

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

THE TALE OF THE FABULOUS FOUR



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THE TALE OF THE FABULOUS FOUR

This short adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four to six pre-generated characters. All the characters are kids, aged between 9 and 12. You'll find character sheets at the back of the module.

With the exception of Brent Hardcastle, the main hero of our *Daring Tales of Adventure* line, who must be taken as a character, the players are free to pick and choose from the others. None are vital to the successful completion of the adventure, though all have their strengths.

The GM also needs the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

Important: The players should be made aware that their characters are young kids. Although most have some combat skills, they are not warriors, nor are they armed with an array of deadly weapons. Indeed, their low Strength scores make the use of large melee weapons or firearms trickier. They also have an average Toughness of 4, which means they'll suffer injuries more often if they opt to pummel their way out of trouble. Tricks, Tests of Will, and creative use of scenery and props are the heroes' best weapons.

SPECIAL RULES

In addition to TAG's regular pulp rules, which you'll need for this adventure (they're free from the website on which you found this little tale), a few special rules are plied, simply because the heroes are all kids.

Guns: Adult pulp heroes may be willing to charge a gun-wielding goon, but kids aren't. Anytime a gun is drawn by an adult, the thug gets a free Intimidation roll against all kids within range (+2 if he actually fires the gun, +4 if it hit someone). Roll once for the goon, with each kid making an individual Spirit roll. Characters who fail to resist are Shaken. If the thug gets a raise over the character's total, the hero is Panicked instead.

Likewise, a kid who picks up a gun isn't going to be a crack shot, even if his Shooting die is high. Allowing that is fine in a regular pulp game, but in a one-off adventure

like this, where we want to encourage the players to actually think like kids, it might tempt the players to acquire firearms from fallen foes. To that end, two special rules are introduced.

First, a kid using a firearm does *not* benefit from a Wild Die.

Second, his Shooting skill is reduced one die type. Shooting dropping below a d4 becomes unskilled, and unskilled heroes suffer an *additional* -2 penalty (so that's d4-2 and no Wild Die).

Tricks: Stick a bunch of kids in a standup fight against an equal number of adults, and the kids'll likely lose. Sure, the heroes are Wild Cards, but they have low Strength, feeble Toughness scores, and few weapons.

For that reason, and for *this adventure only*, Shaken results from Tricks count as nonlethal, physical damage (and so can knock out Extras) if the Trick warrants it. For instance, squirting ink in a goon's eyes isn't going to cause him to black out, even if he's Shaken already, but tripping him will—the GM can rule the goon hits his head as he falls.

ACT 1: MILK AND MAYHEM

Set the scene by reading the following text to the players.

The festive holidays are drawing close. As a special treat your parents have taken you to Boston to visit the circus. Your folks have gone off to find a restaurant, but you kids didn't fancy that. Armed with a few bucks, you've been allowed to visit a milk bar for sodas, milksbakes, and donuts.

SCENE 1: LOCAL PROBLEMS

The youngsters are all seated at a single table. Arrayed before them are a variety of drinks and snacks, all high in sugar and low in nutritional value. Seated behind them

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are two burly men in trench coats. The heroes can overhear their conversation.

First man: "The boss said we have to snatch the diamond this afternoon."

Second man: "Clam up, dummy! Yer want someone to overhear us and call the cops?"

First man: "I'm just saying is all. Boy, that sparkler is going to net us some big bucks."

Second man: "Quit yer yapping and drink yer milk. Come on, it's time to go case the joint."

With that the two men leave the milk bar. Hopefully the young heroes are intrigued by the possibility of a crime taking place, and decide to follow the thugs.

As you step outside, you bump into a small gang of kids heading into the milk bar. One of them stumbles back, slips on the icy sidewalk, and lands heavily on his butt. Rising to his feet he balls his fists and snarls, "Darn country kids. Looks like they're spoiling for a fight. Get 'em, lads!"

Deal action cards. Remember, damage from Extras doesn't Ace, so the best one of the city kids can do is Shake a hero with a single hit. This should limit the amount of damage inflicted on the party.

The sidewalk is covered in ice and snow, halving all movement. Heroes who roll a 1 on their running die, slip and fall prone.

The snow can be made into a snowball as a free action. This improvised weapon has Range 3/6/12 and

inflicts Str damage. However, damage from a snowball does not Ace, though raises on the attack still grant an additional +1d6 damage.

Props outside the milk bar include a trashcan full of discarded drink cartons and food wrappers, and a gobstopper machine. Heroes who want to use other suitable props (like a newspaper, or a passing dog, which can be used as part of an Agility Trick to trip a foe), should find them available.

Pushing over the candy machine is an action. On hitting the ground, hard balls of candy scatter in a Medium Burst Template. Place the outside of the template to where it touches the machine and rotate it, so it affects an area in the direction the machine fell. Anyone moving through the template must make an Agility roll (-2 if running) or slip and fall prone.

At some point toward the end of the fight, the milk bar window must be broken. This could come about as a result of a youth staggering backward from a blow and crashing through, a missed slingshot attack, or even by a hero throwing a snowball (which just happened to contain a stone).

The round after this occurs, a large policeman appears on the scene. He blows his whistle, points at the heroes, and orders them to stand still. Characters thinking of complying may make a Common Knowledge roll. With success they know two important facts. First, their parents will have to pay for the damage. Second, they'll end up with no supper for a week and likely lose Christmas presents as a result of their bad behavior.



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!City Kids (1 per hero): See page 10.

SCENE 2: THE CIRCUS ARRIVES

No matter which way the characters run, they end up running down the street—straight into the oncoming circus parade. Every year, the circus comes to Boston for Christmas, and every year it parades through the streets on arrival, to drum up business.

This scene uses the Chase rules, but with our alternate Obstacles rules. The Range Increment is 1", and the characters begin three Range Increments ahead of the policeman. This scene is mainly for cinematic and humor value. If the kids are escaping too quickly, add another policeman to the chase three Range Increments behind the hero furthest back. The characters should escape, but there's no harm in delaying their victory a little longer.

Because of the slippery road surface, any character who goes Out of Control automatically ends up on his butt. His Agility roll next round suffers a -2 penalty, as he must waste time getting to his feet.

Should the policeman draw close enough, he uses the Parallel maneuver. He then tries to grapple one of the young hoodlums. If a character is arrested and not freed by his comrades, he gets a cuff around the ear and is dragged back to the milk bar. His parents have just arrived and are horrified to hear of his troublesome and destructive brawling. All privileges are lost for a month, including supper and Christmas presents!

Neither the policeman nor the heroes' parents believe any stories about a potential diamond robbery—it's dismissed as an overactive imagination (and an excuse to avoid the consequences of getting caught brawling in public).

The adventure isn't over if a hero is arrested. As luck would have it, the parents intended to take the children to the Museum anyway. While the children explore, the parents visit nearby shops for last minute presents (except for you-know-who). Before the kids know it, the Museum has closed early, leaving them locked inside! Skip straight down to **Diamonds are Forever**, page 5.

!Policeman: See page 10.

OBSTACLES

Deuce (-4) Grappled: A cowboy is twirling his lasso. When he sees the hero, he tries to snare him for the amusement of the crowd. A failed Agility roll means the character is ensnared. On subsequent rounds he must make an Agility or Strength roll (hero's choice) to escape the binding. Only when this is achieved can the hero run off (so escaping and running in the same round incurs a multi action penalty).

Three (-2) Clumsy Clown: The hero runs into a clown. As the kid darts left, so does the clown (deliberately—he thinks it's funny). Failure causes the hero to drop back a Range Increment, due to the lengthy delay.

Four (-2/0) Free Tickets! A performer is handing out free tickets for tonight's show! If the hero stops to

collect them, his Agility roll suffers a -2 penalty. Otherwise he can ignore the tempting lure and keep running with no penalty. Next round, the hero has the option of grabbing another pair of free tickets and not making an Agility roll, or continuing his flight.

The policeman is just as keen to attend the show as anyone else, and always grabs tickets. He doesn't delay on subsequent rounds, though.

Five (-2) Scantly Clad Ladies: It's near-freezing, but the circus performers are a hardy bunch. Some of the acrobats are wearing barely any clothes, which is a lure for young boys and policemen. Female heroes ignore this Obstacle. A failed roll simply means the character makes no grounds, due to the distraction.

Six (-2/0) Firecrackers: A performer is handing out strings of firecrackers. If the hero stops to collect them, his Agility roll suffers a -2 penalty. Otherwise he can ignore the tempting lure and keep running with no penalty.

Using the firecrackers in a Distract stunt grants the hero a +2 bonus. If the kid elects to keep them for later, he can use the crackers to make an Agility vs. Smarts Trick (fooling any victims into thinking they're gunshots).

The policeman must make a Smarts roll if he draws this card. With failure, he suffers the Agility penalty, as he cautions the performer against giving kids firecrackers. Otherwise, he continues the chase.

Seven (-2/0) Free Candy: As above, except the reward for taking an Agility roll penalty is free candy.

If this event is drawn for Oscar, he *must* go for the candy (the player should roleplay this anyway). If Oscar is within one Range Increment of another character drawing this card, he automatically moves to the same Range Increment, whether than is an extra move forward or a forced move backward.

Eight (-2) Tangled: A glance back or slight distraction causes the hero to stumble into an acrobat, cart wheeling down the road. On a failed Agility roll, the hero is tangled up with the performer. He gains no distance this round and suffers a -2 penalty to his Agility roll next round, as well.

Nine (-2) Snowball Barrage: Local youths are pelting the circus with snowballs. The character runs straight into a barrage. Roll 2d6. If either die comes up 1, the hero has been struck. He is automatically Shaken.

Ten (-1) Singed Hair: The character runs a little too close to a fire breather spewing out a gout of flame. A failed Agility causes the hero to be Shaken and suffer a -1 Charisma penalty for the rest of the session (no eye-brows).

Jack (-1) Smelly Stuff: Elephants make a lot of mess, and the hero is headed for a fresh pile of manure. A failed roll means the character skids on the stuff, losing any movement for the round. Should he go Out of Control, he falls into it. He suffers a -1 penalty to Charisma and Stealth rolls for the rest of the adventure (even if he washes).

Queen (-1) Elephant: A number of elephants block the character's path, forcing him to weave through them.

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A failed roll means the hero is accidentally struck by a band and suffers 2d6 damage (from an Extra).

King (0) They'll Eat Me Alive!: A pair of lions (well-fed) is being paraded through the streets on a leash. One roars loudly at the passing character, forcing him to make a Spirit roll as a free action. With success, he may make his Agility roll as normal. A failure causes him to take a detour around the ferocious beast. He moves one less Range Increment than his Agility roll normally permits (moving backward if he fails the Agility roll). On a critical failure he is Shaken, as well.

Ace (0) Smashing Fun: A performer who balances plates on sticks (held by colleagues) and a chase can mean only one thing. A failed Agility roll causes the plates to fall and smash. The hero suffers no other effects beyond making no headway.

Alternately, if a kid draws this card and the policeman is within 1 Range Increment, the Wild Card can take a -2 penalty to his Agility roll. Success not only moves the hero ahead a Range Increment, but also gives him an automatic Distract stunt against the cop.

ACT 2: BOSTON MUSEUM

Having escaped the police, the characters have only one lead—the mention of a diamond of great value. Discovering which diamond requires either a Streetwise roll (asking around the crowd streets) or Investigation (reading the newspapers).

Whatever method is used, success results in the characters learning of the Amritsa Diamond, a fabulous gem on display at the Boston Natural History Museum. With a raise, they learn the Museum is closing at midday today because the circus is in town. The youngsters don't have much time!

SCENE 1: THE DIAMOND IS OURS

No matter how fast the heroes run, they reach the Museum just in time to see the last of the patrons being shown the door. A junior curator, Oswald Hibbert (who appears in *Daring Tales of Adventure* #2), is just closing the door.

"Sorry, kids," the man says apologetically, as he shuts one of the doors and slides home the bolt. "Museum's closing early today due to the circus being in town. We're open again tomorrow, though."

The heroes need to gain entrance if they're to thwart the robbery, as Hibbert won't believe their story about a theft. Persuasion rolls can be made, but any reasonable excuse, such as urgently needing the toilet, is enough to gain the party access without a die roll. Hibbert smiles politely if any hero is so brazen as to offer a bribe. He doesn't take the money.

Hibbert leads them to the toilets, but then wanders

off. He plans to inform a colleague to make sure the kids are out before the doors are locked, but he forgets when he spies some exhibits that have been moved out of place. Before the characters know it, they are shut inside the Natural History Museum.

DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER

Locating the diamond can be achieved two ways. First, the heroes can wander aimlessly through the galleries. Second, they can grab a tourist brochure. Although we don't usually tell GMs when to hand out bennies, this is one of those moments when player ingenuity should be rewarded. Hey, the kids need all the help they can get!

The gallery before the one containing the diamond has a few dinosaur skeletons at floor level. Hanging overhead, however, are the immense bones of a diplodocus and a pair of T-Rex.

The gemstone gallery contains a few other treasures, such as emeralds and rubies, but nothing as lucrative as the diamond, a fist-sized, glittering stone.

The Amrita Diamond sits in a glass display case, which is surrounded by a rope to keep patrons from getting too close. This is 1915, long before the advent of infrared beams and other such security measures. One plan, which may cross the heroes' minds, is to swipe the diamond first, thus preventing its theft.

If the stone is taken, or if the heroes spend too long trying to come up with a plan, they hear sounds of clanking metal behind them. Staggering into the gallery is a suit of plate mail clutching a spiked mace! One of the goons decided to hide inside the armor to escape detection when the Museum closed! There's only one way in and one way out of the exhibit hall—past the armored goon.

In a deep voice, the armored figure growls, "Pesky kids! You'd better hand over the diamond and vamoose now, or you're going to get badly hurt!"

The characters have little chance of hurting the goon (he's a Henchman) thanks to his armor, but he's also heavily encumbered. Running past him is certainly possible.

Deal action cards.

The gallery is 10' long and 6' wide. The thug doesn't advance into the room, though—he just tries to block the doorway. Moving through his square counts as difficult ground. Despite his strong words, the guy isn't a child killer. He'll swing his mace, but pull his punches (an excuse for why damage doesn't Ace for him). He's more interested in grabbing the diamond.

Whether the thug is avoided or somehow beaten, he has one last trick up his sleeve. Regardless of whether he was Incapacitated or not, as the heroes enter the dinosaur bone gallery, the goon swings his mace, smashing the mechanism holding up the skeletons. Slowly but surely, the bones begin to fall!

❗ **Armored Goon**: See page 10.

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SCENE 2: COLLAPSING BONES

Unless the heroes want to be buried under tons of bones, they need to start running fast toward the other door.

This Scene uses a version of the Chase rules. Place 10 markers on the tabletop. In order to escape into the next gallery, the characters have to move beyond the 10th marker. Each hero has two free rolls before the bones begin to fall.

The skeletons have an Agility die of d10, but can't Push. Success moves them one marker, and a raise two markers. Use a token to represent the debris. If the bones end up on the same marker as a hero or move ahead of him, the hero suffers 2d6 damage (from an Extra) at the end of the current round.

Example: *Young Brent ends the second round on the first marker (having rolled a failure on his first Agility die and a success on the second). Next round, the third since the scene began, the bones enter play. Brent wins the initiative but fails his Agility roll, gaining no distance. The skeletons roll a 5, and move one position, bringing it level with Brent. He suffers 2d6 damage when the round ends but Soaks the wound it caused.*

Next round, the bones draw a higher action card but roll a failure. Brent scores a raise! He rushes ahead of the collapsing bones, leaping ahead of a toothed maw as it crashes to the ground. Since he's ahead of the debris at the end of the round, he takes no damage.

SCENE 3: INSECTS!

CRASH! The grinning skull of a T-Rex slams into the floor, as you dive through the doorway. Your scurry toward the exit is quickly halted by the appearance of two goons. Both look mean and menacing!

Deal action cards.

The gallery measures 10" long and 8" wide, as does the bone gallery (which the heroes may reenter). Place a dozen or so 1" counters to represent display cases. Each is full of worms, bugs, and other creepy-crawlies. Tipping over a case counts as an action. When it smashes, it releases a swarm of bugs (see below). Movement over the bones in the previous area counts as difficult ground.

When the fight begins, there are two goons present. At the start of the second round, two thugs appear to block the exit from the bone gallery. When round three begins, the armored goon (assuming he's wasn't knocked out) enters play, as well. If the characters are still in the bug room, then the armored thug appears in the doorway between this area and the bug room.

On round one, a display case *must* be smashed. This can be done by a wild swing missing, or, and easier to arrange, a goon shoving one aside as he rushes toward the kids. As it strikes the ground it shatters, releasing a swarm of angry (but not dangerous) bugs.

Deal the bugs an action card starting on the next round. Roll a d12 when the bugs act and read this as a clockface. Then roll 2d6 to determine how far the bugs move in that direction. Should they hit a wall, they "bounce" back into the room at the same angle.

At some point, the bugs' template *must* move over the character of Brent. As fans of the *Daring Tales of Adventure* line know, the adult Brent has a phobia of bugs. Can you guess where and how he got that?

Before the last goon falls or after the first hero takes two unSoaked wounds, a gun shot echoes through the gallery. Standing in the doorway is a number of thugs, one of whom has a smoking revolver in his hands.

"Brave fight, kids," he smiles, "but the show is over. We want the diamond, and we're not afraid to shoot you to get it. Now, hand it over and you can go free. Come on, you wouldn't want your parents to get a coffin for Christmas, would you?"

This is a "surrender moment," the point where the heroes give up the fight without further violence in return for a free benny.

! Insect Swarm: See page 10.

! Armored Goon: See page 10.

! Goons (1 per hero): See page 10.

TIED UP

The kids are tied up and stuffed into a very dark closet. The goons don't think the kids will escape; they know the Museum won't be opened until the morning, and they're planning to skip town tonight. Before the thugs leave the heroes alone, the characters hear one speaking louder than he probably should.

"Come on," he says. "These brats aren't going anywhere fast. By the time anyone finds them it'll be morning, and we'll be long gone. I got us all tickets for the circus show tonight. The boss said he'd meet us there later to collect the merchandize and pay us."

ACT 3: ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR

The heroes aren't in a deathtrap, though they are securely bound. Escaping doesn't require any die rolls—it just takes several minutes to loosen the bonds and crack open the door. By this time, the goons are long gone. Still, the heroes know where to go, at least.

SCENE 1: FAIRGROUND FUN

By the time the kids reach the circus, the show is in full swing. The grounds are swarming with adults and kids, performers and animals. As well as the circus there is also a full-scale funfair in town, so there are stalls and rides of every description.

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Let the kids explore the funfair for a bit. Assume anything else that could be readily available for purchase at a funfair, such as cotton candy, costs a dime each. Who knows, it might come in handy!

There are two attractions they pass which might be of interest to the posse.

SHOOTING RANGE

There's a shooting range (air rifles), which offers a variety of prizes, one of which is a high-powered slingshot (Range: 4/8/16, Damage: Str+d4+1). The heroes might already have one, but a spare wouldn't go amiss. The GM is also free to invent other prizes the heroes might find useful, such as a fake gun (water pistol) or bag of marbles. Likewise, encourage the players to think of cool things they might want to use later in the adventure (or just to own).

In order to win a prize, the character has to make three Shooting rolls. As low-powered weapons with no recoil of note, the air rifles do not use the special rules for firearms detailed at the start of the adventure. Aiming makes no difference—the sights are rigged to be off center, and it's assumed any shooter is aiming, anyway.

A success is worth two points, a raise nets three points, and two or more raises earns the shooter five points. In order to win, the character has to score seven or more points. Each go costs a quarter!

COCONUTS

Coconuts are tough to eat, but they can be used as a thrown weapon (Range: 2/4/8, Damage: Str+d4+1). In order to win one, the heroes have to go on the coconut throw. That costs a dime and earns the thrower three balls. Hitting a nut isn't that hard, but making one fall from the ring is—a Throwing roll at -4 is required! Any winner gets the coconut he toppled.

ANOTHER BEATING

The city kids the heroes trounced earlier are also at the funfair. They spot their “rivals” and decide to get even. In order to do that, they rustle up a few more friends. Deal the action cards and let mayhem commence! Add scenery as desired to make the battlefield fun!

!! **City Kids (2 per hero):** See page 10.

SCENE 2: A FUN AND FAIR CHASE

After having a go on the firing range and reminding the local kids that country folk are raised tough, the heroes spot the thugs heading across the fairground, toward the funhouse. Unless they're quick (i.e. they give chase), they'll lose them in the huge crowd.

Run this Scene as a Chase. For the purposes of ranged combat, each Range Increment equates to 5". The goons begin three Range Increment ahead of the kids.

Lay out 20 marker stones to represent the fairground

and the various attractions, through which the action takes place. It's very important that some of the stones are of different colors, or placed in such a way to distinguish the distinct locales. You can use whatever colors you want. Check the table below.

Marker	Locale
1–4	Outside
5–8	Funhouse—moving floor
9–12	Funhouse—hall of mirrors
13–16	Funhouse—haunted house
17–20	Outside

In each specific locale special rules apply, as detailed below.

The characters can “win” the scene one of two ways. First, they can catch one of the thugs and wrestle him to the ground. Pinned beneath a mob of kids, the thug quickly reveals the location of his boss (keep reading). Second, they can try to remain behind the thugs and tail them. Any hero within three Range Increments of a thug reaching the 20th marker is close enough to see the destination—the big top.

So what if the heroes fail to achieve either? They'll need to make a Notice roll to spot the goons when they leave their meeting place. With success, proceed straight to Act 4, Scene 2.

!! **Goons (4):** See page 10.

OUTSIDE

There are no true Obstacles. Instead, the numerous stalls and visitors get in the way and hamper movement. Check the value of a Club card on the table below. Modifiers apply to the participant's Agility roll for the round.

Failure results in the hero making no movement (he's still moving, of course, but very slowly). A roll of 1 or less means the hero goes back one Range Increment, through taking lengthy detours or being swept backward.

Card	Modifier
Deuce	-6
3–6	-4
7–10	-2
Jack	-1
Ace	0

FUNHOUSE—MOVING FLOOR

This particular funhouse has one attraction—a moving floor. Sections of the wooden catwalk shift left and right at varying speeds and make walking difficult. And people call this fun? Participants use Agility as their skill for determining movement, but there is always a -2 penalty. Use the table above as well—all modifiers are cumulative!

As above, heroes who fail just don't move—they're too busy catching their balance. A roll of 1 or less means the character falls. He must use an action to stand, giving him a multi action penalty if he wants to stand and try moving in the same round.

The floor counts as an Unstable Platform.

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FUNHOUSE—HALL OF MIRRORS

Instead of using Agility (a measure of speed), navigating through the mirror maze uses Smarts! Use the table from the Outside segment of the Chase in here. Rather than people, it presents the confusing placement of mirrors.

A failure results in no forward gain. The character might wander in circles or just hit several dead ends (literally). On a roll of 1 or less, the hero ends up getting lost or smashes into a mirror by mistake. If his action card is red, he's lost. Move him back a Range Increment. A black action card means he collides with a cunning mirror which shows no reflection until its too late to stop (the kids are running, after all). The character is Shaken.

FUNHOUSE—HAUNTED HOUSE

Okay, it isn't really haunted, but there are plenty of spooks leaping out of the shadows to startle visitors.

Heroes use Agility to make progress. A Club result means the hero must make a Spirit roll as a free action, as something scary occurs (the GM should decide what). A failed roll prevents the hero from making an Agility roll this round—he's busy clutching his heart in fright. A critical failure means the runner is Shaken, as well.

ACT 4: IT ALL ENDS WELL!

There's a performance on in the big top, so it's packed. As the kids enter, the ringmaster is just announcing the next act—the clowns!

SCENE 1: BUGGY WHO?

Working their way through the spectators, the heroes catch sight of the goons not far away. They're talking to a weasel-faced man in a suit. There seems to be some sort of problem.

"Where's the merchandize?" asks the weasel.

The goons shift on their feet nervously. "Boss," begins one of them, his head hung low while he twiddles his fat in his fingers, "we stashed it for safety. Some kids was after us."

"Kids? You're telling me a bunch of brats got you scared? Darn it; just tell me where the goods are? We've got to get moving. If those kids call the cops, we're done for."

"Er," the goon replies, nodding his head toward the ring, where the clowns are dragging in a huge table full of cream pies, "we hid it in one of the pies for safekeeping. I don't remember which one, boss, we was in a real hurry."

The boss slaps a hand against his forehead. "You dummies!" he hisses. "Get in that ring now and start searching those pies! I don't care who sees you; just do it!"

With that, the goons climb over the low railing and, ignoring the boos and hisses from the crowd who resent their intrusion, head for the table.

Deal action cards. Hopefully the heroes realize they need to act fast and reach the pies first.

The circus ring is 10" across. The goons enter at the six o'clock position. The table of pies is 3" long and stands inside the northern end of the ring. Ignore the clowns—they become a special hazard once the fight breaks out. The thugs initially begin searching for the diamond, but quickly begin throwing pies at the kids if attacked.

There are a lot of cream pies. Grabbing a cream pie is a free action. Searching through a pie for the diamond requires an action but no die roll. Instead, draw a card from the action deck. A Joker means the character has found the stone! Picking it up requires an action, though.

A thrown pie has Range 2/4/8 just like a weapon, but instead of causing damage it functions like a Trick, but uses Throwing vs. Agility. Slapping one in someone's face is a regular Agility Trick.

When a pie that hasn't been searched is used as a weapon draw an action card. A Joker means the victim gets hit by something hard—the diamond! Picking up the gem from a thrown pie requires an Agility roll as an action, due to its slipperiness.

What about the clowns? They mill around the scene for the first round, but then decide this is a great opportunity for some fun. From round two onward, whenever a character draws a deuce, the clowns hamper him in some way (see the table below). For the goons or police (see below), pick *one* thug to be victimized, not all of them.

Suit	Result
Club	My Eyes!: The clown uses a water squirting flower or soda siphon on the hero. Treat this as an Agility Trick. The clown's Agility is d8+2 (they have Acrobat).
Diamond	Big Hat: A clown tries to stick an oversized hat over a hero's head, temporarily blinding him. This functions as an Agility Trick (d8+2), with the hat being thrown off when all penalties are removed.
Heart	Rubber Mallet: A hero is whacked with a rubber mallet. Make a Fighting d6 roll. With success, the hero is automatically Shaken (nonphysical effect). On a raise, the character is knocked prone, as well.
Spade	Pie: A clown throws a pie. Draw a card to see if the pie contains the gem. Then

THE TALE OF THE FABULOUS FOUR

roll a d8 (the clown's Throwing skill). The "attack" is made at short range.

At the start of round four, the commotion alerts a passing policeman. By a quirk of fate, it's the same one who already chased the heroes. Deal him an action card. Naturally, he sees the young hoodlums harassing adults with cream pies, so his first act is to try and arrest the kids.

Convincing him the thugs are the bad guys requires a Persuasion roll at -2 or producing the diamond—which means grappling a villain and then making an opposed Agility roll to remove the gem from the boss' pocket. Either way, the constable blows his whistle on his next action.

Once the whistle is blown, more police arrive two rounds later. The exact number is equal to the number of characters minus one (because there's already one officer present). Hand control of the law enforcement officers to the players.

The goons *will* use guns against the police (compounding their crimes), but *never* against the kids.

The boss doesn't fight—once the police turn up, he *immediately* uses the Recurring Villain rule to make good his escape. Head to the next Scene when the heroes eventually give chase.

!! **The Boss:** Treat him as a goon Henchman.

!! **Goons (1 + 1 per hero):** See page 10.

!! **Policemen (1 per hero):** See page 10.

ESCAPING THUGS

In the event the goons manage to find the gem and pick it up, they start running. Likewise, a hero who finds it and starts running is quickly chased. Whoever becomes the chased has a three Range Increment lead (it takes time to spot his action and give chase).

Should the goons be running, only the one holding the gem sprints away—assume others that aren't Incapacitated surrender and are arrested, as the action has now switched from melee to the chase. One policeman per goon stays behind to arrest them. The other cops, if any, give chase on the round after the heroes.

The first three rounds are through the crowded circus tent. There's an automatic -2 penalty to all Agility rolls. After this, use the Outside table to determine the thickness of the crowd (see page 7).

If the gem-carrying goon escapes, the heroes have a second chance to catch him—he joins his boss in the next scene. Heroes who escape should be reminded, if necessary, that the boss has already made a run for it, and only the characters can identify him. Unless they act swiftly, he might escape!

SCENE 2: HIGH ABOVE THE WATER

The boss, and any minion who may have joined him, is detected on the edge of the river, on which the fair-ground is located. Run this final scene as a Chase. The heroes have two choices for how they give chase—they

can swim (Swimming) or use sets of stilts left nearby by a performer (Agility). The criminals opt to use stilts.

The boss begins three Range Increments ahead of the characters, and each Range Increment equates to 5". Lay out ten marker stones to represent the river.

Once a hero is clear of the 10th marker, he is on dry land. He can either remain on his stilts or spend a full round (no movement) removing them. The far side of the riverbank is a field. It doesn't affect heroes on foot, but those on stilts still suffer penalties for drawing a Club (see below).

The water is absolutely freezing. Any hero who elects to swim also has to make a Vigor roll each round or suffer a level of Fatigue. We're not here to watch youngsters freeze to death or drown, so the worst a hero can suffer is Exhausted (-2 penalty).

A hero who goes Out of Control while on stilts falls into the freezing water. He must make an Agility roll to get back on his sticks. Until he does, he's in the water (requiring a Vigor roll) and can't roll to increase his distance.

Characters on stilts who want to use a single hand for something other than gripping the stilt, suffer a -2 penalty to all rolls if they move as well in the same turn. Standing still, the penalty is -1. Take away both hands, required for using a slingshot for instance, and the penalty is -4 (or -2 if the character doesn't move). On a roll of 1, regardless of Wild Die, the hero falls into the water as above.

The riverbed isn't flat, either—it's covered in stones and boulders. When a hero draws a Club for his action card, his stilts enter a patch of treacherous ground. The penalty on the table below is applied to his Agility roll.

Card	Modifier
Deuce	-6
3-6	-4
7-10	-2
Jack	-1
Ace	0

Where are the cops in all this? They're searching for a boat. If it looks like the villain is about to escape, have the cops appear ahead of him (having found a boat and crossed the river quickly). The boss drops back 1d4+1 Range Increments, allowing the kids to continue their chase.

!! **The Boss:** Treat him as a goon Henchman.

!! **Goon (1):** See page 10.

AFTERMATH

Hopefully the fight ends with the characters victorious. Once the villains are cuffed, they admit their crime.

"Yeah," snarls the boss, "we stole the diamond. A few of the boys bid in the Museum just before it closed. We knew nobody would detect the theft until the next morning. By then we'd be a long way from here and looking to retire. And we'd

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have gotten away with it if it wasn't for those meddling..."

"Ah, right," says the senior policeman, "that's enough talk from you lot! Take them away and book them, Danny. As for you youngsters," he says, turning to face you, "I reckon you've done your parents proud today."

Before the heroes leave town for their country life, they are contacted by a representative of the Boston Natural History Museum. He rewards each character with \$25 (a goodly sum for the age) and thanks them profusely for their assistance. The Boston Herald also interviews the party, and they make the front page!

Happy holidays from everyone at Triple Ace Games!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CITY KIDS

City kids consider themselves savvier than their country cousins, who are a little "backward" in their opinion. They're prepared to "defend their turf" with fists, if necessary. Note that because the kids are Young, they earn a benny each.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Loyal, Young

Edges: —

Gear: —

POLICEMAN

Stereotyping may be politically incorrect, but this is pulp, and certain stereotypes are part of the genre. In this case, it's the Irish policeman with the thick brogue.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6

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

Edges & Hindrances: —

Gear: Baton (Str+d4), handcuffs

ARMORED GOON

The thug has a -2 encumbrance penalty due to the bulky armor. Modifiers are included in his stat block, for convenience. Remember, damage is *not* a trait roll, so that is unaffected. The armored goon is a Henchman, so he has three wound levels but no Wild Die.

Attributes: Agility d6-2, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength

d6-2, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8-2, Intimidation d8, Notice d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (3)

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Mean

Edges: —

Gear: Plate armor (+3), spiked mace (Str+d6+1)

GOONS

Most of these goons are mere Extras. One, the boss, is a Henchman.

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

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

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

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Mean

Edges: —

Gear: Revolver (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6)

INSECT SWARM

The insects aren't dangerous, but they are creepy. They fill a Medium Burst Template.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: 2d6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- * **Bugs:** Nonviolent, the bugs are nonetheless scary to young kids and adults alike. Any hero caught under the template as it moves must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken as he frantically tries to flick away the insects and creepy-crawlies.
- * **Split:** When the swarm is first wounded, it splits into two Small Burst Template swarms. The Toughness of each swarm is lowered by -2 (i.e. to 5). When these swarms take a wound, they are dispersed and become ineffective.
- * **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the swarm is composed of hundreds of tiny bugs, cutting, piercing, and energy weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally. Stomping does Str damage each round.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

BRENT HARDCASTLE

Brent has grown up on the farm where his dad works as a laborer. A rough-and-tumble lad, he prefers to solve problems through action and fisticuffs, not idle thought. He's currently the school slingshot champion, an honorary title handed down by his fellow students, but one of which he is very proud.

THE TALE OF THE FABULOUS FOUR

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

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Notice d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d4

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

Hindrances: Arrogant, Loyal, Young

Edges: Ambidextrous, Luck

Gear: Slingshot (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d4, RoF 1), handful of stones, pack of gum, packed lunch, \$1

SAMANTHA HARDCASTLE

Sam is Brent's kid sister (only a year difference). Studious and well-read, she has aspirations of becoming a novelist one day. Although her family isn't wealthy by any stretch of the imagination, Sam has an extensive library, thanks to her teacher, Mrs. Wintermore, who has spotted her talent and is nurturing it. Sam's freckles, long pigtails, and thick glasses give her a dorky appearance.

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Investigation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Bad Eyes (Minor), Curious, Stubborn, Young

Edges: Investigator

Gear: Glasses, pad and pencil, packed lunch, \$0.50

OSCAR WHITEFIELD

Oscar is your stereotypical "fat kid," but with one difference—he isn't bullied by his peers. Rather, Oscar is the school bully. He runs a "protection racket"—fellow students hand over their lunches and pocket money, or he pounds them senseless. Of course, to his parents he is their darling angel, and can do no wrong.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Streetwise d4, Throwing d6

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

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor: obsessed with food), Mean, Obese, Young

Edges: Sweep

Gear: Note from his mother excusing him from strenuous activity, three packed lunches, \$3

NANCY HESTLETWAIN

The daughter of the town doctor and the mayor's eldest child, Nancy is richer than the other kids in her school. She owns a pony, takes violin lessons, is a star gymnast (private lessons), and has even ridden in her daddy's car (one of the few in town). Nancy has a crush

on Brent, though it isn't reciprocated—Brent would rather be playing than wasting time with girls.

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

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d4, Healing d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d6, Riding d4, Taunt d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Big Mouth, Pacifist (Minor), Young

Edges: Acrobat

Gear: First aid kit, borrowed stethoscope (for playing "doctors and nurses"), packed lunch, \$10

ARTHUR ABRAHAM

Arthur's dad is an avid reader of the works of H. G. Wells and Jules Verne, and Arthur has followed suit. Using his dad's tools, Arthur has constructed a "ray gun." Actually it's just a flashlight with a powerful strobe effect, but the lad isn't having any of that.

Note: Arthur's flashlight is his sole gizmo and uses *one* set of Power Points (he's only a kid, not a genius). Due to the device's experimental nature, it cannot recharge during play—once the Power Points are spent, they are gone. The *stun* power uses a Cone Template, ignoring the usual rules on Range and the Medium Burst Template.

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Optics) d6, Notice d4, Repair d6, Stealth d4, Weird Science d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Cautious, Delusional (Minor; thinks he has invented a ray gun), Young

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), New Power (*stun*), Power Points

Powers: *Light*, *stun* (15 Power Points)

Gear: "Flashlight," screwdriver, packed lunch, \$0.75

LUCIUS MUNROE

In front of adults, Lucius is a perfect child—well-mannered, sociable, and very cute. But his friends know different. If there's trouble in town, you can bet Lucius is involved somehow. Many a lad has been rewarded with a cuff round the ear for stealing apples or candy at Lucius' prompting, but Lucius has a knack for avoiding danger.

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

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Lockpicking d6, Persuasion d4, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Overconfident, Phobia (Minor: Claustrophobia), Young

Edges: Attractive, Danger Sense, Fleet Footed

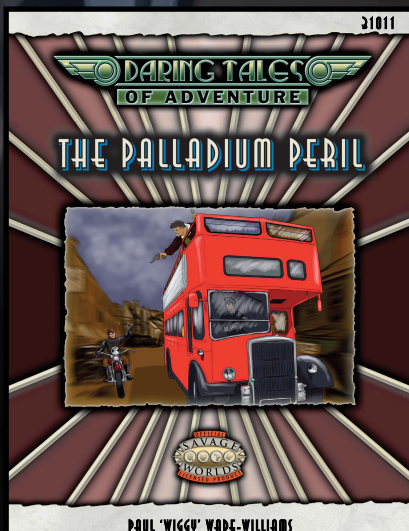
Gear: Homemade lockpicks, packed lunch, stolen bubblegum and assorted candy, \$1.25

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