

G U R P S

# CLIFFHANGERS



By Brian J. Underhill

Edited by Andrew Hackard

Additional material by Jake Boone, Shawn A. Fisher,

Phil Masters, David Morgan-Mar,

William H. Stoddard, and Hans-Christian Vortisch

Useful suggestions by Michele Armellini, Glen Barrett,

Andre Beckershoff, Lee Cordochorea, M.A. Lloyd,

Jeffrey K. McGonagill, and Gene Moyers

Cover by Jon Foster

Illustrated by Zach Howard and Ramón Pérez

Additional illustrations by Pat Ortega, Shea Ryan, and Dan Smith



Lead playtesters: Devin Ganger and  
Siegh Pennington.

Playtesters: CJ Beiring,  
Frederick Brackin, Stephen Dehman,  
Peter Dell'Orto, Leonardo M. Holschuh,  
John Macek, Matt Riggsby, Allen Smith,  
Brian C. Smithson, Chad Underkoetter,  
the great playtesters at Pyramid online,  
and the Baker City New Year's Eve crew.

Special thanks to Jake Boone, the  
best *Cliffhangers* GM I know. His  
input, friendship, years of gaming, and  
ankhs and tubers stories were  
invaluable.

**GURPS System Design** • Steve Jackson

**GURPS Line Editor** • Sean Punch

**Managing Editor** • Andrew Hackard

**Project Administrator** • Monique Chapman

**Production Manager** • Heather Oliver

**Creative Director** • Philip Reed

**Production Artists** • Heather Oliver  
and Alex Fernandez

**Print Buyer** • Monica Stephens

**Sales Manager** • Ross Jepson

**Errata Coordinator** • Andy Vetromile



*GURPS*, Warehouse 23, and the all-seeing pyramid are registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. *Pyramid*, *GURPS Cliffhangers*, and the names of all products published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are registered trademarks or trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license.

*GURPS Cliffhangers* is copyright © 1989, 2002 by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. All rights reserved.

Some art copyright www.arttoday.com. Printed in the USA.

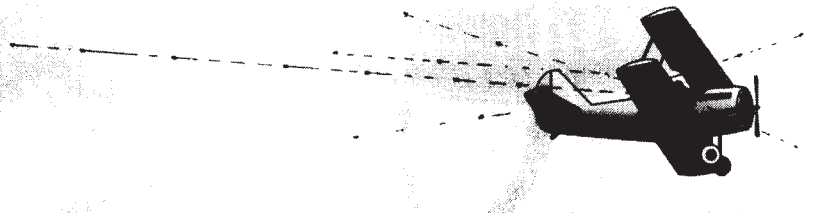
ISBN 1-55634-589-5

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

STEVE JACKSON GAMES



# CONTENTS



## INTRODUCTION ..... 4

- About GURPS ..... 4
- About the Author ..... 4
- Second Edition ..... 4

## 1. THE ERA ..... 5

### POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT ..... 6

- Black Thursday* ..... 6
- The Colonial World ..... 6
- World Wars ..... 7
- Political Boundaries ..... 7
- The International Criminal Police Commission* ..... 7
- Comintern* ..... 7
- Scotland Yard* ..... 7
- Gold and Silver ..... 8

### TECHNOLOGY ..... 8

- Medicine and Healing ..... 8
- Transportation ..... 8
- Travel Times* ..... 10

### COMMUNICATIONS ..... 11

- Who Answers to Whom?* ..... 11
- Languages of the World* ..... 12

### ADVENTURING AROUND THE WORLD ..... 12

- Bribes, Tips, and Gratuities ..... 13
- Science and Technology ..... 14

### TIMELINE: 1925-1939 ..... 14

- Mysteries of the '30s ..... 20
- The Pulp ..... 23

## 2. THE UNITED STATES .... 24

- Politics and Government ..... 25
- NEW YORK CITY ..... 25
- The Empire State Building* ..... 25

### Adventure Seed:

- The Night of the Wolves* ..... 26

### NEW ENGLAND ..... 26

### THE SOUTH ..... 26

### Adventure Seed:

- The Southern Menace* ..... 26

### Adventure Seed:

- La Gonave* ..... 27

### OUT WEST ..... 27

### Adventure Seed:

- The Haunting of the*

- Blackrock Aerodrome* ..... 28

- Air Shows* ..... 28

- San Francisco ..... 28

- In San Francisco* ..... 29

- The Un-American*

- Activities Committee* ..... 30

- Telephone Exchanges ..... 30

- Hollywood ..... 30

### Adventure Seed:

- Studio of Death* ..... 30

- The Pacific Northwest ..... 31

- Galloping Gertie* ..... 31

- Bigfoot* ..... 31

## 3. SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA .... 32

- Politics and Military Action ..... 33

- The Panama Canal* ..... 33

### Adventure Seed:

- Lively Times With a Latin Beat* ..... 33

- Communism in South America* ..... 34

### ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS ..... 34

- The Incas ..... 34

- Viracocha* ..... 34

- Adventure Seeds* ..... 35

- The Maya ..... 36

- Quetzalcoatl* ..... 37

- The Aztecs ..... 37

- THA AMAZON BASIN ..... 38

- The People of the Amazon ..... 39

- Percy Fawcett and the Lost City of*

- Gold* ..... 39

## 4. EUROPE ..... 40

### GREAT BRITAIN ..... 41

### Adventure Seed:

- New Order of the Golden Dawn* ..... 41

### THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS ..... 42

- The Eastern Highlands ..... 42

- Selkies* ..... 42

- The Loch Ness Monster* ..... 42

- The Isle of Skye ..... 43

### Adventure Seed:

- Phantoms of the Skye Games* ..... 43

- The Spanish Civil War* ..... 43

### GERMANY AND AUSTRIA ..... 43

### FRANCE ..... 44

- Paris ..... 45

- The Eiffel Tower* ..... 45

- The French Military ..... 45

### Adventure Seed:

- The Mystery of the Griffon* ..... 46

### ITALY ..... 46

### Adventure Seed:

- Shadows of Ancient Rome* ..... 47

### THE MEDITERRANEAN ..... 47

- Greece. .... 47

- Legends of the Mediterranean ..... 47

### Adventure Seed:

- Cult of the Double Axe* ..... 48

### MONTE CARLO ..... 48

### Adventure Seed:

- Murder in Monaco* ..... 48

- Conspiracy* ..... 49

## 5. AFRICA ..... 50

- African Wildlife ..... 51

### THE SAHARA DESERT ..... 51

- Tutankhamen's Tomb* ..... 52

- Adventuring in Egypt* ..... 52

### EGYPT ..... 52

- Mosques* ..... 53

- Cairo ..... 53

- Alexandria ..... 53

- Giza ..... 53

- Thebes ..... 53

- Egyptology* ..... 53

- Adventuring in Equatorial Africa* .. 54

### THE CONGO BASIN ..... 55

### Adventure Seed:

- The Sparkling Heart*

- of Darkness* ..... 55

### THE GREAT RIFT VALLEY ..... 55

- The Ivory Trade* ..... 56

- The Elephants' Graveyard* ..... 56

## 6. ASIA ..... 57

### JAPAN ..... 58

- Politics and Government ..... 58

- Religion ..... 58

- Death Before Surrender* ..... 58

- Feudal Japan ..... 59

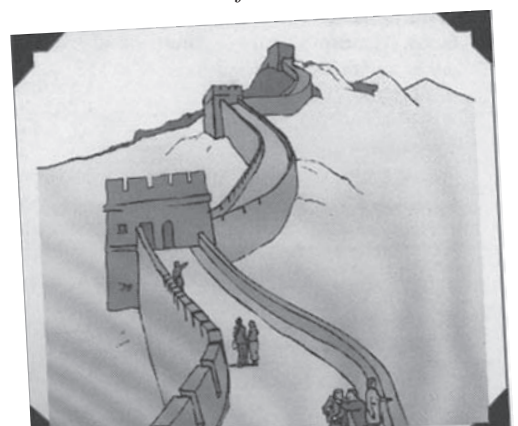
- Ninjas* ..... 59

### RUSSIA ..... 60

- The Mad Monk* ..... 61

### CHINA ..... 61

- The Great Wall of China* ..... 62



Transportation .....	62
<i>Clipper Flying Boats</i> .....	62
Shanghai .....	63
<i>Adventures in China</i> .....	63
<i>The Stone of Heaven</i> .....	64
Peking .....	64
SOUTHEAST ASIA .....	64
French Indochina .....	64
Burma .....	65
British Malaya .....	65
Siam .....	65
The Islands .....	65
<i>Tigers</i> .....	65
<i>Adventuring in India</i> .....	66
INDIA .....	66
<i>Temples of the Far East</i> .....	67
<i>Monasteries</i> .....	67
<i>Adventuring in Tibet</i> .....	68
TIBET .....	68
The People .....	68
Lhasa .....	69
<i>Roy Chapman Andrews</i> .....	69

## 7. THE REST OF THE WORLD .....70

AUSTRALIA .....	71
Climate and Terrain .....	71
<i>Adventuring in Australia</i> .....	71
<i>Sydney Harbor Bridge</i> .....	72
The Peoples .....	72
ISLANDS OF THE WORLD .....	73
The Sargasso Sea .....	73
The Caribbean .....	73
<i>The Fountain of Youth</i> .....	73
<i>Adventure Seeds</i> .....	74
<i>The Bermuda Triangle</i> .....	75
The South Pacific .....	75
<i>Volcanoes</i> .....	75
THE ARCTIC .....	76
ANTARCTICA .....	76
<i>Transportation in the Arctic</i> .....	77
<i>Adventuring in the Yukon</i> .....	77
<i>Adventuring in Antarctica</i> .....	77
<i>Eskimo Myths and Legends</i> .....	77

## 8. THE HERO .....78

CHARACTER TEMPLATES .....	79
Archaeologist .....	79
Crusader .....	80
Daredevil .....	80
Dilettante .....	81
Explorer .....	81
G-Man .....	82
Pilot .....	82
Private Investigator .....	82
Reporter .....	83
Soldier of Fortune .....	83
Other Characters .....	84

ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES, AND SKILLS .....	85
Advantages .....	85
<i>Animal Allies</i> .....	85
Disadvantages .....	86
<i>Cost of Living</i> .....	86
New Disadvantages .....	87
Skills .....	87
Jobs and Income .....	88
Job Table .....	88
OUTFITTING THE HERO .....	89
Personal Equipment .....	89
Equipment Table .....	89
COMBAT EQUIPMENT .....	92
Weapons Table .....	82
VEHICLES .....	94
Vehicles Table .....	94

## 9. ADVENTURE DESIGN ....95

THE GENRE .....	96
Atmosphere .....	96
THE PLOT .....	96
Borrowing Adventure Ideas .....	96
Using Props .....	97
Getting Adventure Ideas .....	98
<i>Keeping the Adventure Moving</i> .....	98
<i>The Deus ex Machina</i> .....	99
<i>Sample Mastermind:</i>	
<i>Methuselah</i> .....	100
THE VILLAINS .....	100
The Mastermind .....	100
The Gangster .....	100
The Foreign Threat .....	100
<i>Sample Foreign Threat:</i>	
<i>ChangSoo</i> .....	101
<i>Sample Femme Fatale:</i>	
<i>Lana Caine</i> .....	102
The Femme Fatale .....	102
Henchmen .....	102
HIDEOUTS .....	103
The Mastermind's Hideout .....	103
EVIL DOINGS .....	103
<i>Deathtrap Ideas</i> .....	104

## 10. THE CAMPAIGN .....105

Hindsight vs. Accuracy .....	106
THE SERIAL APPROACH .....	106
The Recurring Villain .....	106
<i>Double Indemnity</i> .....	106
CAMPAIGN STYLES .....	107
Adventure and Exploration .....	107
<i>Exploration Adventure Seed:</i>	
<i>The Temple of the Feathered</i>	
<i>Serpent</i> .....	108
<i>At the Earth's Core</i> .....	108
Crimefighting .....	108
Horror .....	109
<i>Street Talk</i> .....	109
<i>Supernatural Creatures</i> .....	110

<i>Weird Menace Adventure Seed:</i>	
<i>The Ocean Terrors</i> .....	110
Spy and Espionage .....	110
Westerns .....	111
<i>Espionage Adventure Seed:</i>	
<i>Plans of Death</i> .....	111
<i>Adventure Seed:</i>	
<i>The Case of the Jade Buddha</i> .....	112
<i>Aviation Adventure Seed:</i>	
<i>The Sky Demons</i> .....	112
War .....	112
Aviation .....	113
Sci-Fi .....	113
<i>Science Fiction Adventure Seed:</i>	
<i>TheXR-700</i> .....	113
<i>Adventure Seed:</i>	
<i>The Secret of Fenton 's Grove</i> .....	113
The Pulp Supers Campaign .....	114
<i>Character Death</i> .....	114



## 11. CROSSOVER .....115

CAMPAIGNS .....	115
What Makes it Cliffhangers? .....	116
<i>Keep the Sheets</i> .....	116
OTHER ERAS .....	116
The Victorian Age .....	116
The Twenties .....	117
World War II .....	117
Modern Day .....	117
The Future .....	117
OTHER GENRES .....	117
Sources of Adventure Ideas .....	117
Historical Worldbooks .....	118
<i>Black Op</i> .....	119
<i>Castle Falkenstein</i> .....	119
<i>Cyberpunk</i> .....	119
Modern-Day Espionage .....	119
<i>Time Travel</i> .....	120
<i>Illuminati</i> .....	120
<i>In Nomine</i> .....	120
<i>Martial Arts</i> .....	120
<i>OldWest</i> .....	121
<i>Special Ops</i> .....	121
<i>Swashbucklers</i> .....	121

## BIBLIOGRAPHY .....122

## INDEX .....127

## ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources include:

*Pyramid* ([www.sjgames.com/pyramid/](http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid/)). Our online magazine includes new *GURPS* rules and articles. It also covers *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games - and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!

*New supplements and adventures.* *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. A current catalog is available for an SASE. Of cheek out our website (be low).

*Errata.* Everyone makes mistakes, including us - but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE. Or download them from the Web - see below.

*Gamer input.* We value your comments, for new products as well as updated printings of existing titles!

*Internet.* Visit us on the World Wide Web at [www.sjgames.com](http://www.sjgames.com) for an online catalog, errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: [rec.games.frp.gurps](mailto:rec.games.frp.gurps).

*GURPSnet.* This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, e-mail [majordomo@io.com](mailto:majordomo@io.com) with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your web browser to [gurpsnet.sjgames.com](http://gurpsnet.sjgames.com).

The *GURPS Cliffhangers* web page is at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/cliffhangers/](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/cliffhangers/).

### Page Reference

Rules and statistics in this books are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* - e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*. Other references are BE for *GURPS Bestiary*, CII for *GURPS Compendium II*, HT for *GURPS High-Tech*, MA for *GURPS Martial Arts*, MO for *GURPS Monsters*, PM for *GURPS Places of Mystery*, VE for *GURPS Vehicles*, WT for *GURPS Warehouse 23*, and WWi for *GURPS Who's Who I*. A full list of abbreviations can be found on p. CI181, or see the updated web list at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html).

# INTRODUCTION



Welcome to a world of mystery and intrigue, excitement and danger, gunplay and glory. It's a world filled with lost treasures, exotic lands, villainous masterminds, and unspeakable horrors. This is the sensational world of the adventure stories of the 1930s ... the "pulp!" *GURPS Cliffhangers* contains game mechanics, campaign suggestions, background information, exotic settings, and historical details from several sources . . .

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian J. Underbill has spent over two decades roleplaying, and half that time writing about it. His publishing credits range from book and movie reviews for various periodicals to tongue-in-cheek humor bits on a whole gamut of gaming topics. He is both the author and revisor of *GURPS Cliffhangers* and has several other projects on the burner, including a pulp-era adventure novel and more than one *GURPS* project.

He is ever grateful to the Internet for transforming research from a tedious, headache-inducing search for minutiae in a dusty library into a tedious, headache-inducing search for minutiae in the comfort of one's own home.

## SECOND EDITION

Readers familiar with the original edition of *Cliffhangers* will notice several changes.

Chapter 1 now contains a detailed description of the 1920s and '30s in general, with an expanded timeline covering the years 1925-1939. Information on 1940-1945 can be found in *GURPS WWII*, allowing GMs to run a *Cliffhangers* campaign spanning some 20 years!

The subsequent chapters now contain revised and expanded information on adventure locations around the world, including Australia, the Caribbean, and more. The chapters focus not only on adventure sites, but also politics and government, for use in espionage- or military-oriented adventures.

Finally, in addition to adding templates for quick-start adventures, and updating material to reflect improvements in the *GURPS* system over the years, an entire chapter has been added to help GMs apply the *Cliffhangers* style to over a dozen other genres!





# THE ERA





The *Cliffhangers* era extends from the mid-1920s to the beginning of WWII. For most of the era, times were hard; perhaps that contributed to the popularity of heroes who always managed to survive.

## Politics and Government

The time was one of lively politics. The shock of the Great War (it was not called World War I until the 1940s), followed by the Great Depression, had left many people dissatisfied with conventional ideas and forms of government. Fascism, Communism, Socialism, the New Deal, Technocracy, and others all claimed to have solutions to the problems of industrial civilization. The great empires that had stabilized the prewar world were weakened or gone. Colonial peoples had discovered that Europeans were not invincible.

The great powers were reluctant to fight each other, but smaller wars were common. The League of Nations, founded with such great hope, could do nothing to prevent or stop

war. There was continual civil war in China and a full scale Sino-Japanese war after 1937. Spain's Civil War (1936-39) also involved Italian, German, and Russian troops, as well as volunteers and adventurers from around the world. Latin America had almost continuous coups and disturbances; a war between Paraguay and Bolivia (1932-35) gave mercenaries plenty of work. All of the colonial powers had to fight to hold their empires. Russia and Japan clashed several times, Germany and Austria were the battlegrounds of private political armies, and the Balkans had many border disputes.

Governments were wary of internal revolt. A population of hungry and desperate men, many with experience of war and weapons, had terrifying potential. In Germany and Italy, successful dictators had exploited that potential. Even in the United States, Herbert Hoover's administration felt it necessary to disperse the Bonus March holdouts by force in 1932. Anyone with military or intelligence background may be involved in such intrigue.

## THE COLONIAL WORLD

*"Dictators ride to and fro upon tigers which they dare not dismount. And the tigers are getting hungry."*

- Winston Churchill

Adventurers in some countries will find themselves dealing not with a local government, but a representative of a colonial power. Several nations (e.g., Great Britain, Holland, Portugal, and France) had colonies around the world. The relationship between the ruling nation and its colony ranged from peaceful submission to guarded acceptance to violent opposition.

Each colony has a representative from the mother country. This official (often called a Governor-General) may have complete authority - the ability to create or remove any laws - or he may act as a counselor/ambassador, allowing the colony a fair amount of political freedom.

Regardless of the authority of the representative, the ruling nation almost always reserves the right to veto decisions, policies and laws that the colony wishes to enact. This often leads to rebellion, and foreigners may find opportunity to work for either side (though most pulp heroes supported the colonial empires, especially Britain and France). Rebel armies tend to be illled, atrocity-prone, and Communist-infiltrated.

European and European-officered armies are the ultimate authority in the colonies. Service with these armies (such as the French Foreign Legion) is a common background for pulp heroes and villains. Colonial armies and colonial police forces also make colorful backgrounds and adventure seeds.

## Travel in the Colonies

Travel through Africa and Asia was, for the most part, travel through European-controlled countries with European officials, courts, customs, papers, and currencies. It was possible to tour these areas and never see anyone but Europeans except at a distance or in subservient capacities. Americans

### BLACK THURSDAY

Thursday, October 24, 1929 has the dubious honor of being called *Black Thursday* - the day the New York Stock Exchange crashed. This economic disaster signaled the end of the "Roaring Twenties" and the beginning Of the Great Depression. Despite popular opinion, *Black Thursday* did not begin the Great Depression, but rather was an indication of the economic instability that was actually responsible for the collapse,

GMs who set their *Cliffhangers* campaigns in the mid-to late 1920s would do well to play up the rapid increases in industrialization that fueled economic growth, along with the technological improvements that had economists believing that the upswing would continue. Wages increased, economic spending swelled, and stock investment and speculation was at an all-time high. Investors, in an effort to make a killing in the market, leveraged homes, cashed in insurance policies, and traded off more secure investments such as treasury bonds and savings accounts.

By October, 1929, the buying craze had begun to decline, only to be followed by an even more intense selling craze. On Thursday, October 24, 1929, the bottom began to drop out of the market - by the end of the day, the New York Stock Exchange had lost four *billion dollars*. By Tuesday, October 29 ("Black Tuesday"), the market seemed to have bottomed out, with 16 million shares sold. A few days of apparent recovery followed, with a slight rebound in prices, but the market dropped again. By November 13, prices had reached their lowest point for the year, with \$30 billion in stock value wiped out.

The Great Depression had heralded its arrival with a resounding crash.

visiting any colonial nation will usually be dealing with its -governing nation - rarely (if ever) with a native government. Racial intolerance and social stigmas are rampant in these areas and extend from European to native and vice versa. Discrimination is the order of the day; travel, lodging, and eating establishments use first, second, and third class accommodations to keep American and European visitors segregated from the native patrons. (See also *Going Native*, p. 13.)

## WORLD WARS

Until the 1940s, World War I was known as the Great War (or simply The War). It was also called “the war to end all wars.” It was the bloodiest war up to that time, resulting in the deaths of nearly 20 million people. Famine and disease in the aftermath killed twice as many.

The Great War was the first war to involve at least one nation from each major continent. It was fought from 1914 to 1918 (primarily in Europe), with France, America, Great Britain, and Russia on one side, and Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey (the Ottoman Empire) on the other. Russia dropped out of the war in 1917 after two revolutions.

After the War, a peace treaty signed in Paris on January 1, 1920 established the League of Nations. This international peacekeeping force was to promote world peace and prevent another tragedy like the Great War. The League had some success at mediating difficulties, but by the 1930s was ignored more often than not. It collapsed at the start of World War II. The United States never joined the League of Nations.

### The Aftermath

For many years after 1918, minor wars (arising in part from the Great War) continued in Russia, China, Mexico, Turkey, Africa, Poland, Ireland, and the Baltic States. The troops were mostly veterans using equipment left over from WWI. Many adventurers soldiered in these regional wars and players are encouraged to weave them into their characters’ background stories.

### World War II

By the mid-1930s the clouds of war were beginning to drift across Europe, culminating in the Second World War which began in September, 1939. The timeline on pp. 14-23 includes many of the political and military developments that led up to the war, and a complete treatment can be found in *GURPS WWII* and its supplements.

## POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

Globe-hopping heroes will find themselves crossing international borders on a regular basis. Strangers who don’t conform to the local rules and regulations can wind up in serious, even fatal trouble. Checking out political conditions before journeying is always wise and usually requires only a few hours of research. If the heroes have neglected to do the necessary research, they may be able to locate an American embassy or consulate to determine local policies.

## THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL POLICE COMMISSION

The International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC), the forerunner to Interpol, is a worldwide, nongovernmental agency founded in 1923 to reduce international crime. It is a clearinghouse for information, furnishing member nations with data on criminals, unidentified bodies, stolen property, etc. Until after World War II, the ICPC is primarily a European organization dealing with international (European) crimes - most revolving around smuggling, narcotics, and counterfeiting. It is strictly forbidden to meddle in political crimes such as espionage and terrorism.

The ICPC is staffed by law enforcement officers and agents of its member nations who are bound by their own national laws and regulations. It does not have its own police powers, nor does it maintain its own field agents.

The ICPC can be used to good effect as a plot device to feed information to any policeman or federal agent who has at least 10 points in Legal Enforcement Powers, or to anybody with a good police Contact. Those on the shady side might have a Contact in the agency itself, able to drop the sort of information that normally comes through official channels. An ICPC contact costs 4 points (skill-15, available on 9 or less, usually reliable). Information on non-European crimes will be difficult to come by, giving a -5 skill penalty.

## COMINTERN

Comintern, the Third Communist International, is an organization founded by the Russian Communist Party. Its primary goal is to promote international revolution by any means possible (e.g., propaganda, bribery, blackmail). Rumors of violent actions abound, including assassination, terrorism, and guerrilla warfare.

## SCOTLAND YARD

Scotland Yard is a nickname for the London Metropolitan Police (not to be confused with the City of London police). The name stems from the original location of the London Metropolitan Police headquarters, and continues to be used even though the offices were moved to the Thames Embankment in 1890.

Metropolitan police officers carry firearms only when given special permission by a judge; normally they are only armed with a *truncheon* (a club about a foot long - use baton stats, p. B206). Their jurisdiction is limited to the London Metropolitan area unless requested by outside authorities and authorized by the Home Secretary (the cabinet officer who commands the police).

The CID (Criminal Investigation Department) is a subdivision of Scotland Yard. Its officers wear plainclothes and conduct undercover operations and investigations. CID agents (as well as mounted police and royal bodyguards) were often allowed to carry a .32 ACP caliber pistol.

# GOLD AND SILVER

After the Gold Reserve Act of January, 1934, possession of gold in the United States was against the law. Citizens were allowed to keep gold in its natural state



gold jewelry, gold dental work, or coins of numismatic interest. All other forms of gold were to be taken to the nearest depository and exchanged for paper money. Anyone finding golden treasure or coin should be very careful what they do with it - anyone with the Honesty disadvantage *must* turn it over to the gov-

ernment as soon as possible. Prior to the Gold Reserve Act, gold was worth about \$20/ounce. After that time, the legal price was fixed at \$35/ounce (even illegally held and traded gold tended to be valued at roughly that same price). Possession of silver was still legal.

The traditional cost of silver was about \$1.25/ounce, but during the Depression years it could be bought and sold for around half that. Gold and silver are weighed in *troy* ounces, each 1/12 of a troy pound (a rough approximation for calculations is 1.1 regular ounces equals one troy ounce).



## Technology

The 1930s was part of the industrial age and the age of science. Many present-day discoveries are based on research done in the '30s. For a modern player, though, there are still many unfamiliarities. The world is a lot closer to the Middle Ages in 1930. Muscle power, animal and human, still does a lot of work. There is more variety; uniformity in parts, accessories, and fittings is only beginning. Transportation and communication are faster than ever before, but still slow by today's standards. Perhaps the most immediately apparent differences for a time traveler would be fashions. Every adult wears a hat outdoors; every office worker wears a three-piece suit; everyone wears more clothing than today. The next obvious points would probably be negatives: no television, no computers, no all-music radio, and almost no air conditioning.

## MEDICINE AND HEALING

The medical field (like other scientific fields) progressed rapidly from the turn of the century to the Thirties. Medical training had evolved into the modern form: a premed degree followed by 3 or 4 years of medical school.

Medical services cost about 10% of today's prices. Some treatments (such as delicate surgery) may cost nearly as much as they do today, if they are available at all. Anesthesia and asepsis are generally practiced in all the developed countries. Primitive countries are often served by medical

missionaries with good credentials. Many preventative and curative medicines are available. In the U.S., a doctor will have access to any medications; others will need a prescription for most. Other countries may have other regulations (GM's decision). Any large city will probably have a black market in medical supplies; it may take a Contact or a Streetwise roll to find it.

Vaccines exist for many of the great plagues of the past. Globe-hopping adventurers may run into a new one, or a resistant strain of an old one. Use the Illness rules on p. B133; the symptoms, vectors, and mortality of exotic diseases are up to the GM.

## TRANSPORTATION

Travelers have a variety of choices. Sample travel times are listed in the box on p. 10, and the list of vehicles on p. 94 gives details for several specific cars and airplanes.

### Automobiles

Cars of the era come in two basic styles. Roadsters are the sports cars of the '30s. Most are two-seaters (possibly with a rumble seat in the back); many have convertible tops. Sedans are usually four-seaters; police departments and taxi drivers favor them. Most cars are painted a single dark color; bright or multicolored ones will be noticed and remembered. The Depression puts new cars out of reach of most people; older vehicles are kept running as long as they will roll. Delivery vans are common on the city streets; they make good cover for a stakeout and are handy for kidnapping. Trucks are not as large as today; six-wheel designs are the most common and most cargo-haulers have capacities of 6 tons or less. Only the military has many multiwheel drive vehicles.

*Running Boards.* Nearly all cars and trucks of the Thirties are equipped with running boards. Standing on the running boards and riding outside the car is not unusual and rarely illegal. Anyone riding on the running board of a car must make a successful ST roll (modified as the GM wishes) each time the car makes an unusual maneuver (high-speed turn, sudden start and stop, hitting debris). A failed roll means the rider has been thrown off and will take 1d damage per 5 mph of vehicle speed. A natural 18 means he has fallen *under* the wheels of the car; he will take damage as the GM sees fit.

### Airships

Airships were used by all the combatants in the Great War. The largest and most famous were the German zeppelins, used for aerial reconnaissance and bombing. The most militarily successful were the small British blimps used for convoy escort; no convoy escorted by blimps lost a ship to submarine attack.

An airship is an aerostat; that is, its lift is not generated by movement. The lift is provided by filling the structure with a gas which is lighter than air. Blimps simply have bags of gas with cargo and engines slung below. Rigid airships (such as the zeppelins) have a rigid skeleton, which



mounts gas cells, cargo, engines, and an aerodynamic skin. Lift is usually provided by hydrogen (efficient and costing \$1 per 1,000 cubic feet but explosive when mixed with air) or helium. Helium can lift only about 2/3 as much in cargo and passengers in the same size airship and costs \$10 per 1,000 cubic feet. In the 1930s, it is a U.S. government monopoly, produced at only one plant (in Texas) and so rare that there is seldom enough at one time to inflate the U.S. military airships. In 1938, the first license to export helium was issued; prior to that foreign airships were forced to rely on hydrogen. The *Hindenburg* disaster of May 6, 1937, was due in part to the \$600,000 price tag the U.S. Government put on filling her with helium.

Most of the world had given up on large airships by 1935 (though the use of blimps was expanding). Only the Germans, forerunners in the field, continued to press forward (led by Dr. Hugo Eckener). In 1936 they sent the *Hindenburg* on her maiden flight. When she went down in a fireball one year later, it was the effective end of large airships both commercially and militarily.

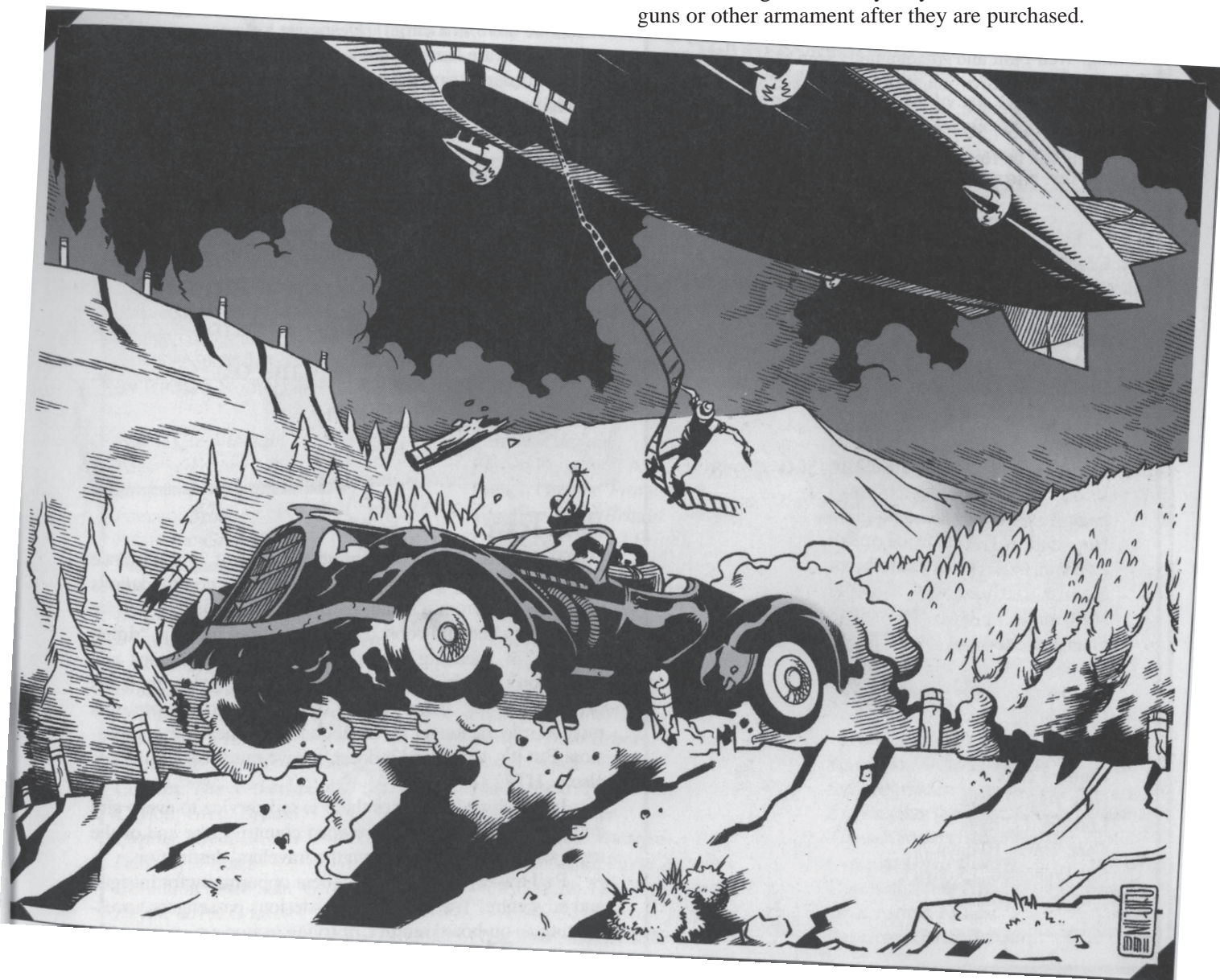
The American military used airships as early as 1919, but the first two U.S. dirigibles (the ZR-1 and ZR-2) were destroyed in accidents by 1925. The Navy commissioned the *Akron* in 1931 and the *Macon* in 1933. Each was 785 feet long and provided launching and landing facilities for five scout planes. The *Akron* went down in 1933 and the *Macon* in 1935.

*Cliffhangers* villains may find a used blimp a useful mobile headquarters . . . and suspending heroes by their feet from such a monstrosity makes an ideal deathtrap!

## Autogiros

The autogiro is the precursor to the helicopter. The primary difference between the two is that the autogiro has an unpowered rotor. A propeller pulls it forward; the airstream turns the rotor to provide lift. An autogiro needs a runway to get airborne (but not as long a runway as a fixed-wing craft requires) but can land vertically by auto-rotating. It cannot hover.

Commercially available autogiros only hold the pilot and one passenger, but they may be modified to hold a third person in the cargo area. They may also be fitted with machine guns or other armament after they are purchased.



## TRAVEL TIMES

**Car:** Cars traveling long distances average about 30 mph in 10 hours of driving, amounting to 300 miles per day. Poor roads (such as those found in Texas and the South) cut travel time in half, while well-paved thoroughfares (such as in the Boston or New York areas) could increase it by 50%. Average fuel consumption is 25 mpg.

**Rail:** Trains are not much faster, averaging about 40 mph, but they travel around the clock, averaging about 900 miles/day. Cross-country travel (such as San Francisco to New Orleans) took about 3 days. Costs range from a nickel for local commutes to \$1 plus 2 cents/mile for a crosscountry ticket.

**Plane:** There are no commercial intercontinental flights until late in the period (across the Pacific in 1937 and transatlantic in 1939), but daredevils may wish to charter a plane or fly their own. For a detailed table of aircraft speed and ranges, see p. VE59.

**Ship:** Express liners make 600 miles/day, weather permitting. Well-built and -maintained cargo ships make 350 miles per day. Badly maintained tramps and sailing ships make 250 on average; any change is likely to be for the worse.

Costs can be found on p. 91. Typical liner or rail travel times (+/- 2d%) are listed below:

### From New York

Calcutta: 16 days  
The Congo: 10 days  
Hong Kong: 19 days  
London: 5 days  
Port Said: 8 days  
Rio de Janeiro: 8 days  
San Francisco: 10 days

### From San Francisco

Buenos Aires: 12 days  
Hong Kong: 10 days  
Honolulu: 4 days  
London: 14 days  
Manila: 10 days  
Melbourne: 12 days  
Shanghai: 10 days

### From Paris

Berlin: 1 day  
Moscow: 3 days  
Cairo: 4 days  
New York: 7 days  
London: 1 -2 days  
Cape Town: 10 days  
San Francisco: 15 days  
Singapore: 16 days

## Commercial Air Travel

The airlines expanded so quickly during the 1930s that no general statement on the availability of air travel is possible. From a few low-and-slow daylight-only routes in 1929, service expanded to pressurized transcontinental service in 1939. There was fierce competition for profitable routes, and aerial adventurers can find employment in the burgeoning industry. Many of the early transoceanic flights were by flying boat - aircraft with large, hydrodynamic hulls that landed and launched from water.

## Going by Sea

Sea is the commonest method of intercontinental travel. Ships range from rust-bucket tramps to luxurious liners.

Travelers on an ocean liner have their choice of accommodations, from first-class staterooms to steerage (usually for immigrants and other destitute types). Many cargo ships have a few cabins for passengers; these are substantially cheaper than passenger liners (liner means the ship is on a scheduled run or line, as distinct from a tramp that goes wherever there is a cargo). Desperate voyagers can ship as crew. Wages are low and there are many applicants for every job in this depression time, but it is possible (especially with a good reaction from the captain or mate). Travel prices are in Chapter 8.

**The cheapest rail travel is "riding the rods" - sneaking aboard a freight. Railroad crews and cops don't like tramps on a train, and have violent means of discouraging them.**

## Rail Travel

Trains are the most common means of long-distance travel during the Twenties and Thirties. Accommodations match means, from a small, hard seat to a luxurious private car with kitchen and cook. The cheapest rail travel is «riding the rods» - sneaking aboard a freight. Railroad cops and crews don't like tramps on a train, and have violent methods of discouraging them. Other travelers who choose this method may be longer on nerve than on honesty or compassion. But it's cheap, and it doesn't leave much of a trail. (See also p. HT72.)

In developed countries there is rail service to every city and most towns. In less developed countries, the end of the track may be a long way from the travelers' destination.

Rail travel provides an excellent opportunity for intrigue and adventure. Traveling with mysterious passengers, investigating an on-board murder, or trying to stop a runaway train are all examples of putting this pulp staple to good use.



# Communications

Communication during the 1930s is as variable as transportation. Anything from a local phone call to an intercontinental message is likely to have problems.

## The Telephone System

Local telephone systems in the U.S. are fairly reliable. Outside the cities, especially in underdeveloped areas, few people have a telephone in the house, but local businesses usually do, and may be willing to let others use it. Even in the cities, lower-income families are unlikely to have a home phone; the local candy store or grocery store will take calls and fetch nearby residents to the phone. Pay phones are more commonly inside a business than in a freestanding kiosk. Most systems are operator-controlled; automatic dialing is rare. A telephone operator is a valuable contact; he can listen in on any call and keeps a log of long-distance messages.

Long-distance calls often require calling the operator, then waiting several minutes for her to make the connection and call back. (In Britain, a long-distance call is called a *trunk call*.) Outside the U.S., the phone systems are extremely variable; the French system is notoriously unreliable but the French prefer not to hear any criticism from foreigners.

International calls are difficult but not impossible. Between neighboring developed countries it generally involves multiple operators and, at times, translators. Transatlantic phone service by radio becomes available in 1926, but transatlantic cable isn't laid until 1956.

See *Telephone Exchanges* on p. 30 for more information about the U.S. telephone system.

## Telegrams

The telegraph is the normal way to send a long-distance (especially overseas) message. Almost every town has a telegraph office; a message can usually reach the intended recipient (delivered to his hand!) within the day. Telegraph rates vary depending on the origin and destination; on the average they are a nickel a word for in-country and a quarter a word internationally. The GM should require appropriate expenditures for long messages and appropriate confusion for obscure ones. Those with Miserliness will have great difficulty balancing meaning and money.

## Mail Service

Mail service in the United States is efficient. Most homes get two deliveries a day; businesses get more. Overseas mail is much slower. Most of it goes by sea, and may take weeks to get to a distant address. There is little international airmail, and it is monstrously expensive.

## WHO ANSWERS TO WHOM?

The following information will give GMs some idea of who was "in charge" of various regions of the world. Some of the British colonies listed in the box gained dominion status in 1931 with the passage of the Statute of Westminster. Despite that recognition of autonomy, they are included in the list for reference. See the *Timeline*, 1931, for a list of colonies affected by that change.

Also, note that some noncolonial regions are included in the list due to the geographic separation from their mother country (such as Sardinia and Sicily, both part of Italy).

Aden: <i>Great Britain</i>	Formosa: <i>Japan</i>	Nigeria: <i>Great Britain</i>
Algeria: <i>France</i>	French Equatorial Africa: <i>France</i>	Nyasaland: <i>Great Britain</i>
Angola: <i>Portugal</i>	French Guiana: <i>France</i>	Palestine: <i>Great Britain</i>
Annam: <i>France</i>	Gambia: <i>Great Britain</i>	Philippine Islands: <i>United States</i>
Australia: <i>Great Britain</i>	Gold Coast: <i>Great Britain</i>	Puerto Rico: <i>United States</i>
Bechuanaland: <i>Great Britain</i>	Greenland: <i>Denmark</i>	Rhodesia: <i>Great Britain</i>
Belgian Congo: <i>Belgium</i>	Hawaii (Sandwich Islands):	Sardinia: <i>Italy</i>
Bissao: <i>Portugal</i>	<i>United States</i>	Sicily: <i>Italy</i>
Borneo: <i>The Netherlands, Great</i>	India: <i>Great Britain</i>	Sierre Leone: <i>Great Britain</i>
<i>Britain (separate regions)</i>	Iraq: <i>Great Britain</i>	Somaliland: <i>Italy, Great Britain, and</i>
British Guiana: <i>Great Britain</i>	Jamaica: <i>Great Britain</i>	<i>France (separate regions)</i>
Burma: <i>Great Britain</i>	Java: <i>The Netherlands</i>	Sudan (Anglo-Egyptian Sudan): <i>Great</i>
Cambodia: <i>France</i>	Kenya: <i>Great Britain</i>	<i>Britain/Egypt</i>
Cameroon: <i>France</i>	Korea: <i>Japan</i>	Sumatra: <i>The Netherlands</i>
Celebes: <i>The Netherlands</i>	Madagascar: <i>France</i>	Syria: <i>France</i>
Ceylon: <i>Great Britain</i>	Morocco: <i>France</i>	Tanganyika Territory: <i>Great Britain</i>
Cyprus: <i>Great Britain</i>	Mozambique: <i>Portugal</i>	Trans-Jordan: <i>Great Britain</i>
Dahomy: <i>France</i>	Newfoundland: <i>Great Britain</i>	Uganda: <i>Great Britain</i>
Dominion of Canada: <i>Great Britain</i>	New Guinea: <i>The Netherlands,</i>	Union of South Africa: <i>Great Britain</i>
Egypt: <i>Great Britain</i>	<i>Australia (separate regions)</i>	West Africa: <i>France</i>
Federated Malay States: <i>Great Britain</i>	New Zealand: <i>Great Britain</i>	Zanzibar: <i>Great Britain</i>

## LANGUAGES OF THE WORLD

The following is a list of countries (or regions) and some of their major languages. Those who are fluent in one of the languages listed below will be able to communicate with at least some.

Africa, north: *Arabic, Tuareg (rare), French, Spanish*  
Africa, sub-Saharan: *Kiswahili, Kingwana, English, French*  
Arabia (Saudi Arabia): *Arabic*  
Argentina: *Spanish*  
Austria: *German*  
Belgium: *Flemish, French*  
Bolivia: *Spanish, Aymara, Quechua*  
Brazil: *Portuguese*  
China: *Mandarin, Cantonese, Soochow, Min*  
Denmark: *Danish*  
Eastern Africa: *Kiswahili*  
Ecuador: *Spanish, Quechua*  
Egypt: *Arabic*  
El Salvador: *Spanish*  
Ethiopia: *Amharic*  
Guatemala: *Spanish*  
India: *Hindi, Persian, English*  
Indonesia: *Bahasa, Dutch*  
Iraq: *Arabic*  
Libya: *Arabic*  
Malaysia: *Malay*  
Mexico: *Spanish*  
Nepal: *Nepalese*  
Netherlands: *Dutch*  
Palestine: *Hebrew, Arabic, Yiddish, English*  
Paraguay: *Spanish, Guarani*  
Persia (Iran): *Farsi, Kurdish*  
Peru: *Spanish, Aymara, Quechua*  
Samoa: *Samoan, English*  
Singapore: *Cantonese, Malay, English*  
South Africa: *English, Afrikaans*  
Sudan: *Arabic*  
Tibet: *Tibetan*  
Thailand: *Thai, Cantonese*  
Turkey: *Turkish, Kurdish*  
Wales: *Welsh, English*  
Yugoslavia: *Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian, Slovenian*

### Dialects and Lingua Franca

Follow the rules on pp. B54-55 when dealing with dialects. Related languages may also default to one another. For example, some dialects of Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish are mutually intelligible at -3 or -4.

Several languages are widely used for commerce and diplomacy. Kiswahili is spoken over most of sub-Saharan Africa, Arabic over most of North Africa and the Middle East, Pidgin English in most of the South Pacific, and Malay in most of the East Indies. English is the most widespread language in the 1930s; there is a chance of finding an English-speaker almost anywhere.

## Adventuring Around the World

In the shrinking world of the 1930s, travelers can go farther and faster than ever before. They must, however, pay strict attention to the laws and customs of foreign nations.

### Passports and Customs

Entering most foreign countries requires a passport and a visa. These papers may take several weeks to process, depending on the destination. If they are confiscated, lost, stolen, or destroyed, it may take days, weeks, or even months to get replacements. In some countries, anyone without proper papers may find it impossible to leave . . . or even to get a room and a meal. False papers cost many times the legal price, and possession of false papers is a serious crime.



### Guides and Translators

Unless someone in the party is fluent in the local language, foreigners may find themselves unable to do business. Guides and translators can usually be found in any major city or frequently visited locale.

Local guides in primitive countries charge from \$0.10 to \$5.00 per day (use 3dx10 cents to generate an average fee, then adjust it depending on quality, honesty, the local economy, demand, and so forth). An advance payment may help relations, or may tempt the guide to take the cash and leave without doing the job. Check the reaction of the guide as described on p. B204; increase the penalties if the guide has been patronized or mistreated, the job is dangerous, or it violates local customs and mores. High-paying strangers will be swamped by would-be guides, each one "the best you can find."

"European" guides in exotic locales (Old China Hands, Great White Hunters, etc.) are much more expensive. Use 2d + (Area Knowledge/5) + (Reputation as a guide)xdollars per day as a price guide. High skills in useful areas such as Tracking, Guns, Survival or Naturalist may cost more.

### Currency

Depending on the country, American dollars may be worthless or highly desirable. They may be exchanged for local currency; the GM determines rates of exchange. Black-market currency dealing is common; it is always a serious crime.

All prices in these rules are in dollars. Dealings may actually be in rupees, rubles, or cruzeiros, but the arithmetic will be the same.



## Haggling

Haggling for the best price on a sale or purchase is not only good business but also expected entertainment in much of the world. If someone purchased a street vendor's product at his asking price, he would be thrilled to have such a windfall of profit, but disappointed to have missed out on the contest.

There are two types of hagglers. One starts near the actual value and is difficult to budge. In this case, anyone making a ridiculously low offer will be scoffed at and ignored. The other type (perhaps more entertaining) asks an exorbitantly high price and expects an equally absurd offer, eventually meeting the buyer somewhere near the actual cost.

Buyers should be mindful of the unspoken rules of haggling:

1. Never deride the quality of the workmanship. Pointing out flaws that devalue the object while praising the overall fine quality is encouraged.
2. Once a deal is struck, it is final - even if one party later realizes he was seriously out-bargained.

3. A cleverly told lie is silently approved of (and often rewarded) by the opponent, but blatant misrepresentation is not acceptable.

4. One good turn deserves another. If a haggler gets a great deal on one item, he is expected to give a little on the next.

Hagglers may use Contests of Merchant skill (p. B49), but roleplaying the encounter is frequently enjoyable.

## Going Native

People with appropriate skills have the option of traveling abroad as Europeans, or "blending in" by adopting native dress and customs.

Native garb can be copied or purchased on the spot, but native customs and etiquette can only be followed through a successful Anthropology-2, Area Knowledge-2, or Savoir-Faire roll (modified for Cultural Familiarity, p. Ñ 189). Those who choose this route may get a favorable reaction from the natives, but they will be discouraged by colonial residents and officials. "Going native" gets a -3 reaction from colonialists; "going native" badly gets a -3 reaction from the natives.

## BRIBES, TIPS, AND GRATUITIES

Tips and gratuities are part of daily life. In some countries, however, the line between tipping and bribing is hazy. Some



foreign officials depend on routine bribes to bolster their salary - omit it and they'll be offended and take petty revenge. Examples include customs inspectors who can expedite (or impede) passage across international borders, outfitters able to procure (or misplace) valuable adventuring equipment, and colonial governors

willing to approve (or deny) papers for visiting foreigners. This sort of tip/bribe in the Far East is often called *baksheesh* - from a Persian word meaning «to give.»

Baksheesh is often given in exchange for simple favors. Want to see inside that locked Egyptian tomb? A few piastres to your guide may produce the key. Need to find a good desert guide? A handful of coins will guarantee a better selection.

Occasionally it will take more than slight palm-greasing to get results. In cases where someone is called upon to betray his position or perform an overtly illegal act, bribers must be much more careful about the quantity and method of the bribe.

### How Much?

The GM must have an idea of the relative wealth of the bribee and the importance of the bribe being offered. One who offers too little may be turned down, but he can always try again (see sidebar, p. B92).

Bribes that are *too big* will be turned down almost immediately *regardless of the Reaction roll*, since the recipient is likely to believe that his actions are dangerous or that the situation is somehow more complex than it really is.

If a bribe is less than the recommended amount, use a modifier of -1 per 10% difference. If the bribe is too large, use a modifier of +1 per 20% over the normal amount to a maximum of +5. If the bribe is more than 5 *times* the recommended amount, the recipient will refuse the bribe and will react at -3 in any further negotiations.

The Reaction Table (p. B204-205) can be used to determine whether or not a bribe is accepted. A reaction of *Good* or better must be achieved for a bribe to be successful.



### Sample Bribes

A simple formula for determining bribes is to use the recipient's wages as a guide. A reasonable bribe is half a day's pay for small bribes, a full day for more serious matters: a month's pay or more for flagrantly illegal actions is reasonable.

If a high-ranking official must be bribed, the listed value will be much greater (multiply the recommended value by the person's Status times 3).

Speeding in a rural area: \$2.

Reckless driving, small town: \$5.

Reckless driving, large city: \$10.

Running gun battle, large city: \$25.

Concealed weapons, no license: \$5.

Prohibited weapons: \$25.

Forced entry, sleazy apartment: \$2.

Forced entry, ritzy apartment: \$10.

Forced entry, murder scene: \$100+.

Smuggling: \$10-\$100 at each border.

Getting address from a Hall of Records clerk: \$2 times addressee's Status.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Technology during the early 20th century was changing with breakneck speed. Two global wars pushed the need for high-tech equipment to the fore.

To determine exactly what is and what is not available to the heroes, the GM should consult a good reference or search the Internet. A list of mundane items follows to give a general idea of the technology available during specific times.

The date shown represents the year the item became commercially available or popular. Dates in parentheses are dates of discovery or invention.

Aerosol spray can: 1941 (1926)  
 Autogiro: 1923  
 Automatic pilot: 1914  
 Bathyscaphe: 1948  
 Boulder (later named Hoover) Dam: 1936  
 Car radio: 1927  
 Color film: 1935(1912)  
 Dry ice: 1925  
 Flamethrower: 1912  
 FM Radio 1939(1933)  
 Freeze drying: 1946(1906)  
 Geiger counter: 1928(1913)  
 Jet Engine: 1944(1930)  
 Jukebox: 1928(1906)  
 Kleenex tissue: 1924  
 Movie camera: 1904  
 Nylon: 1939 (1936)  
 Panama Canal: 1914  
 Pen, dripless cartridge: 1935  
 Pen, ball point: 1948 (1938)  
 Penicillin: 1943 (1928)  
 Photoelectric cell: (1873)  
 Photocopy machine: 1907  
 Radar: 1939 (1904)  
 Radiocarbon dating: 1947  
 Retractable landing gear: 1929 (1911)  
 Safety razor: 1903  
 Scotch tape: 1930  
 Scuba gear: 1946(1935)  
 Seat belts: 1959  
 Steel-belted radials: 1937  
 Stereo records: 1933  
 Suez canal: 1869  
 Synthetic rubber: 1927  
 Telephone, transatlantic: 1956  
 Telephone, public (pay phone): 1889  
 Telephone, rotary: 1923  
 Television: 1939(1928)  
 Tetanus shot: 1927  
 Torpedo: 1866  
 Trolley car: 1911  
 Velcro: 1948  
 Water skiing: 1927  
 Welding, oxyacetylene: 1904  
 X-rays: 1895

## Timeline: 1925-1939

Information in the timeline is provided to give an overview of the world and a feel for popular culture. GMs can use the information as adventure seeds or simply to flesh out his campaign.

Events are grouped roughly by category within each year, rather than chronologically (e.g., military events occur in the text near other military events, popular film occurs near literature). Dates in parenthesis indicate month/day.

### 1925

Literature: Adolph Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in German; F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*; John Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer*; Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans*; Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*; Emily Dickinson's *Complete Poems* (posthumously).

Film: Harold Lloyd's *The Freshman*; German film director E.A. Dupont's *Variety*.

George Bernard Shaw wins the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Harold Ross publishes the first issue of *The New Yorker*, a weekly magazine that extols the virtues of modern-day urban life in New York City (2/17).

University of Illinois football star Red Grange joins the Chicago Bears (11/22).

Bad booze in New York results in some 750 deaths.

An estimated 5% of liquor that is smuggled into the U.S. is intercepted by law enforcement officials.

General vaccine programs against tuberculosis begins in the United States.

Team of sled dogs, led by a husky named Balto, races some 650 miles with medical supplies to save the diphtheria-stricken citizens of snowed-in Nome, Alaska (2/2).

Arkansas passes a law making it unlawful to have sex before marriage.

Solar eclipse visible in the northeast and Great Lakes region of the US (1/24).

Walter Chrysler founds the Chrysler Corporation.

Midwest tornadoes kill 700-800 people; worst in U.S. history (3/18).

German serial killer Fritz Haarmann, "The Butcher of Hanover" who murdered at least 26 young boys and sold the flesh of some as meat, is executed by decapitation (4/15).

*Scopes Monkey Trial* (5/5). John T. Scopes is arrested for teaching evolution in violation of Tennessee state law. Despite Clarence Darrow's defense (against politician William Jennings Bryan), Scopes is found guilty on July 21. He is fined \$100 plus court costs, but the entire case is dismissed on a technicality in January 1927 on appeal to the Tennessee Supreme Court.

Some 40,000 Ku Klux Klan members march through Washington, D.C., as part of the KKK's first national congress (8/8).

Navy dirigible *Shenandoah* crashes in Ohio, killing 14 airmen (9/3). U.S. Air Service General William «Billy» Mitchell calls the government's investigation of the crash incompetent, and on December 17 is found guilty of insubordinate conduct.

Ho Chi Minh founds the Vietnamese Nationalist Party (later known as the Indochinese Communist party).



Conference on International Arms Trade in Geneva produces the Geneva Protocol of 1925 against chemical and bacteriological warfare. The U.S. and Japan refuse to ratify the agreement.

Russia and Japan sign agreement to end rift left by the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war. Japan agrees to withdraw troops from Sakhalin Island in exchange for oil and coal concessions (1/20).

Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg elected president of Germany (4/26).

Adolph Hitler founds the *Schutzstaffel*, or SS. They begin as his protective guard and eventually become the elite police corps of the Nazi party.

## 1926

Literature: Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*; Andre Gide's novel *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* published in France; Ezra Pound's *Poems*; Ivan Pavlov's *Conditioned Reflexes* published in Russia; Langston Hughes' first poetry collection *The Weary Blues*; T.E. Lawrence's *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*; A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*.

*Don Juan* debuts in "Refrigerated Warner Theater." It is the first *Vitaphone* release using sound-on-disk sound synchronization (8/5).

In Philadelphia, Gene Tunney defeats Jack Dempsey in 10-round unanimous decision to become Heavyweight Champion of the World. Fight takes place outdoors during a downpour. (9/23).

**Honey, I just forgot to duck.**

**- Jack Dempsey to his wife,  
Estelle, after losing his World  
Heavyweight title in 1926**

Nikola Tesla erects radio towers at the Waldorf in New York. Claims to get signals from outer space.

Ku Klux Klan membership exceeds 4 million.

Contract bridge begins to gain popularity.

Rudolph Valentine dies of perforated ulcer at age 31.

National Broadcasting Company (NBC) founded in New York (I 1/1).

Makwar Dam completed on Egypt's Nile River (1/21).

Robert Goddard launches liquid fuel rocket at Auburn, Massachusetts (3/16).

Revenue from bootlegging in the U.S. reaches estimated \$3.6 billion.

Fiery evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson mysteriously disappears in May. Weeks later, she reappears, claiming to have been abducted and tortured. Later speculation is that she was in hiding with a lover, pulling a publicity stunt, or both.

U.S. Commander Richard E. Byrd and pilot Floyd Bennett fly over the North Pole (5/9).

Jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman makes his first record, as part of Ben Pollack's band (9/14).

American Gertrude Ederle becomes first woman to swim the English Channel. She receives a New York City ticker tape parade (8/6).

Henry Ford institutes 5-day work week and 8-hour day at his auto plants to reduce overproduction (9/25).

Harry Houdini dies in Detroit from peritonitis (10/31).

The Kodak Co. produces the first 16-millimeter movie film. Lufthansa airline founded in Germany.

Some 32,000 speakeasies operating in New York City; this is roughly double the number of taverns prior to Prohibition.

Rin Tin Tin is biggest box office star of 1926.

Knights of Malta support the rise of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.

Germany joins League of Nations: Spain resigns membership.

## 1927

Literature: Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*; Sinclair Lewis' *Elmer Gantry*; Hermann Hesse's *Der Steppenwolf*; Willa Cathers' *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.

*The Jazz Singer* is released. First all-synchronized feature film including dialogue (10/6).

Film: Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*; Buster Keaton's *The General*; French film director Abel Gance's *Napoleon*; Clara Bow in *Wings*; German film director F.W. Murnau's *Sunrise*.

Gene Tunney again defeats Jack Dempsey in world heavyweight boxing championship, this time at Soldiers Field, Chicago. Fight is broadcast to some 40 million listeners. Tunney receives "the long count" of 13 seconds to recover from a knockdown (9/22).

New Year's Day: Forty-one deaths at New York's Bellvue Hospital due to bad booze. An estimated 50,000 deaths thus far during Prohibition, plus hundreds of thousands of non-fatal blindness and paralysis cases.

Al Capone's operations receive an estimated \$60,000,000 from bootlegging.

The Stork Club on New York's 53rd Street opens.

First commercial transatlantic telephone service established between New York and London using radio waves. Expensive and unreliable (1/7).

Women's cloche hats (low-riding straw hats, often with a ribbon) become popular.

The Roxy Theater opens in New York City. 5,920 seats (3/11).

Hollywood showman Sid Grauman opens the Chinese Theater in Hollywood; the first picture is Cecil B. DeMille's *The King Kong*. Tickets are \$11.00 (5/19).

Charles Lindbergh flies solo from Curtiss Field, Long Island to Paris, France in his monoplane, *Spirit of St. Louis* (5/19 to 5/21).

Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) founded (9/18).

Diphtheria vaccinations kill 5 injure 37 in China.

Four percent of U.S. banks fail.

U.S. Supreme Court finds Texas law barring blacks from voting in state primaries unconstitutional.

American consulate in Nanking ransacked by Chinese troops (3/24).

Mississippi River floods, covering 4.4 million acres and causing \$300 million in damage (4/16).

The German stock market collapses on "Black Friday" (5/13).

8.3-magnitude earthquake kills 200,000 in Nan-Shan, China (5/22).

Iron lung is invented by Philip Drinker and Louis Shaw to help polio victims breathe (5/22).

U.S. inventor Philo T. Farnsworth demonstrates electronic television in San Francisco.

Free-form dance pioneer Isadora Duncan dies in a freak auto accident near Nice, France, when her fluttering long scarf gets caught in a back wheel (9/14).

New York Yankees baseball star Babe Ruth hits his 60th home run for the season (9/30).

Bela Lugosi premieres as *Dracula* on Broadway (10/5).

World's largest vehicular tunnel, the Holland Tunnel, opens to connect New York City and Jersey City (11/12).

Ford unveils the Model A to replace the antiquated Model T. Crowds flock to Ford's Detroit and New York offices to see the new automobile (12/2).

Duke Ellington and his orchestra open for a four-year run at The Cotton Club in New York City's Harlem (December).

*Show Boat* opens on Broadway and becomes one of the biggest stage musical hits in history (12/27).

Average annual income in U.S., \$2,400.

Al Capone's annual income estimated between \$20 million and \$100 million.

First wide-scale tetanus vaccines administered to humans.

Allied control over Germany expires. Control turned over to the League of Nations (1/31).

Josef Stalin's control of Russia almost certain. Communist party bans all opposition to Stalin's policies. Leon Trotsky and others purged from the party (December).

## 1928

Literature: D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover* published in Italy, but not in Britain due to sexually explicit content; Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter-Point*; Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* is banned in the U.K. due to lesbian content; Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall*.

Film: Carl Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* premieres in Denmark; first feature-length "talkie," Warner Brothers' *The Lights of New York*; Disney's first sound cartoon, *Steamboat Willie*.

Mickey Mouse premieres in *Plane Crazy*, a silent cartoon parody of the Lindbergh craze.

Louis Armstrong records *West End Blues* for Okeh in Chicago (6/28).

Women's events are featured for the first time at the summer Olympic Games in Amsterdam (July).

Federal Reserve withdraws \$80 billion from the U.S. government.

Alexander Fleming discovers penicillin. It does not become commercially available until the 1940s.

Third International Congress of Eugenics. At the conference, a Dr. Robie calls for the sterilization of 14 million Americans with low IQ scores.

Japan begins experimental production of mustard gas at Tandanoumi Arsenal.

Herbert Hoover defeats Al Smith, becomes U.S. president (11/6).

Stock market breaks and tails in June, but recovers quickly. Market breaks again December 7, but once again recovers. Trading volume reaches almost 7,000,000 shares.

Amelia Earhart becomes first woman to cross the Atlantic (6/17 to 6/18).

First television sets available to consumers; \$75 each (7/3).

Eliot Ness forms "Untouchables."

General Electric begins first regularly scheduled television broadcasts, 3 days a week for 2 hours each, at station WGY in Schenectady, N.Y. (5/11).

The Dodge Brothers merge with Chrysler Corporation in July. That month, the Plymouth model appears. The De Soto follows in August.

Ethiopia and Italy sign treaty of friendship (8/2).

The Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact is signed in Paris by 65 nations, including the U.S. (8/27).

The Chrysler Corporation unveils plan for its new headquarters, the Chrysler Building.

Germany's *Graf Zeppelin* dirigible arrives at Lakehurst, N.J. (10/15).

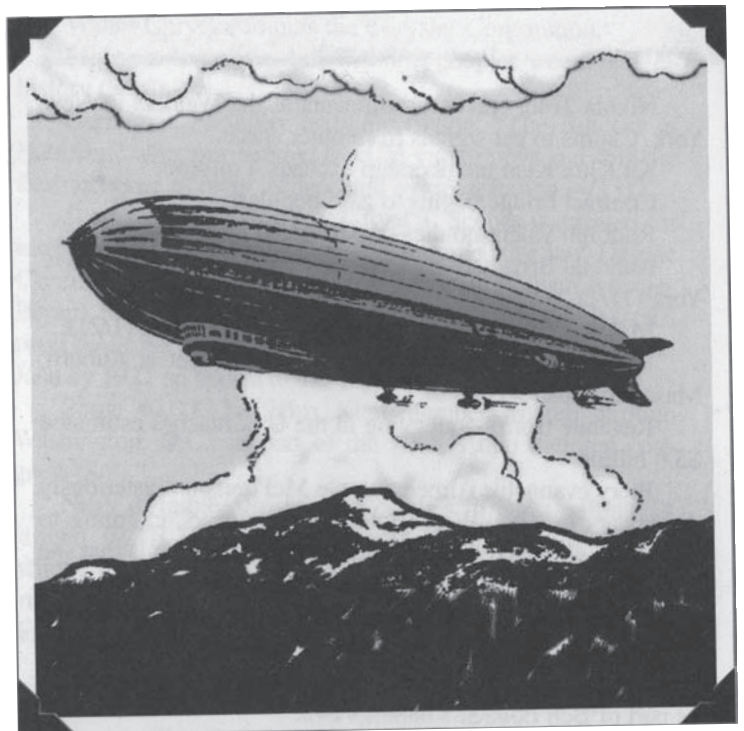
An underdog, injury-ridden Notre Dame football team goes up against the heavily favored, undefeated Army team. Using the deathbed words of the late Notre Dame star George Gipp, coach Knute Rockne tells his players to "win one for the Gipper." Notre Dame defeats Army 12-6. (11/10)

British steamer *Vestris* sinks in a storm off Virginia, killing 113. U.S. press sensationalizes the story (11/12).

Albert Szent-Gyrgi discovers vitamin C.

Rickards and A.H. Refell build the first working robot (United Kingdom).

Hans Geiger and Walther Muller make first feasible Geiger counter to measure radiation. Geiger had invented the original device in 1912.





## 1929

Literature: Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel*; Jean Cocteau's *Les Enfants Terribles*; W.R. Brunett's *Little Caesar*; William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*; Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*; Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*; Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Count Basie, jazz pianist and future bandleader/composer, makes his first record, "Blue Devil Blues," with Walter Page's Blue Devils, in Kansas City, Missouri, for Vocalion Records (11/10).

Admiral Byrd conducts expeditions to both poles. He and his pilot Bernt Balchen are the first to fly over the South Pole.

Construction on the Empire State Building begins.

St. Valentine's Day Massacre gangland hit, ordered by Al Capone against North Side boss Bugs Moran, leaves 7 bullet-riddled corpses on the floor of a north Chicago garage. Moran was not one of them (2/14).

New York Stock Exchange sets records throughout the year, despite several sharp corrections and recoveries. On October 24, trading volume reaches a record 12,894,650 as stocks dive. Charles E. Mitchell, Albert H. Wiggin (Chase National Bank), William Potter (Guaranty Trust Company), and Seward Prosser (Bankers Trust Company) meet with Thomas W. Lamont of J.P. Morgan on Wall Street and agree to invest \$40 million each to "shore up the stock market" Five days later, the market collapses (see *Black Thursday*, box, p. 6).

Charles Lindbergh starts Central American air-mail service.

English racecar driver H.O.D. Segrave sets world car speed record at 231.3 mph at Daytona Beach, Florida (3/11).

U.S. Navy Eieutenant Apollo Soucek sets airplane altitude record of 39,190 feet (5/8).

The first Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awards (Academy Awards) ceremony is held, to honor films for the years 1927 and 1928 (5/16).

Bell Laboratories makes first U.S. public demonstration of color television. Images are roses and a U.S. flag (6/27).

BBC broadcasts first transmission 30-line color television (8/20).

The Gerber Co. invents canned, strained baby food.

Electroencephalograph invented by Hans Berger in Germany.

## 1930

Literature: Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies*; Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*; William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*; Robert Frost's *Collected Poems*; Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*; T.S. Eliot's *Ash Wednesday*.

A copy of James Joyce's novel *Ulysses*, sent from its Paris publisher to a New York publisher, is seized by the U.S. Bureau of Customs on the grounds that it is obscene.

Boston bans all works by Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky.

Films: *Blue Angel* (starring Marlene Dietrich), *All Quiet on the Western Front* (starring Lew Ayres, Academy Award winner), *Anna Christie* (starring Greta Garbo), *Murder* (directed by Alfred Hitchcock), and *Hell's Angels* (directed by Howard Hughes).

115 million attend movie theaters weekly.

Popular music: *Body and Soul*, *Georgia on My Mind*, *I Got Rhythm*, *Three Little Words*, *Time on My Hands*, *Walkin' My Baby Back Home*.

Max Schmeling (Germany) defeats Jack Sharkey (U.S.) in world heavyweight fight in New York City - 80,000 attend. He wins on a foul in the fourth round (6/12).

Philadelphia wins World Series 4 to 2 against St. Louis.

Gallant Fox wins Kentucky Derby, Preakness, and Belmont Stakes.

Contract bridge all the rage.

U.S. population 120 million.

Bank closures reach 1,300.

By the end of the year, millions are unemployed. Apple sellers fill New York City street corners.

Construction begins on Boulder Dam.

The Governor of the Federal Reserve Board grudgingly admits that the U.S. may be in "what appears to be a business depression." (5/8)

Chrysler Building is completed and becomes the tallest building in the world - Manhattan's 800-foot, 68-story, art deco Colossus. It will soon be relegated to second-tallest by the Empire State Building.

**We could never get our coffee  
hot when flying out of Cheyenne  
because of the altitude - and we  
were too dumb to know why.**

**- Ellen Church,  
first airline hostess (1930)**

Amy Johnson becomes the first woman to fly solo between England and Australia. She makes the trip in 19.5 days.

Charles Lindbergh and Anne Morrow set a transcontinental speed record from Los Angeles to New York, 14 hours, 45 minutes (4/20).

The British airship *R101* crashes near Beauvais, France while en route to India. Forty-six passengers and crew burn to death (10/15).

The ninth planet is discovered by Clyde Tombaugh after its existence is predicted by Percival Lowell. Tombaugh spots the planet on 2/18 but holds announcement until 3/13 (Lowell's birthday) and names it Pluto based on Lowell's initials.

U.S. now employs some 3,000 prohibition agents with salaries from \$2,000-\$3,000.

Over 500 gangland murders this year.

France begins building Maginot Line.

Constantinople renamed Istanbul.

Turksib Railroad connecting Turkestan and Siberia opens.

Austria and Italy sign friendship treaty. Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and U.S. sign naval disarmament treaty.

Ras Tafari becomes Emperor Haile Selassie of Abyssinia (Ethiopia).

Indian leader Mohandas K. Gandhi begins second civil disobedience campaign to protest British government's salt tax (3/12).

Last Allied troops are removed from the Rhineland and the Saar.

Revolution in Argentina; Jose Uriburu becomes president.

A Communist revolt in China is suppressed by Nationalist troops (July-August). The Nationalists begin their "extermination campaigns" against the Communists.

U.S. Marines are stationed in Haiti and Nicaragua to assist the local authorities and preserve U.S. interests.

## 1931

Literature: Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*; William Faulkner's *Sanctuary*; Henry James' *Charles W. Eliot, a Biography*.

*The Shadow Magazine* begins publication in April. It is first released as a quarterly (April-June, July-September), but goes monthly with issue #3 (October).

Frost's *Collected Poems* (1930) wins Pulitzer Prize.

The *New York World* suspends publication.

Films: *City Lights* (directed by and starring Charlie Chaplin), *Frankenstein* (starring Boris Karloff), and *Flowers and Trees* (Disney's first color cartoon). Clark Gable (age 30) begins his Hollywood career. *Dracula*, starring Bela Lugosi, opens on Valentine's Day.

Popular music: *Minnie the Moocher*; *Mood Indigo*; *When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain*; *Goodnight, Sweetheart*.

*The Star Spangled Banner* becomes U.S. anthem; words by Francis Scott Key, music from *To Anacreon in Heaven*.

St. Louis wins World Series 4-3 over Philadelphia.

U.S. Golf Association Open won by Billie Burke.

World car production 36 million; world film production 1,000.

U.S. unemployment 4 to 5 million.



Population (in millions): China 410, India 338. Russia 168, U.S. 122, Japan 75, Germany 64, Britain 46.

Britain abandons gold standard; pound sterling falls from \$4.86 to \$3.49 (9/21).

German banks close until August 5 following failure of *Danabank*(1/3).

German millionaire Hugenberg finances 800,000-member Nazi party; Kirdof, Thyssen, and Schroder follow suit.

Empire State Building completed (see box, p. 25) (5/1).

Gangster Al Capone is jailed for tax evasion.

Australian explorer G.H. Wilkins captains the submarine *Nautilus* under the Arctic Ocean, reaching latitude 82 degrees, 15 minutes.

Amelia Earhart establishes the Pitcairn autogiro world's altitude record at 18,451 feet (4/8).

After severe monsoon rains, the Yangtze River in China floods; dikes and dams break, inundating over 35,000 square miles and leaving 40,000,000 homeless.

Mukden Incident in September begins Japanese occupation of Manchuria. China boycotts Japanese goods (China is Japan's principal market).

Gandhi ends second civil disobedience campaign with signing of Delhi Pact. Britain releases nonviolent political prisoners.

Statute of Westminster adopted by British Commonwealth gives formal recognition to the autonomy of the dominions of the empire: Canada, Commonwealth of Australia, Dominion of New Zealand, Union of South Africa, Irish Free State, and Newfoundland (12/11).

## 1932

Literature: Dashiell Hammett's *The Thin Man*; Ernest Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*; W. Somerset Maugham's *The Narrow Corner* and *For Services Rendered*; Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.

*The Shadow Magazine* goes semimonthly beginning with volume #3, issue #3 (October 1). It is released on the 1st and 15th of each month.

Films: *Shanghai Express* (starring Marlene Dietrich), *Sign of the Cross* (directed by Cecil B. De Mille), *A Farewell to Arms* (starring Gary Cooper), *Red-Haired Alibi* (Shirley Temple's first film), Academy Award winner *Grand Hotel* (starring Greta Garbo), *The Mummy* (Boris Karloff), and *The Most Dangerous Game* (Fay Wray).

Sound films gain popularity; 127 will be made this year.

Johnny Weissmuller appears in the first of his many *Tarzan* films.

Popular music: *Brother Can You Spare a Dime*, *I'm Getting Sentimental Over You*, *Night and Day*, *Let's Have Another Cup of Coffee*, *April in Paris*.

Baseball player Evar Swanson circles the bases in a record time of 13.3 seconds.

Jack Sharkey defeats Max Schmeling in a world heavyweight title fight in Long Island City; 15th-round decision (6/21).

New York Yankees shut out Chicago Cubs in the World Series, 4 to 0.

Burgoo King wins the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness Stakes.



The Olympic Games are held in Los Angeles (7/30 to 8/14). 37 nations participate in 23 sports, 124 events. (The Winter Games were at Lake Placid, N.Y., in February.)

U.S. unemployment reaches 13.7 million; worldwide unemployment is approximately 30 million.

Fingerprint information exchange between the U.S., Paris, Rome, and London begins.

Charles Lindbergh's baby is kidnapped from his home on March 1. The kidnapper sends a ransom note; the \$50,000 ransom is paid. The baby is not returned.

Amelia Earhart flies solo across the Atlantic Ocean on May 20 - the first woman to do so. Newfoundland to London derry in 13.5 hours.

Work begins on the Golden Gate Bridge.

Germany opens the world's first modern motorway, the *Cologne-Bonn Autobahn*.

Earthquake in China's Kansu Province leaves 70,000 dead.

Stimson Doctrine (Secretary of State Henry Stimson) protests Japanese presence in Manchuria. The U.S. announces it will not recognize gains made through armed aggression.

70,000 Japanese troops storm Shanghai and drive out the Chinese 19th Route Army (1/28); in February, Japan establishes a puppet empire in Manchuria, Manchukuo, under Emperor Pu-yi; an agreement between China and Japan sets up a demilitarized zone and ends the boycott against Japanese goods.

Austrian-born Adolph Hitler receives German citizenship.

Franklin D. Roosevelt wins the U.S. presidential election in an electoral landslide over Herbert Hoover, 472 to 59.

In May and June, "the Bonus Army" of 17,000 ex-servicemen marches on Washington, B.C., to demand passage of a law permitting them to cash their bonus certificates; the bill is defeated in the Senate. Washington offers to pay for a return home, but troops led by General Douglas MacArthur must drive out over 2,000 dissenters on July 28.

In June the long-standing dispute between Paraguay and Bolivia over the Gran Chaco develops into full-scale war. Both sides employ foreign mercenaries, especially technical personnel. The war goes on until 1935.

Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud, conqueror of the Arabian Peninsula (including Al-Hasa, Hejaz, and Nejd), renames his kingdom Saudi Arabia.

## 1933

Literature: Erskine Caldwell's *God's Little Acre*; James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*; Sinclair Lewis' *Ann Vickers*; Bernard Shaw's *On the Rocks*; H.G. Wells' *The Shape of Things to Come*; James Thurber's *My Life and Hard Times*.

Issue #1 of *The Phantom Detective Magazine* (February), *Doc Savage* (March), *G-8 and his Battle Aces* (October), and *The Spider: Master of Men* (October). All are published monthly and continue well into the Forties.

Films: *Queen Christina* (starring Greta Garbo), *King Kong* (produced by Schoedsack and Cooper), *The Invisible Man* (Claude Rains), and Academy Award winner *Cavalcade* (written by and starring Noel Coward).

547 films are produced in the U.S.

Popular music: *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*, *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf*, *Stormy Weather*, *Easter Parade*.

First baseball All-Star game is played on July 6 in Chicago. Over 45,000 watch the American League defeat the National League 4 to 2.

Primo Camera (Italy) knocks out Jack Sharkey in the sixth round and gains the world heavyweight title (Long Island; 6/29).

New York Yankees beat Washington Senators 4 to 1 in World Series.

Unemployment in the U.S. reaches 17 million.

The first rock paintings by the Sahara Desert's prehistoric inhabitants are found at Tassili.

Albert Einstein settles in U.S. and begins work at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, N.J.

Chicago World's Fair; *A Century of Progress International Exposition*.

Wiley Post (who is blind in one eye) lands his Lockheed Vega, the *Winnie Mae*, in New York, after circumnavigating the globe in 7 days, 19 hours (7/23).

Admiral Byrd begins his second Antarctic expedition.

A British airplane flies over Mt. Everest.

Malcolm Campbell sets a land speed record of 273 mph in the 2,450 horsepower *Bluebird* (2/23).

Dirigible *Akron* crashes into the Pacific Ocean near midnight; only 4 of 77 aboard are saved (4/4).

An attempted assassination of President-elect Roosevelt by Giuseppe Zangara (2/15). Chicago mayor Anton Cermak is wounded and dies on March 6.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt becomes 32nd president at age 51. He begins the "New Deal" economic plan, starting with a "bank holiday" closing all United States banks for a week (3/6).

Congress passes a bill on March 9 making it illegal to possess gold. A grace period is allowed for citizens to bring their holdings to gold depositories (see p. 8).

America abandons the gold standard (4/19).

Prohibition repealed at 5:32 p.m. EST (12/5). Journalist H.L. Mencken (working for the *Baltimore Sun*) reputedly drinks the first legal beer and proclaims it "good."

U.S. Congress votes for independence of the Philippines.

Reichstag (Parliament Building) fire in Berlin (2/27); Adolph Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany (1/30), gets dictatorial powers (Enabling Act of 3/24).

Germany withdraws from the League of Nations (10/15).

U.S. Marines are withdrawn from Nicaragua (1/2).

## 1934

Literature: Pearl S. Buck's *The Mother*; F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*; Robert Graves' *I, Claudius*; Sinclair Lewis' *Work of Art*; Upton Sinclair's *The Book of Love*.

Issue #1 of *Operator #5* hits the stands in April.

Dell Publishing releases *Famous Funnies*, the first comic book for the public - cost: 10 cents.

Films: *The Lost Patrol* (John Ford, director) and Academy Award winner *It Happened One Night* (starring Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert).

Max Baer (U.S.) knocks out Primo Camera in the 11th round for the world heavyweight title (Long Island; 6/14).

Babe Ruth hits 700th home run.

St. Louis Cardinals defeat Detroit Tigers 4 to 3 in World Series.

# MYSTERIES OF THE '30s

## War of the Worlds

While the radio broadcast of *The War of the Worlds* (October 31, 1939) was presented as fiction, many believed the Martian invasion to be real.

Even today some sources claim there was an actual invasion near Grover's Mill (the site of the fabled attack) and that the radio broadcast was a government ploy to cover it up. Anyone out on Halloween has a chance to find the truth, but may not survive the discovery.

**While the radio broadcast of *The War of the Worlds* was presented as fiction, many believed the Martian invasion to be real.**

**Anyone out on Halloween has a chance to find the truth, but may not survive the discovery.**

## The Death of John Dillinger

On July 21, 1934, Dillinger was gunned down by FBI agents and the East St. Louis Police outside a movie theater in Chicago. There is some dispute as to whether or not he was actually killed. Some say he was wearing a bulletproof vest and survived the attack, while others believe it was not him at all, but one of his thugs made up to look like him (see *Double Indemnity*, p. 106). Since the official report says he died on that day, convincing anyone otherwise (especially law enforcement agencies) will be difficult. Dillinger had used acid to remove or disfigure his fingerprint.

## The Morro Castle

Several strange circumstances surround the *Morro Castle* ocean liner disaster (September 9, 1934). The fire consumed nearly the entire ship as hundreds watched from the New Jersey shore. Many people survived, but the *Morro Castle* was a total loss.

(1) The captain died in his sleep around midnight (several hours before the fire). No one determined the cause of death - it was assumed to be from natural causes.

(2) Prior to his death, neither he nor his crew had ordered lifeboat drills (standard procedure aboard such a vessel). Again, no explanation is known for this lack of safety precautions.

(3) After the fire started, the first officer and crew were very slow to react, telling nearby crew members to put it out.

(4) Once the fire was out of control, crew members (including officers) acted poorly, often pushing passengers out of the way to be first to board the lifeboats.

(5) When the incident went to trial, the entire disaster was blamed on the captain - *even though he was dead at the time of the fire*. Coincidentally, the fire occurred near the scene of the airship *Akron* disaster of April 4, 1933.

Worldwide scheduled air service routes total 223,100 miles. Over 100 million miles are actually flown during the year.

Dionne quintuplets (first to survive beyond infancy) are born in Canada.

First laundromat (called a *Washateria*) opens in Fort Worth, Texas.

*S.S. Queen Mary* and France's *S.S. Normandie* (the largest ship of its time) are launched.

Major law changes give the FBI more power (see p. 82).

FBI agents shoot "Pretty Boy" Floyd on October 22 and "Baby Face" Nelson on November 27.

Texas outlaws Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow are killed in Louisiana after an epic investigation by famed Texas peace officer Frank Hamer (5/23).

Bruno Hauptmann is arrested for the Lindbergh baby kidnapping on September 20.

On July 21, John Dillinger is ambushed outside a movie theater and shot to death at age 32 (see box at left).

Charles William Beebe descends 3,028 feet into the ocean off Bermuda.

First practical test of radar is conducted by the German Navy (3/20).

On September 9, the ocean liner *Morro Castle* burns off Asbury, New Jersey; 130 die (see box).

A severe dust storm lifts 300,000,000 tons of topsoil from Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, Colorado, and other states. Much of it is blown into the Atlantic Ocean (5/10-5/11). This is only one of many such storms.

German president von Hindenburg dies at 88. Adolph Hitler becomes president (8/2).

U.S. Marines are withdrawn from Haiti (8/6).

Heinrich Himmler becomes chief of Reich Police with Reinhard Heydrich in charge of the Gestapo.

"Night of the Long Knives." On June 30, Hitler cleans out his ranks by having dissidents and troublemakers assassinated during the night.

Japan renounces the naval limitation treaties of 1922 and 1930.

Mao Tse-tung and 90,000 followers embark on a Long March of 8,000 miles.

Gandhi suspends his civil disobedience campaign in India.

## 1935

Literature: T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*; Clifford Odet's *Paradise Lost*; Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here*; John Steinbeck's *Tortilla Flat*.

Films: *Anna Karenina* (starring Greta Garbo), *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (directed by Alfred Hitchcock), and Academy Award winner *Mutiny on the Bounty* (starring Clark Gable). Movie serials: *The Lost City* and *The Phantom Empire*.

Popular music: *Begin the Beguine*, *The Music Goes "Round and "Round, I Got Plenty o' Nuttin'*, *It Ain't Necessarily So*, *Just One of Those Things*.

Benny Goodman introduces "swing music" to a broader audience.

Detroit Tigers beat Chicago Cubs 4 to 2 in the World Series.



James J. Braddock (U.S.) outpoints Max Baer to win the world heavyweight crown (Long Island; 6/13).

Omaha wins the Kentucky Derby, Preakness, and Belmont.

Parker Brothers (a game company in Salem, Massachusetts) introduces **Monopoly**. After Christmas the game becomes a nationwide fad.

Social Security Act takes effect (8/14).

Alcoholics Anonymous organized in New York City.

Rumba becomes the fashionable dance.

Alligator caught in New York sewer weighs some 125 pounds and is over 8 feet long (2/10).

Chain letter craze sweeps the nation. Typical letters ask one dime.

Oil pipelines between Iraq, Haifa, and Tripoli are opened.

The U.S. Congress passes a Neutrality Act prohibiting transportation of weapons to warring countries.

Huey Long - senator, former governor, and major national rival to FDR - is assassinated by Dr. Carl Weiss in the Louisiana capitol building (9/8).

Bruno Hauptmann is convicted of Lindbergh kidnapping and murder (2/13).

Ma Barker and son Freddie die in 4-hour shootout with FBI (1/16).

Charles F. Richter develops a scale for measuring earthquakes.

A Pan American Clipper (a 19-ton flying boat) flies from San Francisco to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in 18 hours 39 minutes, making it the first trans-Pacific transport plane (4/16).

The first air traffic control center goes into operation at Newark, New Jersey (12/1).

The longest bridge in the world is opened over the lower Zambezi River (Africa).

Malcolm Campbell drives *Bluebird* at 276.8 mph at Daytona Beach. Later he sets a land speed record of 301.13 mph at Bonneville Salt Flats.

First flight of a practical helicopter (France, 6/26).

Earthquake at Quetta, India kills 60,000.

Germany defies the Versailles treaty and reinstates compulsory military service.

Trace ends the fighting between Paraguay and Bolivia in the Gran Chaco (6/12).

Mussolini's Italy invades Abyssinia (Ethiopia); Haile Selassie flees to Britain (October).

Russia signs treaties with the U.S., France, Czechoslovakia, and Turkey.

Persia changes its name to Iran. Britain's Government of India Act divides India into 11 self-governing provinces, but the British Parliament retains ultimate control (8/2).

## 1936

Literature: Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead*; Dylan Thomas' *Twenty-Five Poems*; Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*; Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With The Wind*; F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Crack-Up*; Aldous Huxley's *Eyeless in Giza*.

Henry Luce begins publishing *Life* magazine.



Films: *Modern Times* (directed by and starring Charlie Chaplin), *San Francisco* (starring Clark Gable), *The Ghost Goes West* (Rene Clair), and Academy Award winner *The Great Ziegfeld* (starring William Powell).

Movie serials: *Flash Gordon* and *Undersea Kingdom*.

Popular music: *It's De-Lovely*, *I'm an Old Cowhand* (from *the Rio Grande*), *Is It True What They Say About Dixie?*, *I Can't Get Started with You*, *Pennies from Heaven*.

First Popular music chart based on sales ("top 10") is published by *The Billboard* in New York City. *Stop! Look! Listen!* by Joe Venuti and his Orchestra is #1 (1/4).

The Olympic Games are held in Berlin (8/1 to 8/16). Jesse Owens (U.S.) wins four gold medals. The winter games were held at Garmisch-Partenkirchen (2/6 to 2/16).

New York Yankees (American League) beat New York Giants (National League) in the World Series (nicknamed the Subway Series), 4 to 2.

The Baseball Hall of Fame is founded in Cooperstown, N.Y.

Max Schmeling defeats Joe Louis (U.S.) in the world heavyweight title fight.

Population (in millions): China 422, India 360, Russia 173, U.S. 127, Japan 89, Germany 70, Britain 47, and France 44.

King Edward VIII of England abdicates to marry an American divorcee, Wallis Warfield Simpson.

Boulder Dam (later named Hoover Dam) on the Colorado River is completed, creating Lake Mead, the largest reservoir in the world.

Dr. Alexis Carrel and Charles Lindbergh develop an artificial heart.

Bruno Hauptmann is executed on April 3.

Floods sweep Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

The dirigible *Hindenburg* makes her maiden voyage across the Atlantic on May 9. Fares are \$400 one way, \$720 round trip.

J.A. Mollison flies from Newfoundland to London in 13 hours, 17 minutes.

Mrs. Amy Mollison (formerly Johnson) flies from Britain to Cape Town in 3 days, 6 hours, 25 minutes.

Jean Batten flies solo from Britain to New Zealand in 11 days, 56 minutes.

Lockheed Aircraft Corporation builds the first pressurized cabin airplane.

President Roosevelt is re-elected in landslide over Alfred M. Landon (11/3).

The Spanish Civil War begins with an army revolt in Morocco (7/17).

German troops occupy the demilitarized Rhineland (3/7).

Mussolini and Hitler form the Rome/Berlin Axis.

Anti-Comintern (see p. 7) Pact signed by Germany and Japan.

Sian Incident (12/12). Chiang Kai-shek is kidnapped by a Marshal Chang Hsueh-liang. After secret negotiations with the Communists, he is released on December 25. Chiang stops the extermination campaign against the Communists and begins more active measures against the Japanese.

Leon Trotsky, Stalin's greatest rival for international communist leadership, settles in Mexico.

## 1937

Literature: Ernest Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not*; George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*; John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*; J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. H.P. Lovecraft dies on March 15.

**In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.**

**- J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit***

London's *Daily Telegraph* and *Morning Post* merge.

Popular music: *Bei Mir Bist Du Schon*, *The Lady Is a Tramp*, *A Foggy Day in London Town*, *Whistle While You Work*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm*.

*Babes in Arms*, a Rodgers and Hart musical comedy, opens in New York.

Films: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (a Walt Disney feature-length cartoon), *Camille* (starring Greta Garbo), and the Academy Award winner *Life of Emile Zola* (starring Paul Muni).

Movie serial: *Dick Tracy*.

Joe Louis wins the heavyweight title, defeating James J. Braddock in the eighth round (Chicago, 6/22).

New York Yankees (AL) beat New York Giants (NL) in the World Series, 4 to 1.

War Admiral wins the Kentucky Derby, Preakness, and Belmont.

U.S. tennis team wins the Davis Cup from Britain.

Over 500,000 people in the U.S. are involved in sit-down strikes (from 9/36 to 5/37).

The Lincoln Tunnel becomes the second major vehicular tunnel between New York and New Jersey.

The Golden Gate Bridge opens.

The first shipment of gold arrives in mid-January at the National Bullion Depository, Fort Knox, Kentucky.

The *Hindenburg* goes down in a massive fireball on May 6.

President Roosevelt dedicates Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River in Oregon.

*S.S. Normandie* crosses Atlantic Ocean in 3 days, 23 hours, 2 minutes.

Amelia Earhart and co-pilot Frederick Noonan are lost over the Pacific Ocean in their Lockheed Electra. Scores of search vessels fail to turn up the slightest trace (7/2).

All-India Congress Party wins in the Indian elections.

President Roosevelt signs the U.S. Neutrality Act.

Following an incident at the Marco Polo Bridge near Peiping (Peking), Japan launches an undeclared war on China. Japanese atrocities outrage world opinion (7/7).

Japanese planes sink the U.S. gunboat *Panay* on the Yangtze River (12/12).

Japanese seize Peking, Tientsin, Shanghai, Nanking, and Hangchow. Italy withdraws from the League of Nations and joins the Anti-Comintern Pact.

Guernica, the "Holy City" in Spain's Basque region, is bombed by German planes allied to the Spanish Nationalists.

The Kuomintang (Nationalists) under Chiang Kai-shek unite with Communists, led by Mao Tse-tung, to fight Japan.

## 1938

Literature: Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*; William Faulkner's *The Unvanquished*; Ernest Hemingway's *The Fifth Column*; Sinclair Lewis' *The Prodigal Parents*.

Pearl S. Buck wins the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Popular music: *Flat Foot Floogie with a Floy Floy*; *September Song*; *Jeepers Creepers*; *You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby*; *A Tisket, A Tasket*.

Films: *Pygmalion* (starring Leslie Howard), *The Lady Vanishes* (directed by Alfred Hitchcock), *Bank Holiday* (Carol Reed), and the Academy Award winner *You Can't Take It With You*.

Movie serial: *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars*.

New York Yankees defeat Chicago Cubs 4 to 0 in the World Series.

Lambeth Walk becomes the fashionable dance.

40-hour work week established in the U.S.

Howard Hughes circumnavigates the globe by airplane in 3 days, 19 hours.

A hurricane strikes New England, killing 700 and doing millions of dollars of damage (9/21).

On Halloween, Orson Welles broadcasts *The War of the Worlds*, causing nationwide panic (see box, p. 20).

Japan installs a puppet government in Nanking (3/28) and takes Canton, Tsiangtao, and Hankow.

Germany seizes Austria (3/12-13) and Czechoslovakia (10/3).

President Roosevelt sends Hitler and Mussolini a plea to settle European difficulties amicably.





Chinese troops divert the Yellow River to halt the Japanese invasion. The resulting flood covers 20,000 square miles and kills hundreds of thousands.

## 1939

Literature: Adolph Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is translated into English; James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*; John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*; T.S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion*; C.S. Forester's *Captain Horatio Hornblower*.

Pulp magazine *The Avenger* (issue #1) is released in September.

Popular music: *God Bless America*, *Three Little Fishes*, *Over the Rainbow*, *Beer Barrel Polka*, *I'll Never Smile Again*.

Films: *The Wizard of Oz* (in color; starring Judy Garland), *Ninotchka* (starring Greta Garbo), *Pinocchio* (a Walt Disney feature-length cartoon), *Good-Bye, Mr. Chips* (starring Robert Donat), and Academy Award winner *Gone With The Wind* (starring Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh).

Movie serials: *Blake of Scotland Yard*; *Buck Rogers*; *Dick Tracy's G-Men*; *The Phantom Creeps*.

First televised baseball.

New York Yankees shut out Cincinnati Reds 4 to 0 in the World Series.

The World's Fair opens in New York City on April 30, drawing record crowds.

Nylon stockings are first offered for sale.

Al Capone released from Alcatraz; retires to Florida.

President Roosevelt asks \$552 million for the defense budget.

Pan-American Airways begins regularly scheduled flights between the U.S. and Europe on the *Dixie Clipper*. First flight (from Long Island to Portugal) takes 20 hours, 16 minutes (5/20).

Pan-American Airways' *California Clipper* lands at Auckland, New Zealand, completing the first flight of a regularly scheduled fortnightly service from San Francisco, California (8/30).

The Heinkel He-178 makes the first jet-powered flight (8/24).

Chilean earthquake devastates 50,000 square miles and kills estimated 30,000 (1/24).

Severe earthquakes in Northern Turkey destroy city of Erzingan and kill 100,000 (12/27).

The Spanish Civil War ends; Francisco Franco rules Spain as *Caudillo* (3/28). Spain joins the Anti-Comintern Pact and leaves the League of Nations.

Japan occupies Hainan and blockades the British concession at Tientsin.

Germany occupies Bohemia and Moravia, places Slovakia under "protection," annexes Memel, and renounces most military agreements. On 9/1 Germany invades Poland and annexes Danzig. On 10/5 the last organized Polish resistance ends.

France and England declare war on Germany on September 3.

A British Expeditionary Force is sent to France.

Russia invades Poland in alliance with Germany (9/17).

Russia invades Finland (11/30) and is expelled from the League of Nations.

The United States announces neutrality on September 5, but orders from European countries for war supplies make a vast improvement in U.S. economy.

## THE PULPS

Pulp magazines (so-called because they were printed on unglazed paper) were published before 1900 and continued into the '50s, but reached their heyday in the 1930s, with over 100 titles spanning virtually every genre. Many aspiring new writers started their careers in the pulps.

**Comics:** Most newspapers carried a daily page (or more) of black-and-white comic strips and a Sunday section of color comics. Particularly notable were the exotic locales of *Terry and the Pirates*, the science fiction and fantasy settings of *Flash Gordon*, and the hair-raising perils of *Little Orphan Annie* (possibly the toughest female protagonist of all time).

**Films:** Gallant adventures and hairbreadth escapes were common film fare. The most literally cliffhanging films were the movie serials. A new episode was released each week. Each chapter ended with the hero (or his sidekick, or his lady-love) in dire peril; each new chapter began with a nick-of-time escape or rescue.

**Radio adventure tales** depended on words rather than pictures to set the scene. Words could create such a powerful image that *The Shadow*, originally just a narrator for broadcast detective stories, became one of the great pulp heroes.

## Roleplaying

Whatever the medium, the message of '30s adventure fiction was the same. The perils of life must be faced with courage and humor, and virtue triumphs only if the virtuous fight for it. *Cliffhangers* encourages a unique style of play. The GM can put the characters into any impossible situation he chooses, and get them out again with a *deus ex machina*. It's all part of the genre. Anything the heroes do can be "right" - as long as they act with gusto and style!

# THE UNITED STATES





While the pulp genre is often associated with globe-hopping adventure in exotic locales, many of the adventure stories of the 1920s and 1930s took place in the United States. Heroes like the Avenger and the Shadow routinely patrolled the streets of the cities in the fight against crime, while world traveler Doc Savage thwarted menaces all across the country.

## POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

*"Our security is not a matter of weapons alone. The arm that wields them must be strong, the eye that guides them dear, the will that directs them indomitable."*

- President Franklin D. Roosevelt

Domestically, America was still a federal republic in the 1930s. The New Deal legislation gave a vast increase in federal power and authority over the states, but state and local governments were still more independent of Washington than they are today. Local and state laws and law enforcers were more important than the handful of federal agents.

The United States had an extensive colonial empire in the Pacific, including Hawaii and the Philippines. Their presence both there and in China sparked a rivalry with Japan that lasted through WWII. The U.S. also had a history of intervention in Latin American affairs. Marines were stationed in Nicaragua until 1933 and Haiti until 1934 to train the local military and insure stability of the governments.

Other than this, the United States did its best to distance itself from the rest of the world's problems. The principal U.S. foreign interest was a desire to collect the debts owed to it from the Great War. This insistence on cash led to riots in France, questions in Parliament in Great Britain, and a further U.S. conviction that the rest of the world was not worth troubling about. (As a matter of record, only Finland ever paid its WWI debts. It paid on time, in full, and in cash.) The United States was potentially an enormous power, as had been demonstrated in the Great War. In the 1930s that power was greatly reduced. The U.S. maintained a miniature army (about half that of Poland, and one-tenth of Russia's) and depended on an aging fleet to keep any possible foes out of reach. U.S. diplomacy was devoted to neutrality and U.S. espionage was almost nil.

## New York City

New York is the largest city in the U.S. (8 million people) and the center of business and communications. It is also the center of organized crime, the busiest port, the headquarters of most publishers, the site of the greatest libraries and museums, and the home of the only sporting-goods store in America that regularly stocks elephant guns. There are a lot of reasons for adventurers to go to New York ... or even to live there.

New York is made up of five boroughs: Queens and Brooklyn on Long Island, Manhattan on Manhattan Island, Richmond on Staten Island, and the Bronx on a peninsula of New York State. Going very far in New York City requires one to cross water by bridge, tunnel, or ferry. West of New York City is New Jersey; east is the Atlantic.

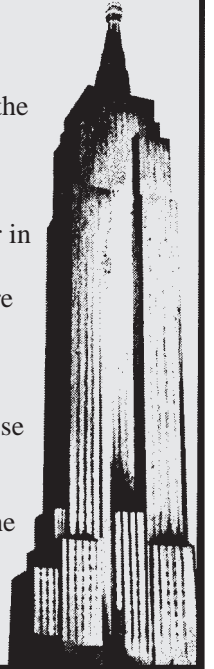
## THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING

Located in midtown Manhattan at Fifth Avenue and 34th Street, the Empire State Building was constructed from 1929 to 1931. Stretching some 1,350 feet into the air, with 86 stories, it is the tallest skyscraper in the world.

The dirigible mast atop the building (towering 200 feet above the 86th floor) contains an observation area, but the tower was never used for its intended purpose due to dangerous updrafts (-10 to Piloting).

### Adventure Seed: Empire of Darkness

Somewhere in the tallest building in the world is a monster. When the lights go down, he stalks the corridors and stair wells, and the track he leaves is one of blood. A secretary working late, a janitor in the deepest basement, a doughnut seller trying for the prebreakfast trade - all were gruesomely and bizarrely butchered on successive full-moon nights. So far, the management of the building has kept things quiet. None of the victims had close family; the deaths have been covered with a layer of careful lies. Last month a private detective patrolled the halls on the night of the full moon; he has not been seen again. This month the managers will try again, hopefully with a sturdier foe of evil.



New York City has an ethnic neighborhood for almost every race, religion, and culture. It has a Chinatown; black, Italian, and Spanish Harlems; and Jewish, Irish, German, and Polish areas. Anything from ethnic food to ethnic feuds can be found in the five boroughs.

### Manhattan

Manhattan Island has famous skyscrapers, expensive shops, publishing houses, stock exchanges, and the Empire State Building. It is bordered by the Hudson River on the west, the narrow Harlem River on the north, and the East River and New York Harbor on the east.

### Harlem

Even in the '30s, the Harlem district of Manhattan contains mostly blacks. German and Irish immigrants hold a sizable portion of the area, but since the drop in rent in 1905 (caused by overbuilding), black families have been steadily taking over. There are also two small subsections called Italian Harlem and Spanish Harlem.

The principal attraction in Harlem, for outsiders, is the night life. Clubs, music, and a chance to meet the powerful of all classes might bring anyone to Harlem. In the 1930s it is not as dangerous as many other neighborhoods, but is a place where anyone not black will find it hard to blend in.

## ADVENTURE SEED: THE NIGHT OF THE WOLVES

The winter has struck early and struck hard, closing down businesses and bringing New England to a halt. In rural upstate New York, Jake Boone, a crotchety, axe-wielding hermit, has lived alone most of his life. But this year, "Old Jake" has gone on a rampage. No longer content to hide from civilization in his ramshackle clapboard house, Jake has suddenly appeared in a nearby town, bundled in ragged clothes and carrying his own soapbox. And in the middle of the town's park, Jake began to rant about the coming *Night of the Wolves* and the impending end of the world.

Few, if any, level-headed citizens paid any attention to Jake's rantings until scores of wolves descended on the town, attacking its citizens and howling as if heralding the coming of Armageddon. The wolves disappeared into the night, and Jake claims it was only a warning. He's packed up his soapbox now, and is moving south toward New York City . . .

## New England

The northeastern states were some of the first parts of North America permanently settled by Europeans. The natives have a reputation for individuality amounting to eccentricity. It is an area particularly hard hit by the depression; factories have closed and the hardscrabble farms have neither work nor i'ood to spare. In the backcountry broods the spirit of the witch trials (or maybe the spirits of the witches); in the cities are gangsters, Bolshevik agents, and some of the country's most active smugglers. New England is also an intellectual center; any abstruse study, from Arabic Occultism to Zoology of the Elder Night, probably has a scholar in residence somewhere in the Northeast.

New England is traditionally home to many of the pulp stories written by H.P. Lovecraft and his contemporaries, detailing the horrific adventures of the unfortunate men who faced *Things Man Was Not Meant To Know*. See pp. 109-110 for more information on running this sort of campaign.

## The South

The South still lives in the shadow of The War (not that 1914 unpleasantness, but The War Between the States, 1861-1865). The South's economy was smashed by the Great Crash; the southern states are full of desperate men with knowledge of weapons and no inhibitions about violence. They are ready to blame all their troubles on a Yankee and anxious to take it out of his hide. Labor violence in the coalfields amounts almost to war. Hundreds of blacks are lynched every year. In Louisiana, Huey Long seems to some to be an American Mussolini (see *The Kingfish*, p. 27). Through it all, the traditions of southern chivalry are honored - if not always in observance, at least in rhetoric.

## The Bayou

A bayou is a sluggish, marshy tributary of a river or lake. Bayou country is dark and foreboding, thick with cane, pine, and twisted cypress dripping with Spanish moss. It is a dangerous land crawling with man-eating alligators and poisonous cottonmouth snakes. Scattered through it are the remains of plantation houses ruined by The War (or by the fecklessness of their owners). No one is there, of course. At least, no one *lives* there.

Possibly the most insular and independent of the bayou folk are the *Cajuns*, descendants of French settlers deported from Canada by the British in the 18th century. Most will have high Area Knowledge skills (a must for traveling through the dismal land) and the majority speak Cajun French, a mixture of archaic French, English, German, Spanish, and Choctaw that defaults to French-4.

The Cajuns can be fiercely territorial, and if threatened have no hesitation in fighting back ... to the death. Otherwise they are a very friendly and hospitable people, willing to offer aid where it is needed. Their tolerance does not extend to blacks. Like all the bayou folk, the Cajuns consider guns an everyday tool; almost every household has a rifle and shotgun and many have a pistol as well.

## The Everglades

This 4,000-square-mile wetland in southern Florida consists mostly of grassy plains, dotted with wooded hummocks (low mounds) and surrounded by stretches of open water. Most of the rainfall in the region is trapped on the surface, turning the whole area into a swamp.

The water in the Everglades, ranges from a few inches to several feet in depth and can only be traversed by shallow-draft boats. The fauna is tropical; alligators, snakes, deer, opossums, a huge variety of birds, and millions of insects. The inhabitants, white and Indian, are hunters, trappers, fishermen, and occasional moonshiners. They are highly skilled with boats and guns, masters of stealth and tracking. Most have hunting rifles and shotguns; many have pistols. Every family has at least one small boat. Here, only minutes from the bustling city of Miami, is a wilderness as trackless as the Congo.

## ADVENTURE SEED: THE SOUTHERN MENACE

It's been a long, hot, humid summer in the South and, as everyone knows, heat and humidity can make people crazy. In the cities of Kentucky, an arsonist continues on an unstoppable rampage, burning government buildings and disappearing without a trace. Along the Tennessee border, bands of men in gray roam the highways on horseback, stealing everything from melons to moonshine. And deep in the heart of Kentucky, a religious cult is proclaiming the Second Coming. Is there a relationship between these apparently disparate events? If so, what is it and what does it mean for the future of the South - and of the United States?



## ADVENTURE SEED: LA GONAVE

One of the PCs has a problem. Three days after Mardi Gras he begins to get restless and has difficulty sleeping. As the days wear on, he soon finds sleep impossible.

While searching for clues to his mysterious affliction, a dark-skinned woman in native garb approaches, "La Gonave," she whispers, then fades into the darkness like a ghost. A successful Area Knowledge (Caribbean) roll will reveal that Gonave is a Haitian island just northwest of Port-au-Prince.

Unless the sufferer travels to Gonave, his sleepless nights will continue until he eventually dies of exhaustion. What is this curse that afflicts him? How did he pick it up and why? What voodoo mysteries await him? Only a trip to this mysterious, underdeveloped island will give him the answers he seeks . . .



## The Mountain South

The Mountain South is a land barely touched by the 20th century. The mountaineers have been called "yesterday's people" because the rugged terrain has isolated them from most of the world. They are proud and independent, relying on their own skills to supply them with what they need. They are clannish and profoundly loyal to friends and family. They can be equally loyal to a cause, if they decide it is theirs. Some of the best soldiers in the U.S. Army came from these hills. Marksmanship is still the favorite sport; at least one Guns skill at 17 or more is not uncommon. Many have souvenirs (both German and American) of the Great War, including pistols, rifles, and an occasional machine gun. They are liberally supplied with dynamite, a necessity in stump-and boulder-strewn fields.

## The Kingfish

Louisiana Governor Huey P. Long was impeached in 1929 on charges of bribery and gross misconduct (he was never convicted). In 1930 he was elected to the U.S. Senate, but didn't take his seat until January of 1932; he spent the intervening time making certain one of his supporters would succeed him as Governor. From Washington, D.C., "The Kingfish" continued to control the Louisiana government, including pushing through a 1934 reorganization that practically abolished local government and gave Long tremendous power over the state.

Initially a supporter of Roosevelt's New Deal, Long soon became FDR's most vocal critic and a presidential hopeful himself. But on September 9, 1935, Long was assassinated - shot in the stomach by Dr. Carl Weiss in Baton Rouge. Weiss was killed by Long's bodyguards, and Long died the following day.

## Out West

The southwestern United States is a land of semi-arid plains, canyons, and mesas, cowboys and Indians, old Spanish missions and sagebrush. The eastern areas of Oklahoma and Texas are the exception, with terrain and climate more like that of the deep South, but the western portions of those states, together with Arizona and New Mexico, are exactly what we see in old western movies.

Western adventure was a staple of many pulp stories, and heroes often went directly from urban detective work to Texas cowpunching. For suggestions on Western adventuring, see p. 111.

The pulps' stereotypical image of dusty pueblo towns filled with lazy, thieving indigents can be used in an especially "nonhistorical" campaign. In reality, by the '30s, the West was quite adequately civilized... though even today, some Easterners visit Texas and expect to see stagecoaches in the streets.

## Indians

Historically, Indians of the Thirties wore contemporary clothing and lived in whatever housing they could afford. Fiction of the era maintained the stereotypical "cowboys and Indians" image, and GMs may choose to follow suit.

**Cliffhangers** Indians still live according to ancient tribal customs. Burial grounds, ritual magic, tepees, and adobe huts abound in the Southwest, especially in parts of Oklahoma and New Mexico. Most tribes are friendly enough, but because of the harsh treatment white men have dealt out in the past, many are wary of strangers and confine their interaction to necessary business only.

Ancient Indian ruins (burial grounds, cave dwellings, etc.) can still be found and may contain valuable artifacts. Indian rituals and magic also played a part in the pulps, and the GM should draw on whatever sources of myth, legend, and reality he chooses in this area.

## ADVENTURE SEED: THE HAUNTING OF THE BLACKROCK AERODROME

In the rugged plains of Wyoming, a ramshackle airstrip is in trouble. Once the site of some of the region's top competitive flyers, the strip is nearly deserted. After three mysterious deaths and more than twice as many near-fatal accidents, even the diehard daredevils have chosen to relocate. It's said that the white, men have awakened the vengeful spirit of an Indian warrior who walks the strip at night, taking revenge on those who have disturbed his ancestors.

But veteran wingwalker Kerry Travis doesn't believe in ghosts. Despite pressure to sell the airstrip for pennies on the dollar, she's decided to stay. A recent telegram to the PCs confirms her resolve to get to the bottom of the mystery and includes an invitation to come help. She's not going anywhere, she says. Until one night, when Kerry Travis disappears without a trace...

## AIR SHOWS

Air shows gained popularity during the late 1920 and 1930s. The sleek, colorful aircraft and the skilled pilots who "polished me pylons" became household names. Aircraft like the GeeBee Model Z, flown by Jimmy Doolittle, were easily recognizable and the topic of much conversation among aircraft enthusiasts. Nom-petitors engaged in speed and efficiency racing, stunt flying, spot landing contests, parachute jumping, and more.

Daredevils and pilots fit nicely into these sorts of shows, and traveling the air-show circuit provides plenty of opportunity for players to get involved in a number of adventures across the U.S.

**"My oil temperature would hit the pin even before my Wedell got off the ground. I put a piece of tape over the gauge. I didn't want to look at it anymore."**

**- Joe Mackey, pilot**

## The Dust Bowl

Poor farming techniques and bad drought created one of the worst "natural disasters" of all time in the mid- to late '30s. Winds tore the fertile topsoil from Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, Kansas, and parts of Colorado, turning that area into what became known as the Dust Bowl.

Great black clouds covered the land, bankrupting farmers, shutting down entire towns, and suffocating many. When a dust storm hit, the thick black dust clouds blocked the sunlight so effectively that visibility was reduced to only a few feet. The darkness was worse than night; it was impossible to see more than a few feet in front of you. Dust settled everywhere - in food, in clothing, in water supplies, and in every body opening. PCs in a dust storm will find their equipment prone to failure - see *Sand, Slime, and Equipment Failure*, p. CII6, and use a modifier of -2.

Hundreds began the long trek westward, to California and its relative prosperity. Many were so devastated and poor that they *walked* their long pilgrimage. These poverty-stricken refugees became known as "Okies" - though not all were from Oklahoma. "Okie" is a derogatory term, and most Dust Bowl farmers will take offense at it.

## SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco of the '30s is a cosmopolitan city. It is a major port, a naval and military base, a focus of art, music, and literature, an intellectual and educational showplace, and the site of the toughest prison in the country. Not as large as Los Angeles, San Francisco has much more flavor for adventurers.

### Chinatown

San Francisco's Chinatown is the most famous of all the Chinese districts in the United States. A network of narrow, twisting streets crowded with Chinese shops, restaurants, theaters, stores, residences, and endless open-air markets makes this section of town very difficult to navigate without Area Knowledge (Chinatown).

The residents of Chinatown are happy to buy and sell to anyone, but they don't talk to strangers and they notice anyone who doesn't belong. Chinatown's people stick together; strangers should be careful who they wrong and how they act.

Legend says that Chinatown sits atop a maze of tunnels. Secret entrances, twisting passages, false doors, and dead ends mask a world no Westerner has ever seen. The residents say the tales are nonsense; but what else would inscrutable Orientals say?

### Alcatraz

The island of Alcatraz, in San Francisco Bay, was a military prison from 1909 to 1933, under the direction of the nearby Presidio military base (see the next page). In 1934, Alcatraz became a federal penitentiary, deemed "escape-proof" because of the strong, cold currents that surround the island.

Swimming from Alcatraz is at -2 to skill due to the currents. Prolonged exposure to the cold water is treated as exposure to freezing weather as described on p. A130.



# IN SAN FRANCISCO

## The Golden Gate Bridge

Construction of the Golden Gate bridge was completed in 1937, a year after the opening of the nearby Bay Bridge. Adventures may be designed in such a way that the pursuers wind up chasing the villain through the half-finished structure or swinging from the towering heights in the middle of rush hour.

## The Presidio

The Presidio military base, established by Spanish troops in 1776, covers some 1,500 acres near the southern end of the Golden Gate Bridge. The officer's club, built when the base was opened, is the oldest building in the city.

Visitors will need a legitimate reason to enter the base. Construction of the Golden Gate Bridge was done entirely within the Presidio, and construction workers with proper I.D. will be allowed access from 1934-1937.

Command of the Presidio was highly prized in the army because it meant an automatic position in San Francisco's high society. Any visitor who meets the "swells" (i.e., the upper crust), will encounter the Presidio commandant (typically a colonel).

## The Tongs

The "tongs" were Chinese fraternal organizations. Not all tongs had criminal connections, but some did. In the Occidental mind, all tongs became sinister conspiracies, and "tong war" signified a brutal clash of gangs.

In San Francisco of the '30s, the five major tongs were all dominated by the underworld. Between them, they ruled Chinatown more tightly than the Mafia ever dreamed of running Sicily.

The mingling of Chinese magic and gang wars worked wonderfully in the movie *Big Trouble in Little China*. Crafty GMs interested in integrating the tongs into their campaign should be on the lookout for just such a melange of adventure styles. Other possible crossovers include playing up sinister conspiracy theories by throwing in connections to the Bavarian Illuminati, or linking the tongs to Things Man Was Not Meant to Know and rumors of an ancient temple in the labyrinthine bowels of the city.

## Adventure Seed: A Ticket off the Rock

Something is rotten in Chinatown! Neither the Chinatown Squad nor the federal agencies can get the inside word; their informants have lost touch or developed lockjaw. Someone big is in town; the tongs have buried the hatchet and are working together. No round-eye can make threats or promises more effective than the tongs' unified command to go blind and dumb.

Only three bits of information have leaked about the caper. It involves a fast boat, a nautical chart of the bay, and the sanitary steam laundry patronized by the commandant of the Presidio.



## THE UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

In 1938, the U.S. Government established the Select Committee on Un-American Activities under Democratic Senator Martin Dies. According to its charter, it was to investigate “the extent, character and objects of un-American propaganda activities in the U.S.” The committee, later renamed the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), began preliminary investigations into Hollywood movers and shakers, but with the onset of WWII most of those investigations were shelved. By the mid-1940s, the investigations moved into the realm of witch hunts and blacklisting, as McCarthyism and fear of Communism swept the country.

The committee’s methods typically included pressuring witnesses to name current and former associates, making vague, sweeping accusations, and the assumption of guilt because of association with a so-called “suspect organization” - that is, any they considered subversive to the U.S. government.

Anyone with even a passing association with Communist organizations or individuals - especially those in Hollywood; a number of producers, directors, screenwriters, and actors joined the Communist Party during the Depression - may find themselves the target of such an investigation. Failure to answer to the committee will lead to being cited with contempt of Congress and an immediate assumption of guilt on the part of the one being investigated.

GMs should keep in mind, however, that the pulps never fought *against* this sort of investigation. On the contrary, the heroes were seen as the ones exposing the evil Red sympathizers - all of whom seemed to have wireless transmitters in their basements.

## TELEPHONE EXCHANGES

Prior to the 1920s, telephone calls were made strictly through an operator. After picking up the receiver and tapping the hook a few times (which flashed a light to attract the operator’s attention), the caller would give an exchange (representing a geographic area - a city, a neighborhood, a major thoroughfare, etc.) along with the specific 4-digit number, for instance Sycamore 2348, Klondike-1356, or Pennsylvania 5000.

With the advent of the dial telephone, callers could simply dial the first three letters of the exchange and then the number (e.g., PEN-5000). It wasn’t unusual for the entire exchange name to be written out, capitalizing the first 3 letters (SYCamore-2348 or KLondike 1356). By the 1930s, large cities dropped the third letter and replaced it with a number, turning PENnsylvania-5000 into PENn-sylvania 6-5000.

GMs giving out phone numbers should use a two-letter exchange, followed by five numbers (e.g., SY2-2348, KL6-1356, PE6-5000).

## HOLLYWOOD

By the 1930s, some 100 million people flocked to theaters in the U.S. each week. The cry for more and better movies created a burgeoning industry in Hollywood, California that carries on even to this day.

Hollywood of the 1930s was a bustling boomtown. With the growth of studios came the growth of restaurants, clubs, banks, lavish movie theaters, and more. It is a world of glitz and glamour, with a darker underside populated by what Nathaniel West called the “flea people” - laborers, extras, and failed starlets.

### ADVENTURE SEED: STUDIO OF DEATH

Aspiring actress Jane Hammonds has had a run of bad luck. Her last five auditions have gone nowhere, but that’s the least of her worries. Three nights ago, Jane took a wrong turn on a darkened Hollywood lot and saw something she shouldn’t have; a looming black figure in rags and chains running a scythe through producer Hal Caine in the dead of the night.

The police are investigating and lot security has tightened. But Jane is sure someone - or *something* - is stalking her at night. Can the PCs unravel the mystery of the cloaked killer before it’s too late?

## Landmarks

*Hollywood Hotel.* This Mission Revival-style hotel was the first major hotel in the area (built in 1905) and located at the northwest corner of Hollywood and Highland. It served as the residence of many famous Hollywood stars during the 1930s.

*The Brown Derby.* Built along North Vine Street, this Spanish Colonial-style restaurant was the second location of the famous hat-shaped building on Wilshire. It was built in 1928 for director Cecil B. DeMille.

*The Chinese Theater.* Completed in May 1927, this flamboyant movie palace is the best known of the landmarks on Hollywood Boulevard. It was patterned after a Chinese opera house and included a plush interior designed in a unique “Chinese Chippendale’s” style. On April 15, 1927, Sid Grauman, Norma Talmadge, Mary Pickford, and Douglas Fairbanks became the first in a long line of celebrities to leave their mark in the cement outside. It was often called “Grauman’s Chinese Theater” in honor of its creator, Hollywood showman Sid Grauman.

*The Masonic Temple.* Across the street and a block away from the Chinese Theater sits the neoclassical Masonic Temple built in 1921. It was designed by architect John C. Austin, who also designed the Los Angeles City Hall and the Griffith Park Observatory. GMs are sure to find some dark conspiracy between the construction of the Temple and the Observatory, and the proximity of the Chinese Theater leads to speculation as well...



## The Studios

Hollywood of the 1930s was dominated by a handful of large studios responsible for the bulk of the films during that era; big money and studio monopolies on patents kept the number of independent filmmakers to a minimum. PCs in Hollywood will find that each studio had a distinctive style and genre of film, and their lots and sound stages will reflect those styles.

Warner Brothers films had a gritty, hard edge. Warner was responsible for many of the tough gangster movies and hard-edged melodramas of the time. David Selznick founded Selznick Pictures International in 1935, continuing his reputation for big-budget, high-quality motion pictures. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) made colorful, over-the-top musicals, while Universal Pictures was the king of the horror movies, full of atmosphere and style. Other major studios included United Artists (Chaplin, Pickford, and Fairbanks), RKO, and Republic (known for their pulp serials).

## THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Most of the Pacific Northwest is covered by mountains, rivers, and evergreen forests. It is the home of logging camps and logging-dependent towns whose economic survival depends on the lumber and paper that comes from the surrounding countryside.

The Cascade Mountains run down the middle of Oregon and Washington, and are home to a string of snow-covered mountains including Mount Rainier, Mount St. Helens, and Mount Hood (just outside of Portland). East of the Cascades, the terrain changes sharply into a treeless high desert plain more suited to the southwestern U.S. than the stereotypical tree-covered northwest.

### Seattle's Underground

Adventures in Seattle should be sure to include a trek through the Underground, a mysterious area covered over and unused since 1907. The 25-block Underground is home to abandoned warehouses and maze-like tunnels, the remains of a water system made up of hollow logs and still trickling conduits. Bootleggers and other illegitimate businesses use the area for hideouts and meeting places, but some portions are completely abandoned.

The site was covered over beginning in 1889 after a fire destroyed 30 blocks of downtown Seattle. City officials had planned to elevate the streets nearest the waterfront, but business owners rebuilt and reopened their businesses prematurely. Undeterred, the city implemented their plan to raise the city streets, building stone walls on either side of the original roadway, filling them with whatever was available - debris from the fire, dirt from a nearby hillside, even dead animals. For some 10 years afterward, the streets were some 10 to 30 feet higher than the front doors of the nearby businesses. Ladders were erected in some places, but the situation was inconvenient and deadly; 17 men fell to their deaths.

In 1907, a bubonic plague outbreak forced the closure of the underground portion of Seattle, leaving only illegitimate business to flourish.



## GALLOPING GERTIE

The Tacoma Narrows Bridge, built in 1939, spanned the Tacoma Narrows canyon of Puget Sound. It was given the moniker *Galloping Gertie* because of its perpetual rocking and twisting, caused by the high winds that were funneled into the Narrows. The up and down oscillations drew the attention of engineers and the public alike, many of whom drove the bridge just to experience the roller-coaster-like thrill of the one-mile drive. The “galloping” became so great, however, that on November 7, 1940, a support cable snapped, causing the entire bridge to crash into the river below.

GMs may find a car chase across the bridge an ideal scene for the culmination of their Seattle-based adventure. Driving across the bridge requires a Driving roll, modified by 0 to -3 depending on current winds. Failure will cause a momentary loss of control and a second Driving roll. Failure of the second roll will cause an accident.

Gangsters whose car spins out of control, forcing them to flee the moving bridge on foot, will add a whole new edge to an already exciting scene.

## BIGFOOT

The legend of Bigfoot didn't have its heyday until the 1960s, but GMs may integrate legends of the hairy creature into early pulp adventures.

Bigfoot has often been compared to the Yeti of Tibetan legend and the Wendigo of the far north. It is generally thought to be some combination of brown, black, and gray, standing some eight feet tall, and leaving a trail of extra-large footprints that gave it its name. Its call has been described as a cross between the howl of a wolf and the shout of primitive man, and the forlorn echo of its cry haunts the forests of the northwest.

See *GURPS Monsters*, pp. 32-33, and *GURPS Bestiary*, p. 61, for more information.

# SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA





This region was both an unexplored wilderness, full of ancient ruins waiting to be discovered, and a hotbed of military action throughout the *Cliffhangers* era.

## Politics and Military Action

For PCs seeking action, mercenary jobs were readily available to support one side or another in various military uprisings throughout the decades. Some examples follow.

### Nicaragua

Settled by the Spanish in 1522, Nicaragua became fully independent in 1838. In 1912, the government invited the U.S. to establish military bases in Nicaragua (a good background hook for military-oriented characters). Some 15 years later, Augusto Cesar Sandino assembled an army of peasants and launched an extensive guerrilla war against the U.S. troops there. After six years of conflict, the U.S. had failed to defeat the guerrillas; America withdrew in 1933, after establishing a Nicaraguan National Guard under Anastasio Somoza Garcia.

In 1934, guerrilla Sandino signed a peace agreement with the new president, Juan Bautista Sacasa. On February 21, Sandino was assassinated on National Guard commander-in-chief Somoza's orders. In 1936, Somoza ousted President Sacasa and began a 20-year rule that was dictatorial in nature, if not in name.

PCs can find many opportunities to support the U.S. troops, the Sandino guerrillas (later called *Sandinistas*), by supplying arms or information. The hunt for ancient ruins in this war-torn country would provide many opportunities for adventure.

## THE PANAMA CANAL

Engineers and politicians had considered connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans since 1870, and construction had actually begun in 1882 along the route of the Panama Railroad. Yellow fever and malaria killed off much of the workforce, and the project was abandoned and restarted several times by various companies of various nationalities.

With American support, the country of Panama gained full independence in 1903, and at that time the U.S. bought land and rights to build the Panama Canal. By August, 1914, the Canal had become a reality. In exchange for the land and rights, Panama was given U.S. protection as well as financial payments until 1939 when the protectorate status was ended by mutual agreement.

The Canal is roughly 40 miles long, and about 300' wide where it is man-made (much of the route goes through Gatun Lake). Its construction shortened the journey from one coast of the U.S. to the other by 8000 miles.

## ADVENTURE SEED: LIVELY TIMES WITH A LATIN BEAT

Things have been too quiet in Nicaragua (or your own favorite Latin American country) since the Marines left. Now local politics is about to liven up. The National Guard has declared that the election machinery is too corruptible to produce a respectable government, so their Commandante will run the country and save everyone trouble.

General Sebastiano, head of the Conservatives, is appalled; he had just spent a fortune rigging the vote. Iribarra, head of the Liberals, is enraged; his coup was scheduled for election day. The Coast Indians are delighted; with the *blancos* shooting at each other, there should be plenty of opportunity for profitable banditry.

The prospects are excellent for experienced pilots, machine gunners, drivers, and mechanics. Three U.S. corporations (fruit, oil, and aluminum) have an interest in the outcome. They are prepared to pay well for information, assistance, and perhaps a little well-timed treachery.

### Peru

President Augusto B. Leguia dominated Peruvian politics from 1919 to 1930 as a virtual dictator. In 1924, Victor Raul Haya de la Torre formed a new political party, the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA). It called for radical reform, especially where treatment of the native peoples was concerned. The party was outlawed by Leguia, and banned again when Sanchez Cerro overthrew Leguia in 1930.

Cerro's reign was marked by bitter rivalry between Left and Right parties, but the turbulence settled at the end of the decade with the election of Manuel Prado ó Ugarteche in 1939. Only a mildly serious border dispute with Ecuador marred his otherwise moderate term.

Peru sided with the Allies during WWII.

### Brazil

Brazil was originally settled around 1500 by the Portuguese, but achieved independence during the 19th century. In 1926, Washington Luis became president without an election, in an unopposed nomination contrived by the country's upper class. Four years later, when it appeared Luis was set to do so once again, disillusioned junior officers joined forces with working class *tenentes* in a mass revolution.

The revolution began in Rio Grande do Sul and flooded northeast. The guerrillas met some resistance in Sao Paulo, and encountered heavy fighting in the northeast. The troops of the revolution formed around young officers who led their men against regimes in Minas and Rio, as well as the gaucho cavalry that accompanied Getulio Vargas. Vargas took power following the Revolution, and only faced brief opposition in 1932 when Sao Paulo rose against his dictatorship in a short (and quickly crushed) revolt.

## COMMUNISM IN SOUTH AMERICA

During the 1920s and 1930s, Comintern (see box, p. 7) attempted to establish an Indian Republic in the Andean region of South America. Comintern turned its attention to Latin America in 1928 after the Sixth Congress decided that blacks in both South Africa and the United States were subject nations and began building alliances with them to create revolutionary movements.

Victorio Codovilla, Comintern's South American Secretariat leader, assigned Jose Carlos Mariategui to prepare a document for the First Latin American Communist Conference in Buenos Aires in June of 1929. Mariategui's conclusion was that the nation-state formation was too advanced in the Andes to build a separate republic. Influenced by Mariategui's work, leftist leaders in neighboring countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia began to foment peasant-worker alliances to draw the indigenous people into class-based movements.

GMs should not hesitate to expand and fictionalize Comintern influence in South America, perhaps creating Bolshevik-financed training camps or groups of soldiers stirring up revolts across the continent.

Brazil nearly joined Germany during WWII, but backed the Allies beginning in 1942. In 1945 the army forced Vargas to resign, and General Eurico Caspar Dutra was elected president.

### The Chaco War

In 1932, a bloody war erupted between Bolivia and Paraguay over a desolate 100,000-square-mile piece of land called the Chaco Boreal. In the years preceding the war, armed conflict between the two countries was increasingly common. As war became inevitable, Paraguay began mounting tremendous numbers of troops at the Bolivian border. In an attempt to forestall the Paraguayans, a Bolivian force stormed the fortress at Vanguardia, Paraguay on June 15, 1932 and a full-scale war began.

During the three-year war, thousands of soldiers died in the harsh climate of the Chaco. Even in the forested areas, which were especially dense, many lost their lives to disease and infection. It is estimated that more soldiers died from this "green hell" than from gunshots.

By 1935, both countries were economically strained and their armies exhausted. After arbitration by the United States and five South American countries, a truce was signed in 1935, which became a treaty in 1938. Paraguay had pushed the Bolivians out of the Chaco region, and was largely considered the "winner."

PCs in the region from 1928 to 1935 will find plenty of opportunity for adventure along the Bolivia/Paraguay border. And who knows what ancient secrets might lie buried in the inhospitable Chaco region! Perhaps the Bolivians knew something about that seemingly worthless land that no one else knew . . .

## Ancient Civilizations

Adventurers with a less military bent may wish to explore the jungles and mountains of South America in search of ancient ruins, lost treasures, mysterious temples, and more. South and Central America provide more than ample opportunities for all this and more!

### THE INCAS

Along the western coast of South America, from Quito, Ecuador to Santiago, Chile, lie the scattered ruins of a once-great civilization - that of the Incas and their ancestors. The term *Inca* is really a title meaning "divine ruler" or "king" (much like the Egyptian *pharaoh*); it is now used to indicate the entire culture.

The Incas were one of the three great civilizations of the New World (along with the Aztecs and Maya). They were the last to develop - the first real empire was formed around 1400.

### The Conquest and the Gold

The conquest of the Inca civilization began in May, 1532. Francisco Pizarro and a handful of Spanish *conquistadores*, on first contact with the Incas, killed 2,000 of them and captured their king, Atahualpa. The king promised to completely fill his prison with gold in exchange for his freedom. Pizarro agreed, and from every corner of the empire came loads of golden treasure, until the room was at last full. Pizarro had Atahualpa strangled in the summer of 1533. When word of their leader's death reached the Inca people, many loads of gold (still en route to the Spaniards) were dumped into lakes, hidden in caves or buried, to keep them from the murderers. Much of the treasure has never been accounted for (including a 700-foot-long chain of gold with links as big as a man's wrist, valued at \$10,000,000).

### VIRACOCOA

Viracocha is the Inca creator god, the Lord of the Beginnings. Legends tell that the first men he created fought among themselves, so he turned them into stones. He then created more men, who were better behaved.

Another legend tells of his travels from village to village where he taught farming, government, languages, dance, and morality to the people. He is portrayed as a large man dressed in white robes and sporting a full beard.

The Incas were a beardless people. Picturing their creator with a beard would have been a great leap of imagination. Perhaps a great bearded man really *did* visit them. If so, was he the same bearded man deified by the Aztecs as Quetzalcoatl?



## The Peruvian Deserts

The deserts of the Peruvian coast contain some of the driest spots in the world - some areas are thought to have *never* seen rainfall. The deserts contain over 30 fertile river valleys that were at one time filled with individual "city-states" and still contain many ancient secrets waiting to be discovered.

## The Andes

The Andes Mountains run north-south through the center of the ancient Inca empire. The mountain-dwelling Incas were a tough and hardy folk, well-adapted to the thin mountain air. Many Inca cities were built above 10,000 feet, where the air is thin and the nights are bitterly cold - adventurers who seek ancient mountain cities need to be hardy climbers.

The jungle east of the Andes marks the border of the Inca empire. Savage beasts and headhunting tribes kept the Incas in the mountains and deserts. The possibility remains, however, that one of the ancient Inca tribes braved the unknown jungle (perhaps with loads of treasure) rather than face certain destruction at the hands of the Spaniards, and remains there to this day.

## Machu Picchu

Perhaps the most famous Inca city lies some 50 miles northwest of the modern-day city of Cuzco, Peru. The ancient stone ruins of Machu Picchu (discovered in 1911 by Hiram Bingham) are found high in the mountains, at an elevation of some 8,000 feet.

The city is one of the largest and best archaeological sites in South America. The GM may come up with secret areas in the ruins that have not yet been discovered. Nearly any device - ancient runes, inter-dimensional gateways, hidden treasure - may be used to lure a party to this high-altitude locale.

## Tiahuanaco

One of the greatest mysteries of ancient Peru is the ruins of Tiahuanaco. Situated in a bleak valley 13,000 feet above sea level, the monuments of Tiahuanaco are cold and eerie - as though wrought by beings from another world. Just being near them, listening to the chilling howl of the wind, is enough to set the hardest hero's flesh crawling. No one can explain the unearthly power of Tiahuanaco.

Much of the Tiahuanacan architecture is covered with grisly representations of snakes, condors, pumas, and the so-called "weeping god," Viracocha the Creator (see box).

*The Gateway of the Sun.* In one corner of the ruin stands the eeriest of all structures found at Tiahuanaco: a ponderous stone gateway carved from a 10-ton block of lava, standing alone, that leads *nowhere*. The block is 10 feet tall and 12 1/2 feet wide, and contains a single doorway cut into the center. It is covered with bizarre carvings, and above the doorway is the figure of Viracocha, the "weeping god." He stands with a staff in each hand, condors and puma-heads sprouting from his face and body. He wears a terrifying belt from which dangles a row of faces, and he is surrounded by 48 condor-headed attendants running toward him.

## ADVENTURE SEEDS

### The Heart of the Jungle

In the slums of San Francisco, a bearded man in tattered khakis is looking for a way home. All he needs is enough money for a one-way train ticket to Chicago, but all he offers in return is a fantastic story of months spent in the jungles east of the Andes, an unbelievable tale of a lost tribe of Incans guarding a fantastic storehouse of golden treasure. He can pass on a hand-drawn map and detailed directions to the lost tribe's hunting grounds.

Why is he willing to give up the information so easily? He hesitates to say, but when pressed admits he is the sole survivor of a massive expedition into that land. The Incans of old may have been a relatively peaceful people, but those hiding in the jungles of South America today worship a bloodthirsty god in the form of a hideous, tanged creature. After watching it devour most of the expedition, he's given up the adventure business once and for all.

PCs who follow his map and directions will find themselves in the depths of the Amazon jungle. Signs of a slaughter can be found, and perhaps a straggling member of the doomed expedition. But none of that explains the eerie chanting that drifts through the darkness each night, or the glowing eyes that haunt the dreams of the party members.

### The Altar of the Time God

Surrounded by pathless jungle is the strangest of Mayan pyramids. It is not impressively large, only 90 feet from base to flattened top. Its sculptures are subtly different from most Maya work; there is an elusive ichthy-oid, even amoeboid, quality to the strange creatures depicted. On a monolith of blood-red sandstone are carved a sequence of dates. The first group consists of dates a decade apart for a period of 40 years, 90 million years in the past! In the second group, the dates are a year apart for four years in the early part of the 16th century. The third group, if the translation is correct, contains dates 10 days apart, beginning 39 days ago and ending tomorrow.

This would be an interesting intellectual curiosity, but for one thing. On each of the listed dates of the last sequence a European resident or visitor vanished. Yesterday their mutilated remains were found at the crest of the pyramid. Tomorrow is the last date. After that date on the monolith is a carving of a strange, twisted, gigantic thing trampling with taloned feet on a multitude of tiny humans.

What grim rites have been enacted, and will be enacted again, on the pyramid? What being is propitiated by this sacrifice of blood? Or is there another explanation? All the Europeans were partners or employees of the same firm; a company that imports heavy machinery from Germany. What is in the mysterious shipments sealed in their warehouse?



No one knows why the ominous gateway was built, but creative GMs will come up with reasons - the most obvious of which is that it is a gate to another world simply waiting to be activated.

*The Sandstone Statue.* In 1932, renowned archaeologist Wendall C. Bennet uncovered a large, red sandstone statue near Lake Titicaca (13 miles to the north). The monolithic statue has the same bizarre eeriness of all Tiahuanacan artifacts, and the GM may wish to allow explorers to discover it before or in conjunction with Bennet, perhaps solving the riddle of why it stands near the lake, not at the main site with the other ruins.

## THE MAYA

GMs should keep in mind that the 1930s view of the Mayan civilization is vastly different than the modern view. Much of the information that follows is presented from the point of view of the pulps.

The Mayans had a thriving, intellectual civilization that flourished from the first to the 10th century - then suddenly vanished. A small remnant of this great people remained in the Yucatan peninsula until the coming of the Spanish in the 16th century, but some 2.5 million ancient Maya disappeared from the jungles of Guatemala, leaving their cities and temples to fall into ruin.

An interesting trait of the Mayan people was their overwhelming compulsion about time - complex calendars, exact dates, stone monuments to mark the passage of time, even complex mathematical calculations delving *backward* in time some 90 million years. One of the Mayan calendars is based on the year 3114 B.C. All dates on that calendar are calculated in reference to that year, which held some great significance to the Maya.

Another Mayan obsession was astronomy. They could accurately predict eclipses of the sun and moon, and were able to determine the amount of time it took for Venus to orbit the sun. Were the Maya waiting for some mysterious event? The return of an ancient being? Could they have been masters of time travel... or in contact with a spacefaring species that was?





## Tikal

One of the oldest Mayan cities is Tikal, located in the lowlands of Guatemala near Lake Peten Itza. It contains several giant pyramid temples (reminiscent of the ziggurats of Mesopotamia), including the huge Temple of the Giant Jaguar.

## Copan

The center of Mayan mathematics and astronomy, Copan was the southernmost Mayan city. It contained several temples of astronomy, including one dedicated to the planet Venus. One temple can only be reached by climbing the 33-foot Hieroglyphic Stairway. Each of its 62 steps is carved with a piece of Mayan history, for a total of some 2,500 hieroglyphs in all. Nearby is the Jaguar Stairway, its steps guarded by lifelike stone jaguars once spotted with bits of black obsidian.

## Chichen Itza

While much of the ancient city of Chichen Itza has been restored, there are still many surprises in store for the adventuresome. The two most outstanding features are the Temple of Kulkulcan and the Sacred Well.

*The Temple of Kulkulcan.* The Temple is a perfect example of the Mayan obsession with time. It is a large four-sided pyramid, each side containing 91 steps. Four sides (seasons) times 91 steps equals 364 - add one for the top level and the total is the 365 days in a year. The terraces of the pyramid are divided into 52 panels (the number of years in the sacred calendar) and are separated by stairs into 18 sections (the number of months in the Mayan year).

At the top of the Temple is the secret room of the Red Jaguar Throne, containing a full-sized red stone jaguar. In front of the throne is a stone figure lying on its back, the bowl on its stomach ready to receive the still-beating hearts of human sacrifices.

Deep inside the temple, 50 feet below ground level, lies the tomb of an ancient ruler, thought by many to be Quetzalcoatl, the legendary god-man (see box).

While the Temple of Kulkulcan may be nothing more than a tremendous monument to an ancient ruler, its strange mathematical proportions and bloodstained past certainly make for imaginative speculation.

*The Sacred Well.* Another place of interest in Chichen Itza lies at the opposite end of a wide avenue from the Temple. It is a deep hole, 190 feet across and 140 feet deep, usually half filled with water. Maidens were hurled into the water to appease Yum-Chac, the Mayan god of rain. The victims were left in the well, and if they were still alive by noon (which was unlikely, since their raiment weighed them down), they were pulled up and questioned about life in the other world. They were thereafter treated with respect, having spoken with the gods.

Is the Sacred Well really a gateway to another world? If so, why did some survive and others perish? Are those who "die" transported to another world or another planet? How is the Well related to the Temple of Kulkulcan? Only the GM knows . . .

## QUETZALCOATL

Legends about the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl, the "feathered serpent," abound. He is primarily known as the god of learning, culture, and humanity, but other legends show him to be the god of the wind and the planet Venus, the bringer of civilization, symbol of time, and always opposed to human sacrifice.

Some say Quetzalcoatl was a man who grew into a deity. In fact, most legends portray him as a *bearded* man, though the Aztecs were beardless. Did a bearded stranger visit the Aztecs centuries before the Spanish? If so, why did he leave, saying, "on the date of my birth which is *Ce-Acatl*, the year of One Reed, I will return"? Many scholars point to legends and inscriptions that seem to identify Quetzalcoatl as the Aztec king Kulkulcan (see *Temple of Kulkulcan*, above). An amazingly similar legend can be found surrounding the Incan god Viracocha (see box, p. 34).

Or was Quetzalcoatl actually a "feathered serpent," perhaps a pterosaur or even a great winged dragon? If so, he may still be worshipped in the remote jungles of Central America by a devout group of Aztec priests, striving to effect his return ...

## THE AZTECS

The great civilization of the warlike Aztecs, once encompassing some 80,000 square miles and millions of citizens, now lies in ruin in the Valley of Mexico. The Aztecs grew from a group of barbaric people called the *Tenochca*, and from about 1215 to 1531 conquered 500 neighboring lands, inspiring fear in nearly anyone they met - only to fall prey to Hernando Cortez and the Spanish *conquistadores*.

Today there are very few *true* Aztec ruins left standing - Cortez and his men were thorough in their rampages. For example, the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan now lies 30 feet below the surface of modern-day Mexico City (creative GMs may find several adventure ideas in that).

For detailed information on the Aztec culture, see *GURPS Aztecs*.

## The Olmec Statues

In the thick jungles of the southern Gulf Coast lie the ruins of the Olmecs, predecessors to the Meso-American civilizations. The most mysterious of the Olmec ruins are mammoth stone heads weighing 20 tons and standing eight feet tall. They are thick-lipped, with baby-like faces, and dot the countryside around La Venta, Tres Zapotes, and San Lorenzo. No one knows the meaning or purpose of these ever-vigilant watchers.

## Teotihuacan

The tremendous city of Teotihuacan covered eight square miles. The center of the city was split by a great avenue, lined on both sides with temples, pyramids, and plazas, and terminating in the Great Pyramid of the Sun. The people of Teotihuacan flourished from the time of Christ to the end of the 7th century - then mysteriously vanished.

# The Amazon Basin

During its 4,000-mile course to the Atlantic ocean, the Amazon River is joined by over a thousand tributaries and drains 20% of the world's river water from the Amazon Basin. The basin receives rain more than one-third of the time.

The jungles of the basin are largely unexplored, and can be hazardous to strangers who enter them - head hunters, piranha, army ants, snakes, and other perils make any Amazon journey a dangerous one.

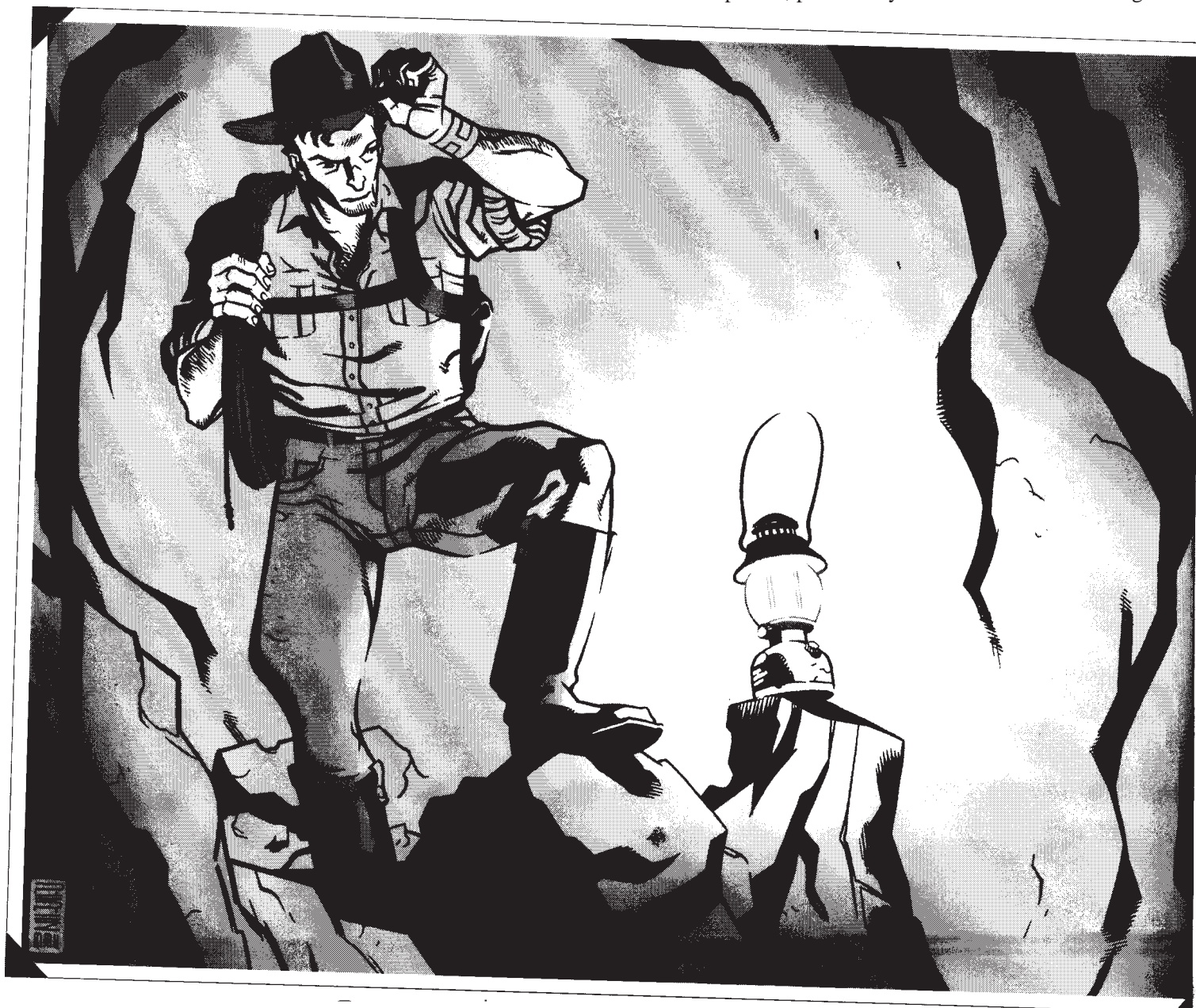
## Terrain and Climate

The Amazon basin is a land of lush foliage and receives enormous amounts of rain; some areas get as much as 350 inches per year. Adventurers trekking these thick jungles will find movement slow and wet, whether it is raining or not. The jungles hold the moisture, allowing a slick, green slime to settle on everything - even the explorers themselves. Papers mold, leather rots, fungus nourishes, and equipment rusts (see *Sand, Slime, and Equipment Failure*, p. CII6).

## Quicksand

Quicksand can be found throughout the world in patches a few inches to many feet deep. It is created by an underground spring that allows earth (dirt, sand, clay, even small gravel) to go into suspension, floating in the water. It can easily support a layer of light detritus (such as fallen leaves), making it difficult to see; adventurers must make a successful Vision or Survival skill roll to spot it. (Due to surface conditions, the visibility of quicksand varies widely; GMs may apply up to a +2 bonus or -2 penalty and still be realistic). By all reports, being trapped in quicksand is very harrowing; a Fright Check at +1 is required. If an adventurer has trouble getting out, the GM may require additional Fright Checks at increasing penalties.

Quicksand is much denser than salt water, and humans can float in it - a task not easily done in a panicked state! Victims may make a Swimming roll to try and float on their backs (if the victim failed his Fright Check, apply a penalty equal to the amount of his failure). Movement through quicksand is at 1/3 swimming speed. The GM should apply the rules from p. B91, particularly the encumbrance and fatigue





rules. If the victim has assistants on solid ground, they may attempt to pull him to safety by using a rope, plank, or other such object. A Strength roll is required; success indicates he has been pulled to "shore."

Note that the pulp view of quicksand was not so mundane; it was not unusual to find quicksand that actively sucked you down! GMs are encouraged to be creative in their use and description of such bottomless pits.

## THE PEOPLE OF THE AMAZON

The natives of the Amazon basin are healthy, dark-skinned people. They tend toward small, independent tribes, and are as at home in the treacherous jungle as an American is in the suburbs. Hunters will have high Tracking skill (15+), enabling them to hunt down almost any animal (or man) with ease.

Amazonians use a blowpipe with an extremely lightweight dart. It does no points of damage, and any sort of DR (besides Toughness) will keep it from penetrating, but it is often tipped with *curare* (see sidebar, p. CII140) or other poison. A number of interesting poisons are available in the region, some even made from a poisonous species of frog. Many tribes also use bows and arrows, both for hunting and for war.

Some of the tribes are known to be cannibals (see box, p. 54), while others are simply fiercely territorial, attacking any neighboring tribe or trespassing stranger. Some take the heads of their enemies as trophies and shrink them by removing the skull and packing the skin with hot sand.

### "Amazon" Women

The term "Amazon" (as applied to warrior women) does not stem from the Amazon region of South America. Rather, the region was named after this legendary tribe.

In 1542, a band of Spaniards trekking down the Marañon River found themselves under attack by fierce Indians led by warrior women. These women forced their men to fight, and were even more accomplished fighters themselves. If one of the men turned to flee, he was struck down by one of the beautiful, well-muscled women. The surviving Spaniards later learned that the women belonged to a tribe that shunned men except as slaves or breeding stock. After mating, if a man-child was born, it was immediately killed - only baby girls were raised. The women reminded the Spaniards of the Greek legend of "Amazon" warrior women and soon that portion of the river was called by that name.

Male heroes coming up against this elusive tribe will find themselves in for a tough fight - far tougher than people of this unliberated era would expect! If they fail, through GM fiat or simple bad luck, they will find themselves imprisoned and used as slaves. The most attractive or physically fit (total ST and HT) PC will be singled out as a mate. After his captors tire of him, however, he will be mercilessly killed.

Captured women will have to prove themselves in combat in order to be accepted by the tribe. This may be in unarmed combat, or with spears or knives, but the fight will not be an easy one regardless of what form it takes.



## PERCY FAWCETT AND THE LOST CITY OF GOLD

Colonel Percy H. Fawcett was born in Torquay in 1867. After extensive training as an archaeologist, he began work in 1906 for the Bolivian government, helping them map their border with Brazil. During his time in South America, he became obsessed with a worn and moth-eaten document dating from 1753. Percy found the mysterious parchment in a library in Rio de Janeiro, and became fascinated by the strange symbols and cryptic comments about a "hidden and great ancient city, without inhabitants, that was discovered in the Amazon."

After serving honorably in the Great War, Colonel Fawcett set off into the dense Amazon jungle in search of this South American El Dorado. His expedition included his son Jack, Jack's friend Raleigh Rimmel, and numerous native guides and bearers. Deep in the jungle's green heart he dismissed his guides and sent a message to his wife from a place he called "Dead Horse Camp," telling her "you need have no fear of any failure." Fawcett then set off into the Mato Grosso region of the Amazon, never to be heard from again.

Later expeditions were sent to find Fawcett and his men, but returned bearing only legends and rumors. A mining engineer claimed to have met a white man living in the jungles with no wish to return to civilization, while a Swiss trapper reported encountering Fawcett being held prisoner by the natives and wearing nothing but animal skins. By the 1950s, blame for Fawcett's disappearance had been laid on the Kalapalos Indians, a tribe that lives in a clearing in the heart of the forest, but even that explanation remained dubious and full of doubt.

What really happened to Colonel Fawcett and his expedition? Were they slain by the usually passive Kalapalos, and if so, why? What was the mysterious document Fawcett carried with him, and what was the meaning of the mysterious symbols written on it? If a lost city of gold really does exist in the Amazon, why was it abandoned - and what evil might lurk there now? What secrets did Fawcett uncover, and what dangers will curious heroes face before finding out the truth?







The depression has affected the Old World as well as the New. There is massive unemployment and unrest all across Europe. For many it seems that the old ways are already dead; the only question is what will replace them. The obvious choice is between the national socialism of Italy and Germany and the international socialism of Russia, but there are both milder and wilder schemes.

The United Kingdom and the European continent are more tightly controlled societies than the United States. There are more police; they ask more questions; they are much harder to satisfy. There is no constitutional right to keep and bear arms; pistols and automatic weapons are strictly controlled and even rifles and shotguns can be forbidden at government whim. In much of Europe, ticket agents and hotel clerks automatically report all travelers to the police, and even residents must report any change of address.

Europe is where past, present, and future meet for adventurers. Today's scandal, next year's war, or the mysteries of ages gone to dust; any or all may be the signpost of adventure.

For detailed information on the more arcane mysteries of this region, see *GVRPS Places of Mystery*, pp. 90-101.

## Great Britain

Britain was a dominant world power through most of the 19th and early 20th century. The Great War had been a shock to British complacency; in its aftermath even Ireland, a British possession for centuries, had managed to break free. Still, Britain was a great force in the world, possessor of the world's largest navy and a victorious if not very large army. Britain was also a great industrial power. Much of the world still bought its goods from Britain, and British engineering was a synonym for reliability.

### The Empire

"The sun never sets on the British Empire" was more than a cliché in the 1930s. British colonies, possessions, and self-governing dominions circled the world. Britain controlled most of Africa, large parts of Asia and Oceania, and a substantial fraction of North America and the Caribbean. Even South America (Guiana and the Falkland Islands) and Europe (Gibraltar) had land under the Union Jack.

Heroes of the pulps and movie serials generally supported the British Empire against its enemies, often cooperating with Scotland Yard or British Intelligence. The Empire was seen as a benevolent, though pompous and clumsy, agent of civilization. There remained an old American weakness for "twisting the lion's tail," and Irish-Americans were prone to even more violent activities (see below), but on the whole, American adventurers were likely to support the British in any dispute.

### The IRA

Many Irish adventurers will be especially *anti-British*, and may even have served in the war against Britain (1919-1921) or the subsequent civil fighting. British or Irish characters can use this rivalry as a background, and GMs may wish to use it as the focal point of an adventure.

## ADVENTURE SEED: NEW ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN

New mysteries have been added to the ancient wonders of Stonehenge. "Strange Rites by Cloaked Figures; Disappearances of Livestock; Local Residents Terror-Stricken." These headlines should be enough to attract the attention of many an adventurer.

If more is needed, consider this statement by a retired British general, as famed for his occult studies as for his brilliance as a military theoretician. "Our experiments are not to be interrupted by vulgar curiosity; we are not sensation seekers. Our High Leader is at the utmost verge of the rediscovery of lost power beyond imagination. Soon the true light will top the horizon and the darkness of false science will be vanquished."

Are ancient powers about to be released in England? If so, are they creatures of light or servants of the ancient dark? Or is there a more mundane explanation for these cavortings? The general's politics are eccentric; the mysterious High Leader has a decidedly guttural accent -perhaps German, perhaps from farther east.



### Stonehenge

Stonehenge is the ruins of a prehistoric monument located on the Salisbury Plain in southern England. The center consists of a semicircle of mammoth stone columns supporting huge stone lintels. Inside this rained circle are several pairs of larger columns supporting more crosspieces. The purpose and provenance of Stonehenge are unknown. It has been credited to (or blamed on) Romans, Druids, King Arthur, Merlin, Atlanteans, and aliens from a distant planet. It has been described as a temple, monument, cenotaph, observatory, and sacrificial altar. The truth is unknown; perhaps the 1930s are the years when the stones will give up their secrets. GMs are free to use any of the actual archaeological knowledge of the time, any discoveries made since, or any speculation, however wild. If Stonehenge is moved or destroyed, someone will probably notice; be prepared to change history accordingly.

Salisbury Plain also may interest less arcane adventurers. It is not just a site of ancient monuments; it is the British Army's principal training ground and test site for new equipment.

Both Stonehenge and other stone circles are given outstanding treatment in *GURPS Places of Mystery* (pp. 18-27).

# The Scottish Highlands

The Scottish Highlands are home to castles, fortresses, battlesites, ancient brochs and cairns, and much more. It is a land full of rich history, majestic forests, rugged mountains, and sweeping heather-covered moors. Buried deep in glens shrouded with mist lie thousands of inland lochs hiding mysteries waiting to be discovered.

## THE EASTERN HIGHLANDS

The eastern part of the Highlands provides many adventure settings and ideas for a *Cliffhangers* adventure, including a haunted battlefield and castle and the infamous Loch Ness. The land is covered with beautiful glens and gorgeous beaches dot the eastern seaboard. Like most of the rural Highlands, small villages provide food and shelter, but little in the way of equipment or weaponry. The city of Inverness, often referred to as the Capital of the Highlands, has road and rail connections to the rest of Scotland and Britain, and is one of the more cosmopolitan cities in the region.

### Loch Ness

For many years, Loch Ness has been the supposed home of a large plesiosaur-like creature that was sighted as far back as the sixth century (see box).

On the shores of Loch Ness lie the ruins of Urquhart Castle - one of the largest castles in Scotland. Built between the 13th and 16th centuries, it was largely destroyed in 1692 to prevent it from becoming a Jacobite stronghold. Still, the ruins are very impressive, and include a large tower - the best-preserved part of the castle. Urquhart is built on a rocky peninsula overlooking Loch Ness, and is a favorite haunt of

## SELKIES

A popular legend along the shores of the British Isles involves shapeshifting sea creatures called *selkies*. Selkie tales are rampant among the fisher folk who live near the seals. The great seal, the gray seal, the crested seal, and others are often called *selkiefolk*, and the legend says their natural form is human.

Selkies live in an underwater world or on lonely skerries, putting on seal-skins and transforming into seals to move easily through the water. At times, they remove the seal-skin and come ashore, where legends says they often seduce the locals, sometimes even giving up their selkie form for true love. Other stories tell of selkies being captured by humans who find and steal their seal-skin, trapping them forever ashore, often in the name of love.

Perhaps the seductive selkies are creatures of legend, akin to werewolves and other shapeshifters. But what if that lithe, some brunette sitting alone in the pub knows otherwise? Her seductive eyes and supple limbs beckon even the hardest adventurers - who knows what secrets she may be hiding...

## THE LOCH NESS MONSTER

The "modern" history of the Loch Ness Monster begins during the 1930s. A series of sightings in 1933 and 1934 culminated when a local paper published a fuzzy photo taken by Dr. Robert Kenneth Wilson, a London physician, who supposedly had photographed a plesiosaur-like monster with a long neck slipping through the dark waters of the loch. Interestingly, Loch Morar, in the west of Scotland, is also said to contain a sea monster, though the evidence for such a creature is even less reliable than for "Nessie."

Detailed information about the Loch Ness Monster is found in *GURPS Places of Mystery*, p. 91. Stats for a plesiosaur are found in *GURPS Bestiary*, p. 42.

would-be "Nessie Hunters." The ground is uneven and broken, and the castle is surrounded on three sides by the deep, icy waters of Loch Ness. A foot chase through the ruins at night would be both exciting and very dangerous.

### Culloden Battlefield

Not far from Inverness is the site of a bloody battle where Highland clans led by Prince Charles Edward Stuart - Bonnie Prince Charlie - were defeated by the British on April 16, 1746. Today the moors wail with eerie winds that carry the death cries of the Scottish Jacobites, and the land is dotted with 200-year-old headstones that mark the graves of the clansmen. It is only a short distance from Castle Stuart - abandoned and thought to be haunted, and an excellent site for a mastermind's hideout!

### The Haunted Castle

Castle Stuart is a 17th-century tower house situated on the Moray Firth in the Scottish Highlands, not far from Inverness. In 1561, Mary, Queen of Scots, gave the land to her half-brother and granted him the title *Earl of Moray*. After he was murdered, the Second Earl ruled for a time, but was also killed - he was stabbed 13 times. James Stuart, the Third Earl of Moray, finally completed the castle in 1625.

Eventually, Castle Stuart was abandoned, becoming nothing more than a haunted ruin full of secret stairways, alcoves, priest-holes, and hidden doorways.

Early in the castle's history, the Earl of Moray heard strange noises throughout the castle. In response to a ?20 reward offered through a nearby church, four men gathered to disprove the haunting. They were each to spend a night locked in the bedroom at the top of the east tower, to share their experiences only after all four had done so. The men experienced horrible waking visions and nightmares, ranging from a bloody highlander threatening them with a dagger, to the image of a floating skull in the room's mirror, to visitations by the devil himself. The last man, an irreverent, fearless man known as Big Rob Angus, was locked in the room, quipping, "You will find me as I am. Or dead." The following morning, the room was found in a shambles, the mirror broken; Big Angus' body was found in the courtyard below, his face a macabre mask of horror.



During the 1930s, a Canadian named John Cameron actually attempted a restoration of the castle, but was driven away by strange cries in the night and an invisible force which grabbed him with icy hands. GMs may make use of Cameron's story (details are available on the Internet and in many "ghost story" compilations) by having him hire the PCs to clear out the castle, or by having Cameron disappear without a trace, prompting an investigation by local police or a concerned friend or relative.

Alternately, should the GM prefer a less horrific campaign theme, Stuart Castle would make a wonderful hideout for an evil mastermind. Using all sorts of gadgets and inventions, he has convinced the locals that the hauntings are real. Now no one will even come near the place, allowing him to plot his world-conquering schemes in peace. That is, until the PCs arrive...

## THE ISLE OF SKYE

The western portion of Scotland is made up primarily of the Isle of Skye, known to the ancient Celts as *An t'Eliean Sgitheanach*, The Winged Isle. The Vikings approaching from the sea called it *Skuyo* or *Skya*, the Cloud Island.

Bordered on the east by the land of Lochalsh, it is a land of natural beauty - sweeping moors, jagged mountains, and breathtaking waterfalls abound. It is also home to some of the strongest traditions in the land. Even in the 1930s, the Gaelic culture here is strong, and outsiders will be viewed with some distrust.

Skye and Lochalsh are also home to ancient castles, stone circles, and numerous myths and legends. It was once inhabited by Vikings, and the Celtic tradition that flourishes there is rich and strongly entrenched. This land could provide an endless supply of adventure ideas and settings for imaginative GMs.

### The Skye Games

The Skye Games were first held on September 6, 1877 and continue to this day, interrupted only by both World Wars. The Games, held in Portree, include contests of strength and endurance, as well as opportunities for dancing and entertainment. In 1932, Lord Douglas-Hamilton even brought his seaplane, *Cloud of Iona*, and gave eight passengers at a time trips around the bay. It is largely a local event during this time, but outsiders will be welcomed in a friendly, if competitive, spirit.

## ADVENTURE SEED: PHANTOMS OF THE SKYE GAMES

This year, a small group of newcomers has come to Portree. While visitors to the Games are not unusual, this group is only seen at night and rarely talks to anyone. Rumors abound that they have strong European agents. Add to these mysterious visitors a full moon during the peak of the events, and a recent spate of dead livestock drained of blood, and investigating PCs are sure to have their hands full...

## THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

The Spanish Civil War began in July 1936, when General Francisco Franco led a military uprising against the democratically elected Republican government of Spain. The conflict soon escalated into full-scale war, marked by infantry and armor attacks, cavalry charges, strafing biplanes and dive-bombing Stukas, armored trucks and armored trains, street fighting, guerrilla attacks, urban carpet-bombing, and legions of men in colorful uniforms marching into battle with flags unfurled.

The war was a proving ground for German, Italian, and Soviet materiel and doctrine. Russia supplied the Republic with some 50,000 communist-inspired "volunteers," while the revolutionary Nationalists received support from Italy and Germany (including Hitler's "Condor Legion"). After numerous bloody battles, in which the tide changed many times, the Republicans marched into Madrid on March 28, 1939, putting General Francisco Franco in power for decades to come.

Besides being an excellent locale for soldiering, the war is an excellent backdrop for nonmilitary adventures. Spanish artifacts lure archaeologists and treasure hunters into the region; soldiers of fortune try to liberate innocent civilians from besieged Madrid; reporters cover the war; pilots smuggle supplies to either side; spies and government agents photograph or capture German technology; and *anyone* caught in the country when war breaks out may have to fight for his freedom!

For more information on the Spanish Civil War, see *GURPS WWII*, p. 10.

## Germany and Austria

At the end of the Great War, Germany had little hope of reaching the level of prosperity it had achieved in years past. The postwar treaties limited German military forces and obliged Germany to pay reparations. It seemed for a time that the democratic government was about to succumb to Communism; instead the National Socialists under Adolph Hitler took power in 1933.

With the rise of Hitler and his National Socialist (Nazi) party (see below), the parliamentary government was dissolved. The Nazis rearmed and revitalized Germany. Hitler butchered his domestic enemies, bluffed his foreign opponents, and managed to convince most Germans and many foreigners that he was "the wave of the future."

It is difficult to make a general statement about the pulp view of Germany, since it was portrayed in several different ways - often within the same story! The cruel-enemy image (from WWI) carried over, especially in Belgian atrocity stories; German soldiers (not Nazis) were often portrayed as chivalric and honorable - German aviators especially so; and the pulps often focused on the decadence of the country (especially Berlin) of both the Twenties and Thirties.

Germans in general were characterized in various ways: ruthless Prussian militarists; *gemutliche* Austrian aristocrats; fat, brutish peasants; insanely brilliant scientists; and just plain-old-ordinary-Joes-like-us. GMs can take advantage of each of these caricatures, mixing and matching as they please.

## National Socialism

With the end of the Great War, a number of extremist political groups arose in Germany. One of them, the minis-cule German Workers' party, combined socialist economic ideas with nationalistic fervor and attracted the attention of Adolph Hitler and his future cronies Hermann Goering and Rudolf Hess. By 1920, Hitler had taken control of the party, renaming it the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP) - the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Members were first called *Nazis* in a derisive sense. Hitler fomented anti-Semitic and anti-Communist sentiment, and soon the ranks of the Nazi Party swelled with everyone from fanatical riff-raff to discontented intellectuals.

Hitler's early political reforms brought him praise from the U.S. and other countries for his stand against Communism. He was even *Time* magazine's man of the year in 1933. Savvy PCs may see through Hitler's popularity early in the decade, and by the middle and late Thirties, it should be plain to any red-blooded adventurer that the Third Reich is a menace to the Red, White, and Blue (see *World War II Cliffhangers*, p. 112).

An in-depth consideration of Nazi Germany can be found in *GURPS WWII*.

## France

France suffered even more than Britain from the Great War. There were more French casualties, from a smaller population base. All of France was exhausted, and much of it literally devastated, by the fighting. Still, in the end, the Republic had won. For Americans, France was the old ally dating to the American Revolution. It was also the home of culture; in art, science, fashion, literature, and cuisine, France was the model for America. A substantial American expatriate population was to be found in France all through the '30s.





The French Empire had holdings in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and America; French soldiers, bureaucrats, and spies worked day and night to keep it that way. French adventurers are often veterans of the colonial campaigns. French villains (or even PCs) may have served a hitch in the *Bat d'Af*, *Compagnies Disciplinaires*, or in extreme cases, the *Sections d'Exclus*. Foreigners may have served the Republic in the Foreign Legion (see below).

## PARIS

The City of Lights is a magical town and a center of culture and intellect. PCs may choose to visit famous landmarks such as the *Louvre* or the *Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile*, or stroll the *Champs Elysees* enjoying its spacious, tree-lined beauty and the elegant cafes, theaters, and shops.

But for the average *Cliffhangers* hero, Paris of the 1930s is also a city of intrigue and danger. It is a city where the elite of Parisian society mingle with foreign visitors - some with decidedly Germanic accents. It is a city with a rich history dating back over a thousand years, hiding many secrets both above and below ground.

### The Catacombs

Beneath the bright city streets of Paris lies a dark, mysterious underground of caverns and tunnels. The largest system occurs beneath the Montparnasse section of the city, and is full of creepy catacombs, secret doors, skull-lined passages, and bizarre altars and statues.

The network dates back to Roman times, when the first tunnels were dug. They were further expanded in the 17th and 18th centuries. Large pits and empty areas were often filled in with whatever was available (including human remains) to prevent accidents.

By the 1930s there are over 1500 acres of subterranean space with nearly 200 miles of winding tunnels. The underground is full of catacombs and sepulchers, abandoned construction projects, tunnels, pits, secret entrances, hidden rooms, and more. Sections may flood with ankle- or knee-deep water during heavy rains, and many portions are so completely blocked off from the surface as to be completely dark.

How deep does the subterranean complex *really* go? What secrets does it hold? What secret society is plotting the downfall of Western civilization from beneath the sparkling lights of the gay cafes? What deformed monster creeps up from the depths each night to stalk the darkened streets of Paris?

### The Crypts of Notre Dame

Near the Cathedral of Notre Dame lies a warren of ancient buildings dating back to the Middle Ages. These crumbling ruins and streets hold little interest for most Parisians, though a moonlit gunfight through the maze of buildings might provide some excitement for adventuresome heroes.

Of more interest are the ancient crypts that lie just beneath the surface. Hidden from view, and not discovered until the 1960s, are the remains of buildings just below the plaza, some dating from pre-Roman times. Who knows what secrets lie in the crypts - and what will happen when they are disturbed after a thousand years?

## THE EIFFEL TOWER

The Eiffel Tower was designed by A.G. Eiffel and erected in 1889. The 984' tower was built in the Champ-de-Mars for the Paris exposition and consists of an iron framework supported on four masonry piers. Three platforms at varying heights are reached by stairs and elevators.

No *Cliffhangers* adventure in Paris would be complete without a trip to the Eiffel Tower, providing no end of excitement as the PCs chase a villain or monster up the Tower during the dark of night. Gunplay and malfunctioning elevators are always encouraged!

## THE FRENCH MILITARY

In addition to standard infantry units, France had a collection of unique units that can serve as background hooks or plot elements for adventurers and GMs alike (see *GURPS WWII* for details).

### The French Foreign Legion

Founded in 1831, the Foreign Legion (*Legion Etrangere*) is a volunteer army unit surrounded by mystery, intrigue, and glamour. Most enlisted men come from outside France, since Frenchmen are usually forbidden enlistment. The officers are mostly French, but foreigners can hold rank up to colonel. Enlistments are for five years. Twelve years of honorable service in the Legion is rewarded with French citizenship. The pay is terrible (four cents a day for privates) and the discipline is brutal, but the esprit of the Legion is famous.

The Legion is a haven for those fleeing political or criminal punishment, as well as an ideal organization for adventurers. The Legion insignia is a small red grenade spouting seven flames; uniforms during the Thirties are regulation khakis copied from the uniforms for the *Bat d'Af*. The Legion is a military force, not an intelligence or police organization. When not fighting, it trains or performs hard physical labor. The desertion rate is high, but the Legion actively pursues deserters and punishes them severely, usually by several years in the *Bat d'Af* which do not count toward the original enlistment.

The headquarters of the Legion is at Sid-bel-Abbes, in Algeria. Recruits are shipped from Marseilles, in France, to Algeria after training. Once trained (which takes three to six months) the recruits may be sent to any Legion unit in the French Empire. In the course of the '30s the Legion served in Algeria, Morocco, Dahomey, Senegal, Indochina, French India, China, Madagascar, Syria, and Lebanon. The Legion has no units stationed in France proper; they only go to France to fight a war.

Legion equipment is that of the French line infantry (e.g., Lebel Modele d'Ordonnance 8mm rifle, pp. HT114, HT126). Toward the end of the 1930s the Legion also organized artillery and cavalry units, but most remained foot soldiers. The Legion, like many armies of the period, made considerable use of mules; a veteran could easily have Packing at 13+.

## Bat d'Af

The *Infanterie Legere d'Afrique* (known colloquially as *Battalion d'Afrique* or *Bat d'Af*) is made up of penal battalions employing strict regulations and harsh discipline. Many of the legends surrounding the Foreign Legion have roots in the Bat d'Af.

The Bat d'Af (sometimes called *Les Joyeux*) are reserved for criminals. They are sometimes confused with the *Compagnies Disciplinaires* and *Sections d'Exclus*, but they are not part of either.

During the 19th century, the Bat d'Af consisted of recruited men who had served a term in the *Compagnies Disciplinaires* but had not finished their prior term of enlistment. They also accepted men released from prison sentences who had not yet served their term of conscription. Soon a corps of hardened volunteers, seeking adventure and service in North Africa instead of boring garrison duty in France, became the predominant source of recruits. By the 1930s, the Bat d'Af rarely contained criminals convicted of serious crimes. Hard-core criminals were relegated to the *Sections d'Exclus*.

The Bat d'Af were often used in dangerous, desolate areas of North Africa under grueling conditions that required the toughest of men. They were pushed to total exhaustion under conditions requiring the most brutal discipline. But when the bullets began to fly, their conduct was exemplary.

French villains may have a history in the Bat d'Af, but PCs may have served a stint as well. Whether their punishment was just or not is up to the character background.

## ADVENTURE SEED: THE MYSTERY OF THE GRIFFON

In 1715, five vessels, collectively known as the *Flota de Nova Espana*, were en route from South America to Spain laden with treasures of the New World. On July 31, a hurricane struck the doomed fleet as it passed through the Caribbean, smashing the ships like wooden toys and sending millions of dollars worth of treasure to the bottom of the sea.

Some say that one vessel, the French merchant ship *Griffon*, survived the storm. Her captain, Antoine Dar, had been given permission to sail with the Spanish flotilla, and his ship had been loaded with hundreds of chests bursting with gold and silver coins.

The loss of the *Griffon* has remained a mystery until three days ago, when the French antiquities market was stunned by the appearance of a hand-worked silver statue of South American origin dating from the time of the *Flota de Nova Espana*. Is it possible that Captain Dar sailed the *Griffon* back to France, rather than to Spain? If so, what did he do with the ship and its treasure, and where has it remained hidden all these years? If the statue is part of the *Griffon's* treasure, where did it come from and why is the German government so interested in possessing it?

## Other Units

The *Compagnies Disciplinaires* were made up of men serving punitive disciplinary terms who were then returned to their original units. French PCs could easily come from such a service background.

*Sections d'Exclus* were made up of the worst of the worst. They contained only men considered unfit for service and subject to extreme punishment. Only characters of the lowest caliber would come from these units - PCs should have a very good reason for such a background.

## Italy

Italy of the 1930s was a respected country: a forerunner in science and engineering, a strong military power, and the center of an ideology perceived by many to be the up-and-coming thing in the 20th century. The country's Fascist leader, Benito Mussolini (in power from 1922-1943), was a strong man to all and a great man to many. He tried to restore the Roman Empire, and in the 1930s seemed to be succeeding.

By the end of the 1930s Mussolini was firmly allied with Hitler, but before 1935 the situation was more fluid. Italy had fought against Germany in the Great War. Italian troops were deployed as a warning to protect Austria from Hitler's annexation plan in 1934. In 1935 Italy invaded Abyssinia (Ethiopia), almost the last independent country in Africa (see p. 51). This action isolated Italy from most of the world, and hastened Mussolini's alignment with Germany - a friendship cemented during the Spanish Civil War when Italian and German troops fought side by side with Generalissimo Francisco Franco's Nationalist troops. In 1939 Italy invaded Albania and formed the "Pact of Steel" with Germany.

Italian politics is one possible area of involvement in a *Cliffhangers* campaign; the opposition to Mussolini is a maze of socialists, communists, democrats, anarchists, gangsters, and unclassifiables, all glad of foreign aid. Italy is also the usual entry into the Balkans; all through the '30s it remains an explosion waiting for the right spark. Mussolini's police are making a serious (and brutal) attempt to destroy the Sicilian Mafia and the Neapolitan gangs. Either side might employ an outsider; either side has painful penalties for betrayal or incompetence. The great cities of Italy are treasure houses for archaeologists, historians, and artists. In the 1930s they are also a battleground for spies. Italy is on the cutting edge of technology, and perceived as a great and unpredictable military power. Every intelligence organization in the world wants news from Rome. For occultists, Italy cloaks the remains of Rome, Greece, and Etruria. What secrets are hidden in its tombs and catacombs? What mind-blasting hints from the Great Dark were discovered in the Renaissance, and buried lest they unhinge the feeble intellect of man?

GMs can also make good use of *GURPS Imperial Rome* to create some interesting adventure seeds for 1930s characters. The remains of ancient Roman buildings dot the region, ranging from piles of rubble that might hide stairwells to hidden catacombs, to the greatest of the remaining Roman architecture, the Colosseum. *GURPS Places of Mystery* details both the city and the catacombs that lie beneath it (p. PM100).



## ADVENTURE SEED: SHADOWS OF ANCIENT ROME

Ancient treasures have been vanishing from the halls of Italy's greatest museums. A string of brutal attacks on guards, curators, and museum employees makes it clear that the thieves have no qualms about killing to achieve their goals. Though the thefts are brutal, they are not random; the thieves are slowly robbing Italy of the treasures of ancient Rome.

It would be little more than a bloody mystery for the local *polizia* to deal with, except the victims have been slain by the sword and witnesses swear the attackers wore ancient Roman armor.

Who's behind the thefts? Is some secret society attempting to revive the ancient Roman legions? Or are the mysterious attackers the ghosts of centurions come to restore the glory of Imperial Rome? And why is the sound of blood-thirsty cheering heard from the Colosseum late at night...?

### The Colosseum

The Colosseum is the common name for the Flavian Amphitheater in Rome, near the southeast end of the Forum. Completed in A.D. 80, the vast oval construct was originally some 500 by 600 feet, much of which is still standing. Tier upon tier of marble seats once held some 40,000 spectators overlooking a 150' by 250' arena.

A nighttime foot chase through its interior, or a fight to the death in the exposed corridors below the original floor of the arena, make wonderful additions to any adventures in Italy. For more details, see *GURPS Imperial Rome*.

## The Mediterranean

The Mediterranean Sea stretches from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Suez Canal, and touches parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Once a principal route of commerce and travel, the Med still plays a key role in many countries in that region.

The sea itself, fed by large rivers such as the Po, Rhone, Ebro, and Nile, has little variation in tides. The shores are frequently rugged and mountainous; earthquakes and volcanic activity are frequent. The climate is warm, dry, and almost always sunny. Strong winds, such as the *sirocco* from the south and the cold, dry winds of the north, blow across the sea. Animal life (fish, sponges, corals) is plentiful.

## GREECE

Greece takes up the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula, and is bordered on three sides by water - the Ionian Sea on the west, the Mediterranean Sea on the south, and the Aegean Sea in the east. Its northern land border consists of Bulgaria, Turkey, Macedonia, and Albania. GMs will find a wealth of information on ancient Greece in *GURPS Greece*.

## Politics and Government

The years leading up to World War II were turbulent times for the Greeks. The Balkan Wars (1912-13), fought for the possession of European territories in the Ottoman Empire (Turkey), were followed by Greek involvement in WWI (on the side of the Allies). Encouraged by the Allies and their victories, Greece invaded Asia Minor in 1921, but was dealt a crushing defeat by Turkey in 1922. The following decade was marked by economic difficulty and violent political upheaval. In 1935, Premier Eleutherios Venizelos, in an attempt to stem rising royalist tide, fomented armed uprisings in Athens, Macedonia, and Crete, but was put down by General George Kondylis, marking the end of the Republic of Greece. Kondylis then arranged for a plebiscite that resulted in the restoration of the monarchy and the return of King George II (1922-23, 1935-47). In 1936, Premier John Metaxas, supported by the king, established a dictatorship, ostensibly to avert a Communist takeover of the country.

The political intrigue and armed revolt make an exciting backdrop for any Grecian adventures. Seeking ancient treasures while fending off bands of armed rebels or dealing weapons to both royalists and republicans will keep the players busy. GMs are encouraged to use *GURPS Greece* as a starting point for archaeological treasure-hunts, but to keep the unstable political and military situation of the Balkan peninsula in mind when creating such an adventure.

## LEGENDS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Mediterranean Sea is a place of rich history and ancient mysteries. It is the home of Homer's *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; the legendary site of the Minotaur and the labyrinth; it is even thought by some to be the site of ancient Atlantis (see *GURPS Atlantis*, *GURPS Places of Mystery*, and *GURPS Greece* for more information on these and other legends of this region).

### Knossos

Knossos was an ancient city on the north coast of Crete, near the modern city of Iraklion. Much of today's knowledge about the Minoan civilization comes from study of the ruins of Knossos, which has been the site of numerous archaeological digs over the years. PC archaeologists should jump at the chance to explore the ruined city and its Great Palace, for it is the legendary capital of King Minos and the site of the fabled labyrinth that housed the dreaded Minotaur. More details on Knossos can be found in *Places of Mystery*, pp. 86-87.

### The Labyrinth

The legendary labyrinth - a winding, maze-like series of underground tunnels - is probably more myth than reality. The fact is that the narrow, winding halls of the Great Palace at Knossos probably inspired the legends behind the tale of King Minos and his half-bull son, the Minotaur.

## ADVENTURE SEED: CULT OF THE DOUBLE AXE

A mysterious band of raiders has been kidnapping young virgins from Iraklion. Clad in ancient Minoan dress; they descend on the town at night and disappear into the darkness. Each time, they carry off a helpless innocent into the hills of Crete.

Where are they going with these Women? How many more do they need to complete their sacrifice? The only clue the PCs have is the insignia of the double-bladed axe (or *labrys*) that has been seen tattooed on the kidnappers. Can they find the missing women before it's too late?

GMs may allow explorers to stumble through the ruins of Knossos and find little truth to the legend, but a much more exciting adventure will ensue should grains of truth be found, pointing to an as-yet-undiscovered underground labyrinth, complete with a still-living Minotaur.

Details on the legend of the Minotaur can be found in *Places of Mystery* in the sidebar on p. PM86. Whether the Minotaur is simply a giant carnivorous bull or a rampaging bipedal monster is up to the GM; either way it is sure to put a fright into even the most hardened heroes.

### Troy

Many myths surround this ancient city: Homer's *Iliad* details one brief period near the end of the Trojan War, and the tales of Helen of Troy's infinite beauty, the Trojan Horse, and even Odysseus' involvement in the battle are the stuff of legend.

Troy is an ancient city made famous by Homer's account of the Trojan War. Its site is generally thought to be the mound called Hissarlik, in Turkey, about four miles from the mouth of the Dardanelles. Using Homer's poems to guide him, archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann began excavations there in 1871. Schliemann uncovered many interesting artifacts that could be used to trigger an adventure. Details about his work are readily available in book form and on the Internet.

GMs wishing more details on both the actual archaeological site and its legendary history should consult *Places of Mystery*, p. PM83.

## Monte Carlo

Monte Carlo is the most notable city (population about 10,000), in the principality of Monaco, a country with an area of 0.58 square miles on the Mediterranean coast of France. It is ruled by Prince Louis II, scion of the House of Grimaldi, descended from a notable family of medieval pirates and mercenaries. Louis himself fought in the French Foreign Legion in the World War.

The greatest attraction of Monte Carlo is its famous casino. Huge fortunes are won and lost at this exotic club every year; no gambler can call his career complete without a flutter at Monte. Citizens of Monaco are forbidden to gamble at

the club (but they pay no taxes); visitors and foreign residents are encouraged to try their hand at roulette, baccarat, chemin-de-fer, and other games of chance.

The casino is more like a stately mansion than a gambling hell. Evening dress is common, though anyone not actually repulsive in attire will be accommodated. The management prefers to think of itself as the entertainment of gentility, and prefers not to notice the hopelessly addicted small-timers who live in cheap flats and drop their questionably acquired pitances across the tables.

There are many games, at many levels of play. A real "high roller" (the management discourages such vulgarisms) may be invited to a small (but plush) side chamber where the game of choice will be opened with no betting limit.

"Breaking the bank" is not likely; the casino's resources are substantial. A really big winner might be requested to wait until the next morning for his cash, but he will get it, in full and without fail. The management loves a big winner; the tale of his fortune attracts so many big losers. He will be treated gracefully and deferred to (+5 reaction roll) by employees. Food and lodging will be on the house, wine and song will be provided (not women - the casino is in the *gambling* business), and the winner will be invited to return for another coup at the tables. The house knows who always wins in the long run.

Monte Carlo is more than a haunt of gamblers. Its location is convenient to all the great spy-holds of Europe. It is an independent nation and the authorities take a live and let live attitude, as long as the casino is not bothered. The food, the wine, the company, and the games bring the wealthy and the powerful from all the world to this 1/2 square mile; the chances for adventure are excellent.

## ADVENTURE SEED: MURDER IN MONACO

The characters are visiting the casino at Monte Carlo, betting, socializing, or just watching, when a man comes up to them. He was once well-dressed, and still wears his jacket, but his tie has come off and a haggard look has come into eyes. He approaches one of the characters and offers them a diamond (which he displays). The diamond is a beautiful emerald-cut blue-white and worth at least twice as much as he is asking, but he is willing to sell it cheap to cover his losses at roulette. A character with the Greed disadvantage and sufficient money will have to make a Will roll at -2 to avoid making this transaction; others may deal with the situation as they see fit.

Whether or not the adventurers buy the gem, things soon heat up. Ten minutes after their conversation, a scream is heard in the casino foyer. The man with the diamond has fallen dead, a thorn stuck in his neck. A successful roll against Anthropology, Forensics, or Poisons reveals that the thorn poisoned with curare.

Who was this mysterious man, and why was he killed? If the PCs purchased the diamond, what lies in store for them when the murderer finds out? Even if they didn't buy it, their conversation with the man may have revealed information the murderer wished kept quiet.



# CONSPIRACY

Conspiracies are essential to the pulp genre. A conspiracy is usually a criminal organization headed by a mastermind (see p. 100) who may have access to highly advanced technology. Europe (especially Germany and Austria) is thought to be the birthplace of secret societies that make perfect villainous organizations for a *Cliffhangers* campaign.

Heroes facing any of these secret societies may find themselves racing to find arcane tomes of power or trying to destroy a nearly-finished “infernal machine” - all the while fending off ever-present, ultra-powerful enemies. But no matter how many times they are defeated, they always seem to return...

## The Rosicrucians

The Rosicrucians are members of a secret society which claims to have been in existence since the days of ancient Egypt. Their secret knowledge deals with occult symbols including the rose and the cross (from which they take their name), the swastika, and the pyramid. Much of their knowledge is contained in cabalistic writings, many of which might contain spells and rituals in a campaign where magic plays a role.

The Rosicrucians have been variously called the Brothers of the Rosy Cross, the Rosy Cross Knights, and the Rosy Cross Philosophers. The highest echelons of the Rosicrucians are considered to be “illuminated” and hence referred to as *Illuminati*.

## The Illuminati

The Illuminati of the world of *GURPS Cliffhangers* should conform closely to the legendary conspiratorial organization detailed in *GURPS Illuminati*. An entire campaign can be designed around a *Cliffhangers* and *Illuminati* theme, keeping the PCs looking over their shoulders while on their globe-hopping adventures!

## Freemasons

Properly known as the order of the *Ancient Free and Accepted Masons*, the Freemasons are a secret society with roots stemming as far back as the 14th century. The order arose from the English and Scottish fraternities of practicing stonemasons and cathedral builders in the Middle Ages, but some documents of the order refer to practices of masonry and geometry as far back as ancient Egypt and Babylon.

In 1717, the English Grand Lodge was formed in *London*, beginning the widespread growth of Freemasonry, with some 30 lodges in place by 1723. A similar development took place across Scotland and Ireland; by 1800 there were Masonic lodges in every European country.

The order is said to have hundreds of secret rituals, passwords, and elaborate symbolic rites and ceremonies, many of which involve the tools of the masons - tie plumb, the square, the level, and the compass. Some say there are even ceremonies based on apocryphal events surrounding the building of King Solomon's Temple.

This secrecy and ritualistic ceremony has led many to believe the Freemasons are the front for a dark, sinister conspiracy that continues today. The truth about the Freemasons and their place in a *Cliffhangers* campaign is up to the GM.

## The Knights Templar

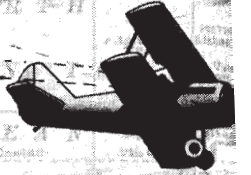
The Knights Templar were a monastic military order formed during the Crusades (about 1118 A.D.). They were bound by vows of loyalty to God and King, and assigned the task of protecting pilgrims on journeys to the Holy Lands.

Within two centuries, they became fabulously wealthy and powerful, a fact that led to their destruction. In the early 1300s, Pope Clement V and the King of France (Philip the Fair) had them rounded up and destroyed. On October 13, 1307, King Philip had all the Templars arrested on the grounds of heresy and witchcraft, allowing him to seize their money and their assets to aid him in his war against England's Edward I. The Templars were tortured and killed, ending with the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar, Jacques de Molay, being burned at the stake. De Molay cursed King Philip and Pope Clement as he burned, swearing they would join him within a year. Clement died one month later; Philip seven months after that...

Were the Knights Templar truly destroyed, or did they simply go underground to wield their power and magic from behind the scenes? Does a group of Templars exist today, ready to destroy any that would learn their secrets? If Grand Master Jacques de Molay had the power to curse Pope Clement and King Philip, could he still exert power from beyond the grave?



# AFRICA





The continent of Africa is a conglomeration of deserts, plains, jungles, and mountains. Largely unexplored until the late 19th century. Africa still holds many secrets waiting to be uncovered - fierce natives, lost cities, unexplored lands, and immeasurable wealth all await hardy (or some would say *foolhardy*) adventurers.

Most of Africa is divided among the European colonial powers. The only independent countries are Abyssinia (Ethiopia) before 1936, Egypt (with qualifications), Liberia (with its finances in the hands of an American receiver), and the Union of South Africa (a self-governing British dominion).

## AFRICAN WILDLIFE

Travelers in Africa will be amazed, intrigued, excited -and perhaps attacked - by the abundant wildlife. Most animals will flee from encounters with humans, but if an animal is wounded or cornered, or its young are threatened, it will fight.

The African animals of the adventure story are often more aggressive and dangerous than their real-world counterparts. Man-eating lions and carnivorous apes are but two staples of pulps stories that would make a nice addition to a *Cliffhangers* campaign. To create such bigger-than-life monstrosities, use the scaling rules in *GURPS Bestiary* (pp. BE94-95) or the stats on pp. B140-145 and increase them appropriately. An especially interesting adventure can be designed around a "normal" man-eating predator that has somehow gained human intelligence.

### Habitats

People on safari in Africa will find the greatest variety of large animals on the plains of the Serengeti and other savannah regions. Common are herbivores such as the zebra, rhino, gazelle, wildebeest, topi, waterbuck, giraffe, dikdik, roan, sable, and warthog. Carnivores include the lion, hyena, wild dog, jackal, and cheetah.

Herd animals (antelope, gazelle, zebra, etc.) may be spooked into stampeding. Usually they will run away from the threat, but if they are confused or unusually panicked, they may charge straight at the disturbance of the stampede. See p. A142 for *Knockdown*, *Overrun*, and *Trample* rules.

Africa is also home to gorillas, chimpanzees, and many species of monkey. Snakes are common. Elephants are found in both jungle and plains. Jungle is also a common habitat for the leopard, the species of big cat most likely to attack man.

Waterways are home to two of the most dangerous animals: hippopotamus and crocodile. The crocodile probably is the most common man-hunter of all animals. An enraged hippo (and they are very short-tempered, especially in the breeding season) will attack anything.

### Nessie in Africa

Rumors of a species of sauropod living in the Likuola swamp region of the Congo may draw adventurers in search of this mysterious monster. Many tribes in the region are familiar with the elusive three-clawed monster called jago-nini (giant diver), dingonek, ol-umaina, chipekwe, or mokele-mbembe.

In 1932, British cryptozoologist Ivan Sanderson discovered large hippo-like tracks in a region with no hippos. The

natives said they belonged to "Mgbulu-eM'bembe." Sanderson claims to have seen a massive hippo-like creature in a body of water nearby, but it disappeared before he could investigate.

German explorer Captain Freiheer von Stein zu Lausnitz reported stories of an animal that was "brownish gray with a smooth skin, its size approximately that of an elephant, at least that of a hippopotamus." The natives called it mok'elembembe, and told him it had a long neck and ate tree leaves.

Over the years, a similar creature has been reported in Lake Victoria, Lake Tanganyika, Lake Albert, and Lake Tele. Like the monster of Loch Ness, however, no indisputable evidence has ever been found.

**Strangers encountering Tuareg tribes deep in the desert will still find a possessive, often hostile warrior people . . .**

## The Sahara Desert

The 4,000,000-square-mile Sahara Desert is the dominant feature of North Africa. Travelers through the desert will sink in ankle-deep sand, scramble over rocky crags and boulders, or batter across iron-hard plateaus. Temperatures can soar to 150° at midday, then plummet almost to freezing at night (see *Heat*, p. A130).

During the spring months, winds up to 90 miles per hour can do serious damage to anyone caught without shelter. Anyone exposed to the *khamsin* (called *sirocco* by Europeans) will take 1d-3 damage even *with* a successful Desert Survival roll; failure will result in a full die of damage. Mechanical equipment (guns, vehicles, cameras, etc.) in the Sahara is also susceptible to damage (see p. CII6).

### The Tuareg

The Tuareg (singular, *Targui*) are a tall warrior people who for centuries made the heart of the Sahara their inviolate territory, allowing access and passage only to those willing to pay the price. This led to their Arabic name, Tuareg - "the abandoned of God." After the French conquest in 1905, much of the Sahara was opened up to trade or was settled by the Arabs, forcing the Tuareg to forsake their nomadic way of life and increasingly adopt Islamic traditions.

Strangers encountering Tuareg tribes deep in the desert will still find a possessive, often hostile warrior people, and may be unable to borrow even a canteen of water. Tuareg are sometimes found encamped at one of the rare oases scattered about the desert, living on locusts and dates. More often they inhabit the tiny fertile valleys hidden between the towering *massifs* that dot the land.

The Tuareg speak their own language, but some are also fluent in Arabic. They wear white robes like the Arabs, but Tuareg women bare their faces and the men cover themselves with blue veils. They are proud and intolerant; any stranger who violates their customs (by failing a Savoir-Faire roll for instance) might be killed - painfully.

## TUTANKHAMEN'S TOMB

The discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb by Howard Carter, of Lord Carnarvon's expedition, made newspaper headlines worldwide in 1923. The publicity brought letters from some who feared that disturbing the contents of the tomb would bring retribution in the form of the "Pharaoh's Curse." Lord Carnarvon's death in late April of 1923 (caused by an infected insect bite) was blamed on the curse, but Carter (who actually opened the tomb) lived a healthy life until 1939, dying of natural causes at age 66.

Was there such a curse? If so, why was Carter unaffected? Was he protected by some sort of ancient magic? Does the curse still haunt the Valley of the Kings, waiting for some other impious foreigner? Can some gullible American be conned into paying to have the phony curse lifted? What happens if the curse is not so phony?

## ADVENTURING IN EGYPT

### Archaeology

Legitimate scientific research in Egypt is continuous, and less-legitimate tomb robbing is at least as active. Theft and smuggling of artifacts, however, is a serious crime. Tracking down tomb robbers is well-thought-of by both the authorities and legitimate archaeologists.

The legends and myths surrounding the ancient tombs of Egypt can be used to spice up an otherwise mundane archaeological expedition (see *GURPS Egypt* for more information). Speculation about Hitler's interest in the occult can also be used to pit adventurers against Nazi soldiers seeking their *Fuhrer's* latest obsession.

### Intrigue

The nationalist movement in Egypt (including young Egyptian Royal Army officers such as Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat) wants the British out and wants a league of all Muslims under Egyptian dominance. They also want the Jewish immigrants out of Palestine. They seek allies, including Hitler's Germany. They would pay for help against the British; the British would pay well for inside information about the nationalists. A fast-stepper could collect from both sides.

### Crime

The port of Alexandria is a center for smuggling throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East: gold, guns, drugs, slaves, and fugitives all pass through the hands of the Alexandrian crime lords. An outsider who tries to infiltrate that den had best have extraordinary luck.

## Egypt

The most common points of arrival in Egypt are Alexandria, Suez, and Port Said. Steamship lines regularly service the port cities, while many tramp steamers continue up the Nile to Cairo. Anyone arriving by steamship will be set upon by dozens of beggars - ignore them and they become angry; pay them and others appear by the hundreds. The port areas are also a favorite for pickpockets.

### Terrain and Climate

Egypt is a desert country. The fertile areas on either side of the Nile are criss-crossed with irrigation ditches and aqueducts. They have been farmed for over 3,000 years. Away from the river valley is desert; temperatures reach 90° to 120° in the daytime (see *Heat*, p. B130) but drop as much as 40° after dark. Prudent travelers must also be prepared for the springtime *khamisin* (see *The Sahara Desert*, p. 51).

### Wardrobe

The people of Egypt (and visitors, unless they enjoy heat-stroke) wear loose-fitting garments that block the sun, yet allow air circulation. Light colors are usual to reflect the sun's burning rays.

*Adventurers:* Short-sleeved khakis and a lightweight pith helmet or broad-brimmed hat are the order of the day. Public display of handguns is not acceptable; Egypt is, after all, under English protection.

*Businessmen:* A white linen or cotton suit and a white Panama hat (as well as a white kerchief for wiping away perspiration) is standard garb for businessmen in most of Egypt. Use the cost for a suit on p. 89 and increase or decrease appropriately for quality.

*Natives:* Native Egyptians wear a long, loose garment called a *djellaba* and a cloth turban or felt *tarboosh* (fez). The *djellaba* gives +1 when rolling against heat-related difficulties (p. A130). Non-Egyptians who choose to wear this type of clothing should see *Going Native*, on p. 13.

### The Government

Egypt is ruled by the king (Fuad until April 1936, then his son, 16-year-old King Farouk) and an elected parliament. Before 1936, Egypt was a British protectorate; after 1936 it is an independent country with special ties to Great Britain. This means that the Egyptian government does nothing without British approval, and any unusual activity will be investigated by British agents. As a result, doing anything in Egypt requires government permission, and getting that permission is likely to be a major exercise in bureaucratic manipulation.

Characters with Administration can find their way through the tangle of bureaucratic red tape faster than normal, but even then there will be an inevitable delay (2d days to process most paperwork; a successful Administration roll will cut the time in half).

The heavy hand of the British Empire could be found everywhere. Britain was in charge of Egypt's defense and foreign policy until 1936, and maintained a large garrison. After that time, British forces were confined to an area around the Suez Canal, but could deploy anywhere in time of war.



## MOSQUES

The Muslim mosque is the equivalent of the Christian church. Originally nothing more than a courtyard surrounded by three meditation corridors and a fourth facing Mecca, the mosque slowly evolved into a complex temple and learning center complete with libraries. Women are usually forbidden to enter a mosque. Anyone entering a mosque must remove his shoes to avoid defiling it. It is unmannerly, and dangerous, to interrupt services.

## CAIRO

The city of Cairo, situated on the east bank of the Nile, is the heart of Egypt, throbbing with excitement and variety. From the quiet, secluded mosques to the bustling marketplace of Khan Kalili, Cairo is a page out of the *Arabian Nights*. Prices in Cairo are about 80% of those in America, and a guide can be hired for about a dollar a day. Weapons, ammunition and explosives are available, but any legal purchase is government-controlled, and any illegal dealer is likely to be a government informer. There is an active anti-British political movement that may look with favor on any disruption of the status quo, but “members” may also be informers. A Streetwise roll is necessary to find an illegal dealer or rebel representative; anyone with the right sort of Contact might get a name from him.

## ALEXANDRIA

If Cairo is the heart of Egypt, then Alexandria is the mouth - and it is multilingual. A melting pot of peoples and cultures, Alexandria is a “new” city built on ancient foundations. Visitors in this thriving city will find Frenchmen, Englishmen, Germans, Americans, Greeks - even a few Egyptians. Crime fighters will find a seedy world of organized lawlessness under the facade of legitimate business. Explorers and occult investigators will revel in the mysterious labyrinth of skull-lined catacombs. Fortunate explorers may find the sarcophagus of Alexander the Great (made of solid gold) or those of the descendants of Ptolemy, buried somewhere beneath the city.

## GIZA

When people speak of “The Pyramids of Egypt,” they usually means the three great pyramids on the plateau of Giza, six miles west of Cairo. All three (like most pyramids and tombs) were plundered by grave robbers centuries ago, but perhaps there still remains a hidden passage or chamber waiting to be discovered, and who knows what ancient spells may actually *work* in the right place ...

The pyramids, together with the Sphinx and acres of ancient *mastabas* (tombs), will probably be the visitor’s first taste of Egyptian archaeology. Much of the background about the pyramids and other facets of ancient Egypt can be found in *GURPS Egypt*, and a full description of the Pyramids is found in *GURPS Places of Mystery*, Chapter 3.

## The Sphinx

The great sphinx of Giza is 240 feet long and 66 feet high. It is one of the oldest surviving Egyptian constructs. According to the *stele* (stone monolith) between the paws of the mysterious creature, the Sphinx spoke in a dream to Tuthmosis IV of the XVIIIth Dynasty while he rested from a hunt in the midday sun. If Tuthmosis would uncover the Sphinx, removing the sand that had buried it, then the Sphinx would grant him sovereignty over Egypt. Tuthmosis did so, the Sphinx kept his promise, and Tuthmosis ruled as pharaoh.

The Sphinx is carved from solid rock, but in keeping with the excitement and adventure found in the pulps, it’s likely that the Sphinx of a good *Cliffhangers* campaign is laced with hidden passageways or compartments.

*GURPS Places of Mystery*, p. 34, contains more information on this enigma.

## THEBES

Nearly one million people once lived in Thebes, then the largest city in the world. It now lies in ruin near the modern village of Luxor.

*Luxor*: On the east bank of the Nile lies the small town of Luxor. Visitors may be able to find room and board in one of the few hotels there, but there is little chance of finding much equipment. Boats are available to cross the Nile, and guides can be hired for \$2 a day.

*Gumah*: This tiny village on the west bank of the Nile houses a large number of tomb robbers, many of whom can trace their lineage (and profession) clear back to the New Kingdom era. Gurnah is built over the tombs of ancient nobles, and is criss-crossed with a labyrinth of hidden tunnels used only by the robbers. Gurnah and the robbers function much like a “thieves’ guild” of medieval times; infiltrators will have an almost impossible job.

## EGYPTOLOGY

**ankh**: An Egyptian version of the cross, with a loop at the top and a crosspiece; it represented eternal life.

**canopic jars**: Earthenware vessels that contained the internal organs of mummified persons.

**dynasty**: A succession of rulers from the same family.  
A subdivision of Egyptian history.

**false door**: A stone or wood carving through which the spirit of the dead was to come and partake of the offerings buried in the tomb.

**ka**: Egyptian term for life-force.

**mastaba**: A brick or stone tomb resembling a bench.

**pharaoh**: An Egyptian king, thought to be divine.

**sarcophagus**: An outer stone enclosure containing one or more smaller coffins.

**serdab**: A secret chamber in a mastaba that contains a statue of the occupant.

# ADVENTURING IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA

## Hunting

The 1930s are a great age for safaris. There are comfortable modern cities; the plains and deserts are accessible to cars, trucks, and rough-field airplanes; and portable electric generators can keep the beer cold. Safari clients have a reputation for eccentricity, and a trophy hunt is good cover for less acceptable activities. Great White Hunters can do well, if their nerves can take it.

## Poaching

By the '30s, hunting is already government-controlled in all of Africa. The game laws are strictest and best enforced in British territory, and laxest in Portuguese. Elephant ivory, rhino horn, and leopard skins can be a fortune for a good shot with a ruthless nature (or for a rugged individualist not trammled by the petty rules of a bureaucracy). Protecting the game is a satisfying job for noble spirits, except for the occasional nasty chore such as dealing with a man-eating lion or rogue elephant.

## Soldiering

All of the colonial powers maintain garrisons in Africa, and all of them sometimes see action. Not all the natives appreciate the blessings of civilization. Most of the garrison troops are Africans, with European officers and sometimes European NCOs. Any sophisticated rebels are glad of experienced mercenaries, but "traitors to the white race" don't get prisoner-of-war treatment if they are caught!

## Exploring

A lot of Africa hasn't been mapped yet. Somewhere in the deserts and plains and jungles and mountains may be riches or the solution to riddles. Lost cities, lost mines, lost races, lost civilizations, or maybe just lost explorers may be found almost anywhere. Mysterious native rumors abound: the white queen of the cannibals, the child raised by animals, the huge things that go *Ghroonk!* in the night. Only dauntless searchers will find the answers.

## Cannibals

A good *Cliffhangers* campaign will find cannibalism in many parts of Africa, especially in the Congo region, as well as throughout the islands of the Pacific. Many natives believe that if you eat a portion of your enemy after his death, you gain his strength. This tradition should not be confused with cannibalism for the sake of food.

Some tribes even eat human flesh just for variety. The practice of capturing and "fattening up" other humans is probably not common, but it is up to the GM to determine each tribe's cannibalistic practices.

GMs including cannibals in their campaign are encouraged to find entertaining ways to put the PCs in peril while still providing them an opportunity to escape. Being roasted on a spit or boiled in a large black cauldron (complete with lots of vegetables) are pulp classics.





## Valley of the Kings

Six miles west of the Nile lies the Valley of the Kings. A mere six acres in area, it is packed with tombs of pharaohs and nobles, a queen, a prince, and numerous unknown Egyptians - a total of 57 different sepulchers. It was believed to be completely excavated until Howard Carter uncovered the now-famous tomb of Tutankhamen (see box, p. 52). While a party of adventurers might find it difficult to set up a complex archaeological dig, they may discover yet another New Kingdom tomb if they look hard enough. If a full-scale dig would make for a better adventure, any number of archaeologists - newcomers and veterans alike - might be found excavating a site in search of just one more artifact or clue to the ancient Egyptians.

South and west of the Valley of the Kings lies the Valley of the Nobles. Over 400 noble (but nonroyal) Egyptians are entombed there; all but one are from the New Kingdom.

## The Congo Basin

The heart of Africa is the 600,000 square miles of jungle of the Congo basin. Much of it is still unexplored, and the thick cover protects it from aerial survey. Explorers of the Congo have to go the old-fashioned way, by boat or foot.

Travel through the African jungle is slow and difficult. Temperatures range from 60° to 100°. The jungle harbors an incredible variety of diseases and parasites, and thunder-storms frequently drench the jungle (usually in the late afternoon). The rain is accompanied by lightning and high winds that send broken branches and debris plummeting from the heights. Anyone caught without shelter must roll 3 dice each hour; a 17 or 18 results in 1d+2 damage from falling timber.

"Darkest Africa" refers to the perpetual twilight at ground level, caused by the towering broad-leafed trees. At night it is so dark that a man can put his hand on his nose and not see his fingers wiggle. Nighttime in the jungle is totally dark for those with the Night Vision advantage (see p. B22). Fortunately, these 200-foot monsters prevent excessive undergrowth, making travel easier (and faster) than "normal" jungle travel. Use the *Bad Terrain* modifiers (p. B188) for foot or mounted travel; *Very Bad Terrain* for vehicles.

The Congo River and its tributaries are often the fastest means of travel, in spite of the many falls and rapids that dot its 3,000-mile length.

## Pygmies

Congo pygmies are a group of native bands living in the northeast corner (about 20,000 square miles) of the Congo basin. There are four major Pygmy groups - the Binga, the Tswa, the Gesera, and the Mbuti - with hundreds of smaller bands scattered through the jungle. Some groups are nomadic, while others are farmers with permanent villages.

The Pygmies call their jungle *Ituri*, and their familiarity with it, combined with their diminutive stature, allows them to move silently and almost disappear only a few feet away.

## ADVENTURE SEED: THE SPARKLING HEART OF DARKNESS

Despite the recent advances in exploring the dark continent, there are still rumors flying about the Royal Geographic Society in London. Two months ago, a blackmarket ne'er-do-well sold an uncut diamond to a British gemcutter. The man claimed it had come from a diamond mine deep in the heart of the Congo.

After deliberating for weeks, the Society has finally decided to send in an expedition. The PCs may be hired to arrange and lead it, or simply as additional manpower in whatever capacity they're best suited. The trek will take weeks and the dangers will be many, not the least of which is the strange group of well-dressed Europeans that seem to shadow the expedition as they prepare for their journey.

Has the black marketeer tipped off another group of explorers? Which group will get there first? And when the bullets start to fly, who will be left standing in the middle of darkest Africa?



All Pygmy characters have the Dwarfism disadvantage (see p. B28) but without the penalties to running and jumping, and Stealth at +2. They are not usually warlike, but quickly defend themselves against attack or threats. Each group speaks its own dialect, but there is a 1/3 chance that any individual knows Kingwana.

## The Great Rift Valley

The Great Rift Valley stretches 3,000 miles through east Africa. Beginning in Ethiopia and cutting through Kenya, Tanganyika, and Mozambique, this fissure is from 30 to 50 miles wide and as deep as 2,000 feet. It is bordered by highlands and dotted with mountains, including Africa's highest, Mount Kilimanjaro (19,000 feet) and Mount Kenya (17,000 feet).

Inside the Rift are plains teeming with wildlife: zebra, elephant, antelope, lion, and cheetah. Rising up either side of the fissure are jungles, rain forests, then finally a rugged mountainous highland.

The Rift Valley houses the African "great lakes" complex, including Lake Tanganyika, Lake Victoria, Lake Nyasa, Lake Edward, Lake Albert, and Lake Rudolph. These deep-water lakes are unique in Africa; other surface water (such as Lake Chad) tends to be shallow, marshy, and seasonal. They are the scene of extensive boat traffic and some of the best fishing and crocodile hunting in the world.

## The Masai

On the plains east of the Rift Valley live the Masai. The Masai live on the dry grasslands, sustaining themselves with extensive herds of cattle, sheep, and goats. None are farmers, believing that God gave them the cattle and hence it is unworthy of a Masai man or woman to work the soil for food.

The Masai were once a fierce warrior people. They killed lions with stabbing spear and shield, and raided all the surrounding tribes for loot and slaves. They believed that all cattle were Masai cattle; anyone else with cows either stole them from the Masai or misappropriated Masai strays. Masai raids were simply to recover property and chastise the thieves. Masai warriors lived for battle, and considered defeat to be worse than death.

By the 1930s, the Masai had been pacified by the British. The British had been so successful in convincing the Masai that war was wrong that they refused to provide troops for the British in the World War. Adventure writers preferred to portray them in their martial glory of the 19th century; GMs have the same option. Masai fighters are colorful, with capes of lion skin and decorations of fur and feathers. They are armed with spears, medium shields, and short chopping swords. Use the stats on p. B76 for shields and p. B206 for spears and swords, with these changes: the shields have only 10 hits and the swords cannot thrust.

## The Zulu

The Zulu are probably the best known African tribe. They have a deserved reputation as fierce and ruthless fighters. By the 1930s this was history; the last Zulu uprising of any size had been in 1907. The Zulu had been incorporated within the Union of South Africa and lived on steadily shrinking native reserves.

As with the Masai, adventure writers preferred the warrior image to the peaceful reality, and such an approach should be encouraged in a *Cliffhangers* campaign. Visitors to Zulu territory will find themselves among arrogant and savage warriors. Chiefs have absolute authority; a chief can order any of his people to commit suicide and be obeyed. Only the tribal wizards have any power independent of the chiefs; they can accuse anyone of malignant witchcraft for which the automatic sentence is death. Strangers have no rights; they are slaves at best and animals at worst. They can survive if they can interest a chief or if they have enough firepower.

Zulu warriors are not as colorful as the Masai. They are armed with medium shield, assegai, and knobkerrie. The assegai is a spear, short in the haft and long in the blade, intended for stabbing. The knobkerrie is a club with a knob head; treat it as a baton (p. B207). Otherwise, unarmed Zulu normally carry a knobkerrie as a walking stick.

Zululand begins with a low, swampy, densely grown coastal plain. Inland the country turns into rolling hills filled with wildlife and Zulu cattle. The Zulu speak their own language.

## THE IVORY TRADE

Ivory is obtained primarily from Africa, where elephant tusks are larger than in Asia (African tusks average 50 pounds of ivory, with some over 200 pounds). Ivory is generally classified as live (from recently killed elephants) or dead (tusks stored or left to lie for extended periods). Fresh ivory comes in various degrees of hardness, and becomes harder and more brittle with age. The soft variety (obtainable primarily from the eastern part of Africa) is easier to work with and commands a higher price. Green, or guinea, ivory denotes a type of ivory that comes primarily from a swath of north central Africa covering both coasts.

By 1900, England and the U.S. were importing more than 1.5 million tons of ivory *per year*. The ivory trade had nearly wiped out Africa's elephant population. Restrictions on hunting by native Africans were imposed by the colonial powers, primarily in an effort to force Africans into cheap labor and to preserve the elephant population for European safari hunts. By the 1930s, however, ivory exports were once again on the rise. Some efforts were still in place to protect African wildlife (including a 13,000-square-mile game preserve in Kenya, complete with dozens of game wardens), but Europeans were largely given free rein when it came to safari hunting (the actual ban on exporting ivory wasn't imposed until 1989).

Prices for raw ivory vary based on age and quality, from about 25 cents to \$1.00 per pound.

## THE ELEPHANTS' GRAVEYARD

Rumors abound of a legendary place where elephants go to die, and speculation about its existence and location is rampant. Some of the more bizarre stories of the Elephants' Graveyard include the tale of an arcane tome full of spells and rituals that can bring either peace or destruction upon the land.

The location of the Graveyard, if it truly exists, is still a mystery. One legend places it deep in the deserts of Saudi Arabia, near Yemen. Expeditions sent into that area in search of it have vanished. Did they die of dehydration? Were they attacked by desert raiders? Some say it was the guardians of the Graveyard that devoured them. The exact nature of these guardians remains a mystery even to the storytellers.

Other stories place the Graveyard in the heart of Africa - a more likely place. One tribe believes that the elephants, when about to die, trek to a valley deep in the mountains, reached by a narrow pass with sheer walls of stone. There, it is said, they lie down to die on the shores of a beautiful lake.

In *The Jungle Tide*, published in London in 1930, John Still states that he had heard of a "mysterious cavern in the lost valley" near Sri Pada. Still attempted to find it, but failed.

Even the best trackers, following elephants near death, are unable to find such a place, often being led in circles by the dying beasts. Despite man's attempts to find this mythical place, many of the stories say that one day the elephants themselves will lead man to the sacred ground and the land shall enter a new age ...





From fighting ninjas in Japan to stealing plans from the Kremlin, adventurers in eastern Europe and Asia will find plenty to keep them busy. It is a vast region full of surprises...

# Japan

The archipelago of Japan is made up of four main islands of the coast of East Asia - from north to south, Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. The remainder of the country consists of a multitude of small islands spread out in an arc between the Sea of Japan, the East China Sea, and the Pacific Ocean. Honshu is the largest and most populated island, and includes most major cities.

Two thirds of Japan's surface is taken up by mountains, the highest and most famous of which is Mount Fuji. Many are volcanic, and all impede transportation and agriculture. The rest of the land is covered with short rivers and irregular lakes, forested mountain slopes, and small but fertile plains. The climate is humid and ranges from cold to subtropical. Rainfall is plentiful and typhoons and earthquakes are frequent.

## POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

During the Great War, Japan sided with the Allied forces, playing only a minor role as she fought against German colonial forces in East Asia. Prior to, and during the War, Japan faced an unstable economy that only worsened after the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 that shook Tokyo and Yokohama, killing some 140,000 people. With the beginning of the Depression in 1929, Japan's economy hit bottom.

### DEATH BEFORE SURRENDER

Japanese troops during this period are often remembered for the brutal absolutism of giving their life before surrendering to the enemy. But during WWI, Japanese troops were noted for their restraint and good treatment of prisoners of war. It was only with the rising militarism in Japan during the interwar years that the culture resurrected the ancient "death before surrender" philosophy. Hence, it is not unusual for characters in military conflict with Japan to find an odd mixture of honor, restraint, brutality, and fatalism.

#### Kamikaze

Kamikaze is a Japanese word meaning "Divine Wind." It was first applied to monsoons that destroyed Mongol fleets invading Japan in the late 13th century, but on October 21, 1944 the first Japanese aircraft made a suicidal ramming attempt at the *HMAS Australia*. Other attempts soon took place, and on October 25, 10 aircraft succeeded in sinking the escort carrier *St. Lo* and damaging five other ships.

Contrary to popular legend, kamikaze attacks weren't very good at sinking ships, but they did succeed in doing immense damage. More details can be found in **GURPS WWII** and its related supplements.

During the 1930s, the military began to establish control of the government by means of assassinations, persecution, and imprisonment, and military officers soon occupied most important political positions, including that of the Prime Minister.

When the Chinese Nationalists began to challenge Japan's position in Manchuria in 1931, the Kwantung Army (Japanese armed forces in Manchuria) moved in. In the following year, occupied Manchuria - "Manchukuo" - was declared an independent state, controlled by the Kwantung Army through a puppet government. In the same year, the Japanese air force bombarded Shanghai in order to protect Japanese residents from anti-Japanese movements. Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in 1933 after heavy criticism for the attack against China. By 1937, Japan was involved in the Sino-Japanese war (see p. 61).

By 1940, Japan occupied French Indochina and had joined sides with Germany and Italy to form the Axis powers. Great Britain and the U.S. reacted to the alliance with an oil boycott, putting pressure on Japan to attack the oil-rich Dutch East Indies. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the Allies at Pearl Harbor and several other points throughout the South Pacific, bringing the U.S. fully into World War II. For more details, see **GURPS WWII** and related supplements.

### Emperor Hirohito

Born in 1901, Michinomiya Hirohito became emperor of Japan in 1926 when he succeeded his father, Yoshihito. His reign was called *Showa*, or "Enlightened Peace."

The Japanese constitution provided him with supreme authority, but in reality he only ratified policies formulated by his ministers and advisers. Some historians claim Hirohito had misgivings about war with the United States, and that he opposed Japan's alliance with Germany and Italy, but that he was powerless to resist the militarists who dominated the government. Others claim that he was involved in the planning of Japan's expansionist policies from 1931 onward.

## RELIGION

Two religions dominate Japan: Shinto and Buddhism. Most Japanese actually follow both faiths.

### Shinto

Shinto is an ancient religion, native to Japan. Its origins can only be traced as far back as the fifth century, when Chinese writing was introduced into Japan. Prior to that time, the myths and rituals were handed down orally.

The Shinto doctrine holds that there is no one deity supreme over all. The gods were given various ranks, and the one who held the highest position was called the sun goddess, the Ruler of Heaven. The emperors of Japan are said to be descended from the sun goddess *Amaterasu-o-mi-kami*; thus, the emperor was looked upon as being divine. This ancient mythology was used to glorify the emperor and the state, and state-supported Shinto became a powerful instrument in the hands of the military, which used it to support their policy of aggression.



It is not unusual for characters in military conflict with Japan to find an odd mixture of honor, restraint, brutality, and fatalism.

## Buddhism

Buddhism is as much a philosophical discipline as a religion. Founded in 525 B.C. by Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha), it is one of the world's largest religions. It is divided into two main schools: the Theravada or Hinayana, in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, and the Mahayana, in China, Mongolia, Korea, and Japan. Interestingly, Buddhism has largely disappeared from India, its country of origin, except for a handful of refugees from Tibet and a small number of converts from the lower castes of Hinduism.

There are "four noble truths" to all forms of Buddhism:

1. *Dukha*: Life is suffering.
2. *Trishna*: Suffering has a cause - craving and attachment.

3. *Nirvana*: There is an end to suffering.

4. *The eightfold path* is the path to *nirvana*. This path consists of accuracy and tightness in views, resolve, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration. Buddhism typically describes reality in terms of process and relation rather than physicality or substance.

Another key doctrine in Buddhism is *karma*, which states that one's state in this life is a result of actions in past lives.

From a practical standpoint, visitors to Asia will find that devout Buddhists spend much time in meditation and attempt to uphold five basic moral precepts: take no life, do not steal, do not act unchastely, do not speak falsely, and do not drink intoxicants. Some monastic orders take additional vows, including restrictions in eating at improper times, viewing entertainment, adorning their bodies (even with perfumes), sleeping in high or spacious beds, and receiving money.

Numerous ritualistic and devotional practices have developed in Buddhism, such as the worship of *stupas* (burial mounds containing religious relics). More information on unusual Buddhist rituals and monastic orders can be found on p. 67.

## FEUDAL JAPAN

Though the feudal arrangement in Japan had been eliminated in the Meiji restoration of 1868, the pulps often favored bringing back ancient *samurai* warriors and masterminds reminiscent of the *daimyo* of old. PCs on an espionage adventure in the opening years of WWII will be surprised to find a wizened Japanese lord commanding a

troop of sword-wielding samurai. Adventures in this vein can be made even more interesting by throwing in some ancient Oriental magic . . .

## Bushido

Bushido, literally "way of the warrior," represents the traditional code of the samurai, involving honor, bravery and self-discipline. It originally grew from the feudal bond between vassal and lord, requiring unwavering loyalty, and borrowed heavily from Zen Buddhism and Chinese Confucianism. After the Meiji restoration, it was the basis for emperor worship, taught until Hirohito repudiated his divinity in 1946.

An Oriental mastermind employing a strict Japanese code of conduct may adhere to the bushido code and be a more honorable, respecting enemy. Instead of employing a group of mindless thugs, he may well consider his henchmen samurai, and require them to adhere to the bushido code as well. PCs engaged with such a nemesis may or may not follow a similar route, but those violating the code will be viewed as dishonorable and treated as unworthy of respect.

## Samurai

Samurai were originally knights of feudal Japan, retainers of the *daimyo* (Japanese lords). They formed an aristocratic warrior class whose members were privileged to wear two swords and were at one time given the right to kill any commoner who offended them. Samurai cultivated martial virtues (including adherence to the bushido code), as well as an indifference to pain or death.

Samurai warriors in the employ of a Japanese mastermind will be tougher, smarter and more honorable than the average villain's henchmen. Samurai without a *daimyo* were called *ronin*.

More details about both samurai and bushido can be found in *GURPS Japan*.

## NINJAS

The Ninjas of the pulps were more than mortal men. They were demons who could walk on water or pass through walls, wander through a crowded room unnoticed, enter a locked bedchamber, and vanish into thin air after assassinating its occupant...

Their dedication and patience were legendary. A ninja assassin would wait in a hidden spot for hours or even days until the target was within range, then strike. They were unparalleled in the arts of deception, stealth, misdirection, and combat, and used all manner of poisons and gadgets to instill fear in their enemies and employers alike.

PCs may encounter bands of ninjas in Japan, but it is just as likely a group of the shadowy assassins will show up in the U.S., hired by an inscrutable Oriental mastermind with death and destruction on his mind.

For a complete look at ninjas, both real and cinematic, see *GURPS Martial Arts*, especially pp. 10-12.

# Russia

*"I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."*

- Winston Churchill

Communist agitation, subversion, and espionage was worldwide, and in the pulps was shown to be even more widespread and effective than it really was. Communist agents (see *Comintern*, p. 7) were active in Labor and Social-ist movements in nearly every non-Communist country, including the United States.

## Foreign Affairs

Russia's relations with China collapsed during the victorious Northern Expedition of 1926-27, led by the Kuomintang leader Chiang Kai-shek. This disaster caused the Comintern (see the box, p. 7) to instruct foreign Communist parties to concentrate on opposition to left-wing parties (social democrats, Laborites, and moderate socialists).

Diplomatic relations were restored with Great Britain in 1929, but not entirely, and France remained violently opposed

to the "Bolshevik Menace" until about 1932. In 1933, Russia became a member nation of the League of Nations.

China was a hotbed of Russian complications, both White (anti-Soviet) and Red (Communist). Both Chiang and Mao were allied with the Bolsheviks at various times, and both official and unofficial Russian military missions and agents were very common there. An extensive White Russian community, complete with organized mercenary units, was set up to further anti-Soviet activities.

Russia maintained a huge military and a massive internal police apparatus, largely to check internal dissent. The civil war against the Bolsheviks had lasted until the mid-1920s, and pockets of resistance may have still been active in the '30s. Stalin's policies, including the murder of millions of his countrymen, were not universally beloved. Foreign or Russian adventurers might try to topple the Man of Steel. On a less elevated plane, many an aristocrat left Mother Russia after hiding the family treasures in anticipation of a return. The '30s is a good time for an attempt at recovery. Stalin was actively recruiting western engineers and technicians for his expanding industry. Unfortunately, the Communist police have suspicious natures, short tempers, and no concept of rights of the accused.





## THE MAD MONK

Grigory Rasputin, a debauched mystic from Siberia, arrived in St. Petersburg in 1911 and soon became one of the most controversial and influential men in government circles. His reputation as a drunken, womanizing thief was well deserved. At the Verkhoturye Monastery, Rasputin discovered a renegade sect of the Russian Orthodox Church called the Skopsty (or Khlisti). Followers of this sect believed the way to God was through sin; only by committing sin and confessing could the penitent achieve forgiveness. Rasputin, one of the biggest sinners in Russia, was thrilled by the potential in that doctrine. Almost immediately, Rasputin adopted the robes of a monk, developed his own self-gratifying doctrines, and traveled the country as a *staretz*, or holy man, sinning to his heart's content.

Rasputin soon began to influence the politics of Russia, through his relationship with Nicholas II's wife, Alexandra. Nicholas' son and heir to the throne, Alexis, suffered from hemophilia, and only Rasputin had the power to do what the top medics could not: he could stop the boy's bleeding. This mysterious ability to heal her son by waving his hands over the boy's body convinced Alexandra that Rasputin had been sent by God to protect her son.

Rasputin's life was full of mysterious events. When a train derailed near St. Petersburg, the Tsarina's closest friend, Anya Vyubova, was nearly killed. Rasputin stood over her crushed and mangled body as she lay near death. Though doctors claimed they could not save her life, Rasputin reached out and took her hand. Soaked with sweat and staring intently at the near-dead woman, Rasputin called out, "Annushka, Annushka, rise!" Anna suddenly awoke from her coma, opened her eyes, and tried to rise. As Rasputin stumbled from her room,

he spoke prophetically, saying she would be crippled for the rest of her life. And so it came to be ...

In December, 1916, a group of aristocrats led by the Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich Romanov decided Rasputin had become too powerful. After inviting him to the palace of Felix Felixovich Yusupovsky, they led him to the cellar and fed him chocolate cakes and wine, both laced with potassium cyanide. Rasputin complained of a burning sensation in his stomach, but otherwise there was no effect. Yusupovsky fetched a pistol and shot him point blank in the chest. The group checked the body to be certain the monk was dead, but when Yusupovsky returned later, the lifeless corpse rose and grabbed Yusupovsky in a stranglehold. Yusupovsky stabbed Rasputin and fled. Rasputin ran from the cellar and left the castle... where he was shot, beaten, tied up, and thrown into the river.

Was Rasputin a miracle worker or just a tough, crafty manipulator of the Imperial Family? Witnesses, including doctors and skeptics, were certain he possessed some inexplicable powers including the power to heal. Others claim his eyes changed colors as he spoke. It is said Rasputin predicted his own death, and that people often felt compelled to do things while in his presence, and even when he was hundreds of miles away.

Was Rasputin's body truly recovered from the river, or did he somehow survive the assassination? And even if it was his body that was later exhumed and burned, could the monk have survived from beyond the grave? What arcane secrets are hidden in Rasputin's diaries? Do the remaining followers of the Skopsty sect hold the key to the evil monk's supernatural powers?

## China

During most of the decade, China was in a civil war. Two of the many factions were the Nationalists (Kuomintang or KMT), led by Chiang Kai-shek, and the Communists, led by Mao Tse-tung. Besides these two political forces, there were numerous lesser warlords (Yen Hsi-shan in Shansi, Li Tsung-jen in Kwangsi, and Chang Hsueh-liang in Manchuria; local militants in Yunnan, Szechwan, and Sinkiang; and Communist regimes in Hunan-Kiangsi and then in Shensi). All of these factions hired mercenaries, attracted volunteers, and did business with foreign companies. Really daring adventurers might try to collect bounties; there was a \$1,000,000 KMT reward for the assassination of Mao Tse-tung, for instance!

China was full of political intrigue during the decade. Russian spies, soldiers, diplomats, and mercenaries could be found throughout most of China (see *Russia*, p. 60), and foreign troops and gunboats occupied parts of the country.

Chapter 9 covers the pulp cliché, "the inscrutable Chinese villain." Details on ancient China can be found in *GURPS China*. Characters may encounter "Two-Gun" Cohen in China. Much more information on "Two-Gun" may be found in *GURPS Who's Who 1*, pp. 120-121.

## The Sino-Japanese War

In 1937, skirmishes between China and Japan over the control of Manchuria finally resulted in war. On July 7 of that year, Japan attacked China near Peking (at the Marco Polo Bridge). Shanghai was taken in November after intensive battles with the Nationalist Army, and Nanking fell (with horrible Japanese atrocities) in December. By the end of 1938, Japan controlled North and Central China, most of the coastline including all the main coastal cities, and all modern lines of communications. Faced by a common foe, the Nationalist and Communist parties joined forces against Japan (in some instances, as early as 1933), all the while preparing for the confrontation that would come when Japan was defeated.

## Terrain and Climate

Geographically, China is an enormous, isolated nation. It is bordered by mountains, jungles, deserts, and the Pacific Ocean. In the 1930s it is a nation mostly (80%) of rural farmers. Attempts to modernize have been difficult because of foreign interference and the ongoing civil war.

## THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

This mammoth monument, some 1,900 miles long, was originally built two centuries before Christ to keep out the raiding steppe tribes. It is lined on either side by a crenellated parapet, and is topped by a 12-foot walkway. Guard towers (or beacon towers) are spaced along its entire length, which seems to take the most difficult route through the roughest terrain. At times the route is so steep that to follow the walkway one must use hands and feet and climb the stones like a ladder!

Why did the builders of the Wall choose such a difficult path when other, easier routes were available? One legend says that a great winged horse showed the way, and wherever the horse flew - no matter how steep or serpentine the course - the workers had to follow. What is the real reason? No one knows.

The most macabre fact about the wall is that untold thousands of workers died during construction and were hurled into the trench between the two walls and covered over. It has been called "the longest cemetery in the world."

Most of southeast China is a wet farmland: a low, flat plain, watered by the Yangtze River. Travelers in this area will find numerous, lakes and canals and fields of rice, mulberries and sugar cane. The weather is hot in the summer and so humid that mildew and mold can form overnight, wreaking havoc with equipment (see p. CII6). The winters are pleasantly warm and not as wet. Farmers work the fields year-round.

North, across the Chin Ling mountains, lie the Loess Plateau and the Yellow River. The river gets its name from the loess (wind-blown dust settled into clay) that filters into it and turns the waters murky yellow. Beyond the loess is the fertile farmland of the Manchurian plain. Here is the national capital, Peking (officially renamed Peiping in 1928, but usually called Peking by westerners). The weather here is dry and very cold in the winter.

Western China is part of the highlands of Central Asia. It contains the vast grasslands and deserts of the Mongolian plateau and a waste of unmapped mountains and forests. Its climate is extreme; it is bitter cold in winter (and always in the high mountains) but the deserts and plains are blazing hot in summer. It is a paradise of information for scholars; anthropologists, archaeologists, historians, and paleontologists all have competing theories that might be proved somewhere in Western China. It is also a less-academic battleground. Warlords, bandits, political factions, mercenary leaders, and the Bolshevik Menace all have armed forces in the area.

## TRANSPORTATION

The transportation system of China is a mix of medieval and modern. Oxcart, horseback, and foot suffice for most; camels are common in the western deserts. The major cities

are linked by rail, and intrigue on the railroads is a frequent adventure plot. Motor vehicles exist, but parts, fuel, and decent roads are rare. On the other hand, much of Mongolia is accessible to cars, which can speed over the plains and desert. By the '30s, there are a lot of airplanes in China (almost all of them obsolete military craft), but very few airfields. Experienced bush pilots may be able to put down on any piece of flat ground, but the chances of fuel, parts or skilled assistance are small. Often a trip breaks into two phases; 20th century to the end of the track, then the age of Marco Polo.

## Waterways

This is the most common form of native transportation. From the lengthy Yangtze River to the multitude of tiny canals that criss-cross the southeast, the waters teem with traffic. Whole families live their entire lives in boats, fishing or hauling small cargoes. A stranger who needs a lift will probably be accommodated; it is polite to offer at least a few coins or a gift. (Make a reaction roll; on Excellent or better, the boatman will go out of his way to get the stranger to his desired destination.) Long-distance river travel averages 1d cents per mile per person on Chinese boats. This may vary depending on the boat, the river, the weather, and the boat owner's mood. Hagglng is a Chinese national sport.

European-owned and -officered merchant ships run the major rivers and along the coast. Fares are considerably higher, but a desperate Westerner can probably hitch a ride. (Make a reaction roll; on Poor or better, the captain will grant a ride. "White men must stand together against the yellow heathen!") The captain's responsibility is the safety of his ship and cargo. If violence breaks out or the boat is attacked because of the hitchhikers, he will probably demand that they leave as soon as possible.

*The Grand Canal.* This great, man-made waterway connects the cities of Hangchow and Tientsin - a distance of more than 1,000 miles. Construction started during the 5th century B.C. and continued on and off for almost 2,500 years. It can handle shallow-draft vessels of up to 500 tons.

## CLIPPER FLYING BOATS

The first air crossing of the Pacific was in 1928, but the first passenger flight occurred November 22, 1935, in the *China Clipper*. The flight from San Francisco to Manila cost \$675 per person, and carried 22 passengers. Due to difficulty in climbing, the pilot flew the Clipper *under* the Bay Bridge shortly after takeoff.

The transpacific route began in San Francisco, made stops in Honolulu, Wake Island, and Guam, and ended in Manila. The Glenn L. Martin Company provided three M-130 Flying Boats (the *China Clipper*, the *Philippine Clipper*, and the *Hawaii Clipper*) each capable of carrying 41 passengers. For the transpacific route, however, only 14 seats were installed.

In April 1937, the Sikorsky S-42B *Hong Kong Clipper* extended the Manila route to Hong Kong. Service to Auckland, New Zealand was added later that year.





## Piracy and Gunboats

Piracy is a traditional Chinese occupation, both on the rivers and the high seas. Most pirate craft are indistinguishable from honest vessels until the crew breaks out weapons. Because of piracy, the Europeans in the crew of any ship are armed and the ship carries rifles and possibly even automatic weapons. A favorite pirate tactic is to travel as passengers (Chinese passengers are strictly segregated from the Europeans) and infiltrate or suborn the crew. Once under way they hijack the ship and kill anyone who is not ransomable or salable.

Partly to combat pirates, but mostly to assert European rights over Chinese, the powers (especially Great Britain and the U.S.) maintain gunboats on the major rivers. (They also maintain squadrons of conventional warships in the major ports.) The gunboats are shallow-draft steamers, most dating to the turn of the century. They are of little use in a naval battle, but with machine guns, light artillery, steam hoses, and armed sailors and marines, they can fight pirates or anti-foreign rioters. By long custom, they aid any foreigner who is in trouble with the Chinese.

## SHANGHAI

Shanghai is the largest city in China, and perhaps the most exciting. Shanghai is really two cities. The Chinese city is crowded, sinful, and poor. The European city (the International Settlement and the adjoining French Concession) is crowded, sinful, and rich. The European city is governed and garrisoned by French, British, Italian, and U.S. forces. After 1937 the Chinese city is controlled by the Japanese.

# ADVENTURES IN CHINA

## China Seas

European ships are tempting targets for Chinese pirates; they are rich and capturing them can be seen as a patriotic act, in resistance to the unequal treaties forced on China by foreigners. Visitors to China might get involved in piracy in several ways. They might be on a pirated ship; they might be trying to rescue a pirate captive; they might be trying to wipe out a pirate nest. A ruthless group might go into piracy themselves; if they leave no witnesses it will be blamed on the local villains.

## Gunboat Diplomats

The U.S. gunboats on the rivers of China were home to a special breed of sailor. They signed up for enlistment after enlistment for the good living and excitement of a berth at China Station. An American sailor's pay in China was wealth; there was always the chance of a tight with pirates or rioters.

Adventurers could be members of a gunboat's crew or perhaps intelligence agents using the gunboat for cover. Gunboats also make an excellent *deus ex machina* if adventurers in China need aid.

## The Tuchun Wars

*Tuchun* means military governor; it is usually translated into English as "warlord." The military governors controlled the armies in their own provinces; they had to pay and feed them without much help from the central government so they had little motive to obey its orders. By the '30s, the Kuomintang was much more powerful than it had been in the '20s, but independent tuchuns still made deals with each other, with the Communists, and even with the Japanese. All of them employed foreign mercenaries. Adventurers might be technical advisers (aviators, gunnery experts, military engineers) or just good, modern soldiers. They might be representatives of a foreign business after sales or concessions. Anyone with access to a warlord is suspected of being a spy; maybe the suspicion is correct!

## The Forbidden City

The Forbidden City is located in Peking, and was the home of Chinese royalty since the time of the Ming dynasty (early 15th century). Commoners were never allowed to enter the city, which was surrounded by a moat and ornate, but functional walls. It was home to the palaces of ancient emperors, and included white-marble terraces, sculpted gardens, and shrines. The 250-acre red and gold complex contained nearly 10,000 rooms spanning some 2.5 million square feet!

Adventurers in China will find the Forbidden City a place of intrigue and mystery, even during the '20s and '30s, when much of the complex had been ravaged by fire and left to decay. GMs wishing to include the Forbidden City in their adventures would do well to turn to the Internet for detailed information on both the city and the last emperor, P'u Yi.

## THE STONE OF HEAVEN

Of all the precious stones in the world, few hold the same allure and mystery as jade. Called “yu” by the Chinese, jade is a durable, easily carved green stone found throughout China and southeast Asia.

Myths and legends about jade abound. Chinese bridegrooms traditionally presented jade butterflies to their brides. Newlyweds would drink from a jade goblet in confirmation of their vows. Powdered jade, thought to contain life-extending power, was mixed in drinking water. Jade bowls were used at meals, so that the power could seep into the food.

Jade comes in colors other than green, but is often dyed green to increase its desirability.

The International Settlement is policed by a British-officered force that is one of the toughest in the world. The rule of the police is that nothing is allowed to interfere with business or disturb the European residents. They prefer to let the Chinese authorities and criminals settle their own problems outside the settlement. Besides the criminal conflicts, Chinese political factions, Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik Russians, Nazi and anti-Nazi Germans, and many other combinations fight their private wars in Shanghai. Through it all, the businessmen continue their quest for profit.

Gambling houses, nightclubs, brothels, and curio shops line the narrow and twisting streets. One without Area Knowledge (Shanghai) is likely to become lost very quickly. Street signs and markers are in Chinese and one narrow, winding street looks much like another.

Nearly anything in the world - legal or otherwise - can be bought and sold in Shanghai. It is no surprise that it is called “The Wonderland of the Adventurers.” Room, board, and equipment in Shanghai are at standard prices. Sporting guns and ammunition are readily available (hunting is a high-status sport) and handguns are easy to find. Almost every European owns at least one. Military arms are available both legally (at listed prices) and on the black market (1d+1 x listed price). Purchasing military arms may attract unpleasant attention from any of the conflicting elements. A translator/guide can be hired for a dollar a day; an exchange of favors with one of the local powers may get a better one.

## PEKING

Peking (also called Beijing) was already an ancient city when the great Mongol, Kublai Khan, conquered it and made it the capital of China. It is the cultural center of the nation, full of theaters, museums, immense libraries, mysterious temples and (within the red-walled Imperial City) royal palaces. A string of lakes cuts through the center of the city, and small parks are interspersed with decorative buildings, making it one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

In 1900, during the Boxer Rebellion, the Chinese rebels besieged the embassy compound in Peking. Since then, foreign garrisons (U.S., British, French, and Japanese) have defended the embassies and looked out for the interests of

their nationals. Perhaps because of this reminder of defeat the Nationalist Chinese moved the capital to Nanking in 1928 and renamed the old capital Peiping. Chinese officials insist on the new name, but most foreigners keep to the old.

## Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia is a land made for adventure. It is a world of mystery and mortal danger, sparkling gems and ancient ruins. Here death stalks the unexplored jungles, the mad scientist sets up his hidden lab, the exiled mandarin plots world domination, and Frank Buck promises to “Bring ‘Em Back Alive!”

## FRENCH INDOCHINA

In the late 19th century, France established a protectorate called Indochina, encompassing modern-day Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. It was beset by political unrest fomented by the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang (VNQDD) and Ho Chi Minh’s Indochina Communist Party (ICP). Both groups used terrorist tactics in an effort to overthrow French colonialism. In 1930, the VNQDD launched the Yen Bay Revolt by stirring up Vietnamese troops in the French army. The French quickly suppressed the uprising and effectively destroyed the VNQDD. The more-successful ICP continued fighting against French rule throughout the decade. They often trained at the Whampoa Military Academy - a Chinese military training camp - where ICP members learned martial arts and guerrilla tactics to use against the French mines and plantations of Indochina.

Ruthless French retaliation increased local support for independence. In 1936, the French Popular Front government eased its opposition to the ICP, releasing members from prison and allowing them more political freedom. In 1940, pro-Vichy forces took control of the region and began cooperating with Japan. By 1941, the Japanese military occupied the entire colony.

## The Ruins of Angkor

French Indochina is home to the ruins of Angkor, a complex of over 100 buildings dating back to the ninth through 13th centuries. A restoration work financed by the French government was well underway during the ’20s and ’30s.

The most impressive and well-known Angkor temple is Angkor Wat. This temple, devoted to Vishnu, covers 200 acres and is surrounded by a wide moat. Balustrades shaped like giant serpents line the causeway leading to the enormous entrance gate.

The ruins of Angkor Thorn lie a short distance to the north. This walled complex covers 15 square miles and is surrounded by a moat that was once infested with crocodiles. A square wall, 25 feet high, surrounds the city; it is broken by four gates, each topped with four smiling, enigmatic human faces - likenesses of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. Each face points in a cardinal direction.

At the center of Angkor Thorn lies the Bayon, an imposing group of over 50 stone towers, each carved with the same four smiling faces as the gates. From a distance, the Bayon looks like a natural rock formation, complete with giant,



jutting stalagmites. Up close, however, the Bayon is positively haunting. Bas-reliefs and carvings of women, *apsara* (cherubs), dancers, and war are everywhere, and the ever-smiling faces of the enigmatic Buddha watch from all sides.

GMs may wish to create a fictional archaeological site stocked with man-eating tigers, giant crocodile guardians, labyrinthine tunnels, deadly stone traps, and ancient magics. And who knows what secrets are hidden in the bas-reliefs!

See *GURPS Places of Mystery*, pp. 58-59, for more information.

## BURMA

Burma was controlled by the British Raj of India until 1937, when it became a self-governing protectorate. In 1940, Rangoon University student Aung San negotiated with Japan to train and equip his nationalist supporters. He soon became the leader of the Burmese Independence Army in Bangkok, which marched into Burma with the invading Japanese in 1942. Burma saw heavy fighting during the war; see pp. W23 and W32.

Burma is home to some of the finest gems in the world. It is especially known for its star rubies, characterized by their bright red color and silver rays. The legendary Delong Star Ruby - a 100.3-carat stone worth over \$20,000 - was discovered in Burma in the 1930s.

## BRITISH MALAYA

The Malaysian archipelago sits on the crossroads of European, Oriental, and Indian trade routes; it is a melting pot of peoples, societies, and customs. Although Malaya was once a bastion of Hindu-Buddhism, Arab traders introduced Islam in the 13th century. In 1511, the Portuguese invaded, and were later ousted by the Dutch. Britain acquired Melaka (or Malacca) in 1824, creating the Straits Settlements - Melaka, Penang, and Singapore. On April 1, 1867, the Straits Settlements became a Crown Colony controlled by the British Colonial Office in London.

## Singapore

Singapore exemplifies Malaysia's diversity. It is a cosmopolitan city complete with British naval and military bases, and is home to exiles, merchants, spies, diplomats, and soldiers of fortune. Nearly anything can be bought or sold for a price - guns, opium, gemstones, ancient artifacts, military secrets, even slaves.

## Malay Pirates

The pirates that operated off the Malaysian coast for centuries had their heyday in the late 1800s. But despite British prosecution, bands were still operating well into the 1930s. In the pulps, Malay pirates were bold sailors and formidable enemies who took as much delight in violence as they did in gaining spoil. They favored the South China Sea and the Straits of Malacca, but could be found almost anywhere if it was dramatically appropriate. Most operated in large groups, relying on numbers to overwhelm their opponents at sea, on land, or on the blood-slicked deck of a Chinese junk.

## SIAM

Siam is unique among the countries of southeast Asia - it is a fully independent monarchy. This distinction attracts political intrigue only found here. Heroes in Siam could become embroiled in cloak-and-dagger adventures, leading up to the border war with French Indochina in 1941. Combat veterans would be a welcome addition to either side... if the subtleties of the spy game aren't enough. In 1939, Siam gained a democratic government and the country's name changed to Thailand.

## THE ISLANDS

The Netherlands and Britain own the major islands of Southeast Asia. These isolated locales provide an excellent backdrop for adventures involving dark jungles, lost cities, headhunters, pirate dens, and more! After 1940, when Germany invades the Netherlands, there is an increasing Nazi presence in Dutch colonies. GMs looking to spice up their campaign may find that a hidden zeppelin base or jungle-shrouded laboratory is just what they need!

## Java

The powerful Borobudur temple, the largest Mahayana Buddhist monument in the world, stands atop a hill in central Java south of Magelang, while the nearby Pramaanan (or Lorojonggrang) temple complex is still being uncovered and restored during the 1930s. On a plateau a few miles south of Lorojonggrang lies Ratu Boko, whose origins still have not been determined. Some believe Ratu Boko was once a palace, others a monastery, still others a royal park or a fortress. Will stalwart adventurers be able to uncover the *real* truth about the ancient ruin?

## Sumatra

Sumatra is an island of jungles, volcanoes, canyons, swamps, fertile plains, and lakes, including Lake Toba, a large lake in the north. It is home to elephants, tigers, bears, leopards, and many species of snake. The most tropical of all islands in the region, it has rightly been called the "Africa of Asia."

## TIGERS

Southeast Asia is home to several subspecies of tiger. Basic information about tigers is found on p. BE36. GMs should use the optional man-eating rules listed there to give tiger in *Cliffhangers* a crafty, dangerous edge.

The Indochinese tiger, also called Corbett's tiger (named after veteran tiger hunter Jim Corbett), is native to Burma, Siam, Indochina, and Malaya. It is reclusive and favors remote forests and mountainous terrain.

Sumatran tigers live exclusively in the jungles of Sumatra, staying near water to cool off during hot days. They enjoy swimming, and are unafraid to chase their prey into deep water.

# ADVENTURING IN INDIA

## The Great Game

The Government of India needs a lot of information to do its job. Its intelligence service is famous. The agents, whether native Indian or British, are famous for their ability to mimic accents, assume disguises, and blend into any background. The government might hire an occasional mercenary, but reluctantly. They prefer some motivation other than money. They would welcome the assistance of allies.

Agents of the Indian Government also make a great *deus ex machina*. The beautiful American girl and her stalwart companion are doomed! The starving tiger, released by Sergeieff the Bolshevik Monster, will be on them in an instant. Suddenly an ash-smeared fakir whips an Express rifle from under his prayer mat and drops the beast with a single shot. "Smythe, of the Indian Survey. Damned close run thing, eh? Foreigners shouldn't meddle in India. Leave it to us; we know what we're doing."

"The Great Game" is the name given by the British to the ongoing intelligence war and occasional skirmishes between the Russian and British empires over control of India and the Caucasus as Britain attempts to deny Russian access to the Indian Ocean. Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, published in 1901, describes the "Great Game" of espionage from the point of view of a participant. It is a detailed portrait of Indian life of that era, and a source of espionage adventure seeds involving Russian agents in India and the Himalayas.

## Mysteries of the East

India is a land of religious sects; some of their doctrines are more than a little confusing to outsiders. A staple of pulp adventures was a revival of thuggee. This cult, which hinted the roads and robbed and murdered in the name of Kali, was supposedly wiped out in the 19th century. What if it was not? What if the holy stranglers are still at work? What happens to a stranger who learns too much? Other cults with even stranger customs are possible. GMs can devise any religion, with a fair chance that something not unlike it has been practiced somewhere in India.

## The Tribes Are Out

The frontier between India and Afghanistan is the home of the *Pathan* tribes. (The name is properly pronounced puh-TAHN, with a very short first syllable; all British soldiers say PAY-than.) They are Muslim hill men with a long record intransigence against authority. The British fought against them regularly. The Pathan revel in murder, rape, looting, and kidnapping; they prefer Hindu targets but will settle for what they can find. Adventurers in the Northwest Frontier province are likely to be involved in the conflict. They might be attacked the Pathan, or come to the rescue of a British patrol in Pathan territory. Anti-British characters might help the Pathan instead. In the '30s Russian agents were active in Afghanistan and India, and Afghanistan was full of refugees from the Sovietization of Central Asia; any anti-Bolshevik campaign could involve frontier warfare.

## Borneo

Borneo is the third-largest island in the world, covering an area five times that of England and Wales. It is a mystical land covered with thick jungle and laced with rivers, most of which cannot be navigated upstream for more than 100 miles. The difficulty in penetrating the jungle, combined with legends of fierce headhunters, has kept the interior an untouched, exotic land.

Adventurers will find few problems on the westernized coasts of the island. Inland, however, headhunting tribes collect human skulls, cleaning and smoking them before adding decorations. Body tattooing is common as well, favoring circular designs and images of dogs, scorpions, and dragons.

## The Philippines

The Philippine Islands, administered by the United States, comprise over 7,000 islands and islets spanning 1,150 miles north to south. In 1935, Manila, one of the great Asian crossroads, became a terminus for the Pan American Clipper flying boats (see box). The multitude of small islands makes this an excellent hideout for American gangsters, nefarious masterminds, and Malay pirates.

# India

India is one of the largest and most populous countries in the world. Most of its native residents are illiterate peasant farmers.

There are over a dozen major languages and hundreds of minor languages and dialects. The most popular language, Hindi and its related dialect Urdu, together with eight others (all descended from Sanskrit), are spoken by about two-thirds of the people. Urdu and Hindustani default to one another at -4.

Indians in the southern regions for the most part speak one of the Dravidian languages (Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, and Telugu). All Indian languages are Mental/Average.

## Politics

India of the 1930s is part of the British Empire and includes the modern-day lands of Pakistan and Bangladesh. Since the Great War, the Empire has been challenged by Indian politicians, notably M.K. Gandhi. Riot, conspiracy, and civil disobedience against the British have added to the age-old rivalries between races and religions to keep India lively. The Northwest Frontier province, facing Afghanistan and beyond Afghanistan, Russia, is the scene of war against hostile tribes and the focus of intrigue.

Although India is ruled by a viceroy from New Delhi, almost a third of the land consists of states ruled by native princes. Though largely powerless, they make for interesting characters, either as loyal, erudite aristocrats, or as scheming malcontents.



## Religion

About 75% of the people of India are Hindus. Roughly 20% are Muslim; Christians, Buddhists, animists, and others make up the rest. The religions are not tolerant of one another; the Hindus and Muslims frequently attack one another and the main body of Hinduism is in conflict with the militant Sikh sect.

One tenet of Hinduism is *Ahimsa*, noninjury to living things. This applies particularly to the cow, which is sacred. Devout followers will not harm cows in any way; many cattle are allowed to roam free through the countryside and even city streets. One of the perpetual bones of contention among the faiths is that the Christians and Muslims eat beef. Some Hindus (and Buddhists) are complete vegetarians, but most eat meat as long as it is not beef.

## Terrain and Climate

India is bordered on the north by the Himalayas. Most of the central region is a flat lowland, sloping gently up to the mountain region. Climate over most of India is tropical and monsoonal, with summer temperatures averaging 80-90° (with highs above 100°), and winters a temperate 70°. The rains are seasonal, mostly in the spring and fall. Annual precipitation varies from 2" in the Thar Desert (northwest India) to 428" on the Shillong Plateau. The temperatures grow steadily cooler as altitude increases. The "hill stations," in the Himalayan foothills, are where Europeans go to escape the torrid summers.

## Villages and Towns

Most Indian villages are a huddle of mud and straw huts with mud floors and only one or two rooms. The village may be several miles from the fields. The villages are not electrified, water is drawn from a village well, and a motor vehicle is a nine-days' wonder. Strangers may find a welcome and a meal (which may not agree with tender European digestions) but almost certainly will find no modern equipment. The only firearm will be the village watchman's ancient smoothbore musket.

The towns cluster along the railroads. They have at least a telegraph station and possibly a European-commanded *thana* (police station). The military garrisons are also near the railroads; rail is the principal way to move troops in a hurry. Towns have some equipment (flashlights, batteries, blankets, and gasoline, for instance) at normal prices. Sporting arms and ammunition are only available with government license; military arms are not available, except illegally. The government of India maintains a considerable espionage force to combat illegal arms dealings; there is a 50% chance that any illegal arms dealer is a government informer.

## The Cities

The major cities (such as Calcutta, Madras, and New Delhi) are a kaleidoscope of the world of the 1930s and the world of the Moguls. Wealthy sections with modern buildings, spacious tree-lined streets, and comfortable houses contrast with near-medieval neighborhoods. Here the streets are narrow and twisting and jammed with carts, bicycles, livestock, and people. Small shops with open fronts line these streets, the owners living above or behind the buildings. The extremes of wealth and poverty are greater, or at least more visible, than in America or Europe.

## TEMPLES OF THE FAR EAST

In China the characteristic temple differs from a dwelling primarily in size and splendor. Besides the temple proper, a Buddhist monastery includes a pagoda, a library, a relic shrine, and living quarters for the monks.

In Japan the temples are built in harmony with the landscape in which they are set. Japanese temples often have an asymmetrical grouping of *torii* (sacred gateways) in addition to the usual shrines and pagodas. Terraces often surround the temple, as well as many Japanese dwellings.

### Pagodas

A pagoda is a building in the form of a small tower. They are used almost exclusively as shrines in part of a monastery or temple.

In China, the pagoda is one of the most characteristic building styles generally devoted to sacred usage. Octagonal, hexagonal, or square, they are built in super-imposed stories - sometimes as many as a dozen or more! From each story, a tile roof projects out and upward. Pagodas in China are usually made of brick, often covered with glazed and colored tile. There are some pagodas in China that are over 1,000 years old.

In Japan, pagodas are typically square and no more than five stories high. Unlike their Chinese counterparts, Japanese pagodas are usually made of wood. The Horyu-ji tower pagoda near Nara has been standing for some 1,200 years.

## MONASTERIES

The philosophies of withdrawal and meditation led to the establishment of monasteries. These dot the countryside of the Far East, and range from simple meditation houses to sprawling estates that house hundreds of monks and lamas. Visitors may be able to find temporary food and shelter in monasteries, as well as a storehouse of knowledge in areas like Theology, Occultism, Philosophy, and History.

### The Pangboche Monastery

The Pangboche Monastery is an uninteresting little brick building located only 12 miles from Mount Everest. The monks have an ancient ceremonial cap that may draw visitors to this uninviting crag; it is supposedly made from the scalp of a yeti. The lamas will not part with it willingly or even allow it to be studied by outsiders. Decades later the cap will be proved a fake, but GMs are not bound by this.

### Tantrism

Tantrism is very active in the secluded monasteries of Tibet. It is distinctly different from most Buddhism; it involves magical rites and demon worship. Stumbling into a Tantrist ritual may lead to a very unpleasant confrontation.

# ADVENTURING IN TIBET

## Enlightenment

If there is lost and secret knowledge anywhere in the world, it is likely to be in Tibet. The monasteries keep things, and they have been in the collecting business for a long time. Any adventurer in need of arcane knowledge should consider a trip to Lhasa. For those who can't expect a polite answer, a late-night burglary of one of the monasteries is an option. There is nothing in the way but monks, savage Tibetan warriors, forbidding mountains, and the mysterious powers of an age-old magic.

## The Yeti

Somewhere far above the normal haunts of man walls the yeti. Any zoo, circus, or museum would pay well for a yeti, alive or dead. The hunt itself is difficult; it is hard to track an animal when there is no reliable information on its habits, habitat, diet, behavior, or even appearance. The search will have to start at very high altitude (see p. CII 132), but it may lead elsewhere. Is there a reason why the monks don't like to discuss the yeti?

## The Road Across the Roof of the World

Tibet is hard terrain for an army, and it borders on some of the most desolate country in the world. Surely no one would attempt to use it as an invasion route. But common sense is not required of world conquerors, and mirth of Tibet are Russia, Russian-controlled Mongolia, and already war-ravaged China. South of Tibet is British India, and the British in India have been apprehensive of Russian expansionism for a century. Can the acquisitive little eyes in the Kremlin have turned toward Lhasa? Does the Indian Army need to consider a mountain campaign? The answers are worth cash, if patriotic duty is not enough motivation.

**Strangers are likely to be very surprised the first time they meet a native while traveling in Tibet.**

## The Tibetan Greeting

Strangers are likely to be very surprised the first time they meet a native while traveling in Tibet. The Tibetan equivalent of "Hello, how are you?" consists of sticking out your tongue and pushing one ear forward with your hand. Laughing at this unusual greeting (especially after it is acted out by the GM) is considered insulting, and may provoke an attack (-4 to reaction roll).

## Segregation

Europeans (for Asia the term includes British and Americans) segregate themselves for the most part from Indians. They have their own entertainments and residential areas. It is possible to have a long life in India and never meet an Indian who is not a servant. The unrest of the Indian Nationalists is passed off by such people as "just a lot of native nonsense; they could never run the country without us." Visitors who argue the Indian position, or ostentatiously cultivate native society, will be politely frozen out of European society. Transportation, facilities, even jails are divided into native and European sections. The railroads and ships are theoretically divided only by rate into first, second, and third class. Natives can usually afford only third, or second at best. The few Indians who could afford first class are usually wealthy enough not to use public transportation at all.

## Caste

The Hindu caste system is ancient; it may go back to the Indo-European conquest, before recorded history. The caste system is more complex than a brief description can convey - essentially, each Hindu is born into one of thousands of castes which regulate what occupations can be followed, who can be married to whom, hold what office, perform what rite, walk on what path, be burned on what pyre, and so forth. The Europeans in India in effect made of themselves another caste, superior to all non-Europeans, although strictly speaking, as non-Hindus, they fit into the lowest class, that of *Pariahs* or Untouchables. The slightest contact with an Untouchable can religiously defile a person of higher caste.

## Tibet

Tibet is one of the most rugged countries in the world. It is tucked away in the Himalayas, and of the hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Orient, only a handful have ever visited this forbidding region.

There are no roads-only trails that climb as high as 15,000 feet to cross the mountain passes leading from India. Even in mid-summer, these passes can fill with chest-deep snow, and freezing winds keep out all but the most determined (and sturdy) adventurer.

## THE PEOPLE

Tibetans are not renowned for hospitality. Until well into the 20th century they shot intruding Europeans on sight. The first one to be invited to Lhasa was a British representative, in 1920. In the 1930s foreigners are allowed in Tibet, but they are not encouraged. There are no airfields and no modern transportation; the only real concession to the 20th century is the telegraph line from Lhasa to India.

Tibet is a Buddhist theocracy, ruled by the Dalai Lama. As each Lama dies, he is reincarnated. Monks search through the land to find the infant avatar; when he is of age he is enthroned. The Dalai Lama died in December of 1933 and



the new avatar was enthroned in February of 1940, so for most of this period it was very difficult to get a positive answer to anything from the Tibetan government. The principal rival of the Dalai Lama is the Tashi Lama, also held to reincarnate. He rules at the Tashihlunpo monastery near Shigatse, over 100 miles west of Lhasa. The Tashi Lama throughout the 1930s was pro-Chinese, as opposed to the pro-British Dalai Lama; he died in 1937. Outsiders in Tibet will certainly be contacted by the representatives of one or both Lamas.

Food (yak meat, barley, and tea thickened with yak butter), native clothing, and pack animals are easy to find and cheap in Tibet; modern equipment, weapons, ammunition, and medical supplies are rare to nonexistent. The Tibetans want gold or trade goods; foreign currency has little value. They will trade for modern weapons; they prefer German Mausers (the Chinese standard, so parts and ammo are available), British Lee-Enfields (parts and ammo available from India), or Russian Mosin-Nagants (parts and ammo available from Russian-dominated Mongolia). Broomhandle Mauser pistols are particularly desired, preferably with the shoulder-stock holster.

## LHASA

To reach the capital city of Lhasa from India, visitors must travel through the frozen passes above India, cross the Tibetan border, and then trek for two weeks across a bleak wilderness of scrub brush and rock. Here the summer daytime temperatures can soar to 110° and then plummet to freezing at night; in winter they are seldom above freezing. On reaching the hidden city (population of some 40,000, *half* of which are lamas), the visitors will find the build-ings are ramshackle, the streets filthy, and no one has even heard of a wheeled vehicle - not a single cart can be found.

## The Potala

The most magnificent sight in Lhasa is the Potala - the palace of the Dalai Lama. Built along a tremendous cliff, the Potala spans 1,000 feet end to end and reaches over 400 feet above the city proper. It contains more than 500 rooms; it houses over 1,000 students, teachers, and soldiers under its golden roofs.

Inside is a maze of rooms and corridors, all painted with Chinese demons. A labyrinth of dark tunnels, winding stairways, hidden passages, and endless corridors makes getting lost easy. Anyone without Area Knowledge (Potala) will almost certainly become lost - and probably can't ask for help, since much of the Potala is forbidden to nonlamas - even more so to foreigners.

## ROY CHAPMAN ANDREWS

*"I was born to be an explorer. There was never any decision to make. I couldn't do anything else and be happy."*

- Roy Chapman Andrews

Beginning in 1922, under the auspices of the American Museum of Natural History, Roy Chapman Andrews - a gun-toting adventurer in a trademark ranger hat - led five expeditions into central Asia in search of "the missing link." What he found instead was a wealth of scientific wonders...

From 1922-1930, the expeditions, financed by greats such as J.P. Morgan, Jr. and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., revealed the first nests of dinosaur eggs, the Flaming Cliffs of the Gobi Desert, new species of dinosaur (including the velociraptors of *Jurassic Park* fame), evidence of mammalian life during the age of dinosaurs, and more.

Andrews was an explorer, adventurer, administrator, and museum director forced to deal with poisonous snakes, armed bandits, Mongolian and Chinese warring factions, deadly sandstorms, howling blizzards, and sweltering heat - a superb example of a real-life *Cliffhangers* hero. His adventures are chronicled in books and online; see the Bibliography for details.



# THE REST OF THE WORLD

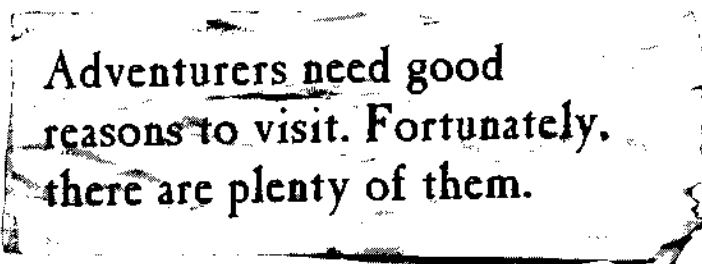




From the islands of the Pacific to the vast reaches of Antarctica, the world holds many secrets and many opportunities for adventure.

# Australia

Australia, situated between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, is the smallest of the continents. The Commonwealth of Australia, a federal parliamentary state since 1901, consists of six states: Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia on the continent, and the island of Tasmania to the south. Two continental territories - the Northern Territory (divided into two territories in 1926, then reunited in 1931) and Australian Capital Territory (an enclave within New South Wales, called the Federal Capital Territory until 1938) - and several small Pacific and Indian Ocean island territories make up the rest of the country.



## CLIMATE AND TERRAIN

The Australian landmass is as large as the United States, making a generalization of terrain and climate difficult. Much of it is exceedingly flat and dry, devoid of any major rivers or lakes, but conditions range from tropical fringes on the north to the temperate southeast.

The narrow coastal plain in the west rises dramatically, giving the impression of a mountain range. In actuality, the rise is an escarpment leading to the rough plateau that occupies the western half of the continent.

The east coast is delineated by the Great Dividing Range - mountains that run the length of the east and southeast coasts. Rivers spring from the range and run to the Coral and Tasman Seas, watering rich coastal plains.

Much of the south coast consists of sheer cliffs rising from the sea to a desert plateau, while the north contains swampy tropical forests.

Due to its isolation from other land masses, Australia is home to many unique animal and plant species. Many species of the genus *Eucalyptus* (part of the myrtle family) are unique to Australia, where they are commonly called gum trees and form much of the forests. Some species form the primary food of the koala (p. BE19). Adventurers may encounter potentially dangerous animals such as kangaroos (p. BE18), emus (p. BE14), dingoes (p. BE11), Tasmanian devils in Tasmania (p. BE35), and both cassowaries (p. BE14) and crocodiles (p. BE11) in the tropics. Wombats are not aggressive, but dig wide burrows which can easily cripple a horse or a car. Unusual creatures such as Tasmanian tigers (today presumed extinct, but still found in the 1930s) or platypuses may be the goal of an expedition.

Foreign animals introduced to Australia have done well. Rabbits multiplied so rapidly they soon became a threat to sheep farming, and could be caught for food anywhere but the harshest desert.

## The Outback

The Australian outback takes in the vast region of red-gold desert, subtropical wetlands, rainforest, and scrubland which has very little human occupation. The Australian population is extremely urban, with the majority of people living the coastal cities. Inland, away from the cities and surrounding farmlands, the wild outback takes hold.

## ADVENTURING IN AUSTRALIA

Australia is a long way from anywhere, and adventurers need good reasons to visit. Fortunately, there are plenty of them.

The continent's unique flora and fauna provide zoologists and botanists with research opportunities. Hunters will be as intrigued by the wildlife as scientists. Australia also offers some of the best whaling and big game fishing waters in the world.

More material types will be interested in prospecting for gold or opals, or even ores worth mining. In 1929 Harold Lasseter claimed to have found a huge reef of gold in the western Northern Territory; he died in 1931 trying to find it again. Many expeditions were mounted in the 1930s to find the legendary "Lasseter's Reef" - PCs might have better luck than real-world explorers.

Australia is also a good location for aviators. Daredevils might want to emulate or preempt men like Charles Kingsford Smith, who made the first trans-Pacific flight in 1928 and the first aerial circumnavigation of the world in 1929. He set and reset flight records from England to Australia over the next few years. Airplanes are also ideal vehicles to explore the many remote places of Australia still to be mapped in detail, or simply to use as transport across the vastness of the outback.

Anthropologists may want to work amongst the Aborigines, Occult researchers may encounter unusual aboriginal artifacts exported overseas and wish to visit the source to investigate.

Australia is the closest large "civilized" country to many South Seas islands, so it is likely that any clues or survivors of mysterious expeditions to such places will end up there. It is also the logical starting point for expeditions to most of the more hospitable parts of Antarctica (see p. 77).

Of course, adventurers may merely be chasing an enemy. By the 1930s, Botany Bay and other British penal colonies were a thing of the past, though the pulp adventure stories didn't think so. Shady ne'er-do-wells and third-generation criminals stalked the Australian alleys and waterfronts of pulps. With so many henchmen for hire, who could blame a mastermind for moving his headquarters there?

The outback is remote and ragged and home to many of Australia's Aborigines (see below). Travel through this land is often slow and difficult, and deadly to the unprepared. Travel through the desert uses the *Bad Terrain* modifiers, while the wetlands qualify as *Very Bad Terrain* (see p. B188).

## Ayers Rock

In the midst of the outback, a monolith rises a thousand feet above the desert floor. Ayers Rock, named in 1873 after Sir Henry Ayers, is considered one of the natural wonders of the world. The Anangu Aborigines have lived around Ayers Rock for thousands of years; their name for it is *Uluru*. Tourists visit the rock and often climb it. The path to the top is steep and even today climbers occasionally slip and fall to their deaths, making it a perfect location for a cliffhanging fight.

Uluru extends over 3 1/2 miles below the desert surface, and rumors exist that a light emanates from deep inside at various times of the year. The Anangu believe the area beneath the rock is hollow, and that an energy source called *Tjukutpa* originates there. They say Uluru is home to dozens of ancestral beings that were born in the mythical *Dreamtime*. These beings, in the form of plants, animals, and humans, traveled the land in a journey of creation and destruction, marking the land with hills, mountains, caves, rivers, and other geographical features.

The Anangu explanation for the creation of Uluru itself also comes from the *Dreamtime* and such stories are kept secret from the *Piranypa* - the non-Aborigines. **GURPS Places of Mystery** contains more information and a modern-day cliffhanging adventure seed (pp. 104-105).

## SYDNEY HARBOR BRIDGE

The Sydney Harbor Bridge was constructed from 1924-32, providing essential jobs in the Depression years. Two steel half-arches hung over the water from 1928, swaying in the weather until 1930 when they were joined and a roadway was hung beneath. The bridge, the widest long-span bridge in the world, links the business district of Sydney with its northern suburbs across the harbor with six lines of traffic, two rail lines, two tram lines, a dedicated cycleway, and a pedestrian path.

The bridge was opened on March 49, 1932, amid much drama. The New South Wales Premier, John Lang, was about to cut the official ribbon when a mounted member of the honor guard charged at him with saber drawn. The horseman, a retired cavalry captain named Francis De Groot, slashed the ribbon with his sword in an act of political protest. De Groot was a member of a right-wing paramilitary group known as the New Guard, dedicated to overthrowing the Government. For his indiscretion he was fined a total of 9 pounds.

The bridge is an ideal setting for cliffhangers, both during construction and after. PCs at the opening ceremony might intervene in De Groot's actions, especially if they have investigated the New Guard and Come up with clues beforehand. The 100-yard drop from the top of the archway makes it a dangerous but ideal location for any number of cliffhanging adventures.



## THE PEOPLES

In the 1930s most Australians are of British or Irish immigrant stock. Beginning in the 1850s, English laws restricted immigration by nonwhites - a policy continued by Australian law until WWII. Clichés to the contrary, few Australians are descended from the convicts sent to penal colonies in the early 19th century.

Australians speak an English rich in slang. Players or GMs running Australian characters are encouraged to pick up an Australian slang dictionary or search the Internet, for there are many more terms than can comfortably be described here.

## Aborigines

The native population of Australia came to the continent from Asia long ago. During the 1930s, nearly 100,000 aborigines occupied the continent, most in New South Wales and the Western Australian outback. At this time there were over 500 distinct groups of aborigines speaking some 200 different languages or dialects. PCs fluent in one language will have difficulty speaking with other natives; use a modifier of from -1 to -5 at the GM's discretion.

Some aboriginal groups following traditional lifestyles may have complex systems that define relationships and allowed marriages. These can be very difficult for an outsider to understand (Anthropology-2 roll to grasp even the basics). Strangers who violate cultural caste systems and the like are treated harshly and perhaps even ostracized.

Many aboriginal groups follow traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyles. They are generally peaceful, but cinematic license allows hostile encounters with spear and boomerang throwing natives. Tribal Aborigines have the Primitive disadvantage, with a TL ranging from 0-3 depending on their contact with outsiders.

Some Aborigines follow a less traditional lifestyle. For example, Sydney has a large population of urbanized Aborigines, usually living in poverty. Others are rural workers on large sheep or cattle stations.



PCs may wish to hire aboriginal guides or trackers for wilderness expeditions - without such help expeditions may court disaster.

Aboriginal religion is based around a complex animistic totem system. Totemic plants and animals are thought to fully explain the relationships between peoples, plants, and animals. PCs may be asked to participate in unusual rituals involving totems in order for the tribes to fully “understand” the strangers’ presence there. Suburban Aborigines may practice dark rituals designed to alleviate their poverty or bring about the fall of the white civilization being built around them - investigators pursuing strange incidents in town may find themselves up against more than they bargained for.

## Islands of the World

Lost civilizations, mystic beauty, ancient horror - the islands of the world hold many secrets.

### Hidden Islands

Many adventure stories revolve around an island that can’t be found on any map. Various reasons are given for its undiscoverability - perpetual cloud cover, treacherous waters that sink ships before they are within sight, winds or tidal forces that push ships away, or inhabitants that kill or enslave anyone stumbling upon their home.

What can be found on the island is up to the GM. Depending on the campaign, explorers may discover lost civilizations, lands untouched by time, untold riches guarded by hideous monsters, and more.

Hidden islands make excellent sites for land-that-time-forgot Lost World adventures (p. 108). Islands with a prehistoric climate especially appropriate to the South Seas (jungles, flood plains, swamps) could be home to many sorts of dinosaurs. *GURPS Dinosaurs* is indispensable for lost world adventures, and the *GURPS Bestiary* contains stats for some dinosaurs as well.

## THE SARGASSO SEA

When Columbus reached the deep waters of the central Atlantic, he believed he was close to shore due to an abundance of plant life floating in the ocean. His sailors, on the other hand, feared their ships would become entangled in the weeds and they would never see home again. Neither Columbus nor his men were correct. The floating plants - later named *sargassum* - were not sturdy enough to ensnare a ship, nor were they close to the shores of the New World.

The Sargasso Sea is a 2,000,000-square-mile ellipse of warm, exceptionally clear water that “floats” adrift in the midst of the Atlantic. Its location is constantly changing, defined by the changing ocean currents that form its perimeter.

The pulp view of the Sargasso Sea is much more sinister. Small areas of the tough seaweed trap ships forever; civilizations spring up living in derelict vessels still afloat; pirates use the floating tangle to trap unwary mariners and raid their cargoes. Who knows what secrets lie in the Sargasso Sea, waiting for hardy adventurers...

## THE CARIBBEAN

The Caribbean contains a string of islands that stretch from the U.S. to South America. The 1930s were years of crisis in the Caribbean characterized by poverty and unemployment. The Depression exposed the contradictions in governmental policies, with European colonialism being replaced by American neo-colonialism.

Adventurers in the region will find themselves in the midst of social upheaval as one country after another struggles to gain independence from Europe. There were labor strikes in Cuba, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and nearly every other island during the 1930s, and governments reported widespread poverty. At the same time there was a cultural growth exemplified by the *negritude* and *negrismo* literary movements. Afro-Cubanism was artistic as much as political.

### THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

*“At first we thought it was only a rumor, this place, where the magical waters are said to make an old man young again. We have found the place and I see the many rivers flowing. Which one leads to the Fountain of Youth?”*

*- From the Journal of Ponce de Leon*

Legends surrounding the Fountain of Youth are thousands of years old and place the bubbling waters everywhere from India to the New World (Alexander the Great once searched India for the *River of Immortality*). Ponce de Leon’s search is often associated with Florida, the state he discovered and named in the early 16th century. But in his search for the fabled fountain, and the gold and silver that was rumored to surround it, he was following directions given him by native Indians who told him to look in a place called *BeeMeeNee*.

In the midst of the Caribbean sea are two small islands called Bimini. Some say the Fountain is located on South Bimini, others point to a place called “The Healing Hole” on the north island.

### The Healing Hole

The Healing Hole can be found on the northern end of North Bimini, a land consisting of lush mangrove trees, winding creeks, and narrow shorelines. At the northeastern end of North Bimini is a small creek fed from an underground labyrinth of narrow tunnels. With the outgoing tide, cold water flows from those tunnels and into the creek. The cold mineral waters are said to have a miraculous healing effect on any who bathe in them.

Was there ever a Fountain of Youth? Was it located somewhere in the Caribbean or perhaps in the wilderness of Florida? Could the Healing Hole of North Bimini be the fabled Fountain, or is it only an outlet for diluted waters welling up from an underground source in the labyrinthine tunnels below?

# ADVENTURE SEEDS

## Danger in the Depths

A hundred feet beneath the crystal waters of a lost lagoon is the rotting hulk of the schooner *Orca*. She was captained by Billy Jack Dean, the most notorious black-bird, smuggler, and pirate ever to haunt the tropic isles. On his last voyage he pillaged the great altar of Toalonga of its fabulous hoard of pearls, but was never seen again.

Now a rum-soaked wreck in a Kalgoorlie bar has proven to be the only survivor of Dean's crew; for enough liquor to drink himself to death he has traded the location of the *Orca*.

There are the usual hazards, of course: sharks, octopus, giant clams, poison-spined reef fish, deadly currents, and savage natives. There is something else; something that terrified the hard-boiled old ruffian so much that he won't speak of it. Sometimes, in drink, he mutters of the vengeance of Toalonga, and he will not go within a hundred miles of the sea.

## Central Heating

Only a vulcanologist could love this island. The natives are sullen savages with no appreciation for the blessings of British civilization. The only European settlement has a British Resident (an appointed British representative), three seedy bars, and docking sufficient for one tramp freighter. The coast is miserably hot and humid; inland the choice is between miasmatic, crocodile-infested swamps and fetid, snake-ridden jungles. The pleasantest local fauna is the wild boar (stats as on p. A144). The most obtrusive is the local strain of mosquito: huge, ferocious, and rife with malaria.

But the smoking mountain at the island's heart is showing signs of another eruption. Perhaps it will be as big as the blast of 1903 that turned Mount Schermerhorn into Schermerhorn Bay. The natives certainly think something bad is coming; they have been muttering that the volcano goddess doesn't like white men. Besides, long pig hasn't featured in the menu for many years.

Despite all this, the scientists are determined to get a closer look at the volcano, and are ready to pay generously for jungle-wise assistance. Which leaves one large question. Why is a German cruiser anchored offshore, and why is her crew so interested in jungle walks?

## The Ship of Death

Rumors are flying through the ports of the Caribbean; a 17th-century pirate ship haunts the shipping lanes at night, flying a black skull-and-crossbones. Like most "ghost ship" sightings, the reports vary widely - some say the ship is rotted and draped in seaweed, others claim she looks as if she has just been launched. But everyone agrees: the cannons she fires are still functioning, and she is not afraid to use them.

Is the ship only a specter, inhabited by long-dead sailors seeking revenge for an untimely death? Or has a new threat arisen in the Caribbean under the guise of an archaic pirate ship? Regardless of the answers, who is the mysterious figure who stalks the PCs each night in flowing robes...?

Despite the social and economic difficulties, the Caribbean still has much to offer globe-hopping adventurers. The islands and surrounding continental coasts are treasure-troves of pre-Columbian artifacts to attract archaeologists; treasure hunters will be intrigued by the legends of sunken ships and buried treasures. Cuba is a haven for playboys and international movers and shakers, and what adventurer worth his salt would pass up an opportunity to investigate the mysteries of the Sargasso Sea?

## Jamaica

Jamaica has been a favorite playground of travelers since the 1930s. It is often considered one of the most alluring of the Caribbean islands. It is a land of lush greenery and lovely mountains, friendly people and beautiful sunsets.

The Rastafarian religion, borrowed from Africa, is growing rapidly in Jamaica (and the surrounding islands), embraced mostly by the poor black populations there. Voodoo cults can be found both here and in Haiti, Trinidad, and other Antillean areas (see *GURPS Voodoo* for more information).

## Cuba

Cuba became a republic in 1902, but the U.S. exercised power by installing a series of presidents. Like most of the region during the '20s and '30s, Cuba was a center of political upheaval. A new organization, the *Federation de Grupos Anarquistas de Cuba*, was formed in 1924, promulgating strikes, circulating propaganda, and contributing to the violence and disorder of the bloodiest period of Cuban history (1930-33). It dissolved in 1933 during a general strike by the anarchist elements of the Transport Union and the Streetcar Workers' Union, and finally by the masses of the people in general. The U.S. sent troops to Cuba once again in 1933 (they had done so previously in 1906, 1912, 1917, and 1920) in an effort to maintain civil order and stability, and to aid in bringing General Fulgencio Batista to power. Batista directly or indirectly ran the country for some 25 years with the help of the U.S. and the Mafia.

But despite the upheaval (or perhaps because of it), Havana of the 1930s was a notorious gambling-nightlife mecca for rich Americans, including the Mafia. The Vedado neighborhood was a grid of boulevards lined with gorgeous mansions, opulent casinos and legendary hotels. Vedado, Havana, and Cuba as a whole developed the reputation of being the playground of the rich; a place where Americans could go to indulge in drinking, gambling, and any other pleasures money could buy. The brothels and casinos were largely funded by the Mafias, and filled Batista's coffers to the tune of \$300 million.

Dilettantes, spies, and globe-hopping adventurers will all find Cuba a mixture of decadence, intrigue, crime, political upheaval, and mysterious African religions!

## Bermuda

Despite being a British possession, Bermuda of the 1930s has close ties to the United States. In 1930, Bermuda began promoting itself as a summer tourist resort. The Volstead Act (Prohibition) sent thousands of American tourists to the island in search of rum and whiskey, and the influx of American money changed the face of Bermuda for years to come.



## THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

The mysteries of the Bermuda Triangle (often called *The Devil's Triangle*) evolved primarily in the 1950s. But as far back as the 15th century, navigators called the islands *The Isles of the Devil*. Mysterious disappearances, supernatural sightings, ghost ships, and time travel are but a few of the many possibilities for including the Triangle in a *Cliffhangers* campaign. Details on the region can be found in *GURPS Places of Mystery*, p. 15.

### Haiti

Haiti is an independent nation that occupies the western third of the Island of Hispaniola; the rest of the island is the Dominican Republic. Haiti became a nation in 1804 after a long revolutionary battle against the French, and became the only nation in human history that was settled by black slaves who overthrew their white masters. The latter half of the century saw a land in chaos; anarchy reigned and poverty was rampant. By 1915, U.S. Marines were sent in to calm the situation, leading to improved living conditions but once again a class distinction between blacks and whites. When the Americans left in 1934, the country was still in turmoil, with the Catholic Church struggling for power with practitioners of voodoo.

Haiti of the pulps is more than just a land of poverty and strife. It is a land of mystery and danger, the birthplace of voodoo and dark sorceries. GMs should consult *GURPS Voodoo* for information on integrating this dark magic into a *Cliffhangers* campaign.

### Pirates and Buried Treasure

The Caribbean Islands were once a haven to privateer and pirate alike. The surrounding seas are littered with sunken ships once loaded with treasures bound from the New World, and the islands themselves may be home to buried treasure salvaged from wrecks of hundreds of years gone by.

## THE SOUTH PACIFIC

The islands of the South Seas are often volcanic. A smoking volcano can bring a sense of urgency to an adventure! Eruptions and lava flows are quite common (see box). The other style of island is the coral lagoon. This is a fringe of reef, composed of coral, surrounding a central body of deep water, the lagoon.

Finding the islands may be difficult unless the voyagers are handy with a map and compass or hire a guide to take them to their destination. The islands tend to look alike and are spread over thousands of square miles. Guides can be hired at any of the major islands for about 25 cents a day.

The natives of this area are Polynesians, Micronesians, or Melanesians. The Polynesians speak a group of fairly closely related languages (-2 to -4 for various dialects), but the latter two speak hundreds (perhaps *thousands*) of different, unrelated languages. Most natives of the area are excellent boat builders, sailors, and navigators.

Note that the pulps were full of isolated islands inhabited by savage cannibals. See p. 54 for more information on cannibals in *Cliffhangers*.

### Climate and Terrain

All of the islands are tropical. The weather is hot and humid, and the rainfall is pleasantly warm. The vegetation is also tropical. On coral reefs it tends to be mostly palm trees, with brushy undergrowth. The thin soil favors shallowly rooted plants. The interior of the volcanic isles is usually dense jungle.

The balmy weather is punctuated by tropical storms of great violence but usually short duration. (The most violent storms are called *typhoons*; they feature winds over 100 miles an hour and rains that can batter a man unconscious.) Predicting such a storm, in a time before satellite observation, is difficult. A successful Meteorology roll can predict the onset of a storm 6 hours in advance. For each additional 6 hours of warning, the roll is at -2. The furthest possible prediction is 2 days.

### Hawaii

Toward the turn of the century, political unrest and desire for constitutional reform led to the overthrow of Hawaiian Queen Liliuokalani, who had ruled since 1891. A provisional government was established and the country was made a U.S. protectorate. By 1900, the islands were annexed and made a United States territory, with Sanford B. Dole as governor. In 1937 statehood was proposed, but refused by the U.S. Congress.

During WWII, Hawaii was the chief Pacific base for U.S. forces, and was under martial law from December 7, 1941 to March 1943.

## VOLCANOES

Volcanoes may be active or extinct. Active volcanoes often do no more than sit and smolder for years at a time, then suddenly erupt. Even extinct volcanoes may not be extinct *forever*.

Most lava flows at only a few miles per hour, so even a man on foot can outrun it. The real danger lies in hot mud and ash flows (which can reach 80 mph), scorching hot air, poisonous gases, and suffocation from ash fallout.

In keeping with the genre, however, the GM may allow for a rapidly flowing river of molten lava, especially if it provides an opportunity for a cliffhanger. Crossing a dilapidated footbridge strung across a canyon flowing with lava is a classic scene.

The inside of an active volcano is even more dangerous. Temperatures can reach 150° or more, depending on proximity to the lava. When designing an adventure in which someone must enter a live volcano, simply indicate how hot it will be in certain areas, without worrying about distance from the heat source. Anyone falling into lava of any kind will be killed instantly (with the possible exception of Gadgeteers with lava-proof, air-conditioned armor).

# The Arctic

Parts of North America, Asia, and Europe, including several independent countries, are in the north polar region. Going northward, terrain, temperature, flora, and fauna change slowly without a sharp dividing line. Temperature does not get steadily colder as one goes north; temperatures at the North Pole are roughly the same as a winter day in Ontario or Manitoba. The coldest recorded temperatures have been within the forest belt;  $-81^{\circ}$  in the Yukon and  $-90^{\circ}$  in Siberia.

## Terrain and Climate

*The Forest Belt.* While a layer of permafrost can often be found several feet under the topsoil, large tracts of evergreens flourish in the southern arctic regions. Moving north, the permafrost is closer to the surface and the trees are small and stunted. Water, trapped and frozen above the permafrost, forms ridges and mounds (called *naled* or *aufies*) that push the trees into unearthly, twisted angles. Scientists have called this the “drunken forest” region.

*The Tundra Region.* North of the forest belt is the tundra. The impermeable layer of permafrost keeps water at the surface; nearly half the tundra is underwater. Lakes, ponds, rivers, creeks, and swamps make for miserable travel conditions, worsened by the hills and valleys created by constant freezing and thawing of the ground (use *Bad Terrain* modifiers, p. A188). Sharp rocks also cover the area, quickly wearing out footgear (and feet).

*The Barrens.* North of the tundra is the Arctic Barren Land (called the barrens). Where there is land, it is mostly crags and mountains, their slopes covered with *scree*, a mixture of sand, gravel, and ice pellets, making climbing hazardous for even the veteran climber (-7 to Climbing skill). An uncontrolled slide down a scree slope causes Id-3 cutting damage per 10 yards (zero damage is possible; all DR bonuses apply). A successful Climbing-7 roll should be allowed to attempt to stop the slide every 10 yards.

*The Arctic Ocean.* The North Pole itself is in a perpetually frozen ocean. The ice can be crossed but the crossing is difficult and dangerous. Pressure ridges make most of it *Bad Terrain* (see p. B188); there are patches of thin ice and even open water, which can swallow a traveler.

## The Arctic Peoples

Thousands of people call the arctic region home. Most live in the forest belt and tundra regions, but there are some even in the barrens.

*Eskimos.* The domain of the Eskimo (properly called the Inuit) ranges from northeast Greenland to the Siberian coast of the Bering Sea. Adventurers traveling through Greenland, northern Canada and Alaska will have many opportunities to interact with the various subgroups of this northernmost culture. Their language, *Inupiaq*, circles the pole with little variation (mutual understanding among speakers with -1 for different dialects). There is a 50% chance that any individual will have some western language skill (English, Russian, or Danish, depending on location).

All Eskimo hunters will have the best modern hunting rifle they can afford and a good knife and axe; almost none have handguns or military weapons. Hunting equipment is vital to their survival; they will be very reluctant to sell or trade it. Eskimos will know their local environment intimately (local Area Knowledge-18), be adept at tracking game (Tracking-15), and their arctic survival skills are often unparalleled (skill levels of 18+ are not uncommon).

*Siberian Asiatics.* In north and central Siberia live Asiatic peoples such as the *Yakut* (the largest group of Siberian Asiatics). They make their living by breeding reindeer (over 2,000,000) and dogs. Different tribes speak different languages, all Mental/Average. There is a 2 in 6 chance that any individual will know Russian. Most have hunting rifles.

*Siberian Indians.* The Indian people of northeastern Siberia so closely resemble the Indians of the Pacific Northwest that many scientists refer to them as *Americanoids*. The three main subdivisions are the Churkch, the Koryaks, and the Kamchadals. Language and weapons are as with Siberian Asiatics.

*Scandinavian peoples.* The natives of northern Scandinavia are closely related to the Finns, or *Suomi*. The largest and most well-known group, the Lapps, speak a language that sounds like Finnish, but the two languages are mutually unintelligible. Most Lapps speak at least a little Finnish, and there is a 50% chance that any given Lapp will speak a little Swedish or Norwegian as well. Most have hunting rifles.

# Antarctica

Surrounding the South Pole is the frozen continent of Antarctica. Its snow and ice cover and high elevation combine to make it the coldest place on Earth. The subzero temperatures freeze the moisture out of the air, making most of Antarctica *drier* than the Sahara Desert.

There are no native inhabitants on the continent, but various exploration teams may be encountered. Wildlife is restricted to seals, penguins, birds, and fish. There are no polar bears in Antarctica.

Nearly all of Antarctica lies within the Antarctic Circle. Along the coastline, snowfall averages 20 to 40 inches per year, and temperatures range from  $40^{\circ}$  to  $-40^{\circ}$ . Most of the coastline is mountainous, and travel to the interior is difficult.

## The Interior

The worst cold-weather conditions in the world can be found deep inside the continent. As the land slopes gently away from the mountain ranges, it becomes flat and barren. Little precipitation reaches these areas (2-6" per year), but extreme low temperatures make any travel difficult. Vostok, at  $78^{\circ} 28'$  south, elevation 11,500 feet, has a record high of  $-5.8^{\circ}$  and a record low of  $-126.9^{\circ}$  - the lowest temperature ever recorded.

GMs may wish to take advantage of the isolation and desolation of the area by throwing Things Man Was Not Meant To Know into Antarctic adventures.



## TRANSPORTATION IN THE ARCTIC

### Dog Teams

Dog teams are a primary source of arctic transportation in the '30s. Handling a dog team effectively requires a couple weeks of familiarization; Teamster skill rolls will be at -2 until that time.

### Aircraft

Bush pilots eke out a living in the wilds of Alaska and other northern climes, landing light planes on gravel bars, frozen rivers, and makeshift landing strips of cleared, frozen land. Float planes are also very popular, though icy waters can be treacherous and deadly to even the most skilled pilot.

Especially brave adventures may wish to try flying into the polar region themselves, but a number of issues make it a dicey proposition. Daredevils may mink nothing of taking a plane into the northern reaches, but landing safely and returning to civilization is another story. Most aircraft flights through the arctic cold were fly-bys and overflights designed to take photos or map unexplored regions: Landing in the frozen waste as a rare occurrence. The extreme cold is hard on mechanical parts: Winds and whiteouts can make flying impossible, and landing strips are few and far between.

## ADVENTURING IN THE YUCON

In the 20' and 30', a lot of gold was still coming out of Alaska and the Yukon. Hardy prospectors still boated the rivers in summer and mushed the trail in winter after precious metal. Classic pulp characters were the old sourdough (usually with a beautiful daughter he hasn't seen in 20 years), the heroic Mountie, and the dastardly financier out to steal the sourdough's claim. Adventurers have the choice of heroically rescuing the honest miner (he may be grateful) or backing the crooked play (get the cash up front).

## ADVENTURING IN ANTARCTICA

Antarctica is the world's largest deep freeze as well as its least-explored continent. What might survive in those long nights? What alien flesh might the cold have preserved? What secrets are hidden under the perpetual ice? Adventurers in search of answer to these questions must first face the terrible power of the cold, and then the mysteries of the elder dark.



## ESKIMO MYTHS AND LEGENDS

### Angiaks

Angiaks are undead children. During difficult times, tribal elders would take unwanted babies into the snow to die. Unless the tribe moved from this place, they would find themselves haunted by this small, unhappy ghost.

### The Caribou Man

The legend of the *Kanipinikas sikueu* (Caribou Man) begins during a time when ancient beings transformed themselves between animal and human form. An Innu man went to live with the caribou, married a doe, and became one himself. He lived to become the Master of the Caribou, and now provides the Innu with caribou for all eternity.

### The Abductor of Souls

The Abductor of Souls has no name. She is a hideously old woman with matted hair and claw-like hands. One eye is grotesquely larger than the other so she can see deep within the mind of her victims.

She often makes her home under the edge of the ice; those who venture close risk feeling snatched and dragged into the icy blackness forever. On warm days she casts spells to make her victim drowsy. When he settles down to rest, she rushes from the water, her hair matted with seaweed, and entangles him, dragging him into the water after her. At times she even roams the land disguised as a wolf or a bear, using her breath to confuse unwary travelers until they became lost and wander into her clutches.

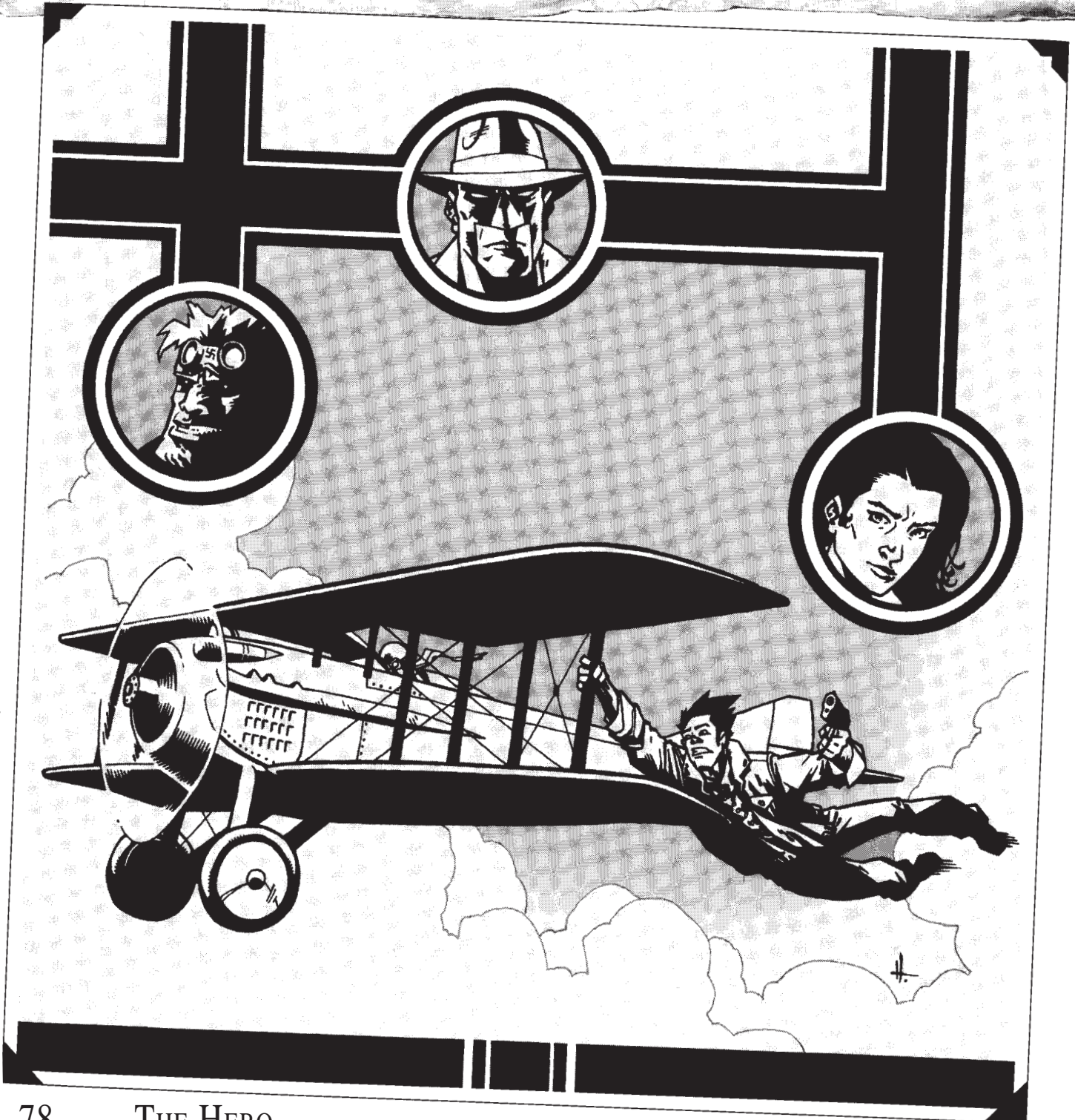
### Kul

Kul is a water spirit found in the waters of the frigid Arctic. He is malevolent at times, but often aids the northern people with their fishing. When he is helpful, it is customary to offer him some of the fish.

### Manitutshu

*Manitutshu* is the Innu name for a hill at Muskrat Falls on the Churchill River in Labrador. In it lives the evil creature, *Uentshukumishiteu*. The creature travels through the ground, the water, the ice - nothing can stop its progress. Its movement is marked by shaking and growling, turbulent waters, and the unnatural movement of rock and earth. It traps its victims by opening gaping holes in the ground and swallowing them alive. What happens to them then is unknown, but it is said you can hear them screaming long after the hole has closed...

# THE HERO





The heroes who walked the pages of the pulps were larger than life, able to perform incredible feats of strength, use techniques and equipment years ahead of their time, and stand up to unbelievable punishment.

To reflect these incredible abilities, the GM may wish to allow the players to start with more than the usual 100 points allotted to build a character. In really high-flying games, with characters rivaling famous pulp heroes, PCs should be built on a minimum of 250 points, with 500 being a better starting figure.

Regardless of the point value of characters, GMs would do well to include some of the Cinematic Campaign rules on p. B183.

## The Sidekick Campaign

In keeping with the genre, players and GM may wish to create a central character to adventure with companions of lesser stature. As a general rule, build the main hero on 150-200 points, and his associates on only 100.

GM and players alike should keep in mind that while the main character may be remarkable, his sidekicks are heroes too. They should be allowed as much game attention as the leader - if not, go back to the basic method of creation.

Alternately, the GM may wish to create a 250+ point NPC hero and let the players take the roles of his sidekicks. A crimson-cloaked crimefighter who leaves the physical and legal cleanup to the PCs, never tells them the entire story, always gets top billing, and frequently loses his memory (after bumps on the head, of course), could make for an exceptional campaign.

## Women in the Pulps

Most pulp magazines were written with the working-class male in mind. While some were geared toward women (e.g., *Husbands*, *Popular Love*, *Ranch Romances*), the majority portrayed women as helpless, beautiful victims, the prize for the victorious hero. This sort of stereotyping will irritate female players who want their character to be more than a screaming, air-headed blonde.

But many pulp heroines were able to hold their own against the forces of evil. They might not have been as physically tough as their counterparts, but they could handle guns, didn't faint at the sight of blood, and often thought their way out of danger faster than their two-fisted companions.

It should be noted, however, that these heroines weren't unfeminine in any way, and were often even more alluring than the two-dimensional damsels-in-distress so prevalent in the pulps. They were confident of both their ability and their femininity. The pulp heroine doesn't reject male admiration; she accepts it as her due.

# Character Templates

Most pulp heroes tell into a few basic categories. They had in common a willingness, it not an outright need, to visit unusual places and mix with strange people. Even more than in other campaigns, the essence of the pulp hero is *adventurer*.

In keeping with the high-drama, low-rules feel of a fast-moving *Cliffhangers* campaign, the following pages contain some ready-to-use character templates and a sample character or two. With a few personal touches, these characters will be ready to jump into high-flying two-fisted action adventures in no time!

## ARCHAEOLOGIST 85 POINTS

The archaeologist spends much of his time searching out archaeological sites (called "digs") or exploring those he has found. He may be included on other expeditions, particularly if he has high Anthropology skill. Since most digs are expensive to finance, the archaeologist may work for a university, teaching there part-time as well as publishing papers on his findings in the field. The archaeologist is first and foremost a scientist; gunplay and fisticuffs are better left to the soldiers.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 14 [45]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** 25 points chosen from Intuition [15]; Language Talent [2/level]; Patron (University, 6 or less) [10] or (9 or less) [20]; Single-Minded [5]; or Tenure [5].



**Disadvantages:** -20 points chosen from Absent-Mindedness [-15]; Age [-3/year]; Bad Sight [-10]; Jealousy [-10]; Obsession [-5 to -15]; Sense of Duty (Archaeological Community) [-10]; or Stubbornness [-5].

**Primary Skills:** Anthropology (M/H) IQ [4]-14; Archaeology (M/H) IQ+1 [6]-15.

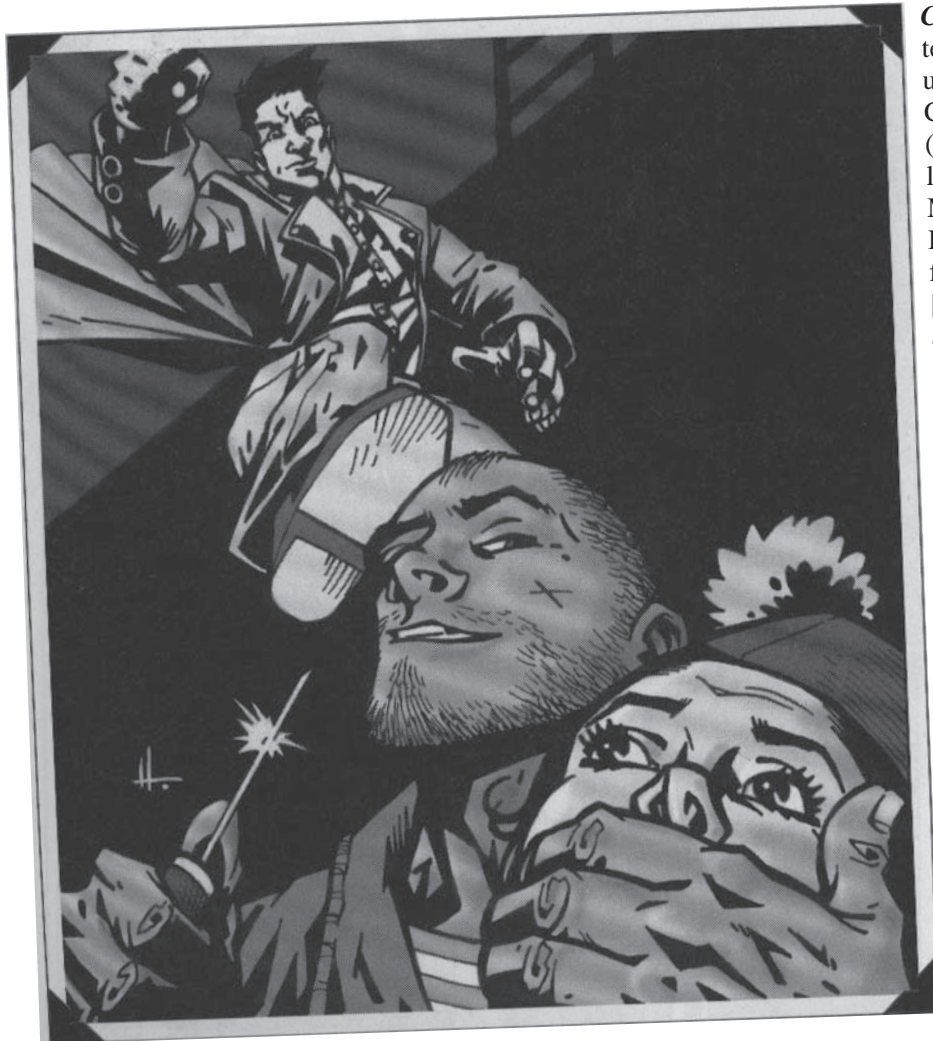
**Secondary Skills:** Cartography (M/A) IQ-1 [2]-14; History (M/H) IQ [4]-14; Research (M/A) IQ [2]-14.

**Background Skills:** A total of 7 points in Area Knowledge (any) (M/E); Geology (M/H); Language (any); Orienteering (M/A); Occultism (M/A); Teaching (M/A); or Writing (M/A).

**Customization Notes:** This template can be adjusted to provide a more general scientist. Exchange the existing *Primary Skills* for ones more appropriate to an alternate field of study, and the archaeologist becomes a botanist, zoologist, linguist, or whatever kind of scientist the player wants to create.

## CRUSADER 95 POINTS

This cloaked or hooded vigilante keeps his real identity secret. He often operates outside the law, but (with the right advantages) sometimes with police cooperation. He is concerned with righting wrongs and putting an end to the crooks... often permanently. This type of character is usually suited to very small parties, and often prefers working alone.



**Attributes:** ST 11 [10]; DX 13 [30]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 11 [10].

**Advantages:** A total of 25 points chosen from Acute Senses (any) [2/level]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Composed [5]; Contacts [Varies]; Danger Sense [15]; Fearlessness [2/level]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Imperturbable [10]; Intuition [15]; Night Vision [10]; Reputation [Varies]; Strong Will [4/level]; Toughness [10 or 25]; Voice [10]; or Wealth [Varies].

**Disadvantages:** -30 points from Cannot Harm Innocents [-10]; Charitable [-15]; Code of Honor [Varies]; Compulsive Behavior (Trademark) [Varies]; Enemy (Criminals) [Varies]; Fanaticism (Patriot) [-15]; Impulsiveness [-10]; Loner [-5]; Nightmares [-5]; Overconfidence [-10]; Reputation (As crusader, to criminals) [Varies]; Secret (Secret Identity) [Varies]; Sense of Duty [Varies]; Stubbornness [-5]; or Vow [Varies].

**Primary Skills:** Acting (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Criminology (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Disguise (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Stealth (P/A) DX-1 [1]-12; Streetwise (M/A) IQ [2]-13.

**Secondary Skills:** Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-14; Guns (Pistol) (P/E) DX [1]-15 (includes +2 for IQ); Intimidation (M/A) IQ [2]-13.

**Background Skills:** Total of 6 points from Area Knowledge (M/E); Climbing (P/A); Cloak (P/A); Conspiracy Theory (M/VH); Escape (P/H); Fast-Draw (Pistol) (P/E); Interrogation (M/A); Running (P/H; HT); Shadowing (M/A); Tactics (M/H).

**Customization Notes:** Crusaders are often better suited to a high-power campaign that allows unusual or *super* powers. If so, increase the Crusader's maximum point cost accordingly (250 points is recommended) and add the following Advantage choices: Catfall [10]; Eidetic Memory [30 or 60]; Extra Fatigue [3/level]; Extra Hit Points [5/level]; Gadgeteer [25]; Perfect Balance [15]; Sharpshooter [45]; Silence [5/level]; and Trained by a Master [40] and its appropriate martial arts skills.

Regardless of point cost, the Crusader may replace Brawling with Karate (P/H) or Judo (P/H) with the GM's permission.

## DAREDEVIL 80 POINTS

Daredevils live for adventure and the exhilarating feeling that comes from "cheating death." They may travel constantly, performing death-defying stunts for county fairs or holiday celebrations. These feats might include barnstorming, wingwalking, high diving, parachute jumping (from planes, balloons, cliffs, or anything else high enough), and escaping from a straitjacket while suspended head-first above something deadly. Some daredevils scale vertical walls, especially those of skyscrapers, without equipment.



Daredevils go almost anywhere an audience can be found, even into other countries; they are naturally drawn into anything that smacks of adventure or challenge. Most are usually broke, making just enough at one show to repair their equipment (and often, themselves) before moving on to another audience. Some are loners, but most have at least one sidekick, such as an aircraft mechanic.

**Attributes:** ST 11 [10]; DX 13 [30]; IQ 11 [10]; HT 12 [20].

**Advantages:** Daredevil [15]; and 15 points chosen from Absolute Timing [5], Acute Senses (any) [2/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Double-Jointed [5], Hard to Kill [5/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Luck [15], Reputation [Varies], Serendipity [15], or Toughness [10].

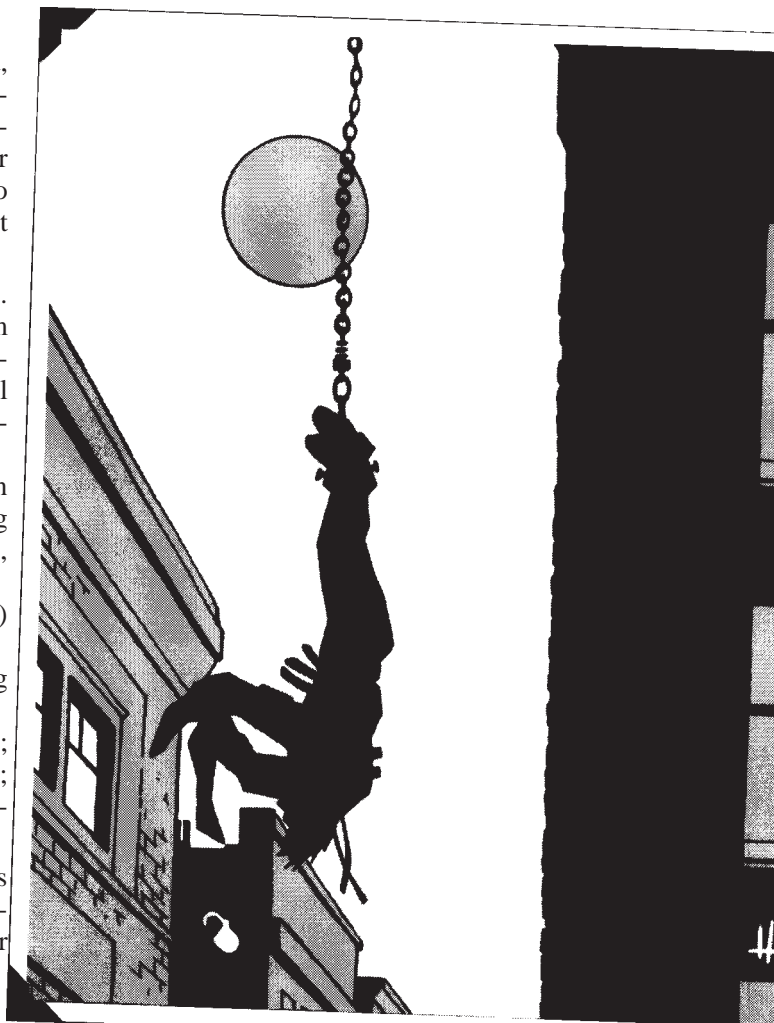
**Disadvantages:** Glory Hound [-15]; and -20 points chosen from Alcoholism [-15 or -20], Compulsive Gambling [-5 to -15], Jealousy [-10], Loner [-5], On the Edge [-15], Overconfidence [-10], or Poverty [Varies].

**Primary Skills:** Acrobatics (P/H) DX [4]-13; Climbing (P/A) DX[2]-13.

**Secondary Skills:** Demolition (M/A) IQ [2]-11; Driving (P/A) DX-1 [1]-12; Escape (P/H) DX-2 [1]-11.

**Background Skills:** A total of 5 points from Brawling (P/E); Carousing (P/A; HT); Fast-Talk (M/A); Gambling (M/A); Guns (Pistol or Rifle) (P/E); Motorcycle (P/E); Parachuting (P/E); and Piloting (P/A).

**Customization Notes:** Wingwalkers should have Acrobatics of at least DX+1; escape artists should have Escape at a similar level; "human fly" types will have Climbing at DX+2 or greater.



## DILETTANTE 80 POINTS

*"Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me."*

- *All the Sad Young Men* (F. Scott Fitzgerald, 1926)

This is a wealthy member of "high society." Many dilettantes are useless playboys and poseurs or bubble-headed rich brats, but a few make good use of their abilities while enjoying their wealth.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** Comfortable Wealth [10]; Fashion Sense [5]; Status 2 [10]; and 20 additional points from Alcohol Tolerance [5], Appearance [Varies], Charisma [5/level], Claim to Hospitality [Varies], Contacts [Varies], Courtesy Rank [I/level], Heir [5], Intuition [15], Luck [15], Military Rank [5/level], Patron (Daddy) [Varies], Voice [10], or additional levels of Status [5/level] or Wealth [Varies].

**Disadvantages:** A total of -25 points from Addiction [Varies]; Alcoholism [-15 or -20]; Bad Temper [-10]; Code of Honor (Gentleman) [-10]; Compulsive Carousing [Varies]; Extravagance [-10]; Intolerance (Racial) [-5]; Jealousy [-10]; Laziness [-10]; Lecherousness [-15]; Miserliness [-5]; Pacifism [Varies]; Self-Centered [-10]; Selfish [-5]; or Xenophilia [-5].

**Primary Skills:** Carousing (P/A; HT) HT+1 [4]-11; Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+5 (defaults to IQ+2 due to high Status, +2 for Voice) [2]-18.

**Secondary Skills:** Appreciate Beauty (M/VH) IQ-2 [2]-11.

**Background Skills:** A total of 12 points from Fencing (P/A); Gambling (M/A); Guns (Rifle) (P/E); Hiking (P/A; HT); Language (Latin, French, or Italian) (M/A); Poetry (M/A); Riding (P/A); Seamanship (M/E); Sex Appeal (M/A; HT); Writing (M/A); or any artistic, musical instrument, hobby, or sports skill.

**Customization Notes:** Philanthropic Dilettantes should consider Charitable [-15]; Selfless [-10]; or Sense of Duty (Must use my money for good) [-10].

## EXPLORER 85 POINTS

An explorer of unknown lands such as Africa, South America, or the Arctic may do so on his own, or he may be hired to lead an exploratory expedition. Outfitting your own expedition can be very expensive, and those intending to do so should have some level of Wealth or a wealthy Patron.

**Attributes:** ST 11 [10]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 12 [20].

**Advantages:** 15 points chosen from Absolute Direction [5]; Acute Senses (any) [2/level]; Animal Empathy [5]; Disease-Resistant [5]; Fit [5]; Language Talent [2/level]; Reputation [Varies]; Strong Will [4/level]; or Wealth [varies].

**Disadvantages:** -25 points chosen from Bad Temper [-10]; Jealousy (Over rival explorers) [-10]; Obsession [-5 to -15]; Odious Personal Habit [-5 to -15]; or Stubbornness [-5].

**Primary Skills:** Cartography (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13; Hiking (P/A; HT) HT [2]-12; Naturalist (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11; Orienteering (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13; Survival (type) (M/A) IQ [2]-12.

**Secondary Skills:** Animal Handling (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11; Guns (Rifle) (P/E) DX+1 [2]-15 (includes +2 bonus for IQ); Packing (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11.

**Background Skills:** A total of 5 points chosen from among Anthropology (M/H); Language (any); Leadership (M/A); Navigation (M/H); Surveying (M/A); and Tracking (M/A).

**Customization Notes:** Guides familiar with a specific area (e.g., the Congo, the Yucatan peninsula), will have Area Knowledge and Survival for that location at IQ+1 or better. Oceangoing explorers should consider Navigation (M/H), Sailor (M/A), Seamanship (M/E), and/or Shiphandling (M/H) at IQ-1 as well as Boating (P/A) at DX.

## G-MAN 90 POINTS

G-men (government agents) are agents of some branch of the U.S. government: the FBI, the Treasury Department, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN), the Immigration and Naturalization Service, etc.

**Attributes:** ST 11 [10]; DX 13 [30]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 11 [10].

**Advantages:** Legal Enforcement Powers [10]; Patron (U.S. government, 6 or less) [15]; and 15 points chosen from Alertness [5/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Contacts [Varies], or Intuition [15].

**Disadvantages:** Duty [-15]; and -20 points from Addiction (Cigarettes) [-5], Enemy [Varies], Fanaticism (USA) [-15], Honesty [-10], Intolerance (Criminals) [-5], No Sense of Humor [-10], or Truthfulness [-5].

**Primary Skills:** Criminology (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Guns (Pistol) (P/E) DX [1]-15 (includes +2 for IQ); Law (M/H) [1]-10; Law Enforcement (M/A) IQ [2]-12.

**Secondary Skills:** Brawling (P/E) DX [1]-13; Driving (Car) (P/A) DX-1 [1]-12; Interrogation (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Streetwise (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Tactics (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11.

**Background Skills:** Total of 3 points from Area Knowledge (M/E); Fast-Draw (Pistol) (P/E); Guns (Light Automatic) (P/E); Guns (Shotgun) (P/E); Intimidation (M/A); Sex Appeal (M/A; HT).

**Customization Notes:** FBI agents created before 1934 will have limited Legal Enforcement Powers (worth only 5 points). An FBI agent created prior to 1934 must pay an extra 5 points if the campaign progresses beyond that year, gaining the extra level of enforcement power.

## PILOT 90 POINTS

With the Great War only a few years past, players may wish to create ex-military pilots. There are only a handful of commercial airlines in operation, so most pilots are forced into freelancing if they want to stay in the air. Possible freelance jobs include flying for Hollywood, giving lessons, or doing air shows (see also *Daredevil*, pp. 80-81).

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 14 [45]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 11 [10].

**Advantages:** 20 points chosen from 3D Spatial Sense [10]; Absolute Direction [5]; Acute Vision [2/level]; Courtesy Rank [1/level]; Danger Sense [15]; Luck [15]; or Reputation [Varies].

**Disadvantages:** A total of -20 points taken from Flashbacks [Varies]; Hard of Hearing [-10]; Impulsiveness [-10]; Jealousy [-10]; Overconfident [-10]; or Post-Combat Shakes [-5].

**Primary Skills:** Aviation (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Piloting (type) (P/A) DX+2 [4]-16.

**Secondary Skills:** Cartography (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Gunner (Machine Gun) (P/A) DX+1 [1]-15 (includes +2 for IQ); Mechanic (Airplane engines) (M/A) IQ [2]-12.

**Background Skills:** A total of 4 points taken from Guns (Pistol) (P/E); Parachuting (P/E); Photography (M/A).

## PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

### 90 POINTS

A hard-boiled gumshoe in the tradition of the Continental Op and Sam Spade is often cynical and wise-cracking, but always ready to fall for a dame with great gams. Some investigators work for agencies; some freelance. A PI (or “operative,” or just “op”) with his own business will need to find suitable office space and advertise. On the other hand, he can also set his own fees.

The PI’s relationship with the local police may be one of mutual respect or complete antipathy. The player and GM should work this out together, as it may provide for some interesting advantages or disadvantages.

A PI on good terms with the local cops may wish to take them as a Patron. A PI must usually have a license (the law varies from state to state) but the license gives no Legal Enforcement Powers. It gives the PI the right to advertise and to charge for investigation; otherwise he has the same powers as any private citizen. A PI license is not a concealed weapons permit; that takes another license and another fee.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 11 [10].

**Advantages:** 12 points of various Contacts. 25 points chosen from Alertness [5/level]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Hard to Kill [5/level]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Intuition [15]; Reputation [Varies]; Strong Will [4/level]; Toughness [Varies]; or additional Contacts.

**Disadvantages:** -30 points chosen from Addiction (Cigarettes) [-5]; Alcoholism [-15 or -20]; Bad Temper [-10]; Enemy [Varies]; Odious Personal Habit [Varies]; Overconfidence [-10]; Poverty [Varies]; and Stubbornness [-5].

**Primary Skills:** Brawling (P/E) DX [1]-12; Research (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Streetwise (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-14.

**Secondary Skills:** Carousing (P/A; HT) HT [2]-11; Detect Lies (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Guns (Pistol) (P/E) DX+1 [2]-15 (includes +2 bonus for IQ). Lockpicking (M/A) IQ [1]-12; Shadowing (M/A) IQ [2]-13.

**Background Skills:** A total of 6 points from Disguise (M/A); Driving (any) (P/A); Intimidation (M/A); Photography (M/A); Savoir-Faire (M/E); and Sex Appeal (M/A; HT).



# REPORTER

80 POINTS

A reporter is a professional snoop, on the lookout for a scoop. Freelance reporters are free to adventure when and where they please, but a reporter who works for a newspaper is often bound to follow his employer's assignments. One way around this difficulty is for the employer (the GM) to assign him to cover events that are likely to occur during the campaign. This is also an excellent way to get the party started on an adventure in the first place.

Note that the female reporter was a stock figure in many pulp stories.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** 11 points of various Contacts. 25 points chosen from Intuition [15]; Patron (Publisher, 9 or less) [15]; Reputation [Varies]; Strong Will [4/level]; or additional Contacts.

**Disadvantages:** -25 points chosen from Bad Sight [-10]; Bad Temper [-10]; Curious [-5 to -15]; Impulsiveness [-10]; Obsession (The public must know the truth) [-5]; Odious Personal Habit (Nosy) [-5]; Sense of Duty (Publisher) [-5]; and Stubbornness [-5].

**Primary Skills:** Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ [2J-13; Research (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Writing (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-15.

**Secondary Skills:** Acting (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Detect Lies (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12.



**Background Skills:** A total of 6 points chosen from Carousing (P/A: HT); Disguise (M/A); Photography (M/A); Psychology (M/H); Savoir-Faire (M/E); Sex Appeal (M/A; HT); Shadowing (M/A); and Streetwise (M/A).

**Customization Notes:** An important subtype of the reporter is the war correspondent. A successful war correspondent would be able to speak a foreign language or two (M/A) and have appropriate Area Knowledge skills (M/E). Note that war correspondents are often suspected of being foreign spies.

# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

90 POINTS

The epitome of the globe-hopping adventurer, the soldier of fortune may be in it either for the fun or for the money. He may have a Sense of Duty to his country or all mankind . . . or he may be strictly a mercenary, treasure-hunter, or hired gun. Some soldiers of fortune are on the run from enemies, an unhappy past, or the law. Others simply can't settle down.

The large variety of soldier of fortune characters make this one of the most customizable templates.

**Attributes:** ST 11 [10]; DX 13 [30]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 11 [10].

**Advantages:** A total of 25 points chosen from Acute Senses (any) [2/level]; Ambidexterity [10]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Courtesy Rank [1/level]; Danger Sense [15]; Fearlessness [2/level]; Fit [5]; Hard to Kill [3/level]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Luck [15]; Military Rank [5/level]; Reputation [Varies]; Serendipity [15]; Toughness [10 or 25]; or Very Fit [15].

**Disadvantages:** A total of -30 points chosen from Addiction (Cigarettes) [-5]; Alcoholism [-15 or -20]; Bad Temper [-10]; Code of Honor [Varies]; Compulsive Gambling [-5 to -15]; Enemy [Varies]; Flashbacks [Varies]; Impulsiveness [-10]; Lecherousness [-15]; Loner [-5]; Overconfidence [-10]; Poverty [Varies]; Secret [Varies]; Sense of Duty [Varies]; Social Disease [-5]; Stubbornness [-5]; or Unluckiness [-10].

**Primary Skills:** Brawling (P/E) DX+ [2] -14; Guns (Pistol) (P/E) DX+2 [1]-15 (includes +2 for IQ).

**Secondary Skills:** Climbing DX-1 (P/A) [1]-12; Hiking (P/A; HT) HT [2]-11; Knife (P/E) DX [1]-13; Survival (type) IQ-1 (M/A) [1]-12.

**Background Skills:** Total of 7 points from Area Knowledge (M/E); Boating (P/A); Carousing (P/A; HT); Cartography (M/A); Demolition (M/A); Driving (type) (P/A); Fast-Draw (Knife) (P/E); Fast-Draw (Pistol) (P/E); Gunner (Machine Gun) (P/A); Guns (Rifle) (P/E); Guns (Shotgun) (P/E); Jumping (P/E); Merchant (M/A); Orienteering (M/A); Packing (M/A); Riding (type) (P/A); or Stealth (P/A).

## OTHER CHARACTERS

With a little modification, these templates will provide numerous ready-to-go characters. Some alternate versions, as well as suggestions for less-common character types are listed below.

### Gadgeteer

Gadgeteering may be a profession for an eccentric inventor or just a means to an end for a Crusader, Soldier of Fortune, or Daredevil who doesn't want to depend *only* on his two fists. Gadgeteering can be added to any of the existing templates, though Wealth and high levels of Science skills will be needed for the Gadgeteer to be successful. *Cliffhangers* Gadgeteers should always take one or more *Gizmo* gadgets. For more details on Gadgeteering, see *GURPS Compendium I*, pp. CI121-127.

### Former Gangster

The pulp era was highly conscious of crime. The "Ten Most Wanted" list turned bank robbers into national heroes of a sort. Prohibition made bootleggers rich, and gang wars with tommy guns created legends.

Playing a 1930s criminal can be fun, but it can create a nightmare for the GM if there are nongangster PCs in the same adventure. In most cases, players should create an ex-gangster that would be willing to cooperate with the forces of law and order (or at least refrain from too many overt acts of crime). Such characters may have Enemies on both sides of the law.

Stereotypical pulp-era gangsters include Mafiosi, tough Irishmen, sinister Chinese, and "all-American" Brooklyn or Chicago thugs ("Hey, youse guys, over dere!")

Disadvantages for the ex-gangster include Greed [-15] and Bully [-10]; bootlegging Gangsters would do well to take both Distilling (M/A) and a high level of Driving (P/A).

### Great White Hunter

Whether he's tracking down elephants for their ivory or riding shotgun on an archaeological expedition, there will always be a need for the Great White Hunter. Simply use the *Explorer* template and beef it up with a higher proficiency with guns (especially high-powered rifles).

Hunters should consider Stealth (P/A), Tracking (M/A), and other outdoor skills. Leadership (M/A) and Languages (M/E) are always desirable.

### Policeman

Policemen of the 1930s usually walk a "beat" - a certain area of the city that is their jurisdiction. They are very close to the people that live on the beat, often on a first-name basis. A cop with many years on the same beat might have hundreds of Contacts. Some policemen are assigned to squad cars, but such cars are rarely equipped with a radio (and even then, likely only a receiver).

It may be difficult for police characters to adventure with a nonpolice party, but an entire *group* of police PCs working out of the same precinct makes a good campaign. For detailed information, see *GURPS Cops*.

Modify the *G-Man* template by lowering Legal Enforcement Powers to 5 points and adjusting the Duty and Enemies. Skills specific to a Policeman include Area Knowledge (his beat) (M/A) and Shortsword (Nightstick) (P/E).



### Spy

The pulp period was full of intrigue. An espionage campaign is a possibility - or a single character, unknown to the others, may actually be a spy! This can be a Secret.

It is difficult to pigeonhole a spy into a single character template. He usually has appropriate skills for deception, and most have combat abilities. Some spies can mingle with the upper crust in the casinos of Monte Carlo; others are rough-and-ready pilots, couriers, or even assassins. Players should discuss the campaign style with the GM to determine what type of spy would be appropriate. It is possible that spy PCs simply won't work with the GM's campaign, but spy NPC's always make good foes. Enemies and Patrons will vary from foreign powers to secret organizations - the GM will supply the details.

In addition to deception and combat skills, don't forget such specializations as Intelligence Analysis (M/H) and Lockpicking (M/A). See *GURPS Espionage* for more details.



# Advantages, Disadvantages, and Skills

## ADVANTAGES

Most pulp heroes are in constant physical danger, and rely on such traits as Luck, Serendipity, Hard to Kill, Toughness, and Combat Reflexes to see them through. Physical enhancements of all kinds are often seen. Common Sense is almost unknown . . .

### Ally Group see p. CI19

Pulps heroes were often surrounded with a group of friends and adventuring companions such as Doc Savage's *Fabulous Five*. They support a central figure, supplementing his abilities with their own. Many were incredibly powerful heroes in their own right! Creating a group of PC allies is covered on p. 79.

### Legal Enforcement Powers see p. B21

Characters with this advantage must remember that they will be adventuring long before the age of Miranda rights, probable cause, search warrants, and other modern-day protections. Many law enforcement officials *won't* respect a suspect's civil rights. Any law enforcement character who abuses his 5-point enforcement powers (even though his employer may look the other way) should be forced to buy the 10-point version or face the eventual consequences of his actions.

### Patron see p. B24

Possible patrons for this era include archaeological foundations or museums, police departments, governments, newspapers, journals, retired heroes, millionaire philanthropists, etc.

### Status and Reputation see pp. B17-18

A special type of Status, most appropriate for British characters, is knighthood. Characters are knighted for outstanding achievements in the name of the king, and receive Status 2 and a +1 reaction bonus from civilized people when his name and title are mentioned. *Sir* precedes the name of the knight, and the initials of the appropriate order of knighthood (K.C.B. means Knight Grand Cross of the Bath, for instance) follow it.

Being knighted is a 12-point advantage which must be bought with character points. This includes Status 2 and a 2-point Reputation (+1, civilized people, all the time).

### Unusual Background see p. B23

Many of the great pulp heroes came from an unusual background; born of a noble family and raised by apes, trained in the Orient in the mystic arts of invisibility and self-healing, etc. This type of roleplaying is to be encouraged, but the GM must be careful not to hand out too many abilities under this advantage. Note that both the above backgrounds would cost far more than the "normal" 10 points.

A version of this advantage that works wonderfully in the pulps is the Gadgeteer background (see p. CI25).

## NEW ADVANTAGES

### Independent Income 5 points

You have what nearly everyone wants: a source of income that does not require you to work. The source of income is up to you: a trust fund, a pension, rent on land or houses, royalties on inventions - use your imagination! Income per month is 5% of the starting wealth for your wealth level. At the GM's discretion, you may need to spend 10 hours a month looking after financial matters - doing anything from standing in line at a pension office to reading reports from trustees. This advantage only applies to those who normally would work for a living, i.e., from Poor to Wealthy. If you are Very Wealthy or better you already have it, and the same 5% of starting wealth per month can be used to determine your income; if you are Dead Broke you have no income.

This advantage can be used to represent military pensions and half pay; Kipling's "shillin' a day - bloomin' good pay!" (an old sergeant's pension) amounts to Poor with Independent Income, while an inactive officer's half pay is Comfortable with Independent Income.

If your income derives from investments, their exact value need not be specified; it is assumed that you cannot or will not invade your capital.

## ANIMAL ALLIES

Cliffhanging fiction is full of heroes with animal allies, including horses (The Lone Ranger's "Silver," The Phantom's "Hero," Zorro's "Tornado"), dogs (Rin Tin Tin, Jake from *Tales of the Gold Monkey*, The Phantom's "Devil"), Monk Mayfair's pet pig "Habeas Corpus," and more. Players will need to get GM permission to create an animal ally with anything other than normal animal characteristics. Animal Empathy and other similar advantages or skills would be especially appropriate for a hero with an animal sidekick.



# DISADVANTAGES

The hero of the pulp era was very likely to have “noble” disadvantages like Sense of Duty, Code of Honor, Honesty, and so on. Traits such as Sadism and Bully are almost never seen in pulp heroes; their use should be carefully governed by the GM.

## Addiction see p. B30

The era was full of addictive substances, including:

*Cigarettes.* Cigarette smoking in the '30s was not only legal, but accepted as the norm. -5 points.

*Marijuana.* Not fashionable, but common. No modifier to withdrawal roll, \$ 1 daily dose. -5 points.

*Cocaine.* Quite common; it was legal until 1934. Highly addictive (-5 to withdrawal roll), \$3 daily dose. Stimulating (user feels smarter but is at -1 to IQ, +1 to Speed). -10 points until 1934, -15 points afterward.

*Opium.* In the pulps, a traditional vice around Chinatown. Highly addictive (-5 on withdrawal roll), \$5 daily dose. -15 points.

*Morphine.* Totally addictive (-10 on withdrawal roll), \$8 daily dose, incapacitating (drowsiness, stupor). -40 points.

*Heroin.* Totally addictive (-10 on withdrawal roll), \$15 daily dose, incapacitating. -40 points.

## Alcoholism see p. B30

The Prohibition Act, ratified in 1919, made the sale of alcohol illegal in the United States. During Prohibition, Alcoholism is a -20-point disadvantage to American PCs. It was repealed on December 5, 1933, after which alcoholism is worth only -15 points. Any alcoholic created during Prohibition who adventures beyond that date must buy off the 5-point difference.

## Enemy see p. B39

Nearly every pulp hero worth his salt had at least one recurring enemy. Appropriate to the genre is the “nemesis” - a powerful foe who will go out of his way to interfere with the PCs’ plans. He should be built on at least 100 points and have a few thug types to do his light work. Masterminds make great nemesis enemies.

Note that it is possible (even advantageous) for more than one character to take the same Enemy. Imagine the nefarious deathtrap the evil Doctor Kromm will create when he learns that his foes Damn Bold and Reginald von Snoot are working together! In the case of a shared Enemy, the GM should roll only once per session.

## Poverty see p. B16

During the Depression years, many rich people became poor, while the poor got poorer. PCs who are unable to find a job may end up poor as the campaign progresses, but they do not get extra points to make up for it.

A poor character who wishes to buy off the disadvantage must provide the GM with some sort of logical reason for his sudden increase in wealth.

# COST OF LIVING

Status and cost of living were in a turmoil during the Depression. The table lists the cost of living, per month, for each status level. For more information, see p. B191.

Status	Monthly Cost of Living
-2 (Homeless, Bum)	\$2
-1 (Unemployed)	\$10
0 (Average Citizen)	\$40
1 (High Society)	\$100
2 (Mayor, Crime boss)	\$200
3 Corporate Executive	\$400
4 (Big City Mayor, Godfather)	\$750
5 (Senator, Governor)	\$1,000
6 (Financial Tycoon)	\$1,500
7 (National Ruler)	\$2,000

## Sense of Duty see p. B39

Pulp heroes often have a Sense of Duty. The two common ones are:

*Patriotism.* This could also go as far as Fanaticism (and some heroes may well decide to carry it that far). The pulps were full of heroes who felt duty-bound to defend their country against foreign menaces such as Imperial Japan, Nazi Germany, Bolshevik Russia, vengeful Mexico, or any threat (real or imagined) to Crown or Constitution. -10 points.

*Humanitarianism.* Many heroes in the pulps were humanitarians. Their concern for the welfare of mankind led them to the four corners of the earth, righting wrongs, avenging injustices, and helping out citizens wherever they went. This makes it simple to involve a character in any adventure; if he hears of someone in trouble, he will immediately come to their aid. -15 points.

## Social Stigma see p. B27

Many groups of people were looked down upon in the 1930s, including blacks, Nazis, Jews, Orientals, Filipinos, Mexicans, outsiders, anyone with a bad appearance or habits, homosexuals, “hicks,” Bolsheviks, and high-class twits. Specific reaction modifiers vary and should be set by the GM in line with his campaign. Examples:

*Foreigners.* Racial prejudice was rampant in many areas of the U.S., especially the South. Any black or foreign character will be viewed as a second-class citizen (-2 reaction) by most Americans. -10 points.

*Nazis.* During the latter portion of the decade (1935-1939), most of the world will react at -2 to Germans in general, and -3 to known Nazis. Prior to that time, Hitler was often *admired* as a leader who had pulled his country from the ashes of the Great War, so being a German or a Nazi was not a Social Stigma. If a Nazi-related character is created before 1936 and adventures into the latter half of the decade, he adds the Social Stigma without gaining additional points. -10/-15 points.



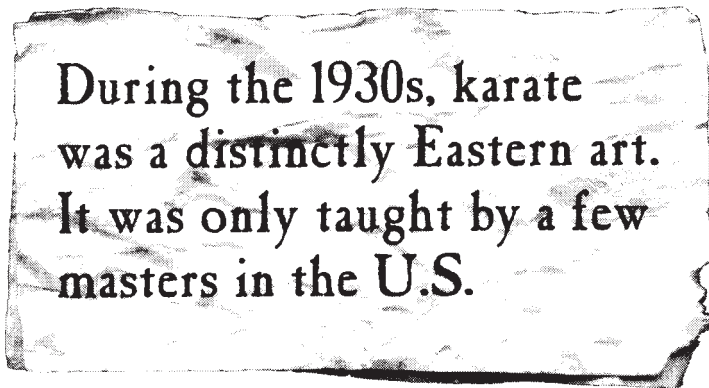
# NEW DISADVANTAGES

## Malaria

**-5 points**

You have malaria and regularly suffer from attacks of the disease (see details on p. CII 170). Roll vs. HT+2 each week while under mental or physical stress; roll vs. HT+4 at other times. A failed HT roll brings on an attack. There is a +1 to HT rolls if the character takes a daily prophylactic dose of quinine (roll vs. HT+2 or suffer mild nausea and/or vomiting from the drug).

Characters with Immunity to Disease are immune to malaria and cannot take this disadvantage.



## SKILLS

### Distilling

**see p. CI136**

This is a common skill for gangsters and mountain-dwellers of the U.S. South. The most common form of bootleg alcohol was bourbon or whiskey, which required at least *some* aging in oak casks. This led to an increase in popularity of gin made from raw alcohol with juniper berry extract, mixed in a large container such as a bathtub (thus the origin of the term *bathtub gin*). This bootlegged gin was usually of very poor quality, but it was quick and easy to make. This led to the increasing popularity of cocktails in which the taste was masked by a mixer of some sort.

### Guns

**see p. B51**

Gun skill specializations found in the sidebar on p. CI121 are appropriate for *Cliffhangers*. The Light Automatic specialization would include the tommy-gun as well as light machine guns such as the M1918 BAR. Full-sized machine guns (such as the Browning M2) come under the Gunner (Machine Gun) skill.

### Hypnotism

**see p. B56**

The pulp view of hypnotism is a far cry from the reality of today's psychotherapeutic uses. In the pulps, it is a mix of mysticism and mind-control whereby villains and vigilantes alike take over men's minds by looking in their eyes. The Shadow was renowned for his ability to "cloud men's minds" and numerous villains would hypnotize innocent women before abducting them.

Practitioners of more powerful, cinematic forms of mind control may wish to consider Enthrallment (p. CI139) and Invisibility Art (p. CI141), or consult *GURPS Psionics* for a better way to emulate the intended results. Also see *GURPS Warehouse 23*, pp. 109-111, for additional suggestions.

GMs may wish to assess an Unusual Background to characters with powerful mind control abilities.

### Karate

**see p. B51**

During the 1930s, karate was a distinctly Eastern art. It was only taught by a select few *sensei* (masters) in the U.S. Searching for a sensei in the U.S. is very difficult; convincing one to accept you as a disciple is next to impossible, and would constitute an Unusual Background worth at least 10 points. Oriental characters, or those who have spent much time in the Orient, are most likely to have access to the Karate skill. The GM has the final say. The same applies to Judo, but to a lesser degree.

For a more detailed treatment of martial arts in a fashion applicable to pulp-era heroes, see the Trained by a Master advantage (p. CI31), as well as *GURPS Martial Arts*.

### Piloting

**see p. B69**

For this era, Piloting is divided into six categories: Light Airplane (single-engined, high performance planes, such as fighters, racers, and aerobatics craft), Heavy Airplane (multi-engined transports and bombers), Glider (for unpowered aircraft of all sorts), Autogiro (an airplane-helicopter hybrid) and Lighter-than-Air (airships, including blimps, dirigibles, and zeppelins). Primitive helicopters were introduced in the late 1930s, but these remained experimental until 1945; they use the Light Helicopter specialization. See pp. HT144-145 for more information, and use the list of aircraft on p. 94 to determine specific plane types.

### Research

**see p. B62**

Prior to the modern network of data storage and retrieval, most research was done either at the library or the newspaper "morgue" (today known as the newspaper library).

The morgue contains copies of that particular newspaper's back issues spanning several years, depending on the paper's size and financial status. It is open to anyone during regular business hours. Back issues are not indexed (except by date of publication) and research is slow and tedious. Each research attempt takes 2 hours per piece of information; if the roll succeeds, subtract 5 minutes for each point the roll was made by.

Some larger newspapers would keep indexed files of clippings; base time to research in this sort of morgue is only 1 hour. However, these files are normally open only to newspaper employees, law-enforcement personnel, and friends of the management; others must try a reaction roll at -2.

Library research was usually much faster (base time 1 hour), but couldn't provide the sort of detail that the morgue would offer.

# Jobs and Income

Finding a job during the Depression *is far* more difficult than in most societies. Someone looking *for any* job is at -3 to his success roll during most of the decade; from 1932-1934 use -5 (see p. A192). Advertising will increase the chance of success according to the amount spent. Spending \$3 gives +1, \$30 gives +2, \$300 gives +3 and so on.

Complete rules for jobs and income can be found on pp. B192-194.



## JOB TABLE

### Job, Montly Income

#### Poor Jobs

	Success Roll	Critical Failure
Bum* (None), \$5	9	2d/2d, 3 mos. in jail
Apple seller (None)*, \$10	11	LJ/2d, LJ
Hired farm hand (ST 10+, Agronomy or Animal Handling 12+), \$18	PR	LJ/4d, LJ
Thief* (DX 11+, Stealth 11+, Lockpicking or Pickpocket 10+), \$20	PR	3 mo.jail/4d

#### Struggling Jobs

Retail clerk (Accounting 10+), \$35	PR	LJ
Factory worker (ST 10+ or DX 10+), \$40	PR	LJ/4d
Cab driver* (Driving (Car) 10+, Area Knowledge (City) 13+), \$40	Worst PR	-1i/4d, LJ
Salesman (Merchant 11+), \$50	PR	LJ
Private investigator* (Streetwise 12+), \$50	PR-2	2d, -1i/6d
Pulp writer* (Writing 12+), \$50	PR	-2i/-5i

#### Average Jobs

Street cop (Guns(Pistol) 12+, Status 0+), \$75	IQ-1	3d/3d, LJ
Office worker (Administration 11+, Accounting 10+), \$80	PR	LJ
Thug* (Guns 13+), \$100	PR-3	1 yr jail/6d
Factory lineboss (tree years at factory), \$160	IQ	LJ
Insurance salesman* (Fast-Talk or Merchant 13+), \$100	Fast-Talk-2	-2i/-2i, LJ
Police detective (Criminology 12+, Guns (Pistol) 12+, Status 0+), \$120	Criminology	3d/3d, LJ
Newspaper reporter* (Writing 12+), \$120	PR	LJ
Athlete* (Sports(in specialty) 12+, Status 0+), \$120	PR	1d/LJ
Musician* (Singing or Musical Instrument 11+) \$120	PR	-2i
Gadgeteer* (Gadgeteer advantage, Engineering 20+), \$150	IQ-2	1d/6d, -2i

#### Comfortable Jobs

Store manager (Administration 12+, Status 0+), \$200	PR	LJ
Head bookkeeper (Accounting 13+, Statis 0+), \$170	PR	LJ
University professor (Academic specialty 15+, Status 1+) \$230	PR+Status	-2i/LJ
Mafia thug* (Streetwise 12+, Guns 14+), \$300	IQ-3	5 yrs in jail/8d
Newspaper editor (Writing 14+, Administration 12+, Status 0+), \$300	PR	-2i/LJ
Corporate manager (Administration 13+, Status 1+), \$300	PR	-2i/LJ
Doctor* (Phisician 14+, Status 2+), \$350	PR-1	-2i, -5i
Lawyer* (Law 13+, Status 1+), \$400	Law	-2i,-5i
Radio celebrity* (Voice, Status 1+), \$400	Reaction+4	-1i/LJ, -1 Status

#### Wealthy Jobs

Commercial airline pilot (Pilot[Large Planes] 14+, Status 1+), \$600	PR	LJ/LJ,8d
Corporate president (Administration 14+, Status 1+), \$750	PR+Status	-3i/-6i, -1 Status
Mafia boss* (Admin. 11+, Guns 14+, Streetwise 13+, Status 2+), \$1200	Worst PR+Status-3	5 yrs in jail/8d
Dilettante (Status2+), \$1500	Reaction+8	Allowance cut 20%

\* indicates a freelance job. LJ indicates lost job.

2d indicates 2 dice damage, 3d indicates 3 dice damage, and so on.

-2i indicates loss of money equal to 2 month's income: -3i indicates loss of 3 months' income, and so on.



# Outfitting the Hero

Starting wealth for this background is \$750. Remember, this figure represents the character's entire net worth. Only 20% is to be spent on adventuring equipment (see p. A16).

A short cut is to reduce starting wealth to \$150 and use the entire amount for weaponry and other adventure-related items. Should the question arise as to whether someone owns some particular mundane item (a household radio, a pressure cooker), the GM decides, with the aid of the dice if he likes.

## EQUIPMENT TABLE

### Clothing and Armor

	Cost	Weight
Belt, leather. Heavy-duty leather belt.	\$0.75	1/2 lb.
Belt, money. Zippered underside for concealing cash	\$1	1/2 lb.
Boots, arctic. Heavy-duty boots for arctic duty. PD 2, DR 2.	\$25	8 lbs.
Boots, hip (waders). For fishing or treasure hunting in swamps.	\$5	5 lbs.
Boots, jungle. Olive-drab, rubber-soled canvas boots.	\$3	2 lbs.
Boots, leather. Basic boots for work and adventuring. PD 2, DR 2.	\$10	4 lbs.
Breastplate, concealable. Metal breastplate. PD 4, DR 10, front only.	\$75	12 lbs.
Bulletproof vest. PD 3 DR 4	\$30	10 lbs.
Chaps, leather. Front of legs only. PD 2, DR 2.	\$8	2 lbs.
Clothing, formal. Tailored suits, evening gowns, tuxedos.	\$20+	4 lbs.
Clothing, khakis. Typical safari wears.	\$7	4 lbs.
Clothing, ordinary. Includes summer dresses and cheap suits.	\$7+	4 lbs.
Clothing, summer. Short pants, short-sleeved shirt, etc.	\$5+	2 lbs.
Clothing, winter. PD 0, DR 1. +2 to HT to resist cold weather effects.	\$15+	8 lbs.
Clothing, arctic. PD 0, DR 2. +5 to HT to resist cold weather effects.	\$30+	15 lbs.
Gloves, canvas. PD 1, DR 1.	\$1	1/2 lb.
Gloves, heavy leather. PD 2, DR 2.	\$3	1/2 lb.
Gloves, winter. Lined, soft leather gloves.	\$4	1 lb.
Goggles. Must-have for aviators and motorcyclists. DR 1, eyes only.	\$5	neg.
Hat, formal. No gentleman would be seen without one.	\$3	neg.
Hat, slouch. For the stylish private investigator.	\$1	neg.
Helmet, flight. Leather helmet for aviators and motorcyclists. PD 2, DR 2.	\$15	3 lbs.
Helmet, pith. PD 0, DR 1.	\$1	1 lb.
Helmet, steel. PD 4, DR 3. Hot in the summer, cold in the winter.	\$7	4 lbs.
Jacket, field. A heavy lined jacket.	\$7	3 lbs.
Jacket, heavy leather. PD 2, DR 2.	\$15	7 lbs.
Jacket, light leather. PD 1, DR 1.	\$10	4 lbs.
Jacket, lightweight. A windproof, water-resistant jacket with a zippered front	\$15	3 lbs.
Overcoat, business. Common in the cities. Gives +4 to Holdout. Heavy cloth.	\$10	3 lbs.
Overcoat, leather. Lightweight leather. Gives +4 to Holdout. PD1, DR 1.	\$25	6 lbs.
Pants, heavy denim/canvas. PD 1, DR 1.	\$3	2 lbs.
Raincoat. Heavy rubberized mackintosh coat with hood.	\$7	6 lbs.
Scarf, silk. Fashionable for city wear and practical for open-air cockpits.	\$5	1/4 lb.
Shoes. Everything from deck shoes to wingtips. DR 1.	\$8	2 lbs.
Sweater. Heavy wool watch sweater.	\$10	3 lbs.

### Adventuring Gear and Miscellaneous Equipment

Backpack. Canvas rucksack. Holds 2cf or 50 lbs.	\$10	3 lbs.
Backpack, mountain. Heavy canvas with pack frame. Holds 3cf or 75 lbs.	\$25	8 lbs.
Battery. Will last 6 months.	\$0.35	neg.
Binoculars, 5x. With leather case.	\$10	1 lb.
Binoculars, 10x. With leather case.	\$30	2 lbs.
Blanket, wool. Mountains warmth even when damp.	\$2	4 lbs.

## PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

This is a list of personal equipment available in the 1930s. Any equipment not on this list may be available at roughly 10% of the modern cost, depending on its TL. Equipment and weaponry in the *GURPS Basic Set* (pp. B208-209 and B213) and in *GURPS High-Tech* is also available (at 10% of the cost if given in "modern" terms) assuming it exists in the 1930s. Any equipment bought outside these lists must be cleared with the GM.

<b>Adventuring Gear and Miscellaneous Equipment (continued)</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Blanket, flannel. Lightweight blanket.	\$0.35	2 lbs.
Camera, Kodak. "Box Brownie"	\$2.50	1 lb.
Camera, movie (battery). Uses 8-mm film. Battery lasts about 6 hours.	\$50	3 lbs.
Camera, movie (wind-up). Uses 8-mm film.	\$30	3 lbs.
Camera, standard.	\$50	2 lbs.
Canteen. Holds 1 quart (2 lbs.) of water.	\$1	3 lbs.
Cargo net, 10'x10' net.	\$3	13 lbs.
Cartridge belt. Hold 50 rounds or 8 magazines.	\$1	2 lbs.
Cigarette lighter. Zippo brand invented in 1932.	\$1	neg.
Compass. Provides +1 to Orienteering.	\$3	neg.
Disguise kit. All manner of disguise gear. +2 to Disguise skill.	\$50	7 lbs.
Duffle bag. Canvas, holds 4cf or 30 lbs.	\$2	3 lbs.
Film, b/w (roll of 6)	\$0.30	neg.
Film, color (roll of 6)	\$2	neg.
Film, 8-mm. Three minute roll.	\$1	1/2 lb.
Film, 8-mm. Eight minute roll.	\$5	1 lb.
Flashbulb (disposable).	\$0.05	neg.
First aid kit, individual. +1 to First Aid.	\$6	2 lbs.
First aid kit, medic. +2 to First Aid.	\$15	10 lbs.
First aid kit, doctor. As medic, plus Physician, Surgery, and Diagnosis at no penalty.	\$75	15 lbs.
First aid kit, field unit. As medic, plus +1 to Surgery, Physician, and Diagnosis.	\$100	50 lbs.
Fishing gear. Pole, reel, and tackle.	\$10	5 lbs.
Flashlight (uses 2 batteries)	\$2	1 lb.
Gas mask. Filters out smoke and other gases.	\$5	3 lbs.
Gasoline.	\$0.20/gallon	6 lbs./gallon
Grapnel. Supports 300 lbs.	\$5	4 lbs.
Handcuffs.	\$1	1/2 lb.
Holster, flap. Leather; fits most pistols.	\$1	1 lb.
Holster, shoulder. +1 to Holdout.	\$1.50	1 lb.
Insect repellent. Citronella, distinct odor. +1 to resist insect-borne diseases.	\$1	1/2 lb.
Lamp, carbide. Light clips to helmet, generator to waist. Burns 5 hours per fueling.	\$9	3 lbs.
Lantern, kerosene. Burns 2 pints of fuel per 12 hours.	\$12	5 lbs.
Map case, waterproof. Holds map and writing utensils.	\$5	1/2 lb.
Mosquito netting, 12'x12' net. Gives +1 to resist insect-borne disease.	\$2	2 lbs.
Newspaper.	\$0.05	neg.
Playing cards.	\$0.50	neg.
Projector, 8-mm.	\$50	12 lbs.
Pack board. Frame and shoulder straps only. Can support 150 lbs.	\$3	4 lbs.
Pulp magazine.	\$0.10	neg.
Quinine, bottle of 30 pills. See p.86 for details.	\$5	neg.
Rope, 10 yds. 1/2" or 3/8" manilla or hemp line.	\$1	3 lbs.
Saddlebags. Dual leather bags for riding.	\$11	15 lbs.
Shovel.	\$1	5 lbs.
Streamer trunk. Wooden trunk, holds 5cf of cargo (100 lbs.). DR 4.	\$7.50	20 lbs.
Stove, camp. Burns 1 pint of gas in 2 hours.	\$5	3 lbs.
Sulfa tablets, 30. Helps prevent infection. Some characters may be allergic.	\$0.95	neg.
Sulfa powder. Five applications; poured directly on wounds to prevent infections.	\$1	neg.
Suitcase. Holds 3 cf. DR 1.	\$3	8 lbs.
Telescope, 25x. With tripod.	\$22	10 lbs.
Tent, small. Canvas, with poles and stakes. Generally slips one or two.	\$20	9 lbs.
Tent, medium. 12'x12'x8' tent. Slips 6-8.	\$50	50 lbs.
Tool kit, electrician's.	\$30	6 lbs.
Tool kit, mechanic's.	\$15	10 lbs.
Typewriter. Large, bulky, indispensable for writers.	\$25	25 lbs.
Typewriter, portable. Compact model with integral case.	\$55	10 lbs.



<b>Adventuring Gear and Miscellaneous Equipment (continued)</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Watch.	\$5+	neg.
Wind-up alarm clock.	\$2	1 lb.

## Hand Weapons

Axe.	\$2	4 lbs.
Crowbar. Uses Axe-2; does sw+1 crushing.	\$2	4 lbs.
Dagger.	\$0.50	1/2 lb.
Hatchet.	\$1	2 lbs.
Large knife.	\$3	1 lb.
Nightstick.	\$0.50	1/2 lb.
Saber.	\$10	3 lbs.
Sap (Blackjack).	\$0.50	1 lb.
Pocketknife.	\$1.50	neg.
Sword cane (treat as Smallsword in cane).	\$10	3 lbs.

## Meal and Services

Apartment, average.	\$25/month
Apartment, slum.	\$12/month.
Bottle of cheap booze.	\$1
Bottle of good liquor.	\$5
Candy bar.	\$0.05
Cigar.	\$0.10-\$0.50
Cigarettes, pack.	\$0.05-\$0.10
Home, 3-bedroom.	\$4000
Hotel, average.	\$5/night
Hotel, flophouse.	\$1/night
Hotel, ritzy.	\$20/night+
Matinee (including a cartoon).	\$0.10
Meal, average.	\$0.25-\$0.50
Meal, good.	\$1.50
Meal, ritzy.	\$5
Meal, train/liner.	\$1.50
Office rental, nice.	\$30/mo
Office rental, slums.	\$10/mo
Shave and haircut	\$0.75
Soda pop	\$0.05
Swing joint cover charge.	\$0.25
Tobacco, plug. Chewing tobacco.	\$0.05

## Travel Costs

Airplane (Chicago to L.A.)	\$125
Airplane (New York to Chicago)	\$50
Cab fare	\$0.04/mile plus 1 cent per mile for each additional person
Ferry	\$0.15 plus \$0.05/mile
Ocean liner (first class, suite)	\$100+/day
Ocean liner (first class, berth)	\$50+/day
Ocean liner (second class)	\$25/day
Ocean liner (third class)	\$10/day
Ocean liner (steerage)	\$2/day
Subway token	\$0.05
Train (local)	\$0.05 plus \$0.02/zone
Train (New York to Boston)	\$4
Train (New York to San Francisco)	\$20
Tramp freighter	\$10/day

# Combat Equipment

Besides those weapons introduced during the '30s, firearm designs many years old were still being used during that decade. Below are several popular models, including some updated stats for guns found in the *GURPS Basic Set*. Many more weapons for the period are found in *GURPS High-Tech*. All bullets do crushing damage; all weapons are TL6.

## Reloading

The weapons on this list all have one of three feed devices for repeat fire: integral magazine, removable magazine, or extra barrel. The revolvers, rifles, M1 1 shotgun, and Astra Mod 902 machine pistol are integral magazine; the M32 shotgun is two-barreled. All other weapons have detachable magazines.

Changing magazines takes three seconds: one to drop the old magazine, one to grab the new magazine, and one to lock it home and prepare to fire. Loading rounds into a magazine takes one second per round. The Colt has a swing-out cylinder, the Enfield is break-open; reloading takes one second to open the cylinder, one second to eject the spent cartridges, one second per round to load the cylinder, and one second to close and prepare for firing.

The .22 rifle and the M11 shotguns have tubular magazines; they are loaded with individual rounds. Loading takes one second to prepare the weapon for loading, one second per round to load, and one second to ready for firing. The M32 shotgun takes one second to open, one second per round to load, and one second to ready for firing.

## Automatic Weapons in the '30s

Prior to 1934 there was no federal law against purchasing automatic weapons in the United States. After that time, while they remained legal, there was a \$200 tax on each automatic weapon sold. This tax must be paid in addition to the retail cost if the weapon is bought legally.

# WEAPONS TABLE

Malf	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt.	AWt.	RoF	Shots	ST	Rcl	Cost
<b>Automatic Pistols</b>												
Colt M1911A1, .45 ACP, 1926 U.S.												
Crit.	2d+	10	2	175	1,700	2.75	0.5	3~	7+1	10	-2	\$50
Luger P08, 9x19 mm Parabellum, 1908, Germany												
16	2d+2	9	4	150	1,850	2	0.4	3~	8+1	9	-1	\$50
Mauser S96 "Broomhandle", 7.63x25mm Mauser, 1896, Germany												
Crit.	2d+1-	10	3	150	1,900	2.75	0.25	3~	10	10	-1	\$50
TT-33 Tokarev, 7.62x25mm Tokarev, 193, USSR												
Crit.	2d+1-	10	2	150	1,900	2.2	0.35	3~	8+1	9	-1	\$45
Walther P38, 9x19mm Parabellum, 1939, Germany												
Crit.	2d+2	10	3	150	1,850	2.4	0.4	3~	8+1	9	-1	\$75
Webley&Scott Police Model, .32 ACP, 1906, U.K.												
Crit.	2d-1-	10	2	100	1,300	1.5	0.25	3~	8+1	8	-1	\$10

Some states and cities had more restrictive laws; the GM is the final authority on weapons law in the game. Most foreign countries prohibit private ownership of automatic weapons.

## Explosives

*Dynamite.* Dynamite is available to anyone in construction, demolition, and related businesses, but would-be purchasers must prove their legal need. It is also available on the black market, but at a substantial markup. Farmers often use dynamite, especially for blowing rocks or stumps from would-be farmland; most farming communities have it for sale.

One stick of dynamite does 5d-2 damage, costs \$2, and weighs half a pound. Black market costs will average 1d+2 dollars per stick. See *GURPS High-Tech*, pp. HT28-29 for more information.

*Grenades.* All TL 6 grenades listed on p. B209 and in *GURPS High-Tech* are available at 2d+2 dollars each on the black market. Note: The British "Jam Tin" grenade was an improvisation of the Great War. It is not likely that any have survived into the '30s; any that have are very dangerous antiques. Even touching one requires a roll against Demolitions-6; on a failure the grenade goes off. If one does work, it does considerable damage.

*Nitroglycerine.* While honest people will not be carrying a supply of the stuff on every adventure, villains are likely to use it in deathtraps. One legitimate use for nitro is putting out oil-field fires; this sometimes involves several pounds of the stuff. One of the high-risk jobs available to destitute adventurers is hauling nitro across rough roads in badly sprung trucks to burning oil fields. Nitro is very dangerous, and can be set off by flame, sparks, electricity, or another small explosion. Dropping a container of nitroglycerine will detonate it on a roll of 13 or over. Impure nitro may explode on 12 or over.

Eight ounces of liquid nitro does 3dx3 of explosive damage.



Malf	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt.	AWt.	RoF	Shots	ST	Rcl	Cost
<b>Revolvers</b>												
Colt Police Positive, .32 LS, 1907, U.S.												
Crit.	1d+2-	10	2	100	1,450	1	0.2	3~	6	8	-1	\$15
Enfield No. 2 Mk I, .38 S&W, 1928, U.K.												
Crit.	2d	10	2	120	1,500	1.8	0.2	3~	6	8	-1	\$30
Smith&Wesson Military&Police, .38 Special, U.S.												
Crit.	2d-1	10	2	120	1,500	2	0.2	3~	6	8	-1	\$30
Webley No. 1 Mk VI, .455 SAA, 1915, U.K.												
Crit.	2d-1+	11	2	160	1,600	3	0.3	3~	6	11	-1	\$25
<b>Shotguns</b>												
Remington M11, 12g, 1911, U.S.												
Crit.	4d	12	5	25	150	10	0.84	3~	5+1	12	-2	\$50
Remington M32, 12g, 1932, U.S. <sup>1</sup>												
Crit.	4d	12	6	25	150	8	0.28	2~	2	12	-3	\$35
<b>Rifles</b>												
Enfield SMLE No. 1 Mk III, .303 SAA, 1907 U.K.												
Crit.	6d+1	14	10	900	3,500	9.2	0.55	1	10	12	-2	\$130
Mauser Kar98k, 7.92x57mm Mauser, 1935, Germany												
Crit.	7d+1	14	10	900	3,900	9	0.3	½	5	12	-3	\$125
Remington M8, .35 Remington, 1906, U.S.												
Crit.	5d+2	12	8	450	3,000	8.25	0.2	3~	5	10	-1	\$55
Remington M34, .22 LR, 1932, U.S.												
Crit.	1d+1-	13	10	75	1,200	6	1.5	1	20	7	-1	\$45
Springfield M1903, .30-06, 1906, U.S.												
Crit.	7d+1	14	11	1000	4,200	9	0.3	½	5+1	12	-3	\$120
Steyr-Solothurn S18-100, 20x105mmB Solothurn, 1932, Austria <sup>2</sup>												
Crit.	5d×3 (2)	19	10	1500	4,800	107	8	1	10	16B	-3	\$1000
<b>Machine Pistols and Submachine Guns</b>												
Astra Mod 902, 7.63x25mm Mauser, 1928, Spain <sup>3</sup>												
16	2d+1-	10	3	160	1,900	3.8	0.5	15*	20	10	-5	\$100
Auto-Ordnance M1921 “Tommy-gun”, .45 ACP, 1921, U.S.												
Crit.	2d+1+	10	8	180	1,700	11.9	1.3	13*	20	11	-2	\$200
Haenel-Schmeiccer MP28/II, 9x19 mm Parabellum, 1928, Germany												
Crit.	3d-1	10	6	160	1,900	10.3	1.5	8*	32	10	-1	\$200
Steyr-Solothurn S1-100, 9x25mm Mauser, 1930, Austria												
Crit.	3d+1	10	6	180	2,000	9.9	1.4	8*	32	10	-2	\$200
<b>Machine Guns</b>												
Brownig M1918 BAR, .30-06, 1918, U.S.												
Crit.	7d+1	17	10	1,000	4,200	17.6	1.5	9*	20	13	-2	\$180
Lewis Mk I, .303 SAA, 1913, U.K.												
Crit.	6d+1	15	10	800	3,600	27	5	8*	47	13B	-1	\$150

*Damage:* Weapons with a “-” behind their damage stat have their damage halved after penetrating DR. Weapons with a “+” have their damage multiplied by 1.5 after penetration.

1. This is a double-barreled shotgun. If both barrels are fired simultaneously, roll only once to hit, then assess 8d damage. Minimum strength of 15 is required to fire both barrels, otherwise firer must roll vs. DX (-1 per point of ST below 15) to keep from being knocked down.

2. A heavy antitank rifle, fitted with a bipod and recoil buffer. The gun fires an armor-piercing round, which halves DR.

3. An unlicensed machine pistol variant of the Mauser C96. Use Guns (Machine Pistol) if used without the detachable stock, Guns (Light Auto) with the stock attached. With the stock, Ace is 6, Wt 4.8, and Rcl -3.

The Steyr-Solothurn S18-100 and Lewis Mk I are equipped with bipods. See p. HT123 for details.

# Vehicles

The table below gives a broad sampling of the vehicle; available in the Thirties. Vehicles are listed by date - either the year they became available, or the year of the most common or popular model. After the listed date, buyers may be able to get the same model in a newer year, or they may buy the vehicle used. The GM determines availability, cost and condition of used vehicles. Additional vehicles (especially combat vehicles) can be found in *GURPS WWII* and its supplements.

## VEHICLES TABLE

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Seats</i>	<i>Top Speed</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Skill Modifier</i>
<b>Automobiles</b>					
Lincoln Touring Car	1923	5	65	800	
Chrysler Sedan 70	1924	4	70	800	
Chevrolet Superior	1925	5	60	650	
Ford Model T Truck	1925	2	50	550	-1
Ford Model T	1926	4	50	260	
Ford Model A	1927	4	60	450	
Cadillac La Salle	1928	6	65	4,200	
Mercedes-Benz SS	1928	4	85	12,000	+1
Bentley Speed 6	1929	2	80	2,500	+1
Stutz Blackhawk	1929	2	110	4,500	+2
Cadillac V-16	1930	6	75	7,500	
Ford Large Truck	1930	3	55	1,600	-2
Studz Bearcat	1931	2	70	3,500	+3
Duesenberg SJ	1932	2	130	25,000	+1
Lincoln KB (V-12)	1932	5	85	2,700	
Alpha Romeo Tipo 8C	1933	2	120	8,000	+2
Ford "V8"	1933	4	65	460	
Pontiac 8	1933	4	70	570	
Lincoln Zephyr	1934	4	95	750	
Cord 810	1935	2	100	2,800	+2
Cord 812	1937	4	110	2,000	+1
Bantam Coupe	1937	2	70	335	-1
Hash Sedan	1938	5	80	700	

### Small Planes

Sopwith Camel <sup>1</sup>	1917	1	105	8,000	
PW-9C Biplane <sup>2</sup>	1926	1	150	15,000	+1
GeeBee Model Z	1931	1	250	20,000	+1
Boeing F4B-4 <sup>3</sup>	1932	1	185	17,000	+2
Grumman FF-12 <sup>3</sup>	1933	2	205	18,000	+2
Boeing P-261 <sup>3</sup>	1934	1	230	18,000	+2

### Large Planes

F5L	1920	14	100	12,000	
Dornier Wal (Seaplane)	1922	10	110	14,000	
Ford Trimotor	1926	14	125	46,000	
Short Calcutta (Seaplane)	1928	15	110	20,000	
Commander	1929	20	100	32,000	-1
Stinson Detroiter	1929	6	110	27,000	
Boeing 247	1933	12	155	44,000	
Curtiss Condor	1933	17	145	40,000	

*Note:* The final number listed for each vehicle represents a simple way for GMs to determine handling and maneuverability of a given vehicle, rather than using gAccel, gDecel, gMR, and gSR modifiers from *GURPS Vehicles*. *Cliffhangers* is a high-drama, low-rules game, and GMs should not get bogged down in statistics and number-crunching while a Grumman FF-12 is strafing a Stutz Blackhawk through a treacherous canyon. Simply add or subtract the listed *Skill Modifier* to the appropriate vehicle handling roll (Driving or Piloting) and let the action continue!

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Seats</i>	<i>Top Speed</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Skill Modifier</i>
Curtiss Condor (Seaplane)	1933	17	140	40,000	-1
DC-2	1934	16	160	45,000	
DC-3	1935	36	150	47,000	
Martin B-10B Bomber <sup>4</sup>	1935	4	210	30,000	
Sikorsky S-42 (Seaplane)	1935	36	160	50,000	

### Autogiros

Pitcairn Cierva <sup>5</sup>	1930	2	125	19,000	
Cierva C30.A <sup>5</sup>	1935	2	110	20,000	

### Boats

Speedboat	1930	2	40	2,000	-2
Yacht <sup>8</sup>	1930	62	22	N/A	
Tramp freighter	1917	50	15	12,000	
Submarine <sup>6</sup>	1916	20	20	100,000	

### Airships

Small blimp <sup>6</sup>	1915	3	50	5,000	
Graph Zeppelin (German) <sup>7</sup>	1928	65	60	N/A	-1
Akron (USN) <sup>7</sup>	1931	77	40	N/A	
Hindenburg (German) <sup>7</sup>	1936	97	50	N/A	

1. The Sopwith Camel F.I carried two .303 Vickers Mk II machine guns (p. HT118). The much scarcer 2F.1 carried a Vickers and a .303 BSA-Lewis Mk III machine gun (p. HT118) or, on occasion, two Lewis guns.

2. Armed with two .303 BSA-Lewis Mk III machine guns (p. HT118).

3. Armed with two .30-06 Browning M2 guns (p. HT118).

4. Armed with three flexible .30-06 Browning M2 guns (p. HT118).

5. Requires short takeoff area; can make near-vertical landings.

6. WWI surplus equipment may be available much cheaper by the '30s; it may be in bad shape.

7. Large airships are not available commercially, and construction costs are enormous. For example, the *Akron* cost \$3,000,000 in 1931. Its sister ship, the *Macon*, cost more than \$4,000,000 only 2 years later. However, not all German Zeppelins were accounted for by the Allies after the war...

8. "If you have to ask what it costs, you can't afford one."

- J. P. Morgan



# ADVENTURE DESIGN



# The Genre

GMs who want to run an authentic pulp-style adventure must learn to think in terms of black and white. The heroes are bigger than life - easily recognizable because they are the *good guys*. No one would be surprised to see them ride up on a white horse to save the day (and some of them really did). That's their job.

The villains are just as evil as the heroes are good, and the GM must keep them that way. None of the wimpy, milquetoast bad guys of reality; heroes want to fight out-and-out evil. And don't worry about psychological motivation - the bad guys are just *bad*, and no one particularly cares how they got that way.

## ATMOSPHERE

Although many players and GMs enjoy complex mysteries and lots of research, the emphasis in the adventure pulps is on *excitement*. Obviously, the PCs will get nowhere if they don't do *some* planning, but in keeping with the genre, the adventure should proceed fairly quickly from one thrill to the next.

"Excitement" doesn't have to mean "combat." Excitement involves suspense, action, and adventure too. Stalking a fugitive through a jungle, delving into the sealed tomb of an ancient Incan ruler, or creeping through a haunted house at midnight are all exciting, but they're not hack 'n' slash.

Keep in mind that a certain degree of manipulation on the part of the GM, and occasionally some flat-out railroading, is in keeping with the genre. In a pulp adventure, more than any other, the GM can yank events back on course any time the players get out of hand.

## Suspense

A key element in creating a suspenseful situation is letting the players know that something *might* happen. The gunman *might* step out from around the next corner; an ancient stone trap *might* go off any minute; a malevolent monster *might* be hiding under the bed.

## Action

*"When in doubt, always have two men with guns burst in the door."*

- Raymond Chandler

Not all action should be ordinary combat. The PCs should occasionally find themselves in a high-speed car chase, leaping from (or onto) a moving vehicle, rushing to make a deadline, or climbing down the side of a skyscraper. Any situation where the PCs must make repeated DX-based skill rolls, with a dire penalty for failure, is probably active and therefore exciting. Keep it moving.

One of the problems with an action scene is that that it can deteriorate into an instant replay of the previous action scene. To keep things moving even more, make sure something *else* is going on at the same time. For example, a fistfight between a PC and a thug may be commonplace - but if it takes place atop a speeding train destined for a canyon where the bridge has been blown, who could be bored? Environment can be used in a similar manner:

*"Wait a minute, Lefty! These crates are full of nitro - use that gun and you 'll blow this whole place to toothpicks!"*

*"Okay, G-Man, I guess I 'll hafta take youse apart wid me bare hands . . ."*

The conditions of the fight can set a time limit. A fuse or timer on a bomb, a Dependent in a deathtrap, a burning building, a diving airplane, or a truck headed for a cliff can all keep the fight from going on longer than is dramatically interesting.

Occasionally the hero doesn't jump off that train in time! That's all right; heroes are, by nature, good at miraculous escapes. Of course, if the hero didn't perform as well as he should, surviving may cost him the use of his Luck advantage or some unspent character points.

## Adventure

Adventure implies an unusual occurrence or event. Travel through exotic foreign lands, even when there is no suspense or action, is often exciting. Exploring underground passages, diving for sunken treasure, haunting sleazy nightclubs looking for clues - all these provide excitement through adventure. The early chapters of this book provide an overview of some adventure locales, but the more research the GM does about his chosen locale, the more effectively he can recreate its atmosphere for the game.

## The Plot

Designing a pulp adventure is much like writing a story, and a good plot is vital. By definition, a plot must have a beginning, middle, and end. Anything that does not fulfill these requirements is not a plot - it is simply an event.

## BORROWING ADVENTURE IDEAS

Thousands of adventure ideas lie waiting in the movies, books, and magazines of the adventure pulp genre. To turn an exciting pulp story into a terrific adventure, follow these steps:

*Outline the plot.* The first step is to write a brief synopsis of the storyline.

*Break it into sections.* Divide the storyline into several events or scenarios. Good dividing points include changes of location, changes in timeframe, or changes in character view-point. They are the main scenes of the story.

*Stat out the main characters.* While skimming through the book, make notes about each character: their traits, skills, abilities, and descriptions. Then translate these into **GURPS** statistics. The original protagonists may be omitted, or kept as NPCs.

*Draw the maps.* Determine where maps will be helpful, both small-scale maps for combat scenes and large-scale maps for overland journeys, etc. Key each map on a separate sheet of paper.

*Flesh out each section.* Beginning with the first section, flesh out the adventure by skimming the appropriate pages of the book, noting things like clues, NPC actions and reactions, etc. Do this section by section, writing down anything you think may be pertinent to the adventure.





*Plan for other contingencies.* The players will *never* follow the plot exactly as written in the book, so the adventure writer must plan for other courses of action. Ask yourself what *you* would do in each particular instance, then plan accordingly.

## USING PROPS

A prop is a tangible item that the *players* can examine when their characters find a clue. Props can enhance any adventure, and are especially helpful in a campaign featuring detective work - the prop can actually be a clue. Props, especially authentic ones, also add greatly to the authentic "feel" of an adventure!

### Books and Maps

Finding old maps from the 1930s is not as difficult as it sounds. Old *National Geographic* magazines are widely available; these often have small area maps. Full-sized 1930s maps can often be found in second-hand stores for very little.

Books from the Thirties (and even earlier) can be bought in almost any used bookstore for as little as a quarter apiece and add to the atmosphere of a pulp adventure. Writing a dedication inside the front cover or slipping a note between the pages is always interesting.

### Ancient Documents

Old papers (treasure maps, letters, diary pages, etc.) can be created by writing the text on plain white typing paper, then smearing the sheet with a damp teabag. When the paper dries, it is not only yellowed, but wrinkled and brittle like an ancient manuscript.

### Advertising Props

Matchbooks, pens, old business cards, keychains - anything with a business name on it can become a clue at the scene of a crime. Simply use the name of the business (or owner, salesman, or whatever) when the adventure is designed, then throw in the prop at the appropriate time.

## The Victim's Wallet

When someone is found dead, one of the first things most investigators do is search the body. Filling an old wallet with ID (made from cut-up index cards), business cards, notes, receipts, phone numbers, and play money will provide the players with plenty of fun.

# GETTING ADVENTURE IDEAS

The first challenge in creating an adventure is coming up with a realistic, yet interesting idea. Inspiration can stem from several different sources, including locations, characters, and gimmicks.

## Adventure Ideas From Location

Creating a storyline that is unique to a certain location is a reliable method of plotting. Read the first half of this book for some inspiration. For example, what kind of adventure could take place in the islands of the Pacific Ocean? How about a shipwreck? Or a search for the builders of the Easter Island statues? Or the discovery of an isolated island inhabited by the descendants of Spanish *conquistadors*?

To create an adventure based on a location, ask the following: Why is it unique? Who lives (or lived) there? What kinds of secrets does it hold? What would lure the heroes there? And perhaps most important - if I were a player, what would interest *me* there?

Several *GURPS* worldbooks can be used to provide settings and inspiration for *Cliffhangers* adventures, including *Egypt*, *Greece*, *Russia*, *Japan*, *Imperial Rome*, *Aztecs*, *Places of Mystery*, *Dark Places*, and more.

## KEEPING THE ADVENTURE MOVING

Regardless of the amount of excitement, suspense, adventure, and action, and no matter how well the plot moves from beginning to end, there will come a time when the players will sit dumbfounded, scratch their heads, and mutter incoherently. Since the pulp adventure thrives on forward motion, that's the time to push the adventure toward its next phase.

The best way to do this is to allow the PCs to discover a vital clue . . . even if they missed a roll required to uncover it. Or simply create another clue that leads them to the next event.

A second way is to allow a sympathetic NPC to come up with an appropriate suggestion - but only if he had enough information to do so. An NPC who usually comes up with unreasonable plans works wonderfully.

As a last resort, allow each of the PCs an IQ roll. If they succeed, point them in the right direction. If this is necessary very often, the adventures are not appropriate for the players' level of skill.

Chapters 1 through 7 of *Cliffhangers* can be used to provide jumping-off points for adventure seeds based on locations. Simply skimming a chapter can often stimulate an adventure seed!

## Adventure Ideas From Characters

Unusual or eccentric characters appear regularly in the pulps. Likewise, some NPCs will stimulate adventure ideas by themselves. An especially powerful villain may have his own set of disadvantages and quirks that are so specific that they automatically define his next evil plan. Obviously, the combination of a villainous plan and a group of heroic characters yields an adventure.

This works best in campaigns that have already been running long enough to generate continuing NPCs with their own histories and personalities.

## Adventure Ideas From Gimmicks

This is what Alfred Hitchcock called a "MacGuffin" - an item that motivates an adventure. A priceless artifact, a secret formula, or a new doomsday device all lend themselves very well to this. The MacGuffin can also be totally mundane - an incriminating love letter, or the Countess' cherished pet poodle.

History can provide wonderful inspiration for lost relics and artifacts, such as King Arthur's *Excalibur* or Ponce de Leon's *Fountain of Youth*. With a little imagination, some of the objects in *GURPS Warehouse 23* would make intriguing quest items as well.

## The Beginning

The introduction to an adventure sets the stage. It presents the heroes with a situation which requires some sort of change - perhaps a puzzle to be deciphered, an item to be found, or a murderer to be captured.

In the first part of the adventure, give the party some sort of challenge, something for them to do. It is *very* important that it be of sufficient stature to warrant their interference. If beautiful young Alyssa Sinclair comes to the heroes because she doesn't like her stepmother, there is little cause for alarm. But if she found the family dog dead - completely drained of blood - and believes her stepmother is a vampire, what hero worth his salt *won't* want to get involved?

Once the problem has been presented, give the investigators a little excitement. Since Alyssa came to the PCs for help, perhaps her stepmother, the vampire, knows about her plea. A nocturnal attack on one of the heroes will keep them interested!

The first part of almost any adventure will probably include at least one session of planning, investigation, or research (such as finding out how to stop a vampire). But don't let the beginning get bogged down in nothing but Research and Fast-Talk rolls - get it moving as soon as possible.

## The Middle

This is the largest portion of the adventure, consisting of a series of connected events. These events should flow naturally from one to another, either in a predetermined series or in whatever order the heroes choose to take them. For



example, the PCs may decide to sneak into Mrs. Vampire's house late at night - that is one event. Failing to find a coffin resting on fresh soil, they speak with Alyssa, who informs them that her stepmother spends the daylight hours out of the house. Now they must follow her to her daytime resting place - another event. Once they find out that she is staying at a private club (members only), they must find some way to get inside and deal with her - a third event.

## Complications

During the course of an adventure, throwing in a few plot complications can add interest. If every adventure went exactly according to plan, the players would soon tire of the game. One of the primary ways to create an interesting complication - and in fact one of the keys to good story - is to interrupt a routine. Once the players think they're on to something, interrupt it.

That is not to say that the GM should sabotage every plan the players come up with. Simply plan the adventure with a few twists and turns; get the players to say, "Aha! The plot thickens."

In our ongoing example, the "members only" club is a sort of complication. But suppose that the heroes find out that the *entire membership* consists of nothing but vampires, werewolves, zombies, and amoeboid slime creatures? *That* is a complication!

A plot complication can also be a *red herring* - an interesting but basically unrelated event introduced to throw the players off the track. Don't overdo the use of unrelated complications or your adventure will bog down. Keeping things moving in a directed fashion will provide a much more entertaining and coherent adventure.

The middle of the adventure can last for several game sessions, breaking at dramatic points in the action. The most appropriate ending for a *Cliffhangers* game session is a *cliffhanger* - more about that below.

## The End

Once the players have gathered all the clues and worked their way through the middle of the adventure, they are ready for the finale. Whether this is a climactic battle against the forces of evil or simply the final showdown between the murder suspects and the detective, there is always some sort of confrontation. The end of the adventure should wrap up most of the loose ends and provide a satisfactory ending to the "story."

In some genres, loose ends should *all* be tied up neatly. But it is most faithful to the cliffhangers genre to leave some mystery unexplained, some villain uncaught, some treasure unfound . . . leading to the next adventure!

## The Cliffhanger

The most satisfying ending to single installment in an ongoing campaign is the cliffhanger. While full fledged adventures need some sort of denouement, the individual sessions that make up that adventure should, when possible, conclude at a moment of high drama and intense peril. Leaving the characters in imminent danger, with no apparent means of escape, leaves the player wanting more and is true to many of the pulp era adventure stories.

# THE DEUS EX MACHINA

A "*deus ex machina*" (god from a machine) is a plot device through which the heroes are aided or rescued by some totally unexpected means. Most writers (and most adventure designers) consider *deus ex machina* to be cheating.

However, in the pulps, this sort of thing was tradition-al! In fact, it may be the only way to resolve a cliffhanger situation. Suppose that an episode ends with the heroes trapped on an Arctic ice floe. They have no boat and no shelter of any kind. The only question seems to be whether they will freeze or starve to death.

Now, if they had made earlier arrangements with a friendly whaling captain to come look for them, that might be a "fair" escape. But suppose they didn't. Anything goes!

*"Suddenly, there is a terrific boiling in the water beside the floe. A dark shape becomes visible through the flurries of snow. There is a clanging noise . . . It's a submarine!"*

What the submarine is doing in the Arctic wastes, and whether its crew is friend or foe, is up to the creator of the adventure. The point is that anything goes! The *deus ex machina* allows the GM a way out, giving him the freedom to put the characters into impossible situations at the end of each episode.

Ending the session in the middle of an exciting scene may be difficult at first, but in the long run it can be the most satisfying style of campaign, for it is from this very style of play that *GURPS Cliffhangers* takes its name. (See also *What Makes it Cliffhangers*, p. 116, and *The Serial Approach*, p. 106).

## Et Tu, Brute?

In many pulp stories, the villain (usually a mastermind) hides behind an alias that allows him to lead a normal life as well as a life of crime. Infiltrating the heroes' organization allows him to keep tabs on their progress as well as steer them in the wrong direction.

Bringing a villain into the party as a seemingly innocent victim of the "real" villain is sure to create havoc. Unusual disappearances, inconsistent stories, and odd coincidences will tip off the heroes sooner or later, but the NPC may have already struck. If the villain becomes a love interest of a PC, the revelation will be even more shocking.

Another possibility is to allow a player to run the disguised villain in accord with the Adversary rules on pp. B181 and B198.

## Captured!

A key element in many of the hero pulps is the inevitable capture that occurs just before the finale. Having the heroes captured by the villain is the precursor to the Soliloquy and the Deathtrap (see p. 104). *Intentionally* getting captured is the easiest way for the heroes to find out where the villain's hideout is (or perhaps even *who* the villain is).

Designing the adventure so that the characters *have* to be captured may seem unfair, but players familiar with adventure pulp stories probably expect it. An alternative to the mandatory capture scenario is to design the adventure so that capture is *probable*, but not certain. That way, if the heroes are especially cautious - or lucky - they can avoid capture and finish the adventure however they choose.

If mandatory capture is part of an adventure, be certain to use the Soliloquy and Deathtrap rules. Otherwise, there is little point in forcibly capturing the party.

## SAMPLE MASTERMIND

### Methuselah

197 points

Age uncertain; 5' 4", 105 lbs, sparse gray hair, green eyes, stooped over.

**ST** 7 [-20]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 17 [100]; **HT** 10 [0].

Speed 5.25; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

**Advantages:** Charisma +1 [5]; Filthy Rich [50]; Immunity to Disease [10]; Longevity [5].

**Disadvantages:** Addiction (Snuff) [-5]; Delusion (Believes he is 350 years old) [-5]; Lecherousness [-15]; Megalomania [-10].

**Quirks:** Enjoys games; Fascinated by tall women; Gets irate when called a liar; Knowledgeable gourmet and wine-fancier; Points his finger when he talks. [-5]

**Skills:** Accounting-17 [4]; Administration-19 [4]; Cooking-16 [1/2]; Detect Lies-17 [4]; Economics-18 [6]; Engineer (Bombs and Traps)-17 [4]; Engineer (Guns)-18 [6]; Guns (Pistol)-13 [1]; History-22 [14]; Hobby (Gourmet)-18 [4]; Hobby (Wines)-20 [8]; Hypnotism-17 [4]; Leaderships-18 [2]; Mathematics-15 [1]; Nuclear Physics-14 [1]; Physics-15 [1]; Research-19 [6]; Savoir-Faire-17 [1]; Strategy (Land)-15 [1]; Streetwise-16 [1]; Tactics-15 [1]; Traps-15 [1/2].

**Weapons:** Concealed Walther PPK (.32 ACP): 2d-1 crushing. He only uses this in a last-ditch effort - he prefers to let his henchmen do the work.

A withered old man with very little hair, Methuselah does not present much of a physical threat. He claims to be over 350 years old (and has enough knowledge of history to back up his claim), but his real age is a mystery. He only gives his name as Methuselah; without knowing his true identity, it is impossible to determine his actual date of birth (even then, it still might not be possible). It is up to the GM (based on the type of campaign) to determine how old he really is and whether his outrageous claim is true.

Methuselah has recently begun studying nuclear physics in an attempt to harness the atom for use in weaponry. His goal is to build an atomic bomb and use it to force the world into submission. He is also working on a form of "death-ray" based on a limited atomic reaction that can be focused into a beam of pure energy that would cut through *anything*, and (in his spare time) a machine that will age wine and cheese instantly.

## The Villains

A successful pulp adventure must have a successful villain. The villains in the pulp stories were sinister, scheming, and nefarious. It follows that villains in a pulp *adventure* must be as well.

## THE MASTERMIND

The ultimate scheming villain, the mastermind, found his way into every type of pulp fiction. Megalomania is usually the driving force behind a mastermind - a burning desire to rule a large chunk of the world (if not all of it). Some masterminds are out to do *good*, or their twisted idea of good, and will let nobody stand in their way.

**Suggested Advantages:** Charisma, Contacts, Eidetic Memory, Strong Will, Wealth.

**Suggested Disadvantages:** Bad Temper, Enemies, Lecherousness, Megalomania, Sadism, and Unlucky are all quite appropriate. Other disadvantages might include Appearance, Bully, Delusions, and Greed. In fact, there aren't many disadvantages which *aren't* appropriate.

**Suggested Skills:** Acting and Disguise (if he is to infiltrate the group of PCs - see box), Area Knowledge (Hideout), Leadership, and Traps are almost necessities. Mental skills appropriate to the mastermind, and perhaps one or two combat skills, will flesh him out.

## THE GANGSTER

This is no ordinary street thug or Mafia enforcer. He is a crime boss controlling a certain "turf" or area: a few city blocks, a large district - even an entire town!

Gangsters differ from other villains; they are usually not concerned with events outside their jurisdiction. But should the PCs stop a drug deal or shut down a gambling hall where it counts, they'd best keep looking over their shoulders and avoid any dark alleys.

**Suggested Advantages:** Since most gangsters started out on the street, Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, High Pain Threshold, and Toughness are all appropriate. Very influential gangsters should buy Wealth and Status. All gangsters have many Contacts, ranging from street cops to high-level politicians.

**Suggested Disadvantages:** Bad Temper, Bully, Greed. A *mafioso* may have a Sense of Duty to his family, Dependents, and often even a Code of Honor.

**Suggested Skills:** Brawling, Carousing, Guns skills (including Tommy-gun), Interrogation, Savoir-Faire, and Streetwise. Many others are also possible.

## THE FOREIGN THREAT

Although today we would call it stereotyping and racism, during the pulp era the foreign menace permeated the magazines. Inscrutable Orientals, "godless" Communists, and heartless, unfeeling Nazis made formidable opponents for the heroes of yesterday.



Foreign villains may be found in the U.S. or abroad. There is often a lengthy chain of command leading from the henchmen to the villain himself. This chain may begin in the U.S. (when the PCs shut down an opium den, for instance) and stretch halfway around the world to the villain's headquarters. Whether the heroes have to go to the villain or the villain comes to them is up to the GM.

Appropriate advantages, disadvantages, and skills may be chosen according to the villain's bent. If he tends to be more of a world-conqueror, use the "mastermind" suggestions. If he smuggles narcotics and runs illegal prostitution houses, then refer to the "gangster" suggestions. Remember to buy English as a second language.

## The Yellow Peril

The most common foreign villain was the inscrutable Oriental. There were two basic Oriental foes: the cool, calculating aristocrat with a sense of honor, and the gross, lecherous crime boss, sodden with drugs and drink. There was often a sense of mystery about the Oriental; magical powers or mystical abilities were sometimes hinted at, sometimes blatantly displayed. Use whatever stereotype suits the campaign, or break the routine and throw in something different to keep the players on their toes.

A major portion of Chinese villains' time was taken up with smuggling opium and other narcotics into the United States. A legitimate business (usually a general store) was set up in or near the Chinese district of the city, and clients could buy their shipments after identifying themselves with special passwords, Chinese symbols or gestures. Interfering with such an operation brings retribution ranging from severe beat-ings to death.

The classic Oriental villain lives in luxury. His henchmen are skilled with poisons and unusual weapons.

## The Red Menace

Villains seeking to undermine the authority of governments around the world were also found in the pulps. Bolsheviks, Communist spies, Comintern agents - all are viable options. Communist villains are especially appropriate to espionage-oriented campaigns (see pp. 110-111), but any hero with Fanaticism for his country or a Sense of Duty should be quick to take on these subversive elements.

The Red Menace may lurk in any guise, but when his true colors are revealed, he stops at nothing to forward the cause of the dictatorship of the proletariat (the GM may arm himself with some Marxist rants to add realism). His henchmen are not all scraggly anarchist bomb-throwers. As part of a world-wide conspiracy, he commands assistance from many sources; the red-blooded American hero must suspect all foreigners, especially Europeans.

## Nazis

During the latter half of the decade, the rise of Nazi Germany brought a new villain into the pages of the pulps. Hunting a Nazi spy or double agent anywhere in the world is sure to be exciting.

Fanaticism and Intolerance are absolutely required for Nazis; if the stereotypes of the Thirties are to be followed, so are Bully, Sadism, and Bad Temper. Nazi villains have absolutely no sense of humor. They are either physically disgusting or Aryan supermen. Some of their henchmen are junior Aryans; others are riff-raff of all types, working for money and secretly despised by their masters.

## SAMPLE FOREIGN VILLAIN

### Chang Soo

187 points

Age 40; 5'10", 165 lbs. Bald with long black queue and black "Fu Manchu" mustache.

**ST** 12 [20]; **DX** 14 [45]; **IQ** 12 [20]; **HT** 12 [20].

Speed 6.50; Move 6.

Dodge 6; Parry 10 (Karate, Saber).

**Advantages:** Intuition [15]; Status 2 [5]\*; Very Wealthy [30].

\* Includes one free level of Status from Very Wealthy.

**Disadvantages:** Addiction (Opium) [-15]; Code of Honor (Gentleman's) [-10]; Compulsive Behavior (Daily meditation, 2 hours) [-5]; Gluttony [-5].

**Quirks:** Believes everyone should eat more; Constantly quoting old Chinese philosophers; Likes thousand-year-old eggs; Protective of his very long fingernails; Thinks Occidental women are unattractive. [-5]

**Skills:** Accounting-14 [8]; Fencing-16 [8]; History (Chinese)-16/22 [14]; Interrogation-11 [1]; Karate-15 [8]; Merchant (Black market Goods)-16/22 [12]; Stealth-17 [6]; Streetwise-13 [4].

**Languages:** Chinese (native) - 12 [0]; English-11 [1].

**Weapons:** Saber (1d imp, 1d+3 cut),

Chang is a gracious, if not compassionate, villain (Chang is his surname). His Code of Honor and philosophical outlook make him an enjoyable person to visit as long as you aren't on his bad side.

His primary vices are opium addiction and the large West Coast opium ring he operates. Anyone trying to shut down this money-making operation or its fledgling East Coast cousin does not find Chang so pleasant. Through his network of underworld contacts he tracks down the offenders, has them kidnapped, and then conveys them to his hideout in Shanghai... where he deals with them in person.

Once the investigators arrive at his hideout, they find themselves treated fairly, given plenty to eat, bathed, and given appropriate Oriental clothing before they are brought before Chang himself. They are under constant guard.

For the heroes' offense against him and his family, Chang punishes them accordingly. If they are below Status 1, he puts them into a deathtrap or pits them against one of his henchmen in a saber duel to the death (or both). Any PCs of Status 1 or more are honored with a personal duel with Chang using a pair of matching sabers of Very Fine quality (+2 damage).

## SAMPLE FEMME FATALE

### Lana Caine

162 points

Age 27; 5' 8", 130 lbs. An athletic woman with straight black hair, blue eyes, and sharp features.

**ST** 11 [10]; **DX** 13 [30]; **IQ** 12 [20]; **HT** 13 [30].

Speed 6.50; Move 6.

Dodge 6; Parry 8 (Brawling, Fencing).

**Advantages:** Alcohol Tolerance [5]; Alertness +1 [5]; Attractive [5]; Charisma +1 [5]; Fit [5]; Intuition [15]; Resistant to Poison [5]; Strong Will +3 [12].

**Disadvantages:** Callous [-6]; Greed [-15]; Lecherousness [-15].

**Quirks:** Claims the derringer she carries is the one that John Wilkes Booth used on Abraham Lincoln; Dislikes knives (they're so messy!); Enjoys painting; Hates to lie about trivial things. [-4]

**Skills:** Acting-11 [1]; Artist-10 [1]; Brawling-13 [1]; Carousing-14 [4]; Dancing-14 [4]; Detect Lies-12 [4]; Erotic Art-14 [8]; Fast-Draw (Derringer)-15 [4]; Fencing-12 [1]; Gambling-11 [1]; Garrote-15 [4]; Guns (Pistol)-15 [1]; Holdout-12 [2]; Pickpocket-11 [1]; Savoir-Faire-15 [10]; Sex Appeal-15 [6]; Stealth-12 [1].

**Languages:** English (native)-12 [0]; French-11 [1].

**Weapons:** Lana carries two weapons; a silver-plated steel garrote that doubles as her favorite necklace, and a concealed single-shot .44 caliber derringer (2d1+ crushing Damage; +2 to Holdout) which she uses only as a last-ditch measure.

Lana has claimed, at various times; to be a U.S. government agent, a Nazi informer, a French prostitute, and more. In reality, she is a woman willing to vamp or even kill to get what she wants. She is constantly falling in love with one attractive male or another, only to tire of him after one night, usually leaving him with a smile on his face and a garrote mark around his neck.

She can be used as a mastermind in her own right, or the seductive right hand of another villain. Perhaps one day she will meet a man who will convince her to change her ways - but he'd best sleep with one eye open ...

Whether a calculating mistress of death, an Oriental dragon lady, or a sexy foreign spy, the female villain has often proved to be the most deadly.

## THE FEMME FATALE

*"It was a blonde. A blonde to make a bishop kick a hole in a stained glass window."*

*- Farewell, My Lovely (Raymond Chandler, 1940)*

Whether a calculating mistress of death, an Oriental dragon lady, or a sexy foreign spy, the female villain has often proved to be the most deadly. Stereotypically bad-tempered and strong-willed, the Femme Fatale of the pulps was either stunningly attractive or hideously disfigured (the latter always wore a mask).

Since the pulps were written *by* men, *for* men, sex often appears in the Femme Fatale's motivation. Whether she plans to spawn a race of warrior women or simply wants a new bed partner, the lecherous Femme Fatale goes out of her way to capture the most attractive male hero, inevitably planning to kill him when he is no longer "useful." Of course, she may fall in love with him in the meantime... or is she just pretending?

A Femme Fatale may be a foreigner, a mastermind, or any other "type" of criminal; in that single sense, the pulps were equal-opportunity! She may also be the chief henchman, or the power behind the scenes, for a male villain.

Mata Hari, a real-life femme fatale, can be found in *GURPS Who's Who I*, pp. 116-117.

**Suggested Advantages:** Appearance, Charisma, Strong Will, and Voice are appropriate for all Femme Fatales.

**Suggested Disadvantages:** Bad Temper, Jealousy, Lecherousness, Megalomania, Overconfidence, Sadism, and Stubbornness.

**Suggested Skills:** Almost any skills are appropriate, depending on the type of villainy she leans toward. Sex Appeal is almost required for the pulp-stereotype Femme Fatale.

The fact that the chief villain is a woman should be concealed until it is obvious. Be careful not to slip up and say "she" before the players know the truth.

## HENCHMEN

Any villain needs henchmen to do the dirty work. A mad scientist's "Igor," a gangster's thugs, and a Gadgeteer's mindless automatons are all different versions of this pulp classic.

Ordinary henchmen are "cannon fodder" and do not need to be built in detail. Only create the attributes and skills that are likely to come into play. It is often easier to use one set of numbers for most henchmen the PCs encounter. They usually have a vocabulary that consists of "Drop it and put 'cher hands up," "Let 'em have it," and "Sorry, boss, I dunno how they coulda got away ..."

However, a "personality" henchman adds a lot of flavor. Many of the most memorable scenes in the pulps depict the interaction between henchmen and their masters, or between henchmen and heroes. A well thought-out henchman (with his own disadvantages and quirks) can provide hours of enjoyment if he is captured (and perhaps coerced into temporary service) by the heroes.

Henchmen are there to commit a crime, defend the Boss's territory, or just to kill the heroes. Their usual program is something like:



1. Terrorize people into giving up without a fight.
2. If that fails, use brute force.
3. If the heroes arrive, use more brute force.
4. If the heroes are winning anyway, pull something desperate (blow up a building, grab a hostage).
5. Run away.

Even when a henchman is minding his own business - in his flophouse or at a cheap nightclub - he tends to make a few feeble protests of "I ain't done nuttin', copper!" before fleeing or opening fire.

Fortunately, this means that an action scene can be thrown into the plot at almost any time; if the heroes can't find the crooks, the crooks may come looking for the heroes (and there is always the pulp standby of pure coincidence).

## Hideouts

A villain has to have a hideout. It can be anything from a rented room in the seedy part of town to an underground complex of gargantuan proportions. The hideout should have an emergency exit in case of a raid, or simply for surreptitious entry and exit. Regardless of its size, a map and key are a must; many of the best scenes of a pulp adventure take place at the villain's lair.

Small-time criminals operate on a limited budget, so their hideout is often nothing more than a rented apartment. A thug or two will stand "lookout," and entry into the room is accomplished only through the use of a password. There are rarely any large-scale architectural modifications, but peepholes and gun slots are common.

Wealthy gangsters and *mafiosi* spend their hard-earned money on lavish estates, walled and patrolled by sentries - guard dogs are not uncommon. At the center of the grounds stands the estate itself - a multi-level mansion furnished in lavish splendor. More often than not, the crime boss has several of his advisors and their families living on the premises, as well as several personal "escorts" as bodyguards.

Underground tunnels may lead to an emergency getaway car (or boat, or autogiro, or dirigible...), and a handful of secret passages make it much easier to avoid police inspections and raids.

## THE MASTERMIND'S HIDEOUT

Unique among hideouts are those constructed by a mastermind. At least some of the following features can be found in nearly every mastermind's hideout. Pick and choose among them, adding, subtracting, or changing to suit each character. And don't forget that the mastermind will probably want at least one deathtrap (p. 104).

### Concealment

Every mastermind worth his salt conceals his home base to keep the law enforcement agencies and the heroes from capturing him immediately. It may be located in an isolated wilderness area, far from prying eyes... or right in the center of the city, in the guise of an abandoned warehouse or factory. Either way, its presence is kept secret from most of the populace.

Some masterminds conceal their hideout under a legitimate front: a business or residence that they would have reason to frequent. Entry into the secret areas is through hidden passageways or secret doors - the sliding bookcase is a perfect example.

Lining the area with secret tunnels (at least one, for escape) is encouraged.

### Trapdoors

Located in strategic points throughout the complex are hidden trapdoors. These trapdoors drop unsuspecting visitors down winding chutes and into waiting deathtraps. Trapdoors may function automatically (use Traps skill to disarm), or they may be operated manually by a concealed switch. Either way, anyone standing on a trapdoor when it opens must make a DX-5 roll to keep from falling in. Anyone standing only halfway on (GM's discretion) simply rolls against DX.

### The Laboratory

Mad scientists and Gadgeteering villains have some sort of laboratory (pronounced, of course, la-BOHR-ah-tor-ee). It must be spacious enough for scads of strange equipment, some of which seems to be working *all the time*.

Heroes sneaking into the laboratory find bubbling liquids, masses of complex tubing, strange electrical devices (including a Jacob's ladder that goes *SZZZZZT* . . . *SZZZZZT* . . . *SZZZZZT*), plenty of test tubes, beakers and other glass-ware, reagents (including acids), and so on.

A laboratory in a horror campaign might also include slimy fungus samples, various animal and human body parts (pickled, of course), a few pints of blood, and the remains of failed experiments. Caged, mutated animals (or - gulp! - humans) would also prove interesting.

### A Hideout for the Heroes

Certain PCs (especially vigilantes) may wish to have their own hideout, using it as a base of operations and a retreat from the world. If it's not secret, it's a "headquarters." An entire group of heroes could work together to create a headquarters. Bear in mind, however, that *building* a hideout is expensive, and secret tunnels, hidden entrances, elevators, and the like are especially so.

Renovating an abandoned building or renting office space should prove cheaper (and quicker), leaving more money for any unusual equipment or architecture the heroes might wish to include. Other headquarters possibilities include the home of a wealthy adventurer, an exclusive club, or the office of a PC detective.

Gadgeteering heroes should remember that they need plenty of equipment and somewhere to work, making a laboratory a necessity in their headquarters.

## Evil Doings

Villains in the pulps spent almost as much time harassing the heroes as they did advancing their nefarious plans ...

## Torture

Villains with the Sadism disadvantage (and there are a lot of them) always threaten the foes with torture. Some of them seem to get their kicks just from the threats; others carry them out - or at least try to. Tortures may be brutal and unimaginative, like flogging, or simply insane: "After Igor finishes covering you with the peanut butter, my friends, he will release you, and we will see how long you can outrun my giant beavers! Hahahahahahaaaaa . . ."

## DEATHTRAP IDEAS

A deathtrap can be any sort of devious trap designed to kill the victims slowly but surely. Sometimes they work automatically, but more often the "trap" is actually a prepared device in which the villain can place his foes. A few classics are listed below, but the GM is encouraged to be imaginative.

### Sliding Walls

When the heroes hear the telltale sounds and see the room getting steadily smaller, their only hope is to find a way out. Sliding walls are virtually unstoppable unless the PCs have some heavy item they can wedge between the gargantuan granite slabs.

Anything caught between the walls (including people) takes 6d crushing damage per turn. An obstruction with a DR that can take that kind of punishment stops the trap.

### Suspended

Hanging the heroes (by their wrists or by their ankles) above a deadly hazard is a pulp classic. The danger lies in the fact that the rope holding them up is slowly being eaten away by some insidious agent (acid, fire, animals chewing on it, etc.).

The potential hazards waiting below are almost limitless. A vat of boiling oil, a pit of hungry lions, a blazing inferno (very uncomfortable even if they don't fall), a pool of acid... Sadistic villains may well hang them above a pit of scorpions or poisonous snakes, and using a hero's phobia against him is especially delightful to a sadistic foe.

### Combat

Tossing the heroes (one at a time) into an arena for combat to the death is appropriate for bloodthirsty villains. Lions are a favorite foe, but allies of the combatants suffice as well.

While the villain promises release if the heroes win, he may renege and continue to throw opponents against them until they lose.

### Immersion

Tying or chaining the victims to the bottom of a pit or vessel, then slowly filling it, is always suspenseful. The villain can use ice-cold seawater, syrupy tar, quicksand, cement, sand, or anything that strikes him as humorous or appropriate. See *GURPS Compendium II*, p. CII135, for information on immersion in icy water.

The GM should be careful to moderate his descriptions of tortures and their results to fit the audience. The purpose is to establish the cruelty of the villain, and the fact that the hero (or, often as not, the heroine) is in a real fix - not to sicken or upset the players! In all but the most adult pulps, the sadistic villains were either thwarted in the nick of time or indulged their depravities offstage.

## Deathtraps

A step up from simple torture, deathtraps may be anything from a room with moving walls to a Rube Goldberg-style mechanical nightmare. The purpose of the deathtrap is to imprison and kill the villain's foes - slowly. Villains with a Code of Honor (or just a love for games) may create deathtraps that can be escaped, if the victim is strong or clever enough. But most deathtraps are just intended to be slow, fiendish murder.

Once the heroes have fallen (or been put) into the deathtrap, the villain is sure to deliver a soliloquy (see below). If nothing else, he dwells in loving detail on the gruesome way in which the trap will slowly slaughter them!

When he is done gloating, there are two possibilities. He may seat himself comfortably, along with a few favored henchmen, to watch the heroes' pitiful struggles and lingering death. Sometimes, though, the foe does not stick around to watch their demise, preferring to finish whatever devious plan the heroes tried to foil. This allows the heroes a few moments during which they can (supposedly) contemplate the utter genius of their captor.

Either way, death now stares the heroes in the face! This is the point at which the *Cliffhangers* GM should close the book, smile at the players, and say "See you next week!" Will the PCs be rescued in time? Will they somehow escape? Or is this (shudder) The End?

Whatever the situation, remember: if the GM forces the PCs into the deathtrap, there *has* to be a way out - unless a convenient *deus ex machina* is going to rescue them anyway. Some deathtrap ideas are listed in the box.

## The Soliloquy

The soliloquy, a staple of the adventure pulps, is heard almost every time a villain (especially a mastermind) captures the good guys. Pulp villains are somehow compelled to explain, in detail, their entire operation (which, after the heroes escape, inevitably means the end of even the best-laid plans).

Any time the PCs are captured (which may be fairly often; see pp. 99-100), the villain should launch into a lengthy speech about his plans. He pats himself on the back for being so brilliant, so sinister, so ... *villainous*; he gloats and brags. Regardless of what the heroes say or do, as long as they are in his custody and about to be killed, his jovial mood cannot be diminished.

After his gloat, the villain probably puts the heroes into a deathtrap. Foes with more common sense and less honor order their hirelings to "take them out and shoot them." Especially confident villains may release the heroes, as a gesture of contempt! Other evil fates are quite possible, but are left to the GM.



# THE CAMPAIGN



This chapter deals specifically with themes and genres set in the 1920s and 1930s - the heyday of the pulps. For details on running a *Cliffhangers* style adventure in other eras, see Chapter 11.

## The Changing World

As the campaign progresses, so does the rest of the world. By using the timeline in Chapter 1 (pp. 14-23), GMs can keep the players up to date on what's happening in the heroes' world. Political events, fads, newsworthy items, etc., can make the campaign much more realistic.

Getting the heroes involved in a national event is also a good way to reflect the changes that take place.

## HINDSIGHT VS. ACCURACY

GMs running a *Cliffhangers* campaign may wish to decide at the outset how far the game will reflect the attitudes of the '30s, and discuss with the players what approach will work best for them.

The original pulps and cliffhanger movies were products of their time. While the ideas of adventure and heroism are always appealing, other aspects have not endured so well. Some pulps display attitudes, verging on prejudice, that modern players might find extremely unheroic. Conversely, modern pulp-style stories have the benefit of 20/20 hindsight. For example, when the Nazis rose to power in Germany, they did *not* instantly become favorite villains in the pulps. Most people outside of Germany probably saw them as just another oddball foreign political movement, maybe unattractive but not obviously *evil*. Other non-Germans (who may later have recognized and deeply regretted their mistake) actually supported them, more or less openly. It was only with the approach of WWII, in later pulp-based tales, that Nazis became villains of choice.

Some gamers may wish to play heroes who embody their own ideals, recognizing the worth of members of both sexes and all races and battling the Nazis and their like at every point. There is nothing too anachronistic about this; plenty of people in the '30s were tolerant, broad-minded, and despised the Nazis from the start. However, other players may feel that a pulp-style game is dishonest and fake if it ignores the widespread social attitudes and assumptions of the era. As the idea of an RPG is to have fun, there is no point in offending the first group or aggravating the second. GMs should find out what works for their players, perhaps with a little compromise on all sides.

## The Serial Approach

Cliffhanger campaigns can be compared to the old movie serials: several short scenarios strung together into an ongoing adventure.

A hallmark of those movies, as well as most pulp stories, is the cliffhanger ending. Derived from the overused (but effective) ploy of leaving a hero hanging from a cliff (or over a deathtrap, or buried under a landslide), the goal of a cliffhanger is to leave the viewer/reader/player in suspense, not knowing whether the protagonist will survive or not.

This will surprise many players at first, since most GMs tend to end game sessions with the characters (at least temporarily) safe and sound. It may be hard to pack up and go home when the adventure is at a key point, but it can cut down on the number of no-shows in an ongoing campaign!

Similarly, once the party has completed a multi-session adventure (hopefully full of several nerve-wracking cliffhangers), give them a taste of what is coming up next time. For instance, after the heroes have returned to their homes, a package is delivered to each of them. Inside each package is a piece of a puzzle which when completed forms a crudely drawn map of South America with a large "X" deep in the Amazon jungle. What does the "X" represent? Where did the map come from? Why was it sent in pieces? For the answers to these and other burning questions, stay tuned to this campaign - same pulp time, same pulp channel.

## THE RECURRING VILLAIN

An outstanding feature of the pulp campaign is the recurring villain. The books and movies of the Thirties brought back the same villain to fight the heroes time and again... not *every* adventure, but often enough to add interest.

An especially effective method is to keep the villain out of circulation long enough for the players to almost forget him. Then, when they realize who they're dealing with, stand back!

## The Disappearing Body

The time will come when (possibly after several encounters) the PCs succeed in destroying the bad guy. But pulp villains were just as hard to kill as the heroes.

Any time a really interesting villain is killed, make it difficult for the party to lay hands on the body. A plane crash, a landslide, a burning building - all are good ways to keep the players guessing as to the true fate of their lifelong enemy. Did the Mystic Dwarf really burn to death in his hideout, or did he escape unnoticed through a maze of underground tunnels? And why couldn't they find Lung Fung's body after that gun battle - a bulletproof vest, perhaps?

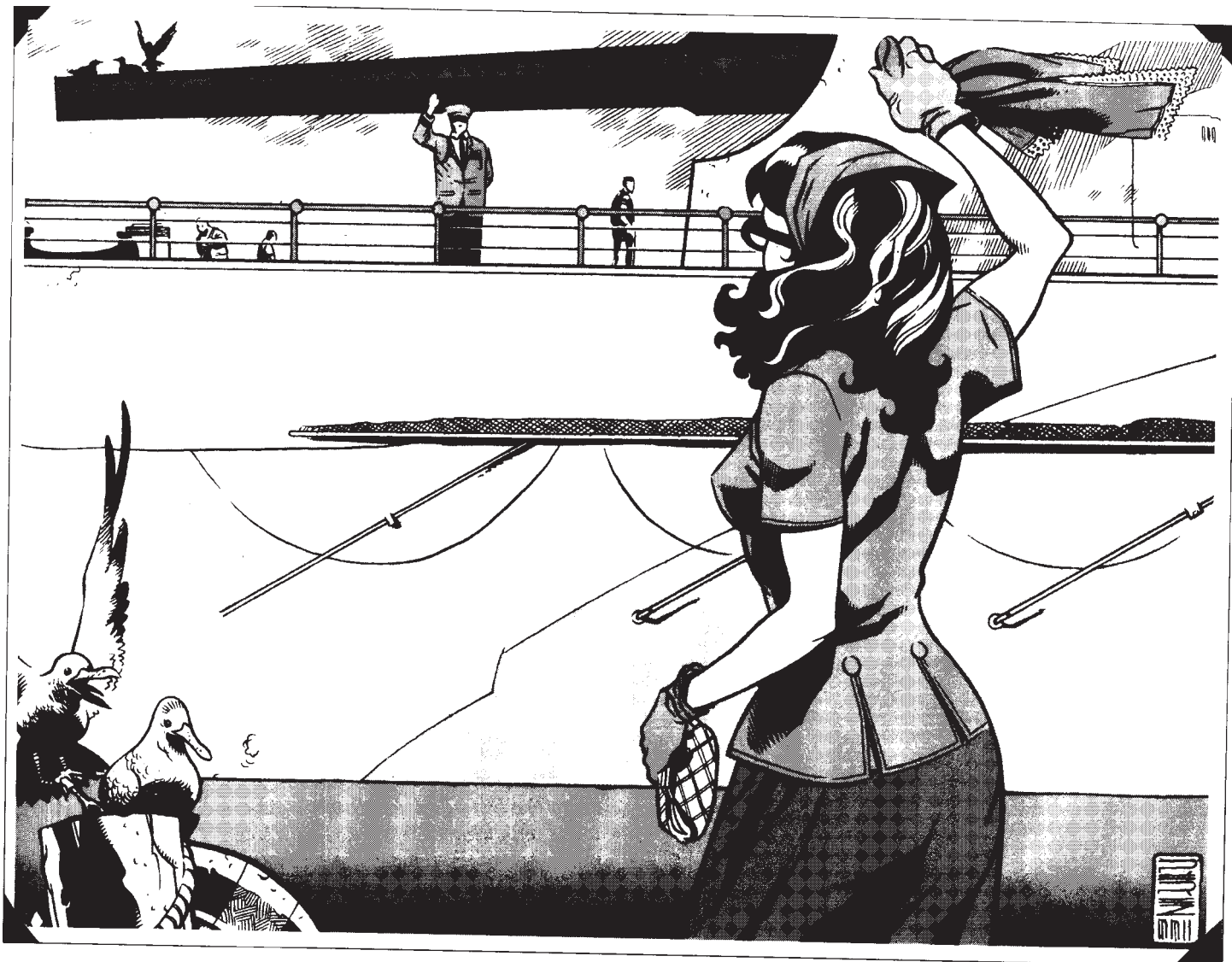
## DOUBLE INDEMNITY

Suppose a GM spends hours putting together a nefarious mastermind, a multi-level hideout, and a world-conquering plan to beat all plans... and the players put an end to it in one session.

Never fear. The villain wasn't really killed - someone who *looked* him; was. Trough makeup, plastic surgery and disguises, the villain has put a doable in his place. When the heroes arrive, his true identity remains a secret and he, is safe from their attempts to stop him. Often, villains dress and act like henchmen in order to remain on the scene.

Heroes who have never seen the villain will have no idea what he looks like and will be completely fooled. If they have encountered him in the past, follow the Acting and Disguise rules on pp. B62 and B65.





## Campaign Styles

Pulp heroes ran the gamut, from the Frail Professor Accidentally Uncovering Unspeakable Horrors to the Reckless Soldier Of Fortune Saving the World... Again. Different heroes are suitable for different campaigns.

Before starting the campaign, the GM should discuss the possibilities with the players. Do they want to haunt dusty catacombs and ancient temples, or are they happier duking it out with the local thugs and Bolshevik agents? Do they prefer a realistic approach, or are they willing to accept rayguns and resurrections?

The following list of adventure types is merely a starting place - almost any sort of situation can be treated in the pulp style! And, of course, the GM can mix and match elements from each . . .

## ADVENTURE AND EXPLORATION

The deserts of Egypt, the jungles of South America, hidden temples, lost civilizations - these are the settings that make up the adventure and exploration campaign. What sets this type of campaign apart from the rest is the use of an exotic locale. Foreign lands provide plenty of adventures, beginning the moment the border is crossed.

Standard character types for exploration campaigns include Soldiers of Fortune, Archaeologists, Explorers, Great White Hunters, and Reporters. Incongruous characters (such as a street cop) may be great fun if the GM can find a way to get them involved in the adventure.

Exploratory expeditions are often financed by outside sources such as museums, universities, archaeological institutes, or wealthy explorers (both active and retired). Characters may wish to put together their own expedition, but this is a costly and time-consuming procedure. The PC must purchase supplies, hire guides, and locate geologists, cartographers, naturalists, archaeologists, and other professionals necessary for a successful expedition. While it is a complex operation, the GM should allow heroes to do so, especially if they are Wealthy or go about it in a resourceful or detailed manner.

## Unexplored Lands

Many areas around the world remain virgin territory, including parts of Africa, Asia, South America, the North and South Poles, Canada, and Indonesia. The heroes may be hired to map or explore (either on their own or as part of an expedition), journey to search for lost or hidden treasures, or perhaps end up there through unfortunate accident (plane crash, shipwreck).

# EXPLORATION

## ADVENTURE SEED:

### THE TEMPLE OF THE FEATHERED SERPENT

The PCs are hired to accompany an expedition into the interior of Central America in search of an ancient golden temple to Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent. The expedition is sponsored by a large university, and consists of a reporter, a photographer, at least two marksmen (one an NPC), an archaeologist, the expedition's leader (an NPC from the university), and several native bearers. The PCs may fill any of these positions, or the GM may find another reason for them to go.

One of the marksmen (who is secretly working for the mob) begins making strange things happen (items disappear, strange noises, whatever he can get away with), in an effort to spook the party into believing they are cursed. He wants the reporter to send back these reports, so that once the temple is found, he can murder the entire group without suspicion of (mundane) foul play.

The lost world's appeal lies in the mysteries and peculiarities of the surroundings.

## AT THE EARTH'S CORE

Many pulp adventures took place *inside* a hollow Earth. Several pulp writers created complex flora, fauna, and society, and reprints of those works can provide the GM with abundant ideas.

In these stories, gravity at the earth's core pulls in the opposite direction. That is, the inhabitants are pulled toward the *surface* of the planet, thereby allowing them to live on the inside of the hollow sphere.

The inhabitants are humans - trapped, millennia ago, by a great natural disaster. They speak their own tongue, but PCs who are fluent in an ancient language (such as Latin or Egyptian) might be able to communicate with them.

Time at the earth's core seems to have slowed or stopped entirely. Dinosaurs and man-eating plants can be found in the "wilderness" regions, and the technology of the inhabitants is rarely greater than TL3. Some writers went to the other extreme and filled the region with super-science, death rays, and flying saucers - the choice is up to the GM.

Setting the campaign back in time a few years opens up many new areas to explore. Perhaps the most intriguing is 19th-century Africa; quite a bit of material is available on that genre, including some written by real explorers!

## Ancient Civilizations

The explorers may pick up an ancient map or a whispered legend that leads them to thousand-year-old ruins in nearly any part of the world. These civilizations may be well known (Aztecs, Egyptians, Babylonians) or they may be entirely mythical (Atlantis, Lemuria), but either way they are almost certain to hold incredible treasures, terrifying secrets, and lethal dangers.

A twist to this type of adventure is to create *inhabitants* of these ancient cities. For example, in the first Doc Savage story, an ancient tribe of Mayans appeared, living deep in a hidden valley and spoken of only in whispered legend among nearby natives. Many versions of Atlantis can be found in the pulp stories - some with high technology, others with wizardry.

Worldbooks such as *GURPS Atlantis* and *GURPS Aztecs* can be a wealth of information and inspiration for such a campaign.

## Lost Worlds

A special sort of expedition is the search for the now-proverbial *lost world*. A physical barrier (such as a geological formation), keeping the lost world from being discovered, is very common. For example, a tropical village may be hidden in a deep valley amid the frozen wastes. There may even be a complete world deep in the center of the earth (see box).

Bear in mind that the lost world's appeal lies in the mysteries and peculiarities of the surroundings, and that a campaign that runs in a lost world for very long may lose its excitement. One way to resolve this is taken straight from the pulps: when the PCs discover the world, it is in danger of being destroyed by a colossal natural disaster (flood, volcanic eruption, earthquake). Give them enough time to explore, uncover its secrets, rescue a beautiful native girl or two, and then (if they're quick and resourceful) escape with their lives before it is truly lost forever, or at least rendered inaccessible.

An interesting twist: suppose the lost world is not completely destroyed. Several adventures later the heroes could be accosted by escaped natives who blame *them* for the disaster.

## CRIMEFIGHTING

"For an ordinary man to get a bullet through his hat as he walked home at night would be something to talk about for years. Now, with me, just the price of a new hat."

- Race Williams in *Snarl of the Beast*  
(Carroll John Daly, 1927)

Crimefighting is a common pulp theme, spawning such immortals as The Avenger and The Shadow. Their heroes are constantly battling to stop crime and evil on a local or world-wide scale. This type of campaign does well as a pulp *Supers* campaign (see p. 114), and also mixes easily with *Horror*.



## Organized Crime

One of the staples of the crimefighting adventure is the organized crime ring. GMs should establish the exact nature of the underworld's influence over whatever city the campaign is in; how many factions are vying for the same "turf," who are the principal NPCs, and what areas they excel in (e.g., racketeering, narcotics, prostitution). Private investigators, G-men, police, crusaders, and reporters are all excellent candidates for this type of adventure. See pp. 100-103 for information on appropriate villains for a crimefighting campaign, including gangsters and henchmen.

## Global Crime

Throughout the pulps we find master criminals who are not content with controlling a section of a city. It is not greed that drives them to carry out their fiendish plans, but megalomania - they want to rule the world.

World-conquering villains are the natural foes of crusaders and soldiers of fortune. Of course, anyone adventuring with a globe-hopping crimefighter has ample opportunities - perhaps more than they would like - to test their wits and weapons against a megalomaniacal mastermind.

Global crime is especially suited to *Supers* campaigns (p. 114).

## HORROR

The pulps did not create the horror genre, but they certainly popularized it. *Horror* campaigns may include anything from ghosts, vampires, and zombies to Ancient Slobbery Things With Unspeakable Names. See *GURPS Horror*, *GURPS Monsters*, and other related supplements.

## Old Favorites

Ghosts, vampires, werewolves, graveyards, and haunted houses - these and other cliché horror trappings can provide hours of enjoyment. They make adventures easier to design for GMs, and players love the familiarity.

GMs must be careful, however, not to let familiarity lead to boredom. There isn't too much that hasn't been done in this area, and the players are likely to have already seen it. One way to keep the players on their toes is to change one or more of the elements that they are so sure of - a werewolf that sucks the blood of its living victims is sure to cause some confusion...

## Eldritch Horrors

H.P. Lovecraft and his peers created an entire mythos, intricately tied in with accurate historical facts. Most of the stories involved "normal" people uncovering, and often unleashing, evil entities of tremendous power (many times worshipped as gods). The tales almost always had a tragic ending. The mythos is too complex even to begin to detail, and GMs would do well to read some of the works of Lovecraft and his emulators (e.g., August Derleth, Robert E. Howard, Robert Bloch). More suggestions can be found in *GURPS Horror*, *GURPS CthulhuPunk*, and especially in Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu*, the licensed roleplaying version of Lovecraft's mythos.



## STREET TALK

Detective stories of the Thirties were laced with slang. To add to the atmosphere of a crimefighting campaign, use some of the terms listed below. The more detective pulps you can get your *meat hooks* on, the better your slang will be. So get off your *kiester* and go find some.

Instead of just pulling a *gun*, *jack out your heater*, *rod*, *hardware*, *blaster*, or *iron*.

Don't talk about the good-looking girl that came into your office... brag about the *dish*, *looker*, *peach*, *lolla-palaoza*, *babe*, *skirt*, or *dame*.

Nervous? You've got a case of the *heebie-jeebies*, *jitters*, *willies*, or *creeps*.

Kill anybody lately? Well, now that you *put them on ice*, the *cops*, *heat*, or *coppers* are going to send you *up the river* or lock you in the *hoosegow*, *clink*, *slammer*, or *pen*.

Shoot someone: *drill* or *plug* him. *Fill him with lead*, *give him a case of lead poisoning*.

On the run: *on the lam*.

A clumsy idiot: *lummox*, *lunkhead*, *oaf*. Excellent for verbal abuse among thugs!

Money: *lettuce*, *bacon*, *dead presidents*, *jack*, *scratch*, *dough*.

A dollar: a *buck*, *clam*, *bullet*, *peso*, or *simoleon*.

## Monsters

This category is a catch-all for the wide variety of creatures that range from not-quite-human to absolutely hideous. In creating monsters, the GM should feel free to be creative; examples include giant animals and insects, disfigured humans, swamp things, and laboratory experiments that have run amok.

Monsters often kidnap beautiful young women, whether or not they have a logical reason. The damsel in distress is a pulp staple, and such adventures are easy to plan!

If the PCs prefer a good investigative adventure, mastermind criminals often employ slobbering, humanoid monsters to do their dirty work (which, of course, includes kidnapping beautiful women for some diabolical purpose).

Additional information and inspiration can be found in *GURPS Monsters*.

## SUPERNATURAL CREATURES

Legends and myths of both ancient and modern civilizations are full of monsters and beasts. Many are composites of existing animals, such as the Babylonian winged bull, the Greek Cerberus (three-headed dog), the griffon, the chimera, and the Hindu winged elephants. Even the dragon is a composite reptile and flying creature, with the added touch of a fiery breath. Human/beast combinations abound, such as the mermaid, the satyr, the sphinx, and the centaur.

Most supernatural creatures represent evil in some form. Ghosts, living dead, and other restless souls are nearly always malevolent (See *GURPS Undead* and *GURPS Spirits* for more details). Despite the tragedy behind the stories, vampires, werewolves, and even Frankenstein's monster ultimately inflicted some kind of pain or evil on innocents, even if unintentionally.

GMs can draw upon such legends for a horror campaign, or search the Internet and library for less familiar legends.

### Modifying Existing GURPS Creatures

Through inventive use of *GURPS Bestiary*, *GURPS Undead*, and *GURPS Spirits*, GMs should never run out of creatures to use in a horror campaign. Combining attributes and physical features from two or more creatures can result in a unique monster that will leave the PCs scratching their heads or perhaps running for their lives. From such an imaginary creature, plots often spring unbidden.

For example, suppose the players encounter a cult that sacrifices animals fortnightly in order to appease some ancient demon-god. What if those dead animals were reanimated by *another* ancient force, and struck back - not only at the cult, but anyone they found! Beginning with statistics for normal animals - a dog, a wolf, a housecat - then giving them supernatural abilities and powers, GMs can ensure a frighteningly good time as the heroes deal with fanatic, bloodthirsty cultists, two rival demons, and the ghosts and animated corpses of slaughtered animals...

## WEIRD MENACE ADVENTURE SEED: THE OCEAN TERRORS

Strange noises are heard in and around an expensive beach resort in northern New England. Ominous chanting echoes across the water at night, ghostly lights seem to float through the fog, and employees and guests are found dead - their bodies choked with seaweed - with damp footprints leading to and from the ocean. Business drops off and the heroes are called in to investigate.

*The Explanation:* A competing resort chain has tried to buy out the current owner, but without results. They are now working with the local underworld to scare off business, planning to make an even lower offer when the resort is forced to close. Once they own the resort, they intend to "reveal" the fact that the hauntings were an elaborate hoax, perpetrated by the first owner in a failing attempt to drum up business.

### The Weird Menace

Weird Menace adventures present the players with what seems to be a supernatural occurrence with no logical solution. Careful research, quick wits, and a sure aim eventually lead the investigators to the real (and perfectly rational) explanation.

This type of adventure works well when combined with a straight supernatural campaign. Alternately, an ongoing Weird Menace campaign where nothing is actually supernatural can be rejuvenated by throwing in a *real* horror once in a while. Imagine the players' reactions when they attempt to unmask what they *think* is a fake werewolf. Better yet, imagine the *werewolf's* reaction...

## SPY AND ESPIONAGE

While few pulps were dedicated wholly to international intrigue, detective and adventure pulps frequently crossed into that realm. Much of the information in Chapter 1 will be helpful, as well as selected details on politics and government in Chapters 2-7, especially in the areas of the Kuomintang, the Bolsheviks, and Nazi Germany.

It requires work to keep espionage adventures exciting and fast-paced without resorting to perpetual combat. The emphasis is on deception and secrecy. The excitement comes from wondering who's on your side and who's a double agent; sneaking around in a tuxedo, hoping no one asks why you're hiding in the dark; or trying to smuggle stolen plans across a hostile border.

From the casinos of Monte Carlo to the Louvre in France, exotic locales are necessary for a successful campaign. The early chapters of this book can help establish the atmosphere of these foreign lands, but anything from a spy story will work just as well. Start with the French Riviera, Rome, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Washington, D.C., Berlin, and Hong Kong. . .



International travel can also provide opportunities for exciting cat-and-mouse espionage games. A three-day trip on the Orient Express or a sea voyage from San Francisco to Japan can confine the spy and his enemies in a place from where there is little opportunity to escape. Acting and subterfuge, misdirection and prevarication are the order of the day. And, should combat break out, what could be more exciting than gunplay atop a moving train or in the damp, rusty bowels of an ocean liner...?

Espionage adventures thrust the spy into a world of deception and intrigue, where his only allies are his quick wits and a sharp eye. Character goals range from copying secret plans to retrieving stolen film. Sultry female spies, whether allies or enemies, are a must for an authentic pulp-style spy adventure (for an example, see *Femme Fatale*, *Lana Caine*, p. 102).

**GURPS Espionage** is a treasure trove of ideas and suggestions for such a campaign.

## WESTERNS

Gunslingers and lawmen collide in the classic tales of the Old West.

There are two ways to run a Western campaign. One is to set the campaign in the Old West of the late 1800s (see Chapter 11). The other is to send city-dwelling pulp heroes into the rough-and-tumble western towns that still existed in the 1930s.

A pulp staple of the 1930s Western adventure was the idea that the "Old West" was only a short gallop from the airfield. Adventures set in the middle of arid regions of the southwest might indeed have exactly that. PCs landing at a dusty airstrip in the middle of Wyoming may be met by a group on horseback, ready to escort them to the Lazy I Ranch to try and rid it of the spirits of slaughtered Indian braves.

Cowboys, Indians, outlaws, posses, gunfights at high noon, lynchings, and any place with the name "Gulch" in it can be used in a Western campaign. GMs should use **GURPS Old West** to flesh out a Western campaign, no matter the time period. Additionally, elements of **GURPS Deadlands** could be used to keep the campaign from going stale. Running an entire 1930s crossover campaign using **Deadlands**, or combining a western theme with other genres, could be very rewarding.

The 1960s television series and recent movie adaptation of *The Wild, Wild West* provide an excellent example of such a cross-genre Western adventure, combining a western setting with elements of science fiction and gadgeteering.

## ESPIONAGE ADVENTURE SEED: PLANS OF DEATH

The party is sent to Casablanca to recover stolen plans for a rocket-propelled bomb... a prototype missile! The plans are in the hands of an Egyptian diplomat who intends to sell them to the highest bidder. The fact that they are U.S. government plans does not bother him in the slightest.

When the heroes contact the Egyptian, they discover that their bid has been rejected. They have three choices. They can try to steal the plans from him immediately; they can steal them from the Nazi agent who buys them... or they can wait until they are smuggled out of the country and intercept them.

The local authorities are no help (and in fact get in the way of negotiations unless they are appeased with a healthy bribe), and the Egyptian cannot be coerced or Fast-Talked.

The GM may wish to make things more difficult by adding another foreign agent or two, and making the investigators determine who actually got the plans. Another twist is to make the Nazi agent a beautiful femme fatale pretending to be a French Underground resistance fighter.



## ADVENTURE SEED: THE CASE OF THE JADE BUDDHA

The PCs are hired by a wealthy congressman to retrieve a 3' jade and diamond statue that was recently stolen from his home. He has traced it to an art collector in Shanghai, and will pay \$3,500 for its return (he goes as high as \$5,000 if pressed).

The catch? The congressman never owned the statue in the first place. He is, in effect, hiring the PCs to steal the statue from its rightful owner.

The statue is valued at \$75,000. The owner's residence is heavily guarded. Research about the statue reveals nothing. The congressman does *not* pay for the PCs' trip, but he provides an advance of 10% if asked.

This adventure seed also works well with a twist: for instance, the statue is cursed, or its rightful owner is a powerful Chinese magician.

## AVIATION ADVENTURE SEED: THE SKY DEMONS

Allison Reed is in trouble. As a courier for the U.S. government, her brand new Beech C-17R was shot down only a few miles from the *Wilson Gulch Aerodrome*, home to a group of adventuresome aviators. As the heroes rush to the crash site and Allison runs from the wreckage, an unmarked fighter of unique design strafes the area. The attacker takes aim at both the rescuers and the young woman, firing with four .30-caliber Lewis guns. The PCs have time to return to the airstrip and get airborne if they choose, but on facing any serious opposition, the unmarked plane turns tail and runs, racing away with a high-powered engine that leaves even the fastest pursuers behind.

When the dust settles, Allison pleads with the heroes to help her make it to Washington, D.C. The plans she's carrying cannot fall into the hands of the Sky Demons. These ruthless pilots are the airborne minions of a mastermind rumored to have a hideout in a giant dirigible hidden somewhere in the Rockies.

Will the PCs take to the air to help the young woman? Would it be safer to travel by land with airborne scouts and escorts? What are the plans she carries in the locked satchel that never leaves her side? Why can't Ms. Reed produce any official identification? Is she truly a government courier, or a double agent who has stolen the plans herself? If she and the plans are captured, will the heroes be able to find and infiltrate the dirigible hideout in time to save her? One thing is certain: now that the plans are protected by the heroes and their aircraft, the Sky Demons will return en masse . . .

## WAR

Campaigns set during one of the two World Wars, or any of the skirmishes in between, provide plenty of opportunity for action and adventure. Adventures may include re-creation of historical battles with PCs playing integral parts, the destruction or capture of a strategic point (a bridge, a munitions dump), or freeing an abducted officer or group of soldiers from a POW camp. In a World War I campaign, the heroes may find themselves ducking into foxholes or dodging strafing fire from a biplane.

The countless uprisings and skirmishes between countries or in civil uprisings provide infinite opportunities for the protagonists to become involved in arms smuggling, guerrilla operations, evacuating innocents caught in the cross-fire, or rescuing kidnapped politicians or their families. These sorts of operations work well in conjunction with the use of **GURPS Special Ops** and can take place during the '20s and '30s, or in a modern day setting (see p. 121 for more information on a **Cliffhangers/Special Ops** campaign).

Throughout the first several chapters of this book, GMs can find references to many of the conflicts of the era. Some have more details than others, but information on all of them is readily available on the Internet and in libraries. GMs looking for a quick and easy war adventure should simply ignore the historical skirmishes and create one out of whole cloth. Pick a small South American or African nation (real or imagined), throw in feuding dictators with authentic sounding names and *voila!* — instant adventure.

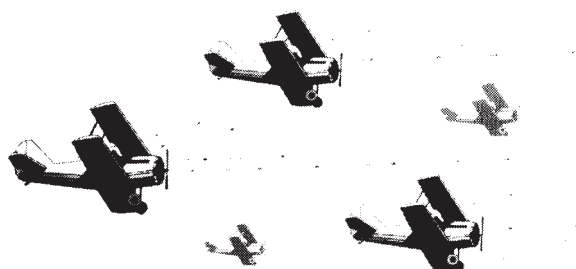
### World War II Cliffhangers

Many of the conflicts of the 1930s set the stage for World War II. Wars in Europe during the 1930s can engage soldiers in full-scale war even before Hitler invaded Poland. The latter half of the 1930s makes for an exciting beginning to a WWII campaign. The GM should involve the heroes in historical incidents leading up to the war; for some examples, see the *Timeline* (pp. 14-23).

The GM has many opportunities to use the impending war as a backdrop for campaigns of many different styles. Create a fictional mastermind (see p. 100) as the real power behind Hitler or Mussolini; let the heroes uncover a Nazi plan to dig up a supernatural artifact that could destroy the world; or introduce a love interest who later turns out to be a Nazi spy. With a little imagination and help from **GURPS WWII**, the possibilities are endless!

A shootout with Nazi stormtroopers in the jungles of Central America; an interrogation by black-uniformed SS officers; a race through the Arctic waste to find occult treasure - these are the trappings of a successful **Cliffhangers** World War II campaign!

For comprehensive coverage of WWII, be sure to see **GURPS WWII** and its supplements.





## AVIATION

Either World War will provide an exciting setting for an aviation campaign, and flying mercenaries were in demand during the years in between. Pilots expecting to see combat should have both high Piloting and Gunner (Machine Gun) skills.

Aviation adventures should include plenty of action on the ground. Get the aviators out of their planes not only before the adventure, but during it as well. Downed fliers or agents infiltrating enemy installations keep the campaign from becoming too repetitive.

The PCs may be part of, or perhaps completely make up, an elite squadron of pilots sent on specialized missions considered too difficult or dangerous for “ordinary” fliers. During the Great War, it would not be unusual to have a single “lone ace” sent on special missions alone.

Not all aviation adventures need to revolve around aerial stunts or combat. A group of adventuring PCs may simply have a common background as aviators or daredevils, and have become heroes-for-hire since the onset of the Depression. Solving mysteries and rescuing damsels in distress are necessary to buy enough fuel and baling wire to keep their planes aloft for the next National Air Race or daredevil show at the State Fair. This sort of campaign works well when mixing or crossing genres such as horror, lost worlds, and so forth.

GMs would do well to read the *G8 and His Battle Aces* pulps for an outstanding look at aviation-based cross-genre adventures. *G8*, a master spy and brilliant pilot, leads his men (Bull Martin and Nippy Weston) into battle during WWI, fighting not only America’s enemies, but also zombies, Vikings, plagues released from ancient tombs, vampires, a Chinese curse, werewolves, and more!

*GURPS Cliffhangers* rules can also be used with FASA’s *Crimson Skies* world background for an alternate-reality aviation campaign setting.

## Gadgeteers and Aviation

Should the PCs be fortunate enough to have an aerospace whiz in their midst, modified planes, experimental aircraft, helicopters, jetpacks, and more may add a touch of science fiction to the campaign. Aircraft modified for specific jobs can make defeating the villain and saving the day easier and more interesting. Airborne rescue using an extendible rope ladder, giant dirigibles with integral aircraft hangers, crop-dusting biplanes modified to lay smoke screens - the ideas are limited only by one’s imagination.

## SCI-FI

Science fiction (known in some pulps as *scientifiction*) is in some ways the broadest of campaign types, but nearly always involves space travel and/or the future. *GURPS Space* is a useful reference - but remember that space, space travel, and the future were viewed very differently 70 years ago.



## SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE SEED: THE XR-700

Doctor Lawrence Church has built a rocket. Not just a projectile that would arc from one place on earth to another, but an actual *rocketplane*! After months of tedious calculations and trial runs, Dr. Church launched the unmanned XR-700 into orbit, where it stayed for; nearly three weeks as scientific instruments gartered data, recording it on paper and a high-tech wire recorder. Right on schedule, the rocket returned to earth, dropping gently to the surface on its gigantic parachute.

But scientific data isn’t all it brought back. When Dr. Church retrieved the rocket, it had already been opened - the heavy sheet metal was bent outward as if something had emerged from it by force. A strange, glowing ooze is all that remains of the stowaway; that and a string of murders leading away from the landing site.

What came back with the XR-700? Where is it going on its straight-line course away from the rocket? Can it be reasoned with? Can it even be destroyed? And how can the heroes deal with the official investigator’s conclusion that they’re responsible for the murders and that the alien story is just so much nonsense? Even if the alien is destroyed, are the PCs brave enough to venture into orbit to put an end to the threat there...?

## ADVENTURE SEED: THE SECRET OF FENTON’S GROVE

The party is summoned to the sleepy town of Fenton’s Grove somewhere in New England. The uncle of one of the PCs has just died, and the hero is to attend the funeral and the reading of the will.

At the funeral, the heroes are surprised to find that nearly the entire town of Fenton’s Grove turns out to “honor” the dead man. None are willing to speak to the PCs, and most seem intent on being certain the hero’s uncle is buried quickly. If pressed, the townsfolk admit they are afraid of the man (as they were when he was alive) because he practiced black magic and horrible rituals.

That night, the reflection of a large fire is seen in the sky. When the heroes investigate, they find that a mob of townsfolk have exhumed the old man’s body and are already burning it on a large bonfire. If the PCs try to interfere they are met with violent resistance. Assuming the characters are armed, they have little trouble in persuading the townsfolk to go home. Either way, the body is badly charred and disfigured.

The remainder of the adventure centers on the attempt to stop the old man from killing the townspeople one by one. His arcane knowledge and power have allowed him to rise from his grave every night and hunt down those responsible for burning him after he was “dead.”

## Invasions

Little green men from Mars, eight-foot monsters from Jupiter, or slimy amoeboid things from the moon; it makes no difference what they look like or where they come from - they are taking over our planet. Their motivation for conquering Earth varies; women, water, air, food, slaves... Earth seems to have it all.

## Other Planets

GMs may wish to set their entire campaign on another planet, allowing the heroes to wind up there through intent or incident. Pulp-era planets almost always seem to have breathable air and tolerable gravity, and the native language is easily learned. Pulp aliens are usually monstrous, but a few are wholly human except, perhaps, for their green or purple skins... and their women are beautiful. The Edgar Rice Burroughs *John Carter of Mars* series is a great example of this type of campaign.

## Space Opera

The pulps were also famous for what is often termed “space opera” - an epic, sweeping storyline full of rayguns and spaceships, aliens and distant planets. It is, in many ways, what most people today consider classic “science fiction.” In space opera, ships make noise in a vacuum, aliens look cool rather than biologically feasible, and the science is always spurious. Physics was never an impediment to the storyline - space opera heroes got around in rocketplanes and used rayguns to thwart their evil nemeses.

Classic examples include the television series *Captain Video*, the thousands of *Perry Rhodan* stories, as well as the ongoing sagas of Flash Gordon.

GMs may wish to take a look at *GURPS Lensman* for some ideas on running a space opera campaign, as opposed to the more realistic universe of *GURPS Traveller*.

## THE PULP SUPERS CAMPAIGN

While all pulp heroes were larger than life, there were a few that could only be considered superbeings. For instance, Doc Savage’s superhuman strength and mind-boggling intelligence were far beyond the reach of any normal human being, and the amazing abilities of The Shadow left most heroes scratching their heads.

To emulate these heroes, the GM may wish to run a *Supers* campaign. Any pulp-style genre can be used in conjunction with super-crimefighters, super-explorers, super-spies, etc.

The pulps usually did not feature the costumed crusaders of the comic books. Pulp superheroes were simply men with superhuman abilities who used their skills to improve the quality of life. Many times they were ruthless in their fight against crime, believing in “bullet justice.” Others viewed all human life as sacred and disdained killing, opting to capture the bad guys in hopes that they could be rehabilitated. Examples include Doc Savage, the Shadow, the Spider, and the Avenger.

For this campaign, PCs should be allowed a substantially higher beginning point value (200 to 500 points). If the campaign will cross the line between pulps and comic books, the GM may allow the use of certain “unusual” powers such as those listed in *GURPS Compendium I*, pp. C149-71 or in *GURPS Supers*. Players must have the GM’s permission to choose abilities that are actually superhuman.

In this sort of campaign, the villains must likewise have some extraordinary abilities. A large number of henchmen (pp. 102-103) may give “normal” villains a fighting chance, but a pulp favorite is to arm the villain with an unusual or deadly device (a Gadget) that seems to be unstoppable. Heroes may have to rely on their wits rather than their super abilities to successfully complete this type of adventure. Nearly any disadvantage is appropriate for a super-mastermind, but Megalomania is by far the most common.

GMs wishing to throw the PCs into a deathtrap must take into consideration their tremendous abilities, and design super-deathtraps.

## CHARACTER DEATH

Heroes in adventure fiction rarely die. In keeping with the spirit of cliffhanger fiction, GMs may wish to use the following guidelines to keep the PCs alive while maintaining a sense of impending doom throughout the adventure.

1. *Use Cinematic Rules.* **Cliffhangers** is a cinematic setting, and GMs are encouraged to read the cinematic roleplaying guidelines found on pp. CII176-177. An especially useful rule for keeping the heroes alive is the *Flesh Wound* rule found on p. CII151.

2. *Death Should Be Heroic.* Pulps heroes should never die at the whim of a random die roll. Instead, be certain that when a hero dies it is at a dramatically appropriate moment and integral to moving the plot along. The death should be heroic, not meaningless, and the player should be fully aware of the danger his PC is in. When intrepid reporter Karl “Sharkey” Malone hurls himself into the Pit of Peril to close the gate to another world, his death serves a larger cause. Should he simply fail a die roll and stumble into the pit, it would be tragic... in more ways than one.

3. *Stupidity Should Not Be Tolerated.* Players in a **Cliffhangers** campaign may come to believe their heroes are invincible and begin to take inordinately risky, even ludicrous, action. Charging into a band of fierce Tuareg warriors holding a helpless female captive is heroic. Charging a squad of Nazis armed with automatic weapons is just suicidal.

4. *Give Advance Warning.* Whenever possible, players should be warned of the consequences of their actions. Let them know ahead of time that what they’re about to do may result in death - glorious or otherwise.

5. *Encourage Tenacious PCs.* *GURPS* is full of advantages that make it much easier for a **Cliffhangers** character to survive. GMs should encourage advantages such as Hard to Kill, Serendipity, Luck, Daredevil, Toughness, and so forth.



# CROSSOVER CAMPAIGNS



*Cliffhangers* is as much a style or set of values as it is an era. The bulk of *GURPS Cliffhangers* centers on the heyday of the pulp action adventures - the 1920s and '30s. But applying *Cliffhangers* standards to other genres and other eras is easy and exciting.

## WHAT MAKES IT CLIFFHANGERS?

There are several aspects to a successful *Cliffhangers*-style adventure, many of which were discussed on pp. 95-103. What sets *Cliffhangers* apart from a standard campaign - in whatever genre or era - are things like action, adventure, style, heroism, suspenseful endings, and high drama.

### Cinematic Rules

The cinematic rules on p. A183 are especially appropriate for any *GURPS Cliffhangers* campaign, no matter the setting. GMs are encouraged to create and use other cinematic rules as well, focusing on high drama and fast action without getting bogged down in detailed rules.

In running a cinematic campaign, the GM should strongly encourage the players to create characters with Luck, Toughness, Sense of Duty, Code of Honor, Honesty, and other "heroic" qualities. *Supers* campaigns (p. 114) are especially suited to cinematic rules.

### Heroism

Central to a successful *Cliffhangers* character is heroism. Pulp heroes *were* heroes. They risked life and limb at every turn - to save a stranger, a friend, a loved one, or a country. Personal gain was rarely a factor in their actions, and even the greediest or richest of heroes was often a philanthropist at heart, lending not only time and money, but his very being to the Cause of Good.

## KEEP THE SHEETS

A technical trick to encouraging *Cliffhangers*-style play in any genre is for the GM to allow the players to make up their characters, then have the sheets turned over to him for the duration of the game. The players are allowed to know what advantages, skills, and disadvantages they have, but specific questions like "what do I need to roll to jump off the burning truck" are not allowed. Instead, the players simply play the game, focusing on the content and action, while the GM makes all their rolls. Hidden rolls also allow the GM to resolve seemingly impossible situations at dramatically appropriate moments. That is not to say that he should cheat on the die rolls, but fudging at dramatically appropriate moments often makes for a much better game.

Players may find it uncomfortable at first, but once they realize the freedom they have in acting instead of number-crunching, the play can become appropriate to the genre!

## Style

Much of the responsibility for a successful campaign rests on the shoulders of the GM, who can use the suggestions given in Chapter 9 to create a fast-moving, high-drama adventure. But even the best adventure design is useless if the players don't do their part as well.

*Cliffhangers* is about style - taking risks, acting before you think (too much), and making the move to win the day no matter the difficulty. It is a world of fast-moving and dangerous scenes, hairbreadth escapes, and foolhardy schemes. And yet, through it all - using guts and daring, skill and courage - the hero comes out on top.

## Other Eras

Any background can support a *Cliffhangers*-style game. It's not really about time or place; it's about derring-do and narrow escapes. If your players enjoy this style of adventure, you can pick any setting you like...

## THE VICTORIAN AGE

The late 19th century provides plenty of opportunity for adventure and excitement. Exploration and colonization was at its peak and the foggy streets of nighttime London can be a wonderful place in which to roleplay. Clandestine meetings; mysterious strangers; Jack the Ripper... Victorian London is an ideal place for *Cliffhangers*-style adventures.

GMs are encouraged to consult *GURPS Steampunk*, *GURPS Steam-Tech*, *GURPS Screampunk*, and *GURPS Castle Falkenstein* for atmosphere, adventure ideas, and an alternate reality setting for Victorian *Cliffhangers*.

Typical pulp heroes adventuring in this era include Phileas Fogg, Captain Nemo, Tarzan, and Allan Quatermain.

### African Exploration

Much of the Dark Continent was still unexplored during this era. Adventurers may find themselves hired to accompany expeditions into the depths of the continent in search of the legendary city of Timbuktu or the sources of the Nile river. Are the legends about vast diamond mines true? What other mysteries wait to be revealed in darkest Africa?

### The Great Game

The Colonial period is full of intrigue and opportunities for wonderful *Cliffhangers* espionage campaigns (see box, p. 111). This is the time when the "sun never sets on the British Empire," and whether PCs are working for or against the Empire, colonialism and expansionistic policies abound worldwide. This is also the era of the Zulu wars, giving heroes a chance to soldier for the Brits as well.

### Melodrama

The turn of the century is also an excellent time for mustachioed villains to tie innocent women in front of onrushing trains or spinning sawmill blades. These sadistic villains will do anything to get the young widow to fork over the deed to



her gold-laden property! With the gold rush in California and Alaska, adventurers have plenty of opportunity to try and strike it rich on their own, vanquish the villain, and get the girl too!

## THE TWENTIES

The 1920s is a popular era for pulp campaigns, especially horror campaigns based on the H.P. Lovecraft stories. Starting wealth is still \$750, but the Poverty disadvantage is far less common prior to the Depression. Prohibition is in effect during the entire decade and organized crime is in its heyday.

## WORLD WAR II

The Second World War creates new weapons and new enemies galore. The pulps of the Forties were filled with sci-fi stories, so alien invasions are also appropriate. A full-scale invasion might even be enough to get the Axis and Allies to work together against a common foe - at least until the threat has passed (the premise of Harry Turtledove's *Worldwar* series). *GURPS WWII* is invaluable for a 1940s *Cliffhangers* campaign.

## MODERN DAY

With the advent of new technology, changing political boundaries, and armed uprisings in small countries around the world, there are plenty of opportunities for "grand men's adventures" in the modern world. Weapons can be chosen from the *Basic Set* and *GURPS High-Tech*, and modern department store catalogs can be used to determine equipment prices. Technology such as computers, laser devices, and IR equipment brings a whole new dimension to the campaign.

## The Cold War

Campaigns set between the 1950s and the 1980s provide opportunities for espionage between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, as well as a number of military skirmishes and anti-terrorist adventures. Both *GURPS Espionage* and *Special Ops* should be used to flesh out such a campaign.

## Vietnam

The Vietnam War saw the appearance of the Navy SEALs as well as extensive use of the Rangers. Small elite units of men stalking through jungles and swamps behind enemy lines makes for a perfect *Cliffhangers* scenario (see p. 121 for more information on using *GURPS Special Ops* for such a campaign).

## THE FUTURE

*Cliffhangers* values and cinematic rules can easily be applied to cyberpunk, post-holocaust, and science-fiction campaigns. The gritty, realistic tone of those genres must be toned down, and the Good Guys allowed to win *almost* every time. Specific suggestions for applying *Cliffhangers* to *GURPS Space*, *Cyberpunk*, and *Traveller* can be found on pp. 113-114 and p. 119.

## Other Genres

Over the years, Steve Jackson Games has published over 160 worldbooks covering nearly every genre known to man. Rules for applying *GURPS Cliffhangers* to all of them are beyond the scope of this book, but several especially appropriate examples follow.

## SOURCES OF ADVENTURE IDEAS

Two *GURPS* supplements stand out for use in creating *Cliffhangers* adventure ideas: *GURPS Places of Mystery* and *GURPS Warehouse 23*.



### Places of Mystery

This book is an absolute must for any serious *Cliffhangers* GM. It is packed with exciting, exotic, mysterious places to adventure - the pyramids of Egypt, ancient Babylonia, stone circles, even Atlantis... this book has it all!

An entire campaign could be created using nothing more than *GURPS Cliffhangers* and *Places of Mystery*, sending the heroes globe-hopping from one ancient site to another.

### Warehouse 23

Just as *Places of Mystery* provides adventure seeds based on location, *Warehouse 23* is a treasure trove of McGuffins - items to build adventures around. Some could be used for a modern-day campaign, others will fit nicely into a "standard" 1930s campaign. Whether you want your heroes to go searching for Excalibur, the Lost Ark of the Covenant, or something even more bizarre and earth-shattering, this book is for you.



## HISTORICAL WORLDBOOKS

Any of the historical worldbooks (*GURPS China, Greece, Imperial Rome, Egypt, Aztecs*, and so on) can be used to provide information for 1930s or modern-day exploration of those ancient civilizations. They can be used to even better effect in a *Time Travel* campaign, where players from the 1930s unwittingly open a time gate and find themselves thrust into one era after another, struggling to survive the dangers and find their way back home.

There are two ways to immerse the players in the full splendor of ancient civilizations: send them back in time to those days of grandeur, or bring the ancient worlds to them (see *Ancient Egypt Adventure Seed: Dynasty Arisen*, below).

Sample adventure seeds follow for running *Cliffhangers* adventures set in ancient times.

### Ancient China Adventure Seed: The Jade Tiger

Independently of one another, the PCs - mere peasants - are contacted in a dream by an ancient god. They see a vision of a jade tiger, and know it must be set free. Within days, they find themselves mysteriously drawn together near the Forbidden City. None has any more clue to the vision than the others; only that they are under a compulsion to infiltrate the holy city to find and remove the Jade Tiger.

Can they sneak in undetected or will they face countless angry guards? What powers will the god grant to them to combat so many foes? What will they do with the mystical object once they steal it? And when they finally free the Jade Tiger, will they be prepared for it to come to life...

### Ancient Egypt Adventure Seed: Dynasty Arisen

In the ruins of a newly discovered underground labyrinth, the explorers stumble across an ancient portal with arcane markings. Deciphering them, they accidentally activate the portal, opening what looks to be a gateway to ancient Egypt! The gateway flutters and shimmers, but seems stable. Surely if they can enter from this side, they can return from the other...

Once they have crossed through, the unpleasant truth is revealed. The gateway did not transport them into the past, but altered reality and brought the glorious ancient dynasties of Egypt to the 20th century! As the portal closes behind them, they become trapped - strangers in a world ruled by a despotic Egyptian empire where Caucasians and other minorities are used as slaves for the mighty Pharaoh. Modern technology and ancient magic rival one another for greatness in this alternate earth. Only the GM knows if the heroes will ever restore the world to its former state.



## Ancient Greece Adventure Seed: The Odyssey Revisited

Through some slight, real or imagined, the PCs have drawn the ire of one of the Greek gods. As punishment, they have been violently exiled from their home, thrust to the farthest reaches of the world, and sentenced to die there. But love for home and family is strong, and like Odysseus before them, the heroes *will* find a way back...

The GM may use Homer's *Odyssey* as a guide for this campaign, perhaps even tracing Odysseus' steps closely. Limiting the antipathy from the god that exiled them (perhaps he is impressed by their determination) and playing up the two-fisted action of the journeys will give it a distinctly *Cliffhangers* feel. Imagine the players' enjoyment when they give the Cyclops a quick *one-two* before fleeing to their boats!

## BLACK OPS

It is 1932, and the PCs are recruited into a newly formed U.S. government department known as the NSD (National Security Department). The NSD is a new department aimed at "investigating and eliminating threats to the security of the United States." In reality, it is a front for an international Black Ops organization fighting aliens, vampires, and other dangerous monsters that threaten the Allies. Players may choose to create investigators from any Allied country, and any background. They will be intensively trained by the NSD (or its international counterparts) before being turned loose as 1930s Men In Black.

The heroes must keep the conspiracy quiet, but they're not given free rein to slaughter innocent witnesses. Instead, they must concoct innovative cover stories to fool the press and keep the black operations a secret.

One of their first assignments is to infiltrate European capitals and find out how far the threads of conspiracy reach. Rumor has it that a coven of witches has settled in London and is influencing the Crown. Others say that vampires have returned to Romania and taken up residence in an ancient castle there. But the most disturbing rumor is that the new German Fuhrer has established diplomatic relations with alien invaders and is planning to annex nearby countries very soon...

## CASTLE FALKENSTEIN

*GURPS Castle Falkenstein* is ripe for *Cliffhangers*-style campaigning. GMs should include plenty of nighttime foot chases through fog-lined castle parapets, fencing duels atop racing locomotives, stolen blueprints for infernal machines, and other adventure-laden details.

### Falkenstein Adventure Seed: Priam

While traveling through Bayern by train, the PCs spot a mysterious Prussian spy known only as *Priam*. He is rarely seen and has never been captured, but now is the heroes' chance to corner him.

As the train rushes through the wooded countryside, they must play the roles of innocent travelers while they formulate

a plan to capture him. What kind of information can they extract from him before they move in? Will he escape their trap and disappear like so many times before? Is the dark-haired man *really* who they think he is, or is he a clever plant sent to draw them out for the real spy to deal with...

## CYBERPUNK

Running a *Cyberpunk* campaign with a *Cliffhangers* feel can be difficult due to the gritty, realistic nature of the *Cyberpunk* world. The key to a successful campaign is to retain the grittiness, but shift the focus from "low-status rebels fighting high-status corporations" to *Cyberpunk* film noir.

*Cliffhangers Cyberpunk* is a gritty world full of ordinary Joes with their ordinary datajacks, trying to make enough credits for their next bottle of cheap soybooze. It's a world of dames that do you wrong, PIs with chromed cyberware and slouch hats, and a Peter Lorre snitch who spills his guts at the drop of a hat.

### Cyberpunk Adventure Seed: Sara

After a long stretch of hard times, the PCs are contacted by a gorgeous dame in the latest uptown fashions. "Call me Sara," she intones, lighting up a real-tobacco cigarette. It's obvious to the characters that "Sara" doesn't belong in their world of grimy streets and cheap booze, but when she hands them a credstick with an unlimited balance, they'd best stop asking questions.

"I need to you find someone for me," she says. "Some-one important." She hands them a holopic of a handsome, dark-skinned man in his twenties. "His name is Enrique." Expenses are not an issue, and she promises the heroes a hundred grand if they find him and bring him to her alive - no questions asked.

Who is "Sara" and what is her game? Who is the man with the foreign name? What does she want with him? Is he a friend, a lover, a relative? Or is he an industrial spy or assassin she wishes to torture and then eliminate? The GM knows the answers and the PCs will soon find out. They'd best hope it's not the hard way...

## MODERN-DAY ESPIONAGE

Information on espionage during the 1930s appears on p. 84, and location-specific information is available throughout chapters 2 through 7. A modern-day *Espionage* campaign should focus on adventure and excitement, with James Bondlike agents rather than realistic information analysts or couriers.

By including elements from *GURPS Special Ops*, the modern day *Cliffhanger* spy can become a saboteur and assassin as well as a master of deception and espionage games. Suggestions for adventures include creeping into a Russian Mafia leader's mansion to tap the phones and place cameras, intercepting the exchange of fissile material dock-side in the Black Sea, rubbing elbows with the world's elite in an effort to root out a faceless assassin at an international summit, and infiltrating a terrorist organization to locate and destroy their hidden training camp in the deserts of Iraq.

## TIME TRAVEL

**GURPS Time Travel** and its related supplements can be used for a rip-roaring, globe- and time-hopping campaign with a distinct *Cliffhangers* feel. Modern-day characters thrust into alternate times ranging from the Crusades to the Civil War will find plenty of action and adventure to keep them busy saving whatever part of the world they land in.

Alternate worlds such as those detailed in **GURPS Alternate Earths** and **Alternate Earths 2** can keep players busy for several adventures, all linked by a common theme and interconnected by a “cliffhanger” ending.

A single mastermind from the heroes’ own time who jumps from one time period to the next, wreaking havoc in an effort to strengthen his “modern-day” position, makes for a fine nemesis. Perhaps he can even assume the form of a famous historical personage (Genghis Khan, Hitler) and command legions of henchmen. Players will love to fight sword-wielding Roman legions in one adventure followed by tommy gun-toting toughs on the San Francisco waterfront the next!

### Espionage Adventure Seed: Iraqi Heat

Intelligence operative Jana Sterling has vanished. Assigned to investigate the Kuwait offices of Petrocorp, a multinational oil corporation headquartered in London, Agent Sterling never missed sending a status report... until last week. She was sent in 40 days ago after MI6 discovered that Petrocorp had smuggled in optical sensors used in laser-guided bombs and missiles.

The PCs are assigned to find Sterling and bring her back alive and to uncover the mysteries behind Petrocorp. They travel under the guise of foreign investors touring Petrocorp’s facilities around the world; proper background is established for them, allowing them at least a polite tour of the Petrocorp offices.

Is Jana Sterling still alive? If so, where is she? What secret is Petrocorp hiding? And how does the sudden appearance of Iraqi “businessmen” figure into this? The heroes will need to be on their toes as they infiltrate the R&D labs and assault the “experimental” oil-rig off the coast to learn the truth.

## ILLUMINATI

Global conspiracy, mind-control lasers, alien spacecraft... these are the trappings of a modern-day *Illuminati* campaign, and are a natural for a modern-day *Cliffhangers* campaign. Combining both these worldbooks with **Black Ops** creates one exciting campaign!

Information about using the Illuminati in a 1930s campaign can be found on p. 49.

### Illuminati Adventure Seed: Strawberry Fields Forever

*“Let me take you down, ‘cause I’m going to Strawberry Fields.”*

*“Nothing is real, and nothing to get hung about. ...”*  
- The Beatles, “Strawberry Fields Forever”

In the midst of a crowded street, one of the PCs bumps into a strangely dressed man with penetrating eyes. Without so much as an apology, the man hurries on his way. When the PC next checks his pockets, he finds an audio cassette with one song - the Beatles’ “Strawberry Fields Forever.”

Alone, the event is bizarre but hardly informative. But repeated encounters with this stranger lead to more and more clues. Each reference is to fantasy, nirvana, zen, the Void. What do they mean? Who is this stranger and why won’t he talk straight? When his body turns up at the hero’s apartment, shot to death with the hero’s own gun, the PC finds himself on the run from the police and even those he once called friends.

Is the world around him a facade? What force controls his reality - what *is* reality? Can the other PCs be trusted? Why is a red “X” drawn on a map of downtown Seattle found in the dead man’s pocket? Who are the black-clad henchmen that suddenly shadow his every turn? And why do they shrug off a blow to the head with a two-by-four as if it were only an irritation...

## IN NOMINE

The *In Nomine* background can be manipulated to provide a number of pulpish possibilities. Suppose the PCs, rather than playing celestial beings, are caught in the middle of a struggle between Good and Evil. No self-respecting PC would stand by and be just a pawn in this game - a good *Cliffhangers* hero would be as quick to try and knock the block off a fallen angel as any other antagonist! This sort of campaign can be set in almost any era; GMs may wish to use a “Pulp Supers” style campaign and bolster starting PC point costs to even up the odds.

### In Nomine Adventure Seed: The Seven Deadly Sins

A new boss has moved into Inferno, New Mexico. Once a thriving tourist stop along historic Route 66, the small town has become the home of thieves, murderers, and other trash. The townspeople are terrified, powerless against the sudden influx of criminals.

One of the townspeople, a raven-haired beauty named Amanda, has taken it upon herself to bring in help. She looks disappointed when only a handful of heroes show up; surely it will take more than this to defeat the evil that’s growing in town!

As they investigate, they find seven men - each a living testament to one of the Seven Deadly Sins. Can the heroes defeat these otherworldly villains and restore Inferno to a place of peace and rest? Why do the ringleaders retreat to the catacombs beneath the ruins of the ancient church each morning? The PCs need to draw on all their inner strengths to defeat the malevolent force seeking to control the town...

## MARTIAL ARTS

The cinematic rules in **GURPS Martial Arts** are a natural for inclusion in any *Cliffhangers* campaign, and the image of a single warrior fighting hordes of attackers is a staple of the



pulps. During the 1930s, martial arts were exclusive to the Orient, and anyone wishing to use Karate, Judo, or any other Oriental form will be required to take an Unusual Background. GMs can draw on the flood of Hong Kong action movies from the 1980s to present, using action director John Woo's Hong Kong films as an excellent example of a *Cliffhangers* martial arts campaign. (Woo's American films - such as *Broken Arrow*, *Hard Target*, and *Face/Off* - are a stylistic example of a good action flick, but the martial arts content is limited).

## Martial Arts Adventure Seed: The New Samurai

The rivalry between Los Angeles gangs has escalated along with the temperature. A record high heat wave is sweeping California, and a gang called the New Samurai has declared all-out war. As part of a new anti-gang task force formed eight months ago, the PCs are assigned to go undercover and infiltrate the violent martial-arts group.

Infiltrating the group will be difficult - it's said their initiation rites include killing an innocent man. How far will the PCs go to earn the Samurais' trust? Will they survive the Circle of Blood - the underground fight to the death held each Saturday at midnight? What will the heroes do to learn the true identity of the daimyo . . .

## OLD WEST

*GURPS Old West* already include many elements that make up a good *Cliffhangers* adventure - gunplay atop moving trains, high-speed chases on horseback, barroom brawls, two-fisted heroes defending a lady's honor, and more. Many of the trappings of a *Cliffhangers* campaign can be transferred to an *Old West* campaign, including not only action, adventure, heroism, and the serial approach, but also death-traps, masterminds, and gadgeteering.

The Old West of the 1930s pulps is discussed on p. 27.

## Old West Adventure Seed: Gold Fever

Zeke Barstow is crazy. Everyone in Blind Gulch knows it and nobody's afraid to say it. The filthy old prospector comes to town once a month like clockwork, his mule Bess in tow, and turns in a few grams of gold dust to the surveyor's office before leaving once again.

But this time, old Zeke brought back more than gold dust. He's carrying around a six-inch gold statue with emerald eyes and showing it to everyone in town. "I'm rich!" he exclaims, kicking up his heels and cackling with glee. It surely won't be long before someone guns him down and takes the statue, but that doesn't answer the big question: Where did it come from?

Can the PCs get Zeke to confide in them before the Braymen Gang hears about his treasure? How much of his story is true and how much is just the whiskey talking? Why is the town doctor so afraid of the ancient image, and is it related to the sudden sound of chanting that has begun to drift in on the midnight wind?

## SPECIAL OPS

Hostage rescues and anti-terrorist teams make for outstanding action scenarios. Applying the ideas to the 1930s and '40s means small groups of soldiers sent behind enemy lines to cut off supplies, destroy bridges, or knock out powerful gun emplacements. The Richard Burton movie *Where Eagles Dare* is an excellent example of 1940s special forces in action.

Applying *Cliffhangers* values to a modern day *Special Ops* campaign mean playing up the excitement and adventure and using cinematic rules to help keep the players alive. Adventures located in unusual or mysterious places lend to the *Cliffhangers* feel, and adding yet another genre (science fiction, horror, time travel) can lead to a complex, but satisfying campaign.

## Special Ops Adventure Seed: The Demon of Bir Dakar

Deep in the mountains of the Middle East lie the ruins of an ancient Kushan stronghold dating from the time of Christ. Carved into solid rock, the fortress is now home to a terrorist cell threatening to detonate four hidden incendiary bombs unless their leader's demands are met - the release of all political prisoners in every U.N. nation, plus one billion dollars' worth of gold bullion within 48 hours.

The PCs must infiltrate the fortress, wipe out the terror-ists, and bring their leader back alive. The place is heavily guarded and full of endless twisting tunnels and secret rooms. The locals won't even go near it; they say it is haunted by an ancient demon and that any stranger who goes in never comes out alive...

## SWASHBUCKLERS

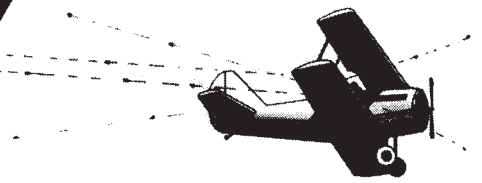
*GURPS Swashbucklers* is another natural match for *Cliffhangers*. It uses many of the same elements of style and theme.

## Swashbucklers Adventure Seed: Dead Man's Chest

Plying the waters of the Caribbean is not the most exciting of jobs, but it's the only one the heroes have. But after months of hauling sugar and flour, one of them is visited by a courier who delivers a small satchel containing a hand-drawn map and a golden ring inlaid with a ruby. The package is from his now-dead uncle, an infamous privateer, who has named him his sole heir! The ring is worth a fortune by itself, but who knows what lies buried under the X marked on the map?

First stop for the heroes is the newly inherited estate. On arriving, they find the buildings burned to the ground - the result of angry pirates looking for the map now in the heir's possession. Did another copy of the map exist? Are the pirates already en route to the treasure? How will the heroes manage when they're beset by hordes of cutlass-wielding buccaneers, angry natives, and rival treasure hunters!

# BIBLIOGRAPHY



The '30s were an exciting and much-chronicled decade. There are books on almost every subject: the Spanish Civil War, professional athletics, crime, transportation, fashion, slang, movies, mysteries. There is a growing body of work on pulp magazines, both anthologies and critical and historical studies. Whatever a GM or player needs to know is probably in print. The following works are especially informative, enjoyable, or readily available.

## The Era

Bowen, Ezra (editor). *This Fabulous Century; Volume 4. 1930-1940* (Time-Life, 1969). Great for background and atmosphere, including a Depression-era shopping list on p. 27 and an excellent section on gangsters and the FBI on pp. 100-113. Other decades, such as 1920-1930 or 1940-1950, are also available.

Phillips, Cabell. *The New York Times Chronicle of American Life: From the Crash to the Blitz, 1929-1939* (Macmillan, 1969). Almost 600 pages of stories and photographs covering all aspects of American life during the '30s. Easy reading since it is a conglomeration of short articles on various topics.

## Background and Settings

Gallenkamp, Charles and Novacek, Michael J. *Dragon Hunter* (Viking Press, 2001). A top-notch biography of one of the world's premiere adventurers and dinosaur hunters, Roy Chapman Andrews. Andrews explored in Asia before the Great War, and spent part of that war as a U.S. Army Intelligence officer in China. He led the first automobile expedition into Mongolia in 1920. He wrote several works of nonfiction and two novels. *Quest in the Desert* and *Quest for the Snow Leopard*. Besides his biography, Andrews' works themselves are recommended.

Halliburton, Richard. *Richard Halliburton's Complete Book of Marvels* (Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1941) and other books. Halliburton was a best-selling travel writer of the 1930s. He was a real-life adventurer and explorer, and visited many of the areas described in Chapter 2. He dived into the Well at Chichen Itza, climbed the Pyramids, trekked through Tibet, and tried

to visit Mecca. Halliburton disappeared at sea in 1939 while trying to sail a Chinese junk from China to America. A posthumous collection of his letters was published; it gives a candid inside look at the world of the era.

Hawkes, Jacquetta (editor). *Atlas of Ancient Archaeology* (Butterworth-Heinemann, 1974) and (McGraw-Hill, 1974). An excellent reference work for running adventure/exploration campaigns. It locates and details archaeological sites around the world. Hawkes has written or edited many fine archaeological reference works.

Hunter, J.A. *Hunter* (Harper and Brothers, 1952). John Hunter was a professional African hunter (and heard all possible variations of the joke) from before WWI until the '50s. This book was billed as "the adventurous life of one of the last and greatest of Africa's white hunters." It is an autobiography with a background of the wild years of Africa.

Marquand, John P. *Mr. Moto* novels (Little, Brown, 1985). Moto is a Japanese intelligence officer who gets involved in mysterious crimes. The backgrounds are authentic and the attitudes of the era, without the benefit of hindsight, give a feel for '30s characters. The stories were originally written in the 1930s and '40s, but have been reprinted. Peter Loire starred as Mr. Moto in screen adaptations of the novels.

Mason, F. van Wyck. *The Sulu Sea Murders* (Pocket Books, 1958) and others. Mason was a popular historical novelist and pulp writer. His novels about Colonel Hugh North, a U.S. Army intelligence officer (G-2, Criminal Investigation Division), started in the 1930s and continued into the 1960s. Mason had traveled in Europe and Asia and the background and detail of the novels is authentic. North is both spy and detective; the detail on '30s criminological techniques is also authentic.

Masters, John. *Bugles and a Tiger* (Viking Press, 1956). Masters was an officer of the Indian Army in the last days of the Empire. He served as a lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion, 4th (Prince of Wales' Own) Gurkha Rifles from the mid-'30s until the early part of WWH. His autobiography, *Bugles and a Tiger*, is a superb picture of that vanished way of life. His novel *Man of War* shows India, England, and Spain of the 1930s from the point of view of a professional soldier.

*National Geographic* publications. Most libraries keep *National Geographic* magazine; large ones have files that extend well before the '30s. Used magazines are frequently for sale at used book stores and estate sales. They were

printed on high-quality paper and usually have survived in good shape. Modern issues can be used for background when running adventures in exotic locales; there are frequent historical notes in the articles. *National Geographic* books (such as *Lost Empires*, *Living Tribes* detailing Central and South American natives) are always a pleasure to read and are full of out-standing photos. Archives of the magazine are available on CD-ROM for a fee.

Silverberg, Robert. *Empires in the Dust* (Chilton, 1963) and *Lost Cities and Vanished Civilizations* (Bantam, 1970). Well-written histories of such ancient peoples as the Babylonians, Egyptians, and Aztecs. Silverberg has also written many other informative nonfiction books on exotic peoples and places.

Taylor, John. *African Rifles and Cartridges* (Safaripress, 1994). John Taylor was a professional ivory hunter who spent some 30 years living in the African bush. *African Rifles and Cartridges* is intended as a treatise on the best guns for African game, and it is a superb one. Taylor used all calibers of British, American, and German weapons and ammo to kill many species of big game found in Africa. It is a look at a real adventurer of the pulp era, without any polishing. It is also full of the casual racism that is so much a part of the pulp era.

Thomason, John W., Jr. "— *And a Few Marines*" (Scribner, 1943) and *Salt Winds and Gobi Dust* (Scribner, 1934). John W. Thomason, Jr. was a Marine Corps officer from WWI until his death in 1944. He was also an excellent writer and illustrator. Several of his books, especially these two, give a picture of life at the last of the colonial era - a literal picture, because the books are illustrated with Thomason's own drawings. He served in China, Haiti, and Nicaragua, and set stories in all three.

## Comics

Caniff, Milton. *Terry and the Pirates*. This action series was one of the most popular comic strips of the 1930s. The adventures take place in China against the background of the war with Japan (called just "the invaders" in those neutral days). Caniff was a meticulous researcher; no matter how wild the plot, the look is authentic. Some of the characters are pulp classics: Pat Ryan, the hero adventurer; The Dragon Lady, slinkiest of femme fatales; Terry Lee, boy growing up into hero. Several collections of the strips have been published; specialty comic book stores are the best place to look.



Gray, Harold. *Little Orphan Annie*. This strip started in the 1920s and ran for over 50 years. The '30s were perhaps its best decade. Annie's adventures are one cliffhang after another and the rescues usually grow legitimately from the plot. Daddy Warbucks is a multitalented hero; he is so good that Gray kept him offstage most of the time to avoid short-circuiting the adventures. Punjab and The Asp are two of the most lethal allies ever conceived.

Herge. *Tintin*. These full-length adventure comics are among the greatest international comic strips of all time. Tintin is a teen reporter who travels the world with his faithful terrier Snowy in search of action and adventure. Many of the books were written in serial form in the '30s and contain page after page of action and cliffhangers. The later books, especially the "big three" double-book stories, are masterful examples of globe-spanning adventure plotting. The books are in print and found in children's sections of most bookstores.

Raymond, Alex. *Flash Gordon*. The premier science fantasy comic strip of the '30s. Raymond's alien creatures and graceful spaceships created the image of space travel for a lot of minds. The alien worlds were an excuse for Flash to battle with swords, usually to save the beautiful Dale Arden; cliffhangers were common. The Flash Gordon movie serials with Buster Crabbe are available on video.



## The Genre

Collecting pulp magazines is an enjoyable and entertaining hobby. It is also the only way to find some of the stories in the pulp genre. While many of the pulp stories have been reprinted in one form or another, there are still thousands that remain hidden and obscure - but not to the pulp collector.

Some of the later pulps (especially the sci-fi pulps of the 1940s and early '50s) can be found for as little as \$1, but early *Shadow* or *Doc Savage* pulps can run into three- or four-figure sums.

The best way for an average gamer to enjoy these stories is through reprints, some of which are becoming available in electronic format on the Internet. One such online source is *The Vintage Library*, a specialty bookstore featuring hundreds of reprints, collector's editions, e-books, magazines, and more. A link to their web site can be found on the *Cliffhangers* home page ([www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/cliffhangers/](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/cliffhangers/)).

There are hundreds of stories available in reprint (often in anthologies); it's just a matter of tracking them down. Many libraries have collections. The University of Texas at Austin, for instance, has a complete file of *Adventure*, possibly the greatest of all the pulps. The revival of critical interest in American popular literature has produced some good reprints, many with original illustrations; these are also more likely to be found at a college library. There are several mail-order bookstores that can provide copies at a reasonable cost.

Reprints and cover art is often available online; a thorough search of the World Wide Web will turn up numerous sites dedicated to the pulps with links to various sites that specialize in a certain genre or hero.

In addition to the stories themselves, several good reference and background works are available:

Farmer, Philip Jose. *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life* (Doubleday and Company, 1973). This paperback is the definitive biography of the Man of Bronze. Farmer covers all aspects of Savage's life, from his mysterious lineage (including a family tree linking him to several great fictional heroes) to his final battle in the depths of the earth. The Fabulous Five, Pat Savage, and several villains are also analyzed.

Jones, Robert Kenneth. *The Shudder Pulps - A History of the Weird Menace Magazines of the 1930s* (FAX/Starmont, 1974) and (NAL/Dutton, 1978). An enjoyable overview of the horror and weird menace pulps. Includes several reproductions of pulp covers and associated artwork.

Weinberg, Robert and McKinstry, Lorh. *The Hero Pulp Index* (Opar Press, 1971). An extensive index to the pulp magazines with short biographies of some of the great pulp heroes. There were only a small number printed so it may be difficult to find.

## House Names and Pseudonyms

Many pulp publishers used a house name. Street & Smith, for example, used the house name *Kenneth Robeson* for Doc Savage stories, written by Lester Dent (who wrote the majority), Norman Danberg, Alan Hathaway, or William Bogert, as well as for their Avenger series written by Paul Ernst. The house name acquired such a following that Street & Smith commissioned a series of detective stories for another of its magazines, *Crime Busters*, to be

written by Dent under the Robeson name. The publishers announced it as a coup; they had persuaded the popular writer to start a new series!

Dent would probably have used some pseudonym anyway; he had another series, by Lester Dent, running in the same magazine. Writers frequently had several pseudonyms. Sometimes this was to differentiate works in different styles. John W. Campbell wrote universe-crashing, super-science space opera under his own name and poetic, visionary stories under the name Don A. Stuart. Sometimes it was to give the illusion of variety. Reputedly, in some issues of Street & Smith's *Western Stories*, every story was by the redoubtable Frederick Faust under some of his many pseudonyms (Max Brand, Evan Evans, George Challis, for example).

Biographies, bibliographies, and other references may list authors under their real name or one or more of their pseudonyms.

## REPRINTS

The reprints referred to here are usually paperback. The list that follows should be used only as a guide to reading and adventure planning, and not to collecting, since no distinction is made between first printings and others.

Many of these are out of print, and finding them may be a problem. Try haunting second-hand bookstores, and be sure and let the owner know what you're looking for.

## Adventure/Exploration

Burroughs, Edgar Rice. *Pellucidar* (Ace, 1980s). This series of stories is set in the world of Pellucidar, a mysterious land in the center of the Earth. They are excellent examples of the Lost World campaign. Some GMs may wish to use the world of Pellucidar as is, allowing the PCs to discover it for themselves.

Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan. *Professor Challenger* (Pyramid Books, 1977). *The Lost World* and other Professor Challenger stories are excellent sources of pulp ideas for exploration campaigns centered around a hidden world or lost civilization. Most were reprinted several years ago and can still be found second-hand. Episodes of the television series "The Lost World," ostensibly based on Doyle's writings, may provide some suggestions for a lost world campaign.

## Aviation/War

Bowen, Robert Sydney, Jr. *Dusty Ayres and his Battle Birds* (Corinth Books, 1960s). The reprints of these pulp aviation stories (in which most of the world has been conquered by the sinister Evil Eyes and his Black Invaders) only lasted through five books: *Black Lightning*, *Crimson Doom*, *Purple Tornado*, *The Tesla Raiders*, and *Battle Birds versus the Black Invaders*, a series of short stories. Reprints available online.

Hogan, Robert J. *G-8 and his Battle Aces* (Berkely Books, 1965). In the 1960s Berkely began to reprint the G-8 series. The first three (*The Bat Staffel*, *Purple Aces*, and *Aces of the White Death*) had terrific cover art by Jim Steranko; the remaining few fell back on original magazine cover art. The series is hard to find and expensive (\$20 each in good shape). Electronic and magazine reprints are available through *The Vintage Library*.

## Crimefighting/Superhero

Farmer, Philip Jose. *A Feast Unknown* (Essex House, 1969) and others. Farmer wrote numerous books extrapolating the lives of pulp-and Victorian-era heroes. His stories involved Captain Nemo, Doc Savage, Phileas Fogg, Tarzan, and more. In *Feast*, Doc Savage and Tarzan are manipulated into fighting one another in "an orgy of hate and vengeance, lust and bloodshed." This book, along with Farmer's similar works, is good, fun reading.

Grant, Maxwell, and others. *The Shadow* (Belmont, 1963-1967), (Bantam Books, 1969-1970), and others. Several versions of the Shadow exist in reprinted form as well as a brief series of 10 new Shadow stories, published beginning in September, 1963, by Belmont Books, written under the original house name of Maxwell Grant. The Shadow character in these new stories does not really resemble the pulp Shadow (he is an international spy in the Belmont books), but the first story, *Return of the Shadow*, was written by Walter Gibson (one of the most prolific of the original writers). In 1969, Bantam Books (happy with the success of their Doc Savage reprints) began to reprint the original Shadow stories. These did not sell as well as the Savage reprints, and the series was short-lived. Pyramid Books reprinted some in the 1970s, and HBJ/Jove reprinted several (with excellent Steranko cover art) beginning in the late '70s. With over 300 original Shadow stories in the pulps and many reprints out, it shouldn't be too difficult to put together a fair collection.

Robeson, Kenneth. *The Avenger* (Warner Books, 1972+). Warner Books began reprinting the Avenger series in paperback in June of 1972, and all 24 original stories are now available. Beginning with #25, the books are *not* reprints, but original stories written in the mid-Seventies. The reprints are fairly scarce, but the new stories (which are generally more far-fetched than the originals) are not too difficult to find - some used bookstores have several copies.

Robeson, Kenneth. *Doc Savage* (Bantam Books, 1964+). In 1964, Bantam set out to reprint the entire series of Doc Savage stores. They began with #1, *The Man of Bronze*, but broke the original order immediately, following it with *The Thousand-Headed Man* (originally #17), *Meteor Menace* (originally #13), and so on. They reprinted nearly 100 of the stories before switching to two-in-one novels (hard to find) and finally choosing to do the *Doc Savage Omnibus* series. The price of these reprints varies tremendously from a dollar or two in sec-

ond-hand stores to as much as \$12 each from collectors.

Scott, R.T.M. and Page, Norvell. *The Spider* (Berkely Books, 1969). This was an attempt to reissue the Spider series in its original order. The first two (by Scott) were not written in the same action-packed style as the rest of the Spider stories (written by Norvell Page), and so the reprint series was doomed to failure. It lasted through *The Spider Strikes*, *The Wheel of Death*, *Wings of the Black Death*, and *City of Flaming Shadows*. Hard to find. A better source of Spider stories can be found in magazine and electronic reprints available from *The Vintage Library* (see the *Cliffhangers* home page for more information).

## Detective Stories

Chandler, Raymond (various). This famous detective writer learned to write as a pulp contributor; many of his stories have been reprinted and/or made into films. His flagship detective Philip Marlowe has been played by Humphrey Bogart, Dick Powell, Robert Mitchum, and James Caan.

Daly, Carrol John. *The Adventures of Race Williams* (Mysterious Press, 1989). Daly may have invented the hard-boiled detective; he was certainly one of the first to write of them. He was the most popular writer in *Black Mask* and contributed to several other magazines. Race Williams first appeared on June 1, 1923 in a *Black Mask* short story entitled "Knights of the Open Palm." Race answered to no law but his own and was violent, brutal, and quick to kill. Daly fans will also want to pick up *The Adventures of Satan Hall* (Mysterious Press, 1989).

Dziemianowicz, Stefan R., Weinberg, Robert, and Greenberg, Martin H. (editors). *Hard-Boiled Detectives: 23 Great Stories from Dime Detective Magazine* (Gramercy Books, 1992). Includes one story for each year of *Dime Detective* from 1931 to 1953.

Goulart, Ron (editor). *The Hard-Boiled Dicks* (Sherbourne Press, 1965). Goulart is a science fiction and mystery writer, and a noted historian of pulps and comic books. This anthology saves some of the undeservedly obscure pulp writers from oblivion. Includes classic tales from John K. Butler, Norbert Davis, Frederick Nebel, Richard Sale, and Raoul Whitfield. Also includes "An Informal Reading List."

Hammett, Dashiell (various). Dashiell Hammett was the hard-boiled writer personified; he had actually been a private detective before he started writing about them. Hammett's Continental Op was perhaps the ultimate pulp detective. Some of his adventures combine several pulp genres (e.g., *Corkscrew*, which combines Detective and Western, or *This King Business*, which combines Detective and Balkan Intrigue).

Shaw, Joseph T. (editor). *The Hard-Boiled Omnibus* (Simon and Schuster, 1946). Shaw was the editor of *Black Mask* from 1926 to 1936. He is the editor most associated with the

"hard-boiled" school of pulp detective fiction. In 1946 he put together one of the first and one of the best anthologies of that style that includes stories from Paul Cain, Raymond Chandler, George Harmon Coxe, Norbert Davis, Ramon Decolta, Lester Dent, Dashiell Hammett, Roger Torrey, Raoul Whitfield, and others.

Ruhm, Herbert (editor). *The Hard-Boiled Detective* (Vintage Books, 1977). Another excellent collection of pulp tales, almost all reprinted for the first time in years. Includes Carroll John Daly's *The False Burton Combs*, often considered the first genre protagonist, although he isn't really a detective.

## General

Goodstone, Tony. *The Pulps* (Chelsea House, 1976). This compilation of pulp stories from various genres also contains color reproductions of several pulp covers. The scarcity (and cost) of many of the old pulp stories makes this valuable to GM and players alike.

## Horror/Weird Menace

Howard, Robert E. Howard wrote extensively and in many pulp genres. Because of the success of the Conan stories, almost anything with Howard's name on it would sell; collections of his westerns, boxing stories, weird menace adventures, and spicy stories (very mild by modern standards, but considered nearly pornography in the '30s) have been published. Particularly useful are the biographical works written and edited by Glenn Lord.

Lovecraft, H.P., and others. Perhaps the ultimate horror writer of the age, H.P. Lovecraft's most famous stories revolve around Things Man Was Not Meant To Know - the Cthulhu Mythos stories. Lovecraft penned over a dozen by himself, and collaborated on many more. Many of his peers (Robert Bloch, August Derleth, Robert E. Howard, Frank Belknap Long, and Clark Ashton Smith, just to name a few) wrote stories set against the same back-grounds, providing hundreds of eldritch beasts and situations for a horror campaign. The most famous Lovecraft stories are "The Call of Cthulhu," "The Dunwich Horror," "The Shad-ow Over Innsmouth," "At the Mountains of Madness" (set in Antarctica), "The Shadow Out of Time," and "The Thing on the Doorstep." All are available in anthologies. There is also an extensive collection of Lovecraft's letters, many of them to other pulp writers; they are a good look into the world of the pulps.

Norris, Edward P. and Ward, Harold (aka, "Zorro"). *Doctor Death* (Corinth, 1960s). Reprints of a short-lived (9 issues) Horror/ Weird Menace/Crimefighting magazine with a villainous central character, the Doctor Death paperback series (Corinth) was equally short-lived. The series includes reprints of the Harold Ward stories and included *Twelve Must Die*, *The Grey Creatures*, *The Shrivelling Murderers*, and a collection of short stories, *Stories from Doctor Death*.



Quinn, Seabury. *Jules tie Grandin* (Popular Library, 1976+). Jules de Grandin was a sort of occult Sherlock Holmes. Despite being horror stories, several were reprinted by Popular Library in the mid-Seventies with a *science fiction* classification; if you are hunting for them in a used bookstore, be sure and check the science fiction section carefully. The reprints contained several stories (usually five to seven) and usually included the name Jules de Grandin in the title (such as *The Adventures of Jules de Grandin*, the first book, or *The Casebook of Jules de Grandin*, the second). In September, 2001, Battered Silicon Dispatch Box Publications issued a three-volume reprint of the Jules de Grandin stories entitled *The Compleat Adventures of Jules de Grandin*.

## Science Fiction

Asimov, Isaac (editor). *Before the Golden Age* (Doubleday, 1974). This book gives a big chunk of good magazine science fiction from before the "Campbell Revolution" and adds Asimov's own autobiographical notes about what it was like to be a pulp science fiction reader in the '30s.

Knight, Damon (editor). *Science Fiction of the '30s* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1975). This anthology contains not only a fine selection of stories but reproduces the original illustrations and includes brief notes on the writers and history of the magazines.

Smith, E.E., Ph.D. *Lensman* and *Skylark of Space* (various). All these are classic science fiction novels, written and published in the 1930s and available in paperback reprints. Kimball Kinnison is the pulp hero to the Nth degree, and Clarissa McDougall is a pulp heroine who is no shrinking violet. The *Skylark* heroes are two-fisted super-gadgets.

## Spy/Espionage

Charteris, Leslie. *The Saint* (various publishers). Leslie Charteris began the chronicles of Simon Templar, the modern Robin Hood, with *Meet the Tiger* in 1928, and continued them for decades. In the '30s, the Saint frequently visited America. The Saint is a classic pulp hero in many ways: strong, handsome, honorable, good with weapons. He is also *clever*; he prefers to outwit rather than outgun the opposition. The series spawned a television series in the 1960 with Roger Moore, and a Hollywood version with Val Kilmer in 1997.

House, Brant. *Secret Agent X* (Corinth, 1960s). Corinth also reprinted the exploits of Secret Agent X, another master of disguise. The series includes *The Torture Trust*, *Servants of the Skull*, *Curse of the Mandarin's Fan*, *City of the Living Dead*, *The Death Torch Terror*, *Octopus of Crime*, and *The Sinister Scourge*. Brant House was a house name; actual authors included Paul Chadwick, G.T. Fleming-Roberts, and Emile C. Tepperman.



Rohmer, Sax. *Fu Manchu* (Pyramid Books, 1963+). Pyramid has reprinted many of the Fu Manchu stories, beginning with *The Insidious Doctor Fu Manchu* (originally *The Mystery of Fu Manchu*). They have gone through several printings, so they are fairly easy to find. Arthur Sarsfield Ward, the real name behind the pseudonym Sax Rohmer, was possibly the ultimate master of the deathtrap. Fu Manchu is a villain who completely outshines the heroes who oppose him. He is brilliant and courageous; his personal word is inviolate; he is only a villain because the rest of the world can't seem to realize the beautiful peace and order they would have if they only obeyed his commands. *President Fu Manchu* is set against the background of 1930s American politics; it gives a thinly disguised portrait of several prominent figures of the time. Rohmer also wrote many other books; most have been reprinted in paperback and show up at used-book stores.

Steel, Curtis. *Operator #5* (Corinth, 1966+, and Dimedia, 1980s). These stories originally appeared in the mid- to late 1930s and were written first by Frederick Davis, later by Emile C. Tepperman (both under the house name Curtis Steele). A series of reprints following the adventures of Operator #5, a brilliant secret agent who repeatedly saves America from invasion by foreign powers. There are eight books from Corinth: *Legions of the Death Master*, *The Invisible Empire*, *The Army of the Dead*, *Master of Broken Men*, *Hosts of the Flaming Death*, *Blood Reign of the Dictator*, *March of the Flame Marauders*, and *Invasion of the Yellow Warlords*. A ninth book, *Legions of Starvation*, was announced, but never printed. In the 1980s, Dimedia issued large-format facsimile reproductions.

## Westerns

Brand, Max (various). Max Brand was one of the many pseudonyms of Frederick Faust. He wrote in every pulp genre but most successfully in westerns. Again, his name guarantees an audience, so much of his work can still be found. The Silvertip stories take place in

that curious pulp world that combines Old West and 20th century; they are full of cliffhanging adventures. Faust was fond of unscalable walls and disintegrating bridges, and had a nice touch with a deathtrap.

L'Amour, Louis (various). L'Amour started as a pulp writer, and some of his collections contain pulp stories suitable for adventures. Many of his later novels are full of good cliffhanging situations. He also wrote in several other pulp genres, and since his name guarantees an audience, some of them have been reprinted. *Yondering* is a sample of pulp tales; *Hills of Homicide* contains detective stories; there are others.

Short, Luke (various). Frederick D. Glidden wrote under the pseudonym Luke Short (taken from the name of a notorious gambler/gunman of the real Old West). Many of his westerns are perpetually in print; the publishers usually do not stress that they are over 50 years old.

## MODERN NOVELS

Carter, Lin. *The Nemesis of Evil* (Popular Library, 1978). Another product of the 1970s, *Nemesis* is Carter's tribute to the pulp heroes. Reminiscent of Doc Savage and his Fabulous Five, Prince Zarkon and his Omega Crew are distinctly "pulpish" in everything they do. Carter has also written other cliffhanger stories (such as *Journey to the Underground World*), so be sure and check them out.

Crichton, Michael. *Congo* (Del Rey, 1995 reissue). A group of modern-day scientists explore dark Africa in search of the Lost City of Zinj. A nice guide to modern equipment available to adventurers in this era. Much better than the disappointing 1995 movie.

Gores, Joe. *Hammett* (Ballentine, 1976). Dashiell Hammett as the hero of a detective story, by an author of hard-boiled stories who has himself been a detective. This tale is set in San Francisco, partly in Chinatown.

Preiss, Byron (editor). *Weird Heroes* (Pyramid, 1975+). There are a handful of volumes in this series of "modern pulp" stories put out in the mid-Seventies. It contains excellent stories and artwork by many of the best science fiction writers and artists of today. Great for adventure and character ideas.

Sale, Richard. *For The President's Eyes Only* (Simon and Schuster, 1971). Sale was a pulp writer through the Thirties; when the pulps collapsed he kept writing, largely in Hollywood. This novel is pulpish in the best sense; nonstop action and a tremendously convoluted plot that carries the adventure from Antarctica to Ireland by way of Africa.

*Crimson Skies* novels. Several novels are available detailing the alternate 1930s earth of FASA's out-of-print *Crimson Skies* board and miniatures game. Sample titles include *Wings of Justice: Rogue Flyer* by Loren L. Coleman and *Wings of Fortune: Pirate's Gold*, by Stephen Kenson.

# Movies and Television

The following list is in no way a critical review of films; some of them are dreadfully bad. Nevertheless, GMs and players alike will find some redeeming value in all of them - adventure ideas, atmosphere, new gadgets, and sample characters. Most are available on video-cassette and the older films can be seen on late-night television or at certain "cult" theaters.

*Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the Eighth Dimension* (W.D. Richter, 1984). This star-studded film follows the adventures of modern-day pulp hero, neurosurgeon, rock singer, rocket-car test pilot, physicist, and government agent Buckaroo Banzai. Buckaroo and his rock-and-roll band battle monsters, aliens, a mad scientist, and criminals bent on conquering the world.

*Allan Quatermain and the City of Gold* (Gary Nelson, 1987). The sequel to *King Solomon's Mines*, shot simultaneously, chronicles further exploits of Allan Quatermain in his search for a legendary city of fabulous wealth.

*Big Trouble in Little China* (John Carpenter, 1986). A rip-roaring adventure combining underground passageways, ancient evils, Chinese gods and magic, and enough combat to satisfy even die-hard action fans. A must-see for *Cliffhangers* fans.

*Cast a Deadly Spell* (Martin Campbell, 1991). This is a clever genre film set in an alternate Hollywood, 1948 - a Hollywood where magic, curses, and demons are commonplace. Fred Ward plays hard-boiled gumshoe Harry P. Lovecraft, the only PI in the world that uses his brains instead of magic.

*Doc Savage, The Man of Bronze* (Michael Anderson, 1976). A George Pal production of the first Doc Savage story. Moderately well done, though it deviates from the original storyline. Stars Ron Ely as Doc.

*Firewalker* (J. Lee Thompson, 1986). Lou Gossett, Jr. and Chuck Norris team up in this modern-day adventure film that includes American Indian legends, lost treasure, and a beautiful, strong-willed girl.

*Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (Steven Spielberg, 1989). The third in the series. Scene unrolls after scene to the sound of crashing and banging; it includes one of the definitive cliffhangers.

*Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (Steven Spielberg, 1984). The prequel to *Raiders of the Lost Ark* is also a must-see for pulp enthusiasts.

*King Solomon's Mines* (J. Lee Thompson, 1985). The early versions (1937 and 1950) of H. Rider Haggard's classic adventure novel can still be seen on late-night television and are on cassette. The 1985 version with Richard Chamberlain and Sharon Stone is available on video, but is a far cry from the original storyline. It is, however, full of cliffhangers and comic book

situations, including an outrageous tribute to a classic *Raiders of the Lost Ark* scene.

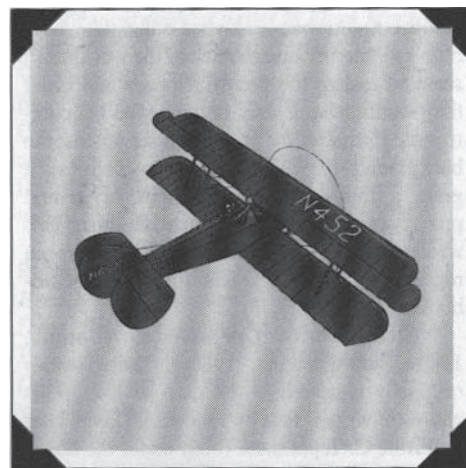
*Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (Simon West, 2001). Angelina Jolie stars as the computer-game heroine come to life in a modern-day struggle against an age-old conspiracy.

*Lost Horizon* (Frank Capra, 1937). A plane crash in the Himalayas strands the survivors in the magical land of Shangri-La where people can live for centuries. Don't confuse the original Capra classic with the disappointing 1973 remake.

*The Mummy* (Stephen Sommers, 1999) and *The Mummy Returns* (Stephen Sommers, 2001). Set during the 1920s and '30s, these blockbuster movies starring Brendan Fraser are must-sees for *Cliffhangers* enthusiasts.

*The Phantom* (Simon Wincer, 1996). Billy Zane stars as the purple-suited jungle-dwelling hero in this adaptation of Lee Falk's 1930s comic strip. The Phantom is pitted against mastermind Xander Drax, who seeks to find and unite three skulls in an attempt to gain tremendous occult powers. Also stars Kristy Swanson, Treat Williams, and Catherine Zeta-Jones.

*Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Steven Spielberg, 1981). A definitive adventure movie for pulp heroes, starring Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones. If you haven't seen it, do so.



"Relic Hunter" (Paramount Television, 2000+). Tia Carrere in a sort of Indiana Jones meets Lara Croft modern-day television adventure series. Each episode focuses on a McGuffin of some sort - ancient relics from times gone by. The series often includes supernatural or magical events and spells.

*Remo Williams: The Adventure Begins* (Guy Hamilton, 1985). Another modern-day hero, Remo is the star of *The Destroyer* series of novels. Intended as the first of a series of movies, it failed commercially and stands alone. It also inspired a very short-lived television series.

*The Rocketeer* (Joe Johnston, 1991). A Touchstone Pictures film full of plenty of high-flying action and adventure brings Dave Stevens' comic book character to life. Based on the illustrated novel (complete with serialized chapters) detailing the adventures of Cliff Secord - dreamer, ace pilot, daredevil rocketeer...

*Romancing the Stone* (Robert Zemeckis, 1984) and *Jewel of the Nile* (Lewis Teague, 1985). Two modern-day adventure films full of excitement, danger, exotic locales, and villains. There is an excellent deathtrap near the end of *Jewel of the Nile*. Stars Michael Douglas, Kath-leen Turner, and Danny DeVito.

*The Shadow* (Russell Mulcahy, 1994). This entertaining flick starred Alec Baldwin as the cloaked pulp super with the ability to cloud men's minds. Recommended for sets and costume if nothing else.

"Tales of the Gold Monkey" (ABC Television, 1982-83). This short-lived television series starred Stephen Collins as Jake Cutter, a pilot and soldier of fortune, and boasted a great cast of supporting characters including a lecherous Nazi spy posing as a missionary, an exiled Japanese princess as the femme fatale, Roddy McDowell as a corrupt French official, and Jack, the one-eyed, multilingual dog. This cult classic, set in 1938 on the fictional South Pacific island of Borabora, can sometimes be seen in reruns, especially on "Nick at Nite's" TV Land.

## Games

*Call of Cthulhu* (Chaosium). Now in its fifth-and-a-half edition, this roleplaying classic is excellent for adventuring in the nightmarish worlds of H.P. Lovecraft and his contemporaries.

*Crimson Skies* (FASA, 1997). An excellent, atmosphere-laden miniatures/board game that recreates the pulp aviation excitement of the 1930s. Set in an alternate 1937, players fly over a fractured North America battling (or playing) air pirates, aviation rangers, and more. The game is out of print, but the computer game version by Microsoft is readily available. Numerous supplements are available, each with a bit of world background: *Behind the Crimson Veil*, *Pride of the Republic*, and more. A handful of novels set in this world are also available.

*Daredevils* (Fantasy Games Unlimited). Several supplements for this out-of-print RPG are still available at used-game stores: *Black Claws*, *Menace Beneath the Sea*, *Supernatural Adventures*, and *Lost Worlds*.

*Indiana Jones RPG* (TSR). Numerous supplements (both based on the movies and of original design) can be used to glean adventure ideas and plot hooks.

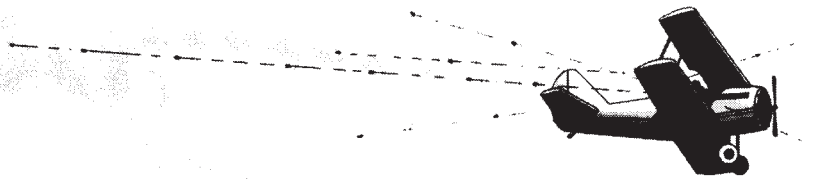
*Justice, Inc.* (Hero Games). The long out-of-print supplements *Trail of the Golden Spike* and *Lands of Mystery* are highly recommended. *Lands of Mystery* is an excellent resource for Lost World style campaigns.

*Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes* (Sleuth Publications, Ltd). Another out-of-print roleplaying game. Supplements include *Stormhaven* and *Case of the Chinese Clipper*.

*Torg* (West End Games). For good *Cliffhangers* ideas, look for the supplements *The Nile Empire*, *The Land Below*, and *Terra*.



# INDEX



- Aborigines, *Australian*, 72-73.  
 Action, 96.  
 Addiction disadvantage, 86.  
 Advantages, 85.  
 Africa, *exploration of*, 116.  
 Air shows, 28.  
 Airships, 8-9.  
 Alcatraz, 28.  
 Alcoholism disadvantage, 86.  
 Alexandria, 53.  
 Allies, *animals*, 85.  
 Ally Group advantage, 85.  
 Amazon River, 38-39; and "*Amazons*," 39.  
 Andes Mountains, 35.  
 Andrews, Roy Chapman, 69.  
 Angkor, 64-65.  
 Antarctica, 77.  
 Archaeologist, *template*, 79-80.  
 Arctic, 76-77.  
 Australia, 71-73.  
 Austria, 43-44.  
 Autogiros, 9.  
 Automatic weapons, 92.  
 Automobiles, 8.  
 Aviation, 113.  
 Ayers Rock, 72.  
 Aztecs, 37; *see also GURPS Aztecs*.  
 Bat d'Af, 46.  
 Bayous, 26.  
 Bermuda, 74.  
 Bermuda Triangle, 75.  
 Bigfoot, 31.  
 Black Thursday, 6.  
 Borders, *international*, 7.  
 Borneo, 65.  
 Brazil, 33-34.  
 Bribes, 13.  
 British Empire, 41.  
 Buddhism, 58-59.  
 Burma, 65.  
 Bushido, 59.  
 Cairo, 53.  
 Cajuns, 26.  
 Campaigns, *crossover*, 116-121;  
     *serial*, 106-114.  
 Cannibals, 54.  
 Caribbean Sea, 73-74.  
 Castes, 68.  
 Castle Stuart, 42-43.  
 Catacombs, *of Paris*, 45.  
 Chaco War, the, 34.  
 Chichen Itza, 37.  
 China, 61-64.  
 Chinatown, 28.  
 Civilizations, *ancient*, 34-37, 108.  
 Clippers, 62.  
 Cold War, 117.  
 Colonies, 6-7, 11.  
 Colosseum, the, 47.  
 Comintern, 7.  
 Communications, 11.  
 Communism, *in South America*, 34.  
 Congo Basin, 55.  
 Conspiracies, 49.  
 Copan, 37.  
 Crime, 109.  
 Crusader, *template*, 80.  
 Cuba, 74.  
 Culloden Battlefield, 42.  
 Currency, 12.  
 Customs, 12.  
 Dalai Lama, 68-69.  
 Daredevil, *template*, 80-81.  
 Death, *of characters*, 114.  
 Deathtraps, 104.  
 Deus ex machina, 99.  
 Dialects, 12.  
 Dilettante, *template*, 81.  
 Dillenger, John, 20.  
 Disadvantages, 85-86.  
 Distilling skill, 87.  
 Dog teams, 77.  
 Dust Bowl, the, 28.  
 Egypt, 52-55; *see also GURPS Egypt*.  
 Egyptology, *jargon of*, 53.  
 Eiffel Tower, 45.  
 Elephants' Graveyard, 56.  
 Empire State Building, the, 25.  
 Enemy disadvantage, 86.  
 Equipment, 89-91; *combat*, 92.  
 Eskimos, 76-77.  
 Everglades, the, 26.  
 Explorer, *template*, 81-82.  
 Explosives, 92.  
 Fawcett, Col. Percy, 39.  
 Femmes fatale, 102.  
 Flying boats, 62.  
 Forbidden City, the, 63.  
 Foreign Legion, 45.  
 Foreign threats, 100-101.  
 Fountain of Youth, 73.  
 France, 44-46.  
 Freemasons, 49.  
 G-Man, *template*, 82.  
 Gadgeteers, 84.  
 Galloping Gertie, 31.  
 Gangsters, 100; *former*, 84.  
 Germany, 43-44.  
 Giza, 53.  
 "Going native," 13.  
 Gold, 8.  
 Golden Gate Bridge, the, 29.  
 Government, 6; *Egyptian*, 52; *Japanese*,  
     58; *U.S.*, 25.  
 Great Britain, 41.  
 Great Depression, 6.  
 Great Game, 116.  
 Great Rift Valley, 55-56.  
 Great Wall of China, 62.  
 Great War, *see World War I*.  
 Great White Hunters, 84.  
 Greece, 47; *see also GURPS Greece*.  
 Guides, 12.  
 Gunboats, 63.  
 Guns skill, 87.  
**GURPS Alternate Earths**, 120; **Alternate**  
     **Earths 2**, 120; *Atlantis*, 47, 108; *Aztec*,  
     37, 98, 108, 118; *Bestiary*, 31, 42, 51,  
     73, 110; *Black Ops*, 119-120; *Castle*  
     *Falkenstein*, 116, 119; *China*, 61, 118;  
     *Cops*, 84; *CthulhuPunk*, 109;  
     *Cyberpunk*, 117, 119; *Dark Places*, 98  
     *Deadlands*, 111; *Dinosaurs*, 73; *Egypt*  
     52-53, 98, 118; *Espionage*, 84, 111, 11  
     **119**; *Greece*, 47, 98, 118; *High-Tech*,  
     89, 92, 117; *Horror*, 109; *Illuminati*,  
     49, 120; *Imperial Rome*, 46-47, 98,  
     118; *In Nomine*, 120; *Japan*, 59, 98;  
     *Lensman*, 114; *Martial Arts*, 59, 87,  
     120-121; *Monsters*, 31, 109-110; *Old*  
     *West*, 111, 121; *Places of Mystery*, 41 -  
     42, 46-48, 53, 65, 72, 75, 98, 117;  
     *Psionics*, 87; *Russia*, 98; *Screampunk*,  
     116; *Space*, 113, 117; *SpecialOps*, 112,  
     117, 119, 121; *Spirits*, 110; *Steam-*  
     *Tech*, 116; *Steampunk*, 116; *Supers*,  
     114; *Swashbucklers*, 121; *Time*  
     *Travel*, 118 120; *Traveller*, 114, 117;  
     *Undead*, 110 *Vehicles*, 94; *Voodoo*, 74-  
     75; *Warehouse 23*, 87, 98, 117; *Who's*  
     *Who 1*, 61, 102; *WWII*, 7, 43-44, 58-  
     59, 94, 112, 117.  
 Habitats, *African*, 51.  
 Haggling, 13.  
 Haiti, 75.  
 Hawaii, 75.  
 Healing Hole, the, 73.  
 Henchmen, 102-103.  
 Hideouts, 103.

- Hirohito, 58.  
Hollywood, 30-31.  
Hypnotism skill, 87.  
ICPC, *see* *International Criminal Police Commission*.  
*Ideas, for adventures*, 98-99.  
Illuminati, 49; *see also* **GURPS**  
***Illuminati***.  
Incas, 34-35.  
Income, 88; *see also* *Table, Cost of Living*.  
Independent Income advantage, 85.  
India, 66-68.  
Indians, 27-28.  
Indochina, 64-65.  
International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC), 7.  
Irish Republican Army (IRA), 41.  
Islands, “lost,” 73; *South Pacific*, 75.  
Isle of Skye, 32.  
Italy, 46-47.  
Ivory, 56.  
Jade, 64.  
Jamaica, 74.  
Japan, 58-59; *feudal*, 59; *see also* **GURPS**  
***Japan***.  
Java, 65.  
Jobs, 88.  
Kamikaze, 58.  
Karate skill, 87.  
Kilimanjaro, 55.  
Kingfish, the, *see* *Long, Huey*.  
Knights Templar, the, 49.  
Knossos, 47.  
Labyrinth, the, 47-48.  
Languages, *of the world*, 12.  
Legal Enforcement Powers advantage, 85.  
Lhasa, 69.  
Loch Ness, 42.  
Long, Huey, 27.  
Lost worlds, 108.  
Lovecraft, H.P., 26, 109, 117.  
Machu Picchu, 35.  
Mail, 11.  
Malaria disadvantage, 86.  
Malaya, 65.  
Masai, 56.  
Masons, *see* *Freemasons*.  
Masterminds, 100.  
Maya, 36-37.  
Medicine, 8.  
Mediterranean, 47.  
Military, *French*, 45-46;  
*South American*, 33.  
Monasteries, 67.  
Monsters, 110; *see also* **GURPS**  
***Monsters***.  
*Morro Castle*, the, 20.  
Monte Carlo, 48.  
Mosques, 53.  
Mysteries, 20.  
Nazis, 44, 101.  
“Nessie,” 42; *in Africa*, 51.  
New York City, 25.  
Newspapers, 83, 87.  
Nicaragua, 31.  
Ninjas, 59.  
Notre Dame, 45.  
Okies, 28.  
Old West, 121.  
Olmecs, 37.  
Outback, 71-72.  
Panama Canal, the, 33.  
Paris, 45.  
Passports, 12.  
Patron advantage, 85.  
Peking, 64.  
Peru, 33, 35.  
Philippines, 65.  
Pilot, *template*, 82.  
Piloting skill, 87.  
Pirates, 63, 65; *and buried treasure*, 75.  
Plot, *cliffhanging*, 96-97.  
Policemen, 84.  
Politics, 6; *Japanese*, 58; *of India*, 66;  
*Russian*, 60; *South American*, 33;  
*U.S.*, 25.  
Poverty disadvantage, 86.  
Presidio, the, 29.  
Private investigator, *template*, 82.  
Props, 97-98.  
Pulps, the, 23.  
Pygmies, 55.  
Pyramids, 53.  
Quetzalcoatl, 37.  
Quicksand, 38-39.  
Rasputin, Grigory, 61.  
Red menace, the, 101.  
Religion, *Japanese*, 58-59; *of India*, 67.  
Reloading, 92.  
Reporter, *template*, 83.  
Reputation, 85.  
Research skill, 87.  
Rosicrucians, 49.  
Running boards, 8.  
Russia, 60.  
Sahara Desert, 51.  
Samurai, 59.  
San Francisco, 28-29.  
Sargasso Sea, 73.  
Science fiction, 113-114.  
Science, 14.  
Scotland, 42-43.  
Scotland Yard, 7.  
Seattle, 31.  
Selkies, 42.  
Sense of Duty disadvantage, 86.  
Shanghai, 63-64.  
Shinto, 58.  
Siam, 65.  
Sidekicks, 79.  
Silver, 8.  
Singapore, 65.  
Sino-Japanese War, 61.  
Skills, 87.  
Skye Games, the, 43.  
Social Stigma disadvantage, 86.  
Soldier of fortune, *template*, 83.  
Spanish Civil War, 43.  
Sphinx, the, 53.  
Spies, 84.  
Status, 85.  
Stonehenge, 41.  
Street talk, 109.  
Sumatra, 65.  
Superheroes, 114.  
Suspense, 96.  
Sydney Harbor Bridge, 72.  
*Table, Cost of Living*, 86; *Equipment*, 89-91;  
*Jobs*, 88; *Vehicles*, 94; *Weapons*, 92-93.  
Tantrism, 67.  
Tashi Lama, 69.  
Technology, 8-9, 14.  
Telegrams, 11.  
Telephones, 11; *exchanges*, 30.  
Templates, 79-83.  
Temples, *of Far East*, 67.  
Teotihuacan, 37.  
Thebes, 53.  
Tiahuanaco, 35.  
Tibet, 68-69.  
Tigers, 65.  
Tikal, 37.  
Tips, 13.  
Tongs, 29.  
Translators, 12.  
Transportation, 8-10; *Chinese*, 62; *in the Arctic*, 77; *time required*, 10.  
Troy, 48.  
Tuareg, 51.  
Turtledove, Harry, 117.  
Tutankhamen, 52.  
Un-American Activities Committee, the, 30.  
Underground, *see* *Seattle*.  
Unexplored lands, 107.  
Unusual Background advantage, 85.  
Valley of the Kings, 55.  
Vehicles, 94.  
Victorian Age, 116.  
Vietnam, 117; *see also* *Indochina*.  
Villains, 100-103; *recurring*, 106.  
Viracocha, 34.  
Volcanoes, 74, 75.  
*War, campaigns set during*, 112.  
*War of the Worlds*, the, 20.  
Westerns, 111.  
Wildlife, *African*, 51.  
Women, *in the pulps*, 79.  
World War I, 7.  
World War II, 7, 117; *see also* **GURPS**  
***WWII***.  
Yellow peril, the, 101.  
Yeti, 67, 68.  
Yukon, 77.  
Zulu, 56.