



# TEHRAN

nest of spies



— A CITY SOURCEBOOK FOR —  
THE DAY AFTER  
**RAGNAROK**  
— BY KENNETH HITE —



**Dedicated, respectfully,  
to the citizens of Tehran.**

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## nest of spies

A CITY SOURCEBOOK FOR

THE DAY AFTER  
RAGNAROK

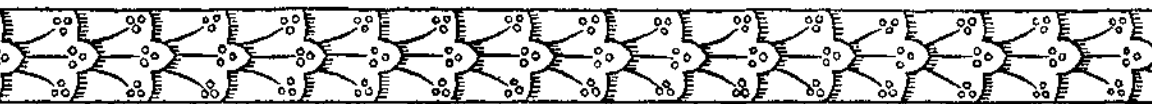
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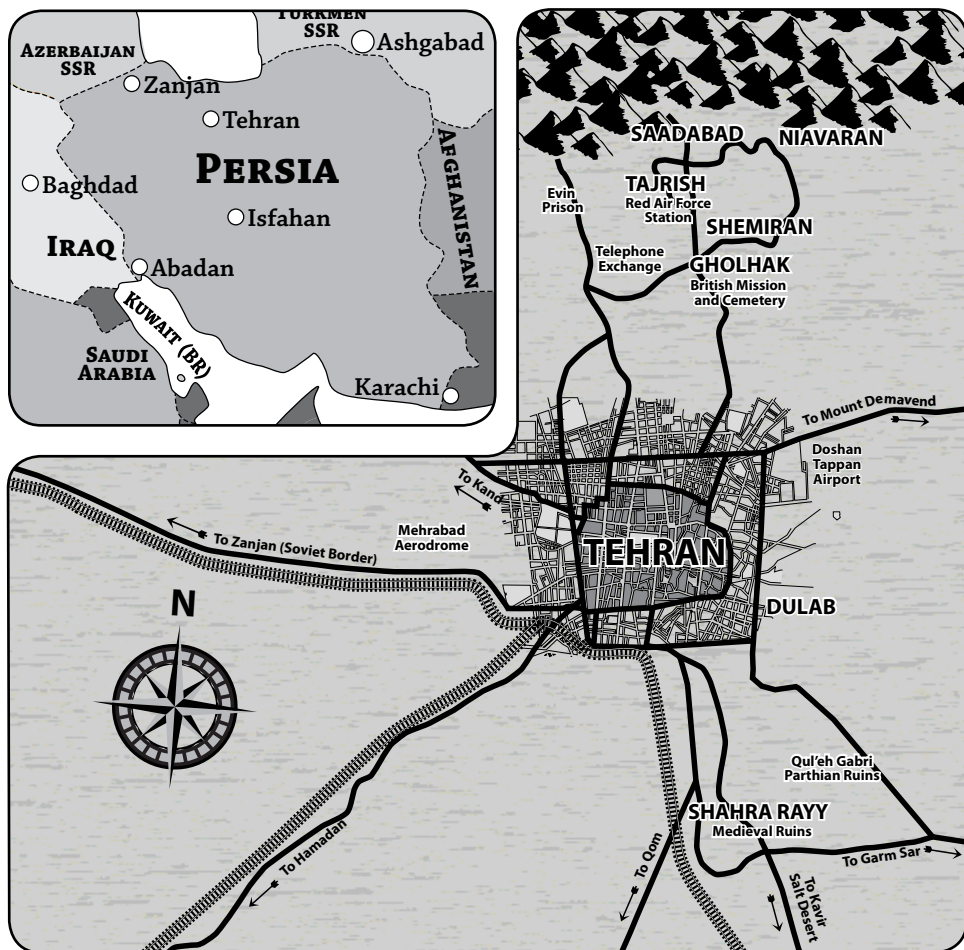


# Tehran

The capital of Persia since 1789, Tehran has grown from a dusty backwater to a teeming metropolis of 800,000. In the last decade alone, Tehran has added 300,000 residents, many displaced by the earthquakes, monster attacks, and other consequences of the Serpentfall.

And some of these new residents are here to play the secret game that Britain and Russia have played here—much to the distaste of Persians of all stripes—since the 19th century. But now the game is in new innings; played with a savage intensity here because Persia is almost the only court left for it. The Serpent Curtain lies across Europe, an impenetrable barrier. Turkey is surrounded by Soviet clients and conquests—and by suspicious Soviet guards. Central Asia and China are remote, plagued by warlords and bitter cold. But Persia borders Soviet territory directly, a border that moved much closer to Tehran after the Soviets annexed Persian Azerbaijan in 1946.

Less than 200 miles from the expanded Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, Tehran has become a veritable nest of spies. It draws those who would try to smuggle agents into the Soviet empire, and information out...and it draws those who would move the Soviet border yet again, all the way out to the Persian Gulf and the doorstep of India.



## THE CHARACTER OF TEHRAN

Tehran sits—and increasingly, sprawls—on the southern slopes of the Elburz Mountains, specifically Mount Demavend, an extinct volcano that towers 18,000 feet above sea level. It is an arid city with a climate similar to San Bernardino or Nevada: hot, dry summers and cold, dry winters. The northern sections of Tehran are higher and cooler, and thus wealthier and nicer, than the southern sections; in Tehran, money and power flow uphill. In general, the “new towns” for managers and professionals, and the country houses of the newly rich and powerful, will be on the northwest side of the city. The old rich live in Shemiran, a 19th-century northern suburb built around the Qajar shahs’ summer palace, now the Pahlavi dynasty’s palace complex. The workers’ suburbs, industrial plants (such as the new oil refinery put in after the War), and such grimy construction spread to the south and east.

The original 13th-century trading fort, built after the Mongols destroyed the former Persian capital at Rayy, became the city center (most of the territory on the map). Reza Shah, who founded the Pahlavi dynasty in 1921, demolished the city wall, and drove wide, straight, tree-lined, Western-style boulevards through Tehran, flattening anything in their way. Hence, most of the buildings along these major avenues are only a few decades old, built in European style. On the older, crooked streets, and inside the bigger city blocks, the buildings display traditional Persian style: thick walls, few windows on street level, and an inner courtyard and garden if possible.

Tehran society also has a veneer of Western style and modernity: many Europeans and other Westerners live there, either oilmen or expatriates of another kind, and both Pahlavi Shahs have sponsored Westernizing reforms: ending the veil for women, selling government property to private concerns, land reforms to create a new middle class, and so on. However, the vast majority of Tehran’s citizens, especially the new immigrants from the countryside, are traditional Persians: religious, hospitable, poor, and suspicious of all things Western. Thus the visitor can see women in the height of Brazilian fashion checking their makeup in the midst of a crowd of chador-clad wives going shopping; hear jazz from nightclub doorways and the call to prayer from minarets; smell industrial chemicals and sizzling kebabs.

### Money in Tehran

The currency of Persia is the rial. (100 dinars makes a rial.) The current exchange rate is 70 rials to the British pound, or 14 rials to the U.S. (or Texas) dollar. Prices in Tehran are higher than they are elsewhere in Persia, but they are still very low compared to the Empire or America—for anything made locally, that is. A Tommy gun, a radio, or a piece of scientific gear costs its list price, in dollars or pounds. A meal, lodging (except at Western hotels), a tailored suit of clothes, or anything of roughly medieval technology—lanterns, ropes, hammers, saddles—costs its list price in rials. So an average meal (cost \$3) would cost 3 rials, or about 20 cents.

This represents the “foreigner markup” that all Tehranis charge to all foreigners as simple patriotic good sense. Goods and services for Persians cost a third of their “foreigner price.” If heroes want to haggle, they can make an opposed Taunt test against the usual d8 for bazaar hounds; the price comes down 10% for a win, and another 20% for each raise.

## TEHRAN CITY LOCATIONS

The following sections match the entries in the **City Location Table** on p. 104 of *Day After Ragnarok*. Some of those entries are less immediately applicable to Tehran; we provide local variations and substitutions where needful.

### Gate/Checkpoint

Reza Shah tore down the old city wall in the 1920s, along with most of the city’s twelve gates. The ones that survive are no longer used for any sort of traffic control, merely providing a looming architectural presence to the scene.



The largest remaining gate in Tehran is the one at the north entrance of the **Bazaar**, and in general a result of “Gate” on the **City Location Table** for Tehran should be applied to the Bazaar. The Bazaar is an immense covered warren, fifteen miles’ worth of streets and shops interrupted by open-air squares with their own stalls and marketplaces around fountains, mosques or other gathering places. A city within a city, it has not only its own mosques but teahouses, guesthouses, banks, and its own jail and fire station. Every street’s vendors specialize in a specific sort of trade: booksellers, coppersmiths, spice-sellers, jewelers, silversmiths, paper-makers, tobacconists, bird-sellers, shoemakers, saddlers, carpetmakers, carpenters, bookbinders, and on and on. Tehran’s richest merchants gather here to exchange information, do deals worth millions, or just take the pulse of Persia’s economy.

Chase scenes in the Bazaar can feature loads of improvised weapons (from blacksmiths’ or knife-makers’ shops), twisty double-back escapes, sudden cul-de-sacs to force a confrontation, birds and monkeys and snakes, or literally anything else in the entire Middle East from war-surplus Panzerfausts to flying carpets.

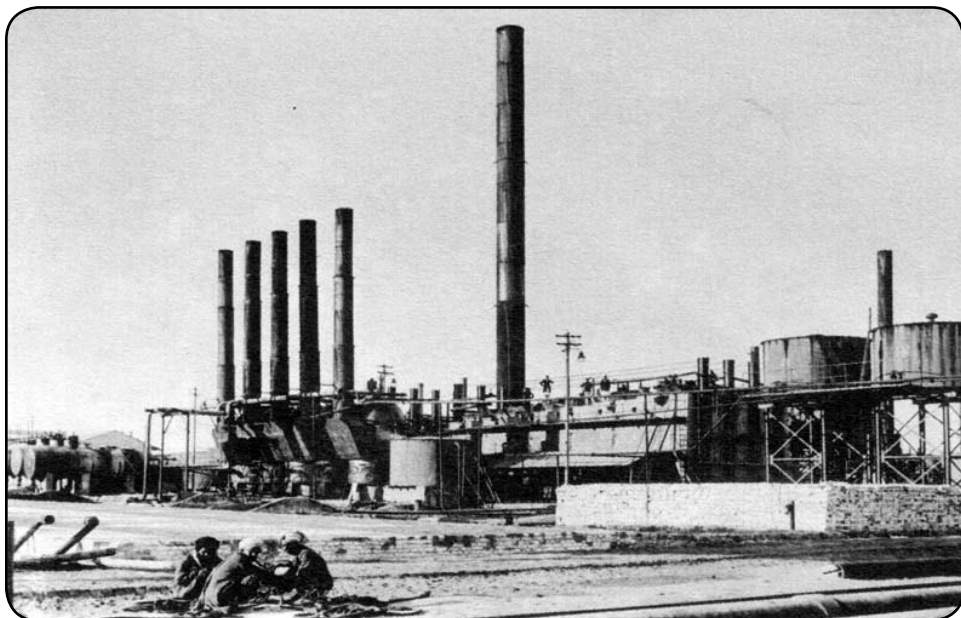
## Jail

The **Tehran city jail** is in a low brick building east of the main police station on Toopkhaneh Square. Getting out is fairly simple with a bribe or successful string-pulling with someone influential in Tehran. The only downside is that the Shahr bani have completely infiltrated the Tehran city police, and will hear of such actions.

The jails and prisons of the Shahr bani, or National Police, are another matter. Anyone held in the concrete, brutalist **Shahr bani headquarters** on Avenue Khayyam or even the infamous Evin Prison north of the city, is still potentially accessible by government officials with enough juice to make it happen. But dissidents whisper that the Shahr bani has a network of secret prisons across the southeastern half of Tehran where prisoners can be effectively “disappeared.”

## Laboratory/Factory

A secret laboratory in Tehran is probably more likely to be a magical workshop than a cutting-edge ophiurgical installation. Even the Rhodes University House on Avenue Shiraz acts mostly as a clearinghouse, library, and way station for stringers and academics on assignment—officially, that



is. Government or other official laboratories are almost all connected to the petroleum industry, most likely located at the **refinery** on the south side.

Tehran's **factories**, almost all in a ring around the south side of the city, weave carpets, roll cigarettes, refine sugar, tan leather, assemble weapons, and mix cement for more construction. They're most likely to be covers (or covert funding sources) for whatever nefarious activity the villain has planned; the only exception being the armament works by the airport. Like the refinery, they're full of dangerous machinery, moving belts, heavy equipment, and sudden gouts of flame.

## Church

In Tehran, this result is likely to be a mosque, instead. There are synagogues in the Jewish quarter, churches in the Armenian quarter, and an Anglican church (St. Paul's) near the British

## Savage Shortlist: Top Five Tehran Touches

Without overloading everyone with too much detail, here are five elements of life and adventure in Tehran that the GM should keep in mind. She might work one of them into an adventure, or merely mention them in passing.

### GUTTERS

Tehran has no sewers; waste and wastewater pour into the gutters of the major streets and flow downhill into the poor section of town. An excellent place to discover a corpse, fight a carrion-eating monster, or to chase the heroes fluming (and fuming) downstream, slipping and sliding in slimy sewer water.

### NEWSPAPERS

Tehran has ten daily newspapers, each with its own audience and political agenda. The *Ettala'at* is a respectable evening newspaper approved by the Shah, the *Journal de Tehran* provides news in French aimed at the European expatriate community, *Keyhan Setareh* is a rabble-raising religious rag, and *Mardom* (an intellectuals' paper) and *Rahbar* (an workers' paper) are both run by the pro-Communist Tudeh Party. Heroes might encounter crusading journalists or cover-up artists from any of these, and they can pick up interesting hints about what the city's factions are up to by reading between their lines.

### RELIGIOUS TENSION

Persia is a Muslim country, and the majority of Persians are Shi'ites. (Sunni Muslims predominate in Persia's neighbors such as Arabia and Iraq, and in border provinces of Persia like Baluchistan and Khuzestan.) Most of the Shi'ite *ulema* (the higher clergy) support the quietist Grand Ayatollah Borujerdi, but his anti-British fundamentalist rival Ayatollah Kashani draws immense crowds from Tehran's poor and radical neighborhoods. Even the more mystically minded Sufi Muslims in Persia are split between the Heydari and Ne'mati sects. The GM can always shake things up with a religious protest march, one that becomes a riot if it meets a rival protest march—or known infidel troublemakers like the heroes.

### TEAHOUSES

As a Muslim city, Tehran does not have a lot of bars. Instead, the social center of Tehrani neighborhoods is the *chaikhane*, or teahouse. Here, regulars exchange gossip while sipping tea and smoking the *nargile*, or water pipe. Animal trainers, puppet shows, political arguments, and other amusements help pass the time. The GM can set any sort of rendezvous, ambush, or adventure hook in a teahouse—and if a fight breaks out, remember there's a giant samovar full of boiling water just waiting to be hurled at someone. Tehran's public baths, including conveniently steam-filled "Turkish" bath chambers, can serve similar purposes.

### TRAFFIC

Wide modern streets or no, Tehran's traffic is terrible. Not just cars and trucks, but omnibuses, bicycles, WWII leftover jeeps, jitneys, and motorbikes crowd the roads—along with horses, burros, and even camels. The GM can end any daytime chase scene in a massive traffic snarl, complete with overturned trucks and stubborn camel sit-down strikes.



Embassy, but the overwhelming majority of houses of worship in the city are mosques. The largest, most important mosque in Tehran is the **Masjed-e-Shah**, or “Mosque of the Shah,” on the northern edge of the Bazaar. The **Sepah-Salam Mosque** on Baharestan Square holds Tehran’s most prestigious madrassa, or religious school. Other mosques might be anything from holy places driving off Serpent Taint by their very existence to covert nests of frenzied terrorist assassin cults.

Main Muslim worship services are on Fridays; non-Muslims are not allowed in mosques during worship or at all on Friday. Visitors must remove their shoes before entering mosques.

## ***Rich Neighborhood/Bank***

The old city of Tehran itself, like most Middle Eastern cities, doesn’t have a “rich neighborhood.” Local dignitaries might have mansions in the middle of a block of poor rowhouses, distinguishable only by the guards at the gate to their courtyards. In the last century, Tehran built a few fashionable apartment districts, mostly along Avenue Shemiran, which leads out of the city to the “old rich” suburb of Shemiran. Other “rich neighborhoods” include houses near the Shah’s various palaces, where connected court figures rent luxurious compounds until they fall from grace or power.

Persia’s national bank, **Bank Melli**, is the center of Persian finance. More interestingly for most heroes, it holds the Persian Imperial Crown Jewels in a vault in the basement, including the Darya-i-Noor, or “Sea of Light,” the largest uncut diamond in the world, a jeweled globe faceted with 51,363 precious stones, and other sumptuous artifacts. It is a constant temptation for daring thieves, and a constant attraction for the burrowing ganj serpents (see p. 22).

The “Rich Neighborhood” result might also refer to a Western-style nightclub like the **Khaiban Club**, where drinking, jazz, dancing, and other sinful modern activities can occur unmolested by religious police. Other clubs exist in or near the various European-style hotels on Avenue Takht-i-Jamshid “uptown.” Each of these clubs is under the protection of a powerful Persian official, who takes a cut of the gate in exchange for looking the other way at alcohol, gambling, or worse. Fights in, or raids on, such clubs reflect poorly on these powerful patrons, who send their own private enforcers to settle the hash of those who would disturb the rich at their pleasures.

## Savage Scenery: Top Five Tehran Sights

The most characteristic sight in Tehran is the wall of white mountains looming to the north. The clear desert air (though increasingly smoggy) makes them look much closer than they are, but they allow anyone to roughly orient themselves once they get out of Tehran's back alleys and onto the newer avenues.

These other places are "picture postcard" locations the GM may wish to throw in to establish local color, places locals may refer to or set meetings at, and otherwise help build the reality of Tehran in the players' minds.

### GOLESTAN PALACE

The palace of the Qajar Dynasty, it still serves the Pahlavi Dynasty as a reception palace for foreign dignitaries. The Coronation Hall holds the diamond-encrusted Peacock Throne of the Shahs, looted from India in 1738, with the gemlike skulls of six ganj serpents arranged around it. Many of the main rooms are mirrored; the rest hung with sumptuous artworks of Persian and European origin. All the floors are, of course, richly carpeted.

### MUSEUM OF PERSIAN ANTIQUITIES

Opened in 1937, this museum contains artifacts and antiquities from Persia's prehistoric past all the way to the Sassanian Empire of the 6th century A.D. Glorious statues and idols from Achaemenid cities and temples predominate, but almost anything could be shelved in some corner, unremarked until it awakens.

### PARK-I-SHAHR

Tehran's version of Central Park is an ideal location for rendezvous (romantic or professional), dead drops and brush passes, sudden attacks, or the occasional lurking monster. It has a lake, an ice rink (in winter), and plenty of trees and high rosebushes to block pesky surveillance. Abandoned cellars and qanats honeycomb the whole park: it was built on the old Sangeladj neighborhood, razed to the ground by Reza Shah in 1930.

### TAKIYEH-E DAWLAT

This four-story open theater in the western part of the old city primarily hosts *taziye*, or sacred Shi'ite plays similar to medieval Passion Plays. The ulema occasionally approves other performances of a moral and uplifting nature, or those aimed at some modernizing policy of the Shah. Although the Shah would love to close the Takiyeh-e Dawlat down, it's far too popular in the heated religious and mythical climate following the Serpentfall. The crowds during a performance make excellent cover for shaking a tail; impromptu *taziye* might be going on anywhere in the southern half of the city, blocking streets and (just perhaps) unleashing miraculous power.

### TOOPKHANEH SQUARE

Tehran's old military parade ground, "Artillery Square" is now its civic centerpiece. The size of St. Mark's in Venice or Red Square in Moscow, it connects by one of Tehran's ornamental gates to another square for overflow rallies and parades.

## Slum/Criminal Dive

Much of the new construction in southern Tehran would fit this description, although "poor neighborhoods" can be found almost anywhere in the city with the exception of the Shah's palace compounds. While some **teahouses** may host gambling (dice, cards, or animal fights), most of them are merely places for working men to blow off steam in religious disputation, political discussion, or fist-fights. But I repeat myself.

Tehran's **opium dens** are the main "vice houses" in the city, usually providing one-stop shops for prostitution (male and female) and drugs. Here, both Persians and Westerners mix with little or no regard for anything except cost and the pipe. Guards are the toughest kind of thugs.

The **zoor-khaneh**, or wrestling house, is another popular establishment among the poor and working-class folk of Tehran. Wrestling matches provide entertainment for the masses, and a

useful way for a hero to gain the respect of the local crowd. Thug bosses and other criminals run many of the *zoor-khanehs*, reaping the profits from the fights and the gambling on them, and using the wrestlers as tough muscle for their gangs if need be.

### **Airport/Railway Station**

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Tehran's **Doshan Tappan Airport** is also the main Persian Air Force base in the country. Given the chaos of travelers and incoming civilian craft, security is not what the Shah or his generals might wish. Heroes can evade passport control with bribery, stealth, connections (being met by a private car on the tarmac), or brazen intimidation. Aeroflot and BOAC serve the Soviet and British spheres, respectively, with daily flights to Baku and Karachi. Air France flies between Algiers and Tehran (via Tripoli and Djibouti) twice a week. Pan Am flights are weekly to Manila, via Bombay and Mandalay. Private pilots can hangar their craft at Doshan Tappan, or at the old USAAF field northwest of the city at Mehrabad.

The **Iranian National Railway station** on the south side of the city is a stop on the Trans-Iranian Railway between the oil refinery port of Abadan on the Gulf and the new Soviet border at Zanzan south of Azerbaijan. Trains, many of them brand-new American models brought over during Lend-Lease, arrive and leave several times a day. No direct rail line links Tehran with any of Persia's other neighbors besides the Soviet Union.

### **Sewers/Subways**

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Tehran has no sewers and no subways. It does, however, have the *qanat*, or underground aqueduct, network running beneath the city. Dating in some cases back to the ancient days of Cyrus and Darius, the qanats began as irrigation tunnels bringing Elburz Mountain snowmelt to the dry fields below. A qanat tunnel can run for three miles or more than 20; when dry, they provide enough room for two men abreast to stand up in. There are at least 40 qanats under Tehran, with entrances in gutters all over the city.

Medieval Tehran was a network of caves and cellars dug out as refuge from the Mongols; these may survive beneath the modern buildings as well, along with the fissures and crevasses opened up by post-Serpentfall earthquakes. Qanats can hold *kil-barak*, *ganj* serpents, spies, Serpent cultists, skulking heroes, or—in the spring, at least—an onrushing wall of icy cold water.

### **City Hall/Government Building**

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Tehran's **City Hall** is an ornate domed edifice on the north side of Toopkhaneh Square. Since the real power in Tehran lies with the national government and the Shah's palace, City Hall serves mostly as a dumping ground for modestly connected clerks and functionaries. For heroes, it's not necessarily even that useful, except as a place to pick up gossip or bribe local officials to get building plans or other records.

On the south side of Toopkhaneh Square is the **National Post Office**, where scribes still sit on the steps, waiting to write letters for illiterate clients. Suspicious mail in Tehran—anything written in a foreign language, or addressed outside the country, or mailed to people on one or another secret police list—is opened and read by at least one clerk here. Here again, judicious information-gathering techniques (such as the investment of a few hundred rials) can bear fruit for heroes.

North of Baharestan Square is the **Majlis**, or Parliament, building. Angry protesters often fill the Square, marching up and down Avenue Ibn-Sina, rallied by the Tudeh Party, one of the ayatollahs, or some other demagogic faction. Inside the building, every faction in Tehran—indeed, every faction in Persia—has its spies, bribed officials, paid agents, and sincere allies.

The **Shah's palace**, for now anyway, is at Saadabad in Shemiran, north of the city proper. (The Marble Palace, on Avenue Pahlavi, is primarily for court officials, equerries, and other functionaries, although the Shah of course keeps apartments there for his use after late



receptions, formal banquets, and such.) The Pahlavis have begun building a new palace complex just east of Shemiran at Niavaran, demolishing the less suitable of the previous dynasty's palaces. (What might they find, or release, in the ruins? Only the GM knows for sure...) This construction creates a boom in new mansions and gardens nearby for ambitious courtiers and officials to occupy once the court moves a decade or so from now. Until that happy day, the Shah must content himself with 18 or so lavish buildings, sprawled over 275 acres of immaculate grounds and gardens. The Shah lives in the White Palace and works in the Green Palace; the others are for family members and key officials. The whole complex is stuffed to the gills with almost unspeakable luxury and wealth; the GM should exceed herself in description should the heroes find themselves in Saadabad.

### ***University***

**Tehran University** began in the 19th century as the equivalent of an American "A&M," a school for training engineers and agronomists. In 1932, the royal council approved its upgrading to a full-fledged university with a modern campus in western Tehran. Although it has a "Department of Ophiurgy," its research facilities are quite limited. On the other end of the arcane spectrum, however, the university's library of ancient Persian manuscripts is unrivaled in the world.

Most Persian factions have campus "youth wings," which can be relied upon to start protests and riots even without orders from the central apparat.

### ***Barrio/Ghetto/Ethnic Enclave***

Tehran's oldest ethnic enclaves are the Armenian quarter along Avenue Gozar-bashi and the Jewish quarter of Oudlajan, northeast of the Bazaar. Both are likely centers of political turmoil, as both Armenia and Palestine are now under Soviet rule. Both neighborhoods were reliable socialist recruiting grounds, but now swell with refugees from Stalin's protection—including many Trotskyites, Gorkyist "superstitionists" and other deviant socialists.

Likewise the Azerbaijani neighborhood between the Bazaar and the railway station (historically anti-Soviet and friendly to the Axis powers), and the blocks of Lebanese refugees settled north of Avenue France. These last are not only roiled by inter-socialist and anti-Soviet intrigues, but by the various French factions whose sponsorship they claim.

# Friends and Foes

In Tehran, knowing somebody is the key to getting a good apartment, getting out of jail, or even getting out of Tehran with a whole skin. The city sizzles with intrigue, and allegiances come together and come apart with frightening frequency. Worse yet, there are things no human can ally with...or that no human *should* ally with, at least.

## PERSIAN NATIVES

Technically, "Persian" is only the dominant ethnic group of the country, which has officially gone by the name "Iran" (meaning "home of the Aryans") since 1934. Among its 17 million people, Iran also counts Kurds, Arabs, Azeris (many fewer after Stalin annexed most of them), Baluchis, Turkomens, Chaldeans, and Qashqai, a Turkic southern tribe in occasional rebellion against the Shah's government. However, it's still "Persia" on the Foreign Office maps and in Foreign Office discussions, and to the F.O., what the wogs think doesn't matter.

The wogs think the British are conniving, oil-stealing, imperialist rat-bastards.

## The Shah

And so does His Imperial Majesty, Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi, the 29-year-old supreme ruler of Persia. Pressured not only by the Soviets and British, but by the rural landholding aristocracy, the ulema, and the rising middle class, the Shah charts a careful course. He wishes to follow his father Reza Shah's example and make Persia a modern, independent country. He does not, however, wish to follow his father Reza Shah's example and get overthrown by the British and Soviets—the two Allies invaded Persia in 1941 to secure Stalin's southern flank against Nazi subversion, and to secure Britain's oil supply.



**USUAL ENEMIES:** The Shah's enemies list shuffles itself every season, but constants include the old Qajar aristocracy that his father overthrew in 1921, the most radical of the ulema, and the Serpent cults that (as a good Muslim) he despises.

**USUAL ALLIES:** The Shah's power base is the Persian army and air force, which constantly agitates for action against the Soviet "invader" regardless of the balance of forces. He can usually count on the Shahrbani and Gendarmerie, although his court's corruption offends the latter.

**HOW HE WILL CROSS YOU:** If the Shah bears the heroes no personal malice, he will send the military or Gendarmerie to arrest them, prevent their plane from leaving, or whatever else seems needful. If the heroes have irritated him, he will turn the Shahrbani loose on them and forget they ever existed.

**WHY HE WILL CROSS YOU:** The Shah will cross the heroes for some enemy who needs to be placated in the short term, or because he has decided (or some enemy of the heroes has convinced him) that they pose a threat to him. Only major political pressure can convince him to back off in the latter case.

## Shahrbani

The Shahrbani are the Shah's internal secret police, back under the command of the feared and hated Rokneddin Mokhtari. (Mokhtari, intriguingly enough, is also a concert-quality violinist.) The Shah removed Mokhtari from command in 1942 as a sop to the Allies and as a way to gain popularity with the citizenry of Tehran. After the Soviets annexed Azerbaijan, the Shah brought Mokhtari back to root out Communist subversion across the country.

**USUAL ENEMIES:** The Shahr bani's enemies are Mokhtari's enemies, with the exception of officers who profited a little too much from his six-year absence. Mokhtari hasn't yet purged them all from his command. Outside his own ranks, his main targets are Communists, followed closely by anyone else with a large enough following to threaten his power.

**USUAL ALLIES:** The Shah isn't quite stupid enough to give Mokhtari an outside power base. Every other faction in Persia hates Mokhtari's guts. The Turks (most likely to cooperate with his anti-Communist investigations) don't much like him. Even the Ba'athist agents in Tehran work with Mokhtari reluctantly, despite his pro-Nazi credentials during the War—Mokhtari doesn't much like Iraq.

**HOW THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** Classic Gestapo style: knock on the door at night, blindfold ride in the back of a black Rover S.A. sedan, interrogation under a bare lightbulb in a bleak basement, and (if need be) a shallow grave in the desert. The Shahr bani will also use overt surveillance to push targets into mistakes, wiretaps and black-bag jobs to case targets' rooms, and the rest of the secret policeman's manual.

**WHY THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** Orders from the Shah or from Mokhtari, or suspicion of Communist or arcane activity. People who threaten, wittingly or unwittingly, to expose Shahr bani corruption also wind up crossed.

## Gendarmerie

The Gendarmerie are Persia's national non-secret police, essentially Persia's version of the Texas Rangers or the Mounties. They alternate between settling tribal disputes, tracking down criminals, and general do-gooding wherever the budget will allow. Colonel Schwarzkopf has slowly turned his men into honest, effective law officers with a relatively high degree of professionalism

### Col. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Sr.



Colonel Schwarzkopf (b. 1895) may be best-known to Americans as the chief investigator in the Lindbergh baby kidnapping, or possibly as the voice of the *Gang Busters* radio program in the late 1930s, but in Persia he is the trusted commander of the National Gendarmerie, and has been since 1942. Put in charge of Persia's only national police force during the Allied occupation, he brought the same dedication, honesty, and organizational skills to the task that he'd used as Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police. With his wife and son (back in New Jersey) presumed dead after the Serpentfall, Schwarzkopf has re-dedicated himself to his men and his adopted country, an attitude that gains him enemies and grudging respect in equal measure in the corridors of power.



He speaks German, Persian, and Russian in a raspy voice, a consequence of a gas attack during WWI.

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

**SKILLS:** Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Criminology) d8, Knowledge (Logistics) d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8, Survival d6, Tracking d6.

**CHARISMA:** 0 **PACE:** 6 **PARRY:** 5 **TOUGHNESS:** 8

**EDGES:** Brawny, Command, Connections, Danger Sense, Investigator, Nerves of Steel, Quick Draw.

**HINDRANCES:** Anemic, Callous, Code of Honor, Loyal

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **GENDARMES:** As head of the Gendarmerie, Col. Schwarzkopf can call on a squad of Gendarmes (2d6 available) anywhere in Persia. (Use Police stats, **DAR** p. 81; replace Driving with Riding d6, increase Shooting to d6.)

and literacy, and a relatively low degree of opium addiction and brutality. He stiffened his Gendarmerie with a cadre of some of the 10,000 American soldiers left in Persia after the Serpentfall, and equipped them with some of the leftover arsenals of American Lend-Lease likewise.

**USUAL ENEMIES:** Tribal warlords (especially Kurds and Qashqai), bandits, criminals, and Communist agents among any of the above. Schwarzkopf's political enemies include most of the parties of the Majlis, who make hay about the "Yankee cop" running Persia's police and cut his budget to keep their own corruption from his investigative instincts.

**USUAL ALLIES:** Tehran's merchant class appreciates the novelty of a police force that takes only modest bribes; the Shah appreciates anyone with no outside power base.

**HOW THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** Reluctantly, if the heroes are Americans; gleefully, if the heroes are British. Unless the heroes are behaving like "mad dog" outlaws (raping, indiscriminate killing and burning, etc.), the cross will be a legal arrest, confiscation of any contraband, and either jail time or an escort to the border.

**WHY THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** You are a smuggler, or have enough weapons to look suspicious, or have actually committed a crime without a powerful patron to protect you from the heat. The Gendarmerie will also arrest any of the Shah's enemies who he requests get the kid-glove treatment for whatever reason.

### Tudeh Party

Founded in 1941 by a group of Persian intellectuals, the Tudeh ("Masses") Party rapidly moved left until it became in essence a Communist-dominated party in 1944. Its greatest asset, besides the ability to turn out lots of thugs—er, radicalized workers—at rallies, is its TPMP (Tudeh Party Military Organization), a secret society that has penetrated the entire Persian military. While some factions of Tudeh are not completely Soviet-dominated, all the decision-making, and much of the funding, for Tudeh comes straight from Moscow.

**USUAL ENEMIES:** Tudeh are anti-monarchist and anti-imperialist, opposing the Shah and the British in equal measure. The Shahrbani works to destabilize them, and they return the favor. They are also anti-clerical, and they don't much like the Ba'athists either. But then who does?

**USUAL ALLIES:** Besides the NKVD and their own TPMP, Tudeh draws much of its support from intellectuals and labor unionists. Tudeh may also make temporary "popular front" style alliances in the Majlis or elsewhere for local, tactical goals.

**HOW THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** The Tudeh will either smash its enemies in a street fight or deploy its hidden allies—the TPMP, fellow-travelers in the European community or the aristocracy, college professors, etc.—to run interference and sabotage enemy activity. In the worst cases, Tudeh will rat foes out to the NKVD.

**WHY THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** Tudeh guards the interests of the international working class; those who oppose them—or seem like British allies, capitalists, or reactionaries—deserve what they get. Also, if Moscow says so.

### Fadayun-e-Islam

Nawab Safavi, a 21-year-old theology student, founded this terrorist society of assassins after the Serpentfall, in order to bring about a perfect Muslim state in Persia, governed under the strictest form of *sharia* (religious law). Although relatively few in number, the Fadayun-e-Islam have already killed several prominent scholars and government officials, many in the wake of the 1946 Azerbaijan crisis.



## Ruhollah Khomeini



Dour and devout, Ruhollah Khomeini (b. 1902) is one of the leading lights of Persia's religious and scholarly community, the *ulema*. He divides his time between the Shi'ite holy city of Qom (about 60 miles south of Tehran) and various mosques in the capital city's southwestern neighborhoods, where he has built a substantial following.



In political matters, he is staunchly theocratic and traditionalist, defending the strict laws of Islam and opposing both the modernizing Shah and the social-democratic (and Communist) opposition parties. His teaching expertise, oddly enough, covers not only Shi'ite theology, but neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, and Sufi mysticism: he is perhaps the closest thing in the Persian *ulema* to an arcane scholar.

**ATTRIBUTES:** Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d8

**SKILLS:** Guts d10, Intimidation d12, Investigation d10, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Knowledge (Theology) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d12, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6

**CHARISMA:** +2 **PACE:** 6 **PARRY:** 2 **TOUGHNESS:** 6

**EDGES:** Charismatic, Command, Fervor, Followers, Great Luck, Scholar (Theology and Occult), Strong Willed

**HINDRANCES:** Holy Roller, Overconfident, Stubborn

### • WHAT'S HIS AGENDA?

Like many significant figures in the labyrinthine tangles of Persian politics, Khomeini plays his cards close to his chest. The GM can supply any of the following possibilities as rumors, and choose any one (or more!) of them to be true in her own campaign:

#### ISLAMIC MASTERMIND

Khomeini only pretends to stay aloof from the fundamentalist factions in the parliament. In fact, he secretly coordinates Ayatollah Kashani's Mujahidin Party and the assassins of the Fadayun: those who he denounces turn up purged, or dead. He plans to build a purified Islamic dictatorship in Persia, with himself subordinate only to Allah.

#### RED DUPE

Like all movements that seek to undermine the Shah, Khomeini's faction is riddled with bribed and coerced Soviet agents of influence. One of his promising young protégés, the precocious student Ali Shariati, is actually a deep-dyed Marxist, subtly manipulating Khomeini into doing Stalin's bidding.

#### ON THE MAKE

Khomeini merely seeks the best for himself (and perhaps for the poor, conservative folk of his flock) and is playing for time and power by balancing the Shah, the Reds, and the other imams against each other. He has no greater loyalty, no long-term agenda whatsoever.

#### BRITISH ASSET

Khomeini is actually the son of a Kashmiri Indian woman and "Haji" Richard Williamson, a British oilman and devout convert to Islam—who was also a deep-cover SIS agent. Haji Williamson's son Ruhollah carries on his father's work, keeping the Shah weak so that Britain can keep extracting Persia's oil. Those who find out the truth of Khomeini's parentage turn up suddenly dead.

#### SERPENT CULTIST

Khomeini's studies of occult matters prepared him for the Serpentfall, and he has wormed a cult of Zahhak (the serpent-dragon of ancient Persian myth) into the very heart of Tehran, concealed among the mosques and seminaries where he preaches. (Add Arcane Background (Magic), All Thumbs, Spellcasting d10, and suitable spells.)

**USUAL ENEMIES:** Modernizers, effective government ministers, and anyone else who opposes the will of Allah.

**USUAL ALLIES:** Radical clerics of the ulema, especially Kashani and Khomeini.

**HOW THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** Constant surveillance, inflaming religious mobs, and a bullet. Steps one and two are optional.

**WHY THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** The Fadayun mostly targets Persians. It will only go after foreigners who threaten it directly or intervene on behalf of its intended targets, those who a hardline ayatollah condemns, or infidels who commit clear acts of sacrilege against Allah such as overt magic-working or desecrating a mosque.



## FOREIGN FORCES

Persia has been a battleground in the “Great Game” between Britain and Russia since the 1850s, and both powers have long had agents, spy rings, and local assets in Tehran and among the tribes. In 1941, the British and Soviets invaded Persia to overthrow the insufficiently anti-Nazi Reza Shah, and to secure the crucial southern supply line for Allied Lend-Lease aid to Stalin. Much of this aid was American, and U.S. troops flooded into Persia (along with their own spies and covert operatives) during the War to operate the “Persian Corridor” between the Persian Gulf and the Soviet Union. In 1943, the three Allied leaders met in the Tehran Conference to plan the last half of the War—but they reckoned without Ragnarok.

The Serpentfall in July 1945 wracked Persia with earthquakes—and had a similar seismic effect on the Great Game. The Americans, who looked like the new dominant player, were swept aside. The Soviets grabbed as much of Persia as they could in 1946, while the British were forced to play catch-up with a suspicious Shah and Persian population. Fugitive Nazis infiltrate into next-door Iraq; over the mountains, the Turks plot revenge against the infidel Reds; and everyone wants Persia’s oil. A lot.

## SIS

Although Ian Milne, the official SIS Chief of Station, coordinates British intelligence activities from the British Embassy, the key figure for MI6 in Tehran is Robert Charles “Robin” Zaehner. Zaehner, a religious scholar with extensive counter-sabotage experience in northern Persia during the War, runs a personal network that extends from tribal chiefs in the now-Soviet north to shipping and banking magnates in Tehran. His famous opium and mescaline parties, at his house in the old city near the Golestan Palace, give him access to Tehran’s artistic and arcane set; Zaehner is also a scholar of mysticism and Oriental religions.



**USUAL ENEMIES:** The Soviets, the anti-British social-democratic parties in the Majlis, the Nazis, anyone else interested in ending British access to (and control of) Persian oil.

**USUAL ALLIES:** No explicit allies save paid and recruited agents. Everyone else, Persian or foreign, is an ally only so long as they prove useful to the Crown.

**HOW THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** Shop you to another intelligence service, blackmail or coerce you into working for them, blow your cover or your operation.

**WHY THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** Ian Milne may well be an NKVD agent; he was close friends with Kim Philby during the War. Zaehner may be suborned by the Daughters of Dionin, given his extravagant taste for low living. Or, of course, SIS might just sell you out as a convenient favor for some other player.

## Kara Vania



It is hardly polite to ask Kara Vania, a.k.a. “the Tiger Woman,” a.k.a. “Secret Agent XW-9,” a.k.a. “the Lady of Doom,” her age. Although she could pass for her early 20s, she has been one of the most sought-after (in multiple contexts) femmes fatale in Eurasia since before the War. She is probably half-Russian and half-Indian, although she could be from anywhere between Paris and Java, and speaks a dozen languages with perfect fluency.



She is known to have worked for the British, French, and Japanese intelligence agencies, as well as at least two Chinese factions; she has been the mistress of Abwehr and GRU generals alike. Her greatest skills (at least those she exercises in public) are cards and thrown weapons; she has the eye and reflexes of a striking snake. Kara Vania works for anyone and no-one, an adventuress in the purest sense of the word.

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

**SKILLS:** Climbing d8, Driving d10, Fighting d8, Gambling d12, Guts d8, Knowledge (Tradecraft) d10, Lockpicking d10, Notice d10, Persuasion d12, Shooting d6, Stealth d10, Streetwise d8, Swimming d6, Throwing d12

**CHARISMA:** +4 **PACE:** 6 **PARRY:** 6 **TOUGHNESS:** 6

**EDGES:** Acrobat, Ambidextrous, Connections, Danger Sense, Improved Dodge, Improved Sykes-Fairbairn, Quick, Quick Draw, Steady Hands, Thief, Very Attractive

**HINDRANCES:** Curious, Greedy, Vengeful, Wanted (varies)

**GEAR:** Grappling gun and climbing harness, throwing knives, lockpicks, other spy gear concealed in remarkably tailored clothing.

## NKVD

Ivan Fitin runs the NKVD operation in Tehran from the Soviet Embassy, just a block away from the Embassy of their hated British rivals. He relentlessly and ruthlessly works to completely suborn the Tudeh Party and weaken the Shah, planning a Communist Revolution in Persia that will turn the country over to Stalin wholesale. An local Armenian activist, Artashes Avanesian, feeds the Moscow line to Tudeh for the Comintern, a Party agency. The NKVD also runs agents amongst the refugee communities, monitoring them for anti-Soviet activities.

**USUAL ENEMIES:** The Shah, the British, the Turks, the Nazis, the Poles; in that order.

**USUAL ALLIES:** The Tudeh Party is a willing Communist front organization. The NKVD wants to transform it into an automatic Soviet front organization, which is not quite the same thing.

**HOW THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** A “noodle” in the back of the head; or a remote rendezvous followed by an ambush, torture, and “doubling” if possible.

**WHY THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** Something the heroes do unwittingly interferes with Soviet plans; something the heroes do intentionally interferes with Soviet plans.



## Nazis and Ba'athists

Nazi ideologists helped create the Ba'ath Party in Persia's neighbor Iraq, and expatriate Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS troopers provide Iraq with a military cadre to boot. The Ba'athists (and their Nazi partners in the SD) seek like-minded folk in the Persian military, to repeat the Iraqi

model. General Fazlollah Zahedi is the most promising such asset: a dapper boulevardier, former Tehran police chief and pro-German governor of Isfahan. The British kidnapped Zahedi in 1942 and interned him in Palestine, but he escaped after the Serpentfall and returned to Persia and military command. Under his protection, Nazi and Ba'athist agents can operate within the Persian army and Tehran police.

**USUAL ENEMIES:** Persian socialist and democratic parties, the British, the Poles, and the Soviets.

**USUAL ALLIES:** Serpent cultists and ambitious generals. Tactically, the Ba'ath works with anyone at need: they have, for example, cooperated with the NKVD to crush anti-Soviet socialists and intellectuals outside the Tudeh Party.

**HOW THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** Most likely, a street killing. Failing that, a kidnap-and-exfiltration to a remote Army base—or to Iraq, if you're very interesting.

**WHY THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** In addition to the usual reasons, the Nazis didn't learn their lesson and still seek occult power, which the heroes might well seem to have.

## MAH

The Turkish intelligence service operates not out of the Turkish Embassy, but from a pistachio factory in southern Tehran legitimately owned by an Armenian businessman. (The Turks do have a "false front" intelligence operation run from their Embassy, which knows nothing of the main MAH operation.) The principal MAH agent in Tehran, former Istanbul detective "Quicksilver" Necati, doesn't even have diplomatic papers, so confident is he of his ability to foresee and escape any crisis.

**USUAL ENEMIES:** The Soviets, always and forever. The SIS should be a natural ally, but far too many British diplomats and spies are pro-Greek or NKVD-tainted for the Turks' liking. Plus, blowing a British operation in Persia is good for Turkish credibility with everyone else in Persia.

**USUAL ALLIES:** The Turks find themselves working most closely with the Poles and with anti-Communist officers in the Gendarmerie and army. Or with wandering adventurers who seem easily pointed at the NKVD.

**HOW THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** Find out who else wants you dead, imprisoned, or otherwise out of the way; shop you to them. Unless you're an NKVD agent, the Turks won't expose themselves to whack you.

**WHY THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** To earn favors and credibility from a Persian power broker of any sort, or because you're insufficiently anti-Communist for them.

## Polish Home Army

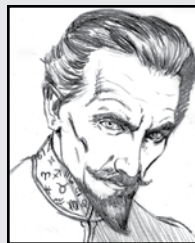
Persia was a major destination for Polish refugees during the War, including 40,000 Polish troops assigned to security duty for Lend-Lease. After the Serpentfall and the Soviet annexations, these Polish troops and refugees fought their own miniature civil war in the streets of Tehran; the winners were the "Polish Home Army" faction, who finally purged the pro-Communist Poles in Tehran at the cost of most of the Poles' materiel. They now depend on a lifeline of French support from the Deuxième Bureau in Algiers, represented in Tehran since 1947 by Foreign Legion General Jean Marsal. Abdol Omar (see p. 21) believed that Marsal (a traitor to the Legion



## Prince Abdol Omar



Born in 1871 to a Russian princess (from whom he got his gray eyes) and a noble of Khuzestan province in southwestern Persia, Abdol Omar spent the years from 1907 to 1934 in New York, working as a practicing psychologist while solving crimes and righting wrongs (especially against women) using his forbidding command of the astrological arts. He returned to Tehran shortly before WWII, and lives as befits a prince in quiet luxury with his wife Lotis Popov and a retinue of trusted servants.



Since the Serpentfall, he has resumed crime-solving and wrong-righting, opposing Serpent cults wherever he can discern their actions. He believes that the Black Brotherhood, a demonic cult of soulless Central Asian psychics he battled in the 1920s, may be seeking to join forces with the Brotherhood of Set. Due to his advancing years (although his imposing frame has aged well), he prefers to work through surrogates and cut-outs, sending them on strange errands to perform precisely timed tasks, co-ordinating their actions by astrological prediction.

**ATTRIBUTES:** Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**SKILLS:** Fighting d4, Gambling d12, Guts d10, Healing d6, Intimidation d12, Investigation d12, Knowledge (Astrology) d12+2, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Knowledge (Psychology) d10, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Psionics d10, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8

**CHARISMA:** +4 **PACE:** 5 **PARRY:** 5 **TOUGHNESS:** 6

**EDGES:** Arcane Background (Psionics), Attractive, Brawny, Danger Sense, Followers, Improved Arcane Resistance, Investigator, Master (Astrology), Mentalist, Noble, Rich, Scholar (Astrology and Psychology)

**HINDRANCES:** Code of Honor, Elderly, Enemy (Black Brotherhood), Heroic, Minor Pacifist

**POWER POINTS:** 20

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **ASTROLOGY:** By making a Knowledge (Astrology) test, Abdol Omar can predict virtually any action (except major moral choices) by anyone, if he knows their exact birth date and hour. (If he only has a date, his roll is at -4.) He can also determine their location anywhere on Earth at any time. Casting the first such horoscope for a given person requires hours of labor; afterward, it takes only a few brief calculations.
- **ILLUSIONS:** By means of hypnotic force, Abdol Omar can create illusions in the minds of his foes: turn yarn into snakes, for example. For 3 points per round, such illusions can automatically hit a target, who must make a Smarts roll or be Shaken. (Those who roll a 1 on the Smarts roll receive a wound.) A suspicious foe can make a Smarts roll at -2 to disbelieve such illusions.
- **TELEPATHY:** Abdol Omar can communicate with anyone within a mile (or with his wife anywhere in the city) with a Smarts roll. Telepathy requires concentration (-2 on all other tasks) and 2 points.

in the pay of the Kaiser) was killed in the Sudan in 1917 as a Lieutenant. Was the astrologer fooled? Has Marsal been resurrected by Djehuti-Yamun? If so, who's really running the Polish Home Army?

**USUAL ENEMIES:** Pro-Communist Poles, the NKVD, the Ba'ath Party, fundamentalist clerics who don't like the Poles' Catholicism, Abdol Omar.

**USUAL ALLIES:** The MAH, French agents (if any).

**HOW THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** Old-fashioned curb-stomping. The Poles don't really have the assets for subtlety, although they do have contacts among the various churches, and in the Gendarmerie.

**WHY THEY WILL CROSS YOU:** As a favor to Marsal, or because you looked like a Commie.

# — Monsters of the Persian Night —

Persia escaped the Serpentfall relatively unscathed, as far as supernatural infestations go. Of the creatures in the main **Day After Ragnarok** setting book, adventurers in Persia have encountered only giant snakes, fly-by-nights, and other demons (**DAR**, p. 87). The Soviets, of course, have deployed man-apes in their occupied zone and on missions into the Persian wilds.

Most of the dangers in Persia come from rebel tribes in the hinterlands (use the Bandit statistics, **DAR** p. 79) such as the Qashqai, from the political turmoil and tension discussed earlier in this book, and from resurgent Serpent cults. The primary local cult is the Fadayun-e-Azi-Dahaka, who worship the three-headed evil dragon from the *Zend-Avesta*, who according to Zoroastrian lore is imprisoned in Mt. Demavend just 60 miles northeast of Tehran. They identify Jörmungandr with Gandarw, the great sea serpent who could devour twelve provinces in one bite; Azi-Dahaka is Gandarw's avatar and successor as inevitable ruler of the world. The Fadayun-e-Azi-Dahaka primarily recruit from ambitious intellectuals, generals, and figures of power. The mass cult of Zakhak grows amongst the poor of Tehran, opposed strenuously by the ulema.

Persia does, however, have a few specific local monsters, detailed in the following pages.

## Thief

Tehran, like most poor, crowded cities, is full of thieves, from burglars to pickpockets to smash-and-grab types. Most spy rings in the city employ at least one thief (either local or brought in from the home country) for specialized operations—ideally a master thief, if they can afford it.

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

**SKILLS:** Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Gambling d4, Guts d6, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6, Throwing d6

**CHARISMA:** 0 **PACE:** 6 **PARRY:** 5 **TOUGHNESS:** 5

**HINDRANCES:** Greedy, Wanted

**EDGES:** Thief

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **MASTER THIEF:** Every ring of thieves has a master thief to lead it. Master thieves are Wild Cards, with Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Lockpicking d12, Notice d10, Stealth d12, Streetwise d10, Throwing d8, and a smattering of additional Edges (Dodge, Acrobat, Natural Leader) as needed.
- **PICK POCKET:** With a successful opposed test of Stealth against the target's Notice, a thief can lift a wallet, cut a purse, or plant contraband without detection.

## Ganj

Awakened by the Serpentfall, the ganj crawled out of the earth's fissures and caves and back into Persia's nightmares. The dreaded "jewel serpent" resembles an enormous cobra, with its scales studded with faceted encrustations: sapphires, emeralds, rubies...and always one great diamond in the beast's forehead. The ganj can sniff out large concentrations (or even a few carats) of crystallized carbon—jewels and gems, in other words. Tehrani banks and jewelry stores have to hire monster-killing parties every so often, to clear out the qanats or sub-cellar underneath them as the ganj draw closer. Fortunately, ganj are solitary creatures: where one ganj is "hunting," others stay away. The exception, of course, is mating season, when any female ganj that has discovered and "nested" a sizable hoard attracts predatory males by the dozen.

**ATTRIBUTES:** Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d8

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

**PACE:** 9 **PARRY:** 5 **TOUGHNESS:** 8 (14 on head)

## Special Abilities

- **BITE:** Str+d4
- **FEAR:** Seeing a ganj requires a Guts roll.
- **GLITTERING SHIELD:** The gem-like coruscations of the ganj's head scales attract the eye: attackers must make a Smarts test to avoid aiming for the ganj's jeweled armor (Armor 6).
- **MINERAL SENSE:** The ganj can detect crystallized carbon within 200 yards; it receives +2 to all relevant Notice checks and ignores darkness or similar penalties.
- **QUICK:** Discard action cards of 5 or lower.
- **RESIN SPIT:** The ganj spits quick-hardening resin at its prey, at ranges up to 20". Treat the resin as an *entangle*, aimed at a single target. Each round after it hits, the penalty to Agility or Strength attempts to break free increases by -1. Use the Drowning rules for the long-term effects of being trapped in ganj resin.
- **SIZE +2:** The ganj can get up to 40' long.

## Kil-barak

According to legend, after conquering Persia, Alexander the Great sealed up an army of dog-headed men, the kil-barak, behind an immense brazen gate somewhere in the mountains northeast of Tehran. The Serpentfall has jarred the gate loose. They roam the Elburz Mountains, and have begun to infiltrate the further suburbs—and darker qanats—of Tehran itself. They seem to have no higher organization than the individual pack, but rumors of a Dog-Headed Khan somewhere in Soviet Central Asia or British Afghanistan (allied or opposed to either) fly throughout the Bazaar.

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

**SKILLS:** Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Stealth d8, Throwing d6, Tracking d10

**PACE:** 8 **PARRY:** 7 **TOUGHNESS:** 6

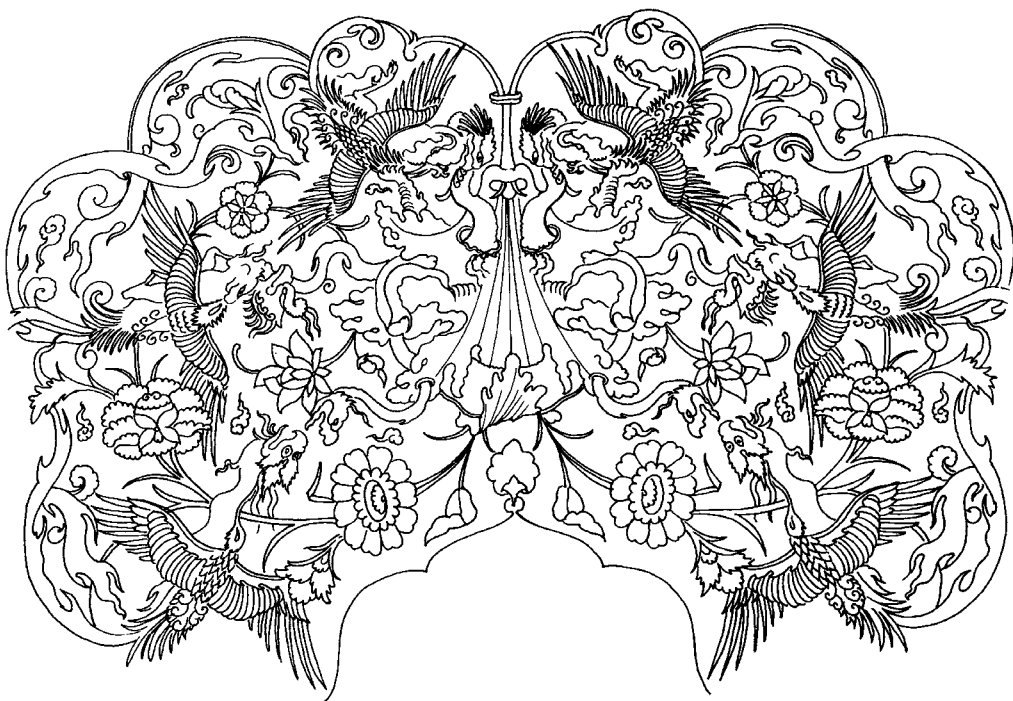
**GEAR:** Scimitars (Str+d8), spears (Str+d6; Reach 1), small-shields (+1 Parry)

## Special Abilities

- **ALPHA MALE (WC):** Each kil-barak pack is headed by an alpha, with Command, Fearless and traits one die larger than regular kil-barak. If the alpha is killed or driven off, the surviving pack must make an immediate Spirit roll or turn tail. The alpha male is a Wild Card.
- **BITE:** Str+d4
- **ENHANCED SMELL:** Kil-barak get a +2 to all Notice and Tracking rolls to detect objects with odors, and ignore all darkness penalties.
- **FLEET-FOOTED:** Kil-barak roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.

## Symir

Sufi legend speaks of the "Conference of the Birds," a conclave of avian seekers after wisdom. The symir is that legend embodied in a flock of Tehran's birds, an emergent consciousness hovering over the city, potentially including every bird in the province—or in Persia—from pet nightingales to predatory hawks. Symir are more often encountered as spies than as combatants; a string of sparrows on a telephone line, or a flock of pigeons in the square; even individual jays or parrots, carrying their grains of information up to...who? Or what? (Both magical cults and Soviet psionicists are rumored to use symirs in their activities.) Whether there is one symir or many, or whether the various symir flocks make up some ultimate symir (the mythical Simurgh, perhaps), nobody can say. Except the birds, of course.



**ATTRIBUTES:** Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**SKILLS:** Notice d12+2

**PACE:**— **PARRY:** 4 **TOUGHNESS:** 5

## Special Abilities

- **BLIND:** When attacking human-sized targets, birds fly at their eyes. If wounded, the character must make an Agility roll to see if they protected their face from the avian onslaught. On a failure, he suffers the One Eye Hindrance until his wound heals; on a 1, regardless of the Wild Die, he suffers the Blind Hindrance until his wound heals instead.
- **CLAWS/BEAK:** Flock attacks do 2d4 damage. As with normal Swarm attacks, they automatically hit.
- **COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE:** The listed Smarts and Spirit traits are for a Medium Burst Template sized flock; about 50 birds. For each additional 50 birds, those traits increase one die size. More birds also increase Toughness by +2 per additional flock; or the symir can merely substitute a fresh flock for a wounded one, thus “healing” all damage.
- **DISTRIBUTED CONSCIOUSNESS:** A symir flock can split into smaller flocks (Small Burst Template) for combat, or detach individual birds as scouts or spies. If any member of the flock is in eyeshot of a single scout, the symir knows what the scout is seeing.
- **FLIGHT:** Flying Pace 6; Climb 4.
- **SMALL:** Birds are small, quick targets; human-sized attackers attack at -2. (The Toughness value is for the flock as a whole, not an individual bird.)
- **SWARM:** Parry +2. Cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage; firearms force a Spirit check by the flock on the first discharge.

# Adventures in Tehran

Adventures in Tehran come from one of three sources: an adventure that the GM creates for the heroes, a random adventure created by the tables and rules in this section, or an adventure the heroes create for themselves. Hopefully by now you have plenty of great ideas for adventures to set in Tehran, but if not, you can always use the **Day After Ragnarok** Adventure Generator (**DAR**, pp. 102-115) to create one, tweaking the results to suit your campaign or your sense of Tehran more specifically.

## TEHRAN URBAN ADVENTURE GENERATOR

This leads into the random encounter option. For each day the heroes spend in Tehran, draw a card from your Action Deck. If you draw a face card, roll on either the **Tehran Encounter Table** (p. 26) or the **Tehran Event Table** (p. 28). Or roll on both, and blend the two or pick whichever seems like a better result. If you draw a Joker, it's a really exciting day: roll twice—once on each table, or twice on one, whichever. If you draw a black Ace or black Jack, someone might betray the heroes: roll on the **Betrayal Table** (p. 29). Reshuffle your deck after every encounter.

The heroes generate adventures in one of several ways:

- The players proactively decide on a mission: “We’re going to loot the Bank Melli,” or “We’re going to whack every NKVD agent in sight,” or “We’re going to make friends with Colonel Schwarzkopf and find out what he needs,” or “We’re going to open a *zoor-khaneh* and use it as a home base and income source.”
- The heroes have stepped on some other actor’s toes: the NKVD, the SIS, the Ayatollah Kashani, the Fadayun-e-Azi-Dahaka. That actor kicks back.
- Someone the heroes have helped in the past needs a new favor.
- The heroes have raised their local profile enough to interest a power player in trying to recruit them: the SIS, the Shahr bani, the Gendarmerie, Abdol Omar.

## TEHRAN ENCOUNTER TABLE

Roll on the **Tehran Encounter Table** any time you need a person in Tehran, either a client or victim or villain or guest star or etc. for the main **Adventure Generator** (**DAR**, pp. 102-115), or for a person who sparks a random encounter.

Modify the roll by **+1** for daytime encounters, or **-1** for night-time encounters; **+1** for encounters on the north side, in the Westernized streets, or in a rich block, **+0** for the Bazaar, or **-1** for the south side, the old city, or in a poor block.

You can either put the encounter wherever the heroes happen to be at that moment, or roll on the **City Location Table** (**DAR**, p. 104) suitably modified for Tehran (pp. 5-13).

**BEGGARS:** By day 1d10, by night 1d2. Ragged unfortunates, reduced either by dire circumstances or professional gifts to the begging of alms. May provide cryptic prophecies, rumor from the Bazaar, put the word on the street, or finger the heroes for whoever they really work for. Make a Streetwise test (at -2 for any hero new to Tehran) and give generously.

**DISGUISED KIL-BARAK:** By day 1, by night 1d8. Either running on all fours and disguised as dogs (Notice at -2 to detect something strange; no penalty if the hero has encountered the kil-barak) or wearing hooded cloaks. Either on a random hunting run, or on a scouting mission for some strange (probably arcane) kil-barak plot.

**EXPATRIATE:** Native of a foreign land now living in Tehran; likely to either try to borrow money, interest the heroes in some wild scheme (financial or political), or attempt to sell information (or

rumor) to the heroes. The expat is either from the heroes' native country or roll a d8: **1:** Azeri; **2:** Armenian; **3:** Lebanese; **4:** Jewish; **5:** Polish; **6:** British; **7:** other European; **8:** American.

**FRIEND:** Old friend, love interest, or acquaintance of the heroes. Ideally, they owe him or her a favor.

**GIANT SNAKE:** Probably lurking in a qanat or an earthquake-rubble pile. Roll 1d10: **1-3:** 20'; **4-5:** 30'; **6-10:** Ganj. Modify the die by +1 for every hero carrying gems or wearing jewelry, and +1 if the heroes are underground. Note that killing a giant snake almost certainly identifies the heroes as dangerous, and possibly possessing illegal weapons.

**MERCHANT:** Roll 1d6: **1-2:** alone; **3-6:** with 1d6 guards. Depending on the neighborhood, he may want to sell the heroes something, or he may be being mugged and need rescuing.

**MOB:** 10+d100 angry Tehranis are steamed about something, and the heroes are in the way. A Persian-speaking hero can disperse a mob by turning it from Hostile to Neutral or Friendly with Persuade.

**NOBLEMAN:** A member of either the current Pahlavi aristocracy or the former Qajar aristocracy. Any interaction—professional, romantic, financial—with the nobility is a great way to get sucked into political intrigue. Always accompanied by 1d4 thugs, er, attendants. If the noble needs statistics, use Thug Boss, replacing Streetwise and Taunt with Driving d6 and Riding d6, removing Wanted, and adding the Noble edge.

**POLICE:** Roll 1d6: **1-2:** 1d4 Gendarmerie; **3-6:** 2d4 Tehran city police. Roll again on this table to see who they're after, or protecting, or assume it's the heroes.

**PREACHER:** If he's not trying to hire (or draft) the heroes for some good work or other, he's up on a chunk of wall preaching up a storm about something. Possibly the polluting presence of foul, infidel adventurers in the pay of the hated British. If the heroes molest him, add a Mob to the encounter. If they leave him alone, he must Persuade (d8) the Neutral crowd (Friendly on the south side; Uncooperative on the north side) to become Helpful to him (and thus Hostile to his target).

**SECRET POLICE:** 2d4 Shahr bani secret police, with at least one car somewhere nearby. They're rousting someone, if the encounter is out in the open. Roll again on this table to find out who.

**SERPENT CULTIST:** By day, the heroes spot a known Serpent cultist. If they don't know any Serpent cultists by sight, re-roll. By night, the heroes stumble across some sort of cult activity: **1-2:** kidnapping someone; **3-5:** engaging in vile rituals (probably inside a walled compound, always with a cult leader); **6:** hunting the heroes.

**SOLDIERS:** 2d8 Soldiers plus one Officer. Marching or driving Jeeps through the streets. Just showing off? Putting down a riot somewhere? On their way to a TPMO meeting? A Ba'ath Party cell?

**SURVEILLANCE OP:** 1d4 secret agents watching someone. Make a Notice roll at -2 or a Knowledge (Tradecraft) roll to spot the op. Who are they watching? Decide based on the ongoing plot, or roll 1d6: **1-2:** roll again on this table to find the target; **3-4:** rival secret agent or asset;

Tehran Encounter Table

D20	ENCOUNTER
<1	Giant Snake
1	Disguised Kil-barak
2	Thugs
3	Beggars
4-5	Thief
6	Urchin
7	Wrestlers
8	Mob
9	Secret Police
10	Serpent Cultist
11	Police
12	Surveillance Op
13	Expatriate
14	Friend
15	Nobleman
16-17	Merchant
18	Preacher
19	Soldiers
20	Symir

**5-6:** the heroes! If they're watching the heroes, it becomes a contest of heroes' Stealth or Streetwise (-2 for heroes new to Tehran) against the agents' Notice to evade.

**SYMIR:** Make a Notice roll at -2 (at -1 if the heroes have encountered a symir) to discover the symir watching. (Double the penalties if the symir is watching the heroes.) Who are they watching? Use the table and mechanics from Surveillance Op, above to find out and evade if need be.

**THIEF:** 1d6 thieves (p. 22), led by a master thief if there are 5+ thieves present. Roll 1d6: **1-2:** robbing a rich merchant's stall (by day) or home (by night); **3:** robbing a noble's retinue (by day) or home (by night); **4:** re-roll on this table to find their target; **5-6:** robbing the heroes.

**THUGS:** 2d4 thugs, with a thug boss on an odd-numbered total. Roll 1d6: **1-2:** collecting protection money; **3-4:** rumbling with another gang of thugs; **5:** re-roll on this table to see who they're fighting or cringing to; **6:** mugging the heroes.

**URCHIN:** An orphan child forced to live by his wits. Use Thief statistics (p. 22), with Strength, Vigor, Fighting, and Lockpicking d4, and Fleet-Footed instead of the Thief Edge. Either fleeing someone (re-roll on this table) or trying to interest the strangers in wild rumor, some bauble, or his estimable guide services.

**WRESTLERS:** 1d4 wrestlers, either on their way to a match, hanging out at the zoor-khaneh, or on a mission for some criminal or covert boss. If a hero fights the strongest wrestler there fairly (no weapons, no tricks) and wins, the wrestlers will be open to a Persuade to leave the heroes alone. Use Thug statistics with one die higher in Agility, Strength, Vigor, Fighting, and Intimidation.

## TEHRAN ALLEGIANCE TABLE

Roll 2d6 for randomly encountered people or groups in Tehran. An encounter's overt allegiance is who they claim to be allied with, working for, sympathetic to, etc. if asked. Roll on the Overt Allegiance sub-table only if they don't have an immediately visible overt allegiance: for example, soliders, the Shahrbani, and the Gendarmerie are overtly loyal to the Shah; a mob listening to a sermon are overtly loyal to the ulema. Don't roll for them, but do roll for spies, thugs, thieves, nobles, and similar slippery customers.

Modify the Overt Allegiance roll by -1 for the north side, the Westernized districts, and rich blocks; by +0 for the Bazaar; by +1 for the south side and poor blocks. Outside and Local Faction sub-results refer to the attitude toward the heroes (enemy, neutral, or allied) of the distant leaders of the agency, gang, or faction. (See **DAR**, p. 122.)

Feel free to roll on the Covert Allegiance sub-table for anyone, or (if the NPC is a transient presence) don't bother. An encounter's covert allegiance is who they're really working for, reporting to, loyal to, etc. Some assets will reveal their covert allegiance only under torture; for others, all it takes is a well-roleplayed Persuade or Taunt. Modify the Covert Allegiance roll by +2 for those whose Overt Allegiance is to Outside or the Ulema.

**ESPIONAGE AGENCY:** Asset or agent of an outside intelligence service. Roll 1d12: **1-4:**

Tehran Allegiance Table	
2D6	OVERT ALLEGIANCE
1-3	Outside ( <b>1-2:</b> Enemy; <b>3-4:</b> Neutral; <b>5-6:</b> Allied)
4-7	The Shah, Allah keep him forever
8	Local Faction ( <b>1-2:</b> Enemy; <b>3-4:</b> Neutral; <b>5-6:</b> Allied)
9	Number One
10+	Ulema
2D6	COVERT ALLEGIANCE
2-3	Shahrbani
4	Police Agency
5-7	Same as Overt Allegiance
8	Tudeh Party
9	Espionage Agency
10	Roll again (double agent)
11	Fadayun-e-Islam
12+	The Serpent

NKVD; **5-7:** SIS; **8-9:** MAH; **10:** Ba’ath; **11:** Deuxième Bureau/Polish Home Army; **12:** OSS or other. Roll 1d6; on a 1 or 2, they are “false flagged,” and don’t know who they’re really working for; roll again on Covert Allegiance table to determine who they think they’re allied to.

**LOCAL FACTION:** Might be anything from a Qajar noble family to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company to a major criminal gang to the Qashqai tribe to a Sufi sect to an ambitious interior minister. Dealer’s choice, in other words.

**NUMBER ONE:** This result indicates folk out for themselves: freelance spies, merchants, gangsters, mercenaries, adventurers, and so forth.

**OUTSIDE:** Loyal to some non-Persian group or nation: Britain, the USSR, etc. Includes Embassy personnel, expatriates, Rhodes Scholars, and employees of foreign corporations.

**POLICE AGENCY:** Indicates informants or undercover cops. Roll 1d8: **1-2:** Tehran police; **3:** Gendarmerie; **5-6:** Shahrbani; **7:** Ba’ath; **8:** Abdol Omar.

**TUDEH PARTY:** Some members of Tudeh have a greater loyalty still. Roll 1d8: **1-2:** Comintern; **3:** NKVD; **4:** Shahrbani infiltrator; **5+:** Tudeh only.

**ULEMA:** Primarily loyal to the Shi’ite clergy, and hence to Allah Himself. Roll 1d8: **1-3:** Grand Ayatollah Borujerdi; **4-6:** Ayatollah Kashani; **7:** Ruhollah Khomeini; **8:** Fadayun-e-Islam.

ENCOUNTER ACTIVITY

What are they doing? You can use the suggestions in the **Tehran Encounter Table** writeup, roll on the **Tehran Event Table** to find out, or use the following rule of thumb: *The random encounter is doing whatever would be least convenient for the heroes.* If the heroes are searching for something, the encounter is noisy and chaotic; if the heroes are hurt or badly armed, the encounter is dangerous and aggressive; if the heroes are in a hurry, the encounter is delaying or distracting; if the heroes are trying to stay hidden, the encounter is either loud or hunting them, and so forth.

The arguable exception is that if the heroes (or the players) are spoiling for a fight, the encounter should be violent—you can’t go wrong with a fight scene—but the stakes of the fight shouldn’t be what the heroes think they are at first. The “underdog” the heroes wade in to protect should be a fugitive cultist, or the gang of religious thugs should have mistaken our heroes for filthy atheist Russkies.

Use this method primarily for the opening and mid-game of the scenario. Once the heroes have figured out a storyline and are aimed down it, the GM should be working on that premise, not playing change-up just for perversity’s sake.

**ARREST:** Roll on the **Tehran Encounter Table** to find out who’s being arrested; roll 1d6 to find out by whom: **1-3:** 1d8 Tehran city police; **4:** 1d4 Gendarmerie; **5:** 2d4 Shahrbani; **6:** 2d6 soldiers.

**CHASE:** Roll on the **Tehran Encounter Table** twice to find out who’s chasing who, or roll once on the **Tehran Encounter Table** to find the runner and use the Arrest mechanic above to find out who’s chasing him.

**FIGHT:** Roll on the **Tehran Encounter Table** twice to figure out the sides. It might be a nightclub brawl, a mob action, a monster-hunt, a lynching, a gang rumble, a Shahrbani hit gone wrong, or anything.

**FIRE:** Roll 1d8 to find out what’s on fire: **1-2:** merchant’s stall or shop; **3-4:** teahouse; **5:** mansion; **6:** factory; **7-8:** apartment block. If you wish, roll on the **Tehran Encounter Table** to get an idea who started it, is fleeing it, is fighting it, etc.

Tehran Event Table	
1D8	EVENT
1	Arrest
2	Chase
3	Fight
4	Fire
5	MacGuffin
6	Mugging
7-8	Protest

**MACGUFFIN:** Somebody sells, hands, drops, plants, etc. a MacGuffin to or on the heroes. Is it a treasure map? The stolen documents? A carved black falcon? An arcane item? A Marconi pistol? Who knows?

**MUGGING:** Roll on the **Tehran Encounter Table** to find out who's being mugged (usually only 1d3 victims); roll 1d6 to find out by whom: **1-3:** 2d4 thugs with a boss on an odd-numbered total; **4:** 1d4 wrestlers; **5:** 1d4 Shahr bani secret police; **6:** 1d3 NKVD agents. In the latter case, it's either a kidnap in progress or an attempt to steal a MacGuffin of some sort.

**PROTEST:** A mob of 10+1d100 angry Tehranis is protesting something, somewhere. Roll 1d6 for protest theme: **1:** anti-British; **2:** anti-Soviet; **3-4:** anti-Shah; **5:** pro-Shah; **6:** religious. Roll 1d6 for protest organizers: **1-2:** Tudeh (except pro-Shah or anti-Soviet); **3:** University students; **4-6:** radical preachers.

## WILL THEY BETRAY YOU?

As mentioned above, when you draw either a black Ace or a black Jack from your Action Deck, someone is likely to betray the heroes. For an even twistier game, add betrayals on black Eights; for a more straightforward game, only the Ace or Jack of Spades signifies treachery.

Roll once on the **Betrayal Table** for each major NPC or NPC faction (except the actual villains) that the heroes have encountered. Roll in any order: alphabetical, length of time on stage so far, closeness to the heroes, etc. The first result besides "No Betrayal" you get applies to this adventure or story, and stops the process. If you go through the whole supporting cast (except the bad guys) without a result, congratulations! The heroes can count on the situation remaining stable...until the next black Ace turns up.

Modify the roll on the **Betrayal Table** based on the relationship between the NPC and the heroes as follows: **-2** for family or marriage; **-1** for fellow enlistment; **-1** for every time the heroes have saved the NPC's life or family; **+1** for every time the heroes have crossed or neglected the NPC; **+1** if the NPC is under pressure (by the heroes or someone else); **+1** if the heroes are infidels and the NPC is a Persian.

- **DESERTION:** NPC leaves the hero in the lurch; fails to make a rendezvous, deliver the guns, watch the warehouse, etc.
- **SELL-OUT:** NPC reveals all he knows to the authorities or to the villains (GM's choice) and vanishes as best he can. Sometimes the villains (or authorities) take care of the vanishing part.
- **BETRAYAL!** NPC actively assists the villains.

The betrayal might not happen immediately; the traitor might wait for the safest (or cruelest) time to make his move, or he might have always been working for the other side, and wait until the next adventure to betray the heroes!

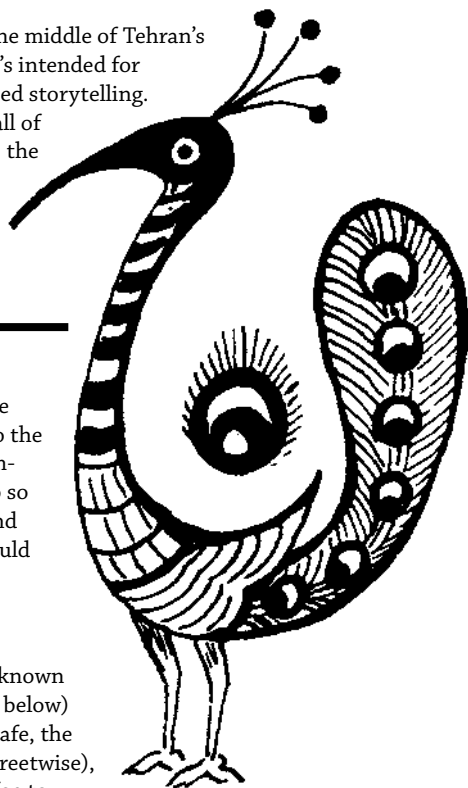
Motives for betrayal classically break down as follows: Money, Ideology, Coercion, or Ego. The GM should determine why the NPC betrayed the heroes, and how long the NPC has been working for the other side. Or for another side, anyway; the traitor might not be working for the villains at all, but for a third force. For example, an NPC who has always been working for the Shahr bani might well betray the heroes to the SD or the SIS as part of a larger deal; an NPC who is actually an NKVD plant might well finger the heroes to the Fadayun-e-Islam (or the Fadayun-e-Azi-Dahaka) on a "mutual destruction" principle.

Betrayal Table	
2D6	RESULT
2-8	No Betrayal
9	Desertion
10	Sell-out
11+	Betrayal!

# **Savage Scenario Starter:**

## **A Key For the Peacock**

“A Key For the Peacock” kicks the heroes right into the middle of Tehran’s swirling world of intrigue and competing factions. It’s intended for maximum flexibility, but allows some pre-programmed storytelling. This “scenario starter” has three basic components, all of which can go in almost any direction the GM wishes: the Drop, the Hunt, and the Prestige. The GM should likely design this scenario backwards: pick the Prestige she likes, and use that to determine the Hunters, and then pick a Drop that matches both.



### **THE DROP**

In the Drop, the heroes discover the existence of the “Peacock Key.” (Unless the GM decides otherwise, the key is a heavy brass key with a peacock engraved into the handle. It appears to be custom-made, but most 19th-century keys were, especially in Persia.) How they do so depends on the type of campaign, the heroes’ jobs and motives, and the GM’s vision of Tehran. The GM should pick one of the following.

#### **Word on the Streets**

With or without a Notice roll, the heroes overhear a known enemy (an agent for one of the factions in the Hunt, below) discuss the great importance of finding, or keeping safe, the Peacock Key. They can troll for rumors of the Key (Streetwise), research local lore (Investigation), or just trail their foe to the meet. Recommended for heroes with some familiarity with Tehran, at least enough to have enemies and sources of knowledge.

#### **A Sudden Acquisition**

The heroes accidentally acquire the Peacock Key—it’s in a book they buy at a stall, or it’s slipped under the wrong doorway at an opium den or ritzy hotel, or it falls out of someone’s pocket during a fight, or they take it off a guy they killed for some other reason, or an urchin gives it to the wrong “Angrezi.” They discover its importance when some bad guys try to beat them up and take it back: “Give us the Peacock Key and nobody needs to die.” Win or lose, this starts the Hunt. Recommended for newcomers to Tehran who could plausibly stumble, Hitchcock-style, into an ongoing intrigue.

#### **Orders From Above**

The heroes’ patron orders them to secure the Peacock Key, or gives it to them to pass to a trusted local agent (who might be a traitor, regardless). The patron might know what the Key does, be wrong about what the Key does, or only know it’s important because so many other folks want it. Recommended for heroes in a “Servants of the Crown” style game, or heroes likely to take jobs for patrons or clients.

## A Simple Trade

One of the heroes' allies, or just the cute urchin girl they met in the Bazaar, offers them the Key in exchange for something else, or passes it to the heroes in desperation to throw off the hunters, or gives it to them with a dying gasp: "Protect...the Key...aaggh." Again, the heroes discover what they've gotten into only after the bad guys start harassing them. The difference is the heroes can also research (or trail, or confront) the people who passed them the Key, assuming any are left alive. Recommended either for newcomers or for heroes with a positive local rep of whatever kind.

## THE HUNT

During the Hunt, several factions (the heroes among them) compete to find and steal the Key from whoever has it. The GM can pick two to five factions from the possibilities below and set them on the heroes' trail, or on the trail of the Key. The heroes, likewise, can either trail their foes or trail (or research) the Key.

This is a resource game; each faction has a set number of warm bodies it can devote to the Hunt. (The writeups give the number in relation to P, the number of heroes in the players' adventuring party.) When the heroes have killed or discommoded a faction's body count, the faction must stop or pause the Hunt as given in the faction writeups, which also suggest other ways to knock a faction out of the Hunt. The GM can alter these factions as she sees fit, or break them out of this adventure as ready-made opposition (or allied) teams for other Tehran scenarios. The winner of the Hunt is the last faction standing, which might or might not be the heroes.

### The NKVD

The NKVD has **P - 1** secret agents and a Wild Card secret agent in chief, *Ivan Fitin*. Their mooks include **P - 2** man-apes, **P** Red Army soldiers, and **P × 3** Tudeh Party thugs. The NKVD will shadow the heroes and ambush them where possible; each strike team includes one secret agent, one man-ape, and two soldiers if possible. If they lose **P × 2** thugs, they will have to spend the next day shipping more in from a suburban factory that doesn't know about the danger. After losing **P × 5** thugs, they can't get more easily. The man-apes and soldiers are expendable, but cannot be replaced. They will also halt the Hunt if they're down to their last secret agent; it will take a 2d6 days to get more from Russia.

### The SIS

The SIS has the following agent assets available:

- *Robin Zaehner* (Wild Card secret agent, with Smarts d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Streetwise d10, Charismatic, and (at the GM's discretion) Spellcasting d8, All Thumbs, and 20 Power Points)
- *Mukarram Singh* (Wild Card elite soldier with Strength d10, Throwing d8, Tracking d8, and Improved Sykes-Fairbairn)
- *Manning Fairbanks* (Wild Card master thief (see p. 22) with Knowledge (Tradecraft) d8, Shooting d8, and Attractive)

They also have access to **P - 3** secret agents, **P** police, and **P** thugs. The SIS can recruit **P** more police or thugs in 1d6 days. If the Key requires successes in Knowledge (Occult) or Knowledge (Tradecraft), Zaehner can provide one free success per day. The SIS calls off the Hunt if they lose two WCs and all the secret agents. They will shadow, menace, and steal from the heroes, but will not attack to kill until the heroes so attack them. If the heroes kill Zaehner, Fairbanks, or any of the secret agents, the SIS will put out a termination notice on them. If the heroes kill Zaehner, William Samson, Jr. (**DAR**, p. 53) will hear about it in 1d6 months and then hunt them down like dogs.

The Shahr bani

The Shahr bani has *Colonel Shahryar Nassiri* (Wild Card secret agent; +2 to Intimidation on Iranians) and **P** × **3** police, who will shadow the heroes, tap their phones, lean on their local contacts to pick up their trail, or even arrest them. (Use Connections, magic, or some awesome roleplaying to get out.) Once per day, Nassiri can make an Intimidation roll to recruit 2d6 Persian Army soldiers for muscle for a raid or other imminent combat. They call off the Hunt when they lose Nassiri, who retreats to the impregnable Shahr bani headquarters on Avenue Khayyam if wounded. It takes him 1d4 days to replace lost police.

The Ghorbecki Gang

The Ghorbeki gang (a random street gang that’s somehow clued in) has one Wild Card thug boss (*Jafar Ghorbeki*), **P** × **3** thugs, **P** wrestlers, and **P** thieves. The thieves and wrestlers stop the Hunt if they lose half their number; the thugs only stop if Jafar dies or stops. It will take him 2d6 days to recruit more thugs, thieves, or wrestlers.

The Polish Home Army

The Polish Home Army has *Captain Jerzy Poniatowski* (a Wild Card elite soldier officer) and **P** elite soldiers, plus **P** × **3** soldiers. Their first ambush of the heroes will not intend to kill them, unless the heroes seem Red; they will not begin shooting to kill until the heroes do. They will stop the Hunt if they are given an NKVD target, or if 2/3 of their ranks are wounded or incapacitated.

Fadayun-e-Islam

The Fadayun-e-Islam has one Wild Card assassin (*Ali Mualimi*; use Secret Agent statistics) and **P** Fadayun mooks (use Soldier statistics). Once per day on the south side, Mualimi can rile up a mob (6d6 cultists), but the mob breaks if it loses **P** + **3** members. It only stops the Hunt if Mualimi and all the Fadayun are dead; another Fadayun cell picks up the Hunt in 1d6 days unless the heroes are very careful to leave no traces.

Kara Vania

Kara Vania (see p. 19) has her lovely self, and tries very hard to befriend the heroes. Whether that fails or not, she always has 2 wrestler bodyguards on call, who she can replace in a day. She can also make a Streetwise test once per night to recruit allies. Roll 1d6:

Vania’s Recruits	
1d6 ROLL	VANIA’S ASSET
1	<i>General Amjad Dihqani</i> , a Persian Army general (WC officer) and 3d6 soldiers
2	<i>Captain Pejman Khusayn</i> , a Shahr bani inspector (WC secret agent; +2 to Intimidation on Iranians) and 2d4 police
3	<i>Hubert-Bonisse du Jarretier</i> , a Deuxième Bureau operative (WC secret agent) and <b>P</b> - <b>2</b> secret agents
4	<i>Ghiorgi Artemidian</i> , a local criminal boss (WC thug boss with Knowledge (Tradecraft) d8; he’s also an NKVD asset) and <b>P</b> × <b>2</b> thugs
5	<i>Manning Fairbanks</i> (who works for the SIS; see p. 32) and <b>P</b> - <b>2</b> thieves
6	<i>Khosrow Ardabil</i> , a Persian nobleman (see <b>Nobleman</b> in <b>Tehran Event Table</b> , p. 26) and <b>P</b> × <b>2</b> thugs.

She can only recruit new allies after the old ones are expended, offended, or otherwise removed from the Hunt. She will give up the Hunt if she is in immediate danger of death, or if she is talked out of it by a suitably persuasive (and handsome?) hero. And maybe not even then.

## Fadayun-e-Azi-Dahaka

The Fadayun-e-Azi-Dahaka has one Wild Card cult leader with magic (*Shahrukh Ghurani*), a female garrote-wielding sacred assassin known only as *Zari* (either a Master Thief with Fighting d10, or an Aunt Jenny), and **P × 2** cultists. It only stops the Hunt when Ghurani is killed or exposed, but it takes 1d4 months to recruit more cultists. Ghurani can summon a demon with a Spellcasting roll, one night of rituals, and an expenditure of Power Points equal to the demon's highest die. Roll 1d6: **1:** Fly-by-Night **2-3:** Giant Snake **4-5:** Giant Ghost Snake **6:** Primordial Serpent-Man (see **DAR**, p. 87).

## The Sicherheitsdienst

The SD has two Wild Card Nazi refugees, *Sturmbannführer Kurt Kreisach* (an elite soldier officer) and *Doktor Professor Ruprecht Hauptstein*, an Ahnenerbe magician (use Cult Leader statistics). It also has **P - 2** Wehrmacht or Waffen-SS soldiers (use Soldier or Elite Soldier statistics), and **P × 4** crummy local Ba'athists (use Militia Soldier statistics). The Nazis will try using magic to set up an ambush. They will stop the Hunt if they lose both WCs. They can get more Ba'athists from Isfahan in 1d4 days if need be, but they cannot replace German casualties.

## THE PRESTIGE

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The GM may never even get around to running the Prestige, in which the heroes see the Key in action, especially if the Key is a bad thing and the heroes have done a good job keeping it away from bad people. Or, if the bad guys really trashed the heroes early on, maybe the next scenario is “deal with the now much-stronger, Key-empowered bad guys.”

The ideal situation dramatically is for the final lot of bad guys (the winners of the Hunt) to capture the heroes and (for reasons known only to villains) take them to the site of the Prestige to witness their final failure. Of course, the heroes get away and a big fight ensues. Alternately, the GM can hocus the Hunt such that the heroes and the villainous winners of the Hunt both reach the Prestige location simultaneously: just too late to prevent the turning of the Key, but just in time to stop the villains from profiting by its power.

Just what that power is, is up to the GM. Each possibility requires 1d6+1 successes to uncover; the length of the Hunt, in essence. (Some suggested skills for each possible Prestige appear in parentheses at the end.) Unless the writeup says differently, one success takes a day; a raise lets you try for another success that day. Failing the roll means no more investigation that day. All these values are up to the GM to use or change at her whim. A well-roleplayed interaction with a source (with a good Persuade result, for example) might be worth two successes. Remember—you can sometimes find out a lot more, a lot faster, by waiting and Intimidating or Persuading the information out of one of your rivals in the Hunt, or by eavesdropping on or tapping their communications! Any or all of this information might also be uncovered in a hidden diary, scrawled map, or other information dump at the GM's whim; Persuasion and other interpersonal rolls can put the heroes on the trail of such things (which may require Lockpicking, Stealth, or Fighting to get ahold of).

### The Key to the Lion of Persia

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The Key is somehow magically linked to the Peacock Throne, the seat of the Shah. Any spell cast on the Shah using the Key as a focus is at +6! Anyone who wishes the Shah ill (or well) really wants this Key. Finding this out requires magical investigation by the heroes or an outside consultant like Abdol Omar. (Investigation, Knowledge (Arcana), or Knowledge (Occult))

### The Key to the Palace

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The Key is a master key to the doors of Golestan Palace; a priceless opportunity for thieves or political conspirators alike. Finding this out requires asking around amongst the old

Qajar nobility, talking to the weird old brass-worker in the Bazaar, or similar investigations. (Investigation, Knowledge (History), or Streetwise)

### ***The Key to Malik Taous***

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The Key is a sacred symbol of the quasi-Gnostic Yezidi cult in Kurdistan, a region in northern Iraq and Persia. The Yezidis worship *Malik Taous*, the “Peacock Angel,” whom they identify with Lucifer. (The GM might switch the Yezidis as a faction in for either of the Fadayun in the Hunt.) It might allow communication with Nasren/Loki (also a rebellious demigod), or open the door to Muspellheim, or anything else adventurous in the GM’s future campaign plans. Finding this out (the Yezidi part, anyhow) requires a chat with a religious scholar (like Khomeini, or the SIS’ own Robin Zaehner) or a trip to the Persian Museum of Antiquities. (Investigation, Knowledge (Anthropology), Knowledge (Arcana), Knowledge (Occult), Knowledge (Theology))

### ***The Key to Destruction***

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The Key opens a warehouse on Kuchei Taous (Peacock Alley), a warren of a street on the southwest side of Tehran. The warehouse holds a huge stash of U.S. Army Lend-Lease equipment intended for Russia once upon a War: American rifles (Garands, M2 carbines, BARs), pistols (Colt .45 ACPs, flare guns), and ammunition, jeeps, uniforms, boots, trucks, C-rations, gold, maybe even a working tank or six. Enough to mount a revolution, or to clothe and feed a whole lot of poor Tehranis. Finding this out requires tracking down the rumors of “Peacock House,” talking to American expats in opium dens, casinos, or the Gendarmerie, looking through old abandoned USAAF records out at Mehrabad (perhaps with Colonel Schwarzkopf’s recommendation?), tracing a trickle of American gear in the hands of local ragamuffins or criminals, and finally spotting a peacock design on some run-down building. (Gambling, Investigation, Notice, Streetwise)

### ***The Key to the Garden Gate***

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The Key opens the brass gate of a beautiful garden just south of the airport. This is the Garden of the Simurgh; the “peacock” on the Key is actually a depiction of the Simurgh, with its leonine claws and eagle’s head. The Garden contains magical plants, perhaps immune to Serpent Taint, or otherwise useful. More, it is a sanctuary for the symir (p. 23), and the Key allows its holder to talk to (or command?) all the symir in Persia—or the whole Middle East. Finding this out involves recognizing the “peacock” for what it is, and asking occultists, Sufi mystics, and scholars (Robin Zaehner and Khomeini again!) for hints about the whereabouts of the Simurgh. It also probably involves at least one confrontation with the symir, possibly controlled by an NKVD psionic—or with rival symir, controlled by a spate of psionics and occultists. (Knowledge (Occult), Knowledge (Theology), Streetwise)

### ***The Key to the Peacock House***

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The Key opens the deserted townhouse (on a back alley behind Avenue Ferdowsi) of Sir Christopher “Kit” Pryde, one of Her Majesty’s more secret agents during the early stages of the Great Game. Depending on the sort of campaign the GM runs, Pryde’s house might contain extraordinarily frank and embarrassing dossiers on early (1880s-1920s) SIS operations in Persia, India, and the Levant, including the identities of British family agents across the Middle East. (And perhaps the true parentage of Ruhollah Khomeini? See p. 17.) Or it might contain Pryde’s experimental device (magical or psionic) for translating his body into an astral form, all the better to spy on Britain’s enemies. Or both. It takes access to SIS files to see Pryde’s punning peacock signature and note it’s the same as the key design; failing that, maybe an SIS “Deep Throat” contact (or retired spy, or double agent, or both) can point the heroes in the right direction before being mysteriously killed. Something might come from attending one of Zaehner’s opium parties, as well. Kara Vania may also have found out about Pryde’s “Peacock House” from a previous lover; if she’s in the Hunt, she may wind up recruiting the heroes for the heavy hitting. (Investigation, Knowledge (Tradecraft), Streetwise)

# Inspirations

The inspiration for this city book comes specifically from the world map, and from the realization (too late!) that I'd left Tehran off the Top Five Cities For Spies in the main *Day After Ragnarok* setting book. It is, after all, the closest non-Soviet capital to an accessible border; if anywhere gets to be this setting's Berlin, Tehran is it.

More generally, it also comes from Robert E. Howard's great "Eastern adventure" stories, featuring El Borak and Kirby O'Donnell. Both of those heroes mostly hung out in Afghanistan, but Howard drew from the same "east of Suez" adventure blend that this book slurps down in Tehran. Talbot Mundy, Rudyard Kipling, and other great scions of that tradition no doubt influenced both the decision to write a Middle Eastern-Central Asian setting book, and the feel of the present work. Milton Caniff's *Steve Canyon* comic has the same sort of feel, updated for the post-WWII air age; devoted readers will recognize one possible Key of the Peacock. And again, Jess Nevins' *Encyclopedia of Pulp Heroes* came through for me; hopefully, it will soon be in print and coming through for all of you.

On the general topic of the Great Game, which makes for great gaming, my first and best recourse is to Peter Hopkirk's *The Great Game*, *Setting the East Ablaze*, and *Like Hidden Fire*, a trilogy of histories of British espionage and counter-espionage from Constantinople to Calcutta. I should also recommend Tim Powers' incredible fantasy spy novel *Declare*, which made sure the symir would be in this book. For the kil-barak and dog-headed men in general, nothing beats *Myths of the Dog-Man* by David Gordon White.

More specifically, I read two histories of real-life spying in Tehran in almost our period: Kermit Roosevelt's *Countercoup* and Stephen Kinzer's *All the Shah's Men*. Both discuss the real-life SIS (and CIA) coup d'état plot in Tehran in 1953 that took down Iran's prime minister Mossadegh, restored the Shah to power, and lit the fuse under Khomeinism; Roosevelt helped manage the coup for the CIA, and his deliberately slipshod history has a wild "boy's own" feel to it. Kinzer is more detailed, but less fun. I can also recommend Richard A. Stewart's *Sunrise at Abadan*, about the unprovoked (and deeply strange) Allied invasion of Iran in 1941.

I read a lot of other stuff specifically about Tehran, but as always, Lonely Planet has already published the best game book on the subject: Paul Greenway and David St. Vincent's *Lonely Planet Iran*. Finally, I strongly recommend checking out the images of "Old Tehran" you can find in various places on the Web, such as: <http://www.worldisround.com/articles/255726/> or <http://www.iranianhotline.com/OldTehran/Old-Tehran.htm>.

This book is respectfully dedicated to the citizens of Tehran, who deserve much better adventures and many fewer spies than they have had for most of a century now.

## About the Author

Kenneth Hite is the multiple Origins and Ennie Award-winning author, co-author, or designer of over 70 roleplaying game books and supplements, including **GURPS WWII: *Weird War II***, **Back East: *the South for Deadlands***, **Targets of Opportunity** for *Delta Green*, and *Trail of Cthulhu*. For ten years, he was the Higher Strangeness columnist for *Pyramid* magazine, producing over 300 "Suppressed Transmissions." Other recent works include a work of Lovecraftian criticism, *Tour de Lovecraft: the Tales*, the Mythos introduction *Cthulhu 101*, and two children's books: *Where the Deep Ones Are* and *The Antarctic Express*. His **Hero System** supplement *Adventures Into Darkness* combined H.P. Lovecraft with Golden Age comics; he has not yet tackled Clark Ashton Smith. He lives in Chicago with his wife Sheila, the mandatory writer's cat, seven thousand or so books, and a well-tempered blade.

