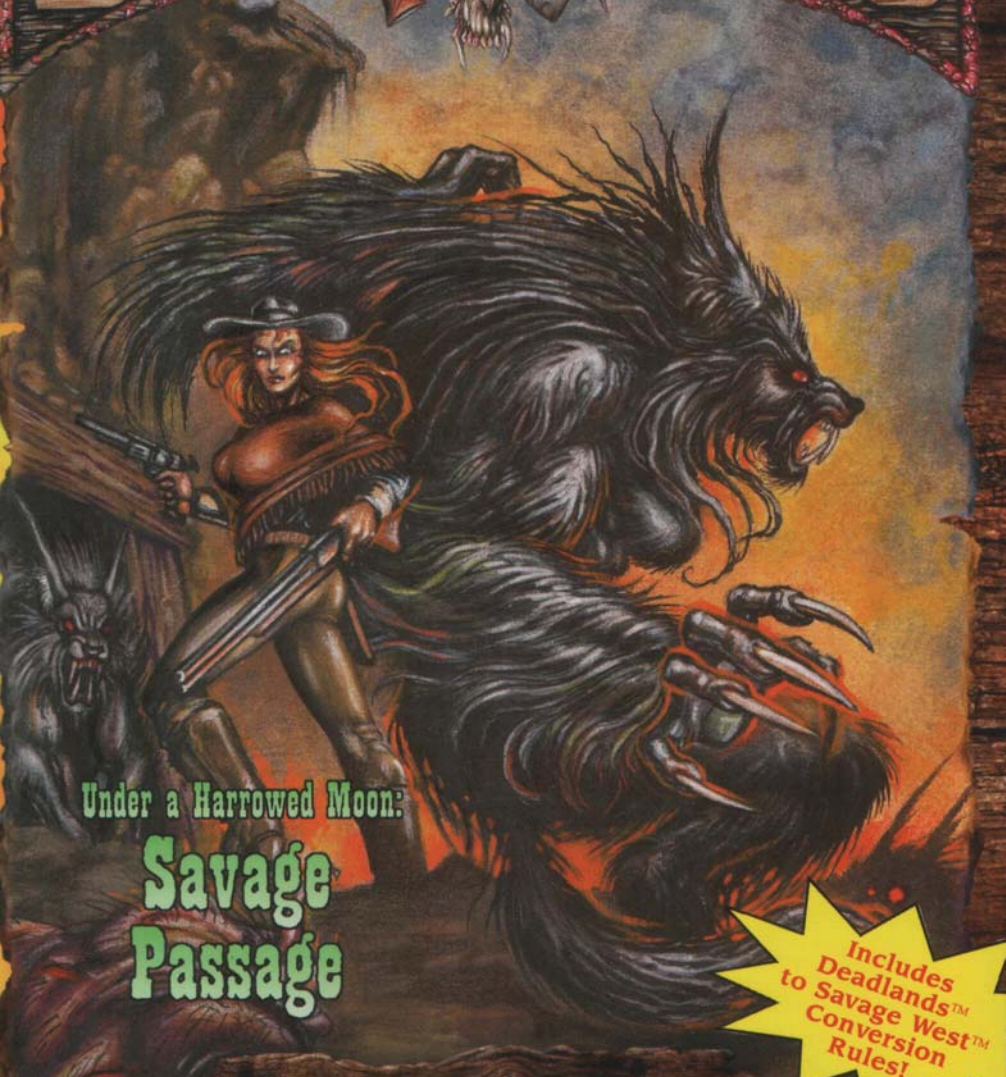


DEADLANDS



Under a Harrowed Moon:

Savage Passage

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WEREWOLF

THE WILD WEST





Deadlands™ Dime Novel™ #5

UNDER A HARROWED MOON (PART TWO):

SAVAGE PASSAGE

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SAVAGE PASSAGE

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

As we get older, our minds start slipping a gear or two, and often enough some of them need a good, swift kick to get them back on the right track again. If you're not in that company, you can skip this bit and jump into the story proper. Otherwise, read on.

If you haven't already devoured the first installment in our twisted trilogy of Dime Novels (known as the *Under a Harrowed Moon* series), well, you really ought to. Get your hide back to wherever it was you picked up this book and demand a copy of *Strange Bedfellows*. You won't regret it.

If you've already enjoyed the first act of our world-shaking drama (or if you're just more stubborn than a mule about not bothering to start out stories where you should), then here's a quick recap.

It all started out with Ronan Lynch (the undead hero of all of our Dime Novels to date) wandering through Monument Valley, looking for a rail camp established by one Wendell Toomes, a young inventor in the employ of the Wasatch Railroad Company. Ronan managed to find the place, but the guards around the encampment soon found him.

After battling off a trio of Apache Indians led by Taza (no less than the son of the famous chief Cochise), Ronan was set upon by a snarling werewolf. Let's just say Ronan got the raw end of that deal, and the creature lumbered away only a little worse for the wear.

Eventually (by means best not discussed in polite company—undead, or the Harrowed as we call them, heal in the nastiest ways), Ronan managed to make it back to his hotel room in a

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sleepy, nowhere-near-boom town called Desmondville. There, he was cared for by his friends: Velvet Van Helter and "Bad Luck" Betty McGrew.

Velvet calls himself a huckster, and that means he plays games (of poker, naturally) with evil spirits that grant him all sorts of magical powers (when he wins, which he usually does). He used these powers to bring Ronan (who's got one of these spirits wriggling around inside of him) back to near-perfect health. Well, as healthy as a dead man can get.

Later that day, Ronan, Velvet, and Betty had a run-in with four more werewolves in their human forms: Proud Speaker (an Oglala Sioux), Annalee LaBelle (who normally walks around on all fours when she's not in polite society), Earl Cotten (a trapper), and Isaiah Morningkill (a tinhorn from Back East). This motley crew wandered into the Monumental Saloon and immediately picked a fight with Ronan, mistaking him for the kind of bloodsucking undead they deal with where they come from.

It turns out that where the werewolves (they call themselves Garou) come from is another world reachable only by traveling through the space between dimensions. They call this area the Umbra, while folks like Velvet and Taza refer to it as the Hunting Grounds. (Don't worry if you don't understand all of this—Ronan doesn't really either.)

Anyhow, Velvet managed to settle the fight before it got too far along. Soon after, the Garou revealed they were hunting a rogue werewolf in this strange land, a creature of evil by the name of Billy Stormwalker. It didn't take Ronan too much thinking to realize he'd already found their man.

The heroes then banded together to launch a raid on the Wasatch camp, find Stormwalker, and bring him down. When they got there, they found that Stormwalker had joined Toomes in attempting to blast a gateway between the worlds. To complete the deed, they'd have to set off a massively powerful bomb in the middle of the camp and then destroy a sacred site in the werewolves' world. Once these two atrocities were completed, the gate could be forged.

Despite a couple of pitfalls, the heroes managed to drive off Stormwalker, defuse the bomb (powered by a mysterious superfuel known as ghost rock), and save the day. Due to Stormwalker's treachery against the Apaches, Taza has now joined the rest of the heroes in their quest to hunt Stormwalker down and bring him to the kind of justice he can expect in the lawless West.

Of course, there's a whole lot more to it than that, but that should bring you pretty much up to date. If you want all the (sometimes really) gory details, head on back to *Strange Bedfellows* before continuing along here. You'll thank us for it in the end.

CHAPTER ONE

"Gol-durn it!" cursed Bad Luck Betty as she stumbled down the hill. She pulled herself up short and, after a long moment, realized she was sitting flat on a prickly pear cactus. She leapt to her feet in a Dodge City second, slapping a hand over her face to stifle her shout of pain as she did.

Her eyes watering, she reached behind herself and began pulling the needles out of the seat of her dungarees. "Dog-gone it!" she said softly, then glanced over at the wolf who had watched the entire incident.

"No offense intended, Annalee," said Betty as she continued her painful work. She could almost swear the wolf-woman was laughing at her, but it was like looking for a smile on a dog: it was impossible to tell if it was just what she wanted to see.

The young Indian standing to her right wasn't as stoic as the wolf. He laughed openly while the dark-haired beast growled a reply. "She says, 'None taken,'" Proud Speaker laughed.

"Why doesn't she just walk around like a—ouch!—woman," Betty asked him angrily as she poked herself in the finger with a needle she'd just pried from her rump.

"She doesn't mean to be rude," explained Morningkill as he helped Betty to her feet. His educated accent sounded sweet and smooth to ears that had known only rustic slang for the past several months. Sometime Betty wondered why she'd ever left Pennsylvania. If they'd been willing to let her fight in the War Between the States, she'd probably still be there, but the military just wasn't that enlightened—yet.

"Then what might her reason be?" Betty graciously accepted the gentleman's help. His hands were warm and strong, yet not soft like those of so many tin horns she'd met out here.

No, not here, she had to correct herself. She'd followed Velvet and Ronan into this savage new setting—the world of the werewolves—and she was a long way from home.

She thanked Morningkill as she stood into his arms. "You are more than welcome, my lady," he said softly as he released her, perhaps a little reluctantly. "But you must forgive Annalee for her current form," he continued.

"Yes, miss," Proud Speaker interrupted. "Walks-Among-Men was born a wolf. She can take the form of a woman, but walking on four feet is as Gaia made her."

Betty was astonished. "So she was actually part of a litter of wolves? What about her brothers and sisters? Were they, um, like her?"

Annalee throated out a response that Proud Speaker translated. "She says she was the only gifted one in her birth pack."

The buffalo gal raised her eyebrows at the Kiowa as she shouldered her rifle again. "And you can understand what she's saying?"

"Of course," Morningkill broke in, a knowing, yet friendly smile on his face. "Despite the fact we hail from different tribes, we are all of the same breed: Garou. In fact, her vocalizations are the least of what speaks to us. There's her posture, her movement, even her scent."

Betty just shook her head as the four continued on their way through the Arizona dawn. She was in Monument Valley again, and although she couldn't see any discrepancies between the awe-inspiring landscapes in this world and her own, there was something subtly different about the two. But maybe it was just her.

"And you folks think we're weird."

CHAPTER TWO

"Where are they again?" asked Velvet as he rifled through his cards. His normal drawl had a hint of tension in it this morning. Ronan was pretty sure it wasn't because they were walking on the soil of a different world.

"I explained already," Taza cut in. The Apache was obviously wondering how he'd managed to fall in with such a strange group of white men. His tone spoke volumes about his building frustration. "They will circle around to the east while we move west. Then we will come together and meet in the center of the valley."

"Right where that Wasatch camp was in our world." Ronan finished. "Keep your cards in your pocket, Reb," the gunslinger told Velvet. The two had become good friends over the past several months, but he'd never seen the aristocrat so unnerved. "She can take care of herself."

"Betty's not the problem, Ronan," the huckster said, ignoring the Indian's comment, shuffling his deck again.

"You can say that ag'in," sniggered Cotten. "That's one fine filly you got yerself there."

Velvet flushed red, which set off sharply against his midnight blue velvet suit. "For your information, mon ami, Miss McGrew is neither a filly, nor is she mine, and I'd thank you to not refer to her in such a crude manner!"

The trapper shrugged and grinned broadly as he cleaned his grimy nails with the tip of a knife that could have doubled as a sword. "Whatever gets your britches out of that bind they're in, sonny."

"Sonny?!"

The huckster started forward, his fists already up. Ronan held Velvet back with a single hand across his chest.

"We got bigger critters to skin," Ronan said. "Besides—he's got a point. What's up, Reb? Out with it."

Velvet swallowed his anger and looked straight into Ronan's eyes. They were the only thing about the gunslinger that almost never seemed dead. And when they did, you'd better hope he wasn't looking for you.

"My friend, the problem is not with Betty," Velvet paused for a moment, then shook his head, "although I'll admit to some distraction from that quarter."

The huckster fanned out his cards and held them up to Ronan's face. "The real issue is that these cards are as dead to me as your heart is to you."

Velvet let his words sink in for a moment before continuing on, frustration welling up in him. The sun was just eking its way over the rim of the valley, and the air was crisp and clean. The only movement came from a flock of buzzards circling silently overhead.

"I can tell you for sure that Stormwalker hasn't got his gate set up yet. I need manitous to make these cards sing. That's how we students of Hoyle work our magic."

The huckster trembled with unfocused anger as he continued. "There are no manitous here, and without them, I'm—I'm powerless."

Taza and Cotten turned away from Velvet, not wanting to have to watch this usually smooth and confident man struggle with his emotions. They walked on ahead.

Ronan didn't flinch. He put a hand on the dandy's shoulder as Velvet produced a handkerchief to mop his forehead.

"Get a hold of yourself, Velvet. We've got us a job to do, and we're going to need all the help we can get. Besides, we've got at least one manitou here," he said tapping his chest, "otherwise I wouldn't be walking around so well."

"How is your, um, demon, by the way? Has the trip affected it in any fashion?"

Ronan thought about this for a moment. "Not so far as I can tell. I still feel like I'm in pretty decent control. It's been a long time since I've lost it."

"Thank God for small favors," Velvet said, folding up his handkerchief again. "I'll never forget the last time."

"Anyhow," Ronan said, uncomfortable with the subject. "You still got that pop-gun in that fancy sleeve-rig of yours, right?"

Velvet nodded as he slipped the damp handkerchief back into his vest pocket. A look of determination was returning to his face. "Of course."

"Then you're just as powerful as most folks. Just make sure your shots count."

Velvet sighed as he and his friend turned to walk after Cotten and Taza. "I'll do that," he said.

CHAPTER THREE

"Dear God!" exclaimed Morningkill. Although as a Garou he worshiped Gaia these days, his early Christian upbringing sometimes got the better of him.

Betty spat her coffee all over herself. She'd been congratulating herself on not spilling it since they'd taken that short break about a half-hour back. It had been too hot when she'd first tasted it, and she'd burned her tongue on it. Now it was just right—maybe a bit too cool, actually—but instead of drinking it, she was wearing it.

Annalee rolled on the ground in some wolf equivalent of a deep belly laugh. Betty hurled her empty cup at the wolf's head, but it sailed wide by a country mile. Annalee rolled about even harder.

Proud Speaker motioned for Annalee to knock it off as he turned to the New Yorker. "What is it, my friend?"

"Do any of you realize where we're headed? It's the Monument caern."

Proud Speaker remained stone-faced. "Of course it is. Do you know of any others in this area?"

Squeezing the cold coffee out of her blouse, Betty cut in. "What are you two talking about?" The look on Morningkill's face had her spooked. He was normally so poised.

The New Yorker turned to Betty, already collecting himself. "My apologies, my lady. I suddenly realized that—oh, my, you're soaked!" he exclaimed, looking down at her sodden shirt. "Let me offer you my jacket."

He was already in the process of removing his coat when Betty stopped him with a hand on his arm. "No. I couldn't. Then what would you wear?"

Proud Speaker reached into his pack and withdrew a weathered but intact poncho. "I believe this will do."

Morningkill began to screw up his nose at the offer and then caught himself. "Thank you, friend, for your kind assistance," he began, but the Sioux cut him off.

"It's not for you," Proud Speaker grinned as he tossed the bundled garment to Betty. She plucked it out of the air with one hand. "It's for her."

Morningkill turned a pale shade of red as he watched Annalee rolling on the ground harder than ever.

Betty thanked the Indian for the loan of his poncho as she put it on. It wasn't much, but it would keep the wind off until her shirt dried, and she was grateful for it. It was just the kind of thing she could see Ronan wearing, and that thought brought a smile to her face. It vanished just as quickly as she remembered what her friend had become.

"So what's all this about the 'kern' then?" she asked, wanting to get her mind onto a new subject.

Morningkill was relieved to be able to move on himself. "The word is 'caern,' my lady. It's a place of nature that's sacred to we Garou. We worship Gaia, who you might call Mother Nature, and she charges us with keeping the world around us unspoiled. Caerns are powerful places of nature, like a waterfall, a stand of trees, or even a mountain, that have never been spoiled."

"Or were once that way," Proud Speaker interrupted. "There are dark tribes within the Garou, and sometimes they or other forces of the Wyrms brutalize these areas, turning them into dark versions of themselves."

"That's what happened in Monument Valley," Morningkill cut back in. "There was once a great tribe known as the Croatan, but they were lost to us long ago. Long ago in the area of Virginia, they sacrificed themselves to banish from this world the Eater-of-Souls, a great servant of the Wyrms. They are an inspiration to every Garou to continue in the fight to serve Gaia."

Betty was confused. "Virginia's a long way from Arizona."

"Yes, miss, it is," answered Proud Speaker. "But Garou can travel quickly from some caerns to linked caerns by means of mighty spirit gates. The Croatan had a gate that led here to a caern in Monument Valley."

"Once the Croatan were gone, other Garou tended their caerns as best they could. But we were not able to protect them all. Access to the Monument caern was sealed off over a hundred years ago when servants of the Wyrms tried to use it to sneak into a caern in Virginia."

Morningkill continued for his friend, warming to the tale. "According to our legends, the creatures that came through the gate were twisted things, monsters beyond belief."

"Coming from your kind, that must mean something," said Betty.

"Yes, well," Morningkill favored her with a wry smile. "I suppose it does. Anyhow, many Garou leapt to be involved in the tremendous battle against these foul invaders, and it was only at the sacrifice of many good Garou that they were beaten back. Soon after, the gate was closed forever."

Betty thought about this for a moment. "It sounds to me like this would be the perfect place for your friend Stormwalker to start his bridge to our world. After all, one end of it's already built."

Annalee let loose a snarl that made Betty jump.

"She says Stormwalker is no friend of ours," Proud Speaker filled in grimly, "and she's right."

"Got it," said Betty, giving the wolf a wary look. "But how is Stormwalker going to build his bridge now? Didn't we stop him in our world?"

Morningkill laughed bitterly. "Just because the beast has been foiled once doesn't mean he's finished. Don't fool yourself, my lady. Our worlds cannot be safe from this creature until he's dead."

Betty's thoughts immediately leapt to Ronan once again. "And maybe not even then," she whispered to herself.

CHAPTER FOUR

Cotten swore softly as he and his three traveling companions crested the hill. A mining camp squatted in the center of the valley that stretched out before them. Small canvas tents were arranged in a loose half-circle around a tower of rock.

There was a small grotto of trees at the tower's base, and the entrance to a mine had been bored into the center of it. Men scuttled in and out of the entrance, some pushing small wagons full of ore.

"Well, this looks familiar," Ronan observed dryly. "It's almost the spittin' image of the Wasatch camp that Toomes was runnin'."

Cotten cursed again as he fell to his hands and knees and stared straight down at the camp. "I almost can't believe my crusty, ol' eyes. Those jackasses are putting a hole right in the heart of Monument Caern."

Velvet shot Taza an inquisitive look, but the Apache leader just shrugged. Cotten saw the exchange and just spat. "Never mind. T'ain't important—at least not to them."

The trapper glared down the hillside at the mining operation. "Dad-blasted humans! Sometimes I'd like to rip the bloody throats out of every last one of them."

Cotten looked up to see Velvet and Taza staring at him uneasily. Ronan's look said "Come on and give it a try." The trapper gave them an uncertain grin. "Present company excepted, course."

"Of course," said Velvet, his tone dripping with his trademark sarcasm.

"Anyhow," Cotten said, "this is the place we're looking for. The others should be coming up on the other side of the valley any minute now."

"And what do we do then?" asked Velvet. "Just go down there and ask if any of them have seen a nine-foot-tall werewolf wandering about recently?"

"Actually, Reb, that's just what we should do. But I wasn't thinking we should all go."

"What do you mean?" Velvet eyed his undead friend suspiciously. Ronan was unscrewing the cap off a flask of whiskey.

The gunslinger took a long pull on his bottle and then offered it around. No one took him up on his offer.

"Well, from what I gather, Indian's ain't so welcome in white folks' homes around these parts, so that puts out Taza and Proud Speaker. And as long as that lady with Betty's running around on four legs, there's no one's down there that's gonna want to scratch her belly.

"I could go down there, but this sun's making me a little ripe, and Stormwalker could probably catch my scent from down there if I'm not careful. Same goes for Cotten, although his stench ain't from being dead."

The trapper sneered up at Ronan, but the gunslinger ignored it flatly.

"That leaves you and Morningkill and Betty. Now you know I love Betty to death, but with her luck followin' you around, you'd all be lucky to get down there alive, much less back in one piece.

"And, Morningkill's not here. So that just leaves you."

Velvet smiled wryly. "Very eloquently put, Mr. Lynch. I've rarely been railroaded so well."

Ronan nodded his thanks for the compliment.

"Unfortunately, I'm also the least likely to step away lively after a fight of all of us, so what should I do if I've got trouble? Just curl up in a ball and pray?"

Taza laughed out loud. Cotten stood up, fished into his coat, and brought out a small, thin whistle. "This was carved from the fang of a mighty Garou," he explained as he tossed it to Velvet. "All you got to do is blow in it, and you'll alert every Garou in the territory."

Velvet made to bring the device to his lips, but Cotten stopped him with a rough hand. "Don't try it now! There are Garou all around these parts, and you don't want them all on their way here quite yet. Some of them might not be quite as friendly as me—*comprende?*"

"Yes," Velvet grimaced. "I understand." He slipped the whistle into the breast pocket of his vest. "Hopefully, I won't be called upon to make use of it."

Ronan slapped the huckster on the back and shoved him off down the hill. "That's the spirit, Reb."

Velvet let out a long sigh and started off down the hill toward the camp. It was going to be a long day.

Once the huckster was out of earshot, Cotten turned to Ronan. "You really think that pencil-necked dandy can figure out what's going on down there?"

"He's got himself a silver tongue. He could talk a lamb into lying down next to a hungry wolf."

Taza grunted at that. "He couldn't talk his way out of going down there."

"True," said Ronan, "but I ain't really dependin' on him anyhow."

"What's the real plan then?" asked Cotten.

"We regroup with the others and then just wait until Velvet gets himself in enough trouble to blow that darned whistle," Ronan drew his Peacemaker and cocked it, "then we go in and kill 'em all."

Cotten snickered at that. "For a dead man, I like the way you think."

CHAPTER FIVE

"Blackie" Carr grunted loudly as he shoved the ore wagon along the rickety steel rails up out of the mine and into the light of the dying Arizona day. Sweat poured out of Blackie's body like water over a dam. Bare-chested as he was, there was little stopping it.

Blackie muscled the rock-filled cart up and over the last rise in the rail and let it coast away from him. It had already been a long day, and the fatigue was building in his arms, but he wasn't done yet.

As he wiped the sweat from his brow, Blackie looked up toward the horizon, and there he saw the silhouette of a man walking toward him. "What in blazes is someone doing out here by himself?" He muttered to himself. "And without a horse no less."

Blackie grabbed his hat from where he'd left it beside the rails, and he walked up to greet the man. There was no reason to alert the others. Some of them had already seen the newcomer, and they weren't bothered by him at all. Still, the stranger's appearance had Blackie's hackles up, and he wasn't about to just ignore it. You didn't get to be in charge of a place like this by not paying attention to what was going on around you.

As the man got nearer, Blackie saw that he was wearing a reddish suit cut entirely out of velvet. The man must have been roasting in those clothes. They were the kind you wore in the city, or maybe on your way to church if you were into that kind of thing, but not out here in northern Arizona. The man must have been suffering. He had taken off his hat and was wiping his brow with a bright blue handkerchief.

Deciding to make the first move before the stranger collapsed, Blackie strode forward and put out his hand, introducing himself as he did. "What can I do for you, mister?" he asked. His tone was less than friendly.

The stranger shoved his handkerchief back into his pocket before he spoke. "You'll have to give me a moment, I'm afraid. It's been quite a day, and I'm a bit tired."

He seemed to collect himself for a moment and then tried again. "My name is Van Helter, Velvet Van Helter of the New Orleans Van Helters. Perhaps you've heard of us?" Velvet paused and looked at Blackie expectantly for a moment, then shook his head, more to himself than anyone else. "No? Of course not. Not in this, um, part of the world."

Blackie snorted impatiently.

"Yes, well, I'm afraid my wagon broke down as I was traveling along through here—it's, oh, it must be several miles back. Anyhow, it's pretty well gone, something about the steam engine, and I was hoping I could talk to your foreman about possibly borrowing or even purchasing a horse and getting directions to the nearest town."

Velvet seemed to realize he was rambling and simply shut up, having said his piece. Blackie let him sweat while he measured him up for a moment.

"I don't know what trail you were traveling along to bring you out this way, mister, and I don't really care. We'd be happy to help you out. As for finding yourself the foreman, you're looking at him."

A smile creased Velvet's face. "Excellent. Thank you, my good man, for your kind assistance. However, I don't think that I'm feeling up for a journey of any kind right now, and I was hoping I could impose on your kindness once more for something to drink and a cool place to sit while I drink it."

"Just follow me, mister." With that, Blackie turned and walked off toward his tent, Velvet close on his heels.

* * *

When they reached the tent, the foreman pulled the flap aside and motioned Velvet in. It was a large wooden, canvas-covered frame, big enough to hold a cot, a table, and several chairs. Someone was sleeping quietly on the cot. Velvet thought it strange that the man was covered with a blanket head to toe on such a warm day, but he ignored it. Who knew how people slept in this strange new world in which werewolves had their own sort of society they'd developed alongside humanity's throughout the ages?

Velvet walked around the table and took a seat next to the cot. He sat patiently while Blackie dipped a ladle into a bucket and poured the huckster a glass of warm, mostly clean water. He slapped it down on the table before him, and Velvet took it with a grateful tip of his hat. A soft dripping sound came from somewhere, but the huckster could not tell where.

Between sips, Velvet sized up the foreman. There was something unsettling about the man. Perhaps it was the way his eyes never seemed to blink.

"Thanks again for your kind attentions. So what is it that you and your men are mining out here?"

Blackie flashed a quick smile at Velvet. It seemed that each of his teeth had been filed to needlelike points, but then the smile was gone as fast as it had appeared. "Oh, whatever we can find. There's all sorts of things in these towers of stone. More than you could ever guess."

"I can guess quite a few things," Velvet said, trying to keep a note of nervousness from creeping into his voice. "For instance, I'd guess that there's a bit more to you than there seems."

Blackie grinned again, this time showing off his teeth proudly. "And you'd be right, mister. There's not a whole lot here that's as it seems, and that's how we like it."

Velvet squirmed a bit in his chair. There was something sticky on the bottom of his shoes, but Blackie still had his full attention, so he ignored it.

"We?" he asked, glancing around nervously.

Blackie laughed cruelly. "You and me, we're alone. The others are busy working. After all, it's not every day such a pretty plaything comes along, and as the boss around here, I get you to myself."

Velvet was on his feet now. "Perhaps I should be leaving."

"Perhaps you'd like to try."

As Velvet watched, Blackie transformed from a heavysset, well-tanned man with thinning hair into a nine-foot tall, slavering beast with foot-long fangs. But this Garou wasn't like the others.

His fur was an unnatural grayish-green, something like the color of rotten flesh. His ears were wide, thin, and shot through with veins, more like those of a bat than a wolf. And his dinner-plate eyes burned with the reddest fires of Hell. Insanity danced in those flames.

Velvet shook his right arm, and his derringer slid down his sleeve and appeared in his hand. Blackie, or the creature that had once been him, cackled madly. "You think a popgun like that is going to stop me?"

Velvet smiled and jabbed the gun at the figure on the cot. "Even with the silver bullets in this, I don't think it would do much to you. However, your slumbering friend here is another matter altogether. Back off, or I'll blow his head off."

The Blackie monster cackled again as he started forward. "You're a bit late for that, mister."

Velvet jabbed the little gun into the sleeping figure's head and felt it squish through into something much softer than a skull. Suddenly Velvet realized where the dripping sound had been coming from. The sticky liquid he was standing in was blood.

Blackie reached out at Velvet with a handful of razor-sharp talons as long as railroad spikes. Velvet turned the gun toward the monster, but instead of attacking the huckster, Blackie reached down and pulled the blanket off the cot like some sort of mad stage magician.

"This is how we handle snoops."

Velvet turned to look at what the monster had revealed, and he found himself unable to turn away. It was another Garou—or what was left of it.

The creature's limbs had been amputated, making it almost as short as a normal man, and much of its skin had been peeled away. Its powerful jaws had been sewn shut with wire, and from the leaking wound in the poor thing's throat, Velvet guessed its vocal cords had been cut.

The peltless skull, part of which had been removed from the top of the thing's head exposing the beast's bloody brain, stared back at Velvet with eyes that were very much alive.

Velvet screamed once and tried to bring his gun to bear on Blackie, but he was slapped across the tent by a gigantic, furry backhand that knocked him senseless. The last thing he heard was, "Stormwalker is not going to be pleased."

CHAPTER SIX

Ronan Lynch was not having a good night. First, Betty had just about torn his heart out when he'd told her that he'd sent Velvet off on his own. It had taken the better part of an hour to get her calmed down about it, and Annalee had finally had to return to her human form to do most of the talking to her, woman to wolf-woman.

Then Velvet hadn't come back, and all of Betty's accusations were tearing Ronan up inside even worse. Had he really been heartless, soulless, all those other things she'd said? He'd honestly pegged the huckster as having the best chance to talk her way into the camp.

Ronan wasn't usually much with words himself. Sure, he managed to get the things that needing saying said, but he couldn't string the damned things together into those speeches Velvet was capable of. No, Ronan generally let his gun do his talking for him, and there were few folks willing to debate his .45 caliber arguments.

So to put Betty's mind to ease (as well as his own, although he was hardly going to admit that to anyone), Ronan had volunteered to sneak into the camp himself. After all, it was his fault Velvet had gone off by himself, and he was going to do something about it.

It had been a long time since anyone had called Ronan a coward. Betty hadn't actually used those exact words. She knew how he'd been drummed out of the US Army for calling a retreat in the face of overwhelming odds, and she wasn't quite ready to push that red-hot button—yet. But if Velvet turned up dead, he was sure she'd drive a knife right into that sore spot and start twisting.

"A wooden nickel for your thoughts," said Morningkill. His smooth, New York accent grated on Ronan's already fraying nerves.

The colonel that had discharged Ronan had been from New York, and the gunslinger could still hear the contempt in the man's voice as he had read the charges against him. "You're lucky we don't just take you out back and shoot you, Lynch, but we're short on bullets," he had said. Ronan wondered what that colonel would think of him now.

"They ain't worth that much," Ronan growled. The tinhorn had insisted on coming along with him. Ronan had tried to refuse, but a look from Betty told him he'd better take the Garou's help and like it.

They hadn't gotten too far from where the group had decided to make camp for the night. They'd had to set up a good ways off from the caern for fear of the miners hearing them or seeing the light of a campfire.

As the two men topped the hill overlooking the miner's camp, a wolf's howl split the night. Ronan looked over at Morningkill, trying to read the man's eyes in the dimness of the still-full moon. He hadn't known him for all that long, and he didn't entirely trust him yet.

"One of yours?" he asked.

Morningkill shook his head slowly, his brow creased with worry. "No. I've not heard a howl like that since I left New York: a mad howl, one that comes not from the throat of an honorable Garou, but from a beast."

Ronan snorted disdainfully. He'd been listening to Morningkill wax eloquent about tribes and caerns and Gaia and the Weaver and the Wyrms all afternoon, and it all sounded like a load of manure to him. "You werewolves sure take yourselves seriously," he said.

"Deadly serious. We live in that kind of a world."

"Speak for yourself."

"I shall. In this savage west of ours, Garou struggle to retain what is left of the frontier. Ours is a strange world, filled with beasts like vampires, mages, ghosts, and faeries."

"Is that all?" Ronan asked. "We've got all that 'n' more. Hangin' judges, Mojave rattlers, tumblebleeds, more critters than you could shake a shotgun at."

"Our complexities run deeper than just on the surface. Although we certainly have monsters, the true evil comes from within all thinking folk, and there is much of it. This is a world of darkness."

"Huh. Ours is just plain weird, and I like it that way. Otherwise, I'd be feeding worms somewhere in Colorado."

A howl split the night again, closer this time. "How about that one?" asked Ronan.

"The same as before. It seems the creatures in the camp are getting restless."

Ronan swore. "Less gabbing and more walking."

"I agree—" Morningkill caught himself short, and then he began sniffing the air. "Dear God in Heaven!"

Ronan drew his gun and thumbed back the hammer. "What is it?"

Morningkill didn't answer. He just grew larger and furrer until he reached his full fighting form.

"Who is it?" Ronan demanded.

Morningkill reared back his head and howled. Ronan followed his line of sight and spotted a dark shape racing down from the top of the hill. Before he could draw a bead on the thing, it was on top of them.

Ronan's gun was knocked from his grasp with a single massive blow. He dashed after it, hunting frantically for it in the dimly lit brush.

The monster barreled full on into Morningkill, and the two went tumbling along the valley floor in a ball of muscle, fang, and fur. Talons slashed wildly, and teeth met with flesh and bone.

Ronan managed to find his gun quickly enough. Its polished barrel gleamed in the moonlight. He checked the action on the hammer quickly and then turned to aim the barrel at the two monsters wrestling to the death.

Ronan aimed straight at the tangled Garou. There was no way for him to get a clear shot at the attacker without putting Morningkill at risk. "Get away!" he shouted. "I'm ready for him, and I'm packin' silver!"

The two warriors struggled for a long moment, neither able to get the advantage. Then suddenly Morningkill hurled his attacker away from him in a mighty throw.

As Stormwalker scrambled to its feet, Morningkill pointed at him from his position on the ground and snarled desperately at Ronan. "Shoot him!"

Ronan unloaded all six of his shots into the towering beast, catching him square in the chest.

Stormwalker was knocked sprawling across the hard Arizona ground.

"And so it ends," Morningkill spat. "After chasing that dastardly monster through the Storm Umbra, to your world and back, he's finally dead."

Ronan listened to the sound of the Garou's labored breathing for a long moment.

Then he heard something laughing madly.

Ronan glanced over to see Stormwalker working his way to his feet, apparently none the worse for having six lumps of silver slammed through his chest.

The gunslinger cursed. "I guess silver works different in this world."

"No," Morningkill gasped, "It doesn't at all. It should have worked."

The Garou's astonishment quickly gave way to rage. With a blood-curdling battle-snarl, he launched himself at Stormwalker, claws flying and teeth snapping.

The two Garou were nearly evenly matched, but Morningkill drew upon his anger to transform himself into a truly savage beast. Despite a desperate struggle to keep free of Morningkill's gnashing teeth, Stormwalker went down beneath his attacker's jaws.

Ronan holstered his empty gun. It was over.

Morningkill reared back from Stormwalker's body, his mouth full of the bloody throat he had torn from his foe's neck. He spat the foul flesh out and began to retch, suddenly pulled out of his raging anger.

"Dear God," he growled. "That's the most foul thing I've ever tasted."

While Morningkill was still complaining, a long, taloned arm shot up from the corpse he was straddling and fastened around his neck. It began to squeeze.

Suddenly, Ronan knew what was going on. He snatched his gun from its holster, popped out the cylinder, and slammed a single bullet home. It was only going to take one.

Slapping the cylinder back into place, Ronan strode forward and shot Stormwalker straight between the eyes.

The arm that was strangling Morningkill fell limp, and the tinhorn Garou fell from its now-open grasp. Ronan bent over to check and found that Morningkill was still breathing, although only barely.

While Ronan was trying to revive the New York Garou, he heard a rustling behind him. He turned, knowing what he would find, but not being able to do a thing about it.

Stormwalker's massive paw reached out and encircled the gunslinger's neck. With one viselike squeeze from that tremendous fist, Ronan's neck snapped nearly in half.

The last thing Ronan heard before consciousness left him was Stormwalker rasping madly, "It's going to take a *silver* bullet, fool!"

CHAPTER SEVEN

Velvet wasn't sure if he was happy to be waking up. Being dead would have been so much easier.

When he finally managed to peel his eyes open, Velvet was sorry he had. He almost closed them again, but what he was seeing was too incredible to ignore.

The creature that had been Blackie stood in the center of a great room carved out of living rock. Four powerful oil lanterns lit the area brightly, and they showed Velvet more than he wanted to know. A half-dozen similar monsters worked intently around the other side of the room, huddled around a man-sized pot of boiling water squatting over a raging fire contained in a deep pit.

The beasts looked like Garou, but awfully different. They stood as tall and were vaguely wolflike, but they were each subtly twisted in their own ways. One creature had patchy fur, and where the hair was gone, it seemed like scales were growing through. Another had a head that looked almost snakelike, with emerald scales and a long, forked tongue. Others had mangy-looking hair with strange boils and tumors bursting out on various portions of their bodies.

One and all, they were repulsive. Where the Garou seemed like a part of nature—admittedly a decidedly savage one—these creatures were corrupted abominations, things warped by unholy filth.

Velvet found himself bound hand and foot, laid across a stack of crates like so much luggage. He strained against the ropes around his wrists and ankles, but in vain. It was then that Blackie noticed him.

"Welcome back to the land of the living," the monster's voice boomed. "You won't be staying long."

"That's a pity," Velvet cracked, "and you've been such a wonderful host."

Blackie giggled softly, madness dancing in his eyes like moonlight on rippling water. "Oh, you're a funny one! I like funny ones. That pal of Stormwalker's we carved up was a funny one too."

Blackie's demeanor suddenly shifted dark. "He's not so funny anymore." He motioned to his companions to pick up the huckster and bring him over to the pot.

Massive, taloned hands wrapped around Velvet's arms and hoisted him into the air. Bound by the creatures' paws even more tightly than the ropes, Velvet was carried almost ceremoniously toward the fire pit until he was set on his feet. He was so near the pot he could have touched it had his arms not been held behind his back.

As Velvet's feet came to rest on the ground, he looked back to see where he'd been. The crates he'd been resting on were large and wooden and had the word "Dynamite" stenciled across them in large, black letters.

The huckster realized he'd been lying atop enough explosives to bring the entire room down on them. "And you've got a fire going in the same room as all that dynamite! Are you entirely insane?"

Madness danced in Blackie's eyes as his wolflike lips curled up in a gross approximation of a smile. "Now you're catching on," he gloated.

Then Blackie looked at the creatures holding Velvet in place like twin vises. There was one to each side. He motioned for them to pick the huckster up. "Let's show our guest what's cooking!"

The two monsters hefted Velvet into the air, then lifted his feet over his head and pointed him face first at the surface of the boiling water.

"There's nothing in there," Velvet said happily.

"Yet."

Velvet was hoisted so he was even more upside-down, and his head was brought closer to the burbling water. The withering steam began to scald his face, and he squirmed in the monsters' grasps, even though being let go was the last thing he wanted right now.

As he wriggled about, Cotten's whistle fell out of his vest pocket and plopped right into the water.

Blackie's hand darted right in after it. Velvet could smell the flesh cooking as the monster groped around the bottom of the pot for the little whistle. Despite the half-minute he kept his hand and arm in the boiling water, Blackie acted as if he was doing nothing more than fishing around for a coin dropped in a rain barrel.

When Blackie pulled his arm out, it came away with a great deal of the hair boiled off the flesh, which was a livid red and pockmarked with blisters all over. But the whistle was in his grasp.

"What's this?" he asked, pointing the instrument right between Velvet's eyes. The end of it was cracked, and steam curled around its surface.

"A w-whistle," Velvet stammered. These things were so powerful—and so mad. He was doomed. Still, an idea stuck in his mind. "Can I play it for you?"

Blackie looked at him cross-eyed for a moment, then seemed to think the better of it. "Of course not! How crazy do you think I am? Don't listen to what those other Garou say about Black Spiral Dancers. We know more about how the world works than they do."

Velvet's heart fell, but it leapt a moment later as another plan sprang into his mind. "You're right, of course. It's poisoned, and had I put my lips to it, I would surely have died. But I would have escaped being your plaything at least."

"I think there's enough poison on that thing to even drop a creature like you dead in your tracks. It's a good thing you didn't try to play it yourself. It made a beautiful sound at one point, but it's just a device of death now."

Blackie looked at Velvet with distrust etched on his face. "You think that this thing would kill a Garou?"

Velvet simply nodded.

"And we are lucky to not have tried to play it?"

He nodded again.

"And you don't want us to play it, right?"

One more time.

"A-ha! Then it's a trick. I'm onto you and your devious ways, mister. I'll play the damned thing!"

With that, Blackie drew a deep breath and took a long, hard blast on the whistle.

Not a note came out of it.

Perhaps it had been damaged when Velvet had been captured. There was a substantial dent in it after all. Or maybe the boiling water that was soon to be Van Helder Stew had hurt it. Either way, it looked like Velvet wasn't getting any help from that quarter.

"Ha!" said Blackie. "I'm still alive. But this does make pretty music. I think I'll keep it."

The smile still on his face, Blackie pointed the whistle straight at Velvet's forehead again. "Anyhow, back to the boiling."

"I'm curious about how come you're not a drooling idiot right now, mister. Most monkeys see one of us, and they lose their tiny minds so much they forget they've even seen us—if they survive that long."

"Let's split the difference. I won't drool, but I promise to forget about you just as soon as I get out of here."

"No deal." With a flick of Blackie's taloned index finger, Velvet was turned back right side up and his boots rested upon the kettle's rim. The creatures were so tall, they could look Velvet in the eye right where he stood.

"I'll let you in on a secret, monkey-man," Blackie grinned. His teeth were greenish now, but longer and sharper than ever. "We just look like we're crazy. Actually, we're more sane than anyone else."

"Oh, well, that does explain it," Velvet said slowly, not wanting to set off this obvious lunatic.

"See, now you're really getting it. We're not crazy. We're the proud few that have managed to get the Wyrms to open up to us. And when he talks, we listen." Blackie chortled with glee at this revelation. He glared deep into Velvet's eyes to make sure he understood before he continued on.

"Other Garou call the Wyrms the great corrupter, the source of all evil, but that's just not true. He's the embodiment of chaos, one of the balancing forces in life. As his followers, we're simply warriors of chaos. We don't really expect our side to ever win the war—we don't really want the war to end—but it's our side, so we fight for it."

At this point, Blackie lowered the whistle and brought his snout close enough to Velvet's mouth to kiss it.

"And the Wyrms," he whispered as he traced a talon along Velvet's jaw, "wants you to fight at our side."

"Pardon me?" asked Velvet. He couldn't believe what he was hearing. It was then that he heard the voice.

Surrender to me, and all can be yours, it said. Mad images flashed through Velvet's eyes as he stared deep into Blackie's wagon-wheel eyes: Betty, cards, chips, New Orleans, manitous, Betty again.

If you resist, you will be killed in ways too horrible to imagine. The kettle is only the start of what is in store for you. Velvet shuddered with the memory of the shattered thing he'd found in Blackie's tent.

Give in to the Wyrms, to the chaos in your heart, your very soul, and you will find ultimate freedom. Betty will be yours forever. All of New Orleans will worship at your feet. And your magic will be returned.

Images of love, success, and power spun around in Velvet's head. They were tempting, each one of them by themselves. Together, they were irresistible.

All you need to surrender is your soul. Such a small price to pay, especially for one who has already jeopardized himself by dealing with demons. It can all be yours, if you swear to be mine.

Velvet's mouth struggled to form the words he longed to say. It was too much for him, all swirling around, making him so dizzy he could barely think.

Or you shall die. But not for a very long while.

That was it for Velvet right there. He was one who could be dazzled by promises of power. It was what had drawn him to Hoyle's magical tome in the first place. He was ready to say yes.

But he hated threats.

All his life, Velvet had bucked threats, from his father, his friends, even the woman to whom he'd once been engaged. This time was no different.

"Go to Hell," he hissed through his teeth.

"Oh, we're already there," came Blackie's voice. "So kind of you to join us."

CHAPTER EIGHT

"So what is it about this place that makes it so darned special?" asked Betty. She needed something to take her mind off of worrying about the others, and conversation was the only thing that seemed to work.

Shots had rung out in the dark soon after Ronan and Morningkill had gone to look for Velvet. First six, and then one. Then nothing.

Cotten and Proud Speaker had dashed off to investigate, but they hadn't returned yet. That left Betty, Taza, and Annalee huddled around a dying campfire, waiting for the others to return.

Taza had been pretty quiet up until now. He had little to say to the others, and he was obviously embarrassed for having taken Morningkill's side before he had realized how dangerous the rogue Garou was.

Betty didn't blame him much. She knew he was just doing what he thought was right for his people. A leader like him was honor-bound to reach out to help other people like his, even if they were worlds apart.

He just hadn't realized Stormwalker was only using him to further his own ends.

At least Annalee had stayed in her human form. It was, well, somehow comforting having her around as a wolf. At those times, she reminded Betty of her favorite dogs back home. But of course, she was so much more.

"Annalee?" she prodded.

"Hm? I'm sorry, Betty. I was listening to the sounds of the night."

"It must be wonderful to be so in tune with nature. I like to think of myself as a lover of the great outdoors. I really enjoy living on the frontier. But you don't just live in nature. You're really a part of it."

Annalee favored Betty with a smile. She was beautiful in the firelight, full of an unloosed, natural grace that could never have been taught. Her angular face was framed by her wild, loose hair, and the stars shone brightly behind her, distant diamonds sparkling in a velvety sky.

"We're all part of nature, my friend, although many of your people don't like to admit it. They try to conquer nature, not realizing that they are disrupting their harmonious place in it."

"I know what you mean," said Betty, thinking of the Great Rail Wars that were ravaging the West in her world. "I try to get closer to nature myself, but it's so hard."

"There is no trying when it comes to understanding Gaia. There is only being. We are all a part of the Earth Mother, and it is only by understanding our place in the pattern that we can truly appreciate the beauty of all that is around us."

"But it is not all beautiful, is it?" interrupted Taza.

"No," Annalee admitted. "There are those who would destroy the balance. On one side, there is the Weaver and his followers. These people follow the call of science and order.

"And on the other are the minions of the Wyrms. They sow only corruption and chaos."

"And where is Stormwalker's loyalty?" the Apache wanted to know.

"He is a special case. He is a Garou, pure of mind, and so he thinks he fights for Gaia. But his heart is twisted. The only path that he sees to right the wrongs, to stop the encroachment of the Weaver and to drive back the Wyrms, is one that would unleash great evil upon the world.

"Still, these manitous of yours are spirits of nature. But they are of your nature, not ours. Those of us who have walked the realms are able to make this distinction clearly, but Stormwalker has chosen not to.

"He sees that your world is superior to ours, at least in the ways that the Indians are treated, and so he wants them to be the same. He does not see that each world is different and must follow its own destiny, apart from those that might surround it. He plays a dangerous game that could spell doom for us all."

"So what makes this place so special?" asked Betty. "Why not blast a gate through the offices of the Tombstone Epitaph? Or in Shan Fan?"

Annalee cocked her head to one side as she gave Betty a quizzical look. "I am not familiar with the places of which you speak, but I suppose that doesn't matter. A caern is a place of great power for those in tune with Gaia's pattern. For many Garou, guarding a caern is the entire focus of their lives. However, sometimes a caern can be despoiled."

"That is what happened here," Taza stated flatly.

Annalee nodded. "According to our traditions, the Monument Caern was captured by the Black Spiral Dancers, a Garou tribe of which we do not often like to speak. They are a people of unspeakable evil. They worship the Wyrms, and they are truly mad."

"So why haven't all the Garou around here just got themselves together and put this 'mad pack' down once and for all?" asked Betty.

"Until now, no one was really sure where the Monument Caern was. The true location was lost with the Croatsans, and the gate to the place was sealed off soon after that when it was discovered the Dancers had taken the place as their own."

Annalee gazed up into the stars then, and her voice grew more distant. "Also, many of us hoped to one day reclaim the caern for Gaia. The taint of the Wyrms is not always a permanent thing, and even the most corrupted places can be restored with the proper—"

The Garou suddenly leapt to her feet. "Come, we must go."

Betty grabbed her rifle and jumped up. Taza was next to her in a flash. "What is it?" she demanded. "Velvet?" Hope rang in her voice.

"The whistle that Earl gave to your friend has been blown. It's time to answer its call."

"Then let's go!" said Betty. "And pray that we're not too late."

CHAPTER NINE

Earl Cotten and Proud Speaker heard the whistle go off and started running. Before they had gotten 100 yards along, they had already transformed into their monstrous Crinos forms, ready for whatever their world could throw at them.

They weren't ready for what they found.

Proud Speaker nearly tripped over Morningkill's body, and Cotten actually did. The massive Garou was staked out in the moonlit night, spread-eagled by leather straps that held him down. His pelt had actually been peeled back from his chest and pinned down into the dirt, exposing his raw flesh to the elements and preventing him from changing form.

"Stormwalker for sure," Cotten muttered. "He likes to torture before he kills."

"It seems he left before he could finish the job," said Proud Speaker. "Our friend is yet alive."

"Damnation! Give me a hand here, Speaker. He can still make it if we work quick."

"But what about Mr. Van Helter? The whistle was blown."

Cotten cursed again. "All right, you stay here and take care of Isaiah. With a little help, he should be fine. I'll find Velvet."

As Cotten turned to leave, he said over his shoulder, "Besides, Stormwalker's sure to be in the thick of whatever's going on, and that son of a bitch is mine!"

* * *

Velvet screamed as his feet were dipped into the boiling water of the cast-iron kettle. Thankfully, Blackie hadn't bothered to remove the huckster's shoes, so Velvet's feet were protected. His ankles weren't quite so lucky.

This is not how Velvet had planned to die. When he'd been a boy, he'd always imagined he'd be shot down in a duel like his father. Or maybe even die at his favorite restaurant like his grandfather. Being boiled alive by a monster on some distant world wasn't even on the list.

Still, it didn't seem like he was being given much of a choice in the matter.

Blackie glared straight into Velvet's eyes again. "Are you sure you do not want to join us?"

The voice returned to him again. *I will stop the burning, the pain. I will make your skin whole again. All you have to do is surrender to me, and this can all end.*

Velvet summoned up all his strength and spat directly into Blackie's glowing red eyes. Enraged, the monster started to scream at the two creatures holding Velvet to plunge him into the kettle. Before he could finish, though, a shot rang out in the night, seemingly right outside the mine's entrance.

* * *

"Darn it!" yelled Betty as she lowered her rifle. "I had that blasted werewolf in my sights. I could have sworn I hit him too."

"Are you using the silver bullets?" asked Taza. Cotten had outfitted everyone in the group with a handful each as they made their way to this strange world. "You're sure to need them," the trapper had said, looking at them each in turn. "Just don't get any crazy ideas about using them on me. And remember, these things kill a normal person just as dead as the lead ones, but they're expensive as Hell, so be careful with them."

Betty checked her rifle's magazine. "No! I forgot to load them in!"

She reached into her pocket and immediately spilled a handful of gleaming bullets on the ground. As she scrambled around hunting for them, she shouted at Taza and Annalee, "I'll just hold you up. Go on without me. Get to Velvet as quickly as you can!"

Taza looked up at Annalee, now towering over him at her full nine feet. "Let's go," she growled.

He followed her without any questions.

* * *

Dawn was nearly breaking as Cotten neared the entrance to the mine shaft. He was about to race in to come to Velvet's aid when he saw a pack of Garou come shambling up to the surface.

They were twisted, demented things, corrupted by lives spent in such close proximity to the Wyrms. "Dancers!" Cotten muttered as he dove behind the nearest tent.

The perverted beasts wandered about the center of the camp aimlessly for a moment, not knowing exactly what they were hunting for. When he was certain the last of them had made it out of the mine, Cotten made his way toward the entrance, darting from tent to tent too quickly for the creatures to see his progress.

Eventually he made it to the tent nearest the shaft, but dashing across the open ground toward the entrance was sure suicide. There were far too many of them for him to take them all on at once, and the distance to the mine was too great for him to make it unseen. What he needed was a distraction.

Just then, a shot cracked out from far up the valley floor. Cotten looked up to see Taza running in his direction, his rifle still smoking. Annalee was out in front of him, her hackles standing straight up and her snout releasing a terrifying snarl.

The Apache leader cocked his rifle and another shot rang out. This one smacked right through a Dancer's chest, sending it spinning to the ground. It did not rise.

Cotten congratulated himself for risking all that money by dipping into his supply of silver bullets. As Morningkill would say, that was one investment that was clearly paying dividends.

As his friends hurled themselves into battle with the Dancers, Cotten slipped into the mine shaft. He was Velvet's only hope.

* * *

By the time Taza reached the camp, Annalee was already in the thick of a horrible battle. She was rampaging through the twisted werereatures, but she was severely outnumbered. Taza made to even the odds a bit with the business end of his rifle, but before he could fire, Annalee yelled, "Don't worry about my fate. Attend to your friend instead."

"That huckster is no friend of mine," spat Taza. "I'm here to stop Stormwalker, and this seems like a fine method. I will not leave you here alone."

Before Taza could squeeze off another bullet, a shot rang out from off in the distant. A Dancer that had been about to leap on Taza from behind fell dead to the ground. The Apache leader glanced up to see Betty dashing down toward him. Apparently she'd managed to collect her silver bullets.

"Betty will help me," shouted Annalee between raining horrible blows on her foes. "Get into the mine and help Velvet."

Taza simply nodded and ran off toward the mine entrance. Despite the fact he didn't care for men who trucked with manitous, Taza knew Velvet was a good man. Released from the obligation he felt to help defend Annalee, he would not let the huckster die.

* * *

Proud Speaker helped Morningkill to his feet. "What happened to you, my friend?" he asked.

"Stormwalker," said Morningkill, and the word explained it all.

"And Ronan?"

"The last I saw, he was alive, but I'm sure Stormwalker would have made quick work of—*aah!*" Morningkill cried out in pain and leaned heavily on Proud Speaker's offered shoulder. The skin on his chest was already beginning to knit itself back together, but the healing powers of Garou didn't make the wounds any less painful.

"Still, his body is not here," Proud Speaker pointed out.

"Well, let's hope he made it then. We're going to need all the help we can get."

* * *

Blackie was getting impatient waiting for his pack to return and help him torture Velvet. When he finally heard more shots outside, he turned to the huckster and said, "I'm afraid I don't have no more time to play with you, friend."

"Well, that's a relief," Velvet groaned through gritted teeth. He was still in tremendous pain. "Don't let me stop you from running off."

"Oh you won't," said Blackie, "but first I've got to finish with you." With that, Blackie reached down and hoisted Velvet into the

air by the back of his jacket. "I'll just toss you in now, and by the time I get back, you'll be soup."

At that moment, Cotten dashed into the room with Taza close on his heels. The trapper had gotten sidetracked down the wrong tunnel and met up with Taza on the way to the right room. They entered together, and as one shouted, "No!"

Blackie turned to laugh at the newcomers as he made to toss Velvet into the pot. "Your friends are too late to save you," he cackled wildly. "The Wyrms will get you after all, in body if not soul!"

The flat crack of a shot echoed loudly in the chamber, and Blackie fell to the ground, a perfectly round entry wound appearing directly in the center of his forehead. Velvet fell to one side of the pot, nearly dropping into the fire pit, but he managed to extinguish his own fires by rolling away and smothering the flames.

Taza and Cotten glanced at each other in surprise. Neither of them had fired the shot.

"I think you're looking for us," came a growl from over in the opposite direction of the kettle. The duo looked up to see Ronan standing atop the crates of dynamite. Smoke rolled out of his gun, and a red light danced in his eyes.

Stormwalker towered behind him.

* * *

"Is this it?" asked Betty. She was standing back to back with Annalee, who stood several heads taller than Betty in her full werewolf form. The rising sun crisply showed the faces of the disgusting creatures they were up against.

"What kind of talk is that?" asked the Garou. "This is only two to one odds. We can defeat them easily."

Just then, the four remaining Dancers who had been circling the two women chose to attack.

Betty managed to down one of them with a rifle shot square in the chest, but a second slipped in before she could recock her weapon. It was all she could do to get the barrel of the gun between her throat and the twisting thing's gnashing teeth.

Betty looked to Annalee for help, but she had her hands full. Actually, it was more like her mouth, in which she had one beast's throat. The last creature, however, was crawling all over her back, sinking its teeth into her powerful shoulders.

Betty could feel on her lips the fetid breath of the thing that straddled her, trying desperately to find purchase on her soft flesh with its vicious teeth. There was no way she could fight off this monster for long, but she wasn't quite ready to give up yet.

Then off to one side she heard a tremendous snarl, and suddenly the creature was knocked from her body by something large and dark.

Betty scrambled to her feet to find Proud Speaker making quick work of the beast that had been about to rip her throat out. The thing didn't stand a chance against the powerful warrior's skills.

Then a single shot cracked out, and the lizardlike creature on Annalee's back sloughed off of her like a snake's old skin. Betty looked over to see Morningkill blowing the smoke off the tip of his gun.

Unburdened by her second foe, Annalee tore into the first. It was not a pretty sight, and Betty turned away.

Then, remembering why they'd come in the first place, she sprinted for the mine entrance. The others followed close behind.

* * *

"How nice to see you again," Stormwalker growled at Taza, Cotten, and Velvet. "But you're too late to stop me.

The huckster ignored the comment and busily set about freeing himself from his bonds. Without anyone keeping an eye on him now, it wasn't going to take him long to slip out of the ropes. They'd been singed a bit in the fire pit, too, and that helped.

Velvet was halfway through freeing his hands when a voice stopped him cold. It belonged to Ronan—or at least the thing inside of him, masquerading as his soul.

"Don't bother with those ropes, huckster. You're all going to die."

Velvet swore and kept working.

"What's up with you, Lynch?" Cotten yelled. "Shoot the bastard!"

"That won't be happening," Stormwalker laughed.

"It's his manitou!" Velvet explained. "It's got him. Ronan's not in control any more!"

"And neither are any of you," the rogue Garou growled.

"Don't shoot!" Velvet yelled. "A stray bullet could bring down the entire place."

Stormwalker cackled. "My rival Blackie was so paranoid about any Garou finding and cleansing this caern, he set it up so that he could destroy it at any moment. That's what we're standing on right now," he indicated the crates of dynamite below his feet. "Since we want the place blown to pieces, this couldn't have worked for us more perfectly."

"All it's going to take is a single match," said the thing with Ronan's voice. "I'll tell you what, suckers. I'll give you a ten-second head start."

With that, the gunslinger reached into his pocket, drew a match, and lit it on the back of his teeth.

"Ten."

Taza leapt toward Velvet, scooped him up, and threw him over his shoulder.

"Nine."

Ronan's demon was counting slowly as if to tease his foes.

"Eight."

As Taza dashed out of the chamber, Cotten spit out his parting words. "This ain't over yet, Billy. It won't be over until I've got your bloody heart pumping in my hands!"

With that he turned and fled.

"Seven."

"You're too late to stop me, Cotten!" Stormwalker shouted after the trapper, his voice echoing loudly in the shafts. "And you always will be!"

* * *

Taza and Cotten stumbled into the others near the entrance to the mine. "Run!" they shouted, and their demeanor told everyone that there was no time to ask why.

When the seven people made it to the surface, Cotten ordered, "Don't slow down! Keep moving!"

As they cleared the far side of the camp, there was a loud, hollow sound that escaped from the mine shaft. The group turned back to see the tower of stone rise up for a moment. It seemed to hover in the air, almost reluctant to fall to the Earth. And then it did. Hard.

* * *

When the smoke and dust finally cleared, Betty found Velvet and quickly removed his bonds. When he was finally free of the ropes, she took him in her arms and kissed him with all her might. He returned her passion just as fiercely, and for a short moment, all was right with the world—no matter which world it was.

Then Betty finally asked Velvet, "What happened to Ronan?" Tears of relief had cut tracks through the dust on her cheeks.

Velvet bowed his head and, in an uncharacteristic moment, could not speak.

"He's with Stormwalker," Taza finally offered. "His manitou got him."

"Oh, no!" cried Betty. "No, no, no, no, no!"

Velvet took her in his arms and held her tight as she sobbed into his chest. "Don't worry, Betty," he said above her tears. "I've got a pretty good idea where they're going, and we'll follow them to the ends of any Earth they care to run to."

The huckster reached down and cradled Betty's face in his hands. Lifting her face to his, he stared deep into her eyes and made her a solemn vow.

"This is all *far* from over."

To be concluded in
Under a Harrowed Moon, Part 3:
Ground Zero!



SAVAGE PASSAGE

THE ADVENTURE

Whoa! That sure was quite a twist there at the end of that story, wasn't it? I'm sure y'all are just as eager as we are to find out what's gonna happen next. In the meantime, though, we've got something for you and your posse to chew on.

If you just fell into this particular book and you're not sure what's going on, well, you've got some backing up to do. This is the second installment in a trilogy of Dime Novels™ featuring heroes from both the Weird West of *Deadlands* and the Savage West of *Werewolf: The Wild West*. Have a blast with this one, but hang on for the third and final act in our earth-shattering conclusion.

Like we told you last time around, this Dime Novel (that's

a book that's half fiction and half adventure for you tin horns in the crowd) is real simple to use. You just read through the story, then play through the adventure.

Even though we're working with two different games here, don't you fret. You'd be surprised how smoothly things can blend if you're willing to work at it, and we, of course, have done all the work for you. You can thank us later.

The key thing about the adventure is that it doesn't have any rules in it, just full-on action and descriptions of certain key players that you're going to want to know about. We provide you with statistics for both *Deadlands* and *Werewolf: The Wild West*, so Marshals or Storytellers can

just use their chosen game system and go—no conversions are required.

So saddle up, and let's go!

THE STORY SO FAR

In the interest of not boring those of you who've been kind enough to pick up and play *Strange Bedfellows* (the first in this trilogy), we're going to try to keep this short.

In a nutshell, it turns out that all the different worlds in the multiverse are separated from each other by an ethereal realm that most of us mortals never actually see. Whether you call it the Hunting Grounds (as is done in *Deadlands*) or the Umbra (as the Garou in *Werewolf: The Wild West* like to do), it's the mortar in the cracks between the worlds.

Certain special folks have figured out the way to get into the mortar and travel from world to world. One such person was a Sioux Indian by the name of Billy Stormwalker. (His friends might call him Stormy—if he had any.)

Anyhow, Stormwalker was a Garou (that's a fancy name for a werewolf in the world of *Werewolf: The Wild West*), and he was pretty annoyed by how he saw matters progressing in his world. As happened in our own history, the white

governments kept breaking treaties with the Indian nations, shoving them further and further away onto smaller and smaller reservations.

Stormwalker decided to do something about this, but he didn't have the kind of power he needed to stand up to the entire United States government. So he went on a walkabout between the worlds.

JACKPOT!

Eventually, Stormwalker stumbled upon the Weird West of *Deadlands*, and he liked what he saw. With the resurgence of magical powers, the Indians had turned the tide against the white governments, and they were actually managing to establish themselves as powers to be reckoned with. The key behind their newfound might and the return of magic was something called the Reckoning.

Unfortunately, even for the Indians, the Reckoning wasn't all good. It involved the return to the world of evil spirits known as manitous, plus the monsters of myth and legend that had long since been banished from the light. They were all back now with a vengeance, and many surprised Indians died at their hands, beside the bewildered whites.

Stormwalker saw all this as a good thing. After all, what

was the sacrifice of a few of his own people if it propelled the rest of them to unheard-of heights of power. He came up with a plan.

STORMWALKER'S PLAN

Stormwalker's central goal is to bring the Reckoning to his world at any cost. To that end, he is trying to fashion a gate between the two worlds.

Of course, building this gate is not easy. There's a lot to it, but the gist of it is that Stormwalker needs to set off an explosion at a certain point of power in both worlds. For this, he's chosen a secluded portion of Monument Valley.

In the Weird West, Stormwalker joined forces with Wendell Toomes of Dr. Darius Hellstromme's Wasatch Railroad Company. Toomes developed a monstrous bomb powered by a substance known as ghost rock, a superfuel that burns a thousand times better than coal. Once set off with a sorcerous detonator, this bomb would blast open one end of Stormwalker's bridge between the worlds. Then all he needed to do was blow open the other.

FOILED

Of course, if you've been keeping up with us—or even if you just read the synopsis of



the first story (which appears in the front of this book)—then you know that the heroes foiled Stormwalker's plan. At least, that's how things were intended to pan out. How your posse fared may be another matter.

Assuming events went as they were supposed to, Stormwalker abandoned the Weird West while leaving the heroes to try to defuse the ghost rock bomb (which they succeeded at by the skin of their teeth—or fangs if that's appropriate). Once the dust settled, the villain was long gone, and it was up to the heroes to offer pursuit and

bring the rogue werewolf to the kind of silvery justice that can only be dispensed from a gun.

If you're still not clear on what happened, go get yourself a copy of *Strange Bedfellows*. It's worth it.

THE SETUP

Getting the heroes involved in this part of the adventure is a bit easier, assuming they already took part in the first act. If so, they're hot on Stormwalker's trail. Otherwise, this takes a bit of doing.

As we mentioned the last time around, this is a pretty loose set-up for an adventure. It basically presents you with the situation that's happening and then lets you run with it in whatever direction you can prod your posse.

There's no real plotline here to railroad the posse along. Just present things to the heroes and see what they do. Sometimes letting them surprise you is half the fun.

THE VERDICT

Okay, we might as well come clean. The heroes aren't really expected to win this round. In fact, if they don't come out of this feeling like they've been tarred and feathered, you're just not doing your job.

This is your chance to really cut loose on the heroes. Let them know what it's like to look Death in the face and realize the old bugger's smiling.

Of course, this doesn't mean it's open season on heroes and you've got a full-posse permit. You don't really want to butcher them all in the second act, just scare them a bit. Otherwise, no one's going to be around for the grand finale, and what fun is that?

Hey, this is where you get to put the horror back in your western horror game.

PICKING UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF

Okay, you did the right thing and played through the adventure in *Strange Bedfellows*. Good for you. Now what?

The fact is the next part of this twisted tale catapults the posse straight into that strange space between the worlds known as the Hunting Grounds (or the Umbra or whatever you like). Your heroes have got to figure a way to get from the Weird West to the Savage West in one piece each.

That's where the adventure picks up, so you smart folks can just skip on ahead to the Major Players section. The rest of us will catch up with you in a bit. Promise.

STARTING IN THE MIDDLE

You're the kind of person that doesn't mind sneaking into the middle of a movie just to see the end. You're entitled, as twisted as you might be.

We're going to assume you know what you're doing. Maybe you ran one Deadlands posse in the Weird West, and now you're playing with a pack of *Werewolf: The Wild West* Garou in the Savage West. Or maybe you just can't find *Strange Bedfellows* and you can't wait any longer to get things moving along.

Anyway, here are a few ideas to get you going if you're starting off this adventure in the middle of things. You might also try ones of these methods if the heroes lost their battle with Stormwalker. If they did, they're very likely dead, in which case, their players can make up a new posse of heroes to take up at the spot from which the previous generation left off.

WEIRD HEROES

If you've got a Deadlands posse itching to jump on in, here are some possibilities. Just tailor them to fit the heroes, and away they go.



BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

The heroes arrive on the scene soon after someone else—perhaps a Garou chasing after Stormwalker—has managed to foil the rogue's plans as told in the first Dime Novel (or the synopses in this book). With his dying breath, this other hero tells the posse of what's happened and begs them for their help. Before he dies, he bestows upon them the means to travel to the Savage West. This could be a Garou fetish or even a really strange mad scientist's gizmo.

It's then up to the heroes to take up the bloody baton and carry on to defend both worlds from the fate Stormwalker would foist upon them.

DRAFTED!

If the heroes aren't really the heroic types, it might be better to take a firmer hand. Instead of the carrot, it's time to haul out the stick—and the bigger the better.

One night, while the heroes are minding their own business (however twisted it may be), they are visited by a Garou who needs their help. Before they can react, he transports them into the Hunting Grounds by stepping sideways (piercing the veil between the worlds).

Now, unless the heroes happen to have their own way to get between the worlds, they're stuck in the Hunting Grounds. This makes them entirely reliant on the Garou, who's not going to do them any favors until they give him a hand with Stormwalker.

At the end of this adventure, of course, the Garou has to be alive to bring the heroes back to the Weird West. Otherwise, they're going to have a Hell of a time getting back home.

SAVAGE HEROES

If the heroes hail from the Savage West, then things are going to be a little different. First of all, there's little reason for them to have ever been in the Weird West, so the adventure can start off normally for them—well, as normal as this kind of thing ever starts off.

ON A MISSION

Stormwalker is a notorious name among many Garou elders. It's certainly possible that one of them 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?

Of course, this time around, the heroes manage to catch up with Stormwalker after the first adventure is over. In this case, assume that some heroes from the Weird West managed to put a stop to his plans there but were unable to follow him into the Hunting Grounds. Back in the Savage West, it's up to the Garou to take matters into their own hands and put the rogue werewolf down for good.

SYNCHRONICITY

The Garou heroes stumble across the ancient Croatan caern without any prior knowledge of Stormwalker's designs. Once they find out the place is lousy with Black Spiral Dancers, they make an assault on the despoiled caern with an eye toward retaking it for the forces of Gaia. That they cross paths with Stormwalker may seem only incidental at first—until they realize what the success of his plans would mean to them all.

The kicker with this approach is that the heroes might not truly understand

what's going on until the very end. Then, when they're facing defeat at Stormwalker's hands, he lets them know just how bad they've screw things up. It's up to them to make reparations in the third act.

IF THE HEROES LOST?

Hey, just because we tried to make it easy doesn't mean every posse is going to manage to make it through Strange Bedfellows alive. If they blew it entirely, you've got one of two options.

First, you can assume that even though the heroes bit the dust, someone else (say the Prospector or someone equally unlikely) swept in and prevented Stormwalker's plans from coming to fruition. In that case, just stick to the plan.

If you really want to be cruel (and admittedly a lot more realistic), you can tell the heroes that when they screw up, they really don't mess around. Their mistakes are the stuff of legend.

The ghost rock bomb went off, and everyone within 10 miles or so was killed in the blast or the resultant fallout (trust me, you don't want to know what ghost rock fallout does to a person). Worse yet, the first part of the bridge between the worlds was established. If the heroes fail in

part two (which they are pretty much destined to do), Stormwalker's plan succeeds, and the Reckoning arrives in the Savage West.

Of course, it's your game, and if you want to play things that way, it's entirely up to you. Just don't plan on seeing a line of supplements supporting this hybrid world of yours. When this is all said and done, these two worlds are going to be as separate as they ever were (officially, at least).

SAVAGE HELP

If the heroes are entirely from the Weird West, they're 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.

A huckster or a shaman with the appropriate ability might be able to pierce the veil and enter the Hunting Grounds, but where would they go then? Tracking someone through the space between the worlds is always difficult at best, and it's doubly worse if you don't know where you're going.

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. If you're smart, you managed to plant this character in the posse while you were playing through Strange Bedfellows. Otherwise, you're going to have to figure a whole new way to shoehorn him into the plot. If you need this kind of hero, simply use Stormwalker's stats with a few modifications, and you're set.

Of course, you should leave out the part about him being Harrowed.

MAJOR PLAYERS

There are two Garou that the heroes are bound to face off against in their attempt to put an end to Stormwalker's unholy ambitions.

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.)

Over the years, Stormwalker became frustrated with the position of both his Garou and Indian tribes. Both seemed doomed to early extinction under the boot of the encroaching white settlers. He struck out from time to time, often outright killing those who were unfortunate enough to get in his way.

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. 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 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 key thing about Stormwalker (and something we kept to ourselves the last time around) is that he's Harrowed. Soon after arriving in the Weird West, Stormwalker was put down by a posse of Texas Rangers. They didn't know he was from another world, and they didn't rightly care. All they knew was he was a monster that needed killing, and it was their job.

The Reckoners knew trouble when they saw it, and they weren't about to let the mad Garou go gently into that good night. A manitou was dispatched toward his cooling corpse, and he was back up and stalking around in no time.

Needless to say, the Texas Rangers are now short one brave posse. Stormwalker's not the forgiving kind.

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:

Harrowed: Ignore normal bleeding and *Wind* damage. Ignore two levels of wound penalties. Can only be killed by a maiming wound to the head.

Cat Eyes: Can see in complete darkness (level 4).

Bite: STR+2d6

Claw: STR+2d6

Garou: See the rules in the back of *Strange Bedfellows*. Basically, he can spend one point to activate one of the Gnosis powers listed below.

Gnosis: 7

Assimilation: The Garou can assimilate himself into any culture he likes. He makes a scrutinize check. The TN depends on how alien the culture is to him. If successful, the Garou does not suffer any

prejudices against him 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 new command requires a new Fate Chip. This does not summon spirits, nor can it be used to exorcise one.

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 don't necessarily have to listen to him, though, or even keep deals.

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

Special: Harrowed (ignore penalties for two Health Levels; can only be killed if Incapacitated by damage sustained to the head), Cat Eyes (capable of seeing in complete darkness as if under normal daylight conditions)

Rage 10, Gnosis 6, Willpower 8

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

"BLACKIE" CARR

Wilson "Blackie" Carr was born into the Black Spiral Dancers as a metis, a sterile offspring of two "normal" Garou. This made him nastier than the normal Dancer, and his anger has served him well in his rise to leader of his evil little sept of dark Garou.

Carr was born under a half moon, making him a Philodox, or judge. While his heritage as a Black Spiral Dancer make it difficult for him to keep his temper, when he does, his reasoning is flawless.

The others of Blackie's sept follow his word if for no other reason than he's meaner than any of them. Also, despite being tailless, he's actually a bit better looking than most of the others.

In any case, Blackie's a vicious killer who takes his duties seriously. He's been charged with maintaining control over the Monument Caern, and he'd done a fine job up until now. In the meantime he's started a mining operation to help make him rich.

So far, Blackie seems to be on the right track toward fortune, but he's about to run afoul of the heroes and Stormwalker. Any time his control of the area is threatened, Blackie flies into a dark rage, and his control over that is his greatest asset.

WERD PROFILE

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

Climbin 2d6, dodge 2d6, fightin' brawlin' 5d6, sneak 2d6

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

Guts 2d8, native language: English 2d6, overawe 3d8, scrutinize 3d8, search 2d8

Edges:

Hindrances:

Deformity: Tailless (minus one die step from Nimbleness, already figured into stats)

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

Special Abilities:

Bite: STR+2d6

Claw: STR+2d6

Garou: See the rules in the back of Strange Bedfellows. Basically, he can spend one point to activate one of the Gnosis powers listed below.

Gnosis: 5

Wurm Visions: After breathing in a victim's mouth, the Garou must win a contest of *Spirit*. Each extra success reduces the victim's *Spirit*, *Deftness*, and *Nimbleness* by one die type each.

Resist Pain: By spending a Fate Chip, he can ignore the effects of his wounds until the end of the battle.



Roll Over: By making an opposed *overawe* contest with at least two successes over the foe, the Garou can force humans down to their knees and Garou over onto their backs.

Truth of Gaia: By making an opposed *scrutinize* roll, the Garou can tell if someone is lying or telling the truth. This is not a guess; it's as reliable as the sun coming up in the east.

Gear: Bowie knife, Lantern, Lantern oil (one gallon), box of 100 matches, Canteen, Axe, Pick, and Shovel.



SAVAGE PROFILE

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

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Dodge 2, Empathy 3, Subterfuge 3, Melee 5, Stealth 2, Linguistics 2,

Gifts: Resist Pain, Roll Over, Truth of Gaia, Wyrms Visions
 Range 6, Gnosis 5, Willpower 6

Equipment: Bowie knife, Lantern, Lantern oil (one gallon), box of 100 matches, Canteen, Axe, Pick, and Shovel

THE OTHER DANCERS

The other six Black Spiral Dancers in Blackie's sept have pretty much the same stats as him, so there's no need to repeat them here. The only real differences are their Gifts. They each have the listed Gift instead of Blackie's Wyrms Visions and Truth of Gaia.

JACKIE CARR

He's Blackie's little brother, but nearly as mean.

Bite of the Bat: After biting a foe, the Garou spends a Gnosis point and holds a contest of *Spirit*. For every success over the foe's, the Garou inflicts 1 extra wound plus gains 1d6 Wind (up to his normal maximum).

JENNA SPOTSWOOD

Jenna is the lover of both the Carr brothers, and she's about as nasty as you'd expect.

Ears of the Bat: The Garou can use sonar to navigate her surroundings, even in total darkness.

WILMA SPOTSWOOD

Jenna's mother is the twisted matriarch of this sept.

Gift of the Porcupine: The Garou's fur becomes as spiky as a cactus. She adds

+1d6 to any fighting attacks. Any barehanded attacks against her add +2 to the TN.

ALEX MONTGOMERY

Alex is a young Dancer, the spawn of Blackie and a dove he once soiled. It doesn't make him any less dangerous.

Curse of Hatred: The Garou spends a Gnosis point and contests his Mien against the target's Spirit. For each success the Garou gets over the victim, the target loses a Fate Chip of its choice.

DARLA LINSTON

Darla is a horribly deformed woman with a mind as warped as her form. She looks more like a lizard than a Garou.

Rattler's Bite: The Garou injects poison with a bite. Any damage done by such a bite (after Fate Chips are spent to stop it) is doubled.

ALBERT BROWN

A twisted creature without a hair on his entire body, Albert fancies himself the leader of the sept, but Blackie always puts him down.

Burrow: The Garou (in Crinos, Hispo, or Lupus form) can tunnel through earth at 1 yard per turn. Make a *Strength* roll to get through tougher stuff like rock.

CHAPTER ONE:
THE MONUMENT
CAERN

Monument Caern, AZ—Fear Level 0 (There's no such thing in the Savage West.)

The entire adventure is based around the Monument Caern, built into the heart of a natural column of stone carved out of the valley by the northern Arizona winds. The place is surrounded by a mining camp consisting of seven separate tents, each as large as a small cabin.

To those not in the know, the caern area is simply a bunch of miners scratching a living out of a rich vein of ore in the heart of a tower of stone. The truth, of course, is much worse.

The Monument Caern once belonged to the long-departed Croatan tribe, a group of Garou that sacrificed itself in the battle against a mighty servant of the Wyrms. It was once a gate from the West to Back East, but it was then taken over by the Black Spiral Dancers, another tribe of Garou that went off to battle the Wyrms and were instead subverted to the foul creature's ways.

Since then, the rest of the Garou have sealed off the one end of the gate, leaving the

Black Spiral Dancers with a gate that leads to nowhere. This is where Stormwalker comes in.

STORMWALKER'S PLAN

Like many Garou, Stormwalker had heard the legend of the Monument Caern in his youth. When he learned of the Weird West and devised a plan to build a bridge from that world to his own, Stormwalker remembered the legend of old, and a plan leapt into his mind.

Soon after, Stormwalker returned to the Savage West and set about locating the forgotten caern. When he finally found it, he was surprised to learn that a small sept of Black Spiral Dancers still controlled it.

There were too many Dancers around for Stormwalker to manage to defeat them all by himself—at least in a full frontal attack. He planned instead to build his strength slowly and take control of the caern once he'd managed to start the other side of the bridge in the Weird West.

To that end, Stormwalker drafted his half-brother Walter to help him. Walter poked around the caern while Billy set off to the Weird West to set his plan in action.

While Billy was gone, he was killed by the abominations of the Weird West. Soon after that, he returned to the land of the living as the first ever Harrowed Garou. For more about what happened next, check out *Strange Bedfellows*.

Following Billy's defeat at the hand of the heroes in the Weird West, he returned to the Savage West to work on the other end of the bridge. He hadn't given up his plan yet. Time was on his side now, and if he could finish half the job now, he could take care of the other whenever the way was clear.

By the time Billy returned, though, Walter had been found by Blackie Carr. Blackie tortured Walter in an attempt to learn of Stormwalker's plans (this is the Garou that Velvet finds in Blackie's tent). Walter, tough to the end, refused to talk.

At this point, Blackie got nervous that Billy would try to retake the caern and cleanse it. He reasoned that if the Dancers couldn't have the caern, he'd make sure no one could. To that end, he stocked the place with dynamite so he could blow the place to kingdom come if it looked like the Dancers were going to lose it.

By doing this, Blackie has played right into Stormwalker's hands.

THE CAMP

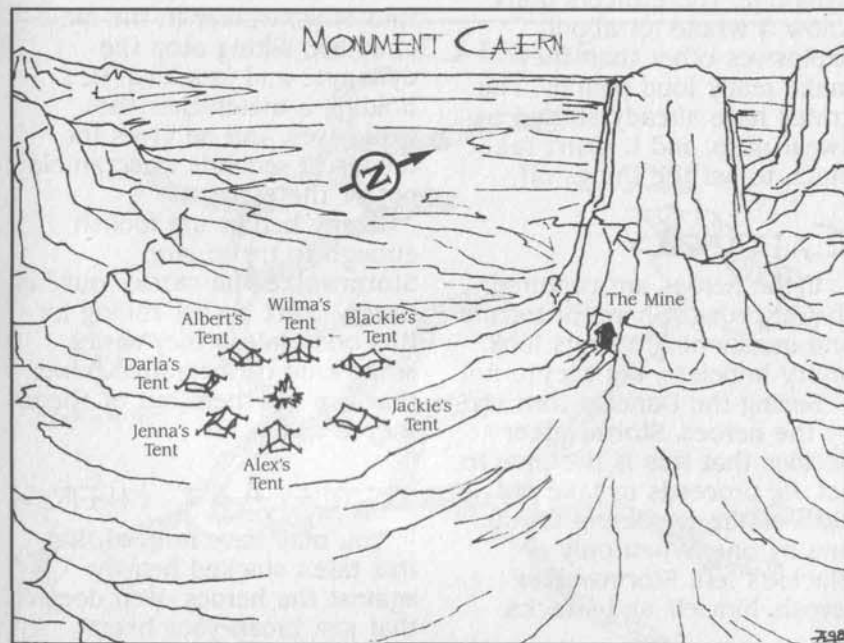
The Black Spiral Dancers' mining camp is set up near the Monument caern, in the middle of a low point in Monument Valley (right about where Toomes' camp was located in the Weird West). It consists of seven medium-sized tents clustered around the opening to a mine that burrows into the tower.

The heroes can poke around the place if they like (Stormwalker's trail leads right into—he's hiding out atop the tower), but they're bound to be noticed by one of the Dancers soon enough. When that

happens, there's going to be a fight, whether the heroes like it or not. The Dancers aren't ever in a talking mood.

However, the Dancers are more interested in capturing the heroes than killing them. They want to know why there's suddenly been so many people poking around the Monument Caern. They even go so far as to bandage up a near-dead victim so they can question her later.

Throughout all of this, Stormwalker is nowhere to be seen. However, anyone that goes into Blackie's tent may find the still-living remains of his brother.



CHAPTER TWO: KA-BOOM!

The heroes are likely going to end up in the heart of the stone tower sooner or later.

THE CAERN

The entire tower is actually the caern, but a tunnel has been carved into the heart of it. This is where the gate once led. The mine is pretty simple, but it's easy to get lost if you don't know where you're going.

There's only one major chamber in the mine, and that's the place the Dancers have packed solid with dynamite. The Dancers don't know a whole lot about explosives other than they make really loud sounds. The crates have already started to sweat nitro, and it won't take much to set the things off.

CAPTURED!

If the heroes are captured, they're brought here for torture and questioning. Things look pretty hopeless, but they're not.

Seeing the Dancers torn up by the heroes, Stormwalker decides that this is the time to act. He proceeds to take out each of the remaining Garou one by one. When only Blackie's left, Stormwalker reveals himself and attacks.

Now's the time for the heroes to figure some way to break free and get the Hell out of Dodge. The werewolves' battle barrels on over to the top of the dynamite crates, and it looks like it's only a matter of time before the whole place gets blown to pieces.

If the heroes stick around, see below. Otherwise, assume they make it outside just before the place goes up.

THEY THINK THEY WON

If the heroes somehow manage to defeat the Black Spiral Dancers (hey, it could happen), they eventually are going to poke around inside the tower. When they do, they find Stormwalker in the main chamber, sitting atop the dynamite and laughing. He's holding a match over the explosives, and he gives the heroes 10 seconds to scramble out of the place.

If any heroes are foolish enough to try to stop Stormwalker, he carries out his threat. Don't bother rolling for this one. Unless they've got some kind of incredible power that can get them out of there, they're dead.

VICTORY AIN'T THEIRS

You may have noticed that this tale's stacked heavily against the heroes. Well doesn't that just break your heart?

EPILOGUE

If the heroes play it smart, they might actually get out of this adventure alive. They should consider themselves lucky if they do.

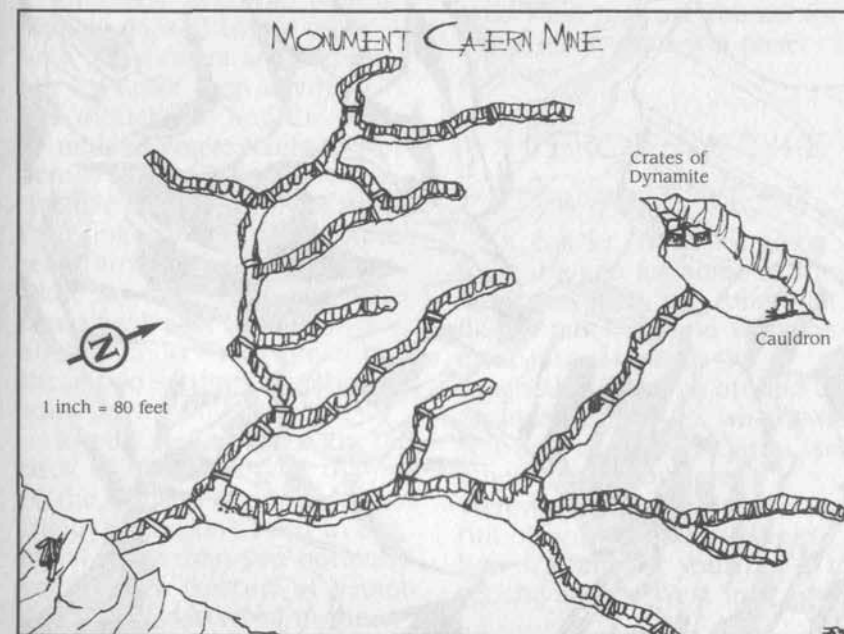
Just because Stormwalker's won a battle doesn't mean the story's over. Sharp heroes are going to realize that the rogue Garou's still got one end of the bridge to build.

Again, the key is to make sure the heroes are capable of getting into the Umbra/Hunting Grounds and from there to the Weird West. After all, they're going to want to be on hand for the final act.

That's the way the chips are fated to fall, no matter how much the heroes may want matters to be resolved differently.

In the end, Stormwalker's going to succeed because he's planned for it to happen that way, and there's little anyone can do to stop him. And you can probably guess where he's headed after that.

If the heroes somehow do prevail, the story's hardly over. Stormwalker's just going to come back and blow the place later. The only way to prevent that from happening is finding him and putting him down permanently. Wish them luck.





SAVAGE HEROES

CONVERTING DEADLANDS TO
WEREWOLF: THE WILD WEST

WORLDS APART

Werewolf: The Wild West is already packed to the teeth with gunslingers and the like, but it's never seen anything like a huckster. And the kind of undead you're likely to run across there aren't much like the Harrowed (except for maybe the stink). Of course, if you've read through the rest of this Dime Novel (and the one that came before it), then you already know that we can mix these two settings together in some pretty unique ways.

To play the adventure in the back of this book (and the rest of the *Under a Harrowed Moon* trilogy), you don't need to do much more than you normally would. Each creature or person that's fully described in the

adventure comes with its own set of statistics for both *Deadlands* and *Werewolf: The Wild West*. Just use the set for the game system you prefer playing.

HEROES IN THE SAVAGE WEST

Of course, that's not going to be enough for some of the braver at heart, you folks that like to muck around with the meat mixed in with the spaghetti. Last time around (in *Strange Bedfellows*), we showed you how to convert Garou (and other characters) from *Werewolf: The Wild West* into full-blown *Deadlands* heroes. Now it's time for your posse to get the Savage West treatment.



To convert your *Deadlands* hero into the kind of character that any Garou would be proud to hunt with, all you've got to do is work your way through the following procedure. It's actually not all that difficult.

STEP 1: TRAITS TO ATTRIBUTES

Since *Werewolf: The Wild West* uses dots instead of dice when talking about a character's raw abilities, you need to be able to convert your hero's Trait dice types into dots. Just check out the table we have provided below for all the details.

Of course, *Deadlands* heroes have a Coordination for each of their die types. You just ignore these in the Savage West. This means a *Quickness* of 1d10 is just as good as one of 4d10.

DICE TO DOTS

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

That's the easy part, of course. Now you've got to figure out which Traits equate to which Attributes. Just consult the next table for that. Any time you've got more than one Trait that applies to an Attribute, just average those numbers, rounding normally.

TRAITS TO ATTRIBUTES

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

APTITUDES TO ABILITIES

Aptitude	Ability
Artillery	No equivalent
Arts:	Expression
Scrutinize	Alertness, Empathy & Subterfuge
Search	Investigation
Trackin'	Survival
Academia:	Science
Area Knowledge:	Culture
Demolition	No equivalent
Disguise	Subterfuge
Language:	Linguistics
Medicine:	Medicine
Professional: Detective	Enigmas
Professional: Law	Law
Professional: Occult	Occult
Professional: Politics	Politics
Professional: Other	As appropriate
Science:	Science
Trade:	As appropriate
Animal Wranglin'	Animal Ken
Leadership	Leadership
Overawe	Intimidation
Performin'	Performance
Persuasion	Expression
Tale Tellin'	Expression
Bluff	Subterfuge
Gamblin'	Subterfuge
Ridicule	No equivalent
Scroungin'	Survival
Survival	Survival
Streetwise	Etiquette
Tinkerin'	Crafts
Faith	See Gnosis
Guts	No equivalent
Bow	No equivalent
Fannin':	Firearms
Filchin'	Larceny
Lockpickin'	Larceny
Shootin':	Firearms
Sleight o' Hand	Performance

APTITUDES TO ABILITIES

Speed Load	Firearms
Throwin':	No equivalent
Climbin'	No equivalent
Dodge	Dodge
Drivin'	No equivalent
Fightin': Brawlin'	Brawl
Fightin': Weapon	Melee
Horse Ridin'	Ride
Sneak	Stealth
Swimmin'	No equivalent
Teamster	No equivalent
Quick Draw	Firearms

For example, if your huckster had a *Cognition* of 3d12, he'd have 5 dots in Perception. Nothing to it.

STEP 2: APTITUDES TO ABILITIES

This is where it gets a bit more complicated. After all, there's a lot more of these skills to go around. We've listed how to convert the basic Aptitudes below, but this can't possibly cover every kind of skill that's going to crop up. Sometimes it's got to be up to the Storyteller and the player to use their common sense to figure things out.

When converting Aptitudes, the hero's Coordination with an Aptitude is equal to the number of dots that hero has with that Ability.

If your hero's got two or more Aptitudes that convert to the same Ability, use the Aptitude with the highest Coordination. If the Aptitude converts to more than one Ability, use the same numbers for each.

Werewolf: The Wild West doesn't use skill concentrations like *Deadlands* does. If your hero has a concentration in a skill, just use the basic skill to convert it. If your hero's got several concentrations of the same skill, use the one with the highest number when converting.

You may notice that many Aptitudes have no equivalents in *Werewolf: The Wild West*. This doesn't mean your hero can't use these skills, just that there are no listed Abilities that equate properly. It's up to the Storyteller to come up with the proper Ability.

STEP 3: EDGES & HINDRANCES TO BACKGROUNDS

In the space of this book, there's no way we could cover how to convert every different Edge and Hindrance into an appropriate Background. That's up to you and your Storyteller. Just remember to use your common sense and rely on the Storyteller's sense of fair play.

Savage Deadlands Details

That part was a piece o' cake compared to what you're up against when you want to convert some of the stranger *Deadlands* heroes into characters running around the Savage West. After all, converting a gunslinger from one game to the other is a simple matter of juggling some numbers and figuring out how each game names a particular kind of skill. The Blessed, Harrowed, Mad Scientists and some of the other unusual *Deadlands* heroes are another matter altogether.

These *Deadlands* characters have some particularly weird wrinkles that don't just cross over all that smoothly to *Werewolf: The Wild West*.



THE BLESSED

IN THE SAVAGE WEST

The blessed aren't really anything out of the ordinary when in the Savage West. They're the standard figures of Western religions that you can find all across America, even today. Sure, they're in touch with their God, but (with a few rare exceptions) that doesn't grant them any special powers.

In the Weird West, all mystical powers have been knocked up several notches by the Reckoning. That's not true in the Savage West. Sure, things

are a bit different there than they are in our world (what with all the werewolves running around and all), but blessed folks aren't able to call on supernatural powers the way they can in the world of *Deadlands*.

IN THE WEIRD WEST

The more ornery sorts (in the faithful kind of way) might want to play a blessed in the Weird West while using the *Werewolf: The Wild West* rules. This just takes a little tinkering.

Since every blessed has a *faith* skill, turn this into a Faith ability. For this convert both the blessed's Spirit and faith as described above and take the highest of the two scores. That's the blessed's Faith.

You then use this Faith number to check to see whether or not a miracle comes off when the blessed asks for it. You roll the dice just like you normally would for any Storyteller check. Take

the Faith number and roll that many d10s. Determine success and failure in the regular way.

Of course, it's impossible to relist every miracle in this here Dime Novel. Your Storyteller needs to work out the effects of each miracle in her game for herself. Most of these are pretty straightforward and only take a little bit of brainwork.

Remember that blessed have to make a Faith roll every time they sin. The difficulty of the roll depends on the nature of the sin, as shown on the Sinnin' Table below. If they fail, they lose a point of Faith until they do something to atone for their mistake.

SHAMANS

IN THE SAVAGE WEST

Shamans work pretty much like the blessed in the Savage West: not too well at all. After all, it's a matter of the mystic levels once again, and they're just not there at the same strength as they are in the

SINNIN'

Sin	Difficulty	Example
Minor	5	Taking the Lord's name in vain; refusing to help those in need.
Major	7	Stealing; refusing to help those in dire need.
Mortal	9	Adultery; killing (not in self-defense); stealing something vitally important.

Weird West. Of course, that doesn't mean that shamanic magic or blessed miracles are entirely useless. Look for future books in the *Werewolf: The Wild West* line to explain just how these sorts of characters function in the American West of the World of Darkness.

In the meantime, though, your shaman's pretty much out of luck if he wants to call on the nature spirits to grant him massive favors. That doesn't mean he's not the same cool character. He's just not working with mystic powers in the same way.

IN THE WEIRD WEST

If you want to use a *Deadlands* shaman with Storyteller rules, here's what you need to do. Shamans purchase each of their rituals as skills, so you need to convert each of these to Abilities. Do this just like you would with a normal Attribute.

Whenever you want your shaman to perform a ritual to ask for a favor, roll the dice for the appropriate ritual Ability and consult the ritual's description.

You should generally subtract -2 from every ritual's TN across the board to find the ritual's difficulty, although the final number is always up to the Storyteller.



For each success, you get the Appeasement Points listed under "Appeasement." So if you get two successes on a dance ritual, which has an Appeasement of 1, you get 2 Appeasement Points.

Once you've figured out how many Appeasement Points you've generated, you can use them to ask for a favor. (If you don't use them now, they fade away.) This works just like it normally does in *Deadlands*. It's simply a matter of spending the Appeasement Points to activate the favor.

It's up to the Storyteller to determine exactly what each favor does in each situation.

MAD SCIENTISTS

IN THE SAVAGE WEST

Mad scientists have two real problems in the Savage West. First, there's no ghost rock other than what they bring along with them (which shouldn't be much). This makes it even more precious than ever before, since it's a Hell of a long way back to get more.

Second, the manitous that spur these inventors to such heights of insane innovation don't exist in the Savage West (that's the whole point of what Stormwalker's trying to do). This means that mad scientists can't come up with new inventions while in the Savage West. Try as they might, nothing is going to strike them out of the blue like a light bulb over the noggin. They might be able to make some small improvements upon devices they've already got, but they won't be anything like the kind of breakthroughs they might have accomplished in the Weird West.

Gizmos brought over from the Weird West work just fine in the Savage West, as long as they've got a supply of the kind of fuel that's needed to power them. Some gadgets don't need ghost rock (like bullet-proof vests), and they work normally. Things like

steam wagons, though, are eventually going to run out of superpowered steam, and nothing can get them going again. Oh, sure, your hero could likely build a massive boiler to create the same kind of heat as burning ghost rock with barrels of coal, but the thing would likely collapse under its own weight.

In any case, you still have to make Reliability rolls when using weird gizmos, and they can still break down with spectacular (and somewhat devastating) results.

IN THE WEIRD WEST

Mad scientists are pretty straightforward, even in the Storyteller system. To create a device, your hero must still go through the same procedure.

While devising a blueprint, you roll the appropriate Ability against a difficulty of 5. Then you draw five cards, plus an extra one for every success.

When you want your hero to actually build the device, you need to roll using the listed Target Number as your difficulty. Unlike standard Storyteller rolls, this one has to be open-ended. This means that if you get a 10 on any of your dice, you get to roll that die over and add the next roll to your previous result. So if you roll a 10 and then a 7, your result is 17.

Weird gizmos are used normally in a Storyteller game. If any special situations come up, it's up to the Storyteller to figure out how to best apply the rules in your game.

HUCKSTERS

IN THE SAVAGE WEST

A huckster normally casts a hex by beating a manitou in a game of wits, represented by manipulating a deck of poker cards. In the Savage West, though, when a huckster deals a hand to invite a manitou to a new challenge, he finds he's the only one at the table.

Huckster hexes don't work in the Savage West. There are no manitous to call on (or they've been sealed away until the World of Darkness has its own Reckoning—which is exactly what Stormwalker is trying to bring about).

In the meantime, though, a huckster is plain out of luck.

IN THE WEIRD WEST

It's a different story back home, of course. Using the Storyteller system, hexes work a whole lot like they do in a standard *Deadlands* game.

Hucksters treat each of their hexes as skills, so you need to convert them into their own unique Abilities. Whenever your huckster wants to cast a hex,



roll the appropriate number of dice. The difficulty is 5. Then you draw 5 poker cards, plus 1 for every success you rolled.

You check all this normally against the hex's description. It's that simple.

HARROWED

IN THE SAVAGE WEST

Unlike most *Deadlands* heroes, Harrowed aren't really affected by traveling to the Savage West. The manitou that drives them and their powers comes with them wherever they go. So the short answer is: They work just like normal.

To see just what constitutes "normal" in the Storyteller system, keep reading, amigo.

IN THE WEIRD WEST

There's one big thing you need to change to work Harrowed in the Storyteller system. You keep track of Dominion just like usual. Of course, the Storyteller doesn't have any Fate Chips to spend on taking advantage of the Harrowed whenever she wants. Instead, the Storyteller should give the manitou its own Willpower statistic (see below for more about this).

To figure the manitou's Willpower, convert its *Spirit* into an Attribute, then double that number.

To try to take over a Harrowed, the Storyteller must spend 1-3 points of Willpower. Spending 1 point is like spending a white Fate Chip; 2 points is a red; 3 points is blue.

The Harrowed and the manitou then each make a Willpower roll, each using its current Willpower. Each side adds its Dominion to its number of successes. The side with the higher total wins. The Harrowed takes ties.

No Willpower points can be spent to make an automatic success on this roll.

However, the Harrowed can spend a Willpower point to regain control once it's lost. To

do so, he must spend as many points of Willpower as the manitou did to take him over (1-3). The manitou can always try again later, though.

Once the Harrowed runs out of Willpower, he's the manitou's plaything until the time period the manitou paid for control of him is over. When that happens, the Harrowed regains control with his current Willpower entirely restored.

It's up to the Storyteller to determine how individual Harrowed powers work in her game. There are a lot of these, after all, and we've only got 64 short pages here.

WILLPOWER

Sometimes you just gotta dig way down deep inside you to find your backbone. That's easy enough if you're Harrowed, but that's not really what we're talking about.

To figure a hero's Willpower, convert its *Vigor* and *Spirit* into Attributes using the Dice for Dots Table. Then add the two numbers together. This is the hero's permanent Willpower. He can use it normally.

FATE CHIPS

If you're familiar with both games, you might notice that Willpower in *Werewolf: The Wild West* works a lot like Fate Chips do in *Deadlands*. Since you've already got a means of

figuring Willpower out, you might think all those Fate Chips you've got are just going to go to waste. That's not necessarily true, but the matter is up to your Storyteller to decide on.

If the Storyteller likes, she can convert those Fate Chips over to "extra" Willpower points. They don't raise the hero's normal Willpower limit, but they can be used just like normal.

Think of these as a spare pool of Willpower points (let's call them Fate Points) you've been awarded for roleplaying your hero well. (Nice going!) You can use them just like normal Willpower points, but you can't recover them after you spend them. Once they're gone, they're gone, compadre. They convert as shown on the Fate Points Table.

A clever Storyteller might decide to include this new mechanic in her *Werewolf: The Wild West* game. All she's got to do is award these Fate Points whenever she thinks you've done a particularly good job of getting into your character.

FATE POINTS

Fate Chip	Fate Points
White	1
Red	2
Blue	3

THE DELIRIUM

Sometimes folks would be scared out of their wits if they knew any better.

Last time we mentioned that the Delirium doesn't work in the Weird West. It's actually more accurate to say it doesn't affect people from the Weird West. If you've got yourself a standard Savage Westerner running around in the world of *Deadlands*, seeing a Garou causes the Delirium to kick in just like normal.

Conversely, even when a Weird Westerner is roaming around the Savage West, spotting a nine-foot tall,



HEROES



drooling mutt doesn't scare him straight out of his mind. No more than you might expect anyhow.

FEAR & GRIT

There's no such thing as a Terror check in *Werewolf: The Wild West*, though, so it's up to the Storyteller to let the heroes know when they feel like turning tail and running.

We suggest letting heroes make Willpower checks in these situations, modifying the difficulty for the situation. Be sure to use *half* the hero's permanent Willpower number for this, not his current total.

Of course, if a hero wants to he can spend a point of Willpower to stand his ground, even when he should be getting out of Dodge. In particularly bad situations, though, each point might only last him a round before he needs to make another check.

Heroes with Grit can use it to reduce the difficulty for their rolls by -1 for each point of Grit they have.

Again, a Storyteller may want to adopt Grit into her campaign. All she has to do then is award a hero a point of Grit for facing up to and destroying a particularly nasty monster. It's up to the Storyteller's judgment, of course, but Grit should only be given out rarely.

MARSHAL: 62



Want Some More?

Well, if you're like old Stone here, you're probably just achin' for a little more of that heart-pumpin' action like you just witnessed in this here Dime Novel™. Well, the folks at Pinnacle Entertainment Group were already waitin' to ambush you, and you just happened to show up at the *right* place at the *right* time.

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DEADLANDS

Werewolves, Go Home!



Ronan Lynch and his friends, including a pack of werewolves, think they're on a roll. Having foiled Billy Stormwalker's plan in the Weird West™, they follow him to the home of the Garou, the darkened land known as the Savage West™. Whatever they were hoping to find, what they get is worse. Stormwalker hasn't given up his plans yet, and he's fixing to destroy a sacred caern.

The heroes are the last, best defense of both their worlds. Wish 'em luck. They'll need it.

Savage Passage is the second Dime Novel™ in the *Under a Harrowed Moon* trilogy.

It includes the second part of a triple-length novella and a *Deadlands*™ / *Werewolf: The Wild West*™ adventure.



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