

The Court of Kutaraja

Dutch airships blockade Kutaraja, the capital city of the Sultanate of Aceh. The sultan distracts himself with toys while his vizier pins his hopes on foreign aid which will not come. A scheming ambassador and nationalist revolutionaries prepare to seize the looming invasion as their best opportunity against the sultanate.

Someone in the sultan's court ordered the assassination of Mambo Violine, and now her crewmates are coming to settle that debt. Will Violine's scoundrel allies be able to get in, do what needs to be done, and get back out? The only way to find out is to play...

What Is This?

The following few pages detail the city of Kutaraja, in the Sultanate of Aceh, in the steampunk world of *Renegade Jennys and Boilerplate Jacks*. It includes seven NPCs, some setting details, and a network of agendas and schemes that our picaresque heroes can get caught up in. This scenario is by no means exhaustive; there are lots of corners of Kutaraja not even mentioned here. Rather, this gives you just enough detail to get yourself started; you and your players will be able to flesh out the rest of this location through play.

Speaking of play, you can use this scenario in two different ways: as a coldstart to kick off play or as a regular destination in an ongoing campaign. Guidelines for both are found at the end of the document.

Kutaraja: Jewel of Sumatra

It should go without remark, I should think, that very few of our readers will have visited the court of Alauddin Mahmud Syah II, the Sultan of Aceh. Sadly, I suspect few would be able to locate it on a map—although this fault lies as much in the paucity of decent maps available to the public as it does to the faculties of you, the reader. So let me first direct your attention to those islands known as the East Indies, which is a terribly inapt name, but what they are most commonly called beyond their own shores. On the westernmost end of this region, further west than even the Malay peninsula, lies the long island of Sumatra, and at its northern extremity sits Kutaraja, a bustling city that served as the seat of the Sultan for some four or five centuries.

Aceh—pronounced, as some of you may wonder, more or less “At-jeh”—is a country of rich jungles, broad pepper plantations, and fiercely independent Acehnese. The architecture is typical of what you might find in the region, which is to say elaborately-gabled structures faced with lacquered lumber; the island nation often builds its houses atop rows of stilts, with work areas beneath.

Achinese cuisine tends towards fish, rice, and curry, with a broad range of variety within each of these. They also produce a very fine duck. Everything, as you might expect, includes pepper, Aceh’s most lucrative and pervasive crop. A popular means of preparation involves wrapping a melange of ingredients in banana leaves and then steaming the package until the contents are cooked. This is then often served over rice or noodles.

If one had never had the pleasure of meeting one of the locals, one might rather confusedly take them for an Indian or Chinese or some hybridization of the two. One would expect an Acehnese to bristle at this characterization as much as an Englishman being described as a cross between a Scotsman and a Spaniard, but it remains accurate enough for our purposes. Aceh, after all, lies at the midpoint of the trade routes between India and China. Its position at the top of the Strait of Malacca—and its sizeable naval fleet—has ensured prosperity for the Acehnese for some time. It has also made them something of a target, but we shall get to that later.

—*One Hundred and Ten Days Aloft*, by Major James Starling

Uncle (decoded using the crane cipher)—

The years have not been kind to Kutaraja, to the point where our prior understanding of its workings is now outdated. The palace, treasury, and government buildings still lie on the highest ground behind a tall lacquered wall. The rest of the city, swelled with refugees, has grown up to press against these walls like weeds; even the sentries and patrols cannot prevent a clever thief from leaping into the royal enclosure. I can already hear you, though, saying that foreign princes are of little concern to us.

The port here was destroyed by the first European invasion and has been rebuilt in pieces all across the city's frontage to the water. The city has three mooring derricks for airships, also scattered haphazardly throughout the city. It would be trivial to evade customs, although this is hardly necessary: the city has been choked off and starved for so long that a simple bribe goes a long way. The only exception are the palace guards, all women, who wander farther afield every day. They do not take bribes; these noble guardswomen are already rich.

With the destruction of the port also came the destruction of many of the drinking houses that serviced visiting sailors. One notable exception is Yang Peka Badak, which escaped destruction due to its location behind a low hill, huddled amongst tenements for dock workers and other vermin. Its proprietress, Wangi, knows how to show proper deference to Society members... and expects to be properly paid for her trouble. Her silence and discretion, however, are iron-bound.

We must use this information and the opportunities they imply as quickly as possible. Send as much silk and porcelain as you can bear; I will be able to move it through Kutaraja and onwards to India quickly and easily, but only for a short time. The Europeans mean to have this port to themselves, and have already proven themselves willing to destroy it if it is denied them.

—together against the Qing, Koh Luan

Most Esteemed Father—

My many thanks for your donation of the heliograph. This will allow my friends to coordinate with each other much better. I have installed it at Yang Peka Badak, a dive in the capital of such poor reputation I am sure you have never heard its name. It serves us well enough, however, as a meeting place and rally point. If, in the following days, you lose track of my whereabouts, a servant sent to Yang Peka Badak should be able to make inquiries. My compatriots know my name, of course, but if your servant refers to me as “pepper daughter,” they will know he can be trusted.

I continue to worry about your station and safety in the coming days. You have been always been a generous friend to many people: to myself, to the vizier, and even to the Hongmen and Dutch. You have always said that a pepper raja is enriched by having many friends in many places, but things will be changing very soon. I will not be able to protect you if certain friendships of yours are not disposed of in time.

— your daughter, Cut Nyak Dhien

To His Most Generous and Wise Counsel, Mehmed Rushdi Pasha, of the Ottoman Porte—

My many thanks to you, my mullah, for sending us the *Muin-I-Zaffer*. Now that Aceh can bombard ships from the sky, no naval blockade can stand against Aceh. We have already modified our inventory of mortar shells to function as capable aerial bombs. I will admit that I was skeptical of taking war to the skies, but with your guidance and assistance, I believe we shall overcome even this challenge.

I understand that, due to the despicable intriguers within the Ottoman Porte, may they be cursed for dimming the light of Islam, you are not presently in a position to offer Aceh more than the single airship. Perhaps, after you inevitably overcome your persecutors, you will again be in a position of strength. I welcome this eventuality, and not only because of the greater help you might give us. You have, as you have always had, my admiration.

However, given your present circumstances, we have had to turn to the British for additional airships, and—I am almost ashamed to say it—the warlord Tippu Tib for a supply of Zinderi rifles. These latter come to us through smugglers and pirates, the same cut-throats which Aceh tried to crush as criminals and thieves in better days. I worry for the soul of Aceh, to be dealing with such persons, but such measures are necessary for the sultanate’s very survival.

When we fight back the Dutch marauders from the deck of the *Muin-I-Zaffer*, we shall sing your praises to the Porte, in the hopes that your fortunes may be rectified and you return again to lead the Faithful to glory.

—Habib Abdul Rachman al-Zahr, vizier to His Highness Alauddin Mahmud Syah II, Sultan of Aceh

To the Governor-General van Lansberge in Batavia—

It has now been five years since our first, failed invasion of Aceh. They had, as I warned your predecessor, the best army that pepper money could buy: Zinderi guns, American training, and a sizable territorial advantage. While we handily destroyed the harbor town of Ulèë Lheuë, no amount of naval bombardment would break their defenses in Kutaraja. We were pushed back into the sea, and that is where we have remained ever since.

I relate these details to you, Governor-General, because you were not here then, and can not be held at fault for disregarding my counsel before we took on this war. I hope that you will prove more amenable than your predecessor.

We have maintained a naval blockade around the entirety of the sultanate for five years. This has not cut off all contact—some smugglers always get through—but our control of the Strait of Malacca has crushed Aceh's once-ascendant monopoly on the pepper trade. Their treasuries have withered in these last five years.

This has not prevented al-Zahr, the sultan's vizier and the real power behind the throne, from spending the last treasures of the state. He has, over the course of the past year, purchased three airships: two from the British and one from the Turks. In order to prevent these from bombing our ships at sea, we have requested, and you have wisely approved, airships to bolster our blockade fleet.

The seventh and eighth dirigibles have just arrived, and I like these odds. I humbly request your approval to initiate a second land invasion. I will patiently await your response—however, if the circumstances seem to shift to the detriment of our current advantage, I may be forced to act before this opportunity disappears.

—General Johan Harmen Rudolf Köhler, Commander, Aceh Expedition

Local Names

Acehnese & Malay Names

Masculine

- † Adi
- † Agung
- † Bima
- † Buana
- † Budi
- † Darma
- † Guntur
- † Harta
- † Iskander
- † Krisna
- † Kusuma
- † Putra
- † Setiawan
- † Surya
- † Susila
- † Tirta
- † Wahyu
- † Wibawa
- † Wira
- † Yuda

Feminine

- † Batari
- † Bulan
- † Cinta
- † Citra
- † Indah
- † Intan
- † Kasih
- † Lestari
- † Mawar
- † Mega
- † Melati
- † Nirmala
- † Putri
- † Ratu
- † Sari

Gender Neutral

- † Cahaya
- † Dian
- † Dwi
- † Eka
- † Iman
- † Tri

Siamese Names

Masculine

† Arthit
† Klahan
† Mongkut
† Preecha
† Somchai
† Thaksin

Feminine

† Anong
† Kanda
† Lawan
† Malai
† Pakpao
† Ubon

Gender Neutral

† Kamon
† Kulap
† Wattana

Chinese Names

Masculine

† Chao
† Da
† Dong
† Gang
† Qiang

Feminine

† Ai
† Fen
† Ju
† Lan
† Nuan
† Shu
† Ya

Gender Neutral

† Bai
† Bo
† Chang
† Guo
† Jian
† Tai

Persons of Note

Habib Abdul Rachman al-Zahr, vizier to the young sultan Alauddin Mahmud Syah II

While al-Zahr works hard to give the appearance of venerable age, the man behind his expansive grey-streaked beard is only a few years past forty. Originally from Yemen, al-Zahr first came to Aceh as a tutor for the future sultan Alauddin and his brothers. The untimely death of the sultan put Alauddin on the throne at the age of thirteen; the young sultan immediately appointed his trusted tutor as his vizier. al-Zahr has been all but running the sultanate since.

It has not been an easy job. The sultan's power is dependent on the goodwill and cooperation of the Aceh nobility, the Ulèë Balang. These "pepper rajas" control vast spice plantations and hoard deep treasuries, and are potent political adversaries. al-Zahr has leaned heavily on his connections with the Ottoman Porte in Istanbul to keep the pepper rajas in line: recognition and honors from that distant capital were expensive, but Aceh's near-monopoly on the global pepper trade made it affordable.

Then came the Dutch invasion, which was narrowly pushed back with help dearly purchased from Siam, the Turks, and the Americans. The subsequent naval blockade then crippled al-Zahr's ability to buy support from the Ottoman Porte. As al-Zahr increasingly has to do more with less, the boy sultan has chosen this moment to finally take an interest in governing his sultanate, leading to heated arguments. al-Zahr's personal relationships with the pepper rajas may be the only thing keeping him in his position... a position he must retain if he is to keep Aceh free of Dutch conquest.

Exemplars

- † Bearded Arab Mullah
- † Simple White Kaftan
- † Bejeweled Vizier's Mantle

Classes

- † Bureaucrat (Red Tape)
- † Herald (Confession)

Approaches

- † Reason
- † Misdirection

Languages

- † Fluent Arabic
- † Fluent Acehnese
- † Fluent Thai
- † Broken Dutch
- † Broken Mandarin
- † Broken Malay

Cut Nyak Dhien, Achenese Nationalist

A regal woman of broad shoulders and proud bearing, Cut Nyak Dhien is most often attired in the trim white-and-gold uniform of the palace guard. The guard is exclusively made up of the daughters of the Aceh nobility, the Ulèë Balang. While their typical martial training is patchy at best, Dhien has dedicated herself to marksmanship, and carries a hand-crafted Zinderi rifle, presented to her by the sultan, to show for it. Of course, she has other reasons beyond loyalty to apply herself.

While Cut Nyak Dhien spends most of her days in the palace guard, her true loyalties lie with the dream of creating a new Aceh: one unburdened by stifling tradition, free of foreign entanglements, and ruled by the people. Her father, Teuku Nanta Setia, one of the more powerful pepper rajahs, has financed more than one scheme of the Nationalists; Dhien isn't sure if he actually supports her views or just wants to unbalance the sultan. She doesn't particularly care.

Dhien's true loyalties are unknown to the Sultan, and more importantly al-Zahr. For now, she uses her position in the palace guard and her connections with the Ulèë Balang to play the "man inside." She is constantly looking for opportunities to stymie or weaken the sultan, and plans to capitalize on the looming threat of the Dutch, without losing everything. Widowed during the Dutch's first expedition against Aceh, she has no desire to trade the Sultan for a Dutch bureaucrat in Batavia.

Exemplars

- † Broad, Nut-brown Lady
- † Matte-Black Zinderi Rifle
- † Pristine Guardswomans' Coat

Classes

- † Revolutionary (Regroup)
- † Duelist (Riposte)

Approaches

- † Misdirection
- † Honesty

Languages

- † Fluent Acehnese
- † Fluent Arabic
- † Fluent Malay
- † Broken Dutch
- † Broken Thai

Suraphan Phisut, Siamese Ambassador

A round-faced man with a ready smile, Suriphon Phisut seems a natural diplomat: slow to anger and offense, quick to put others at ease. The only dissonant note is the elaborate, whorled tattoos that cover the majority of his body. His clothing covers most of these, but they constantly peek out under his sleeves and collar. The arcane tattoos mark him as a practitioner of Thai theurgy, a detail he usually leaves out of his introductions.

As a representative of Siam, the kingdom across the Strait of Malacca, everyone in the Kutaraja court assumes he is more than just a diplomat. This is true: Phisut organizes Siam's espionage activities throughout Sumatra. However, Phisut also uses his position to pursue his own ends.

His first deal upon taking the position was to sell the sultanate munitions—but the crates of gold that were sent back to Bangkok did not include the ancient Indian horn that Phisut insisted be part of the payment. The treasury of Kutaraja holds many similar treasures of arcane significance, and Phisut intends to have them all... whether he slowly bleeds them out through diplomacy or seizes an opportunity to simply steal them.

Exemplars

- † Dark-skinned Tattooed Man
- † Elaborately Embroidered Coat
- † Ancient Coin Amulet

Classes

- † Theurgist (Secrets of the Universe: smoke, gold, and anger)
- † Hustler (Cold Read)

Approaches

- † Misdirection
- † Force

Languages

- † Fluent Thai
- † Fluent Malay
- † Fluent Acehnese
- † Fluent Arabic
- † Fluent Mandarin

Johan Harmen Rudolf Köhler, Dutch General

Johan Köhler is a tall, haggard man marked by the hardships he has survived. His right side—shoulder, arm, and ribs—have been replaced with a bulky mechanical prosthetic. This steams, hisses, and clanks quietly in the background while he goes about his day. His uniform is cut to accommodate the extensive prosthesis, allowing access to gauges, coke spouts, and smokestacks. While the eye may be first attracted to the whirring technology, it is the man's piercing eyes and brusque demeanor, both hardened by long and grueling experience, that capture and hold attention.

Köhler has spent the majority of his life in the service of the Dutch East Indies armed forces. While in his younger days he wallowed in the xenophobia and assumed superiority that pervade the ranks of soldiers in his command, he has discovered a tactician's respect for the Acehnese. A large part of this may stem from the maneuvers that left him surrounded and fatally shot during the first expedition into Aceh.

Köhler knows that the Dutch East Indies company drastically underestimates the Aceh armies, just as he knows how determined the company is on seizing control of the sultanate. Unless the next expedition is a quick, flawless victory, they will be facing a grueling and prolonged war. When his young, hot-headed soldiers have their cherished superiority challenged, needless blood and suffering will be the only outcome. If he can prevent this, then the second chance given him by God and the doctors will not be for nothing.

Exemplars

- † Ramrod-backed Rubicund Gentleman
- † Azure Medalled Uniform
- † Steaming Mechanical Arm
- † Dutch East Indies Expedition Forces

Classes

- † Ringleader (In Charge)
- † Thug (Bark)

Approaches

- † Force
- † Honesty

Languages

- † Fluent Dutch
- † Fluent German
- † Fluent French
- † Broken Arabic
- † Broken Malay

His Majesty Alauddin Mahmud Syah II, Sultan of Aceh

The sultan is young—eighteen years old—and possessed of the boundless enthusiasm of youth. Unfortunately, none of that enthusiasm is for ruling the sultanate. His robes of office are worn tied back and out of the way, spectacles rest atop his head, and his fingers are usually stained with engine oil.

An inveterate tinkerer, Syah is obsessed with the world of mechanics. In better years, he paid travelers and merchants for the latest innovative devices from Brussels, Zinder, and New York. Since the siege, he has turned to cannibalizing his collection to create new pieces. Entirely self-taught, his lack of a formal education leads to strange gaps in understanding and practice, and even stranger solutions to these lacunae.

The sultan's attention to his throne wavers, leaning heavily on al-Zahr to run the state while he buries himself in his workshop. The enormity of the siege of Kutaraja, which seems to surround his entire world, is often more than the young ruler can comprehend. This drives him to melancholia and back into his workshop, a safe microcosm in which he is in control. He seeks an engineering solution to the siege (the Acehnese air navy was his idea), but even he knows that one device cannot turn back an entire army.

Exemplars

- † Smiling Brown Youth
- † Tied-back Embroidered Coat
- † Gem-Encrusted Sword and Scabbard

Classes

- † Mondaine (Charm)
- † Inventor (Tinker)

Approaches

- † Grace
- † Reason

Languages

- † Fluent Arabic
- † Fluent Acehnese
- † Fluent Malay
- † Fluent Mandarin
- † Broken Dutch

Koh Luan, Chinese Smuggler & Pirate

Everything about this woman bespeaks competence and danger. Lithe and wiry, she is usually clad in plain leather and canvas aeronaut gear which seem to bear more than a single lifetime of wear. She keeps her long sable hair bound up in looping braids to keep it out of the way.

Luan has been called a gangster, a pirate, and a patriot, and all of these are true in some sense. She is an airship captain for the Hongmen, an organization dedicated to bringing down the Qing dynasty in China, and whose methods and funding borrow heavily from organized crime. There are many places where she is a criminal; there are many others where she is a hero. There are some places where she is both.

Luan and her crew are active across Sumatra, Malay, and Borneo, with occasional forays into the Dutch colonies on Java. While Aceh is at the periphery of the Hongmen's usual operations, Luan has been diligent in both keeping Qing influence out of the sultanate and in using the compromised port security to smuggle goods. Of particular note is the gunrunning that she has done for the sultanate, which she knows makes her more involved in this foreign port than her superiors would like her to be. The gunrunning is lucrative, however, and the funds return to China, where they fuel the Hongmen's smoldering insurrection.

Exemplars

- † Lithe, Ochre-skinned Woman
- † Hip-Mounted Grappling Gun
- † Leather Climbing Harness

Amenities of the airship Hung Fa Ting

- † Mobile: Flying
- † Landing pontoons
- † Smuggler's Bolthole
- † Crow's Nest

Classes

- † Aeronaut (Captain)
- † Midnighter (Contacts)

Approaches

- † Force
- † Misdirection

Languages

- † Fluent Mandarin
- † Fluent Malay
- † Broken Arabic
- † Broken English
- † Broken French
- † Broken Dutch
- † Broken Japanese

Wangi, Proprietor of Yang Peka Badak

Heavysset and flat-featured, Wangi looks like she could man the door of Yang Peka Badak instead of the bar. If there was a door. Yang Peka Badak occupies the open space between the stilts of Wangi's family home, and the woman herself can reliably be found behind the long teak bar at its center. Her clothes and unremarkable, but she seems to radiate a palpable sense of authority and ownership; the regulars whisper that her glare was sufficient to keep the dive safe during the naval bombardment during the First Expedition.

Her low-born Acehnese family has lived under the sultans for generations, but Wangi herself feels no special loyalty to the current sultan or his dynasty. Neither does she ally herself with the Acehnese Nationalists or the Hongmen, even though she welcomes both into Yang Peka Badak. Wangi's allegiance is mercenary: she can sense change on the air in Aceh, and she is waiting to see who will come out on top. She is not even particularly adverse to occupation by the Europeans, confident that she'll still make a good living servicing the sailors that come through the port.

Yang Peka Badak has long been a regular haven for picaros, and Wangi is accustomed to their habits and needs. Everyone, the Acehnese guardsmen included, know that there is no violence allowed on Yang Peka Badak's floor. She maintains a pair of private drinking rooms upstairs, which can be rented cheaply for a few hours. A small, secret corridor runs between the drinking rooms and can hear everything that occurs there; access to this chamber is less than cheap, but still available.

Exemplars

- † Robust Bronzed Woman
- † Worn Canvas Apron
- † Notched Kitchen Knife

Amenities

- † Long Teak Bar
- † Smoky "Back" Room

Classes

- † Thug (Unstoppable)
- † Hustler (Confidence)

Approaches

- † Force
- † Reason

Languages

- † Fluent Acehnese
- † Fluent Malay
- † Broken Arabic
- † Broken Dutch
- † Broken Mandarin
- † Broken English

Playing in Kutaraja as a Destination

If the picaresque heroes are on their way to Aceh, there's a reason for it. What plot hook got dangled in front of them? What otherwise throw-away detail caught their fancy? Is someone coming home, or hunting down an enemy (or a friend)? No matter what it is, that element must be the core of the scenario you build using the following materials.

Below is a list of possibilities that you can seed in prior scenarios to tempt your players to Kutaraja:

- † The picaros uncover a mystic conspiracy, of which Suriphan Phisut is the only confirmed member.
- † A device requires a strange power source, a prototype of which came out of Aceh... investigation will reveal the mysterious inventor to be the sultan himself.
- † The Hongmen are smuggling a certain MacGuffin that the picaros need.
- † A dying man reveals that he hid his satchel of important documents in Yang Peka Badak.
- † The picaros need to move something big-too big to fly by airship—from East to West or vice-versa, which means they'll need to get through Aceh to avoid the long way around Sumatra.
- † A Turkish sailor scrawled coordinates on the inside of the *Muin-I-Zaffer's* gas envelope.

Playing in Kutaraja as a Cold Start

This scenario can be played as a cold-start: a one-shot game or the first installment of a longer *Renegade Jennys and Boilerplate Jacks* campaign. This will let you create characters and play through the Kutaraja destination in about four hours.

Once everybody is at the table, explain that you have a cold-start scenario to play, enticingly titled *The Glittering Trumpet of Kutaraja*. Everybody will make characters, which will proceed a little differently than normal (but not by much), and then you'll settle in to play.

Before the first step of character design, explain that you have a letter for each player, depending on what character classes they pick. If they ask, tell them you have one for an Aeronaut, a Mondaine, a Theurgist, a Revolutionary, and a Midnigher. If they don't ask, don't worry about it. Proceed with the Shopping and Casting steps of character design.

Pass out the class sheets for Aeronaut, Mondaine, Theurgist, Revolutionary, and Midnigher. Have everybody read aloud the name and description at the top of at least one class. Explain that there are more classes which you'll get to in a moment, and everyone will end up with two classes. The cold start requires each player to be one of these five, so everybody should pick one. If you have fewer than five players, no worries: no single class is necessary.

Once everybody has picked their first class, hand out the remaining classes and read them aloud together. Everyone should now pick another. There's no reason a player can't pick two of those original five. They'll still only get one letter, for the first class that they picked. So an Aeronaut/Revolutionary is A-OK; they'll just get the Aeronaut letter.

Proceed through the rest of character design until you get to Seeds and Destination. That's when you hand out the letters. These take the place of Seeds and picking a Destination; they also add a little backstory, so playing this scenario is like playing the third or fourth installment of a campaign. Everyone should read aloud the choices that they pick from the lists on their letters.

Once you've done that, you're ready to play. Start with the In Media Res scene described on the GM Sheet below.

If the players want more after they've roughed up Kutaraja, you can end the game with selecting Seeds and picking the next Destination.

My Dearest Aeronaut—

You are a member of a crew of picaro: disreputable scoundrels for hire. Together, you have traveled the globe alternating between mercenaries, spies, and freedom fighters. Over the past year, you have been investigating the Stone Army of Lemuria, a score of legendary Atlantean artifacts that the lost civilization used to devastating effect in its wars. If you found it, you would be world-renowned legends overnight.

Your last port of call was Hyderabad, where a member of your crew, Mambo Violine, sought out an ancient text hidden in a university there. While she was studying the tome, she was struck down by an assassin. The killer was captured, but would only reveal that she had been hired by someone at the court of Kutaraja in the Sultanate of Aceh. The assassin died shortly thereafter.

Pick One:

- † Mambo Violine was your sister
- † Mambo Violine was your wife
- † Mambo Violine was a fare — she was financing the search for the Stone Army

Pick One:

- † You sent Violine to the library, alone.
- † You told the assassin where to find Violine, presumably not knowing she was an assassin.
- † You offered to go to the library with Violine, but she refused your “needless” protection.

Now you are en route to Kutaraja to find whoever is responsible for Violine’s death. You have been through the Sultanate of Aceh before, and on your last visit you were shown a secret entrance to the Sultan’s palace. You were, at the time, a little drunk, so details are hazy. However, if you can find your way to Yang Peka Badak, a dive bar, you’re certain you can find your way in.

Your Seed is **Cartography**: if you find Yang Peka Badak, you’ll gain a 5d advantage Secret Entrance to the Palace.

—your Adoring Servant, the GM

My Dearest Mondaine—

You are a member of a crew of picaro: disreputable scoundrels for hire. Together, you have traveled the globe alternating between mercenaries, spies, and freedom fighters. Over the past year, you have been investigating the Stone Army of Lemuria, a score of legendary Atlantean artifacts that the lost civilization used to devastating effect in its wars. If you found it, you would be world-renowned legends overnight.

Your last port of call was Hyderabad, where a member of your crew, Mambo Violine, sought out an ancient text hidden in a university there. While she was studying the tome, she was struck down by an assassin. The killer was captured, but would only reveal that she had been hired by someone at the court of Kutaraja in the Sultanate of Aceh. The assassin died shortly thereafter.

Pick One:

- † Mambo Violine was your confidante
- † Mambo Violine was once your lover
- † Mambo Violine was your rival in a love triangle

Pick One:

- † You were with Violine at the library but couldn't protect her
- † You saw the assassination from a distance
- † You happened to chat with the assassin in the library foyer and later identified her

Now you are en route to Kutaraja to find whoever is responsible for Violine's death. The court there is, by all reports, a mess. The Sultan Alauddin Mahmud Syah II is a young man who takes his guidance from a Yemeni imam, Habib Abdul Rachman al-Zahr. Gossip says that al-Zahr has a secret lover, which would not go over well if it became public knowledge.

Your Seed is **Reputation Preceding**: if you verify that the rumors about al-Zahr is true, or you discover the kernel of truth behind the rumor, you'll earn a 5d advantage for what you discover.

—your Adoring Servant, the GM

My Dearest Midnighter—

You are a member of a crew of picaro: disreputable scoundrels for hire. Together, you have traveled the globe alternating between mercenaries, spies, and freedom fighters. Over the past year, you have been investigating the Stone Army of Lemuria, a score of legendary Atlantean artifacts that the lost civilization used to devastating effect in its wars. If you find it, selling it to the highest bidder could set you up for life.

Your last port of call was Hyderabad, where a member of your crew, Mambo Violine, sought out an ancient text hidden in a university there. While she was studying the tome, she was struck down by an assassin. The killer was captured, but would only reveal that she had been hired by someone at the court of Kutaraja in the Sultanate of Aceh. The assassin died shortly thereafter.

Pick One:

- † Mambo Violine recruited you into this crew
- † You and Mambo Violine occasionally got together for desperate, frantic sex
- † Mambo Violine was grooming you to become a voodoo priestess, yourself

Pick One:

- † You ran down the assassin through the streets of Hyderabad
- † You knew the assassin from way back, tricked her into meeting you, then captured her
- † You seduced the assassin, then captured her

Now you are en route to Kutaraja to find whoever is responsible for Violine's death. Speaking of Kutaraja, you know that the Glittering Trumpet, a massive, bejeweled orichalcum gunsword, has been the centerpiece of the sultan's collection of riches. It's not that you don't care about Violine... it's just that, while you're in the area, you might as well take advantage of this opportunity. You figure it should be easy to get some climbing gear to scale the palace walls and make some pepper bombs to take out the guards. Get your hands on either of those and they're instant 3d advantages. It's what Violine would have wanted.

Your Seed is **The Heist**: when you acquire pepper bombs or climbing gear, they become free 3d advantages.

—your Adoring Servant, the GM

My Dearest Theurgist—

You are a member of a crew of picaro: disreputable scoundrels for hire. Together, you have traveled the globe alternating between mercenaries, spies, and freedom fighters. Over the past year, you have been investigating the Stone Army of Lemuria, a score of legendary Atlantean artifacts that the lost civilization used to devastating effect in its wars. If you found it, you could unlock untold power once harnessed only by the long-dead Atlanteans.

Your last port of call was Hyderabad, where a member of your crew, Mambo Violine, sought out an ancient text hidden in a university there. While she was studying the tome, she was struck down by an assassin. The killer was captured, but would only reveal that she had been hired by someone at the court of Kutaraja in the Sultanate of Aceh. The assassin died shortly thereafter.

Pick One:

- † You and Mambo Violine recently overcame your differences and became fast friends
- † You and Mambo Violine recently overcame your differences and became lovers
- † You and Mambo Violine had profound differences of opinion, but also potent respect for each other.

Pick One:

- † You interrogated the assassin using threats and force
- † You seduced the assassin to get information out of her
- † You knew the assassin from way back and convinced her to talk

Now you are en route to Kutaraja to find whoever is responsible for Violine's death. You have been researching a powerful rite called The Thundering Invocation of Ba'al Hammon, which may help you in this effort. Talk about it to the other picaro, but don't quite reveal what it does... you'll get to decide what exactly it does once you complete it. In order to pull it off, though, you'll need to be on the rooftop of a reigning monarch (like the sultan's palace) and perform a lengthy invocation (eight beats long) around a length of orichalcum (which you don't presently have).

Your Seed is **Rites and Rituals**: when you perform the rite, you'll get an advantage Thundering Invocation rated at 3d for each of those three elements you have.

—your Adoring Servant, the GM

My Dearest Revolutionary—

You are a member of a crew of picaro: disreputable scoundrels for hire. Together, you have traveled the globe alternating between mercenaries, spies, and freedom fighters. Over the past year, you have been investigating the Stone Army of Lemuria, a score of legendary Atlantean artifacts that the lost civilization used to devastating effect in its wars. If you find it, you could bring the old order to its knees and establish the brave new world you've dreamed of.

Your last port of call was Hyderabad, where a member of your crew, Mambo Violine, sought out an ancient text hidden in a university there. While she was studying the tome, she was struck down by an assassin. The killer was captured, but would only reveal that she had been hired by someone at the court of Kutaraja in the Sultanate of Aceh. The assassin died shortly thereafter.

Pick One:

- † You owed your life to Mambo Violine
- † Months ago, Mambo Violine predicted your own death... in Sumatra
- † Mambo Violine was your mother

Pick One:

- † You killed the assassin while she was left in your custody
- † You killed the assassin in front of everyone
- † The assassin was in your custody when she was killed by someone else

Now you are en route to Kutaraja to find whoever is responsible for Violine's death. You know that there is an underground nationalist movement there, upset at the deals that the Sultan has made with foreign powers like China, Siam, and the British. You have a name of a contact in the underground: Cut Nyak Dhien. She may be able to help you... and she'll probably want some help in return.

Your Seed is **Conspiracy**: when you make contact with Cut Nyak Dhien, she can provide you with 5d worth of amenities.

—your Adoring Servant, the GM

Name(s): Cut Nyak Dhien

Actor: Christine Hakim


Concept: Achenese Nationalist


Wants: PCs to sack the palace

Exemplars

Broad, Nut-brown Lady 

BODY

Matte-Black Zinderi Rifle 

Pristine Guardswoman's Coat 

Classes & Tricks


Revolutionary


 Regroup


Duellist

 Riposte

Advantages







Approaches

Misdirection

Honesty

Threat Pools

 10 Sorcerous Backlash

 10 _____

 10 Angry Mob

 10 _____

 10 Minions Reinforcements

 10 _____

Bit Parts

Teuku Nanta Setia, Johan Harmen Rudolf His Majesty Alauddin
 Pepper Raja & Cut Köhler, Dutch General Mahmud Syah II, Sul-
 Nyak Dhien's Father tan of Aceh

Destination: _____

Question: _____

Destination: Kutaraja, Aceh Sultanate

Act One

Meet the Awesome: It Wants a Hug

- start in media res: ACTION!
- remind PCs of opportunities to earn Bx
- beat the PCs with the damage stick
- introduce situation

In Media Res...

Run the airship blockade, repel boarders, and outrun pursuing patrol ships. If no Aeronaut, use Koh Luan for color (not dice).

Name Key NPCs

- A Habib Abdul Rachman al-Zahr, vizier
- B Cut Nyak Dhien, Achenese Nationalist
- C Suraphan Phisut, Siamese Ambassador

Establish Seeds

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Refresh & Reveals

Jot These Down As They Occur

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Question: Whose side

Act Two

It's Not That Simple

- challenge PC assumptions
- give PCs opportunities to
- beat the PCs with the da
- complicate situation

Introduce Key NPC

- A Habib Abdul Rachman
- B Cut Nyak Dhien, Acher
- C Suraphan Phisut, Siame

Describe NPC Re

- A>B al-Zahr believes Dhien
- B>A Dhien thinkss al-Zahr l
- B>C Dhien knows Phisut is
- C>B Phisut has evidence tha
- C>A Phisut seduced al-Zahr
- A>C al-Zahr can't bring him

If the PCs don't i

- If the PCs do not interve
- vade a few days later. Th
- three airships, leaving
- The palace will fall and
- fend the sultan from bei
- sacked, the rebel-crewe
- day, but fail against tall
- warfare for decades. Phi
- tering Trumpet in the cl
- activate the Stone Army

de are you on? _____

Crew Name: _____

ns... with ACTION!

o reveal & refresh

amage stick... harder.

Act Three

Nothing Can Stop Me Now!

- pursue NPC goals with abandon... with ACTION!
- do NOT change NPC plans
- do not introduce any new information
- provide opposition to PC efforts

PCs

al-Zahr, vizier _____

ese Nationalist _____

ese Ambassador _____

Threat Pools Resolved?

Suggest Destinations

Bangkok, Siam: where Phisut will flee to _____

Batavia, Java: administrative capital of the Dutch East Indies _____

Istanbul: where al-Zahr's support comes from _____

Relationships

to be a loyal palace guard _____

has distracted the sultan from his people _____

more spy than ambassador _____

t Dhien is a nationalist revolutionary _____

to facilitate his own machinations _____

self to break it off with Phisut _____

Denouement!

Wrap Up

Next Destination?

Interfere...

ene somehow, the Dutch will in-

ne nationalists will hijack Aceh's

Kutaraja hopelessly vulnerable.

al-Zahr will die trying to de-

ng captured. Once the palace is

and airships will return to save the

odds, retreating to wage guerilla

sut will make off with the Glit-

naos, using it to track down and

of Lemuria.

New Seeds
