

A decorative border of dark blue floral and vine motifs surrounds the central text. At the top center, a stylized sun or moon with a spiral center is positioned above a dark blue mountain range silhouette.

# ORCHIDELIRIUM

VOLUME ONE:  
EXPEDITION RULES

A ROLE-PLAYING GAME  
*regarding*

ORCHID HUNTING  
*during the*

REIGN OF QUEEN VICTORIA



# PLAYER REFERENCE

## Character Creation

- Deal 5 cards/belongings to each player (10 if only one player)
- Split 6 pennies as equally as possible between the hunters
  - Choose hired hands equal to your number of pennies
  - Pick a suitable profession and give your hunter a name

## Game Play

- Deal 6 cards/obstacles face down on the table in a circle:  
EMPLOYER - ENVIRONS - LOCALS - MESSAGES - TRAVEL - WEATHER

To begin, your GM will flip over the employer obstacle  
Take it in turns choosing which obstacle to flip thereafter

### *Finding Orchids*

- Uncover an ace and resolve the situation with 3 actions minimum  
Name and collect the orchids if successful

## Actions

### *Hired Hand (Automatic Success)*

- Pay a penny to a hired hand to succeed in your stead  
Narrate how they overcome the obstacle

### *Belongings (Automatic Success)*

- Describe how you successfully use a belonging  
Roll a 7 on 2d6 to keep the item else narrate its loss

### *Test of Wits (Risk of Failure)*

- Describe an action and roll a 7 on 2d6  
Succeed on a 6, 7, or 8 if embellishing on your hunter's past

### *Sticky Situations (Snatch a Victory)*

- Should your wits fail, you may choose to describe how you sacrifice a belonging and one of your hired hands to succeed

## Out of Luck

- Should you fail a test of wits with no belongings,  
narrate your hunter's departure from this mortal coil

# CONTENTS

<i>Player Reference</i> .....	<i>Opposite</i>
<i>The Diabolical World of Orchid Hunting</i> .....	2
<i>Orchidelirium Rules</i> .....	4
A Brief Overview .....	4
Setting Up .....	5
Obstacles .....	6
Actions .....	7
<i>Character Creation</i> .....	8
1865 .....	8
Belongings .....	9
Professions .....	9
Hired Hands .....	10
Names .....	10
In Case of Perishment .....	10
Cherished Belongings .....	11
<i>Character Sheet</i> .....	12
<i>Playing Mat</i> .....	14
<i>Running the Game</i> .....	16
Obstacles .....	16
Actions .....	17
Orchids .....	17
Endings .....	17
Seeds .....	18
<i>Establishing Expeditions</i> .....	20
Setting .....	20
Secrets .....	20
Adversaries .....	21
Introductions .....	21
South Pacific Isle ( <i>Setting</i> ) .....	22
A South Pacific Sojourn ( <i>Expedition</i> ) .....	24
Obstacles ( <i>Examples</i> ) .....	26
<i>Game Master Reference</i> .....	28

# THE DIABOLICAL WORLD

*Sodden and starved yet steadfastly sanguine we wended our way back to the supply cart. Three months off-track with barely anything to show for it except the loss of a lame horse, most of our provisions, and a small but bounteous cache of the most desirable pink-flecked-with-yellow blooms a soul could yearn for. And then, once securely ensconced back at the camp, we met the wretched Willoughby, one of Carmichael's more gregarious Associates...*

The year is 1865, the weather is passable, and tea remains the greatest fortification for the soul.

J. Carmichael & Associates EST.1852 have brought you into its employ, provided travel arrangements and retinue before sending you out into the far flung regions of the world from India to Peru, Africa to Scotland, all in the aid of finding, collecting, and packing exquisite blooms to be returned to London's dockside for sale at auction to the landed gentry of Queen Victoria's Britain.

Up and down the Kingdom, in nurseries, orangeries, and glasshouses the moneyed admire their botanical purchases while their gardeners attempt to keep the exotic plants alive long enough in climes far removed from their original residence.

The suspiciously absent Carmichael (and the business's shadowy Associates) set their nurseries in Kentish Town within easy reach of the auction houses of King Street, Covent Garden, where your hard-won accumulations eventually meet their destiny via precarious voyage. Holds of precious cargo: thousands of plants impoverished of light and water yet protected from perishment by the wood and glass of their Wardian Cases, cross seas and oceans facing salt and storm.

# OF ORCHID HUNTING

It is with Willoughby, one of the company's traveling representatives, you have had greatest dealings, updating you on the wishes of Carmichael and providing additional Concerns under the guise of Assistance.

Once out in the world of air and forests and mountains and jungles however, you find a freedom of sorts. Left to your own devices, looking for that sizeable prize with which you might choose to voyage home or remain in the wilds, living as you choose, exploring uncharted territories, and discovering new cultures and specimens, not least within the horticultural world.

But that choice too, comes at a price. Doom by means of drowning, falling, dysentery, cannibalism, duelling, fever, vanishment, toothache, rheumatism, pleurisy, and many more delightful fates await anyone venturing into the wilds for money.

Beset by blistering sun and lashing rain with God's own creatures placing themselves between you and a peaceful life in a lush and peaceful Arcadia, your search continues, following local guides and trusting in your entourage.

To aid you in your search for rare, elusive, and above all, expensive orchids, J. Carmichael & Associates have generously provided you with a six hired hands on which you may rely to interpret, cook, ferry, and the like. You may even be lucky enough to be travel with other hunters in the company's employ.

Should you ever find a glorious trove of orchids a rival hunter may still chance across your source so you must decide on how best to secure your cache. Do you strip the area bare before razing it to the ground or set a permanent guard? Remember, newly found orchids raise much more at auction than varieties that have already passed the gavel.

Throughout the principal ports of the known world, J. Carmichael & Associates have placed their operatives in small offices near large warehouses and it's to these that you return your blooms in their collection baskets for packing and transport to London.

Whether you also make the return trip or continue your explorations is for you to decide.

# ORCHIDELIRIUM

## A Brief Overview

Orchidelirium is a role-playing game about discovering orchids and the enraptured characters that venture into the wilds to capture them.

To begin, pick through your hunter's cherished belongings to help uncover their former profession (pg.9) and choose their name (pg.10). Throughout the game you will have opportunity to add flesh to these simple bones.

Your Game Master (GM) will describe where you are, what you can see, smell, and hear then flip the employer card to explain just how your esteemed employer is about to make your expedition that much easier (pg.21).

Decide what the group will do next and flip an appropriate obstacle card (pg.6) for the GM to improvise your fate based on the matching obstacle seed (pg.16) and the expedition's setting and secrets (pg.20).

Overcome obstacles by risking your belongings or surviving by your wits (pg.7), recollecting your past or uncovering signs of orchids (pg.6).

Once out of belongings you are out of luck and your life is forfeit (pg.7).

There are four orchids to discover, each suit with a thematic secret and accompanying adversary actively opposing your discovery of the nearby blooms (pg.20):

◆ A Treasure to Die For

♣ A Shocking Truth

♠ A Monstrous Curse

♥ An Uncanny Wonder

You have one or more pennies available to you, each coin a payment for one your hired hands, whom you may call upon to help solve an obstacle (pg.7).

When an ace is flipped, you have found a delightful crop of orchids! Congratulate yourselves but be wary for its associated adversary are nearby and you are imposing most rudely. Should you find success in securing a new species of orchid be sure to name it before moving onward (pg.17).

After an expedition you should secure your source of blooms, discover just how much of your shipment will return to London unscathed, and decide on whether you will return with them (pg.17).

# RULES

## Setting Up

Remove the aces from the deck of playing cards and deal a hand of 5 cards to each player (or 10 to the singular hunter if playing with just 2 persons) plus 6 more face down on the table in a circle, each representing one of the following:

EMPLOYER - ENVIRONS - LOCALS - MESSAGES - TRAVEL - WEATHER

The centre pages of this booklet can be used as a playing mat to help identify the cards (pg.14).

Your hand matches up with your character's belongings (pg.11) - it's these that define your orchid hunter. Based on the items, decide on a profession you think they may have had prior to their current horticultural pursuit (pg.9) and give them a name (pg.10).

Split 6 pennies as equally as possible between the hunters - one or two hunters may end up with a penny more than the others. These are used to pay for your hired hands, porters, interpreters, and the like, useful for small jobs, sending messages, and communicating with the locals and occasionally relied upon for dangerous tasks (pg.7).

The cards on the table are obstacles that will get in the way of your search be it the weather, travel problems, messages (both intercepted and sent), the local inhabitants, your immediate environs, or even your own damned employer.

Split the remaining deck into two, shuffle two aces into each stack, and place one atop the other in a pile within reach.

For a shorter game, take 18 cards from the remaining deck, split and shuffle as before and discard the rest. Alternatively, stop once you outstay your welcome or find a certain number of orchids.

Introduce your character to everyone at the table:

∩|| *What is your name?* ||∩

∩|| *What was your former profession?* ||∩

∩|| *How have you ended up hunting orchids?* ||∩

Finally your GM should read aloud the introduction to your expedition, describe your immediate surroundings, and turn the employer card (pg.21).

## Obstacles

The employer obstacle provides you with an overarching goal or hindrance for the session, it is up to you to decide which immediate obstacle you wish to tackle next...

—|| *What would you like to do and which obstacle is most appropriate?* ||—

Choose a hunter to decide what the group would like to do next, e.g. travel upstream, explore the cave, etc., and flip an appropriate card from the available options:

EMPLOYER: Egregious edicts	MESSAGES: Malignant missives
ENVIRONS: Terrible terrain	TRAVEL: Precarious paths
LOCALS: Imposing inhabitants	WEATHER: Stratospheric strife

The value of the card and its position on the table dictate which obstacle seed your GM uses to describe the scene while its suit matches a secret and accompanying adversary.

You, along with any other hunters in your party, then choose how you would like to deal with the obstacle by performing actions (*opposite*). Orchid obstacles are more difficult to overcome than their more mundane counterparts requiring a minimum of 3 successful actions.

Once it has been overcome, or it gets the better of you, the card is discarded and replaced by another laid face down. What the group does next is decided by the next hunter who flips an appropriate card.

Game play repeats in this way until all hunters have had a chance to flip an obstacle card before the choice returns to the first hunter.

### Types of Obstacle

Your GM will choose to present the obstacle in one of three ways:

RISK	REVERIE	REWARD
You find yourself placed in bodily peril and must act quickly and accordingly	The situation stirs a memory from your past giving you pause for thought	You discover a clue to the whereabouts of a cache of orchids
—   <i>What do you do?</i>   —	—   <i>What is that memory?</i>   —	—   <i>What does it look like?</i>   —
Describe the action that you take ( <i>opposite</i> ) to overcome the obstacle	Describe your memory to the group to complete the obstacle	Describe the clue to the group and your GM will then tell you the number of cards in the deck until the next ace

## Actions

For risky obstacles, decide what action you would like to attempt based on your hunter's motives and history and use a belonging, pay a hired hand, or test your wits to overcome it.

### Hired Hands

Pay a penny to one of your hired hands (*pg.10*) to take care of a mundane obstacle.

Muck the card and narrate how your chosen employee overcame it in your stead.

Your GM will then let you know the repercussions of your helper's actions and pocket the coin.

### Belongings

Describe how you use a belonging to automatically succeed in your action.

Using an item puts it at risk of expiration, breakage, or loss: roll 2 six-sided dice (2d6) to determine whether your character keeps their item.

Roll a 7 and the belonging is safe. Any other result and the item is lost to you.

Narrate how it ceases to be in your possession and discard the card to the table centre.

### Test of Wits

When not using a belonging (or having no more belongings to use), you may test your character's wits in the face of adversity: roll a 7 on 2d6 to be successful in your attempt.

Improve your chances by sharing a related anecdote to gain a +/- 1 swing to your roll, i.e. succeed on a roll of a 6, 7, or 8.

### Sticky Situations

Fail a Test of Wits and you may choose to sacrifice a belonging alongside a hired hand by narrating how both enable you to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat then discard the card and a coin to the centre of the table.

Should you have no more pennies/hired hands, choose a belonging and narrate how you lose it without success, and discard the card to the centre of the table.

### Out of Luck

If your character loses all their belongings they must survive by their wits alone. Rolling anything other a 7 (with applicable +/- 1 swings) on your Test of Wits counts as a fatal failure.

Narrate how your character perishes in the failed attempt and meets their untimely demise.

Draw five more cards to continue as a different hunter (*pg.10*).

# CHARACTER

1865

Queen Victoria, all but unseen these last four years whilst mourning the loss of Prince Albert, has left Lord Palmerston's Liberals in a rapidly expanding London to rule over Great Britain as it steams ahead in its desire for industry, manufacture, and imperial conquest.

The teeming working classes and colonial migrants spend long hours in harsh conditions for little in the way of wages, jostling alongside a small but rising middle class with their aspirational outlook who in turn encroach upon a paternalistic upper class, the lawmakers and property owners.

While being in good standing is sometimes more important than being good, truthfulness is a quality all can hold dear along with a strong understanding of what is right and what is wrong.

Science and reason rise above frivolous and unnecessary human values but paradoxically, success and contentment await those who develop their skills, talents, and personal values.

A world awaits anyone willing to board a clipper or sea-faring steamer with jobs in civil and military service, missionary work, infrastructure, or of course, flower collection.

Once in the furthest reaches, formal attire and starched collars give way plain tweeds, shirts, waistcoats, and trousers or long skirts - far more appropriate to wilderness exploration.

Although society may be awash with condescension and feelings of superiority, do not feel you need walk that path. Like the non-voting working class who are left to influence change through demonstrations, petitions, and pamphlets, each and every person can have their own beliefs, mind, and spirit.

# CREATION

## Check Your Belongings

Judge your character by their closest and most cherished belongings (*overleaf*) - telling signs of your personality and being. Consider if the items came to you through legitimate or less salubrious means.

Use them in times of trouble and risky situations. Draw upon their very essence (if not their form) to provision you with the means by which to overcome whatever obstacle may stand in your path.

You may have as many flavoursome items (such as collecting baskets, cookware, tents and the like) in your possession as you desire. While they cannot be used in place of a Belonging during an action your GM may allow them to improve your chances in a Test of Wits.

## Choose a Profession

Orchid hunters can come from all walks of life and nations and, unlike much of Victorian society, J. Carmichael & Associates discriminate not a jot assuming you return a ship's hold brimming with suitably delightful specimens or be willing to perish in the endeavour.

Use your belongings (*overleaf*) to guide your choice of profession at which your hunter may have been employed before moving onto greater adventures.

Feel free to select one from your imagination or consider an option from the following list below. If at a complete loss, roll 2 six-sided dice to decide for you.

- |                        |                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2. Accountant          | 8. Schoolmaster/Schoolmistress |
| 3. Soldier/Sailor      | 9. Dilettante/Aristocrat       |
| 4. Barrister/Law Clerk | 10. Doctor/Nurse               |
| 5. Revolutionary       | 11. Theologian/Clergyman       |
| 6. Reporter/Author     | 12. Physician/Surgeon          |
| 7. Gardener            |                                |

## Pick Your Hired Hands

Your character sheet (*overleaf*) has a list of helpful persons that could accompany you on your expedition. Choose one helper for each penny that you hold by placing a mark in the box next to them.

Multiple hunters may choose to pick the same person if they wish, or different people who fulfil the same role.

## Give Yourself a Name

All that remains is to give your hunter a name. Either make one up or consider choosing from this small selection:

### *First Names*

Abigail	Clarence	Georgiana	Lavinia	Rhoda	Allen
Abraham	Dinah	Godfrey	Letitia	Rosina	Bennett
Ada	Ebenezer	Gwenllian	Llewellyn	Sabina	Edwards
Adeline	Edna	Hartley	Mabel	Solomon	Green
Agnes	Elias	Hephzibah	Mahala	Theophilus	Griffiths
Arabella	Emeline	Hezekiah	Margaretta	Tryphena	Hill
Archibald	Enoch	Humphrey	Millicent	Uriah	Jackson
Augusta	Ephraim	Jabez	Norah	Wilhelmina	Lewis
Betsy	Ernest	Jenkin	Oswald	Zachariah	Watson
Blanche	Euphemia	Kezia	Reginald	Zillah	Wood

### *Surnames*

## Cherished Belongings

### ◆ *Treasures*

- Glass beads
- Ribbons
- Musical instrument
- Wallet of bank notes
- Purse with mixed coin
- Music box
- Oil painting (rolled)
- Lock of hair
- Gold rings
- Stamps
- Letter from the Queen
- Religious book

### ♣ *Weapons*

- Knives
- Cutlass
- Revolver
- Whip
- Rifle
- Pistols, pair of
- Truncheon
- Bow and arrows
- Bottle of poison
- Machete
- Sword cane
- Fireworks

### ♣ *Equipment*

- Walking stick
- Writing desk, travel-sized
- Small brass telescope
- Dowsing pendulum
- Sporting equipment
- Small valise with pills
- Ropes and nets
- Pencil and notebook
- Hook for a hand
- Umbrella
- Painting set
- Climbing apparatus

### ♥ *Supplies*

- Tobacco
- Biscuits & tea
- Snuff
- Opium pipe
- Cure-all medicine
- Fortifying alcohol
- Anti-venom
- First aid kit
- Water canister
- Matches and tinder
- Chocolate
- Mint imperials

## In Case of Perishment

Should your hunter be unlucky enough to perish whilst on an expedition (e.g. lose all their belongings and fail a Test of Wits), simply draw 5 more cards (or as many as are available) from the remaining deck to take on the mantle of another hunter. Do not pick up any pennies.

If you find yourself holding an ace in your new hand of cards, consider whether you are keen to share your recently won orchids or would prefer to keep them to yourself, remaining cagey about their origin.

—|| Do you also work for J. Carmichael & Associates or a competitor? ||—

Your new hunter should then be happened across during the next obstacle so feel free to make your introductions at that point.





ENVYRONS

LOCALS

EMPLOYER

WILKINSON

GRANDMOTHER

MESSAGES

WEATHER

TRAVEL



# RUNNING

As Game Master (GM) you have the ability to improvise obstacles, change and shift the world in reaction to player actions, and facilitate each hunter's self discovery through their own recollections.

After setting up the game (pg.5) and describing the employer obstacle (pg.21) allow the players to flip their own obstacle cards that most closely match what they want to achieve (pg.6).

Use the Setting and Secrets (pg.20) to help you improvise an appropriate environment through which they may travel.

## Obstacles

Improvise obstacles using the seeds (overleaf) as prompts, each providing around 5 minutes of game time. A minimum of one action is required to succeed at a risky non-orchid obstacle.

### Risks, Reveries, and Rewards

These three types of obstacle allow you to control the tempo of the game and give you breathing space should you need it. For example, if you're stumped as to how a card may be physical obstacle, asking what memory the situation stirs puts the action back on the players.

For every six obstacles aim for 3 RISKS, 2 REVERIES, and 1 REWARD.

#### RISK

Challenge the hunter with potential harm through a risky situation.

#### REVERIE

Encourage the hunter to reflect on their past to better understand their character.

#### REWARD

Describe the situation then ask the hunter what clue they have found.

||| *What do you do?* |||

||| *What is that memory?* |||

||| *What does it look like?* |||

Describe the situation and tell the hunters what kind of bodily risk they face.

Describe the situation then ask the hunter that flipped the card what memory it stirs.

Tell the hunters how many cards remain in the deck until the next ace.

### Hints

Each obstacle should be accompanied by a hint toward a particular secret and its accompanying adversary. The adversary (pg.21) may have created the obstacle purposefully or be tangentially related.

It's better to hint heavily than not at all; there are a maximum of 12 hints per adversary and likely far fewer.

# THE GAME

## Actions

Remind players about the +/-1 bonus available to them during a Test of Wits (pg.7) so they can embellish on their backstory with something that might assist them with their immediate problem.

Since a hunter's belongings are analogous with their ability to survive they may choose to rely more on their wits. However, should they fail their Test of Wits and choose not to place a member of their entourage in harms way to get out of the Sticky Situation, they immediately lose a belonging and fail their action.

Players may want to pick up an item described in an obstacle. If so, once it has been resolved through any successful action, they may take the obstacle card and add it to their belongings (up to one additional item per player).

## Orchids

Finding an orchid (flipping over an ace) also means coming face to face with its accompanying adversary who must be overcome to secure the blooms and fully uncover whatever mysterious secret they have been guarding.

A minimum of three actions are required to succeed an orchid obstacle. Ask for all the actions and die rolls up front before resolving the outcome or run through each action at a time with the third finally overcoming the adversary.

## Endings

Once all blooms have been collected or the players decide to return to London it is time to close proceedings, harvest and pack the orchids, and find out what happens to each hunter.

Ask each player to answer the following:

||| *How will you stop other orchid hunters finding your source of blooms?* |||

More than half the group must succeed an action to secure their plant source from theft or damage

||| *How many orchids survive the journey back to London?* |||

Ask each hunter to roll 2d6, on a 6, 7, or 8 their fraction of orchids survive the arduous journey back to London

||| *Do you return to London or remain in the wild, wrapped up in your delirium?* |||

Allow each player to narrate their hunter's ultimate fate

## Obstacle Seeds

These seeds are triggers to help you improvise the situations that arise and are to be used in tandem with the setting, secrets, and adversaries.

Cards of the same value that are flipped in the same position could be seen as the characters returning to the same spot or a new area.

<i>Employer</i>	<i>Environs</i>	<i>Locals</i>	<i>Messages</i>	<i>Travel</i>	<i>Weather</i>
<i>Requests &amp; Requirements</i>	<i>Terrain &amp; Tumbles</i>	<i>Folk &amp; Fauna</i>	<i>Received &amp; Seized</i>	<i>Explore &amp; Advance</i>	<i>Calm &amp; Calamity</i>
2. BLOOTERED Intoxicated associate	2. SHADOWED GROVE Hidden paths & quiet places	2. STARWISE SAUNTERER Stargazers & hermits	2. ENIGMATIC EMBLEMS Ciphers & hieroglyphs	2. BEYOND THE KEN Lost one's bearings	2. GLEEN IN ONE'S GIMLETS Glaringly bright light
3. HASTY DEPARTURES Tarry ye not	3. UNDERGROUND GROTTA Caves & tunnels	3. CIVIL UNREST Unconcerned about onlookers	3. WHISPERED WOES Confused carriers	3. CONVEYANCE COMPLAINT Slipped shoes & broken buckles	3. SOAKED TO THE SKIN Heavy downpour
4. BROKER A TREATY Mutually beneficial	4. LOOSE FOOTING Mudslides & burrows	4. TERRITORIAL PATROL Scouts & guards	4. HOWL Cries on the wind	4. SARDONIC SPRAIN Turned ankles	4. BOILED BY NOON Sunstroke & burned skin
5. BATTLEFIELDS Reports of unrest	5. TANGLED TOES Briar & undergrowth	5. CAPITALIST CAPERS Pirates & paupers	5. WAYLAID MISSIVE Loss & delays	5. PERNICIOUS PATH Slowly ebbs at one's soul	5. FOXY COLD Cool drafts & freezes
6. FAIR WARNING Signs of danger ahead	6. WATER FEATURE Rivers & waterfalls	6. SANCTIMONIOUS SENTRY Refusal of passage	6. INTERCEPTED ALERT Smoke signals & bottled messages	6. TERRIFYING TRACK Knife-edge walkways	6. SWULLOCKING Humid & damp
7. MYSTERIOUS MARKINGS Magic abounds nearby	7. RUN AGROUND Reefs & ditches	7. SURLY SETTLERS Convicts & explorers	7. MARRED MESSENGER Bedraggled & burdened	7. RUTTED ROAD Unkempt & unruly	7. HUNCH-WEATHER Gusts & gales
8. COLLECT A LOST SOUL Wayward associate	8. INSECT INFESTATION Ticks, flies, & fleas	8. RITUALISTIC REVELLERS Priests & acolytes	8. UNDERHANDED INVITE Cunning temptation	8. SPILLED SUPPLIES Upset wagon & broken bags	8. LIGHTLY OBSCURED Mist & fog
9. METEOROLOGICAL MEASUREMENT For the records	9. MONOLITHIC IMPEDIMENT Cliffs & rockfalls	9. TOLLS & TAXES Bargains & barter	9. ILL OMEN Foretold doom	9. WICKED WATER Spoiled springs & spilled flasks	9. WHISTLING WINDS Whiffs of danger
10. PROVIDE PROVISIONS Search for supplies	10. MADDENING MIDDENS Dung hills & dirt	10. GATHERED THROG Events & celebrations	10. TROUBLE AT HOME Settlement shenanigans	10. ROPEY BRIDGE Dizzying heights	10. PERILOUS PRECIPITATION Snow & hail
J. UNSCRUPULOUS SWINE Duplicitous deed	J. ABANDONED BUILDINGS Ghosts & stone	J. CURIOUS URCHINS Troublesome & quick	J. VELLUM AT VELOCITY Short & swift note	J. CONTAMINATED CUISINE Spoiled foodstuffs	J. BOWS OF PROMISE Sunshine & rainbows
Q. CRUEL COMRADE Abominable associate	Q. CURIOUS QUAGMIRE Swamps & sewers	Q. MALFEASANT OLIGARCH Inquisitive & manipulative	Q. MALICIOUS MARKINGS Fearsome & warding	Q. PARCHED THROATS Lack of lubrication	Q. QUEEN'S WEATHER Fine & bright
K. ABANDONED TO ONE'S FATE Deplorable desertion	K. QUAKE IN ONE'S BOOTS Earthquakes, eruptions, & expulsions	K. AGGRAVATED AUTHORITY Imposing & forceful	K. AGGRESSIVE ANNOUNCEMENT Cautionary gesture	K. BARRIER TO PASSAGE Purposeful blockade	K. THUNDER-HEAD Storms & suffering

# ESTABLISHING

The bedrock of an Orchidelirium expedition are its setting, secrets, and adversaries. As GM, you will need to write these before the game.

## Setting

A setting, such as an alpine mountain, rainforest, oceanic island (*overleaf*), or bustling city, provides basic details about its terrain, flora, and fauna that the hunters may come across along with a Non-Player Character (NPC), the Company's local Associate.

Use the setting as a guide to the fictional place the hunters are travelling through. The aim is to evoke the feeling of the place and not necessarily its exact geography.

## Secrets

The secrets themselves need be no more than a sentence or two, just enough to give you a spark of inspiration during play. The themes for each suit provide guidance toward what that secret could be and can be used in combination with the setting.

### ◆ A TREASURE TO DIE FOR

Invaluable trinkets - nothing is more delightful than an orchid but precious metals have their own allure

|| *What is this delightful object?* ||

### ♣ A SHOCKING TRUTH

Not all is what it seems - the shocking truth is the real story behind one of the other secrets

|| *Which secret holds a more sinister truth and what is it?* ||

### ♠ A MONSTROUS CURSE

Woebegone blooms - curses affect the local area, the adversary, and anyone who happens across them

|| *What is its effect upon the world?* ||

### ♥ AN UNCANNY WONDER

Lean into the fantastic - what would a traveller's journal be were it not for the joy of an impossible sight or two

|| *How does this magic manifest?* ||

# EXPEDITIONS

## Adversaries

An adversary accompanies each secret, perhaps coveting it, guarding it, being forced to endure it, or whatever relationship you deem fit.

|| *What is the adversary's relationship to its secret?* ||

Importantly, they are not keen to share and will attempt to ward any explorers away from it. Unfortunately, it is at these sites where the most prize orchids have chosen to festoon themselves.

|| *What is the relationship between each adversary?* ||

Also consider the relationships between the adversaries should they ever come into contact with one another. Aim for a single descriptive word for each.

## Introductions

Once you have laid these foundations, add a description for each orchid, note specific geographical features you want to include, and pen a short introduction to set the scene for the hunters before they set out on their expedition in earnest.

## *Employer Obstacle*

After reading the introduction, always flip the employer obstacle card to begin. This may be delivered directly through the Setting's Associate or however else you see fit.

This obstacle differs slightly from the others in that it provides a longer term goal or hindrance for the expedition and therefore is generally not solvable by any immediate action. The aim is provide the hunters with an additional goal or material you can use over the course of the game.

Should it be overcome however, discard the card and place another face down in its position to be flipped by the players when appropriate.

The repercussions for succeeding or failing to overcome the employer obstacle remain up to you but should fit within the fiction of the game.

Beyond the employer obstacle, allow players to flip whichever card in any position as they see fit so long as it fits within the narrative of what they are trying to achieve.

# SOUTH PACIFIC ISLE

Hot and humid all year round with wild and rugged scenery, exquisite plants, and dangerous animals. Hundreds of active and inactive volcanic islands alongside coral-based atolls make up the archipelago, beset by exotic birds of paradise and branches of trees dripping with colonies of innumerable species of orchids especially above 2,000 ft.



## Natural risks

Cyclones, floods, tsunami, earthquakes, landslides, heavy rains, coastal erosion, and drought

## Locals

Many languages and dialects are spoken, generally separated along tribal lines.

Giant communal structures with smaller huts to house women are common in villages and food is provided through subsistence farming, collecting wild plants, and hunting.

Seashells and local produce used as currency between upland and lowland tribes.

Clothing is limited with adornments such as grass, shells, and bone piercings are common.

Religion can follow animism beliefs with alongside ancestral worship & feature dance, rituals, sorcery, magic, and spells. Ritualistic cannibalism and head hunting also occurs.

Europeans, primarily Dutch, have been settling in the region for around thirty years and the islands themselves are not far from the main shipping routes.

### VOLCANIC CRATER (50-90°F)

Sheltered and uninhabited, up to 2 miles wide and a mile deep, the inactive crater is nigh impossible to access but holds rare delights such as fanged frogs, giant caterpillars, giant rats, and lichen-like spiders.

### CANYONS, GORGES, & RAVINES (65-90°F)

Fertile ground with copper and gold deposits, limestone mountains with extensive cave networks, and defensively built ridge-top housing dug into the earth.

### UPLAND TRIBUTARIES (75-90°F)

Clear, rapid waterways rich with aquatic plants, with many changes in levels, waterfalls, abundant fish life. Isolated tribes within the forests.

### MANGROVE SWAMPS (80-95°F)

Brackish, turbid, silty water with stilt or prop-rooted trees alongside muddy banks with tiny poisonous and giant edible frogs, turtles, and crocodiles.

### RIVER DELTAS (80-95°F)

Fed by both fast and slow flowing rivers, lakes, and streams with fishing villages on stilts in sheltered areas.

NB: Rough conversion of Fahrenheit to Celsius: minus 30° and divide by 2

### CLOUD FOREST (40-60°F)

6,000 ft Moist with occasional frost or snow. Shrouded by clouds, mist, and fog. Moss, lichen, fungi, tree ferns with thin, densely packed coniferous trees and rocks.

### MOSS FOREST (50-75°F)

5,000 ft Taller and thicker oaks, beech, red cedar, and pines dominate with mosses, lilies, vines, creepers and ferns amidst wraith-like mists. Undergrowth lessening.

### MID-MOUNTAIN FOREST (65-80°F)

4,000 ft Cool areas with oak and pine, tree ferns and vines. Drier than above with limited undergrowth. Ground feeding ostrich-like birds (cassowaries), parrots, venomous snakes, lizards, butterflies, and pigs.

### LOWLAND RAINFOREST (75-90°F)

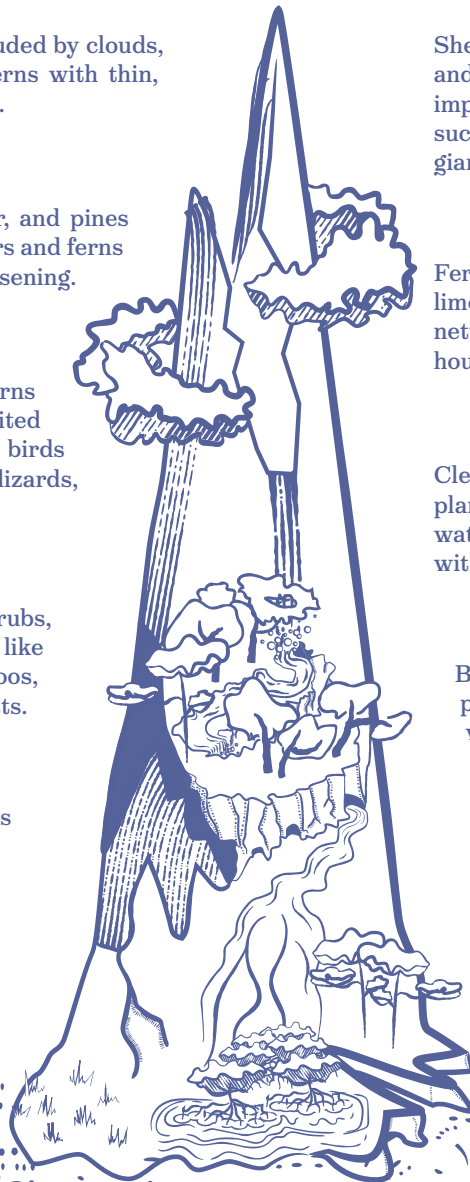
2,000 ft Palms alongside rivers, vines, large shrubs, flowering plants, with small animals like tortoises, spiny anteaters, tree kangaroos, bandicoots, rats, mice, and swarming insects.

### GRASSY PLAINS (75-90°F)

1,000 ft Low to mid with occasional floodplain lakes sparsely populated by sago gatherers.

### COASTAL AREAS (80-90°F)

0 ft Sandy beeches, rocky coves, river deltas, coral reefs, whales, dolphins, salt-water crocodiles, and sea cows (dugong).



## Associate

### Willoughby

FOIBLE

FOLLY

Incorrigible  
braggart and  
show-off

Refuses to  
acknowledge  
danger

VISAGE

Wears loose fitting cottons with  
a scarf "for the breeze" and  
carries an umbrella at all times

# AN EXPEDITION:

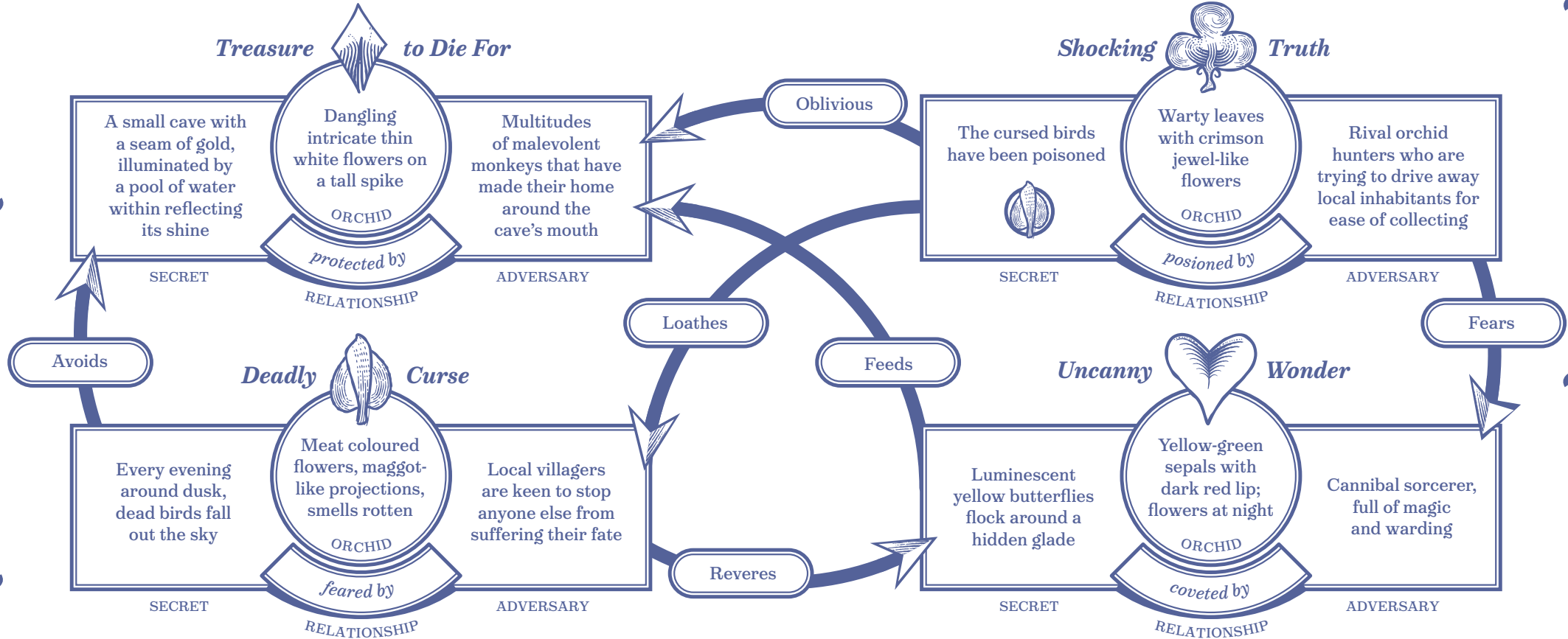
## Features

This small volcanic island is one of many in the archipelago, about 6 miles across, rich in oversized fauna with the occasional pocket of civilisation. Beaches are made up of black sand with rocky inlets, mangrove forests, and an overgrown volcano rising up in the centre of the isle.

# A SOUTH PACIFIC SOJOURN

## Introduction

The warm briny spray fetching from the prow of the boat is barely noticeable as you coil around the island to find a suitable mooring spot, spacious enough to weigh anchor and explore the island that luxuriates ahead of you... Do you approach by the river delta, mangrove swamps, or grasslands?



RISK

REVERIE

REWARD

## Obstacle Examples

Obstacles are very situational in terms of a hunter's immediate environment, the suit's secret and adversary, the previous obstacle's

outcome, and current obstacle type. The following should be therefore only be taken as possible interpretations of obstacle seeds (pg.18).

<i>Employer</i>	<i>Environs</i>	<i>Locals</i>	<i>Messages</i>	<i>Travel</i>	<i>Weather</i>
2. Willoughby (W.) drunkenly pitches head first into the rainforest; the boatswain refuses to leave without him	2. Trees dot the grasslands offering shelter or something more sinister	2. Unmoving, a singular figure stares at you from a distance	2. A shaped rock carved with hieroglyphs	2. You find yourself split from the rest, unsure how to get return to them	2. The bright sun catches you unawares; careful of your footing
3. Can't stay long; a cyclone is expected	3. Mouth of a watery cave gapes its malevolent maw wide	3. A venomous snake, locked in battle with a spiny anteater	3. Two villagers approach and quietly urge you to leave	3. The mud sucks at your boot, licking it from your ankle	3. Abruptly, an entire monsoon decides to fall in one go
4. Orchids previously found but locals refuse access	4. The ground suddenly starts to slip away beneath you	4. Two wary tribal people with spears in hand	4. A scream is heard nearby; is it animal or human?	4. Not quite making the leap, your ankle turns beneath you	4. The suns heat radiates down causing headaches and short tempers
5. Rival tribes rumoured to be fighting; beware!	5. Snagged on creepers	5. Bandicoots attempt to steal some of your supplies	5. You find a skeleton of an explorer with a letter in its pack	5. A never-ending steep slope of scree sucks at your soul	5. A bitter cool breeze sweeps up from a cave mouth ahead
6. Recent earthquakes so be wary of the volcano	6. The boat runs aground on coral and will not budge	6. Path is barred by people aiming weapons	6. You tread on a bottle with a note inside	6. Track leads along a thin ledge above a 300' drop	6. Humidity hugs in close while sweat gets in your eyes
7. Magical structures spotted, warning away travellers	7. A waterfall inhibits further travel upstream by river	7. Ill tempered Dutch settlers with pistols	7. One of your sailors staggers toward you, much the worse for wear	7. An overgrown and forgotten track; space for two abreast	7. The wind whips at you, trying to knock you down
8. Barnabas, a meteorologist, is desperate to take readings from the highest point	8. Swarm of biting insects pour out of an old skull	8. A funeral procession moves ahead of you toward the cliffs	8. A monkey leaves fruit in your path inviting you to walk 'neath its hidden troop	8. Snagging on a branch, your pack spills its contents to the floor	8. Mist wreaths around you alongside an eerie quietness
9. Supplies are running low on board; see what you can scavenge	9. A cliff stands proud ahead; difficult to climb but not insurmountable	9. Two tribal people appear to offer you food and water for trade	9. A skull with two crossed femurs lie on the path ahead	9. A spring! Just in time to fill your bottles (but purposely spoiled)	9. The scent of smoke carries on the breeze
J. W. wishes to murder a hunter... which one and why?	10. A pile of human remains causing nausea to swell inside	10. A tribal celebration is occurring in the clearing up ahead	10. You open a letter you've been holding onto for some time	10. A rope bridge across a chasm, swaying in the wind	10. While the sky darkens, hail drops like lead shot
Q. W. is a bastard when it comes to dealing with the locals	J. Small piles of rocks, remnants of what once were dwellings	J. Urchins surround your feet and pick at your packs and clothes	J. A note, knifed to a tree: "Beware!"	J. Settling down for a bite, your stomach turns queasy	J. A rainbow strikes across the sky claiming your attention
K. W. intends to ditch the party on the island	Q. Mangrove swamp with stilted tress	Q. Leader of the tribe appears to wish you harm	Q. A decorated skull hangs from tied sticks	Q. Out of water, tempers and headaches flare	Q. A delightful day reminds you of home
	K. The volcano erupts!	K. Crocodiles quickly manoeuvre to surround, snapping gleefully	K. An unwelcoming arrow lands at your feet	K. A blockade of branches stops the path short	K. The cyclone swells quickly and without mercy

# GAME MASTER REFERENCE

## Game Play

Card values relate to obstacle seeds  
Suits indicate hints toward a secret and adversary  
Select a fitting obstacle type before or after describing an obstacle

## Secrets

- ♦ A Treasure to Die For
- ♣ A Shocking Truth
- ♠ A Monstrous Curse
- ♥ An Uncanny Wonder

## Obstacle Labels

- EMPLOYER: Egregious edicts
- MESSAGES: Malignant missives
- ENVIRONS: Terrible terrain
- TRAVEL: Precarious paths
- LOCALS: Imposing inhabitants
- WEATHER: Stratospheric strife

## Obstacle Type

Aim for a ratio of 3:2:1 respectively for every six obstacles

### RISK

┌|| What do you do? ||┐

Describe the situation and tell the hunters what kind of bodily risk they face

### REVERIE

┌|| What is that memory? ||┐

Describe the situation then ask the hunter that flipped the card what memory it stirs

### REWARD

┌|| What does it look like? ||┐

Tell the hunters how many cards remain in the deck until the next ace

## Endings

Once all orchids have been found, ask of each player the following

┌|| How will you stop other orchid hunters finding your source of blooms? ||┐

Success if more than half succeed an action

┌|| How many orchids survive the journey back to London? ||┐

Each to roll 6, 7, or 8 on 2d6 to save their fraction

┌|| Do you return to London or remain in the wild, wrapped up in your delirium? ||┐

Allow each hunter to narrate their own fate

## Obstacle Seeds

### Employer

2. Blootered
3. Hasten your departure
4. Broker a treaty
5. Battlegrounds
6. Fair warning
7. Mysterious markings
8. Collect a lost soul
9. Meteorological measurement
10. Provide provisions
- J. Unscrupulous swine
- Q. Cruel comrade
- K. Abandoned to fate

### Messages

2. Enigmatic emblems
3. Whispered woes
4. Howl
5. Waylaid missive
6. Intercepted alert
7. Marred messenger
8. Underhanded invite
9. Ill omen
10. Trouble at home
- J. Vellum at velocity
- Q. Malicious markings
- K. Aggressive announcement

### Environs

2. Shadowed grove
3. Underground grotto
4. Loose footing
5. Tangled toes
6. Water feature
7. Run aground
8. Insect infestation
9. Monolithic impediment
10. Maddening midden
- J. Abandoned buildings
- Q. Curious quagmire
- K. Quake in one's boots

### Travel

2. Beyond the ken
3. Conveyance complaint
4. Sardonic sprain
5. Pernicious path
6. Terrifying track
7. Rutted road
8. Spilled supplies
9. Unwelcome water
10. Ropy bridge
- J. Contaminated cuisine
- Q. Parched throats
- K. Barrier to passage

### Locals

2. Starwise saunterer
3. Civil unrest
4. Territorial patrol
5. Capitalist capers
6. Sanctimonious sentry
7. Surly settlers
8. Ritualistic revellers
9. Tolls and taxes
10. Gathered throng
- J. Curious urchins
- Q. Malfeasant oligarch
- K. Aggravated authority

### Weather

2. Gleen in one's gimlets
3. Soaked to the skin
4. Boiled by noon
5. Foxy cold
6. Swullocking
7. Hunch-weather
8. Lightly obscured
9. Whistling winds
10. Perilous precipitation
- J. Bows of promise
- Q. Queen's weather
- K. Thunder-head



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