

Enemies On The Horizon

**An Any-System Key
Pulp Egypt Scenario**

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Credits

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Any-System Key

You can use this adventure with your favorite roleplaying game system. Just check out page 16 and use the rules there to match descriptive gamemaster character abilities and task difficulties to corresponding values in your preferred game. Use the customizable stat forms found in the adventure margins to note values for character stats in your game. Visit the *Any-System Key* page at griffonpubstudio.com/NESys.html for examples of customizing stats into those of your favorite game system.

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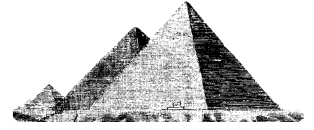
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When Bedouin raiders kidnap their beautiful photographer, the members of the Hartwell College archaeological expedition set out on a heroic desert chase that leads them to a long-lost temple where the “Enemies of Pharaoh” wait for the right moment to strike.



The



Egyptian Gazette

CAIRO, THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 1935

2 piastres

NAZI AIRSHIP VISITS TRIPOLI

LZ-128 ON PUBLICITY TOUR

TRIPOLI, March 1—The latest German airship docked outside Tripoli today amid a great crowd gathered to see the zeppelin on its tour of Mediterranean cities. LZ-128, named the “Friedrichshafen,” is on a goodwill tour to ports in nations allied with or neutral to Germany. Before landing at Tripoli LZ-128 stopped at Milan, Rome, and Naples. She is the sister ship to the celebrated “Graf Zeppelin,” which completed a much-publicized round-the-world flight in 1929.

“This airship stands as a monument to German engineering and industrial power,” said Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels in a prepared statement issued from Berlin. “It is a testament to the resilience of the German people and our dedication to technologies of the future.”

A cadre of Nazi Propaganda Ministry personnel aboard the airship worked the throngs gathered to see her land, handing

ZEPPELIN ‘FRIEDRICHSHAFEN’ LANDS IN LIBYA



out literature, answering questions about the airship’s design, and operation, and even inviting prominent citizens aboard for tours.

The German zeppelin service is using the Mediterranean tour to train LZ-128’s crew and put the airship through technical trials. The airship is 761 feet long and is kept aloft by more than five million cubic feet of hydrogen gas. The gondola contains the forward control compartment, a galley, lounge, and quarters for the propaganda officers traveling with the *Friedrichshafen*.

ZEPPELIN ENGINEER SAYS AIRSHIPS ARE SAFE

FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, March 3—In response to questions about the safety of airship travel in light of last month’s disastrous crash of the American dirigible “Macon” off the California coast, zeppelin designer Hugo Eckener issued a statement endorsing airships as the mode of transportation for the future.

“Zeppelins offer speed and comfort unparalleled by any other mode of transportation,” Eckener said. “The ‘Macon’ accident was regrettable, but simply serves to illustrate how technical vigilance and constant maintenance ensure safety aboard any airship.” The “Macon” crashed when sev-

eral helium gas cells ruptured and sent the airship plunging into the Pacific Ocean.

Eckener was ecstatic about the current tour of LZ-128. “Often, when people greet it so enthusiastically as it appears in the heavens,” he said, “I have felt as if they believed they were seeing it in a sign and symbol of lasting peace, or at least a symbol of the universal dream of lasting peace among peoples.

Eckener believes hydrogen is no less dangerous than helium when carefully used and monitored during airship flight. The Helium Control Act of 1927 prohibits the export of

Continued on Page Seven

EXPEDITION LOCKS TOMB

IRON GATE A PRECAUTION

BY ARCHIBALD LITTLEDALE

Special to the Gazette

SAKKARA, March 4—With permission from the Department of Antiquities, Hartwell College’s Mallory Expedition recently installed a locked, iron grate over the entrance to the recently discovered tomb of Henu-Akhet at Sakkara.

Archaeologists hope the measure deters potential tomb thieves and vandals. “We haven’t had any problems yet, aside from the initial opening of the tomb,” said Professor Elliott Hamilton of Hartwell College. “The locked gate simply serves as a precautionary measure.”

As expedition leader Hamilton holds the key while work progresses at the site. The Mallory Expedition discovered and opened the tomb last month. After defeating lethal

Continued on Page Five

ABYSSINIANS PROTEST ITALIAN AGGRESSION

TENSIONS RISE THROUGHOUT AFRICA

ROME, March 2—Premier Mussolini is reviewing an Abyssinian note calling Italians the aggressors in recent border conflicts. This note, Italian officials said, made the situation “very serious.”

Nevertheless, there appeared this evening to be less concern in government circles over the prospect of hostilities in Africa, although an authoritative source said Italy was prepared to spend about £500,000,000 to pursue and protect Italian interests in the region.

Introduction

Sakkara, March 1935—The characters belong to the Hartwell College Egyptian excavation formerly led by the late Professor Percy Mallory. (Use the character outlines provided on page 13 or make sure each hero has some connection to the expedition: bodyguard, student, assistant archaeologist, museum representative, driver, privileged observer.) Allow players to introduce their characters and describe their role in the dig. Give players copies of “The Egyptian Gazette” handout to set the mood and offer some information on the dig and contemporary events.

In their previous adventure, “The Charioteer’s Tomb,” they opened and explored the grave of an ancient general and transported the most valuable of treasures back to the expedition warehouse in Cairo. Since opening the tomb last month they’ve begun the meticulous work of recording the remaining artifacts in place and after removal, photographing the detailed wall paintings and hieroglyphics, and generally keeping copious accounts of everything they uncover. With Cairo a little more than an hour’s drive away and the security of the site constantly under threat, the expedition decided to work from its camp near the tomb. Each character has their own tent, with the chef in one and the supplies sheltered under another. A large tent provides an enclosed work area where expedition members clean and catalog artifacts and maintain journals detailing their work.

To aid in this process the expedition has hired a photographer based out of Cairo, Vera Doyle, an attractive young British woman who has solid knowledge of photography, drawing, and hieroglyphics. She gets along with everyone on the dig, charming the excavation staff, befriendin~~g~~g the *fellahin* workers, and impressing everyone with her professionalism and artistic talents. Her personal tent stands next to the thick-canvassed darkroom tent where she develops her film.

The expedition recently installed an iron grate over the entrance shaft to further ensure the tomb’s security at night and while they’re away from the encampment. An intimidating padlock deters even the most persistent tomb robbers. The single key usually rests in the hands of the chief archaeologist on the site; but tonight, while everyone else works late in camp, Miss Doyle has taken the key to open the grate and descend into the tomb to check some of her photographs and sketches against the original wall paintings. It’s getting late when one of the expedition members, laboring diligently in the work tent over some broken pottery, wonders aloud if Miss Doyle is all right. Anyone making a *Challenging notice* roll thinks they heard a muffled cry in the night and something topple over in the nearby photography tent.

Episode One: Abduction!

When the heroes emerge from the work tent to check on Miss Doyle, they spot two hulking Bedouin dressed in dark robes. One hauls the photographer’s still struggling body out of the tent, his huge hand claspin~~g~~g a cloth over her mouth and nose. The other spots the characters and whips out a machine gun! The heroes must quickly dive for cover before he lays down a cover fire with military efficiency. The momentary attack gives the two Bedouin time to disappear amidst the camp tents and nearby rocks, though the heroes can give chase and attempt to shoot them. The Bedouin retaliate with ruthless cunning, firing the machine gun only when advantageous in keeping the characters’ heads down, and otherwise using the cover of the vast Sakkara necropolis to their advantage.

Once the commotion has died down and they realize the Bedouin abductors have escaped, the heroes can examine Miss Doyle’s photography tent and the surrounding encampment for clues about the identity of her assailants and their motives. Anyone making a *Challenging notice* or *search* check spots several interesting items:



BEDOUIN ABDUCTOR (Boss)

Competent Skills:

- bluff* _____
- interrogate* _____
- notice* _____
- pilot* _____
- stealth* _____
- street smarts* _____

Expert Skills:

- drive* _____
- fight* _____
- navigate* _____
- tracraft* _____

Signature Skill:

- shoot* _____

Equipment:

- MP-35 submachine gun* _____
- knife* _____
- Bedouin robes* _____

“For to keep silent when one is attacked would mean provoking the enemy to violence.”

—*Instruction for King Merikare*

Chloroform: A mostly empty or evaporated bottle of chloroform sits in the sand near the tent entrance. The label indicates it was manufactured by a British medical company, though the bilingual English and Arabic text indicates it was probably used in an Egyptian hospital. Bedouin in North Africa do not have access to nor rarely use such medical chemicals.

Boot Prints: Examining the abductors’ boot prints around the encampment (assuming they weren’t obliterated in the fray) and leading off into the necropolis show they were well supplied with military grade footwear.

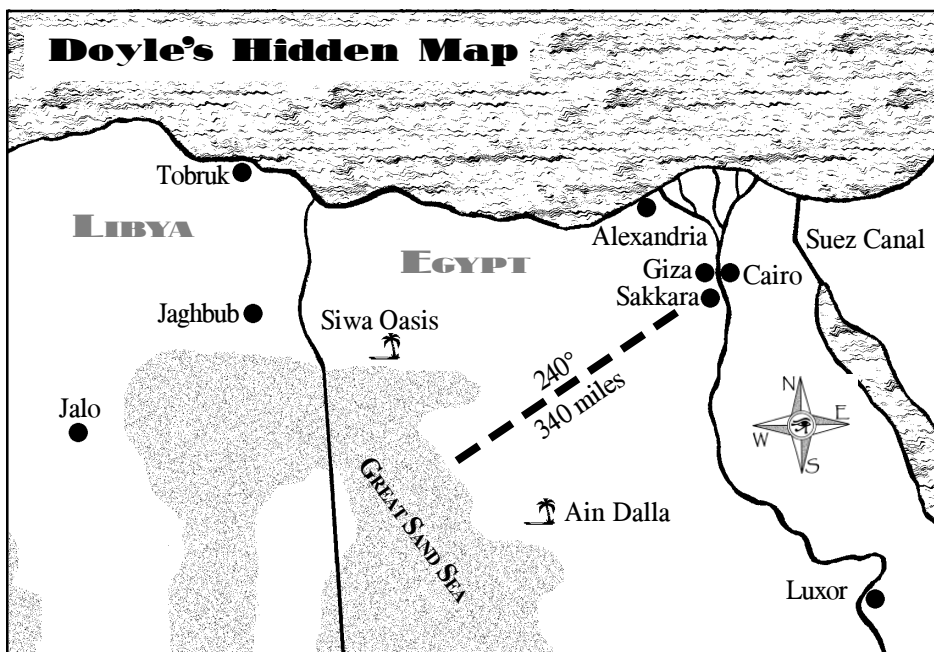
Doyle’s Journal: Examining Doyle’s tent reveals her journal, pen, and sketchbook sprawled on the floor with the rest of her belongings, probably kicked around during the abduction struggle. The photographer’s notebook contains written descriptions of the hieroglyphics and illustrations she’s examined referenced to pages in her nearby sketchbook (in which she’s rendered detailed areas of the tomb’s wall decorations). With a *Routine notice* roll, anyone with any familiarity with the tomb (particularly archaeological staff) spots an odd page of notes that doesn’t correspond with any page in the sketchbook. Unlike most other pages, which include written hieroglyphics side-by-side with their tentative translations, this page only includes the ancient signs with no English notes. To read the message a character must make a *Challenging hieroglyphics* roll or similar check to read ancient languages.

Pharaoh beware!
Your enemies lurk nearby waiting to strike your kingdom.
Set waits on the 240 horizon from your throne.
You must drive your chariots 340
To meet him on the Battlefield of the West.
Flames will reveal your path.

When translated, the numerical notations in the hieroglyphic message seem extremely awkward; those familiar with Egyptology or the ancient language realize they’re entirely inappropriate for the inscription. Anyone making a *Hard deduce* roll or similar intellectual test guesses that the numbers relate to navigational directions: “240 horizon from your throne” probably indicates a heading of 240 degrees from the capital, Cairo, and “chariots 340” possibly indicates the miles.

The reference to “flames” revealing the path seems odd; however, should anyone hold the journal page near an open flame or hot lantern, secret writing emerges from the paper showing a rough map of the area, with a dotted line leading south-southwest from Cairo to a point near the Great Sand Sea between the wells at Ain Dalla and Siwa Oasis, the exact course mentioned in the hieroglyphic text!

In fact Miss Doyle was not abducted by Bedouin, but by two Nazi agents disguised as the desert dwellers to conceal their true identity. The charming British photographer actually serves as a spy for the Inter-Services Liaison Department (the cover agency for MI-6 in Egypt). The Nazi spies are spiriting her away to a secret supply depot near the border



with Libya where they can interrogate her about her knowledge of planned Axis military activity in Egypt.

After some discussion the heroes realize they must go after her; no civilized gentleman could allow such assault and let the abductors get away, and Miss Doyle had the key to the grate guarding the tomb shaft (and dutifully locked it before she walked into the ambush). Give players encouraging the immediate chase some minor bonus they can use in the coming episodes related to their chivalry and heroic spirit.

Episode Two: Desert Chase

The heroes prepare to leave immediately to follow the fresh trail left by Miss Doyle's abductors and the course set out in her cryptic journal message. If they wait to leave much past dawn they risk losing the tracks or endangering Doyle's safety.

If they're organized the characters can gather and pack everything they need into the back of their lorry in an hour. Unfortunately they have no other means of transportation conveniently at hand; they'd have to go back to Cairo to find a suitable car for crossing the desert. If they could round up some camels they'd have more reliable transport, though they'd slow up the truck.

Supplies

The heroes have plenty of supplies (having just returned from a trip to Cairo in the past few days) and recently had maintenance done on their lorry.

Anyone with experience traveling through the desert (explorers, Bedouin, military personnel) who makes a *Routine navigation* or *survival* roll thinks to bring along all the reed mats they can gather from the floors of the tents. These give a bonus to "unsticking" the lorry should its tires get bogged down in soft sand among the desert dunes.

Those with connections with desert explorers might have access to a sun compass, enabling the lorry to stay on course by using the sun to determine the direction rather than a magnetic needle confused by the truck's metal body. This allows the heroes to better maintain direction and reduces their chances of straying from their charted course.

The heroes have the following items in their excavation equipment that might help them in their chase across the desert. Loss or damage to any of them could place their expedition in severe peril:

Food: These supplies of dry goods, canned food, and preserved meat can feed the group for one week.

Water: Several aluminum cans carry enough water to sustain the characters for one week and refresh the lorry's radiator once.

Compass: The group's single compass doesn't work near the lorry, whose metal construction confuses the needle. To use it properly, the heroes must halt their progress and move at least 30 feet from truck. This slows their pursuit as they stop frequently to check their bearing.

Theodolite: Any character with the *navigate* skill can use this surveying instrument in tracking the sun and stars to chart one's position in the desert. If used properly it offers a small bonus to related *navigate* rolls.

Watch: One character has an accurate pocket watch necessary for computing their progress by dead reckoning (figuring mileage based on one's speed). It's also required to accurately use the theodolite.

Binoculars: The clear desert air allows people to see far, and binoculars can help bring faraway objects into closer focus. The group has one pair that offers the user a small bonus on *notice* rolls.

Map: Since the expedition was more concerned with digging around Sakkara, it only has a rudimentary map of Egypt and the desert west of the Nile. It's barely adequate for navigating and doesn't offer much detail about geographical features in the area.

Difficulty Values

Routine _____

Challenging _____

Hard _____

Improbable _____



EXPEDITION LORRY

The expedition truck (or the British army lorry) has a cab up front for a driver and two passengers and a payload area covered with canvas stretched over several metal ribs. The truck isn't terribly nimble, but is sturdy enough to endure rough handling.

Top Speed: 35 mph

Driver: 1

Passengers: 10

“A coward is he who lets himself be driven away from his frontier.”

—*Instruction for King Merikare*

Tools: The heroes can gather plenty of shovels and other digging implements from their camp. Altogether they can muster one shovel for each character, two picks, a crowbar, and any number of reed baskets used to haul away sand. The shovels become especially helpful in unsticking the truck should it get bogged down in soft sand.

Tents: Since temperatures can reach both extremes in the desert, the heroes should bring along some camping equipment to afford shelter at night and during any daytime rest periods. The lorry doesn't provide adequate cover or shade for extended camping.

Desert Encounters

The heroes can make 200–240 miles per day assuming they drive for eight hours, maintain a speed of between 25 and 30 mph, and avoid any significant mishaps. At this rate they can reach the point specified in Doyle's cryptic note in the afternoon or early evening of the second day of driving.

Anyone making a *Challenging track* roll can follow the trail left by Doyle's assailants. Tracks can remain in the sand for years if undisturbed by storms or human intervention. Checking navigational information along the way confirms they're following the route specified in Doyle's journal.

The hero driving the lorry must make frequent *Challenging drive* skill checks to avoid mishaps on the varied desert terrain. The degree of failure might indicate how damaging and delaying the mishap. The truck could topple from the top of a dune if mishandled. Rough driving over difficult ground might damage the axles, tires, or even the engine. Avoiding patches of soft sand that can bog down the truck's tires takes practice and experience. If the lorry get stuck in soft sand the heroes must expend an hour's time and some elbow grease to coax it out onto firmer ground.

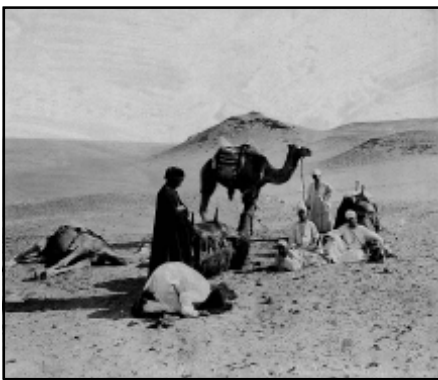
Several encounters might slow their progress, add some excitement to their journey, and possibly reveal more about Doyle's abductors and their ultimate destination:

Stowaway Cat: Several hours into their desert journey the heroes discover a friendly housecat among the cargo they've loaded into their truck. The cat nuzzles them and meows for attention, but otherwise doesn't prove a nuisance. If the characters evict the cat and exile it to almost certain death in the desert sands, they bring upon their heads a string of bad luck throughout the rest of the adventure. Should they befriend the cat and show it every kindness, it bestows upon them one miraculous rescue elsewhere in the scenario; a near miss with almost fatal danger that one could only chalk up to a cat's nine lives.

Glinting Reflection: Around midday the heroes spot a reflection on the horizon. Is it someone watching them with binoculars, or a clue left behind by Doyle? If they investigate they discover the corner of an aluminum water can sticking out of the sand and reflecting the sunlight. It's one of several abandoned here and hastily covered with sand, the remains of a supply dump left here by someone who knew its location and needed to replenish their water in a hurry. Anyone searching the refuse discovers a dainty handkerchief everyone recognizes as the one Vera Doyle used to mop her brow when working in the hot confines of the tomb.

Abandoned Camp: Near sunset on their first day of travel the heroes reach a remarkable geological formation called Mushroom Rock, a teetering boulder balanced on a smaller mound. The landmark stands within sight of the track leading from the Nile to Siwa Oasis to the northwest. Here the characters spot a pair of wandering camels still wearing their harness yet without any riders. They're milling about a dune where anyone making a *Routine track* roll can determine the Bedouin probably stopped at noon for relief from the midday sun; footprints, empty food tins, and cigarette butts betray their presence. If the characters aren't careful they might stumble upon a buried land mine that could escalate the mission's urgency if anyone sustains serious wounds. Tire tracks lead off from one end of the former campsite in the direction indicated by Doyle's message.

Bedouin Refugees: The next morning the heroes spot a small group of Bedouin riding camels heading their way. From its composition—weary women, starving children, and a few wounded men—and some compassionate interaction they learn that they are refugees



Italian military patrols have forced desert Bedouin from their territory in Libya and sent them wandering toward Egypt in search of aid.

fleeing their territory in the Libyan deserts in the face of frequent raids by Italian military forces establishing a presence at various towns and oases. If questioned about others traveling in the desert, they mention spotting a cloud of dust to the south of their course. Although it was moving westward, they assumed any vehicle in this area belonged to the belligerent Italian desert patrols and thus avoided it. They gladly accept any aid offered; the refugees hope to find a new, safer life under the protection of the British in Egypt.

Episode Three: Temple of Set

Toward the afternoon or evening of the second day the heroes spot a bluff on the horizon. A small and as-yet uncharted rocky plateau rises at the edge of the Great Sand Sea. The automobile tracks and the course indicated by Doyle's journal point directly to a point on the plateau where the heroes can clearly identify the remains of two colossal statues once carved into the cliff walls marking the entrance to a lost temple to the chaos god Set. The bulk of the statues sit as crumbled debris in the sand, leaving two haunting stone silhouettes on the cliff face to guard the dark temple gateway.

The tire tracks mysteriously disappear about 300 feet away from the temple entrance, apparently erased by an expert hand. Only with a *Hard track* roll can a character determine where the trail once led; around a nearby boulder where the car now sits beneath a well-placed camouflage net. Unless they explore the cliff face further, however, the heroes won't discover another fallen rock and more netting concealing a secret cave the Nazi's use as a garage for their car and a small biplane (see "Nazi Cave" below).

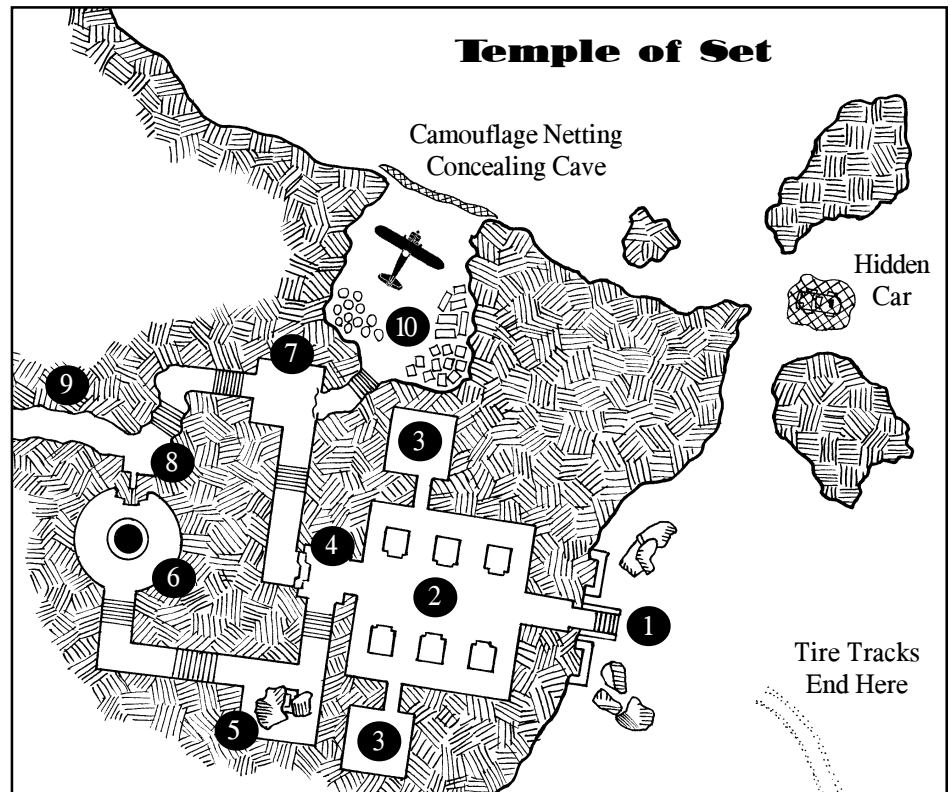
The heroes can explore the temple facade and interior in an effort to find and rescue Miss Doyle.

1. Ruined Facade: The temple facade consists of the base and backs of the two ruined statues (presumably of Set based on examination of the tumbled wreckage) and a short stairway leading to a once-decorated gateway. Careful examination near the temple entrance reveals evidence of boot prints matching those of the Bedouin abductors and signs that someone was dragged along against their will.

2. Great Hall: A short passage leads from the entry gate into a vast hall with six colossal statues of Set lining the walls like columns. Another doorway at the back leads deeper into the cliff temple. Hallways behind the figures contain inscriptions praising Set and relating stories of his many vile deeds throughout Egyptian mythology. Scuff marks still betray someone's recent passing through this area.

3. Storerooms: Two passages lead from the great hall's back corridors to storerooms once used to hold ceremonial gear and supplies to sustain worshippers on their long desert journeys. Only debris remains: crumbled stone from the walls and ceiling, broken pottery, and the smashed remains of several wooden crates with stenciled markings in German....

4. Gateway of Set: Here a smaller Set statue greets those proceeding deeper into the temple. One outstretched arm points to the left down another passage where stairs



“Behold, Set, the rebel, has come on his way, he has turned once more to Egypt, to plunder with his hand.”

—*Memphite Theology*

lead deeper into the rock. A *Hard search* roll reveals a slight breeze coming from the edges of the statue and a torn scrap of Miss Doyle’s clothing caught in the seam between the stone figure and the wall. Pulling the statue’s outstretched arm downward causes hidden counterweights to slide the statue to one side, revealing a narrow corridor leading to the secret vestry (see below).

5. Shrine: A huge stone block fell from the ceiling long ago, smashing the ceremonial shrine of set that stood on a low plinth in the center of this room. Bits of once-gilded wood and shards of a crushed black basalt figurine of Set lie beneath the undisturbed dust of the ages. Enough space still remains for the characters to slip around the fallen block and debris to reach the continuing passage on an adjacent wall, but evidence suggests nobody has passed this way in a long time.

6. Pit of Set: The stairs descend to a circular chamber containing another stone statue of Set placed against the far wall and what appears like a well in the center of the floor. The ancients painted the walls red—traditional color of Set—and covered them with hieroglyphic spells honoring the divinity and beseeching him for support in their cause. The well shaft plummets into darkness; a writhing mass of snakes awaits deep below in a damp cave near an underground cistern (whether or not the ancient priests dumped human sacrifices down there remains open to speculation). The statue seems to preside over the entire room; it’s open snout contains a hole leading deeper into the rock yet inaccessible from this chamber. The hole goes to the oracle niche, a secret room behind the statue reached from a concealed door in the gateway of Set.

7. Secret Vestry: The door concealed behind the statue in the gateway of Set leads to a set of stairs and a small chamber where ancient priests prepared to carry out rituals honoring the god. Little remains of the holy regalia, though the disturbed dust shows men in boots dragged an unwilling person through the room on their way downward. A tattered curtain of undeterminable origin hangs along one wall and conceals a passage leading upward to the Nazi cave (see below). An open corridor leads to more stairs delving deeper toward the oracle niche.

8. Oracle Niche: A niche in the subterranean passage offers access to the hole leading to the statue’s mouth in the pit of Set chamber. Ancient priests pronounced their god’s decrees from this chamber, speaking as the oracle of Set and directing their followers with seemingly divine commands.

9. Deeper Passage: The corridor leading from the secret vestry past the oracle niche continues until it reaches a cave entrance on the inside of the plateau (see “The Nazis Arrive” below). If they believe the heroes are following them, the two Nazi agents might set some kind of booby trap for them in the passageway’s tight confines: a hidden land mine, falling ceiling block, or a simple tripwire and pit.

10. Nazi Cave: With the entrance concealed by a large boulder and well-placed camouflage netting, this cave provides a storage area for vehicles and supplies the Nazi spies use on their occasional trips across the desert to Cairo. It also serves as a back door escape route should anything happen at the supply base the Italians and Germans have been within the plateau walls. A single-pilot biplane sits here (a lightly armed Henschel Hs 123), while several drums of petrol, crates of supplies, and aluminum water cans sit piled against the cavern wall. Unfortunately the two Nazi spies didn’t have time to pull the car in and conceal it, for they feared they couldn’t conceal the tire tracks well enough in the time they had.

HENSCHEL Hs 123

One of the first planes manufactured by the Nazis after re-arming, the Henschel was a single-seat biplane powered by a radial engine. Its fixed-forward machine guns and bomb load made it ideal for dive bombing and close support.

Top Speed: 180 mph

Range: 300 miles

Crew: 1

Ordnance: 7.92mm machine guns (2) firing forward, 200-lb. bombs under wings (4)

Episode Four: The Nazis Arrive

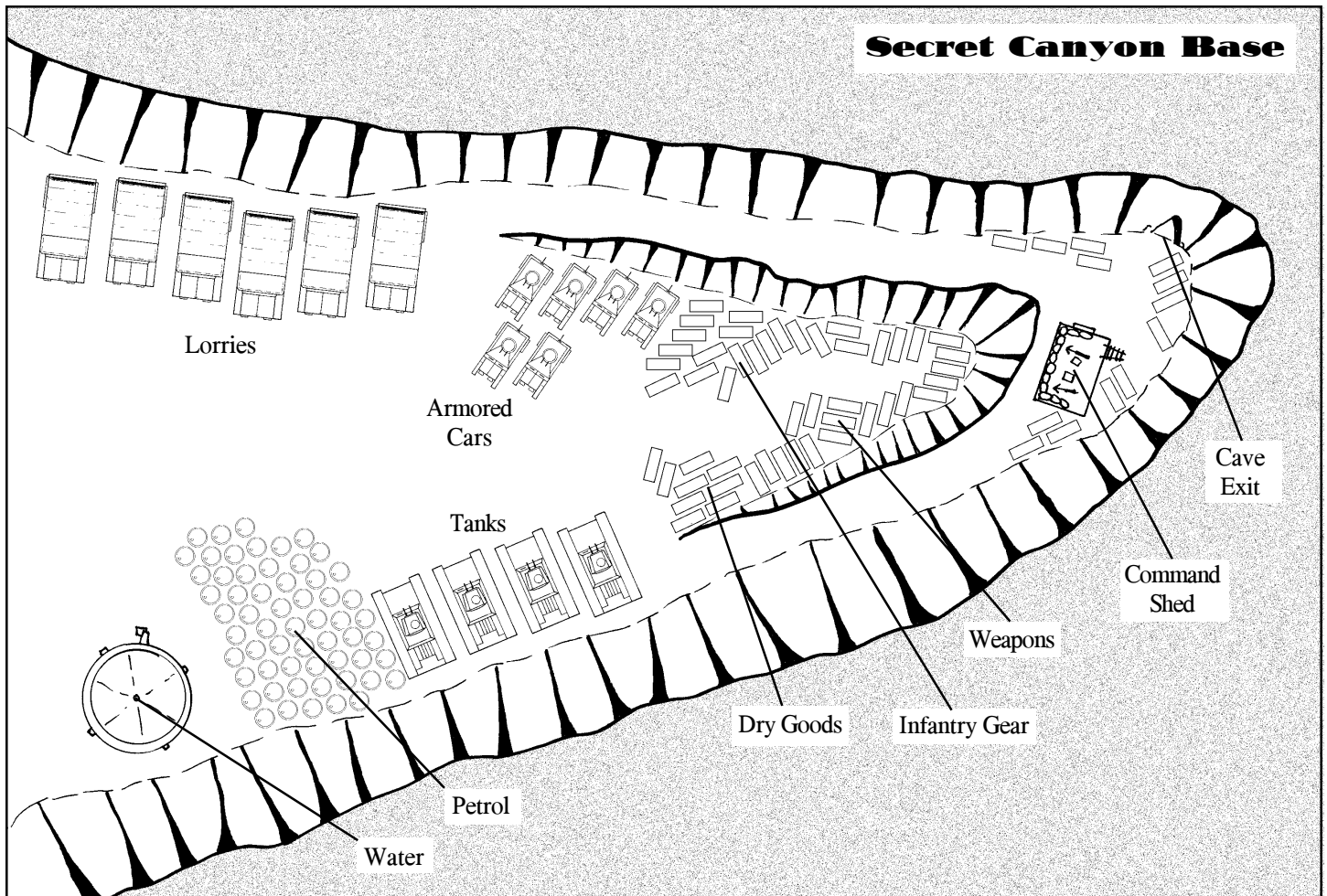
The heroes eventually emerge from the lost temple of Set into a vast canyon carved from the interior of the plateau. The Italian and German desert explorers who discovered it realized its strategic potential and converted it into a secret supply dump to support any military operations against British-controlled Egypt should war erupt. Engineers strung

Enemies on the Horizon

high-tension cables from the top of each ridge upon which they strung camouflage netting. From the sky it seems like one vast plateau with no ravine cutting into it. Although the secret temple offers a back-door exit to the east, the canyon exits to the west.

The cleared gully now serves as a vast supply dump filled with all kinds of equipment suitable for making a dash across the desert to seize key objectives along the Nile:

- 1. Petrol:** A pile of 55-gallon drums holds enough gasoline and diesel fuel to fill all the vehicles stored here twice. It represents more than enough petrol for this force to travel to the Nile and back again. Were it to ignite here in the canyon, it might easily destroy everything in sight (except the tanks) and set off subsidiary explosions from overheated ammunition and vehicle fuel tanks.
- 2. Water:** A large tank raised on a wooden framework holds enough water to more than fill the pile of German-manufactured plastic water cans tossed nearby. Any amount of sabotage to the scaffolding can topple the tank and spill the contents all across the sandy canyon floor; however, the amount of water stored here could not put out the fire caused by the exploding fuel dump.
- 3. Dry Goods:** A small mountain of crates and sacks contains preserved dry goods to feed any military force venturing from this supply depot, including canned vegetables, dried meat, and plenty of coffee and sugar.
- 4. Infantry Gear:** Equipment for individual soldiers—primarily camp supplies—stands stacked in orderly rows as if ready for distribution to a small force of troops. Each individual kit contains a web belt rig carrying empty magazine pouches, gas mask and gas sheet, entrenching tool, and two empty canteens, plus the standard German breadbag



satchel, and a rucksack with cooking gear and a canvas tent quarter (soldiers pooled four of these to construct one tent in the field).

5. Weapons: Orderly stacks of long wooden crates with imposing labels stenciled on their side next to the Nazi eagle and swastika design contain a variety of infantry weapons. Most hold long semi-automatic rifles used by most soldiers, and one box contains Luger pistols for use by officers. Several crates contain MP-34 submachineguns (like those used by Miss Doyle’s “Bedouin” abductors). Others hold weapons for heavier infantry support. The infamous German “potato masher” grenades fill nine crates, though a tenth also marked “Stielhandgrenate” (“grenades”) sits empty, its contents having been removed to arm the sandbagged roof of the command shed (in case anyone desperately goes for a grenade box, they have a 1 in 10 chance it’s the empty one). Six crates hold one standard German 5 centimeter light mortar each with plenty of rounds. Although six more crates have markings indicating they contain one MG-34 machinegun and six 500-round belts of ammunition, two of the boxes sit empty (like the grenades, two MG-34s now sit atop the sandbagged command shed). Crates filled with extra ammunition conveniently sit near those containing the corresponding weapons.

6. Lorries: Several trucks with canvas-covered payloads await use to transport troops and supplies across the desert including one outfitted as a mobile kitchen and another crammed with wireless gear to function as a mobile communications array (alas, nobody left any codebooks or cipher machines here...).

7. Armored Cars: Six Italian-designed armored cars specifically outfitted for desert operations sit along one of the canyon’s walls. These Autoblinda Lancia armored patrol cars serve the Italian colonial forces in both Libya and Ethiopia. The rugged vehicles mount armored plating and a small turret on light truck chassis. Two of the three machineguns sit in the turret, while the third faces the rear. Wire-cutting rails along the front surfaces allow it to more effectively crash through border fences.

8. Tanks: The Germans took the trouble to transport four light tanks across the desert. They stand in a loose line along one canyon wall. The PanzerKampfwagen I (“armored battle wagon”) represents the Nazi’s first tank manufactured since the re-armament, though it mounts only two machine guns in the turret.

9. Command Shed: A small wooden shed near the temple cave exit serves as a planning, command, and guard post. Several large windows look out from its elevated position across the entire camouflaged ravine. A ladder leads to the roof, which has been reinforced with a sandbag wall, two MG-34 with spare ammo belts, and a handful of grenades in case the canyon comes under attack. A wireless antenna emerges from the roof and rises upward to point just above the camouflage netting.

The heroes must emerge from the tunnel carefully, since the command shed stands only about 30 feet away. As they survey the secret supply depot, they hear several people in the shed arguing in German. The two Nazi spies who masqueraded as Bedouin to kidnap Doyle are grilling her about how much she knows about Axis plans to prepare for a cross-desert assault in case war breaks out. She sits tied to a chair while the two Nazis pace around the room shouting questions at her.

If they’re careful, the heroes might have a chance to formulate a plan to rescue Miss Doyle. Although the spies are somewhat preoccupied with the interrogation, the heroes must still take care sneaking around the supply depot. Any obvious disturbance—toppled crates, sliding rocks, gunshots, or rumbling tank engines—attracts the Nazis’ attention and incites them to immediate action; one heads up to the shed roof to cover the area with a machine gun while the other drops low in the shack and scans the area for threats.

If the Nazi spies don’t discover the heroes at some point, or the characters execute their rescue plan, they’re interrupted—at an appropriately dramatic point—by an ominous roar of engines above. Through the camouflage netting the heroes spot a huge zeppelin looming over the canyon. Nazi soldiers drop ropes from the control gondola and slide down, tearing through the netting with knives and rappelling down to the ravine floor. From their vantage point they’ve spotted the heroes and are making an emergency descent

**AUTOBLINDA LANCIA:
Armored Patrol Car**

Top Speed: 37 mph

Driver: 1

Passengers: 5

Weapons: 3 machineguns

Armor: 11mm (all around)

**PANZERKAMPFWAGEN I
(PzKPFW)**

Top Speed: 37 kmh

Range: 140 km

Crew: 2

Ordnance: 7.92mm machine guns (2)

Armor: 15mm (all around)

in assault mode to protect the security of their hidden base. Their arrival also alerts the Nazi spies if they haven't already detected the heroes' presence.

The zeppelin—LZ 128, the *Friedrichshafen*—was part of a Nazi aeronautical publicity stunt, touring cities around the Mediterranean Sea neutral or friendly to Germany. Its compliment of crewmen and passengers intended to support the public relations tour actually consists of trained SS commandos. Their true mission? To deploy half their unit here to maintain and protect the hidden depot in the event of war.

The soldiers land in a position between the heroes and the fuel dump. Start by deploying twice as many soldiers as characters and increase or decrease the number to keep a suspenseful fight going. To complicate matters both spies take positions atop the command shed and use the machine guns and grenades to further worry the characters from the flank. If the characters prove particularly resilient, several soldiers in the zeppelin's control gondola lean out the windows and start lobbing grenades at them or providing suppressive fire with machine guns. The ravine offers plenty of cover behind large rocks or piles of supplies; the heroes can also use any resources stockpiled here to their advantage. Don't forget that Doyle remains captive inside the command shed, offering an additional objective besides simple escape.

No climactic fight involving a supply depot packed with weapons, a well-guarded fuel dump, and a zeppelin hovering above would be complete without a climactic explosion. Although the soldiers know losing the petrol would destroy their plans, they defend it at great risk. Every stray shot in that direction threatens to set off the fuel, and any explosive lobbed into the pile of gasoline drums ignites the entire pile. Such a blast easily engulfs enough of the zeppelin to ignite its buoyant hydrogen gas cells, sending the entire airship crashing down the length of the canyon in flames. Any explosive successfully hitting the zeppelin (a well-thrown grenade or carefully aimed mortar round) has similar results.

When everything starts exploding, the heroes have only a short time to rescue Miss Doyle and escape the burning ravine. The cave passage leading back to the temple proves the easiest escape route, though the characters might try blasting out in one of the tanks (though this isn't particularly well-insulated from a flaming zeppelin).

Episode Five: Escape!

The characters have several options in fleeing the hidden base and returning to civilization. Depending how they left the situation in the canyon, they may still have to deal with one or both Nazi spies (if they managed to escape back through the temple passageway), crewmen escaping from the flaming zeppelin, or surviving commandos intent on revenge.

The Nazi cave accessible from the temple's secret corridors (or from outside if anyone notices it) holds enough supplies for a trip back to the Nile, even at a leisurely pace. Even though the heroes can't all fit in the biplane, they might decide for one character to pilot it; it serves as a good means to survey the damage they've done to the base, scout out any other enemy units in the area, and provide aerial reconnaissance for characters traveling on the ground.

If they can find the hidden car the Nazi spies used earlier, the characters might also commandeer that for their desert trek home. It's a bit more maneuverable than the lorry, and proves easier to "unstuck" from patches of soft sand. Two MP-35 submachine guns sit in the back seat. It can accommodate the entire group, though it's a tight fit with necessary supplies.

Their lorry could use more petrol and some additional supplies, but otherwise can transport them back to civilization reliably.

If escape seems too easy, throw in some additional complications. Any escaping Nazis might pursue them with whatever means possible, including the biplane. Commandos moving quickly could block their escape from the temple corridors or even set up an ambush among the giant statues and back passages in the temple's great hall.

NAZI COMMANDO (Henchman)

Competent Skills:

climb _____

dodge _____

fight _____

intimidate _____

notice _____

Expert Skill:

shoot _____

Equipment:

rifle _____

knife _____

Epilogue

After her rescue the heroes retrieve the key to the tomb gate's lock and can return to Sakkara and resume their excavations.

Miss Doyle admits she occasionally works for the British gathering information about potential threats, watching suspect foreigners in Egypt, and photographing points of interest to His Majesty's government. Her father served in the army for many years which fostered her strong sense of patriotism.

Doyle discourages them from discussing these events with anyone. Despite their astounding escapades, the heroes have a difficult time getting anyone to believe them, especially with British, German, and Italian authorities officially denying any knowledge of such a secret base on the Egyptian border. The remote location of the action almost guarantees nobody can truly verify their experiences. The Nazi propaganda machine releases a news story that the zeppelin LZ-129 veered off course after its stop in Tripoli and was presumably destroyed in a desert sandstorm, but that's the only official acknowledgement the characters receive of events related to their escapades.

Further Adventures

Events in "Enemies on the Horizon" can provide the basis for several subsequent scenarios.

Nazi Vengeance: Realizing the heroes suspect their plans to invade Egypt should war break out, the Nazis conspire to discredit, discourage, and even eliminate the Mallory Expedition to remove a threat to their activities in Egypt. Bad luck seemingly hits the excavation at every turn as allies and suppliers slowly disappear. The heroes must expose the Nazi spies working against them and regain their stature as a legitimate archaeological dig.

Set's Followers: Members of a cult dedicated to the ancient god Set hear rumors that the characters discovered an ancient desert temple and seek to find and appropriate it for their own sinister purposes (see the Legion of Set on page 83 in *Pulp Egypt*). They sneak into the heroes' camp looking for clues, ambush Vera Doyle and other characters to interrogate them about the temple's whereabouts, and mount an expedition of their own to restore the temple and use it to summon an apocalyptic manifestation of their god.

Mummy Rising: When the heroes get back to their dig and things finally return to their normal routine their fellahin workers, always the suspicious type, start murmuring about sighting an animated mummy haunting the area at night. Thefts, sabotage, and even a murder are blamed on the supernatural creature. The characters must investigate the mummy rumor and expose it as a fake; a burned Nazi spy or commando from the battle at the secret supply dump has infiltrated Egypt and, still bandaged and disfigured from his injuries, has undertaken a personal vendetta to destroy the expedition (gamemasters can link this with the "Nazi Vengeance" scenario hook above).

The Mallory Expedition

Use these six members of the Hartwell College's expedition, formerly under Professor Mallory's leadership, as templates for characters to use in this scenario or any Pulp Egypt adventure. Use them as written or adjust them to the campaign's themes and players' preference. Customize their skills using the *Any-System Key* found on page 12.

ELLIOTT HAMILTON

Occupation: Archaeologist

Age: 29 **Gender:** Male

Physical Description: Slight build, glasses, studious features, mop of blonde hair, dressed in tweed jacket and cap.

Background: As Professor Percy Mallory's protege, you've served as his assistant and colleague on various expeditions to Egypt. You're good friends, and spend many evenings smoking pipes and discussing theories about life in ancient times. You're a diligent scholar, studious academic, and meticulous archaeologist. You respect Mallory, even if you often sit off to the side taking on the daily tasks of the dig while he basks in the limelight. You're a quiet fellow used to listening more than barking orders.

You have a thorough understanding of Arab culture and of ancient Egyptian language and history. Thanks to generous financing from Hartwell College, you and the expedition rarely want for funds. This also ties you to the institution, obliging you to spend your time administering the expedition and overseeing the logistical aspects of its operations.

ELLIOTT HAMILTON (BOSS)

Competent Skills:

climb _____

dodge _____

persuade _____

Expert Skills:

deduce _____

search _____

speak Arabic _____

Signature Skill:

Egyptology _____

Equipment:

pocket knife _____

satchel _____

electric torch _____

magnifying glass _____

notepad, pencil, ruler, brush

MACK TANNER

Occupation: Wayward Adventurer

Age: 35 **Gender:** Male

Physical Description: Tall, well-built, with rugged good looks and a shock of wavy brown hair. Wears a leather jacket, brown fedora, and sturdy expedition boots.

Background: Your wanderlust and natural curiosity have led to a life of varied adventure across the globe: mountaineering in the Rockies, treasure hunting in India, smuggling in Italy, exploring along the Amazon. Along the way you've picked up a few useful skills that help you hold your own in a fight and get by using your wits. When you found yourself in Cairo looking for a job, you signed on with the Mallory archaeological expedition to Sakkara. Your varied past and often rough demeanor sometimes inhibit courteous interaction with others, but you get along well enough with your fellow expedition members. Although you have few academic skills that help with the dig, you oversee general security, make sure the native *fellaheen* workers stay in line, and keep the less worldly excavation personnel out of trouble.

MACK TANNER (BOSS)

Competent Skills:

navigate _____

notice _____

Expert Skills:

bluff _____

climb _____

dodge _____

fight _____

sneak _____

Signature Skill:

shoot _____

Equipment:

Webley revolver _____

compass _____

satchel _____

ISABELLE NEAVE (BOSS)

Competent Skills:

bluff _____*brawl* _____*charm* _____*dodge* _____*gamble* _____*navigation* _____*streetwise* _____

Expert Skills:

drive _____*ride* _____*shoot* _____

Signature Skill:

pilot _____

Equipment:

Derringer _____*flight jacket, leather helmet, goggles***ISABELLE NEAVE****Occupation:** Vehicle Ace**Age:** 23 **Gender:** Female**Physical Description:** Gorgeous figure accentuated by boots, riding pants, leather jacket, silk scarf, goggles and flight cap.**Background:** A rich upbringing exposed you to extravagant toys like motorcars and aeroplanes, so you naturally developed an affinity for and proficiency in operating them. You were in Cairo when your degenerate brother squandered the family fortune. You found work driving or piloting those wealthy enough to afford automobiles and aeroplanes (though they'd never let a woman do such work for the army or Royal Air Force). You still have a flair about you from growing up rich, though this means you spend more money than you make. Everything's an adventure to you, even overseeing transport and logistics for the Mallory expedition. You drive their lorry, picking up supplies and hauling artifacts back to the warehouse in Cairo. When you're not driving, you watch the dig and gamble with the *fellahin*.**IBRAHIM AL-KASSAM (BOSS)**

Competent Skills:

dodge _____*endurance* _____*lift* _____*persuade* _____*streetwise* _____

Expert Skills:

fight _____*intimidate* _____

Signature Skill:

command _____

Equipment:

stout stick _____*pipe, kaftan, tarboosh***IBRAHIM AL-KASSAM****Occupation:** *Fellahin* Foreman**Age:** 52 **Gender:** Male**Physical Description:** Hulking, dark-skinned Arab with full graying beard wearing a tarboosh and sashed kaftan**Background:** A native Egyptian, you have worked among the ancient ruins all your life. You began hauling and sifting dirt from excavations for *ferengi* (foreigners) who came to dig seeking tombs and treasures. You befriended many and soon rose to become a foreman, directing crowds of *fellahin* peasants on vast excavations and advising great archaeologists how best to unearth Egypt's regal past. You deal sternly with workers, who need strict leadership and supervision, but you've also earned their respect. Those unfamiliar with your work often treat you as infirm or senile considering your great age. To your employers you offer quiet suggestions and paternal encouragement; they are friends whom you faithfully serve.

ARCHIBALD LITLEDALE

Occupation: Reporter

Age: 25 **Gender:** Male

Physical Description: Tall and wiry, with a thin mustache, wearing a dapper suit and broad-rimmed hat, and carrying a pen and pad in his hand.

Background: As the son of a cotton mill owner in the Nile Delta, you spent much of your youth in Cairo among both wealthy Europeans and common Egyptians. You made friends with everyone you met, finding something interesting in each person and encouraging them to talk about themselves and their work. You used this natural rapport when you got a job reporting for Cairo's English-language newspaper, the *Egyptian Gazette*. You cover various beats: archaeological digs, society gossip, business news, military happenings. Cairo can be a pretty rough city, so you carry a two-shot Derringer in your pocket in case of trouble. You maintain a wide cast of low-level contacts throughout Cairo, people who can offer more information or other angles on stories you're researching. Your solid understanding of Arabic culture also aids you in navigating the exotic terrain of Egyptian society.

**ARCHIBALD LITLEDALE
(BOSS)**

Competent Skills:

dodge _____

sneak _____

speak Arabic _____

Expert Skills:

bluff _____

charm _____

notice _____

persuade _____

search _____

streetwise _____

Signature Skill:

investigate _____

Equipment:

Derringer _____

camera _____

notepad, pen

MAJOR WILSON BROOMHALL

Occupation: British Military Officer

Age: 41 **Gender:** Male

Physical Description: Aging fellow with stern face, meticulously trimmed mustache, army uniform and hat, and military bearing.

Background: Life had little direction until the outbreak of the Great War. You received a commission in the British Army and fought the Hun in France. Since then you've remained in the service, rising in rank and going wherever His Majesty required: India, Hong Kong, Singapore, British East Africa, and lately Egypt. You understand obedience and the chain of command, but realize individual soldiers must rise to the occasion to prevail. You hold authority over lower-ranked British military personnel and have the respect of many Englishmen in Egypt. Your duty to King and country is beyond reproach, though many native Egyptians treat you with resentment for occupying and ruling their country. Between your light duties at the Cairo garrison, you dabble in archaeology, tagging along on excavations, observing, and occasionally helping to supervise operations.

**MAJOR WILSON
BROOMHALL (BOSS)**

Competent Skills:

brawl _____

dodge _____

navigate _____

Expert Skills:

investigate _____

streetwise _____

survival _____

Signature Skill:

command _____

Equipment:

Webley Mk4 revolver _____

riding crop _____

army uniform



Any-System Key



An Adaptable Stat System

By Peter Schweighofer

The *Any-System Key* describes character skills and task difficulties in terms that easily translate into different game systems. These terms do not key into any one game engine, but serve as general guidelines to give readers an overall sense of how they fit within their own game's stat and difficulty scale. *Any-System Key* publications provide settings, characters, adventures, and other source material adaptable to your favorite roleplaying game.

Character Stats

Assume characters have the average rating in most skills, with several rated at the level of a competent professional, a few considered expert in their field, and sometimes one signature skill for which the character is renown.

SKILL LEVELS

Competent Skills: Displays a professional level of training

Expert Skills: Possesses specialized knowledge

Signature Skill: Ranks among the best in the world

Three character levels further describe their abilities. Henchmen do not possess Signature skills and only have one Expert skill. Bosses have the usual complement of skills. Masterminds boost all their skills by one level; their Competent skills have the same value as Expert skills normally possess, Expert skills have values equivalent to the Signature level, and Signature skills increase by one increment beyond their maximum game value.

CHARACTER LEVELS

Henchman: No Signature Skill, only one Expert Skill

Boss: Normal skill levels

Mastermind: Skills boosted one level, Signature Skill gains bonus

An equipment category defines a character's possessions (or an animal's natural weapons) gamers can easily look up for damage, cost, and other stats in their preferred game.

Example:

ORC (Henchman)

Competent Skills: archery, brawl, carouse, climb, intimidate, track

Expert Skills: fight

Equipment: leather armor, sword

Task Difficulties

Any-System Key publications use four levels to describe the degree of difficulty for tasks undertaken by a person with professional training and proficiency in relevant skills.

TASK DIFFICULTIES

Routine: Low chance of failure (25%).

Challenging: Moderate chance of failure (50%).

Hard: High chance of failure (75%).

Improbable: Almost certain chance of failure (99%).

Example:

The characters must leap across a chasm to reach safety. Doing so successfully requires a *Challenging jump* roll; the have a moderate chance of failure, but also a moderate chance of success. If flames leaped out of the chasm, the difficulty might increase to *Hard*; not only must they jump the chasm, but they must withstand intense heat.

Higher Level Games

Running a setting or scenario with heroes who seem to waltz through encounters? Simply raise the gamemaster character levels and the task difficulty levels. Nothing turns Henchman-level mooks into challenging opponents better than upgrading their Expert skill into a Signature skill.

Fits Your Favorite Games

Game character skills have different degrees of competence defined by stats. Simply figure out which stats best represent the levels of Competent, Expert, and Signature skills and use those values when integrating *Any-System Key* material into your game.

The same applies for difficulties. Just match the *Any-System Key* difficulty descriptions with the corresponding values for rating tasks in your own game.

Visit the Griffon Publishing Studio website
griffonpubstudio.com
for more *Any-System Key* material, including free adventures
and sample character stats.
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