



Western Seeds II

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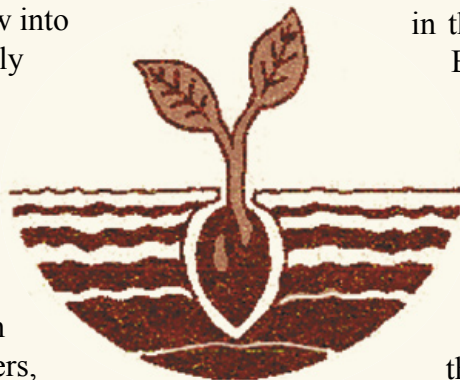
Introduction

Welcome to Seeds and to the 42nd product in the new line by Expeditious Retreat Press. Seeds are story ideas, plot ideas, creature ideas, adventure hooks, anything that can grow into an enjoyable gaming experience. Each seed is small (only a paragraph or two at most) and each Seed product will be small as well (only four to five pages), but just like their namesakes, they have great potential when provided with the right environment.

We're pleased to introduce Western I to our line of Seeds products and are happy to announce we're accepting submissions for additional western seeds as well as seeds for the other genres (horror, supers, fantasy, sci-fi, modern, pulp, and post-apocalyptic). Western Seeds I is four pages packed with adventure ideas suitable for western gaming. We received this bunch from an open call at ENworld and RPGnet and we hope that you'll be inclined to send us your seed ideas for perusal and possible inclusion in future Seeds products. We'd love a continual series of Seeds created by the very people who enjoy reading them the most.

So drop by the Expeditious Retreat website, check out our submission guidelines to find out more about the process, and then send us your seeds. Hopefully you'll soon be reading the latest Seed containing your successful seeds. Whew! Enough with the alliteration already, on to the fun!

Joseph Browning & Suzi Yee



A popular stagecoach line, which primarily deals with transportation of passengers, is occasionally utilized for transporting valuable cargo, such as banknotes or gold dust, between several small townships in the area. One of the stagecoach company's employees, Bartleby Foster, has hatched a plan to rob one of these "special deliveries" while it is traveling between towns. Bartleby has several accomplices and has supplied them with the times and routes that the coaches will be traveling. His gang plans on attaching the coaches, stealing all the valuables, and making the attack appear to be the result of an Indian massacre. Although there are a few Indian tribes in the region, they are generally peaceful and keep to themselves, never interfering with the towns' affairs. A few rational individuals in the townships recognize this fact right away, finding the attack strangely uncharacteristic of the region's tribes. Others, however, are infuriated and are looking to gather parties together to go raid the Indian camps in retaliation for the crime. Bartleby, of course, agrees that this is a good plan and speaks up the idea any chance he gets.

The 1836 smallpox epidemic rages throughout the Upper Missouri River country, yet the Assiniboine insist on coming to Fort Union to trade buffalo robes for guns and tobacco. Can the PCs convince the friendly but suspicious tribe to stay away for their own safety?

An aging Ohio River boatman and knife fighter has traveled West in the early days of the fur trade. He takes a shine to the same young Blackfoot woman a PC is married to and will go to any length to claim her as his own.

It is 1851 and Alexander Culbertson is traveling from Fort Union on the Missouri River to Fort Laramie, near the Platte River for the great conference and treaty session with the Plains Indians. Who will act as guide for him, and hunt buffalo and pronghorn to feed the contingent of Indians traveling with him?

An attractive girl working in the local burlesque show has a troubled past. Over a year ago, she shot and killed a man she wrongly believed responsible for killing her family. Once she realized her mistake, she went on the run and changed her identity. Now, she is trying to fit into her new life and avoid being identified while trying to find her family's killer. All the while, however, she knows there are others out there are searching for her, as there is a price on her head for murder. Not only for the man she killed, but for her family as well, as since her disappearance, she has become the prime suspect in their murder.

A group of mean-spirited and unsuccessful prospectors have decided to abandon their efforts and take over another, more successful claim by force. They rough up an old prospector who has had moderate success in the past and tell him they are taking over his claim, sending him away on his pet burro with only a canteen of water and barely a day's food. When the ragged old prospector arrives in town, shaken and distraught, and conveys his problems, several concerned individuals form a posse and decide to go confront the new prospectors. The prospectors are particularly well-armed, however, and have access to a substantial amount of dynamite in addition to their long firearms.

While relaxing in the town saloon, a verbal argument breaks out a couple tables away over a card game. Although not noticeable at first, voices escalate to the point that the entire bar quickly realizes a fight might be starting. Johannes Griplighter, a cantankerous scoundrel that most townsfolk would classify as a professional gambler, has kicked back his chair and is standing, screaming at Denton Philpot, the well-respected owner of the town's general store, accusing him of cheating at cards. Denton has, of course, just won the pot for the second time, and remains seated, stuttering and stammering while declaring his innocence. Johannes is armed, although he has not yet drawn his pistol, which lies holstered at his hip. The characters have one round to act before Johannes flies across the table and starts a fistfight with Denton.

Depending on how the situation plays out, it is quite possible that those within the bar will notice additional playing cards falling out of Denton's sleeves should he get injured or roughed up.



Dinosaur bones have been discovered in Wyoming! Great, huge beasts that once walked the earth! Two scientists from back east, one from Chicago and one from New York City, are organizing parties in St. Louis to retrieve the fossils, but both want to be the first on the scene.

Buffalo keep using the telegraph poles along the Union Pacific railroad in Nebraska and Wyoming as scratching posts, with the result being that the poles are knocked down and the wires broken, disrupting communications. The railroad is offering a reward to anyone that comes up with a way to keep buffalo away from the poles.

Sitting Bull is coming back from Canada to surrender at Fort Buford, Dakota Territory. The army needs several people to go with them to the Canadian border, driving wagons with supplies of food and clothing.

Someone robs the Great Northern Hotel in the small cowtown of Havre, Montana Territory. All evidence points to the fact that the thief was none other than Pete Wolf, but the problem with that theory is that Pete Wolf is sitting in prison in Deer Lodge and has been for the past six months.

The owner of the local saloon is being pressured to sell his establishment to a gang of ne'er-do-wells who are currently charging the owner protection money. The gang is definitely not looking for an easy way to get into the saloon business, but is instead interested in the building the saloon is housed in. Not only would it make a great hideout and storage area, but they have heard rumors that the old man who owned the building before it became a saloon may have hidden something valuable in the walls of the building. The saloon's current owner has never heard these rumors. He loves running the saloon (except for the occasional gunfight or unruly gambler) and is terribly distressed over the position he has been put in.

The characters get hired as ranch hands at a fairly large cattle ranch just on the outskirts of town. After working there for several weeks, they eventually discover that several of the cowboys on the ranch are actually former cattle rustlers. If confronted, they claim to have served their time and to now be reformed. They beg the characters not to inform the ranch owner of their shady past, as they are afraid they'll lose their jobs and this is their chance to earn an honest living. Can they be trusted or do old habits die hard?

A corrupt town assayer has been cheating clients out of their gold, little by little, for quite some time. Although he has been accused of keeping some of his customer's gold dust for himself on a few occasions in the past, there has never been any proof. A long time prospector who recently left the town and moved to Dallas discovered that the gold dust he had examined by the assayer over the past couple years had been laced with

sand and pyrite. He is planning on returning to the small town near which he staked his claim and confronting the assayer when he gets there. The assayer has been mixing his stolen gold with silver and minting his own counterfeit coins and ingots to pass off at face value.

A large band of Blackfoot suddenly attacks the unsuspecting mountain men at the 1833 Green River Rendezvous.

There is no end of trouble when a party of gold prospectors finds the teenaged daughter of the commanding officer at Fort Laramie has stowed away in one of their supply wagons.



A group of train robbers have decided on a unique approach. They have all booked passage and purchased tickets for the train they plan to rob, and will be getting on the cross-country ride at different locations. Once they are all onboard, each plans to rob an individual passenger car, and then head to the back of the train. Once they have all reached the caboose, they will separate that car from the rest of the train. The characters are onboard the train, hoping to catch some well deserved rest on a return tip from their latest excursion.

A group of would-be bank robbers plans on impersonating a famous gang of criminals who are still at large. They believe if they can make a clean getaway, their crime will be pinned on the infamous gang they were impersonating, and no one will be any wiser that they were actually a gang of copycats. The robbers are actually members of the same family, the majority of which live quite a distance away. One cousin, who does live in the bank's home town, works as a teller there. He will be working there on the day of the heist and has already supplied his cousins with layout maps and details of the bank and the surrounding area. After the heist is complete, the robbers are supposed to leave their cousin's share in a predetermined location and then head back to their home town.

The US government is sponsoring a land grab on a new parcel of land recently acquired under a settlement with a local Indian nation. This is the characters' chance to obtain land for a ranch, farm, mine, or homestead of their own. There are several other ruthless characters, however, looking to obtain prime sections of land for themselves. They have no qualms whatsoever about taking any necessary steps to ensure they get the property they want. Mounted rangers on horseback are on hand patrolling the area to witness the land grab and to enforce order but they can't be everywhere at once.

Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer has been defeated at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Captain Grant Marsh of the steamboat Far West is taking the wounded from Captain Benteen's command down the Yellowstone to Fort Buford. He needs a small group of very brave people to go by horseback directly east overland to Fort Abraham Lincoln, Dakota Territory, and take them the news.

The Civil War is over and more people are moving west. A West Texas cattle rancher, tired of all the Eastern Tenderfoots that have been arriving lately decides to head north to the relatively unpopulated lands of Montana. He needs several good hands to help drive his large herds of cattle and horses from San Antonio all the way to the Sun River Valley of Montana.

Lucky Strike

Charles "Lucky Strike" McGee has got to be the luckiest prospector in the West. He's brought back gold from every single trip he's made into the hills since he first arrived in town a year ago. Folks greet him with a mix of respect and suspicion – if he is that good a prospector, he's one-in-a-million. Trouble is, the local land registry has no record of McGee ever staking a claim. The local Sheriff can't arrest him for squatting, since there's no evidence that he's actually grabbed a piece of

land. Has ol' Lucky Strike found some secret gold mine up in the hills? Or is he getting his gold by some less lawful means, like claim jumping or perhaps even worse?

A few of the local boys mean to find out, but time is short. McGee is leaving in an hour on his last trip before winter sets in. Everyone is quietly scrambling for equipment and supplies, but once McGee leaves, that's it. All that can be done is hope the party has enough skill and supplies to discover McGee's secrets.

Hide and Seek

Thomas Creel won't be remembered by history, but he'll never be forgotten by the families of the three lawmen he gunned down in cold blood. Sheriff Benton just arrived back in town with the news, and is gathering up a posse to run down Creel and bring him back for justice. There's no lack of volunteers. The dead lawmen were well-liked in these parts, and word of the shooting is giving everyone an appetite for a hanging.

In fact, the Sheriff has whipped up the crowd into such a frenzy that nobody seems to be considering some of the more curious points of this case. Though Creel was no saint, he also wasn't the kind of man to kill three people without cause. Another thing: Creel and Sheriff Benton used to be close but they had a big falling out two months ago. Afterwards, Creel packed up and moved out of town. Nobody's quite sure why and Benton won't talk about it, but most folks figure it has to do with that train robbery that happened 'round then. Rumor has it that the robbers slipped right past Creel's posse, and Benton held him responsible.

Did Creel shoot the lawmen? He'd have to be awfully good to take down all three, but if he didn't pull the trigger, who did? Does Creel have a friend or two out there with him? And why is Benton trying so hard to turn the posse into a lynch mob? What is it about Creel that has Benton all fired up? Maybe there was more to the train robbery than most folks thought. The only way to know for sure is to find Creel before the posse drags him back to the gallows for a necktie sociable.



The Magnificent Steven

Steven MacKutcheon is the only son of rancher “Black” Angus MacKutcheon. Angus knows his son has no head for the cowboy life, so instead of teaching him the ropes so he can one day take over the MacKutcheon ranch, Angus sent Steven to New York for some fancy schooling in the hopes that his son would find success in the bustling heart of Gotham.

No such luck. Shortly after his arrival, Steven started reading dime novels and filled his head with all sorts of romantic and glorified notions of the West. After a few years, Steven’s come home with the belief that he’s been missing out on all the action. Unfortunately, he’s not much more than a mail-order cowboy: he has all the clothes, but none of the experience. Angus is at a loss, but doesn’t have time to mind the boy. A dispute about the boundary between his lands and a neighbor is getting very ugly, and what Angus needs now more than anything else is a six-gun guardian angel or two to look after Steven until the feud gets resolved. The job is trickier than it sounds. Steven has a knack of slipping away only to show up later where he can get into the most trouble. Protecting Steven from the feud is easy. Protecting Steven from everyone else might well prove impossible.

A Fist Full of Dullards

Robbing the bank in Tumbleweed should have been easy. Walk in, wave around a shooting iron, walk out with the cash. Unfortunately, a bunch of complete idiots had the same idea about an hour ago. They robbed the bank, led a merry chase through town, and finally got cornered about three miles farther west – without the money. All five of them are in the hoosegow back in Tumbleweed, and all of them claim they don’t know what happened to the bank’s money. There might still be a way to get some good from this turn of events. All that has to be done is bust the idiots out, get them out of town and then question them in the hope that one of them was lying to the sheriff about the cash. Assuming the idiots don’t have idiot friends that might try an ill-timed rescue, what could possibly go wrong?

Sinners

Frank Malone is a self-styled missionary. He’s spent his life teaching the Indians about the Good Book from a mission near the treaty territory of the Ishwanees tribe. Frank is considered a decent man, but most townsfolk regard the Ishwanees with suspicion. It’s no big secret that there’s a deposit of silver somewhere on their land, though nobody’s ever found it. Not that folks haven’t tried, but the Ishwanees were very good at catching trespassers. The railway also wants to build a line across Ishwanees land. It would be good news for the town, but the Ishwanees so far have refused.

This morning, the mission was set ablaze and poor Frank was discovered staked out in his front yard with all manner of atrocities visited on his body. The town is in shock, but already some folks are talking about taking action against the Ishwanees. The Sheriff is begging for calm. He’s sent for the Cavalry, but it could be a day or two before any soldiers arrive. In the mean time, he’s got his hands full keeping the town in line. Still, there’s a mystery about who killed Frank. If it was Indians, it wasn’t the Ishwanees – they’re not a violent people, and certainly don’t mutilate bodies. Maybe someone had a grudge against Frank, though that’s hard to believe. More likely someone has a grudge against the Ishwanees, and is trying to make it look like the Indians violated their treaty. If that happened, the Ishwanees would be rounded up and sent to a reservation, making it a lot easier for someone else to use their land. Somebody’s got to find out what’s really going on. It won’t win them any friends, but it will right the sins committed against Frank Malone and the Ishwanees.



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