

ISSUE 19

WRETCHED VERSES



**WRETCHED
INTERBELLUM**

TEN THOUSAND
MILES TO FIJI



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EXPERIENCE THE GLITZ AND GLAMOUR OF EARLY 1930s
BERLIN, THE DECADENT PLAYGROUND OF CABARET SINGERS,
EXPATRIATES AND OCCULT THRILL-SEEKERS. RUB ELBOWS WITH
THE LOCAL ELITES IN UNDERGROUND JAZZ CLUBS. GET SWEEPED UP
IN RIVETING ROMANTIC ENCOUNTERS THAT COULD LEAD TO RED-
HOT PASSION OR RED-HANDED MURDER. BUT BEHIND THE
DAZZLING ART DECO EXTERIOR LURKS MURDER AND ANCIENT
FORCES. SURVIVE THIS TREACHEROUS WORLD OF POLICE
INFORMANTS, RUTHLESS CRIMINALS AND DEMONIC CULTS TO
UNRAVEL AN OCCULT MYSTERY. THEN SET A COURSE ACROSS THE
SOUTH PACIFIC TO THE SUN-SOAKED PARADISE OF FIJI. SAIL
BETWEEN PRISTINE TROPICAL ISLANDS AND DISCOVER ANCIENT
ISLAND CULTURES. JUST BEWARE THE ALLURING DRAGON LADY,
WHOSE FAR-REACHING CRIMINAL EMPIRE HAS ITS CLAWS IN EVERY
PORT, AND HER EYES SET ON YOU!

INTRODUCTION

WEIMAR BERLIN

Berlin in the 1920s was a city of extremes, as residents reeled from the Great War's devastation and sought both escapism and political radicalism.

An economic crisis fuelled by crushing war reparations led to hyperinflation and rampant unemployment. Once-great families were reduced to dire poverty.

The middle class saw their savings become worthless overnight. This widespread misery and resentment created the perfect conditions for political extremism and criminal activity to flourish. Against this backdrop, Berlin also became a capital of cultural experimentation.

Traditional social mores were abandoned as a new generation pursued decadent hedonism in the cabarets, clubs and speakeasies of the city center. Outcasts and eccentrics from across Europe flocked to Berlin, drawn to its reputation for "tolerance of the avant-garde".

The city's nightlife grew increasingly wild, with cocaine and liquor fuelling marathon parties. Cross-dressing cabarets like the Eldorado hosted transvestite revues and same-sex dancing, scandalizing conservative visitors. The music was a pulsing mix of jazz, swing, and cabaret songs riddled with sexual innuendo.

Burlesque shows pushed the boundaries of legality with nudity and lewd acts. Prostitutes of both sexes openly solicited customers on the Kurfürstendamm shopping boulevard.

This new permissiveness also allowed Berlin's homosexual community to flourish openly. Well-known gay establishments included the Cosy Corner, the Lady Windermere, and the Dorian Gray. The city became a gay mecca in the 1920s, attracting visitors from abroad. Though technically illegal under Paragraph 175, the sodomy law was seldom enforced during the Weimar years. Those seeking illicit thrills could readily find them in this sexually liberated atmosphere. This freedom extended to recreational drugs and underground gambling.



Cocaine and opium could be purchased in backrooms and alleyways. Hashish permeated many nightclubs. Clandestine casinos ran poker, roulette, and dice games for high stakes, protected by bribes to the police and city officials. Money launderers affiliated with mob organizations used Berlin's banking infrastructure to conceal ill-gotten gains.

Weimar Berlin also became an epicentre for occult movements, already strong in Germanic regions. Secret societies devoted to hermeticism, eastern mysticism, and ritual magic proliferated. The Thule Society was one such German occultist group with far right-wing political goals, claiming mystical insight into Teutonic heritage.

While most members were harmless eccentrics, the Nazis would later infiltrate and co-opt the organization. Small cabals delved into darker magic and summoning, some attracting the attention of otherworldly beings. Séances, automatic writing, and mediumship catered to those seeking to contact the dead.

This pervasive social and political dissent nurtured the rise of militant factions across the left-right divide. Communist revolutionaries clashed in the streets with ultra-nationalist groups like the emerging National Socialist party, fighting for dominance with fists, knives and pistols. Political assassinations and beatings became commonplace. The brutal chaos allowed criminal syndicates to thrive.

With rising poverty came an increase in drug smuggling, robbery, and vice linked to organized crime. Major factions included the Ringvereine crime rings, the Jewish Mafia and the "Ring of Red Boxers" Chinese triads. Street gangs terrorized their local neighbourhoods. Bank robberies, truck hijackings, kidnappings and extortion were daily occurrences. Crooked lawyers and politicians enabled the worst offenders to evade justice.

Berlin's police force struggled to maintain order amidst the turmoil. Underfunded, undertrained and demoralized from the war, they faced an impossible task. Cynical Berliners jeered at the police as inept and corrupt. Outbursts of mob anger sometimes led to attacks on police stations and officers. On the Kurfürstendamm, rival student factions fought open battles. Sporadic strikes paralysed transport, utilities and businesses.

Yet the avant-garde cultural vibrancy persisted despite the chaos, giving the era its unique dynamism. Berlin attracted young dreamers, radicals, and eccentrics from across Europe



both inspired and appalled by the city's decadence and depravity. When inflation stabilized by mid-decade, the extravagance of the nouveau riche added a veneer of prosperity through the later 1920s. This would make the coming crash into poverty and fascism all the more shocking.

During its brief golden era, Berlin accepted every dissident philosophy, radical voice, and nonconformist subculture into its freewheeling embrace. Avenue sightseers could encounter anything from riots to cabaret dancers to mystical Salons. Political demonstrators marched past down-and-outs and decadent dandies strutting the latest fashions.

But Berlin's eccentric veneer concealed a dangerous rot festering beneath the surface. Criminals both petty and grand exploited the turbulent conditions and prospered on moral decay and corruption. Impressionable minds were drawn to angry ideologies preaching a violent return to glory. Away from the cabaret spotlights, innocent lives were being destroyed by poverty, addiction, degeneracy and underworld violence.

Berlin's wild meteor flight through the 1920s invited provocateurs and agitators of all stripes to spread their disruptive messages under the umbrella of tolerance. When economic calamity, political division, and social instability again engulfed Germany in the 1930s, the individual freedoms of the Weimar era were exterminated. The Nazis ultimately rose to power by promising order after the previous chaos.



BACKGROUND

Hugo Talbot was once a respected professor of Anthropology at the University of Berlin. His early academic work focused on studying indigenous religious practices in Africa and the South Pacific.

Talbot spent years living amongst remote tribes, gaining their trust to learn forbidden occult rituals. He faithfully chronicled their folklore and shamanic traditions, publishing several acclaimed books on the subject.

But during extended fieldwork in the Americas, Talbot became dangerously obsessed with a legendary ancient civilization, that existed before humans; perhaps a mother race to our own. He started to believe their myths and prophecies hinted at a profound cosmic truth that conventional academia ignored.

Against his colleagues' advice, Talbot led dangerous expeditions into the jungle seeking out rumoured ruins, artefacts, and sacred sites. The scholar became convinced a profound revelation was within his grasp.



Upon returning to Berlin, a changed man, Talbot withdrew from campus life and began fraternizing with the city's secret occult societies, including the Anta Odelia Uta.

He severed contact with former academic associates and devoted himself fully to collecting rare mystical texts and relics for his private research. Talbot's university lectures grew increasingly bizarre as he incorporated occult concepts into his course material, drawing concern and ridicule from faculty.

Students assumed the once-esteemed professor was under the sway of dark forces.

Recently, Talbot abruptly resigned from his faculty position amidst allegations of an affair with a young female student.

But in truth, he desired complete freedom to pursue obscure rituals and arcane knowledge without hindrance. Talbot's wife left him as he became more erratic, his townhouse falling into shadowy disarray.

TALBOT'S JOURNAL

Before his shocking demise, Talbot gave his cryptic journal to his cabaret friend Elsa, sensing her contacts in the underworld could prevent it getting into the wrong hands.

Inside the diary there's a note asking Elsa to take the journal to the Fiji archipelago and contact the local chapter of the Traveller Society in case of his demise.

The note tells her to find Professor Caleb Thorne in Suva. He is a British member of the Society and a specialist in occult studies. Thorne is the one who can help decipher the cryptic contents of the journal.



THE STORY UNRAVELS

The curtain falls after another scintillating performance by Elsa Müller at the Roter Salon cabaret. As she retires backstage, there is an urgent knock on her dressing room door. She opens it to find her friend, scholar Hugo Talbot, looking deeply shaken. "Elsa, I need your help," he pleads.

Talbot explains he is in grave danger from forces seeking the results of his research. He begs Elsa to safeguard a journal containing clues to an ancient civilization's disturbing mysteries. Trusting her old friend and lover, she agrees to hide it among her belongings.

THE POLICE SUMMONS ELSA

On the following night, Elsa is horrified to receive the news: Hugo Talbot has been found dead in his study, contorted in a rictus of terror. And one day after the scholar was found dead in his study, Elsa is summoned to the townhouse by Detective Bauer. He interrogates her about her relationship with the deceased, suspicious of her as an associate. If Elsa is a PC she must convince the sceptical inspector of her innocence (an Average or Difficult Persuasion or Seduction roll) without revealing the journal she now safeguards. Her alibi should be watertight, but as a known associate the police are suspicious.

SEEKING HELP

If Elsa is a PC, the GM might remind the player that Javier Ortega, a rakish smuggler she encountered during his last port visit, and Vivian Monroe, an American expat journalist with an eye for mystery, are both in Berlin. Elsa could arrange to meet them and ask for their help. If Elsa is an NPC she will certainly get in touch with the

player characters. Yuri Ivanov, an old smuggling partner of Javier is another character whose help can be sought. Yuri's experience with the criminal occult elements will prove invaluable.

PLACES IN BERLIN

The Roter Salon Cabaret:

A lavish venue in Berlin's theatre district catering to poets, artists, expats, and anyone seeking refuge from their troubles through revelry. Crimson velvet, baroque wall sconces, and avant garde Art Deco motifs create an atmosphere of risqué extravagance. An elevated stage dominates the far wall, where jazz musicians do their acts. Clustered circular tables fill the main floor, shrouded in wisps of cigarette smoke and boisterous laughter. In a rear corner, Otto the gruff bartender slings drinks with machine-like efficiency. A curved marble staircase beside the stage leads up to private balconies for elite clientèle seeking discretion. Backstage is a chaotic maze of dressing rooms, hastily stored props, and gear from travelling acts. Backstage, you will also find Elsa Müller's dressing room, decorated in rich fabrics and flowers sent by admirers.

Hugo Talbot's Townhouse:

Located in the Wilmersdorf district the house stands untouched days after the scholar's unexplained death. The interior is dim and musty, with all the curtains drawn.

The dark wood-panelled study is in disarray, strewn with dusty tomes and bizarre ancient relics. A small blood stain mars the Turkish rug where Talbot reportedly died. He beat his head against the desk after, probably, having fainted. Shelves that once held occult texts and relics now stand empty. A massive desk piled with scribbled notes and maps dominates the room. Nothing of real importance can be found among those notes. Talbot's leather chair sits slightly askew, as if he leapt up in his final moments to confront some nameless horror lurking in the shadows.

Berlin Docks: They stretch for miles along the Spree River in southeast Berlin. Forests of cranes hoist cargo to and from ships docked side-by-side. Rails leading inland stand piled with goods bound for Germany's industrial heartland.

The docks employ hundreds of local workers daily, but at night the largely empty quays become the territory of smugglers, pickpockets, and ladies of the night haunting the sailor's bars. The *Sirena del Mar* sticks out from the grimy tramp steamers nearby, her sleek lines hinting at her speed. Her roguish captain Javier Ortiz can often be found at the wharf taverns making deals and swapping tales with fellow raconteurs late into the night. There are countless places amid the shadows where discreet exchanges of information, cargo, or currency can take place unnoticed.

The Black Orchid Club: It lies hidden in a nondescript building in Berlin's decorative arts district. Behind the façade of an exclusive design firm hides a neon-lit Art Deco staircase leading down to a dimly lit subterranean gambling parlour and speakeasy. Cigar smoke hangs in the air as roulette wheels clatter and dice rattle across green felt tables. The well-tailored clientèle murmur over cocktails and poker hands while jazz floats through the haze.

NOTABLE BERLIN NPCs

Otto Weber: The seasoned bartender at the Roter Salon cabaret. A great war veteran, he lost his left eye on the Somme. Though grizzled and gruff in demeanour, Otto has a soft spot for the cabaret dancers, acting as their protector.

He keeps tabs on all the local gossip and rumours, knowing virtually everyone in Berlin's nightlife scene and underworld. Otto is wary of the increased gang violence sullyng his beloved city. He is willing to discreetly share what he knows to help newcomers navigate Berlin's treacherous waters. However, Otto avoids direct involvement, preferring to keep his own hands clean.

Helga Richter: Resident chorus girl at the Roter Salon, plays the part of the bubbly Marlene Dietrich-esque cabaret dancer to perfection. Helga soaks up all the gossip swirling around Berlin's cabarets and clubs, dreaming of writing for the society pages or penning lurid crime novels. She has aspirations beyond dancing in seedy clubs into her twilight years.

Helga jumps at any opportunity to ingratiate herself with writers or reporters visiting the cabaret, hoping to glean secrets about the activities of Berlin's elites. Though wary of danger, her curiosity often overrides her caution if there is a chance to learn tantalizing information.

Detective Karl Bauer: A 25-year veteran of Berlin's police force with an impeccable record. He has an intimate knowledge of the city's criminal underworld and occult societies. Bauer is gruff and stern in manner, intolerant of the perceived moral decay and lawlessness overtaking Berlin. He sees himself as the city's staunch defender, clashing frequently with soft superiors. Bauer resents vigilantes interfering in police business, believing they undermine his authority. However, he recognizes the value of civilians with special skills, occasionally providing discreet tips or looking the other way on minor infractions if it serves the greater good. His highest priority is keeping the people of Berlin safe, no matter the personal cost. Bauer feels the rise of the Nazi party will bring order to chaos in Berlin.

Dieter Schmidt: A cold and calculating occultist rapidly rising through the ranks of the burgeoning National Socialist party. He firmly believes the Aryan race was responsible for the greatest magical achievements throughout history, and that Germany can regain its rightful place as a world power by reviving ancient occult knowledge. Schmidt is determined to acquire mystical artefacts and texts that will empower the Nazi cause. He attracts like-minded individuals to his inner circle through false charm, then discards them once their usefulness expires. Schmidt presents a veneer of civility when needed, but within beats the heart of a fanatic willing to commit unspeakable acts in pursuit of his ideals. Schmidt is part of Vogel's inner circle.

STORY SEEDS FOR BERLIN

- Several Roter Salon patrons have recently vanished after nights of heavy drinking. Elsa is certain she saw one depart with a mysterious woman.
- Helga reveals that women like herself are being recruited for "private parties" catering to politicians and diplomats at a secluded manor house.
- Inspector Bauer needs help tracking down smugglers bringing occult artefacts and forbidden texts into Berlin's occult circles. But his superiors forbid him from getting involved.



- While passing a beer hall, the characters hear a charismatic speaker whipping the crowd into a frenzy with anti-Semitic rhetoric and promises to restore Germany's pride. A brawl breaks out with some patrons voicing dissent.
- Notices on the walls of Berlin are calling for citizens to join a mass rally to "unite the right-thinking Volk against foreign agitators." The posters feature ominous Gothic-styled fonts and red and black colour schemes.
- A band of steel-helmeted youths storms through the market smashing the stalls of Jewish merchants while police look on indifferently. They leave behind leaflets proclaiming Germany for Germans.
- A prominent modern art gallery is violently vandalized with smeared swastikas and slogans decrying "cultural degeneracy." The owner is known for showcasing abstract and avant-garde works.
- While enjoying a night out, the characters are accosted by drunken members of a radical right-wing veteran's group looking for a fight with some "Bolshevik rabble."
- A violent communist protest march led by students and unionists is dispersed by the police.
- A Jewish professor's home is fire-bombed after the university refuses to dismiss him based on demands from nationalistic student groups. He is one of many academics targeted for dismissal based on ethnicity, politics or lifestyle.
- Johann Schmidt has taken a special interest in Elsa, sending lavish gifts backstage between her performances. His intentions seem more sinister than romantic.
- A scholar whose colleague died mysteriously pleads for help recovering a set of ritual daggers before Schmidt's occultists can claim them.

THE FIJI ISLANDS

The islands remain a colonial possession of the British Empire, as they had been since ceding to Britain in 1874. The indigenous population numbers around 140,000 native Fijians and Rotumans.

A further 6,000 whites, known as Europeans, dominate the economy and government as plantation owners, merchants, and colonial administrators. An additional 40,000 Indian immigrants have arrived under indenture to provide plantation labor since 1879.

Fiji's capital and largest city is Suva, in the island of Viti Levu, home to Kings Wharf, the police barracks, and the Government House where the British Governor resides. Other notable towns included Levuka, the former capital, and Lautoka which boasts a thriving sugar mill.

The interior highlands are largely undeveloped due to dense jungle and lack of roads. But the coasts are dotted with colonial ports processing sugar, coconut products and gold for export abroad.

Fiji's plantation economy relies on sugar, coconuts, bananas, tobacco and cotton produced on European-owned estates. Indian labourers work 12-hour days in the fields for low wages. The international sugar trade enriched plantation owners but left indigenous Fijians impoverished. Many were forced into the cash economy by colonial tax and land policies, losing their traditional clan rights.

The British administration sought to "protect" native Fijians by prohibiting their sale of land to foreigners. But whites soon controlled the majority of arable interior through leases. Segregation was enforced between Europeans, indigenous Fijians, and Indian immigrants.

Christian missionaries made significant inroads converting Fiji's indigenous population by the 1920s. Native customs like polygamy were strongly discouraged. But remnants of ancient religion persisted, particularly in remote villages. Cults around local deities, taboo rituals and chieftain lineage endured. Sugar cane farm labourers blend Hindu traditions from India with Fijian lore.

Suva is a quaint colonial port, with clapboard houses climbing lush hillsides. The aristocratic Colonial Club provides whites-only networking. Indian shops and eateries cater to plantation workers crowded into tenements. Native Fijians paddle dugout canoes from thatched shoreline villages.

Fiji's isolation meant colonial rule remained relatively benign, but anti-colonial sentiment gradually spread as educated native elites emerged. Increasing Indian population also threatened European dominance. Fears of racial tensions and unrest led Britain to gradually increase native representation in government during the interwar period.

Westerners typically view Fiji as an exotic paradise, captivated by images of swaying palm trees, pristine beaches and coral lagoons. Graham Greene wrote his first novel set in Fiji, depicting the tropics' languid beauty and dangers. Tourists on P&O luxury liners stopped to experience this "Garden of the Pacific." Beyond postcard idealism lay complex economic

and political currents stirring beneath the surface calm. Travellers who venture beyond manicured resorts might face poppy fields worked by indebted labor and syncretic rites in back-country villages. While most European settlers and visitors remained comfortably aloof, the adventurous and open-minded could find a far more complex Fiji lurking behind the façade.

This remote South Pacific archipelago conceals both breathtaking natural beauty and dangerous secrets. Mei-Ling's criminal empire controls the port cities, but venturing inland reveals forgotten occult ruins and mystical knowledge.



LOCATIONS IN SUVA

The Traveller Society

Compound: It occupies a former colonial plantation manor on a hill overlooking Suva Bay on the main island of Viti Levu. The whitewashed two-story building has a wrap-around veranda shaded by palm trees. Inside, the dark teakwood panelled walls are lined with artefacts from the society's global expeditions - ritual masks, pottery, tribal weapons, and idols. The expansive library contains obscure texts and journals detailing mysterious phenomena. Out back are bungalows to lodge visiting scholars and explorers. At night, candles burn in the windows as members conduct research, translate obscure texts, and catalogue finds. The reclusive society is wary of outsiders, but willing to share knowledge with those who prove discreet allies.

Mei-Ling's HQ: Located on the far end of Suva Harbor, the labyrinthine three-story structure has wide loading bays opening to the pier for efficiently moving cargo.

Thick iron doors bar entry to the inner warehouses crammed with crates of opium and contraband bound for Shanghai's criminal syndicates. The roof has snipers and searchlights to deter unwanted visitors. The perimeter is patrolled day and night by Mei-Ling's thugs scrutinizing for intruders. Attempts by rival tongs to infiltrate the warehouse inevitably end in a hail of gunfire. Mei-Ling bribes the local authorities to ignore the operation, while ruthlessly eliminating any who dare cross her or disrupt business.



NOTABLE NPCs

Caleb Thorne: He appears far younger than his fifty-odd years, with a vigorous physique and sharp gaze that belies the gray creeping into his close-cropped hair. His handsome features are weathered from years in the field beneath the tropical sun. When not on expeditions, Caleb dresses in loose linen shirts and trousers.

He speaks with precision in a refined British accent—a product of Oxford—but years abroad have coloured his speech with exotic inflections. Caleb's quarters are a chaotic jumble of occult tomes, maps, and relics collected from around the globe.

He thinks nothing of skipping meals or sleep when seized by passion for piecing together some new insight. Caleb has spent decades piecing together obscured links between ancient cultures and unexplained phenomena.

While viewed as an eccentric by many academics, Caleb's

open-mindedness and rigorous intellect have uncovered revelations about our world often dismissed as mere superstition.

His network of informants and fellow scholars is far more valuable to him than his forgotten family fortune in England. Caleb approaches the task of deciphering Talbot's journal with calm rigor, carefully cross-referencing its cryptic passages against his vast repository of esoteric knowledge. He sees aiding those who uncovered it as more than just scholarly duty—it is his life's purpose.

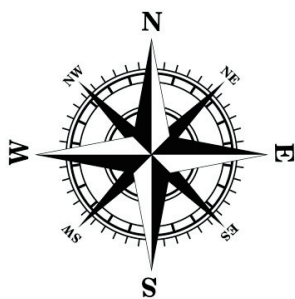


Kona: A grizzled Fijian scout intimately familiar with his homeland's remotest regions. As a youth, he served Christian missionaries as a guide and translator, mastering English and shedding much of his ancestral traditions.

He still guides the occasional scientific expedition or adventurous writer into the highlands to earn a living.

Kona can navigate the backcountry flawlessly, avoid taboo sites that bring ill fortune, and speak enough of the old lore to offer guidance.

His knowledge may prove invaluable to those seeking Fiji's hidden marvels or occult secrets. If the characters decide to find the alien structure he may be available to take them to Matagi island.



Captain Bartholomew Rourke:

Born into a respectable Boston merchant family, but a youthful stint smuggling rum to speakeasies instilled a thirst for adventure no respectable career could satisfy. So he abandoned his inheritance to roam the South Seas on a rickety steamer, taking odd jobs transporting cargo of questionable legality.

Now in his 40s, Rourke's rakish charm has hardened into cynicism, though he still indulges in periodic bouts of drinking, gambling and romantic conquests. His insouciant bravado means he frequently runs afoul of Mei-Ling's operation and other criminal syndicates, but he just laughs off their threats.

Rourke knows scores of exotic ports throughout Oceania. Scholars, smugglers, and secretive parties looking for discreet passage between islands would do well to secure Captain Rourke's services.

If the characters decide to travel to Matagi island, Rourke will be available to take them there for a substantial fee.

Professor Rolf Lars: He began his career as a humble archaeologist unravelling ancient Germanic settlements. But a mysterious coded tablet unearthed in Bavaria set him on an obsessive quest to decipher its references to a forgotten antediluvian civilization across the seas. Lars abandoned his tenured university post, questing from ruin to ruin in Asia and Oceania seeking evidence to unlock the tablet's secrets.

Now in his 50s, years of fruitless searching have frayed his patience and stability. Lars' funds are dwindling, but he remains convinced just one more major find will substantiate his life's work.

When he hears about Talbot's journal being decrypted by Thorne he will be interested in finding more about it. Lars is a potential ally to Vogel, but the characters might sway him to their side.

He may initially help the party, but will likely betray them once he learns of the lab's location, consumed by his obsession.

Madame Sato: Arrived in Fiji a decade ago, establishing a discreet gentlemen's club catering to foreign dignitaries and businessmen with predilections beyond the bounds of propriety. Her true origins are unclear, with rumours placing her birth everywhere from a British noble family to the streets of Shanghai. An uncanny ability to fulfil her clientèle's deepest desires - however unusual - has earned her considerable influence.

Sato's girls trade in secrets as well as sensual delights. Details accidentally revealed in her parlours are carefully recorded should they ever prove useful leverage. Prestige and mystery compel the wealthy to seek Sato's company, despite the ruinous extravagance.

To add some more complexity to this adventure, Madam Sato could be an agent of a Japanese occult society/ government, using her club to gather intelligence. She could become another antagonist, perhaps trying to get the journal herself or finding the alien structure.

EVENTS FOR SUVA

- Caleb Throne may be waiting for the Player Characters if they announced their arrival in advance. Otherwise, he will still be easy to find if the PCs ask around Suva. Decrypting the journal will take some time, at least 1 week+1d6 more days. During that time the party will be targeted by Mei-Ling's thugs, Vogel and his team and any other hostile factions you want to add.
- Mei-Ling, on the other hand is expecting the characters, even if they were discreet. Vogel has been following them from Berlin and hired Ling's services to stop the party. As soon as they arrive, they will be met by a group of armed thugs. If those are dispatched, more minions will come for them.
- Meanwhile, Vogel arrives at Suva and sets up a temporary headquarters. If Mei-Ling's thugs are unable to stop the characters in the first few days, Vogel will lend them a hand. The

German occultist is more than just a scholar, he has studied the dark art of Necromancy. He also has at his disposal a team of operatives, whose number should be twice as much as the characters. While Mei-Ling's minions are common thugs, Vogel's team are professional killers.

ADDITIONAL STORY SEEDS

- Ominous omens have been occurring around the islands as dark forces gather, sharks circling swimmers, rotting fruit, silent birds.
- Mei-Ling is recruiting beautiful local women for her enterprises in Shanghai through nefarious means.
- Strange singing echoes from a jungle valley contain clues to an ancient ritual site. But rumours speak of huge serpents guarding the area.
- Ghostly lights and translucent vessels have been reported in the waters between Fiji and Samoa. Some claim they are omens of impending upheaval.

WHAT'S IN THE JOURNAL?

The journal contains part of Talbot's research about the Adityan (the psychic alien race that created humans as a genetic experiment to find a cure for their own malady). Among other bits of information that you can tailor yourself to expand on this scenario, the journal contains a description of ancient alien structure located in the Fiji archipelago.

The structure is an Adityan lab, made of an unknown metal, Darkite (this metal shields the buildings from the Beyond's influence). There's not much to be found inside, except a couple of strange contraptions, whose functions are unknown. While Talbot has never been there, he has found information about it in old texts and he was planning an expedition to Matagi island, where the alien building can be found.

There are no coordinates, so the characters should probably find a local guide to aid them. Talbot's journal might contain clues to even bigger secrets, but that's beyond the scope of this introductory scenario.

MATAGI ISLAND

Matagi lies over 100 miles north of Vanua Levu, part of Fiji's far-flung Northern Lau island group. Sharp coral reefs and sheer volcanic cliffs make Matagi nearly inaccessible by sea or land. The island's inner terrain is a tangled jungle knotted with vines and thorns.

No native settlements exist on Matagi and its waters teem with sharks, discouraging visitors. Perpetual mists and rain storms shroud the island, with mud and mosquitos discouraging exploration.

Within the island's heart lies the volcanic Mt. Murimurina, wreathed in ominous clouds. Local legend says it is home to the Koloba spirits and the cave of the trickster demigod, making it taboo. Lack of fresh water also prevents habitation.



1d8 table of complications

1. Torrential rain and high seas strand visitors or sink vessels trying to reach/depart the island.
2. The odd electromagnetic effects disable electronic gear, engines, or vital tools at the worst possible moment.
3. The untamed jungles teem with snakes, spiders, and biting insects that could hospitalize the unwary.
4. Noxious fumes vent from the volcano or toxic jungle plants cause disorientation, paralysis, or blackouts.
5. The island's isolated ecosystem has led to abnormally large and aggressive apex predators.
6. Loose volcanic rock buried in the jungle shifts and crumbles underfoot, causing dangerous falls.
7. Patches of sodden ground can trap and swallow the incautious, especially with the heavy rains.
8. Being near the ancient complex causes headaches, insomnia, visions and instability.

THE ADITYAN LAB

The structure is nearly invisible amidst the dense tropical foliage until you come right upon it. The sleek metallic walls rise 6 meters high, seamless and devoid of any markings. The dark gray metal has an oily iridescence in the sunlight. Approach from the east and an arched entrance will open, the metal plates sliding away silently.

Inside, more metal corridors lead deeper underground, illuminated by strips of pulsing blue lights along the walls and floors.

There's a faint antiseptic smell inside. Strange piping and conduits line the hallways, leading to empty rooms. In what appears to be the central lab, banks of equipment blink with undecipherable displays. Alien symbols flash across video screens. One larger machine dominates the room, it has several buttons and levers. If the characters try to operate the machine, roll on the following table.

Roll 1d10

- 1. Gene Splicer:** This device can isolate and combine genetic material from multiple species to create hybrids. Dangerous if used haphazardly.
- 2. Cloning Vat:** Grows biological duplicates from living tissue samples. Failures result in mutated horrors.
- 3. Psychic Amplifier:** Temporarily (1d6 hours) boosts latent psychic potential but with a chance of burning out the subject's mind.
- 4. Dream Scanner:** Extracts images and knowledge from a subject's subconscious mind while they sleep.
- 5. Soul Extractor:** Rips the spirit or soul from a body, storing it in a gem-like vessel. The process is agonizing.
- 6. Physic Manipulator:** Alters subjects' physical forms, allowing radical transformations.
- 7. Void Projector:** Bombards the mind with imagery captured from alien minds. Causes hallucinations and madness.
- 8. Cranial Drill:** Surgically alters brain structure to

enhance or repress certain capabilities. Highly invasive.

- 9. Bio-Cooker:** Mutates cell structures via radiation exposure. Causes dramatic but chaotic changes.
- 10. Psychic Gestation:** Grows engineered psychic hybrids by manipulating energies and biology. Disruptions spawn horrors.

At the heart of the complex is a dimly lit, cavernous domed chamber, Suspended from the ceiling is a massive sphere of swirling energies contained by three rotating metal rings. Below it is a raised platform with a central altar-like structure. This seems to be the power source for the entire complex. Concentrating on the sphere for too long causes headaches and visions to swim in your mind's eye.

Scattered throughout the facility are stasis pods made of the same dark metal and glassy surfaces. Most are empty and long inactive, but a few still contain frail, withered humanoid specimens floating in glowing amber fluid. They have elongated skulls and slender limbs. Their sealed pods are covered in more inscrutable hieroglyphs.

PREGENS

THE ANTI-HEROES

Javier Ortega

Javier Ortega is not just a sailor but a conqueror of both seas and beds. Chiselled and bronzed, his body tells a story of hard labor and passionate nights. Women find themselves lost in his sea-blue eyes, only to be found in the tangled sheets of his cabin aboard *La Sirena del Mar*.

A frequenter of seedy taverns, opium dens, and brothels, Javier seeks pleasure as relentlessly as he does adventure. But each woman he leaves behind is a temporary escape, a fleeting reprieve from a past filled with sins he can't drink away.

Javier

Ortega

Sin: Lust

Virtue:

Diligence

Occupation:

Man of
Action

Archetype:

War Veteran

Level: 5

Health: 17

Defence: 12

Attributes:

Muscle 15 (+1)

Agility 16 (+2)

Toughness 13 (+1)

Brains 10

Wits 11

Magnetism 14 (+1)

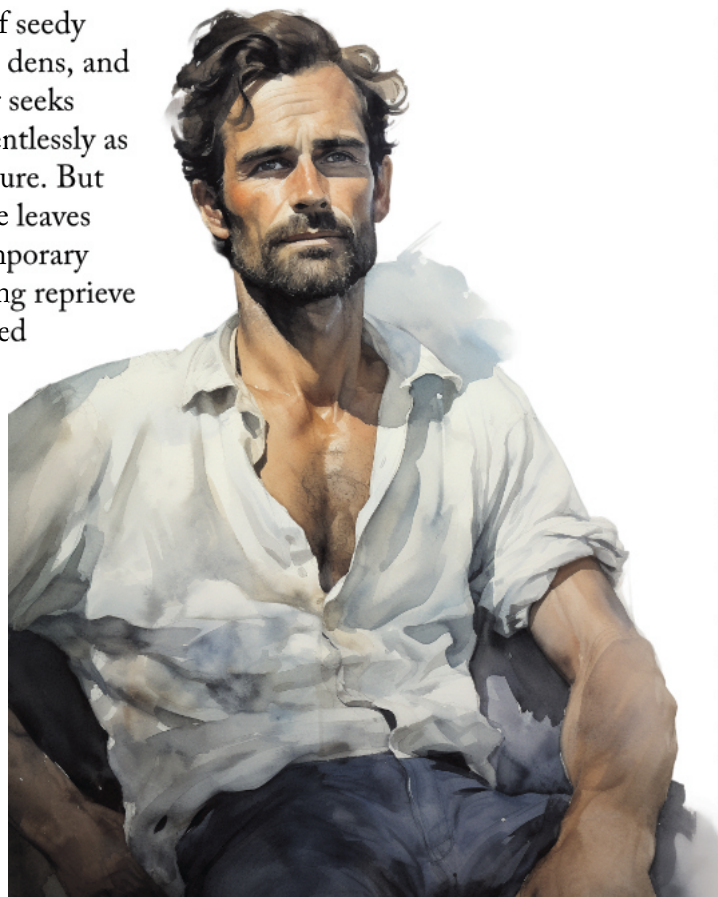
Sex-appeal 15 (+1)

Skills of Note:

Sailing 3, Persuasion 2,

Seduction 3, Survival 2

Perks: Sexually Alluring



Vivian Monroe

Vivian Monroe is a siren with a typewriter. Her allure isn't just physical; it's intellectual, intoxicating, and at times, manipulative. Her red lips have tasted both the finest champagne and the bitterest truths. She's not above using her sex appeal to get a lead or unlock secrets hidden behind closed doors. Vivian's past affair with Javier was a storm of passion and betrayal, where bodies and confidences were laid bare. Her attraction to danger is as addictive as the narcotics she occasionally indulges in—a deadly cocktail of ambition and hedonism.

Vivian

Monroe

Sin: Greed

Virtue:

Kindness

Occupation:

Investigator

Archetype:

Reporter

Level: 5

Health: 15

Defence: 11

Attributes:

Muscle 10

Agility 13 (+1)

Toughness 12

Brains 14 (+1)

Wits 13 (+1)

Magnetism 15 (+1)

Sex-appeal 16 (+2)

Skills of Note: Interview 3, Persuasion 3, Seduction 3, Streetwise 2, Research 2

Perks: Sex Bomb

Drawbacks: Addiction (drug use)



Yuri Ivanov

Yuri is a paradox—a ruthless killer with a soft spot for feline companionship. His icy exterior melts only when he's deep in his cups, revealing a man haunted by a love left behind in a homeland he can never return to. Yuri's love for vodka is second only to his love for late-night liaisons, often seeking warmth in the arms of women who remind him of a past he can't reclaim. Yet, each intimate encounter is tinged with a sadness that even his strong arms can't hold onto.

Yuri Ivanov

Sin: Wrath

Virtue: Kindness

Occupation: Man of Action

Archetype: Mercenary

Level: 6

Health: 19

Defence: 11

Attributes:

Muscle 15 (+1)

Agility 14 (+1)

Toughness 14 (+1)

Brains 11

Wits 12

Magnetism 10

Sex-appeal 13 (+1)

Skills of Note: Small Arms 4, Survival 3, Melee 2, Persuasion 1, Tracking 1

Perks: High Pain Threshold

Drawback: Alcoholic



Elsa Müller

Elsa is the dazzling night star of Berlin's cabaret scene. Her performances are electrifying, her beauty is mesmerizing, and her appetites are insatiable.

Often high on cocaine and lust, she takes multiple lovers, revelling in scandal and defying societal norms. Her dressing room has been graced by politicians, gangsters, and starlets, each of them seeking a taste of her forbidden fruit.

Skills of Note: Performance 4, Seduction 3, Persuasion 2, Singing 2, Streetwise 1

Perks: Sex Bomb, Famous
Drawbacks: Addiction (cocaine), Reckless

Elsa Müller

Sin: Lust

Virtue: Humility

Occupation:

Performer

Archetype: Cabaret

Singer

Level: 5

Health: 17

Defence: 11

Attributes:

Muscle 10

Agility 14 (+1)

Toughness 13 (+1)

Brains 12

Wits 11

Magnetism

15 (+2)

Sex-appeal

17 (+3)



Detective Fritz Weber

Outwardly, Detective Fritz Weber appears a model officer upholding law and order in Berlin's chaotic streets. But behind closed doors, he is deeply in debt to criminal bookies and extortionists. To pay them off, Weber provides tips on police activities, destroys incriminating evidence for a fee, and looks the other way on most underworld activities. The detective rationalizes that organized crime helps keep order by controlling the city's vices and violent factions. He sees himself as a realist simply using the leverage at his disposal to survive in dire times. Weber may prove a useful source of official information, but his motives are entirely self-serving. Any deals with him could backfire badly if a bigger payout emerges.

Detective Fritz Weber

Sin: Greed

Virtue: Diligence

Occupation:

Investigator

Archetype:

Cop

Level: 5

Health: 17

Defence: 10

Attributes:

Muscle 14 (+1)

Agility 13

Toughness 12

Brains 11

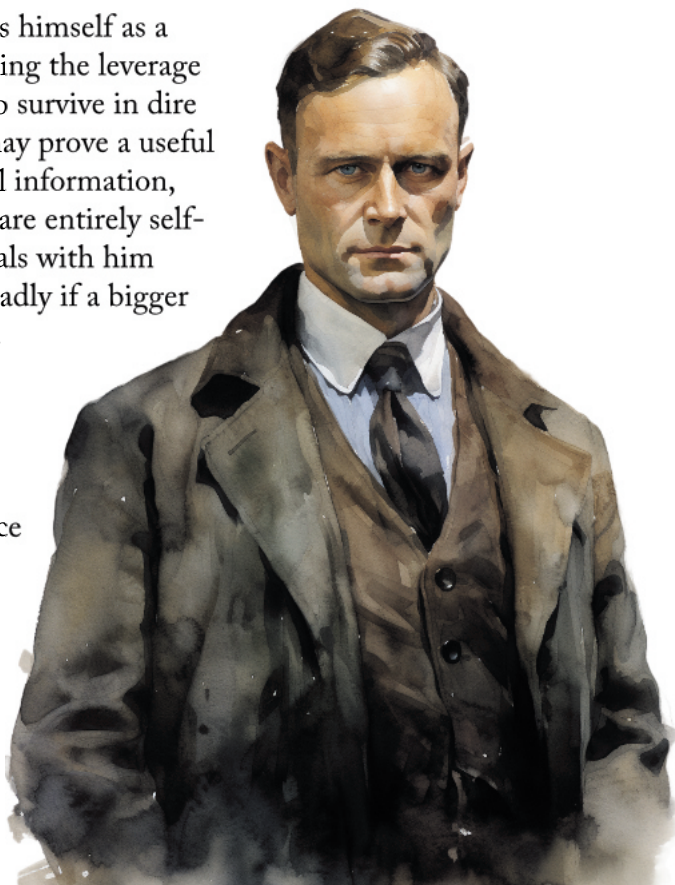
Wits 12

Magnetism 13

Sex-appeal 10

Skills of Note: Intimidation 3, Streetwise 3, Investigation 2, Melee 2, Persuasion 2

Perks: Membership, Contacts



Maria Hoffman

On the surface, Maria Hoffman seems just another bored socialite floating from soirees to the latest cabaret shows and art exhibits. In truth, she is an expert manipulator exploiting men's attraction to gain access to sensitive information. Maria mingles effortlessly among the Berlin elite, coaxing indiscretions using her charm and sex appeal. These secrets she sells to the highest bidder - whether newspaper editors, corporate spies, or underworld Fixers. However, Maria is not loyal to any cause; she follows wherever the money and excitement lead. Her life as an industrialist's pampered wife ended abruptly when she discovered he was a philanderer. Now Maria embraces hedonism and profit from blackmail as her revenge. Hers is a risky game, playing all sides. But she cannot resist the allure of danger and deception.

Maria Hoffman

Sin: Greed

Virtue: Temperance

Occupation: Rogue

Archetype:

Femme Fatale

Level: 5

Health: 16

Defence: 11

Attributes:

Muscle 9

Agility 12

Toughness 11

Brains 12

Wits 14 (1)

Magnetism 16 (+2)

Sex-appeal 17 (+2)

Skills of Note: Persuasion 3,
Seduction 4, Stealth 2

Perks: Sex Bomb, Magnetic
Personality



Johan Brandt

Brandt's cluttered shop in the arts district offers a dizzying selection of ancient relics, obscure texts and artwork from forgotten civilizations. Brandt eagerly regales visitors with tales of his exotic expeditions across Asia, the Americas and the South Seas that secured these rare finds. In truth, many were stolen from tombs and temples by plundering mercenaries funded by Brandt's secret backers. Brandt launders and sells their ill-gotten artefacts for exorbitant sums, no questions asked. But Brandt also learned many secrets himself.

Johan Brandt

Sin: Greed

Virtue: Diligence

Occupation:

Scholar

Archetype:

Occultist

Level: 6

Health: 18

Defence: 11

Attributes:

Muscle 12

Agility 11

Toughness 14 (+1)

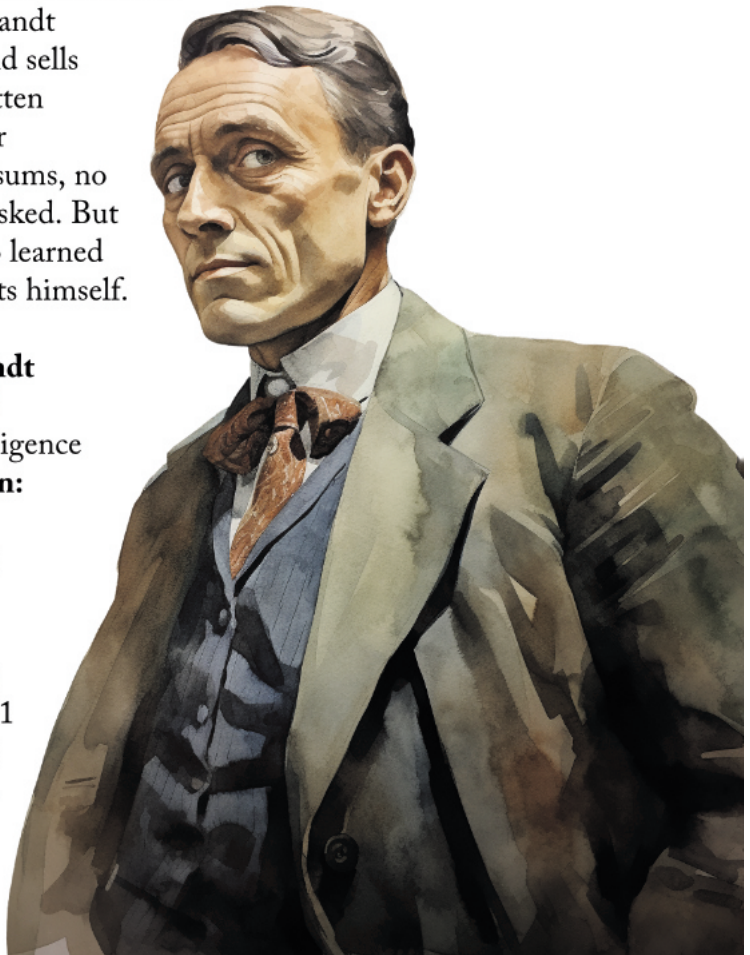
Brains 15 (+1)

Wits 13

Magnetism 12

Sex-appeal 10

Skills of Note: Academics 3,
Occult 3, Persuasion 3,
Streetwise 2



THE MAJOR VILLAINS

Mei-Ling Zhou

Mei-Ling, the "Dragon Lady," mixes business with pleasure, often sealing deals with a kiss laced with poison. Her beauty is a weapon, and her body, a negotiation table. Beneath her seductive exterior is a cunning mind that has orchestrated countless illicit operations. Her relationship with Carlos is a dangerous dance—a blend of rivalry, lust, and a hint of emotional vulnerability. She's a woman who can give you everything one moment and take it all away the next, often leaving a trail of satisfied but ruined men in her wake.

Mei-Ling Zhou

Sin: Greed

Virtue: Temperance

Occupation: Rogue

Archetype: Mobster

Level: 7

Health: 20

Defence: 11

Attributes:

Muscle 12

Agility 14 (+1)

Toughness 14 (+1)

Brains 15 (+1)

Wits 13 (+1)

Magnetism 16 (+2)

Sex-appeal 17 (+2)

Skills of Note: Persuasion 4, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 3, Sleight of Hand 2, Seduction 2

Perks: Sexually Alluring, Magnetic Personality

Drawbacks: Greedy, Enemy (rival syndicates)



Heinrich Vogel

Vogel is a dark enigma even within the shadowy corridors of the emerging Nazi party. A scholar of ancient lore and esoteric mysteries, Heinrich is less interested in political power and more consumed by an insatiable lust for forbidden knowledge. With piercing gray eyes, an unsettling calm, and a presence that chills the air, he is a man who unnerves both allies and enemies. Heinrich believes that the path to true dominion lies beyond mere worldly concerns, in the arcane rituals and dark pacts with otherworldly entities. In the years leading up to WWII, Heinrich is often dispatched to various corners of the globe on quests for occult artefacts, mystic texts, and unholy alliances. He is as cunning as he is ruthless, willing to sacrifice anyone who stands in the way of his dark objectives. Though scholarly in demeanour, Heinrich is not above indulging in the pleasures of the flesh—especially if such acts are part of some twisted ritual or another.

Heinrich Vogel

Sin: Greed

Occupation: Conjuror

Archetype: Necromancer

Level: 7

Health: 18

Defence: 10

Attributes:

Muscle 10

Agility 10

Toughness 12

Brains 16 (+3)

Wits 15 (+2)

Magnetism 14 (+2)

Sex-appeal 13 (+1)

Skills of Note: Occult 4,
Research 3, Persuasion 2,
Academics (History) 2

Perks: Magnetic Personality,
Contacts (Occult)

Drawbacks: Sadistic

