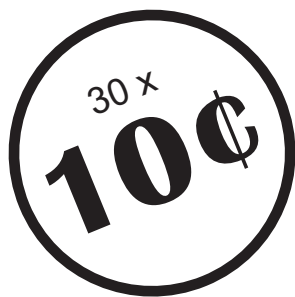


THE DORDOGNE ZODIAC



A Hero Plus Adventure for

PULP HERO

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Everything Else: Stev... you get the picture

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to all the *HERO System* fans who've been so enthusiastic about *Pulp Hero* and what will hopefully become a rich, long-lived line of Pulp gaming books.

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Printed in the U.S.A. First printing September 2005

Produced and distributed by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games.

Stock Number: DOJHERO-HPA04

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YOUR SECRET LEAGUE OF HEROES ENCODED MESSAGE!

Attention Secret League Of Heroes
members! Here's your secret message for
this Hero Plus Adventure. Use your secret
decoder ring to read it!

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3-23 20-7-15-14: EQ 16-7-18-17-14-15.

THE DORDOGNE ZODIAC



When they receive a strange relic as a bequest from a friend who died under mysterious circumstances, Our Heroes find themselves drawn into an investigation of — and a battle against — an ancient, evil cult. But will they be in time to prevent the cult and its foul masters from wreaking havoc throughout the Earth?

The Dordogne Zodiac is a *Pulp Hero* adventure designed for characters built on a total of 150 Character Points or less. The optimal number of PCs is four to six, but you can scale it up or down based on the number of opponents you pit against the heroes in various encounters.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

A letter from an attorney informs the PCs of the tragic death of their friend, Malcolm Bosworth of Chicago, and that he has left them a bequest in his will. Upon reaching Chicago, the heroes discover that Bosworth, who on April 2, 1935 was murdered and apparently robbed under mysterious circumstances, has left them a box containing an artifact and his notes on that artifact. After reading over the notes, the PCs discover that Bosworth believed he had found evidence of a malign, ancient cult of some sort, and had recently corresponded with Professor Roderick Peasley of Tulane University in New Orleans concerning it.

The heroes travel to New Orleans to meet with Professor Peasley, arriving just in time to stop an attack on him by a group of degenerate cultists. Information obtained from the attackers leads the heroes to an isolated mountain valley in Chaffee County, Colorado, not far from Trout Creek Pass. Here they find one of the cult's headquarters, wipe it out, and obtain additional information in the form of other relics and books. Now they have the chance to learn some significant (and presumably highly accurate) information about the cult and its goals, no doubt leading to possible further adventures... but the PCs are now aware that a great evil has only been averted *temporarily*, and that they

bear an uncomfortable burden of knowledge, and a duty to act on that knowledge, from now on.

PROPS

This adventure features two “props,” the letter from the attorney and some reproductions of entries from Malcolm Bosworth’s diary. You can find these at the end of the adventure; you have Hero Games’s permission to make photocopies or print extra copies to hand out to the players during the game. The props assume the adventure takes place in the early spring of 1935; if you’ve set your campaign in another year, just inform the players of the change.

If you want to add a touch of verisimilitude to the adventure, a great prop would be to get a banker’s box and fill it with Bosworth’s notes and books about various ancient cultures (Sumerian, Babylonian, Aztec, and so on). Bookmark pages with interesting pictures or other clues, then alter or add to the scenario to make them meaningful. In Part One, give the players the box and let them actually investigate its contents and research their course of action.

PART ONE: THE BOSWORTH BEQUEST

The adventure begins when one of the PCs receives a letter from the Chicago law firm of Rutledge, Mann & Fellows. If possible, pick a PC who is either (a) an archaeologist, professor of ancient history, or a talented amateur interested in these subjects, (b) wealthy, or (c) both. If that’s not possible, choose the most appropriate PC based on the background of the scenario.

The letter reads:

Dear [Character]:

It is my sad duty to inform you of the death of your friend, Malcolm Bosworth. Mister Bosworth has left you a bequest in his will, which is to be read on Friday, April 5. If you cannot attend the reading, please feel free to make an appointment to visit me in my offices at any time convenient to you.

Very truly yours,

Sloane Whitcombe

HERO PLUS ADVENTURES

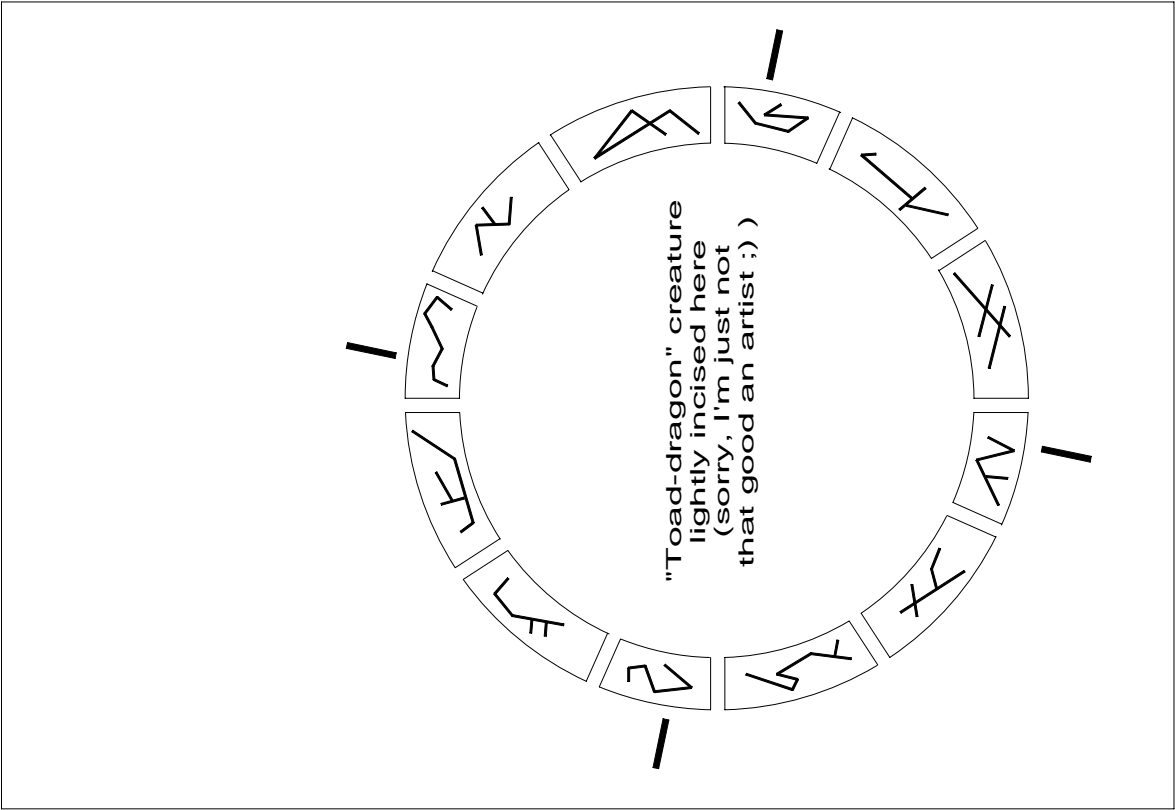
The Dordogne Zodiac is one of Hero Games’s *Hero Plus Adventures*, a series of short, no-frills, inexpensive adventures in PDF format. Hero Plus Adventures are designed to provide roughly one game session’s worth of entertainment, though they include suggestions on how to lengthen or expand the scenario if you want to. They’re written with simplicity and ease of use in mind so you can run them with a minimum of preparation.

PRINTING

The general statement on the credits page notwithstanding, DOJ, Inc. grants each purchaser of *The Dordogne Zodiac* permission to make one (1) printed copy of this adventure, and permission to make as many copies as desired of the two handouts.

THE DORDOGNE TABLET

Approximately 1.25 feet (15 inches) long



The edges of both the tablet and the plaques are much rougher than depicted here.

The plaques stand up from the base about an inch; the base itself is about an inch thick.

Approximately one foot (12 inches) long

There's a prop version of this letter at the end of the adventure that you can hand out to the players. For an added touch of class, print it on cream-colored letter-quality paper rather than standard printer or photocopier paper.

If possible, introduce Malcolm Bosworth into the campaign well before you run this scenario so that his death had greater impact. Bosworth is a very wealthy resident of Chicago who inherited his family's meat-packing business and fortune about a dozen years ago. He spends most of his time studying the history of Europe and the Near East; he's as well-versed in several subjects, including some ancient languages, as any professor. His wealth has also allowed him to amass a substantial art and antiquities collection.

IN THE LAWYER'S OFFICE

The PCs don't get the letter in time for them to make it to the reading (unless you want them to). Feel free to alter the date of the reading if necessary based on the PCs' latest adventures, but don't forget that April 20 is the crucial date for the conclusion of the scenario, as described below.

Sloane Whitcombe, Bosworth's lawyer and the executor of his estate, will be glad to meet with the PCs at any time, though he suggests an early morning meeting since they may want to examine their gift in his office. Skilled and prosperous, he's in his late 50s and has a hale and open manner most of the time.

The bequest to the PCs is in two parts. The first is a heavy, tightly-sealed banker's box that Bosworth brought to Whitcombe only three days before his death (which was also when he added the codicil to his will that made the bequest to the PCs). The second is a trust fund, administered by Whitcombe, in the amount of \$20,000 for the purpose of researching and investigating the contents of the box. Whitcombe suggests that the PCs retire to his firm's library to open the box and review its contents (but he doesn't care if they agree to his suggestion or not).

Bosworth's Death

If the PCs ask Whitcombe about Malcolm Bosworth's death, he tells them Bosworth was found beaten to death April 2 in a downtown Chicago alley not far from the University of Chicago. His wallet and valuables had been stolen. A witness reported seeing him accosted by two "burly" men earlier in the day.

The study in Bosworth's luxury penthouse was found torn up and rifled through when Whitcombe, as Bosworth's lawyer, let the police into his home. While many presumably valuable relics and *objets d'art* were left in the home, the police presume that *something* must have been taken — they just don't know what. (In fact, they're wrong; Bosworth's attackers were looking for what he bequeathed to the PCs, and took nothing when they didn't find it.)

The PCs can talk to the police if they want to get the information directly, but they won't learn anything more. If they pass on to the police infor-

mation obtained from the materials in the box, the police will express polite skepticism and refuse to re-open the case.

THE BOX

Inside the box are several things:

—Bosworth's diary, with the first entry in October 1934 and the last on March 31, 1935 (two days before his death);

—a thick file of notes in Bosworth's handwriting, labeled DORDOGNE CULT;

—several books on various ancient peoples (the Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, Aztecs, and ancient Hindus, among others); and most importantly

—a stone tablet approximately one foot on a side and an inch thick. The tablet has been chiselled down to leave in relief a circle of twelve rectangular "plaques" in a circle. Each plaque is about one inch tall. On each plaque is a unique symbol. Outside the ring, next to four plaques equidistant around the circle, is a distinct, incised line. Inside the circle formed by the plaques is another, less pronounced, relief depicting some sort of fantastical creature. The best description for it would be "toad-dragon," but even that doesn't really convey the thing's appearance. (See the accompanying illustration for a simplistic depiction of the tablet.)

The tablet is made of a greyish-green stone that no PC recognizes (a successful roll with an appropriate Skill, such as SS: Geology or SS: Mineralogy, discloses that the stone resembles no known terrestrial stone). It has an unpleasant slick or greasy feeling to it, though it definitely doesn't have any grease or oil on it.

Examining it makes the PCs feel disturbed in ways they can't really articulate — there's something vaguely unnatural and upsetting about it that just plain gives them the willies. In game terms, all the PCs lose 1 point of PRE for purposes of resisting or making Presence Attacks by/against members of the cult (whom they'll encounter later in the adventure) or cult-related situations. This lasts for the remainder of the adventure. If any of the characters have the *Unimpressed* Heroic Talent from page 276 of *Pulp Hero*, the *Fearless* Talent (from page 106 of *Fantasy Hero*), or a similar ability, they don't suffer this effect. As the adventure goes on they'll probably lose more points of PRE as they get drawn further and further into the horror of the situation.

THE SECRET OF THE TABLET

The tablet, naturally, has a history... one far older than modern man.

Hundreds of thousands of years ago, when *Homo sapiens* was still to come and Java Man and his kin walked the Earth, another species shared this planet with him. A foul, decadent race, it may have journeyed here from some distant star, or spawned deep underground where men dare not go, or arisen side by side with men's ancestors — no man knows, and if they themselves know they have never told of it. What this race named itself

also remains unknown; tens of thousands of years later, the Sumerians called them the *Kiggûrhamelu* — “men of toad-like visage,” for these people were short and squat, with broad, flat-nosed, large-eyed faces no true human could call lovely.

The *Kiggûrhamelu* worshipped as their chief god a being like unto them, and yet unlike: a thing that might have been one of their kind transformed into a gigantic beast, the fountainhead of legends about dragons and monsters the world over. The Sumerians named the god, too, though they spoke of him only in the barest of whispers: *Usumgallu*, meaning “great reptile.” Where the *Kiggûrhamelu* encountered early men, they forced them to worship this god by performing his foul rites and learning his doctrines as best their primitive minds could. Far more often, they forced them onto altars and tore out their throats as sacrifices to the god. Fortunately for humanity to come, the toad-men were far less numerous than the people they shared the Earth with. Only a small number of proto-humans fell under the sway of the *Kiggûrhamelu*, while the rest regarded them and their pawns as perverse and evil.

Usumgallu was not the only god of the *Kiggûrhamelu*. In their lore were many other demons and deities whom they described to their servants in only the vaguest terms. *Usumgallu* was but a forerunner, they said — a scout or messenger sent ahead to clear the way for the rest to enter into the Earth and claim it as their own.

When the world turned colder and the great glaciers returned, the *Kiggûrhamelu* retreated into the warm depths of the Earth, admonishing their followers to maintain the rites and continue the worship of great *Usumgallu*. They warned that they would return from time to time to ensure that all was done in accordance with their commands. And so the cult of *Usumgallu* lived on the face of the Earth, though his people did not.

About 50,000 years ago, a Neanderthal from a tribe that belonged to the cult — which his people called *Sogg-Utash* (“The Worshipful Ones”) — carved the tablet out of stone left behind by the *Kiggûrhamelu*, using primitive flint tools. The level of art rises far above what Neanderthals could normally achieve; at times, it seems, *Usumgallu* granted his worshippers wisdom beyond their means. The tablet is a zodiac, depicting the twelve sacred star-symbols of the cult. These are *nothing* like constellations recognized by modern man; it would take a KS: Astrology or SS: Astronomy roll at -4, or a KS: Arcane And Occult Lore roll at -6, to recognize them for what they are. The lines next to four of the plaques mark the holiest days of the cult’s calendar, which modern humans would name April 20, July 20, October 20, and January 20.

The lore of the cult states that the rest of the *Kiggûrhamelu* gods may one day manifest on Earth during certain astrological conjunctions *if* all that is needful has been done to prepare the way for them. Sanctified stone circles must be built at key points around the world, and certain rituals and sacrifices performed therein. The circles are the keys that

open the Gates of Earth, and once “turned” cannot be put back as they were without equally terrible counter-rituals. When the cult succeeds in creating and turning all the keys, the gods will come, and mankind be cast down before them, all save their faithful servants who opened the way.

The cult of *Sogg-Utash* — a name kept most secret — still exists. Tens of thousands of years ago Cro-Magnon men attempted to wipe out the foul Neanderthal tribes who kept it alive, but they did not succeed in slaying them all. These worshippers hid, and bred, and slowly evolved to a form more like that of modern men. Their descendants live today, often interbred with true men but still showing many of the marks of their forebears: heavy foreheads, deep-set eyes with pronounced brow-ridges, thick lips, broad but projecting noses, thick black hair, and coarse, swarthy skin. They often live in isolated communities where they worship *Usumgallu* through half-remembered ceremonies and attempt to prepare the way for the coming of his brethren. They keep alive the memory of the *Kiggûrhamelu* and their commands, though none have been seen on the face of the Earth for a thousand generations.

BOSWORTH’S NOTES

The PCs can examine the tablet quickly; it won’t tell them much for now, other than that it’s mysterious and disturbing. The diary, notes, and books will take more time to review — at least one day in quiet surroundings, if not more.

Once the heroes begin to study the materials seriously, give them the handout you’ll find at the end of this adventure: the excerpts from Bosworth’s diary. (You should, of course, read over it and familiarize yourself with it before the players receive it.)

Prop Notes

The “Le Moustier site” mentioned in the October 28, 1934 diary entry was a rock shelter in southern France where tools created by Neanderthals were found. The Mousterian style of tools takes its name from Le Moustier. As indicated in later journal notes, the implication is that the tablet was created by Neanderthals as well — though Neanderthals could not possibly have created so sophisticated a piece of art.

Manning, mentioned in the February 22, 1935 entry, is Professor Walter Manning, an expert on Far Eastern languages at the University of Chicago. He was a friend of Bosworth’s, though the PCs haven’t met him (unless one of them happens to be an expert in the same field). He remembers the meeting and the tablet — which he disliked intensely for reasons he can’t explain — but has nothing further to offer beyond what’s mentioned in the diary. The “inscriptions” are mysterious to him; he may even suggest to the PCs that they’re not writing at all, but something else (though he has no idea what that might be).

The “Peasley” of the March 28, 1935 entry is Professor Roderick Peasley of Tulane University in New Orleans, a world expert on anthropology,

mythology, and comparative religion. Any PC with any significant knowledge of those subjects (*i.e.*, an 11- or better roll on any relevant KS or SS) has at least heard of him, and may have met or corresponded with him.

The Notes And Books

Bosworth's notes, handwritten on standard paper, provide the information behind his diary entries. At first they involve research into Neanderthal toolmaking and culture; everything he found indicated that the Neanderthals (who inhabited Europe from roughly 100,000 to 50,000 BC, according to his notes) had stone weapons, rock shelters, fire, and burial practices. What art they had, if any, is unknown — but they definitely don't seem to have been capable of stonework anywhere as precise, detailed, elaborate, or skillful as that of the Dordogne tablet.

From there the notes segue into an examination of various ancient languages and alphabets in an effort to decipher the "inscriptions" on the twelve raised plaques. Bosworth spent no small amount of time digging through musty old books trying to locate any sort of clue from which to proceed, but found nothing. Characters with Universal Translator or translation-based Cryptography can try all they want, but they won't recognize any sort of writing or communication in them either (as mentioned above, they're cult constellations, not writing at all).

Lastly, Bosworth investigated comparative primitive religions, and here he seemed to feel he was making some progress. After finding depictions of a creature similar to the one on the tablet on two Sumerian clay tablets, he began looking for others. He felt he found them in Aztec, Chinese, Malay, and Hindu myths and legends, with other possibilities in a half-dozen other cultures. By most experts' standards this would be a *very* thin thread — the similarities aren't that striking and could easily be pure coincidence — but the possibility of some sort of world-spanning cult or religious figure definitely fixed itself in his mind. (The books in the box are all marked at pages showing pictures of the various creatures and monsters Bosworth was interested in.)

As the months pass, Bosworth's writing becomes harder to read and more disjointed. He seems to become obsessed, maybe even possessed, by the tablet; he obviously spent far too much time studying it. By March, his mental health clearly started to suffer — his notes become harder to read, not only because of the handwriting but because he's using so many obscure references, and even alternate alphabets at times, that following the train of his logic is sometimes difficult. There are several references to the works of Professor Roderick Peasley, a friend of Bosworth's; two of the books in the box are texts by Prof. Peasley on comparative mythology and religion.

PART TWO: HARD TIMES IN THE BIG EASY

After the PCs finish reviewing Bosworth's notes, their next step should be fairly obvious: they need to talk to Professor Roderick Peasley at Tulane. Bosworth certainly had faith in Peasley's ability to shed some light on this mystery, and by this point the PCs should realize they've stumbled into something deeper than they can deal with on their own.

If the PCs telephone or send a telegram to Peasley, he'll be deeply saddened to hear of Bosworth's death but glad to discuss the tablet with them — in fact, he thinks he's made some intriguing discoveries. However, it's too much to go over in writing or on the phone; he suggests that they come to visit him in New Orleans. He promises both enlightening discussion and pleasant hospitality. If the PCs pressure him, he stands firm: it's not something he can discuss long-distance, they've got to come to New Orleans.

GETTING TO NEW ORLEANS

The PCs can travel to New Orleans by train, bus, or even ship down the Mississippi River. However they get there, they have directions from Professor Peasley as to how to reach his office at Tulane University.

When the PCs reach New Orleans, have all of them make PER Rolls. If any of them makes his roll by 6 or more, he notices someone watching their disembarkation point (whether it's the train depot, the dockyards, or the bus station). The watcher is a cultist who has the traditional Worshipful One look: heavy forehead, deep-set eyes with a pronounced browridge, thick lips, a broad but projecting noses, thick black hair, and coarse, somewhat swarthy skin. Given that it's New Orleans, the obvious conclusion is that he's of mulatto or mestizo stock — but he's definitely keeping an eye on the PCs. If they spot him, have him make a PER Roll (12-). If he succeeds, he realizes they've seen him and doesn't follow them; if he fails, or they don't see him, he follows them into the city (Shadowing 13-). He won't attack or try anything else; the cult just wants to keep an eye on the PCs to find out which hotel they're staying at, and so forth.

THE CULT ATTACKS!

Whether they check into their hotel first or go directly to see Professor Peasley, sooner or later the PCs make their way over to Tulane. As they approach the building where he has his offices, they hear a shout for help and the sound of breaking glass!

Charging inside, they find that Professor Peasley is being menaced by several attackers with the traditional Worshipful One look — they're holding him captive and tearing through his office looking for something. It's the PCs to the rescue as a fight breaks out! See the accompanying sidebar for a character sheet for the cultists.

WORSHIPFUL ONE CULTIST/THUG

15 STR	12 DEX
17 CON	13 BODY
8 INT	8 EGO
13 PRE	7 COM
7 PD	5 ED
3 SPD	8 REC
34 END	35 STUN

Weapons:

Pistol

RKA 1d6, 6 shots

Blackjack or brass knuckles

HA +2d6

Knife

HKA ½d6, STR Min 6

Abilities: +1 HTH, KS: Usumgallu Cult 8-, Shadowing 11-, Stealth 11-, WF: Small Arms, Common Melee Weapons, Resistance (5 points)

25+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features (Worshipful One features); Psychological Limitation: Fanatic Usumgallu Cultist

EXPANDING THE SCENARIO

If you want to draw the scenario out a little, have the clue found in the thugs' pockets lead to a group of cultists that worship Usumgallu at an abandoned plantation out in the swamps near New Orleans. Then, a clue found there in turn sends them on to Colorado.

Victory!

The cultists should give the PCs a good fight — include enough cultists to challenge your heroes — but the odds are they'll still win. Defeated cultists can be turned over to the New Orleans Police Department; Professor Peasley will explain the situation to the cops so the PCs don't get into any trouble (unless, of course, they're wanted men).

The PCs will undoubtedly search the cultists before releasing them into police custody. In the pockets of two of them they find a pair of tickets: a train ticket from Salida, Colorado to New Orleans, and a bus ticket from a town named Uptonsville to Salida.

If the PCs try to interrogate the cultists, they'll probably get nowhere fast. Between the cultists' Psychological Limitation and Resistance, the odds of convincing them to part with any useful information are mighty slim. If the PCs succeed anyway (perhaps by rolling a 3 on Interrogation), at most they'll convince a cultist to rave at them about "the unknown powers that lurk nearby and hunger for your souls," "the vengeance of the Worshipful Ones, mighty and terrible, which shall fall upon you right soon," and so forth. For men who look brutish, they seem perfectly intelligent, even expressive on some subjects.

A Snake In The Grass

What the PCs don't know, and hopefully don't even suspect, is that Peasley himself is a member of the Cult of the Worshipful Ones! Although he lacks the brutish features and build so many of his fellow cultists have, he's a descendant of the ancient Neanderthals who worshipped Usumgallu just like they are — and he's every bit as dedicated to the propitiation, and eventually the manifestation of, the Kiggûrhamelu gods. He chose his career because it allows him to search for Worshipful One relics and lore all over the world without arousing suspicion. It was he who informed the cult that Bosworth had the tablet. The "attack" on him was a fake designed to lure the PCs in, make them trust him, and hopefully get them killed.

Peasley will do everything he can to earn and keep the PCs' trust, even to the extent of hinting indirectly at the cult's true history — he wants them to come to think of him as a friend and valuable ally, and to entice them further into the cult's web with tantalizing tidbits of information. That way he can keep tabs on what they know about the Worshipful Ones (and whether they've told anyone else), tell the cult about their movements and activities, and eventually destroy them.

WHAT PEASLEY KNOWS

After the "attack" by the cultists has been defeated, Peasley thanks the PCs profusely for rescuing him. He's a middle-aged man, probably in his late 40s, with black hair that hasn't yet started to go grey; he wears nice but not overly expensive men's suits.

Quickly recovering his composure, Peasley welcomes the PCs to his office — "it's practically my home, I spend so much time here" — and to

New Orleans. After a few moments of small talk, he turns to the matter at hand.

He tells the PCs that after reviewing the materials Bosworth sent him, he's not prepared to dismiss the matter. He thinks Bosworth may have stumbled onto something that more orthodox students of anthropology would laughingly dismiss. "The concept of a cult of worldwide proportions that's survived in secret for centuries may seem absurd," he says, "but many native religions have continued for just as long after the introduction of 'mainstream' religions like Christianity and Islam. To my mind, the question is not whether the cult exists, but what its purposes are. Why would a religious organization kill a harmless scholar in Chicago? You must also ask yourselves: if the cult has spread around the world, as Bosworth thought and as my studies would seem to confirm, how did it accomplish this? How can cultists thousands of miles apart continue the same worship for centuries without being discovered?"

(The answer to this question is: mystic rituals of communication. The PCs probably won't answer those questions in this scenario, but if they get their hands on Ezekiel Upton's grimoire [see below] or continue their crusade against the cult, they'll discover the truth eventually.)

Examining The Tablet

At the appropriate time, Peasley will ask the PCs to show him the tablet. If allowed to, he'll spend hours examining it, comparing it to the notes Bosworth sent, and making his own notes. In part this is a bluff — he knows almost instantly when he sees it that it's a genuine Worshipful Ones artifact. He's playing for time. He hopes to have the opportunity to (a) abscond with the tablet if the PCs are so foolish to leave it with him for a while, and/or (b) to cable Ezekiel Upton (see below) in Colorado to warn him the PCs have found a clue to lead them his way because two of the cultists forgot to get rid of their train tickets.

If the PCs don't leave Peasley alone with the tablet long enough for him to make a getaway with it, he'll study it carefully and say that in his opinion it's a genuine artifact, not a forgery. He's at a loss to explain its provenance, since he "knows" Neanderthals weren't capable of stonework of such skill. He suggests that the tablet may be a calendar tracking solar months. If the PCs ask if it could be a zodiac, he'll agree that it could be, but say he can't confirm that fact.

If the PCs leave the tablet with Peasley, he'll contact another cultist in the city (the one who followed the PCs, if they didn't eliminate him; someone else if not). They'll carefully pack the tablet in a small trunk. Then the cultist will catch the first train to Colorado, stopping along the way to wire Uptonsville about what's happened. Peasley will arrange things in New Orleans to look like another group of "thugs" assaulted him and stole the tablet. He'll stress to the PCs that its obvious value to the cult means that it must be important, or that some major cult activity is about to occur.

PART THREE: HORROR IN THE ROCKIES

One way or another, the PCs are likely to find themselves heading out to Colorado on the trail of the sinister cult. If they try to research the trip in advance, they'll discover little about Salida, and *nothing* about Uptonville except its location. It's as if the town doesn't exist as far as the outside world is concerned.

Uptonville is located in Chaffee County, Colorado, not far from Trout Creek Pass. To get there, the PCs have to take a train to Salida, Colorado, then catch the ramshackle weekly bus to Uptonville. They may have to wait a few days in Salida, a town of just a few thousand residents, before the bus leaves; they can spend the time studying Bosworth's notes or engaged in other useful activities. They won't notice anyone with "the Worshipful One look" in town, though if they describe the look to a friendly local, he'll quickly identify it as being similar to the appearance of many people from Uptonville.

If possible, time the PCs' arrival in Uptonville for April 19 — the day before a major cult holiday when an important ritual will be held. That way the PCs can witness, and stop, a key cult activity.

UPTONVILLE

The driver of the bus, which visits many of the smaller communities in Chaffee County, seems surprised that so many people want to visit Uptonville, but gladly takes them there if they can pay the \$1 per person fare.

After a couple hours on the bus, the PCs arrive in Uptonville, a small town nestled in a valley in the Rocky Mountains. After the PCs alight from the bus, a few locals get on to ride to other towns, and the bus soon takes off for its next destination. The PCs should be left with the uncomfortable feeling that they're alone with something unnatural, possibly even terrifying — they're miles from anywhere "civilized." Be sure to emphasize this feeling if you can; isolation is an important element in horror.

The PCs' first impression of Uptonville is of decrepitude and squalor. The town basically consists of a long, unpaved north-south main street lined with buildings — Candler's General Store, the Uptonville Hotel, a barber shop, a dress shop, a couple of saloons, and so forth. Additionally, there are some other buildings and structures on lesser streets to the east and west of the main street. The buildings are mostly made of wood, and appear to all have been manufactured at the same time — roughly 50 years ago, at a guess. It's questionable whether anything's been done to maintain them since then. They look old and rotten, with collapsed eaves or railings here and there. The whole place gives the PCs an impression of insularity and decay.

After the PCs have had a little while to absorb all of this, it's time for you to give the disturbing "feel" of the place and their situation a definition in game terms. Each PC loses ½d6 of points of PRE as a way of representing how the place gives them the

creeps; this loss applies only to defending against Presence Attacks made by the cultists and the like; it doesn't reduce Interaction Skill rolls or the PCs' own Presence Attacks. Characters with abilities that reflect a special level of courage, such as the *Fearless* Talent from *Fantasy Hero*, are immune to the PRE reduction, or suffer it at a lesser effect determined by you.

None of the buildings in Uptonville appears to be a church. Don't mention this to the players; let them think to ask about it on their own.

The northern terminus of the main street is at a gold mine. The mine is shut down, with a sturdy chain-link fence locked with a strong chain and padlock cutting off access to the mine and its buildings, and a prominent sign saying UPTONVILLE MINING CO. — CLOSED. Unlike the rest of the structures in town, the fence and lock seem relatively new. If the PCs ask someone in town who's willing to talk to them, they learn that a couple of kids got lost in the mine a couple of years ago, so the company put up the fence to prevent any further tragedies. (This is true — though the fence also blocks off access to a tunnel that leads from the mine to the cultists' ceremonial chamber, described below.) The mine itself played out nearly 20 years ago and has been idle ever since. The buildings and abandoned vehicles visible inside the fence testify to two decades of neglect — rust, rot, decay, and collapse are everywhere.

The PCs see few cars or trucks on the streets of Uptonville, though there are some (and one tiny gas station); most people seem to get around on foot or horseback. There are also very few telephones, mostly in a couple of important businesses (the hotel, the general store, and so on). There's a telegraph office; the proprietor is a cultist with a touch of the "Worshipful one look" to him. In short, the PCs will find it difficult (at best) to communicate with the outside world, and even harder to do so without being monitored. Again, this should heighten their feeling of isolation.

<5> The Uptonville Hotel

The only place in town for the PCs to stay is the Uptonville Hotel. The PCs may wonder why a town as small and isolated as Uptonville even has a hotel (a small and uncomfortable one, but still a hotel). They may attribute it to the former activity of the gold mine, and if they can get any townsfolk to talk to them, that's the story the locals tell. But the truth is the hotel exists to provide a place for cultists who come to visit Ezekiel Upton to stay. The PCs can get rooms there for the outrageous sum of \$1.50 per room per night.

The owner/desk clerk (in fact, sole full-time employee) of the Uptonville Hotel is a man named Pete Worth. He's got something of the "Worshipful One look" to him, but it's not nearly as pronounced as in the thugs the PCs fought in New Orleans. He is, in fact, a cultist; he'll report on the PCs' movements to Ezekiel Upton by phone.

The People

The people of Uptonville are a quiet, insular folk who don't seem to take kindly to visitors, especially nosy ones. They often glare at the PCs, and attempts to get them to answer questions earn the PCs nothing but a brush-off.

Many — but by no means all — of the Uptonvillers have at least a touch of “the Worshipful One look.” Some are as brutish-looking as the thugs the PCs encountered in New Orleans, while others are nigh-indistinguishable from the normal run of humanity.

History

Uptonville was founded about 50 years ago by Ezekiel Upton, patriarch of the Upton clan and one of the world leaders of the Worshipful One cult. Using cult magic he'd determined that there was gold to be found here, which would fund cult activities around the world, and that it was located on a site of mystical significance that made it suitable for some cult rituals (though it's not a site where a stone circle is to be placed). Nearly three-quarters of the inhabitants are cultists; they're the ones least likely to talk to the PCs. The remainder were drawn to Uptonville over the decades to work in the mine or associated businesses. Most of “the others” (as the cultists call them) realize that there's something not quite right about the town, but can't or won't leave for some reason. They know it's unhealthy to talk about the cult — several people who've done so in the past have mysteriously “disappeared” — so they're likely to treat the PCs brusquely.

AVENUES OF INVESTIGATION

Having situated themselves in the hotel, the PCs can poke around and try to learn a little bit about what's going on. Some of the ways they might do this are discussed below — but as always, players can be extremely inventive, so you should be prepared for other possibilities.

Talking To Townsfolk

The most obvious way of gathering information is to talk with Uptonville residents to find out more about the town and its inhabitants. Unfortunately for the PCs, this is a complete dead end. Most of the citizens are cultists, and they will have nothing to do with the PCs, rudely brushing them off if necessary. There are a few non-cultist citizens, but most of them are canny enough to know they should keep their mouths shut about their suspicions and the local gossip. The one possible exception is Arthur Candler.

Candler's General Store

Candler's is the only major business in town not owned by a cultist. It used to be, but 30-some years ago its owner fell into debt to one of his suppliers, who took the store in payment of the obligation. The current owner, Albert Candler, is that man's son. He doesn't like the town or its strange people, but he makes a pretty good living with the store, so here he stays.

Candler's sufficiently starved for interesting conversation and companionship — since the cultist

citizens shun him — that he might become talkative with the PCs if they spend a lot of money in his store. He doesn't know the full local history, and knows nothing about the cult *per se* (not even that it exists). However, he can tell the PCs the following useful facts:

—Ezekiel Upton founded the town about fifty years ago. Stories say he was already married and had grown children, but since he's still alive Candler wonders how that could be possible — Upton would have to be nearly 100 years old, if not more, and he doesn't look or move like someone that old.

—Upton and his sons run the town. They're rich from owning the mine and other local businesses. David Upton is the town marshal. Upton himself comes into town once every few months; he looks like he's in his fifties or sixties.

—Upton lives on a large “ranch” a few minutes' drive south and west of town. Candler's never known them to raise cattle, sell cattle, or buy cattle feed, though.

—Sometimes large groups of the townsfolk go up to the Upton ranch for “doin's” — Candler thinks it's like a picnic or revival meeting or something, though these get-togethers happen at dusk and night. He's never been asked to go.

Local Records

Uptonville has one public building that includes town offices, the one courtroom, the register of deeds, and so forth. The town clerk is an Upton by marriage and a cultist; she'll report on the PCs' activities to Ezekiel Upton.

Local records don't contain any smoking guns, but they will tell the PCs just how much of the town is owned by the extended Upton clan, Ezekiel Upton in particular. (The records do show the location and extent of Ezekiel's “ranch” near town.) Most of the townsfolk seem to belong to one of five or six families who've lived here since the town was founded.

If the PCs spend several hours looking at local tax records, they'll discover that there's been little economic activity in town since the mine shut down. And yet there doesn't seem to have been a mass exodus of people looking for a better life elsewhere. There's money coming into the town *somehow*, but the source is unclear. (In fact, Ezekiel Upton receives money from the cult to maintain the Uptonville “stronghold,” and distributes it to the other cultists in town.)

THE CULT STRIKES BACK!

The cult has many eyes and ears in Uptonville, so news of the upstart visitors spreads quickly. The cult doesn't react well to being threatened, so it takes steps to first neutralize, then destroy, the heroes.

If possible, start this scene as it's becoming dusk. The rest of the adventure works best at nighttime. If the timing doesn't work out, have dark clouds roll in, threatening a thunderstorm — an odd occurrence for this time and place, but that should spook the PCs even more.

A Mysterious Burglary

After the PCs have explored the town, investigated, asked questions, and so forth, they return to their hotel rooms to discover that their possessions have been rifled through, with no effort made to hide that fact. Anything of value or use — notes about the tablet, weapons, money, jewelry, and especially the tablet itself if they were foolish enough to bring it — is gone. There are no signs of forced entry. If the PCs confront Pete Worth, he swears he didn't see or hear anything. (In fact, he tipped the burglars off and let them in.) If the PCs had any (D)NPCs staying behind at the hotel, they've disappeared... giving the rest of the characters even more motivation to destroy the cult. (If a PC remained in the hotel rooms for some reason, you should run a combat scene with just that player to have the cultists take him hostage.)

Depending on the circumstances, you've now deprived the PCs of some (if not all) of their gear, and maybe an ally or two. They should get concerned about being "trapped behind enemy lines" with no way out and little information about what's happening here... and night's coming on. Time to ratchet their concern up another notch and force them to action!

Torches And Pitchforks

As soon as the PCs have had the chance to realize the extent of the burglary and the difficulty of the situation they're in, but before they have the chance to leave the hotel, have them make PER Rolls. The character(s) who make them by the most look out the window and see a group of townsfolk approaching the hotel. The looks on their faces and the fact that they're armed with farm implements, hunting rifles, and shotguns makes plain their hostile intentions. The PCs are badly outnumbered; the odds are *strongly* against their being able to defeat this mob.

Fortunately, the mob's only approaching from the front of the hotel. If their discretion is a sufficient part of their valor, the PCs should realize that their best bet is to flee the hotel and the town and take to the wilds for the time being. Hopefully by now they've discovered, one way or another, how powerful Ezekiel Upton is and where his ranch is. That's the logical place to take the fight against the cult.

THE UPTON RANCH

Ezekiel Upton's ranch is located just a few minutes' drive south and west of town. If the PCs want to stay on the road, they can walk there in about an hour and a half... but they'll almost certainly be seen by patrols of well-armed cultists. If they stay in rough areas, walking there takes them close to three hours, but there's almost no chance the cultists will spot them.

The accompanying map shows the layout of the main part of the Upton ranch; the PCs probably approach from the north, since the ranch is south and west of town. Surrounding the main compound are many acres of fenced, mostly barren pastureland. Cultists armed with rifles patrol the grounds on horseback; for excitement you might arrange an

encounter between a guard and the PCs in which the heroes have to act quickly and quietly to stop the guard from giving them away.

The heroes may expect to fight a major battle in and around the main house... and they're partly right. You should station a few guards here (as well as two on the porch of the main house), but only a few. Since most of the cultists are at the ceremony (see below), there are far fewer people at the ranch than normal. Smart PCs will quickly realize that something's not right here.

This part of the adventure provides the PCs with an opportunity to re-arm, if the burglary cost them their weapons. The guards have rifles and shotguns, and there are similar weapons stored in gun cabinets at the main house. Assume these are Winchester Model 70 rifles and 12 gauge shotguns (see *Pulp Hero*, pages 304 and 306).

The Main House

The main house is a large wooden dwelling with a stone foundation. It has two stories and a cellar. On the first floor there's a den, dining room, kitchen, and sitting room; on the upper level a master bedroom, two other bedrooms, and a library/study. The latter seems oddly out of place in so rustic a dwelling, but the owner of this house clearly is no ordinary rancher. If the PCs take the time to examine the library, they'll discover that it contains many volumes on subjects such as anthropology, the occult, witchcraft, history, exploration, and geography, as well as various general-interest books. None of the books are grimoires, long-lost "missing texts," or other tomes of great significance, but some are quite old and rare and would be valuable to a collector or researcher.

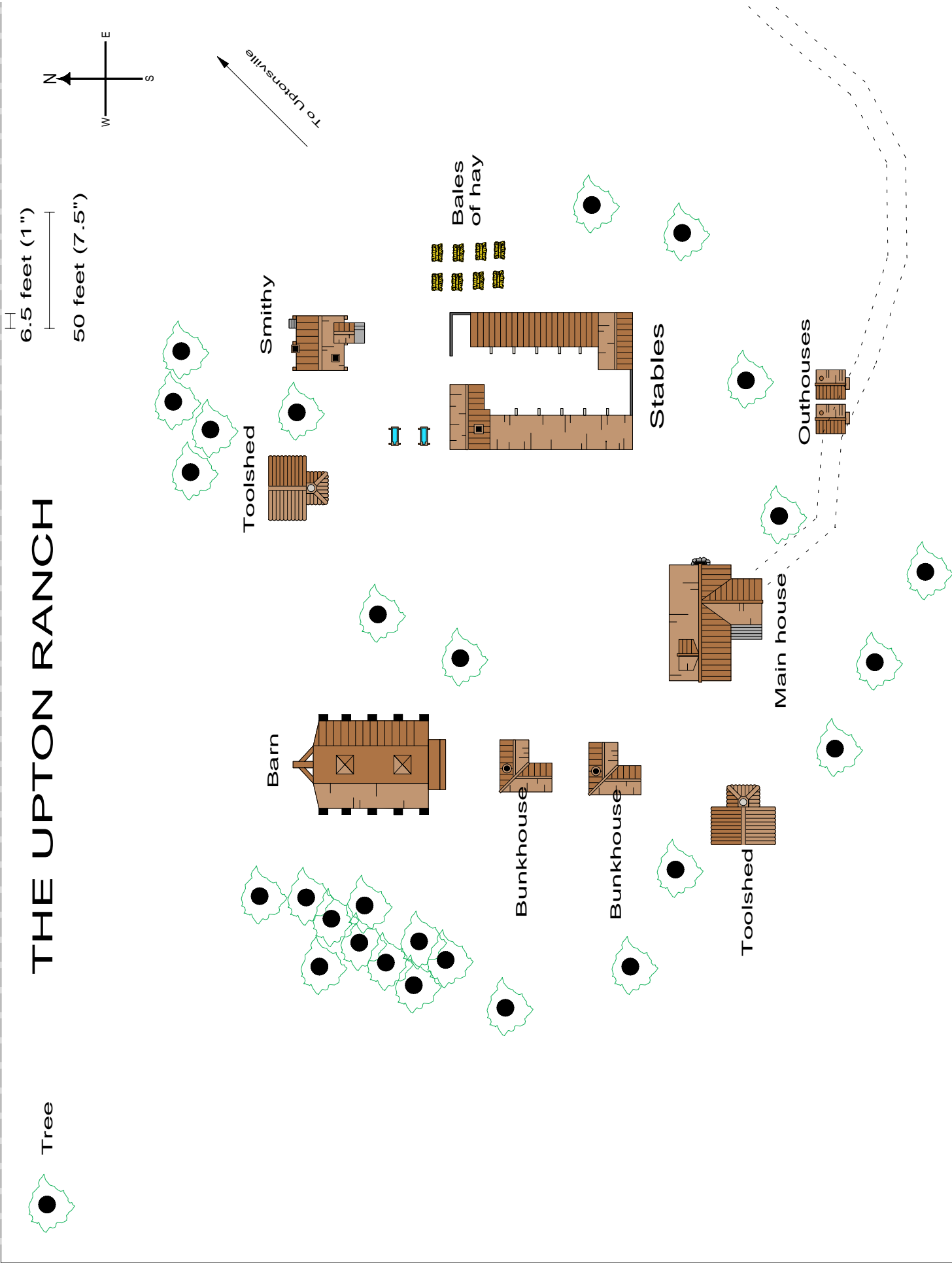
The cellar's filled with what one would normally expect to find in such a place: crates, barrels, old equipment, that sort of thing.

As mentioned above, the Upton family is at the worship ceremony. Thus, the house is eerily deserted. After fighting their way past guards, the PCs probably expect another major battle here — but all they'll find is silence. If any of them examines the master bedroom in detail and succeeds with a PER Roll, he gets the impression that the room hasn't been lived or slept in for some time, even though Ezekiel Upton's supposedly still alive given the way the townsfolk talk about him.

The Secret Tunnel

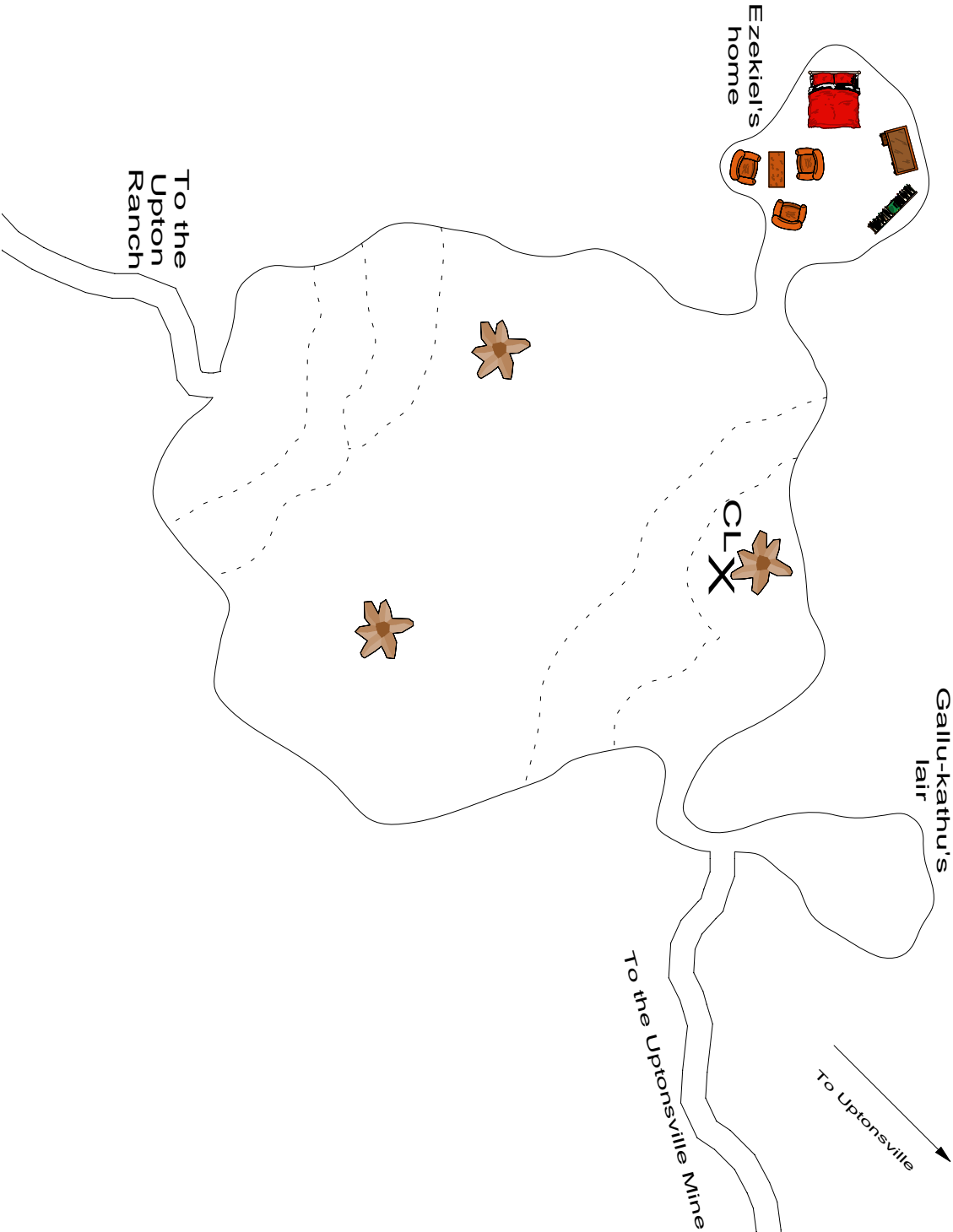
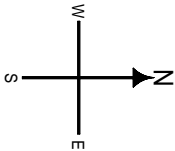
A secret tunnel leads from the main house to a ceremonial chamber deep underground, and then onward to the abandoned Uptonville Mine. There are two ways to find it. First, there's a main entrance in the cellar of the main house; a PC searching the cellar who makes a Concealment roll at -2 can locate it. Second, the westernmost outhouse marked on the ranch map isn't actually an outhouse at all; it conceals a ladder that leads down to the tunnel. Heroes poking around the outhouses can make a Smell PER Roll at -3 to realize that there's no outhouse stench coming from that particular outhouse.

The tunnel is marked on the map with dotted lines.



CEREMONY CAVERN

6.5 feet (1")



PART FOUR: THE THING IN THE TEMPLE

From this point the adventure quickly progresses to its conclusion: the PCs have to disrupt a Worshipful One ritual, in the process saving a beautiful young woman who's destined to become a human sacrifice... and slay the horrific creature who intends to eat her.

THE TUNNEL

After the PCs enter the tunnel, they'll be heading north and east — back toward town — though they might not realize that unless one of them has Bump Of Direction, since they're underground. The tunnel's about eight feet high, and wide enough for one man to walk comfortably or two to walk abreast (or pass one another) in cramped conditions (-2 DCV, -1 OCV). There's no light; the PCs need torches or lanterns to see where they're going (they can find plenty of lanterns at the Upton ranch house if necessary).

At first the tunnel's earthen, with thick beams every ten feet or so to brace it, but after the PCs have walked for a while and descended a good bit it turns to stone and the braces are spaced out more. Curiously, the tunnel's musty smell doesn't end when it becomes stone — in fact, it becomes worse, with an underlying stench of the swamp that's disturbing in an underground tunnel. As the heroes proceed down the tunnel, approaching the ceremony cavern, the smell becomes stronger.

A little further on and the PCs begin to see paintings on the walls. The paintings depict cultists worshipping an evil looking "toad-dragon" sort of creature, the same as the one shown on the tablet. The first paintings the PCs see show primitive-looking men performing all sorts of unholy worship ceremonies. As the tunnel continues onward, the men in the paintings change — the PCs recognize scenes set in the artist's view of what must have been Sumer, ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, and other prominent places and times throughout history. As the tunnel progresses, the paintings get closer and closer to the modern day.

At this point, each PC loses another ½d6 of points of PRE: if the town itself was creepy, the tunnel, with its odd smell and blasphemous paintings, is worse. Again, characters with abilities representing special courage or fearlessness are immune or suffer a lesser effect.

After they've walked down the tunnel for nearly half an hour, the heroes see a glimmer of light up ahead. If they douse their own lights they can proceed forward without being seen (unless they deliberately make a lot of noise, or significantly fail any Stealth rolls you have them make). If the PCs keep their own lights lit, the cultists have a much better chance of seeing them coming and being prepared for them.

THE CEREMONY

The tunnel eventually leads to a large cavern where numerous cultists are gathered. The cavern is fitfully lit by torches (-2 to Sight PER Rolls and to Ranged OCV). There are two tunnels exiting from the cavern, one to the northwest, one to the northeast.

The odor the characters have been smelling in the tunnel is particularly strong here; all characters must make a CON Roll. Any who fail suffer a -1 to all Skill, Characteristic, and Attack Rolls due to nausea and dizziness.

On the cavern map, the dotted lines are contour marks indicating where shelves of rock rise from the cavern floor. Thus, to get into the cavern the PCs must descend two or three shelves, and to get to the sacrifice (see below) they must ascend two. Ascending or descending each shelf costs 1" of movement.

The Cultists

The cavern is filled with cultists. They're wearing rust-colored, hooded robes with the hoods up and mostly looking north, so there's a good chance they won't see the PCs at first, unless the PCs have done something to draw attention to themselves. They're chanting in low, sonorous voices in a language the PCs do not recognize — not even characters with Gifted Linguist (*Pulp Hero*, page 290) or similar Universal Translator-based abilities defined as extensive linguistic training can understand it. (On the other hand, Universal Translator defined as "subconsciously telepathically reading the speaker's mind" or the like *can* understand it.)

The Sacrifice

On the northern side of the cavern the heroes see something that makes their blood run cold. Tied to a column of rock is a beautiful young girl. She's wearing an ordinary dress, though it's badly torn in places, and has passed out, probably from fright. She's clearly intended as some sort of human sacrifice. (On the map, the X marks the girl.) The bonds holding her are DEF 2, BODY 3; untying them without cutting them takes ½d6+1 Phases, or only a single Full Phase if the character trying to untie them succeeds with a Contortionist or PS: Knot-Tying roll.

The High Priest

Standing to the left of the girl is a man dressed in more ornate robes that are blood-red in color — obviously the cult's leader. (On the map, the CL marks his position.) The hood on his robes obscures most of his features, but from what little the PCs can see of his face and the way he moves, he's obviously aged. Clutched in one arm is a large, thick, old leatherbound book. He's preaching to the cultists in the same unknown language as the chants, his voice rising in a pitch of ecstasy and power as he prepares them to witness the glorious sacrifice heralding one of the cult's holy days. If the PCs think to ask about it, tell them he doesn't seem to have a knife or any other weapon with him.

Because the high priest is looking south, there's a chance he sees the PCs if they make themselves

obvious in the south tunnel. Have him make a 13-PER Roll in a Skill Versus Skill Contest against their Stealth rolls, if necessary. If he sees them, or even suspects he sees something, he'll halt the ceremony and alert the cult.

AND THEN ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE

If all goes well — and since the PCs are heroes, it probably does — the PCs are likely to find themselves with the drop on the cult. The best plan of action here is to shoot the high priest, then hope to rescue the girl in the confusion and escape with her before the cult can muster enough wherewithal to stop them. In the process a lot of cultists are likely to get shot, too — a perfectly acceptable outcome as long as the heroes don't just start mowing them down like trapped cattle (which wouldn't be very pulpish, now would it?). However, there are a couple of potential flies in the ointment.

First, the high priest — Ezekiel Upton, whose life has been extended with unholy magics — has mystic powers he can bring to bear. They aren't as flashy as comic book magic or Fantasy magic, but they might have an effect. He can curse a PC with dizziness (Drain DEX 4d6, Ranged, Full Phase, Requires An 18- Skill Roll), or inflict pain in another person (Ego Attack 4d6, Full Phase, Requires An 18- Skill Roll). (He has other mystic powers, but they're not applicable to combat.)

Second, about half the cultists have pistols (RKA 1d6, 6 shots). They're not as helpless as they look. Use the Worshipful One Cultist/Thug character sheet on page ??? for most of them; about half aren't quite so strong, quick, and brutish.

The *Gallu-kâthu*

Third, the tunnel to the northeast is actually the entrance to a smaller cavern — one where the Uptonville cult's most terrifying ally lives. It is a *gallu-kâthu*, a Spawn of Usumgallu, a loathsome thing somewhat in the image of its father. Nearly 18 feet (3") long including its tail, it looks like a cross between a giant toad and an iguana. See below for its character sheet.

The *gallu-kâthu* has been awaiting the high priest's signal to come out and eat the girl (at which point the each cultist will bow his head and stare at the floor). Upton can also urge it to come forth (though he cannot command it; it's a godling to the cult, not a pet). The most dramatically appropriate thing would be for the PCs to shoot Upton, and have him with his dying breath call upon the creature to protect the cult and slaughter the unbelievers... but if that doesn't work out, reveal the *gallu-kâthu* whenever it seems best to you.

When the PCs first see the *gallu-kâthu*, its very appearance horrifies them and blasts their sanity. That such a *thing* could exist is wrong; it is a blasphemy, a being so unnatural as to offend their innermost sensibilities. Roll a Presence Attack using the creature's 7d6 applied against the heroes' Presence (reduced due to the fear they've been feeling all along, as described above). Adjudicate the attack's effects appropriately. It's not a good idea for the PCs to run screaming in fear (that's not very pulpish, after all), but if the result

is high enough they'll definitely hesitate before doing anything. Even worse results might cause a PC to lose his sanity temporarily and fall to the floor, screaming, crying, and clawing at the cavern's rock. Other PCs may suffer penalties to Attack Rolls because they don't dare look straight at the thing.

And don't forget the creature's stench! That's what's causing the smell in here. As noted on the *gallu-kâthu*'s character sheet, the smell forces characters to make a CON Roll at -4... and if they fail, they suffer penalties to CV and various other rolls due to retching and nausea.

AFTERMATH

Can Our Heroes survive?

The best outcome for the PCs is that they kill the monster, kill Ezekiel Upton, kill some (or all) of the cultists, rescue the girl, and find the items described below. Many less optimal outcomes are possible, such as just rescuing the girl and escaping — but even that represents a major triumph, since it means the PCs struck a significant blow against the cult (and what's more important, know some things about it that it doesn't want them to know).

THE GIRL

The would-be sacrifice's name is Darla Bromwell; she's a secretary who was kidnapped from her home in Denver by the cult. She's pretty (COM 14) and, though not well-educated, quick-witted and bright (INT 13). She's obviously quite grateful for the rescue (though she's still not entirely sure what was going on, since she was dazed most of the time; she can't tell the PCs anything of use about the cult). She'd probably have no objection to starting a romance with a handsome PC (as an NPC, she's unaware that women who get romantically involved with Pulp heroes usually have short and unpleasant lives... but of course, as the GM you can violate that particular genre convention if you prefer).

THE OTHER CHAMBERS

The chamber to the northeast is the *gallu-kâthu*'s lair; the stench should keep the PCs out of there altogether, and in any event there's nothing there of interest. A tunnel leads out from there several miles back to the old Uptonville Mine.

Upton's Lair

The northwest chamber is Ezekiel Upton's quarters; he's lived down here for years as part of the spells that preserve his life (which is why his bedroom at the ranch house seems unlivable in). Here the PCs can find several items of note.

First, there's the book he was holding during the ceremony. Written in a script none of the PCs can recognize and a language none of them know, it's one of the holy books/grimoires of the cult; its loss is a major blow to the Worshipful Ones. It can be a great source of knowledge for the PCs, since it's got the full history, theology, rituals, and spells of the cult... but learning to read it will take a PC months of scholarly effort and the expenditure of Skill points to buy the cult's language. Furthermore, the matters it deals with

are, like the gallu-kâthu itself, so blasphemous and unholy that studying the book may subject a character to psychological problems (a hefty Major Transform with Gradual Effect). The exact effects and how they play into the campaign are left in your capable hands.

Second, there's a stone statuette depicting Usumgallu himself on a base of rough-hewn rock. His name has been crudely etched into the base in cuneiform; anyone who makes an SS: Archaeology roll or Forgery (Art Objects) roll can tell that the writing was added long after the statuette was made. The statuette has aesthetic stylings similar to the tablet from Dorgogne; while they might not have been made by the same artist, they were created by the same culture at around the same time.

LEAVING UPTONSVILLE

Even if the PCs defeat the cult, they still have to get out of Uptonsville — not necessarily the easiest thing

GALLU-KÂTHU

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 [2]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
20	CON	20	13-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
4	COM	-3	10-	
14	PD	15		Total: 14 PD (2 rPD)
10	ED	8		Total: 10 ED (2 rED)
4	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
9	REC	0		
40	END	0		
43	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 120

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 8"/16"

Cost	Powers	END
42	<i>Disgusting Stench:</i> Change Environment 2" radius (stench), -4 to CON Rolls (see text), -6 to Smell/Taste Group PER Rolls, Multiple Combat Effects, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Always On (-½), No Range (-½)	0
27	<i>Disgusting Stench:</i> Add to Change Environment -2 CV, -2 to DEX-based Rolls, -2 to INT-based Rolls, and -2 to PRE-based Rolls, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Always On (-½), No Range (-½) Only Applies If Victim Fails CON Roll (see text; -½)	0
5	<i>Horrrifying Appearance:</i> +10 PRE, Only For Fear-/Horror-Based Presence Attacks (-1)	0

in the world to do. Their best bet is to steal a car from a cultist and lam out of there. If that's not possible, they may be in for a long overland trek.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

Win, lose, or draw, the PCs are now aware of the existence of a world-spanning cult of utter evil, a cult that's existed in one form or another since before true humans lived on Earth. What they decide to do with that information is up to them — and you. If you want, you can easily spin many other adventures out of *The Dordogne Zodiac* as the PCs attempt to hunt down other parts of the cult and destroy them, disrupt the cult's rituals and plans, find other books and objects associated with the cult, and in general protect humanity from it... and its masters.

16	<i>Tongue:</i> Extra Limb, Inherent (+¼) plus Stretching 2", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Always Direct (-¼), Limited Body Parts (tongue; -¼)	0
2	<i>Tough Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (2 PD/2 ED)	0
3	<i>Strong Legs:</i> Leaping +3" (8" forward, 4" upward)	1
10	<i>Wall-Walking:</i> Clinging (normal STR)	0

Skills

10	+2 HTH
3	Stealth 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 118

Total Cost: 238

75+ Disadvantages

10	Physical Limitation: Near-Human Intelligence (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
5	Physical Limitation: Large (-2 DCV, +2 to PER Rolls to perceive) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
15	Physical Limitation: Very Limited Manipulation (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
25	Psychological Limitation: Utterly Devoted To The Service Of Usumgallu (Very Frequently, Common)
108	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 238

RUTLEDGE, MANN & FELLOWS

Attorneys at Law
2712 Prussian Street
Chicago, Illinois 57516

April 3, 1935

Dear

It is my sad duty to inform you of the death of your friend, Malcolm Bosworth. Mister Bosworth has left you a bequest in his will, which is to be read on Friday, April 5. If you cannot attend the reading, please feel free to make an appointment to visit me in my offices at any time convenient to you.

Very truly yours,

Sloane Whitcombe

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIARY OF MALCOLM BOSWORTH

October 28, 1934: Received interesting package today from Henri. He says he bought it from a farmer who lives near Dordogne, not far from the Le Moustier site. The farmer tried to sell it to the University, which dismissed it as a fraud. Rightly so, I think.

November 13, 1934: Continue to study Dordogne tablet. Very puzzling. If it's a fake, it's a damn good one, at least in terms of technique. Knapping of stone on edges and around the twelve plaques definitely suggests Mousterian culture — but no Mousterian man could have made such a thing. Why go to such technical trouble to create something so obviously impossible?

November 29, 1934: Have sent rubbings and photographs of tablet to Kruegdorf in Berlin. Perhaps he can shed some light on the mystery.

January 9, 1935: Heard back from Kruegdorf at last, thank God — but he could offer no help with this damnable problem. He thinks it's definitely Mousterian, but can offer no solutions as to provenance or purpose. Suggests that maybe the twelve "plaques" represent solar months.

January 26, 1935: Very bad dreams last night. In a forest, running for my life from inhuman things lurking above and below. Need a few days in the countryside, I think.

February 3, 1935: Returned to the study of the Dordogne tablet. Could symbols on the plaques be runes or letters of some sort, maybe the first letters of the names of the months? But surely Neanderthals could not have had speech, much less writing!

February 14, 1935: Very bad dreams last night. Trapped underground, running through torchlit caverns, pursued by something I couldn't see. Slept in late to make up for it.

February 22, 1935: Thinking the inscriptions might bear some relation to primitive Oriental writing I took the tablet to the University and showed it to Manning. He could make nothing of it, says the letters look nothing like Chinese, Korean, or Japanese. Not surprising, I suppose, if it was made in Europe. Maybe some relation to Basque or Etruscan? Must find out more about those languages' alphabets.

March 1, 1935: Obscure European languages don't seem to be the key. May have found something, though — Sumerian. Inscriptions look vaguely like cuneiform; maybe that will hold some clues.

March 6, 1935: Don't think cuneiform is the answer anymore, but have uncovered more disturbing information. In reviewing pictures of Sumerian tablets I have found two, both allegedly spell-tablets from the libraries of renowned magi, showing a creature remarkably similar to the one in the center of the tablet! No name that I could locate.

March 14, 1935: The mystery deepens. Aztec mythology has the creature, too, or traces of it at least — Cipactli, the crocodile-monster. What sort of a religion could span five thousand years and three continents?

March 20, 1935: The more I look, the less I think I know. Chinese, Malay, Hindu legends all seem to have similar creatures or gods! Could there be a cult, some sort of shadow-religion, behind them all? What sort of a person... or group... or being... could orchestrate such a scheme? I cannot fathom it. The thought terrifies me in ways I cannot describe.

March 28, 1935: Have sent rubbings, photos, notes to Peasley at Tulane. If anyone can come up with some answers to this puzzle, it's him.

March 30, 1935: No word from Peasley yet, but he could scarcely have had time to study what I sent him, I suppose. Accosted on the street today by two rough-looking men, Polish dockworkers probably, who offered to buy the tablet! How they learned of it they rudely declined to say. I refused their offer.

March 31, 1935: Have not been sleeping well. Another bad dream — priests on torchlit ziggurats at night, moonless sky bright with stars, preparing to sacrifice me to the toad-thing which somehow lurks nearby, unseen. Have had it for several nights, each time more intense. What is going on?