

# The MINISTRY of RECALLER OCCURRINGERS

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE



POWERED BY  
**FATE**

by Don Bisdorf

**TOOLS OF THE TRADE**

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ISBN 1-978-1-887920-17-9

<http://www.galileogames.com>

ENGINEER AGENT DOCTOR JULIA PRYDE  
Senior Technician



LONDON OFFICE  
United Kingdom  
Research and Design

To: Doctor Basil Sound, Director

Doctor Sound,

Professor Axelrod and Doctor Blackwell had hoped to deliver this report to you themselves, but last week's accident in the Research and Design laboratories--and the subsequent cleanup effort--has claimed most of their time and attention. At their request, I have completed the report, and the results are now in your hands.

For convenience of reference, I have organized the report into six sections. The "Espionage" section describes tools intended for use during clandestine operations, while the "Utility" section contains equipment for more general purposes. The "Weapons" section contains a list of personal defense devices, and the "Vehicle" section is a list of transportation machinery.

The "Outside Efforts" section lists a few particularly noteworthy inventions produced by parties outside the Ministry. These are devices that we either cannot reproduce due to unsolved technical difficulties, or that we will not reproduce due to clear moral issues.

The final section, "Major Projects," describes some of the Ministry's larger and more challenging engineering efforts. The R&D Department is grateful for the chance to participate in these scientific triumphs, and we hope that these innovations will yield great benefits for our organization and for our nation.

If you have any questions about this material, you may contact me directly, and I will provide any further information or clarification you might require.

Regards,

*Julia Pryde*

Doctor Julia Pryde  
Senior Technician

P.S.: Doctor Blackwell has asked me include in this letter a re-iteration of her concern about the habit of some Ministry personnel to refer to R&D staff members as "clankertons". She believes that this term conveys unwarranted ridicule and condemnation, and if I may quote her own words: "It would be wise to show more respect for people who can build death rays from household materials."

# TOOLS OF THE TRADE

## ADDITIONAL GADGETS FOR AGENTS

👉 A report on recent inventions developed in Research & Design to assist Field Agents on mission 👈

### GUIDE TO ENTRIES

This report details several types of equipment. Many of the devices described below are Skill Gadgets and vehicles, as detailed in *The Ministry Initiative* (pages 76 to 86). Some are new Agent Gadgets, but unlike the standard Agent Gadget, these may be acquired from Research & Design for use on specific missions. Also detailed are several new vehicles. The final portion of the report is an assessment of enemy capabilities, or details on gadgets seized from other organizations. These often have dangerous or immoral applications, and are not likely to be issued to Agents of the Ministry.

### TEMPORARY AGENT GADGET

The Agent Gadgets described in this document are meant to be temporary, an exception to the usual rule that only a single Agent Gadget may be used by an Agent at any given time.

These are like regular Agent Gadgets in all respects, having to Aspects that can be invoked or compelled as desired. However, at the conclusion of a mission where these gadgets are issued to an Agent, they must be returned to Research & Design.

### ESPIONAGE

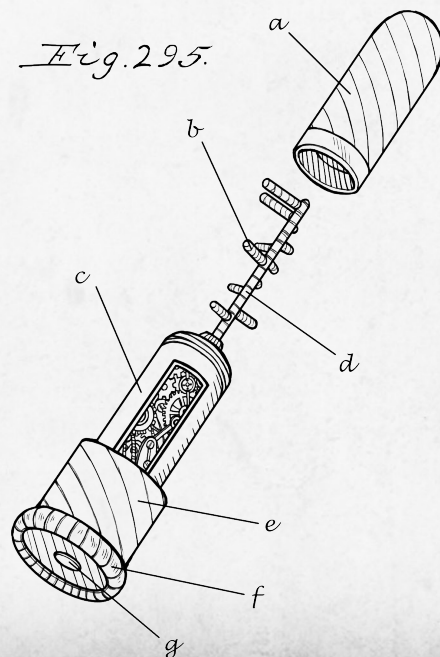
#### MECHANICAL LOCKPICK

This device is housed in a pen-sized cylinder and can open almost any modern lock. After rotating the rear section to wind the internal spring, the agent removes the cap, inserts the manipulator rods into the lock, and presses the activating stud. The device will probe the interior of the lock, adjusting its motions as necessary to mimic the activity of a key. Trials have shown that an agent with minimal training can use this item to open any Yale, Chubb, or Bramah lock within thirty seconds.

Unfortunately, the automatic lockpick is not effective against primitive locks that require large, heavy keys, and cannot assist an agent in solving combination locks or other security devices that do not require keys.

#### BENEFIT

+2 to Theft when picking common locks. (Requires Theft +1.)



## COVERT PHOTOGRAPHY CAMERA

Miniature optic lenses and microphoto film allows the R&D Department to construct small photographic cameras which appear to be other ordinary items, such as shaving razors, hairbrushes, pocket watches, fountain pens, bracelets, necklaces, musical instruments, eating utensils, and so forth.

### BENEFIT

+2 to Stealth to take photographs without being noticed.

## INVISIBLE INK FORMULA #27

After the Ministry confirmed that the House of Usher had learned how to reveal Ink Formula #23, the R&D Department launched an all-hands effort to develop a replacement. The result is Formula #27, which has been performing admirably in the field for the past six months. This black ink remains visible for 60 seconds after leaving the bottle, after which it fades and becomes undetectable, even under a microscope. Treating the ink with the revealing agent, Formula #27A, renders it permanently visible again.

Formula #27 is suitable for fountain pens and calligraphy brushes, though we do not recommend its use in typewriters, since the keystrokes will leave visible impressions on the page even if the ink itself is invisible. Agents may apply Formula #27A by brushing, spraying, or pouring, whichever is convenient given the situation and tools available.

The R&D Department has destroyed its remaining supply of Formula #23 and has advised all Ministry personnel to do the same. Field agents should exercise all possible precautions to prevent outside parties from capturing samples of either Formula #27 or #27A.

### ASPECTS

High Concept: VANISHING MESSAGES

Trouble: THE ENEMY MUSTN'T FIND THIS BOTTLE

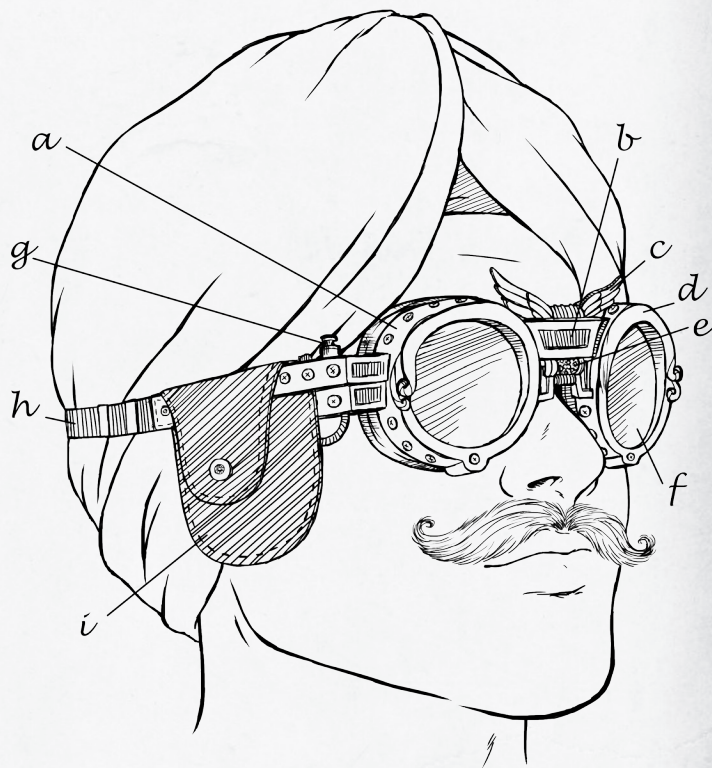
## COLOR CHANGE CLOTHES

These clothes are treated with a special dye which reacts chromatically to certain atomized chemicals. When a field agent sprays her clothes with one of the activating chemicals, the clothing changes colors within seconds. Each garment can shift between three different colors as needed, each color activated by a different chemical spray. This may help an agent to throw off pursuers, or to maintain surveillance on a target without being discovered.

### BENEFIT

+2 to Stealth in conditions where a change of clothing may confuse the opposition.

*Fig. 68.*



## AUTOMATIC ENCODER

Ministry engineers have managed to conceal a sophisticated encryption machine within the body of a fountain pen. The pen can operate as a normal writing instrument, but removing the rear cap exposes a pair of alphanumeric dials. The agent encodes a message one letter at a time, setting the original letter on the input dial, and reading the encoded letter from the output dial. This is not a simple substitution cipher; the pen calculates each output letter using a classified mathematical process. Intelligence personnel at Ministry headquarters provide each pen with unique coding characteristics, so that even if one pen were to fall into enemy hands, messages encrypted with other pen would remain secure.

### BENEFIT

An enemy agent intercepting a message encrypted with the automatic encoder may only decrypt the message if he succeeds at a Fantastic (+6) Overcome action using Deduction.

## MESMERISM RING

Though true mesmerism is an art that can require years of practice, R&D has used several mesmeric principles to design this interrogation aid. It appears to be an ordinary ring with a large jewel, but when the agent presses a button, the jewel glows with a slowly swirling light. The pattern of the light can induce a mild trance state in a subject who observes the light closely. A subject under the effects of the ring will be somewhat more susceptible

to suggestions, and more willing to answer questions. A suspicious subject, however, can easily avoid the effects by simply refusing to look at the ring.

**BENEFIT**

+2 to Rapport in calm, quiet environments when you have the subject's full and willing attention. (Requires Rapport +2.)

**THERMOVISOR GOGGLES**

An alternative to Starlight goggles, this optical device allows the wearer to perceive heat patterns visually. The amplifiers are sensitive enough to detect heat through curtains or walls, but not through exceptionally solid barriers such as heavy stone or dense metal. The goggles may be useful in a variety of surveillance and reconnaissance tasks, such as observing the movements of a subject in an adjacent room, or searching a location for hidden machinery and electrical equipment.

Since the Thermovisor goggles obscure the wearer's normal vision, objects that are the same temperature as the wearer's surroundings--such as furniture, large rocks, and so forth--will be invisible. Agents attempting to move about while wearing the goggles should exercise caution.

**ASPECTS**

High Concept: **HEAT AND COLD ARE REVEALED**  
Trouble: **WHAT DID I JUST TRIP OVER?**

**COMPRESSED CLOTHES**

This item comes packaged in a sealed can, similar to those used to preserve food. Instead of fruit or meat, the can contains a man's suit or woman's dress, chemically treated so that it will compress into a small volume without damage. A field agent who suddenly requires a change of clean, fashionable clothes may open the can with the quick-release button and remove the compressed suit or dress. When exposed to air, the fabric expands to its normal size, completely wrinkle-free. The effects of the chemical treatment dissipate after the fabric is restored, and the agent will be unable to put the suit or dress back in the can.

Some agents have reported that clothing that goes through the compression and restoration process no longer fits correctly, but the R&D Department is confident that this is merely the result of agents not properly using the size notation system when filling out requisition forms.

**ASPECTS**

High Concept: **INSTANTLY ELEGANT**  
Trouble: **THIS SEEMS A BIT SNUG**

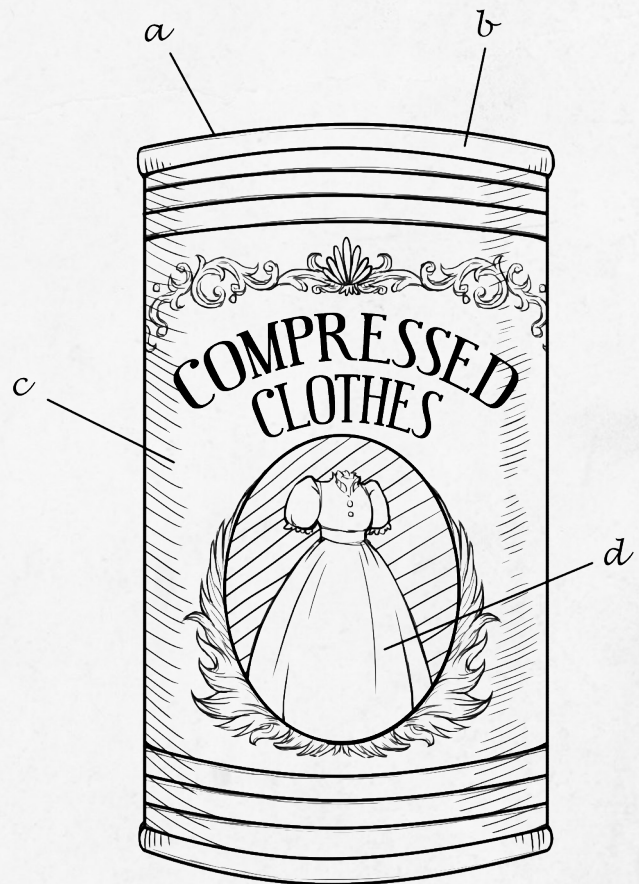
**OBFUSCATION MESH**

This device has just passed internal testing, and the R&D Department looks forward to learning how well it performs in the field. It consists of a ten-foot by ten-foot wire mesh, attached to an electrical power case about one cubic foot in size. When the agent activates the device, the current running through the mesh produces an optical distortion field, bending light so that anything concealed beneath the mesh is visible only as a hazy shadow.

Agents using the mesh should note the following limitations: first, the power case only provides enough charge for fifteen minutes of continuous use, and requires twenty-four hours to fully recharge. Second, the distortion field does not provide complete invisibility, and is best used to enhance the agent's own talents for concealment. And finally, agents must remember that the power case itself will not be invisible unless it is underneath the mesh.

**BENEFIT**

Persons and objects that can fit under the mesh receive +2 to Stealth for visual purposes.



*Fig. 37.*

## WEAPON CONCEALING CLOTHES

Unless the agent is traveling through the United States, it is frequently necessary for a field agent to appear unarmed. To this end, the R&D Department can add hidden holsters, sheaths, and pouches to any garments. Our tailoring process ensures that the weight of pistols and knives does not spoil the lines of the agent's clothes, ensuring that the agent remains well dressed and well prepared.

### BENEFIT

Provides Great (+4) passive opposition to any attempt to discover weapons carried by the agent. Only effective for weapons that are pistol-sized or smaller.

## POCKET DISGUISE KIT

Thanks to modern chemistry, all of the substances an agent would need to construct an effective disguise can now fit within a cigarette case. The small vials in this kit contain concentrated hair and skin dyes, as well as adhesives and putty for the purpose of shaping one's face and producing scars or wrinkles.

### BENEFIT

+2 to Deceive to disguise one's face, hair, and skin. (Requires Deceive +2.)

## TELEVOCALIZER

This device is conical, and roughly the size of a human hand. When an agent speaks into the narrow end, the device's reverberation chamber converts the sounds into a linear wave. When the sound wave reflects off of a distant object, that object will seem to be the sound's origin. An agent might use this device to create distractions or deceptions, or to communicate discreetly with other agents.

### BENEFIT

+2 to the agent's Deceive skill to Create Advantages such as **WHISPER FROM THE SHADOWS** or **IMAGINARY AMBUSH**. (Requires Deceive +1.)

## SMOKESCREEN BUTTONS

The R&D Department can manufacture these buttons in various sizes and colors as required to suit any agent's clothing. When an agent rips this button free of its garment, the action releases the chemicals contained inside, rapidly creating a dense but harmless smokescreen. The smoke dissipates after a few seconds, but this temporary concealment may be sufficient to allow an agent to escape a hazardous situation

### BENEFIT

Using this gadget does not require a skill roll and does not use up the agent's action for the exchange. The button creates a Smokescreen aspect in the agent's zone that adds +4 to the opposition of any action that would require clear visibility in that zone. The aspect remains in effect until the agent's action in the next exchange.

## UTILITY

### EMERGENCY TRACKING SYSTEM (ETS)

It's possible that the Ministry's Emergency Tracking System has saved the lives of more field agents than any Aetheralternator rifle or razor-brimmed bowler hat. The ability to locate any of our agents instantly allows us to safeguard the brave men and women who venture into the unknown on the Ministry's orders.

We were therefore alarmed to discover that field agents sometimes deliberately remove their ETS rings during missions. This seems to be the result of misconceptions that have spread unchecked among Ministry personnel. We intend to address these unfounded concerns with the following facts, and we hope that you will reinforce our message.

It is certainly true that wearing a Ministry signet ring might jeopardize an agent's cover identity during clandestine operations. For this precise reason, we provide ETS beacons in many different housings, such as engagement rings, class rings, or purely decorative rings. We can also provide beacons mounted in bracelets, pendants, earrings, cufflinks, and so on.

Second, it is absolutely not true that the ETS beacon transmits a continuous signal that an enemy can track. An ETS beacon remains silent unless a Ministry monitoring station transmits an activating signal, or unless the agent manually activates the ring to send a distress signal. In either case, the beacon will transmit a brief wireless "ping". The characteristics of this wireless signal allow our monitoring stations to chart the beacon's location anywhere on the planet, though lightning storms or powerful electrical equipment may provide some interference.

Once a monitoring station has made contact with a beacon, the nearest Ministry headquarters can relay the beacon's location to a portable wireless tracker, which resembles a handheld compass. Based on this wireless signal, the tracker aims its directional needle toward the desired ETS beacon. A field agent carrying the tracker can follow the needle to the target beacon and provide aid to the missing agent.

### ASPECTS

High Concept: **THEY'LL FIND ME ANYWHERE**

Trouble: **OCCASIONAL ATMOSPHERIC INTERFERENCE**

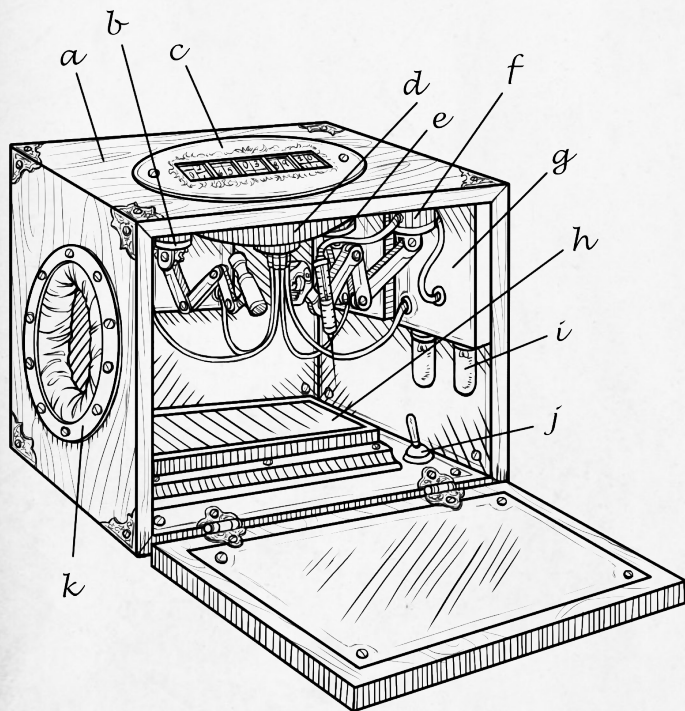
## "HIPPOCRATES" MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS APPARATUS

While we cannot expect all of our agents to display a mastery of the medical sciences, we must make our best effort to avoid the sort of mistake that occurred in Framlingham, Suffolk. During that investigation, our agents concluded that the village inhabitants were suffering from a two thousand year old Druidic curse, when, in fact, they were actually suffering from a batch of undercooked sausages. The truth did not arrive in time to prevent the damage caused by the misdiagnosis, which included several fires, a riot, and the collapse of the prison tower of Framlingham Castle.

Therefore, the R&D Department has combined a suite of automated medical instruments into a travel-ready, one-foot-square case. To obtain a diagnosis, the subject inserts his hand into a slot on the side of the case, and presses his palm down on a metal plate inside. Pressure activates the instruments, which measure the subject's body temperature, collect and analyze a blood sample, test nervous system reactions, and observe the subject's bio-magnetic field. The entire process takes close to a minute, and when complete, dials and gauges on top of the case display the results. The Hippocrates thus allows any agent with rudimentary training to obtain information that would ordinarily require an experienced physician and full medical laboratory.

Since the diagnostic process may yield some slight discomfort, agents may wish to assist subjects in remaining still while the Hippocrates performs its functions.

Fig. 94.



### BENEFIT

+2 to Medicine when using the Hippocrates to discover aspects related to medical conditions. (Requires Medicine +1.)

## TRAVELING TEA KIT

A hot cup of tea, among its other benefits, is a powerful diplomatic tool. In situations where operating a full tea set is impractical, agents may use this portable kit, which is a cylinder a foot long and three inches in diameter. The kit comes pre-loaded with enough fuel, water, and tea to brew four cups. The agent merely presses a button and waits for the brewing cycle to complete, taking care not to obstruct the steam vents. When the bell rings, the agent removes the bottom cap to expose the serving nozzle. If no other receptacle is available, the agent may use the bottom cap as a cup.

### BENEFIT

+2 to Rapport in conditions where no other source of refreshment is available.

## VERTICAL ASCENSION BOOTS

When the agent brings together the metal contact points in the heels of these boots, the resulting electrical circuit ignites a concealed supply of concentrated rocket fuel. The exhaust provides a brief but vigorous thrust, sufficient to propel an agent from the ground to a fifth-story rooftop. The burst expends the entire supply of fuel, after which the agent must return the boots to the R&D Department for refueling.

We recommend that only agents with athletic training use these boots. Also, since there is no way to reduce the amount of thrust provided, agents should take note of overhead obstructions before igniting the rockets.

### BENEFIT

Allows fifty-foot jumps. Also adds +2 to Sport for jumping. (Requires Sport +1.)

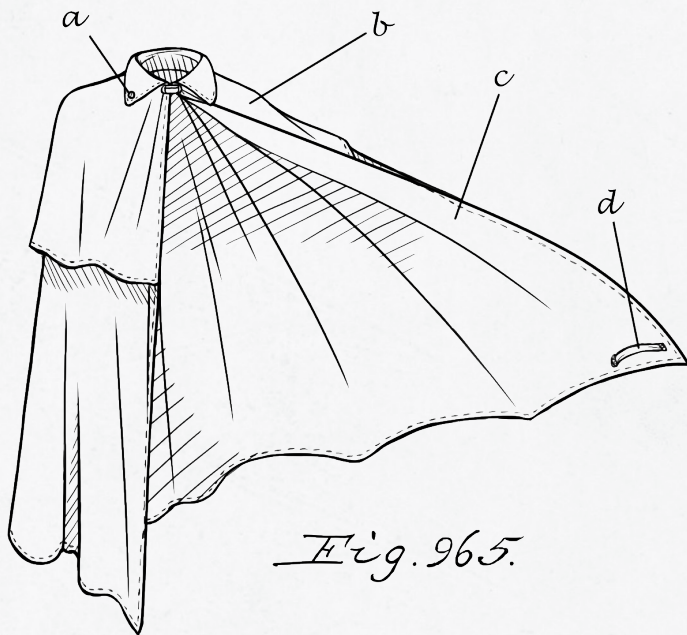
## GLIDING CLOAK

A control in the collar of this elegant cloak causes its fabric to expand and stiffen, creating an aerodynamic surface. Thus deployed, the cloak allows an agent to descend from any height without danger of injury—provided, of course, that a safe surface awaits the agent's landing. Agents should avoid using the cloak in strong wind conditions.

### BENEFIT

Allows the wearer to survive falls of any distance. Also adds +2 to Sport when leaping down from a height. (Requires Sport +1.)





*Fig. 965.*

### SPRING WHEEL SHOES

The flip of a switch causes spring-powered wheels to pop out of the soles of these ordinary-looking shoes. When the springs are completely wound, the shoes can carry an agent a full mile in five minutes. After this distance, the spring must be wound up again. Available in many different men's and women's styles.

#### BENEFIT

Adds +2 to Sport for foot travel at high speed. (Requires Sport +1.)

### UNIVERSAL ANTIDOTE

It is impossible to produce a single treatment that can act as an antidote to all poisons an agent may imbibe or inhale, but we believe that our current formula is effective against most toxins that an agent is likely to encounter, including animal venom, poisonous plants, artificial chemicals, and even common alcohol.

The R&D Department does not recommend or condone regular use of this product as a hangover cure.

#### BENEFIT

+2 to Physique to resist the effect of poisons.

### OCCULTIST'S POCKET WATCH

The dials and meters of this timepiece display chronological factors that are significant in many occult practices, including the current phase of the moon, the alignments of planets in relation to the zodiac signs, and the current date as expressed in Mayan, Babylonian, and Runic calendars. In most social occasions this knowledge is of

passing interest at best, but when dealing with occult organizations or supernatural phenomena, this information may be critical.

#### BENEFIT

+2 to Mythology when investigating supernatural mysteries. (Requires Mythology +1.)

### "HUMMINGBIRD" INSTANT MESSAGE SYSTEM

We have designed the Hummingbird for situations where firing a conventional firearm into the air as a signal does not convey enough information. This large single-shot pistol contains a rocket projectile with a clockwork guidance system. The dials on the pistol's grip allow the agent to configure the guidance system with a short message of up to twenty letters or digits. When the agent fires the pistol, the rocket will ascend to its maximum height of five hundred feet and then trace out the chosen message with smoke trails.

When requisitioning a Hummingbird, agents should indicate whether the Latin, Arabic, or Cyrillic alphabet is desired. Hanzi and kanji models are in development and should be available within the year.

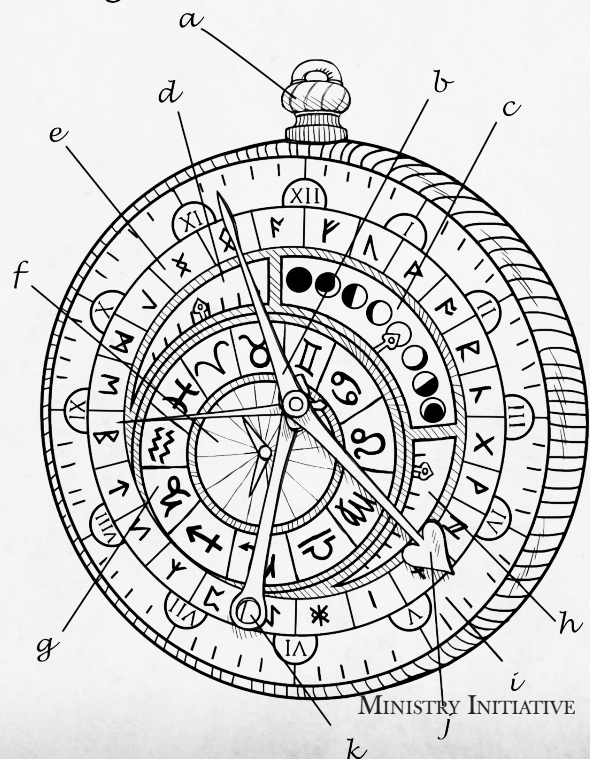
The R&D Department does not recommend using the Hummingbird as an improvised weapon, especially in enclosed places where a rebounding projectile full of rocket fuel might endanger allies or ignite flammable materials.

#### ASPECTS

High Concept: SKYWRITING PISTOL

Trouble: FIRE HAZARD

*Fig. 528.*



## EXPEDITION OUTFITS

For the benefit of agents who must challenge our planet's more dangerous environments, we provide pre-assembled kits of outdoors equipment. We have incorporated useful tools and supplies into items of terrain-appropriate clothing, leaving the agent's hands free and disguising the agent's capacity for survival in the wilderness.

**Arctic & Mountain Outfit:** The heavy boots included with this outfit contain retractable climbing spikes, and the soles can expand into snowshoes when needed. Pouches in the hooded coat contain climbing rope, pitons, and a combination hammer and pick. Tinted goggles fold down out of the hood to shield against snow blindness. The coat, boots, gloves, and trousers are constructed to retain body heat and to keep the agent alive, though perhaps not comfortable, in temperatures well below freezing.

**Sea:** To assist the surprising number of agents who find themselves alone in the open water without a nearby vessel, we have concealed a variety of useful tools in this outfit, including an auto-inflating flotation harness, shoes with extendable swimming flippers, a seawater desalination kit, sunburn protection lotion, and a chemical which can mask the scent of a swimmer's blood to ward off sharks and other predators.

**Desert:** These traveling clothes carry a supply of anti-sunburn lotion and drinking water, as well as the components of a Hydromatic Distiller, which can harvest as much as a quart of water a day from moisture evaporating from desert soil. The soles of the outfit's boots can expand to provide surfaces similar to snowshoes, to assist in walking through drifting sand. Also included are a sand-proof veil, tinted goggles to prevent sun blindness, and a sturdy wide-brimmed hat.

### BENEFIT

Each kit provides +2 to Physique to resist hazardous effects of the environment the kit was designed to protect against, such as heat or cold. The kits also provide +2 to Sport to maneuver through the terrain the kit is intended for.

## WEAPONS

### CONCEALED AGENT DEFENSE SYSTEM

This device appears to be an ordinary grooming kit, but its various items contain components that an agent can use to assemble a compact electric shock pistol within thirty seconds. The pistol will not deliver the same stopping power as a full-scale energy rifle, but can provide an additional self-defense option in circumstances where agents cannot openly carry weapons.



### BENEFIT

While the pistol is disassembled, a character would need to succeed at an Overcome action using the Invention skill to realize that the grooming kit contains a weapon. This Overcome action has Great (+4) passive opposition.

### PACIFICATION GAS BOMB

While we in the R&D Department would never challenge the on-the-spot judgment of an agent in the field, we do regret the many instances in which a liberal use of explosives has deprived us of the opportunity to inspect evidence or equipment. As a possible solution, we offer these portable chemical gas bombs, which can render a human being unconscious after a single breath. Each bomb is the size of a cricket ball and contains enough gas to flood a room for several minutes.

### BENEFIT

Detonating a gas bomb imposes a Knockout Gas aspect on a single zone. This aspect remains in effect for the entire scene, or until removed by an influence such as a strong gust of wind. During each exchange when a character is present in this zone, the gas inflicts a Great (+4) passive physical attack which the character must defend against using Physique. Any consequences inflicted by the attack will recover completely at the end of the scene, regardless of severity.

## ARTIFICIAL SUNLIGHT PROJECTOR

In most conditions, this device would not qualify as a weapon. However, after the tragic events in Bucharest, our department has been keenly aware of the need to provide our agents with the means to defend themselves against enemies who are immune to conventional weapons. The device is pistol-shaped, and at the target-facing end is a crystal mounted in a parabolic mirror. When the agent pulls the trigger, the device's battery runs a charge through the crystal, producing an intense beam of light with the characteristics of natural sunlight.

### BENEFIT

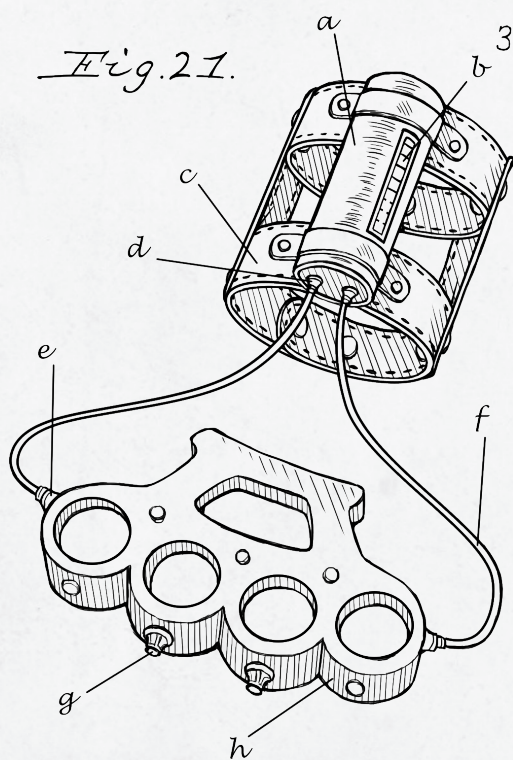
Allows agents to use their Shoot skill to attack targets that are harmed by sunlight. Against other targets, agents may use the projector to perform a Create an Advantage action to impose a Blinded aspect.

## TESLA KNUCKLES

This is an electric shock system whose delivery devices are a pair of "knuckleduster" pugilism weapons. The metal knuckles are connected by wires to batteries on a belt harness. Winding the crank on the belt charges the batteries, and pressing a button on either set of knuckles discharges the batteries through conductive studs on the striking surfaces. The shock, combined with the physical impact of the metal knuckles, is normally sufficient to disable a human target.

### BENEFIT

+2 to Fight (Requires Fight +2.)



## VOLTAIC SMALLSWORD

This weapon is based on modern European dueling swords, and is certainly usable as such; however, the enclosed battery can also deliver a disabling electric shock through the blade. The shock is effective if the blade is in direct contact with the enemy, or is in contact with an electrically conductive item the enemy is carrying. Agents should note that using the electric charge would be dishonorable in a formal duel unless the agent's opponent is similarly armed.

### BENEFIT

+2 to Fencing (Requires Fencing +2.)

## TRACKING BULLETS

These bullets contain a radioactive isotope. If an agent fires one of these bullets into a target, they will be able to track them within a one mile radius with the Ministry issue tracking device.

Although the Ministry is generally willing to oblige requests for large quantities of ammunition, these tracker bullets are expensive, and our budget does not allow us to issue more than one or two on a given mission. With your authorization, Director, we can hand out more if needed, but we typically do not carry more than a few dozen in inventory at any time.

### BENEFIT

When shot with a tracker bullet, a target who takes stress or consequences or who is taken out also receives a Radioactive Tracker aspect. If the target is a living thing, removing the bullet requires an Overcome action using the Medicine skill against Average (+1) passive opposition. If the target is an inanimate object, or if the bullet killed the target, removing the bullet does not require a roll.

## "THE NIPPER"

Doctor Blackwell's research into directed energy weapons has produced a breakthrough in miniaturization: a ray pistol barely larger than the palm of one's hand. The critical component is the "light cache": a small globe containing coils of orichalcum alloy suspended in a chemical solution. The globe is transparent, allowing ambient light to excite the chemicals and build up an energetic charge. Attached to the globe is a silver handle with a trigger, and on the opposite side is a small energy emission barrel. Pulling the trigger alters the magnetic properties of the orichalcum coils, which in turn causes the chemical solution to release its stored energy through the firing barrel. The power of the beam depends on the amount of energy trapped in the light cache. Exposing the globe to intense illumination for forty-eight hours gives it enough energy to fire several shots with lethal force.

A second control on the handle adjusts the orichalcum coils so that they trigger a runaway chemical reaction, causing the light cache to release its energy in a single uncontrolled explosion. Given the proclivities of our field agents, we have no doubt that they will find a variety of uses for this self-destruct feature. For safety reasons, the current production model has a lesser explosive force than Doctor Blackwell's original prototypes, but we still recommend that agents stand at least thirty feet away from the detonation.

#### **BENEFIT**

Operates as a normal Firearms weapon. Activating the Nipper's self-destruct does not use up the agent's action for the exchange, and causes the weapon to explode during the agent's action in the next exchange. Everyone in the same zone as the explosion must use Sport to defend against a Fantastic (+6) passive attack rating.

### **TRANQUILIZER RING**

This ring contains a small retractable needle and several doses of a concentrated knockout drug. Some targets may be able to resist the drug's effect, so we recommend that agents using the ring should have a backup plan ready.

#### **BENEFIT**

+2 to Fight. If the target takes a consequence to absorb the harm from this attack, the consequence is Drowsy and it clears at the end of the scene, regardless of the consequence severity. This weapon is not effective against fighting opponents who are not susceptible to drugs. (Requires Fight +1.)

### **"DUVELLEROY" COMBAT FAN**

The Duvelleroy provides our female agents with additional combat options in refined social situations. It appears to be merely a decorative ladies' fan, but its ribs are made of steel, and the lace surface conceals a sturdy wire mesh. An agent may use the Duvelleroy both as a striking or parrying weapon, and with the fan open, the agent may hurl it with accuracy at short ranges.

I have also attached to this report the latest version of the Ministry's covert fan signal system. To avoid awkward situations, agents should take care to not send Ministry signals to an audience expecting to receive ordinary social fan signals, or vice versa.

#### **BENEFIT**

+1 to Fight. An agent can also throw the fan at a target up to one zone away, gaining +1 to Firearms. (Requires Fight +1.)

### **MAGNETIC WHIP**

The core of this leather bullwhip is a long electromagnetic coil. Buttons in the handle allow the operator to alter the coil's magnetic field, causing the whip to coil and constrict with great strength. An agent proficient with this whip can use it to seize and restrain an enemy at a distance, or to pluck a weapon from an enemy's hands.

#### **BENEFIT**

When using the whip for Create an Advantage actions, gain +2 to Fight to create aspects such as Tangled Up or Disarmed. (Requires Fight +2.)

### **METAPHYSICAL DISPERSION ARRAY**

In the past, when our agents have encountered psychic phenomena in the field, the R&D Department has been unable to provide assistance, thus leaving our agents armed with nothing but guesswork and superstition. Our research in this area has begun to show promise, and the Metaphysical Dispersion Array is one of many tools that we believe may be invaluable in such circumstances.

The device is intended to capture--and if necessary, destroy--localized non-corporeal metaphysical energy patterns. We would caution against the use of the word "ghosts" or "spirits" to describe these entities, as these are terms of folklore, not scientific fact. We suggest instead the term "non-corporeal entity", or NCE.

The system consists of four aetheric projectors, connected by wire to a hand-held control box. The agent must arrange the projectors in a square no larger than twenty feet across, with each projector facing inward. When the NCE enters the square, the agent activates the projectors. At the lower power settings, the aetheric waves will act only as a hindrance to the NCE, preventing it from exiting the area bounded by the projectors. If the agent determines that the NCE is a threat to public safety, the agent may use the higher power settings, which will destroy the coherence of the NCE's psychic patterns--in effect, disassembling it and scattering its energy.

We have tuned the projectors so that the aetheric waves will not affect corporeal beings. Agents may move freely through the active array, though this may be inadvisable if the NCE within the array is hostile. We do not have sufficient data to predict whether the array will be effective against an NCE that has gained psychic control of another corporeal being, but we look forward to receiving field reports on this subject.

#### **BENEFIT**

When the array is active, a spirit trying to escape the array must use its Will to attempt an Overcome action. The agent operating the array may actively oppose this escape action with her Invention skill. The agent may also use her Invention skill to attack a spirit inside the array, and the spirit must defend using Will. The array

provides a +2 bonus to the operator's Invention skill for both of these actions. (Requires Invention +2.)

## VEHICLES

### "HELIOS" HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE

Though it seems certain that the steam automobile will become ubiquitous, transforming our streets from a chaos of pedestrian and horse traffic into a ballet of efficient, machine-driven travel, there are many who believe that the automobile lacks the nobility of a well-constructed horse-drawn carriage. Since it is the responsibility of the R&D Department to provide support for our agents in any situation, we have dedicated our best efforts to produce what we believe is the best-engineered carriage in Britain.

The Helios has a closed coach, with doors on the left and right sides, windows all around, and a roof hatch. The walls are bulletproof as well as soundproof, to protect our agents from both physical harm and eavesdroppers. The ornamentation on the exterior can be easily removed and rearranged to change the coach's appearance, and we can supply coats-of-arms--either real or fictional--as necessary.

We have devoted special attention to the undercarriage. All elements of the running gear are strong and durable, and testing has proved that the vehicle can survive abuse that would shatter the wheels or axles of a conventional carriage. The design of the springs and steering system will allow the driver to maintain complete control of the vehicle at high speeds, over uneven roads, or through rapid turns.

The coach's interior is finely upholstered, with fabric treated to be resistant to most stains, including mud, blood, and machine oil. The fine construction of the benches, combined with the coach's soundproofing and the resilient undercarriage, will provide passengers with a comfortable ride on any road, whether urban or rural. The interior panels contain hidden compartments to hold weapons or sensitive documents, and the seats on the benches lift up so that passengers may stow larger items, such as heavy equipment or incognito travelers.

We feel confident that the Helios will impress any passenger with its elegance and sound design, and that it will allow our agents to present themselves with grace and refinement.

#### ASPECTS

High Concept: **NOBLE CHARIOT**

Trouble: **MAGNET FOR THIEVES**

Description: **QUIET AND COMFORTABLE**

#### SKILLS

Fair (+2) Class

Average (+1) Ride, Rapport

#### STUNT

**Hidden Compartments:** Provides Great (+4) passive opposition to any attempt to discover items hidden within the coach.

### PERSONAL GYROCOPTER

Though the Royal Ornithopter Corps dismissed this apparatus as too heavy and expensive for their purposes, our own agents have found it invaluable in many circumstances.

The current model fits within a specially-constructed backpack. The backpack's harness distributes the machine's weight for the agent's comfort, and holds both machine and agent securely so that the two cannot become separated during flight.

To use the machine, the agent reaches behind himself and takes hold of two control sticks, which are attached to the backpack with retractable cables. Pulling the sticks forward releases several springs which unfold the machine's blades and extend its struts. The rotor blade rises upward on a strut above the agent's head, and the propeller blade rides on a strut that extends perpendicular from the agent's back. When both the rotor and propeller have moved outward to their operating positions, the steam engine ignites automatically.

The gyrocopter can reach speeds of 40 miles per hour, and agents who have completed the training course have proven the device capable of startling feats of aerobatics. (I am attaching a diagram of a combat maneuver attributed to Agent Braun, which combines a high-speed dive and a two-footed kick.)

One practical note: the overhead rotor does not provide lift by itself and cannot allow an agent to ascend vertically or to hover. The rotor, while in motion, merely acts as an aerodynamic surface, and requires the velocity provided by the rear propeller to provide true flight.

#### ASPECTS

High Concept: **PORTABLE FLYING MACHINE**

Trouble: **HEAVY BURDEN**

Description: **DANGEROUSLY FAST**

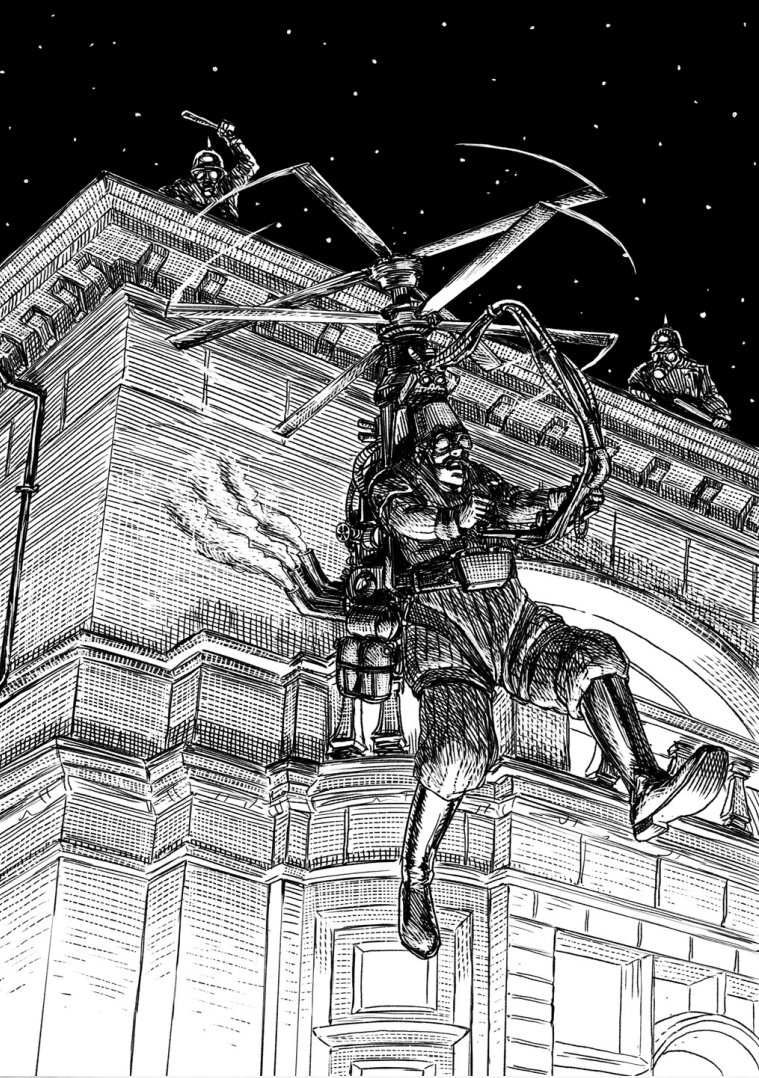
#### SKILLS

Fair (+2) Pilot

Average (+1) Fight, Sport

#### STUNT

**Rapid Departure:** After an agent starts the gyrocopter, the agent gains +2 to defend against any and all attacks until the agent's action occurs in the next exchange.



## INFILTRATION BALLOON

This is another backpack-carried flight device, but whereas the gyrocopter is designed for speed, the infiltration balloon is designed for stealth. Pulling the quick-release cord discharges the compressed helium canisters, ejecting the balloon from the backpack and filling it rapidly. When inflated, the balloon is ten feet in diameter, and provides enough lift to carry two adults, in case one agent needs to carry another to safety. The balloon is black and non-reflective, and is nearly invisible against an overcast night sky. Once inflated, the balloon is noiseless, as is the included hand-cranked propeller. An agent will not be able to move faster than walking speed with this conveyance, but the agent is free to ignore fences, walls, hedges, rivers, or guards who only expect intruders to arrive on foot.

Inflating the balloon empties the helium canisters. If the agent wishes to use the balloon again, she must either return it to a Ministry office for maintenance, or she must find a way to refill the canisters in the field.

### ASPECTS

High Concept: **INFLATABLE TRANSPORTATION**

Trouble: **TROUBLESOME IN STRONG WINDS**

Description: **SILENT AND UNSEEN**

### SKILLS

Fair (+2) Stealth

Average (+1) Notice, Pilot

### STUNT

**Where Did That Shot Come From?:** If the agent is in the air and no one has seen her, she gains +2 to Firearms for her first attack in the scene.

## VARIABLE TERRAIN TRANSPORT

Although modern steam automobiles are convenient and efficient modes of travel, they do not always provide our agents with sufficient mobility, especially when there is not a clear and well-maintained road available. To solve this problem, we have designed an automobile that contains the necessary equipment to traverse a variety of obstacles.

In normal operating conditions, this vehicle appears to be an ordinary automobile. The forward and rear benches can each accommodate three riders, and a rear compartment can carry a few bags of luggage.

The vehicle's additional propulsion equipment is concealed within the chassis and can extend into operating position when activated by the driver's controls. For amphibious travel, the vehicle extends buoyant pontoons, and exchanges the rear wheels with paddlewheels. For travel over snow and ice, the vehicle exchanges the front wheels for skis, and exchanges the rear wheels for continuous tracks. Using the continuous tracks alone can propel the vehicle through deep mud or sand.

Since our agents frequently find themselves in hostile situations, we have mounted a Maxim machine gun under the hood. Dashboard controls allow either the driver or a forward passenger to elevate, aim, and fire the machine gun. We have also installed a system of sound baffles which, when activated, significantly reduces engine noise, allowing agents to travel silently.

Although the driver's controls may be confusing, we have prepared a 300-page training manual which we believe adequately explains proper operation of the vehicle.

Professor Axelrod also wishes me to inform you that he has reviewed Agent Books' proposal for adding a flight system to this vehicle, and he has judged it unworkable. It is the Professor's opinion that such a system would produce tragic accidents rather than controlled flight.

### ASPECTS

High Concept: **UNDAUNTED BY ANY OBSTACLE**

Trouble: **WHICH BUTTON DO I PRESS NOW?**

Description: **LOOKS ORDINARY ENOUGH**

### SKILLS

Fair (+2) Pilot

Average (+1) Firearms, Stealth

## STUNT

**Sound Baffles:** Activating the baffles causes the engine to run entirely silent, allowing the driver to make Stealth rolls without any increase in opposition due to engine noise.

## TRAVELING EXCAVATOR

I am pleased to report that the traveling excavator has passed its initial trials and is performing according to expectation. We have demonstrated that the capsule and internal oxygen supply is sufficient to sustain a crew of six for a full week, and we calculate that the thirty-foot-long drill will be powerful enough to tunnel through rock at the deepest layers of the earth's mantle. The rotating, spiral-grooved rings around the capsule serve adequately to propel the capsule through the tunnel produced by the drill. The entire vehicle can bore through rock at speeds up to seven miles per hour.

Until now, most of our testing has occurred in artificially-constructed environments intended to simulate various geological conditions, but we believe that our test results prove that the excavator is ready for extended subterranean expeditions. We now await only formal approval and assignment of personnel before launching the Agatha mission. Professor Axelrod and Doctor Blackwell have asked me to inform you that they have received your orders to cancel this mission, but they are certain that if you were to inspect the excavator personally, they would be able to address any concerns you may have regarding the safety or success of the endeavor.

## ASPECTS

High Concept: **MOLE MACHINE**

Trouble: **UNRELIABLE NAVIGATION**

Description: **CRAMPED, LOUD, AND SHAKING**

## SKILLS

The traveling excavator is still experimental and does not yet provide skill bonuses.

## STUNT

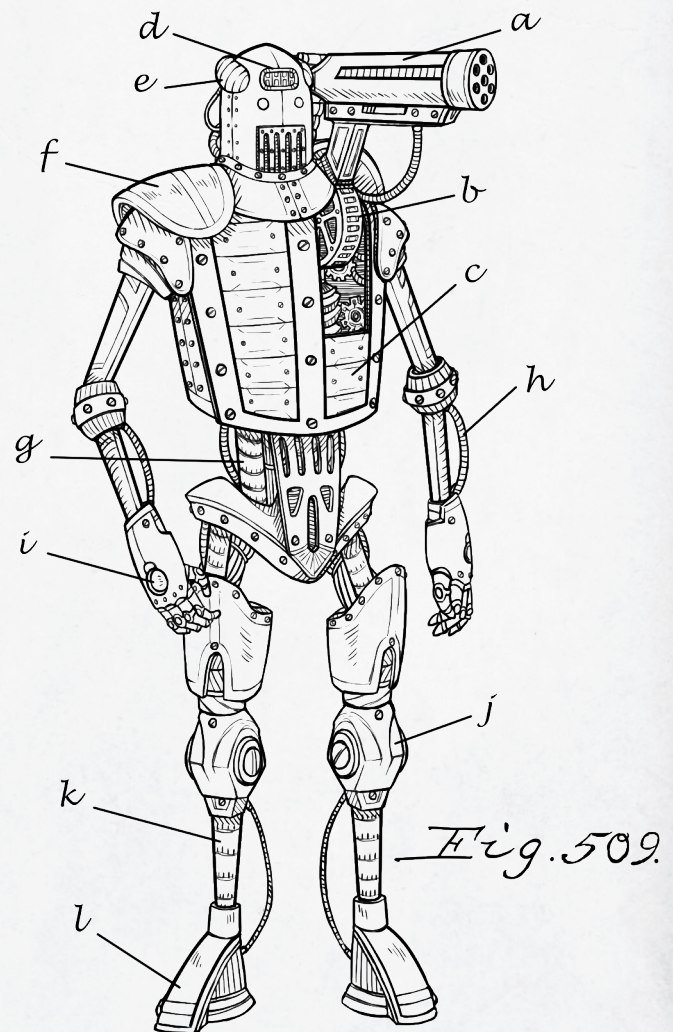
**I Felt The Earth Move:** When the excavator surfaces, it performs a Create an Advantage action with a passive Great (+4) rating against everyone in its zone and all adjacent zones. Targets may defend using Sport, and any target who fails to defend receives a Stumble and Fall aspect.

# OUTSIDE EFFORTS

## MECHAMEN

For better or for worse, the Ministry has no intact examples of the combat automata produced by Doctor Deveraux Havelock for the Phoenix Society. We have only the schematics recovered from Havelock's workshop, and the reports from our agents explaining the operating characteristics of the Mechamen. Due to unresolved questions about certain critical internal components, we have been unable to reproduce these machines, though we remain committed to the effort.

The schematics show that a Mark I Mechaman is humanoid in outline, standing eight feet tall, with a rectangular torso and skeletal arms and legs. Mounted in the cranium are optical sensors and a mouth-shaped ventilation grill, which produce a green glow when the automaton is in non-combat mode. When the Mechaman switches to combat mode, its eyes and mouth glow red, and its shoulder panels slide back to allow two Gat-



ling guns to emerge from the torso. For long-term storage, a Mark I Mechaman can fold itself into a four-foot-high obelisk, disguising its true nature from the unsuspecting.

Mark I Mechamen are completely automatic, and can carry out simple behavior patterns, such as guarding a location, or attacking an indicated target. An operator can configure a Mark I with three different behavior patterns, and can select the current behavior pattern using a switch on the automaton's forearm. Any pattern can contain instructions to enter or exit combat mode in specific circumstances, and while in combat mode, the Mark I will resist any attempts to reach its behavior switch. The instructions as to when to exit combat mode would seem to be critical, as there is no safe way to approach a Mark I in combat mode until its ammunition or steam power runs out.

Mark II Mechamen have the same humanoid outlines as the Mark I's, but on a much greater scale, standing one hundred feet tall. These battle machines do not have a non-combat mode, and their large-caliber Gatling guns remain prominent on their shoulders at all times. Whereas the weapons of the Mark I are devastating against human targets, the Mark II's guns can level buildings. Mark II's are not automatic, and require two human pilots riding in the machine's cranium. One pilot supervises the machine's complex locomotion controls while the other operate the weapons. These pilots are the Mark II's only weakness. Field reports tell us that the glass windows around the pilot stations are not reinforced and are susceptible to rifle fire.

The documents recovered from the Phoenix Society suggest that Doctor Havelock had also conceived a Mark III Mechaman, but we can only speculate as to what that design might entail.

Although the Ministry destroyed Havelock's workshop and his army of Mechamen, we cannot discount the possibility that a member of the Society fled with copies of Doctor Havelock's designs, or that some other party or organization may have recovered documents from the site. Our agents should therefore familiarize themselves with these designs, in case they encounter these formidable weapons again in the future.

## Mark I (as NPC)

**Aspect:** MURDEROUS AUTOMATON

### SKILLS

Good (+3) Shoot

Fair (+2) Fight

Average (+1) Physique

**Stress:**

(Attempting to toggle a Mark I's behavior switch requires an Overcome action. The Mark I receives a +2 bonus to oppose this action. Choose the skills required for the action and the opposition based on the method chosen to reach the switch. Note that an agent will not necessarily know which switch position will activate which behavior pattern, and choosing a switch position randomly may make a bad situation worse.)

## Mark II (as a vehicle)

### ASPECTS

High Concept: **GIGANTIC WALKING DREADNOUGHT**

Trouble: **INSUFFICIENT PILOT PROTECTION**

Description: **SLOW BUT POWERFUL TREAD**

### SKILLS

Fair (+2) Firearms

Average (+1) Fight, Notice

### STUNT

**The Long View:** Aiming telescopes give pilots +2 to Notice when viewing distant objects.

## ANTICIPATION ENGINE

From the fragmentary documents we've examined so far, we are unable to conclude whether the diagrams represent a genuine project of Methuselah's Order, or whether a fraudulent inventor was simply attempting to earn a portion of the Order's substantial wealth with a marvelous but impossible proposal. We would be glad to review any further information the agents can gather about this device.

If the Order did construct this device, it would take up an enormous amount of room: it might just fit within the boundaries of a rugby pitch. It appears that the device is designed in several modules so that the physical configuration may be altered to fit the environment. The modules could be spread across several rooms or train cars without impeding the engine's function, so long as the cables between the modules remained connected.

Once assembled, the machine is a calculating engine of unprecedented power, designed to perform statistical calculations of a complexity far beyond human capability. It appears to be based on mathematical principles suggested by Ada Lovelace for enhancing and adapting Charles Babbage's analytical engine. By feeding the engine data describing the identities, capabilities, and past actions of a group of people, the system is supposed to be able to predict future events occurring within that group. In theory, the engine could predict the actions of a business, or a government--or even the actions of our own Ministry.

By adjusting parameters, the engine's operator could use it to calculate the subject organization's response to



an outside influence. The operator could play out a variety of scenarios until discovering the factors that would produce the most desirable outcome. The strategic advantages of possessing such an engine should be both obvious and frightening.

Though we cannot know whether the Order has constructed this device, our scientists recommend that the Ministry should take suitable precautions. Since the accuracy of the engine's predictions is constrained by the accuracy of the information given to it, the Ministry should disseminate misinformation that would lead such a device to arrive at incorrect conclusions. Our engineers have already produced a prototype of a device we call a Falsehood Mill, which can automatically generate plausible but inaccurate memoranda and field reports. I have also attached a supplementary proposal from Doctor Mantegazza, who believes that we might use the Falsehood Mill to supplement the Ministry's budget with profits from high-volume publication of light escapist fiction.

### **ASPECTS**

High Concept: **ALWAYS A FEW STEPS AHEAD**

Trouble: **GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT**

## **ATMOSPHERIC PATTERN TRIGGER**

Since the Ministry's agents captured this machine two years ago, our engineers have studied it with equal parts astonishment and unease. We would prefer to dismiss the machine's creator, known to us only as "The Herald," as a harmless eccentric. The lengthy manifestos she has submitted to newspapers around the globe are a dizzying mixture of prophecy and delusion, in which she casts herself as the earthly agent of powerful cosmic forces, and as the architect of a utopia that she will build upon the ashes of the civilizations she herself has destroyed.

Regardless of whether her writings are the product of a deranged mind, or are part of a strategy of deception and misdirection, her work demonstrates without a doubt that she is a scientific genius of the highest caliber. Her most recent project, the Atmospheric Pattern Trigger, demonstrates this fact all too well.

The device broadcasts aetheric vibrations at a low power level, but over an area hundreds of miles in diameter. The vibrations interact with the Earth's atmosphere, affecting temperature, precipitation, and wind currents. Our calculations, based on the fragments of the device available for our inspection, suggest that the device would produce no immediately visible reaction when activated, but over time, the atmospheric effects would grow more and more pronounced. After a few weeks of continuous operation, it could punish an entire continent with blizzards, hurricanes, drought, or floods.

From a scientific point of view, the machine contains a collection of remarkable innovations. The principles of atmospheric cascading employed by the device could

represent the birth of an entire field of scientific research. The power generation system, once we fully understand it, may make the innovations of Edison and Tesla obsolete. From a more practical standpoint, the machine's aetheric antenna is noteworthy due to the fact that it must be constructed entirely of gold. It was the Herald's efforts to accumulate six and a half tonnes of gold that led our agents to her base of operations, so it would be prudent to remain alert for any such activity in the future.

While the Herald remains at large, we must face the possibility that she will attempt to construct another copy of this machine, or that she may deliver its design to another equally dangerous individual or organization. Professor Axelrod is attempting to adapt his Stratus Manipulator system to serve as a countermeasure against such a circumstance. In theory, several Stratus Manipulators situated strategically around the affected area would cancel the meteorological disturbances. But without a full field test of both the Atmospheric Pattern Trigger and the Stratus Manipulators operating simultaneously—which we cannot in good conscience recommend—we cannot be certain.

### **ASPECTS**

High Concept: **UNLEASH THE ELEMENTS!**

Trouble: **WE NEED HOW MUCH GOLD?**

## **NECROANIMATION PROBES**

After inspecting the notes and materials recovered from Ecuador, the R&D Department has assembled a working theory to explain the phenomena our agents encountered there. I must stress that we have made no attempt at duplicating the machinery involved, and we have no intention of doing so. To quote Doctor Blackwell on this subject: "We may all be a little mad here, but we're not insane."

To create an undead soldier, the Illuminati scientists in Ecuador started with a freshly dead corpse. They implanted electrical probes in the corpse's head, each probe targeting a specific location of the brain. In order to precisely install these probes, the scientists had created a helmet-like device which positioned the probes and drilled them into the corpse's skull.

The scientists activated these probes by broadcasting an electrical signal through the Earth's magnetic field. The probes redirected the electrical impulses through the corpse's brain, nervous system, and muscles, restoring its power of motion and a limited level of unconscious instinctive thought.

Altering the broadcast signal would affect which cranial probes were activated, which allowed the Illuminati to place their reanimated soldiers in three different operating modes. The instruction mode activated the soldiers' language interpretation functions, allowing them to receive and understand simple verbal orders. The execution mode heightened the soldiers' motor and planning

skills so that they could carry out their orders. While in execution mode, the soldiers' language functions were dormant so that they could not receive countermanding orders.

The third mode triggered the soldiers' instincts for rage and violence, transforming them into mindless, berserk instruments of destruction. Clearly, this mode was intended to provide the Illuminati with an emergency measure for creating chaos, and according to the field reports, it achieved that goal frighteningly well.

Analysis of the technology involved has revealed two weaknesses. First, the electric broadcast technique had limited range. The transmitter operated by the Illuminati was only effective across a three-mile radius—enough to threaten the citizens of Quito, but not effective beyond the city limits. A larger transmitter would extend this range, but we expect that there would be a practical limit of about a hundred miles, no matter how much power was used. Second, a strong electric or magnetic field can temporarily interfere with the cranial probes, causing the soldiers to become inactive or confused. In theory, constructing a second transmitter would allow one to interfere with the activating signals, such an effort is probably outside the limits of time and resources commonly experienced by field agents.

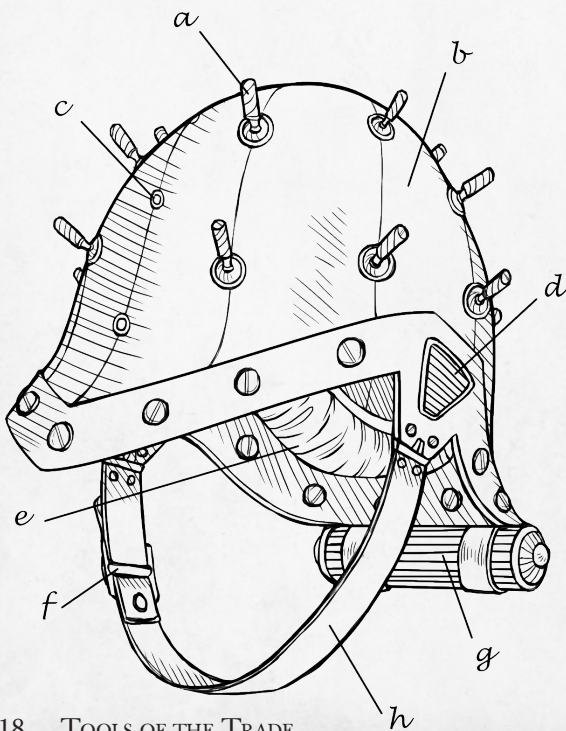
## Necroanimated Soldiers (as NPCs)

**Aspect:** MINDLESS SHAMBLING HORROR

### SKILLS

Average (+1) Fight, Physique

**Stress:** □ □



## MAJOR PROJECTS

### HMS EIDOTHEA

Ministry engineers first produced designs for this vessel in 1851, but the Ministry's resources at the time were not sufficient to realize that ambitious proposal. The vessel might never have been constructed at all but for the Moskenstraumen affair in 1866, which provoked the Ministry to produce an underwater exploration vessel in haste. The result was the HMS Thalassa, which was a smaller version of the original design, but proved to be sufficient for the immediate need. Though the Thalassa was lost in combat with the Moskenstraumen, her laudable performance demonstrated the value of the original design, and the Ministry commissioned the construction of the Eidothea.

The Eidothea has a top speed of 15 knots while surfaced and 10 knots submerged; an underwater trip from London to New York City would require two full weeks. She was designed to survive dives down to 30,000 feet in depth, but in practice, she has only descended as far as 20,000 feet, during the Fortuna Prime expedition in 1872. She holds facilities for a crew of thirty, although she could carry as many as one hundred passengers for short durations.

Since the Eidothea is intended for long-term exploration missions, we have attempted to outfit the vessel with all of the tools necessary for independent scientific research, as well as every possible comfort to ensure top performance of field personnel. There are seven four-person cabins, and two single-person cabins for command officers. There is one general-purpose scientific laboratory, and a separate infirmary which also serves as a medical laboratory. There is also a common room which the crew can use as a briefing room or dining room as needed. The galley, though small, is capable of sophisticated cuisine if important guests are aboard.

The 1851 plans called for a steam engine, but in this case, our engineers have eclipsed the ambition of the original designers. The Eidothea's magnetodynamic drive collects water through intakes in its bow and uses magnetic fields to force that water out of the stern under high pressure. Since the drive contains only a few moving parts, it produces little noise either inside or outside the vessel. In addition, the vessel manufactures its own fuel, producing hydrogen from seawater and burning that hydrogen to power the magnetodynamic drive and the ship's electrical generators.

The bridge has four control stations, intended for the pilot, the navigator, a command officer, and a scientific advisor. Apart from the standard guidance and navigation controls, these stations allow operation of various environmental and scientific instruments, including an echolocation system which can identify solid objects within two miles. In case of hostile opposition, the bridge

controls allow operation of the Eidothea's defense system, including two torpedo tubes—one facing forward and one rearward—and a short-range electric burst emitter.

For hands-on exploration, the Eidothea carries ten diving suits, each equipped with helmet lanterns, harpoon pistols, and an hour's supply of oxygen. When supplied with our Deep Breath formula of breathing gases, the suits allow underwater exploration at depths up to 1,000 feet. The Eidothea also carries two Neptune-model mechanical diving suits, reinforced and pressurized to allow safe dives down to 5,000 feet. The vessel's embarkation chamber is a large airlock of sufficient capacity to admit ten crew members at once, or to hold large items that must be brought into or out of the vessel while submerged.

### ASPECTS

High Concept: **YES, SHE'S EQUIPPED FOR THAT**

Trouble: **SLUGGISH MANEUVERING**

Description: **SUBMERGED RESEARCH FACILITY**

### SKILLS

Fair (+2) Notice

Average (+1) Invention, Medicine

### STUNT

**Tool of Science:** The Eidothea's equipment and instruments grant +2 to Deduction for purposes of scientific research.

## OSM MOBILE HEADQUARTERS

Despite the modest origins of the American Office of the Supernatural and Metaphysical, it is safe to say that they have earned a position at the forefront of the world's scientific and intelligence organizations. Take, for example, the attached plans for a new OSM headquarters facility, designed to provide robust on-the-spot support for field investigations while maintaining the organization's secrecy. In these aspects it is fully the equal of any of our outposts, except that the OSM facility has one further advantage: it can move.

The facility is designed as a series of locomotive cars, towed by a high-speed engine. From the outside, the cars appear to be ordinary freight or passenger cars, allowing the facility to travel without announcing the OSM's presence. Each car is dedicated to a certain function, and by adding more of a given type of car, it's possible to enhance the facility's capabilities in specific areas.

**Laboratory:** A fully-equipped scientific lab, with work stations for eight researchers. The car's suspension protects sensitive experiments from bumps, tilting, and other disturbances. The car is also fire-proof and contains a venting system to remove toxic fumes.

**Workshop:** A facility with the necessary equipment to accomplish engineering tasks both large and small, from repairing watches to producing ammunition to

manufacturing battleship engines.

**Garage:** A telescoping crane mounted in the ceiling of this car can pick up an automobile alongside the train and deposit the vehicle safely inside the train car, even if both the train and the automobile are in motion. Operators can reverse this procedure to deploy a stored vehicle on a nearby road. The car is equipped with wheel braces to keep a stored automobile stable, and can also carry fuel, tools, and replacement parts.

**Hangar:** This car is designed to carry a single United States Eagle-class two-seater ornithopter, with its wings stowed. Folding back the roof and side walls of the car converts it into a stable landing and takeoff platform. The car could accommodate one of our own Robin ornithopters after slight modifications to both the car and the aircraft.

**Defense:** Concealed within this car is a weapon the OSM calls the Avalanche: a heavy-caliber, triple-barreled machine gun, nearly an artillery piece. It is mounted on a rotating platform that allows the operator to aim in all directions, and to threaten both air and ground targets. Mechanisms in the car slide back the roof and raise the Avalanche's platform, and feed the weapon a constant supply of ammunition from below.

**Training:** It's clear that the OSM wishes its agents to practice their combat skills even while traveling. This car contains automated training dummies and targets for both hand-to-hand and firearms training. Bulletproof walls ensure that missed targets don't result in accidental casualties.

**Quarters:** To allow OSM agents to recuperate in comfort, this car holds six double-occupancy sleeping cabins, and a single common washroom.

**Dining:** This car proves that our American counterparts are not as bereft of sophistication as their reputation suggests. The decor, accommodations, and kitchen are all suited to entertain the cream of society or heads of state.

**Records:** This entire car is a document storage and retrieval facility, resembling the retrieval system in our own Archive in some crude respects. It's possible the similarity is simply the result of similar functional requirements producing similar designs, but Professor Axelrod suggests that information leakage from the Archive Department may be responsible, and would appreciate discussing the matter with you at your convenience.

Thanks to recent fruitful collaborations between our agency and the OSM, the Americans have willingly provided us with a copy of these plans for our own use. We can begin construction on our own version of the mobile headquarters whenever you so order, though we would caution that the facility would be susceptible to the usual hazards of rail travel, including track maintenance issues and right-of-way conflicts. We are happy to leave these logistical problems in the hands of more qualified Ministry personnel.

## ASPECTS

High Concept: **SECRET INTELLIGENCE AGENCY ON RAILS**

Trouble: **WHAT'S THE DELAY THIS TIME?**

Description: **PREPARED FOR THE TASK AT HAND**

## SKILLS

Adjusting the mobile headquarters' equipment and supplies allows agents to rearrange its skill bonuses. Choose one Fair (+2) skill and two Average (+1) skills from the following list: Class, Deduction, Invention, Medicine, Mythology, Firearms.

## STUNT

**Hyperstea Engine:** Gain +2 to Pilot for Overcome actions that depend on raw speed.

## ATLANTEAN GATE KEY #14

As per your instructions, we have deactivated Gate Key #14, though we have kept its support systems in working order. Even if we never activate this artifact again, it remains valuable as a reminder that the best minds of my department can sometimes still be surprised.

When the Ministry recovered its fourteenth Atlantean Gate Key and found that it was damaged, the R&D Department proposed a solution that seems hopelessly optimistic now: we suggested that simply repairing the chip missing from the artifact's surface might allow it to operate. Though we achieved our goal after six years of labor, the system we refer to as "the Patch" is now a room full of sophisticated electrical and magnetic equipment. The size of this project, and the fact that we require several tons of machinery to reactivate an artifact I could hide in my pocket, is a telling comparison of our technology to the accomplishments of the Atlanteans.

Since our first successful activation of the Key eighteen months ago, we have rebuilt the Patch three times to improve reliability, but its broad structure remains the same. The focus of the system is the transportation corridor, which is a metal-walled construction seven feet wide, seven feet high, and thirty feet long. We have elevated the corridor ten feet from the floor to grant engineers free access to the theta coils that wrap around it. A ramp leads from the floor to the entry end of the corridor.

The Patch's charging array requires fifteen minutes to achieve full power from a cold start. When the Patch is charged, we can activate the Key and open its aethergate. The transit process through the gate is straightforward. An agent simply walks up the ramp and into the corridor, entering the rainbow-colored vortex produced by the gate. A single step forward then projects the agent instantly across a distance of over 350 light-years. Based on astronomical measurements made by expeditionary agents, we know that Key #14's aethergate leads to a planet in orbit around the star Epsilon Delphini.

We have named this planet Arion, after the the Greek

poet whose life--according to myth--was saved by the dolphin represented by the Delphinus constellation. The terminus of the aethergate appears to be a fixed point on the Arion's surface, near its equator. We have made little progress in mapping the area due to the planet's hostile ecosystem. Though the atmosphere is breathable, the terrain around the aethergate's terminus is choked in thick jungle, and most native forms of life, from the foliage to the reptilian predators, are either venomous or poisonous or both.

The aethergate does provide some mild physical resistance to entry, enough to block the passage of air, spores, pollen, and other microscopic organisms. However, since returning agents might carry some of these items on their person, the Gate Key and the Patch are in their own air-tight chamber in the R&D facility, and we employ the strictest decontamination procedures for agents and equipment alike after every expedition.

Despite the difficult conditions on Arion, we hoped it would be possible to establish a permanent research facility on the planet. However, illness caused by a native virus forced our construction team to evacuate the site, and when another team returned a week later, they found our

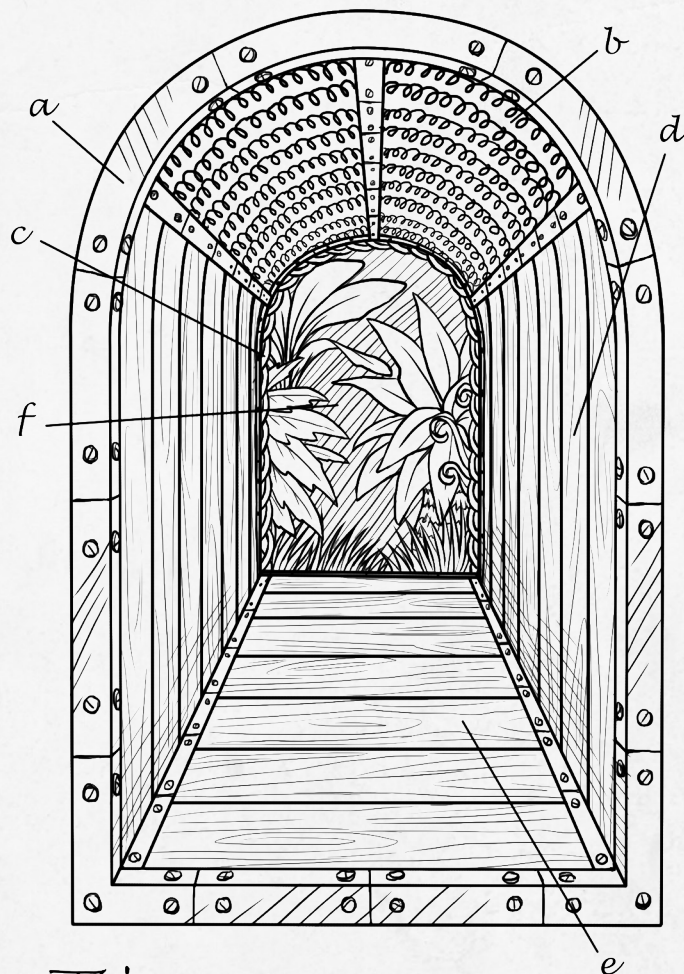


Fig. 17.

half-completed buildings smashed and scattered. More disturbing was the discovery that the tools left behind by the prior team were missing. We must conclude that the tools were stolen, but we have no clues as to what or who may have stolen them. One of Arion's torrential storms washed away any tracks that the perpetrators might have left behind. Thus, we cannot determine whether the base was destroyed by one of the Ministry's Earthly rivals, or by some entity or entities native to Arion.

Clearly, we must proceed with extreme caution, though we must proceed. The scientific benefits to be

gained by exploring Arion are beyond measure, and I hope I speak without contradiction when I assert that a challenge of this significance and magnitude is the Ministry's reason for existence. The R&D Department has submitted proposals for improved security measures to your desk, and we look forward to your final approval.

#### **ASPECTS**

High Concept: **THE STARS ARE A STEP AWAY**

Trouble: **WHAT PERILS LURK BEYOND?**

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Written by Don Bisdorf.

Edited by Brennan Taylor.

Layout design by Thomas Deeny.

Art direction by Jared Axelrod and Brennan Taylor.

Cover by Alex White.

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Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN 1-978-1-887920-17-9

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