

How to ease the Boot Hill™ identity crisis

by Paul Montgomery Crabaugh

Everyone seems to have a place in Boot Hill except the player-characters, who have to be content with a place on Boot Hill. They wander in out of nowhere, invariably causing much havoc and then moving on.

Mind you, it doesn't have to be that way. A player can simply define his character as being the local deputy, or whatever; however, it seems that most players are reluctant to do that.

Nor is this attitude necessarily born of timidity. The Deputy, for example, would clearly have certain advantages over the other characters, and the players may be reluctant to claim a clear advantage for themselves.

The impartial (and usual) way to determine matters such as this is to roll on a table (May I have the envelope, please?):

Roll Character Background

MALE CHARACTERS

01-06	Gunman
07-11	Gambler
12-16	Rancher
17-19	Bartender
20-23	Lawyer
24-27	Bounty Hunter
28-30	Deputy Marshal
31-33	Detective

34	Miner
35-38	Wells Fargo Agent
39-44	Cowboy
45-47	Stage Driver
48-49	Homesteader
50	Merchant
51-52	Gunsmith
53-54	Blacksmith
55-59	Drifter
60	Secret Service Agent
61	Clerk
62	Sheep Rancher
63-65	Foreigner
66-67	Teacher
68-69	Preacher
70	Scout
71-74	Cavalryman
75-77	Cavalry Officer
78	Banker
79-80	Craftsman
81-83	Doctor
84-85	Dentist
86	Photographer
87	Author
88	Artist
89-91	Deputy Sheriff
92-95	Reporter
96-00	Indian

09-13	Bartender
14	Lawyer
15-16	Detective
17	Secret Service Agent
18-23	Clerk
24-30	Foreigner
31-38	Teacher
39-43	Doctor
44-47	Dentist
48-52	Photographer
53-58	Artist
59-62	Author
63-64	Reporter
65-72	Secretary
73-81	Saloon Girl
82-88	Indian
89-90	Nun
91-00	Widow

FEMALE CHARACTERS

01-05	Gambler
06-08	Rancher

Before anyone asks, I'm not notably chauvinistic— but the times were.

It should be noted that if you were to use these tables to populate a town, it would be a very strange town indeed. The idea is not to reflect the population, but to recreate the mix of character types you find in westerns—especially the older westerns and new old-style westerns (respectively typified by *Rio Bravo* and *Breakheart Pass*), where there was more variety of characters; newer westerns tend to divide the population into three classes: cuties, killers and bodies.

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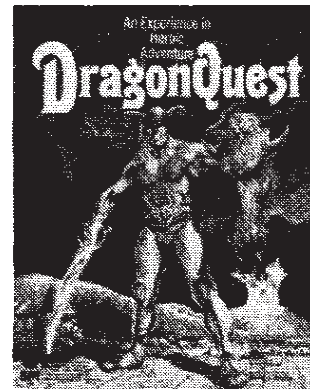
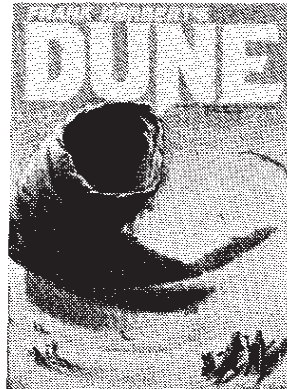
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