



THE TAXIDERMIST'S TALE

A Savage Worlds One Sheet™ By Owen Lean
for use with Deadlands: Reloaded™



Even a stuffed critter might have its revenge in Deadlands!

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THE STORY SO FAR

People Back East are payin' mighty good money for mounted critters from the West. One taxidermist, Chester McShane, is making a tidy profit. McShane used to shoot game and mount them, but now he's more crook than Crocket. He was doing well until a talented woodsman named Zeke Boone ruined his business by selling his better creations for much less. McShane hired a bunch of varmints called Lightnin' Kenny and The Hurricanes to rough up his more talented rival. Boone got the message and now sells to McShane dirt cheap, who sells them as his own work.

What McShane doesn't know is that Kenny's gang was a bit too rough and killed Boone—and now the Reckoners have brought him back as an abomination. Better saddle up pardners, else the Weird West is stuffed!

THE SET UP

The posse finds out that a wealthy taxidermist by the name of Chester McShane is willing to pay \$250 to bring in a bunch of outlaws who robbed a stagecoach carrying his money and a wolf he mounted. Whether our amigos hear the word on the street, see a bunch of wanted posters all over town, or are approached by McShane directly is up to you, Marshal. But what McShane ain't sayin' is he has history with the outlaws, and they robbed his stage because he didn't pay them what he owed.

WANTED...BUT ALREADY DEAD

A successful Investigation roll to trawl through local newspapers, or a Streetwise roll to ask among the locals tells our cowpokes that Kenny's gang hides out in an old mine north of town. When our compadres get there, they find the outlaws are already dead, and it ain't pretty either!

Seven bodies are strewn over the floor, bite marks at their necks. A successful Common Knowledge roll for any outdoor types reveals the bandits were all killed by a wolf; a raise reveals that the men were asleep when they were attacked. A bit further into the mine they find \$47 in coin and an unused taxidermy mount. The mount has a plaque with the address of McShane's shop. Have the heroes make Tracking rolls; success turns up wolf prints headed away from the mount, but no wolf prints going toward it.

If the trackers go looking for the wolf, let them find it. Otherwise, on the way back to town, a ferocious wolf with dead, beadlike eyes leaps out and attacks its trackers. When the heroes hit back, there's no blood—just a flurry of hemp-wool stuffing. If they didn't already, the posse is surely gonna have some questions for McShane now, Marshal.

- **Mounted Wolf:** Use the Wolf profile in *Savage Worlds*. Add the Construct Monstrous Ability.

MCSHANE'S MENAGERIE

Read this passage to the group when they enter McShane's shop:

In McShane's shop, the lamps are all made from birds. McShane sits at a desk with deer's feet. Next to the door, a bear stands holding a silver tray. Behind McShane's desk, a small pack of coyotes stands on a large table, all looking out at the posse. McShane himself has let his fortunes go to his head—and his gut. He's wearing a fine suit and persistently strokes his bushy horseshoe moustache.

A Notice roll (-2) reveals that the coyotes are of superior-quality taxidermy, when compared to the rest of the collection.

If the heroes tell McShane what happened, he visibly pales. He's heard a couple of his customers Back East were found dead from impossible animal attacks, and has been having nightmares in which his mounts came to life and savage him. It only takes a successful Intimidation or Persuasion roll for McShane to confess they aren't his creations. McShane buys them cheap off a woodsman named Zeke Boone. Give the heroes a +2 bonus on the roll if they present the wolf to him; on a raise, McShane confesses the whole affair: the rivalry, hiring the bandits, the lot.

The moment he's about to say where to find Boone, the coyotes behind McShane leap off their mounts and tear him apart. Go for your Action Deck, Marshal!

- **Mounted Coyotes (1 per hero):** Use the Coyote profile from the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but add the Construct Monstrous Ability.

• **Chester McShane (Wild Card):** Use the Townsfolk profile in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. Add Shooting d6 and Knowledge (Taxidermy) d8. Chester's Winchester '73 rifle is mounted on the opposite wall. Too high up, too far away...too bad.

The coyotes go after McShane first, then turn their attention to the heroes. If the cowpokes manage to save Chester, he confesses everything and tells them where they can find Boone. If they don't, a search of the office finds a note from Lightnin' Kenny saying where they found Boone's cabin, and that "he won't be any more trouble."

THE HUNTER'S LODGE

Fear Level: 3

Boone's cabin is deep in the woods by a little creek. There's a strong smell of arsenic soap coming off the place. Inside, the posse is greeted by a menagerie. There's a wolf, an alligator, a bear, a bison, a coyote, a rattlesnake, and on the wall is a prize salmon. Let the posse take this in for a moment, before reading them the following:

You hear a strange chittering from above. Slowly you raise your heads to see the entire ceiling is made from owls! Five beaked heads stare down at you, their feathers sprayed out in sunbursts around them. No sooner have you seen this than all five heads screech at you.

That'll be a Fear check Marshal, then deal Action Cards as all the other animals leap off their mounts.

CEILIN' O' OWLS

One of Boone's more artistic creations. Luckily it can't actually leave the ceiling!

Attributes: Agility -, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength -, Vigor d6

Skills: Intimidation d6, Notice d12

Pace: -; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

- **Construct:** +2 to recover from Shaken. No additional damage from called shots. No wound penalties. Immune to disease and poison.
- **Five Heads Are Better Than One:** Its a called shot at -2 to hit one of the heads. One wound puts a head out of action. If all five heads are destroyed, the ceiling is truly dead.
- **Screech:** Once per round, the ceiling makes an Intimidation Test of Wills against any heroes standing under it. Treat this as a single roll (One trait die plus one wild die) that is applied to anyone still under the ceiling—anyone who runs out of the cabin is safe. Give the ceiling's roll a -1 penalty for every head that's been taken out.

All the stuffed animals have the Construct Monstrous Ability. See *Savage Worlds* for Alligators, Snakes (Venomous—the glands are full of arsenic), and Wolves, and the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook* for Bison, Coyotes, and Grizzly Bears. The salmon flaps uselessly on the floor, but a clever posse could use it as bait to get rid of the bear.

After two rounds of combat, there's a crash from the door! There stands Zeke Boone...or what he has become. He's a hulking man, now with bear claws, deer antlers, and a horse tail and feet. When he sees what the posse has done to his masterpieces, he lets out a cry of anger and charges.

ZEKE BOONE, "THE TAXIDERMIST"

Zeke was content as a woodsman until McShane thought he was bad for business. When Kenny's gang killed him his soul passed on full of bitterness and hatred. Boone returned as an abomination able to animate his creations. He slowly grew into the creature he is now. The more he succumbed to the beast inside him, the less human he became.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d12

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Taxidermy) d10, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d6, Survival d10, Tracking d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

Gear: Winchester '76 (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, RoF 1, Shots 15, AP 2).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Boone's skin has turned into a leathery hide.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Coup (Tracker's Tail):** A deader who consumes Zeke Boone's essence gets a +2 bonus to Tracking rolls, but also permanently grows a horse's tail. If it's cut off, it grows back in 1d6 days. Have fun covering that up, amigo.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Pace 8, d10 running die.
- **Gore:** Boone charges enemies with his antlers. If he moves at least 6" before attacking add +4 to damage.
- **Horns:** Str+d6.
- **Infernal Taxidermy:** Any animals mounted by Boone can come to life, and gain the Construct Monstrous Ability.

