

SERPENT SCALES

FRAGMENTS FROM THE WORLD AFTER THE SERPENTFALL 4

After a bit of a gap in publication, we're happy to unleash the coils of the fourth issue of *Serpent Scales: Fragments From The World After The Serpentfall*. The Swedish gaming magazine FENIX commissioned an article from Ken for their "post-holocaust" issue—this look at Sweden in *The Day After Ragnarok* was the result. We've slightly tweaked and expanded it for this version.. Put on your cold weather gear and prepare for life north of Jörmungandr's rotting carcass, as Kenneth Hite presents...

— The Lion in Fimbulwinter: — Sweden After the Serpentfall

When the Midgard Serpent fell to the Americans' nuclear fire in July 1945, it was the Americans who took the brunt of its posthumous revenge: a cloud of deadly radioactive venom rained down on North America, and a mile-high tidal

*"From the East there pours, through poisoned vales
With swords and daggers, the river named Fear."*

— VÖLUSPÁ, STANZA 36

wave scoured the eastern seaboard clean. But Sweden did not escape. It would have been physically impossible; trillions of tons of dead snake smashed the British Isles and slammed into the European continent only 700 miles away. Earthquakes tore through Scandinavia, and the North Sea poured its own tsunami onto the low, sandy coasts. Denmark was nearly completely destroyed; Norway saw storm surges pour tens of miles up every fjord below Trondheim. Those nations sheltered Sweden from the worst of it: the tsunami that scoured Jutland clear merely flooded lower Malmö, although it smashed Göteborg with a glancing blow that still left hundreds of thousands dead or homeless. Earthquakes wounded Stockholm and the other eastern cities, but compared to the near-total demolition of Paris and Vienna, they remained inhabitable. Sweden's survivors could shelter in their damaged buildings as the volatilized oceans came pouring down out of the upper atmosphere in torrential rain that became torrential hail and snow in August.

POLITICS

Among the approximately 500,000 Swedes killed in the Serpentfall was King Gustav V, found dead in the ruins of a coach house on the palace grounds. Crowned in the miraculously intact Masthugget church in Göteborg, his elderly son became King Gustav VI Adolf amidst a freezing famine, desperate earthquake recovery, and the news that the Soviet Red Army was mopping up Germany, "liberating" Norway, and threatening Finland. The Communist press in Sweden was full of scandalous stories of the late King Gustav's homosexuality, and the Communist parties were baying for new elections. When Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson died of a sudden heart attack, the national wartime emergency cabinet fell apart. The Soviets published extensive correspondence gathered in Berlin between Swedish politicians and Nazi officials; the Communist parties took over 40% of the vote in the dark winter of 1945. In partnership with the Farmers' Party (angry at the seizure of crops by the government), the Communists formed the government with their Party Chairman Sven Linderot serving as Prime Minister. The new

SWEDEN
AFTER THE SERPENTFALL



parliament repealed the Instrument of Government and forced Gustav VI Adolf to turn the Stockholm Palace over to the “workers’ revolutionary vanguard.” On January 1, 1946, the Palace became the headquarters of the Swedish Communist Party (SKP).

Royal Retreats

Unwilling to add civil war to Sweden’s troubles, the king has secluded himself in the private royal residence Drottningholm Palace with his books and his greenhouses. An avid botanist himself, he sponsors agronomists trying to find grains and fruits that can grow in Sweden’s now much-shorter summer. “Comrade G” does not discuss politics. Neither does his cousin, Count Folke Bernadotte, whose tireless work during and after Serpentfall as president of the Swedish Red Cross has made him hugely popular. Even the Communists hesitate to criticize the smooth-voiced aristocrat. No such restraint on either side applies to the Crown Prince Gustav Adolf, who proclaimed the repeal of the Instrument unconstitutional, and with much of the military refused to swear allegiance to the “people’s government.” For their part, the government accused him of Nazi sympathies, producing more German documents that rival newspapers declared forged or authentic depending on their party line.



**CROWN PRINCE GUSTAV
ADOLF'S FAMILY CREST**

After seven months of escalating tension and street brawls, the Crown Prince decamped in November 1946 to the once-German island of Heligoland in the North Sea with a third of the Swedish Navy (see the **Heligoland** sidebar on p. 4). Here he raised the Swedish flag, appointing himself Royal Governor of Heligoland. The resulting purge of the armed forces, along with a bill collectivizing Sweden’s farms, led to the Linderot government’s fall and new elections in April 1947. Misled by optimistic reports from SKP officials, Linderot refused Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov’s suggestion that he cancel the election.

Triumvirate

The result was a hung parliament. The Social Democrats (SAP) barely fell short of a plurality of seats, followed by the SKP and the Left Socialist Party (VSP). After two months of wrangling ended by Folke Bernadotte’s mediation, the three left parties formed a coalition headed by Gustav Möller, the new SAP chairman, with the Trotskyist Albin Ström of the VSP as Defense Minister and Linderot as Foreign Minister. The Farmers’ Party went into opposition, along with the Liberals and the National Organization of the Right (both of which suffered constant censorship and harassment during the preceding Linderot ministry). Against all odds, the governing triumvirate has lasted into 1948, mostly on a basis of postponing any votes that might fragment the coalition and lead to open street fighting. Even now, protests and strikes ripple through Sweden’s recovering industrial centers, and Stockholm’s Communist mayor (backed by the hundreds of new Communist police he has hired) keeps the capital calm only with curfews and restrictions on public gatherings. Thus, no new Instrument of Government has been drafted, the farms remain non-collective, and the reorganization of the military remains half-complete even as Möller and Ström desperately rearm.

GEOPOLITICS

They rearm because Sweden must stand alone. Easily visible from Stockholm and points south, the Serpent’s body lies humped and cloudy on the western horizon, a constant reminder that Britain has been destroyed and the world is changed. The Americans have pulled back to the Rockies; the center of the British Empire removed to Australia. Well-supplied with oil slant-drilled from the Serpent’s carcass, the Royal Navy can keep station in the North Sea, but the Red Army commands all of Europe east of the Serpent Curtain.

Heligoland

Captured from Denmark by Britain in 1807, the island of Heligoland (located 30 miles off the northwest German coast) became a German naval base in 1890. The Kriegsmarine expanded the island's facilities under two Reichs, building harbors and submarine pens, and tunneling deep into the bedrock. On the surface, civilians built resorts and planted tropical trees—figs, bananas, palms—that flourished in the island's strangely warm and clement climate despite seasonal battering from storms and air raids in two world wars. In April 1945, the Nazis evacuated all civilians from Heligoland, ostensibly to protect them from increasing British air attacks.

The Serpentfall only completed what millennia of storms and erosion had begun. The last remnants of the sandy marsh around Heligoland drowned under the tsunami, along with the neighboring island of Düne. What was left was a roughly quarter-mile square block of hard red rock, towering 60 feet above the stormy waves of the North Sea. Its fortifications, submarine pens, and tunnels mostly survived the tsunami: like the similarly flooded and drained Shetland Islands, the British Royal Navy turned it into a radar station and forward base for its North Sea Fleet.

The British formally protested the Crown Prince's "annexation" of Heligoland, but left behind years' worth of stored rations, a newly cleared airfield, and all the radar antennas, as well as a small ophiline-cracking facility built on rockfill over the drowned western beach. The Swedish Navy has taken over and extended the British "New Harbour" built on the southern side of the island; in addition to the four capital ships and eight destroyers of the royalist "TF Bernadotte," the harbor hosts (and refuels) visiting British ships. (Royal Navy submarines pay less public port calls to the "Unterhafen" hollowed out by the Kriegsmarine.) Most of the island's population of 3,500 are Swedish sailors or aviators who defected with the Crown Prince and the fleet—very few wives or girlfriends have made it onto the island since. Female refugees from Communist Germany (three hours away by boat) are thus assured of a warm reception despite the crowded conditions, and despite the security risks they pose.

What kind of adventures happen on Heligoland? At least three kinds:

AIR ADVENTURE

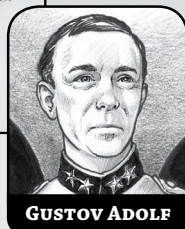
The Crown Prince also brought about 300 aircraft with him on his flight to the "unsinkable aircraft carrier Heligoland." The pilots fly reconnaissance and CAP missions looking for monsters, escorting defecting aircraft from Communist Europe, dodging and provoking Soviet squadrons, and keeping watch for a sudden Red Navy attack. Missions for these rebel fighters range from flying a spy out of Norway to mounting a dive-bombing run on a kraken.

SOCIAL PRESSURE

Not even all the officers on the Crown Prince's fleet knew about the plan, and certainly not all the crew. Some of the men might not enjoy being trapped on a womanless island, living in a cave, for a royal brat who buddies up with fascists. While most of the known agitators got shipped back to Sweden, the Nilson Tendency (and the NKVD) still has cells working away below decks. Add to the political stresses the strains of overcrowding, siege, and male rivalry, and you have dramatic potential aplenty.

TUNNEL CRAWL

The British didn't explore all the Nazi tunnels. Maybe the tsunami didn't wash them all out, either. Anything could be down there, built by the Third Reich, or crawled up from the underworld, or shaken loose from its Atlantean beginnings. The men need more space, for hydroponic gardens and barracks and water tanks—you need to clear out the spaces on the schematic first.



GUSTOV ADOLF

Norway and Denmark are both People's Republics garrisoned by Soviet troops and guarded by barbed wire. Across the Baltic, Germany and Poland likewise host Soviet occupiers and proclaim socialist unity with Moscow. Stalin swallowed up the Baltic States and East Prussia during the war, and in the spring of 1946 the reinforced Red Army once more invaded Finland. Once more, fanatical Finnish defenses killed hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops, but Konev had millions more men to throw into the battle, total air superiority, and command of the sea. The Finns had no more sources of weapons or ammunition: the Linderot government refused even to condemn the Soviet invasion, much less aid its neighbor. Helsinki fell in May 1947 and the Soviets incorporated Finland into the USSR directly as the Karelo-Finnish SSR.

After the Crown Prince's defection, the Soviet Navy demanded and received basing rights at Karlskrona; the Soviet Air Force routinely overflies Swedish air space out of Oslo and Copenhagen. The Finnish Resistance ties down the Red Army for now, but even the Finns cannot hold out forever. Some time soon, Stalin will have fifty undistracted divisions on Sweden's eastern border. When that time comes, Sweden must seem not worth invading: cooperative in peace, deadly in war.

Ministries of Fog

Not everyone agrees. The SKP still officially calls for "the closest fraternal association with our Soviet brothers." Linderot's eager placation of Moscow is bad enough, but the new General Secretary of the SKP, Set Persson, is more Stalinist than Stalin. If Sweden ever becomes a "People's Republic," Persson will be its Premier: he actively conspires with the NKVD to advance Soviet interests and his own. The NKVD prioritizes the royalist underground as the ultimate class enemy, especially targeting the Swedish military for infiltration and subversion. Although the VSP controls the defense portfolio for now, plenty of Defense Ministry staff are willing to bet on the SKP returning to power, and to help out the Soviets without the formality of an election. The SKP's deputy secretary, Hilding Hagberg, edits the Party paper *Ny Dag* and runs a network of such SKP assets within city and provincial governments, parliamentary and ministerial staffs, and the criminal police system. His already extensive files on everyone in

Anton Nilson



Tough, quick, and suspicious, Anton Nilson (b. 1887) looks and moves like a man a decade younger. During the Russian Revolution, he flew fighter planes and eventually commanded the Red Air Force in the Baltic: age has slowed some but not all of his pilot's reflexes. He wears a leather jacket given him by Trotsky himself, or the peacoat of a common dockside longshoreman. He doesn't suffer fools or posers; while he doesn't demand complete ideological fidelity, he clearly distrusts and despises characters who seem too cozy with the royals, the Wallenbergs, or other reactionary interests.



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

SKILLS: Boating d10, Climbing d8, Driving d6, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Explosives) d8, Knowledge (Left politics) d10, Knowledge (Tradecraft) d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Piloting d8, Repair d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d10, Swimming d8, Taunt d6, Throwing d6

CHARISMA: +2 Pace: 6 Parry: 7 Toughness: 8

EDGES: Ace, Alertness, Block, Brave, Brawler, Charismatic, Command, Fervor, Hard to Kill, Tough as Nails

HINDRANCES: Loyal, Wanted (by the NKVD and the Swedish government)

NOTES: Anywhere in urban Sweden, Nilson can round up 2d4 Trotskyist brawlers (use Thugs on DAR p. 83) armed with lead pipes and knives if need be. He can use his Knowledge (Left politics) to escape custody of any Swedish official group including the military—his agents are everywhere.

Sweden (known ironically as “the Morgue”) ballooned when the SKP ran the Justice Ministry under Linderot’s government.

Salmon Run

Meanwhile Tage Erlander, the SAP Education Minister, cooperates in secret with the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, also known as MI6). In exchange for access to British ophitech research, he turns a blind eye to the “salmon run” the SIS keeps in Sweden: a network of safe houses for getting defectors out of the Soviet Union—or spies into the Red sphere. The local handler of the salmon run, Dr. Josef Zimmertür, is a Jewish psychiatrist and amateur criminologist in Stockholm; his police connections and highly placed patients make him an ideal coordinator. Soviet citizens can get visas for Sweden relatively easily, and running a small boat across the Baltic to or from the Finnish coast or Latvia is simple, if not quite safe. Running a larger boat past the Soviet patrols to the Shetland Islands is less simple, but flights on Swedish Intercontinental Airlines (SILA) and AB Aerotransport (ABA) leave Stockholm for Reykjavik weekly, weather permitting. ABA and Aeroflot fly to Moscow, Leningrad, Berlin, and Warsaw: forged passports and visas fill a seat or two on seemingly every flight.

Red Harvest

Even more secret agendas stir the pot. Anton Nilson, a Communist labor organizer and convicted murderer, joined the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 but returned to Sweden disgusted by Stalin’s dictatorial ways. He heads a covert “direct action wing” of the VSP, dedicated to erasing SKP (and thus Stalin’s) influence over Swedish labor unions. His “Nilson Tendency” silences Stalinist organizers, dogs the heels of the NKVD in Sweden, and (with members in every dockworkers’ and sailors’ union) monitors Soviet Navy activity all across the Baltic. Nilson personally despises the reactionary British (his murder conviction was for bombing British strikebreakers in Malmö) and only works with SIS when he has no other choice.

Shadow Cabinets

Not all the Crown Prince’s supporters in the military have been purged. An officers’ network called “Friends of Björn” (after the Great Bear on the arms of the House of Bernadotte) monitors developments in Sweden and does what it can to lay the groundwork for a royalist coup d’état when “Comrade G” abdicates or dies. Whether or not the Crown Prince ever cooperated with the Nazis, the Friends of Björn are not so finicky: they harbor Wehrmacht and SS officers and Ahnenerbe occult specialists in the ranks under false identities, and use members of the banned Socialist Party (which advocated for the Axis during the war) as cut-outs for dangerous missions.

The Björners also work with the SIS, and with the “T-Office,” a covert network of anti-Communists within the government and academia. The head of “T-Kontoret” (or just “T”), Thede Palm, is a specialist in ancient religion and the occult, teaching at Lund University. He is also the former head of Swedish foreign intelligence. “T” reaches into the Swedish military and bureaucracy, including the Security Police (Säpo), acting as a kind of secret police inside the secret police. Palm’s occult training gives him and his “T” agents something of an edge on the officially materialist Communists, though their frost-giant allies are another matter.

MYTHS AND MONSTERS

The frost giants known as Narts in the Caucasus Mountains, called bogatyrs in Russia, and remembered as jötunn in Norse myth do not restrict themselves to advising Stalin on primordial weather magic and arcane lore. They want their ancient kingdom back, to rebuild Utgard on the crest of Galdhøpiggen, to rule the North as they once did before the coming of the Aesir. But those gods—and then the newcomer God—sealed the land against their rule, with runestones

Swedish Shortlist: Top Five Places To Find Adventure

BOHUSLÄN

This coastal province was badly hit by the tsunami, and much of it has yet to be repopulated. Rumors of wights and wraiths abound, possibly describing gangs or clans of starving, cannibal survivors. In the middle of the wrack, a barbed-wire fence cuts off the Lysekil peninsula, enclosing the oldest runic symbols in Europe. Ahnenerbe scholars studied these petroglyphs in 1935 and somehow learned enough to eventually summon the Midgard Serpent; now a T-Kontoret team of Lund University scholars tries to recreate that research. Their failures and experiments do much to keep the surrounding devastation safe from prying eyes, but what population remains has longstanding Communist sympathies.

CAFÉ STRINDBERG

Although this smoky, bohemian nightclub appeals to writers as well as artists, musicians, smugglers, fixers, spies, and gourmards, it is named not for the playwright but for its owner Erika Strindberg. Beautiful and enigmatic, Mlle. Strindberg spent the 1930s in New York working for the Comintern and hobnobbing with literati and jazzmen. In 1940, she returned to Sweden and opened her club on Österlånggatan in Stockholm's Old Town, which rapidly attracted foreigners with money and those interested in such folk. Now it is a crossroads, rendezvous, and hiring hall for every dubious character in Scandinavia, and every avant-garde artist or performer in the hemisphere.

GRASÖ

This remote island off the shore of Uppland province has a population of about 300 after the Serpentfall. Insular and standoffish, they make their living as fishermen and smugglers—and as Nazi assets in Sweden. Twenty miles offshore is Seepunkt Manta, an underwater Nazi base built into the bottom of the Gulf of Bothnia. During the war, the Germans stationed there used experimental equipment to interdict and monitor Soviet naval traffic. The Serpent's rise stirred up some Beings nearby ... and now the sea-changed Nazis don't have to use diving gear to swim underwater to Grasö.

HAPARANDA

Not all Swedes are happy to see their Finnish neighbors and relatives slaughtered by the Red Army. Haparanda, just across the river from the town of Tornio in the Karelo-Finnish SSR, is where they send arms, volunteers, and supplies for that struggle; any combat vet can get a job here if he's not picky about retirement benefits. Tornio, of course, holds a regiment of NKVD troops with all the most advanced detection gear and plenty of Bratukhin B-11 helicopters.

STORA SJÖFALLET

These spectacular waterfalls in Sweden's far north have mostly been tamed by the Porjus Hydroelectric Station downstream. Porjus is the headquarters of Sweden's top secret ophi-tech research and development program, overseen by Deputy Minister of Fuel Tore Waller. Waller is preternaturally gifted at detecting spies and other nosy strangers, perhaps a legacy of his time in the 1930s spent solving crimes. This brilliant (if prone to excesses of Nietzschean vainglory) engineer drives his staff, picked from Sweden's top industrial and scientific establishments, to constant inspiration and flights of genius: the prototypes developed here might be able to keep Sweden independent. One possible reason for this amazing progress: the falls are also Mimir's Well, where Odin sank his eye and hung suspended in exchange for wisdom.

and church steeples. Although Communist Norway gladly tears down churches in the high mountains at their command, the jötunn can for now only wander in Sweden, not rule it. For now,

For now, their servants the trolls spread across Sweden's bogs and forests, mountain scarps and quake-heaped rubble. They pull down runestones and smash isolated churches; they deface idols of Thor, Odin, and Christ alike. They kidnap humans for food and slavery and less wholesome purposes still. The sagas sometimes describe trolls as having human appearance; perhaps the trolls, too, infiltrate Sweden for their horrific masters.

Other monsters have revived in the wake of Serpentfall. A cult in Östersund on the shores of the Storsjön in Jämtland worships Storsjöodjuret, a 20-foot long, humped lake serpent with

a wolfish head. Children in the Stockholm parish of Bromma tell of a short, dark-complected “friend” who invites their playmates to parties no one returns from; are these “friends” dwergar, vampires, or children gone feral and ghoulish in the quake ruins? Krakens roil the North Sea and stir at the bottom of the Baltic. The giant snakes known as lindorms have returned to Småland, even as the volcanic flutes across the hills and forests belch forth new steam. Could dragons be next?

Trolls

Trolls are ugly, cruel beings created by the jötunn long ago as servants. They plagued the ancient Norse, who eventually drove them back into their dens and crevasses with the sound of iron church bells and the kiss of iron blades. After the Serpentfall, the jötunn called them back to service; once more, no peat-covered bog or dark cave is safe to approach after dusk. So far, trolls have not taken up their habit of nesting under bridges, not least because most bridges in Sweden are iron.



ATTRIBUTES: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

SKILLS: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d8, Throwing d6

PACE: 8 **PARRY:** 6

TOUGHNESS: 9 (1)

GEAR: Club (Str+d6), stone spear (Str+d6; Parry +1; Reach 1 or throwing Range 6/12/24), stone knife (Str+d4)

Special Abilities

- **ARMOR +1:** Rubbery hide.
- **BITE:** Str+d4
- **FAST REGENERATION:** Trolls make a Vigor roll every round to heal any damage they have sustained, even after “death.” Success heals one wound (or removes Incapacitated status) and a raise heals an additional wound. This does not apply to wounds made by iron, lightning, or sunlight.
- **IMMUNITY:** Immune to poison and disease.
- **IMPROVED SWEEP:** May attack all adjacent foes at no penalty.
- **INFRAVISION:** Trolls halve bad lighting penalties against warm-blooded targets.
- **SIZE +1:** When unfolded to their full length, trolls are lanky creatures over 7' tall. However, they can crouch down to under 5' with no penalties for movement or action.

- **WEAKNESS (IRON):** The touch of iron burns trolls; they cannot use it and must make a Spirit roll to shove it away or even to pick up a steel tool by the handle.
- **WEAKNESS (LIGHTNING):** Trolls suffer double damage from lightning or electricity-based attacks. Trolls fear lightning and must make a Spirit roll to go outside during a thunderstorm.
- **WEAKNESS (SUNLIGHT):** Direct sunlight turns trolls to stone; they take 2d10 damage per round until safe or fully petrified. Armor does not protect.

Troll-~~Life~~

Some trolls are married, to wives far more formidable than they. Troll-wives have Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10; and Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Knowledge (Poisons) d8, Persuasion d10, and Spellcasting d10. They can shapeshift from troll form to human form, and usually have other spells such as *blind*, *disguise*, or *invisibility*. A troll-wife is a Wild Card.



Sea-Troll

Some trolls haunt the coasts of Sweden. Increase Swimming to d10 and add *aquatic*.

SWEDISH SCENARIO SPARKS

These adventure seeds assume investigators generally able to work within Swedish society, generally interested in poking Stalin in the eye but not averse to the main chance. Feel free to alter them for your own campaign.

Light Fingers

Former gentleman thief Filip Collin has returned to Sweden and to his old identity as Professor Pelotard, a scholar at Lund University. He works for T-Kontoret, and has been tasked to steal a fabulous occult item the heroes are also interested in: a Hand of Glory looted by Swedish troops from the sorcerous emperor Rudolf II's castle in Prague. The Hand is under close guard in the Ministry of Culture, an SKP stronghold. Even if he bests the characters, if they impress him he may offer them a job with "T"—maybe one where they get to use the Hand.

Below Zero Point

The skies of Sweden occasionally light up with arrow-shaped anomalies flying overhead at amazing speed. These "ghost rockets" seem to come from the south and fly to the north, but nobody knows just what they are. The Ministry of Fuel hires the heroes (especially if they have any mad scientists among them) to investigate Lake Kölmjär, where a ghost rocket crashed on July 19, 1946. Nazi UFO? Experimental British or Soviet super-plane? Valkyrie? Who knows?

Up Against the Wallenbergs

The Wallenberg family of bankers, industrialists, diplomats, and politicians are the greatest defenders of capitalism left in Sweden. The Wallenbergs build railways, finance reconstruction projects, research ophi-tech in their corporate labs, and own the airline SILA. They jealously conspire against each other and against the patriarch Jacob Wallenberg for preferment in the family empire. A Wallenberg might hire the heroes to find a grandniece gone missing from a family retreat, or to get blackmail on a grasping uncle. Most of the Wallenbergs are anti-Soviet, so they might recruit the heroes into T or the "salmon run" or the Friends of Björn—the Wallenbergs are an old naval family. Perhaps this was why the NKVD arrested Raoul Wallenberg (then working for the War Refugee Board to rescue Hungarian Jews) for espionage in Budapest in January 1945. For some groups, rescuing

Raoul from the Lubyanka prisons in Moscow might be realistic; for most, their ties to the Wallenbergs will be less superhuman.

Orsen's Will

Neils Orsen is a frail little man, almost a dwarf, with a big domed head and enormous pale-blue eyes like those of a Siamese cat. He spent much of the 1930s and early 1940s as a ghost-breaker for hire and a "psychic Sensitive." He left London for Stockholm on June 19, 1945, which would seem to confirm his psionic gifts. He is the executive officer of the T-Kontoret, but most of his jobs for the heroes concern monster-hunting, ghost-breaking, and similar tasks. He would like to recruit a PC who has access to Hilding's "Morgue" (or who is running an asset with such access) if only to reassure himself that the Communists continue to neglect the occult front. He pays in psionic readings and predictions, which are never wrong.

Does Your Father Know?

Here's one final possibility, which admittedly may appeal only to just the right game group. The heroes are approached somewhere outside Sweden (ideally in the South Pacific) by a sea captain named Efraim who is concerned about his daughter Pippi, alone in her home on Gotland. She's a good girl who can take care of herself—why, she gets her strength from dear old dad!—but a father worries. He has responsibilities here, but if they could go to Gotland and see if she's all right he'd be very grateful. (He might punctuate this by absent-mindedly squeezing coal into a diamond.) She'll be easy to find; she's friendly, adventurous, keeps a horse and a monkey, and has bright red hair in two pigtails. Characters trying to recruit the strongest girl in the world for their own schemes will get frustrated; heroes trying to help people out get the strongest girl in the world on their side.

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ART BY MICHAEL VILARDI CARTOGRAPHY BY HAL MANGOLD

FOR TOVE AND ANDERS GILLBRING, SWEDEN'S FINEST COW-PUNCHERS.

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