ADVENTURE DESIGN

Put together a folder or 4-8 page mini-notebook of scraps of texts, images, rubbings, maps, diagrams, and speculations about one or more relics, secrets, lost cities, or other ancient wonders. Most likely, the documents simulate a much larger body of research, but it needs to be short enough that it’s easy to flip through in play. Plus you may add new documents to the booklet as you go. In fact, players—especially the one currently in possession of the documents—should feel free to keep notes on what they’ve discovered and add them.

When you put the folder or notebook together, try to set up interesting ideas and questions, but don’t think too far ahead in terms of linking things together. Write down some speculations by the previous owner of these materials, but the collector doesn’t describe a trail straight to the treasure. Maybe they’re already familiar with the face-down deck or pule to inspire what you discover. Typically this happens when you explore ruins or old buildings, but it could happen in libraries or any location. Often the PCs may have to work their way through a puzzle, trap, stretch of forbidden terrain, or other obstacle in order to move still deeper.

Once this scene if over, shift back to the wreck of a situation in the “present” and play out a little more. From here on out, whenever there’s a break in the action, allow the PCs to choose the next scene in the “flashback” portions (which don’t always follow a return to the present, but can continue on from previous flashbacks). Soon, the flashbacks will catch up with the “present,” and the crew will move forward from there, but that can’t happen until the players choose to frame the next scene in the “present.”

SECRETS & IMAGES

When you sit down to play the game, spread the adventure materials on the table and pass a handful of blank index cards or scraps of paper to each of the players. Have everyone, including the GM, write down imagery inspired by the materials and the theme of the adventure, specifically things that they might uncover or come across when they delve into these mysteries. These could be a simple as a single gold thread or a human skull, missing the lower jaw or as epic as a cavern filled with mercury or a shard of the true cross. When you have a few dozen cards, shuffle them up and place them face down next to the GM.

CHOOSING CHARACTERS

Currently there are only three PCs to choose from: Téte, Jo, and C-P. Eventually there will be a number of playable rivals and allies as well. Choose a PC to play, review their stats and specialties, and work through their history and background, asking questions of the GM and other PCs as needed or directed.

THE FIRST THREE SCENES

The game begins in media res, with the PCs scattered about the wreckage of a situation, having just regained consciousness or woken up. Maybe you’re all kept in separate cells in a Saudi jail that is currently under attack by an uncertain force and have to find each other and escape to safety amidst the chaos. Maybe you’re in the wreckage of a plane that crashed in the middle of the Serengeti and have to find the people who parachuted out. Something like that. Begin with this situation and play out some of it, getting used to how the moves, stats, harm, and specialties work.

But then there’s flashbacks, right? How the heck did you end up here, and where do you need to go next? For the next scene—breaking at some opportune moment in the action—play out the PCs finding, stealing, being given, or otherwise acquiring the folder or notebook documents. Most likely, you are hired by some shady dude to find some lost treasure (or acquire a found treasure from a museum or private collection).

Once this scene is over, shift back to the wreck of a situation in the “present” and play out a little more. From here on out, whenever there’s a break in the action, allow the PCs to choose the next scene in the “flashback” portions (which don’t always follow a return to the present, but can continue on from previous flashbacks). Soon, the flashbacks will catch up with the “present,” and the crew will move forward from there, but that can’t happen until the players choose to frame the next scene in the “present.”

CHOOSING SCENES

We all know that the ultimate goal is finding the treasure, but nobody (including the GM) knows how we’re going to end up getting there or what we’ll find. That’s what we play to find out. Maybe we’ll have to rob the Vatican or sneak into North Korea in order to unlock the secrets. But each thing we do moves us one step closer and makes the picture clearer.

In most normal circumstances (aside from a few early scenes) the players should take turns deciding what scene happens next. Where are they and what are they trying to accomplish? Choose from the following list:

• share a moment with a teammate or NPC
• converse with or press them for information
• investigate an interesting location
• acquire something from its resting place
• chase after or escape from them
• a fight, gun fight, or other struggle

On a particularly choice failure, series of failures and half-successes, or when you choose to save yourselves by choosing love over gold (see below), the GM can make a hard move by changing the current scene to a different type. For example, if you are having a chase scene, maybe the GM turns it into a conversation scene by having your pursuers capture and blackmail you into giving up valuable information. Or they might hold an NPC or PC hostage and force you to acquire something for them.

DELVING DEEPER

Whenever the crew delves into a deeper level of the mystery, the GM will draw cards or scraps from the face-down deck or pule to inspire what you discover. Typically this happens when you explore ruins or old buildings, but it could happen in libraries or any location. Often the PCs may have to work their way through a puzzle, trap, stretch of forbidden terrain, or other obstacle in order to move still deeper.

When they move into a new space, use the imagery on the cards to inspire what’s there. If it doesn’t make sense that the image itself would be present in the current location, consider having an illustration, photo, or some other sign of the image appear (or just draw a different image from the deck).

Secrets that you encounter in places where other people regularly are should be strange and interesting but non-supernatural. The further you get away from what others have seen and where others have been—in lost /hidden places, deep underground, or in extremely remote locations—things become more magical.

FRONTS + THREATS

As you play, the GM should freely invent rivals or threats that seek to take advantage of the PCs, impede their search, or rob them of their treasures (both the information they possess and the artifacts they collect). In a game about the lost city of Atlantis, for example, these might be: a Somali warlord who seeks sunken treasure off horn of Africa, several groups of pirates, UN anti-piracy operations, the total breakdown of order in Somalia, descendants of Atlanteans who have a weird global freemasonry, other fortune hunters, plus all the dangers of Atlantis and being on the bottom of the sea. Bring these into play as appropriate or when you have the chance to choose the type of scene.

HARM

When you inflict or take harm, it’s as established. This isn’t a GM move, but something that everybody holds each other accountable for. When you’re not sure what harm something inflicts (Are they shot in the arm or the eye? Does the explosion blow you to pieces or throw you 30 yards?) and it matters (it may not matter for every one of the crimelord’s thugs or for each shot that hits your getaway boat), either consult the Terminate stat/rull of a PC or roll a die (higher is worse for the sufferer).

LOVE OVER GOLD

When you’re faced with damage that you don’t want to take, you can decide to let the GM alter the current scene type instead. Whatever harm you were about to take, that doesn’t happen or is diminished by a lucky break. Bullets graze you, the explosion leaves you stunned, or you grab on with a couple of fingers before you fall.

You can only avoid harm by acting out of love (for other human beings, for the nature, for something higher) rather than a desire for gold (artifacts, material things). If you choose gold—which you do only at a climactic moment or as your development suggests—the fiction may kill you (punishment or tragedy). If you choose love, you have to abandon your greed and turn towards compassion and the care of others.

The GM’s scene adjustment can’t kill you, but anything else is fair. Often the bad guys show up, your companions are put in danger, or you get captured, imprisoned, or put in a really bad spot. Sometimes you get knocked unconscious and skip ahead several hours, days, or weeks; your PC may go missing and be presumed dead.
Teté's family was one of many that left the Philippines to escape the New Society of President Marcos. She was born eight months later, in Mexico. Her family had worked in newspapers for generations, but her parents and a smattering of uncles, aunts, and cousins eventually settled into the tourism industry of the Caribbean coast, moving between contracts as hotel workers, pool cleaners, and bartenders at a variety of lavish fenced-off resorts.

When she was old enough, her family paid for her to earn scuba certification so she could take more lucrative jobs leading tour groups on ocean expeditions. When she found her first unexplored shipwreck, though, it was love at first sight. That, plus a handful of eye-opening liaisons with female tourists, convinced her that the life of an obedient Catholic daughter was not for her.

Teté is a natural and has memorized more obscure facts about rumored lost treasures than most would-be hunters encounter in their lifetimes. This whole thing is her idea, about rumored lost treasures than most would-be hunters ever heard of. She pretty much runs the show.

Teté’s Specialty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPLOIT</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speciality: HISTORY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSUADE</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFILTRATE</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAVERSE</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speciality: WATER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERMINATE</td>
<td>+0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scene Types**

- Share a moment with a teammate or NPC
- Converse with or press them for information
- Investigate an interesting location
- Acquire something from its resting place
- Chase after or escape from them
- Fight, gun fight, or other struggle

**Asking Questions**

When you examine something, ask questions about it equal to the appropriate stat. If you have a 0 in a stat or have used up your questions, you can still ask questions, but the GM is under no obligation to answer or be helpful.

**Rolling for Uncertainty**

When you attempt something risky or uncertain, roll the appropriate stat (or +0). On a 10+, you do it without complications; on a 7-9, you do it but there's some cost, compromise, choice, or harm; on a 6 or less, things don't go well.

**Documents & Specialties**

When you examine something, press questions about it equal to the appropriate stat. If you have a 0 in a stat or have used up your questions, you can still ask questions, but the GM is under no obligation to answer or be helpful.

**Making Stipulations**

Before you roll, you can make stipulations up to the value of the stat being rolled. On a 10+, they all happen; on a 7-9, all but 1; on a 6-, you overreach. Without stipulations, you leave it up to the GM.

**Exploit**

When you examine an object or place, ask:
- Who's responsible for creating this?
- How did it come to be this way?
- How might I make use of this?
- What's wrong and how might I fix it?

When you make use of it, make these stipulations:
- Nothing important breaks.
- It does exactly what you intended.
- You can undo it later, if you want.
- You don't draw any undue attention.
- The path forward is clear.

**Persuade**

When you interact with other people, ask:
- Are they telling the truth?
- What are they really feeling?
- What do they intend to do?
- What do they wish I'd do?
- How could I get them to ____?

When you press them, make these stipulations:
- They tell you what you want to know.
- They give you something they think you want.
- You don't have to keep any promises.
- They have to roll-Persuade to refuse.

**Infilitrate**

When you surveil a target or location, ask:
- What's my best way in/out/past/through?
- Where/how are they most vulnerable?
- Who's in control here?

When you go to work, make these stipulations:
- No one will notice anything's wrong yet.
- You draw the enemy out of position.
- You take someone out along the way.

**Traverse**

When you survey a rough stretch of terrain, ask the GM to sketch out a map and then, in conversation about it, ask them to point out the following things (can pick the same thing multiple times):
- One possible route across
- A handhold, gap, or other physical feature
- A dangerous obstacle to be careful of
- A risk you can take to do it faster/better

When you give it a go, make these stipulations:
- You jump across this gap here.
- You head this way instead of that way.
- You jump across this gap here.

When you look to eliminate some problems, ask:
- A question from the Infilitrate list
- How can I unleash some serious destruction?

When you take them out, make these stipulations:
- You impress, dismay, or frighten them.
- They barricade themselves securely in.
- They get the hell out of your way.
- They back off, hands raised, or flee.
- They have to roll-Persuade to refuse.

**Terminate**

When you look to eliminate some problems, ask:
- A question from the Infilitrate list
- How can I unleash some serious destruction?

When you take them out, make these stipulations:
- You impress, dismay, or frighten them.
- They barricade themselves securely in.
- They get the hell out of your way.
- They back off, hands raised, or flee.
- You inflict terrible harm.

**Harm Suffered**

Ignore harm by choosing LOVE over GOLD.
After her mother died in an automobile accident when she was small, her father—an officer in the French military—moved the family (including her older bother Alphonse) from Toulouse to Dakar, where he accepted a job training and advising the Senegalese armed forces. Alphonse eventually entered the French military, and Jo was sent away to boarding school in Montreal after her father discovered she had a black boyfriend (her 4th). After finishing a couple years of college at the American University in Cairo, she dropped out to sign with a military contractor and take part in Desert Storm. However, she found the company’s culture to be pathologically stupid and left to find other uses for her wanderlust, ambition, and comfort with violence.

Jo worked a few freelance mercenary jobs before she met Charles-Patrick on a hostage-rescue gig in Cambodia, beginning their long and torrid off-again on-again relationship. It wasn’t until they met Tete, however, that they found their true direction in life: racing against and fighting off other ill-tempered miscreants for the last of the world’s remaining buried treasures.

Ask each of the other players at least one question:

• You owe me and I don’t let you forget it. What for?
• Why do you want me to break up with C-P?
• You inflect terrible harm.
• You impress, dismay, or frighten them.
• They give you something they think you want.
• You don’t have to keep any promises.
• They have to roll +Persuade to refuse.

When you press them, make these stipulations:

• They tell you what you want to know.
• They give you something they think you want.
• You don’t have to keep any promises.
• They have to roll +Persuade to refuse.

When you surveil a target or location, ask:

• What’s my best way in/out/past/through?
• Where/how are they most vulnerable?
• Who’s in control here?

When you go to work, make these stipulations:

• No one will notice anything’s wrong yet.
• You draw the enemy out of position.
• You take someone out along the way.

When you surveil a target or location, ask:

• Who’s responsible for creating this?
• What are they really feeling?
• What do they wish I’d do?
• What for?

When you make use of it, make these stipulations:

• Nothing important breaks.
• It does exactly what you intended.
• You can undo it later, if you want.
• You don’t draw any undue attention.
• The path forward is clear.

When you examine an object or place, ask:

• Whos responsible for creating this?
• How did it come to be this way?
• How might I make use of this?
• What’s wrong and how might I fix it?

When you make use of it, make these stipulations:

• Nothing important breaks.
• It does exactly what you intended.
• You can undo it later, if you want.
• You don’t draw any undue attention.
• The path forward is clear.

When you examine something, ask questions about it equal to the appropriate stat. If you have a 0 in a stat or have used up your questions, you can still ask questions, but the GM is under no obligation to answer or be helpful.

When you draw on documents in your folder or notebook, including stuff you added, you may ask a free question or take +1 forward when rolling to take advantage of the information.

A specialty gives you 1 additional question for free or a +1 to your stat when it applies.

When you attempt something risky or uncertain, roll +the appropriate stat (or +0). On a 10+, you do it without complications; on a 7-9, you do it but there’s some cost, compromise, choice, or harm; on a 6 or less, things don’t go well.

When you press them, make these stipulations:

• They tell you what you want to know.
• They give you something they think you want.
• You don’t have to keep any promises.
• They have to roll +Persuade to refuse.

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• What’s my best way in/out/past/through?
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When you examine an object or place, ask:

• Who’s responsible for creating this?
• How did it come to be this way?
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• What’s wrong and how might I fix it?

When you make use of it, make these stipulations:

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• It does exactly what you intended.
• You can undo it later, if you want.
• You don’t draw any undue attention.
• The path forward is clear.
C-P was born in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) but spent most of his youth as an exile from his war-torn homeland. Named for two of his uncles—Charles & Patrick—who were killed in the violence, C-P spent time in Mozambique, South Africa, Hong Kong, and Indonesia, working as an automobile worker and mechanic before he was recruited into less legal work. After running errands and deliveries for local gangs and smugglers, C-P decided to get out but only made it as far as a job at a quazi-legal security firm based out of Macau. At least it was enough that he could send checks back to his immediate family, most of whom where now conducting grey-market business in Mauritius.

He met Jo when they were both hired for a hostage-rescue gig in Cambodia, beginning their long and torrid off-again on-again relationship. It wasn’t until they met Teté, however, that they found their true direction in life: racing against and fighting off other ill-tempered miscreants for the last of the world’s remaining buried treasures.

Ask each of the other players at least one question:
- You think I’m the best thing that ever happened to Jo.
- What do you suspect my true motivations are?
- How might I make use of this?
- How can I unleash some serious destruction?
- You don’t have to keep any promises.
- You can undo it later, if you want.
- How could I get them to _____?

When you examine something, ask questions about it equal to the appropriate stat. If you have a 0 in a stat or have used up your questions, you can still ask questions, but the GM is under no obligation to answer or be helpful.

Rolling for Uncertainty
When you attempt something risky or uncertain, roll + the appropriate stat (or +0). On a 10+, you do it without complications; on a 7-9, you do it but there’s some cost, compromise, choice, or harm; on a 6 or less, things don’t go well.

Documents & Specialties
When you draw on documents in your folder or notebook, including stuff you added, you may ask a free question or take +1 forward when rolling to take advantage of the information.

When you examine an object or place, ask:
- Who's responsible for creating this?
- How did it come to be this way?
- What do I wish I'd do?
- What's my best way in/out/past/through?
- Where/how are they most vulnerable?
- What's my best way in/out/past/through?
- How can I unleash some serious destruction?

Making stipulations
Before you roll, you can make stipulations up to the value of the stat being rolled. On a 10+, they all happen; on a 7-9, all but 1; on a 6-, you overreach. Without stipulations, you leave it up to the GM.

When you press them, make these stipulations:
- They tell you what you want to know.
- They give you something they think you want.
- You don’t have to keep any promises.
- They have to roll + Persuade to refuse.

When you surveil a target or location, ask:
- What's my best way in/out/past/through?
- Where/how are they most vulnerable?
- What's my best way in/out/past/through?
- How can I unleash some serious destruction?

When you give it a go, make these stipulations:
- You jump across this gap here.
- You head this way instead of that way.
- You head this way instead of that way.
- You impress, dismay, or frighten them.
- You don't have to keep any promises.
- You can undo it later, if you want.

When you go to work, make these stipulations:
- No one will notice anything's wrong yet.
- You draw the enemy out of position.
- You take someone out along the way.

When you interact with other people, ask:
- Are they telling the truth?
- What are they really feeling?
- What do they intend to do?
- How could I get them to _____?

When you surveil a target or location, ask:
- What's my best way in/out/past/through?
- Where/how are they most vulnerable?
- What should I be on the lookout for?
- Who's in control here?

When you give it a go, make these stipulations:
- You jump across this gap here.
- You head this way instead of that way.
- You shave some time by doing this.

When you examine an object or place, ask:
- Who's responsible for creating this?
- How did it come to be this way?
- What do I wish I'd do?
- What's my best way in/out/past/through?
- Where/how are they most vulnerable?
- What's my best way in/out/past/through?
Jean-François is the descendent of legendary French Egyptologist Auguste Mariette, living in the shadow of that legacy and desperately wanting to make an even greater discovery. Depending on who he's trying to impress, his nickname comes either from Ramses II or Ramfis, the high priest in the opera Aïda (which Auguste worked on).

Rams knows Jo Dubois from her time at the American University in Cairo, where they were briefly an item before Jo dropped out to go off to war. In some part of his mind, Rams still hopes to get her to come back to academia, to show her that she still had a place and a name among the intellectual elite she had impressed early on.

He currently overseas a rival, more academically oriented treasure-hunting group semi-associated with the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo (though their interest goes far beyond Egypt). They do all sorts of acquisitions of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo (though their interest treasure-hunting group semi-associated with the Museum still hopes to get her to come back to academia, to show her that she still had a place and a name among the intellectual elite she had impressed early on.

When you make use of it, make these stipulations:

- Nothing important breaks.
- It does exactly what you intended.
- You can undo it later, if you want.
- You don't draw any undue attention.
- The path forward is clear.

When you attempt something risky or uncertain, roll+the appropriate stat (or +0). On a 10+, you do it without complications; on a 7-9, you do it but there's some cost, compromise, choice, or harm; on a 6 or less, things don't go well.

When you examine something, ask questions about it equal to the appropriate stat. If you have a 0 in a stat or have used up your questions, you can still ask questions, but the GM is under no obligation to answer or be helpful.

When you press them, make these stipulations:

- They tell you what you want to know.
- They give you something they think you want.
- You don't have to keep any promises.
- They have to roll+Persuade to refuse.