

The Fight at Chichen Itza

So there I was, running headlong through the Yucatan bush with I don't even know how many Mayans on my tail. Suddenly I burst out of the scrub and vines and out into empty air. I fall like a rock.

At first I think I've run directly into one of the cenotes and I'm going to drown. But I hit hard-packed dirt sooner than I expected the water, and I hear this great collective gasp of surprise.

I look up and there are spectator stands on either side of me, filled with people decked out like they're at some rodeo. And that's when the shadows of two giants fall across me, and one of the giants throws the other one directly at my head...

WELCOME TO THE YUCATAN

In the following pages, the ancient Mayan city of Chichen Itza is described as it is found in 1878: a rancho set about the stone ruins, invaded by hot-tempered partisans of an old war. The present-day Mayans want to reclaim the city; the criollo settlers want to keep it driving the local economy. And the starry-eyed American archaeologist insists that the ruins hide something ancient, powerful, and quite possibly dangerous.

This port-of-call includes six game master characters circling around the disposition of some real estate of incredible value—economic, archaeological, political, and supernatural. The included “coldstart” adventure can bring starting characters directly into the action.

Chichen Itza is a powderkeg of a port-of-call where patriotism, pride, scientific inquiry, and entitlement threaten to fan the embers of an old war into a conflagration again.

DEAREST CHARLOTTE —

We have arrived in Yucatan. The voyage has been without incident since my last missive to you from Havana; SMS Novara continues to live up to the reputation of her predecessor. It makes me happy to see my favorite ship's name live on with a bright future and service record, even if it now sails the skies instead of the seas. The last Novara circled the globe in twenty-eight months, but this one, without having to dodge all those pesky continents, might accomplish the feat in two.

How strange it is, though, to be brought to these shores in the new Novara. Do you recall, we had planned to take the old Novara to Mexico, before Atlantis struck down that heady imperial dream? I still regret not making you an Empress, my love, but how fortunate both we and Mexico are that we never made that voyage.

The Mexicans are a strong, capable people; we have been in Merida only a day and already I have been impressed with their stout hearts and their independent natures. It would have been an honor to rule them, but I do not think I would have done them any favors. Not to mention I might never have corresponded with Benito! I would not trade that friendship for any crown.

Instead of dwelling on might-have-beens, though, I should tell you about the botanical expedition. Already we have collected a number of specimens, and have spoken with the locals as to where we might pursue more.

One of the local matrons, a Profesora Cetina, has greatly impressed me with her grace, learning, and ambition. She is the headmistress of two schools for girls, one a grammar school for poor girls and the other an academy for young ladies. One of Cetina's former pupils is the heir to a sizable rancho to the south, deep within the bush, as they call the jungle here. She has promised us both botanical bounty and her student's hospitality.

Therefore in two days, the Novara departs for Rancho Chichen Itza.

All my love,

— Maximilian Ferdinand

CHICHEN ITZA IS NO RANCHO!

Do you remember the Caste War? Do you remember when the Maya threw off the criollo oppressors and ruled ourselves? When we heard the voice of the Talking Cross? When we fought, and we died, and blood covered the Yucatan?

Then Presidente Benito Juarez, friend of every Mexican citizen, reached out his hands to the Maya. Juarez, a Zapotec man himself, came to us and he said, "Let us end this fighting. Let us end this blood. Because we see in you a worthy opponent who we would rather call friend. Let us all be Mexicans. Mayan Mexicans. Zapotec Mexicans. Spanish Mexicans."

And there was peace! The ancestral lands of the Maya were promised to us. We returned to our homes, we tilled the land, and we were happy. We made Chan Santa Cruz a healthy city and state capital. In Tulum, the criollos waving their deeds saying they owned the plantations were chastened and sent away. In Bacalar you see faces of many different colors and shapes, because we trade there, but it the Maya who own the wharves, and the Maya who own the warehouses. Even the Icaiche and the Ixcanha got their land back!



But Chichen Itza? A criolla lives there, and calls it her rancho, and they herd cattle through the ancient city. "This is not your land!" they say to Maya. "The likes of you could not have built these ruins." Do they not see Chan Santa Cruz? Do they not see Bacalar? We are a people of builders. And our people built Chichen Itza.

"This is my rancho," this criolla says. "It was my father Don Sosa's and his family's before that. I have a deed, I have a deed!" But what use were the deeds of the criollos in Tulum? The magistrates of Juarez dismissed them and dissolved them and Tulum is now ours. The same ought to happen in Chichen Itza.

But our friend Juarez is no more, God rest his soul. And the man who has taken his place, this pale-faced Diaz, he has no respect for us. Diaz becomes presidente and overnight the magistrates fall silent. Overnight the criollos grow bolder and greedier. Already they have come creeping into Tulum and into Bacalar. Already they are waving their pocketbooks and offering to buy up everything.

But their money will never make this land theirs. Their connections and their politicians will not erase the peace and prosperity that we built with Juarez. And they will not claim Chichen Itza, for we have with us Iktan Sosa Cocom, the true heir of Don Sosa, and the true indio son of the Maya.

Iktan will return to the place of his birth, Chichen Itza. He will reclaim what is rightfully his. This land will become a part of the Maya state. And we will rebuild it into a thriving city again. To do this, we need your help. Iktan will need funds, and he will need volunteers. Colonists. Hard workers. Brave patriots. Future citizens of Chichen Itza. Who will join him?

-Batal Iziquin Cocom Tun, Address at the Cathedral of Chan Santa Cruz

AS WE ALL KNOW,

the lost civilization of Maya had extensive connections with Atlantis and the noble superhumans who made up that society. From its distant foundation by a Phoenician ship captain who circumnavigated Atlantis to find the Americas, to the apogee of its influence when Mayan diplomats and sages traveled to Thebes and Galilee, this incredible people made their mark on world history. It is no coincidence that Jesus of Nazareth spoke Yucatec.

It has been my incredible honor to spend the last five years working and living in the ruins of the great Mayan city of Chichen Itza. My husband Augustus and I have combed the site for its architecture and artifacts, creating a photographic catalogue that will last for the ages, unlocking for all mankind the secrets of the universe once enjoyed by the Maya. It is my privilege to share with you one of these pieces.

The bas-relief mural we have named “The Twins at Votan’s Tower” displays a confrontation between two figures, identified as Hunahpu and Xbalanque, two twins whose story is found in the Popol Vuh. In that ancient manuscript, the twins confront the gods of the underworld to avenge their fallen father and ascend to godhood as the sun and moon.

However, our discovery of the mural adds a heretofore unknown chapter to that ancient legend. Here we see the twins locked in mortal struggle at the base of a tower that reaches into the heavens. This, then, must take place after their victory over the underworld but before their ascension. The twins most likely fought over who would take the dominant “sun” role when they go to join the demigods of Atlantis.

However, the most fascinating element of this mural is found in the elaborately worked background of the scene. Here we see a sea of demoniacal faces watching the twins’ fight. The faces are kept back by a lattice of bars, signifying that they are imprisoned. After referencing many sources, we have concluded that these are the souls of the underworld, taken captive by Hunahpu and Xbalanque, perhaps even fought over in this confrontation.

Given the mural’s placement in the ruins of Chichen Itza, it is likely that this was the temporary prison of those ancient Mayan souls while the brothers fought. However, while there are many accounts of their later ascent into the heavens, there is no further mention of their captives. Thus we can only conclude that the captive souls of the underworld remained here.

As I write this, my husband has descended deep within the ruins of Chichen Itza and is attempting to enter an ecstatic trance. It is his goal to contact those ancient souls and discover what they can tell us of their incredible civilization. The secrets they hold may transform human society forever.

HELIOGRAPH DELIVERY TO RANCHO CHICHEN ITZA

To Dona Antonia Sosa, transmitted 6:37pm—

Received word of your terrible idea STOP Respecting your fathers wishes is one thing but this harebrained scheme is madness STOP I am departing immediately to join you hoping to dissuade you from ruin STOP Helio-graph message delivered by morning but we will arrive in one or two days depending on stops for flowers STOP Am bringing military airship dont ask STOP Ship will intimidate savages and allow you to withdraw from silly contest FULL STOP

— *Profesora Pita Cetina, Medina Helio-graph Station*

To Dona Antonia Sosa, transmitted 6:45pm—

This is second message STOP Am not finished with your well-deserved upbraiding STOP Cannot believe you would throw away your inheritance for your own pride STOP I know you love the boy as brother but he is indo bastard STOP No legal claim on Rancho STOP Fighting his creature proves nothing STOP You know I support your studies and work but this is ridiculous STOP Better things to do than mechanical cockfights STOP Remember your responsibilities to Yucatan FULL STOP

— *Profesora Pita Cetina, Medina Helio-graph Station*

To Dona Antonia Sosa, transmitted 7:01pm—

A fight between two giant automatons is no way to settle an inheritance dispute young lady FULL STOP

— *Profesora Pita Cetina, Medina Helio-graph Station*

TO MISS APOLONIA CEPEDA PASTOR (DECRYPTED)—

I may be with you sooner than we thought, my love. My brother and I have devised a scheme which... will determine the course of our future lives, honestly. But we are leaving that course up to the Almighty. Or Iktan's version of the Almighty, which may or may not be the same as mine... as soon as I decide if I believe in a God at all.

The problem, of course, is the Rancho. Everyone in Merida tells me that I must have it. Apparently everyone in Chan Santa Cruz tells Iktan that he must have it. They tell us, too, that we must want it. Must, because it is so very very valuable. You know I would cast aside what everyone tells me to think were it not for my father, who wanted the Rancho to prosper and to provide for his children. If only he had left a will to tell us which child!

It is a noble life to raise cattle and grow henequen, just not one that I am drawn to. I am drawn to a life with you, of course, and furthering the cause of our sex, and developing my engines.

Cetina insists that I can do the latter two as a rancho Dona (I still maintain she does not know about the first part, love), but I am skeptical. Women are everywhere, certainly, and so the fight for women must be everywhere. Does that mean that we who fight for women must be everywhere? Does that mean that I must be here, in the Yucatan bush?

Iktan's uncle—Tziquin Cocom Tun—is mad for the Maya state, its protection and expansion. And I can see why. I do sympathize. But he has swept Iktan up in this business. Iktan has no wish to become the first mayor of Chichen Itza City, but does not feel like he can refuse. He, like you and I, is kept from his desires.

The life you and I desire is waiting for us in New Orleans. And I think Iktan and I have figured a way to get that. In lieu of a proper will, and with so many people on both sides clamoring for us to get our proper due, we have decided to stage a great spectacle. Iktan has developed his walking engine in Maya, and my own has made some recent progress. We will pit them against each other in what I expect will be a very awkward boxing match. But it will be very exciting. Everyone will watch. And whoever wins will take the Rancho.

I honestly have no idea which engine will win. If it is mine, I stay with the Rancho, make it blossom like father wanted, and work with Cetina for Yucatecan women. If it is Iktan's, then I am free. We can slip away to New Orleans and begin a new life.

The only question for me now is if I can convincingly throw the fight.

A NOTE IN THE BUNKHOUSE

Rodrigo—

I apologize if my absence this afternoon made the herding hard for you. I have left the rancho. There is too much happening, and too many high tempers colliding, and I do not want to be here when it all goes up in flames.

I spent midday out in the Columns, chasing one of the southern girls who came with Iktan. They've lashed branches and thatch together to put a roof up across all those old stone columns, and are camping beneath. There is a strange and unsettling mood there in the shadowy half-light. All the indios there smiled at my approach, called me 'brother,' and asked if I was going to live in the rebuilt city. They've brought one of their Talking Crosses with them, at least that is what they claim; it didn't talk to me.

I accompanied the indio girl up to the big cenote, although the whole way there she kept insisting it was a sacred site. There were rumors that brujas met there, but that was before the Piste priest chased away all the witches. On the way back, we passed the Castillo and the girl spotted that crazy British lady. I explained that she and her husband had been living there since Don Sosa's time, and the girl—a slip of a thing, pretty as a flower—gave the lady the darkest look I've ever seen on a person's face. "She'll have to go," she said, and it raised every hair on the back of my neck.

I took her back to the Columns and turned my steps south to the hacienda. That place, too, is crawling with outsiders. Criollos, mostly, from Merida and Piste, who've come to see the big fight. There was drinking and laughing, but I tell you there was an edge to it that I didn't like. And the way they looked at me—I remember criollos looking at us that way when I was a child, during the Caste War. As if they are not sure if I might lunge at them like some wild animal.

The Dona needed a wagon hauled up to the Ball Court, piled high with cushions and umbrellas. When I got there, a handful of other ranch hands were busy clearing out the brush from the bottom of the court. I laid out the cushions on the benches up top and set up the umbrellas, and when I was done I was struck by such a fear as I have never known. There's to be a fight between machines there, but I cannot imagine a result that does not end in human blood being spilled, as well.

The criollos in the hacienda and the indios in the Columns, Rodrigo—they're all armed. I'm not going to be here to find out who wins these fights, and if you're smart, you'll meet me in Piste tonight and we'll both get out of here.

—Jordan

COMING TO CHICHEN ITZA

Chichen Itza is a bit off the beaten path, but as a landmark location there are a number of different ways to tempt the picaros into a Yucatan adventure. Here are some of the more interesting ones:

- An atlantean vault came up in the middle of a river, and the only way to get into its flooded interior is to dredge deep diversion channels to either side of the vault entrance. It's a huge task, which is why the picaros need Iktan's dredging walker.
- Apolonia Cepeda isn't your garden variety Yucatecan debutante. She's a world-class mathematician and also the niece of the Yuctecan governor—and given, she wasn't supposed to be where the picaros found her, but she can make some very compelling promises regarding why they shouldn't take her home, but instead to Rancho Chichen Itza.
- The *Nichtabfangen* was a top-secret airship design intended for mid-air interception, developed by the Deutscher Bund air navy. The project was scrapped as cost-prohibitive and shelved... until the only working prototype was stolen from the hangars in Trieste. It's too fast to catch, and it's wreaking havoc across Central Europe. Unfortunately, the only man who knows the interceptor's weaknesses is half a world away, captaining a botanical expedition.
- The Caste War was a long-running and very messy guerrilla conflict that often spilled over national borders. The British colony at Belize saw more than its share of fighting, and some actions went as far afield as Cuba. Which is why there's a Confederate bounty on the head of Tzinquin Cocom Tun.
- Iktan enjoyed himself in Washington... possibly a bit too much. There's a young American girl with a toddler in tow who'd really like to see that shy Mayan guy again. There's a proposal he's supposed to make her.
- The picaros need a jade key to an atlantean device which fits the description of a pendant discovered at Chichen Itza. There's even photographs of it hanging around Alice Le Plongeon's neck, and it looks like a match.
- The conspiracy that haunts the picaros communicates through coded messages printed in public newspapers, usually unremarked and unnoticed. However the code phrases used by the conspiracy all seemed to be worked into a sequence of poems written by a "Cristabela." This is the pen name of Rita Cetina. How much might she know about the clandestine society that the picaros must uncover?

PERSONS OF NOTE

IKTAN SOSA COCOM, INDIO SON OF DON SOSA

A slight young man with too-strong features and a mop of unruly jet hair, Iktan is unlikely to make eye contact. He seems to shrink behind others and into the corners of rooms. Three fingers of his right hand have been replaced with bronze digits that whine as their internal springs pull and push. The young man's attention is often diverted by making slight adjustments to the prosthetic. Otherwise he dresses conservatively, in a simple white cotton shirt and dun-colored pants, both chronically displaying oil stains.

Iktan's "walker" is a hulking machine bedecked on all sides with images of the Talking Cross, the prime symbol of the Mayan church. Intended to dredge rivers, its "fists" are broad, heavy shovels.

For most of his young life, Iktan was raised at Rancho Chichen Itza as the much-loved but illegitimate son of Don Sosa. When the Caste War ended with the creation of a Mayan state, his mother left with her son to the new state capital of Chan Santa Cruz. The Cocom family, led by Tzinquin, welcomed them, and Iktan became a scion of the new political order. He was sent to Georgetown University, where he studied engineering and medicine, and received his Master's. Throughout his travels, he maintained correspondence with his father and sister, Antonia, visiting whenever possible.

Recently returned from America, Iktan was surprised to find that his uncle Tzinquin has promoted him as the heir to Chichen Itza, which Tzinquin wants to claim for the Maya state. The young engineer feels indebted to his uncle despite having no interest in following his footsteps and becoming a politician. He has reluctantly agreed to "lead" the Chichen Itza colony, at least as a figurehead, bringing some three hundred Maya to his old home.

Exemplars

- bronze spring-powered glove
- black leather toolbag
- strong-featured amber-faced boy
- cross-bedecked mechanical walker

Classes

- Inventor (It's Alive!)
- Medic (Come Back Swinging)

Languages

- fluent Spanish
- fluent M̄aya t'āan
- fluent Latin
- broken English
- broken French

Approaches

- with Reason
- with Grace

Possible Wants

- win the fight and hand the rancho to Tzinquin
- believably lose the fight
- discover the identity of Antonia's lover
- examine the Novara's top-secret engines
- find his father's soul beneath the Castillo

ANTONIA SOSA NABOR, CRIOLLO DAUGHTER OF DON SOSA

Tall, lean, and pale-skinned, Antonia seems the polar opposite of her brother, down to her welcoming smile and sparkling eyes. The latter are occasionally occluded by the pince-nez lenses she perches on her nose when reading or doing detailed work; otherwise they disappear into a breast pocket. On her shoulder or at her side is a scarlet parasol which can, with a short twist, produce a wrench head, ratcheted screwdrivers, or steam-chisel.

Raised on her father's rancho along with her half-brother Iktan, Antonia expected the typical life of a criollo woman: an advantageous marriage, a train of children, and disappearing into the home. All that changed when her father sent her to La Siempreviva, a school for young ladies. Her eyes were opened to the wider world of mathematics, science, and engineering... and sudden infatuation with classmate Apolonia Cepeda. The ladies kept their affair discreet, studied hard, and planned a nomadic life together, stringing the great cities of the world together in an odyssey of research and romance.

Fate intervened, however, with the death of Antonia's father. The young scholar returned to manage the rancho. A few months later, a small horde of Mayans arrived, claiming the rancho and ruins properly belonged to them. Her half-brother Iktan sheepishly stood at their head. When the siblings managed to meet and speak alone, both tried to abdicate their claim. The ensuing laughter led to drinking, and the drinking led to plotting. Thus was hatched a plan to quell the rabid supporters on both sides, sacrifice one of them to become shackled to Chichen Itza, and liberate the other to pursue their dreams. They would pit their mechanical automatons against each other in the ruined Ball Court, winner take all.

Exemplars

- scarlet utility parasol
- tortoise-shell pince-nez spectacles
- lean, eye-catching blonde
- clawed farming engine

Classes

- Inventor (It's Alive!)
- Mondaine (Rumormill)

Approaches

- with Reason
- with Misdirection

Languages

- fluent Spanish
- fluent French
- fluent Latin
- broken Greek
- broken M̄aya t'ään

Possible Wants

- a believable way to throw the fight
- the De Plongeurs off the property
- Cetina's blessing for her romance with Apolonia
- airship passage for two to New Orleans
- clip Tzinquin's puppet strings on Iktan

MAXIMILIAN FERDINAND, AUSTRIAN PRINCE

In many ways the picture of stereotypical European nobility, Maximilian is tall, slender, and possessed of incredibly long and fine features. He wears his beard in the imperial style, with wide wings jutting to either side of his narrow face. He wears a pressed air officer's uniform with his Admiral rank denoted by three lines of gold braid. At his hip he wears a thin saber, the bell guard of which doubles as a spring-powered grapple line.

The second son of the Archduke Karl Franz, Maximilian was raised as a noble with a very slim but unignorable chance of becoming the Austrian Emperor. He became a naval officer, and rose to command the entire Austrian navy. In 1859, Maximilian was offered the title Emperor of Mexico in advance of France's conquest of that state. He quietly accepted, but never made it to his throne—Atlantis rose and the French conquest failed disastrously. Maximilian's involvement was never made public, and he retired to his castle Miramare on the Gulf of Trieste and turned to scholarly pursuits.

When Austria entered into the Deutscher Bund, Maximilian's naval experience was requested to help transform the Alliance's disparate sea navies into a unified air navy. His history of progressive politics, which had hampered him before, became an asset, and he became a celebrated role model of the Neueise political philosophy. It was to get away from this constant attention, in fact, that he assigned himself to the SMS Novara's maiden voyage, a botanical expedition to the Yucatan. Now over Chichen Itza, he can plainly see the unrest fomenting below, and as a man of conscience he feels moved to act. However he is uncertain how—or even if—he should use the sizable military power of which he is in command.

Exemplars

- crisp officer's uniform
- engraved grapple saber
- pale, bearded gentleman

Classes

- Aeronaut (Captain)
- Mondaine (Belle of the Ball)

Approaches

- with Grace
- with Force

Languages

- fluent German
- fluent French
- fluent Spanish
- fluent English
- fluent Latin
- broken Greek

Amenities of SMS Novara

- command bridge
- cannon broadside
- map room

Possible Wants

- a way to calm tensions
- to recover the Deutscher Bund codebook that's gone missing
- a way to silence the Mexican national who knows Maximilian's former ambitions to the Mexican throne
- first crack at the Atlantean vault under the Castillo
- a suitable excuse to abandon the shitstorm below

ALICE DIXON LE PLONGEON, ARCHAEOLOGIST

A mousy ball of trembling energy and enthusiasm, Alice usually makes an impression, though not always a positive one. The woman speaks quickly and breathlessly, often touching a jade pendant she wears around her neck as if this helps make her words more persuasive. At her side she carries a complicated contraption of boxes, knobs, and lenses.

Raised in England by her father Henry Dixon, an early innovator in the field of photography, Alice knew her way around a camera from an early age. She married Augustus Le Plongeon, an antiquarian using the new technology to document archaeological sites. Shortly thereafter, the couple traveled to the Yucatan to excavate and document Mayan sites. Over the next five years, they produced an extensive catalogue of photographs of Mayan ruins and artifacts, using the abandoned temples and palaces as their dark rooms.

When the Le Plongeon arrived at Chichen Itza, they received Don Sosa's blessing to take up residence within the ruins and continue their work. They found a treasure trove of artifacts in the ruins, including the jade pendant that Alice now wears every day. The Le Plongeon have slowly developed an extensive theory describing ancient Mayan civilization (completely divorced from present-day Mayans, who usurped the name from the original, white, Mayans). The Mayans, according to the Le Plongeon, were an enlightened people whose mastery of the secrets of the cosmos allowed them to live in peace and prosperity for centuries.

Their interpretation of a mural in Chichen Itza suggests the ruins hide a "Soul Prison" containing trapped Mayan souls. Augustus has placed himself in a deep trance in the catacombs under the Castillo, hoping to make contact with them and learn their secrets. But now Alice can't wake him.

Exemplars

- portable camera-projector
- restored jade pendant
- frail, starry-eyed Englishwoman

Classes

- Herald (Speaking in Tongues)
- Inventor (Powered By... Photography)

Approaches

- with Reason
- with Creativity

Languages

- fluent English
- fluent French
- broken Latin
- broken Ancient Mayan

Possible Wants

- wake her husband from his trance
- recover the Soul Prison
- aerial photographs from SMS Novara
- secure permission from Iktan or Antonia to continue excavating
- turn the battle into a re-enactment of the Hunahpu and Xbalanque fight, thus triggering a new age of mankind

BATAB TZINQUIN COCOM TUN

There is little to distinguish this short Mayan man besides the intensity that seems to radiate from his bright eyes and tensed shoulders. This is a man accustomed to getting things done. He dresses in humble, rugged bush clothes, but this does little to hide his air of authority; neither does the glinting heavy axe over his shoulder. At his hip bounces a leather case holding maps of the Yucatan peninsula and a copy of the Juarez treaty with the Maya. Axe, map, treaty: these are the tools he uses to get things done.

Tzinquin grew up in a warzone, never knowing a time when the Mayans weren't fighting white settlers for their land and freedom. He joined the fighting at 13 and built a reputation as a dependable soldier in the Iz'a army. His friendly relations with the British in Belize helped fuel the war effort. This, combined with his noble blood, earned him a place at the negotiating table when Benito Juarez made peace with the Iz'a, Icaiche, and Ixcanha Mayans. In return for recognizing Mexican authority, they were made a semi-autonomous state, named Maya. Tzinquin did not see this as an end to the Caste War, but the beginning of a new phase of retaking the Yucatan.

Tzinquin's prodigal sister turned up in the new state capital with her mestizo son Iktan, and Tzinquin saw in the boy an opportunity to expand Maya's borders. Under the Juarez treaty, all Mayan lands would be returned to the Maya and be incorporated into the new state. Chichen Itza, though, was in Xiu territory, and the Xiu Maya had not been a part of the treaty negotiations. But even though he was not Xiu, Iktan had been born at Chichen Itza, and this could be used to make a claim. Tzinquin sent the boy to America to receive an education and went about finding volunteers to join the "colony" to repopulate Chichen Itza on his return. Now at the head of nearly one hundred Mayans, Tzinquin can feel the city already falling in his hands.

Exemplars

- orichalcum bush axe
- leather map case
- short brown man

Classes

- Ringleader (Dig In)
- Herald (Acolytes)

Approaches

- with Honesty
- with Force

Languages

- fluent Maaaya t'ään
- fluent Spanish
- fluent English

Possible Wants

- sabotage Antonia's engine
- secure Maximilian as an impartial judge
- unleash the Soul Prison on Yucateco criollos
- prove to the criollos that indios make good neighbors
- get Alice to record Iktan's victory

PROFESORA RITA CETINA GUTIERREZ, HEADMISTRESS

Despite her imposing figure, this woman knows how to become a wall-flower at the drop of a hat. She also knows how to surge forward and seize attention, and her strong speaking voice can ring out with easy confidence. She dresses conservatively, even plainly, carrying a care-worn journal in her hands, or occasionally storing it inside the mechanical dog that trots along at her side. She will happily introduce it as Fidel, a gift from Antonia.

Rita's father, a Colonel in the Yucateco army, was murdered at the height of the Caste War, plunging her family into genteel poverty. Only with the beneficence of family friends was she able to complete her education. She became a poet, and then an essayist, writing about romance, piety, and women's liberation. Together with two other ladies, she opened La Siempreviva, an institution composed of two schools for women, a scientific and literary society, and a newspaper. Their goal was nothing short of the transformation of Yucatan society. And it worked: Rita's fame and reputation grew until the governor hired her as Director of a new state school, Instituto Literario de Niñas, giving her explicit state backing.

Cetina's work in organizing the new school was interrupted by news of one of her early, star students, Dona Antonia Sosa. Antonia had inherited a sizable rancho south of Merida, and Cetina had high hopes for the young woman to grow into a pillar of Yucatan society. Sosa, however, was about to throw that inheritance away in a silly contest, and to none other than the indio savages of the south. Adamant that this should not come to pass, Cetina resolved to stop the ridiculous contest at all costs. By providence, the headmistress made the acquaintance of a visiting Austrian airship captain and convinced him to take her to Chichen Itza, planning to leverage the imposing airship against the invading indios.

Exemplars

- scripture and poetry journal
- mechanical Great Dane
- heavyset olive matron

Classes

- Revolutionary (Unite!)
- Teacher (Role Model)

Approaches

- with Honesty
- with Grace

Languages

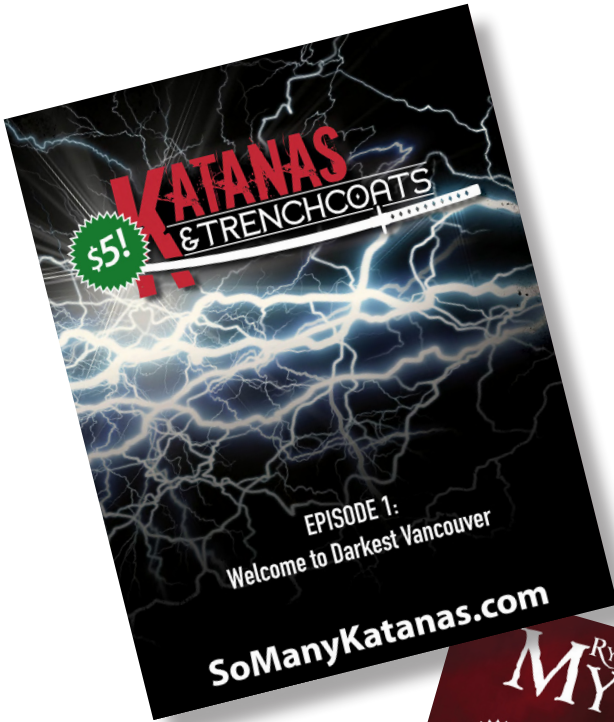
- fluent Spanish
- fluent French
- fluent English
- fluent Latin
- fluent Greek

Possible Wants

- halt the fight
- frame the Mayans as rabid savages
- recruit Alice to teach at La Siempreviva
- destroy the heathen temples at Chichen Itza
- kill Tzinquin

THE BROADSHEET

If giant robots brawling in front of ancient Mayan ruins is your thing, you might also get a kick out of...



(Josh edited both and wrote bits of K&T.)

THE MAIN EVENT

A COLDSTART ADVENTURE FOR UP TO SIX CHARACTERS

Now that you've seen the lay of the land at Chichen Itza, what follows is a "coldstart" adventure suitable for introducing new characters to the game. It comes in three parts:

Letters of Admiration

There are six letters to potential player characters. After you've done the Shopping and Casting steps of character generation, allow each player to pick one of the six letters, which will determine their character's first class; they may then pick their second class freely. The letters give the players a few options for defining their character's background and opinions, which they can pick at any point during character creation. Lastly, each letter provides a Seed which will prompt new characters with immediate goals once the adventure begins.

Adventure Sheet

This sheet is the step-by-step overview of the adventure *The Main Event*. The Game Master can check off the boxes of each character introduction and plot revelation as they go. When all the boxes of one Act are checked, it's time to proceed to the next Act.

The Adventure Sheet provides space to write down details that the players reveal about their characters for use in later adventures. There is also space to record, at the end of the adventure, where the picaros will go next and what Seeds their players select to feature in the next adventure.

Game Master Character Sheet

This sheet presents all the vital statistics for the three Key Game Master Characters the Game Master will need to run the game. The fourth quadrant of the sheet corralls Threat Pools and Bit Parts.

WAIT, WHAT?

If this page has made absolutely no sense to you, the complete rules for the *Renegade Jennys and Boilerplate Jacks* roleplaying game can be found here:

<http://rjbplaytest.joshroby.com>

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. Your compatriots almost always have an angle or a scheme for profit in any given locale; by contrast, you are often drawn into the local politics.

Case in point: your next port-of-call is Chichen Itza, the abandoned ruins of a Mayan city, which has since been turned into a rancho. After winning presidential recognition, the indigenous Maya of the southern Yucatan have organized into a state of the Mexican Republic. They have rallied behind Iktan Sosa, a Mayan boy born at Rancho Chichen Itza to its late owner. They claim he is the true heir to the property, which would transfer the land into Maya state. The Yucatecan authorities reject this claim on the basis that the boy is indio and illegitimate, and insist that the land should go to his legitimate half-sister, Antonia Sosa, who just happens to be white. This would also keep the valuable property within Yucatan state.

You, of course, have an opinion about the situation.

Pick One:

- Chichen Itza must remain in Yucatan State, to strengthen all of Mexico
- Chichen Itza must be transferred into Maya State, as is only just.
- Chichen Itza must go to the legitimate daughter, Antonia Sosa.
- Chichen Itza must go to the eldest, Iktan Sosa, regardless of caste.

Pick an Objective that would further your Cause:

- Convince Iktan to publicly abdicate his claim
- Convince Antonia to publicly abdicate her claim
- Make the Maya vacate the city ruins
- Burn down the hacienda

Now you are en route to Chichen Itza to turn its current events to your desired outcome. The situation is chaotic and unstable; the slightest prompting on your part might just be enough to make things right.

Your seed is **The Cause**: if your chosen objective comes to pass, you will earn three Development Points.

—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. Your crewmates might be a little uncouth, but you make up for their lack of social niceties with your own undeniable style.

Pick two other players, and pick one of the following options for each:

- you've taken this crewmate under your wing, trying to teach them manners and grace
- you've tried to teach this crewmate social niceties, but after too many disasters, have since given up.
- you have a quiet respect for this crewmate's demeanor, even if their outlook would never work for you.
- despite (or because of?) their crass behavior, you are frustratingly drawn to this crewmate.

Now you are en route to Chichen Itza, chasing down one of your crewmate's bright ideas. Rumors are flying that you are preceded by an Austrian airship on a botanical expedition to the Yucatan, which is odd enough. However, the SMS Novara is commanded by none other than Prince Maximilian Ferdinand. The prince is an accomplished naval commander and has been instrumental in creating the Deutscher Bund's impressive air navy.

There are other rumors, however, hinting that the Prince had greater ambitions frustrated by world events. A little bird once told you that, when the French nearly conquered Mexico only to be interrupted by the rising of Atlantis, Maximilian was involved. He was to be crowned the Emperor of Mexico as some sort of puppet for France. If true, this would make his visit to the Republic downright scandalous.

Your seed is **Reputation Preceding**: if you discover the truth of the rumors circulating around Maximilian Ferdinand, you'll earn a 5d advantage for what you find.

—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. Your sticky fingers have put food in their mouths and fuel in the gas tank more than once... about as often as your habits have drawn the crew into danger. You reason that as long as you stay useful, they'll keep you around and you can keep travelling the world.

You've been through Latin America before and come into contact with its caste system. The pure-blooded descendants of Spanish settlers are criollos; the indigenous people are indios; half-breeds are mestizos, and another half-dozen names for increasingly fine distinctions of parentage. The system is of particular interest to you because it helps you quickly and easily identify targets of your larcenous attention.

Pick One:

- criollos are honest and hard-working folk trying to build a life
- criollos are like any other upper class: rapacious and greedy
- criollos are lazy, indulgent, and therefore have little of worth

Pick One:

- criollos make fine targets for thievery
- criollos make poor targets for thievery
- criollos deserve a helping hand, even if it's yours

Now you are en route to Chichen Itza, the home of a strange couple of antiquarians who live in the ruins themselves. The Le Plongeons have spent five years documenting the ruins using photography, and the few prints that have been released have generated great excitement. Rumors say there are a lot more photographs, an entire catalogue of them, under hardly any guard at all. You could make a tidy profit selling them to the right collector.

You figure you can throw a beehive into the ruined temple to drive the antiquarians out and then the catalogue will be yours. If the reports are accurate, you'll need a wagon or ox cart to haul them all away.

Your seed is **The Heist**: if you can get your hands on an oxcart and a beehive, you stand a good chance of making off with the priceless catalogue. When you take action to prepare one of these elements, it becomes a 3d advantage. If you gain the prize, you and everyone who helped in the heist earns 1 Bx.

—your adoring servant, the GM

MY DEAREST INVENTOR—

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.

You are led to understand that there is some sort of mechanical contest happening at Chichen Itza. Such an event is not uncommon in your circles; inventors and engineers often feel the need to pit their machines against each other, to see whose is the fastest or strongest or most efficient. Such events often draw large crowds, and in the bigger cities these contests are now being staged simply to charge admission.

Some inventors take issue with this, while others embrace the trend. You've taken a decisive stand, yourself.

Pick One:

- engineering is a gift that should improve the lot of all mankind, not be squandered on frivolous nonsense.
- inventor duels are a worthwhile testbed for innovation.
- technology exists to make our lives more exciting.

Now you are en route to Chichen Itza, where you hope to find Iktan Sosa, an expert in prosthetic technology. You've encountered difficulties with one of your own inventions, a backpack with two powerful mechanical arms meant to supplement a worker's own strength. You're positive that a conversation with Sosa will give you the insight you need to overcome the feedback problem that has you stymied.

Your seed is **Projects**: if you can speak with Iktan Sosa about prosthetics, you will gain a 4d advantage "Progress on Loading Arms" and one Badassium token. If you successfully field test your Loading Arms, you can spend that Badassium to turn them into a lasting Advantage.

—your adoring servant, the GM

MY DEAREST HINTERLANDER—

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. You may not always be an enthusiastic supporter of the crew's more questionable methods, but as long as you stick with them, they'll take you to new places to explore.

The horizon is your perpetual goal, with side trips to anywhere that sounds interesting. Cities and civilization are all well and good, but you find the greatest discoveries off the beaten path, in the wilderness, and away from urban society.

This is not your first time in the Yucatan; you've also visited the ruined temples and palaces at Uxmal. While there, you enjoyed some limited dealings with the local Maya and came to a rough understanding of their ways.

Pick One:

- Mayans are a noble and civil society, misunderstood by criollos.
- Mayans are a nasty race prone to temper and violence.
- Mayans are just people like everybody else: boring.
- Mayans are a queer people with unpredictable beliefs.

Pick One:

- The ruins at Uxmal were dangerous: unstable and trapped.
- The ruins at Uxmal were innocuous piles of rubble.
- The ruins at Uxmal hosted all manner of strange and unexplainable events.

Now you are en route to Chichen Itza, an impressive ruin in the Yucatan bush. You've always been fascinated by the ball courts found in similar ruins; at Uxmal you watched or perhaps even played pitz, the Mayan sport the courts are designed for. Perhaps you can get a game going during your stay at Chichen Itza.

Your seed is **Wayfaring**: Each time you tell another character about pitz, gain 1d in the advantage "Seeking a Pitz Game," up to 6d. If you do get to watch a game or even play, convert the advantage directly into badassium, 1d to 1 Bx. Anyone who comes along also gains 1 Bx.

—your adoring servant, the GM

MY DEAREST RINGLEADER—

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. While you might not be “in charge” of the crew, you find the work that keeps your little band fed and operating.

You’ve done a few jobs in and around the Yucatan before. In particular, you’ve dealt with Tzinquin Cocom Tun, now a Mayan aristocrat in the newly-minted Maya state of the Republic of Mexico. Before that, he was a freedom fighter, resisting the oppression of the Yucateco criollos.

Pick One:

- You ran guns for Cocom before, and “borrowed” one of the crates.
- You once smuggled a team of criollo saboteurs into Chan Santa Cruz, the Mayan capital. Cocom was unable to capture you.
- You raided a Mayan shipyard run by the Cocom family.
- You were supposed to deliver a shipment of vaccine to the Yucatan capital of Merida, but you sold it to Cocom instead.

Pick One:

- You did the job with your current crew.
- You did the job with a prior crew.

Now you are en route to Chichen Itza, having heard that Tzinquin Cocom Tun has need of some discreet operatives. There’s some sort of big prize fight happening there, which will lend you and your team cover, as you can pose as spectators while quietly doing Cocom’s dirty work.

Your seed is **The Job**: if you can convince Cocom to hire you, you’ll immediately earn two Badassium tokens. He’ll give you marching orders and pick up a 5d “I Hired You” advantage.

—your adoring servant, the GM

DESTINATION: Chichen Itza, Yucatan State, Republic of Mexico

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...

You're in the catacombs under the Castillo with an insensate man on the ground...and the tunnels are collapsing!

INTRODUCE KEY GMCS BY NAME

- A Tzinquin Cocum Tun
- B Maximilian Ferdinand
- C Alice Dixon Le Plongeon

ESTABLISH SEEDS

- The Cause: the rancho should go to _____
- Rep Preceding: Maximilian was to be the Mexican Emperor
- Heist: the Le Plongeon catalogue
- Projects: speak with Iktan Sosa
- Wayfaring: Pitz Game

The Job: Tzinquin Cocum Tun

Refresh & Reveals

Job These Down As They Occur

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Act Two

IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE

- challenge PC assumption
- give PCs opportunities
- beat the PCs with the d
- complicate situation

KEY GMCS APPEAR

- A Tzinquin Cocum Tun
- B Maximilian Ferdinand
- C Alice Dixon Le Plongeon

DESCRIBE GMC RE

- A>B Tzinquin thinks Maximilian is
- B>A Maximilian finds Tzinquin ru
- B>C Maximilian thinks the Le Pl
- C>B Alice suspects Maximilian is
- C>A Alice thinks Tzinquin trapp
- A>C Tzinquin wants the Le Plong

IF THE PCS DON'T I

- Alice and Tzinquin stumble in
- machine shop; Alice runs screa
- chases her down, killing her in t
- the colonists to slaughter the
- death from the sky to stop the
- destruction.

ons... with ACTION!
to reveal & refresh
damage stick... harder.

& INTERACT

RELATIONSHIPS

s in pay of or in league with the criollos
de and unruly

ngoons are unhinged

s a reborn god in disguise

d her husband in the Soul Prison

eons OUT!

INTERFERE...

to each other in Antonia's

aming "sabotage!" and Tzinquin

front of Maximilian. Tzinquin rallies

criollos and Maximilian rains

e slaughter. Many dead, great

CREW NAME: _____

Act Three

NOTHING CAN STOP ME NOW!

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

THREAT POOLS RESOLVED?

SUGGEST DESTINATIONS

- Alice says Soul Prison can be smashed open on Ponape altar
- Le Plongeon catalogue can be fenced by Moussaief in Samarkand
- Take Antonia & Apolonia to New Orleans or Detroit

DENOUEMENT!

Wrap Up

NEXT DESTINATION?

NEW SEEDS


NAME(S): Tzinquin Cocum Tun


ACTOR: Gerardo Taracena


CONCEPT: scheming Mayan patriot

WANTS: sabotage Antonia's walker


Exemplars


BODY orichalcum bush axe 3 

leather map case 4 

short brown man 2 

CLASSES & TRICKS

 8 Ringleader
▶ Dig In

 6 Herald
▶ Acolytes


Advantages








APPROACHES

 8 with Honesty

 6 with Force


NAME(S): Alice Dixon De Plongeon


ACTOR: Sarah Silverman


CONCEPT: photographic archaeologist

WANTS: free Augustus' soul from the prison


Exemplars


BODY portable camera-projector 2 

restored jade pendant 3 

frail, starry-eyed Englishwoman 4 

CLASSES & TRICKS

 8 Herald
▶ Speaking in Tongues

 6 Inventor
▶ Powered By... Photography


Advantages








APPROACHES

 8 with Reason

 6 with Creativity

NAME(S): Maximilian Ferdinand

ACTOR: David Tennant

CONCEPT: Austrian prince and Air Admiral

WANTS: PCs to guarantee peace

Exemplars

BODY

crisp officer's uniform	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4
engraved grapple saber	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2
pale, bearded gentleman	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3

CLASSES & TRICKS

8	Aeronaut
▶	Captain
6	Mondaine
▶	Belle of the Ball

Advantages

	<input type="checkbox"/>	
command bridge	2d	<input type="checkbox"/>
cannon broadside	6d	<input type="checkbox"/>
map room	2d	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPROACHES

8	with Grace
6	with Force

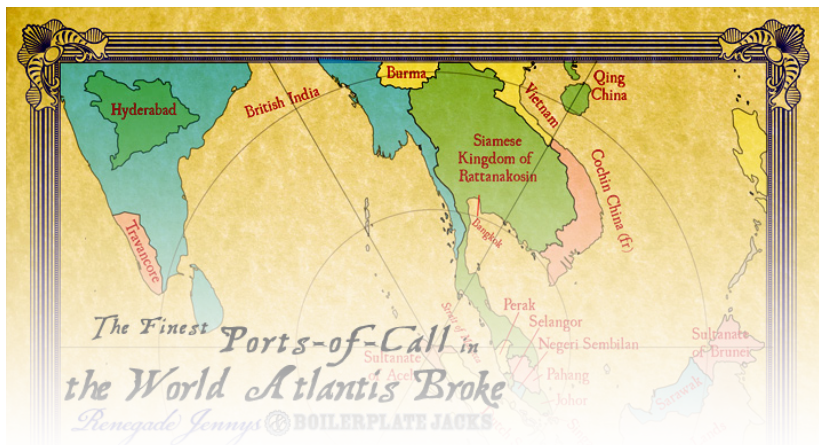
THREAT POOLS

7 6 5 4 3

<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<i>Sorcerous Backlash</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<i>Angry Mob</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<i>Minions Reinforcements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	_____

Bit Parts

Antonia Sosa Nabor clawed farming engine	Iktan Sosa Cocom cross-bedecked mech walker
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POWERED BY  **patreon**

The production of this port-of-call was made possible by the generous patrons of The Finest Ports-of-Call in the World Atlantis Broke Patreon campaign.

This month's port-of-call was sponsored by John Reiher, who's been campaigning for Chichen Itza for months. Here you are, John. Three rounds of Mayan ruins, fighting mechs, and melodrama. Enjoy!

Each month I detail a new location in the World Atlantis Broke and publish it as a port-of-call. These content packs can be used with any tabletop roleplaying game—steampunk or no—or simply enjoyed as colorful reading and dream-fodder.

If you get any enjoyment out of this port-of-call, please consider becoming a patron yourself. All patrons receive early bird access to the ports-of-call as they are designed and get to vote on where the next month's port-of-call will be set.

Find more about the patreon campaign here:

<http://patreon.com/joshroby>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The art in this port-of-call are actual photographs taken by Alice Le Plongeon and her husband Augustus. They are public domain and used accordingly and with gratitude. The Le Plongeon might have been bonkers, but they took some great photographs!