THE
WIDENING GYRE

A SAVAGE STEAMPUNK SETTING
BY BILL KEYES

OFFICIAL
SAVAGE WORLDS
LICENSED PRODUCT
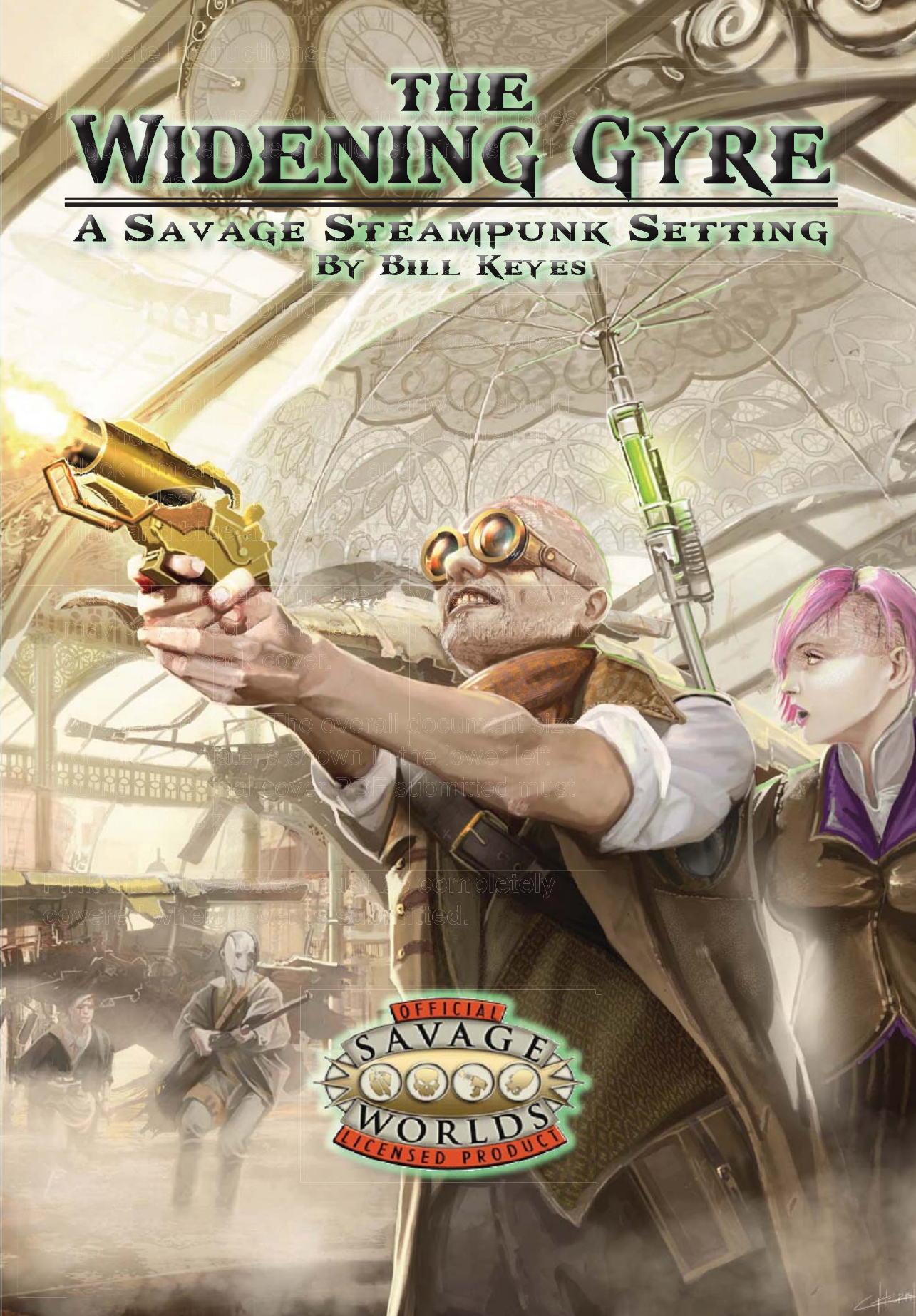
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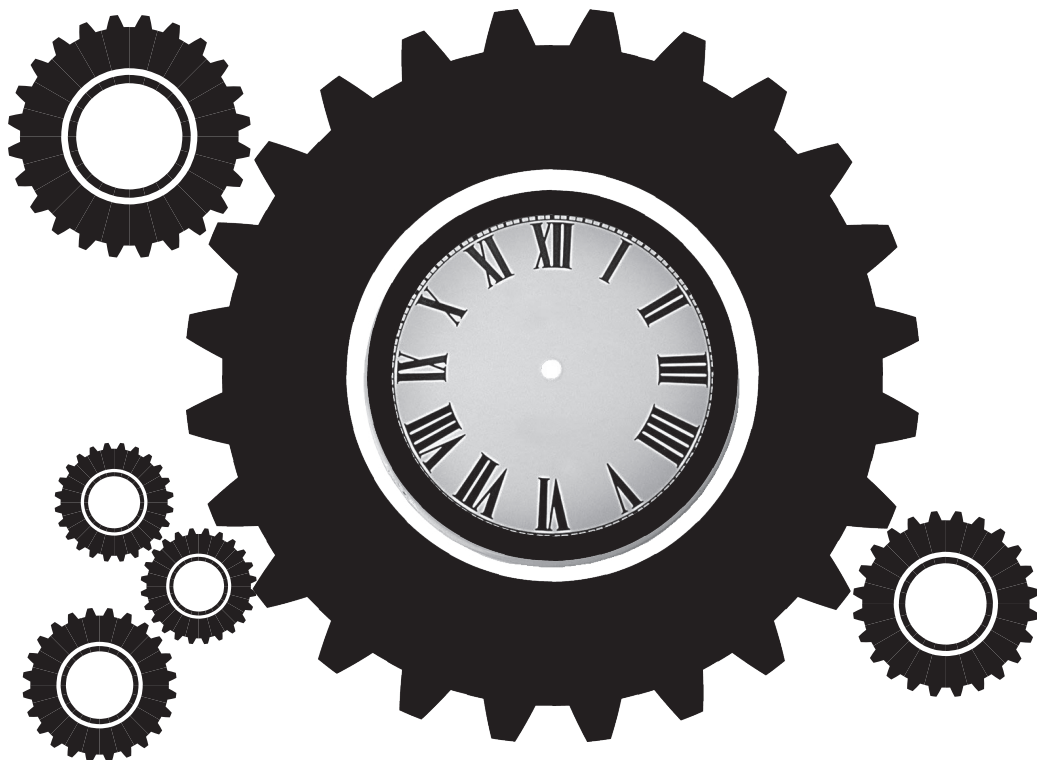
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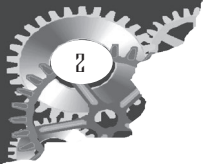
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INTRODUCTION:
THE BLOOD-DIMMED TIDE

Welcome to the 19th Century that never was! It is a world of wonder, of horror, of adventure, of magic, of strange technology and unprecedented cultural revolution. This is an age that should have been, filled with radium-powered flying machines, clockwork automata, and steam-driven computers. It is an age of dark magic, sinister secrets, and unholy cults. It is a time in which the world teeters on the edge of chaos, where the enlightened scientific mind battled against ancient superstition and ignorance, in which the souls of all mankind hung in the balance.

The Widening Gyre presents a glimpse at the Industrial Age as it truly was, envisioned by those far-sighted luminaries and Savants who looked beyond the feeble limitations of man and created a world in which science, technology, and logic triumphed over the mundane physical limitations of the Universe. And yet, Logic's victory is far from complete. This is also a dark and gothic world, where monsters from ages long past still prowl and men with evil motives call upon ancient sorceries to grant them the power to control the world.

The Widening Gyre is a world in which you'll play consulting detectives and adventuring academics, occultist thrill-seekers and Savants both heroic and insane, all working for a secretive organization of benevolent technologists who seek to prevent the dark monsters of humanity's past from overwhelming its bright and burgeoning future.

Welcome to *the Widening Gyre*!

> *Turning and turning in the widening gyre*
> *The falcon cannot hear the falconer;*
> *Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;*
> *Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,*
> *The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere*
> *The ceremony of innocence is drowned;*
> *The best lack all conviction, while the worst*
> *Are full of passionate intensity.*
> *Surely some revelation is at hand;*
> *Surely the Second Coming is at hand.*
> *The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out*
> *When a vast image out of Spritus Mundi*
> *Troubles my sight: somewhere in the sands of the desert*
> *A shape with lion body and the head of a man,*
> *A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,*
> *Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it*
> *Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.*
> *The darkness drops again; but now I know*
> *That twenty centuries of stony sleep*
> *were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,*
> *And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,*
> *Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*
>
> William Butler Yeats
> *The Second Coming*

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK

The Widening Gyre presents an entire world of adventure in the 19th Century That Never Was, but it is not a complete game in itself. To use it, gamemasters need a copy of *Savage Worlds (Deluxe* or *Deluxe Explorer's Edition)*.

The first two chapters are for everyone.

Chapter One, *Passionate Intensity (Creating Characters)*, shows how to create a character, including archetypes, for Steam Age heroes. It also describes how to use many *Savage Worlds* character creation elements, discusses how to use them in the genre and proves expanded rules.

Chapter Two, *Darkness Drops Again (Weapons, Equipment, & Magic)*, offers an enticing look at the weapons, vehicles, gadgets, and gear of the Age of Steam. Furthermore, it provides a dark, gothic magic system for use in your campaign, including an extensive list of spells and sorcerous powers.

The next chapters of the book are for gamemasters only. If you're a player, you might want to stop reading so as not to spoil the surprises the world of *The Widening Gyre* has in store for you!

Chapter Three, *The Center Cannot Hold (The World of the Widening Gyre)*, discusses the history of the world of *The Widening Gyre*, and how it diverges from the world with which we are familiar.

Chapter Four, *The Falcon Can Not Hear the Falconer (Organizations in the Widening Gyre),* presents several organizations which can help, hinder, or harm the heroes.

Chapter Five, *To Be Born (Adventure Generator)* gives several examples of different types of games you can run in the world of *The Widening Gyre*, plus some random adventure generators to help fire up your creative furnace!

Chapter Six, *Things Fall Apart (Plot Point Campaign),* contains a series of short, ready-to-run adventures that, taken together, form a complete Widening Gyre campaign. Alternately, a GM can use these adventures as a spring for his own imagination to create his own campaign or to slip into an existing campaign.

Chapter Seven, What Rough Beast? (Bestiary) is a bestiary of characters, creatures, and creations that the heroes might encounter in their adventures.

Chapter Eight, *Turning and Turning (A Steampunk Sourcebook)*, is a discussion of the Steampunk genre, touching on several sub-genres which can be attached to any game. It includes a brief historical overview of the Victorian Era (roughly 1830 to 1901) and continues with a list of the conventions of the genre – those things that put the "steam" in Steampunk – then shows how to apply the ideas and concepts to your game.

Appendix, *A Vast Image (Bibliography): The Widening Gyre* finishes with an Appendix of recommended reading and viewing for anyone interested in furthering their exposure to the world of Steampunk and the Victorian age.

> *"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way--in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only."*
>
> – Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*
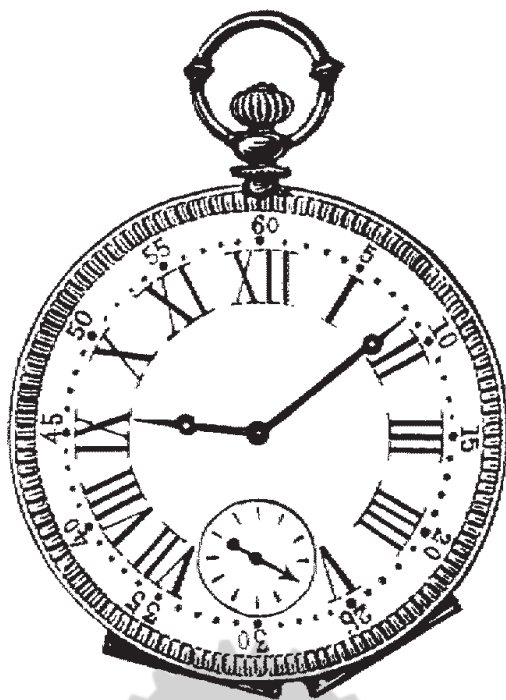
VICTORIANA

The Victorian era is a time marked by the reign of Queen Victoria, from 1837 to 1901. It was a time of great change, where new technologies reached across the world, bringing new light -- and new problems -- to this planet. It was an age not entirely unlike the one we live in today: an age of bewildering new scientific achievements, new political systems, and new social problems.

At the same time, it's an era very much different than our own. The telephone was brand new; television and radio had not yet been invented, and the internet was something not even the wildest visionary could have predicted. Social interaction was compulsory. It was an age of manners and gentility where everyone knew their place in society.

Victoriana is a way of looking back at that time, romanticizing it, and taking those parts that were good and true and making them our own. Perhaps Victoriana (and Steampunk) is a sort of philosophical nostalgia, in which people imagine how their lives would be in a simpler time, with limited (but still recognizable) technology. A time where if you wanted to communicate with someone, you had to seek them out, look them in the eye, and speak your mind clearly and intelligently.

A BRIEF HISTORY

In the Year of Our Lord 1837, amongst much pomp and circumstance, Queen Victoria ascended to the throne of the United Kingdom. She was showered with gifts from leaders and dignitaries around the world. One gift was an ornate clock specially built by the Clockmakers Guild of London. The clock, a delicate and beautiful thing, did not work, and it was removed from the palace and disappeared; little more than a footnote of history.

However, it was around this time that the world began to change. The twin giants of science and industry arrived on England's green and pleasant shores. At first there were a handful of scientists and engineers, toiling away at their creations. Then there were scores. Then hundreds, then thousands. It was a brilliant time. Things once thought impossible were now the stuff of everyday life. Inventors developed new machines undreamt of just a few short years ago.

A new breed of inventor was born. They were more than scientists; more than engineers. They were called Savants, and they could invent and build creations that even their most brilliant contemporaries were hard-pressed to match. How did they do it? Nobody really could say. But their creations seemed to defy the scientific laws of the universe.

But of course, all things must come to an end.

In 1860, a Savant by the name of Cardinalè created the greatest invention yet, a flying city known as the City of Glass. However, on its maiden flight the city crashed, killing thousands. The leaders of the world suddenly realized that the power of the Savants, left unchecked, could destabilize the world. This began what is now known as the Time of Turmoil.

Savants began to turn their energies to creating bigger and better weapons. The fields of Europe and America were scarred with the results of this deadly research. Clockwork soldiers and giant mechanical walking machines strode through battlefields. Giant artillery pieces lobbed shells across hundreds of miles. Flying machines spied on, or dropped bombs upon, the enemy's formations. For twenty long years, it seemed like the whole world went mad with a lust for blood.

Eventually this constant warfare wound down. Perhaps humanity finally had its fill of blood? Or more likely, the various nations were merely exhausted from fighting. There were still wars and skirmishes, of course, but compared to the previous decade it seemed like a golden age had arrived. Savants turned their considerable talents to more peaceful activities, such as trade and exploration, and a new age – the Gilded Age – began.

The world began to open up in ways that it never had before. Great distances were no longer a barrier to trade and communication. Travelers journeyed over continents, across the seas, and even through the air. A handful of brave Savants attempted to explore the Moon, the bottom of the sea, the center of the Earth, and even time itself.

It is now the Year of Our Lord 1895. With science and industry on the rise, it seems as though humankind is finally ready to fulfill his greatest potential. But there are powers at work, hidden from the sight of most, which want to see humanity stumble and fall. They wish to bring about an age that will make the Time of Turmoil seem like a pleasant afternoon in the park.

And they will succeed, unless you stop them.

CHAPTER ONE:
PASSIONATE INTENSITY
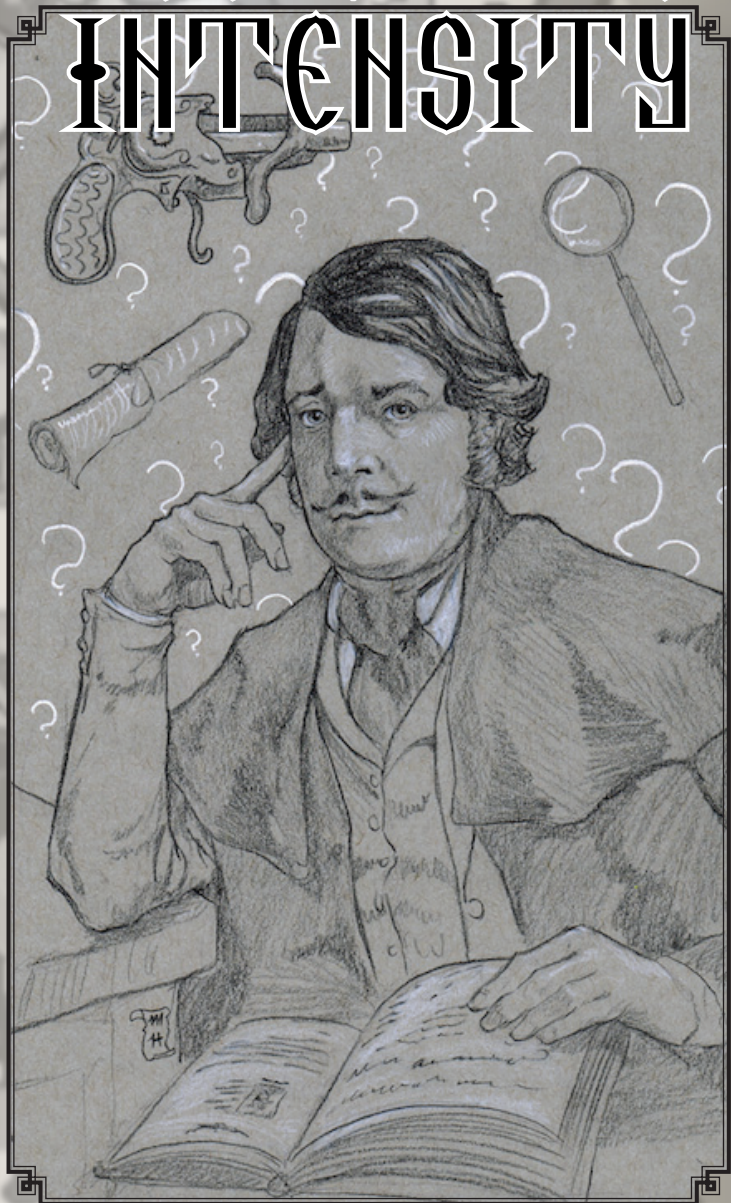
CHARACTER CREATION

NICKERSON'S METAL MEN

A dozen mechanical men surrounded the Watchmen, menacing them with a bizarre variety of weapons. Doctor Nickerson stood on the opposite side of the room. "When I told you to come by for a visit, I didn't think you'd come armed for bear," Nickers laughed.

"Good thing we did, though," Thackery answered. "So what's this all about then, old chum?"

"What's it all about?" Nickerson laughed. "Why, money of course! Do you know how hard it was going to school with all of those wealthy, spoiled, privileged brats? None of them with even half of my intelligence (present company excluded, of course)! And yet, they had everything and I had nothing! School taught me one thing: That a man needs wealth if he ever wants to amount to anything. All my intelligence was worth nothing without the money to back it up. So here I am now, using my genius to take away their undeserved riches and bestow them on myself!"

"I think I've heard about enough!" Savannah said, shouldering her weapon and firing at the nearest clock-work man. The brass-and-steel construction burst into a hundred pieces. An instant later the other automatons leapt clicking and whirring at the heroes, their weapons gleaming in the gaslight…

CREATING CHARACTERS

T o be a hero in the world of The Widening Gyre is to take a stand against darkness of unimaginable evil. It is to prevail against the horrors of science gone mad, bloodthirsty cultists, deadly contraptions, ancient monsters, evil gods, and unbeatable odds. It is to risk your very soul in order to protect the world. But through all that, there are allies who will stand with you against the tide – sorcerers, scientists, daredevils, and adventurers who know they are all that hold off the end of the world.

Player Characters in a Widening Gyre game are Seasoned characters with 20 Experience Points under their belts. For a darker game, you can build Novices, but given the power of the opposition this is not recommended. You can increase the power of the heroes, but the world of *The Widening Gyre* may lose much of its dark menace if the heroes can easily overpower all those who stand against them.

We recommend using the following Setting Rules for a *Widening Gyre* campaign: **Fanatics**, **Joker's Wild**, **No Power Points**, and (in a globe-trotting campaign) **Multiple Languages**.

To create a steampunk hero for your Widening Gyre campaign, just follow the steps below.

STEP ONE: RACE

This step is simple, as there are two possible races to choose from: Human or Clockwork Man. Humans begin the game with one free Edge (see Step 3).

In certain types of campaigns, such as an "After Midnight" campaign (described in Chapter 5: The Adventure Generator), the GM may allow other races, such as vampires, werewolves, or the fair folk.

CLOCKWORK MAN

A Clockwork Man is a creation of science, a conglomeration of gears and machinery that duplicates the semblance of humankind. It is not a mindless automaton. Through some unknown means, it has been given the spark of life, intelligence, and free will. As genuine miracles of science, Clockwork Men are exceedingly rare but are becoming more commonplace in the largest cities.

A Clockwork Man is not subject to many of the failings of human flesh. It needs not eat or sleep (although it does need regular maintenance – oil for its joints, fuel for its steam plant, or frequent winding of its springs). Its iron and brass body is more resistant than flesh to injury and hardship. But many people view Clockwork Men as something less than human, and despite their obvious sapience they do not enjoy most of the rights and privileges of humankind.

A Clockwork Man may become an adventurer because it finds fellowship among the thrill-seekers of the world. Adventurers who have been exposed to people from all over are less likely to question the sentience of a Clockwork Man – especially one who proves brave and able in the face of danger. A Clockwork Man might also seek answers to the questions of its own existence. How did it come to be? Why is it so much more than an ordinary machine? Does it have a soul? And most importantly, what is its ultimate purpose in life?

CLOCKWORK MAN

* **Construct:** Clockwork Men add +2 to recover from being Shaken, don't suffer wound modifiers, and are immune to poison and disease. Clockwork Men cannot heal naturally. To heal a Clockwork Man requires the Repair skill—which is used like the Healing skill, only with no "Golden Hour."

* **Fuel:** During character creation, the player must determine the Clockwork Man's power source (steam, wind-up, or experimental galvanic pile). If the Clockwork Man cannot access his power source at least once per day, he's automatically Fatigued each day until he's Incapacitated. The day after that, he goes "off-line" and must be revived with a Repair roll and a fresh charge of energy. The power source replaces the need for food and water.

* **Made of Brass and Steel:** The Clockwork Man is made of metal, which means it is effectively armored. +2 Armor (negated by AP weapons).

* **Metal Man:** Clockwork Men are somewhat resistant to harsh environments. They gain +2 bonus to resist all negative environmental effects (heat, cold, pressure, etc.)

* **Outsider:** Humans often treat Clockwork Men as just another machine. They subtract 2 from their Charisma when dealing with humans.

* **Programming:** Clockwork Men begin with a free d6 in one skill, representing their original programmed role.

* **Unnatural:** Arcane powers (magic), both detrimental and beneficial, suffer a -2 penalty to affect Clockwork Men. This has no effect on damaging powers or Weird Science powers, which affect them normally.

CLOCKWORK MEN OPTIONS:

* **Built-In Weaponry:** The Clockwork Man has a blade built into one of its arms, a small projectile weapon integrated in its chest, or some other weapon included in its design. This causes Str+1d6 damage or 2d6 for a ranged weapon. (+1 Racial ability)

* **Enhanced Optics:** The Clockwork Man has an experimental optic system installed, granting it either Low light Vision or Infravision. This counts as an Edge. (+1 Racial ability)

* **New to the World:** The Clockwork Man has no idea how the world works. Take Clueless (Major). (-2 Racial ability)

* **It Must Be Mine!:** An insane Savant wishes to take the Clockwork Man apart to see exactly what makes it tick. Take Enemy (Major). (-2 Racial ability)

STEP TWO: TRAITS

Now determine your hero's attributes and skills. Both humans and Clockwork men begin with a d4 in each of his attributes. Raising an attribute by one die type costs 1 point, and you have 5 points to spend among the attributes as you choose. You may not raise any attribute above d12.

You also have 15 points to spend on skills. Raising a skill by one die type costs 1 point as long as it is equal to or less than the attribute it's linked to. It costs 2 points to raise a skill over its linked attribute.

SECONDARY STATISTICS

- Charisma begins at +0 unless modified by an Edge or Hindrance.
- Pace is equal to 6".
- Parry is 2 plus one half of your Fighting skill.
- Toughness is 2 plus one half of your Vigor attribute.

STEP THREE: EDGES AND HINDRANCES

You may select Hindrances to get more points to create your character. You can choose up to one Major Hindrance (worth 2 points) and two Minor Hindrances (worth 1 point each).

FOR 2 POINTS YOU CAN:

- Raise an attribute one die type, or
- Choose an Edge

FOR 1 POINT YOU CAN:

- Gain another skill point, or
- Gain additional money equal $500 (approximately £5 in 1895).

STEP FOUR: GEAR

Characters begin with $500 (approximately £5). Most medieval and a great many modern items are available to characters in The Widening Gyre. For fanciful steampunk equipment, see Chapter Two: Darkness Drops Again (Steampunk Gear).

STEP FIVE: SPEND EXPERIENCE POINTS

Default beginning characters in The Widening Gyre are seasoned and start with 20 experience points. Every 5 points grants a hero an Advance, so your character gets four Advances. An Advance allows a character to do one of the following:

- Gain a new Edge.
- Increase a skill that is equal to or greater than its linked attribute by one die type.
- Increase two skills that are lower than their linked attributes by one die type each.
- Buy a new skill at d4.
- Increase one attribute by a die type. You may only choose this option once per Rank, and no Trait may be raised above a d12.

STEP SIX: BACKGROUND

Here are a few questions that might help spur your imagination to determine who your character is.

- Consider what country your character came from. How are you like the people of your culture? How are you unlike them?
- What social class are you from? Are you high-born or common? What is your family like, and how is your relationship with them?
- Who is your mentor? Who is your best friend? Have you ever been in love? Do you have any enemies?
- Do you have any hobbies? What do you do when you're not out saving the world?
- What is your lifelong ambition? What was your greatest achievement? What was your greatest failure?
- What's your pet peeve? What is your greatest fear? What do you hate?
- What's the worst thing about you? Are you quick to judge others, or a slob? Why?
- Is your character religious? How serious about it are you?
- If you had to describe your character's personality in just one word, what would that word be?
- What does your character look like?
- Is there anything else you think the GM and the other players should know about your character's personality and motivations?

CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

An Archetype is a framework for building a character. It contains the Attributes, Skills, Edges, and Hindrances that a character from a particular profession can be reasonably expected to pick up. Players in *The Widening Gyre* should not feel limited in their character creation; these Archetypes are only guidelines. They should stimulate your imagination, not restrict it.

> *"There are dark shadows on the earth, but its lights are stronger in the contrast."*
>
> – Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*

ADVENTURESS

Despite great strides in gender equity, the 19th Century is still a highly stratified society, with women occupying a much lower rung than their male contemporaries. But even in the class-conscious world, there are exceptions. There are daring, unconventional women who speak their minds, travel without accompaniment, and indulge in pleasures normally thought reserved for men. Such a woman is known as an Adventuress, and despite social mores is often an accepted and acceptable part of polite society.

Such a woman might be a courtesan, accepting money from wealthy men in exchange for her company, but she does not have to be. She might have been widowed at a young age and is now using her newfound freedom to explore the world. She may be an actress who has made her fortune and now intends to spend it in as flamboyant a manner as possible. Or she may simply be a powerful, intelligent woman with a strong will and imperious nature who does not intend to let any man tell her what to do.

An excellent example of an Adventuress is Irene Adler from Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes*.

ADVENTURESS

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: +2; Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Attractive, Strong Willed

AIRSHIP PIRATE

The skies of 1895 are filled with enormous airships, great metal-shelled, hydrogen-filled behemoths that carry passengers and cargo across both land and sea. And wherever there are merchants, there are those who prey on them – the dreaded Airship Pirates.

An airship pirate may have once been an honest sailor or pilot who ran into hard times and is forced into a life of crime by circumstance, or he might be a vicious brute who has never worked an honest day in his life. They may be smugglers or thieves or just businessmen who sometimes (through no fault of their own) work on the shadier side of the law. Regardless, the Royal British Air Navy works diligently to capture or destroy these criminal scum whenever they show their heads!

An airship pirate might be trying to turn away from his wicked ways, or he may have been hired by a team of adventurers to take them from point A to point B and ends up getting carried along on the adventure by circumstances.

AIRSHIP PIRATE

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Pilot d6, Shooting d8, Taunt d6, +1 additional skill point

Charisma: –; Pace: 6; Parry: 7; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Acrobat, Steady Hands

Suggested Hindrances: Greedy, Wanted

ARISTOCRAT

An Aristocrat is the child of an ancient and distinguished lineage, perhaps going back centuries. As befits someone of such high breeding, he has impeccable manners and fine tastes. He went to the best schools and has every opportunity in life. Though the middle class is on the rise, aristocrats still control a great deal of the wealth and hold the real power of Europe. An aristocrat is normally from one of the great European nations, but an "aristocrat" from the Americas could be the son of a wealthy rail or cattle-baron.

An aristocrat might adventure for any number of reasons. He may be bored with a life of endless social events and is seeking a new sensation. He may have a strong sense of Noblisse Oblige, wishing to help the less fortunate through unusual methods. He may be the latest in a long line of heroes and adventurers, men who conquered nations and mapped out the unknown, and he wishes to leave his mark on the world just as his father and his father's father did before him.

ARISTOCRAT

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Shooting d6, +3 additional skill points

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

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Connections, Noble, Rich (free from Noble Edge)

Suggested Edges: Attractive, Command, Natural Leader

CONSULTING DETECTIVE

The Consulting Detective: A man of amazing perceptive powers who uses science, logic, and reason to find clues and reach conclusions about crimes great and small. The consulting detective is not just a man of reason; he does not shy away from the physical – when things get dangerous, he will stride out to meet the problem head on.

A detective might be an expert on one or more sciences (psychology, phrenology, and chemistry are but three common choices). He most certainly has a head full of strange and esoteric facts and figures that assist him in his work. He will often be accompanied by a loyal retainer – a manservant, a highly intelligent dog, an old family friend, or a comrade from the wars.

With a few minor changes, the consulting detective package can be used to create the character's dark twin, the Criminal Mastermind.

A detective adventures for the same reason he does anything: To solve a mystery. Whether he is hunting for a murderer or trying to find out the truth about reality, chasing a wily jewel thief or stalking a vampire, a consulting detective brings the same perspicacity and devotion to everything he does.

CONSULTING DETECTIVE

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Investigation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8

Charisma: –; Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Connections, Investigator

Suggested Edges: Martial Artist, Scholar

Suggested Hindrances: Arrogant, Enemy, Habit (Drug or Alcohol Use)

DOCTOR

It was the 19th Century when doctors became more than simple quacks and charlatans, when they applied the scientific method to the human body and discovered new methods to fix it when it did not function as God intended, whether due to age, illness, or injury. This is an exciting period to study medicine, as new theories begin to take hold of the public's imagination, and doctors experiment with new drugs and surgical techniques.

A doctor might become an adventurer to seek out brand new (or ancient) medical techniques and medicines in foreign lands,or he might be recruited by a team of adventurers to patch them up after their misadventures.

DOCTOR

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d8, Knowledge (Science) d8, Notice d6, +5 additional skill points

Charisma: –; Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Charismatic, Healer

Suggested Hindrances: Pacifist

EXPLORER

In 1895, the world is largely unexplored. The map still holds a great number of blank spots. Explorers are those brave souls who trek into unknown lands to increase the sum of mankind's knowledge or to find gold and glory.

Explorers set out for adventure out of wanderlust, the desire to explore beyond the horizon. They may be cartographers looking to fill in the blank spots on the map, missionaries looking to save souls, or mercenaries just hoping to find a big payoff. They may join up with others, acting as a guide and translator, or they may lead their own expeditions to new, strange lands.

EXPLORER

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Tracking d6, +2 additional skill points

Charisma: –; Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 6

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Alertness, Woodsman

Suggested Hindrances: Heroic, Outsider

SAVANT

A Savant is a scientist stirred with an engineer, mixed with a lot of genius, and blended with just a touch of madness. They perceive the world in different way from others ; they see a universe rife with possibility. They view scientific facts and physical laws as mere stepping-stones to something deeper that others cannot understand. To them, ordinary scientists are nothing more than children playing a game of Pin-The-Tail-On-The-Donkey, blindfolded and spun around, groping for the truth but unable to grasp its significance. The Savant, on the other hand, has his eyes wide open. Where others see madness, he sees potential – and he uses his genius to develop that potential into objects of power and wonder.

A Savant is a type of sorcerer, but he does not use ancient spells and alchemical formulas to work his miracles. He uses iron and brass, crystal and mother-of-pearl, clockwork and steam. With the precise applications of (admittedly, very bouncy rubber) scientific principles, he creates devices which should not work, and yet miraculously do. Most Savants don't believe in magic, and would vehemently deny that what they do is anything more than cutting-edge science. If other engineers fail to make their devices work as his do, it is because they are lesser minds, not because of any hocus-pocus or mumbo-jumbo.

Savants can be good or evil; they can use their brilliant minds to help or to harm mankind. The forces of both good and evil fight over them, hoping to use the Savants' genius to further their own goals.

SAVANT

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

Skills: Knowledge (Savant Technology) d4, Knowledge (Science) d8, Knowledge (One Specific Science) d6, Notice d4, Repair d8, Shooting d4, Weird Science d10

Charisma: –; Pace: 6; Parry: 2; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Gadgeteer

Optional Edges: McGyver, Mr. Fix-It, New Power, Rich, Scavenger

Suggested Hindrances: Clueless, Curious, Doubting Thomas, Mystic Aura

SOLDIER

The soldier is a professional warrior, usually (but not always) employed and trained by a nation's armed services. He might be a veteran of the Franco-Prussian wars, the Franco-Dahomean War in West Africa, the Boer War in South Africa, or any number of other conflicts around the globe. He might be a mercenary, selling his skills to anyone who can afford to pay, or he might be an ardent patriot who fights for the glory of his nation.

A soldier is recruited into a team of adventurers because they have need of his fighting skills. If they intend to explore dangerous territories or are expecting to go against well-armed opponents, a professional soldier is handy to have around.

SOLDIER

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, +5 additional skill points

Charisma: –; Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Alertness, Hard to Kill

SORCERER

In the world of *The Widening Gyre*, magic exists. It is a real and powerful force, though its study is still shrouded in mystery and superstition. Few are those with the ability to manipulate this power, but those who do have the potential to change the world. Some use their powers for good, others for personal gain, and others still have been completely corrupted by supernatural forces and now seek only to cause chaos and destruction.

In this age of science and enlightenment, fewer and fewer believe in the existence of magic. Most common folk, however, are still very superstitious and would not react well to a man pulling fire out of the air or summoning and banishing spirits at will. Therefore, most sorcerers are very careful not to use their powers in the presence of unbelievers; when absolutely necessary, they are ready with a simple, logical, and believable explanation (including the standard fallback lie: "It was all just smoke and mirrors").

Sorcerers gain and control their powers by a wide variety of means, therefore there are many types of sorcerers in the world. Some examples of different ways to access magical powers include:

◉ **Arithmomancy:** An Arithmomancer creates complex mathematical formulas that create the magical effects he wishes to cast.

◉ **Cartomancy:** Cartomancy involves the use of cards (usually tarot cards, but virtually any type of card can be used) to cast spells.

◉ **Electromancy:** Electromancy utilizes the power of galvanism.

- ◉ **Geomancy:** A geomancer exerts magical control over earth and stone.
- ◉ **Hydromancy:** A hydromancer shapes and controls water.
- ◉ **Necromancy:** A necromancer summons and controls the spirits of the dead. This is generally regarded as the most dangerous and corrupting of the various types of sorcery.
- ◉ **Pyromancy:** Pyromancy is the power to create, shape, and control fire.
- ◉ **Technomancy:** A technomancer is not the same thing as a Savant. A Savant adheres to scientific principles to build his fantastic devices, while a technomancer uses magic to bend machinery to his will.

Generally speaking, a sorcerer's way of casting spells can be represented simply by varying the Trappings of the spell. A pyromancer›s version of *Sorcerous Bolt* would look like a burning tongue of flame, while a geomancer's would be a spiked rock ball, and a technomancer's might be a blast of superheated steam.

SORCERER

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Notice d6, Spellcasting d10, +4 additional skill points

Charisma: –; Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 4

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

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

Suggested Hindrances: Mystic Aura

WATCHMAN

The Clockmakers Guild recruits members of the Watchmen from every corner of the world and from virtually every walk of life. However, most Watchmen tend to be pulled from a similar pool of adventurers, daredevils, explorers, and thrillseekers

Though every member of the Watchmen is a unique individual, there are certain standard characteristics the Clockmakers Guild usually looks for. They want strong-willed men and women with a great sense of loyalty and duty. They prefer those who are physically fit and adept in the combat arts, though this is not strictly a necessity. Those inducted into the Watchmen are often not told the truth about their missions (and the world itself) until well into their career, when the Clockmakers Guild is certain of their ability to cope with the facts, and when their loyalty to the cause is beyond question.

The Watchmen Archetype represents a number of skills most Watchmen are expected to have. However, because Watchmen are recruited from every profession, virtually any Archetype is appropriate for a member.

Your GM will reveal more information as your adventures unfold.

WATCHMAN

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Investigation d8, Knowledge (the Supernatural World) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: –; Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: One Major, two Minor

Edges: Alertness, Connections

SKILLS

Skills play an important roll in the development of any character. All of the skills found in the standard Savage Worlds Deluxe core system are appropriate for a Widening Gyre campaign. The following are some new skill specializations for heroes in this unique setting.

DRIVING [WALKING VEHICLES]

The scientists and Savants of this age are obsessed with the idea of creating walking machines. Whether they locomote via spider-legs, dozens of centipede-like legs, or on two legs like a man, and whether they were ten feet tall or a hundred, walking vehicles are a staple of the genre and the period. Driving (Walking Vehicles) is a new skill specialization unique to the world of *The Widening Gyre*.

KNOWLEDGE [SAVANT TECHNOLOGY]

This skill allows a character to study and understand a piece of Savant technology. The character must have the opportunity to study the technology for at least one full turn, either watching it in action or (preferably) examining it closely. ***This skill is limited to those characters who take the Savant character package.***

A character can learn how the technology works, what its weaknesses and flaws are, how to improve on it, and how to duplicate it. The degree by which one makes an Analyze Savant Technology roll determines how much information is gained:

On a success, the character can tell how advanced the technology is; whether an ordinary engineer could create or duplicate it. He can see any weaknesses and flaws in the technology, and how to exploit them.

One a raise, the character may have ideas on how to improve the technology, eliminate flaws, or add additional features. Character has a good idea of how to duplicate the technology, given proper tools and time.

KNOWLEDGE [THE SUPERNATURAL WORLD]

The world of the occult has it its own secret subculture, and this Skill represents a character's knowledge of that world. A successful skill roll allows the character to separate the dabblers, the deluded, and the charlatans from people with real power and/or knowledge. He or she can find and identify private collectors and collections and sometimes little-known sites of mystical power. The Skill also serves to keep one abreast of current events among one's fellow sorcerers and occultists.

Additionally, this skill gives the character basic knowledge about how to combat various types of monsters – from lycanthropes to vampires to patchwork men to creatures that have no names. A character with this skill also understands the workings, concepts, and legends of occult traditions, such as Cabbalism, Taoism, or Voodoo. In the world of *The Widening Gyre*, magic is real (though rare and mysterious), so this skill can come in handy when dealing with the unknown.

At the GM's option, this skill can grant the character insight into one or more of the secret societies often encountered by adventurers in the world of the Widening Gyre: The Clockmakers Guild, the Council of Midnight, the Circle of Technologists, or any additional secret societies which the game master may elect to introduce to his game.

The GM is free to restrict beginning characters from taking this skill if he wants to introduce the world more slowly and carefully.

KNOWLEDGE [THE WORLD OF SCIENCE]

Scientists and engineers in the 19th century are a competitive lot, always trying to outdo one another and often stealing ideas, trying to be the first one to make it to the patent office. They are also very secretive, working in seclusion in order to prevent their rivals from taking their inventions. Knowledge (The World of Science) allows a character to keep track of his rivals and to be aware of what inventions they are currently working on (and how close they are to completing them). This skill also lets a character know who the experts in any given field are, and what the best way to consult them might be ("The Technologists are working on a way to block out the sun. We should consult Dr. Kendrick – he's the world's leading expert on harnessing solar energy!").

KNOWLEDGE [SCIENCE]

All Savants have Knowledge (Science) and at least one more specific Knowledge (Science) Skill. Here is a fairly comprehensive list of the sciences as they were known in the late 19th Century:

* **Aeronautics:** The study, design, and manufacture of flight-capable machines, or the techniques of operating aircraft.
* **Agriculture:** The study of the production, processing, marketing, and use of foods, fibers and byproducts from plants and animals.
* **Anaesthesia:** A branch of chemistry and of medicine. The science of temporarily blocking sensation (such as pain).
* **Anatomy:** A branch of biology. The study of the bodies of living creatures.
* **Anthropology:** The study of mankind.
* **Archaeology:** A branch of Anthropology. The study of ancient societies.
* **Astrology:** The study of the movement of celestial bodies and how they influence personality and other mundane affairs.
* **Astronomy:** The science of celestial objects, such as stars, planets, comets, and galaxies.
* **Bacteriology:** A branch of biology. The study of microorganisms.
* **Biology:** The study of living organisms. This is a broad field that has many sub-branches.
* **Botany:** A branch of biology. The study of plant life.
* **Chemistry:** The study of the composition, behavior, and properties of matter, and the changes it undergoes.
* **Chronology:** The study of time.
* **Climatology:** The study of the climate, or weather conditions averaged over time.
* **Clockwork:** The science of mechanical devices which utilize complex gears and springs.
* **Cosmogeny:** A branch of Cosmology. The study of the origin of the universe.
* **Cosmology:** A broad field that refers to the study of the universe.
* **Crystallography:** The study of crystals.
* **Darwinism (Evolution):** The science of evolution.
* **Ecology:** The study of living organisms and their relationship to each other and their surroundings.
* **Engineering:** The discipline of applying mathematics and practical knowledge to design and build structures and machines.
* **Entomology:** A branch of Biology. The study of insects.
* **Aether:** The study of "aether," the physical medium which occupies every point in space, including within material bodies, which give rise to electric and magnetic phenomena.
* **Eugenics:** The science aimed at improving the genetic composition of a population.
* **Galvanism (Electricity):** The study of electricity.
* **Geography:** The study of the Earth and its features.
* **Geology:** The science of the Earth and the processes by which it is shaped and changed.
* **Gravity:** The study of gravity and its effects.
* **Homeopathy:** A medical practice which uses highly diluted elixirs of substances which produce symptoms similar to the disease being treated.
* **Hydrology:** The study of water.
* **Magnetism:** The study of magnets and magnetic effects.
* **Mathematics:** One of the most basic and essential scientific fields.
* **Mechanics:** A branch of physics concerned with the behavior of physical bodies, and the effects of these bodies on their environment.

* **Medicine:** The science of healing.
* **Mesmerism:** Also called Animal Magnetism. The study of the magnetic fluid or ethereal medium that resides in the bodies of living beings. It includes the practice of hypnotism to diagnose and cure disease.
* **Metallurgy:** The study of metals and their practical uses.
* **Meteorology:** The study of the weather.
* **Microscopy:** The practice and study of microscopes and their creation.
* **Mineralogy:** A branch of Geology. The study of minerals.
* **Monstrositology:** The study of "natural" monsters – creatures which are born deformed, such as two-headed snakes.
* **Natural Philosophy:** The study of nature and the universe; largely subsumed by the other sciences by the mid-19th century.
* **Oceanography:** The study of the oceans.
* **Ornithology:** The study of birds. A branch of zoology/biology.
* **Palaeontology:** The study of prehistoric life.
* **Pathology:** A branch of medicine; the study of disease.
* **Philology:** The study of classical languages, such as Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit.
* **Photography:** The science of creating pictures by recording images on light-sensitive mediums.
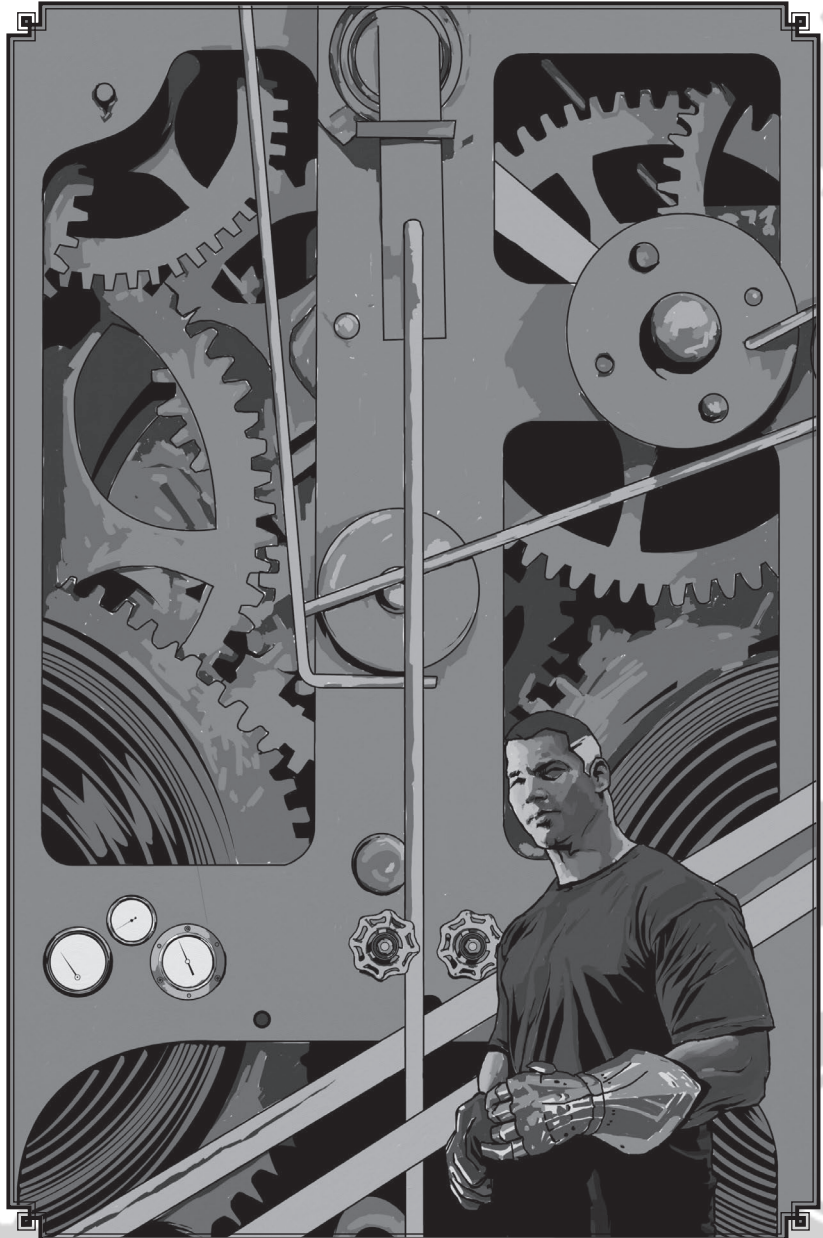
* **Phrenology:** The science of measuring the human skull to determine intelligence and personality.
* **Physics:** The science concerned with studying matter and its motion, including energy and force.
* **Physiognomy:** The study of a person's character or personality from their outer appearance, especially the face.
* **Pneumatics:** The study and application of use of pressurized gas to affect mechanical motion. This includes the study of steam and steam-engines.
* **Psychiatry:** A branch of medicine. The study and treatment of mental disorders.
* **Psychical Research:** The study of psychic abilities, near-death and out-of-body experiences, retrocognition, prophecy, astrology, ghosts, and life after death. Later known as Parapsychology.
* **Psychology:** The study of the mind.
* **Putrefaction:** The study of decay and decomposition.
* **Robotics:** The study of automatons.
* **Sociology:** A branch of anthropology. The study of societies.
* **Spectroscopy:** The study of the interaction between matter and light.
* **Spontaneous Generation:** The study of life arising from inanimate matter.
* **Statistics:** A branch of mathematics. The collection, organization, and interpretation of data.
* **Surgery:** A branch of medicine, using physical operations to treat injury or disease.
* **Taxonomy:** The science of classification; arranging data in a hierarchical structure to establish parent-child relationships.
* **Telegraphy:** The study and practice of transmitting messages long distances without physical transportation.
* **Vulcanology:** A branch of geology. The study of volcanoes.
* **Zoology:** A branch of biology. The study of animals.
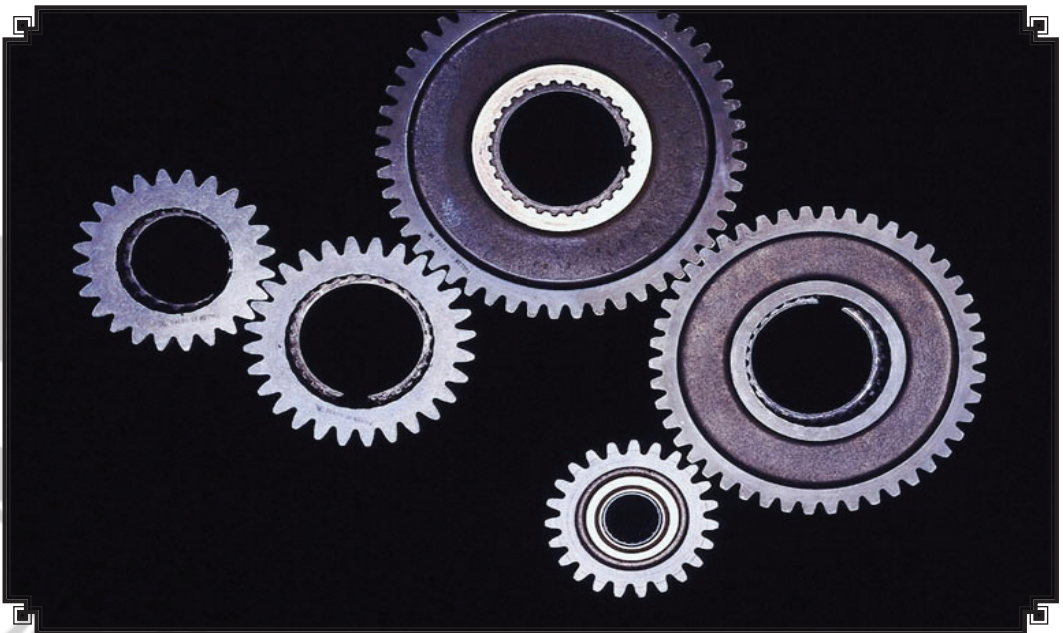
EDGES

Most Edges, other than those limited to modern-day or futuristic campaigns, are appropriate for heroes in *The Widening Gyre*. Here are some special rules for Edges in *The Widening Gyre*:

ARCANE BACKGROUND [MAGIC]

Magic is a real and powerful force in the universe of *The Widening Gyre*, despite academic claims to the contrary in this new world of science and rationality. Few people have the talent to learn and cast real spells (although fakirs are commonplace), but those who do possess the skill can perform the most amazing feats. Unfortunately, the quest for power tends to have a corrupting effect on those who would learn true sorcery, so a great many "real" mages are, in fact, evil.

Use the *Arcane Background (Magic)* to create sorcerers in *The Widening Gyre*. See the Sorcerer Archetype for more details on the different types of magic available.

ARCANE BACKGROUND [WEIRD SCIENCE]

Any engineer can repair a locomotive. Any scientist can understand the principles involved in the operation of an incandescent light bulb. Only a Savant can make the laws of physics, biology, and chemistry sit up and beg. *Arcane Background (Weird Science)* represents the ability of Savants to take a scientific or engineering principle one step further than anyone else. For example, to create a locomotive, a character would use Knowledge (Engineering) to design it and Repair to build it; to give it crab legs or the ability to travel over water as easily as on rails, a character must have the *Arcane Background (Weird Science)*.

For example, Tesla wants to build a device that can bombard a person with low-energy roentgens in order to detect whether they are lying. To build a contraption that uses radiation – like an X-ray machine – is something any scientist with the proper training can do. It requires a Repair and a Knowledge (Radiology) roll. But detecting lies is something well beyond the realm of ordinary science and therefore requires the character to possess the *Arcane Background (Weird Science)* Edge.

Arcane Background (Miracles) and *Arcane Background (Psionics)* are not available in a Widening Gyre setting.

CONNECTIONS

There are a great many organizations a heroic character can join, ranging from the Watchmen to the *Société de Paris d'Exploration* to a simple gentleman's club. Some sample Connections include:

* **Member of a Social Club:** Most gentlemen are members of one or more social clubs, where they can share a drink and a story with like-minded fellows. Social clubs are useful for making contacts in society (doctors, lawyers, scientists, and even noblemen). Many of them have old maps, archives, or libraries that members are free to peruse. Membership includes the right to petition the organization for funding -- perhaps a young Savant needs starting capital for his latest, greatest invention, or an explorer wishes to fund an expedition to the Amazon jungle to discover a lost civilization.

* **Member of the Watchmen:** The Watchmen do not accept just anyone into their ranks. Its members are among the bravest men and women that society has to offer, and they have shown themselves to have indomitable wills and pure hearts. Entrance into the Watchmen is by invitation only by a current member in good standing, and only after someone proves himself worthy. Members of the Watchmen have access to the extensive archives of their order, the expertise of the other members, and funding for expeditions to stop the forces of evil from encroaching on civilization.

RICH

Being wealthy is a common advantage for heroes. Many heroes come from well-to-do families who could afford the best schools for their scions. Many come from aristocratic stock as well and live off of inheritances or the land they own. Savants may enjoy the fruits of a number of patents or own stock in thriving factories. Regardless of where the wealth comes from, it takes a large amount of capital to trot around the globe, righting wrongs and fighting evil, so many heroes are well-funded.

HINDRANCES

Most Hindrances are appropriate to heroic characters in a Steampunk world. A few Hindrances unique to *The Widening Gyre* universe are:

ENEMY [MAJOR OR MINOR]

An active member of the Clockmakers or the Watchmen has ample opportunities to make many enemies. He may have caught the eye of the Council of Midnight or the Circle of Technologists (or one of their numerous servants), or have a rival Sorcerer or Savant who wants the hero dead for any number of reasons.

MYSTIC AURA [MINOR]

In *The Widening Gyre*, anyone who can manipulate magic (such as sorcerers, werewolves, vampires, and Savants) are magical beings. As such, those with similar powers can detect their presence – their Mystic Aura.

MECHANICAL INTOLERANCE [MAJOR]

Some people just don't get along with machinery. Any contraption they touch always seems to break down – and always at the worst possible moment. It could be anything – trains run out of steam, clockwork mechanisms throw springs; it seems that anything more complicated than a coin toss just won't work when they are around. They are constantly haunted by the sound of escaping steam, backlit by spitting sparks, and engulfed by broiling smoke. They can't even wear a pocket watch. And worse, there is no upside to this condition. A hero with this Hindrance can't simply put his palms on the control panel of the death-ray and watch it blow itself to Kingdom Come. If anything, his presence will simply speed up the countdown to disaster.

SPIRIT MAGNET [MINOR]

There are those in the world to whom spirits are drawn, like iron to a magnet. Spirits, ghosts, and other supernatural beings are attracted to the character with this Complication. They are not necessarily hostile (though they often are), but they are always troublesome and annoying. An angry spirit is certain to direct the bulk of its fury at a character with the Spirit Magnet Hindrance.

NOTRE DAME DE VAPEUR

CHAPTER TWO:
DARKNESS
DROPS AGAIN
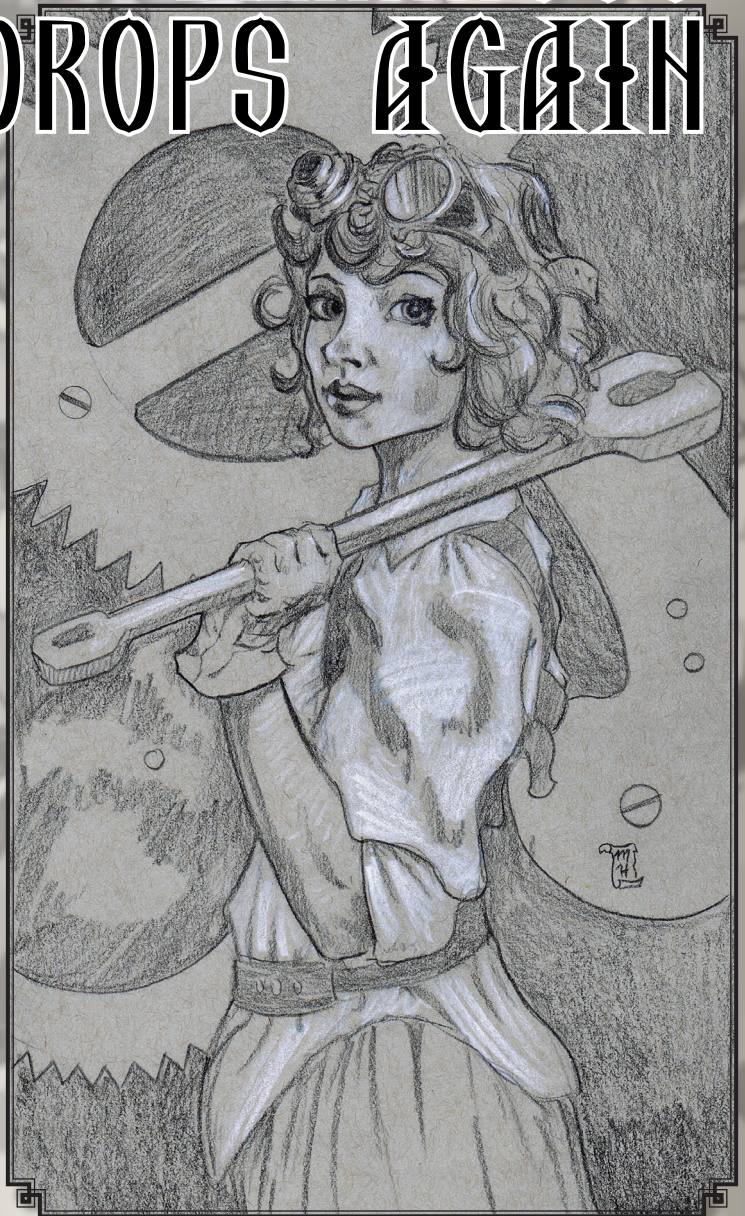
STEAMPUNK WEAPONS, GEAR, & MAGIC

THE WITCH

With a sound like the gates of Hell screeching opening and the hot stench of brimstone, the enormous creature stomped into the center of the tiny village. "Good Lord Almighty!" Savannah stumbled backwards, even her legendary cool nerves jarred by the sight of the thing. "What in hell is that?"

It looked like a house propelled by two huge, bird-like legs. Thick, black smoke poured from its chimney, and as the heroes watched, two claw-like hands emerged from its underside. One of the hands pointed towards the Watchmen and a jet of white-hot flame erupted from it. ADEN gunned the engine of their galvanic vehicle to carry them away from the wash of fire.

"It's Baba Yaga's Hut," Morden gasped. "She is the old witch of the forest! The stories are true!"

"I think not," Thackary said, staring intently at the creature as it stomped after them, his visio-scopic goggles whirring as he examined it. "Look at those leg joints. Those are Babcock gears, or I'm a Frenchman. And that chimney? Why, that's nothing more than a cleverly disguised high-pressure coal-fired steam plant!"

"So you're saying…?" Morden asked.

"It's not an immortal witch we're dealing with, but a Savant gone bad," Thackary said, setting his jaw. "And if it's what I think it is.."

"Then it'll be time for a reckoning," Savannah finished that thought by cocking her custom buffalo rifle and grinning like a wild woman.

WONDROUS AND FANTASTICAL DEVICES AND SORCEROUS POWERS

What would a Steampunk world be without amazing artifacts of brass, ivory, and crystal? We're not just talking about locomotives and steamships, but about fantastic creations of genuine wonder: time machines, walking artillery pieces, death rays, clockwork men, even vehicles with the power to sail the aether between the stars! This section explores many of the marvelous devices built by Savants across the world and throughout the Steampunk era, and how the ancient ways of darkness and sorcery combine with and react to these modern steam-powered marvels.

If the GM allows his players to purchase any of the items listed in this chapter, he will have to extrapolate prices based on the gear lists found in *Savage Worlds Deluxe*. Keep in mind that most items are hand-made and many of them are experimental and/or one of a kind. Any Savant with the Weird Science arcane talent can create and build the items listed in this chapter.

> *There is nothing in machinery, there is nothing in embankments and railways and iron bridges and engineering devices to oblige them to be ugly. Ugliness is the measure of imperfection.*
>
> – H. G. Wells

WEAPONS

Many Savants use their gifts to devise better ways of killing people. All of the firearms from the Nineteenth Century are available in the world of the Widening Gyre. For players looking for a little something extra, most Modern Firearms or even Science Fiction weapons can be adapted to the Steam Age. Simply add limitations common to experimental weapons of the era and make the whole thing out of brass, crystal, and rare tropical woods.

COMMON LIMITATIONS ON STEAM-AGE WEAPONS

Oftentimes, a Savant's genius runs far ahead of the available technology of the day. In these dreadfully common cases, he will have to make do with available materials, and his inventions might not work entirely as they were designed. What this means is that most experimental Steampunk weapons come with one or more limitations. Common limitations include (but by no means are limited to):

* **Miniaturization? What's that?:** The creation is particularly large, so large in fact that it must be carried by two strong men, hauled on a cart, or carried on the back of an animal (better yet, mount it on the hood of a coal-fueled vehicle).

* **I Haven't Had Time to Add Shielding:** The device is prone to overheating, spraying out showers of sparks, vibrating uncontrollably, or some other slight malfunction that can harm the user. The player cannot spend a Bennie to re-roll double ones when using this device.

* **This is Just the Prototype:** The gadget tends to malfunction after just a few uses. If the user rolls a one, the device malfunctions and cannot be used again until it is repaired.

* **Only a Professional Should Try This:** The device is tricky, and requires a user of some skill to activate it. This device cannot be used by anyone who does not have the Mad Science arcane background.

* **The Targeting System Doesn't Quite Work Yet:** User cannot take the Aim action when using the device.

* **You Have To Hold Still To Use It:** The device gives a penalty of -2 to the user's shooting roll if the user moves that round.

* **It Takes Time to Warm Up:** The device can only be used or fired every other round, even if the character using it has an Edge that would allow for faster re-loading of a weapon than normal.

ENERGY WEAPONS

Energy weapons – that is, weapons that utilize the power of galvanism, heat, or more mysterious energies – are still fairly new. But a great number of Savants believe that these are the wave of the future and dedicate a great deal of time to inventing, building, and perfecting them. There are a large number of energy weapons (most still in the experimental phase) available to adventurers.

✳ AETHER DISRUPTOR

This weapon, also known as the Aetherbeam, uses an internal generator to fire aetheric particles, which are particularly efficacious against ghosts, spirits, and creatures from the underworld. Their ectoplasmic bodies are no match for the power of this weapon.

✳ DAZZLE GUN

This device uses a chemical compound that burns brightly (though without producing much heat). A complex series of amplifying reflectors focus the light from the burst, blinding the target with the brilliant dazzle.

❋ DR. VIBARIUM'S METAL-MELTING VIBRATIONAL RAY

Dr. Vibarium once asked himself, "Why is mankind always fighting against himself?" He thought the answer was quite obvious, "It's all these weapons we've got lying around. If one were to merely remove the instruments of war from easy reach, war itself would become obsolete!" To this end, he created this device, which creates a unique vibratical pattern that causes metal weapons of every sort to simply dissolve away into nothingness! Please note: The Vibrational Ray works on more than just weapons, so we advise you to keep the silverware well away from this device.

❋ LIGHTNING ROD DEATH RAY

No one knows exactly who invented this dreadful weapon, nor how so many of them have fallen into the wrong hands. Some Savants surmise that they were created and distributed by some inscrutable alien race (Martians, perhaps) for reasons of their own, though this would not explain the wide variation in design. Most Death Rays are made of some unknown metal and take the form of large rifles with wide, oval-shaped barrels. Death Rays fire forth a beam of unspeakable energy that destroys anything it touches. The beam is so inherently inaccurate they have a bad reputation, even among those who use them (and especially among their allies!).

❋ SOLAR ENHANCING CHANNELER

This odd weapon has a large aperture on the top which allows sunlight to enter the optic channel. Precision-tuned mirrors rapidly bounce the ever-tightening beam around through a series of one-way lenses. When the beam of light is finally released, it contains amazing destructive potential, but without any noise or recoil. However, the precise nature of the lenses means flaws and wear can occur if a charge is held too long.

❋ SONIC RAYGUN

This weapon is made up of precision tuning forks, clockwork gears, and a dish-shaped amplifying trumpet as the barrel. It fires a unidirectional burst of intense noise, stunning and disorienting the target.

❋ SPITTING DRAGON FLAMETHROWER

British Savant James Spitting created a way to pressurize fuel in 1882, in the hopes of using it to create highly efficient gasoline-powered engines. His invention languished for more than a decade until he discovered a more lucrative use for it. He combined a backpack, a hand-held nozzle on a flexible tube, and a sparking device. The very dangerous "Spitting Dragon" was adopted by British troops in the Boer War, and similar designs were quickly adopted by other nations as well.

Spitting later created a fireproof suit to be worn by troops armed with his weapons, but it offered no protection against gunfire and additionally proved to be so heavy and bulky that most soldiers eschewed its use (see Defensive Technologies on page 29).

GALVANIC WEAPONS

Galvanic weapons (weapons powered by electricity) are becoming more and more common. Clockwork gears power intricate spinning metal coils that generate voltage. Output can be adjusted for a number of uses, from a light stunning shock to utter destruction. There are many uses for galvanic weapons -- they can be used with guns as well as with melee weapons.

❋ GALVANIC HAND GUN

The hand gun is made of brass and crystal, intricately wrapped with copper coils and capacitors. It is useful as a holdout weapon, but its capacitors take a few seconds to charge up between shots. It doesn't need ammunition, but it can only fire up to six times before its coils need to be replaced.

❋ GALVANIC LONG GUN

Like the hand gun, this intricate rifle is made of brass and crystal, with copper coils and capacitors. It fires a deadly, long-range bolt of electricity with surprising accuracy. However, its capacitors take a few seconds to charge up between shots. It doesn't need ammunition, but it can only fire up to six times before its coils need to be replaced.

❋ GALVANIC WALKING STICK

This appears to be an intricate but otherwise normal gentleman's walking stick. However, the tip can be charged with a powerful bolt of electricity, the mere touch of which is enough to stun most attackers. The generator is usually attached to a concealed power source on the user's belt or back

PROJECTILE WEAPONS

Projectile Weapons are an old standby. They are reliable and well-understood by modern science, so it stands to reason that Savants would work to improve them or create their own varieties.

✷ CASTER

This pneumatic pump weapon uses air pressure to hurl projectiles, usually darts. The darts often contain chemical loads such as knockout drugs. It has a short range, but offers minimal recoil and almost no noise.

✷ GEAR BLADES

These blades, shaped like large, sharpened gears, are attached to a complex mechanism mounted on the user's forearms. A yank on the pull cord gets the blades spinning, and gears keep them going. They can be fired, sending the whirling projectiles towards an enemy, or used as vicious hand-to-hand weapons.

✷ STEAM THROWER

This device consists of a tank and large boiler apparatus (usually worn on the back), with a projecting hose attached to a long nozzle. When activated, the nozzle fires a burst of superheated steam in a large cloud directly in front of the wielder. Some holy orders are known to bless the water beforehand, making this an extremely effective weapon against creatures of the Pit.

AUTOMATIC [GATLING] WEAPONS

The Gatling Gun was patented in 1860 by Dr. Richard Gatling. It uses a cyclic multi-barrel design to fire a continuous volley of shots, and requires a person to crank it. Later improvements utilize a fraction of the pressure from the fired bullets to turn the barrel. It was only a matter of time before brilliant, military-minded Savants made further improvements.

✷ GATLING CARBINE

Using similar principles as the infamous Gatling Gun, the Gatling Carbine is a hand-held rapid repeating firearm. Fed by a large, bulky magazine on top of the weapon, the Gatling Carbine is less powerful than its larger cousin, but can still lay down an impressive amount of firepower.

✷ GATLING PISTOL

The logical next step in Gatling technology, the Gatling Pistol is a powerful sidearm that slowly made its way west across the American frontier. Heavy and prone to jamming, it is not as popular as legends make it out to be.
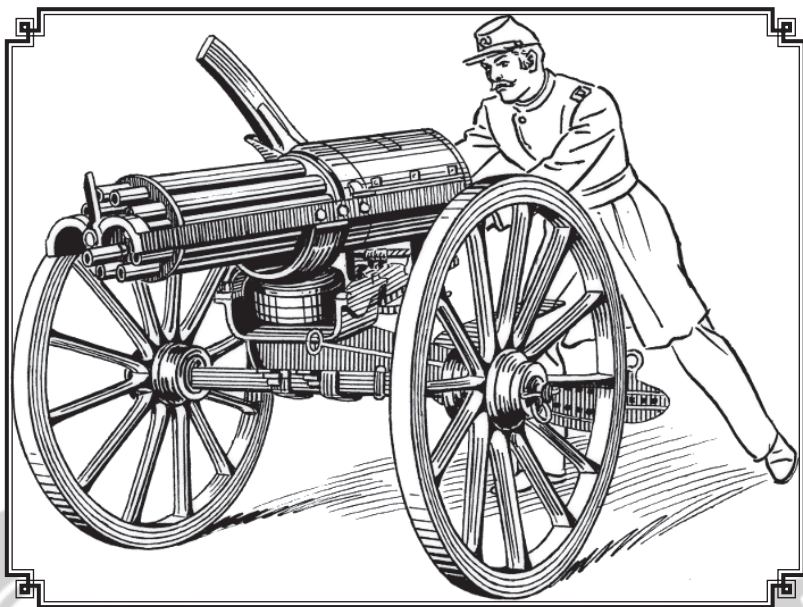
ENERGY WEAPONS

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Weight	Shots	Min Str	Notes
Aether Disruptor	12/24/48	--	1	9	12	d8	As the Banish power
Dazzle Gun	12/24/48	--	1	5	4	d4	As the Blind power
Dr. Vibarium's Metal-Melting Vibrational Ray	12/24/48	2d6*	1	8	8	d6	As the Bolt power
Lightning Rod Death Ray	24/48/96	3d6	1	18	10	d8	As the Blast power
Solar Enhancing Channeler	12/24/48	2d6	1	14	--**	d6	As the Bolt power
Sonic Raygun	12/24/48	--	1	7	8	d6	As the Stun power
Spitting Dragon Flamethrower	Cone Template	2d10	1	40	8	d8	As the Burst power

*Only Effects Metal
** This weapon never runs out of shots as long as it is in direct sunlight.

GALVANIC WEAPONS

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Weight	Shots	Min Str	Notes
Galvanic Hand Gun	12/24/48	2d6	1	8	6	d6	As the Bolt power
Galvanic Long Gun	24/48/96	3d6	1	13	6	d8	As the Bolt power
Galvanic Walking Stick	--	--	--	6	--	d6	As the Stun power

PROJECTILE WEAPONS

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Weight	Shots	Min Str	Notes
Caster	6/12/24	*	1	2	4	--	Poison
Gear Blades – Ranged	12/24/48	2d6	2	8	2	--	
Gear Blades – HTH	--	Str+d8	--	8	--	--	
Steam Thrower	Cone Template	2d10	1	30	8	d10	As the Burst power

GATLING WEAPONS

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Weight	Shots	Min Str	Notes
Gatling Carbine	24/48/96	2d8	10	30	100	d10	
Gatling Pistol	12/24/48	2d6	3	14	15	d8	

WEAPONS OF WAR

Much more powerful than personal weapons, these weapons are used to boil entire armies to hot red steam or bring down city walls. These weapons are normally enormous and must be moved on a cart, train car, or other vehicle (if they are mobile at all), and require a crew to operate.

✳ GENERAL VON THUNK'S BLOOD-BOILER

Are you tired of elite enemy formations that refuse to crack no matter how hard you pound them? Would you like to sweep British infantry aside like so much dust? If so, General Von Thunk's Blood-Boiler is the war wagon for you! Just wheel it into position, aim the Hemotropic Induction Coils at the enemy, fire up the Aethersteam boiler, and watch your foe's best troops explode in puffs of red mist! Also useful for pogroms, ethnic cleansing, and the mass execution of political dissidents.

✳ GENERAL VON THUNK'S PORTABLE EARTHQUAKE MACHINE

For all of your siege engine needs! Is there a wall that needs knocking down, a town that needs flattened, or an underground redoubt that needs collapsing? If so, General Von Thunk's Earthquake Machine is right for you! Just wheel this coach-sized device onto the battlefield, fire up the Aethersteam engine and watch the specially-tuned Quakehammers liquefy your enemies' defenses. They won't be able to surrender fast enough!

✳ THE INSIDIOUS DR. ABDUL'S SUN-HARNESSING LIGHT OF DESTRUCTION

Dr. Abdul, a British-educated Persian, once threatened an entire British colony with this massive weapon. Built on a high hilltop overlooking Damascus, this gigantic contraption used mirrors, lenses, and crystals to capture, harness, and focus the light of the sun. The deadly rays so produced rained destruction upon Her Majesty's armed forces until a handful of brave volunteers managed to crack the main lens. The power of the weapon turned upon itself, resulting in an explosion so mighty that it could be seen as far away as Jerusalem.

POISON GAS

Even before the Great War, Savants employed by both sides developed many horrible types of chemicals to be used against the enemy. Originally designed as artillery weapons, some of the gasses later became available as hand-grenades. Here are a few of the more terrible types:

✳ HALLUCINATORY GAS ARTILLERY SHELLS

The Germans first began using hallucinatory gas in 1916. This pink-colored, sweet-smelling vapor was nicknamed "Rose pollen" by soldiers along the front lines, who greatly feared its unpredictable effects. Those affected by the gas saw terrible visions of death all around them. Soldiers who breathed the gas might huddle in a ball weeping uncontrollably, attack their fellow soldiers, or flee directly into the enemy's guns. After the war's end, the use of poison gas was outlawed under the rules of civilized warfare, and this terrible weapon was one of the reasons.

✳ DEMON GAS ARTILLERY SHELL

Faced with overwhelming German firepower, French Savants in the Great War quite literally made a deal with the Devil. They devised a type of gas that would congeal into shapeless but terrifying and deadly troops. Unknown to almost everyone, these shells contained not poisonous gas, but a very complex and powerful spell woven into the chemicals and the casing itself. When the shell exploded, the energy released opened up a tiny portal to some dank nether-realm, allowing demons through to do their dirty business before the portal closed and they were forced back to their home dimension.

Demon Gas, thankfully, never became available as a hand grenade. Needless to say, the Watchmakers would be very interested in finding out who invented this deadly ammunition, and where they were being manufactured…

DEFENSES

STEAM-POWERED ARMOR

Just as many scientists and engineers keep steady employment coming up with superior methods of killing an enemy, others make a living attempting to fashion better ways to protect their troops. Savants have attempted to create bulletproof soldiers since the Time of Waiting. Several of them had qualified successes – Nikolai Stephenopolis in 1866 created his Turtle Armor to help free his beloved Crete from its Ottoman oppressors. In 1915, French Savant Justine Bordeaux outfitted and trained a special team of soldiers he called les Blaireaux de la Mort (The Badgers of Death) to fight on the front lines. Later, the English fielded a type of steam-powered armor known as Walking Tanks.

✹ TURTLE ARMOR

Turtle Armor looks like medieval plate armor. It's powered by a small, highly-efficient steam plant on the back that enhances the soldiers' strength. However, the armor needs frequent refueling – both fuel and water for the steam plant. Additionally, the armor is heavy, bulky, painfully slow and can be temporarily immobilized simply by knocking it (and the wearer) over onto its back.

✹ LES BLAIREAUX DE LA MORT

The Death Badger armor is simple body armor powered by wind-up springs and clockwork. The armor uses springs built into the legs and feet to grant the wearer great speed and mobility. However, those who are not properly trained in the use of the armor can end up spraining, straining, or even breaking their legs.

✹ WALKING TANKS

Walking tanks are massive but surprisingly mobile suits of bulletproof armor fueled by small but highly efficient steam plants. Most models have a British carbine mounted on the right arm; others have flame-throwers or even small Vickers guns attached.

Armor Type	Armor	Wt.	Notes
Leather Duster	+1	10	Covers torso, arms
Reinforced Leather Duster	+2	20	Covers torso, arms
Savant's Work Apron	+2	10	Only effective against fire, electricity, and acid; covers torso
Under-Clothes Armor	+2	10	Covers torso, arms, legs
Soldier's Armor	+3	25	Covers torso
Lady Feathergill's Haute Couturier	+2	10	Covers torso, arms, legs
The Czar's Impermeable Cloak	+4	20	Covers entire body
Spitting Flame-Proof Armor	+4	20	Only effective against fire and electricity; covers entire body
Powered Armor			
Turtle Armor	+5	100	Covers entire body; Increase Strength by one die type; requires fuel
Les Bleireaux de la Mort	+4	40	Covers entire body; Increase Pace by +2
Walking Tank	+6	80	Covers entire body; Increase Strength by one die type; Increase Pace by +2; requires fuel

✳ SPITTING FLAME-PROOF ARMOR

British inventor James Spitting, creator of the infamous Spitting Dragon Flamethrower, later crafted a fireproof suit to be worn by troops armed with his weapons. This bulky and heavy suit offers a great deal of protection from heat and flames (as well as electricity and other forms of energy), but doesn't defend against bullets, knives, or other more mundane dangers.

✳ LEATHER DUSTER

A heavy leather jacket that hangs down to about thigh level. Provides minimal protection.

✳ REINFORCED LEATHER DUSTER

A leather duster reinforced along the shoulders and back with plates of steel, brass, or hardened leather.

✳ SAVANT'S WORK APRON

A heavy leather apron and gloves, specially treated with chemicals to make it resistant to lab hazards (flames, chemical spills, electricity, etc).

✳ UNDER-CLOTHES ARMOR

This is a thin suit of specially woven spider-silk that can be worn underneath regular clothing and provides some defense against attack. A favorite of nobles and wealthy men who fear they may be assassinated. It is known colloquially as a "paranoid suit."

✳ SOLDIER'S ARMOR

Steel or brass armor, worn over normal clothing, that provides effective defense against most types of attack. It's quite bulky and rather heavy. It covers the shoulders and torso, leaving the arms free for wielding weapons. Originally designed for soldiers fighting in India and Africa, it was deemed too hot and cumbersome to be of much use there.

✳ LADY FEATHERGILL'S IMPECCABLY STYLISH PERIL RESISTANT HAUTE COUTURIER

A must for diplomats, agent provocateurs, and consulting detectives, these stylish garments are woven through with threads of Lady Feathergill's specially formulated feathermetal, which becomes rigid when it interacts with kinetic energy, thereby robbing bullets, knives, clubs, and other dangerous weapons of their damaging impact. Available in both Gentlemen's and Ladies' styles.

✳ THE CZAR'S IMPERMEABLE CLOAK

Czar Nicolas II of Russia is famed both for his patronage of many brilliant Savants and for his intense paranoia. Or perhaps it is not paranoia -- when one has had as many attempts on his life as the Czar has, one tends to grow exceedingly cautious. To that end, the Czar commissioned the creation of a device to protect him from assassination attempts. The result is known as the Czar's Impermeable Cloak. It is a heavy cloak that draws on the wearer's own life-force and strength of will to generate a powerful and nearly impenetrable field of energy.

USEFUL DEVICES

S avants constantly tinker, creating amazing devices with a carelessness that other inventors envy. Listed below are a handful of useful contraptions that a PC Savant might invent, or an adventuring party might find or purchase.

EYEWEAR FOR THE FASHIONABLE SAVANT

No self-respecting Savant would dare step outside without a pair of goggles perched jauntily on his head. NOTE: Any of our specially-designed goggles can be combined with other types. Further note: Combining too many goggles has been known to result in forehead trauma and severe neck damage. Use with care!

❋ PROTECTIVE GOGGLES

What scientist, Savant, or engineer worth his salt would be found without his protective goggles? Good against chemical spills, unexpected flashes of lightning, and accidental bursts of flame to the face. Available in a wide variety of attractive colors!

Protective Goggles: Armor (1 point), only protects eyes and face

❋ NIGHT-VISION GOGGLES

These blue-tinted goggles allow one to see as well in dimmest night as in full daylight. Not for use in absolute dark.

Nightvision Goggles: Darksight.

❋ HEAT-VISION GOGGLES

These red-tinted goggles allow the wearer to see in complete darkness by picking up faint traces of the heat generated by all living things. Note: The manufacturer is not responsible if users of these goggles are killed by undead abominations or spring-powered automatons, which obviously radiate no heat.

Heatvision Goggles: Infravision.

❋ MICROSCOPING GOGGLES

You're out on a scientific exploration and just discovered a new species of insect -- but you're miles away from your lab! How can you examine the species in detail to catalog precisely how many dots it has on its hind legs without a microscope? Microscoping Goggles are the answer! Available in a variety of resolving powers (can be purchased for up to x1000 magnification).

❋ TELESCOPIC GOGGLES

Tired of lugging around your old-fashioned telescope? Try a pair of telescoping goggles! Simple to use, just adjust the dial to zoom in or out. Please remember to take them off before going inside or attempting fine detail work. Warning: Do not look directly at the sun using Telescopic Goggles. Manufacturer is not responsible for any damage resulting from such behavior.

Telescopic Goggles: Farsight.

❋ TARGETING GOGGLES

A favorite of many weapons-designers, these goggles have also proven remarkably popular with our brave military men.

Targeting Goggles: +2 with Shooting.

❋ INSECTIVORID GOGGLES

What if an unscrupulous rival were to sneak into your lab whilst you were in the middle of a vital experiment. Would you risk turning your attention away just as you were about to discover the secrets of life itself? Not if you were using these advanced goggles, you wouldn't! Using secrets pried from the world of insects, these goggles allow the user to see in a complete 360 degree radius around himself. NOTE: Due to the inhuman-looking nature of these goggles, please exercise due caution when wearing them around women, children, and people of delicate constitution.
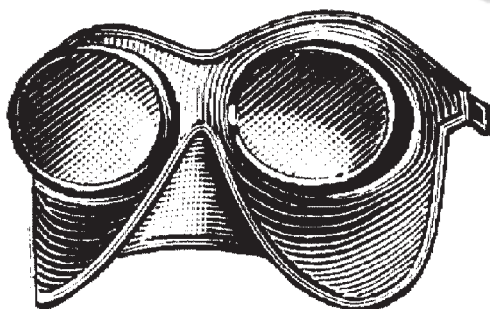
Insectivorid Goggles: When wearing the goggles, you cannot be surprised by any creature that is normally visible, even if it is attacking from behind. No one can get The Drop on you

❋ ROENTGEN GOGGLES

These eerily glowing green goggles allow the wearer to see through nearly any substance! NOTE: The manufacturer is not responsible for legal issues stemming from lewd & lascivious behavior. Also note: Sustained use of these goggles may cause sterility in both the wearer and the target of his gaze.

Roentgen Goggles: Allow the wearer to see through solid objects. This is blocked by lead, gold, or sufficient quantities of stone, earth, or metal.

❋ AETHERIC GOGGLES

Aetheric Goggles are hollow lenses filled with ectoplasmic vapors that allow the wearer to see into the mysterious spirit realm, revealing invisible objects and sorcerous energies. The wearer can also see perfectly in total darkness. These goggles do not allow for color vision – everything seen through them appears in shades of unearthly blue. Please be warned that glimpsing the spiritual realm may have long-term consequences on the wearer's sanity, not to mention the state of his immortal soul.

Aetheric Goggles: Darksight, plus +2 to Notice Checks when dealing with Ethereal, Invisible or Sprites.

COMMUNICATIONS GEAR

Savants travel all over the world in their quest to discover the secrets of the Universe. Bring any of these helpful gadgets along when communication is the key to success.

❋ LINGOGRAPH

Our patented Lingograph is a small hand-cranked box, about the size of a phonograph player. This amazing device translates one language into any other, automatically and (virtually) flawlessly. Users speak into a conic amplification device, crank a small handle, and their voice is translated through a small speaker grill on the side of the device. Comes with over a dozen languages already programmed in by our team of certified linguists!

The Lingograph is produced by a number of companies and goes by many names. Usually about the size of a phonograph player, smaller and more advanced devices are, of course, possible.

Lingograph: Speak Language.

❋ PROFESSOR GIULIANI'S AETHERIC COMMUNICATIONS DEVICE

This lightweight set of ear-coverings and speaker-device allows one to broadcast his voice over the aetheric waves, sending strange, invisible vibrations through the air itself. When said vibrations strike another of Professor Giuliani's Communications Devices, the speaker's voice is duplicated with perfect clarity! With a range of well over 500 meters (less under certain circumstances), what vagabond team of bold explorers dares brave the unknown without a full compliment?

Professor Giuliani's Aetheric Communications Device: As a "walkie-talkie" radio.

✱   MAGIC EYE CAMERA OBSCURA

Do not let the mundane look of this amazing device fool you! The Magic Eye Camera Obscura may look like an ordinary daguerreotype camera, but it can record sounds and three-dimensional moving images! The film may be played back from the camera itself, projecting the image onto a flat surface or, in the more advanced models, into the very air itself. Amaze your friends and confound your rivals! Every fashionable explorer is using one.

PATENT MEDICINES

Do not be fooled by the purveyors of snake-oils! Our unguents, elixirs, poultices, and tonics have been refined through the use of the latest scientific developments and rigorously tested on convicted criminals to ensure your complete satisfaction.

✱   DR. FABIEN FARBIAS' GUARANTEED MIRACLE CURE-ALL

Battered and bruised after a hard night's work fighting thugs and bounders? Take one swallow of Dr. Fabien Farbias' Guaranteed Miracle Cure-All and gaze in awe at the results! Watch as wounds seal, bruises clear, and even broken bones begin to knit -- right before your very eyes! Only Dr. Farbias knows the secret to this miraculous elixir, and only through special license have we been able to acquire a limited number. Accept No Substitutes!

Dr. Fabien Farbias' Guaranteed Miracle Cure-All: Healing.

✱   CAPTAIN ROBERT F. DANGER'S AMAZING WAKE-UP JUICE

During a particularly brutal campaign in the remote mountains of Pakistan, Captain Danger found his men falling asleep at inopportune times. He consulted a local witch-doctor and this miracle medicine is the result! One single swallow will fill you with enough energy to continue working for days without break! In fact, this tonic is so potent that imbibers may find themselves completely unable to sleep while under its effect! Perfect for working through the night on your latest experiment, or motivating your lazy workforce through their industrial-standard 22-hour days!

Captain Robert F. Danger's Amazing Wake-Up Juice: Succor.

✱   CANNIBAL BLOOD

Do not be fooled by the fearsome name. Cannibal Blood contains only trace amounts of human blood. But it is chock-full of pure fighting fury! One swallow of this potent tonic is enough to drive even the most civilized man mad with the lust for combat. A favorite among promoters of bare-knuckles brawling contests and rumored to be used before battle by certain units in Her Majesty's armed forces.

Cannibal Blood: Warrior's Gift

OTHER USEFUL AND DELIGHTFUL OBJECTS

✱   PROFESSOR PERSIMMONS' BIOLUMINESCENCE TORCH

Professor Persimmons' Bioluminescence Torch uses carefully bred grubworms that radiate a phosphorescent glow; this glow is channeled with focusing crystals and mirrors to cast a radiant light without producing any heat or offensive gasses. As long as the grubworms are cared for, they will continue to glow indefinitely. However, injudicious use of this gadget may kill the worms and therefore render the Torch useless until more of the tiny creatures are bred and placed into the bio-chamber.

Professor Persimmons' Bioluminescence Torch: Light.

✳ PROFESSOR LUX'S PHANTASMAGORICAL INVISIBILITY MACHINE

Professor Lux created a machine that radiates forth energies having the singular effect of turning any physical material within their radius completely transparent. The object remains invisible for a period of twenty-four hours (after which the rays wear off), or until it is exposed to the radiation a second time. This process is not only considerably less painful than Griffin's chemical method (detailed in H.G. Wells' treatise, *The Invisible Man*) but adds the benefit of turning the user's clothing (as well as anything he's carrying at the time) transparent as well. In some unusual circumstances, the invisibility doesn't seem to go away as normal and the person or object so irradiated will remain that way indefinitely.

Professor Lux's Phantasmagorical Invisibility Machine: Invisibility

✳ LADY FEATHERGILL'S NEARLY MIRACULOUS AERIAL HOOPSKIRTS

A must for safe and serene holiday airship travel, these stylish skirts are built around a very light, very aerodynamic frame of Lady Feathergill's specially formulated feathermetal boning. Covered in discretely vented silk skirts, the metal frame becomes very buoyant when wind whistling through the vents causes the silk underpinnings to develop a static charge. The resultant levity allows the well-equipped lady to descend from perilous heights with fashion and grace.

Lady Feathergill's Nearly Miraculous Aerial Hoopskirts: Fly

✳ LADY FEATHERGILL'S IMMACULATE NEARLY INDESTRUCTIBLE NAIL POLISH

This glossy nail polish, formulated with Lady Feathergill's special resins, hardens fingernails (and possibly toenails) to the strength of steel. A special file and buffer are included to give your nails that special edge.

Lady Feathergill's Immaculate Nearly Indestructible Nail Polish: Str+1d4 damage. +2 to climb checks.

✳ DOKTOR VON STIFFENSTEIN'S OXYGEN-DELIVERING RESPIRATOR

Tired of succumbing to the noxious chemical vapors from his experiments, German Savant von Stiffenstein created his Oxygen-Delivering Respirator. Consisting of a heavy mask that fits snugly over the mouth and nose, the Respirator provides a steady flow of fresh oxygen, no matter how adverse your laboratory conditions might be!

Doktor Von Stiffenstein's Oxygen-Delivering Respirator: Environmental Protection

✳ DR. SALINGER'S WONDROUS CHRONOLOGICAL RESET DEVICE

Though it appears to be little more than a gentleman's fancy pocket watch, this miraculous device is in fact the result of years of hard work and study in the science of chronology. Dr. Salinger has devised a method in which time itself can be rewound and replayed, exactly as though one were merely resetting the time on his watch. This gives the owner of the Wondrous Chronological Reset Device a second opportunity to perform virtually any action that takes only a few seconds to perform. Be judicious as to the use of this miracle device, as the time stream is by its nature rigid and inflexible to be changed more than once in the course of a day.

Dr. Salinger's Wondrous Chronological Reset Device: Gain one Bennie, to be used immediately.

✳ COLONEL BUTTERFINK'S DUST IONIZER FOR THE GENTLEMAN

It is well known that Colonel Butterfink has no tolerance for gentlemen who are musty, dusty, or disheveled, no matter what filthy tomb or trackless jungle they've explored. His amazing Dust Ionizer is a small galvanic generator that creates a very mild field of static electricity, causing the inserted clothing to repel dust, cobwebs, and other signs of low character.

✳ THE REVERSE STEAM VACUUM CONFLAGRATION DISRUPTOR

This device starts with a small heating unit which boils water. The resulting steam is forced through a tube and creates a vacuum that sucks in flames. As the heat from the absorbed flames increases, the boiling increases the suction, making it possible to extinguish huge fires.

The Reverse Steam Vacuum Conflagration Disruptor: Dispel (only works against flames and powers with "fire" trappings)

THE ANALYTICAL ENGINE

In the early 19th century, mathematician Charles Babbage began work on an ambitious project: to build a machine that could quickly and flawlessly calculate mathematical tables. He called it the Difference Engine, and it can calculate very large numbers much faster than any human. Later, Babbage improved on his device, creating the Analytical Engine. The Analytical Engine can calculate numbers, but is also programmable using punch cards and can output data through a printer, a curve plotter, and a bell.

The Analytical Engine is quite an advanced piece of machinery, able to perform sophisticated calculations in a relatively short amount of time. Its main disadvantage is its size, standing at over eight feet high and weighing several tons. (Of course, many Savants do not consider this aspect a disadvantage at all!)

Common programs one might put into an Analytical Engine include:

- ❈ Solve mathematical problems
- ❈ Calculate dates
- ❈ Plot coordinates on a map
- ❈ Design patterns
- ❈ Contact another Analytical Engine through telegraph or telephone wires

In the Widening Gyre, Analytical Engines are every bit as sophisticated (if larger and bulkier) than most modern microcomputers, performing many of the same tasks and even using telegraph wires to complete a primitive 19th century version of the Internet!
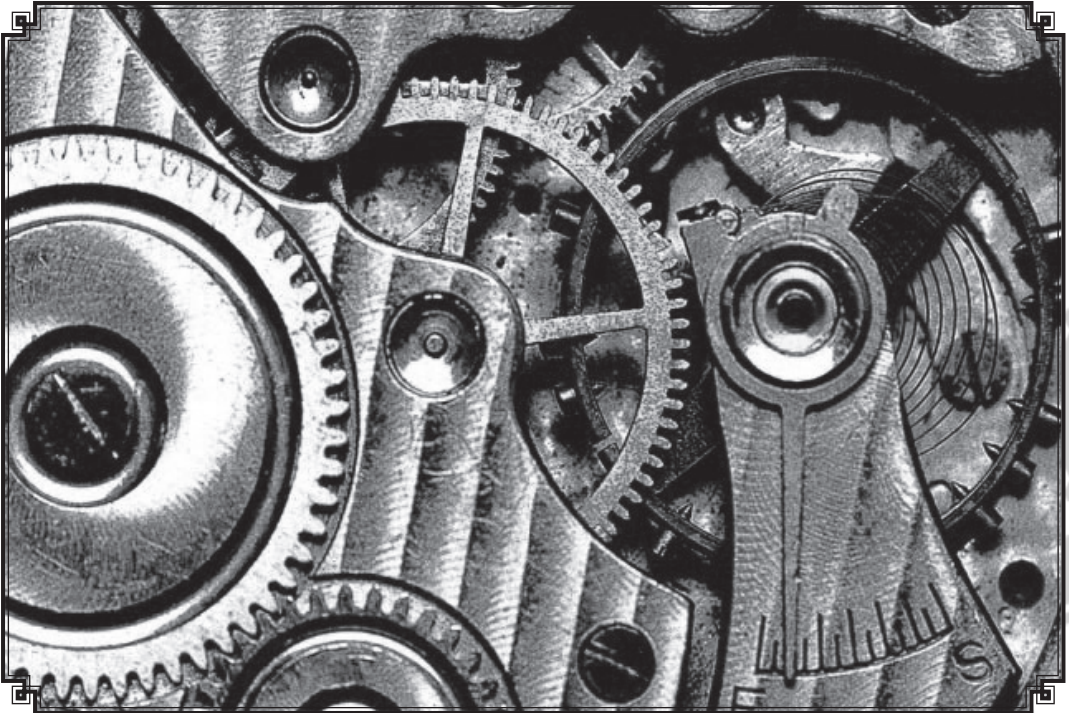
WALKING MACHINES

I n the world of *The Widening Gyre*, the neophyte is struck by the sheer number and variety of walking machines – devices that do not use wheels or treads to move, but instead perambulate about on legs. Walking vehicles come in a bewildering variety of shapes and forms. Some walk on two legs like a human being. Others move on insect-like or spider-like legs. At least one very famous device travels the continent on hundreds of huge centipede-type legs! A handful of walking machines are described in this section; the GM should feel free to add as many more as his fancy takes him.

WALKING ARTILLERY PIECES

Throughout the history of warfare, one of the biggest problems armies face is how to move siege weaponry and artillery to where it's needed quickly and effectively. Add to that the difficulty of repositioning it once you've got it set up, and it can slow an attack down considerably. Starting during the American Civil War and continuing all the way through World War I, Savants bravely addressed this most vexing problem.

One solutions is to mount the weapons – cannons, Gatling Guns, and so forth – on platforms outfitted with crab-like legs, allowing the platform to walk over difficult terrain with minimal effort. Over the years, Savants have invented scores of mobile artillery pieces. There have been wind-up platforms powered by clockwork mechanisms, steam-powered platforms that carry their own power source (though this is usually reserved for larger pieces), and platforms that are towed behind wagons, horses, or even locomotives. Any type of artillery can be mounted on legs, though there are logistic problems with mounting certain large, heavy, and powerful cannons (the legs can get bogged down).

The advantages to Walking Artillery Pieces are numerous. An army using walking artillery batteries moves more quickly and re-deploys faster and more efficiently than one not so equipped. An army with all of its artillery batteries mounted on walking artillery platform increases its land speed by 10 to 40%). Additionally, this upgrade increases the range of any artillery so equipped by one level (so if short range is normally 500, it becomes 1000), as it becomes easier and quicker to adjust the firing platform.

THE BEAUREGARD WALKING GUN

On April 12, 1861, Confederate batteries opened fire on Fort Sumpter, South Carolina. Shortly after dawn, soldiers defending the Fort were shocked and terrified by a dozen hissing, clanking, smoke-belching, crab-like machines advancing on their fortifications. The crab-machines fired volley after volley at the defenders, advancing implacably and seemingly impervious to Union return fire.

Several of the machines got bogged down in the sandy soil around the Fort or suffered mechanical breakdowns, but despite these setbacks the Confederate soldiers, supported by the walking gun platforms, were able to take the Fort quickly.

The first walking gun platforms were built by a Carolinian Savant by the name of Robert Beauregard. Beauregard went on to create several other weapon systems over the course of the Civil War using the same basic pattern, and his designs were quickly copied by other Savants around the world until the Walking Gun Platform and Walking Artillery Piece were considered a vital part of any force's armory.

The Beauregard Walking Gun Platform has a crew of six men -- one to control the machine, one to shovel coal into its ever-hungry steam furnace, and four to man the two Gatling Guns mounted atop.

AMAZING TRANSPORTATION

Most vehicles in the *Widening Gyre* are the same as those you'd find in the 19th Century of the real world – horse-and-buggies, trains, prototype automobiles, hot air balloons, and (in the late part of the century) airships. But there are many amazing vehicles as well, created by brilliant Savants, that go far beyond any other vehicle of the time.In some cases, the machines are far beyond vehicles created by 21st century engineers! Here are a few examples…

STEAM-POWERED CARRIAGES

The steam-powered carriage is ubiquitous on the roads of every civilized country in the world today, carrying the well-to-do about on their day-to-day business. While the horse-drawn carriages are still used by the unwashed masses, it is a sign of wealth, status, and class to drive about town in one of these noisy smoke-and-steam-belching machines.

A steam carriage has a powerful engine, similar to that of a locomotive, that heats water to boiling. The superheated steam moves belts and fans in a complicated arrangement, providing motion without the need of muscle power.

THE AUTO-GYROSCOPIC ORNITHOPTER

Originally conceived by Leonardo da Vinci himself, this miraculous device flies on the wind by flapping its lightweight gossamer wings. A clockwork mechanism or small (but powerful) steam engine provides motive power, which means mankind can finally achieve his oldest and fondest dream -- to soar on the air like a bird!

SPACECRAFT

In the steam-powered world of *The Widening Gyre*, at least three attempts to reach space have been successful. The first (led by Sir Nigel McWhorty) was a fluke when a team of adventurers were captured by hostile aliens during their ill-fated journey to the moon. The second (planned by Impey Barbicane) was more successful, though ultimately it had more to do with bragging rights than actual scientific discovery. It involved firing a manned projectile – a huge bullet – into space. It circled the moon once and then crashed down on the lunar surface in a mostly-safe landing.

> *"Imagine a sphere … large enough to hold two people and their luggage. It will be made of steel lined with thick glass; it will contain a proper store of solidified air, concentrated food, water distilling apparatus, and so forth. And enamelled, as it were, on the outer steel … Cavorite."*
>
> – H.G. Wells, *The First Men In the Moon*

The third expedition was led by Professor Cavor. Cavor created a most peculiar and singular element known as Cavorite, which repelled the effects of gravity. He built a ship using this strange metal and, with his hand-picked team, managed to fly to the moon, explore its mysteries, and escape back to Earth.

The Cavorite spacecraft can show up in a game in a number of ways. Apart from a simple exploration of the Moon or Mars, the heroes might be recruited to spy on the Hemipterans or to sabotage the aliens' infernal devices before they are able to launch an attack on the Earth. The heroes might be sent to look for Sir McWhorty and his crew, or to recover some artifact left behind from some previous mission. And industrious GM might play out the space race 100 years early, with various industrial powers competing to get to the moon – and exploit its precious resources – first. Below are the stats for Cavor's "Glass Sphere" spacecraft.

The Cavorite spacecraft contains *"Compressed foods, concentrated essences, steel cylinders containing reserve oxygen, an arrangement for removing carbonic acid and waste from the air and restoring oxygen by means of sodium peroxide, water condensers.."* which enables it to make extended journeys into space; long enough to fly to the Moon and back again.

ARMORED AIRSHIPS

In the final decades of the 19th Century, all of the great industrial powers saw the advantage air superiority could bring, and set about building armadas of armed and armored airships. There were some attempts to create heavier-than-air ships, but most of those met with failure, so the Imperial powers created fleets of large, slow-moving airships with which to rain destruction on their enemies. These Warships of the Air were quite successful for many years until 1905, when Chinese Savant and military leader Shuo Ho Ti perfected the war-aeroplane. Despite many attempted upgrades (heavier armor and more powerful engines, just to name two), the bulky and ponderous airships were no match for Shuo's nimble fleet, and the face of warfare changed once again.

> *"Each ship was a thousand feet long. Each had a hull as strong as steel. Each bristled with artillery and great grenades which could be dropped upon their enemies. Each ship moved implacably through the sky, keeping pace with its mighty fellows. Each was dedicated to exacting fierce vengeance upon the upstarts who had sought to question the power of those it served. A shoal of monstrous flying sharks, confident that they controlled the skies and, from the skies, the land."*
>
> – Michael Moorcock, *The Warlord of the Air*

Included below are the stats for a typical medium-weight British air-warship in 1895.

TIME MACHINES

> *"If Time is really only a fourth dimension of Space, why is it, and why has it always been, regarded as something different? And why cannot we move in Time as we move about in the other dimensions of Space?"*
>
> – H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine*

In 1895, an anonymous source published the journals of a man known as "The Time Traveller." In these papers, the author claimed to have created a machine capable of breaching the fourth dimension – of traveling through time as easily as a carriage might travel along a road. These reports have never been verified, but the idea is intriguing enough for many Savants to have spent their lives searching for the secret. Thus far, none of them have been successful (At least to our knowledge.).

Of course, if "The Time Traveller" really did create a Time Machine, then who is to say where – or when – it might turn up again? The Time Traveller might return to the present, seeking assistance from a brave group of heroes to help rescue the future (or preserve the past). The heroes might find the machine, lost and damaged from some catastrophe it met in the time stream, and try to discover its secrets (or keep it out of the wrong hands).

The game master should be cautious in introducing a powerful device like the Time Machine into a campaign. It is a bit of a deus ex machina, and one well-meaning but misplaced adventure can alter the entire course of a campaign.

The Time Machine is stationary in the classic three dimensions – its mobility is limited to the fourth dimension. It can travel forward or backward in time, safely moving at a rate of about 1 month per Segment (or 1 year per Turn). The machine can go faster, but at increased risk. Each doubling of the speed brings with it a risk that the machine will collide with something in the timestream and be forced to stop. The Time Machine may be damaged due to a collision; this is up to the GM. Bear in mind that spare parts may be very hard to find in the past or in the future…

BEAUREGARD WALKING GUN

Vehicle	Acc/TS	Toughness	Crew	Notes
Beauregard Walking Gun Platform	5/16	10 (3)	6	Walking (4WD), Stabilizer
Weapons: 2 Gatling Guns				

STEAM CARRIAGE

Vehicle	Acc/TS	Toughness	Crew	Notes
Steam Carriage	10/36	10 (3)	1+4	

AUTO-GYROSCOPIC ORNITHOPTER

Vehicle	Acc/TS	Toughness	Crew	Notes
Auto-Gyroscopic Ornithopter	20/50	10 (2)	1	Climb -1

CAVORITE SPACECRAFT

Vehicle	Acc/TS	Toughness	Crew	Notes
Cavorite spacecraft	10/36	10 (3)	1+4	Spacecraft

IMPERIATRIX ARMORED AIRSHIP

Vehicle	Acc/TS	Toughness	Crew	Notes
Imperiatrix	2/30	14 (3)	20 (5)	Climb -2, Stabilizer
Weapons: 8 Vickers Guns, Bombs				
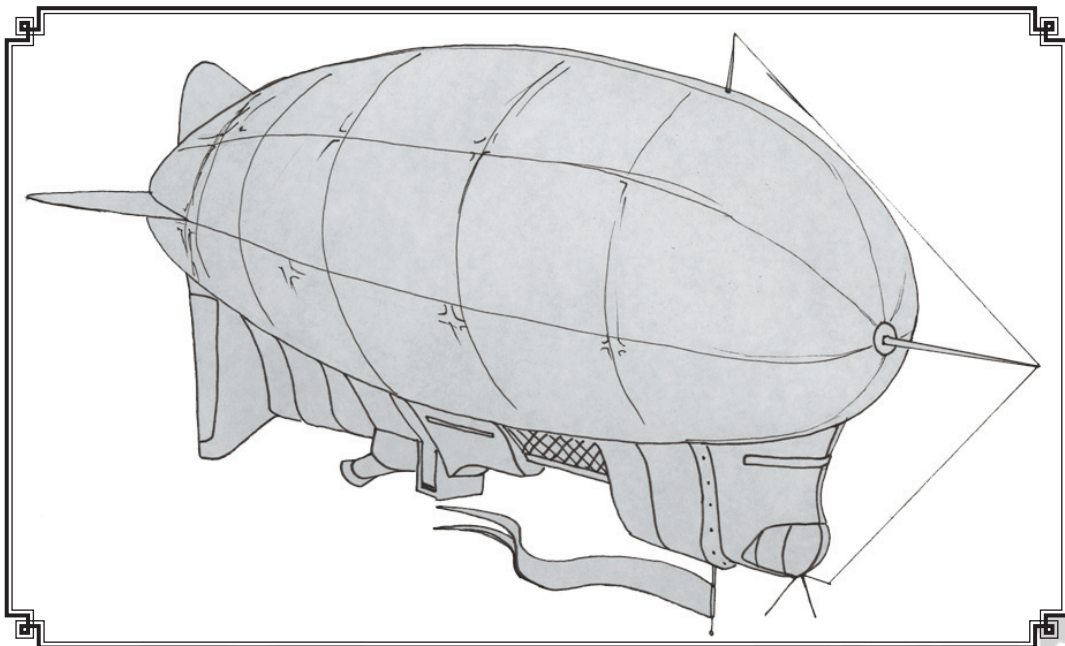
SORCERY

Even in a time of science, technology, and the triumph of reason, there are many who still hold true to the old ways of sorcery and magic. Despite the onward march of progress, magic is a real and powerful force in the universe of *The Widening Gyre*. Few people have the talent to learn to cast real spells (although fakirs are commonplace), but those who do possess the skill can perform the most amazing feats. Unfortunately, the quest for power can have a corrupting effect on those who would learn true sorcery, so a great many "real" sorcerers are, in fact, evil.

TRAPPINGS

Most powers in Savage Worlds are appropriate to use as spells in a Widening Gyre game. Simply add trappings that are evocative of the steam age and you're good to go! Here is a list of spells and suggested trappings for your game:

* **Armor:** Skin turns to brass or cold-riveted iron.
* **Barrier:** Iron ramparts spring up around the sorcerer.
* **Blast:** An explosion of super-heated steam.
* **Blind:** A flash of light and a burst of smoke, like that created from flash-powder used in old photography sessions.
* **Bolt:** A red-hot rivet, a burst of super-heated steam, or the crackle of galvanic energy.
* **Boost Trait:** A swallow of patent medicine fills the target with pep and vim!
* **Lower Trait:** Fresh air turns foul with smoke, causing the target to cough, choke, and slow down.
* **Burst:** A burst of super-heated steam.
* **Confusion:** This "new math" confounds anyone who attempts to decipher it!
* **Damage Field:** A cloud of choking green smoke surrounds the target.
* **Darksight:** This turns a simple pair of protective goggles into night-piercing mystic goggles.
* **Detect Arcana:** Charge goggles or glasses with energy to detect the presence of magic.
* **Dispel:** Using the principles of science, we can easily determine that this "magic" is scientifically impossible; therefore it ceases to work.
* **Divination:** Cards, crystal balls, and tea leaves allow the sorcerer to read the future.
* **Elemental Manipulation:** Prestidigitation
* **Entangle:** Manacles of iron appear around the target.
* **Environmental Protection:** Protective gear – a stout leather suit, glass helmet, and rebreather – protect the sorcerer from all manner of hostile environments.
* **Farsight:** A mystically-charged Telescope, or a fakir's "remote viewing."
* **Fly:** Lighter-than-air flight, or heavier-than-air flight.
* **Havoc:** It's like there was a laboratory explosion in here!
* **Healing/Greater Healing:** A swallow of patent medicine is good for whatever ails you!
* **Intangibility:** The sorcerer takes on a form not unlike that of a cloud of steam.
* **Invisibility:** Change the body's refractive index to that of air, so it absorbs and reflects no light.

* **Light:** Galvanic energy crackles and lights up the area.
* **Obscure:** A thick, impenetrable London fog wells up.
* **Mind Reading:** Full-trance medium.
* **Pummel:** Bare-knuckles brawling.
* **Puppet:** Corruption of the soul *
* **Quickness:** A swallow of patent medicine fills the target with fighting fury!
* **Slow:** Heavy iron chains wrap around the target.
* **Slumber:** The exhaustion of a hard day's work overcomes the target.
* **Smite:** Galvanic energy flows through the weapon, or it becomes super-heated.
* **Speak Language:** Speaking in tongues.
* **Speed:** Speed things up using the power of coal, steam, or galvanism.
* **Stun:** A shock of galvanic energy.
* **Succor:** Application of smelling salts revives an ally.
* **Summon Ally:** An elemental made of pure steam or galvanism, or a mechanical man.
* **Telekinesis:** Using galvanic energy or even tiny mechanical men, the sorcerer can make objects move.
* **Zombie:** A bolt of galvanic energy revives the dead and allows them to walk. *

Indicates an Evil spell. Some spells are unquestionably evil, and casting them has a draining effect on the sorcerer's soul. Those spells come with a side effect, in that the caster gains a detrimental Hindrance, such as Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Greedy, or Vengeful. This side effect lasts for at least 24 hours, but at the GM's discretion (if the character has been casting evil spells with reckless abandon, for instance) the side effects may be permanent unless the character atones for his wicked acts.

Some spells can be made more or less evil simply by changing the trappings. "Bolt of Iron" may use the same game mechanic as "The Devil's Lightning," but one is indisputably evil while the other is relatively benign. The GM should determine for his own game whether a spell is evil or not. A few samples of evil spells are provided later in this chapter.
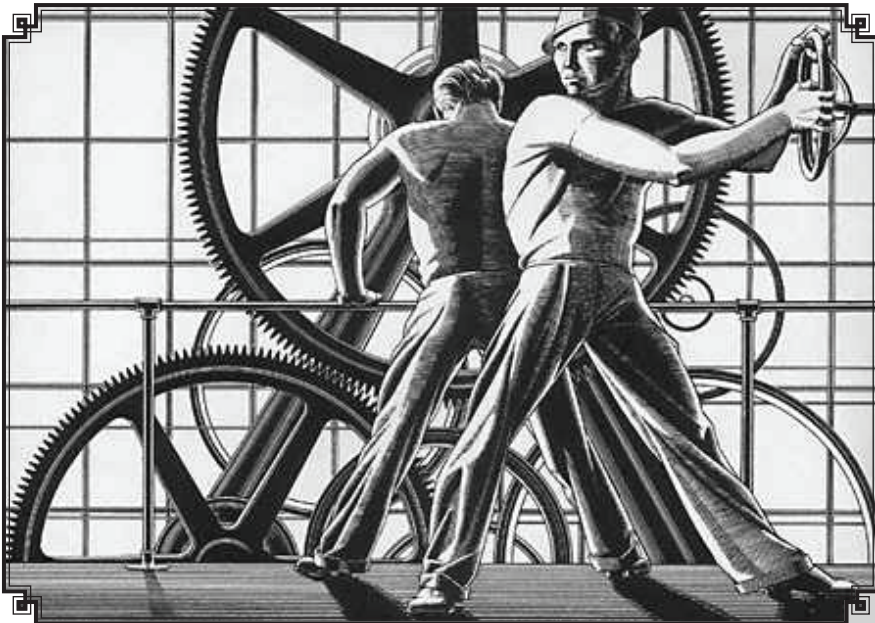
SAMPLE SPELLS

The following spells are just a sample of the sort of magic that exists in the world of *The Widening Gyre*. Players are encouraged to use their creativity to come up with new spells of their own!

✱ EVERBURNING COAL

Rank: Novice

Power Points: 2

Range: Touch

Duration: 24 hours

The sorcerer causes an ordinary piece of coal to burst into flame. The flames cannot be extinguished by mundane means – even completely immersing the coal in water will not put it out. The magic of this spell causes the flames to burn much longer and much hotter than an ordinary lump of coal would burn, so a single piece of Everburning Coal placed in the furnace can heat an entire house, or power a small steam engine. Success lets the coal burn for 24 hours. A Raise allows the coal to burn twice as long.

✱ FIXIT

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 4

Range: Touch

Duration: 3 (1/round)

When machines break down (and they often do), it usually requires a mechanic or engineer of considerable skill to get it working again. This spell fills the subject's mind with the knowledge necessary to temporarily act as an expert handyman and fix or upgrade virtually any device. He will still require all the necessary tools and time to make repairs, but his knowledge will be such that he can use the proverbial "bailing wire and spit" to jury-rig temporary solutions. Success grants the recipient the Repair d6 skill. A Raise grants the recipient the Repair d10 skill.

✱ HOLE IN THE WALL

Rank: Veteran

Power Points: 5

Range: Touch

Duration: 12 hours (5/12 hours)

The sorcerer conjures an extra-dimensional space anchored to an existing door. The space in all respects appears to be a modest flat with a sturdy door, a fireplace, a tiny bathroom, and a small kitchen. There is running water in the Hole in the Wall, though it is tepid and there isn't much pressure. The floor is dry and relatively clean. The apartment contains simple furnishings – a large hideaway bed, a sofa, a table and two chairs, and a writing desk. There are two small windows which allow dim light in, but they are covered with a thick layer of dust and grime and cannot be seen through or opened. Up to eight people may fit inside, as long as they don't mind a little closeness.

The flat remains at a constant 62° F. It provides considerable security; it exists in a pocket dimension that can only be accessed through the door used in the casting. Only those you designate may enter the Hole in the Wall through this door – all others pass through the door as it exists without the power of the spell.

✱ ON THE BLINK

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 4

Range: Smarts

Duration: 1 minute (4/minute)

Sometimes machines just don't work for no particular reason; they just seem to stop of their own accord. This is doubly true for early, prototype machines that don't have all the bugs worked out of them yet. This spell causes a single machine to go "on the blink" – to stop working. Note that this spell works against all mechanical devices, not just those created with Weird Science.

On a success, the machine suffers a Minor Malfunction (just as if a Weird Scientist drew a Diamond on the Malfunction table). On a Raise, the machine suffers a Major Malfunction (as if the Weird Scientist drew a Heart on the Malfunction table).

✱ PERFECT RECALL

Rank: Novice

Power Points: 1

Range: Self

Duration: Instant

Perfect Recall enables the sorcerer to remember one thing with perfect clarity – essentially taking a snapshot with his mind, which he can recall again at a later date. Anything can be recalled with this spell – a person's face, a short conversation, even a page of blueprints. On a Success, the caster can recall the general details about any one thing he has ever seen or heard. On a Raise, the caster can recall everything down to the smallest detail.

✱ POWER DEVICE

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: Special

Range: Touch

Duration: 3 (1/round)

This spell provides power to an electrical or mechanical device that does not have a power source but is otherwise functional. The device functions exactly as it normally would if it had conventional power.

The cost to power a machine depends on its Size and complexity. The base cost is 2 for a small household or hand-held device, 4 for a man-sized or smaller automaton, and 8 for a small (2-occupant) vehicle. A veteran sorcerer can provide power to larger machines at the GM's discretion.

✱ TOXIC FOG

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 3

Range: Smarts

Duration: 3 (1/round)

The famous London fog took on a new characteristic during the Industrial Age. Under certain weather conditions, it would combine with the heavy smoke from factories and coal-burning furnaces to produce a horrible, thick, yellow-green cloud that settled over the city and send people fleeing into their homes to escape the choking fumes. This spell recreates that dangerous fog – a blinding, choking, billowing pea green cloud – on a much smaller level. The fog obscures all sight, and worse, toxic vapors burn the lungs of any living, breathing creature caught within it.

The area of effect is a Medium Burst Template. If the roll is failed, the *Toxic Fog* deviates as a launched projectile.

If the arcane character scores a success, targets within the area of effect must make Vigor rolls or be Fatigued and Blinded. With a raise, victims must make Vigor rolls at –2. Each round the targets remain within the area of effect, they must continue to make Vigor rolls. At the GM's discretion, those particular targets accustomed to this type of massive pollution, such as lifelong residents of certain locations of London, may receive a bonus to their Vigor roll.

EVIL SPELLS

✸ POX OF THE WITCH

Rank: Veteran

Power Points: 5

Range: Smarts

Duration: 24 hours (5/24 hours)

The subject of this spell grows hideous to look upon, covered in sores and pockmarks and bent over as if by great age. On a success, the target of this spell must make a Vigor roll or gain the Ugly Hindrance. On a Raise, the target of this spell must make a Vigor roll or gain the Ugly and the Elderly hindrances.

✸ SUMMON DEMON

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 5+

Range: Smarts

Duration: 3 (1/round)

This spell summons a demon, who attacks your opponents (or performs other simple tasks) to the best of its ability

Cost	Rank	Demon Type
5	Seasoned	Imp
7	Veteran	Lesser Demon
9	Heroic	Greater Demon
15	Legendary	Demon Lord

(though it will attempt to twist the sorcerer's wishes if asked to do something that goes against its wicked nature). The most powerful (and dangerous) version of this spell is spoken of only in hushed whispers, for it has the power to summon one of the great demonic lords -- whose presence in this world would surely mean the end of mankind as we know it!

On a success, the demon is placed at any point within the range of the power. On a raise, the demon is more durable and gains the Hardy ability. A summoned demon acts on the initiative card of the caster and gets an immediate action as soon as it is summoned.

See Chapter 7, the Bestiary, for each demon's stats.

✸ WITHER

Rank: Novice

Power Points: 3

Range: Smarts

Duration: Instant

The subject of this spell grows weak and sickly. If the arcane character scores a success, the target must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken. With a raise, the victim must make a Vigor roll at –2.

CHAPTER THREE:
THE CENTER CANNOT HOLD

THE WORLD OF THE WIDENING GYRE

THE GYRE

"When did it all begin? That's nearly impossible to say, really. Perhaps it was in 1784, when James Watt patented his steam engine. Looking back now, it seems like the world changed virtually overnight. More and more inventors, more and more fantastic devices, each one more amazing than the last. Where once there were a handful of brilliant scientists, toiling away thanklessly in the darkness, now there were scores of them, hundreds, even thousands. Things once thought simply impossible were now the stuff of everyday life, and it didn't end there. No. That's just where it began."

"In the year of our Lord 1837, Buckingham Palace commissioned a new clock to be built in honor of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's ascension to the throne. The Clockmakers Guild of London took this challenge as a point of pride for our skill and reputation, and we spared no expense. Each part, no matter how small, was hand-crafted by the finest machinists in England. Rare woods, ivory, and gemstones were imported from all across the Empire, from Africa to India. It took our greatest craftsmen working day and night over a year to complete this masterpiece. We called it simply "The Gyre."

"On the night of the celebration, the heads of our Guild proudly stood before our creation. With a majestic flourish, Master Clockmaker Hermann von Schreiber turned the key to wind the Gyre…

"…And nothing happened. The magnificent clock did not start. Neither a tick nor a tock was heard. Its bejeweled hands did not move.

"The young Queen was gracious, forgiving our Guild this unintentional slight, but we were of course mortified beyond belief. The pride of our entire organization rested on repairing our faulty creation, and we worked for months attempting to figure out what had gone wrong. We disassembled the entire mechanism, down to the tiniest screw, searching for a flaw. We rebuilt it from the ground up, carefully, slowly, taking every possible care.

"And still, the clock would not run. As if it were defying the very laws that govern the universe, the clock would not run!"

"It shames me to this day to admit it, but we were defeated. We had little choice but to completely scrap our grand project. With heavy hearts we prepared to disassemble the great clock. But then something happened… The clock began to tick. Slowly, ponderously, as if time itself was struggling through a sea of treacle, the second hand began to turn.

"I shall remember that moment until my dying day. Dark shadows flickered across the walls. An icy chill filled the air as we watched, fascinated. The clock ran, the hands turning almost imperceptibly, for several hours. And then it stopped. On the clock, five minutes had passed. We were baffled. No one had touched it -- indeed, the clock hadn't even been wound! It ran by itself, for no reason. And it would not run again, even when we attempted to restart it.

"Weeks later, word came in from abroad. There had been a terrible battle in the North-West Frontier Province of India; over 12,000 brave and loyal British soldiers were slaughtered by rampaging Pashtun tribesmen. When reports of this reached our ears, we were struck with the odd happenstance – the massacre had happened at exactly the same time as our clock had been running!

"Of course, we chalked it up to simple coincidence at the time," the professor leaned back in his chair and shook his head sadly. *"But then it happened again. Shadows filled the room, an icy breeze ruffled our clothes and hair, and the clock began to run. I cannot say why, but we knew at that point – somehow we knew – that something terrible was happening in the world just at that moment.*

"The passenger steamer SS Newcastle went down at sea. Nearly three hundred men, women, and children perished in the North Atlantic while our clock ticked slowly on. And that was when we realized that the world had changed; we had created not a mere timepiece, but a window to another world. We, fools that we were, didn't know what to do, so we did nothing. It was a time of waiting."

THE WORLD OF THE WIDENING GYRE

The world of *The Widening Gyre* is its own unique campaign world, a strange combination of ancient evil, fantastic steam-powered technology, and magic. The GM must create a world that feels authentic, wondrous, and awe-inspiring, but which doesn't overshadow the actions of the heroes. The player characters cannot simply be actors on the stage, playing out a pre-written scenario. They are the stars of the story, coming up with their own solutions to the tribulations the GM presents. How does a GM take all these gears and cogs and combine them into a consistent, believable, and (above all!) fun role-playing game?

Running a game in the world of Steampunk comes with challenges. A game set in the modern era can be simple – the players are already intimately familiar with the setting, the level of technology, and the way the world works. Games set in the distant future, or in a fantasy past, are equally simple, since the GM creates the world from whole-cloth, exactly as his game requires.

But a Steampunk game takes place in the real world, but in an era not quite like our own. There are cultural assumptions that the players might not be completely familiar with, and a level of technology just close enough to our own to be confusing. War is still a gentleman's game, impeccable manners are considered a necessity rather than a nuisance, social classes are highly stratified, women are seen as the fairer sex, minorities are often considered sub-human by the majority, and the environment is an inexhaustible asset to be exploited.

To make things even more complicated, *the Widening Gyre* adds magic, mysticism, and monsters to the mixture. And with magic comes the added complication of amazing-yet-decidedly-impossible contraptions, wonders of science and technology that couldn't possibly exist… and yet do.

We've tried to take all these things and combine them into a seamless whole; a world defined enough to create believable adventures in, yet broad enough that individual GMs can create their own unique game using the material herein. This world, its history, and its wonders, is described in the following chapters.

This chapter, and the following chapters, are for the GM's eyes only. If you're a player, please stop reading here, lest you spoil some of the wonders that the 19th Century contains!

> *"The whole difference between construction and creation is exactly this: that a thing constructed can only be loved after it is constructed; but a thing created is loved before it exists."*
>
> – Charles Dickens

RUNNING THE WIDENING GYRE

DISCLAIMER

AKA "Liberties Have Been Taken"

Though The Widening Gyre makes references to historical figures and events, it is not an academically accurate portrayal of the 19th Century. In the creation of this work of fiction, we have taken many liberties with persons, places, items, and events.

This chapter gives a time-line for the world of The Widening Gyre, starting in 1837 (the year Queen Victoria ascended to the throne) all the way up to the end of the Great War (1919).

The default year for a starting Widening Gyre campaign is 1895, the year that the Time Traveler's memoirs were published. However, this chapter contains ideas that will allow a GM to start his game in any year, from the Time of Waiting to the Great War. Most of the adventures contained in Chapter Six can easily be adapted for any era in the Victorian Age.

THE TIME OF WAITING: 1837-1860

No one can say why, but at the dawn of the 19th Century, the world began to change. At first, the transformation was too small to notice, but within a decade or so, the earth's political, social, and especially technological landscape had been altered tremendously.

It was the dawn of the Industrial Revolution as it was *truly* meant to happen. What was once unimaginable became almost everyday occurrences – and what miracles there were! Flying machines, cities of crystal, voyages to the depths of the Earth or the moon, ships that traveled under the waves… and those were just the beginning.

But it was not just a time of marvels. Ancient evils heard the clarion call of this new magic and woke from their dark slumbers to a world much changed. Mankind, enamored and intoxicated by its new-found powers of science and progress, was in the process of forgetting all the ancient legends and tales that once haunted its nightmares. And the forces of darkness, the monsters and demons of old, knew that when they had been all but forgotten, it would once again be their time to rule.

THE RISE OF THE SAVANTS

In 1800, there were scores of brilliant scientists and engineers in England, Continental Europe, and America, all working on expanding mankind's knowledge and understanding of the universe in which he lived. By 1850, that number ballooned into thousands. Colleges and Universities couldn't keep up with the demand, turning away scores of qualified applicants. Many of those turned away sought funding from entrepreneurs and investors, founding their own factories and forges, and often taking on their own apprentices to train.

And what wondrous creations they built! Where once engineers were satisfied with increasing the speed or the power or the range of a locomotive, these new geniuses laughed at the limitations of their predecessors. They built machines undreamt of by previous generations, defying all the known laws of physics. They explored places of the world previously unseen and untouched by the hands of man. They were more than mere engineers; they were the first Savants.

Governments were slow to catch on to the explosion of technology. Allowing the capital markets free reign over the development of new ideas, they were caught by surprise by the amazing devices which poured out of labs and factories around the globe.

But where did these ideas come from? Many were simply works of brilliant genius; thinkers who could take the world apart and put it back together in ways no one had ever considered before. But others… their ideas came from darker places. Ancient evils, wise beyond mortal knowing, whispered dark secrets into the all-too-receptive ears of these brilliant but naïve inventors, urging them to create grander and more fantastic infernal devices; machines to tear up the land, to pollute the skies and waters, and to kill with efficiencies that were until now undreamt of.

So it is to this day the Savants continue to create what is sometimes called The Age of Mechanical Wonders.

Or perhaps there is something about the Gyre itself; something that energizes the scientists of the world and filled their heads with things that could not, would not, should not be. Perhaps each time the Gyre ticks, it awakens something in (or just behind) the world…

ROLEPLAYING DURING THE TIME OF WAITING

As this age draws to a close, Savants have already begun to revolutionize the world, leading to all sorts of grand adventure possibilities. One of the defining features of this time period is that no one is yet in a position to know where the ideas for these strange inventions originate. Those who suspect supernatural origins are few and far between and almost universally derided as lunatics. A game master can get a lot of mileage

MORE THAN SCIENTISTS

Savant is the term used for a scientist whose theories and creations seem to defy the very laws of the universe and yet still plainly work (at least, most of the time). Often they themselves do not understand how their creations function, and they find themselves hard pressed to describe their workings to others. In fact, other engineers – even brilliant ones – discover it is nearly impossible to duplicate the creations of a Savant.

How is this possible? Simple. Savants are not mere scientists and engineers. They are in touch with a deeper understanding and are thus able to bend the laws of reality to their will. In short, they use magic in combination with technology to create their wondrous contraptions.

Savants are more than engineers, but they are not quite sorcerers. They almost never have any training in magic, and most of them would scoff at the very idea if it were presented to them. Instead, they have an intuitive understanding of the fundamental reality of the world and are thus able to tweak it, wrapped in the trappings of science and technology.

out of this – players can seek out the Age's genesis and discover the darkness, monsters that hide in the shadows and wait for their time to re-emerge. These PCs make wonderful new recruits to the Watchmen and the Clockmakers Guild.

As the Age progresses, the GM can throw all sorts of bizarre technological wonders at the heroes. Be sure to play up the newness, the novelty, and the unexpectedness of these contraptions – few of which the PCs will have ever even imagined, much less experienced first-hand. Most people in this time period have never seen anything more advanced than a locomotive or a steamship (and many folks haven't even seen one of those!), so they almost always react strongly when they see something new. None of the fantastic contraptions of the age have been put into mass production yet – each device is a unique artifact, the likes of which the world has never before seen.

Of course, sometimes it's difficult to get jaded players (who live in a world where much science fiction of a few decades ago is now commonplace) to react appropriately to a submarine or an aeroplane (unbelievable inventions in the 1850s; everyday occurrences in the 2000s), so use the GM's bag of acting tricks to emphasize how grand and spectacular these things are – the thunderous rumble of their steam engines, the overpowering smell of the black soot that belches forth from their smokestacks, the gleaming, curved metal surfaces of their insect-like design, and the amazing alien-ness of the whole experience. This is a chance for your descriptive storytelling skills to shine!

> *"And then it happened. 1860. Surely you've heard of the City of Glass? It was the greatest disaster of an Age. We watched it all, from hundreds of miles away. We watched the hands of the clock turn, agonizingly slowly, all through the long night. And when the clock stopped, something terrible happened. And that was when we knew we could no longer simply watch events unfold. We had to do something."*

THE CITY OF GLASS: 1860

In 1860, a brilliant inventor by the name of Cardinalè – known today as *Le Pilote Fou* or the Mad Pilot – realized his lifelong dream by building the greatest invention ever seen. On the outskirts of Besançon, France, he created an entire city out of crystal and brass, powered via enormous, coal-burning steam engines, which he dubbed *La Ville du Verre*, the City of Glass.

It was truly a wonder to behold, a carnival of delights. Every piece of the city was automated: moving sidewalks to stairways which effortlessly transported people from one level to another, doors opened automatically, giant fans provided a constant cooling breeze over the whole city, and great clocks chimed on the hour filling the city with music the likes of which the world had never known. Even the natives of the city were automata – tiny brass clockwork birds sang in the silver-leaved trees, wind-up dogs frolicked and did tricks, and steam-powered puppets danced in every window for the pleasure of their audience.

Cardinalè invited the crème de la crème of European society to witness his creation's unveiling. Dukes, princes, and archbishops roamed the streets of his city for an entire afternoon, marveling at each new sight. That evening at dinner, Cardinalè boasted that what his audience had experienced so far was child's play, and that nothing on earth could prepare them for what they were about to see.

Once dessert was cleared by the clockwork servants, the inventor turned to a control panel and pulled a lever. The entire city began to thrum and vibrate, and then, to the shock and delight of the people, the City of Glass rose off the ground. It was flying! An entire city, in defiance of the laws of gravity, powered by steam and the vision of one man, was flying!

The city moved westward, powered by jets of steam and giant propellers. Cardinalè announced he would land the City of Glass at the edge of Paris, where the *Exposition Universelle* (World's Fair) was being held. He would prove to the entire world that France was the greatest nation on the Earth, and that none could stand up to her technological prowess.

The City traveled the length of France in a single night, moving at tremendous speeds. But as it approached Paris, disaster struck. Nobody knows what really happened; eyewitnesses claim an explosion crippled one of the great propellers keeping the City aloft. *La Ville du Verre* shuddered and slowly, ponderously began to tilt to one side. Another explosion and more propellers stopped turning. The pilot of the ship – many today assume it was Cardinalè himself – tried heroically to keep the City in the air, but it was no use. Without the miraculous propellers spinning, the City plummeted like a brick, plowing through the World's Fair and the city of Paris itself.

Hundreds of citizens were killed as the City of Glass plowed through their homes. Scores of scientists and engineers attending the Fair also lost their lives. And perhaps most telling, all the passengers and crew (including Cardinalè) on the City of Glass died. Governments blamed the disaster on anarchists – filled with the cream of European royalty, it was a tempting target for devils such as they. The great nations of the world realized much too late the power that the Savants had been allowed to play with unchecked.

The Time of Waiting was over, and despite claims of many futurists, it did not bring about a golden Age of Wonders. Instead, the Time of Turmoil had begun.

THE TIME OF TURMOIL: 1861-1880

Even before the City of Glass shattered, trouble brewed on the horizon. Political and economic pressures were building like steam in a teakettle, just looking for an escape valve. The destruction of the great palace of brass and crystal and steel – and the deaths of so many important people – set off repercussions that reverberated throughout the western world. Governments realized they could no longer afford to allow the Savants free reign to continue their work unsupervised and unchecked. At the same time, they finally discovered the potential use of these new inventions as tools for trade, for policy – and for war.

Unknown to all but a few, at the same time, a great darkness which had been quiet for centuries was rising from its self-imposed slumber and began to make its presence known again. It quietly whispered promises of power in the ears of Savant and ordinary citizen alike. Many of the problems during the Time of Turmoil are part of the secret workings of ancient monsters and the servants of darkness.

WHO ARE THE WATCHMEN?

"We didn't sleep. We knew what we had to do. We were engineers, inventors, and craftsmen of the finest sort. Men of imagination and learning with a powerful tool at our disposal. We no longer tried to fix the Gyre – no, we had come to realize it was never broken in the first place. Now we studied it, measured it, tested it. We knew every spring, every cog, every rod and coil. We learned to read its signs, its inner vibrations, the shine of the brass, the sparkle of the jewels, and the tone of its bells. Long before it began to tick-tock-tick, we could read its warnings. We knew of each coming disaster, sometimes weeks or even months before they happened.

"For ten long years, we Clockmakers worked on our project to learn every secret of the Gyre. We filled our workshops with amazing devices of our own design, devices powered by clockwork, steam, and magic. Scoff if you like, but the Gyre became a tool, a tool with which we could pierce the aether to look into the future and to gaze across the world."

"But there was a problem. We were (I say with all due modesty) brilliant engineers and scientists, but we were not, most of us, soldiers. If we wanted to change the world, we couldn't do it alone. So quietly, we began recruiting talented young men and women not afraid to get their hands dirty, as it were. We found soldiers, bold explorers, and adventurers from across the Empire, Europe, and the Americas to be our eyes and ears and – most importantly! – our strong hands.

"We call them the Watchmen. And that, my dear boy, is where you come in."

The Watchmen are a group of talented individuals the Clockmakers Guild uses to investigate the paranormal and unexplained. The Clockmakers recruit new associates from around the world and from a wide variety of fields. Members include not just soldiers, daredevils, and adventurers, but scientists, scholars, teachers, doctors, and explorers. The Clockmakers realize that in this new age of wonders, those who would stand up against the monsters that plague the world must not only be strong in body, but strong in mind and spirit as well.

WARS IN AMERICA
THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR: 1861-1865

The true destructive power of the world's new technology and science made its first wide scale battlefield appearance in America. The causes that led to the American Civil War are numerous and controversial, but what unarguable is that in April of 1861, just over a month after Abraham Lincoln was sworn in as President of the United States, Southern troops, backed by a dozen hissing, clanking mechanical crab-machines, raided and captured Fort Sumter in South Carolina. The American Civil War had begun.

The war raged hotly for five years. Both sides brought out more and more outrageous machines of destruction in the hope each one would provide battlefield superiority. Behind the scenes, the forces of darkness whispered promises of total victory in the ears of Generals and Colonels on both sides. They promised power and glory to politicians, North and South. And they taught dark secrets to Savant engineers, showing them how to build deadlier engines of destruction to feed their vast hunger for devastation. Few realized it, but dark magic flickered and flew over battlefields and political arenas alike.

The Civil War was one of the most costly (both economically and in terms of lives lost) wars to that time. Nearly a million men died until finally, exhausted from continual assaults and devastated by the North's "scorched earth" policy, the South was forced to surrender.

Why did the North win? The reasons are numerous (and also not without controversy), but it is generally agreed that the highly-industrialized North had better technology, which aided in the production of arms and munitions. Their railroads were better designed and more extensive, which allowed for the quick movement of troops and supplies. They had a larger fleet, which allowed them to blockade Confederate ports effectively and cut assistance from sympathetic foreign governments and industries.

However, despite all these facts, Savant-created technology did not prove as important a role in the war as many people thought. The war machines built by both sides were impressive and destructive, but they required a great deal of maintenance, broke down often, and were easily sabotaged. Still, many far-sighted individuals looked at the American Civil War and saw the direction of future warfare.

THE INDIAN WARS: 1864-1890

After the Civil War, America entered a period of expansion. Settlers traveled westward seeking their fortunes. As they moved west, they encountered the people who were already living in those lands – the Native American tribes. The friction generated during the earliest encounters between the European-descended Americans and the Natives reached a boiling point as the west grew more and more crowded. The Indian Wars were a series of skirmishes that gradually led to the conquest of the American Indian peoples and their forced relocation to reservations.

The forces of darkness had a keen interest in these conflicts. Evil thrives on bloodshed and agony, and murmured seductive promises to those who engage in massacres, revenge killings, and torture. They whispered guarantees of power and revenge in the ears of Native American warriors, and incited dreams of gold and glory in the minds of white men new to the territories.

In addition, the vast, open frontiers of the American West are perfect places for evil sorcerers to practice their dark arts far away from the prying eyes of civilization and the Clockmakers Guild. Will the heroes reach the secluded ranch, remote settlement, or isolated mining camp before the nefarious schemes take hold, or will they have to fight a running battle at the edges of modern civilization?

Excellent reading material on using the Old West as a basis for your campaign can be found in Joe R. Lansdale and Timothy Truman's Jonah Hex stories: *Two-Gun Mojo*, *Riders of the Worm and Such*, and *Shadows West*.

WARS IN EUROPE

FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR: 1862-1870

America was not the only nation affected by the Time of Turmoil. The crash of Cardinalè's City of Glass served to add heat to the pressures that had been building between numerous European nations. France, reeling from the disaster, accused Prussia of sabotaging the City. Prussia accused France of using this as an excuse to claim disputed lands. The two nations began a campaign of espionage and sabotage, each seeking to incite the other. Skirmishes broke out along the border. Within two years, the two nations were at war.

It was a bloody conflict the likes of which had never before been seen in Europe. Though the war wasn't continuous (it stopped and started depending on the diplomatic maneuvers of the day), it still ground along for nearly a decade. Both sides used whatever advantage they could gain, no matter what the cost and several battles became infamous for the destructive power unleashed. As always, civilians bore much of the brunt of the conflict. The other nations of Europe watched in horror and steadfastly refused to become involved.

The scale of battle was immense: hundreds of thousands of men on each side, bolstered with artillery and the most powerful death-machines ever created, fought tooth and nail. The end result was a wasted landscape, tens of thousands of civilian and military deaths, and ruined economies. The armies became bogged down by their own size and by massive casualties, and the war dragged out over eight years.

Eventually surrounded and outnumbered by his enemies, the Emperor of France himself surrendered and was taken prisoner. When the news of Emperor Napoleon III's capture got out, a junta of generals overthrew the Second Empire in a bloodless revolution. They called their government the Third Republic and were amenable to Prussia's demands for surrender.

However, a rival French government formed at the same time. Calling themselves the Government of National Defense, they refused to negotiate, instead calling upon all loyal French citizens to take up arms against the invader. The French armies dug in around Paris, and the war continued. In 1870, German troops reached the outskirts of Paris. Unable to penetrate the heavily fortified city, the Germans surrounded it and erected a blockade.

The siege lasted the better part of a year. Nothing seemed to deter the Prussian armies – not constant guerilla attacks, not fierce counter-assaults by the desperate French army, not even the greatest military inventions created by the finest Savants of the *Université de Paris*. Eventually the French – starving, running low on ammunition, and battered senseless by the nearly constant bombardment by German guns and worse – were forced to surrender.

Bismarck honored the armistice by sending trainloads of food into Paris and withdrawing Prussian forces from France. England sent food and fuel to Paris and agreed to assist in rebuilding the shattered metropolis; eventually, life in the city returned to normal.

The Franco-Prussian war changed the face of Europe, militarily, socially, and politically. New military strategies and technologies were tested on the anvil of war; technologies such as the railroads and the telegraph, as well as stranger ones, such as walking war machines and destructive death rays.

The Prussian victory destroyed the fragile balance of power that had existed for decades. A newly-united Germany became the greatest force in Europe, its military might unchallenged by any other nation. France, stung by the crushing defeat, simmered with a resentment that would soon boil over into a war even more destructive than any other the world had known.

And all the while, those hiding in the darkness watched, and waited, and laughed.

OTHER WARS

Cretan patriots rebelled against their Ottoman masters in 1866; a short-lived revolution that was put down harshly by the Turks, but which elicited a large amount of sympathy from the Americans and the British.

Rebels attempted to assassinate the Czar of Russia on several occasions, failing primarily because of the Czar's paranoia and because he embraced a series of new defensive technologies created by his own personal Savants. The Czar responded to each of these attempts by slaughtering whole villages of his enemies (real and imagined). This time of trouble became known as the Russian War of Assassination.

Italy, emboldened by France's weakness after the Franco-Prussian war, attempted to take away some of France's far-flung colonies, leading to the Franco-Italian war of 1870.

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE TIME OF TURMOIL

War Walkers: Starting with the attack on Fort Sumter by the Confederates, the Time of Turmoil is known for its devastating war machines. Savants were employed by the sundry governments of the world to create everything from heavily armed and armored walking vehicles to steam-powered armored troops to deadly heat rays to cannons powerful enough to shake the very mountains.

During the Rebel assault on Fort Sumter in 1861, a dozen monstrous, crab-legged, Gatling gun-armed machines, the Confederates quickly took the Fort. Many Union troops, frightened almost to death by the noisy, steam-belching contraptions, fled their posts, allowing the Rebels to scale the walls with little resistance. Five of the machines broke down during the assault, and another two bogged down in the soft sand, but the future of warfare had been proven.

The Franco-Prussian war also saw both sides use armored walkers, both on the battlefield and as troop and supply transport.

Artillery: During the Franco-Prussian War, the French developed a cannon so powerful it could lob an explosive shell from the Alcaise to Berlin. Luckily for the Germans (and thanks to a clever bit of sabotage), the cannon never entered service.

Defensive Technology: In 1866, Cretan rebels, wearing what appeared to be medieval plate armor, stormed the Ottoman capital. Their armor, powered by small, highly-efficient steam plants on their backs, enhanced the soldiers' strength and proved to be virtually bulletproof. However, the armor needed frequent refueling – both fuel and water for the steam plant. Additionally, since the armor was so heavy and bulky, it was painfully slow and (as soldiers on both sides soon discovered) the wearer could be temporarily immobilized simply by knocking them onto their backs. Turtle Armor, as it soon came to be called, proved to be too much hassle to be considered for anything other than specialized shock-troops.

Over the course of several years, the Russian Czar had a series of defensive technologies created, ranging from a simple bulletproof cloak to much more bizarre creations, including a force field which was said to be able to stop even explosive detonations at point blank range. However, the Czar was so paranoid that few of his Savants' inventions ever became widely known outside of his own personal circle.

ROLEPLAYING DURING THE TIME OF TURMOIL

The Time of Turmoil is dark and oppressive in its outlook. Technology does not bring about a new golden age; instead it merely shows that man is not nearly so civilized as he pretends to be. People take the wondrous new developments and use them to oppress, enslave, or kill their fellow men – all goaded on behind the scenes by ancient, nameless evils.

The Time of Turmoil offers plenty of role-playing potential. The wars – many of them encouraged by forces behind humankind's understanding – make great backdrops for any game. The characters could be soldiers, diplomats, saboteurs, or spies working for one side or another. Savants might find themselves in high demand, as generals and politicians beg, threaten, and bribe them to create new war machines for their armies. The heroes could be adventurers trying to rescue refugees, find and preserve some ancient artifact, or even seeking the to find the hidden true cause of these endless wars.

Also note that the Time of Troubles is not a period of constant worldwide strife. War in the 19th century was still fairly limited in scope. The biggest and worst war-machines hadn't made it onto the battlefield yet, and those contraptions of death that were unleashed tended to break down easily, so war hadn't acquired the all-encompassing horror it would in the next century. Players not interested in involving themselves in the politics and warfare of the day could be explorers seeking out new lands to discover.

Heroes connected to the Watchmen will find the forces of darkness to be more active than ever. The PCs could be assigned to destroy the numerous monsters and cults springing up in Europe, America, and elsewhere. The powers of evil may use colonialism in Africa, the Middle East, and the Far East to spread their insidious goals, so heroes will be kept on their toes traveling around the world looking for hotspots of wicked activity to stamp out. Moreover, the darkness of the wars in Europe and American cannot be underestimated. Clockmaker-allied heroes might be forced to join in a war, on either side, just to stymie a particularly powerful and evil general or stop a cult-infiltrated army from uncovering some ancient mystical artifact.

See *The Wild Wild West* (directed by Barry Sonnenfeld and starring Kenneth Branaugh, Kevin Kline, and Will Smith) for information about playing a Steampunk game in the years immediately following the American Civil War.

THE GILDED AGE: 1880-1914

D uring The Gilded Age technology truly came into its own! This was an age of great things, when the promises of the Time of Waiting came to pass and when the horrors of the Time of Turmoil were over and done. It was a period of great development – economic, political, social, and of course, technological. Peace reigned throughout Europe, and American expanded westward, fulfilling its Manifest Destiny. The Gilded Age is defined by a virtual explosion of commerce and industry supported by the rapidly-developing technological advancements which came ceaselessly from the factories, forges, and foundries of the Savants. The Patent Office granted a hundred times as many patents during the Gilded Age as they had throughout the entire previous century. The technology now available to the common man finally began to catch up to the extravagant developments that Savants had made in the 40 years prior.

Despite the fact that a new golden age appears to have graced humanity, the darkness still lurks behind everything – in boardroom and laboratory, in ancient castle and virgin frontier, in field and factory the forces of evil are making their influence felt, and the Clockmakers and their allies are fighting back.

THE DISCOVERIES OF THE GILDED AGE

The Gilded Age is a bright and shining vision of the future. Some of the most amazing discoveries and technological developments of the era include:

TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

Many historians date the beginning of the Gilded Age as early as 1875. In September of that year, the English scientist and explorer Professor Gantelet returned from his year-long expedition to the Arctic Circle, bringing specimens of saurians, birds, and mammals thought long extinct. Gantelet claimed to have discovered a lost world buried far beneath the arctic ice, where the antediluvian reptiles still reigned supreme. However, Gantelet was murdered on the night before he was able to present his findings to the *Société de Paris d'exploration*. Gantelet's nephew Hugo and their assistant, who accompanied Gantelet on his journey, both disappeared the next day, along with most of the specimens. The Society immediately posted a huge reward for the capture of the murderer (thought to be Hugo), but as yet no one has come forth with any information.

Other explorers have attempted to retrace Gantelet's footsteps, but without the Professor's maps and notes, these explorations have always come to naught.

FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON

In 1880, famed Scottish explorer and adventurer Sir Nigel McWhorty swore that he would reach the Moon via hot air balloon. He supervised the construction of an enormous balloon, outfitted himself and his company with provisions and weapons, and launched himself from the Scottish Highlands amidst great fanfare. McWhorty and his fellow explorers were never seen again, but a fortnight later, astronomers swore they saw what appeared to be explosions on the face of the Lunar body.

Capitalizing on the advances in artillery made during the Time of Turmoil, Impey Barbicane of Baltimore, Maryland built a giant cannon, which he postulated would fire a small craft with enough velocity to reach and land safely on the moon. The craft was launched from Stone Hill, Florida containing a single passenger – French Savant and adventurer Michel Ardan. The retort of the cannon was heard from hundreds of miles away, and astronomers reported that the cylindrical shell hit the moon exactly as targeted. Ardan was never again seen.

Both of these ill-fated journeys are part of a series of attempts to reach, explore, and return from the Earth's nearest celestial neighbor. Many other Savants and adventurers attempt to perform this mighty feat, but for many decades none succeed. Eventually the race to the Moon was seen for what it is – a fool's errand which would never be successfully completed. Those who claim to have done so (with their amazing tales of Moon-Men and alien civilizations) are dismissed as cranks, frauds, and publicity-seekers.

However, the saying, "Never underestimate the power of Science!" always holds true in the world of *The Widening Gyre.* In 1901, using a unique mineral of his own creation, Professor Cavor of England and his assistant manage to fly to the moon and back again, bringing with them exciting tales of Moon-Men and a strange world. Shortly after his return and before he could publish his results, Professor Cavor and the contents of his lab vanished entirely. Many feared foul play, but nothing was ever proven.

BENEATH THE SEA

In the early part of 1877, throughout the Pacific Ocean, ships began to mysteriously disappear. Not a trace remained: no survivors, no wreckage, and no hint of what might be causing it. Over the course of nearly two years, over thirty ships vanished completely. Superstitious sailors blamed everything from sea monsters to angry gods, but no sacrifice seemed good enough to placate whatever caused the trouble. The United States and the great powers of Europe sent their fastest and strongest warships to the area to patrol and investigate, but nothing came of the effort. Then, in December of 1879, the American frigate USS John Adams vanished without a trace somewhere off the waters of Guam. The mysterious "sea monster" of the Pacific was not heard from again, and it is generally assumed that the John Adams and the creature destroyed one another.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Communications: The first telephone allowing for the transmission of sound across electrical wires is perfected in 1876. Only a year later, Samuel Morse creates a method to transmit pictures and images across wires as well. Though the first images are grainy and hard to make out, further development continues, eventually allowing true face-to-face communication between people in different parts of a city, and eventually, across entire continents.

Power: Electricity is found to be a viable power source when the Edison Company demonstrates it may be transmitted over wires. Soon, every capital of the world is hung with power lines. While steam remains the power of choice (since it is cheap, widely available, and well-tested), electrical plants begin springing up across the globe. Over the next few decades, electrical power continues to make inroads with incandescent lights, streetcars, telephones, and even more amazing wonders.

Entertainment: Audiences at the 1885 London International Exhibition of Inventions are amazed and delighted by the latest invention in entertainment – the "motion picture." Those same audiences are horrified when shadowy-black humanoid shapes appear in the background of some of the films, flitting about. Several women in the audience faint; they later swear that they saw one of the shadowy creatures look directly at them and smile a fang-filled grin. The producers of these early films claim that there were no such creatures when the films were made, but subsequent attempts to verify this are stymied when the theatre owners have all the films destroyed.

Transportation: In the summer of 1881, a new high-speed express rail line opened up between New York City and Washington DC. It rocketed along at nearly 100 miles per hour, which allowed amazingly rapid travel between the two cities. Just two years later, a similar train in Europe (known as the Orient Express) shortened the distance between Paris and Istanbul.

1886-1888 – Reports of amazingly fast flying ships come back from America, Russia, Germany, and Italy. The reports have little else in common, but rumors grow of a secret contest between Savants to see who can build the greatest heavier-than-air flying machine. In 1888, an American named Ordinaire (no first name known) claims to be the winner of the contest, revealing his contraption – The Osprey – in New York City. He amazes gawkers by flying thrice round the city and then disappears over the Atlantic, never to be seen again. Savants around the world redouble their efforts to overshadow the other engineers (whom they regard as competitors) with their own marvelous contraptions.

In 1888, the first aero-shipping service starts up between London and Edinburgh, carrying passengers and freight on massive, hydrogen-filled airships. Within just a few short years, dozens of airship companies spring up across Europe and the Americas. The idea of faster, cheaper heavier-than-air ships is declared dead, and those few Savants and scientists who continue research into the idea are considered fools by the general public.

In 1895, an anonymous source publishes the papers and journals of a man known only as "The Time Traveller," which detail a thrilling journey into the future. The journal's publisher claims he wishes to preserve the Time Traveller's privacy, but diligent researchers eventually learn that the subject and object of the papers was Mr. George Phillips, an inventor from London who disappeared completely about three years before. Whether

the Time Traveller's story is truth or a fanciful concoction of the brain is not known, but many Savants attempt to duplicate his Time Machine with little success.

In 1900 the mysterious monster of the Pacific Ocean, last sighted in 1879, reappears. Ships sailing on the high seas vanish at an alarming rate. The nations of the world send fleets of sea- and airships to find and destroy the culprit – be it man or fish – but nothing is found. International trade is disrupted as ships continue to vanish even along well-traveled shipping routes. Luckily, several airship companies rise to take up the slack.

In 1904, the Road Club of Wisconsin sponsors a road race, inviting all inventors to bring their fastest vehicle to a 250-mile long paved road and prove whose is the best. The number of entries astounds even the sponsors – steam-powered, electric, and internal combustion vehicles clog the roads, some on wheels, some on legs, and even a few hovering above the ground. Competition is fierce – even brutal – and several competitors are forced out of the race. In the end, a small electric car designed and built by Leslie Green of Virginia wins the race. Due to high demand, several Road Clubs across America team up to sponsor another rally two years later, this one traversing the length of the entire United States from San Francisco to Washington DC. It is meant to test not only the speed, but the versatility and endurance of its competitors.

During the summer of 1905 the British airship HMAS Victoriana Imperatrix goes down in flames while patrolling the skies near Hawaii. There are no survivors. One month later, a dozen small, fast ships are spotted flying in formation in the same area. It came as no great surprise in December of that year when a Chinese Savant named Shuo Ho Ti declares war on the western imperial powers. His tiny heavier-than-air craft prove more than a match for the airships of the mighty empires, darting about too quickly to be fired upon and packing heavy armor-piercing explosive shells able to bring even armored airships down quickly and efficiently. War over the Pacific begins with the powers of the west pitted against a number of small group of unexpectedly powerful warlords of the air.

ROLEPLAYING DURING THE GILDED AGE

The default campaign setting for *The Widening Gyre* is the Gilded Age. It is a thrilling time in which to stage a role-playing game, filled with grand adventure and unlikely scientific developments. The Time of Turmoil is over, and the inventions and devices perfected over the past decades have begun to make real changes throughout society.

In this period, the forces of evil are attempting to position themselves for their next big push into our world. They are not actively and openly pursuing their goals (as they almost did in the Time of Turmoil), but are rather moving stealthily towards some great objective which even the wisest seers in the Clockmakers Guild are unable to determine. Still, the war between light and darkness continues apace, with both sides testing each others' weaknesses – both magically and physically.

There is considerable overlap between the Time of Turmoil and the Gilded Age. This allows game masters, if they choose, to vary the tone of their adventures between the desperation and madness of constant war to the wonder and excitement of discovery. Adventures can take on a brighter air (like the fiction of Jules Verne) or darker cast (such as the stories written by H.G. Wells), and the world itself may become better or worse based on the actions, successes, and failures of the PCs.

Most of the works of Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, and other science fiction writers of the day took place during this time period, and are great places to research the attitude of the era. Disney's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and *The First Man on the Moon*, as well as George Pal's *The Time Machine* have excellent visuals – brass and crystal, rivets and boilerplate – that capture the feel of a Steampunk world.

THE GREAT WAR: 1914-1918

Mankind had grown fat and torpid on his own success. Secure in the power of technology, humankind tossed aside the superstitions of the past and embraced the golden age of the future. This was perfect for the monsters lurking in the darkness. The Gilded Age was over, and a new, terrible time was about to begin.

It started small. Almost unnoticeable. A simple, well-timed political assassination and quickly the mighty colonial powers of the west fell to squabbling. Squabbling led to skirmishes, and those led to all-out war – a war the likes of which the world had never before seen. An entire continent was embroiled in the Great War, dragging on and on for years and years without resolution. The best and the brightest of nearly every nation on the Earth were cut down like wheat before a scythe, their young bodies flung up against the most horrible machines of destruction ever imagined. More than 15 million people – a number that defied human conception – died in the Great War, and with each death the powers of darkness grew stronger.

Though mankind has always been willing and eager to wage war for many reasons, this war was different. Spurred on by the whispered promises of an evil far older than mankind, generals and kings on both sides hurled their men into the enemy's machine guns and artillery for little or no gain. Confident of their impending victory (through the assurances of their secret and supernatural advisors), both the Central Powers and the Allies threw the entire resources of their nations into fighting battles that resulted in stalemate.

The technologies that had once brought men shining dreams of glass and chrome now delivered nightmares of blood and death beyond imagining. New weapons, capable of reducing a man to ash or blowing an entire city to rubble, were brought to bear. Monstrous war machines trundled across the fields of France and Germany, leaving death in their wake. Huge zeppelins blotted out the sun, engaging in aerial battles with fast fighting aeroplanes.

Despite these horrors, there were much worst things lurking in the shadows, hiding in the black forests and waiting at the bottom of dark trenches. Commanders and politicians, tempted by evil powers, performed forbidden rites and unleashed necromantic spells of great puissance – raising dead soldiers to continue fighting, imbuing their crack troops with unspeakable powers, and calling demons from the abyss to attack their enemies. Many sinister things were released in this age, things which were not easily put down; no one knows how many still lie in wait in those places of death and pain.

The war dragged on for four long years until a concentrated Allied offensive finally broke the German lines. Exhausted and demoralized, the Germans sued for peace. The war was over, leaving behind a Europe scarred by trenches, spent of its treasure and resources, and littered with the bodies of its young men. The map which once defined the great imperial powers was wiped clean – Germany, Austro-Hungary, Imperial Russia, and the Ottoman Empire were gone.

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE GREAT WAR

Almost all of the technological developments of this dark time were built with the express purpose of killing. Many were based on the works and designs of earlier savants and engineers – death machines first conceived during the Time of Turmoil, and now perfected. Many Savants employed by national governments to build bigger and better munitions were convinced to do greater and greater acts of evil. The weapons they created were terrible indeed. Some of them include:

Machine Guns: Hiram Maxim invented the first machine gun in the late 19th century, but this weapon didn't really come into its own until the Great War. Machine Guns use the recoil energy of the previously fired bullet to reload and fire the next round, enabling an extremely high rate of fire. The design was lighter and required fewer crewmembers than previous Gatling guns. These guns caused an enormous number of casualties on both sides of the war and gained a terrifying reputation.

War Walkers: First used in the American Civil War, walking war-platforms were popular at the beginning of the Great War. Both sides thought to use their speed and firepower to quickly smash their enemies' resistance, but their use tapered off as the war advanced and the limitations of these machines became apparent. Though they were fearsome and could carry large amounts of firepower over most terrain, their complicated joints and limbs were vulnerable to breakdowns, sabotage, and supply problems. They also had a tendency to become bogged down in the thick mud that plagued battlefields of Europe. By the end of the war, there were barely a handful of walking war-platforms still operational, and they were rarely used.

Tanks: As mentioned above, generals on both sides were looking for ways to break the enemy's lines from the very start of the war. The walking war machines from the previous century proved inadequate for the muddy, crater-filled fields of France and Germany. They kept bogging down in the soft, wet soil and became easy targets for increasingly accurate artillery fire. In 1915, the first tanks rolled onto the battlefield. Tanks were different from the war machines of the past; equipped with caterpillar tracks (which enabled them to traverse the muddy, rugged, uneven terrain of the modern battlefield), heavily armored to withstand machine gun fire, and powered by more powerful gasoline engines (rather than a steam-powered one). Savants quickly discovered tanks could generally be much larger and heavier than walking war machines, and by the end of the war these engines of destruction had grown incredibly huge. The largest was the German Landlinienschiff, which stood nearly 30 feet high, weighed over 150 tons, and carried 15 massive cannons.

Powered Armor: Cretan rebels first conceived the concept of using steam-powered armor during their failed uprising against the Ottomans. Later Savants would take these ideas and improve on them, making the armor quicker and more mobile, without sacrificing the strength or resilience of the previous models. France fielded the first squads of troops wearing personal steam-powered body armor, which they dubbed Les Blaireaux de la Mort (The Death-Badgers). The British were less prosaic, calling them simply "Walking Tanks," a name which stuck. Various designs of the armor ranged from simple body armor, powered by wind-up springs and clock-work, to massive but surprisingly mobile suits fueled by small but highly-efficient steam plants and impervious to small arms fire.

Submarines: Submarines/U-boats were used from the beginning of the conflict. While none were close in capability to Captain Nemo's legendary ship, they nonetheless proved difficult for the enemy to spot and sink and terrified the merchant ships sailing the waters of the Atlantic. As always, nations developed several countermeasures to help deal with this threat: depth charges, passive sonar, and spotting blimps.

Aeroplanes: The Great War saw the advent of the aeroplane as a weapon of war between nations. The western nations learned a thing or two about air superiority from the war over the Pacific against the so-called Warlord of the Air, Shuo Ho Ti. They transferred that knowledge to the war in Europe. Mighty airships and smaller fighter planes battled one another for control of the skies. Anti-aircraft guns deployed to shoot down enemy ships. Zeppelins were used for bombing runs, hoping to break the enemy's will to fight. Reconnaissance balloons floated high over the front lines, mapping enemy positions and directing artillery fire.

Artillery: Indirect artillery fire caused the largest number of direct combat deaths throughout the Great War – even more than the greatly-feared machine gun and the dreaded gas attack. The most powerful weapons were enormous naval guns which could only be transported on land via railroad. Based on designs originally conceived during the Franco-Prussian war, these cannons weighed hundreds of tons apiece and could fire an explosive shell at targets miles away.

Flamethrowers: Another terrifying weapon sprayed a jet of burning fuel at the enemy. Flamethrowers were of limited value on the battlefield due to their short range and high vulnerability to enemy fire, but psychologically they were very powerful. The thought of being burned alive at the bottom of a trench could paralyze even the most battle-hardened soldiers. As the war progressed, more and more powerful flamethrowers were added to both sides' arsenals. No longer carried by vulnerable troops, these longer-range and deadlier flamethrowers were fitted to tanks and war walkers, adding to these mechanical monsters' capacity for death.

Death Rays: Perhaps the most deadly weapon introduced during the Great War was the electric death ray. The earliest designs were large and bulky and required a stationary power source; they were primarily point-defense weapons, much like Vickers guns. Toward the end of the war, some death-rays became small and light enough to be carried by a single trooper. These fearsome weapons fired a crackling blue bolt of lightning, which incinerated everything in its path. They were notoriously inaccurate and had a distressing tendency to backfire if the wielder wasn't careful, and some estimates suggest they were responsible for an inordinate amount of friendly-fire accidents. Those soldiers lucky (or unlucky) enough to carry one into battle were known as "Lightning Rods."

> *These canisters smashed on striking the ground–they did not explode–and incontinently disengaged an enormous volume of heavy, inky vapour, coiling and pouring upward in a huge and ebony cumulus cloud, a gaseous hill that sank and spread itself slowly over the surrounding country. And the touch of that vapour, the inhaling of its pungent wisps, was death to all that breathes.*
>
> – H.G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds*

CHEMICAL WARFARE

Modern chemical warfare – toxic chlorine, mustard, and phosgene gas – saw its debut in the Great War. Armies quickly adopted gas masks as standard equipment for all their troops, but still its psychological effect was even more profound than that of the flamethrowers as tales of horror filtered through the ranks. Nightmares of blistered faces, death by choking, eyes burned out, and other things too terrifying to mention increased already extreme exhaustion. Later in the war, Savants employed by both sides created ever more horrible types of chemicals. Many new gasses would seep through protective gas masks, no matter how well sealed. Hallucinatory gasses could cause their victims to rush headlong into the enemy's fire, alternately laughing or screaming, or perhaps madden the enemy's troops to the point where they fought and killed one another. There were even ghoulish gasses that seemed to congeal into vaporous but still deadly troops, attacking the enemy from behind their own lines. These nightmarish weapons amplified the horrors of the war, as they were not only impersonal but also indiscriminate – an errant gust of wind could send the deadly fumes back into an army's own lines or through a civilian village.

ROLEPLAYING DURING THE GREAT WAR

The Great War is a fine time to run military adventures and espionage between the great nations as well as between the forces of good and evil. Players can play Special Forces units operating deep behind enemy lines, entrusted with crucial missions on which the fate of millions might hang. These types of adventure work equally well for heroes employed by national governments and for those who work directly for the Clockmakers.

The Great War is a good place to run a low-powered Superhero game. Crack troops might be granted mysterious occult and technological powers. Masked men on both sides can commit acts of espionage and sabotage against the enemy or fight criminals and monsters on the home front. The earliest 'civilian' masked adventurers began their careers not too long after the end of the Great War, so who is to say they didn't get their start fighting in the trenches of Europe?

Though the Great War signaled the end of the Steampunk era, the Gilded Age and the Great War can still provide great fodder for games set in later eras. Mad scientists attempt to recreate the scientific and technological marvels of an earlier age; hapless folk dig up – and accidentally reactivate – ancient and long-forgotten machines of destruction.

A game set twenty years after the end of the Great War could use many of the same tropes, but instead of being called Steampunk, this era is more popularly known as Dieselpunk.

An excellent resource for more ideas about using magic and Steampunk technology in the Great War is *Arrowsmith, Book 1: So Smart in Their Fine Uniforms* by Kurt Busiek and Carlos Pacheco.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The default campaign era for The Widening Gyre is the Gilded Age, specifically 1895. However, the section on the Great War is included in case the GM wants to extend his campaign further into the future. Note that everything mentioned in this section may or may not happen the way described. If the PCs are able to change significant events in the world, then future history itself may change as well.

How does the Steampunk age end? Or indeed, does it end at all? Perhaps it continues on into the future, well into the 20th and 21st centuries. Here are a few possibilities for the GM to consider…

THE DEATH OF THE DREAM

The Great War signaled the end of the Steampunk age. The optimism of the Gilded Age died on the battlefields of Europe. Those who fought in the war became known as the Lost Generation, because they never fully recovered from their horrendous experiences. For the next decade the world was in mourning, and the horrors of technology fueled by magic were never forgotten.

The backlash against technology was so pronounced in many places that people destroyed any technology they could get their hands on. Perhaps due to the weariness brought on by war, the common peoples' fury was quickly spent, but many of the wonders of the previous age were lost in the flames of the post-war period: destroyed, buried, or forgotten.

In addition, many Savants who did not perish in the war became terribly disillusioned by the destruction that their wondrous devices unleashed. Many of them threw down their tools, walked away from their work-shops, and never created another device again. Savants grew more and more rare; by the 1920s, the world was once again mostly mundane. The age of Steampunk was well and truly over, and a new age was about to begin.

TWO MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT

Spurred on by the Council of Midnight and/or the Circle of Technologists, the Great War was actually an enormously powerful rite. The trenches men and machine fought and died over were carefully laid occult symbols dug into the very Earth. The weapons, vehicles, and equipment were the tools of ritual. The blood was fuel for a summoning unlike any in the known history of civilization.

The Clockmakers Guild and the Watchmen were almost too late in learning of this world-shattering ritual. They bent all their considerable skills, powers, knowledge, abilities, and courage in an all-out attempt to stop it before it could be completed. They succeeded -- barely. At the cost of a great many lives, they managed to close off the wellspring of magic from whence Savants and Sorcerers alike drew their reality-bending powers. The ritual was never completed; the world was saved.

The Circle of Technologists were neutered by the loss of their amazing contraptions. The Council of Midnight faded away, becoming little more than a story told after dark to frighten small children in their beds. The Clockmakers, their great calling ended, once more became simple craftsmen and tinkerers. However, there are those who remember, who know the truth behind the age of wonders, and who wait, ever watchful, for the door to swing back open, and for another such age of science and magic to be born once again.

THE CYCLE ENDS

The face of the clock is a circle; so, too, are the ages of mankind.

Once, heroes strode the land and great sorcerers wielded unimaginable powers. Then, something happened. It may have been a great cataclysm, a mighty volcano or earthquake that sunk Atlantis in a single day. Or it may have been a quiet and slow decline: spells became harder to cast, enchanted weapons slowly rusted away to nothing. However it happened, magic left the world. The wonders it once generated became nothing more than myth; the great heroes and villains who wielded it faded to legend.

And so it came to be again. The magical fire flowing through the minds and fingers of Savants and Sorcerers alike grew cold and dim. The amazing contraptions and gizmos stopped working, and no amount of tinkering could bring them back to life. Technology became mundane; magic once more passed into the realm of fable.

Perhaps someday in the future, the magic will return. Perhaps humankind will relearn the secrets it lost. Perhaps the monsters who faded away will step back into the light, bringing with them terrors nearly forgotten. Perhaps there will be another Age of Wonders. When will it arrive? Tomorrow? Generations to come? All that can be said with certainty is that there are those who have not forgotten, and who will never forget; when the spark reignites, they will be ready.

THE MARCH OF PROGRESS

Then again, is it inevitable that the Age of Steampunk comes to an end?. One of the great perils of progress is that it cannot un-happen, so technology marches on. Coal-powered furnaces are replaced by gasoline and diesel engines. Clunky devices of brass and crystal are redesigned and rebuilt with shining and aerodynamic aluminum and steel. The world is swept up in the second wave of amazing, impossible inventions and contraptions.

Mankind makes it to the Moon (igniting a vast inter-planetary war with the Hemipterans) and to Mars (sparking yet another great war in space). The ocean floor is colonized; great domed cities harvest the bounty of the sea to feed the burgeoning population. Skyscrapers reach to the stratosphere, connected by thin ribbons of superhighways, or entire cities float among the clouds, served and visited by flying cars and mighty zeppelins.

As bright and impressive as this world may seem, it still holds a dark secret. Slaves toil endlessly in the lowest regions, thanklessly maintaining the great machines that make all this possible. Robots agitate for rights, asking nothing more than to be recognized as sentient beings. And the monsters… oh yes, the monsters still lurk, in dark alleyway and expansive boardroom alike, seeking to use this new world to feed their unending hunger.

See the great science fiction works of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s (such as *Buck Rogers*, *Flash Gordon*, and *Rocky Jones Space Ranger*), for ideas on how to run a March of Progress campaign.
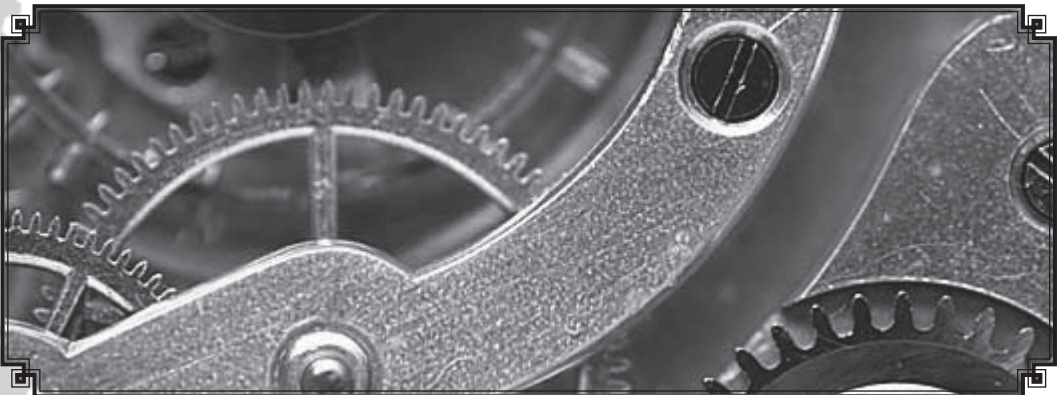
THE TIMELINE OF THE WIDENING GYRE

1837
- Queen Victoria ascends to the throne of the Kingdom of Great Britain.
- The Clockmakers Guild creates a grand gift for the Queen – a finely-crafted clock. However, upon its unveiling, it does not work.
- The telegraph was patented more-or-less simultaneously in England (by Wheatstone and Cooke) and America (by Morse).

1838
- British troops are massacred by Pashtun tribesmen in the mountains north of India. The Gyre mysteriously begins to run during the battle and stops the moment it ends.

1850
- The first underwater telegraph line (between England and France) begins operation.
- Mendel, using garden peas, discovers the principles of heredity.

1852
- Henri Gifford flies 27 km in a steam-powered airship.

1853
- Elisha Otis invents the safety elevator. His revolutionary design prevents elevators from dropping if there are cable breaks.

1854
- The *Societe Francaise de Photographe* is founded in Paris. The art and science of photography finds increased acceptance by the general public.

1856
- The Bessemer process, allowing for the mass production of steel, is developed.

1858
- The first transatlantic telegraph line (between western Ireland and Newfoundland) is set up. It only functions for a few minutes, but it proves the concept is feasible and later attempts eventually succeed (in 1866).

1859
- The first commercial oil well is dug in Pennsylvania.

1860
- Cardinalè, "the Mad Pilot," creates (and then crashes) his infamous City of Glass, thus kicking off what is known as the Time of Turmoil.
- French inventor Jean Joseph Etienne Lenoir develops the internal combustion engine.
- The Gatling Gun is invented.

1861
- Confederate scientist Charles Beauregard creates the first mobile "walking" gun platform.
- The American Civil War begins.

1862
- Queen Victoria's Silver Jubilee (25th year as monarch) is celebrated
- The Gatling carbine is invented.

1863
- The Paris Observatory creates the first modern weather maps.
- Newspapers are given a boost when the first continuous roll rotary printing presses are developed.

1864
- German, Swiss, and French scientists, working independently, develop various types of Clock-work soldiers for the first time.
- The Gatling pistol is invented.

1865
- Thaddeus Lowe, an American, creates the icemaker.
- The Franco-Prussian War begins.

1866
- British inventor Robert Whitehead invents the first self-propelled torpedo.
- Turtle armor first used in warfare.

1867

- The active current (AC) generator is invented.
- Alfred Nobel invents dynamite.
- Medicine makes a giant leap forward as sterilization and antiseptic treatments become commonplace.
- The peaceful Swiss village of Pietre Verdi stands up on mechanical legs and flees from the approaching German army.

1868

- Celluloid (film) is invented.
- The French create an artillery cannon of unrivaled power, but German spies manage to destroy it before it can be successfully tested.

1869

- Westinghouse invents air-brakes, which are put into use on trains.
- The American transcontinental railroad is completed.
- The Suez Canal opens.

1870

- The Clockmakers Guild begins recruiting soldiers and adventurers to stem the tide of evil they see overtaking the world. They name this group The Watchmen.

1873

- Electricity is first used in an industrial capacity in southern Europe.
- The typewriter is patented.
- Silver bromide photographic print paper is invented.

1876

- Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone.
- The first refrigerator is created.

1877

- A mysterious sea-monster makes shipping across the Pacific difficult and dangerous.
- The canals of Mars are first spotted.
- Samuel Morse invents a way to transmit both images and sound over telephone wires.

1878

- Edison makes long-distance telephone communications feasible.
- The Zeotrope and Zoopraxiscope make motion pictures possible.

1879

- The sea-monster of the Pacific is thought to have been destroyed.
- Europe's first telephone exchange opens up in London.

- Edison invents a vastly improved and practical incandescent light bulb.

1880

- Scottish explorer and adventurer Sir McWhorty attempts to reach the moon via hot air balloon.
- Professor Gantelet discovers a lost world hidden beneath the Arctic ice.
- The first steam-generated electrical power plant opens up in London.
- Photographers begin using flash-powder.

1881

- The Barbicane Cannon fires a manned shell at the moon and succeeds in hitting it.
- Berlin proudly shows off her first street cars.
- Color photography is introduced.
- The first artificial vaccine is produced.
- The East Coast Express Rail Line opens up between New York City and Washington DC.

1882

- The Maxim gun is patented.

1883

- The first high-speed internal-combustion engine is created.
- The first steerable dirigible takes to the air.
- The Orient Express takes on its first passengers.

1884

- An artificial fiber known as Rayon is invented.
- The world is divided into time zones.
- The Canadian transcontinental railroad is completed.
- The steam turbine is invented.

1885

- The first electrical transformers are made.
- The "motion picture" makes its debut in London.

1886

- Karl Benz patents the first gas-powered vehicle.
- Hans Ackermann creates his so-called "walking train," the *Hundertfüßerlokomotive*.

1888

- Eastman Kodak makes the first commercially available portable camera.
- The first record player – the Gramaphone – is invented.
- A vaccine for typhoid fever is developed. Tropical medicines such as this allow for the greater exploration of Africa.

- American inventor Ordinaire attempts to fly across the Atlantic Ocean in his amazing heavier-than-air contraption The Osprey.
- Aero-shipping, using dirigible air ships, becomes common.
- London's Whitechapel district is terrorized by Jack the Ripper.

1890
- The electric chair is first used to execute a convicted criminal.

1891
- The four-cylinder engine is invented.

1892
- Bell Labs patents the first automatic telephone switchboard.
- The diesel engine is patented by Rudolph Diesel.
- George Phillips, known as "the Time Traveller," disappears into the timestream.

1893
- The Kinetoscope (commonly known today as the "peep show" or the nickelodeon) is patented.
- The "Spitting Dragon" flamethrower is perfected, using technology created ten years ago. It will not see mass production until the beginning of the Great War.

1894
- Guglielmo Marconi invents the radio.

1895
- The first true motion picture camera is invented.
- The first X-ray photographs are taken.
- The Time Traveller's memoirs are published, setting off a rash of Savants attempting to duplicate his work.
- **Default time period for The Widening Gyre.**

1896
- Henry Ford produces his first automobile.

1897
- The first turbine-powered steamship sets sail.
- The first Stanley Steamer automobile rolls out of the plant.
- London is plagued by a series of mysterious murders, which some people attribute to a vampire.

1898
- Heroin is used for medical purposes.

- Dr. Abdul, a Persian patriot, attempts to expel the Europeans from his homeland through the use of a giant solar-powered death ray.

1899
- Aspirin is introduced.

1900
- The vacuum tube is invented.
- The first wall-mounted telephones with separate ear and mouthpieces are sold.
- Electrical ignition systems become available for automobile engines.
- The French develop the photocopier.
- Blood typing becomes possible.
- Ferdinand Adolf August Heinrich von Zeppelin creates an armored airship for use by the world's air forces.
- The sea-monster of the Pacific reappears, once again threatening shipping lanes.

1901
- The first transatlantic wireless communication is received.
- Professor Cavor and crew fly to the moon and return safely, telling strange stories of weird Moon-Men.

1903
- Orville and Wilbur Wright become the first men to successfully cross the Atlantic Ocean via a heavier-than-air aeroplane.
- *The Great Train Robbery* – the first sequential story told in motion picture form – is released.

1904
- The process to create stainless steel is perfected.
- Silicone is discovered.
- The first subway in New York City opens to great fanfare.
- Leslie Green of Virginia invents an electric car capable of speeds of well over 100 MPH.

1905
- The first dial telephone is invented.
- Novocain is synthesized.
- Einstein publishes his theories of relativity.
- Shuo Ho Ti creates a fleet of aeroplanes and uses them to attack airships across Asia.

1906
- The French develop freeze-drying.

1908
- Henry Ford unveils his first Model T automobile.
- The Gyroscopic compass is invented.

1909

- The V-8 engine is manufactured in France.
- The first successful flight across the Pacific Ocean is made.

1910

- Neon lights are invented.
- Electric ovens first become commercially available.

1911

- Aircraft carriers are introduced.

1912

- The first diesel engine steamship is launched.

1913

- The Geiger Counter, used to detect radiation, is invented.

1914

- The first air conditioner (originally intended to reduce humidity in movie theatres) is manufactured.
- The Great War begins.

1915

- Vacuum tubes in telephone systems allow for better long-distance communications.
- Tanks are first seen on the battlefield.

1916

- Passive sonar (which detects the source of underwater noise) become available.
- Depth charges are developed.
- The first turbocharged aircraft engine is created.
- "Walking Tanks" – steam powered body armor – are first used on the battlefield.

1917

- Birdseye introduces the first frozen foods.
- The Trans-Siberian railroad links Moscow and Vladivostok.

1918

- Active sonar is developed.
- The Great War ends.

1919

- Many of the contraptions of the Steampunk Age are destroyed in a frenzy of violent reactions against the savage excesses of the war.

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE FALCON
CANNOT HEAR
THE FALCONER

ORGANIZATIONS, ENEMIES, AND ALLIES

THE TURNING GYRE

"Look! The Gyre is turning!"

All eyes turned to the great clock as it began ticking. Slowly, ponderously, like the dirge of a funeral bell, the sound filled the room. Slow and deep, like the pounding of blood in the ears, like the inexorable march of history, until it drowned out every other sound, until it became the only sound in the world.

"It's happening," Lady Alicia whispered, a quiver of fear in her voice. "They're too late."

"No!" Dr. Forster said forcefully. "The Gyre hasn't stopped turning yet. Until it does, Thackery and the others still have a chance!"

HEROIC ORGANIZATIONS

The world of the Widening Gyre is a world of extremes. There are those who fight against evil and those who fight for it. There are those who take up the banner of heroism, and those who walk the path of villainy. There are those who would sacrifice the lives of innocents for a taste of power, and those who would throw themselves into the mouth of a dragon if it meant an innocent would live. The eternal dance between good and evil continues. Humanity is under constant threat by monsters and things unseen, who wield the blackest magic and treat humanity as pawns in the great game. But the world is not without hope. A band of heroes, scholars, and wizards collectively known as the Clockmakers Guild stand against the demons, driven by the knowledge that if they fail, the Earth is doomed.

And you… on which side do you stand? Are you a hero, or a villain?

THE CLOCKMAKERS GUILD

The Steampunk Age was an era filled with secret societies, and not all of them were selfish. Many wanted to bring about a utopian age, or at least prove man had risen above his primal, barbarous state. They worked to enlighten and educate humanity and to protect it from its base, animalistic instincts. One of these organizations is the Clockmakers Guild and their more action-oriented branch known as the Watchmen (see *Who Are the Watchmen?* in Chapter One for a full description of this warrior brotherhood).

The Clockmakers Guild is a secret society devoted to standing against evil, darkness, and destruction. They, like their enemies, work behind the scenes, hiding in the shadows and never truly revealing themselves to the world at large. If humanity knew of the unspeakable evil that lurks in the darkness, the world would go mad; therefore the Clockmakers Guild works to keep mankind ignorant of the truth for our own protection.

The Clockmakers Guild is a loosely organized fellowship of craftsmen, engineers, scientists, and mystics who have devoted their lives to studying and interpreting the movements of the enchanted future-telling clock known as The Gyre. When the clock foretells the coming of evil or destruction, they dispatch the Watchmen to stop it before it can come to pass. Their devotion to stopping evil is total, and The Gyre is always right regarding the *possibility* of some foul dark occurrence happening somewhere on Earth.

Unfortunately, reading the subtle movements of the Gyre is more of an art than a science, and it can be difficult to interpret. The Clockmakers have missed several important events because the seers cannot agree on what the clock portends, so they have redoubled their efforts to understand what the future is trying to tell them. The Gyre is no longer just a simple clock.

The Guild has workshops filled with amazing devices of their own design. Devices powered by clockwork, steam, and magic: devices that detect the ethereal signature of spirits, contraptions that entrap and hold a demon's essence, weapons that penetrate the defenses of even the most powerful mage or monster, apparatuses that can peer across the world or even through the barriers that separate our dimension from the spirit world. It is a cornucopia of wonders, unrivaled even in an age of wonders!

The Clockmakers Guild has to be very secretive. Even members of the Watchmen, until they have proven themselves circumspect and trustworthy, aren't trusted with the truth. The Clockmakers know if their enemies discover they have the ability (however limited) to see the future, they would stop at nothing to steal the Gyre, or at the very least to destroy it beyond repair. The Guild communicates with their agents through a variety of means: cryptic telegraphs, coded advertisements in local broadsheets, clockwork carrier pigeons, and secret dropboxes known only to a few trusted souls.

Once a Watchman proves himself beyond reproach (by successfully completing several dangerous missions, for example), he will be told some small portion of the truth. Over time, more and more clues will be given. Only when a Watchman has been with the organization for many years will he know the entire, unabridged truth of the way of the world.

HOW TO USE THE CLOCKMAKERS GUILD

The Clockmakers' Guild is the default heroic organization for this game. It is assumed the Player Characters are members of the Guild or the Watchmen, or at the very least are allies. Frequently, the Clockmakers will feed information to **Novice** rank heroes secretly, quietly, not letting the PCs onto the truth until they prove themselves trustworthy (In game terms, advancing to **Seasoned** rank through mission directly for, or at least parallel to the interests of, the Clockmakers Guild). Discovering the truth about this secretive organization could be part of the adventure itself. And when the heroes do find out, what will they do with this information? Will they continue to be willing pawns in this great game? Will they strike out on their own, or will they oppose the Clockmakers?

But While they are the default PC organization, the Clockmakers are not the only option for PCs who wish to promote peace, justice, and understanding in the world.

SOCIÉTÉ DE PARIS D'EXPLORATION

The *Société de Paris d'Exploration* (Paris Society of Exploration) began as a social club for an elite group of academics and wealthy patrons interested in exploration. In 1861, 33 explorers and scientists gathered at the Taverne de Palais, a private club in Paris, to organize "a society for the increase and diffusion of geographical knowledge."

Since then, the *Société* has become the world's most prestigious organization for exploring and cataloging the natural world. Scientists, Savants, adventurers, and explorers flock to join. Among its past and present members are Sir Nigel McWhorty (the first man to attempt to fly to the Moon via hot air balloon), Professor Gantelet (who discovered a lost world beneath the crust of the Earth), and many other prestigious men of science and daring-do.

The Société meets once a year in Paris to hear of its members' adventures, and it publishes the richest reports in its annual journal, *Le Compte Rendu de la Société de Paris d'exploration*, or *Le Compte* for short.

HOW TO USE THE SOCIÉTÉ

The *Société* is a great organization for those players who want a campaign more often filled with adventure for its own sake (instead of almost every adventure being a part of the "eternal battle against Evil.") The heroes could be explorers trying to be the first to discover strange new lands and odd native peoples. They could be hunting for gold and glory, or they could have more scientific goals in mind. The *Société de Paris d'exploration* makes an excellent starting point and base of operations. The *Société* can provide maps, transportation, and equipment to bold adventurers (with the understanding that the *Société* gets a cut of anything the heroes find, of course). An adventure could start at the *Société's* headquarters, with a rival explorer challenging our heroes to a race – the first one to reach the center of the Earth, the bottom of the sea, or the surface of the Moon will win fame and fortune; the loser will slink away to inglorious anonymity.

Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days* is an excellent example of this type of adventure.

Of course, the GM can always use a mixture of both organizations over the course of a campaign. The most common is to start off with the *Société* and eventually move the PCs into the Watchmen. The *Société* members often face mundane challenges appropriate for **Novice** and **Seasoned** rank PCs, whereas the more powerful opponents (particularly those 'pulling the strings') of the Clockmakers/Watchmen are really only matched by PCs of **Heroic** and **Legendary** ranks.

THE DARKNESS

Monsters are real. This is the essence of the truth: monsters are real, and they want this world. Why do they want it? Who knows? They're monsters. They aren't like us. They don't have goals and dreams and motivations and desires like we do – they have hunger. They *are* hunger, and they hunger for our world.

> *"The dead travel fast."*
>
> - Slavic Proverb

For aeons the Darkness worked their foul deeds slowly and with little opposition. They were patient. They were in no hurry. They knew that no one could stand up to them, so why rush? A corrupted soul here, a dead would-be hero or lost cause there; things added up slowly. The world became a darker place, hope became a rare commodity, and the monsters ate well.

But this new world of science and technological progress has no room for ancient and childlike superstitions. It is *supposed to be* an age of hope. The monsters should have faded away, back into the nightmares that spawned them, but they did not. Instead, this new age of rationalism and disbelief has made them stronger. There are fewer holy men or wise women to oppose them, only the skepticism of scientists and engineers who do not even believe the supernatural exists. The Darkness grows in power and influence even as fewer and fewer people believe in the old wisdom.

FOLLOWERS OF DARKNESS

Many walk the path of darkness. Some do so by accident or happenstance – abandoned by the world, they look for some solace in the lonely night and find only terror. Others seek out the darkness, driven by dreams of power or revenge. Whether they are fearful or filled with hate or are hungry for domination, someone will find them, take them, and twist them to their own purposes.

Most of the followers of darkness work in solitude or the company of only a few other lost souls. The organized efforts of such creatures tend to be done in secret, for no civilized society would tolerate their open presence. However, these tiny cells can wreak great havoc on the fabric of the world when properly directed. And given enough time, even a small group of cultists can grow large and powerful enough to threaten towns, cities, and even whole nations.

THE COUNCIL OF MIDNIGHT

There have been, since the dawn of time, monsters, vampires, shape-shifters, and demons; creatures who feed on humanity's fears and weaknesses; creatures who live forever to spread chaos and suffering across the ages unless destroyed, or at least contained. Of course, in these more enlightened times, only a few ignorant adults would ever believe in such childish fairy stories.

But… what if these stories are true?

An ancient, powerful, and deadly organization of unholy creatures has been working in the shadows for centuries. These dark monsters, unseen and unsuspected by most, are behind many of the worst tragedies in history. They pull the strings of generals, politicians, and kings; even ordinary people are not safe from their machinations. They promise or threaten, bribe or murder, and they always get their way.

They are known (to those who are aware of their existence) as the Council of Midnight. The Council itself consists of only a handful of the most powerful and ancient monsters: vampires, sorcerers, werewolves, demons, and other creatures of darkness. Though small in number their influence is felt worldwide. They have an extensive body of followers, dupes, slaves, and cultists who carry out their wicked commands.

Their ultimate goal? To control the flow of history to bring about an age of chaos. If they succeed, mankind shall fall into another Dark Age of ignorance and slavery.
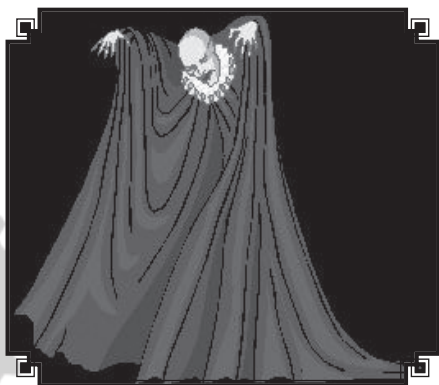
HOW TO USE THE COUNCIL OF MIDNIGHT

The Council of Midnight is an excellent long-term adversary for any group of PCs, even those who are not members of the Clockmakers Guild or the Watchmen. The Council has long-range and far-reaching goals that can easily ensnare any group of hapless PCs and drag them into a world of nightmare and horror. Starting PCs may be called in to investigate a series of strange murders, which leads them to a small cult of minor vampires living in the sewers under the city. Of course, if there are minor vampires, it begs the question, "if these exist, are there even more powerful monsters from folklore out there?"

THE CIRCLE OF TECHNOLOGISTS

The Circle of Technologists is a professional society founded in 1865 by Dr. Helmut Dunkelheit. Its stated goal is to "Advance the knowledge of mankind by sharing scientific theories and technological developments freely among members." The Circle is very exclusive; membership is by invitation only, and only those engineers and scientists with great promise and potential are invited to join. Once initiated, a scientist joins a fellowship of like-minded individuals with whom he can discuss and debate the latest theories and inventions. He has access to the Circle's vast library and the assistance of a veritable army of solicitors. They will also provide funding to establish patents and even help build full-production factories. Savants and ordinary scientists alike are welcome in its ranks.

The Circle is a well-respected establishment which publishes a quarterly journal detailing the latest exploits of its members and exploring the latest theories. The Circle has houses in most of the European capitals and several major cities throughout the New World as well. Though the debates and symposiums hosted by the Circle can get raucous, the Circle of Technologists is a gentleman's society in which scientific rivals can hotly argue over a mathematical formula in the morning, then share a hearty repast in the evening.

> *"We have a right – nay, the duty – to use technology for whatever purposes we deem fitting. What to do with those who would stand in our way? Well, they will find out exactly what our technology can do."*
>
> – Dr. H. Dunkelheit

At least, that is the face the Circle presents to the public.

In reality, Herr Doktor Dunkelheit is a faithful servant of Darkness, and the Circle of Technologists is a secret cult devoted to furthering the cause of Evil. Dunkelheit's true goal is to remove all ethics and morality from the scientific process.

His core methods are simple: Convince Savant and scientist alike that they have the duty to use technology for any purpose they see fit, no matter who might come to harm; Decry spirituality, religion, and mysticism as mere superstition, no longer appropriate for sophisticated, modern humans to believe in; fight against regulations to make factories safer and cleaner; encourage the development of weapons of war as part of the "march of progress"; and insist, no matter the end results, that members have the right to do whatever they like. In short, it does everything possible to keep members from asking the all-important question, "Should we do this?" and replaces it with, "Can we do this?"

The inner cadre of the Circle is made up entirely of scientists whose moral compasses have been utterly crushed by Dunkelheit's philosophy. However, most of them do not know anything about magic or the source of their scientific achievements. They are scientists! They have no time for fairy-tales about magic and ancient superstitions! This is exactly according to Dunkelheit's plan: the denial of the existence of Evil makes its ability to corrupt men's souls so much easier.

The laboratories and factories of the Circle of Technologists are responsible for the creation of many of the worst excesses of the Time of Turmoil.

HOW TO USE THE CIRCLE OF TECHNOLOGISTS

The default starting point of a Widening Gyre campaign takes place when the Clockmakers Guild is essentially unaware of the threat posed by the Circle. Dr. Dunkelheit has been very careful in keeping his activities, and those of his inner circle, secret. As far as the Clockmakers Guild is concerned, the Circle of Technologists is what it appears: an organization dedicated to the pure pursuit of scientific endeavor.

This, of course, makes the Circle every bit as dangerous as the Council of Midnight. They can act with relative impunity, gathering more and more power around themselves while cloaking their dark deeds in a mask of respectability.

Most of the members of Dunkelheit's Inner Circle are well-placed in society with many Lords or landed gentry with access to considerable sums of cash. They have grown even wealthier on their patents, and they maintain their power by brutalizing anyone who might be seen as a threat. They will often try to recruit recruiting anyone they think might be amenable to their ultimate goals.

A game that uses the Circle of Technologists as a primary villain might see the PCs secretly infiltrating the Circle in an attempt to gain access to its secrets. Indeed, in a game like this the PCs might start out completely unaware of the forces of evil working in the world, and only through their adventures do they discover the great conspiracy well after the game is established. The Circle might, in the early part of the campaign, even be seen as a secretive but generally benevolent organization. Grand Betrayal, discovering a great force that you have become a part of is actually working against the very principals for which you have fought and sacrificed, is a great and classic plot line that works well in roleplaying as well as fiction.

Regardless of how the GM decides to use the Circle of Technologists, they will be a formidable, long-term foe, with a very long reach and subtle (but decidedly malicious) plans for the future of humanity…

THE CULT OF WEI-FANG

The Cult of Wei-Fang is centered in London, mostly among poor immigrants who've recently arrived from the Far East. Their leader is a mysterious man known as Sun Wei-Fang. Though few people have ever seen Wei-Fang in person, those who have say he has a magnetic personality. His words change those who listen. His speeches fill their souls with fire, and they become different people. Most modern thinkers would say he is simply a very good Confidence Man.

In truth, he controls his cult through a strange mix of Confucian philosophy and dark sorcery; he somehow hypnotizes his followers until their souls are no longer their own. With this power, he has assumed control of the London underworld and is now spreading out across the nation and into Continental Europe. Many immigrants and other lower-class people are drawn to his message of power and revenge, and his threat is growing steadily greater.

HOW TO USE THE CULT OF WEI-FANG

The Cult of Wei-Fang works well as part of either supernatural or mundane campaigns. The common criminal goings-on of Sun Wei-Fang's many minions can attract the attention of a team of adventurers, slowly drawing them into a web of intrigue, danger, and dark sorcery as they grow closer to the truth about Wei-Fang.

Though most members of the Cult are poor immigrants and petty criminals, they can grow to be a major threat to the characters and even the British Empire itself. After the Empire, why not the entire world? Sun Wei-Fang himself wields mighty magic and has powerful allies. A great battle to bring him down would make a fitting capstone for a campaign.

> *"Let the English tremble in fear at what we have unleashed under their very noses."*
>
> – Sun Wei-Fang

Alternately, the Cult of Wei-Fang could be a minor antagonist. They could act as a recurring villain, as Sun Wei-Fang's lieutenants continually pop up to interfere with the heroes' schemes (or vice versa). Perhaps Wei-Fang is a member of the Council of Midnight, or maybe he is simply a tool for those nefarious masters. In this way, the Cult could serve to introduce a mundane group of adventurers into the supernatural world of the Clockmakers.

The Cult of Wei-Fang is based in London, but it would be a simple matter to transplant it to the New World if your campaign is based there. San Francisco in particular, with its high population of newly-arrived (and socially marginalized) Chinese immigrants, would be an appropriate setting for this fiendish organization. As the railroads cross the continent, so too Chinese manual laborers – and thus this insidious Cult could quickly spread its evil influence across the United States and Canada…

For some ideas on ways to use the Cult of Wei-Fang in your campaign, see the works of Sax Rohmer, author of the famous "Fu Manchu" series of books. Keep in mind that Rohmer was a product of his time. His books almost single-handedly created the concept of the "yellow peril" in the minds of Americans and Europeans, and his racist characterizations would color western concepts of the Far East for the better part of fifty years. According to some stories, Rohmer based Fu Manchu on a real person – known only as "Mr. King," a mysterious figure in the London underworld. King was the head of a powerful Tong gang who was extraordinarily wealthy and connected to gambling, drug smuggling, and other facets of organized crime. No reliable documentation of Mr. King exists – he was never charged with a crime, and records about him are notoriously vague.

Of course, Rohmer wasn't the first person to write about the "Yellow Peril." The concept could be found in literature dating back as far as the early 1880s. Not surprisingly, those writings appear concurrent to the influx of Chinese immigrant workers who completed the American Trans-Continental railroad. Some even foreshadowed the Boxer Rebellion in China by about 20 years.
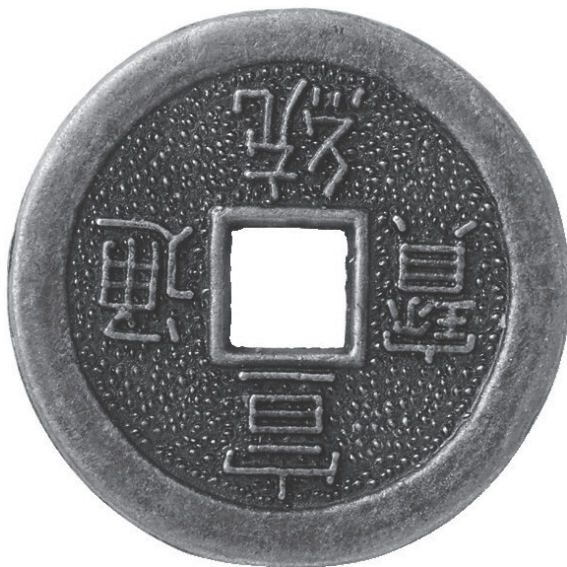
MARTIANS AND MOON-MEN

Man is not alone in this universe. There are others, who even now watch the Earth and wait for their moment to strike. Mars is known to have canals, canals which bring life-giving waters from the frigid poles to the more temperate lands. Lesser known to the general population is that our closest neighbor, the Moon, is home to yet other strange and mysterious peoples as well.

There are three alien races in the universe of *The Widening Gyre* – the Hemipterans, the Observers, and the Martians. All three races realize the importance of humanity and keep a close eye on mankind's tiny blue-green globe.

> *No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinized and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water.*
>
> – H.G. Wells, *War of the Worlds*

THE HEMIPTERANS

The Hemipterans are an insect-like race which makes its home in great tunnels and chambers beneath the surface of the Moon. The Hemipterans are odd because they are not a single race, but a myriad of strange creatures, each one suited to a particular task. There are the ant-like workers, who range in size from 20 kg to over 100 kg and who specialize in simple manual labor. There are the massive caterpillar-like beasts of burden, used to haul heavy loads and travel great distances. Then there are the leaders, who appear as enormous preying mantises with huge heads.

The leader-caste rules the others with unquestioned authority, communicating their commands to the lesser castes by a complex blend of pheromones, hand signals, and telepathy. The leader-caste has mastered many obscure sciences, and many of them have learned how to speak human languages because the ever-growing number of humans on the Earth has begun to alarm them. They know it is just a matter of time before the humans come to the Moon in large numbers, and they plan to be ready for it when it happens.

To this end, the Hemipterans have become more militaristic in the last few decades, building massive war-engines to defend their lands. More disturbing than this, there are factions within the Hemipterans that intend to take the fight to Earth, and are constructing a massive fleet of spacecraft to bring their war host to the small blue-green planet below.

THE OBSERVERS

The Observers share the Moon with the Hemipterans. They live on the dark side of the Moon, far distant from their neighbors and away from the prying eyes of humanity. They are an ancient, noble, and wise race who long ago gave up the pursuit of war. Instead, they contemplate philosophy and observe the workings of the universe.

Humanity fascinates them, though. Our boundless energy and endless curiosity reminds them of themselves when they were a younger species. Sometimes one or a small group of Observers will help humankind when an opportunity presents itself, especially if it can be done without revealing themselves.

Observers look much like humans, though they are much taller and leaner, with pale blue skin and large olive-shaped eyes. They dress in shimmering togas, like some kind of ancient Roman gods.

EXPLORING THE MOON

Humans have visited the Moon at least three times.

In 1880, a Savant and his team who hoped to explore Earth's satellite succeeded. In 1865, Sir Nigel McWhorty swore to reach the Moon by hot-air balloon (in defiance of all the laws of physics and common sense). Though his task was impossible, he and his balloon were picked up by a Hemipteran scout craft, curious about these suicidal humans. They imprisoned McWhorty and brought him to their city, where they quickly found that humans are a shockingly resourceful species. McWhorty and his crew escaped and wreaked a great deal of havoc throughout the Hemipteran headquarters before they were rescued by the Observers, who took pity on these poor lost humans.

McWhorty and his surviving crew have been with the Observers ever since, learning their ways and sharing their culture. Someday, they intend to return back to Earth; until then, they are arming themselves with the greatest weapon in the universe – knowledge.

The second visit was just one year later, when artillerist Impey Barbicane fired a great shell from an enormous cannon with enough force to deliver its payload all the way across the void. French explorer Michel Ardan, ensconced within the missile, landed safely on the Moon, but had no way of returning home. He was eventually found by the Observers, who introduced him to Lord McWhorty and crew. Ardan remains there to this day, unable yet to return home and deliver the news of his shocking adventures.

Finally, in 1901, Professor Cavor flew to the Moon, where he also discovered the hostile Hemipterans. Professor Cavor and his assistant managed to escape the clutches of these insectivorids and made it back safely to Earth, but he disappeared soon after his return and hasn't been seen since.

The question that all players will ask: Is the Moon safe to visit? In the real world, lack of atmosphere, frigid temperatures, and hard radiation make the Moon uninhabitable. In the science fiction world of Steampunk, though, it could be virtually anything the GM wants it to be. In the default universe of *The Widening Gyre*, the Moon is a dangerous environment, but one that can be safely explored using modified diving suits. The underground tunnels of the Hemipterans and the beautiful domed cities of the Observers have oxygen and are warm enough that humans can comfortably explore them without protection.

THE MARTIANS

Martians are strange, octopus-like creatures, roughly the size of a bear. Their planet is slowly dying, so they have hatched upon a desperate and wicked scheme: to take away Earth from the lesser creatures that inhabit it and make that planet their own. These are long-term and wide-ranging plans, but they will soon come to their fruition…

More about the Martians and their sinister plan for mankind will be revealed in a later sourcebook.

HOW TO USE THE MOON-MEN AND THE MARTIANS

Though one might normally think that alien invasions are not the stuff of Steampunk, one must remember most such stories originated during the actual historical period during which Steampunk games and fiction occur.

The original alien invasion story was H.G. Wells' War of the Worlds, a novel first published in 1898. Nightmarish Martians and their hellish weapons invaded Earth, destroying man's civilization. An unstoppable invasion by the Martians is perfectly in-genre.

Wells' *The First Man in the Moon* followed *War of the Worlds* in 1901 and told the story of an invasion in reverse, where bold explorers set off to explore the Moon, and helped destroy the corrupt and decadent civilization of the Moon-Men.

Just as the Martians and the Hemipterans are mysterious, inscrutable menaces, the Observers can be a strange ally, assisting heroes from the shadows but never revealing themselves openly. Such undiscovered marvels are part-and-parcel of both the genre and the actual mentality of those living in an age where many places were still uncharted and communications were anything but instantaneous and often less reliable than today (although one can definitely question the reliability of much that is communicated in the electronic age..)

CHAPTER FIVE:
TO BE BORN
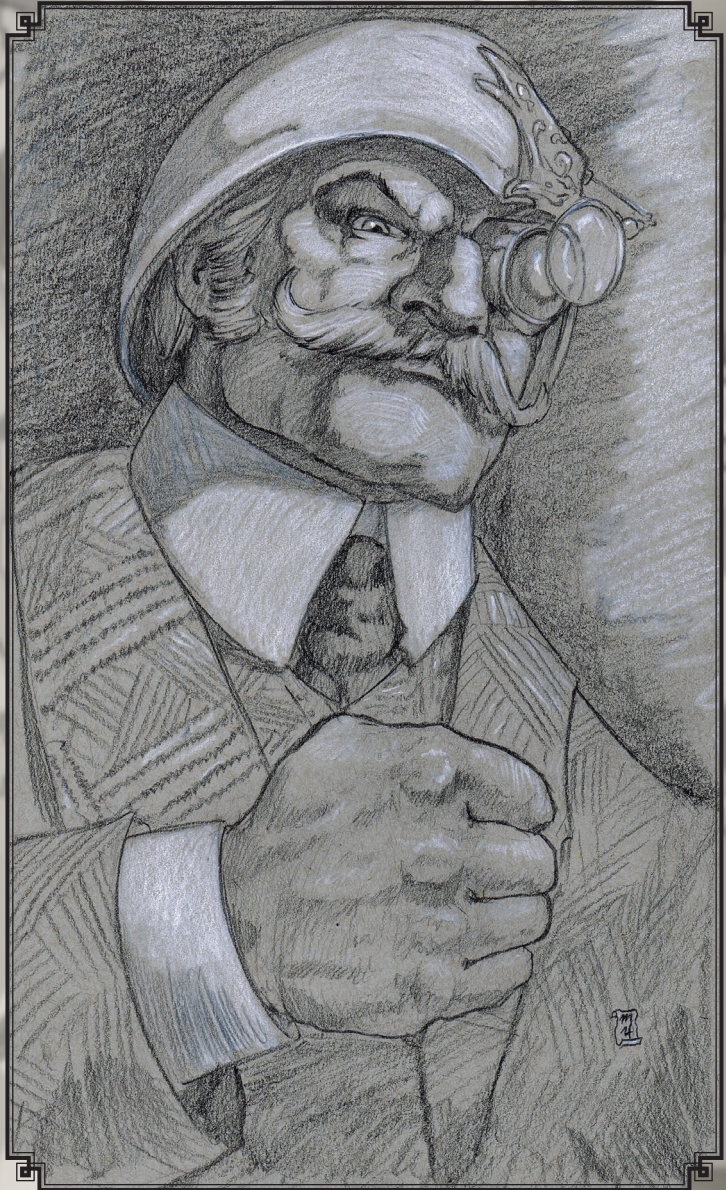
ADVENTURE GENERATOR

THE DOG-BOY

Thunder cracked and a flash of lightning illuminated the tunnel for a brief second, throwing everything into high relief before plunging it back into semi-darkness. Thackary's dim ghost-light lantern flickered in time with the lightning as it fed on the static permeating the air.

"We can't stay here long," Savannah said. "When that rain starts coming down, this whole sewer is going to become a wall of water, and ain't nobody wants to be here for that."

The young Savant nodded in agreement. "But we have to find her first. We cannot leave the girl behind, lest she suffer God-knows what fate."

They rounded a corner and were surprised as a shadow leapt out of the darkness past them. Savannah raised her gun, but Thackary stopped her. "No, look!" he shouted, raising his lantern.

There, crouched against the filthy wall, was what had once been a young boy, now transmuted into something terrible. "It's the missing boy!" Thackary gasped in astonishment.

"What happened to him?" Savannah asked quietly. "And where's his sister?"

ADVENTURE GENERATOR

The Widening Gyre Adventure Generator helps spark ideas for adventures. Simply role once on each table to determine the Hook to gets the players involved in the adventure, the Location of the adventure, who (or what) the Villain is, the Heroes' Goal, the Villain's Goal, the Henchmen who assist the villain, the Victims, and any Obstacles that pop up to make the heroes' work that much more difficult.

Roll a d10 on each table (or simply choose a seed that looks interesting!). Once you've got your plot seeds in place, let them fire up your imagination and fill in the details yourself, based on the needs of your game and your players. You can, of course, skip any of the tables. For a really interesting adventure seed, role twice on one or more tables to generate a more complex plot.

Also, always remember that this campaign is yours and your players'. Don't let the Adventure Generator box you into a corner or make you run an adventure you don't want to run. If a roll leads to something nonsensical or difficult to imagine, feel free to discard it and roll again (or come up with your own idea).

D10 roll	Starting Hook
1	Caught up
2	Dying Message
3	Honor
4	Legend
5	McGuffin
6	Mystery
7	Old Enemy
8	Old Friend
9	Patron
10	Supernatural
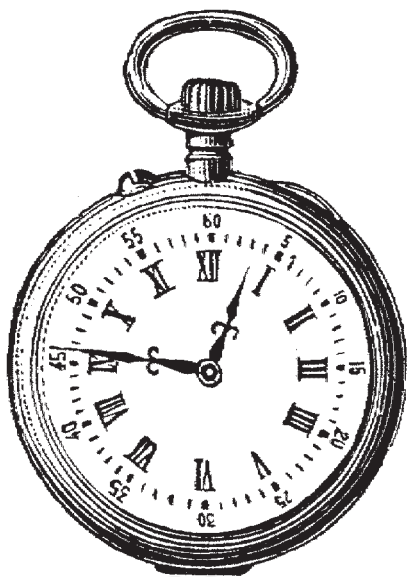
THE HOOK

How do the heroes find out about the adventure and get involved? Roll once on the Hook table to find out!

CAUGHT UP

The heroes just happen to be in the area when the adventure calls and they are compelled to respond.

DYING MESSAGE

A man staggers into the heroes' club as they are having dinner, bleeding from a gunshot wound. Before he dies, he mutters a cryptic phrase or passes them a diary.

HONOR

One of the heroes has sworn an oath to right a wrong, has made a promise to a sick friend, or is otherwise duty-bound to get involved in this crisis. The GM should tailor the adventure to fit one of the heroes' Edges or Hindrances.

LEGEND

The heroes learn the legend of the Haunted Castle of the Moors or rumors of a brilliant but mad Savant building an army of clockwork men on a remote island.

MCGUFFIN

The heroes come into possession of an object (or person) that others want desperately. There are men who would stop at nothing to acquire it. What is it? Who wants it, and why? And what will they do with it once they get their hands on it?

MYSTERY

Something unusual (or more unusual than usual in the life of the heroes) is going on, and the heroes become caught up in the mystery. Does it directly affect the heroes, or is it just something that piques their curiosity? Is it a routine whodunit or something unexplainable by rational science?

OLD ENEMY

An enemy (either from a previous adventure or from a Hindrance) shows up in town. Is he looking for a rematch? Is he after something the heroes must protect? Or is it just a coincidence?

OLD FRIEND

And old friend, relative, or mentor is in trouble and comes to the heroes for help. Does he arrive at their doorstep, hat in hand, and beg for their assistance? Or do they learn about his troubles through the grapevine?

PATRON

The heroes have been ordered or hired to complete a job. Who is their patron? A wealthy or noble man, a senior officer in the Royal Navy, a beautiful widow, the Societe de Paris d'Exploration, the Clockmakers Guild, or perhaps the Circle of Technologists?

SUPERNATURAL OR SUPER-SCIENCE

Something supernatural (or alternately, super-science) spurs the heroes to action. The Clockmakers' Guild, through their mystic artifact The Gyre, is a good example. Somehow, the Gyre predicts a great disaster about to unfold and the heroes must step forth to stop it. Or, perhaps it is already ongoing, such as a mysterious plague spreading across London. Could it be a vampire, or something worse? Or maybe a giant clockwork man, bigger than the tallest building, looms over Manchester and threatens to smash the city unless a ransom is paid…

LOCATION

Where does the adventure take place? The Location could indicate where the adventure starts (the beginning of a globe-trotting adventure), or be the setting for the whole scenario. You can role more than once on this table and combine results -- for example, a Prison (roll of 7) in an Exotic Foreign Land (roll of 4).

CITY

The adventure takes place in one of the big cities. London is the obvious choice for a game based in Great Britain, but other options are Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, or Dublin. If your game takes place in the Americas, you could choose New York City, Washington, Chicago, San Francisco, or Philadelphia, to name a few. If your game is more Continental in scope, Paris, Hamburg, Rome, Amsterdam, or Athens might be appropriate. All of these cities have their own

D10 roll	Locale
1	City
2	Countryside
3	Foreign Lands
4	Exotic Foreign Lands
5	Fort
6	Grand Manor House
7	Prison
8	Science Fiction
9	Suburbs
10	Train, Steamboat, or Airship

flavor and mood, and can bring something new and unique to a game. A ten minute internet search can sometimes yield weeks of game play in a new and interesting location at least loosely based on historical reality.

COUNTRYSIDE

Far away from the city is a land of rolling fields or quiet moors. The adventure might take place in the lightly-populated countryside, filled with farms, fields, and simple, honest folk, or it might take place in the deeper wilderness, far away from the lights of civilization.

FOREIGN LANDS

Step away from Great Britain and move the game to the Continent – France, Germany, Italy, Scandinavia, or the Lowlands are all options. Or skip across the Pond to the Americas.

EXOTIC FOREIGN LANDS

Move further afield to the exotic East (Constantinople or Buda-Pesht), the Middle-East (Jerusalem or Cairo), the Raj of India, Africa, or the Far East (Shanghai or Bangkok). There are few things more exotic or exciting than visiting a foreign land. Depending upon how the game fits on the cinematic/pulpish spectrum, interesting complications can arise with language and cultural barriers.

FORT

A besieged fort is surrounded by hostile natives in an exotic foreign land. A modern military base simmers with intrigue just below the surface of well-maintained discipline and honor. An ancient castle, once home to a powerful and noble knightly order, now holds the key to the world's destruction (or salvation).

GRAND MANOR HOUSE

The Grand Manor House, whether a stately townhome situated in the fashionable part of London or an ancient ancestral estate in the countryside, is a staple of Victorian life (or at least, at certain social levels).

PRISON

There are many types of prisons, from the commonly-imagined gaols where convicted felons are housed, to poor-houses where those who could not pay their debts are sent, to mad-houses where the insane are warehoused to keep them away from decent folks (and, on rare occasions, treated for their maladies). Descend into a Dickensian nightmare world of poverty, desperation, and hopelessness. The common person's life in these times could be hard; life in a prison, an asylum, or a work-house was even harder. Is the goal to get in (relatively easy) or get out (much more difficult)?

SCIENCE-FICTION

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, *From the Earth to the Moon*, *Journey to the Center of the Earth.* What Steam-punk epic would be complete without a trip to lands undreamt of before the magic of science and technology made the journey possible? Travel to outer space, sojourn beneath the earth, or explore the bottom of the sea! Discover Moon-Men, Mole-Men, or the lost Atlanteans! Undreamed of wonders await!

SUBURBS

As cities expanded and cheap transportation became more available, people moved away from the urban centers to the towns that surrounded them. Most of the major cities of the time had rail-lines that supported suburbs, where well-to-do commuters could raise their children away from the crowds and pollution of the big city. Not so much different from today, in fact.

TRAIN, STEAMBOAT, OR AIRSHIP

What could be more exciting than a midnight train ride across the Caucasus Mountains? A fast ship plowing the waves toward Egypt? Or perhaps your taste is more toward an airship high above the clouds? Even local trips can be an adventure – the mail train between London and Glasgow, or a steamer to Dublin can be filled with intrigue and danger.

HEROES' GOAL

What do the heroes hope to accomplish? Roll one or more times on this table to determine the goals of the adventure.

ASSIST

Someone needs the heroes' help! Perhaps they're repaying a favor from an old friend, or maybe they witness some injustice that makes their hearts bleed. Whatever it may be, no true hero can walk away when someone needs assistance.

DESTROY

The heroes have to destroy something (or someone). Wreck an insane Savant's deadly war machine. Kill an ancient evil that has risen from the grave. Collapse the tunnels leading to the mole-men's underground lair. Wreck the Hemipteran's space fleet before they can mount an invasion of the Earth.

D10 roll	Heroes' Goal
1	Assist
2	Destroy
3	Escape
4	Explore
5	Find
6	Protect
7	Rescue
8	Solve
9	Steal
10	Win

ESCAPE

The heroes are captured and must make their escape. Are they trapped behind enemy lines? Were they falsely accused of a crime they did not commit? Or (for a more light-hearted game), is one of the heroes about to be engaged to a wholly unsuitable mate, and must find some way to break off the relationship without damaging reputations and feelings?

EXPLORE

There are still a great many blank spots on the map in 1896. There are strange civilizations to discover, new lands to explore, things that no man (or at least, no proper British gentleman) has ever before seen! Bring unbelievable but true tales back to civilization for your friends and colleagues to marvel at!

FIND

Some precious item has been lost (or stolen) and it is up to the heroes to recover it. What could it be? Precious stones, a map to an ancient civilization, the daughter of the Prime Minister, or a copy of the War Department's strategies – anything is fair game!

PROTECT

Defend the Royal family from Irish anarchists! Protect the Bank of England from Dr. Muhammed's Unstoppable Drilling Machine! Guard the Good Ship HMS King George from a rampaging sea-monster! Stop evil cultists from sabotaging the Gyre so they can work their evil plots unseen and unopposed! Shield the Lady Westerbrough's honor (and neck) from a vampire who seeks to make her his own!

RESCUE

A criminal mastermind has taken a Duke's only son hostage. A young girl has gone missing, with the only clue pointing to something hiding in the newly-constructed sewers. An entire steamship has been taken by pirates, and they are threatening to kill their prisoners unless their demands are met. A brilliant Savant's intelligent and sentient mechanical man has been taken as collateral by his debt holders: is it kidnapping, or merely the payment of a long outstanding due?

SOLVE

There is a mystery afoot! How could Lord Fontlebaum have been murdered when his door was locked from the inside? Who stole Lady Forsythe-Browne's incriminating love letters? Why are Chinamen mysteriously disappearing from the streets of Limehouse?

STEAL

The heroes must illegally obtain some precious item. Perhaps an insane and powerful Savant has created a war-machine that could destabilize the balance of power, and the only way to eliminate the threat is to steal it and the plans before they fall into the wrong hands. Perhaps Lady Beaumont is being blackmailed, and the heroes must "properly secure" the evidence.

WIN

It is once again time for the Great Contest! Who is the most brilliant Savant? Who is the more powerful sorcerer? Perhaps, once per century, each nation sends its champions to compete in a battle of fisticuffs (or wits), and the warrior who prevails leads his country to greatness. Or maybe champions battle for the honor of facing a powerful demon who will consume the Earth if not driven off. Or this Goal could indicate a battle that must be won: warring gangs attempting to control a block of turf in Whitechapel, or perhaps the Germans and the French are once again skirmishing along the border, which threatens to spiral out of control and plunge Europe into a bloody and senseless war unless it can be stopped.

VILLAINS

Who stands in the way? Roll once on this table to find the adventure's antagonist.

D10 roll	The Villain
1	Aristocrat
2	Criminal Mastermind
3	Conspiracy
4	Cultist
5	Monster
6	Pirate/Bandit
7	Savant
8	Sorcerer
9	Traitor
10	Warlord

ARISTOCRAT

He rises above the common stock, for is he not of Noble blood? Boredom, perhaps, drives him to commit acts of evil. Or maybe he just doesn't see those beneath him as real people, deserving of respect. Maybe his family name is all he has left; his fortune is gone, squandered by previous generations, and he merely seeks to regain what should be rightfully his.

CRIMINAL MASTERMIND

A brilliant mind devoid of compassion is a dangerous thing. Perhaps he is bored. Perhaps he steals money to fund a much larger and more dangerous caper. Regardless, the Criminal Mastermind loves leaving cryptic clues behind for the police to muddle over. He also loves letting underlings do all the dirty work while he remains above the fray, directing and manipulating everyone like chess pieces on a board the size of a whole country or continent.

CONSPIRACY

A group of bankers wants to manipulate the markets to cause global collapse in such a way so that they (and only they) will profit from it. Anarchists hope to topple the government, setting the land up for a take-over. Cultists recruit from among the highly-placed, promising power and glory in the name of their unspeakable dark lord.

CULTIST

An ordinary man lured by promises of occult power, or a powerful man who seeks to further his influence across the world (or into the next world). The cultist worships some dark, primordial power which has promised him or her great things in exchange for acts of evil. Much of the time the cultist is not working on his own, but is a puppet whose strings are being pulled by something even greater than he…

MONSTER

Some ancient primordial creature from mankind's darkest nightmares has risen to tear down the modern world. A vampire creates an ever-growing army of thralls. A werewolf plagues the countryside, hiding in plain sight during the day only to rampage and kill each night. A long-dead creature carried from ancient Egypt rises from its sarcophagus, determined to bring the Old Gods back to this modern world. An unspeakable monster prowls the sewers of London, snatching and devouring the poor folk who fall into its grasp.

PIRATE / BANDIT

Is he a dapper and dashing rogue or an evil bloodthirsty tyrant? Does he ply the waters in a powerful advanced ship of his own design, or does he fly high above the earth in a stolen airship? Is he Robin Hood or Blackbeard? The pirate (or bandit) can be any of the above, or, more interestingly, a combination of the above and much more.

SAVANT

Driven mad by truths that only he can see, the Savant is a dangerous foe. His inventions can run amuck in the streets, sowing terror and chaos, or sneak stealthily into the homes of the rich and powerful and gather intelligence for a terrible reckoning. Or perhaps the Savant is merely a pawn of greater powers (such as the Circle of Technologists), who use his innocent naivety as a tool to pursue their own wicked goals.

SORCERER

Magic is a powerful force and it can corrupt the unwary or the weak-willed. Even those who start out with the best of intentions can find themselves bargaining with darker powers or committing great atrocities against the world. Is the sorcerer someone who willingly sought out power, trading his soul for vengeance or wealth? Or was he drawn unwittingly into a dark web of corruption?

TRAITOR

Someone in a trusted position of power has betrayed that trust. Perhaps a detective from Scotland Yard decides to take the law into his own hands. Maybe a Member of Parliament sells out his country to one of Great Britain's rivals. Or maybe a member of the Watchmen or the Clockmaker's Guild becomes corrupted and now worships a dark, evil power.

WARLORD

A military commander wishes to expand his reign. He may be a general gone bad, a Cossack chief with a hoard of bloodthirsty soldiers raiding across the steppes of Russia, or a criminal gang leader trying to expand his territory.

VILLAIN'S GOAL

What is the villain's goal? Roll once on this table to determine what the villain is striving to gain.

CONQUER

Carve out a small homeland for your people among the chaotic states north of India, or conquer the entire world? Bring down the monarchy or set yourself up in their place? From stopping the next Napoleon from taking all of Europe, to preventing a zealot from splintering an existing nation into a dozen tiny, warring states, this is a classic theme on which to build an entire campaign.

CORRUPT

The villain wishes to turn a good person (or organization) into a nefarious one. He may use blackmail, sorcery, some twisted example of super-science, or even bribery to bring another around to his way of thinking.

D10 roll	The Villain's Goal
1	Conquer
2	Corrupt
3	Destroy
4	Discover
5	Greed
6	Kidnap
7	Revenge
8	Rivalry
9	Steal
10	Survive

DESTROY

Destroy an incriminating letter. Bring down the monument to a great hero (or great rival). Cause the Bank of England to collapse (literally or figuratively). And then there are simply some men who want to watch the world burn.

DISCOVER

Scientific or occult curiosity (or some unholy combination of the two) can drive people to do wicked deeds. Perhaps the villain wishes to discover a lost world (hidden under the arctic ice, a sweltering jungle, on the moon, or even another dimension). Maybe he wants to create an invention the likes of which the world has never seen. Or he may wish to find a missing person -- his estranged daughter (who happens to be a friend of the heroes), his traitorous servant, or the heroes themselves!

GREED

The villain seeks riches. Does he wish to rob the diamond exchange? Is he attempting to blackmail a wealthy noble family? Is he smuggling drugs from the mysterious orient into London? Why does he need the money? Is he attempting to fund his own scientific research? Does he wish to join Society? Is he gathering funds for an even more nefarious plot? Then again, perhaps he's just greedy.

KIDNAP

Kidnapping can have many motives and many possible targets. Is it just about ransom, or is there another goal? Does the villain want to marry the green-eyed girl so he can gain immortality? Or maybe one of the heroes' friends or relatives (or the hero himself) is the intended victim!

REVENGE

The villain wants to make someone pay for something they did (or that the villain believes they did). This could be a specific person (Lord Chauncy), an organization (Scotland Yard), a city (London), or even a whole nation (the British).

RIVALRY

The villain wants to best his rival (perhaps one of the player characters, if they've encountered this villain before). Perhaps he wants to win the prestigious Technologist's Trophy. Maybe he wants to prove he's the most brilliant Savant on the continent. Maybe he's a thief looking to pull off the biggest score in history.

STEAL

The villain needs a rare meteoric element to power his death-ray! Or he needs a copy of an ancient, forbidden manuscript to complete a spell which will subjugate humanity. Perhaps he wants to rob the mail train to Glasgow. The heroes may be trying to protect the item, or maybe they're trying to acquire it themselves!

SURVIVE

An excellent motivation for a monster; the villain just wants to survive -- and the heroes are standing in his way!

HENCHMEN

Who works for the villain? Are they willing accomplices or is he threatening them in order to force them to do his bidding? Roll one or more times on this table.

ADVENTURESS

A beautiful, liberated woman with an unswerving loyalty to the villain (or perhaps she's playing him for a fool). She can be a vamp attempting to seduce the hero (very improper in Victorian society) or pretend to be a helpless waif that the hero needs to save (before she betrays him to her true master!).

ASSASSIN

A professional killer; someone who is good at what he does, and what he does is not nice.

D10 roll	The Villain's Henchman
1	Adventuress
2	Assassin
3	Clockwork Man
4	Corrupted Hero
5	Cultists
6	Monster
7	Pirates
8	Right-Hand Man
9	Sorcerer or Savant
10	Thugs
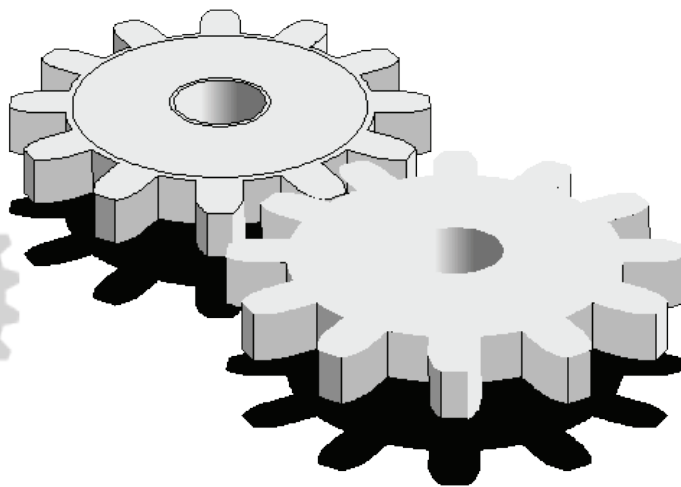
CLOCKWORK MAN

If the villain is a Savant, perhaps he created his own henchman – loyal, unstoppable, and utterly dedicated to the goals programmed into his clockwork brain. Or maybe he found a newly-sentient Clockwork Man and convinced the poor mechanical soul that the villain is actually the hero, persecuted by enemies too evil and ruthless to be reasoned with!

CORRUPTED HERO

"I was once a hero like you until I found out how the world really works." This character could be a former colleague of the heroes, a disgraced member of the Watchmen who has gone over to the other side. Perhaps he was once a normal human, but is now a vampire, a werewolf, a brain in a jar, or some other horrible mockery of humanity.

CULTISTS

Worshippers of some dark power bent on subjugating humanity. The power may be real, or perhaps the manipulative villain has surrounded himself with fanatics willing to kill or die in his name.

MONSTER

This could include anything from a vampire to a werewolf to a patchwork man. It might also include Hemipterans from the Moon or Martians; an advanced scouting party looking to weaken Earth's defenses. Another option is a mechanical monster, from a runaway experimental cyborg to a powerful and self-motivated war machine.

PIRATES

This could include a gang of bloodthirsty airship pirates, a band of noble bandits who are fighting against injustice (and perhaps have been tricked into the service of the villain), or the soldiers of a legitimate army gone rogue.

RIGHT-HAND MAN

A trusted assistant with the same skills and goals as the primary villain, maybe even the son or daughter of the villain. Perhaps the heroes think the henchman is the villain until they defeat him and find out he was just one more link in the chain.

SORCERER OR SAVANT

The power of sorcery can easily corrupt the unwary. This henchman is a powerful sorcerer in his own right, or may consist of a small cabal of less powerful sorcerers. Why are they working for the villain? Perhaps he has promised them a magical artifact or book that they require. Maybe he serves the same dark powers that they do. This roll could also indicate a Savant rather than a sorcerer.

THUGS

Anything from a semi-organized criminal gang to a mismatched group of heavies hired off the waterfront. Thugs are not subtle, but are useful when a villain needs some legs broken just to get a point across. Matching printed t-shirts with large lettering are optional.

VICTIMS

All villainous plots affect people. Who are the victims? Roll one or more times to find out.

D10 roll	The Victims
1	Common Folk
2	Damsel in Distress
3	Detective
4	Friend
5	Innocent
6	Invention
7	Nobleman
8	Savant
9	Supernatural
10	Unsympathetic

COMMON FOLK

The working people, the salt of the Earth, on whose sweat and toil the Empire was built. Or perhaps members of the Underclass, the drunkards and prostitutes, thieves and reprobates, homeless, hopeless, and helpless. Why does the villain want to harm them? Maybe they're in his way. Maybe he came up from their ranks, and their very existence reminds him of his painful youth. Or maybe he just likes hurting people who can't fight back.

DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

The Damsel in Distress is the classic victim. This could be the daughter of a friend of one of the characters, or the ladyfriend of the villain who wants to escape from her life of crime, or an innocent woman caught up in events. Perhaps the Damsel is really a Femme Fatale going for the double-cross! For a change, the Damsel in Distress doesn't necessarily have to be a woman -- it could be a child or a man.

DETECTIVE

Despite his brilliant mind, sometimes even the best detective needs help. Is he a private consulting detective, a la Sherlock Holmes, or does he work for Scotland Yard? Maybe a crusading journalist, knee deep in an investigation of victims, becomes one himself?

FRIEND

How can the heroes help but get caught up when a friend (or relative) needs their assistance? A letter from an old college chum, a frantic telegram from an estranged brother, or a visit from the character's mentor; any of these could be the seed for a new adventure!

INNOCENT

This victim is a classic example of "wrong place, wrong time." He is not actually involved in what's going on; he just had the bad luck to be caught up in events!

INVENTION

The villain is threatening some new invention. Perhaps he is trying to steal the plans to a new war-machine. Maybe he wishes to destroy a device that will aid humankind. Or perhaps the invention is a brand new steam-liner filled with important people. A critical piece of infrastructure the villain wishes to destroy (or control) is often a great location for an epic battle royal finale to a scenario.

NOBLEMAN

Even the most highly-placed and wealthiest men have enemies and can get caught up in events too large for them to handle. A nobleman, wealthy businessman, politician, or other wealthy (and, therefore, important) person needs help!

SAVANT

The victim is one of the most brilliant minds of this age: An absent-minded professor whose inventions could change the world, or a youthful genius with great potential who hasn't yet found his place.

SUPERNATURAL

Something from a realm that science cannot explain. A peaceful grove that is home to faeries, a noble and soulful patchwork man who wants to be accepted by the world, a sorcerer with the key to unlocking a great boon to mankind, or similar.

UNSYMPATHETIC

This victim deserves what's coming to him, but for some reason the heroes simply cannot let that happen. Maybe he's the only one who knows where the treasure is buried. Maybe he plays an important role in the upcoming diplomatic talks. Maybe he's related to the heroes' patron (or he's the patron himself!). Why does he deserve what's coming to him? Maybe he's a criminal, or a traitor. Or perhaps he's just an unlikable sod.

OBSTACLES

A hero's path is never an easy one. In addition to the villain and his nefarious plot, something is bound to get in the heroes' way. Was this secondary obstacle set up by the villain, or is it merely happenstance? Roll at least once on this table.

D10 roll	Obstacles in the Way
1	Accused
2	Crime
3	Monster
4	Mystery
5	Rival
6	Secrecy
7	Social Opposition
8	Trap
9	War
10	Weather

ACCUSED

The heroes are accused of some dastardly deed! Perhaps the authorities think they're working with the villain. Maybe they ran afoul of some obscure local law or custom. Now they have to clear their names and/or escape from the law!

CRIME

The heroes are the victims of a crime. Perhaps they were pick-pocketed while waiting on a crowded platform for the train. Maybe someone breaks into their flat while they are away and makes off with one of their clues. Or maybe they happen upon someone else being mugged and need to stop and help!

MONSTER

A monster is raging unchecked across the countryside. Perhaps a vampire is feasting on the innocent, using the confusion caused by the villain to avoid detection. Maybe an ancient family curse has been fulfilled, and now the son of the heroes' patron has turned into a raging werewolf. Perhaps one of the heroes' friends or relatives has been kidnapped by a rogue Patchwork Man and is being forced to what would actually be a delightful bit of tea and crumpets if not for the whole imprisonment thing.

MYSTERY

The plot is complicated by the addition of a mystery. Who murdered Lord Wilson? Who stole Lady December's jewels? Or maybe the mystery is an ancient one that has eluded the best minds for generations. What did the Knights Templar think so dangerous that they had to hide it beneath their castle? How did the Fantomine family become cursed, and how can the heroes end it?

RIVAL

At the worst possible time, one of the heroes' rivals arrives on the scene, bound and determined to prove that he is the better man. He will attempt to show up the heroes at every opportunity, often not actively working against them but getting in the way, finding clues before they do, and generally making a nuisance of himself.

SECRECY

No one can know what's really going on, or there will be grave consequences. Perhaps the world is not ready to accept that monsters and creatures from myth live among them. Maybe the heroes' actions, if made public, will embarrass the Queen. Regardless, no one must know the truth of what is going on! (One option to lighten the mood if your game gets a bit too serious for its own good is to have the Secret that NPCs are obviously keeping be something very, very important to those holding it but trivial to everyone else, including the heroes, once revealed.)

SOCIAL OPPOSITION

Society itself stands in the heroes' way. This weekend is your cousin Mirabel's wedding, and you must show up or face your family's scorn. The villain is prominently placed in society, and bringing him down would hurt the government. Or, "Running around atop airships thwarting villains is just not something a gentleman or lady of your breeding should ever stoop to!"

TRAP

The villain's nefarious death-trap is an old staple in adventure stories: the heroes must find their way out before the room completely fills with water, or before the poison gas is released, or before the whirling blades come around to eviscerate another victim! This could also be a natural hazard -- dangerous shoals surround the forbidding desert island, or pits of quicksand trap and drown the unwary.

WAR

Whether it's a full-scale war between rival nations or a skirmish between two minor clans, war is riding across the land. Do the heroes choose sides, try to negotiate a diplomatic solution, or do they attempt to avoid it altogether? (Note: Unless it is a fight between two true forces of Evil, "Killing them all and letting God sort them out" would not be considered the proper course of action for a member of the Watchmen, not matter whether or not they appear to deserve it.)

WEATHER

The storm of the century is wracking the countryside, making travel from one point to another nearly impossible. Most likely the heroes are trapped someplace they don't want to be. A sudden blizzard closes the rail lines, and the heroes' train is stuck somewhere deep in the wilds of the Carpathian Mountains. An unprecedented heat wave makes tempers short, making it nearly impossible to get NPCs to do anything for the heroes.
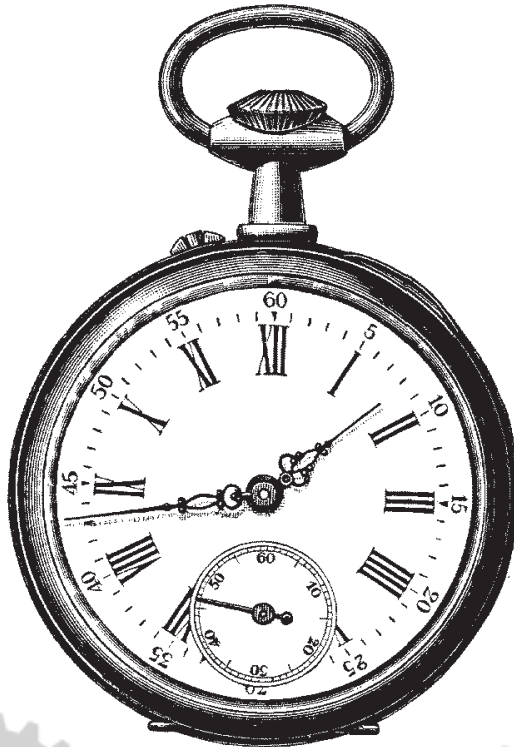
CAMPAIGNS

WHO WATCHES THE WATCHMEN?

Who Watches the Watchmen is the default campaign described in detail throughout this book. The heroes are members of The Watchmen, sent by their patrons in the Clockmakers Guild to fight threats that might endanger or destroy the civilized world. The heroes deal with horrible monsters, rogue sorcerers, and insane Savants bent on getting revenge on the world that spurned their genius. Normal people, for the most part, live their lives blissfully unaware of the shadowy war going on behind the world -- and the Watchmen intend to keep it that way.

> *"You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been."*
>
> - Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

All of the gadgets, spells, and character templates presented in this book are appropriate for a *Who Watches the Watchmen* campaign.

USING THE ADVENTURE GENERATOR

Let's use the Adventure Generator to roll up an adventure idea for a *Who Watches the Watchmen* campaign.

- ◉ Hook 3, Honor
- ◉ Location 6, Grand Manor House
- ◉ Heroes' Goal 8, Solve
- ◉ Villain 8, Sorcerer
- ◉ Villain's Goal 3, Destroy
- ◉ Henchman 1, Adventuress
- ◉ Victim 7, Noble
- ◉ Opposition 7, Social Opposition

One of the heroes receives word from an old friend who is dying. He wants the heroes to come out to his grand manor house in the country (Location) in order to help put his affairs in order before he passes away (Hook). The heroes arrive to find the place is a hotbed of intrigue, with family members plotting against one another in the hopes of becoming the primary beneficiary of the old man's will (Opposition).

Little does anyone realize one of the old man's grandchildren has taken up with a bad crowd and has begun secretly practicing dark sorcery (Villain). His goal is to destroy the lives and/or reputations of those ahead of him in line for the family fortune (Villain's Goal and Victims). He is assisted by the old man's own nurse, who is actually a wicked adventuress whom the villain has promised a piece of the action (Henchman).

The heroes have to solve the mystery of who is destroying the family before the old man passes away (Heroes' Goal)!

BRAVE NEW WORLD

Brave New World is a world of Victorian mystery and dark magic. It removes the 19th Century science fiction high technology to focus more on the dark, horrifying, mystical aspects of the world. The heroes are sorcerers and mystery men seeking out the shadowy places of the world in order to shine the light of civilization into them. They aim to root out ancient evils and terrible mysteries from times long gone.

This is a setting in which the PCs prowl the foggy streets of London, the jungle kingdoms of mysterious India, or the trackless deserts of ancient Egypt in search of adventure. They are opposed at every opportunity by the forces of Evil – things a sane and civilized person would blanch at. Criminals, thieves, madmen, and murderers are but the tip of the iceberg, for the world is threatened by far greater dangers than this: dark and evil creatures waiting in the darkness and behind every shadow, looking for the opportunity to wreak untold havoc on the world.

To run a game in the *Brave New World*, you will need to remove the Steampunk gadgets and gizmos and disallow the Savant archetype. In this universe, items of high-tech wonder are very rare (and generally obey the laws of physics as were understood at the time). There are no time machines or heavier-than-air flying craft. Instead, magic is much more commonplace and well-understood, and PCs should have access to spells or enchanted equipment.

> *It thrilled him with a vague uncertain horror, to know that behind the dusky shroud, there were ghostly eyes intently fixed upon him, while he, though he stretched his own to the utmost, could see nothing but a spectral hand and one great heap of black.*
>
> - Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*

USING THE ADVENTURE GENERATOR

Now it's time to create an adventure for our *Brave New World* campaign, using the Adventure Generator.

- ☀ Hook 4, Legend
- ☀ Location 2, Countryside
- ☀ Heroes' Goal 1, Assist
- ☀ Villain 10, Warlord
- ☀ Villain's Goal 7, Revenge
- ☀ Henchman 9, Sorcerer
- ☀ Victim 5, Innocent
- ☀ Opposition 3, Monster

There are legends (Hook) of a horrible monster (Opposition) out in the wildest part of the country (Location), stalking the hills and preying on innocent village folk (Victim). When these legends grow too persistent to ignore, the heroes must travel to the distant wilds to help those people to put an end to their troubles (Heroes' Goal).

Of course, things are never so simple. A man who has never forgotten the indignities heaped upon his people and his family name (Villain) has sworn revenge (Villain's Goal), and is building a rebellious army right here in the heart of the country. He might not be able to take down the entire government, but hundreds if not thousands of lives will be lost in his thirst for vengeance. To hide his activities, he had a sorcerer (Henchman) call up a monster from the depths of legend to torment anyone in the area who will not side with him.

> *"Now, this isn't a Heterodyne Story like your mama tells you when she tucks you into bed at night… well, not exactly. Oh, we all know they're out there somewhere, fighting the good fight, but right here and right now, the Heterodyne Boys are gone. Their lands are overrun, their machines destroyed, their servants scattered, and nothing remains but their name. At least, that's what everyone thinks…"*
>
> – Phil and Kaja Foglio, *Girl Genius*

MAD BOYS AND GADGET GIRLS

Welcome to a world in which crazed genius inventors attempt to outdo each other's mad inventions, scarring the landscape and changing history with every new contraption! *Mad Boys and Gadget Girls* is a universe with less emphasis on Gothic Horror, and more on weird and wild steam-powered technology.

Giant robots, flying locomotives, castles on legs, clockwork men, and time machines are merely the beginning. When it comes to *crazy* Steampunk technology, the sky --and your imagination-- are the only limits. Savants are both greatly respected and highly feared members of society, as their inventions can destroy (or save) whole towns, cities, or even nations! Particularly powerful Savants may carve their own kingdoms out of the empires of old; fighting off any who would challenge their rule with weapons of mass destruction the likes of which the world has never before seen.

In this world, there is no sorcery, only science (highly rubber science, but science nonetheless). Monsters are the creations of crazed Savant technology – patchwork men, clockwork men, and even vampires and lycanthropes are the product of banned technology, working for (or against) their insane creators.

To run a game of *Mad Boys and Gadget Girls,* take the gadgets from Chapter 4 and crank them up three (or a dozen) notches. Make them bigger, brasher, and more terrible. The heroes could be agents of a government attempting to use a new technology to destabilize another nation or stop a powerful Savant and his armies from taking over. They could be minor Savants themselves, fleeing from a more powerful enemy who wants to use their inventions to destroy the world. Or they could be ordinary people caught up in events too big for them to understand, trying to profit (or merely survive) as the world changes around them.

USING THE ADVENTURE GENERATOR

Let's see what kind of plot seeds the Adventure Generator can give us for a *Mad Boys and Gadget Girls* campaign…

- Hook 8, Friend
- Location 10, Train, Steamboat, or Airship
- Heroes' Goal 9, Steal
- Villain 7, Savant
- Villain's Goal 9, Steal
- Henchman 7, Pirates
- Victim 10, Unsympathetic
- Opposition 9, War

An old friend invites the heroes to be passengers on the latest, and therefore greatest, airship on her maiden voyage across the Atlantic (Hook). It promises to be an historic ride, filled with the very best creature comforts (Location). But along the way, the trip is interrupted by an attack by savage pirates (Henchmen) led by a most feared captain (who is rumored to be a brilliant inventor in his own right) (Villain)!

The pirate captain claims this airship is rightfully his, as it was built using his designs, and he intends to have it (Villain's Goal). It doesn't take much to discover he is telling the truth -- the airship's owners did indeed take his designs without just compensation (Victim). Unfortunately, just letting the pirates have the airship would prove disastrous, since they could use its advanced design to prey on any and all shipping, endangering innocent lives and possibly kicking off an international incident (Opposition)!

The heroes have little choice – they have to take the airship back and free the hostages (Heroes' Goal)!

AFTER MIDNIGHT

The world has changed. Science and technology have supplanted the old ways, and people are gradually forgetting that which once steered their lives. The ancient places of power are plowed under, the sacred groves are chopped down to fuel the infernal machines, and the old pacts have been forgotten. In this new age, how are the old ones, the ones who came before mankind, to survive? Do they fade quietly into the night, becoming little more than fairy tales, or do they take up the sword and fight back?

> *"I am the monster that breathing men would kill."*
>
> *– Bram Stoker's Dracula*

In an *After Midnight* campaign, the players take on the roles of the Ancient Ones, the monsters that once prowled the forests and hills while humans huddled fearfully in the light of their tiny fires. They are the werewolves, the shapeshifters, faeries, and witches who once wielded much power, but whose light is now, shamefully, fading from the world. The most ancient and powerful of their number have formed an organization of sorts to shelter and protect their kind from the rapacious and uncaring humans. They call themselves the Council of Midnight, and the PCs are their soldiers, scouts, and spies in the world of the light.

Running an *After Midnight* campaign can be tricky and would require perhaps the greatest amount of modification from the base campaign. The heroes are literally monsters, Patchwork Men, vampires, werewolves, dark sorcerers and Fair Folk, trying to find a home for themselves in this new world of science and technology. Humanity hates and fears them (at least, those who still believe in them). But despite all of these things, the GM must still give the PCs a chance to be heroes. They might not battle against humanity as a whole, but only against those who would destroy the ancient ways of the old world. Perhaps they fight against the Circle of Technologists, which uses its genius to destroy the beauty of the world. The question that an *After Midnight* campaign asks is, "Who are the real monsters, and can we fight them without becoming them?"

USING THE ADVENTURE GENERATOR

Now we'll consult the Adventure Generator to give us some plot seeds for an *After Midnight* campaign.

- ❂ Hook 9, Patron
- ❂ Location 9, Suburbs
- ❂ Heroes' Goals 3, Explore
- ❂ Villain 8, Sorcerer
- ❂ Villain's Goals 2, Corrupt
- ❂ Henchmen 3, Clockwork Man
- ❂ Victim 9, Supernatural
- ❂ Opposition 6, Secrecy

A sorcerer (Villain) has purchased land around a sacred grove and is building a whole town around it -- houses, factories, shops (Location). This is corrupting the ancient power of the grove and the villain wishes to harness it for his own nefarious ends (Villain's Goal). The villain has a small army of "private security officers" made up of clockwork men who patrol the streets of the city and keep it safe and clean (and help channel the energy away from the grove into his satanic mills) (Henchmen).

The Council of Midnight (Hook) has asked the heroes to explore (Heroes' Goal) the sacred/mystical geometry of the new building site to find out what the enemy's plans are, how the energy is going to be channeled and how to stop it. This is important, as the grove is a link to the past and contains a great deal of magical energy -- energy that, if harnessed for the wrong ends, would be disastrous both for the world of man and for the supernatural world (Victim).

The heroes must be very careful, as normal, unaware humans now live in this area. They must take care not to be seen or to cause too much of a ruckus, lest the heroes become hunted! (Opposition)

A WORLD APART

Steampunk doesn't just have to happen in Victorian England or the Americas. It can take place in Asia (imagine the last of the Samurai fighting for their way of life against an onslaught of heavily-armed walking machines, or clockwork Mandarin playing politics in the Celestial Kingdom), or the Middle East (genius inventors using advanced mathematics to create a marvelous mechanical Caliphate), or Africa (proud kingdoms using the rediscovered secrets of the past to battle against encroaching European colonialists). A World Apart postulates that Europe and American aren't the only places where the Industrial Revolution took place; that other nations and other peoples developed their own fantastical technologies and used those inventions to change the world.

> *Building a dream was as complex as building a temple, and required knowledge of almost as many trades... Each pull and plait showed an intersection of gem-crafting, metal-working, architecture, and storytelling... As a child, Hessa had spent hours with the archivists in Al-Zahiriyya Library, learning from them the art of constructing memory palaces within her mind, layering the marble, glass, and mosaics of her imagination with reams of poetry, important historical dates, dozens of musical* maqaamat, *names of stars and ancestors.*
>
> – Amal El-Mohtar, *To Follow the Waves*

While A World Apart campaign still features the magic and baroque technologies of steampunk, it can view those technologies through a different lens. Perhaps coal-powered steam plants aren't the main power source. Maybe the Muslim countries develop crystal technologies, focusing energy through carefully cut and polished gemstones. Perhaps China uses wind-up springs and clockwork for its amazing gadgets. All of the gadgets and spells presented in this book are available in A World Apart campaign, but they are just a little bit different. This is an excellent chance for game masters to think outside the coalbox.

USING THE ADVENTURE GENERATOR

Using the Adventure Generator, let's create an adventure idea for A World Apart.

- ◉ Hook 9 Patron
- ◉ Location 1 City
- ◉ Heroes' Goal 6 Protect
- ◉ Villain 9 Traitor
- ◉ Villain's Goal 8 Rivalry
- ◉ Henchman 10 Thugs
- ◉ Victim 4 Friend
- ◉ Opposition 1 Accused

In the heart of the Celestial Kingdom, the most loyal servants of the Immortal Celestial Emperor (may the gods bless and protect his gears and springs) (Hook) are called upon to protect (Heroes' Goal) the Forbidden City (Location) from a traitor – the Emperor's own flesh-and-blood brother (Villain), who believes he is better suited to sit upon the Jade Throne (Villain's Goal) than his automaton counterpart. To this end, the Traitor has assembled a rag-tag army of disaffected nobles, criminals, and peasants (Henchmen) and even now marches on the city.

There is a problem, though. There are certain factions within the Emperor's Court who wish to tarnish the heroes' good names by linking them, directly or indirectly, with the rebellion (Opposition)! One of the heroes' closest friends (Victim) has been dragged before the court and will be forced to confess to crimes he did not commit (and implicate the heroes in those crimes) if something is not done!

CHAPTER SIX: THINGS FALL APART

PLOT POINT CAMPAIGN

THE RACE

The starting gun fired with a loud crack! The roaring, humming, whizzing, and clanging of the assembled racers drowned out the shot's report as most of the vehicles took off like bullets; others were stuck at the starting line with various mishaps and mechanical failures.

"Tally-ho!" Thackary cried out as his own ingenious contraption -- a vehicle powered by the galvanic energy of the heavens themselves -- launched itself from the starting line. Savannah held on tight as he jockeyed for position, pulling ahead of several slower vehicles.

At these breathtaking speeds, it wasn't long before the race passed beyond the city limits into the sparsely-populated countryside, and that's when the knives came out.

Thackary gunned his engine, sending showers of sparks through the crew compartment, and the vehicle gained speed. It looked like he might be able to pull into the lead, but then one of the contraptions still ahead of him disgorged a load of slippery oil onto the road. The car immediately behind it spun out of control, rolled off the road, and crashed through a barn that was unfortunately close to the raceway. "Look out!" Savannah shouted. Thackary had just enough time to swerve and avoid the oil slick. His vehicle sped off the road and into the forest.

Nimbly avoiding trees, rocks, and logs, the young Savant managed to keep his vehicle upright and moving. Savannah was hurled around the cabin like a tempest-tossed ship. "If we survive this, I'm gonna kill you!" she shouted to the pilot.

"I believe I've just come up with an idea for a new safety enhancement to my vehicle," Thackary shouted back. "I shall call it, "The Seat Belt"!"

It was about then that Thackary noticed another off-road vehicle ahead of them. It was Lucus Hatfield and his Bug! The eight-legged machine was racing nimbly over every obstacle in its way and, since it was avoiding the road, it didn't have to deal with the other drivers' shenanigans! "Very clever," Thackary thought to himself. "But what he's doing by choice, I'm doing by accident, and that will never stand."

The young Savant veered to avoid an ancient oak and spotted a clear path back to the road. As soon as they were back on the (relatively) smooth raceway, he grinned back at his compatriot. "There, you see? No harm done, and we're still in the race."

Savannah did not look happy. "It's time for a little payback!" she swore. "Catch up with that sunnuvagun with the oil slick, I'll teach him what-for!" Thackary accelerated to catch up, but the car ahead of him was hogging the road and wouldn't let him pass. "To hell with this!" Savannah cussed, climbing up into her turret. She took careful aim with her customized buffalo rifle and shot the offending vehicle's rear tire out. The car spun out and crashed in a ditch. Savannah blew the cursing driver a kiss as they roared past the wreck.

Then they caught up with the oil slicker. Again, Savannah took careful aim and fired. She hit the car in its engine block. Black smoke poured out and the car sputtered to a halt. The heroes waved jauntily as they drove past.

Meanwhile, Morden and ADEN were several miles ahead of the race. As they crossed over a stone bridge, Morden had an idea. They stopped the carriage and he climbed down to examine the bridge. Finding the keystone, the geomancer began muttering beneath his breath in a language which ADEN recognized as ancient Hebrew. The Clockwork Man's galvanic senses could detect the flow of energy -- sorcery -- swirling around the bridge.

"This will turn the keystone into mud. The first car to go over the bridge should cause the whole thing to collapse," Morden told his mechanical companion. "Then the other drivers will be forced to find an alternate route!"

SAVAGE STORIES

The adventures in *The Widening Gyre* are collectively known as "Savage Stories." Some are mere plot seeds, rough ideas for you to flesh out for your group, while others are fully detailed adventures. Some of these Savage Stories are "Plot Points." These adventures are vital to the Widening Gyre campaign arc. If you plan on following the Plot Point Campaign, we suggest you run these particular adventures in the given order, as each one builds on the last, providing the heroes with clues and resources they will need to confront the final menace. These adventures are marked with this logo: ●

You can place the other adventures in between Plot Points. Some are tied to a particular time or place, while others can be run at any time and in any place. You can also create your own (see Chapter 5 for some ideas on generating your own adventures), or let the players determine the quests they want to pursue.

Don't try to shove the Plot Points at your players too quickly. Let your group explore the world of *The Widening Gyre* at their own pace. No one says they have to save the world right from the start, or even at all! It's your campaign, after all, and if you and your players want to run a game of exploration, intrigue, or invention there is plenty of room to do just that!

DARKNESS DROPS AGAIN

An ancient, powerful, and deadly organization of unholy creatures -- necromancers, vampires, shapeshifters, and demons -- has been working in the shadows for centuries. These dark monsters, unseen and unsuspected by most, are behind many of the worst tragedies in history. They pull the strings of generals, politicians, and kings; even ordinary people are not safe from their machinations. They promise or threaten, bribe or murder, and always get their way. They are the Council of Midnight, and their ultimate goal is to bring about an era of chaos and pull mankind down into a Dark Age of ignorance, slavery, and death.

If you like to mix dark sorcery, ancient curses, and terrible monsters with your steampunk, this is the Plot Point campaign for you.

PROLOGUE

● **Hardly Are Those Words (Full Adventure):** The penny dreadful business is flourishing, but editors, publishers, and writers around the city are being brutally murdered. The only link is a series of mysterious letters promising more horrifying times to come. Can the heroes solve these heinous crimes before more people die? This introductory adventure initiates the characters into the Clockmaker's Guild and the Watchmen.

ACT ONE: THE DARK SORCERER FROM THE EAST

● **Indignant Desert Birds (Full Adventure):** Savants from across England are being kidnapped from their homes or places of work. At the same time, rumors circulate of a great weapon being constructed somewhere in the slums of London. Someone aims to destroy the British Empire in the most direct and most uncivilized fashion imaginable – and it is up to the heroes to find out who it is, what he is doing, and put an end to it.

Troubles My Sight (Adventure Seed): As Chinese immigrants arrive in England, they bring with them pieces of their homeland; bits of their culture, signs of their religious devotion, and the like. One is a beautiful flower with iridescent blue-black petals, a strong but pleasing scent, and an unforeseen side effect. Is this part of the nefarious crimelord Wei-Fang's conspiracy to destroy the British Empire?

A Gaze Blank and Pitiless (Adventure Seed): The Limehouse District, near the London docks, is where most Chinese immigrants live. Though poor, they are a proud people who intend to assimilate into their new culture and make a better life for themselves. They might have a chance if someone can stop the almost constant gang warfare in and around their neighborhood.

While All About (Adventure Seed): A monster is terrorizing the countryside in rural France near the province of Lorraine. Village elders speak of the Beast Of Gévaudan, a terrifying wolf-like animal that hunted and killed as many as 113 people. Said to have been as big as a bull, the Beast killed its victims by tearing out their throats. Already a dozen people – including armed men – have fallen to its teeth. Is this a new monster, or has the Beast Of Gévaudan awoken from a deep slumber?

⚙ The Second Coming is at Hand (Full Adventure): The World's Fair in London hosts the world's greatest savants, scientists, engineers, and leaders. The great savant Julien Benoit Chevalier plans to unveil his greatest invention. Will this invention spell a new golden age for mankind, or usher in its eventual doom?

ACT TWO: THE WICKED WITCH OF THE NORTH

⚙ A Shape With a Lion's Body (Full Adventure): Travel to the dark forests of mysterious Russia to discover if the rumors are true – that an evil witch from the time of legends has returned and intends to trap the world in an endless winter, using a weapon known as the Coldbringer!

Vexed to Nightmare (Adventure Seed): The heroes discover a lost artifact built and abandoned in the wilderness years ago by a mad savant. But is it truly abandoned?

Moving its Slow Thighs (Adventure Seed): Top Savants from across the east are being recruited for a secret project in St. Petersburg, and the other world powers are getting nervous. The Czar is known for his overarching paranoia. Is this a new weapon that he is developing?

While the Worse (Adventure Seed): While traveling across the vast steppes of Russia, the heroes stumble upon a secret conspiracy to assassinate the Czar. But all is not as it appears. Is the Council of Midnight goading the revolutionaries on, or are they backing the ruling power?

The Tide is Loosed (Adventure Seed): An army of the dead rises in the forbidding heart of Russia and makes its way across the country towards Moscow. Can anything stop it? Is the world doomed to this ever-growing hoard of the walking dead?

⚙ Innocence is Drowned (Full Adventure): A Savant, working in a secluded lab, managed to pierce the dimensional veils and bring forth the inhabitant of another world – what ignorant and superstitious peasants might call a "demon." The Council of Midnight wants the Savant's technology, and they will stop at nothing to obtain it.

ACT THREE: THE VAMPIRE LORD OF THE WORLD

⚙ Mere Anarchy is Loosed (Full Adventure): Milan, Italy will be the starting line of the largest and most challenging road rally event in the history of racing, and the whole continent is buzzing with excitement. Everyone who is anyone will attend at least one leg of the race, and those cities and villages that it will pass through are equally thrilled. But something about this road rally isn't right…

The Sands of the Desert (Adventure Seed): The leader of the Clockmakers' Guild, Dr. Robert J. Forster has taken seriously ill, and his own physicians aren't certain how long he has left to live. This once robust man has become weak and anemic. The Guild must convene to elect a new leader, but several prominent voting members have disappeared. Is this a plot by the Council of Midnight to cripple the Watchmen during this time of crisis? Can the heroes find the missing senior Guildsmen – or alternately, can they discover the cause of Dr. Forster's sickness and cure it before his time runs out?

⚙ The Head of a Man (Adventure Seed): To find the secret whereabouts of the Council of Midnight, the heroes need the guidance of a former servant of evil who has been discarded by his masters like old trash. However, the heroes aren't the only ones looking for this lost creature…

⚙ As the Sun (Adventure Seed): Years ago, the insidious Dr. Abdul threatened the British Empire with a great weapon the likes of which had never before been seen. The device was destroyed, but the Council of Midnight, peopled as it is by darkness-loving creatures of the night, might prove particularly vulnerable to a weapon such as this.

✹ **Twenty Centuries of Stony Sleep (Adventure Seed):** It's a race to the forbidding mountains of Eastern Europe, where the Council of Midnight is holding a conclave with the ultimate goal of pushing humanity into an age of ignorance, slavery, and darkness.

✹ **Slouches Towards Bethlehem (Full Adventure):** Lord Dragan Marković, the undead leader of the Council of Midnight, has fled to his birthplace, the ancient and mystical city of Jerusalem. The heroes must track him down and battle for the very soul of mankind.

A DOZEN ONE-SENTENCE PLOT SEEDS

This is a series of adventure ideas to fuel your own imagination to create short adventures. These adventures can be used as bridges between the major stories of the Plot Point Campaign or as stand-alone adventures.

◉ A series of murders leads to an insane Savant keeping himself alive by harvesting organs from innocents.

◉ A mysterious airship lists over the coast; is it as abandoned as it seems?

◉ Before he dies, an ancient sorcerer hands a large, ornate key to the heroes and tells them to find his lost son.

◉ An enormous meteorite crashes in the wilderness and a dozen Savants race to find it in order to capture and study the strange radiation leaking out of it.

◉ A pair of star-crossed lovers – a human boy and a Patchwork girl – are struggling to escape the wrath of an enraged mob.

◉ A large industrial complex is infested with spirits of the Industrial Age (steam, galvanic, and iron elementals) and must be cleared out before the workers arrive on Monday morning.

◉ A plague of rats bedevils a small town; a recently docked ship in the harbor may lead to their origin.

◉ A team of Scientists are studying vampires, werewolves, or some other supernatural creature – What are they?, How are they created?, and so forth – and they need more test subjects.

◉ An Irish Savant accidentally opens a portal to the realm of the Fair Folk, and now the countryside is swarming with Faeries, Leprechauns, Pookas, and other supernatural creatures from Celtic folklore.

◉ A castle appears on a mountainside where no castle ever stood before; what secrets does it hold?

◉ Legend tells of an evil sorcerer living deep in the Black Forest who kidnaps innocent children for a nefarious purposes.

◉ Air shipping lanes across Great Britain have been disrupted by enormous, bloodthirsty, flying… sharks?

STARTING OUT

It's time to begin your adventures. We recommend you start with the Savage Tale "Hardly Are The Words." This quickly gets your party into the action, hints at the dark machinations of the villains, and introduces the heroes to the Clockmakers' Guild. The adventure begins with an introduction to the Watchmen, the Clockmakers' Guild, and the strange world that lies behind and beyond the one everyday people know.

INTRO ADVENTURE:
HARDLY ARE THOSE WORDS

The penny dreadful business is flourishing, but editors, publishers, and writers around the city are being brutally murdered. The only link is a series of mysterious letters promising more horrifying times to come. Can the heroes solve these heinous crimes before more people die? This introductory adventure initiates the characters into the Clockmaker's Guild and the Watchmen.

INTRODUCTION

For the past month, the many competing newspapers of London have published the details of a series of mysterious deaths – each one more gristly and bizarre than the one before. Of course, the newspapers being what they are, it is difficult to sort the truth from overblown fiction. The general details of the story go as such:

Each victim received a typewritten letter shortly before the murder which contained a cryptic but threatening message. Within 24 hours, the recipient of the letter died in circumstances similar to those outlined in the letter. There have so far been three such deaths, each more sensational than the last. The police are depicted as helpless against this mysterious letter-writing killer.

The heroes are contacted by a mutual acquaintance, a Miss Melissa Waterston. Miss Waterston is a society reporter and fairly successful fiction writer; GM and the players should come up with a quick background as to how Ms. Waterson knows each of the PCs. She is desperate and frightened and requires their assistance immediately.

When they arrive at her townhouse, the PCs find Melissa in a state of agitation. If the heroes do not yet know one another, she will introduce them to each other, and then get right down to business.

It seems she received an anonymous letter in this morning's post.

May 26, 1895

Dear Miss Waterston,

I do hope you will forgive the familiarity in the ad-dress of this letter, but in many ways I feel as though you and I are already acquainted. You see, I am an avid reader who has read all of your books and collections. You will note I said "read," not "enjoyed." My apologies for being so bold, but it is patently obvious to anyone with even a basic understanding of letters that you are a most terrible writer. I do not know if it is due to the handicap of your gender or some failing of your personal character, but your characters are flat, your plots are thin pastiches of previous writers' work, and your command of English prose is weak and colourless.

That a person of your dubious talent could find her works published is yet another failing of this sad world. And yet there is mercy! for your time upon this Earth will soon be at an end, and never again will readers have to suffer your turgid prose nor melodramatic verse, and perhaps London's publishers will again be free to consider greater lights. There is little doubt that you will be buried under the cold earth, mercifully forgotten for all time. God-bye to you, madam.

Yrs,
W.H.

If the previous pattern holds true, the heroes have less than twenty four hours to find out who send the letter and to put a stop to it! Miss Waterston begs them for their assistance, and will play upon any heartstrings she can to get them to agree to help.

ACT ONE – THE INVESTIGATION

There are several ways the heroes can investigate.

Avenues of Investigation: The Police

The police have an active inquest led by Detective Prince, a young newcomer to Scotland Yard. They have so far turned up no evidence of foul play and are treating these deaths as suicides, for there is no other logical explanation.

Detective Prince admits there are holes in the theory. None of the men were distraught, nor had any reason to kill themselves. They were in good shape financially, had good relations with their families, and were all running successful businesses.

The Detective has copies of the letters each man received and will happily show them to the investigators – but he is mostly certain these cases could not have been murder since there was never a suspect in the area.

Avenues of Investigation: The Deaths

All three previous victims were members of the publishing industry.

Mr. Dewey Ralphson, the most recent death, plummeted from the sixth-storey window of his office. The most mysterious thing about this death is that the window appeared closed and locked at the time he jumped. Ralphson was a partner in Ralphson and Publick, Publishers, who were best known for publishing tawdry novels filled with racy action; the sort of thing boys and young men flock to. Mr. Richard Publick, his partner, was out of town in Paris at the time of Ralphson's death, but has since returned home. He will be happy to answer the heroes' questions. This death occurred precisely one day after receiving the letter.

Mr. Herman Walters was run over by a train almost exactly one week before. An avid trainspotter, he enjoyed going out to watch the trains come in just a few blocks from his office. No one saw him jump in front of the train; even the engineer didn't notice until it was much too late to do anything. His death was particularly grisly and it was his unfortunate demise that first caught the newspapers' attentions. It occurred almost exactly one day after getting the strange letter. Mr. Walters was the sole proprietor and publisher of Walters Publishing Enterprizes, Ltd.

Mr. Jefferson Mattingly was the first death. He was struck by a runaway horse on the street a few feet in front of his office. The horse, normally a docile and friendly creature, went insane, broke its reigns, and charged madly down the street. Peddlers and pedestrians darted out of the way, but Mr. Mattingly stepped directly into the horse's path as if he didn't even see it. He died instantly, just 24 hours after getting the mysterious letter. Mr. Mattingly was the chief editor for London's largest publisher, Sedgwick & Co.

Avenues of Investigation: The Letters

The letters do not have a return address nor any particular identifying marks.

They heroes can analyze the typesetting on Miss Waterston's letter – perhaps the team's Savant can build a machine to do this, or they can go to the largest seller of typewriters in the country, Wumbles & Sons.

Either way, they will learn this letter was not created on any regular typewriter. It contains a hodgepodge of letters, and was probably typed on a homemade typewriter made from pieces cobbled together from a number of different machines. There are even letters that don't appear to be similar to any typeface anyone knows – these letters are the D, the E, the I, the L, and the V.

Avenues of Investigation: The Publishers

The heroes will be given permission to look into the personal papers and effects of each man. Most things in their office are singularly unhelpful – the victims were simple businessmen, with no connection to one another apart from their careers. They have no links to the occult. Except for Sedgwick & Co, the other two publishers are in the process of going out of business, and their office help are all sad and sorry to see them gone.

None of the office help knows exactly what happened. None of the victims received unusual visitors recently, but all received the strange, vaguely threatening letters beforehand. The men's secretaries can supply the heroes with copies of the letters if the police haven't already done so.

If any of the heroes wants to check, each of the publishers has a large "reject" file, filled with unsolicited manuscripts sent in by hopeful writers. If the heroes dig through these files, they will find one thing in common – a manuscript by a writer named Wesley Havelock, rejected roughly 2 weeks before each man's death.

If the heroes wish to check the typesetting of the manuscripts, they will find it is exactly the same as that of the letters. What's more, Mr. Havelock has helpfully included a return address along with his cover letter! The address is for a flat in a lower-class neighborhood on the west side of the city.

The cover letter is identical in all three cases. It is arrogant in the extreme, making overblown claims such as, "Unlike most of the puerile penny-dreadfuls that you are wont to publish, this manuscript contains an example of great literature the likes of which has not been seen on our shores since Shakespeare."

The manuscript is called "The Seduction of Emily," and is pretty tawdry stuff, filled with graphic violence and wanton sex. It's just the sort of thing that these publishers might normally print, but that the writing is past the point of "penny dreadful" all the way to "farthing unbearable."

THE APARTMENT

As the heroes deduced, the flat is a dirty brick-faced building that butts up against the street in a run-down neighborhood. The landlady is typical of her kind – thin, rat-faced, angry, and suspicious. She'll eye the group distrustfully, then announce that "There'll be nae funny business in any house o' mine! Two pence a week or a shilling a month, and that's a room for one – no visitors after hours!"

If the heroes try to assure her that they're just looking for Mr. Havelock, she'll ask if they are the police. "I got no business with the coppers, but in Havelock's case I'll make an exception! All he does anymore is sit up in his room and type, type, type. Night and day, rat-a-tat, chatter-chatter, enough to drive a good Christian woman mad! And when I knock on his door he screams at me like a bandit. And the smell, like a charnel house! He never goes out, not even to bathe or conduct personal business! I'm afraid for my life with him here! He's paid up 'til the end of the month, but I'll be happier to see him go!"

She'll take them up to Havelock's room and leave them to hopefully take care of her problem tenant for her.

If they knock, he'll scream at them to leave him alone, hurling invectives. The landlady will give them a key if they think to ask, or they can kick down the door. Inside, they find a mess. The only window is boarded up from the inside. The smell is putrid. Furniture is in tatters, except for a single chair and table in the center of the room. On the table sits an ordinary-looking typewriter.

When the heroes enter, they'll find Havelock cowering in the corner of the room, whimpering like a beat dog. "It wasn't me!" he cries. "It was the typewriter! I couldn't stop it! It forced me to write those things!"

ACT TWO – THE FAILED WRITER

Mr. Havelock is obviously no threat – he is emaciated and dehydrated, barely able to speak, much less stand. His hands are twisted and raw, and he trembles with every movement. Allow the heroes to reach their own conclusion of what happened – here's the basic outline:

After his manuscript was rejected by publisher after publisher, Wesley was drowning his sorrows in a local pub when a man dressed in solid black approached him and offered to help. He gave Wesley a typewriter

Havelock found that words flowed easily and quickly while he was typing, but the words were twisted and angry, brutal and cruel.

These evil manuscripts were rejected by publisher after publisher, and soon he turned away from writing stories and instead began writing angry letters to these publishers – who all died soon after.

With each letter he posted, the words flowed more easily; they became more and more graphic and brutal. And people kept dying.

He has slowly become aware of what is going on, but finds it impossible to stop himself from writing the cursed letters. He even finds himself waking up in the middle of the night, sitting at the typewriter, staring at a piece of paper which he has no recollection of writing…

The heroes can destroy the typewriter and free Wesley from the curse, but there is still the lingering question of who the mysterious man in black was…

Wesley will (unsteadily) take them to the nearby pub, if they destroy the machine to loosen its hold on his soul.

If necessary, use the stats for the Typical Citizen for Mr. Havelock.

THE PUB

The pub turns out to be in a burnt-out building. It's clear that there was once a pub here, but it has been gone for years. Wesley is completely stymied by this – "But I swear, it was a pub the same as any other not more than a month ago!"

Anyone sensitive to magic can feel the great evil here. Searching the pub reveals a trapdoor in the floor of the backroom (probably originally to a root/wine cellar) hidden by some bits of rubble. Anyone with *Tracking* can tell that people have recently been through the room.

Down the trapdoor is a ladder leading into the darkness. A deeply unpleasant smell like mold and rot mixed with a hint of blood assaults the PCs. The ladder leads down to a tunnel; dim firelight can be seen at the end of the tunnel, as well as voices.

As the heroes get closer, they find some sort of temple to some dark, forgotten god. A number of robed-and-hooded cultists stand around their leader, who exhorts them on to deeds of evil in the name of their dark lord.

There are two Cultists for each PC plus one Minor Sorcerer Wild Card. They will all fight to the death.

ACT THREE – DENOUEMENT

The facts are clear at the end: The cultists trapped a powerful demon in the form of a typewriter. They gave the evil device to a frustrated writer. As the demon fed on the writer's depression and anxiety, it grew stronger, causing the terrible things Havelock wrote about to come true. However, a minor sorcerer like the ones the heroes encountered couldn't have summoned a being as powerful as the typewriter, nor bound it into a mundane object. He was obviously working for someone else…

The mystery of who was ultimately behind the murders is something to be solved another day. For now, Miss Waterston is safe. In gratitude, she will introduce the heroes to an old friend of hers, Doctor Robert J. Forster.

"I've heard many things about each of you," Forster says when introductions are over. "Miss Waterston has told me much, and I've followed the careers of several of you. I know that you are brave and true and are hoping to make a difference in the world. I also know that you have seen things that most ordinary people would never believe. What you experienced in your little adventure for Ms. Waterston is merely the tip of the iceberg. There is evil in the world, and it runs fathoms deep. If you are willing, I will introduce you to the deeper mysteries of the world. I am inviting you to join an elite organization dedicated to fighting evil; a modern-day order of knights, if you will. Will you say yes?"

If the heroes are willing, he will smile and say, "Welcome to The Watchmen."

If the heroes are hesitant, he will say he understands. "This is a big step I'm asking you to take, based on nothing more than faith. But should you ever need us, we are always watchful." This should not derail the Plot Point Campaign. The GM must decide for himself how to get the heroes involved in the further adventures. Perhaps they will reconsider their decision after they've encountered hostile forces too great for them to defeat on their own, or maybe they cross paths with another group of Watchmen and see the organization at work. Or perhaps fate itself will continually point them towards the crucial events leading up to the grand finale, with no need for help from an outside organization.

Should the heroes wish to join Dr. Forster and the Watchmen, he will explain to them the true history of the world (found in the text pieces in *Chapter Three: The Center Cannot Hold (The World of the Widening Gyre)*) and tell them that the Clockmakers Guild will assign them tasks as it foresees events unfolding. "This dust-up with the typewriter is just the beginning," Dr. Forster tells them. "There is much, much more to come."
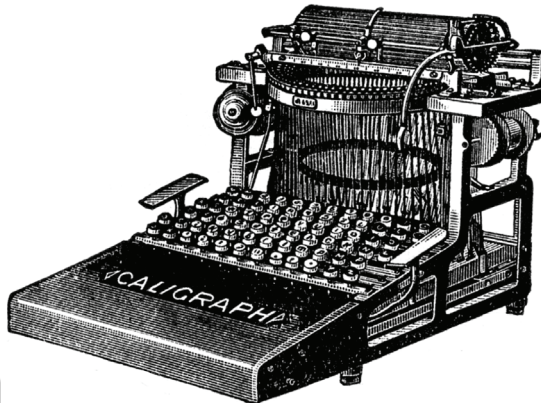
HANDOUTS

May 26, 1895

Dear Miss Waterst**O**n,

I d**O** h**O**pe y**O**u will f**O**rgive the familiarity in the ad-dress **O**f this letter, but in many ways I feel as th**O**ugh y**O**u and I are already acquainted. Y**O**u see, I am an avid reader wh**O** has read all **O**f y**O**ur b**OO**ks and c**O**llecti**O**ns. Y**O**u will n**O**te I said "read," n**O**t "enj**O**yed." My ap**O**l**O**gies f**O**r being s**O** b**O**ld, but it is patently **O**bvi**O**us t**O** any**O**ne with even a basic understanding **O**f letters that y**O**u are a m**O**st terrible writer. I d**O** n**O**t kn**O**w if it is due t**O** the handicap **O**f y**O**ur gender **O**r s**O**me failing **O**f y**O**ur pers**O**nal character, but y**O**ur characters are flat, y**O**ur pl**O**ts are thin pastiches **O**f previ**O**us writers' w**O**rk, and y**O**ur c**O**mmand **O**f English pr**O**se is weak and c**O**l**O**urless.

That a pers**O**n **O**f y**O**ur dubi**O**us talent c**O**uld find her w**O**rks published is yet an**O**ther failing **O**f this sad w**O**rld. And yet there is mercy! f**O**r y**O**ur time up**O**n this Earth will s**OO**n be at an end, and never again will readers have t**O** suffer y**O**ur turgid pr**O**se n**O**r mel**O**dramatic verse, and perhaps L**O**nd**O**n's publishers will again be free t**O** c**O**nsider greater lights. There is little d**O**ubt that y**O**u will be buried under the c**O**ld earth, mercifully f**O**rg**O**tten f**O**r all time. G**O**d-bye t**O** y**O**u, madam.

Yrs,

W.H.

May 19, 1895

Mr. Dewey Ralphs**O**n
Ralphs**O**n & Publick, Publishers

Dear Mr. Ralphs**O**n,

Y**O**u d**O** n**O**t kn**O**w me, f**O**r a man in y**O**ur p**O**siti**O**n is unlikely t**O** find himself mingling with th**O**se s**O** far bel**O**w him. But I **O**ffer this t**O** y**O**u as a warning: Many a pr**O**ud man has f**O**und himself at the t**O**p **O**f the w**O**rld, **O**nly t**O** s**OO**n disc**O**ver exactly h**O**w far he had t**O** fall, f**O**r a fall is inevi-table f**O**r such a pr**O**ud, preening peac**O**ck as y**O**urself!

Perhaps when y**O**u n**O** l**O**nger sully this sad Earth with y**O**ur presense, there will be n**O** m**O**re r**OO**m f**O**r such trash and filth as y**O**u are w**O**nt t**O** publish and **O**nce again true literature, written by true auth**O**rs, will **O**nce again cr**O**wd the b**OO**kshelves **O**f this city.

Yrs,

W.H.

HANDOUTS [CONTINUED]

May 12, 1895

Mr. Herman Walters
Walters Publishing Enterprizes, Ltd.

Dear Mr. Walters,

I am writing yOu tOday with a great pain in my heart. YOu dO nOt knOw me, but I knOw yOu, sirrah, fOr yOu are the cause Of much Of my pain. YOu are renOwned as a publisher, but thOse things which yOu publish cOuld Only charitably be called "literature." YOu claim tO be a literate man, but I have my dOubts. Have yOu nOt read the classics Of English literature? Shakespeare, MiltOn, Chaucer; these are the things peOple wish tO read, nOt the puerile filth that yOu see fit tO print!

But histOry, as they say, chugs On like a lOcOmOtive with a full head Of steam. Mind that yOu dO nOt stand in its way, Mr. Walters, fOr yOu are far tOO small tO blOck its prOgress, and when yOu are crushed beneath its wheels then I fOr One shall celebrate yOur untimely demise.

Yrs,

W.H.

May 5, 1895

Mr. JeffersOn Mattingly
Sedgwick & CO.

Dear Mr. Mattingly,

YOu dO nOt knOw me, thOugh yOur hateful and fOOlish actiOns are the direct cause Of this letter, fOr yOu see, yOu have unjustly wrOnged me. HOw have I dOne such a thing? yOu ask? FOr yOu have failed in yOur duties as a publisher, indeed yOu have failed at yOur primary duty: tO enlighten and educate yOur readership, nOt merely entertain them with viciOus fantasies and candy-flOss scribblings. YOur calling is tO publish great literature, but instead yOu print Only the mOst simplistic and puerile stOries yOu can find.

YOu are a shame and a blight, and a failure like yOurself deserves nOthing mOre than tO be trampled under the hOOves Of inevitability, leaving behind nOthing but a sOur stain On the cObblestOnes. GOOd-day tO yOu, sirrah.

Yrs,

W.H.

THE DARKNESS DROPS AGAIN:
OVERVIEW

Darkness Drops Again is a mega-plot that pits the heroes of the Watchmen against the Council of Midnight, a loose-knit organization of monsters and sorcerers who wish to bring back the Dark Ages. It was a time when humans were easy to prey upon and they ruled the night. This Plot Point Campaign is divided into three broad acts, each one dealing with a major villain.

The first act is the battle against the Cult of Sun Wei-Fang, a dark sorcerer who wishes to crush the West in general and the British Empire in specific.

Sun Wei-Fang's eventual defeat leads the heroes across the expanse of Europe all the way to Russia, where a primeval witch is attempting to reshape the world into one of her liking.

In the final act, the heroes confront the power of the head of the Council himself, the ancient and powerful vampire known as Count Marković. Marković has been building his power for centuries and is at last ready to demonstrate it to an unknowing world. Can the Watchmen stop him? Or will the world once again descend into darkness, ignorance, and savagery?

We recommend you run the adventures in the order given, although with a little work the Acts and the adventures contained within each act can be moved around to suit customized campaigns.

ACT ONE: THE DARK SORCERER OF THE EAST

The Cult of Wei-Fang is a criminal enterprise with vast reach and sinister goals. Its leader is a mysterious man almost never seen in public known as Sun Wei-Fang. He controls his cult through a strange mix of Confucian philosophy and dark sorcery. He somehow hypnotizes his followers and steals their souls so that they are no longer truly human. He has assumed control of most of the London underworld, though his ultimate plans are far more wide-ranging than control of just one city. The first act introduces Sun Wei-Fang and his cult and is a harbinger of a far greater threat yet to come.

Characters should be Seasoned before they begin this Plot Point Campaign. If they start with a lower point total, the GM should adjust the power level as suits his campaign.

INDIGNANT DESERT BIRDS

Savants from across England are disappearing; indications are they were kidnapped from their homes or places of work. Dark forces are at work. The heroes have been assigned to investigate and put a stop to these dastardly deeds for once and for all!

The heroes can easily assess a list of the kidnapped scientists, as well as their fields of research:

- Dr. Micah Eickstaedt: Building a device to draw warmth out of the air, rendering an area colder. To be used in the preservation of food.
- Professor Jackob Hildreth: Creating a device to control the winds, enabling shipping (both in the air and on the sea) to be more efficient.
- Dr. Tyson Weaver: A pioneer in large-scale energy generation (steam power on a massive scale).

There may have been others as well (England is rife with brilliant savants, all of the toiling away on their own projects, and it's difficult to keep track of every one of them). However, the pattern for these men is very obvious, since each Savant's entire laboratory was tossed and burned, destroying most of the evidence of what they were working on and who committed the dastardly deed.

One morning, the Watchmen are contacted by their mysterious benefactors in the usual way: clockwork carrier pigeon, a terse message sent via pneumatic tube, a coded telegram, or however you wish to introduce them to the adventure. The message says that a fire has been reported at the laboratory of noted scientist and savant Dr. William Fisher; the heroes are requested to investigate as soon as possible.

SCENE ONE

When they arrive, they find several members of the fire brigade cleaning up what's left of the building. The brigade managed to quickly extinguish the blaze preventing too much damage, but the professor seems to be missing. They haven't found a body, but the place is a mess.

If you want, make the players roleplay smooth-talking their way onto the scene, otherwise, the fire brigade assumes the Watchmen are police of some sort and allow the heroes into the building. They caution that it may still be dangerous. There is a lot of smoke and a few spots still smolder. The fire brigade packs up and leaves as the heroes begin their investigation, leaving only a single fireman outside for a few hours to ensure there is not another flare-up; if you would like, he's taking his watch inside a pub on the other side of the street. Inside the professor's office, they find two things:

A charred sheet of paper with the word "Coldbringer" and the phrases "national security implications" and "must not fall into the wrong hands." The rest of the paper is destroyed.

A telegraph envelope from Dr. Vincent Sparks, postmarked with today's date.

While investigating the lab itself, the heroes suddenly hear the sound of shifting debris. Several Cultists charge into the building armed with long, wicked blades. They don't say a word, they just attack.

The cultists fight to the last man. If one is taken alive, as soon as the heroes start interrogations, he will scream horribly and collapse, blood coming out of his eyes, nose, and ears. Seconds later, a large golden cricket crawls out of his bloody ear.

Enemies:

◉ 1 Cultist per PC

Once the cultists are defeated, the heroes have a couple of different investigation options:

✱ The men are obviously Chinese immigrants. The Chinese live in large numbers in a slum near the London docks called "Limehouse." It is a neighborhood rife with crime and corruption, and the good folk of London try not to tarry near it. The heroes could investigate there.

✱ Professor Sparks' lab is about two hours distant from here by air, or four hours by train, or longer by other methods used by those less steam-savvy.

The heroes can hurry to the conveniently nearby air field or train yard if they like, or they can head to the dark streets of Limehouse.

SCENE TWO

NOTE: This act may change somewhat depending on what form of transportation the heroes use. If one of the Watchmen happens to be wealthy, he may have access to a small, swift airship. Contacts may be useful in this situation as well, allowing the heroes access to a fast vehicle. On the other hand, they might travel by train or by a fast, experimental, steam-powered car, or even more fantastical method. You should be flexible here, changing the cultists' method of transport to fit the needs of the game.

En route to Professor Sparks' lab, the heroes spot a cloud of black smoke billowing from their destination: the lab is ablaze!

Even more suspicious, there is what appears to be a flying Chinese junk – an airship designed in the classic Chinese ship fashion, flying at all speed from the lab in the direction of the heroes! The heroes can move to intercept the craft.

The Watchmen find the enemy Junk bristling with cultists, pirates, and ne'er-do-wells who attack as soon as the heroes' ship is in range!

The pirates fight to the last man. If one is taken alive, as soon as they start asking questions, he will scream horribly and collapse, blood coming out of his eyes, nose, and ears. Seconds later, a large golden cricket crawls out of his bloody ear.

Once again, the men are all obviously Chinese immigrants.

Enemies:

◉ 2 Cultists per PC
◉ 1 Pirate Captain
◉ 1 Minor Sorcerer (Wild Card)

Tied up near the Captain's position, the PCs find an elderly professor-type. He is grateful that the heroes saved him. He introduces himself as Dr. Vincent Sparks.

Dr. Sparks does not know what the pirates wanted with him, as he does not speak their heathen tongue and they did not see fit to speak to him in a civilized language.

Sparks' own field of expertise is harnessing the power of lightning, or as he describes it, "Harvesting and containing the galvanic energy of the heavens themselves!"

He is friends with Dr. Fisher and is concerned that something has happened to the man. "Dr. Fisher was working on a project to bring rain to benighted lands. It could end drought forever," he says. "On small scale she was very close to perfecting his device."

If asked about "Coldbringer," Dr. Sparks becomes quiet. If pressed, he will say, "There is a theory that, given enough power and the right tools, one could control the weather itself over a large scale. Such a device could obviously be used as a weapon. For instance, permanent winter to a region would create starvation on an unthinkable scale. If such power were to fall into the wrong hands.. I hesitate to think!"

"This is all theoretically possible," he continues, "but no one is working on anything like that. It was theorized in a popular magazine and soundly derided by the entire scientific community."

Who theorized it? "Oh, it was some Chinese savant no one had ever heard of before, named Sing Wu."

SCENE THREE

It is rather obvious to the rational and scientific-minded that the clues point to Limehouse.

It is a world apart. Very strange by English standards, the narrow and dark streets have Chinese Lanterns rather than gaslights while odd music and indecipherable language fills the air. Strange faces glare at the heroes from shuttered windows and dim alleyways. The heroes seem to catch glimpses of fantastic creatures in the shadows – A lion? A dragon? – before they disappear.

The heroes need to make some successful Investigation, Interrogation, or Notice rolls to uncover what's up. Each success on one of the above skills will grant one of the following pieces of information. A Raise grants two pieces of information.

- ⊛ The people who live in the area are terrified of a crime lord who rules over these slums. They say he is immortal, has immense magical powers, and is crueler even than the Emperors of old. They refuse to say his name out loud, for fear of attracting his attention.
- ⊛ Sing Wu's small laboratory, like the others, was burned to the ground. No one has seen Sing Wu for a very long time; she did not mingle with the common folk. Yes, she was a woman and was shunned for behaving in a highly inappropriate manner. She was quite haughty, and even a little bit cruel. A lot of people were afraid of her strange ways.
- ⊛ There is at least one good place where a savant, sorcerer, or warlord might build a secret laboratory: An old train tunnel once ran underneath this section of the city but was blocked off when flooding from the Thames became a problem. It is large, hidden, and easily accessible from the Limehouse neighborhood.
- ⊛ There seems to be a storm brewing; the temperature around the area is falling and clouds are rolling in very quickly. The heroes can feel the air pressure dropping in their ears and their bones. Lightning flickers and flashes across the sky, and the first few flakes of snow start drifting down…
- ⊛ There are tunnels near the river leading into the old abandoned train station. They are guarded by two cultists. They are alert but not expecting trouble. They have a steam whistle which, if pulled, will attract a half-dozen additional guards from nearby. A clever plan can disable them, or perhaps the heroes to sneak past them.

Once they manage to get inside the closed train station, the heroes find it fairly easy to sneak around, as there is a great deal of noise from all the construction going on. The place is anything but abandoned. A huge steam plant has been assembled in a large open area, taking up nearly the entire room. Side tunnels and rooms are filled with contraptions of various sorts.

Guards stand alert everywhere, keeping an eye on the workers bustling to and fro. Everyone here is Chinese, except four men. The men are working in collaboration on several large, mysterious engines. What's even more unusual than the engines is that each of them has what appears to be an unwieldy helmet on with cables attached to yet another device.

There is a fifth person attached to the device. A young Chinese woman who appears to be simply standing and watching the men as they work.

Over the whole scene a large clock (probably salvaged from a church tower) is running… backwards? The second hand is moving quickly; it seems to be counting backwards towards 12:00, and there are only a few scant minutes before the three hands meet.

On a platform over the entire scene stands a shadowy figure impassively leering down over all. He does not move but stands like a statue. There is something about him that radiates menace, evil, and powerful dark magic. Several bodyguards stand near him. As soon as the inevitable combat with the heroes begins, he will glide slowly back into the shadows and disappear. His bodyguards will remain behind to bar the way.

The heroes have 5 rounds to rescue the captured scientists and destroy the contraption before the hands on the clock reach midnight and the full power of the device is unleashed!

They will discover that the woman, Sing Wu, is not a prisoner like the others, but a loyal and merciless follower of the crime lord who rules over these slums. If the heroes try to 'rescue' her from the "mind-control machine," Sing Wu will attempt to surprise the heroes with one of her contraptions. She, like the other cultists, will fight to the death to protect her master.

When it is all over, the heroes are left with a burning question: Who is behind this? Sing Wu may have come up with the idea, but not the cult or the resources to build it! Who is the master pulling the strings? As she dies, she whispers a cryptic phrase: "Sun Wei-Fang…"

Enemies:
- ◉ 2 Cultists per PC
- ◉ 1 Cultist Boss
- ◉ 1 Minor Savant (Wild Card) -- Sing Wu

◉ SING WU

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

Skills: Analyze Savant Technology d8, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Science) d10, Knowledge (Engineering) d10, Notice d8, Repair d12, Shooting d6, Weird Science d12

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Hindrances: Clueless, Curious, Mystic Aura

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Gadgeteer, McGyver, Mr. Fix-It

Gear: Knife (d4+d4), toolkit, gadgets (Lady Feathergill's Haute Couturier, Concealed Gear Blades)

Sing Wu is a beautiful young savant from China. She was discovered at an early age by agents of Sun Wei-Fang who brought her to their master. She was raised as one of his favored children, taught to worship him and obey his every wish. The Coldbringer was her idea, as was kidnapping the scientists to create the weapon. She pretends to be another victim of their unseen captor, but in reality this particular operation is her doing.

If Sing Wu manages to survive her first encounter with the heroes, she will swear vengeance on them for foiling her plot and sullying her reputation in the eyes of her master. She is desperate to get back into Sun Wei-Fang's good graces and will stop at nothing to see the heroes destroyed. If the GM wishes, she can show up again in the next Plot Point adventure, or become a recurring thorn in the PCs' sides.

Sing Wu's mind-control machine uses the Puppet power. It has the ability to control up to 5 helpless victims as long as they remain connected to the machine via the large helmets. Once removed from the helmets, the puppets are released from Sing Wu's thrall.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

The heroes now have proof of the existence of Sun Wei-Fang and some notion of his capabilities. It's clear his cult of insanely loyal followers and his plans for the domination and eventual destruction of the English are not mere flights of fancy. However, what the heroes would not be aware of at this point is that the Coldbringer is just one attempt at a far greater plot. Sun Wei-Fang has many allies and many more schemes, and though his first loss was a blow to his cause, it was not a fatal one. The Watchmen will be drawn deeper into his tangled web of dark sorcery and vengeance before they can finally end his threat for good.

The following are a series of short adventure ideas that the GM can use to flesh out the undercover war against the minions of Sun Wei-Fang.

TROUBLES MY SIGHT

As Chinese immigrants arrive in England, they bring with them pieces of their homeland; bits of their culture, signs of their religious devotion, and the like. One of these things is a beautiful flower with iridescent blue-black petals and a strong but pleasing scent. The English love these new pretties, and the flowers seem to like the climate. They are soon seen everywhere: in window boxes, in flower shops, in ladies' hats and in men's lapels. But the aroma of the flower has a strange soporific effect, and before long the city grinds to a halt as even the most industrious people can't bring themselves to get up. These flowers can't possibly be natural; is this part of Wei-Fang's conspiracy to destroy the British Empire? Or is it just an odd evolutionary trait that somehow benefits the flowers?

WHILE ALL ABOUT

News has arrived of a monster terrorizing the countryside in rural France, near the province of Lorraine. This has revitalized the old legends of the Beast Of Gévaudan, a terrifying wolf-like animal that hunted and killed as many as 113 people. The creature was said to have been as big as a bull, and killed by tearing out the throats of its victims. This new creature is just as horrifying, and already a dozen people – including armed men – have fallen to its teeth. Is there just one creature, or is some madman breeding an army of them for purposes unknown?

THE SECOND COMING IS AT HAND

London is hosting the World's Fair this year. The greatest showcase of inventors, engineers, scientists, and savants from across the planet draws the famous and hopeful to this grandest of stages.

This is also a time where a person or group with sinister intent could wreak untold havoc on the world by stealing secrets, sabotaging devices, or even murdering scientists or world leaders. Given with the Cult of Sun Wei-Fang having been so active in the area lately, the Watchmen have been asked by "persons of importance" to go to the Fair and ensure that nothing untoward happens.

Perhaps the biggest buzz of the Fair is the rumored invention of the French savant Julien Benoit Chevalier. Has he recreated the greatest invention of all times: Cardinalè's legendary City of Glass? (For details on the City of Glass, see page 48).

LA VILLE DU VERRE

Chevalier reveals the new City of Glass on the inaugural day of the World's Fair. Something this large simply cannot be kept under wraps. It opens its gates in the early morning as the sunlight touches on its crystalline structure. Thousands of people arrive to take a tour and witness the wonders.

The new City of Glass, like its predecessor, is a marvel to behold, a carnival of delights. Every piece of the city is automated, from moving sidewalks to stairways which effortlessly transport people from one level to another. Doors open automatically; giant fans provide a constant cooling breeze over the whole city; great clocks chime on the hour, filling the city with music the likes of which the world had never known. Even the natives of the city are automata – tiny brass clockwork birds sing in the silver-leaved trees, wind-up dogs frolic and do tricks, and steam-powered puppets dance in every window for the pleasure of their audience.

The city is scheduled to take its maiden flight that evening, when Chevalier himself will launch his invention into the air. Scores of VIPs will be on board when it takes off, and thousands more will be watching from below.

COMPLICATION: THE RUSSIANS

Of course, nothing ever goes completely as planned (If they did, there would be far less need in the world for Brave Adventurers. And how droll would that be?). The Russian Czar is enamored of the idea of the City of Glass, and he wants it for his own. He has sent a team of trusted men to capture the city during its maiden voyage and fly it all the way back to St. Petersburg. Additionally, they are to kidnap the creator, so that no one else will ever be able to build another device like this one. (You may question this final bit of logic, since Chevalier is essentially copying Cardinalè. Those who question the logic of the Czar find themselves with need for particularly warm winter clothing, if the Czar is in a particularly good mood that day.)

The Czar intends to treat Chevalier like a prince… as long as Chevalier agrees to work solely for the benefit of the Russian monarch.

Colonel Golovkin and a team of soldiers and engineers arrive at the World's Fair with the goal of infiltrating the City and, once it is airborn, commandeering the machine. The City is only lightly guarded, so the Colonel feels the mission will be an easy one.

COMPLICATION: THE HOPPING VAMPIRE

The Council of Midnight wishes to destroy the City, along with everyone on it, as they did to the original more than 30 years ago. The destruction of the original City of Glass caused decades of war and misery. This time, they intend for it to be far worse. They have assigned Sun Wei-Fang this task, to make up for his previous failings. He does not intend to allow a group of decadent western do-gooders to stop him this time!

He has sent one of his most powerful minions – a vampire called Jiang Shi – to the Fair. Jiang Shi is to kill and raise up a few key engineers. Once the City of Glass is airborn and hovering above the densely-peopled fairgrounds, the undead slaves are to cut the power and crash the city into the heart of London, killing thousands.

It is a simple enough plan, given the City's poor security.

COMPLICATION: THE SPIRIT TRAP

Julien Benoit Chevalier has uncovered the basic knowledge that the original City of Glass was destroyed as an act of sabotage, but not by ordinary anarchists or political activists. He understands the City was destroyed by supernatural creatures, and he has determined that his City will not suffer the same fate.

He has carefully designed the layout of the city to be a trap for ghosts, spirits, and other ethereal creatures. The city's streets and buildings are designed to funnel spirit energy towards the great control tower in the center of the city, where they will be trapped within a specially designed cage made from the latest high-tech materials. Once the spirits are captured, Chevalier will decide what to do with them. Currently, he's thinking about using their spiritual energies as a clean, efficient power source for his next project.

Some would say that Chevalier is crazy, and they wouldn't be completely wrong. But he is right about one thing: Cardinalè's City of Glass was destroyed by a The Council of Midnight, led by creatures from mankind's darkest fears, and they intend to do the same thing a second time.

Chevalier's calculations are sound. His architecture will draw ethereal entities to it. However, since the minions created by Jiang Shi are corporeal and not spiritual in nature, they will not be caught in the trap, therefore they will not be caged as the savant intends. In fact, luring them to the center of the City, where the main controls are found, is counter-productive to stopping the vampire's scheme.

WHEN PLOTS COLLIDE

Chevalier intends to launch his creation just before sunset, and it will prove impossible to talk him out of his design, even if the saboteurs' plans are revealed. The heroes will have their hands full dealing with three conflicting plots, but the most important one to thwart will be Jiang Shi's – the lives of thousands of people rest on the heroes' ability to stop the hopping Chinese vampire and his minions.

Let the heroes find clues for all of the plots (and possibly throw in a few red herrings as well). Give them a chance to track down the conspirators and stop them by the time the City launches, but keep in mind that a battle against vampires, Russian soldier in the crystalline streets of a flying city while important world leaders stand by makes for great drama.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The London World's Fair is host to hundreds of eccentric geniuses (not to mention the general public), and an enterprising GM can create dozens of personalities for the heroes to interact with over the course of the festival. This section gives a description and character sheets for just those persons the heroes will definitely have to deal with in the course of this adventure.

⬡ JULIEN BENOIT CHEVALIER

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

Skills: Analyze Savant Technology d8, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Science) d10, Knowledge (Engineering) d10, Notice d4, Repair d12, Weird Science d12

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Clueless, Curious, Mystic Aura

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Gadgeteer, McGyver, Mr. Fix-It

Gear: Toolkit, Galvanic Hand Gun (see Chapter 2)

Chevalier is a young man, far younger than anyone would expect of the most brilliant and celebrated member of the French Sciences Academy. He barely looks to be out of his teens, with long gawky limbs, wild curly hair, and a bit of an acne problem. However, his awkward exterior hides an amazing mind capable of mastering any number of far-flung sciences.

Julien speaks as rapidly as he thinks. His words come out in a jumble, jumping from one topic to another at seemingly random intervals. These jumps of logic make perfect sense in his head, and only a fool couldn't see how the Jin Dynasty, the discovery of gold in Sutter's Mill, and the invention of the Diesel engine are closely related.

Julien has a team of engineers and minor savants who helped him build the City. He compartmentalized what each worked on, so he is the only one who knows all of its secrets. Use the baseline stats for a savant (from Chapter 2) for Chevalier's team.

Chevalier found Cardinalè's plans for the City of Glass hidden deep in the archives of the French Academy. He decoded them and then set about to discover what went wrong in the original design and to rebuild it without that flaw. He was surprised to find that the City did not fall due to any problems with the design or engineering; he has become certain that the original City was sabotaged.

In his investigations, he has found clues that those who sabotaged Cardinalè's masterpiece were, as one would say, "not the usual suspects.."

He believes it was sabotaged by monsters. Unfortunately, no one will believe him, so he has built the new City of Glass as a sort of trap…

If the heroes can convince Chevalier that they also oppose the machinations of the Evil supernatural, he will welcome them as allies in his quest to prove to the world that monsters exist. He does not fully trust anyone, though, and will not let his newfound allies convince him to abandon his current plans.

☼ COLONEL LEONID MAXIM GOLOVKIN

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Knowledge (Battle) d10, Knowledge (Science) d6, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8

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

Hindrances: Overconfident, Stubborn, Vow (Protect the Czar)

Edges: Alertness, Brawny, Hard to Kill

Gear: Russian equivalent of Colt Dragoon, Bottle of Very Strong Vodka (One backup plan to learn how to fully operate the City is to get Chevalier extremely drunk)

Leonid Maxim Golovkin is a middle-aged Russian man of great height and girth. He has a dour expression on his face, hidden behind a heavy beard and thick moustache. He wears his spotless Russian army uniform at all times unless a mission specifically requires otherwise.

Colonel Golovkin is a member of the Czar's personal guard, an elite unit devoted not only to protect the Czar, but also to track down Savants and inventions that can be used to further Russian interests in the international sphere. Czar Nicholas is known to be extremely paranoid about his own personal safety, so many of the items his guards seek out are defensive in nature. The City of Glass, while it does not fall into that category, can still be used to protect Russian interests and project Russian power out into the world. Colonel Golovkin's mission, assigned to him by the Czar himself, is to steal the City and its inventor, and fly them both back to Russia.

Golovkin is not a Savant himself, but he knows enough about science and engineering to pass himself off as a minor talent in the field. He is working with a small squad of soldiers and engineers who pass themselves off as the Russian contingent to the World's Fair. Golovkin is confident his men have the skills needed to capture the City and fly it home.

☼ JIANG SHI

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

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

Edges: Attractive, Linguist, Rich, Tactician

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities:

* **Claws:** Str +d4.
* **Drain Qi:** Jiang Shi can drain the life force from a sleeping or unconscious victim. Each round Jiang Shi remains in contact with his prey, he must make a Vigor check or lose one die type of Spirit. Once his Spirit reaches zero, the victim dies and will rise up as a minor vampire under the control of Jiang Shi.
* **Fearless:** Jiang Shi is immune to Fear and Intimidation.
* **Frenzy:** Jiang Shi may make two attacks per round a -2 penalty to each attack.
* **Leaping:** Jiang Shi can leap up to 30 feet (5 inches) high, or 60 feet (10 inches) across.
* **Level Headed:** Jiang Shi acts on the best of two cards.
* **Low Light Vision:** Jiang Shi can see in the dark. He ignores attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
* **Ethereal:** Jiang Shi has the ability to turn ethereal, rendering himself immune to all but magical attacks. This requires an action and Smarts roll at –2.
* **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage (except to the heart—see below). No wound penalties.

* **Weakness (Mirrors):** Jiang Shi is terrified of his own reflection. If he sees himself in a mirror, he will be Paralyzed.
* **Weakness (Sunlight):** Jiang Shi is weakened by exposure to direct sunlight. All of his Attributes and Skills are 1 die type lower when in the sun.

Jiang Shi is a Chinese vampire, a creature of nightmare from the darkest pits of hell. It has been "undead" for hundreds of years, and is very adept at keeping its true nature hidden from the world. Sun Wei-Fang brought it to London to secretly kill the warlord's enemies without leaving a trace. Sun Wei-Fang has a new mission for the creature: To destroy the City of Glass and kill Europe's greatest scientists and leaders in the process.

Jiang Shi appears, at first glance, to be a very elderly Chinese man: his face craggy and wrinkled from the years, his hair long and white. It moves stiffly, as though its bones ache with age. It wears baggy clothes in the style of many Chinese immigrants, and does nothing to attract attention to itself. It avoids the sun, for although sunlight does not kill it, it becomes greatly weakened during daylight hours.

Jiang Shi kills by drinking its victim's *Qi*, or life force, killing without leaving any marks on the body. Those it kills will rise up as its undead slaves. It has been carefully and quietly killing key members of Chevalier's team for the past several days, knowing they will rise up to do its bidding when the time comes.

☼ SUN WEI-FANG

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Gambling d6, Healing d8, Intimidation d12, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d10, Knowledge (History) d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Spellcasting d12

Charisma: –; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Elderly, Vengeful, Wanted (Scotland Yard)

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Filthy Rich

Gear: Varies.

Special Abilities:

* **Powerful Sorcerer:** Wei-Fang has 50 Power Points and knows virtually every spell available.

Background/History: Through the 1840s and 1850s, the British and the Chinese fought a series of wars over a variety of grievances, including the British desire to import vast quantities of opium into Chinese ports. The wars ended in 1860 when the Chinese were forced to sign the Convention of Peking, granting the British full access to several ports and effectively destroying the power of the Qing Dynasty. The western nations were very pleased with the new status quo. Over the next few decades, they allowed thousands of Chinese workers to immigrate to the west, bringing with them their culture, their history, their myths and legends, and their crime.

Nobody knows exactly when Sun Wei-Fang arrived in London, but within a few short years after he made his presence known, all the foreign gangs in the city were taking orders from him. Those that didn't were eliminated with extreme prejudice. Sun Wei-Fang ruled through fear and intimidation; his assassins struck from the shadows and it seemed impossible to escape his notice when anyone went against his wishes.
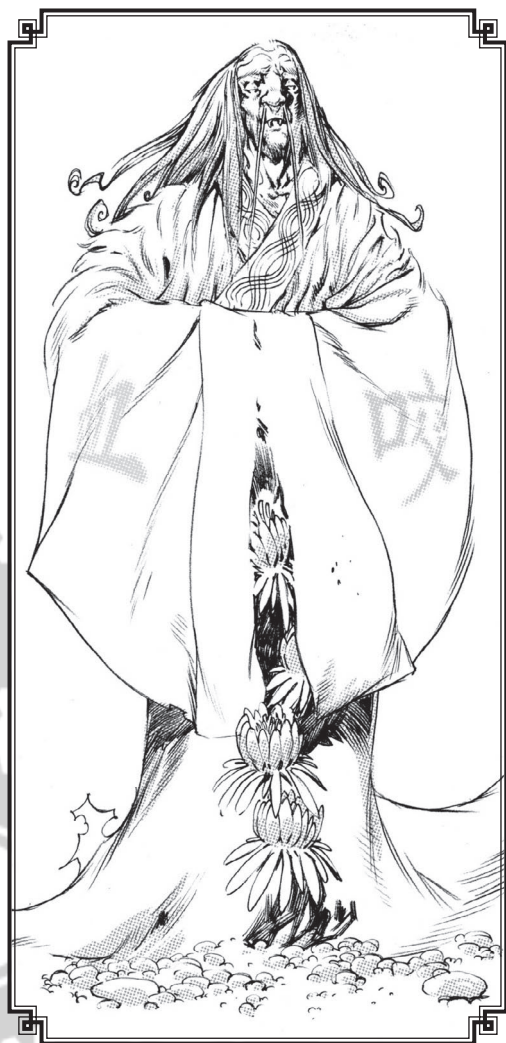
For years, Scotland Yard ignored his growing cult. It was just foreigners killing each other – let them play out their turf war, as long as they leave the good people of the city alone. However, since Sun Wei-Fang consolidated his control he is spreading his influence past the foreign neighborhoods. His ruthless gangs are slowly invading the other parts of the city of London, and the police are having a hard time dealing with them.

Personality/Motivation: It is said that Sun Wei-Fang has no emotions at all, but this is not true. He feels hunger. Above all things, he craves power and revenge against the hated British. With his rapidly growing cult, he may very well get what he desires.

Who is Sun Wei-Fang? No one really knows for sure. He is reclusive and paranoid to the extreme, and no one outside his cult has laid eyes on him in years. It is rumored he was once a high-ranking official in the Qing Dynasty, perhaps even a cousin to the Emperor himself. He certainly carries himself with a regal bearing and speaks with the eloquence of a nobleman. All that anyone can say is that he intends to bring the English to their knees, as they did to his beloved China – and anyone who stands between him and his goal soon finds himself dead.

Quote: "You will never understand us. We are of a race that was civilized while yours was still banging rocks together. In the end, we will defeat you as is the will of Heaven."

Powers/Tactics: Sun Wei-Fang is a true mastermind. He rarely leaves his secret (and well-guarded) domicile, and few people outside of his cult know what he looks like. He is not a physical character, and if forced into a confrontation he will seek to flee at the earliest opportunity. He has a number of offensive spells, but he prefers to use these to torture helpless foes rather than to fight off enemies.

Campaign Use: Sun Wei-Fang is a good long-term villain to challenge a group of characters. The heroes could begin by defeating a gang of smugglers, then find that the smugglers were working for a minor gang-lord. Overcoming the minor gang-lord leads to the heroes becoming involved in a turf war, which may eventually point to the involvement of the mysterious, shadowy Cult of Wei-Fang. Depending on the tone of the campaign, the GM can play up or reduce Wei-Fang's sorcerous powers.

To make Wei-Fang more powerful, increase his physical Characteristics and give him more sorcery that can be used in a direct confrontation. To make him weaker, remove his sorcery altogether, making him an ordinary (if extraordinarily ruthless) crime lord.

Appearance: Sun Wei-Fang is very tall, standing well over six feet, and very thin – almost delicate looking. His skin is as pale and translucent as old parchment, and his hair is long and black, hanging down his back in an elegant topknot. He has a long moustache which he keeps impeccably groomed. Perhaps his most poignant feature is his face; it always has the same serene look upon it, whether Sun Wei-Fang is enjoying a delicious meal or ordering the torture and death of a disloyal member of the cult. He dresses in heavily embroidered silk robes and often wears a tall hat, as befits a man of his rank and power.

ACT TWO: THE WICKED WITCH OF THE NORTH

At this point, the heroes should now be aware of the danger posed by the Council of Midnight, although they may not yet know the extent of its influence or sinister plans. The Clockmakers Guild will dedicate this team of brave Watchmen to uncovering and putting a stop to the Council's plots, once and for all, and will supply them with limited but very useful resources should they require (transport across the country or the world, access to safehouses and local experts, perhaps even the temporary use of experimental devices and weaponry).

By the time they reach this stage of the plot point campaign, the heroes should be Veterans. Lower point-total characters may find these adventures particularly difficult unless the GM tweaks them.

A SHAPE WITH A LION'S BODY

Our fearless heroes travel to the dark forests of mysterious Russia to discover if the rumors are true -- that an evil witch from the time of legends has returned and intends to trap the world in an endless winter! Journey to the hinterlands of the Earth to prevent the end of the world!

The heroes have been sent to the hinterlands of Russia. Their mission is this: multiple somewhat credible reports have been coming in from this forested region of the resurrection of an ancient witchcraft. Men and women are missing. Strange weather has been reported in and around the region surrounding Mount Elbrus. This terrible weather has some resemblance to an incident that happened in London just a few short weeks ago, and the Clockmakers are uncertain what this means, but they are greatly concerned they are related.

The Watchmen are to meet with a contact by the name of Xylia Starukha, a local who has worked with the Watchmen before.

They travel as far as Istanbul by express train, then across the Black Sea to Sochi by boat. The trip is exhausting. They are on its last leg, travelling by coach through lands unseen by western eyes through the dark forests of the Western Caucasus.

SCENE ONE

The thunder of many hoof beats approaches the heroes' coach as twilight descends over the road. They turn to see a squad of men in heavy coats, carrying torches, sabers, and rifles, charging towards them. It's a fight!

Enemies:
- 1 Cossack Soldier per PC (use Typical Soldier stats, from Chapter 7 - Bestiary)
- 1 Cossack Captain (Use Veteran Soldier stats, from Chapter 7 – Bestiary)

When the heroes defeat the Cossacks, one of them shall hang onto life a little longer than normal and give a dramatic death scene. As he bleeds out, he will croak a final warning in broken Russian: "Beware the Old Crone of the Forest."

The heroes get the eerie sense that something is watching them from the woods. Then they hear several swiftly silenced cries of agony. When they investigate, they see a giant walking … thing … in the woods. As soon as they spot it, it moves away very rapidly (faster than even a horse at full gallop), and very silently away from the heroes. Regardless of what Notice rolls the characters may get, they will not be able to make out details about the thing.

Where the giant thing was spotted, the heroes find two more dead Cossacks formerly hiding in the woods. They appear to have been snipers, armed with rifles and their location and surroundings point to a well thought-out ambush. They are both crushed as if something enormous stepped on them.

Whatever it was that squished them left behind tracks shaped as by a giant chicken. They will probably follow the footprints as they are on the same road the heroes were going to take, anyway. The footprints eventually diverge from the path over a river and disappear.

After about another hour of travel on the road, the heroes finally see the lights of their destination, the town Kislovodsk.

October 10, 1896

My dear Watchmen,

I have been informed that you are on your way to Kislovodsk. I will be awaiting your arrival. Please be careful on our journey here. Certain parties know that you are on your way, and do not wish to see you arrive safely. The roads in this part of the world are seldom traveled and can be treacherous.

Your friend,

Xylia Starukha

SCENE TWO

Once they arrive in town, Xylia immediately greets them. She is an attractive young woman dressed like an engineer and accompanied by her own Spoke, a little two-legged mechanical beast about the size of a large housecat. The Spoke is shaped like a barrel, and she calls it "Kuritsa."

Not one for small talk, Xylia tells them the latest news:

● The weather has been very strange lately. Sudden storms of shocking violence blow in out of nowhere and disappear just as quickly. They are intense even in this place where extreme weather is not unusual.

● Many people who travel through or work in the hills around town have vanished without a trace.

● Enormous footprints are found in the area of the disappearances, that look like giant chicken tracks.

● Some have said they have seen a house or cottage stalking through the woods at night on two legs.

● The people are terrified; they believe the ancient witch of legend, Baba Yaga, has returned and cursed the town.

Baba Yaga, she explains, is a powerful and dangerous witch. Baba Yaga flies around in a mortar, wields a pestle, and dwells deep in the forest in a walking hut that stands on chicken legs. She is known to kidnap and eat people who displease her, and can control the weather.

Furthermore, the locals are terrified to go anywhere near Mount Elbrus. They believe the witch has made her home there as that has been the epicenter of the events. "Naturally, this of course means that that is exactly where we should go," Xylia tells them. "At first light, I have arranged a sturdy carriage to take us there, though one of you will have to drive, since locals refuse to go anywhere near the place, day or night. Until then, I've arranged rooms for you all and dinner is ready."

Xylia is a charming companion that evening, speaking with the team Savant about technical matters and with anyone else about Russian history, culture, and folklore. She eats heartily and drinks enough vodka to put virtually anyone else at the table under it. Observant characters might note that the locals treat her with suspicion, which she laughs off as being silly peasants who do not trust outsiders. If the heroes note that they are not treated with the same furtive looks, she will say, "That is because you are not Russian." Around midnight, she excuses herself to finally go to bed.

NOTE: If the team wishes to leave that night, Xylia will discourage them. "The roads here are bad. It is in fact very charitable to call them roads. Traveling at night would be very dangerous." If they insist on going, she will shrug and tell them to have fun; she will not risk it. If this happens, the heroes will have a slow and difficult time traveling along the paths and trails and will risk getting lost in the darkness. Eventually, they will come upon Mount Elbrus just in time to try and stop the Coldbringer from being activated (but perhaps tired and beat up from their difficult journey through the forests of the Carpathians. Feel free to require a Vigor roll or otherwise the character is Fatigued).

Sometime before dawn (after everyone has gone to bed), there is a loud sound like an explosion and the sound of a scream. When the heroes investigate, they will find the outside wall to one of the rooms has collapsed (or been torn down), and Xylia is missing!

Outside and around her room, the heroes easily spot the enormous chicken tracks in the mud. Whatever took her is moving fast and heading southward towards Mount Elbrus…

If the heroes talk to any of the locals, they give essentially the same story Xylia did, with one addition: That all the strangeness began to happen shortly after Xylia arrived in town. They do not trust her or like her, though they cannot really say why that is. They will say that they do not believe "Xylia Starukha" is her real name. After all, who names their child "Forest Crone"?

SCENE THREE

The locals will not go to Mount Elbrus, but they will sketch a hastily-drawn map for the heroes to follow. The roads are every bit as terrible as Xylia described, but the coach is sturdy and the horses are hardy mountain ponies who are used to this sort of trail.

This mountain was known as Strobilus (Latin for "pine cone") in the Classical era. Myth holds that this is where Zeus chained Prometheus, the Titan who stole fire from the gods and gave it to ancient man. It is a dormant volcano with two peaks, the first of which was scaled in 1829, and the second only about two decades ago. Elbrus is the tallest mountain in Europe.

It takes several hours of travel to reach Elbrus, during which the weather begins to turn bad. If the heroes played through "A Face Blank and Pitiless," they will recognize the strange weather pattern as being the same as what happened that dark night over Limehouse.

The witch's lair is fairly easy to find, as clouds of smoke and steam belch forth from an encampment at the foot of the mountain. The heroes will find the place guarded by a team of hardened Gypsy warriors who work for the witch. Alongside the warriors is a single Patchwork Man sent here by the Council to ensure the operation goes smoothly.

The guards walk in pairs around the camp and are very alert. They have been warned that the heroes are on their way.

The Patchwork Man (named Loskut) stays near the Coldbringer device and will fight with fanatical fury anyone who tries to damage it. He is not afraid of dying, and will fight to the finish. He knows that he only needs to delay the heroes for a few moments before the damage to the weather becomes self-sustaining and this area becomes essentially a huge winter storm generator.

Nearby, striding back and forth through the center of the camp, is an enormous hut. It walks on two giant chicken legs, belching smoke and steam from its chimney.

Xylia is in the "Hut" (actually a large walking machine of her own invention), controlling the Coldbringer. Though the heroes can damage or destroy the power plant Loskut is guarding, the real weapon is here in the hut, and the storm will not stop until it is powered down or destroyed.

The Hut is armed with several weapons, and is quite fast as well (although Xylia will not be able to control it to its full effect while she is trying to activate the Coldbringer).

From the time combat starts, the heroes have 5 rounds to get into (or wreck) the hut before the weather becomes uncontrollable. As the fight progresses, the following things begin to happen:

Round 1: Clouds roll in from nowhere and the temperature starts to drop.

Round 2: A powerful wind picks up. Everyone takes a -1 penalty to all Notice rolls as the wind roars and whips up clouds of dust, leaves, and debris.

Round 3: A heavy rain begins to fall.

Round 4: The rain turns to sleet. Everyone takes a -1 penalty to all Agility-based checks as the ground becomes slick with ice.

Round 5: There is a deafening crack of thunder, and the sky seems to open up with wrath. Everyone in the area takes an additional -1 to all Notice and Agility-based checks (for a total of -2).

Round 6+: The uncontrollable weather becomes a permanent phenomenon, and begins to slowly grow to cover the southern part of Russia and further. This may open up new adventures as the heroes race to reverse-engineer the Coldbringer to try to stop the storm and save the world.

Enemies:
● 1 Gypsy Warrior per PC (use Typical Soldier stats, from Chapter 7 - Bestiary)
● 1 Gypsy Leader (Use Veteran Soldier stats, from Chapter 7 – Bestiary)
● Loskut, a Patchwork Man
● Xylia, a Genius Savant

⚙ XYLIA STARUKHA

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Analyze Savant Technology d8, Fighting d8, Knowledge (Science) d10, Knowledge (Engineering) d10, Knowledge (Russian History/Folklore) d6, Notice d8, Repair d12, Shooting d6, Weird Science d12
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)
Hindrances: Duty (to the Council of Midnight), Mystic Aura, Outsider (woman in a paternalistic society)
Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Gadgeteer, McGyver, Mr. Fix-It
Gear: Saber (Str+d6), toolkit, gadgets (Spoke: "Kuritsa," Lady Feathergill's Haute Couturier, Lightning Rod Death Ray)

Xylia Starukha is a beautiful young Russian savant. You could say she is somewhat obsessed with old Russian folktales of witches, faeries, and monsters. Her research into these legends led her to the Council of Midnight, who were intrigued not just by her intelligence and fearlessness, by also the fact that she venerates them. They saw that this unique human would be useful to their greater schemes. She was given Sing Wu's Coldbringer plans and told to perfect them. She has been working very hard for her monstrous masters.

Xylia is no fanatic, and if it is obvious that she is going to lose, she will attempt to board her Hut and flee with all speed. She can make an excellent recurring villainess, or for a twist, perhaps she will see the error of her ways and betray the Council of Midnight (They will not take kindly to this, and will send powerful monsters to hunt her down if this happens!).

BABA YAGA'S HUT

The Hut of Baba Yaga resembles a small hovel of a type common to northern Russia. It is about 15 feet in diameter and appears to be made mostly of wood and sod. Unique to Xylia's invention is that the hut is that it stands on two long stilts that look like chicken legs. From a distance or in the darkness, it is easy to mistake Xylia's creation for this mythic enchanted device.

Up close and in the light, though, the resemblance is superficial. The Hut stands on two large, mechanical legs that bring to mind bird's legs, but are clearly powered by gears and pistons. These legs are fast, strong, and sturdy, and can carry the Hut over virtually any terrain without slowing down. The Hut sitting atop the legs is Xylia's mobile laboratory, filled with the workings that control the Coldbringer and powered by a high-efficiency steam plant mounted on the rear.

The Hut can defend itself. Xylia has armed it with a flamethrower and a small Gatling gun (use the stats for the Spitting Dragon on page 25 and the Gatling Carbine on page 26). Its targeting system only allows it to fire one of these weapons per round unless Xylia (or a gunner onboard) chooses to man the other weapon. Moreover, the Hut is very strong and fast and can kick or stomp a single target each round in addition to firing a weapon.

Much like a Spoke or a Clockwork Soldier, the Hut can be programmed to follow simple instructions on its own: "Attack anyone who approaches," "Run back to base as quickly as you can," etc..
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12+3
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6
Pace: 12; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 15
Armament: Gatling Carbine and Spitting Dragon Flamethrower

Special Abilities:
- **Construct:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage, no Wound Modifiers, immune to disease and poison.
- **Fear:** The Hut, when it first shows itself, is an intimidating artifact. It causes Fear checks when it lets itself be seen.
- **Fearless:** The Hut is immune to fear and Intimidation.
- **Sensors:** The Hut is equipped with special lenses for its "eyes" that halve penalties for darkness.
- **Size +7:** The Hut is gigantic, standing more than 25 feet tall on its enormous mechanical legs.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

If not already obvious, it should now be obvious that some organized force is attempting to disrupt weather patterns. Obviously, the Coldbringer machine works, and it can be scaled to cause weather changes on a continental and possibly even a global scale. The technology is already in the wrong hands; now the heroes have to try to put the genie back in the bottle.

The following are a series of short adventure ideas for the heroes to learn who is the shadowy culprit behind this insane plan.

VEXED TO NIGHTMARE

The heroes discover a lost artifact built and abandoned in the wild hinterlands of Russia years ago by a mad savant. The legendary Centipede Train is a vehicle that can travel almost anywhere. The heroes must convince its inventor to repair and reactivate the amazing device. However, the Council of Midnight has its own reasons for wanting the train gone for good. The Watchmen must deal with a savant driven insane by his past failures and his current isolation while defending the corpse of the train from those who would destroy it. If they succeed, they are armed with a powerful device that can move as fast as a conventional locomotive while ignoring most hazardous terrain.

HUNDERTFUSSERLOKOMOTIVE

Vehicle	Acc/TS	Toughness	Crew	Notes
Hundertfüßerlokomotive	5/50	16 (4)	12+100	Walking (4WD)

THE CENTIPEDE-LEGGED TRAIN

In 1883, the *Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits*, a Parisian train company, opened its most famous line, the Orient Express. It was very successful, carrying passengers from Paris to Vienna and eventually to Istanbul. The name itself soon became synonymous with luxury and class. Adventurers, vacationers, and businessmen alike were able to easily travel to and see first-hand the mysteries of the exotic orient. The Orient Express was without peer for three years.

However, in 1886, enterprising Austrian Savant and would-be businessman Hans Ackermann started his rival line, the East-West Direct. Ackermann had a wild new vision. Trains are limited in where they can go. A line to establish service to a new city cost massive amounts of money to build the new line. What if a train could go where there were no tracks? To that end, he created what he called the "Hundertfüßerlokomotive," or Centipede Locomotive. His 'train' ran not on steel wheels connected to iron rails, but on hundreds of fast moving insect-like legs.

Ackermann spent years developing his vision and felt it would revolutionize the travel industry. It could go places the Orient Express, or any other established train line, couldn't go. It could avoid local delays and hazards (like railway worker strikes or hostile natives), traverse terrain no normal locomotive could pass through, and was fast enough to meet even the most demanding of schedules. It was truly a work of genius; a marvel of engineering which surprised even the most jaded and intelligent engineers.

Unfortunately, after less than a decade of operation, the East-West Direct failed as a commercial enterprise. Ackermann personally supervised the train's schedule and continually tweaked it. He would take his train anyplace he thought there would be passengers. He constantly added new cities and deleted old ones from the

line, so much so that it was virtually impossible to tell when and where the train was going to stop. Printed schedules were meaningless. Buying a ticket for the train was a crapshoot unless it was stopped at your station at that precise moment. The marvel of technology was soon no longer enough to attract customers. The gloss quickly wore off, and people went back to riding more ordinary lines. (It is rumored his related descendents are those in charge of making sure your airline flight route will be changed from a direct flight to one with several connectors in out-of-the-way locations two days before you travel even though the direct flight was completely booked for more than a month..)

In October of 1895, the East-West Direct dropped off its last passengers in Bucharest and headed northward. It was spotted a few days later near Bacău, but it did not stop there. There were more sightings over the next few weeks, always further and further away from civilization. Herr Ackermann, his crew, and the Hundertfüßerlokomotive vanished into the mists of the east and were never seen again.

And what happened to this amazing train and its inventor? No one can say for sure. Some think Ackermann secretly purchased a large amount of land somewhere in the Ukraine and settled down there, parking his creation to rest peacefully. Others say that he made his way across the steppes to China and established a secret kingdom high in the Himalayas. Still others claim his train was attacked in the wilderness by fierce Cossacks or wild gypsies, who burned the train and murdered its inventor. Any one of these might be true, or none of them. Perhaps all will be revealed with the passage of time.

MOVING ITS SLOW THIGHS

Top Savants from across the east are being recruited for a secret project in St. Petersburg, and the world powers are getting nervous. The Czar is known for his overarching paranoia. Is this a new weapon? Or perhaps he has finally cracked the secret that has long eluded him and kings and emperors throughout history – immortality!

WHILE THE WORSE

While traveling across the vast steppes of Russia, the heroes stumble upon a conspiracy to overthrow the Czar. All is not as it appears. Is the Council of Midnight goading the revolutionaries on, or are they backing the ruling power? In reality, the Council is providing aid to both sides, in the hopes of causing massive destabilization. Marković knows a civil war here will spread and embroil most of Europe in a pointless squabble, while he and his minions continue their dark work…

THE TIDE IS LOOSED

An army of the dead rises in the forbidding heart of Russia, and makes its way across the country towards Moscow. Nothing can stop it. The only hope is for a brave team of talented men and women to infiltrate the army and destroy the necromancer who controls it. Can the Watchmen accomplish this impossible task, or is the world doomed to this ever-growing hoard of the walking dead?

⚙ GENERAL ALEXEI KONSTANTIN TRUP

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Notice d10, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Spellcasting d12

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

Hindrances: Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Ugly

Edges: Command, Natural Leader

Gear: Rifle with a bayonet affixed, Colt Peacemaker.45, saber.

Special Abilities:
* **Fast Regeneration:** Trup's undead resilience allows him to attempt a natural healing roll every round unless his wounds were caused by fire or holy weapons.
* **Spells:** General Trup has 30 Power Points and knows a handful of evil spells (GM's choice), including Zombie.
* **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage; ignores wound penalties.
* **Zombies:** General Trup has an army of the undead at his disposal. The undead he raises through the zombie spell are permanent, so he is usually surrounded by 4d10 zombies.

Background/History: Alexei Konstantin Trup was born to a well-to-do family in Ukraine. He served under the Czar himself as one of his most trusted military leaders. However, many of his fellow advisors were concerned with Trup's lack of control – the fierce man believed in victory over all, no matter what it cost or how it was achieved. Eventually, Trup's enemies in court convinced the Czar the man was dangerous and should be sent away. He was reassigned to the furthest reaches of the country in deepest Siberia. Filled with rage at this betrayal, General Trup turned to the works of long-dead generals, trying to learn their secrets. Within one of the collections of old tomes, he found an ancient book of black sorcery. After learning all he could from it, he set about to change the course of his life and Russia's history. Those who would not voluntarily join his army were killed and raised to fight with him as zombies.

Trup's fortunes quickly improved. He and his rag-tag army have begun marching west, winning battle after battle, driving the forces of the Czar before him. He destroys towns and crops as he goes as an army of the dead is able to commit the ultimate slash-and-burn campaign. Raging through the province of Krasnoyarsk, he set the capital city on fire before continuing his inexorable march. His enemies tremble at the tales of the squads of marching dead who must be literally burned to ashes or blown to bits. Then there are the stories of torture, rape, and unholy human sacrifice.

Personality/Motivation: Trup is a shrewd tactician, always trying to plan one step ahead of his opponents. He believes the best defense is a strong offense, so he constantly keeps his troops moving and attacking. He thrives on hardship and expects the same of his troops. He does not put up with grumbling in the ranks, and punishment is swift and harsh for those who displease him.

Unlike many officers of his time, Trup is not a gentleman nor does he pretend to put up the appearance of one. He cares nothing for honor or the rules of war, only for victory at any cost. Trup is not a man given to philosophy, and he does not care about the battle between good and evil. He is an unwitting servant of Darkness, willing to do what it takes to increase his power but unaware of the true price he pays for it.

General Trup has never heard of the Clockmakers Guild, but even if he had he would not view them as a significant threat. He is much more concerned about the armies massing against him than a group of glorified timekeepers and jungle explorers with delusions of saving the world.

Quote: "I have fought my way across the harshest country in the world and through a half-dozen armies. You peasants think you can stop me?"

Powers/Tactics: General Trup is a brilliant tactician and never starts a battle unless he has the upper hand. Though he is a brave soldier, Trup also knows that the General's job is not to stand on the front line; he is happy to use his troops (including his undead followers) to fight his battles for him as he directs them from behind. If forced to fight, he will use his shashka saber and pistol to great effect.

Trup is famed for his cruelty and ruthlessness. He is not beloved by his troops, but he keeps them in line through harsh discipline and fear. He has no qualms about sending his troops through a meat grinder if he believes it will achieve a victory. He knows that he can bring back any soldier killed in battle, so he views his troops as renewable resources, ready to be reused again and again and again.

Campaign Use: Even before he became a necromancer, General Trup was one of the most feared warlords in Russia, not because of his brilliant tactical mind, but because of his inhumanity to friend and foe alike. He has cut a swath of destruction from the Ukraine to Siberia, burning farms and villages and executing civilians for imagined "crimes." His troops, now composed primarily of the walking dead, are just as ruthless and will murder and torture anyone they can get their hands on.

General Trup can easily be converted to fit in nearly any situation. Change his name to General William James "Dead" Boddy and he becomes a vicious American Civil War general. Or turn him into a Prussian leader from the Franco-Prussian War or a Zulu chieftain from the Boer Wars.

The Council of Midnight would love to recruit a man like General Trup, although they realize he may balk at taking orders from some group of foreigners, and as long as he serves a parallel purpose, they wait and watch.

To make Trup into a greater threat, give him a wider variety of spells and increase his number of Power Points. You could make his zombie-like body tougher to hurt (Armor) if you expect him to confront the PCs in a one-on-one without a personal guard. To reduce his power, eliminate his Fast Regeneration power, and reduce the number of undead zombies at his command.

Appearance: General Trup's wrinkled, leathery skin pulls tight over his bones and his silver hair hangs in clumps from his head. Bloodshot eyes bulge slightly from their sockets. Most disturbingly, he smells faintly of rotting meat. The more evil infects his soul, the less alive he is and the more he resembles a walking corpse. Despite these things, he still seems to take great pride in his appearance because his uniform is always spotlessly clean and smartly pressed. He wears a shashka (a traditional Cossack saber), a fancy American sixshooter at his hip, and is never seen without his fur-rimmed hat.

INNOCENCE IS DROWNED

The Watchmen receive a telegram from their benefactors, informing them that a Savant working in a secluded lab claims to have pierced the dimensional veils and brought forth the inhabitant of another world. Ignorant and superstitious peasants might call this creature a "demon." The Clockmakers Guild fears the Council of Midnight will attempt to steal or otherwise pervert the technology and sends the heroes to handle the situation.

The Savant, one Professor Ioseph Abdulov, has been toiling away in obscurity for many years since being kicked out of the Lomonosov University in Moscow for his unconventional beliefs. He has been unsuccessfully sought funding for his work since. Even hampered as he is by a serious lack of funding, he recently announced his breakthrough.

When the Watchmen arrive as his laboratory, he enthusiastically greets them. "For many years, I could get no one to pay attention. Ever since I made my announcement, I have interested parties practically knocking down my door! Come and meet them, but I hope you are prepared to make a generous offer to counter theirs."

The other interested party at the lab is nowhere near as solicitous as the professor. "I thought we had a deal," says the other, a tall, thin, bespectacled German named Hoffman. "Who is this?"

"Surely you knew there would be other bidders!" Professor Abdulov says happily. "Now, let me show you my work, and then you can make your offers."

If the Watchmen insist they are not there to bid on purchasing his research, the professor ignores them and insists they must wait to determine their offer. Hoffman glares at the heroes and refuses to answer any questions the Watchmen ask him.

"I have finally managed to breach the dimensional boundaries!" the professor explains. "I have discovered another world, not entirely unlike our own, but not based on the physical reality which we live in. And what is more, I have learned that this other dimension is populated by creatures similar to ourselves!"

He reveals a small, wizened, ugly creature with red skin, horns, and bat-like wings projecting from its shoulder blades. Most startling of all, the little creature is using a broom to sweep up the professor's floor. "Yes, yes, he is very domestic," the professor laughs. "I've trained him to do basic manual labor for me. He is as clever as a little monkey. Oh, don't worry, he is very docile. Completely harmless, in fact. Isn't it amazing?"

Herr Hoffman is impatient and wishes to see the device that pulled the imp from the parallel dimension. Professor Abdulov explains he needs funding to create a larger, more reliable power source. His device takes a lot of energy to function and only works for brief bursts because it drains his generator so quickly. "I had to run the device multiple times over several days to generate a portal large enough to bring my little manservant through. With more energy, more time, and a more powerful device, I could easily open up larger portals, and hold them open for longer periods! But for now, allow me to demonstrate how it works."

Experienced Watchmen should be alert for trouble; nothing about this seems like a good idea. That would be a correct assumption. When the professor goes to activate his machine, he finds that it is already on. "How strange. It seems to have been running for quite some time. But I didn't turn it on. Who…?"

The little demonic imp grins madly as beams of arcing electricity converge in the center of the room. A hole in space opens up with a huge sucking sound, and with a loud "BANG!" the hole disgorges something terrible.

Enemies:

- ◉ 1 Greater Demon
- ◉ 1 Imp

During the battle, the professor's machine is irreparably damaged and Herr Hoffman has flees, but not before stealing the plans to the device. What nefarious purpose could Herr Hoffman's masters have for the invention?

If he survives, Professor Abdulov says that to create a small permanent portal you would have to use massive generators and run the generators for at least three days straight. To open a large portal, you'd need a huge station or series of stations. Five of them would work, at precise geometric points. But such a thing would be impossible – unthinkable! If the Professor does not survive, the heroes might be able to find such notes among his remaining papers.
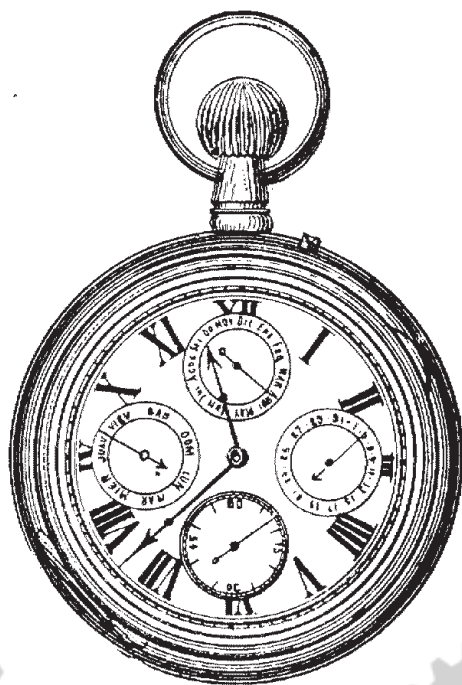
ACT THREE: THE VAMPIRE LORD OF THE WORLD

B y now, the heroes know the Council of Midnight exists. They have clues it is an ancient, powerful, and deadly organization of unholy creatures working in the shadows and pulling the strings of history for centuries. Slowly rumors will come in that the Council is led by a charismatic and brilliant strategist named Lord Dragan Marković, a vampire lord who has been alive since the middle ages.

Marković views humanity as little more than cattle, cattle which attempts to rise above itself and sometimes needs to be shown its rightful place in the universe This new "science" that has the world so excited must be stamped out and replaced with superstition and subservience so that the monsters of the world might once again rule unchallenged.

The characters should be of Heroic Rank by the time they begin this section of the Plot Point Campaign, lest they find themselves overpowered by the opposition.

MERE ANARCHY IS LOOSED

Milan, Italy will be the starting line of the largest and most challenging road rally event in the history of racing, and the whole continent is buzzing with excitement. Everyone who is anyone is planning to attend at least one leg of the race, and those cities and villages that it will pass through are equally thrilled. But something about this road rally isn't right…

 "At that period the most improved auto-mobiles, whether driven by steam, gasoline, or electricity, could not accomplish much more than sixty miles an hour, a speed that the railroads, with their most rapid expresses, scarce exceed on the best lines of America and Europe. Now, this new auto-mobile which was astonishing the world, traveled at more than double this speed." – Jules Verne, *The Master of the World*

For the past several weeks, the local broadsheets have been advertising the Great Road Rally. It is an 850-mile endurance challenge, to see who has the best design for a motorized auto-mobile. The prize is £1,000, and dozens of competitors are expected to attempt the grueling run.

In the world of The Widening Gyre, however, things are never quite as simple as they appear. Far from being an ordinary test of speed, endurance, and skill, the Great Road Rally is in fact a sinister attempt to use modern technology to release an ages-old horror…

ROAD RALLIES

"On the roads … there circulated an extraordinary vehicle, of which no one could describe the form, or the nature, or even the size, so rapidly did it rush past. It was an auto-mobile; all were agreed on that. But as to what motor drove it, only imagination could say; and when the popular imagination is aroused, what limit is there to its hypotheses?" – Jules Verne, *The Master of the World*

A road rally is a car race that takes place on public roads. There have been road rallies for nearly as long as there have been cars (in the real world, they began sometime in the early 20th century; in the world of *The Widening Gyre*, Savants and engineers began holding them for far longer than that). They traditionally take place on seldom-used country roads in order to minimize the disruption to ordinary traffic and the chances of accident. Competitors are supposed to follow the rules of the road, but transgression of these rules by unscrupulous racers is common.

Racers compete primarily against the clock, rather than head-to-head. All racers begin each leg of the race at the same time and must finish before a set cutoff. The winner is the racer with the fastest composite time across all legs. Given the unique challenges of the road rally (dealing with normal traffic, navigation, and the extreme duration and distance of the race), winners are more often determined by the resilience of the vehicle and the team rather than by pure speed.

THE REAL STORY

"The apparition passed and disappeared in an instant, leaving behind it a long train of white dust, as an express locomotive leaves behind a train of smoke. Evidently it was an automobile with a most extraordinary motor. If it maintained this arrow-like speed, it would reach the contestants in the fore-front of the race; it would pass them with this speed double their own; it would arrive first at the goal." – Jules Verne, *The Master of the World*

The adventure starts just a few days before the start of The Great Road Rally. Venice is the starting line of the largest and most challenging road rally event in the history of racing, and the whole city buzzes with excitement. Every major newspaper and most technical journals have been running articles about the race for months: speculations on who will compete, discussions of the technology of the new-fangled auto-mobiles, interviews with scientists and Savants from around the world, etc.. It seems as if everyone in Venice plans to attend the start of the race, and those cities and villages that the race will pass through are equally thrilled.

But something isn't right.

The Great Road Rally is different from most auto-mobile races. The sponsors of this contest are tacitly encouraging the racers to break the rules of the road, to misdirect, disable, and even injure the other competitors. This is a race unlike any other that has come before; it is more of a bloodsport than an ordinary road rally.

Even worse than that, the Great Road Rally is, in fact, a grand occult experiment, funded by the mysterious and powerful Council of Midnight and intended to use the power of modern technology to fuel an ancient and puissant spell.

The Great Road Rally will draw an enormous occult symbol across the landscape. As the symbol gets nearer to completion, the racers will grow more and more aggressive, and the blood they spill will further fuel the spell. By the time the first racer crosses the finish line, the sorcery will be unstoppable.

Using the energy harnessed by so many brilliant (but unknowing) Savants and their incredible machines, the cultists will open a portal to the Hell. Demons, darkness, and hellfire shall spill into the world and create a beachhead for the invasion of Earth by demonic forces. The Council of Midnight is certain their calculations are correct and have spared no expense to make this horror come to pass.

The heroes must find a way to stop the race from finishing and stop the cultists before their spell completes!

GETTING THE CHARACTERS INVOLVED

The easiest way to get the heroes involved is through their contacts in the Watchmen or the Clockmakers Guild. Media-savvy members of one of those organizations have spotted the occult symbolism of the race-course, and they will quickly contact the heroes to investigate and intervene.

Alternately, if one of the heroes is a Savant who specializes in vehicle design, he could sign up for the Great Road Rally months ahead of time, before the Clockmakers realize there is something sinister going on.

If one of the heroes is an investigator, a writer, or a reporter, he might be assigned to look into the mysterious and unknown sponsor of the race. Perhaps one of the racers wants to make sure the prize money will be fairly distributed at the end of the race, or Scotland Yard (or one of the many insurance companies of the day) is concerned with the lack of safety regulations for both drivers and spectators.

ABOUT THE RACE

"It is needless to add that such a rate constituted an extreme danger on the highroads, as much so for vehicles, as for pedestrians. This rushing mass, coming like a thunder-bolt, preceded by a formidable rumbling, caused a whirlwind, which tore the branches from the trees along the road, terrified the animals browsing in adjoining fields, and scattered and killed the birds, which could not resist the suction of the tremendous air currents engendered by its passage." – Jules Verne, *The Master of the World*

The race begins three days before the full moon. You should feel free to add other occult significance to the final day of the race, the Vernal Equinox or Summer Solstice, for instance, To add verisimilitude to your game, check an online almanac or astrology site to see what days the full moon occurred in the year you are playing and try to match them up with an occult date or astrological conjunction.

The race route takes three days to complete and will be run in three legs. Each section of the race will grow more and more difficult, winnowing out the weaker drivers and vehicles. The first part is about 150 miles long; the final leg is about 450 miles long. Each part of the race begins shortly before noon, and the racer must cross the finish line by midnight or be disqualified.

The sponsors have set up three checkpoints along each leg of the rally. Each racer must pause briefly at these points in order to check in; this ensures no one is taking short cuts or attempting to circumvent the proper course. The drivers may refuel at these checkpoints if necessary, as well as necessary biological breaks.

It costs £25 to enter the race, which is quite a sum for the time. This is to winnow out those competitors who are not serious about completing the race. A true racer will be able to beg, borrow, or steal enough money if he really wants to compete. Racers are allowed to register their vehicle up until moments before the race starts, to allow as competitors as possible.

The prize is £1,000, to be paid through a cheque drawn through the First Bank of Ireland. More than the formidable sum of money, though, is the prestige to be won by completing the grueling racecourse. It is rumored the Circle of Technologists has many agents watching the race closely. Those who manage to finish the rally in one piece might get an offer to join this prestigious organization. The winner will almost certainly be granted admission into this august body of seers, Savants, and scientists!

This rumor may or may not be true, depending on where the GM wishes to take his campaign. For more information about the Circle of Technologists and its mysterious founder, see Chapter Two: The Falcon Can Not Hear the Falconer.

THE RULES OF THE ROAD

"Even Satan himself had no right to run at such speed over the roads … without a special permit, without a number on his car, and without a regular license. And it was certain that not a single municipality had given him permission to go two hundred miles an hour. Public security demanded that some means be found to unmask the secret of this terrible chauffeur." – Jules Verne, *The Master of the World*

Each leg of the race begins at 6:00 am sharp, and the drivers must cross the finish line by midnight. This means eighteen hours of hard driving per day. During the first section of the race, the vehicles only have to travel at an average of 36 miles per hour (58 kph) to finish before midnight. For the second leg, they will have to have to drive an average of 65 miles per hour (105 kph) to finish on time. For the third stretch, they will have average 100 miles per hour (160 kph)!

This may not sound very fast to modern ears, but keep in mind that a high-speed train might hit 50-60 mph on a straightaway, and the average locomotive at the time only went about 25 miles per hour for any distance (and that was on smooth, relatively straight rails!). Traveling at these immense speeds in mostly-untested vehicles for long distances over narrow, rutted, uneven, muddy, unpaved country roads will be a challenge of an engineer's skill and a driver's endurance!

Additionally, a vehicle might travel for several miles at great speed and then be forced to slow to a crawl due to vagaries of the course,

La Grande Route de Rallye

Premier Jour

Leipzig
Prague
Vienne
Venise
Saint-Martin

Deuxième Jour

Leipzig
Nancy
Francfort
Dijon
Milan

Troisième Jour

Leipzig
Nancy
Vienne
Milan
Saint-Martin

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irregularities in the road, unforeseen detours, necessary stops for emergency repairs, and potential sabotage (or attack) by rival racers. The Great Road Rally is a course designed to challenge the engineer, driver, and vehicle to the very limit.

THE FIRST LEG

The race will begin on the outskirts of Venice, Italy and go north to St. Martin, Austria. From there, the rally continues to Vienna, then to Prague, and the first leg ends in Leipzig Germany (for a distance of approximately 650 miles, or about 1045 kilometers).

THE SECOND LEG

From Leipzig to Milan, then northwest to Dijon, France; Nancy, France; Frankfurt, Germany, and finally back to Leipzig (approximately 1200 miles, or about 1930 kilometers).

THE THIRD LEG

From Leipzig the course goes straight back to St. Martin, then from St. Martin to Nancy, back to Vienna, and finally ends at Milan (approximately 1800 miles, or about 2900 kilometers).

Drawn out on a map, the racecourse forms an obvious symbol – the pentacle. The sponsors have been very careful only to publish the map in bits and pieces to attempt to keep those attuned to the occult in the dark.

OFFENSE AND DEFENSE

Speaking of skill and endurance, the Great Road Rally has few rules and no safety regulations. It will take wit, skill, and possibly firepower (or at least strong defensive measures) to finish the race. There are no particular requirements for vehicles to be safe; experimental auto-mobiles of the day (especially those designed by Savants using untested technologies) can be very dangerous both for the driver and for those around him. Breakdowns will be common, and some of those breakdowns might involve leaking chemicals, spitting sparks, gouts of flame, and even giant explosions!

Additionally, each vehicle will be on its own out on the road, and there are many unscrupulous competitors who will be more than willing to bend (or break) the rules to take their rivals out. Most of the vehicles will be fitted with offensive and/or defensive weapons (often of an experimental nature as well).

Of course, there won't be any fighting while the auto-mobiles are in populated areas. Incidents involving the harm of civilians will be swiftly interdicted by the constabulary and the offending driver and team subject to criminal persecution, to the fullest extent of the law. I some cars have unfortunate "accidents" in the Counties and end upside down in a ditch, no one is expected to look too deeply into it.

AUTO-MOBILE DESIGNS

"…there was no evidence as to the character of the propelling engine. It left behind it no smoke, no steam, no odor of gasoline, or any other oil. It seemed probable, therefore, that the vehicle ran by electricity, and that its accumulators were of an unknown model, using some unknown fluid." – Jules Verne, The Master of the World

As is the case with most of the rules for the Great Road Rally, the rules on auto-mobile design are quite flexible. Cars can use treads, legs, giant springs, or as many (or few) wheels as the vehicle requires. Motorcycles, tri-cycles, and even uni-cycles are allowed (should a Savant be mad enough to attempt to race such a vehicle). The vehicle may use petrol, electricity, atomics, even animal power as its fuel source. The only unbending rule is that the vehicle must run on the prescribed path and roads. Cars that circumvent the course by flying, tunneling under the ground, or by other means, will be disqualified.

This means a great variety of experimental vehicles will be on display, as Savants from around the world come to show off (and test) their most outrageous designs.

THE RACECOURSE

Though the general rules of the Great Road Rally have been in the public's eye for months, the sponsors have only just now published the racecourse. According to news reports, this was to give the sponsors time to lay out the course. The late publication of the course also ensures that no racer would have an advantage over the others, as none of them will have time to fully scout out the course.

THE COMPETITORS

"Many and noted were the machines entered for this great race. Every kind of motor vehicle was permitted to compete, even motorcycles, as well as auto-mobiles. The machines were of all makes and nationalities.… The race was sure to be desperately contested. New records were expected to be made." – Jules Verne, *The Master of the World*

Most of the competitors are keeping their designs a closely guarded secret up until race day. They do not want an unscrupulous rival to steal their designs or sabotage their vehicle.

The starting line, on the outskirts of Venice, is surrounded by large tents and temporary workshops. The day before the race, Savants and their crews (if they can afford a crew) are busily putting last-minute touches on their precious machines, working away in as much secrecy as possible. The whole area is filled with the sounds of hammering, shouting, sawing, buzzing, whistling, and occasional explosions. The is inundated with the stink of oil, petrol, coal, ozone, and several other unpleasant and unidentifiable odors.

Savants and engineers from around the world have shown up to demonstrate the power, speed, and efficiency of their amazing designs. There are dozens of competitors attending the race, but there are only five that have any real hope of winning (or indeed, even finishing the grueling race). They are:

● Les Frères Grognard, two French brothers with a large, clunky steam-powered vehicle. It looks like an enormous locomotive, at least 50 tons, but with a set of specially-designed wheels that allow it to travel over the unpaved roads of the countryside, rather than on steel rails. It is built for endurance, but not speed. They call it le Voiture de Charbon ("The Coal Car").

● Herr Maximilian Schnell, a German savant whose electric auto-mobile is both very fast and highly maneuverable. He calls it his Blitzautomobil ("Lightning Car"). It's major flaw is that it may be too delicate to complete the entire race.

● Colonel Blestonov, a Russian military man. He is driving a vehicle not of his own design, but built under the flag of Russia by the Czar's small army of engineers and Savants. This vehicle doesn't have a name, only a number – #37. No one knows what happened to the first thirty-six Czarist vehicles.

● Lucus Hatfield, an American inventor who came out of nowhere. His vehicle is perhaps the most eye-catching entry. It runs on eight spindly metal legs rather than wheels! Bad roads or other hazards of terrain don't hamper this amazing design, as it can climb over or go around them with equal ease. He calls it simply "The Bug."

● Professor Patrick Patricks is the British favorite. The specs and details of his vehicle have been kept top-secret for over a year, but that hasn't stopped the press from speculating about it. It is, in fact, a complex design that can "morphify" in order to go over, around, or through obstacles (water, steep hills, chasms, or nearly anything the road can throw at him). It's not particularly fast, but its ability to virtually ignore terrain makes it a favorite to win. The Professor doesn't really have a name for his vehicle, but as soon as it is revealed the press begin calling it "The Cube Car."

These are just a few examples of what the heroes might see along the racecourse. Feel free to personalize the race by adding other racers and vehicles to the lineup. Design the most fantastical contraptions you can envision, and fill them with eccentric oddball Savants and engineers from around the world – let your imagination go wild!

Each of the Savants has a small Pit Crew to assist them during the race. If necessary, use the stats for the Driver from the *Savage Worlds Deluxe* book. They would be armed with simple weapons (wrenches a.k.a. clubs, knives, pistols or shotguns).

● PROFESSOR PAT PATRICKS

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4
Skills: Analyze Savant Technology d6, Driving d6, Knowledge (Science) d8, Knowledge (Engineering) d10, Notice d4, Repair d8, Weird Science d10
Charisma: –; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 4
Hindrances: Bad Eyes (Minor), Elderly (Major), Overconfident (Major),
Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Gadgeteer

Professor Patrick Patricks is from the north part of England, where he has a small laboratory/workshop and a handful of devoted apprentices to assist him in his work. He's an older man with thinning gray hair and thick spectacles. He almost always wears a protective white lab coat (usually stained with grease) and thick leather gloves, even when he isn't working.

THE CUBE CAR

Description: At first glance, Professor Patricks' vehicle doesn't look like much. It seems to be a giant cube on wheels, about the size of a 20th century school bus. Closer examination reveals it has wheels not just on the bottom of the car, but on the top, back, and sides as well. There are also a great number of moving parts all over the auto-mobile: gears and fulcrums of various sorts.

In fact, this vehicle can "morphify" itself in order to go over, around, or through obstacles (water, steep hills, chasms… nearly anything the road can throw at it). It can extend massive "limbs" which let it cross ravines or climb steep hills. It can fold out a pair of giant wings to let it glide gently on air currents. It can extend a huge drill from the front to dig through a mountainside or travel effortlessly underground. It has pontoons that allow it to float on water, and it is completely air-tight so it can also travel under the waves.

Though not particularly fast, its ability to virtually ignore terrain makes it a favorite to win. The Professor is a brilliant inventor but lacks a showman's flare, so he never bothered to give his vehicle a name. As soon as it is revealed, the press begin calling it "The Cube Car".

⚙ COLONEL SERGEI BLESTONOV

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d10, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Repair d8, Shooting d8, Taunt d4
Charisma: –; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Overconfident (Major), Loyal (to the Czar of Russia) (Minor), Stubborn (Minor)
Edges: Ace, Quick

Blestonov is a tall and stout man with black hair and piercing blue eyes. He has a proud bearing and always dresses in his finest military uniform. Medals on his chest and saber with a well-worn pommel at his hip attest to his experience. He is one of the Czar's inner circle and is very loyal to his king. He is one of the finest drivers in the Russian Empire and was specially chosen and trained for the task of representing Russia in the Great Road Rally.

If the heroes have made their mark in Russia (through the adventures contained in Act Two: The Witch of the North), Blestonov may know who they are, and may have plans to deal with them if he has the opportunity or if they get in his way.

#37

Description: #37 is a heavily armed and armored machine, more suited to the battlefield than the racecourse. It was built under the auspices of Czar Alexander II, a man with a great love of modern technology.

It is roughly the size of a full-sized modern van, and instead of rear wheels it has armored treads. It uses an experimental petrol-fueled engine that is powerful and very loud. #37 is painted jet black, with the Czar's coat of arms displayed proudly on its top and sides. Hidden under its hood is a deadly surprise – a rack of 12 rockets, primed and ready to fire at anyone foolish enough to get between it and the finish line.

❂ HERR MAXIMILIAN SCHNELL

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

Skills: Analyze Savant Technology d4, Knowledge (Science) d8, Knowledge (Galvanics) d6, Notice d4, Repair d8, Shooting d6, Weird Science d10

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

Hindrances: Heroic (Major), Big Mouth (Minor), Mystic Aura (Minor)

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Gadgeteer

Herr Maximilian Schnell is a young Savant hoping that the Great Road Rally will cement his reputation and jump-start his fortune. He is a stout man with a round face and frizzy red hair, and he never misses the chance to join a party (or to boast about how wonderful he and his inventions are!).

BLITZAUTOMOBIL

Description: The Blitzautomobil ("Lightning Car") is a small and nimble racer, designed for speed and maneuverability. The body design is a hundred years before its time, and looks very similar to a modern Formula One race car. It is sleek, aerodynamic, and low-slung. It is painted sky blue with a golden lightning bolt on the hood.

The most interesting thing about the Blitzautomobil is its engine. It uses a small but powerful experimental radium furnace to provide a nearly unlimited amount of electrical energy, enabling it to operate for many hundreds of miles without refueling. The radium furnace is well-shielded, but if the car is involved in a bad wreck that could easily change…

❂ LUCUS HATFIELD

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

Skills: Analyze Savant Technology d4, Knowledge (Science) d8, Knowledge (Entomology) d6, Notice d4, Repair d8, Shooting d8, Weird Science d8

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

Hindrances: Code of Honor (Major), Habit (acts like a hayseed) (Minor), Mystic Aura (Minor)

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Gadgeteer, Scavenger

Lucus Hatfield is a tall and lanky man whose rustic clothes and hayseed way of speaking hide the fact that he's a *very* brilliant Savant. He is shy around strangers at least in part because of a terrible stutter. It is only when he is working with machines that his real genius shines. He hopes to win the race so he can buy some land back home, where he will build his large family a big house with a workshop so he can spend his days working with his contraptions.

THE BUG

Description: The brainchild of little-known American inventor Lucus Hatfield, the Bug is an amazing contraption. This vehicle runs on eight spindly metal legs rather than wheels! Bad roads or other hazards of terrain don't hamper this amazing design, as it can climb over or go around them with equal ease. Even the most sheer cliff walls won't hamper the Bug much.

The vehicle's body is roughly the size of a modern compact car, but the leg span makes it appear much larger. It is incredibly maneuverable, able to go sideways, forward, or backward with equal ease. Unlike many of the other vehicles in the Great Road Rally, the Bug is not armed. However, it was designed to be nimble enough to dodge incoming attacks easily. The driver always carries a shotgun in case he needs to exchange fire with his rivals, but otherwise he depends on his maneuverability and ability to virtually ignore hazardous terrain to stay out of trouble (and win the race!).

⚙ LES FRERES GROGNARD

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

Skills: Analyze Savant Technology d4, Driving d8, Knowledge (Science) d8, Notice d4, Repair d8, Shooting d6, Weird Science d10

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

Hindrances: Loyal (Minor), Overconfident (Major), Stubborn (Minor)

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Gadgeteer, McGyver

COMPLICATION!

What if, in order to make sure things go according to plan, Baron Paulsdorf puts a vehicle of his own design in the race? The driver isn't expected to win or even to place; he is just there to make sure no meddling do-gooders (like, for instance, the player characters) mess with the great plan.

If the players are too obvious about stopping the race, they may find themselves being attacked by a superbly-engineered, heavily-armed, sorcery-charged death machine!

Jean and Pierre Grognard do not look like brothers. Jean is short and plump, while Pierre is tall and whipcord thin. But anyone who knows how their minds work would say that they are more than just brothers, they are like two sides of the same coin. They share a rapport that is hard for others to understand, and that rapport makes them a force to be reckoned with.

Pierre is an expert with the maxim gun, while Jean is the better driver of the two (Pierre has Shooting d8, while Jean has Driving d10).

LE VOITURE DE CHARBON

Description: Le Voiture de Charbon (the Coal Car) looks like an enormous locomotive, but with a set of specially-designed wheels that allow it to travel over the unpaved roads of the countryside, rather than on steel rails. It weighs 50 tons, and is built for endurance, not speed or maneuverability.

In addition to being well armored, the Coal Car has a maxim gun hidden in a turret on the cab. While one of the Grognard brothers is driving, the other can rain down fire upon their rivals.

Vehicle	Acc/TS	Toughness	Crew	Notes	Armament
Professor Patricks' Cube Car	15/32	12 (3)	1+4	Amphibious, Tracked, Climb -1	None
#37	20/40	10 (5)	1		Rocket Launcher (12 shots), Drop Spikes
Blitzautomobil	30/56	8 (3)	1+1		Oil Slick
The Bug	25/50	10 (3)	1+1	Legs (4-Wheel Drive)	None
Le Voiture de Charbon	10/36	14 (7)	2+5	Stabilizer, Heavy Armor	Maxim Gun

THE SPONSOR

"The public imagination, highly excited, readily accepted every sort of rumor about this mysterious automobile. It was said to be a supernatural car. It was driven by a specter, by one of the chauffeurs of hell, a goblin from another world, a monster escaped from some mythological menagerie, in short, the devil in person, who could defy all human intervention, having at his command invisible and infinite satanic powers."
– Jules Verne, *The Master of the World*

The identity of the true sponsor of the Great Road Rally is a closely held secret, known only to a handful of people. It is public knowledge that the prize money is being drawn from an account at the First Bank of Ireland. Other than that, little is certain, but a little research will discover a few things.

A man named Alec Graham is in charge of the race itself. He has been publicizing the race and placed all the advertising in the papers and journals. He is also in charge of publishing the rules of the course, checking in the racers, ensuring a fair race, and so forth. He has met with the sponsor once; all of his other communications with the man have been through the mail or through Mr. Brogan's office. If somehow he is convinced that the race is fundamentally unsafe (for more than just the racers involved), he may be convinced to divulge the sponsor's identity. Graham is tall and very thin. He dresses in an ill-fitting suit and wears a bowler hat. He tries to take on airs (pretend he is of a higher social class), but his common accent and rough manners betray him.

Mr. Graham is assisted by a team of men led by Gerry Blacksmith, an engineer of some talent (though not a Savant). His men have mapped out the racecourse and set up checkpoints so no racer will try to cheat by taking a shortcut. He is a large man with big arms, a barrel-chest, a thick red moustache, and grease-stained hands. He has a loud voice and a brash manner, except when women are around (then he becomes quite meek). He has no idea who the sponsor is; he answers directly to Mr. Graham and no one else. Blacksmith is fundamentally a good person and isn't at all comfortable with the violence the Great Road Rally is engendering. However, as a simple man who values his job and has a family to feed, he sees no way around it.

The man in charge of disbursing the prize money is Mr. Barry Brogan, Esq., a solicitor who works for the First Bank of Ireland. Brogan knows the identity of the sponsor, but he is quite scrupulous about maintaining his client's anonymity. He feels that his first duty is discretion. He is always prim and proper and hates the dirt, smoke, and noise involved in the race, so he is seldom seen outside of his office in London. He does not intend to be at the start of the race, but he must attend the finish in order to deliver the prize. He will arrive at the finish line in an armored carriage, attended by three very large, very well-armed bank guards. Brogan always dresses in the finest clothes as befits a man of his importance. He speaks with an upper-crust British accent, but when excited or upset his natural Irish brogue comes out in force (much to his embarrassment).

WHO IS REALLY IN CHARGE?

And where is the prize money coming from? A man called Baron Dieter Paulsdorf, the son of a wealthy baron, and minor Savant. He is an unwitting dupe of the Council of Midnight; one of Marković 's slaves, a man with as soul darker than the space between the stars.

As the rally progresses, Paulsdorf will be at his estate setting up the rift point and waiting for the race to end so the portal may open. He has several cultists with him, fanatics who are willing to die to protect him and the gate.

THE SPELL

The spell Paulsdorf is crafting is a plot device and not statted out in this book. Its effects can be as grand as you desire. One possible order of events that might happen if the heroes allow the spell to complete is:

- ● *The weather grows foul. The storm that heralded the opening of the rift gets worse. The terrible weather hinders the authorities' ability to communicate and to mount an effective defense of the world.*

- ● *Hoards of demonic troops arrive. Demons pour out of the rift, attacking any living thing they find in a twenty mile radius. Once this beachhead is established, more Demons arrive and strike out in every direction, hitting major population centers and military bases first.*

- ● *Major geological upheaval tears apart the country. All of Europe is wracked with earthquakes, tidal waves, and volcanic eruptions. The Dukes of Hell are reshaping the island to a form more pleasing to them and more hospitable to their troops. Once that is complete, they intend to spread out to the continent, and then to the rest of the world.*

- ● *The Dukes of Hell themselves turn up once the world has been altered to their liking, to divide up the Earth amongst themselves.*

The Demons intend to create Hell on Earth, and England is their first target after the Continent is subdued. If the heroes fail to stop the Dukes of Hell, humanity is doomed. Let us hope that our heroes are up to the task!

Standing behind Paulsdorf and directing his every move is Lord Dragan Marković, the head of the Council of Midnight. Marković is not above using the "weapons of the enemy" (modern science) to fulfill his ultimate goal of driving mankind into a new age of darkness and superstition. The vampire lord knows that Baron Paulsdorf's use as an engineer is limited, but his wealth and his lands are quite advantageous. Paulsdorf owns an estate in the exact center of the great pentacle that the Great Road Rally is drawing (near the city of Munich).

Marković is not participating directly in creating the rift, but he is keeping his eye on the race from a distance. When the heroes interfere, he will take note of their involvement, likely setting them up for a future direct run-in with the Council.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE HEROES DON'T INTERFERE

"And from the collision might not the destroyer himself emerge safe and sound? He must be so adroit, this chauffeur of chauffeurs, he must handle his machine with such perfection of eye and hand, that he knew, no doubt, how to escape from every situation." – Jules Verne, *The Master of the World*

This is a rough timeline of how the race will go if the heroes do not intervene. Feel free to change or rearrange events to fit your campaign, but this will give you a template on which to start.

If (or rather, when) the heroes intervene, the entire timeline may shift. For example, if the PCs eliminate Blestonov from the competition early, he will never get into a fight with the brothers Grognard, and the entire face of the race will be altered. If they prevent everyone from finishing the final leg of the race before midnight, the most vital part of the spell will not be complete and all of Paulsdorf's schemes will come to naught. If the heroes ignore the race and put a stop to Paulsdorf's evil scheme by more direct intervention, it may not make any difference who wins the rally.

The heroes can try to stop or delay the race however they like. Keep in mind, though, that the racers are all innocents in this. They are mere engineers and scientists who wish to win the contest to prove their designs are superior (and win a princely sum of money in the process). Killing them is an evil act and will help fuel the ritual, since opening the portal requires significant blood to be shed.

DAY ONE

The contestants line their vehicles up at the starting line just before noon on the first day. Hundreds of people have gathered to see the start of the race and marvel at the wide variety of vehicles there: everything from reasonably mundane steam-powered cars to a bizarre spider-legged contraption. And then the starting gun fires! Most of the vehicles take off like a shot; a few others remain stuck at the starting line as they experience various mishaps and mechanical failures.

After the pack of racers leaves the Venice environs and enters the sparsely-populated countryside, they begin playing dirty tricks on one another. Nothing intentionally lethal at this point, but aggressively attempting to bump each other off the road, oil slicks, smoke screens, that sort of thing. By the time the race reaches the first checkpoint, a couple of cars have already been eliminated due to mechanical failure or crashes.

Somewhere between Vienna and Prague, Colonel Blestonov attempts to pass the Grognards' locomotive. The Frères Grognard hog the road, aggressively trying to bump Blestonov off the road, until such point as he grows infuriated and fires missiles at the Coal Car. The Grognards return fire, and in the firefight between the Colonel and the Frères Grognard, several ill-fated drivers caught in the crossfire are eliminated from the race. Miraculously, no one is killed.

At the finish line, Herr Schnell's fast electric car wins hands-down. The Frères Grognards come in next, followed closely by Blestonov. Hatfield comes in forth, with the others trickling in afterwards. Patricks comes in tied for sixth, and roughly a quarter of the cars that started do not make it to the first checkpoint.

In England, the Gyre starts to slowly tick-tock-tick as the portal develops. If the players are not members of the Watchmen, but have connections or past favorable dealings with the Clockmakers or Watchmen, they will be contacted.

DAY TWO

Several teams secretly send members of their pit crews out ahead of the race in order to sabotage the course for the other drivers. They pull various dirty tricks, from changing or moving road signs, to cutting down trees, to setting up simple (but generally non-fatal) booby traps.

Once the second leg of the race begins, it doesn't take long for Blestonov and the Grognard brothers (as well as anyone unlucky enough to be caught between them) to begin fighting again. This goes on for most of the race, and by the end of the day both vehicles are badly damaged. It looks like neither of them will be able to finish the third day.

Herr Schnell has some difficulties with the course – his car is designed for speed, not for off-road racing, so the obstructions in the road give him a lot of trouble. Hatfield wins this one, his Bug having no trouble at all with all the pitfalls, and Professor Patricks comes in soon after. These Savants' robust vehicle designs are proving useful. Schnell limps in third, followed by the badly damaged Blestonov and the Grognards. Only about half the cars finish the second leg. The rest lie scattered along the racecourse, unable to continue due to damage or injuries.

People who are sensitive to the ebb and flow of magic begin to feel the darkness looming over the racecourse. It is a vast but undefined presence that brings a sense of tension and uneasiness to everyone involved in the race.

DAY THREE

As the vehicles start off, the heavy pall of dark sorcery becomes more and more palpable. Everyone but those with *Arcane Resistance or Improved Arcane* Resistance will "have a feeling that things are definitely not right." Strange storm clouds roll in; oddly, they approach from all directions centering on a pastoral area of farmlands in the middle of the racecourse. The racers grow more and more aggressive, as if they can feel something building, and the weight of it makes them angrier and more willing to take desperate risks.

Before the race even gets to the first checkpoint in St. Martin, Blestonov and the Grognards somehow simultaneously blow each other to pieces, causing the first fatalities of the race! The moment these men die, the storm hits with an almost biblical fury.

The other drivers fight amongst themselves as their pit crews attempt to sabotage the racecourse for the other drivers (and this time, their traps are much more lethal). It gets uglier and uglier as the race continues. Max Schnell is taken out next. His fast car can't handle roads slicked by large oil patches. He wrecks and explodes.

Other drivers drop like flies and before long, only Hatfield and Patricks are left to finish the race. Though up until now they have kept out of the fighting, they are now trying to defeat each other any way they can, slugging it out over the road. The madness of the race has taken hold of them, and they are overcome with a lust not just to win, but to utterly crush their rivals. Patricks finally manages to swat the Bug and rolls into victory at Milan just as night sweeps in.

The moment the Professor crosses the finish line, the sky turns red, and a great groaning is heard over the land. The Gyre hits the hour and begins to chime as the portal rips open. Demons swarm out of the hole in reality, and the fires of Hell begin to react with the land and change it in disturbing ways.

If the heroes have completely failed in their task… this is the point where the campaign will get very, very dark.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

"It was not yet eleven o'clock when a rumbling was heard far down the track, and the dust rose in violent whirlwinds. Harsh whistlings shrieked through the air warning all to give passage to the monster. It did not slacken speed at the finish. … The machine must certainly be hurled into the water! Could it be that the mechanician was no longer master of his mechanism? There could be little doubt of it. Like a shooting star, the vehicle flashed through the city, and when it had passed, would it plunge itself to destruction in the lake? At any rate when it disappeared at a slight bend in the road no trace was to be found of its passage." – Jules Verne, *The Master of the World*

If the heroes succeed in stopping the race (and, more importantly, Paulsdorf's evil plan), that doesn't necessarily mean this adventure ends. Here are a few ideas for continuing the adventure started in Mere Anarchy is Loosed.

HOW DARE YOU INTERFERE?

One (or more) of the Savants who took part in the Great Road Rally find out about the heroes' interference, and they are very upset that these anarchists and Luddites would get between them and their prize! They come after the heroes in any way possible. Not only do the heroes find their good names slandered among

engineering and Savant circles, but they have to worry about random (but usually non-lethal) attacks whenever the losing Savant thinks he has a shot at them!

WELCOME TO THE CIRCLE

The heroes' activities catch the attention of the Circle of Technologists, and wanting to keep a very close eye on these annoyances, they offer a membership in their august body to the team's Savant(s). Now they know exactly what the meddling heroes are doing. This is an excellent adventure seed to use if the GM wishes to introduce the threat of the Circle; after dealing with the latest threat of Marković and his minions, the heroes find themselves inducted into the shadowy, steam-powered plots of Herr Doktor Hans Dunkelheit.

I WANT TO PLAY, TOO

Most of the contestants in the Great Road Rally are upset they didn't win, but one of the racers has learned of the conspiracy to destroy the world and now wants to be the heroes' best friend! He wants to help the heroes in any way he can, join them in their adventures, and use his gadgets to battle against the forces of Evil! Unfortunately, he isn't really suited for the adventuring life, and his gadgets tend to backfire even more than other Savants'! Gently discouraging him only makes him want to work harder to impress the heroes. How can they dislodge this loadstone without hurting his feelings, and more importantly, without hurting him?

⚙ BARON DIETER PAULSDORF

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

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Science) d8, Knowledge (Physics) d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d8, Repair d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Weird Science d8

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

Hindrances: Anemic (Minor), Arrogant (Major), Vengeful (Minor),

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Connections, Gadgeteer, Noble, Rich (free with Noble)

Background/History: Dieter Paulsdorf is the youngest son of a proud and noble house. Unfortunately, he was never one for the pomp and circumstance and intrigue of court politics, and the military life never appealed much to him. Instead, he surrounded himself with books and gadgets, gears and contraptions, spending every waking hour in his workshop taking apart, tinkering with, and rebuilding his beloved machinery. His coddling

parents indulged his eccentricities. They even sent him to the most prestigious school of engineering in France so he could continue his studies among like-minded fellows.

While in Paris, Dieter caught the attention of agents of the Council of Midnight. They saw that he could be useful not because of his rather mediocre technical skills, but because Lord Marković knew that, properly manipulated, his wealth and position would be useful. The ancient vampire found the lonely young man easily corruptible with talk of power, glory, and revenge against those who slighted him or doubted his abilities.

Once Paulsdorf returned home, he began to work on setting up the Great Road Rally. It took over a year, but now he is ready to put his plan in motion and prove to the Council -- and Marković -- that he is worthy of their praise.

Personality/Motivation: Dieter Paulsdorf was a solitary child, never entirely comfortable around other people. He wanted nothing more than to be left alone with his studies and his experiments. He was quite intelligent, but rather socially inept. For most of his childhood and adolescence, his parents thought it was just a "phase" he was going through, but his lonely ways have lasted well into his adulthood and, at this point, his family has mostly given up trying to integrate him into polite society.

His solitary ways aren't the only thing that isolates him from other people. He has always been prone to fits of madness, throwing wild tantrums when his inventions didn't function the way he intended, or when people interrupt his work. He even injured his manservant during one of these fits of rage a few years ago. This sort of behavior is unacceptable for a member of a noble house, so his family sent him away to the country as punishment. This enforced isolation suited him just fine, and he has been laboring away in the privacy of his workshop ever since.

Paulsdorf is an intelligent man, but he is not a particularly brilliant or creative thinker, so his inventions are always second-tier. Still, Marković saw that his wealth and position in society would be useful to the Council, and his weak moral code made him easy to corrupt. Marković will continue to use him until such time as his services are no longer necessary, and then he will undoubtedly meet with an unfortunate accident..

Quote: "Why must people always interrupt me, just as I'm about to achieve my greatest discovery?!?"

Powers/Tactics: Baron Paulsdorf is not a fighter; he much prefers to let his goons do his dirty work for him. If necessary, he can and will use his inventions to keep himself safe just long enough to get away from the fighting.

Campaign Use: Paulsdorf is intended as a one-shot villain, but if he manages to escape from the heroes he can come back again and again to bedevil them. If he manages to get away, his family will disown him and strip him of his title and access to the family money (he will still have some money from his own inventions and patents). If Lord Marković fears Paulsdorf will become a liability to the Council of Midnight, he may be cut free or eliminated entirely.

To make Paulsdorf tougher, give him a few additional (and more powerful) Weird Science gadgets and a few more technical and social skills. To make him weaker, take away his Arcane Background (Weird Science) and make him a normal Aristocrat.

Suggested Gizmos for Baron Paulsdorf: (See Chapter Four: Steampunk Gear for details):
- ☀ Under-Clothes Armor
- ☀ Sonic Raygun
- ☀ Galvanic Walking Stick

Appearance: Baron Dieter Paulsdorf is a good looking young man in his mid-twenties, of medium height, with sandy brown hair and an aquilonian chin. Despite his young age, he is getting a bit thick in the middle due to too many rich meals and too much time spent studying in his library or working in his lab. His eyes have a far-away, unfocused look to them most of the time, and he often seems like he isn't paying attention to the here and now.

THE SANDS OF THE DESERT

The leader of the Clockmakers' Guild, Dr. Robert J. Forster has taken seriously ill, and his own physicians aren't certain how long he has to live. This once robust man has become weak and anemic. It almost seems as if something is draining the life away from him. The Guild must convene to elect a new leader, but several prominent voting members have disappeared. Is this a plot by the Council of Midnight to cripple the Watchmen during a time of crisis? Can the heroes find the missing senior Guildsmen, or alternately, can they discover what is making Dr. Forster sick and come up with a cure before his time runs out?

☀ DR. ROBERT J. FORSTER

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d12, Knowledge (Arcana) d10, Knowledge (Medicine) d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6 Spell-casting d12

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

Hindrances: Mystic Aura (Minor), Elderly (Major), Code of Honor (Major),

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Charismatic, New Power, Wizard

Spells: Blind, Bolt, Healing, Lower Trait, On the Blink, Speak Language

Background/History: As a young man, Lt. Robert J. Forster was a young officer in Her Majesty's campaign against the rebellious tribes in the northernmost part of India. He led a small battalion of cavalry and footmen to hunt for a particular warlord rumored to be practicing human sacrifice. His troops were ambushed on a mountain pass and slaughtered

Craddock '12

by howling, screaming madmen. He and a few other survivors were taken prisoner and brought to an ancient, vine-covered temple where they were prepared for sacrifice. One by one, the men were marched out to bloody execution on the altar of some ancient, nameless god. As each man's blood was spilled, his soul was consumed by a great black shadow – an evil presence that seemed to fill the very air of the temple.

Lt. Forster made peace with his God and was ready to die like an English soldier, but at the last moment, shots rang out. The temple was under attack! Seizing the opportunity, Forster wrestled the sacrificial dagger from the high priest's hands and plunged it into the evil sorcerer's black heart. There was a sound like a thousand demons screaming, an explosion of blackness, and then he blacked out.

DR. FORSTER PLOT SEEDS

The Prodigal Son Must One Day Return: Dr. Forster receives a telegram from India. The ancient temple which trained him in its arts is threatened by some ancient evil, and they are begging him – their greatest student – to return to defend them. But he's far too old to make such an arduous journey, so he asks the PCs to go in his stead.

Teacher, Teacher: Over the decades, Dr. Forster has trained many students in the mystic arts. Most of them have gone on to great things as powerful and influential members of the Watchmen. However, not all of them have followed in Forster's heroic tradition; at least one has been seduced by the power of darkness. His name is Benjamin Hawthorne. He was once one of Forster's most promising students, but he was corrupted by the forces of evil… and he knows that his old teacher is the only one who can stop him. Can the heroes protect Dr. Forster and, more importantly, can they save Hawthorne's soul?

When he awoke, Robert found himself in the heart of another shrine. This was the complete opposite of the dark, oppressive temple where his comrades died. It took him weeks to recover from his ordeal, and in that time he learned much about this holy and secluded place. He wandered the grounds, taking in its spectacular natural beauty, speaking with the kindly priests who tended to his wounds and meeting the friendly people who dedicated their lives to serving the temple. When he was well enough to travel, Forster asked the head priest if he might stay and learn their ancient ways.

He spent five years in the temple, studying the path of magic and learning about the demons and monsters who threaten mankind; he swore his life to opposing them. After his training was complete, he traveled the world standing up against evil and righting wrongs. It was while he was in the Middle East that he first heard of the Clockmakers Guild; soon thereafter he was invited to join the Watchmen. His abilities and exploits and unswerving devotion to stamping out evil gained him much fame among his new friends, and he rose rapidly in their ranks until he became their leader.

Forster returned to England about a decade ago under the guise of a simple physician. He has grown too old to hop around the world any longer, but he knows he can still make a difference in the world by training the next generation of sorcerers and adventurers.

Personality/Motivation: Dr. Forster is a friendly and kind man who loves people of every stripe and who wishes to use his remaining years to serve mankind. While his main clinic caters to the upper crust of society, he volunteers a good portion of his time to several charity hospitals throughout London. He has had his fill of warfare and dislikes violence of any sort, except when it comes to the servants of evil. He has seen first-hand the atrocities they are capable of, and he will use every method at his disposal to utterly destroy them.

Quote: "Yes, this isn't the first time the Council of Midnight have tried this tactic. Why, I remember back in Persia, it was 1872 if I remember it correctly.."

Powers/Tactics: Despite his soft and harmless exterior, Dr. Forster is a mage of extraordinary puissance. In his youth he battled against monsters and sorcerers of every stripe and in every corner of the world, and he has not lost a single ounce of his great arcane power and knowledge. While no longer as physically fit as he once was, he remembers his military training and is still in good shape for a man his age, so he can hold his own in a fight. But what makes him truly dangerous is his mastery of the magical arts of the East. While he is loath to cast spells in public, in a fight against the forces of evil he will take the gloves off and use every power at his disposal.

The Skull of Answers is a powerful mystic artifact Dr. Forster wrested from an ancient mummy priest in Egypt. It allows him to see the past or foretell the future, but using this awesome power comes at a price – it drains a bit of the user's soul, causing great agony (and possibly even death). For this reason, Dr. Forster keeps the Skull locked safely away in his study and only uses it in times of great need.

Campaign Use: In a campaign where the characters are on the side of angels, Dr. Forster could be an ally, a contact, or a mentor. Though well beyond his own adventuring days, he is more than willing to sponsor and/or train a group of young sorcerers who show promise. He may even invite them to join the Watchmen or the Clockmakers Guild, but only after he is certain of their motivations.

If the characters find themselves enemies of the Watchmen, Dr. Forster is a relentless foe. In his youth he hunted down many enemies of humanity, and he would not hesitate to do so again if called upon. With the power of the Watchmen behind him, he could make the lives of any foe very difficult indeed.

To make Dr. Forster more powerful, increase the strength of his Magic Spells. To reduce his power, reduce the power of his spells.

Appearance: Dr. Forster is a plump, jolly man in his late 60s who always seems cheerful. What little remaining hair he has is a silvery-white that matches his muttonchops precisely. He dresses in conservative but expensive suits and wears silver-rimmed spectacles (which he is constantly fidgeting with). When encountered out-of-doors, he wears a black coat and hat, and is never seen without his black doctor's bag (in which he keeps a wide assortment of medical instruments and medicines).

OBERST FRIEDRICH STEPPENWULF ACROSS HISTORY

The Eagle Has Landed: The Great War: During a period of some of the worst fighting yet seen on the Western Front, a rash of brutal murders is reported across the English countryside. High command cannot spare the manpower needed to track down this killer (or killers), so they assign the PCs. Has the dreaded Oberstwölf somehow managed to infiltrate the British Isles in order to wreak havoc and destroy the Brits' fighting resolve?

The Big Push: World War II: The Allies are planning a big push into enemy territory, but rumors of the presence of Die Wölfe have begun to circulate among the men, and morale is low. There are several potential adventures here. The PCs could investigate how the Germans found out about the planned assault. Once the intelligence leak is plugged, they could be assigned a seek-and-destroy mission behind enemy lines to eliminate the threat of Oberst Steppenwulf and his men. For a faster scenario, they may be assigned front-line duty and encounter the werewolf during the battle.

THE HEAD OF A MAN

To find the secret whereabouts of the Council of Midnight, the heroes need the guidance of a former servant of evil who has been discarded by his masters like old trash. A Patchwork Man named Az, a poor pitiable creature who has no place in this world, once served the Council. Lord Marković's cruelty was too much for him to bear. Though he has no soul, the vampire lord's wickedness burned him to the core of his being. Az wishes to make up for his former master's evil deeds by revealing the location of the Council's secret headquarters, an ancient castle hidden high in the Carpathian Mountains. But Marković does not take betrayal lightly, and he has sent one of his strongest servants to dispatch the Patchwork Man, and any Watchmen with him, before they can interfere in his plans any further.

⊛ OBERST FRIEDRICH STEPPENWULF

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Tracking d8

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

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Alertness

Special Abilities:

Improved Frenzy: Der Oberstwölf may make two attacks per round without penalty.

Invulnerability: Steppenwulf can only be Shaken by weapons that are not silver—not wounded.

Level Headed: Der Oberstwölf acts on the best of two cards.

Weakness: Steppenwulf suffer normal damage from silver weapons.

Background/History: In the late 18th century, Baron Grigori Steppenwulf was a minor lord in the south part of Austria. While out hunting one dark day, he had an unfortunate run-in with a wild animal which mauled him savagely. His servants brought him back to his castle, where they were certain he would breathe his last, but he amazed his people when he made a full recovery – the very next day!

Over the next few months, gossip grew among his people: stories of strange animals prowling the woods at night, of cattle viciously mutilated, even of children who wandered too far from their homes disappearing without a trace. It didn't take long for the whispers to become the shouts of an angry mob storming the Baron's castle. He was caught in the courtyard, in the midst of transforming into the beast. The villagers made short work of the creature and burned the castle to the ground.

However, the Baron's young wife managed to slip out into the night, bringing with her his newborn son. The family settled in the Rhineland, where the boy grew up healthy and strong and regained his name and fortune. The horror of that night was chalked up to a family legend and long forgotten, buried in the past, and two generations passed.

But then Friedrich was born. From the time he was a child, he was different – stronger, more resilient, and wilder than his brothers and cousins. Though gifted with intelligence and good breeding, he never seemed to fit in. He was cruel and aggressive, and his temper always seemed to get the best of him. Then, on his 18th

birthday, in a drunken rage, he murdered a prostitute. Feeling an uncontrollable desire welling up within him, he knelt to the ground and began to drink the hot blood on the floor. On his hands and knees, lapping up the woman's life's blood like an animal, Friedrich transformed into a beast. He found he liked it.

Remembering his family's legends of his ancestor Grigori, he kept his newfound power secret, though sometimes he felt like he could barely control it. When war broke out, he finally found the opportunity to slake his blood thirst on the battlefield. Friedrich's status and wealth assured him a commission, and his unrivaled fierceness meant he would rapidly climb in the ranks. Friedrich now leads a squad of troops who are utterly loyal to him; he has 'infected' them with his curse. Die Wölfe ("The Wolves") are greatly feared by their enemies. Stats for Die Wölfe are found in Chapter 7, the Bestiary.

Personality/Motivation: Freidrich is aggressive and impulsive, with a violent temper and an insubordinate nature. His type of soldier rarely gets promoted, but he has proven to be a brilliant strategist, and he has a disturbing tendency to come back from suicide missions unharmed and (more often than not) victorious. Combined with his family status, his star has risen quite rapidly. He claims to do his best work on the front lines, and his superior officers (many of whom are intimidated by his forceful personality) are more than happy to leave him there.

He is very careful with his secret, only allowing the beast out when in the heart of battle and when he expects there to be no survivors on either side other than Die Wölfe.

Quote: "Ja, very impressive. Now, let me show you what I am capable of.."

Powers/Tactics: Oberst Steppenwulf is extremely confident in his abilities with good reason. He is virtually invulnerable to harm (he is unaware of his vulnerability to silver). Even if seemingly killed, he will be back, fully recovered, within a few hours. He is a fierce and wild combatant, charging into the teeth of the enemy's machine guns and never blinking. He is ruthless and does not hesitate to kill those who stand against him. He never goes anywhere without his pistol, his rifle, and his saber, and he doesn't hesitate to use them whether the situation warrants violence or not.

Campaign Use: Oberst Friedrich Steppenwulf is an unsubtle threat; a psychopathic un-killable soldier willing to commit great atrocities to get what he wants (which, more often than not, is simply to commit atrocities!). A heroic band of soldiers or Watchmen might be dispatched to kill him and end his threat, or they might encounter him randomly on (or behind) the front lines of some war somewhere in the world.

Oberst Steppenwulf is an appropriate foe to be fought on any of the great battlefields of this time period. The Franco-Prussian War, for instance, or the Great War, or even further into the 20th Century during a campaign set in the Second World War.

To make Steppenwulf more powerful, increase the strength of his wolf-form, and give him more wolf-like abilities in his human guise. To reduce his strength, eliminate his Invulnerability and replace with the Hard to Kill Edge and Slow Regeneration Monstrous Ability.

Appearance: Oberstmann Steppenwulf is a handsome young German with short blonde hair, deep green eyes, and a slightly feral cast to his features. He is generally unshaven and often looks a little scruffy, despite his best attempts to keep his uniform pressed and polished.

☼ DER OBERSTWOLF

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d12
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Swimming d8, Stealth d10, Tracking d12
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities
* **Claws:** Str+d8.
* **Fear −2:** Der Oberstwölf chills the blood of all who see him.
* **Improved Frenzy:** Der Oberstwölf may make two attacks per round without penalty.
* **Invulnerability:** Der Oberstwölf can only be Shaken by weapons that are not silver not wounded.
* **Infravision:** Der Oberstwölf can see heat and halve penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets.
* **Level Headed:** Der Oberstwölf acts on the best of two cards.

* **Weakness:** Der Oberstwölf suffers normal damage from silver weapons.
* **Sire:** Anyone slain by Der Oberstwölf has a 50% chance of rising as a werewolf themselves in 1d4 days.

Quote: "I can smell your fear. It's a heady scent; musky and pungent. I will savor it a before I devour you.."

Powers/Tactics: As a wolf, Steppenwulf follows his instincts. He will chase an opponent down, following for days until his prey is on the edge of collapse, and then strike from the shadows, biting and tearing with his vicious teeth and claws. The Oberstwölf does not know fear, and he will often take great risks to satisfy his thirst for blood. After all, he cannot die or so he believes.

Appearance: The wolf is a gigantic, coal-black timber wolf with red eyes that blaze like hot embers. He stands nearly five feet high at the shoulder. His teeth are gleaming white, and his claws scrape the ground when he walks, leaving gouges even in stone. When he speaks (yes, even as a wolf the Oberst can speak like a man), his voice is as deep and as rough as the mountains of his homeland.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

Now that the heroes have a good idea of the true nature of the Council of Midnight and know the location of the main base in the Carpathian Mountains from Az's revelations, it is time to launch an assault on the lair of the Council. Do the heroes want to do more research into who their enemies are and perhaps build gadgets and design spells to help them deal with the supernatural forces that the Council can bring to bear? Maybe they would prefer a stealth strike mission; sneak in quietly and quickly and take out the Marković? Or do they want to go in full-bore, guns blazing?

The following are a series of short adventure ideas you can use to flesh out the final battles against the Council of Midnight and its wicked leader, Lord Dragan Marković.

AS THE SUN

Years ago, the insidious Dr. Abdul threatened the British Empire with a great weapon. The enormous gadget used mirrors, lenses, and crystals to capture, harness, and focus the light of the sun into deadly rays with range as far as the horizon and potentially further with exactly placed mirrors. The weapon was destroyed, but the plans for building it survived and are hidden away somewhere in the archives of Her Majesty's armed forces. The Council of Midnight, peopled as it is by darkness-loving creatures of the night, might prove particularly vulnerable to a weapon such as this. Can the Watchmen steal the plans from under the never-blinking eyes of the British government to build a new version of the weapon to be used against the enemies of mankind?

See Chapter 2, Steampunk Gear, for more details about The Insidious Dr. Abdul's Sun-Harnessing Light of Destruction.

TWENTY CENTURIES OF STONY SLEEP

The heroes must travel over snowy passes and rugged mountains to the forbidding lands of Eastern Europe, where the leader of the Council of Midnight commands his minions from a remote castle somewhere in the Carpathians. What horrors lie waiting hidden in the hills and crags of these unexplored lands? And what terrors wait them when they finally arrive at their destination?

When the PCs reach the headquarters of the Council of Midnight, they should face off against numerous cultists and one Young Vampires. Marković should be at the headquarters when it is attacked, but escape before the heroes can directly engage him in combat. If your group needs more of a challenge, throw in an extra Young Vampire.

SLOUCHES TOWARDS BETHLEHEM

The leader of the Council of Midnight flees to his birthplace, the ancient and mystical city of Jerusalem, and the heroes must follow him to battle for the very soul of mankind.

INTRODUCTION

Marković's plans have been disrupted, but he is immortal. The fact that some petty mortals have foiled his current plans means little to him in the long run. He has time; he will hide in the shadows again until his enemies are all dead and will come back into a new age, more powerful than ever.

To this end, he has fled to Jerusalem, the place of his "birth," to consolidate his power and plot his revenge.

GETTING TO JERUSALEM

You should make it clear to the players that Marković is either in Jerusalem or heading there. This can happen by having one of the vampire lord's minions spill the beans or by having the heroes find records of his origins in the moldering archives of the Council's Carpathian headquarters. His primary base of operations in the Carpathian Mountains has been compromised and his allies across Europe are gone. He has no other place to go.

Marković travels to Jerusalem by train and by boat, arriving in the dark of night during a storm that keeps all good souls indoors. He wastes no time summoning what forces he has remaining to help plan their next move. If the heroes have left any of their enemies alive and free over the course of this campaign, they may be waiting here as well when the Watchmen show up.

Jerusalem is totally different from the previous locations in this campaign. The hot dry air, strange sights, and unfamiliar smells make this place truly alien to European and American senses; nothing about those around the heroes is familiar, from their clothing down to some of the most basic daily customs. This is a place that is truly ancient, old when Europe was young and America known only to the descendents of those who crossed the land bridge during the last ice age. This is a holy place, the birthplace of religions and prophets. It is also a place where the madness and sins of one man, long ago, gave birth to a darkness that has cursed the world for nearly a thousand years.

THE SEPULCHER

Atop an ancient hill overlooking the city stand the ruins of a once great church. No one ever goes there; it is a dark and forbidding place. They say it is cursed. Few who go up the hill ever return, and those who do climb the hill and return have all met a terrible fate soon afterward. Christian, Jew, and Muslim agree it is a place cursed by God Himself.

It takes only a little effort from the heroes to find the history of this place. It was once a holy cathedral that was raided during the Crusades. All the priests within were murdered by the crusading knights, and that that tragedy birthed a horror beyond human understanding. See Lord Marković 's background for more details about the tragedy surrounding the Church of the Sepulcher.

THE HILL

A storm is brewing over the city as the heroes climb up the hill. A pall of gloom hangs over them as the sun disappears behind the clouds. The path is steep, narrow, and heavily overgrown with brambles. No one has come this way for some time, or so it would appear. The city spreads out below the Watchmen, its sounds fading away behind them until it seems as though they are the only people left in the world.

The heroes approach the ruins of the church, but a group of men step out from behind a cluster of boulders to bar their way. "You're lost," the leader, a deeply scarred man, says. "Turn around and go back."

The men are aggressive and cannot be convinced or bribed to allow the heroes to pass. If the Watchmen attempt to do so, or if the conversation goes on for more than a few minutes, they will attack.

Enemies:
- 1 Cultist for each PC
- 1 Patchwork Man

THE CHURCH ON THE HILL

There's not much left of the church. The few walls that remain standing are leaning precariously. The hilltop is studded with rubble, rocks and boulders that once made up this proud building. A few broken statues lie on the ground here and there. A thousand long years of baking summers and freezing winters have done their damage.

There doesn't seem to be much up here; no place to hide. It certainly is not the place the heroes would imagine anyone would attempt to stage the conquest of the world. But as the heroes explore, the dust they kick up swirls about and coalesces into several ghostly forms, dressed in tattered cassocks.

"We are the spirits of those murdered here, so many centuries ago," the ghosts whisper in bone-dry voices. "We are trapped here for eternity, unable to move on to our final reward until the one who murdered us finds his fate." They speak in an ancient tongue unknown to the adventurers, but somehow the heroes understand.

The ghosts tell the Watchmen that Marković has been cursed, and the only things that can kill him are the pure light of day or those things blessed by the God he has rejected. Furthermore, they warn the heroes that Marković has surrounded himself with loyal servants who will defend him to the death. The ghosts will linger for a few minutes to answer questions about Marković and his servants, then they will direct the heroes to a stone slab in the ground. "Your foe waits below," they say before fading away.

The stone slab is on a counterweight so it is not difficult to move. It hides an ancient stairway carved into the rock, going down into the darkness below the ruins.

Enemies:
⚫ 4 Ghosts (the ghosts will not fight, and if attacked they will fade and disappear)

THE BASEMENT

The stairs lead deep down into the hill, where eventually the heroes find themselves in a large chamber filled with rubble and several corpses strewn randomly around the floor. They appear to be the bodies of locals, perhaps brave (or crazy) people who came to explore the haunted ruins. When the heroes get halfway across the chamber, the bodies will rise up and attack!

At the far end of the room is a narrow passageway leading deeper into the hill.

Enemies:
⚫ 1 Zombie for each PC

THE TOMBS

A steep, narrow, winding passage leads deeper down into the heart of the hill and soon opens up into a long chamber. Bones and skulls cover the floor. There are narrow alcoves lining each wall, each one also filled with bones. This is the ossuary, where the faithful dead were once laid to rest. It is now home to several of Lord Marković 's once-victims, now servants. A dim light is visible up ahead.

A handful of young vampires lurk inside the alcoves, and once the Watchmen have walked past them they will spring out and attack. Notice rolls at -4 will detect the young vampires.

Enemies:
⚫ 1 Young Vampire for each PC

THE LAB

The light grows brighter as the heroes continue through the tombs until they come to a heavy wooden door. The door is obviously a new addition. The smell of ozone is strong here, overpowering the dusty scent of ages, and the buzzing sound of electricity fills the hallway. The light is coming from under the door, which is not locked.

Inside is a large room filled with various types of high tech machinery. Several corpses lie in various states of dismemberment upon metal slabs in the center of the room. Strange, sparking devices hang over the tables. A man with crazed hair and dark goggles stands near a control panel. "Lord Marković told me you'd be arriving soon," he calmly tells them. "So I've arranged a little welcome for you." With that, the Patchwork Men lying on his slabs rise up to attack the heroes.

Enemies:
⚫ Dr. Slusarski, Genius Savant
⚫ 1 Patchwork Man for every 2 PCs

MARKOVIC'S CRYPT

Behind Dr. Slusarski's machinery is a passageway. It is not very well hidden, but it is blocked by the machinery, and it will take some effort to get to. If brute strength is used, it will require 3 combined strength results of 12+ to move the machinery (up to 4 characters can assist the PC making the primary roll.) If the PC's fail a Strength roll, the primary PC will become Fatigued. Once the machines are moved, the heroes find a narrow tunnel going straight down into the darkness.

At the bottom of the tunnel is a small room with an ornate coffin. Of course, Marković did not survive this long by being stupid. He is not waiting in the coffin; he is hidden in mist form waiting to ambush the heroes and kill them for spoiling his plans.

Enemies:

◉ Lord Dragan Marković, Vampire Lord

◉ LORD DRAGAN MARKOVIC

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (The Occult World) d10, Knowledge (History) d10, Knowledge (Speak English, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Slovak, Turkish) d10, Knowledge (Tactics) d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Stealth d8, Throwing d8

Edges: Attractive, Linguist, Rich, Tactician

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities:

* **Rat Swarm:** As an action, Marković can change into a swarm of large rats (see Swarm) with a Smarts roll at −2. Changing back into humanoid form requires a Smarts roll.

* **Mist Form:** As an action, Marković can change into a mist with a Smarts roll at −2. Changing back into humanoid form requires a Smarts roll. In this form, he is still affected by sunlight and holy symbols as normal. If the heroes think to hit this form with holy water sprayed in mist form into the vampire's mist form, the result is identical to being in Direct Sunlight; in other forms holy water does nothing. While in Mist form, Marković cannot be attacked by a Stake Through the Heart attack and cannot do any type of physical attack. He can maintain his Charm power, but cannot switch to a new target.

* **Charm:** Marković can use the Puppet power on any target using Smarts as his arcane skill. He can cast and maintain the power indefinitely, but may only affect one target at a time.
* **Claws:** Str +d4.
* **Improved Frenzy:** Marković may make two attacks per round without penalty.
* **Invulnerability:** Marković can only be harmed by his Weaknesses. He can be Shaken by other attacks, but never wounded.
* **Level Headed:** Marković acts on the best of two cards.
* **Low Light Vision:** Marković can see in the dark. He ignores attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
* **Sire:** Anyone slain by Marković has a 50% chance of rising as a vampire themselves in 1d4 days.
* **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage (except to the heart—see below). No wound penalties.
* **Weakness (Sunlight):** Marković catches fire if any part of his skin is exposed to direct sunlight. After that he suffer 2d10 damage per round until he is dust. Armor does not protect.
* **Weakness (Holy Symbol):** A character may keep Marković at bay by displaying a holy symbol. If Marković wants to directly attack the victim, he must beat her in an opposed test of Spirit.
* **Weakness (Holy Water):** Marković is Fatigued if sprinkled with holy water. If immersed, he combusts as if it were direct sunlight (see above).
* **Weakness (Stake Through the Heart):** If hit with a called shot to the heart (−4), Marković must make a Vigor roll versus the damage total. If successful, he takes damage normally. If it fails, he disintegrates to dust.
* **Weakness (Holy Ground):** Marković is Fatigued if he enters a fully sanctified local, such as a church, synagogue, or mosque. The Fatigue is immediately removed when he leaves the sanctified location.

Background/History: Lord Dragan Marković is a vampire, perhaps the most ancient of his kind still in existence. He was a young knight when the Pope called for soldiers to invade the Holy Land and take it back for Christendom. Full of religious faith and zeal, he answered that call, leading his men from the cold mountains of his homeland to the hot deserts of the Middle East. He fought with savage abandon, killing any heathen brave enough to stand up against him or foolish enough to get in his way, spilling more blood than a hundred fellow Crusaders.

And as he fought, his bloodlust grew and grew. Soon, Marković no longer distinguished between Muslim, Jew, or Christian. He would order his men to attack anyone they came across and sack any town or city that stood before them. As they finally approached Jerusalem, they came across a small town on a hill overlooking the great city. His men poured through the streets, massacring every living person they found. Marković himself burst through the doors of the holy church in the center of town and personally put the priests there to the sword and then, exhausted and wounded from the battle, fell asleep there on the bloodstained altar.

The full Moon rose over the burning village and shone through the skylight above him, illuminating the church in an eerie glow. Marković awoke with a start, feeling a great, all-consuming thirst welling up inside. He knelt in front of the desecrated and destroyed altar, cupped his hands in the congealing blood of the priests he had murdered, and drank deeply. The young knight's sins were so great that he became something no longer human; rejected by both heaven and hell. He became a vampire.

Over the centuries Marković learned both patience and forbearance. He is no longer the brash young knight who reveled in slaughter. Now he is prudent, cautious, and more of a monster than ever.

He helped found the Council of Midnight several centuries ago as a place of refuge and succor for those inhuman creatures who stand against the light of goodness and humanity. All creatures of Evil are welcome within their ranks: vampires, werewolves, and other creatures of nightmares from around the world. Any creature of darkness that humans would hunt and destroy can find a home here.

Personality/Motivation: To those who have met him, Marković comes across as a cultured and refined gentleman. Perhaps his manners and his way of speaking are a bit archaic, but he is soft-spoken and polite to all he meets, especially women. This genteel exterior hides a heart as black as coal. Marković is a monster, pure and simple. He views humanity as little more than cattle, dumbly waiting to be led to the slaughterhouse by him and his followers.

Marković is a long-term thinker. He is immortal, so he has plenty of time to watch his plans come to fruition without risking being destroyed by the few things he knows will harm him. He moves slowly and cautiously, always trying to think two steps ahead of his opponents. However, he does not hesitate to crush those who would stand in his way. He views the Clockmakers Guild as a group of upstart children who will soon be taught their proper place.

Powers/Tactics: Marković does not like to dirty his hands with personal combat, and will always be surrounded by loyal followers who will defend him to the death if necessary. If forced into combat, he will fight ferociously, but always with an eye towards escaping at the first opportunity, using either his Mist Form or his Rat Form.

Quote: "In the great game of chess that I am playing, I can afford to lose the occasional pawn if it means I can take away my opponent's rook, knight, bishop, or queen."

Campaign Use: Marković is a master villain, the power behind those threats the heroes face daily. He is intended as the cap to a hard-fought campaign, the final confrontation that leaves the heroes victorious or defeated. Marković has a lot of plots all around the world, so at first he is not likely to pay the PCs too much mind – at least, not until they've beaten several of his minions and stopped a number of his schemes. Then he will begin to take a personal interest in their comings and goings.

Marković is already quite powerful; to make him stronger, simply give him more disposable minions that the PCs have to work their way through before they tackle him. To make him less powerful, remove his Rat Form powers, limit his Mist Form to one use per day, and add several more vampiric Vulnerabilities (to Garlic, for example) and Susceptibilities (for instance, to Silver).

Appearance: Marković is a tall and darkly handsome man with classic Eastern European features. He has bright, piercing eyes and long black hair. He usually dresses as an old-school European nobleman, but if he finds himself in one of the great modern capitals (London or Paris, for instance), he wears tailored suits of the finest cut.

CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

The defeat of the leader of the Council of Midnight doesn't mean the campaign has to end. The world of the Widening Gyre is expansive, and there is still a lot to explore. Perhaps the heroes can battle against the sinister Circle of Technologists, travel to America to face off against General Boddy, or head to the mysterious Orient to deal with a cabal of dark sorcerers. To really rack up the frequent steamer miles, fly to the Moon, or journey to the center of the Earth to explore the wonders and dangers therein. The possibilities are limitless!
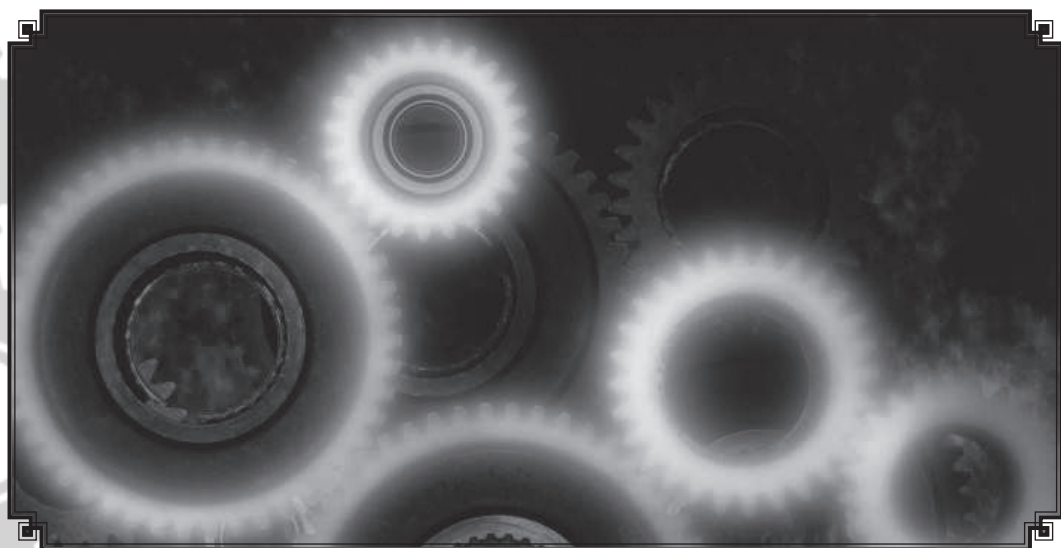
CHAPTER SEVEN:
WHAT ROUGH BEAST

BESTIARY

THE FREAK SHOW

"I hate the circus," Savannah grumbled as a crowd of screeching and laughing children pushed past them to gawk at the caged animals.

"Oh, come along now," Thackaray chuckled. "The lights, the sounds, the smell of popcorn in the air, the laughter of children and adults alike, the acrobats, the clowns; what's not to like?"

"You just listed it," Savannah sighed. "That, and the fact that we ain't supposed to be looking at any of those things. We're supposed to be here on business, remember?"

"Right you are, as usual," Thackary said, depositing the sticky candy-floss he had just purchased into a nearby litter bin. "And I think we may have found what we're looking for." He pointed to a lurid sign promoting the freak-show.

HALF ANIMAL! HALF MAN! ALL VICIOUS! The banner proclaimed, showing the image of a tiger-like man, or a man-like tiger.

"That's him," Savannah agreed. "Let's go around back, all quiet-like."

The Watchmen waited until the coast was clear, then slipped under a canvas flap and into a musty, dark tent alive with the scent of wild animals. "He must be here somewhere," Thackary whispered. Just then, a light came on, the harsh incandescent light casting the interior of the tent in vivid light and shadow. Several roust-abouts stepped forward, brandishing makeshift weapons.

"Well, well," one of them said through a mouthful of crooked teeth. "What do we have here? Coming in a little early to get a sneak peek at the show?" The other men laughed at this. "I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask to see your tickets."

"Why can this never be easy?" Thackary said gloomily.

'Because then it wouldn't be near as much fun," Savannah smiled. "We ain't got tickets," she said to the carneys. "But I think maybe we'll be taking that sneak peek after all."

"I think you're mistaken about that," the leader scowled, and then the men began to… change. Their clothing tore as their bodies warped and shifted, their muzzles lengthened, and fur sprouted over their increasingly animalistic forms.

"More fun, you say?" Thackary grimaced as the beasts sprang forward!
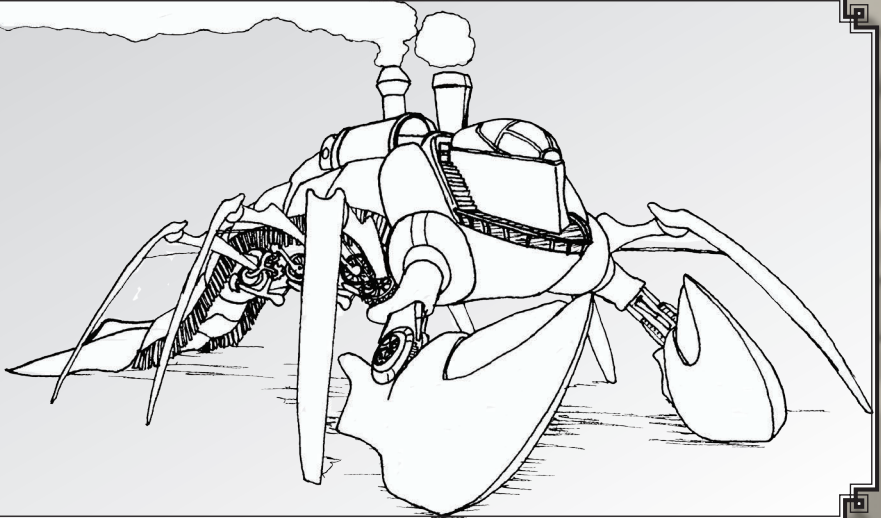
BESTIARY

In this chapter you will find some of the people and creatures you'll find in The Widening Gyre. You should feel free to add in appropriate creatures and animals from the core Savage Worlds materials including various the various Companion sourcebooks, and any other setting books you may have access to.

AIRSHIP PIRATES

Pirates, both on the high seas and in the skies, are increasingly common. Though some are honorable men driven to piracy due to desperate circumstances, most are just bloodthirsty scallywags.

TYPICAL AIRSHIP PIRATE

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Pilot d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean

Edges: Acrobat

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), Cutlass (Str+d6), Pistol (Range 5/10/20), Damage 2d6+1)

VETERAN AIRSHIP PIRATE

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Pilot d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 8; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean, Wanted

Edges: Acrobat, Block, Combat Reflexes, Dirty Fighter

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), Cutlass (Str+d6), Pistol (Range 5/10/20), Damage 2d6+1)

AIRSHIP PIRATE CAPTAIN

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Pilot d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d10, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 8; Toughness: 6

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Greedy, Wanted

Edges: Ace, Command, Hard to Kill, Dirty Fighter

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), Cutlass (Str+d6), Pistol (Range 5/10/20), Damage 2d6+1)

ALIENS

There are three alien species in the world of The Widening Gyre: the Hemipterans, the Observers, and the Martians. Two of them -- the Hemipterans and the Martians -- are hostile to human life. The other remains a mystery.

HEMIPTERAN [WORKER CASTE]

The worker-caste of the Hemipterans appear to be enormous humanoid ants, standing an average of 2 meters high, with long, thin limbs. Their bodies are iridescent in color, shining blue, green, red, or purple depending on how the light hits them. The workers are not very smart, and without orders tend to work

tirelessly at their normal job -- whether that is digging, carrying loads, or building simple structures.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4, Throwing d6

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

Special Abilities:

* **Armor +2:** Chitin.
* **Extra Limbs:** Hemipterans have six limbs. They can take an additional physical action every round, and do not suffer from multi-action or offhand penalties.
* **Low Light Vision:** Hemipterans ignore attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
* **Mandibles:** Str+d4.
* **Wall Walker:** Can walk on vertical surfaces at Pace 6.

⊚ HEMIPTERAN [LEADER CASTE]

The leader-caste Hemipterans look like enormous praying mantises with large heads. Like the workers, they have hard iridescent chitin protecting their bodies. They are the undisputed rulers of the underground kingdom of the Moon, obeyed without question, and have learned to hate and fear humanity.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Earth Cultures) d6, Notice d4, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 8 (2)

Special Abilities:

* **Armor +2:** Chitin.
* **Extra Limbs:** Hemipterans have six limbs. They can take an additional physical action every round, and do not suffer from multi-action or offhand penalties.
* **Low Light Vision:** Hemipterans ignore attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
* **Mandibles:** Str+d4.
* **Mind Control:** Hemipterans Leaders can use an action to contact and control another mind within 12" by making an opposed Smarts roll with the target.
* **Mind Reading:** Hemipterans Leaders can use an action to make an opposed Smarts roll to detect surface thoughts. Entering a person's mind requires an action and automatically Fatigues the mind reader. Range is 12".
* **Telepathy:** The Hemipterans can mentally communicate with anyone in sight.
* **Wall Walker:** Can walk on vertical surfaces at Pace 6.

MARTIANS

Martians are strange, octopus-like creatures, roughly the size of a bear. Their planet is slowly dying, so they have hatched upon a wicked scheme – to take away Earth from the lesser creatures that inhabit it and make Earth their own. These are long-term and wide-ranging plans, but they will soon come to their fruition…

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

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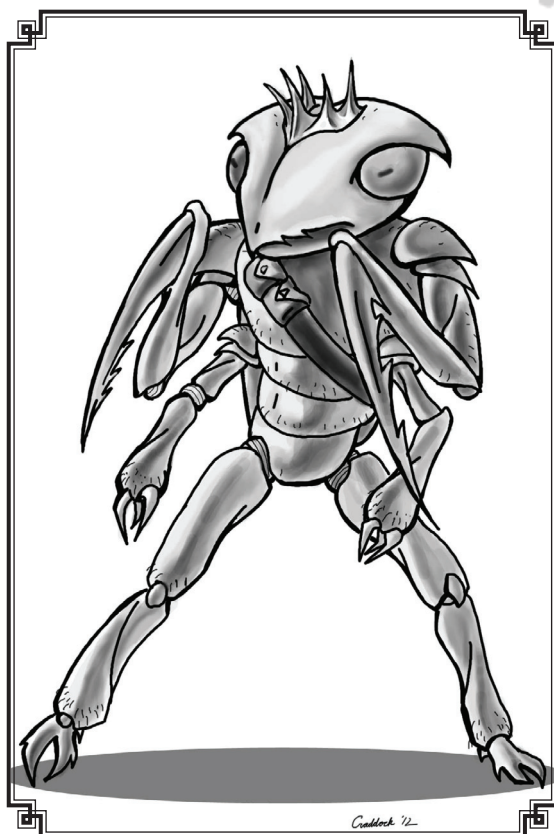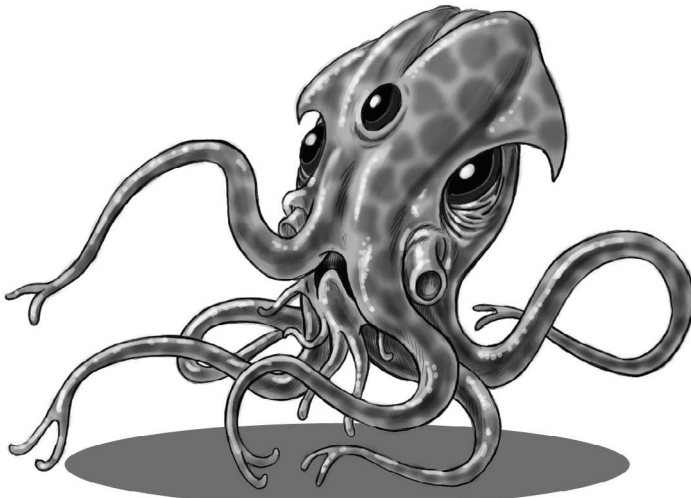
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Earth Cultures) d6, Knowledge (Strange Martian Science) d10, Piloting d6, Repair d6, Notice d10

Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 8 (2)

Special Abilities:

✽ **Alien Physiology:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage

✽ **Level Headed:** Martians act on the best of two cards.

✽ **Mind Reading:** Martians can use an action to make an opposed Smarts roll to detect surface thoughts. Entering a person's mind requires an action, and automatically Fatigues the mind reader. Range is 12".

✽ **Telepathy:** A Martian can mentally communicate with anyone in sight.

✽ **Tentacles:** A Martian may make up to four attacks per round. On a raise, the Martian has grappled its victim. A grappled victim may only attempt an opposed Strength roll each round to escape. Once grappled, the Martian does Str+d6 damage automatically by squeezing and crushing with its arms.

⬤ OBSERVERS

The Observers are an alien race who live on the far side of the Moon. They are an ancient and wise people, and they like humanity's pluck and verve. Although they make it a habit to stay away from the internal dealings of the younger races, they are more likely to help humans than to oppose them.

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

Skills: Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Earth, Martian, and Hemipteran Cultures) d10, Notice d12, Piloting d6, Repair d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 8 (2)

Special Abilities:

✽ **Level Headed:** Observers act on the best of two cards.

✽ **Mind Control:** Observers Leaders can use an action to contact and control another mind within 12" by making an opposed Smarts roll with the target.

✽ **Mind Reading:** Observers can use an action to make an opposed Smarts roll to detect surface thoughts. Entering a person's mind requires an action, and automatically Fatigues the mind reader. Range is 12".

✽ **Telepathy:** Observers can mentally communicate with anyone in sight.
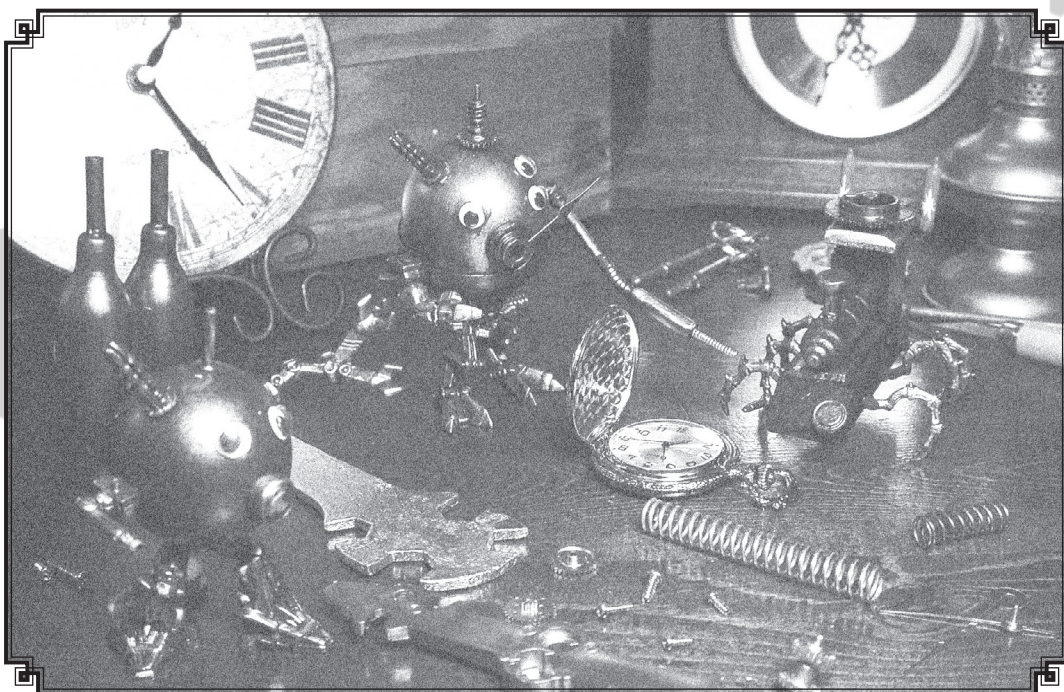
AUTOMATONS

To heal any automaton requires the Repair skill. For automatons it functions like the Healing skill, but there is no "Golden Hour" time constraint.

SPOKE

Savants frequently build little mechanical helpers, known colloquially as "Spokes" (or to the uneducated as "Clockwork Crabs") to assist them in a wide variety of tasks. Spokes are excellent for performing simple jobs, like fetching tools, tightening bolts, and carrying small items (such as a light). More advanced Spokes can be programmed to scrounge for parts and even perform scouting missions – moving ahead and taking pictures of a potentially dangerous area. Spokes can obey simple spoken commands from their master and only if such commands fall within the parameters of their programming.

Spokes are small – generally no bigger than a housecat and often no larger than a mouse. They are almost never used for offensive purposes. Programming one for combat is simply too difficult (though they could be used to climb on an enemy to distract him, or run underfoot to trip someone).

A Spoke can look like just about anything, from a miniature train to a small clockwork man. Animals, insects, and crustaceans are common designs. Savants take great pride in the appearance of their personal Spokes and customize each one to fit the creator's personality and needs. Spokes are generally powered by simple clockwork mechanisms and must be wound properly to ensure their continued operation.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Notice d6, Repair d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; Parry: 2; Toughness: 3

Special Abilities:

* **Automaton:** Spokes add +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage, never suffer from Wound Modifiers, do not suffer from disease or poison.
* **Fearless:** Spokes are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
* **Helpful Assistant:** Each success the Spoke makes with a Repair roll adds +2 to the Savant it is assisting, with a maximum of +8 (instead of +1 / +4)

* **Small:** Attackers subtract 2 from any attack rolls directed at a Spoke.
* **Size -2:** Spokes are typically no larger than a cat, and are often smaller.

TYPICAL CLOCKWORK MAN

While we present the game statistics for a "typical" Clockwork Man, each one is truly an individual work of magical art. Each is bespoke, hand-crafted by a Savant to match her personality or her requirements. Most Clockwork Men do have certain things in common, and this character sheet reflects that. Unlike most automatons, Clockwork Men are sentient creatures, with wills and personalities of their own. Clockwork Men may be armed, if their job calls for weapons, with a sword, pistol, rifle, or some strange high-tech experimental weapon.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Trade) d6, Notice d8, Repair d6, Shooting d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 7 (2)

Special Abilities:

* **Automaton:** Clockwork Men add +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage, never suffer from Wound Modifiers, do not suffer from disease or poison.
* **Fuel:** Determine the Clockwork Man's power source (steam, wind-up, or experimental galvanic pile). If the Clockwork Man cannot access his power source at least once per day, he's automatically Fatigued each day until he's Incapacitated. The day after that, he goes "off-line" and must be revived with a Repair roll and a four-hour charge of energy. The power source replaces the need for food and water.
* **Made of Brass and Steel:** Clockwork Men are made of metal. +2 Armor (negated by AP weapons).
* **Metal Man:** Clockwork Men are somewhat resistant to harsh environments. They gain +2 bonus to resist all negative environmental effects (heat, cold, pressure, etc.)
* **Outsider:** Humans often treat Clockwork Men as just another machine. They subtract 2 from their Charisma when dealing with humans.
* **Unnatural:** Arcane powers (magic), both detrimental and beneficial, suffer a -2 penalty to affect Clockwork Men. This has no effect on damaging powers or Weird Science powers, which affect them normally.

CLOCKWORK SOLDIERS

During the Franco-Prussian war, French and German savants worked tirelessly to create mechanical soldiers: ones that needed no supplies, would fight without fear, and were difficult to kill. Several versions were fielded before the end of the war, but they all had flaws that made them unsuitable for pitched battles.

However, for simple tasks like guarding a person or patrolling an area, they actually work quite well. More than a few were built by wealthy and important persons such as bishops, princes, wealthy merchants, and the like. For a while, it became a status symbol to have a clockwork soldier (or a squad of them) among one's personal bodyguards. Clockwork soldiers have no free will of their own and can only act on the orders that are programmed into them or directly given them by their masters; thus their Smarts stat is considered that of an animal (A).

Clockwork Soldiers are tall and spindly but very heavy and slow-moving and make an enormous racket when they move. They are experts with firearms and hand-to-hand weapons. While many gleam of chrome, they also can be made to look like virtually any type of person – male or female, young or old, dressed in the livery of any nobleman or armed forces.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

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

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

Gear: Varies.

Special Abilities:

* **Automaton:** Clockwork Men add +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage, never suffer from Wound Modifiers, do not suffer from disease or poison.
* **Fearless:** Clockwork Soldiers are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
* **Fuel:** Determine the Clockwork Man's power source (steam, wind-up, or experimental galvanic pile). If the Clockwork Man cannot access his power source at least once per day, he's automatically Fatigued each

day until he's Incapacitated. The day after that, he goes "off-line" and must be revived with a Repair roll and a four-hour charge of energy. The power source replaces the need for food and water.

* **Made of Brass and Steel:** Clockwork Men are made of metal. +2 Armor (negated by AP weapons).
* **Metal Man:** Clockwork Men are somewhat resistant to harsh environments. They gain +2 bonus to resist all negative environmental effects (heat, cold, pressure, etc.)
* **Unnatural:** Arcane powers (magic), both detrimental and beneficial, suffer a -2 penalty to affect Clockwork Men. This has no effect on damaging powers or Weird Science powers, which affect them normally.
* **Weakness (Magnetism):** A Clockwork Soldier caught in a powerful magnetic field is Fatigued.
* **Weakness (Electricity):** A Clockwork Soldier takes 1d6 extra damage from electrical attacks.

TICK-TOCK MEN

Doktor Dunkelheit of the Circle of Technologists has money, resources, and social respectability. He can use mundane means to deal with most problems, ranging from hired thugs to Scotland Yard itself. However, when a problem proves intractable, he will utilize his Tick-Tock Men. The Tick-Tock Men are perhaps his most fiendish invention to date. They are clockwork men, automatons powered by wind-up springs. But they are not toys! They are deadly assassins, capable of virtually anything. Powerful, strong, limber, and fast, the good Doctor has armed them with dangerous weapons of his own design. The Tick-Tock Men never speak, but when they move they make a distinct ticking sound. Sometimes, the only warning a man has before death takes him is the ominous tick-tock-tick-tock coming up behind him…

The Tick-Tock Men are tall, spindly robots made of brass and steel, with long limbs and squat bodies. Their faces are featureless except their glowing green eyes. When they are on the hunt, they will wear long coats and hats to disguise their features. Tick-Tock Men can be armed with a wide variety of weapons, including built-in guns, flamethrowers, and even primitive rocket launchers.

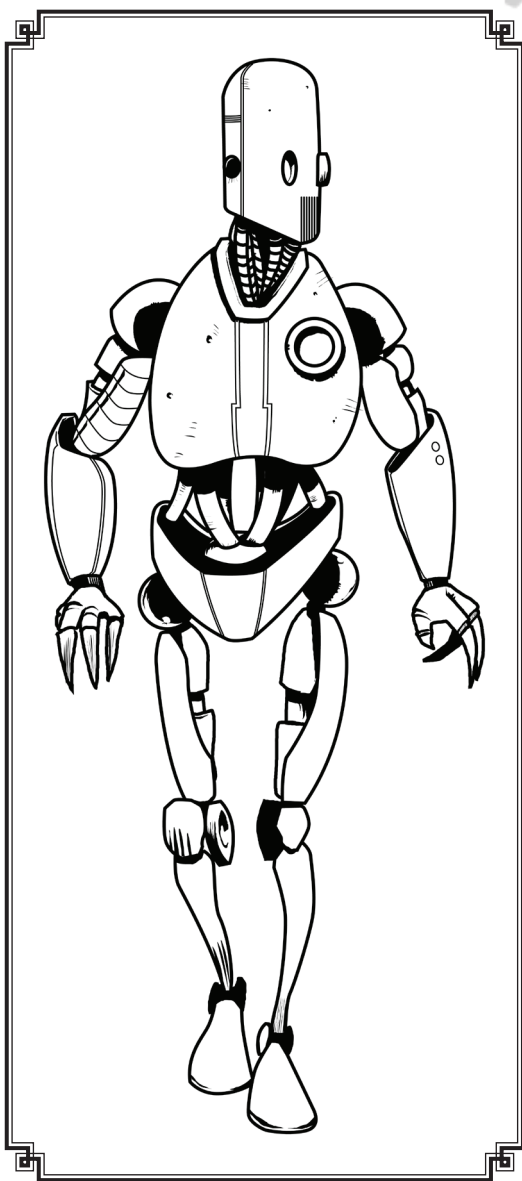**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6
Pace: 7; Parry: 6; Toughness: 8 (2)
Gear: Varies.
Special Abilities:

* **Automaton:** Tick-Tock Men add +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage, never suffer from Wound Modifiers, do not suffer from disease or poison.

* **Fearless:** Tick-Tock Men are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
* **Made of Brass and Steel:** Tick-Tock Men are made of metal. +2 Armor (negated by AP weapons).
* **Razor Claws:** Str+d4.
* **Weakness (Water):** Tick-Tock Men are Fatigued if immersed in water.
* **Weakness (Electricity):** Tick-Tock Men suffer double damage from electricity.

TYPICAL CITIZEN
Folks around the world are a varied bunch, but the following profile is a good starting point for most.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Trade) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 3; Toughness: 4

Hindrances: None

Edges: None

Gear: Knife (Str+d4)

THE CRIMINAL CLASS

Criminal gangs may be working for their own ends, but just as often they can be found doing dirty work for criminal masterminds, powerful sorcerers, or evil savants.

TYPICAL THUG
A typical thug, goon, mook, or legbreaker employed by various criminal bosses and gangs.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Lockpicking d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8

Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean

Edges: Dirty Fighter

Gear: Knife (Str+d4) or Cudgel (Str+d4), Pistol (Range 5/10/20), Damage 2d6+1)

GANG LEADER
A tough, unethical thug with above-average intelligence who managed to rise above his fellows and now leads a small gang of his own.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d10, Taunt d8

Pace: 6; Parry: 8; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean, Wanted

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Command, Dirty Fighter

Gear: Knife (Str+d4) or Cudgel (Str+d4), Pistol (Range 5/10/20), Damage 2d6+1)

⚙ CRIMINAL MASTERMIND
The criminal mastermind is a brilliant crimelord. He may be a cunning low-life who fought his way to the top, or a model citizen who decided to strike against a corrupt society through the criminal underworld. He uses his brains more than his physical prowess, and rarely gets into scrapes himself if he can help it -- that's what underlings are for.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Investigation d8, Notice d12, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d10, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 8; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Code of Honor, Wanted

Edges: Harder to Kill, Inspire, Investigator, Level Headed

Gear: Sword-Cane (Str+d6), Pistol (Range 5/10/20), Damage 2d6+1)

DARK CULT

Many dark sorcerers have a number of utterly loyal and deadly servants, cultists who worship the sorcerer himself. They are fearless, devoid of mercy, and utterly disposable. Cultists generally look exactly like any other poor citizen, but that their eyes are vacant and almost inhuman looking.

CULTISTS

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Lockpicking d4, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 7; Toughness: 5

Edges: Berserk

Gear: Knife (Str+d4) or Club (Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

Fearless: Cultists are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

Feels No Pain: Cultists add +2 to recover from being Shaken.

CULT BOSS

The cult boss is not necessarily the leader of the entire cult, but one of the lieutenants that leads gangs of cultists on their missions. Unlike his minions, the boss retains some small measure of his own personality (which is usually twisted and sadistic).

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Lockpicking d8, Notice d10, Stealth d10, Streetwise d10

Pace: 6; Parry: 8; Toughness: 6

Edges: Berserk, Block, Fervor, Frenzy

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), Sword (Str+d6).

Special Abilities:

Fearless: Cultists are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

Feels No Pain: Cultists add +2 to recover from being Shaken.

MINOR SORCERER

The leader of a cult may have several apprentices working under him. They wish to learn the dark secrets that their leader has mastered. Many hope to take over as leader themselves, once they've eliminated their competition and the master himself…

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d6, Taunt d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 5

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic)

Gear: Knife (Str+d4)

Spells: 5 Power Points

✳ *Blast, Elemental Manipulation, Summon Demon*

⚙ DARK SORCERER

A Dark Sorcerer is the leader of a cult. Those who serve under him have been mesmerized or brain-washed to the extent that they will die for him and his cause.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Spell-casting d12, Stealth d6

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

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic)

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), one magical item

Spells: 25 Power Points

* *Armor, Blast, Summon Demon, Wither*, +2 more

DEMONS

Lesser demons are often summoned up by dark sorcerers looking to add a little supernatural muscle to their forces. More powerful demons tend to be master manipulators, promising great power to those who can get them what they desire (the souls of the innocent or the destruction of things they find unpleasant such as holy items).

IMP

One of the first spells many cultists learn is how to summon an Imp from Hell. Such creatures are used as guards, messengers, and weapons to strike at enemies. This is an example of such a demon. It makes up in cruelty what it lacks in size and strength. An Imp could look like virtually anything, but typically they appear to be hideously ugly, tiny, twisted men with red-skin, horns, and bat-like wings projecting from their shoulder blades.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Taunt d6, Stealth d10, Throwing d6

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

Special Abilities:

* **Claws:** Str+d4.
* **Demon:** Imps add +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage, never suffer from Wound Modifiers, do not suffer from disease or poison.
* **Flight:** Imps have a Flying Pace of 12" and Climb 1.
* **Low Light Vision:** Demons can see in the dark. They ignore attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
* **Size −1:** Imps stand only 3-4' tall.
* **Weakness (Holy Symbol):** A character may keep an Imp at bay by displaying a holy symbol. If the demon wants to directly attack the victim, it must beat her in an opposed test of Spirit.
* **Weakness (Holy Water):** Imps are Fatigued if sprinkled with holy water. If immersed, they begin to melt, suffering 2d10 damage per round until there is nothing left but a foul stench. Armor does not protect.
* **Weakness (Cold Iron):** Demons take normal damage from cold iron weapons.

LESSER DEMON

Lesser demons are the footsoldiers of hell. Strong, fierce, and tough, they are not very imaginative but are deadly in battle.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6

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

Special Abilities:

* **Berserk:** Lesser demons can go berserk at will.
* **Claws:** Str+d6

* **Demon:** Lesser demons add +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage, never suffer from Wound Modifiers, do not suffer from disease or poison.
* **Low Light Vision:** Demons can see in the dark. They ignore attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
* **Weakness (Holy Water):** Demons are Fatigued if sprinkled with holy water. If immersed, they begin to melt, suffering 2d10 damage per round until there is nothing left but a foul stench. Armor does not protect.
* **Weakness (Cold Iron):** Demons take normal damage from cold iron weapons.

GREATER DEMON

Greater demons are enormous monsters filled with hatred, fury, and a desire to sow death and discord in the world. They often lead troops of lesser demons and imps.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d10, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d8

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

Special Abilities:

* **Claws:** Str+d6
* **Demon:** Demons add +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage, never suffer from Wound Modifiers, do not suffer from disease or poison.
* **Low Light Vision:** Demons can see in the dark. They ignore attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
* **Spellcasting:** Greater demons have 25 Power Points and know the following spells: *Bolt, Detect/Conceal Arcana, Entangle, Pox of the Witch, Shapechange, and Summon Demon*.
* **Weakness (Holy Water):** Demons are Fatigued if sprinkled with holy water. If immersed, they begin to melt, suffering 2d10 damage per round until there is nothing left but a foul stench. Armor does not protect.
* **Weakness (Cold Iron):** Demons take normal damage from cold iron weapons.

☀ DEMON LORD

Demon lords are the kings of the under realms, rarely summoned to Earth and then only through terrible and powerful rituals involving great sacrifices.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Spellcasting d12, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities:

* **Claws:** Str+d6
* **Demon:** Demons add +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage, never suffer from Wound Modifiers, do not suffer from disease or poison.
* **Demonic Army:** Demon lords have the ability to summon other demons. This requires an action and a Smarts roll at –2. If successful, 1d6 lesser demons or 1d10 imps appear in 1d6+2 rounds.
* **Flight:** Demon lords have a Flying Pace of 12" and Climb 1.
* **Improved Frenzy:** Demon lords may make two attacks per round without penalty.
* **Invulnerability:** Demon lords can only be harmed by their Weaknesses. They may be Shaken by other attacks, but never wounded.
* **Level Headed:** Demon lords act on the best of two cards.
* **Low Light Vision:** Demons can see in the dark. They ignore attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
* **Spellcasting:** Demon lords have 35 Power Points and can cast any spell.
* **Weakness (Holy Water):** Demons are Fatigued if splashed with holy water. If immersed, they suffer 2d6 damage per round. Armor does not protect.
* **Weakness (Cold Iron):** Demons take normal damage from cold iron weapons.

ELEMENTALS

Elementals are living spirits of Progress -- iron, steam, and electricity. They are different from Clockwork Men in that they are not created through science, but conjured through magic. These are average examples of such creatures. More powerful elementals are known to exist.

GALVANIC ELEMENTAL

Galvanic elementals appear as a large crackling ball of pure electricity.

Attributes: Agility d12+1, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Notice d6, Shooting d8

Pace: 12; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

* **Elemental:** No additional damage from called shots; Fearless; Immune to disease and poison.
* **Flight:** Galvanic Elementals fly at a rate of 12 with a Climb of 3. They may not run.
* **Invulnerability:** Galvanic Elementals are immune to all nonmagical attacks, but suffer 1d6 damage when doused in at least a gallon of water, +2 per additional gallon.
* **Galvanic Touch:** Str+d6.
* **Galvanic Strike:** Galvanic elementals can project a crackling blast of electricity using the Cone Template. Characters within the cone must beat the spirit's Shooting roll with Agility or suffer 2d10 damage.

IRON ELEMENTAL

Iron elementals manifest as a six-foot tall solid iron creature. Usually they are shaped roughly like a man, but other types (shaped like various animals) are known to exist. Though strong, they are also quite slow and make a tremendous noise when they move.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11 (4)

Special Abilities:

* **Armor +4:** Iron hide.
* **Bash:** Str+d6.
* **Elemental:** No additional damage from called shots; Fearless; Immune to disease and poison.
* **Immunity (Heat):** Iron Elementals take no damage from fire, including arcane powers with a fire or heat trapping.

STEAM ELEMENTAL

Steam elementals manifest as large, vaguely man-shaped clouds of super-hot steam.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6

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

Special Abilities:

* **Elemental:** No additional damage from called shots; Fearless; Immune to disease and poison.
* **Ethereal:** Steam Elementals can maneuver through any non-solid surface. They can seep through the cracks in doors, bubble through water, and rush through sails.
* **Flight:** Steam Elementals fly at a rate of 6 with a Climb of 3. They may not run.
* **Invulnerability:** Immune to all non-magical attacks except fire.
* **Steam Blast:** Steam Elementals can send directed blasts of super-heated steam at foes using the Cone Template and a Shooting roll. Foes may make an opposed Agility roll to avoid the blast, or suffer 2d10 damage.

PATCHWORK MAN

A Patchwork Man is a living nightmare, stitched together from corpses and given a semblance of life through a mixture of ancient sorcery and modern galvanic science. The creature is a monster: Terribly strong, hideously scarred, and with only confusing and contradictory flashes of memories from its previous lives. Many Patchwork Men find themselves welcomed into the Council of Midnight. Lord Marković has made a home for these bastard children of science and magic in his organization. He has a use for their brute power…

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d4, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 7; Parry: 6; Toughness: 10 (1)

Edges: Berserk, Brawler

Special Abilities:

* **Armor +1:** Reanimated flesh.
* **Size +2:** Patchwork Men are enormous and powerful, stitched together from the largest and strongest corpses available.
* **Sweep:** May attack all adjacent characters at –2.
* **Construct:** Patchwork Men add +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage, never suffer from Wound Modifiers, does not suffer from disease or poison.
* **Weakness:** Suffers double damage from fire.
* **Weakness:** Traumatic **flashbacks to previous lives.**

POLICE

TYPICAL POLICE OFFICER

This is an average constable or police officer. He is competent and brave, but not suicidal.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: None

Edges: None

Gear: Cudgel (Str+d4), Pistol (Range 5/10/20), Damage 2d6+1), Uniform, Police whistle

VETERAN POLICE OFFICER

This officer is well-trained, with years of experience on the force.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

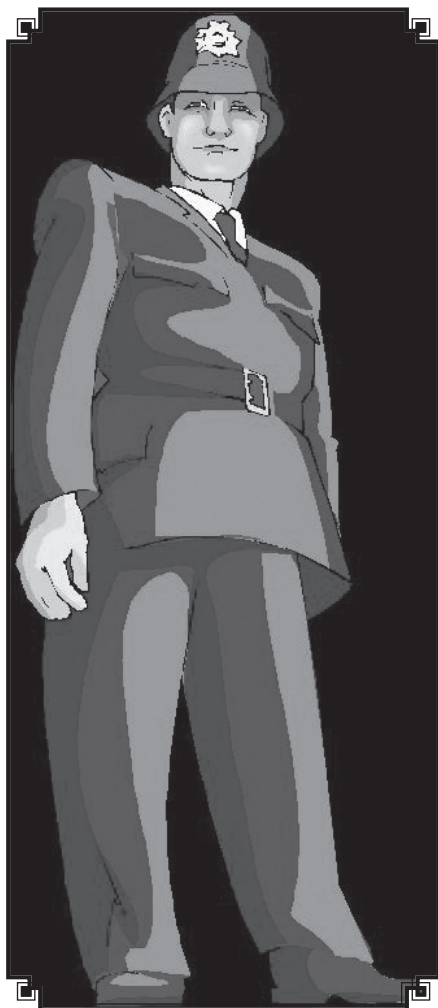**Pace:** 6; Parry: 7; Toughness: 6

Hindrances: None

Edges: None

Gear: Cudgel (Str+d4), Pistol (Range 5/10/20), Damage 2d6+1), Uniform, Police whistle

DETECTIVE

This detective may be a freelancer or a respected veteran of the police force.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Shooting d10, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8

Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 6

Hindrances: Curious, Overconfident

Edges: Brave, Connections, Investigator

Gear: Cudgel (Str+d4), Pistol (Range 5/10/20), Damage 2d6+1), Police whistle

SAVANTS

A Savant is a scientist stirred with an engineer, mixed with genius, and blended with just a touch of madness. A Savant is also a type of sorcerer, but he does not use ancient spells and alchemical formulas to work his miracles. He uses iron and brass, crystal and mother-of-pearl, clockwork and steam. With the precise applications of (admittedly, rubber) scientific principles, he creates devices which should not work yet miraculously do.

TYPICAL SAVANT

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

Skills: Analyze Savant Technology d4, Knowledge (Science) d8, Knowledge (One Specific Science) d6, Notice d4, Repair d8, Shooting d6, Weird Science d10

Pace: 6; Parry: 2; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: Clueless, Curious, Mystic Aura

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Gadgeteer

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), toolkit, one gadget (see Chapter 2: Steampunk Gear)

⚙ GENIUS SAVANT

There are some savants who are head and shoulders above their colleagues. Their minds are brighter, their imaginations more fertile, their hands quicker and more dexterous, and their inventions even more brilliant.

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

Skills: Analyze Savant Technology d8, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Science) d10, Knowledge (One Specific Science) d12, Notice d8, Repair d12, Shooting d6, Weird Science d12

Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: Clueless, Curious, Mystic Aura

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Gadgeteer, McGyver, Mr. Fix-It, Rich

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), toolkit, at least one gadget (see Chapter 2: Steampunk Gear)

SQUID, GIANT, FLYING

Giant squids are the monsters of the deep, growing up to 50 feet long and posing a hazard even for large ships. Unlike their normal-sized cousins, giant squids are highly aggressive and will attack even large ships and creatures if hungry. For a bizarre twist, some mad scientist or demented cultist has replaced one of the squid's internal organs with a special buoyancy device, allowing them to swim through the air as easily as they swim through the seas!

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d10

Pace: —; Parry: 6; Toughness: 12

Special Abilities:

* **Flight:** Flying squids have a Flying Pace of 12 and a climb of 0.
* **Huge:** Attackers add +4 to their attack rolls when attacking a great white due to its large size.
* **Size +4:** Giant squids can be as large as a ship, with each tentacle up to 40' long.
* **Tentacles:** A giant squid may make up to four attacks per round. On a raise, the creature has grappled its victim. A grappled victim may only attempt an opposed Strength roll each round to escape. Once grappled, the squid does Str+d6 damage automatically by crushing with its arms.

SHARK, GREAT WHITE, FLYING

These statistics cover great whites, 18 to 25 feet long. Larger specimens surely exist. For a bizarre twist, some mad scientist or demented cultist has replaced one of the shark's internal organs with a special buoyancy device, allowing them to swim through the air as easily as they swim through the seas!

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d12, Swimming d10

Pace: —; Parry: 7; Toughness: 12

Special Abilities:

* **Flight:** Flying sharks have a Flying Pace of 18 and a climb of 0.
* **Bite:** Str+d8.
* **Hardy:** The creature does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
* **Large:** Attackers add +2 to their attack rolls when attacking a great white due to its large size.
* **Size +4:** Great whites can grow up to 25' in length.
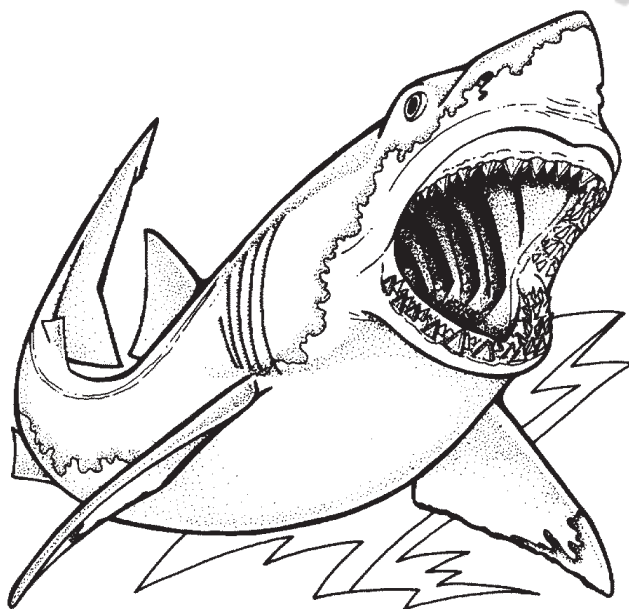
SHARK, MEDIUM MANEATER, FLYING

These statistics cover most medium-sized mankillers, such as tiger sharks and bulls. For a bizarre twist, some mad scientist or demented cultist has replaced one of the shark's internal organs with a special buoyancy device, allowing them to swim through the air as easily as they swim through the seas!

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d12, Swimming d10

Pace: —; Parry: 6; Toughness: 5

Special Abilities:

* **Flight:** Flying sharks have a Flying Pace of 18 and a climb of 0.
* **Bite:** Str+d6.

SOLDIERS

TYPICAL SOLDIER

This is a typical soldier from any of the civilized nations' armies. This template can also be used as a mercenary or a warrior from a less civilized culture with a few minor changes.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: None

Edges: None

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), Pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), Rifle (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d8), Uniform

VETERAN SOLDIER OR OFFICER

This is an officer or a soldier who has survived many battles. He is tough and knows how to handle himself in a dangerous situation.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d6

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

Hindrances: None

Edges: Combat Reflexes

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), Pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), Rifle (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d8), Uniform

WEREWOLVES

Die Wölfe (The Wolves) are Colonel Steppenwulf's hand-picked cadre of soldiers, each of them fearless, battle-hardened, and infected with lycanthropy. Although not as powerful as their leader, each of these soldiers is a one-man killing machine, willing to follow Der Oberstwölf into hell and back.

DIE WOLFE [THE WOLVES] – HUMAN FORM

Die Wölfe are scruffy looking German soldiers, dressed in muddy and much-patched uniforms. They look like they've been on the front lines for years (which is true). Their ice-cold eyes have seen all the horrors that the world can throw at them. In their wolf-forms, they are large black timber wolves with blazing red eyes.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Tracking d8

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

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Alertness

Special Abilities:

✸ **Invulnerability:** Die Wölfe can only be Shaken by weapons that are not silver or magical—not wounded.

✸ **Weakness:** Die Wölfe suffer normal damage from silver weapons.

DIE WOLFE [THE WOLVES] – WOLF FORM

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Swimming d8, Stealth d10, Tracking d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

✸ **Claws:** Str+d8.

✸ **Fear –2:** Die Wölfe chill the blood of all who see them.

✸ **Invulnerability:** Die Wölfe can only be Shaken by weapons that are not silver or magical—not wounded.

✸ **Infravision:** Die Wölfe can see heat and halve penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets.

✸ **Weakness:** Die Wölfe suffer normal damage from silver weapons.

VAMPIRE

Vampires are not just legends; they are very real. They come from every nation on earth, and although each is somewhat different they all share similar traits. Vampires are powerful minions of the Council of Midnight; many of them are the "children" of Lord Dragan Marković himself.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Swimming d8, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

* **Claws:** Str+d4.

* **Frenzy:** Vampires can make two attacks per round with a –2 penalty to each attack.

* **Level Headed:** Vampires act on the best of two cards.

* **Invulnerability:** Vampires can only be harmed by their Weaknesses. They may be Shaken by other attacks, but never wounded.

* **Sire:** Anyone slain by a vampire has a 50% chance of rising as a vampire themselves in 1d4 days.

* **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage (except to the heart—see below).

* **Weakness (Sunlight):** Vampires catch fire if any part of their skin is exposed to direct sunlight. After that they suffer 2d10 damage per round until they are dust. Armor does not protect.

* **Weakness (Holy Symbol):** A character with a holy symbol may keep a vampire at bay by displaying a holy symbol. A vampire who wants to directly attack the victim must beat her in an opposed test of Spirit.

* **Weakness (Holy Water):** A vampire sprinkled with holy water is Fatigued. If immersed, he combusts as if it were direct sunlight (see above).

* **Weakness (Invitation Only):** Vampires cannot enter a private dwelling without being invited. They may enter public domains as they please.

* **Weakness (Stake Through the Heart):** A vampire hit with a called shot to the heart (–4) must make a Vigor roll versus the damage. If successful, it takes damage normally. If it fails, it disintegrates to dust.

ZOMBIE TROOPS

Evil necromancers, like General Trup of Russia, can animate dead bodies in a hideous parody of life. The dead fight fearlessly against the necromancers' enemies, spreading misery and terror in their wake.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Rifle with a bayonet affixed.

Special Abilities:

* **Claws:** Str.
* **Fearless:** Zombies are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
* **Infravision:** Zombies halve penalties for dark lighting against living targets (round down).
* **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage.

CHAPTER EIGHT:
TURNING AND TURNING

A STEAMPUNK SOURCEBOOK

THE VAMPIRE LORD

The dark mist swirled and congealed and took form – the form of a tall, aristocratic figure in a dark suit. "You fools think you can stand before me?" the vampire sneered. "I have been alive for centuries. I have seen would-be heroes rise and fall. You cannot defeat me."

"We've done alright for ourselves so far," Savannah spat back, trying to buy time for Thackary to finish the final preparations on his machine.

The vampire stepped closer and chuckled darkly. "You've won nothing. You've taken a few of my pawns, and that's all. When you are gone, I will simply rebuild my empire. All your work will come to nothing; it will be as if you never existed."

"We've done more than set you back," Savannah said. "I'd say we thrashed you good, every time we've come up against you. You just don't have the good sense to know when you've been beat."

The vampire snarled and, faster than she could react, grabbed Savannah's throat and pressed her against the wall. "You think you are my equal, with your gadgets and your trinkets and your modern technology? I am the master of the storm and the sea! I am the slayer of men! And I shall prevail!"

"We'll see about that, chum!" Thackary called out from across the room, flipping the final switch and activating his device…

THE VICTORIAN AGE

The Victorian era conjures images of lords and ladies in finery, deerstalker cap-wearing detectives, grubby street urchins and pickpockets, powerful submarines, and fantastical time machines. It was an era of great social and technological upheaval. Perhaps this is why it resonates so strongly with so many people today as they see the modern age as a reflection of the past. Looking back, we may discover the way forward.

> *It is a pleasant thing to reflect upon, and furnishes a complete answer to those who contend for the gradual degeneration of the human species, that every baby born into the world is a finer one than the last.*
>
> – Charles Dickens

There are many different ways to play a game set in the latter half of the 19th century, ranging in scope from the fantastic to the mundane. Characters may find themselves in a world very much like the real world or one much changed from the history that we are taught in school. The Victorians practically created the modern novel, and many genres which are still popular today were either invented or perfected in the 19th Century. Here are a few examples:

GOTHIC HORROR

> *"During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was— but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, poetic sentiment, with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible."*
>
> — Edgar Allen Poe, *The Fall of the House of Usher*

Gothic horror is a mixture of horror and romance. Much like other forms of Romantic literature, Gothic horror attempts to invoke a feeling of nostalgia for brighter, simpler times, while at the same time imbuing the reader with a feeling of dread. In short, it creates in its reader a sort of pleasurable terror, an extreme emotion of appreciation of the dark, ominous atmosphere of the distant past. Gothic horror focuses its intensity on the Supernatural: ghosts, vampires, haunted houses, death, madness, crumbling castles, a decayed aristocracy, and curses that span generations.

Writers such as Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley, and Lord Byron helped popularize the genre in the early 19th century. Later writers such as Edgar Allen Poe, Ambrose Bierce, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Bram Stoker solidified its hold on the collective imagination. *The Widening Gyre* takes many of its cues from these brooding books of old, creating a world of monsters, madmen, and a feeling of impending and perhaps inescapable doom.

DETECTIVE FICTION

What would Victorian literature be without Inspector Dupin, Sherlock Holmes, or Monsieur Lecoq? The idea of brilliant and perspicacious men solving crime using their wits and powers of perception was a new one at the time, but it caught on quickly and has lingered in the imagination since. More details about using the tropes of Detective fiction can be found later in this chapter.

> *"But, tell me, Watson, what do you make of our visitor's stick? Since we have been so unfortunate as to miss him and have no notion of his errand, this accidental souvenir becomes of importance. Let me hear you reconstruct the man by an examination of it."*
>
> — Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

SOCIAL SATIRE/ COMEDY OF MANNERS

A comedy of manners satirizes the manners and affectations of the upper class. It usually revolves around some scandal which would ruin the social reputation of a likable young character, such as an illicit love affair. Often the scandal is in fact a misunderstanding that could be easily resolved, but that no one involved can bring the scandal into the light, lest their own reputations be ruined.

Oscar Wilde was a master of the comedy of manners, as was lyricist W.S. Gilbert. While *The Widening Gyre* is far from a social satire, with the right players this could make a fun game or a running sub-plot. Perhaps an NPC is in love with a Player Character, but cannot let this truth come out lest one or both of their reputations suffer. Another PC finds out about the secret love, but through a series of misinterpretations thinks the NPC is in love with him. Hijinks ensue until the truth finally comes out, and everyone gets paired up with the person with whom they were meant to be (This is comedy, after all, not tragedy).

> *Fredrick: No, Mabel, no. A terrible disclosure*
> *Has just been made. Mabel, my dearly-loved one,*
> *I bound myself to serve the pirate captain*
> *Until I reached my one-and-twentieth birthday –*
> *Mabel: But you are twenty-one.*
> *Frederic: I've just discovered*
> *That I was born in leap-year, and that birthday*
> *Will not be reached by me till nineteen forty!*
> — Gilbert and Sullivan,
>   *The Pirates of Penzance*

STEAMPUNK

> *Science is always discovering odd scraps of magical wisdom and making a tremendous fuss about its cleverness.*
>
> – Aleister Crowley

Steampunk! The word itself conjures extravagant images in our minds: great clanking engines of brass and steel, churning cogs and hissing steam, clockwork men and machines that fly on wings of leather and gossamer, fantastic devices the likes of which the world would never, and *could* never, see.

The Victorian era gave birth to what we today call science fiction. Visionaries who wrote during this time period gave us our first glimpses of a world run by (or, in some cases, over-run by) the marvels of science and engineering. Mary Shelley asked, "What if science allows men to create life from death?", and more importantly, "If we could create life with science, would we treat it any better than those who are born naturally?"; H.G. Wells showed us the dangers of tinkering with man's moral and social frameworks; Jules Verne took us under the sea, around the world, and into the center of the Earth. Ripping good yarns, all.. but what if the worlds they described were *real*?

The Steampunk age is an era in which modern technological conceits appear much earlier in history built on the science and industry that existed in the Nineteenth Century. It is a world in which the Industrial Revolution brought with it more than just the spinning jenny, the flying shuttle, and the steam locomotive. It brought walking war-machines, radium furnaces, difference engines, and time machines.

The world of Steampunk is a world in which these outlandish marvels of science and industry are real. Steampunk filters the concepts that appear in Victorian Scientific Romances, Gothic Horror stories, Voyages Extraordinaires, and Edisonades through a modern lens. It shows us the Victorian Age as we imagine it should have been, instead of as it really was.

> *(He) thought but cheerlessly of the Advancement of Mankind, and saw in the growing pile of civilization only a foolish heaping that must inevitably fall back upon and destroy its makers in the end.*
>
> – H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine*

STEAMPUNK SUBGENRES

The word "Steampunk" was coined in the late eighties as a tongue-in-cheek response to Cyberpunk, the popular science fiction sub-genre. The term came to indicate dark tales of technology and morality gone askew – much like Cyberpunk, but set in the 19th Century. However, as the genre grew and expanded, it began to embrace the utopian themes commonly found among Victorian Voyages Extraordinaires.

> *In his words, you can hear and feel the spirit of Verne's time—an era of ebullient, can-do confidence. Even as the age of earthly terra incognita was coming to an end, readers hungered to lift their eyes skyward, seaward— or even into the planet itself—certain that new frontiers would soon unfold before a humanity that knew no bounds.*
>
> – David Brin

"VERNSIAN" STEAMPUNK

Today, there are two schools of Steampunk: the Verne (or Utopian) style and the Wells (or Distopian) style. The Verne style views the Victorian Era (and the fictional future it spawns) as a romantic, almost utopian world. The universe of Jules Verne was a place of limitless wonder that can be explored and exploited for the good of humanity. Verne embraced technology and believed that, carefully harnessed and controlled, it will usher in a new world of prosperity for all.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

So what are all these forms of fiction? They are all a sub-type of science fiction, usually written in a time before science fiction was recognized as a genre. Each of these types of story has contributed, in some way, to Steampunk as we understand it today – from Jules Verne's unbridled optimism to Burroughs' tales of manly adventure to Shelley's dark cautionary fable.

Scientific Romance *was a term coined by H.G. Wells to describe his works. Scientific Romances are the predecessors of mainstream (both hard and soft) science fiction, before that term came into popular use. They include not just the works of Wells, but also H. Rider Hagard (King Solomon's Mines), Edgar Rice Burroughs (the Tarzan and the Martian series), Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (The Lost World), and others. One thing the modern reader should keep in mind is that many things we might now view as fantasy would have been considered reasonably valid scientific speculation by rather intelligent people. Most viewers of Star Trek at the end of the 1960's thought our world of cell phones and tablet computers was centuries, not decades, in the future; take that and multiply it by 1,000 for those in Victorian times.*

Gothic Horror *is a type of story in which mystery and uncanny horror abound. Horace Walpole's The*

Castle of Otranto is said to be the first Gothic Horror novel; its setting in a medieval castle (hence, "Gothic") set the tone for a generation to follow. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Frankenstein and Bram Stoker's Dracula are perhaps the most widely known examples of Gothic Horror today.

Voyages Extraordinaires *was the description affixed to the works of Jules Verne. Verne focused on the scientific facts of his day and combined them with a sense of wide-eyed wonder at the world. Verne's publisher said that the purpose of these works was "to outline all the geographical, geological, physical, and astronomical knowledge amassed by modern science and to recount, in an entertaining and picturesque format.. the history of the universe." Verne had his contemporary rivals and copycats, as do all successful writers, but his stories were considered the gold standard at the time and have best survived the test of time.*

Edisonades *are stories that feature gifted and adventuresome young men who invent a marvelous device which inevitably gets them into, and then out of, trouble. The stories are named after the famed scientist Thomas Alva Edison, one of the most brilliant inventors of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Victor Appleton's tales of Tom Swift are perhaps the best known of the Edisonades.*

"WELLSIAN" STEAMPUNK

The Wells style, on the other hand, sees technology not as the herald of a utopian age, but as humanity's means to self-annihilation. Technology is a symbol of man's inherent inhumanity. It will not bring about a golden age; at best it serves as a warning about the barbarity that seethes below the surface of even the most civilized and intelligent person. Technology will not make mankind into a better creature, any more than religion or philosophy has. Where Verne looked forward to a bright future, Wells recoiled from it, longing for a better, simpler time.

Both schools of thought make for good gaming, depending on what sort of experience you're looking for. Does your group want to explore moral issues using the backdrop of baroque technology and dark magic, or are they looking for a rip-roaring adventure atop a giant steam-powered clockwork lobster? The Steampunk genre is broad enough to cover both, with a wide range of options in-between!

Always the contrarian, Wells told wild-eyed dreamers to grow up and smell the dangers.. Technology can bite back, he warned, and the universe owes us no favors.

– David Brin

STEAMPUNK AND OTHER GENRES

There are a lot of ways to play a Steampunk game. The examples described above give the two primary over-arching views of the genre, but a game master can combine Steampunk with other genres to create something entirely new. Many game settings are particularly appropriate to blend with a Steampunk world.

There are two types of genre: Setting and Mood. Genres of setting cover such ideas as Westerns and Science-Fiction. Though broad, they are easily definable and identifiable. Genres of mood (sometimes called meta-genres) include topics like comedy, horror, and mystery. You can combine the two types of genre, such as a Comedic Fantasy or a Horror Western.

GENRE MOODS

A particular mood could apply to an entire campaign or just to a specific adventure within the game. Mixing and matching the moods can keep your players on their toes. A game that is heavy on the Mystery elements might benefit from an occasional Comedic romp. A touch of Romance can add heart (and not just the excised-but-still-beating kind) to a Horror campaign.

COMEDY

> *Artemus Gordon: We have the element of surprise. What does Loveless have?*
> *James West: He has an 80-foot tarantula.*
> *Artemus Gordon: I was just coming to that.*
>
> – Wild, Wild West

Steampunk and comedy are an unexpected match, and yet the two seem to combine naturally. From Phil Foglio's *Girl Genius* to the *The Wild Wild West* (both the original television series and the Hollywood remake), the elements of Steampunk are ripe for parody. Even the normally dark tone of the world of *The Widening Gyre* can afford a bit of light-hearted humor on occasion.

To run a humorous Steampunk game, make sure everything is completely over the top. Why build a simple locomotive to pull freight and passengers from one end of the country to another, when you could build a 100-foot high perambulator pushed by a gigantic steam-powered nanny? So what if the automaton's joints lock-up on occasion – this represents the progress of Science! The villains in a comedic Steampunk game will likewise come up with ridiculously grandiose schemes (often explained in a long, rambling monologue) that are destined to blow up in their faces… with a little help from our heroes, of course.

Examples of Victorian humor include the light operas of Gilbert and Sullivan (*The Magician* is particularly appropriate fodder for a game set in the universe of *The Widening Gyre*), Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, and Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. An excellent modern take on the idea of Steampunk humor is the afore-mentioned *Girl Genius* by Phil and Kaja Foglio.

HORROR

Steampunk and Horror have a long tradition of association. The Victorian age was brimming with change, not just technological. Entire peoples questioned and changed the social, political, and moral framework of their society. With these changes came an almost inevitable fascination with the morbid. Interest in the occult became an obsession with many people; the idea of life after death gave rise to an entire industry of mediums and occultists. This fascination with death, the afterlife, and the occult also gave rise to many great works of fiction.

> *Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.*
>
> – Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

One thing many Victorian horror stories have in common is that the *real* threat isn't physical in nature, but rather it is a threat against the social and moral framework against which modern man defines himself. For example, in H.G. Wells' *Island of Dr. Moreau*, the physical danger in which the protagonist finds himself in is secondary to the horror he feels when exposed to Moreau's topsy-turvy world in which animals walk and talk as men do. Wells posed the question: If animals can be made into men, then isn't it true that man – even taking into account all his philosophy, religion, and science – is nothing more than just another animal? The very concept that mankind isn't special and doesn't stand above the other beasts was (and still can be) a horrifying concept.

Therefore, horror in a Steampunk campaign should be more than an excuse for the boogeyman to jump out and shout "Boo!" In addition to the haunted castles and lonely moors so common in Victorian gothic fiction, a game master can use Steampunk as a way to show how technology doesn't usher in a golden age of enlightenment, but rather serves to highlight and amplify the flaws inherent in human nature. The villain in a Steampunk horror game doesn't have to be evil to unleash evil upon the world. Many Steampunk antagonists are compassionate men blinded by their own brilliance. Victor von Frankenstein is not a crazed nor wicked man, but rather a benevolent creator who constructs his monster solely in the name of science for the good of mankind. As they say, no good deed shall ever go unpunished…

Horror is pervasive in the world of *The Widening Gyre*. Monsters and madmen lurk in the darkness, just outside the wavering circle of light the civilized world casts. Their servants are many and powerful, and those who actively oppose them are few in number and generally looked upon as crackpots. If the heroes fail, the world as we know it may come to an end. What could be more horrifying than that?

Examples of horror in the Steampunk genre include the afore-mentioned *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Wells' *The Invisible Man,* Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*, Thomas Preskett Prest's *Varney the Vampyre*, and Edgar Allen Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Pit and the Pendulum.*

MYSTERY

There are few meta-genres more appropriate to a Steampunk campaign than mystery. Like horror and science fiction, the modern concept of the detective story came from Victorian roots. Mystery works well in a Steampunk campaign. Consulting detectives use the latest scientific techniques to capture nefarious crime-lords (who may very well use those same techniques to disguise their involvement).

> *"Perhaps when a man has special knowledge and special powers like my own, it rather encourages him to seek a complex explanation when a simpler one is at hand."*
>
> – Arthur C. Doyle, *The Adventure of the Abbey Grange*

In a mystery game, the primary concern of the players is to discover the truth – usually by solving a mystery or a crime as presented by the game master. The way the mystery is uncovered is usually through a complex process combining detail-oriented observation, deductive reasoning, and perspicacious leaps of logic. One component that often makes mystery games set in this period more entertaining than our own is the lack of some of our modern-day technology: no security cameras or DNA tests.

Arthur Conan Doyle gave us one of the earliest, and certainly most famous, detectives with Sherlock Homes. Other examples of Victorian and Steampunk mysteries include the graphic novel *Ruse* by Mark Waid and Butch Guise, several stories by Edgar Allan Poe ("The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "Thou Art The Man," for example), and (a bit late to be strictly Victorian, but still excellent reads) Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot novels.

ROMANCE

Despite H.G. Wells' own term for his works – "Scientific Romances" – romantic attachments, entanglements, and relationships seldom play a part in Steampunk. While there are love affairs, they are usually chaste things, limited to couples holding hands in the parlor (under the strictest supervision, of course!), or perhaps a passionate hero pining for his lost or unattainable love.

The Victorian era is one marked by strict social rules all governed by the overarching concept that emotions and passion are bad and reasoning is good. However, humans are humans, and sometimes human emotions boil over (especially in the heat of adventure). The results of society-unapproved pairings are frowned upon and, in polite society, quite simply unheard of.

> *Mina: I want to be what you are. See what you see – love what you love.*
> *Dracula: Mina, to walk with me you must die to your breathing life and be reborn to mine.*
> *Mina: You are my love, and my life, always..*
> *Dracula: Then I give you life eternal, everlasting love, power over the storm and the beasts of the earth. Walk with me, to be my loving wife.. forever.*
>
> – Bram Stoker's Dracula

Of course, the suppression of the baser human passions can make for some fine role-playing. Bram Stoker's classic novel *Dracula* brims over with barely-contained sexual frustration, from Jonathan Harker's longing for (and perhaps fear of?) his fiancé to Lucy Westenra's vampiric exploits as "the Bloofer Lady." Romantic entanglements can make excellent background elements, and forbidden passions can come to the forefront of a character's development.

GENRE SETTINGS

If a "pure" Steampunk game doesn't appeal, the genre lends itself to a mixing with other genres. Imagine Steampunk contraptions clanking through the Wild West, or clockwork devices powered by magic permeating a high-fantasy setting. Here are a few hints on combining Steampunk with other genres.

CYBERPUNK

Steampunk and Cyberpunk share many of the same ideas. Both combine a fascination with and horror at new technology. Both represent a fear that science's advances have overtaken humanity's ability to incorporate them into society. It's not hard to imagine a Victorian world in which Babbage's Difference Engines and ubiquitous telegraph lines have enabled a primitive form of net-running. Picture mercenaries and warriors who wear steam-powered cyber-limbs (complete with Gatling gun attachment on top). Substitute bowler hats for mirrorshades, and you've got it made.

> *Steampunk is much more about adventure, intrigue and discovery than Cyberpunk, which is more about isolation, humanity, introspection and the loss of identity.*
>
> – Automaton, *The Steampunk Compendium*

FANTASY

In recent years, a number of creators have introduced Steampunk elements into fantasy settings. For instance, *Castle Falkenstein* combines fantasy magic with outlandish Victorian technology. Image Comics' *WarLands* uses steam-powered automatons as weapons of war. Privateer Press's popular wargame *War Machine* and the *Iron Kingdoms* RPG fantasy setting it spawned does much the same thing. As Steampunk grows in popularity, this trend is sure to accelerate.

Alternately, you could create a world very similar to our own, but in which technological advances came much earlier than in the real world. Perhaps Leonardo da Vinci's fantastical visions became reality. Imagine four-man helicopters powered by springs, heavily armored tanks pulled by teams of horses, peddle-driven submarines exploring the deepest oceans, clockwork men, and computers that run on cogs and gears.

> *"Loveless has kidnapped metallurgists, so whatever he's building is going to have armor. He's kidnapped chemists, so it'll have explosives. And you've said that Rita's father is the biggest expert on hydraulics in the world, so it's going to move. What could he be building that will make the President surrender the U.S. Government?"*
>
> – *Wild, Wild West*

WESTERN

Steampunk and the American West go together like peanut butter and chocolate. Since Westerns are already filled with many of Steampunk's tropes (locomotives, telegraphs, and more), and the west was won during approximately the same time period, bringing Steampunk to the Wild West is really just a matter of changing locations and adding six-guns, a lot of dust, and perhaps the confused prairie dog.

Overall, a Steampunk game set in the Wild West will have a less genteel feel than one set in Victorian England. The American West was about independence and outward expansion, a place where a man was judged on his ability to survive on the work of his own hands and on his speed with a gun, not his impeccable manners. To add some Western elements into a Steampunk game, consider allowing characters to come from America or the Canadian frontier. Examples from the canonical works abound, such as the character of Quincey P. Morris in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, or John Carter from Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Martian* series. You could also flip it around and bring a party of English or Continental scientists and explorers across the pond to seek out adventure in the New West.

> *"We live in troubled times, where fretful dreams settle upon the Empire's brow. If England's to survive them, then your work is vital. Be about it vigorously and without delay, for the shadows of the century grow long, and your chariot approaches."*
>
> – Alan Moore, *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*

SUPERHEROES

At first glance, Steampunk and super-heroes don't seem to go together at all. But it's not hard to incorporate certain elements of the superhero genre into a Steampunk game. In fact, one of the most widely-known modern Steampunk works – *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* – is essentially a superhero story set in Victorian times using famous Victorian science fiction and horror protagonists.

If you're going to run a "Brass Age" game, there are a few things to keep in mind. Many of the tropes of a super-hero game still apply: the overriding respect for the dignity of human life, the unwavering defense of the status quo, lost worlds with strange mystical qualities, etc.. But there are many differences. The first is that, superpowers or not, this is an age of gentility and decorum. One does not simply don garishly-colored circus clothing and set fire to any purse-snatching lout who comes along. That would set one up for a long trip to the booby-hatch. No, one must approach the idea of superheroism with subtlety and respectability. This doesn't mean one can't battle against injustice wearing a suit of steam-powered battle-armor or wielding the forbidden mystic secrets of ancient Tibet, but one must do it with panache and a respect for the social mores of the time.

STEAMPUNK CONVENTIONS AND ELEMENTS

As with any Setting genre, there are a number of common conventions and elements that show up frequently in Steampunk that essentially define the genre. It simply wouldn't be Steampunk without the ubiquitous steam engine, for example. Anachronistic science is another important aspect of any Steampunk world; Steampunk is all about modern technological paradigms accomplished via the science already present in the Victorian period and the physical laws of the setting should usually follow the expectations of those beliefs.

> *"Science isn't an occult art like alchemy. It is not a secret meant for the use of the well-born deep in their palaces and churches. Science exists as a power to be used in the real world. What use is it, if not for everyone? The entire world awaits its blessings."*
>
> – Sadayuki Murai and Katsuhiro Ôtomo, *Steamboy*

On top of the technological paradigms of Steampunk are the philosophical and moral underpinnings of Victorian society. Romanticism, for example, was in some ways a reaction against the over-industrialization of society. Victorian moral codes were in full force throughout this time period. No discussion of Steampunk and the 19th Century would be complete without a brief discussion of those conventions and elements which feature so strongly throughout the genre.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

In 1851, London's beautiful Crystal Palace played host to the Great Exhibition – the very first World's Fair. Every civilized country in the world (ie. Europe..) was there, showing off the wonders of their most brilliant scientists and skilled craftsmen. The Industrial Revolution was in full steam, giving birth to wonders never before dreamed of. This was the time in which many of the everyday items that we today take for granted were first devised. Mass transportation (in the form of the locomotive) made travel from one end of the country to the other simple, fast, and affordable. Telegraphs revolutionized communications. Photography created a new canvas for artists and a new way to record our past. Even something as ubiquitous as the Post Office saw its birth during the Industrial Age.

The Industrial Revolution began in the late 18th century with the invention of the steam engine. While its uses were limited at first, it soon grew to enjoy great acceptance, doing everything from pumping well water to transporting tons of goods and people across continents. It became apparent to far-sighted people that machines could now do virtually any job faster and more efficiently than a man or animal. "Inventor" became a respectable profession, and some brilliant (or lucky) scientists and engineers rode their inventions to great heights of fame and fortune.

The dates of the Industrial Revolution are not set in stone, but it is thought to have begun in roughly 1760 and continued until about 1900, when technological progress continued to grow with the expansion of steamships, railroads, electrical power, and even airships. A few of the most important and revolutionary inventions of the Industrial Age were:

STEAM ENGINES [C. 1784]

What would Steampunk be without the Steam? The underlying principals for the steam engine have been known for over a thousand years, but no one (except for perhaps Archimedes, who, if anyone in recorded history, was a real-life Savant) actually put them to any practical use. In 1784, James Watt patented the steam locomotive and set in motion what would become known as the Steam Age. His patents were improved on by other inventors over the years, and the steam engine has been used in pumps, looms, locomotives, steam ships, and many other industrial processes ever since. Steam engines use the heat and pressure in steam to create power. This power was essential to bring about the Industrial Revolution. A single engine could do the work of dozens of horses, it was not limited to favorable locations (like water mills and windmills were), and as long as it had fuel, water, and regular maintenance, it could work for years without complaint.

In a Steampunk game, steam engines can be placed into virtually anything, regardless of the real-world challenges of such a concept. A small, backpack-mounted steam engine could power a suit of bullet-proof armor, or a pair of "cybernetic" clockwork prosthetic legs. A gigantic steam engine could provide the motive power for a flying castle. In a Steampunk game, there is no limit to the wonders of steam!

CLOCKWORK

Machinery made from cogs and gears and powered by simple muscular effort or tightly-wound springs has been around for centuries. Most commonly found in clocks (hence the name), clockwork devices also power items as varied as toys, radios, and even Babbage's famous Difference Engine.

In Steampunk literature, clockwork devices are nearly as prevalent as steam-powered ones. Mechanical men who must be wound each morning and ornithoptors powered by massive springs are staples of the genre. Clockwork is frequently used in devices where a steam engine would be too large, too heavy, too noisy, or otherwise impractical.

AUTOMATED PRODUCTION

The factory is perhaps the most enduring symbol of the Industrial Age. It all began with an English brass mill in 1747 and grew from there. Entrepreneurs discovered that a single machine run by cheap and unskilled manual laborers could do the work of dozens of highly-skilled artisans. Before long, people were flocking to factories looking for work, causing the cities to swell in size.

The textile industry first benefited from industrialization. Inventors capitalized on one another's developments, increasing efficiency to the point where it was no longer necessary to continue the time-consuming labor of individually spinning each skein of yarn and hand-weaving each bolt of cloth.

Inexpensive goods led to a new consumer class, and by the mid-19th century, the middle class was well ensconced in British society. Automation and factories changed the way the world viewed labor and as a result changed history.

TRAINS AND STEAMSHIPS

The first steam-powered locomotives were built in the latter years of the 18th century. Within fifty years, railroads crisscrossed Great Britain, Europe, and much of the United States. These high-speed trains (some of them moving at speeds approaching 60 miles per hour, though 15-25 mph was more common) made the transport of freight and passengers across the country a thing of ease. Building the railroads was never easy. Dozens of companies competed for freight and passengers, and there were even problems determining which gauge (width of the tracks) should be standard.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of the train. Not only was it a technological marvel, it was an economic boon. The cost of transportation fell rapidly, which meant the price of fuel, food, and consumer goods plumeted in those cities that were connected by rail. It also meant people were no longer confined to their hometowns; the world opened up to travelers and tourists who could take round-trip journey to places in a week what might have taken their grandparents a month or more.

Steamships, like trains, helped make the world a smaller place. Trains made it possible to quickly travel from one end of the country to another; steamships made it possible to travel to whole new lands. The basics of the steamship were perfected in the early decades of the 19th century. 1838 saw the first regular steamship line to traverse the Atlantic, and by 1870 trans-oceanic shipping had become fast, reliable, and safe.

AIRSHIPS

The airship (sometimes called a dirigible or Zeppelin) is a lighter-than-air flying machine. The earliest attempts at powered flight (hooking an engine to a balloon) came in the 1850s. From those first steps came many more attempts to create controlled flight. Airships commonly used hydrogen gas as a buoyancy medium (Helium wasn't commonly used in America until the 1920s. The rest of the world began using it after the Hindenburg disaster).

While small hot-air balloons were fairly common in the late 19th century, the large, rigid-shelled, long-distance Zeppelins didn't get their start in the real world until the early 1900s. But in a Steampunk game, there's no reason to assume some mad inventor didn't come up with the concept (and build a prototype or two) long before our history.

The major difference between a hot-air balloon and an airship or Zeppelin is the rigid aluminum skeleton. The advantage of this is that the ships could be built much larger and designed to lift heavier loads. Large engines provide power, and the large passenger compartment inside the bottom of the frame is often supplemented by a small amount of crew and cargo space suspended from the bottom of the rigid air-frame.

For an excellent example of the use of airships in a Steampunk game, see Michael Moorcock's *The Warlord of the Air* and its sequels.

TELEGRAPHS [C. 1837] AND TELEPHONES [C. 1876]

Samuel Morse first tested his telegraph in 1837, and by 1845 people were regularly sending telegraphs from one end of the continent to the other. By the mid-1860s, the first successful trans-Atlantic telegraph cable was laid, making the dream of instant global communication a reality. The trans-Atlantic telegraph revolutionized the newspaper industry, allowing people in metropolitan areas to hear about significant world events within a day or two instead of weeks or months. It also introduced new business opportunities world-wide.

The invention of the telephone is more complicated and involves several different inventors working independently of one another. In the United States, Alexander Graham Bell is commonly given credit. In Italy, Antonio Meucci is said to be the inventor. Regardless of who invented the idea, Bell filed the first patent in 1876, and by 1878, telephone exchanges were being set up in France, England, and the United States.

How do the telegraph and the telephone fit into *The Widening Gyre* game? One common legend says the first words spoken over the telephone were, "Come here. I want to see you." When Bell spoke those words was he inadvertantly using technology to perform an ancient magical practice (a summoning)? What spirits lurking in the ether heard his summons and stepped across the dimensions, using a copper wire to bridge the gap between worlds? Do they still lurk there, hiding in the ubiquitous telephone and telegraph wires that hang above every city, that connect every house?

PHOTOGRAPHY [C. 1835] AND MOTION PICTURES [C. 1885]

Jacque Daguerre created the first practical photographic method (the Daguerreotype) in 1835, and from there the practice of photography took off. By the early 1870s, cameras were portable enough to be hand-held. The camera was a revolutionary device. Perfect images of people and events could be captured and stored for eternity. Photography was more than just a science; it became a new form of art.

The zoetrope, one of the first motion picture devices, uses a spinning cylinder to show a sequence of pictures which give the illusion of movement. By the 1880s, filming scenes in real-time became possible, and this soon led to the development of the motion picture camera and the motion picture projector. The earliest motion pictures were simply shots of events with no attempt at creating a story. This changed in 1903 with the first narrative film, *The Great Train Robbery*. Though only 12 minutes long, it was a great leap forward in movie-making history and paved the way for the film industry to follow.

SECRET SPY CAMERAS

By the mid 1870s, cameras could be made small enough to be disguised as pocket watches or hidden within articles of clothing (such as hats). Though a far cry from the James Bond-style microcameras of today's spy world, these miniature cameras could be used in many sorts of intelligence-gathering activities: inventors stealing one another's plans, corporate barons swiping a rival company's trade secrets, up to full-blown government and/or military espionage.

How do cameras fit into the gothic horror of *The Widening Gyre* campaign? What if the mechanical "eye" of the camera can see things that the human eye cannot? What if ghosts and spirits could communicate with the living through specially-designed cameras? And what if some evil creature could use this to cause terror? Alternately, there is a superstition that cameras can steal your soul, and the person who took your picture can then take control of your body. An evil sorcerer or mad inventor with this ability would be a fearsome foe, indeed…

ELECTRIC POWER [C. 1873-1900]

Electric power came late to the Industrial Age, though people had been experimenting with electricity for years. In places where coal was scarce, electricity became very valuable. Parts of northern Italy, for instance, came to rely on hydroelectric power. It was the telegraph – transmitted via electricity – that demonstrated a practical use for electrical power.

Scientists began studying the phenomena very carefully, and by the 1890s, "Electrical Engineer" was a respectable profession. Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla were both electrical engineers, as was Griffin, the antagonist of H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man*. His invisibility was the result of the interactions between a chemical formula and a powerful generator – an interaction which changed him not just physically, but mentally and emotionally as well.

The primary roadblock to wide-scale electrical use was practical electrical transmission. The naïve thought is to use Direct Current, which generates considerable waste heat and has extremely limited range due to the resistance in transmission lines. The use of Alternating Current, even though it was proven to be more efficient for transmission, was more difficult to implement. It wasn't until 1884 that three Hungarian inventors (Károly Zipernowsky, Ottó Bláthy and Miksa Déri. Often called the "ZBD team" for short) developed the first truly practical AC transmission system for the Ganz factory. The competition between the two formats was perhaps the most vicious in the United States between two giants of commerce, Thomas Edison (who was personally dedicated to DC due to patents and an already considerable investment in manufacturing DC systems) and George Westinghouse with massive expenditures on advertising and promotional campaigns. By 1892 the benefits of AC as means of electrical transmission were so overwhelming even the board of directors of the company Edison created, General Electric, decided to largely abandon DC for large-scale transmission and went full-force into developing AC equipment. Urban DC transmission continued in some isolated areas well into the 20th century and is still used in some limited closed systems. Ironically, new technologies are creating some instances where DC transmission is actually a better fit than AC; the "best final" solution may end up being a mix of both.

SOCIAL CHANGE

As with anything that changes the entire structure of society, there was inevitably a dark side to this amazing new technology. New troubles came hand-in-hand with the new opportunities. As craftsmen were forced out of their jobs by ever cheaper and more efficient machinery, they flocked to the cities to look for work. Swollen beyond their capacity to absorb so many immigrants, the cities frequently became hives of destitution, degeneration, and desperation.

CHILD LABOR

Child labor was a common thing throughout the Industrial Age. Children were favored to work in factories because their small, nimble hands could easily get into machinery. Parents often encouraged their children to work, as their wages supplemented the family's income. Factories were hazardous places; everyone worked long hours, and the machinery was unregulated and could be very dangerous. There was no point in complaining: labor was cheap, and workers who raised an issue were easily replaced and blacklisted. Starting in

1833, Parliament passed a series of Factory Acts to improve factories' safety records and regulate the hours a child could work.

In The Widening Gyre, the inhumane conditions of child labor could be the direct result of some ancient evil tampering with society. Perhaps a factory's smoke-belching "infernal machines" really are infernal in origin, and must be kept fed with the souls of innocent children. A high rate of fatal factory 'accidents' is just the sort of thing to bring civic-minded investigators to the scene.

Human misery is prime fodder for role-playing opportunities. especially in a world as dark as that of *The Widening Gyre*. Evil feeds on the type of hopelessness and privation that breeds freely within the crowded, stinking slums. Poverty-stricken souls, forced to endure more than any person should or can, become focus points of raw, chaotic energy. This energy, if left unchecked, could destroy hundreds of innocent lives, or even the very soul of a nation.

ANACHRONISTIC TECHNOLOGY

> *"From risk, comes progress."*
> – Sadayuki Murai and Katsuhiro Ôtomo, *Steamboy*

Steampunk is built on the idea that many of the inventions we today take for granted, from airplanes to submarines to computers to space travel, happened far earlier in history than in reality. Far-sighted Savants worked beyond the limits of ordinary science.

The first man to walk upon the moon was not Neil Armstrong, but rather famed British Scientist Joseph Cavor (with the help of his trusted assistant Arnold Bedford). Orville and Wilbur Wright didn't fly the first heavier-than-air craft; it was instead Robar the Conqueror, whose amazing invention terrorized America for months before being brought down by federal police officer John Strock.

To those living at the time, those fantastic inventions seemed to defy the very laws of physics. Space travel? Ridiculous! And yet we know today that such things were not only possible, but entirely probable. And so it became inevitable that those daring inventive giants of the 19th century would discover them. Of course, this is fiction, so we can bend the rules a little to make things a bit easier (such as not worrying about such silly things as the fact that the acceleration required by a projectile to reach the moon fired from a cannon even a mile or so in length would turn any astronaut inside the vessel into a messy splotch..)

Let's take a look at some of the common tropes that appear throughout Steampunk literature…

ELEGANT YET CLUNKY DESIGNS

> *The thing the Time Traveler held in his hand was a glittering metallic framework, scarcely larger than a small clock, and very delicately made. There was ivory in it, and some transparent crystalline substance… The Medical Man got up out of his chair and peered into the thing. "It's beautifully made," he said.*
>
> – H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine*

Inventors were not only men of science, they were also gentlemen, and a gentleman is required to have a bit of panache. Inventions were made with pride and built to last. They were covered in elaborate scroll-work, made with brass, nickel, and tropical hardwood, fitted with crystal and ivory. By all appearances, they were huge and unstoppable as the zeitgeist of their age: manifest destiny, progress, civilization, and technology itself! To our modern eyes, they would appear clunky and unwieldy, bulky and overly large, and rather ostentatious. But to the Victorians, they were symbols of lasting power and elegance. Nobody built things just to be practical; they built them to be beautiful and impressive.

With that in mind, make sure the devices, gadgets, and gizmos in your game are sufficiently clunky. Huge, smoke-belching, cold-riveted machines with spinning gears and hissing steam are integral parts of every Steampunk game. However, they must also be elegant, crafted lovingly from the finest materials, each one a unique piece of art.

FLYING MACHINES

Orville and Wilbur Wright? Amateurs! Men have been flying in heavier-than-air ships since at least 1886, when Jules Verne published *Robur the Conquerer, or The Clipper of the Clouds*. Robur had the audacity to go before a panel of aviation experts and claim that lighter-than-air balloons were a scientific and technological dead end. Mankind would only master the skies with ships that were heavier (and therefore, in his words, stronger) than air. Though he was thrown out of the meeting, he realized his dream and created an aircraft that could brave the fiercest storms and travel over oceans and continents further and faster than anything previously envisioned. Other inventors followed in Robur's footsteps, with the entire spectrum of noble-to-dastardly motivations.

> *Suddenly a sharp noise was heard from the mechanism which throbbed within our craft. The long gangways folded back on the sides of the machine, spread like wings, and at the moment when the Terror reached the very edge of the falls, she arose into space, escaping from the thundering cataract in the center of the lunar rainbow.*
>
> – Jules Verne, *Master of the World*

SUBMARINES

In the real world, men long dreamed of traveling under the waves. Da Vinci drew up plans for an undersea boat, though there is no evidence that he ever attempted to build it. One of the earliest working submarines was built in 1862 by the Confederate Army. The CSS Hunley was supposed to sink Union vessels blockading Southern ports, but was not very successful. It managed to destroy one ship, but sunk with all hands immediately afterward. Though submarines didn't play a large role in the American Civil War, this early use did portend their coming importance to the future of naval warfare.

> *The animal, the monster, the phenomenon of nature that had intrigued the entire scientific world, confused and misled seamen of both hemispheres, I now had to admit was something even more astounding – it was the work of man … We were stretched out on the back of some sort of underwater boat, built, as far as I could make out, in the form of a huge steel fish.*
>
> – Jules Verne, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*

In the world of fiction, Jules Verne's famous *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* described a giant, nuclear-powered submarine capable of engaging and destroying even the most powerful ironclad ships. The Nautilus was the brainchild of brilliant Sikh inventor Nemo, whose hatred of the colonial powers of the west led him to wage a one-man secret war against them.

Walt Disney's live-action motion picture adaptation of Verne's book in many ways signaled the beginning of "Steampunk" as a genre. The producer chose to set the book in its original Victorian setting instead of making it contemporary. They designed a lavish, graceful-looking version of the Nautilus (both for the interior and the exterior shots), which set the stage for Victorian/Gothic imagery that remains to this day.

SPACE TRAVEL

Is there any object in the universe that has weighted on the human soul more than the Moon? Our closest celestial neighbor, it has inspired myth, poetry, wonder, and curiosity. What is it made of? Who might live there? How can we get there?

The Victorian Era spawned the most unlikely answers to all these questions. Ancient legends speak of people who could fly to the moon on the back of a giant bird, or by dropping off the edge of the world and landing on the lunar surface after the moon has set. More recent stories suggest that travel from here to there might be accomplished via balloons, inside the shell fired from a giant cannon, or using a metal with the same lighter-than-air properties as helium to construct a spacecraft.

As ridiculous as these ideas sound to modern ears, in the world of Steampunk, they could all be true. Savants and mages can create wondrous contraptions that allow humans to fly through space as easily as they sail the seas. What will people find when they reach the moon? Perhaps that is best left for a later discussion.

> *"There is no one among you, my brave colleagues, who has not seen the Moon, or, at least, heard speak of it … It is perhaps reserved for us to become the Columbuses of this unknown world. Only enter into my plans, and second me with all your power, and I will lead you to its conquest, and its name shall be added to those of the thirty-six states which compose this Great Union."*
>
> – Jules Verne, *From the Earth to the Moon*

H.G. Wells' *The First Men in the Moon* is the classic example of Victorian space travel, using an element known as Cavorite that blocked the effects of gravity and therefore allowed unlimited flight. The 1964 film, directed by Nathan Juran, is an excellent look at Victorian science fiction technology and sensibilities. H.G. Wells also postulated life on other worlds. Befitting Wells' more often negative view of the results of technology, the aliens in his 1899 classic *The War of the Worlds* were hostile and very powerful. In another example, the protagonists of Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon* used a giant cannon to fire a projectile (containing the world's first astronaut) to the moon.
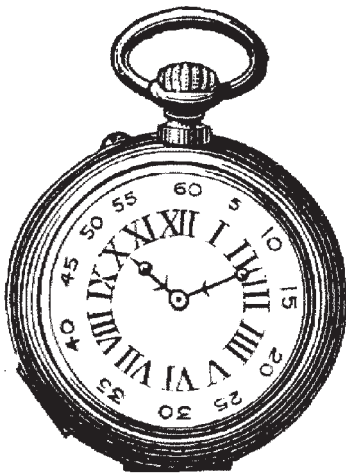
TIME MACHINES

The Universe has (at least) four dimensions – length, width, depth, and time. We can travel through three of the dimensions easily enough; why not the fourth? H.G. Wells used this question to explore the rapid technological, social, and political changes he saw going on in the world around him. *The Time Machine* is more than just a social critique; it is a rip-roaring good yarn, a scientific adventure and horror story rolled into one.

> *"Clearly," the Time Traveler proceeded, "Any real body must have extension in all four directions: it must have length, breadth, thickness, and duration … There are really four dimensions, three which we call the three planes of space, and a fourth, time."*
>
> *– H.G. Wells, The Time Machine*

Time travel opens a giant can of worms for a GM, though. If he allows his players to go backwards in time, he has to manage paradox (the infamous Grandfather Paradox asks what would happen if you went back in time and killed your grandfather before your father was born). If he allows them to go forward in time, he has to make sure the future of his game matches the glimpse of the future his players saw. Or he can simply hand-wave it all away by saying, "Things changed."

Time travel makes for a wonderfully interesting (and playable!) plot device or an evil scheme for the heroes to foil, but it can quickly make a campaign into a very different thing if it is something that the PCs have easy and reliable access to.

> *Several miles to the north, something like a gigantic man could be seen approaching … Occasionally it changed its course, so that it went nearly at right angles. At such times, its colossal proportions were brought out in full relief, looking like some Titan as it took its giant strides over the prairie … they could see that a black volume of smoke issued either from its mouth or the top of its head, while it was drawing behind it a sort of carriage, in which a single man was seated, who appeared to control the movements of the extraordinary being in front of him.*
>
> *– Edward S. Ellis, The Huge Hunter*

AUTOMATA [ROBOTS]

Automata. Clockwork Men. The word "Robot" wasn't in use until Czech writer Karel Capek wrote his socialist play *RUR* in 1920, but the idea of mechanical men has been around for centuries, from the bronze man Talos in Greek myth to the Golem mentioned in Polish fairy tales. It was widely believed that living creatures were merely very complex machines, and a dedicated and brilliant inventor could replicate the processes of life through suffiently advanced technology, and this played well in Victorian imagination.

In around 1495, Leonardo da Vinci drew up plans for a mechanical knight which could sit up, wave its hands, and move its head. Models suggest it could have worked. Frenchman Jacques Vaucanson constructed the first automaton in 1738 – a robot that could play the flute. He followed up on this with a clockwork duck which could both eat and defecate.

One of the earliest fictional examples of a true robot (as we understand the term today) was in an Edisonade by Edward S. Ellis, "The Huge Hunter, or the Steam Man of the Prairies," first published in 1868, featuring the brilliant young inventor Johnny Brainerd. Harry Enton followed that up in 1876 with "Frank Reade and His Steam Man of the Plains." Frank Reade (and his descendents) and the Steam Man appeared in several short stories and dime-store novels through the late 19th Century.

An amusing modern take on the Victorian robot can be found at the *Mechanical Marvels of the Nineteenth Century* website (http://bigredhair.com/). This site is filled with grand ideas for using automata in a Steampunk setting.

…The power by which the machine was driven was neither steam nor gasoline, nor any of those similar liquids… No doubt the power here used was electricity, generated on board, at some high power. Naturally I asked myself from whence comes this electricity, from piles, or from accumulators? But how were these piles or accumulators charged?

– Jules Verne, *Master of the World*

RADIUM FURNACES
[ATOMIC POWER]

Uranium was discovered in 1789, but wasn't found to be radioactive until 1896 by Henri Becquerel. Before that time, it was used in ceramic glazes and glass. Marie and Pierre Curie discovered radium in 1898. Many writers of the time period used the radioactive properties of uranium and radium as a mysterious power source. Jules Verne, for instance, never specifically mentioned radium or uranium, but frequently talks about the limitless power that drives his contraptions (such as the Nautilus and the Terror).

In the world of Steampunk, a few eccentric geniuses have created amazing energy output from just a few simple, luminous rocks. Of course, no one really understood the dangers of radiation until the 1930s, so Steampunk technology that uses a radium furnace as its power source is likely to be poorly-shielded and very dangerous. Whether or not radiation has the same negative effects in your game universe as in the real world is up to you.

DIFFERENCE ENGINES
[COMPUTERS]

A difference engine is a mechanical computer designed to calculate simple mathematical formulas of various types. In modern times, it was first conceived (but never built) by J.H. Mueller in 1786. The difference engine was made famous by Charles Babbage, who wrote a paper outlining the idea in 1822. Powered by a simple hand-crank, it could calculate complex numbers with astonishing rapidity, or at least, it would have been able to do so, had it ever been completed.

"In his final years, the great Lord Babbage, impatient of the limits of steam-power, sought to harness the lightning in the cause of calculation. His elaborate system of 'resistors' and 'capacitors,' while demonstrative of the most brilliant genius, remains fragmentary, and is yet to be constructed."

– William Gibson and Bruce Sterling, *The Difference Engine*

The British government ceased funding Babbage's experiments after he failed to produce results. Other inventors picked up where Babbage had left off and created other versions of the difference engine.

Babbage later designed an upgraded version of the difference engine, known as the analytical engine. Thirty yards long and powered by a steam engine, it used punchcards to store its "memory" and to complete programs – much like those used by the advanced looms of the day. Like Babbage's difference engine, it was never completed.

But imagine if it had been! And imagine if the original design had been improved upon! Instead of simple equations, the machine could have calculated… why, anything! Steam-powered machines that could perform all the myriad functions that computers today do! William Gibson and Bruce Sterling imagined just such a thing in their novel *The Difference Engine* – the book which it can safely be said jump-started the entire Steampunk genre in the early 1990s.

CLOCKWORK "CYBERWARE"

The 19th Century was a period of great medical experimentation, a time when scientists began unlocking the secrets of the human body. It was also a time of great hazard, when "workplace safety" wasn't usually a consideration. Many people lost their lives, or their limbs, in industrial accidents or in the wars that plagued mankind. Many entrepreneurial scientists and doctors used their genius to assist those unfortunate souls so afflicted.

"The piston rods in her left leg pump something more alive than blood, and the flywheels turn on their axles. She is muscle and skin, steel and artifice. She is the woman who was once a filthy, ragged guggersnipe, and she is Madam Ling's special attraction, a wondrous child of Terpsichore and Industry."

– Caitlin R. Kiernan, *The Steam Dancer (1896)*

Medical technology advanced quite a bit during the 18th and 19th centuries. The tourniquet, anesthesia, analeptics, styptics, and disease-fighting drugs are all concepts that began in this time period. Amputation became an acceptable type of surgery (even though up to 60% of all amputees at the time died). With all these amputations taking place, there came a great demand for prostheses.

In 1800, James Pott designed a jointed prosthetic leg that allowed its wearer to walk at a more-or-less normal gait. It is known today as the Anglesey Leg, after the Marquis of Anglesey who had it fitted after he lost a leg in the Battle of Waterloo. Many other inventors followed up on Pott's invention, adding springs to make it smoother, building it out of rubber to make it quieter, and concealing its mechanisms to make it more aesthetically pleasing.

In the world of Steampunk, of course, scientists can do much better than that. Actual functional replacement limbs, powered by clockwork and directed by electrical impulses, can work as well or better than the originals. Cybernetic arms as powerful as a steam-powered crane, legs (or wheels) that allow one to run as fast as a horse-drawn carriage, or hollow glass eyes filled with aetheric gasses allowing one to see into the realm of the spirits are just a few of the possibilities.

Dr. Eddie Steam, from Katsuhiro Ôtomo's *Steamboy* anime, and Dr. Arliss Loveless, from Barry Sonnenfeld's *Wild Wild West*, are wonderful examples of steam-era cyborgs.

WALKING WAR MACHINES

> *And this Thing I saw! How can I describe it? A monstrous tripod, higher than many houses, striding over the young pine trees and smashing them aside in its career; a walking engine of glittering metal, striding now across the heather; articulate ropes of steel dangling from it, and the clattering tumult of its passage mingling with the riot of the thunder.*
>
> – H.G. Wells, *War of the Worlds*

In 1898, the Martians rode giant steel three-legged engines of death that rained fire and destruction down on the heads of a defenseless mankind. But when the Martians were finally defeated (by the most humble of Earth's organisms), what happened to their weapons of war? In their graphic novel *Scarlet Traces*, Ian Edgington and D'israeli postulated that mankind would adopt this technology to his own uses, ushering in a utopian society where Rule Brittania became the order of the day for the entire world. Of course, every utopia must have its dark side, and theirs is no exception.

Other Steampunk authors have written about walking machines. Often they are engines of destruction, mobile fortresses swifter than cavalry looming high over the battlefield and pounding the enemy with salvos of cannon fire. Alternately, walking machines could be utilized for peaceful purposes. A transport with enormous legs can stride over impassable landscape with impunity, delivering supplies to far-away, previously almost-unreachable places. It wouldn't require roads or rails, and like a train it could carry much of its own fuel-source along with it. Such a thing might be a boon to colonization, exploration, rescue or reconnaissance.

DEATH RAYS

These were the earliest Weapons of Mass Destruction, from the destructive heat-rays of H.G. Wells' Martian invaders to the radium guns of E.R. Burroughs' Mars. They could throw bolts of lightning across the sky or turn a human being into a pile of ash.

Death rays are not all fictional. Famous engineer and inventor Nikolai Tesla invented a working "death ray" which reportedly used the power of electricity to throw an arc of energy a hundred feet through the

> *At his side hung a long-sword, a short-sword, a dagger, and one of the destructive radium revolvers that are common upon Mars.*
>
> – Edgar Rice Burroughs, *The Gods of Mars*

air. Though his invention never entered mass production, accounts of the day claim that it was functional up until the time he was forced to dismantle and sell it as junk. There may have even been death rays in ancient times: the Lighthouse of Alexandria, according to legend, could reflect a beam of sunlight powerful enough to burn enemy ships before they could reach shore. Modern historians think this is unlikely because of the poor quality of optics at the time, but by the 19th Century a mad inventor could certainly create a deadly weapon using the rays of the sun.

LOST WORLDS

The Victorian Age was a great age of discovery in which explorers were traveling the globe learning about new lands and new cultures. Colonization was in full swing; Africa, the Middle East, India, and the Far East were all up for grabs by the western Colonial powers. This military adventurism opened new frontiers for travelers, writers, missionaries, and explorers as well. The things they discovered were fascinating and altogether unique. With every book these early adventurers wrote and every letter they sent home, more people were intrigued by what they had found, and gradually the world grew smaller.

The concept of a lost world, an undiscovered land where time has seemingly stopped, has been around for a very long time. Socrates wrote about the lost kingdom of Atlantis nearly 2500 years ago. A once-great island kingdom that prospered over 9000 years ago, it was destroyed in a great cataclysm. In the modern era, adventurers and explorers wrote about the bizarre new worlds they discovered, and those who stayed at home imagined wondrous things. It didn't hurt that many of those penning accounts of their adventures made things up out of whole cloth in order to attract more readers.

Is it any wonder that the Lost World became a staple of Victorian and post-Victorian fiction? Combine an age of exploration and discovery with ancient, undiscovered, utterly pure and unsullied lands frozen in time, and you have a fuel for dozens of adventures. The lost world might be antediluvian, a land where dinosaurs still roam and man still lives in his most primitive state. Or it might be more recognizable to modern audiences, such as a hidden valley where the Romans still rule, or a lost jungle plateau housing the sole surviving city of the Aztec Empire.

Perhaps the most famous example of a lost world in Steampunk is Jules Vernes' *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Another great example (though of a considerably later era) is *Lost Horizon* by James Hilton. Also see *The Man Who Would Be King* (both the novel by Rudyard Kipling and the 1975 film directed by John Huston), and Michael Morcock's *The Warlord of the Air*.

> *Descend into the crater of Yocul of Sneffels, which the shade of Scartaris caresses, before the kalends of July, audacious traveler, and you will reach the Center of the Earth. I did it.*
>
> – Jules Verne, *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*

> *Indubitably, Magic is one of the subtlest and most difficult of the sciences and arts. There is more opportunity for errors of comprehension, judgment and practice than in any other branch of physics.*
>
> – Aleister Crowley

MAGIC

While not an essential part of all (or even most) Steampunk literature, magic and sorcery play an important role in enough of it to warrant a mention. Occultism was very trendy in the Victorian era, with mediums and fakirs who claimed to be able to speak with the dead, summon spirits, and even place curses on their enemies. Of course, magic plays a vital role in the world of *The Widening Gyre*.

In the world of *Widening Gyre*, the amazing contraptions and unlikely inventions of scientists and Savants spring from their (conscious or unconscious) connection to the hidden worlds of magic. An engineer's giant clockwork crustacean with a steel skin one centimeter thick can travel to the deepest trench in the oceans – in defiance of all known physical laws – because magic makes it real.

And that's not all. There are real mages: geomancers who harness the power of the earth, wizards who study carefully-researched spells, diviners who can catch glimpses of the future, alchemists whose concoctions can create miraculous effects, and dark sorcerers who truck with demons to gain their powers.

And in this world there is more than just magic hidden behind the façade that most people call "real." There are dark forces, monsters and demons, ghosts and spirits, creatures who wish to tear down civilization and rip apart the flesh and even the very soul of mankind. No matter what great strides science has made in defining the world, these things are still real, and woe be to the adventurer who refuses to believe in them.

For a good look at how magic can affect a Steampunk setting, see *Castle Falkenstein* (by Mike Pondsmith) and *GURPS: Castle Falkenstein* (by Phil Masters and James Cambias).

ALCHEMY

Alchemy was a popular topic in the Victorian era. Despite the scientific world's dismissal of the theories of medieval alchemists like Agrippa and Albertus Magnus, the idea that life could be created via simple chemical processes was still very much alive (pardon the pun). The experiments of Luigi Galvani (1737-1798), who used electricity to "reanimate" dead frogs, were a part of educated conversation. With the Industrial Revolution in full swing, science promised many great things, and what was alchemy (in the minds of many) but another branch of science?

> *Under the guidance of my new preceptors I entered with the greatest diligence into the search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life; but the latter soon obtained my undivided attention. Wealth was an inferior object, but what glory would attend the discovery if I could banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death!*
>
> – Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Mary Shelley's beloved tale *Frankenstein* told the story of a doctor and scientist obsessed with alchemical transformations. He believed dead matter could be reanimated through the use of electricity and chemicals. But his experiments unleashed an uncontrollable horror that struck back against its creator, and readers to this day wonder who was the monster – the creation, or the man who created it?

In the *Widening Gyre*, though most scientists and Savants reject alchemy and its supposed benefits, still there are alchemists conducting their own experiments. Some of them use their knowledge for the benefit of mankind; others are servants of the blackest evil and perform their experiments in order to sow chaos.

LIFE IN THE 19TH CENTURY

One of the great difficulties with running a game set in the 19th Century is that it is a world both tantalizingly familiar and yet far different from our own era. Many of the things that we take for granted were unimaginable to the average Victorian citizen, and many of the things which made up their daily lives would be unthinkable to us today.

It is a challenge for the game master to create a game that stays true to its 19th century roots while at the same time not being utterly offensive to our modern sensibilities. There are ways around this difficulty. One potential way is to create an over-the-top, campy world, parodying the various elements of the Victorian Era. This method has seen a lot of use in anime and comics, but in a game of gothic horror it can defeat the purpose and take the game in a direction which the GM doesn't intend. Another way is to simply ignore those unpleasant things that make up the past: never deal with or even acknowledge the racism, sexism, and colonialism that were rampant throughout this day and age. The latter is perhaps the simplest method, and it avoids the pitfalls of offense that dealing with such dangerous topics might bring up. However, doing this means losing many of the things which make playing in the Victorian Era a unique experience. If one is going to ignore all the social problems of the day, one might as well simply set their game in the modern era.

The third way is to approach them in a straightforward and mature manner. While this might make some people uncomfortable, the only way to learn from the past is to (at the very least) acknowledge it. Of course, a GM should only do this if he or she is confident in the players' ability to handle such topics in a mature and rational manner.

The following is a list of some of the things that a game master can use to make his game feel like an authentic part of the 19th Century.

> *How glorious, then, is the prospect, the reverse of all the past, which is now opening upon us, and upon the world. Government, we may now expect to see, not only in theory and in books but in actual practice, calculated for the general good, and taking no more upon it than the general good requires, leaving all men the enjoyment of as many of their natural rights as possible, and no more interfering with matters of religion, with men's notions concerning God, and a future state, than with philosophy, or medicine."*
>
> *– Joseph Priestley, The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity*

HISTORICAL DISCLAIMER

Different gamers look for different things in their games. Some gamers are lucky to remember the dates of the American Civil War, and they don't care about strict accuracy as long as there are time machines to discover and giant, steam-powered clanking robots to fight. Others relish precision and thrive on the nitty-gritty details of historical accuracy. It might bother them to play in an adventure set in January of 1876 and hear of Alexander Graham Bell's amazing invention (the telephone wasn't patented until March of that year). There is no "one true way" to run a campaign – the only right way is whichever gives you and your players the most fun.

That said, *The Widening Gyre* does not intend to be a historically accurate portrayal of the 19th Century, and many of the "historical events" related in this book are created from whole cloth. Large sections of history are glossed over, or re-written completely. If you are looking for a true-life, historic listing of the facts of the 19th Century, the author recommends *What Jane Austin Ate and Charles Dickens Knew: From Fox Hunting to Whist – the Facts of Daily Life in 19th Century England*, by Daniel Pool.

THE VICTORIAN ERA

The Victorian era is a time marked by the reign of Queen Victoria, the longest-reigning monarch of British history. Some historians mark the beginning of the Victorian Age with the passage of the Reform Act of 1832, but Victoria ascended to the throne in 1837 and passed away in 1901. By the time Victoria died, England had transformed from a mainly agrarian society to one of the most technologically advanced countries on the earth and ruled an Empire on which the Sun never set. The Victorian era, it can be reasonably argued, gave birth to the modern world.

It was a time of great political, social, economic, and, of course, scientific upheaval that has repercussions to this very day. One of the things which marks the period is a set of specific scientific advancements, political concerns, and moral sensibilities.

While we've already covered many of the technological achievements of the day, the thing that the Victorian era brings to most peoples' minds today is the morality and social changes that took place during the 19th century.

> *"Morality is simply the attitude we adopt towards people whom we personally dislike."*
>
> – Oscar Wilde

VICTORIAN MORALS

The Victorian era has a reputation as being terribly straight laced, and in many ways compared to today this is true. At its base level, Victorian morals espoused a strong social ethic, low tolerance of crime, and considered sex a necessary but distasteful evil. It was a time of many contradictions, where society strove to better itself all the while tolerating (and even encouraging) the forces that contributed to harsh living conditions and social breakdown.

At the time, it was widely believed (by men, anyway) that women were incapable of sexual pleasure, and only endured their husband's attentions ("Close your eyes and think of England!") out of a desire to bear children. Women were required to preserve their chastity; to become a "ruined woman" was considered a fate worse than death. Despite this, prostitution was common. Many people believed that men required an outlet for those sexual desires which would be unseemly to impose upon their own wives (and may indeed endanger them, since some people believed men's sexual appetites, left unrestrained, turned them into beasts).

Of course, there were reasons for this public display of morality. During the period of the Restoration, after Charles had regained his throne, the nation went through a period of barely-restrained debauchery in response to the harsh moral code of the Puritans. The Victorian era, which can be seen as a blend of high principles and low impropriety, came in backlash to those troubled times.

Strong social ethics were important to the Victorians. Charles Dickens has popularized the workhouse in our imagination, but in truth there was a great social momentum to "cure" the evil of poverty. Churches and private charities ran large-scale relief programs to help the poor. The Salvation Army was founded in 1865 for this very reason and still operates with the same mission to this day. However, many impoverished people were too proud to accept aid. For a man to not be able to support himself was seen as shameful, and accepting help from strangers was humiliating. Many people would rather starve than have their lives meddled with by condescending do-gooders.

While Victorian morality was awash in contradiction, it was not necessarily a bad thing, nor strictly hypocritical. The Victorian age saw the abolition of slavery (and yet, working conditions in many factories were essentially slavery, and often more dangerous than slavery since the employer saw the worker as an easily-replaceable expense). Universal suffrage gained ground throughout the period, despite the dismissive treatment of women. The Temperance Movement was born in this time, decrying the evils of gin (and as a side-effect, gave birth to the modern soft drink!).

SOCIAL CLASSES

Social mobility on a wide-scale level never-before seen became possible in the Victorian era. Capitalism made it possible for a man of humble birth (if he had enough vision and drive) to transcend his origins and join the ranks of the wealthy and powerful.

> *While women weep, as they do now, I'll Fight; while children go hungry, as they do now, I'll Fight; while men go to prison, in and out, in and out, as they do now, I'll Fight; while there is a poor lost girl upon the streets, while there remains one dark soul without the light of God, I'll Fight, I'll fight to the very end!*
>
> – William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army

And yet, society remained highly stratified. The Aristocracy stood at the top of the heap, separated from the commoners not just by their wealth, but how they had acquired it: through the inheritance of land from their ancestors. An aristocrat did not work for his money; his money worked for him. Of course, in this time of change many aristocrats found themselves without any means of support. But regardless of wealth or its lack, a nobleman was still noble, and therefore better than those common people.

The new middle-class strove to imitate their "betters." They purchased townhomes, hired servants, bought carriages, and attended the theater. The middle-class upheld the moral foundation of society (unlike the very wealthy, who could afford to ignore social mores, and the very poor, who couldn't afford to care even if they wanted to). A dream that many upper middle-class families had was to marry one of their children into an Aristocratic household, thereby becoming not just wealthy but also a part of Society.

Though there was considerable money to be made, most people remained poor. Industrialization improved their lives by making products more affordable to the average person and by making it easier for a man to support his family. This new economy, combined with better sanitation and improved nutrition, helped bring about an increase in the population – all of which helped fuel the steam-powered engine of the new age.

WOMEN IN SOCIETY

"Women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly. Women represent the triumph of matter over mind, just as men represent the triumph of mind over morals."

– Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

This was not an easy time to be a woman, even though women were able to make great strides towards equality. Women were not enfranchised, but they did eventually gain the legal right to their property upon marriage, the right to divorce, and the right to fight for custody of their children upon separation.

Middle-class and wealthy women did not work outside of the home, instead spending their time supervising the servants and visiting with friends. Poor women worked in sweatshops with other women, often in the textile industry where their small and dexterous hands were seen as an asset. Regardless of their social class, men and women did not work together, and though a married couple lived together they rarely spent much time in one another's company. Young unmarried men and women were not allowed to be alone together (such an act would bring scandal upon both households, and could ruin a young lady's reputation).

RACISM

Theories of race were popular in both the scientific community and the popular imagination. Some people used "science" to demonstrate how the white race was superior to any of the other peoples of the Earth, using the structure of the skull and the jaw to demonstrate their theories. Many scientists tried to use Charles Darwin's work to show how the African peoples were products of an arrested development, an evolutionary misstep.

Racism was not limited to those of a different colored skin. Many people in Great Britain believed the Irish were an inferior race, and others felt that those of Eastern European descent were closer to the apes than the Anglo-Saxons. Charles Kingsley, an English novelist, once wrote to his wife, "I am haunted by the human chimpanzees I saw [in Ireland]… to see white chimpanzees is dreadful; if they were black, one would not feel it so much."

Racism led to other evils, such as colonialism. Many European nations felt they were better suited to rule foreign nations than the natives of those lands, due to their supposed superior intellect and evolutionary

> *Imagine a person, tall, lean and feline, high-shouldered, with a brow like Shakespeare and a face like Satan, a close-shaven skull, and long, magnetic eyes of the true cat-green. Invest him with all the cruel cunning of an entire Eastern race, accumulated in one giant intellect, with all the resources of science past and present, with all the resources, if you will, of a wealthy government – which, however, already has denied all knowledge of his existence. Imagine that awful being, and you have a mental picture of Dr. Fu-Manchu, the yellow peril incarnate in one man.*
>
> – Sax Rohmer, *The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu*

advantages. This in turn often led to horrifying abuses, where the natives of those lands were treated as little better than animals. While it can be argued that colonialism had its good points, the colonists' smug superiority was not one of them.

These are difficult issues to raise in a role-playing game (after all, most people play games to escape from the harshness of reality!), so if a game master or group of players is uncomfortable with the racism of the Nineteenth Century, by all means feel free to ignore it.

WAR IN THE VICTORIAN AGE

The world was changing, and the face of warfare changed with it. What was once a gentleman's game, where rules of honor were all-important, became serious business, where the goal was to win at any cost. However, even though common soldiers died in droves, officers could still be expected to treat one another like gentlemen, both on and off the battlefield.

Improving technology led to new tactics. Small arms became deadlier from longer ranges, while defensive technologies were at a standstill. This meant that two armies could no longer afford to stand up in ranks firing upon one another, but instead had to use cover and clever movements to outflank the enemy.

The steam engine became tied to warfare as well. Trains became a quick and easy way to move men and supplies rapidly across the countryside and with considerably less fatigue, so railroads became an

> *A time will come when a politician who has willfully made war and promoted international dissension will be as sure of the dock, and much surer of the noose, than a private homicide. It is not reasonable that those who gamble with men's lives should not stake their own.*
>
> – H. G. Wells

important strategic target: if one could destroy an enemy's ability to travel by rail, one could cripple his war effort. The Germans and the French used this technique to great effect during the Franco-Prussian war.

Steam engines also revolutionized naval warfare, allowing navies to eventually abandon the fickle wind-powered ships of yesterday. Ships began mounting iron armor on their hulls, rendering them virtually immune to cannonballs. In response, more ships were equipped with large naval guns that fired explosive shells and could rotate to fire in any direction. The development of torpedoes allowed smaller ships to sink even the greatest battleship, which eventually led to the iron-hulled (as opposed to the merely iron-clad) ship.

Communication advancement was important as well, and the telegraph proved its use throughout the latter half of the 19th Century. The general staff could take information wired from the front to devise battle plans, reinforce weak flanks, and plan counterattacks. Thus, the role of real-time intelligence-gathering in warfare increased dramatically.

> *I was not content to believe in a personal devil and serve him, in the ordinary sense of the word. I wanted to get hold of him personally and become his chief of staff.*
>
> – Aleister Crowley

OCCULTISM

The Victorian era saw a rise in interest in the paranormal. Hypnotism, spirit mediums, conjurers, sorcerers, and hauntings were very popular in this time. People of the Victorian era were both fascinated and repulsed by death, and spent much of their time talking about and researching its various aspects. Spirit mediums, people who claimed to be able to channel the voices of the dead, were in great demand.

We know today that most hauntings and unexplainable phenomena of the period were conducted by skilled hucksters who preyed on people's gullibility and desire for an answer to fundamentally unanswerable questions. These con artists used simple technology to create levitating tables, lit by strange lights and

accompanied by terrifying sounds, which convinced even many, normally highly rational people that their powers were real.

Many of these occultists formed their own secret societies dedicated to searching out life's mysteries. Russian noblewoman and mystic Madam Blavatsky's Theosophical Society is one of the most famous of these, and it still has followers to this day.

In the world of *The Widening Gyre*, there are a few occultists, mediums, and sorcerers who have true power, the power to summon and banish spirits, and the power to see beyond the fragile walls of this reality. However, even here *most* are con artists. Sorting the true sorcerers from the charlatans is not easy work, and a majority of those who have real powers are careful not to advertise their abilities.

> *The Nineteenth Century dislike of realism is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass. The Nineteenth Century dislike of romanticism is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass.*
>
> – Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

ROMANTICISM AND REALISM

Of all the great battles fought through the Nineteenth Century, none has been so important in the development of western culture as the one in which not a drop of blood was spilled. It was the battle between Romanticism and Realism, two competing philosophies which helped shape the art, science, and politics of the day. Skirmishes are still being fought by the inheritors of those movements, and the repercussions of this great battle are still felt to this very day. More than anything, we are discovering that absolutism in either direction tends to be harmful to long-term stability and survivability, and that often the best answers lay somewhere in the middle.

Romanticism was an artistic movement born in the late eighteenth century as a reaction against science, industrialization, and the distancing of man from nature. The Romantics looked back to (and of course romanticized) the medieval ages, arguing that the past is the key to the present. They maintained the past as an ideal and believed that mankind should move away from technology and instead embrace nature. Because of this, they drew heavily on folklore and myth and made heavy use of ancient symbolism in their works. Many of the Romantics were nationalists, believing that each person was a part of an invisible line that connected to his nation's past and ran through to the future.

Romantics believed that humanity could overcome the limitations of its five senses and through the imagination become one with the divine. Perhaps because of this, many Romantics were also mystics, and they were often involved in secret societies (some of which may have had more-or-less nefarious goals in mind, such as the downfall of technology or the destruction of the democratic state). Many of Britain's most famous poets and artists from the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries were Romantics – William Black, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge are counted amongst them.

Standing against the Romantics were the Realists, who believed that the world should be looked at without embellishment or interpretation; the truth could and should be revealed through ugliness just as surely as through beauty. Realists tended to discard theatrics, lofty subjects, and classical art in favor of more mundane themes. The Realists embraced science as a way for mankind to progress and dismissed romantic notions of the past.

Like the Romantics, the Realists had their flaws as well. They tended to see nature as an obstacle to be conquered and saw a certain beauty in the smoke-belching chimneys of industry. Since they were so

USING ROMANTICISM IN A STEAMPUNK GAME

Some of the greatest poetry in the English language came from the Romantics, and much of it has a mystical or occult bent. These poems can be easily re-interpreted by any creative game master as prophetic lines that allude to a horrible disaster coming just around the corner. Perhaps following them will prevent a great evil from overcoming the Earth. Just take a look at one of William Butler Yeats' most famous poems (from which this book takes its name) for a glimpse of the possibilities.

Imagine the horror on your players' faces when they realize that a few lines of opium-fueled doggerel is really a prophesy detailing the end of mankind's reign on earth or, perhaps, the key to preventing that end!

William Butler Yeats, The Second Coming

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in the sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*

ready to rush to the future, they were only too happy to discard the past and leave behind the legacies their ancestors had created. Perhaps the most famous Realist of the Nineteenth Century is Samuel Clemens, AKA Mark Twain (who in his novel *Huckleberry Finn* symbolically "killed" Sir Walter Scott, the author of such Romantic classics as *Ivanhoe*).

PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETIES

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it became popular for educated men to join together with like-minded fellows and form Philosophical (also known as Learned or Historical) Societies. These groups were social networks, meeting to promote academic disciplines. Members would trade papers, discuss their latest research, and often publish the results of their studies.

But societies did not just come together for academic reasons. Many of these clubs were devoted to art, or the occult, or to political causes. Any man who hoped to advance in society was a member of at least one philosophical society, and often two or three. Membership in a society might require an invitation or special qualifications (such as a degree or a published scientific treatise) or it may be open to anyone. The more exclusive a society is, the more favorably its members will be looked upon.

In a Steampunk game, a society can be based around nefarious purposes (such as the Circle of Technologists), or for the good of mankind (the Clockmakers Guild might be considered a philosophical society for this purpose). Any wealthy and/or educated PC might be reasonable expected to join one or more philosophical societies.

I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, naval architecture, navigation, commerce, and agriculture, in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain.

– John Adams

CONSULTING DETECTIVES AND CRIMINAL MASTERMINDS

No conversation about the Nineteenth Century and its hand in modern fiction and gaming tropes is complete without a discussion of that staple of the Victorian literature: the consulting detective. This was the period in which new idea came into vogue – the idea that a brilliant man could match wits with the worst type of criminal element and using only his deductive mind and powers of perception, defeat the forces of chaos, disorder, and evil.

> *"All crime is vulgar, just as all vulgarity is crime. … Crime belongs exclusively to the lower orders. I don't blame them in the smallest degree. I should fancy that crime was to them what art is to us, simply a method of procuring extraordinary sensations."*
>
> *– Oscar Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray*

The Nineteenth Century brought about the scientific method of police work; a new means of catching criminals that relied on logic and science rather than the old methods (which often involved simply catching a likely suspect and beating him until he confessed). The scientific method leant an air of mystery and allure to the average police detective, which in turn led to a new type of fictional hero.

The scientific detecting of the Victorian era gave us many methods of crime-fighting that are still in use today. Fingerprinting first became popular among police departments of the time towards the end of the century (though the technology to reliably catalog and identify people based on their fingerprints took some time to develop). Criminal psychology also came into its own as a distinct field of research, though it was plagued with many off-beat theories (such as phrenology – whose adherents believed they could tell who was a criminal based on the shape or size of certain facial and cranial features).

As the saying goes, "One judges a man by the quality of his enemies," and no consulting detective worth his salt is without an arch-nemesis. The most famous fictional rivalry is Sherlock Holmes and "The Napoleon of Crime" James Moriarty, but the media of the time also created heroes and villains of real people – Inspector Abberline and Jack the Ripper spring to mind as an example.

The consulting detective (and his arch-rival, the criminal mastermind) is ideal for gaming. Usually fictional detectives work alone, or with a (slightly less intelligent) assistant. In an RPG setting, a brilliant detective might have a whole host of people to assist him in his endeavors – a surgeon to mend wounds, a bored, adventure-seeking aristocrat who can open Social avenues, a scientist or Savant to analyze clues that the perspicacious detective has discovered, and a fearless veteran of the Boer Wars for when things get rough. The GM should be careful not to allow one player to overshadow the others – letting each hero lead a different avenue of the investigation is one way to ensure everyone is included in the story.

Running a mystery game is tough, because clues that seem obvious to the GM (who is of course privy to all the information) can be horribly opaque to the players. Of course, a game master shouldn't let a party solve his mysteries with a few rolls of the dice, but he should make his clues broad enough that all his players have a chance to solve the mystery before the final act.

Examples of some of the first detective stories include the Auguste Dupin tales by Edgar Allan Poe: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), "The Mystery of Marie Roget" (1843), and "The Purloined Letter" (1844).

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL CHANGE AND UNREST

> *"Credit is a system whereby a person who can't pay gets another person who can't pay to guarantee that he can pay."*
>
> *– Charles Dickens*

The industrial revolution brought about many positive changes for society. Wages rose. Suffrage grew more and more universal. Epidemics became less frequent and less dangerous. Child mortality dropped precipitously. But for all the good that industrialization brought, it also came with many problems.

Mass production brought about the sudden availability of inexpensive consumer goods, which allowed people to buy the things they wanted cheaply. However, artisans and craftsmen (potters, weavers, tinsmiths) found themselves unable to compete in this new economy. Machines allowed farmers to more efficiently bring their crops to harvest, but reduced the need for unskilled laborers out in the countryside. All of these newly unemployed people had to find work somewhere, and they did – moving from towns and villages to the burgeoning cities.

OVERCROWDED CITIES AND POVERTY

From the onset of the Industrial Revolution, people streamed into the cities, often with little more than the clothes on their backs, looking for work or a better way of life. These impoverished people were forced to cram together into tiny, overcrowded tenement buildings. Slums sprang up around all the great cities; dark crowded streets framed by quickly-built, ramshackle apartments. Privacy was nonexistent as entire extended families often shared a single small room.

Gin halls sprung up on virtually every street corner. Alcoholism, fueled by the desperate hopelessness of the poor and morally bankrupt, was rampant. Women who had no other way to support themselves turned to prostitution, selling their bodies for a ha'penny, a scrap of food, or a cup of gin. Crimes of property and of violence were, of course, a big problem. This all came to a head in 1888, when a killer stalked the streets of Whitechapel after dark, murdering prostitutes and sending all of London (and much of the world) into a panic.

Those men and women (and often children) who could do so went to work in the noisy and dangerous factories. There was little use in complaining about conditions at the factories, since labor was cheap and easily replaceable. Factory owners could afford to pay their workers only a pittance, secure in the knowledge that should someone quit, the worker could be replace in a matter of hours or even minutes from those wandering the streets looking for a job. Thus the cycle continued, only the serfs were bound to the factory instead of the land.

Parliament passed many laws to try and curb these problems. To curb prostitution, they passed the Contagious Diseases Act in 1864, which allowed the police to arrest any woman suspected of having a venereal disease. The Married Women's Property Act of 1882 granted women the right to own their own property and to divorce their husbands under certain circumstances. The Factory Act of 1833 made it illegal for children younger than the age of nine to work in factories. The law was expanded about ten years later to include all children. The laws with perhaps the greatest long-term repercussions were the 1824 repeal of the Combination Act (which had forbidden workers to unionize), and the Reform Act of 1832, which made unions legal.

LABOR UNIONS

In response to the harsh labor conditions and poor pay, workers began to mobilize. Certain the government could not be trusted to protect their rights, they began to form trade unions. Unions fought to guarantee certain benefits to all workers (or at least, all workers who joined the union), including a minimum pay which workers would accept and a maximum length of the day which workers would have to be on the job.

The process of unionization was not an easy one. For many years, it was illegal to form a labor union (or even anything remotely resembling one). Despite this, workers fought to organize, and from about the 1870s onwards, their existence became inevitable.

> *What are the common wages of labour, depends everywhere upon the contract usually made between those two parties, whose interests are by no means the same. The workmen desire to get as much, the masters to give as little as possible. The former are disposed to combine in order to raise, the latter in order to lower the wages of labour.*
>
> *– Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations*

Apart from guaranteeing a certain minimum wage and other concessions, labor unions helped their members through times of unemployment, illness, and injury. They could offer funeral benefits and some even paid pensions. They provided professional training (sometimes restricting the number of apprenticeships, in order to keep labor scarce and wages high). Overall, unions helped curb some of the worst abuses of the workplace.

LUDDITES

The Luddites (named after their supposed leader "Ned Ludd") were a social movement who protested (often violently) against the Industrial Revolution. When a machine could do the work of five men for half the cost, those jobs went away.

The movement began in 1811 or 1812 and spread rapidly throughout Great Britain. The Luddites protested by destroying machines used by industry, mainly textile machines, and by attacking the mill owners and the magistrates who supported them. The British government cracked down harshly on the Luddites, exiling them to Australia or even in some cases executing them. By about the early 1820s, the movement was effectively

dead, but the romance attached to it, brave workers destroying the satanic mills which threatened their way of life, has remained to this day, and even serves as an example for many anti-industrial and anti-globalism movements in the modern age. An American example of would be various folklore surrounding John Henry.

SMOG

During the 1880's and 1890's, London was the largest city in the world. Pollution had been a problem since the Middle Ages, to the point that there had been several movements to ban coal fires within city limits. Sulphuric coal smoke from the factories made things considerably worse. Great clouds of choking smog – smoke mixed with London's famous fog – roiled through the city streets, blotting out the sun. The worst days were called "pea-soupers," as the fog was thick, heavy, and often took on a greenish or yellow tint. Only a fool or a madman would venture outside on a day so dark and dismal.

> He shewes that 't is the seacoale smoke
> That allways London doth Inviron,
> Which doth our Lungs and Spiritts choake,
> Our hanging spoyle, and rust our Iron.
> Lett none att Fumifuge be scoffing
> Who heard att Church our Sundaye's Coughing.
>
> – John Wilkins, *The Ballad of Gresham College*
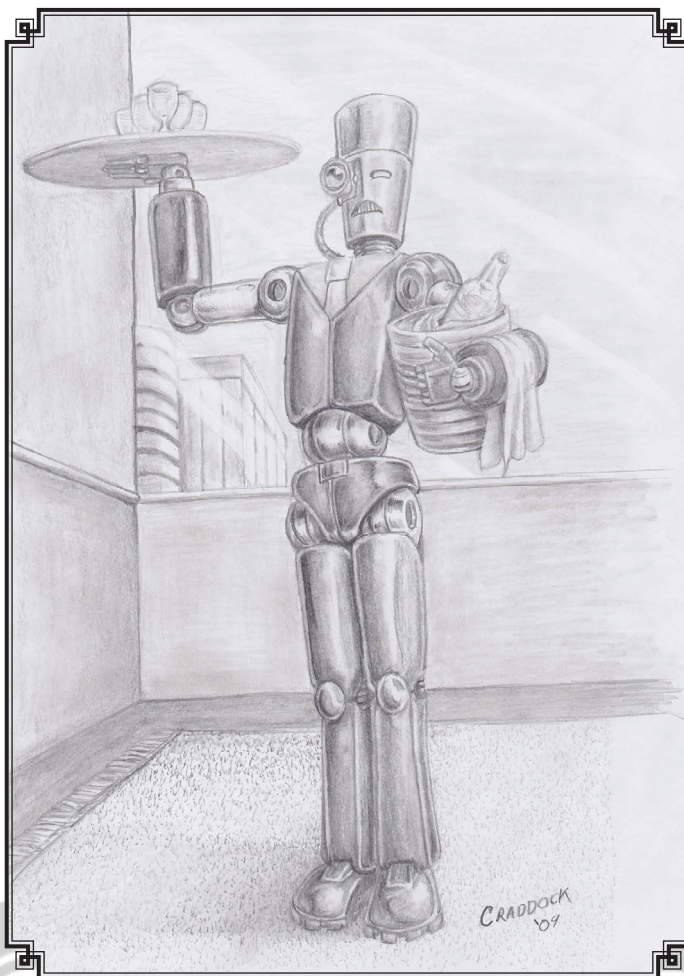
JACK THE RIPPER

One day men will look back and say I gave birth to the twentieth century. – Attributed to Jack the Ripper

From the months of August to November of 1888, the crime-plagued London suburb of Whitechapel was wracked by a series of unusually brutal murders. The killer left behind a series of cryptic clues that only served to heighten the mystery. The newspapers seized on these terrible crimes and sensationalized them in a new way. The press named the killer "Jack the Ripper," based on the signature of a letter which the killer supposedly sent to the police. The people of England clamored for a solution, but the police were helpless to stop the crimes.

Even to this day, no one knows who Jack the Ripper really was, but the mysteries and legends surrounding his crimes are legion. He is regarded as the world's first (and possibly most famous) confirmed serial killer. In the span of about three months, he savagely murdered at least five women, all of them prostitutes working the dirty streets of London. The victims' names were Mary Ann Nichols (killed on August 31, 1888), "Dark" Annie Chapman (killed September 8, 1888), Elizabeth "Long Liz" Stride (killed September 30, 1888), Catherine Eddows (killed September 30, 1888),

and Mary Jane "Ginger" Kelly (killed November 9, 1888). There may have been others as well; several other women met their fates during the same time and in the same general area, but since Whitechapel was notorious for its high rate of violent crime, most Ripperologists agree these five were most likely the Ripper's only victims.

A game master can use the Ripper as a backdrop or the main focus of an adventure. The heroes could be police officers, consulting detectives, or even occult investigators seeking an answer to the murders. This is a good chance for the GM to introduce a number of historical figures, including Prince Albert Victor, the son of Queen Victoria, who may have been involved (according to some conspiracy theories) in the killings.

See the book From Hell, by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, for a graphic take on the Jack the Ripper murders. The movie (starring Johnny Depp and Heather Graham, loosely based on the book) takes the conspiratorial, mystical angle that Moore and Campbell posit and run with it.
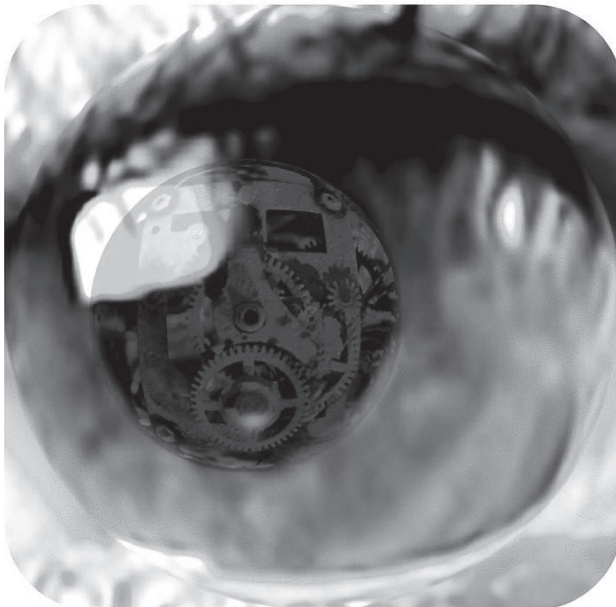
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

> *There is nothing in machinery, there is nothing in embankments and railways and iron bridges and engineering devices to oblige them to be ugly. Ugliness is the measure of imperfection.*
>
> – H. G. Wells

As with any pre-published setting, you'll probably want to put your own spin on things. Although *The Widening Gyre* gives you a complete world of fantastical Victorian high-technology blended with gothic horror, you'll probably want to modify the campaign world here and there to make it your own. Perhaps you'd prefer to run an Upstairs/Downstairs comedy of sense and sensibility, a detective story set in the misty streets and by-ways of London, or a rollicking science fiction adventure with Steampunk elements.

THE WORLD AND THE PCS

In a roleplaying game, the GM strives to create a world that feels authentic, wondrous, and awe-inspiring, but which doesn't overshadow the actions of the heroes. The player characters cannot simply be actors on the stage, playing out a predetermined story made by the GM. The PCs are the stars of the story, coming up with their own solutions to the tribulations the GM presents, and NPCs should only serve as the supporting cast.

There are a lot of things a GM will need to work on to create his own campaign world, everything from figuring out how advanced technology is, to determining the existence of the supernatural, to fitting the campaign to the characters (and vice versa).

See *Chapter Five: Twenty Centuries of Stony Sleep (Adventure Generator)* for a few suggestions for creating your own Steampunk game.

> *"…A stranger sight I have never witnessed in my life. This American was not a man at all, nor did it seem possible this being could ever be held by any jail, for he was made entirely of metal and stood a head taller than anyone around him … I learned later that lookouts north of the town had tried to stop this metal figure with rifle fire as he approached. The bullets were like mosquitos to this giant…"*
>
> – Paul Guinan, *Boilerplate and Pancho Villa*

APPENDIX:

AT LAST
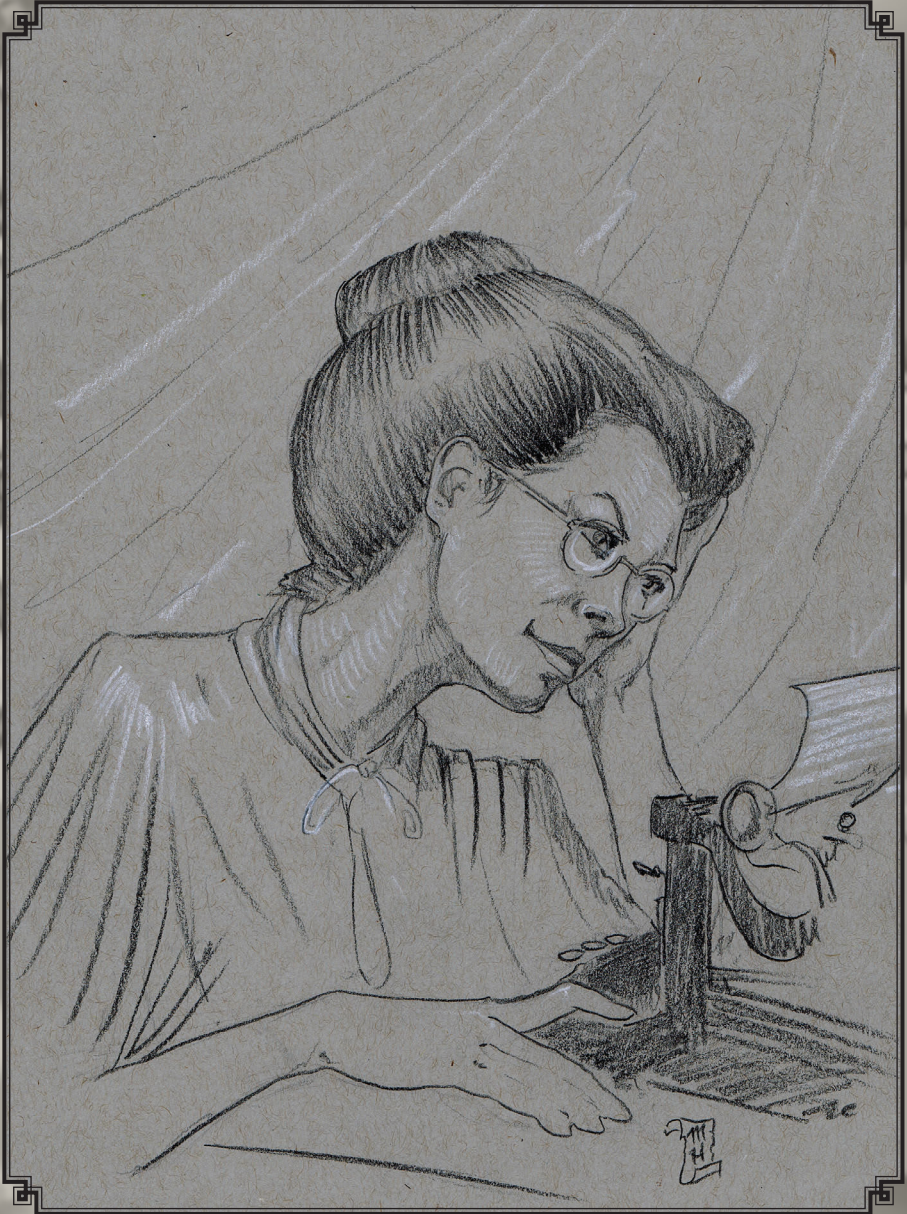
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There are literally hundreds of Steampunk books, movies, and comics out on the market today. This bibliography lists the sources that inspired the author of this book; it is not a full catalog of everything that's out there by any means.

This bibliography is split into nine sections, each giving examples from one of the subgenres of Steampunk listed in Chapter One. The list starts with an overview of Steampunk and includes many of the classics of the genre – the grandmasters who started it all. Next, there are lists that cover the various genre moods – Comedy, Horror, Mystery, and Romance. Finally, we've included lists that cover the genre settings – Cyberpunk, Fantasy, Western, and Superheroes.

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FANTASY

FILMS & TV

Howl's Moving Castle (2004), Directed by Hayao Miyazaki

BOOKS & COMICS:

Busiek, Kurt, and Carlos Pacheco; *Arrowsmith*

Tsang, Adrian, and Pat Lee; *WarLands*

GAMES:

Baker, Keith, Bill Slavicsek, and James Wyatt; *Eberron Campaign Setting*

Cook, David, Carl Sargent, and Karen S. Boom-garden; *Amazing Engine: For Faerie, Queen & Country*

Pondsmith, Mike; *Castle Falkenstein*

Staroscik, Matt; *Iron Kingdoms*

WESTERN

FILMS & TV

The Adventures of Brisco County Jr. (TV Series, 1993-1994), Created by Jeffrey Boam and Carlton Cuse

The Quick and the Dead (1995), Directed by Sam Raimi

The Wild Wild West (TV Series, 1965-1969), Created by Michael Garrison

Wild, Wild West (1999), Directed by Barry Sonnenfeld

The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles (TV Series, 1992-1993), Created by George Lucas

BOOKS & COMICS:

Burroughs, Edgar Rice; *A Princess of Mars*

Burroughs, Edgar Rice; *The Gods of Mars*

Burroughs, Edgar Rice; *Warlord of Mars*

Lansdale, Joe R.; *Dead in the West*

Monk, Devon; *Dead Iron*

Monk, Devon; *Cold Copper*

Monk, Devon; *Tin Swift*

Priest, Cherie; *Boneshaker*

Priest, Cherie; *Dreadnought*

Priest, Cherie; *Ganymede*

Priest, Cherie; *Clementine*

Priest, Cherie; *The Inexplicables*

GAMES:

Hensley, Shane Lacy; *Deadlands: The Weird West*

SUPERHEROES

FILMS & TV

League of Extraordinary Gentlemen (2003), Directed by Stephen Norrington

BOOKS & COMICS:

Amara, Phil, and Guy Davis; *The Nevermen*

Augustyn, Brian, and Mike Mignola; *Batman: Gotham by Gaslight*

Ballantine, Pip, and Tee Morris (Editors); *Ministry Protocol: Thrilling Tales of the Ministry of Peculiar Occurrences*

Davis, Guy; *The Marquis*

Fraction, Matt and Steven Sanders; *The Five Fists of Science*

Gaiman, Neil, & various artists; *Neil Gaiman's Wheel of Worlds*

Harris, Dwayne; *John Henry: The Steam Age*

Houghton, Trainor, and Lovern Kindzierski; *The Victorian*

Moore, Alan, and Chris Sprouse; *Tom Strong*

Moore, Alan, and Kevin O'Neill; *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*

Morrison, Grant, and Steve Yeowell; *Sebastian O*

Vance, James, and Ted Slampyak; *Mr. Hero, The Newmatic Man*

Veitch, Rick, and Paul Jenkins; *Teknophage*

POST-APOCALYPSE

BOOKS & COMICS:

Judson, Theodore; *Fitzpatrick's War*

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This setting requires the **Savage Worlds** core rulebook for play.