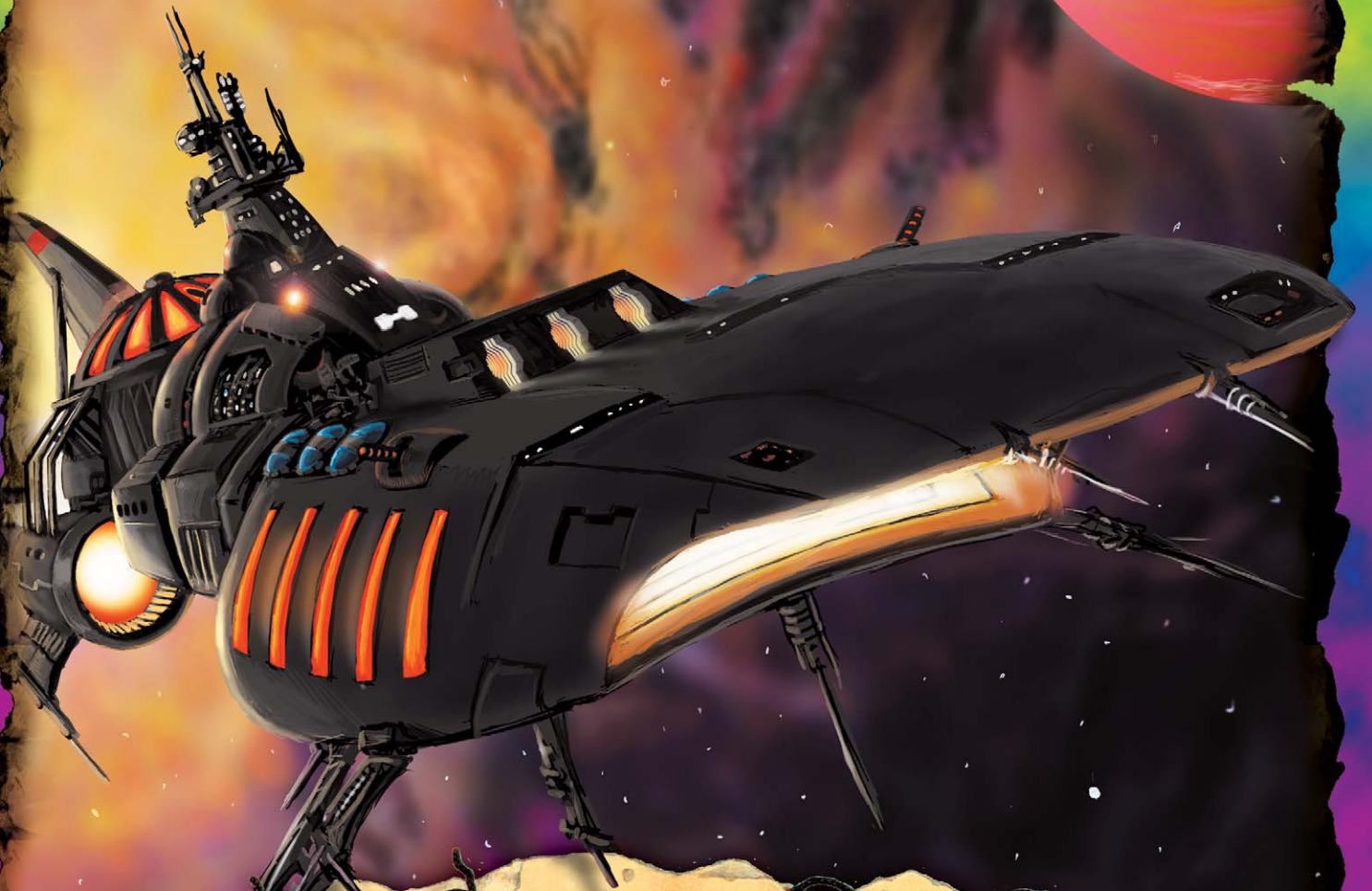
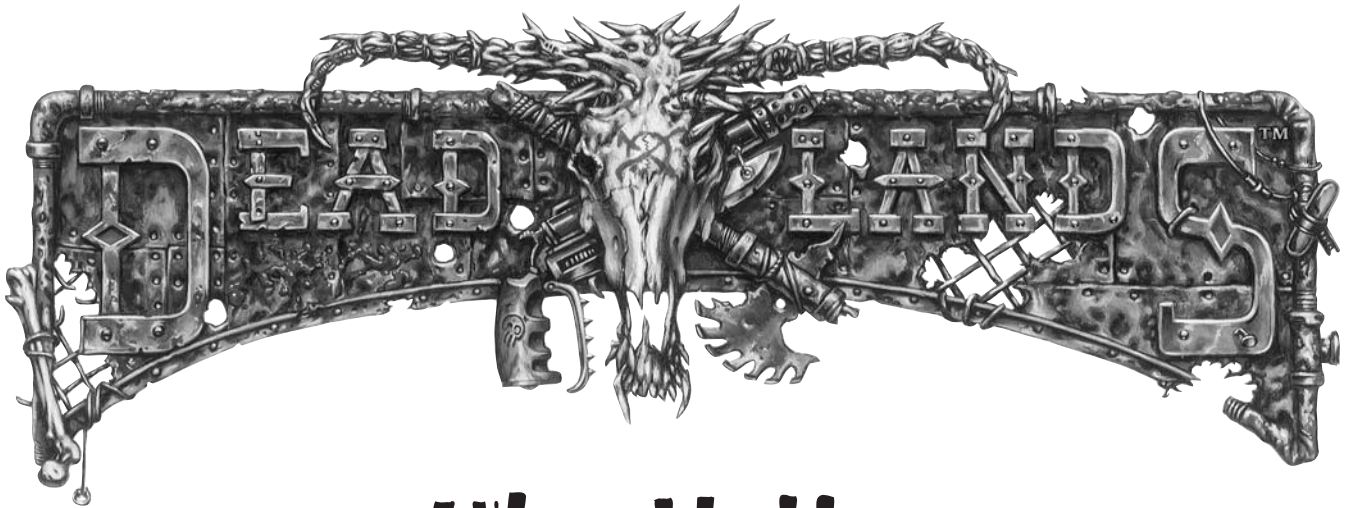


The Unity



HELL ON EARTH
Shane Lacy Hensley

1/11/02



The Unity

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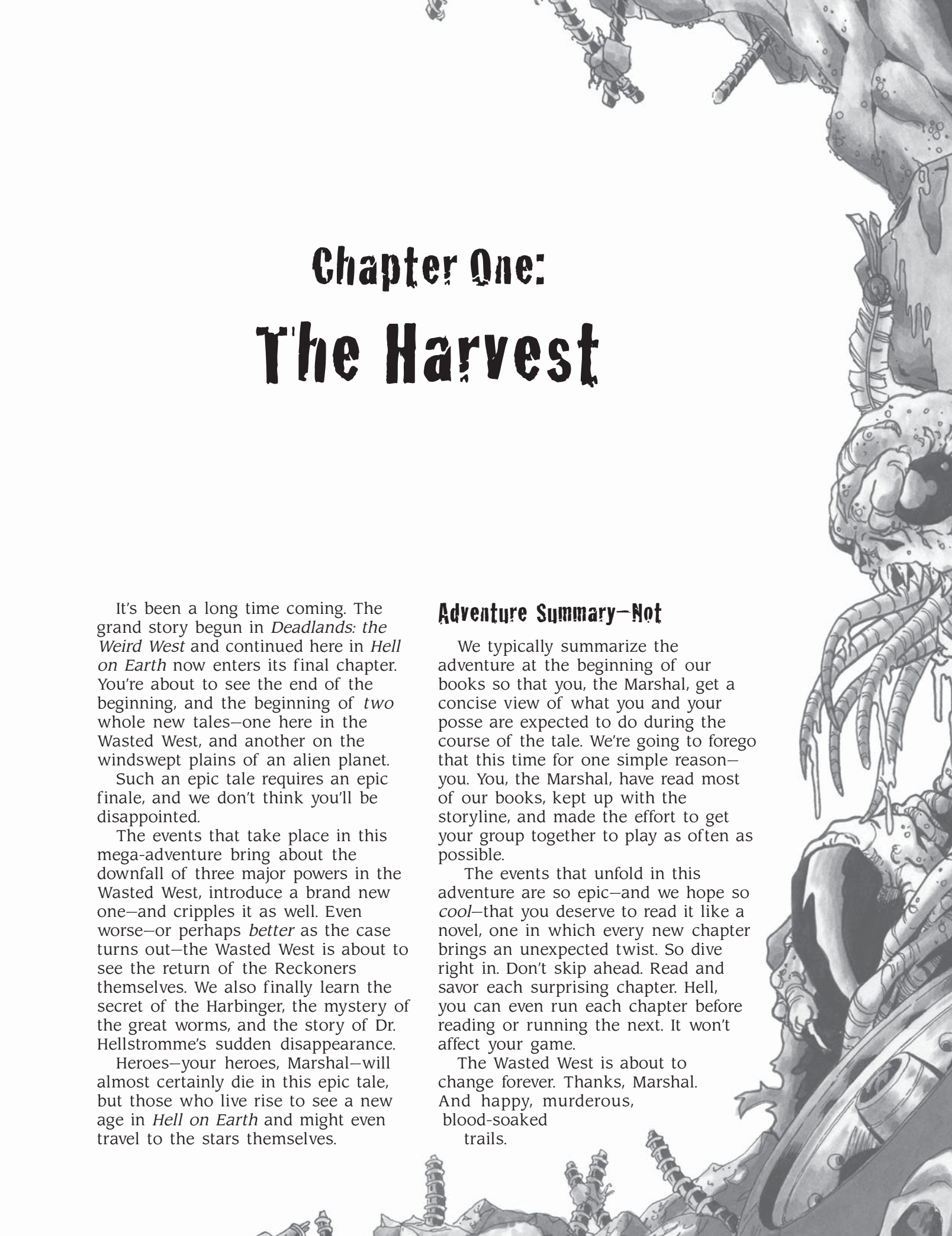
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Dedication: To the fans of the Wasted West and our long, strange trip through Hell.

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Chapter One: The Harvest

It's been a long time coming. The grand story begun in *Deadlands: the Weird West* and continued here in *Hell on Earth* now enters its final chapter. You're about to see the end of the beginning, and the beginning of *two* whole new tales—one here in the Wasted West, and another on the windswept plains of an alien planet.

Such an epic tale requires an epic finale, and we don't think you'll be disappointed.

The events that take place in this mega-adventure bring about the downfall of three major powers in the Wasted West, introduce a brand new one—and cripples it as well. Even worse—or perhaps *better* as the case turns out—the Wasted West is about to see the return of the Reckoners themselves. We also finally learn the secret of the Harbinger, the mystery of the great worms, and the story of Dr. Hellstromme's sudden disappearance.

Heroes—your heroes, Marshal—will almost certainly die in this epic tale, but those who live rise to see a new age in *Hell on Earth* and might even travel to the stars themselves.

Adventure Summary—Not

We typically summarize the adventure at the beginning of our books so that you, the Marshal, get a concise view of what you and your posse are expected to do during the course of the tale. We're going to forego that this time for one simple reason—you. You, the Marshal, have read most of our books, kept up with the storyline, and made the effort to get your group together to play as often as possible.

The events that unfold in this adventure are so epic—and we hope so *cool*—that you deserve to read it like a novel, one in which every new chapter brings an unexpected twist. So dive right in. Don't skip ahead. Read and savor each surprising chapter. Hell, you can even run each chapter before reading or running the next. It won't affect your game.

The Wasted West is about to change forever. Thanks, Marshal. And happy, murderous, blood-soaked trails.

The Story So Far

In our last book, *The City o' Sin*, Silas Rasmussen, the self-proclaimed Mutant King of Las Vegas, performed a ritual that allowed him to open a gate through the Hunting Grounds to the renegade mutant city of Armana.

The Hekants, as they called themselves, had splintered from the Cult of Doom several years earlier, and Silas had never forgiven the slight.

The Mutant King's hand-picked arbiters of justice included a horde of trogs and Grundies as well as a small host of Doombringers. This force marched through the gate, emerged in Armana, and destroyed the Hekants in a bloody, merciless massacre.

Silas blamed the massacre on the norms the Armanans "foolishly" allowed to live with them (Helots). His fiery speeches back in Lost Vegas incited the mutants to a blood-frenzy and prepared them for his eventual march on the last bastions of non-scaly-skinned humans.

Before he would declare such a war, however, he needed to consult the Glow at the Yucca Mountain holy site.

The Second Ritual

Of course, all this was just an excuse. Here's why he really needed to run to Yucca Mountain.

The ritual Silas used to open such a massive gate through the Hunting Grounds, and have it lead exactly where he wanted in Idaho, drained both he and his city of precious radiation. As you'll see several times in this adventure, getting to the Hunting Grounds is *relatively* easy. Controlling one's destination once there is much more difficult.

Fortunately for the Mutant King, he had anticipated such a power drain, and knew of a way to "recharge his batteries"—for a time at least.

Restoring the Glow required another dark ritual, one that involved a large pile of highly concentrated radioactive goo. One such pile sat under guard at the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Storage Facility, a holy site to the minions of the Cult of Doom. Silas could use the radioactive sludge to re-power Vegas, but he knew it would destroy the site as well. An unfortunate side-effect to be sure, but yet another incident that could be blamed on the norms.

In the adventure "Jihad!" from *The City o' Sin*, Yucca Mountain was destroyed. Either Silas vaporized it in the ritual or the heroes destroyed it. In either case, the story back in Lost Vegas is that a band of norm terrorists destroyed this most holy of sites.

Now Silas is ready to cement his power in the long-term. The more territory his minions conquer, the more the Glow spreads, and the more power Silas can draw from it.

Enter the Combine

As was discussed in *City o' Sin*, the Combine and the Cult of Doom have formed a tenuous alliance. Detachment Gamma under Colonel Wanda Jones, is stationed at Indian Springs Air Force Base near Lost Vegas to facilitate communications between the two armies.

After his return from Yucca Mountain, Colonel Jones informed Silas that the time had come. The Combine's assault—the so-called "Harvest"—was about to begin.

Silas was all too happy to oblige. He would ally with the cyborg-general and his army of machines.

For now, anyway.

Throckmorton's plan was to split his legions into three parts. The majority of the force, including the bulk of the Black Hats, would move directly against Junkyard from the east. Two smaller flanking forces, consisting mostly of elite automatons and cyborgs, would move along the Rockies before crossing and flank the city from the north and south.

Throckmorton's infiltrator automatons assured him the Iron Alliance's plan was to call in the Convoy once the Combine left Denver. It

was 78% likely, Throckmorton's AI determined, that the Convoy would be kept in reserve to the south of Junkyard in position to descend upon the Combine's flanks once they were engaged with Junkyard.

Rasmussen's role, then, was to approach from the west, smash the Convoy, and then link up with the Combine to join in the final assault.

Throckmorton's AI believed this was 67% likely to destroy both the Convoy and the bulk of the mutant army in one massive battle.

Rasmussen, never a military genius, saw only a chance to destroy the Convoy and then take the Combine in the rear after the Black Hats had weakened themselves on Junkyard's walls. A few *EMPs* would render the Combine's automatons and raptors helpless, Silas mused, and then his mutant hordes could charge in and wipe out whatever was left.

Throckmorton announced the day of the Harvest as midnight on January 1st, 2096—one day from the start of this adventure.

Rasmussen and his warband set out on foot December 14th to complete their part of the arrangement. The Combine's mechanized forces marched from Denver two weeks later. The early departure of the mutant forces was spotted by Ike Taylor's allies in the Sky Pirates, and gave the Iron Alliance time to contact the Convoy and get them in position exactly where the Denver AI thought they'd be—near Provo, south of Junkyard.

The Setup

Your group needs to be known by the leaders of the Iron Alliance. Well known. If your posse has played *The Boise Horror* and *Urban Renewal*, this isn't a problem. If they're not well known, it's best if you make them so first. They need to be powerful enough that the alliance is willing to send out a pilot to look for them. A Law Dog, a Templar, a powerful Doomsayer, or syker are also good candidates, even if the group hasn't specifically worked with the alliance before.

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The first scene starts shortly after dinner time, December 31st, 2095. Your posse simply has to be some place where they can be found by the Iron Alliance. If they're away from Junkyard, a Sky Pirate by the name of Hal Goldman is sent to pick them up and deliver them to a large camp south of old Provo. If they're in Junkyard, they're summoned before the leaders of the Alliance and taken to Provo.

When the heroes arrive, they see the hundreds of vehicles of the Convoy sitting behind a long east-west ridge a few miles south of the Provo ruins. Along the ridge, facing south, the Convoy have set up scattered defensive positions and deployed their weapons as if for a major battle. Anyone who makes a Fair (5) *Cognition* roll also notices a large number of purple-robed Doomsayers and more than a few tribes of (obviously) friendly mutants. (Joan is here as well if the heroes have met her previously—otherwise they likely do not recognize the plain-looking head of the rebel Doomsayers.)

If the group has met some of the other defenders stationed here, such as the Black Watch and Ghurkas from Culp Creek, Oregon, or Hauptmann Johann Kleiber's Fallschirmjaegers (see *Waste Warriors* for information on both groups), they spot them as well. All these survivors are part of the Iron Alliance, and have been stationed here to block the Cult of Doom and then flank the Combine when it assaults Junkyard.

Give the heroes a little time to speak to any old acquaintances they encounter. You might also throw in any other particularly interesting nonplayer characters the group met on their previous adventures. This gives the game a better feeling of continuity and perhaps makes your players more loyal to the alliance and their friends. (Jenny Quaid, encountered later in this adventure, is *not* here. Her Queens of the Road are in Junkyard.)

Everyone Hates My Posse!

Okay, sometimes a posse just doesn't know how to make friends and influence people. A group with a lousy reputation around Junkyard (or with the Iron Alliance in general) is not going to be entrusted with an important mission like the one that starts this adventure. Here's how to handle a body of blackguards.

If the heroes are just unknown, they can be hired on as bodyguards for a single hero of your creation who can get conveniently killed when you think your own posse will pick up the flag and carry on.

If the heroes have become genuine bad guys to the Iron Alliance, you've got problems. First, what kind of campaign are you running, Marshal? The Iron Alliance is about the only chance the Wasted West has against the machinations (literally!) of the Combine. And you don't even want to know what might happen if those guys win. Hey, we blew the world up once. We'll do it again, compadre!

All right, 'nuff said. If the "heroes" are hated by the Iron Alliance, you need to stage things a bit differently. The Iron Alliance should still hire them to fight with the Convoy south of Junkyard. They aren't called on for their loyalty, however, they're hired/bribed/forced or whatever to fight there in hopes they'll get slain and take a few muties with them in the process. If you're lucky, your posse will do such a good job there that Ike Taylor and his gang look at them a bit differently from that point on.

How things go from this point forward depends on the actions of your posse, of course, but you should work to make them at least accepted, if not loved, by the leaders of the Alliance.

Scene One: Opening Moves

The head of the Convoy, Fuller "Goose" Mattox, is in charge of this force. You can find lots more details on Goose and the Convoy in the *Road Warriors* book, but their statistics aren't that important to what's about to happen here.

One of Goose's two right-hand men, Calvin "Preacher" Ellis, is the first to formally greet the posse and inform them why they've been summoned.

You have to do a little figuring here, Marshal. We're assuming your posse is loyal to the Iron Alliance, and by default, that means they're ready to defend Junkyard when Throckmorton's Harvest begins (which it has, as they're about to learn). If your group is more mercenary, then you'll have to go through that whole bartering song and dance before giving the speech below. When you've figured out what they're fighting for, start reading, Marshal.

"Hi brothers. I'm Calvin Ellis, but most folks call me 'Preacher' on account of I used to be one.

I'm sure you're wondering why you've been asked here. I'm afraid it's bad news. The Combine's 'Harvest' has begun."

Ellis waits for that to sink in before giving them the really bad news.

"It gets worse. Throckmorton's made some kinda deal with the Cult o' Doom. Rasmussen and around 20,000 three-eyed weirdos are headin' toward Junkyard right now. Near as we can tell, the doomies are comin' up I-15 to hit Junkyard from the south while the Combine hits from the north or east. Or maybe both.

The Convoy's job is to block the muties here in the hills outside o' old Provo. We got a good position here that overlooks I-15, and we're spread out enough their magic won't kill too many of us at once.

Once this fight's over, we're supposed to head up to Junkyard and take Throckmorton from behind. Er, that didn't sound quite right. We're supposed to ram 'em in the rear. Pardon me brothers and sisters. I mean it's a flank attack. That's it. We got to hit these muties as hard and as fast as we can so we can get up to Junkyard and make sure Taylor's boys hold.

So we're callin' in every friendly gun with a rep. What do you say, brothers and sisters, will you join our flock?"

Let's hope your heroes say yes, because otherwise some other group gets to go on the rest of this adventure and screw over the good people of—well, we'll get to that later. If the posse decides not to help for some bizarre reason, then you'd better figure out some way to get them back in.

Digging In

The heroes are told to station themselves wherever they want. They can find a spot on the ridge south of Provo or look for some other clever spot from which to fight.

As they survey the scene, have everyone make *Cognition* rolls. Junkers or other mathematically-inclined characters can add +4 to the roll. The highest-rolling hero notes by a quick count that there are around 4,000 combatants making a stand here. That's a far cry from the 20,000 Preacher says Silas is bringing. Should they bring this up, Preacher gives them a surly look (as if they might be trying to shirk their duties), and gives them the standard speech about how the alliance has better weapons, better troops, and righteousness on their side. Then he moves on to deal with other more important issues.

Head to Head to Head

Around midnight, anyone with nightvision goggles (or similar abilities) spot the mutie horde appear in the distance. Though the Convoy maintains

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light discipline (no fires, flashlights, smoking, and so on), the mutants somehow sense their presence. "Maybe they smell us," someone says. That and a multitude of eyes capable of seeing in near-darkness give the Convoy's position away.

The muties don't know the strength of their opponents however, and they have little choice anyway, for Silas Rasmussen himself, the Mutant King, presses them onward with the force of his terrible Doombringers and their fanatical underlings.

The horde approaches to within half a mile of the ridge. The elite troops exit the ragtag collection of buses and trucks that brought them here. The rest stand on foot in poorly-aligned ranks, a pathetic mockery of melee troops from ages past.

The mutant horde gathers for several minutes before everyone hears Silas deliver one last oration over a truck-mounted PA system.

One of the muties is speaking in the distance. It's a tinny sound, as if through a loudspeaker. By the sound of his voice, it can only be Silas Rasmussen.

"Brothers, sisters, and those in-between! Our day has come! The norms who destroyed our errant brothers in Armana stand before us. They despise you for your scaly skin, your extraordinary vision, your massive teeth, or your monstrous strength! And they would kill you for it! They would kill you and mount your three-eyed skulls on their walls as cruel jokes!"

"But today we can strike them at their very heart. We can tear down the walls of Junkyard, where mutants are tortured and castrated or fed to wild animals! We can free our brothers and sisters and in-betweeners serving as slaves to the cruel tyrants of

Quick Combat

There are several large combats in this adventure, and you won't want to game out every single one of them with the fully detailed system normally used in *Hell on Earth*. *The Unity* is an epic story that needs to be told from start to finish in a couple of sessions—not dragged out for months by gaming out every massive battle scene.

The system described here helps you run these large fights in just a few minutes.

To start, read the adventure section that describes any special modifiers or conditions. Then have everyone make attack rolls. These rolls cover about 2-5 minutes of sporadic combat. Most characters should use the *shootin'* skill and mark off 2d10 bursts or 3d6 shots of regular ammo per roll.

Heroes with arcane abilities, magical weapons, heavy weapons, or other special abilities should get a +1 to +5 modifier to the roll—your call, Marshal. You can reduce this modifier when a lot of fights happen in a short amount of time to simulate the loss of ammo, Strain, and so on.

Chips may be spent on these rolls, as usual.

Wounds suffered should be distributed randomly (roll Hit Location for each).

Each player should keep track of the casualties he caused as well—they count toward awards at the end of each chapter!

Roll Result

| | |
|-------|--|
| Bust | The hero catches Hell and suffers 3d6 wounds. |
| 1-3 | The hero gets hit early with a lucky round and suffers 1d4 wounds in one location. He doesn't account for a single casualty this time. |
| 4-6 | The hero suffers 1d4 wounds and takes out 1d6 opponents. |
| 7-10 | The hero takes a wound but takes out 2d6 foes. |
| 11-19 | The stud suffers no wounds while taking out 3d6 bad guys. |
| 20+ | The hero takes no damage and proves himself a mean, lean, killing machine. He causes 4d6 casualties. |

the 'Iron Alliance.' We can show the norms that it is they whom evolution has passed over. It is they who shall serve. It is they who shall be shown the true kindness of mutant-dom by ending their pathetic and antiquated existence."

"Are you with me?"

The shouts of the mutant horde bring back odd memories. You think of a football game you attended before the war, when 100,000 fans screamed to prevent the visiting team from calling their plays. Oddly, you almost start to wave your arms in an attempt to quieten the mutants. But only death will silence these unfortunate creatures tonight.

Silas screams a few more times, then utters that word you've dreaded for hours now, "Charge!"

The mutants attack. A few hundred scream ahead on bikes or in cars rigged with machine guns, rockets, or other hardware. The vast majority of mutants charge forward on foot, however.

The Convoy opens fire with artillery hidden further back in Provo and a wave of junker tech. The big guns concentrate on vehicles first and then work their way over the scattering foot troops as they rush forward.

Small arms fire crackles next, ripping into the first waves of charging mutants less than 200 yards from the main line. The artillery stops when the muties reach the Convoy's foxholes. Now the real fighting begins. Fire erupts from both sides and green-robed Doombringers and Doomsayers among the crowd let off a string of arcane attacks. Dozens of *nukes*, *EMPs*, and *MIRVs* explode along the ridgeline, killing scores of defenders in one Hellish barrage.

The Convoy and its other allies hold their ground, but the bursts give the foot troops time to charge the ridge itself. A few last salvos tear into the screaming mutants, but hundreds manage to hit the front lines and close into melee.



Let Slip the Dogs of War!

Your posse now has to deal with one of these charges. Have your team go through three rounds of Quick Combat (as described on page 8, amigo). The muties are poorly armed, so add +2 to the heroes' rolls during these first three attacks.

Read the following afterward:

You've done well, but now the muties have gained the ridge. It's time for close combat.

After the third round, run two more rounds using the hero's *fightin'* skills. The muties are now in close and force the posse into bloody hand-to-hand combat.

After the last roll, the battle still rages but the heroes have dealt with the foes in their immediate area. Unfortunately, the muties have crested the hill and at least a few Doomsayers are tossing *nukes* and other such spells at the massive car park below.

It looks very, very bad for the Convoy. They've been overrun. Let your heroes argue about what to do with a bit, and roll an occasional shot at them. When the heroes finally come up with a plan, move on to the next scene, The Harbinger.

The Harbinger

That's right, we said the Harbinger. It's time he made his appearance. Have you guessed who he is? We've dropped a few clues here and there, but this one has been relatively tough. We'll give you a few more paragraphs to figure it out.

Read the following to your doomed heroes as they watch Rasmussen's mutant hordes overrun the Convoy's positions.

You slam another magazine into your rifle and damn your luck as more and more muties charge up the hill. There seems no end to the hideous freaks this night.

You look up and howl one last furious curse at the stars—and see a strange red light. Something—a flare, or a helicopter, or some kind of jet with Vertical Take Off and Landing is coming in. You plug a few more muties charging you and your friends then watch as the ship continues to descend—smack into the middle of the ridge line!

Most everyone stops firing for a moment, waiting to see what this

thing is and whose side it's on. As it draws level, you can see it's definitely a ship of some kind—like a spaceship! It's small but sleek and painted jet black. Is it possible you're being invaded by little green men just as you're about to be eaten by big green ones?

The craft lands on the ridge line, scattering a group of mutants and norms grappling in hand-to-hand combat, and then it goes still. Most everyone is dead silent now, though a few hardened vets take the opportunity to whack nearby foes.

Then from the middle of the Convoy's cars you see a bunch of purple-robed Doomsayers running up the hill. In the lead is a brown-haired woman—could that be Joan herself? She's literally sprinting up the hill, screaming "Stop! Stop the fighting! It's him! It's him! As I have foretold!"

Now a single door on the ship starts to lower like a drawbridge. It looks like a scene from some bad sci-fi movie, but here it is. You're ready for a big steel robot to step out and say "Klaatu Barata Nikto," when what comes out but...

...a giant robot!

Only this one's a pale white color with a blazing red electronic eye in the center of its head. It steps out, and in a mechanically amplified British voice it says "I am the Harbinger. Mutants, lay down your weapons, for I am more than the Harbinger. Much more. I am Doctor Darius Hellstromme! And I am your master!"

That's right, friends. The Harbinger is the long-missing Doctor Darius Hellstromme, the very same Dr. Hellstromme who brought about this whole end-of-the-world thing. You can

read all about his tragic tale later in this book' in truth, he's currently in the running for the single most important figure in the whole tale of Deadlands. With players like Raven and Stone, that's really saying something. But again, his full story is finally revealed in the end of this adventure. For now, let's get back to that nifty narration.

Every waster has heard Joan's predictions that a pale "harbinger" with a single red-eye would emerge to lead mutants everywhere to a new era of peace and prosperity. Dr. Hellstromme and his robotic body (which keeps his 200+ year old brain alive) certainly fits the bill, though not in the way anyone expected. Joan wastes no time in rushing to Hellstromme's side and kneels before him, as do her personal escort of purple-robos and a couple dozen friendly mutants.

Seeing this, hundreds of Rasmussen's own mutants join Joan and kneel before Hellstromme. You watch in amazement as the robot points to the attackers and says "Lay down your arms!" and they do!

But Silas isn't ready to get voted off the island just yet. He uses his own mega-PA system to start screaming. "What are you doing? Fight, my mutants! This is nothing but a pathetic norm trick! Hellstromme is dead! A sacred martyr to the cause. Now fight! Fight!"

A few mindless trogs and Grundies do what Silas says, but the rest just stare dumb-founded, trying to figure out what to do. Trying to choose between a mad dictator and a robotic prophet.

Hellstromme cranks up the volume, drowning Silas out and continues. "It is written that I, Hellstromme, am your maker! This pointless war against the pitiful norms was not my bidding. Turn now and return to our holy city to await my arrival! These humans will not hurt you if you do as I say!"

Another voice calls out from one of the trucks below. It's Goose Mattox. "Do what he says people. Any mutie going south doesn't get shot. Any of you disobey my order and I'll strap you to the front of my truck when we fight the Combine!"

Go ahead and give the party an opportunity to screw themselves. Be forgiving unless they really go nuts and just won't stop. Even then, let them fight some muties who didn't give up so that Goose doesn't crucify them.

Then get back to Uncle Hellstromme's story-time.

The vast majority of the mutant horde drops their weapons and high-tail it (literally in some cases) back into the darkness. Silas Rasmussen continues to scream for a while, then a barrage of fire in his general direction silences the madman. You can hear his vehicles gunning their motors, returning south.

Silence follows for several long seconds, then a distant cheer starts at one end of the ridge line and ripples along toward the other.

This battle is over.

The Harbinger briefly speaks to Joan and the other schismatics nearby, then looks to the rest of the cheering crowd and gives one last cryptic speech.

"I'm glad I could be of help here today, but I also know I am largely responsible for the destruction of our world. I must also tell you that there is something far worse than the mutant horde or the Combine coming your way. I'm off now to find a way to stop it, and perhaps redeem myself for the horror I have subjected you to."

With that, Hellstromme quickly steps into his spaceship, seals the door, and blasts off into the night sky.

Again the crowd goes silent. What could be worse than the Cult of Doom and the Combine?

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Goose Mattox finally breaks the silence. "Shake it off, people. I'm throwing away my booze too, but despite tonight's unexpected show we've still got a job to do. Let's get to Junkyard and kick Throckmorton's armored ass or this was all for nothin'."

The survivors of the ridge line pack up their heavy weapons and wounded and slowly trundle down the hill. There they load onto the Convoy's vehicles, and start toward Junkyard for another bloody fight.

Scene Two: The Defense of Junkyard

It's time for General Throckmorton's Combine to make its big play on Junkyard. So break out about 10,000 Cardstock Cowboys and start the fight. You can order extras from...

Okay, of course we're just kidding. The fight for Junkyard takes place around the heroes as they engage in one small but very important part of this epic battle.

Let's get right to it.

Here Comes the Cavalry!

The heroes are now on a flat-bed truck en-route to Junkyard with the rest of the Convoy. (If they have their own vehicle, they can use that instead.) About five miles from the city, the lead vehicles manned by Goose, Preacher, and Wayne "Jackrabbit" Hollins come to a halt. Though the heroes don't know this, they're waiting on the signal to charge, and only the head honchos know exactly what that signal is.



The driver of the heroes' truck comes to a halt as well. Then he lights up a smoke and steps out onto his running board for a better look. After a few minutes, he turns back towards his passengers. He shifts his Mack truck ball cap on his head and tries to give a pep talk of his own.

"The Combine is coming. We've got maybe 10,000 wasters in Junkyard who can handle a gun and another 2,000 or so out here. The Combine has a good 20,000 Black Hats and God knows how many automatons, raptors, and other devices we ain't seen yet. Sky Pirates say he's got half a dozen hover tanks, too.

But Goose told me the Iron Alliance has a plan. He wouldn't say 'xactly what it was, but I been ridin' with the man for five years now, and if he says it, it's gospel."

The driver then reaches inside the cab and pulls out a satchel. Inside are a handful of incendiary

grenades. He tosses two of them to your group.

"I've been told our job is to look for mobile artillery pieces and take 'em out. Any Red Hats we come across as well. No, I don't know how we're supposed to pull it off with a flatbed truck and a couple of grenades, but Goose says that's our job so that's what we're doin'. Don't ask me any questions 'cause I don't know nothin' else. Just hang on an' wait 'til we see the signal. I'm told we'll know it when we see it. Then we're goin' in."

An hour later, the heroes finally hear the sounds of battle around Junkyard. Streaks of fire race across the sky as raptors duel with surface-to-air missiles and rain death down on the fortress-city.

It's time for another big narrative.

It feels like you've been waiting for days, though it's really only been an hour or so since you stopped here. Your nerves dance like hot wires waiting for this mysterious "signal."

Finally, the battle starts, perhaps five miles north of you

in the dark night. A low rumble sounds in the distance. Artillery?

Now you hear the staccato bursts of anti-air fire and the rush of turbines—the all-too-familiar sound of raptors. Suddenly a salvo of surface-to-air missiles race from somewhere below the horizon and into the sky. At least two make contact and create two beautiful fireballs high in the night sky.

The Convoy starts forward—not fast, but at a slow creeping pace that makes you all the more nervous.

Ten minutes later you crest a low rise and can make out beautiful Junkyard. Her walls blaze with small arms fire, rockets, and even a few flamethrowers.

You pass around a pair of night-vision binoculars and feel your guts curl into a knot. In the binoculars' green light you make out hundreds of cars, motorcycles, trucks, and even the dreaded hover tanks advancing on the city, drawing ever closer. Legions of Black Hats and automatons advance on the wall, firing as they go. Scores of valiant defenders tumble from the heights, but scores more take their place.

Then something begins to hum, something from within the walls of Junkyard itself. The humming grows louder, so loud you can feel it rattling your teeth!

Now the front line of the Combine's horde impacts the wall. Dozens more lines of merciless troops follow! There's no hope against these numbers—no way Junkyard can stand.

Then the humming surges one last time. A wave of violet energy rushes out from the wall and washes over the stunned forces of the Combine below. The sudden silence is deafening. The rattle of machine guns stops, the screech of tires halt, and even the whir of turbines from raptors and hover tanks fades.

The Harvest

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A loudspeaker from somewhere inside Junkyard suddenly blares to life. "This is Ike Taylor. Now's the time, survivors! The Combine's weapons are useless and their automatons are jammed for half an hour! Charge! Charge! Charge!"

Massive floodlights from hidden sconces in the wall flood the surrounding plains. Thousands of Black Hats stand stunned, trying desperately to work guns that won't fire! Raptors fall from the sky and crash to earth, their engines seemingly dead. Hover tanks stop and hit the ground with heavy thuds. Automatons freeze in place like grotesque mannequins. Now you understand. The rumors of Hellstromme's secret weapons hidden under the walls has somehow stopped the Combine dead in their tracks.

For half an hour.

The walls of Junkyard open and thousands of angry survivors rush out to wreak havoc on the stunned Combine.

It's time to let slip the dogs of war, and you are the dogs.

What the Hell Is That?

As we hinted in the *Iron Oasis* sourcebook, the shields used to defend Junkyard have an additional purpose. It's not an electro-magnetic pulse—that would ruin Junkyard's equipment as well. It's more like static that temporarily severs the link between the earth and the Hunting Grounds. That shuts down the raptors, automatons, hover tanks (all controlled by zombie brains) and even the mad science that controls the Black Hats' guns.

Of course that also means cyborgs in your posse shut down as well. Sykers, Doomsayers, and other arcane-sorts are similarly cut off from their powers. In



other words, there's no supernatural mumbo-jumbo within a mile of Junkyard for the next 30 minutes.

Payback's a Bitch

The walls of Junkyard open and Ike's "heavy cavalry," the long-courted road gangs, lead the way, thundering over the Black Hats like worn-down speedbumps. Throckmorton's machines—almost all controlled by now-helpless zombie brains or mad "super science"—stand frozen in the harsh glare of the floodlights. His cowardly Black Hats turn tail and run as well—smack into the charging ranks of the Convoy.

After the posse's truck does a little *Death Race 2000* through the Black Hat scum, it pulls up alongside a massive

self-propelled gun. The weapon was a hover vehicle rewired to run with an automaton head, so it now sits helpless on the desert floor. Christmas must have come early, because a command APC with two Red Hats in it sits less than 50 yards away as well. The posse is in for a little payback they've likely earned in their previous adventures.

The two Red Hats (both cyborgs) sit helpless in their seats—seemingly dead. In fact, they are dead since their manitous are temporarily scrambled. This is like shooting fish in a barrel except for a handful of Black Hats who decide to grow spines and come to their leaders' aid. A dozen of these courageous fellows make it to your posse as they attempt to disable the gun or finish the Red Hats.

The hover tank is an easy kill as long as the heroes use the thermite grenades the driver gave them. A Fair (5) *demolitions* roll puts it in the right spot. The grenade lights up like a road flare and begins to burn a hole straight down through the chassis of the tank and into the automaton brain-case sealed within. Even on a *demolitions* failure, the tank's internal systems are damaged enough that it cannot fire (though it might limp away to fight another day when the scrambling stops).

Profile: Black Hats (12)

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

Dodge 2d6, drivin' 2d6, fightin': brawlin' 3d6, lockpickin' 2d8, shootin': MG 3d8, sneak 3d6, speedload 2d8, swimmin' 2d6, throwin': balanced, unbalanced 2d8

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

Academia: occult 2d6, area knowledge: Denver 2d6, artillery 1d6, demolition 2d6, gamblin' 4d6, guts 3d6, leadership (leader only) 2d8, medicine: general 2d6, overawe 2d6, scroungin' 3d6, scrutinize 2d6, search 3d6, survival 3d6, trackin' 3d6

Pace: 6

Size: 6

Wind: 14

Special Abilities:

Armor: Scavenged Kevlar (AV 2)

Gear: These goons carry assault rifles, but none of them are currently working, so they use their knives! (Ammo: 10mm; Shots: 30; RoF: 9; Range: 10/20; Damage: 4d8, AP2), large knives (STR+1d4), and two frag grenades each. The Black Hats aren't too wild with their grenades—they use them only if they won't wipe out the rest of their team.

Description: These thugs haven't quite figured out that their bosses (the nearby Red Hats) are out of it. They're afraid that if they try and run, their HeadBangers will be triggered. They've stayed to fight and won't run until they see the Red Hats are dead.

The Big Party

When the half hour is up, more than 60% of the Combine force sent to attack Junkyard has been destroyed. What's left put their metal tails between their legs and run for Denver.

The Convoy pulls up outside Junkyard's walls and regroups. There Ike Taylor, Goose Mattox, Joan, Jo, and Doc Schwartz engage in hardy handshakes, hugs, and a public champagne bath. Ike then picks up a portable megaphone and finishes this chapter with one last speech.

"Today is a great day, citizens of Junkyard and friends from afar. We've broken the back of the Combine. But we know better than to let them rebuild. Now we've got to finish the job. The Convoy and our own mobile forces are ready to pursue Throckmorton's dogs all the way to Denver. There we'll rally with thousands of allies from the east for the final siege on Denver itself!"

The crowd goes wild, hungry for more blood and bolts. Ike lets the mob scream a bit, then finishes his sermon.

"Survivors, leave your wounded here. They'll be cared for as heroes. The rest of you who have pledged yourselves to our cause, fuel up your rigs here at

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Junkyard or hitch a ride on a bus or a truck. Goose Mattox is in charge of the expedition, and he's ready to roll all the way to Denver! Now let's finish this thing!"

The crowd lets out one more huge cheer and then everyone goes to work. Some start repairing their damaged rigs, others get in line for Junkyard's spook juice, and those awaiting rides stoke up fires and warm themselves as best they can while they wait.

It seems Throckmorton's Harvest is all but over.

Yeah, right.

Let your heroes recoup for a bit, and maybe barter for any supplies or ammo they need. Then move on to Chapter Two.

Bounty

Enemy casualties caused in the

Cult of Doom fight: Count the number of casualties each character caused in Quick Combat (only) and award the following Fate Chip: 1-10 casualties nets 1 white chip; 11-20 casualties is a red chip; 21-50 casualties is a blue chip; 51+ casualties is a Legend Chip!

Destroying the Self-Propelled Gun:

1 white chip each, plus a red chip for the character who actually planted the explosives (or otherwise destroyed the vehicle)

Defeating the Black Hats Around the Self-Propelled Gun: 1 white chip each.

Slaying the Red Hats: One red chip to whoever does the killing. We know that's not politically correct, but these are bad, bad guys.





Chapter Two: The Dead Walk

The Combine force sent to attack Junkyard is in full retreat, relentlessly pursued by the Convoy and Ike Taylor's road gangs. Of course, wounded animals are the most dangerous, and now the Combine forces are starting to regroup a bit.

This chapter starts with the heroes mopping up the stragglers, then moves into a more dangerous stage as the retreating forces attempt to rally. Even that nut is eventually cracked, of course, and then it's on to Denver for the big siege scene. Being the courageous types, the posse is even chosen for a "special ops" mission—infiltrating Denver to link up with the Resistance.

Assuming all that goes well, what happens next is such a big shocker that we'll just let you read along. Trust us though—it's a surprise even MGKelley and the listserv couldn't possibly have seen coming!

For now, get your dice ready, Marshal. Your posse is about to take part in the largest battle since the Last War. If they succeed, it's cigars and rewards. If they fail, they're worm food. Literally.

Scene One: Pursuit

The bulk of the retreating Combine troops head straight for the Rockies and back into Denver. Ike, his road gangs, and a large portion of the city's troops follow in hot pursuit. The chase takes roughly five days, during which time you may want to stage a few more set-piece battles for your posse if you want to prolong the war for your own nefarious purposes.

Colonel Green heads the pursuit party while a detachment of Sky Pirates keeps an eye on the Iron Alliance's harried prey. If your group happens to have a radio, they can occasionally hear reports from other teams. The transmissions are encouraging—groups of Combine troops who fall behind are quickly wiped out by the pursuers,

Assault Table

Opponents

| d6 Roll | Opponent |
|---------|------------------------------------|
| 1-3 | 2d10 Black Hats |
| 4 | 2d4 Black Hats + 1d4 Automatons |
| 5 | 2d10 Black Hats +1d4 Automatons |
| 6 | 2d20 Black Hats +1d4 Automatons |

Location

| d10 Roll | Location | Mod. |
|----------|-------------------|------|
| 1 | Cave | -2 |
| 2 | Gas Station | -2 |
| 3 | Shopping Mall | -4 |
| 4 | Car Dealership | -2 |
| 5 | Apartment Complex | -6 |
| 6 | Office Building | -2 |
| 7-10 | Forest | +1 |

though sometimes with heavy casualties.

Your posse is assigned to Colonel Steele Green, who brings up the rear. The heroes should be of sufficient renown to report directly to Green, but if not, Emmanuel Freedman, a former Confederate commando, serves as one of Green's lieutenants. Their assignment is to mop up any stragglers left behind by the fleeing Combine force during the running battle to Denver.

Green (or Freedman) is particularly diligent in tracking down these cornered rats. Your posse is sent out to finish off Combine troops three times before the next scene occurs. These battles take place about every other day, so the group has time to heal up between fights (depending on their supernatural abilities).

Roll on the Assault Table each of the three times to determine the group's

targets and just where the prey has holed up. The modifiers listed on the table are for the Quick Combat system presented on page 8. Roll on that table after determining just how large of a force the posse is forced to engage. The modifiers are applied to each character's attack rolls.

The heroes have to keep rolling until all of their foes in each mission are defeated. Each Black Hat counts as one casualty, but it takes three casualties to take down each automaton (and they're always the last to go down).

Should it become important, the stragglers are 1d4 miles away from the main route of retreat (east on Highway 70). If the heroes don't have vehicles, Green offers them a ride with Hal Goldman, the chopper pilot from Chapter One. If they'd prefer to drive and don't have vehicles of their own, Green can send them to the attack in a standard pickup truck. Use the *Road Warriors* book should you need statistics. Otherwise just assume the vehicle gets them to the bad guys and don't worry about its game stats.

Remember that you're using the Quick Combat system for these three fights, so you shouldn't need statistics for the bad guys. If you do, however, you can find Black Hat stats in Chapter One. They're also in the *Hell on Earth* rulebook, along with the deadly automatons.

Make sure to allow your heroes to heal up between fights if they have the ability. You want to beat them up here, not kill them.

Scene Two: Battle at the Vail Pass

The final battle of the pursuit takes place in Vail, Colorado. Vail was once an upscale ski resort, but these days it's home to cold-natured muties, wendigos, and frost wyrms (none of which actually show up in this scene, but may be the subject of future tales!)

As the pursuit reaches the top of the Rockies, the Combine is whittled down to a few thousand Black Hats and less than a hundred automatons of various designs. Unfortunately for the Iron Alliance, however, the strike force sent against Junkyard was the main army—but not the only one. At a freezing pass through the Rockies near Vail, the struggling Combine survivors move into the snow-covered ruins and dig in for what seems a last stand. In truth, the leader of the force finally managed radio contact with a second, smaller force that had been flanking from the north (and was delayed by more of the Iron Alliance's allies).

The ranking surviving Red Hat, Nicholas Payne, believes the pursuit can be stopped if they can hold at Vail long enough for the northern force to arrive.

Nicholas has also tried to raise Denver for reinforcements, but the usual wasteland interference has killed radio communications. He dispatched his fastest troops ahead of the main body to Denver to verbally request reinforcements, but so far none have returned. In truth, Throckmorton has reports of another force moving from the east and cannot spare reinforcements. We'll tell you more about this mysterious new player all too soon.

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The fight here is another massive set piece with nearly 10,000 Junkyard troops slowly probing the urban ruins of Vail. Every building holds a surprise—some a skulking automaton, others a lone sniper, still more an entire platoon of well-armed, desperate Black Hats.

The Sky Pirates Need a Hand

This time, the party isn't destined to take part in the main assault. Instead, the heroes are given the role of assaulting an anti-air missile launcher hidden somewhere high on the slopes. Colonel Green knows the position they fired from last (when they took out a supporting attack helicopter), but figures they've moved at least a few hundred yards away from that position since. That puts them somewhere up in the highest ski trails.

The group has to find the position and take it out so that the Sky Pirates can come in and provide air support for the general assault against the Vail.

How the group does this is entirely up to them, but it has to be done within two hours of receiving the



assignment. Until then, the main assault on Vail has been slowed down. When the ground to air threat is over, the Sky Pirates can then sweep in with their jets and cut loose with some serious firepower.

The troops manning the missile launcher are some of the more skilled of the bunch. They're dug-in to a shallow pit in the ground and covered with scrub, so the party must come up with a clever plan to root them out in the short deadline given them.

One possible plan involves Hal Goldman, the chopper pilot who may have transported the posse earlier. With an Incredible (11) *persuasion* roll, or a direct order from Colonel Green, he might fly through the area and draw the anti-air team's fire.

If the heroes simply want to spread out and do a search, they need to accumulate five Incredible (11) *search* rolls. Each one takes 10 minutes, so they'll have to hurry. Let the team name one hero to be the lead and make the roll. Everyone else can pitch in—every successful roll adds +1 to the main character's roll. If the last roll comes with a raise, the heroes catch the SAM team by surprise. Otherwise, the Black Hats are almost certain to see the posse first.

Make sure everyone takes precautions against the cold as well. It's around 26 degrees on the slope! Every hour spent in the cold forces the hero to make a Hard (9) *Vigor* roll and lose the difference in Wind. This can only be recovered when the hero warms up. Add +2 for really good winter gear, no modifier for standard coats, and -1 to -4

for ill-prepared chicks in chainmail (but God bless 'em).

Use standard Black Hat statistics for the SAM team (see Chapter One or the *Hell on Earth* rulebook), but add the *shootin': missile launcher* skill at 5d8.

What happens after the fight depends on whether or not the heroes take out the position within the allotted time of two hours. Proceed to **The Heroes Fail** or **The Heroes Succeed** as appropriate.

Hal and Audrey Ann

Here are the statistics for Hal Goldman and his chopper, should you need them.

Profile: Hal Goldman

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

Climbin' 1d12, Drivin': rotary wing 5d12, lockpickin' 2d6, shootin': SMG 3d6, sneak 3d12, throwin': unbalanced 3d6

Mental: C:4d6, K:2d10, M:1d8, Sm:4d10, Sp:1d6
Area knowledge (Salt Lake region)

2d10, bluff 3d10, gamblin' 3d10, guts 3d6, scroungin' 3d10, survival: desert 2d10, tinkerin' 2d10

Pace: 12

Size: 6

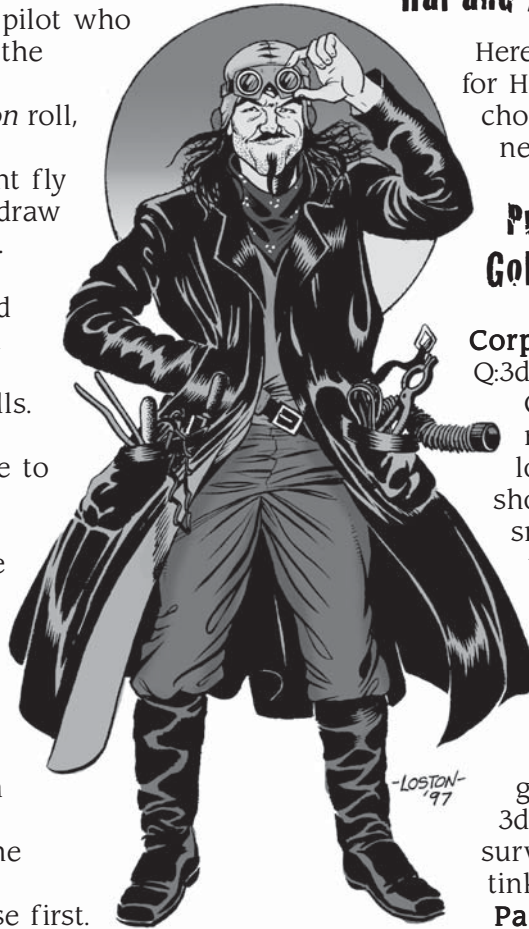
Wind: 16

Edges: Friends in high places 3, level-headed, purty

Hindrances: Heroic, stubborn

Gear: Hunting rifle, 50 rounds, 3 grenades.

Description: Hal has long, cornsilk hair that he tosses constantly about his head, an honest face, and a constant look of doubt in his eyes, though he's actually internally very optimistic.



Hal's Chopper (*Audrey Ann*)

Passengers: 10
Engine: Twin turbine
Gas Tank: 120
MPG: 5
Handling: +2
Top Speed: 150mph
Stall: N/A
Acceleration: 10mph
Durability: 45/9
Armor: 0
Size: +3
Load Limit: 300
Weapons:

.50M2HB: Ring; Turret; 360; Damage: 4d12, AP 4; Shots: 100 (with 270 rounds remaining); ROF: 3; Range: 40.

Description: Hal's chopper is an old cargo hauler, though he's made a few "adjustments" to improve its performance. It also has a killer sound system, though Hal's music slugs are some of the worst drek ever recorded. East Indian dirges, Babylonian chant, and German "screech" music are all available to torment passengers.

The Heroes Fail

If the posse doesn't find the SAM team and finish the fight within two hours, the second Combine force from the north moves in and hits the stalled Junkyarders in the rear. The damage is terrible and the casualties are high, but the stalwart Junkyarders eventually rally and force back their mechanized foes.

Unfortunately, this gives the trapped Black Hats in Vail a break. Colonel Green must pin these troops down while using his main force to deal with the northern flankers. The posse is used in the assault along with a loosely-organized platoon of former bikers and road gangers. This strike force is assigned an assault against a hastily-dug defense of foxholes and shallow trenches. The Black Hats here number two dozen and have a heavy machine gun pit in the center of their position. An automaton lurks along their right-hand flank and makes an appearance if its human allies start losing a fight.

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Stage this as a Quick Combat with a -4 penalty. This time, let the group go in whatever order they want and actually apply any casualties they cause to the Black Hats' numbers. Each single casualty removes one of the 24 Black hats. The automaton is removed last and counts as three casualties.

When all the Combine troops have been eliminated, no further rolls are necessary, meaning weaker characters might not have to be involved more than once or maybe twice. (And yes, for the record, characters can hang back and not participate in the fight at all.)

Assuming they survive, Colonel Green informs the group that the Combine is once again in full retreat. The heroes are rewarded for their performance with a spot on a truck for the pursuit to Denver the next day.

The Heroes Win

If the team is successful, they should report in to Colonel Green and let him know. Within minutes, the Sky Pirate air force comes swooping in and lays waste to what remains of Vail. Just as they finish the job, the Combine's northern flanking force enters and gets into an aerial duel with the Sky Pirates. The air duel ends in a draw—those raptors are tough!—but the good guys hold off the flying death machines long enough for the ground troops to fight. The northern force and the Vail defenders merge but are pushed out of the town in a bloody assault.

The Iron Alliance's army of 10,000 is whittled down to 7,000 or so. Roughly 2,000 Combine troops—mostly the toughest automatons and cyborgs—once again hit the highway and run like Hell for Denver.

Colonel Green congratulates the party on their success and tells them to pack their gear—the whole force is pursuing to Denver where they hope to hook up with other allies who should already be attacking from the east.

Scene Three: The Teller Brigade

The party reaches Denver late that night (if they don't have motorized transport of their own, they're put on a truck). The Junkyarders have rallied and are regrouping south and west of the "Place No One Goes," Denver. Rockets and artillery from the surrounding Junkyarders are already busy pelting the city with fire, snipers pick off any Black Hat foolish enough to show his noggin, and an occasional missile streaks out to swat down any raptor or other flying terror that tries to sortie out.

The fight rages for three days, with the Combine mostly staying hunkered down within its walls and lobbing explosives out at the besiegers.

The heroes are assumed to be a squad of their own and should make their own camp (foxholes with overhead cover are highly recommended!), set their own watches, and so forth. If your group is of sufficient renown and you feel like letting them have some nonplayer-characters assigned to them, feel free.

On the first night, around 2am, the Combine sends out a wave of Black hats to raid and create confusion. One of the groups come close to your posse—have everyone make a Quick Combat roll at +1. This is the only excitement tonight.

Viva La Resistance!

Early on the morning of the second day, Colonel Green tasks the party with a special mission. Read the following when you're ready.

"Mornin', heroes. I've got a job for you. The Denver Resistance is

planning to blow up the Combine's ammo factory, but they need some heavy weapons and explosives to get it done."

"I want you for the job. We'll lay down enough of a barrage to cover your approach. Then you gotta sneak into town, link up with the 'Teller Brigade' at the old Rock Bottom Brewery, then get the Hell back out."

"Got that? Good. You leave in an hour."

You heard the man, Marshal. Tell your posse to ready themselves and then hurl them into the fray.

A Few Hours on the Town

When it's time to go, Colonel Green gives the heroes an old map of Denver with the Rock Bottom circled on it. He wishes the team good luck, then has his scouts lead them to a sprawl of ruins running up close to the Denver barricades. From there they wait until the artillery barrage clears the area and sprint across the clearing toward the base.

Once in, the posse can follow their map to get to the Rock Bottom. If you have the *Denver* sourcebook, hit them with one encounter rolled randomly (or selected by you) from Chapter Three. If you don't have that book, you can simply make up some details of the city and have them avoid several Black Hat patrols. Once, as they duck down a back alley to avoid Black Hats, the heroes discover a lurker (see the *Hell on Earth* rule book). Fight this thing out with Quick Combat, but it goes on until at least one hero gets an 18 or better on his attack roll. On any roll of 4 or less, 10 Black Hats show up to investigate the noise and join in the fight (this can only happen once per round). Keep it going until the lurker and any reinforcing Black Hats are waxed.

Rock Bottom

Eventually the group should find the Rock Bottom Brewery. The top is deserted and well-looted, but a Fair (5) tracking roll reveals recent tracks leading toward the wrecked vats.

Hiding among the old steel vats is Sarah Olsen, a member of the Resistance. She takes possession of the weapons and explosives, thanks the heroes, and then asks them a big favor. Sarah is blonde with big brown eyes and fairly cute (which is why she was chosen for this), and doesn't hesitate to use her feminine wiles if it helps her get her way. Read Sarah's dilemma when you're ready.

"Thanks for the stuff—we'll put it to good use. Here are the kids."

Sarah knocks on an old beer vat—a metal tank nearly eight feet tall and four feet wide. You look inside the torn wall to see a concealed hatch open in the bottom. Staring up at you are five sets of big round eyes set in very small heads. Kids.

"What kids?" you ask. "We weren't told about any kids."

"Hmm. Not my problem. I was told to make sure these kids got out with you. We rescued 'em recently and with the attack on, this is no place for children."

The blonde turns to the children as they climb out of the vat. "Okay, guys. You're getting out with these nice folks. Be careful, and show them the sneaky way out, okay?"

On the down side, the heroes have to smuggle out all five kids (ages 5, 8, 12, 13, and 15). On the plus side, the kids know how to avoid the worst of the patrols, horrors, chain dogs, and other nightmares that plague their city. On the unexpected down side, one of them, an eleven year-old girl named Jessie, is an infiltrator cyborg.

Jessie doesn't actually do anything "on camera." Her objective is to relay exact troop positions back to the Combine so that they can properly target the Junkyarders with indirect fire. Your group might have some way of detecting Jessie's true identity, however. If so, she tries to run for it, and only fights if cornered. Her first action is to try and grab a weapon off someone (an opposed *Strength* roll with a raise).

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Profile: "Jessie" (Infiltrator Cyborg)

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

Fightin': brawlin' 4d6

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

Area knowledge: Denver 3d6, bluff 2d10, demolition 1d6, overawe 3d10, scrutinize 2d8

Pace: 16

Size: 4

Wind: 16

Edges: Level-headed, friends in high places (can normally call on a Combine strike-force but not in this adventure)

Hindrances: Rules of engagement oath 4 (serve the Combine)

Cyber Systems: AI, antenna, big ears, brain mole, CPU, drug dispenser, facemaker, infiltrator, radio, self-repair unit, spirit fetter, spur.

Manitou/Power: 4d6/6


Gear: None, but Jessie is quick to gather up a weapon from someone if she needs one.

Description: Jessie looks slightly Asian with jet black hair. She wears tattered jeans and a *Power Puff Girls* t-shirt.

Scene Four: The Siege of Denver

Morning comes with a beautiful red sky and a cold frost. The Iron Alliance bombarded the Combine until 4am last night, at which point they called a halt to the barrage to give the Black Hats time to surrender (and truth be told, save their precious ammo).

A message calling for unconditional surrender was sent in, but no word has



yet come back out. Talk among the troops is that the alliance will have to assault Denver—a bloody proposition no one looks forward to. If the posse was successful in their previous mission, the Resistance might be able to attack from the inside and drastically reduce the assault's casualties.

But we're not quite there yet. Something *else* is about to happen.

Message For You, Sir!

Let the group recover for a bit. Give them a visit by Colonel Green (or Freedman) or even Goose or Preacher. They can spread the word that the Combine is licked—they just don't know it yet. The visitor exchanges a little grub, warms his hands on the heroes' fire, and asks if they have everything they need (though he can't really do much about it if they don't).

When the group starts to get bored, Colonel Green comes to them with a strange look on his face. He asks the group to come with him and takes them back to his camouflaged command tent somewhere back behind the lines.

"Something's happened. Something bad. Details are unclear but the allies we were supposed to have from the east haven't showed. We're sending out teams to find out what's happening. You're one of 'em. Hal'll fly you along I-70 to the survivor settlement at St. Louis. A fella name o' Marcus Rand shoulda left there with a couple o' heavy tanks, some APCs, and a few dozen well-armed militia. Find 'em, ladies, and bring 'em here. We need those troops and especially those vehicles before we can take Denver."

The mission is clear, and Colonel Green instructs the team to leave within the hour. Hal is ready to go

when the posse is. Green wants them to fly, so they aren't driving even if they have their own rig. If they have their own flight, that's fine, but you'll have to amend some of the coming scenes just a bit.

See You in St. Louis

On the way to St. Louis (a few hours after leaving), a storm breaks. Dark clouds cover the plains and heavy rain pours, but Hal and the heroes can just make out a handful of cars and motorcycles screaming up a broken highway. As Hal moves in for a closer look, one of the lead cars hits a pothole at high speed and flips end over end. Most of the others continue on, but two bikers double back to check for survivors.

The action is in the players' hands now. Everyone in the flipped car is alive, though wounded and dazed. The bikers can only pick up two of the four occupants. They yell for the others to come back, but their friends can't hear them and move on. It's very clear the two bikers don't know what else to do and aren't keen on leaving two of their wounded behind (a sure sign that they're "good guys"). If left on their own, the bikers eventually argue a bit more, then hand the two worst wounded a single pistol. The other two wounded grimly mount the bikes and continue on their way.

Hopefully, the heroes swoop in and help instead. Hal's chopper can easily handle the load, so that's not an issue.

At some point, the heroes will either ask one of the fleeing survivors what's going on, or they'll zip on down the road a bit to see what's going on for themselves. If they talk, a biker points down the road and screams over the roar of engines "Zombies! Thousands of 'em!" If the heroes swoop in and rescue the remaining two bikers, one of the wounded yells the same as above, then points in the easterly direction. "Look for yourselves," he finishes.

Regardless of what the heroes say, Hal turns the chopper around and follows the highway. Perhaps a mile back, anyone looking sees an amazing sight. You'll want to read this one out loud, Marshal.

There are dead men as far as your eyes can see. Thousands—maybe tens of thousands—are on foot. But these are no lumbering zombies from an ancient vid-slug. These things sprint along the busted highway, never tiring. Alongside them are hundred of trucks—mostly flatbeds—carrying even more undead. A few of them are armed and fire in your direction. Most are unarmed however, and simply snarl at the whine of your engines and the delicious blood still coursing in your veins.

Here and there among the grotesque throng are worse things—gloms, undead animals, and odd creatures with mechanical bits jammed into their unfeeling flesh. But as unsettling as these horrors are, the true terror is the simple staggering number of the dead running your way.

It's probably time for the good guys to get back to Denver and let Colonel Greene know what's coming. But let's throw in one last complication for our hapless heroes, shall we?

You're still staring at the unbelievable host before you when something even more amazing happens. You can just make out a single figure screeching and pointing at you—a zombie—but an unusually tall and lanky one. It waves its arms and a bizarre, almost comical thing happens. Sickly green energy races from its hand and surrounds five of the nearest zombies. The tall thing then throws its hand toward you and the pack comes streaking through the air toward your chopper!

Hal jinks with unbelievable speed, but three of the things catch hold of the rails and start climbing in. A fourth smashes into the propeller and is shredded, but the chopper takes a serious

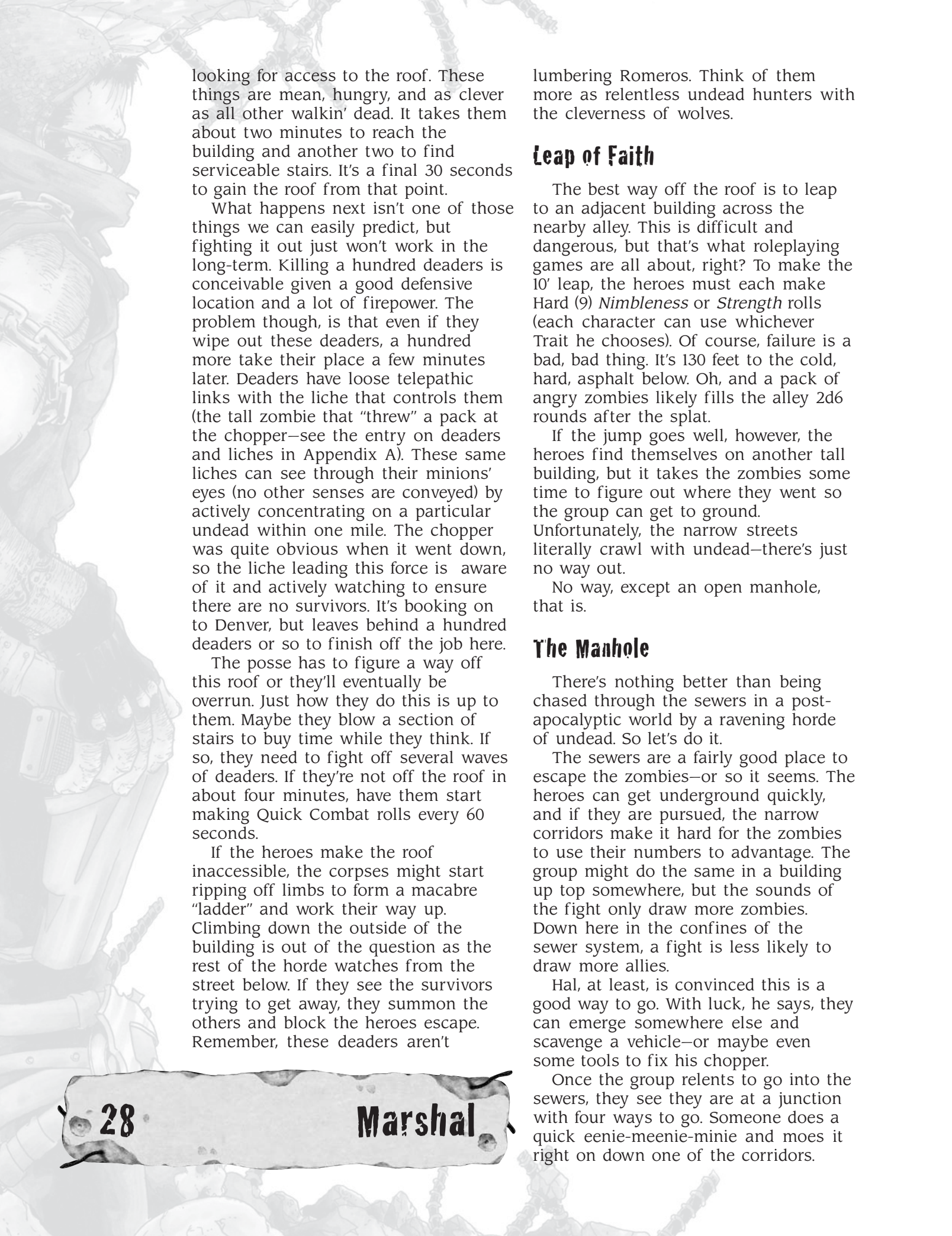
nosedive and heads toward the earth!

"Hang on!" Hal screams. You deal with the crawling deaders while Hal proves his mettle. Hal flips off the engines and lets what left of the shattered propellers auto-rotate, slowing your descent as much as possible. The chopper angles in, far too fast you think, and heads straight for the top of a nearby building. It smashes into the rooftop and every bone in your body feels like it's in a trash compactor. You black out for just a moment from the concussion, but the spastic dead things still crawling after you snap you back to reality. There's no doubt that with any other pilot, you'd be joining this grisly horde.

Hal is good—he managed to put them on top of a rooftop. If it had gone all the way down to the street level, the momentum would have smashed the posse flatter than waster flapjacks. They can thank Hal later though. Right now they must deal with two deaders that "survived" the crash (the third is crushed beneath the rails). In the streets below, perhaps a few hundred yards off, comes the sound of more deaders and at least one of their vehicles heading this way. Read the following aloud:

From your high vantage point you can make out thousands of the dead. There's no doubt all of them saw the chopper land here, but most keep on moving west. Unfortunately, a large group from the front peels off and makes a b-line toward your building.

A group of deaders, say about a hundred or so, part from the main body and race into the office building Hal landed on. There's no doubt they're



looking for access to the roof. These things are mean, hungry, and as clever as all other walkin' dead. It takes them about two minutes to reach the building and another two to find serviceable stairs. It's a final 30 seconds to gain the roof from that point.

What happens next isn't one of those things we can easily predict, but fighting it out just won't work in the long-term. Killing a hundred deaders is conceivable given a good defensive location and a lot of firepower. The problem though, is that even if they wipe out these deaders, a hundred more take their place a few minutes later. Deaders have loose telepathic links with the liche that controls them (the tall zombie that "threw" a pack at the chopper—see the entry on deaders and liches in Appendix A). These same liches can see through their minions' eyes (no other senses are conveyed) by actively concentrating on a particular undead within one mile. The chopper was quite obvious when it went down, so the liche leading this force is aware of it and actively watching to ensure there are no survivors. It's booking on to Denver, but leaves behind a hundred deaders or so to finish off the job here.

The posse has to figure a way off this roof or they'll eventually be overrun. Just how they do this is up to them. Maybe they blow a section of stairs to buy time while they think. If so, they need to fight off several waves of deaders. If they're not off the roof in about four minutes, have them start making Quick Combat rolls every 60 seconds.

If the heroes make the roof inaccessible, the corpses might start ripping off limbs to form a macabre "ladder" and work their way up. Climbing down the outside of the building is out of the question as the rest of the horde watches from the street below. If they see the survivors trying to get away, they summon the others and block the heroes escape. Remember, these deaders aren't

lumbering Romeros. Think of them more as relentless undead hunters with the cleverness of wolves.

Leap of Faith

The best way off the roof is to leap to an adjacent building across the nearby alley. This is difficult and dangerous, but that's what roleplaying games are all about, right? To make the 10' leap, the heroes must each make Hard (9) *Nimbleness* or *Strength* rolls (each character can use whichever Trait he chooses). Of course, failure is a bad, bad thing. It's 130 feet to the cold, hard, asphalt below. Oh, and a pack of angry zombies likely fills the alley 2d6 rounds after the splat.

If the jump goes well, however, the heroes find themselves on another tall building, but it takes the zombies some time to figure out where they went so the group can get to ground. Unfortunately, the narrow streets literally crawl with undead—there's just no way out.

No way, except an open manhole, that is.

The Manhole

There's nothing better than being chased through the sewers in a post-apocalyptic world by a ravening horde of undead. So let's do it.

The sewers are a fairly good place to escape the zombies—or so it seems. The heroes can get underground quickly, and if they are pursued, the narrow corridors make it hard for the zombies to use their numbers to advantage. The group might do the same in a building up top somewhere, but the sounds of the fight only draw more zombies. Down here in the confines of the sewer system, a fight is less likely to draw more allies.

Hal, at least, is convinced this is a good way to go. With luck, he says, they can emerge somewhere else and scavenge a vehicle—or maybe even some tools to fix his chopper.

Once the group relents to go into the sewers, they see they are at a junction with four ways to go. Someone does a quick eenie-meenie-minie and moes it right on down one of the corridors.

Less than a minute later, a jolly band of flesh-eating deaders spills into the sewers in hot pursuit. They're not smart enough to actually track the posse, but they're smart enough to split up into groups of 10 and comb the system.

Once in the tunnels, it's up to your group where they want to go. It's fairly pointless to make a map of the sewers—your players will just choose random directions to move anyway. So instead, let's have some fun with the chase and use this simple and quite deadly cheat.

Have everyone in the party make *Smarts* rolls. Take the lowest roll and consult the **Sewer Chase Table**. Note that standard corridors down here are 5' wide and 5' high, and that there's no real end to the number of zombies that can be encountered. Each time there's a fight, use the Quick Combat system from page 8.

Only when the party has achieved the **Escape!** result on the table can they move on to the next event, **Out of the Frying Pan**.

Out of the Frying Pan

*By the stench of this old creek,
the town above must have
dumped their sewage in here long*

*By the stench of this old creek,
the town above must have
dumped their sewage in here long
ago. It might be a toxic shaman's
dream, but for most of you it's
just another reminder of why the
world went to Hell in the first
place. At any rate, the old creek
should eventually feed out into
daylight if you follow it long
enough.*

The tunnel the creek runs through is a good 15' in diameter. The heroes should follow it for a while, but if they don't they're welcome to climb back up into the sewers and deal with more deaders. Just don't let them find daylight again anywhere else—you need them to move on down in the tunnel so you can pull a Jonah and the Whale bit on them—and reveal one of the biggest secrets of the Deadlands universe.

Sewer Chase

Bust: One of the heroes (the one with the lowest *Smarts* roll) finds a ladder leading up about 20'. He climbs it and tells everyone the coast is clear. Just as he finishes the "clear" part, a pair of long, dead arms yanks him out of sight. The hero is grappled by a zombie and must fight a Quick Combat round at -6 by himself. Another 9 wait at the top of the ladder, and the posse may join in after the first round.

1-3 Junction: The group runs into a group of zombies and starts to head back—but there's another group behind them! They're trapped in rectangular junction chamber 20' long, 40' long, 5' high, and filled with a foot of muddy water. They must fight their way through one of these groups using Quick Combat. Roll at -2 due to the thick muck in this area.

4-5 Corridor: A band of zombies in a perpendicular corridor stumble into the heroes. A running fight ensues! Have everyone roll *Smarts* totals again. If everyone gets a 7 or better, they outrun the zombies. Otherwise they must wage a Quick Combat and try again. If the heroes stay to finish all these zombies, another group of 10 arrives in 2d6 rounds.

6-7 Spotted: The posse is spotted by a group of deaders! There's no combat (unless the group chooses to fight), so go ahead and roll *Smarts* totals again, subtracting -2 from everyone's rolls next time as they run blindly through the sewer system.

8-9 Stymied: The posse eludes the deaders for a few minutes but doesn't find a safe way out.

10+ Escape!: A grate opens out onto a small, subterranean creek. A Hard (9) *Strength* Check removes the grate, then it's just a 10' drop to the muddy cave-stream below. Go to **Out of the Frying Pan**.

Jonah and the Worm

Sit back and relax, Marshal. We have a bit of primordial history to share with you—and one of the biggest secrets in the Deadlands universe.

Most of the “powers that be” in the Deadlands world, including the Reckoners, are made up of the spiritual energy of humans (both living and dead). The good of a soul goes to good forces, and the evil goes to evil forces. These forces aren't split up entirely evenly—there is far more good in human souls than there is evil. But evil works a lot harder at getting attention. Think of terrorists and the United States government in the real world. The US government has the best equipment, a million well-trained soldiers, and brilliant leaders who obtained their position by merit. Terrorists have a little money, primitive weapons, and perhaps a few hundred truly militant members. Yet terrorists are able to “win” their battles because they pick the time and place of their attacks, operate in secrecy, and don't care who gets hurt in the process.

Evil is like that. Good is spread thin trying to help everyone. Good is also worried about helping people too much, lest they grow dependent on supernatural aid. Evil hands out bad mojo like candy. It even creates horrors if the world isn't terrible enough.

The Reckoners are not the first evil gods of the Hunting Grounds. And they only took the shape of the Four Horsemen because that's how the minds of millions of Americans (Raven's intended victims) saw them. Other destroyers exist as well—Shiva, Anubis, Hades. The Reckoners just happen to be the only ones who tried such an audacious plan—and succeeded.

For lack of a better word, we'll call all these cosmic powers “gods.”

Another group of elder gods existed long before the Reckoners. They weren't happy that humans forgot about them and started depositing their negative energy into these four horse-guys. Trouble was, they were too weak to really fight the Reckoners, so they slyly ingratiated themselves with the Four Horsemen and joined them as servitors. They lost most of their powers, but they were allowed to slither upon the earth at the start of the Reckoning as giant worms. That's right, we're talking about the “rattlers.”

A dozen of the massive beings first appeared on the Earth. They quickly reproduced and filled the deserts, salt flats,

and plains of the earth with their massive offspring.

They also began a secret quest to regain their status as gods. This required the spiritual energy of humans. And since the ancient worms had first been born of negative energy, only more negative energy would help them ascend once more.

Unfortunately for the worms, they were a little out of touch with people of the 19th century. A few loonies here and there grew to worship them (such as the worm cult in the Wyoming Badlands), but worm-worshipping never really caught on in polite society.

Then the great worms got the idea that if these humans wouldn't worship them, maybe they could make a new batch of mortals who would. Remember, these things were still thinking like gods here. So for the next couple of hundred years (like pulling an all-nighter for formerly cosmic beings), the great worms were finally able to create the wormlings. These are the nasty critters most every waster in *Hell on Earth* has run into at one time or another. The wormlings are wormy enough to worship the elders, and they're human enough to send their spiritual energy to the Great Beyond.

But the process has only begun in the last decade, and that's simply not enough time. The worms' plans are working, but two important obstacles stand in their way. First, there's too damn many humans left, and these pale, puny fonts of spiritual energy aren't giving any up for the worms these days. In fact, their fear and dread are powering the worms' nemeses and hated rivals, the Reckoners. Second, and closely related to the first, are the Reckoners themselves. As long as they're still prancing about the earth, humans aren't likely to forget them.

So the worms have teamed up with a once-unlikely candidate—Raven.

Back in the necropolis of the east, Raven decided the only way to get revenge on the Reckoners—whom he believed betrayed him—was to kill them. And the only way to do that was to rob them of their power by killing every human on earth. A few months ago, while trying to crack a particularly tough underground lair of survivors, Raven used his powers to summon a worm. In bargaining for its assistance, Raven revealed his plan for killing both the humans and the Reckoners.

The worm passed on this exciting news to its elders telepathically, and a marriage made in Hell was forged in slime and blood.

Riding the Worm

Things are about to get wild, Marshal! Read the following and watch your players' faces!

You've been slogging through the creek for at least ten minutes when you hear a rumbling from somewhere behind you. There's no mistaking the sound—water is rushing toward you.

You can let the players come up with a plan to escape, but there really isn't one for most characters. If your hombres have some really special powers—such as the ability to teleport, *ghost*, or otherwise vacate the tunnel in a heartbeat, you'll have to fudge things a bit. Either have the water hit them so fast they don't have time to use their powers, or counter with some equally powerful trick of your own devising. In the end, you need them to wind up in the same "cavern" described below.

A wall of rushing, brown water unleashed from some forgotten cistern of this old sewer system rushes down the tunnel and slams into you. You grab one last breath and tumble head over heels in the dark, swirling stream. Finally, you succumb.

(Point to one of the heroes.) You can hold your breath no longer and feel disgusting sludge rush into your lungs.

(Point to another.) You bang your head on something hard yet squishy and see a bright flash of light before all goes dark.

(Point to a third.) You simply tumble head over heels until the stench overwhelms you.

The characters are unconscious for some time. How long exactly isn't important—but it's long enough for Raven's horde to make it back to Denver. If you need a delay for any heroes who really shouldn't go unconscious, by the way, such as Harrowed (though even they can be "knocked out" by taking enough

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wounds) such characters are literally buried over their heads in mud and must dig their way out. This takes hours.

In truth, the heroes aren't in a new section of tunnel. They're inside the vast innards of a great worm! The things are accompanying Raven west, and one of them burst through an underground river into the sewer system. The heroes are swept into the deluge and accidentally swallowed whole by the massive thing!


Don't let on that they're inside a worm for a while though—let them think they've been washed into an ancient tunnel system they're supposed to explore. What they find in the worm's vast innards then becomes all the more terrifying.

You've been unconscious for a long time. You can tell because your limbs have fallen asleep and your muscles are cramped. You're in the dark, stuck in thick mud that isn't quite wet enough to let go. It's pitch dark so you close your eyes and feel with your other senses. You hear a low rumbling all around you. You feel no one and nothing else around you. There's a rotten, earthy smell that almost overpowers you.

The sewer must have burst somewhere and washed you down into another section of the tunnel—an older, long unexplored section.

Hands and Knees

Allow the group to call out for each other and stumble around in the slimy darkness for a bit. On a Hard (9) *Spirit* roll, they managed to keep whatever was in their hands in a death grip. Otherwise, their weapons/lights/etc. are lost somewhere in the muck. If they can create light somehow, they see they are sealed in a rounded pocket of



wet, slimy mud roughly 10 feet high. A narrow tunnel just high enough to crawl through is their only exit (a character with a compass or a keen sense of direction reads it as “west”).

Sit back and relax now, Marshal. Don't push your posse through the hole. Let them argue about what to do or try some of their fancy tricks. Any attempt to magic oneself out of the worm doesn't work—elder worms are near-Gods, after all, and get away with a few perks when we need them to. Fudge this one as you see fit—no *nukes*, no *shadow walking* or otherwise ruining your fun. Got it?

Eventually, someone will crawl through the hole. It's just wide enough for one character to go at once so you'll soon find out which of your wasters has the largest *cajones*.

Break On Through, to the Other Side

The poor brave soul who crawls through the mud tunnel is in for a creepy surprise. Read the following when you're ready:

You're crawling along when your hand sinks through the mud and catches on something sharp. You withdraw and see your own dark blood dripping into the dank muck.

If the hero cares to dig, he finds a jagged leg bone. This belonged to one of the worm's “passengers.” It's harmless, but creepy!

Very large characters (such as heavy cans or *big 'uns*) can't fit through either hole without some effort. A few minutes of clawing up dirt makes the hole wide enough to crawl through. There's no game effect to this—it's just a reminder of how tight and nasty these little mud tunnels are.

The First Pocket

Nothing else is found by further digging in the short tunnel. When the hero presses on, however, he finds himself in another, smaller mud pocket. In truth, mud forms in the worm's vast bodies and creates thousands of ever-changing “cells.” Fortunately for the heroes, they're close to the worm's center where the “tunnels” don't change as often (otherwise they'd almost certainly be smothered).

The Second Pocket

The second pocket contains nothing else, but another tunnel—this one about 2' thick—leads directly down. There's no “dropping”—a waster has to slither like a worm. Anyone who wants to go down the chute is looking at a suffocating, terrifying ordeal. A wise party ties a rope, shirt, pants, or other “safety-line” to the first idiot to go down the hole.

The Third Pocket

When someone does eventually descend the 6' drop, he finds himself in a much larger chamber. In fact, this is the central “stomach” of the elder worm. It's not truly a stomach, but it is where the creature gathers the forces it plans to wretch out later.

As the hero enters the chamber and brings some sort of light to bear, read the text below.

You're standing in what looks like a large, oblong cavern. It's only about 5' wide where you stand, but further on it's obviously much wider—maybe three times as wide and tall.

The mud remains thick, and you can see strange pink weeds growing out of the muck everywhere—on the walls, ceiling, and floors.

On closer examination of the weeds, read a bit more:

The “weeds” aren't plants at all. They're some sort of long, pink earthworms lying—or perhaps even growing—in masses. You

turn in disgust and see something that freezes you in horror. One of the worm "masses" lies more exposed than the others. Beneath it is the grotesque face of a wormling! The "weeds" are the things' tentacles! A quick look around tells you there must be hundreds of these things encased in the floors, ceiling, and walls of the chamber!

As the horror grows in your stunned mind, you feel the floor beneath you start to buckle. Or undulate. The walls shudder and constrict as well, then shake and shiver. A deep groan comes from somewhere much deeper in the cavern. The cavern slowly turns and rolls, throwing you to the wall.

Now you get it. This is no cavern. You're inside the body of a giant worm!

Taste the dramatic pause, Marshal. If you've played it right. The gals at your game table are sneering in revulsion while the guys are saying "EEEEWWWW!"

Let them figure out what they want to do. The wormlings are currently dormant and won't react unless harmed. The moment the heroes figure out a plan however, read the following:

Slowly, the wormlings before you start to move. First a slimy bunch of fingers twitch, then a grotesque head shakes, then hideous shark eyes flutter and open! The wormlings are awaking!

Let the heroes take whatever actions they want—there are around 50 wormlings in this "egg sac," most currently enclosed in protective muck. (There are another thousand or so bunking in the rest of the worm!) Short of a nuke, there's not much any party can do to kill them all. (If the party can wipe out the wormlings, more power to them! It won't affect the plot at all, so don't thwart them if they have some clever plan to wipe out this colony.)

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Blechh!

Just as the hibernating wormlings start to react, the massive worm the heroes have been riding in vomits forth its grotesque inhabitants. Hundreds of deaders and young rattlers, a thousand wormlings, millions of tons of earth and soil, and a party of dazed heroes are vomited up in a disgusting brown stew on the plains surrounding Denver.

The worm's wrenching isn't particularly gentle. The thing doesn't really care if it loses a few deaders and wormlings in its "deployment." The heroes, unfortunately, are on the more tender side. Roll 1d6 for each character. That's how many d6 damage dice each waster takes as massive damage. That means some should get off pretty light as they're wretched along in a relatively soft stream of mud. Others might get wrapped up with a swallowed street car and mangled beyond comprehension (we hope the hapless heroes saved some Fate Chips for just such an emergency).

Once wretched, the wet mud spills out into a small cone-shaped lake roughly 50 yards wide at the worm's mouth, 200 yards long, and 100 yards wide at the far end. Within this horrid goulash are roughly 500 deaders, 1,000 wormlings, and 500 young rattlers. Oh, and a handful of very wet, mud-covered, blood-stained heroes.

The deaders and wormlings—accustomed to the muck as they are—are less affected by the mud and scramble from its sticky embrace much faster than the heroes. That's good, because while the mud-covered heroes are floundering about and digging themselves out of the muck, the horrors charge out of the cone and toward the sounds of battle.

A quick look around reveals scores of other great worms wrenching forth their squirming contents as well. Within minutes, the heroes find themselves behind enemy lines watching an



unholy army of dead men and worms rushing into the fray.

Both the Iron Alliance and the Combine hold their fire, waiting to see what these strange new terrors are and whose side they're on. The first waves slam into the besiegers first, overwhelming an isolated group of hovertanks that won many accolades in the victory at Junkyard. The Iron Alliance retaliates immediately, lobbing rockets, firing missiles, and raining fiery lead down into the screaming horde of worms and wormlings and silently running deaders.

The Combine holds their fire, waiting to see if the horde is some strange new ally. Then the massive worms rush toward the barricades around Denver. Throckmorton's troops take no chances and open fire with incredible firepower. A number of the great worms explode in showers of blazing, rancorous flesh. Their stinking hides rain down over the plains all the way back to the posse's location. Still more rush toward Denver and a few actually enter the downtown area before being pulped by the Combine's incredible weaponry.

Scene Five: Raven's Victory

Let the heroes do what they want for a bit. If they're smart, they should remember there was a large force of undead topside as well (such as the group that chased them into the sewers), and they'll probably be coming up the highway directly behind them.

Their choices here are many. The heroes might want to fight their way through the horde to join the Iron Alliance, they might want to slip into Denver, or they might decide to get the Hell out of the area. In any case, they must fight their way through a horde of deaders, worms, and wormlings to succeed. Roll on the Quick Combat table on page 8 three times to simulate a few minutes of combat. Make sure everyone is keeping up with their ammo—they're likely getting low.

After the last roll, the group hears a large group of vehicles moving in from the east. These are large semis, buses, and flatbed trucks loaded with the meanest, most-grotesque, spikey deaders yet.

In the middle of the convoy is another of the flatbed trucks. Anyone with binoculars or a vision-enhancing power of some sort can see that this particular truck is quite different. The bed of the truck virtually drips with a large carpet of squirming deaders. More of the grotesque things form a raised throne. Sitting on the throne is yet another deader—this one gaunt and blackened, as if burned.

The posse has spotted the leader of this merciless horde. Before they can do anything, however, read the following:

Air support finally screams in overhead—it's the fighter jets of the Sky Pirates! The jets streak in and launch a salvo of guided missiles. At least two plow into the bellies of the great worms and detonate, showering the massive creature's guts all over the plains.

Then something incredible happens, something you and your friends have seen once before. One of the sorcerous undead gathers a handful of deaders in some sort of arcane grip and hurls them into the air at the jets! One fighter goes up in flames instantly as it impacts a wall of writhing dead. Another—almost laughably—pops off a dozen flares before being covered in corpses and plummeting toward earth. The pilot ejects and is quickly covered in another swath of dead, fighting with the blasphemous things as they fall faster and faster to ground.

Another wing of jets makes another pass—one of them dropping a thousand pound bomb between two worms and tearing great swaths of greasy flesh from their sides. Then one of the worms reaches down to the ground and swallows up dozens of deaders running below. It spins its ten-story tall neck about, rears back, and then spits out dead men like a machine gun! The trail of flailing bodies slams into the bomber from behind and sends it tumbling towards the Rockies

where it explodes in a massive flash of light and sound.

Now it's time for the ground troops. Hover tanks and other heavy vehicles appear on the distant horizon. They open up on the worms just like in an old Godzilla movie and turn three of the monsters into giant bags of blood.

A dozen of the closest worms respond by arching their backs and plunging their heads into the ground, disappearing. You can see several of the tankers cheering, believing they've driven the worms off—but you know better.

The heroes can try to warn the tanks (nearly a half mile distant) as they fight another round of Quick Combat against the surrounding horde. Then the inevitable occurs.

As you thought, the worms simply burrowed underground. Now they strike up from beneath the tanks, turning the massive vehicles on their side then grappling them with their long tentacles and bashing them on the ground. A number of crewmen scramble out and try to fight back, but they're smashed beneath the flailing worms or dragged underground by a new batch of young rattlers that appear beneath them.

A Farewell To Arms

Time for another Quick Combat roll, Marshal. Then wet your whistle and do the narrator routine again.

On a slight rise a mile or more to the west, you can see Goose Mattox has circled the wagons—literally. He's called together all the remaining survivors and ringed them in with vehicles.



Bunching together like this would be suicide fighting the Combine's automatic weapons and heavy artillery, but it seems to be working against the massed hordes of the dead.

You fight with new vigor, determined to break through to Mattox—surely your last hope of survival.

Let the heroes fight another two rounds of Quick Combat before moving on to the following event.

You're fighting your way west when you hear heavy weapons firing from behind you. You turn and your heart fills with dread. On the highways from the east come hundreds of vehicles, each loaded with more deaders. A short way behind them march their tireless foot soldiers, thousands—maybe hundreds of thousands more walking corpses bear down upon the surrounded Iron Alliance.

You turn and fight even harder, determined to make your last stand with Goose Mattox and the rest of the alliance. To go down fighting. But Goose now sees the truth too—the worms were only the vanguard of this unknown army. There is no hope of resistance—not here, not now. Within minutes the survivors on the hill have loaded onto their remaining transports and are racing away to the west. You can see Goose is one of the last to go. He salutes you and all the other trapped and surrounded survivors still fighting on the plains, but he has no choice. He's leaving you behind.

The Death of Cole Ballad

It's time to introduce the big bad guy and say farewell to one of the Wasted West's heroes. That fellow on the cover of your rule book is about to meet his maker.

After the heroes make another Quick Combat roll, read the following:

You can see five or six other groups like yours fighting for their lives, surrounded by deaders, but it's hopeless. You give the members of your posse one last look of respect and steel yourselves for the inevitable.

Suddenly a barrage of small explosions rip through the dead around you. You spin and see a wave of hoverbikes and an old Stuart APC racing through the grotesque horde. At the head of the group, riding a hoverbike with a shining gold eagle on the front, is the massive unmistakable form of Cole Ballad. It's Cole Ballad's Law Dogs!

At first you think they've come to rescue you, but they only fire a few bursts of 20mm cannon into the deaders around you before racing on by. Ten hover bikes and the APC race by, but only half

make it to the line of vehicles that just approached from the east.

The hoverbikes race on to the center of the undead army—toward a flatbed with a mysterious throne of corpses. Another hover bike is the first to go down, wrecked by yet another flying ball of flailing deaders hurled by the magical “liches.” Then the APC—a Confederate Stuart by the look—gets bogged down in a horde of undead. A handful of troopers abandon the Stuart to fight, but it’s obvious they’re doomed.

Roll another Quick Combat.

Ahead, Cole Ballard and four others leap from their hoverbikes and fight their way toward the macabre flatbed truck. The burnt master of this gruesome army sweeps his hand and kills one of the Law Dogs with a blast of green fire. The hero’s death is tragic, but it allows Cole to get closer. Suddenly, the deaders around you turn and race to protect their master.

Cole climbs the cab of the flatbed and rips off a burst of automatic fire. The bullets rip through the deader on the throne to no effect. Cole’s remaining companions surround him, fending off the surrounding undead with an amazing amount of firepower.

Cole moves forward, fires off another clip and draws two massive knives. He dives toward the back of the flatbed then steps over the writhing carpet of undead. He screams something and the deader steps forward to meet him.

The two grapple, yelling and screaming as they fight.

Let the heroes decide what they want to do. Point out that the APC is now free of deaders, though the driver and crew are all dead. You want them to make a play for the APC—it’s the only way out of this mess.

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There are really only three options. If the posse makes for the Stuart, move on to **Revelations**. If they move for the APC but some or all of them try to help Cole Ballard, hand out some Fate Chips but run **Revelations** before they get there—it’s too late to save Cole. The only real problem comes if they decide not to move toward the fight. If they hang where they’re at, or they try to move west, you’ll have to push them back in the right direction, maybe with a giant worm, another horde of dead rushing toward their master, or some similar threat. The point is that you need them to move toward Cole so they can witness his death and learn the identity of his slayer.

Stuart APC

Crew: 3+8

Engine: Fusion

Gas Tank: N/A

MPG: N/A

Suspension: Hover

Wheels: 0

Top Speed: 60mph

Pace: 150

Acceleration: 15mph

Durability: 60/12

Armor: Bottom 5, front 8, rear 5, left side 6, right side 6

Handling: -2

Size: +4

Load Limit: 100

Weapons:

M38: Fixed; Turret; 360 arc; Damage: 1d20, AP 2 (each action spent charging increases damage by +1d20, to maximum of 5d20); Shots: Unlimited; ROF: 1; Range: 30.

.50M2HB: Ring; Turret; 360; Damage: 4d12, AP 4; Shots: 100 (with 270 rounds remaining); ROF: 3; Range: 40.

Flamer: Out of fuel.

M-249GL: Out of ammo.

Revelations

It's time to reveal our villain's true identity to the posse—and his purpose.

Cole Ballad jams two large knives deep into the heart of the burned deader on the flatbed. The thing shivers but then reaches forward and grabs Cole by the head and neck. He forces the Law Dog down onto the flatbed where he is held down by the carpet of dead men beneath them.

The deader screams:

"I AM RAVEN! THE RECKONERS BETRAYED ME! BUT I WILL HAVE MY VENGEANCE WHEN I AM THE LAST LIVING MAN ON EARTH!"

Cole's jaw drops in shock—he knows Raven is a servitor and can't be killed without knowing his specific weakness.

Let the realization sink in as the heroes gain the APC. This is Raven, the villain who started everything. The posse can't kill him, so they'd best run. Don't let your heroes go charging after him—they won't make it with all the deaders now surrounding Raven's "throne"—and they can't kill him anyway since they don't know his weakness. It's more important to get this information back to the Iron Alliance so they can figure out how to defeat him.

When the party has decided on their course of action, read one last bit of narration.

Raven screams one last time as bursts of red and green flame streak between his eyes and mouth and that of his victim. You watch as Cole Ballad arcs his back, struggling to escape, but the black smoke and flame erupting from his face mark this warrior's final act of defiance.

Cole grabs the knives still resting in Raven's chest and pushes them all the way through his twisted flesh though he knows his struggle is pointless. With a snarl, Cole Ballad screams "You ain't got the balls! I #\$(&@! dare you!" Raven sneers and smashes Cole's head into the trailer. The Law Dog twitches one last time and dies.*

Raven spits on his sizzling corpse—and turns his blazing eyes to you!

Run Heroes, Run!

In case you don't understand the header above, it's time to run! Fortunately, the heroes' APC can plow through the horde and make it out of the fray. You can describe a few additional scenes for drama—the Stuart gets stuck in deaders and has to push through, a worm chases it for a bit, and so on—but in the end, the posse should try to force their way west and attempt to catch up with the fleeing survivors of the Convoy.

What's After the Fire?

Once you're out of the frying pan and into the fire, where do you go from there? Into the coals? Or Hell maybe? Let's find out.

The heroes drive for maybe two miles back toward the Convoy when they see...well, read on, Marshal.

You've finally broken free of dead men and giant worms when you crest a small rise. There you witness a sight you never dreamed possible.

On the field before you is yet another massive army. You see bikers, zombies, monsters, wasters, and more horrors than even you've seen in your long adventuring career. At the rear of the army are four gigantic figures. One, gaunt and skeletal, stands. The other three sit upon massive horses.

Dramatic pause, Marshal. These are the Reckoners themselves. And they're here to save the day.

Fleeing before the monstrous horde are the bloodied remnants of the Iron Alliance.

You pause and spare a quick glance behind you. Raven's army moves forward as well. Some move toward Denver, the rest race after you, not yet seeing the rivals that lie directly in their path! And you are caught in the middle!

Let the group panic and yell at each other for a bit, then hit them with a weird burst of green energy. It slams into the engine of the Stuart APC and knocks it out. Read or paraphrase the following when they look out the viewslits to see what happened!

Three snake-like creatures race up the hill toward you from the west—from the direction of what can only be the Reckoners and their terrible army of servitors and abominations. A group of five Junkyarders flee before them. Three are incinerated beneath the worm's blazing gaze, a fourth trips and is instantly entangled by another. The last, a beautiful and strong-looking young woman, turns to save her entangled friend.

The young woman is Jenny Quaid, leader of the Queens of the Road gang (see *The Wasted West*). Like many other gangs, she threw her hat in the ring with Ike and the Iron Alliance. She's single, gorgeous, and dead if the posse doesn't help her out.

The things chasing her aren't more of Raven's worms, these are particularly nasty abominations the Reckoners brought to the party—voracipedes!

Voracipedes are 20' long insect-like serpents with tons of armor, nasty teeth, and the ability to fire bolts of irradiated energy from their slitted eyes! The first bolt slams into the engine of the APC—it's currently immobile, but it still makes a nice bunker for the following scene!

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Immediately after the first voracipede knocks out the APC's engines, the other two fire off their bolts as well. These make sizzling round holes in the vehicle but otherwise do no damage. Tell the heroes that the APC can likely be repaired, but they must defeat the serpents quick or they're sure to do more permanent damage, or blast a hole through a passenger!

The heroes must step outside and fight the things in a regular combat to save Jenny Quaid. She doesn't lie there like some helpless bimbo in a horror movie though—Jenny stands up and gives the snakes all she's got.

Profile: Voracipede (3)

Corporeal: D:1d6, N:6d10, Q:2d12+2, S:5d10, V:2d12

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

Pace: 20

Size: 13 (20 feet long)

Wind: —

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Armor: 5

Bolts o' Doom: Damage 3d20, ROF 1, Max Range 20'

Damage: Claw (STR+1d12, AP 2, or on a raise they can grapple. Its bite hits automatically on the creature's following actions until a successful contest of Strength is won), bite (STR+2d8, AP 1)

Burrowing: Pace 8 through earth, loose stone, and similar materials, Pace 4 through concrete and stone.

Wall Crawl: Pace 10

Description: The voracipede is a 20' long arthropoid creature resembling a nightmarish fusion of centipede and preying mantis with scythe-like forelimbs, a wicked set of mandibles, and eyes capable of emitting a concentrated beam of energy powerful enough to vaporize steel!



Profile: Jenny Quaid

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

Climbin' 1d8, dodge 3d8, drivin': car, motorcycle 4d8, shootin': shotgun, pistol 5d8, sneak 5d8

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

Area Knowledge: SoCal 3d6, gamblin' 3d6, guts 4d8, leadership 5d10, persuasion 6d10, scrutinize 4d6, search 3d6, survival: desert 3d6

Pace: 8

Size: 6

Wind: 14

Edges: Level-headed, purty, "the stare," "the voice" (soothing)

Hindrance: Law o' the West, loyal

Gear: 12-gauge pump-action shotgun, 3 shells left!

Description: Jenny is beautiful and uses it to her advantage when leading her gang. Unfortunately, her gang now lies dead on the plains of Denver. She's on her own now.

Assuming she's rescued, Jenny stays with the heroes if they treat her right. She might even be attracted to someone in the party. If someone loses their character later on, Jenny might be a good replacement—there aren't many places to pick up fresh faces once the posse gets to the *Unity*.

Drive-In Double Feature!

The round before you think the last voracipede is going down—or the party decides to climb back inside their APC—tell them they see a huge swirling cloud of reddish-dust coming from the west. A quick glance in the other direction shows Raven's front line of deaders and wormlings approaching as well.

When the last voracipede falls, the big red cloud of dust comes within 50 yards. Anyone who makes a Fair (5) *Cognition* roll realizes the cloud is some sort of abomination—filled with swirling innards!

It's time to get inside the APC and watch the show.

The storm racing from the Reckoners' camp is a gore storm. You can read all about it in *Monsters, Muties, & Misfits* if you like, but we don't really intend for your heroes to fight it. Consider it more of a plot device.

Read the following.

You peer out the viewslit and see the red storm whirling up the hill toward you. A glance out the other side shows a throng of deaders already climbing atop your vehicle. Some of them bang on the roof and grunt fiercely, obviously sensing prey. You feel

like tuna packed live in a dented can.

Then something bangs on the floorboards and rocks the APC! Young rattlers! Dozens of 'em by the sound of it!

You peer back toward the storm just in time to see it wash over you. The APC rocks like it's in a hurricane, then it's hit by hundreds of wet, sloppy...things! Your viewports are splattered with red gore, but you can just make out the forms of the deaders atop you being washed away by the storm's gory fury.

The grotesque battle rages for a few long minutes—during which time the group might be able to give Jenny Quaid a little first aid and get her talking. If they do, she has time to tell them the Reckoners are back, and they've brought an army of horrors with them. She doesn't know what happened to the rest of the Convoy—everyone got separated when the first of the Horsemen's troops entered the fray.

After half a minute—though it likely seems much longer—the storm passes over the APC and moves on into Raven's horde. The group has to get moving again. The APC's power flickers on and off—ensuring them that the engine is fixable (let 'em make a Foolproof (3) Smarts roll to figure that out if they haven't already, Marshal).

A decent mechanic can fix the Stuart's engine. When he steps outside to take a look, he sees the voracipede's shot just took out some unimportant subsystem and caused a shutdown. By disabling the subsystem (from outside) and making an Onerous (7) trade: mechanics or tinkerin' roll, the APC starts right up.

If the posse decides to sit and wait it out instead of fixing the Stuart, a few bigger, meaner abominations start heading their way. If they try to run on foot, convince them of their folly by telling them there are literally THOUSANDS of deaders, worms, and bizarre horrors fighting all around them.

Once the Stuart is running again, the group can smash through the weakest of the horrors fighting around them.

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Describe a gory, wild dash through the battlefield as gigantic rattlers crush thousands of prairie ticks beneath their scales, charnel hounds rip apart staggering deaders, and desert gators waddle into the fray to devour Raven's liches. Anything goes here, Marshal. If you have a favorite abomination the Reckoners might have brought with them to the fight, feel free to describe it—or even force the party to fight it if they've had too easy a time so far (yeah, right).

When you're done with your version of *Monster Death Race 2094*, move on to the next event. It's a doozy!

Behold. A Pale Horse

You smash through a wall of angry-looking fat men! As you hit them, their stomachs burst open, spewing greenish clouds of what can only be poisonous gas. You put the pedal to the metal and move through the cloud before it can seep into the Stuart.

The next rise is fairly clear—only a few toxic zombies to run over. You scream down a short road clogged with dead men and into an old suburb—Aurora by a sign on a ruined Quickie Mart.

Even with all you've seen today, the sight you now witness is the most terrible yet.

Standing in what was once a small intersection is a tall, gaunt figure atop a pale horse. He wears a black cloak and carries a massive scythe. Death swings the great weapon and cuts down a hundred deaders. The things continue to writhe, though Death's gigantic, skeletal charger steps forward to stomp them into meaty black stains.

From somewhere within the Reaper's dark cowl comes a low, rumbling whisper, yet somehow

you can still hear it inside your trusty Stuart—"RAVENNNNNN!"

You hit the accelerator—this is not a good place to be! But Death turns towards you and points a long bony finger...

This is a good time for a five-minute break, Marshal. Let the gang take a break from this completely over-the-top chapter. They've likely been laughing their collective keisters off for a good bit now, so let 'em get a fresh soda or water the lilies. When everyone's settled and ready to fight Death itself—proceed.

Death turns toward you and points a bony finger...

...when suddenly a thin beam of blood-red light streaks from the sky and envelops the Horseman. Death turns and swings its incredible scythe in...panic?

You look up and see a small, strange craft—a sleek, black VTOL of some sort by the pale light of its beam. Hellstromme? It hovers not thirty feet above the Reckoner. Death slashes madly at the thing, but can't quite seem to reach. Legions of horrors suddenly begin to swarm to their master's aid—but it's too late! The Reaper and his horse turns ethereal and seems to be sucked upward into the beam—and into the strange black ship!

Just as the red light fades, a group of skeletal wasters—foot troops of Death himself—fire a massive cannon of pure Hellfire into the black ship. It sputters, spins, and heads for the mountains. The pilot—if there is one—struggles to keep the craft under control, but you can plainly see it go down in a forest not a mile from your position.

The skeletal foot troops and all the other undead servants of Death race toward it!

We hope that's a strong-enough hint, Marshal. Your posse needs to beat Death's minions to the ship! If they don't get that clue, you'll need to have the ship's pilot send out a radio message asking for help. Read the next scene to figure out what he says to his rescuers.

Black Ship Down!

The heroes have to race to the black ship and rescue its mysterious pilot—Dr. Darius Hellstromme.

The trip to the crash site is fairly short—barely a mile, but the roads and fields are covered with Raven's deaders, worms, wormlings, and the myriad horrors of the Four Horsemen.

Describe a few bizarre fights between these terrible troops and make the driver of the Stuart make a few *drivin'* rolls. Don't worry about the results, though. Just say "Whew! Barely!" a lot and get on with the action.

(Should the driver go bust on one of these rolls, he drives the Stuart into an old ditch and everyone suffers 2d6 damage.)

Eventually, the group finds the woods where the ship went down. Right behind them are a pair of black riders—Death's personal bodyguards. The ship won't open—it's damn near impenetrable—and it won't open on its own until the posse defeats the riders.

Profile: Black Riders (2)

Corporeal: D:4d12, N:2d8, S:2d12+4, Q:5d12+4, V:3d8

Fightin': brawlin' 4d8, horse ridin' 8d8, shootin': pistol 8d12

Mental: C:4d12, K:1d4, M:2d10, Sm:3d8, Sp:4d10

Overawe 5d10, **search** 4d10

Pace: 8

Size: 6

Wind: —

Terrors: 9

Special Abilities:

Coup: A Harrowed who takes a rider's essence can instantly detect other Harrowed by simply looking at them.

Damage: Ghostly six-guns (ROF 1, range increment 10, damage 4d10, never need reloading)

Immunity—All

Weakness: Blessed Weapons: The riders can only be destroyed by blessed weapons. In the Wasted West, this includes good Doomsayer magic and any sort of hand weapon wielded by a Templar. Even then, the creature's horses and their cloaks are insubstantial. Only their black skulls have form, and it is these that must be shattered to send them back to the abyss.

Description: The riders wear tattered black shrouds with a single holster at their waists. Beneath their black cowls—should anyone get that close—are skulls with two glowing red sparks for eyes.

If your group can't handle the Black Riders, by the way, they probably shouldn't be on this adventure—this is a veterans-only shindig.

When the posse finishes the riders, the black ship opens on its own. Inside the small craft (about the size of a Cessna with half the wingspan) is the robotic body of Doctor Hellstromme.

The good doctor quickly speaks, strangely managing a British accent through his digitized voice.

"Those creatures around us. You know what they are? The worms and the dead are the army of Raven. The monsters are abominations of the Reckoners themselves.

Raven seeks revenge for his betrayal. He believes that if he wipes out every single living human being on the face of the earth, the Reckoners will die.

He is correct, but fortunately, there is another way.

I have all four of the Reckoners trapped for a bit—perhaps a day or more. But they must be taken far, far away from here. And quickly.

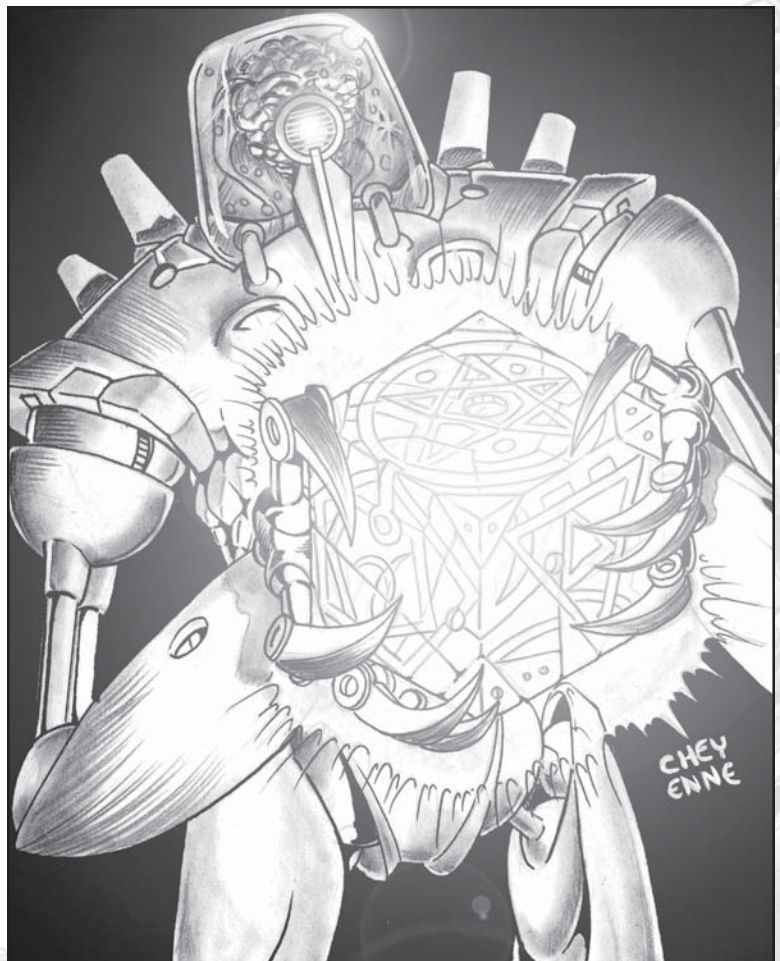
My ship is ruined and my body is failing. You must continue where I have failed. The odds are nearly impossible that you will


succeed, and to do so you will likely face horrors even worse than those that surround us now. But it is humanity's only hope! May I count on you?"

Well, let's hope so, Marshal, because that's how the heroes are going to get to the *Unity*.

When they agree, or ask those pesky questions, Hellstromme's massive robot body clambers out of his cockpit. Read on, Marshal.

Hellstromme's massive robotic body has seen better days—he's limping and there's a serious crack in the dome that holds his living brain. He staggers stiffly to the rear of his ship where he





pushes it over with titanic strength. A buzzsaw then extends from the tip of one crumpled arm and begins to cut into the ship's tail—near a strange protrusion that emitted the red light.

Hellstromme reaches inside the gash with his left “hand”—as if cutting out a tumor from a patient—and pulls forth a strange crimson box covered in bizarre black “veins.” Even a cursory look shows creepy pentagrams, skulls, and other signs of the occult.

“I do not have time to tell you everything now. Take this box and head toward the Vanessa Hellstromme Memorial Spaceport on the outskirts of Denver as fast as your vehicle will allow. I will move away from this spot and try to draw off Death’s minions. I will brief you further by radio—for as long as it lasts in these accursed wastes—or until I am overtaken.”

“Go! Now! You haven’t much time!”

Hellstromme won't answer any more questions. He just gives the group a look with his single red eye (cracked down the center) and says “Godspeed! Now go!” Then he heads off into the woods to play cat and insane-world-killer with the servants of Death. (That’s something you just don’t see every day!)

The party should hop in their Stuart and get moving. We can't troubleshoot everything they might do to delay their trip, Marshal, so you'll have to figure out what to do if they're hesitant. Feel free to throw in a servitor of Death, some more Black Riders, a wave of deaders or wormlings, or whatever else might convince your heroes to be on their merry way.

One way or another, that box has to get to the spaceport east of Denver and fast! There's no *real* time limit to how long the box will hold the Reckoners—

whatever they do will be “just in time.” Just make sure they don't know that.

Twenty Questions with Doctor Hellstromme

Once the posse is on their way to the spaceport (a good 30 minute drive), it's possible they might want to communicate with him via radio for some more detailed instructions, or perhaps to ask a few questions. This is encouraged, and in fact, if your heroes don't think about it, Hellstromme could contact them instead.

As he's escaping, Hellstromme fills them in on a few more details. This is all said quite calmly, though the wasters can often hear the sound of his buzzsaw, screaming zombies, and other weird sounds in the background.

Many have wondered where I have been these last 13 years. I have been on Banshee in the Faraway System. As you know, the Tunnel that allows travel between our two worlds no longer functions, but what few know is that the Tunnel is not the only way to Faraway. It was simply the safest.

I'm afraid I have many secrets to tell you before this makes any sense.

First, the Tunnel is a portal from our world to Faraway, but hyperspace and worm holes are just technobabble used to hide the truth. Travel through the Tunnel is facilitated through a mystical realm that has come to be called the Hunting Grounds. Some areas of it are what you might call Heaven. Other parts are most definitely Hell.

The Tunnel merely opens a portal to the Hunting Grounds and then directs ships through it to a specified area on the other side, avoiding the demons, devils, and nightmare realms in between.

There are many other portals to the Hunting Grounds, but without the Tunnel or some other method of navigation, a traveler might easily be lost in the

nightmare lands for centuries. And for whatever reason, it is far easier to wander into Hell than any other region.

I left for Banshee not to flee the earth's destruction—which I contributed to, but to attempt some minor atonement for my actions. I went because there is a secret that I have kept for many years.

Banshee is alive.

My studies had shown this conclusively in years past, but I had to discover if another of my hypotheses were true. It is, and it may mean the destruction of the Reckoners themselves.

Just a moment..."

The sound of a buzzsaw ripping through bone fills the radio before Hellstromme continues.

"If the Reckoners can be transported to Banshee, they will not die, but they will lose their invulnerability. And then they may be killed."

Allow a dramatic pause here as the heroes realize where they're headed.

A heavy thunk sounds over the radio. Hellstromme frites in and out for a moment, cursing some nameless undead thing, then continues.

"The box I gave you is something of a trap. Inside it—for perhaps a turn of the sun or two—are the Reckoners themselves."

You hear a racket of machine gun fire and a quick series of metallic thuds. Hellstromme curses again and then you hear a large "WHUMP!", as if the doctor's radio was in the middle of a small explosion.

"Pardon me. Some sort of bone conglomeration with assault rifles. Where was I? Oh, yes. The box must be on Banshee before the Reckoners find a way to free themselves. It is the only chance we have of destroying them. Even

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then, it may take years for their power to wane enough to kill them—but it can be done!"

"Of course, to do this, you must get to Banshee. With my ship disabled, there is only way to do so. You must board the Unity, the first ship I used to forge a tunnel through Hell."

Give your group a slight pause before continuing, Marshal.

"I know of only one way to get to the Unity. You must contact the satellite called ComSat and convince it to send a shuttle down after you. It is controlled by a very finicky artificial intelligence, but I watched it for a time on my return and know that it is active. I also know that there are numerous space stations in orbit, one of which must surely have a shuttle that ComSat can link in to."

"There is a direct link to ComSat at the Vanessa Hellstromme Memorial Spaceport. In the control tower. There's also room to land a shuttle there. That is the only way. Get to the spaceport and persuade that paranoid AI to transport you to the Unity."

"There you must do three things. First, you must restore power. The ship is driven by a nuclear reactor, but it has likely gone cold. To restart it you must engage the conventional engine and bring the reactor back on line."

"Second, you must go to the engine room and speak the word 'Apostolos.' Remember that. 'Apostolos.' It's a...code word. The computer AI will tell you what to do next. Make sure at least two of you make it there. You'll need two

bodies to properly follow the computer's instructions."

"When that task is completed, go to the bridge and set the destination for Faraway. The ship will do the rest."

"When you get to Banshee, seek out the Colonial Rangers. Specifically Ranger David Ross or Debbi Dallas. Any other power you approach—including my own Lab—will attempt to use the Reckoners for their own ends."

"Go as quickly as you can. There's no way to tell how long the trap can hold them!"

Okay, Marshal. That's the big plan for the final chapter of this epic saga. But before Hellstromme disappears once more, your group has earned a very special reward. They've got another few minutes before they're out of the mad doctor's radio range. If they'd like to ask him a few questions and fill in some of the gaps about the mysteries of Deadlands, now's the time.

You should be able to answer most questions about Deadlands and the way things work. Hellstromme knows pretty much everything about how the Reckoners "terror-formed" the earth, the Path of Stone (see the *Fortress o' Fear* trilogy), and so on. He's a little ignorant of recent Hell on Earth history, however, as he's only been back a short while and hasn't yet learned all of what's happened since he went away.

Here are a few questions you might not know off the top of your head, for your benefit as well as your posse's.

Question: Why the Four Horsemen? Does that mean the Christian mythology is the "right" one?

Hellstromme: The form they chose, the Four Horsemen, was irrelevant. They are forces of destruction unbound by any particular religion. They manifested as the horsemen only

because that was the form present in the minds of Raven's enemies when he first called them long ago.

Question: Why did the Reckoners come to earth?

Hellstromme: I can only guess at the answer to that question. The Reckoners are impatient creatures. They were created to destroy, and I imagine they grew impatient waiting for some promised apocalypse. So they decided to bring about the end of the world themselves. And by creating a Hell on Earth, they have managed to create a constant state of destruction.

Question: What was your role in all this?

Hellstromme: I'm afraid the Reckoners needed four humans who were willing to help bring them into the world. To "sell their souls," so to speak. Reverend Grimme was the servitor of Famine. A killer named Stone served Death. War chose Raven himself. I'm afraid I was Pestilence's personal servant. I offer no defense for my actions, and you are very right to blame me for the current state of the earth. I will never redeem myself, but I do know how to destroy the Reckoners.

Question: What's up with your wife? How did she really die? Why did you build the Unity in the first place?

Hellstromme: My darling Vanessa. I wronged her, oh so many years ago. I have told many tales of her death, but the truth is that she was wounded in India. I sought revenge rather than comforting her in her agony as I should have. Eventually, miserable, lost, and lonely in a foreign land, my sweet young bride took her own life.

I was wracked by guilt for centuries, but never allowed myself to grieve. Instead I used my scientific skills to build devices

that might one day let me bring her back to life. When that proved impossible, I sought to venture into Hell itself and bring back her soul. My first trip was on a train, over two hundred years ago. That went...poorly.

Centuries later, I created the Unity, a ship that would take me into Hell itself and retrieve my wife. The Unity did venture into Hell, but that is another story. It could not recover my wife, but it did eventually discover the Faraway System. And perhaps earth's salvation.

Question: What's the state of the Unity now?

Hellstromme: I've no idea. I did not visit it when I returned from Faraway, though my sensors did note that it was still present.

Scene Six: The Haunted Spaceport

The trip to the spaceport on the outskirts of Denver is a 30 minute trip. That's at breakneck speed over the good roads with a slow careful pace off-road or while skirting some nasty critter.

The journey itself should be fairly easy—have everyone make a Quick Combat roll and add +4 to their rolls. Whoever mans the Stuart's guns does double casualties.

Along the way, just to make your wasters nervous, Hellstromme's box makes "bzzt" sounds and crackles with dark red energy. This happens only once during this trip and lasts for about ten seconds. It gets more frequent later on.

Fortunately, getting to the spaceport is fairly easy. It's outside of town and there are enough road signs left to guide even the dimmest posse straight towards its formerly heavily-fortified walls. Move on to the heart of this

scene when you're done with the *Road Warrior* routine.

The Vanessa Hellstromme Memorial Spaceport

The VHMS is described in the *Denver* sourcebook, but we don't need too many details for our scene here. You know the basics: busted tarmac, ruined planes and space shuttles, crumbling buildings, and so on.

The main building is haunted by a poltergeist-like abomination, but fortunately, your heroes don't have to go there. There's also evidence that the Combine has been working on the spaceport, but they've all retreated back into the walls until the siege is over.

The Spaceport

The spaceport sat at the edge of the Colorado blast, but it was close enough to fry its electronics and incinerate most of the folks who worked there. What's left are a series of long runways that look just like any major airport, a number of ruined buildings, and the blackened hulks of tankers, luggage trolleys, and even a few old spaceships. A number of massive hangars survived as well, but campfires burning within should warn the posse away from the muties who have taken up residence inside.

The old control tower here has a powerful transmitter that can break through the usual ground interference and reach ComSat. Any junker or other waster with a high-tech background can spot the dishes and relays and guess their intent on a Foolproof (3) *science: electronics* roll.

Getting to the tower is fairly easy if the party is either very quiet or uses their Stuart. The few hermits and muties who are squatting here are perfectly willing to go after weak prey,



but won't tangle with a group who looks like they can handle themselves.

The central control tower is scorched and weathered with an old fire escape zigzagging down one side. The only entrance is protected by a high-security door. The electronic locks were fried and it's now stuck in place. Someone has busted the door inward, but it is blocked by rubble and debris on the inside. The only way in is to go up the fire escape and directly into the top of the tower. This requires three Hard (9) *climbin'* rolls as the gantry is twisted and shaky. Each success gets the character 10 yards up the high tower (it's about 30 yards to the doorway at the top of the walk). The fire escape can hold about 300 pounds before falling. Anyone caught up in the jagged metal takes 2d6 damage from the fire escape in addition to any falling damage.

At the top, the climber is rewarded with an open door into what was once the world's most advanced control tower. An elevated walkway leads into the rest of the spaceport, as well, but there's nothing there that is particularly

relevant to this adventure, so you can skip it and move on to the action.

Would You Like to Play a Game?

The central control room has been picked over by looters, but since most of the electronics are fried, and not too many survivors need advanced telemetry computers, the room is in surprisingly good shape.

One very powerful computer sits in the rear center of the room. Even a clueless waster can spot the label on the monitor that reads "ComSat Uplink." This unit is shielded to resist the effects of electro-magnetic pulses, though the characters might not realize this just yet. The screen is cracked but viewable, the keyboard is covered with dust, and it has no power.

It's time to let your junker characters do their thing. A quick Fair (5) *scavengin'* roll and a Fair (5) *tinkerin'* or *science: electronics* can rig a cable from the APC's power outlet below directly to the computer.

If the scavengers get careless, you can have them run afoul of a few random muties lurking in the shadows, or perhaps a lurker hanging out in the debris, but otherwise let your heroes get on with their mission.

Paranoia

Once the power is on, a microphone next to the monitor allows anyone with any technical background to realized ComSat should be instructed by voice commands. When spoken to, it answers by typing a message on the screen: ComSat Active. (It never speaks.) Maddeningly, nothing else happens until someone tells ComSat that the group needs to get to the *Unity*.

Then a strange thing happens—a commercial plays:

The cracked screen goes from black to an old commercial.

*In the commercial, a well-dressed man stands before the spaceport. He says "Here at Noble Corp, the sky is **not** a limit. Our new deep space research vessel, the *Unity*, has the most advanced technology on the planet. It features state of the art artificial intelligence and a drive so secret even the government doesn't know about it. But machines are only as good as the people who use them. That's why we've chosen veteran shuttle pilot Colonel Mark Hazard to command our first journey into deep space. Watch on March 26th as the *Unity* begins its historic mission. The world will never be the same."*

The screen freezes on the last frame, the announcer's face caught in a permanent smile. The gaff, of course, is that "Noble Corp" didn't build the *Unity*, it was Hellstromme Industries. As soon as someone says that aloud (so that ComSat can hear it through the microphone), the commercial fritzes out.

ComSat is playing its little games as it is wont to do (it thinks this protects it from abominations). If you've read the *Wasted West* book, you might remember ComSat was disguised as a typical commercial relay satellite. It relayed airplane (and spaceport) data, mobile phone calls, television signals, computer downloads, and so on. It did all these duties, but had other, more secretive functions as well. Many of its old broadcasts still exist in its memory

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banks. ComSat often uses these to send "coded" communications to its few friends on earth. An advanced Artificial Intelligence, it also has the ability to create new video and audio clips from its library as well.

A second commercial starts a few seconds later.

The screen went black for a moment, but now it's back. This time you see a man in a suit kissing babies and shaking hands with common folks. A banner at the bottom of the screen reads: "President Romero. What's best for Texas and the rest of the Confederacy."

The trick to this one is that Romero was President of the United States, not the Confederacy. It freezes on a picture of Romero in front of the Texas flag and waits until someone in the room realizes the truth.

The screen goes black when Romero is revealed and another commercial begins. This one shows nothing but a ticking stopwatch followed by a spinning book of noxious green that rushes out at the viewer.

"Tonight on 60 Minutes. Was the Last War predicted by a Sean Hanson roleplaying game made in the late 1990s? And if so, is his startling vision of apocalypse unavoidable? Ingrid Honnaker and Joel Tuchman find out tonight on 60 Minutes, for September 24th, 2081."

Sadly, there was no broadcast on September 24th, 2081, for this was the day after the world ended. The image freezes on the familiar 60 Minutes stopwatch, waiting for someone to state the answer out loud. The screen goes black again when ComSat hears the right answer.

The Clueless Hindrance

It is possible your players don't know the answers to some of these questions. No sweat. Hey, we wrote all those "gray pages" for them to read, but don't mind our carpal tunnel syndrome, bleeding fingers, and bloodshot, irradiated eyes.

The questions ComSat asks are fairly easy to *characters* of the Wasted West. The trick is just figuring out the commercials *are* questions. If your players do that, you can let them make *Knowledge* rolls to guess the truth (or to determine what's wrong with each advertisement).

In any event, in the future, let those poor players read the gray pages of your books! Even better, make them go buy their own and learn about this world they're playing in! We won't complain.

Bubbly Fizz. Mmmmm.

When the *60 Minutes* puzzle is solved, the screen switches to a view from orbit. It shows the spaceport, then tracks across the tarmac to a wreck lying a few hundred yards distant. The screen then zooms in close enough to read the ship's name—the *Hesperas*. It's obviously ruined—it won't go into space, but ComSat keeps showing the image anyway (it wants the heroes to go there).

As the heroes start to leave the tower, the terminal flickers on and off, hesitantly playing another commercial. This one is unintentional, but as was stated in *The Wasted West*, ComSat's a little screwy these days and can't stop itself. Perceptive heroes might notice the heavy static and constant breaks in this commercial that show ComSat is trying to turn it off.

Those who stay to watch see a sexy lingerie model opening a can of fizzing cola, then pouring it into a tall glass. A sexy female voice then says "Bubbly Fizz. Mmmmm."

The voice was done on a computer and designed to reside subliminally in customer's minds for days. Every time they see a bubble, something round, or even something that looks like a cola can, the voice runs through their head. *Bubbly Fizz. Mmmmm.* Drive your group crazy by making them all say that aloud everytime they see something bubbly or can-shaped.

Once the commercial is over, the screen goes black and stays that way.

The Wreck of the *Hesperas*

The *Hesperas* was a light freighter that carried goods from the planet to larger bulk freighters in space. Now it sits in a ditch to the side of one runway. Its door is buried in the dirt, but the back loading bay can be opened with a welding torch or a good bashing from the Stuart. If the heroes don't have a way to cut the door open, an Onerous (7) *scroungin'* roll (and maybe a run-in with some random muties) allows them to find one.

Inside, the *Hesperas* is a mess. At first glance, it looks as if someone threw gelatinous blood over the cargo bay. In truth, a large shipment of reddish petroleum jelly sealed in plastic drums was the *Hesperas'* final cargo. The burst drums look something like cola cans, so the characters are likely reminded of the subliminal ad again: *Bubbly Fizz. Mmmmm.*

Most of the drums have long since burst and the jelly lies about the bay in large piles. Here and there can be seen ancient remains of the crew—those within the jelly are still fairly fresh, the rest are mere bones.

Your wasters are going to have wade through this mess, Marshal. Anyone with a phobia of blood (fairly common if you're using the Scart Table as much as you oughtta) feels a little queasy about the goo and must make a Hard (9) *guts* roll to wade in.

Beyond the barrels are a number of unlabeled plastic crates. Ripping them open reveals ComSat's true intentions—the crates are filled with spacesuits.

Zombies. Who'da Thunk It?

As the heroes near the front of the ship (just after discovering the suits) and are hip deep in slippery jelly, the former crew rises from the dead to defend their cargo. These walkin' dead aren't particularly dangerous, and are armed only with wrenches, inanimate

carbon rods, and other simple tools—but the slippery jelly makes footing treacherous for everyone. Anyone in the cargo hold subtracts -4 from physical skills involving movement (including *fightin'* and even *shootin'* if the character hasn't braced himself first).

There are two walkin' dead for every member of the party. You know the stats, Marshal (see the *Hell on Earth* rulebook). These suckers aren't armed and not particularly dangerous except for the possibility of the wrestling match in the jelly.

Oh, and fireworks are a strict no-no. Allow everyone a Foolproof (3) *Smarts* roll to realize the petroleum jelly is likely to ignite if they break out the flamethrowers and hand-cannons. Players being players, someone will likely still whip out their zippo, so here's how to handle it. A small flame, like the burst of a big handgun, has a 1 in 20 chance of starting a fire. A bigger burst, like that of automatic fire, has a 1 in 10 chance. Flamethrowers and similar devices have a 1 in 1 chance (that's right—kaboom!) The initial blast is equal to a grenade. After that, the jelly burns slowly for the next eight hours. Anyone who gets it on him suffers 2d6 damage per round until it's smothered completely. Fortunately, the suits are in a fire-proof container and aren't destroyed.

When the fight is over, the posse can explore the hold and salvage the goodies ComSat needs them to find.

One hour later, they hear the roar of jets. A few minutes after that, a small space shuttle descends from the sky and lands near the wreck of the *Hesperas*. It looks a little weathered, but should hold up. With a little luck.

As the heroes get in, ComSat blasts another commercial over the shuttle's view screen.

A commercial suddenly flares to life on the ship's cracked monitor. It shows a number of figures in power armor moving fast through a blasted urban scene and fighting what can only be a heavy can cyborg. Music plays, "Be all that you can be, in the Arrrrr-myyyyy."

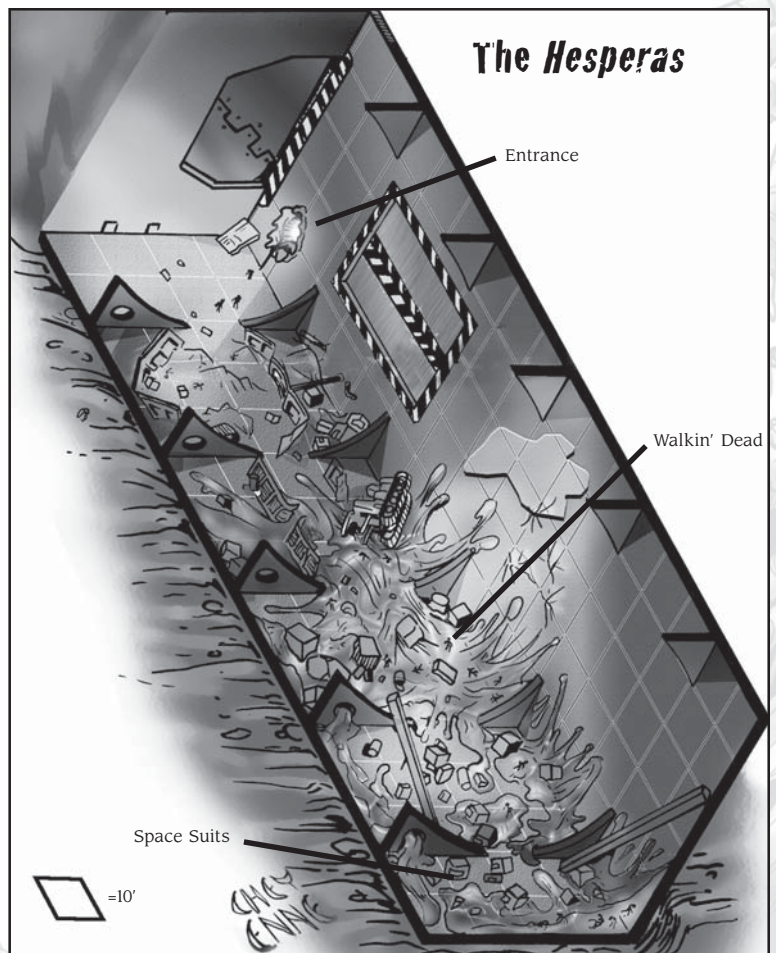
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A female voiceover says, "In the United States Special Forces, we kill more rebels before 9am than the Latin Alliance kills all year." The picture then pans up the hulking power armor until it gets to the top. There the soldier takes off her imposing helmet to reveal a beautiful young girl of about 17.

Now a male voice cuts in. "Sign up now for the new spaceborne Marines and receive twice the usual recruiting bonus!"

ComSat is trying to prepare the heroes for their venture into space. It has a slight "favor" it wants to ask of its visitors before it sends them over to the *Unity*.



Blast Off

The shuttle has just enough room for the characters and whatever gear you want them to have. We'll leave this a bit ambiguous so that you can force posses with truckloads of equipment to choose what they'll take into the void.

Throttle jockeys are disappointed when they step into the ship—its controls are locked. ComSat plans on guiding it from orbit.

If a junker or some other rocket scientist tries to override the shuttle, it rises abruptly into space, pinning the offending technician in his seat. Anyone who wasn't strapped in takes 2d4 massive damage as he flies back through the hull. Roll 1d6 for each other passenger as well. On a 1, that character is hit by the first and suffers a like amount of damage. If the offending techie keeps at it, ComSat shakes the shuttle violently enough to keep them from doing any intricate electronic work.

ComSat is pretty smart and can monitor most small operations that could cause critical mishaps. If the doors to the shuttle are left open when it launches, for instance, ComSat automatically closes them.

Needless to say, blasting out of Earth's atmosphere is a little disconcerting. Have every character make a Hard (9) *guts* check to avoid filling the cabin with curiously weightless vomit. Savages and others with fears of the miracles of high technology subtract -4 from their rolls.

The shuttle has windows (for dramatic effect, Marshal!), so the posse can see the big blue ball they lived on fading into the distance behind them. Let the posse get a good look at their blasted mudball—it's likely the last they'll see of Earth for a long time.

Hotel ComSat

The shuttle slows a few hours or so after breaking earth's orbit and changes course towards ComSat. Those looking out one of the portholes see a cylinder about the size of a grain silo with several solar panels, radar dishes, and sensor prongs jutting from its center. These are ComSat's primary sensor arrays. Though few know it—and ComSat never reveals it—it is linked with hundreds of smaller relays around Earth's orbit as well. ComSat itself is the "brain" of this network.

There is a single entrance to ComSat's housing, and no gantry or walkway to accommodate docking craft. Since ComSat does not spin (no gravity is required), technicians were expected to simply "hover" nearby and go extravehicular (EV) to conduct repairs or add new components. This is why the heroes needed spacesuits. Now it's time to use them.

As the shuttle nears ComSat, the monitors flicker to life. Read the following to the heroes:

Just outside the shuttle is an old satellite about the size and shape of a grain silo. Solar panels and sensor prongs ring its perimeter. Marked clearly on its side, in big blue letters, is "ComSat."

As you marvel at being in outer space, the shuttle's monitor flickers on to show two children eating what appears to be soggy corn flakes soaked in blood. Audio booms into your suit's radio:

"Tasty Flakes are yumilicious, nutritious, and made from algae harvested in the Red Sea! Children love the way it turns milk red! Parents love Tasty Flakes because they're wholesome, all-natural, and affordable!"

"Even Astronaut Flip Cheney loves Tasty Flakes! They're space-licious!" The commercial now shows an astronaut floating in space around a United States space shuttle in a suit that looks exactly like yours. The video then

pauses and zooms in to the suit's various buckles and clasps. It continues to cycle through these close-ups, over and over.

Those who pay close attention to the cycling images can figure out how to make sure their suit is sealed. Have everyone make a Hard (9) *Smarts* roll. Those who make it seal their suits with no leakage. Those who don't have a serious problem the moment the shuttle doors are opened (there are no airlocks—the ship floods with oxygen when the doors are sealed and empties it to the vacuum when they are opened). Decompression sets in immediately. Every round, the character loses 1 Wind and gets a chance to make a Hard (9) *Smarts* and *Nimbleness* roll to fix the problem. Only when both rolls are made is the suit correctly fitted and decompression stops.

Should a character lose his base Wind to decompression, he dies. His eyes bulge out and hemorrhage and blood comes bubbling out his mouth and ears (*Bubbly Fizz. Mmmm*). Not a pretty site. The waster is now a frothing, frozen mess, though he might make an interesting conversation piece.

Deaders in Space

ComSat's single access door rests on broken hinges. Seeing as how the hinges were made of two inch thick steel, this is quite an accomplishment. There are no scorch marks or other indications the door was attacked or knocked off by an errant flyby. In truth, those who broke into ComSat were simply strong enough to rip it off its hinges (more in a moment, Marshal).

What happened here? For that, you need a little background, courtesy of the *Cyborgs* sourcebook.

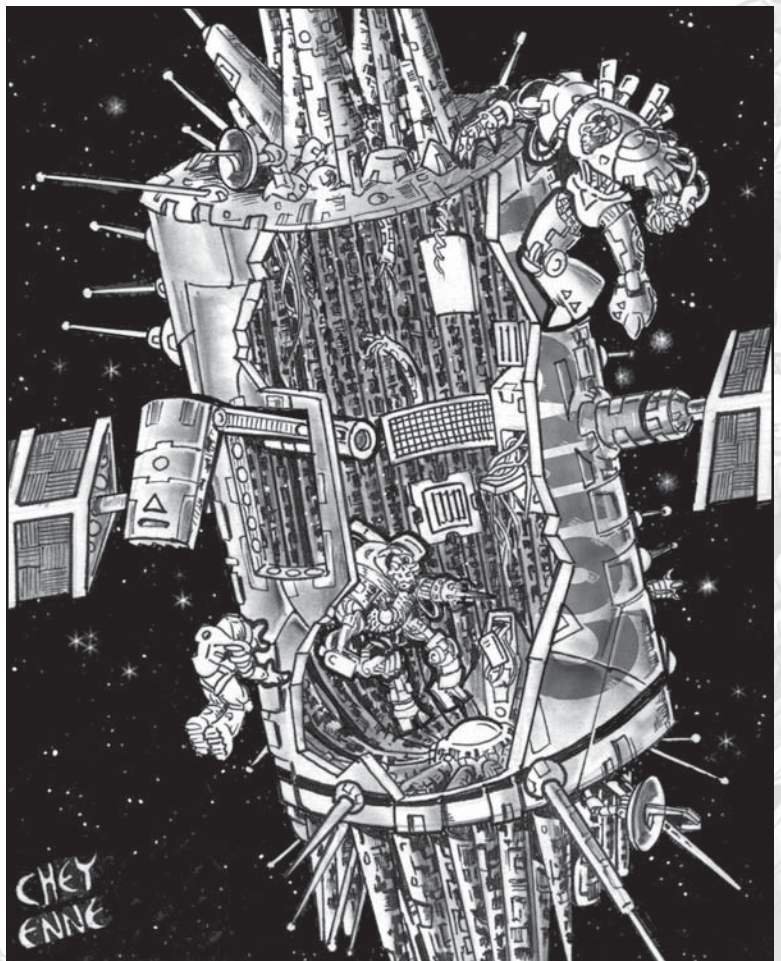
Harkrader's Cyborgs

During the final phases of the Last War, both the USA and CSA established orbital drop stations. The droppers were primarily cyborgs—Harrowed fitted with cybernetic goodies to make them nearly unstoppable killing machines. Popular rumors claim the cyborgs of both Sherman Orbital and Manassass

Station had been trapped in space since the Apocalypse, and were likely dead. The truth is far worse. The cyborgs united under General Thaddeus Harkrader and are in league with General Throckmorton and the Combine.

In fact, the cyborgs were about to jump in on Junkyard when Ike Taylor turned on Hellstromme's secret gadget and zapped all the cyborgs, automatons, and other manitou-infested troopers. Harkrader's team stopped the drop just in time to avoid certain doom and then watched incredulously at the events of the last few days.

Throckmorton has called on Harkrader to drop and help him now in the besieged Denver, but the cyborg



Space suits

The suits the heroes wear are thick and heavy. They provide some light armor against scrapes and light bumps, but little protection against any sort of impaling attack. They also provide roughly 24 hours worth of heat and oxygen, a short-term waste system (meaning you can do number 1 but not number 2), and short-wave radio communications within a one mile radius.

The suit doesn't interfere with a user's *Nimbleness*, but the bulky gloves subtract one step from the wearer's *Deftness* and related skills. Fine handheld tools, holdout weapons, and the like, can't even be used as the gloves' fingers are simply too thick.

Of course the real problem is leakage. A wound caused by blunt trauma damage doesn't breach the suit—even in the faceplate as it's made of advanced plexiglass. Cutting or impaling attacks cause a breach if a single wound or more is caused.

Fortunately, the heroes can find some patch kits in the Fighter Bay if they look a bit. (If they don't, they're likely in serious trouble, so cut 'em a break, Marshal). The patch kits have six square feet of self-adhesive, air-tight patching material. Each "wound" patched takes up one square foot of material.

A hero has to make a *Deftness* check to apply the patch. The TN is equal to 3 for a light wound, 5 for a heavy wound, 7 for a serious wound, 9 for a critical wound, and 11 for a maiming wound.

Every round that a hero's suit is breached, he loses 1 Wind. Should a character lose his base Wind to decompression, he dies. His eyes bulge out and hemorrhage and blood comes bubbling out his mouth and ears. (*Bubbly Fizz. Mmmm*)

Remember that Harrowed don't need to worry about decompression, but they do lose their ability to communicate via their radios if their suits lose pressure.

You'll find information on maneuvering in the suits on page 62.

commander is pulling the old "bzzt—can't read you, over" bit with his hand over his mouth.

He can't keep this up much longer, however. Before he commits his precious troopers to what looks like a losing fight, he wants more info. For that he needs some of the more powerful surveillance equipment found aboard ComSat. Two heavy cans are here ripping ComSat's guts out when the heroes arrive. They must be dealt with before ComSat will send the shuttle on over to the *Unity*.

Profile: Heavy Cans (2)

Corporeal: D:3d12, N:2d6, S:3d12+4, Q:2d10, V:2d6

Climbin' 1d6, Fightin': chainsword 3d6, shootin': pistol, rifle, MG 4d12, sneak 1d6

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

Area knowledge 2d6, guts 2d8, leadership 2d8, overawe 2d8, search 3d8, tinkerin' 1d6

Pace: 8

Size: 8

Wind: 16

Special Abilities:

Cyber Systems: AI, command & control, cyber eye (16x telescopic sight), cyber eye (thermal imaging), heavy hard points (all locations), radio, Samson, spirit capacitor, spirit fetter, targeting computer

Manitou/Power: 3d10/10

Gear: Heavy battle armor

Satellite Fight

ComSat brings the heroes up quiet and out of sight around 100 yards off the satellite. The posse must "leap" to the fight and try to take the squatters by surprise. There are no tethers or other lifelines for the jump (unless the posse rigs up something themselves). Everyone who wants to make the jump simply needs to make a Fair (5) *Nimbleness* roll. Losers who fail shoot slowly past ComSat and into the void. Those who go bust go racing past the satellite and off into the void. The suits have 16 hours of heat and oxygen left in them, so the group has a little time to figure out a way to rescue errant

companions. Of course, this won't keep most wasters from soiling their pants. ComSat is also quite sympathetic to the doomed—it pipes in the best of its commercials to keep the soon-dead character entertained during his last hours. Over. And Over. And over.

Once there, the mission is very straightforward—blast the cyborgs into paste without destroying ComSat.

Here's an easy way to keep track of the damage. Every missed shot (or area effect attack) scorches ComSat's panels and causes a shower of sparks, but only does real harm 33% of the time (roll of 1 or 2 on a d6 with each attack).

Every time serious damage is caused, someone's going to have to repair it before ComSat is willing to send the posse on their merry way to the *Unity*.

The cyborgs have a tool kit here, so the heroes are in luck there, but each fix requires an Incredible (II) *science: electronics* roll (a junker could use *tinkerin'* with a -4 penalty) and 30 minutes of time.

If the heroes try something truly catastrophic here (such as using a missile launcher or other mega-weapon), give them a stern warning first. ComSat might even flash some sort of radio message into the offender's helmet beforehand, something very direct and to the point—such as a screech so loud the hero is stunned.

The cyborgs aren't armed, but once attacked, they're smart enough to grab wrenches and try to rip open the heroes' suits. (The deaders ignore the effects of the vacuum.) Neither of them fight to the death if they're obviously outclassed. If they have to flee, they simply jump out into space and hope their friends find them before they go too far!

If they're offered a truce or bargain of some sort, they're fairly clever and can lie with the best of 'em. They could care less about the *Unity* (if told)—they just want to keep tabs on the earth below and eventually get back down there. Maybe they even volunteer to accompany the heroes (in hopes of stealing their shuttle). ComSat won't allow this however, and actually seals the shuttle's doors if the cyborgs are taken there.

Underway

When the cyborgs are driven off or defeated, ComSat calms down and allows the heroes to go on their way. The paranoid satellite opens the shuttle doors and waits for the posse to climb in. When they do, it powers on, eases up the throttle, and blasts off into the depths of space. It takes 10 hours to reach the *Unity* from ComSat—leaving your wasters with approximately 6 hours of heat and air. Characters with relevant phobias should probably make a Fair (5) *guts* check now. Going to a satellite in orbit is one thing—heading into deep space is another.

It's time to visit the ship from Hell.

Bounty

Enemy casualties: Count the number of casualties each character caused in Quick Combat (only) and award the following Fate Chip: 1-10 casualties nets 1 white chip; 11-20 casualties is a red chip; 21-50 casualties is a blue chip; 51+ casualties is a Legend Chip!

Taking out the Combine's SAM site: One red chip each.

Detecting and destroying Jessie, the infiltrator automaton: One blue chip each.

Surviving the sewer chase: One red chip each.

Trying to help poor, doomed Cole Ballard: One red chip to anyone who tries really hard even though the effort was doomed to failure.

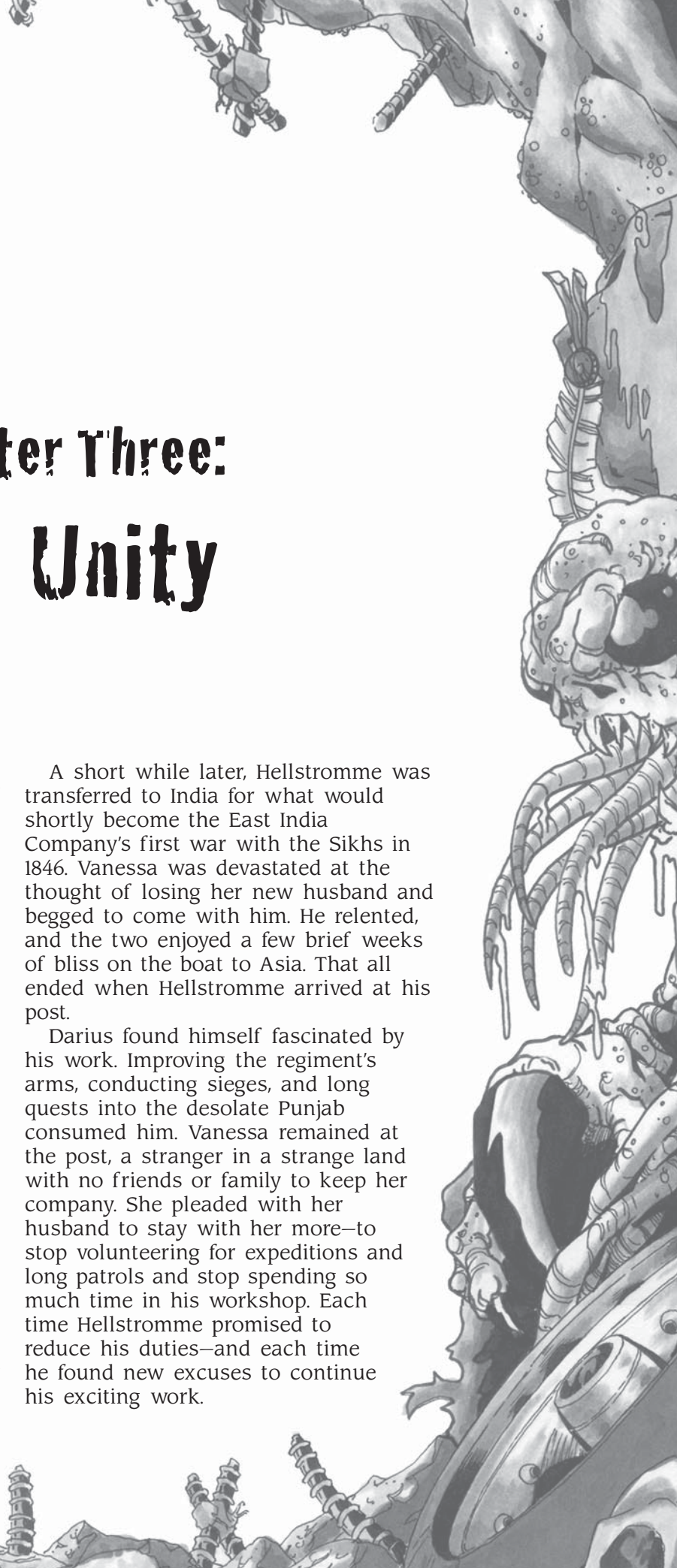
Rescuing Jenny Quaid: One white chip each. One red chip to anyone who really risked his neck for her.

Defeating the Black Riders: One blue chip each. Good job, heroes!

Figuring out ComSat's puzzles: One red chip to the player who figures out each puzzle.

Defeating the two deaders at ComSat: One red chip each.





Chapter Three: The Unity

We've said "Welcome to Hell" about umpteen-dozen times since the story of *Deadlands* began. Now we really mean it. It's time to reveal one of the biggest secrets of *Deadlands*. Bear with us, there's a lot you need to know here. We'll get to the slaughter soon enough.


Oh, and one last thing. One of your heroes *will* die in this chapter. We guarantee it.

The Story So Far

As some of you Marshals have guessed, the tale starts with Dr. Darius Hellstromme. Way back in the mid 1840s, Hellstromme was a young lieutenant in Her Majesty's Royal Engineers. While still in London, Darius met and fell in love with the beautiful daughter of an English Colonel, Vanessa Cardigan. Vanessa loved the dashing young Engineer in kind, perhaps seeing something of her father in Hellstromme, and they were soon wed.

A short while later, Hellstromme was transferred to India for what would shortly become the East India Company's first war with the Sikhs in 1846. Vanessa was devastated at the thought of losing her new husband and begged to come with him. He relented, and the two enjoyed a few brief weeks of bliss on the boat to Asia. That all ended when Hellstromme arrived at his post.

Darius found himself fascinated by his work. Improving the regiment's arms, conducting sieges, and long quests into the desolate Punjab consumed him. Vanessa remained at the post, a stranger in a strange land with no friends or family to keep her company. She pleaded with her husband to stay with her more—to stop volunteering for expeditions and long patrols and stop spending so much time in his workshop. Each time Hellstromme promised to reduce his duties—and each time he found new excuses to continue his exciting work.



One bloody Sunday, Sikh raiders under Runjoor Singh overran the East India Company's base camp. The lightly-manned garrison managed to repel the attack, but not before Vanessa was stabbed by a wild-eyed Sikh.

Hellstromme returned days later to discover his wife dead, her wound turned gangrenous. Vanessa begged her husband to stay by her side, but the enraged young officer instantly mounted his charger and raced into the hills to kill every Sikh he could find.

The carnage ended 18 hours later, but Vanessa was even closer to death and once again begged her young husband to remain with her as she passed. Darius waited until she slept, then slipped to his workshop to devise the most cruel and vicious traps he could imagine to maim the raiders the next time they approached his camp.

Vanessa woke to find herself alone. Her wound seeped green and her eyes wept bloody tears. She called out for her husband again and again, but there was no response. The pain of her body was tremendous, but it was nothing compared to the pain in her heart. Finally, she picked up a surgeon's scalpel from beside the bed and ended her misery.

Darius was still in his workshop when his commander came to tell him the news. "You should have been with her," Sir Hugh Gough said quietly.

Hellstromme snapped. His eyes went wild and his heart nearly leapt out of his chest. He kept his back to his commander and continued to work.

The famous general left without another word.

After Vanessa's body was shipped back to London, Hellstromme threw himself into his work, constructing gadgets and gizmos to destroy the Sikhs in the bloodiest manner possible. At first, his fellow officers reveled in the engineer's success, though no one cared for the cold, driven scientist personally.

As time went on, Hellstromme's penchant for bloodshed became all too apparent. His seniors realized he wasn't fighting the war for the East India Company or even Queen and Country. Hellstromme fought for revenge. They said as much in dispatches back home, but his reputation had already grown too great. The Army could not discharge him.

They could, however, transfer him. The next quarter century saw Darius transferred from post to post. He traveled the Orient, explored the Dark Continent, and even ventured into Russia and Australia. Between orchestrating massacres and developing new weapons of destruction, Darius continued to learn. Occult books and sources in his travels hinted that there were eldritch forces in the world that could offer him even more power. They also hinted that it was possible for humans to master these arcane arts. Long before the Reckoning, Hellstromme tapped into what little magic remained in the wake of the Great Spirit War.

When he had verified the existence of the supernatural, he formalized the plan that had been burning in his brilliant but demented mind long ago. He would go to Hell and reclaim Vanessa's damned soul.

The Reckoning

Hellstromme awoke with a start the day Raven freed the manitous. Formulas and theories swam through his brain. He later learned these were manitous—evil spirits tempting him with knowledge far exceeding the rule of the day. Darius did not question their existence, nor their motives. He simply began to distill, organize, and test the incredible forbidden lore he had been granted.

Of all he learned, none had more potential than his secret discovery of ghost rock. He found his first vein by "accident" while exploring in Africa. The rest of the world discovered ghost rock shortly after the Great Quake of 1868 shattered America and dropped California into the sea. Survivors found veins of the stuff exposed in the new

labyrinth of towering sea canyons. Hellstromme had already mastered its Hellish properties, but his supply grew dangerously short and the mines in Africa were dangerously exposed to hostile natives. So he packed his things and moved to America.

Hellstromme sensed that Reverend Grimme of the new City of Lost Angels was a madman and wanted no part of his insane cult. The only other logical site for laboratories and factories was Salt Lake City, Utah, home of the Mormons, and large deposits of ghost rock in the Wasatch Mountains.

Fortunately for Hellstromme, the Mormons were caught in a difficult struggle against the United States Army, the Indians, the elements, their own internal strife, and the Reckoning. Giving them an advantage over these difficulties would make him their champion, and the fiercely loyal settlers would then be honor-bound to protect him. The details of that story are revealed in the Weird West book *City o' Gloom*, and do not need to be repeated here. Suffice it to say that Darius not only won the hearts and minds of the Mormons, but gained the independence of "Deseret" and transformed it into the most advanced (and polluted) industrial nation in the world for two centuries to come.

Eventually, Darius was able to put together an expedition to recover his wife. He built an armored train, loaded it with hired guns, and built a special track that would take them all straight to Hell. The expedition failed to recover Vanessa's soul, but it did prove that such a trip was possible. (The story of Hellstromme's trip to Hell is related in *Out of the Frying Pan* in the "Trilogy with No Name" anthology.)

It would be many years later before Hellstromme could attempt the journey again. Unfortunately for him, his body was growing old and weak despite the constant alchemical potions and occult concoctions he used to preserve it. Eventually, he was forced to remove his brain from his body and have it placed in a robotic suit. The lack of flesh meant little to the mechanical master.

At least three more Hellish safaris took place over the years. Hellstromme even learned that he could approach

Hell by land, sea, air, or even space. Unfortunately for him, all his expeditions met with failure and bloody disaster as Hellstromme's troops found themselves overwhelmed by legions of demons. What he needed was a powerful juggernaut large enough to blast the largest demons and carry a full legion of his finest troops to deal with the lesser hordes. He decided to attempt his next venture into Hell from space.

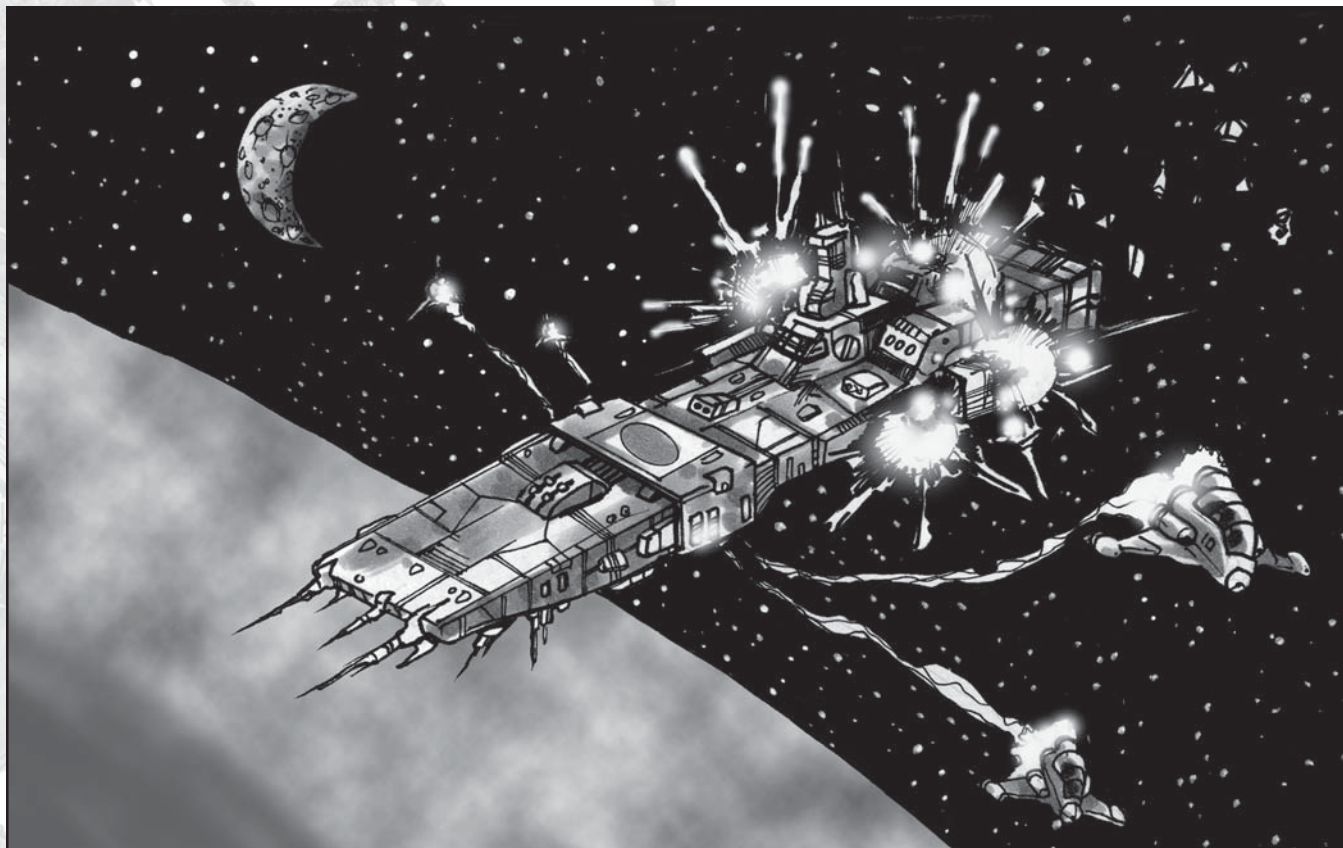
Faraway and the *Unity*

Hellstromme's final trip was to be better-armed and more suited to travel in the dark abyss of the Hunting Grounds. The mad doctor already had several space stations in orbit around Earth. In one of them, he built a top-secret spaceship called the *Unity*. Years later, Hellstromme's public relations agents would tell the world that the ship was named to celebrate the union of humans and any alien species it might discover. In truth, the ship was named for the reunion of Hellstromme and his lost wife.

But a ship designed for Hell requires far more than rockets or even nuclear power to propel it to the depths of the Inferno. The drive that powers the ship is rightly called the "Faustian Device," for it is more a cage than an engine. In fact, it is a much larger version of the box he would later use to imprison the Reckoners themselves.

Inside the *Unity's* Faustian Device is an ancient demon named Apostolos. But capturing a demon is one thing. Getting it to use its powers is another. Apostolos' price is nothing less than cold-blooded murder.

To activate the drive and send the ship into the Hunting Grounds, Apostolos demanded a blood sacrifice. Hellstromme and a hand-picked, murderous few of the *Unity's* staff, used the doctor's foes to fulfill this dark contract.



The First Journey

The *Unity* first blasted into space in 2039. The journey ended badly. The ship was able to enter the Hunting Grounds as hoped, but its destination was always random and unfocused. Hellstromme's crews fought legions of demons only to discover they were nowhere near the Hell of Suicides where Vanessa was thought to abide.

Several nightmarish trips later, Hellstromme theorized that he needed a focusing device of some sort. The device he concocted to fulfill this requirement was a massive ring that would align the ship the moment it entered the Hunting Grounds, sending him directly to that part of Hell where he believed Vanessa lie waiting.

The device worked, but not in the way Hellstromme imagined. Instead of

directing the ship to the Hell of Suicides, it propelled it safely through the Hunting Grounds and out again—into an entirely new and alien system—Faraway. Hellstromme was unimpressed with the inhabited planet of Banshee and its primitive anouks, but he wasn't so blinded he didn't realize the profit that could be made off unveiling an alien civilization. And that profit could help him continue financing his expeditions.

In 2044, Hellstromme unveiled the "Tunnel" and the Faraway System to the public. The story of the first meeting with the native anouks, the settling of Banshee, and the wars that developed, are related in the *Brainburners* sourcebook and the *Lost Colony* roleplaying game.

Hellstromme was still perfecting the ship's navigation system when the Last War broke out. Just as he was about to launch another expedition, the *Unity* was commandeered by the United Nations and ordered to pick up the last of the Psychic Legion and bring them back to Earth to be redistributed among their member nations.

The *Unity* picked the legion up as planned, but the Tunnel was destroyed before it could make its way back. The captain of the *Unity* at the time, Phillip Truman, had no intention of being trapped in the Faraway System like so many millions of colonists. Against his own crew's wishes, he murdered a nosy syker who had already learned too much—Cathy Griffin—and activated the Faustian Device. Unfortunately for everyone, Cathy let out a psychic scream before dying. Her mental energy was like honey to the demons of the Hunting Ground. Several varieties of nasty creatures found their way aboard the *Unity* on its way back to Earth-space. These creatures first appeared among the civilians and worked their way up to where the sykers were housed. Not a soul survived.

The alarms went off quickly, and the leader of the Legion saw to it her people were the first to get to the escape shuttles. A few dozen met quick ends at the hands of the attacking demons, but most of the others made it to shuttles and left the sinking ship.

Fifteen of the sykers stayed behind voluntarily. Some did so to save the civilians and crew, a few hoped to recover the ship and procure some of its loot. Either way, the rest of the sykers referred to these as the “Unforgotten Fifteen.” Your posse will likely call them dirty bastards, because they’re all long dead, and now their corpses and amazing mental abilities make them a very powerful servant of Hell. You read that right. Servant. As in singular. The Unforgotten 15 have merged into a massive abomination, a “brain glom” with the best powers of these 15 amazing sykers. The posse must defeat this nasty thing to reclaim the bridge and set the *Unity* on its course to Faraway.

Of course, there's far more than just a big disgusting brain dwelling on the *Unity*. There's a heaping helping of walking dead, and the deadly demons that first took over the ship are still present. They've gone dormant with no flesh to feast upon, but the delectable scent of the posse's souls stirs them up quick.

That's the setup, Marshal. Now let's mess with your best friends.

Scene One: Approach

Read the following as the shuttle draws near the *Unity*.

The shuttle's monitors have been quiet for nearly eight hours, but now they suddenly flicker to life. You're obviously looking at an exterior camera zooming in on a distant ship. It's a long, sleek vessel that looks almost like some ancient, primordial shark covered in steel. The ship looks black, though it's likely just the shining silver hull reflecting the infinite darkness.

You don't see any major signs of damage from here. The craft seems intact, though powerless.

You've all heard rumors of the Unity. How it was used to bring back the last of the Psychic Legion before the Tunnel collapsed and the Last War ended. You also heard that the sykers abandoned the ship when something got on board—something that killed most of the civilians.

The ship certainly doesn't look like a “victim” from here. It looks more like a predator.

Your shuttle seems to be approaching from low and to the front. It shifts upwards and angles in toward a yawning slit that might be some sort of hangar bay—but it feels more like a mouth to you.

The shuttle approaches the *Unity* at its only possible entrance—the fighter bay. We aren't mapping out the whole ship in this adventure—it's the size of a

luxury liner and very complex. You'll only be using a few key areas of the ship anyway, so we'll concentrate our attention on those sections.

Syker characters who were on this ship before probably didn't venture down into the lower decks, so this part of the ship isn't familiar. (They were only on here a few days.) Other areas might be better known, but so many of the lifts and corridors are blocked or ruined that any familiarity is too limited to be of much use. Only when they get to the Officer's Quarters (where they were housed) might they truly see familiar surroundings.

Your Box Is Humming

As soon as the posse enters the *Unity*, the box holding the Reckoners starts to hum. It also begins to warp and "wriggle" just a bit.

The Reckoners sense their minions nearby—and a powerful demon as well. It's time to scare your heroes a bit. Every now and then, make the box wiggle and shake violently. This will hurry your players up and remind them that they're under a time limit.

Fighter Bay

ComSat passively detects an entrance at the bottom front of the ship and guides the shuttle in. This is the Fighter Bay. The shuttle wiggles around a bit in front of the *Unity*, then gently floats in for a gentle touchdown.

Read the text below as the shuttle doors open.

Your ship touches down with barely a jolt. Nervously, you turn your head to watch the shuttle door open. It bangs silently against the floor of the hangar, but no horrors rush in to kill you. You unstrap yourselves and move out, looking at the floating

wreckage all around you. This was obviously a hangar for smaller ships—maybe fighters or scouts of some sort. Only one ship remains now, and it seems to have been disassembled and under repair when disaster struck.

The rest of the bay is filled with floating tools, fuel, and debris—though quite a bit of the flotsam has already floated out of the bay and into space.

There are no bodies or other biological material here—those who entered the bay either escaped in the *Unity's* fighters or were blasted out to space when the hangar doors opened.

A clever party can search the bay for tools or makeshift weapons. If they do, have each character make a Fair (5) search roll. Should anyone go bust, he's moving about the bay when he launches himself into a heavy piece of unsecured equipment and suffers 1d4 Wind. The bruising is deep and the Wind loss lasts 1d6 hours.

Those who succeed at the roll find the following:

- **Flashlights:** Two working lights with sufficient battery power to last the rest of the adventure.
- **Tools:** Most any sort of tool that might be found in a repair/launch hangar. This includes three blow torches (range 1 yard, damage 2d4, AP 4, shots 30), two portable saws (damage STR+4d10, 1 hour of power), two rivet guns (Range Increment 2 yards, damage 1d6, shots 10 with 1d100 loose rivets floating about).
- **Patch Kits:** A total of four space suit patch kits can be found floating about the bay. See the sidebar on page 52 for information on how these work.
- **Fuel:** Two intact drums of combustible fuel. Most of the *Unity's* scout ships use fusion or even solar power, but a few of the utility loaders use old-fashioned combustible engines. Two drums of diesel fuel remain intact, a few more have burst and leaked out into the bay, floating through the hangar in long, crystallized sculptures. The drums can be ignited by any sort of open flame (such as the torches), but have only a 1 in 6 chance of detonating

from gunshots or other attacks as sparks aren't normally generated in the vacuum. (As a quick aside there is some chance of creating sparks as oxygen bubbles trapped in the fuel itself can be ignited.) Should the drums explode, they cause 6d20 massive damage with a burst radius of 10 yards (short due to the vacuum).

After the scavenger hunt, the heroes need to move on. There are several exits out of the vehicle bay, but regardless of which way they go, read the section below.

Long Hall

The next section of this demented journey leads into a maze of hallways. Describe the scene to your players as follows:

The hall leads into a maze of junctions and dead ends. It seems many of the doors were locked shut—perhaps to seal the ship or block off whatever supposedly invaded. With no map, you are forced to move haphazardly down the corridors. Most are completely empty, though occasionally you see bullet holes, scorch marks, or brown smears along the walls—obviously blood stains from before the ship was exposed to the vacuum.

You spot a sign directing you to the "Lifts," and follow the corridor for some way. As you move in that direction, you pass a blasted door on the left-hand side of the hall. Above the jagged steel are the words "Mess Area #7."

Note that the heroes don't have to enter this room—it's simply a side-trip to set the appropriate mood.

The hanging door obscures the group's sight until they physically pull it wider. The door is still attached so the posse must either wiggle through the hole or take the time and effort to cut it off the hinges with blowtorches.

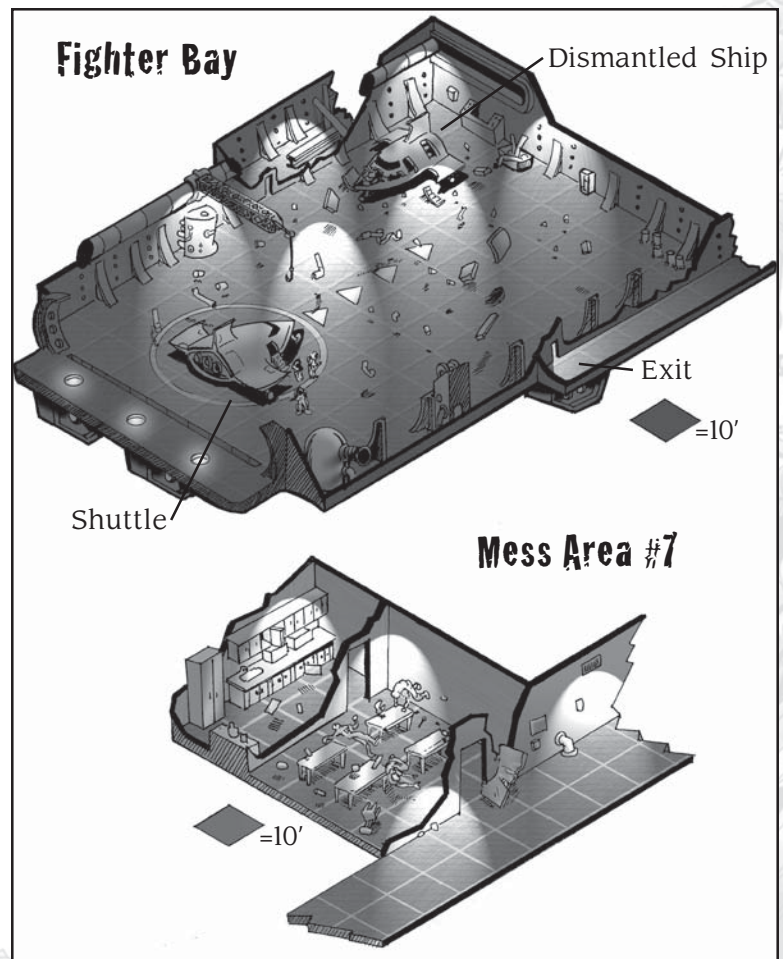
Either way, a closer look reveals the worst—long, claw-like slashes cover the door and the wall surrounding it.

Those who look inside see a 20' by 20' room with tables and benches bolted to the floors. A number of grisly, mutilated corpses float inside.

Inside the room is a second doorway leading into a small kitchen featuring an advanced microwave, food rehydrator, empty fridge, and a single sink. (None of these work until power is restored.)

An examination of the bodies reveals they were slashed to death by something with jagged, razor-sharp claws. Oddly, whatever attacked must have had some weapons (or appendages) with one blade, some with two, and some with three.

An Onerous (7) search roll comes up with one useful discovery—a first aid kit on the wall. Being a Hellstromme



Zero-G

The *Unity* has no gravity, heat, oxygen, or other necessities until power is restored (see **The Engine Room** later in this chapter). Until that time, your heroes need to make sure they stay in their space suits. The suits they start with are basic emergency outfits—they don't have magnetic boots or other niceties to help the wearer maneuver around in zero-g. For most of the adventure they'll be bounding from wall to wall and worrying about suit-breaches (see **Space suits**, page 60).

Maneuvering in zero-gravity isn't particularly hard once someone gets the hang of it. For the first couple of areas (depending on how much movement your heroes perform), have them make Fair (5) *Nimbleness* rolls to get around. Those who make it move at half their basic Pace. Those who get a raise move at their normal Pace. Those who fail get to roll on the table below. Don't feel you need to use this table every time someone moves. Maybe roll a few times at first as your posse gets their bearings, and then whenever they attempt to move more than a few feet while under stress (such as in combat).

Zero-G Maneuvering

1d6 Error

1 **Undershot:** The hero doesn't push off hard enough or hits an obstacle and only goes half the distance he desired.

2 **Overshot:** The waster hurls himself too hard and hits the opposite wall or an obstacle in the way. He suffers 1d4 Wind.

3 **Left:** The spacer hits 2d6 feet left of his intended target.

4 **Right:** The spacer hits 2d6 feet right of his intended target.

5-6 **Whoops!** Roll 1d4 twice and apply both results, ignoring this result on either of those rolls.

Industries ship, the kit is the most advanced available. One dose each of an anticoagulant (instantly stops bleeding) and a shot of artificial adrenaline (relieves all Wind) are still intact.

Getting the Shaft

Further down the hallway, the spacers come to a blasted lift shaft. The lift car itself (think elevator car, Marshal) is demolished—it crashed here on the lowest deck during the fight. The shaft still leads upward however, and this is the only real option the players have.

Unfortunately, it's not a good option. The lift car was packed with civilians when it crashed. As the heroes enter the shaft and attempt to move up it, the corpses come to life.

Start this creepy encounter with the following:

The shaft leads up—almost certainly toward the engine room and the bridge. The good news is that the lift car itself isn't blocking the passage—it's crashed into the bottom of the shaft. The bad news is that it was evidently loaded with civilians when it hit. Some of their crushed and frozen corpses lie entangled with the car. A quick look up the dark hole reveals several more floating inside.

The corpses are inhabited by long-dormant manitous, but the things don't instantly come to life. They wait until the heroes are halfway up the shaft and trapped between them before attacking.

If the group is smart and have the right tools, they might try to destroy the corpses before entering the shaft. That's less fun (for you, Marshal), but you should reward your heroes with Fate Chips for trying. Of course, the second the heroes instigate their plan, the walkin' dead come to "life." They attack if that makes the most sense, or retreat up into the darkness of the shaft to make the intruders come after them.

There are two walkin' dead in here for each character.

Profile: Walkin' Dead (2 per)

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

Shootin': (any) 2d6, climbin' 1d8, dodge 2d8, fightin': brawlin' 3d8, sneak 3d8, swimmin' 1d8

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

Overawe 5d6

Pace: 8

Size: 6

Wind: –

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Brittle: The dead are frozen and so are more than a little brittle. Dark magic lets them move around, but crushing attacks do an extra die of damage to the things. When one is destroyed, it shatters, causing a burst of crystallized flesh that causes 2d4 damage to everything in a 3 foot radius.

Damage: Bite (STR), club (STR+1d4)

Fearless

Undead

Description: The *Unity's* former passengers were slain by slashers (see page 69) or other walkin' dead. As such, they're a gruesome mess. Besides being cut or torn to ribbons, their skin is now frozen and jagged and covered in crystalized blood.

The dead know they're in zero-gravity and use it to maximum effect—hanging in “dead” spaces no one will look, launching themselves from bulkheads, or even knocking their opponents off-balance and away from walls so that they can't fight effectively. This last trick requires a single raise on a *fightin': brawlin'* roll, and if successful, inflicts a -4 modifier on all physical activities on the waster until she can brace herself once again.

The shaft is 60' high, 10' square, and spans four levels. Just before the top (at the 50' mark) is a small plaque that reads “Engineering Level.” The sign is small and unobtrusive—it's meant for mechanics working on the shaft instead of lift passengers.

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The door is sealed closed, but there's a thin sliver of blackness beyond. The posse can either burn off one of the doors (perhaps with one of the torches found in the Fighter Bay) or simply pry the doors apart with brute strength. This takes a *Strength* roll of 20. Up to three additional characters may pitch in, adding +2 to the main character's roll for each Fair (5) success.

Each attempt takes just a few minutes, but you can instill a sense of urgency by rattling the Reckoner's prison now and then.

Once opened, the posse can crawl out into another corridor. After a few twists and turns, they find a sign that points them to the “Engine Room.”

Bulkheads and Byways

Remember that the *Unity* was commandeered on several occasions, including the transportation of the last batch of refugees from Banshee on its last mission. But it was built to go into Hell. For that reason, its walls and doors were made to repel boarders and withstand invasions by powerful demons. Had the *Unity* had its original Hellstromme Industries crew and regiment of corporate marines, the fate of the ship might have been quite different.

The exterior walls have 3 points of armor and are chemically treated to withstand heat (half fire damage). They've also been sprayed with a special impact adhesive concocted by Hellstromme himself that has a 50% chance of “deadening” any non-armor-piercing projectiles. Rounds that are deadened simply bounce a few inches off the wall and lose all momentum. Other rounds penetrate the wall as usual.

Interior walls have 2 points of armor and are treated with the same substance.

Interior doors are made more like the exterior skin, with 3 points of armor.

The Wide Hall

The standard hallways open up into a larger passage (20' across) littered with six corpses. They've been mutilated like those found in Mess Area #7 (they were killed by slashers).

The heroes will likely take the time to put aimed shots into each of the corpse's brainpans. That's just fine—these aren't walkin' dead—they're bloodchunks.

There's no map of this battle—it's just a long hallway 60' long and 20' wide. Two of the corpses lie at the 20' mark, another at the 40' mark, and three more at the far end. The bloodchunks wait until the heroes are at the 40' mark (between them) before launching their attack.

Profile: Bloodchunks

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

Fightin': brawl in' 2d6, throw in': any 5d6

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

Face: 3 in vacuum; 1 out of vacuum

Size: 1 (heart)

Wind: —

Terror: 11

Special Abilities:

Armor: 1

Damage: STR+2d10 The heart can create up to four razor-sharp weapons of 2' in length. When approached in hand-to-hand combat, it forms these limbs and spins in place, attacking up to four adjacent opponents.

Cloak o' Evil: -6 (the heart resides inside a mass of floating, frozen blood)

Blood Shards: Once per round, up to twenty times per day, the bloodchunk can fire a blast of frozen blood shards (Damage 3d6, ROF 6, Range Increment 5, Max Range 30'). Anyone hit by a blood

shard loses Wind as usual, and if they suffer a single wound (after spending Fate Chips), lose an additional 2 Wind as the blood seeps into their system and begins to freeze the victim's own blood.

Weakness—Fire: Resolve any heat-based attack normally, then double the number of wounds the creature takes.

Description: A bloodchunk is a human heart surrounded by a large viscous mass of near-frozen, slushy blood. The demon uses the blood to hide its dark heart and create deadly shards it hurls at its victims.

As the posse nears the 40' mark in the passageway, the bloodchunks "ooze" blood out of their hosts, reform the blood into spikes, then fire them at the passing heroes at point-blank range. These particular bloodchunks remain hidden inside the corpses as long as they can—they know it confuses the party and offers some protection from damage as well.

The heroes don't have to fight all the bloodchunks—they just have to get through the hall to the other end—that's where the big sign reads "To Engine Room." There they can manually crank the door shut and lose the ponderous bloodchunks.

Of course, the bloodchunks don't retreat. Their whole purpose is to maim, mangle, and cause mischief.

The Engine Room

This is the dark heart of the *Unity*. Read the following, Marshal.

Three more hallways, two breached doors, and a crawl through some wreckage later, you come to a black door labeled simply "Engine Room." It's wide open.

Make the players actually tell you their characters are entering the dark room beyond. You should even ask each one "Are you entering the room?" That'll creep 'em out. This is a choice they have to make. It's a Faustian thing, try to understand.

You shine your light around the dark room and find...a perfectly normal control board for a small fusion reactor. It's obviously powered down, but a small blinking light on the main panel hints that it may be easy to reignite.

Speaking the magic word "Apostolos" does nothing until the ship is powered on. When someone presses the button below the blinking light, read the following.

A low hum starts from somewhere below you. Several lights on the control panel flicker, then red auxiliary lights kick in. Warm air also rushes into the room, swirling around bits of debris. Most importantly, you're pulled to the floor of the ship via some sort of artificial gravity. The Unity is online.

The ship has power, oxygen, and warmth now, so the heroes can take off their suits if they like.

Nothing more happens until the heroes say the word "Apostolos." If the group leaves the Engine Room to head for the bridge without saying the magic word, you might want to let someone make a Fair (5) *Knowledge* roll to remember. They can run the ship around the galaxy for a bit without dealing with Apostolos, but they can't get to Faraway.

Apostolos

When the posse says the word "Apostolos," the door behind them closes and the false bulkhead in front of the control panel slides open to reveal a 40' square room, painted jet black. In the center of the room is a steel pedestal that holds a large crimson box veined with weird black lines—a near duplicate of the device that currently holds the Reckoners. This one is bigger (4' square) and meant for more long-term use. The pedestal stands in the center of a blood-red pentagram permanently embossed on the floor.

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Weird energy buzzes across the surface of the box and a low "thrumming" sound emanates from somewhere within as it comes to life.

The *Unity's* ability to warp into and out of the Hunting Grounds comes from a greater demon imprisoned long ago by Dr. Hellstromme. Trapping the demon in the ship is one thing, but making it actually use its power comes with a very high price. Murder.

Apostolos' requires the murder of a living human being to activate the *Unity's* Faustian Device. Hellstromme—in earlier days—had no problem with this requirement, but your party almost certainly will. There probably aren't any convenient victims standing about, so one of your party has to die.



The Ultimate Sacrifice

So you've just read the bit under **Apostolos** about offering a PC and your jaw's dropping. Fair enough. It's a terrible, dirty thing to do to your players, and we know it.

We also know some of you are saying, "No way. I'm not killing a player character like that." That's your call, of course. If you want to make it easy, make Apostolos demand a blood sacrifice. Someone has to take a light wound but otherwise the scene is over.

For the rest of you, for those with intelligent, mature groups who can handle some deep ethical decisions, this is what a good, hard roleplaying game is all about. Forget about the death itself—player characters die in *Deadlands* fairly often. You've probably even lost one or two heroes during this adventure. What's really interesting in this scene, especially for you, is just letting Apostolos tell the group the deal, then sit back and watch. Don't push them, don't argue with them, don't rationalize on your behalf—or ours. Don't argue that an epic adventure like this demands such a sacrifice.

Just sit back and spectate, and enjoy watching your friends squirm. What will your group do? Will the players argue with you that this is unfair? Will some of the characters start slowly backing away from their "friends?" What will your totally violent, no-holds-barred gunslingers do? What will your noble Templars do? What will your altruistic, self-sacrificing types do? Suicide doesn't work. The victim can be willing, but someone has to kill someone else.

So yes, we'll agree this is a dirty thing to do to your group, but it might also be one of the most memorable moments in your group's entire gaming history. For those of you who run this adventure, join us on the Hell on Earth listserv and share your story. You can find directions at WWW.PEGINC.COM.

We can't wait to hear what happened.

Here's how you can present this difficult dilemma to your heroes.

No sooner do you speak the word "Apostolos" than the lights dim and red auxiliary lights come on, casting the room in the shade of blood. You hear the door lock behind you and look back—the walls, floors, and ceiling are covered in some kind of black, scaly hide!

The control panel is still there, but before you a false panel has opened up and exposed a large, black room beyond, also covered in the strange black "skin." In the center is a black steel pedestal enclosed in a blood-red pentagram.

A trickle of whispers rolls into the room. You sense some dark presence among you. The whispers become louder, but still just faint enough to make you hold your breath to better hear them. You look around, but see nothing. The whispers grow slightly louder. You can just make them out now..."murder murder murder"

You feel fear crawl up your spine and slither into your skull. Gooseflesh covers your arms like pustulant boils. You continue to search about for the whisperer, but there is only the dark redness of the blood-lit room.

Somehow knowledge comes into your mind unbidden.

"murder murder murder."

You begin to understand.

"murder murder murder"

The ship has some dark device that allows it to break through the Hunting Grounds and reach Faraway. The device is much like the box that contains the Reckoners. There is a demon inside. Apostolos.

"murder murder murder"

And Apostolos' price to activate the drive is cold-blooded murder.

It's time to watch what happens, Marshal. Go read the sidebar "The

Ultimate Sacrifice" right away, then come back here.

You read right. One of your player characters must be murdered to power the Faustian Device. The room is enclosed in a pocket dimension of the Hunting Grounds with no exit, even for those with magical abilities to teleport or enter the Hunting Grounds. Only when someone is murdered does Apostolos allow the room to return to its former state.

No other bargain or power will do. Someone has to be murdered to power the drive. This is Apostolos' bargain. Once the deed is done, it retains its "charge" of blood and souls until directed from the Bridge.

If your party has a non-player character with them, this person may certainly be the victim. Hopefully, this has almost as many moral consequences as killing a player character, but we'll leave that to you.

Harrowed may be the victim, but we mean *permanently* killed. Manitous *can't* take control here. Tell the player that secretly, but let *him* convince the rest of the posse that he's not about to go into murderous self-preservation mode.

In any event, Apostolos doesn't speak with the heroes. It just keeps whispering the words "*murder murder murder*" over and over until blood is spilled and a life is lost. Apostolos is able to plant enough information in your posse's brains to let them understand exactly what is required of them—you just don't want to have to roleplay the thing. Besides taking away from the creepy factor of the whispering, you don't want to provide a skill for your fast-talking argumentive friends.

This is a big scene, and one that must be resolved on somehow. If a fight breaks out, we recommend using the full regular combat system so that everyone has a fair shake at surviving if their friends start whipping out their heavy artillery.

The Deed is Done

When Apostolos' fee is paid in full, the door to the black room closes. The demon is sated and the rest of the

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group can proceed to the bridge. Anyone who thinks to look for it can find a direct path to the command tower on the ship computer.

Because some of the lifts are destroyed (and the gravity is back on), the most direct route takes the heroes through the Officer's Quarters. This is where the Psychic Legion was housed on their way back from Banshee. A syker in your group who was on the *Unity* before knows this.

The posse follows a short route through several twists and turns, then comes to an intact lift. The heroes merely need to press the panel to bring the car down and wait for it to spill its disgusting contents upon them.

Ding! The lift car arrives on your level. You can barely make out some soft music coming from behind the doors. It seems to be "The Girl From Ipanema."

Then the lift opens and dumps a grisly wash of mangled body parts and thick, black blood all over your feet. At least a dozen people must have died in this lift. Their corpses have now thawed and cover your boots in a grisly stew.

These corpses don't attack unless you want them to. They're more for dramatic effect and to force your already disgruntled party to ride up through several dozen levels in ankle-high chum.

Officer's Quarters

When the *Unity* was under Hellstromme's command, this mass of rooms served as a barracks for the ship's large compliment of officers, scientists, and "specialized" personnel (those hombres Hellstromme thought were tough enough to fight the more powerful demons). The rooms were only

fitted with four beds each, but the Psychic Legion crammed eight to twelve sykers in each room for the trip home. Most of the sykers jumped ship before the fighting got down and dirty, but a handful got caught by slashers before they could get to the lifepods. Another 15 (the Unforgotten 15 mentioned in the *Brainburners* book) stayed on purpose to form a rearguard (or possibly look for loot).

Some of the psychic energy used to fight off the slashers has been retained here, forming a hallway of horrific visions.

Run the following as the heroes' lift opens up into this section.

The lift doors open.

A bald-headed woman stands in front of the door. She smiles, says hi, and steps into the elevator with you—her worn combat boots stepping right through the grisly corpses lying on the lift's floor.

In front of you, down a long, brightly-lit hallway are dozens more sykers. Some stand together talking, others are playing cards, and a few are even practicing their mental tricks.

It's almost as if you've stepped back into the past. Before the Unity was taken over.

You're in some kind of barracks area. The rooms are a little more spacious than you would have thought, with only four beds per room, a computer terminal, and a desk unit. If this were an airplane, you guess this would be somewhere between coach and 1st class. Maybe this was where Hellstromme bunked his scientists or officers.

There's junk everywhere. It's obvious they crammed way more people in here than this level was meant to hold. Most of the stuff looks like standard UN military

issue—the stuff the Psychic Legion would have carried.

Let the heroes do whatever they want. All of the sykers are an illusion—they pass right through anything they touch. Give the posse a minute or two to observe how things were before the disaster. Then beat them over the head with a little horror.

Suddenly the lights go red and alarm klaxons blare out. Most of the sykers around you freeze, but a few begin to concentrate, perhaps trying to scan other parts of the ship—or other minds—within it. One of the sykers yells out, "Something's attacking! Killing the civilians!" That syker then falls to her knees and screams, obviously experiencing whatever has happened to the mind she probed.

Other sykers begin to organize. You hear orders shouted in the darkness and the click of a few unconfiscated weapons being readied. Weird green energy swirls from one bald head to another,

Now it's like watching a movie in fast-forward. Everything happens at ten times its normal speed. Many of the sykers move out, others start building barricades in the hallway. Then there are more screams.

Something's gotten into the hallway. You can just make out fast-moving shadows at the end of the corridor. Whatever they are, they're covered in long spines, and there are dozens of them. The sykers fight back, but someone blasts a telepathic scream "Get outta here!" and the rest go running back the way you came.

The fast-forwarding suddenly stops. Everything's at normal speed again. The red lights are coated in gore and emit little more than an ember-like glow. At the end of the hallway you hear a woman groaning. Then you hear something heavy step slowly toward her. There's a slashing sound, a scream, then silence. No, not completely. Something stands

at the far end of the hallway. You can hear its heavy breath, waiting for you to come near.

This is all a massive illusion, of course, a remnant of the battle the sykers fought against the slashers that made it to their level. Unfortunately, the lights stay out, casting the corridor in a dim red glow (-4 to all ranged attacks over 10').

The psychic energy here has awakened a pair of long-dormant slashers. They sniff the party and come slowly stalking along the dark ceiling.

The slashers are invulnerable to all but slashing weapons. They must still roll stun checks against all other "damage," so they can be slowed down by guns and the like, but only wounds caused by cutting or slashing weapons actually take.

Profile: Slashers

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

Dodge 5d12, fightin': brawlin' 6d12, sneak 6d12

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

Overawe 5d10, search 3d6

Pace: 12

Size: 6

Wind: -

Terror: 13

Special Abilities:

Armor: 1

Damage: Claws (STR+2d10): Slashers wade into their foes, twirling and thrashing their razor-sharp carapaces. The slasher makes a single attack but apply the same total to all adjacent targets. If fighting heavily armored foes, slashers are crafty enough to make single targeted attacks at +4 (minus whatever area it's targeting).

Immunity—All: Slashers can be stunned by normal attacks, so bullets, magical attacks, explosions, and the like do slow them down. Only damage caused by cutting or slashing weapons actually sticks, however.

Wallcrawling—Pace 8

Weakness—Cutting Weapons:

Cutting or slashing type attacks do

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full normal damage to the creature (after subtracting its armor).

Description: Slashers are humanoids encrusted in some sort of granular carapace covered in slashing spines. Their faces have no mouths, only two long, slitted, black eyes with no pupils. They are silent, fast, and incredibly deadly.

Slashers prefer to stalk their victims until they are bunched together. Then they attack from some unexpected area (such as the ceiling) by jumping into the middle of the crowd and dicing their prey to pieces.



Brain Blastin'

The psychic residue of the battle means syker powers gain an automatic raise when cast in this hallway. Any syker in your party should instantly sense there is raw power in the air here, though you shouldn't describe the effects until someone actually uses a power. Unfortunately, the raw energy here also magnifies a syker's backlash. Roll for backlash any time a character's *blastin'* roll fails (ignore the free raise if this occurs). Double damage for a true bust.

Command Tower Lift

Once the party fights their way through the slashers, they can move through the rest of the Officer's Quarters to the Command Tower Lift.

The front central tower of the *Unity* is the "Command Tower." The bridge and all administrative sections are housed within it. The doors are also twice as thick as those on the "troop" decks below, and have an armor value of 4.

Like the first lift the party encountered, this one is smashed. It obviously happened before the ship lost gravity as it lies splintered at the bottom of the shaft, many floors below the posse.

The lift used a conventional pulley system, and two steel cables still dangle in the center. A long ladder once ran up the sides of the shaft, but the car evidently took most of it out as it plummeted to the bottom. The posse has to make like monkeys and do this one the hard way.

Climbing the cables is not as easy as it sounds without proper equipment. The climb to the Command Level is 60' straight up, so we're looking at three rolls per character here. The TN is Fair (5), but those wearing space suits must subtract -2 from the roll. Failing any of these rolls means a long fall to the

bottom. Roll at each 20', and add in another 60' from the posse's starting position for the levels below.

The uppermost level of the shaft leads directly to the bridge. The doors here are sealed shut and must be opened with torches or cutting equipment of some kind.

Is It Supposed To Do That?

This is a good time to shake the box holding the Reckoners again. This time it pulses, shakes, and begins to change its faces—like a puzzle box. The Reckoners are beginning to figure out the combination to escape. They won't, of course, just look at your watch, run your fingers over the pages of this book, pretend to add up the time it's taken them to reach this point, and then give your friends that "Uh oh" look. They'd best hurry or the cats are out of the bag, if you catch our drift.

If you really want to scare them, you can have the puzzle box open up, slide some panels around, and then close again (come on, you've seen boxes like this in movies before). Whatever you do, it should be obvious that time is running out.

Once the doors are finally opened, the group finds themselves at one end of a short hallway leading to a door that reads simply "Bridge."

Scene Two: The Bridge

Now we're cooking with gas, Marshal. It's time to fight the biggest, baddest varmint on the *Unity* and de-spook this creepy ghost ship.

As the party moves toward the bridge door they hear something moving beyond it. Read or paraphrase the following.

You're almost there. But there's something moving around behind the door. Something big and wet. You can hear it stomp, then squishy sounds like feet stuck in thick mud. There's also some kind

of babbling—like a room full of patients whispering to each other in a home for the criminally insane.

A single button opens the door—the creature inside has turned off the security system once they breached the hallway. If the heroes start to plan too much, it might even open the door itself! That might come as a surprise when the door “whooshes” open and reveals the brain-glom staring at your survivors from the room beyond!

Savagely, the glom attacks right away, while the wasters are still bunched together in the hallway. There are no traps or clever tricks here, Marshal. The ‘glom just gets to killing.

Profile: Brain-Glom

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:5d12, Q:3d8, V:4d10

Fightin': brawlin' 6d6, shootin': SMG 3d6

Mental: C:2d10, K:1d12, M:3d10, Sm:3d10, Sp:4d10

Blastin' 8d12, overawe 5d10, search 3d6

Pace: 12

Size: 12

Wind: —

Strain: 150

Terror: 18

Special Abilities:

Damage Resistance: Killing a brain-glom is very difficult work. The only way to do it is to destroy each of the component syker's heads (five wounds each, -6 to target). Attacks to the body have no real effect—the “gray matter” at the center just soaks up damage like a sponge. Massive damage *does* affect 1d6 random heads, however. Apply the full damage dealt to all 1d6 heads.

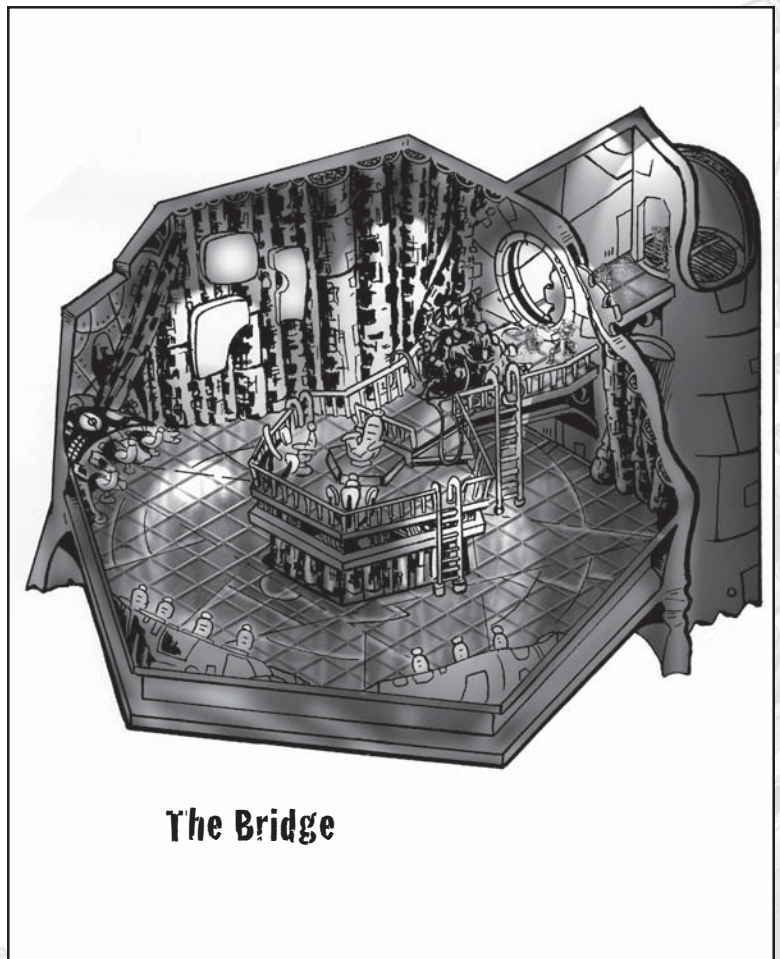
Psychic Resistance: This acts like the *steel will* +5 Edge, adding +5 to the brain-glom's roll when resisting syker powers via opposed rolls.

Syker Powers: See text below
Undead

Coup: This is a good one, and up to 15 heroes who are near the brain 'glom when it expires can count the coup. . As the thing dies, it emits a psychic scream that temporarily stuns

everyone on the Bridge. Sykers actually take 2d6 Wind damage from the blast. On the plus side, non-sykers gain a random power from the thing (roll among its heads) and a *blastin'* skill of 1. Sykers gain the amount of damage they just took as Strain! That's right—it's permanent.

Description: The brain-glom is a grisly amalgamation of the Unforgotten 15. Their bodies have been blasted and forged together into an unholy carnal “conglomerate,” welded together at the center by spongy gray matter. All 15 of the dead sykers jut from the mass, leering at the party and cackling like mad as they blast the heroes with their many powers.



The Bridge



Powers

Think of the brain-glom as a grisly beholder-type thing. Roll its *Quickness* as usual, but instead of allowing it to act on each of its cards, it only goes on its highest card (discard the rest). It starts the fight with a Hold action (unless the heroes somehow manage to sneak into the bridge).

Each of the heads has its own specialty, and the thing can use up to three heads per round. Roll the thing's *blastin'* skill every time it uses a power just as with any other syker. If it goes bust, it takes damage as usual. You'll need the *Brainburners* book for this.

On its held action, the 'glom activates the Kolinsky, Griffin, and Ryan heads. This gives it a force field, centers a telekinetic storm on the posse, and possibly takes over the first player character the thing sees.

After this first "free" round, the rest of the heads go to work on the 'glom's regular actions. The heads don't actually work that well together and are more than a little insane, so roll for the remaining 12 heads randomly to see which three activate on the creature's

actions. The rest of the heads babble and scream incoherently.

If a head has already established its power and needs to concentrate to maintain the power, it does so automatically. If a concentrating head is rolled, the 'glom simply loses that attack.

When a head is killed, scratch it off the list. If a "dead" head is rolled for an action, roll again.

Prefight Heads

These heads activate on the creature's "hold" action, before the fight really begins.

Anna Kolinsky of the Dragons

(Left): *Force field* (Covers entire glom, even though Anna is on the left side; *force field* acts as light armor (-5) per raise on the *blastin'* roll.)

Cathy Griffin of the Screaming Eagles

(Left): *Telekinetic Storm*. (Cathy centers the storm on the heroes, making sure not to catch "herself" in the area of effect.)

Charles Ryan of the Brain Dogs

(Right): *Meat Puppet*. (Charles goes for the first hero he sees—roll randomly. If he loses that contest, he can then evaluate his threats and go after whoever is doing the most damage.)

Battle Heads

Roll three of these heads randomly each turn. If a head is rolled twice, it dominates the 'glom's "thought process" and eats up the attack (don't roll again, and only roll one attack for the head no matter how many times it's selected).

- 1) **Tariz Nafsanjani of the Banshee Blasters:** *Brain blast* (Range Increment 10, RoF 1, Damage: 4d10).
- 2) **Tara Gallagher of the Dragons:** *Arson* (Range 80 yards, RoF 1, Burst Radius 10 yards, Damage 2d10 plus fire damage of 2d6 per round to those who take a single wound from the initial blast)
- 3) **Tim Link of the Dragons:** *Detonate* (See *Brainburners*, page 60).
- 4) **Ashe Marler of the Wendigoes:** *Aztec Surprise*. (Ashes goes for the biggest, strongest-looking character.)
- 5) **Kevin Sharpe of the Fighting 43rd:** *Brain blast* (Range Increment 10, RoF 1, Damage: 4d10).
- 6) **Barry Doyle of the Phantom Brigade:** *Blindside*. (Barry goes after any Doomsayers or sykers he sees.)
- 7) **Matthew Tice of the Wendigoes:** *Brain Bomb*.
- 8) **Christy Hopley of the Star Swans:** *Sturm und Drang*.
- 9) **Jay Neal of the Voodoo Gurus:** *Negator*.
- 10) **Nate Perkins of the Screaming Eagles:** *Brain blast* (Range Increment 10, RoF 1, Damage: 4d10).
- 11) **Dave Sisson of the Banshee Blasters:** *Brain blast* (Range Increment 10, RoF 1, Damage: 4d10).
- 12) **Zeke Sparkes of the Black Lighting:** *Boneripper*.

You Mean Someone Lived?

A hearty congratulations are in order for any hero who has survived this adventure. We'll do just that in the Bounty section below. For now, it's time for another narrative.

Finally, the thing collapses. You put a few more rounds in it just to be sure and lick your wounds.

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Let the group handle any trauma cases. When they're done sewing each other up, someone needs to activate the ship's drive.

You move to the central control panel and enter your destination: the planet of Banshee in the Faraway System.

A soothing female voice sounds out over the ship's intercom: "Please sit. The Unity is about to engage."

You sit in the seats and feel a slow tugging sensation, almost more at your soul than your body. Your well-attuned senses detect dark things moving in the spirit world around you, but no dangers present themselves.

A scant few minutes later, the voice returns. "The Unity has entered Faraway. Time to Banshee Orbit is two days, three hours, and twenty-seven minutes."

You look at Hellstromme's cursed box in terror—the thing was about to explode—there's no way it can go two whole days. But the thing seems strangely quiet. It almost feels...frightened.


Maybe all this was worth it after all.

Maybe.

It's time for the heroes to relax. They're in the Faraway System, but it's still two days to Banshee. They've got a little over 51 hours to lick their wounds, but they really should stay in the command tower as the rest of the ship is still crawling with demons, undead, and worse things we haven't seen yet.

The water, oxygen, and heat generators here work just fine (at least for a few months). Food is another problem, however.

The food processors up here work, but most of the food in them has long since gone bad. A Hard (9) *scroungin'*



roll in the levels just above and below the bridge comes up with enough sealed food for four people, plus one per raise. This takes about two hours of searching the tower. Going bust means the group found food but it was tainted. Food poisoning causes a step loss in *Vigor* for the next 72 hours. A failure on the *scroungin'* roll simply means they don't find any food, but they do encounter bloodchunks, walkin' dead, and maybe even a few slashers. Use the Quick Combat system if you'd like to get this over with fast.

Hellstromme's box won't do anything until it gets closer to Banshee. When that happens, the box starts to pulse once again. Move on to the final scene of this adventure, amigo.

Scene Three: The Wreck of the *Unity*

The *Unity's* autopilot guides it straight to Banshee, but unfortunately, the system is a little off. It's only off by a few miles mind you, and that's not normally a problem in the depths of space, but it's deadly when the ship accidentally dips into Banshee's atmosphere because the *Unity* is not an atmospheric-craft.

There's nothing the heroes can do about it. If someone is a rocket-jockey, you can let him make a few *piloting* rolls and credit him with saving everyone's life, but the ship still crashes (it's a plot-device thing, Marshal.) Here's one last narration before we say goodbye to our haunted starship.

A dull, yellow planet has been growing larger on the bridge's central viewscreen for a few hours. Now the view is close

enough to see a land of stark black mountains and yellow sandy plains swept by violent winds. You can see why they named this place Banshee.

The Unity continues directly on its course, straight toward the planet. You begin to wonder if the autopilot knows to stop. Just as you think about figuring out the system, a warning flashes on the viewscreen. "Collision Imminent."

That can't be good.

The Unity starts to shake violently as the planet on the viewscreen swells faster than you could have imagined. Your teeth chatter and suddenly you hear wind coming from somewhere—you're in atmosphere and you're damn sure this ship wasn't meant for that.

You try to wrestle the controls, but the ship is in override, trying to save itself. You can feel it trying to pull up, but Banshee already has it locked in its gravity. This ship is going down!

Red lights flare, klaxons blare, and a gentle, far-too-calm voice instructs you to strap yourself down. The shaking becomes more violent. Your teeth feel like they're going to bust. The g-forces bring dark spots to your eyes, and finally start to black out your brain. With any luck, you'll be unconscious when you die.

Let 'em wonder a minute. If you're feeling really dirty, you can close the book and stare at them for a minute like they're all dead. Maybe the joker they killed back at the Engine Room will feel better this way.

Of course, they're not going to die. They've got an appointment with destiny.

Something hurts. You wake, as if from a heavy sleep and feel something sharp sticking in your leg. Or maybe your arm, or both. Pinpricks of light stab at your eyes and you smell...dust?

Now you remember. You're on the Unity. That damned, cursed ghost ship.

*It's crashed. You're on Banshee.
And somehow you're still alive.*

*You look around. Bits of
sunlight shine through the
cracked command tower. You see
your companions lying about,
some strapped in seats like yours,
others crumpled against the
bulkheads, but it seems they and
the tower survived relatively
intact. You can only imagine
what the hull beneath looks like.*

*Maybe it smashed all the
demons and walking corpses as
well, but you know you're not
that lucky.*

*You pull yourself out of your
chair and walk toward the front
of the tower. It's torn and jagged,
forming a crude balcony over the
desert floor some hundreds of
feet below. The wind here really is
like a banshee's scream.*

*You suddenly remember
Hellstromme's box. It's right
where you left it, but its sides
have popped out, like some sort
of expanding puzzle. It just sits
there. Inert.*

It's empty.

*The Reckoners have been
released on this alien planet.*

*You've brought them here to
save earth. But what have you
done to Banshee?*

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The rest of the action takes place in the *Lost Colony* roleplaying game, Marshal. We'll see you there.

Adios.

For now.

Bounty

Finding the patch kits: One white chip for the finder.

Defeating all the undead in the shaft: One white chip each.

Destroying all the bloodchunks: One red chip each.

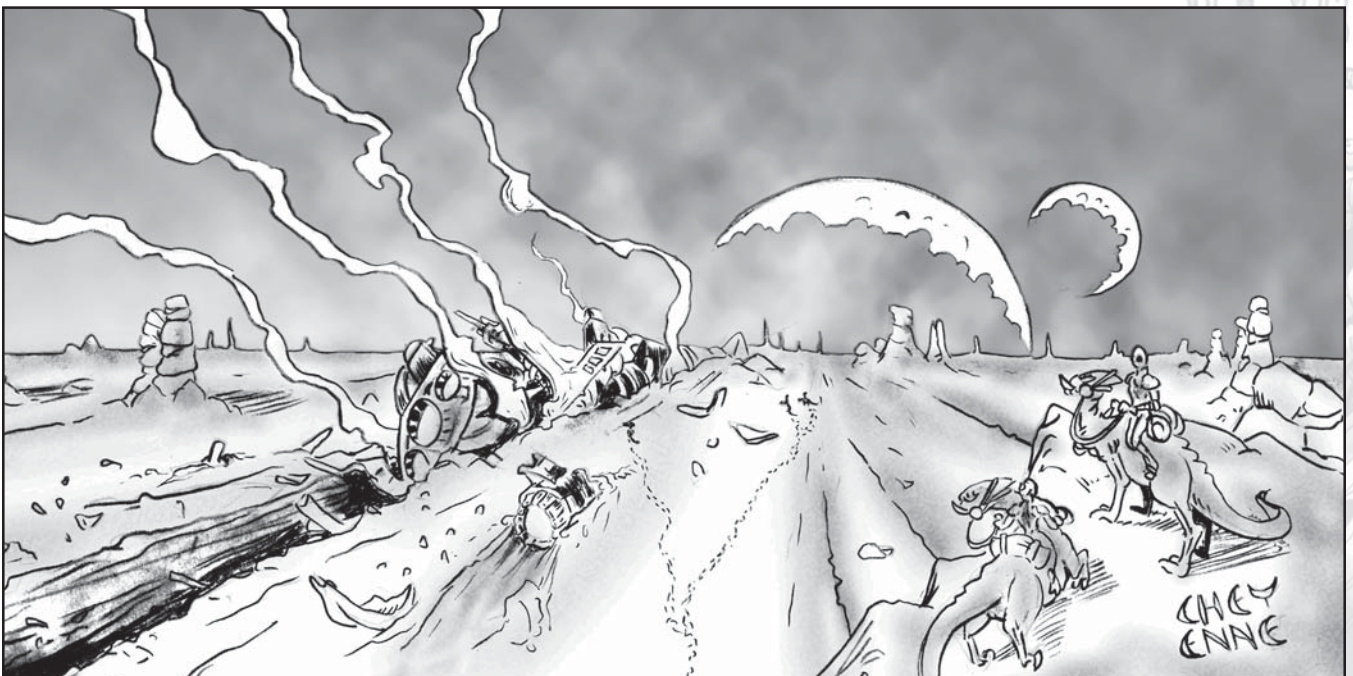
Murdering another player character to satisfy Apostolos: One blue chip to the murderer!

Resurrecting the slain hero (somehow?): Legend Chip to the miracle-worker.

Destroying both slashers: One red chip each.

Defeating the brain-glom: One blue chip each.

Getting to Faraway: One Legend Chip—each!



Epilogue: Unity

No, not *the Unity*, we mean, “unity,” as in “uniting.” The *Unity* went a bit off-course on its way to the Faraway System. In fact, it veered off the “tunnel” Apostolos opened for it and literally ripped a new hole through the Hunting Grounds.

This is complicated stuff, so bear with us for a little more explanation. Apostolos, the demon trapped inside the Faustian Device, used his magic to open a temporary path through the spirit world, avoiding all the really nasty places, twists, turns, and other areas that would destroy the ship. But the *Unity* had been damaged over the last 13 years and its navigation systems were a little erratic. It veered off-course a fraction of an inch and “skimmed” the sides of Apostolos’ tunnel. As it did so, it accidentally tore open doorways into other pockets of the nightmare lands. Apostolos kept the ship intact, but couldn’t repair the damage.

The permanent (yet malleable) tunnel through the spirit world is called the “Hell Hole,” for obvious reasons. It leads directly from the Earth of the Wasted West to Banshee in *Lost Colony*. Somewhere along the way, it also happens to cross the “Path of Stone,” the trail Stone forged when he went back in time to kill heroes for the Reckoners (see the *Hell on Earth* rulebook and the *Fortress o’ Fear* trilogy for the *Weird West*).

What this means for the people of the various *Deadlands* settings is that there is now a permanent pathway through the Hunting Grounds between *Lost Colony*, *Hell on Earth*, *the Weird West*, and perhaps even other times or places yet to be explored.

What that means to you, the Marshal, is that all the worlds of *Deadlands* are now open to you. Don’t worry—it’s still not easy for heroes to travel back and forth—it’s just more possible. That lets

those of you who have been keeping up with both *Hell on Earth* and the *Weird West* use all those great books you’ve bought. You can also use the new *Lost Colony* setting without giving up on return trips to the Wasted West.

How does it work? That’s what the rest of this section is about—how to get characters from one world to another and how to manage time-travel zaniness.

The Hell Hole

On Banshee, the Hell Hole can only be entered via the wreck of the *Unity*. Anyone who ventures to the engine room of the *Unity* finds it suspended at an odd angle with the false doors crumpled and open, revealing the black room with the pentagram beyond. Apostolos’ weird crimson and black box is still mounted atop the pedestal, and glows with a Hellish red light.

Any creature with a soul (including Harrowed but not animals or walking dead, for example) who touches it, are instantly transported into the Hunting Grounds (see **Into the Hell Hole**, below).

A character’s personal gear goes with her, but nothing else. This is a somewhat subjective limitation—a hero who wants to lug an assault rifle into the Hell Hole can do so, and she can haul in whatever ammo she manages to “wear.” If she’s holding a crate of ammo in her hands, however, it just drops to the tilted floor when she vanishes and slides on down into the wreck.

The box, the pedestal, and the wreck of the *Unity* itself are somewhat like a relic now. Any attempt to dismantle the box causes horrors to emerge from the Hunting Grounds to protect it. If the box is somehow removed from the ship, it ceases to function and the Hell Hole is closed forever (so don’t let that happen, Marshal).

Feeding Frenzy

Any large group of mortals—say more than a dozen—is like walking into a bear cave with a fresh-baked ham. Every demon “in range” of the Hell Hole comes pouring in with knives and

forks. As Hellstromme found out on his many trips into Hell, when the residents of the Hunting Ground are riled, they're unstoppable. First come waves of lesser creatures—demons taking on a thousand different nightmarish forms. Then come middling creatures waiting for their lesser brothers to soak up the invader's firepower. Finally, greater manitous descend upon the carnage and finish off any survivors. Then the horde feasts on the flesh and souls of those they've slain. It's not a pretty sight.

This is what happened to Hellstromme each time he entered the Hunting Grounds in force. Only when he ventured through alone in his tiny scout ship was he able to slip in without attracting all the legions of Hell.

That means your heroes can go through as a posse and attract no more trouble than they'll meet in a typical adventure (see **A Walk in Hell**), but if they talked the whole Iron Alliance into trying to cross-over, they'd be slaughtered.

Even moving across the worlds too frequently has this effect. It's like a well-stocked trout stream. An occasional catch attracts a few bears. An abundant stream attracts hundred of hungry grizzlies.

Learning About the Hell Hole

So how might your heroes find out about the Hell Hole in the first place? We have something fun for you there.

First, *don't* let them find out about the Hell Hole right after the end of this adventure (unless they go exploring the wreck for some bizarre reason). Instead, let them wander Banshee and discover its strange secrets in the *Lost Colony* game. A few months after they've settled into their new routine, run **The Prospector Returns** scene below.

If your heroes are in the Weird West, or in the Wasted West and they didn't play this adventure, the Prospector scene still occurs. Work it in whenever you want to let your party in on the secret.

The Prospector Returns

Run this encounter when you want your heroes to know about the Hell Hole.

From out of nowhere comes a scraggly looking old man. He's dirty and worn-looking, but he has the air of a veteran. He comes right up to you and begins to—of all things—sniff your clothes!

"You've been to the Hunting Grounds," he says. "Name's Coot Jenkins. Folks just call me the Prospector. I can tell you've been around the block a bit. And been to the Hunting Grounds as well. I used to be able to smell gold buried twenty feet underground. Then this whole Reckoning thing happened and I developed a nose for corpses. Lucky me.

Now I can smell the spirit world as well. A couple dozen years lost in there'll do that to you.

Well, I got some news you might be interested in. I been pokin' around again, tryin' to get back to my time, and I've figured somethin' out. There's a new path that goes more or less straight through.

Depending on exactly where this encounter takes place, Coot then tells them about the three locations the Hell Hole connects. The first is the engine room in the wreck of the *Unity*. The second *and* third is in Devil's Tower, which opens to both the Weird West and Hell on Earth, depending on where one *wants* to go.

What happens after that is up to your posse. If they want to head back into Hell, here's how to handle it.

Into the Hell Hole

We already told you how to enter the Hell Hole via the *Unity*—a character just has to fight his way through the wreck and lay hands on the black box. At Devil's Tower, a hero has to make it to the old Portal Chamber (see the *Fortress o' Fear* boxed set). In the Weird West, it's still currently guarded by Kang and the weird aliens that live there. In the time of Hell on Earth, Devil's Tower was hit by a city-buster. The dirty secret we've kept to ourselves for a bit is that the portal chamber is destroyed—but the portal itself is still intact. It's now buried beneath several hundred feet of rubble and dirt. The crossbreed aliens who lived there are now mutated crossbreed aliens and they're more dangerous than ever before. We update the status of the portal in *Epitaph #4*, and believe us, it's nasty.

Let's reiterate for those of you who are afraid travel between the worlds might ruin the settings for you. Getting to any one of the portals is essentially a "dungeon crawl" all its own. Because things often come out of the portal, no one will *ever* be able to clear out the areas around them (the *Unity* or the caverns of Devil's Tower).

And when a group *does* make it to the portal, they have to play out an entire adventure to actually travel it (see **A Walk in Hell**, below).

A Walk in Hell

Venturing through the Hunting Grounds is an exercise in creativity. The trip changes every time, as do the types of creatures encountered and even the setting. One time a character might find himself in the tale from *Sleepy Hollow*, the next he's in a frightful animated world ripped from a seriously demented Saturday morning cartoon. In other words, the trip is whatever you can come up with Marshal.

One thing that might be fun is to grab an adventure from another game

line—as long as it has a horrific overtone (or you can portray it that way). Imagine a typical orc-slayfest from a certain well-known fantasy game. A trek through a lair of greenskins can be incredibly horrific if you play it that way. You might also take a look at adventures for our own *Weird Wars* or *Hostile Climes* lines. All of Pinnacle's games have elements of horror in them, and can make for very strange and disturbing portrayals of the Hunting Grounds.

When is the trip over? It's not a matter of distance—it's a matter of will. In essence, whenever the heroes complete their goal, they arrive at their destination. Let's say they're playing an adventure where they have to go through a veritable tomb of horrors and defeat an evil liche. Ahem. When they defeat the creature and walk back out of his dungeon, they actually arrive at their real destination—the *Unity* or Devil's Tower.

These settings in the Hunting Grounds are filled with "real" people, monsters, histories, and everything else that makes the world feel real, though they're actually drawn from *someone's* nightmares (not necessarily the posse's nightmares).

Rules in Hell

A few rule questions may come up in the Hunting Grounds. We'll talk about that a little more in future information about the Hunting Grounds. For now, just let everyone use their arcane powers and relics normally.

Death in the Hunting Grounds is as permanent as anywhere else, but the presence of so many manitous increases the chances a character will come back Harrowed. Let the recently deceased draw 1d4 extra cards when her hero kicks the proverbial bucket.

Time Travel Issues

First, Hell on Earth and Lost Colony are on the same time-line, so there's no time travel issues there. Poses who go back into the Weird West are slightly more problematic. Here's how to handle time-travel weirdness.

First, the future (Lost Colony and Hell on Earth) are moving forward on a parallel path with the past (the Weird West). When a day passes on Banshee or in the Wasted West, a day passes in the Weird West as well. That means posses *can't* decide to go back into dinosaur days, or the day Raven watched his tribe get killed, or even into the "past" of the Weird West as characters in that setting might see it. They can *only* go the "current" game day in the Weird West (which is early 1879 in the current Weird West timeline, and late 2096 in Hell on Earth and Lost Colony).

That said, there are still certain timeline problems that could occur. Except for one thing. You're not going to let them. You're going to foil any attempt to create a paradox. That's the golden rule, and one you absolutely shouldn't break.

Remember that the point of the Hell Hole is to let everyone have an occasional change of pace. Sometimes you want the funny accents of the Old West and other times you want the desperation of the Wasted West. Don't let the issue of time travel ruin that. If you have players who insist on creating paradoxes even after you've foiled them time after time, show them the above paragraph and maim his character—"Whoops! Someone in the distant past just chopped your hand off!"

Okay, not really, but you get the idea.

Resolving Paradoxes

So here's exactly *how* you resolve those potential paradoxes.

In short, you sabotage them. The manitous in the Hunting Grounds, the Nature Spirits, and even the powers of good don't like any *serious* tampering with the time stream. The heroes should be able to do whatever they want in the past, but it somehow just doesn't affect the future that much.

The best way to explain is through a few examples.


Killing Ancestors: Let's say your posse lost a beloved character a few adventures back in Hell on Earth to a villain named Slade. They decide to go back to the Weird West, find Slade's ancestor, and put a bullet through him.

Here's the problems you can throw at them. First, how exactly will they find out who Slade's ancestors were? It's not like there are many surviving records in the Wasted West, and Slade himself probably doesn't know his family tree from a banzai. But let's suppose they figure it out somehow. If they go back and wipe out the ancestor, the fates just change things so that Slade is born to someone else. He's still there to put a bullet in the PC 200 years later. If the heroes put a lot of work into their plan only to have it ruined, they probably won't try again. You can reward their creativity with Fate Chips, but don't let them create any paradoxes.

Planting Gear: Here's another example. Let's say the heroes got ambushed without their weapons in one of Junkyard's hotels, and it led to a chain of unfortunate events. So they go back to the Weird West and plant a batch of assault rifles in the floorboards of their room so they won't be caught with their pants down. This one's easy. The weapons could simply be gone—no explanation required, the powder could be ruined, the hotel could be an entirely different building from way back then (almost always the case anyway), and so on. Again, reward the heroes for their creativity, but their plans don't work.

Sharing Information: The most potentially damaging paradoxes are the sharing of information. Let's say your heroes go back to the Weird West with datapad articles, pictures, video, and other "proof" about what happens on September 23rd, 2081. Then they take that information to Lacy O'Malley at the *Tombstone Epitaph* or some other more respectable paper. And then let's assume a persuasive individual manages to convince someone in the media that they're telling the truth.

Well, that is a tough one, but you can handle it. Here's how. Start with sabotaging their "proof" as they go through the Hunting Grounds. Maybe



their datapad is simply lost or destroyed during whatever adventure occurs as they travel to the Weird West. If not, maybe the datapad is infested with gremlins or other weird demons—showing awful and chaotic pictures of weird creatures and bloody debauchery. Or maybe it's more like an EMP that simply scrambles the datapad's circuits. Whatever it takes, sabotage it.

Messing With the Big Boys: What if your crew goes to Hellstromme and tells him what's going to happen? And they can "prove" it by explaining some scientific principles that haven't been discovered yet? First, you probably shouldn't let the posse anywhere near Hellstromme. Second, Hellstromme might just decide to throw them in a dungeon and get more information with tongs and branding irons. Third, if they *somehow* get to Hellstromme and don't get strapped to a wall, the "good" doctor might simply believe them and promise not to invent, sell, or distribute ghost rock bombs. Assuming he's not just lying (and maybe he invents them that much faster now, bringing about additional destruction and misery), he just does it anyway for his own reasons (he needs the money when the time comes, he realizes it will get him to Vanessa, whatever).

Interfering at Key Times: What if the heroes want to tell Dove to leave Raven chained to the rock? Well, they can't. Remember that the Hell Hole only goes back to 1876—it doesn't go to the late 2000s when Dove kills Raven.

But maybe you've got a Harrowed who goes back to the Weird West and decides to wait for 200 years to stop Dove from killing Raven. First, mess with him long before that happens. Second, let the manitou take over when it comes time and the disaster happens anyway (what a waste of 200 years!). Third, maybe the deader shows up to stop Dove but there's a bodyguard of other shamans and Indians there who stop him.

Time Twins: What happens if a really old character, such as an *Omega Man* or a Harrowed, goes back from *Hell on Earth* into the *Weird West* and meets himself? It's not really as great a problem as it sounds. Sure, the "young" hero would have lots of information, and he's *probably* going to believe him if the "old hero" can convince him it's not a trick, but what's the game effect?

The powers that be really don't like this, so a hero who tries to enter a place where he already is (in a younger or older version) simply can't exit the Hunting Grounds. Should his "time twin" die, or exit that time, he may then enter just like anyone else.

Only Stone has ever managed to get away with being a time twin, and that was with the direct help of the Reckoners.

So What's the Point?

The most honest answer is that we want you to be able to play in all of our *Deadlands* worlds. Everyone needs a change of pace now and then, and strapping on six-shooters or simply eating hot meals because they're available everywhere might be enough for survivors of the desolate future. That's not very satisfying from a heroic character's point of view, however. Once your group has figured things out about the Reckoning, how it started, and what they might do to prevent it, they may genuinely want to return to the Weird West not to give you fits but to save the world. If they can't because you keep foiling them, what's the point of going back to the Weird West?

Easy. As you'll see in the *Lost Colony* game, the Reckoners are loose on Banshee, and they've been "demoted" a step from unkillable, god-like beings to servitors. That means they're invulnerable to everything *except* their particular weaknesses. And those weaknesses can only be found...

...in the Weird West.

But that's a tale for another day.

Hell Hole Redeux

Here are the highlights of all we've just said.

- There are no paradoxes, because you're going to do whatever it takes to stop them. Don't think of the portals as time machines (though a certain amount of that can't be helped), think of them as gates to other worlds.
- The past and present run on parallel courses—characters can't go whenever they want, they can only go to the "current" day in the past/future. When a day passes in Hell on Earth, a day is forever lost in the Weird West as well. You can't go to 1877 in the past, because it's already "past." You can only go to late 1878. The Battle of Junkyard took place on the evening of December 31st, 2096. The date in the Weird West on that day was December 31st, 1878.
- Each trip through the Hell Hole is an entire, nightmarish adventure and should take at least one game session of not two or three.
- A trip through the Hunting Grounds should have a horrific, nightmarish feel to it.
- The Hell Hole only opens at the *Unity* in Lost Colony, Devil's Tower in the Weird West, and the ruins of Devil's Tower in Hell on Earth..
- Only personal items can be taken through the Hell Hole.
- The portals allow only small groups of people to travel between worlds. Large groups or too-frequent use (slipping in all the Iron Alliance through in groups of 5, for instance), attracts an army of demons.
- The portals are there for you, Marshal. We know from 5 years of email and listserves that most of you buy the books from both lines. The portals allow you a chance to play in each of our settings without starting whole new campaigns.
- If your posse *really* tries to mess with the timeline, they get a visit from Stone. These Hunting Grounds-jumping do-gooders are some of the folks who tasted Stone's six-guns when he forged the Path of Stone. Harsh, but clean.

And in case you forgot!

- There are no paradoxes!





After the Harvest

Well, that was one Hell of a ride, huh?

We suppose most of you are wondering what happens next in Hell on Earth? Is the story over?

Yes and no. On the one hand, the big metaplots we've had in store for the game are played out. We've been waiting for the return of the Reckoners and the arrival of Raven for a long time. We also think it's time to hand the reins over to you. We've created a huge irradiated sandbox for you to play in, so go tear it up.

On the flip-side, the story of *Hell on Earth* has simply entered a new chapter, one that's just as dangerous as before, though perhaps there's a little more hope than there was when the Reckoners were still stomping around. What's in this new chapter? Well, we have some events planned that you'll see in the pages of the new *Deadlands Epitaph*, but for the most part, it's up to you.

The rest of this book tells you which players are left, how they fared in the

days after the "Battle of the Worms," and what their immediate plans are. We'll also detail Raven's new army, his weird new liches, and his creepy new bodyguards.

Let's start with our good friends in the Iron Alliance.

The Iron Alliance

The leaders of the Iron Alliance have a lot to be thankful for, even though they suffered the heaviest casualties in the Battle of Worms. The people who made up the alliance currently remain encamped around Junkyard. They'll stay there for a few more weeks until someone figures out whether or not Raven or the Combine will make a play on Junkyard once again (they won't be doing so anytime soon, as you'll see in the other sections).

Now let's discuss each of the leaders of the Iron Alliance and their people in turn.

Ike Taylor and Junkyard

Ike's enthusiasm and constant positive attitude have convinced his people (and most other members of the alliance) that they were overwhelmingly victorious. This is a little true and a little false. It's true in the sense that the secret attack against the Combine worked like a charm. It's false in the sense that the casualties at the Battle of Worms were horrendous. Most of the Convoy was wiped out along with thousands of road gangers who had pledged themselves to the cause.

A few have raised a stink about the Junkyarders themselves. Ike's people fared quite well. They lost a few hundred in the initial Combine bombardment, but most then stayed behind to give the road gangs and the Convoy the "honor" of the pursuit. (Ike also had to keep them in Junkyard as a reserve against other Combine strike forces.)

In the aftermath of the Battle of Worms, Ike is preparing for the inevitable political battle that will come next. He knows that everyone will forget who forged the alliance and defeated the Combine when food is short and the deaders start back up again.

Ike's first priority, however, is to keep a close eye on the road gangs. He's keeping them happy with corn mash and loot right now, but knows they'll be trouble in the future. He's made sure his own Junkyard security forces are well-armed and ready for a fight if it comes to that.

The Road Gangs

The road gangs are currently quite happy—simply because Ike has ensured corn liquor flows like honey during the "victory celebrations." Ike also secretly arranged for Fuller Mattox to make sure the gangers got the lion's share of the Black Hat's loot.

When the liquor wears off, many of the gang leaders are going to take a hard look around and realize their gangs have a lot less members than they used to. These hardcore road warriors were on the front lines at Denver. Ike and Goose did this on purpose, of course. Neither want to see the predatory road gangs *stronger* after the war.

The road gangs' casualties were moderate during the siege, but atrocious when Raven attacked. Some of the most famous wasteland bandits and their crews are now worm-poop.

In the shelters around Junkyard, they sit by their fires, drinking, debauching, and generally celebrating. But a few cast hungry eyes on Junkyard itself, and converse in quiet whispers about one day putting Ike Taylor in his place.

The Law Dogs

Law Dogs were a very loosely organized force before the battle. During the pursuit however, these men and women came together under a woman named Aki Tyler and the late Cole Ballad. Aki's attitude and smarts under fire made her a hero with her companions. Cole's raw courage and fighting ability made him the man to be with in a fray. Under their informal leadership, these freelance officers of the peace became the most elite strike team in the pursuit force. That's why they got the task of going after Raven when they determined he was the center of the deader horde.

Aki didn't make it to the fight with Raven—she was pulled into a rattler's mouth and disappeared. Cole and the rest of his survivors rode against Raven screaming her name.

There are only a handful of Law Dogs left now, perhaps three dozen or so, and those only survived because they were wounded and dragged to safety. The rest stayed behind trying to free isolated groups like the posse when the deaders overran the battlefield.

A few other Law Dogs (such as any player character Law Dogs) decided to fight alongside their own companions instead of with the main body. Some of these survived as well.

Joan and the Schismatics

Hellstromme's appearance as the Harbinger has had little effect on the mutants. Some certainly believe Joan and her vision and have joined her cause. Those who prefer Silas either believe Joan was always full of rattler dung, or think Hellstromme wasn't really the Harbinger (such a being could only be a mutant, after all).

Joan and the Doomsayers were in the rear of the camp at Denver, so most of them survived. Mattox wanted the purple Doomies safely in reserve for selective strikes using their *EMP* abilities.

Now they have opened a "Welcoming Center" on the outskirts of Junkyard for all mutants who have chosen to accept Joan's vision of the Harbinger.

Joan and her best Doomies hold workshops and "self-improvement" seminars for those mutants who formerly fought for Silas.

Joan won't admit this to anyone, but she's elated her vision came true. She had begun to have doubts but was self-

vindicated when Hellstromme descended on the plains of Deseret,

Jo and the Templars

Jo's Templars were conspicuously absent during the siege of Denver. Three dozen or so fought with their personal companions or squires on the field, but there are currently over three hundred Templars in Jo's legion.

The best of the sword-swingers stayed with Jo, defending Junkyard and ready to act as a super-powered strike

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team in the event of some dire and unforeseen circumstance.

The rest of the legion was stationed around the Wasted West in strategic locations. If Junkyard had fallen, their task was to establish resistance movements against the Combine. These insurgents remain hidden with their survivor settlements until Jo gives them the word to move out.

Jo isn't particularly worried about politics, but Ike has convinced her that the Templars' small numbers in the

recent battles might be seen as a

sign of weakness. To keep the gossip down, he's played up a few key Templars who did fight.

He's awarded them medals, lauded them at public gatherings, and praised them among his lieutenants. His

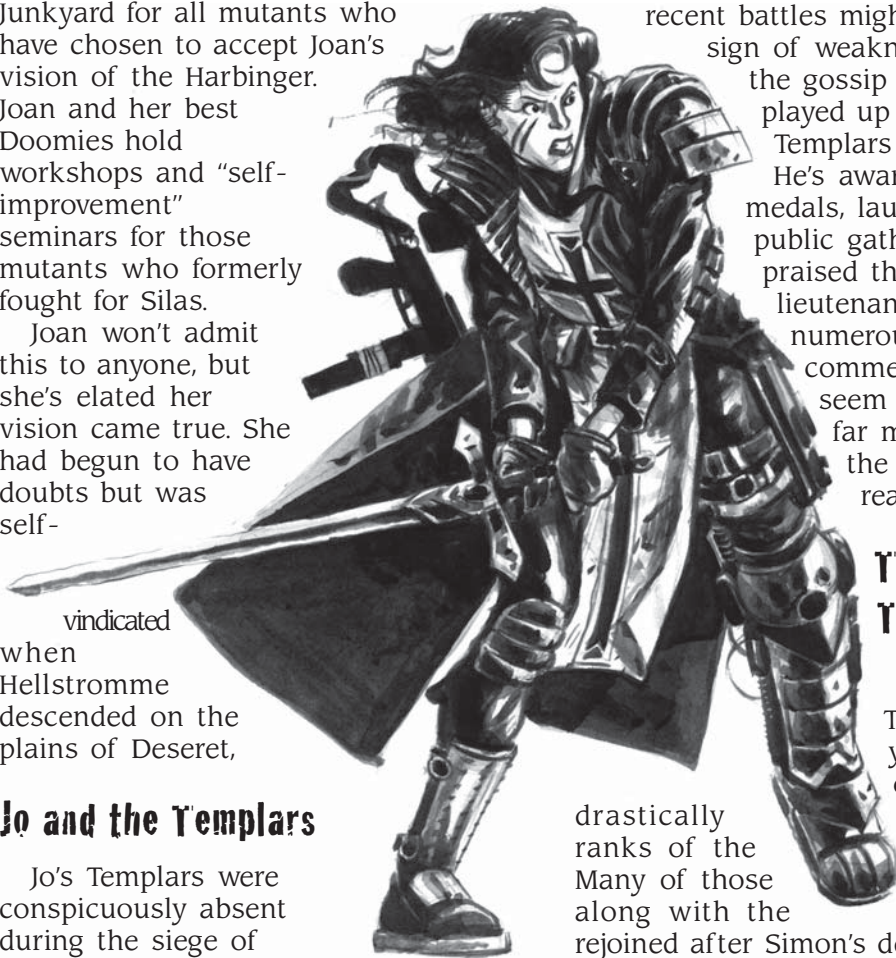
numerous and frequent comments make it seem as if there were far more Templars in the fight than there really were.

The Anti-Templars

The actions of Templars like your player characters have reduced the anti-Templars.

Many of those who didn't get along with the Templars rejoined after Simon's death. Jo is a hard-ass, but in a very different and more tolerable way (to most) than Simon, the former GrandMaster.

Though a few altruistic but misguided souls still wear the black tabard, those who remain at the movement's center are definitely of the evil variety. Modeen himself was



killed—either in “The Destroyer” adventure in *The Last Crusaders* or during the siege of Denver, where he fought alongside the Combine. Throckmorton persuaded the anti-Templars that he was destined to win the coming fight, and that if they would join them, he would grant the warriors access to his powerful weaponry to help fight the horrors of the Wasted West. The anti-Templars weren’t sent to Junkyard—Throckmorton and Modeen (or his replacement) were afraid the rank and file might switch sides when they saw what the robotic army planned to do to the Junkyarders after their city fell.

Instead, they were held back in Denver as a “reserve.” A small number of anti-Templars still reside inside the “Place Where No One Goes,” but a dozen or so slipped out to start trouble elsewhere. Of those who are left, less than four have any decent intentions. The rest crave power and like to play with axes.

The new leader of the anti-Templars is a surly fellow who goes by the moniker “Brain.” His real name is Marvin Finkelstein—he was a hospital supplies-salesman before the war. That’s not very intimidating, however, and since the war, Marvin’s buffed up quite a bit. He’s never going to win a Mr. Universe competition, but few survivors in the Wasted West are wimps.

Marvin was one of many turned away by Simon in Boise—Simon thought he was more interested in power than he was in helping people. He was right, of course.

Marvin tried again with the anti-Templars, and by this time learned to become a devious if not overpowering fighter. Modeen took him in, and the scheming salesman made himself valuable if not particularly well-liked. He inherited the group by deceit and betrayal in the end.

Profile: Marvin Finkelstein (Brain)

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

Shootin’: pistol, shotgun 3d6, dodge 3d6, drivin’: car 3d6, fightin’: axe 3d6, sneak 4d6

Mental: C:2d8, K:4d10, M:3d6, Sm:4d12, Sp:2d8

Area Knowledge: Wasted West 3d10, arts 2d8, bluff 3d12, faith 1d8, guts 1d8, leadership 3d6, medicine 2d10, overawe 2d6, persuasion 5d6, professional (salesmanship) 3d10, ridicule 4d12, scroungin’ 3d12, scrutinize 3d8, search 2d8, streetwise 2d12, survival 2d12

Pace: 6

Size: 5

Wind: 14

Edges: Arcane background (anti-Templar), “The stare”

Hindrances: Bad eyes, scrawny

Gear: 12-gauge pump-action sawed-off shotgun, “Backstabber,” a magical fireman’s axe that does STR+2d10 damage, or STR+3d10 damage if attacking someone with surprise.

Special Abilities:

Anti-Templar: Armor of the Saints 3, command 5, sixth sense 2; Greater Rewards: Command

Description: Brain is scrawny, skinny, short, and bald. He wears taped-up glasses that he protects zealously. He’s petty, jealous, and ruthless as a snake.

The Cult o’ Doom

Silas Rasmussen lost major face in the battle south of Junkyard. It’s not so much that all the muties think Joan’s heresy was proved right, it’s more that Silas lost the fight.

Gossip is thick and fast in the City o’ Sin about Hellstromme being the Harbinger. A few hundred muties have even set out to join their new “master.” Most locals, however, long ago chose to stay in Vegas because they simply like it there or because they believe in Silas—and belief like that dies hard. If Hellstromme is truly the Harbinger, he’ll come to them. If he’s not, or if Joan is on crack, then Vegas is still the most mutie-friendly city in the Wasted West.

Silas himself is a *very* unhappy camper. The first few days after the “Battle of the Harbinger,” he sat and brooded in his inner chambers of the Luxor, trying to figure out how to recover his crumbling empire. When nothing particularly clever came to mind, he turned to old-fashioned fear and violence. Anyone caught professing the coming of the Harbinger (or a few poor sots who just happened to catch Silas’ eye) have been hung upside down from the city’s lightposts until dead.

Hanging a few luckless individuals is definite proof that Silas is the true Mutant King—to the most remedial mutants. The rest simply don’t care—Silas is still their best chance at “ruling the West,” and they’re really looking forward to showing those non-scabby norms a thing or two.

Of course, the resistance in Vegas is getting ready to take advantage of the situation. Buggy Siegel, the Cult of Grendel, the LVPD, and even Joan’s Doomsayers have all begun to quietly stir up the muties about the coming of the Harbinger and the downfall of Silas, the “false prophet.”

Mutants

Mutants outside of Silas’ scaly grip are in a bit of a funk. On the one hand, there’s a chance that Joan’s prophesy was real and that Hellstromme has come to rescue them somehow. If so, are they supposed to be doing something? No one seems to know, and it’s making them restless.

If Hellstromme wasn’t the Harbinger, then there are other worries. Silas was defeated outside of Junkyard, and now there are tales of Reckoners and an army of the dead marching across the High Plains. The Iron Alliance has also grown more powerful from their victory among norms. The question of the day then, is who will champion the mutant’s cause?

Until that question is solved, mutants everywhere have become more and more paranoid. Those tribes that were once considered friendly have closed themselves off and refuse to treat with white men for fear of treachery (such as happened at Armana, where muties believe their kind were massacred by

norms—see *City o’ Sin* for all the gory details).

Like the Indians of old, the mutie tribes simply strive to survive in a land filled with those they perceive as enemies.

Hellstromme

So what about the Harbinger himself? Doctor Hellstromme is anxious to return to Banshee to be with Vanessa, but he doesn’t want to do so until he finishes a “Pinocchio” type quest and becomes a “real man.” The technology exists to create a new body for himself—one as young and virile as his wife. Hellstromme has a few theories on how to create a new body,



but isn't quite ready to walk the path of mad science again. At least not until he finds a few *very* rare pieces of equipment.

In the meantime, Hellstromme's decided he must use his identity as the Harbinger to fix what will become a major problem in the Wasted West if something isn't done—resolving the mutant question. Hellstromme realizes the mutants are the West's new "Indians." If they are not handled carefully, they'll become even more violent and isolationist than they are now. So the once-mad doctor is traveling about the West promoting peace between muties and norms. He hasn't tackled any major Silas-enclaves yet—he's proofing his theories on smaller "control" groups before going toe-to-toe with the Cult of Doom.

The Combine

Throckmorton's army suffered greatly in the fight at Junkyard. The general still has thousands of Black Hats, but his precious automatons, raptors, and other automated troops were nearly annihilated.

This leaves him with a great number of soldiers numerically, but drastically weakened in terms of actual strength. Black Hats are a dime a dozen, and zombie brains for new automatons, raptors, and other devices are fairly easy to create as well. But what the Combine truly lacks is the high-tensile metal to create new shells for these mechanical undead.

Throckmorton has already dispatched a handful of recovery teams to find new sources of metal. At least a dozen teams, all headed by Red Hats or recently promoted Black Hats are quietly scouring the West in disguise in search of salvageable ghost steel. One team, under Rudolph Tynes, is actually in Junkyard itself, buying up the remains of the hundreds of automatons

and other constructs slain in the Battle of Junkyard.

Throckmorton's forges and foundries suffered heavily in the bombardment of Denver. Repair crews are busy trying to get the smelters back on-line, but none of the Green Hats know exactly what they're doing, and spare parts are scarce. They've begun a concentrated effort to find slaves with engineering experience and "promote" them to Green Hats in exchange for repairing and expanding the Combine's metalworking capabilities. This is something the remaining Denver Resistance has discovered, and will eventually be passed on to the Iron Alliance. When it is, Ike Taylor and Doc Schwartz will quickly realize Throckmorton is desperate to rebuild his army of automatons.

Until Throckmorton gets his forges back in operation, he's managed to crank out a new squad of automatons. These creatures have extremely weak armor, but as yet no one has discovered this secret. They're more for show than for fighting, but having this shiny new squad walk the rubble streets of Denver is giving the demoralized Black Hats some small reassurance that the Harvest ain't over yet.

The "Vengeance Brigade" is actually just eight of these flimsy automatons. They've been instructed to be highly visible, beat the snot out of any defeatists, and help rebuild the city (more with impressive shows of strength than actual labor).

Profile: The Vengeance Brigade

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

Climbin' 2d6, dodge 2d6, fightin': brawlin' 3d6, shootin': MG 4d6, sneak 3d6

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

Area knowledge: Denver 2d6, overawe 4d10, ridicule 4d10, scroungin' 2d6, search 3d10

Pace: 6

Size: 8

Wind: NA

Armor: 1

Special Abilities:

Fearless

Regenerate: Automatons don't actually *regenerate*, but they can heal themselves by scavenging for parts in ruins. Treat this as a normal healing roll made once per day of *scroungin'* against a Fair (5) TN.

Description: The Vengeance Brigade is made of the shiniest metal Throckmorton's Green Hats could find—it's mostly chrome and other weaker metals. Note that the Vengeance Brigade has no internal weaponry. Mostly they use their metal fists to club nay-saying Black Hats. Should they be forced to combat, they carry standard Damnation assault rifles on their backs.

The Denver Resistance

The Denver Resistance struck while the siege was on, freeing a great number of slaves. Unfortunately, many of the slaves escaped just in time to be devoured by Raven's horde, but "them's the breaks" in the Wasted West.

This has caused one major problem for the Combine, however. With the large number of Black Hats currently hiding in Denver and the sudden lack of slave labor, feeding the Combine's servants has become very difficult. The Denver AI, in the guise of Throckmorton, is not particularly sympathetic to this maddening human need for constant sustenance. To solve the problem, the AI has done two things. The first is to send out Black Hat patrols to raid, gather new slaves, and steal any large stores of food they come across. Of course, the Black Hats are a little outnumbered and underarmed these days. Most of the towns they try to raid wind up winning. That's okay for the AI though—a few less Black Hats reduces the food supply problem as well. That's why it loves automatons so much—they only eat "for fun."

The second food program is far more insidious and downright disgusting. A select few Green Hats under Charles "the butcher" Barkley are creating a new cloning center and abattoir. The idea is to raise livestock, clone it in giant vats via some seriously demented

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junker science that creates full-grown animals in days, then process the meat through the efficient but gruesome "assembly line of death," a series of conveyor belts, whirling knives, lasers, and "juice" sluices that can turn a weak-limbed, undeveloped cow into hamburger in less than a minute.

And yes, Marshal, the AI's most vocal critics are set to become pate as soon as the architects finish the abattoir's construction.

The disappointed Resistance, trapped again and a little bummed about getting all the slaves killed, is in their "blue period." Sean Connors, the leader of the Resistance and the narrator of the *Denver* sourcebook, is currently wandering the streets of Denver disguised as a Black Hat. If he can verify that the Combine is weak enough, he's thinking of mounting a major effort to storm the Hellstromme Industries Factory Complex.

Right now, the "Vengeance Brigade" has him cowed a bit—if Throckmorton can create new automatons that quickly, what hope does his ragged band have? Plenty—if he discovers the new automatons have skin like tin foil.

Raven

Raven's appearance in the Wasted West has created quite a stir for more than just the obvious reasons that he commands an army of undead and giant worms. There's a lot to say about Raven and his new "friends," so buckle up, Marshal. This one's a bit longer.

Nearly 400 years of trying to destroy the world does not a pleasant person make.

The madman who started this whole thing, Raven, now sits brooding deep beneath the Rockies. His massive worm friends burrowed into the mountains and made a subterranean hideout for the shaman and his undead hordes.



Raven now takes council with the great rattlers, trying to figure out just what happened. He knows the Reckoners are gone, but he has yet to figure out just how it happened or who's responsible. He knows the humans could not have defeated them, and the demons tell him the Reckoners aren't at "home" in the Hunting Grounds, so where could they be?

Unfortunately for Raven, only Darius Hellstromme, and now Jo, Ike Taylor, and Joan, know just where the Reckoners went to, and even they don't know if the heroes they sent to the *Unity*—your posse, Marshal—was successful.

So what's a twisted, demented, burned up, 400-year old shaman to do? He can't just walk up to the surface, grab a mortal, and ask him where the Reckoners got to (he actually tried though, and the results were just embarrassing).

Before we tell you what he's about to do, we should tell you what he's already done, and just how he raised this terrifying army of worms and dead men.

Raven's Plan

You remember what we told you in the *Wasted West* book, right? That about 100 years ago, Raven was lured into a trap by a band of Old Ways shamans. They bound him with magical bracelets (made from the skin of white men) and staked him to a slab of rock in the Black Hills. Over the years, various shamans tried to kill him, but to no avail—he was a servitor and therefore could only be killed in one particular way—which none of them ever learned.

That didn't stop them from trying however. They stabbed him, cut him, skinned him, but to no avail. One female shaman, an otherwise peace-loving Sioux named Dove, even set him on fire. That didn't work either, but it was really painful and made Raven much uglier. It also made Raven vow to torture Dove *when* he got free.

Dove finally figured out how to kill Raven, but he had long ago bound a powerful manitou to resurrect him as Harrowed when the inevitable

happened. Dove left the mountain with Raven's mutilated corpse upon the "Blood Stone." Imagine her surprise when Raven showed up at her teepee the next day.

The unfortunate girl was dragged along behind Raven for nearly a decade. She was there when Raven conquered the fortress at Minier, Illinois, and watched as he put the survivors of hundreds of holdout settlements in the East to the sword.

The horrible things Raven did to her were finally so great that even his magic could not heal her. Dove died in agony alone and in pain.

Raven still drags her bones behind him on his Palanquin of War—the platform Cole Ballad attacked him on in Chapter Two.

Ten Things Raven Hates About the Reckoners

As much as Raven hated Dove, his true enemies are the Reckoners themselves, for it was they who betrayed him and left him to suffer for a century upon the Blood Stone.

So he planned to destroy them.

But how does one destroy the destroyers? Raven knew the Reckoners drew their power from the fear and terror of the living. If every last single human being on the planet were to be slain, the Reckoners would die along with them. This was Raven's dreadful plan.

For the last thirteen years he has wiped out the last pockets of resistance in the East and added their corpses to his shambling army of the dead.

For the last few months, Raven has been involved in a siege of his own. The last great survivor settlement in the east, Minier, stubbornly refused to die. But then Raven's demonic allies informed him of Throckmorton's impending "Harvest." Raven made his final assault, losing thousands of his minions in the fight but gaining half that many in the carnage that followed. To punish the humans for their tenacity, the last valiant fighters of the living in the east became Raven's newest and most powerful shock

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troops, a retinue of warriors called the "Honor Guard."

His undead army assembled, Raven marched to the river and sent his horde plunging into the depths of the "Bloody Old Muddy." They emerged on the other side, overran the River Watch, and began destroying all life that happened in their path—one survivor settlement at a time.

The Worms Turn

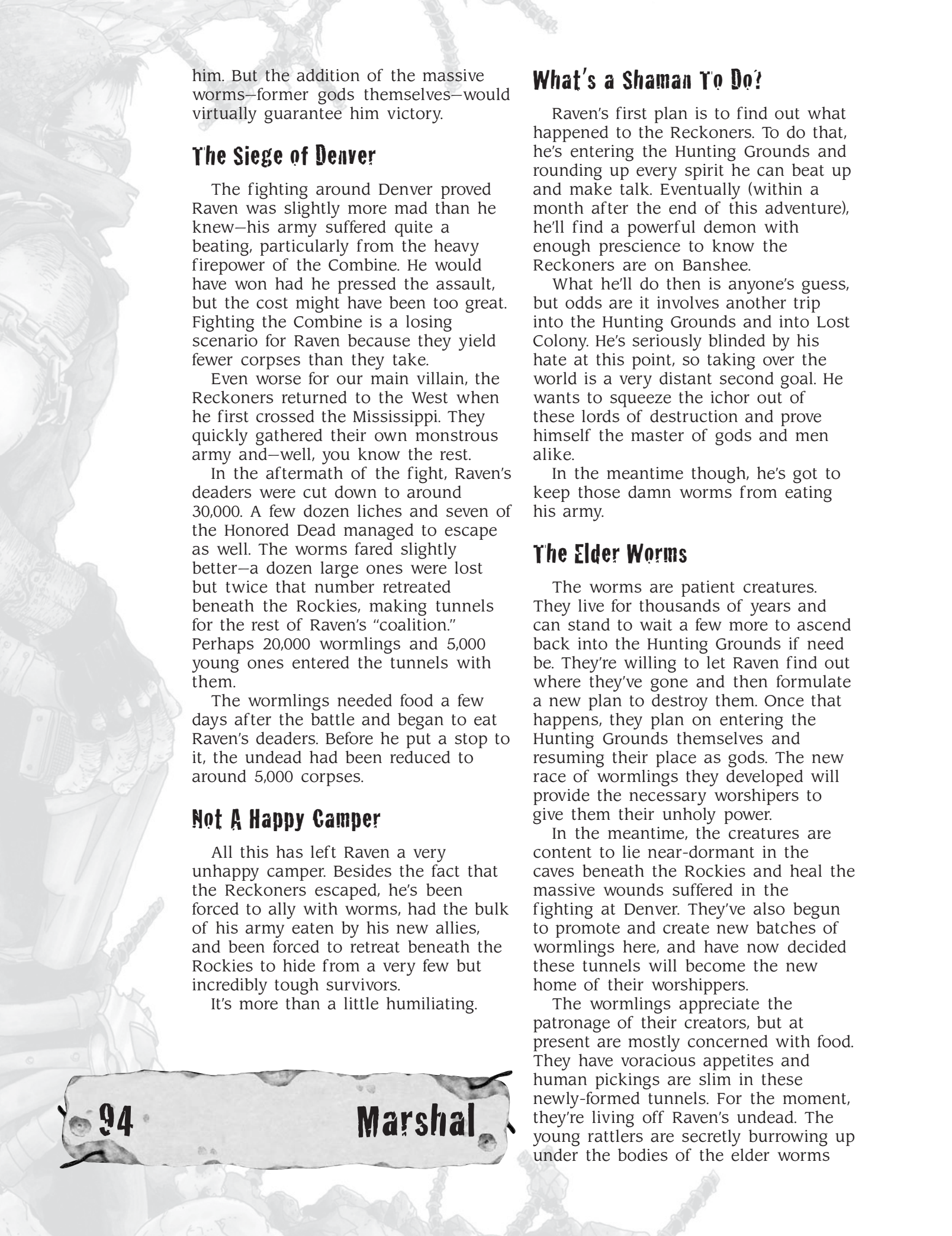
Many of those who survived Raven's assault fled west to warn the rest of humanity—but they were met by waves of giant rattlers, young ones, and wormlings. Very few made it through the swarm, and those who did were promptly ignored—there were lots of wormlings and zombie hordes after all. No one truly understood just how many were coming this time.

The worms met Raven at Kansas City in one of the strangest meetings of all time. The great worms hovered above tens of thousands of young rattlers and wormlings. Raven stood at the head of nearly 50,000 walking dead, liches, and a convoy of captured vehicles.

The worms communicated with Raven telepathically and told him of their ancient fall from the Hunting Grounds. They would help him destroy the Reckoners, allowing them to return to the Hunting Grounds as the gods they were, with a new race of wormlings to worship them and ensure their eternal place in the dark "heavens" of the spirit world.

Raven knew his undead army would have little trouble against the remaining humans of the world. It would not be a quick victory, but the more settlements that fell to him, the more undead he was able to add to his horde.

His major problem was that the deaders would not stand before the Reckoners once they caught on to his plan and formed their own army to stop



him. But the addition of the massive worms—former gods themselves—would virtually guarantee him victory.

The Siege of Denver

The fighting around Denver proved Raven was slightly more mad than he knew—his army suffered quite a beating, particularly from the heavy firepower of the Combine. He would have won had he pressed the assault, but the cost might have been too great. Fighting the Combine is a losing scenario for Raven because they yield fewer corpses than they take.

Even worse for our main villain, the Reckoners returned to the West when he first crossed the Mississippi. They quickly gathered their own monstrous army and—well, you know the rest.

In the aftermath of the fight, Raven's deaders were cut down to around 30,000. A few dozen liches and seven of the Honored Dead managed to escape as well. The worms fared slightly better—a dozen large ones were lost but twice that number retreated beneath the Rockies, making tunnels for the rest of Raven's "coalition." Perhaps 20,000 wormlings and 5,000 young ones entered the tunnels with them.

The wormlings needed food a few days after the battle and began to eat Raven's deaders. Before he put a stop to it, the undead had been reduced to around 5,000 corpses.

Not A Happy Camper

All this has left Raven a very unhappy camper. Besides the fact that the Reckoners escaped, he's been forced to ally with worms, had the bulk of his army eaten by his new allies, and been forced to retreat beneath the Rockies to hide from a very few but incredibly tough survivors.

It's more than a little humiliating.

What's a Shaman To Do?

Raven's first plan is to find out what happened to the Reckoners. To do that, he's entering the Hunting Grounds and rounding up every spirit he can beat up and make talk. Eventually (within a month after the end of this adventure), he'll find a powerful demon with enough prescience to know the Reckoners are on Banshee.

What he'll do then is anyone's guess, but odds are it involves another trip into the Hunting Grounds and into Lost Colony. He's seriously blinded by his hate at this point, so taking over the world is a very distant second goal. He wants to squeeze the ichor out of these lords of destruction and prove himself the master of gods and men alike.

In the meantime though, he's got to keep those damn worms from eating his army.

The Elder Worms

The worms are patient creatures. They live for thousands of years and can stand to wait a few more to ascend back into the Hunting Grounds if need be. They're willing to let Raven find out where they've gone and then formulate a new plan to destroy them. Once that happens, they plan on entering the Hunting Grounds themselves and resuming their place as gods. The new race of wormlings they developed will provide the necessary worshipers to give them their unholy power.

In the meantime, the creatures are content to lie near-dormant in the caves beneath the Rockies and heal the massive wounds suffered in the fighting at Denver. They've also begun to promote and create new batches of wormlings here, and have now decided these tunnels will become the new home of their worshippers.

The wormlings appreciate the patronage of their creators, but at present are mostly concerned with food. They have voracious appetites and human pickings are slim in these newly-formed tunnels. For the moment, they're living off Raven's undead. The young rattlers are secretly burrowing up under the bodies of the elder worms

that perished in the battle and feasting on their parents' rotting flesh.

This carrion won't last for long however, so the wormlings and the young rattlers have convinced their elders to make a few long tunnels through the mountains to more distant survivor settlements where they can find fresh prey. A few small hordes begin to appear about a month after the close of this adventure.

Raven's Horde

The heroes battled Raven's hordes using the Quick Combat rules in this adventure, but should they run into them again, you might need more detailed statistics. Here you go, Marshal.

Most of his horde are simply walkin' dead, with about 25% veteran walking dead (see the *Hell on Earth* rulebook for statistics). The rest of his undead (maybe 10% of the army) are 'gloms, bloats, and other undead used for specialized missions.

Raven also has three very unusual undead types with him as well.

Profile: Spikers

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

Shootin': any 2d6, climbin' 1d8, dodge 2d8, fightin': brawlin' 3d8, sneak 3d8, swimmin' 1d8

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

Overawe 5d6

Pace: 8

Size: 6

Wind: —

Terror: 11

Special Abilities:

Damage: Spikes (STR+1d6)

Fearless

Spikes: Spikers like to hurl themselves upon lightly armored foes. This is a *fightin': brawlin'* attack. If it hits, the foe takes STR+1d6 damage. With a raise, the opponent is stuck to the undead pincushion until he wins an opposed *Strength* check with a raise. Of course the spiker will be jamming knives and other "fun

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rods" into the victim while he's struggling to get unsnagged.

Undead

Description: Spikers are simply walking dead who have taken shards of glass, nails, wooden stakes, or other pointy bits and driven it through their unfeeling flesh. They do this mostly to further terrify their increasingly jaded foes, but also occasionally to dive onto opponents and impale them.

Profile: Liches

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

Shootin': any 2d6, dodge 2d8, fightin': brawlin' 3d8, sneak 3d8, swimmin' 1d8

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

Faith 4d10, overawe 5d6, scrutinize 2d10, search 3d10

Pace: 8

Size: 6

Wind: —

Terror: 11

Special Abilities:

Damage: Bite (STR)

Bolt o' Doom (ROF 1, Range 20, Damage 3d10); manifests as sickly green energy.

Fearless

Telekinesis: The liches can lift and move undead creatures up to a combined total of Size 35 (so usually five deaders with a little room to spare). The undead can be then be moved up to 200 yards distant at a Pace of 24. With a good launch, the corpses can be thrown out to a total range of about 500 yards. Deaders in "flight" attack at -2 for the speed but add +1d6 to any *Strength*-based damage they manage to cause.

Undead

Zombie: Liches can raise new undead by simply touching a fairly intact corpse. The thing rises as a

standard walking dead (or veteran walking dead) in 1d4 rounds.

Description: Raven's liches are the "captains" of his army. Their unholy powers allow them to directly attack their foes, but more importantly, let them move and manipulate other undead. One of their favorite tactics is to gather a throng of deaders (usually five corpses) with their telekinesis power and hurl them at their foes. It doesn't hurt what's already dead and surprises the snot out of the living who think their long-ranged guns give them time to deal with the approaching horde.

Profile: The Honored Dead

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

Shootin': any 4d8, dodge 4d10, fightin': any 4d10, sneak 3d10, speed load 2d8, swimmin' 2d10

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

Overawe 5d10, scrutinize 2d10, search 3d10

Pace: 10

Size: 7

Wind: -

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Damage: Bite (STR); hand axe (STR+2d6, DB+1); auto-shotgun, SMG, or assault rifle, 2 hand grenades

Fearless

Description: The last humans to stand before Raven in the necropolis of the east were a powerful bunch. As a cruel jest, he resurrected them as undead servants after finally crushing them in the siege of Minier, Illinois. There are seven of these creatures left, each armed with a variety of weapons and plenty of ammo stuffed directly into their undead flesh.

Raven's Relics

Raven has given rise to many relics during his tenure as Destructor Emeritus. Here are the four we've discussed in *Hell on Earth*.

Bracelets of a Hated Foe

These leather bands are made from the skin of white men killed long ago in the Weird West. They were fashioned in blood by the Old Ways shamans who sought to bind Raven and keep him from escaping the "Blood Stone." They were successful in that regard for over a century.

The bracelets appear as little more than strips of old leather, but a close inspection reveals wet smears of blood here and there around the bands, even if washed.

Needless to say, Raven doesn't wear the bands himself. He keeps them around for particularly powerful prisoners or those he wants to torture for a long, long time.

Power: Anyone wearing the bands cannot escape from whatever bonds hold him. The bands are not bonds themselves, they just make it impossible for the cursed wearer to escape any other bonds. The prisoner cannot call upon any magic while bound, though internal supernatural powers still work (Harrowsed don't "die," for example, and a syker could *fleshknit* his wounds).

The bracelets may only be removed by another person. The victim may then free himself from his actual bonds normally.

Taint: Anyone trying to put the bands on someone else must have the subject temporarily bound in the first place. Not a true taint, but difficult enough against the kinds of villains you'd want to use these on.

Dove's Bones

Poor Dove was the lovely Indian shaman who managed to end Raven's mortal existence—but only after trying many other painful experiments to kill him.

Raven paid her back by dragging her around on his Palanquin of War for the next decade after he got free. She expired from one of his many blind rages, finally passing into peace and the Happy Hunting Grounds.

Power: Dove's bones have come to be another of Raven's weaknesses (the first is an artifact of Susquehanan manufacture—something near impossible to find by now). Any weapon or projectile made from these bones causes normal damage to Raven, though even he does not yet know that. Yet. He keeps the bones dangling from a bag on the back of his palanquin.

Taint: The bones are taint-free, but going after Raven with a couple of brittle clubs or bone arrows is less than easy.

The Palanquin of War

Raven's undead body generally feels little pain, but strangely, the burns inflicted on him during his time on the Blood Stone cause him constant discomfort. Because of that, he prefers to ride on his "Palanquin of War," a massive flatbed "carpeted" with writhing deaders and decorated with the bones of his most hated foes (such as the shaman named Dove).

Powers: While on the palanquin, Raven automatically draws 5 Action Cards every round—there's no need to roll *Quickness*. The palanquin works for no other.

Taint: None.

Blood Stones

The stone Raven was bound to all those years was just a simple slab of rock. Over the century, the many shamans who tried to kill Raven spilled his blood upon it thousands of times over. Even an ordinary rock must eventually become a relic when drenched repeatedly in the blood of a primary servitor.

Raven sundered the hated thing into a thousand pieces after his return from the Great Beyond. Its shards lie atop the Black Hills for several years. Eventually however, shamans searching for Raven found the stones and learned that the "blood stones" were enchanted.

Anyone who carries one of these stones is partially protected from servitors of the Reckoners.

Powers: The hero gains +1 mystical armor against any attack directly generated by a servitor.

Taint: The stone is seeped in the blood of one of the most evil people on earth, so it has a few malignant tendencies. Anyone who wears a blood stone constantly seeps minute amounts of blood. The droplets are so tiny the wearer won't even notice it until he works up a sweat—which then comes out slimy and red. This effectively reduces the wearer's Wind by 1 point an hour to a maximum of 4 points lost. Not a particularly deadly taint, but a creepy one when a waster looks at his favorite scavenged Polo and sees the armpits have turned crimson.

And One More...

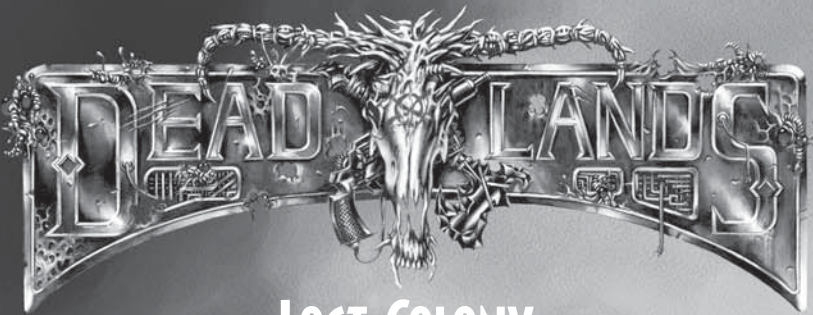
There's one more relic we haven't told you about yet, because there's just no way your heroes could have discovered it.

Raven's Coup Stick

Raven began plotting revenge immediately after the Reckoners left North America. Raven knew they could take his power away, and if they did, he would have no chance to destroy the world—and his former masters. So he performed a decade-long ritual drenched in blood and souls. The power that he gained was simple—the Reckoners could not take his powers away. This powerful magic was imbued in Raven's coup stick, with which he has killed hundreds. If the stick were to be broken, Raven would instantly lose his powers as a servitor.

So where is Raven's coup stick? He keeps the grisly thing stuffed up inside his undead ribs.

Come and get it. We dare you.



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