

The Big-Game Hunt

A Pulp Gaslight adventure for Call of Cthulhu



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INTRODUCTION

The Big-Game Hunt is set in the Victorian “Gaslight” era, and uses the *Pulp Cthulhu* rules, focusing more on adventure and combat than investigation. It is intended as a one-shot for 3 to 5 players.

BACKGROUND

Terence Ashworth was once a renowned and successful big-game hunter, but was forced to retire due to failing health, much to his chagrin. His one regret in life was never getting to hunt the fabled “Six-legged Rhinoceros.” Despite his best efforts, he was simply unable to pin down the creature's location. (See **The Truth Behind the Legend**, page 15, for the full story of the Six-legged Rhinoceros.)

A few months ago, however, Ashworth overheard a fellow hunter discussing the creature at their Gentlemen's Club, complete with the new information of where it could be found—the Tibesti Mountains in the Sahara Desert. Specifically, Emi Koussi, the highest peak of the range. This was followed up by something with which Ashworth was previously unaware, and that was that the creature was no mere beast, but was actually intelligent.

Despite this revelation, Ashworth's resolve to have the creature killed and displayed in his trophy room never wavered, and he left the club immediately to make plans for it to be hunted.

Having made contacts in the British Army during his time spent in Africa, Ashworth was able to arrange for a Section of 20 soldiers, lead by one Corporal Fletcher, to act as his hunting party. Unfortunately for Ashworth, the Corporal learned from the Tibesti locals of the creature's sapience, and so turned around, sending one of his men ahead with a letter to Ashworth explaining that they would be returning as soon as “this blasted sandstorm ends.” Though the letter made its way to Ashworth, the Corporal and his Section were never heard from again.

PLAYER-CHARACTERS

Having come to the conclusion that men of good conscience are of no use to him, Ashworth uses his many global contacts and financial clout, to bring together a group of assassins, bounty hunters, and the otherwise unscrupulous.

Unlike a typical *Pulp Cthulhu* adventure, where the player-characters are Heroes, those in this adventure are villains.

WE COULD BE HEROES

If either the Keeper or players are not comfortable playing villains, all of the pre-gens—except perhaps Alison Girard—can easily be played as Heroes, though this change will affect the ending of the scenario.

With the goal of the scenario being the capture of Guk-Keh, this will likely become more of a moral quandary than a straight-out battle, as the Heroes would be fighting a being who has done nothing wrong. If they continue regardless, they would likely incur significant Sanity point loss at what equates to murder.

Provided for use in this scenario are six pre-generated (pre-gen) villains, each with unique traits and Pulp talents. They have been given three character-appropriate talents each, which *Pulp Cthulhu* classes as “high pulp”, so if the Keeper prefers the default of two talents, they may ask each player to remove one of their choosing.

If the players are creating their own characters, they will need to be reminded that they are playing villains, and as such, some of the archetypes—such as Steadfast and Swashbuckler—may not be suitable without being completely inverted.

Below is a brief summary of the included villains:

- **Noah Clarke** is the classic mad scientist, or more accurately, mad engineer. The kind whose greatest aspiration is building a giant death ray to take over the world. In the meantime, he's content wielding his patented lightning gun.
- **Alison Girard** is a femme fatale who uses her looks to get what she wants in life. If that doesn't work, she happily resorts to poisons.
- **Rana** and her hyena **D'ba** are inseparable, and are so in sync with each other that observers may believe they share one mind.
- **Ren Shinoda** is a ninja—or kunoichi—skilled at striking with precision from the shadows with her katana.
- **Marcus Matheson** is the stereotypical loner cowboy, rarely looking out from under the brim of his hat, and is as quick on the draw as any cowboy of the silver screen.
- **Alexi “The Bear” Vasiliev** is a jolly giant. He is just as likely to be found laughing heartily with a drinking comrade, as he would be laughing heartily crushing an enemy's skull between his huge hands.

BEGINNING PLAY - LONDON, ENGLAND

The Big-Game Hunt begins in a large Victorian manor in London, England. It is March of 1882, and all of the villains are ushered into a spacious, rectangular, wood-paneled smoking room on the second floor. Around the room are several large taxidermied predatory animals, such as a bear, lion, and cheetah, all posed in aggressive manner upon two-inch high, beveled mahogany pedestals, each with an engraved

D'BA (RANA'S HYENA)

D'ba is a large female spotted hyena, and is a Pulp character in her own regard. Legends say that she has been by Rana's side since birth, though hyenas are only known to live 10-20 years, so most attribute her longevity to mystical influence. In reality, D'ba had a pup who took her mother's place upon her death.

The Keeper may control D'ba when not specifically under direction by Rana.

D'ba, spotted hyena

STR 95	CON 55	SIZ 60	DEX 75
INT —	APP —	POW 50	EDU —
SAN —	HP 23	DB: +1D4	Build: 1
Move:12			

Combat

Fighting	30% (15/6), damage 1D8+1D4
Dodge	37% (18/7)

Skills

Intimidate 50% (25/10)
Stealth 75% (37/15)
Track 30% (15/6)

Pulp Talents

- **Keen Vision:** gain a bonus die to Spot Hidden rolls.
- **Keen Hearing:** gain a bonus die to Listen rolls
- **Scary:** reduces difficulty by one level or gains bonus die (at the Keeper's discretion) to Intimidate rolls.

Armor: 2-point tough hide and fur.

brass nameplate identifying the species. Upon the walls are the busts of many other large animals, such as a moose, rhinoceros, and warthog, likewise mounted upon beveled mahogany boards with nameplates. In the center of the room are eight large leather-upholstered chairs arranged in a circle.

The villains should be given a moment to introduce themselves to each other (if they wish to), and look around the room. If they do, they notice that amongst the taxidermied animals there is an empty pedestal, like the others, but larger in width and length than even the bear's. It, too, has a brass nameplate, but unlike the others, it is unengraved.

Soon enough, a double-door opens up at the far end up the room, and Terrance Ashworth enters in a wheelchair being pushed by a nurse. "I should be fine here, m'dear," he says, and the nurse stops to help Ashworth out of the chair, handing him a walking cane. He starts towards the group, and the nurse exits, leaving the wheelchair in the room.

"Well aren't you a motley lot," he remarks as he limps to one of the chairs in the circle. He then gestures to the other chairs, and says, "Sit, sit."

Ashworth then introduces himself, and explains why he has brought them here. Presuming that a group of assassins won't want to hunt an animal, he spins a tale that he feels they would be more likely to accept, which only contains snippets of truth.

Ashworth tells of how he had sent out a hunting party to capture his "white whale", the fabled six-legged rhino (*Moby Dick* is 30 years old at this point, so the term should be well known). If any of the villains can pass an Extreme **Know** roll, they have heard rumors of the beast. He continues, saying that the party was ambushed, and his prize stolen, and that he is tasking the villains to reclaim it for him for the princely sum of £10,000 each—£2,000 now, and the rest on their return with his trophy. This may be haggled up to £2,500 up-front with a successful **Persuade** roll.

Ashworth then informs them that the thieves have set up camp on Emi Koussi, the Tibesti Mountains, in the Sahara, and that he has already made travel arrangements for them to Cairo, Egypt. Once there, a man known only as Orson will meet them. Ashworth finishes by asking if anyone has any questions.

In answering any, the Keeper should be mindful not to give away any information about the Section of soldiers, or the fact that the creature is alive and sapient, as these are revealed over the course of the scenario.

CAIRO, EGYPT

Upon arrival in Cairo in early April, Ashworth's contact, Orson, is waiting for the villains on the dock. As the last of them steps off the gangway, a group of 1D4 young men bump into them,

CHASING THE THIEVES

If the villains chase after the thieves immediately after realizing they've been robbed, the Keeper should initiate a chase scene. It is up to the Keeper whether the thieves stick together or separate, but if they do separate, they should not diverge too drastically else the villains end up lost in a city they neither know, nor speak the language of, which, while not game-breaking, will end up wasting time that could be otherwise spent adventuring. Suggested locations and hazards are listed below:

The Bazaar

Directly off the port is a fish market and bazaar. It is quite busy, and in particularly dense sections a **DEX** roll is required to weave through the crowd. An **Intimidate** roll may also prove useful in scaring them into dispersing, though with an Extreme success they become *too* scared, and panic, making traversal just as difficult as it would have been had they failed.

Further into the bazaar, one of the thieves knocks over a merchant's basket of fish, which requires a **DEX** roll to not slip over on. A failure not only loses movement points, but does 1D3 damage from hitting the pavement.

First House

Once out of the bazaar, the thieves run into the first open door they find, closing it behind them. A villain may opt to smash the door open with a **STR** roll, but it is actually not locked, and can be simply opened with the handle (using 1 movement point).

Second House

Through the first house, the thieves run up to the second floor, where they head outside and jump from the balcony, across an alleyway, to an adjacent balcony. This requires a **Jump** roll from all attempting it. Failure could mean either landing in the alley below, taking 1D6 damage unless a second **Jump** roll is made to hit the ground running, or grabbing onto the edge of the opposite balcony with a **DEX** roll. A **Climb** roll is needed on their next movement to clamber back up.

Rooftops

Exiting the second house, the thieves climb up onto the roof. A **Climb** roll is needed to get up there, followed by **Jump** rolls as they leap from roof to roof. A fall from

this height does 1D10 damage, though the result can be halved with a successful **Jump** roll to stick the landing.

Assuming the thieves and villains have made it this far, the Keeper may choose whether to continue along the roofs, or to take the chase back down to the street.

Anyone who finds themselves on the street while the chase is continuing above should make either **Spot Hidden** rolls to visually see where people are running and jumping, or **Navigate** rolls to track their general direction. To rejoin the chase, they either need to enter a door (with a **Luck** roll will determining if it's locked or not), or make a **Climb** roll to scale a wall.

For the sake of simplicity, all 4 thieves have been given the same combat ability and skills.

Thief #1

STR 50	CON 50	SIZ 65	DEX 55
HP 11	DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 7

Thief #2

STR 55	CON 50	SIZ 70	DEX 50
HP 12	DB: +1D4	Build: 1	Move: 7

Thief #3

STR 55	CON 55	SIZ 60	DEX 50
HP 11	DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 7

Thief #4

STR 50	CON 55	SIZ 65	DEX 55
HP 12	DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 7

Combat

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3
Dodge	Half DEX

Skills

Climb 40%, Intimidate 20%, Jump 30%, Language (English) 25%, Listen 40%, Locksmith 50%, Navigate 25%, Sleight of Hand 80%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 40%.

apologizing in Egyptian ("aasef"), before casually walking away. Each villain should make a **Spot Hidden** roll. Those who succeed notice that their wallet/purse has been stolen. One of the thieves looks back, and upon realizing they've been made, yells to the others to run ("doosu"). If any of the villains choose to take chase (see **Chasing the Thieves**, opposite page), they will be doing so without any of their weaponry, as that is still packed in their luggage. Once the chase is over—regardless of the outcome—Orson runs up behind them, struggling to catch his breath, as if he'd been trying to keep up the entire way.

If they chose to take any weaponry from their luggage, this costs them time, and the thieves automatically escape with all their money. If this happens, it is up to the Keeper whether they will have Orson pay for all subsequent expenses on Ashworth's behalf (with the debt being subtracted from their remaining payment), or have him simply recognize one of the men, in which case he can ask around for the location of their den, and let the villains deal with them as they may.

Once the thief encounter is over, Orson aids the villains in procuring camels and supplies, as well as finding a guide. If the players take the Benghazi or Aswan paths, Orson could simply say that he knows a man at that location who can sell them camels, though he will still help them find a guide in Cairo before they depart.

Orson is a shady fellow, asking the villains to remain outside while he meets with various people, asking around for a guide. This is mostly a red herring, sprinkling a little suspicion onto the fact that Ashworth is not telling the whole truth. Eventually the contact leads them to a man named Karim, who is willing to guide them to Emi Koussi. He not only has the navigational skills to get there, but also the necessary knowledge on surviving in the Sahara (see **The Guide**, opposite).

Upon meeting Karim and procuring the necessary camels, Orson leaves them. Because this is a Pulp scenario, the acquisition of supplies can simply be skipped, and presumed that they are able to find everything needed for the journey, including food, water, and camping gear. If the villains choose to take anything supplemental to the necessities, they can, but depending on the item, may require a **Luck** roll to determine if Karim (or Orson before he leaves) have the contacts to procure it. Adding more weight may also require more camels.

For every two riders (inc. Karim), six camels are needed (two for riding, one for water, one for food, one for equipment, and one pack camel). Each can carry up to 450 lb., needs to drink every 7 days, and eat every 2 days. Due to the weight of water, they only have enough for 20 days, so need to refill at oases along the way. On average, a team of camels can travel 25 miles (40 km) a day, perhaps more if recently watered. Karim is adept at coaxing the beasts to walk longer and faster, but in his absence, daily **Animal Handling** rolls are required.

THE GUIDE

Karim is a small, lean, and unkempt man. He is not only the camel wrangler, but the navigator and translator, so should be portrayed as a coward, hiding or fleeing at the first sign of danger, and returning only when the coast is clear so that he may be kept alive (at least until Emi Koussi is spotted). If the Keeper does choose to use him as a "red shirt," they should make sure that he has passed on any necessary navigational knowledge prior.

Karim, age 28, camel wrangler

STR 55	CON 75	SIZ 50	DEX 65
INT 55	APP 50	POW 70	EDU 40
SAN 70	HP 12	DB: 0	Build: 0
Move: 9	MP: 14		

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge	32% (16/6)

Skills

Animal Handling 60%, Credit Rating 5%,
Language (Own) (Egyptian) 40%, Language
(English) 31%, Natural World 50%, Navigate 70%,
Ride 75%, Survival (Desert) 50%, Track 30%.

ALTERNATE ROUTES

Four alternate routes are provided (pages 8-9) if the Keeper wishes to use them. They all work out to roughly the same travel time once boat travel has been factored in, with the main difference being the number of oases passed through, and the distance between them. For instance, on the eastern Benghazi route, the longest distance between oases is 10 days, whereas on the Aswan route, it is 23 days. As most of the travel in Pulp games is "red lined" anyway, none of this has any practical effect on gameplay, and is only included for the sake of flavor.

The choice of route does, however, affect the verisimilitude of the narrative, as the western Benghazi and Aswan routes both bypass the Great Sand Sea, as well as the western Benghazi route missing the actual path of the solar eclipse. If choosing these routes, the Keeper could simply shift their locations, as it is unlikely that any players will know their exact placement.

THE BIG-GAME HUNT

Route	Distance (miles)	Days' Travel	Oases Passed	Longest Between
Cairo (N)	1268	51	6	15 days
Cairo (S)	1094	44	5	14 days
Benghazi (W)	1091	48	5	10 days
Benghazi (E)	1047	46	4	13 days
Aswan	1000	45	1	23 days

EMBARKING

Once the camels have been bought, the villains are right to embark. As soon as they have, Karim casually asks if they are following the soldiers, referring to the Section that Ashworth had sent out previously. Whether they inquire further, Karim elaborates, telling of the British soldiers that had come through Cairo only a month before, also seeking the Tibesti Mountains, and how his friend, Ahmed, had been their guide. He won't know any more details, and has not heard from his friend since, so can only assume they're still en route. He quips optimistically that they might pass them. The true fate of Ahmed is revealed in **The Ghost Town** (page 10).

At this time of year (April), the temperatures in the Sahara are reasonable—around 86°F (30°C) in the day, and 55°F (13°C) at night—so there is no need to seek shelter during the middle of the day, like would be necessary in the height of summer.

THE GREAT SAND SEA

Roughly a third of the way into their journey, the villains arrive at the Great Sand Sea. This is the region that people envision when thinking of the Sahara—nothing but huge, rolling sand

dunes as far as the eye can see. Such a region is known as an erg, and while there are many ergs throughout the Sahara, the Great Sand Sea is the largest.

If the villains took the Aswan route, they would not realistically pass through any ergs, though for the sake of the narrative, the Keeper should still have them come across some large dunes at some point, and simply not mention a name.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

While the Great Sand Sea is ostensibly empty, the list of **Saharan Predators** (below) could be used for a random encounter, either while traveling, or camping for the night. Another option could be to have a small gang of bandits attack (see **Average Bandit**, opposite, for stats).

SAHARAN PREDATORS

Despite being the largest desert in the world, the Sahara has a plethora of fauna. While the majority would pose no threat to a human, those listed below *could*, and may be encountered on the journey from Cairo to the Tibesti Mountains:

- **African Golden Wolf:** Closely related to the grey wolf, but smaller in size, and are most threatening in packs. For stats, average the rolls of a jackal and wolf (*Malleus Monstrorum*, p.266 and 273 respectively).
- **Striped Hyena:** Smaller than spotted hyenas such as D'ba, and with different markings (as their name suggests). As with the wolf above, hyenas are most threatening when encountered in packs. Stats for spotted hyenas can be found in the *Malleus Monstrorum* (p.266), which could be used for striped hyenas if minimum roll values are used.
- **Saharan Horned Viper:** A scaly, sandy-colored, side-winding snake with recognizable horns protruding straight up above its eyes. See **Snake, Venomous** in the core rulebook (p.339) for stats.
- **Deathstalker:** One of the most dangerous species of scorpion. While only about 2 inches long, its venom is a powerful mixture of neurotoxins. Roll 2D10 damage if stung.

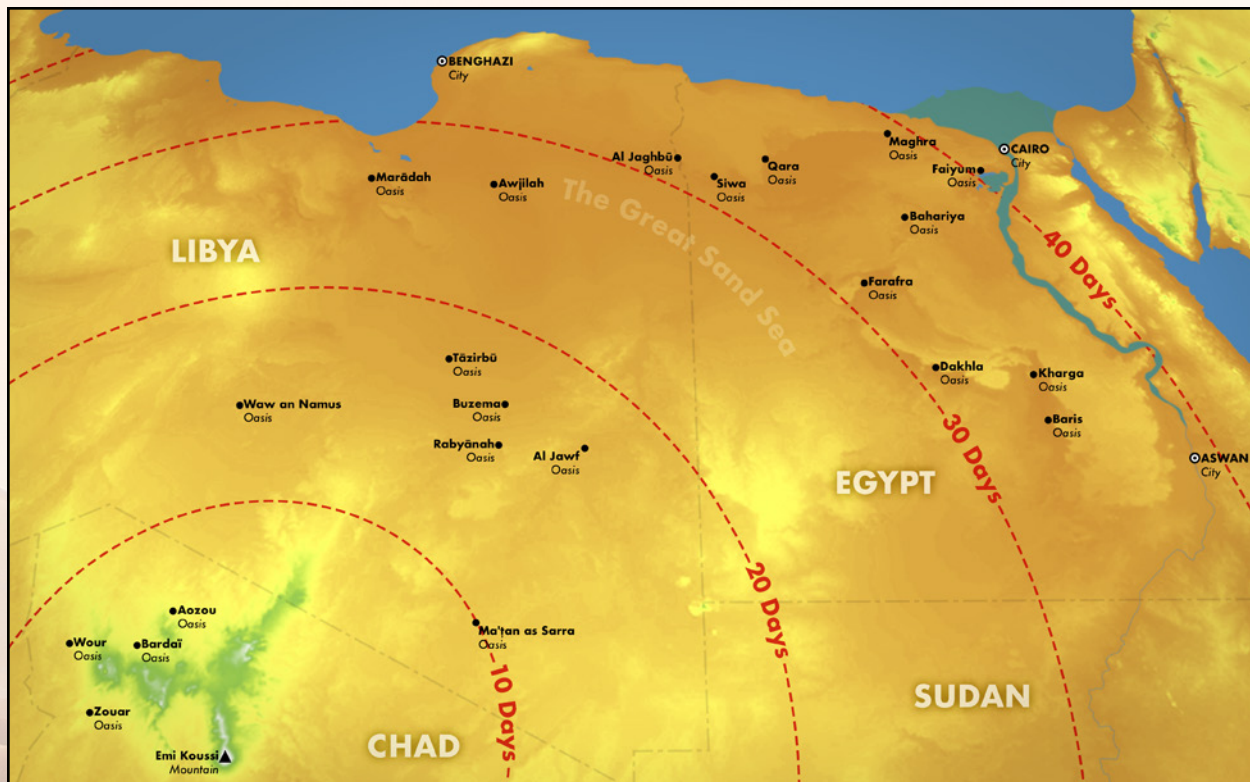
AVERAGE BANDIT

STR 50	CON 50	SIZ 65	DEX 50
INT 40	APP 50	POW 50	EDU 40
SAN 50	HP 11	DB: 0	Build: 0
Move: 7	MP: 10		

Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3
Machete	50% (25/10), damage 1D8
Dodge	25% (12/5)

THE BIG-GAME HUNT

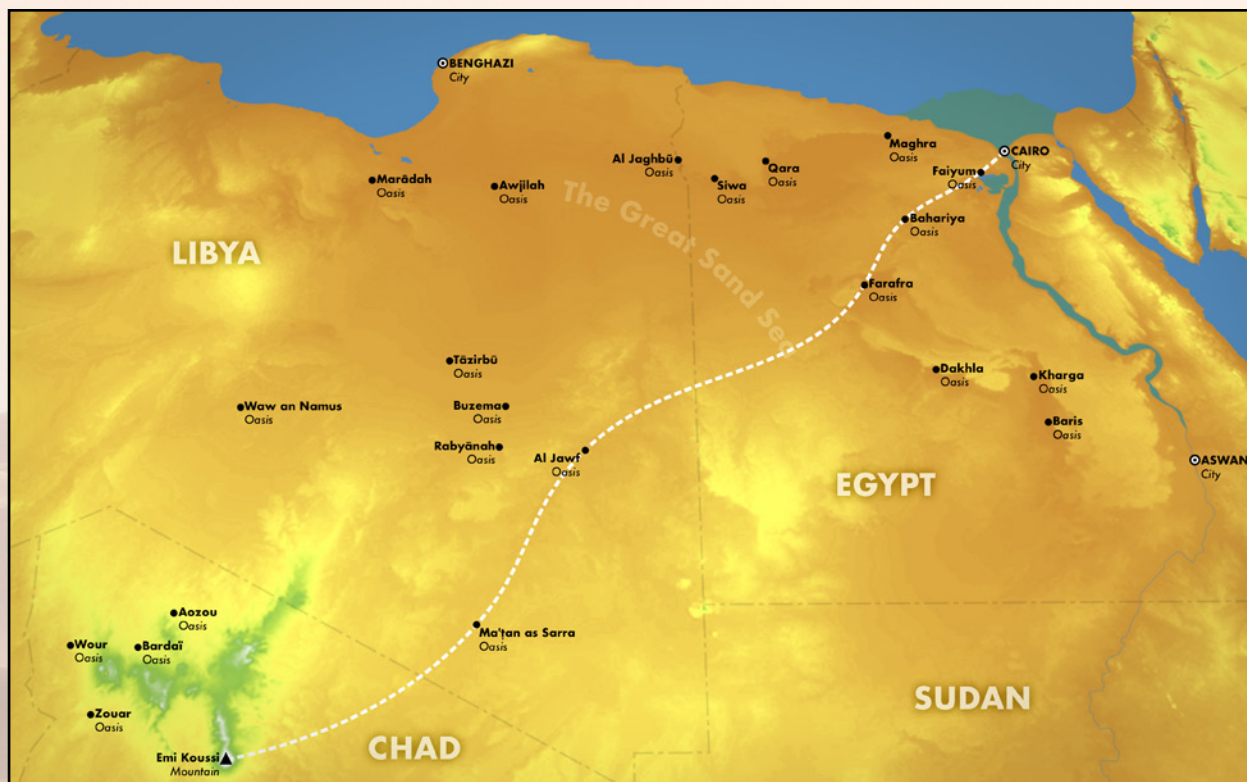


Days to Destination (approx.)

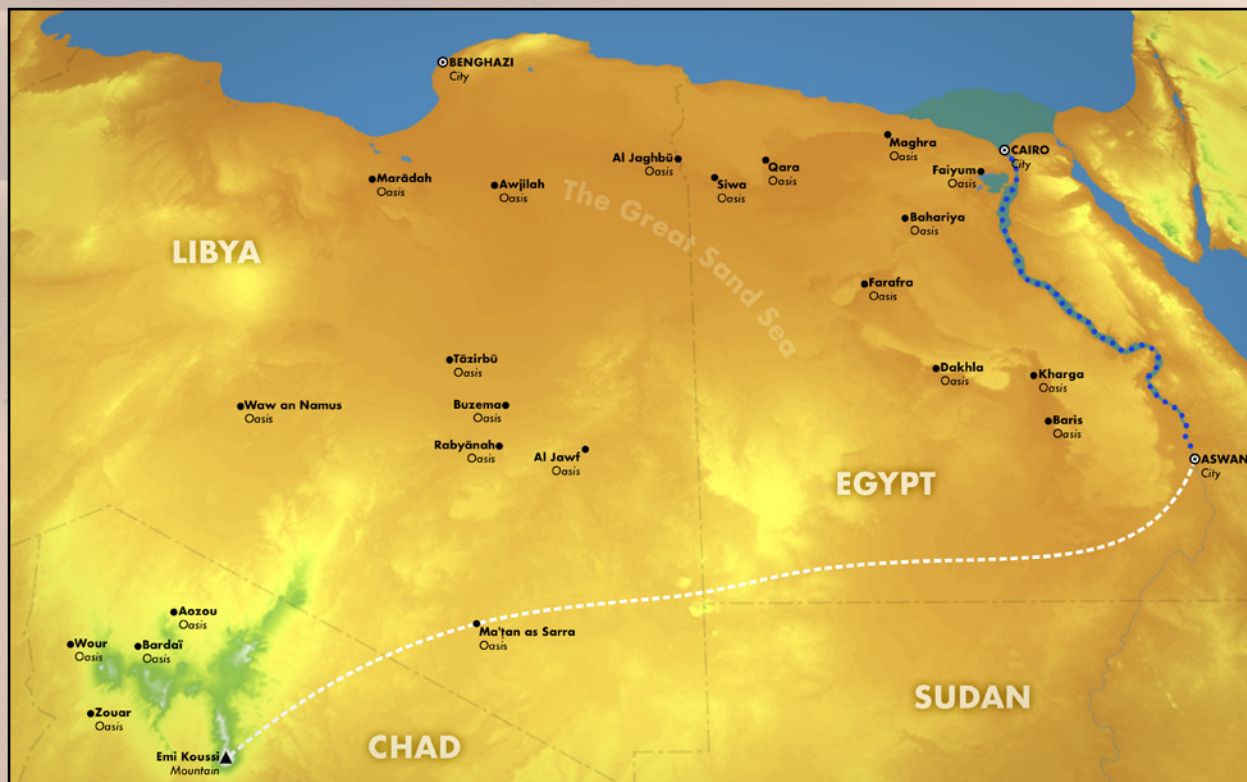


Intended Route (Cairo Northern Route)

THE BIG-GAME HUNT

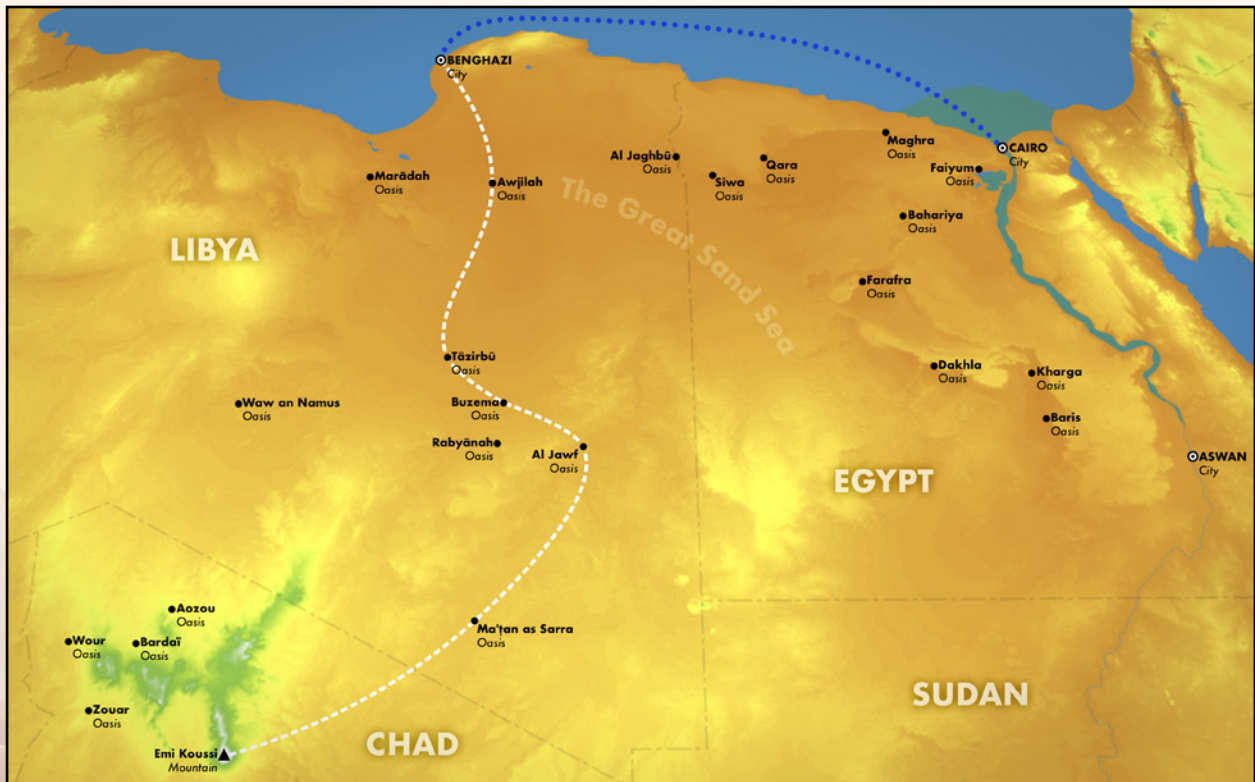


Cairo Southern Route

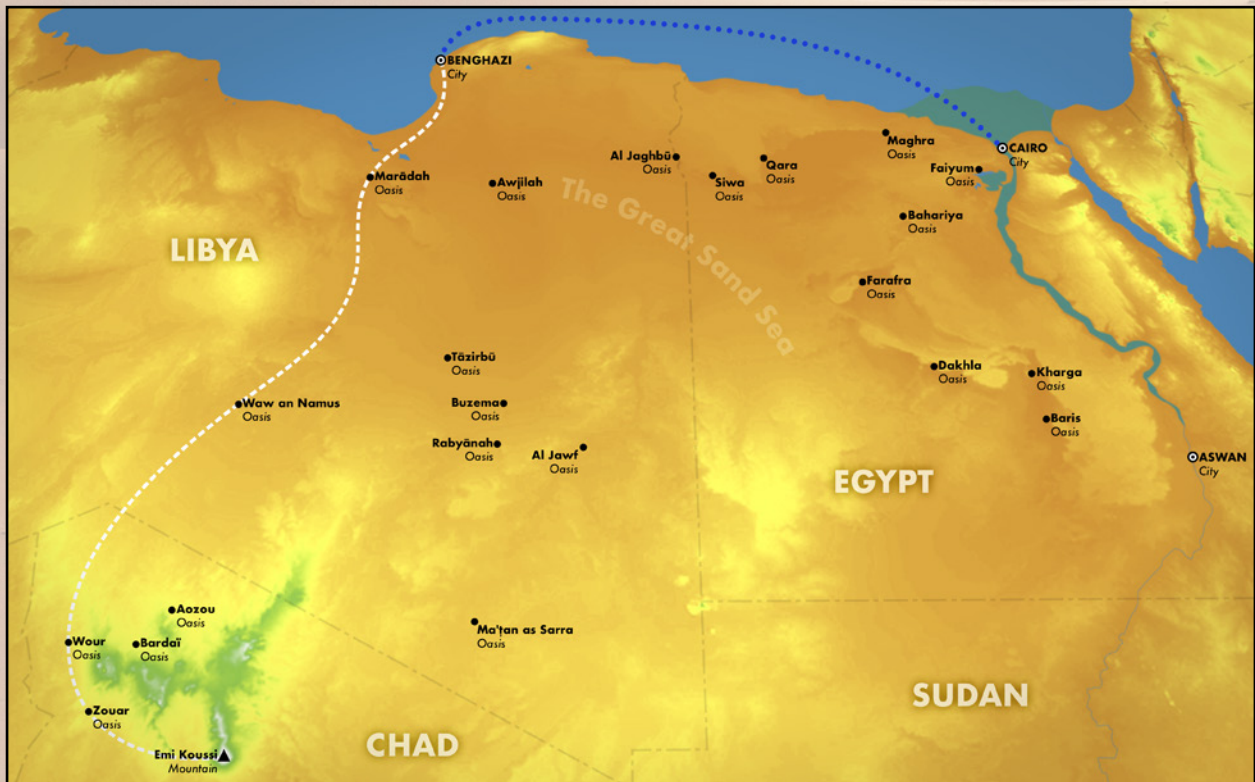


Aswan Route

THE BIG-GAME HUNT



Benghazi Eastern Route



Benghazi Western Route

THE GHOST TOWN

At the far edge of the Great Sand Sea, the villains come across an abandoned village that's in the process of being overcome by advancing dunes. From a distance, they are able to see that the buildings are no different to any others in the area—one or two story rendered brick—but won't be able to discern its abandonment until closer.

As the villains approach, all should make a **Spot Hidden** roll. Those who succeed spot a person sitting slumped against the nearest wall. Upon closer inspection, they notice that the person is wearing a British military uniform. Closer again, and they notice that the front of the uniform is covered in now-dried blood. If they inspect even further, they discover that the man is dead, and has been for some time. A large gash across his carotid artery is evidently the cause of death, and accounts for the amount of blood upon his uniform. The soldier's Martini-Henry rifle is laying on the ground by his limp hand, implying that he was holding it until death (see "Table XVII: Weapons", page 403, in the core rulebook for details on the Martini-Henry rifle). As the villains soon discover, this soldier, and all of his Section, were killed by sand-dwellers (see **Sand-**

Dwellers, page 12, for details). They should all make a **Sanity** roll for the sight (0/1D3 loss).

Entering further into the village, more dead soldiers are found around the central square, all in similarly wounded states to the first. Further **Sanity** rolls should be made. Karim panics, and start calling out, "Ahmed!" (the name of his friend). After a few tries with no response, he dashes into buildings looking for him. If the villains ask what he is doing, he reminds them that his friend was the soldiers' guide.

The village is completely abandoned by those who lived there, with only a few larger furnishings remaining. It is obvious that it was abandoned with deliberation rather than a sudden exodus. Many of the buildings surrounding the square show obvious signs of a fight, with bullet holes pitting the walls, and broken-down doors and shutters, many of which also show claw marks. Inside the buildings are more dead soldiers, but also blood stains on the floors that have no bodies nearby, and seem to be smeared in the direction of the doorways. These are from the sand-dwellers dragging away their own casualties. With a **Luck** roll, a keen-eyed observer notices a bloody footprint from one of the sand-dwellers stepping in some spilled blood. It appears human, if slightly small.



Ghost Town & Naturalist's Camp

At some point, the villains hear a wail coming from the largest building in the village. It is Karim, having found the body of his friend. Joining him, they find a makeshift stronghold in one of the upstairs bedrooms, with a single table pushed up against the doorway as a barrier, and the bulk of the Section's ammunition supplies piled in the back corner. It's clear that the battle culminated here, as there is more blood on the floor and walls than in any other building.

Karim is found on the floor, cradling his friend's upper body in his arms, weeping. Of the other corpses in the room, a **Spot Hidden** roll reveals that one has different insignia upon his uniform. This is Corporal Fletcher, though a Hard **Know** roll is needed for them to identify the specific rank. Karim is inconsolable for a while, so the villains have little more to do than explore the building and/or village.

Besides being able to salvage the remaining supplies, the only other item of note is Corporal Fletcher's journal, which may be found amongst his belongings in the room with his body. As the sand-dweller attack was a sudden ambush, there is no mention of it in the journal. However, it does mention his correspondence with Ashworth (see **Handouts: Corporal Fletcher's Journal**, page 22), as well as his discovery of the six-legged rhino's sapience.

With **The Ambush** (next page) of the sand-dwellers due to occur at nightfall, the Keeper should use the intervening time to have the villains find the naturalist's camp, as there is an antidote to the sand-dwellers' blow-dart poison there. Depending on where they are in the village, the Keeper may have them spot a lone camel atop a nearby sand dune, which leads them to the camp if followed, or perhaps one of the villains may see the top of a distant tent out of an upstairs window, or see the glint of the sun reflecting off something metal or glass, or perhaps they hear the sound of a camel dying in the distance. As long as the camp is brought to their attention, the means of its discovery is inconsequential. One encroaching dune separates the camp from the village, so that it can't be seen from ground level.

Karim does not follow them to the camp, opting instead to stay with his deceased friend.

THE NATURALIST'S CAMP

The camp consists of two medium-sized tents—one of which is set up as living quarters, while the other is filled with tables of laboratory equipment—both of which are atop a small rocky outcropping on the desert plain beyond the dunes. Several camels are tethered to one side, with evidence that more had been present but had broken free. One encroaching dune separates the camp from the village, so that it can't be seen from ground level.

A naturalist and his assistant had been living here, studying the sand-dwellers. The sand-dwellers had not minded the intrusion, as the scientists had kept their distance, but unfortunately, on the night prior to the villains' arrival, the naturalist had been working in the laboratory when a formless spawn of Tsathoggua seeped up through a cleft in the rock and attacked him. His screams drew the attention of his assistant, who was subsequently attacked as well. In the time since, the formless spawn has been slowly consuming both.

THE SKELETAL PUPPETEER

Each attack on the puppeteer not only strikes the formless spawn, but the skeletons that are supporting it. Because the puppeteer has no vital organs to hit, and the skeletons' silhouette is so thin, attacks made with an impaling weapon (including bullets) have one penalty die added.

The combined skeleton has 12 hit-points, and upon reaching zero becomes too broken to support the formless spawn any longer, at which point it "dismounts". It is up to the Keeper whether the formless spawn continues to fight, or slinks away back to its cleft.

Puppeteer, skeletal abomination

STR 45	CON 15	SIZ 110	DEX 70
INT 40	APP —	POW 15	EDU —
SAN —	HP 12	DB: +1D4	Build: 1
Move: 7	MP: 3		

Combat

Attacks per round: 4

In combat, the puppeteer uses the phalanges of both skeletons' hands as claws.

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D4+1D4
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Armor: The formless spawn itself is immune to all physical weapons, even enchanted ones—wounds simply snap closed after being opened. Spells may affect it, as may fire, chemicals, or other forces. However, the skeletons have no such immunities.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D10 Sanity points to see a puppeteer.

LIVING QUARTERS

Inside the tent are two separate foldable cots (camping beds), as well as one travel trunk at the foot of each. A small foldable table and chairs are in the corner. Strangely, a lit lantern hangs above the table, despite being day time. This was left behind by the assistant when he ran to investigate the naturalist's screams.

LABORATORY

Within this tent are a handful of tables, each with various scientific instruments such as a microscope, Bunsen burner, glass flasks and vials, as well as biological samples in varying states of dissection. Upon entering, a successful **Listen** roll alerts the villain to a rustling noise at the very back of the tent. There they discover the corpses of the naturalist and his assistant—both little more than skeletons with some connective tissue remaining—covered in a gelatinous black slime. As they approach, the slime with quiver, and coalesce somewhat, as if startled. If the villains back away and let it be, it may simply return to its meal, but if they harass it in any way, it promptly pulls the remains of the two corpses into itself, and use them as its own skeleton, forming a two-headed, four-armed, four-legged abomination with black slime in the place of muscles. Then, with a cliched squeal, it attacks (see **The Skeletal Puppeteer**, previous page, for stats).

Once the puppeteer is dealt with, the villains are free to look around the laboratory, which is likely to be in ruins after the fight. Here they find the naturalist's notes on the sand-dwellers, including their poisoned blow-darts (see **Handouts: The Naturalist's Diary**, page 23). He mentions working on an antidote, some of which can be found in 2D6 labeled vials nearby. Each vial is a single dose, and with a successful **Science (Chemistry)** roll, 1D6 more doses can be synthesized using the equipment and samples on-hand. A single hypodermic syringe—the large, stainless steel kind of the era—is found nearby that the vials can be inserted into for use. Loading a vial into the syringe during combat takes one round, and using it takes another. If Alison Girard is in the party, her experience with syringes allows her to load and administer one in a single round.

THE AMBUSH

Upon their return to the village, Karim is found in the town square, digging a grave for his friend, who is on the ground nearby wrapped in a bed sheet. He found a shovel in the Section's inventory, and more would be available should the villains choose to assist him (though he won't ask for help). By the time the grave is dug, and his friend is placed within and

SAND-DWELLERS

This obscure race appear emaciated, most likely from the scarcity of food in the desert, and their skin looks as though it is encrusted with sand. Though humanoid in morphology, they are easy to discern at a distance due to their large eyes and ears. They dwell in caverns deep in desert areas, and come out at night to prowl and hunt for prey.

Sand-Dwellers, stalkers of the wastes

STR 50	CON 65	SIZ 45*	DEX 65
INT 50	APP —	POW 50	EDU —
SAN —	HP 11	DB: 0	Build: 0
Move: 9	MP: 10		

Combat

Attacks per round: 2

In combat, sand-dwellers have the usual range of unarmed attacks open to humanoids, in addition to its claws.

Blow-gun: Some sand-dwellers carry blow-guns and poisoned darts. See **Blow-Dart Poison Effects** table (opposite page) for details.

Fighting	30% (15/6), damage 1D6
Blow-gun	25% (12/5), damage special (see above)
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Listen 60%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 55%.

Armor: 2-point rough hide.*

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a sand-dweller.

**Note: These stats have been intentionally altered for the purposes of this scenario.*

covered, the sun has set, and lanterns have to be lit. Karim asks if the villains can help him find sufficiently large rocks to make a cairn while he goes inside to collect his friend's possessions.

Whether the villains chose to do as Karim asked or not, as soon as he is inside the Keeper should call for **Spot Hidden** rolls from all. Those who are successful notice pairs of silvery discs surrounding them at a distance in every direction,

BLOW-DART POISON EFFECTS (CHOOSE OR ROLL IDIO)

Roll	Sense Affected	Effect
1	Vision (<i>sight</i>)	The victim's sight becomes overwhelmed with brightness, like walking from a dark room into daylight, but without the subsequent adjustment, forcing them to squint, or close their eyes completely. The distraction adds a Penalty Die to all skill rolls.
2	Audition (<i>hearing</i>)	Every sound the victim hears becomes amplified immensely. Even something as faint as wind through trees sounds like a burst steam vent. The distraction adds a Penalty Die to all skill rolls.
3	Gustation (<i>taste</i>)	The victim's tongue becomes so over-sensitized that they can even taste their own saliva and plaque, making them feel ill. If the Keeper chooses, they may call for a CON roll for them to not vomit. The distraction adds a Penalty Die to all skill rolls.
4	Olfaction (<i>smell</i>)	Every smell in the victim's vicinity becomes intensified and overwhelming, including the smell of their own breath. If the Keeper chooses, they may call for a CON roll for them to not vomit. The distraction adds a Penalty Die to all skill rolls.
5	Somatosensation (<i>touch</i>)	The victim's skin becomes overly sensitive, to the point that their clothing feels painful against them. The distraction adds a Penalty Die to all skill rolls.
6	Thermoception (<i>temperature</i>)	The victim feels the temperature climb suddenly, and they start sweating profusely. If the Keeper chooses, they may call for a POW roll for them to fight the urge to remove their clothes to cool down. The distraction adds a Penalty Die to all skill rolls.
7	Proprioception (<i>kinesthetics</i>)	Unlike the other senses, where they go into overdrive, this sense shuts down, making the victim unaware of where their body is in space, causing them to become clumsy and uncoordinated, dropping their DEX to its half value, and adding a Penalty Die to any physical skills (such as Climb or Jump).
8	Nociception (<i>pain</i>)	Not only does the area around the puncture sear with pain, but the victim's entire body begins to ache unbearably. The distraction adds a Penalty Die to all skill rolls.
9	Equilibrioception (<i>balance</i>)	The victim becomes afflicted with vertigo, to the point that they almost cannot stand or walk without stumbling, dropping their DEX to its half value, and adding a Penalty Die to any physical skills (such as Climb or Jump).
10	Mechanoreception (<i>vibration</i>)	The victim can sense every vibration around them, from footsteps to sound. The distraction adds a Penalty Die to all skill rolls.

shimmering in the darkness like cats' eyes. An Extreme success allows them to notice humanoid silhouettes attached to the discs, barely contrasted against the night sky. These are sand-dwellers—the same ones that attacked the Section.

The villain with the lowest **Luck** should make a roll. A success means that they hear a blow-dart whisk right past their ear, narrowly missing them. If more than one are tied for lowest Luck, each should make their own roll. A failure

means that they have been struck by the dart, and should roll a 1D10 against the **Blow-Dart Poison Effects** table (above) to determine its effect. Alternatively, the Keeper may choose which effect to apply.

Unlike other poisons in *Call of Cthulhu*, which do physical damage, the sand-dweller blow-dart poison affects the different senses, so results in varying penalties. Subsequent doses either affect a different sense, or double the effect to the

same sense (e.g. applying a second Penalty Die). The effects of the poison last for 1D6 hours, though an Extreme CON roll halves the time.

If the villains simply take cover, the sand-dwellers continue the barrage of blow-darts from the darkness. However, as soon as they take action, the sand-dwellers cease fire and run down into the village to attack (see **Sand-Dwellers**, page 12, for stats). **Sanity** rolls should be made for seeing these uncanny humanoids (0/1D6 loss).

The sand-dwellers are running from a far enough distance that the villains are able to ready their weapons, and should be able to get at least one round of fire off before the sand-dwellers reach them. They have an innate hunters' intuition that allows them to determine which threats take priority over others, so they send a number of fighters to each villain equal to that villain's Fighting (Brawl) skill divided by 20 (rounded down). For example, a villain with Fighting (Brawl) 90% is attacked by 4 sand-dwellers ($90 \div 20 = 4.5$). It is also recommended that the Keeper apply the Mooks rule (*Pulp Cthulhu*, page 62) during this attack, as the number of foes will be difficult to defeat otherwise. If the Keeper chooses to have the sand-dwellers use their blow-guns during combat, it should be done sparingly, as the penalties the poison imparts may unbalance the fight. It also requires the sand-dweller to step away from combat to fire accurately, which counts as fleeing, or else a Penalty Die should be applied if fired within melee.

After the fight, the villains find Karim missing. If they enter the building he ran in to and search for him, a **Listen** roll reveals a whimper coming from a toppled wardrobe. Whoever opens the door receives a kick from a startled Karim. As it counts as a surprise attack, they need to make a **Dodge** roll to avoid it, taking 1D3 damage if they don't. Karim apologizes profusely, claiming that he thought they were "one of those monsters." If the villains fail to find Karim, he runs out of the building, screaming, "Don't leave without me!"

Once he has calmed down, Karim asks, once again, if someone can help him build a cairn. If no one does, he simply does it himself. Once complete, he begins some rites in Egyptian, and places Ahmed's possessions atop the cairn.

If the villains ask to leave this night, Karim reminds them that the camels need to sleep, and that a tired camel is a grumpy camel. If they still decide to leave, the Keeper should ask for some **Animal Handling** or **Ride** rolls as they depart, with the camels acting unpredictably upon failure, to which Karim responds, "I *did* try to tell you."

AL JAWF, LIBYA

About two-thirds of the way into the journey, the villains arrive at Al Jawf—a large town around the area's largest oasis. Karim suggests they stop here for the night, getting a good night's rest, and restocking their supplies. The Libyans here are the ones who informed Colonel Fletcher of the six-legged rhino's sapience.

While there are no hotels in Al Jawf, Karim has no trouble securing board for the night, as the locals are more than welcoming. That night, while sat down for dinner with their host family, the patriarch of the house, Mohamed—a weathered elderly man in a dust-covered white keffiyeh—asks what brings them through Al Jawf (Karim translates for both parties). Below are some suggestions on Mohamed's responses to the villains:

- If the villains mention Ashworth's lost hunting party, or their ambush, Mohamed simply laughs. He explains that the six-legged rhino cannot be killed, so if they failed to return, then they either succumbed to bandits...Or the hands of the beast itself.
- If they mention the six-legged rhino, Mohamed nods, and say that he is familiar with the legend. If they ask for details, the Keeper should provide a truncated version of the story (opposite page), beginning from when they arrived in Egypt, and ignoring the specifics of dates, simply saying, "a long time ago". The Keeper should also make sure the detail of the eclipse is mentioned, as this comes into play during **The Eclipse** (opposite page).
- If the villains ask about the British soldiers, Mohamed says that he knew of their arrival in Al Jawf, and the fact that they turned around the very next day after hearing of the legend.
- If the sand-dwellers are brought up, Mohamed's demeanor turns somber, and he goes silent. Kalim speaks with him, to which he replies no more than, "The men of the sand are not spoken of here. There is a reason you will find no one outside until morning."

Trying to leave the house at any time after dusk results in a stern warning from their hosts. If they hadn't asked about the sand-dwellers before hand, Karim translates their warning: "The night belongs to the sand-men." Should the villains ignore this warning, it is up to the Keeper whether they face any sand-dwellers outside or not.

As the villains are leaving the next morning, Mohamed gives them one parting word of advice: should they find their missing hunters are without their trophy, do not seek it out. It will only end in tragedy. With that, he slaps one of the camels' rump and start them on their way.

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE LEGEND

In the winter of 932, a hairless baby gnoph-keh was born. As was the gnoph-keh tradition, any baby born with such "deformities" was to be sacrificed to the deity Ithaqua, as it would not survive in their arctic home regardless. The baby's mother, Karra-Keh, could not bear to see this happen, so fled her homeland with the baby wrapped in layers of animal pelts, searching for warmer climes.

Karra-Keh made it all the way to Egypt before her child, Guk-Keh, showed any signs of comfort, so that is where they set up home. While Guk-Keh thrived in the heat, unfortunately for Karra-Keh, she did not, and her health deteriorated year after year.

In October of 977, Guk-Keh learned from the local humans of mountains to the south-west, where the temperature gets so cold in winter that it sometimes even snows—The Tibesti Mountains. Guk-Keh and Karra-Keh immediately set off into the Sahara.

On the morning of December 13th (Dec. 8th Julian date), shortly after setting out for the day, the sky began darkening as the moon eclipsed the sun. Karra-Keh asked to sit and admire the cosmic event, which Guk-Keh was more than happy to oblige. After totality, Guk-Keh stood to set off once again, only to discover that Karra-Keh had passed during the display.

Wanting his mother's final resting place to be a cold one, Guk-Keh continued on, eventually making it to the Tibesti Mountains' highest peak, Emi Koussi, where he was able to bury his mother, as he had seen the Egyptians do with their dead. Not wanting to abandon her, Guk-Keh decided to stay on Emi Koussi, and claimed it as his new home. Every eclipse since, Guk-Keh has mourned his mother, the bellows of which can be heard far and wide.

Gnoph-keh are polar bear-sized, with six legs, and one large horn protruding from their head. They would normally be covered in long white fur, but as Guk-Keh is hairless, his skin turned dry and leathery under the Saharan sun. As the years passed, tales of Guk-Keh filtered out of the Sahara and into Europe, where he was dubbed the "Six-Legged Rhinoceros."

THE ECLIPSE

While the dates in this scenario are quite flexible, the Keeper should have the villains halfway between Ma'tan as Sarra and Emi Koussi on May 17, as there was a real-world total solar eclipse in this area on that date. It began at 7:03AM local time, with totality starting at 8:07AM and lasting just less than a minute.

The eclipse begins a mere 50min after sunrise, but even then it would not be noticeable right away unless looking directly at the Sun for some reason. To account for these factors, the Keeper should first ask for a **Luck** roll, to find out who is awake, with those failing still sound asleep in their tent, followed by a **Spot Hidden** roll by those awake, to see who notices the Sun's disc becoming obscured. If no one does, the Keeper should have Karim point it out, perhaps waking those who are still asleep.

At the moment of totality, as the sky turns black, a monstrous, unearthly bellowing is heard, carried by the winds from Emi Koussi, which by this time is just becoming visible over the horizon. It is such an unnatural noise that **Sanity** rolls need be made for hearing it (0/1D3 loss). Despite its alien nature, a **Psychology** roll can still detect a hint of mourning in its tones.

EMI KOUSSI, CHAD

Emi Koussi is a long-dormant, high pyroclastic shield volcano, and is the highest peak in the Sahara. Despite the desert surrounding it, Emi Koussi's elevation means it can get down to 32°F (0°C) on winter nights, and has even been known to snow—once every 7 years on average—which is why Guk-Keh was determined to take his mother there. In late May, at the time the villains arrive, this won't be a concern.

From the relatively flat desert sands to the rim of Emi Koussi's caldera is roughly 34 miles, with an average grade of 9%. While a 9% grade is not particularly steep, it does reduce walking speed by about 30%, which means that traversing it takes two whole days. If the Keeper wishes, they could have **The Eclipse** (above) take place while the villains are leaving their final camp, midway up Emi Koussi. While the placement is off geographically, it would make hearing the mournful bellowing more believable, being only about 17 miles from Guk-Keh's lair.

Karim goes no further than this final camp.

THE CALDERA

Atop the volcano is an 8 mile (13km) wide caldera, surrounded by 1000ft (300m) scarps. Guk-Keh's lair is located upon the

THE BIG-GAME HUNT

southern scarp, at the highest peak, overlooking the caldera—his kingdom. It is a peaked stone structure, akin to an Egyptian pyramid, albeit much smaller, irregularly-sided, and with 3 small towers rising from points on its circumference. Atop the tower closest to the caldera, a large seat has been carved into the stone from which Guk-Keh can look out over his kingdom. When the villains arrive, Guk-Keh is inside his lair.

Just off-center of the caldera is a second, nested caldera named Era Kohor, another 1000ft deep, and roughly 1.2 miles (2km) across. The floor of this second caldera is covered

in natron, appearing at first glance to be snow. Dug into its scarps are numerous sand-dweller caves. For generations, the sand-dwellers here have worshiped Guk-Keh as a deity, and do anything to protect him.

Whether the villains arrive at day or night—though it should be night if they camped mid-way up the mountain—each villain needs to make a **Stealth** roll. Inverse to what may be expected, arriving in the daytime incurs a bonus die due to the sand-dwellers being nocturnal. If failed, the sand-dwellers instantly notice their arrival, and a vocal alarm is sounded,



Emi Koussi Topography

THE SIX-LEGGED RHINO

Guk-Keh, mutant gnoph-keh

STR 150	CON 110	SIZ 150	DEX 70
INT 70	APP —	POW 100	EDU —
SAN —	HP 26	DB: +3D6	Build: 4
Move: 9	MP: 21		

Combat

Attacks per round: 5

May attack with its vicious claws and tremendous bulk. Once per round, the gnoph-keh may bring its terrible horn to bear on one target.

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D6+3D6
Horn Gore	65% (32/13), damage 1D10+3D6
Dodge	35% (17/7)

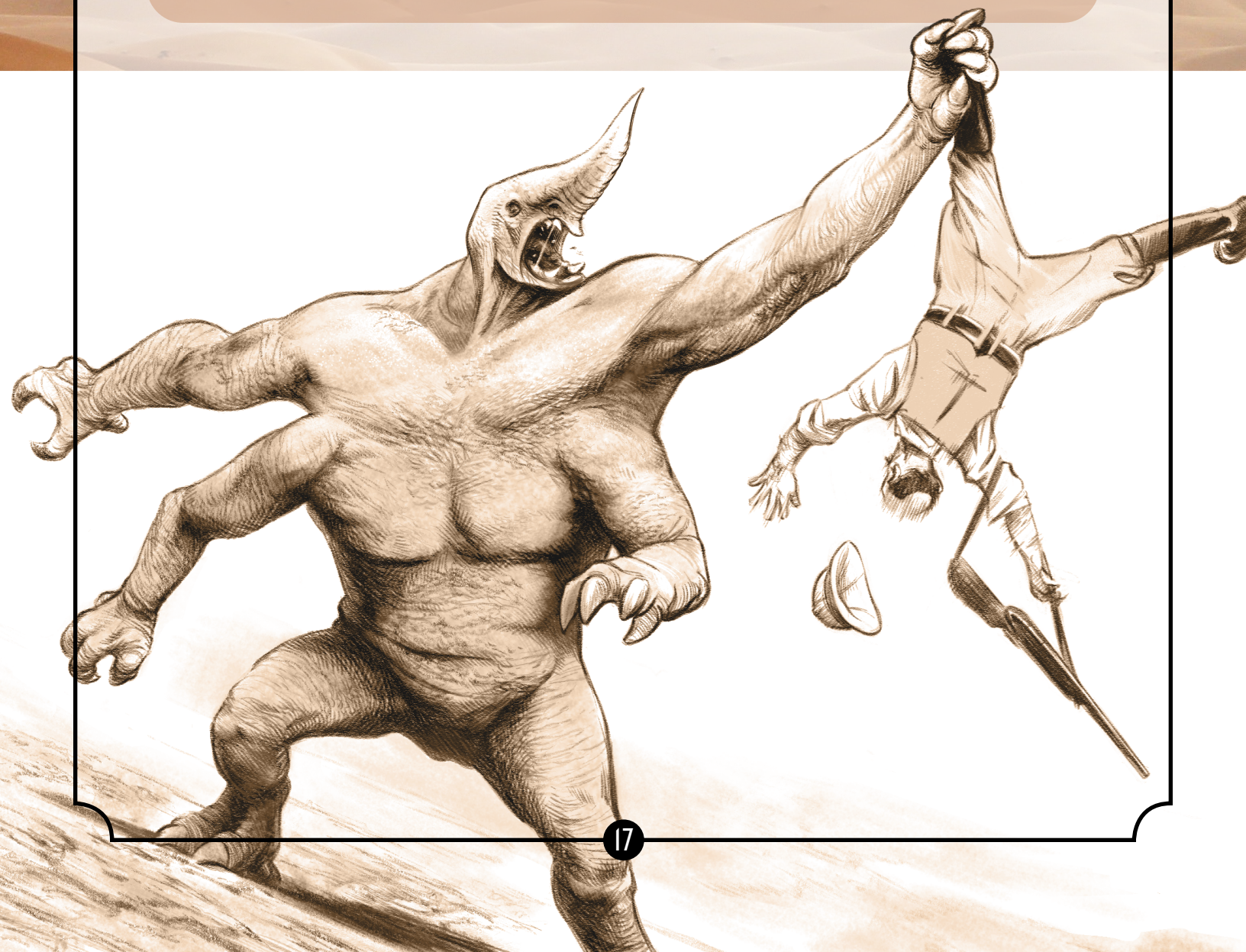
Sandstorm: able to summon a small sandstorm, restricting visibility to 9 feet maximum, costing the creature 1 magic point per hour, and yielding a sandstorm with a radius of 100 yards; that radius may be increased by 100 more yards for every extra magic point expended.

Generate Heat: can raise the air temperature by expending magic points. For each magic point spent, the temperature goes up by 18°F (10°C) for an hour (in a 100-yard radius). If the creature desires, it can combine its heat and sandstorm attacks.

Armor: 5 points of leathery hide.

Spells: none.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D10 Sanity points to see Guk-Keh.



SAND-DWELLER CAVES

Due to their slight size, the entrance to a sand-dweller cave is little more than a hewn cleft in the rock. If a villain chooses to enter one, they need to make a **SIZ** roll, with the difficulty determined by the table below.

SIZ	Difficulty
0-49	Regular
50-89	Hard
90+	Extreme

Inside, they find a slightly larger tunnel. The ambient light filtering in attenuates sharply, so an artificial source of light is needed to progress any further, else they quickly find themselves in pitch darkness.

Due to their keen hearing, it won't be long before the sand-dwellers are alerted to the intruder, and defend their home with ferocity. If more than one villain has entered, only the leader is able to attack due to the narrowness of the tunnel, though the Keeper may allow the second-in-line to attack with a penalty die if they wish. Similarly, only one or two sand-dwellers are able to attack at a time, however, as soon as one falls, another takes its place.

which brings many more swarming out of Era Kohor. The Keeper may describe as many sand-dwellers as they like here, as the villains won't be fighting many of them anyway. Seeing this horde will require a **Sanity** roll (0/1D6 loss).

The sand-dwellers start running at the villains, but as they are crossing the distance, a sandstorm begins to form. Unlike a regular sandstorm, which arrives as a wall, this one appears to be encircling the area, building up in size at the same time as its eye closes in. This has been created by Guk-Keh, who has expended all of his magic-points to create the biggest sandstorm he can muster. As it begins, the sand-dwellers momentarily pause, looking towards the lair. As they do, Guk-Keh appears atop the nearest tower, taking a seat upon his stone throne. Due to the distance, the Keeper should postpone the Sanity roll until Guk-Keh is faced in person later. The sand-dwellers then perform an action halfway between a nod and a bow before turning back towards the villains and resuming their sprint.

Any villains with long-range weapons can fire at any time, though the Keeper should not roll for success or damage, instead describing the targets as simply collapsing to the ground and being trampled over by their brethren. At some point, the Keeper should have the advancing sand-dwellers fire a barrage of blow-darts. Due to the number, the Keeper should once again forego rolling, and instead ask each villain for a **Luck** roll to determine if they are hit as the darts rain upon them.

Before the sand-dwellers and villains meet, the sandstorm closes in, reducing visibility to a mere yard or two due to its intensity. This lack of visibility affects both sides, so should not incur any form of penalty.

Unlike the attack in **The Ambush** (page 12), this encounter should be more descriptive and tense. Due to the poor visibility, a villain may see a dark form in the storm ahead, getting a chance to sneak up on them, or perhaps they themselves have been stalked and are set upon in a flurry of claws. Also unlike the previous attack, it is recommended that the Keeper keep combat in this scene as one-on-one, and not use the Mooks rule. If a villain wants to identify a figure in the storm from any further than arm's reach, they may make a **Spot Hidden** roll. If they succeed, they can differentiate between the silhouette of a sand-dweller and ally. If they fail, they simply can't tell. If a villain chooses to shoot at a figure in the storm without first identifying it, the Keeper may ask for a **Luck** roll. Failure means that they've hit one of their fellow villains. Due to the noise and ferocity of the storm, all surprise attacks should be allowed without opposition.

As soon as any villain loses half their hit-points, or at any time prior at the Keeper's discretion, a booming voice is heard above the storm yelling, "Stop!" in Egyptian ("aaddu"). Immediately, the sandstorm dissipates, and the sand-dwellers freeze momentarily before scattering. The villains notice that practically every sand-dweller is looking up at Guk-Keh in his tower. Guk-Keh rises from his throne, and jumps down to the caldera floor, over 1000ft below, with a loud thud and cloud of dust. The sand-dwellers all flee to their caves. While they worship Guk-Keh, they also fear him.

Guk-Keh strides directly towards the villains (or gallops if there is a significant distance to close). **Sanity** rolls will need to be made now (0/1D10 loss). If any of the villains take potshots at him, he continues his path, unflinching. Once he is at a suitable distance, he speaks Egyptian in a deep guttural voice, saying, "Why have you come to my home—my Kingdom!" and holds his arms out gesturing to his surroundings. If he notices someone needing to translate, or if no one speaks Egyptian at all, he snorts, "English?" (the Keeper may change this if the predominant language amongst the villains is any other). Guk-Keh then repeats himself, slowing it down as if speaking to

children. If the villains question how he knows English (or any other), he says that his mother taught him all the languages of the humans.

THE CLIMAX

There are many ways this final encounter could play out. The following are a few suggested paths:

FIGHT!

Gnoph-keh are *extremely* dangerous creatures, so a straight-out fight is not recommended unless the Keeper is content with the scenario likely ending with the death of the entire party. With his five allowed attacks, Guk-Keh could easily kill an average *Pulp Cthulhu* PC in a single round. Even one attack has a small chance of killing a lower hit-point PC in one go. For this reason, it is recommended that the Keeper perhaps opt to not use all five, or if they do, spread them around the group instead of focusing all five on one villain.

TEACH A LESSON

In this option, Guk-Keh still fights the villains, but without the intent to kill. Instead of using his claws or horn to attack, he is more likely to swat the villains away with the back of his hand. Despite pulling his punches, this attack still does 3D6

damage (DB), and also sends the villain flying back a distance of 100-SIZ feet.

Once every villain is prone or unconscious, Guk-Keh chastises them for their actions, and tells them he is letting them live so that they may return to the world of men and spread the word that any who follow in their footsteps will not be so fortunate.

PLEA FOR EMPATHY

Guk-Keh is not the villain in this scenario. Besides the occasional human snack, he has never acted maliciously. In this option, Guk-Keh pleads with the villains to just leave him alone to live out his life by his deceased mother's side. The Keeper should have him Dodge all attacks, and forfeit his own turn, constantly saying things such as, "Why are you doing this?" If Guk-Keh loses half his hit-points, he becomes angered, and the Keeper should switch to **Fight!** or **Teach a Lesson** for the remainder of the fight.

PLEA FOR EUTHANASIA

This is the saddest option, and perhaps also the least satisfactory for the players. Here, Guk-Keh resigns his fate to the villains, saying that he is tired of being hunted, and looks forward to seeing his mother soon. If choosing this option, the Keeper should aim for maximum emotional impact by describing the pain being inflicted upon Guk-Keh in gruesome detail, and upon receiving the killing blow, should whisper something like, "I'm...coming...mother."

INSIDE GUK-KEH'S LAIR

Should the villains make their way into Guk-Keh's lair at any time, they find it has a very simple layout. The entrance is on the western side, and opens directly onto an antechamber, which in turn opens onto the living area, which consists of a large bed made of various animal furs, as well as a hearth filled with ashes and a handful of animal bones. Off the living area are 3 short halls leading to the 3 towers, as well as a dark room filled with the remains of countless animals, all ranging in states of decay from mere bones, to the head of a jackal that was likely killed today. There are even some human remains amidst the carrion (0/1D4 Sanity point loss). If the Keeper wishes, one of these may have a note on their person which could provide a plot hook leading into their next scenario.

CONCLUSION

If the villains manage to slay Guk-Keh, they hear a slow clapping from a distance, and turn to see three men riding towards them with the rest of their caravan in tow. This is Pierce, Ashworth's personal taxidermist, Spence, his assistant, and Youssef, their guide. Even before introducing himself, Pierce quips, "I hope you didn't damage the hide too much. It's going to be a right bugger to stuff out here as it is."

Ashworth, knowing that the corpse would not survive the month-long trip back to Cairo, sent them out just behind the villains so that they can work on the trip home. All involved know it's not an ideal situation, but neither is returning with a rotten carcass.

The villains then return to Ashworth for the remainder of their reward, which he happily hands over in his study. He then excitedly takes them into the smoking room to show them his prize on display, which is where the scenario ends.

THE BIG-GAME HUNT

Should the villains opt to leave Guk-Keh be, they pass Pierce and his party on their way back down Emi Koussi. Pierce looks confused, and asks, "Well, where is it?" It is up to the Keeper how they proceed, but Ashworth will not hand over any money, and states how disappointed he is with them all, saying, "You were meant to be the best of the best, and you've failed me. Get out of my sight."

REWARDS

Because the PCs in *The Big-Game Hunt* are villains, they are not rewarded upon the morality of their actions as a typical scenario would. Instead, their rewards are more self-centered.

- Taught those thieves a lesson +1D2 Sanity points
- Killed more than 6 sand-dwellers +1D6 Sanity points
- Killed the puppeteer +1D10 Sanity points
- Killed the six-legged rhino +1D10 Sanity points
- Spared the six-legged rhino. +1D3 Sanity points
- Got paid. +1D4 Sanity points

NPCS AND MONSTERS

Terrance Ashworth, age 74, retired big-game hunter

STR 35	CON 45	SIZ 65	DEX 50
INT 65	APP 25	POW 50	EDU 65
SAN 50	HP 11	DB: 0	Build: 0
Move: 3	MP: 10		

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Elephant Gun	85% (42/17), damage 3D6+4
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Credit Rating 75%, Fast Talk 50%, Listen 80%, Natural World 75%, Navigate 70%, Ride 60%, Spot Hidden 65%, Stealth 40%, Track 35%.

Orson, age 51, Ashworth's agent

STR 45	CON 50	SIZ 70	DEX 40
INT 70	APP 40	POW 55	EDU 70
SAN 55	HP 12	DB: 0	Build: 0
Move: 5	MP: 11		

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge	20% (10/4)

Skills

Appraise 50%, Charm 30%, Credit Rating 45%, History 25%, Language (Egyptian) 75%, Law 30%, Library Use 60%, Psychology 25%.

Karim, age 28, camel wrangler

STR 55	CON 75	SIZ 50	DEX 65
INT 55	APP 50	POW 70	EDU 40
SAN 70	HP 12	DB: 0	Build: 0
Move: 9	MP: 14		

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge	32% (16/6)

Skills

Animal Handling 60%, Credit Rating 5%, Language (Own) (Egyptian) 40%, Language (English) 31%, Natural World 50%, Navigate 70%, Ride 75%, Survival (Desert) 50%, Track 30%.

Mohamed, age 77, gracious host

STR 45	CON 55	SIZ 60	DEX 45
INT 60	APP 25	POW 50	EDU 60
SAN 50	HP 11	DB: 0	Build: 0
Move: 3	MP: 10		

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge	22% (11/4)

Skills

Animal Handling 50%, Credit Rating 10%, Cthulhu Mythos 6%, First Aid 50%, History 40%, Natural World 30%, Ride 40%, Survival (Desert) 35%, Track 20%.

Puppeteer, skeletal abomination

STR 45	CON 15	SIZ 110	DEX 70
INT 40	APP —	POW 15	EDU —
SAN —	HP 12	DB: +1D4	Build: 1
Move: 7	MP: 3		

Combat

Attacks per round: 4

In combat, the puppeteer uses the phalanges of both skeletons' hands as claws.

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D4+1D4
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Armor: The formless spawn itself is immune to all physical weapons, even enchanted ones—wounds simply snap closed

THE BIG-GAME HUNT

after being opened. Spells may affect it, as may fire, chemicals, or other forces. However, the skeletons have no such immunities.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D10 Sanity points to see a puppeteer.

Sand-Dwellers, *stalkers of the wastes*

STR	50	CON	65	SIZ	45	DEX	65
INT	50	APP	—	POW	50	EDU	—
SAN	—	HP	11	DB:	0	Build:	0
Move:	9	MP:	10				

Combat

Attacks per round: 2

In combat, sand-dwellers have the usual range of unarmed attacks open to humanoids, in addition to its claws.

Blow-gun: Some sand-dwellers carry blow-guns and poisoned darts. See **Blow-Dart Poison Effects** table (page 13) for details.

Fighting	30% (15/6), damage 1D6
Blow-gun	25% (12/5), damage special (see above)
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Listen 60%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 55%.

Armor: 2-point rough hide.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a sand-dweller.

Guk-Keh, *mutant gnoph-keh*

STR	150	CON	110	SIZ	150	DEX	70
INT	70	APP	—	POW	100	EDU	—
SAN	—	HP	26	DB:	+3D6	Build:	4
Move:	9	MP:	21				

Combat

Attacks per round: 5

May attack with its vicious claws and tremendous bulk. Once per round, the gnoph-keh may bring its terrible horn to bear on one target.

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D6+3D6
Horn Gore	65% (32/13), damage 1D10+3D6
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Sandstorm: able to summon a small sandstorm, restricting visibility to 9 feet maximum, costing the creature 1 magic point per hour, and yielding a sandstorm with a radius of 100 yards; that radius may be increased by 100 more yards for every extra magic point expended.

Generate Heat: can raise the air temperature by expending magic points. For each magic point spent, the temperature goes up by 18°F (10°C) for an hour (in a 100-yard radius). If the creature desires, it can combine its heat and sandstorm attacks.

Armor: 5 points of leathery hide.

Spells: none.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D10 Sanity points to see Guk-Keh.

HANDOUTS

CORPORAL FLETCHER'S JOURNAL

February 15, 1882

Heading into desert tomorrow with reluctance. Ashworth must have serious clout to command military Section. All to hunt animal that may not even exist.

March 10, 1882

Al Jawf locals say rhino is no animal, but intelligent being. Whether legend or no, my men and I are not murderers. Will send one of the men ahead in morning with letter advising Ashworth of return.

March 18, 1882

Sandstorm hit as approaching Great Sand Sea. Luck on side, found abandoned town to shelter in.

THE NATURALIST'S DIARY

February 4, 1882

Oh, my Lord, the rumours have proven to be true. There is indeed a race of sand-dwelling men in the Sahara. This is a remarkable discovery. I've only made preliminary observations thus far, but they seem to live in tribal communities, and are wholly nocturnal, spending the daylight hours sleeping in caves. I'm no geologist, but the caves appear to me to be crafted, rather than natural.

It's been difficult to get a clear look at them, but under last night's full moon, and with the aid of a spyglass, it appeared to me that their skin was coated in sand, though its uniformity seems to suggest a natural covering. Perhaps some kind of mineral excretion? One other discernible feature was their enlarged eyes and ears, likely an adaptation to their nocturnal nature. Save for these traits, they appear almost human, albeit emaciated, which is unsurprising given the scarcity of food out here. I will continue my observations for as long as our supplies hold out.

February 16, 1882

This day will be forever etched in my memory. After securing further supplies at *Aujila* to allow us to continue our research, I resolved to try something bold. The sand people had shown no hostility towards us, despite our nightly observations, so at dusk I approached them, offering a gift of food and water. I noticed some initial trepidation on their behalf, but after a moment, their apparent Elder came forward and took them from me, retreating immediately after. The encounter, though fleeting, was nonetheless exhilarating. Seeing one up close, and briefly coming in contact with its hand, I can confirm that their sandy covering is indeed part of their skin, as none came loose whatsoever. Another physiology I was unable to discern until this encounter was that their fingers have large claws in place of fingernails. They are truly remarkable beings. This exchange was enough to satiate my curiosity, and I have no further plans to directly interact.

March 18, 1882

An exceptionally violent sandstorm has hit us today. While we were outside securing the camp, we saw soldiers riding past, presumably heading to the abandoned village for shelter. I can't say for sure, but their uniforms appeared to be British. Once the storm has cleared, we might pay them a visit and see if they have any surplus supplies for sale, saving us another trip to *Aujila*.

March 19, 1882

I'm afraid I fear the worst for our military neighbours. The sandstorm continued on today and into the night, presumably keeping them from leaving the village, and just a few hours ago we heard gunfire coming from that direction. Were they attacked by bandits? The sand people? As I write this, the gunfire has ceased, but the storm is still too strong to risk venturing out, so I can only speculate.

March 20, 1882

My fears were confirmed this morning. After a near sleepless night, we rose to find the sandstorm had subsided, so headed to the village to investigate last night's gunfire. It was a bloodbath, with all evidence pointing towards the sand people. I have no idea why they would have attacked the soldiers when they have shown little more than apathy towards us. Perhaps they were provoked or threatened? I do admit a morbid hope that one of their slain had been left behind that I may have examined it upon my dissection table, but it seems they are quite diligent in the removal of their deceased. This explains their avoidance of discovery until now. As a consolation, I was able to recover several of their blow-darts from the scene, which I will be able to study, and hopefully create an antidote for should we ever find ourselves on the receiving end of one.

April 2, 1882

Today proved to be enlightening, to say the least. Needing to know exactly how it works, I drew up the courage to test the blow-dart poison on myself. From observing the sand men hunting, I knew it would cause no physical harm, but was completely unprepared for its true effects. Upon the first dose, my hearing became immensely heightened. I swear I could hear sand blowing across the floor! It was quite maddening. The effect wore off after a few hours, thankfully. After some recovery time, I was ready for a second dosing. To my surprise, it affected a completely different sense, and I was hit with an intense bout of vertigo, nearly knocking over a table as the room spun around me. Further testing is in order, but I suspect the other senses will be affected by subsequent dosings.

April 14, 1882

Huzzah! I've had a breakthrough in the synthesis of the poison antidote tonight. Having spent the night in the laboratory, I've managed to make a small batch, which self-administered testing has shown to work wonderfully. I should probably finish up for the night, and share my findings with

KEEPER'S TRANSCRIPTS

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NOAH CLARKE, AGE 36, MAD SCIENTIST

STR 50	CON 40	SIZ 60	DEX 50	INT 90
APP 60	POW 70	EDU 80	SAN 70	HP 20
DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 7	MP: 14	Luck: Roll 2D6+6 ×5

Archetype: Egghead

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Screwdriver	25% (12/5), damage 1D4
Lighting Gun	50% (25/10), damage special*
Dodge	25% (12/5)

**The Lighting Gun does not use ammunition, but instead requires charging via a crank. It can be cranked and fired in the same round for 1D6 damage, but each extra round spent cranking adds one extra die to the damage roll, e.g. 2 rounds of cranking results in 2D6 damage. Each crank also takes 10% from the malfunction threshold, e.g. 1 crank: 90%, 2 cranks 80%. If rolled damage is greater than the target's base hit-points, they instantly disintegrate into a cloud of ash.*

Skills

Credit Rating 50% (25/10)
 Fast Talk 50% (25/10)
 Language (Own) (English) 80% (40/16)
 Library Use 80% (40/16)
 Locksmith 40% (20/8)
 Mechanical Repair 80% (40/16)
 Science (Mathematics) 60% (30/12)
 Science (Chemistry) 45% (22/9)
 Science (Engineering) 70% (35/14)
 Science (Physics) 75% (37/15)
 Spot Hidden 50% (25/5)

The player has 40 skill points to allocate to any skills they desire, apart from Cthulhu Mythos.

Pulp Talents

- **Weird Science:** may build and repair weird science devices.
- **Gadget:** starts game with one weird science gadget (lightning gun).
- **Photographic Memory:** can remember many details; gains a bonus die when making Know rolls.

Note: for a game that does not use the optional rules for weird science, replace the Weird Science talent with the Resourceful talent.

Backstory

Noah came from a family of wealth, and was always intelligent, but with that intelligence came precociousness. He entered the University of Oxford, but despite his family's clout, was expelled for expressing some less-than-benevolent project proposals. Using his personal trust fund, he set up his own laboratory and workshop, and continued his work in secret. His family eventually found out, and cut him from any further financial support, so now uses his unique skills to make weapons of destruction for sale on the black market.

- **Description:** slender, pale, and cleanly-shaven, with unkempt blonde hair; wears a lab coat everywhere he goes; 5' 7", 160 lbs.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** materialist—reality is nothing more than chemistry and physics.
- **Meaningful Location:** his workshop in London.
- **Traits:** manic; obsessive; know-it-all.



ALISON GIRARD, AGE 28, ASSASSIN

STR 40	CON 50	SIZ 60	DEX 60	INT 80
APP 90	POW 70	EDU 50	SAN 70	HP 22
DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 8	MP: 14	Luck: Roll 2D6+6 ×5

Archetype: Femme Fatale

Combat

Brawl	75% (37/15), damage 1D3
Switchblade	75% (37/15), damage 1D4
Double Derringer	60% (30/12), damage 1D10+1
Syringe (mnvr)*	75% (37/15), damage 4D10
Dodge	30% (15/6)

**Alison carries a purse filled with syringes containing various poisons. Due to the grappling required to inject the syringe into the target, this is considered a fighting maneuver rather than an attack. For the sake of combat, it should be assumed that she will use a fast-acting poison such as curare or cyanide (4D10 damage). See the Call of Cthulhu Rulebook, pg. 128, for more details on the use of poisons.*

Skills

Charm 70% (35/14)
 Credit Rating 58% (29/11)
 Disguise 25% (12/5)
 Fast Talk 25% (12/5)
 Language (Own) (French) 50% (25/10)
 Language (English) 40% (20/8)
 Locksmith 50% (25/10)
 Psychology 60% (30/12)
 Science (Chemistry) 60% (30/12)

The player has 40 skill points to allocate to any skills they desire, apart from Cthulhu Mythos.

Pulp Talents

- **Outmaneuver:** character is considered to have one point higher Build when initiating a combat maneuver.
- **Smooth Talker:** gain a bonus die to Charm rolls.
- **Stout Constitution:** may spend 10 Luck to reduce poison or disease damage and effects by half.

Backstory

Alison was once a successful and respected chemist in Paris, France. She was, however, living in an abusive marriage. One night, while working in her home laboratory, her husband came in drunk, and started getting physical. In a moment of panic and self-defense, she grabbed a syringe off her workbench and stabbed him with it. To this day, she can't recall exactly what

was in the syringe, but regardless, it killed him. Knowing she would be tried for murder, Alison packed up what she could that night, took all the money they had, and fled. Knowing she could never return to her life as a chemist, she embraced her new life as a criminal, offering her unique services for the right price, so that she may continue living the lifestyle to which she had become accustomed.

- **Description:** shapely and beautiful, with green eyes and long black hair; 5' 10", 130 lbs.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** Alison is an atheist.
- **Meaningful Locations:** the laboratory in the attic of her house.
- **Traits:** alluring; glamorous; cunning.



RANA, AGE UNKNOWN, BOUNTY HUNTER

STR 45	CON 60	SIZ 40	DEX 65	INT 70
APP 70	POW 90	EDU 60	SAN 89	HP 20
DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 9	MP: 18	Luck: Roll 2D6+6 ×5

Archetype: Mystic

Combat

Brawl	80% (40/16), damage 1D3
Khopesh	50% (25/10), damage 1D6+1
Hyena	30% (15/6), damage 1D8+1D4
Dodge	32% (16/6)

Skills

Animal Handling 70% (35/14)
 Credit Rating 11% (5/2)
 Cthulhu Mythos 10% (5/2)
 Intimidate 70% (35/14)
 Language (Own) (Egyptian) 60% (30/12)
 Language (English) 10% (5/2)
 Natural World 50% (25/10)
 Occult 65% (32/13)
 Psychology 30% (15/6)
 Stealth 50% (25/10)
 Track 75% (37/15)

The player has 40 skill points to allocate to any skills they desire, apart from Cthulhu Mythos.

Pulp Talents

- **Animal Companion:** starts game with a faithful animal companion (see **D'ba (Rana's Hyena)**, page 3, for details), and gains a bonus die when making Animal Handling rolls.
- **Mythos Knowledge:** begins the game with a Cthulhu Mythos Skill of 10 points.
- **Resilient:** may spend Luck points to shrug-off points of Sanity loss, on a one-for-one basis.

Note: Being a Mystic, Rana will know some spells. It is the Keeper's discretion as to how many and which, though her connection to Anubis, the god of death, should inform their decision.

Backstory

Rana's history is shrouded in mystery. Some say she was orphaned as a baby and raised by a clan of hyenas, while others say she is the daughter of a witchdoctor. Rana revels in such mythology, and will never reveal if either is true (or neither), and is more likely to embellish upon them herself.

- **Description:** lithe and beautiful, with black hair tied into thick braids; anachronistically wears Ancient Egyptian garb; 4' 11", 110 lbs.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** Rana believes in the old gods of Egypt, and worships Anubis.
- **Significant Person Animal:** D'ba.
- **Treasured Possessions:** An onyx scarab she keeps on a necklace.
- **Traits:** cunning; chaotic; ferocious.



REN SHINODA, AGE 32, ASSASSIN

STR 40	CON 80	SIZ 45	DEX 90	INT 60
APP 70	POW 65	EDU 50	SAN 65	HP 25
DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 8	MP: 13	Luck: Roll 2D6+6 ×5

Archetype: Outsider

Combat

Ninjutsu	75% (37/15), damage 1D3
Katana	80% (40/16), damage 1D8+1
Shuriken	75% (37/15), damage 1D3
Dodge	45% (22/9)

Skills

Credit Rating 32% (16/6)
 Disguise 25% (12/5)
 First Aid 60% (30/12)
 Language (Own) (Japanese) 50% (25/10)
 Language (English) 10% (5/2)
 Listen 50% (25/10)
 Locksmith 30% (15/6)
 Psychology 50% (25/10)
 Spot Hidden 50% (25/10)
 Stealth 70% (35/14)
 Throw 75% (37/15)
 Track 40% (20/8)

The player has 40 skill points to allocate to any skills they desire, apart from Cthulhu Mythos.

Pulp Talents

- **Rapid Attack:** may spend 10 Luck points to gain one further melee attack in a single combat round.
- **Shadow:** reduces difficulty by one level or gains bonus die (at the Keeper's discretion) to Stealth rolls, and if currently unseen, is able to make two surprise attacks before their location is discovered.
- **Night Vision:** in darkness, reduce the difficulty level of Spot Hidden rolls and ignore penalty die for shooting in the dark.

Backstory

Ren was born into a family of shinobi (more commonly known as ninjas in the West). While the era of the ninja ended in the 17th century, Ren's bloodline continued to teach and practice their ways. Having been trained since childhood, it is all she knows.

- **Description:** alabaster and dainty, with straight black hair tied into a ponytail; 5' 2", 110 lbs.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** Buddhist.
- **Meaningful Locations:** A small forest shrine in the mountains of her home village in Mie Prefecture.
- **Treasured Possessions:** Her katana, passed down through generations of her family.
- **Traits:** cold; quiet; brutal.



MARCUS MATHESON, AGE 36, BOUNTY HUNTER

STR 60	CON 90	SIZ 60	DEX 80	INT 50
APP 70	POW 50	EDU 40	SAN 50	HP 30
DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 8	MP: 10	Luck: Roll 2D6+6 ×5

Archetype: Rogue

Combat

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3
S&W Schofield (×2)*	90% (45/18), damage 1D10+2
Winchester '73	60% (30/12), damage 2D6+1
Hunting Knife	70% (35/14), damage 1D4+2
Hog-tie (mnvr)**	70% (35/14)
Dodge	50% (25/10)

**Marcus has a penchant for dual-wielding his Schofield revolvers. If the Keeper chooses not to allow the dual-wielding optional rule, the only difference will be halving the number of shots available before needing to reload.*

***This maneuver results in the target becoming immobilized until freed by a third party, or making an Extreme STR roll. It may be replaced by the Rope Use skill from Down Darker Trails if the Keeper so desires (with the necessary skill points skimmed from other skills).*

Skills

Charm 50% (25/10)
 Credit Rating 25% (12/5)
 Fast Talk 30% (15/6)
 Intimidate 50% (25/10)
 Language (Own) (English) 40% (20/8)
 Psychology 30% (15/6)
 Ride 70% (35/14)
 Spot Hidden 50% (25/10)
 Stealth 40% (20/8)

The player has 40 skill points to allocate to any skills they desire, apart from Cthulhu Mythos.

Pulp Talents

- **Rapid Fire:** ignores penalty die for multiple handgun shots.
- **Quick Draw:** does not need to have their firearm "readied" to gain +50 DEX when determining position in the DEX order for combat.
- **Beady Eye:** does not suffer penalty die when "aiming" at a small target (Build -2), and may also fire into melee without a penalty die.

Backstory

Marcus was a cowpoke turned lawman in the American "wild west", and though he found satisfaction in bringing ne'er-do-wells to justice, he constantly felt constrained by the institutionalized laws and procedures, and felt that too many criminals were getting off scot-free because of them. Leaving his position, he took matters into his own hands and turned to bounty hunting, enforcing his own brand of vigilante justice.

- **Description:** rugged and tanned, with a perpetual five o'clock shadow, and graying, scruffy brown hair; 5' 7" 160 lbs.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** Marcus is a Christian, and believes that every man needs to pay for their crimes while their feet are still planted on God's green Earth.
- **Significant Person:** None. He is very much a loner.
- **Treasured Possessions:** His twin Schofield revolvers.
- **Traits:** untrusting; detached; arrogant.



ALEXI "THE BEAR" VASILIEV, AGE 50, BOUNTY HUNTER

STR 90	CON 70	SIZ 90	DEX 50	INT 40
APP 50	POW 60	EDU 50	SAN 60	HP 32
DB: +1D6	Build: 2	Move: 8	MP: 12	Luck: Roll 2D6+6 ×5

Archetype: Two-Fisted

Combat

Brawl	90% (45/18), damage 1D3+1D6
Throwing Knife	80% (40/16), damage 1D4+1D3
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Charm 90% (45/18)
 Climb 40% (20/8)
 Credit Rating 21% (10/4)
 Intimidate 80% (40/16)
 Language (Own) (Russian) 50% (25/10)
 Language (English) 30% (15/6)
 Psychology 70% (35/14)
 Throw 80% (40/16)
 Track 60% (30/12)

The player has 40 skill points to allocate to any skills they desire, apart from Cthulhu Mythos.

Pulp Talents

- **Heavy Hitter:** may spend 10 Luck points to add an additional damage die when dealing out melee combat.
- **Tough Guy:** soaks up damage, may spend 10 Luck points to shrug off up to 5 hit points worth of damage taken in one combat round.
- **Hardened:** ignores Sanity point loss from attacking other humans, viewing horrific injuries, or the deceased.

Backstory

Alexi grew up on a farm outside Nizhniy Novgorod, Russia. Never one to shy away from manual labor, he grew into a mountain of a man. Whenever they would get the chance, he and his father would go hunting in the nearby wilderness. On one fateful day, his father was attacked by a Eurasian brown bear. In a panic, Alexi threw a knife at the creature, hitting it right in the eye. The throw had so much force that it pierced the skull, impaling its brain, and killing the bear instantly. Unfortunately, Alexi's father did not survive the encounter. To the shock of on-lookers, Alexi was seen exiting the forest, covered in blood, cradling his father with both arms, as well as the bear's severed head. Alexi quickly gained a reputation as "the man who killed a bear with his own hands," which over time evolved into the nickname, "The Bear." With such a

reputation, it wasn't long until the criminal underworld sought him out as hired muscle. Having sold the farm after his father's death, he jumped at the employment opportunity.

- **Description:** Herculean in stature and physique, with short black hair and a thick beard; 6' 4", 265 lbs.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** Russian Orthodox.
- **Significant Person:** His late father.
- **Meaningful Locations:** The wilderness outside his hometown of Nizhniy Novgorod.
- **Treasured Possessions:** The skull of the bear he killed, with knife still embedded in its eye socket.
- **Traits:** fearless; jolly; insouciant.

