

# Deadlands Adventures



# The Tombstone Epitaph's Guide to the Weird West

1876 Edition

"The Bright Light of Truth!"

Only 10¢

## Greenwood Man Found Drowned in Field!

Sheriff at a loss for explanation.

IDAHO - The small logging town of Greenwood is the center of an investigation into the bizarre death of one Donald Johnson. Thirty-seven years of age upon his demise, he was found face down in a field by his wife early yesterday morning. The local doctor determined the cause of death to be drowning, though how this could have happened remains unclear.

There were few clues at the site of Mr. Johnson's death. The only thing that seemed out of the ordinary was the fact that the area around his body was wet and muddy--it hasn't rained in Greenwood for over a week. When pressed for information, Sheriff Talbot Thomas responded that there was nothing found to indicate foul play. "How a man drowns on dry land is beyond me, but that's what the doc said happened. We'll keep looking into this, though. Don was a good friend of mine."


The local doctor, James Richardson, commented, "This entire event is rather strange. It appears that Mr. Johnson drowned in the middle of a field. The only water in the vicinity is the small puddle that he was found in. This does not appear to be the source of the water that killed him, however. I found no trace of mud in his nose or mouth." He added that Mr. Johnson was a perfectly healthy man in good shape.

Mr. Johnson seems to have been plagued by problems recently. Just two nights ago, a stranger attempted to steal his horse, but ran off when Donald confronted him with a shotgun. Who this stranger was is unknown, but it appears unlikely that the two events are connected.

The residents of this quiet town have been shocked to the bone by this occurrence. Yet, to this reporter's trained eyes and ears, it seems there is an undercurrent of fear behind their surprise. No details have been forthcoming, however.

It seems strange that this tranquil region would be afflicted with such a strange circumstance. Perhaps soon there will be an explanation that holds water.

**Wanted!**  
Warren Lash



**Dead or Alive!**  
**\$500 Reward**  
For cattle rustling, horse thieving,  
and the murder of a peace officer  
in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

# The Cult of the Deep

The Cult of the Deep was a small group of about twenty individuals who sought to attain power by contacting malevolent water spirits known as deep dwellers. The deep dwellers inhabit only the very deepest bodies of water. They are primeval spirits long ago banished from the world of man. The Cult of the Deep hoped to change that. They traveled the northwest about twelve years ago, searching for a body of water suitable for the summoning ritual they intended to perform—a ritual that included human sacrifice.

They found what they were looking for in Greenwood. Palmer's Pond isn't very large as ponds go, but it is very deep—the bottom of the pond extends down through a fissure in the bedrock to a depth of almost 600 feet. The cult set up camp and prepared for their ritual. Unfortunately for them, the local sheriff got wind of what they were up to and rounded up a posse to take them in.

The posse arrived as the ritual neared completion and immediately charged in. Taken by surprise, most of the cult was cut down before they could react. After all was said and done, only one member, Lawrence Hodgson, remained standing. He has resided in the Greenwood jail to this day.

Since that bloody day, the waters of Palmer's Pond have been stained a deep crimson. Some say it's due to minerals that have dissolved into the water, but most of the local residents think differently. Most prefer not to speak of it at all, and warn their children to stay as far from the pond as possible (of course, this means the it has become a favorite haunt of many of the youngsters, who refer to the place as "Bloody Pond").

Today

Two nights ago, Warren Lash was on the run from authorities in Boise for the murder of two men. He could cover more ground if he had a horse, so, when he noticed one standing in Donald Johnson's corral, he decided to appropriate it.

The next thing Warren knew, Donald was standing in the doorway, shotgun leveled at his chest. Lash fled through the dark, not knowing where he was headed, and tripped over a rock. He landed face first in Palmer's Pond, striking his

head on a rock. He drowned before he regained consciousness.

Alright, so what's going on here?

The only thing needed to complete the ritual interrupted twelve years previous was the final human sacrifice. Lash's death fulfilled that requirement and called forth the deep dwellers from within the bowels of the earth. The cultists had planned a second ritual to bind the spirits to their service, but this obviously did not happen. The dwellers are currently their own master, and they are out to cause as much trouble as they can.

The spirits cannot stray far from water. If they leave the water, they appear as a small puddle about three feet in diameter. They can only move about in this way for five minutes before they must merge with water again. Each minute beyond five a dweller remains out of water, it takes a wound. This means that the spirit dies if kept out of water for thirty minutes.

The deep dwellers can also travel in a host body. This allows them to remain out of water for 24 hours at a time. The spirits currently have access to six bodies—Warren Lash's body and the body of five cultists. The cultists' bodies were never recovered and were fairly well preserved in the cold depths of the pond.

There are thirteen dwellers in the pond. Their immediate goal is to harvest enough bodies that they can move on to a bigger body of water near a larger population.

The spirits are exploring the area around the pond by traveling through the local ground water. They have not ventured far enough to discover the town's wells and pumps, but soon will. Once that happens, they begin hunting in earnest. The dwellers will emerge from water pumps, wells, etc. and look for hosts.

Donald Johnson was killed by a dweller that emerged from the water pump near his potato patch. It drowned him, but then was unable to assume control of his body before his wife appeared. It was in a weakened state from its struggle with Johnson and retreated into the ground.

The spirits kill a new host every few nights. The possessed bodies return to the pond and wait there beneath the waters. Depending on the circumstances it may be possible to track a newly acquired host back to the pond. The bodies are in

the very deepest part of the pond, making it impossible to find them without special equipment.

As long as a host body is inhabited by a dweller, it decays very slowly.

And how is it stopped?

The residents of the town are reluctant to speak about the pond, both because of what they fear is there and because many of them have guilty consciences. A number of them were in the posse that attacked the cultists. Some of the cultists surrendered, but were shot down anyway. The guilt the townspeople feel about this is the only reason that Lawrence Hodgson wasn't strung up for his part in the gruesome ritual.

There is a witness who can point the posse in the direction of the pond. Ted Monroe is seven-year-old who, when told never to go near the pond, naturally had to go straight there the next day. He saw Lash's body bobbing in the water and ran away in fright. He doesn't want to tell anyone in the town about what he did, since he knows he'll get into trouble if he does. If he sees the posse asking questions, he'll offer to tell them what he saw, and how to get there, if they don't squeal on him.

Alternatively, the posse can try an Incredible (11) Trackin' roll to follow the trail of water and mud left by a victim as it makes its way back to the pond.

If the posse can convince Sheriff Thomas that the pond is the source of all the trouble, he allows them to speak to Hodgson. Hodgson claims that he knows how to stop the spirits and will do so in exchange for his freedom. He is actually trying to trick the posse into taking him to the pond so that he can perform the binding ritual.

The only way to be rid of the spirits is to individually destroy each one while it is away from the pond, or to perform an exorcism on the pond and drive the spirits back from whence they came.

An exorcism takes a good while to perform, though, and while it takes place, the spirits will rise up to prevent it from continuing. They will attack the group with all of the stolen bodies present in the pond.

If the exorcism is successful, the pond glows brilliantly with light streaming out in all directions. After the pyrotechnics display ceases,

Palmer's Pond is crystal clear, signifying the end of the Cult of the Deep.

Dweller Host

Use the stats for walking dead in the main rulebook. The only difference is that those who were killed by drowning can pass themselves off as a (pale to blue) human. The spirits may use this to get close to posse members and kill them. The hosts can speak, but their voices have a gurgling sound to them as if they have water in their throat (which they do). The spirit does not possess any knowledge or memories of the body being inhabited. Killing a host does not destroy the spirit inside, it simply forces it to vacate the body and appear in its natural form.

Profile: Deep Dweller

**Corporeal:** D:3d8, N:2d8, Q:3d10,  
S:2d8, V:2d8

Dodge 4d8, fightin': brawling 4d8

**Mental:** C:3d8, K:2d6, M:2d6, Sm:3d8,  
Sp:3d12

Overawe 4d6

**Size:** 4

**Terror:** 9

**Pace:** 12 (swimming); 6 (land)

**Abilities:**

**Immunity:** Physical attacks do not affect the spirit in any way. Bullets, fists, and rocks simply fly right through the liquid, which reforms around it right away. Damage from fire won't usually have any effect, unless the fire is very hot (such as from a flame-thrower, or magical flame). In this case, the heat causes the water to evaporate. Because the water spirits are about as far as you can get from flammable, all flame attacks are reduced to d4s for damage. For example, a flame-thrower shot doing 4d12 damage would do only 4d4.

**Amorphous:** When outside of a host body, the spirits resemble a puddle of water, usually about three feet in diameter and a few inches deep. While in this form, they can change their shape as needed, as long as their volume remains constant. For instance,

one could shrink down to squeeze through the crack under a door, but then it would probably be close to six feet long. The spirits can also sink into the earth, but usually avoid doing so because it causes them 2d6 wind. If a spirit can enter a body of fresh water, it immediately heals all damage it has taken.

**Smother:** A water spirit attacks by wrapping itself around the head of its victim and then forcing its way into the victim's lungs. In game terms, if a spirit hits in combat, it has slithered up its opponent and covered his head

(when defending against a water spirit, the defender may only add half his fightin' aptitude to the defense--it's hard to grab water). On each of the spirit's next actions, the victim must roll Vigor vs. the spirit's Strength. The loser of the roll takes the difference in Wind. A spirit will release a victim if it is in danger of becoming winded. Anyone killed in this manner becomes a host for the spirit and may not return as a harrowed.

**Weakness:** The water spirits are affected by the Protection miracle.

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## The Raggedy Man!

NEBRASKA - Greetings friends. Stacy O' Malley here, Lacy O' Malley's sister and a far better reporter by a Utah mile. I just got my delicate fingers on a new rumor of strangeness, and it's a doozy!



Could this be what the Raggedy Man looks like? The Pinkertons who investigated the case aren't telling.

The story takes place in Table Rock, Nebraska, just southeast of the Sioux Nations. The local corn-farmers claim there's a murderer on the loose. Worse, the fiend's targets have all been children, life's most delicate flowers.

The killer often hides in the thick rows of corn that line Nebraska's country roads and attacks his prey from ambush. No mother dares let her children walk the roads after dusk these days!

Other times the murderous monster steals children right out of their beds! Then he takes them out into the cornfields and slices them to ribbons!

The heavy-handed agents of the Pinkertons came to investigate the story but left empty-handed, as usual. The only tidbit of information came from a young boy who claims to have witnessed one of the killings. The boy, whose name was reported only as "Hank," said he saw a man dressed all in tattered clothing lean in his window one night and pull his kid brother right through.

The bodies of the children have all been horribly mutilated. The sheriff of Table Rock, Clem Dunkins, found the body of Hank's brother out in the cornfield the next day. He told the Pinkertons that the boy "...looked like someone whipped him a thousand times with a rough piece of rawhide."

Some brave soul must put a stop to this nefarious beast! Judging from young Hank's description of a man in tattered clothing, the murderer could be a transient bum or an escaped lunatic on the run. He is most likely a man due to his incredible strength, and must carry a whip or rope of some sort.

Parents in southeastern Nebraska have been warned to lock their children up tight, keep them in after dark, and bolt their shutters closed.

If you are the adventurous type, the Pinkertons are offering a reward of \$500 for the capture of the "Raggedy Man"--dead or alive. Be careful if you venture here though, the locals are very suspicious of strangers right now.

# The Raggedy Man

In the small town of Table Rock, Nebraska, a group of 11 boys formed the Cornfield Baseball Club.

While the children originally banded together to play ball, their leader, Jonathan Gardner, also demanded absolute loyalty from them. Gardner insisted that all the boys become “blood brothers.” They took his prized hunting knife, made cuts on their arms, and pressed them together.

One little boy, Elias Manners, wasn’t a great baseball player and was excluded from the club.

Elias decided to spy on the children who had snubbed him. He knew they played ball in a clearing between two large cornfields. At the edge of one of the cornfields was an old, tattered scarecrow. Elias decided to hide inside the straw man and spy on the boys who had snubbed him.

But some of the boys were late. Jonathan Gardner, impatient as always, pulled out his hunting knife and began using the scarecrow for target practice.

Elias was too terrified to scream out until the knife hit him, and by then it was too late. Gardner and the others gasped in horror when they heard the scarecrow gurgle and saw blood pour from its tattered coat. They ran from the field and didn’t return, thinking the field was haunted.

Now the vengeful spirit of Elias Manners is alive in the tattered, bloody form of the scarecrow. It has been systematically hunting the children of the Cornfield Club, saving their leader, Jonathan Gardner, for last.

It kills one child every 1d4 nights. There are 7 remaining members of the Cornfield Club including Jonathan Gardner.

The Raggedy Man won’t stop after it’s finished with the members of the Cornfield Baseball Club. When it’s finished with them it will move on to other children in the area.

**Profile: The Raggedy Man**

**Corporeal:** D:2d8, N:3d8, S:4d10, Q:3d8, V:2d8

Climbin’ 3d8, fightin’: brawlin’ 5d8, sneak 3d8

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:2d4, M:3d8, Sm:3d6, Sp:4d8

Search 2d10, trackin’ 2d10, area knowledge (cornfields of Table Rock) 4d4, overawe 4d8

**Size:** 6

**Terror:** 9

**Special Abilities:**

**Fearless:** the Raggedy Man passes guts and overawe checks automatically.

**Flailing Arms:** The Raggedy Man’s arms are stuffed full of dried corn husks. When it flails these about, it causes STR+3d6 damage to its opponent. The area around the creature’s attack is always full of corn husk remnants, and bits can be found stuck in its victims’ flesh as well.

**Invulnerable:** Bullets and the like pass right through the straw body of the Raggedy Man. Even magic and blessed weapons won’t harm the creature. Fire will burn the creature to cinders, but the corrupted soul of Elias Manners will transfer itself to another scarecrow the very next night.

## Defeating the Raggedy Man

The posse needs to discover the existence of the Cornfield Club before they can defeat the Raggedy Man--something the Pinkerton troubleshooters weren’t able to do.

The club hasn’t met since the killings began. Gardner has guessed the scarecrow is after them, but doesn’t know Elias Manners was inside. He also doesn’t know what to do about it. He’s told some of the others, and while they believe him, they’re afraid to tell their parents they might have committed murder.

Hank Atkins, the little boy who watched his brother get pulled through a window by the Raggedy Man, is the posse’s best source of information. Like Elias, Hank wasn’t allowed to join the club, but he did watch occasionally, and the others often sent him into the cornfields to find their lost balls.

Hank didn’t see the “bleeding scarecrow” incident that started the whole affair, but he can point them to the club’s leader, Jonathan Gardner.

The scarecrow can only be destroyed by the knife Jonathan Gardner killed Elias Manners with. If the scarecrow is killed with this weapon,

it crumbles into rags and husks, never to walk the earth again.



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## Railroad Saboteur Massacre!

DENVER, CO. – Railroad workers of the Union Blue Railroad were shocked to find the dead bodies of eight men just ahead of the UB railhead yesterday. Judging by the evidence at the scene, the deceased desperadoes had been setting a deadly ambush for the Union Blue work gangs expected to be in the area in the next few days. Explosives had been rigged into the face of a cliff beneath which the Union Blue work crews would have labored in just a few days.



Sabotage is nothing new to the Union Blue Railroad. A tragic incident such as the one depicted here occurred to a U.B. passenger express last year, killing over 100 innocent people. As the violence of the rail wars escalates this sort of thing may become only too common.

The US Marshals have been reluctant to discuss details of the killings, saying only that the eight men appear to have been shot to death in their sleep. However, one worker who was with the group that discovered the bodies described a very different set of circumstances. The railman, who wishes to remain anonymous, recounted that the group of men were most definitely not killed in their sleep. "When we found 'em, it looked as if there had been a right big

fight in their camp," he opined. "All their hoglegs was out o' ammo, but nary a bullet wound on any one o' them. And every single one o' them boys was beat to death, by what looked to me to be some sorta hammer...maybe a railroad sledgehammer." Our source described in rather gruesome detail how the bodies of the dead men lay scattered about the camp like broken dolls. "All that and only one man's tracks enterin' and leavin' the camp. I ain't never seen anything like it in all my day."

UB spokesman Otis Robertson issued a statement identifying the eight men as employees of a competing rail line. "We've continually had trouble with sabotage," said Robertson, "We're just lucky that someone got to these men in time and avoided a great tragedy. Were it not for the intervention of an unknown person, many of our workers would likely have perished." Robertson has offered a reward of \$500 and help with legal expenses to the person who steps forward and can prove they were responsible for the incident.

Such a person is unlikely to come forward, however, as they will have to face the wrath of the local US Marshals. Alvin Thomas of the US Marshals office discounted the anonymous worker's account as "drunken hysteria" when it was recounted to him. "There was nothing strange about those killings other than the fact that the perpetrators managed to get all eight of the men. Anything else you hear is balderdash."

While the Marshals are sticking to their story, it is rumored that agents of the Pinkerton Detective Agency have taken over the investigation. This reporter's questions about why this case warrants Federal involvement have been met with a stony silence.

# The Hammer Swinger

The eight men killed were, in fact, a sabotage team working for the Black River Railroad. Unfortunately for them, they ran afoul of one of the US's living legends, John Henry (see below).

Henry's wanderings have brought him to the Denver area, where he hooked up with one of the Union Blue work crews. On a late night walk, he stumbled upon the group of Black River saboteurs. Henry quickly assessed the cutthroats' plans and decided only one thing could be done. He walked into their camp.

Henry's intent was just to frighten the men so badly that they would leave the area post haste, but things quickly escalated, and a fight broke out. The Harrowed Henry made short work of the Black River gang, busted up their equipment, and high-tailed it back to his camp. He's lying low now, trying to stay out of the sight of the Pinkerton agents now nosing around the railroad.

And what about the Pinkertons? Well, even an idiot could tell that something unusual went down at the Black River camp, and Marshal Alvin Thomas is no idiot. He contacted the Pinkerton office in Denver, and they sent an investigative team led by Agent Leon Thomas. The team quickly gathered all the evidence they could, and destroyed it after they had come to their conclusions. They told Marshal Thomas what "officially" happened at the camp, and then got down to the business of finding the man responsible for what happened. Agent Thomas intends to either "shoot or recruit" the person when he finds him. If he can find him, that is.

Several parties are not buying the whitewash that the Pinkertons are trying to sell. Union Blue wants to find out exactly what happened so they can hire or at least thank the person responsible. They will pay handsomely for that information. Of course, the Black River Railroad has its agents active in the area now as well. They lost some highly trained demolition men in the massacre, and Black River is big on revenge.

John Henry: Harrowed Railroad Worker/Living Legend

John Henry was born sometime around 1850. It is said that on the night of his birth, thunder and lightning cracked the sky asunder, and that a low rumbling was heard from beneath the earth. He reportedly rolled right out of his momma's womb and went to work for the railroads.

While all these tales are exaggerated, Henry was indeed an almost preternaturally powerful man. While he lived, he could bend steel rods in his bare hands, and floor most men with just one punch. He worked on a track crew for the C&O railroad, blasting paths through the mountains to lay down the tracks for the trains. He was a master of his craft and loved the work like no other. Henry could drill a blasting hole faster than any man alive or dead, and the stories of his skill spread far and wide among the railroad men.

All this led to his famous duel back in June of 1871. His foreman took a \$100 wager that, armed only with two sledgehammers, Henry could out-drill the company's newest steam powered rock drill. John Henry won that bet, but the strain of this feat was too much even for a man of his massive strength and, as the song tells, he died with his hammers in his hands.

Of course, this was not the end for Henry. A few days after his burial, souvenir hunters exhumed his body to steal his fabled hammers, buried with him. Imagine their surprise when Henry opened his eyes and got up! Dazed and confused by his experiences beyond the grave, Henry only managed to frighten the men off. They ran away, taking one of Henry's hammers with them.

Since that day, John Henry has been walking the earth. His physical prowess has kept him employed wherever he goes, but he has always careful not to show the full range of his strength. His wanderings have gradually taken him further and further west, and he has returned to the life he loves; the life of the railroad man.

Henry is not really sure what has happened to him, but being a religious man, he figures that it's all part of the Lord's plan for him. He tries to do right when he can, and cares deeply about his fellow railroad workers. Woe to the work-boss who mistreats his crew while John Henry is around. His rage is a frightening thing to behold.

The only thing that sometimes bothers Henry is what happened to his missing hammer. He is aware that the one he has become something special, and it worries him what someone might do with its twin. He can sometimes feel the other one out there, somewhere. Sometimes in his dreams he can almost see the hammer, wherever it is.

John Henry is a not as huge as one might think from the statistics below. He stands just over six foot four inches tall, and weighs 255 pounds. Every muscle in his body is as strong as a steel cable, and there seems not to be an ounce of fat on the man. He keeps his head shaved, and usually wear simple work clothes. He is almost never found without his trusty sledge hammer, which he hefts as if it were made of air.

Profile: John Henry

**Corporeal:** D: 2d6, N:1d10, S:3d12+6, Q:2d8, V:3d10

Throwin': Hammer 4d6, Climbin' 2d6,

Fightin': Brawlin' 5d10, Fightin' Hammer 7d10, Swimmin' 2d10

**Mental:** C:1d6, K:2d4, M:2d10, Sm:1d6, Sp:2d12

Scrutinize 4d6, Search 2d6, Demolition 5d4, Trade: Rail, Buildin' 5d4,

Overawe 5d10, Tale Tellin' 3d10,

Survival: Mountain 2d6, Guts 5d12

**Gear:** One of John Henry's Hammers

**Special Abilities:**

**Grit:**4

**Harrowed:** Stichin' 4, Supernatural Strength

John Henry's Hammers

The passion and force of will that John Henry expended in his race with the steam drill has

imbued his hammers with a bit of his determination, as well as his skill at the art of laying the rails. His hammers are linked to him, yet Henry has lost one. In the wrong hands it could do much damage.

**Power:** The hammer is a magical weapon, able to harm abominations not normally subject to physical damage. The wielder of the hammer must have at least a d10 in Strength to fully realize the hammers capabilities. The hammer delivers STR+2d10 damage and has a speed of 1. In addition, the hammers lower the difficulty level of any task having to do with rail building by 2. John Henry is psychically linked to his hammers, and he gets flashes of what the hammer experiences in his dreams. If he chose to, he could probably find the hammer just by following his gut feelings about where it is.

**Taint:** In John Henry's hands, none. In the hands of others, the hammer haunts its owner with dreams of John Henry's fatal struggle with the steam drill. They gain the Night Terrors Hindrance. Should the hammer be used for malicious purposes, Henry would feel it through his link to the hammer. His innate sense of justice would force him to find the hammer, retrieve it from its current owner, and punish them.

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## Werewolves!



This photograph was recovered from a camera found by hunters in the hills northwest of Wolf Creek, Montana. No trace of the camera's owner has been uncovered.

MONTANA – Two hunters, Jervis Farlow and Emmet Taylor of Wolf Creek, have made an amazing discovery. While tracking a herd of elk, the pair stumbled across the shattered remains of a camera. It didn't look as if it had been there long, so the two, both expert trackers, decided to search for the camera's owner. They spent most of the day combing the area but turned up nothing. The two returned to town with what was left of the camera.

"I hated to give up, but it was getting dark. Lately, it hasn't been safe to be out after dark here.

We've had a lot of problems with wolves. We've lost some livestock to them and even had a few attacks on humans. Last winter was pretty harsh and thinned out the elk herds. I guess the wolves are just hungry is all. Plus there have been a lot of Sioux warriors in the area of late, you can't hardly leave town without running into one," said Jervis.

"We thought that whoever owned the camera might be out there hurt or something," added Emmet. The hunters returned to the area the next day with some of their neighbors and continued the search, but found nothing.

Chuck McSorley, the owner of the general store suggested that they take what was left of the camera down to Helena and see if anything was salvageable. They did so. The result is the blurry photograph displayed here. Although it is slightly out of focus, two human figures with wolf-like features can be seen.

"I don't know what to make of it," said Jervis, "I've spent most of my life in these hills and I've never seen anything that even come close to what's in that picture."

When asked if the search for the camera's missing owner would continue, the local marshal, Leroy Stagg, responded, "Nah, I think this thing's all a great big hoax. Some pain-in-the-keister reporter like yourself probably faked the picture and then smashed his camera up there in the hills, hoping people would find it and get all worked up. I can't speak for everyone, but I don't like having my leg pulled. If I find out who left that camera up there, I think I might just have to break out my trusty bullwhip."

On that note, this humble reporter decided it was time to leave Wolf Creek.

# The Great Wolf Devil—Sunkmanitu Tanka Wakansica

The hills around Wolf Creek are the home of an ancient evil--a spirit known by the Sioux as *Sunkmanitu Tanka Wakansica* because it normally manifests itself in the form of an enormous black wolf. This Wolf Devil lives on the fear that its presence in an area creates. Once it absorbs enough fear, it spawns small pieces of itself off in the form of small jet black wolf cubs. These cubs can possess human hosts, enslaving them and giving them supernatural powers.

In the days prior to the Great Spirit War, this malevolent spirit was served and worshipped by a small group of Indian warriors. These warriors captured braves from nearby tribes to use as hosts for the Wolf Devil's litters. On the night of the new moon, the captives were bound and thrown in a cave with the cubs. Each cub selected a victim and ripped out his throat. As the brave's blood poured out on the floor, the cub would lap it up and absorb the victim's life force. When the victim expired, the cub vanished into his body and assumed control of it.

These possessed warriors roamed the countryside and terrorized all in their path. The fear they created nourished Mama Wolf and allowed her to spawn a new litter.

The Wolf Devil was eventually defeated by a group of warriors led by a shaman named Talk With Bears. He was unable to destroy the spirit, but he was able to imprison it in a copse of trees high up in the mountains. The creature's paws were pinned to the ground with specially prepared spears carved from the bones of elk--a wolf's normal prey. All of the local Indians knew this and gave the area a wide berth.

Recently, some prospectors removed the spears and freed the Wolf Devil. They became its first victims. Since then, it has grown stronger and has had a few small litters. The actions of Marshal Stagg in Wolf Creek have created a lot of fear and allowed the spirit to quickly regain strength.

A shaman named Drinking Deer has heard the stories about strange wolf/man creatures and come from the Sioux Nations with a small band of warriors to investigate. He knows the legend of the Wolf Devil and is trying to find it and imprison it again.  
Wolf Creek

Wolf Creek is a small mining town high in the Bitterroot Mountains of western Montana. Until recently, there had been a lot of problems in town with rowdy miners and those who were trying to part them from their money. Then Leroy Stagg came to town and became marshal. He and the deputies he brought with him quickly cleaned the place up. Unfortunately, the townsfolk discovered too late that the medicine was worse than the cure.

Stagg is an ex-US Marshal. He was killed in Kansas fighting some Texas Rangers and then returned from the dead as a Harrowed. Unfortunately, he lost his struggle with the manitou and it has been firmly in control ever since his resurrection. Along with some scum he calls deputies, he travels to small remote towns and offers his services as a lawman. If the town accepts, he makes them live to regret it. He runs the town with an iron hand and takes what ever he wants. If anyone dares to oppose him, they end up in a pine box.

Stagg has been in Wolf Creek for about two months now. He figures that he can stay a few more before someone has enough spine to try and get help. What he doesn't know is that some of the local merchants have already taken up a collection to hire some gunslingers to get rid of him.

The camera belongs to Spencer McAdams, a reporter for the Chicago tribune. He was captured by the wolf warriors and is being held captive in a nearby cave until the Wolf Devil has a new litter. That should happen in about a week.

The fear level in this area is 3.

Profile: The Great Wolf Devil

**Corporeal:** D:3d10, N:2d8, S:4d12,  
Q:2d10, V:3d10

fightin' 4d8, sneak 5d8, dodge 3d8

**Mental:** C:3d6, K:2d6, M:2d8, Sm:3d8,  
Sp:3d12

trackin' 5d6, overawe 4d8

**Powers:**

**Immunity:** normal weapons-- may only be harmed by magic and weapons carved from the bone or antlers of an elk. It cannot be killed, but it can be disabled. If the posse can pin the creature's

paws to the ground with weapons of elk bone, the spirit is trapped at the spot and will eventually vanish. Removing the weapons will free it.

**Bite** STR + 2d8

**Claw** STR + 2d6

### Wolf Warriors

These are the individuals who have been possessed by the Wolf Devil. They can appear as normal humans but prefer their wolfman form. It takes two actions for them to switch from one form to another.

Profile: Wolf Warriors

**Corporeal:** D:3d10, N:3d8, S:3d12, Q:2d10, V:3d10

fightin' 4d8, sneak 5d8, dodge 3d8

**Mental:** C:3d6, K:2d6, M:2d8, Sm:3d8, Sp:3d12

trackin' 5d6, overawe 4d8

**Special Abilities:**

**Wolf Form**

**Immunity:** Half damage from normal weapons-take full damage from magic and weapons carved from the bone or antlers of an elk.

**Bite:** STR + 2d6

**Claw:** STR + 2d4

Profile: Marshal Leroy Stagg

**Corporeal:** D:3d12+2, N:2d8, S:3d6, Q:2d10, V:3d8

shootin': pistol 4d12+2, fannin' 3d12+2, shootin': rifle 4d12+2, fightin': knife 4d8, sneak 3d8, dodge 2d8, horse ridin' 4d8, quick draw 3d10

**Mental:** C:3d8, K:2d6, M:2d8, Sm:3d8, Sp:3d8

scrutinize 3d8, trackin' 4d8, overawe 3d8, persuasion 2d8, survival 4d8, guts 4d8

**Powers:** Supernatural Deftness 3d12+2

**Gear:** Two .36 Navy revolvers, a Winchester '73, and a Bowie knife.

# The Horse Eater

Our twisted tale of the Weird West begins, of all places, in the City of Lost Angels, California. The Cult of Lost Angels, under the leadership of Hezekiah Grimme, is constantly trying to thwart the influx of settlers and technology to the region. Such things upset their secret cannibalistic rituals, you see.

The railroads are the cult's worst nightmares. They bring more tinhorns and lawmen to California than a fellow can shake a gnawed leg-bone at. So the cult sends its followers out to sabotage any company that gets close to linking their lines into a transcontinental railroad.

The latest object of their peculiar affections is the Iron Dragon Railroad. Iron Dragon signed a treaty with the Sioux Nations earlier this year ('76) and ran a line right through South Dakota and the treaty city of Deadwood. The Sioux's only restrictions were that Iron Dragon could not make any stops other than Deadwood and they could not lay their tracks through the sacred *Paha Sapa* or Black Hills.

Iron Dragon eagerly agreed. Who wanted to build a rail line over steep hills anyway? Even better, the protection of the fierce Sioux warbands meant rival railroad gangs couldn't sabotage their line. This made the "Dakota Stretch" a crucial link in completing Iron Dragon's transcontinental railroad.

The Cult of Lost Angels isn't pleased with this platonic arrangement, so Grimme sent two of his Outer Circle members to start trouble between the railroad and the Sioux. The cultists hope to start a war that will ruin the entire Dakota Stretch and raise their status with Reverend Grimme.

## The Scheme

To do this, Brothers Emmanuelle Strong and Jacob Wyse spent some time in Deadwood to study the situation and then devised a simple but cunning plan. They sabotaged a bridge between Deadwood and the Iron Dragon's main line and lay in wait for a repair crew to come fix it. Then they jumped the crew, pushed their pump-car into the river, and took the captives up into the Black Hills.

The cultists made camp the first night in an old trapper's cabin near a swamp formed by the bowl of several peaks. They planned on killing their captives the next morning and planting false

evidence to suggest the rail crew was actually a survey team looking to lay a line through the Black Hills. This would anger the Sioux, while Iron Dragon would assume the Indians murdered their repairmen.

## Chance Encounter

But that night, something went terribly amiss. An ancient creature known to the Sioux as the "Horse Eater" lived in the swamp beside the cultist's camp. The cultists watched in reverent fascination as its slimy touch burned the flesh of the captured rail crew's horse. It devoured the liquefied animal in minutes, then killed one of the crewmen who tried to rush by it and escape. One of the repair crew got away--Brothers Strong and Wyse jumped into the stolen wagon and fled into the night.

The next day, Strong and Wyse returned to the swamp. Strangely, the horse had been devoured but the body of the dead rail worker was left untouched. Brother Strong instantly realized how he could turn misfortune into opportunity. They had spotted a Sioux village nearby with a large herd of horses. If he could get the swamp creature to attack the Sioux's horses, then set it up so that the Sioux found the body of the repair man and the fake survey maps, the Indians would believe that not only had Iron Dragon secretly surveyed the Black Hills for a new rail line, their careless treachery had also awakened a monster.

The trouble was leading the creature to the Sioux village. This meant stealing a few of their horses to make a "trail" from the swamp to the village. Strong pulled this off easily enough, and within three days, the Horse Eater attacked the Sioux village.

## Never Smiles

One of the Sioux, a champion named Never Smiles fought the Horse Eater and was burnt by its acidic touch. Never Smiles could not defeat the monster and fled for his life, but the touch of its slug-like flesh gave him an idea how he might defeat it. Salt.

Never Smiles hoped shotguns loaded with rock salt would kill the Horse Eater. Unfortunately, he had neither shotguns nor enough salt to kill a monster the size of the Horse Eater. So Never Smiles sent money and an order

to a trader he knew in Deadwood. Besides the shotguns, shells, and salt he ordered several other items to help conceal the contraband (the Federal government does not allow the sale of weapons to tribes of the Sioux Nations.)

Never Smiles also knew a friend in Deadwood who owed him a favor, and sent word for him to escort the wagon-load of supplies to his village just east of the Black Hills.

While the impatient Never Smiles was waiting for his salt and shotguns, he decided to venture into the hills and find the thing's lair. The creature attacked only at night, so Never Smiles figured he would be safe if he searched the Black Hills only in the daytime. He hadn't counted on the Brothers Strong and Wyse. The cultists caught Never Smiles poking around the swamp and got the drop on him with their rifles. Then they beat him up and dragged him to a ruined cabin along the Horse Eater's nightly path.

## Chapter One: Deadwood

One of the posse is the unfortunate fellow who owes Never Smiles a favor. The Marshal, that's you, partner, needs to pick a character that will feel honor-bound to pay back the favor and keep this adventure going. Another Indian makes a good choice, as does a cowpoke with Hindrances like loyal, honest, or heroic. Good guys make such easy pickings.

Never Smiles has sent word that it's time to repay his favor. He's arranged for a wagon-load of supplies to be picked up from an Indian trader named Dean. He needs his friend and his companions to escort the wagon to his village some 40 miles northeast of Deadwood.

The trip starts in Deadwood on Saturday, November 6th, 1876, sometime before noon. It's cold and wet in South Dakota this time of year, so the group should be well-outfitted with coats, blankets, and rain-slickers. Never Smiles' supplies are already paid for. Trader Dean has everything packed in a rickety buckboard ready to go. Dean chucked the list of what's supposed to be in the wagon, so the posse will have to trust the trader that what's inside is what Never Smiles paid for.

### Inside the Wagon

The supplies are concealed by a tight canvas tarp tied over the wagon. The posse shouldn't get an inventory unless they actually untie the tarp and poke around. If they do, they'll find the

following contents: 4 Barrels of flour, 16 20 pound bags of rock salt, 107 surplus US Army blankets with shotguns wrapped in the bottom-most blankets, a barrel of 50 shotgun shells covered by a layer of nails, 1 keg of whiskey marked "sugar."

A character who makes a Foolproof (3) Knowledge roll knows the Sioux Nations have announced that anyone caught bringing whiskey into their territory would be dealt with under the law of the tribe that catches them. This means death in most tribes. Never Smiles hopes the whiskey will burn the creature if the salt doesn't work.

Dean's rickety wagon can make 40 miles a day, so it should take the posse only about a day or two to get to the village.

### Bounty

Give the posse 1 bounty point for agreeing to repay Never Smile's favor. Add 1 for each of the 3 contraband items they discover in the wagon.

## Chapter Two: Portents

As the posse journeys east, they'll come across Elk Creek. The Iron Dragon line crosses the creek here before heading southwest toward Deadwood. Or at least it would if a 3 yard section of track in the middle of the bridge wasn't missing it's ties.

Anyone looking for tracks will have a difficult time because of the cultist's efforts to conceal their presence. Still, on an Incredible (11) trackin' roll, wagon tracks leading from the east can be found. The wagon was heavily loaded until it stopped a few yards from the bridge. At that point there are strange drag marks leading into the deeper water beneath the bridge. The tracks then get much lighter as they lead to a shallow ford twenty yards to the north. The wagon came out the other side but disappears a few yards from shore.

The creek below the bridge is just over 4 feet deep. Should anyone plumb its depths they'll see what made the strange drag marks-enough wooden ties to repair those missing from the center of the bridge.

This is where the repair crew's wagon full of replacement ties was jumped by Brothers Strong and Wyse. The cultists then dumped the railroad ties into the river and took the captives and their wagon into the hills.



## Bounty

The posse gets 1 bounty point for poking around the mess and gathering clues. Add two more if they find the rail ties hidden in the creek.

## Chapter Three: Angry Clouds

The posse will be noticed as they approach Never Smiles' village. Braves on horseback will ride near and ask them their business. The characters are expected so there shouldn't be much difficulty in dealing with the warriors. The Sioux village is but one of many Lakota settlements. Twenty men, 28 women, and 8 children currently occupy the various lodges. All stare curiously at the posse as they ride into the center of their home.

When the group stops, an old, haggard Indian approaches. This is Angry Clouds, the tribe's Shaman. After brief formalities, Angry Clouds speaks:

"Welcome to our home. The one you seek is not here. Never Smiles has gone to Paha Sapa to fight the evil. But he cannot succeed without this wagon. You must take it to him."

Paha Sapa are, of course, the Black Hills. Should the party refuse to travel there, Angry Clouds reminds the character who owed Never Smiles of his obligation. A few angry young braves might also encourage the posse to take the wagon on to Never Smiles.

When the party does finally agree, Angry Clouds tells them what he knows of Never Smiles' fate:

"The evil came several nights ago. Every night one pony was taken. Never Smiles and several other braves vowed they would catch the thief and hid among the ponies on the sixth night. The evil came and killed most of them before taking another pony. This time the evil ate the pony and left its bones. Never Smiles was hurt badly but he said he knew how to defeat the evil. The next morning he sent two notes to Deadwood. He said he would slay the creature when it returned that night with the supplies you were to bring. He wanted to spend the day trying to find the creature's lair. Never Smiles promised he would be gone only a few hours then he would return and tell us of his plan. That was early this morning. Now it is almost night and he has not returned. You must find him tonight-before the Horse Eater rises again."

Angry Clouds is insistent that the posse go looking for Never Smiles immediately. His fresh tracks require only a Fair (5) trackin' roll to follow.

## Bounty

Add 1 to the posse's bounty once they've picked up Never Smiles' trail.

## Chapter Four: Lacy O'Malley

### **Black Hills: Fear Level 2**

Never Smiles' trail leads the group down a winding trail for just under half an hour. The trail is usually 3-4 yards wide, so they should have little difficulty getting their wagon through the hills.

After a half hour of travel, the posse sees a burnt wagon in a pass between two steep cliffs fifty yards ahead. Standing before it are two men and their horses. One man wears an all white suit and hat. The other is hidden beneath the canvas sack of a tripod camera.

When the group draws near enough, the camera flashes on the macabre scene and a dark-haired Italian man emerges from beneath the canvas. He is a studio photographer dragged from Deadwood by the other man, a blonde-haired Irishman named Lacy O'Malley, a well-known newshound for the Tombstone Epitaph. Anyone who reads the rag likely knows his name as well as his reputation.

Lacy greets the posse cautiously when they first approach. He was in Deadwood when he got a tip that an Iron Dragon rail crew had gone missing. His investigations brought him here. If asked, Lacy tells the posse that Iron Dragon is not allowed into the sacred Black Hills. In his opinion, these men trespassed and were killed by nearby Sioux. As far as he can figure, Iron Dragon is looking to break their treaty with the Sioux by running a line through the Black Hills. He figures they staged the break themselves as an excuse to send their "repair crew" out into the Nations. From there the crew could sneak on into the hills to survey a pass.

In truth, Brother Strong staged this scene to blame the murder of the repair crew on the Sioux. He was forced to burn the body to hide the horrible scars caused by the repairman's death at the hands of the Horse Eater.

## Lacy O'Malley

Lacy is tenacious to the point of annoying. Both the Pinkertons and the Texas Rangers despise him for constantly revealing abominations to the public.

### Profile: Lacy O'Malley

**Corporeal:** D:3d6, N:2d8, Q:1d6, S:2d6, V:1d6

Climbin' 1d8, dodge 2d8, filchin' 2d6, horse ridin' 1d8, lockpickin' 2d6, shootin': pistols 2d6, sneak 4d8, swimmin' 1d8

**Mental:** C:3d6, K:1d6, M:1d4, Sm:1d8, Sp:2d4

Academia: occult 3d6, area knowledge: Tombstone 2d6, arts: photography 2d8, bluff 2d8, guts 2d4, language: French 2d6, overawe 1d4, persuasion 3d4, professional: journalism 3d6, ridicule 2d8, scroungin' 1d8, scrutinize 5d6, search 4d6, streetwise 2d8

**Junk:** Lacy carries a steno pad, pen, and a .38 caliber revolver

### Examining the Scene

In the seat of the wagon is a charred body with several arrows sticking out of it. Everyone present should make guts checks, but the Marshal should modify the difficulty based on each character's previous experiences. The blackened sideboards of the wagon read "Iron Dragon Railroad." Lying in and about it are survey tools and hand-drawn maps of the area showing a new rail line cutting directly through this pass.

There is one important clue that can later help reveal Strong's scheme. The hand-drawn survey maps were made by brother Wyse, not an experienced engineer. If a character has science: engineerin' or experience working on a railroad, have him or her make a roll. On an Onerous (7) success for the former or an Incredible (11) success for the latter, the examiner realizes the maps are completely useless.

### Babblings of a Madman

Just as the group finishes investigating the scene, Lacy says that there were supposed to be two members of the repair crew. As if on cue, the surviving repairman comes running out of the woods. The man grabs onto the nearest character and starts ranting.

"Eyes. . .evil. . .claws like Bowie knives. . . slimy skin like an eel. Bullets bounced right off it. I want to go home!"

Charlie is the man lying dead in the burnt wagon. The repairman will point at him as he says his name. If the posse asks him about the wagon or the "attack," he'll simply shake his head and say "No!" That's the best the posse will get out of this fellow. The things he's seen in the last two days have driven him completely over the edge.

Assuming the party has told Lacy about the missing Never Smiles, he'll decide to tag along. His photographer eagerly volunteers to take the mad repairman back to Deadwood.

### Bounty

The posse gets 2 bounty points for poking around the mess and gathering clues. Add 1 more if someone notices the poor quality of the survey maps.

## Chapter Five: The Rescue

### ***The Bog and Overlook: Fear Level 3***

Never Smile's tracks lead to a deep bowl between several high hills. The bowl holds a large swamp full of scraggly trees, tall weeds, and thick muck. Never Smiles' tracks lead around the swamp several times before they disappear.



As the group tries to pick up the trail, they come upon the bones of a pony a short ways up the northern slope of the bowl that forms the swamp. A Fair (5) search roll also reveals a ruined blood-stained rope hanging from a nearby tree. This is one of the ponies the cultists used to draw the Horse Eater to the top of the hill where it could see the Sioux village below. The Horse Eater typically follows this path up the hill and climbs down the front of the cliff to attack the Sioux's herd. Every 100 yards up the wide path of the hill is another horse carcass. Each one looks slightly fresher than the last.

### The Overlook

At the top of the hill is a ruined trapper's cabin. The group should reach this spot shortly after dark. Tied to a post inside the ruin is Never Smiles. The cultists beat him senseless and left him here in the path of the Horse Eater to see if it would attack humans that weren't actually provoking it. It will, of course.

As the posse moves in to free Never Smiles, they'll hear a strange slurping sound from the base of the hill then an eerie thudding. The Horse Eater has risen from the swamp below and is climbing up the hill toward the cabin. When it reaches the top of the hill, it attacks ferociously. If reduced to below its last 10 hits, the Horse Eater retreats to its swamp where it disappears in the mire.

If the posse hasn't already figure it out, Never Smiles will tell them that their only hope is the shotguns and salt in the wagon. Some of the group will have to distract and delay the Horse Eater while the others dig out the shotguns and shells and stuff the barrels full of salt. Loading the shotguns with rock salt takes 1 extra round of reload time.

### Never Smiles

Never Smiles name is a bit misleading. He has a great sense of humor, he's just a very stone-faced straight man. He also speaks very good English though he often pretends not to.

**Profile:** Never Smiles

**Corporeal:** D:3d8, N:2d10, Q:2d8, S:2d8, V:1d8

Climbin' 2d10, dodge 2d10, fightin': brawlin' 2d10, fightin': knife 3d10, horse ridin' 3d10, shootin': rifles 3d10, sneak 4d10

**Mental:** C:3d8, K:1d6, M:1d8, Sm:2d8, Sp:2d8

Bluff 3d8, faith 2d8, guts 4d8, language: English 2d6, overawe 3d8, scrutinize 2d8, search 3d8, survival: hills 3d8

**Junk:** Never Smiles usually carries a Winchester '73 rifle and a large knife, though the cultists disarmed him.

### The Horse Eater

The Horse Eater has slimy blue flesh like that of a slug or an eel. It's teeth and nails are the size of Bowie knives. It doesn't walk so much as bounds, making it very difficult to move through the thick forests of the Black Hills (half move), which is why it usually keeps to the large paths when it emerges from its home in the swamp.

**Profile:** The Horse Eater

**Corporeal:** D:3d10, N:4d10, Q:2d12, S:1d20, V:1d20

Climbin' 5d10, fightin': brawlin' 5d10, sneak 2d10, swimmin' 5d10

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:1d4, M:3d8, Sm:1d6, Sp:1d6

Overawe 4d8, search 4d10

**Special Abilities:**

**Acid Touch:** The Horse Eater's hands emit a powerful acid.

Besides the damage from the creature's inherent Strength, anyone touched by it suffers hideous wounds that can only be healed by magical or mystical means.

**Invulnerability:** The Horse Eater is a creature of legend. Bullets, arrows, and normal weapons cannot hurt it. It's slug-like skin makes it extremely vulnerable to salt, however. Handfuls of salt do 1d4 points per hit. Salt shot does a base 2d8 damage per hit.

**Weakness:** The creature feeds on horse meat. If it is confronted by a mounted target, it attempts to focus its attentions on the more dangerous riders first. If the thing fails a Foolproof (3) Smarts roll, however, it attempts to put down a horse so that it can feed on it afterwards.

**Coup:** A Harrowed character who absorbs the Horse Eater's spirit gains 1 point of natural armor. The character will ever-after have a peculiar taste for horseflesh, however, and every round spent in contact with a handful or more of salt causes 1d4 Wind.

## Bounty

The posse gets 3 bounty points if they defeat the Horse Eater. Add 1 more as long as Never Smiles survives the fight.

## Chapter Six: The Truth is Out There

Once the Horse Eater is slain or chased back into the swamp, Never Smiles tells the group that two white men have a camp nearby. It was they who jumped him when he was investigating the bog. They beat him with rifles then dragged him to the old cabin and tied him up. He has no idea why the men did it.

An Onerous (7) trackin' roll picks up a trail leading back to the cultist's camp. There the posse will find a tent, camping supplies, and the remains of a small fire, but no inhabitants. As soon as the party starts poking around, Brothers Strong and Wyse will emerge from the woods,

their horses tied a short distance away. They were watching Never Smiles when the Horse Eater struck and have actually followed the victorious posse back to their own campsite.

Brother Strong's story is that they are two pilgrims come to bring religion to the heathens. They attacked Never Smiles because he pointed a rifle at them. They subdued him and took his rifle (it's sitting in the camp), but being peaceful men, they merely bound the warrior at the nearby cabin where he could eventually work his way free. A few minutes ago they heard the sounds of battle and went to help, but they got lost. Now they've returned only to find strangers poking around their belongings.

This doesn't explain the work done on Never Smiles' face, but is otherwise difficult to disprove.

While Strong tells his story, have any characters who aren't taking an active part in the interrogation make a search roll. On a Hard (9) roll or better, they'll see a few clues that contradict Brother Strong's lies. First, piled among their gear is a crowbar. This was used to pry up the railroad ties at Elk Creek. Second, a makeshift desk made of crates inside Wyse's tent has several large pieces of paper atop it. If anyone can get close enough, they'll see these are poorly drawn half-completed survey maps. These were Wyse's first attempts to forge the maps. The final clue is a blue cap lying on Brother Strong's bed. Embroidered on the top of the cap are the words Iron Dragon.

## Brothers Strong and Wyse

Strong is older and more forceful. Wyse is nervous and not quite sure of himself yet. Both are brainwashed minions of Grimme's sinister cult.

**Profile:** Brothers Strong and Wyse

**Corporeal:** D: 2d6, N:3d6, Q:2d6, S:2d6, V:1d6

Climbin' 1d6, dodge 2d6, fightin': brawlin' 2d6, horse ridin' 2d6, shootin': pistols 3d6, shootin': rifles 3d6, sneak 1d6

**Mental:** C:3d6, K:1d6, M:1d4, Sm:1d8, Sp:2d4

academia: occult 3d6, bluff 1d8, faith 4d4, Guts 2d4, medicine: general 1d6, overawe 2d4, persuasion 2d4,

scrutinize 2d6, search 3d6, survival:  
plains 1d8

**Junk:** Both cultists carry .45 caliber  
revolvers, Winchester '73 rifles, and  
a knife

### The Truth

If the posse doesn't point out Strong's inconsistencies, the cultists won't do anything rash. If they do point out the major evidence against them, Strong will grimace and pull several gnawed bones from his vest pocket. Wyse does the same and the two back up into cover with their weapons drawn. In two rounds the bones grow into Bloody Ones and the fight begins.

### The Bloody Ones

Members of the Cult are often granted enchanted bones taken from their victims. Grimme gifts them with a twisted miracle that summons forth a bloody zombie with putrefying organs, looking much as Grimme did during his rebirth. These blood-soaked skeletons are called the "bloody ones."

A cultist (or anyone else with the bone in hand) need only toss the enchanted bone on the ground to summon the horrid servants. The bloody one follows its summoner's orders to the letter—but only if the summoner is a flesh-eating member of Grimme's cannibal cult. An hour after it is summoned, the shambling thing collapses into a pile of steaming gore.

### Profile: Bloody Ones

**Corporeal:** D:3d6, N:3d10, S:3d8,  
Q:3d10, V:3d8

Dodge 2d10, fightin': brawlin' 4, sneak  
4d10

**Mental:** C:4d8, K:1d4, M:2d8, Sm:2d8,  
Sp:3d6

Overawe 4d8, ridicule 4d8, search 4d8,  
trackin' 3d8 (by scent)

**Terror:** 9

### Special Abilities:

**Undead:** Can only be harmed as if  
they were Harrowed.

**Claws:** STR+1d6

**Bite:** STR+1d6

The trick here is to expose the cultist's ruse to Lacy O'Malley. He'll publish his story when the encounter is over regardless of the outcome. If he still believes Iron Dragon is violating its treaty

with the Sioux and their trespassing roused the Horse Eater, his story will do irreparable harm to the Iron Dragon-Sioux Nations alliance. Worse, it will raise the fear level of the entire Black Hills to 3.

If the posse proves the truth, that Strong and Wyse were behind the whole scam, his story will have a different effect. The fear level of the Black Hills will not decline, but the inspiring story of the posse's fight will drop the fear level of this area to 2.

### Bounty

Give the heroes 1 bounty point if the cultists get away with their scheme. Add 3 more if the group forces Strong's hand and defeats them.



# Such a pretty face... But how much fer the head?

## Setup

As the posse is stopping in a small town during their travels, perhaps wetting their whistle with some whisky at the local saloon, they witness an argument between two men (this argument can easily be placed anywhere in town—wherever the posse is congregating).

One man is obviously the town's sheriff—one Joshua Hutchens, the other man is dressed in very distinguished clothing and is obviously quite wealthy. The wealthy man has the sheriff backed up against a wall, and is stabbing him with a finger while screaming and yelling at the top of his lungs. The posse will overhear such statements as “How dare you?,” “Will you do ANYTHING for money you sniveling grub!,” “Didn't you bother even to check on her, do you even HAVE a doctor in this piss bowl of a town?”

The sheriff will weather all of these scathing remarks, seeming very apologetic to the man—and very uncomfortable. After a few more minutes the man will leave the sheriff and get himself a drink. If the party approaches the man—he will greet them and seek their assistance (see “Retrieve my daughter, please”)—if they do not seek him, he will seek them—stopping them and offering them a job. If the party approaches the sheriff he will only tell them that he made a “dreadful mistake.” He will tell them that the man's daughter died this morning—and that the man believes she is still alive. The sheriff is sure she is not. If pushed, he'll tell them to talk to Mr. Donnelly—presumably the man he has just finished arguing with.

## Retrieve my daughter, please...

Regardless of whether the party approaches Donnelly, or whether he approaches them. Eventually he will sit them down, buy them a round of drinks, and tell them his story... In a tense, yet controlled voice, he will brief them on the situation:

“Gentlemen. My name is Xavier Donnelly. I am originally from Philadelphia, where I ran my family's mercantile business for fifteen years. Currently, I am funding several expeditions to California—and have already laid claim to a vein of ghost rock. I tell you all of this so that you

will be sufficiently aware that I am quite literally made of money...

“But you see, as the popular saying dictates—money can not buy everything. The greatest love in all of my life is my daughter Susan—she is my pride and joy—my special one. Unfortunately, she has been stricken with a falling sickness. When she does not receive her medication—she will often lose great gaps of time. Perhaps months. When she will quite simply not know who or where she is. Six weeks ago I was on business in Pennsylvania when our maid broke the bottle of Susan's medication. The woman did not inform me of this. Susan's situation became acute. And she disappeared. I have in the past month tracked her across two states—apparently she found her way onto a train at one point. And finally, to this town. She lived here, as I have gathered, for most of the time she's been gone—fostered here by the saloon keeper. However, when she is without medication for very long periods—she quite literally will fall into deep unconscious stupors. This has happened, and since the doctor—apparently, is currently sick with some virus. The sheriff pronounced my daughter dead. Apparently, there is a man who travels through this area often who purchases corpses who's families can not be found or who have none. This morning that butcher of a sheriff sold my Susan to this man. His name, is Ignacious Blye. I know not what nefarious purpose he uses these cadavers for. But I know that my daughter still lives! Mr. Blye travels with a large carriage—you should be able to catch him before dark. Certainly be back by late this evening. If you will do me this service, and find my daughter. I will pay you fifty dollars each for the service. (PAUSE). Dead or Alive.”

Donnelly can offer up to sixty dollars per person—but truthfully he is almost broke. Some bad investments and his lack of attention to his business for almost two months have taken their toll. He is a desperate man. And if necessary, he will attempt to coerce the posse into doing this by trying to persuade them to pity him. Once the posse agrees, if they agree—move on to “The Real Story”—it's time you (the Marshall) knew how much trouble Susan Donnelly is really in...

## The Real Story

Ignacious Blye is on his way to meet Lieutenant Montgomery Hamilton—a southern officer who was killed a year ago in the war. Hamilton is, of course, now harrowed. He is in control of his manitou, but he’s a fairly ruthless gent all on his own. Since his “resurrection,” Hamilton has been raiding into the disputed territories—using a band of Good ‘ol Boys (walking dead) that he dug up on the way. He currently maintains 12 of these “soldiers.”

Hamilton contacted Blye two days ago, and had him comb the surrounding towns for fresh bodies—his boys haven’t eaten in awhile. And they get pretty ornery when they haven’t had their fill of brains. Hamilton, in an attempt to keep them docile and to not raise too much attention by having them go berserk in the countryside, considers Blye his best option. Blye, being in the business of bodies, deals with such things all he time.

Unfortunately—Hamilton suffers an attack by his manitou—during which he goes into a seizure and blurts out “Bind me and gag me boys—so I don’t hurt myself.” (Really this is out of reflex—since he can’t really hurt himself being Harrowed and all ). His men happily oblige. Unfortunately, they don’t untie him since, in his present state, he can’t order them too. In fact, they’ve tightened the bonds and started to make plans of their own. This is the situation that Blye (and shortly later the posse) will come across when they arrive.

Blye will be captured by the hungry dead—and they will be preparing to crack open his skull (along with the beautiful Susan, who they happily discover is also alive) when the posse arrives.

## Meat

### Encounter I—Which way did he go?

The first challenge the posse will face will be locating Blye’s track... The sheriff will be able to volunteer that Blye left town on the north road—beyond that he can’t offer any help. If the posse heads down the north road and is checking for tracks, an Onerous (7) tracking roll will allow them to determine that Blye left the road about 500 yards north of town and headed east into the hills. From this point forward, tracking the coach will require only a Fair (5) difficulty roll—require one of these to be made between each encounter

(require your first roll now, as the posse begins tracking Blye into the hills).

### Encounter II—Bad Tidings

After about an hour, the posse will come across a homestead nestled within the gently sloping hills. A Fair(5) Cognition (visual) roll will give them an “odd” feeling about the place. An Onerous (7) visual examination of the exterior will show bullet holes in the front of the home—about a dozen or so. Though no glass has been broken, and the door is completely intact.

If the party enters, they will be overwhelmed by the stench of decay. The door opens into the kitchen, across the kitchen is a living area. Within the living area are the decomposing body of a rancher, his wife, and their two children. All of the bodies look as if they’ve been gnawed on—and each has had their brain pan cracked open—exposing an empty skull (the brain is gone). As soon as anyone views this, they need to make an Onerous (7) fear check. A Fair (5) visual cognition roll will reveal what look to be teeth marks on the broken skulls. Aside from some broken items, nothing seems to be missing from the house.

If they search out back of the house, an Onerous (7) Cognition roll will reveal tracks leading off in roughly the same direction of Blye. A Hard (9) tracking roll will reveal the tracks were made by four individuals, who drug their feet in an odd fashion and walked in a ponderous manner. An experienced tracker will be able to determine the tracks are only several hours old.

### Encounter III—Rock and Rattle

Whether the party follows Blye’s tracks, the tracks from the house, or both—they will come across what looks to be signs of a struggle. The dirt is disturbed and looks like it has been “brushed clean”. Earlier, after assaulting the ranch, Hamilton’s boys came through here and awakened a lone Utah Rattler hunting far south of its usual hunting area One of them was hit badly and was left behind. Blye however, moved quickly through the area—and did not disturb the beast.

As the party moves past this location, have every one make a Fair (5) Cognition (hearing) roll—anyone who makes it will hear low groaning coming from the other side of a rock cleft—and the sound of scraping. If anyone investigates—they will find one of Hamilton’s



boys with most of his lower body missing. Their walking all around will most likely attract the rattler—who hasn't strayed very far from his last "kill".

If the party manages to kill the rattler, they will find that the walking dead is indeed badly wounded—though healing. He can't really talk—and seems pitiful. If anyone wants to get close enough, they will hear him begging to die. He will reveal nothing of his compatriots or their activities however.

#### Encounter IV—Kill 'em all. And pass the salt!

As the posse comes up on the encampment (should have taken them about 2 hours to get here)—they will be approaching across a short rise on the south side of the camp. The camp itself is set up against a bluff (which lies on the north end of the camp)—presumably for shelter. There are three tents spread out in a semicircle coming out from the bluff. There is a wagon set up on the eastern end of the encampment—the horses are tied on a rock at the base of the bluff, on the west side of camp.

Dancing around the bonfire are seven of Hamilton's boys. Three more are drawing from a barrel at the rear of the wagon, two are set up with rifles up on the bluff. It will take an Onerous (7) Cognition role to spot the three at the wagon from the posse's initial vantage point, and a Difficult (9) Cognition roll to spot the two snipers. Hamilton himself is tied up in the wagon, while Susan and Blye are easier to spot: they are trussed up by the fire... And it looks as if the boys are preparing to bash Blye's skull in.

At this point all hell will break loose. The boys will fight as a semi-organized unit (they have experience, but no real leader). If the party should kill Hamilton, the boys will also die. If they let Hamilton go, he will help them. But remember—in the current situation Blye will be dead in minutes and Susan shortly after. So they'd better hurry. The boys will fight to the

death- they're last order was to guard the camp—and besides, they are real hungry. Refer to boot hill for the stats on Hamilton's gang. If the posse should manage to defeat the gang, proceed to the "Roundup" section to complete the yarn.

### Boot Hill

#### Mongomery Hamilton (Harrowed Southern Lieutenant)

##### Attack

Pistol: 4d8

Rifle: 3d8

##### Defense

Brawling: 4

Dodge: 3d8

Hits: 60

##### Special Abilities

Takes damage as Harrowed

#### Hamilton's Boys

Just your standard walking dead—10 are armed with SA Colt Peacemakers, 2 are armed with Winchester '76 rifles (Hamilton has equipped them well).

#### Utah Rattler (Mojave Rattler)

Again- one of the standard big snakes... Could be tough for a small posse—so be careful...

#### Ignacious Blye

They say Ignacious Blye—he went crazy sometime way back. He's a dwarf of a man—standin' only a little over four an a half feet tall—voice is all high pitched and gravely. Man's scary ta listen too. What he does tho—that's even more disturbin'. He's an undertaker by trade—cept I don't know if that's what he does no more. See he travels town to town—and he claims those bodies no one else'll claim—got himself one o' them scientists wagons, the ones that are cold all the time. He pays right well for the bodies—then he heads on outta town—after he puts em in the wagon o' course. Where he goes with 'em and what he does with 'em no one aint ever bothered ta ask. Truth is, I dont think anyone cares ta know

# Ticked Off.

## Setup

This simple yarn is built to play just about anywhere. The only requirement is that the posse is out in the middle of nowhere (no cities or towns for many miles) and it would also be a good idea if they aren't on a deadline when you run this.

So, the posse is traveling somewhere in the great expanse of the weird west. The adventure begins around 6:00 in the evening—as they are beginning to consider looking for a suitable camp for the night. As they begin to search, have anyone in the party make an Onerous (7) survival roll. If the roll is made, inform them that a dust storm is on the horizon, rolling in fast. If this first roll is missed, another can be made at Fair (5)—though this will give considerably less warning. If no one in the party has survival, visual cognition will suffice (though you shouldn't inform them what they are seeing exactly—call it a “disturbance” instead of a “very large dust storm.”).

Chances are they will begin to make survival and/or Cognition rolls like mad to look for shelter. Any result of Onerous (7) or better will reveal a short path leading off over a hill. If the posse follows the path they will find a solid structure at the end of the path. It consists of two buildings (one significantly larger than the other) connected by a short hallway. A fence squares off the front of the property and two large sets of

doors allow entrance to the larger building. One of these doors is swinging back in forth in the building wind, and a horse is running free within the fenced in perimeter.

The storm will be screaming at them by now, and they'll most likely run in and worry about asking permission from the owner later. Anyone looking closely will notice a sign proclaiming “Sullivan Mining Inc.” above the main doors—barely visible through the blowing dust.

## The Real Story

A few days before the posse arrives, the miners at the site dug into a huge nest of prairie ticks. The critters quickly overran the place and killed everyone.

The ticks are extremely aggressive because there is a Queen among them. This also increases their intelligence slightly and allows them to act more as a group.

The Queen has a nest down in the mine shafts—where most of the host bodies were drug after infestation. She will defend her lair aggressively.

The storm has agitated the ticks and they will be quite foul tempered by the time the posse arrives. There are approx. 30-40 ticks, in addition to the queen.

The only survivor of the massacre is a small infant that the queen has taken an interest in. Any god-fearing hero couldn't help but try to rescue the little tike.

## Meat

### Ground Floor: The Sullivan Mining Camp



- 1: Entryway - fairly empty, a few chairs.
- 2: Sleepin' Quarters - trickles of blood and gore on the sheets, bits of bone.
- 3: Dinin' Room - Group Mess, one long table, rotting food, more blood, (Onerous[7] cognition roll to notice tracks in food of small critter). There is also a makeshift baby cradle here—and some soiled wrags. Look recently used.
- 4: Stable - 2 dead horses. One with big hole, one with moderate hole. One sick horse (infested).
- 5: Storage - Lots of boxes, etc. Difficult [9] cognition to notice holes in wall from ticks. 3 bottles of castor oil in old crate. Dynamite packed in small crate (5 sticks)
- 6: Sleepin' Quarters - trickles of blood and gore on the sheets, bits of bone.
- 7: Hall - Mining equipment, etc. Tracks from critters.
- 8: Mine - Entrance to mine. Skittering can be heard down the hole. Crude lift carries up to three at a time down shaft.

### Second Floor: The Mine



- 1: Bottom of Lift - Lift drops you off here. Loud clicking in distance.
- 2: Small Cavern - Between 2-8 ticks will be here itchin' for a fight.
- 3: Host Storage - This is where the queen has the hive bring the hosts who've been infected. All dead—bodies mostly in side caves (Horror Roll TN 7).
- 4: Small Cavern - Another cavern serving as a lair. 1-10 ticks here.
- 5: Queen's Chamber - The queen and her warriors are here—there will be the queen and an additional 8-15 ticks here (gauge party strength and apply ticks as needed). Stats for the queen can be found in the boot hill chapter. A little baby wrapped in dirty rags lies close by the queen—it is very upset.

## Boot Hill

### Prairie Ticks

See Deadlands, page 199.

### The Queen

The queen is slightly different than her brood in two fashions. First, she is larger (**Size: 5**) and therefore her mandibles do more damage—1d12 instead of the usual 1d4. Second, she also has an armor value of 2 due to the thicker shell which will make her impervious to normal pistols. However, if all else fails- the posse will still have dynamite. The good news is that she can not crawl down your throat—which makes you one lucky cowpoke.

## Roundup

### Bounty Awards for the Entire Yarn

Posse Finds the mining shacks before the storm hits them	1 bounty
Posse determines horses were killed by some critter	2 bounty
Posse finds castor oil in store room	1 bounty
Posse finds dynamite in store room	2 bounty
Posse figures out there was a baby in the main shack	1 bounty
Posse rescues the baby from the ticks	3 bounty
Posse destroys the ticks without killing baby	3 bounty
Posse destroys the queen	2 bounty
Posse gives at least some of the miners last rights or a proper burial	2 bounty
Posse survives the night.	1-3 bounty

# The Tombstone Epitaph's Guide to the Weird West

1876 Edition

"The Bright Light of Truth!"

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## PINKERTONS MURDERED!

DENVER – While riding into the outskirts of Denver yesterday afternoon, a small wagon train chanced upon the remains of two bodies yesterday afternoon. According to Walter Thurman, the group's guide, he noticed a strange-looking mound off to one side of the road, partially obscured by some undergrowth.

Curious, Thurman rode over and discovered the first of the corpses. He quickly rode into town and fetched the sheriff. Upon returning and searching the area, a second corpse was discovered. The remains have been identified as those of Christopher Dawson and Geoffrey

Harris, two Pinkerton agents stationed in the area. The cause of death for both was determined to be a gunshot wound to the back of the head.

When asked what he thought might have occurred, senior Pinkerton official Laurence Cross offered no comment. "This is an internal agency matter and will be handled as such. If anyone has information that might assist in our investigation, that will be taken into consideration. We are working closely with the local authorities, and are confident that the matter will be closed shortly."

To this reporter, however, it seems that the investigation is finding little. No murder weapon has been found, no motive is known, and there don't even seem to be any suspects. But, knowing the Agency, it is quite possible that all the facts are merely being well-concealed.

# Booth's Encore

## The Background

### April 15, 1865 - Ford's Theater

A disillusioned actor, John Wilkes Booth, initiates his plan to throw the government of the North into chaos by shooting Abraham Lincoln in the back of the head at Ford's Theater. Lincoln dies the following day. Booth manages to escape from the theater, and evades authorities for twelve days before being tracked down to his hiding place in Bowling Green, Virginia, by Pinkerton agents Michael Summers and Wayne Palmer.

Booth was surprised by the pair, and killed when he attempted to flee. Upon searching the body for evidence, Palmer discovered the assassin's weapon --a small Derringer, in beautiful condition. He also discovered something else, however, the weapon had become an evil relic of great power. While Summers was searching the barn for further clues, Palmer found himself raising the gun, and shooting his partner in the head, slaying him instantly. From that moment, Palmer has been completely under the control of the weapon.

### May 14, 1876 - Denver

Wayne Palmer is now a high-ranking member of the Pinkerton Detective Agency. He is well respected, primarily due to his ability to catch almost anyone he's sent after. He's gained a reputation for ruthless efficiency, any of his suspects that put up a fight usually end up dead--shot through the head.

Under the gun's influence, Palmer has been working his way up in the Agency, biding his time until his position gave him the power he needs to act. Palmer's recent assignment to Denver has given him the opportunity he needs.

Palmer is one of the few agents outside of the Inner Council who knows of the existence of the Star Chamber. He often transports Harrowed prisoners to the chamber and has access to it. With the assistance of an ambitious huckster by the name of Jimmy Cooper, he plans to twist the power of the Star Chamber to his own ends. Cooper has devised a ritual to use the chamber's pentagram to bind a Harrowed's manitou to his

service. Using this ritual, Palmer plans to recruit a group of undead assassins and complete Booth's plot to decapitate the US government.

Unfortunately, while performing this ceremony on the first of their "recruits", the pair were interrupted by agents Dawson and Harris. Palmer managed to surprise the two, and killed them both.

He and Cooper hauled the bodies outside of town. They were about to bury them when the wagon train appeared. They quickly threw some brush over the bodies and fled the scene.

Luckily for Palmer, his superiors have no idea that he was involved. The murder of such senior agents is an important matter, and his superiors have asked Palmer to personally look into the matter. Palmer, claiming that there may be an infiltrator in the Denver office, has asked for and received permission to hire some outside investigators to assist him.

## The Adventure

Enter the posse. If one of them is a Pinkerton, or other law enforcement official, a perfect hook exists. Otherwise, the group hears through the grapevine that the Pinkertons are looking for freelance investigators.

Once the posse is onboard, Palmer will send them on a few wild goose chases while he and Cooper enslave a few more Harrowed assassins. When Palmer is satisfied he has enough ( 3 or 4) to carry out his assassination plan, he will murder Cooper and then plant evidence connecting him to the murders.

During the investigation, the posse should uncover some clues connecting Cooper and Palmer. Palmer, who is coming increasingly under the gun's control, may also accidentally let his Southern sympathies show.

### The Star Chamber

As described in *The Quick & the Dead*, this is where the Pinkertons attempt to suppress the manitous within Harrowed prisoners and recruit the characters for their own ends. Only a few senior members of the Agency know of this chamber, and will never tell anyone else about it without a damn good reason.

The power of the chamber is such that other rituals can be performed there by those individuals who know what they're doing. Cooper is ritually binding the Harrowed to Palmer's service by striking a deal with them. He offers them total control of their host bodies in exchange for a short period of service. The alternative is being destroyed. Cooper's ritual and the nature of the Star Chamber forces the manitou to abide by the deal. They don't do so willingly and interpret any orders they are given in a manner most favorable to them.

It is likely that the posse will have to visit this area at some point to further their investigation. In order to do so, they'll have to convince an agent (not Palmer, of course!) that it is vital to finding out what's really going on, though.

The Star Chamber has a fear level of 3, due to its blatantly supernatural nature, while the area around it has a fear level of 2. People just naturally tend to shy away from the warehouse which it's underneath...

### John Wilkes Booth's Pistol

This small Colt one-shot pistol is the same one used by Booth during his assassination of Lincoln. The moment he fired it at Lincoln, it became another relic of the Reckoning.

**Power:** When used against an unsuspecting target, the gun totally negates the penalty for a called shot to the head (and only the head, called shots to other body parts suffer the normal penalties).

Other than this, the pistol functions as a normal Colt one-shot as detailed in *The Quick & the Dead*.

**Taint:** The person who owns this item develops an all-consuming hatred for the Union and those who support it. They become bent on trying to destroy the government, or at the least throw it into total chaos, so that the South can achieve the victory it deserves.

### Wayne Palmer - Senior Pinkerton

Eleven years ago, Wayne was regarded as an excellent young recruit in the Agency, with a bright future. Since then, he has fulfilled everyone's expectations, though nobody is aware of exactly how.

In reality, Wayne's turned into a bit of a basket-case. He used to be fanatically loyal to the Union, and his encounter with Booth's relic has turned his mind inside-out. Now, he has become a ruthless and cold man, able to concoct plans on the spot and execute them flawlessly, without regard for who they might hurt.

Profile: Wayne Palmer

**Corporeal:** D: 3d8, N: 2d6, Q: 2d10, S: 3d6, V: 3d6

Shootin': automatics 3d8, Shootin': Pistol 4d8, Shootin': Rifle 3d8, Speed-Load: Pistol 2d8, Dodge: 3d6, Fightin': Brawlin 3d6, Fightin': Knife 2d6, Horse Ridin' 3d6, Sneak 3d6

**Mental:** C: 4d8, K: 2d8, M: 3d8, Sm: 3d10, Sp: 3d8

Scrutinize 3d8, Search 3d8, Trackin' 4d8, Area Knowledge: Denver 3d8, Area Knowledge: Virginia 4d8, Overawe 2d8, Bluff 4d8, Guts: 3d8

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Intolerance: Northerners

**Edges:** Eagle Eyes, Sand (4)

# The Tombstone Epitaph's Guide to the Weird West

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## FOUR DEAD IN RANDOM SHOOTING!

ROCKY FORD, COLORADO - John Stutler, landowner, rancher, councilman, and father of three was arrested by town Marshal Jim Craddock today. Why? Because at approximately 3 o'clock this afternoon, Mr. Sutler walked into the local dry goods store, drew his pistol, and opened fire on the customers and staff. After emptying his gun, he fled into the street, reloaded, and began to shoot at passersby. This

continued until the Marshal apprehended him in an alley while trying to reload again.

Four people, including the owner of the store, Mortimer Tarpley, and his nine year-old daughter, Claudia, were killed in the attack. Three others were seriously wounded. Mr. Stutler could offer no reason for this sudden outburst of violence. When interviewed he said, "I was feeling a might under the weather this morning, so I went to the store to get some tonic. Mort said he was out and I turned to leave. I don't remember drawin' my gun, the rest is just a blur."

What could have caused an otherwise peaceful family man to commit such a callous act? We here at the Epitaph will dig deep to answer this question. Look for the answer in our next edition.



## Victoria Epps, Alchemist

Stutler's murderous rampage is the unwitting work of Victoria Epps, a traveling fortune-teller and budding alchemist. Victoria, Vicky to her friends, has spent the last few months traveling slowly West from Dodge City in her small covered wagon. She makes a living telling fortunes and passing herself off as a gypsy. A few months ago, a rather mysterious visitor to her wagon paid for her fortune-telling abilities with an old book.

This tome turned out to be a copy of Albertus Magnus' writings on the theory of alchemy. Vicky was intrigued by the book and began mixing up small batches of elixir in her spare time. She eventually developed an all-purpose health elixir and began to sell this in towns along her route.

What she didn't know was that the book she had been given was tainted by evil. It had once belonged to Torquemada, one of the Spanish Inquisition's Grand Inquisitors. He took it from one of his "guests" and used the secrets contained therein for his own nefarious purposes. Notes in Torquemada's handwriting are scrawled in many of the book's margins.

The book contains secrets which many alchemists would (and have) killed for. Any who possess the book can create powerful elixirs, but at a price. The evil of the book's past has tainted it, any formulas made using its knowledge have an automatic side effect on their users. The stranger who gave it to Vicky recognized its evil, but was one of those scholarly types who couldn't bring himself to destroy such a rich collection of knowledge. The last health elixir Vicky brewed up was extremely potent, and she sold quite a few bottles, many in the town of Rocky Ford. Before she went on her way she sold the last bottles of the batch to Mortimer Tarpley, the owner of the general store.

What she didn't realize was the side effect that her elixir possessed. It is highly addictive and when taken in large doses, it causes the user to become surly and irritable. If an addict is crossed in any way, or denied access to more elixir, he flies into a murderous rage and lashes out at anyone who crosses his path. There are quite a few more addicts of Mistress Victoria's

Patented Health Elixir in Rocky Ford (all of whom feel in the best of health). Once their supply of elixir runs out, there's going to be more blood flowing in this poor little town's streets. Vicky has continued west along the Arkansas river. Unaware of the trouble she has caused, she has brewed up another batch of her elixir and is selling it in towns along her path.

## The Posse

This situation is made for the posse to stumble into. Perhaps one of the posse members gets hooked on the elixir. Or maybe Mistress Victoria passes through one of the posse members' hometowns and the posse comes to investigate why people they have known for years are suddenly gunning each other down. You can throw in any number of complications, like bad blood between some of the shooters and their victims, sinister alchemists after the book on Vicky's trail, etc.

More information about alchemy, alchemists, and elixirs can be found in Smith & Robards, which will be hitting store shelves very soon. Until then, the duration is how long the elixir's effects last, reliability is rolled for each dose in the same way as for a gizmo (failure causes one of the listed side effects), and the speed is how quickly the elixir takes effect.

## Mistress Victoria's Patented Health Elixir

**Price:** \$20 dollars a bottle (10 doses)

**Duration:** 4 hours

**Reliability:** 18

**Speed:** 1 round

**Effect:** Taking a dose of elixir acts as a stimulant to the body. The user feels alert and healthy and gains a +1 bonus to all rolls. It is also highly addictive, each time a character takes a dose, he must make a Hard (9) Vigor roll or become hooked on the stuff. Once hooked, the hero must have a dose every four hours or become surly and irritable. If crossed, the addict must make an Incredible (11) Spirit roll or fly into a murderous rage for 2d10 minutes. It takes 48 hours to completely flush all traces of the elixir from one's system. At this point the effects of addiction vanish.

**Side Effects**

**Minor:** The user is nauseated and -2 to all rolls for 1d6 rounds.

**Major:** The hero spends the next 1d4 rounds vomiting.

**Serious:** The user flies into a rage for 2d6 rounds and tries to kill everyone in sight. While raging, the user has an effective size of 8 when resolving damage.

### Torquemada's Tome of Alchemy

**Power:** The book allows any alchemist using it to create an elixir to lower the difficulty by one hand.

**Taint:** Any elixirs created with the book have an automatic detrimental side effect determined by the Marshal.

## Grave Robbing on the Rise!

DENVER, COLORADO – Denver police report that a number of bodies have recently been taken from the city cemeteries.

The first victim was Marcus Trent, who died back in '65. The next few victims were all recent interments. Police speculate the bodies were taken for their gold teeth and other personal effects, but this reporter suspects something more sinister is afoot.

A reward of \$50 has been offered to anyone who puts a stop to these ghoulish hijinks.

The Epitaph will keep you informed as more details become available.

--Lacy O' Malley  
November, '76

## Mysterious Bandit Flees Chicago!

Word has come to this intrepid reporter of a strange story that recently took place in Chicago, Illinois. According to the Tribune, a thief broke into the Chicago Museum of Fine Arts and made off with an ancient book.

An armed guard attempted to stop the theft, but the bandit stabbed the brave man with a long, jagged knife. It isn't known whether or not the guard lived, but he described the thief as a young, wiry fellow with wild eyes, brown hair, a disheveled suit, and spectacles.. The guard believes he broke the thief's spectacles in the shuffle, and a man matching this description was seen boarding a Union Blue train bound for Denver.

Chicago authorities are urging locals to look for anyone matching this description in the High Plains area.

The book stolen by the thief had not yet been identified by museum scholars. All that is known is that it was written in some sort of old Arabic, and bound in scarred leather.

--Chicago Tribune  
October, '76

# The Necronomicon

Howdy, friends. Our latest tale involves a certain book some of you may have heard of, and a young man who is about to learn its power comes at a terrible price.

This twisted tale is designed to introduce the Necronomicon into your game. This might help you and your players get more use out of our new Book o' the Dead. The adventure is merely an outline, however (hey, what do you want for free?) You'll need to flesh it out yourself to give it proper depth and challenge.

## The Story Thus Far...

The book stolen by the Chicago thief was none other than the fabled Necronomicon. Within its musty pages are many ancient rituals, hexes, and incantations.

The thief is a crazed chemist named Henry West. Henry had been secretly studying reanimation procedures at a college Back East when he read about the discovery of the book. Though his sources were unsure of the book's purpose, West's long years of research told him that a "book bound in ragged leather and written in ancient Arabic" must be the Book of the Dead.

West couldn't afford a trip overseas, so he waited patiently for it to come to America. Six months later, his dreams came true. The book, along with several other artifacts, were shipped to Chicago.

Henry raced westward and managed to get an appointment to view the artifacts using the name of a famous professor from his own university back east. His suspicions confirmed, Henry came back to the museum that night, broke in, and tried to make off with the Necronomicon. He was discovered by a guard, however, and in his panic, grabbed a knife from the rest of the scattered relics and tried to fight his way out. Henry had no intention of killing the guard, but the dagger had a mind of its own and drank deeply of the unfortunate man's life.

The incident pushed the already unstable West off the deep-end. Now he's headed west with more trouble in his satchel than he can handle, looking for an isolated graveyard where he can continue his unholy research.

## The Setup

Someone has been stealing bodies from the city cemeteries. We've set this tale in Denver, but you can relocate it anywhere you want. The Weird West is a big place, after all.

The heroes might first hear about the tale in the first Tombstone Epitaph we've given you above. If the reward offered isn't enough to entice them into getting involved, use the Denver police to hire them, use them, or call in a favor as appropriate to your campaign.

## Chapter One

The heroes will likely begin their investigations by poking around the local cemeteries. When they do, they'll discover that three bodies were taken over the course of the last week, about one every other night. The first body, however, that of Marcus Trent, was taken an entire week before the next three were unearthed. West experimented with Marcus for some time before determining it was too old for proper reanimation. That's why the next few bodies were all recent interments.

The second clue the group can discover is that around each grave are a single set of footprints. This requires a Fair (5) trackin' roll to detect after visiting at least two gravesites.

In the last grave the party visits, they'll find a two-week old ticket stub for a Union Blue train from Chicago to Denver. Any character that has ridden the rails or makes a Fair (5) Knowledge roll knows that Union Blue has been recording passenger names for the last few months due to sabotage by the other railroads involved in the Great Rail Wars.

If they take this ticket to the Union Blue station, they might be able to uncover the grave robber's identity.

## Chapter Two

Sure enough, the Union Blue office has a record of ticket stub 0013, dated two weeks prior to the adventure. The passenger's name is H. West. The station master didn't see the passenger, but fortunately, the same train is in town and the conductor is having dinner at a local

eatery before the train leaves again the next morning.

At the restaurant, the posse can quickly find Arthur Dulles, a one-armed veteran of the Civil War. The owner of Union Blue, former General Joshua Chamberlain, often gives such jobs to disabled veterans who still want to work.

Arthur is a keen man and, surprisingly enough, actually remembers the passenger:

“He was a strange fellow. Held a satchel tightly in his arms the whole trip. Even slept that way. I thought he was an odd bird, but I didn’t have any reason to stop him. I did pick up an article in Chicago on the last trip that makes me wish I had, however.”

With that, Arthur hands over the Chicago Tribune (the second story we gave you, partner.) This should give the posse some insight as to what Mr. H. West is up to.

## Chapter Three

The next step belongs to the posse. They’ll have to start combing the saloons, hotels, and inns to find their suspect. Eventually, when someone makes a streetwise total of 11 or more, they’ll find that Mr. West rented a small house on the outskirts of Denver. The saloon keeper who passes this information on also owns the house, and asks the posse to ask Mr. West for the rent should they go visit him.

## Chapter Four

The climax of the adventure works best if it takes place at night. If the posse goes early in the daytime, you should sideswipe them with a short encounter or have them get lost for a time. When they do finally get to West’s house on the outskirts of Denver, they’ll see that several lightning rods have recently been added. The lines from the rods all lead into the house, rather than into the ground as usual. This is part of West’s bizarre reanimation procedure.

Whenever the group finally approaches the house, they’ll be met at the door by West himself. When confronted, he first lies nervously, then, when it’s obvious he’s about to get buffaloed, locks the door and runs to the attic.

### The Basement

Storming the house, the posse will be stopped by Marcus Trent, the first reanimated golem

created by West. This thing has murder on its mind. In fact, it’s so savage that West has kept it locked in the basement until just now.

Marcus is a Veteran Walkin’ Dead, as described on page 142 of *The Quick & the Dead*. He carries a large plank that he uses to bash people, which causes STR+2d6 damage. This zombie is particularly merciless. He’ll pick on the weakest character first before moving on to tougher folks.

### The Attic

West is secured in the attic, which also doubles as his laboratory. He’s climbed up the only interior entrance, a hatch in the ceiling, and pulled the ladder up behind him. If the posse scouted out the house, they might remember there’s a rope and pulley leading to an attic window. This is how West got his bizarre apparatus, not to mention his stolen corpses, up into his attic laboratory.

In the attic are four more corpses, all created with the *Necronomicon*. They are bound to various tables, but West runs about releasing them when it’s apparent the posse will break into the attic. Treat these corpses as Walkin’ Dead.

Other than that, West doesn’t directly attack anyone if he can help it. If the zombies start to lose, however, he throws bottles of acid from afar. These cause 3d10 damage that ignores armor. There are 7 of these bottles in his lab.

If pressed, West defends himself with the dagger he stole from Chicago. He’s taken to calling it “Bloodrinker,” for it is hollow, and when used, blood pours from the carved ghoulish head at the end of the handle.

### Henry West

Henry is a dedicated scientist, but the temptations of the dreaded *Necronomicon* have proved too much. His obsession with reanimating dead corpses started as a noble idea, but he quickly became disillusioned when his “successes” came back as mindless zombies.

#### Profile: Henry West

**Corporeal:** D:1d6, N:2d6, S:2d6,  
Q:2d6, V:2d6

Lockpickin’ 3d6, throwin’ 2d6, fightin’:  
knife 2d6, sneak 4d6

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:3d8, M:2d6,  
Sm:3d10, Sp:3d8

Academia: occult 5d8, medicine:  
general 4d8, bluff 3d10, guts 3d8

**Special Abilities:**

**Black Magic:** Zombie 3

**Gear:**

**Blooddrinker**

This ancient dagger was used by mad cultists in Arabia in the 1200s. Many a crusader found himself a victim of its tainted steel.

**Power:** A dark sorcerer who kills a human with this dagger gains an extra power level in all his spells for 24 hours.

**Taint:** None, dealing in dark sorcery carries its own taint.

**The Necronomicon**

The fabled Book of the Dead is a necromancer's handbook. It's ancient pages are tattered and torn and wrapped in aged human skin. In fact, decayed holes in the cover of the

book make it look as if the Necronomicon has a leering, hateful face.

**Power:** The secrets it contains are many. Within its crumbling pages is the black magic Zombie spell detailed on page 139 of The Quick & the Dead. Any character may learn this spell, though what they do with it will likely carry a high cost.

When first learned, the power level is 1. Additional levels can be bought with bounty points for 2 times the new level.

Also, any character who reads the entire Tome increases his chances of coming back from the dead as a Harrowed. When the hero dies, he may draw 5 extra cards.

**Taint:** This power comes at a cost, however. Once read, the user becomes obsessed with death. If the reader doesn't make a Hard (9) Spirit total, he'll take his own life at the first opportunity in hopes of coming back as a Harrowed.

# The Tombstone Epitaph's Guide to the Weird West

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## Jenkins Expedition Disappears Without a Trace!

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH- The Jenkins Expedition has been officially declared missing! A spokesman for Dr. Hellstromme announced today that the expedition's return was weeks overdue and all attempts to locate the group have failed. As of today, the search for the missing scientists is being called off. Hellstromme has not given up entirely on the ill-fated expedition, however, it was also announced that a \$1000 reward is being offered for any information which leads to unraveling the group's fate.

As most of our readers know, the Jenkins Expedition, led by Dr. Claudius P. Jenkins, left Salt Lake City nearly two months ago. Their goal: use the latest scientific methods and inventions to locate, track, and kill a Mojave Rattler. Dr. Jenkins firmly believed that, like the whale, the Mojave Rattler could be hunted and exploited for its meat, oil, and other products.

The departure of the expedition for the Mojave was quite a spectacle. The group's equipment filled five large steam wagons. These impressive vehicles were the latest models and had been custom outfitted for the expedition. Each wagon had over-sized wheels to give better handling in the loose sand and a raised fighting platform on the rear, equipped with powerful lanterns and a large harpoon gun. In addition to these, the caravan boasted four steam velocipedes and an ornithopter. Most of this equipment was donated by Dr. Hellstromme, the expedition's sponsor. It made for quite an impressive display

of what new science can achieve as the group steamed its way out of the city.

The expedition boasted more than just an impressive array of modern equipment. Dr. Jenkins is a well-known scientist who has created many useful inventions for use in daily life. He is probably best known for his Amazing Clockwork De-Moler. Accompanying him on the trip was the famous (some would say infamous) gunslinger, Lockjaw McGraw. A last minute addition to the group was the renowned worm hunter Charlie "Cutter" Waxman (shown at right). He has spent many years in the Badlands of South Dakota trapping young rattlers for their hides. Dr. Jenkins hired him on for his knowledge of the creature's habits.

Hellstromme sponsored the expedition in the hopes that if it met with success, larger scale operations could be mounted and rattler hunting could begin on a commercial basis. Those close to Dr. Jenkins say the scientist envisioned large fleets of what he called "sand ships," enormous steam-powered vehicles as large as a house, steaming across the desert, harvesting Mojave Rattlers.

Recent sand storms hampered searchers' efforts. We can only hope that the expedition has simply become lost and those sent in search of it simply looked in the wrong place. Unfortunately, the dangerous nature of the expedition's quarry can only lead one to think the worst. Let's pray the 25 men and women of the Jenkins Expedition are soon found.

# The Sand Men

## The Peabody Expedition

In 1866, an inventor named Jeremiah Peabody had an inspiration, he was going to transform the Mojave into a lush, green paradise. All he needed to do was burrow down deep enough and get at the enormous amounts of water he believed were trapped beneath the desert sand. If this water could be tapped and pumped to the surface, he could turn the Mojave into an area as green and fertile as the plains of Nebraska.

Peabody found some investors back East who were foolish enough to finance this escapade and in early '68, after nearly a year's preparation, he led an expedition into the desert. The trip was not publicized, because if the initial expedition met with success, the scientist's investors wanted first crack at buying up lots in the desert at bargain prices. The group was equipped with specialized digging equipment of Peabody's design and wagon after wagon of copper piping. The expedition members set to work and quickly sank a number of shafts-walled with pipe to keep out the sand-into the desert floor. The work crews eventually hit the bedrock beneath the desert and began the slow process of blasting their way through it. To escape the desert heat, living chambers were carved out of the rock and the expedition moved completely underground. Each day the workers tunneled deeper into the earth. Peabody exhorted them onward, sure that at any moment they would break through to the water below.

Unfortunately for the miners, Peabody was crazier than a junecbug. His vision of the desert utopia had come after a particularly nasty failure at the drawing board and was a product of his own imagination and the dark suggestions of the spirits which served as his creative muse. Any water beneath the desert was well beyond his expertise and resources.

## The Curse

After more than a month of digging the expedition's supplies began to run low, especially the stores of fresh drinking water. The miners wanted to send for additional supplies, but Peabody stopped them. Certain of quick results, he had exhausted his investors' funds outfitting

the initial expedition—there was not sufficient money to purchase more supplies. Rather than face failure, Peabody drove the miners relentlessly, telling them that if they only worked a little longer there would be plenty for them to drink. The workers eventually had enough, and when water ran dangerously low, they decided to leave. Peabody became violent and tried to stop them. In the ensuing scuffle, he was mortally wounded. As he lay dying, he cursed the miners and their thirst to Hell. The dark spirits which had tormented his dreams for years fulfilled his last request. They caused a tremendous sandstorm, which buried the tops of the shafts and prevented the miners from leaving. The storm raged for days, and long before the miners could burrow their way out, they died of thirst. The last, desperate few resorted to drinking the blood of their companions.

These individuals never noticed when they passed over from the land of the living to the land of the living dead. They simply wasted away, until all that was left was a dry, desiccated shell of their living body. All thought of leaving the desert left them, but their thirst did not. This thirst drives their actions and they prey upon any living creature which they encounter, desperate for the moisture it can provide.

Over the years, these mummified ghouls have expanded their labyrinth of shafts, tunnels, and caverns beneath the desert surface. They use this to move about unseen beneath the shifting sands and surprise their victims. Any items their prey possess which can be used to add to their tunnels is put to use.

Legends have sprung up about these creatures, people have taken to calling them the Sandmen. Of course, nobody believes they really exist, they're just yet another story you tell your children to get them to behave.

## Enter the Rattler Hunters

Jenkins and his expedition had the misfortune to begin their hunt over the sandmen's lair. As part of the group's rattler hunting equipment, Jenkins had brought along a gigantic stethoscope-like device which allowed him to listen for sounds beneath the ground. He heard what he



believed to be immature rattlers moving about. What he actually heard was the sandmen.

Although Waxman tried every trick he knew to attract the “rattlers,” they had no success. A few days into the hunt, a sandstorm struck and confined everyone to the group’s makeshift camp. It was then the sandmen struck. They emerged from the sand in the middle of the expedition’s encampment and made short work of the half-blinded hunters. After they had finished gorging upon the group’s water supply, they dismantled the expedition’s vehicles and carried them below to use as components in the expanding network of pipes, leather and canvas frames which laced the area beneath the sand.

The bodies of the expedition members were also taken below to be feasted upon later. As the blood is drained from the corpses, they will eventually transform and rise as sandmen (and women) themselves.

### Finding the Expedition

Your posse can be hired to find the expedition, they can go after the reward money offered for the Jenkins expedition. The sandmen have left few traces of either expedition behind on the surface—with one exception. Peabody’s men had begun construction of what was to be the main pump house for the project. It was never finished. When Peabody was wounded, he barricaded himself up in the building’s shell. His mummified corpse is still there. This is the one place the sandmen won’t go and the building’s walls still stand. It was completely buried during the storm which trapped the miners, but occasionally the wind exposes a wall or two.

If the player’s are looking for a place to escape a sandstorm, this is as good as any. If they dig down to the floor level, they can find Peabody’s remains and as well as a hatch in the floor which opens into the sandmen’s lair.

### The Sandmen

Upon casual inspection, an unfed sandman appears as an extremely dehydrated and badly sunburned person. A closer look reveals details which quickly dispel this impression—shriveled eyeballs, skin flaking off in long strips, exposed bone and desiccated flesh. One of these creatures which has recently consumed water can actually pass as human for a short while.

Maintaining this appearance in the desert requires the creature to consume a canteen of water every half hour.

Sandmen are canny and use their appearance to their advantage. They often approach people as lost travelers in need of water. If they get it, they tag along until the group’s water supply gives out or until their benefactors get grumpy about the amount of water they’re consuming. At this point they either attack or burrow away.

Sandmen usually carry clubs or short lengths of pipe as weapons. More recent victims still remember how to use the weapons they carried while living. Sandmen prefer to attack while over their lair. If things turn bad, they simply dive into the sand and burrow down to the pipes they call home. The entrances to their lair are normally buried under at least 10 feet of sand.

Profile: The Sandmen

**Corporeal:** D:2d8, N:3d8, S:3d6, Q:3d8, V:2d8

Climbin’ 3d8, fightin’: brawlin’ 5d8, shootin’: 3d8, sneak 3d8

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:2d6, M:3d8, Sm:3d6, Sp:4d8

Search 2d10, trackin’ 2d10, area knowledge (pipe maze) 5d6, overawe 3d8

**Size:** 6

**Terror:** 7

**Special Abilities:**

**Increased Strength:** Drinking water increases a sandman’s Strength. Each canteen of water the creature drinks raises its Strength by one die type. Every thirty minutes which passes without the creature drinking, Strength drops by a die until it returns to 3d6.

**Vulnerable to Fire:** Sandmen in their dehydrated state take double damage from fire. If the sandman has drunk enough water to raise its strength to 3d8, this does not apply.

**Infection:** Anyone drained by a sandman must make a Hard (9) Spirit roll or rise two nights later as one of them.

**Burrowing:** Sandmen can burrow through the sand with a Pace of 8.

**Undead:** Like most undead, sandmen can only be killed by flame or a shot to the head. They ignore wound modifiers.

## Death on the Plains!

### Tremendous Battle Fought Between Wasatch and Union Blue

TABLE ROCK, NEBRASKA-For as yet undisclosed reasons, forces of the Wasatch Railroad attacked a train belonging to the Union Blue Railroad today.

Witnesses report that a heavily armed Wasatch train overtook an eastbound Union Blue train early this morning. This train opened fire on the U.B. freight without provocation and the Union Blue train returned fire. A general free-for-all ensued, during which the Union Blue locomotive was disabled.

Both trains came to a halt and disgorged troops, who continued the fight on foot. Spectators report seeing what appeared to be heavily armored men, each carrying a Gatling gun, attack the Union troopers. Some also report seeing strange devices which resembled large, mechanical insects scuttling about the battlefield.

The battle raged for nearly three hours. Reports indicate that things went badly for the

Union Blue forces early in the battle. The firepower of the armored men's Gatlings turned the area between the two trains into a killing field which none dared enter. Most of the Union troopers were forced to take refuge behind the heavy undercarriages of their train cars.

When the Gatling men advanced to flush the Union Blue forces from their hiding places, the troopers managed to turn the tables. As the attackers drew near, the troopers opened fire with some sort of hand-held explosives projector and destroyed many of them. The surviving attackers withdrew back into the Wasatch train, which then steamed off.

Some of those who witnessed the battle said it appeared as if the Union Blue may have been expecting the attack—the freight train had a much larger contingent of troops on it than normal.

# The Attack

Union Blue was expecting the attack. The Union Blue train was returning from a run to Fort 51 and was on its way to Washington, D.C. Onboard were the prototypes of a new weapon cooked up by the scientists at the fort. The prototypes were to be demonstrated for President Grant when they arrived in the capital. Chamberlain knew Dr. Hellstromme would try to stop the train if he discovered the nature of its cargo and stationed extra troops onboard.

Hellstromme found out about the train's cargo almost too late to do anything about it. In desperation, he loaded a train full of automatons and clockwork tarantulas and routed it onto the Union Blue line to intercept the U.B. freight. The rest you know.

## Dynamite Rifles

What was Hellstromme so eager to destroy? A new weapon dubbed the Dynamite Rifle. Dynamite rifles look like an extremely large bore shotgun with a large lever protruding from the right side. This lever is used to cock a powerful spring inside the gun. Once the spring is cocked, a stick of dynamite is dropped down the muzzle of the gun and it's ready to fire. When the trigger is pulled, the spring propels the dynamite from the barrel. A dynamite rifle can launch a piece of

dynamite up to 100 yards with double the accuracy of a thrown stick.

These weapons terrify Hellstromme because they give the average trooper a weapon which is capable of hurting his normally invulnerable automatons. The rifles are designed to use specially modified sticks of dynamite. These sticks have small fins at one end to stabilize them in flight. At the other end is an impact fuse which triggers the dynamite when it comes in contact with a solid object. Loading one of these into the rifle requires an action.

It's possible to use standard dynamite with the rifle, but not recommended. There are two ways to do this. You can strap a blasting cap on one end of the stick and hope that end hits the target (roll 1d4 for each stick fired like this, on a 1 the stick actually detonates, the rest are duds), or you can light the dynamite before dropping it in the gun (the drawbacks to this are pretty obvious). Either way, the range increment of the weapon is reduced to 5 yards because a normal dynamite stick tumbles end over end in flight. Max range is still 100 yards.

If you let your player's get their hands on one of these things, be sure to look over the explosive rules on page 66 of the Deadlands rule book.

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Amm</b>	<b>Sho</b>	<b>RO</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Damag e</b>	<b>Reliabili t y</b>
Dynamite Rifle	dynamite	1	1	10	3d20 burst	16

## Malfunctions

**Minor malfunction:** The firing spring jams. The weapon will not fire until the user makes an Onerous (7) tinkerin' roll. Not too bad unless you've got a lighted fuse down the barrel.

**Major malfunction:** The dynamite slips forward in the barrel and the spring whacks it a little too hard. Check for explosion as if the user had just suffered a severe blow.

**Catastrophe:** Don't bother to check. The gun blows up in the user's face.

## Travelers Found Dead!

TABLE ROCK, NEBRASKA- The bodies of two unknown travelers were found in the woods outside of town today. They carried no documents or inscribed possessions which might give a clue as to their identities. The manner of their death has made the bodies themselves unidentifiable. According to Dr. Hardaway, the local physician, much of their flesh seems to have been burned or dissolved off, possibly by acid.

According to the good doctor, both bodies were those of men between the ages of 20 and 40. Little could be told from the fragments of

clothing recovered, other than the men were dressed as typical cowboys. Pistols were found on the ground near the bodies. A number of shots had been fired from each, so it seems as if the two had gone down fighting.

Who or what could have committed this horrible crime? We have recorded many a horrible happening in the pages of the Epitaph, but this is by far one of the worst. If you have any information which could help solve this mystery, please contact the Epitaph or the Table Rock marshal.

## Cleanup Continues

TABLE ROCK, NEBRASKA- The residents of this sleepy farm town are still dealing with the aftermath of the tremendous battle between Wasatch and Union Blue forces here last week.

Most of the bodies have been collected, but there is still a tremendous amount of twisted metal left on the battlefield from the destruction of Union Blue's armored foes. The majority of this debris resides in Grover Gorrel's pasture. He has hauled some away, but there is still quite a bit

left. Says he, "Anyone who needs some scrap metal is welcome to this stuff, free of charge. I'm going to be a while cleaning up this pasture, there's some kind of greenish goop all over the place that stinks to high heaven. Whatever it is, it's spooking my cows. They won't go near the stuff and they stopped giving milk."

In related news, the damage to the Union Blue rails has been repaired and the company's trains have resumed their normal schedule.

# The Battle's Aftermath

The two deceased travelers were gunmen for the Wasatch railroad. They got separated from their group during the battle the previous week. When their side beat a hasty retreat, they missed the train.

Union Blue troops were combing the area for stragglers immediately after the battle, so the two holed up in the woods nearby. After a few days of playing cat-and-mouse with the boys in blue, the pair were tired, cranky, and hungrier than Henry VIII.

That's when they spotted young Elijah Long making the trek from his father's farm to the schoolhouse in town. Over his shoulder he carried a full lunch pail.

The two decided to grab the boy's lunch and then start back west to rejoin their unit. What they didn't realize was the boy was being protected by his newest friend.

## A Boy and his Tarantula

One of Dr. Hellstromme's clockwork tarantulas had suffered an unusual malfunction during the battle. All of its precision mechanisms continued to work just fine, but the brain the doctor's dark magic used to give the machine its guidance recovered from its alchemy induced obedience.

The brain was that of a dog. When the elixirs which kept it bound to its handlers wore off, the frightened "dog" ran away from the noise and smoke of the battlefield and hid in the woods. It was found the next day by Elijah while on the way home from school. At first he was frightened of it, but his curiosity got the better of him and he examined it more closely. He nearly ran when it started moving, but there was something about the way it acted which convinced him to stay.

Elijah was the first person the creature had encountered that hadn't either run or tried to shoot it, and somewhere in the dim recesses of its memories it recalled having a young boy as its master. Instead of attacking like it had been trained, the tarantula befriended the boy.

The creature refused to follow Elijah back to the farm--it saw the adults from a distance and was afraid. Since his newfound playmate wouldn't come home with him, Elijah visited him

everyday in the woods after doing his chores. The boy eventually figured out how to open the panel on the creature's back and cranked its clockwork mechanism.

When the two Wasatch gunmen tried to take Elijah's lunch, the tarantula attacked and killed them. The boy saw the entire attack. He ran on to school, afraid to say anything about what he had seen because he was afraid he would get in trouble.

He no longer visits the creature and takes the long way home from school--around the woods--each afternoon.

Eventually the tarantula's mechanism will run down and activate the self-destruct device which melts the gizmo down into a pool of acid and twisted metal. Until then, the creature pines for its lost master and roams the edges of the Long farm at night, hoping to find Elijah. Elijah's father has noticed something spooking the livestock at night but has not caught a glimpse of what's causing it.

## Clockwork Tarantula

Clockwork tarantulas are mad science gizmos cooked up Dr. Hellstromme to give his forces the edge on the battlefield. Like his dreaded automatons, building these machines is beyond the abilities of most scientists because some black necromantic magic is involved. Automatons and clockwork tarantulas can only be built in Hellstromme's special roundhouses and only when conditions are just right.

The tarantulas have a heavily-armored, multi-legged body which is powered by a wind-up clockwork mechanism. Encased in this body is the brain of an animal, usually a dog. A special elixir preserves the brain's function and makes it receptive to training. New tarantulas are taught how to use their new body and how to obey simple hand signals.

A fully wound tarantula has about 200 hours of activity before it must be wound again.

### Profile: Clockwork Tarantula

**Corporeal:** D:2d8, N:3d8, S:4d6,  
Q:3d8, V:2d6

Climbin' 5d8, fightin':brawlin' 5d8,  
shootin': acid 3d8, sneak 3d8

**Mental:** C:3d6, K:2d4, M:1d4, Sm:2d6,  
Sp:3d6

Search 3d6, trackin' 3d6

**Size:** 5

**Terror:** 9

**Special Abilities:**

**Acid:** The tarantula has a pair of fangs it can use to inject or spray acid. Spraying acid requires a shootin': acid roll. When sprayed, the acid has a speed of 1, range increment of 2, ROF 1, and does 4d12 damage. Determine the number of wounds and distribute them randomly using the Hit Location Chart. If the tarantula gets a raise against its opponent in hand-to-hand, it can inject acid into its victim's body. This does 4d12 damage to the rolled location on the round the hit took place. Each round thereafter, the victim takes damage again as the acid spreads through their system. Reduce the number of damage dice by one each round, i.e. on the second round the victim takes 3d12, on the third round 2d12, etc. All damage after the initial 4d12 is to the Guts location. A full tarantula has 12 shots of acid available. The one in Table Rock has only 7 remaining.

**Armor:** 2

**Climber:** Tarantulas have large barbs on the end of each leg. They use these to climb. Tarantulas can move at their normal pace up any surface which is soft enough for them to sink their barbs into, i.e. most wood, trees, people, etc. They can even hang upside down from the ceiling. In combat, these barbs inflict STR+1d4 damage.

**Fearless:** Barring a malfunction like that which happened in this story, tarantulas are immune to fear. They are not affected by other creatures with a terror value and are immune to tests o' will.

**Reliability:** 19

**Self-destruct:** If a tarantula's clockwork mechanism ever stops, it vents its remaining acid (the acid reservoir actually holds 13 shots, so there is always one dose left for this purpose) into its brain case, destroying it and the secret of its construction. Anyone within 2 yards of the gizmo when this happens is splashed for 1d12 damage per remaining shot.

**Gorrel's Pasture**

The goop Gorrel was complaining about is some of the elixir used to preserve the gizmos' brains. It's useless now, except as a red herring for your posse.

# The Ghost Rock Express

The other night, Ranger Wells 'n me tossed a few whiskeys down our gullets at some cantina in San Antone. Can't rightly remember the name--and after drinkin' that rotgut, I guess I'm lucky to still know muh own name. Anyways, after he loosened up a bit, I asked him about the Rangers, and whuther or not it was true that they never fail.

Well sir, he leaned forward and gave me a stare, and I thought fer a minute I'd made muh last slip o' the tongue. But then, he just leaned back and told me an amazin' story. Comin' from anybody but Wells, I'da known it was a tall tale....

## Introduction

So ya think that Rangers never lose, eh? Well, that's true and it ain't. To put it another way, it's true less'n you want a heap of trouble on yer hands from the likes of me. But just between amigos over a drink...we've had a few failures in our time.

What's that? Name one? You sure do like to live dangeously, friend. But all right. Lissen up 'n I'll tell you about one of our greatest setbacks involvin' a train fulla ghost rock, and a crazy fella named Marcotti.

## The Story so Far...

Professor Emilio Marcotti is a brilliant (but mad) scientist who worked for the Confederates at Roswell. However, after the failure at the Battle of Washington, things turned a bit ugly at Roswell. Marcotti and several other scientists decided to escape in '71, taking with them many of the gadgets they had helped to design. During the escape, Marcotti's wife was accidentally shot by a guard (one of the Texas Ranger detachment guarding Roswell), and he swore to avenge her death on the men responsible.

Since then, Marcotti has been working for himself, building up his resources and his hatred of the Confederacy. He did some work for the Mexican government for a year or so, until once again things went a bit awry, and Marcotti decided it would be prudent to cross the border into New Mexico. There, he decided it was time to take his revenge on Roswell, and so he hatched a plan involving a secret train known as the Ghost Rock Express.

## The Train

Every three months, a mule train with 15 to 20 wagons of ghost rock arrives in Tombstone from the Great Maze. From there, it travels by train to the East for use in war machines for the Confederacy. Some of it is secretly shipped north by train from El Paso to a depot in the middle of nowhere; a depot not too far from Roswell.

The train is disguised as a normal passenger train (albeit a heavily armored train with two gatling guns mounted on the top) with an engine, four passenger cars, and a caboose. By the way, the train has no coal car because the train itself runs on ghost rock, and therefore doesn't need to refuel very often. If anyone asks why a passenger train is armed, tell them that recent attacks by the Apaches, bandits, and the French Foreign Legion have made these extra precautions necessary.

The Texas Rangers call this train the Ghost Rock Express (hereafter referred to as the GRE), and ten handpicked Rangers guard it. Eight are stationed in the caboose of the train along with the strongboxes of ghost rock, while two of them patrol the other cars, pretending to be passengers. Their badges and rifles are tucked away, but handy in a pinch.

For those who are interested in distances and time for this trip, it is approximately 275 miles from El Paso to Santa Fe. The train will reach the Roswell depot about 100 miles out from El Paso. Assuming a train moving about 30 to 40 miles per hour, that puts it about 2.5 to 3 hours into the trip.

## The Robbery

Professor Marcotti has several cards up his sleeve for this caper. The first is that he has blackmailed one of the Rangers assigned to guard the GRE. He is Jacob Fortner, who has faithfully served the Rangers for over ten years. Marcotti has Fortner's wife and daughter held captive. If Fortner does not cooperate, Marcotti will have them killed.

The second card up Marcotti's sleeve is that he has hired a gang of thugs and outfitted them with stolen French Foreign Legion uniforms, courtesy of his recent stay in Mexico. The idea is to make the Confederacy blame Mexico for the robbery, and hopefully escalate the tension



between the two countries. He has twenty men, riding in five steamwagons with gatling gun mounts and flame throwers, ready to assault the train about 75 miles north of El Paso.

The third card is that Marcotti is not with his gang, but is actually a passenger on the train. He has several gadgets with him to assist in stopping the train and neutralizing any resistance.

## The Setup

All of the posse members are boarding the GRE in El Paso bound for Albuquerque and Santa Fe; each of them needs a reason to be doing so. If you want to give your posse a real hard time (muhaha!), stick this adventure in the middle of some other really important trip. Maybe they absolutely have to be in Santa Fe by tomorrow morning, or someone's ranch will be put up for auction, etc.

### Chapter One: All Aboard!

The posse awaits the departure of the train at 10:00 AM. It is a chilly winter morning (as chilly as it gets in southern Texas), the kind where you can see your breath. Allow the posse members time to make any preparations they wish before 10:00, then gather them at the depot.

At that point, they and all the other waiting passengers are told that the departure will be delayed for awhile (it turns out to be two hours, but they are not told that). This gives the posse time to get acquainted some of the other passengers, uncluding the following individuals:

### Professor Emilio Marcotti

The Professor has much to hide--however, he is rather egotistical (c'mon, he's a mad genius). He delights in carrying on polite chit chat. He is very well dressed in a fashionable European suit and he has an Italian accent, immediately labeling him as a "ferner. " If questioned, he will use a phony name and say that he is a merchant from Venice (he likes that little joke) here in New Mexico to set up an import business.

By the way, he has a bunch of luggage with him, including trunks concealing his flamethrower and bullet-proof vest (he'll need these later). He is happy to open several of the trunks to show off various knick-knacks that he claims are imports from Venice.

### Ranger Jacob Fortner

Fortner is one of the ten Rangers assigned to guard the GRE (he will be one of the two on patrol). Normally, he is supposed to keep a low profile and therefore would not be seen at the depot. But today, he paces about the depot, visibly troubled. If anyone tries to talk with him, he will be quite distracted and abrupt, possibly even rude.

He will not confirm that he is a Ranger, or that he is even going to be boarding the train. If you feel so inclined, let someone in the posse make a Cognition roll with a TN 9 to catch him speaking (one might even say arguing) with Professor Marcotti at some point during the two hours. If confronted about this, Fortner will glare at the posse and tell them to mind their own business, while Marcotti will smile and say that Fortner objects to foreigners.

### Reginald Meriwether Delaroi

Delaroi is a blue-blooded Son of the South, although he is a gentleman in name only; his family estate was destroyed during the siege of Vicksburg in '63. Since then, Delaroi has drifted as a gambler throughout the Southwest. This man exudes charm and style. He has nothing to do with the story plot, but he can be handy in a gunfight, if your posse needs a little extra help.

### Franklin Spencer

Spencer is short, balding, wears thick glasses and a suit, and he talks way too much. He's a purveyor of Dr. Martin's Fabulous Elixir of Health, guaranteed to cure what ails ya! He's also an undercover Pinkerton, and much more dangerous than he looks. Like Professor Marcotti, Spencer has also heard of the Ghost Rock Express. He is a passenger on the train for reconnaissance; he hopes to take enough information back to his superiors to set up a sabotage mission at a later date. In this story, he can serve as a red herring; here is a man who has a lot to hide as well.

He won't jeopardize his cover to help the party unless his own life is in danger. In fact, he may even help Prof. Marcotti's plan, if he sees an opening to do so without getting caught.

### Bounty:

Speaking with the NPC's: 2 points (total).

Noticing Fortner and Marcotti arguing: 1 point.

## Chapter Two: What's Up Doc?

The train ride goes on uneventfully until about 2:30 PM. If want to fill some time with a little entertaining diversion, have Delaroi suggest “a friendly game of cards,” possibly with Marcotti and Spencer volunteering to sit in as well. Marcotti may intentionally lose money to the other players with a smile (another of his little jokes), and anyone who makes a Hard (TN 9) gamblin' check will figure that out. This may be an early warning for the posse that something's up.

At 2:30 PM, the conductor will discover the bodies of the eight Rangers in the caboose. Fortner poisoned the coffee they were served a half-hour earlier. He thought he was only giving them a drug to make them fall asleep, but Marcotti gave him a deadly poison instead (he really has a grudge against the Rangers who guarded Roswell and accidentally killed his wife the night of the escape). This leaves only Fortner and one other Ranger alive on the train. They are both out on patrol, moving through the passenger cars.

The conductor will discretely go through the train, asking the passengers if there is a doctor aboard. He will say that one of the passengers is sick and needs medical attention. If any of the posse volunteers his or her services as a physician, the conductor will ask that person to accompany him to the caboose.

Upon examination of the bodies, it requires no skill check to determine that they are all dead. It will, however, require an Onerous (TN 7) medicine: general check to determine that they were poisoned. One success will reveal the poisoning, an additional success (i. e. , one raise) will reveal that they died quickly, but in intense agony.

Three further clues are available to the posse in this car. The first is that the source of the poison was the coffee. This will not be too hard to discover, as there are cups on the table and strewn on the floor. A pot sits in the center of the table, mostly empty.

The second clue will be revealed by anyone specifically examining the bodies who makes a Hard (TN 9) search check. On the floor near one of the Rangers, the word “FORT” is scratched into the floor. The Ranger was trying to write

“FORTNER” to reveal his killer (Fortner brought the coffee back to the caboose and made sure everyone had some), but he died before he could finish writing. Also, anyone who examines the bodies will find Ranger badges tucked in their pockets.

The third clue is that there are a few dozen heavy iron strongboxes filled with ghost rock stacked against the walls of this car. Up until this point, the posse won't know why the Rangers are aboard, but this should make it apparent. Getting the strongboxes open is no small trick. They are made of cast iron with inset locks with an overall armor of 2. Shooting one open with a rifle will eventually work, but will undoubtedly draw lots of attention (at the very least Ranger Swann will assume someone is trying to rob the train, and may come in shooting). To pick the lock requires an Incredible (TN 11) lockpickin' check. The easiest way to open them is with the keys, which are hidden in the car. Make an Incredible (TN 11) search check to find the keys in a secret drawer under the table.

### Bounty:

Discovering that the Rangers were poisoned: 1 point.

Discovering the word “FORT” scratched on the floor: 2 points.

Finding the ghost rock: 2 points.

## Chapter Three: The Missing Pair

The posse starts their investigation at about 1:30 PM. Marcotti has arranged for his gang to attack the train at approximately 2:00 PM (based on where they have laid their ambush). That leaves roughly 30 minutes for the posse to figure out what is going on. They don't have much hope of doing this...unless they find the two missing Rangers.

Early on, the conductor will tell the party that there should be ten Rangers aboard the train, and that the other two must be on patrol. However, the Rangers chosen to guard the train are frequently changed, so even the conductor doesn't know what the other two look like. and as they are walking about the train undercover, they won't identify themselves as Rangers. In order to identify the Rangers, someone in the posse should make an Onerous (TN 7)

scrutinize/Smarts check; to the trained eye, they will stand out like wolves among sheep.

The first Ranger the posse spots will be Marlena Swann. She is currently in the second passenger car from the caboose, and has no idea what has happened. She has been patrolling the passenger cars since about 1:00 PM. Once she finds out what has happened to the other Rangers, she'll help the posse locate the final Ranger, Jacob Fortner (he's in the passenger car nearest the engine). She will casually mention his name during the search ("Fortner's probably up in the forward car..."), which will most likely tip the posse off if they have discovered the scrawled clue in the caboose.

If the posse handles their encounter with Fortner badly, he may get desperate and start shooting, in which case, he may get killed without spilling any information. If they get a chance to tell him that the other Rangers are dead, not just asleep, he will surrender in shock and grief. He will tell the posse that Marcotti plans to rob the train any time now, and that the Professor is aboard.

At this point, screams from the passengers announce that the train is under attack.

### **Bounty:**

Finding Swann and Fortner: 1 point.

Learning of Fortner's betrayal and the robbery: 2 points.

## **Chapter Four: Here They Come!**

I'll start off by pointing out that the posse is meant to lose the following battle. Unless your posse is a small army, they will be heavily outnumbered. In any case, this is the Professor's time to shine. He and his men must manage to stop the train and rob it in order to set up the rest of the adventure (and any that may follow from it). Now, my advice is that you make the battle between the posse and the steamwagons an exciting, running gun battle...then suddenly the party's over as the Professor stops the train. If you would rather have the posse confront the Professor first and have his thugs stop the train instead, be my guest. Just remember where yer headed, pardner.

Marcotti's gang consists of twenty thugs riding five steamwagons, each of which sports a gatling gun and a flamethrower. The GRE also

has two gatling guns mounted in rotating turrets on top, one on the caboose and one on the car just behind the engine. Ranger Swann will inform the posse that the plan in case of attack was to send two Rangers to each of the gatling gun turrets (anyone in the turret has an armor of 2 for all hit locations except the head, arms, and upper guts, while the other six would use Winchesters from the train windows (there is a gun cabinet with rifles and ammo in the caboose).

Marcotti's gang has been told to expect little resistance, as the Rangers have been dealt with. If the posse decides to attack the gang while their steamwagons close in on the train, have the gang make an overall Fair (TN 5) Cognition check (use a Cognition of 2d6) or else they are surprised for one round.

The steamwagons will now take up positions along the sides of the train about 30 yards out, keeping pace with it. Their goal will be to take out the gatling guns if they are firing, and then wait for the Professor to take control of the engine and stop the train. If the train does not stop for whatever reason, some of them will attempt to jump across to the caboose.

If the posse has not yet figured out who Marcotti is, he and Delaroi will volunteer to guard the engine car. Once there, Marcotti will eliminate Delaroi and don his bullet-proof vest and flamethrower, then kill the engineer and stop the train. Also sometime during this combat, Fortner will most likely lose his life attempting to stop either the Professor or his thugs. Burned to death with the flamethrower might be a fitting end. You decide, marshal.

The posse members can choose to fire at the steamwagons or at the thugs themselves. All attacks are made at -4 to hit, since everyone is moving. The steamwagons have an armor of 2. If they are hit for a total of 50 points of damage, make a check using a reliability of 17. If the check fails, the steamwagon explodes, and the thugs on board are either killed or out of commission for the duration. If the check is successful, the steamwagon loses power and begins to drop back from the train.

One thing that must happen for the adventure to work out correctly: you must have them disable one of the steamwagons without destroying it. If this seems hard to do, remember

that you control the reliability checks for the steamwagons. Simply make a hidden roll at one point, then pronounce that one of the steamwagons starts sputtering and slowing down, falling back from the train. If fudging this roll bothers you, console yourself by letting them blow up another of the steamwagons in a nice, satisfying boiler explosion.

Realistically, the best the posse can hope to do is put one or two of the steamwagons (and hopefully their crews) out of the picture. Once that is accomplished, the train will be stopped. Either the Professor or some of his thugs will kill the engineer and take control. If any of the posse attempts to take control back of the engine, convince them that with the Professor's flamethrower and bullet-prof vest (my, he sure had a lot of luggage when he came on board), not to mention his thugs, this isn't going to work. Use a few passengers as hostages if need be.

#### **Bounty:**

Each steamwagon stopped: 2 points.

Confronting Professor Marcotti: 2 points.

### **Chapter Five: The Great Train Robbery**

Once the train has stopped and the posse has acknowledged that they're outgunned (if they don't, it could be a rather sticky ending), the gang will unload all of the passengers from the train, and transfer the strongboxes of ghost rock to their steamwagons. They will also replace the strongboxes with identical ones filled with very potent explosives. Professor Marcotti has it in mind to send the train on it's way to the depot near Roswell. When the detachment there sent to pick up the ghost rock boards the train...well, you know.

As I mentioned before, Professor Marcotti is very egotistical, so that if any of the posse makes a ridicule or persuasion test of will against the Professor and scores a success, he will be goaded or seduced into revealing his plan and his need for revenge.

Once the thugs have completed the transfer, Marcotti will inform that characters that the nearest depot is still 30 miles away, and it won't be there much longer. With a smirk, he wishes the posse and the rest of the passengers good luck. He then rides off due east with his gang in

the steamwagons, leaving the marooned passengers by the side of the rail, as the train continues down the tracks with nobody on board. It is set to a modest 20 mile-per-hour pace, so that it doesn't accidentally jump the tracks on a turn.

Things look desperate for our heroes...until they remember that one of the steamwagons was left disabled a few miles back down the track! Hopefully, one of them has some tinkerin' skill (if not, oblige them with a passenger on the train who does) and can make a Hard (TN 9) tinkerin' check to patch the holes in the steam boiler. Once they do that and fill it with some water (have them convince the passengers to give up what little precious water they have for this), they have a decision to make: they can go after the booby-trapped train, or they can chase after Marcotti's gang. The posse will probably reason out the following:

1) If they don't stop the train, a bunch of unsuspecting soldiers, Rangers, and scientists may be killed by Marcotti's explosives. Anyone in the posse who is a southerner should not be too happy with that prospect.

2) Marcotti's gang probably still outnumbers them heavily, and has gatling guns and flamethrowers (the posse's gatling guns just chugged their way out of sight up the tracks). Going after him right now will probably get some or all of the posse killed. Marcotti had been content to let the desert do his work for him when the posse no longer posed a threat, but if they come after him, he will have them killed without any hesitation.

3) Riding off after Marcotti leaves the train passengers stranded in the desert without any bright prospects. Even once the train gets to the next depot, nobody left alive there after the blast will probably be too concerned with starting up a rescue party for the passengers real soon.

This being said, the posse will probably go after the train, which they can eventually chase down and stop before it gets to the depot. From there, they can back the train up, pick up the passengers and voila, the day is saved. What if they choose to go after Marcotti instead? Happy trails, amigo! Maybe have one of the NPC passengers point out the facts. Maybe let em get killed. Run it as you see fit.

## Bounty:

Getting Marcotti to reveal his plan: 2 points.

Fixing the steamwagon and stopping the train: 3 points.

## NPC Statistics

For Fortner and Swann, use the Texas Ranger template on page 80 of the Deadlands rule book.

You can use the Huckster template on page 72 for Delaroi (minus the hexes; he's just a gambler), and the Pinkerton template on page 75 for Spencer (this means that he can man a gatling gun if necessary).

Profile: Professor Emilio Marcotti

**Corporeal:** D:4d8, N:2d8, S:2d6, Q:3d6, V:3d8

Shootin': flamethrower 4, Drivin': steamwagon 4, Sneak 3

**Mental:** C:3d10, K:4d12, M:2d10, Sm:4d12, Sp:2d10, Wind 18

Scrutinize 3, Search 4, Area knowledge 4, Demolition 5, Science: engineering, chemistry and biology 5, Leadership 1, Overawe 2, Ridicule 2, Scroungin' 3, Tinkerin' 5, Guts 4

**Edges:** Arcane background: mad scientist 3, Dinero 3, Keen 3, Mechanically inclined 1

**Hindrances:** Big Britches -3, Enemy -3 (the Confederacy), Ferner -3 (Italian), Greedy-2, Loco -2, Mean as a rattler -2, Oath -3 (get revenge on Roswell)

**Equipment:** Flamethrower, Bullet-proof vest

Profile: Marcotti Gang Member

**Corporeal:** D:2d8, N:2d8, S:2d6, Q:3d6, V:2d8, C:2d6, Shootin': automatics and flamethrower 2, Drivin': steamwagon 2

**Mental:** K:2d6, M:2d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d8, Wind 16

Scrutinize 2, Search 2, Area knowledge 2, Guts 2

## Epilogue: What Happens Next?

I may (or may not) write some follow-up adventures with Professor Marcotti. I heartily encourage you to use him as a recurring villain in your campaigns, if you wish. Here are some ideas I have for what happens next. Feel free to elaborate on them yourselves. If you get a good one, send it back to me and I'll post it!

The posse takes the train to the depot and gets a reward from the Roswell folks. Then they hire the posse to track down Marcotti's gang and recover the ghost rock. Perhaps they'll even loan the posse a few NPC soldiers or some nifty gadgets (might as well fight fire with fire) for the duration.

The posse remembers that Fortner's family is being held hostage. Maybe there is still time to rescue them? They'll find a picture of his wife and daughter on his body, and if they talk to Swann or any other Rangers, they'll find out that he owns a ranch near so-and-so.

The posse just forgets the whole thing--but Marcotti doesn't. He eventually finds out that the train didn't explode and who it was that foiled his revenge. Now, the posse is on his hit list. But he's a patient man. He'll wait until they least expect it, then.

# The Tombstone Epitaph's Guide to the Weird West

1876 Edition

"The Bright Light of Truth!"

Only 10¢

## More Dead as Midnight Saloon Murders Continue

KANSAS CITY – In the worst such incident to hit Kansas City yet, two people turned up dead in their rooms in the Gilded Lily Saloon last night. The condition of the bodies was best described by a deputy, Elroy Henderson, who discovered them after being sent to see why the patron failed to pay his bill by checkout time. Mr. Henderson, when asked what he saw, turned pale and retched violently.

This is the fifth killing in as many weeks. The first occurred in the Hero's Welcome Saloon across town five Fridays ago. The mistress of the house, Emily Rothendale, somehow got herself strewn violently all over her rooms in a scene of hideous carnage. Her last known whereabouts were upstairs at the saloon. Apparently, she personally entertained an unidentified patron of the House just before midnight.

Descriptions of the patron are unreliable. It seems the patrons of the Hero's Welcome were drinking pretty hard that night. Who would think it? The only part of her body left intact was her head, found thoughtfully placed on a platter on her bureau. Her rooms were sealed by the staff. The Hero's Welcome closed, and remains so to this day. The Sheriff is no closer to an answer than he was when the murder took place. He's said to have scratched a bald spot into his head trying to put the pieces together. (Hope he was a redhead when he started.)

The second killing occurred in the Gilded Lily. A male patron, identified as Wallace Connery, woke up dead in his room four Sundays ago. Connery, a known drunkard and frequenter of the saloon, reportedly had a real hankering for the fairer sex, and a none too gentle hand. Not surprisingly, witnesses last reported him in the company of a female employee of the Lily, staggering to the upper floor. To date, the identity of the woman remains a mystery, and again, descriptions are unreliable. Connery turned up dead the next morning, his eyes gouged out, and other, less discrete portions of his anatomy missing. The

location of these parts remains unknown. Locals say that sure is a switch from when he was alive.

The next two incidents appear similar to the first two in all respects. Each took place in a saloon. The third victim, a woman, was decapitated and mutilated. The fourth, a man, had his eyes gouged out, and . . . well, you know. In fact, the only apparent difference between this killing and the ones before it seems to be the number of victims killed.

Edna Mellons (and a more accurate name you'll never see,) was an employee of the Lily. Louis Davis was a cowboy for the Double Q Ranch. Witnesses report each of them going upstairs with another person, but at different times. Louis accompanied an employee of the House. Edna entertained a customer.

The Sheriff suddenly has other things to do when we ask him about this case. He says he's sent a wire to the Texas Rangers, but has yet to receive a reply. Then he hurries off.

Anyone having information that might lead to the capture of this heinous killer, please contact the Epitaph.

# The Tombstone Epitaph's Guide to the Weird West

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## Donations Sought for Tombstone

KANSAS CITY, APRIL 30 – Donations are being sought to purchase a tombstone for Sally Macaphee, a dancer at the Golden Circle Saloon. Miss Macaphee was killed early last month by an unknown assailant. A passerby who wishes to remain anonymous discovered her body behind the Myerhoff Stables. Wounds from a large knife covered most of her body. Only her face was intact. While she did put up a struggle, the identity of her assailant remains a mystery. Interested parties should inquire at the Golden Circle. They appreciate your generosity.

### Local Cowboy Still Missing

KANSAS CITY, APRIL 30 – The search continues for missing ranch hand Eric "Red" Buck. He vanished almost two months ago. A picture of Mr. Buck hangs in the Sheriff's office. Anyone seeing this man should report it to the Sheriff immediately.

# The Bar Haunt

## The Story So Far...

All Sally Macaphee ever wanted to do was dance. She was always a graceful young woman with an ear for rhythm. Her natural beauty was an asset to her as well. Only two things kept her from brilliant dancing career. The first was her poor immigrant family, who was unable to pay for any formal training for their talented young daughter. The second was her father, who wouldn't hear of any daughter of his becoming a "fancied up floozy." He insisted she work in the textile mills with her mother and three sisters, earning an honorable living. As far as he was concerned, that was the end of it.

Sally had other ideas. Her passion for her art finally brought her to a fateful decision. If she couldn't dance in New York, she'd dance somewhere else. She sneaked away from the mill her family worked at, boarded a train for Kansas City, and never looked back. Why should she? She had her dream to follow. Damn shame of it is, some dreams lead to dark places.

She got a job just about as fast as she asked for one, and Miss Elizabeth of the Golden Circle Saloon was glad to have her aboard. Her dancer's body and beautiful features were a powerful draw, and within a week of her arrival business had jumped almost ten percent. Everyone wanted to see her, among other things. Unfortunately for the cowboys and miners, Sally's father raised her with a strong moral streak. The other side of being a saloon girl shocked her delicate sensibilities. Try as she might, Miss Elizabeth couldn't change the young girl's mind, but as long as Sally brought in the customers she was too valuable to fire.

Sally was a popular girl. Her naiveté was refreshing to the older saloon girls. Her spunky nature and refusal to sell herself, short or otherwise, helped offset the jealousy inspired by her beauty. The men naturally fell all over each other to please her. She never lacked for flowers, perfume or drinks, and when she gently turned the fellas away, the other girls were quick to take up the slack. For a price, of course.

Some men just can't handle rejection, and "Red" Buck was one of them. He quickly

became obsessed with Sally. He sent her flowers, gifts, poems. . . anything he could think of to win her affection. True to her nature, she turned him down each and every time. One night, after way too much to drink, "No," just wasn't an answer Red would settle for. He caught Sally on the street as she was returning from a friend's house, took her behind Myerhoff's Stables, and had his way with her. Sally fought back, and Red lost control. He staggered away from the alley, covered in Sally's blood. He couldn't very well stroll into the saloon to change, and his horse was out front. There was no way he was going to get to it without being spotted. He began to hoof it home As the walk wore on, and the booze wore off, what he'd done preyed on his mind. Finally, in a fit of remorse, he cut himself open.

The Reckoners had other ideas. Red's body walked away from the scene of his death. Red didn't. The twisted desire that had brought him to his end mingled with Sally's bloody cries for revenge to drive the Harrowed thing into the night.

Now the Bar Haunt returns to satisfy its twisted needs. It uses its supernatural attraction to lure victims into the back rooms of the saloons it frequents. Sometimes Sally's rage drives the thing. Other times Red's obsession guides it. Whichever side of its nature dominates the creature determines the sex of the target. Sally kills the men. Red kills the women.

## The Bar Haunt

The Bar Haunt is a dark engine of seduction. It hangs out in saloons, parties, and other festive occasions seeking victims to meet its twisted needs. It resembles a Harrowed version of Eric "Red" Buck, although the eyes are more sunken than any Harrowed this near the grave should be. They also glow with a weird, greenish light. Few people actually see this, though. The Haunt has a supernatural camouflage that hides its true nature.

The Haunt spends its nights in a saloon, watching the crowd for its best victim. If Sally's rage directs it, it seduces and kills violent men. If Red's lust is the driving force, it looks for the prettiest unattended girl. Mind you, she doesn't



have to be unattended long. Only long enough to be seduced into going upstairs.

Profile: Bar Haunt

**Corporeal:** D:1d6, N:1d8, S:2d6,  
Q:3d8, V:1d10

Fightin': brawlin' 3d8, fightin': knife  
3d8, horse ridin' 3d8, sneak 5d8

**Mental:** C:1d6, K:1d6, M:4d12,  
Sm:1d8, Sp:1d8

Bluff 2d8, overawe 2d12, performin'  
3d12, persuasion 5d12

**Size:** 6

**Terror:** 9, once the Posse discovers its nature.

### **Special Abilities:**

**Bewitchin':** The Bar Haunt is a supernaturally alluring creature. If it makes an opposed persuasion roll against the target's Smarts, the target follows the Haunt anywhere. They stare, transfixed, as the Haunt does its gruesome work. They even forget to scream.

**Eye of the Beholder:** Unless the observer makes a Hard (9) Cognition roll, it will see the Bar Haunt as a very beautiful specimen of whichever gender is presently controlling the Haunt. For example, if Sally is in charge, the Haunt appears as a beautiful woman. More so, it appears as the observer's definition of a beautiful woman. Each observer sees a different person. Should Red's nature be in charge, it seems to the eye to be a very handsome man, with the same fluid description.

**Harrowed:** The Bar Haunt takes damage as a Harrowed character.

**Stitchin':** As the level Two Harrowed power.

**Weaknesses:** The Bar Haunt is a product of the Deadly Sins of Lust and Anger. Therefore, it cannot attack the Blessed directly if the hero makes a stand against it. A

successful faith roll holds the creature at bay. It also gives the hero a bonus of +1d6 to hand to hand damage inflicted. The Haunt takes Str+4d6 damage if attacked with the knife that took the lives of Red and Sally.

**Coup:** If a Harrowed character counts coup on the Bar Haunt, he gains two levels to his persuasion Aptitude.

### Defeating the Bar Haunt

In order to defeat the Bar Haunt, the Posse is going to have to do something terrible. The heroes have to drink, gamble, and enjoy themselves as they hop from saloon to saloon looking for clues. What a pity for them. They have to listen to alehouse piano and flirt with women of dubious moral character. Oh, the pain. They have to risk getting shot by drunken cowboys or robbed by the less scrupulous of the House employees. Now that's the stuff that makes a Marshal's heart go pitty-pat. Feel better now? Glad to oblige.

The biggest clue available to the characters is the absence of a reliable description for the killer. It should be fairly obvious that one creature is doing all the killing. The M.O. of the atrocities is too close to be coincidental. The problem is, two people who swear they saw the same thing give different descriptions of the "other person." Play this up. Make sure every other detail matches perfectly. The clock reads the same in each version. The actions are identical. The dialogue matches up. Only the description of the person with the victim changes. Even then, all of the descriptions have a similar feel to them. Barflies may disagree about the hair color and bust size, but all of them see a very beautiful woman if Sally is in charge. Red always appears as a handsome gentleman. He's just a different handsome gentleman each time. If the party doesn't catch on, have someone in one of the saloons see the Haunt as it really is—a Harrowed version of Eric "Red" Buck. The Haunt will know its disguise was pierced, and will come after the poor sap. Better yet, have one of the Posse spot the Abomination as it really is. Just one, though. The others see what the Haunt wants them to see.

If the Posse does figure out who the Haunt used to be, they can trace events back through the paper, or local gossip. Quick thinking hombres notice that “Red” Buck and Sally Macaphee met their respective fates on the same night. They might notice all the other murders start about two weeks later. If they do, give those plucky devils an extra Bounty point. They’ve earned it. This could also lead them to the knife. Red dropped it after he died, and the Haunt never did pick it up. The knife is back on the Double Q, with the rest of Red’s gear.

If they don’t figure it out, they can start scouring the town looking for someone that looks different to each of them. This ought to make for some good role-playing. (“I see a scrawny little yankee lookin’ fella wearin’ a brown derby. What do you see Bob?” “Same thing, Cat.” “Huh. Go figure. Must actually be a scrawny yankee lookin’ fella wearin’ a brown derby then.”)

The hardest part about this little drinking binge is going to be finding the Haunt. It’s pretty short on smart, but it’s long on cunning. It knows what it can do, and uses its powers to their full potential. It’s nearly impossible to pick out of a crowd, for example. (“Which one? The one by the piano?” “No, y’idjit. The tall one by the fireplace!” “The fireplace is by the piano, ya chicken faced weasel!”) That’s why it only attacks on Fridays and weekends. The haunt is only really vulnerable when it zeroes in on tonight’s victim. The choice of victims is predictable. Sally kills, then Red, then Sally.

It doesn’t always stay in the same saloon, so have a few ready to go. All you really need are different names and a different decoration scheme for each one. A saloon is a saloon is a saloon. If you really feel the need to have a different floor plan for each one, make cut-outs of tables, bars, pianos and such. That way you don’t have to draw out a different map each time. Don’t worry if the tables aren’t in the same place each time the posse enters a particular saloon. Any really busy night tends to cause saloon owners to redecorate anyway. Besides, if they’re smart, the heroes will stay in one place and let the Haunt come to them.

Once they find it, the Haunt shouldn’t prove all that hard to kill. Sure, its Harrowed. Big deal. Stitchin’? So what? Its a seduction machine, not a

combat monster. It will try to run to the nearest crowd to lose itself given the slightest chance.

# Suffer the Children

Fear. To those who feed on it, nothing is more succulent or potent than the fear of a child. While some children have been forced to an early maturity from the Reckoning, countless others have become magnets for those who would cause them terror.

A new horror has arisen in the town of Eagle's Point, Montana. The one room schoolhouse on the edge of town has become the focus of something very sinister. Though the parents of the local children may not realize it, there is more to their new school marm than meets the eye.

## The Story Thus Far

Elizah Markley was a lovely person... on the inside. Though she grew to be one of the few genuinely kindhearted people in this world, the Cosmic Joker had played a nasty trick on her from birth. Her twisted visage was as ugly as her soul was beautiful. Nonetheless, the people of her town grew to love her and respect her. Not only did she have a sweet personality, but a razor-sharp wit and an incredible patience. She also had a love of learning, and thus her path as the town's school teacher was decided. Through several years, Elizah basked in the joy of helping others discover her love of education. She developed very close bonds with not only the children she taught, but their parents as well.

It was no surprise that many people were tremendously worried when she disappeared. Though people sought far and wide, no trace of Elizah could be found. And rightly so. One night, while enjoying the starlit splendor of a summer night in Montana a few miles outside of town, Elizah was attacked by a transient and horse thief, Frank Beaumont. Frank was three sheets to the wind when he noticed a womanly figure sitting on a hill in his path. Being on the run from the law, Frank had not had the opportunity to visit any brothels in the recent past. He raped Elizah, stabbed her to death, and then dropped her in a canyon a half-night's ride from where he had committed his crime.

## Rebirth of a School Marm

When Elizah awoke at the floor of the canyon, she realized that she should not be there. Nonetheless, she quickly adapted to her new lifestyle (no pun intended). Though ugly in life, she realized that she had the power to make herself seem beautiful in death. In addition, she discovered that she could scare away would be admirers of her newfound beauty through several decidedly unorthodox means.

She spent several years happily hiding behind the illusions she could create. Unfortunately, her manitou had other plans for the chameleon it inhabited. When Elizah reached the town of Eagle's Point, she had lost her long battle for control of her body. The manitou used Elizah's inherent charm and wit to obtain a position as the town's new schoolteacher. It also used her false beauty to seduce and gain control of the local law. Elizah's manitou quickly set up the one room schoolhouse as its base from which it could reap a harvest of youthful fear. The terror had begun in Eagle's Point.

## Sleepless Nights

Elizah's manitou began by giving bad dreams to randomly picked victims from the schoolhouse. This was effective at first, causing tremendous amounts of sweet, youthful fear for the Reckoners. Using her powers, it was easy to keep the children from telling their parents. They were too scared that the evil from their dreams could find them in the waking world.

The manitou stopped tormenting the children for a few weeks, to throw the children off balance. When it resumed harvesting terror from the youth of Eagle's Point, it had even more diabolical plans. After a week or so of ordinary bad dreams, Elizah decided that she could hone the town's fear to an even sharper point.

Elizah decided that one child would die of fright each night for seven nights in a row. The burst of fear from each child's death would only be the beginning. Parents would wonder if they would find their child dead the next morning. Those without children would fear that the unseen killer could turn on adults.

The evil school marm put her plan into action four nights before the posse arrives. For each child that she has killed so far, she has done the same thing. She first gives the child a specific nightmare, wherein she appears undisguised and performing horrifying acts. She sneaks into the child's room while the nightmare is in progress. When the victim wakes from his or her horrible dream, Elizah masquerades as the child's mother, and provides one last moment's comfort. As the child calms down, the manitou suddenly removes its disguise. It draws on its otherworldly powers to make Elizah's already twisted visage terrifying enough to kill.

So far, Elizah has killed four children without a hitch. Each child has taken one look at her hideous face and passed into the Great Beyond with wide eyes, a gaping mouth, and a killing pain in the chest. Elizah has used her ties with the local law enforcement to keep the investigations vague and inconclusive.

## Major Players

The two badasses the heroes are going to have to bring down are evil in a tragic sort of way. Neither exactly chose to be a horrible person; they were both twisted by forces beyond their control. Make sure that it comes across this way when the posse discovers where the real evil lies.

### Elizah Markley

You've heard her story already. Though Elizah's beautiful, kind soul may be hidden somewhere in her body, the demon in charge right now is pure evil. Through discriminating use of the Harrowed powers Elizah discovered, the manitou has managed to subvert the local sheriff and deputies. In addition, it has secreted itself into the lives of the local schoolchildren. The children may not know it yet, but their teacher is the cause of the mysterious deaths and the terrible dreams they suffer from.

Elizah uses her Death Mask power to appear beautiful and trustworthy. When using her chosen face, she is tall, busty yet slender, blond with blue eyes, and the very image of a sweet, desirable woman. When not clothed in illusion, her face is hideously disfigured (and the cause for a Fair (5) Guts check).

Profile: Elizah Markley

**Corporeal:** D:3d6, N:2d8, S:2d6, Q:3d8, V:2d10

Dodge 3d8, Sneak 4d8

**Mental:** C:2d6, K:4d12, M:3d10, Sm:2d12, Sp:2d10

Academia: elementary 4d12, Disguise 4d12, Language: Latin 2d12, Professional: teaching 5d12, Overawe 5d10, Persuasion 4d10, Bluff 3d12

**Edges:** Purty (when using Death Mask power)

**Hindrances:** Ugly as Sin (when not using Death Mask)

**Harrowed Powers:** Death Mask 5, Nightmare 5, Spook 5

### Randy Blake

Randy Blake is the sheriff of Eagle's Point. He's fairly tall and not too slender or stout, with brown hair. His almost black eyes peer from a sun browned and weathered face which generally reflects good cheer. Though generally a good hearted fella, Randy... well, he's also kinda randy. In addition, he's fairly weak-willed. Elizah used this to seduce the poor fella, then bring him under her control. In the middle of one of their "sessions," she revealed her true form to him. Randy now believes that Elizah is a devil from Hell, though he's still addicted to her devilish pleasures.

Sheriff Blake has brought the force of the law behind his demon mistress. Any investigations into strange happenings in Eagle's Point are subdued and very inconclusive. Randy's deputies are local boys who were brought up to believe in the local law and God, in that order. They obey orders, even if they may question what is being done. So far, Randy hasn't pushed the limits of their moral boundaries... yet.

Profile: Randy Blake

**Corporeal:** D:3d10, N:2d12, S:2d8, Q:2d10, V:3d8

Shootin': pistol, shotgun 4d10, Speed Load 2d10, Dodge 2d12, Fightin': brawlin', knife 3d12, Horse ridin' 2d12

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:3d6, M:3d8, Sm:2d6, Sp:4d4

Scrutinize 3d10, Professional: law 4d6,  
Trade: sheriff 4d6, Overawe 3d8,  
Guts 4d4

**Edges:** Law Man, Two-fisted, “The  
voice” (threatening)

**Hindrances:** Obligation (Sheriff),  
Randy

**Gear:** .45 Peacemakers (2), box of 50  
bullets, Bowie knife

## The Setup

The posse has wandered into Eagle’s Point for some reason or another. Maybe they’ve been hired by the Pinkertons or the Texas Rangers to look into the events, maybe a Harrowed posse member was sent by The Prospector, or maybe they’re just do-gooders who’ve heard about the murders.

If the characters have not met, players can introduce their characters to the others, and some may decide that they know each other from before. Let them get their familiarization done before you move on to

## Chapter One: Suffer the Children

### ***Eagle’s Point, Montana: Fear Level 2***

Eagle’s Point is a small, dusty town where not much goes on. It sprung up as a way station for would-be explorers into the great mysteries of the High Plains. Since its founding in the early 1830’s, it has quieted down into a small agrarian community, where the main sources of income are crops and cattle. The War between the States has remained fairly distant. The population of 75 consists mostly of young families, whose children are all still young enough to be going to school. The parents of Eagle’s Point are particularly grateful to have such a pretty, young, and capable school marm to handle the education of 30 or so youngsters. The recent and tragic deaths have mothers and fathers all over town worried for their children.

The town has been shaken by the mysterious deaths of 4 youngsters in the past four days. All of the children were found dead in their beds, apparently due to natural causes. The most recent death was little Timmy Burton, who died last night. Ten year-old Timmy was not only dead, but his hair had turned completely white. All the

town is talking about the deaths, though only nobody has the facts straight.

The heroes will probably want to talk to the local law, Timmy Burton’s parents, and also his friends. In addition, they should probably check the scene of his untimely demise. Should they think of any other places to check, Marshall, they probably won’t turn up any additional clues (unless you can think of something pertinent).

## Sheriff’s Office

**Description:** The sheriff’s office is a small building smack-dab in the middle of town. Its peeling facade hides a fairly well stocked armory on the inside. Various weapons line one wall, ranging from scatterguns to a Sharp’s Big .50 rifle. Two cells, both currently empty, are opposite the door. Both have an air of disuse about them. Until recently, the only crimes committed in Eagle’s Point could be remedied by an overnight stay and a headache powder in the morning.

**Occupants:** There is normally at least one deputy present. The sheriff, should the heroes ask, is out of the office on business. He comes and goes, and is normally checking the town and surrounding areas on horseback. When asked about the recent deaths, the deputy becomes cautious, and requires either a Fair (5) persuasion or Hard (9) overawe roll for him to give any other response than, “Well, you probably should be talkin’ to the Sheriff ‘bout that...” If one of the heroes successfully persuades or overawes the deputy, he lets it slip that the investigations have been somewhat slipshod, to say the least. On one raise (or a success by another hero), the deputy mentions that the children did not look like they were sleeping when they died. On two raises (or a subsequent hero’s questioning), he also hints that nobody had checked for intruders in any of the recent deaths. The deputy has no other information which he is comfortable sharing with the heroes, and more questioning leads nowhere.

## The Burton House

**Description:** The Burtons live on the west end of town. The small house is well kept, although the sadness inside is almost palpable. Timmy’s room is neat and made up, with small items obviously belonging to the former occupant placed on the furniture. There is a window in the room facing out of town. A Hard (9) search roll

reveals what appear to be streaks from fingers on the outside of the window. An Incredible (11) search roll shows that somebody entered and exited through the window last night. Occupants: Timmy's parents are both in mourning, and act very distant. Timmy was an only child. On questioning, the parents reveal that Timmy had been acting out of sorts for the past few days.

## The Schoolhouse

**Description:** The one room schoolhouse is on the opposite side of town from the Burton house. Students are scattered throughout, engaged in various scholastic pursuits such as reading in a group, working on their writing, or practicing their numbers. As the posse enters, Ms. Markley approaches. On a Fair (5) Cognition roll, the posse can detect the strong smell of perfume, and they notice dark circles under the teacher's eyes as if she has lost sleep or been crying (Oh, what a devious illusion!). She appears preoccupied with the students, and gives little or no help to the posse while they are investigating here. Occupants: Other than Elizah, the heroes may attempt to talk to the children one at a time. For any of them to comfortably converse with the strangers, the heroes must make a Hard (9) persuasion roll. If the posse talks to no other child, make sure they talk to a mousy little girl called Lindsay Turner. If one of the heroes successfully persuades her, Lindsay mentions that she's been having very scary dreams lately. She also says this: "There's a really bad lady in the dreams. She talks like someone I know, but I can't figure out who it is. She really scares me. I've also seen a bad man in my dreams. He kinda looks like the sheriff, but Sheriff Randy is always nice to me... I wish the bad dreams would stop..." If the posse mentions bad dreams to any other child, he or she clams right up. On an Incredible (11) persuasion roll, the child whimpers, "No, don't make me talk about it. She might hear me." Any other attempts at conversation with these children get the heroes nowhere.

## Chapter Two: Night moves

After the heroes wrap up a day of investigation, they turn in for the night. When they wake up the next morning, talk in the common room is buzzing of the events of last

night. Another child was found dead at dawn. This time, the child was not found in her bed, but several yards outside the window. The posse will have to rush if they want to catch the crime scene untainted!

## Lindsay Turner

The victim this time is Lindsay Turner, a the scared schoolgirl who opened up to the heroes yesterday. When the heroes arrive at the scene, there is already one deputy standing guard and one deputy looking around. The posse will have to make an Onerous (7) persuasion roll or an Incredible (11) overawe roll to cow the deputies into letting them look around. Make sure that the heroes understand how important it is to check this scene out. If they persist even after missing the target numbers for a little bit, the deputies relent and let the posse take a quick gander.

Once the posse gets to look around, they discover the following clues:

With a Foolproof (3) search or trackin' roll, they see that Lindsay was dragged out of her window. There is no sign of struggle in the room.

On an Fair (5) search or trackin' roll, they see that Lindsay's features are frozen in terror. In addition, there appears to be skin caught under some of her fingernails, and others are pulled back as if her hands were forcibly removed from whatever they were gripping.

With an Hard (9) search or trackin' roll, they see a set of footprints leaving the body, rounding the house, and heading towards the opposite end of town. If followed, the tracks become obscured by the tracks of normal morning traffic. The posse can not pick up the trail again. In addition, the heroes can catch a quick whiff of perfume clinging to Lindsay's nightgown. On a Fair (5) Cognition roll, they can recognize it as the perfume that Ms. Markley was wearing.

The heroes should have a very good idea of who they are looking for by now. If by some incredible chance they miss out on the clues pointing to Elizah Markley, have them overhear the deputies talking animatedly about something. When questioned, the deputies comment on the fact that the school is not opened today, and that nobody can find Elizah. Either way, the posse should take this as a hint to check her house for clues next.

## Chez Markley

Ms. Markley lives in a small house on the north edge of town. The front walk is decorated with pretty stones, and the yard looks neatly kept. When the posse enters the house, however, a faint smell of decay is evident to anybody who makes a Fair (5) Cognition roll. The furniture, while neatly arranged, has a light coat of dust on it, as if it hasn't been used recently. When the posse enters the bedroom, the smell of decay is stronger (evident even to a Foolproof (3) Cognition check), but the furniture appears more recently used. As a matter of fact, the bed is even slightly rumpled. Several pieces of clothing are strewn about, and the dresser drawers seem to be missing clothes, as if someone decided to go on a trip. Let the heroes snoop around for a bit, and describe any female implements or clothes they might find laying around. On a Foolproof (3) search roll, they notice a bottle of perfume on a vanity next to the bed. When somebody smells it, they can verify that this is the same perfume that was clinging to Lindsay Turner's nightgown. After muddling around for a little longer, and after making an Onerous (7) search roll, somebody discovers a sheet of paper crammed under the mattress.

This sheet of paper has seven names scribbled on it. The first five, though legible, have been crossed out. The last one is scratched out to the point of illegibility. On close inspection, the heroes recognize the first five names as the children who have died (number 4 is Timmy Burton, 5 is Lindsay Turner). The sixth name, which was not touched, is "Shirley Erickson." The posse should by all means have come to the conclusion that Elizah Markley has been involved in the deaths of these children. They should also conclude that Shirley Erickson may be in danger still, though it appears that Elizah has left town. If they have not reached these conclusions, you can give them this brilliant flash of insight on a Foolproof (3) Smarts roll.

## Chapter Three: To Save A Child

Elizah Markley has decided to leave town. But not without one more bit of unfinished business. The manitou in the driver's seat wants to savor youthful fear once more. Shirley Erickson is in danger tonight, and it's up to the heroes to protect her. The heroes have many

options at this point. They may decide to warn the Erickson family. They may decide to inform the local law enforcement. They may decide to take the Ericksons and hole up in a safe place. Whatever they decide, they are still vulnerable. Let them play it out until nightfall. If they end up telling the Sheriff or one of his deputies, they promise to check the Erickson house several times tonight. The law will then brush off any other attempts to warn about the family in danger.

No matter where the posse and the family end up, the heroes should have figured out by now that the only way to protect little Shirley is by guarding her themselves. They can decide if they want to spread out and guard the house, or if they all want to stay with Shirley. Whatever they decide, the following events will come to pass.

A little past midnight, Shirley wakes up with a scream. Anybody inside the house can hear this with a Foolproof (3) Cognition roll, and anybody outside but nearby can hear it with a Fair (5) Cognition roll. This should cause most everybody to come running. As they enter the room, the heroes see Mrs. Erickson holding her daughter and rocking her back and forth. Have any heroes present roll scrutinize versus Elizah's disguise (with a modifier of +7 to the roll for Elizah). If any of them succeed, they can see that whoever is holding Shirley is not her mother. On a raise, they can see Elizah's twisted undead visage (time for those guts checks, Marshall).

If none of the heroes penetrate Elizah's disguise, she goes on with her normal plan, and uses her Spook power on Shirley. Shirley automatically has a heart attack (see the Scart Table for details), although she survives (no need to roll, Marshall, we don't want to kill another kid!) and Elizah turns to the posse and uses her Spook power on them. If one of the heroes sees through her disguise, she turns and uses Spook on the posse immediately. While the posse is shaking off the effects of Spook, Elizah calls for her reinforcements. If there are windows in the room (and there are two in Shirley's room in the Erickson house), Sheriff Randy and 3 deputies bust through them, guns blazing. If there are not windows (i.e., they decided to hole up somewhere), the sheriff and company bust through the front door and open up on the heroes.

Elizah uses Spook on all of her actions. Here are the stats for the deputies:

**Profile:** Deputy Dawgs

**Corporeal:** D:2d8, N:3d6, S:3d6,  
Q:1d8, V:3d8

**Shootin':** scattergun (2), rifle (1) 3d8,  
Dodge 3d6, **Fightin':** Brawlin' 4d6

**Mental:** All you need to worry about is  
Guts 3d8.

**Size:** 6

**Gear:** Two are equipped with  
scatterguns, one is equipped with  
the Sharps Big .50 rifle.

### The Roundup

After the heroes successfully stomp the crap out of Sheriff Randy and his deputies, they turn to Elizah. If she was shot during the gunfight, then she's either clinging tenuously to consciousness or dead on the floor. If she's dead, we'll handle that in a second. If Elizah was not injured, here's what happens:

Elizah looks fearfully at you. Her gruesome face betrays little emotion, but her trembling hands and hunched stance show that she fears for her life. "Mercy..." she whimpers, and falls to her knees. She crawls toward you, whining and begging for her life. As she nears you, a strange sense of uneasiness intrudes on your consciousness. Call it a hunch...

Elizah springs up with one of the Sheriff's revolvers in hand, aiming at the posse. Do your surprise checks and start combat. The revolver has 1d6 rounds in it, and Elizah runs for the nearest exit if she runs out of bullets. Hopefully she gets killed (or nearly killed) in this sequence. Make it so.

If Elizah is only near death when the fur stops flying, here's what happens: The battered and twisted face looking up from the floor suddenly shines with a new urgency. "Please," she says. "You must kill me now!" You look at her in bewildered silence. What could have brought about this sudden change of heart? "Please!" she cries in anguish. "I don't know how long I can stay in control! You must not give the demon another chance to control me! You can't! I'm ready for my death now. Please release me!"

If none of the heroes end it for her in 1 round, then Elizah pulls a Derringer from her bodice and

puts a bullet in her rotting brains, ending her tortured life for good. Read the scene below once Elizah is finally dead.

*Elizah Markley lies dead on the floor.*

*Though still twisted and malformed, she seems more at peace now. You look up from her still form to a strange light. Standing in front of the window is one of the most beautiful women you have ever seen. You realize, with a start, that it is Elizah, though how you can recognize her you can't say. The fact that you recognize her is much less shocking than the fact that you can see through her! Before you can say a word, the ethereal creature speaks. "Thank you for your work here. You saved my soul, and many other people in this town. Be careful that you control your demons, or you too will come to find death is a release." She turns towards the Montana night, looks up at the stars, and vanishes without a trace.*

That's the end. If the players want a little more closure, you can help them tend to Shirley (who recovers from her fright with a Fair (5) medicine roll), and have them release Mr. and Mrs. Erickson, who are tied up in their bedroom. They can also receive a congratulatory note from Coot Jenkins. In the note, he will allude to needing their help sometime in the near future. That's about all the closure I can think of. Marshall, the rest is up to you.



# No thanks...I'm Stuffed!

## Marshal's Note

This adventure is designed for a single session of Deadlands. Before running the adventure the Marshal needs to pick out one of the characters that will capture the interest of the farmonger. The character should be different or unique (not white and not male). Keep this info handy: the farmonger is looking to complete his collection of specimens of various races and genders.

## The Story So Far

This is the sick and twisted story of a sick and twisted man. Steffen "Zeke" Ritter is the son of German immigrants. He prefers to be called Zeke, which is a shortened version of his middle name, Ezekiel. Zeke served on the Union side in the civil war for a very short time and was transferred to help in the Indian Wars. During his short tenure on the Great Plains, his company was massacred by the Sioux. Only he survived and he was forced to scavenge and hunt for food in the wilderness for six months. He was traumatized by the experience and went mad. He was found by Pawnee who were friendly with the whites and took him to their shaman so that the spirits haunting him could be exorcised.

Now, that old Pawnee shaman was unable to cure Zeke because he wasn't haunted by a manitou. He was just plain not right in the head. During a long ceremony, Zeke had a fit of insane rage and killed the shaman. He took the shaman's turtle shell rattle, a special magical artifact that comes into play later on in the adventure. This all happened over ten years ago. Zeke has always been interested in hunting and taxidermy. But his malaise has caused his little hobby to turn macabre. Zeke has turned to shooting and stuffing various species of Homo sapiens. One of the members of the posse fits a missing piece in his collection.

## Chapter One: The Great Hunters

The adventure begins when the posse is on their way to another town or are out camping for some reason. Either way, they should only be less than a day's ride away from a town with a considerable population. At night, the posse is

stalked by a mated pair of mountain lions. The puma are driven by starvation and have been taking livestock from nearby farms and ranches. Locals have pooled together \$50 reward for the critters.

A posse member will spots one of the puma just before it attacks one of the weakest horses owned by the posse. If for some strange reason the posse has no horses it attacks a sleeping member of the posse. As the posse is fighting the cat, have one of the heroes notice the second puma hanging back. It is bigger than the first, but will flee before the posse can do anything about it.

Profile: Mountain Lion

**Corporeal:** D:1d4, N:3d10, Q:2d12, S:4d6, V:2d8

Fightin': brawlin' 4, Sneak 4

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:1d4, M:1d8, Sm:1d4, Sp:2d4

**Size:** 5

**Terror:** 3

**Special Abilities:** Claws STR, Bite STR+2d6

## Stranger in the Night

When the posse gets the mountain lion killed, they will realize that it is a big brute. Shortly thereafter, a fella by the name of Lance O'Boyle will approach the camp on horseback. Over the panting of his shagged-out horse, he will explain that he was camped not very far away and that he heard gunshots. Seeing the dead puma, he will congratulate the posse and tell them about the reward.

Profile: Lance "Potato" O'Boyle

**Corporeal:** D:3d8, N:2d8, Q:2d10, S:3d8, V:2d8

Shootin': pistol 2, rifle 2, Fightin': brawlin' 3

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:1d6, M:1d6, Sm:1d6, Sp:1d4

Trackin' 2, Guts 1

**Gear:** .44-40 Winchester '73 and .45 Peacemaker

On the way to town, the posse will pass by a camp of three Indians from the Pawnee tribe. They should make them no nevermind. If the posse leaves them alone, they will leave the posse alone. The leader of the group is a powerful shaman named Spring Star. He camps with his two sons, Little Coyote and Riverchild, who are strong braves in their own right. They are searching for a sacred artifact taken from them many years ago. (The turtleshell rattle). To learn more, hang tight and read on.

If you need stats, use the archetypes for Brave and Shaman in the Deadlands Rulebook.

### Bounty

Killing the Mountain Lion: 2 points

Befriending Potato O'Boyle: 1 point

## Chapter Two: Zeke's Hunting Lodge

Tater O'Boyle will lead the posse into to town and directly to Zeke's Hunting Lodge, where he will turn in the puma's carcass on their behalf. Because there are actually two cats, the posse only gets half of the reward (\$25). The posse will be introduced to Steffen "Zeke" Ritter, sole proprietor of the Lodge and also the local taxidermist. The building is divided up into two parts. The front serves as a small bar and the back is the taxidermy office. Both places are filled with numerous mounted trophy animals. Zeke offers to stuff the puma for free as long as he can display it at the Lodge. He also offers the posse a free drink in celebration.

Jack the barkeep and Lily, a saloon gal, work the bar for Zeke. As the posse is toasting with a shot of whiskey, one of the patrons pinches Lily's caboose. She has a fit, slaps the guy, and quits right on the spot. She storms out. Zeke shakes his head and says that he suspected she would quit any day. His only regret is that she was such "a perfect physical specimen." After the drink, Zeke and Tater propose that they and the posse should go back out and find the mountain lion's mate. They will do their best to get at least some of the posse to go with them.

### Them Injuns Again

When the party gets ready to leave for the hunt, they will notice the Pawnee shaman and his sons hanging out by the stables watching them. If they are approached, they will feign ignorance of

the English language. The Pawnee are actually more concerned with Zeke. Don't let the posse get to preoccupied with the Pawnee. If they are questioned, they will feign not understanding English.

### A Manhunt

Zeke has decided that he just must add one of the members of the posse to his collection. Thus, when Zeke and Potato go out hunting with the posse, Zeke will hire a local group of scums and lowlifes to help him separate that special posse member from the herd and bag him. During the hunt, Zeke will separate from the rest of the group when he gets the opportunity, taking a few of the thugs with him. Potato understands what he is supposed to do. He will feign spotting the puma and have the heroes circle around a specific spot. At the right moment, he will pull out his Peacemaker and attempt to blow a nice, clean hole in the back of the hero chosen for the collection. Along with Potato is an equal number of thugs to that of the posse. They will hide be hiding nearby when Zeke "spots" the mountain lion. These lowlifes aren't very smart and will try to kill the posse member in an obvious way.

A messy gunfight should ensue. The Marshal can improvise a simple wilderness setting in which the battle can take place. With a hard (9) cognition check, the posse will see Zeke hanging around when the attack comes. They should not be allowed to catch him, however. They carry Peacemakers (3d6) and Buffalo guns (4d10) and \$10 in silver dollars each. The posse may remember seeing the same kind of silver dollars at Zeke's Hunting Lodge on a Cognition check of (11). If, after this, the posse is insistent about getting this mountain lion, have them corner it somewhere in the hills and bag the thing.

### Profile: Zeke's Thugs

**Corporeal:** D:2d10, N:2d8, Q:2d10, S:3d8, V:2d8

Shootin': pistol 2d10, Shootin': rifle 2d10, Fightin': brawlin' 2d8, Dodge 3d8

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:1d6, M:1d6, Sm:1d6, Sp:1d4

Trackin'1d10, Guts 1d4

**Gear:** .45 Peacemakers and Buffalo guns (4d10)

## Bounty

Going out on Hunt: 2 points

Defeating Thugs: 3 points

Spotting Zeke: 1 point

Matching up Silver Dollars: 1 point

## Chapter Three: The Taxidermy Shop

The posse is going to be getting a might suspicious at this point. They are eventually going to want to go poking around the taxidermy shop. This is a good move because it's where the danger lies. If the heroes break in at night, they will find the numerous stuffed animals disturbing (fear 3). Zeke keeps the doors locked and the posse is going to have to pick the lock or break down the door. If they make a lot of noise, the town marshal will come around to investigate ten minutes after that that time.

The stuff in the taxidermy shop is just as creepy as in the bar. If the posse studies the instruments here for a bit, have them make an Onerous (7) Cognition check. On a successful roll, they will realize that several of the wooden frames Zeke is building to go inside an animal that would look remarkably like the shape of a human being. On a Hard (9) search roll, they will find two fancy name plates wrapped up in paper and hidden away under the counter. They read, "North American Caucasian Female," and the second being a 'scientific' description of the special posse member the Marshal was supposed to pick out. (For example, "Sioux Male — Indigenous American")

In the back room of the taxidermy shop is a secret retracting stairway covered by a throw rug. This leads to the special cellar room where Zeke keeps his trophy collection, the one that other people just wouldn't understand. When the heroes come down to investigate, Zeke is down here working on his latest kill, Lily the Saloon Gal. She is spread out on a table in the center of the room. With an Onerous (7) Cognition check, the hero opening the stairwell will catch a glimpse of lantern light extinguished just as he lowers the stairs. Zeke hides when the heroes come down, jumping up on one of the stands and covering himself with a sheet. He holds real still.

Read the following description to the players when they get down in the cellar:

"Several lanterns hang from the web-covered floor supports. You notice right away that the wick in one of them is glowing a faint red. You see what appear to be human figures standing on little platforms lined along the north and west wall. There are seven of them, but platforms for ten. Most of these figures are covered with a white sheet, but two of them are just standing there. One is an Indian, while the other looks like a banker or some Easterner in fancy duds. They are frozen stiff. A purty but dead woman lies on a table in the center of the room. Each figure is marked with a place card reading, "North American Caucasian Male," or, "Female Homo sapien sapien — Cheyenne Tribe," similar to the name plates found upstairs."

Zeke is hiding on the south side on the last platform. He snatched up the tortoise shell rattle because he doesn't want anyone to take it. Some day he is going to figure out what that thing does. He also has a carving knife. He will try to hold as still as possible. If the heroes pull off the sheet, he will dart for the stairs. The posse must check for surprise. Otherwise, conduct the combat as normal. When Zeke is discovered, he will drop the rattle and the shell will burst open, releasing about 100 manitou that various Pawnee shamans have captured in it over the years. These manitou will possess the human trophies and attack the posse.

The following round, the human trophies will animate and come down off their stands wielding canes, tomahawk, rifle butt, whatever they happen to be holding in the display. Each need only take 10 hits to be destroyed.

**Profile:** Animated Humans

**Corporeal:** D:2d4, N:2d8, Q:1d4,  
S:2d6, V:1d4

**Fightin':** brawlin' 3

**Mental:** C:1d4, K:1d4, M:1d4, Sm:1d4,  
Sp:3d10

**Terror:** 9

**Gear:** They may wield a cane (STR+1d4), a tomahawk (STR+2d6) or a rifle butt (STR+1d6).

**Profile:** Steffen "Zeke" Ritter

**Corporeal:** D:4d10, N:2d8, Q:2d10,  
S:3d8, V:2d8

Shootin': pistol 2, rifle 4, Fightin':  
brawlin' 2

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:1d6, M:1d6,  
Sm:1d6, Sp:1d4

Trackin' 4, Science: anthropology 3,  
taxidermy 4, Guts 1

**Gear:** He carries a knife (STR+1d6),  
\$13.50 and a \$15 pocket watch.

### Leaving the Cellar

If Zeke manages to escape or if the posse flees this room and goes back into the taxidermy office, they will find that the manitou have possessed the animals here. The sight of the animals writhing to get free from stands for the wall is enough to frighten anyone. The posse must check against a Hard fear (9). If the heroes are stupid enough to stay and fight, refer to the stats below.

Profile: Animated Animals

**Corporeal:** D:2d4, N:2d8, Q:1d4,  
S:2d6, V:1d4

**Mental:** C:1d4, K:1d4, M:1d4, Sm:1d4,  
Sp:3d10

**Size:** 6

**Terror:** 9

**Damage:** by hoof, claw or horn is STR.

Running out of the building, they will be met by the shaman, Spring Star, guarded by his two sons. Spring Star is in the middle of a ceremony and is singing and shaking a similar rattle. His sons urge the posse to get away from the house. They can stick around if they like, but there isn't much that they can do. After a long ceremony, Spring Star will recapture all of the manitou and leave. When he is done, Spring Star will attempt to find out what happened to Zeke through crude English.

If Zeke manages to escape from the posse, the Pawnee catch him, kill him, and take his scalp.

### Bounty

Suspecting Zeke is up to something: 1 point

Breaking into Shop without Detection: 2 points

Finding Wooden Frames: 1 point

Finding Name Plates: 1 point

Defeating Zeke: 3 points

Defeating Animated Humans: 4 points

Surviving the Animated Animals: 2 points

# Everybody Loves Zombies

Hey y'all!!! It seems as things get weirder in the west, so do the people. And we all know that Texans can be weirder than most. Leave it to the folks down in Nacogdoches to turn a profit on the single most horrible event to occur in their peaceful little town. The problem is, the terror's just begun, and a posse of freelancers are about to get a lot more than they bargained for.

## The Story So Far

It seems that last October, a Bayou Vermillion train carrying an experimental batch of Baron LaCroix's "Zombie Juice" crashed, spilling its foul cargo into the Angelina River just outside of Nacogdoches. Some of the liquid made its way into the local boneyard, and all Hell broke loose on All Hallow's Eve. The zombies, who fortunately were extremely stupid (even for zombies), dug their way out of their graves looking for human brains to feed on. Well, after the initial shock wore off, the gun-toting Texans quickly figured out that putting a bullet in their brain-buckets was the easiest way to put a zombie down.

They took turns picking off their rotting townsfolk while they tapped the whiskey kegs, and only a few of the Texans were injured.

Word spread of the incident, and after a few months, Nacogdoches became a regular tourist attraction (at least in those parts). Well, the folks of Nacogdoches have decided to have themselves a bit of a festival this year (they really didn't have much of a choice, and figured they might as well make some money from their notoriety), as all of the big game hunters, do-gooders, and nut-cases drift into town for a Halloween zombie bash. They all know the zombies aren't coming back anyway... right? Well, little do they know that Baron LaCroix has other plans, and he's sent an associate of his to teach the arrogant Texans a lesson.

H. G. "Hoodoo Brown" Neill is a Judge with considerable influence from just outside of Albuquerque, NM—he's also as corrupt as they come. Neill has the market cornered in his neck of the woods in prostitution, illegal liquor,

gambling—you name it, if it's illegal, he has his chubby little hands in it.

You may be wondering about the "Hoodoo" part of his nickname... well, it seems the Honorable Judge Neill also looks out for Bayou Vermillion's interests in New Mexico. In exchange, Baron LaCroix has granted Neill supernatural powers to run his criminal empire. Little did he know that these powers have slowly turned him into a slave for the Baron—one piece of his soul at a time. A few days ago, one of LaCroix's "men" showed up at his doorstep with a coach, and they set off for Nacogdoches to start some trouble. In Austin, TX, they ran into a bit of a problem.

The local head of the Texas Rangers in these parts, Robert Madison, recognized the Judge and decided that it wasn't safe for a law official of his status to be travelling in these parts alone. In truth, Madison has heard some disturbing rumors about the man and wants the freelancers to keep an eye on him. He decided to send the posse as an escort to Nacogdoches, where he was to "catch a steamcoach to New Orleans.", and they could supervise the festival. Neill figures the Ranger's lackeys can be disposed of before they reached the town—it wouldn't do to have them interfering with the Baron's plans. Since last year, LaCroix has been coming up with a grand scheme to have a little fun with the sleepy little town of Nacogdoches who has so "valiantly" fought off the horrible abominations that had risen from their graveyard—hey, everybody has their hobbies. His henchmen have been planting little undead "surprises" all over the area, to be presented to the townsfolk at their little festival. The fear created by the event will make his masters very happy.

## The Setup

The heroes are bound for the town of Nacodoches, as freelancers for the Confederacy's most feared military branch, they've got to prove themselves now. On their way from San Antonio, they stop in Austin where the boss(es) receive their orders—and pick up an unexpected travelling companion. This adventure works best

if there's a Ranger in the posse, otherwise the most experienced freelancer will be in charge of the mission.

## The Briefing

After a good night's rest, the heroes are fed and, just as breakfast is ending, the Ranger(s) or most experienced freelancer in the posse are led off to a small conference room. {TAKE THIS PLAYER(S) ASIDE FOR THIS PART OF THE ADVENTURE} A stocky, bow-legged old man with long, gray hair and a beard hobbles into the room. The old man is dressed like most Texas Rangers, and wears two ivory-handled revolvers casually under his long duster. He is accompanied by a fat, balding little man dressed in the finest of suits, smoking a huge cigar (think Boss Hogg... )—the two make quite an odd pair. The older Rangers stand and salute as the man approaches the posse.

“Howdy. Please do sit down... it's far too early for all that.”

He sits down with the heroes, and the fat man does the same. “As y'all may (or may not) know, I'm ol' Bob, the guy yer fellow recruits warned ya about. This here's the honorable H.G. Neill.”

The fat man tips his ten-gallon hat to the heroes.

“Y'all may recall a while back, a bunch o' the dead folks at Nacogdoches decided ta get up and walk around. In case ya don't know about it, here's the deal. Last year these dead folks decided ta just get up—all at once, mind ya—and try ta eat their livin' neighbors. Luckily, no one was really hurt—except fer the town barber—who fell drunk offa his horse and was dragged a bit. Well, it seems the town's become a bit of a tourist attraction. We almost kept the whole town quiet, but soon everyone was talkin'.”

The old man mops his brow with his sleeve and pauses for a second. He pulls a crumpled up flyer out of his coat pocket and hands it to the Rangers. [GIVE THE PLAYERS HANDOUT #1]

“Take a gander at that.”

He lets all of the Rangers read the flyer before he begins speaking again. “It seems the idjits have decided to have themselves a bit of a fiesta this year to celebrate the event. Now, fer y'all part. First, and foremost, is to escort Judge Neill here—who's traveled all the way from

Albuquerque already—to Nacagdoches where he's ta hop a steamcoach (ur some-such contraption) ta visit some family down in New Orleans. You make sure he gets on that coach safely. Second, when y'all get ta Nacagdoches—which should be two days a'fore the fiesta—do what ya do best, uphold the law. Sounds easy, right? One thing ya learn when y'all have been doin' this job as long as I have... it's never as easy as it sounds. Good luck. Report back here afterwards, yer horses should be ready out in the courtyard. Now go brief yer freelancers.”

The old man gets up and hobbles away.

{THE RANGERS IN THE POSSE SHOULD NOW FILL IN THE OTHER PLAYERS TO THE SITUATION}

The heroes find their horses equipped with all of the basic provisions they'll need for the trip, which is approximately 175 miles (and will take three days). The coach the Judge is to be traveling is heavily laden with bags and chests as well. The judge is accompanied by his “secretary”, an extremely attractive young brunet woman wearing a slinky dress, and his driver, a grizzled veteran of the War Between the States who doubles as the Judge's bodyguard. The caravan leaves shortly after dawn.

## The Major Players

Baron LaCroix's agents are an eclectic, yet formidable, group. Like the Baron himself, they're sneaky and patient. The Judge is friendly and talkative with the heroes, often offering one of his fine cigars or a shot of bourbon. Veronica struts about, as aloof as can be, but may pretend to take to one of the heroes so that she can get a hold of a personal belonging or some hair to curse them with. The driver will respond to posse members with nods, grunts or short answers, but he won't initiate conversation and most of the time acts lethargic and half-dead (which—amazingly enough—he is).

### Judge H.G. “Hoodoo Brown” Neill

The Judge thought he had the world wrapped around his little finger. Anything he desired was his at the snap of a finger, women, money, anything—and the Baron rarely called upon his services for all of the power he had bestowed upon Neill. When the coach pulled up in front of his estate, Neill knew that this wasn't going to be

one of the usual “jobs” that he could send his thugs to take care of—and for the first time in his life, the puppet strings were apparent. Now he’s scared.

Profile: Judge H.G. Neill

**Corporeal:** D4d8, N:3d10, S:2d6, Q:2d8, V:3d6

Fightin’: brawlin’ 1d10, horse ridin’ 2d10, quick draw 2d8, shootin’: pistol 3d8, shootin’: rifle 3d8, slight o’ hand 5d8, teamster 2d10

**Mental:** C:3d10, K:3d8, M:3d8, Sm:4d6, Sp:3d6

Academia: law 3d8, area knowledge: New Mexico 3d6, area knowledge: Texas 2d6, bluff 4d6, language: English 2d8, language: Spanish 2d8, overawe 3d8, professional: judge 3d8, scrutinize 3d10, search 2d10, spirit 4d6, streetwise 3d6, tale tellin’ 4d8

**Wind:** 12

**Edges:** Lawman 1, knack (born on All Hallow’s Eve) 5, “the stare” 1

**Hindrances:** Big ‘un -2, cautious -3, high falutin’ -2, outlaw -2

**Spells:** Puppet (evil stare) 5, sendin’ (nightmares) 1, spook (icy grip) 5, Zombie (potion) 3

**Gear:** One Merwin Hulbert Pocket revolver, one Remington Double Derringer, (50) rounds of ammunition for both guns, springsleeve holster for derringer, white Stetson, half dozen fancy white suits, box o’ good stogies, (3) bottles of the good stuff, Zombie Rattle

Ms. Veronica Callicutt

Veronica often poses as the Judge’s secretary, she was sent as an “aide” from Baron LaCroix to keep a sharp eye on his investments. The Judge often hints that their relationship is more than professional. She personally despises the Judge, and feels that he is an incompetent, womanizing, idiot—unworthy of the Baron’s time. She longs for the day that the fat little man’s usefulness to Bayou Vermillion comes to an end. Veronica enjoys playing the helpless woman, while using

her curse power and watching her enemies waste away from a distance. If someone gets her riled enough though, she won’t hesitate to go right for the throat (which she usually does with her 8” poisoned hairpins).

Profile: Ms. Veronica Callicutt

**Corporeal:** D4d8, N:3d8, S:1d6, Q:3d6, V:2d6

Fightin’: brawlin’ 1d8, horse ridin’ 4d8, shootin’: pistol 1d8, slight o’ hand 5d8

**Mental:** C:3d10, K:3d8, M:3d8, Sm:4d6, Sp:3d6

Bluff 3d6, faith 4d6, overawe 4d8, persuasion 2d8, survival: city 2d6

**Wind:** 12

**Edges:** Arcane background: voodoo 3, purty 1, “the voice” (soothing) 1

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty -2, loyal (Bayou Vermillion) -3, scrawny 5

**Spells:** Curse (voodoo dolls) 5

**Gear:** Slinky dresses, riding clothes, .44 derringer, (2) 8” hair pins (+1 Def., Spd. 1, Dam. Str+1d4+poison), poison (paralyzes victim for 1d4 rounds unless a Fair (5) Vigor roll is made)

Joshua Norell (the driver)

Joshua Norell is just a poor sap who was in the wrong place at the wrong time. The man ran into one of LaCroix’s zombie “rail crews” on his way home from town one evening, the houngan in charge of the crew trapped his soul in a Relic (a small, black onyx statue), turning him into something far worse than a zombie. He was told if he didn’t do what he was told, they would force him to kill the wife and child he left behind—and he knows they aren’t bluffing.

Joshua just wants to die, but they won’t let him. It’s been ten years now, but it seems like an eternity. Whoever possesses the statuette (an evil bastard currently residing in New Orleans by the name of Papa Natanga), can force Norell to do their bidding, but that requires some strain, and he normally can do as he pleases. Norell’s last command was to go to Judge Neill and do as he says. Any chance to get himself killed outside of these orders, he’ll willingly jump at—the Judge keeps him on a short leash though.

Profile: Joshua Norell

**Corporeal:** D:2d8, N:2d8, S:4d10,  
Q:1d6, V:3d12

Fightin': brawlin' 3d8, teamster 3d8,  
shootin': shotgun 2d8

**Mental:** C:2d6, K:2d8, M:1d8, Sm:2d6,  
Sp:2d6

Animal handlin' 2d8, overawe 2d8,  
tinkerin' 2d6

**Wind:** 28

**Edges:** Thick skinned 3, tough as nails  
5, Sand 2

**Hindrances:** Death wish -5, slowpoke  
-2

**Gear:** Travelling clothes, Winchester  
Lever-Action shotgun

### The Zombie Rattle

In a fancy little box, inset with "ivory" scrimshaw, hidden in a secret compartment beneath one of the seats in his coach, the Judge keeps the Zombie Rattle. This disgusting little Relic was a gift from Baron LaCroix himself, and is made from the shrunken head of a once powerful voodoo houngan (obviously not powerful enough) mounted at the top of a short stick. All of the major orifices are sewn shut, and the loose teeth rattle around in the mummified cranium. The rattle is painted, and decorated with beads, coins, bones and feathers.

**Powers:** Anyone holding the rattle has the power to control any zombies within 10 miles created by the Baron's "Zombie Juice". The commands must be spoken out loud (while the relic is rattled), but the command can be a mere whisper. In addition, anyone holding the rattle tends to blend into any surrounding shadows—effectively giving them cloak o' evil at level 2 (-4 to be hit or spotted) for as long as they hold it.

**Taint:** You might call the rattle a "Zombie Magnet". Any of these abominations within 25 miles of the rattle (walkin' dead included) are drawn to the rattle, and will head for the thing unless they have specific instructions not to.

## Chapter One: Night One

The heroes travel all day without incident, stopping occasionally to water the horses or stretch their legs. Every now and again passing travelers (some of whom are en route to Nacogdoches as well). An odd thing that the

posse members may notice—an Incredible (11) roll while on the road, or Onerous (7) in camp—is several large crows seem to be following the caravan. They may be scared away, but soon return within sight. The bird(s) find a good perch (even on top of the wagon when it's stopped) and watch the posse with an unnerving intelligence behind their eyes. They, like the zombies, are drawn to the rattle.

As the sun begins to set, the coach driver gestures to a small grove of trees to the right of the trail. If there are no disagreements, the caravan sets up camp here. The heroes may notice the driver doing all of the work while Judge Neill and his secretary lounge about. After dinner, the heroes can choose to post a watch if they want (the rest of the caravan don't volunteer). The Judge and Veronica retire to their tent and the driver sets up his bedroll near the horses.

At about 3am, anyone on watch will hear someone shuffling down the road—and on a Hard (9) Cognition roll will hear his undead buddies crawling towards the camp from the opposite direction.

The lone traveler is actually a diversion for the Judge's first attempt at bumping off the heroes. As he approaches, the heroes notice in the dying light of the campfire the rotting flesh hanging from its partially exposed skull, and a faint glow in its gaping eye sockets. When the posse is distracted from this gruesome sight, the other zombies emerge from the trees and attack. There are 1d4 zombies (including the diversion) who attack them.

### Ack, Zombies!!!

A few of the Baron's buried surprises, the Judge detected them shortly before dusk using the Zombie Rattle. He doesn't expect the undead to kill the posse, but is using this encounter to feel out the heroes a bit, and gauge their strengths and weaknesses.

Profile: Walkin' Dead

**Corporeal:** D:2d6, N:2d8, S:3d8,  
Q:2d10, V:2d8

Shootin': pistol 2d6, shootin': rifle 2d6,  
shootin': shotgun 2d6, climbin' 1d8,  
dodge 2d8,



fightin': brawlin' 3d8, sneak 3d8,  
swimmin' 1d8

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:1d6, M:1d6,  
Sm:1d6, Sp:1d4

Overawe 5d6

**Size:** 6

**Terror:** 9

**Special Abilities:**

**Bite:** STR

**Guns:** Many walkin' dead carry  
weapons they've taken from their  
victims.

**Immunity:** To Wind or physical  
stress. They are affected by  
other forms of damage just like  
Harrowed characters.

**Gear:** (2) pistols, (1) rifle

During the encounter, the Judge makes quite a  
show of hopping around in his nightshirt, blasting  
away at the zombies with his derringer, as does  
the driver with his shotgun (none of their shots  
will hit the creatures in the head). Veronica stays  
hidden in the coach—looking for the toughest  
hero, who she'll attempt to curse tomorrow.

**Bounty**

Noticing something fishy about the encounter: 1  
chip

Surviving the ambush: 1 chip

## Chapter Two: Night Two

The caravan heads out bright and early the  
next morning (most of them probably didn't sleep  
too well after the encounter anyway). Sometime  
during the day, Veronica will attempt to grab a  
personal item from one of the posse members,  
and will use her curse power on him. The day  
passes uneventfully once more, and once again  
the driver points out a likely looking camp sight.  
Despite the previous evening's events, the Judge  
and his companions are sleeping like babies by  
10pm.

Tonight, there are more birds than the  
previous evening, and the judge will even remark  
about them if the posse hasn't noticed by now.

The posse might notice (on a Foolproof (3)  
Cognition roll) that the bottle of Scotch the judge  
is passing around this evening is only shipped  
into Boston, and is on the Confederacy's banned  
list (something a judge should be fully aware of).  
If questioned concerning this, the judge acts

indifferent, denying any knowledge of that fact,  
and makes quite a show of throwing the bottle  
into the fire. After this, he doesn't say much for  
the rest of the evening and retires early.

Otherwise, he's his cheerful, drunken self.

This evening, Veronica will also Curse one of  
the posse members, the one who she figures poses  
the biggest threat to their plans. If she hasn't  
already swiped the personal belonging to sew into  
the voodoo doll, she will do so tonight (you may  
or may not want to give the player(s) a chance to  
catch her in the act). If all goes well for the bad  
guys, the cursed posse member wakes up in the  
morning pale and sick. Here's the important  
information for the spell:

**Curse**

**Speed:** 1d6 minutes

**Duration:** Varies

**Trappings:** Voodoo Doll

Few cults use blatant means to deal with their  
enemies. Some prefer a more subtle, if somewhat  
slower, method of removing the competition.  
This draws a lot less attention. Curse inflicts a  
slow wasting on the target represented by a daily  
loss of the victim's Wind. Wind lost to this black  
magic cannot be recovered by normal means.  
Once the victim reaches 0 Wind, he becomes  
bedridden, and he begins to suffer wound levels  
as usual when his Wind reaches low negative  
numbers.

The caster must see the target or have an item  
belonging to the victim in order to cast the spell.  
After that, there is no range restriction, and the  
spell has a virtually limitless duration. The caster  
can freely release the curse at any time, and  
killing the cultist who invoked the curse ends the  
spell as well. The miracle dispel and the hex  
disrupt are also effective means for lifting a curse.  
While magical cures can restore some of the lost  
Wind, they don't prevent further losses.

The Wind loss is based on the caster's level  
with the spell. Veronica's Curse will cause 1d6  
Wind loss per day.

**Bounty**

Confronting the judge: 1 chip

Catching Veronica in the act: 1 chip

## Chapter Three: Nacogdoches, here we come!

As the caravan gets within 50 miles of the town, they begin to see billboards advertising the Nacogdoches Festival. Signs like: *ONLY 50 MILES TO THE BIGGEST PARTY OF THE YEAR!!!* and *THE DAY THE DEVIL CAME TO NACOGDOCHES... A DRAMATIZATION.*

Every ten miles along the trail, there's a new one. The stream of people along the trail has drastically increased. At about 5pm (if the posse left at dawn), they reach the bustling town of Nacogdoches.

### Nacogdoches: The Town **Fear Level: 1**

Chaos is the only term to describe the state of things at Nacogdoches. Troops of actors dressed as zombies or heroic Texans practice in the streets, vendors are setting up booths or already hawking their wares in town square, and crews of citizens busy themselves with the decorations. The Judge, who's been uncharacteristically quiet during the entire trip today, steps from his coach and approaches the heroes.

"I truly thank y'all for all your help, we had never expected so much trouble getting here. I suspect we never would've made it here if not for the Pride o' Texas! I pray that the steamcoach journey will be a little less eventful. Good day to you, Gentleman (and Ladies). Please join me at my hotel, Lee's Rest, for dinner this evening—lets' say eight o' clock?—as my way of showing my gratitude."

With that, he leaves the posse. As the coach is leaving, Veronica can be seen scowling at the posse through her window in the vehicle.

The heroes can do whatever they wish in the meantime. Try to steer them away from checking in to the Lee's Rest, the prices are very expensive (far beyond the salary of a Texas Ranger), and we already have plans for it. During this time, you should encourage the posse to do their part in providing law and order for the good folks of Nacogdoches. Pickpockets abound, as well as shysters, drunkards, and gun-toting lunatics hell-bent on bagging themselves a zombie. Use the characters Hindrances against them if you have to.

### Bounty

Using the time available to help bring law and order to Nacogdoches: 1 chip

### The Sun Sets

As the heroes make their way through the streets for their dinner engagement, something doesn't feel quite right. The streets are still bustling with preparations for tomorrow's festival, as the blood-red moon rises over the horizon, but there is an unnatural chill to the air, and the feeling that eyes are watching from the shadows. A Fair (5) Cognition roll reveals that the posse members aren't the only ones who feel this way as townsfolk jump at the slightest things and look nervously over their shoulders.

### Lee's Rest

As the posse approaches the hotel, the uneasy feeling gets stronger. The people on the streets appear to feel the same way, looking nervously over their shoulders and working quickly so they can get off of the streets. The posse enters the hotel and steps into a scene from Dante's *Inferno*.

As they enter, two heavily muscled bouncers (who are fresh-dead zombies) shut the doors behind them (and lock them if anyone's looking). Assembled about the room, in various states of decay are scores of walkin' dead. The innkeeper lays in the middle of the floor where he had been dragged down while trying to escape, what's left of his brains leak from his caved-in skull. The other hotel patrons lay about the common room in similar states of dismemberment.

The Judge, flanked by Veronica and his driver, stands at the top of the balcony, looking down on the posse. He's holding the Zombie Rattle in his hand, and his face is painted white. "Glad to see you could make it to our little pre-party!!! I do hope that y'all were surprised. To be perfectly honest, I never thought you'd have made it this far. I'm afraid that the good folks of Nacogdoches need to be taught a lesson... they will soon learn to be afraid of the dark!!!"

At that moment, screams and gunshots can be heard from outside the hotel. "Ahhh, my ears tell me that the town of Nacogdoches has found my little surprise as well. I wonder how they'll do this time? Well, I can't have you reporting this back to 'ol Bob now, can I? Could hurt my professional career, it has been a pleasure. Kill them and bring their bodies to me."

The Judge smiles broadly (cigar clenched in teeth), and the zombies attack.

## The Final Showdown

There are 12 zombies in the common room who attack the posse, all of them have pistols (but many still prefer to attack with their teeth). The Judge is controlling them all with the Zombie Rattle (which the heroes can see him gesturing with), along with the 200 or so that are attacking the town. Anyone who gets a hold of the rattle, can make them stop (they just have to survive long enough to get it). If the Judge (or Veronica) are injured, they retreat into his bedroom in the back, and wait for the zombies to bring the bodies of the heroes. If the posse tries to escape through a window, herd them back to the hotel with more zombies—far too many for the posse to fight off—they're meant to be an unopposable force, not a large-scale combat.

If threatened, the Judge will attempt to use his puppet power to turn posse members on each other. Joshua Norell will fight to the death defending the Judge, but might just do something stupid to speed up the process (he has a death wish remember). Veronica, will cower in the corner, and lash out at anyone who gets too close with her poisoned hairpins. If the posse kills the Judge or gets a hold of the rattle, the zombies become disoriented and the gun-toting Texans make short work of them. Any character with the Arcane Background Edge or Academia: occult can actually control the zombies themselves on a Fair (5) Smarts roll.

Getting a hold of the rattle or killing the judge is really the only way out. Going toe-to-toe with the walkin' dead when they outnumber you 2-to-1 isn't a good idea. Try to show your players that. Even by making an example of a posse member if you have to.

## Bounty

Players stop the Zombie attack: 3

Players survive the Zombie attack: 1

Joshua Norell put to rest: 1

Players kill the Judge and/or Veronica: 1

Players capture either the Judge and/or Veronica alive: 2



# Old Ghosts

By Brian Leybourne

***“On Hallowe’en the old ghosts come about us,  
and they speak to some;  
to others they are dumb.”***

***- Eleanor Farjeon.***

## The Story So Far

Black Kettle was the site of one of the most infamous Indian Massacres of the Civil War. Scattered Indian raids had caused much ill will between the white settlers and the Native Americans. In the autumn of 1864, Territorial (Colorado) officers had offered a vague amnesty if Indians reported to army forts. Black Kettle with many Cheyenne and a few Arapahos, believing themselves to be protected, established a winter camp about 40 miles from Fort Lyon. On November 29, Col. John Chivington, who advocated Indian extermination, arrived near the camp, having marched there from Fort Lyon. In spite of the American flag and a white flag flying over the camp, the troops attacked killing and mutilating about 200 of the Indians, two-thirds of who were women and children.

The Indians who survived the attack fled the scene and apparently took to living in caves in the cliff side near the battlefield.

Enter the Great Rail Wars. Both Black River and the Union Blue have sought an alternate route from Dodge City to Denver. However, the local geography has played havoc with their efforts. Eventually, both built their rails northwest to Denver. The Union Blue has also built a spur going due west, through Fort Lyon, intending to reach Pueblo and Denver. The railhead is currently located at Las Animas, roughly five miles from Fort Lyon. North of the newly laid tracks outside of Granada (another rail town about 100 miles west of Dodge), a small town has sprung up very near the site of the massacre. This town and the surrounding countryside are where our adventure takes place.

Following the slaughter of so many Indians by the Union Army, the power of the Reckoners manifested itself in a way never before seen. Denied their rest the angry spirits of the slain Indians remained bound to the battlefield. In the years since the massacre, they have merged in a

mass conglomeration of hatred. This Spirit ‘Glom is similar to it’s near cousins, the ‘Glom and the Bone ‘Glom, but rather than bones or bodies, it is the angry spirits of the dead that are fused together, compounding their hatred and sorrow.

Bound to the battlefield where the Indians were slain, the Spirit ‘Glom discovered it was able to raise and control the dead bodies of the souls that had gone into making it, and it uses those to cause terror and death in those unfortunate enough to be in range of it’s control. For years, the Spirit ‘Glom has been sending it’s zombie thralls into town at night, spreading fear and dissention. More recently, most of the bodies it has been using have been getting too decayed to be useful, but it discovered that by kidnapping townsfolk, and slaying them in the field, it not only increases it’s power slightly (and the range of its misty body) but gains one more body that it can raise and use. The ‘Glom has been slowly increasing its power, ultimately waiting for the time when its mist body would reach the town, allowing it to harvest bodies and spirits wholesale.

The Spirit ‘Glom will be aware of the posse, but allows them to continue their investigations unmolested, so that the townsfolk could see how ineffective they are. See **Boot Hill**, at the end of this document, for the statistics of the Spirit ‘Glom and it’s zombies.

The posse comes across a town where the men of the town are mysteriously vanishing at night. The townsfolk are terrified and the posse investigates. The posse follow some wrong leads, but eventually discover that the townsfolk are being murdered by a supernatural entity empowered by the Reckoners, which hates all non Indian life and is using the bodies and souls of those it kills to further empower itself. Eventually, the posse discovers the truth, destroy the entity, and save the town. (That is the plan, at least).

## The Setup

You may use any method you prefer to get the Posse involved in this adventure. In my case, one of the posse is actually a Pinkerton, and has been sent to investigate the missing people (the rest of the posse are paid by the Pinkertons to assist him.) Alternatively, the Pinkertons or the town may have simply offered a reward for anyone who discovers the truth and the posse may be attracted by the money. It is up to you. The posse must travel to Colorado, in the disputed territory. The name of the town is Black Kettle, in the Cheyenne district. If you decide to alter the location of this adventure to fit in with your campaign, be warned - the town and area are important to the adventure as it occurs on the site of a (real) 1864 Civil War Indian massacre, so if you want to move the setting you'll have to fudge things a bit.

If the posse for some reason decide to research the town before they travel there (mine didn't, but a slightly less Gung-Ho posse might), an Onerous (7) Area Knowledge - Colorado or an Incredible (11) General Knowledge roll will turn up the historical details found in **The Story So Far**.

If the posse takes the time to investigate the town and its history, award them 2 Bounty Points, or 1 Bounty Point if they think to do the research but don't discover anything.

### Traveling to Black Kettle

There is no train directly to the small town of Black Kettle. The closest station is at Granada, 10 miles southeast from the town. The posse may travel to Fort Lyon or Granada by train, and then continue on foot or horseback, or if they are already close by (in Colorado or nearby Kansas) they may travel directly.

The area surrounding the town is very hilly, and there is a large cliff with an extensive cave system to the north. The posse will find themselves curving around and approaching the town from the south. Ensure that the posse arrive at the town at night through whatever delaying tactics you can come up with.

## Chapter One: Encounter by Moonlight

The posse is approaching the small town of Black Kettle. It is a quiet and still night, and an

Onerous (7) Cognition roll will allow someone to notice the absence of insect sounds. If a member of the posse thinks to ask if she can hear insect noises, award a white fate chip and do not bother with the roll.

As the posse move along the winding road leading to the town, they will find themselves passing a large field. Some enterprising farmer has fenced the edge of the road, but the posse will notice that the fence has been broken in places. A strange mist can be seen in the field. A Normal (5) Knowledge roll will let anyone realize that this usually indicates standing water on or just under the surface of the field. The water forms a mist in the warm still evening. Of course, this is not what the mist is at all, but do not tell your posse that.

Up ahead, just showing up in the moonlight, the posse may notice two men carrying a body between them, and heading for one of the numerous gaps in the fence leading into the field. Make the posse roll Hard (9) Cognition rolls to spot the men. If nobody succeeds, a few minutes later they can make an Onerous (7) Cognition roll, then finally a Normal (5) Cognition roll. If everybody still fails, suggest to your posse that they need to buy up their Cognition traits, and randomly select someone to spot the men. The farther away the posse notices the men, the closer they can get (by picking up the pace a little and riding / running hard to catch up with them before they reach the field), but it really does not make any difference, as you will soon see.

No matter how fast the posse is they cannot catch the two men before they reach the field. Play this one up to the full as a fast rush to catch the men as they vanish into the mist in the field. The posse should rush blindly into the mist to find the men, only to discover that they have lost their quarry. Once inside the mist, the members of the posse feel a faint sense of dread (Foolproof (3) Guts checks) as the mist is cold and clammy on the skin, and deadens sound somewhat so that voices sound faint and flat, and posse members who move away from each other very quickly have to shout to be heard by the others. Eventually, the posse will realize that they have lost the men they were searching for (actually, they're walking over them) and will regroup and head off to the town, most likely determined to return by the light of day to investigate.

## Bounty

2 if they spot the two men early (at the difficulty 9 stage)

1 point if they spot them at the difficulty 7 stage

2 points for chasing the men into the mist

1 if nobody failed or busted the guts check.

## Chapter Two: Black Kettle (Fear Level 3)

The posse arrives in town to see a total lack of people in the streets. Although it's not very late, it is dark, and the townsfolk have retreated to communal "safety houses." The first structure the posse comes to as they enter the gates of town is the sheriff's office. From the three windows facing the entrance, five rifles are aimed at the posse, and five very nervous men are itching to pull the triggers on the posse. What happens next depends on how the posse reacts to this.

A voice from the sheriff's office will shout to the posse, demanding to know who they are, and what their business is. The posse had better hope they can come up with a reasonable excuse (the truth works well in this situation). Bear in mind that the men in the office are very jumpy, so judge the posse on how they answer. If they make any sudden moves (the voice warns them not to go for any weapons) it is just possible that the townsfolk will fire on them. Hopefully, this will not occur as it will make the rest of the adventure difficult. If the posse manages to calm down the speaker, the door will open and the man will come out, enquiring hopefully if Sheriff Hank Braddock is with them. The posse will be taken inside the sheriff's office and will have everything explained to them

If a fight ensues between the posse and the men in the office, the posse will have to make called shots at -8 to shoot through the windows at the riflemen, but all shots will hit head, upper guts or arms (Roll d10; 1 = Head, 2-3 = Right Arm, 4-5 = Left Arm, 6-10 = Upper Guts). After the fight goes for a couple of rounds, the townsfolk will cry out that they surrender and wave a white flag out the window. They have realized that the posse are not the strangers who have been taking them (as the strangers have never hung about to gunfight before) and will try to make peace. Hopefully your posse are not too proud to stop fighting.

The man who meets with the posse is Deputy Miles Garnett. Miles is about 40 years old, hair thinning and just starting to grey (it's a hard life). There are five other men in the office with him, and two boys of about 12 years. There is one man in the cells - he is an Indian Brave named Black Feather. Miles will offer the posse coffee and bread (all they have in this office) and sit them down to explain the story.

Apparently, ever since three weeks ago people have been vanishing from the town at night. It took the folk a week or so to work out that people were actually going missing, as the first few to vanish were the sort who would be gone for days on end anyway. Once they worked out that the abductions were occurring at night, they started locking themselves into their homes every night when it went dark. The sheriff imposed a curfew, and things were fine for a few nights. But then, people who started living alone began to vanish from their homes. The homes have been obviously broken into, and there is usually a lot of blood and evidence of struggles in the houses afterwards. The sheriff managed to get to one of the homes when gunshots were heard, four nights ago. He shot at the two men, but they ran away, carrying off the unconscious body of the occupant of the house. The sheriff pursued them but lost them in the mist on the common.

Since then, the people of the town have taken to sleeping in shared accommodations every night. It's been working well, but the previous evening two men vanished who went out to the toilet together, and just two hours ago the sheriff heard a noise and went out to investigate. He has not come back yet...

The posse will be invited to stay in the office overnight (they will be strongly encouraged not to leave until daylight) and then be given reign of the town to try to solve the mystery.

### Other information the posse may ask about:

The town has never been without fear. For years, townsfolk constantly reported seeing strange visions; emotionless men looking through their windows at night, moans and cries in the darkness, and so on. It is only recently, however, that people have been vanishing.

Miles will tell the posse of the other places in town where people hole themselves up. The two saloons 'The Fat Lady' and 'The Wolves Den', where approximately 50 people sleep in each; the sheriff's office which holds 12 (but only has 8 at present); the church which holds 10, and the local brothel, which sleeps 30.

Black Feather was captured stealing a horse from the town coral three days ago just after dusk. If the posse asks about him, Miles will explain this, and sheepishly explain that some of the townsfolk think that the Indians are responsible for the missing people. Miles does not believe this himself. Black Feather is being kept for the next visit of the local U.S. Marshall, who will presumably hang him for horse theft.

Miles does not know anything about the massacre of '64, and neither do any of the other men in the room. The town historian (the schoolmaster) is the only man who can fill the posse in on details about that, and they will have to wait until morning to bother him. Miles does know that there are Indians living in the caves in the cliff out of town (Black Feather is one of them) who have lost their Indian ways and make occasional bandit raids on the livestock of the town. The townsfolk hate the Indians, and many blame them for the missing people.

### **Bounty**

3 if the posse manages to avoid getting into a fight;

2 points if they find out about Black Feather, and ask about him.

If they put two and two together and realize that the Sheriff was the man they saw dragged into the mist on the way to town, give them an extra Bounty Point, or a red chip to the first person to say it out loud (your decision).

### **Chapter Three: About Town**

There are several sections to this scene, which can be done in any order or not at all. During the day, the town functions fairly normally, with shops and bars (and the brothel) opening as normal, but when night falls, the town closes up. Although people are trying to get on with their lives (during the day at least) they are all quite jumpy. Move on to scene four when the posse decides to head off to see (or kill) the Indians

hiding in the caves in the cliff. The fear level in the town is 3.

In general, the townsfolk are slightly suspicious of the posse (they're not fond of strangers, particularly at the moment) but will generally warm to them, as it becomes known that the posse is there to help the town. Very few people know anything about the history of the town, but they will point the posse to the schoolmaster, who is also the town historian. The impression the posse should get of the average townsman is of a badly frightened person. Most people think that the rogue Indians are behind the missing people, and possibly have been responsible for years of fear as people find their livestock killed in strange ways, blood splashed on their clothes drying on a line, and so on.

### **Inns & Hotels**

There are two inns in town, The Fat Lady and the Wolves Den'. Neither is particularly populated during the day, but there are usually a couple of games of poker going on. None of the wait staff in either inn knows much about the disappearances, but the posse will get the impression from most people that they think the rogue Indians did it.

### **The Brothel**

Dorothy "Ma" Collins runs the town's only brothel out of the Wolves' Den. Being a small town, there are only two prostitutes, Louise and Melanie. Since they are working girls, they are not generally available to talk (unless the posse makes an appointment, which will cost them \$10 for the hour, thank you). "Ma" Collins is happy to talk to the posse, although she does not know anything of importance for them. She does have strong opinions about the Indians though - she is keen on extermination. ("Ma" Collins was raped by one of the Indians when she was younger, but she will not willingly tell the posse this). The people of the town are not strongly against the brothel, as in some other towns; "Ma" Collins is known and loved by all (literally loved, by many of the older men) and they admire the care and love she gives her girls.

### **The Church**

The church is generally empty during the day, except for Sunday when most of the townsfolk



turn up in their least grubby clothing. The preacher is a drunkard, and the posse will have a hard time sobering him up enough to talk to. He spends the best part of the week sloshed, then spends Saturday sobering up for the Sunday service, after which he hits the bottle again. If the posse manages to talk to him when he is sober they will find out the reason for his drunkenness.

Tom Crawley was one of the town's founding members, back in '66. He knows very little about the massacre of '64, but is aware that the town was built on the site of a battle and that the local Indians are angry because many of their people have not had the chance to be buried properly because of the foundation of the town. He feels that the Indians are somehow involved in the missing people because they want their land back. Being nominally a man of the cloth, Reverend Crawley has been slowly driven into the bottle from constant "visions" of the dead Indians, hearing their moans and cries of anguish, seeing blood dripping from the rafters of the church, etc.

Even on Sundays, Tom never sobers enough to really be any use to the posse. He certainly will not go with them to the final battle (the real one -- read on). The only way he can be useful is that he has a jar of consecrated water hidden away in the rectory, which the posse can use to bless their bullets. Up to 100 rounds of pistol or rifle ammo may be soaked in the water (it costs 3 rounds per shotgun shell blessed). Bullets blessed in this manner are the only things that can harm the Spirit 'glom in the end battle. When any bullets are put into the water, they will shimmer for a couple of seconds and then turn pure white. After this, they may be removed from the water and are now considered blessed. He can be convinced to treat bullets in this manner with an Incredible (11) persuasion check by a posse member, or by an Onerous (7) persuasion attempt by another Blessed.

## The Schoolhouse

During the day, there are 9 children of various ages being taught in the schoolhouse by the schoolmaster, Grant Harper. Grant is a self-styled historian, and along with Tom Crawley and Hank Braddock was one of the founders of the town. Grant knows all about the bloody history of the town, and will tell the posse about it if they ask. He has met with some of the Indian

survivors of the massacre and he knows how unhappy they are. The main concerns of the Indians, as Grant sees them, are: a) the town was built on part of the battlefield where many Indians died, denying them the possibility of a proper burial; b) the proximity of the town prevents the Indians from finding any other bodies or remains in the nearby field to bury them as the townsfolk scare off any Indians immediately upon seeing them; c) they are just a tad upset at having been slaughtered after having been told they were under a flag of truce.

Grant does believe that the Indians are behind the attacks on the townsfolk, but does not seem to blame them. Grant is reluctant to talk about the rumors of the haunting of the town, but if asked directly will admit that for years people have reported strange sightings and noises at night, pets killed, windows smashed, and so on. He suspects the Indians are responsible for this also.

None of the children will be of any help to the posse - they are half terrified and half bored at not being allowed out to play when the sun goes down. Nonetheless, they know nothing of interest to the posse.

## The Battlefield

It is likely that the posse will want to go out to the battlefield to search for any sign of the two men or the sheriff from the previous night. During the day, there is no mist, and the battlefield is wide and clear, leading up to the edge of the cliff rising up to the north.

A Fair (5) Tracking roll will allow a character to follow the tracks of the chase into the field, which end at a rough area of earth. Unless the tracker then makes a Hard (9) Tracking roll, she will believe that the two men were met by some others at this point (there are a lot of tracks about the field). The tracks of the men continue no further.

If the posse dig, they will find the bodies of both men and the sheriff, buried shallowly under the earth. All three appear to have been strangled. Anyone with the Medicine aptitude can examine the bodies of the men if they wish. The general condition of the slightly muddy earth and the bruising evident on all three, it is very difficult to set a time of death. If the examiner makes an Incredible (11) Medicine roll, she will know that the two men have been dead for about

two days, otherwise she will assume they died the previous night (along with the sheriff).

If the posse takes the bodies back to town, they will be recognized as the two men who went missing two nights ago. This is a bad move for the posse to make, as rumors will very quickly spread throughout the town that the Indians are somehow brainwashing the men they have kidnapped to perform more kidnaps and are then killing them. The Fear Level in the town will immediately rise to four. It is your call Marshall, but assisting the Reckoners in actually raising the fear level of an area is usually good grounds for a Black Fate Chip to be added to the pot.

About an hour after the posse's return with the corpses, a mob of people will approach the sheriff's office intent on lynching Black Feather. Unless the posse somehow stops them (perhaps an Overawe might work), they will take him out behind the Sheriff's Office and hang him high.

If the posse searches the rest of the field, they will find Indian arrowheads, remains of campfires, bone and clothing fragments, rifle cartridges, and such-like. They will not find any other bodies of the missing townsfolk as these are buried far deeper.

### Doctor's Office

Sadly, the doctor (Dr. James Logan) was one of the first people taken, so the posse will be without any doctoring in this town. His assistant, Mary Beth Clemont, who is the town veterinary surgeon, will offer to patch up any scrapes and suchlike, but she has only 2D6 in Medicine: General. Conversely, if the posse wants her to look at their horses, she will do a reasonable job and can roll 5D6.

### Sheriff's Office

Miles stays at the Sheriff's office during the day. He has been hitting the bottle a bit recently, and since the disappearance of the sheriff last night, he has been into it quite heavily. The posse can ask him more questions, but he does not know much more than he told them last night. The main reason for the posse to be here is to question Black Feather.

Black Feather is quite sullen, and he will not willingly talk to the posse unless they can somehow convince him to do so. Bribery will not work, although offers of freedom may loosen his lips with a Hard (9) persuasion, or, of course, the

posse can simply resort to good old-fashioned violence.

He denies that his tribe has been involved in the vanishing people, but altogether seems rather pleased that someone or something is killing the townsfolk and the posse may have a hard time believing that he and his tribe are not involved.

If convinced to talk, he will tell the posse that his people were abandoned by their spirits after the massacre, and went to live in the caves as a penance (they feel they are not worthy to live on the plains). His people desire revenge against the Union Army for its betrayal, and know that the spirits will not return until the Indians have had their revenge, and properly buried their dead.

### Houses of the abducted

Whichever house the posse decides to examine, they will find much the same things. The houses have been broken into, and an obvious fight has taken place. There is blood and suchlike strewn about. In one of the houses, the posse will find a bunch of feathers. An Onerous (7) Knowledge roll will tell the posse that they are from the headdress of an Indian (not Black Feather). They are rather old and crusted with dirt. In another house, an old tomahawk will be evidently stuck into a roof beam. All of the houses broken into are on the edge of the town, and were inhabited by single people.

### Wrap up

These are not the only locations in town, but are the only ones of real interest. Eventually, the posse should decide that the Indians are the problem, or at least are involved in some way, and will decide to go and 'talk' to them. If they have blood in their eyes, 2D4 townsmen will offer to go with them to 'sort out those Injuns'. They will only go with the posse, not instead of, and have (roughly) the following stats:

### Profile: Town Posse

#### **(2D4 Members)**

**Corporeal:** D: 2d8, N: 3d6, Q: 3d8, S: 2d6, V: 2d6

Shootin': Pistol 2d8, Climbin' 2d6,

Dodge 2d6, Fightin': Brawlin' 2d6,

Horse Ridin' 1d6, Sneak 1d6

**Mental:** C: 4d6, K: 1d6, M: 3d6, Sm: 2d6, Sp: 3d6

Search 2d6, Area Knowledge: Black Kettle 2d6, Survival 2d6, Streetwise 1d6, Guts 2d6

**Size:** 6

**Gear:** .44 Army Pistol, 15 rounds of .44 ammo, Bowie Knife.

**Bounty:**

3 if the posse talks with the historian and finds out about the history of the town (or 2 if they already knew it);

2 for sobering up Tom Crawley and getting his story;

2 for thinking to bless their bullets with the holy water;

2 for examining the houses that were broken into and finding all available clues;

2 for finding the bodies in the field;

3 for **not** causing a panic by bringing the bodies back to town;

1 for saving Black Feather from a lynching, if necessary;

3 for convincing Black Feather to help them speak to his brethren in the caves.

## Chapter Four: Indian Hideout

### **(Fear Level 2)**

When the posse finally decide to go and visit the Indians (If they do not, you may have to force their decision by having the angry posse (see above) form and head off. If your posse does not follow them, the Indians kill them and the rest of the town gets really mean. You watch - eventually your posse will head off to see the Indians.)

### Below the Cave Complex

The resistance the posse will meet here depends on how they approach the cliffs, which contain the cave complex the Indians are living in. Because the posse must approach the cliffs across the battlefield, the Indians will be aware of their approach unless they travel at night, and without a posse of angry townsfolk (who are muttering angrily). Even in this case, each character will need to make an Onerous (7) Stealth roll, or be heard by the Indians as they approach.

There are three Indians permanently stationed at the base of the cliff, caring for a small coral of horses (several of which have actually been stolen from the town – their brand marks are quite

visible in daylight) and a vegetable patch/chicken run. If aware of the impending arrival of potential danger, one of the Indians will scale the cliff to the caves (taking the rope up with him as he does so) and the other two will hide, ready to ambush the posse. If the posse arrives undetected, they can surprise the three braves, who are sitting around a small campfire, huddling for warmth and slow roasting a chicken.

If the posse is actually here to talk, it is just possible they may convince the Indians of this fact. To do so requires tangible proof of the posse's peaceable intent (disarming, etc.). Having Black Feather along will automatically elicit an opportunity for a peaceable parley. Without Black Feather, the posse must try to convince the braves of their willingness to talk with a Hard (9) persuasion or bluff. The presence of townspeople, visible law enforcement, or soldiers will net a -3 to the roll. If convinced of their peaceful intent, the braves will call back to the caves (in their native language) and ropes will be thrown down to allow the posse leave to enter.

If, however, the posse looks ready for a fight, and/or have arrived with angry townsfolk, then they will have a battle on their hands. In this case, the Indians are most likely hiding and will leap out of the brush, surprising the posse and townsfolk, and attack bravely.

If the posse has somehow surprised them, the townsfolk will open fire without warning and the fight will be on. (For allowing the angry townsfolk to accompany them, the posse gets what they deserve!). For the townsfolk, use the stats shown earlier. For the Indians, use the Indian Brave template from the main Deadlands rulebook.

If the posse wins, they will have to work out a way to scale the cliffs to get at the cave system. If they thought to bring rope with them, someone can make three Climbing rolls to climb to the cave mouth and secure the rope. The difficulties of the rolls are 5, then 7, then 9 (as the climb gets harder) and the damage for falling should get progressively worse the higher the character was when he fell.

The mouth of the cave is unguarded, because the three braves at the bottom were thought to be all the guards needed, and if one has climbed up already, he is still 'rousing the troops' inside the caves. The fear level of the cave system will rise

to 3 if one of the braves is warning the other Indians about the 'angry mob' approaching the caves.

## The Cave Complex

Describe the cave system as you like, but no matter which way the posse goes, they will pass through the following areas, in order, before they reach the main chamber. Because of the nature of the caves, echoes do not travel, and as such, noise (even gunfire) will not be heard from one area to another, meaning that if the posse is unexpected, they will be able to travel through the caves without alerting the Indians in each area that they are coming. If, during any fight, any Indians are able to flee to warn the tribe about the posse, they will.

### Cave Entrance

As mentioned previously, there will be nobody at the cave entrance when the posse arrives here. If accompanied by an Indian brave, he will lead them straight in, without stopping. He is not talkative at all.

### Antechamber

This room contains various food stores the Indians have been gathering for the impending winter. Grains, barrels of water, bottles of whiskey, dried meat, dried vegetables and so on are stored here in barrels and boxes. If they search the room, the posse will also find boots and clothing stolen from the town, as well as saddles, stirrups, and so on. All of this equipment may 'confirm' for the posse that the Indians are responsible for the slaying of the sheriff and other townsfolk. Also in the room are two Indian Braves (use the template from the Deadlands rulebook). If the posse is being escorted by a brave, they will receive a cursory interest from the two men in the room, otherwise one of the men will leap forward and attack the posse while the other runs for the far entrance to warn the tribe. Note that this room will be empty of people if the tribe has already been warned by one of the braves from below the cave complex.

### Guard Room

If the posse's entrance is already known (either by a brave from below the cave complex or from the Antechamber, this room will be empty; otherwise, there is a bored looking Indian sitting here carving patterns into a walking stick.

If the posse is accompanied by an Indian he will nod to the brave and allow them to pass. Otherwise, make a guts check for the Brave. If he succeeds, he will utter a war cry and attack the posse. If he fails, he will turn and attempt to run out of the chamber, warning the rest of the tribe of the invasion.

### Men's Sleeping Chamber

If the posse is accompanied by a brave, he will motion for them to be silent as they pass through this room. There are six braves asleep on straw rugs. The Indian will automatically pass the test, but the posse will have to make Fair (5) Stealth rolls to make it through the room without waking anyone. If they are not accompanied by an Indian, they still have to make the test to avoid waking any braves. If any of the Indians are woken up, they will shout to the others, and attack the posse. Unless outnumbered, the Indians will feel that they are capable of beating the invaders, and will not bother sending anyone to warn the tribe. If they are outnumbered, four will fight while two try to get away and warn the others.

If they have any angry townsfolk with them, the townsfolk will immediately start shooting, killing 2 of the braves, before the other 4 can wake up and defend themselves.

If the tribe has already been warned of the posse's presence, this chamber will be empty, and look like it was hastily abandoned.

### Kitchen

The Kitchen is where the women of the tribe prepare meals (duh!). A hole in the roof allows smoke to get out, and there are five or six cooking fires around the room, where horsemeat is being dried for storage. If the tribe has been warned of the presence of the posse (likely by now) there will be nobody in the room, otherwise six Indian women and four children will be in the room. Unless an Indian Brave accompanies the posse, they will begin screaming for help (no, they can't be heard by the tribe) and push the children behind them, defending them with soup ladles and knives. Hopefully, your posse will not be Gung Ho and cold enough to attack these women and children, but if they are, use the Indian Brave template for the women (they're easily as good as a brave when defending their children), and the

same template for the children but reduce all trait die types by two steps (to a minimum of D4's).

If the posse still has a mob of angry townsfolk with them, the angry folk will not hesitate to start shooting the women and children (they've had a belly full of these damn Indians!) and the posse may have a hard time stopping them.

### Woman's Sleeping Chamber

This room is empty if the tribe have been alerted to the posse, otherwise there will be nine women and seventeen children in the room. Unless the posse is accompanied by a Brave, when they see the posse, they will begin to cry out and will huddle over the children in the corner. It is hoped that the posse will not slay them, and as long as the posse 'explained' to the angry townsfolk (if with them) the error they made killing the last lot of women, the townsfolk will not start shooting here. None of the women will put up a fight, as they have so many children to care for.

### Armory

The Armory contains bows and arrows, as well as tomahawks, and some rifles and pistols stolen from the townsfolk. As well as good quality bows and arrows, the posse will be able to find 7 Peacemaker (Single Action) .45 pistols, 10 Winchester .45 Rifles, 3 Scatterguns, 200 rounds of .45 ammo, and 30 shells for the scatterguns. All guns have reliability numbers of 19, but can be fixed up (remove the reliability problem) by a gunsmith or a Mad Scientist with an onerous (7) Tinkerin' roll.

### Shrine

This small chamber is empty of people. It is here that the tribe Shaman has tried to appease the nature spirits. A small shrine has been built, with animal sacrifices, as well as grains and wheat, and what small wealth the Indians possess. Sadly, the spirits still seem to have their backs turned on the tribe.

Should the posse search through the offerings at the shrine, they will find two small gold statuettes worth about \$40 each, and an uncut emerald worth \$300. Keep a note if the posse steals these treasures, as it is going to really annoy the nature spirits in the confrontation that is coming. If the posse is accompanied by a Brave, he will not allow the posse to get close to

the shrine. If they do anyway, and they defile it by looking through the offerings, he will run from the room screaming for help, and the posse will have a fight coming in the Meeting room (see below).

### Meeting Room/Community Chamber

This is the main 'living area' of the tribe, and where the final confrontation is going to take place. There are several possibilities as to how the posse got here; I will deal with each one in turn:

a) If the posse has arrived without killing anyone, and are accompanied by an Indian Brave. There are nine Braves in the room, plus the Shaman who is also the chief. Use the Shaman template from the Deadlands rulebook, but note that the Chief has no access to any favors or appeasement. Refer to 'talking' below.

b) The posse has fought its way through the caves, killing or injuring braves along the way. Nobody escaped to warn the tribe. There are nine Braves and one Shaman in the room (with no access to his powers). The Indians will wait for the posse to make the first move, but talking is unlikely, as the Shaman is suspicious as to how the Posse got so far into the cave system by themselves. Refer to 'talking' or 'fighting' below, as appropriate to how your posse reacts.

c) The posse has fought their way through the caves, killing or injuring braves along the way. At least one Brave escaped to warn the tribe. There are nine Braves and one Shaman in the room (with no access to his powers) as well as any other Braves who may have escaped the posse on their way through the caves. The Indians will wait for the posse to make the first move, but talking is basically an impossibility. Refer to 'fighting' below.

d) The posse has not only killed Braves, they have killed women and/or children as well. There are nine Braves and one Shaman in the room (with no access to his powers) as well as any other Braves who may have escaped the posse on their way through the caves. The Indians don't wait – as soon as the posse head through the door the Braves open up with bows and thrown tomahawks. Treat the posse as being surprised for the first round (even if they were expecting trouble) as they are pretty much hit as they walk

around the corner and into the room. Refer to 'fighting' below.

e) The posse has defiled the Shrine by sifting through the offerings, and maybe even stealing the gold or emerald. The tribe known this was done, even if nobody escaped the posse on its way through the caves. This angers the tribe even more than the slaying of their people. There are nine Braves and one Shaman in the room as well as any other Braves who may have escaped the posse on their way through the caves. The Braves ambush the posse as they walk through the entrance to the chamber. Treat the posse as being surprised for the first round (even if they were expecting trouble) as they are pretty much hit as they walk around the corner and into the room. The Shaman does not enter the fight, as he is on his knees sobbing with joy as the Nature Spirits flood back to him, to aid him in the battle against these upstarts who would dare defile a sacred shrine. Refer to 'fighting' below, but the Shaman will not be involved in the battle for the first two rounds (the Braves will surround and protect him if possible) after which he will enter the fight, utilizing favors at will, with an effective pool of 20 appeasement points (the Nature Spirits are rather ticked off).

### Talking

Note that if the posse are talking to the chief, having killed anyone along the way, and left anyone alive (the sleeping Braves or any of the women or children) then during the talk, the survivors will run into the room, screaming blue murder, and the Braves will attack the posse instantly. Go straight to 'fighting' below. If there were no survivors, then at some stage during the talks, one of the Braves in the room will wander out to relieve himself, and will run back, shouting about the murders. Refer again to 'fighting' below.

The shaman/chief will discuss the town and its concerns with the posse. The Indians are unconcerned about the missing townsfolk, but adamant that they are not involved, although they will admit (if pressured) to stealing equipment and horses from the town. The Indians feel it is their right as the existence of the town has prevented them from properly burying their dead.

The Indians will accept no compromise except the abandonment of the town, so the only

thing the posse will get out of talking is the knowledge (if they believe them) that the Indians are not responsible for the missing and dead townsfolk.

As the conversation wears on, the Indians will get more and more frustrated with the posse (especially if the posse disbelieves them or keeps trying to make a settlement as regards the townsfolk). Eventually, unless the posse gets the hint and leaves quickly, the Indians will eventually attack them. Refer to 'fighting' below. If the posse is accompanied by angry townsfolk, those townsfolk will have held themselves back for this long, but will start a fight rather than allow the posse to walk out without 'killing some red men.' Refer to 'fighting' below. Otherwise, the posse will be allowed to leave and will be escorted out.

### Fighting

The battle is on! This is going to be a hard fight for the posse. It is not at all unlikely that one or more members of the posse will die. Note that anyone who does die in this room is slightly more likely to come back as harrowed, as the absence of nature spirits means that the manitou's are a little more powerful here – draw one extra card to check for coming back as Harrowed. Also, hucksters risk a greater chance of backlash than normal. Drawing a Red Joker or a Duce of Clubs will cause a backlash here. Note that this does not apply if the posse defiled the shrine and the Nature Spirits have subsequently returned to the Indians.

If the posse left any survivors behind them, these survivors will arrive during the fight and attack the posse from behind. Note that this could be very bad, especially if the posse left the six Braves alive in the men's sleeping quarters. Woman will come and fight as well, if they were left alive, but when not defending their children they're not quite as good as the men – reduce all trait die types by one step to a minimum of D4's. No children will arrive to fight.

The Braves are fighting to defend (or avenge) their tribe, and as such will fight to the death. Subsequently, they get a +3 bonus on any guts or overawe defense checks they have to make, automatically succeed against ridicule checks, and ignore one level of wound penalties – they are mad!

This is not a dungeon romp – other than the gold statuettes and uncut emerald in the shrine, there's nothing of value for the posse to take after the fight, except perhaps the guns and ammo in the armory.

Try to manipulate things so it is night when the posse leaves the caves to return to town.

### **Bounty:**

5 bounty points if they enter, get the truth from the Indians, and leave in peace;

1 if they managed to survive the encounter and got some information.

Killing women and children, and/or defiling the shrine, will induce a blood curse upon the posse for the next chapter. Apply a -2 to all the posse members' actions made against the 'Glom in the final encounter.

## **Chapter Five: Back in Town**

As they head back to town, the posse will notice that the battlefield mist is particularly thick tonight, and extends past the field and right to the edge of town. The 'Glom has been slowly increasing its power, waiting for the time when its mist body would reach the town, allowing it to harvest bodies and spirits wholesale. That time has finally come, especially so if any of Indians in the caves have been attacked and killed. All Hell's about to break loose!

Either the posse has arrived back in town having killed the Indians, or having 'made peace' with them. If they killed the tribe, they will be greeted as heroes. The townsfolk will have a slap-up celebration, and the dancing and drinking will go late into the night. At some stage in the wee small hours, once everybody has staggered back to their homes to sleep in their own beds for the first time in weeks, then the shit will really hit the fan.

If the posse did not kill the Indians, but can somehow convince the townsfolk of the Indian's innocence (A tale telling roll perhaps...your call, Marshall), there will be a more somber celebration. If they cannot convince the townsfolk that the Indians are innocent, they will head off in disgust and sleep in the communal quarters again. This will make the events about to occur even worse.

By 5am, the mist has reached the closest building in town to the battlefield – the church. If

the townsfolk have been assured by the posse, and are sleeping in their own homes, then the only occupant of the church is Tom Crawley. Otherwise, there are ten people asleep inside (oops). The posse (and the town in general) will be awoken by the sounds of screaming (either one voice or ten, depending on the situation) as the church collapses to the ground with the occupant(s) still inside.

Rushing outside, people will be greeted with the sight of their own missing townsfolk (including the sheriff and the two men if they were either not found in the field, or are still sitting in the morgue and can get up again) wandering through the town attacking and grabbing people at random. This would be bad enough, except that most of them are obviously dead, with open festering wounds and maggots and suchlike (I'm confident you can describe it in all the necessary detail to your posse).

Marshall, it is time to raise the fear level of the town again. If this raises the fear level to four, then things are quite nasty. However, if this raises the fear level to 5 (because the posse had already managed to raise it to 4 by bring the two men's bodies back to town earlier) then things really get mean. The raising of the fear level to five means that the Spirit 'Glom's power takes a spike upwards (courtesy of your friendly neighborhood Reckoners) and the zombies start killing folk instead of just grabbing them and running into the field with them.

See, the fear level of 5 means that any person killed by a zombie of the Spirit 'Glom automatically raises straight away as another zombie under it's control. Things just got harder for the posse.

While all this is going on, amidst the screaming and gunfire, the posse will hear, with a Fair (5) Cognition roll, a low, deep chuckling coming from the mist in the direction of the battlefield.

Presumably, the posse will join the townsfolk in trying to fight back this threat. Be warned, this fight has the potential to go on for some time. There are about 150 potential bodies for the Spirit 'Glom in town (it just has to kill them first), and no matter how many zombies the posse kills, they never seem to be getting on top of it all (townsfolk are dying faster than the posse can kill zombies).

Use the Walking Dead stats from the main rulebook, remembering that even if limbs are severed, the Spirit ‘Glom can still control the zombies until the head is destroyed. If you are using the quick hits system (recommended), give each zombie 30 hits, and record damage from head shots normally, but divide all damage to other parts of the body by four before applying it (this represents the zombie’s ability to take a lot of damage before going down).

If the posse is using consecrated bullets (from earlier in the church or because they have a Blessed with them) then do not divide damage – apply it in full to the zombies regardless of hit location. No zombie will use any weapon – they all fight with their hands and attempt to club people unconscious to drag them into the mist and kill them.

Hopefully, the posse will realize the futility of the situation, and run into the mist to find the cause of it all (they may need some prompting). The mist is cold and oppressive, even worse so that the first night they entered it: make each character make a Fair (5) Guts check.

The posse will come across zombies killing townsfolk in the mist on the battlefield. Whether they stop to help people or not, they will eventually find themselves in the middle of the field, ready to confront the Spirit ‘Glom itself. See the entry in Boot Hill at the end of this adventure for the stats of the Spirit ‘Glom. For your reference, the Glom has 12 Zombies protecting its “prime” body, each a badly decayed Indian from the Black Kettle massacre. Because they are so decayed and rotting, each has only 20 hits, rather than the usual 30 (remember to divide all non-head damage by four though, unless the posse are using blessed weapons or ammo). Remember that while the posse are fighting the zombies, the Spirit ‘Glom will attack them with its misty tendrils, which cannot be blocked or attacked, but may be dodged.

If any posse members are killed in the battle, the body will be raised as another zombie by the Spirit ‘Glom at the start of the following round. Other characters will have to make Fair (5) Guts checks at the sight of their mortally wounded companion fighting against them, and will be left with no option but to hack to bits the body of their departed companion. Since they will have

to destroy the head to stop the zombie character, she cannot come back as Harrowed.

Standing behind the Indian Zombies, is the body of a small Indian Girl killed in the massacre. This is the “prime” body of the Spirit ‘Glom, and is what the posse must kill to end the suffering of the town. Despite the fact that it is the body of a girl, it has the full stats as listed at the end of this adventure. Mist flows from the ears, eyes, and mouth of the body, and it chuckles in a low, evil voice as it attacks the posse with its misty tendrils. This will be happening at the same time the posse are fighting the zombies.

If the posse can kill it, the mist will slowly dissipate, as all the zombies collapse, really dead this time, and the angry spirits of the dead are released to whatever reward or fate awaits them.

## Bounty

3 Bounty Points for running into the mist and figuring out the problem;

5 bounty points for destroying the Spirit ‘Glom. Award a Legend Chip if they successfully talk the townsfolk down afterwards, and stick around to help bury the dead and clean up the town.

## Boot Hill

### Spirit ‘Glom.

A Spirit ‘Glom is similar to a ‘Glom or a Bone ‘Glom, but is a fusing of the angry spirits of the dead, rather than their bodies or bones. Like a ‘Glom, the Spirit ‘Glom needs a focus body (Called a Prime body) which is its physical manifestation. This body houses the essence of all the spirits in the Spirit ‘Glom (preventing them from ascending or descending, and equally preventing them from possession by a manitou to return harrowed).

The more spirits fused into a Spirit ‘Glom, the more powerful it is. Note that the initial creation of a Spirit ‘Glom will only fuse the most powerful spirits of the recently dead, so that even in a battle where 500 men died, only ten or twenty spirits might be fused into the Spirit ‘Glom. Later, when the Spirit ‘Glom adds spirits to itself, it can take any spirit regardless of its power.

Spirit ‘Glom’s are only created in areas where mass killings have taken place, such as old battlefields. The entity is confined to the general area, but can extend its influence in two ways.



Firstly, by night the Spirit 'Glom appears as rolling mist, covering the battlefield where the massacre took place. The more spirits fused in the Spirit 'Glom, the larger the area of mist. The Spirit 'Glom has control and influence over the physical form of the mist, such that it can form solid tendrils of mist, and use these to strike out at anyone within the mist itself.

Secondly, the Spirit 'Glom is capable of animating the bodies of the spirits contained within it, and these may travel out of the mist (to an effective distance of a couple of miles). These are under the full control of the Spirit 'Glom, but should in all other ways be treated as Walking Dead (from the Deadlands rulebook) with the same statistics (including their resistance to damage other than to the head). Any persons who are killed within the area of mist, either by one of the zombies or by the Spirit 'Glom itself (using tendrils of mist) is added to the Spirit 'Glom, making it more powerful, and providing another body for it to animate.

If the Spirit 'Glom can raise the fear level of an area to five or above, then any person killed by a Zombie will raise as another Zombie, even if it was not within the mist at the time. Generally, the Spirit 'Glom will cause the bodies it has animated to dig themselves into the ground during the day, to remain hidden.

Profile: Spirit 'Glom (Prime Body)

**Corporeal:** D: 2d8, N: 2d8, Q: 2d12, S: 1d10\* (8d10), V: 2d8

Dodge: 2d8, Fightin': Brawlin' 3d8, Fightin': Lash 3d12

**Mental:** C: 1d10\* (8d10), K: 1d6, M: 1d10, Sm: 1d6, Sp: 1d12\* (8d12)

Overawe: 5d10

\* Increases by 1 for every three spirits in the Spirit 'Glom. The number in parenthesis indicates the level possessed by the Black Kettle Spirit 'Glom.

**Size:** 6

**Terror:** 11

**Special Abilities:**

**Undead**

**Control/Animate Undead**

**Spirit Tendrils:** The Spirit 'Glom can make one tendril attack per action for every three spirits it has fused into itself (8 for the Black Kettle Spirit 'Glom) but

never more than one attack per opponent in the mist. It uses its Lash skill, which is a sub skill of Quickness, not Nimbleness or Deftness. This attack cannot be blocked, but it may be dodged with a normal vamoose action. It does Strength damage (8D10), which of course is a normal Strength roll, do not add the dice together. This may not be prevented by any form of (non magical) armor.

**Bite:** The Spirit 'Glom may also make a bite attack with its Prime body on the same action. This does base strength (1D10 in all cases) damage.

**Incorporeal:** The mist form of the Spirit 'Glom is immaterial, and as such cannot be harmed by any means.

**Weakness:** The only way to destroy a Spirit 'Glom is to destroy its Prime body, which is generally difficult as the creature is likely to keep that body safely hidden under the ground most of the time. To absorb the spirits of freshly killed people, however, it is necessary for the Prime body of the Spirit 'Glom to be in the exact center of the mist, so the best time to kill one is to catch it while it is absorbing spirits. To add to the fun, this body is extremely resistant to damage from any source that is not blessed or consecrated, making it difficult to kill without the aid of one of the blessed. Blessed weapons or bullets do normal damage to the prime body of the Spirit 'Glom, but all damage from other sources is divided by 5 before it is applied (this includes magical or other forms of damage other than those that are blessed). This means that a non-blessed attack needs to do thirty

hits to do one wound to the Spirit 'Glom (The prime body is size six). Additionally, only a maiming wound to the head can kill the Spirit 'Glom; all other wounds are ignored and healed automatically

at a rate of one wound level per round (not one per location, but one in one location). Wounds to the head are healed at a rate of one per ten rounds.

# All That Shimmers...

## Part 1 - A Rock and a Hard Place

### Setting

This adventure is designed to be set in Colorado, with the initial action happening in Boulder and Denver and then moving into the Rockies near Aspen. It will most likely run over two sessions (6-8 hours), and involves about an equal mix of investigation (first half) and action (second half). Some of the combats are quite deadly; you may have to tailor them to suit your Posse.

### Setup

A powerful group of Reckoner-inspired black magicians has been plotting for several years to bring one of their lords to earth in the flesh, using a newborn baby as the vehicle. The ritual they intend to perform, however, requires a very specific location; a cave deep in the Rockies whose walls are lined with pure silver, in which a permanent gate to the Hunting Grounds exists. This cave is spoken of as a place of evil in several Indian legends, but its location is never given. Despite the cultists' efforts to find its precise location over the years, they have never managed to narrow the area down further than a region fifty miles in radius. As the ritual calls for the birth to occur in the cave, scouring 7500 square miles of mountainside for a cave with a pregnant woman in tow has held up plans for the ritual, until now.

Recently, one of the cultists (who works for a mining company in Denver) overheard his boss trying to buy rights to a silver-finding device that a local scientist had developed. The cultist investigated, and sure enough, the device seemed to be genuine. Hastily, they assembled their expedition, kidnapped two suitable pregnant women, and set out for Boulder. There, two of the cultists broke into the Doctor's house (killing one of his guard dogs in the process), and stole a working prototype of the device. From Boulder, the group moves hastily southwest, towards the mountains near Aspen, where the gateway lies...

Getting the Posse involved: There are several 'hooks' that you can use to get the Posse involved.

They could be in it for the money: Dr. Purvis is offering a \$500 reward for the prompt return of his device.

They could be motivated by Helgo Schmidt, the editor of the Boulder Herald, whose motivations are discussed below.

They could be friends or associates of Boulder's town Marshall, who is set to have his reputation as a lawman dragged through the mud if this case isn't promptly solved.

Feel free to mix and match these motivations; it would work well to have the posse motivated by several of them.

## Chapter 1: Boulder, CO

### **(Fear Level 0)**

There are several leads that the Posse can follow up in Boulder.

#### Dr. Purvis

Can be found in his house, sunk into a deep depression. He will be in his study, staring morosely into the bottom of a glass of brandy, attended to by his Mexican valet, Inigo. A whining dog with a bandaged neck lies at his feet, and a thin and smoky coal fire hisses and sputters in the grate. He will initially be resistant to questioning; a Fair (5) Persuade roll is required to get him to play along; alternately, the only way to snap him back to the real world is to mention money; this will remind him of the potential revenue he has lost with the disappearance of his device, and he will spring to life. He has the following to say:

Only one device of real worth is missing, although the thief took several of my more portable designs as well as all the blueprints from my cabinet. The one that I'm most upset about, you see, is one that I haven't yet patented; if the thief, whoever he is, patents the method before I can build a replacement, then six years of work have all come to nothing. The device works on the principle of etheric resonance harmonies; put simply, when you dissolve a small sample of a substance in a special mix of vitriolic salts within the mechanism, the ether antennae pick up the strongest source of sympathetic resonances in the local environment - within, say, twenty to thirty miles - and orients a pointer towards it.

I've only managed to get the device to work in the case of one substance so far... silver. The missing device was calibrated to find large silver deposits, gentlemen, and now it has fallen into the hands of a criminal.

He pauses to wipe his glasses. Continued questioning will reveal the following, but only if the Posse undertake to track down the thief for Dr. Purvis.

He will offer the aforementioned reward, and will ask any obviously scientific types in the Posse to swear "on their honor as a practitioner of Science" to return the device. The real secret to the machine is the acid mix; luckily, the mix is only good for about ten readings before it becomes inert; and once it is inert, the secret of its composition cannot be determined by chemical analysis.

The thieves broke in while he was taking his evening walk. He has no regular time for this walk; he "takes some air" whenever his work for the evening is finished, usually for about twenty minutes at a time. He usually walks around the block, has a brandy at Far son's Tavern, and then returns home.

He was longer than normal on his walk this time because he spilt someone's drink while walking to his table, and felt obliged to replace it. He doesn't remember who the person was, just that it was a tall man with a beard he hadn't seen in town before, who was sitting at the bar with two other men who were playing backgammon and who smelled strongly of drink. Inigo was out at a friend's on the evening of the crime, playing poker. He has a cast-iron alibi, and has no motivation whatsoever that might make him a suspect. The thief killed one of his dogs and wounded the other; these wounds were inflicted with a stabbing weapon of some sort. Anyone examining either the wounded dog, or the dead one's carcass (which is buried in the back garden) and making a Medicine (General) roll of 7 or more, or a Cognition roll of 9, will reach the conclusion that these wounds were inflicted by a long straight knife, like a bayonet. Both dogs have deep wounds on the left side of their necks.

Only one person other than the Doctor knew about the device; the manager of a mining outfit, Backlund Mining, based in Denver. Dr. Purvis had been negotiating with Irving Backlund to buy the rights to the device, but had wanted to hold

off the sale until he could make the device work for other substances than silver. The price tag was \$25 000. Dr. Purvis has not been to Denver to keep Backlund updated on progress for several weeks. The closest patent office is in Denver. It will take the Doctor approximately two months to draw up new blueprints and build a new prototype.

The prototype is a large apparatus resembling a lawn barbecue with a TV antenna sticking out of its lid. The whole thing weighs about sixty pounds.

Helgo Schmidt

The editor and star reporter of the Boulder Herald can be found in his office, working on a first draft of a scathing editorial slamming Marshall Kingsley for "deserting his sworn responsibility to serve the interests of the Cattle Barons." Schmidt's motivations are simple; there is a mayoral election coming up, and he strongly favors a certain candidate over the others. If he sets himself up as a concerned mouthpiece for the *vox populi* now, he will be able to align public support behind his candidate more strongly. Marshall Kingsley's decision to lead a large posse out on a week-long campaign to find a gang of rustlers operating in the area has been a contentious issue in the town, and it is this dissatisfaction that he is using as his stepping stone.

If the Posse mentions that they are thinking of tracking down the thief, he expresses a great deal of interest; in fact, the paper is willing to add an additional \$100 to the reward that Dr. Purvis is offering. Should the Posse accept this, Schmidt will, of course, set the situation up to make himself look good in tomorrow's paper: "Incensed Scientist And Local Paper Accept Mantle of Justice! No faith in Kingsley", say sources," and so on. The information he knows is as follows:

His "confidential source" was Deputy Marshall Brevis, who overheard the Doctor cry out "The prototype! It's gone!" when they entered the workroom. He will only reveal this fact if he feels he can trust the Posse.

Backlund Mining is a broad-based mining company which runs several shafts in the area of the Rockies. One mine produces semi-precious gemstones, and the other two are silver mines.

Schmidt has heard several rumours that one of these mines is running a little “dry”. Irving Backlund is a successful businessman who worked his way up from working as a shaft steward to owning his own mining company. He has a reputation as a cut-throat but scrupulously honest man.

He doesn’t actually know what the prototype does; Purvis hasn’t told him. However, he will attempt to worm this out of the Posse with any means at his disposal.

The worst thing the Posse could do is let Schmidt in on any of their information or plans; if they do this he will shadow them all over the place, getting in the way and generally being a nuisance. He will not follow them outside the town limits, though; he’s not that interested in the outcome of the case, except where his personal agendas can be served.

### Farson’s Tavern

It is almost impossible to speak to “Red” Farson, the owner and barman of Farson’s, during peak hours (during lunch, and after seven at night), but at other times he’s more than happy to put aside checking his beer mugs for chips and cracks, to talk.

Dr. Purvis comes in for a glass of peach brandy every night; it is about the only time he leaves his house. All his shopping and errands are done by Inigo.

He remembers the three fellows who were sitting at the bar playing backgammon; they arrived three days ago, with two friends. Their room is paid up until the end of the week, although he has not seen them today.

He can provide them with descriptions of Ivan Green, Christopher Sutcliffe, and Murray Barron (see Boot Hill). He will remember Murray most clearly (Murray spent the most time in the saloon); and thus his description will be the most detailed, which will allow the Posse to recognize him from a photograph in Backlund’s office. He also remembers Ivan Green (the tall, bearded man who distracted Dr. Purvis on the eve of the robbery), as being a “heavy drinker.”

Not surprisingly, the cultists’ room is empty. They are long gone. They did not say where they were going, but there was not much tack on their horses; they couldn’t have been going more than a day or two’s ride from Boulder.

There are not many other leads to follow up in Boulder; the cultists made sure that they were not seen near the scene of the crime. Deputy Marshall Brevis is very little help indeed; a nervous 18-year old, he is beginning to feel like he has opted for a job too demanding for him. Schmidt’s rabble-rousing is not helping either.

The reason the cultists seemed so short on supplies is that they have been operating out of a Conestoga wagon five miles out of town, in which Victor Rose held their two pregnant captives under guard, while his acolytes stole the silver finder. Within this wagon are all the supplies they need for their trip to Aspen, as well as most of their weapons and supplies. If the Posse speak to farmers (or truant school kids) on the road out of town (where the wagon was parked) to ask whether they have seen any passers-by headed out of town, they will discover that a wagon and a pair of oxen was parked there for three days, with one man hanging around it, but that it was gone on the morning following the robbery.

It is a 14-hour ride to Denver from Boulder. If the Posse really pushes it, they might make it in one day, but if a reasonable pace is followed, it will take two moderately hard days of riding to reach Denver. They know that the same route would take a wagon two, three, or even four days, depending on the load.

Of course, the cultists have headed west, not east; they are taking back routes to avoid any pursuers, and will not be spotted by the Posse. They have various charms that allow them to detect magical attempts to find them (either by spells or by shape shifted shamans in eagle form, for instance); these attempts will be retaliated against if at all possible, using Victor’s full range of dark powers, and the information they return to the Posse will be garbled.

### Bounty

1 white chip for questioning each of the following; Dr. Purvis, “Red” Farson, and Helgo Schmidt.

1 white chip for asking the locals for information on who traveled along the roads.

1 red chip for racing to Denver to try and intercept the thief.

## Chapter 2: Denver, CO

### **(Fear Level 1)**

The Posse should head towards Denver; even if they do not think that is where the criminals will be found, all their leads point in that direction. Less cynical parties should speed towards Denver with all haste; after all, there is always the chance that they might overtake the wagon on the road!

### **Backlund Mining**

A two-story building in the heart of Denver, the Backlund Building holds the records and claims offices of the company (bottom floor), and the offices of the President and Vice-President as well as a boardroom (top floor). A guard with a shotgun and a dog is always on duty in the reception area (a certain quantity of silver is kept on the premises). Getting an appointment with Irving Backlund is moderately difficult, as he spends a lot of time out of the office; however, it is usually possible to see him at some point on the same day as one requests a meeting. Mentioning Dr. Purvis or his invention will draw a much speedier response!

Backlund will meet them in his luxurious office, with the a wall full of framed photographs behind him. The photographs depict various important times in his life; his old shaft crew, his first paycheck, his wedding, the day he opened Backlund Mining, and so on. Each one is labeled with a small caption - "Opening the Honeycomb Shaft, 1871", for instance.

Irving Backlund is an imposing figure, with long gray hair and an impeccably tailored gray suit which accentuates his powerful build. He has the strong, calloused hands of an ex-miner, and he is fond of waving these in the air while he talks. If the Posse mention, or have mentioned, Dr Purvis or Boulder, he leaps to the conclusion that the characters are representatives of Dr Purvis', come to negotiate the final sale, and will greet them as such with some remark like "So, I see old Bart finally feels like gettin' rich!".

Of course, Backlund knows nothing about the theft, and will react with genuine alarm at the news.

One of his mines is running dry, and he is concerned that the loss of capital will slow down the pace of his company's growth. He has an alibi (of course), for the evening in question. He

will corroborate Dr. Purvis' version of their negotiations thus far, adding the following:

"Well, while I'm upset at the theft, I made my fortune without the help of such a contraption and I'll make another fortune without one before I'm through. But Purvis is a good scientist, and if he ever does get his little toy to work on anything but silver, I'd sure like a piece of that action. I could make ten fortunes that way! I tell you what; if you can find it, and get it back to him, I'll add a hundred and fifty dollars to whatever he's paying you... for traveling expenses, let's say. How does that strike you?"

At this point, ask the Posse to make Cognition rolls. The character with the highest total will notice a picture on the wall behind Backlund, showing Backlund with Murray Barron at the signing of the purchase documents for his latest acquisition. Barron's features are clearly visible in the image, identifying him as the man in Farson's Tavern. The caption reads "Irving Backlund and Murray Barron Purchasing the First Water-Cooled Drill Bits in Colorado." If this is brought to Backlund's attention, he will scowl and say the following:

"Humph! I should take that one down, I suppose. That damned Barron turned on me in the end - little half-blind snake!"

At this point, a little questioning will reveal the following:

Murray Barron was an accountant and personal assistant to Christopher Backlund at Backlund Mining.

He absconded a week ago, taking the contents of the firm's petty-cash safe and several confidential survey maps of the area around Aspen with him.

Backlund has several detectives looking into the issue, focusing on rival mining firms in the Colorado area. He suspects that Barron has gone over to a competitor with the maps. These detectives have already been over Barron's residence with a fine-tooth comb, and found no clues.

One detective, Lucas Tredhill, an ex-Pinkerton, has been dispatched to Aspen to look for Barron there.

This is all they stand to learn from Backlund, but some more enquiries around Denver will reveal that Barron bought a Conestoga wagon, enough supplies for a month, and a pair of oxen

from a local outfitter's ten days ago. Other news around town (Roll Streetwise (7), or buy 20c worth of newspapers) includes:

There are no leads yet in the murder of a local seamstress, Tessa Green, who was killed with an axe last week. Police are looking for her husband, Ivan, in connection with the crime. Green is described as tall and gangly, with a beard. The reports refer to him as a "drunkard" with a violent temper. (Ivan Green is one of the cultists. A picture is provided).

A \$10 reward is offered to anyone who sees 17-year old Alice Winnicott, who is still missing after fleeing her home after a fight with her parents. She is rumoured to be "in a delicate condition". (This is one of the women that the cult has abducted. A picture is provided).

There's a strike on at the Golden Sunset Gold Mine east of town, after several miners were killed by a malfunctioning lift. (Nothing to do with the adventure).

### Problems?

The Posse could attempt to assault or kidnap Backlund. This has been tried before, and Backlund now has two bodyguards packing Gatling pistols with him at all times. One walks by his side dressed in a suit, and one walks ten paces behind them dressed casually and looking as inconspicuous as possible. Backlund's bodyguards (use the Spy archetype, and add Shootin':Automatics of 4) will shoot to kill. Backlund's house is similarly impregnable. Backlund will not, of course, talk to any Posse that he encounters in this way; and they will soon find out that he is an incredibly bad enemy to have.

The Posse might be too cagey around Backlund to get any information out of him at all; in which case, one of the secretaries at the office, Margaret Ferguson, will follow them outside and tearfully "confess all" - she has mistaken them for more detectives being sent after Barron. She had been having a relationship with Barron, and he asked her to come along to Aspen with him for "something big," but she could not face deserting her aged mother, who lives in Denver.

A Cognition (9) roll will reveal that she is pregnant and beginning to show (6 months). In fact, Barron has planned to bring her along as one of the kidnapped, but lost his nerve at the last

minute. Margaret wants the Posse to bring him back to her; in between sobs, she promises that she will stand by him, even if he loses his job. In fact, there's no reason why the Posse should not meet Margaret anyway, whether they get Backlund to talk or not; it might make an interesting role-playing dilemma for any Heroic characters who might otherwise have no qualms blowing a hole in Barron's skull when they find him.

### On the Road Again

The Posse must once again head out in a hurry, this time in the direction of Aspen. It's a hundred hard miles southwest by horse (five or six days ride); alternately, Wasatch Rail operates a rail service from Denver to Salt Lake City, which runs 125 miles west through Glenwood Springs, from which it is only 50 miles southeast through the Sawatch Range to Aspen. The train leaves just before dawn on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and takes 14 hours to reach Glenwood Springs.

### Bounty

- 1 red chip for talking to Backlund
- 1 white chip for talking to the outfitter
- 1 white chip for talking to Margaret Ferguson.
- 1 white chip for handling the meeting with Backlund well
- 1 white chip for taking time to find out what else has been happening in Denver in the last two weeks.

### Part 2 - Aspen and Beyond

The cultists have reached Aspen ahead of the posse. After taking some readings using the silver finder on the way in, they manage to find the location of the cave. They then speak to a local trapper to find out about routes capable of taking a wagon's weight leading up to the area. They set off the next day, using the Scrye spell to "look behind them" in case of pursuit. Through this spell they find out about Tredhill's arrival. As the posse reaches its destination, the cultists have just finished casting a spell onto the trapper, compelling him to kill Tredhill and then himself.

### On the Trail

In order to keep the story fluid, the Marshal should create a diversion during this point. If the heroes are headed to Aspen by horse, how about

an encounter with a wandering madman. He's just a fine ol' fellow who has wired the bridge he and the heroes are standing on and will pull the string leading to the ignition fuse and the two crates of sweaty gelignite if the posse doesn't promise to give a message to God when they see him. "Tell him the Devil's comin' back t'earth soon... tell him I dreamed it last night. Dreamed 'bout you, too... that's why I wired the bridge like I did. Had to make sure you'd stop to listen, see...". The posse will have to be convincing in its promises to deliver the message! If the heroes are on the train to Glenwood Springs, a pickpocket loose on the train and a high-stakes bare-knuckles brawling contest in one of the freight cars ought to make a good diversion. There is no reason why you shouldn't turn the madman loose on them during the ride from Glenwood Springs to Aspen as well (two days along a narrow pass).

Shaman and Braves with the Occult Skill, or those characters with Area Knowledge: Rockies or Colorado may roll a Ornerly (7) check to recall any information about the area surrounding Aspen; there are several old, half-buried legends in various local tribes that refer to the area surrounding the slopes of Mount Maroon as a place of great beauty but also of bad luck.

## Chapter 2: Aspen, CO

### ***(Fear Level 0 - for now....)***

Aspen is a young town, enjoying the effects of the silver boom. Ideally, the heroes should arrive at dusk; if they don't you may have to modify the time references that follow. The heroes have two potential routes by which to investigate the town; they could look up Lucas Tredhill, the private detective that Backlund has sent to Aspen, or they could ask after Barron himself. Snooping around town yields the following results:

Lucas Tredhill: A few inquiries in the saloons (Streetwise roll of 5 or more) will turn up that a man fitting Tredhill's location has been seen around town recently. As far as those questioned know, he is staying at the Titania Rooming House.

Barron and friends: Well, plenty of people pass through Aspen this time of year... but a Streetwise roll of 7 or more, or a dollar's worth of beer and whiskey to refresh people's memory,

will reveal that four fellows with a wagon came in a few days ago. One of them (Murray Baron) was seen talking to a certain one-armed trapper by the name of Roger Ryan down at the Dry Gullet Alehouse. The others rented a room at Flatley's Junction Hotel, and were not seen around town much. One old coot by the name of Buster Flanagan swears blind there were more people in the wagon apart from the four fellows everyone saw, and that he saw a woman's face in there too. The woman, should the heroes ask, does not fit Alice Winnicott's description. Several people will also remember Tredhill, who has also been asking about Barron - they will mention that he is staying at the Titania.

### Flatley's Junction Hotel

The proprietor, an old black lady called Lillian Flatley, remembers the group, and can give descriptions matching those the posse already has. She is upset that they left such nasty gashes in her nice wooden floors, and is busy putting up a sign saying "No Spurs to be Worn Inside" as the posse arrives. The silver finder's tripod legs, of course, left the gashes. She will also confirm Old Man Flanagan's observation that at least one man stayed with the wagon all night, and took food there at night; she attributed it to them not wanting to pay for an extra room, as there were already four sharing the room she rented to them.

### The Dry Gullet Alehouse

It takes the heroes about half an hour to get the barman's attention in this packed saloon; but, when they eventually do, he says he hasn't seen Ryan all night, but he does remember the man who came in to talk to him - it was one morning, when things weren't so busy. The man had a map, and it looked like Ryan was showing him routes into the mountains.

### The Titania Rooming House

The Titania is run by George d'Ortraine, an eccentric Boston artist who moved here to paint the Rockies. As the heroes arrive, pair of grim-faced deputies (Smith and Timms) is busy carrying a blood-soaked sheet with a human body inside out towards the undertaker's. Standing nearby is Sheriff Michael Deens, Aspen's local lawman, who is taking notes as d'Ortraine stands by wringing his hands and asking how to get rid



of all the blood. The body in the sheet is Lucas Tredhill; he has been shot in the gut, chest, and head, and is very dead indeed. His left hand is clenched closed, with a scrap of paper visible peeking out of the end of his fist. . The body's arms spill out of the sheet as the deputies negotiate the steps. If the party can somehow get the paper out of the dead man's hand, the information on it is theirs; otherwise, they will just have to do things the hard way.

The scrap is a piece of a lined notebook, and bears the words "Rog. Ryan - trapper (scruffy, one hand). Barron seen talking to, asked about routes - where to?".

### What really happened:

Acting under the influence of the cultists, Roger Ryan went up to Tredhill's room to kill him about an hour ago. Opening the door without knocking, he surprised Tredhill in the act of writing his journal. Tredhill, not realizing that Ryan was here to kill him, quickly crumpled the page he had been writing on in his left hand to hide it. He did not want to spook a potential source of information, after all. That is when Ryan pulled his .36 Navy and started blasting. Tredhill took a slug in the leg before he could react; then, pulling a .45 Derringer, he managed to draw a bead on Ryan just as Ryan's second and third shots took him in the gut and head. Tredhill's own gun blazed as he fell, and both slugs hit Ryan in the right shoulder, breaking it. Ryan's orders were to "Kill Tredhill, and then shoot yourself in the head." But, lacking a left hand and unable to lift his right arm past the hip to complete his orders, he just stood there dumbly as Deputy Smith, who had happened to be downstairs enjoying a whiskey in the Titania's small bar, burst into the room and tackled him. Ryan has been carted off to jail by the time the heroes arrive.

### Sheriff Deens' View of Events

Deens will talk freely to any bona-fide lawman who inquires about the details, and possibly to a journalist, but anyone else will have to make a fairly good case for why he should reveal "confidential legal proceedin's". The letter from Backlund will help, as will any reference to the speed with which the guilty party was apprehended (Deens, like many small-town

lawmen, is fairly susceptible to subtly delivered praise!). He can tell the posse the following:

Roger Ryan has been apprehended for the crime. Ryan is not known to have a violent temper; in fact, he's quite well liked around town and known to be particularly friendly to strangers passing through and settlers coming into the region.

Ryan will have to wait in jail until a town meeting can be convened; in the absence of a judge, his fate will be decided by majority vote. He's likely to hang, as Deputy Smith distinctly heard three shots from Ryan's black-powder .36 before the derringer fired. This indicates that Tredhill was unarmed when the shooting started, which makes it murder.

If the heroes want to know more, they are free to talk to Ryan; the town doctor is just finishing up with his arm, and he seems to have broken out of the stupor.

### Aspen Town Jail

The Aspen Jail is currently more of a drunk-tank than a serious hoosegow; the jail itself is located in the cellar of the Sheriff's house, the bottom floor of which serves as his office.

The Sheriff will stick around the crime scene for now, as he wants to finish interviewing d'Ortraine. Deputy Smith is given the keys to the jail and the task of taking them to see Ryan.

Deputy Smith is 25, tall and heroic looking, with light brown hair and a bright red neckerchief. He is very chatty as he guides the posse towards the jail; it is not often that he gets to catch a 'bad guy', and even less often that he gets to brag to interested strangers about it.

Upon reaching the jail, he hands them the keys and directs them to the trapdoor; he still has to complete the arrest papers for Ryan, and inventory Tredhill's belongings. Only a large kerosene lamp, burning on the counter, lights the office, so the heroes are liable to jump a yard when a huge black cat with bright blue eyes struts out from behind a desk to rub against the characters' legs! This is Deen's cat Leo, and despite his sinister appearance, there is nothing malevolent about him. Smith will give the posse another lantern for their trip down to the cellar.

### The Lockup

Aspen's lockup is a converted root cellar; trailing roots hang from the roof and the floor is

moist and bears a few mushrooms and toadstools. The walls are rough stone streaked with moss and mold, and the place smells like old whiskey gone sour and unwashed prospectors. Sitting in a huddled heap in one corner is Ryan; his right arm is in a sling, and he is muttering to himself.

## Roger Ryan

As they will have heard from other sources before now, Ryan is missing most of his left arm, an old injury from Ryan's stint as a Confederate Ranger eight years ago. He is currently in a dazed and slightly concussed state. A Persuasion (9) roll is required to snap him out of it; each member of the posse can only try once. When one succeeds (or everyone has tried and failed), he begins to ramble on as follows:

"Voices in my head... the devil, the devil was in my head... he told me to kill Tredhill... never met him before... met him the other day, new in town... a wagon? How big? Heavy load? Well, that's tricky... there's a couple of trails you could try... but watch out for those Henderson boys... steal you blind... blind... I never saw him before... up the mountain? Prospecting, huh? Well, I guess it's your business. Don't mind me asking... guess I'm the Aspen welcomin' committee... welcome to Aspen... welcome... welcome... wel-"

Ryan is utterly unresponsive. Just as they are despairing about ever getting information from him, a big drop of dark red blood splashes onto his upturned face, seemingly from the thin air above them! The West is about to get Weird - and mean...

## Devil Dawgs

By now, the cultists have realized that their plan to cover their tracks and take out their pursuers has failed, so they have fallen back to Plan B. Victor, using his dark arts, has located a gravesite up on the mountain, animated its contents (six long-dead dogs), and sent them back into town to kill the posse, Ryan, and any others who stand in their way.

The Loping Dead's stats can be found in the Boot Hill section. The carcasses animated to produce the dogs are almost a year old, and are held together purely by the powers of dark sorcery - most of the dogs lack leg joints, or have incomplete spines. Their blackened and ancient bones are partially covered by decayed and

desiccated scraps of flesh and hide, except for the skulls, which are bare of flesh and wreathed in a malevolent green glow.

The dogs have entered town stealthily - one reason why it is better for this scene to occur at night - and have entered the jail in search of their victims. On route, they killed the cat (the source of the blood that seeped through the floorboards into the cellar), and knocked over a kerosene lamp... The floor above them is beginning to crackle with flame as the dogs pad around, sniffing and pawing at the trapdoor. The click-click of their bony paws will be audible above the low hiss and crackle of the flame on a Cognition roll of 9 or more.

The ring of keys Smith gave them also holds the key to Ryan's cell, but he is incapable of concerted action and will only shuffle along unless led.

Tactically speaking, the posse has twelve rounds (one minute) until the floor is mostly ablaze. The fire doesn't affect the dogs except to blacken and char their bones. At this point, townsfolk will begin to arrive, drawn by the smoke and flames. Deputy Smith (who left to fetch Tredhill's luggage) will rush in, intent on saving the day, only to be chased out again by two of the snapping, smoldering horrors. Five minutes will then pass, while Smith runs off to fetch the Sheriff and the townsfolk draw back to a safe distance after Smith's screaming exit. Once a minute has passed, the floor will fall in, spelling almost certain death for anyone still in the cellar. All this assumes that the posse did not do the gritty thing and bust out of that trapdoor, guns blazing, before that.

## Fightin'

Refer to the map of the Sheriff's office. Depending on how long it took them to get out of the cellar (the drop of blood marks the beginning of round one), the floor will be in various stages of inferno; refer to the table below for the effects of the blaze.

<b>Roun</b>	<b>Effects on Combatants</b>
1-3	Roll Nimbleness (3) each round, or lose 1d4 Wind from burns.
4-6	Roll Nimbleness (5) each round as above, plus lose 1 Wind/round from smoke and heat.

7-9	Roll Nimbleness (7) each round as above, plus lose 2 Wind per round
10-12	Effects as above, but also make Vigor (5) roll each round or lose highest action card
13 or higher	Effects as above, except lose 2 highest action cards is Vigor (7) is failed.

The ground floor windows are all barred, so the posse either has to fight its way out the front door, or up onto the first floor where it can escape out one of the windows. Note that the counter shown on the map is not a solid bar - it is more like an angular table, so there is ample space for the dogs to attack from underneath it.

The dogs all attack silently, except for one, which utters a strange, high-pitched yelp-howl every few seconds. This piercing noise cuts through the noise of battle like a knife, even more unnerving because the creature making it is obviously as hollow as an old canteen.

### Survivin'

Should the posse fight its way out of this battle, it makes it out just as the floor collapses into the cellar, blowing all the ground-floor windows out in a blast of flame and smoke.

A crowd of townsfolk are gathered outside, either carrying buckets or, if Deputy Smith made his unfortunate discovery, brandishing firearms. An unearthly silence hangs over the street, broken only by the crackle of flames. Aspen is now treated as having a Fear Level of 1. A single child's voice is audible - "Daddy, Daddy, was Nibbles in that house? I heard him bark." The speaker is a little girl of about four in her nightdress, who is tugging at her white-faced father's sleeve.

How the characters explain what happened is up to them (perhaps the best time for some Tale Tellin' - bear in mind that only Deputy Smith actually saw the dogs - the rest of the townsfolk have that slight unease associated with a brush with evil, but no real knowledge of the events that took place), but some fast talking might be required. Should they question the white-faced man (his very insistent child will keep making it clear to all present that she "heard her doggy in there, and isn't he supposed to be in Heaven?"),

they will discover the following story from the man:

"I'm a farmer, see... las' year about this time, m'dawg started actin real weird... howlin' all night, had this real funny look in his eyes. Some m'neighbours started losin' some chickens, 'n some sheep... we found out some of the farm dawgs had upped and gone wild, 'n my dawg was one of 'em... so me 'n James, m'neighbour, rounded em up and took 'em up onto the mountain in James' old wagon... we shot 'em dead, just tied 'em to a tree and blasted all hell out of 'em with our shotguns. Dawg go wild like that, can't keep 'im on the farm no more... next thing, I'da lost a cow, or Ruthie here mighta gotten hurt. I can show ya where we took 'em, come dawn..."

Looks like the posse have its lead into the mountains after all. If anyone asks about "the Hendersons," Sheriff Deens will be able to tell the posse that they are a pair of brothers who make a living off robbing prospectors and settlers up in the mountains. Born and raised in the area, they haven't done anything serious enough to necessitate Deens riding out after them with a posse - but he'll warn the heroes to look out for them anyway, there's a \$250 bounty on the pair alive (\$200 on Jess, who is a deserter as well as an outlaw, and \$50 on Bill).

### Bounty

1 white chip for gathering information about Barron and Tredhill

1 white chip for visiting each of the Flatley Junction Hotel and the Dry Gullet Alehouse

1 white chip for talking to the farmer about his dog, and 1 white chip for finding out about the Hendersons.

1 red chip for convincing Sheriff Deens to spill the beans

1 red chip for retrieving the scrap of paper from Tredhill's hand.

## Chapter 4: The Mountain Trail (**Fear Level 2**)

In the morning, the farmer (whose name is David Slight) will take them about five miles out of town, to the beginning of a wide but rocky trail up onto the slopes above them. "This is the trail they went up," he says. The place they buried the dogs is about five miles further up the trail. He

will not go any further, not even for money - he says he needs to get home and look after his family.

A Tracking (7) roll will reveal that five men on horseback, and a wagon drawn by two oxen, passed up this trail within the last week. The trail heads up about two miles before it is lost from view, and Slight will tell them that it becomes heavily forested beyond the place he buried the dogs.

As the posse start up the trail, a rifle shot rings out from somewhere deeper into the mountains.

As the diagram to the right shows, Slight's information is correct as far as locations go. The gravesite has been recently dug up, and there are the boot prints of four men in the fresh earth around the hole. There are also five acrid-smelling puddles of black wax spaced evenly around the grave; these formed the five points of the summoning pentagram used by Victor Rose to cast his Zombie spell.

It will take until noon to reach the junction. There, a Tracking (5) roll will reveal that the wagon turned left; the right-hand path peters out after a mile or so. The tracks are less than a day old.

The ambush site is one favored by the Hendersons (see below); travelers are forced into a narrow track with a cliff on one side and a drop on the other. Normally, the Hendersons just fire a warning shot and hold guns on their victims, but this time they will be out for blood (see below).

## Ambush

The Hendersons attempted to hold the cultists up this morning, but found themselves on the wrong end of Victor Rose's Stun spell and were soon disarmed at gunpoint. Rather than kill them, the cultists handed them \$100 each, and told them to wait on this trail and kill anyone who passes. The brothers, terrified, agreed; and when the cultists told them they would be watched in case they tried to skip out on their part of the deal, their loyalty was assured.

Jess Henderson is prone in the jumble of rocks facing the posse as they head down the path. Having once been a raider in the Union army, Jess knows how to set an ambush; his first shot will be a called shot to the head of the rear most horse (if the posse are riding); this will

block the path out of the ambush. His second shot will be aimed at the front-most party member, and from then, in order of preference, people with long arms who seem intent on returning fire, and people trying to escape the kill zone. For his first shot, Jesse will be at a bonus of +8 due to aim, and the rifle rest he is using.

Bill Henderson, the less experienced of the brothers, is crouched on the top of the cliff with his scattergun. His orders are to wait until he hears people on the path below returning fire, and then to pop up and give anyone he sees both barrels. He'll keep doing this until Jess tells him to stop.

Bill will fight to the death, or until he is knocked out; Jess, on the other hand, has a yeller streak and will crawl backwards into a ravine and try to make his escape as soon as he takes a heavy wound.

See Boot Hill for the Hendersons' statistics.

## Living through the ambush

There are a couple of ways the heroes might make it out of this one;

If they have a scout out front, this unfortunate person will spring the trap before the rest of the posse arrives.

Alternately, they could just shoot it out with the Hendersons; this will be tricky, because the Hendersons most definitely have the drop on them.

Of course, even though it's a ten-yard drop into gravel and scrub on their right, a character who makes the dive will be able to work their way, under cover, to a position where they can draw a bead on Jess.

Finally, the jumble of loose rock Jess has chosen to hide in is part of a precariously balanced overhang; dynamite attacks or high-velocity firearm attacks (such as rifle shots) specifically aimed at the overhang have a 1% chance, per point of damage, of collapsing it. Should this happen, Jess will be pinned and helpless, his rifle knocked from his grasp. It will take a Scrutinize (7) roll or a Trade: Mining (5) roll to notice this detail.

When the firing dies down, the posse can take stock of the situation. If any of the Hendersons are still alive, they will gladly tell the posse all they know. Additionally, a Tracking (3) roll will

reveal that a wagon passed this way, less than a full day ago.

#### Body and Wagon

In a clearing ahead of them, the heroes see a Consetoga wagon, two oxen dozing in the shade, five horses grazing the stubbly mountain grass, and a jumbled pile of clothing. They also see, sprawled face-down in the gravel, the body of a young woman. This is Alice Winnicott, who broke free of her captors and made a run for it when she was led out of the wagon. With their goal so close, and having brought another woman along for just this eventuality, the cultists elected not to chase her - instead, they just gunned her down.

Alice has been shot in the thigh (pistol) and back (shotgun). She was seven months pregnant. Her terrified and tear-streaked face requires a Guts roll against a Terror value of 5 from anyone examining the body. Her hands are tied behind her back, and from the state of her wrists, have been for over a week.

The jumble of clothing comprises the traveling clothes of six adult men (the cultists changed into their robes before entering the cave).

The wagon has a few days' provisions left in it, but otherwise nothing of interest.

Tracking the footprints of the six men reveals that they left the clearing, leading a barefoot woman, and headed up a steep mountain pass. A few yards up the path stands Dr. Purvis' device! It is steaming gently, and its pointer arrow is spinning aimlessly - the cultists have exhausted its charge, and the device is now useless.

#### Turn back or go ahead?

Well, the posse has retrieved the device; they could turn back now and no one would be the wiser. However, any Heroic or Law Man characters that choose this option lose their highest chip and a point of Grit; they are deliberately turning their back on the chance to bust some evil-doers, and inside there will always be a small voice telling them so.

If the posse gives up now, give them a red chip for fighting their way past the Hendersons, a red chip for shooting the overhang, and a white chip if they outflanked Jess by diving off the cliff.

## Chapter 5: Into the Earth

### **(Fear Level 4)**

Five hundred yards or so along the trail is a jagged cave mouth. The cultists' footprints are clearly visible in the powdery guano on the floor, as is a half-submerged and decayed skeleton. The smoke of ancient fires blackens the walls of the cave; barely visible under the soot are ritualistic carvings, left here by the ancient inhabitants of this region. The carvings are too crumbled to make out any detail, but something about their appearance is disturbing.

The fissure leads deep into the mountain. At its widest points, it is ten yards wide; in other areas, it narrows to a mere two or three feet. The floor shows signs of having been crudely smoothed down, and every ten yards or so, a hole has been carved in the wall to hold a torch or rush-light. Beetles and cockroaches scuttle underfoot, and the occasional moth flutters above.

The tunnel twists and winds treacherously through the darkness. Eventually, the posse reaches a natural cavern with a sinkhole in the floor. The smooth stone surrounding the sinkhole is carved with ancient designs, these ones in better shape than their counterparts in the cave. The carvings depict human figures bowing in worship to a round object (the hole), and placing animals and smaller human figures inside it (sacrifices which were carried down the pit to be offered up to the Gate below). Coils of mossy, rotten bark rope are piled high around the room.

A thick log has been placed across the hole, and a heavy rope with knots tied every yard is attached to it, disappearing down the hole into the darkness. If the posse shine lights down the pit, they will see that the tunnel goes down about ten yards, and then begins to slope, finally being lost from sight.

The sinkhole's walls are unnaturally smooth, and have a soapy, greasy feel to them. As the posse descend down the pit, they will notice the walls beginning to sparkle; by the end of the sinkhole, the walls gleam like metal.

As can be seen from the simplified cross-section provided alongside, there are several sheer drops within the sinkhole's length. At these points, a Climbing (3) roll is required to safely pass through the section. Someone in the posse will also have to make a Guts check against a

Terror value of 3 when a beetle falls down the shaft behind them and lands in their collar, if they fail they involuntarily let go of the rope in panic!

### What's happening at the bottom of the sinkhole?

The ritual is already in full swing, and the sound of chanting and the frightened cries of a woman will start becoming audible as the posse reaches the halfway point. The woman is begging to be let go in Spanish; the chanting is in a mix of ancient Hebrew and Latin. The "Gate" is a monolith of pure silver, three meters high, and a meter across. Its surface is bright and somehow fluid, and those looking directly at it must make a Guts roll against a Terror value of 3. The walls of the cavern are similarly bright, although they do not have the disturbing appearance of the Gate.

Refer to the tactical map alongside; Victor Rose is standing in front of the Gate chanting and holding a staff in one hand and a medallion in the other. All the cultist are wearing white robes with gold trim; they are standing in a half-circle between Rose and the posse, their attention fixed on the Gate, which is beginning to swirl and bulge, seeming to lose it's shape and sway slightly. Two of the cultists support a weeping woman (the second sacrifice, a soiled dove named Miriam) between them. The five cultists standing in the half-circle are carrying their weapons.

The posse is stuck with the dilemma of whether to climb stealthily down the rope, and bringing its numbers to bear on the cultists, or opening fire while holding on the rope.

Firing at Rose (or, indeed, any of the cultists) from the rope will be tricky; firstly, the firer is at a -3 for having such an unsteady position, plus he or she will only have one hand free for shooting. Rose is also over 50 yards away (and the closest cultist over 30 yards away), and has both the Dark Protection (2) and Cloak of Evil (3) spells in effect. Sneaking down requires an opposed Sneak roll versus a random cultist's Cognition trait.

The cultists will, of course, turn and engage the posse at the first sign of trouble, leaving Barron to drag the screaming woman towards Rose and the Gate. The cultists' stats can be found in Boot Hill. Barron will shield the woman

with his own body if the posse begins shooting at her.

Rose needs five more rounds to complete the spell he is casting; start counting from when the heroes first act or when the first posse member is noticed by the cultists. During those rounds, the Fear Level of the Silver Cavern is a steady 5. Once he completes the spell, however, two things happen; first the Fear Level hikes up to 6; secondly something reaches for the woman from inside the Gate, the silver surface of the Gate stretching like rubber as the Reckoners reach out to claim their victim. At this point, Rose and Barron are free to join in the defense of the Gate.

For five more rounds, the gate bulges and roars. The thrashing form of the woman is dimly visible within the gate, which now appears more like shiny, greasy smoke than liquid silver. During this combat, attacks can be directed at the Gate: it is considered to have 100 Quick Hits, and an Armour Value of 1 against physical attacks. Holy Water and symbols of faith burn it like acid; these do damage equal to the wielder's Faith roll (or, halved Spirit roll if he or she does not possess Faith), each round that they are in contact with the Gate. The Gate actually sprays black "blood" when wounded; writhing grubs with agonized human faces can be seen in the blood, thrashing and dying as they enter our world.

The Gate cannot "fight back" until ten rounds have passed; if they kill it before then, you may skip straight to the finale. If not, it attacks just like a Desert Thing until destroyed or the posse are all incapacitated. Do not forget that it draws an extra card each round as a result of the Fear Level. The Living Gate has a Terror Value of 7. Problems?

Your posse died: Damn, Marshall, I told you to tailor these combats to your party! Well, you are just going to have to bite the bullet. If it's any consolation, those killed in this chamber automatically return as Harrowed, but with the Manitou having full Dominion. The sacrifice died: Well, Rose still has one trick to play; a unique Black Magic Spell called My Life For Yours. To learn this spell, a black magician must know over ten levels of dark favors; it requires a Faith roll as usual, and Rose's version involves slashing open the victim's chest, then his own, and actually ripping out his own still-beating heart and pressing it into the victim's chest! The

victim is instantly cured of all damage, but the caster is irrevocably dead. As can be seen, this spell requires 4 actions to perform; if Rose takes a Wound during these actions, the spell fails.

## Chapter 6: Grand Finale

As the heroes strike the final blow, a massive concussion rings out, blowing them all back from the Gate. With an ear-splitting crash, fissures begin to open all over the cavern, and lava begins to gush out. The cavern is filled with black steam as the lake begins to boil. Over all the chaos can be heard the screaming of an angry child, coming from the Gate. It is clear that if the heroes stay in the cavern, they will roast. Hope they left the rope up into the sinkhole intact! Otherwise, you could have a rock fall provide a nice slope up which they can scramble up to the sinkhole. Make the players not what order they are leaving the cave in.

Barron, if he is still alive, will sprint towards the exit along with the posse; the fissures swallow any other cultists. As they flee, the Gate is buried in a wave of lava, and the child's voice is cut off. The exit is only large enough for one hombre to go through per round and they must make a fair (5) nimbleness check to do it, if they fail they can try again next round. There is a catch though, once the first hero has tried to get out of the exit the rest of the posse are feeling the effects of all that hot lava. Each round they stay in the cave, have the heroes who are waiting their turn to get out make a onerous (7) Vigor check to resist the heat. If they fail they lose the difference in Wind. When a hero runs out of Wind, he or she drops from the rope like a stunned bug and plunges into the lava, unless someone can manage to snag them and haul them out. Do not worry about having them make climbing rolls on the way back up; it just wouldn't be dramatic.

As they sprint out of the cave mouth, the cave collapses behind them, burying the site under tons of rubble.

### Bounty

Apply the awards given above; in addition, give:

1 red chip for facing the cultists

1 blue chip for destroying the Gate before it animated **or** a blue and a red chip for destroying it while it was fighting back

1 red chip for using holy symbols or materials against the gate

1 white chip for killing Rose.

Additionally, if they manage to bring Barron back alive, to stand trial, award the player who bagged him a blue chip.

Don't forget the point of Grit for facing, and defeating, the cult and the Gate.

## Boot Hill

Profile: The Lopin' Dead

**Corporeal:** D:2d10, N:2d10, S:1d10, Q:3d10, V:2d8.

Dodge 3d10, Brawlin' 4d10, Sneak 3d10

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:1d4, M:1d4, Sm:1d6, Sp:2d6.

Overawe 5d4, Search 3d10

**Size:** 4

**Terror:** 7

**Special Abilities:**

**Bite:** Str+1d6

**Undead:** Can only be harmed as if they were Harrowed.

**Immunity:** fire.

Profile: Jess Henderson

**Corporeal:** D:2d8, N:4d8, S:1d12, Q:4d10, V:2d8.

Dodge 3d8, Brawlin' 4d8, Shootin:Rifle 5d8, Shootin' Pistol:3d8, Sneak:4d8

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:1d8, M:1d6, Sm:3d6, Sp:1d6.

Overawe 5d6, Search 4d10

**Hits:** 40

**Description:** Short, with long brown hair and a scarred face.

**Gear:** Colt Patterson Model 1836 Rifle, spare loaded cylinder for same, Colt Dragoon, Bowie Knife, Travel Gear, Mule.

Profile: Bill Henderson

**Corporeal:** D:1d8, N:3d8, S:1d12, Q:3d10, V:1d8.

Dodge 2d8, Brawlin' 3d8, Shootin:Shotgun 3d8, Shootin' Pistol:2d8, Fannin' 3d8. Sneak:3d8

**Mental:** C:1d10, K:2d8, M:2d6, Sm:1d6, Sp:1d6.

Overawe 2d6, Search 2d10

**Hits:** 30

**Description:** Short, with a shaved head and a squint.

**Gear:** 12-gauge scattergun, Pair of Colt Navies, Hatchet, Travel Gear, Mule.

Profile: The Cultists

**(Barron, Green, Jamieson, Garforth, and Sutcliffe)**

**Corporeal:** D:3d6, N:2d6, S:3d6

(Green has 4d12), Q:3d6, V:2d10.

Dodge 3d6, Brawlin' 3d6, Fightin':

(weapons): 3d6, Sneak 4d6, Shootin: (weapons):3d6

**Mental:** C:2d6, K:2d4 (Barron has 2d10), M:2d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:3d6.

Persuasion 4d6, Search 2d6, Faith 3d6

**Hits:** 30 each

**Gear & Description:**

**Barron:** Spencer Carbine, 15 rounds, Bowie Knife/Short, oiled hair, glasses with one lens blacked out.

**Green:** 12g Shotgun, 10 rounds, wood axe, Colt .44 Army/Hulking, gaunt, with dark beard.

**Jamieson:** Winchester '73, 2 Hunting knives/Skinny, manic, with green eyes and short brown hair.

**Garforth:** DA Army Pistol, Bayonet/Extremely fat, with ragged and dog-bitten wooden left arm.

**Sutcliffe:** SA Peacemaker/Long white beard, turban, toothless and obviously mad.

**Black Magic:** Barron Knows the Cloak of Evil spell to Level two.

Profile: Victor Rose

**Corporeal:** D:3d6, N:3d8, S:2d6, Q:3d8, V:1d6.

Dodge 2d8, Brawlin' 3d8, Fightin':Knife 3d8, Shootin:Pistol 3d8, Sneak:3d8

**Mental:** C:3d8, K:2d10, M:3d10, Sm:4d8, Sp:3d12.

Overawe 3d10, Leadership 2d10, Guts 5d12, Faith 4d12

**Wind:** 18

**Description:** Tall and wiry, with a cultured and soothing voice. Blue eyes. Balding..

**Black Magic:** Cloak of Evil 3, Dark Protection 2, Stun 2, Animal Mastery 3, Scry 3, My Life for Yours 1.

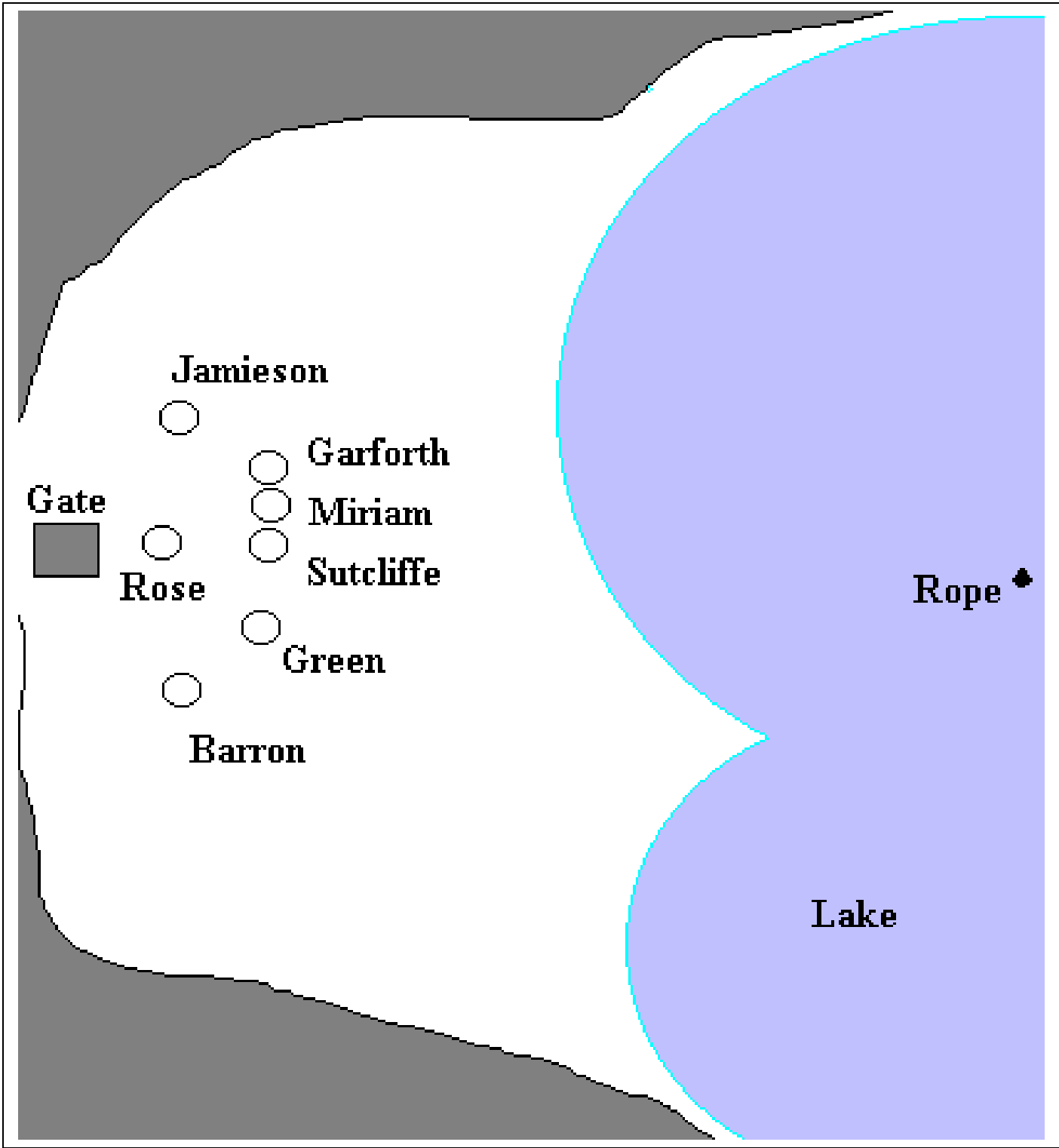
**Gear:** Rupertus Pepperbox, Sacrificial Knife, Sacred Staff (He has the Level

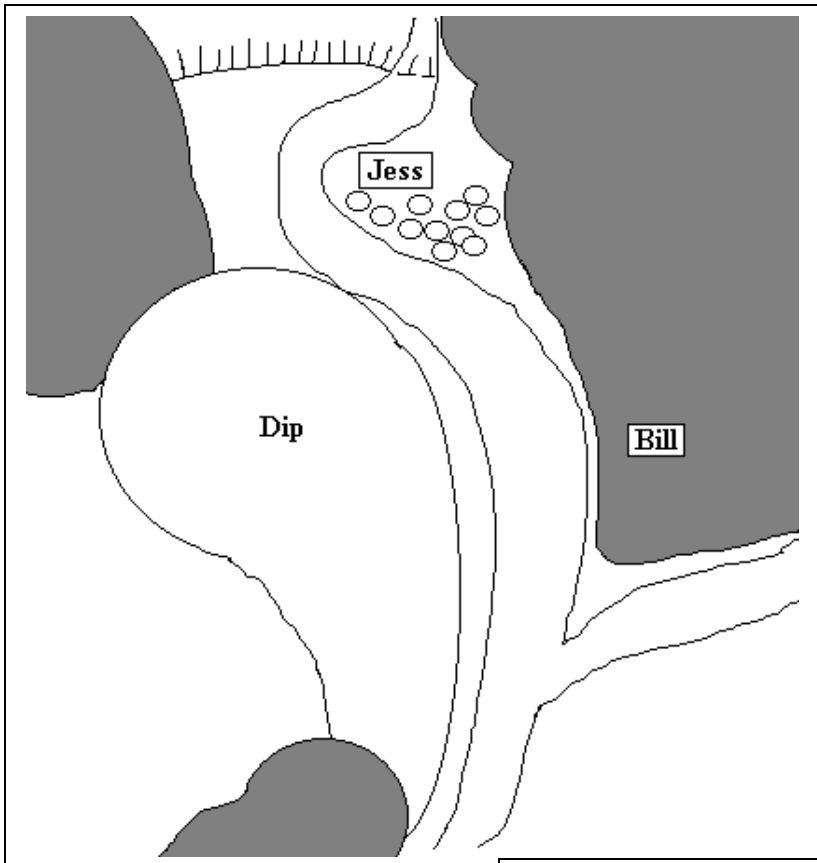


Headed ability while holding the staff - but it only works for him).



The Sinkhole





Ambush!

Sheriff's Office

Local Mountain Trails

