

RAVAGED EARTH

RELICS & RUMORS #1



AARON'S ROD * ALADDIN'S LAMP * AMULET OF TIAMAT
ANKH OF OSIRIS * ARK OF THE COVENANT



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AARON'S ROD

The power of faith is a power that can move mountains. In the post-Martian invasion world of Ravaged Earth, this can manifest itself in many ways, and one of those ways is the potent relic of faith known as Aaron's Rod.

History

The exact history of the Rod of Aaron is not known, as many different faiths have varying interpretations. The Rod itself is said to be a fragment of the Tree of Life and was first used by Shem, one of the three Patriarchs, who passed it down to Judah. The tales of the Rod at this point are vague, and it was only after Judah passed the relic to Aaron that it became famous. Aaron was the brother of Moses, born and raised in the eastern land of Egypt known as Goshen. He became the high priest of his tribe, and was widely known for his eloquent speech and persuasive arguments.

And so it was that when Moses came to Egypt to release the Hebrew people from slavery, he used Aaron as his spokesman. Moses and Aaron were thus brought before the court of the Pharaoh, who demanded a miracle to prove that they were messengers of God. Aaron took the rod that he carried and threw it at the Pharaoh's feet, where it transformed into a mighty serpent.

The Pharaoh's court sorcerers, not to be outdone, proved that they also had this power and created serpents of their own. Aaron's serpent devoured all of these new creatures, but still the Pha-

raoh was not moved. The Ten Plagues of Egypt were then called down upon the heads of the wicked by Moses and Aaron, who used the Rod again in at least some of the terrible calamities. After the tenth plague, the death of firstborns, the Pharaoh relent-

ed and released the Israelites from bondage.

The Rod appears again in a later story from the Bible, where a wicked man named Korah started a rebellion amongst the twelve tribes of the Israelites over which tribe had control of the priesthood. God told each tribe to produce a rod, and whichever one sprouted into a tree that tribe would be chosen. It was Aaron who stepped forward and placed his Rod upon the ground, and overnight it had blossomed into a beautiful almond tree. The rebellion was thus quashed.

Where the relic went to from here is unknown, but a tale told by travelers in Israel says a priest came out of the desert alone and into a village. Half mad from starvation, he was near death but clung to a long rod feverishly. The rod was adorned with sparkling sapphires,

which caught the attention of a group of jealous ruffians who wanted to take the rod. When they tried the man raised the item and smote the ruffians with bolts



of lightning, scaring off the ones that didn't fall to the blast. The man was then given food and water from the people and sent on his way. Many people believe this to be Aaron's Rod in the hands of a wandering priest.

Physical Description

Aaron's Rod is six feet in length made of a darkly colored wood and adorned with embedded sapphires that twinkle strangely in available light. Along its length is an inscription bearing ten Hebrew characters, each representing one of the Ten Plagues of Egypt.

Powers

The Rod of Aaron can only be possessed by those who are pure of heart and strong of faith. When someone tries to grab the relic they must succeed on a Spirit roll at -4. A failure means they are engulfed in white fire that springs forth from the Rod, suffering 2d6 damage. A success means the rod can be handled safely but needs 24 hours to attune itself to the bearer before any of its special abilities can be used; a raise means the Rod attunes itself right away. Only one person can be attuned to the relic at a time, and the only way to lose the connection is for someone else to become attuned.

The item can be used in combat by anyone who carries it (Str+d8 damage, weight 6, Parry +1, Reach 1, requires 2 hands). It also has the following abilities which can only be used by the attuned bearer.

The Rod has the power to summon bolts of searing white lightning. Treat the relic as though it had 6 power points, which are refreshed at the rate of 1 per two hours. It has one power – **bolt** – which functions exactly as described in the **Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition**. In order to utilize this power the bearer must succeed on a Spirit roll.

Once per day, the bearer of the Rod can plant the item firmly in the ground, and within d6 hours, it will transform into an almond bush. The almond bush produces enough sustenance for five people for one day, which can be picked from the branches.

The bush can be returned to the rod at any time.

Finally, the bearer can toss the item to the ground and transform it into a large poisonous snake with a successful Spirit roll. This is neither a normal snake nor a normal animal, and it lasts for d6+6 rounds or until it is defeated or commanded to return. The rod needs an hour to recharge before it can be transformed into a serpent again. It has the following statistics in serpent form:

THE SERPENT OF AARON

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d10

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+1

- **Poison:** A character bitten by the Serpent of Aaron must make a Vigor roll. With a success the bite area swells and become numb and the victim is Exhausted until healed. On a failure the victim become Exhausted and must make a second Vigor roll or die.

- **Constrict:** If the Serpent of Aaron gets a raise on a Fighting roll it has entangled its victim and begins constricting. This causes Str+d6 damage to the person on the round entangled and each subsequent round. The victim may attempt to escape by getting a raise on an opposed Strength roll.

Rumors and Speculation

Aaron's Rod is a potent item in the hands of the faithful, but perhaps its most powerful ability is linked to the Ten Plagues of Egypt. Only Aaron knows the exact details of the relic's link to these terrible plagues, but if some wicked person or creature were to try and summon the power of the Ten Plagues the Rod of Aaron could be a powerful aid in stopping them. Of course, even after possessing the Rod the bearer would have to know what to do, and to get that information they would have to communicate with Aaron directly. A good place to start would be Mount Hor, the mountain on which Aaron died, somewhere in the land of Edom on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea ...



Ravaged Tale: The Serpent's Hiss

Deep in the southern bayous of the United States, where the ways of the modern world are forgotten and folklore rules all, a war of faith is being waged in the town of Black Springs. On one side is Pastor Jebediah Creek, the blind leader of the local Baptist church. And on the other side is a man claiming to be the reincarnation of Korah, the wicked man who led the rebellion against Aaron. And he has the power of Aaron's Rod at his disposal.

The Situation in Black Springs

Black Springs is a small community of about 200 people, living in little more than shacks and run-down homes on a dry scrap of land surrounded by the encroaching bayou. The largest building in town is the local Baptist Church, run by Pastor Jebediah Creek. Pastor Creek was born blind in both of his eyes, but his strong faith more than makes up for his lack of sight. The townsfolk of Black Springs love their blind pastor and view him as sent by God.

All except for Jake Creek. Jake and Jebediah are brothers, not quite twins but close enough to be mistaken for them as they grew up. But as they got older, a rift started to appear between them. Both boys felt a swelling of faith within them, but whereas Jebediah simply wanted to teach Jake saw the promise of power. Their intentions became clear to the people of Black Springs and they embraced Jebediah as their pastor.

Jake felt a rage well up inside of him and he left the town of his birth to reconcile his anger. He traveled to Jerusalem and stumbled upon strange catacombs deep in the bowels of the city. There, standing alone, was the Rod of Aaron, and Jake knew immediately what he saw. As he grasped the relic, though, something happened. The vengeful spirit of Korah, the man who led the rebellion against Aaron, surged forth and rooted itself in Jake Creek.

Seeing a situation similar to his own focused Korah's rage and frustration at Jebediah, and the now possessed Jake took the rod and returned to Black Springs. He recruited a group of ruffians and thugs to

help him and set his sights on eliminating Jebediah Creek and taking his place at the head of the church.

Getting the Heroes Involved

If the heroes are already looking for Aaron's Rod they can be pointed in the direction of Black Springs by a helpful high-ranking member of the Southern Baptist Church who knows somewhat of Pastor Jebediah Creek's plight. Alternatively, the heroes could be tracking Korah, who took the Rod of Aaron from its resting place elsewhere.

Of course, the heroes could just be in the neighborhood and stumble upon this conflict more by accident than design.

Rabble Rousers

The heroes arrive in Black Springs weary and tired, having traveled through the worst the bayou has to offer. The town is small and rundown but full of good people, and a group of these good people are being bullied by a group of Korah's thugs.

Read the following as the heroes enter town:

The sweltering heat and oppressive moisture in the air causes your clothes to stick to you as if they were coated in honey. The bayou is a place of clinging humidity, great swarms of flies and mosquitoes, and slithering things in the water. But people live here too you discover as you enter a small town. The dilapidated welcome sign declared this place as Black Springs, and the first thing you notice upon entering is the large white-washed church at the far side of the town square. In front of the church is a group of townspeople, listening fearfully to a man who waves a large knife at them.

There are twenty townsfolk being bullied by Ned Granger and a group of thugs (one for each hero plus one). Ned speaks in a slow Southern drawl and is trying to convince the people that Jebediah Creek is a blind fool leading them to damnation. Instead they should follow the teachings of Korah since he can command the very serpents of the earth! Ned does this all while waving his knife



at the crowd, which does little to convince them.

The heroes should intervene, and when they do Ned sneers at them and says that Korah is handling the situation. Anything the heroes say Ned perceives as an insult and levels his gun at the newcomers. Deal initiative cards! Treat Ned as just another thug; he is not a Wild Card.

Three rounds into the fight, Korah – off to the side – commands a pair of large constrictor snakes to attack the heroes using his *beast friend* power. Korah will not reveal himself during this fight, instead fleeing as soon as the snakes are defeated.

The thugs fight until half of their numbers fall or if Ned Granger is defeated.

A Tale of Two Brothers

After the fight the heroes are welcomed by Pastor Jebediah Creek, who emerges from the church. He explains the situation, indicating that his brother returned from a long journey to the Holy Land changed somehow. There was a dark malevolence in his eyes that wasn't there before. Jake now carried a strange staff with the power to transform into a large serpent, and he could command other snakes to do his bidding.

Jebediah and the people of Black Springs don't have much, but they ask if the heroes would be willing to go to Jake's shack and take the staff from his hands. Nobody knows exactly where the shack is but they can point the heroes in the right direction.

The Bayou Shack

Getting to Jake's shack requires a successful Tracking check (no penalties). On a success it takes the heroes an hour to arrive; on a raise it only takes a half hour and Korah cannot use the serpent-transforming power of the rod again. The ramshackle building is home to a group of thugs (1 for each hero) and the Korah-possessed Jake. There are two large constrictor snakes in the area which Korah commands to attack the heroes at the earliest possible moment.

It's possible for the heroes to sneak up on the

thugs, who loiter outside the shack. Korah does not back down without a fight, however, and uses Aaron's Rod to strike the heroes with lightning before casting it to the ground as a serpent.

During the fight Korah screams in a strange language (Ancient Hebrew). The only way to defeat Korah and free Jake is

Aftermath

Once Korah is defeated, the possessing spirit departs, leaving Jake Creek just as he was. Bringing Jake back to his brother elicits a reconciliation between the two, with them both serving as pastors for the town. What happens with Aaron's Rod is up to the heroes.

They could give it to Jebediah, who keeps the relic in defense of the town. Or perhaps they keep it for themselves, using it to fight some dark evil looming over the world.

CONSTRUCTOR SNAKES: *Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition*, page 153

THUGS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Mean

Gear: Knife (Str+1), club (Str+1)

JAKE “KORAH” CREEK

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Faith d10, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Arrogant

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), New Power, Power Points

Gear: Aaron's Rod, knife (Str+d4)

Powers: beast friend (commanding voice), entangle (roots reach up), fear (booming voice); 20 Power Points
lamp say that the spirit inside was imprisoned by the Sultan of the Djinn for terrible crimes against mankind. Now forced to serve the will of humans



ALADDIN'S LAMP

The stories and tales told in the famous book *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights* have sparked the imagination of countless writers and delighted children the world over. One of the most famous stories contained therein is "Aladdin and The Wonderful Lamp" a fanciful Arabic tale about a boy, a sorcerer, and a magical lamp. Few people realize the story is true!

But the sorcerer was not so easily dissuaded and steals both the lamp and Aladdin's wife in a cunning trap. Aladdin confronts the sorcerer, defeating him and reclaiming the wonderful lamp and his wife.

A fanciful tale to be sure, or so most people believe. The truth is that there was a magical lamp and a real person named Aladdin, and he did rule Persia as sultan for a time. But the sorcerer – a wicked and despicable man named al'Zulkir – who coveted the lamp was not so easily defeated. After losing the relic to Aladdin



History

"Aladdin and The Wonderful Lamp" tells the story of an impoverished boy named Aladdin in Persia who is recruited by a powerful sorcerer to retrieve a golden oil lamp from a trap-laden treasure cave. Aladdin is betrayed by the sorcerer, and while trapped in the cave accidentally rubs the lamp. This summons the powerful Djinn of the Lamp, who grants the boy three wishes. Aladdin becomes rich and powerful, marrying the daughter of the sultan and eventually becoming sultan himself.

al'Zulkir disappeared from the history books almost entirely. Some say he still lives to this day, hiding away from the world and plotting terrible things.

Aladdin's rule as sultan was a prosperous time but he never used the power of the lamp again. The item was passed down from one generation to another, until eventually someone interred it within a deep cavern near an unnamed oasis somewhere within a vast desert region. Few stories exist specifically about the Djinni of the Lamp, however. Rumors passed down through the ages from people who have actually possessed the



lamp say that the spirit inside was imprisoned by the Sultan of the Djinni for terrible crimes against mankind. Now forced to serve the will of humans forever, the Djinni of the Lamp is an angry vengeful spirit.

Physical Description

Aladdin's Lamp appears as golden oil lamp of great beauty. The gold never tarnishes and there always seems to be oil inside though there are no means of getting it out. It is an item of exceptional craftsmanship.

Powers

The lamp itself has no powers. Instead it functions as a vessel for a powerful being called the Djinn of the Lamp. Rubbing the lamp three times summons this great spirit, who can take the form of any person, animal, or even inanimate object. Usually he appears as a muscular bald Persian man with billowy silk pantaloons and a golden hoop earring. The Djinn grants the lamp owner three wishes but cautions "be careful what you wish for."

Before a wish is granted, the lamp's owner must make a Spirit roll. If successful, the wish goes off as intended. Otherwise it becomes tainted by the vengeful Djinn who twists in such a way to cause the most harm to the wisher (e.g., a hero may wish for wealth and find himself crushed to death beneath an immense pile of gold coins).

Wish results should mirror the effects of gaining an Advance, allowing a hero to gain a new Edge or increase an attribute by a die type. If the hero were to wish for a skill advancement ("I wish to be better at climbing") the skill would be increased by two die types, or in the case of a new skill be bought at a rating of d6.

The Djinn is bound forever to the lamp and not happy one bit about it. He must protect the lamp from danger, utilizing his immense power to stop attempts to destroy it. There is only one way to free him – the Sultan of the Djinn, the being who imprisoned him originally, must grant him his freedom. Wishing for the Djinni to be free does nothing; the freedom must be granted.

DJINN OF THE LAMP



Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (History) d8, Knowledge (Persia) d8, Notice d12, Persuasion d8, Shooting d8, Taunt d12

Pace: 6" (Flight); **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Mean, Overconfident, Vengeful

Edges: Quick

Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** The Djinni of the Lamp can maneuver through any non-solid surface. He can seep through the cracks in doors and bubble through water.
- **Flight:** The Djinni of the Lamp flies at a rate of 6" with a climb rate of 4".
- **Grant Wishes:** The Djinni of the Lamp grants 3 wishes to whomever rubs the magical lamp.
- **Invulnerability:** Immune to all non-magical attacks except fire.
- **Lamp Bound:** The Djinni of the Lamp is bound forever to the lamp and can only be freed by the Sultan of the Djinn.
- **Shape Change:** As the power. Treat the Djinni of the Lamp as though he were a Legendary caster with unlimited Power Points and no checks required.

Rumors and Speculation

Stories about Aladdin's Lamp normally focus on the Djinni granting wishes and the bearer regretting these wishes. But what of the Djinni itself? Imprisoned within a golden oil lamp for centuries can grow tiresome very quickly, and the Djinni is ready to be freed. However, in order to be free the Sultan of the Djinn must be the one to grant it. Accessing the supernatural world of the Djinn is no easy feat, though certainly a worthy goal for a group of heroes trying to rid the world of a powerful relic ...

Ravaged Tale: Secret of the Red Oasis

Many relics from throughout time have been lost and subsequently recovered over the years. Items of great power and great significance. Some have been hidden away for centuries while others pass hands frequently – and many have been sought after for great and



terrible reasons. The Wondrous Lamp possessed by Aladdin in the story is real, and so is the sorcerer who wants it. And he's waited hundreds of years to get it.

Background

al'Zulkir is the sorcerer portrayed in the original *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights* story, and he is no ordinary man. He is actually a powerful Djinni, punished to wear the flesh and form of a man but cursed with immortality. He seeks the Wondrous Lamp not for the wish-granting power of its inhabitant, but for the important knowledge possessed by it in returning to the realm of the Djinn.

Unfortunately, Aladdin bested al'Zulkir and the Lamp was hidden away somewhere. He has spent hundreds of years searching for it, finding nothing but frustration time after time. But one sight proves promising. Near one of the fallen Martian war machines in the Saharan desert there exists a place called the Red Oasis, and a mystical cave nearby appears only once every full moon. Within is rumored to be a fabulous treasure.

The problem is that al'Zulkir cannot touch the Lamp – such was the limitation put on him by the Sultan of the Djinn. So he has been forced to use vassals and henchmen, which he has procured a large group of thieves to help spread across the Arabic lands. And his mischievous and treacherous Djinni nature means he's always on the lookout for young naïve people he can manipulate to do the work for him.

That's how he found Sabah. A young boy living on the streets of Marrakesh, Sabah dreamed of finding golden treasure so that he and his younger brother Sami could move out of the streets. When al'Zulkir approached Sabah with the promise of just such a treasure he could not refuse. Sami tried to warn his brother but to no avail. He did manage to steal a map from one of al'Zulkir's henchmen showing the location of the Red Oasis.

Sami doesn't have any money for the journey, but luckily a fat-pursed hero happens to be walking by in the Marrakesh marketplace.

Stop That Thief!

The Ravaged Tale begins in the marketplace at Marrakesh, a beautiful city set in the foothills of the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. Read the following to begin:

Marrakesh, jewel of Morocco, is a wonderful city and grab bag of a dozen different cultures. British missionaries, Spanish mercenaries, American tourists, and French colonials mingle and mix freely with the native population of Arabs and travelers. The air in the marketplace is charged with excitement. Merchants hawk their wares in loud voices, each trying to get your attention on one thing or another. It's an easy place to lose yourself, that's for sure.

Have each hero make a Notice check. Whoever gets the highest result (it doesn't matter if it's a success or not) spots a young Arabic boy lifting the purse of one of the other heroes! The boy is Sami and if they try to stop him he takes flight with the money!

Run the encounter as a chase through the bustling Marrakesh marketplace. Range increment is 1, and Sami starts out 2 range increments away to begin with. Each hero in the chase (including Sami) makes Agility rolls each round and the marketplace is considered to have thick obstacles (-4). Use the chase rules on page 115 of the *Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition*.

Gotcha!

If the heroes are losing the race, throw some obstacles at Sami to slow him down. Once he is caught he starts crying his eyes out, shouting in a rush that he needs the money to save his brother Sabah. After a minute he calms down and explains that his brother was taken into the desert by a wicked old man with strange blue eyes, who said he knew where to find a magical lamp that granted wishes. His brother wanted a better life for both of them and disappeared a week ago with the man, but Sami was able to steal a map showing where they went. He only needs the money to travel there to save Sabah.



If the heroes don't pick up on the hint Sami asks for their help. He shows them the map which details a small oasis 100 miles south of El Harib on the other side of the Atlas Mountains. The oasis is marked with the Arabic symbol for the planet Mars. Sami insists on joining the heroes.

The Long Journey

The heroes can charter a plane to travel from Marrakesh to El Harib, the last settlement of any note before descending into one of the greatest deserts on the face of the planet. The trip can be as expensive or cheap as the heroes can afford, and it's a solid four hour trip over the Atlas Mountains.

Once in El Harib they need to get camels to travel into the Saharan desert. Camels are relatively cheap but the Arabic traders won't accept money – they want something in trade. They'll take anything shiny with a successful Persuasion roll, or just about anything with a raise.

The journey from El Harib to the Red Oasis is just over 100 miles. Camels travel at 25 miles a day, so it takes just over four days to arrive.

The Red Oasis

It's called the Red Oasis because one of the Martian war machines from the War of the Worlds in 1898 died near the site. It has been picked clean by travelers and traders but the worthless exoskeleton of the remnant still guards over the oasis.

Read the following as the heroes crest over one of the mighty dunes:

Your camel gives a braying sound out of sheer spite you think as you crest yet another mighty sand dune of the Sahara. But this one carries a view with it, for on the other side is your destination. A small oasis, complete with a pool of crystal clear water and bed of green grass, sits in the shade of another dune just ahead. And propped up next it is the twisted frame of a monstrously huge machine that once terrorized

the world 38 years ago. Its mechanical body appears to have been picked clean long ago but still its basic shape can be made out, squatting like a silent guardian over this hidden oasis.

Also interesting is the group of robed men meandering about the oasis, with a group of camels drinking contentedly from the waters. A single caravan wagon is parked not too far away as well.

There are two Arabic thieves for each hero and they each have camels. Have the heroes make Stealth rolls opposed by their Notice; the heroes get a +2 bonus on account of the glare from the sun.

Sabah sits next to the wagon, inside of which is al'Zulkir. The cursed Djinni sorcerer is consulting an ancient tablet concerning the realm of the Djinn.

What happens next is up to the heroes. The Arabic thieves are loyal to al'Zulkir and fight at the first moment of trouble. Sami rushes forward during any confrontation to get his older brother, who is having second thoughts about the whole situation. If fighting does break out between the heroes and the thieves al'Zulkir makes an appearance out of his wagon. His stats are not presented; he should be a mysterious figure with piercing icy blue eyes. Dressed in black and purple robes al'Zulkir stands 7 feet tall and is clearly of Arabic descent.

During the fight al'Zulkir decides not to risk exposing his power and disappears in a cloud of black smoke. He leaves the wagon and Sabah behind, knowing that he could get them back if needed. Inside the wagon is a worn stone tablet bearing strange markings in an unknown language. It would take a linguist who specializes in Arabic weeks to translate it, but it can be done. The details of this ancient Djinn manuscript are left to the GM.

What About the Treasure Cave?

Sabah was told about the treasure cave by al'Zulkir and that it supposedly held the Wondrous Lamp of Aladdin. The sorcerer said that it would appear only on a full moon, and it just so happens that to-



night is a full moon. After the heroes have dealt with the thieves and scared the sorcerer away they can wait at the Red Oasis for the rest of the day.

At night a spectacular cavern emerges from the sand dunes amidst the light of the full moon overhead. The entrance is guarded by an earth elemental who fights all intruders. What's inside? That's entirely up to the GM. This could be the fabled resting place of Aladdin's Lamp, in which case al'Zulkir will most certainly hound the heroes if they take it. Or perhaps it's just a small treasure cache of gold and other fineries. Or maybe it's nothing.

Perhaps the secret of Aladdin's Lamp sits in some other desert tomb awaiting rediscovery.

SAMI

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Marrakesh) d4, Lockpicking d4, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Poverty, Young

Edges: Alertness, Quick

Gear: Shabby street clothes, knife (Str+1)

ARABIC THIEF

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6, Throwing d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Mean

Edges: Thief

Gear: Knife (Str+1), Browning M1918 rifle (24/48/96, 2d8, AP 2).

Earth Elemental: See page 147 of the *Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition*.



AMULET OF TIAMAT

The world is filled with myths and legends regarding the creation of the world. Some claim the world was created in fire, others in blood or out of the very cosmos. In ancient Babylon their myth seems more fiction than fact, unless you have held witness to the power of the Amulet of Tiamat.

History

In Babylonian myth, Tiamat was the embodiment of the saltwater ocean and represented often as a titanic female dragon with multicolored scales. A su-

preremely powerful goddess, her mate and counterpart was Apsu – the freshwater abyss. Together they spawned the first gods of the Babylonian mythos.

In the legend the gods waged war against Tiamat and managed to slay her consort, Apsu. Driven beyond the brink of insanity with rage, she created a monstrous army to avenge her fallen mate. Storm demons, mighty dragons, and other terrible beasts were formed out of primordial chaos and waged war on the Babylonian gods. In the end, however, Marduk the storm god cut Tiamat in half. From one half of the fallen goddess was created the earth, and from the other the sky. The terrible army was dispersed by the legions of the gods.



The people of Babylon believed this myth to be truth, and at the height of the empire great strides were taken to capture the elemental power of Tiamat's fallen body to aid in Babylonia's struggles. Around 1500 BC, an intrepid sorcerer managed to harness this power and focused it into a golden amulet. The amulet would supposedly summon Tiamat's scattered forces to do the bidding of the wearer, but the sorcerer was killed before he could test the item out. The amulet was stolen and passed between many hands over the long years.

Thirteen centuries later a benevolent magician discovered the Amulet of Tiamat and – realizing its destructive capabilities – hid the relic away from the world. In recorded history there has been only one rumored use of the amulet, and that was in 847 AD in Damascus, Syria. The resulting chaos and destruction resulted in over 70,000 deaths.

Physical Description

The Amulet of Tiamat is a large golden medallion, roughly six inches across, embossed with a pentagram and covered in ancient Babylonian script. The script reads "Whoever washes this seal of the Euphrates shall unleash the wrath of Tiamat."

Powers

The Amulet of Tiamat fairly hums with unearthly power. Whomever holds the relic radiates an aura of fear similar to that of Tiamat's most powerful children. All within 30" must make a Fear check at -2 (see page 100 of the *Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition* for details on Fear checks).

To the unleash the true power of the Amulet of Tiamat, waters from the Euphrates River must be poured over it as the final culmination of an elaborate ceremony. The ceremony can only be undertaken by someone with Arcane Background (Magic), though he can be assisted by others without any prerequisites.

At the end of the ritual, the master of the ceremony must make a Spellcasting check at -6, with a bonus of +1 per assistant who succeeds at a Smarts

check (an additional +1 with a raise). The ceremony takes five minutes to complete, and if unsuccessful the master 2d10 points of fire damage as he is engulfed in flames!

If the ceremony is successful minions of Tiamat are pulled out of space and time to stand before the bearer of the amulet. Three drakes and one dragon (described on page 146 of the *Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition*) appear, and then the ceremony master must succeed at an opposed Spirit roll against the dragon. If the dragon wins the check the minions run amok in a wild spree of destruction until defeated or three days pass.

Otherwise the children of Tiamat can be commanded to complete one task. They are destructive creatures and take to any task with the most amount of collateral damage as possible. The minions disappear to the voice from whence they were summoned once the task is complete or after three days have passed.

Rumors and Speculation

Many powerful people and groups covet the power promised by the Amulet of Tiamat. The Great Beast himself, Aleister Crowley, is said to have held the amulet for some time. While he never used with any obvious effects, rumors circulate that he was able to study the relic long enough to replicate its powers. To what extent the cultist leader was able to accomplish this feat is unknown, but many scholars and historians believe that Crowley no longer possesses the item.

Ravaged Tale: Claw of the Dragon

The London area is home to two of the most powerful sorcerous organizations in the world. The Academy of Prestidigitation and Conjuraction sits in the country estate of the Amazing Zoltar while Aleister Crowley and the Golden Dawn Society have the Isis-Urania Temple hidden downtown. Now the heroes get caught up in a decades old feud between the two involving the legendary Amulet of Tiamat.



Background

The rumors of Aleister Crowley possessing the Amulet of Tiamat for a time are correct. What isn't well known is that the relic was taken from him by none other than the Amazing Zoltar in 1929. It was a confrontation of almost epic proportions, but in the end the canny Zoltar was able to secret away the amulet from the Great Beast.

With the aid of a group of former Golden Dawn Society members who left after Crowley took over in 1899, Zoltar secreted the Amulet of Tiamat away within a small pocket dimension once used by ancient druids. Located in a ring of standing stones called Bragwain Mor Deraak ("Fingers of the Dragon" in Gaelic) deep in the English countryside, knowledge of this small dimension is limited to the Academy's founder and the few people who assisted him that day in hiding it.

One of these individuals was Lord Graeme Greenwood, an astrologist and staunch supporter of the Golden Dawn Society's original goals. When Crowley came in 1899 and took over, Greenwood stayed on, thinking that the new leader would lead the organization into a bright century of arcane study. It became apparent over the years that the man known as the Great Beast was interested in no such future and devoted the society to studies of the occult.

Disgusted, Lord Greenwood divorced himself from the order and hid away from its dealings. During his time in Crowley's company he saw things that would make an uneducated man die of fright, and he shared many of these experiences with London's newest celebrity, the Amazing Zoltar. When Zoltar heard that Crowley had the Amulet of Tiamat he wasted no time in organizing a force to take the relic away from such a dangerous man.

In 1929 they succeeded and the amulet was hidden away in Bragwain Mor Deraak. Aleister Crowley has been searching for the item ever since, though other duties have occupied most of his attention, and he's just learned that Lord Graeme Greenwood was part of the group who took it from him seven years ago.

Crowley put one of his most promising Golden Dawn Apprentice in charge of retrieving the amulet, a British occultist named Blackwin. The ambitious man decided to torture Greenwood to get the information, but all that he got was a phrase – "fingers of the dragon." Blackwin set fire to Greenwood's manor and left a pair of fire elementals to leave to trace of their existence.

The Deadly Blaze

As the heroes are strolling through London one evening, an explosion in a nearby manor house catches their attention. Read the following to start:

London is a sprawling city of great disparity, where the ultra rich of the world hob nob while the downtrodden scrape to exist. It's a dirty city with cobblestone streets and old buildings lined up in compact rows up and down the lanes. An explosion rockets glass and debris onto the street from one these nearby old buildings as a raging fire becomes apparent inside. A woman's scream pierces the evening air from inside the house.

Time to roll up the sleeves and be heroes, folks. Residents of London can make a Common Knowledge roll at -4 to identify the home as belonging to Lord Graeme Greenwood, a respected but reclusive member of the upper aristocracy. There are a few people loitering around the street and a few of them run to fetch the fire brigade. But the woman inside can't wait for such a rescue so the heroes will have to take action.

The house is on fire with the windows and doors blown out, so getting inside is not a problem. The building opens into a large open foyer with stairs leading up to the second level balcony. Fire is spreading along the walls quickly, but the heroes quickly see a chambermaid crying on the ground below a flaming ceiling brace.

Deal initiative cards. The flaming beam collapses at the end of the second round, and any hero trying save the woman can make an Agility roll at -2. A success gets the hero near her, while a raise allows the woman to be thrown from harm's way.

During the third round, the two fire elementals show up. They appear as living columns of fire, leaping out of the conflagration to deal with the intruders.



The Dying Words of Lord Greenwood

After the heroes have dealt with the fire elementals and saved the chambermaid, the roof begins to collapse. Have all the heroes make Notice rolls. The hero who rolls the highest sees a man laying on the floor in the next room, blood staining the carpet around him. He coughs lightly, indicating that for the moment he's still alive.

This is Lord Graeme Greenwood and he is dying. If a hero tries to rescue him his eyes flutter open and he clutches the hero's arm feverishly. He whispers a name, "Zoltar," and then with his dying breath he says "fingers of the dragon!"

After that the fire brigade shows up and the fire is contained to just Lord Greenwood's manor house. If the heroes didn't catch Lord Greenwood's dying words the chambermaid helpfully provides them, adding also that the lord was visited by a tall man dressed all in black right before the fire started. She didn't recognize him.

Anyone in town can point the heroes towards Zoltar. His country estate is located ten miles north of London and is the home of the Academy of Prestidigitation and Conjuraton.

Mr. Zoltar, I Presume?

The Academy is located ten miles outside out of London in the rolling countryside. It is a beautiful multi-level mansion set in a gorgeous small forest. The gate swings open as the heroes approach – almost as if they were expected.

There is no one around as the heroes pull up to the magnificent front doors of the mansion. A knock reveals an aged butler who asks their business, ushering them into the academy proper.

Inside redefines the heroes' definition of "opulence." A massive chandelier hangs over the foyer with an expensive Persian rug dominating the floor. Ancient Greek and Roman sculptures dominate the corners and a massive alabaster staircase leads up to the second floor. Chambers and hallways branch off from the main room.

The butler leads the heroes to an extremely well-

stocked library a few rooms away. Comfortable leather chairs sit in a circular pattern in the middle of the floor.

After a few minutes the Amazing Zoltar enters with a flourish. He is a well-groomed middle-aged man dressed in a trendy smoking jacket and slacks. His raven-black hair is cut on the sides with silver streaks and he keeps his goatee neatly trimmed.

Zoltar explains that he has many things to attend to and that this had better be quick. If the heroes mention "fingers of the dragon" in conjunction with Lord Greenwood, Zoltar goes as pale as a sheet. He sits down and explains what that means, saying that Aleister Crowley has apparently renewed his search for the powerful Amulet of Tiamat.

The sorcerer comes to the conclusion that Greenwood probably told whatever agent Crowley sent the same thing he told the heroes, and so now is the time to move the relic. He asks that the heroes accompany him to Bragwain Mor Deraak, the "Fingers of the Dragon" one hundred miles to the north with all haste in order to stop Crowley from regaining possession of the Amulet of Tiamat.

Showdown at the Standing Stones

Zoltar prepares to leave within the hour and can arrange a car to take everyone to the standing stones at Bragwain Mor Deraak. By the time they arrive night has fallen, a steady rain has started, and thick fog hangs low to the ground.

The Fingers of the Dragon are an arrangement of nine stones, each seven feet tall, arranged in a crude circle. They are set in the shadow of a small bluff, and on the other side wait Blackwin and a group of hired mooks (one per hero). They are hidden by Blackwin's obscure spell, so finding them should be difficult.

Zoltar begins the ceremony right away, which he explains will take five minutes. Unfortunately, Blackwin and the mooks take the opportunity to launch their attack (if they weren't discovered previously). The Golden Dawn Society Sorcerer uses his Amulet



of Dawn the second round of combat to summon a drake out of the ether. If the heroes are having a tough time of it have Zoltar swoop in; otherwise he stays concentrated on retrieving the Amulet of Tiamat.

Is this just a regular summoning or did Crowley really crack the secrets of the Amulet of Tiamat? The answer is left up to the GM.

Aftermath

After the combat Zoltar thanks the heroes for their assistance, promising to secret away the powerful amulet to an undisclosed location. Alternately, if the heroes were looking for the relic he could be convinced to give to them if they prove they are on the side of good and righteousness.

Either way they've made a powerful enemy in Aleister Crowley and the Golden Dawn Society. What the sinister cult leader does is up to the GM, but you can bet it's not going to be pleasant.

FIRE ELEMENTALS (2): See page 147 of the *Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition*.

DRAKE (1): See page 146 of the *Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition*.

BLACKWIN, GOLDEN DAWN SOCIETY

SORCERER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Taunt d8, Shooting d8, Spellcasting d10, Notice d8, Knowledge (occult) d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 3; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Obligation (Major, Golden Dawn Society)

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Wizard

Powers: Bolt (crackling black energy), dispel (words of power), fear (image of a great dragon), obscure (enveloped in thick mist), stun (tracing rune in the air); 15 Power Points

Gear: Cloak, dagger (Str+1), Amulet of Dawn (summon 1 drake by breaking it).

GOLDEN DAWN MOOK

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Shooting d8, Notice d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Mean

Edges: Block

Gear: Webley & Scott pistol (12/24/48, 2d6+1)



ANKH OF OSIRIS

The world spins on an axis comprised of two opposing forces. Life and death, living and dying, being and not being – these are the two great constants of being on the planet Earth. But what if there was a way to cheat the system, to return life to death and give death to life. Such power exists, and it was discovered thousands of years ago in an ancient kingdom obsessed with such control.

History

In ancient Egypt the god Osiris was venerated as the keeper of life and death as well as the guardian of the underworld. The annual flooding of the Nile – the very life blood of Egypt – was associated with him, and this power also connected him to the very pharaohs

of the kingdom. The story most remembered about Osiris was regarding his death and subsequent rebirth.

Osiris was both brother and husband to Isis, and also brother to the evil god Set. With murderous intent, Set sealed Osiris in a box and dropped him in the Nile, sealing him below the waters. By the time Isis found him the god was dead. But the powerful goddess would not be denied, and so she resurrected her mate. The life restored to Osiris was not to last, but their short-lived union produced a son named Horus. Osiris died again and his body was cut to pieces by Set later.

Even for a god the task of returning life once it has fled is difficult. Isis poured all of her strength and power into the task of resurrecting her husband, and to this end she created a powerful obsidian ankh. The ankh was the Egyptian symbol of life and it's what allowed Osiris to return to the realm of the living for a short time.



Isis gave the Ankh of Osiris to the priests who worshipped the fallen god, and they used it as a sacred object in their ceremonies for hundreds of years. By the time of the Old Kingdom (circa 2700 B.C.), the relic was kept in a place of honor by the pharaoh as a symbol of power and life.

However, in 1340 B.C., Amehotep IV attempted to subvert the polytheistic religion of Egyptian New Kingdom and raise Aten, god of the sun, as the one and true deity. The Ankh of Osiris was lost in the subsequent flurry of destruction as the pharaoh sought to erase all signs of non-Aten related religion.

Today ankhs are popular pieces of Egyptian exhibits in museums the world over. The largest collections are held in the Brooklyn Museum in New York City, the British Museum in London, and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Perhaps the Ankh of Osiris waits in one of these collections, collecting dust, curators and keepers unaware of its true potential.

Physical Description

The Ankh of Osiris is a foot-long sculpture of the ancient Egyptian symbol of life. It is made from obsidian and covered with markings of inlaid gold. The markings are of an obscure form of hieroglyphic that describes the ritual necessary to utilize the relic's power.

Powers

The power of the Ankh of Osiris is one that is coveted by prince and pauper, kings and vagabonds. It has the power to restore life to the dead – but, unfortunately, it is not permanent. The instructions to perform the ritual are written on the ankh itself and require translation (unless the reader is fluent in ancient Egyptian). Even the most learned of Egyptologists would miss the obscure dialect, mistaking it for little more than gibberish at first.

The ritual itself takes an hour to perform and requires at least a portion of the physical remains of the subject to be work. At the end the caster must make a

Spirit roll at -2. If successful the ritual takes effect and the subject is returned to life – regardless of how long it has been since death took over or what condition the remains are in. The life is temporary, however, and the subject only remains alive for 24 hours. The person has all of the abilities and memories possessed in life.

At the end of the time allotted the resurrected returns in a disgusting display to their previous state of being – dead forever. The power of the Ankh of Osiris can only be used on a given individual once.

Rumors and Speculation

Some rumors in the Cairo area say that the Ankh of Osiris can do far more than simply bring back the dead for a short time. Some say that Isis concealed the true potential of the relic which can actually prevent death from happening. Of course, nothing in the world comes free, and the ritual is said to require the sacrifice of a willing participant who literally gives up their life for another. If this were true the ritual would need to be discovered and the priestesses of Isis were well-known for their ability to hide secrets in the dark places of their temples ...

Ravaged Tale: The Love of Nefertiri

Many people seek the Ankh of Osiris. Some are true villains, dedicated only to raising the dead for dark purposes. Some are more complicated. Ancient Egyptian priestess Nefertiri, risen as a mummy, is searching for the ankh to raise her dead husband so that she can be with him one last time. Unfortunately, her devotion has blinded her and she is willing to sacrifice anyone or thing to reach her goal.

Background

The Cult of Anubis, based in Cairo, have been looting tombs and graves from Egypt's long history in an attempt to restore the former glory of the great kingdom. The cultists have perfected the ability of granting unlife to the mummies and have quite a



force at their command secreted away. When they came to a small unassuming tomb from the Middle Kingdom they found the main chambers already looted and the sarcophagus and its contents desecrated.

A hidden secret room proved to be more interesting, and within they found a plain sarcophagus containing a mummified woman. The cultists' ritual brought the woman back as a mummy, but something went wrong. Nefertiri did not fall under the sway of the Anubis cultists, and when she saw that the mummified man in the main chamber was still dead and she had returned madness took over. She managed to kill the ones that brought her back and fled into the Egyptian desert the remains of her beloved.

Now obsessed with returning her beloved to life, if only for a short time, Nefertiri has been desperately searching for the legendary power of the Ankh of Osiris to return her husband. She has been assisted by what remains of the cult of Isis, who see in Nefertiri's quest a parallel to Isis' own journey to restore Osiris.

The mummy and the Isis cultists have been raiding Egyptian exhibits in areas all over the world. Their tactic is create a distraction using a gargantuan black widow spider in one part of the museum while the Isis cultists determine if the relic is located there. So far they have been unsuccessful, but their next target is the Brooklyn Museum in New York City and their luck is about to change.

Of course, a certain group of heroes are attending a special opening at the museum at the same time ...

The Spider in the Museum

The scenario begins with the heroes at the well-appointed Brooklyn Museum celebrating the opening of its new exhibit on Greek art. Read the following to begin:

The magnificently appointed Brooklyn Museum in New York City has just opened its newest exhibit featuring one of the world's largest collections of Ancient Greek art and you've been invited. The attendee list reads like a who's who of important people in the city, including Major

LaGuardia among others. There are several large sections to the beautiful museum and the new exhibit is featured in the East Wing. You wander about, gazing in awe at the frescos and statues depicting life and times in ancient Greece.

The sound of smashing glass near the entrance foyer to the East Wing draws your attention to the newest arrival. You see a monstrously huge black widow spider crashing through the doors, swinging its legs around in a wild flail and attacking the patrons!

The monstrously huge black widow spider was created from a regular-sized creature using a special ritual known to the priests of Isis. Run the combat as usual but try to create circumstances that get the heroes to save the other people from the spider's wild attacks.

After the combat have the heroes make Notice rolls. The one to roll the highest sees a heavily robed woman suspiciously running away to the North Wing. The North Wing, as the curator is quick to point out, contains the museum's award-winning Egyptian collection.

The Real Heist

Heroes who rush to follow the woman find that she disappears somewhere in the North Wing. A case with broken glass sits prominently in the entrance foyer and a man lays bleeding on the floor. A hero with the appropriate background can make a Common Knowledge check to remember that the case held an obsidian ankh embossed with golden hieroglyphics. It is nowhere to be seen.

The man on the ground is part of a secret sect of Osiris priests who guard the power of the Ankh of Osiris from those unworthy. They felt that the petty need of Nefertiri did not warrant the relic's use and tried to protect it from the mummy. Unfortunately they get the best of him and he was fatally stabbed.

The man explains with his dying breath that the Ankh of Osiris must be recovered at all costs and Nefertiri stopped. When she discovers that the resurrection of her beloved is only temporary her rage will be unstoppable.

He tells the heroes to go to the sewers be-



low the museum and retrieve the ankh. With his last gasp he presses into the palm of one of the heroes a small black ankh that glows warm when the bearer is moving in the direction of the relic.

The Lair of Nefertiri

Nefertiri and her small band of Isis cultists have holed up in a sewer junction below the streets of New York City. There is a storm drain large enough for the heroes to use near the Brooklyn Museum; anyone with Tracking can make a roll and determine that it was used recently by the Isis cultists escaping from the museum.

With the small ankh as their guide the heroes can stumble through the dark, dank sewers of the metropolis in search of their target. It takes an hour of stumbling around to find Nefertiri's lair.

The heroes can hear the chanting of a raspy voice long before they arrive at the junction. Nefertiri and the cultists receive a -2 to their Notice rolls due to their focus on the ceremony, which has the mummy in the center of a ring of cultists. Nefertiri holds the Ankh of Osiris over her head intoning ancient Egyptian in a commanding, if unearthly, voice.

There are two cultists for each hero gathered in a circle around the mummy. As the heroes watch a ghostly form rises up from the ground taking a vaguely humanoid shape. It settles over an urn on the floor before Nefertiri. It is still a minute or so before the ritual is complete so the heroes have time to stop the ceremony from finishing

Aftermath

Nefertiri may seem like a woman who just wants to be reunited with her beloved, but the truth is that both of them were wicked people. If her lover is reincarnated he is immediately revolted by what Nefertiri has become. This sends the mummy into a rage wherein she kills the man whom she loved – and then sets her sights on destroying all life everywhere.

The Isis cultists are not comfortable with this and she turns on them as well, but she learned from them

all she needed anyway. Nefertiri creates monstrously huge black widow spiders to terrorize the city with the objective of killing as many people as possible.

The heroes must stop the mummy before this happens, even if it seems like leaving well enough alone may be a viable solution.

Since the heroes have saved many of New York's cultural elite from being spider chow it's possible that they get recognized for their deeds. Mayor LaGuardia may even try to recruit them to help crack down on the city's rampant criminal problems stemming from the five major gangster families. And being on the good side of the city's mayor certainly can't be a bad thing.

MONSTROUS BLACK WIDOW SPIDER

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d12+2, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11 (2)

Special Abilities:

•**Bite:** Str+d4

•**Large:** Attacks against the monstrous black widow spider are made at +2.

•**Poison (-6):** The bite of the monstrous huge black widow spider causes paralysis to anyone who fails their Vigor roll. The paralysis lasts for 2d4 rounds, and afterwards the victim must make another Vigor roll (no penalties). On a failure the victim dies.

•**Size +4:** The monstrous black widow spider is about 20 feet tall.

•**Webbing:** The monstrous black widow spider can cast webs from its thorax that are the size of Large Burst Templates. This is a Shooting roll with a range of 3/6/12. Anything in the web must cut or break their way free (Toughness 7). Webbed heroes can still fight, but all physical actions are at -4.



CULTIST OF ISIS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal (to Nefertiri)

Gear: Robes, dagger (Str+1),

NEFERTIRI

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

Hindrances: Obsessed (returning her beloved to life)

Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** Anyone seeing Nefertiri must make a Guts roll.
- **Slam:** Str+2
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to poison and disease; no additional damage from called shots; half damage from guns and piercing weapons.
- **Weakness (Fire):** Like most mummies, the chemicals used in Nefertiri's preservation process are flammable and she takes +4 damage from fire.



ARK OF THE COVENANT

They all wanted the sacred Ark of the Covenant: The Philistines, Egyptians and Babylonians, each envious and awed at its ability to smite the unworthy, lay waste to lands and repulse vast armies. Yet the vessel chosen to transport the word of God has eluded many for centuries, lost in the mists of time – until now.

of Holies, the most sacred space in the Tabernacle, a tent constructed according to God's specifications. The Israelites carried the Ark covered through the wilderness, crossing the Jordan River, which miraculously went dry, allowing them to travel unhindered.

The Ark was carried in front of the army during battle, ensuring Hebrew victories as in the Midian War, and the siege of Jericho.



History

According to the Bible, God commanded Moses to construct a sacred box to hold the Tablets of the Law. Built in the shadow of Mount Sinai by Bezalel, the architect of the Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant is mentioned several times in the Old Testament. While associated with the solemn pact between God and the Israelites, the relic signifies God's divine presence on earth, and as such, is an object of immense power.

The Ark of Covenant once rested in the Holy

The Philistines eventually captured the Ark from the Israelites, but every town the Philistines took the relic, the population became stricken with boils and a plague of mice. The Philistines placed the Ark in the temple of Dagon at Ashdod, which caused a statue of Dagon to topple over, smashing on the floor. Frightened at what occurred, the Philistines made an offering of gold to the Ark, before sending it into the wilderness on an oxcart. The Levite priests recovered the Ark and it remained with them until the reign of King David.

King David transported the Ark from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem. During the journey the



oxcart carrying the Ark faltered, and David's servant Uzzah reached out to steady the sacred Ark and was killed instantly by God's wrath.

After Uzzah's death, David carried the Ark to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite, where it remained for three months. The Ark blessed Obed-Edom and his family by causing the women to give birth after only two months.

Solomon, David's son, built a Temple in Jerusalem around 970 BC, similar to the Tabernacle in design and layout but on a majestic scale. The Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies as it was in the Tabernacle. The high priest was the only one allowed in the Ark's presence once per year, on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement and presented the relic with goat's blood symbolizing the people of Israel's sins. According to the Bible, when the priests dedicated the temple, a cloud filled the building, signifying God's presence.

According to the Bible, the Ark was temporarily removed from the temple, but King Josiah ordered its return. After this, the Ark vanishes from history.

In *Ravaged Earth*, the Ark that Josiah had wasn't genuine; the original was taken long ago.

The Queen of Sheba visited Solomon with precious jewels from her native land to decorate his temple, and the king seduced her. On her return journey, she gave birth to a son, who would become Menelik I, King of Axum. After many years, Menelik traveled to Jerusalem to confront his father, and Solomon bestowed gifts upon the young king, including fringe from the Ark's covering and a replica of the Ark.

One of Solomon's priests convinced Menelik to take the real Ark with him to Abyssinia, or modern-day Ethiopia. Menelik left Jerusalem with the Ark without Solomon's knowledge, leaving the replica.

According to the *Kebrä Nagast* (Glory of Kings), a 14th century book chronicling the early Ethiopian kings, Menelik brought the Ark to Abyssinia with great fanfare. Solomon pursued his son into Egypt, but abandoned the quest for the Ark.

When the Christians invaded Axum in

331 AD, they converted Menelik's descendants and built a church to house the sacred Ark.

Physical Description

The Ark of the Covenant is a box made of acacia wood approximately 4 feet by 2 feet by 2.5 feet, plated with gold. Four gold rings, mounted two on each side, hold gold-covered staffs used to carry the relic. On the lid, called the mercy seat, are two gold cherubim facing each other, their wings outstretched and converging towards the center, overshadowing the cover.

The Ark emits a low, supernatural humming as if the relic was breathing. As it hums, the gold covering glows brightly, and the air between the cherubim crackles with some sort of divine electricity.

Inside the Ark the Israelites stored the second set of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2-17) that God gave to Moses as a covenant to the people of Israel. If the Ark is somehow opened, the stone tablets are intact, with the Hebrew letters bored through the stone by an intense heat. A glimmering blue light radiates off the ancient stones.

Other accounts claim the Ark also contains Aaron's rod and a small gomor filled with manna, however, in *Ravaged Earth*, only the Ten Commandments reside in the Ark.

Powers

The Ark of the Covenant is a highly unstable relic. Only members of the tribe of Levi can handle the Ark, but since the Levites are one of the Lost Tribes of Israel, this makes any real contact with the relic dangerous. Those deemed unworthy suffer 3d12 damage. The Ark also has the Bolt power. Targets within a Cone Template suffer 4d10 damage. When commanded properly, the Ark has the Inspire Edge to lead men into battle and help them recover from being Shaken. Staring at the Ark longer than a few minutes forces the character to make a Vigor check at -2; those who don't are Shaken. Anyone who looks upon the Ark when it is open must make a Guts roll at -4 or take 2d10 damage.



Rumors and Speculation

Numerous accounts describe the Ark of the Covenant's probable fate: Pharaoh Shishak pilfered the temple and removed the Ark to Tanis, Egypt; it was stolen by Menelik of Axum and brought to Abyssinia; the priests hid it under the Temple Mount in a cavern; it was spirited away by Jewish exiles during the reign of Manasseh of Judah; the Babylonians destroyed Solomon's Temple and captured the Ark for King Nebuchadnezzar; even that it was removed by divine intervention and ascended into Heaven. Whatever the story, the Ark of the Covenant wasn't among the treasures taken by the Romans in 70 AD when they ransacked Jerusalem, so it likely vanished before then.

Ravaged Tale: The Sacred Ark

The heroes are on a whirlwind adventure to unearth the secret history of the Ark of the Covenant, starting at Chartres Cathedral in France, then traveling to Jerusalem and finally Axum, Ethiopia. They begin as curious explorers and transform to the Ark's protectors when they learn the Nazis and Fascist Italians are also hunting the sacred relic.

Background

During the Crusades the Knights Templar excavated the Temple Mount and found evidence that the Ark of the Covenant was taken to Ethiopia by King Menelik I. Founder of the Templars, Hugh de Payens, sent a contingent of knights to Abyssinia to investigate. The Templar Knights found the Coptic Christians with their holy relic and for the next few decades secretly protected it from harm.

Dr. Harold Danvers is a scholar and historian who studied the Templar Knights for many years, tracing the group's origins and progress throughout the Crusades. He's spent the last month in France, researching Chartres Cathedral. Danvers discovered a link between the Templar Knights and the Ark of the Covenant, and that the Templars might have constructed a secret

shrine to the Ark somewhere in Chartres Cathedral.

Danvers keeps a leatherbound journal that contains all of his research notes and sketches about the Ark of the Covenant and Templars. He accurately surmised that the Templars might have discovered the true fate of the Ark when they excavated the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in 1128. There, the Templars discovered winding passageways beneath the Well of Souls, a cave under the Dome of the Rock. What the Templars found in the passages is unknown, a mystery Danvers wants to unravel.

Unfortunately, Danvers isn't the only one who wants to uncover the fate of the sacred Ark. Nazi archeologist and Thule Society adept Professor Klaus Moebius has mounted his own expedition and seeks the Ark for the glory of the Reich. Moebius works for the Ahnenerbe Institute, a Nazi think tank specializing in studying ancient history, and is on orders from Hitler to study the magical or occult properties of the holy relic.

Getting the Heroes Involved

The heroes have been contacted by the Inscrutables, a secret group of archeologists, explorers and scholars based at Channing College on Long Island. Danvers, a member of their group, cabled a few days ago requesting help with his latest investigation, based in Chartres, located 50 miles southwest of Paris. Danvers wrote that he learned the location of a Templar secret that could point the way inside the passages beneath the Well of Souls. He said Professor Moebius and his Nazi goons are also exploring Chartres to learn the same information.

Dr. Joseph Noel, chairman of the Inscrutables, tells the heroes:

"You must go and assist Danvers with his work. His work on the Templar Knights is world renown, and I'd hate to see him in any trouble. He's also obsessed with the Ark of the Covenant. Danvers is always going on about how the Ark is a truly wondrous and sacred object, one that no government should possess. It is a pathway to God, a way His divine majesty



communicates with man. If the Nazis find the Ark, they'll use it for their evil goals that are too terrible to contemplate. If Moebius is searching for it, I'm afraid Danvers' life is in danger."

The Inscrutables will pay \$1,000 to the group for joining Danvers on his expedition and protecting him.

Chartres Cathedral

Built during the Middle Ages, this Gothic cathedral was the site of many pilgrimages and contains several notable architectural features including two soaring spires, rose windows, flying buttresses and a curious circular labyrinth on its floor.

Danvers meets the heroes at a pre-arranged location in front of the cathedral. He's a likable fellow, wearing a suit and bowtie and carrying a valise containing his research. Though he greets the heroes warmly, Danvers appears apprehensive and fearful. If any of the heroes ask him if there's anything wrong, he tells them the Nazis are spying on him and that they should quickly investigate the cathedral.

According to Danvers' notes, there's a secret room near a statue of the Ark of the Covenant in the cathedral. The statue depicts the Ark atop a wagon with the Latin inscription: "Hic Amititur Archa Cederis" or in English, "Through the Ark thou shall work."

Opening the secret door requires a Strength roll, which pushes the stone door inward, revealing a small cobweb-covered chamber.

Chapel of the Ark

This vaulted chamber, with its floor of intricately inlaid marble and statues of Templar Knights, is unlike any of the other rooms in the grand cathedral. A large Templar Cross is carved on one wall above an ornate wooden box decorated with Islamic star patterns. Heroes searching the box discover a strange metallic key and a yellowed scroll.

Written in French, the scroll is a confession by Hugh de Payens, founder of the Templar Knights. It reads:

"In the name of Almighty God in the year of our Lord 1130, I, Hugh de Payens of Champagne, member of the Order of the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon, do make this confession: That my Order recovered certain sacred relics beneath the site of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, and did know the truth about the Ark of the Covenant, and have pledged an eternal vow to protect it from harm and safeguard it from any evil or kingdom wishing to possess it. In protecting this knowledge, I preserve the Templar Key, which bridges the way between the Well of Souls and our sacred cavern. Henceforth we shall follow the Ark wherever it rests and serve God."

Herr Moebius, I Presume

Just like a bad, goosestepping penny, Professor Moebius and the Nazis show up. Moebius is interested in the scroll and Templar key and instructs his henchmen to liberate it from the heroes. There's one Nazi goon per hero.

Danvers doesn't fight, preferring to flee the cathedral. Whether Moebius gives chase or not is up to the GM. However the melee ends, the next destination on the heroes' archeology tour is Jerusalem.

Kitty Montague

If the heroes need a lift, they can rely on pilot Kitty Montague, a beautiful redhead whose Douglas DC-3 is available to them for the right price. Kitty is more than just an aviatrix, she's a cunning smuggler with a sordid past and tries staying one step ahead of the law. She's fallen on tough times and is renting her services as a pilot for profit until she uses her seedy connections to haul exotic cargo. Her aeroplane is fitted with machineguns for those times when the skies aren't friendly.

Kitty can fly the characters wherever they wish, provided she receives her pay of \$50 per passenger.



Jerusalem, Palestine

Jerusalem is the center of the Holy Land where Judaism, Christianity and Islam converge into a city of dialects, cultures and beliefs. The ancient city is divided into several neighborhoods, including the Muslim, Jewish, Christian and Armenian quarters. Jerusalem is overcrowded with merchants, religious pilgrims, scholars and tourists who want to glimpse its splendors. Notable sites include many open-air bazaars, the Suq Al-Attarin or spice market, the Western Wall or Wailing Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Mosque of Al-Aqsa.

The most visible point is the Haram esh-Sharif, the Temple Mount, the original site of Solomon's Temple, now home to the Dome of the Rock.

Dome of the Rock

Completed in 691 AD by the Umayyad Khalif, Abdul Malik ibn Marwan, the Dome of the Rock is an octagonal building topped with a lead-covered dome and decorated with colorful mosaics. The structure houses an impressive chamber containing the Foundation Stone, a large slab-like rock weighing a few tons caps the entrance to the Well of Souls, an ancient cavern. The Stone is where many believe Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac, where the Holy of Holies existed in Herod's Temple and where Muhammad left on his Night Journey.

The Templar Key the heroes obtained in Chartres Cathedral opens a secret passage in the Well of Souls. Be forewarned that the Dome of the Rock is guarded day and night, as it's considered a holy site. Heroes might bribe a few officials or use Persuasion to get their way into the Well of Souls.

The Nazis are also at the Dome of the Rock, as Moebius has his contacts and will lead his men into the site to search for the cavern opening.

Well of Souls

A staircase leads to a chamber underneath the Foundation Stone called the Well of Souls. Legends say the dead come here to pray, and that the cave is located above a secret cavern where the Hebrews stashed the treasures of the Temple, including the Ark of the Covenant.

When the heroes find it, the Well of Souls is simply a cavern with prayer rugs covering its floor. If the heroes make a Search roll and lift up some of the rugs, they'll find a groove with a small Templar cross. The Templar Key fits into the groove, and activates a hidden trapdoor leading down.

Caverns

The drop is 20 feet straight down and opens into a cavern. The air is stale and rancid, and the sound of an underground river is heard in the distance. Brittle bones of 100 skeletons litter the ground here. Along one wall of the cavern is an elaborate mural depicting Solomon's Temple and the Ark of the Covenant. One part of the mural shows a dark-skinned king and the Ark on an oxcart surrounded by warriors.

Ancient Hebrew writing tells the story of how Menelik I, son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, went to Jerusalem to see his father. One of Solomon's priests convinced Menelik to take the Ark with him to Abyssinia, or modern-day Ethiopia. Menelik stole the Ark and returned to his kingdom with it. Danvers volunteers to read the Hebrew script if none of the characters can.

A Templar cross is carved into the wall near the mural.

The Ghosts of the Well

The caverns are home to a number of restless spirits who attack any interlopers. There's one ghost per hero.

Moebius Makes A Move

Professor Moebius and his men interfere, entering the cavern just after the heroes finish battling the ghosts. There are two Nazi soldiers per



hero, plus Moebius, who translates the ancient Hebrew. Moebius examines the mural and says:

"So, it was Menelik, the Ethiopian Jewish King who took the Ark. Though I can't imagine the Templars believing that ludicrous folktale," Moebius says. "You, however, won't be going to Ethiopia or anywhere else. How fitting it should end for you here, in the gloom and darkness, surrounded by the decaying bones and dust of the past."

With that, Moebius orders his men to leave and he follows suit, shutting the trap door and locking the heroes in the cavern.

Escape is possible; the Templars tunneled several passages in the Temple Mount. Some lead of chambers containing artifacts, while others might lead to an underground spring. Still, others might lead to a secret door somewhere in the Old City. How the heroes escape their predicament is up to them.

Rumble in the Clouds

If the heroes are riding aboard Kitty's aeroplane to Ethiopia, not all goes smoothly on the flight. Over the Sudan they are attacked by two German aeroplanes that glide into view. The German Arado Ar68s (stats available in the Ravaged Earth rulebook), perform a series of stunning aerial maneuvers and fly alongside Kitty's aeroplane. Chomping her cigar and cursing, Kitty responds by barking at the heroes to man the guns and all of the planes engage in a heart-pounding dogfight over the desert. Both German pilots don't relent and battle to the death.

Ethiopia At War

When heroes arrive in Ethiopia, they see a nation torn asunder by bloodshed and conquest. In 1934, Italy built a garrison in Italian Somaliland at the Welwel oasis that encroached on Ethiopia's border. When Ethiopia protested the boundary dispute, by posting soldiers near the border, the Italians attacked. The League of Nations did nothing to curb Italian

military expansion, and the Italians strengthened their border forces and invaded Ethiopia in October 1935. Mussolini saw Ethiopia as part of his growing empire, one that rivaled the Roman conquest of North Africa. Il Duce also sees the war as a way of avenging Italy's past military campaigns in Abyssinia in the 1890s. The Italians soundly defeated Emperor Haile Selassie's Army of the Ethiopian Empire, routing them with modern equipment and ruthless tactics. The Ethiopians, using outdated weapons and aeroplanes, were no match for Mussolini's military, and cities and towns fell to the Italians. In early 1936, Marshal of Italy Pietro Badoglio led a mechanized column and captured Addis Ababa during the March of the Iron Will. Emperor Selassie went into exile and addressed the League of Nations, warning what happened in Ethiopia will happen to other nations who ignore the Fascist threat.

The war is still raging in the countryside, with Italians capturing villages and towns and a resistance of Ethiopian troops fighting back.

Axum, Ethiopia

Located in Ethiopia's northern highlands, Axum is an ancient city, the center of a once powerful empire. The heroes find it a depressing collection of ramshackle houses and dusty streets amid the brown mountains and rocky crags of a hostile wilderness.

Kitty lands her aeroplane at a small airfield outside of town, one held by the Italians. Military officials demand a payment of \$20 from everyone on board and interrogate the passengers about their business in Axum. If the heroes play it cool, they're allowed to enter the town.

One of the most remarkable sites in Axum is a field containing towering stela, tall obelisks carved in the 4th century AD to mark underground burial chambers. These ancient stones were actually raised by the power of the Ark of the Covenant and even functioned as conduits for the Ark's energy. Now they stand as stark reminders of the Akumite Kingdom's past glory. Italian soldiers are planning to remove one of the stela and ship it to Rome, a totem symbolizing Mussolini's conquest.



Church of St. Mary of Zion

Built in 372 AD and rebuilt in the 1635 following its destruction by invaders, the Church of St. Mary of Zion was one of the earliest Christian churches in sub-Saharan Africa. Its fortress-like walls and gated compound make it intimidating to outsiders. The Coptic monks and priests living in the compound have considerable influence in the town, whose population is largely Coptic.

The compound contains the main church building, whose interior is decorated with lavishly colored murals depicting Biblical scenes and scriptures written in Ge'ez, an ancient Ethiopic language.

Currently, the priests have converted part of the church into a field hospital, and secretly tend to wounded soldiers. The Italians are unaware of this, and will surely arrest anyone harboring Ethiopian troops.

If characters ask about the Ark of the Covenant, the priests deny they have it, however, a Notice roll detects they're lying. A Persuasion roll might get them to reveal that the church is the Ark's sanctuary, but the relic remains hidden.

If the heroes make successful Search rolls inside the church, they find a metal trapdoor that leads to an underground crypt. Amid the cobwebs are the bones of several priests. Characters making a Notice roll here see a few stone sarcophagi have the Templar cross on them.

A tall door leads to a large chamber, filled with the light of a hundred candles. The air is heady with incense and smoke, and a large statue of an angel stands at one end of the room. Beneath the statue, on a raised platform is the object that the heroes sought – the Ark of the Covenant, shielded from view by a gossamer sheet.

An elderly Coptic priest wearing black robes and pillbox turban, is the chamber's sole occupant. He caresses a wooden cross around his neck and his white beard belies his advanced age. This is the Guardian of the Ark, one of several monks who have protected the Ark of the Covenant for generations. The Guardian tells the heroes nobody but him may be in the Ark's presence and advises them to leave. If disobeyed or if anyone raises weapons, he is duty-bound to attack.

Battle of the Ark

When Moebius, accompanied by 20 Italian soldiers, invades Axum, the villagers put up a valiant resistance defending St. Mary of Zion. The heroes and the priests barricade themselves inside the church.

The heroes might decide to use the Ark as a weapon during the siege. See the "Powers" section above for the Ark's damage effects.

If the heroes don't resist them, the Italians force their way into the sanctuary and Moebius gasps when he sees the Ark. The Italian commander, Capt. Antonio Bertolini, orders the heroes to disarm and confiscates their weapons.

If nothing is done, the Guardian attempts to clear the room. The heroes should assist the Guardian, or else an overzealous Italian soldier shoots him, much to the outrage of a few young monks. As the Guardian lies bleeding, Moebius stands triumphantly over the Ark, giving the Nazi salute for a photographer. The Nazi archeologist orders two soldiers to open the container. As soon as their fingers touch the lid, lightening leaps from the Ark and strikes the soldiers down with a terrifying, thunderous crash. They're incinerated and perish, emitting blood-curdling screams. Moebius is thrown back and flees the room, shrieking wildly. Heroes watching this must make a Guts check at -2 or else become Shaken. The Ark proceeds to attack everyone in the chamber, including the heroes, if they don't shield their eyes. After the remaining soldiers are dead, the Ark stops and all is eerily quiet.

Aftermath

If the heroes defeat Moebius and the Fascists, the Guardian lives and the Ark is intact, then they've accomplished their mission. The Copts hail them as worthy successors to the valiant Templar Knights who protected the Ark centuries ago. The heroes can return to a nice reward from the Inscrutables for their assistance.

If the Guardian dies the Copts sorrowfully mourn him and install his successor, a young monk who will spend the rest of his life burning incense and praying to the Ark.



It is possible for the heroes to fail; if Danvers is killed, the Inscrutables won't pay the heroes. If Bertolini survives, he sends a squad of soldiers to destroy the church and recover the Ark, which the Fascists do at a great cost of life. The Ark is used by the Fascists to conquer all of Ethiopia and other African nations who resist Mussolini, setting the stage for a possible future adventure.

No matter what happens, Moebius escapes and convalesces in an asylum in Germany, where he spends months recovering and telling his superiors about the awesome powers of the Ark. He might again cross paths with the heroes' one day, as he holds them responsible for his temporary madness.

DR. HAROLD DANVERS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts: d10, Spirit: d6, Strength: d6, Vigor: d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (History) d10, Notice d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8, Tracking d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Milquetoast, Big Mouth

Edges: Scholar, Investigator, Linguist

Knack: Photographic Memory

Defining Interests: Templar History, Ark of the Covenant, Biblical Studies, Baseball

Languages: English, French, Latin, Hebrew

Gear: Suit and bowtie, hat, glasses, passport, valise, journal, wallet with \$200

KITTY MONTAGUE

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Gambling d6, Guts d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Piloting d10, Repair d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Wanted, Greedy

Edges: Ace, Hot-Shot, Back Alley Scrapper, Attractive

Knack: Unerring Sense of Direction

Defining Interests: Money, Aeroplanes, French Cuisine, Cigars

Languages: French, English

Gear: Douglas DC-3, Webley Bulldog, aviator's gear

NAZI GOONS: Use the Hired Goon stats on page 129, *Ravaged Earth* sourcebook.

PROFESSOR KLAUS MOEBIUS: page 126, *Ravaged Earth* sourcebook.

GHOSTS: Page 149, the *Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition*.

ITALIAN SOLDIERS

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Driving d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal (to Mussolini), Overconfident

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge

Gear: Pith helmet, uniform, Carcano M38 short rifle (24/48/96 range, 2d8 damage, 1 ROF).

GUARDIAN OF THE ARK

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d4, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d12, Healing d6, Notice d10, Persuasion d6, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Faith d12

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Elderly, Vow (to guard the Ark of the Covenant)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Luck, Holy Warrior

Powers: Dispel, Smite

Power Points: 10

Knack: Pschometry

Defining Interests: Christianity, Meditation, The Ark of the Covenant

Languages: Amharic, Ge'ez, English



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