

# DEADLANDS



Under a Harrowed Moon:

## Strange Bedfellows

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THE WILD WEST



Deadlands™ Dime Novel™ #4

UNDER A HARROWED MOON (PART ONE):

## STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

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## STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

### CHAPTER ONE

The moon rose wide and bright as the dead man's horse slowly tapped out a funeral drum's beat on the hard, dry dirt of the high plains. Steam rose from the horse's flanks in the chill of the autumn night. Ronan Lynch didn't feel a thing.

Ronan didn't feel much of anything these days. Being dead had a way of doing that to a man. Still, while most of the dead lay rotting in their pine-box beds, Ronan was roaming about the West, so he counted himself lucky.

These days, though, Ronan's luck seemed mostly bad.

A howl pierced the night sky like a silver needle through black velvet. Back in his breathing days, a shiver might have shot up Ronan's spine. Now he just listened to his bay skitter nervously as a chorus of howls rose to meet the first long, lonely wail.

He ignored the wolf songs and concentrated on the task at hand. As he crested a low hill, he spied the object of his midnight run off in the distance, standing exposed sharp and stark in the pale moonlight: a circle of pup tents squatting around two larger tents that would have made a circus ringmaster jealous.

Ronan had run across dozens of camps like these before: small, lonely places that stood at the vanguard of the rail lines racing across the broken landscape to be the first to reach the shattered coast. What was left of California in the wake of the Great Quake was chock full of ghost rock, the most valuable mineral ever scratched out of the planet's crust. Rail barons would kill to win the contract to bring the stuff Back East to the power-hungry War Between the States that raged on to this day.

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There was something different about this camp, though. The larger tents bore the brassy emblems of Wasatch, the company controlled by Dr. Darius Hellstromme, the most notorious master of steam technology the West had to offer.

That wasn't why Ronan was here though—at least not directly. Wasatch was laying dozens of spurs off of their main line on their way toward the coast. Hellstromme's workers were scattered throughout the west, and situated in northern Arizona, Monument Valley wasn't so far from Salt Lake City, the overdeveloped Hellhole the Tombstone Epitaph liked to call the City of Gloom.

No, Ronan had run across many rail company camps in his meanderings around the West, but one thing made this place odd: No tracks ran in or out of the place.

When Union Blue had hired him on to investigate this site, Ronan's first thought had been that the people here must have just been a massive survey team. Now that he saw the place, he knew that he'd been wrong. You didn't need that many folks to survey a stretch of land, even one as broad and starkly beautiful as this one with its tremendous towers of stone stabbing into the blanket of stars overhead.

Something else entirely was happening here.

Ronan reined in his horse, putting an end to its clip-clop gate. It nattered quietly as the choir of wolves sang on.

The gunslinger dismounted and wrapped his reins around a nearby outcropping of rock. Carrying a dead rider made the nag nervous enough. The wolves were making her want to bolt, so he tied her down good. She wasn't going anywhere.

Ronan strode off toward the camp, trying to stick to the shadows as much as he could. The crunching of his boots on the gravelly ground seemed like it would rouse a man from his grave, but the few sentries Ronan could see patrolling the camp didn't appear to hear a thing.

Unfortunately, the camp squatted right in the center of a broad, relatively smooth section of the valley. When Ronan got within a few hundred yards of the place, he saw that nothing larger than a jackalope could make it the rest of the way to the camp unseen.

He knelt down and began to study the movement of the sentries. He noticed they took a break every 15 minutes or so, and it lasted for at least five minutes. All he had to do was wait for their next rest and he could stalk into the camp unseen. He didn't have any idea what was going on here, but he was sure the secret was under those two big tents.

He waited with the calmness of the grave until the guards took their next break. The wolves had fallen quiet, and the only sound he heard was the crackling of a small fire in the center of the smaller tents.

Ronan was just standing up to make his way into the camp when he heard the rifles cock behind him in unison.

His right hand wandered vaguely toward the Peacemaker hanging from his belt.

"Don't think of it, wasichu." The tone belonged to a man prepared to kill. The accent had Apache all over it.

Ronan lifted his gloved hands and turned.

A trio of Winchester rifles pointed down at Ronan from the rocky top of the last small rise before the plain on which the camp sat. The wan moonlight bleached the color from the land, but Ronan didn't need that to tell him that the three Indians had murder on their minds. He could see the warpaint on their faces just fine.

The man in the center aimed his weapon right at Ronan's heart. "You are trespassing."

Ronan smiled inwardly. He'd been shot through the chest before, and he knew he could take it, even at this range. But that didn't mean it wasn't going to hurt.

"I was just wandering through, partner." The gunslinger brought down his hands and spread them wide as he walked forward, up the rise. The two other guns poked like a viper's fangs at Ronan's ribcage.

Ronan ignored them until he was halfway up the rise. Then he stopped short and put his hands back up. "I'm on my way from Denver to Virginia City. I just saw the camp and wondered if they'd be willing to let me bunk near them for the night."

A single wolf's howl punctuated the sentence. The beast was closer now—much closer.

"You are not welcome here!" hissed the Apache to Ronan's right. Her voice was thin and brittle. Even in the dimness, Ronan could see that she was beautiful, her long, black hair running down her back in a warrior's braid.

The Indian to Ronan's left whispered something to the others in Apache. Then there was a burst of conversation in hushed tones. There seemed to be some sort of disagreement among them that was soon cut short by the man in the center. The only word the hired gun was able to make out was "Taza." It was apparently the center man's name.

"What's the story?" Ronan asked when the Apaches fell silent.

The center man snorted and glared right into Ronan's eyes. "My friends here," he said, not taking care to be quiet this time, "they ask me why I bother talking to you at all. Why do I not shoot you down."

"And?"

"I tell them that I don't want to hurt an innocent man.

"You're Taza, right?" asked Ronan. The center man nodded. "Son of Cochise. I've heard of you. Your words mean a lot to your people."

Taza nodded. "Finally, you speak truly." The wolf sounded off again, even closer this time. Taza's friends shuddered at the sound, but the Apache leader's face was like a fresh-carved tombstone.

"So what did you tell them?"

"I have heard your story and measured your words. You are not an innocent man."

Ronan could see where this was heading, and he didn't like it. He glanced from one set of murderous eyes to another and waited for the wolf to howl again.

When it did, he dove to the ground, scrambled to one side and went for his gun. As he brought it up, a bullet grazed his ribs.

Ronan barely noticed the second shot pierce his left thigh as he squeezed off three quick shots. The first smashed into the left Apache's arm, knocking his gun away. The next caught the woman in her right shoulder and sent her spinning to the ground and exposing Taza to Ronan's sights.

Just as Ronan was firing at the leader, Taza's rifle barked. The bullet smacked the gunslinger square in the chest, and his own shot went wide.

Stunned, Ronan went rolling down the short rise until he came to a rest in a dusty heap. When he recovered, he scrambled to his feet to spot Taza helping his injured companions escape.

Ronan grunted and started up the side of the rise again, hunting for his pistol, which he'd dropped. He spotted its polished barrel gleaming in the moonlight and went for it, keeping his eyes trained on the top of the rise the entire time. Taza and his friends were gone for now, but there was no telling how long that would last.

Just as his hand closed on his gun's grip, he spotted the creature.

It topped the hill near where Taza had disappeared. It was taller than the tallest man and covered entirely in long fur that gleamed in the silvery moonlight. It stood on two legs like a man, but when it reared back its head and let loose with a howl that curdled the gunslinger's long-dead blood, Ronan knew there was nothing human about it.

Ronan kneeled into the shadow of a nearby rock and furiously reloaded his half-empty gun. As he did, he peered over the top of the rock and watched the abomination as it prowled the crest of the rise. It moved like a hunter, sniffing the air for a scent on the wind. Ronan had no doubt as to who it was planning to make its prey.

The blackish stuff that passed for Ronan's blood was trickling thickly down into his boot, reminding him that the damage to his leg was going to make it difficult to run. The wound was already closing, but it wasn't going to heal quickly enough to do him any good.

Ronan brought his arms over the top of the rock and leveled his gun at the slaving beast. As he took aim, the thing suddenly spotted him. It turned, snarling savagely and baring the meat grinder that overplayed the part of its massive, fang-filled mouth.

Ronan fired as it leapt at him. Two shots buried themselves into the thing's chest but didn't even slow it down. The beast's leap carried it entirely over the rock the gunslinger was hiding behind. As it landed, it let loose another horrific howl.

Ronan drew his Bowie knife with his left hand while brandishing his Peacemaker in his right.

"Nice doggy," he said. "Just roll over so I can scratch your belly with this knife."

With that, the creature cocked its head at the gunslinger and raised its furry eyebrows at him. Then it reared back its head and let loose an all-too-human cackle.

Ronan spit on the ground. He knew he was in trouble.

The beast leaped at him, and he had just enough time to reverse his grip on his knife before the thing was on him. He jammed his knife arm up under the thing's throat, exposing its massive neck.

The creature's claws slashed deep into Ronan's chest, tearing him open like a Christmas present. Ignoring the pain, the gunslinger shoved his Peacemaker up into the thing's throat and let loose.

Ronan emptied the whole cylinder into the beast's neck. Bullet after bullet blasted away muscle, bone, and fur. Gristle and gore flew everywhere, and Ronan was covered in the creature's hot, red blood.

When Ronan's hammer finally fell on an empty chamber, though, the beast was still relentlessly tearing at him. He gagged on its fetid breath as its jaws snapped at his head, held back only by his left forearm, which he held out before him like a wrought-iron rod.

It was then that the beast stabbed its razorlike claws around Ronan's sternum and cracked his ribs apart like he was a Thanksgiving turkey.

The massive trauma took Ronan's breath away, and before he could find it, he'd also lost his heart.

The beast ripped the lifeless muscle from between the gunslinger's lungs and held it up toward the moon like some savage trophy before wolfing it down in a single gulp.

The creature let loose a howl of sheer triumph and was answered by what sounded like every canine in the county.

The last thing Ronan remembered before he finally passed out was the sound of the beast gagging up its prized meal.

A smile crossed his face as he finally fell still. Apparently he had disagreed with something that had eaten him.

## CHAPTER TWO

It was still night when Ronan awakened. The moon had gone down, and the land was shrouded in darkness except for the constellations shining down on the land below.

The first thing Ronan realized was that he could barely move. As he shook the sleep from his head, he quietly hoped that it had all been a bad dream.

Not the way his luck was running.

His hands were still intact. In fact, he still had his Bowie knife trapped in a death grip in his left fist. He dropped the knife and felt around.

His chest had been shredded like a mass of wet newspaper. And sure enough, his heart was gone. Still, he thought it might not have gone too far.

His spine was still intact, he was pretty sure. He'd never had a chance to touch the front of it before, but he couldn't think of what else in his battered corpse would feel quite that way. Plus, he could feel his toes.

Of course, with the mess that had been made of the muscles in his belly section, he wasn't going to be sitting up any time soon.

Ronan looked over toward the east and saw the first hints of the false dawn. He was going to have to hurry to get out of here before someone found him in the daylight. He could play dead forever by just keeping still, but folks had a way of burying corpses, even ones as ugly as his. He had no desire to have to dig his way out of a grave today, and as weak as he felt, he wasn't even sure he could.

Putting aside the pain that every move sent through what was left of his butchered body, Ronan reached out, grabbed a stretch of ground, and pulled himself over onto his stomach. It tried to squirt out from beneath him, but he pushed it back below his ribs as best he could.

Ronan needed meat to help replace the bits he'd lost, and he needed it soon. The only way to get that was to make it back to where he'd left his horse.

Ronan started the long, torturous crawl up and over the rise. He hadn't gotten 30 feet when he stumbled across what he was really missing: his heart.

The mangled lump of flesh had once pumped his blood through his body. He'd relied on it constantly from his birth all the way through to his death. Since then, it hadn't seemed like he'd ever have much use for it again.

He didn't want to do it, but he desperately needed meat.

"Any port in a storm," Ronan muttered to himself, then bit into his heart like a ripe apple.

He finished off about half of it before stuffing the rest into his pocket.

Ronan could struggle to his knees now, and he was pretty sure he'd be able to make it to his horse before the sun peeked over the rim of Monument Valley. With luck, the thing wouldn't shy away from him, and he'd be able to make a much-needed meal from its flanks. After getting his fill, he could try to hike into town.

Desmondville was a tiny place, not much more than a stop on the stage line, but Ronan had friends there. These were the kind who knew what he was and would be willing to help him out, far away from the prying eyes of the locals. If he could only get to them.

He worked his way over the rise and down into a dry streambed. He made his way along it for a while and then crawled up and over another hill.

As he looked downward, his heart would have fallen into his stomach if it hadn't already been ripped from its regular place. At the bottom of the slope, he saw his nag being picked over by a flock of buzzards in the grayness of the imminent dawn. She'd been gutted by some monstrous creature—probably the same damned beast trying to get the taste of Ronan's heart out of its mouth.

Ronan shooed the damned things off as he made his way over to his ex-ride. He didn't want to scare them off with his gun for fear of gathering unwanted attention. They were cowardly things that took flight as he neared. They flapped casually away but continued to circle overhead, eager to finish off the dead horse or its long-dead rider.

His stomach still growling, Ronan looked down at the horse. The best parts of it had apparently been wolfed down by the heart-eating beast, and the buzzards had picked the remnants pretty much clean.

Ronan rolled on his back to curse at the birds, but before he even really got started, an idea hit him. He closed his eyes and lay in wait.

A few minutes later, the buzzards began circling lower and lower. It wasn't long before one of them landed near the horse's corpse and began pecking away at what it could find. Then it turned its attention to more fleshy pickings.

Ronan waited until the bird actually tried to peck a chunk out of his liver. Then, in one swift move, he reached out and wrung the surprised buzzard's neck.

With a few quick strokes of his knife, Ronan had enough fresh squab to make himself a decent meal. As he devoured the raw meat, he looked up at the other buzzards that had been warned off by the squawking of their dead sister, and he thought about seconds.

## CHAPTER THREE

"You do get yourself into the strangest situations, Ronan," offered Velvet Van Helter as he ministered to the dead man's wounds. The meat Ronan had eaten had helped some, but he was still a real mess. His rib cage had knitted back together, but his flesh was still flayed to pieces.

The slim, sandy-haired huckster—as those who followed the mystical teachings of Edmund Hoyle liked to call themselves—did his best to put back together the jigsaw puzzle that was Ronan's skin. He was wearing one of his signature, all-velvet suits. The color of the day was, appropriately enough, a burgundy so dark as to verge to black. He'd already taken the jacket off and rolled up the sleeves of his crisp, white shirt.

"Interesting," Velvet murmured as he examined Ronan's wounds. "You'd almost think that these were made by some kind of huge dog or wolf."

The huckster poked around in the hole in Ronan's chest a bit more and seemed to come to a conclusion. "From what you told me of your attacker, I'd say it's pretty clear what you were up against last night."

Ronan just looked him in the eye and grunted for him to go on.

Velvet stood up and walked over to his steamer trunk on the other side of the room. He continued to talk as he rummaged through the smaller drawers.

"Now, I've never actually had any personal contact before with one of these creatures, you understand, but there were always dark and nasty rumors of their ilk being involved in all sorts of nasty affairs around the fair Crescent City. The Cajuns in the area called them garou. The rest of us simply referred to them as werewolves.

"By day, these creatures walk among us as human beings, but they carry with them a terrible curse. On nights when the moon is full in the sky, they transform themselves into savage beasts more wolf than man. And they are compelled to hunt—and to feed."

"Are you sayin' these critters don't have any choice about what they're doing?"

Velvet nodded as he continued to search through the trunk.

"Well, then I think your New Orleans wolf-men are different than what they got here in Arizona. This fella enjoyed what he was doing, no mistake about it."

"You mentioned, though, that you shot this werewolf several times with little effect." Velvet seemed to find what he was looking for and turned around to face Ronan. He held something in his balled-up hand.

"True enough. So?"

"According to the legends in N'awlins, such creatures are unaffected by normal means of destruction. Only one thing can hurt them."

Ronan raised an eyebrow at the huckster. Now he was curious. "What's that?"

Velvet stepped forward and opened his hand, revealing six brass-jacketed bullets, the tips of which shone brightly in the light. "Silver," he said, "only silver."

Velvet dropped the bullets into Ronan's outstretched hand. The gunslinger examined them carefully. "Just like that ranger, eh? These must have cost you a mint."

"In N'awlins," the huckster said flatly, "we take our legends seriously."

Silence fell over the room for a long moment. Ronan plugged the bullets into a spare cylinder for his Peacemaker, and Velvet turned his attention to his friend's wounds once again.

"How's Betty doin'?" the gunslinger finally asked. She'd run out of the room soon after Velvet had hauled his battered cadaver up the back steps of the Full Moon Saloon. He'd heard her slam her thumb in the door on the way out. They didn't call her "Bad Luck" for nothing.

"Oh, I suspect she's doing well. I'll go down to check on her as soon as I finish up with you." Velvet's demeanor darkened, contrasting sharply with his gentle Southern drawl. In his days in the Union Army, Ronan's general policy was to shoot any Rebel on sound or sight. He didn't feel too much differently about the situation now than he did then, but for Velvet he was willing to make an exception.

"You know that as much as she values your friendship, she has a deucedly hard time reconciling that with your lack of life."

Ronan grimaced as Velvet's hands dug into something sensitive. "And what can I do about that? Fall over into a grave? I've been dead once already. It didn't take."

Velvet finished what he was doing and went over to the washbasin to scrub his hands clean. When he was done, he drew a fresh deck of cards from his shirt pocket. He broke the seal with his thumbnail, shook the deck into his hand, and began to shuffle it deftly. "Shall we begin?"

As Velvet walked over to where Ronan was lying in one of the room's two beds, he said, "All I mean to say is that Betty is a delicate, young lass with easily offended sensibilities—at least as far as the arcane is concerned."

Ronan ignored him for a moment as he reached into his pocket to get something Velvet had missed.

"It's hard for her when you come in like this," the huckster continued. "It's not that she doesn't know you're dead, of course. It's just that at times like this..."

Velvet looked down at his patient and saw that Ronan was holding the remnants of his heart in his hand and prying apart the skin on his belly with the other.

"Don't let me stop you, Reb. I'm just trying to put this back where it belongs."

Velvet, just a bit paler now, whispered, "Don't let me stop you, please."

\* \* \*

Velvet shut the door quietly behind him and made his way downstairs into the main room of the saloon. Betty was waiting for him at a table by herself.

She had taken off her beige Stetson, and her curly hair, the color of hand-rubbed pine, shone in the early morning sun peeking in through the saloon's front window. She looked up at Velvet, the trouble in her heart showing plainly on her face. She'd already bandaged her thumb.

"How is he?" she asked quietly, looking only at the way her hands were folded on the table in front of her like the steeple to a church.

Velvet let out a long sigh. "He'll live—that is to say, he'll soon be as good as he ever was. All he needs now is a little time. By tonight, he'll be knit together tighter than your favorite blue sweater."

"I'm glad to hear that," said Betty, unable to meet Velvet's eyes.

"Betty," he started, laying a hand over hers.

"It's okay, Velvet," she said, pulling away. She looked up at him with tears welling in her eyes. "Gosh, I'm sorry. We've ridden together for so many miles. I know you're a good man, and Ronan is too. It's just that..."

"What?"

She stumbled for the words, then, "Well, you both work with evil in your own ways."

"Ronan, he's got some kind of spirit in him that keeps him walking around long after he should be fertilizing a flower bed near Denver. And it makes it so we can't entirely trust him. Ever. That's hard."

Velvet reached out to pat her hands again. This time, she didn't pull away.

"And you, Velvet. Ronan never had much of a choice about what happened to him. He didn't ask for it. But you, you chase down these—these..."

"Manitous."

"Yeah, and then you play games with them." She squeezed his hand tightly. "And what kind o' monster coulda hurt Ronan like that? It just scares me, Velvet."

A deep frown creased the huckster's normally amused face. He didn't wear it well. "I'm sorry, Betty, but that's just who I am—who we are."

"You're not so innocent yourself, you know. That rifle of yours doesn't fire pralines. But the people you use it against have all got it coming."

"We do what we have to do. We fight fire with fire—evil with evil—and that's that."

"It's the kind of world we live in."

"But what does that say about this world and where we're all headed? I know what you're saying is true, and I can see what might be coming. All too clearly."

A single, fat tear rolled down her cheek as she stood up to leave. She picked up her hat and turned to go, but before she left, she looked back at him and said, "But it doesn't mean I have to like it."

## CHAPTER FOUR

Albert Dinkins sharpened his knife as his old nag trotted along slowly toward Desmondville. It had been a long, hard trail to Arizona from Deadwood, but it was almost at an end. Dinkins was already making his plans for the rest of the evening. He was going to grab himself a room in the local saloon, saw some quick wood, and then head out that night to investigate the Wasatch encampment.

Kang was paying Dinkins plenty—the mysterious warlord behind Iron Dragon always did—but he'd have made this particular trip for free. According to what Kang's man had told him, Lynch was already in Desmondville, and Dinkins had a score to settle with that Yankee.

Dinkins ran the edge of his blade along the back of his forearm. It was sharp enough to shave a tract through the thick, black hair.

Dinkins thought about how he was going to cut Lynch's throat with that blade. He held it up into the midday sun and watched the blinding light glint off its edge.

When he brought it back down, they were there.

"Howdy, stranger," said the first one. He was a short man with a greasy beard. He wore a long, grimy coat stained all over with splatters of dark stains. He carried a Spencer buffalo rifle slung over his right shoulder. Dinkins could see the man's sneer, even behind the mustache yellowed by years of exposure to tobacco juice.

Dinkins didn't say a word. He just stared back at the quartet as he let his hand rest on the grip of the pistol hanging low on his hip.

"What my rather rustic friend here is trying to say," started the well-dressed tinhorn to the mountain man's left, "is that we would appreciate it if you could tell us just exactly, well—"

"Where are we?" finished the lady standing behind them. She was a true beauty, a dusky thing with smoldering eyes that instantly reminded Dinkins of just how long he'd been on the trail. From the look she was giving him now, though, he knew he'd have better luck with a pack of wild wolves than this sweet thing.

The Indian to her left stared at him with a face carved of something harder than stone. Dinkins felt like he was being sized up—for a pine box.

At the woman's question, Dinkins just laughed. "Where the Hell do you think you are, ya durned fools? How in Tarnation do you think you got here?"

The tinhorn with the funny accent flushed red. "Sir, I apologize for what must seem to you a marvelously amusing situation. You have us at a disadvantage."

Dinkins thought about that for a moment while he kept laughing. The woman seemed slightly intrigued by her companion's flustering, and the trapper and Indian were actually grinning. Then Dinkins went for his gun, and suddenly no one was smiling at all.

"I'd say yer right about that, mister. Four o' you out here in the wilderness. Lost and alone. Not a horse for any o' you."

Dinkins chuckled. "Way I figure it, I shoot the three o' you, I'm doing you a favor. Leastwise this way you'll go quick-like 'steada starving here lost in the middle of nowhere."

"Only three of us?" asked the woman.

"Sure, sweetie. You're too purty to go to waste."

Dinkins cocked his Navy revolver and pointed it right at the trapper's head. "You, on the other hand, somebody shoulda shot you at birth."

Despite the fact the trapper had a loaded gun pointed at his head, he was showing all that was left of his teeth with a grin wide enough to split his head. As Dinkins watched, the gash grew broader until both sides almost touched the trapper's ears.

The trapper's face drew longer and more ferocious—and even furrer than ever. Before Dinkins knew it, the trapper had grown tall enough that he was staring the gunslinger straight in the eye, despite the fact he was sitting atop his horse.

Then the thing that the trapper had become snarled.

Dinkins fanned his pistol, unloading everything he had into the beast's heart. Slug after slug slammed into the monster's furry chest, but the trapper-cum-creature just stood there grinning.

When Dinkin's gun was done, the werewolf reached over and grabbed the revolver by its scorching-hot barrel. Then it blew the smoke off the pistol's barrel and into Dinkin's wide-open face.

The gunslinger stared straight into the creature's saucer-sized eyes and fainted right off his horse.

\* \* \*



Earl Cotten shrugged out of the ruins of his clothes and laughed. "Sonuvagun never had a chance."

"Certainly not," opined Isaiah Morningkill in his upper-class New York accent, dabbing at a spot of blood on his lapel. While Cotten's wounds had already healed, the bullets had made a bit of a mess as they'd exited his body. "The Delirium would have seen to that. You hardly needed to tempt fate with the man's fragile heart."

Cotten smirked as he removed Dinkin's jacket and pants.

"His fate could have been worse." Proud Speaker's words were flat but true.

Cotten slipped into Dinkin's clothes and then went after the man's boots. "Yeah, but if I'd messed him up, where would I be? Wandering 'bout this world with nary a stitch for myself."

The mountain man caught Walks-Among-Men's eye and lent her a broad leer. "And we wouldn't want that now, would we, Annalee?"

"You paint such a pretty picture, Mr. Cotten," said the woman-shaped wolf. "It's too bad the subject doesn't quite measure up to the portrait's billing."

Proud Speaker and Morningkill did their best to stifle their laughter, but it wasn't nearly good enough. Cotten silenced them both with a steely glare.

"Enough chatter, boys," said Annalee LaBelle. "We haven't come all this way through the Umbra and from one world to another just to banter meaninglessly."

Morningkill cleared his throat. "Too true, sweet girl." He turned to the trapper. "We are all weary from our long journey. Have you any idea where we might be?"

The Indian spoke up. "This world seems similar to our own. This is Monument Valley here, just as it was when we left our own realm. The land seems entirely the same. In our world, Desmondville is only about 20 miles to the east."

Cotten sniffed at the air. "That's not the way our boy's gone, although it's kind o' hard to tell. His scent's all around this place."

"I suggest we adjourn to Desmondville and relax until sunset. It's sure to be a most intriguing evening, and we're bound to need our rest."

"What about this...man?" asked Annalee.

"He will awaken soon," offered Proud Speaker. "He will be burned badly by the sun, but he should be able to make it to shelter before the light falls from the sky."

"Whut the Hell d'ya care 'bout him for?" complained the trapper. "He'da killed us dead given half a chance."

"He is an innocent," said Morningkill, "and never a real threat to those such as us."

"He was harmless, all right," Cotten snorted. "But as for innocent, there ain't no such animal."

## CHAPTER FIVE

That night, Velvet found Ronan in the main room of the Monumental Saloon. The gunfighter was in the middle of a long argument with a bottle of cheap whiskey, and the whiskey was losing. As Velvet sat down across the table from him, Ronan poured the man a short drink.

The Southern aristocrat pulled his glass to his lips and sniffed the golden fluid, then drew back, wrinkling his nose. "How can you drink such vile slop?" he asked.

"Given my condition, it's not so hard," the Yankee said flatly. "Besides, I'm not drinking it for the taste of it."

"Ah, yes," Velvet nodded. "Something to keep off the stench of death. As a drink, it makes a wonderful deodorant."

"Yep, but it's a piss-poor way to get a bad taste out of your mouth."

Ronan poured himself another shot and downed it in one gulp. "Just trying to be polite to my trailmates. Speaking of which, just where is the fair Miss McGrew?"

Velvet grimaced. "Up in her room." He hesitated for a moment, then: "Packing."

"Really?" said the gunfighter. "Where's she planning on leading us next?"

"That's just it, friend," Velvet began. "She's working more on leaving than leading."

Ronan rubbed his chin as he thought for a moment about what that meant. He took a long pull straight from his bottle while he ruminated further.

"I suppose I know what this is about."

The huckster nodded solemnly. "She'd like to depart in the morning."

"And how about you?"

Velvet sat back in his chair. "She's asked me to accompany her. I'm considering it."

Ronan snorted. "What's to consider? You can be trailmates with an ungrateful bag of bones or a pretty young girl. Doesn't seem like much of an argument to me."

Velvet smiled mirthlessly. "I knew you'd understand."

At that moment, the conversational roar of the room was shattered by the arrival of four strangers.

The place went entirely quiet as the long-timers paused for a moment to size up the new folks. Apparently unimpressed by what they saw, they returned to their jobs, drinks, or cards straight away.

Cotten lead the way into the saloon and plopped down in a chair at an empty table. The trio with him glanced around suspiciously for a bit, then followed suit.

As the travelers sat only yards away from Ronan and Velvet, Morningkill motioned to the bartender, an easygoing young man in a grimy, once-white apron. The man favored the newcomers with a nod and an easy smile.

"A bottle of your best wine," Morningkill requested as he removed his tailored jacket and hung it over the back of his chair.

The young man snickered softly to himself as he sauntered over to the table, uncorking an unlabeled green bottle as he went. "I don't know if this'll please your refined palate," he offered as he slapped the bottle down on the table, followed quickly by four sparkling, spit-polished wine glasses. "But it's the best you're gonna find 'round here."

Missing the youth's gentle sarcasm, Morningkill sniffed at the offered cork. For a moment he seemed pleased. Then he suddenly crinkled his nose as if he'd found something repulsive on the end of the stopper.

"Somethin' wrong with it, mister?"

Cotten looked up to see his "civilized" friend giving the hairy eyeball to a pair of men sitting in a corner of the bar. One was sharply dressed in a finely tailored suit made seemingly entirely from the same bolt of midnight blue velvet.

His companion looked, literally, like death warmed over. To the sensitive nose of the tracker, he smelled worse.

Cotten rose slowly to his feet, his hand already reaching for the rifle he'd propped up against the wall. "I don't think yer ol' grape juice is what's bothering my friend there, son. I know the smell of the grave when I'm sitting next to it."

The bartender looked at him confused, then noticed Cotten's white-knuckled grip on his rifle and took three long, slow steps backward. "Now, mister," he began, "we don't want no—"

"Hey, you!" barked Cotten, loud enough for the entire room to hear. Everyone ignored him. Lots of people shot off their mouths in a saloon.

Annalee plucked at his sleeve, trying to get him to sit down. "Now's not the time," she started. "We have more important issues to concern ourselves with."

Then Cotten cocked his rifle and tried again. This time, he had everyone's attention. "Mister," he said, "I mean you!"

A man who'd been playing the piano shut the lid on the keyboard, grabbed his hat, and left. Most of the other saloon patrons decided the piano player had the right idea and were close on his heels. In the end, only the Garou, the bartender, and two others were left.

Velvet reached into his vest pocket, brought out a deck of cards, and began shuffling.

Ronan looked up to stare straight down the barrel of the trapper's rifle.

## CHAPTER SIX

Ronan knew when someone had the drop on him. He put up his hands and got to his feet.

"Do I know you?"

He knew he'd done a lot of evil in his day, especially since the manitou inside him had dragged him screaming back from Hell. This wasn't the first time someone he didn't remember had come after him for something he'd done. It likely wasn't going to be the last.

"Naw," said the trapper, inching closer behind the barrel of his gun, "and we ain't gonna have us any time ta get acquainted. I know all about yer kind. I guess bloodsuckers like you are just as common in this world as mine."

Proud Speaker stood and put his hand on Cotten's shoulder and looked deep into his hard eyes. "This is not the time. It is not our place."

"Yes," offered Annalee, a note of pleading in her voice, "we're not here to hunt this prey. We've got more important game to pursue."

Cotten looked down at her for a moment, his resolve crumbling. It was then that Ronan knocked aside the rifle and went for his gun.

The flat crack of the shot banged out, and Cotten was knocked sprawling to the floor.

Morningkill jumped up and went for the shiny new pistol hanging on his hip, but a second shot smacked into the table in front of him. He froze, his move half complete, as Ronan shook his head at him and once again cocked his smoking gun.

Proud Speaker and Annalee huddled over their injured friend as he lay on the floor.

"Is it bad?" asked the Indian.

The woman ripped apart Cotten's blood-soaked shirt to get a better look at his wounded shoulder. "He'll survive, although I'm worried about how he'll be when he awakes. A normal man would likely die from this, but—"

Just then, Cotten's eyes flew wide, bloodshot with a horrible rage. "But I'm no normal man!" he growled, the fur already spreading across his face.

Ronan kept his gun trained on Morningkill. The tinhorn put up his hands, mimicking Ronan's own position of a few moments earlier. A wide smile creased the man's face.

"Scrape your friend's hide off the floor and hightail it outta here. I wasn't asking for trouble."

Morningkill's smile widened as he glanced down at Cotten, still on the floor. The trapper's clothes were shredding as he grew larger and furrer.

"Oh, but your bullet has certainly purchased it for you, foul abomination. Gaia does not gladly suffer such affronts to nature as yourself. We are the Earth Mother's servants on this or any other Earth, and..." Morningkill looked down once again and then stepped aside.

"But I see the time for talk is over."

With that cue, the beast that had once been Earl Cotten stood up to its full height. Its pointed ears brushed against the low ceiling as it rose. Blood still glistened on its shoulder, but the wound had already healed, showing little more than a pink patch of hairless skin poking out through the beast's thick, glossy coat of fur.

The werewolf snarled, baring two rows of spiky teeth at everyone in the room. The young man behind the bar fainted dead away.

Ronan and Velvet stood their ground. "Ronan," the New Orleans dandy said out of the side of his mouth, "do you still have those little gifts I gave you?"

"Yeah," whispered the gunfighter in an awed voice. Although he'd faced one werewolf recently, that had been a ferocious struggle in the dark of night. Here in the well-lit saloon, he could take in the entirety of the beast in all its terrible glory, and the very sight gave the dead man pause.

With a quick riffing of his cards, Velvet said, "I think now would be a good time to put them to use." His voice was as brittle as new frost on glass.

Ronan's hand dove into his jacket pocket and whipped out the cylinder packed full of silver. With a practiced move, he removed the original cylinder and began to slap the new one in place. Before he could finish, he looked up to see the once-trapper beast launch itself at him with a snarl that almost curdled his blackened blood.

"Damn," he swore. "Here we go again."

The burly creature smashed into Ronan, slamming him into the far wall and nearly knocking him senseless. The Yankee's head wobbled around for a moment as if it might simply leap off in search of greener pastures, but it held on for the moment.

Ronan looked up, wondering why the beast wasn't gutting him again, and saw the thing hanging above him in midair.

His wonderment was shattered by Velvet's sharp words. "The bullets, Ronan—now! I can't hold him up there forever."

Ronan glanced over to see the cards glowing in Velvet's hands. The huckster's brow knit with concentration as he glowered at the werewolf struggling about in the air with nothing to find purchase on.

The Yankee's hands went to work on their own, and in a moment his gun was loaded with the priciest bullets they would likely ever fire.

He leveled the Peacemaker at the creature's head as it howled in total frustration. Ronan hesitated for a moment. Even if it wasn't always possible, he liked to know why someone was after him before he plugged him.

However, he knew the werewolf would come crashing down sooner or later. When it did, it was sure to want his head on a bloody platter. "I'm not about to be gutted by your kind twice in one day," he said as his finger tightened on his trigger.

Before he could fire, though, he heard the sound of two pistols being cocked off to his left. He turned his head and saw that the Indian had his Army revolver pressed against Velvet's temple. The dandy's LeMat was pointing the gunslinger's way.

The situation was not good.

"Hold it!" shouted Annalee as she thrust herself between Ronan and Morningkill. Glaring at Ronan, she said, "Did I hear you say you've encountered 'our kind' before?"

Ronan grunted a 'yes.' "Have your friends back off before my bullets turn this critter's head into hamburger."

A knowing look filled Annalee's face. "What kind of bullets?" she asked.

"Silver."

She grimaced. "We need to talk."

Just then, "Bad Luck" Betty burst into the room, her rifle at the ready. She took one look around and saw several men with guns on each other. Then the beast hanging in the air caught her attention.

Frustrated, Cotten gave Betty the kind of snarl that offered to rip her throat out from where he was. She stared at him goggle-eyed for a moment, then fainted dead away.

Ronan looked the dark-haired woman straight in the face and lowered his gun. "So talk."

## CHAPTER SEVEN

"Velvet. Velvet!" Betty's harsh whisper cracked the relative silence of the Arizona night. "What's going on? Who are these people?"

Velvet sighed as he sidled his horse up to the marksman. "It's complicated," he began.

She cut him off angrily. "Then use small words."

He favored her with a winning smile. "I meant no insult to your intelligence, my dear. I was referring to the fact that it's all a bit bewildering to me. Despite having studied the mystical works of Hoyle these many years, I've never heard of such a story.

"Apparently, there are many worlds—these visitors call them 'realms'—like our own, all floating in an interdimensional soup, similar to, say, shrimp bobbing about in a bowl of gumbo."

"Correct," offered Proud Speaker over his shoulder as their horses clip-clopped in formation into the darkness. "Our people, the Garou, are able to enter this 'soup' by stepping sideways, slipping from one way of being and into another. We call the soup that surrounds our realm 'the Storm Umbra.'

"Normally, we stay near to our own realm, but there are those among us, like friend Cotten, who can navigate deeper into the Storm Umbra. It is extremely dangerous, but there are rare rewards. Sometimes those who survive find other realms. Your world is just such a place."

"As you know," Velvet explained to Betty, "my arcane powers come from my ability to work with spirits from a dimension the locals call the Hunting Grounds. Apparently, these people would call that the Near Umbra. It's all just a matter of semantics."

The group fell silent for a moment. At the front, Ronan led the pack with Cotten close behind him, the Garou still wrinkling his nose at the stench of death.

"I should have killed you when I had the chance," the trapper growled at the gunslinger.

"Someone beat you to it a while ago. Try to finish the job any time you think you're up to it."

"Now, boys," interrupted Annalee, coming up from behind. "We've got ourselves a common foe. Arguing among ourselves only helps him."

"This exquisite woman is right as always," said Morningkill. "We're here to bring Billy Stormwalker to Gaia's justice. All else is secondary."

Ronan rubbed his still-sore belly. "I've got my reasons for wanting that shapeshifter dead. What's with you folks? You've come a long way to put that thing in the ground."

For a long moment, no one said a word. Then Morningkill spoke up.

"Stormwalker was born one of us, but he was seduced by the dark power of the Wurm, the thing of rot and chaos that threatens to destroy Gaia herself. We are the warriors of Gaia, the only thing that stands between the Earth Mother and total destruction. We are charged with her well-being, and we shall not fail."

Ronan snorted in disbelief. "That's a lot of fancy talk, but it don't explain why you followed that bugga from one world to the next. Seems he might be out of your jurisdiction."

Cotten hacked loudly and spit on the ground. "I'll track that son of a bitch to the end of all that is, if I have to, and I'll taste his throat before it's all over," he snarled. "Let's just say, I've got my reasons—and they're enough for all of us."

"Actually," Annalee pitched in, "what Isaiah was talking about is why Earl has so many problems with you, Mr. Lynch. A walking dead man is an affront to Gaia."

Ronan turned in his saddle to look back at the woman. Her dark, wavy hair shone in the light of the rising moon. "I never said a man crawling out of his grave was right. I didn't ask for this, but it's who I am. I don't go around sucking blood from folks like your friend here seems to think. That ain't my way.

"If you're gonna share a trail with me tonight—or any night—" at this, he glared pointedly at Betty, bringing up the rear, "you're going to have to get used to it."

Before the conversation could go any further, there was a shushing sound from the front. Earl Cotten turned to wave them forward as their horses trotted to the top of the hill.

"We're here."

In the valley that stretched out before them, they could make out a circle of pup tents squatting around two big tents, each large enough to hide a house in. A fire burned brightly in the center of the camp, and there were several men huddled around it. From behind the blaze, a harmonica wailed a lonesome song that drifted thinly up the gentle rise.

Velvet pulled out a spyglass and scanned the area below. "There's got to be twenty men wandering around down there, not including any inside the tents. I don't see any sign of a werewolf though. Of course, if he was in human—excuse me: Homid—form..."

Morningkill looked down his nose at Ronan. "The stench of death around us makes it hard to discern Stormwalker's scent."

Cotten sniffed the air loudly. "Oh, he's here all right. He's been marking his territory like a rabid dog. I'd recognize that stink anywhere."

"So where is he?" asked Betty.

Ronan got off his horse and pointed to a large splotch of darkness on the ground. "This is where I was attacked. That's my blood right there."

Proud Speaker was next to him. "There's more than your blood here. Two people and one of the Garou had their life spilled here."

The rest of the riders dismounted. "Can you find Stormwalker's tracks?" asked Annalee.

The Indian and the trapper scoured the ground for a few moments. They conferred quietly for a moment, then Cotten spoke up. "Near as we can figure, our boy headed back to camp right after the fight. There's no way to tell without getting in there somehow."

"There could be more than fifty guns down there," stated Betty. "We can't just walk in and ask around—not after what happened to Ronan."

"I concur wholeheartedly, miss," agreed Morningkill. "There must be a way to outmaneuver these cads."

Velvet cleared his throat. "I believe I have an idea."

## CHAPTER EIGHT

The young, skinny, dark-haired man stooped over his workbench, tinkering with a small device of no apparent use. Perhaps it was part of a larger machine, a piece that could be designed or repaired on its own and then plugged back into the thing from which it came. Or maybe it was just an absurd experiment with some insane contraption that defied the known laws of physics—at least as they'd once been defined before everything had gone weird.

The lamp burning atop the young man's long, thin head (it was fastened there with a series of canvas straps) stood in front of a convex mirror that focused all the light from the oil-soaked wick into a tight ray. This beam illuminated the device in a way not even sunlight could have, shining into all the gadget's intricate crevices and angles.

The young man's attention was focused on his work even more sharply than the light. Because of this, he failed to notice that anyone else was in the tent with him until it was too late.

Proud Speaker tapped the inventor on the shoulder. When he turned around, the Indian slapped a hand over the man's mouth and shoved a large, vicious knife up under his chin.

"Whispers only," the Indian said softly, "or your next words are your last."

The inventor nodded his agreement, and Proud Speaker removed his hand. He kept the knife in its place.

"I am Proud Speaker, warrior of the Kiowa people. Who are you?"

For a moment, the young man was too shocked to speak, but a little pressure from the knife prodded him along. "T-toomes. Wendell Toomes." The man's accent sounded much like that of Morningkill: soft and educated. "How did you get in here? The guards—"

Velvet stepped forward from the darkness then, revealing himself for the first time. In his midnight blue suit, Velvet seemed to Toomes like he was part of the shadows themselves, suddenly transforming into a man. "Ah-ah," the huckster wagged his finger at the young inventor. "That would be telling. Besides, we're asking the questions here."

"What are you doing here, Toomes?" Proud Speaker pressed along.

"Ah, I-I'm an employee of Wasatch Railroad. I'm the head of this project. Dr. Hellstromme himself put me in charge."

"Young sir, he didn't ask you who you're working for. He asked what you're doing here." Velvet gave Proud Speaker an appraising look. "If I were you, I'd tell him. Speaker here's got one Hell of a temper and not a whole lot of patience."

"Of course," Toomes swallowed, a bead of sweat running down his left cheek. Eventually it caught and pooled on the blade pressed against his neck. He didn't dare raise a hand to wipe it away.

"We're setting up a mining operation here. Dr. Hellstromme believes that there's ghost rock in these hills, and we're going to keep digging until we find it."

Velvet nodded insincerely at the man. "Uh-huh. Well, Proud Speaker, I believe that Mr. Toomes here is being something less than truthful with us. I've been all over the West, and I've never seen a mining operation like this."

The huckster looked at the Indian. "What do you have to say to that?"

Keeping his blade against Toomes' throat with his left hand, Proud Speaker raised his right with one fluid motion and smashed in the inventor's nose. The man crumpled to the floor, blood streaming down his face.

Proud Speaker looked down at his handiwork and turned to Velvet. "He will live."

Velvet breathed a sigh of real relief. "Fine, fine. I'd like to keep the body count down to something reasonable if we could. 'Don't spill blood unless you're ready to help clean it up,' as my daddy always used to say."

With that, the two set rummaging about the tent to see what they could find. "I had to leap us into three different tents—thankfully all empty—before we found something interesting, but it looks like we may have finally struck ghost rock."

The huckster held up a set of blueprints into the light still streaming from the lamp on Toomes' head. Proud Speaker leaned in behind him and scrutinized the papers, scratching his head. Stormwalker's name was scribbled in the notes lining the pages, but that was about all he understood. "What is it?"

"As nearly as I can figure it," Velvet offered, "this man is working on a ghost-rock bomb."

"A bomb I know is bad, but what is this ghost rock of which you speak?"

"Something *really* bad," the huckster answered absent-mindedly.

Velvet stopped studying the papers for a moment to give the Indian a sidelong glance. Then he returned to the matter at hand. "They don't have that where you come from? Well, that might say a whole lot about it.

"Anyhow, it's this sort of superfuel that burns a thousand times better than coal. It's what powers the latest wave in steam-powered science.

"It's nasty stuff. Some say those who handle it often go mad, and you can always tell those who do. See how black Toomes' hands are? That stain never comes off."

"So what would a ghost-rock bomb do?"

Velvet rubbed his chin for a moment. "Well, I've never heard of such a thing before, and it looks like Toomes here has set up more than a bit of sorcery to help his infernal detonator work. I'd place any wager you like that this man's soul is as tainted as his hands."

The Indian waited patiently for the huckster to answer his question.

"The long and the short of it is this: The bomb would release an explosion the likes of which this world has not seen before. Everything for miles around would be devastated, including that sleepy little town we met you folks in."

Velvet kept sorting through the papers, becoming more frantic about it as he saw more.

"Why would one wish to destroy Monument Valley?"

"Hm, well, according to these papers, this would open one half of a transdimensional rift. The other half..." Velvet shuffled through some more papers.

"The bridge between the dimensions would be completed with the destruction of something this man calls a 'caern' on the other side."

Proud Speaker grunted. "That is a Garou word for a sacred place of power. This crazy man means to create a way to cross easily between your world and mine."

"Why would he want to do something like that?"

"I do not know, but if it has something to do with Stormwalker, then it is sure to be bad."

"That's what I like about you, Speaker," offered Velvet as he rolled the tattered plans up into a tube. "Your gift for understatement."

## CHAPTER NINE

"They've been gone a while," said Betty, a note of worry in her voice.

"I wouldn't worry about it, miss," Morningkill said. "If Proud Speaker had been found, he'd certainly put up enough resistance to capture that we'd have been able to hear him clearly in Colorado."

"Same for Velvet," Ronan offered. "We'd know."

"Actually," said Cotten, "I think it's us we ought to be worried about."

"Why's that?" asked Annalee. His tone made the hair on the back of her neck stand up.

"Maybe you oughta ask him." The trapper pointed up at the rise they had worked their way down from. An Apache Indian was standing atop it.

Ronan recognized him instantly. "Taza."

"Hello, wasichu. I'm surprised to see you alive. Stormwalker was sure you were dead when he left you."

"I'm just full of surprises."

Taza clapped his hands, and suddenly Ronan, Betty, and the Garou were surrounded. Apaches stood on all side of them, their rifles at the ready.

"I don't suppose you'd want to talk about this," started Morningkill.

"You are right. There has been enough talk from white men like you who have promised to leave us what little lands we fight for—and then try to take them away." The voice came from a man who stepped around from behind Taza and into the full moonlight.

"It is time for you to listen instead."

He was a large Indian with a shock of silver running through his raven-black hair, which he wore in a thick braid that fell down the center of his back. A thick scar ran down the length of his left cheek, and his dark eyes sparkled with hatred and madness.

"I grew up on a reservation in my world, white man. One where men like you beat my people down, stealing what little we had and destroying the rest. We were powerless against your numbers and your guns. Our medicine deserted us, and we were nearly destroyed.

"When I came of age, I claimed my heritage as a Garou, and I wandered the West, hoping to find some way to return my people to their former glory. There were some who tried to stop me—" with this he glared at the seething Cotten, who was doing all he could to not let his rage have its way with him, "—but they were doomed to fail.

"I threw off the Garou society that told me I should sit and wait for my enemies to attack. I began talking to the Mockeries and other servants of the Wyrms. Their whispers rang with truth."

Stormwalker wrung his hands together, warming to his tale.

"At their insistence, I explored the wilds of the Storm Umbra. With their help, I avoided the wrath of the Storm Eater. I wandered from realm to realm until I found one in which my people were becoming ascendant."

He stopped then and pointed directly at the ground.

"The people here have powerful medicine, and I am going to bring that back to my people. With the help of a man named Hellstromme, I am going to create a bridge between our two worlds. Once this is fashioned, the mighty spirits that aid my brothers in this world will be able to come to the aid of the people in mine.

"We will rise up against the wasichu, and push them back once and for all."

There was a moment of silence which was broken by the sound of a man laughing softly. It was Cotten.

"You think it's that easy? You think you can undo hundreds of years of bad blood with a few Indian spirits? You're crazier than a loon!"

Stormwalker strode forward into the circle the Apache had formed. "I will not be mocked by you."

With that, Annalee moved between Stormwalker and Cotten. "I don't believe you have a choice, evil one. You may have larger numbers than we, but you have only brought your friends to their deaths."

"True," said Morningkill. "You know what we are. You know that not even forty men could stand against even we three. Send them away before this hill runs with their blood."

"Either way," Cotten snarled, "you'd better say yer prayers, 'cause you're gonna die." With that, he began to grow larger and hairier and even more savage. As if on cue, all three Garou launched themselves at their captors at once.

For a few moments, it was a glorious battle. Cotten squared off against Stormwalker, and he held his own against the larger beastman. Morningkill and Annalee tore through the ranks of the Apaches, the bullets from the Indians' guns doing little to slow them down in their full werewolf forms.

Ronan dashed over and knocked Betty into the dirt, covering her with his body. Of them all, she was the only one who would really regret taking a stray bullet, and there were enough of those flying around to make the gunslinger nervous.

While Ronan tried to pick off a few braves with his Peacemaker, five men came up from the rear of the group, each armed with a strange sort of gun. The weapons looked as though someone had bound a number of shotgun barrels into a massive cylinder, almost like a Gatling gun.

At that, the alarms went off in Ronan's head. "Get down!" he shouted, but it was too late. The Garou would never even know what hit them.

The crew armed with the Gatling shotguns let loose with a thunderous spray of shells that caught Morningkill square in the chest as he stood howling over the body of a fallen foe.

The flying lead buckshot sprayed flesh and chips of bone everywhere, and the Garou was blasted backward into the dirt, where he landed in a bloody heap.

Everyone froze as the smoke blew off the barrel of the rotating guns. Stormwalker tossed Cotten toward his fallen companion like a rag doll as Annalee raced to his side.

"Unless you'd like to all end up like your friend, you should surrender," said Taza.

"Any objections?" asked Stormwalker.

There were none.

## CHAPTER TEN

"So, Earl Cotten," said Stormwalker, "you've come a long way to die."

The Garou glared at the villain (both of them in their human forms) from where he'd been bound with steel links and strapped to a large metal box that stood ten feet on a side. Annalee was on the side to his left, Ronan was to his right, and Betty was behind him. They were in a tent large enough to hold a circus in, likely one of those in the center of the Wasatch camp.

Isaiah Morningkill—reverted to the human form in which he'd been born (and naked as he'd been on that same day)—lay strapped atop the cold cube, out of sight. He hadn't made a sound since he'd been blown away, and there was no way of telling whether he'd finally been forced to shuffle off this mortal coil or not.

Cotten just snarled at Stormwalker. He was beyond words. Despite his rage, though, he was unable to transform himself into the terrifying beast that could rip out the traitor's throat. Bound as tightly as he was, growing into such a monster would cause the chains to squeeze him to death. From their soft gleaming, Cotten was pretty sure the chains had been plated with silver too.

The trapper knew a good trap when he saw one. Now he just had to figure a way out. He gave Stormwalker a wild-eyed look, like a coyote caught in a bear trap. If he could have reached his wrists, he'd have chewed off his hands to have a crack at ripping out Stormwalker's throat.

The tainted Garou just threw back his head and laughed.

Taza and his braves stood uneasily to one side of the room. It was late at night—not too long before dawn—and the Wasatch workers were still asleep in their tents, or perhaps just rising for the day.

Betty looked to the Apache leader. "Taza, I'm told you're an honorable man. How could you ally yourself with this beast? You know of the damage the manitous have done to our world, both to your people and mine. How can you let this happen again?"

Taza stared at her coldly. "Stormwalker has told me of how our people are treated in his world, much the same as they were in ours until recently. The white governments push them back further and further onto smaller and smaller pieces of land. Land so hard it cannot be farmed, and the game does not come to graze on it.

"They are a people put down, as we once were, as we still are. I cannot stand by while my brothers suffer in this way. If I can help them, I will."

"But at the cost of so many lives?" Betty pleaded with the man. She could see his resolve wavering.

"If it must be, yes."

Stormwalker cackled again at his ally's concession. Then he turned to Ronan. "So, my indigestible foe. You are looking much better than the last time I saw you."

Ronan just glared at him with his dead eyes. "You gave me your best shot, pooch. I'm ready for more."

"Oh, are you?" Stormwalker approached the gunslinger where he hung manacled on the steel-cased cube. He wrapped his meaty left hand around Ronan's leathery throat.

"Taza has encountered your kind before, and once I told him of our battle he knew you for what you are. He called you one of the 'Harrowed.' A man with a manitou masquerading for his soul."

The tainted Garou rumbled out an evil chuckle. "The Apache also told me that this tainted soul of yours lives between your ears. To let it out, all I've got to do is open up your skull."

Ronan noticed that the hand around his neck was becoming larger by the moment. Stormwalker's face slowly transfigured from that of a raving lunatic to a slaving, mad beast with silvery hair.

The ten-foot tall Garou brought up his right hand and extended one razor-sharp claw directly at Ronan's eye. The gunslinger didn't flinch. He wished he could reach his gun. He was aching to put a silver bullet into this creature's brainpan.

"One poke of my finger. Right through your eye. Right into your brain. That's all it's going to take."

Suddenly Ronan felt his pistol leave its holster.

"Any last words?" Stormwalker asked like a bartender making the last call.

Then Ronan saw his Peacemaker float up behind the werewolf's head, and he grinned from ear to ear.

"Sure. Let me go. Or else"

Stormwalker snickered as he brought his claw close enough to touch Ronan's eyelashes. "Or else what?"

The ownerless pistol tapped Stormwalker in the back of the head.

"Or my friend will blow your stinking head off."

Stormwalker laughed nervously, looking over his shoulder to see the gun floating there, pointed right at his head. "You should know by now that you can't hurt me that way."

From far off to one side—away from Taza and his braves—Velvet and a massive, brown-furred werewolf that had to be Proud Speaker stepped into the gigantic tent. Velvet bore a handful of cards before him and a look of intense concentration on his face. "I'd be happy to show you just how wrong you are," he said.

His companion continued for him. "He certainly can, traitor. There's as much silver in this world as in ours, and it makes fine bullets."

Stormwalker seemed to consider this for a moment, becoming angrier by the second. He snarled like a caged beast unsure of what to do.

In one eye-blurring move, he let go of Ronan, reached out, and snatched the gun.

"Ha!" he shouted as he wrestled the thing away from his head. "Your friends were foolish to show themselves. Now they can die with you."

The gun went off.

The bullet slammed through Stormwalker's shoulder, tearing his muscles into useless meat. He dropped the gun as he was knocked backward into Ronan. Unable to use his arms, the gunslinger's teeth clamped down on the beast's ear.

The pain in Stormwalker's ear revived him from the shock of the gunshot and set him howling. He shoved his way off of Ronan, losing a good portion of his ear as he went. Ronan munched on the scrap of flesh for a moment, then spit it out as if it had tried to bite him.

"Never tried weremutt before. Tastes 'bout as foul as you'd think."

The tainted Garou howled in pain again as the Peacemaker trained itself on him again.

"You are too late to stop me!" Stormwalker snarled. "That box I've strapped you all to is an explosive device powered by ghost rock. It's set to go off in minutes."

The beast cackled like a mad jackal as he watched the reactions of everyone in the room. Taza and his braves made to leave, while Proud Speaker leapt atop the cube and began straining at the chains.

"You fools!" rasped Stormwalker as he clutched at his mangled shoulder. "You cannot run far enough away. The explosion will reach for miles around."

Taza stepped forward. "But we will all die! You are a trickster." "And you are the tricked!" The beast snorted up blood as he tried to laugh.

"You'd better turn the damn thing off if you don't want to die with us!" yelled Ronan.

"He is likely dead anyway," said Annalee. Proud Speaker had freed her, and now she was working on the bonds of the others.

"But you must have planned this all along," said Taza in a low voice. "How did you think you would get away?"

The beast coughed as he struggled to his feet. "Nothing on this Earth can stop me."

With that, Stormwalker suddenly seemed to start fading into nothingness.



"He's stepping sideways!" yelled Cotten. "Shoot him!"  
The Peacemaker went off again, but the bullet passed right through the place where Stormwalker had once been, and he was gone.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

Wendell Toomes awoke with a slap to his battered face. He was pretty sure that someone had been slapping him for a while, and he wanted it to stop. He mumbled something to that effect, and it did. Then he got a bucket of cold water poured over his head, and he was wide awake.

When he opened his eyes, he wanted to shut them again. He was standing atop the ghost-rock bomb that he'd invented, and the clock atop it told him that it was ready to go off in less than a minute.

Toomes nearly fainted again, but someone shook him to bring him around. It was the strange fellow in the blue suit that he'd seen earlier that night.

"Mr. Toomes, you've got exactly forty-five seconds to shut off your latest invention, or we're all going straight to Hell on the express train!"

The young inventor shook his head and got straight to work. His vision was still a bit wobbly, which made it hard to focus on which wires from the sorcerous detonator needed to be removed, but he finally figured it out.

"The green one," he muttered. "Cut the green one."

Ronan brought his knife down on the wire.

"Are you sure?" asked Annalee. "That wire looks blue to me."

Toomes sighed in frustration. There were twenty seconds left. "The blue one then. Either way, that's it."

Ronan looked his companions in the eye one by one. They each nodded at him. He slashed at the wire, and it came free. The clock kept ticking.

Five.

Four.

Three.

Two.

One.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

Ronan sat back on the top of the cube and let out a deep breath. Velvet reached forward and ripped the detonator off the top of the bomb.

"There must be a fortune in ghost rock in this container," he said.

"Too bad we ain't got time to use it," the gunslinger said flatly. "What do you mean?" asked Betty from down on the ground below.

Suddenly, the four Garou shimmered back into existence next to her. They were all visibly relieved, including the already-healing Morningkill, who was supported by Proud Speaker and Annalee, each beneath one of his shoulders.

"I apologize for leaving you behind," began Morningkill. "It was all I could do to bring the rest of us into the Penumbra."

"There's no need for that," said Betty. "We didn't all need to risk our lives."

Ronan and Velvet climbed down off the cube, leaving Toomes lying up there exhausted and nearly forgotten. At that moment, Taza stepped forward. Most of his braves stood behind him, but two came up with him. One had her arm in a sling, and the other leaned hard on a makeshift crutch.

"I would like to apologize," the Apache leader said, his voice heavy with remorse. "Stormwalker was a trickster to rival Coyote. He would have left us all here to die."

Proud Speaker stepped forward and shook Taza's outstretched arm. "There is no shame in wanting to help your brothers," he said to him in Apache. "But you should be more careful in choosing your friends."

Cotten turned to Ronan, Betty, and Velvet. "Thanks fer all yer help with that s.o.b., but we need to get going now."

Ronan stood up and holstered his Peacemaker, which he had collected from where Velvet's hex had let it fall. "I'm coming," he said flatly. His tone demanded no argument. "No one guts me and gets away with it."

"I'm coming too," Velvet piped up. "No student of Hoyle would ever pass up the chance to walk the Hunting Grounds and experience a whole new world."

"Me too," said Betty as she looked into Velvet's thankful eyes, her resolve firmly drowning out the touch of trepidation in her tone.

"I would also like to go." Everyone turned to face the surprising source of the voice: Taza. "I must atone for my decisions to support Stormwalker. And if he still lives, I swear it will not be for long."

"You're gonna have to get in line," growled Ronan, and the Apache bowed his head, his face still burning with his shame.

Cotten started to say something, but Annalee stepped in. "Then it's settled. I'm sure we could use—and appreciate—all the help we can get."

To be continued in  
*Under a Harrowed Moon, Part 2:  
Savage Passage!*



## STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

### THE ADVENTURE

Hey, pardners! How'd ya like our tall tale? They just don't get much more twisted than that. Now it's your turn to take part in the earth-shattering plot and put Billy Stormwalker's plans to an end for good.

In case you're not quite clear on what's going on here, you're holding the first of a brand-new trilogy of Dime Novels™ featuring heroes from both the Weird West of *Deadlands* and the Savage West of *Werewolf: The Wild West*. It's already been one Hell of a ride, but we promise it's only going to get wilder from here.

All you *Deadlands* players out there already know what a Dime Novel's all about. It's a story with an adventure based upon the story. Cool, eh?

For you new readers from the Savage West side of things, don't get your britches in a bunch. This adventure includes statistics for both games, so you won't find yourself left colder than a wendigo's heart. Just read on, and it should all become clear.

### THE STORY SO FAR

Word is that all worlds, like those of the Weird West, the Savage West, and even our own, are simply different dimensions, each a variation on a theme (although some are more varied than others). Some folks call this situation the "multiverse" because there's "multiple universes." Get it?



The theory runs that these universes are separated from each other only by the thinnest of veils. If you know what you're doing, you can part this flimsy stuff and actually walk between the worlds. The only problem is that most people can't even see the veil, much less part it.

Garou are the kind of folks that can find the veil, and they can reach through it by doing what they call "stepping sideways." When they do this, they find themselves in the place between the dimensions, the otherworldly mortar that holds the bricks of the multiverse together.

Garou have a special name for the region around the world of the Savage West. They call it the Storm Umbra (or sometimes just plain Umbra). The people of the Weird West have another name altogether for the strange locale that invisibly surrounds their world. They call it the Hunting Grounds—and they're usually not of the Happy variety, if you know what I mean.

### THE WALKER BETWEEN WORLDS

However you want to slice it, our story begins in the Savage West. There, a bitter young pup of the Wendigo tribe (that's a kind of werewolf, not Indian, although the young man was a Sioux brave as well) got it into his head that he should go looking for another world, one in which his people (the Indians) weren't quite so oppressed by the white men.

This man—Billy Stormwalker, of course—wandered the space between the worlds for many years. Along the way, he made himself a lot of enemies and precious few friends. His anger and frustration usually got in the way, and he found himself always returning to the Savage West, and always disappointed. Until he stumbled upon the Weird West, that is.

### GETTING WEIRD

Stormwalker had a hard time getting through to the Weird West, what with it being surrounded by manitous and all, not to mention things darker and more dangerous. Eventually, though, he broke through, and he liked what he found.

In the Weird West, the Indians were doing just fine. Sure, they'd been shoved around by the white governments for years, but that had all come to a screeching halt a few years ago. Back in 1863, things had somehow changed.

What happened is an even more bitter Indian shaman by the name of Raven touched off an event that's come to be known as the Reckoning. The upshot of the Reckoning is that certain evil spirits (which the Indians call manitous) were released from their long-held prison and unleashed once again upon the Earth.

Since then, things have gone from the frying pan straight into the fires of Hell.

It's 13 years later, and the American Civil War's still raging on, although a bit more quietly than before. California's fallen into the sea (at the hands of Raven, once again). A fantastic superfuel called ghost rock has been discovered in the remains of California (a

place known as the Great Maze) and the Black Hills of South Dakota, right in the heart of the newly ascendant Sioux Nations. And the dead, well, sometimes they get up from where they're rotting and walk.

The long and short of it is that magic has returned to the world, and in a nastier form than you might expect. Along with it, all sorts of supernatural critters have reared their horrific heads. So creatures like werewolves aren't exactly unheard of around these parts.

Anyhow, the place is full of all sorts of strange types. Hucksters that cast magical hexes with cards. Mad scientists that work ghost rock into new, strange, unheard-of technologies. Preachers that go about banishing demons. And native American shamans that call on the spirits of nature—and actually get them to answer.

### THE MINDS MEET

Billy Stormwalker really liked what he found. With their new magical powers, the Indian nations across the continent had finally been able to rally against the encroachment of the white men (particularly since the white governments were having problems of their own Back East).

For a while, Stormwalker lived among his brethren in the strangely similar Black Hills in relative peace and harmony, but eventually his thoughts turned to those he knew back home. He had to figure out a way to bring this Reckoning to his own people, to restore them to their former glory. The only question was: How?

Stormwalker wandered about the Weird West, looking for an answer. Eventually he found it in the mind of the self-proclaimed smartest man in the West: Dr. Darius Hellstromme.

As the President of Wasatch Industries, Hellstromme had launched his company to the top of the burgeoning new (ghost-rock powered) steamtech industry. And he hadn't done it by being nice.

When Hellstromme heard of Stormwalker's plight, he was struck by two things. First, if he could come up with a way to build a bridge between the two worlds, he could establish for himself a whole new world to exploit.

Second, he was going to find an answer.

Eventually, after days of research and conversing with Stormwalker, he did. Stormwalker was constantly bemoaning the lack of something called a Spirit Gate, and Hellstromme soon figured out a way to make it.

## BUILDING BRIDGES

Traditionally Spirit Gates (or dimensional bridges, as Hellstromme prefers to call them) are places of incredible power, holes in the fabric of the multiverse laid there when the different realities first formed. No one had ever tried to create a new one, until Hellstromme bent his twisted mind to it.

It was clear from the start that what was going to be needed was a terrible rent in both worlds at the exact same geographic location. That and a bit of sorcerous help (by means of black magic), Hellstromme claimed, would be enough to build a bridge between the two places. Once that happened, the manitous would flow freely between the two worlds, and the Reckoning would enter the Savage West as well.

And, of course, Hellstromme would have a whole new world to plunder.

Hellstromme appointed Wendell Toomes, an ambitious young protégé, to head up the Weird Western half of the project. All Toomes had to do was engineer an explosive device of such terrible potential that it could actually tear a hole in the fabric of the multiverse. To do this, he turned to both sorcery and literally tons of raw ghost rock.

Such a large amount of this precious ore was worth a tremendous fortune—more than most folks ever even saw in a lifetime—and even with Hellstromme's financial power behind him, it took Toomes a long time to amass it. It took him even longer to plumb the depths of occult obscenity and devise the sorcerous device that would act as the payload's detonator.

Toomes spent a lot of effort on creating this bomb, and he's damn well going to use it.

Toomes has set up his bomb on spot in Monument Valley, in the northern part of Arizona. This, he's told by Stormwalker, corresponds with a caern (a place of power) in the Savage West. Once the bomb is blown, the bridge is halfway on its way to completion.

Toomes is holding things up to make a few last-minute tests, but it's only a matter of days before he detonates his prized device.

It's at this vital point that the heroes finally enter the picture.

## THE SETUP

How the heroes get involved in the adventure depends a lot on which of the two worlds (the Weird West or the Savage West) they call home. Overall, this is a lot looser of an adventure than you might be



used to seeing. We're just presenting you with a situation and letting you take it in whatever direction you like.

There's no plotline as such, and while this can be kind of liberating for a Marshal, it can also be more than just a little bit intimidating. Relax and just run with it. Give the heroes their head and let them loose for a while. Just be sure to reign them back in time for the finish of this portion of this epic tale.

In the end, you want a climactic confrontation between the heroes and Stormwalker. Everything else is gravy.

## WEIRD HEROES

If the heroes hail from the Weird West, there are all sorts of ways to get them into the thick of the plot. After all, the heroes are going to catch up with Stormwalker in the world of *Deadlands*, not *Werewolf: The Wild West*. Still, it's up to you, Marshal, to snag any reluctant heroes in your wicked web. Spin it as wide as you need.

## HIRED HANDS

The fact that Wasatch has been hoarding a tremendous amount of ghost rock hasn't gone unnoticed among Hellstromme's competitors in the Great Rail Wars (the race to complete the first railroad across the Weird West). If the not-so-good doctor's collecting such a large amount of the stuff, it certainly can't be good for anyone except the professor himself.

Hellstromme's rivals like to keep a close eye on him and his unusual operations, difficult as this may sometimes be. The heroes can be hired by any of the opposing Rail Barons to check into the mysterious camp that Toomes has set up. They are to report back as soon as they figure out just what's going on well enough to satisfy their employer's curiosity.

## CHANCE MEETING

Of course, it's always possible (however unlikely) that the heroes could simply stumble upon Toomes' camp entirely on their own. It's right in the heart of Monument Valley, so it's not impossible.

However, it's a lot more reasonable for the heroes to run afoul of either one of Taza's patrols or even Stormwalker himself. Which way it goes from there is entirely up to you. Mayhem isn't out of the question.

## MONEY MATTERS

If the heroes are something less than heroic, they may be interested in making money the old-fashioned way: stealing it.

With Toomes collecting as much in the way of ghost rock as he is, someone's bound to get wind of it. If that someone happens to let the heroes know about it, they might think that a small camp out in the middle of nowhere should be easy pickings. After all, how tough can it be to knock off a bunch of scientific types in the middle of nowhere. They probably think it would be a piece of cake.

They'd be wrong, but you can let them find that out the hard way. After all, who are you to interfere?

## SAVAGE HELP

If the heroes are entirely from the Weird West, they're eventually going to need some help from the Savage West. Otherwise, at the end of the adventure, they're not going to be able to follow Stormwalker once he gets away.

Even if the heroes could actually somehow manage to get into the Hunting Grounds, chances that they could track Stormwalker back to the Savage West are pretty much nil.

It's perfectly fine to run the game with a mixed posse featuring heroes from both sides of the veil. If there are no Garou involved, though, you're going to have to bring one in as an extra. The Weird Western heroes are going to need his services at some point in their adventure.

The extra Garou knows about Stormwalker (although not all of his plans), and he asks the heroes to help him put an end to the madman's reign of terror. If you need this kind of hero, simply use Stormwalker's stats with a few modifications of your own, and you're set.

Of course, this extra doesn't have to show up until after the heroes foil Stormwalker's plans. Let the heroes deal with the bulk of the adventure on their own.



## SAVAGE HEROES

If the heroes are Garou, then getting them involved becomes a bit more complicated. After all, it takes a lot to get a pack of werewolves to chase their quarry all the way from one world to the next—even if it's Stormwalker.

As for how the heroes might track Stormwalker across the Storm Umbra, that's up to you. They could discover a map of the route that Stormwalker discovered, or possibly they're just good enough to follow the monster's foul scent between worlds. Tailor what happens to your needs.

## ON A MISSION

Stormwalker's name is notorious among many Garou elders. It's certainly possible that one of these wise folks would have gotten wind of the renegade Wendigo's plans for altering the state of their world.

Wise elders certainly aren't going to sit still while such a man wreaks havoc upon Gaia. Many of them are too old or don't possess the proper skills to take off after a Garou such as Stormwalker. However, they are certainly more than willing to call upon younger members of their sept (or of several different septs if need be) to come to the aid of their people.

When faced with such a request, what proper Garou could refuse? After all, the fate of their world could be at stake.

## VENGEANCE IS MINE

In his time, Stormwalker has stepped on more than a few toes. And heads, throats, gonads, and so on. He's been known to fly into frenzied rages that don't stop until he's killed everything in his wobbly path.

The heroes may have lost someone dear to them to Stormwalker. In fact, one of their pack might even have

been killed by the mad Garou. Either way, they're not about to rest until they track the s.o.b. down and administer their own brand of Garou justice on him.

## A LONG SHOT

If the heroes are the kinds of folks who like to wander about the Storm Umbra (they'd have to be out of their minds, but hey, they're heroes, so you never know!), then they might encounter Stormwalker in their travels. This could happen in either the Weird West or even the Storm Umbra. It's really up to you.

Of course, with these kinds of odds against them crossing paths with Stormwalker, you might want to have it turn out that Stormwalker was looking for them. Well, maybe not them specifically, but any kind of Garou that might be gunning for him and trying to ruin his plans. That makes it kind of ironic that his own need for air-tight security is what causes him to run roughshod over the wrong pack of innocent Garou, but that's what destiny's all about.

## MAJOR PLAYERS

There are two men the heroes are likely to encounter in ways that are bound to change their lives (and hopefully—for their sakes—not involve their deaths).

## BILLY STORMWALKER

Stormwalker was born an Oglala Sioux, somewhere in Dakota Territory. He grew up in poverty and watched as the US Army waged war on his people, crushing them onto smaller and smaller reservations and stripping his once-proud people of what little was left of their dignity. It was too much for him to bear.

As Stormwalker came of age, he learned that he was, in fact, a Garou: a Wendigo Theurge, as a matter of fact. "Wendigo" refers to his werewolf tribe; "Theurge" speaks to the phase of the moon the man was born under and how this affects his personality.

The Wendigos are culled from the Indians of the Savage West. They're a solitary bunch, preferring to deal with the white encroachment with their claws.

Theurges are born under a crescent moon. This makes them closer to the spirit world, making them great shamans and mystics. They're the wise men of the tribe, spending most of their time pondering the fate of their people and how to prevent the Garou from being destroyed.

Over the years, Stormwalker became frustrated with the position of his Garou and



Indian tribes. Both seemed doomed to early extinction, fated to be drowned under the encroaching tide of white settlers. He struck out from time to time, often outright killing those who were unfortunate enough to get in his way. That's how he first became an outlaw.

While on the run from the remaining members of a sept he had decimated, Stormwalker stepped sideways into the Storm Umbra and got decidedly lost. When he finally found himself, he was on the outskirts of another realm. It was then that his wanderings through the multiverse began.

Stormwalker is a thin man of medium height, at least in his Homid (human) form. He's lean and fit from his years of having to fend for himself in both the wilderness of the Savage West and the Storm Umbra.

Clean-shaven, he has long black hair, streaked with silver, that he wears in a long warrior's braid. He has a scar down the left side of his cheek that he got in a fight with Earl Cotten many moons ago.

The years have not been kind to Stormwalker. Although he's only in his early 30s, he could easily pass for a man in his late 40s. Perhaps it's the premature gray in his hair that does it, or maybe it's the hunted look in his eyes.

Stormwalker carries a scattergun with him but it's only for show. He much prefers to rip people open with his talons when in his Crinos form. He uses an oversized knife instead when in his Homid form.

The profiles given for Stormwalker below are necessarily incomplete. Let's just say there's more to our villain than meets the eye. We'll let you in on the secret in the next Dime Novel. Until then, consider it your job to keep Billy alive and free. After all, it's not much of a story if the villain gets capped in the opening act.

### WEIRD PROFILE

**Corporeal:** D:3d8, N:4d10, S:5d8, Q:4d8, V:4d12

Climbin' 3d10, dodge 4d10, fightin': brawlin' 5d10, horse ridin' 2d10, quick draw: knife 4d8, shootin': shotgun 2d8, sneak 5d10, swimmin' 2d10, throwin': knife 4d8

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:4d6, M:1d10, Sm:2d8, Sp:3d8

**Area knowledge:** storm umbra 2d6, guts 3d8, native language: Sioux 3d6, language: English 2d6, overawe 3d10, professional: occult 5d6, scrutinize 4d10, search 5d10, trackin' 6d10

**Edges:** Sense of direction

**Hindrances:** Grim servant o' death

**Terror:** Depends on form. See rules on Garou in the back of this book.

### Special Abilities:

**Garou:** See the rules in the back of this book.

**Gnosis:** 7

**Assimilation:** The Garou can assimilate himself into any culture with a *scrutinize* check. The TN depends on how alien the culture is. If successful, the Garou does not suffer any prejudices from anyone in that society. This lasts for one day.

**Command Spirit:** The Garou can force a spirit to obey a single, simple command. To do this, he

must spend a Fate Chip and make a persuasion check. The difficulty is determined by the strength of the spirit. On a success, the spirit obeys the command. Each command requires a new Fate Chip. This does not summon spirits, nor can it exorcise a spirit.

**Dust Storm:** The Garou spends a point of Gnosis, then makes a Faith check. The TN is determined by how dusty the terrain is (desert=TN 3; city=TN 11). If successful, a storm whips around the area, blinding everyone, fouling machinery (time for those Reliability checks), and coating everything in dirt. This lasts for two turns for each success.

**Grasp the Beyond:** This permits the Garou to step sideways with something or someone without having to dedicate it by means of ceremony. The Garou grabs the object to be taken with him, then spends a Fate Chip (white for small items, red for larger items, and blue for huge items, like a person). He then makes the usual roll to step sideways (see the end of this book). If successful, he and the object or person pass into the Hunting Grounds (or

Storm Umbra). An unwilling passenger can resist with a Fair (5) Faith roll. Every success the passenger gets negates one of the Garou's. The Garou must have a success and a raise left to win the battle.

**Persuasion:** The Garou makes a Fair (5) Mien check. If successful, he adds +2 to all other Mien rolls with the current group of people (maximum of one hour).

**Reach the Umbra:** The Garou can step sideways into the Umbra (or Hunting Grounds) without having to look into a reflective surface.

**Savage the Mind:** The Garou spend Gnosis and then makes a contested Spirit check against the target. If he gets at least a success and a raise, he can permanently destroy one die type step from the target's Smarts for every raise he got. He must spend 2 points of Gnosis for every die type destroyed.

**Spirit Speech:** The Garou can converse with spirits (including nature spirits and manitou). They won't necessarily listen to him though.

**Gear:** Scattergun, box of 20 shells, Bowie knife.

## SAVAGE PROFILE

**Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 4, Subterfuge 4, Animal Ken 3, Crafts 1, Firearms 2, Melee 5, Ride 2, Stealth 5, Survival 2, Enigmas 1, Linguistics 2, Medicine 1, Occult 4, Science 1

**Gifts:** Assimilation, Command Spirit, Dust Storm, Grasp the Beyond, Persuasion, Reach the Umbra, Savage the Mind, Spirit Speech, Tornado Rider Rage 10, Gnosis 6, Willpower 8

**Equipment:** Scattergun, box of 20 shells, Bowie knife.

## WENDELL TOOMES

Wendell Toomes is an ambitious young man who was born and raised in Salt Lake City, the notorious City of Gloom (so named for the constant haze of pollution that's settled over it since Darius Hellstromme set up operations there). He's spent most of his life working for Dr. Hellstromme, and he even graduated from the master scientist's notorious Wasatch University with only the best grades.

Toomes is of medium height and build, with curly, dark hair kept short on the sides but permitted to go a bit wild up top. A kind of madness sparkles in his pale blue eyes whenever he starts talking about science. The sparkle might be explained by the dark stains on Toomes' hands, since the man rarely ever takes precautions when working with ghost rock. (One side effect of the mysterious mineral is that it can drive its handlers insane).

Toomes is bossy, bordering on dictatorial. He expects his workers to follow his orders to the letter. When he tells someone to jump, he tells them how high right then and there, and they'd damn well better hit the mark.

In essence, though, Toomes is a man haunted by the possibility of failure. He's rarely actually been faced with a situation in which he was not in complete control. Working with otherdimensional werewolves and Apache Indians in the wilds of Arizona makes him feel something less than secure, and he tends to take this out on those around him. He and Stormwalker have clashed from time to time, but as mad as Toomes might be, he's not so foolish to try to stand up to the Garou—at least not in anything resembling a fair fight.

## WEIRD PROFILE

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

Climbin' 2d6, fightin' brawlin' 1d6, horse ridin' 1d6, shootin' flamethrower 2d6, sneak 1d6

**Mental:** C:3d12, K:6d10, M:2d8, Sm:4d12, Sp:2d4

Guts 2d4, professional: occult 5d10, science: ghost rock 5d10, scrutinize 3d12, search 2d12, tinkerin' 5d12

**Edges:** Dinero, mechanically inclined

**Hindrances:** Curious

**Gear:** Peacemaker, box of 50 bullets, notebook full of untested designs, rocket pack (perfect for an easy escape), flamethrower.



## SAVAGE PROFILE

**Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Dodge 1, Empathy 1, Subterfuge 3, Animal Ken 1, Crafts 1, Firearms 2, Melee 1, Ride 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Enigmas 5, Linguistics 2, Medicine 1, Occult 5, Science 5

Willpower 8

**Gear:** Peacemaker, box of 50 bullets, notebook full of untested designs, rocket pack (perfect for an easy escape), flamethrower.

CHAPTER ONE:  
DESMONDVILLE

*Desmondville, AZ—Fear Level 2*

There's not a whole lot to say about this sleepy little spot on the map. It's more a small collection of businesses servicing the surrounding ranches and farms than a real town. There are only four buildings in the entire place.

Most of the so-called residents of Desmondville are farmers and ranchers living off in the sticks surrounding the township. They come into town whenever they have the desire or the need.



WHAT'S THERE  
TO KNOW?

The people of Desmondville are always happy to have some new visitors in town, although they're a little bit more suspicious lately than they usually are. They've been paid a visit on more than one occasion by Toomes' men, and sometimes the local saloon has ended the night a bit worse for the wear.

Still, no one's complaining about the extra business. They know that the people from the camp are Wasatch employees, and this has fueled speculation that Hellstromme is planning to string a railroad through the area soon. If Toomes plans



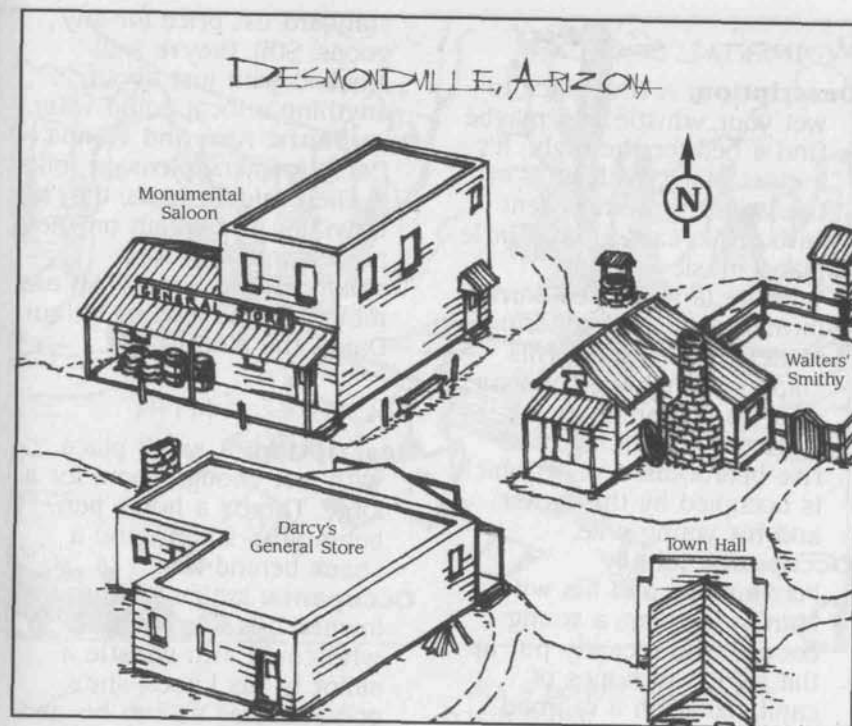
succeed, this is sure to happen, but by that time, most of the area will be a smoking crater.

Some of the cattlemen in the saloon may speak of cattle mutilations that have been taking place in the area lately. Mostly they blame it on a pack of wolves they've heard howling around the area ever since that Wasatch group came to the area. Still, none of them have yet to bag themselves a single wolf.

Other folks talk about the strange explosions they sometimes hear off in the distance: big bangs followed by a strange howling of the wind (actually small, test ghost-rock bombs that Toomes' has been setting off in the open valley). Most attribute it to the rail crews blasting their ways through tough parts of the valley. Sure, Wasatch hasn't officially claimed the area for its railroad, but competition is fierce enough that it often doesn't pay to tip your hand before you have to.

## THE KILLING

Oh, yeah. And then there was that business with the oldest Darcy boy, Wilbur. Seems he was found staked out in the middle of the valley, his skin peeled away from his chest and pinned down to the ground with makeshift stakes fashioned from sticks.



His chest had been carved open like a Thanksgiving turkey, and his heart was gone.

Young Darcy used to like to ride around the area from ranch to farm, selling his family's goods. He was favored by all the locals as the only Darcy who wasn't so greedy as to sell you back your own hat if it fell off your head. He'll be missed.

Wilbur was secretly having an affair with young Mrs. Martha Persimmons of the Monumental Saloon, and she suspects her husband Johnny of the horrible murder, but she

can't figure out how he could have pulled it off. He's got a rock-solid alibi.

Of course, Johnny didn't kill Wilbur. He was working in the saloon until closing time. After that, Martha had helped him clean up and then gone to bed with him. Johnny didn't even know about the affair, only that Martha had been distant of late. The killing was Stormwalker's handiwork.

Folks are willing to talk about Wilbur's murder, but they don't know a whole lot about it. Still, it should be a clue that something is really wrong here.

## MONUMENTAL SALOON

**Description:** A fine place to wet your whistle and maybe find a bed for the night. It's a quiet place, with little in the way of entertainment save drink, cards, and a little piano music when Al Wilshire (a local feed corn farmer) gets the hankering to tickle the ivories. This clapboard building consists of a main room, a storeroom, a kitchen, and five bedrooms, one of which is occupied by the owner and his young wife.

**Occupants:** Johnny Persimmons and his wife Martha (owners; a young couple who recently put up the saloon in hopes of capitalizing on a railroad coming through town), 2d4 other patrons from local farms and ranches. Martha lives in fear of her innocent husband, who just doesn't understand what's going on.

## DARCY'S GENERAL STORE

**Description:** A run-of-the-mill general store in a two-story building. The owners live in the back of the main floor and the entire second story. Since they're the only game in town, the Darcys overcharge mercilessly. Expect to pay 25% over the

standard list price for any goods. Still, they're well-stocked with just about anything a local could want.

**Occupants:** Alex and Wanda Darcy (owners; pleasant folks in their middle years; they're unwilling to bargain on their prices) and their four children, ages 3 to 14. All are mourning the loss of Wilbur Darcy, the eldest child.

## WALTERS' SMITHY

**Description:** A small place with just enough room for a forge. There's a horse pen behind the smithy, and a shack behind that.

**Occupants:** Janice Walters (owner; a stocky woman who could arm-wrestle a sailor to his knees; she's good-natured as can be, and she makes no secret of the fact she's in the market for a husband...at least for a few days).

## TOWN HALL

**Description:** A small, one-room building that stands unoccupied. This place serves as the seat of the local government, but there is none to speak of. No sheriff, no jail, no mayor, no judge. An assayer passes through about once a week to see if anyone needs him to evaluate a claim.

**Occupants:** None.

CHAPTER TWO:  
MONUMENT VALLEY

Monument Valley is located in northeastern Arizona, high on the Colorado plateau and not too distant from such wonders as the Grand Canyon. It's filled with the massive, awe-inspiring, towering rock formations from which the place gets its name.

If you want to really see how this place looks (and you don't happen to live nearby), check out one of John Ford's Westerns. Most of them were filmed in this place of staggering natural beauty.

It's a perfect place for a bomb threat.

## PATROLS

There aren't a whole lot of people who live near Monument Valley. That's just the way that Toomes likes it. After all, it won't do to have folks snooping around the camp and trying to interfere with his plans.

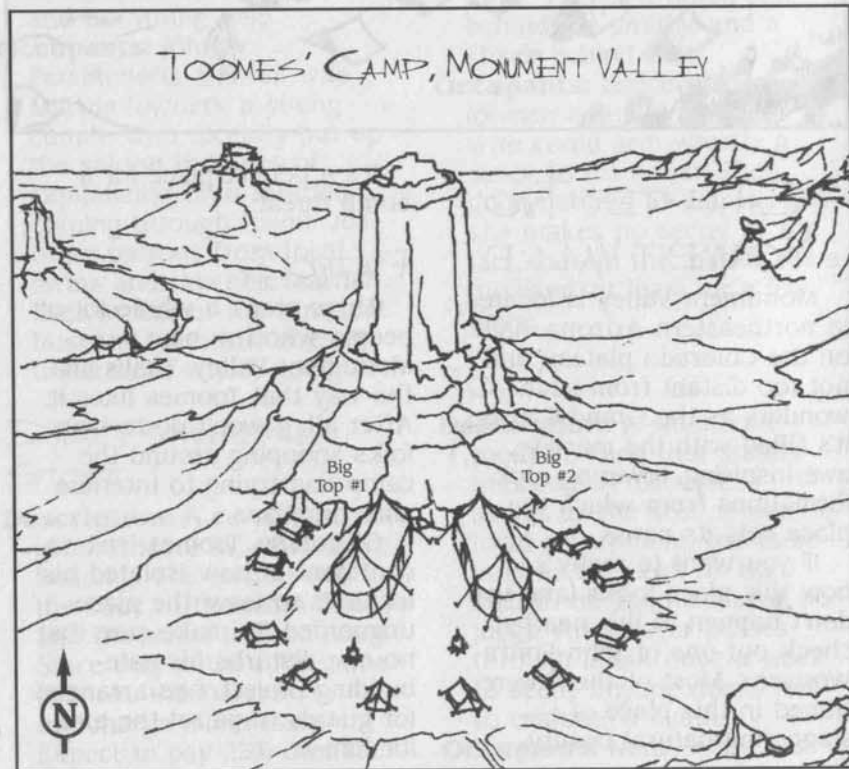
Of course, Toomes isn't so confident in how isolated his locale is to leave the place unguarded. To make sure that no one disturbs his gate-building project, he's arranged for guards to patrol the area for him.

Toomes realized right away that bands of armed white men wandering about the area were bound to attract a lot of unwanted attention. With Stormwalker's help, he hit upon the perfect solution: Use the local Indians.

No one would ever suspect roaming bands of Apaches of being involved in anything more sinister than a hunt. After all, they were crawling all over the place already. And they'd been known to work with Wasatch for a price.

At Toomes' request, Stormwalker approached a nearby band of Apaches (led by Taza, son of the famous chief Cochise) and explained his plan to them. With the aid of Wasatch, he would be able to build a bridge to his world and bring the Apache's newfound power and prosperity to his people.

He simply forgot to mention that he'd be willing to murder everyone in the area, including any Apaches, to put his plan into action.



Clueless as to Stormwalker's true intentions, Taza and his braves set about patrolling the area for several miles around Toomes' camp. They are experienced trackers and hunters, and they know the land like their own mothers. They generally find anyone poking about, unless they take extreme (usually supernatural) measures.

Any heroes that run into a patrol are likely to encounter three to six Apaches (possibly including Taza). If the Apaches are outnumbered, they simply take stock of the heroes and sneak off to get help to shove them off the land. If the Apaches feel confident they can take the heroes, they stand up and confront them right then and there.

If the heroes are discovered at night, the Apaches can call upon Stormwalker for help if they need it. The Garou wanders around the area in his Crinos form all night long, every night, seemingly tireless. During the day, he changes back into a Homid and retreats to his tent.

No matter where he is in the valley, Stormwalker can hear a gunshot. It should only take him less than 15 minutes (or as little as three) to find the heroes from there. Garou in those Crinos forms are pretty darn fast, and Stormwalker knows what's at stake.

### THE RECLUSIVE GAROU

Stormwalker is eager to avoid any sort of attention, although sometimes he lets his baser appetites for blood and destruction get the better of him. Witness the deaths of Wilbur Darcy and several local beeves. Still, he tries to keep to himself during daylight hours, just in case someone comes looking for him. He's pretty distinctive looking, after all, and it wouldn't take much for someone to remember crossing his path, especially if he happened to be in his full-on werewolf form.

That's actually behind what happened to poor Wilbur Darcy. The salesman was traveling along his circuit when he stumbled across the Stormwalker butchering a cow. The Garou wasn't willing to leave any witnesses to the carnage, so he stalked and killed the terrified young man. Of course, he got a little carried away with ceremoniously removing Wilbur's heart, but you could hardly expect any less from such a hot-blooded killer.

Stormwalker's aware of the attention the murder has gotten in town. He knows a Garou tracking him might recognize his trademarks in murder, but there's little he can do about it now, so he's decided to forget about it.

## CHAPTER THREE: TOOMES' CAMP

Wendell Toomes' camp is set up in the middle of a low point in Monument Valley. It consists of two large tents surrounded by 10 medium-sized tents.

The smaller tents house two to four workers each. At the point the story begins, the workers' jobs are done, but Toomes keeps them around anyhow. They don't know why, but the real reason is that the ghost-rock bomb needs the sacrifice of a couple dozen lives for the sorcerous detonator to be able to rip through the fabric of the multiverse. In the meantime, they collect their paychecks.

While the sheep wait patiently to be led to the slaughter, Toomes keeps them busy as "security" for his project. Few of the people know a whole lot about what's going on. All they're really sure of is that Toomes has gathered himself a half a ton of ghost rock in a metal box he keeps in Big Top #2. Also, Toomes keeps tinkering around with some huge device he keeps in Big Top #1, but since all the pieces were brought in separately, no one's really sure what it is.

The workers are all moderately loyal to Wasatch and Toomes. After all, despite

the fact they're sitting around killing time these days, at least they're well-paid to do it. If push comes to shove, though, these folks aren't really ready to lay down their lives for their company. They'll put up with some gunplay, but at the first sign that they're losing a fight, they pull up stakes and head for the hills.

Toomes has trained five of Taza's braves to use Gatling shotguns, which tends to even out a lot of fights. These folks tend to hang back until they know their services are needed. Then they launch themselves into the thick of the fray.

### BIG TOP #1

This is where Toomes spends just about all of his time. This humongous tent is a combination laboratory, sleep space, and warehouse. The place is strewn about with plans for all sorts of things, most of which concentrate on various incarnations of the ghost-rock bomb.

All of the blueprints are dated, so it's easy to figure out which ones are the most recent. Given time to take a good look at the plans, a hero who makes an Onerous (7) *tinkerin'* check can determine just what it is that Toomes is trying to build: the most powerful explosive device ever known.



Of course, there's no way to know what Toomes is building the bomb for without somehow getting it out of him. Since he's rather easily intimidated, this shouldn't be too much of a push for someone who can get him alone for a few minutes.

The big secret in the tent is what's underneath the big tarp in the middle of the room: a number of metallic bodies in various states of construction, all loaded up on a steam tank that's ready to go at a moment's notice. These are five different automatons that Toomes is designing to help him out in his first entry into the Savage West.

### BIG TOP #2

The second huge tent is where the real payoff is. This is where Stormwalker sleeps (on the rare occasions that he does—mostly in the day) and where the ghost-rock bomb is housed.

If the heroes haven't seen the plans for the bomb, they might not understand what it is. It looks just like a steel cube, 10 feet on a side. Chunky rivets hold the entire thing together, and the seams have been caulked with resin and pine tar, making the box airtight. The cube is built as solid as a rock.



Atop the cube, there's a space for the sorcerous detonator that sets the whole thing off. The detonator is in place, and it's ready to go off sometime soon (whenever you feel it might be dramatically appropriate—use your judgment here).

### DEFUSING THE BOMB

The detonator has three wires coming out of it and snaking into the box. They are red, green, and blue. To defuse the bomb, all the heroes have to do is break the connection with the blue wire. Toomes can tell them this if he's still around and alive. Otherwise, it's up to the heroes.

If they choose the wrong wire, well...

Actually if the heroes pick the wrong wire, nothing happens, but the heroes don't need to know that. (Toomes' design for the sorcerous detonator is slightly flawed.) Play up the tension of the moment for all it's worth. Make them sweat a little before giving them the payoff.

You should realize that the heroes are supposed to succeed at this adventure with few problems. After all, it's not a whole lot of fun if the heroes get whacked right at the start of the story.

### DISCREET VILLAINS

When all's said and done, you want a few things to happen.

Toomes can be captured, or he can get away on a rocket pack he's got hidden in his tent. If things fall right, the heroes are going to be too busy to bring him to justice anyhow, so you might as well have him steam off into the sunset.

If Toomes is somehow killed, that's fine. He figures into the plot later down the line, but he can be easily replaced. To Hellstromme, young inventors eager to prove themselves to him are a dime a dozen.

In the end, though, you want Stormwalker to get away. If he doesn't, the whole adventure comes crashing to an end, long before he gets to become a true threat to the two Wests. If the heroes are from the Weird West, the Garou can always be captured or even "killed" and then step sideways to get away. Either way, Stormwalker just waits for the right time to make his break.

### EPILOGUE

With any luck, most if not all of the heroes have made it through this adventure alive. The key thing is to make sure

that they have someone with them who's going to allow them to step sideways into the Hunting Grounds. Unless they've cooked up something really strange, this should be a Garou.

After all, the next battle's not going to be fought in the familiar territory of the Weird West. It's time to brave a whole new world.

### BOOT HILL

#### APACHE BRAVES (12)

**Attack:**  
Rifle 3d6/3d6

**Defense:**  
Brawlin 2

**Werewolf:** Firearms 3, Brawl 2

#### GATLING SHOTGUNNERS (5)

**Attack:**  
Gatling shotgun 3d8/2d6+4d6

**Defense:**  
Brawlin 2

**Werewolf:** Firearms 3, Brawl 2

#### WASATCH MINEERS (20)

**Attack:**  
Pistol 2d6/3d6

**Defense:**  
Brawlin 1

**Werewolf:** Firearms 2, Brawl 1



## WEIRD GAROU

COVERING WEREWOLF: THE WILD  
WEST TO DEADLANDS

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 WORLDS APART

*Deadlands* has already got werewolves of its own, as described in the *Deadlands* rulebook, but they're more like traditional creatures of legend than the Garou of *Werewolf: The Wild West*. Up until now, the Weird West and the Savage West have mixed as well as oil and blood, but the story begun in this book has blended the two into a unique concoction all its own.

Roleplaying games are about a lot more than just fiction, of course. There's a game element to it as well.

If you want to play the adventure in the back of this Dime Novel (and the rest of the

Under a Harrowed Moon trilogy), it's simple. Every character that we give details on here has statistics for both *Deadlands* and *Werewolf: The Wild West*. Just use the set you need for the game that you happen to be playing.

GAROU IN THE  
WEIRD WEST

Some of you out there, though, may want to try to take one of your own heroes and cast him in a whole new light. For you brave souls, we've got some rules for converting your *Werewolf: The Wild West* creatures into *Deadlands* heroes. Let's start out with



putting Garou in the Weird West. Next time (in *Under a Harrowed Moon: Savage Passage*), we'll cover *Deadlands* heroes in the Savage West.

## STEP 1: ATTRIBUTES TO TRAITS

First, you need to be able to convert your Attribute dots into Trait dice. This is pretty darn easy. Just consult the table below. Then figure out your Coordination for each of your dice. Just roll a d4 for each Trait, and that's your Coordination.

### DOTS TO DICE

Dots	Die Type
1	d4
2	d6
3	d8
4	d10
5	d12

The real question, of course, is which Attributes convert to which Traits. Just consult the following Attributes to Traits Table. Any time you've got more than one Attribute that applies to a Trait, just average them.

### ATTRIBUTES TO TRAITS

Attribute	Trait
Perception	Cognition
Intelligence	Knowledge
Charisma+	
Manipulation+	
Appearance	Mien
Wits	Smarts
1/2 Gnosis	Spirit
Dexterity	Deftness
Dexterity	Nimbleness
Strength	Strength
Dexterity	Quickness
Stamina	Vigor

For example, if a Garou had 3 dots in Wits, then his Smarts die type would be a d8. A quick d4 roll comes up 2, so he's got 2d8 Smarts. Simple, right?

## STEP 2: ABILITIES TO APTITUDES

The more complicated part of making a Garou into a Weird Western hero comes with converting Abilities to

Aptitudes. We've listed how to convert the basic Abilities on the chart below, but this list can't possibly cover every kind of skill. Sometimes it's just got to be up to the Marshal and the player to get together and use their collective good sense.

### ABILITIES TO APTITUDES

Ability	Aptitude
Alertness	Scrutinize
Athletics	Choose a Nimbleness skill
Brawl	Fightin': Brawlin'
Dodge	Dodge
Empathy	Scrutinize
Expression	Persuasion, Tale Tellin'
Intimidation	Overawe
Larceny	Lockpickin' and Filchin'
Primal-Urge	No equivalent
Subterfuge	Scrutinize, Bluff & Gamblin'
Animal Ken	Animal Wranglin'
Crafts	Tinkerin'
Etiquette	Streetwise
Firearms	Shootin': (choose one concentration)
Leadership	Leadership
Melee	Fightin': (choose one weapon)
Performance	Performin': (choose one concentration)
Ride	Horse Ridin'
Stealth	Sneak
Survival	Survival: (choose one concentration), Trackin'
Culture	Area Knowledge: (choose one culture/area)
Enigmas	Professional: Detective
Investigation	Search
Law	Professional: Law
Linguistics	Language: (choose one language)
Medicine	Medicine: (choose one concentration)
Occult	Professional: Occult
Politics	Professional: Politics
Rituals	Trade: Garou
Science	Science: (choose one concentration)

When converting Abilities, the number of dots a hero had in a particular Ability is equal to her Coordination with that Aptitude

If your hero's got two or more Abilities that convert to the same Aptitude, use the Ability with the highest number of dots. If the Ability converts to more than one Aptitude, use the same numbers for both.

Don't forget that all *Deadlands* heroes get some levels in certain skills for free. These are Area Knowledge: Home County 2, Climbin' 1, Native Language 2, Search 1, Sneak 1.

Only use these numbers if the converted *Werewolf: The Wild West* hero has no skills in these areas. Otherwise, use the converted dots. Do not add these to the converted dots.

## EFFECTS OF FORMS

Form	Effect
Homid	None.
Glabro	Add 2 die types to Strength and Vigor. Take 1 die type from Mien. Terror 7.
Crinos	Add 4 die types to Strength. Add 3 die types to Vigor. Add 1 die type to Deftness. Take 3 die types from Mien. Terror 9.
Hispo	Add 3 die types to Strength and Vigor. Add 2 die types to Deftness. Take 3 die types from Mien. Terror 5.
Lupus	Add 2 die types to Deftness and Vigor. Add 1 die type to Strength. Take 3 die types from Mien. Take 2 die types from Cognition.

STEP 3:  
BACKGROUNDS  
TO EDGES &  
HINDRANCES

It would take the better part of a good-sized book to cover converting all the possible Backgrounds into the corresponding Edges and Hindrances, so we're leaving that up to you and your Marshal. Just use your common sense and remember: the Marshal's word is law.

## GAROU DETAILS

Of course, Garou aren't like your average garden-variety werewolves. They're a bit more complicated than that. Besides all the Traits and Aptitudes,

they've got some things that set them apart from the standard *Deadlands* hero. Here's how to handle these crunchy bits.

## SHAPESHIFTING

To make a change in form, the Garou must make a Hard (9) Vigor roll. The hero can add its Primal-Urge Ability to the roll.

For every success the hero gets, she can change one level of form. So a Garou that gets two successes can change from a Homid straight to a Crinos.

If the Garou goes bust, her transformation goes wrong in a painful way. This causes 3d6 damage to the creature's guts.

## WOUNDS

Being the rough-and-tumble mystical kinds of critters they are, Garou take injury a bit different than your average joe might.

In any form, Garou take damage normally. However, when they're in Glabro, Crinos, or Hispo forms, they heal one wound level in every location in which they're injured—every turn.

The Garou's healing automatically takes place at the start of each turn. If he ever takes a maiming wound to the guts or noggin, the Garou goes down. It's not dead,



though. Instead, it only heals one wound level per hour until it manages to heal the affected vital area(s) back to critical.

This power makes Garou terrible foes, but there are ways to defeat them. Garou cannot use their healing power on any wounds inflicted by silver, fire, electricity, direct magic (like a soul blast), or supernatural creatures (like other werewolves, whether they're Garou or not).

These wounds heal at the normal rate. They can be healed more quickly by preachers, hucksters, and shamans with the right kind of magical powers.



## RAGE

You should keep track of your Garou's Rage, just like you would if he was roaming around the Savage West. Just consider it an extra stat that is gained and recovered like normal. You can spend Rage in *Deadlands* games in the following ways:

**Extra Actions:** By spending a point of Rage, the hero can draw another Action Card. A Garou can spend up to her Deftness Coordination each turn in this way.

**Changing Forms:** A Garou can spend a Rage point to shapeshift to any form it likes without having to roll for it.

**Stun Checks:** When making a stun check, a Garou can spend a point of Rage (before rolling) to make it instantly.

**Staying on Your Feet:** When a Garou's taken a maiming wound to the noggin or guts, it can stay on its feet (and continue fighting, running, or whatever) by making a Rage roll. He rolls 1d6 for every point of Rage he's got left. The difficulty is Hard (9). Each success heals a single wound level, even if from aggravated damage.

## RAGE ROLLS

Garou tend to think with their large, pounding hearts, and they might have to make a

Rage roll for a number of different reasons (see *Werewolf: The Wild West* for all about this). The difficulty of a Rage roll depends on the phase of the moon (unless the critter's trying to stay on his feet, in which case it doesn't apply).

## RAGE AGAINST THE MOON

Moon Phase	Target Number
Full	3
Gibbous	5
Half	7
Crescent	9
New	11

## FRENZIES &amp; UNCONTROLLABLE ACTIONS

Whenever a Garou gets three or more successes on a Rage roll, he goes a bit bonkers. Handle this just like you normally would (i.e., usually it's pretty bad for the Garou and anyone nearby).

Also, sometimes the Marshal may reveal that the Garou has an uncontrollable urge to do something (like gut someone who's hacking him off).

The Garou can get out of either a frenzy or an uncontrollable urge by spending a Fate Chip to make a Cognition roll.

## WILLPOWER CHIPS

Willpower Points	Fate Chip
1	White
3	Red
5	Blue

## GNOSIS

Gnosis is handled just the way it is in *Werewolf: The Wild West*. Keep track of it just like you normally would. It can be used to activate Gifts or fetishes regularly.

Gnosis can be regained through a variety of means, but most often by way of meditation. After one hour of contemplation, the Garou makes an Onerous (7) Smarts check. She gains one Gnosis point for every success and hour spent in meditation (whichever is the least).

Note that a Garou can never have more Gnosis than she starts out with.

## GIFTS &amp; FETISHES

These things each have their own subsystem that they work on, and they're all described in detail in *Werewolf: The Wild West*. Again, it would take a large book to recast each and every one of these in a *Deadlands* mold. Instead, it's up to the player and Marshal to figure these things out for themselves.

The Target Number of the Cognition roll is determined by the phase of the moon, as shown on the Rage Against the Moon Table. The Fate Chip spent doesn't affect the Cognition roll, no matter what kind it is, but you can spend additional chips to affect the roll. On a success, the Garou regains (or retains) control.

## FATE CHIPS

A Garou can use Fate Chips to purchase points of Rage, as shown on the table below.

## RAGE AGAINST FATE

Fate Chip	Rage Points
White	1
Red	2
Blue	3

## LOSING THE WOLF

If a Garou has no Rage (and no Fate Chips to buy it with), she cannot shapeshift. In fact, she reverts to her natural form until she has more Rage.

## WILLPOWER

Garou don't have Willpower, so to speak, in the *Weird West*. Instead, this converts over to Fate Chips. You can convert beginning Willpower points into Fate Chips by purchasing them for the costs shown on the Willpower Chips Table.

## GLORY, HONOR, WISDOM & RANK

Don't worry about these things. They only function in Garou society, and unless you've got a whole lot of Garou wandering around the Weird West, they're not going to mean a whole lot in the game.

## THE DELIRIUM

The Delirium doesn't work in the Weird West. The human cultures in the world of *Deadlands* haven't been preyed upon by werewolves for generations, so they don't have the same kind of reactions as people in the Savage West.

Of course, people still get scared out of their wits when they see werewolves running around, and they need to make Terror checks.

## STEPPING SIDEWAYS

Garou actually have the power to move directly into the Penumbra. In *Deadlands* terms, they're stepping right into the Hunting Grounds.

To do so, a Garou needs to gaze into a reflective surface of some type. Then his player rolls 1d6 for every point of Gnosis he has. The difficulty is determined by how populated a place is (since there are no caerns in the Weird West). You

should also add an area's Fear Level to the Target Number. This represents how much more difficult the manitous make running the Gauntlet into their home.

## STEPPING DIFFICULTY

Area	TN
City	11
Town	9
Frontier	7
Wilderness	5

The number of successes a Garou gets determines how quickly he moves into the Hunting Grounds. Check out the Stepping Speed Table.

## STEPPING SPEED

Successes	Time
Bust	Stuck in the Gauntlet
0	Failed; must wait an hour to try again
1	5 minutes
2	30 seconds
3	Instant

Hanging around in the Hunting Grounds can be dangerous. For every 10 minutes a Garou stays there, he must make another Gnosis check. If he fails it, he's forced back into the Weird West by rampaging manitous.

# DEADLANDS

## The Fur's Gonna Fly!



Ronan Lynch doesn't know what's in store for him when he checks out that mysterious Wasatch camp basking in the light of the full moon. But it's more than he was bargaining for.

An encounter with a ferocious beast known as a Garou (that's one mother of a werewolf to most folks) launches the undead gunslinger and his friends into the heart of a twisted plot. If they and their Garou allies fail to foil it, the Savage West is going to look a lot like the Weird West™, and a lot of people are going to end up dead—or worse.

As someone once said, "There will come a Reckoning." You'd better pray that's wrong.

*Strange Bedfellows* is the first Dime Novel™ in the *Under a Harrowed Moon* trilogy. It includes the first part of a triple-length novella and a *Deadlands*™/ *Werewolf: The Wild West*™ adventure.



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