

**RAVAGED EARTH**

# RELICS & RUMORS #4



HELM OF KUNSHU \* HOLY GRAIL  
ILLUMINATI MEDALLION

IMPERIAL SCEPTER OF AUGUSTUS \* JUG OF ILLYAP'A



# **RAVAGED EARTH**

## **RELICS & RUMORS #4**

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# Helm of Kunshu

Wars have been fought since mankind first learned to turn sticks into tools, and for as many eons as there have been wars there have been as many different reasons for fighting them. Humanity has fought wars based on territory, perceived birthright, even by religious conviction. In all of history, however, few conflicts have been as bloody as those where the people have risen up against oppression, fighting for what they believed to be right. The bloody Taiping Rebellion was such a conflict, though one of its more notable legacies predates it by many years. The collective consciousness of the oppressed can sometimes take physical form and, when combined with ancient mysticism, create relics that can change the course of history.

## History

China has always been a nation of many different peoples with many different beliefs. It has traditionally been ruled by the family dynasties and the upper class of nobles that formed the government of the land. One man sought to change the status quo of China. Hong Xiuquan was a charismatic leader who believed he was the brother to Jesus Christ, and he gathered the farmers and disenfranchised workers of the land under his banner. He formed the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom with the intent of forging a Christian China free from foreign influence.

The Qing Dynasty moved to crush the rebellion, but their efforts seemed only to fan the flames of revolt. The forces of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom took Nanjing as their capital in 1853, and over the course of the next few years managed to hold their own against the Qing forces to the north. China was engaged in a full-scale civil war.

Hong Xiuquan withdrew from leadership of the campaigns and appointed several generals to lead the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom forces on the fronts. A

strong-willed but soft-spoken former Qing general named Chen Kunshu was appointed Colonel General of the forces. Beloved by his men and a strategic genius, Kunshu led them to many important victories throughout the 1850's. Though he believed in the idea of a unified China, the general was a devout Buddhist who hid his beliefs from his commanders and soldiers. He kept a helmet bearing the symbol of Nirvana, the Buddhist state of enlightenment, with him at all times as the only outward sign of his faith.





Kunshu's strategic brilliance outshone his pacifistic Buddhist beliefs, and the fact that he never killed or engaged in combat himself was thought to be a rumor among the troops. His faith would be the instrument of his downfall later, however.

The strength of the Taiping Rebellion began to fail in 1860. The strong beliefs of Hong Xiuquan began to divide the Chinese people even further than was traditionally the case, creating rifts as the working middle-class began to resent the policies being forced upon them. Even with this dissidence spreading through the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, Chen Kunshu maintained a large loyal army, though some say his men swore allegiance to Kunshu and Buddhism, not to the lofty Christian ideals of the new kingdom.

Perhaps sensing this misplaced loyalty, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom leaders deployed Kunshu and his army to the eastern front to combat the Qing forces at that location. The odds were stacked against them, and time after time the more advanced and better fortified Qing army defeated the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom rebels. Kunshu was driven out of Cixi and the Hangzhou Bay in 1862, failed to take Shanghai in 1863, and suffered a crushing defeat at Changzhou in southeastern China.

The defeats were so great that rumors circulated in Nanjing that Kunshu had betrayed the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. In 1864, the Colonel General was called back to the capital and subjected to a lengthy interrogation. His Buddhist faith was discovered and blamed for the losses, and Chen Kunshu was executed a week later for treachery. He was beheaded and his severed head – still bearing his helmet – was put up on a pike in the courtyard of the Palace of the Heavenly King.

Qing forces surrounded Nanjing shortly after the execution, and in June of 1864, Hong Xiuquan died of food poisoning during the city's siege. Nanjing proceeded to fall to Qing forces and the back of the Taiping Rebellion was broken.

During the subsequent chaos, much of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom remnants were swept away. It is said that, upon taking the palace in Nanjing, Zeng Guofan, one of the leaders of the Qing forces, noticed the head of Chen Kunshu upon the pike. A noted Confucian scholar who studied Buddhism, Zeng Guofan had the head brought down so that the proper rites could be performed. What happened to the remains of one of the Taiping Rebellion's most beloved generals is unknown, but Zeng went on to command Qing forces in putting down future rebellions. After taking Nanjing, he was often seen wearing a new helmet bearing the symbol of Nirvana during subsequent campaigns.

Zeng Guofan died mysteriously many years later in the former Palace of the Heavenly King in Nanjing. He was survived by many children, but most of his personal effects disappeared in the intervening years. No one knows what happened to the helmet, though it is referenced in several scholarly documents in the intervening years linking it to its most famous bearer, Chen Kunshu.

### ***Physical Description***

The Helm of Kunshu appears as a very simple black steel helmet, with a floral design around the brow. It is a traditional Chinese helmet, with a slight brow and a single symbol inscribed in the center. The symbol is the Chinese character representing "Nirvana" or enlightenment. A shoulder-length chain mesh protects the wearer's neck, though the helm does not have a faceplate, as is often featured amongst such protective gear. The interior of the helmet is lined in a comfortable red silk that keeps out the heat.

### ***Powers***

The Helm of Kunshu is a powerful relic that was crafted by Buddhist monks in a time long past. It was created to grant the wearer an enlightened mind, akin to achieving Nirvana under Buddhist teachings. With the mind empty in the state of Nirvana, the wearer can accomplish amazing feats.





While worn, the wearer of the Helm of Kunshu can make a Spirit roll to activate the *boost trait* power, increasing any of a target's Traits by one die type for a standard success, and two with a raise. The affected Trait can exceed d12. Each step over d12 adds +1 to his Trait total. The effect lasts for three rounds and requires an action to activate. The Helm of Kunshu's ability cannot be used again until the duration of the current activation ends, so the *boost trait* ability cannot be used multiple times within the same duration.

Every time the Helm of Kunshu is used the wearer opens himself up to the emptiness that is Nirvana, which can be an intimidating experience for the uninitiated. At the end of the boost trait's duration, the wearer must make a successful Knowledge (Buddhism) roll (or Knowledge (Religion) roll at -2; characters with appropriate backgrounds may also make a Common Knowledge roll at the GM's discretion. With a failure, the wearer is Shaken, his mind reeling from the intimidating presence of sheer emptiness. He cannot attempt to recover from being Shaken for 1d6 rounds. If the character is already Shaken, he does not suffer a wound but still cannot attempt to recover for 1d6 rounds.

### **Rumor & Speculation**

As the pinnacle of Buddhist beliefs, Nirvana is a state of being sought after by many men and women across the world. However, there are those who would seek to gain the power and understanding that comes with Nirvana without having to go through the entire process. Certain sects within the Imperial Japanese government know of the mind-altering powers that come with Enlightenment, but have sought ways to get there faster. These groups seek the Helm of Kunshu to study and duplicate, creating an army of super Japanese soldiers who harness the power of emptiness. Rumors persist of secret programs within Imperial Japan, the most whispered of which say that the Black Dragon Society is working on perfecting psychic warfare through Buddhist research.

## **Ravaged Tale: Path of the Empty Mind**

A covert group of men and women calling themselves the Ravaged Earth Society have sought for many years to combat the evils of the world. Recently they came into possession of the fabled Helm of Kunshu, but they believe that the temptation of its power is too overwhelming. They ask a group of heroes to take the relic into the harsh mountains of Tibet and entrust it to a group of Buddhist monks at the Monastery of the Empty Mind. The heroes will have a difficult time, however, as Japanese forces have learned of the transport and will stop at nothing to possess the helm.

### **Background**

The Ravaged Earth Society was formed by Nikolai Tesla in 1931 as a way of combating the growing wave of evil on a global scale. He and its members work to thwart the machinations of villains and thugs all across the world, though the missions are not always straightforward. The society works to better mankind and boasts a membership that includes many of the Ravaged, those people with special powers who appeared following the Martian Invasion of 1898.

Several months ago a member of the society came upon the Helm of Kunshu at an auction in Shanghai. It was procured at great cost, as members of the Kokuryukai, or the Black Dragon Society, also desired it. The relic was then moved quickly around the world, keeping it out of the hands of the Kokuryukai, who would use it for nefarious ends.

It was decided to secure the helm in a secluded location, the Monastery of the Empty Mind, in Tibet. The Buddhist retreat is shielded from psychic intrusion, and its master can control the monastery's visibility to the outside world. It was also decided to use a group of non-society members for the task of safeguarding the helm in order to throw off the Kokuryukai.

Unfortunately, the plan failed. The Black Dragon Society learned of the transfer and sought to intercept the package in the Himalayas. Sugimoto Ozake, a dedicated agent of the Kokuryukai and member of the





secret Japanese PsiOp was assigned the job of securing the helm. The Monastery of the Empty Mind would not reveal itself to him, so he set up an ambush along the last pass before the probable location of the site.

### **Flight to Gangtok**

The scenario begins with the heroes aboard a plane flying from Calcutta to Gangtok. The experienced British pilot, Herbert Weller, was paid well by the Ravaged Earth Society to transport the heroes to the edge of the Himalayas. The flight becomes a bit bumpy, but Weller hasn't betrayed the heroes.

Read the following to begin:

*The plane hops and jumps in the air like a toy held by a spastic child. Your stomach lurches uncontrollably with each sudden drop, though your pilot — a British man named Herbert Weller — continues to shout over the roar of the plane's twin engines. You have been hired to transport a box from Calcutta, India, north into the depths of Tibet, the ultimate destination being a Buddhist monastery nestled in one of the peaks of the Himalayas. But first you must make it to Gangtok, a city in the foothills of the massive mountain range — the last bastion of civilization.*

The heroes should either already know each other, or have gotten to know each other in Calcutta when they were hired by a group of private citizens calling themselves the Ravaged Earth Society to transport the box to a place called the Monastery of the Empty Mind in Tibet. Their contact told them that the box contained a Buddhist relic but didn't elaborate any further, only explaining that it wouldn't harm them if they left it alone. Payment can be whatever is appropriate for the group, or whatever would get them to undertake such a journey.

Curious heroes can certainly open the box, inside of which is the fabled Helm of Kunshu (Knowledge or Common Knowledge checks as appropriate to identify

it). Wearing the helmet causes a sensation akin to being dropped into an ice-cold lake, after which the mind-boggling power of Nirvana becomes soothing.

### **Into the Himalayas**

After landing, Weller drops them off in Gangtok. The city is a large one, with a population of roughly 30,000, and it sees much traffic from explorers passing through into the Himalayas. The huge mountain range dominates the view to the north, where the icy peaks soar into the sky.

Securing hiking and survival gear in Gangtok is not difficult, though it is expensive. The heroes were provided with enough funds (\$50.00 each) to purchase what they need. As they move about the busy town, have them make Notice rolls at -2. Those who succeed detect certain native Indians who seem to have more than a passing interest in them. Attempting to confront them gets the heroes nowhere, as they quickly disappear into the crowds once spotted, but it should put the heroes on edge for the coming expedition.

The next thing the heroes must procure is a guide. Weller meets with the heroes again and directs them to a Sherpa named Jangir who comes highly recommended as a trustworthy guide. The heroes find Jangir, who speaks broken English and knows the area well, in a place on the edge of Gangtok called Sherpa Town. His stats are not provided, though it may be assumed he has the skills necessary to lead the heroes to the monastery and keep the worst of the elements at bay.

The journey into the Himalayas takes ten days. The first leg involves traveling north through the Nathu La Pass, which takes only four days, while they ascend higher into the mountains the remaining six days. Each day of the second leg of the expedition requires the heroes to make Vigor rolls with a +2 bonus from their equipment. Use the rules for Fatigue and Cold in the Savage Worlds rulebook.

On the last day the wind picks up, and as the end of the journey nears, the shimmering Monastery of the Empty Mind is revealed at the heroes' approach.





### White Out Conditions

Unfortunately, a freak blizzard crops up just as the heroes near the gates to the monastery. The Japanese Kokuryukai agents, led by the PsiOp Sugimoto Ozaki, take this opportunity to strike.

Jangir shouts that they should make a break for the monastery, and each hero must make a Vigor roll. Failure means the hero gains a level of Fatigue. As they run up to the sheltered mountain monastery, the wind howls around them and Ozaki makes his move. Have everyone make Notice rolls at -4 (due to the blizzard effects) versus the Kokuryukai agents' group Stealth roll; give the heroes a +2 bonus if they are on alert. Success means the hero is not caught by surprise and is dealt initiative cards for the first round of combat, as the Japanese agents leap out with guns blazing.

There is one Kokuryukai agent for each hero, plus Sugimoto Ozaki. They position themselves only 10" away from the heroes because of the blizzard, and actions suffer a -4 penalty. Ozaki tries to use his puppet power on the most weak minded (lowest Smarts die type) of the heroes.

The fighting draws the attention of a passing group of Yeti, however. These are not friendly beasts, and they attack the heroes and Kokuryukai agents aggressively. There is one Yeti for each hero and the Yeti can be used to make it easier or harder for the heroes, as the GM sees fit.

PsiOp Ozaki does not fight to the death, fleeing into the mountains after his men have been defeated. He could easily become a recurring villain for the campaign.

### Monastery of the Empty Mind

Assuming the heroes defeat the Kokuryukai and the Yetis, they can enter the Monastery of the Empty Mind. The building is entirely empty except for a gold statue of Buddha at the far end of a large room, in front of which is a plain floor mat. A wizened Tibetan man sits facing the Buddha statue as the heroes enter. He asks why they have come.

Whatever the answer, the master stands and greets them in the traditional Tibetan way — by sticking his tongue out and pushing his right ear forward. He does not take offense if the heroes laugh!

It is up to the GM what happens next. Perhaps the Tibetan master knows that the Helm of Kunshu would be better served out in the world and entrusts the heroes with its safe keeping. Or maybe he knows its powers could easily fall into the wrong hands and it would be best if he kept it in his possession, whichever suits the campaign.

As the heroes leave the monastery and venture back into the mountains, they turn and see the Monastery of the Empty Mind disappear in a strong gust of wind. Their return trip out of the mountains is otherwise uneventful.

### KOKURYUKAI AGENT

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

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

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** Loyal (Kokuryukai), Mean

**Edges:** Alertness

**Gear:** Beretta M1918 (9 mm) SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, RoF 3, Shots 40, AP 1, Automatic), Beretta 1934 (9 mm) pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 7, AP 1), heavy survival gear (Armor +1, +2 Survival).

### (WC) SUGIMOTO OZAKI, KOKURYUKAI PSIOP

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Psionics d12, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d8

**Charisma:** +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)





**Hindrances:** Loyal (Kokuryukai)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Psionics), Level Headed, Mentalist

**Knack:** Psychometry

**Defining Interests:** Acting, Chess, Disguise, Etiquette, Knowledge (Psychology)

**Powers:** blast (psychic scream), puppet (gesticulating like a puppeteer), telekinesis (hand waving)

**Power Points:** 10

**Languages:** Chinese, English, German, Japanese, Korean, Spanish

**Gear:** Beretta 1934 (9 mm) pistol (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 12/24/48, RoF: 1, Shots: 7, AP 1), heavy survival gear (Armor +1, +2 Survival).

## YETI

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Yetis have thick fur.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Immunity (Cold):** Yetis suffer no damage from cold weather or cold-based attacks.
- **Size +1:** Yetis are brawnier than humans and slightly taller.





# Holy Grail

Kings, emperors and the Roman Catholic Church have all sought the Holy Grail, the ultimate sacred relic. According to some legends, it has power reserved for the truly deserving and pure of heart, and to such worthy recipients it can regenerate the dying, possibly even affording eternal life to believers. Other tales associate the relic with fanciful myth and medieval chivalry. Yet the Holy Grail, or at least the power it is said to bestow upon those who are worthy, is an object sought by many, even if only in their fantasies.

## History

Atlantis, that doomed empire of antiquity, had many treasures before it sank into the sea. Objects, mostly mundane in appearance, yielded spectacular arcane abilities in the right circumstances. A common-looking wooden cup, created by an Atlantean artisan thousands of years prior to Christ, found its way to the Holy Land and became one of the most highly desired relics of the ancient world.

During the Last Supper, Jesus Christ used the cup to imbibe wine. After Jesus was charged with heresy, one of his disciples, Joseph of Arimathea, obtained it. When a Roman spear pierced Jesus' side during the crucifixion, Joseph used the chalice to catch Christ's blood. When the blood touched the vessel, the Atlantean magic transferred holy powers to those who believed in Jesus' divinity, and the object became inexorably linked with Christianity.

Joseph realized the cup had become imbued with holy powers for the righteous and worthy. When he was imprisoned, the relic sustained him, and he carried

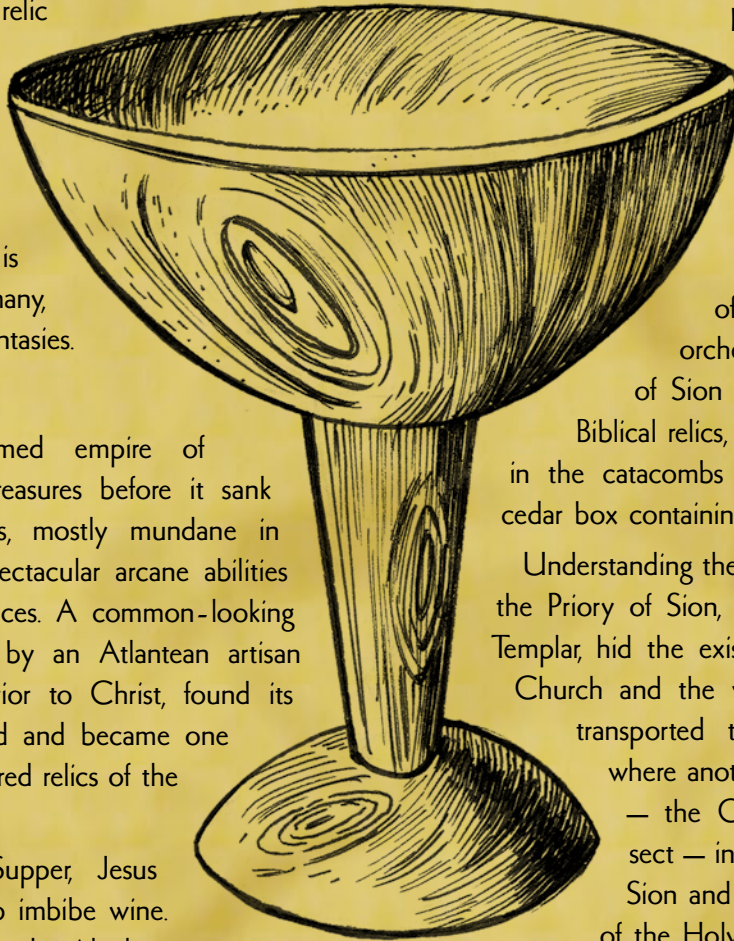
it with him during his peregrination throughout the Holy Land.

During the Crusades, a secret society called the Priory of Sion formed in 1099, led by Grand Masters obsessed with collecting relics and ancient knowledge.

To this end, they supported the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, or the Knights Templar for short. When the Knights Templar conquered Jerusalem and established their fortifications at the site of Solomon's Temple, it was an orchestrated maneuver. The Priory of Sion sent them there to uncover Biblical relics, and what they found buried in the catacombs beneath the mount was a cedar box containing the Holy Grail.

Understanding the significance of this discovery, the Priory of Sion, with the aid of the Knights Templar, hid the existence of the relic from the Church and the world. The Knights Templar transported the Holy Grail to France, where another order of religious mystics — the Cathars, a heretical Christian sect — infused itself with the Priory of Sion and became the chief protectors of the Holy Grail.

The Cathars believed in two distinct gods: an evil god that ruled the material world and lorded over power and physical reality, and a loving, compassionate, and spiritual god free of physical temptations. The Cathars worshipped the second, loving god, believing it to be a perfect manifestation of the divine. For this heresy, the Catholic Church in Rome persecuted the Cathars in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, forcing the sect to flee to remote areas such as the mountains of southern France.





After using the Holy Grail in secret rituals within St. Suplace Cathedral in Paris, the Priory of Sion (now comprised of fugitive Cathars) moved the relic to Monasalvat, a castle in the southern French Pyrenees Mountains. The Priory used the neighboring village of Rennes-le-Château as a base of operations.

When Pope Clement V and King Philip IV of France accused the Knights Templar of heresy and blasphemy in 1305, the Priory of Sion knew the Holy Grail was no longer safe. A handful of the knights escaped the crown's persecution and spirited the Holy Grail north into Scotland, a nation friendly to them.

The Templar order vanished in France with the execution of their leader, Jacques de Molay, in 1314. The Cathars likewise dwindled, and the Priory of Sion was relegated to near extinction, with only a handful remaining to pass their secrets down through the ages.

### Physical Description

Resembling a carved wooden chalice, the Holy Grail is rather plain and without ostentatious filigree or adornments. Despite being the cup of a carpenter, the Holy Grail's inside surface radiates with a curious glow in the hands of those who are worthy of its powers.

### Powers

The Holy Grail's sublime powers are available only to those with the Faith skill. The devout can make a Faith roll when they drink from the Holy Grail, while those without Faith can make a Spirit roll at -2.

With a success, those possessing Faith have all wounds over an hour old removed and, as per the *greater healing* Power — all poison, disease, and Permanent Crippling Injuries are healed. With a raise on the Faith roll, the Holy Grail also adds +2 to the target's Toughness as long as the target remains devout. Any character with a Faith Skill (d6+) gains +2 Toughness while the Holy Grail is in their possession; this benefit is lost should the character violate the precepts of their religion (as per Arcane Background (Miracles) *Savage Worlds* core rulebook).

For those making Spirit rolls, with a success all wounds less than an hour old are healed, as are the

effects of any poison if used within the first ten minutes of ingestion.

The Holy Grail's powers can be conferred only once per individual — further drinks for the same person produces no effect.

### Rumors and Speculation

Claims that Joseph of Arimathea brought the Holy Grail from the Holy Land to Great Britain are widespread. Others believe the legend began with a Celtic mythical object, the Cauldron of Cerridwen, a magical vessel that bestows an abundance of food, fortune, or other desires upon recipients.

The Holy Grail was the subject of romantic medieval tales of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, notably *Perceval, the Story of the Grail* by Chrétien de Troyes, *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach, and the 19<sup>th</sup> century epic *Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory.

From these stories arose rumors that the Holy Grail is buried at the site of King Arthur's grave in Glastonbury Grove, England. Other tales assert the Holy Grail ascended into heaven, or that it remains buried in a cave in Jerusalem with other relics such as the Ark of the Covenant and the True Cross.

Still others believe the Holy Grail is not an actual object, but instead an allegorical representation of the unbroken bloodline of Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene, whose descendants allegedly became the Merovingian kings of France.

## Ravaged Tale: An Acre of History

The heroes find themselves embarking on the first steps of a much larger quest, one that could eventually lead to that most elusive of relics, the Holy Grail. However, a young and ambitious Gestapo agent named Hans Dortenmanner and his Nazi goons are already on the trail, and Hitler will stop at nothing to retrieve the cup of Christ to fulfill his twisted ambition of world domination.

This scenario takes the heroes into Palestine, where Dortenmanner and his team have been working on





unearthing an ancient sanctuary of the Knights Templar. The secrets contained within the sanctuary could lead to future adventures on the quest for the Holy Grail, or it could end up as another dead end in a history of failures that have paved previous journeys searching for the relic. The determination is left up to the GM.

### **Background**

The Holy Grail has passed into legend, the subject of ballads and romantic poems of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. To confound the Roman Catholic Church's influence, the Priory of Sion began spreading misinformation about the legend, claiming the Holy Grail to be only a reference to the bloodline of Jesus, which continued in the Merovingian dynasty. Such tales were only meant to cover the Priory's tracks and deflect attention away from them and the Knights Templar.

Jerusalem was a major stronghold of the Knights Templar where they stored many relics and documents, but in 1187 Sultan Saladin of Syria drove them from the city. They fled to Acre, where they constructed a fortress within the city. The Knights then dug a tunnel 350 meters long that connected the fortress with the south port and was used both as a supply line and escape route. In 1291, when Acre fell to Saladin's Mameluk invaders, the Knights Templar fled the city through the tunnel. Though the remains of the fortress consist mostly of empty rooms and crumbling walls, the tunnel is intact and undisturbed.

Professor Hans Dortenmanner, an upcoming and ambitious Gestapo agent with ties to the highest levels of Germanian government, has learned through in-depth research that a key piece of information regarding the Holy Grail was taken away from Jerusalem to Acre in 1187. He does not know what to expect, but with Hitler's drive for spiritual relics, Dortenmanner was able to organize an impressive archeological team to begin digging for the tunnel below Acre. He hopes to usurp Klaus Moebius one day and sees this as his chance to one-up the infamous Nazi professor.

The speed and efficiency with which Dortenmanner and his team are working caught the attention of the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). They've

ordered one of their best operatives, an undercover agent named Roderick Cheswick, to gather a small team of able-bodied experts to infiltrate the dig site and uncover the secret buried there before the Nazis get hold of it.

Luckily, Roderick knows just such a group of heroes.

### ***On Her Majesty's Secret Airship***

The heroes receive word from Roderick Cheswick, an eccentric but wealthy British aristocrat who secretly works for the SIS, that the Nazis are conducting an archeological excavation at the old Knights Templar fortress in Acre, Palestine. Rumor has it that they expect to uncover one of the biggest archeological discoveries of the era, and the heroes are asked by Cheswick to infiltrate the fortress and obtain the object of the Nazis' search. They don't know for sure what they're after, but all clues indicate it has something to do with the Holy Grail itself.

Cheswick travels the world over on behalf of the SIS, keeping tabs on Germania's archeological interests, and tours in a modified airship emblazoned with the Union Jack and powered by an Aetherium engine. He travels under the guise of an eccentric millionaire with his wife, a socialite he nicknames "Googie." Cheswick keeps his ears to the ground about things and happily transports the heroes, but he otherwise has no combat skills and won't risk blowing his cover.

### ***The Acre Dig Site***

Cheswick drops the heroes off on the outskirts of the Palestinian city of Acre, allowing them to enter the area under whatever guise they choose. Dortenmanner and his team of archeologists have excavated part of a street in the central part of Acre adjacent to a busy marketplace and broken through to the sealed tunnel. There is a large opening in the center of the dirt road, from which native workers haul debris. Nazi soldiers guard the perimeter, permitting only the workers near the gaping pit.

The Nazis occupy a hotel across from the site, where Dortenmanner has established his base of operations. His room is filled with books, maps and charts of the area, as well as lore of the Knights Templar. The





Gestapo agent remains in his room, studying his papers and occasionally glancing from the window to survey the dig. Getting past the Nazi soldiers and gaining access to the excavation requires finesse and a Persuasion roll at -4. If, however, the heroes dress like native workers to slip by the guards, they should make an opposed group roll of the heroes' Stealth versus the guard's Notice.

### ***Tunnel of the Knights Templar***

The tunnel has smooth brick walls and a dirt floor flooded with a foot of dark, brackish seawater. The heroes need a light source when walking around in the underground tunnel or they'll stumble in the darkness (Pitch Darkness penalty of -4). Littering the floor of the tunnel extended out to about fifty feet are a dozen bodies, native workers and Nazis, all of whom have fallen victim to the various ingenious traps built by the Knights Templar. Some of the bodies are crushed and a few have been burnt. Dortenmanner has ordered all of the workers and soldiers out of the tunnel until he can ascertain the secret of the traps, so the heroes have a window of opportunity to make it through before the Nazis.

There are two traps remaining with which the heroes must contend before they reach the end of the tunnel. The first is a compressed air trap, triggered by a stone pressure plate below the water line. The heroes can make Agility rolls at -2 to dive out of the way as a pocket of compressed air blasts a violent spray of debris from the ceiling in a Large Burst Template; those failing suffer 2d6 damage from the rocks.

The second trap is a series of holes in the wall that release jets of fire. The holes can be detected with a Notice roll at -2, and the trigger plate can be avoided by making Stealth rolls at -2. Otherwise the flames shoot out causing 2d10 damage to anyone within a Large Burst Template centered on the lead hero. There is a chance of catching fire from this trap.

### ***Chapel of Joseph of Arimathea***

Once the party has dealt with the traps and progressed several more yards they discover a wooden door with the symbol of the Knights Templar cross

on it. The door leads to the Chapel of Joseph of Arimathea, which contains an altar and a mural depicting Joseph with the Holy Grail at the crucifixion. A brittle parchment rests on the altar, covered in dust.

The parchment, written in French, is an account of the mission of the Knights Templar to collect relics from the Templar Mount in Jerusalem. It describes how the knights recovered a cup of tremendous power to those of faith — the Holy Grail — and how they subsequently abandoned the city of Acre for France.

Just as the heroes discover the parchment, Dortenmanner and ten Waffen-SS soldiers burst in and corner them in the chapel. Heroes can easily hide the parchment from the Nazis with a Stealth roll at +2 bonus (due to the darkness). The young Nazi agent, incensed that the heroes penetrated the chapel first, claims them as his prisoners and orders a squad of soldiers to take them to the surface (one Waffen-SS for each hero) while he stays behind to inspect the area. The parchment is the only real clue to be gained here, so his search is going to be in vain.

### ***Risen Knights Templar***

On the trip back to the surface the heroes are presented with an unexpected opportunity for escape — leaving the chapel with the parchment triggers the rise of entombed skeletal Knights Templar from the walls of the tunnel! There are three of these skeletal warriors for each hero, and they fight all of the living beings with equal tenacity. These "saviors" can dispatch the escorting Waffen-SS soldiers, leaving the heroes free to escape after the combat.

Dortenmanner and his remaining soldiers hear the racket, but arrive too late to stop the heroes from escaping the tunnel.

### ***What Next?***

Escaping the dig site should prove to be no trouble, but if the heroes have too easy a time, consider throwing a few Waffen-SS soldiers taking potshots at them as they disappear into the surrounding Acre market.

The heroes should be in possession of the only real clue to be gained from the Chapel of Joseph of





Arimethea — the parchment indicating the Holy Grail was taken somewhere to France. Whether this leads them to the actual relic itself or is just another clue on the trail is left up to the GM to decide.

However it goes, the heroes have made an enemy in Professor Hans Dortenmanner, if he survives. He can serve as a villainous but fairly incompetent thwart for future endeavors.

**Cheswick's Airship:** Use the Johnston-Reynolds Floating Hotel stats, page 32, *Ravaged Earth* sourcebook.

### (WC) HANS DORTENMANNER, YOUNG GESTAPO AGENT

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (history) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Taunt d8

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

**Hindrances:** Arrogant, Bravado

**Edges:** Attractive, Command, Connections, Dodge

**Knack:** Photographic Memory

**Defining Interests:** History of Christianity, Bootlicking, Germania military protocol

**Languages:** English, German

**Gear:** Gestapo uniform, Mauser Military (10/20/40, 2d6 damage, shots 10), assorted papers and documents regarding the Knights Templar

### SKELETAL TEMPLAR KNIGHT

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

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

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

### Special Abilities

**Bony Claws:** Str+d4.

**Fear -2:** Undead Templar Knights cause Guts checks at -2.

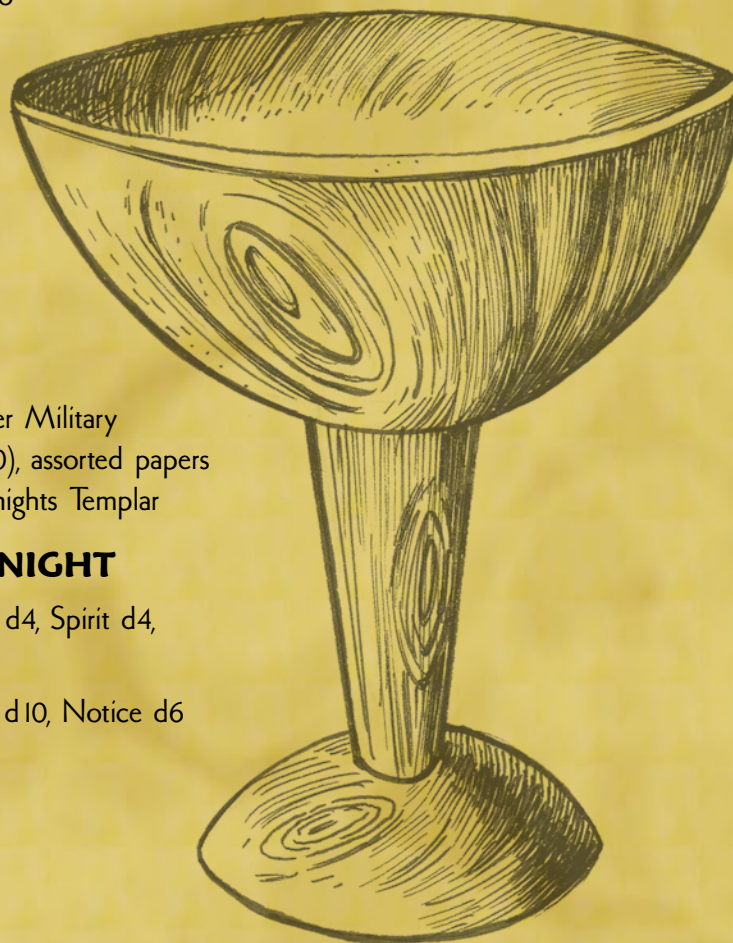
**Fearless:** Undead Templar Knights are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

**Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage.

**Gear:** Chainmail (Armor +2), tabard, sword (Damage: Str+d8).

### WAFFEN SS SOLDIER

Page 131, *Ravaged Earth* sourcebook.





# Illuminati Medallion

One of history's most notorious and elusive secret societies, the Illuminati, has been blamed for starting the American and French Revolutions, being the force behind reshaping nations into a New World Order and clandestinely plotting to overthrow organized religion. Yet this order was very real and used a magic amulet to control the minds of true believers and gain influence.

## History

In 1776, a German canon law professor named Adam Weishaupt founded a secret society called the Order of Perfectibilists that advocated the abolition of organized government and religion and the formation of a New World Order controlled by logic and reason. Weishaupt joined the Freemasons in 1777, and it was here that he began recruiting fellow Masons into his secret order, which was renamed the Bavarian Illuminati.

The rituals and rites Weishaupt used were patterned after the ones from Freemasonry and were designed to mold his followers into leaders of the secular Illuminati. The group had code names for its members; Weishaupt was code named Spartacus. The Illuminati's true aim was to infiltrate other religious and political organizations and destroy them from within. In this vacuum, the Illuminati would reveal itself as a catalyst for change and a New World Order based on reason. Details of Weishaupt's plans were eventually exposed,

and he was barred from the Freemasons. In 1784, the King of Bavaria declared all secret societies, including the Illuminati and the Freemasons, illegal.

The authorities branded Weishaupt a traitor and he fled to Gotha in eastern Germany, where he lived out the rest of his life in exile. Before it was labeled illegal, the Illuminati designed a symbol for its order:

an all-seeing eye in a pyramid and a phoenix rising over the Earth.

Weishaupt ordered a gold medallion, embossed with these cryptic symbols, to be used at arcane rituals, but the secret society was declared traitorous before the medallion could be used.

Though he was a man of science and rationality, Weishaupt believed in the arcane elemental forces of nature, and by delving into ancient texts, was able to unlock their hidden secrets.

In a midnight ceremony, the inner circle of the Bavarian Illuminati met in secret one last time and cast a ritual on the medallion, giving it the ability to control the minds of the weak if the ritual were cast again.

Weishaupt sent the medallion to America, accompanied by two loyal Illuminati brethren. They settled into Washington society comfortably, even joining the Freemasons and starting their own secret chapter of the Illuminati.

Called the Columbian Illuminati, the group carried on their rituals from a secret crypt in the Foggy Bottom section of the city. In 1786, the Great Seal of the United States made its debut. Nobody knows who





designed the Great Seal, which suspiciously resembles the Illuminati Medallion and its all-seeing eye atop the pyramid.

When the British invaded the city during the War of 1812, the Columbian Illuminati were trapped in their crypt. Realizing this could be the end of the Republic if the British won, they sealed themselves in, and one by one committed ritual suicide. The medallion lay safe in the gloomy darkness of the crypt, silently waiting for an intrepid explorer to unlock its secrets.

### **Physical Description**

The Illuminati Medallion is a golden disc four inches in diameter with an engraving of an all-seeing eye within a pyramid on one side and a phoenix rising from a shattered Earth on the other. The medallion's rim is ornately etched with an elaborate design.

### **Powers**

When a ritual involving along with swords, incense and a Latin incantation is performed over the Illuminati Medallion, it confers upon the participants the following Powers (using the participants' Spirit as the arcane skill if they do not have mystical abilities already): *telekinesis*, *barrier*, *cloud mind*, and *puppet*. The ritual requires at least five participants, and the Powers last for five days, after which the ritual must be conducted again to activate the medallion's powers.

Anyone who wears the medallion after the ritual also receives a +1 Charisma.

### **Rumors and Speculation**

Some claim the Illuminati Medallion is hidden in plain sight, perhaps in a crypt at the U.S. Capitol, or at the base of the Statue of Liberty. Other accounts have the medallion in the possession of a prominent United States official, such as the President or Speaker of the House. Still others cling to the delusion that the Illuminati hid their most valuable treasure in a noteworthy public building such as the Library of Congress or the White House. The truth is, because the Illuminati are such a shadowy secret society, the medallion can be anywhere...if it exists at all.

## **Ravaged Tale: Brethren of Blood**

The Bavarian Illuminati settled in America during the country's infancy and sought to manipulate the new country's leaders. With limited success, they might have done so through an arcane object, the Illuminati Medallion. Now a United States senator wants to have the relic for himself, and begin a New World Order of his own design.

### **Background**

Senator Joseph Paine is obsessed with secret societies, including the Illuminati. When the Senate is not in session, he spends long hours in the Library of Congress researching the Illuminati and their early activities in 18<sup>th</sup> century America.

When he discovered that his friend, Zell Fitzwater, had uncovered a family journal with details of the Illuminati Medallion, Paine attempted to acquire that book. Paine tried asking for the book, but Fitzwater rebuffed him. Desperate, Paine hired a friend of Fitzwater's, Miles Fortasque, to kill Fitzwater and obtain the journal. Paine, realizing his name could be linked to the killing, murdered Fortasque. However, a flustered Paine cannot locate the book, and seeks outside help – the heroes!

Paine's motives in recovering the Illuminati Medallion are far from altruistic. He wants to resurrect the Illuminati and plans to recruit potential candidates for positions in his society's inner circle. Paine needs the Illuminati Medallion to conduct a powerful ritual that would transfer arcane powers to him and his inner circle. Then, he could run for president and create a one-world government. Paine would achieve this by eliminating any powerful rivals from foreign countries, namely Germany, England, France and Russia. For now, Paine is obsessed with finding the Columbian Illuminati's secret crypt in Washington, and the powerful amulet, the Illuminati Medallion!

### **Washington, D.C.**

In Washington, D.C., the heroes receive a phone call or telegram from United States Senator Joseph Paine to meet him in his office by the U.S. Capitol.





Paine is a charming, white-haired man with spectacles and a folksy, down-home manner. He welcomes the heroes into his office and notes that he has read about their prior exploits in the newspapers. Admiring their heroism, sense of adventure and knack for solving mysteries, Paine says he'd like to hire them for a job. He explains the task would be to find out who murdered his dear friend, Zell Fitzwater, a local historian. Paine says the police haven't caught the killer and the case is two months old. He says he fears the trail is growing cold and wants the killer found. He fears his friend was killed because Fitzwater was in possession of a rare book, which is now missing.

Paine says he suspects his friend may have been a member of a secret group called the Illuminati and proceeds to relate the society's background to the heroes.

Paine explains that the accounts of the Columbian Illuminati were dismissed as a fanciful tale and forgotten, until a few months ago. Fitzwater was cleaning his grandfather's attic and discovered a journal written by Karl Mueller, a Bavarian architect who came to the United States after the Revolutionary War and died in 1849. According to this journal, Mueller was a member of the Bavarian Illuminati and provided details of the secret crypt and the fabled Illuminati Medallion. Unfortunately, before Fitzwater could translate the rest of the journal, he was murdered, and the journal went missing.

Paine says he wants the heroes to discover the identity of the killer and retrieve the journal. Such a book should be destroyed before anyone else dies.

Paine suggests contacting Detective Brad Grayson at the Washington Police Department for more information. He provides them with a signed letter of introduction.

### **Police**

Grayson is investigating the Fitzwater murder and admits he is stumped by the case. If the heroes say they're working for Senator Paine, Grayson is skeptical and won't budge. If they show Grayson the letter of introduction, Grayson is cooperative and shows them the case files.

According to the files, Fitzwater had few friends. Interviews with some of them seem straightforward and routine, but with a successful Investigation roll one recurring name is noted: Miles Fortasque. He's mentioned by nearly all of Fitzwater's contacts, but he was not interviewed himself, a fact that was overlooked by the police. If the heroes search for Fortasque's address, they trace it to a tiny apartment in Foggy Bottom.

### **Fortasque**

Fortasque's apartment is abandoned. The front door is unlocked and a foul odor permeates the place. Upon further investigation, the living room appears as if a violent struggle took place: overturned furniture, broken lamps and blood splatters on the walls bespeak violence. A roll-top desk in the corner has been rifled through, its drawers overturned and papers scattered on the floor.

Fortasque's battered corpse is found lying face down on the floor underneath a broken table. He's clutching a piece of paper splattered with blood. Any hero who investigates further sees the word "Traitors" written in blood on the note.

Heroes making a successful Notice roll while searching the other rooms of the house find a leather-bound journal in a secret hiding place in an upstairs closet. The journal, written in German, is by Karl Mueller. Tucked in the pages of the journal is an envelope containing a letter written by Fitzwater:

*"To Whomever Reads this Letter,*

*I am Zell Fitzwater and I am about to be killed for this journal. I know one of my closest friends covets this journal for the secrets it contains. I believe this man will use my steadfast ally, Mr. Miles Fortasque, against me. But Fortasque is only being manipulated to acquire this journal and will be expendable in the end. Whosoever finds this journal, please do not give it to anybody. Translate it and find the secret Illuminati crypt and the sacred medallion before the dark forces who ordered my*





*execution come for you! It is not safe! I hear the car door slamming in the street outside. I see the man coming up the stairs. It's Fortasque! I shall try and talk him out of whatever sinister task he's been programmed to do. In the meantime, I will keep this letter with the journal in the hope that he doesn't find it."*

### Sniper

As the heroes make their way from the apartment, a shot rings out. Randomly determine which of the heroes is hit by the sniper fire, taking 2d6 damage. Heroes making a successful Notice roll see the silhouette of a gunman on a rooftop, who then retreats into darkness. The sniper was sent by Paine to kill the heroes and vanishes seemingly without a trace. This should make the heroes a little paranoid.

### Hall of Illuminatus

Deciphering the journal requires a Defining Interest in the German language or the Linguist Edge (with a raise on the Smarts roll). The journal chronicles the early Illuminati's secret meetings and rituals. According to the journal, the group held meetings in an underground crypt in Washington, D.C. The crypt was named the Hall of Illuminatus. The location matches the description of where a modern subway entrance exists.

The secret crypt is in the old access tunnels, which were blocked off when the subway was constructed. Traipsing through them, the heroes have a Pitch Darkness penalty of -4 and should bring their own light source.

A successful Notice roll during the exploration of the subway tunnels reveals a curious side passage blocked off by an iron gate. These are access tunnels which were used when building the subway. One access tunnel has noticeably different brickwork that appears older, as if a passage was sealed. Breaking through the bricks reveals a corridor of red brick flooded with a foot of black, rancid water.

Tumbled rocky debris blocks one end of the corridor, and at its midway point is a grey-bricked doorway and

arch. Carved in the middle of the bricked-up passage is a pyramid with an all-seeing eye in its center.

The bricked-up door has a Toughness of 10. On the other side of it is a chamber adorned with frescoes depicting kings and priests being roasted alive in the fires of damnation, while the council of elders looks on. At the front of the room, an all-seeing eye and pyramid statue is present and looks upon a congregation of empty wooden benches. A wooden lectern stands at the front of the chamber, behind which is a skeleton in judges' robes. A successful Notice roll reveals the skeleton has a bullet hole in its cranium. At the back of the room rests another skeleton with a bullet hole to its head and nearby a rusty pistol (circa 1800).

A wooden and metal door engraved with strange symbols leads east from the chamber. The door is booby-trapped and it requires a successful Notice roll at -2 to notice this fact. Anyone who enters the inner sanctum through the door triggers the trap. Concealed metal springs release when the door handle is pressed, sending a weighted guillotine blade tumbling down from a recessed niche in the ceiling! The person holding the door handle may make a successful Agility roll at -2 to avoid the blade. The blade does 2d10 damage to the hands and arms of the person holding the door handle. A successful Lockpicking roll disarms the trap.

### Inner Sanctum

This octagonal room houses carved pillars decorated with leering gargoyles facing a stone pedestal at the center of the room. An ornately carved wooden box rests on the pedestal, inside of which is the fabled Illuminati Medallion!

Immediately after the heroes enter the room after either disarming or activating the trap, several cloaked and masked figures appear from behind them, brandishing pistols. One of the figures removes his mask to reveal - Senator Joseph Paine!

*"How fortuitous you accepted my little quest. I never would have found the secret entrance without you,"* Paine says. He moves toward the pedestal, opens the box and grasps the medallion firmly in his hand and stares at it longingly. *"The Illuminati*





*Medallion's arcane powers shall be mine tonight! I shall bind its powers to the inner circle through ritual, giving me ultimate power to control the minds of men! If you'll excuse me, I'm off to the Capitol to cast my vote for the future!"*

Paine orders his men to kill the heroes, and makes a hasty retreat through the inner sanctum's doorway. There is one gunman per hero, plus three additional ones, all armed with Beretta 1934 (9mm) automatic pistols (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 12/24/48, RoF: 1, Shots: 7, AP 1).

### Center Of Power

Once he snags the Illuminati Medallion, Paine holds a midnight ritual in the rotunda of the United States Capitol, the epicenter of power. Paine bribes the Capitol guards to go off duty that night, and posts his own sentries to deal with any intruders.

The ritual involves Paine and five other members dressed in black robes. A pot of incense is on the ground and lit candles flicker eerily. Paine, wearing the medallion around his neck, recites an incantation in Latin. The five other members produce rapier swords and join together, arranging the blades in a pentacle shape, and then the shape of a pyramid. Paine then evokes the powers of the ancient Illuminators and a blinding light fills the room as the medallion around his neck glows. At this stage, the ritual is complete, and Paine and his fellow Illuminati adepts receive the Illuminati Medallion's arcane powers.

Getting the Illuminati Medallion from Paine prior to completion of the ritual should be the heroes' first priority. Without the medallion, Paine won't receive the arcane powers he craves.

If at any stage the ritual is interrupted, Paine orders his men to attack while he makes his escape.

### Aftermath

If Paine is killed or the ritual otherwise stopped, the remaining Illuminati stooges flee, and the heroes have halted the spread of an evil power. If Paine is killed, the heroes have a lot of explaining to do: he is a United States Senator, after all.

If Paine succeeds, his Illuminati lackeys attack by using their *telekinesis* Power to hurl large statues from Statuary Hall at the heroes (2d6 damage). Paine also attacks the heroes and tries to persuade them to turn on each other using the *puppet* Power.

If Paine defeats the heroes, he then successfully manipulates the minds of the Senate and secures the nomination for President of the United States. He is elected in November as President and forces Germany, England, France and Russia into war.

### GUNMEN

Use the Hired Goon stats from page 129 of the *Ravaged Earth* rulebook.

### (WC) SENATOR JOSEPH PAINE

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Government) d8, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8

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

**Hindrances:** Bravado, Obsession (to become President)

**Edges:** Cat's Pajamas, Dodge, Rich

**Knack:** Photographic Memory

**Defining Interests:** The Illuminati, U.S. Government, City Knowledge (Washington, D.C.), American History

**Languages:** English, Latin

**Gear:** Colt Service .45 (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 12/24/48, RoF: 1, Shots: 7, AP 2), suit, spectacles, Senate identification card.

### ILLUMINATI ADEPT

Use the Hired Goon stats from page 129 of the *Ravaged Earth* rulebook. They are considered unarmed, but may grab one of the rapiers (Damage: Str+d4, Parry +1) used in the ritual to use against the heroes in addition to possibly having access to the *telekinesis* Power.





# Imperial Scepter of Augustus

History has seen many rulers, kings, and emperors, from the wise to the unjust and everything in between.

Arguably the greatest nation in recorded history was the Roman Empire, which at its height stretched across the known world from Europe into Africa. The man who began forging Rome from a localized Republic into an empire was its first emperor, Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus. His rule marked the beginning of the *Pax Romana*, Roman Peace, and his symbol was a bronze scepter imbued with his power.

## History

Rome stood as a beacon of civilization from the early days of its kingdom in 753 B.C. to the height of its empire in A.D. 476. Governmental structure initially developed from a Roman Kingdom to a Republic in 509 B.C. after the disposal of the last king, and in this form it continued for hundreds of years. But it was treachery and rebellion, initiated with the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. that toppled the Republic and plunged the factious elements into civil war.

One man, the great-nephew of Julius Caesar himself, rose up in 31 B.C. to quell the civil war and restore order. He was born Gaius Octavius Thurinus, and with the help of a group of politicians he took control of the factious government. Within four years he had complete control over Rome and its vast, sweeping expanses, standing at the head of a newly formed Roman Empire. Taking the mantle of Emperor and changing his name to Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus, he set about bringing peace to the empire.

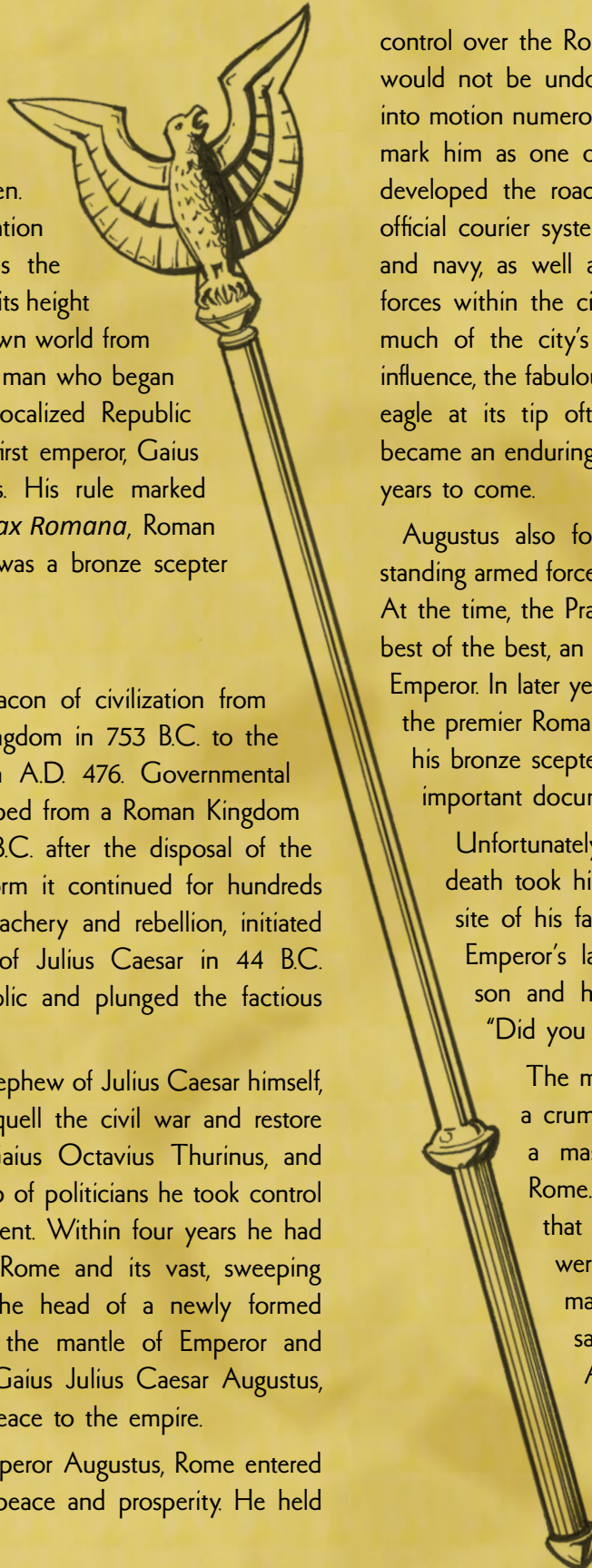
Under the rule of Emperor Augustus, Rome entered an unparalleled age of peace and prosperity. He held

control over the Roman Legions, ensuring that his will would not be undone by bickering senators, and set into motion numerous plans and endeavors that would mark him as one of the greatest Roman leaders. He developed the roads of the empire and enacted an official courier system; he established a standing army and navy, as well as official fire brigades and police forces within the city of Rome; and finally he rebuilt much of the city's former glories. As a sign of his influence, the fabulous bronze scepter bearing a stylized eagle at its tip often carried by Emperor Augustus became an enduring symbol for Roman strength in the years to come.

Augustus also formed the Praetorian Guard as a standing armed force to protect the Emperor at all times. At the time, the Praetorian Guard was considered the best of the best, an elite force dedicated to serving the Emperor. In later years they would idolize Augustus as the premier Roman Emperor and took the symbol of his bronze scepter as a secret mark used to protect important documents and locations.

Unfortunately, Augustus was only a man, and death took him in A.D. 14 while he visited the site of his father's demise in Italy. The famous Emperor's last words, spoken to his adopted son and heir to the empire, Tiberius, were "Did you like the performance?"

The man who brought an empire out of a crumbling Republic was cremated after a massive funeral procession through Rome. His effects, including the scepter that had become the symbol of Rome, were interred within a magnificent mausoleum. Tiberius was quoted as saying "The Imperial Scepter of Augustus, symbol of unity, shall await the return of a truly worthy and great Rome." An ivory scepter, the *Sceptrum Augusti*,





was carried by Tiberius and all future Emperors in homage to Augustus and the bronze original.

For hundreds of years Rome enjoyed relative peace, as Emperor Augustus' mausoleum was visited by many people, and the scepter inside remained untouched. In the waning years of the Roman Empire, however, the empire suffered from brutal attacks, including the sacking of Rome itself in A.D. 410 by raiding northern Goths. King Alaric I destroyed the mausoleum and looted its treasures, including the bronze scepter that lay within.

Alaric moved swiftly from the city of Rome south to Calabria, intent upon crossing the Mediterranean and conquering Africa. He never made it, dying of fever in A.D. 412 in the fields of southern Italy. It was decided that Alaric be buried beneath a nearby river, and so the Goths temporarily diverted the Busento River and interred their king along with all of his earthly treasures beneath it. The river was then returned to its original course and the resting place of Alaric, along with the famed Imperial Scepter of Augustus, remained undiscovered.

### **Physical Description**

The body of the Imperial Scepter of Augustus is a four foot long, thick shaft coated in bright bronze that never loses its luster. Atop the relic is a golden eagle, its wings outstretched and head craned towards the heavens. Poets and playwrights say that the Imperial Scepter of Augustus glowed with a fierce intensity when Augustus was emotional, though this has often been attributed to over imaginative prose more than anything else.

### **Powers**

A character wielding the Imperial Scepter of Augustus can command loyalty from the most stubborn of allies. While the scepter is being held in sight, the wielder gains a +6 to Charisma as the relic imparts the ancient wisdom of the first and greatest Roman Emperor. By holding the scepter aloft and succeeding at a Persuasion roll, the wielder can also create a

palpable aura of fealty. Treat this as a use of the *fear* power with the following exceptions: the range is "self" and the following adjustments are made to the *Fear Effects* table found in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook: treat Minor Phobia as Panicked, Major Phobia as the Loyal Hindrance, and The Mark of Fear as The Mark of Loyalty (with otherwise similar effects).

The wielder also gains the effects of the Command and Inspire Leadership Edges without having to meet the requirements for as long as the Imperial Scepter is held.

### **Rumors & Speculation**

The Praetorian Guard, formed by Augustus during the early years of his reign, worshipped the Emperor as a deity. In the later years of the Roman Empire, the Praetorian Guard became synonymous with treachery and deceit, seemingly working against Rome to assassinate its Emperors. It is rumored that this was because none could live up to the standards set forth by Augustus, the "god-king of Rome," and in A.D. 312 the Praetorian Guard was officially disbanded. Or so it was thought. A secret society, the *Praetoriae Divi Augusti*, or "Protectors of Divine Augustus", formed out of the dispersed remnants, worshipping the famed Emperor in scattered sects. It is still active today. To what lengths they would go to restore the divinity of Augustus and his mighty Imperial Scepter is unknown, but time has likely twisted their original purpose into something dark and sinister.

In Calabria, the southern Italian province where Alaric I was buried beneath the Busento River, it is possible that the powerful Ndrangheta (Honored Society) crime syndicate has recovered the fabled treasure of the Goth King. If so, they possess the Emperor's renowned scepter, though perhaps they don't realize what power it bestows. The Ndrangheta rival the nearby Sicilian-based Cosa Nostra mafia in terms of influence, though they are much less obvious in their methods. They also have a very strong foothold in eastern Australia, controlling much of the illegal activity in and around Sydney.





## Ravaged Tale: The Honor of Botany Bay

While on the trail of Irish snitch Mickey O'Flynn in the seedier side of Sydney, Australia, the heroes get involved with insane Italian Praetorian mobsters and the mythical, elephant-stealing Roc. All in a day's work for a group of Ravaged heroes!

### Background

The *Praetoriae Divi Augusti* believe very firmly in the divinity of Augustus, and have worshipped him in a cult status for hundreds of years. Not every member of the organization is entirely stable, however, and faiths can be shaken, especially in the troubling times following the Martian Invasion of 1898.

Gavius is a devout member of the Protectors of Divine Augustus, but in the wake of the Martian invasion he found himself able to perform superhuman deeds. He attributes these abilities to blessings from the Emperor, and they drove him deep into madness. Seeking the wisdom and counsel of Emperor Augustus, Gavius latched onto the myth of the Imperial Scepter, seeing it as a symbol for uniting himself with the divine.

The Praetorian launched an aggressive investigation, uncovering the truth that the Ndrangheta had gained possession of the scepter in the years since Alaric's death. Gavius tracked the relic to the Sydney harbor, Botany Bay, but there hit a dead end.

### Interrupting Mickey O'Flynn

The scenario begins with the heroes seeking Irish mobster Mickey O'Flynn. Perhaps he has some information needed by the heroes, or maybe he wronged one of them somehow (which is not too farfetched for a conniving Irish gangster). No matter where they picked up the trail originally, it has led the heroes to Sydney, Australia, where they have been beating the pavement looking for the mobster. Their search proves fruitful, and the scene begins just as the heroes are about to burst into O'Flynn's hiding hole. Someone beat them to it, however, and the current

occupants are Gavius, a troubled member of the *Praetoriae Divi Augusti*, and his hired thugs. They are in the process of searching for the Imperial Scepter and they don't take kindly to the interruption.

Read the following to begin:

*It's taken several weeks but you think you've got it nailed down this time. From New York City to the trashiest dive in Sydney, Australia, you've been hunting down Mickey O'Flynn. A snitch and rotten gangster, Mickey's got a list of friends a mile long and he's been pulling every favor he had to stay one step ahead of you. But here in a seedy dock apartment in Sydney, you've finally tracked him down. The only question is whether to knock or just break down the door?*

For dramatic effect, it is best if the heroes don't hear anything from behind the door; the sounds of the nearby Sydney docks mask any noises from inside. Knocking gets no response, so one of the party must break down the door (requires a successful Strength roll). If the heroes do not tarry and are successful on the first attempt, upon entering the room Mickey O'Flynn is found tied to a chair and beaten bloody. Standing over him is a muscular European man dressed in a heavy tabard and wearing a traditional galea (bronze Roman helmet with red plumes). Surrounding him is a group of Australian thugs, one for each hero.

The heroes easily have the "Drop" on Gavius and his men. Regardless, Gavius waits to see if they rush to Mickey's aid, and if they show any compassion at all, he orders his men to attack the newcomers. Gavius is quite insane and believes firmly in the divine power of Augustus, whom he credits with his incredible strength as a Ravaged one. He has both his *armor* and *boost trait* powers active when the heroes enter the room.

Gavius enters the fray if his men are obviously losing, and he fights until he has taken two wounds, after which he leaps out the window into the busy Sydney alley.





### ***Mickey Spills the Beans***

Assuming the insane Praetorian and his thugs are dealt with by the heroes, Mickey thanks them profusely and asks to be untied. He freely tells them that the crazy guy called himself Gavius and said he was “on a mission from Divine Augustus.” heroes can make Knowledge (History) or appropriate Common Knowledge checks to connect Gavius, his outfit, and his comments to the ancient Praetorian Guard of Rome. The Praetorian Guard was formed by Emperor Augustus during the early years of the Roman Empire, and it protected the Roman Emperor for over three centuries.

Mickey says that Gavius was looking for a special package shipped to Sydney by some Italians located outside of the country. Mickey told the insane Praetorian the only thing he knew – the Italians ran a ship called *The Honor* in and out of Botany Bay on a regular basis, so the shipment would probably be located there.

### ***Hands in the Air!***

Just as the Irish mobster is about to further explain to the heroes the information that he had and they were looking for in the first place, the door to the room is flung open and in rush a multitude of Italian gangsters! They are members of the Ndrangheta, who control most of the illegal activities in Sydney. They’ve had their eye on Mickey since he arrived in Australia and know the reason for Gavius’ search.

The leader of the gangsters is the Uomini D’onore (Man of Honor) “Grinning” Scarpelli. He has a force of men at his command that can make Swiss cheese of the party, and he orders the heroes and Mickey to come quietly. Scarpelli takes their obvious weapons and leads his captives to the docks where *The Honor* is moored.

### ***Aboard The Honor***

Whether they want to or not, the heroes find themselves captive aboard *The Honor*. They are tied, gagged, and thrown in makeshift jail cells below deck while the crew prepares to leave. A mobster stops in and drops off a plate of food several hours later.

Eventually, after what seems like an eternity but is really only six hours or so, Scarpelli brings the heroes out to the top deck. It is late morning and *The Honor* is sailing north from Sydney along the Australian coast.

The heroes are marched up and ordered to stand in a line. Next to them stands Gavius, bruised and bloodied and also shackled. Scarpelli asks everyone what they were doing on his docks.

As the interrogation begins, Gavius asks if the Imperial Scepter of Augustus is aboard. Scarpelli laughs and confirms it is, at which point the Praetorian rips open his shackles and pulls a whistle from his pocket, blowing it in one swift motion. Panic ensues on the deck, and the heroes have their chance to get their gear (located in a nearby crate) and escape as bullets fly. Gavius spreads his arms, and after two rounds of absorbing bullet impacts with his *armor* power, his summoned creature arrives, blotting out the sun. A legendary Roc circles over *The Honor*.

Between a Roc and a Hard Place

What follows is a complete free-for-all, and the heroes are in quite a pickle. Once the Roc arrives, Gavius immediately heads below deck while it circles, snatching up Italian mobsters (and potentially the heroes, if they do not get below deck quickly!) in its talons and dropping them into the ocean. While not evil, the Roc is a great predator and views *The Honor* as being full of food. Mobsters shoot at the Roc, the heroes, and Gavius; there are two dozen Italians in total onboard the ship, not including Scarpelli. The Praetorian seeks the Imperial Scepter of Augustus and is willing to sacrifice everyone to retrieve it. Once he has it, though, he doesn’t really know what to do; awe fills him to the point where he is considered Shaken.

### ***Aftermath***

The scenario ending depends upon the actions of the heroes. Gavius is insane, and if left unchecked the Roc kills everyone aboard *The Honor* and then smashes the boat to pieces. This sends Gavius and the Imperial Scepter of Augustus to the bottom of the ocean near the Australian coastline, though the Praetorian survives.





If the heroes somehow retrieve the scepter, they can attempt to use it to command the mobsters to surrender and Gavius to call off, or if need be, to battle the Roc. This option may be their best bet to survive the encounter. What they do with the Imperial Scepter of Augustus afterward is up to them, but certainly they have come to the attention of both a powerful mob family and an ancient order of Roman cultists.

### (WC) GAVIUS, INSANE PRAETORIAN

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Roman History) d8, Notice d6, Taunt d8, Throwing d10

**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7;  
**Toughness:** 8 (1), 11 (4) with armor

**Hindrances:** Loyal (Augustus), Overconfident, Quirk (constantly praises Augustus)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Super Powers), Charismatic, Fists of Steel, Innate Power (Armor), Innate Power (Boost Trait), New Power, Superior Attribute (Strength)

**Knack:** Johnny-on-the-Spot

**Defining Interests:** Knowledge (Military History), Knowledge (Military Tactics), Weaponsmithing

**Powers:** armor, boost trait

**Power Points:** 5 (sacrificed 10 for the Innate Powers to make them raises when activated, 5 for Superior Attribute)

**Languages:** Chinese, English, German, Japanese, Korean, Spanish

**Gear:** Fist of the Praetorian Guard (Damage: Str, AP 2, unarmed), leather vest (Armor +1), galea helmet (50% chance of AP 2 on attacks to the head), whistle (summons a Roc if used properly).

### GAVIUS' HIRED GOONS/ITALIAN MOBSTERS

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

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

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

**Hindrances:** Overconfident

**Edges:** Block (Gavius' Hired Goons), Rock and Roll (Italian Mobsters)

**Gear:** Brass knuckles (Damage: Str+d4), Thompson M1928 (0.45) (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 12/24/48, RoF: 3, Shots: 50, AP 1, Auto Italian Mobsters).

### ROC

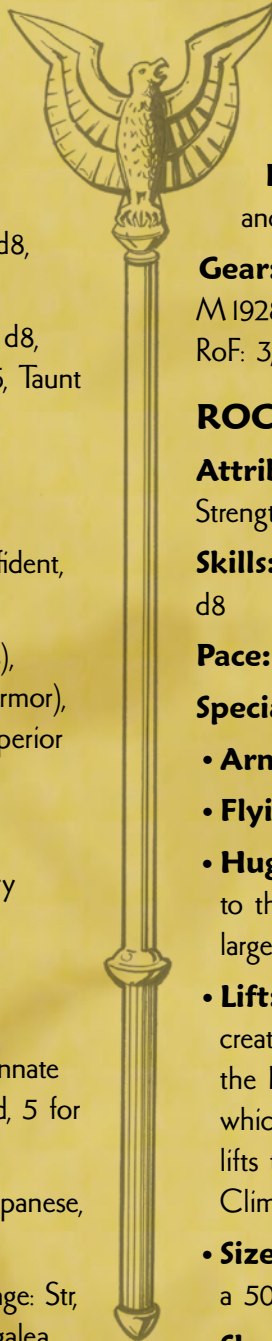
**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Guts d6, Notice d12+4, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 17 (2)

#### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thick hide.
- **Flying:** Pace 18", Climb 9".
- **Huge:** The Roc is massive and attackers add +2 to their attack rolls when attacking it due to its large size.
- **Lift:** The Roc has incredible lift and can pick up creatures or objects of Size +6 or smaller. It takes the Roc a full round to properly grasp a creature, which is a Grappling attack. With a raise the Roc lifts the character into the air and ascends at its Climb rate.
- **Size +10:** The Roc has a 200 foot wingspan and a 50 foot long body.
- **Slow:** Rocs move at a normal Pace 6 on the ground, but can't run.
- **Talons:** Str+d6, AP 4, can damage objects or vehicles with Heavy Armor.



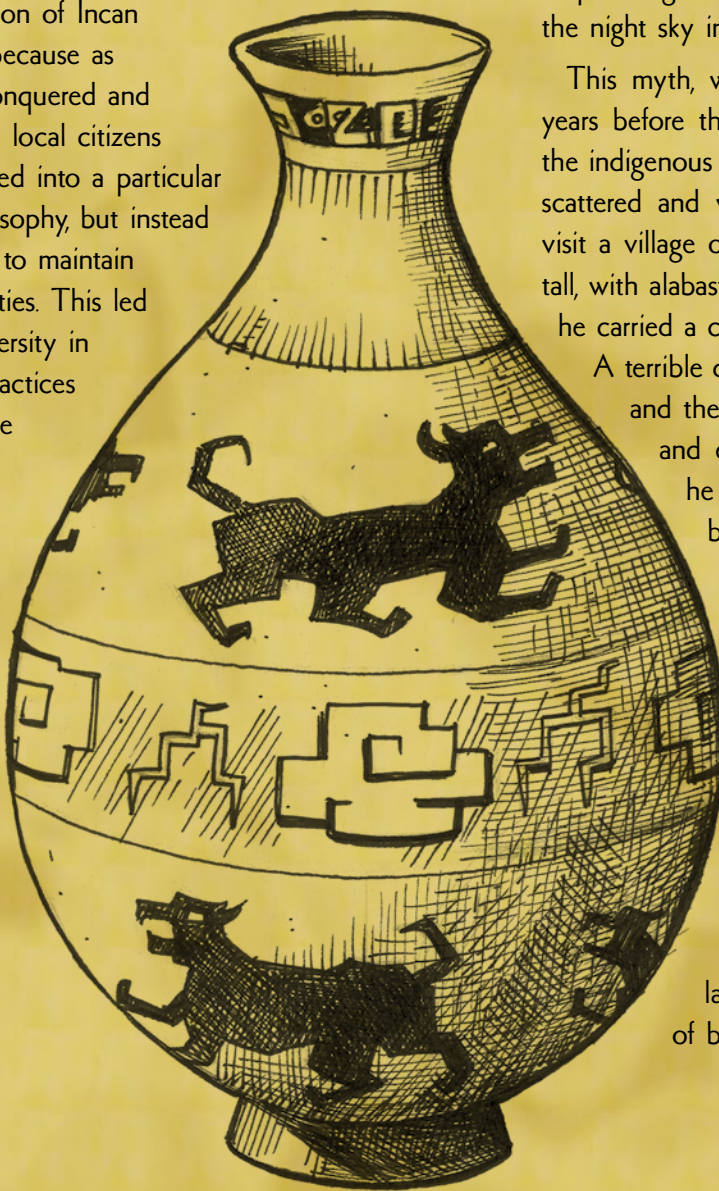


# Jug of Ilyap'a

All across the world tribes and nations have superstitions and legends surrounding events that they don't fully understand. This has been true since the dawn of humanity and likely will continue far into the future. In South America, the ancient Inca Empire interpreted many unexplainable phenomena through legends, though at least a part of their mythology was based on truth.

## History

The pantheon of Incan gods is vast because as the empire conquered and expanded, the local citizens were not forced into a particular religious philosophy, but instead were allowed to maintain their own deities. This led to a great diversity in worshiping practices throughout the land, though the chief worship of many of the gods was localized to small areas.



Many of the deities worshipped by the Incans on a pragmatic level held sway over the elements of the natural world. For instance, their chief god was Inti, who represented the sun and to whom all the emperors supposedly traced the origins of their lineage. In the Collasuyu province of the empire, veneration of Ilyap'a, a weather god who controlled thunder, lightning, and the precious rain, was common. Ilyap'a became a popular deity and his worship spread throughout the empire. Legends held that the god carried the stars of the night sky in a jug from which he created rain.

This myth, while fanciful, is based in truth. In the years before the formation of the Inca Empire, when the indigenous people of western South America were scattered and without unity, a strange man came to visit a village on the shores of Lake Titicaca. He was tall, with alabaster skin that glowed in the sunlight, and he carried a clay jug decorated with strange symbols.

A terrible drought had befallen the Collasuyu area, and the man claimed to be able bring the rain and end the sickness of the land. In return he asked for only one thing: the loyalty of black dogs.

It was a strange request and one that the people had difficulty in providing, but they eventually managed to herd all the black dogs in the area and brought them to the shining man. He then pointed his jug to the heavens, and after only a few minutes clouds gathered followed by the flash of lightning and the crack of thunder and blessed rain fell upon the land once again. The man took his pack of black dogs and disappeared.





The people of Collasuyu called the man Ilyap'a, which translates to "thunder and lightning," and worshipped him as a god. The story of the shining man became a legend passed down through generations; although the truth of what happened was lost, the Incan people never forgot to pay homage to Ilyap'a.

### **Physical Description**

The Jug of Ilyap'a is a ceramic pot roughly two feet high and a foot wide. Images of running black dogs decorate the top and bottom, while in the center is a repeated depiction of clouds with flashing lightning and pouring rain. An Incan phrase decorates the lip which translates to read "when the black dog chases the thunder, look to the sky for the rain."

### **Powers**

The Jug of Ilyap'a allows its owner to utilize the *storm control* power with greater effect. The power as detailed below is the standard version. If the possessor of the Jug of Ilyap'a makes a successful Spirit roll the power can be used as listed below, except its duration is increased to 1d8 hours (or 2d10 hours with a raise) and lightning bolts can be summoned once every five minutes instead of ten as normal.

Each time the jug is used the possessor must make a Guts roll at -2 as the supernatural powers contained within the relic are unleashed. Failure requires the GM to roll on the Fear Table at +2; any result of a Major Phobia means the possessor cannot use the Jug of Ilyap'a again, as it becomes the subject of that Hindrance.

#### **Storm Control**

**Rank:** Veteran

**Power Points:** 6

**Range:** Personal

**Duration:** Special

**Trappings:** Eyes flashing, dramatic wording, magical jug

This power allows the caster to summon storms or to cancel those already in effect. It can only be used outside, and with a successful arcane skill roll a new storm is created or an existing one is negated in 1d10 rounds. In areas where rainstorms do not normally occur (such as a desert or the Dust Bowl) the caster suffers a -4 penalty to the arcane skill roll. The storm affects the area surrounding the caster in a 10-mile radius, or 20-miles with a raise on the arcane skill roll. The resulting rain reduces visibility to 24" and all actions suffer a -1 penalty within its radius because of the rainy conditions and loud thunder.

The caster can also summon bolts of lightning out of the storm clouds once every ten minutes. These strikes require an arcane skill roll at -2 and, if targeted at a creature, appropriate ranged attack roll modifiers apply (such as size modifiers or Edges like Dodge). If successful, the lightning strike deals 2d10 damage and is considered a Heavy Weapon.

Summoning a storm costs 6 Power Points and a summoned storm lasts for 1d4 hours (2d6 hours with a raise).

### **Rumors & Speculation**

The storm generation power of the Jug of Ilyap'a can help in any number of ways throughout the world, but nowhere is it needed more than in the devastated Dust Bowl of the American Midwest. A sinister force, called simply "Pestilence" by the Native Americans, has taken over the region, wasting the land with drought. Not much is known about Pestilence, but the Jug of Ilyap'a can prove a powerful tool in defeating this age-old nemesis. Of course, such a move will not go unnoticed, and Pestilence is a force powerful beyond reckoning, so a group pursuing such a course must exercise caution.





## Ravaged Tale: The Altar of Thunder

Throughout the world, people want to believe in the strength and power of good. They see terrible things occur and wish there was something they could do to alleviate the catastrophes. But most simply don't have at their disposal the necessary means to affect these situations, which is why the world needs the Ravaged. Nowhere is this more true than the scoured Midwest of America, currently being consumed by a terrible drought and ferocious dust storms. A psychic hobo believes he has found the solution to the drought, but the price for his vigilance proved costly, and now he needs assistance from a group of heroes to complete his quest.

### **Background**

Benjamin Granger was born in a small town in Iowa, the youngest of four boys on the Granger farm. From birth he was fascinated with trains, watching them pass on their way east or west, and he promised himself to one day ride those rails. He worked on the family farm for many years, listening with keen interest to the events of the world around him.

Then the drought came, ravaging the Midwest with tornados and dust storms the likes of which hadn't been seen before. Crops withered and families from Minnesota to Texas suffered. Granger's small farming community was engulfed by a particularly fierce dust storm by which his family was killed and his friends driven away. He then vowed to end the drought and rescue the land from devastation, but finding himself homeless and penniless, all he could do was hop the next train and head east.

Along the way Granger met Captain Calhoun, another homeless man, who taught him the ways of the Circle of Light and Wonder, that mystical band of hobos who have elevated their lives in service to others. Granger was a quick study, and Calhoun's teachings resonated deeply within him. He dedicated his life to helping his fellow men and women, though he never forgot the terrible drought that destroyed his family and home.

Several months ago, Granger began to receive strange visions of a once-again lush and fertile Midwest, with rain falling from the sky and crops returning to life. The visions drove him south, where he wandered through Mexico and continued following the Pacific coastline through South America, helping others where he could. The way was difficult, and during his excursion he contracted a wasting disease. But still he continued south, finally arriving in the Peruvian city of Cusco where the disease took the use of his legs, and his visions left him to die in a strange and foreign place.

Frantically he scrambled to transcribe the last goal of his revelation, as he knew he would not be able to complete it himself. He did not wish to see his life's goal go unaccomplished, so he dug deep into his psyche and cast out a message, a psychic call, to a group of the Ravaged, requesting that they complete his vision.

### **Heeding the Call**

The heroes are the Ravaged to whom Granger sent his psychic call. The scenario begins with the characters' arrival in Cusco after a week of intense dreams that left them with the distinct vision of the Peruvian city and a dying hobo.

The visions began a week ago, first as dreams of an American Midwest turned lush and fertile again, though for the last six years the area has been wracked by dust storms and drought, creating the Dust Bowl. Soon they invaded your waking hours, becoming true visions urging you south. Driven by a strange compunction, you have traveled to the place indicated in your dreams – the Peruvian city of Cusco, situated along the Andes Mountains. Chartering a plane took no time, and now you stand in the city square of Cusco, its people bustling about on errands of their own, oblivious to the need driving you to this location.

The heroes have been drawn to Cusco by Granger's psychic call, even after the hobo died of his wasting disease. The vision, growing steadily fainter as time passes, led the heroes to the town square of Cusco. Now they must succeed with Spirit rolls (which may be attempted once per minute) to pinpoint the source of the call.





With a success, the heroes travel down a dark alley branching off from the square, arriving only a few minutes later at a grisly sight. A Caucasian man dressed in rags lies dead, huddled against a pile of garbage, his arms and legs the victims of some strange wasting disease that ate away at his very muscles. The heroes recognize him as being important to the visions. In the hobo's right hand is a piece of paper, upon which is scrawled the name "Ilyap'a" with a crude drawing of a black dog.

Characters with Knowledge (Mythology) or Knowledge (Religion) can make checks to identify Ilyap'a as the Incan god of thunder and lightning who kept the Milky Way in a jug that brought weather. Black dogs are associated with him.

Just as the heroes examine the paper they hear a bark from nearby. A black dog stands at the end of the alley, his head tilted in a friendly manner. If the heroes approach, he darts away, but turns quickly, as if waiting to be followed.

### ***Sacsayhuaman Ruins***

Following the black dog takes the heroes out of Cusco and up the side of the valley to strange ruins known locally as Sacsayhuaman. The stones have stood for hundreds of years and are believed to have been a defensive structure, though the mystery of its construction and true purpose has remained elusive. Sacsayhuaman is comprised of three tiers of stone walls set into the side of the valley, with stairs between each level.

The black dog barks happily and darts into a cave entrance hidden behind a stone wall of the second tier. As the heroes follow, a band of Cusco thugs stride out, brandishing knives. The leader, a tough named Mateo, demands the party's valuables. There is one thug for each hero plus Mateo and they act aggressively toward the group. This is really just a random mugging, so the heroes can deal with it however they please. Use the Cusco Thug statistics for Mateo and his gang.

### ***Caverns of Ilyap'a***

Assuming Mateo and his thugs are dealt with successfully, the heroes continue to follow the black dog. He leads them deep into the caverns beneath Sacsayhuaman, the tunnels twisting and turning in a confusing maze. After about ten minutes of progress, the dog finally stops, panting happily and pointing his head at what appears to be a dead end.

A successful Notice roll at -2 allows a hero to locate a stone that when depressed into the wall activates a trapdoor in the floor, dropping anyone standing within 4" of the wall into an open chute (Agility roll at -2 to grasp the edge of the hole to avoid falling into the chute)! A character that succeeds on the Agility roll can then make a Strength roll to pull out of the chute. However, just when the hero thinks he may be in the clear, but prior to successfully exiting the chute, the black dog bites the hero's hands, forcing him to release his grip and plummet downwards.

### ***Prove Yourself Worthy***

Sliding down the stone chute is a wild ride that ends abruptly with an exit into a large stone chamber; the ride is rough and causes a Fatigue level unless each hero makes a successful Agility roll at -2. After all the heroes have exited the chute, a stone block falls to fit over the chute exit with a loud thud. The room the heroes find themselves inside is a 10" cube and upon the ceiling is an inscription in Incan that translates as "only the worthy can stand before the Altar of Thunder."

Upon the heroes' arrival, water begins to pour in from hidden crevasses in the floor! The room fills with water quickly and is fully submerged in five rounds, but that isn't the only concern. A water elemental servant of Ilyap'a emerges from the rising water immediately after the heroes enter the room and attacks the heroes, who now have to deal with both the elemental and the water problem. If the heroes search for a means to stop the water, a successful Notice roll at -2 for the first round, -3 for the second round, and -4 for the third and each subsequent round allows a hero to





find the hidden valve. It takes an unmodified Strength roll the next round to activate the valve. The water elemental fights to the death.

After activating the valve, a door opens on the north wall of the room, spilling a torrent of water that has filled the room into a stone hallway.

### ***Receiving the Blessing of Thunder***

At the end of the hallway is a wide chamber, lit by a statue of a ten foot tall glowing man made of crystal. Behind the statue is a raised dais upon which sits an altar made of obsidian, decorated with Incan symbols of lightning and thunder. A reverent feeling fills the stale air of the chamber.

As the heroes approach the altar, the crystalline statue comes to life, but it does not seek to harm them. It announces in a booming voice:

*“You have proven yourselves worthy of the Altar of Thunder. Approach and place your hands on the altar to receive the Blessing of Thunder. Only by receiving the Blessing of Thunder can you be worthy of receiving the Jug of Ilyap’a.”*

Any hero who touches the altar is bathed in a blue and purple light and transported back to the surface of Sacsayhuaman. All wounds they have suffered are healed, and the hero can now use a variation of the *blast* power (2d6 damage; trapping is a crack of thunder generated in a Medium Burst Template centered on the hero; anyone affected must make a Vigor roll or be knocked prone in addition to the damage). Activating this power requires a Spirit roll and causes a Fatigue level to the hero after use which recovers normally.

The heroes have now been blessed by the power of Ilyap’a. What they choose to do with this blessing is up to them, but the black dog waits patiently nearby, panting happily.

## **CUSCO THUGS**

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

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

**Hindrances:** Mean

**Edges:** —

**Gear:** Knife (Damage: Str+d4).

## **WATER ELEMENTAL**

See the Savage Worlds rulebook for statistics.

