

RAVAGED EARTH

RELICS & RUMORS #3



EXCALIBUR * GOLD PLATES OF MORMON
GOLDEN FLEECE OF THE ARGONAUTS
GUNGNIR, ODIN'S SPEAR * HEART OF QIN SHI HUANG



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RELICS & RUMORS #3

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Excalibur

History

According to legend, Excalibur was the blade King Arthur was given after the fabled Sword in the Stone was shattered in battle. Arthur received the enchanted Excalibur from the Lady of the Lake as a token of Fey support of Arthur's reign. Excalibur's scabbard, also enchanted, protected Arthur as long as the king wore it. Both the sword and scabbard were stolen by Morgan le Fay, Arthur's half-sister, and though the sword was recovered, the scabbard was not.

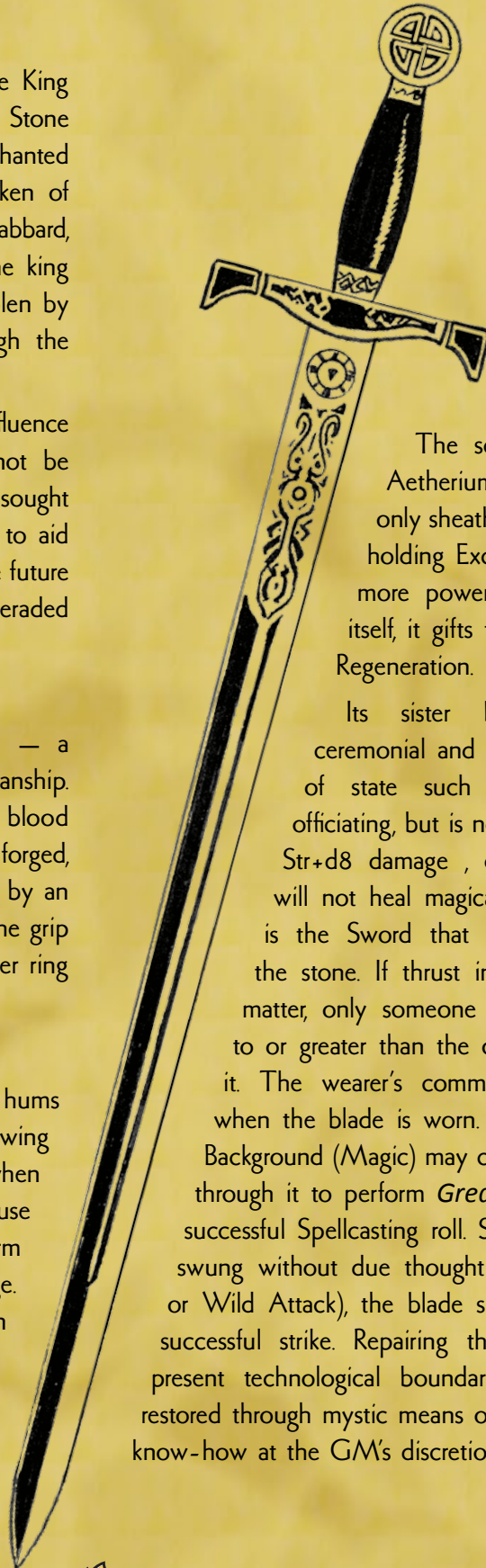
The truth is not always as it seems, and the influence of the Martians on Earth's past history cannot be overlooked. Though most Martians have often sought the destruction of humanity, some endeavored to aid mankind and crafted powerful items to shape the future of earthly civilization. Certain Martians masqueraded as creatures of myth and fancy in this way.

Physical Description

Excalibur is an exquisitely designed sword — a superlative example of sixth century, Saxon craftsmanship. There is fine scrollwork on the blade and the blood groove is sharp. In fact, the weapon looks newly forged, and could be easily mistaken as a reproduction by an amateur eye. A bit of leather wrapped around the grip shows signs of extreme wear, as does the copper ring tied to the pommel.

Powers

Excalibur is a very light, strong blade that hums when swung. The design is done in a very flowing fashion and the metal shimmers slightly when exposed to sunlight. In daylight, the user may use its reflective nature to his advantage and perform Agility tricks with it at +2. It does Str+d8 damage. It is crafted of pure Aetherium and holds an edge that cannot be dulled. It is AP 6 and adds an extra d6 damage with a raise on a Fighting roll.



The scabbard is made of Aetherium as well and is the only sheath capable of properly holding Excalibur. Possibly even more powerful than the sword itself, it gifts the wearer with Fast Regeneration.

Its sister blade, Clarent, is ceremonial and designed for matters of state such as knighting and officiating, but is no less deadly. It does Str+d8 damage, causes wounds that will not heal magically, and is AP 6. It is the Sword that Arthur pulled from the stone. If thrust into non-living, solid matter, only someone with a Spirit equal to or greater than the owner's may remove it. The wearer's command radius doubles when the blade is worn. Those with Arcane Background (Magic) may channel their energies through it to perform *Greater Healing* with a successful Spellcasting roll. Should the blade be swung without due thought (i.e. Berserk, Frenzy, or Wild Attack), the blade shatters after its next successful strike. Repairing the blade is beyond present technological boundaries, but it can be restored through mystic means or advanced scientific know-how at the GM's discretion.



Rumor & Speculation

Legend has it that Excalibur was returned to the Lady of the Lake upon Arthur's death. What Lady? What Lake? Historians and scholars have never been able to pinpoint either, or even if and when, in fact, King Arthur ever truly existed. Many put this down to fanciful myth and fable, so serious inquiry as to the whereabouts of Excalibur have never been fully explored – until recently. During the War of the Worlds, much damage was wrought upon the British countryside. Previously concealed ruins were uncovered, and Aetherium caused many scientific minds to seriously reconsider the underlying facts of some of these myths. Were they magic? Were they alien technologies? The most unlikely of sponsors, the IMSR, is funding an exploration into a remote Siberian village to find answers, and is sending the heroes.

Ravaged Tale: The Excalibur Question

Overview

The Nazis have been questing for artifacts the world over, and located the whereabouts of Excalibur on the isle of Reichenau in the Abbey of Reichenau, a monastery dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St. Paul. When they pulled it from the heart stone, a great keening sound arose. Excalibur had been thrust deeply into the mechanical heart of a beast that had lain beneath the Church for centuries. The Nazis freed the beast known as the Wyrms, an ancient terraforming device from another age, and were destroyed in an instant, turned into piles of salt, while the Rocket Rangers were made into its Harbingers. The heroes must free the Rocket Rangers and keep the Wyrms from carrying out his ancient alien agenda. The Wyrms, however, expended so much energy in converting the Rocket Rangers that he depleted his Aetheric reserves and needs to replenish his source. Presently, he is vulnerable and weak.

Background

The IMSR knows the Ravaged, either by affiliation or reputation, and wants them to handle a field operation that they can't undertake themselves. Ideally,

if one of the characters is a member of the IMSR, the organization calls upon him to do the group a favor that they can't do through official channels. The government needs plausible deniability in the event that anything goes awry, and if things go well, they cannot credit a group of Ravaged in any case. This does allow the heroes the opportunity to make strides forward for the Ravaged everywhere, and get a chance to investigate an ancient myth.

Here's what the scientists know. In the past month, the Germans were modernizing some of their territories in the outlying areas when intercepted radio transmissions went completely silent. Five minutes later, someone sent out a distress call on the channel, and then was heard a great roaring, followed by an explosion and screaming. A squad of rocketeers was quickly dispatched to the area where they witnessed the aftermath – a completely slagged out town with only a church still standing. When they went into the church, static filled the airwaves and the signal weakened. The last reported transmission signaled back only a final snippet, "...sword in a stone? Are you kid..?" before it went dead. This was three days ago.

Wie Gehts?

The heroes arrive in Konstanz, a small German town that is something of an anomaly. It rests on the eastern bank of Bodensee (Lake Constance). Other than the strip of land along the lake, the surrounding territory is Swiss. Konstanz is peculiarly quiet, even for a pastoral town – there are few people on the streets and they look fearfully at strangers. Professor Haas, from Berlin, is waiting for them at the local tavern. He is a haggard, haunted looking man with a slight limp, who is greying around the temples. He tells them he heard an explosion on the island – he was nervous when the Nazis arrived there anyway, and the next night he saw a beam of amber light shoot out of the center of the isle, from the Abbey. The following morning the island was aflame, and horribly burned and twisted corpses were found floating in the waters. None of the fisherman who found the bodies were harmed, though Haas detected a very high radiation level on them. He says it could only be attributed to



an extreme dosage of unfiltered Aetherium in a nuclear state, as though the victims were bathed in the stuff. He wanted to go to the island, but the Harbingers have forbidden it.

Just then the doors open, and the Harbinger, Emissary, enters.

"I am Emissary. I speak on behalf of the Wyrms. Your presence here is neither requested nor desired, and will not be tolerated. In his great benevolence, the Wyrms grants you leave to return to your homes and await the Great Change. I am permitted to field any questions you may have. The Wyrms is unafraid of you, and laughs at how little you've learned over the centuries."

If the characters ask any questions, the Wyrms fully possesses the Emissary. His body flickers with blue energies as he floats into the air, limbs akimbo. In this state as the possessor, the Wyrms is invulnerable. He answers any questions in the first person, but begins with something like..."I am the Wyrms, Creator of Worlds. I am your Vishnu, your Apocalypse, your Flood, your Rebirth. I am your Eden, and I am your Alpha and Omega. I am part of the Three. I am eternal. I am everlasting."

He answers questions with alien honesty and aplomb. In truth, he is a malfunctioning device of the highest technological order. He never refers to himself as a machine however, only as the Wyrms. The Great Change is to prepare his children (the Martians) for their return to Earth. He explains the Great Change is not the first he's performed on Earth, but the most recent. Any further information or allusions are at the GM's discretion, but may hint at the presence of the Wyrms and the Three throughout the history of Earth, and their role in shaping mankind.

Should any character attack, the Wyrms vanishes and Emissary explains to them that physical confrontation is outside of his parameters, but the other Harbingers will be more than happy to accommodate him. He is easy enough to beat down, and within the smoking husk of a shell, lies the broken remains of a Rocket Ranger.

Professor Haas is unshaken throughout this entire exchange, only remarking that they should, perhaps, finish their beers before they proceed to the island.

The Smolders

Getting to the island can be achieved through any means at the characters disposal or through the mundane use of rowboats. The latter way is the least likely to be detected, and the island is easily reached. It is still smoldering, and all of the structures are in ruin, save for two. The Abbey and the Church of Saint George. The heroes encounter some of the local citizenry shambling about - they have been infected with Aether poisoning, becoming zombies in effect. When put down, the A-Zombie infects the earth with Aetherium, and also turns other people into A-Zombies as well. This may be the first tangible proof of the dangers of Aetherium the heroes have ever faced. Do not discount the roleplaying possibilities.

Outside of the Abbey stand two of the Harbingers. They are as still as statues, reacting only if the heroes take aggressive action toward them or the Abbey.

Lights can be seen within the Church. If approached, the sound of soulful chanting can be heard from within.

The Church

Within the Church is Brother Sturgeon; he is the only one to survive in the whole town. The exposure to the deadly radiation transformed him into one of the Ravaged, granting him tremendous Strength and Toughness, and giving a ruddy golden glow to his skin. He opens the door when the heroes approach, as he's been keeping a keen eye out for any survivors.

"Come in. It's dangerous out there. The end times are upon us, I fear. I could not save the Father, and the Father could not save the flock. And look at me. I cannot leave. I cannot endanger others. Now I sit here and pray for a miracle. Perhaps you are that miracle? There is a legend you see. Would you like to hear it?"

The Legend of the Order

"We are a very small order, lost and forgotten, shoved out of sight, but that is of little import. Our order, you see,



was founded to slay dragons. I and my brothers, the rest of the order, took it to be allegorical, that dragons represented sins and evil and so on. It turns out, we were wrong. I've seen a dragon, and it saw me. We were all doing our daily chores when it breathed flame upon us. Most of us died instantly, but I survived, as did the building. Everything else turned to ruins, and burns even still. Enough about me. Now to the story proper.

Saint George was given a sword by the angels to fight back the dragons whenever they arose, in whatever form they took. The angels told him the dragons came in many forms, and were the spawn of Satan. He used the sword to put the dragon down, and was taught the secret of the Spirit Lock. He could not pass on this secret, for the angels forbade him to do so, but he whispered the secret into his blade. The blade of St. George, that later came to be known as the sword, Excalibur. We knew this sword was in the Abbey located on this very isle, and we kept an agent here to keep an eye on it, until our order dwindled down to only this one. We knew that to remove the blade from the heart stone was expressly forbidden without first slaying the dragon. To us, that meant, the sword represented the Key to Heaven on Earth, for the dragon represented our evils and our sins. We knew we would never touch it in our lifetime. This sword must be returned to the heart stone before the dragon grows too strong. Will you do it?"

The Abbey

The Abbey is currently the home of the Harbingers. Two are outside, and two patrol inside. The Abbey looks relatively unchanged, but in truth it has been reconstructed. Careful examination reveals that the building is stronger, and the components look new — brass door handles sparkle and are unscratched, leather-seated pews look unused, and so on. The Wyrms rebuilt the Church after the energies of his awakening destroyed the structure. The heart stone, set in the basement of the Church, looks to be an

ancient amalgamation of gears and wires. Someone with scientific knowledge would realize that it is a transmitter or beacon of some sort. There is a recessed slot in the side of the heart stone where the sword can slide in. An invisible energy field keeps anyone from manipulating it, and only the sword is set to the proper resonance field to penetrate it.

Should the characters return the "sword" to the "stone", the heart-stone sinks into the earth, and a pair of metal doors slide in place over it. There is a series of Martian codes on the doors, that can be manipulated to open them again, but that is another story.

Catacombs

The characters may well pursue the direct approach and fight the Harbingers first before going into the Catacombs, but to the Catacombs they must go. They can be accessed only beneath the Church. The Nazis blew up the connecting tunnels between the Church and the Abbey when they uncovered the heart stone.

In the Catacombs, the characters fight a number of A-Zombies that took refuge in the tunnels before reaching the Sword in the Stone. An incredible brawny Rocket Ranger lies dead near it. Should anyone approach, the Rocket Ranger rises to his feet. His eyes glow with a pale blue light.

"I am designated unit XCLBR. This man gave his life to hide us here. In accordance with the probability matrix, I have maintained a stand-by mode awaiting someone to wield me. The energies that enable my high-level performance abilities are already diminishing. Free energy nets have yet to be established, I fear. Return me to the transceiver unit — err, the heart stone — so I can resume a scrambling mode immediately. Engaging the Wyrms directly is ill-advised at present. The time is not yet right for direct assaults. Patience, dear boy, patience. For more details, seek out designated unit MRLN."

It winds down, and the Rocket Ranger collapses inertly to the ground.



HARBINGER

Appearing as a coppery metal angel, a Harbinger's eyes glow a hellish red.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d10

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Obligations (Major)

Edges: Brawny, Strong Willed, Flight 10"

Gear: Flaming Sword (Str +d10)

Notes: The Harbingers are the missing Rocket Rangers. They have been converted by the Wyrms into thralls, and are little more than shells, extensions of the Wyrms. However, he expended such a great deal of energy that he needs to collect additional Aetheric reserves, before he can begin his plans. For the present, the Wyrms are weak and vulnerable, and not looking for a confrontation.

A-ZOMBIE

Humans exposed to high doses of Aetherium frequently come back as A-Zombies, ravenous undead that continue to radiate Aetherium. Scientists speculate that A-Zombies are part of the Martian plan to contaminate Earth in hopes of one day colonizing it.

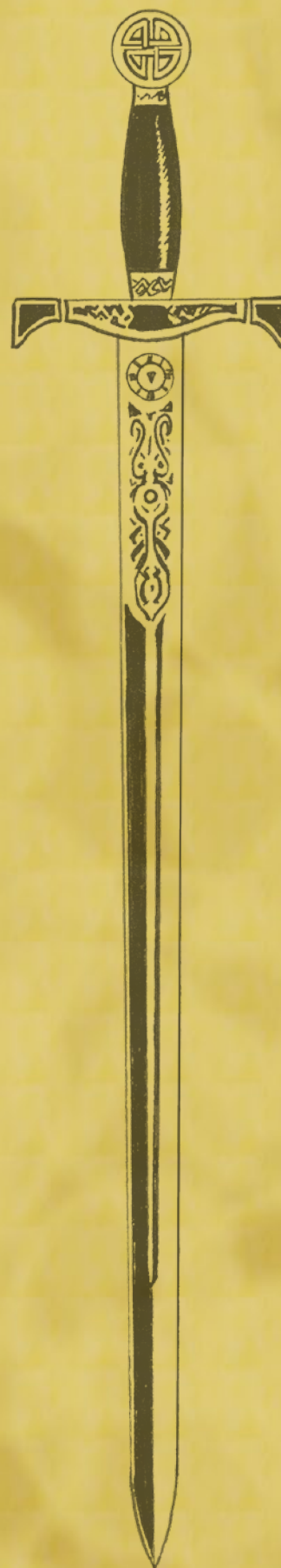
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d10, Investigation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str
- **Fearless:** Zombies are immune to Fear and Intimidation
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage (except to the head).
- **Weakness (Head):** Shots to an A-Zombie's head are +2 damage.



Gold Plates of Mormon

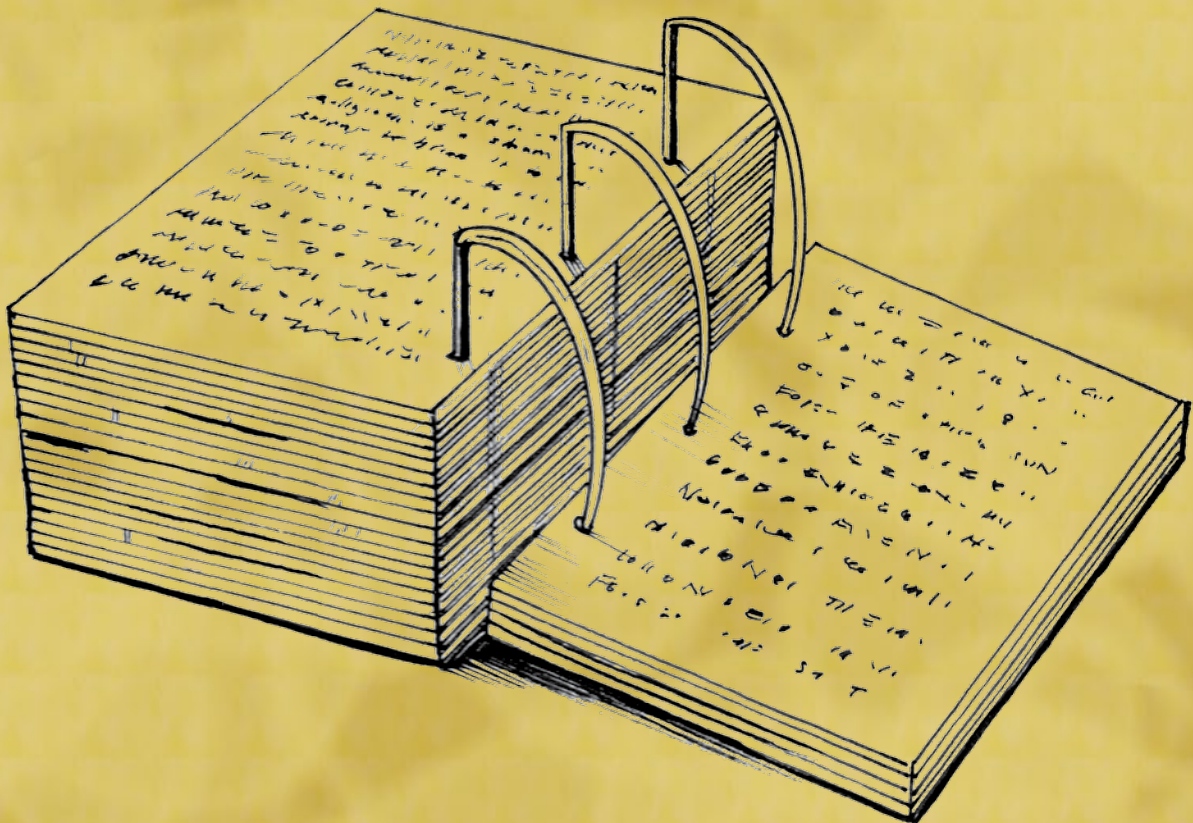
Throughout the ages, the human race has sought to make sense of the universe. Many times over the years this has been expressed through religion and belief in a higher power, in some grand design to the world. Often times this faith comes from strange or even supernatural sources. Such is the case with the Church of Latter Day Saints – better known as Mormonism – and the Gold Plates of Mormon that serve as the foundation of their religion.

History

The history of the Gold Plates of Mormon goes back many hundreds of years and recounts the stories of ancient American civilizations. The plates are a chronicle of events written primarily by Mormon, a prophet-historian of the lost race of people known as the Nephites. Some of the information also comes from his son, Moroni, who was the last of the Nephite prophets.

The details contained within the Gold Plates span a time frame between roughly 600 B.C. and A.D. 400, but it wasn't until much later that the world became aware of them. It was a poor son of a farming family in the New York area named Joseph Smith Jr., who – under the guidance of the Angel Moroni – was directed to the relics in 1823. Buried in a hill called Cumorah near Manchester, New York, Smith uncovered the Gold Plates in 1827 after four years of annual visits and commandments from the angel.

The announcement of the ancient golden book attracted many types of people to Smith, but the young man explained that the Angel Moroni forbade anyone but himself from gazing upon the relic until a later date. Smith and his wife moved to Pennsylvania where he began diligent work on translating the historic record, which was written in a strange language he called “reformed Egyptian.”



The translation process took the better part of two years, during which Smith would gaze upon the Gold Plates through a seer stone. In the early part of this process he dictated the translation to his friend Martin Harris, who quickly became a convert to the religious teachings spelled out by the golden relic. Harris' wife, however, was not convinced and demanded to see the early translation.

Smith reluctantly agreed, and Harris showed his wife the first 116 pages of what they had deciphered so far from the Gold Plates. Afterward those pages mysteriously vanished. Neither Harris nor his wife could explain the disappearance, and the Angel Moroni took back the Gold Plates as punishment for the transgression. When they were returned several months later, Smith could not translate the original 116 pages again, instead taking an abridged version of their details contained later in the text. Though Martin Harris was not asked to return as scribe, he remained a devout follower of Smith and his teachings.

In 1829 Joseph Smith completed the translation, which formed what would later become known as The Book of Mormon. According to Smith himself, however, a portion of the Gold Plates was sealed and contained "a revelation from God, from the beginning of the world to the ending thereof." The exact details of this sealed portion of the golden book has never been fully disclosed, though rumors persist that the truth behind them has been revealed to certain high-ranking members of the Mormon Church.

After the translation was complete, but before returning the Gold Plates to the Angel Moroni, Smith was given permission to show the relic to a group of witnesses. The Three Witnesses saw it first in Smith's home, and upon returning the Gold Plates to the Cumorah hill in mid-1829 another group called the Eight Witnesses claimed to have gazed upon the holy plates.

Cumorah is now a holy missionary site where the Mormons protect the area from thieves and robbers. Are the Gold Plates still contained somewhere in that New York hill? It's possible, but the Mormons certainly aren't speaking on the subject.

Joseph Smith Jr. went on to form the Church of Latter Day Saints based on the religious teachings contained within the Gold Plates of Mormon. The Book of Mormon formed the basis of this religion, which carried the new church from New York to Illinois to the Great Salt Lake Valley in present-day Utah. The Mormons there called their new home Deseret and were led by Brigham Young, an influential prophet and high-ranking leader of the Church of Latter Day Saints.

The church and its members are still strong activists in 1936, wielding considerable power within the state of Utah and specifically its capital, Salt Lake City. These people trace their lives and faith back to the original Gold Plates of Mormon found by Joseph Smith Jr. over a century ago, and this faith has sustained them through the years.

Physical Description

Since the original Gold Plates of Mormon were seen by only twelve witnesses, finding an exact description of the relic should be easy, but it is quite the contrary. Each of the twelve witnesses describes the book in slightly different manners, adding their own religious experiences upon gazing upon the written words of ancient American prophets. The most common thread amongst the descriptions is that it was a stack of thin gold sheets like leaves bound together by three large silver rings to form a rough binding. The sheets were described as "golden as the rays of the dawning sun," though exact accounts vary.

The Gold Plates were written in "reformed Egyptian," a dead language used by the ancient Nephite people. Joseph Smith was only able to translate the book through the aid of a seer stone, which allowed him to dictate the words to a scribe.

Powers

The power of the Gold Plates of Mormon comes primarily from the detailed historic account contained within its golden pages. Anyone who gazes upon this powerful religious relic must make a Spirit roll; those who fail are blinded for 1d6 minutes by a flash of holy light.



Possession of the Gold Plates represents a huge boost in the power of faith. Anyone who holds the book gains the ability to utilize the following powers: *Armor* (cocooned in a golden warmth), *Boost Trait: Spirit* (the recipient radiates a holy aura), *Healing* (pass the golden light to the recipient), and *Smite* (speak with the Word of God). These abilities are used with a Faith d12 skill check. Reading the Gold Plates is not necessary to utilize these powers and they function otherwise like the Arcane Background (Miracles) edge.

If the possessor ever disobeys one of the Commandment set forth by the prophets Mormon and Moroni he must disavow looking upon or touching the relic for a period of no less than one week. If the transgressor disobeys this command, the Angel Moroni curses the person, permanently lowering his Spirit die type by two points. If this drops the die type below d4 the person dies a most horrible death, his soul damned by his unhealthy actions toward the word of God.

Rumor & Speculation

The most pressing question regarding the Gold Plates is the contents contained within the sealed portion. Joseph Smith did not break open this portion of the text, and so it is not contained in The Book of Mormon that forms the backbone of the Church of Latter Day Saints. The only information provided by the Angel Moroni was that it contained “a revelation from God, from the beginning of the world to the ending thereof” – which could mean a lot of things. The Mormon Church is headed by a President, but behind him is a secretive group called the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Is it possible these powerful men and women know the secrets contained in this sealed portion? A recent surge in missionary activities in Central America may be a key to this mystery.

Ravaged Tale: The Lost Leaves of Lehi

Many people living in the post-Martian invasion world of 1936 know that truth is stranger than fiction. Less known, however, is that faith can be stranger than truth, and nowhere is this more true than the history

spelled out in The Book of Mormon as translated from the Gold Plates. When one religious zealot claims to have found a copy of the lost 116 pages of The Book of Lehi, it becomes a race against many powerful forces to set right the course of history.

Background

Joseph Smith Jr. translated the Gold Plates of Mormon from roughly 1827 through 1829. During this time he was aided by several scribes, the first of whom was Martin Harris. Harris’ wife did not believe in the work being done by the men, and asked for proof of their diligence and late hours. After much pestering, Smith reluctantly gave Harris what they had translated so far to prove to his wife the validity of their work.

These 116 pages were subsequently lost under mysterious circumstances, and the Angel Moroni took back the Gold Plates from Smith. When the relic was returned to Smith for continued translation, he was not allowed to re-do the lost work for penance. The irretrievable pages were the writings of Lehi, who was the father of Nephi the prophet, and collectively known as The Book of Lehi.

Smith was able to translate the first portion of The Book of Nephi which contained an abridged version of The Book of Lehi, but the details contained therein were scarce. Lehi’s book covered the family’s exile from Jerusalem and trek across the Arabian Peninsula in greater detail – including cryptic comments about a “ship made of steel and silver that sailed not on water” that they followed at night. Lehi met the visitors from this “water-less ship” and was shown the path to the Promised Land with their aid.

All of these details were “lost” by Martin Harris’ wife, who hid them in a secret panel of Harris’ traveling trunk. Soon afterward, the two were split, whereupon Martin took the trunk and followed Smith. Eventually the trunk was sold to a furniture store. It subsequently passed through many hands until, through accident of fate, it came into the possession of Elder Caleb Dosker, a high-ranking member of the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City.

Elder Caleb made the incredible discovery mostly by accident in early 1936. He quickly realized what he



had found and was fascinated by Lehi's description of the tribe's journey through the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. Unfortunately, Caleb had grown disenchanted with the Church of Latter Day Saints and decides to publish the work on his own.

He only has funding for a batch of twenty copies that he has a small publisher in New York City complete. Somehow the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles receives news of the publication, and they act quickly. Sending members of the Danites – the Mormon secret police dating back to the mob-filled years in Missouri and Illinois – the situation is very nearly resolved. Elder Caleb is imprisoned, and copies of the book, entitled *The Lost Leaves of Lehi*, are confiscated.

Except for one...

Big Things in Small Packages

Whether by accident or design, one of the heroes is the recipient of a copy of Elder Caleb's *The Lost Leaves of Lehi*. A hero with an academic background or standing is preferred, but Elder Caleb's connections range far and wide, so he could be a hero of any type. The chosen hero and his companions are enjoying lunch wherever they are when a courier drops off the package one sunny afternoon.

The contents of the small package are wrapped in plain brown paper bound with string. The hero's name and address is clearly spelled out on the front with no return address. Opening it reveals a thin paper-bound book roughly 100 pages thick with its title plainly spelled out on the cover. There are no illustrations on the cover or inside.

Written inside the cover is a note addressed to the hero. It reads:

"If you are reading this it means my mission has been a success and they did not get all copies. Please take this book to Apostle Ephraim Van Wicke in Salt Lake City – he will know what to do. Trust no one. God watch over all of us! –Elder Caleb Dosker"

Heroes with the appropriate background in theology can make a Common Knowledge check at -4 to identify the book by its title; a Mormon character

receives no penalty on the roll. Skimming the book takes an hour after which the hero has gleaned its details – that it is an account of Lehi, father of Nephi, around the year 600 BC, following the family's journey through the Arabian Peninsula from Jerusalem to the "Promised Land." The last pages detail their arrival in a verdant land of lush jungles in the shadow of the Star Rock Mountain.

Seeking Apostle Ephraim

Heroes can make inquiries as to the identity of Apostle Ephraim Van Wicke, aided by the knowledge that he is somewhere in Salt Lake City. By title alone they should assume he is part of the Mormon Church, and this assumption would be correct. He is in fact a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the shadow government behind both the church and the state of Utah.

Ephraim Van Wicke is a powerful and very spiritual man. A firm believer in the teachings of *The Book of Mormon*, Ephraim gained the acquaintance of Elder Caleb many years ago when they attended seminary together. He currently lives and works in Salt Lake City, which an Investigation roll can quickly determine.

The Danites Are Coming

Unfortunately, the Danites are in the process of tracking the last copy of Elder Caleb's published work, and they are very efficient. Their encounter with the heroes can happen in one of several possible ways.

If the heroes wait more than a few days to travel to Salt Lake City, the Danites show up to kick their butts into gear. Otherwise they can attempt to ambush the heroes on their way to Utah; either way their tactics are the same.

The heroes are approached by a young man wearing plain clothes and carrying a copy of *The Book of Mormon*. He introduces himself as Deacon John and asks if the heroes have been introduced to the Church of Latter Day Saints. While their attention is on him, a group of Danites (one for each hero) sneak up behind and try to bludgeon the heroes into submission. Deacon John helps out with his Faith powers, which somehow continue to function despite his actions...



The Danites are fiercely loyal to the Church of Latter Day Saints and will stop at nothing to retrieve The Lost Leaves of Lehi. Their devotion extends to the point of swallowing cyanide capsules if captured. Even if one is somehow captured, he refuses to speak under any circumstances, voluntarily biting off his own tongue if the situation presents itself.

The Next Steps of the Journey

The heroes' arrival in Salt Lake City and eventual meeting with Apostle Ephraim are left up to the GM to devise. Meeting a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is no easy feat, and the heroes may have to resort to unconventional means. There is a hidden anti-church movement in Salt Lake City that could assist them.

The question about Apostle Ephraim Van Wicke's loyalties is left to the GM. He can either be a friend or foe, and even if he starts as an ally he can easily become an opponent in the future.

If the heroes are interested, it's possible that Apostle Ephraim decides to fund a secret expedition following the path laid out in the lost 116 pages. He doesn't think it's safe just yet to go public, but if they were to verify the story of Lehi ... ? Where this journey leads is a mystery – perhaps to Central America, perhaps to a strange land in the center of the earth

DANITE ENFORCER

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Streetwise d6

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

Hindrances: Dark Secret (secret Mormon police), Loyal (Mormon Church)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Frenzy

Gear: Club (Str+d4), black clothing, black mask

(WC) DEACON JOHN, DANITE LEADER

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

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

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Dark Secret (secret Mormon police), Loyal (Mormon Church)

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

Gear: Black clothing, cross, Book of Mormon

Powers: *Bolt* (red and white twisting energy arc), *fear* (speak the power of God), *puppet* (obey the word of God). 15 Power Points.



Golden Fleece of the Argonauts

One of the most recognized stories of Ancient Greece is the legendary tale of Jason and his band of Argonauts who sailed across a treacherous sea to claim a great treasure – the Golden Fleece of the winged ram Chrysomallos. The tale is an ancient one and has survived the ages with many variations and interpretations. But the object of the quest, that mythical fleece which Jason was tasked with retrieving, has almost passed into antiquity.

History

Like most Greek legends, the story of the Golden Fleece begins with a god. Poseidon was the Greek god of the sea, a powerful deity capable of great destruction and vengeance. He was also commonly possessed with a fearful lust and sired many legendary heroes and beings in mythology. The particular creature

that caught Poseidon's fancy at the start of this tale was Theophane, a nymph and daughter of Helios the sun titan, whom the sea god transported to a remote island. There he transformed her into an ewe and himself into a ram, both hidden amongst the flocks of the island to hide from the nymph's other suitors.

The result of this union was Chrysomallos a mighty winged ram with a golden fleece. The mythical creature appears next in the story of Phrixus and Helle, twins born of a union between Athamas and the cloud goddess Nephele. Athamas was king of Orchomenus, a city in southeastern Greece, who later spurned Nephele in favor of Ino, queen of the Greek city Thebes. With the cloud goddess departed a great drought came to Orchomenus, which Ino blamed on her two stepchildren.



Ino planned on sacrificing them both to appease the gods and lift the drought, but Nephele appeared to her children in the form of Chrysomallos. Phrixus and Helle departed on the back of the winged ram, but during the trip Helle fell off into the strait now named after her, Hellespont. Phrixus and the ram arrived in the city of Colchis on the eastern edge of the Black Sea. There the young man sacrificed Chrysomallos in the name of Poseidon and presented the Golden Fleece to King Aeëtes, who in return gave Phrixus his daughter. The fleece was hung on a tree in a garden sacred to Ares, guarded by a dragon that never slept.

The story of the Golden Fleece turns toward Jason at this point, who was the rightful heir of the Greek city of Iolcus. His uncle Pelias imprisoned his father Aeson in a power-hungry bid for all of Thessaly, going so far as to kill all of Aeson's descendants. But Jason was hidden away and raised by the centaur Chiron in the forest.

Pelias was warned by an oracle that a man with one sandal would one day lay claim to his throne. Some years later Pelias was holding games in honor of Poseidon, when an arriving guest was announced as "the man with one sandal". It was Jason, who had lost his sandal in the mud after helping an old woman (who was actually the goddess Hera). Pelias recognized the rightful heir, and asked what Jason would do if confronted with the man who would be his downfall.

Divinely inspired by Hera, Jason replied that he would send the man on a quest for the Golden Fleece in Colchis, which Pelias only happily obliged. Jason assembled a crew of fifty heroes and demigods from across all of Greece, including such legendary figures as Heracles, son of Zeus; Theseus, slayer of the Minotaur; Laertes, father of Odysseus; and Argus, builder of the mythical ship Argo from which the story takes its name.

Jason and his band of Argonauts sailed from Iolcus and partook in many adventures, including landing on the island of Lemnos populated solely by promiscuous women, fending off a band of harpies to protect the blind prophet Phineus, and crossing the Cyanean Rocks that would crush ships on a whim. Eventually

the crew of the Argo arrived in Colchis, where King Aeëtes was waiting.

The king of Colchis demanded three impossible tasks be completed before giving up the Golden Fleece. These were to yoke the fire-breathing bronze bulls known as the Khalkotauroi and to plow a field; sow the teeth of a dragon into the freshly plowed field; and finally to overcome the Sleepless Dragon that guarded the Ares Garden where the Golden Fleece hung.

Jason fell into a deep depression at the daunting nature of these tasks, but through a series of divine connections the daughter of King Aeëtes, Medea, was made to fall in love with the legendary prince. With her aid Jason was able to complete the tasks and claim the Golden Fleece, which they took and fled from Colchis, chased by the forces of the king. After a few more trials the crew of the Argo returned to Iolcus, whereupon Jason claimed the throne of the king.

After the story of the Argonauts the Golden Fleece disappears into obscurity, its current whereabouts unknown.

Physical Description

The Golden Fleece appears as a large cured ram skin with thick, curly golden hair covering one side and a smooth tanning on the reverse. The hair constantly shimmers and sparkles, a quality which it never loses regardless of the amount of available light. It can easily be worn over the shoulders as a cloak, and if worn in such a way the fleece resizes itself so it never drags on the ground. The horns of Chrysomallos the winged ram still adorn the top of the relic.

Powers

The Golden Fleece constantly sheds light in a Medium Burst template from the golden hair that adorns it. If worn over the shoulders the wearer is immune to all damage from fire, regardless of source. This includes magical fire, such as that from a fiery bolt, and natural/supernatural fire, such as a dragon's breath weapon.

This relic also has the ability to heal the sick of their ailments and mend grievous wounds. By wrapping



the target in the Golden Fleece's embrace, all wounds stop bleeding and any poison or disease effects cease immediately. After leaving the target bound in the relic for a total of 10 minutes (during which the target can take no actions) the fleece flares with golden light and the wrapped recipient is healed of all wounds, including Permanent Crippling Injuries, and all poisons and diseases are cleansed.

If the Golden Fleece's healing powers are used on someone who is Ravaged (a Wild Card), it also bestows its fire immunity to the target. This effect wears off after twenty-four hours, however.

Rumors and Speculation

The current whereabouts of this powerful relic are currently unknown, but there are many people and organizations who would like to lay claim to such an item. One specific and influential such group is the Freemasons, who seek the Golden Fleece of the Argonauts to decipher its healing secrets. With this knowledge they would be able to purify the human body of disease and heal the wounded – but use it only for those loyal to the new world order that would be created. The only lead the Freemasons have is that the Golden Fleece is said to reside “in the home of Chiron on the cavernous slopes of Mount Pelion.” All expeditions to this mountain in southeastern Thessaly in central Greece have turned up nothing so far.

Ravaged Tale: Ace in the Hole

The legend of the Argonauts and their leader Jason has inspired the world for generations. One such man, Prince Paul of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, views the legend and retrieval of the Golden Fleece as no mere allegory – he sees it as the only way to unite his disparate people under one rule.

Background

In 1918 a collection of small countries and Austrian-Hungarian provinces united to form the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Ruled initially by a representative government and then by a royal dictatorship in 1929, the kingdom stretched from the Western Balkans to central Europe, and was comprised of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia,

and Montenegro primarily. It was a very mixed bag of cultures and people, all of whom wanted their own nation-state to govern.

The situation came to a head in 1934 when King Alexander I was assassinated in Marseille, France. It grabbed the world's attention, as this was the first assassination caught on film. The assassin was a Croatian nationalist associated with the Ustase, a revolutionary movement dedicated to a free and independent Croatia and Macedonia.

The next in line to the fractured Yugoslavian kingdom was an 11-year old boy, Peter II, but the minor was not allowed to take the throne. Instead, a council of regents was appointed, with King Alexander's cousin, Prince Paul, the de facto leader of the regency.

Prince Paul grew up in the Drava Banovina province of Yugoslavia, specifically the capital city of Ljubljana. This city traced its origins back to Jason himself, when he and the Argonauts got turned around on their return trip to Iolcus. Some of the Argonauts stayed in the area, and the city of Ljubljana arose around them. The culture and history of this area was distinctly separate from the rest of the country as a result of this, and Prince Paul grew up memorizing the brave tales of Jason and his band of heroes.

Now, with the Kingdom of Yugoslavia struggling to remain unified and the heir to the throne a mere young boy, Prince Paul sees a divine quest in front of him. He announced to the council of regents that he would unify the disparate factions and peoples of Yugoslavia by retrieving the famed Golden Fleece of the Argonauts. The regents scoffed at the notion and claimed the undertaking to be futile, to which Prince Paul replied “if this impossible task can be achieved, then I believe we can be united under impossible odds.”

Unfortunately, members of the revolutionary force Ustase, who assassinated King Alexander I, have learned of the prince's plans and have set out to prevent the reclamation of the Golden Fleece. They fear the unification that Prince Paul seeks, as it would undermine their efforts over the last ten years.



Prince Paul now needs a crew of heroes to venture forth on the journey with him, on a quest that leads him to the casinos of Monte Carlo.

Red and Black ...

The scenario begins with the heroes indulging in a game of roulette in the Monte Carlo Casino. This world-class gambling establishment is located in the Principality of Monaco on the southeastern shore of France overlooking the Mediterranean, and is so exclusive it is illegal for residents of Monaco to even enter. The heroes are joined at the tables by a well-dressed man who introduces himself as Zorislav. During the game the man, an agent of Prince Paul, is attacked by an assassin who flees into the crowd.

Read the following to begin:

The subtle and beautiful lights of the Monte Carlo Casino in Monaco always mesmerize, and tonight is no exception. You find yourselves at a low-stakes roulette table, the soft sounds of a soothing jazz trio in the corner mingling with the calls of card dealers and the shouts of winners and losers alike. Monte Carlo never ceases to amaze.

If the heroes are interested, use the following guidelines to cover half an hour of roulette. Each hero puts in a certain amount of cash, no less than \$10 and no more than \$200 (it's a small stakes roulette game, after all!). Each hero then makes a Gambling check, and for each success and raise they get 50% of their earnings back. So if they put down \$10 and get a success, they walk away with \$5.00 after half an hour; with a raise it would be \$10, two raises \$15, etc. If the hero ever gets a one on the skill die, regardless of the Wild Die, he loses the whole bet.

After whatever amount of time you think is appropriate, a well-dressed man with dark skin and slicked hair appears. Introducing himself in a thick accent as Zorislav, he makes polite small talk with the heroes, gambling the table minimum if the game continues (he has Gambling d6 with no Wild Die).

... Black and Blue

After Zorislav has at least learned the heroes' names, the assassin strikes. A tall thin man with a narrow moustache and dressed in a tuxedo "accidentally" bumps into Zorislav from behind. As Zorislav turns to apologize, his eyes go wide as the knife is plunged into his side!

Have the heroes make Notice rolls; those who succeed are dealt a card. The assassin is a Frenchman named Leon the Wolf, and immediately at the top of the round he dashes into the crowd. Time for a chase through the congested Monte Carlo Casino - use a Range Increment of 1 with the heroes and Leon the Wolf starting out at Near range (2 Range Increments apart). The casino floor is considered Thick Obstacles.

Any hero who pauses to check on Zorislav finds the man is dying, and he passes a slip of paper to the hero just before he succumbs. Written on the note is the name of the theater at the casino, seat numbers (enough for each hero), and the time eight o'clock.

If the heroes don't catch the elusive Leon after ten chase rounds, he disappears into the bowels of the casino's inner hallways. If they do catch him he fights tenaciously, and after only one round is joined by hired thugs (one for each hero). Leon is a despicable villain who delights in taunting his enemies. When things go badly for his side he conveniently disappears into the crowd, making him an easily recurring villain for the heroes.

Night at the Opera

After the scuffle the Monte Carlo Casino security arrives and questions the heroes about what happened. They recognize the name of Leon the Wolf and indicate he is a renowned assassin and master of disguise. They perform a search of the casino grounds but turn up no trace of him.

The only clue left for the heroes is the handwritten note Zorislav gave them before he died. The opera seats have been paid for by Prince Paul, and the box office hands them the tickets after they identify which seats they are looking for. In the grand theater of the Monte Carlo Casino a performance of Jules Massenet's Don Quichotte begins at 8:30.



Heroes who take their seats anytime before that find themselves seated next to a young man with fair skin and a strong jaw. He introduces himself as Prince Paul and asks what happened to his friend Zorislav. The prince already knows what transpired, but he wants to hear it from the heroes.

After the story, Prince Paul says that the assassin was hired by rebellious factions within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In order to unify his country, he needs to retrieve the fabled Golden Fleece of the Argonauts. However, to complete this task he needs his own band of heroes, his own "Argonauts." The heroes have proven themselves to him, and Prince Paul asks if they are willing to undergo a perilous journey to find the legendary relic.

If the heroes agree, Prince Paul is delighted. He asks to meet them in a week in Ljubljana, the large capital city of Drava Banovina province in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. He promises to explain more at that time.

The GM is free at this point to create an epic quest for the Golden Fleece. One possibility is that Prince Paul has custom-built a zeppelin called the *Luba Argo* in which he and his own "Argonauts" (i.e., the heroes) travel the world in search of the powerful relic.

(WC) LEON THE WOLF

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d12, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Throwing d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 11; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Arrogant, Vengeful

Edges: Acrobat, Bring It On!, Combat Reflexes, First Strike, Fleet Footed, Hard to Kill, Improved Block, Improved Dodge, Improved Frenzy, Improved Level

Headed, Improved Nerves of Steel, Martial Artist, Two-Fisted

Gear: Fists (Str+d6), tuxedo, knives (Str+d4), \$75

MONTE CARLO THUG (1 PER HERO)

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Streetwise d6

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

Hindrances: Loyal (Leon the Wolf)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Frenzy

Gear: Club (Str+d4), \$10 each



Gungnir, Odin's Spear

The sagas of Norse Mythology are filled with great gods facing off against terrible giants and other gods in cataclysmic affairs and titanic battles, the results of which were many and varied. None of the gods were so mighty as Odin, who was a god of war, death, wisdom and magic. Many of the Norse sagas tell of the powerful relics and weapons possessed by their deities, and Odin had his share of magical equipment in the old tales. One of his more recognizable weapons was Gungnir, the Spear of Odin.

History

According to legend, Gungnir was forged by the Sons of Ivaldi, a band of dwarves who were master blacksmiths. From their forges came such legendary items as *Skidbladnir* (a magical ship that could be folded up like a cloth) and the golden strands of hair made for Sif after Loki had her original hair cut. Gungnir was a spear like no other, and the greatest of the dwarf blacksmiths – Dvalin – took great pride in his creation.

It was Loki, god of mischief and trickery, who stole Gungnir from the Sons of Ivaldi, after being forced to retrieve it by Thor as punishment for cutting Sif's beautiful hair. Gungnir was presented to Odin, who found it to his liking, and he then inscribed magical runes of power onto the spear's tip. The runes caused the spear to never miss its target and always return to its owner's hand when thrown.

When war between the two factions of the gods, the Aesir and Vanir, finally broke out, it was Odin who started the terrible conflict by throwing Gungnir over the heads of his Vanir enemies.

The Norse legend of Ragnarok, the "Twilight of the Gods," foretells that Odin will ride into battle before his assembled Einherjar (warriors who died in battle) with Gungnir firm in hand. He will pierce the hide of Fenrir, the monstrous wolf, but the wound will not be fatal. Fenrir will in turn kill Odin during this climactic battle, and be slain by one of Odin's sons afterward.

Before Ragnarok, however, Odin knew that the time of his kin would fade into obscurity. A relatively unknown legend recounts that Odin would inter his weapon in the deepest canyon of the Norwegian mountains until the end time of Ragnarok. No mortal has discovered the site, but there are many places where it could be hiding.

Gungnir was not just a mythical weapon to the Norse Vikings, but also a symbol of lordship and command over men. In the hands of Odin, king of the gods, it was a fearsome tool used to cow enemies and inspire confidence in assembled warriors.

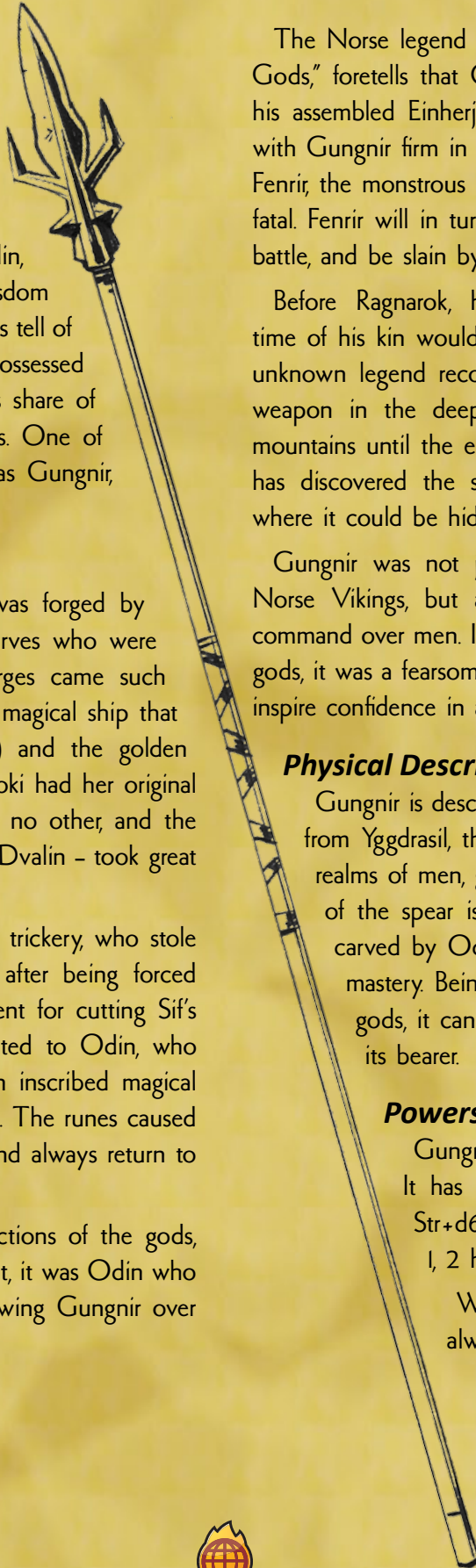
Physical Description

Gungnir is described as being made of ashwood from Yggdrasil, the World-Tree, that supports the realms of men, gods, and in between. The head of the spear is inscribed with runes of power, carved by Odin himself after he learned their mastery. Being a powerful relic of the Norse gods, it can transform itself to fit the size of its bearer.

Powers

Gungnir is a potent weapon of war. It has the following statistics: Damage Str+d6+5; Weight 5; Parry +2; Reach 1, 2 handed.

When used in combat Gungnir always hits regardless of the actual



result of the Fighting roll. However, if the attack would normally hit, the runes cut into the head of the magical spear will flare to life and draw power from its bearer. Each point of difference between the Fighting roll and the target's Parry causes the bearer to suffer a point of damage. Ignore Armor for these purposes, and instead of causing Wounds it causes levels of Fatigue. The Fatigue goes away at a rate of one level per minute. Gungnir has the same draining power when thrown.

If the spear is thrown it returns immediately to the thrower's hands after striking its target.

Rumors and Speculation

Gungnir is a powerful weapon, and in the hands of the truly wicked it could be used to sow great destruction and death across the land. In Germania, Hitler has sent teams of archeologists around the globe to search for lost relics and artifacts, with squads specifically sent to Scandinavia. His interest in Norse mythology and runes especially is well known, and if the Nazis were to gain possession of Odin's Spear there is no telling what they would be able to accomplish. Other groups seek the relic as well, including a deep-seated cult in Norway and Sweden known as the Wolves of Loki. These fanatics wish to bring about Ragnarok and end the world with a cleansing of the earth and gods. Whether these deranged cultists are working with, against, or completely oblivious to the Nazis remains to be seen.

Ravaged Tale: The Tomb of Odin

At the behest of an immortal Viking spirit the heroes travel to Norway to meet a professor at the University of Oslo. There he has made an incredible discovery regarding an ancient temple of Odin located somewhere in the heart of the Jotunheimen Mountains. Unfortunately, a group of radicals called the Wolves of Loki seek to stop the expedition, and the heroes must race against this apocalypse cult to reach the ancient site where Odin's greatest weapon is said to rest. In the mountain cave the heroes will need all the help they

can get when they face a dreaded draugr jötunn, the bloodthirsty spirit of a dead giant.

Background

Many secrets of terrible power and ancient decree dwell within the forgotten corners of the earth. One such corner is the western coast of Norway, where the jagged peaks of the Scandinavian Mountains rise. These are not the tallest mountains in the world, but centuries upon centuries of glacier movement and ice flows have created steep cliffs and breathtaking views.

A legend amongst the Norwegian people dating back to the era of the Vikings relates that somewhere in the Jotunheimens, a particularly rough range of the Scandinavian Mountains, is located the last and greatest temple to Odin the All-Father. It is here where Gungnir is interred, awaiting Ragnarok so that it might be used against Fenrir the wolf, son of Loki.

Many men have gone searching for this temple, which the legends call the Tomb of Odin. Most die somewhere in the craggy peaks of the Jotunheimens, searching for the lost relics of the king of the Norse gods. But one man has found clues to the fabled site.

Professor Sigvard Utterstrom of the University of Oslo has cracked the code to a recently discovered Norse runestone. The runestone details the site where Odin concealed his spear to await his coming as the herald of Ragnarok, a place "where the light of the rising sun struck the invisible rocks through the keyhole, on the shores of Heimdall's lake." After consulting with what few maps and notes of the region might possibly pertain to Heimdall's lake, he has so far been unable to make a connection.

The Norwegian professor's translation has reached the well-connected ears of the Wolves of Loki, a radical group seeking to bring about Ragnarok. They believe they can hasten the Twilight of the Gods by recovering Gungnir and freeing their imprisoned god, Loki. They need the information Professor Utterstrom has in order to find the Tomb of Odin, and they close in on him at his office.



Luckily someone is watching from the other side, however. One of the Einherjar, spirits of Viking warriors who have fallen in battle, sees the pieces of this game in motion and decides to make a play. Erik Bloodaxe, a legendary Viking, chooses a group of heroes to intervene and prevent Gungnir from falling into the hands of the Wolves of Loki.

The Valhalla Visitor

The scenario begins with the heroes gathered a table for dinner, perhaps alone or at a restaurant (GM choice). The Einherjar, Erik Bloodaxe, makes his thunderous appearance before them, commanding them to seek out Professor Utterstrom at the University of Oslo to stop the Wolves of Loki. He also gives them a clue to finding Heimdall's lake – "protected by his mothers."

Read or paraphrase the following to begin:

The evening's meal is interrupted by a gust of chill wind, though glancing around you find no source for such a gale. Your bones momentarily chilled, you are startled when suddenly the lights die down and inky darkness descends in an instant. After a paused breath, a sparkling image materializes before you – a hulking man stepping as if from a dream. He is dressed as an ancient Viking raider, with a flowing red beard and a large blood-encrusted axe gripped firmly in both hands. His eyes, dark and brooding beneath the dented helmet, scan you for a moment.

"From the gates of Valhalla have I traveled," thunders the apparition, raising his massive axe threateningly, "and you shall heed the word of Erik Bloodaxe! The Wolves of Loki seek to bring about Ragnarok, but it is not time for the gods to do battle. Find Utterstrom in Oslo, and then seek the lake protected by the mothers of Heimdall. Waste no time, and go with the blessings of the All-Father."

With nary a word more the ghostly Viking disappears, and the lights return with a flicker.

The heroes have just been visited by Erik Bloodaxe, one of the Einherjar who are gathered from the field of battle and brought forth to Valhalla by valkyries. An academic or linguist expert can make a Common Knowledge check at -2 to identify Utterstrom as an expert in Norse mythology who teaches at the University of Oslo.

The reference to the "mothers of Heimdall" doesn't mean much unless they have the information possessed by the professor, but a hero with knowledge of Norse mythology can make a Common Knowledge check to remember that Heimdall was supposedly the son of nine mothers. This proves the key to finding the identified lake from the runestone.

The heroes should feel a great burden has been placed on their shoulders; after all, they are heroes, and they have been chosen by a Viking warrior from ages past to stop the Wolves of Loki. Though Erik Bloodaxe did not identify a particular timeline, he did specifically tell them to "waste no time," so they should be motivated to seek out Utterstrom without delay.

Wolves at the Door

Chartering a plane to Norway should prove no difficult task for the heroes, especially if one of them is a pilot to begin with. The airport at Oslo is easy to navigate, and most of the people speak English fairly well. The University of Oslo is located in a central part of the bustling commercial city, as any of the friendly natives can point out.

As the heroes make their way to the offices of Professor Utterstrom have them make Notice checks at -2. Anyone who succeeds spots a lanky, ill-kempt man watching and following them from a distance. If the heroes turn around at all or give any indication that they have spotted him, he disappears into the crowd. This is one of the Wolves of Loki watching new arrivals at the airport.

The University of Oslo is an impressive academic institution and the oldest university in all of Norway.



Sigvard Utterstrom is a professor in the Department of Archaeology, Conservation, and History in the Humanities Building, and the front desk clerks are happy to point the heroes to his office. As the heroes approach they notice the door is slightly ajar, and with a successful Notice roll they can hear low voices speaking in Norwegian in the room. Anyone who speaks Norwegian and listens for a moment hears a man telling another to “give up the secrets of the runestone.”

Upon entering, the heroes surprise a group of Wolves of Loki accosting Professor Utterstrom. There is one cultist plus one for each hero present, and they all have their Lugers drawn and ready. Professor Utterstrom is a non-combatant who cowers behind his desk during the shooting.

So fierce is the loyalty and fanaticism of the Wolves of Loki that they fight to the death against the heroes. Campus police arrive after the combat, whom Utterstrom handles by explaining the situation.

After the cultists have been dispatched, the Norwegian professor thanks the heroes profusely and asks why they came to see him. He is shocked when told about Erik Bloodaxe, explaining that it was an Einherjar who visited them – the spirit of a warrior fallen in battle. When they recount his words about Heimdall's mothers, Utterstrom slaps his forehead in frustration and cries out “of course!”

He explains that he just finished translating a runestone that indicated the fabled Tomb of Odin, the resting place for his magical weapons, was located in the Jotunheimen Mountains on the shores of “Heimdall's lake.” He hadn't figured it out until the heroes mentioned it, but there is a remote lake in the mountain range that has nine huge stones situated unevenly along the shore. Heimdall supposedly had nine mothers so that must be the place!

Utterstrom asks the heroes to accompany him with all haste to the site, if only to stop the Loki cultists. If they've been watching him for as long as he thinks

they have, they know the translation and will eventually figure out the spot in the mountains. It would be disastrous if the Wolves of Loki gain possession of Gungnir.

The Home of the Giants

Utterstrom insists on accompanying the heroes, as he is an experienced hiker and knows the Jotunheimen Mountains (probably) better than any of them. His stats are not provided – when combat breaks out he cowers and is very useless. He does provide each of the heroes with high-quality mountaineering equipment, giving them a bonus to checks made during the hike (see below).

The professor suggests that they fly as far into the mountains as they can; if one of the heroes is a pilot this is the preferred method of travel. Otherwise an experienced mountain pilot can be hired in Oslo without too much trouble. However, a plane won't take them all the way due to the high winds of the area.

The towering peaks of the Jotunheimen Mountains, whose name means “Home of the Giants” in Old Norse, offer a beautiful vista to the travelers. The flight takes only three hours from Oslo, and if one of the heroes is flying, have him make a Piloting check to navigate the strong winds. Once the plane has landed it's a three day hike to Heimdall's Lake.

For each day of hiking in the mountains the heroes must make two Vigor rolls. If they are wearing the mountaineering equipment Utterstrom gave them or other heavy winter gear they get a +2 to this roll. The effects are otherwise described on page 103 of the *Savage Worlds Explorer's Edition*.

Each night someone must make a Survival roll to find appropriate shelter from the high winds. Consider Utterstrom to have a Survival d6 with no Wild Die. If no one makes the roll, everyone suffers a level of Fatigue for the night. This Fatigue only goes away with eight hours rest in an appropriate shelter (successful Survival roll).



Odin's Tomb

After the three days of hiking through the Jotunheimen Mountains, the heroes and Utterstrom eventually come to Heimdall's Lake. It is a gorgeous sight, with the still water's surface reflecting everything like a mirror. There are indeed nine large, irregular stones placed unevenly around the lake; it's difficult to say for certain if they were placed there on purpose or not.

A group of Wolves of Loki led by Knute, a High Fang, have reached Heimdall's Lake shortly before the heroes. They stay well out of reach and wait for the heroes to enter Odin's Tomb first in case there are any traps.

The runestone inscription indicated to search for the Tomb of Odin when "the light of the rising sun struck the invisible rocks through the keyhole." Glancing about, everyone spots a particularly strange outcropping on the eastern shore of the lake – the craggy top rises above the horizon and there is a hole in the middle! This is the "keyhole" identified by the runestone.

Until the light of the rising sun strikes the keyhole and illuminates the "invisible rocks" Odin's Tomb remains hidden. Once that is done (which will require resting for another night, though no Survival check is necessary) the light shines like a spotlight onto a rocky spot on the lake shore. After a moment the rocks dissolve like a mirage, revealing a carved staircase descending into the depths of the mountain. Above the door, in Old Norse runes, is an inscription – "The Tomb of Odin awaits if you are true."

Traveling down the stairs the heroes are overwhelmed by the staggering number of centuries that have passed since the stone was trod by mortal feet. They descend into a large chamber containing a single feature – against the far wall stands a twenty foot tall stone statue of Odin the All-Father. Clutched in his hands is a real spear, easily removed, that proves to be nothing less than Gungnir.

Unfortunately, Knute and the Wolves of Loki choose this moment to make their appearance. Knute is a wicked, depraved cultist who studied runes in order to free his "master" and unleash Ragnarok early. He views retrieving Odin's Spear instrumental in this task. There is one Loki Wolf cultist for each hero.

After four rounds of combat, however, the true guardian of Odin's Tomb appears. A Draugr Jötunn lets loose a fearsome bellow and steps into the center of the chamber, appearing much like a twisted, ghostly hunchbacked giant eight feet tall. Normal attacks have no effect on the apparition – only magical attacks can harm it, including powers or relics – such as the handy Gungnir.

If the heroes are having a tough time, have the creature focus its attacks on the Wolves of Loki first. Knute will take any opportunity to flee once the ghostly guardian appears.

Aftermath

Once the Draugr Jötunn is dealt with and the Wolves of Loki scattered, the heroes are left with Gungnir. If they leave it, they can bury the entrance to the cave, but that is no guarantee that someone won't dig it up later. Utterstrom insists on taking the legendary weapon back to Oslo so it can be studied, which could lead to all sorts of future scenarios against the wicked Wolves of Loki and other groups who might be interested in such a potent relic.

LOKI'S WOLF, RAGNAROK CULTIST

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

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

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

Hindrances: Loyal (to Wolves of Loki)

Edges: Dodge

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), Luger P-08 (12/24/48, 2d6, RoF 1, 8 shots)



(WC) KNUTE, HIGH FANG

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

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

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

Hindrances: Arrogant, Delusional (free Loki)

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Improved Nerves of Steel, New Power

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), knapsack containing spells marked on runestones

Powers: *Armor* (skin becomes like stone), *bolt* (jet of flame), *fear* (howl of Fenrir), *puppet* (mocking laughter forces the target to perform actions); **10 Power Points**

DRAUGR JÖTUNN

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12

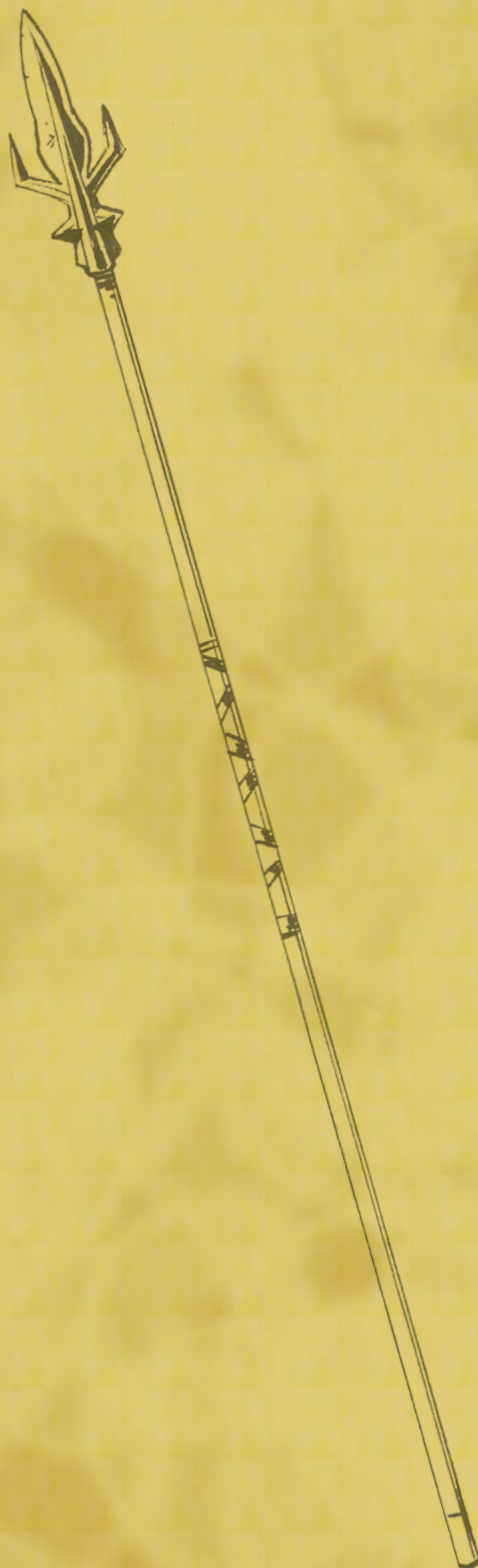
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidate d12+2, Notice d12, Taunt d10, Stealth d12+4, Throwing d12

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11

Gear: Rocks (6/12/24, Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6
- **Ethereal:** The Draugr Jötunn is immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks, such as from Gungnir
- **Fear -4:** Seeing this terrible ghostly giant causes Guts checks at -4.
- **Size +3:** The Draugr Jötunn would be over 12' tall if it stood up, but the creature hunches so it's shoulders only reach about 8'.
- **Sweep:** May attack all adjacent foes at -2.



Heart of Qin Shi Huang

Preserved for over two thousand years, the heart of China's first emperor is a relic of mind-numbing power, conferring on its owner the ability to control minds and exert influence upon the craven and weak. Once beating in the chest of one of history's most ruthless leaders, the heart's magic can now be activated once in a generation, by a leader worthy of its power.

History

Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of China, was a ruthless but competent ruler who ascended the throne in 221 B.C. after defeating rival warlords. Uniting the individual provinces under a codified system of law, language and culture, Qin Shi Huang's bureaucracy bound his people to loyalty under pain of violent death.

His prime minister, Li Si, became his accomplice in transforming China from a feudal system to one of legalism. Li Si dispatched assassins to purge scholars and philosophers in other territories. The emperor constructed the Great Wall, separating his lands from the barbarians in the northern steppes. Workers who fell ill or ceased their labors were interred within the wall's foundation. Besides the defensive wall, the emperor improved roads and canal systems and implemented a unified system of standard currency and weights and measures.

Despite these benevolent advances, Qin Shi Huang's stringent rule was absolute and unquestionable. All controversial texts were put to the torch, and new ones were written that altered history to his whim. Books on agriculture, medicine and prophecy were spared destruction. Confucian scholars were buried alive, and those who questioned his autocratic rule were tortured, imprisoned or killed.

Obsessed with death, Qin Shi Huang looked for ways to prolong his existence, even forcing his alchemists to administer a regimen of mercury pills, which was thought to prolong life.

When the emperor died in 210 B.C., he was entombed in a massive burial mound along with thousands of life-like terra cotta warrior statues that could serve him in the next world.

Before his handlers buried him, they removed his heart and, using sorcery, preserved it in a jade urn as a symbol of his earthly rule. Dynasties that followed retained the



relic, claiming the heart contained great power for those fortunate to wield it.

The emperor's heart magically beat for those who unlocked its secrets through an incantation transmitted orally through the ages and known by a few alchemists each generation. One such alchemist recorded the incantation in a book that was eventually published.

Qin Shi Huang's heart was last used in A.D. 960, when the Song Dynasty assumed control over China, ushering in an era of blossoming artistic and social advancement. The relic remained in the imperial palace in Bianliang until 1279, when the Song Dynasty collapsed. Lost to history until its miraculous rediscovery in a dingy Shanghai warehouse, the heart was purchased by the University of San Francisco.

Physical Description

The heart of Qin Shi Huang is a petrified human heart, surprisingly intact despite being an astonishing two thousand years old. Deep brown in color, it has the consistency of dried leather. The aorta is severed slightly above the right atrium, a telltale sign of hurried surgery by the sorcerer who removed the heart from the emperor's corpse. The organ is stored in a jade urn decorated with dragons, phoenixes and a flowering lotus.

Powers

Magically preserved, the heart's power can be conferred only once in a generation, about every twenty-five years. Activating its power requires the user (usually a ruthless ruler or tyrant) to recite an incantation while holding the relic. When this is done, the heart glows and actually begins beating with a low deliberate thumping. A burst of energy crackles and fifty spirit warriors manifest. These warriors serve their master's commands, mutely obeying without question. The heart's wielder also receives the Fervor and Inspire Edges if he didn't have them previously and gains a +6 to all Spirit and Vigor rolls.

The heart has a Toughness of 10 and once it is destroyed, its powers cease. If the heart is severed from

its user, the relic's special powers last for 1d4 more rounds before the incantation must be recited again.

Rumors and Speculation

With much fanfare and high praise, the University of San Francisco unveiled the emperor's heart at a black tie gala in early 1936. Unfortunately, the relic vanished some time after that, presumably stolen by what authorities claim are "treasure hunters."

The relic is rumored to be in the possession of the Jade Dragon, a cunning Chinese villain also thought to be a highly skilled black magician. In reality, Kung Shen, a vile crime lord, stole the heart and plans to unlock its unearthly powers with a ritual designed to tear the city asunder.

Ravaged Tale: Darkness Over Chinatown

While in San Francisco's Chinatown, the heroes uncover a plot by Kung Shen, a notorious triad leader who wants to expand his dominion over the city. Aided by his army of icy-veined martial artists, he steals the heart of Qin Shi Huang from the city's museum and uses it in an arcane ritual. Can the heroes stop the diabolical plans from taking shape, or will San Francisco fall under the grip of the maniacal crime lord?

Background

Kung Shen runs the Tiger Claw Triad, a notorious Tong gang in San Francisco. Kung's organization emerged from the Triad Wars in the 1920s as a formidable force to be reckoned with, and it now controls opium, illegal hooch and prostitution in a sizable swath of Chinatown. However, competition from other triads, including the largest one run by the mysterious Jade Dragon, stymies Kung's abilities to control the city.

One night Kung's men rob an occult shop, confronting the elderly Chinese owner of the store. Threatened with death, the man tells them of the emperor's heart and the incantation required to activate it. After researching the heart's origins and history, Kung becomes obsessed with attaining its power. He



learns the University of San Francisco had purchased the heart from an unscrupulous antiques dealer in Shanghai and brought it to San Francisco, where it was given a place of honor in the city museum. Stealing the heart is easy; unlocking its arcane abilities is not – until now.

Kung learns a librarian named Abigail Lee knows the incantation. She is a scholar of ancient China who studied Qin Shi Huang and learned the legendary incantation to awaken the dead emperor's heart. Kung plans to kidnap Abigail and force her to recite the incantation.

The heroes are traveling in San Francisco when the crime lord's triad gang strikes.

Clang, Clang, Clang Went the Trolley

As they are riding a trolley up Powell Street, one of San Francisco's hilly routes, the heroes witness three Asian men in suits suddenly rise and surround a beautiful Chinese female passenger. One of them asks, "Abigail Lee? Kung Shen wants a word with you about the heart of Qin Shi Huang"

"Tell that gangster he can rot in hell before I divulge the heart's secrets," she replies through clenched teeth.

They grab the librarian and drag her onto the trolley's roof as a sedan pulls alongside the streetcar. The men are members of Kung Shen's gang and are abducting Abigail Lee. They try to pass the screaming woman to a cohort riding in the sedan.

If the heroes intervene, it takes a successful Climbing roll to hoist themselves to the roof of the trolley. The Tong members use their martial arts fighting to keep the heroes at bay.

If things go rough for the Tong members, one of the men in the sedan shoots the trolley driver, who lurches forward onto the controls. Now the trolley pulls ahead at maximum speed going down the hill, and requires a Driving roll to get the vehicle under control.

The trolley has an Acceleration of 5 and a Top Speed of 20. For stats on the sedan, see the *Ravaged Earth* sourcebook, page 33.

If the heroes succeed, Abigail Lee is rescued. She thanks the heroes and relates the story of the heart of Qin Shi Huang and the incantation required to unlock its powers.

Read the following:

"Kung Shen will stop at nothing to get his hands on that incantation. Fortunately, it's in an old manuscript I keep in my office." A look of growing worry furrows her brow. "We need to check my office now!"

If the heroes accompany Abigail to her office, they notice it's been ransacked and the manuscript is missing. She surmises Kung Shen has it, and he will enact the ritual that will unlock the relic's powers. Abigail tells the heroes they must stop this from happening, or else all of Chinatown and San Francisco could fall under the crime lord's control.

If the heroes fail to rescue Abigail, the thugs force her into the sedan which then peels away and heads for Chinatown. Heroes making a Search roll find a matchbook from Kung's Restaurant, Abigail's likely destination.

I Left My Heart in San Francisco

Finding Kung Shen's hideout requires a Streetwise roll in Chinatown. The crime lord's business, Kung's Restaurant, is located on Grant Avenue. Its imposing façade resembles a resplendent pagoda decorated with dragons and Chinese designs, while the restaurant's interior is typical – tables, paintings of cranes and mountains, and waiters scurrying around with dim sum carts for the hungry clientele. The restaurant's manager and Kung's loyal confidant, Mr. Wong, shows the heroes to a table and hands them menus. Any questions about Kung are met with stony silence or flat denial. If the heroes are too belligerent, they are shown the front door.

If the heroes become too much of a nuisance, Tong gang members attack them in the restaurant, sending customers scattering for the exits. There's one Tong gang member for each hero, plus two more.



Heroes making Search rolls in the restaurant find a door labeled “Employees Only” near the restrooms. Opening it reveals a staircase leading down into an immense subterranean chamber lined with stone pillars and carved Chinese lions. The skeletons of a few victims are chained to the walls here. Exploring deeper, the heroes find a long hallway leading to a round room with a domed ceiling. Standing at the center of the room is Kung Sheng, surrounded by 2d8 of his Tong lackeys.

If the heroes didn’t rescue Abigail from the thugs in the trolley earlier, she’s strapped to a chair, tearfully mumbling the incantation.

If the heroes rescued Abigail, Kung has the ancient manuscript, and is reading aloud from it.

The power of the heart is unleashed, and Kung now wields it against the heroes.

The Emperor’s Vengeance

Once the ritual is cast, the heart begins to beat ominously, a disturbing sight requiring a Guts check at -2. The thumping grows louder, the heart begins glowing green and a swirling mist forms over the relic. Within the mist the heroes see the shapes of Chinese warriors manifesting, each brandishing swords and wearing jade armor. There are fifty phantom warriors – an imposing army – now at Kung’s command.

The crime lord’s eyes bulge with excitement as an electric arc flows from the relic to his face, and he’s bathed in a sickly pale light.

“I have power most men dream of! This city will bow to me!” Kung screams. “Behold the power of the emperor!”

Aftermath

If the heroes defeat Kung and his ghostly army to recover the heart, they’ve saved Chinatown and San Francisco. If the heart is intact, the heroes can return it to the museum, and are paid a handsome reward of \$1,000.00.

If Kung Shen manages to escape, he slinks off to lick his wounds, then returns vowing to track down the

heroes. He stalks them throughout the world with a ruthless army of assassins and may show up again in a future adventure as a recurring villain.

If the heroes fail, Kung Shen and his phantom forces seize control of Chinatown over the next few weeks. If nothing is done to halt the crime lord, the Tiger Claw Triad expands its influence to the entire city, controlling the shipping ports and major institutions at the cost of hundreds of lives.

TONG GANG MEMBERS

Ravaged Earth sourcebook, page 130.

(WC) ABIGAIL LEE

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Chinese history) d10, Notice d6, Stealth d6

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

Hindrances: Cautious, Pacifist

Edges: Attractive, Scholar

Knack: Photographic Memory

Defining Interests: Chinese Culture, Classical Music, City Knowledge (San Francisco)

Languages: English, Chinese (Mandarin)

Gear: Dress, purse containing \$50, books on Chinese history

(WC) KUNG SHEN

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8

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

Hindrances: Bravado, Greedy

Edges: Rich, Dodge, Sweep

Knack: Just a Scratch

Defining Interests: Money, Automobiles, Chinese Cuisine



Languages: English, Chinese (Mandarin)

Gear: Suit, Colt Service pistol (2d6+1)

PHANTOM WARRIOR

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidate d12, Notice d10, Taunt d12, Stealth d10

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

Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** Phantom warriors cannot be harmed by physical attacks. They can only be harmed by magical items and supernatural powers.
- **Fear -2:** The phantom warriors cause a Guts check at -2.
- **Weakness:** Each wound to the heart of Qin Shi Huang inflicts 2d6 damage to all phantom warriors.
- **Gear:** Sword (Str+d6)

