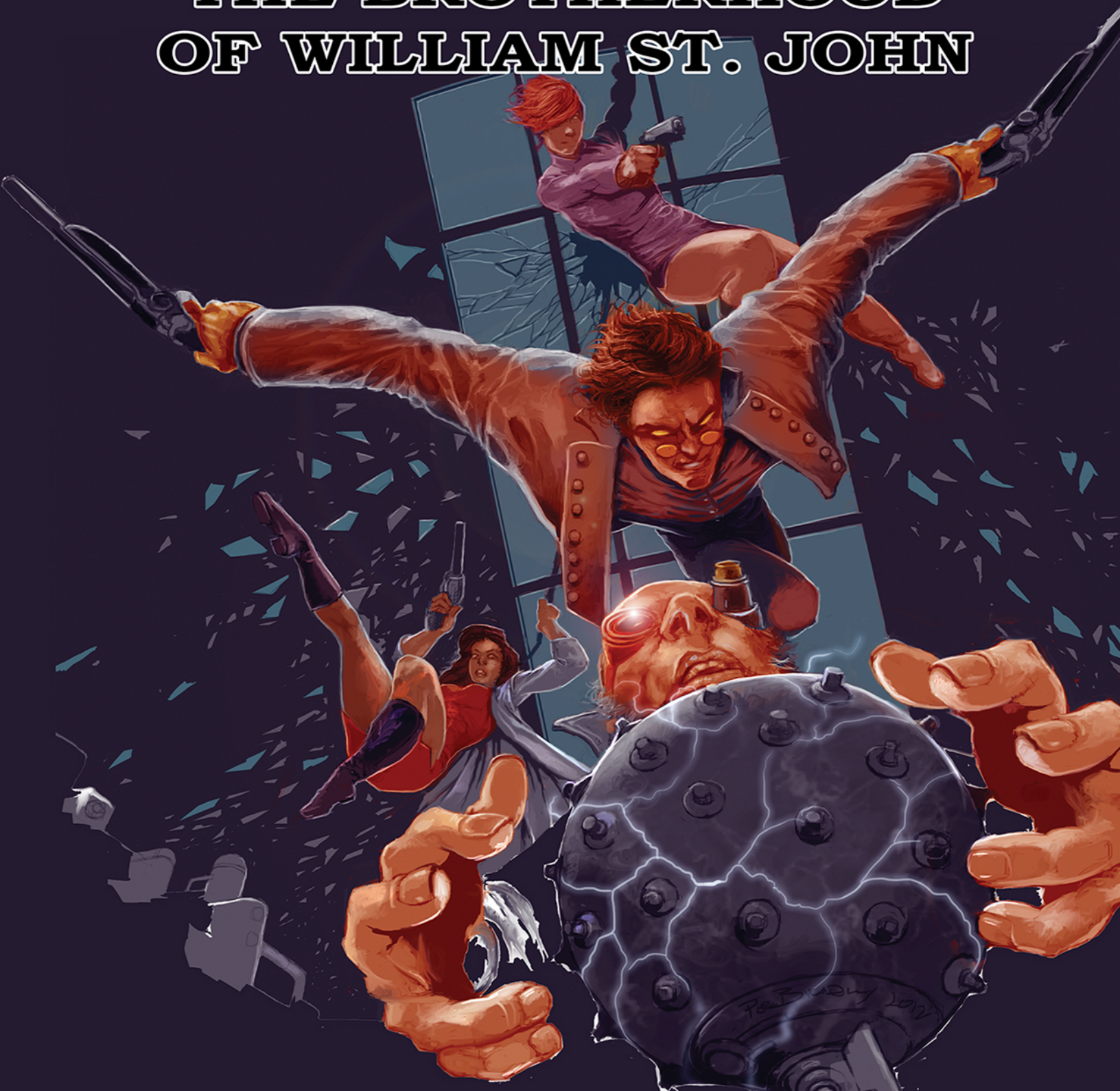




# MAZING ADVENTURES 5E

## THE BROTHERHOOD OF WILLIAM ST. JOHN





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**BY: JASON VEY**

5TH EDITION RULES EDITING: Tom Smith

FRONT COVER: Peter Bradley    INTERIOR ART: Peter Bradley



1818 North Taylor, #143, Little Rock, AR, 72207

email: [troll@trolllord.com](mailto:troll@trolllord.com)

website: [www.trolllord.com](http://www.trolllord.com) or

[www.castlesandcrusades.com](http://www.castlesandcrusades.com)

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the world of the Brotherhood of William St. John, a world of exploration and adventure, where every legend about every mysterious place about which you've ever read has a grain of truth. The world at large is generally the world we know from history—it's a mundane world of beauty, violence, love, hate, death, and life. People go to work and live their lives day after day.

While this book explores a period ranging from the late Victorian era through the far distant future, it is largely focused on the Pulp era. In the late 1930s through mid-1940s, war rages in Europe, the Middle East and the Far East, a war that will by 1941 consume the world.

In Europe and the Middle East the Nazi regime, allied with Italy and obsessed with power and world domination, scours the globe in search of mythical artifacts of power as Hitler seeks to prove the viability of his "Master Race" theory. It has established a tenuous alliance with Japan, whose Imperial aspirations are seen through its vicious and brutal subjugation of the Pacific Islands and portions of Southeast Asia. Millions of so-called "undesirables" die under the Axis oppression in these two regimes because of their religious affiliation, sexual orientation, color of their skin, or ethnic bloodline, and the members of the Axis powers themselves seem fated to eventually turn upon one another.

Meanwhile, the Allies seek to put an end to this reign of terror and hatred, and restore freedom to the globe. In Russia a more insidious (as yet) foe is silently rising as the Bolshevik Revolution and Communism have replaced the prior Imperial dynasties. In the years following the Greatest War, the Cold War will erupt and Communism will emerge as the new threatening world power, an empire that will far outlast and outgrow Hitler's Third Reich, before itself crumbling in the late 1980s to both freedom and a power vacuum that would lead to the greater civil wars, destruction, and terrorism of the 1990s and 2000s..

In the background of World War II, 2.3 billion people struggle to eke out their daily lives the world over, praying that they will somehow come out able to recover. Organizations like the Brotherhood stand against tyranny of all forms, seeking to recover these ancient artifacts of power before the Nazis and hide them away, protected from use by any government agency or world power.

Among the key figures operating in the shadows of this world are the Brotherhood of William St. John, an adventuring and explorer's society established by Sir William St. John in Great Britain in the late Victorian Era. Nominally, the Brotherhood works alongside the U.S. government and various police forces across the nation and abroad. In reality, they see themselves as guardians of the world and want to protect humankind from its own folly and the lessons it has failed to learn from history. They have stood against many organizations throughout his-

tory, including the Hellfire Club, the Cult of the Red God, Chimera, and the Order of the Black Dragon led by the nefarious and mysterious Doctor Serpent.

They have recovered the Eye of Graeae from Greece. They have encountered dark gods from the dawn of time. They have faced alien body-snatchers. They have even faced ninja in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and recovered the weapons of the Tsar Nicholas I. They've faced serpent gods in the Louisiana bayou and undead in the deserts of Egypt. At every step they've battled the forces of darkness and protected mankind from the secrets of the occult.

This is the world of the Brotherhood of William St. John. It's a world of darkness, magic, mysticism, excitement, action and adventure. Now it's yours to make your own.

## A PREVIEW OF THINGS TO COME

"What?" you cry. "This book isn't the entire Brotherhood Sourcebook? We were told this would be a sourcebook on the Brotherhood of William St. John!"

Fear not: this is what we originally intended to offer you. It's that as we put together the original conception, so many more ideas came out that we decided we're going to blow this sucker up into a full-sized book to provide even more information on the Brotherhood and their world.

When we set out to do this we thought it would be a brief look at the world, with some secret societies, a few NPC and villain stats, some mystical artifacts, and done. The reason for it was, in fact, that the core rulebook grew into such a beast we had to cut out a lot of information that exists within the SIEGE Engine version of the book. This particular book was intended to present that information, with an additional, expanded look at the meta-setting in the background.

As development progressed, it grew into a much larger monster—far too large to properly complete if we were ever going to get the **Amazing Adventures 5e** books into your hands. As such, we've decided to declare the stretch goal version a brief "preview" version of the book, which continues to be written.

We hope that this book whets your appetite for what's to come, a full version that will be longer, much more detailed, and include way more information about the Brotherhood and their exploits in the world.

Among other things, the final version will include more statistics for different eras of the Brotherhood (and potentially statistics for the members at different Challenge Levels/Levels of Experience), additional enemies for them to battle down through the ages, an expanded history of the organization, more secret societies for your world, additional mystical artifacts, a discussion of how to ground your game, converting mystical elements into more real-world approaches, an entire additional chapter

covering places of mystery throughout the world where you can set adventures, as well as adventure seeds set in those places, and a lot more.

We hope you'll forgive us this decision to greatly expand this book in the future, and that you'll still find a lot of utility out of this "Stretch Goal" preview. Rest assured, what you are receiving is indeed what we originally intended to deliver; it's just that we've been inspired to grow it far beyond that original conception, and we think there's a lot more to offer about the Brotherhood and their world.

## WHAT THIS BOOK CONTAINS

This book contains a guide to the world of the Brotherhood of William St. John: their history, allies, enemies, membership, some of the artifacts and adventures they've had, and tips for incorporating them into your world, whatever it may be. The book is broken down into the following chapters:

**INTRODUCTION:** The part you're reading right now.

**CHAPTER ONE: A History of the Brotherhood of William St. John** – a detailed overview of the history of the Brotherhood from their inception in the Victorian Era through to the far future years of the Jalex-Solar War presented in **Solar Burn**.

**CHAPTER TWO: The Brotherhood Through the Ages:** Stat blocks for important figures the brotherhood has faced. There is a strong focus on their 1930s and 40s era, but information regarding figures from other eras are included as well. Statistics for the Brotherhood members follow PC rules instead of NPC rules, enabling you to copy them to a character sheet, tweak them as needed for your game, add gear and equipment, and play them right out of this book.

**CHAPTER THREE: Secret Societies** – Writeups of several of the conspiracy groups and secret societies the Brotherhood has faced, as well as of the Brotherhood itself. These follow the same format and guidelines offered in the **Amazing Adventures** core rulebook.

**CHAPTER FOUR: Artifacts of Mystery** – Mysterious, magical, and super science artifacts and inventions that the Brotherhood has encountered, and guidelines for how to incorporate gadgeteers and the Brotherhood in general into a campaign that eschews magic and focuses on a more grounded approach.

**APPENDIX: Amazing Adventures 5e Errata** – A few things were caught after the publication of the book, to our embarrassment. While there may be more moving forward (though we hope not) we're including those few errata at the end of this book for your ease of reference. The most current errata can always be found in the files section of our official Facebook discussion group at <https://bit.ly/AADiscussion>

## WHAT THIS BOOK ISN'T

This book is not a traditional sourcebook, in terms of offering a great deal of mechanical options, subsystems, or scripted adventures for your game. Though the book does include writeups of a few new mystical items and artifacts, and player character / NPC and villain stats to use in your game, it is largely an examination of what a world of pulp adventure looks like from the Victorian Era all the way through a space opera setting set thousands of years into the future.

Rather than offering some sort of metaplot or scripted, detailed rules for a setting, it serves as a guideline for incorporating elements of mystery, adventure, and excitement into whatever world you decide to create, as represented in the Brotherhood of William St. John and its allies and enemies. Even if your characters aren't members of the Brotherhood, these societies can exist in the background and off to the sides to add flavor and a sense of living history.

The sole exception to this is the far future setting of **Solar Burn**, which is a campaign setting unto itself (though one that is left wide open for expansion and personalization) and presented in the sourcebook of the same title. If you choose to play the members of the Brotherhood in your games, they may see "official" adventures published in fiction over the years, but you should never feel bound by the events of a short story or novel in terms of what happens in your game.

That is to say, don't assume that there is a hard metaplot for you to follow—the idea is to give you the tools to make the game and world 100% your own. Once this book is in your hands, these characters are yours to do with as you please within the context of your home campaign (not to publish, of course, but to use in your home games however you like)!

In the end, this book isn't designed as a detailed guide to an entire world to use as your core setting (though it can be the core of one, if you so choose). Rather, it's designed as what I like to call a meta-setting.

## A "META-SETTING"

The complete history and details of the Brotherhood is far too great and expansive to detail in a single book as it covers literally hundreds and even thousands of years of history and adventures. It does, however, form a sort of "meta setting" that can exist to enhance just about any campaign setting you desire. More than a setting unto itself, the Brotherhood is a presentation of secret societies, organizations, non-player characters, villains, and ideas that are designed to drop into many settings of many eras.

Besides the Brotherhood, there are several other secret societies herein which also exist in the same "world", which are included as an example of the many ways you can use **Amazing Adventures**. In addition, all of the secret

societies listed in the core rulebook are assumed to exist alongside the Brotherhood and their core enemies: the Cult of Sang-Xiu, the Order of the Black Dragon, and Chimera. Taken together, the whole forms the basis of a sample meta-setting in which you can set your AA games. Nominally, it is a “pulp” era setting, set in the late 30s/early 40s, but can stretch backwards or forwards in time to provide infinite varieties of settings and play styles.

## THE SUPERNATURAL IS REAL

The one thing that the Brotherhood meta-setting does assume is that magic and the supernatural exist in the world. If your game does not include elements of magic and mysticism, you will need to make certain changes to the contents of this book to make it work. It’s suggested, however, that even if magic doesn’t exist for the player characters (that is, no Occultists, Mentalists, Arcanists, or Hallowed), there are “unexplainable” phenomena which may be grounded in the real world, but are “outside” of easy explanation, much like one sees in the adventures of a certain world-famous whip-wielding archeologist from the 1940s. In Chapter Four we will briefly discuss the idea of grounding your game strictly within the realm of science and “reality,” such as it is.

## THE BROTHERHOOD IN OTHER ERAS

Though it is nominally a pulp adventure setting situated in the late 1930s/early 1940s, the Brotherhood can be moved earlier, to the Victorian Era when the Brotherhood was first founded, into the modern era to form a modern urban fantasy style game, or into the distant future of **Solar Burn**, when the Brotherhood has evolved into an order of star-faring, freedom-fighting fighter jockeys. In fact, the original version of **Amazing Adventures** was billed as a pulp game, but we felt people took the wrong impression from what our definition of “pulp” meant, so we wanted to open things up a bit more with this edition.

You see, the dirty little secret of so-called “pulp” gaming is that it’s really just any kind of genre game you like. Modern urban fantasy games share all the same tropes as your classic supernatural detective story in the pulps of the 1940s, just with modern technology. Modern psychological thrillers are just updated potboilers and hard-boiled noir. Modern science fiction and science fantasy saw the way paved in the works of Mary Shelley and Edgar Rice Burroughs. Where would horror be today if it weren’t for Robert W. Chambers, Edgar Allan Poe and H.P. Lovecraft?

The pulps were simply the popular genre fiction of their day, seen as “lurid” by the literary elite and published on cheap paper to save money. Just as Robert E. Howard and J.R.R. Tolkien paved the way for modern fantasy, the pulps as a whole paved the way for modern popular fiction.

The same goes for the Brotherhood of William St. John. The characters and their abilities are exceptionally malleable, and the history of the Brotherhood can also be easily

tweaked so that the characters herein are contemporary instead of 1930s/40s era characters. Alternately, by tweaking a few character options such as names, genders, backgrounds and the like, you can also use these stat blocks to represent the descendants of the original characters. The idea, of course, is that just as Mackie is the granddaughter of William St. John and Lady Sylvia Morningside, eventually Mackie and Tennessee get together and have children, then grandchildren, as do other members of the Brotherhood. A quick alteration of Mackie’s stat block here can easily be used to represent their grandson, also a great pilot and future leader of the Brotherhood.

It’s possible that Natalya and Bucky had a fling at some point, and their great-granddaughter became a noted adventuring futurist in the modern day, albeit with a touch of psychic power. Perhaps swap out an ability bump from Bucky’s stat block and replace it with the Wild Talent feat, and you’re good to go, or swap one out from Natalya’s to swap it with the Power ability to represent an heirloom gadget from Bucky that carries down through the ages! Such future iterations of the brotherhood will be discussed in **Chapter Two**, and are explored in the introductory chapter fiction in the **Amazing Adventures** core rulebook, but you can set a Brotherhood adventure in just about any time period you like with just a minor modification of the stat blocks herein, or even using the exact same stat blocks and changing the trappings like gender, sex, names, personality traits, ideals, bonds, flaws, gear, and the like.

Even science fiction isn’t out of the realm of possibility. In a space opera game, the descendants of the original Brotherhood could play the galaxy for alien artifacts of great power, exploring new worlds for the thrill and adventure of it. A cyberpunk version could even exist where the original brotherhood see their consciousness downloaded into android bodies, reincarnated for a new age of high technology in a dystopian world. Indeed, the **Solar Burn** sourcebook expressly explores three such far-future members of the (then) Knights of William St. John.

In the end, the **Brotherhood of William St. John Sourcebook** fleshes out the story of the Brotherhood through the modern day and into the distant future, but feel free to make any changes, tweaks and alterations you need to fit the story into any time period you desire. Any adjustments you have to make should be exceptionally minor.

Note that there will inevitably be some reprinted material from the core rulebook and other books, in the interest of keeping all of our information about the Brotherhood and its world in a single place. We are striving to paint as complete a picture as possible.

With all that said, let’s move onto a history of the Brotherhood of William St. John!

# CHAPTER ONE: HISTORY OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF WILLIAM ST. JOHN

## BIRTH OF THE BROTHERHOOD: THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Brotherhood of William St. John began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In Great Britain it was the late Victorian Age, an age of exploration, expansionism, and imperialism for the glory of the British Empire. In the United States it was the end of the Gilded Age and the beginning of the Progressive Era, after the Reconstruction, when the nation experienced rapid economic growth with a massive influx of European immigrants, soaring wages, and industrialization. It was also a period of social activism, political reform, and sweeping change.

William St. John was a British aristocrat who spent much of his time exploring the far reaches of the British Empire and beyond. His passion was discovery and adventure, and he was a member of several prominent explorer's clubs. In his adventures, he gained friends and allies who gradually became his constant companions in his exploits.

These companions were unusual for the era in that one of his most trusted was a young woman—Lady Sylvia Morningside, herself a British aristocrat with land and title, but a capable, intelligent, headstrong, and stalwart woman with the heart and determination of a hero, who had no interest in traditional societal roles.

Though still just 17 years old at the time, Lady Sylvia had come into her fortune following a tragedy and proved mature beyond her years and quite capable of navigating the legal and social hurdles to control her finances and lands without interference from older men.

Joining the Lady Sylvia and William on their journeys was Jonathan Trapp, an inventive and brave soul whose technological innovations saved the trio more than once. It was Jonathan who eventually suggested the group dub themselves, "The Brotherhood of William St. John."

As they adventured and explored, the trio often found themselves at odds with dark forces. Originally all three were firm debunkers of the supernatural, but as time wore on they encountered things that none could understand. Their first enemy, the one that resulted in the formalization of the Brotherhood and who have hounded them through their entire history, turned them all into staunch believers, and more, opponents of dark supernatural forces.

## THE CULT OF THE WORM AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BROTHERHOOD

Their first encounter with this dark enterprise came in the form of a degenerate snake-worshipping cult in Africa: the

Cult of the Worm. This group, it turned out, was engaged in the worship of a dark deity from the dawn of time, and the idea that humanity was a mistake—that in truth, an advanced society of "serpent people" existed before humankind, and were supplanted by the emerging great apes, who never should have evolved in the first place.

This cult was discovered to be behind a series of kidnappings and murders in an African town, and William, Lady Sylvia, and Jonathan tracked them to their hideout, where they put an end to the degradations of the cult, who it seemed was sacrificing their victims in an effort to restore this mythical serpent race.

The burgeoning Brotherhood was horrified at this discovery and indeed at the sheer idea of dark, prehistoric, alien gods. Upon wiping out the cult with the help of the local authorities, they were further disturbed by evidence in the form of unfinished communications that there may be an even larger conspiracy at work that stretched far beyond Africa.

It was at this time that William sat down with Lady Sylvia and Jonathan and suggested that they refocus their efforts from exploration to rooting out these dark agencies wherever they reared their heads. So it was that the Brotherhood of William St. John was formally established.

## THE CULT OF YIG

The Brotherhood next tracked their enemies to the United States, to the Everglades of Florida, where they uncovered an even larger cult, and discovered the name of the ancient deity the conspiracy served: Yig, the Father of Serpents. It was during these adventures that the Brotherhood first encountered the crypto-zoological creatures known only as the Children of Yig, as well as the very serpent-men that the cult worshipped. In addition, they witnessed firsthand the effects of dark sorcery, became staunch believers in the supernatural, and expanded their focus towards battling the forces of the Deeper Dark, and keeping occult forces out of the wrong hands.

It was also in the Everglades where they first encountered the dark figure that would plague the Brotherhood for quite literally hundreds of years into the future: Doctor Serpent.

The Brotherhood's battle with the Cult of Yig took them through several states and outside of the U.S. into Mexico, South America, to China, and back to Europe before they finally rooted out the darkest aspects of the conspiracy, and trailed them to the next level of their hierarchy: the global crime syndicate and mystery cult known as the Order of the Black Dragon.

Over the years, the cult became the archenemy of the Brotherhood, and its leader, the nefarious Doctor Serpent, became the personal nemesis of Sir William himself. Their battles would be bloody and violent, with far more collateral damage than Sir William would have liked, and it became an obsession of Sir William's to stamp out this age-old cult once and for all.

## RETIREMENT

The original Brotherhood battled the Order of the Black Dragon for more than a decade in dozens of skirmishes and battles, until one day after a major victory by the Brotherhood in a small one-horse town in the heart of Arkansas, the cult's operations...simply stopped. The Brotherhood's allies presumed that the secret identity of Doctor Serpent, whoever that may have been, was present and died at that battle, but no proof was ever found.

For his part, Sir William was never convinced, but at the behest of his pregnant wife, then-30-year-old Lady Sylvia, he allowed himself to be convinced that with the Black Dragon gone, the time had come for the Brotherhood to retire. So it was that at the age of 46, Sir William St. John hung up his hat and guns, presumably for good, to settle into the role of father.

For twenty-two years the Brotherhood lived a relatively quiet life, sustained by the wealth they had gathered in their explorations and adventures. Then, just as the 20<sup>th</sup> Century dawned in 1901, whispers began to reach their ears of a strange serpent cult performing horrific and criminal acts. Even as Sir William determined to take up his hat again in his late 60s, Johnathan and Lady Sylvia counseled against it, that there were younger men and women out there to take up the fight. They had a young daughter, Joanna, who was about to marry a stalwart young man named Max Gleeson, and things were good.

## THE END OF AN ERA

Tragedy nearly struck, however, when Joanna and Max were the target of an assassination attempt by the cult, which the young couple survived, but which took the lives of over a dozen bystanders when a bomb bearing the signature construction methods of the Cult of Yig exploded in a New York restaurant. Witness reports stated that a mysterious man wearing a mask in the shape of a cobra was seen at the site of the attack.

This was the convincing that Lady Sylvia and Johnathan needed, and they now supported Sir William's determination to end the Cult of Yig and Doctor Serpent once and for all. They doggedly tracked the cult, battling danger after danger and fighting their own advancing age, until their battles led them to the Himalayas on the trail of nothing less than the mythical city of Shangri-La.

It was there, in the depths of a cavern in the Himalayas and cut off from his beloved wife and best friend, Sir Wil-

liam battled Doctor Serpent one last time, over a mysterious device that would later come to be known as a Ring of Brass. This device allowed for travel throughout time and space, and indeed, during that battle, Sir William witnessed things that would make his heart soar, and crush all his hopes.

There, in the mirror, he witnessed his own granddaughter and successive generations of those keeping his dream of the Brotherhood alive. He also, however, witnessed Doctor Serpent, still active in the 1940s, 2010s, and even many hundreds of years into the future.

Determined not to allow the evil cult leader to gain control of such a powerful device, Sir William undertook a suicidal action, detonating a satchel full of dynamite adjacent to the Ring, with the resulting blast collapsing the entire cavern upon the two of them, while Lady Sylvia and Johnathan escaped the destruction and could do nothing but mourn their beloved fallen leader.

A portion of this final adventure can be found in the **Amazing Adventures 5e Core Rulebook** and is intended to be the topic of a forthcoming novel: *The Legacy of William St. John*

For details on Doctor Serpent and the Order of the Black Dragon, see chapters 2 and 3.

## THE GOLDEN ERA: THE 1930S AND 1940S

In 1915, Mackenzie Wilhelmina Gleeson was born to Joanna and Max Gleeson in Albany, New York. Thanks to a generous trust from Sir William and Lady Joanna, who continued to be a large part of Mackie's life, Mackie grew wanting for little. Tragedy would strike once again when Maddie was but 5 years of age and a car accident took the lives of both of her parents.

Enter Lady Sylvia and Johnathan, who moved to New York permanently and raised Mackie as their ward. Though the relationship between Lady Sylvia and Johnathan remained forever platonic, Mackie came to view them as her mother and father. Both of the elder former adventurers suspected the accident that took Mackie's parents was arranged and quite deliberate, and so took it upon themselves to educate the young girl on all she would need to survive, and indeed, to resurrect the Brotherhood of William St. John.

By the time she was 15 years old, Mackie was an accomplished pilot and already held the equivalent of several degrees in a wealth of liberal arts disciplines: classics, literature, history, finance, and others. She was also quite capable and even expert at navigating the complex realm of social mores and societal strata, able to talk her way into and out of just about anything. She had grown into a young, but solid leader with a good head on her shoulders.

She also showed her grandfather's passion for exploration, adventure, and excitement, and eagerly devoured the stories of the Brotherhood's exploits. For their part, Johnathan and Lady Sylvia held nothing back. This led to the rearing of a young woman with a penchant for getting herself into trouble.

Mackie looked for conspiracies, cults, criminals, and secret societies under ever rock and behind every shadow. Indeed, she often found them, whether they were actually present or not and Lady Sylvia and Johnathan spent as much time smoothing over difficulties with the authorities as they did educating and instructing Mackie.

It was during this time that Johnathan, who had continued his tinkering and inventing throughout the years, took on a young apprentice, roughly Mackie's age. The young man was named James Newson, but Mackie took to calling him Bucky due to his slight overbite. As Bucky grew older, the overbite corrected itself and he became a dashing young man, but Mackie never dropped the nickname, which he would carry for the rest of his life.

Throughout their teens and twenties, Bucky carried a secret torch for Mackie, who never viewed him as anything but a brother and trusted friend. To her credit, she made her feelings towards him crystal clear and never led the young man along, and the two eventually became thick as thieves.

Johnathan passed in 1930 of natural causes, and Bucky remained at the mansion with Mackie and Sylvia, turning into a brilliant tinkerer and gadgeteer who quickly surpassed his mentor in skill and ingenuity.

## **BIRTH OF A NEW BROTHERHOOD**

It was at the funeral of her beloved grandmother in 1935 that Mackie both came into her own and found the danger for which she'd searched her entire life. A mysterious man of extreme age appeared at the funeral, watching sadly from a distance. Mackie spotted him immediately, but was too absorbed in her own grief to address the issue until after the ceremony was over.

As the casket was lowered in the private burial grounds on the Gleeson grounds, Mackie and Bucky both noticed the mysterious old man remained, as though waiting for them. They approached him and he gave them both a sad smile and expressed his condolences. He then went on to warn them that an old enemy had resurfaced right here in Albany, and they must recover an idol from beneath Fort Orange, which once occupied the same site as downtown Albany.

The artifact, he told them, was an idol to an ancient serpent god, lost to history, which held great power and importance to this cult, who must not retrieve it at any cost. The idol, he went on, was hidden in tunnels beneath the library, but that was all the information he had, save that Mackie and Bucky would have help when they needed it, and that they were about to take the next step into their destiny.

Then, just as mysteriously as he had appeared, the old man was gone.

This quest became Mackie and Bucky's first direct encounter with the Cult of Yig and the Order of the Black Dragon, though it would be years before they came face to face with Doctor Serpent himself. It was also the adventure on which they first met one Tennessee O'Malley, a then-new graduate of the Southwestern University with a Ph.D. in archaeology. The cocky adventurer had, it seemed, also been directed here by a mysterious old man.

Over time, Mackie became convinced that the old man was the spectre of William St. John himself, and that her destiny was to rebuild the Brotherhood anew. Thus, with Tennessee and Bucky at her side, she began actively recruiting and seeking out adventure and excitement. Their next recruit was "Savage" Steve McDermott, an Irish dock worker and pit fighter with a deep code of ethics and morality, when Steve bailed Mackie out of a tight spot with a Triad group in New York's Chinatown.

Not long after meeting Steve, the group encountered Natalya "The Fox" Abramova, an up-and-coming Hollywood starlet who was also (secretly) a notorious cat burglar. It was the Brotherhood who put the pieces together, connected Nat and The Fox as one, and captured the young psychic. Relying on her own instinct and judge of character, Mackie opted to recruit The Fox instead of turning her in.

The Brotherhood grew even further when an adventure against the Cult of Yig in New Orleans led them to the doorstep of Marie Laveau, who claimed to be the granddaughter of the original Voodoo Queen, but in reality was the very same woman, having contracted with the Loa to remain in the world, fighting to keep the scales balanced between white and black magic.

Eventually, the ranks were completed with the recruitment of two private investigators: Titanus Williams, a tough-as-nails African-American P.I. from Atlantic City, New Jersey, and another New Orleans native, Medusa "Maddie" Black, a descendant of the mythological figure with the same mystical powers of petrification.

This incarnation of the Brotherhood would go on to serve for two full decades, into the 1950s, serving as government agents for the SOE during World War II and battling everything from aliens to vampires, alien gods and communist conspiracies, and of course, the Order of the Black Dragon led by the resurgent Doctor Serpent. The greatest enemy of the Brotherhood during this era was the Cult of Sang-Xiu, Ornduhl the Red God.

They spent decades in struggle against this black cult and its Outer God leader, and uncovered the mysteries of the Shade, a mysterious group of cosmic entities from the Spaces Between Spaces, what they referred to as the Deeper Dark. Many of their adventures were undertaken



in an effort to uncover the mysterious Rings of Brass and stop them from falling into the wrong hands. Many Rings were destroyed during this era, as the Brotherhood were convinced that there were no “right hands” for control of such power.

Still, their adventures took them beyond this world to other dimensions, other planets, and many distant eras. A great many of the adventures of the Brotherhood in the 40s are classified and completely sealed off, both by government agencies and by the Brotherhood themselves.

Another major enemy of the Brotherhood during this era was Chimera, a corrupt technological and weapons development group with fingers in just about every industry in the world. Though they foiled the schemes of this group time and again, the Brotherhood made very little headway in discovering who or what was behind Chimera, or what their ultimate goal was. More on Chimera can be found in **Chapter 3**.

In time, members of the Brotherhood paired off just as they had in the old days: Mackie and Tennessee eventually married, as did Natalya and Bucky. The fate of many of the members of this Brotherhood, who served during its golden years, is as mysterious as the adventures they had. Maddie and Marie faded into the shadows, and some whisper that these women, best friends in their own right, are immortal—or at least, un-aging—and survived throughout the ages.

It is known that Titanus Williams survived well into his 90s and died of natural causes peacefully in his home outside of Atlantic City, having seen the city rise and fall through gangsters, luxury resort days, natural disasters, and more. When asked about his days with the Brotherhood shortly before death, Titanus only gave a wistful smile and said that the Brotherhood was forever, and when they were needed, they would always be there.

## **THE LOST YEARS: THROUGH THE 1990'S**

It's assumed that the Brotherhood survived in various incarnations throughout the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s, but very little is known about their activities or membership during these decades. The members who would take up the torch in the next era indicate that it remained a “family affair,” but no one knows for certain who the members were, what roles they played, or what world affairs in which they became involved.

It is possible that whatever adventures or struggles they faced during this time were of such dark importance that it became imperative for them to be buried forever, for the sake of the world. It's equally possible, given the experience of the 1930s and 40s Brotherhood with the Rings of Brass, that this era saw the Brotherhood adventuring largely off-world. Scholars continue to research to this day, however, and the adventures of these Lost Years may yet be revealed one day...

## **8 AMAZING ADVENTURES 5E**

## **A BROTHERHOOD FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

The Brotherhood resurfaced in the early-mid 21<sup>st</sup> century, and by 2019 were led by James O'Malley, the great-grandson of Mackie and Tennessee, and godson of Natalya. James' best friend was Alex McPartland, a brilliant technological inventor and descendent of “Savage” Steve and an unknown partner. Joining these two legacy members was Sandra Stevens, a young Hallowed woman with a cynical outlook but a deeply caring heart. Sandra's own adopted mother was said to be a powerful psychic Necromancer.

This group was based just outside of Pittsburgh, PA, where they, too, encountered the Order of the Black Dragon as they battled the corrupt technology company OrdaTech and its sinister CEO, Jeremy Allen, himself a member of the ancient secret society Chimera.

This young and intrepid group is just beginning their adventures, but have already faced death and traveled far into the future and to other worlds, as the Rings of Brass resurface in the world once more...

## **THE WORLD OF SOLAR BURN**

The Brotherhood exists far into humanity's future, when we have colonized the entire Solar System, and have engaged in war and trade with a number of different alien species, the most important of whom are the Decti and the Jalex. In this era, the Brotherhood are publicly known in the colonies, and are now named the Knights of William St. John. They are an elite group of fighters and guardians, battling for humanity's future alongside their Decti allies to fight off an invasion by the brutal insectoid Jalex.

The core members of the Brotherhood in this era are Miranda O'Malley, her beloved partner the Decti warrior Clental, and their agent on Earth, the cybernetically-enhanced private investigator Dan Davenport. In this era, however, the Brotherhood occupies two positions. On Earth, they remain a secret society, dedicated to battling corporate corruption and keeping the secret of the Offworld Colonies from those who would exploit them. In space, they are an influential group of warriors and diplomats, widely respected throughout the various Solar Colonies.

There are dozens of members of the Knights of William St. John spread throughout the system. They are dedicated to expanding humankind's reach throughout the galaxy, while still representing the goals of freedom, justice, and decency for which the organization has always stood. They seek to be paragons of what humanity should be, and recently, they have discovered that their age-old enemies the Order of the Black Dragon are resurgent and, it seems, Doctor Serpent him (or her) self has risen to lead them once again. The more things change...

For more about the Knights of William St. John, see the fiction in the **Amazing Adventures Core Rulebook** and the **Solar Burn** sourcebook.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE BROTHERHOOD THROUGH THE AGES

The non-player characters on the next several pages include some of the current members of note in the Brotherhood of William St. John. They are designed for use as non-player characters in your game with whom the PCs can interact, or as pre-generated characters that your players can use to pick up and go!

These characters have not been designed as starting, first-level characters. This is because should you want to use them as non-player characters, they can be dropped in just as-is to add some color to the game. They are also, unlike most NPCs, built as full player characters with the proper hit dice and abilities inclusive, so you can, if you choose, pick up and start a mid-level game using the Brotherhood themselves.

Should you choose to use the characters at a lower level, all you should need do is re-roll hit points for the desired level, and check which class abilities are available at the given level. Dropping them all the way back to first level should only take a couple minutes' time at most. Characters like Bucky Newson, The Fox, and Marie Laveau will require a bit more adjustment as Bucky will have fewer gadgets, the Fox fewer mentalism powers, and Marie fewer spells, but that's about it!

Following the Brotherhood's statistics, you will find stat blocks for certain major villains the Brotherhood may face in their journeys, including Aldous Schwartzhofer and the evil Doctor Serpent. These are created like any villain, monster or NPC and can be used as-is, but may be a bit powerful for starting characters to face, and are intended as examples of "Lieutenant" and "Big Bad" level adversaries.

### IN THE BEGINNING: THE BROTHERHOOD IN THE VICTORIAN AGE

#### SIR WILLIAM ST. JOHN

**Personality Traits:** I have to stand up for the poor, down-trodden, and marginalized. After all, they can't stand up for themselves, and someone has to! I am plenty self-aware enough to realize that I don't connect properly with people of lesser means or advantages. I feel bad about that and always look for ways to expand my horizons and perspective.

**Ideal:** Charity - I firmly hold to the idea that it's the responsibility of the wealthy to provide aid to those who are less fortunate.

**Bond:** My companions, and especially Lady Sylvia, are my connection to the world and they keep me grounded when I begin to stray.

**Flaw:** I sometimes act like I'm the only savior the world has, and I will always and recklessly dive in head-first if I perceive a threat to others, *especially* if that threat involves Doctor Serpent.

**Appearance:** Distinguished, handsome man in his late 50s or early 60s, with care lines worn into his face. He has a ready smile, but his deep gray eyes carry the worries and regrets of too many adventures and misadventures.

#### SIR WILLIAM ST. JOHN

*Medium humanoid (human) Raider (adventurer), lawful good*

**ARMOR CLASS:** 16 (Intelligence)

**HIT POINTS:** 70 (10d10+10 HD)

**SPEED:** 30ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	WLTH
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

**SKILLS:** Cryptolinguist +7, History +7, Investigation +7, Perception +7, Religion +7, Stealth +6, Survival +7

**SAVES:** Intelligence +6, Dexterity +5

**WEALTH:** +7

**SENSES:** Passive Perception 16

**LANGUAGES:** English, French, German, Russian, Greek, Spanish, Japanese

**BACKGROUND:** White Collar

#### Special Qualities

- **Background Feature: Mover and Shaker.** You have connections in the white collar business world and can usually find information, funding, or help among your connections in the halls of high society.
- **Cryptolinguist.** You gain a special skill: Intelligence (cryptolinguist). You are proficient in this skill. By making an Intelligence (cryptolinguist) check, you understand the general content of a piece of writing you are attempting to decipher. Doing so takes time and is at a DC set by the GM.
- **Cultural Chameleon.** You can impersonate general types of people, as well as individuals, within reasonable limits. For example, a European raider might impersonate a Bedouin, or pass for a local in an alien country. To accomplish this, you make a Charisma check against the Passive Insight score of any suspicious observers. It also takes time and preparation to accomplish.
- **Natural Explorer (jungle, desert, mountain).** When you make an Intelligence or Wisdom check related to your favored terrain, your proficiency bonus is doubled if you are using a skill that you're proficient in. You also can't become lost, aren't hampered by difficult terrain, are always alert to danger, can move stealthily at your normal pace (if alone), find double food if foraging, and learn detailed information about creatures you track.
- **Jack of All Trades.** you can add half your proficiency bonus, rounded down, to any ability check you make that doesn't already include your proficiency bonus.
- **Favored Weapon:** Sir William gains +2 to hit and

damage with his Mk. III Revolver (already factored in)

- **Second Wind:** You may use a bonus action to regain 1d10+10 hit points. After you use this feature, you must complete a long rest before you use it again.
- **Scale.** You gain advantage on Strength (athletics) checks to climb such natural inclines.
- **Extra Attack:** Whenever you take the attack action on your turn, you may attack twice instead of once.
- **Indomitable:** You can reroll a saving throw that you fail. You must use the result of the reroll, and you can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

#### Actions

- **Multiattack.** Sir William makes 2 attacks. If he fires his pistol, he may double-tap on both.
- **Beaumont-Adams Army Mk. III Revolver. Ranged Weapon Attack:** +8 to hit, one target, range 30/100. **Hit:** 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage. Double-tap. 6 shots; action to reload.
- **Cavalry Sabre. Melee Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, one target, reach 5ft. **Hit:** 5 (1d6) slashing damage.

### LADY SYLVIA MORNINGSIDE

**Personality Traits:** I have a responsibility to help those in need. I have no patience for others that turn a blind eye to the plight of those who have less. I have to stand up for the poor, downtrodden, and marginalized. After all, they can't stand up for themselves, and someone has to!

**Ideal:** I firmly hold to the idea that it's the responsibility of the wealthy to provide aid to those who are less fortunate.

**Bond:** I have made a vow to help those who are less fortunate than me, and this vow is what keeps me grounded.

**Flaw:** My wealth has made me disconnected from the very plight of those I seek to help, and I can often come off as condescending and with a lack of understanding as a result.

**Appearance:** Stunningly attractive woman in her early senior years with auburn hair, shot through with streaks of silver, and heterochromia (one green eye and one blue).

### LADY SYLVIA MORNINGSIDE

*Medium humanoid (human) Socialite (high society), neutral good*

**ARMOR CLASS:** 17 (Charisma)

**HIT POINTS:** 61 (10d8+10 HD)

**SPEED:** 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	WLTH
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)

**SKILLS:** DECEPTION +8, INSIGHT +7, INVESTIGATION +9, PERCEPTION +7, PERSUASION +8, STEALTH +6

**SAVES:** DEXTERITY +6, CHARISMA +8

**WEALTH:** +8 (ADVANTAGE)

**SENSES:** PASSIVE PERCEPTION 17 (+7)

**LANGUAGES:** English, French

**BACKGROUND:** White Collar

#### Special Qualities

- **Background Feature: Mover and Shaker.** You have connections in the white collar business world and can usually find information, funding, or help among your connections in the halls of high society.
- **Force of Personality (3x/short or long rest; Save DC 16)**
  - **Exalt:** As a bonus action, expend a Force of Personality use to grant advantage to the next attack roll, ability check, or saving throw made by one creature within 60 feet of you that you choose.
  - **Demoralize:** As a bonus action, expend a Force of Personality use to impose disadvantage on the next attack roll, ability check, or saving throw made by one creature within 60 feet of you that you choose.
  - **Charm:** Expend a use of Force of Personality to use *charm person* as a spell-like ability.
  - **Enthrall:** Expend a use of Force of Personality to use *enthrall* as a spell-like ability.
  - **Confusion:** Expend a use of Force of Personality to use *confusion* as a spell-like ability.
  - **Dominate Person:** Expend a use of Force of Personality to use *dominate person* as a spell-like ability.
  - **Everyone Has Secrets:** Spend a use of Force of Personality as a bonus action to imply that you know something dangerous about a creature who can see, hear, and understand you. That creature must make a Wisdom saving throw or become distracted, suffering disadvantage on all attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws at disadvantage while in your presence, and you gain advantage on all attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws you make against them as long as you remain in their presence. The effect ends as soon as they are no longer able to see and hear you, and are removed from your immediate presence.
  - **Don't Make Me Angry:** Expend a use of Force of Personality as a bonus action to imply that upsetting you is dangerous to your target in some way. That creature must succeed at a Wisdom save or become frightened of you and up to 4 other creatures for one minute. Alternately, you may choose up to 4 creatures and require each to make a Wisdom save or be frightened of you for one minute.
- **Inspiring Words:** During a short rest, you deliver

an inspiring speech that allows all of your companions who are expending hit dice to regain an additional 4 (1d8) hit points.

- Social Tradition: High Society
  - *Society Etiquette*: You gain advantage on all Wealth checks.

### Actions

- *Mental Manipulation*: As an action, designate one creature that isn't overtly hostile to you, and gain advantage on all charisma checks against that creature for one minute, after which it becomes hostile to you until it completes a long rest; alternately, as an action, unleash a tirade of abuse at a target creature within 60 feet. That creature must succeed at a Wisdom saving throw against your Force of Personality Save DC or take 2d4 psychic damage and have disadvantage on the next attack roll they attempt.
- *Connected*: You can call in a favor from a friend. This requires an Intelligence (investigation) check to find an acquaintance, followed by a Charisma (persuasion) check to call in the favor. The GM sets the DC for these checks.
- *Derringer*: *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, one target, range 10/40ft. *Hit*: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage. 2 shots, then bonus action to reload.

## JOHNATHAN TRAPP

**Personality Traits**: I have little patience for laziness and sloth; I expect everyone to pull their weight all the time. I don't quit. No matter how many times I get knocked down, I will always find my feet again.

**Ideal**: I take great pride in what I do and the skill I've developed. I also appreciate when other people show great skill in my field.

**Bond**: It's my duty to remind William and Sylvia that sometimes their perspective doesn't match that of people who came up of lesser means. Without me, the philanthropic attitudes of the Brotherhood might fall morally and ethically by the wayside.

**Flaw**: I am overly critical of the work of others, and am outspoken about my criticism.

## JOHNATHAN TRAPP

*Medium humanoid (human) Gadgeteer (engineer), Neutral Good*

**ARMOR CLASS**: 16 (Intelligence)

**HIT POINTS**: 58 (10d6+20 HD)

**SPEED**: 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	WLTH
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

**SKILLS**: Perception +5, Science +8, Stealth +6

**TOOLS AND VEHICLES**: Mechanic's tools +8, Electrician's Tools +8

**SAVES**: Intelligence +8, Wisdom +5

**WEALTH**: +7

**SENSES**: Passive Perception 15

**LANGUAGES**: English, Spanish, German, French, Latin

**BACKGROUND**: Blue collar

### Special Qualities

- *Get the Job Done*. You have the guts and wherewithal to push through difficult situations and get the job done as expected or required, whatever the situation. Once per session, you may use the "Push Through" function of Inspiration without needing to spend an Inspiration Point. You may even use this ability if you don't have Inspiration Points to spend.
- *Union Support*. You have the support of a labor union behind you. This means that when you need to call upon help that is related to your job skills, you can find it. Union brothers and sisters look out for one another, and they'll get your back when needed and when possible. They will also, however, expect the same from you, and if you start putting other union folk or their families in danger, you might quickly find yourself blacklisted...
- *Gadget Points* (Total 68; 66 spent; 2 banked; 10 banked for on-the-fly; Save DC 16)
  - *Pet Project: Defensive Feedback Dynamo*. As a reaction, Johnathan activates an electrical field generator against a creature that damaged him. That creature is momentarily surrounded by a powerful electrical field. The creature must make a Dexterity saving throw. It takes 2d10 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Johnathan has purchased this two more times, enabling him to use it an unlimited number of times, but only once per turn.
- *Subvocal Communications Devices*. Johnathan has outfitted his entire organization with subvocal communications devices. These devices have a 120-foot range and allow whispered communications between any who possess the device. The signals are stopped by 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of metal, any amount of lead, or 3 feet of wood.
- *Portable Structure*. Johnathan may, once per long rest, create a structure provided that he has enough raw materials on hand. The process takes 10 minutes, and if it's made of wood, he can make objects up to large size and filling a 10-foot cube or eight interconnected 5-foot cubes; if he is working with metal, stone, or minerals, he can only create objects of medium size that can be contained within a single 5-foot cube. He cannot create items that require a high degree of craftsmanship with this ability, such as weapons, jewelry or the like unless he has proficiency with the tools needed. Thus, he can create mechanical devices (he has mechanics' tools). Complex electrical

devices are unlikely as the raw materials needed to quickly produce something of this nature would be hard to come by, outside of a laboratory.

### Actions

- **Phlogiston Pistol.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 120ft, one target. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) radiant damage, and the next attack against this target before the end of Johnathan’s next turn is made at advantage, due to the phlogiston surrounding its body. Johnathan may use this weapon at will.
  - **Advanced Targeting Optics.** Once per short rest, Johnathan may gain advantage on a single attack with his Phlogiston Pistol.
  - **Paralysis Ray.** Johnathan may adjust his pistol to fire a paralysis ray instead of a phlogiston blast. Creatures struck must succeed at a Wisdom saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. Paralyzed creatures may repeat their save at the end of each turn, ending the effect with a success.
  - **Weakening Ray.** Johnathan may adjust his pistol to fire a ray that drains the strength from its target. Creatures struck deal only half-damage with strength-based attacks for 1 minute. Weakened creatures may attempt a Constitution save at the end of each turn, ending the effect with a success.
- **Energy Detection Goggles.** As an action, Johnathan can detect and identify any kind of energy including heat, cold, electrical, radiation, psychic, and others, as well as imbalances in the humours of those he looks at, enabling him to detect poison and disease in their bodies. The goggles have a 10 minute battery that runs continuously when active, and after using them, Johnathan must complete a long rest before using them again, representing their recharge time. While wearing the goggles, Johnathan is at disadvantage to attacks, saves, and ability checks because the optics are distracting; after activation, the goggles can be removed or re-donned with a bonus action.
- **Humour Rebalancing Serum.** As an action, Johnathan injects one creature with a serum. At any time during the next minute, that creature may roll 1d4 and add the result to any one saving throw.
- **Rejuvenation Field.** As an action, Johnathan can generate an energy field that knits wounds and rebalances harm within the body. Up to six creatures he chooses regain 6 (1d4+4) hit points.

## THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE PULP ERA

### MACKENZIE “MACKIE” GLEESON

Aviatrix and wealthy philanthropist. A direct descendant of William St. John, Mackie currently serves as the leader of the Brotherhood of William St. John. A noble, caring, and adventurous soul, she is nonetheless a bit snobbish

due to her wealthy upbringing—while she tries her best to uphold the standards of the society (and demands nothing less of her compatriots) she has never known personally the plights of those she seeks to defend, so she sometimes needs to be reminded that she is not better than those of lesser means.

She is particularly fond of Bucky Newson, who acts as the ace mechanic on many of her cars and aircraft, and on whom she looks as a brother, and of the simple but direct Savage Steve McDermott, who serves as a conscience and anchor to the real world. She has a deep and abiding respect and friendship with Tennessee O’Malley, who is a trusted companion in tight spots, and the one person with whom she can be blunt, and who can get away with openly telling her off.

**Personality Traits:** We all have a responsibility to each other, and to the world. That’s just the way it is, and it’s time everyone got with that program. I am plenty self-aware enough to realize I don’t connect properly with people of lesser means or advantages. I feel bad about that and always look for ways to expand my horizons and perspective.

**Ideal:** *Happiness:* All I really care about is living my life in a way that feels good to me, and in seeing and helping others achieve their own dreams.

**Bond:** My grandfather’s legacy and the mission of the Brotherhood of William St. John mean more to me than anything. It’s my connection to my family history and the root of everything I strive to be.

**Flaw:** I sometimes have a difficult time connecting with those less fortunate than me. I grew up in the lap of luxury so I can be callous to the plight of the poor—and even the middle class.

**Appearance:** Long, slightly wavy brown hair, deep brown eyes, round features, a slender but curvaceous physique .

### MACKENZIE “MACKIE” GLEESON

*5<sup>th</sup>-level Socialite, Chaotic Good*

**ARMOR CLASS:** 13 (Natural + Charisma)

**HIT POINTS:** 28 (5d8 HD)

**SPEED:** 30ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	WLTH
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)

**SKILLS:** Deception +5, Insight +7, Investigation +4, Perception +4, Persuasion +5, Stealth +5

**WEALTH:** +9 (advantage)

**TOOLS:** None

**VEHICLES:** Civilian Aircraft +5 (advantage), Civilian Land +5, Military Aircraft +5

**SAVES:** Dexterity +5, Charisma +5

**SENSES:** Passive perception 14

**BACKGROUND:** White Collar

**LANGUAGES:** English, French, German

## Special Qualities

- **Feat (Ace).**
  - You gain proficiency with civilian aircraft
  - You gain advantage to pilot vehicles in that class
- **Feat (Wealthy).**
  - You automatically succeed in all Wealth checks to purchase common, mundane items, from cigarettes to automobiles
  - You gain advantage in the rare situations when you have to make a Wealth check to acquire something extraordinary.
- **Background (Mover and Shaker)**
  - Always able to find a contact in the white collar business world (no check required, but still must make persuasion check to convince them to help).
- **Force of Personality (2/long rest; Save DC 13):** As a bonus action, you can perform one of the following abilities. You regain expended uses after completing a long rest.
  - **Exalt:** One ally gains advantage on their next attack roll, ability check, or saving throw.
  - **Demoralize:** One creature within 60 feet who can see or hear you must make a Charisma save or suffer disadvantage on their next attack roll, ability check or saving throw.
  - **Charm:** Use *charm person* on one creature as a spell-like ability.
  - **Enthrall:** Use *enthrall* as a spell-like ability.
- **Mental Manipulation.** Gain advantage on Cha checks against one non-hostile creature for the next minute, resulting in hostility when the effect ends. Alternately, verbally abuse a creature that can hear you, forcing them to make a Wisdom save or suffer 2d4 psychic damage and suffer disadvantage on their next attack roll before the end of their turn.
- **Connected.** You have friends anywhere. Make an Intelligence (investigation) check to locate a friendly face, followed by a Charisma (persuasion) check to call in the favor. The DC for these checks is set by the GM based on the remoteness of the location, your history with the contact, your familiarity with the region, and other social factors. Favors you call in may come at a price.
- **Inspiring Words (d6).** You can revitalize your allies during a short rest by delivering inspiring or motivational words. Any allies who choose to spend Hit Dice to regain hit points during the short rest, gain an extra 1d6 hit points.
- **Social Tradition: High Society.** As a member of high society, you have the following abilities:
  - **Society Etiquette.** You have expertise in Insight, and gain advantage on all Wealth checks.

- **Everyone Has Secrets.** As a bonus action, expend a use of Force of Personality to make an implication that throws another creature who can see, hear and understand you and who you can see off balance. Make a Charisma (deception) check against the creature's Passive Wisdom (insight) score. On a success, they must make a Wisdom saving throw or suffer disadvantage on all attack rolls, ability checks and saving throws until the end of your next turn, and you gain advantage on all attack rolls, ability checks and saving throws against them.

## Actions

- **.38 Police Special Revolver:** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5, range 10/100, one target. *Hit:* 1d8+2 piercing damage. *Notes:* 6-shot capacity, reload, double-action (double tap).
- **Bowie Knife:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6+2 slashing damage.

## Gear

- Light handgun (Colt Detective Special; 1d8/6 shots/double-tap)

## Explorer's pack

- Curtiss T-32 Condor aircraft (Civilian model). Speed 190/250. Acceleration 25. Str 10 (0), Dex 8 (-1), Con 12 (+1), Int n/a Wis n/a Cha n/a. Weapons: none. Skills: Athletics +2, Acrobatics +1
- Several land vehicles: luxury cars, sports cars, trucks.
- Bomber jacket, blouse, leather trousers, boots, scarf, gloves.



## JAMES “BUCKY” NEWSON

Ace mechanic, engineering whiz, and gadgeteer. Bucky is a fearless sort who always has a smile on his lips and a bad tendency to leap before he looks. He’s the most swashbuckling of the group in terms of personality, and believes there’s no problem that science and technology cannot solve. He looks up to Errol Flynn and tries to emulate his dashing feats of derring-do, and desperately hopes that someday Natalya will be able to introduce him to his swashbuckling idol.

Bucky is, to his eternal embarrassment, quite in love with Mackie, but knows that she doesn’t look upon him the same way. Still, he gets a bit flustered due to these feelings, which get the better of him all too often. He sees in Tennessee O’Malley a kindred spirit, at least in terms of his outlook on adventuring, but distrusts Marie Laveau, who trafficks in forces that he doesn’t understand, cannot comprehend, are most certainly not scientific, but *must have a rational explanation*.

**Personality Traits:** I work to take care of people, because it’s in my core and my nature. I’m a caregiver at heart. There’s no use complaining, and if you want something done right, you have to do it yourself.

**Ideal:** Bucky takes great pride in what he does, and the skills he’s developed in his job. He also appreciates when other people show great skill in their field.

**Bond:** Bucky is willing to sacrifice everything—his life, his work, and anything else—for Mackie.

**Flaw:** Bucky will work to the point of exhaustion if there’s a job to be done. He doesn’t believe in work-life balance; the job is all that counts, and that can sometimes alienate him from those closest to him.

**Appearance:** Sandy brown hair, mop-style, blue eyes, a crooked, angular smile and sharp features.

## JAMES “BUCKY” NEWSON

5<sup>th</sup> level Gadgeteer, Neutral Good

**ARMOR CLASS:** (description)

**HIT POINTS:** 41 (5d6+15 HD)

**SPEED:** 30ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA:	WLTH
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

**SKILLS:** Investigation +6, Perception +5, Science +6 plus one

**WEALTH:** +6

**TOOLS:** Civilian Land Vehicles, Electrician’s Tools +6, Mechanic’s Tools +6

**VEHICLES:** None.

**SAVES:** Intelligence +6, Charisma +3

**SENSES:** Passive Perception 15

**BACKGROUND:** Blue Collar

**LANGUAGES:** English, German, Russian, French, Italian

## Special Qualities

- **Gadget Points** (Engineer Archetype; 49 points total; 42 spent; 1 banked; 5 On the Fly; Save DC 14)
  - **Pet Project (Radium Homing Pistol)**
- **Perception Filter.** As a bonus action, Bucky can activate a perception filter, which he also refers to as a “Somebody Else’s Problem” field. When in use, Bucky and up to one other person become invisible for up to 1 hour. After the hour’s usage is up, the machine must recharge before Bucky can use it again, which occurs during Bucky’s next long rest. If Bucky chooses to extend the field to a second creature, that creature must remain within 10 feet of him. If Bucky or any additional creature affected by the field attacks, casts a spell, or otherwise does something to directly draw attention to themselves, the field shuts off.
- **Weapons** (see Radium Homing Pistol and Electro-Sword, below)
- **Blue Collar Background:**
  - **Get the Job Done.** You have the guts and where-withal to push through difficult situations and get the job done as expected or required, whatever the situation. Once per session, you may use the “Push Through” function of Inspiration without needing to spend an Inspiration Point. You may even use this ability if you don’t have Inspiration Points to spend.
  - **Union Support.** You have the support of a labor union behind you. This means that when you need to call upon help that is related to your job skills, you can find it. Union brothers and sisters look out for one another, and they’ll get your back when needed and when possible. They will also, however, expect the same from you, and if you start putting other union folk or their families in danger, you might quickly find yourself blacklisted...

## Actions

- **Radium Homing Pistol.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 and advantage to hit, range 120 feet, up to 3 targets. *Hit:* 1d4+3 per bolt (up to 3d4+9 if only a single target is attacked). Each target requires a separate attack roll.
- **Electro-Sword.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. *Hit:* 1d8 slashing damage plus 2d8 lightning.
  - **Electro-Bolt.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 120 ft, one target. *Hit:* 2d10 lightning. This bolt is launched from Bucky’s sword.
- **Lie Detector Goggles.** As an action, Bucky can don these goggles to accomplish certain goals. Each action requires concentration and only one can be used at a time. The goggles will last for 1 minute before the

batteries run down. Bucky may use the goggles three times before they burn out. Expended charges are recovered over a long rest, or one charge is recovered over a short rest. The possible effects are as follows.

- **Lie Detector.** Any creature attempting to lie to Bucky must succeed at a Wisdom (deception) check at disadvantage, against Bucky's save DC, or Bucky knows they are lying. Unless he chooses to read their thoughts, he doesn't know the truth, only that they are not telling it.
- **Read Thoughts.** Bucky can detect the surface thoughts of a given creature unless it makes a Wisdom save against Bucky's save DC. Creatures that are lying may be thinking about the lie, so this doesn't necessarily inform him that they are not telling the truth, unless he directs a specific question.
- **Probe Thoughts.** Bucky can attempt to prove the thoughts of a target to learn deeper knowledge about a target, but this allows a Wisdom save. If the target fails, Bucky gains insight into its reasoning (if any), its emotional state, and something that looms large in its mind (such as something it worries over, loves, or hates). Creatures probed in this manner are aware that they are being probed and may attempt, as an action, an Intelligence save. If they succeed, the goggles break down until Bucky spends a short rest and makes an Intelligence (electronics tools) check at DC 15 to repair them.



- **On the Fly Gadgets (bonus action).** *Int* (engineering tools) check at DC 15+1 per level of gadget, and point expenditure. Bucky has 7 gadget points with which he may produce gadgets "on the fly" to cover a need he doesn't currently have covered. When these 6 points are expended, he may spend Inspiration Points for On the Fly Gadgets. Choose a spell effect upon which the gadget will be based and give it an appropriate science-y name, then announce, "Good thing I brought my [Gadget Name]!" A 0- or 1st-level gadget costs 2 points, a 2nd-level gadget costs 5 points, and a 3rd-level gadget costs 6 points.
- Gear: Bomber jacket, short gloves, scarf, Gadgets (see "Actions"), Explorer's Pack, Mechanic's Tools, Portable Science Lab

## TENNESSEE O'MALLEY

O'Malley is the consummate adventuring archaeologist with the spirit of a rogue, the heart of a hero, and the ethics of a pure historian. He is cynical, wise cracking, cocky, overconfident, uncouth, and arrogant, but there are few in the world who can be considered more expert in the worlds of archaeology and myth and legend. The one area about which he is humble is that he obtained his PhD from Southwestern University instead of an Ivy League school, such as Harvard or Yale, but he will quickly defend the fact that his PhD is as good as any other when it comes down to brass tacks.

His fast, two-fisted style has gotten him into as many scrapes as it's gotten him out of, and he intends it to stay that way. After all, who wants to die a decrepit old man in a bed? Better to make a name for himself while he can. He's seen a lot in his day, and values the knowledge of Marie Laveau and the instincts and skills of Natalya Abramova, though he has difficulty trusting either of the women, Natalya because of her past and Marie due to the dark forces with which she trafficks. Still, O'Malley can't deny a certain chemistry between himself and Nat...

He considers Bucky Newson a trusted friend and companion, and respects the leadership of Mackie Gleeson, with whom he has a deep friendship. He has a quiet bond with Savage Steve, whom O'Malley respects for his simple and direct ways, and while O'Malley may give Steve a hard time, that's his prerogative and nobody else better mess with the gentle giant.

**Personality Traits:** When I see something I want, I go after it. It's not in my nature to back down. I am opinionated and argumentative; as an expert in my field, I don't like to be challenged.

**Ideal:** We learn as much from failure as we do from success, if not more.

**Bond:** I always have my notebook and pen with me, and I constantly jot down my observations and discoveries. Writing, after all, is the key to the legacy we leave behind.



**Flaw:** I rarely take the time to truly think things through before acting.

**Appearance:** Long, chiseled features, dirty blonde hair, neatly cut and parted, piercing gray eyes.

## TENNESSEE O'MALLEY

*5<sup>th</sup> Level Raider, Chaotic Good*

**ARMOR CLASS:** 16 (intelligence, bomber jacket, and fedora)

**HIT POINTS:** 39 (5d10+5)

**SPEED:** 30ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	WLTH
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

**SKILLS:** Athletics +4, History +5, Investigation +6, Perception +5, Religion +5, Stealth +5

**WEALTH:** +5

**TOOLS:** Archaeologist's Tools

**VEHICLES:** Land-Based civilian vehicles

**SAVES:** Intelligence +6, Dexterity +4

**SENSES:** Passive Perception 15

**BACKGROUND:** Academic

**LANGUAGES:** English, Spanish, Greek, Latin, German, Arabic, French, Russian

### Special Qualities

- **Cryptolinguist.** You gain a special skill: Intelligence (cryptolinguist). You are proficient in this skill. By making an Intelligence (cryptolinguist) check, you understand the general content of a piece of writing you are attempting to decipher. Doing so takes time and is at a DC set by the GM.
- **Cultural Chameleon.** You can impersonate general types of people, as well as individuals, within reasonable limits. For example, a European raider might impersonate a Bedouin, or pass for a local in an alien country. To accomplish this, you make a Charisma check against the Passive Insight score of any suspicious observers. It also takes time and preparation to accomplish.
- **Natural Explorer (jungle).** When you make an Intelligence or Wisdom check related to your favored terrain, your proficiency bonus is doubled if you are using a skill that you're proficient in. You also can't become lost, aren't hampered by difficult terrain, are always alert to danger, can move stealthily at your normal pace (if alone), find double food if foraging, and learn detailed information about creatures you track.
- **Jack of All Trades.** you can add half your proficiency bonus, rounded down, to any ability check you make that doesn't already include your proficiency bonus.
- **Feat: Two-Weapon Fighting.** You may add your ability bonus to the bonus attack from your off-hand when fighting with two weapons. You don't suffer disadvantage when firing two handguns simultaneously. You may double-tap with both weapons, so

long as other conditions allow (the target is within the first range increment and you are not otherwise disadvantaged).

- **Archetype: Archaeologist**
  - **Secrets of the Ancients:** Gain advantage on Wisdom (perception) checks to spot unusual stonework or construction, signs of traps, or to avoid surprise.
- **Scale.** you gain advantage on Strength (athletics) checks to climb such natural inclines.
- **Background Feature: The Hallowed Halls.** Whenever you need information or expertise on a subject remotely related to your area of study, you know who to talk to, to find the right books, databases, knowledge and information. You may be able to gain access to ancient texts and even private collections and libraries, depending on the relationship you have with the contact in question, or your reputation as a scholar. Likewise, you may be called upon to provide the same services to someone else in academia.

### Actions

- **Extra Attack.** Whenever you take the attack action on your turn, you may attack twice instead of once.
- **Webley Revolvers (2).** Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, one target, range 30/100. Hit: 1d10+2 piercing. Notes: 6-shot capacity, reload, double-action (double tap)
- **Tomahawks (2).** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, one target, reach 5ft (20/60 thrown). Hit: 1d6+2 slashing.
- Gear: cigarettes, lighter, archaeologist's tools, leather jacket, fedora, explorer's pack



## “SAVAGE” STEVE MCDERMOTT

Savage Steve is a simple sort, a dock worker and brawler who generally prefers the company of his pet Rottweiler Bluto to that of people. He’s a gentle giant who, while he loves a good fight, doesn’t like to start trouble or hurt people and will avoid it if possible. When troubles come, however, he is more than happy to put an end to them.

Steve sees in the Society a chance to give back something to the world, by protecting those weaker than him, and doing a service to humanity. He has spent his life attempting to atone for the accidental death of his childhood best friend Larry, who died in a horrible accident after Steve dared Larry to climb the walls of an old building, which collapsed mid-climb. When Steve failed to come forward with the truth, another boy was arrested and jailed for the accident. Steve never heard from the boy again, and has ever since carried a deep guilt over the event. This is a secret he doesn’t share, but which has defined his sense of right and wrong ever since.

Steve likes Bucky immensely, though he feels protective of the gadgeteer due to Bucky’s penchant for taking unnecessary risks. Marie Laveau and Natalya Abramova (The Fox) make him very uncomfortable, but he trusts Mackie with his life and has faith that she would not allow the two into the Society if they didn’t have the proper moral outlook and skills to share. As far as Mackie goes, Steve holds himself up as her conscience, in a way – when she needs reminded about the mission of the Society, or that she is not better than those the Society seeks to help, he never hesitates to offer the gentle reminder.

**Personality Traits:** I work to take care of people because it’s in my core and my nature. I’m a caregiver at heart. I don’t quit. No matter how many times I get knocked down, I will always find my feet again.

**Ideal:** Loyalty matters, possibly more than anything else. I am loyal to a fault.

**Bond:** I have a dream of making the world a better place in any way I can. It’s what keeps me getting out of bed every day.

**Flaw:** I’m not stupid, but I tend to look for the best in people, which makes me a little gullible at times.

**Appearance:** Bald, thick brown handlebar moustache, brawny, small eyes, not much of a neck, wearing an old and raggedy tank top, work trousers, suspenders, and work boots.

## “SAVAGE” STEVE MCDERMOTT

*5<sup>th</sup> level Pugilist, Lawful Good*

**ARMOR CLASS:** 15 (Constitution, Unarmored Defense)

**HIT POINTS:** 38 (5d8+10)

**SPEED:** 40ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	WLTH
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	11 (0)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)

**SKILLS:** Animal Handling +3, Athletics +6, Acrobatics +6, Insight +3

**WEALTH:** -3

**TOOLS:** Tinker’s tools +5

**VEHICLES:** None

**SAVES:** Dexterity +5, Constitution +5

**SENSES:** Passive Perception 10

**BACKGROUND:** Blue Collar

**LANGUAGES:** Irish-English

### Special Qualities

- **Unarmed Combat**
  - Unarmed or weapon strikes deal minimum 1d8 damage.
  - Whenever you take the attack action with an unarmed strike or pugilist weapon on your turn, you may make an additional unarmed strike as a bonus action.
- **Potency.** You have 5 potency points to spend. Your save DC is 11. You may spend a Potency point to accomplish any of the following effects.
  - *Flurry of Blows:* Spend 1 potency point after you take the attack action. You may make two unarmed strikes as a bonus action.
  - *Patient Defense.* Spend 1 potency point to take the dodge action as a bonus action on your turn.
  - *Move Like Lightning.* Spend 1 potency point to take the disengage or dash action as a bonus action, and your jump distance is doubled for the turn.
  - *Stunning Strike.* When you hit another creature with a melee weapon or unarmed attack, you can spend 1 potency point to attempt a stunning strike. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be Stunned until the end of your next turn.
- **Fighting Style: Brawling.**
  - *Knuckle Duster.* When you use brass knuckles in combat, they deal 1d4 damage, plus your normal unarmed attack damage. In addition, when you successfully strike a creature you may force it to succeed at a Constitution saving throw against your Potency save DC, or be knocked prone, stunned, and unable to take reactions until the end of your next turn.
- **Deflect Missiles.** Use your reaction to deflect or catch a ranged attack, reducing the damage by 1d10+7. If you reduce the damage to 0, you catch the missile if you have a free hand and it is small enough to catch in one hand. You may then spend 1 Potency Point to make an immediate ranged attack as part of the

reaction. This attack is made with proficiency and the missile counts as a Pugilist weapon for you, dealing 1d8 damage with range of 20/60.

- **Feat: Animal Trainer.**
  - Animal Companion: Bluto (see stats below). Bluto follows Steve's commands and acts on Steve's initiative.
- **Slow Fall.** You can use your reaction when you fall to reduce falling damage by 25 points (to a minimum of 0).

#### Blue Collar Background:

- **Get the Job Done:** Once per session, you may use the "Push Through" function of Inspiration without needing to spend an Inspiration Point. You may even use this ability if you don't have Inspiration Points to spend.
- **Union Support:** You have the support of a labor union behind you. This means that when you need to call upon help that is related to your job skills, you can find it. Union brothers and sisters look out for one another, and they'll get your back when needed and when possible. They will also, however, expect the same from you, and if you start putting other union folk or their families in danger, you might quickly find yourself blacklisted...

#### Actions

- **Extra Attack.** You can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.



- **Unarmed Strike.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6, one target, reach 5ft. *Hit:* 1d8+1d4+3 bludgeoning damage, using brass knuckles.
- **Slingshot.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5, one target, range 30/120ft. *Hit:* 1d8+2 bludgeoning. Steve has a pouch of 100 silver sling bullets given to him as a gift by Mackie.

Gear: Cobbler's tools, explorer's pack.

#### BLUTO, STEVE'S ROTTWEILER

*Medium beast, unaligned*

**ARMOR CLASS:** 15

**HIT POINTS:** 5 (1d8+1)

**SPEED:** 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

**SKILLS:** PERCEPTION +3

**SAVES:** Strength +4, Dexterity +5, Constitution +4

**SENSES:** Passive perception 13 (18 hearing/smell)

**CHALLENGE:** 1/8 (25 XP)

#### Special Qualities

- **Keen Hearing and Smell.** Bluto has advantage on Wisdom (perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.
- **Follow Commands.** Bluto follows simple commands given to it by Steve. He is a smart dog, but still a dog, so commands must be the same sort of commands any well-trained animal can understand and obey.
- **Hold Target.** When Bluto knocks a creature prone, he may hold it at bay by clamping his jaws on it, resulting in the creature being grappled and restrained, with an escape DC of 14.

#### Actions

- **Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

#### MARIE LAVEAU

Ostensibly the granddaughter of the original Voodoo Queen of New Orleans, here's what people don't know about Marie: she is, in fact, the original Marie Laveau. In order to deflect questions, she masquerades as your own granddaughter, but in truth she made a deal with the Ghedi Loa (Voodoo Spirit) Baron Samedi—also known as Death—in 1881 to remain on this world, when she became uncertain of what awaited her beyond the Pale.

Laveau's youth was restored and she will not age so long as she continues to send Death corrupted souls and send those who have returned from the netherworld scream-

ing back to Hell. Her necromantic skills have served her well in this capacity; unfortunately, she is no longer the powerful sorceress she once was—along with her return to youth, her skills also atrophied, and she has been working for decades to build them back up. The Society has granted her the ability to both re-hone her skills and continue her work for Samedi. Unfortunately, immunity to harm did not come with the eternal youth, and she tends to be cautious because she doesn't want to get killed before she's sure she has been redeemed.

She respects Mackie very much, and genuinely likes Tennessee. Natalya in some ways seems a kindred spirit, even if her talents are innate and less magical in nature. She gives Steve his distance, since she is wise enough to know his simple mind can't grasp the power she wields. Marie has something of a rivalry with Bucky, who doesn't respect her power, and she in turn has something of a disdain for his reliance on technology.

**NOTE:** Marie's statistics and spell list below are slightly different and more extensive than that in the "Heart of Yhtill" adventure which follows. This is to facilitate her use as a player character if desired, and the adventure could represent her first introduction to the Society if the GM and players choose or, if the players are running original PCs, a more experienced Marie could facilitate the PCs' induction into the Society. Regardless, you can feel free to substitute this version of Marie for running that scenario; it will not alter the outcome in any way.

If a PC is already playing Marie, the GM could wait until the proper section in "Heart" to introduce her, or could substitute the Voodoo Queen in that adventure with a different woman—perhaps Marie's own mentor, also still mysteriously alive after far too many years...

**Personality Traits:** I can find common ground between the fiercest enemies, empathizing with them and always working toward peace. I see omens in every event and action. The gods try to speak to us; we just need to listen.

**Ideal:** A connection to other people is vital to a meaningful life. In my case it's the Brotherhood in general, and Maddie Black in particular.

**Bond:** The people I work with are like family to me, and I really value them. They are what keep me coming back time and again.

**Flaw:** As a voodoo priestess, I can be quietly vengeful towards people who give me a hard time, and I've levied more than a few curses in my life. Curses, unfortunately, tend to have a way of coming back on you...

**Appearance:** Medium-complexion Haitian-Creole mix, piercing black eyes, a serious expression, hauntingly attractive with angular features.

## MARIE LAVEAU

*5<sup>th</sup> level Hallowed, Chaotic Good*

**ARMOR CLASS:** 15 (Wisdom)

**HIT POINTS:** 33 (5d8+5 HD)

**SPEED:** 30ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	WLTH
10 (0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)

**SKILLS:** Religion +4, History +4, Medicine +8, Insight +8, Persuasion +7

**TOOLS:** Cook's tools

**VEHICLES:** Civilian ground vehicles

**SAVES:** Wisdom +7, Charisma +6

**SENSES:** Passive perception 14

**BACKGROUND:** Customer Service (Salon/Bar owner)

**LANGUAGES:** English, French

### Special Qualities

- **Defuse.** You add twice your proficiency bonus to Charisma (persuade) rolls to defuse a situation with another person who will not give ground or is about to cause a major problem.
- **Divine Domain (Death):** You are dedicated to the Loa Baron Samedi and are a shepherd of the dead. This doesn't make you evil; after all, the Baron sometimes refuses to dig a grave, and saves a life.
  - **Disciple of Death.** As an action, you can make a ranged spell attack roll; on a success, you deal 1d8 necrotic damage. If your hit points are below your hit point maximum, you recover half the damage dealt in hit points. You cannot raise your hit points above your normal hit point maximum in this way.
- **Channel Divinity (1/rest):** You can channel divine energy to achieve certain effects. You have the following Channel Divinity abilities:
  - **Turn Undead:** As an action, you present your holy symbol and speak a prayer censuring the undead. Any undead that can see or hear you within 30 feet must make a Wisdom saving throw. If that creature fails, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes damage. It must try to move as far away from you as it can and cannot move within 30 feet of you. It can only use the Dash action or attempt to escape from a condition or effect that prevents it from moving. It can Dodge if it can't escape.
  - **Command Undead:** When you successfully turn undead, instead of turning, you may place the undead under your command for the duration. If the undead would be destroyed, your command over them is permanent until you release it, or until one of your companions or you attack and damage it. Once broken, control cannot be re-established.

- **Destroy Undead (CR ½):** When you successfully turn undead, any undead who are CR ½ or less are destroyed rather than turned.
- **Spellcasting:** Wisdom is your spellcasting ability. Your Save DC is 15. Your Spell attack bonus is +7. You usually have the following spells prepared.
  - **Cantrips (4):** guidance, mending, resistance, thaumaturgy
  - **1<sup>st</sup> Level (4 slots):** bane, bless, command, cure wounds, inflict wounds, sanctuary
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> Level (3 slots):** augury, blindness/deafness, gentle repose, hold person, lesser restoration
  - **3<sup>rd</sup> Level (2 slots):** animate dead, bestow curse, dispel magic, speak with dead

### Actions

- **Pump-action shotgun.** Ranged weapon attack: +4 to hit, range 30ft/100ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage with shot (shot provides advantage to hit; shot deals double damage within 10 feet and half damage beyond 30ft) or 5 (1d10+1) piercing damage with slugs.
- **Ceremonial dagger.** Melee weapon attack: +4 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage.



## NATALYA “THE FOX” ABRAMOVA

This Russian beauty is an up-and-coming starlet in Hollywood; her face is just beginning to grace the papers and her films just beginning to give her name recognition. What would her adoring public do if they knew that she was also The Fox, a notorious cat burglar wanted for robbing several museums and jewelry merchants throughout the world? Indeed, the very saber and parrying dagger she wields were said to once belong to Nicholas I of Russia; she, of course, liberated it from the New York Metropolitan Museum while it was on temporary exhibit there. Its silver edged blade has served her well against some of the more unnatural foes she’s had to face, as have her unique talents—psychic abilities learned from a secretive group of Tibetan monks, which she also keeps well hidden from your adoring public.

In truth, Natalya’s true name is Natalya Fedorovna, and she is the last surviving child of the Romanov dynasty. Born in 1914, her mother, the Tsarina Alexandra had her smuggled out of the country as the winds of revolution began to blow. She was secreted to a monastery in Tibet, where she was raised among the monks, who told her the truth of her heritage. She has spent most of her life on the run from the Soviet Union, terrified of what would happen if they discovered that a Romanov survived the 1918 executions.

By the age of 14, she had become disillusioned with the monks and took her leave, making her way in the streets, traveling through China, the Middle East, and Europe, and honing her skills as a thief. Eventually she became known (and wanted internationally) as the Fox, a high-class cat burglar and purveyor of jewels, artwork and antiques. Between the ages of 18 and 22, she attended Oxford University, using credentials she had acquired from street contacts, and eventually secured a degree in liberal arts. Still, she found herself back in the thieving game, which would be the doorway to a completely altered life.

It was a run-in with the Brotherhood that saw her change her ways, as she ended up having to team up with them on the very caper where they hunted her down, against a group of fascist agents in Spain. After saving the life of Mackie Gleeson and promising to go straight, Natasha’s life changed forever. Mackie used her contacts to introduce Nat to contacts in Los Angeles, launching her career as a model and starlet, as well as helping her to gain American citizenship under the nom de guerre, Natalya Abramova.

So far as the Society knows, Natalya is reformed, and really, she does her best to stay on the right side of the law. It’s just that sometimes the thrill of a good burglary is too much to pass up! She gets along with Marie, and likes Steve a lot—his simple-minded ways are refreshing next to the hypocrisy of high society. She respects Mackie as leader of the group, but in many ways Mackie is representative of all Natalya dislikes about the upper class.

Bucky is incredibly cute, and Natalya has resolved to one day bed him, but she finds Tennessee too gruff and uncouth for her tastes, though she deeply respects his tenacity and abilities as both a scholar and a warrior.

**Personality Traits:** I am unflinchingly and unfailingly loyal: my friends and relationships matter deeply to me. I also have a deep sense of responsibility and feel that I must use my growing fame and my abilities to affect positive change in the world.

**Ideal:** It's my place to bring a little beauty and joy into the lives of other people whenever I can.

**Bond:** I carry a locket with my mother's photo everywhere I go.

**Flaw:** I can't pass up the opportunity to filch something. I'm not a kleptomaniac; it's just the excitement of the heist.

**Appearance:** Slender, athletic build, fiery red hair, crystal blue eyes, soft, round features.

### NATALYA "THE FOX" ABRAMOVA

5<sup>th</sup> level Mentalist, Chaotic Good

**ARMOR CLASS:** 17 (Wisdom, Costume Bonus)

**HIT POINTS:** 28 (5d8 HD)

**SPEED:** 30ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	WLTH
9 (-1)	15 (+2)	11 (0)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

**SKILLS:** Perception +7, Performance (Acting) +5, Persuasion +5, Psionics (+4, +7, +6), Stealth +7

**WEALTH:** +2

**TOOLS:** Disguise kit +5, Thieves' Tools +5

**VEHICLES:** NONE

**SAVES:** Intelligence +4, Wisdom +7, Charisma +5

**SENSES:** Passive Perception +7

**BACKGROUND:** Performer

**LANGUAGES:** Russian (native), English, German

### Special Qualities

- **Psionic Insight (4d8).** As a bonus action, choose yourself or another creature you can see within 60 feet of you. That creature gains one psionic insight die, a d8, that they can use within the next 10 minutes, adding to any one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw. A creature can only have one psionic insight die at a time. You regain expended dice when you finish a long rest.
- **Psionic Nature (Psi-Ghost).**
  - **Psionic Stealth.** You gain expertise with the stealth skill.
  - **Mesmerizing Gaze.** As an action, you may expend one use of psychic insight to force another creature to make a Charisma saving throw against your psychic save DC. If the creature fails, it is charmed by you. A creature charmed in this way is incapacitated and clearly dazed, and when



the effect ends, they do not remember you being there. Roll your insight die; the result indicates the number of rounds the effect lasts, ending at the end of your turn on the indicated round. The creature is entitled to a new saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.

- **Psionic Senses.** As a bonus action, use *detect evil and good*, *detect magic*, *detect psionics*, or *detect poison and disease* as a spell-like ability, or gain advantage on any Wisdom (perception) check. After using this ability, you must complete a long rest before using it again.
  - In addition, you may recognize other psionic, magical, or supernatural persons or creatures using your passive Wisdom (psionics) score, or a Wisdom (psionics) check if you actively attempt to sense another. The DC is 12 if the creature is not trying to hide its nature, and equal to its save DC if it is. This aspect of your psychic senses is always active, regardless of whether you have used your spell-like ability. With this ability, you learn only that the creature is either psychic, mystical, or supernatural in nature.
- **Mental Resistance.** You gain proficiency with Intelligence saving throws.
- **Psionic Powers:** Wisdom is your ability for psionic powers. Your Save DC is 15. Your psionic attack bonus is +7. You have the following psychic powers, which require an action unless otherwise noted:
  - **Obfuscation (Charisma (psionics) (requires concentration); opposed by observer's Wisdom save).** You may achieve effective *invisibility* as per the spell

(DC 13); the ability to pass unnoticed in a crowd (DC 13); *greater invisibility* (DC 17); Obfuscate another (DC 15); Obfuscate objects up to human size (+1 to DC per object obfuscated)

- *Mesmerism (Charisma (psionics); resisted by Wisdom save*. You may achieve the following effects: *command* (DC 14); *sleep* (DC 14; one creature only; no HD restriction); *suggestion* (DC 15); *hypnotic pattern* (DC 16), or other spells and effects which, at the GM's discretion, fall within the overall umbrella of mesmerism; you must declare which effect they are trying to invoke before using this power, and it affects the mind, not emotions.
- *Mental stun*. Make a psionic attack roll vs. the opponent's psychic AC (Wisdom saving throw bonus + 10). Success deals 1d4 psychic damage, and the victim must succeed at a Wisdom saving throw or be stunned and incapacitated for 1d4 rounds. Victims incapacitated in this manner may attempt a new wisdom save at the end of each turn, ending the effect with a success. Additional attacks deal extra damage and increase the time of incapacitation.
- *Psychic defense*. As a reaction, you may choose to replace an Intelligence or Charisma save with a Wisdom (psionics) check.
- *Combat awareness (Intelligence (psionics) DC 13)*. As a bonus action, activate this power to use your psychic attack bonus instead of Strength- or Dexterity-based bonuses in combat. Thus, firing a pistol would use psychic attack bonus instead of dexterity and proficiency bonus. Weapons add Wis bonus to damage instead of Strength or Dexterity. When subjected to a sneak attack, make a Wisdom save vs. the attack roll; success means the sneak attack doesn't deal extra damage. Lasts for concentration (1 minute).
- *Empathic Transmission (Charisma (psionics))*. As an action, generate emotions in others (Easy emotions DC 13; Medium emotions DC 15; Hard emotions DC 18)
- **Psychic Backlash**. If you fail to achieve a DC 13 (basic) or DC 15 (advanced) check on a psionic power, you lose access to that power until you complete a short rest, even if the power is otherwise successful. If you roll a natural 1, you suffer 1d4 points of psychic damage and lose access until you complete a long rest. In the case of a psychic attack, you may successfully attack an opponent whose psychic AC is below 13. In this case, the power works, but you still suffer backlash, losing access to it until you complete a long rest.
- **Background: Performer**
  - *Fame and Fortune*: You have notoriety in certain circles. In any situation where someone might recognize you, they gain advantage on Wisdom

checks to recall who you are, and Intelligence checks to recall information about you. If you have not suffered any scandals or negative publicity, you in turn have advantage on charisma checks to interact with such "fans" or other industry people.

### Actions

- **Luger 9mm**. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 (+7 combat awareness), one target, range 30/100. Hit: 1d10+2 piercing (1d10+4 piercing (combat awareness)). Notes: 8-shot capacity, reload, double-action (double tap)
- **Rapier**. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 (+7 combat awareness), one target, reach 5ft. Hit: 1d8+2 piercing/silvered (1d8+4 piercing/silvered (combat awareness)).
- **Silver Main-Gauche**. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 (+7 combat awareness), one target, reach 5ft. Hit: 1d6+2 piercing/silvered (1d6+4 piercing/silvered (combat awareness)).

**NOTE:** Natasha tends to fight Florentine, using both her rapier and main-gauche when in melee combat. When she does so, regardless of whether she is using her combat awareness, her main-gauche is her off-hand weapon and deals only 1d6 damage (no ability bonus for off-hand damage).

**Gear:** Disguise kit, fine evening clothes, red kung-fu outfit and stylized fox mask, locket, thieves' tools, tarot deck, actor's pack, burglar's pack

### TITANUS WILLIAMS

A private detective usually operating out of the low-rent district in Atlantic City, Titanus is an African-American who refuses to be kept down by the racism that is rampant in the world. His keen powers of detection and nonsense approach have garnered him the grudging respect of many who might otherwise dismiss him out of hand simply due to the color of his skin.

Titanus has made acquaintances, associates, friends, allies, and enemies across the world in his exploits, and has racked up an impressive list of completed cases. His arch-enemy, as he considers it, is Aldus Schwartzhofer, who has defeated the Brotherhood of William St. John, or at the very least escaped capture by them, time and again over the years.

Among the society, Titanus calls every last one of them a friend. He is particularly reverent of Marie Laveau, who he sees as a connection to the "old ways" of his heritage, and he regularly visits New Orleans to spend time with her, and has worked with Maddie Black on more than one case while in NOLA, and has called her to help him with cases in Atlantic City on occasion—the two very much respect each other as colleagues. He likes the gruff



approach of Tennessee, finds Bucky exceptionally easy to get along with, and Mackie a strong leader. He likes the simple, straightforward nature of Steve, though he finds his slow-to-comprehend mannerisms frustrating at times. Of the group, he likes Natalya the least; while he finds her charming and certainly quite attractive, he's got her pegged—she's not entirely left her former criminal ways behind, and the day may come when Titanus can no longer turn his head and look the other way.

**Personality Traits:** I am stoic to a fault and don't show my emotions. Still, I call it like I see it and I don't brook ignorance.

**Ideal: Equality.** I live for the day when everyone is accepted for who they are.

**Bond: My Friends.** The people who have earned my respect are the family I have chosen, and I would put my life on the line for them in a moment.

**Flaw:** I have a very hard time trusting people and I constantly sleep with one eye open, waiting for the other shoe to drop. When it does, I'll be the first to say "I told you so."

**Appearance:** Handsome African-American with prominent nose and long face.

## TITANUS WILLIAMS

5<sup>th</sup> level Gumshoe, Lawful Neutral

**ARMOR CLASS:** 17 (Fedora, 3-Piece Suit, Trench Coat)

**HIT POINTS:** 34 (5d10)

**SPEED:** 30ft

STR:	DEX:	CON:	INT:	WIS:	CHA:	WLTH
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (0)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

**SKILLS:** INSIGHT +10, INVESTIGATION +9, PERCEPTION +10, PERSUASION +7, STEALTH +5

**WEALTH:** +1

**TOOLS:** Surveillance Tools, Thieves' Tools, Portable Science Lab

**VEHICLES:** Land-based civilian vehicles

**SAVES:** Dexterity +5, Wisdom +7

**SENSES:** Passive perception 20

**BACKGROUND:** Blue Collar

**LANGUAGES:** English, Spanish, German, French, Latin

## Special Qualities

- **Investigation Expertise.** Expertise in Perception, Insight, Investigation.
  - **Urban Tracking.** This ability allows the gumshoe to pick up a trail and follow it for one hour through a combination of physical evidence and asking the right questions of the right people.
  - **Gaining Advantage.** By choosing to double the amount of time it takes to gather information, the gumshoe can make a check to track down a mark at advantage.
- **Adversary (Order of the Black Dragon):** You have advantage on all Investigation checks related to this adversary, as well as on any Intelligence checks to recall information about them.
- **Face in the Crowd:** Through quick changes of clothing and posture, disguise or impersonate to blend into a crowd. This disguise is not complete; it is used to throw off a tail, stalk prey without being noticed, or other similar effects. Impersonating specific individuals is not normally possible; change in gender, race, or social class is possible. Requires Charisma (performance) check and 1d4 rounds; change of height or weight no more than one-tenth original.
- Archetype (Detective):
  - **Sherlock.** You make all Intelligence (investigation) checks at advantage.
  - **Natural Scrapper.** Once per turn whenever you strike a creature with an unarmed or melee weapon attack, and that creature is already below its hit point maximum, you deal an extra 1d6 damage.
- **Precision Shot:** Double proficiency bonus when attacking with handguns.
- **Deduction Dice (3d8).** Spend a deduction dice and add its total to any Ability Check, Attack Roll, or Saving Throw. Spent dice are recovered after completing a long rest.



## Actions

- **Beretta M1934 Handgun.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, one target, range 30/100ft. Hit: 1d10+3 piercing. Notes: 8-shot capacity, reload, double-action (double tap)
- **Knife.** Melee/Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, one target, reach 5ft (range 20/60 ft). Hit: 1d4+3 piercing.
- Gear: Investigator's Toolkit, Investigator's Pack, Business Suit, Trenchcoat, Fedora, P.I. license

## MEDUSA "MADDIE" BLACK

Maddie Black is a private detective in New Orleans, and a new member of the Brotherhood of William St. John. She gained the acquaintance of the group after a too-close encounter with the Yig-Worshipping Order of the Dragon and their mysterious leader, Dr. Serpent, and since has become exceptionally close with Marie and Natalya, though she considers all of them friends.

Maddie is, in fact, a direct descendent of the original Medusa, and has inherited some of the ancient Gorgon's powers through her family line. These she uses in her nightly quest to punish evil, though she goes to great lengths not to petrify people, as she views it as the worst kind of torture, and she's not fond of torture.

Maddie is a serious type and can be abrasive and harsh at times. She does, however, have a big heart and has a very hard time looking the other way when there is someone in need. She knows, however, that sometimes doing the right thing means walking on the wrong side of the law, and when she sets her sights on a goal, she is single-minded in her pursuit of the ends which often puts her in danger of those ends justifying her means.

Perhaps Maddie's biggest weakness is that she has a soft-spot for children and young teens. She cannot bear to see young people suffer, and it was her need to avenge a murdered young girl that first brought her into conflict with Doctor Serpent.

Among the Brotherhood, she is closest with Marie Laveau, who has been a contact of hers among the supernatural community in New Orleans for many years, and who recruited Maddie for the Brotherhood. She has also grown very close to Natalya, whom she considers possibly her best friend. She has a deep and abiding friendship with Titanus, with whom she has worked on many a case – the two consider themselves unofficial partners in their respective cities. She respects Mackie a great deal, but while she likes and respects all of them, she finds Tennessee to be a bit too arrogant, Bucky to be too closed-minded and chipper, and has to fight to maintain patience for Steve's simple-mindedness, though she appreciates his straight-forward nature and if she's being honest with herself, really likes Steve's rottweiler, Bluto.

**Personality Traits:** I carry a lot of anger inside me and it leads me to fight for the underdog while raging against those in pow-



er. I work to take care of people, because it's in my core and my nature. I'm a caregiver at heart.

**Ideal:** I take great pride in what I do and the skill I've developed in the job. I also appreciate when other people show great skill in my field.

**Bond:** My gun was a gift from my mentor who passed away some years ago—it's a nickel-plated Colt .45 with mother-of-pearl grips. It's with me all the time, and I would lose my mind if anything ever happened to it.

**Flaw:** I'm a sucker for kids, especially teens on the streets. It gets me in trouble, because I'll drop anything to help a child or indigent teen in need.

**Appearance:** Attractive young Stella with golden hair, piercing blue eyes and a smile that could melt a Jake's heart. That is, until she focuses that gaze on you. Then it's all writhing snakes for hair, serpentine eyes, and horrific scaly skin.

## MADDIE BLACK

4<sup>th</sup> level Powered (Gadgeteer)/1<sup>st</sup> level Gumshoe, Chaotic Good

**ARMOR CLASS:** 17 (Wisdom, business suit, fedora, trench coat)

**HIT POINTS:** 24 (4d6+1d10 HD)

**SPEED:** 30ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	WLTH
10 (0)	14 (+2)	11 (0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

**SKILLS:** Athletics +3, Insight +9, Investigation +8, Perception +9, Science +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5

**WEALTH:** +6

**TOOLS:** Investigator's Toolkit, Thieves' Tools

**VEHICLES:** none.

**SAVES:** Wisdom +6, Charisma +5, Constitution +3

**SENSES:** Passive Perception 19

**BACKGROUND:** Blue Collar

**LANGUAGES:** English, French, Spanish

### Special Qualities

- **Powered (Wis; Save DC 14, Attack +6).** Maddie has 1 point "banked" for future use. Unless otherwise stated, using a power requires an action. When Maddie uses her powers, her victims see her take on serpentine qualities. When she uses her Petrifying Gaze specifically, she goes full on snakes-for-hair, green, scaly skin, glowing eyes, Medusa.
  - **Petrifying Gaze (13-point power; Level restriction suspended for this ability; Maddie banked her initial 8 points and as a result, began play with no powers until she reached second level).** Make a power attack. The victim's AC is 10 plus their Charisma save bonus. If you succeed, the victim is restrained as its flesh begins to harden. A creature thus restrained will remain so for 1 minute; it must make a Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns as long as you concentrate and maintain eye contact with it. If it successfully saves three times, or you break eye contact, it breaks free. If it fails three times, it is turned to stone and is petrified for the duration. Successes and failures don't need to be consecutive. Creatures physically broken while petrified suffer deformities if reverted to original state. If the creature is petrified and you maintain your concentration and eye contact for the entire duration, the creature is turned to stone permanently, or until the effect is removed. After using this ability you must complete a long rest before using it again.
  - **Unsettling Gaze (2-point power).** Make a power attack. The Victim's AC for this attack is 10 plus their Charisma save bonus. On a success, they take 2d4 psychic damage and have disadvantage on their next attack roll.
  - **Blinding Gaze (5-point power).** Make a power attack. The victim's AC for this attack is 10 plus their Wisdom save bonus. On a success, the target is either blinded or deafened (your choice) for the duration. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make a Constitution saving throw. On a success, the spell ends.
  - **Gaze of Doubt (2-point power).** Up to three creatures of your choice that you can see within range must make Charisma saving throws. Whenever a

target that fails this saving throw makes an attack roll or a saving throw within the next minute, the target must roll a d4 and subtract the number rolled from the attack roll or saving throw. After using this ability you must complete a short rest before using it again.

- **Strength and Weakness.** Maddie has resistance to Poison damage, but vulnerability to psychic damage. In addition, when she is within ten feet of a psychic who is actively using their psionic abilities, her maximum hit points are reduced by 1d4 per round she remains within that proximity. Her maximum hit points return after she completes a long rest and is no longer within the vicinity of a psychic actively using their powers. If her maximum hit points reach zero, she dies.
- **Investigation Expertise:** Expertise in Perception, Insight, and Investigation.
  - **Urban Tracking.** This ability can also be used as a sort of urban tracking ability. When used to track a mark, the ability allows the gumshoe to pick up a trail and follow it for one hour through a combination of physical evidence and asking the right questions of the right people.
  - **Gaining Advantage.** By choosing to double the amount of time it takes to gather information, the gumshoe can make a check to track down a mark at advantage.
- **Background: Blue Collar**
  - **Get the Job Done.** Once per session, you may use the "Push Through" function of Inspiration without needing to spend an Inspiration Point. You may even use this ability if you don't have Inspiration Points to spend.
  - **Union Support.** You have friends in the Fraternal Order of Police. They'll get your back when needed and when possible. They will also, however, expect the same from you, and if you start putting other union folk or their families in danger, you might quickly find yourself on the wrong side of the law.

### Actions

- **Colt .45 Pistol.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, one target, range 30/100ft. Hit: 1d12+2 piercing damage. Notes: 7-shot capacity, reload, double-action (double tap)
- **Bowie Knife.** Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, one target, reach 5ft (range 20/60ft). Hit: 1d6+2 slashing damage.

Gear: Thieves' Tools, Investigator's Tools, Scholar's Pack

## THE 21ST CENTURY BROTHERHOOD OF WILLIAM ST. JOHN

Complete writeups for the modern day heroes of the Brotherhood of William St. John will be included in the full forthcoming sourcebook. For the time being, the information provided in the outline should provide you a guideline for creating stats for your game. James O'Malley is a Mentalist (potentially multiclassed with a Hooligan); Alex McPartland is a Gadgeteer; and Sandra Stephens is a Hallowed with the Life Domain and a special kind of Wild Talent: she can use Mental Stun, which is normally not on the Wild Talent list.

## THE DISTANT FUTURE OF SOLAR BURN: THE KNIGHTS OF WILLIAM ST. JOHN

Complete writeups for the distant future heroes of the Knights of William St. John will be included in the full forthcoming sourcebook. For the time being, their character stat blocks can be found in the **Solar Burn** sourcebook.

## VILLAINS

Here we provide several named villains to use as shadowy or not-so-shadowy menaces for your player characters, as well as a few generic statistics for cultists and thugs.

### ALDUS SCHWARTZHOFFER

In many ways the Moriarty to Titanus Williams and Tennessee O'Malley's Sherlock Holmes, Schwartzhofer is an archaeologist for hire, but is a selfish mercenary who seeks only to increase his own power and worldly pleasures. He will happily destroy ancient treasures if he can't have them, and would much rather sell treasures to a private collector than to a museum—private collectors pay far more, after all.

As a young teenager, Schwartzhofer's father, a cruel and drunken but brilliant scholar of ancient religions, sent the boy to study with a group of Tibetan mystics, from whom Schwartzhofer learned the skills of a Mentalist. Unfortunately, the boy was expelled after his own cruel tendencies revealed themselves, leaving one of the Mystics severely injured. So it was that Schwartzhofer returned home to his father's beatings until he turned 16, when he murdered his own father and fled Germany for America, where he managed to hide his past and enroll at University.

Schwartzhofer and O'Malley were once great friends, having studied together at Northwestern University. However, with the rise of the Nazi party only a few years ago, their friendship has crumbled and deteriorated as the result of Schwartzhofer's severe betrayal of O'Malley on an archaeological dig to which they were both assigned. When the Nazis came to collect a valuable and ancient Egyptian treasure which O'Malley had intended to go to the British Museum, Schwartzhofer trapped O'Malley

in a tomb and absconded with the treasure, kidnapping O'Malley's sidekick, a young Egyptian girl named Nesa, in the process.

O'Malley escaped and tracked Schwartzhofer, only to discover Nesa's murdered body left in O'Malley's own hotel room as a warning to stay away. Enraged, O'Malley tracked Schwartzhofer across Europe, eventually cornering the man in Romania, where they had a pitched battle that left both men shot. Schwartzhofer, however, used his mentalist powers to escape, and the two have been enemies ever since.

### ALDUS SCHWARTZHOFFER

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil*

ARMOR CLASS: 16 (Wisdom)

HIT POINTS: 36 (6d8+6 HD)

SPEED: 30ft.

STR:	DEX:	CON:	INT:	WIS:	CHA:
10 (0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+2)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)

SKILLS: Cryptolinguist +5, Deception +5, History +5, Insight +7, Intimidation +7, Perception +7, Persuade +7, Psionics +7, Survival +7

SAVES: Wisdom +7, Intelligence +5

TOOLS: Archaeologists tools, Anthropologist's Tools

VEHICLES: Civilian land vehicles

SENSES: Passive perception 17

LANGUAGES: English, French, German, Latin, Spanish, Aramaic, Arabic, Egyptian



## CHALLENGE: 4

### Special Qualities

- **Cryptolinguist:** with an Intelligence (cryptolinguist) check, you can decipher codes and translate dead languages. The base DC ranges from 15 to 25, depending on the difficulty of the text and your access to translation materials.
- **Cultural Chameleon:** With a Charisma (deception) check against passive Insight of observers, you can disguise yourself to quickly blend into crowds or cultures.
- **Jack of all Trades:** You add an additional +1 to any check in which you are not normally proficient.
- **Psionics.** Schwartzhofer is a psychic (Save DC 15, psychic attack +7). He has the following abilities:
  - **Basic Psionic Powers:** Mental Stun, Mesmerism
- **Scale.** Schwartzhofer gains advantage on Strength (athletics) checks to climb walls and other inclines.

### Actions

- **Multiattack:** Schwartzhofer makes two attacks.
- **Thompson Sub-Machinegun.** Ranged weapon attack: +6 to hit, one target, range 100ft/500ft. Hit: 11 (1d12+5) piercing damage and may double-tap. Burst fire: A burst of 3 or 4 rounds grants advantage to hit, and each increment of 5 above the target's AC means an additional bullet strikes home. Hosing: A 10-shot burst deals damage in a 5' path up to the maximum range; targets can attempt a Dexterity save (DC = attack roll) for half damage. Spraying: a burst of 20 or 50 shots grants advantage on the attack, effects a 5ft x 30ft cone; otherwise, rules for hosing apply save that a maximum of 3 bullets can strike a single target. Schwartzhofer may not multiattack if he uses burst fire, hosing, or spraying.
- **Cavalry Sabre:** Melee weapon attack: +6 to hit, one target, reach 5ft. Hit: 6 (1d6+3) slashing damage.

## DOCTOR SERPENT

Doctor Serpent is currently a high-ranking member of the Order of the Black Dragon. While he will present himself as the absolute head of the group, this is a clear ruse that is allowed by the true Seventh Sons and High Priests of the Seventh Circle. In truth, Doctor Serpent is the face of the Order, and a face that has been worn by many men and women throughout the group's history. He is a High Priest, but of the Sixth Circle, with many members above him. His responsibility is as field leader of the cult, overseeing all important operations and activities in the trenches, including serving as the head of the cult's worldwide criminal enterprises.

He is a purely evil and very dangerous man, and far older than one might expect. In truth he is the same Doctor Serpent who clashed with William St. John and supposedly died in the explosion in Tibet. Rumors of his finding

Shangri-La are true; he did use the regenerating pools in that lost city to restore his youth and life and so continues to this day. The residents of the lost city, however, were powerful enough to drive him out and erase his memory of the location so that he could not find his way back if he wanted to, much to his outrage.

Doctor Serpent is fanatically devoted to the goals of the Order of the Black Dragon and to the quest to awaken Jörmangund and unleash the Great Serpent on the world to bring about Ragnarok. The only organization he despises more than the Brotherhood of William St. John is the Secret Order of Mjólnir, a warrior cult of Thor that stands opposed to Doctor Serpent's own draconic brotherhood.

**NOTE:** This version of Doctor Serpent represents the one that is active in the 1940s during the Golden Era of the Brotherhood of William St. John. If Doctor Serpent is ever defeated, another will rise in his place, chosen from the ranks of the High Priests, Bishops, Archbishops, and Cardinals of the Sixth Circle. The transition will be smooth and great pains will be taken so that it is nearly impossible to differentiate between the dead and current Doctor Serpent. Future incarnations can include men, women, or even aliens in the distant future. All will share similar statistics, and GMs should feel free to adjust or modify those here to represent other iterations. Every version of Doctor Serpent, however, is a powerful Mentalist, a skill highly valued by the Order.

## DOCTOR SERPENT

*Medium humanoid (human??), lawful evil*

**ARMOR CLASS:** 17 (Wisdom/Natural Armor)

**HIT POINTS:** 70 (10d8+20 HD)

**SPEED:** 30ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)

**SKILLS:** Arcana +7, History +7, Insight +8, Intimidate +7, Persuasion +7, Perception +8, Psionics +8, Religion +7

**SAVES:** Intelligence +7, Wisdom +8, Charisma +8

**DAMAGE RESISTANCE:** Psychic, Necrotic

**SENSES:** Darkvision 60ft, Passive perception 18

**INSPIRATION POINTS:** 10

**LANGUAGES:** English, Arabic, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), French, German, Hindu (all dialects), Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and possibly others.

**CHALLENGE:** 6 (2,300 XP)\*

\*In different incarnations throughout time, Doctor Serpent may be more or less powerful and these statistics should be modified to keep them always a severe threat to the player characters.

### Special Qualities

- **Jack of All Trades:** Doctor Serpent adds an additional +2 to any skill or ability check in which he is not normally proficient.
- **Command:** Doctor Serpent grants advantage to all at-

tack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks made by up to 3 of his allies who can see and hear him, so long as he is not incapacitated.

- **Minion Sacrifice:** Whenever Doctor Serpent takes damage in combat, he can instead cause that damage to be inflicted to any ally he has within 10 feet, who is not paralyzed, restrained, grappled, or incapacitated.
- **Psionics (Save DC 16, Attack +8):** Doctor Serpent has the following psychic abilities:
  - **Basic Psionic Powers:** Combat Awareness, Empathic Transmission, Mental Stun, Mesmerism, Metabolic Control, Obfuscation, Psychic Defense, Telepathic Communication, Telepathic Probe
  - **Advanced Psionic Powers:** Mind Control, Telemagery
- **Two-Weapon Fighting:** Doctor Serpent may add his proficiency bonus to off-hand attacks when wielding two weapons, including pistols.

### Actions

- **Multiattack:** Doctor Serpent attacks twice.
- **Dual .45 1911 Pistols: Ranged Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, range 30/100, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10+2) piercing damage. Double-tap.
- **Kris-bladed long knives (2): Melee Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

### ERIK THE PHANTOM

The infamous Phantom of the Opera, or Opera Ghost, Erik actually existed. Born severely deformed, Erik was abandoned by his Romani parents and raised in a traveling circus, where he learned the secrets of the con game and of mechanical engineering. Possessed of an incredible aptitude for music, Eric wanted all his life to perform, but knew his hideous face would never allow him a moment in the limelight.

The brilliant man eventually fled the circus and took up residence in the Paris Opera House, where he used his engineering and burglary skills to masquerade as the Opera Ghost, a phantom haunting the deep labyrinth beneath the Opera. In this guise he was able to hold the opera for ransom and blackmail the owners into providing him a private box and monthly salary. He lived well in the opera house, until he made the fatal mistake of falling in love with a young ingénue named Christine Daaé. His love led him to create a masterpiece opera just for her, but left him vulnerable to the determination of her dashing fiancé, the Vicomte de Chagny, who led a party of men after the Phantom.

In the end, Erik was defeated and presumed killed, but a body was ever found and persistent rumors have cropped up over the years of other art houses haunted in a similar fashion. The truth is, following the famous events at the



Paris Opera House, Erik was recruited by the Order of the Black Dragon and functions as a chief spy and engineer for the cult in their efforts to bring about Ragnarok, a circumstance the darkly embittered man would gladly see occur.

As a member of the Order of the Black Dragon, Erik has clashed with Harry Houdini more than once and the two are sworn enemies.

### ERIK, THE PHANTOM, THE OPERA GHOST

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil*

**ARMOR CLASS:** 16 (Wisdom, natural armor)

**HIT POINTS:** 40 (8d8 HD)

**SPEED:** 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (0)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	15/7 (+2/-2)

**SKILLS:** History +8, Insight +6, Perception +6, Persuasion +6, Religion +8, Science +12, Stealth +11, Survival +6

**SAVES:** Dexterity +7, Intelligence +8, Wisdom +6

**SENSES:** Blindsense 10ft, Darkvision 60ft, Passive perception 16

**LANGUAGES:** English, French, Spanish, German, Latin  
**CHALLENGE:** 5 (1,800 XP)

### Special Qualities

- **Cunning Action.** On his turn, Erik can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide Action.
- **Elusive.** No attack roll has advantage against Erik while he isn't incapacitated.
- **Evasion.** When subjected to an attack that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take half damage, he takes no damage on a success, and half damage on a failure.
- **Rotating Gadgets (64 Gadget Points):** The Phantom's suite of gadgets and traps is constantly changing and shifting. He has 64 gadget points that can be applied to produce any gadget he wishes, at any time. The cost to produce a given gadget is as standard (see the Gadgeteer character class and guidelines in the **Amazing Adventures** core rulebook). Erik treats any gadget treated as an On the Fly Gadget (including the need for an ability check), but he is not restricted in the level of effects he can produce with these gadgets in any way. He makes any ability checks for producing gadgets at advantage.
- **Hideous Visage.** Erik covers his disfigurement with a mask. If his mask is removed, Erik's Charisma drops to 7 for anyone who can see him. This reduction in Charisma will last for 24 hours after his deformity is once again hidden.
- **Uncanny Dodge.** Erik can use a reaction to halve the damage of a successful attack against him.

### Actions

- **Multiattack.** Erik makes 3 attacks with his rapier.
- **Mesmerizing Voice.** With a successful Charisma (Persuasion) check at advantage, Erik can force a target to succeed at a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be subject to the effects of a *command* or *suggestion* spell (Erik's choice).
- **Use Gadget.** Erik may produce and use one of his gadgets. When it comes to damaging effects, he favors those that produce and deal acid damage.
- **Rapier.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

### LILA "DEADLY NIGHTSHADE" TRUVEAU

Born Lily Totenbach, the archer known as Deadly Nightshade would lead a difficult childhood. She was born with natural athletic talents, but orphaned at a young age and lived on the streets of Berlin, until in the mid-1930s she was caught by the police and conscripted into service to train for Germany's Olympic team in women's track and

field. When she failed to win a medal, she fled Germany in fear of her life and took work where she could. Unfortunately, most of the work available for an athletic, pretty young woman was of the unsavory sort and to save her from a life as a lady of the night, she turned to a different sort of nocturnal work: paid assassination. Eventually she came to Paris and caught the eye of a master assassin named Lotus who taught her the ancient art of archery, which Lily took to like a fish to water, as well as the other skills needed to successfully operate as an assassin. Lily adopted the alias of Lila Truveau and eventually killed her teacher after being recruited by the Order of the Black Dragon following a string of successful killings across Europe. She also adopted the moniker "Deadly Nightshade," and her calling card is a sprig of the plant tied to the fletching of her poisoned black arrows.

The excitement of the chase and the thrill of the kill are what motivates Lila. While she is happy to pursue the Order's goals, she's really in it for the money and murder. Still, she has a twisted code of honor and will not break her word once it is given, nor will she take jobs that involve killing children. Over the years, she has found herself at odds with Robert Locksley on more than one occasion.

### LILY TOTENBACH (AKA LILA TRUVEAU, DEADLY NIGHTSHADE)

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil*

**ARMOR CLASS:** 16 (Dexterity and armor)

**HIT POINTS:** 48 (8d8+8 HD)

**SPEED:** 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA:
10 (0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

**SKILLS:** Perception +7, Persuasion +7, Survival +7, Stealth +8

**SAVES:** DEXTERITY +8, WISDOM +7

**LANGUAGES:** English, French, German

**CHALLENGE:** 5 (1,800 XP)

### Special Qualities

- **Deadeye Shot.** If Nightshade has an arrow nocked and ready, she gains advantage on initiative. In addition, when she fires against any creature who hasn't acted yet as her first attack in combat, that creature is denied any ability bonus to AC and she gains advantage on her first shot.
- **Deadly Shot.** Nightshade increases the damage die of any bow she uses by 1 type.
- **Disabling Shot.** Whenever Nightshade successfully damages an enemy with her bow, she may force them to make a Constitution check (DC=8 + damage dealt) or suffer no damage but be prone and incapacitated until they receive healing or complete a short rest. The target may attempt a new save at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect with a success. If she



uses Disabling Shot, she may not use twofer, stable shot, or disarming shot.

- **Shooting Dice.** Nightshade has a pool of 3d8 Shooting Dice. She may choose to add the result of a shooting die to her attack or damage roll at any time (but may only spend one die per round). Alternately, she may expend shooting dice to accomplish the following:
  - **Twofer.** Nightshade expends a shooting die. If her attack against an opponent is successful, that opponent suffers full damage from the attack, including the result of the shooting die. In addition, a second target in a straight line behind the first creature suffers half damage from the shot as her arrow blows through and strikes that target as well.
  - **Stable Shot.** Lily may expend a shooting die to eliminate disadvantage when firing from an unstable position (such as firing from a moving vehicle).
  - **Disarming Shot:** Nightshade expends a shooting die. If her attack hits, she deals no damage, but the target must succeed at a DC 16 Strength saving throw or drop one item they are currently holding, which flies a number of feet away equal to 5 times the result of the shooting die.

#### Actions

- **Multiattack.** Nightshade makes 3 attacks with her bow, plus a fourth at disadvantage, or she makes 2 attacks in melee.
- **Composite recurve bow.** Ranged weapon attack: +8 to hit, range 150ft/600ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d12+4) piercing damage.
- **Butterfly swords.** Melee weapon attack: +8 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.

## CHAPTER THREE: SECRET SOCIETIES

The outlines in this chapter use the guidelines found in the **Amazing Adventures** core rulebook, in **Book Six: Mysteries of the Dark**. We are reprinting the Brotherhood of William St. John from that book, for completeness' sake, and are adding several important additional societies, including the Cult of Sang-Xiu (Ornduhl), the Order of the Black Dragon and Chimera, villainous organizations which have appeared in various adventures already published.

### THE BROTHERHOOD OF WILLIAM ST. JOHN

The Brotherhood of William St. John is a fictional explorer's and adventuring guild designed especially for *Amazing Adventures*. It is hoped that you can use it as a springboard for your game, a group to which your player characters can eventually belong. In the next section, you will find some pre-generated characters who form the core membership of the group. Feel free to use them as you please.

#### OUTLINE

**Goals and Intent:** Elements of Scholarly, Warrior, and Espionage. Philanthropic adventuring guild dedicated to exploration and discovery, and championing justice and the plight of the weak. Will root out and battle evil wherever it shows its face, and seeks to gather, protect and preserve knowledge and information for the good of all mankind.

**Reach and Resources:** Nominally, the guild is a wealthy group. However, members come together when needed in more of a "cell" format than as a group en masse. Often, any team has only the resources available to the team's wealthiest member. In rare and emergency situations, Mackie Gleeson has been able to provide funding, contacts and personnel to a small degree, but the guild is more of a brotherhood than a paramilitary or espionage group.

**Membership Requirements:** Successful explorers and adventurers are bound to catch the eye of the guild at some point and will be contacted and offered membership. Despite its name, the Brotherhood allows both men and women into its ranks, so long as prospective members are judged to be forthright, honorable and stout of heart. Those who seek out the guild will be expected to prove themselves worthy in the field before membership is offered. Mackie Gleeson, the current leader of the guild, makes all formal offers of membership.

There are no formal levels of membership in the guild; members are considered nominal equals, though those with more experience are held in higher regard overall.

Most members will have their own circle of friends and fellow explorers with whom they will consort regularly and may not know other members very well. Members

may identify each other with a series of signs and code words similar to those used by soldiers in the field during wartime. These signs are changed regularly and are distributed to members by Mackie herself.

Any member can choose to leave the guild at any time, simply by announcing their retirement to Mackie. There are no penalties or dangers to doing so, though the guild may occasionally look in on "retired" members to make sure all is well.

Members are expected to battle evil, champion justice and the weak, and search the world for lost and undiscovered knowledge above all other pursuits. It believes that knowledge is to be shared for the good of the world, but has, on occasion, decided as a group to withhold certain arcane secrets dubbed too dangerous for guild to hold. This occurs on a case-by-case basis.

**Membership Benefits and Drawbacks:** Mackie is an exceptionally wealthy woman with a great deal of power behind the scenes and as the granddaughter of William St. John, she is entirely dedicated to the cause. She has contacts and friends all over the world and can sometimes provide members with aid and assistance in this area. She is also a skilled pilot with her own private plane and if an extraction is needed, may be able to show up to perform the pickup.

On the down side, members don't have unlimited access to supplies and resources. While Mackie is wealthy and dedicated, she doesn't spend blindly and any team of adventurers is expected to be self-reliant, sometimes in the extreme. Members are expected to share any knowledge, contacts, and information they glean with the rest of the guild—the guild does not keep secrets within its ranks. Finally, the expectation to always champion justice and the downtrodden can be a burden at times.

**Operations and Activities:** Members of the Brotherhood of William St. John are explorers, adventurers, and though some are flawed in this regard, tend to be heroic to their core. The operations a member might undertake range from exploring South African jungles to root out the secrets of a long-forgotten religion, to attempting to bring down an evil cult that is infiltrating a world government, to stopping a mad scientist from unleashing a plague upon the world. The one thing about which guild members can be certain is that their lives will never be boring.

Since the guild is so loosely organized with such an open mandate, it is vulnerable to infiltration, and there have been one or two times where an enemy has struck a blow against them through gaining access to code words and countersigns. There have also been times when Mackie or another member has played things a little too close to



the vest, and injurious situations have resulted. There is certainly a danger in Mackie being the sole keeper of the guild's history and membership roster. That information is vulnerable to loss or theft should something untoward happen to Mackie.

**Hierarchy:** The hierarchy within the guild is as informal as its structure. Mackie is the undisputed head of the organization. She funds it and keeps all records and membership rosters. Next to her is Tennessee O'Malley, a well-regarded raider and renowned expert in antiquities. Beyond those two, there are few who have any formal authority in the group; however, the remainder of Mackie's group are often considered her inner circle and most guild members will defer to them when leadership is needed.

**Interior Mobility:** Such a thing as mobility is really not an issue in the guild, where all members are viewed as equals. However, should members render great service directly to Mackie or one of her inner circle, they may find themselves entrusted with specific missions or even working directly with the inner circle itself. This is not an easy thing to accomplish, however; while Mackie welcomes new members into the group, she does not give out personal trust lightly.

**Degree of Secrecy:** The Brotherhood of William St. John is an open secret guild. It is known amongst the upper crust of guild, and amongst those downtrodden whose cause it has championed, but it remains something of a legend. While a certain few members might be open about their status, they reveal nothing about the guild itself or its inner workings, on penalty of expulsion from the group. Indeed, should a member reveal information that causes harm to another member or to the guild itself, they may find that they have earned the group's enmity and that their power extends further than the betrayer may once have expected.

While many have heard of the Brotherhood of William St. John, only its members know of their exploits and the group's inner workings. Such an air of mystery gives them an advantage in many situations.

### History:

- Founded in 1860 by Sir William St. John, renowned British explorer.
- By 1865, rendering humanitarian aid all over the world and fighting for the rights of the oppressed wherever they could.
- In Egypt in 1865, Sir William ran afoul of a group called the Cult of the Worm, whom he barely defeated with the help of two close allies, Jonathan Trapp and the Lady Sylvia Morningside.
- This group, it turned out, was a splinter group of a much larger organization called the Order of the Black Dragon.
- 1866: Sir William barely survives his first direct en-

counter with the Order of the Black Dragon and dedicates their new guild to battling such organizations and gathering lost knowledge to be used for the benefit of all mankind.

- 1867: guild battles and defeats the Cult of Yig in Brazil. Doctor Serpent is first encountered.
- 1868: The Order of the Yellow Sign in New York is stopped from summoning a mad god to the world.
- 1869: The group faces the Blood Sect, a supposed cult of vampires in Hungary
- 1870: The group defeats the Sisters of the Poison Kiss in Germany. Doctor Serpent is revealed to be in league with the sisters, but escapes capture.
- 1870-1880: The Brotherhood continues its ongoing battle with the Cult of Yig across the globe.
- 1881: The guild takes down the worldwide syndicate known as the Brotherhood of Crime, revealed to be the Order of the Black Dragon. When Doctor Serpent is revealed to be behind the group, an aging Sir William comes out of retirement.
- 1881: A final confrontation with the Order of the Black Dragon in a small town in Arkansas results in the cessation of all Cult of Yig activities. Doctor Serpent is presumed dead and the Brotherhood retires.
- 1901: Sir William and Doctor Serpent have a final confrontation in the mountains of Tibet. Both are presumed dead following a massive explosion that leveled an ancient temple.
- 1902-1935: Rumors persist that Sir William and Doctor Serpent survived, and one or both were rejuvenated in the lost city of Shangri-La. The guild continues on, nominally leaderless but under the guidance of the 90-year-old Lady Sylvia.
- 1935: Sir William's Granddaughter, Mackie Gleeson, comes of age and proves herself an amazing pilot and adventurous spirit. Lady Sylvia chooses Mackie as the new leader of the guild, turning over all of its records and passing away of natural causes soon after.

### EXPANDED BACKGROUND

The Brotherhood of William St. John is an adventuring guild founded in 1865 by the famed British explorer, adventurer and champion of justice and the weak, Sir William St. John. At its founding, Sir William was a 21-year-old wealthy aristocrat who dedicated his life to seeking adventure and excitement. In his travels, Sir William could not help but notice the plight of those the world over who were far worse off than him. Moved by the poverty, downtrodden souls, and victims he saw everywhere he went, Sir William dedicated his life to aiding those less fortunate than himself. At first this aid was delivered in the form of humanitarian donations—food, money, social programs, clothing—but eventually Sir William stumbled onto more than he bargained for.

Eventually, Sir William ran afoul of a group called the Cult of the Worm, whom he barely defeated with the help of two close allies, Jonathan Trapp and the Lady Sylvia Morningside.

This group, it turned out, was a splinter group of a much larger organization called the Order of the Black Dragon, whose head was a mysterious villain known only as Doctor Serpent.

Barely surviving his initial encounter with the Black Dragons, Sir William, who had already been an established athlete, big game hunter and adventurer, took his actions to another level, vowing with his friends to battle evil and darkness both where it publicly reared its head and wherever he could root it out.

Over the next forty-plus years, Sir William grew the guild into a worldwide network of like-minded individuals. It was they who defeated the Cult of Yig in Brazil, the Order of the Yellow Sign in New York City, the Blood Sect in Hungary, The Sisters of the Poison Kiss in Germany, and took down the worldwide syndicate known as the Brotherhood of Crime.

It is said that Sir William defeated dozens of criminal syndicates and secret societies, and eventually went on to establish a worldwide guild of like-minded individuals who would also step up when called to do their duty for God, Country, and humanity. Still, through it all, one adversary kept re-appearing and always eluding their efforts. The crime lord Doctor Serpent seemed ever involved with the conspiracies faced by the group, and Sir William pursued him doggedly.

Sir William and Lady Sylvia eventually married. Sir William retired from active service in 1881, recognizing his advanced age as finally catching up with him, but continued to fund and guide the guild's efforts while focusing time on his family.

In 1901 and against his wife's wishes, Sir William came out of retirement when Doctor Serpent, having vanished long before and believed dead, reappeared. For the next eleven years, Sir William pursued his foe to distraction, determined to rid the world of Doctor Serpent's evil once and for all.

Alas, it happened that age and the years may have been too much for Sir William to bear. Sir William vanished in 1901 in a heroic final battle with his arch-nemesis. It is said that the two perished together in a massive explosion that leveled an ancient ruin in the mountains of Tibet, though there have been whispers ever since that either Sir William, Doctor Serpent, or both survived the explosion and went deep into hiding. It is said that one or both of them discovered the ancient city of Shangri-La, where they regained their youth and vitality and that they may both be at large today.

Regardless, the guild continued on under the guidance of Lady Sylvia, and since its founding, the guild has welcomed adventurers from all over the world who show a unique skills set and determination to uphold the cause of justice, liberty, and the spirit of exploration at the heart of every man's soul. In 1935, the guild came under the guidance of its current leader, one Mackenzie "Mackie" Gleeson, the wealthy New York socialite and ace pilot who many say has picked up where Amelia Earhart left off (and who, some skeptics whisper, will likely suffer the same eventual fate).

Gleeson is also the granddaughter of Sir William and Lady Sylvia and was passed the mantle of leadership and all of the guild's records and treasures by Lady Sylvia herself, who died of natural causes soon after doing so. Some believe that Lady Sylvia imparted secrets about Sir William, Doctor Serpent, and the guild before dying, but Mackie has given no signs of having such knowledge.

## THE ORDER OF THE BLACK DRAGON

The Order of the Black Dragon (often simply called the Order of the Dragon) is an ancient secret society dedicated to the coming of Ragnarok and the worship of Jörmungandr, the Midgard Serpent...also known as the Great Old One, Yig. The Order is designed to be a shadowy, ongoing enemy for your players. Currently led by Doctor Serpent, if he is ever destroyed, another will simply rise to take his place and the PCs will have traded a known devil for an unknown one...

### OUTLINE

**Goals and Intent:** The Order of the Dragon is a Mystery Cult with elements of an Espionage Society and Control Society. They seek to infiltrate all levels of society and poison the world with the worship of Yig. Their ultimate goal is to bring about Ragnarok, the Norse End Times, and unleash the Great Serpent on the world. They believe that by positioning themselves as leaders of men, becoming the power behind the throne, and becoming unswervingly loyal to their dark god, that they can escape the massive slaughter that awaits mankind, and live on as masters of the next world.

**Reach and Resources:** The Order has vast resources and contacts all over the world. They began as an Oriental society of magi in ancient China, and have steadily grown and expanded their reach throughout history.

**Membership Requirements:** Members need to have a fanatical devotion to worship of Yig, to unleashing the Great Serpent upon the world, and the moral flexibility to kill, subjugate and die for the cause. The society recruits in two fashions—they use their resources to bring in hired thugs and guns, street soldiers who do much of their in-the-trenches dirty work, and they target those who seek knowledge and power both temporal and occult-based, offering great secrets in return for absolute loyalty.

Levels of membership are defined in loose circles, with each subsequent circle representing a deeper level of knowledge and understanding of the secrets of Yig, as well as the corruption and madness that goes hand-in-hand with it. The circles are numbered, with subdivisions in the circles coming from the titles Acolyte, Deacon and Priest. There are currently seven circles in the order, with the seventh being the highest. The First Circle has no subtitles, the only title being "Soldier of the Dragon." The Seventh Circle has two additional titles at the very top: the grand master of the entire order is the Seventh Son of a Seventh Son, while the second-in-command is the Seventh Son. Both also hold the nominal title of High Priest of Yig.

Once one is inducted into the Order of the Serpent, they are a member for life. There is no escaping the cult. Those who leave are a threat to reveal the secrets of Yig, and thus are targeted for death. The cult will turn all its resources to the destruction of a deserter, ceasing all other activities until this task is complete.

Members are expected to go to any lengths to maintain the society's secrets. They will kill, steal, infiltrate, subjugate, lie, cheat and die for their absolute devotion to the cause. It is said that during the initiation ceremonies, powerful magics and mind-altering chemicals are used to ensure a shift in perception which guarantees absolute and eternal loyalty to Yig.

To this end, members are expected to root out any and all knowledge and information regarding the Great Serpent, wherever it may hide, to obtain it for the cult's use, to destroy any outside the cult who gain more than a cursory knowledge of the Great Serpent, and to spread Yig's power and influence throughout society. They have infiltrated most world governments and many other secret societies like a cancer growing through the world.

**Membership Benefits and Drawbacks:** Members of the society of Yig can count on utter devotion and support from fellow members, so long as they are attempting to further the goals of the society. They can count on shelter, refuge, assistance, aid...and they can trust fellow members to ensure they die if captured. They also have access to vast magical and occult knowledge.

In game, members of this society gain +2 to their Wealth score and gain access to a vast occult library, as well as one free feat, in addition to any other class abilities they may have. On the down side, they are prone to Madness (see *Magic and Madness*, **Amazing Adventures 5e** Core Rulebook). This occurs even if Madness rules are not normally in play for a game.

**Operations and Activities:** The Order of the Dragon has its fingers in all manner of criminal activity and corrupt political operations. They are the heads of major crime syndicates, they are OSS snipers and spies. They are the voices whispering in the ears of congressmen. They are

the power behind the Nazi Thule Society. They control dozens of mystical groups and religious temples in the Far East. They are the secret power behind the Thuggees in India, operating as the messengers of Kali and Shiva.

If there is a power base in the world, the Order has likely infiltrated it. They have had thousands of years to pursue their goals and defeating them becomes a lifelong obsession for those who discover the Order's existence. From their origins in China as worshippers of the Great Dragon, they eventually came to Europe and knew the Dragon as Jörmungandr, the Norse Midgard Serpent. They have adopted and absorbed serpent gods from throughout history and all over the world, and melded them into Yig, the grandfather of all serpents. Everything they do is designed to corrupt mankind towards worship of the Serpent, and obtain greater knowledge and power regarding Yig's desires.

If they have a weakness, it is that they are very arrogant in their belief that they are superior to all others. Occasionally, they let slip their existence through carelessness or hubris. Occasionally, they attempt rituals designed to summon powerful servitors of the god, or even the god himself, and these rituals invariably give them away, allowing heroes to thwart their efforts on some level.

**Interior Mobility:** Movement up in the ranks is achieved by members showing absolute loyalty to the cult, success in their activities, and the devotion to gaining further knowledge. The most clever, wily, studious and effective members gradually climb through the circles, granted promotion from one circle to the next by those of higher rank. Normally, one must be promoted through the ranks of their existing circle before advancing to the next, but there have been instances where a devotee does something so successful that they skip ranks and jump entire circles.

**Degree of Secrecy:** Absolute, nominally. The Order does not wish to be revealed in the light, for such revelations could be fatal if all the world's agencies united in a witch hunt to root them out. There are, however, frequent enough slips that their existence is whispered in hushed and fearful terms among occultists and syndicates the world over. As yet, no one has gathered enough hard and believable evidence to prove the Order's existence, and those who have gathered evidence fear the consequences to the world should they reveal what they know.

#### **History:**

- ~5,000 B.C.E.: An order of sorcerers is founded in ancient China dedicated to worship of the ancient elemental dragons that live within the earth. Persecuted by the power elite, they flee to mountain temples and live as a monastic order.
- Through communing with the Great Serpent, the order eventually gains enough mystical knowledge and power that it sends agents south with the mission of

infiltrating other temples, scholarly societies, and the power elite itself. They are fantastically successful.

- ~4,000 B.C.E.: The cult has been discovered in China and is being actively hunted. With its temples burned to the ground, its agents scatter to the shadows, seeking (and gaining) control from behind the scenes. Groups of acolytes are sent west to investigate the empires there.
- ~3,000 B.C.E.: Using powerful magic to alter their features so as to blend in with other cultures, the cult has spread across Asia, the Middle East and Northern Africa, and is moving towards Europe. It has now gleaned that Yig is the true power behind all of the Great Dragons, and begins to collect legends of serpent gods the world over, seeking the secrets of the Great Serpent within. It begins to subjugate the ruling powers in India, Egypt, Greece, Persia and other ancient empires. Ley lines are used to create a vast extradimensional occult library which can be accessed by members for research, storage and communications.
- ~1,000 B.C.E.: The Order reaches Iceland and is nearly stopped cold by a secret society of warrior priests dedicated to the god Thor. It realizes, however, that Jörmungandr may be the original incarnation of Yig, hidden within the Norse myth-cycle. Aside from certain elements in its rituals, the Chinese origins of the society are becoming largely buried in increasingly Western influences.
- 0 C.E.: The Roman Empire has spread across Europe, and the Order enters its most active and aggressive period of recruitment, using the ubiquity of Roman mystery cults and religious freedom to its advantage. At this time more than any other the Order is visible as a sort of open secret society.
- 250 C.E.: As Christianity takes root in Rome, the Order is persecuted along with other traditional cults. It endeavors to hide amongst Christian mystery cults such as the Gnostic sects, but its presence is detected, leading these sects of Christianity to also be wiped out. It goes back underground, resuming its shadow tactics of subverting ruling powers.
- 500 C.E.: Rome falls due to the Order's corrupting of Northern barbarians, who repeatedly raid into Southeastern Europe. The Empire's power base is split into two, with the Eastern Roman Empire being wholly and secretly devoted to the Order of the Dragon.
- 500-1,000 C.E.: The Dark Ages descend over Europe. History fails to record that the turmoil of the time was the direct result of the machinations of the Order of the Dragon and the efforts of various nations to root out and destroy them. These efforts meet with widely varying degrees of success, but none manage to destroy the Order completely. Notable agents of the Order include Charlemagne and Maurice and Heraclius of the Byzantine Empire.
- 800-1,066 C.E.: Much of the era sees Viking expansion in the north as the indirect result of constant clashes between the Order of the Dragon and the Secret Brotherhood of Thor. Viewing the power of other so-called "Pagan" religions as the greatest threat to its existence, the Order begins to manipulate Christian rulers into spreading their beliefs all over the world.
- 738 C.E.: The Order of the Serpent obtains a copy of Abdul Alhazred's *Al Azif* and summons demons to destroy the Mad Poet in broad daylight on the streets of Damascus.
- 1,095-1,291 C.E.: The Crusades usher in the High Middle Ages, with the Order of the Dragon manipulating Christian and Muslim forces into open warfare throughout Europe in a largely successful effort to hide its own activities and cement control of world monarchies. The Order compiles a vast library of scholarly and mystical tomes concerning the Great Serpent in all of his occult and mythological forms.
- ~1,300-~1650 C.E.: The Renaissance ushers in a period of enlightenment and curiosity that enables the Order to both enlighten mankind and pursue its own occult goals in a more aggressive fashion. It increases its occult knowledge and temporal power tenfold during this period, using such notable figures as Galileo, Dante, Milton, DaVinci and others as pawns in their efforts. At one point, the Order even enters public view as a group of Byzantine knights, including one Vlad Dracula. Other notable members of the cult during that time include Elizabeth Bathory, Marie de Medici of France, Cardinal Armand Richelieu, and King Philip IV of Spain.
- ~1519 C.E.: 5th Circle Priest Hernando Cortés arrives in the New World and begins gathering information about the serpent gods of the Aztecs, Inca and Mayans. The conquest he begins will eventually result in the utter extinction of several ancient native cultures, but will gain vast stores of knowledge for the Order's Great Library.
- ~1700-1800 C.E.: The cult actively expands its influence to the New World, being at least partially responsible for an upstart revolt that leads to the founding of the United States of America.
- 1857 C.E.: The Cult, in its local guise as the Order of the Worm, first encounters Sir William St. John.
- 1858 C.E.: Doctor Serpent emerges for the first time, battling the fledgling Brotherhood of William St. John as the head of the Cult of Yig in Brazil. He is a Seventh Circle Priest, though whether he is the Seventh Son or Seventh Son of a Seventh Son is unknown. He and Sir William become lifelong nemeses.
- 1865-1901 C.E.: The Brotherhood of William St. John becomes a major thorn in the side of the Order, but never succeeds in capturing Doctor Serpent, until a final confrontation in the mountains of Tibet leaves

both Sir William and Doctor Serpent presumed dead following a massive explosion which levels an ancient temple.

- 1901-1935 C.E.: The Order continues its work, no longer actively challenged by the Brotherhood, while rumors persist that Doctor Serpent and Sir William still live, having been rejuvenated at the mythical city of Shangri-La.
- 1939 C.E.: Doctor Serpent re-surfaces in New Orleans, narrowly escaping an encounter with new Brotherhood member Medusa “Maddie” Black. The revelation of his survival drives Sir William’s granddaughter, Mackie Gleeson, to re-devote the Brotherhood in opposition of the Order of the Dragon.

**Names:** The Order of the Black Dragon, The Order of the Dragon, The Cult of the Worm, The Cult of Yig, The Society of Jörmungandr.

#### **Expanded Background:**

We are not including a detailed, expanded background for the Order of the Black Dragon, as it is designed to be an all-encompassing shadow organization that can be a constant and overarching threat for your game. Including too many details would ruin the mystery and lock Game Masters into a prescribed story. Rather, we have incorporated a somewhat detailed timeline of the group’s history, which should serve for GMs to flesh out any era of the order they wish to explore or use.

## **CHIMERA**

This secret society was first introduced in our adventure scenario, “Ashton and the Augments,” wherein they were creating mutant humans and animals via a serum which they intended to weaponized and sell to the nation that proved the highest bidder.

Founded in the ashes of World War I as an offshoot of the Eugenics movement, Chimera is an international secret conglomerate of scientists dedicated to the pursuit of the biological sciences just for the sake of science. They are completely amoral and more than willing to sell their creations to the highest bidder to fund further research.

The refreshing thing about Chimera is that they are not the typical Nazi menace of 1930s and 40s pulp. They are North American in origin and are exceptionally capitalist and (unethically) scholarly in their pursuits. As a newer organization, they do not yet have the kind of clout needed to be invulnerable to PC intervention and could make for either a story arc or campaign-long villain.

#### **OUTLINE**

**Goals and Intent:** Chimera is a scholarly society dedicated to the furthering of scientific knowledge at all costs. The group is completely amoral, believing that ethics and morality serve only to hold back scientific advancement.

It will engage in highly unethical and even evil activities, so long as the end result is some small advancement in scientific knowledge. The adage “The end justifies the means” has never been truer than with Chimera.

**Reach and Resources:** Nominally, Chimera has international reach. The cabal of scientists who form the society hail from all over the United States, Canada, and Europe. However, their lines of communication are not as efficient as they would like, and as a newer society they do not quite have the reach and control they’d prefer. Currently they are funded through selling their discoveries to world powers and by a group of wealthy industrialists who have a vested interest in exploiting new discoveries.

They recruit much as any scholarly society would — by taking note of promising young scientists who seem to have the right degree of moral flexibility. Such young men and women are gradually introduced to the organization, their research perhaps being exploited by Chimera, and they are slowly corrupted as they gain further research grants as a reward for pushing their work to extreme levels.

There are no true “levels of membership” in Chimera — at least, not in terms of circles, titles and rank. Those scientists who have been in the group the longest, as well as those who have had the greatest success, are the ones with the most clout and authority.

There is no leaving Chimera. Like most secret societies, the members of this organization have too much to lose from someone spilling their secrets and they are not above using hired muscle and underworld contracts to end the lives of those they see as a danger.

Chimera keeps its operations and existence as secret as they can manage. With their clout relegated to the money funneled through dummy corporations and the rich men at the funding levels, it relies upon bribery, research grants and intimidation to keep things quiet.

Members are expected to remain loyal to the group’s goals, to not waver in the face of the disturbing actions they must take to keep the society going, and to advance the cause of the biological sciences ahead of and above all other concerns.

**Membership Benefits and Drawbacks:** members of the society tend to live the good life. These brilliant scholars have fat bank accounts and all the research grants they can shake a stick at. In return, they are expected to obey and advance the objectives of Chimera without conscience or regret. In game terms, members gain +4 to their Wealth score and access to high-end scientific facilities almost anywhere they go. On the down side, they suffer -2 to Charisma saves, saving throws against fear effects, and on Sanity checks.

**Operations and Activities:** The society is largely a research-based organization working out of University,

medical and industrial research facilities. Many of the experiments, since they are unethical, are carried out after hours and in secret. When a breakthrough occurs, the businessmen step in to broker sales to those who may find the research useful.

Much of the work is compartmentalized, so that several different facilities may be working on different parts of a whole and never be aware of it until they see the results of their work combined with others to sometimes horrific ends. The lowest levels of the organization consist of criminal contacts and connections to organized crime. This means that if anyone decides to rat on the group, they are targeted for extinction with extreme prejudice.

**Hierarchy:** As of this point, the group is rather democratic, though the industrialists who fund the research tend to have more power than the scientists who rely on money to fund their pursuits.

There is a shadowy leader who is known only as “The Other.” This wealthy businessman issues general directives and goals for the society, and leaves it to the conglomerate of industrialists and scientists to work out exactly how the group’s goals are pursued, so long as they stay on task. It is said that failure to keep the end game in sight results in a rather grisly death as a research subject.

In fact, The Other is an immortal who has been around since the days of the Roman Empire. His true name, Lucius Sophus, is known only to him. His true goal, the one thing he wants from the society, is to find a way to die. He does not know how he became immortal, but he is tired after thousands of years of life and cares nothing for humanity. Science, he believes, is finally at a stage where he might be able to find his solution and he will bring the world to an end if it means he can finally die.

Ironically, The Other goes to great lengths to stay completely out of view because his greatest fear is that someone will use him as an experimental subject to find the secret of immortality. He does all his dirty work through others and never reveals his presence or identity.

**Interior Mobility:** Given the informal nature of Chimera, mobility is a factor of respect. The greater success a scholar has in their pursuits, the more clout they have. The more successful a businessman is, the more of a voice he will have. Success is the only way to climb the ranks.

**Degree of Secrecy:** Near-Absolute. The group keeps its membership and work utterly secret, going so far as to assassinate those who are a danger to them. However, they allow the name to slip on occasion, building a degree of threatening mystery around it. People who hear about Chimera are intimidated by the name alone, and this is useful to an organization that wants to cow investigators into leaving them alone, or wants an edge in shady dealings.

## History:

- ~500 B.C.E. Lucius Sophus is born to a wealthy merchant family in Rome.
- ~475 B.C.E. Lucius stops aging.
- ~450 B.C. E. Lucius realizes that he has gained immortality and cannot die.
- ~270 C.E. Lucius spends several years scouring the Library of Alexandria for solutions and, finding none, eventually burns the place to the ground in a fit of rage, using an attack by the Emperor Aurelian as cover for his act.
- ~500 C.E. Lucius searches the Far East for solutions to no avail.
- ~1,200 C.E. Lucius, after fighting in well over a millennia of wars and conquests, constantly wandering the world and re-inventing himself, has become an expert at hiding his identity and begins to seek ways to die.
- ~1,600 C.E. By the Renaissance, Lucius has searched libraries and resources the world over, and has failed to find a mystical solution to his problem. With the enlightenment approaching, he turns to science.
- ~1800 C.E. Lucius begins actively recruiting scientists to explore biological causes and solutions to his immortality. Frankenstein’s Monster is one of the resulting failures.
- ~1818 C.E. Former Frankenstein associate Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley publishes *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. Lucius realizes that he has grown overconfident and that failure to take care in his efforts could expose him.
- 1839 C.E. Lucius secures a position as Shelley’s personal physician and begins a gradual process of poisoning the woman.
- 1845 C.E. Lucius arranges blackmail and smear campaigns against Shelley to further weaken her.
- 1851 C.E. Mary Shelley dies. The suspected cause of death was a brain tumor.
- 1918 C.E. World War I ends. The atrocities committed also resulted in amazing scientific advances. Lucius sees the value of using war to advance science. He begins shadowy recruitment of businessmen and promising scientists to build an organization dedicated to the advancement of the biological sciences. Those he recruits know him only as “The Other” and never see his face.
- 1920s C.E. Lucius turns his scientists towards the study of eugenics and names his society “Chimera,” after the ancient mythological monster that was an amalgam of many different animals.
- Early 1930s C.E. Lucius becomes interested in the policies of Nazi Germany. He quietly works to dis-

credit Eugenics publicly while secretly encouraging its furthering. He now believes that if he can create a superman, he may discover how he became immortal, and in so doing find a way to undo his curse.

- Mid 1930s C.E. Lucius realizes the need for muscle to secure his organization and begins securing ties with underworld and organized crime families. Chimera makes several breakthroughs in bioscience and several of The Other's agents steal important Nazi discoveries.
- 1939 C.E. Events of "Ashton and the Augments": A group of heroes with ties to an assassinated former Chimera researcher foils a Chimera effort to create mutant human and animal "soldiers" to unleash on the battlefields of Europe, but fails to delve too deeply into the organization itself. Chimera covers its tracks and fades back into the shadows...

**NAME:** Chimera

#### **EXPANDED BACKGROUND**

The story of Chimera comes from rather humble beginnings. A young man named Lucius Sophus was born to a wealthy merchant house in Rome. The boy had a normal childhood for the times, with an average and loving family. Things changed around Lucius' 25<sup>th</sup> year of age, when he somehow ceased aging. By the time he was fifty, Lucius had suffered enough injuries and accidents (some deliberate) to realize that he was somehow incapable of dying.

At first, the immortality seemed a gift; he was un-aging, healed very fast, was immune to poisons and disease. Even situations where damage was massive or death was inevitable would result in unconsciousness for varying amounts of time based on the amount of damage done. Lucius would never have to face the fear of the unknown that comes with death.

Such gifts have a way of turning to curses, however, and after watching several generations of his family grow old and die, Lucius had become coldly distanced from humanity. He had quickly grown weary and unwilling to feel for anyone lest he have to suffer the inevitable pain of their death. He threw himself into hedonism and debauchery, reveling in his self-pity, before realizing after a few more decades that it was not filling the hole inside him.

Eventually, the man suffered accusations of demon-worship and witchcraft, and was hung, drowned and burned several times before he learned to move from place to place, hiding his curse and changing his identity as needed. He began a frantic and desperate search for an answer to his problem...for a way he could die. Nothing worked—even getting himself beheaded resulted in his head somehow being inexorably drawn back to his body, re-attaching, and his awakening as good as new.

Eventually, Lucius came to the Library of Alexandria, the greatest repository of knowledge in the ancient world,

and spent a full five years going through every tome in the building. Finding nothing, his rage boiled over and he decided that if this place could not solve one simple problem, it did not deserve to exist. Using an attack by the Roman Emperor Aurelian as a cover and excuse, he burned the library to the ground and left Egypt behind, also walking away from Rome forever.

He spent the next several centuries first searching the Far East for esoteric answers to his problems, then throwing himself into the life of a warrior throughout the Middle Ages, sating his rage in bloodlust. It was during this time that he first began to study how the human body worked, as an agent for the Inquisition.

With the dawn of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, Lucius came to believe that since magic had failed him, science must be the answer. He worked with many of the most famous men of the High Middle Ages through the Enlightenment, including occultists John Dee and Roger Bacon and noted scholars such as Leonardo Da Vinci and Nostradamus.

By the 1800s he had made strides in his understanding of the workings of the human body and recruited an eccentric scientist with similar drives to understand death to help him. This scientist, Victor Frankenstein, managed to create life from stitching together the parts of a dead man, but was unable to duplicate the experience and Frankenstein's creation destroyed the scientist, only to be later destroyed in turn by Lucius.

A near-"fatal" (such as it is) mistake occurred when Lucius had a brief dalliance with a young woman named Mary Shelley, who was married to a bohemian poet. Shelley was a young, attractive and deeply lonely woman, and Lucius found in her a kindred spirit, detached and alone in the world. He made the mistake of telling her his story, and she hit upon the story of Frankenstein, later publishing it as a book.

Realizing how careless he had grown, and stung by Shelley's betrayal, Lucius put his quest aside and set about ruining the woman. Having himself installed as her physician, he set about poisoning her with certain chemical compounds he knew to result in the growth of tumors, and arranging blackmail and smear campaigns to weaken her emotional health. His plan succeeded, and Shelley passed away before she became a further threat.

When World War I broke out, Lucius saw the results of scientific advancements due to war on a massive scale. He got involved in the war, serving in the British medical corps and managed to experiment on many bodies during the four-year tenure of the conflict.

When the war ended, he journeyed to Germany, taking great interest in the Eugenics research being done there. Eventually, he noted the danger of the emergent Nazi regime and left for the United States, where he began to

recruit the best and brightest scientific minds and the wealthiest and canniest industrialists under an umbrella organization he called "Chimera." His quest now had an infrastructure and it was not long before breakthroughs began to happen.

Being intelligent enough to take care, he kept projects split among widely disparate scientists so that few were aware of the true nature of the research being done. He also began to recruit muscle from amongst organized crime, using old family connections to cement associations with the Italian Mafia. Seeking to completely obfuscate his identity, Lucius was now known only as The Other amongst those in his employ, and he used a small cabal of scientists and businessmen as middle management to carry out his directives.

His first success nearly turned into a disastrous failure when an experimental serum designed to create physically superior but violent mutants for use as disposable troops in warfare was developed. One of his scientists developed a conscience and was set to unveil the secrets of Chimera. The scientist was assassinated and the testing phase of the serum moved forward, but it was foiled by a group of small-time adventuring heroes. The plan was ruined and Chimera took a huge financial loss, but The Other managed to fade his organization into the shadows once more.

Research is still ongoing...

#### **AN APOCALYPTIC CULT: THE TRUTH ABOUT CHIMERA**

What makes Chimera dangerous is that the true purpose of Lucius is very simple: he wants to die, and he's willing to go to any length to make that happen. All of his bio-engineering research has been to this end, though much of it has been weaponized to fund his organization and provide additional resources towards his eventual goal.

When an immortal being who has walked the Earth for thousands of years is obsessively desperate to die, their exploits can take on a truly apocalyptic nature. Lucius will absolutely unleash Hell to destroy the entire world if he thinks it will allow him to die. That makes Chimera the apocalyptic enemy which the heroes may never understand, but the GM knows very well has a reason to watch the entire world burn. After all, the argument, "But you'll die, too!" is exactly what the evil head of Chimera wants!

#### **ADDITIONAL SECRET SOCIETIES**

The complete version of this work will include information on additional secret societies, including the Cult of Sang-Xiu/The Red God, which functions as an ongoing enemy throughout the Rise of the Red God and Rings of the Red God campaign.



## CHAPTER FOUR: ARTIFACTS OF MYSTERY

The standard world of the Brotherhood of William St. John is one of magic, psychic phenomena, monsters, and mystery. As the current adventures that have been published illustrate, adventurers in this meta-setting can encounter everything from vampires and succubi to aliens from other worlds, to sorcerers, psychics, and beings of cosmic horror from the Spaces Between Spaces.

This section will review a few of the artifacts that have appeared in our various adventures and fiction, and hopefully can serve as inspiration for other artifacts of myth, legend, and conspiracy for your games. It will also examine the role of super science, and how gadgets can function even in a game that eschews the supernatural for a more grounded, but still high adventure, approach to play.

### MYSTICAL ARTIFACTS IN THE BROTHERHOOD'S WORLD

Many of the artifacts that appear in the world of the Brotherhood are based on myth and legend from throughout history. Still others are fantastical inventions cooked up by the mind of the author. Others involve a crossover with Troll Lord Games' fantasy setting of Aihrde—it was revealed in **Rings of the Red God**, after all, that Aihrde is, in fact, Venus, millions of years in the past before its own moon collided with the world. This event flipped the planet on its axis and reversed its spin, causing a runaway greenhouse effect and the loss of the planet's magnetic field, leaving it the dead world it is today.

The following items all have an element of they mythical, horrific, or otherwise mystical about them. Though they have appeared in some fashion in published materials, there's no reason you have to abide by what we've written—the point of **Amazing Adventures** is to make it your own. Though the world has a deep history reaching back thousands (or even millions) of years, there's no intended metaplot to which you need to feel tied in your game! You should always feel free to adjust, adapt, or ignore any elements to mold events to your liking.

#### THE EYE OF THE GRAEAE

*Wondrous item, unique (requires attunement)*

The Eye of the Graeae first appeared in the introductory fiction for the SIEGE Engine version of **Amazing Adventures**, as the MacGuffin for that particular story. It is among the mythical items known as the Treasures of Perseus, which also include a helmet of invisibility, a magical shield, and winged sandals. The exploits of the Brotherhood to recover these other artifacts have yet to be told, but the Eye itself is (supposedly) locked within their vaults.

The Eye of the Graeae as a fist-sized blue gem, roughly oval in shape. It can be attuned to by up to three users at once, and will function for any to whom it is attuned. To attune to the device, one must simply look through it. If it is already attuned to the maximum number of users, any who attempt to attune to it must make a Charisma saving throw based on the last person to attune to the device. The DC for this save is 8 + the attuned user's Wisdom bonus + the attuned user's proficiency score.

The Eye of the Graeae provides a number of benefits when one looks through it. It grants *truesight* while observing through the eye. It also allows for the use of any *detect* spell at will. Finally, it provides the benefits of a *clairvoyance* spell once per 12 hours. This limit is on the device, not the user. Thus, if one person uses *clairvoyance* with the Eye, no one else can use that ability until 12 hours have passed.

#### THE RINGS OF BRASS

*Artifacts, extremely rare*

The Rings of Brass are detailed in the **Rings of the Red God** and **Ruins of Ends Meet** adventure supplements for **Amazing Adventures**. The Rings of Brass appear as huge, 8- to 12-foot tall oval mirrors, encircled in a brass frame and covered with strange, alien, runic writing (in fact, ancient Dwarven from Aihrde and its sister world of Inzae). They are powered by an impossibly ancient and forever lost deific language: the Language of Creation.

They are, in essence, portals that allow for travel throughout all of known time and space. When properly operated through the right manipulation of the runic script on their frames and fed with mystical energies, they can allow a person to go anywhere in the multiverse, at any time. Of course, if there isn't a matching portal on the other side, the traveler could wind up stranded in an alien and potentially very deadly place.

In addition, the science used to operate the Rings of Brass has been lost for millions of years. At best, if two users make DC 18 Intelligence (science) and Intelligence (arcana) checks together, they may be able to work out how to activate, shut down, or even destroy one of the rings through a mixture of magic and technology. They would not, however, be able to control the destination and travel would be at their peril. If both users made a DC 25 check, it may be possible to achieve a generally accurate destination. Such a check would be needed every single time a Ring was used.

If however, these Rings were to fall into the wrong hands (Say, Chimera or the Order of the Black Dragon), it could be disastrous for all of human history, as these organizations may just have the sheer level of resources required to work out how to activate and control the Rings.

## THE SIBYLLINE CODICES

*Magical Tome, Unique*

There are two sets of tomes that make up the Sibylline Codices. The first are the Sibylline Books, a collection of ancient texts that contain the utterances of oracles from the days of ancient Greece and Rome. They were consulted during the rise and fall of Rome at various momentous times before being burned by the Roman General Flavius Stilicho in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century CE as the prophecies they contained were being used to justify opposition to his government.

The second set of books are a series of 12 to 14 prophetic texts known as the *Sibylline Oracles* with only partial texts that survive dating to a copy from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. In truth, the missing texts (books 9 and 10 of the *Oracles*) were the subject of a late Roman/early Christian effort to stamp them out as they revealed the existence of a strange and alien world, and the secrets of a cult dedicated to the worship of a dark deity known as the Red God, also called Sang-Xiu or Ornduhl and with the titles of the Blood Emperor and Crimson Caliph.

These texts also revealed secrets about the Rings of Brass, where they were located throughout the world, and the history and existence of a world called *Aihrde*, which existed in our own solar system on Venus, many millions of years ago. They contain prophecies of apocalyptic nature involving the destruction of *Aihrde* and the arrival of the Red God on Earth. The Church set out to destroy the texts for fear that they would fuel the resurgence of the Blood Emperor's cult and present a danger to humanity.

A single set of the books, however, were hidden deep beneath the library at Ephesus, and eventually were recovered by the Brotherhood of William St. John (see **The Rings of the Red God**). They are currently (ostensibly) in the Brotherhood's vaults.

What abilities the Books or Oracles would grant to the user is left to the discretion of the GM, though it goes without saying that they are both a wealth of cosmic knowledge and accurate prophecy, so whoever controls them would have untold knowledge of the future and how to manipulate it to their advantage, as well as an important key to finding and controlling the Rings of Brass.

## THE CODEX SANGUINUS

*Wondrous Item, Artifact (requires attunement) or Arcane Tome, now uncommon*

The Codex Sanguinus is, in short, the bible of the cult of the Red God on Earth. It excerpts portions of the history of *Aihrde* from that world's own chronicles, the *Andanuth*, and indeed has been published under that title, but focuses entirely on the sections of that greater work which deal with the Red God Ornduhl, and spins those sections to glorify the Red God to his cult.

The book is a collection of dark rituals designed to summon, harness, and even control the forces of undeath and madness. The ultimate goal of the Red God cult is twofold: immortality, and escape from the apocalyptic End Times they are sure are coming. To this end, they paradoxically seek to bring about the End Times so that they can face them on their own terms, and restore the Red God to life once more so that he can raise them up as all others pass.

The cult paints itself in a twisted interpretation of Ornduhl's own struggle against the *Aihrdian Gonfod*, the End of Days of that particular world, and his eventual betrayal of the creator deity of that world to usurp the power of creation for himself, that he might stop the *Gonfod* and control the cosmos itself. The mythological aspects of the Codex can be found in Troll Lord Games' **The Codex of Aihrde**.

As a book unto itself, the Codex exists in several forms. The more common, "Lesser Codex," has been mass published in a trade paperback format suited for digestion by the masses. In this form, any who read it must succeed at a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or suffer Madness. If the saving throw result is a natural 1 the effect is long-term madness; otherwise it is short-term Madness (See **Madness, Amazing Adventures 5e Core Rulebook**). They also gain a Madness Point as standard. This effect occurs every time the book is read, eventually driving cultists quite mad.

Standard versions of the book also, when properly studied (and with a DC 16 Intelligence (arcana) check) contain up to 4 (1d8) necromancy spells, which can be learned by any Arcanist, Occultist, or Hallowed in the service of the Red God.

The "True" Codex, which is truly unique and only one copy exists in the world, contains the darkest secrets of Ornduhl, which will worm their way into the mind of any reader, inexorably twisting them to an acolyte of the god, and imbuing them with dark powers. Any nonevil creature that attempts to read the True Codex must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. If they fail, they immediately become chaotic evil in alignment and are a fanatical worshipper of the Red God forever.

Further, the book grants the possessor advantage on all Intelligence (arcana) checks and immunity to necrotic damage, and may use an action to cast *Black Tentacles* as a spell-like ability requiring no components. After casting this spell, roll a d6: on a 1-4, the spell may not be cast again until the next dawn. On the down side, it immediately imparts indefinite madness and 5 (1d10) Madness points with no saving throw allowed. The skin of those who attune to the tome also turns a deep, flushed, red color, and there is a faint odor of blood about them.

The book contains every necromancy spell known (and potentially a few that are unknown), all of which are

available to the carrier regardless of their class—that is, if you are an Arcanist, Hallowed, or Occultist, all necromancy spells are Arcanist, Hallowed, or Occultist spells for you, respectively.

You may also use *Vampiric Touch* as a spell-like ability, requiring no components. You may use this ability a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum once). Expended uses are restored after a short rest.

## **SUPER SCIENCE IN A GROUNDED GAME**

Some GMs may enjoy the idea of the many secret societies and level of intrigue and adventure represented by the Brotherhood of William St. John and its allies and enemies, but may not wish to run a game with psychic powers, magic, and super science. For those who wish to do so, it is largely left to the GM to remove mystical elements (Marie Laveau, for example, could become a Socialite instead of a Hallowed, and Natalya Abramova could become a straight Hooligan instead of a Mentalist).

The issue of the Gadgeteer, however, is bound to come up. In truth, it is quite possible to run a gadgeteer or adventuring inventor in a game that is grounded in reality. The rules for the character change very little, but any gadgets created should be required to be based on real world principles and precedent. Existing spells can still be used as inspiration for the mechanical effects of such gadgets, but they must be grounded in their implementation. Rather than a weapon that fires energy bolts, for example, a weapon based on a spell would fire standard

projectiles and simply be more effective or accurate than its standard counterpart.

Consider, for example, the classic jet pack based on the *fly* spell. Jet packs that allow for (very) limited flight do, in fact, exist in the world. They have never been placed into wide production or use because their existing utility is limited in a practical purpose. But a pack that allows for flight at speed for up to 30 seconds could come in quite useful in the field.

As such, basing a jet pack on the *fly* spell is quite appropriate for a grounded espionage-adventure type game. The specifics of the spell would simply need to be re-jiggered to reflect the real world limitations (possibly giving the gadgeteer's version a slight edge due to their sheer genius).

Just a few examples of gadgets that exist in the real world, or have existed at some point in time, include jet packs, motorcycles that can fit into briefcases such as the Welbike; portable long-range radios and communication devices, including those that fit into briefcases, shoes, Thermos canisters, and even denture plates and dental retainers; pens that have poison containers in them, allowing them to be used as weapons; guns hidden in walking sticks, pens, and smoking pipes; explosives disguised as oilcans or pens; and, of course, nightvision goggles. The final version of **Brotherhood of William St. John** will include writeups of these and other potential "hard science" gadgets for your game, as well as discussions on re-skinning some of the overtly mystical aspects of the game for your more grounded campaigns.

## APPENDIX B: AMAZING ADVENTURES 5E ERRATA

No matter how many editorial passes we do...something always seems to slip through.

**P. 27: On the Fly Gadgets:** The totals of allowed points banked don't jibe with the levels of gadgets you can create. Modify them as follows: at second level, a gadgeteer may only produce level 0 or 1 effects with on the fly gadgets. In addition, a character may bank a number of points for on the fly gadgets *equal to their level, with a minimum of 2*, instead of equal to half their level (rounded down), with a minimum of 2. You may never have more than 10 points banked for on the fly gadgets.

**P. 38: Disciple of Death:** This ability, as written, is a little high powered. Modify it as follows: Use of this ability requires an action, and the ray deals 1d8 necrotic damage, not 1d6 + Wisdom bonus necrotic damage. You still recover half the damage dealt if you are below your hit point maximum, and you still cannot raise hit points above your hit point maximum with his ability.

**P. 71:** The beginning of the intro fiction should read "**Outside of Pittsburgh, 2019.**"

**SPELL GRIMOIRE:** It seems that a couple of spells slipped through. *Eldritch Blast* and *Hellish Rebuke* are listed in the Occultist spell list, but was accidentally excised from the grimoire itself. The spell is found in the 5e SRD, but the text is as follows:

### ELDRITCH BLAST

*Evocation cantrip*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 120 feet

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Instantaneous

A beam of crackling energy streaks toward a creature within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d10 force damage.

The spell creates more than one beam when you reach higher levels: two beams at 5th level, three beams at 11th level, and four beams at 17th level. You can direct the beams at the same target or at different ones. Make a separate attack roll for each beam.

### HELLISH REBUKE

*1st-level evocation*

**Casting Time:** 1 reaction, which you take in response to being damaged by a creature within 60 feet of you that you can see

**Range:** 60 feet

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You point your finger, and the creature that damaged you is momentarily surrounded by hellish flames. The crea-

ture must make a Dexterity saving throw. It takes 2d10 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**At Higher Levels:** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d10 for each slot level above 1st.

### ENLARGE/REDUCE

*2nd-level transmutation*

**Casting Time:** 1 ACTION

**Range:** 30 FEET

**Components:** V, S, M (A PINCH OF POWDERED IRON)

**Duration:** CONCENTRATION, UP TO 1 MINUTE

You cause a creature or an object you can see within range to grow larger or smaller for the duration.

Choose either a creature or an object that is neither worn nor carried. If the target is unwilling, it can make a Constitution saving throw. On a success, the spell has no effect.

If the target is a creature, everything it is wearing and carrying changes size with it. Any item dropped by an affected creature returns to normal size at once.

**Enlarge:** The target's size doubles in all dimensions, and its weight is multiplied by eight. This growth increases its size by one category – from Medium to Large, for example. If there isn't enough room for the target to double its size, the creature or object attains the maximum possible size in the space available. Until the spell ends, the target also has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws. The target's weapons also grow to match its new size. While these weapons are enlarged, the target's attacks with them deal 1d4 extra damage.

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