MIDGARD

ADVENTURE 1880
for Beginners
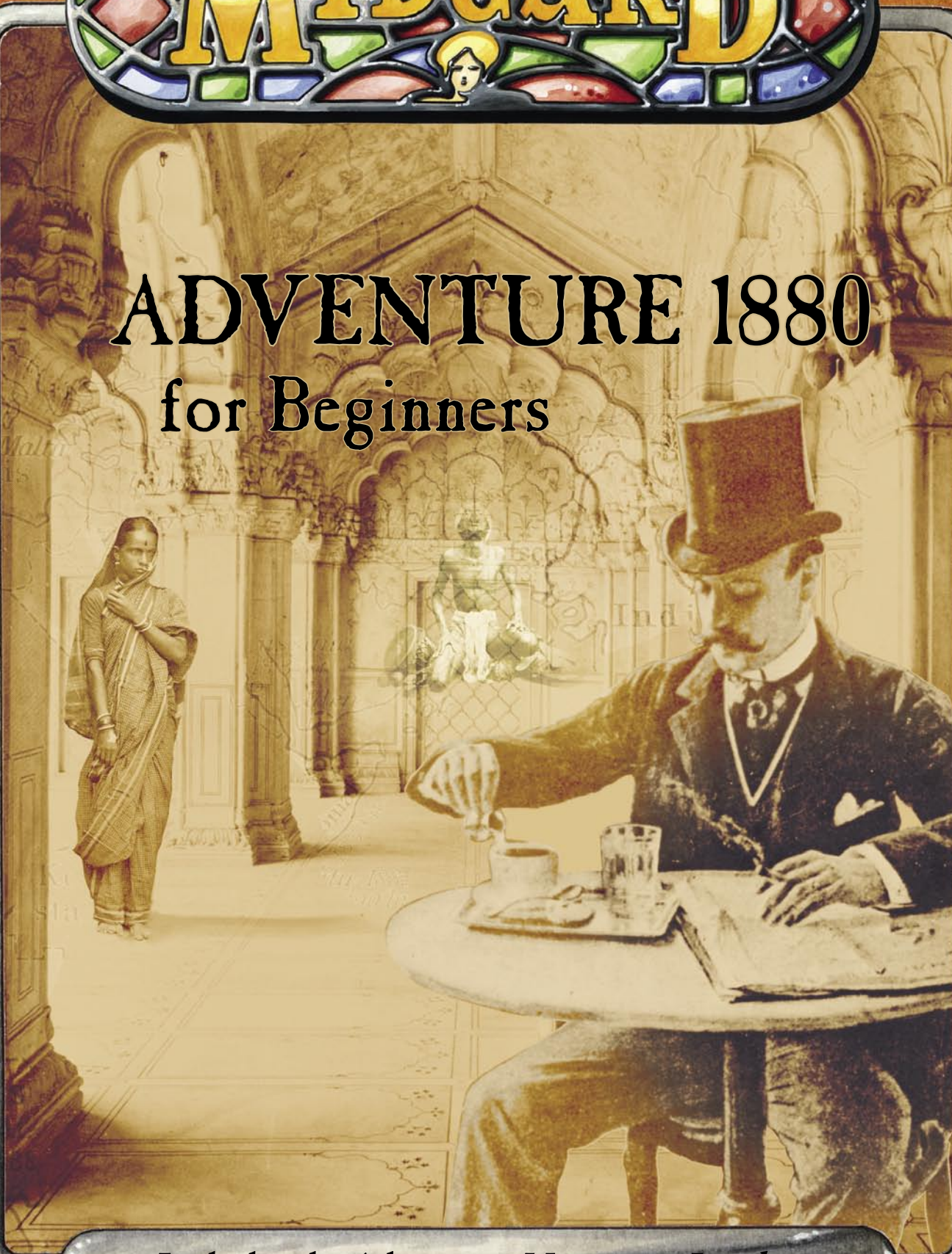
Includes the Adventure *Mission in London*

Content

What Everyone Needs to Know

Maybe you have already asked yourself what a role-playing game such as ADVENTURE: 1880 is in the first place. In such a game, one of the participants acts as an **arbiter** and runs an adventure like *Mission in London* in the latter half of this booklet for the **other players,** who take on the role of **adventurers.** Together, you play through the plot of an entire game as a **group.** This may last for several sessions of gaming.

> Just a brief note on language use: Of course, men and women can be both players and arbiters. However, instead of resorting to the usual "we use the male form to save space" stuff, we have decided to speak of arbiters as "she" and players as "he." Feel free to have female players and male arbiters by all means.

Adventures are set against the historical backdrop of what we nowadays call the late Victorian Period – the decades between 1870 to 1900. While our main focus has been towards the historically correct world, the game also allows for more 'fantastic' settings, such as those depicted in the novels of Jules Verne or H. G. Wells. Our adventurers are people that are prone to being involved in thrilling events – be it because of their profession, their disposition, or because of their financial independence. This sets them apart from most of the other people of their age, who are perfectly content with going about their daily lives, never even thinking of chasing killers, hunting down vampires, searching for the source of the Nile, or investigating ancient cult sites in the jungles of deepest Africa.

During the game, the players take on the role of their **player characters,** i.e., inhabitants of the world of 1880 that are to play important parts in the adventure to come. All other people, as well as animals, not under the control of any of the players are run by the arbiter. They are called **non-player characters.** These may be characters of some importance for the adventure, such as the mysterious serial killer the adventurers are after, or they may take on supporting roles, such as: the cleaning woman who has seen something and might testify as a witness, the coachman driving the heroes around the city, or even the guard dog that makes it so much harder for the adventures to get into the mansion of a suspect to search for clues.

Before you are able to start playing, you will need to do some prep work. So, before you can tackle the *Mission in London* with your fellow players, you will need to take a look at the pre-generated player characters on pages 14-15 and pick one of them to play in the upcoming adventures. You may choose the character's name and gender as you like. Once you have chosen, try to get into the mind of your player character and act as he might do, instead of simply portraying yourself in some unusual surroundings. Your adventurer knows stuff you don't, doesn't know stuff you do, and is an entirely different person. While it may initially be hard for you to think for your player character as something separate from you, this is going to change soon. Learning how to properly role-play might take a few sessions, but it's fun!

Once you feel familiar with the concept behind your player character, you should read through the basic rules on the next few pages. Should you happen to be the arbiter, you are going to find the additional information from page 7 onwards quite useful. The description staring on page 16 is going to give you your first hint as to how a role-playing adventure might develop (don't read this if you are a player!) and finally there is, of course, the description of the *Mission in London* that starts on page 18. And that's all you need to be off on your first adventure!

History and Imagination

The plot of ADVENTURE: 1880 is set against the backdrop of our real world (if a bit removed). This has an appeal all of its own. The players have a certain basic amount of knowledge about the world their characters will be moving in, albeit only from popular films. It is also quite possible that the player characters may meet and interact with famous persons of that time, or meet people that are unknown then but will become famous later.

However, players and arbiter should not succumb to the lure of historical accuracy in all its potential glory if it impedes game play.

Role-playing Is a Social Thing

In its classical, pen-and-paper form, role-playing has been, and always will be, a social affair – you meet with your friends and play a game. However, you don't play against one another as is so often the case with games, but you all play along together and experience thrilling adventures 'in your head.' Reacting to the actions of the other players, exchanging thoughts and speculating on what may be going on, and last but not least the thrill of the developing story all turn role-playing into one of the most interesting, diverse, and socially engaging game forms ever. If you have never played a role-playing game before, looking around the internet should provide a good starting point for finding fellow players. Our Twitter stream and our Facebook page should prove especially useful; they are currently in German only, but should acquire English-language 'offshoots' easily enough. There is also a German-language forum (www.midgard-forum.de), most of whose members are able to communicate in English.
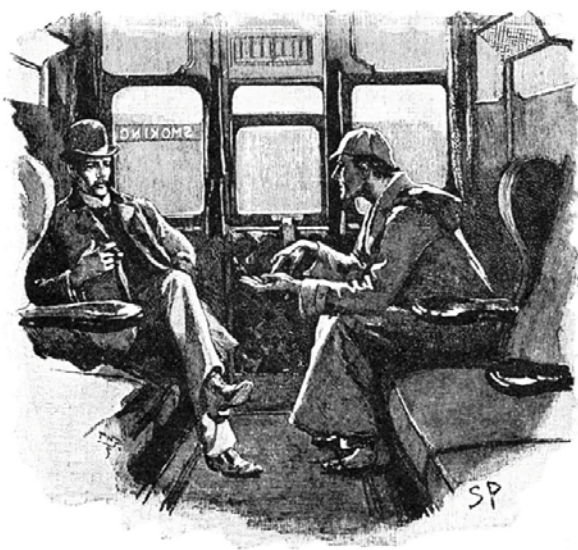
There is nothing wrong with Dr Watson pouring a cup of tea from his thermos flask on that foggy day in 1888 – even when history tells us that this useful little device will not be invented until 1892 by Mrs. James Dewar and Reinhold Burger. Ultimately, role-playing should be fun and not an exercise in all-out historical research. Of course, you might want to shy away from the big historical gaffes such as a car trip from Paris to Calais in 1880 – while Daimler and Benz may have built the first working motor car in 1885, the era in which this game has been set still sees train and coach as the dominant modes of transportation. Towards the close of the century, the occasional adventure in which the use of one of these new-fangled devices might be a crucial plot element is perfectly acceptable!

On the other hand, the arbiter should feel free to spice up her adventures with supernatural elements as long as they fit the times. Late 19th-century literature is full of that stuff: encountering a vampire in some obscure Eastern European country; test-driving a time machine; exploring a steamy jungle full of dinosaurs in a forgotten valley in the Andes Mountains; a ghost story set in the Scottish moors; encountering a 2000-year-old wizard in deepest China. It is up to the tastes of each gaming group whether such forays into the world of the weird, or the depiction of technological marvels as per the novels by Jules Verne or H.G. Wells, may form the core of an entire series of adventures or are just occasional diversions – if they are used at all.

The closer you rely on the documented historical background, the warier you should be about accidentally changing the past in the course of your adventures. Doing so will only get you in trouble as the timeline of your game progresses since you have to take care of an ever-increasing number of historical divergences. Changing key events in history forces the arbiter to adjust the subsequent history of the world accordingly, possibly leading to entire "rewrites" and the creation of some alternate history – a fascinating endeavour indeed, but also a time-consuming one. So be warned! The time you need to spend on rewriting history is time you cannot spend on creating thrilling adventures and interesting non-player characters. Now, details like whether it is Marconi who invents the radio or one of the Player characters are not going to have any noticeable effect on history overall. However, having Otto von Bismarck assassinated in early 1870 before he can set into motion the final stages of the founding of the German Empire will force you to rethink the entire history of Europe from that point on!

Then again, it is not that likely that the player characters will become powerful and influential enough to ever substantially change the course of history. You should be especially clear on disallowing your players the use of their own knowledge of history to provide them with advantages their characters couldn't have!

In this regard, the arbiter has several tools at her disposal. The one that is easiest to use is to simply shy away from adventures that would see the characters as 'global players,' e.g., the ones who have to stop a war that historically didn't take place. However, it is more rewarding – and more challenging – to actually let the players have their run and then arbiter their actions against the bigger historical picture and interpret accordingly. So maybe the player characters are indeed

The Dice

To play ADVENTURE: 1880, you need several standard six-sided dice, from now on abbreviated as **d6.** You will also need a twenty-sided die (**d20**) marked with the numbers 1 through 20, as well as so-called percentile dice (**d%**), normally two differently coloured dice marked with the numbers 0 through 9 each. You use percentile dice to roll results from 1 through 100 by one die representing units and the other tens (0 counting as 10). Should both dice come up 0, this is treated as a roll of 100.

We normally use an abbreviated way of notation to cover the use of dice, including necessary modifications. The most common examples look like these:

1d6+3: roll one d6 and add 3 to the result

2d6-2: roll two d6 and subtract 2; a roll of less than 1 counts as 1

1d3: roll one d6 and divide the result by 2, rounding up: 1 and 2 count as 1; 3 and 4 count as 2; and 5 and 6 count as 3.

the only persons in all of London who know who Jack the Ripper actually was, and why the killings ended so suddenly and inexplicably in 1890 – maybe because they chased down the Ripper, or maybe because their activities at least caused the killer to leave London, preferring not to be caught. And yet, history will still treat the murders as unsolved since the players might not be able to provide sufficient proof.

The Basic Rules of Adventure: 1880

In a role-playing game, you roll the dice to determine whether cavalry officer Harry Flashman gets in a blow with his trusty sabre in combat; whether the journalist Carla Frankins will be able to successfully take a picture in the heat of battle; or whether archaeologist Dr Stuart Pierson will manage to decipher that inscription written in rather untidy Hieratic.

There are four types of die rolls in Adventure: 1880. They are the building blocks from which all other rules are based:

- **Action rolls (AR)** determine whether your adventurer has successfully used a skill. You roll a d20 for ARs..
- **Opposing rolls (OR)** are used after an opponent has successfully attacked your character with a sabre or is trying to intimidate you. Your character can now try to resist this action. You roll a d20 for ORs.
- **Tests (TR)** against an attribute come into play whenever your character wants to do something for which there is no specific skill. You roll a d% for TRs.
- **Damage rolls (DR)** determine the amount of damage your character or one of his opponents take during combat, from the effects of poison, or in accidents. You roll one or more than one d6 for damage.

To allow for action resolution by such dice rolls, all characters in the game need to have a set of game statistics on which each die roll may be based. Game statistics fall into these categories:

> Strength (**Str**), dexterity (**Dex**), agility (**Agi**), constitution (**Con**), intelligence (**Int**), psychic talent (**Tal**)

- physical and mental **attributes** as well as movement (**MV**);
- health points (**HP**) and stamina points (**SP**);
- fame and grace of fate (**GoF**);
- and finally the various **skills.**

The next few pages on this booklet tell you what these statistics mean and how to use them during play.

Attributes and Tests

At its core, your player character is defined by six physical as well as mental attributes. These can take on values between **1** (a damp squib) and **100** (really fantastic):

> Appearance (**App**), charisma (**Cha**), willpower (**Wil**), and composure (**Com**)

- **Strength** measures raw physical prowess. Strong adventurers do more damage in melee combat than weaker ones.
- **Dexterity** encompasses sleight-of-hand as well as fine motor skills. Highly dextrous adventurers will find it easier to hit in combat.
- **Agility** covers general body control as well as a finely tuned sense of balance. Agile adventurers are harder to hit in combat.
- **Constitution** measures an adventurer's health and toughness. High constitution means high stamina and also improves your character's resilience against poison and disease.
- **Intelligence** represents memory capacity, learning ability, and logical thinking. Very intelligent adventurers learn more easily and are also mentally flexible.
- **Psychic talent** describes how far in tune a character is with the 'supernatural,' mostly as regards what is commonly called the 'sixth sense.'

The six basic attributes are joined by four derived ones that use the same value scale:

- **Appearance** stands for a person's looks. Take note that the Victorian period's idea of "beauty" is not exactly the same as today's!
- **Charisma** represents the power of a person's voice, his powers or persuasion, and similar qualities that may influence interactions with other people.
- **Willpower** allows your adventurer to keep his mind and body under control, even in situations of extreme distress.
- **Composure** measures how easily a person falls prone to distraction, even temptation – a beautiful face maybe, a bottle of fine wine, or some rare artefact.

Tests

To figure out whether your character is strong enough or clever enough to master a specific situation, roll a **d%.**. Your adventurer succeeds in the test if the result of the roll does not exceed the attribute value you have rolled against. If the dice come up **100,** the test is always regarded as a failure, regardless of the actual attribute value.

We use a shorthand way of indicating tests throughout these rules and in our adventures: for instance, a test against strength is listed as **TR:Str.**

Bonuses and Penalties: Occasionally, the task that calls for a test may be particularly easy to solve – or unexpectedly hard. To mirror this in the game, the arbiter may assign positive or negative modifiers to the die roll. The final result is then compared to the attribute in question as indicated before to determine whether the action succeeds. In our shorthand, this may look like this: **TR+30:dexterity.** This means that you have to roll **d%** and then add **30** to the result of the dice. Your test fails if the final total exceeds your player character's dexterity value.

There are three types of tests that are used so often in the course of the game that we have had to coin specific names for them:

- A **feat of strength** is a test against your **strength divided by 10.** A feat of strength may allow your character to bend iron bars, lift a heavy chest, or move a solid stone statue – or any other feat that requires extreme physical exertion.
- Sometimes, an adventure may reach a literal dead end, maybe because some important die rolls have failed, or because the players have missed out on important information. In such cases, the arbiter may allow any or all of the players to roll for a **sudden insight** to provide some valuable hint in case of success. A sudden insight is a test against your **intelligence divided by 10.**
- A test against poison (**TR:poison**) is a test against **30+constitution/2**. In case of success, poison has less (or maybe even no) effect on your adventurer.

Test with d%
Test succeeds if the final result does not exceed the tested attribute
Roll of **100:** always fails
Feat of strength: TR:strength/10
Sudden insight: TR:intelligence/10

Action roll with d20
AR succeeds if die result and skill value equal or exceed 20
Roll of **20**: critical success
Roll of **1**: critical failure

Opposing roll with d20
(only after successful AR by opponent)
OR succeeds if the results equals or exceeds opponents result in the AR
Roll of **20**: critical success
Roll of **1**: critical failure

Skills and How to Use Them

Your player character has not only been provided with attributes, but also with certain **skills.** Examples of skills are *fast talk*, *tailing*, *boxing*, or *sabre*, but also *defence* and *evasion*.

Your adventurer's competence with a skill is expressed as his **skill value.** This normally ranges from between +0 to +18. Skill values are expressed as *fast talk+12* or *sabre+7*.

Action Rolls

Whenever you want to use any of your skills in the game (such as, say, *fast talk*), you use a **d20** to make an action roll. Your adventurer uses the skill successfully if the total sum of die roll and skill value equals or exceeds **20.** Action rolls are indicated in our texts in this way: **AR:fast talk.**

Opposing Rolls

In most contested game situations, your opponent will prefer your adventurer not to succeed in his action – or vice versa. In such cases, the affected character may roll an **opposing roll** to either prevent success or at least reduces its effects – for instance, your adventurer may try to block a cavalry officer's successful sabre attack. An opposing roll is only needed in cases where an opponent has previously succeeded in an action roll against you. The entire process may also be called a **skill contest.**

Whenever your adventurer wants to oppose someone's action roll, you throw a **d20** and add the skill value of the appropriate skill. For instance, if you are attacked in melee, the appropriate skill is your *defence*. For the opposing roll to succeed, the sum of die roll and skill value needs to be at least equal to the total result of your opponent's action roll. If the opposing roll succeeds, the successful use of a skill on the part of your opponents is reduced in effect – and possibly even neutralised. Opposing rolls are indicated in our texts in this way: **OR:defence.**

If both action roll and opposing roll succeed, the acting character has achieved a **minor advantage.**
If the action roll succeeds but the opposing roll fails, the acting character has achieved a **major advantage.**

Penalties, Bonuses, and Critical Die Rolls

Occasionally, your adventurer will have to perform a task by means of an action roll or an opposing roll that is especially hard – or especially easy. As with a test, the arbiter may give bonuses or penalties to the die roll. In our texts, we use this notation to indicate this: **AR-4:throwing.** The player rolls a d20 and subtracts 4 before he adds his skill value in *throwing* to the result. As usual, the total sum needs to be at least 20 for the action to succeed.

'Natural' rolls of 20 and of 1 add some more variety to the game. Whenever the die comes up **20,** your adventurer has achieved a **critical success.** A **1,** on the other hand, indicates a **critical failure.** It is up to the arbiter to determine the exact effects of a critical success or a critical failure. A general rule of thumb is that the player character has either succeeded or failed spectacularly.

A critical success with an action roll means that the action has succeeded, even if the opponent succeeds in a (non-critical) opposing roll. However, a critically successful opposing roll will cancel out a critically successful action roll.

Combat

These basic rules cover two types of fighting; they both share a similar set of rules. In **melee combat,** the opponents try to hit one another with weapons, teeth, or claws at close range. A character may be attacked by up to four different enemies, one on each side (front, back, right, left). A character backed up against a wall, or pressed into a corner, may of course only be attacked by three or two opponents, respectively.

In **ranged combat,** the combatants use firearms or throwing weapons from a distance. The shooter needs to have a clear **line of sight** to the target, which also has to be within the **range** of the weapon.

To get in a **hit** in combat, the attacking character needs to succeed in an action roll with the skill value of the weapon used (in shorthand: an **AR:attack**). Otherwise, the blow or throw or shot goes wild.

A character who has been **hit** may defend himself by making an **opposing roll.** In melee combat, he uses his *defence* value (**OR: defence**); in ranged combat, he uses his *evasion* value (**OR:evasion**).

If both attack roll and opposing roll succeed, the attacker has scored a **light hit** – the defending character only loses stamina points. This is due to ducking out of harm's way in a last-ditch effort, or maybe getting some slight bruises and scratches after all. If the attack roll succeeds but the opposing roll fails, the attacker has scored a **severe hit** – the defender loses stamina points **and** health points.

Resolving Combat

Fights often occur during crucial moments in a story. The minions of the goddess, Kali; the raiders of the Libyan desert; the agents of the Russian Ochrana – all of them may be after you, and any adventurer worth his salt will not run, but stand and deliver.

Combat may be hazy and hectic. To better handle such situations, we have broken down the game into rounds of 10 seconds' length once the fighting starts. Each round follows a straight sequence of events:

• **Determining initiative** (*tactics* rolls)
• **Movement**
• **Actions** (in order of agility)

Each party involved in a fight makes a *tactics* roll; the highest roller has won **initiative** and may determine the order of movement in this round, meaning who goes first, who goes second, etc. In case of a draw, the tied parties roll again. If nobody in a party has learnt *tactics*, apply the universal value of »**+5**«.

Your character's **movement value (MV)** determines how far he may move during a round. The number on your character sheet tells you how far your adventurer may move in metres within 10 seconds in the heat of battle.

Once all characters have completed their movement, each of them may perform exactly one **action.** The character with the highest dexterity goes first, the one with the lowest dexterity goes last. A tie in dexterity may be resolved by a die roll, or maybe both characters act at the same time. Depending on how far your character has moved, one of these three options applies:

A. If your character has spent **more than half** his movement value (for instance, 13 – 24 m with MV 24), he may perform no action that lasts longer than a second.
B. If your character has spent **no more than half** his movement value (for instance, 0 – 12 m with MV 24), he may open or close a door, throw something, draw a weapon, or attack with a melee weapon. In short, he may do anything that does not take longer than 5 seconds and does not require too much concentration.
C. If your character has moved **no more than 1 m,** he may also attack with a ranged weapon, change weapons or pick up a weapon from the ground, get up from a kneeling or a prone position, or do anything else that requires around 10 seconds of time and some concentration.

Defending against successful attacks does **not** count as an action. An adventurer may try to defend against or evade all hits made against him as free actions.

Damage

Being hit in combat, being poisoned, falling down from some great height – all of these things are harmful to your adventurer. Just how much damage any of this might be is determined by a **damage roll.** You roll one or more d6, possibly adding or subtracting a set number, such as 2d6-2 or 1d6+3.

You will find the damage your character is going to inflict in combat directly after the respective combat skill (the numbers in brackets). This value has been calculated on the basis of the weapon used, modified by damage bonus (itself calculated from strength and agility).

Damage is subdivided into **light damage** and **severe damage.** Light damage inflicts a loss of **stamina points (SP)** only. Loss of SP means that your character gets ever more exhausted. Severe damage means that your character does not only lose SP, but also the

same amount of **health points (HP).** The lower your adventurer's HP are, the closer he is to death. Your character sheet tells you how many SP and HP your character has. These values are likely to fall and rise during the game. Please modify the current numbers accordingly.

The Effects of Damage

Should your adventurer's **SP** ever reach **0,** he is totally exhausted and can barely stand, let alone act in a meaningful way. Should his HP fall to a value between **1 and 3**, he is completely helpless, cannot act at all anymore, and may do no more than move at a measly MV 4. **0 HP** means that your character collapses and needs to be carried.

Should HP ever drop **below 0,** your character is in danger of imminent death. He is completely helpless and his companions have no more than **10 minutes** to save his life (i.e., give him back enough HP to bring him to at least 0 HP) by application of the first aid skill or some other medical means.

Healing and Regeneration

Lost health points represent wounds and similar injuries. These heal on their own after a while – a wounded adventurer automatically regains **1 HP per day** until he is back to full health. Your character's HP can never exceed the maximum HP value as listed on the character sheet, though!

Lost stamina points regenerate much more quickly. All your character needs to do is sleep for some time. **Four hours of sleep** regenerate **half** the adventurer's missing SP. It takes **eight hours of sleep** to regenerate **all** lost SP. Characters that are down to **0 or 1 SP** get some of their wind back after a short rest of **30 minutes.** They are then at a grand total of **2 SP.**

However, sleeping is not as easy as it may sound. The sleeping period needs to be uninterrupted. Being woken up, either by loud noise or by touch, instantly forfeits all hours slept so far that have not yet had a regenerative effect. Thus, being woken after 3 hours of sleep will net a character no SP regeneration beyond 2, while being woken after 5 hours of sleep will at least bring back half the lost SP.

Your Adventurer and the World

ADVENTURE: 1880 is a role-playing game set in a more civilised time and so your adventurer is also going to have a social background. He will acquire some fame (or infamy) and will also be able to leave his mark on the world.

Fame

The more fame a person acquires, the better known he becomes in the region where he lives. Fame may help or impede a character, depending on circumstances as well as the kind of activity the character has become famous for. We make a clear distinction between actions that Joe Blow regards as honourable and useful for society, and others that he dislikes (but may regard as somewhat interesting) or believes to be outright dangerous to society. Thus, a character's fame has two numerical values: one that shows how **famous** he is and one that shows how **infamous** he is. Both values range from 0 (never heard of before) to 100 (front-page material of any newspaper). Given the limited means of communication in the period, values beyond 100 (known continent-wide) are rare, but do exist. We use a notation such as *Fame 12/3* to indicate that this particular person as a fame of 12 due to honourable deeds, but also an infamy of 3 due to misdeeds or spectacular failures.

The fame and infamy values do not in any way serve as a moral compass for 'good' or 'evil.' In a complex world such as that of the late nineteenth century, such generalisations will normally not work. Neither does fame have any relation to an adventurer's character, but rather reflects how he is seen at home by average people.

The Grace of Fate

Adventurers are special – they stand out from their fellow citizens. They are the daring heroes in thrilling adventures and thus are just a little bit luckier than other people. This is reflected in the game by the concept of grace of fate **(GoF).** GoF is tied to a character's **fame.** Per **5 points of fame,** a player character receives **1 point** of GoF.

Your character may use GoF to get out of harm's way – he's just that lucky. If your character spends 1 point of GoF, he may re-roll one of his action rolls or opposing rolls, or may force a re-roll of a damage roll directly affecting him. You may not spend GoF for other adventurers.

You will need to decide right after each roll whether you want to spend GoF to 'buy' - you cannot wait until the next roll!

Money

In these basic rules, and the accompanying short adventure, money does not play much of a role. The adventurers are assumed able to make any small purchases they may need during the adventure without having to check their purses. Where prices are given, this will be in British pounds. A British pound of the period is worth around 100 present-day euros, 85 present-day British pounds, or 140 present-day US dollars.

What Arbiters Need to Know

You have chosen to take on the position of arbiter, to make the world around the player characters come to life. You are going to describe to your fellow players which situations their adventurers will find themselves in, what they see, hear, smell … And you are going to take over the roles of all the non-player characters they are about to meet – humans as well as animals. Some of them will be friendly from the outset, some will need to be befriended first, while others will attack without questions.

You react to the players' actions and decide about their success or failure – based on the information already given in *What Everyone Needs to Know* as well as the additional guidelines found in this chapter. Your most important task is to see your players through a thrilling story in which they brave dangerous situations and other challenges, but will be triumphant in the end. That is, unless they do something really stupid, or are extremely unlucky.

We have included an example of how the dialogue between you and the players may turn out, in the form of a fictitious game session starting on page 16. Finally, you should take a good look at the adventure *Mission in London* in the second half of this booklet. All in all, this should give you your first notion of how a role-playing game works.

Non-player Characters

All the attributes and skills you need to bring non-player characters to life in the game are listed in ways similar to the game statistics of the characters to be portrayed by your players. Animals have only been given agility (**Agi** – to determine order of action in combat – see page 5), strength (**Str**), and intelligence (**Int** – divide by 10 to get an animal's *tactics* skill value)

Health points (HP), stamina points (SP), and movement value (MV) are used in exactly the same way as with player characters. In addition, non-player characters have skills, too, both for combat and non-combat

situations. All of these are listed with their respective values and, if weapon skills, with damage given in brackets.

Most creatures value their existence and are likely to retreat from combat once they have lost all their stamina points, or if they are heavily wounded and down to a small fraction of their HP. However, in the end it is you who decides whether – and when – an opponent flees.

Who Rolls the Dice?

Players usually roll all the dice for their adventurers, while you as the arbiter roll all the dice for the people and creatures your players are interacting with. However, there will be occasions when the players don't know the odds, and aren't supposed to. Sometimes the result of a die roll will need to remain unclear to the

characters. For instance, a player won't be able to know whether the trapdoor his adventurer is about to open is indeed free of traps, or whether he simply failed to make his roll and thus couldn't detect anything. In such cases, you as the arbiter roll that player's **AR:searching** as a **hidden roll,** to preserve the tension.

There will also be situation during the game where you need to roll the dice for your players **in secret**. This is usually the case when the players can't even begin to know what is about to happen to them. For instance, the *sixth sense* may draw an adventurer's attention towards an ambush – but failing the roll, he does not notice anything. Since you made the roll in secret, the player won't know prematurely (i.e., ahead of his character) that something is amiss. To keep the

Bonuses and Penalties in Combat

Situation	Bonus/ Penalty	Effect on
Melee and ranged combat		
Attacker is defenceless	-4	AR:attack
Defender is defenceless		**no** OR:defence/evasion
Surprise attack	-4	OR:defence/evasion
Attacker/defender is totally unsuspecting		**no** OR:defence/evasion
Attack from horseback or when moving	-4	AR:attack
Only in melee combat		
Attack from behind	+2	AR:attack
Defender is defenceless	+4	AR:attack
Omly in ranged combat		
Target in weapon's medium range	-2	AR:attack
Target in weapon's long range	-4	AR:attack
Careful aiming	+4	AR:attack

players in the dark, we advise you to sometimes roll the dice just for the fun of it, without this having any impact on the game.

Additional Rules

Special Combat Situations

There will be situations during the game when hitting someone (or avoiding being hit) are harder or easier than usual. We reflect this by adding a bonus to either the AR:attack or the OR:defence/evasion, or by giving a respective penalty. Here are some suggestions how to implement this in actual game play:

There is always the moment of **surprise.** The surprised party in combat always receives a penalty of **-4** to their OR:defence or OR:evasion since they can only rely on their reflexes, not their training. Someone who is **totally unsuspecting** of an attack, for instance by being ambushed, may not roll an **OR:defence** or **OR:evasion** at all.

Ranged weapons have different range sections. If the target of a ranged attack is within **long range** of the weapon, the shooter needs to subtract **4** from his roll; he subtracts **2** if the target is in **medium range.** If the shooter is able to **aim carefully** (meaning he can neither move nor act in any other way for one full round), he gets a bonus of **+4** if he fires the next round.

Falling Damage

Height	Damage	Height	Damage
2 m	1d6 (nur AP)	6 m	3W6
3 m	1d6+2	7 m	3W6+2
4 m	2d6	8 m	4W6
5 m	2d6+2	etc.	etc.

A **melee attack from behind** results in a bonus of **+2** to this character's AR:attack.

If any character is **defenceless,** things get especially bad. Both player and non-player characters count as defenceless if they have 0 SP, or are concentrating on some other activity to the exclusion of defending. They may not roll any OR:defence or OR:evasion; are at **+4** to be hit in melee; and get **-4** to their own attacks.

Other Sources of Damage

Falling is a frequent cause of damage. The table below informs you about falling damage as based on height fallen. It also gives you hints for assessing damage from other accidents. For instance, being hit by a moving train is the equivalent of falling from a height of 4 metres (i.e., 2d6 damage points).

Being bitten by a venomous snake, or being dosed with a sleeping drug, may yet be avoided with a **TR:poison** (see page 5). Poisoned adventurers always take **severe damage** and lose a certain amount of both HP and SP, as indicated in the adventure text. Poisons may also confuse, paralyse, or put victims to sleep.

Talking About Skills

In addition to the basic rules on skill use as mentioned in the player section, there are other rules mechanisms pertaining to skill use you need to be aware of.

General Notes on Skills

Skills are usually used for one of these four purposes:

- to gather information or recollect factual knowledge;
- to cause reactions in others by means of social interaction;
- to achieve some feat by physical exertion;
- or to attack or defend in combat situations.

In most situations, these four purposes correspond to the four basic types of skills: **mental, social, physical,** and **combat** as well as **weapon skills.** However, untypical skill uses are quite possible: For instance, *telegraphy* (a mental skill) may also include some mechanical aptitude, such as knowledge of ho to repair a telegraphing machine; or the *throwing* skill could be used outside of combat, for instance in a dart game in a pub. There are also some **innate skills.** These are fairly special and do not fit one of the categories mentioned above easily.

Physical use of a skill does not always require an action roll. Everyday situations do not pose

challenges to experienced adventurers. Some skills, such as *forgery*, *sleight-of-hand*, and *sneaking*, are only used under special circumstances, though. These **always** require an action roll. Action rolls for physical skills are usually made by the player himself since the consequences of success or failure are fairly obvious. The exception to this are skills such as *sneaking* where the character can never be certain whether he was successful or not. The arbiter rolls **hidden** action rolls for such skill uses.

Social use of a skill aims at getting information from someone else, making them do something in favour of the skill user, or try to feign something. The target is usually granted an **opposing roll** with an appropriate skill (*human nature* or *streetwise* being the most likely candidates) – unless he is totally unsuspecting or overly trusting. If the action roll succeeds, the success of the opposing roll, as usual, determines whether the skill user has achieved a minor or a major advantage. This translates into how much the affected person is going to act according to the wishes of the skill user.

However, with these skills an **opposing roll** also becomes necessary when the action roll fails. This opposing roll determines whether the target notices what his opponent **is up to.** If the opposing roll succeeds, it is, for instance, possible for the target to only pretend to act according to the wishes of the skill user, instead providing him with, say, wrong information, or he may simply react in an annoyed way. The arbiter usually makes **hidden** dice rolls regarding

any use of a social skill. The adventurer cannot possibly know whether his ruse was successful, or whether his target has got wise to him.

Mental skills are often used to locate information hidden in books and newspapers, or to recall factual knowledge previously acquired by an adventurer. An action roll for such a skill is always necessary when the character is confronted with a question from the appropriate field of knowledge. If the roll succeeds, the character knows the answer. Should more than one character know the same mental skill, they all get to roll to determine whether they know the answer.

The arbiter generally makes **hidden** action rolls. In case of a **critical failure,** she feeds the player misleading information, while at the same time making sure he believes the use of the skill was successful. Adventures may also gain information **automatically,** without having to explicitly state they are using a mental skill. It is up to the arbiter to realise whether a character may detect something with one of his mental skills, or his senses, and to then roll a **secret** action roll. This roll, however, needs to succeed **critically** for the character to receive the information in question.

Reference Skills

There may be situations where an adventurer has more than one skill at his disposal that might be useful for achieving a specific target.

In the end, it is up to you as the arbiter to determine which skill will be most appropriate for solving the problem in question. However, you may point out to the player that some of his skills may actually help him in this situation, providing additional knowledge or practice. To save on dice rolling time, in such situations you can simply assume that each of these **reference skills** gains the player a **bonus of +1** to the action roll of the skill used to resolve the task. The final decision on which skills to classify as reference skills is, of course, yours.

Universal Skills

Any adventurer with at least a modicum of agility will be able to at least try and struggle up a steep slope, or sneak past a guard. However, he is so much less likely to succeed than his friend who has actually learned how to *climb* or *sneak*. All those skills an adventurer may use to a limited degree without specifically having learnt them we call universal skills. The table below list the skill values any adventurer has in a universal skill. listed as »+X«. You may use a universal skill in the same way you would use a learned skill – but your adventurer will never be as good as it as with a learned one. Not all of these universal skills are given descriptions in the skill listing later since they will rarely see use in our short adventure – but they should all be fairly self-explanatory.

An Adventurer's Senses

The five senses have been given skill values in the game, too. They are used just like skills. You only need to make an action roll if an observable phenomenon is very subtle, or hidden among other stimuli.

The senses are often used for opposing rolls against certain skills when no other, more appropriate skill is present. For instance, a character who is being *sneaked* up on may roll an OR:hearing to notice that somebody is approaching.

A sense with a value of **+5** or less counts as **underdeveloped.** Such a character has bad eyesight or bad hearing. As the arbiter, you may very well call for an action roll whenever the

Archival science	»+3«	Jumping	»+8«
Assassination	»+0/6«	Riding	»+5«
Boating	»+3«	Searching	»+3«
Body control	»+5«	Seduction	»+3«
Burglary	»+0«	Sneaking	»+3«
Camouflage	»+3«	Survival	»+5«
Climbing	»+8«	Swimming	»+3«
Dancing	»+8«	Tactics	»+5«
Disguise	»+5«	Tailing	»+3«
Driving	»+3«		
Evidence analysis	»+0«	Dagger	»+4«
Fast talk	»+3«	Pistol	»+4«
General education	»+3«	Shotgun	»+4«
Hiding	»+3«	Throwing	»+4«
Human nature	»+3«	Unarmed combat	»+4«
Interrogation	»+3«		

skill in question comes into play in an important (!) function. Failing this action roll might have negative effects on another action roll (or opposing roll) with a skill, or may even make it altogether impossible: a nearsighted adventurer who simply cannot see a target at long range will not be able to shoot at it.

Underdeveloped sight or hearing may be offset by glasses or an ear-trumpet (as long as the sense is not at +0). Such tools boost the sense to a skill value of **+6.** They also obviate the need for additional action rolls for the sense in question and the possible impediment of subsequent skill use depending on that sense.

The Skills

Here are short descriptions of the skills given to the four player characters described later in this booklet, as well as those of the main non-player characters found in *Mission in London*.

An adventurer with **alertness** (innate) is immediately up and awake if woken from sleep. He wakes up on his own if there is a strange noise somewhere in the vicinity, as long as the arbiter succeeds in a **secret** action roll. Alertness will not work if the adventurer is drugged, drunk, or completely exhausted (i.e., at 0 SP when going to sleep).

Archival science (mental) encompasses the evaluation of written information as found in libraries, newspaper archives, and police files. A successful **hidden** action roll for this skill allows the arbiter to give hints as to where to find such information. The adventurer will then need to succeed in another *archival science* roll to actually find the books or text passages in question.

Art appreciation (mental) represents an adventurer's acquaintance with works of art and their value, as well as with the artistic community. He is versed in art history and is able to at least roughly place unknown paintings, sculptures, or buildings into their proper historical context.

An adventurer who has studied **chemistry** (mental) is able to create chemical compounds such as disinfectants, explosives, or acids. He can also identify unknown substances to some degree. Should the **hidden** action roll fail, the chemist does not get any decisive result out of his analysis, or he will not be able to synthesise the substance he is working on.

Cryptography (mental) covers the study of secret codes and other means of coding and decoding information. Cracking a code is always difficult. Even after a successful action roll, the creator of the code still gets an OR:cryptography to prevent the decoding. Additional attempts are only allowed when time is not a factor.

Defence (combat) is used in opposing rolls to defend against melee attacks.

An adventurer with **direction sense** (innate) is able to determine the direction towards a specific destination he has at least seen once even when in confusing surroundings. The skill is used every time the character arrives at a point in his travels where he has more than one option as to how to proceed.

Disguise (social) allows an adventurer to change his appearance by using tools such as hair dye, cosmetics, platform shoes, clothing, a fake beard, a wig, or similar things. A convincing disguise needs at least an hour to prepare. It may be created in minutes if pressed, but then the character incurs a penalty of **-10** to all action rolls. Should the disguise be supposed to hold up for a longer period of time, the disguised character needs to make one *disguise* roll per 24 hours. Anyone studying the disguised person gets an **opposing roll** against *human nature*, *streetwise*, or possibly one of the senses if he suspects something is amiss, knows the disguised person in his own guise, or knows the person being impersonated.

Driving (physical) reflects a character's skill at steering horse-drawn carriages. He will also be able to take a coach off-road. The skill also enables adventurers to make small repairs to carriage or harness.

Eidetic memory (innate) is the ability to memorise scenes, texts, or pictures that a character has seen briefly. This skill is mainly

used to recall factual knowledge; the respective rules apply. This is especially true for the option of automatic skill use should the arbiter believe an adventurer with this skill might remember a specific scene even if not stating this outright.

Engineering (mental) comprises thorough theoretical and practical training in the fields of mechanics and technical physics. The skill also covers knowledge of those electrical devices present in the late nineteenth century, such as alarm devices, dynamos, or telephones.

Etiquette (social) covers the fine art of conversing with people from the upper middle class or even higher social circles without serious blunders. The skill covers conversation as well as behaviour, for instance at dinner. A failed action roll should not result in catastrophic results, except the blundering adventurer will be seen as an upstart or a boor. However, a critical failure signals a serious faux-pas that is likely to shock all those present, turning them against the character.

Evasion (combat) is used in opposing rolls to defend against ranged attacks.

Fast talk (social) allows an adventurer to persuade someone else to share his point of view. A successful use of the skill lets the skill user come across as a likeable person. If a character wants to use *fast talk* to persuade somebody into doing something that is against his basic convictions, or directly violates his interests, the person to be persuaded is allowed to defend with an OR:human nature or an OR:fast talk.

Forgery (physical) covers the forging of documents, money, or signatures. The action roll is made (anew) every time the forgery is used, presented, or inspected.

General education (mental) is a catch-all term for all knowledge not directly belonging to one of the more specialised fields of the other knowledge skill. The skill encompasses everyday experience, the basics of natural sciences and technology, knowledge of local history, and information about important persons of public life.

History (mental) demonstrates a character's knowledge about the past of his region as well as the history of the neighbouring countries. Depending on background or origin, he may also be conversant with the history of an overseas country.

Human nature (social) provides insight into the mood of a larger group or people. If an adventurer using this skill concentrates his attention on a single person, a successful **hidden** action roll allows him a rough assessment of the person's character, including whether the person is telling the truth or not. However, the adventurer may only roll once per conversation! Should this fail, he may get the wrong impression of that person's truthfulness, or he may simply not know where to put the other. A critical failure leads to an entirely wrong character assessment.

Using **interrogation** (mental), a character may gain information from a target by means of the basics of psychology, cunning strategies of questioning, fatigue, and mental duress. The target defends against interrogation with an **OR:(willpower/10).**

A **jumping** (physical) action roll only becomes necessary when someone wants to jump a height or a distance exceeding his average physical capabilities. Most people are able to long jump for about 2.5 m; to clear an obstacle of 70 cm in height while running; and to touch something 70 cm above their heads. Each 20 cm in height or each 50 cm in length incur a (cumulative) penalty of **-2** on the die roll.

Law (mental) provides knowledge of crime and punishment, due process, a citizen's rights, and legal procedures.

Maintenance (physical) allows a character to study and repair machines and mechanical devices. The skill may also help an adventurer to identify the functions of an unknown piece of machinery. Characters with appropriate tools may also use this skill to build and repair simple mechanical devices..

A character trained in **mounted combat** (combat) may automatically attack on horseback without incurring the **-4** penalty usually associated with this action. During a charge, or any other difficult situation, he will need to succeed in an **AR:mounted combat** before the actual AR:attack.

Night vision (innate) endows a person with limited sight in averse lighting conditions – light coming only from a distant street lamp, starlight, the light of a torch. For an adventurer with *night vision*, visibility is like that of a normal person on a foggy day (i.e., between 50 m and 200 m).

Occultism (mental) represents knowledge of basic occult theories and practices. An occultist knows about the standard works (and will probably have read them) and has knowledge of famous circles and pertinent leading figures. An occultist does **not** have any supernatural powers!

Photography (mental) allows an adventurer to use a camera to make clear pictures and develop them. An action roll only becomes necessary under difficult circumstances. If the photographer has access to a laboratory and the picture was taken under optimal conditions (bright sunshine, sufficient time, immobile object), developing succeeds automatically. Using magnesium for flash photography, for instance, always requires an action roll.

Riding (physical) allows a character to ride a temperamental horse in a challenging manner, and to guide a horse into combat. Action rolls are only needed in critical situations, for instance when trying to jump obstacles, crossing an uneven field at high speed, galloping through of copse of trees,

or needing to perform an unexpected manoeuvre all of a sudden.

Salesmanship (mental) enables an adventurer to haggle effectively. Two persons haggling with one another via the use of *salesmanship* are in a **skill contest** of alternating action rolls and opposing rolls. An adventurer with this skill is also able to assess the potential value of an item at a glance. Assessing value is always done as a **hidden** roll by the arbiter.

Searching (mental) lets an adventurer find lost or purposefully hidden items or devices such as secret compartments, false bottoms, or secret doors. Usually, the people who have hidden something will defend against the character's *searching* with an OR:hiding. *Searching* conveys information and may thus be used automatically, providing a person who has learnt this skill passes an interesting object or a hidden device in a distance of less than 2 m.

Sleight-of-hand (physical) enables the adventurer to perform little tricks with cards or similar-sized items. He may also unobtrusively appropriate or switch small items. Provided the target is sufficiently distracted, *sleight-of-hand* may also be used for picking pockets or increasing the odds at card and dice games. A target whose pockets are about to be picked always gets an **opposing roll** against *streetwise* or *touch*.

An adventurer trained in **streetwise** (social) knows his way around the larger cities – especially their seedier parts. He knows where to find cheap lodgings, where to get information on which topic, where to have a good time, who to pay off, etc.

Survival (mental) is about techniques of survival in the wilderness. A survivalist is able to collect food for one day with a successful action roll. He may also try to satisfy the daily food requirements of other persons by making additional rolls. Once the first of these fails, the place the character is in is out of food for the day.

Tactics (social) is the art of leading a small military unit (or a group of adventurers …) into combat. An adventurer with this skill knows how to deal with conflict situations and may achieve combat advantages for his troop..

Tailing (physical) is used to follow another person through the streets of a city unnoticed. Whenever the tailed person disappears out of sight, another **hidden** AR:tailing becomes necessary. Tailing is useless in the wilderness; you are going to find *evidence analysis* of much greater use there. A **failed** action roll means the adventurer has lost his quarry. In such a case, the person being tailed is allowed an **opposing roll** against *sight*, *streetwise*, or *tailing* to notice he is being tailed.

Telegraphing (mental) encompasses knowledge of the Morse code and of how to use a telegraph properly. Action rolls are only necessary when time is of the essence; when sending a coded message; or when trying to repair the machine. When there are no time constraints, an adventurer may transmit a number of words per minute equal to his *telegraphing* skill value.

Throwing (combat) is the cover term for the ability to throw stuff (coins, balls, stones, sticks of dynamite, what have you) with the intention of hitting someone or something. The skill may also be used for playing games such as darts or boules.

Weapon Skills

The damage a weapon does is listed in brackets after its name. Throwing weapons and firearms also list three ranges: close range, medium range, and long range (compare the corresponding penalties on page 8).

Boxing (1d6-4)
In the nineteenth century, boxing is especially popular in England, but also in the United States. A boxer only does **light damage,** unless he manages to land a critical hit. Each severe hit, however, has the chance of incapacitating the opponent. If the OR:defence fails, the opponent needs to roll a **second** opposing roll against the same AR: attack, but this time needs to subtract the SP lost as a penalty to the die roll, i.e.: **OR-(SP loss): defence.** If this second roll succeeds, he can shrug off the attack but needs to get his bearing back and **cannot attack** next round. If the roll fails, he immediately needs to roll a **TR:Constitution.** If he succeeds in that, he is groggy and counts as **defenceless** for one round; otherwise, he **goes down for 2d6 rounds.**

Dagger (1d6-1)
When we speak of daggers, we not only mean the actual weapon of up to 40 cm in length, but also bayonet knives when used independently from their gun. The skill may also be used to attack with knives, but these only do 1d6-2 damage.

Derringer (1d6)
20 m   60 m   500 m
This two-shot derringer (calibre 32) is easy to hide in pockets, handbags, or shoulder holsters.

Epee (1d6)
The adventurer may employ epees, rapiers, or similar blades that may deliver both piercing and slashing damage.

Pistol (1d6+2)
30 m   150 m   1200 m
This is a revolver of calibre 44 or 45. Its barrel holds **6 bullets.**

Sabre (1d6, on horseback: +1)
A sabre is a sword with a curved blade. It is only used for slashing. From horseback, it does 1d6+1 damage.

Unarmed combat (1d6-4)
Everyone knows fighting with his bare hands as a universal skill at »+4«.

Languages

Languages are always listed with two skill values. The value to the left of the slash reflects the adventurer's competence in speaking and understanding the language, the one to the right of the slash for his competence in reading and writing.

Pregenerated Characters

British Cavalry Officer

Your Basic Attributes

Strength	92
Dexterity	91
Agility	80
Constitution	76
Intelligence	62
Psychic talent	98
Willpower	85
Composure	51
Charisma	81
Appearance	72

Your Senses

Sight+8, hearing+8, smell+8, taste+8, touch+8, sixth sense+4

Your Derived Attributes

Health points		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		8	9	10	11	12	13	14
			15	16	17			

Stamina points	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Resistance to poison	63	Fame	6/2
Movement	26	Grace of fate	2
Damage bonus	+3		

Your Skills

Alertness+6, drive+15, history+4, jumping+12, mounted combat+14, riding+14, street-wise+10, survival+8, tactics+11, throwing+7

Your Weapon Skills

Boxing+7 (1d6-1), Pistol+7 (1d6+2), Sabre+7 (1d6+3)

Defence+12, evasion+12

Your Languages

English+18/+18, French+9/+9

Your Equipment

Uniform, boots, sabre, pistol (Enfield-476 Mk. 1), 20 bullets, 2 British pounds

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American War Correspondent

Your Basic Attributes

Strength	83
Dexterity	74
Agility	81
Constitution	67
Intelligence	90
Psychic talent	61
Willpower	67
Composure	56
Charisma	62
Appearance	90

Your Senses

Sight+8, hearing+8, smell+8, taste+8, touch+8, sixth sense+3

Your Derived Attributes

Health points		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		8	9	10	11	12	13	

Stamina points	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14

Resistance to poison	63	Fame	6/1
Movement	25	Grace of fate	2
Damage bonus	+3		

Your Skills

Archival science+11, eidetic memory+4, fast talk+10, general education+11, maintenance+6, photography+10, riding+13, searching+7, tactics+8, telegraphy+11

Your Weapon Skills

Derringer+6 (1d6)

Defence+13, evasion+13

Your Languages

English+19/+19

Your Equipment

Clothing, boots, fedora, leather gloves, notebook and pen, portable camera, derringer, 10 bullets, 5 dollars (equals 1 British pound)

German Foreign Agent

Your Basic Attributes

Strength	69
Dexterity	73
Agility	92
Constitution	88
Intelligence	84
Psychic talent	66
Willpower	71
Composure	100
Charisma	70
Appearance	69

Your Derived Attributes

Health points: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Stamina points: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

Resistance to poison	74	Fame	5/6
Movement	21	Grace of fate	2
Damage bonus	+2		

Your Skills

Archival science+11, cryptography+7, disguise+7, forgery+9, history+5, human nature+11, night vision+6, streetwise+11, tailing+9

Your Languages

English+15/+15, German+19/+19, Turkish+7/+7

Your Senses

Sight+8, hearing+8, smell+8, taste+8, touch+8, sixth sense+3

Your Weapon Skills

Dagger+6 (126+1)

Defence+13, evasion+13

Your Equipment

Clothing, shoes, leather gloves, dagger, fake English passport, diverse stationary, coding and decoding tables, 3 pounds for travel expanses

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French Colonial Diplomat

Your Basic Attributes

Strength	64
Dexterity	71
Agility	65
Constitution	76
Intelligence	97
Psychic talent	44
Willpower	88
Composure	91
Charisma	100
Appearance	82

Your Derived Attributes

Health points: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

Stamina points: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

Resistance to poison	68	Fame	6/1
Movement	24	Grace of fate	2
Damage bonus	+2		

Your Skills

Etiquette+12, fast talk+12, general education+12, human nature+12, salesmanship+6

Your Languages

English+16/+16, French+20/+20, Turkish+16/+16

Your Equipment

Clothing befitting your rank, fashionable hat, velvet gloves, boots, diplomat's passport, accreditation by President Jules Grévy, adorned epee, pipe, six different types of tobacco, 200 Franc for expenses (equals 8 British pounds)

Your Senses

Sight+8, hearing+8, smell+8, taste+8, touch+8, sixth sense+6

Your Weapon Skills

Epee+6 (1d6+2)

Defence+12, evasion+12

An Example of Gameplay

Now that you know the basic rules of ADVEN-TURE: 1880 and the players have familiarised themselves with their player characters, it is time to get down to the adventure, *Mission in London*. There is only one thing missing : If you have never played a role-playing game before, you may be unsure of how a game session might actually work. For this reason, we have taken a part of the climax of *Mission in London* and turned it into a rendition of what might happen during game play (it is actually more or less what did happen during one play test, give or take).

It goes without saying that the last players that happen to be still around should stop reading right now!

The Players

- Alexandra as the *arbiter*
- Katja as the German agent, *Charlotte von Pottenstein*
- Robert as British cavalry officer, *George Power*
- Claudia as the American journalist *Carla Franklins*
- Andreas as the French colonial diplomat *Pierre des Meurtrier*

The Situation

This is a rendition of the scene that precedes the final climax of *Mission in London*, to be found later in this booklet. The player characters are hot on the trail of the assassin working to destroy the secret library of the Vatican – but time is running out! The villain (who also happens to be the adventure's final challenge) has already made it into the library and is about to begin his work of destruction …

Alexandra: "Okay, it really wasn't hard to find and open the secret door. Looks like somebody had already opened it before you even got here, got through, and didn't close it properly again."

Claudia: "Looks like that somebody was in a hurry, eh?"

Alexandra: "You might say so, yes. Anyway, there's a narrow, dusty staircase winding down into the dark. You can't really say just how deep, not even …," she pauses and glances at Katja, "… with Charlotte's *night vision*."

Katja: "You mean I don't even get to roll?"

Alexandra: "Well, whatever. Do roll. What's it say?"

Katja: [Rolls a d20.] "17? That's a total of 23?"

Alexandra:" Oh, well. Right. I did mention that the stairs are full of dust. Charlotte makes out footprints in the dust, leading down the stairs. No more than one person, you'd say."

Robert: "You know, I think I'll draw my pistol and aim it at the stairs!"

Alexandra: "And where exactly? Towards the top, where you can see, or into the darkness?"

Robert: "Erm … shall we say … around that part of the stairs that I can still see before they disappear into the darkness."

Katja: "Which isn't much, eh? But do aim this way …" (she makes a vague gesture), "… my *night vision* says that's going to work."

Alexandra: "Right. And what about the two others?"

Claudia: "I'll start searching the area around the secret door. Maybe I'll find something we've missed. Want me to make a *searching* roll?"

Alexandra: "Sure, go ahead."

Claudia: [Rolls a d20.] "13. I've got +7 in *searching*, so this should work, if barely."

Alexandra: "Indeed. Looks like there are two, three drops of some dark, viscous liquid in the top stairs. But shouldn't we see first whether you have managed to examine all of this silently?"

Claudia: "A dark, viscous liquid? Oil? – Erm … what do you want me to do?"

Alexandra: "Might well be oil. But first you want to make a *sneaking* roll!"

Claudia: "Oh. But … I can't actually sneak, you know?"

Alexandra: "Of course you can, just like anyone else – universal *sneaking* at »+3«. I'll even throw in a bonus of +2. Get on with it!"

Claudia: "Erm. If you say so." [Rolls the die.] „Well. That's a 5. Let me guess: this won't do."

Alexandra: "Nope. Your camera bangs against some stone, creating a ringing sound."

Katja: "*So* uncool."

Robert: "So? Anything happening?"

Alexandra: "Doesn't look like. For now."

Andreas: "Well … looks like whoever's down there now knows we're here. Might as well solve the problem the diplomatic way, right? So … I'll take three, maybe four steps up front …"

Robert: "Hey! You're getting into my line of sight!"

Andreas: "… and call down, in as friendly a voice I can muster: 'Allooo? Izz zere somevone?'" [Imitates a bad French accent.]

The rest of the group: "Whaaaat???"

Alexandra: "Okay … Now indeed whoever's down there knows you're here. Any other brilliant ideas?"

Claudia/Katja: "I draw my derringer/my dagger!"

Andreas: Relax. "I've got it covered. But I still keep my hand close to my epee – you never know. And, erm … anyone wants to cover me? Just in case it isn't friendly?"

Robert: "What do you think I'm trying to do here?"

While the adventurers are taking up their positions, Alexandra makes several hidden die rolls – mainly *sneaking* and *hearing* rolls for Pierre und George (because they are standing in front or can see the staircase), but also Charlotte (because of her *night vision*).

Alexandra: "As if in response to that last question of yours, you hear a deep, hollow-sounding voice from down below: *'Who dares disturb me in my holy task enjoined on me by God's will?'* Pierre briefly glimpses a flash of

light in the dark, accompanied by some fleet movement. Looks like an arm in a dark sleeve, or somesuch. George, you hear a low clicking sound, like the flipping of a switch."

Alexandra knows that 'God's envoy' is about to attack. She is giving the adventurers some real-time seconds to make last preparations.

Robert: "I keep aiming at the staircase. I should be getting that +4 bonus now, right?"

Andreas: "Um … looks like it's time to take a careful step or maybe even steps backwards …"

Katja: "I simply but elegantly drop flat on the belly I don't have and move forward lithely, until I can finally peek down the stairs without being seen myself. Is there something like a small box or ledge or whatever around I could use for cover?"

Claudia: "I unobtrusively retreat and watch our backs. You never know."

Alexandra: "Okay, everyone done? – Charlotte, there's indeed some kind of small ledge. Let me just make this roll for you …" [Rolls a die.] "So … As you are standing there in the darkness, waiting tensely, you suddenly hear some kind of hissing sound from below, but before you can even react, a beam of searing-hot fire explodes in your direction! Just a second later, darkness descends upon you as a pitch-black, stinking cloud of smoke envelops you. Everyone except Carla please make *evasion* rolls. Charlotte and Pierre get +2 each, for cover and being on the retreat, respectively."

All players except Claudia make their *evasion* rolls. Andreas und Katja succeed, but Robert majorly fails by rolling a 4.

Alexandra: „Right. Looks like the firestorm was centred around George. You're enveloped by extreme heat, searing your hair, burning your flesh … let's see …" [rolls 2d6] … "take 6 points of severe damage, both in HP and SP. The others rather feel a blast of warm air as they manage to get out of the danger area. Due to the exertion, you lose …" [rolls a d6 three times and points to Andreas, Claudia, and Katja in quick succession] …"3, 4, and another 3 SP. – And now it's your turn!"

Since the assassin foregoes his movement, the players now act according to the agility scores. This means Carla goes first, followed by Charlotte and George, and finally Pierre.

Claudia: "Since I'm kinda removed from the action and couldn't do much, anyway … How hot was the flame?"

Alexandra: "Why don't you ask George … oh, will you relax, Robert. What I'm trying to say is: How do you know? You're the only one who didn't feel it!"

Claudia: "Well, but don't you just *know* that kind of stuff? Basic education, I tell you! I may be a journalist, but shouldn't the colour of a flame tell me something about its temperature? Basics of physics!"

Alexandra: "Which is exactly why the game has this nifty *natural history* skill. *Chemistry* would have worked, too. I can't see any of the characters having either."

Claudia: "Oh, please. Why not *general education*? This is a time of progress, of great interest in science!"

Alexandra: "Okay, fine. Make your roll."

Claudia: "Ha! 28! That should do it!"

Alexandra: "Okay. Hm … the flame was kind of orange-yellowish."

Claudia: "So … neither white, nor blue, nor green? So it wasn't really hot? Just a normal fire? Weird. Where would that … say … did they have flamethrowers back then already?"

Robert: "What do you mean, not really hot? I'm still hurting!"

Alexandra: "No as to the flamethrowers. Ignoring those early Antiquity and Middle Ages design, the first modern patent for a flamethrower dates from 1901. That's the stuff you then got to see in World War One. But this is 1882. Now since you're interested in all thing war-related, what with being a war correspondent and all, you know about the rumours of Greek fire having been used during the American Civil War. Portable flamethrowers are still unknown, though."

[The attacker is indeed using an early flamethrower prototype – there's no rule against adventures deviating from history in some small ways we have just never read about. Of course, Alexandra doesn't want to give this away just now.]

Katja: "Well. What do I see when I peek down – carefully?"

Alexandra: "Nothing. Except heavy black smoke. Lots of it, too. And the place reeks of oil."

Katja: "Hm … I guess that settles further attempts at communication with whatever may be down there. I … um … I'm throwing my dagger!"

Alexandra: "Yes. Well. It's not balanced for throwing, so that counts as an improvised

missile. Ideal for the *throwing* skill. Which you don't have.."

Katja: "But I got that universally at »+4«!"

Alexandra: "And you're basically throwing your dagger into the darkness, since you can't see squat due to the smoke. Hence, there's a penalty of -4 because you can't really see your target. At all."

Katja: "But we did see where he was standing! That's where I'm throwing the dagger!"

Alexandra: "And that's why it's only -4."

Katja: "That's stupid, But whatever, let's do it." [Rolls.] "Oh, that's a 2. But wait … I'm using grace of fate to get a re-roll!. Oh. 12. Not good."

Alexandra: [Nods sagely.] "The dagger disappears somewhere in the darkness, finally clattering to the ground. – Robert?"

Robert: "I was aiming, then I got burned, and I guess I'm still aiming. Is that still of any use?"

Alexandra: "You're saying you've kept up there, weapon trained, even after taking that heat blast?"

Robert: "Sure! I'm an officer of the British Empire! That's what we *do*!"

Alexandra: [Sighs.] "Oh, well. Then as an officer of the British Empire, you won't object a Willpower test?"

Robert: "The hell, no!" [Rolls percentile dice and clearly beats his willpower value.] "23! Told ya!"

Alexandra: [Sighs again.] "Well, assuming he/she/it is still where you were aiming at – sure, sure. But there's still that -4 penalty. If your target has already moved, you'll miss."

Robert: "Nah, he's still there. So that's a standard roll at pistol+7?" [Rolls his AR:attack.] "Ha! 17! A hit! Beat a 24 with your *evasion*!"

Alexandra: "Okay …" [Rolls the robed man's OR: evasion and gets a total of less then 24.] "Oh, my. Looks like he really hasn't moved at all. You must have hit something because you hear a cry of pain. But you still can't see a thing."

Andreas: "I draw my dagger and prepare to attack whatever may come out of the smoke!"

And thus begins the battle for the library …
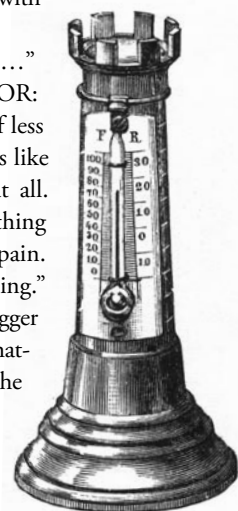
Mission in London

"A rum business, what?"
(Dr. Watson to Sherlock Holmes in *All-Consuming Fire*)

Mission in London is a short introductory adventure designed for the four player characters introduced earlier in this booklet. Players may name these characters as they wish, and may also assign genders freely. It is possible to slightly modify these characters before the game starts, for instance by changing nationalities. Take care to adjust languages accordingly, though!

Playing time is between two and three hours. This being an introductory adventure, quite a few things (for instance, the introduction for the characters) have been simplified somewhat to get into the game more quickly. We sometimes use round boxed text to give explanations or hints that might be of use to the arbiter.

The adventure uses some elements from the novel *All-Consuming Fire* by Andy Lane (1994), but puts these into a new and unique context. The horse-head amulets and the book *Slowcake's Exceptionals* are borrowed from the browser-based game *Echo Bazaar*, used with permission of Failbetter Games.

Introduction for the Player Characters

"Have you heard of the Library of Saint John the Beheaded?"
(Cardinal Ruffo-Scilla in *All-Consuming Fire*)

It is March 1882. You have been invited by Cardinal Ruffo-Scilla from the Vatican, who speaks for the Pope himself. You are meeting the Cardinal in a small house in Maiden Lane, not far from the famous Strand. The clock has just struck 4 in the afternoon. The Cardinal has a … delicate proposition for you. You are to prevent an attack against a secret library of the Vatican, the so-called Library of Saint John the Beheaded, which just happens to be in London's suburb Southwark. You have all caught the Cardinal's attention by means of your reputation, or because of achievements that have somehow become known to the Church. Also, you can be considered 'dark horses' from the Church's point of view – nobody knows about you, and especially not your connection to the Church. "Plausible deni-

ability," the cardinal has called this – whatever it is what exactly he means by that. It probably has something to do with the fact that the best operatives to attend to the matters of a library that doesn't officially exist are those whose existence may be easily disavowed be the Church.

Of course, you have been sworn to absolute secrecy. On the other hand, the Church has been very generous in the monetary department. The Cardinal has promised each of you the sum of 25 pounds if you solve "the problem." He has also hinted at there possibly being "other potential benefits" for you.

The Cardinal knows little about "the problem" as such. All he does know is that some kind of foreign operative is trying to de-

stroy the Library – right now! So you'd better hurry. The Church has already sent out an agent, or so it seems, but the Cardinal has hinted that he has met an untimely – and rather gruesome – end: death by fire. This may be another reason to employ 'unknowns' such as you. Anyway, all this background stuff is not yours to consider – your job is to hurry to the Library as quickly as possible to intercept the operative and prevent imminent destruction. And you should do this as quickly as possible – maybe you can overtake the assassin and ambush him at the Library! The Cardinal regrets that he cannot turn to the police, but given the fact that we are talking about a Library that doesn't officially exist, bringing in official forces is somewhat … awkward.

Why us?

The selection of "mission candidates" followed these criteria:

- The **British cavalry officer** was chosen due to his loyalty to the Crown and his military experience.
- The **American war correspondent** was chosen because of his comprehensive knowledge (back up by the *eidetic memory* skill) as well as his experience in crisis situations.
- The **German foreign agent** was chosen as part of some probably dubious agreement with the German Empire and his special gift (*night vision*).
- The **French colonial diplomat** was chosen because of his excellent reputation in diplomatic circles and his proven skills in interacting with others.

To get right into the action of this introductory adventure, we have significantly shortened the section with the mission assignment. You may simply read out – or paraphrase – the following boxed text and then get right down to the adventure proper.

The adventurers really don't have much to go on: The Cardinal is willing to provide them with a map of London that shows them the quickest way to the Library (see *Just Where Do We Need to Go?*). He also tells them the opening mechanism for a "secret door" in the floor of a basement room (*"In the wall directly opposite the entrance, push the thirteenth brick from above two times on the left, and the trapdoor opens."*) and provides them with a password ("Karakorum") that is to allow to groups past some "guards." He doesn't explain the nature of these guards, stating only, *"You'll find them when the time is right."*

If asked about a librarian, or any other staff stationed at the building, the Cardinal explains that there are only the guards – but these are all outside. The Library itself is devoid of personnel. Church envoys drop by occasionally to drop off new books. And whoever is allowed to use the Library is regarded as trustworthy enough to not need a 'watchdog.'

In short, there are two possible routes to get to the Library. One would be to take a cab (almost) right up to the front door and get past the guards by using the password; or to travel only partially by carriage and, at a certain point, enter the London sewers, which happen to have a direct connection to the Library – a connection the guards know nothing about (*"for reasons of security,"* the Cardinal says). Attentive characters should be aware at this point that the assassin is not really likely to take the route past the guards since he should not be in possession of the password. If asked, Cardinal Ruffo-Scilla shares this opinion. He thinks it even more unlikely that the operative knows the way through the sewers. However, the Cardinal believes it possible the assassin could find out about it – but not about the password. The Cardinal regards the notion that one single person might be able to overpower all the guards as "*quite impossible.*" Should the players not be able to follow this chain of thought, the arbiter might want to allow them *sudden inspirations* to figure it out.

Once the meeting is concluded, the Cardinal urges the adventurers to act immediately. He is convinced that the assassin is on his way to the Library as they speak. Of course, Ruffo-Scilla doesn't know where exactly the assassin is and how much of a head start he has, and thus he doesn't want to take any chances. There is more information on all this in the section *The Schedule*.

Library? Which Library?

Cardinal Ruffo-Scilla is really reluctant to give away information about the nature of the Library and the books it contains. If pressed by the adventurers, he will finally say this (which is a slightly abridged quote from *All-Consuming Fire*):

"The Library does not advertise its presence. It is a repository for books which have been, or are, or may be, banned –either by us or by some other … authority. Books so extreme and unusual that we cannot even acknowledge that we are interested in them, for fear of exciting general opinion. Books that, some say, should never have been written. But we are reasonable men. We allow selected scholars and researchers to examine these books in the hope that they may shed a little light into the darker corners of God's creation for us. Because England is the centre of the rational world, and has always seemed to us more stable than many other countries, the Library is based in London. The greater the perceived gap between the Library and the Church, the better.

One of the three unexpurgated versions of the Malleus Maleficarum *is in the Library, the other two being held in the Vatican Library. The only complete transcript of Galileo Galilei's trials resides there, along with shelves of books on the Chinese* Si Fan *society and its leader, Doctor Fu Manchu – a man whom we in the Vatican believe to be as huge a menace to civilization as you believe anarchism to be. Five lost plays of Aristophanes. The only known copy of the Basra Fragment of the lost Dictionary of the Khazars, along with the proof or Fermat's Last Theorem."*

And this is all the Cardinal is ever going to say on that subject.

Some Background

„I find myself confused. What sort of books are we talking about?"
(Dr. Watson in *All-Consuming Fire*)

First of all, the arbiter needs to know that things are not quite as the good Cardinal makes them appear. Sure, there is a Library of Saint John the Beheaded. It is even in London, for the reasons mentioned by the Cardinal. Then again, it's not in Southwark, but in Holborn. The Church has set up a 'decoy library' in Southwark, just in case someone who should not have learns of the Library. This, of course, means that the 'real' Library is not in any danger whatsoever. However, the assassin is quite real and convinced he is on the way to destroying the real thing – but he is on the same wrong track the adventurers are about to follow.

The "assassin" the adventurers are chasing is an inventor called **Riley P. Tracey.** He has managed to develop a rather early prototype of a fully functional, portable flamethrower. This in itself wouldn't be a problem – in these times, inventors construct all kinds of stuff. The problem is he was also driven insane by a quasi-religious experience. He now believes himself to be the " hand of God," whose task it is to divert the Catholic Church from its "path to perdition." Fortunately for Tracey, he was contacted by a "messenger of God" to guide him: a mysterious stranger he only knows as "Selkie." Not long ago, "Selkie" told him about the Library of Saint John the Beheaded and the dangers it presents for the well-being of the Church. Tracey doesn't know any more details, and quite frankly, he doesn't need to.

"Selkie," on the other hand, didn't know that his sources had not found out the true position of the Library, but only that of the 'backup location,' created just for this purpose (which means the information is *a little bit* easier to attain – but still difficult enough not to arouse suspicion). So Tracey set out on his mission. The Church agent sent after him by a somewhat belatedly informed Cardinal in some undignified haste blundered into Tracey in a rather unfortunate way, so that the assassin could kill him with a burst of his flamethrower. Then Tracey lay low

for a while – not because he wanted to let things simmer down (pardon the pun), but because his flamethrower had developed a slight malfunction during the fight with the Church agent, something Tracey wanted to take care of first before progressing. By the time the adventurers have their meeting with the cardinal, however, he is back to being the "hand of God" (see *The Schedule*).

Of course, the background behind the events in the adventure is not known to the player characters. They are likely to learn some of it later, but probably not all of it. However, even at this early stage they may get the feeling that something doesn't add up here. To substantiate this, the arbiter should roll a **hidden human nature** roll for one (or maybe more) while conversing with the Cardinal. This is best done by either the war correspondent or the diplomat since the other two adventurers only have access to the universal bonus of »**+3**«. The Cardinal, quite loath to divulge more than necessary and fully expecting the adventurers to question his story, is going to defend against such attempts with his own *human nature* – a formidable task for the player characters! Should one of the characters suc-

Doing Research

Should the adventurers try to gather information on the Library, they are going to find that next to nothing is publicly known or available. A successful roll against *general education* or *history* (each with a penalty of **-4**) at least makes these (somewhat vague) facts available:

A somewhat obscure theological journal, around one hundred years old, briefly mentions a library by that name, tracing it back to the Church of San Giovanni Decollato in Rome. The site it occupies was given to the Confraternity of Mercy, of Florentine origin, by Pope Innocent VIII in 1490. The Confraternity's aim was that of ministering to condemned criminals and giving them a Christian burial after execution, and it chose St John the Baptist as its patron because he is one of the patrons of Florence. The church was com-

pleted in the 1580s. Over the high altar is a painting by Giorgio Vasari, the Beheading of St John, made in 1553. The most prominent member of the Confraternity was Michelangelo (he joined in 1514). The church was renovated for the last time in 1727 and is said to be in a rather sorry state in 1882. (Which is why there is going to be another – final – renovation in 1888, but of course this won't be known in 1882.)

Given enough time (i.e., only once this short adventure is over), the same information can also be gathered via the *archival science* skill. Using this skill during the adventure simply takes too much time. The arbiter may of course decide to bring the war correspondent's *eidetic memory* into play here, allowing a roll to see whether he stumbled over the information at a prior time and can recall it now.

What Is the Cardinal Hiding?

Of course, he hides the fact that it is not the real Library that's at stake. Why does he do this? Well, of course he wants to test the adventurers' mettle to find out whether they might make useful agents for later missions – meaning further adventures, of course! Arbiters may use this at their discretion to begin an ongoing campaign with these characters.

The nature of "Selkie" has been left deliberately vague. He (?) could become on ongoing antagonist for the player characters. What is it with his (?) grudge against the Church anyway? The arbiter is free to use "Selkie" at her discretion in later adventures.
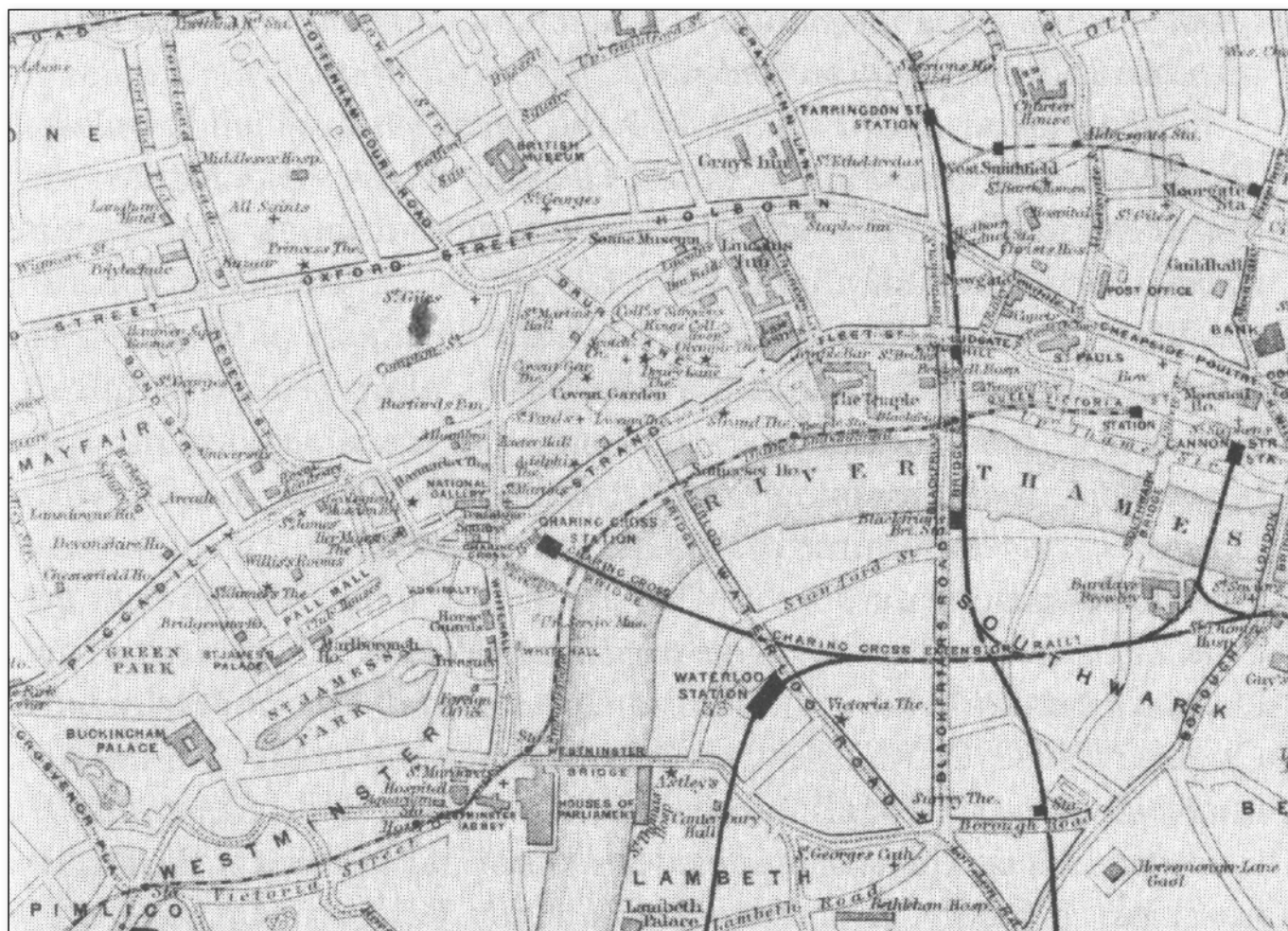
ceed, he notices that the Cardinal, while being basically truthful, does indeed withhold background information. And that he knows more than he is letting on – a lot more …

clock. Thus, we have provided a rather detailed timetable of what is likely to happen when. And yet: the arbiter should see all of this as a set of guidelines rather than something set in stone. It is no good if the adventurers basically do everything right, draw the right conclusions etc., but then get a little bit delayed and find a Library in flames. On the other hand,

Cardinal Ruffo-Scilla

Cardinal Ruffo-Scilla is around 50 years old. He is tall and thin. He wears a long black robe with a scarlet scarf draped around his shoulders, a scarlet sash around his waist, and a scarlet skullcap half-covers what sparse hair he has left. His face seems to be made up of vertical lines. He speaks in a calm, detached voice devoid of emotions.

The Schedule

Time is of the essence in this adventure, since the player characters are literally on a ticking

Kardinal Ruffo-Scilla

Str	Dex	Agi	Con	Int	Tal	Wil	Com	Cha	App
56	64	59	77	96	79	92	99	81	55

HP	SP	MV	GoF	Fame					
13	31	24	11	21/6					

Defence+13, evasion+13

Art appreciation+15, eidetic memory+4, etiquette+12, fast talk+14, general education+16, history+16, human nature+17, interogation+15, law+17, cccultism+16

Classical Hebrew+0/+18, English+18/+18, French+20/+20, German+14/+14, Italian+20/+20, Koine Greek+0/+18, Latin+18/+18

if they tarry too much, they shouldn't be surprised if Tracey was faster …

The adventure begins at **4 p.m.** when the meeting with the Cardinal starts. At this time, the assassin is already on his way across South London. He knows the location of the Library, but has (yet) no idea that he may also get there via the sewers. Tracey reaches Theed Street in a hansom at around 4:30; this is probably the time the meeting with the Cardinal is winding down, give or take a few minutes. Finding a cab shouldn't take longer than a few minutes. Traffic in London at this time of the day is rather heavy, so the carriage is going to need some **15 minutes** until the corner of Waterloo Street and Stamford Street. From there, it's an additional five minutes to Theed Street.

At around this time, Tracey finds out he cannot get past the guards and is forced to think about alternatives. His approach is the reverse of that taken by the player characters: he knows where he wants to go, but doesn't know how. Given London's extensive network of underground tunnels, however, he thinks it fairly likely that he should be able to get close enough underground to at least bypass the guards – with God on his side (and his trusty *direction sense* skill) , not a problem at all! The arbiter may either have him make *searching* rolls every five minutes, or simply decide that he finds an appropriate manhole after **15 minutes.**

For ease of calculation, let's say he discovers such an entry point at around **5 p.m.** He now needs to traverse some 60 metres of sewers to finally arrive in the basement of the house holding the Library. Opening the manhole cover, climbing down, travelling the sewers, and climbing out again takes him 15 minutes – don't forget he is carrying this heavy flamethrower! After a short break to regain his breath, he starts looking for the secret door. He finds and opens it within minutes. Now all he needs to do is get down the staircase, set up his flamethrower, and set fire to the Library – let's say, another **15 minutes.**

To cut a long story short: In all likelihood, the Library is going to be at flames at around **5:45 p.m.** This gives the players around **1 hour and 45 minutes** to fulfil their mission. All subsequent sections of the adventure contain notes on how much time passes. Ideally, the adventurers should arrive directly after Tracey, so that he will have already opened the trapdoor and set up his flamethrower and is just about to start burning down the house.

The table below summarizes the most likely sequences of events, depending on player actions and route taken.

Just Where Do We Need to Go?

"An unexpected location for a library. I would have expected something isolated and heavily guarded."
(Dr. Watson to Sherlock Holmes in *All-Consuming Fire*)

The meeting with the Cardinal takes place in a small, non-descript house in Maiden Lane, near the Strand, north of the Thames and close to Covent Garden. The Library is on the other side of the Thames. The fastest way across the river is to take a cab and travel via Waterloo Bridge. On the other side, the characters best follow Waterloo Street until it meets Stamford Street. From here, they have two options: either drive left into Stamford Street for about 100 metres until they turn right into Cornwall Road and then left into Theed Street. Or they switch to the sewer route at the corner Waterloo Street/Stamford Street, leading them directly to the Library. Cardinal Ruffo-Scilla can provide simplified maps for both routes, including a (somewhat schematic and surely far from complete) map of the sewer system.

In any case, the Cardinal makes it very clear that **time is of the essence** – the adventurers do **not** have time for further research, procuring equipment, etc. In case the adventurers, possibly feeling 'overdressed' to enter a working-class district, want to **disguise** themselves, the Cardinal can provide them with suitable clothing. This is going to take **10 minutes,** though. All characters except the German foreign agent only have the universal bonus of »**+5**«.

London by Cab

Traffic within London is done by horse carriage. There's the two-wheeled hansom and the four-wheeled clarence. There are over 14,000 such cabs in London alone. Hiring

Time	Riley P. Tracey	Player Characters
4 p.m.	on his way in South London	meeting begins
4:30 p.m.	arrives at Theed Street	meeting ends
4:45 p.m.	retreats from guards	travel by cab
4:50 p.m.	searches for sewer entry	arrive at corner Waterloo Street/Stamford Street
4:55 p.m.	searches for sewer entry	incident at Cornwall Road (if by cab)
5:00 p.m.	searches for sewer entry	possibly enter sewers (corner Waterloo Street/Stamford Street)
5:05 p.m.	enters sewers	travel by cab/traversing sewers
5:10 p.m.	traverses sewers	arrive at Theed Street (quick resolution of demonstration)/sewers
5:20 p.m.	exits sewers	'conversation' with guards ends/sewers
5:30 p.m.	finds secret door	arrive in basement (both forms of travel)
5:45 p.m.	Library burns	

Towards the close of the nineteenth century, **London** (4,770,000 inhabitants) is the largest and most important city in Europe, not least because of its port. As the centre of government of a massive Empire, London continues to grow at a phenomenal rate: in geographical size, in the numbers of people it contains, and in its economic prosperity. But for all its wealth and brightly lit palaces, there remain districts of extreme poverty and squalor. The city is currently undergoing a depopulation of its urban centre, which is turning into a business area dominated by commercial premises of five or six floors. In 1880, the city already has a count of annually 80,000 arrests and 5,000 missing people.

The currency is the British pound. It has these denominations: 4 farthings = 1 penny, 12 pence = 1 shilling, 2 shillings = 1 florin, 5 shillings = 1 crown, 20 shillings = 1 pound or 1 sovereign; 21 shillings = 1 guinea (gold).

Impressions of a London Cab Drive

"It was a September evening and not yet seven o'clock, but the day had been a dreary one, and a dense drizzly fog lay low upon the great city. Mud-coloured clouds drooped sadly over the muddy streets. Down the Strand the lamps were but misty splotches of diffused light which threw a feeble circular glimmer upon the slimy pavement. The yellow glare from the shop-windows streamed out into the steamy, vaporous air and threw a murky, shifting radiance across the crowded thoroughfare. There was, to my mind, something eerie and ghostlike in the endless procession of faces which flitted across these narrow bars of light–sad faces and glad, haggard and merry. Like all humankind, they flitted from the gloom into the light and so back into the gloom once more."
*(*from *The Sign of Four* by Arthur Conan Doyle*)*

a cab costs 1 shilling for the first two miles; each additional mile, and each additional passenger, raise the fare by 6 pence, additional luggage is 2 pence apiece. For 6 to 8 pence, the cabbie will wait for 15 minutes.
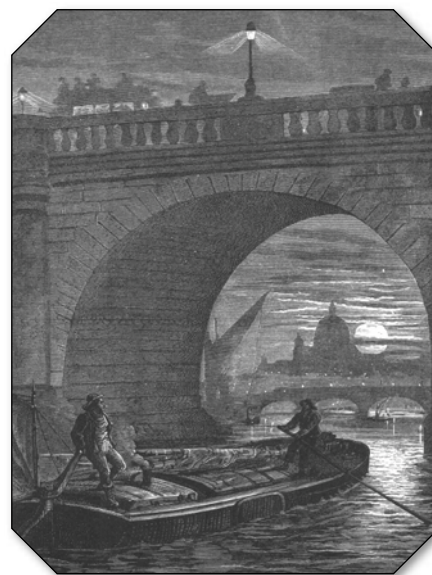
Should the adventurers insist on driving the carriage themselves (the British cavalry officer has the *driving* skill), the Cardinal can get them their own cab within **10 minutes.** The time lost in waiting for the vehicle may be made up by the cavalry officer succeeding in two *driving* rolls. These simulate how well he is able to handle London traffic.

It is less then a mile from Maiden Lane to Theed Street, so the fare is 1 shilling for the first passenger plus 6 pence each for the other three, provided they take a clarence. The price is the same if the adventurers later take the way through the sewers, since most of the journey (including crossing the Thames) comes before that. Since the game does not have a monetary system dealing with small change, let us assume they can either pay for this easily, or the can gets paid by one of the Cardinal's men.

There's only one set encounter during the cab drive and even that does not happen until Cornwall Road. Adventurers who only travel up to the corner Waterloo Street/Stamford Street and continue via the sewers from there are not going to have this encounter. For such groups, the action continues in the *Beneath London* section.

"The longest and possibly most important bridge in all of London from an architectural point of view is Waterloo Bridge: Canova insisted one had to travel from Rome to London just to see it. The granite structure spans the 422-m-wide river gracefully in nine low arches; Sir John Rennie, who, aided by his sons, would go on to build London Bridge, constructed it in 1817 at the expense of 20 million marks. It was originally called 'Strand Bridge,' since it connected that pulsating vein of old London to the main streets of the quarters south of the Thames. However, Wellington's victory over Napoleon had so strongly enthused the English that, in the same way that people only wore Wellington boots and Waterloo hats, or preferred Wellington pubs and Waterloo carriages to all others, the new bridge, too, had to be called 'Wellington Bridge' – especially since it was opened on the anniversary of that memorable battle (18 June 1817) in the presence of the Field Marshal-Duke himself."
(from *Alt-England. Eine Studienreise durch London und die Grafschaften zwischen Kanal und Piktenwall* by Adolf Brennecke, 1887)

The street ahead of you is blocked by a crowd of people made up almost exclusively of women. They are waving banners and posters, singing religious songs, some are even playing instruments. The driver brings the horses to a standstill and curses vehemently. "Can't do nuffink 'ere, guv'nor. Curse 'em teetotallers!"

And there's a well dressed woman already, wearing a blue dress with a blue bonnet, upper middle class by the looks of it. "My dear sirs [and madams]," she calls out, "would you like

to contribute something to our cause? So that no more people give in to the Prince of Darkness!"

The woman is really persistent and doesn't relent until she has her donation. In the end, any amount will suit her, as long as she has the feeling she's got her point across. Larger amounts, of course, please her especially. However, even if the adventurers make a donation immediately, their journey will be somewhat delayed. Obviously, the crowd has to honour the noble donator by singing an appropriate religious song. And he is awarded a green ribbon amidst much pomp and circumstance. Even in the best of cases, this is going to cost the characters **10 minutes,** possibly more.

Should the adventurers be reluctant to pay, or should they insist on being in a hurry, this is not going to help them at all. The resolute woman will then launch into a somewhat longish speech on the evils of careless haste and the dangers resulting to the immortal souls of the poor travellers because of this. What *really* won't work is a lame story like, "We need to save a secret Library of the Church from destruction!" No sane person is ever going to believe *such* nonsense.

It is much more effective to roll with the spirit of things, answering something like: "But we're already on our way in the service of the Lord!" This is even better when backed up with appropriate citations from the Bible. To achieve success here, one of the adventurers needs to beat the woman in a *fast talk* contest. This means that the character's *fast talk* roll needs to be higher than that of the woman (she has *fast talk+9*). The war correspondent and the colonial diplomat are most likely to meet this challenge; *general education* may be used as a **reference skill** (to find the right Bible quotes). One such contested roll stand for a debate of around 5 minutes, meaning the adventurers are going to lose about **10 minutes** with this approach, too. Failed rolls (or trying ideas that simply *can't* work) increase the time lost here accordingly.

Then again, the cavalry officer may try to exert his authority as an officer of the Empire and order the crowd in the name of Queen

and country to clear a path. The arbiter can simulate this by having the player roll the character's **charisma/10** (i.e., a d20 roll at **+8**) in a skill contest against the woman's *fast talk+9* (counting her as the leader of the crowd, which isn't too far off). The arbiter may allow for bonuses due to good roleplaying or appropriately effective martial conduct (such as dramatically brandishing his sabre) – but no more than **+2** in total.

Once the cab has reached Theed Street, the adventure continues in the next section, *Guardians of the Secret Library*.

Guardians of the Secret Library

"The look-outs, Watson. Five of them. You hadn't noticed?"
(Sherlock Holmes in *All-Consuming Fire*)

However, the street is not as deserted as it may seem at first glance. Some of the 'empty' houses hold the **guardians** of the secret (ersatz) Library – **five** per side of the street are on duty at any time. Successful rolls against *searching* or *sight* (the latter at **-2**) reveal faces behind the stained windows – faces that attentively study the newcomers.

> The address at Theed Street is an unremarkable, run-down house with two floors. It seems to be deserted: the windows on the upper floor have been boarded; no smoke is coming from the chimneys; you can't see any light from behind the windows on the lower floor. Aside from some poorly-clad passers-by hurrying along without looking at you, there is nothing that catches your eye. The houses in the vicinity seem to be deserted, too. What desolate place have you got yourself into here?

As long as the adventurers are simply standing in the street, doing nothing but looking around, nothing is going to happen. However, once they start moving towards the Library and get within **5 metres** of the house, things start to heat up:

> Suddenly, doors open to the right and the left of you and several poorly dressed men hasten into the street. All in all, there are five of them per side of the street, for a total of ten. They do not look friendly at all and, worse yet, all of them are brandishing metal bars or wooden clubs. With well-trained movements, they take position to the right and left of you, enclosing you in a wedge that closes in front of you, right where the library is. At least they have left you a way out.
>
> A large, burly man with a holey shirt striped in white and blue, standing at the point of the wedge, takes one step in your direction, hits the bar he is wielding in his left hand once into the palm of his right one, spits in front of you, and finally says something in a language that may or may not have been English. Assuming it was English, it probably meant something like, "Well? Got some head-bashin' goin' here?" Or somesuch. The man to the right of him, who is wearing an old and battered suit, gives first him and then you a disdainful look, whirls his heavy wooden club once around his head, and also takes a step forward. His wide grin reveals that he has lost most of his teeth.

Before we go on with the action, let's see what observant player characters may find out by looking at the men. Anyone able to speak English recognises the man's accent as Cockney on a successful roll; a successful *linguistics* roll achieves the same result, regardless of languages learnt. *Human nature* reveals that the two groups don't seem to get on with one another too well. It is in their stances, and in the way they not only watch the adventurers closely, but also the members of the respective other group. And despite all their non-uniformity as regards clothes and equipment, successful *searching* or *sight* rolls show that there is actually one uniting element per group: the men to the left of the characters all wear an amulet shaped like s small wooden horse's head around their necks, while the men to the right all have a green strand in their hair.

Now What Is This All About?

Shall we say: the Church is being clever. It has given the task of guarding this Library to two rival street gangs. They eye one another with suspicion, guaranteeing safety from bribery since they effectively control one another. They know they are supposed to guard some secret library, but have no idea for whom. Also, they couldn't care less as long as they get to do their thing and are well paid on a regular basis.

Should the player characters fail to show any reaction, the guards start to play their favourite game: bullying their victims until they can provoke a brawl – which would probably not end too well for the numerically inferior adventurers.

But as rough as the gang members may act, there is one easy way to pacify them: once the adventurers legitimise their access by uttering the password "Karakorum," the clubs and bars disappear and the men are getting quite friendly (for street gang members, that is). They even offer some "pig's ear and River Ouse" (Cockney rhyming slang for beer and booze), but maybe touching homebrewed liquor in such parts of the city is not the best of ideas.

When asked about whether someone might have already tried to get to the Library today, the men start to laugh and holler and several of them are suddenly talking at the same time. It takes a successful roll against a character's *English* skill to sort out the various bits of information bandied about. In the end, the following picture should emerge (see also *The Schedule*):

- Indeed, a funny man has just tried that.
- "Just" means: about a half-hour ago.
- The man had a mad look about him and spouted rubbish about "God's wrath" and stuff.
- He was tall about like this [points to the adventurer being closest to 1.7 metres in height].
- The man moved slowly, as if carrying something heavy. Looked like there was something beneath his coat.
- Coat? Sure! Long, black coat. Told ya. And boots. I guess.
- The man was a hunchback, oh yes he was. Could clearly see that even despite the coat. And what a hump!
- And wasn't he carrying a lantern, too?
- Didn't know the password, though. Tough luck.
- Finally figured out he couldn't get through. Then he left. But not after he had parted with some money. All of it, actually. Otherwise, he'd have crawled. Wasn't much, though.

Once they have heard the password, the guards grant the adventurers access to the Library at will. To their surprise, the characters notice that the door they might have thought was leading into the house holding Library has been barred from within – it's not an entrance at all! Hence,

should the player characters try to outrun the guards when they sweep into the street to get into the building, the scene will play out much as described above, except that the guards will now form a semi-circle, with the adventurers backed against the wall of the house.

To enter the Library, the characters need to walk around the house (a detour of a few minutes since the houses are fairly close together around here) and then enter via an old ale delivery flap. This takes the characters into an abandoned cellar from where a musty corridor leads into an equally musty basement room. Two of the guards accompany the adventurers to the final basement entrance, then they turn back. All of this takes around **10 minutes:** the guards know the way by

Gang Members

Str	Dex	Agi	Con	Int	Tal	Wil	Com	Cha	App
80	55	70	70	55	40	65	40	50	55

HP	SP	MV							
15	20	24							

Club+8 (1d6+1)

defence+13, evasion+13

HALLWAY TO "HELL".

THEED STREET

0 2 4M

1 SECRET DOOR MECHANISM
2 HIDDEN TRAPDOOR
3 MANHOLE COVER

heart, so they see no reason to light a lantern or a similarly silly light source. A successful roll against *night vision* might at least help to make out some of the journey in the dark.

When the adventurers arrive at the basement, it is time for *Hallway to Hell*.

Beneath London

"There's hundreds and hundreds of miles of it under London. We have teams of flushers working, but it takes them a while to get round. Unless we gets a problem it might be more than a year before we come past somewhere."

(from *Thrones, Denominations* by Dorothy L. Sayers and Jill Paton Walsh)

As the adventurers know where to look, they will be able to find the manhole closest to the corner of Waterloo Street and Stamford Street easily. Lifting the cover requires a TR:strength. Of course, there are quite a few people in the street, some of which may wonder why a group of persons probably not even closely resembling a flusher crew would want to enter the sewers. They either need to be told a suitable story, or have to be otherwise distracted. If all else fails, three of the adventurers might simply form a small 'ring' around the fourth one, who is lifting the cover.

This is a good place for the arbiter to convey some London street atmosphere, especially if the adventurers have been fairly fast so far and need to be slowed down a bit. The temperance procession from *Just Where Do We Need to Go?* might have marched on; a policeman might get suspicious due to the player characters trying to enter the sewers; or a group of passers-by could cluster around the adventurers to ask them to search for lost persons or items in the sewers (or maybe hunt down the infamous giant rats that are supposed to dwell within). In one of the playtest ses-

sions, the cavalry officer was accosted by some street urchins, who he then used as the diversion to get into the sewers …Whatever the arbiter chooses should cost the player characters some time, but not really endanger their mission.

Finally, the player characters are looking down a dark hole that exudes the stench of decay and mustiness (which, on the other hand, should not bother them as much as one might think, since these were less … hygienic times). Rusty iron rungs, set into the wall in more or less regular spacing, lead down into the darkness. It is a **4-metre-climb** down to the bottom of the sewer, right down into a sewage drain. Climbing down requires an **AR+4:climbing;** characters failing this roll slide past the rungs, along the wall, and take **1d6+2 points of falling damage** when they hit the ground. This is severe damage unless they succeed in a **TR:Agi** – then they only lose SP.

The arbiter may read out this passage to convey some sewer atmosphere:

What little light falls through the opening is barely enough to let you make out your surroundings. Do other dangers lurk down here in the sewers besides the dampness and the smell? Possibly. You trudge through brackish water that reaches up to your ankles. The sewers are dark, warm, and damp. From everywhere, you hear the dripping of water, much louder than you are used to. There are other sounds, too. Some resemble the howling of the wind, some sound like creatures running through the water, others are simply eerie and alien. In places, the walls are glistening with a wet sheen, as if they were … overgrown with something, or as if someone had dumped some greasy, slimy substance down the walls. In other places, algae have completely covered the tunnel walls. And the smell is getting worse.
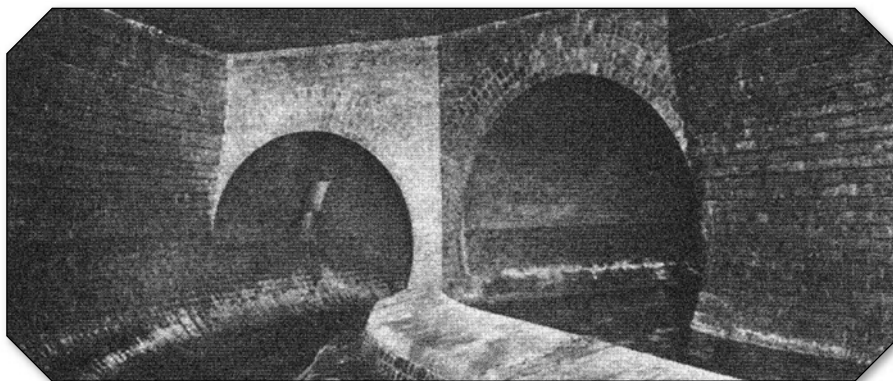
Ratten

HP	AP	Agi	Str	Int	MV
1d3	1d3	70	05	50	18

Bite+6 (1d6-3)

defence+10, evasion+12

Opponents attack rats at -2.

It is dark in the sewers and so the adventurers need to move carefully. Even without a light source, they should be able to find their way quite effectively, due to the German foreign agent's *night vision*. The Library's basement reception room is only some **250 metres** away; in unknown and potentially dangerous environments such as this, player characters may cover around 100 metres in a span of 10 minutes, or 10 metres per minute. This includes inspecting the ground before stepping, inspecting walls and ceiling, listening ahead, checking for pockets of gas, and trying to move silently. This means that the journey through the sewers, including getting in and out again, should take around **30 minutes,** give or take a few. Actually, all movement rules aside, the trip should take about as long as is necessary for the player characters to reach the Library just a few minutes after the assassin.

Should the adventurers want to throw caution in the wind and hasten forward, the arbiter could try and thwart them make *body control* rolls (universally at »**+5**«) to avoid stumbling or running into things, losing **1d6-1 SP** whenever they fail a roll. A pocket of gas might call for a slight detour, something … strange in the water could catch their attention, etc.

Of course, in true pulp fashion, no sewer trip could ever be complete without an encounter with **rats.** To begin with, the arbiter rolls a **hidden AR:sight** for each adventurer(at **+4** for the character with *night vision*). Characters succeeding in their roll manage to see those pairs of red eyes in time … those *many* pairs of red eyes … If at least one character succeeds in this roll, the fight against the furry rodents is conducted normally – otherwise, the rats have achieved **surprise.** Using **two rats per adventurer** works best in this encounter. These rats should not bear any diseases – this is an encounter in an introductory adventure meant to familiarise the players with the combat system, not to infect them with a deadly disease!

Once the player characters have arrived at the rungs leading up into the basement room, the arbiter should make a **hidden** *searching* roll for every adventurer (with the exception of the American war correspondent, these rolls are at universal »**+3**«) – unless the player think of looking around here themselves, of course. At least one successful roll means that the PCs discover a scrap or rather heavy, dark cloth hanging from a rusty nail – the adventurers can't know that yet, but the assassin's coat got caught here when he was climbing up!

In the end, another **AR+4:climbing** gets the adventurers up into the basement room. They do not need to push the manhole cover away this time – somebody has already done this. Somebody was faster than the player characters!

Whatever may have happened during the trip through the sewers – one thing is for certain: the adventurers' clothes will be ruined …

Hallway to Hell

"During the course of the novel, the aptly named Krook is found burned to death in his room, supposedly as a celestial judgement on his sins."
(Dr. Watson in *All-Consuming Fire*)

Ideally, the adventurers arrive in the basement room just a few minutes after the assassin. This means he should have had time already to find and open the secret door, but not time enough the set the Library on fire. The adventure works best with this kind of climax.

> You are standing in a dark room that doesn't seem too large. According to the Cardinal's briefing, there should be a well-hidden secret door somewhere in the floor. You already know how to open it. Where do you want to look first?

It is not possible to determine the exact dimensions of the room in the dark. The German foreign agent, however, is able to give 8 metres by 5 metres as some kind of approximation with a successful **AR:night vision.** The secret door is actually rather easy to find since Tracey only opened it a few minutes ago and didn't close it again properly – not because he believed someone was on his trail, but because he doesn't intend to die in the conflagration he is about to unleash, instead opting for a quick way out. Some light coming from somewhere beneath the partially open trapdoor allows the player characters to make out its position.

> In case the adventurers got in via the secret corridor from Theed Street, they also see a manhole cover lying on the ground, next to a hole leading down – as if (judging from the smell …) someone had got in (or out) via the sewers!

At this time, the assassin is busy setting up his flamethrower in the room just below the trapdoor, to finish his work of destruction; he has left his oil lamp right next to the bottom of the stairs. And yet, he is still alert and thus receives rolls against *sight* or *hearing* whenever the adventurer in the room above him make loud noises or do other easily noticeable things (like using a light source). Should Tracey notice something, he continues to work as quickly as possible, but moves his flamethrower around in such a way that he can easily point it at the staircase. The stairs wind down for 4 metres, but are so narrow that you cannot see the bottom from above.

But let's return to our adventurers now …

> The secret door is a lot easier to find than you had imagined: it is a trapdoor in the floor – and it stands somewhat apart! Weak light shines through the opening, allowing you to trace the trap door. It looks like the assassin is already here! What do you want to do?

To repeat: Whatever the adventurers intend to do now, they should try to do it as silently as possible (roll for *sudden insights* if necessary) – loose talk is noose talk! This means that the arbiter should roll for each and every action of the players to figure out just how silent they are. This means *sneaking* rolls at **+2,** since there is some distance (and a stone floor) between the two parties. Unfortunately, **none** of the pre-generated characters knows how to sneak (by design). So none of them can do better than universal »**+3«.** This means that the assassin is likely to notice the adventurers sooner or later – and can bring his flamethrower to bear … climax time!

In the end, the finale should begin something like described in the example of play

given above: the assassin has his flamethrower primed and is waiting for his pursuers to come down the stairs …

> A narrow, dusty staircase is winding down into the dark. You can't really say just how deep. What might be lying in wait for you there …?

Successful rolls against *night vision* or *evidence analysis* allow the player characters to make out footprints in the dust, as well as the occasional sweeping mark of a long coat plus some drops of a dark, viscous liquid – oil? An **AR:hearing** results in the player noticing clicking sounds, the low banging of metal on stone, something that sounds like a pump … but that's as far as it goes.

If the assassin gets to use the flamethrower, the result is quite spectacular:

> As you are standing there in the darkness, waiting tensely, you suddenly hear some kind of hissing sound from below, but before you can even react, a beam of searing-hot fire explodes in your direction! Just a second later, darkness descends upon you as a pitch-black, stinking cloud of smoke envelops you.

All player characters in a **5-metre-radius** around the stairs are potential targets of the attack (**AR:flamethrower+8**). Hit targets defend with an **OR:evasion.** Should the OR fail (i.e., Tracey achieves a major advantage), the target is engulfed by flames and takes **2d6 points of severe damage.** Clothing (and other flammable items at the arbiter's discretion) will be ruined. Hit targets that make their OR:evasion manage to jump or dodge out of harm's way and only lose **1d6 SP.**

The good news is that the flamethrower is now done for the time being. There is still enough flammable oil for a second attack, but Tracey will need to re-set the trigger device (see *The Flamethrower,* below) and this is going to take him **5 minutes.** During this time, the assassin tries to stall his pursuers by bluffing if need

be (see below). The fact that the thick, black smoke is going to cover the staircase in **almost impenetrable darkness** for the next **5 minutes** is greatly going to help him in this regard – whatever the player characters do in this time, it is at **-4** if it involves seeing or line of sight.

The players may not know it, but at this time, their best option is to press on, down the stairs, and simply charge the assassin. He is going to defend himself with his dagger, but he is no match for a determined and well-trained enemy. Unless the adventurers really make a blunder here, they should be able to overpower Tracey easily. This, however, may not be readily apparent after that nasty fire attack. You may want to have the characters make *tactics* rolls to help them determine that a weapon of this type, unheard of as it may be, would surely be experimental and might need some time to reset.

In the unlikely event that the adventurers do **nothing at all,** Tracey is going to wait for **10 minutes,** his flamethrower primed. Then he is at his wit's end. He does indeed want to fulfil God's wish to burn down this "Library of Heresy," but since God messenger hasn't said anything to the contrary, he would like to survive the deed, too. He knows that he cannot use his flamethrower again once the books are burning – he doesn't have the time to re-set the trigger device and he cannot carry the flamethrower with him and still hope to outrun pursuers. He also knows he is not a trained fighter and will not be able to stand against a group of determined attackers. And thus he chooses … bluff and blackmail.

Should Tracey be forced to bluff (either because he has fired his flamethrower once already, or because the adventurers do nothing), he pretends to be "God's messenger" himself, using a suitably deep voice: *"Who dares disturb me in my holy task, set upon me by the will of God?"* If the situation warrants it, he immediately adds: *"Leave this place now, or feel the wrath of the fire of God!"* Should the players point out to him that they know he intends to burn the Library anyway, he will be thrown off track for a moment of silence, but after a few seconds he will have understood the basic hopelessness of his situation: his pursuers are going to best him either way. And this being the

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Got you!

Everything we have described here so far assumes that the adventurers arrive at the scene of the final showdown a few minutes **after** the assassin, just in time to have a thrilling showdown and narrowly avoid the burning of the Library. This is the ideal and most dramatic end of the adventure. But what happens if they arrive early?

In this case, they can search for the secret door at their leisure – which is best done by walking up to the indicated section of the wall, using the hidden mechanism, and then simply waiting where the door will open. Depending on how far ahead they are, they even might have the time to take a brief look at the contents of the Library (see the box *The Books in the Library*, below). Or they may set up an ambush in the basement room. They could try to hide and charge the assassin when he works his way out of the manhole (he is carrying 30 kg of weight, after all, so rushing him then would basically be an auto-success). They may also simply block the manhole and thus deny the man entry. Which of course only allows him to flee, so this might not be all too clever.

In any case, the thrill and suspense of the adventure ending will be somewhat limited if the player characters are allowed to wait for the assassin. In a direct fight, he is no match for someone like the British cavalry officer. Of course, the players get their full reward even if they end the adventure the 'easy' way – what does the Cardinal care?

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case, he might as well die after fulfilling his task – burning down this Library!

From this crucial moment onwards, Tracey will put all his energy into training the flamethrower on the Library. This is going to take him another **3 minutes.** Then he lets out a dramatic *"And now all behold the will of God!"* before he uses the flamethrower against the stacks of books. At this point, the Library is truly lost since the flames are going to spread rapidly in such a small room with so many dry books.

In any case, Tracey then flees up the stairs – probably straight into the arms of the player characters. He is still hoping against all hope to escape after all, break through the enemy's lines in a flurry of speed and lose them in the sewers. Or maybe into the street – there's supposed to be another entry/exit, right? The one he couldn't get to? He can't imagine the guards stopping him when he's trying to run *away*. After all, he is not a trained fighter and his dagger is little more than a last-ditch effort. And quite frankly, Tracey finds the idea of dying a martyr for his faith not too appealing.

Should he indeed manage to escape, he chooses the sewers in the end, hoping to lose the player characters in the darkness down there. Whether he actually manages this is first up to the actions of the adventurers and then to the whim of the arbiter. The question is whether the player characters will simply flee from the burning Library (which is beyond saving once it burns) or still have the cool to try and catch the perpetrator.

The Assassin

Riley P. Tracey regards himself as the Hand of God, armed with Holy Fire to finally put an end to the calumnious machinations of the Catholic Church and its heretic Library for all Eternity. Tracey is around 1.7 metres tall and a bit overweight. His eyes are blue, his tousled hair a dark brown. He has learnt about the Library and its position from someone he only knows as "Selkie." "Selkie" was a rather nondescript man of around 1.8 metres in height who spoke 'posh' (i.e., upper-class) British English. He never showed his face.

Before Tracey saw God's light, he was a marginally successful inventor who had resolved to construct the first-ever fully functional portable **flamethrower.** He knew all about the

Riley P. Tracey

Str	Dex	Agi	Con	Int	Tal	Wil	Com	Cha	App
45	76	80	85	91	82	52	41	74	64

HP	SAP	MV	Fame
16	22	26	11/8

Dagger+6 (1d6), flamethrower+8 (2d6 HP and SP / 1 SP in a 2-metre radius)

defence+12, evasion+12+12, evasion+12

Chemistry+15, direction sense+12, engineering+9, general education+12, maintenance+15, occultism+8, sleight-of-hand+9, throwing+9

English+18/+18

Equipment: *sturdy clothing, gloves, boots, dark coat, dagger, flamethrower, tool set, two spare trigger devices, purse (empty after encounter with guardians)*

earlier attempts (especially the Chinese ones), all of which were bound to fail because the device was too large, and too heavy, to be carried by one person. Also, these early attempts could spill their deadly loads once and then needed to be recharged in a lengthy procedure. However, Tracey firmly believed that, given the rapid advances made by the material sciences in the second half of the nineteenth century, a breakthrough must be possible! It was, and thus Riley P. Tracey created the first-ever (at least as far as the world of ADVENTURE: 1880 is concerned) portable multi-use flamethrower (see *The Flamethrower*, below).

Next to nothing of Tracey's former technical genius has survived his 'conversion.' If captured, he has little more to say than ramblings about his holy mission – and some mysterious figure called "Selkie" …

The Flamethrower

All things considered, flamethrowers are actually fairly ancient weapons. As early as 424 BC, the Greek historian Thukydides reports the use of such a weapon in the battle of Delium, where the Athenians were defeated by the Boeotians. The Boeotians had built a (stationary and rather large) weapon out of a forge, a bellows, and a long iron-shod tube to torch the wooden battlements of the Athenians from a safe distance. Late Antiquity sees the emergence of 'liquid fire' as used by the Byzantians. This would later become known as Greek Fire

The first step toward a real flamethrower is taken by the Chinese: they invent a piston flamethrower with a siphon projector-pump that is used , in 919 AD, to spread 'fierce fire oil' that can not be doused with water. The new construction principle allows the pumping of the flaming liquid from one chamber and the ejection via the other, both in the same cylinder, in an upstroke motion. In the downstroke motion, the two chambers switch functions via a system of valves: the full chamber is emptied while the other pumps in the liquid again. It is this principle that allows for a continuous stream of fire. However, flamethrowers are regarded as too bulky and unwieldy and finally vanish in the shadow of the emerging firearms.

In the real world, the development of the first 'modern' flamethrower is credited to the German engineer (and fireman) Richard Fiedler. He hands his first testing samples over to the German army in 1901. We have modelled Riley P. Tracey's experimental design on one of Fiedler's early models and just brought it a bit 'backward' in time. It is a portable device, consisting of a vertical single cylinder 1.2 metres long and weighing 30 kilograms, horizontally divided in two parts, with pressurized gas in the lower section and flammable oil in the upper section. When a lever is depressed, the propellant gas forces the flammable oil into and through a rubber tube and over a simple igniting wick device in a steel nozzle. The weapon then projects a jet of fire accompanied by enormous clouds of black smoke over a range of up to 10 metres. Given the nature of the igniting device, this flamethrower is basically a single-shot weapon. Using its oil charge several times in shorter bursts is theoretically possible but rather time-consuming, since a new igniter section has to be attached each time.

Flamethrower (damage 2d6 HP und SP / 1d6 SP on a successful OR:evasion)
2 m   5 m   10 m
Requirements: Agi 31, *maintenance* skill; starting value+5
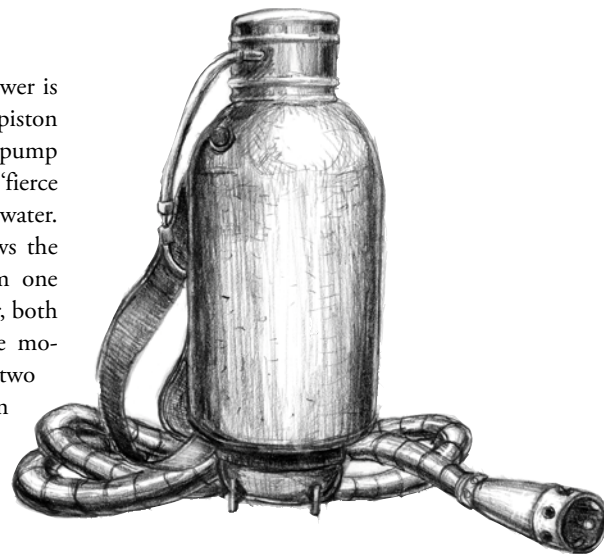
An 1880-style flamethrower is a highly experimental and unreliable weapon that can only be created by the most gifted of inventors. The materials and technology are all there, but nobody would really think of doing it since firearms are regarded as much safer and more effective. Any flamethrower found in an adventure is a unique piece; no two will look alike. Flamethrowers are prone

to accidents, even more so than machine-guns: rolls of **1 through 4** on the AR:attack cause the device to jam. This can be repaired by a successful AR:maintenance. Should the *maintenance* roll fail critically, the jammed flamethrower explodes for **4d6 points of severe damage.**

Winding Down

*"His Holiness would like to extend his gratitude."* (Cardinal Ruffo-Scilla in *All-Consuming Fire*)

Assuming the adventurers have prevented the burning of the Library, Cardinal Ruffo-Scilla arranges the payment of the promised reward. He also tells them in a rather formal and wordy letter that they can be certain of the "eternal benevolence of the Church of Rome." This might serve as a hook for further adventures, at the arbiter's discretion.

Riley P. Tracey, if he can be captured alive, will not be able to shed too much light on things (as per his description above). He appears to have been a religiously motivated loner. In the end, he is going to be classified as "insane" and taken out of public circulation, as the Cardinal would say. If there is anything behind his babbling about "Selkie," the details are up the to arbiter.

It is quite possible that the adventurers are now in the possession of a fully functional (if somewhat tricky) flamethrower. Granted, this is about twenty years before the re-emergence of these devices, but this is not going to have a dramatic effect on the fictitious history of our game world. The item is unique, it doesn't always work properly, it can't be reproduced easily, let alone mass-produced. It took the real-world Fiedler over a decade to get his prototype into production – and do we *really* know that his was the first? But who knows? Maybe it is this find that inspires some inventor (maybe a player-character?) to do more research into flamethrowers, possibly even helping Fiedler along on the way?

It is quite possible that the adventurers have gained some information about the books stored in this Library at the beginning of the adventurer. Naturally, they might want to take a look. And they will be in for a surprise.
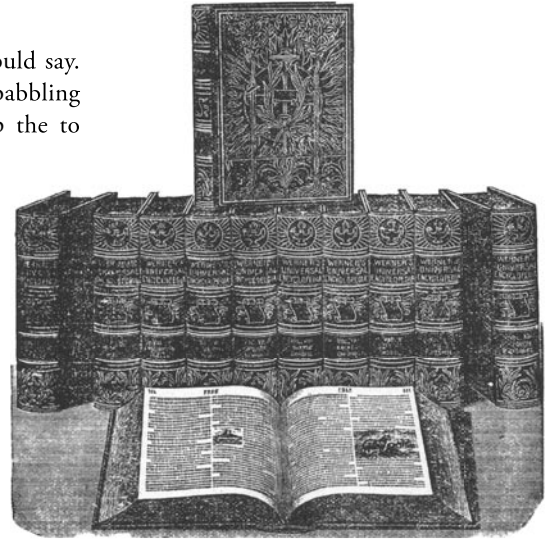
While it is true that some rare, ancient, and downright weird books can be found here, there are none of the literary heavyweights the Cardinal mentioned earlier. Did the man of the cloth lie? Could there even be yet *another* Library? And why was the sewer entrance so totally unguarded? Could this have been … some kind of 'diversional' Library?

What happens if the adventurers want to grab some of these books? Well, this depends on how they intend to leave the Library afterwards. If they leave through the secret corridor, i.e., they have to return past the guards,

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The Books in the Library

Even without the really interesting stuff, there are some books that might be of interest to bibliophiles (and like-minded players). There is at least an unexpurgated version of the *Malleus Mellificorum*. Somewhat … hotter should be an original manuscript of the *Memoirs of Fanny Hill* by John Cleland (1749); it is a bit more … explicit than the published version, and hints at a secret group of agents of the Crown doing mysterious things. Also, some passages in this manuscript might somewhat damage the reputation of Pope Benedict XIV very posthumously. Next, there is a set of several versions of a rather racist diatribe by some Percival Peabody, all called *Prisoner of the Arabians* but all differing in slight details. One might wonder what such stuff is doing down there. Adventurers of a certain bent might find a thick book called *Slowcake's Exceptionals* rather interesting – some kind of 'compendium' of the underworld, if about 20 years outdated. The Library also holds an early edition of Margaret Cavendish's *The Description of a New World, called The Blazing World* (the reprint of 1688), known as the only 17th-century Utopian novel (and a satirical one, too!) written by a woman. Next to this one sits a rather recent, but unpublished manuscript by one Marcus Scarman, called "Pyramids of Mars," which promises astonishing revelations on early Egyptian history. Closer to home is an 1862 edition of John Hollingshead's *Underground London*), dotted with handwritten notes and illustrations. It has a map that clearly shows the location of the Library the player characters are in – and another one, obviously larger, that seems to be in Holborn … Finally, there are stacks of manuscripts containing, among other things the arbiter is free to make up on her own, an unpublished story by one Dr. John Watson, entitled *"The Affair of the Politician, the Lighthouse and the Trained Cormorant"*. Directly beneath this, quite fitting for a Library in Southwark, is a very old looking pile of tattered pages in strange handwriting and a much older version of English – a complete, very late 14th-century manuscript of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, where the pilgrims actually get to Canterbury and do a number of things quite unbefitting devout pilgrims.

Searching for "Selkie"

The adventurers might want to go out and find some more information on that "Selkie" person. This can be done in a somewhat abstract manner by the arbiter making a **hidden** *streetwise* roll, or maybe be role-played. Which information this yields is ultimately up to the arbiter.

But ... But ... Our Flamethrower!

Ah, yes. Players might want to learn how to use the flamethrower. Well … in the full rules, the *flamethrower* skill would be classified as a "hard" weapon skill. Which means alone learning it is going to cost **400 EP.** None of the player characters are going to take that many EP out of the adventure. Even if we let them experiment with the device a bit and halve this amount after a successful **AR: maintenance,** we are still talking **200 EP** here. So maybe that's something to look forward to after a few more home-spun adventures …

they will be subject to a very thorough search and probably found out. The guards will then have loads of fun with them, but will have to reluctantly let them go (without the books, of course) once orders to that effect have come in. Of course, the player characters will even be searched if they have not stolen any books – after all, that's what the guards are for …Leaving via the sewers, however, effectively means that the adventurers may smuggle some books out. Of course, the Church is going to notice come next inventory, and should react accordingly, at the arbiter's discretion – but that is beyond the scope of this little adventure.

There remains the question what happens if the adventurer do **not** stop Riley P. Tracey. Well, in that case the (somewhat fake) Library of Saint John the Beheaded burns down. This is a small setback for the Church (and for the world as such, given some of the books now destroyed), but nothing they can't handle. It may, of course, make further assignments from the Church a little less likely for the player characters.

So That's It?

Basically, yes. Since the full rules for ADVENTURE: 1880 are not (yet?) available in English, further information on experience points, fame increases, and changes in the adventurers' financial status are somewhat limited. For those who really need to know, we have provided a reduced version of the experience system that will at least allow the player characters to increase skills and check for a fame increase. More information might be forthcoming at a later time.

Every player character receives a grand total of **20 experience points (EP)** provided

they prevent the destruction of the Library. Should they managed to capture Riley P. Tracey alive, they get an additional **10 EP** each. Each skill used successfully is worth **3 EP** – or even **6 EP,** provided the player achieves a **major advantage** in a skill contest. Dealing with the temperance procession in a civilised manner is worth **5 EP** per character. Finally, each rat killed is worth **3 EP.**

Now what do the adventurers do with these points? Well, they can use them to increase their skills values with skills they already know. (The full rules, of course, also allow them to learn new things, increase stamina points, and do other nifty things, but let's not get overexcited here.) On the outer back cover you will find a table listing the skills the players have at their disposal, grouped by class and further subdivided into difficulty levels. This is only a selection of the skills in the full game, hence

English versus German

The fact that there is a whole RPG line behind this introductory booklet in German vs. the fact that there isn't in English has led to some changes and loose ends in the adventure. Basically, the German version has the additional function of being a lead-in to the currently available mega-campaign, STURM ÜBER ÄGYPTEN ("Storm Over Egypt"), where Cardinal Ruffo-Scilla provides the main adventure hook. Also, German players might have been able to find out that "Selkie" was last seen heading for Alexandria in Egypt – this is some foreshadowing of that campaign, too.

the gaps. Now find the appropriate skill group and difficulty level on the second table, cross-index with the **new** skill value you want your character to have, and deduct the points used from your EP total. Spent EPs are simply lost once you have increased a skill. Note that neither senses nor innate skills may be increased! No skill may be increased beyond **+20.**

If the adventurers take steps to make their actions known in the right public circles (which is again at the discretion of the arbiter, based on the players' choices), there is a chance their fame will increase. Have each player roll a **TR: fame.** If this roll **fails,** that character's fame is **increased** by **1d6 points;** if the roll **succeeds,** the increase is only **1 point.** (It is a lot easier to get famous if you're not!) If the new fame total is a number that can by divided by 5, the character also gets an additional point of **grace of fate.** Remember that grace of fate spent during an adventure is lost – so increasing fame is the only way to get new points!

Should the adventurers have stolen books from the Library and are now trying to sell them, each book should get them between 1 and 3 British pounds fairly quickly. A few week later, they are likely to receive a letter of thanks signed by Cardinal Ruffo-Scilla for retrieving valuable Church property …

List of Illustrations

List of Abbreviations

Agi	=	Agility	Dex	=	Dexterity	OR	=	Opposing roll
App	=	Appearance	EP	=	Experience points	SP	=	Stamina points
AR	=	Action roll	GoF	=	Grace of fate	Str	=	Strength
Cha	=	Charisma	HP	=	Health points	Tal	=	Psychic talent
Com	=	Composure	Int	=	Intelligence	TR	=	Test (roll)
Con	=	Constitution	MV	=	Movement value	Wil	=	Willpower

Skills According to Group and Difficulty	
Physical Skills	
Easy	driving, jumping, riding
Normal	tailing
Hard	forgery, maintenance
Mental Skills	
Easy	general education, photography, telegraphy
Normal	archival science, cryptography, history, salesmanship, searching, speak language (any), write language (any)
Hard	
Social Skills	
Easy	disguise, etiquette
Normal	fast talk, human nature, streetwise, tactics
Hard	
Combat and Weapon Skills	
Easy	defence, evasion, mounted combat
Normal	dagger, epee, pistol, sabre
Hard	boxing

The Cost of Improvement																
Skill value	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15	+16	+17	+18	+19	+20
Physical skills																
Easy:									10	20	40	80	100	200	200	200
Normal:			20	20	40	60	100	100	150	150	200	200	200	200	200	200
Hard:			20	20	40	60	100	100	200	200	400	400	400	400	400	400
Mental skills																
Easy:					5	10	10	20	20	40	60	80	100	200	200	200
Normal:	5	5	10	10	20	20	40	40	60	80	100	100	150	200	200	200
Hard:	10	10	20	20	40	40	60	80	100	100	150	150	200	200	200	200
Social skills																
Easy:					10	10	20	20	40	60	80	100	100	100	100	100
Normal:					20	20	40	60	100	100	150	150	200	200	200	200
Hard:	20	20	40	60	100	100	150	150	200	200	400	400	400	400	400	400
Combat and weapon skills																
Easy:									20	40	100	200	400	400	400	400
Normal:		10	20	20	40	100	150	200	300	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Hard:		20	20	40	40	100	200	200	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400