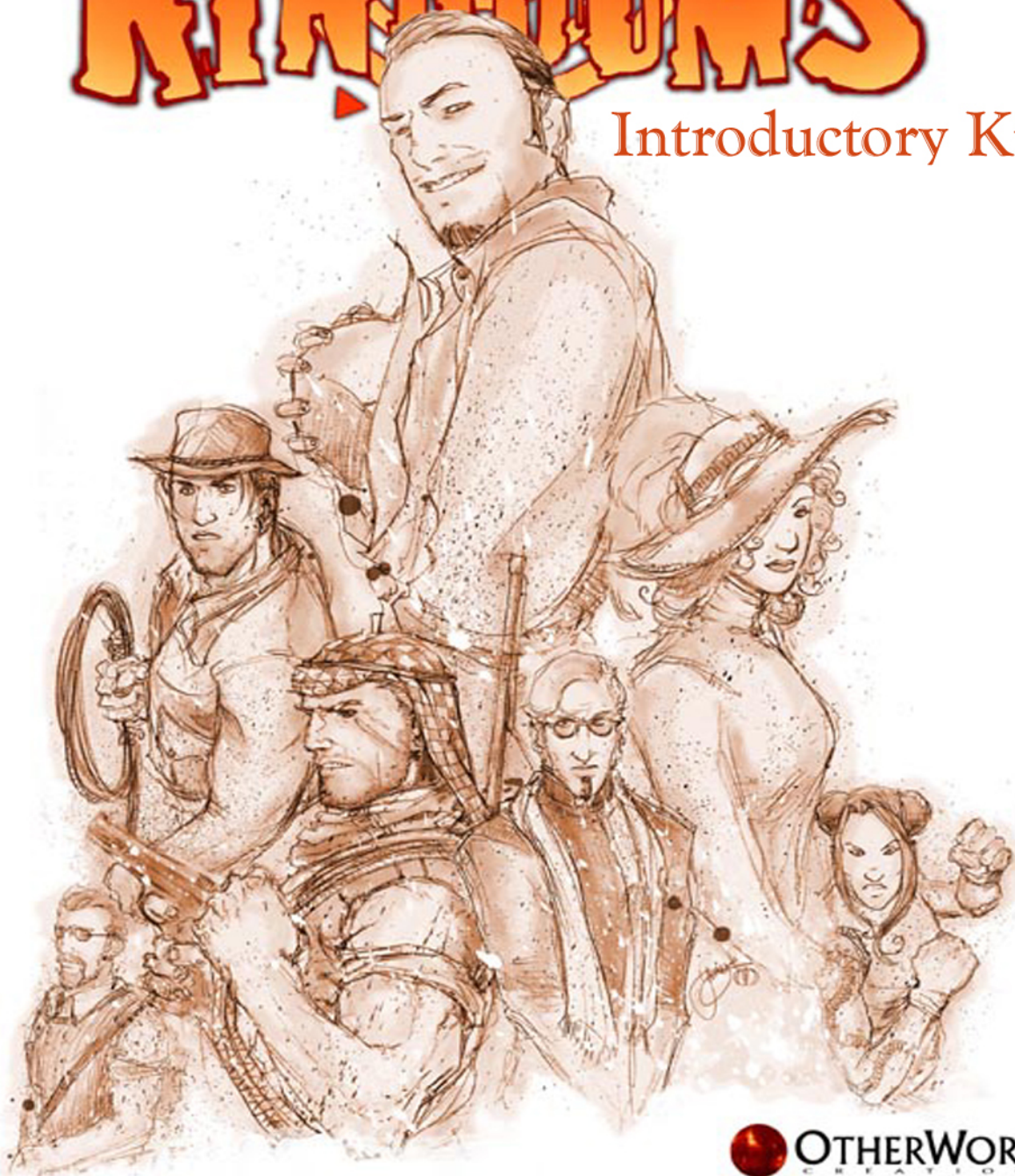


FORBIDDEN KINGDOMS

Introductory Kit



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INTRODUCTORY KIT

Line Developer

Dave Webb

Writing

Dave Webb

Cover Artwork

Kieran J. Yanner

Interior Artwork

D. M. Foster & Kieran J. Yanner

Layout & Graphic Design

Kieran J. Yanner

Editing

Dave Webb & R. Hyrum Savage

Publisher

OtherWorld Creations, Inc.
• 1412 12th St. Suite #B
Santa Monica, CA 90401



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See appendix for Product Identity and Open Gaming content

INTRODUCTION

Whenever I hear the word “pulp” it begins to conjure images of foreign places, exotic people and action, lots and lots of action. As a child growing up I found a unique solace in reading and rereading tales of Doc Savage, the Shadow, G-8, and a host of others. I guess you could say it pushed me into the business I’m in today; crafting stories. I’m glad you took the time to pick up this quick little guide to our new world of “Forbidden Kingdoms”. We look forward to bringing you an exciting new possibility for the d20 system, as well as sharing our love for the Pulp Genre. We may not be the first, but we strive to be the best.

Who are these guys?

When the news of the d20 System™ hit, we at **OtherWorld Creations, Inc.** were excited at the thought of being able to publish product in conjunction with a fantastic game mechanic. As is par for the course with so many independent press companies, we felt the need to express ourselves in every way imaginable. The **Open Gaming License** gave us a chance to step to the forefront in the mid-range publishing market, while, at the same time, allowing us to utilize our ideas to ‘build worlds’ as it were. That is the core of **OWC**; building worlds, settings, and scenarios to be used with the d20 System™. We take the mechanics, see how far we can stretch them, and then create worlds for people to play in, hence the reason for our name. We realize however, that gamers are creators of their own worlds, with their own core beliefs and rules they go by. What we offer is a chance to take anything we create and transpose it to your (yes you) creation. It’s ultimately left up to you to decide whether or not something fits into your world.

What is the Pulp Genre?

Danger, excitement, action and adventure are the trademarks of the pulp genre. Where else do you have masked men, dastardly villains and scantily clad women in peril? The pulps derive their name from the cheap wood pulp used to make the formulaic fiction magazines of the early 20th century and could be akin to dime novels of the earlier century. More to the point, they were a cheap form of entertainment at a time when readers weren’t particularly picky about what they read. With the daring rescues and cliffhanger endings that they provided the pulps captured an audience in escapist fantasy that took them away from the harsh reality of the Great Depression. Pulps were more a state of mind, where one could be adventurous, daring and haphazard without the fear of repercussion or injury. They were crafted in a much simpler time, when morality was black and white, not shades of gray. The core of the pulp novel is simply this: good is good and evil is evil. If you read about the villain in a pulp novel, you knew he was evil. You didn’t care *why* he was evil, just that he was. If the hero of the book did good, unselfish and brave things, then you knew he was the Hero. No questions asked. It was a much simpler time, where simple truths held true. There was no in-depth detailing of how the Crimson Skull came to be the nefarious villain that he was. He was just that evil. There wasn’t any psychological profiling of the character, covering up for, or ex-

plaining away the reasons why he was the “Bad Guy”. He was going to explain himself anyway by chapter thirteen when he had our hero bested in some supposedly “inescapable” deathtrap. With a blend of Weird Science, exotic locations and a world still ripe with places yet unexplored that teemed with lost civilizations, the reader was thrown headlong into adventure. The Pulps were a starting point for many a great author as they used the constant employment to ‘fine tune’ their craft. E.R. Burroughs wrote for the pulps and saw his creation, Tarzan, come to light in the pages of *Argosy*. There are a host of other writers you may know, Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Robert Bloch, Robert Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, Tennessee Williams, Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, Erle Stanley Gardner, John D. MacDonald, H.P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, Luke Short, Max Brand and Louis L’Amour, just to name a few. Pulps were written with two things in mind: Action and Adventure. They were, and still are, a great source of escapist fantasy where the hero gets the girl and the bad guy gets beaten at his own game.

Pulp Elements

The Pulps covered a wide variety of subjects, from *Crimefighting Tales* (which featured such heroes as The Shadow and the Spider) to *Spicy Stories* and beyond. Whatever the genre, a few things could be assured: The story had a Hero, a Villain (who was whole heartedly Evil), and it was set in an exotic local. There were hundreds of variants on the same theme, and at its height the pulp genre boasted over 1200 individual titles, most of which quit being produced after the first three or four issues, while others simply changed their titles after initial release. The following section gives you a little information on how wide a selection the pulps actually covered.

Crimefighting Tales usually consisted of the main Hero and his group of aides/sidekicks taking on the criminal element. The Shadow had his group, fighting the forces of evil on the underworld front while Doc Savage sought to make the world a better place by using Science to rehabilitate crooks. There was always some global scheme going on that the hero stumbled upon and no one could stop it except for him.

Spy Stories were the ones that dealt in the ‘glitz and glamour of international proportion. Rubbing elbows with enemy agents and trying to extract secrets from them while in the middle of dinner became an every evening event. No matter what, the hero always seemed to keep his cool and look good while doing his job. A classic example of this genre is Ian Fleming’s James Bond or Simon Templar, better known as the Saint.

Action and Adventure seemed to go hand in hand and was often quite common in storylines. The hero would be called off to a strange new place because someone had sent him a letter saying they were in dire straights. Exploration played a vital role in these stories, the likes of which Arthur Conan Doyle used in his novel “The Lost World”, as well as Verne’s “Journey to the Center of the Earth”. E.R. Burroughs’s John Carter is a prime example of this element, and for more modern thinkers there is also the “Indiana Jones” trilogy.

One of the most popular elements used in pulp fiction was the **Horror Story**. The authors used a unique style to take the seemingly ordinary and turned it into the macabre. H.P. Lovecraft and Robert Bloch were masters of this. Their protagonists would combat forces in which they had little to no hope of ever defeating, and slowly they would lapse into insanity. It was always the use of innocents that triggered the Evil that lie in wait for most of our heroes. Bram Stoker epitomized mankind's evil in his classic horror *Dracula*, as did Shelley in her tale of *Frankenstein*.

The list goes on and on, encompassing a myriad of subjects. To illustrate this fact, here is but a sample of titles to show you the range in which the pulp genre spanned: *Air Trails*, *Argosy*, *Black Mask*, *Crack Shot*, *Dime Mystery*, *Excitement*, *Far East Stories*, *Foreign Legion Stories*, *G-Men*, *Hollywood Detective*, *Imaginary Worlds*, *Jungle Stories*, *Ka-Zar*, *Love Story*, *Magic Carpet Magazine*, *Nickel Western*, *Oriental Stories*, *Planet Stories*, *Quick Trigger*, *Rapid Fire Action Stories*, *Six Gun*, *Spicy Mystery*, *Strange Detective Mysteries*, *The Thrill Book*, *Underworld Romance*, *Weird Tales*, *Youth*, *Wings and Zing*.

So you can see there was a lot to choose from.

What does all of this have to do with *Forbidden Kingdoms*? Everything. We've taken all of the aspects that were found in the pulp genre and have made a role playing game out of them. You can take on the role of the Explorer, going out into the unknown to strange and exciting new places. Or the Academic as you delve into mysteries about the past long shrouded in secrecy. Maybe you're the two fisted Soldier of Fortune hired by an exotic cabal to guard an ancient temple. No matter what you want to play, we can help you bring your imagination to life.

Remember...the d20 System™ is not just for fantasy anymore!

THE WORLD OF FORBIDDEN KINGDOMS

By and large the world of *Forbidden Kingdoms* is very much like our own. The timeline for the setting spans 50 years from 1889 to 1939 and it captures the full reign of the Pulp era. We've set the stage on an alternate Earth that is full of "what if" possibilities. One of the main concerns that we had when developing this project was the enormous expanse of technological development during this time that we had presented. Instead of limiting ourselves to something linear I asked the rest of the development team to extrapolate on existing information that we had gathered, thereby turning it into a speculative exercise. For example, one of the most popular logistical strands is the development of Babbage's Analytical engine. What if (I really love saying that) he had gotten the funds to craft his machine and it had actually worked? The computer age would have developed sooner, wouldn't you agree? Computations on a mass scale could be accomplished much quicker, and who knows where that might've led to early on.

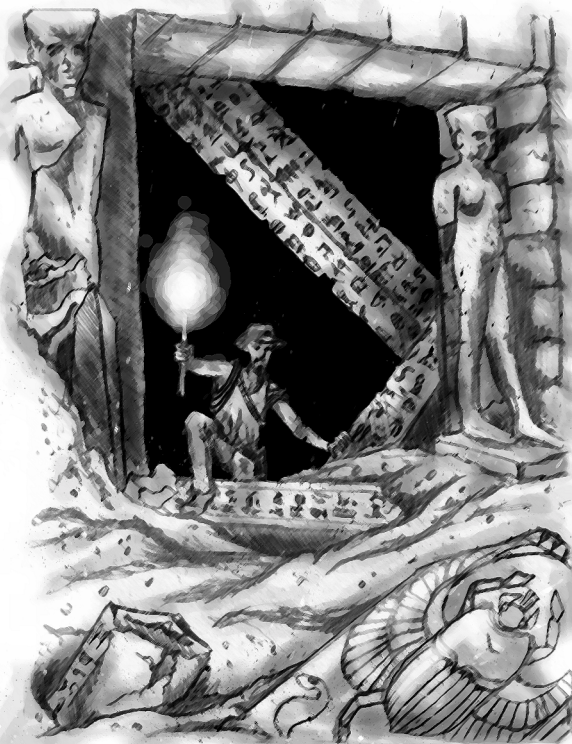
Forbidden Kingdoms is a world that still has the spark of

adventure in it, where you can still traverse the darkest parts of Africa in search of hidden caches of treasure or stop the World Crime League from taking over the world. It is a place where Good vs. Evil is as simple as black and white, and where "the seed of crime" does indeed bear bitter fruit.

The world in which we live is oftentimes an angry place, filled with strife, angst, depression and malice. Travel with us, back to a time when life was easier and all you needed was a trusty .45 and a good right hook.

THE PEOPLE OF FORBIDDEN KINGDOMS

In each of us there is a hero waiting to be set free. The makings of such a person relies upon timing and ingenuity. In every great story there are a set of circumstances that allow for us, as readers, to empathize with the protagonist as we silently cheer him on towards victory. Such is also the case when you create a hero in *Forbidden Kingdoms*. When you take up the book and begin to read about the world before you, you start to become a part of it. Every persona you create helps to enliven the world you play in, every story you tell creates an ongoing history that you chronicle. Soon your game world is populated by your imaginations. Continue on and meet our heroes.



Illus. by D. M. Foster

THE ACADEMIC

Travis looked at his watch, then back to the rolling boil on the main Bunsen burner. Only two minutes more before finding out the answer to the question that had been nagging him for the past week. Was it really gold? He mused silently, thinking back to the nights previous. Where had the strangely dressed Incan warrior come from and why was he in the middle of Los Angeles in the middle of the 1920's? Too many strange and unexplained circumstances surrounded the Incan's death, and now it lay upon Travis' shoulders to figure out this mystery. He picked up a heavy pair of worn leather gloves and slid them on up to his elbows. Gingerly he lifted the beaker off of the flame and deftly set it to the side to begin cooling. Travis stripped off one of the gloves and looked at his watch again, then turned back to extinguish the burner's flame, noticing for the first time the woman standing in the lab with him.

She was everything he ever read about in books; Tall, elegant and beautiful. Not a hair was out of place, nor a wrinkle found on her dark, velveteen dress. When she smiled at him his heart nearly stopped beating. Travis turned to face her, his own face was flush with excitement, but not from his discovery.

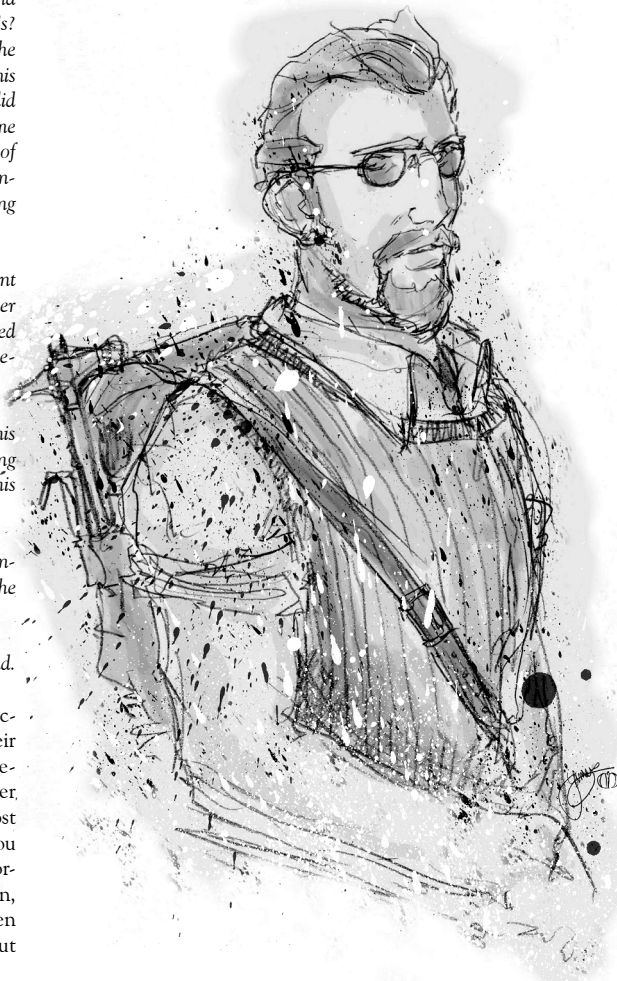
"Herr Smythe?" she purred. Something about the way she said his name made his teeth stand on edge. German? Austrian? Something didn't fit quite right, and that 'something' snapped Travis out of his schoolboy revelry.

"Actually," he said coolly, "it's professor. Professor Alexander-Smythe." He lay the gloves over the still cooling beaker to hide the smelted gold within, then moved to block her way from his work.

"How can I be of service?" he smiled as he extended his hand.

The Academic is the steadfast pursuer of fact over fiction. No matter what the cost, they will doggedly continue their research until the matter is resolved. Many a scholar has descended into the abyss in the quest for knowledge. Some never return, others are *Changed* when the abyss looks back. In almost every civilization that has the capacity for higher learning you will find these people. They are the ones who spend a vast majority of their time chasing after knowledge in all forms and fashion, learning things that "mankind was not meant to know". Often they are rebuked by society for their "crackpot ideologies", but isn't that always the curse of true genius?

The Academic character class allows for quick development in the proficiency of several skills. It is not uncommon to see several characters with at least one level in academic before moving on to another Class as they progress. Two classic examples of this character class are giants in literary fiction, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson.



THE CLERGY

The branches of the large bush parted way giving the Monsignor a clear view of the plateau that was ahead. He took a kerchief out and patted his damp brow, trying to stem the tide of sweat that seemed ever present since he arrived in the jungle's interior. 'This is the last time I track down one of Travis' leads.' He thought as he removed the frosted glasses he used to cut the glare of the sun and cleaned them off. He squinted against the brightness of the day recalling how just that morning had seen them shrouded in a damp, heavy fog that seemed to come from nowhere, and now they had just broken through it to reveal the lush landscape. The Monsignor returned the glasses to the bridge of his nose and hefted the weight of his pack, taking the momentary break to switch sides from left to right. Once he was situated he continued on up the gradual incline and out into the open. Soft, hushed murmurs began to spread throughout the tribesmen he had hired to carry his personal effects, as well as the other baggage of those who had chosen to accompany him. He looked back, bright blue eyes peered from behind the frosted glasses, at the restless natives in curiosity. He motioned for them to step forward, but they refused and began shaking their heads to reiterate their answer. The Monsignor sighed and turned back towards the clearing where he proceeded without them. As he stepped onto the solid footing of the plateau he was met with an arrow, shot cleanly at his feet. It was no doubt a warning, but from where? Who? The landing appeared to be empty. It was then that he saw Them, standing perfectly still against the backdrop of the green foliage that made up the jungle surrounding him. They were all painted in various shades of green, making them nigh invisible against the backdrop of the jungle... A lesser man would not have spotted them.

He nodded to them and slowly dropped his rucksack to the ground, raising his hands after he had done so. He took off his glasses so the natives could see his eyes. He had heard stories back in the village that the Lost Tribe found blue eyes to be a mark of good fortune, he only hoped that it would hold true.

"I have come from a far off place to see you." The Monsignor haltingly proclaimed in the native's tongue. He sighed softly, watching the movements on either side of him. None of the tribesmen moved forward onto the plateau, so he moved closer to them. He stopped as they raised their bows and blowguns in protest, then he backed away slowly.

"I bring a message from God." He said, overly loud so they all could hear him.

One member of the tribesmen stepped forward, out of the jungle and pointed to a high cliff that hung overhead. A lone figure, powerful in build and dressed in the skins of black panthers, stood there, arms folded across his hulking chest.

"HE is our god." Said the warrior, as he looked back at the clergyman, his face a mask of growing confusion.

"Oh dear," the Monsignor said softly to himself, "I can see that this is going to be a trifle more difficult than I first thought."

In almost every culture there is Faith, and with this Faith

there are those who have been called upon to spread the word of their god's "divine message", a calling-if you will. These are the people that take this word to the masses, with full support in their god's doctrine. Amongst the Clergy there are those that are beneficial, wise, and kindly, but also within these ranks lay the fanatical, cultists, and followers of the Darker Faiths that are the diametric opposite of their goodly brethren. One cannot count



just how many belief systems there are out there, from the ancient pagan gods to the singular belief in the All Mighty. None are wrong if that is what they believe. Witch doctors, shamans, priests, druids, etc all fall under this class heading.

The Clergy character class allows for a direct tie to the Character's Belief and the particular deity that the Character worships. This class allows for certain special abilities to be granted if the character's faith is pure, as well as providing spiritual guidance in times of need.

THE EXPLORER

Jack wheeled the truck to a halt in front of the small village, cut the engine and looked around. It was the same in every remote part of the world; tiny mud huts with half naked savages running around. He shook his head and wondered why on earth was the Monsignor out this far in Peru. A wizened old man with a face made of wrinkles looked Jack over and smiled a toothless smile, waving feebly at him as he passed. Jack nodded in reply and headed for what appeared to be the central hut, looking around at the unwashed faces of the children that followed him. A sense of unease came over him as he walked, and although it was nothing he could put his finger on, he knew that something was not quite right. Jack stopped in his tracks and looked around. Other than the handful of children, and the old man that he had passed, there were no other people in sight. It was right about then that the feeling he had been getting increased, and he slowly began dropping his hand towards his .45.

"That won't be necessary Herr Savage." A thickly accented male's voice broke the silence. Jack turned to see who it was that addressed him. As he watched the children scatter, their job done, he was not surprised the see long time nemesis, Udo Horst, or as the underworld knew him better "Herr Totenmeister", the Master of Death. He stood well over six feet and weighed, Jack guessed, a good two hundred and eighty pounds. Udo was a giant of a man who took considerable pleasure in causing other people pain, and right now he was inflicting the tribal leader with his unique brand of restraint. His massive, beefy hand was clamped around the diminutive indian's neck and every so often he'd squeeze to accentuate his remarks.

"Not like you to be off your leash, Udo. Where's Krieger?" Jack asked as he shifted his gaze to sweep the area. His answer wasn't long in coming as a wiry, officious looking man stepped from the confines of the hut that Udo had exited. He wore the uniform of a German officer with arrogance, every buckled shined in the morning sun. Krieger lit a cigarette and smirked at Savage.

"I am glad to see that you are well, Jack. After our last encounter I had given you up for dead." The German chuckled softly, his eyes never leaving the rugged explorer for an instant. Jack narrowed his eyes, weighing his options of escape. The two krauts had him at a disadvantage, especially since they had a hostage.

"We can play this one of two ways Heinrich. You let the villagers go and I promise that no one gets hurt. You get to walk away a free man." Savaged hoped that there was enough bravado in his voice to sway the young colonel's mind. Jack let out a soft sigh and slowly eased his weight to hid back leg. If there was going to be trouble he might as well be prepared for it.

"And the second option?" inquired the amused officer.

"I've got 6 bullets. What's it going to be?" Jack knew it was going to be a very bad day.

Trained in the arts of investigation, deduction and exploration, the explorers are known for their keen minds and daring adventures. Even as children they wanted to know more about

the world around them, as well as the world beyond. As they grow into adults, they never lose that sense of wonder. Always willing to take whatever risk is necessary to reveal the Truth, the explorer sometimes forgets the danger into which this endeavor may lead them.



Often brash, headstrong and straight forward, the Explorer character class is a well-blended mix of investigator, and combatant, with a dash of the criminal element thrown in for good measure. A fine example of this class is Allan Quatermain, of "King Solomon's Mines" fame.

THE IDLE RICH

Ursula looked up from her journal to see that painted savages were leading the Monsignor off into the dense undergrowth of the Peruvian jungle. With a quick look back the Monsignor locked eyes with her and shook his head "no" in an almost imperceptible manner. She had been a friend to the enigmatic priest long enough to know better than to question his decision, just as he knew that she wouldn't follow his orders. Ursula stowed her journal and writing utensils in the confines of her small rucksack and hoisted it up onto her shoulder. She checked the Schofield .38 she kept holstered at her side when she was "on safari", as her uncle would put it, and then called for her faithful guide T'alla to accompany her into the jungle. They watched as the rest of the natives they had hired in the small village days earlier began to separate and run off back the way they had come.

T'alla grunted softly as he hefted up his spear, shaking his head in disgust. Ursula looked back at him and wrinkled a brow. He merely smiled softly and motioned with his head towards the fleeing backs of the Indians. "They fear the jungle." He said solemnly. She merely nodded and began to quicken her pace to catch up with the Monsignor and his captives. As she ran she began to think of home, and all of its elegance. She missed old Randolph, who would wake her with breakfast every morning since she was a tiny little girl. She recalled how the tray he carried was of the finest silver, and how often it was overburdened with colorful fruits, juices, teas of all flavors and various fare. She was so far into her revelry that she became startled when T'alla touched her arm softly to get her attention. Ursula followed the length of his sinewy, ebony arm as he pointed out the clearing that the Lost tribesmen had brought the Monsignor out onto.

She nodded to T'alla and motioned for her rifle. The Zulu warrior nodded once and began to unwrap the Enfield from its field cloth case. The smell of gun oil permeated the air as T'alla slipped one of the magazines into the loading chamber. He quickly handed over the bolt-action rifle to his charge; where Ursula deftly slid a round into the firing position. She knelt with the grace of a predatory cat, the years of her dance training showing in her finely honed form. She blew an errant blond-white hair from out of her eyes as she bore down the sight of her intended target: a rocky outcropping of loose stones that appeared to be holding a much larger boulder in check. All that was left to do now was wait.

Some call them 'dilettantes', others refer to them as 'Ne'er-do-wells'; either way, these people have so much money that they have to hire advisors just to handle all of it. Most of them have the very best that money can buy: elegant cars, clothing, houses, jewelry-even an education. The problem is, they haven't settled on a particular path in life, and have decided to try Everything.

Unfortunately, this drive means they tend to lose fervor in their current interest rather quickly. They tend to be flashy, sophisticated, charming, and the life of the party, but from an outsider's point of view, they may seem shallow and insincere. That is the price one pays to stave off a jaded view of the world.



THE MYSTIC

The Most Venerable Master Wu slipped silently into the laboratory moments behind the statuesque blond woman. He had seen her talking to Travis and had become concerned when the two large men remained stationed just outside the door. Using the disciplines from the Temple of the Four Winds he had neutralized the ruffians with little trouble at all, and now he stood there, nigh invisible to the woman's senses. Wu watched her closely, analyzing every movement the blond made, so it came as no surprise to him when she pulled a small pistol from her purse and pointed it at Travis. A quick flick of his wrist disarmed the surprised woman, who now looked at Wu with a puzzled expression on her face. Another blindingly fast maneuver rendered the woman unconscious.

Travis looked at Wu in utter amazement. He reached down and retrieved the pistol that had fallen to the floor, putting into the waistband of his trousers. By the time he looked up Wu had trussed the woman up like a Thanksgiving turkey and was awaiting the authorities. The diminutive oriental looked at Travis with the smallest hint of a smile playing on his lips. He plucked a piece of lint off of his chi-gong and addressed the young academic.

"You let yourself be wooed by the soft tones of a woman's voice," Wu chided softly to his pupil, "next time it may get you killed." He let the words hang in silence so they would sink in. Travis nodded, but did not reply. The mystic softly padded over to the young man and poked him in the stomach, just hard enough to get his attention. When the two met each other's gaze, the younger knew he had lost the battle. The elder's eyes burned with such ferocity that they almost seemed to glow. Just then there was a sharp and sudden sound that exploded in the small room. Travis blinked, trying to clear the cobwebs from his mind. After a few moments he seemed to be free from whatever hold the Master had held him in, and now he gazed upon the old man in a new light. Master Wu held open his tiny hand, and within lay a still smoldering piece of lead. Again both men gazed at each other, this time the mystic was smiling.

"Time for lesson number two." He said, motioning to the door where the two former unconscious brutes stood brandishing guns.

The Mystic is a rare breed indeed, one that delves into the very depths of the unknown without fear of what lies there. Whether it is Eastern philosophies or modern Spiritualism, the Mystic is always at the heart, searching for answers to unspoken questions.

With a colorful assortment of unexplainable "gifts" at their disposal, the Mystic leads the way in matters of the Occult, but this power comes with an exacting toll. Society instinctively distances from that which it does not understand. A wise Mystic reinforces this stigma in order to preserve their mystique. Eastern monks, Spiritualists, Mediums, and Escapologists are all good examples of this character class.



THE SCOUNDREL

The smoke hung thick within the confines of the seedy bar, so thick in fact that Randall thought he might have to cut his way through it. He wove in and out of the patrons as everyone jostled around each other. He kept one hand on his wallet and the other on the knife he kept hidden in his jacket. He finally spotted one of his contacts leaning against the far wall, away from the crowd. Randall nodded to the bartender, a friend of his from the old neighborhood, and proceeded to take the drinks he ordered to his table. He caught his contacts eye and motioned, ever so slightly, to the chair in front of himself. The swarthy looking gentleman looked around then peeled himself off the wall, heading for Randall.

After a brief exchange Randall slipped a fin to his man, making sure to keep it well out of sight. The Black Bird wasn't a place where one flashed any sort of money, it was also a place where the police were loath to go. When both parties were satisfied that all was well business began. The sailor squinted in the dim light, looking at Randall for a brief moment before speaking in a low whisper.

"Ye know that Big John is lookin' fer ye, why'd ye come up fer air?"

The scoundrel coolly scanned the Bird, looking for any signs of the aforementioned Big John. With a sly smile, he leaned forward withdrawing his knife and held it to the old man's chest.

"The business I have with Jonathan is between he and I, understood? Are you interested in leaving this lovely establishment in one piece?" Bright, cold eyes accentuated his point. The seaman swallowed hard and nodded as Randall removed the knife, letting it slip out of sight. His smile widened and a soft chuckle escaped his lips.

"Good man, Sidney. You have the knack for survival. I like that. I also like your knack for ferreting out information of a somewhat lascivious sort. What can you tell me about Germany?" Sidney's eyes widened, then he licked his lips. He nervously looked around, as if ghosts were to jump from the very rafters themselves. He turned his attention back to Randall and shook his head.

"Nuthin' mate. Nuthin' at all. "The man lied, and he knew Randall knew he lied.

The Englishman sighed heavily and looked back at his contact. Someone had already gotten to him; the question that remained was who? He nodded solemnly and took a sip of his drink, thinking of whom to try next. His thoughts were soon interrupted as the front door of the Black Bird exploded in a hail of gunfire. Instinctually he ducked behind his table and interposed as many bodies as he could between himself and the commotion.

Three figures all dressed in long, black leather trench coats, holding Thompson submachine guns, stormed into the bar and began to fire into the air. There was a fourth figure, a beautiful blond woman, entering behind them, her heels making a soft 'clicking' noise as she walked.

The veil she wore did nothing to hide the slight bruising that



showed on her left cheek. Snapping a cigarette from a holder she lit the end, pausing slightly for effect, watching the smoke add to the bar's own. She smiled a smile that was colder than a child's tombstone. Her voice was a mixture of smoke and honey as she addressed the denizens of the Black Bird.

"I'm looking for a man by the name of Randall Holcombe. No one needs to die if he is brought forth immediately. " She smiled a most perfect, predatory smile. Randall slowly eased further down behind the table, softly sighing.

"Bugger me." He bemoaned as he began crawling for the back door.

Sometimes the loud mouth braggart, oftentimes the dashing rake, the Scoundrel never ceases to keep himself out of trouble. That's because he's always IN trouble. Quick with a joke, relying on their wits to get them out of the thick of things they live on the razor's edge. They walk the fine line between right and wrong, doing what needs doing to ensure that the bad guys don't win. Sure, their methods are a bit unorthodox, but the end result is well worth whatever trouble they cook up in the process of getting the job done.

They have contacts everywhere, most of them being of the more disreputable sort. If you need object d'art smuggled into the country, then the Scoundrel is the person to see. Unfortunately for the Scoundrel, local law enforcement knows this truism too. A very good example of this character class is Han Solo, although he is not of the pulp genre (unfortunate for us).

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

Trent checked his watch for the fifth time in the past two minutes. He cursed himself for allowing Randall to walk into the bar by himself, almost as much as he cursed Ursula for going off on that fool's errand for Travis with the Monsignor. He distrusted the priest, he made no bones about it, and to take a woman into the face of danger was just unthinkable. His head snapped up as he heard the staccato of machinegun fire erupt in the night.

"Randall..." he felt his stomach tighten. For all his faults he counted the Englishman as one of his closest friends. Trent pulled his twin .45's from their shoulder holsters and ran across the street to the back exit in the nearby alley. He stopped short as he saw a shadowy figure emerge from the alleyway leveling a Thompson at him. With a snarl Trent dove to the ground as the submachine gun let loose, sending tiny messengers of death where once he stood. As he rolled Trent began to fire, sending his reply in a much more accurate fashion. The bullets caught the assassin square in the chest, ripping through his trench coat as if it were made of tissue paper. The Thompson clattered to the ground right before the man did. Trent stopped his roll and began to move, first to his feet, then to a run. As he passed the dead machine gunner he scooped up the Tommy gun and took a position near the back door of the Black Bird. He was soon rewarded as he saw Randall come flying out of the back, running as if his life depended on it. Trent had seen this maneuver one too many times in their long, enduring friendship, too often to question why his compatriot was running. In a hail of gunfire the door was riddled behind Randall, then kicked off its hinges. Trent let loose with the Thompson, spraying the interior of the Black Bird's back room, then dropped the spent machine gun, running to catch up with his partner.

"One day you HAVE to tell me what you say to get these people so lathered at you!" Trent exclaimed as he followed Randall into the night.

This two fisted man of action leaps head-long into danger and doesn't really worry about the consequences that follow. The Soldier-of-Fortune is a hands-on, no-nonsense, take-charge kind of guy. At the core, they push towards excellence, in both physical prowess as well as in martial superiority.

They are highly trained combatants, lending their skills to those in need. Single-mindedness is a two edge sword; Soldiers-of-Fortune rarely walk away from a fight, but every one of them has a story to tell about a fight they could have thought



SAMPLE ADVENTURES

The world of *Forbidden Kingdoms* is left open to your imaginations; it allows you to travel to far off Barsoom or in to the interior of the jungles of Peru, whatever your fancy may be. The three sample adventures that are presented here are to give you an idea of what kind of adventures you can craft. Enjoy!

Tale of the Seven Tombs

Deep in the heart of the Egyptian desert lies a relic of unimaginable power and evil. Created by Rahotep, Chief Wizard and Priest of Set during the reign of Pharaoh Aahotepre of the 16th Dynasty, the Nephesh, or Heart of Set, was used to sow discord and pain for many years. Only when Djhutnose, the Priest of Ra defeated Rahotep in a duel was the Upper Kingdom saved from total subjugation to Set. Once the Pharaoh was released from the powerful charm cast by Rahotep he ordered the evil wizard mummified alive and entombed in a secret location, along with his dreaded Nephesh. Now, centuries later, tales of evil and misery have reached the ears of Professor Keith William Alexander of Harvard and he has hired a group of stout hearted professionals to investigate these rumors and if necessary, send the mummy of Rahotep back to the realm of the dead!

The Jade Feather

Long ago, before Hernan Cortez and his Conquistadors changed the face of Mesoamerica forever, a local tribe of Maya had in their possession an artifact that was rumored to have been created by the god of the north star himself, Xaman Ek. This artifact, a piece of jade carved in the form of a quetzal feather, protected the tribe from the predations of their more warlike neighbors, the Mexica. And thus the tribe has been protected until the current day. Now, a group of ruffians calling themselves the Sons of Ah Puch (The Maya god of the underworld) have gone in search of the carving, knowing that whoever controls it will be unstoppable. Can you protect the peaceful tribe of Maya and in so doing protect the world?

Land of the Lost

Based out of London, England, Ursula Hardwig is a famous and well-respected Anthropologist whose main area of study has been the Gu-bjartur tribe of Iceland, a stone-age people with unknown origins. Now, two months have passed with no word from Ursula and her uncle, Professor Ulrich Hardwig of Cambridge, has hired a group of adventurers to travel to Iceland and learn the fate of his niece. Armed only with a small amount of equipment, and a few strange devices given to you by the Professor, you head to Iceland in search of knowledge and fame.

In Closing...

The world of *Forbidden Kingdoms* is ripe for adventure, and ready to be explored. Pick up the classics and rediscover the hero that is in each of us. Reinvent the world around you, as we're doing with the world of *Forbidden Kingdoms*. Inside the Master Codex you will find inclusive rules for firearms, which range from muzzle-loading black powder weapons, to modern automatics, and everything in between. You will also be able to create firearms of your own design for use in any campaign. We have also included definitive martial arts rules, pulled from the real world, and have created packages (styles) to simulate their effectiveness as a hand-to-hand combat system. But that's not all. We have also redefined the psionic system to provide you with an alternative for use in any world you choose. Three new sets of rules, all in one book. What more could you ask for?

Look for the release of *Forbidden Kingdoms* in November at your local retail and hobby store. I hope you've enjoyed this brief peek as to what's coming out from OtherWorld Creations, Inc. and we thank you for your continued interest.

APPENDIX

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