

DEADLANDS

TALL

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BROKEN HEARTS

DEADLANDS

TALL



TALES

 **POWERED BY
PROTOCOL**

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Broken Hearts is Game 1 in the *Tall Tales* game series.

Powered by the *Protocol Game Series*.

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BROKEN HEARTS

Broken Hearts is a story roleplaying game set in **Deadlands: The Weird West™**. Two star-crossed spirits have started to haunt the town of Briar Gulch and it's only a matter of time before they tear the town — and perhaps everyone in it — apart.

The spirits have brought a storm down upon Briar Gulch that threatens to level it. Ever night the winds grow stronger and the town's structures grow weaker. Signs are ripped off buildings, tombstones fall in Boot Hill, and grown men can barely walk down the tempest-tossed streets.

Where did these spirits come from? Do they have something to do with a pair of lovers who died there a year ago? Can they be laid to rest before the town is destroyed by their vengeful force?

The heroes who must survive the spirits' rage are lightning-fast gunfighters, card-slinging hucksters, mad scientists, or even common townsfolk. And they'd best be quick—this storm threatens to break bones as well as hearts.

INTRODUCTION

Tall Tales is a narrative roleplaying game for three or more players. This zero-preparation game features enough structure to move the action along with plenty of room for creative and cooperative storytellers to spin rich and engaging yarns.

Tall Tales is based on the Protocol game series. Players take on the roles of directors outside the action and characters inside the action, using the ebb and flow of four different scene-framing styles to tell meaningful stories about characters in crisis: Vignettes, Interrogations, Interludes, and Ensembles. Each story explores unique player characters dealing with the adversity of the particular situation and their own personal issues in the best dramatic fashion.

Tall Tales requires a deck of cards (with Jokers) as well as tokens to track Drama Points and Grit. It presumes some understanding of GMless game protocol: scene-framing, shared authority, and so on. If you've never played a GMless game, try one of the GMZero games like *Dying Memories*, *Forget-Me-Not*, or *Monogatari*. There is also a free PDF online at drivethrurpg.com.

THE WEIRD WEST

Pinnacle's flagship product is *Deadlands*, a horrific journey into the "Weird West." Mysterious beings called the Reckoners have given life to monsters and magic, causing history to divert from July 4th, 1863 forward. The South has won its independence, California has shattered into a labyrinth of flooded sea-canyons, and a mysterious super-fuel called "ghost rock" has spawned as much war and strife as it has "steampunk" devices.

Players are steely-eyed gunfighters, card-slinging sorcerers called hucksters, mysterious shamans, savage braves, mad scientists, and more who battle against evil and attempt to prevent the "Reckoning".

The Weird West is a vast landscape of strange adventure. Players of the Tall Tales game system will find they can enjoy the system without knowing every detail of the Weird West. But the more you understand *Deadlands*, the more you'll be able to bring to the game.

Unlike traditional roleplaying games, this document doesn't provide all of the answers for you. Sometimes, you'll just have to make it up yourself. But players of Tall Tales may find themselves weaving stories they never thought they could... again and again.

And like anyone telling a Tall Tale, they'll be lying about it later.



GETTING STARTED

Each character in *Broken Hearts* has been enlisted in aiding Briar Gulch against the enraged spirits. Characters may be outsiders or residents, but all of them need a reason to be involved. They might be wandering trouble-shooters doing good deeds, hired heroes, or they may just be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Characters need names, roles, motivations, and relationships, as described below:

- Select one role for your character — this has no mechanical benefit, but provides perspective on your character's place on the team (See **Roles**.)
- Determine your character's **Motivation** by drawing a card and checking the results against page 7
- Determine a **Relationship** between two characters by drawing a card and checking the results against page 7
- Describe the town and the situation by answering the questions found under **World Building** on page 6
- Give your character a good Western name

ADVICE

This game series assumes you are remotely familiar with the Deadlands universe and its character archetypes. There are no spells, gun stats, or specific mad scientist devices. Everything you need to play is found on the charts. Conflicts and trials come up whenever you want them to, so be prepared to narrate clever complications to problem solutions instead of solving everything in the first scene.

Feel free to download the *GMZero Introduction* by Post World Games. It's free at drivethrurpg.com and has lots of advice for GMless gaming.

Advice is also peppered throughout this document. Feel free to ignore whatever doesn't fit your game style.

DECK SHUFFLING

A standard deck of cards is shuffled at the beginning of the game and again (only) if the deck runs out of cards. Used cards are discarded. Do not return Motivations or Relationships to the deck. The same goes for Scenes and Locations during play.

DRAMA POINTS AND GRIT POINTS

Each player starts the game with one Drama Point and one Grit Point. Additional points are only gained during play. See page 10 for more information on how to use them.

ROLES

While roles provide no specific game mechanics, they help provide perspective and purpose for one's place in the story. When choosing a role, you should also determine how and why you've come to help the town in need.

- **Blessed.** The Blessed's miracles come from the often distant powers of good, vital to dealing with spirits and other unworldly things.
- **Concerned Citizen.** Not everyone has magical or mystical tools at their disposal, but some love their town enough to stand up for it.
- **Cowpoke.** The people living outside the town were the first to have problems with the spirits. Now the things are growing in power and it's only a matter of time before Briar Gulch is destroyed.
- **Dime Novel Author.** Interviews and research about the town's infamous sheriff or unsavory hired gun will have to wait.
- **Drifter.** Passing through town... just as the town needs help. What are the chances?
- **Huckster.** Help the town, *or* gamble by yourself in an empty saloon?
- **Indian Brave.** Settlers do not understand why the wind calls. Without Indian aid, they are doomed.
- **Indian Shaman.** Spirits ache for something unfulfilled. They refuse to leave this place and now their haunting affects the town.
- **Law Dog.** The law cannot sit idly by as the town is destroyed. Perhaps a few deputies are in order as well...
- **Mad Scientist.** It isn't science that's haunting the town, but it never hurts to have someone around who can build flamethrowers.
- **Veteran.** A few shots of whiskey and a new saddle for his horse and the war veteran is bound to help a town in need.

MOTIVATIONS

Motivations are determined by drawing one random card from the deck for each character and consulting the chart on page 7. The Motivation descriptions are purposely vague — specificity is the job of the player. For instance, the ♠10 is a Motivation of Family, Impulsively. The player may define this Motivation as doing whatever it takes to protect her family or always acting rashly and getting herself into trouble with them.

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are determined by choosing (any) two characters and drawing one random card from the deck and consulting the chart on page 7. The pair of characters share this Relationship, which is kept purposely vague. Specificity is the job of the player. For instance, the ♣10 is a Relationship of Burdensome Trust. The players sharing this Relationship may define it as an ongoing issue of trust between two brothers who have lied to each other since childhood or a Relationship that is finally reaching its nadir.



WORLD BUILDING

In order to tell your Tall Tale, each player establishes an element of the game world. This is a collective process, which is completed by answering key questions relevant to the story of the spirits.

Each player selects one ingredient from the list below and answers the question as well as he can. Players can take turns, one player can read them off to the others, or a player can even quiz someone else about the questions. No question should be answered more than once. Each bullet point is considered a single “ingredient.”

Now is also a good time to determine what the locals have been calling the wailing spirits.

- When did the trouble with the ghosts begin? What have they done that brought them to your group’s attention?
- Who were the first people to notice the spirits? When? What do they look like? What happens when you look at them?
- Who has died because of the spirits?
- Who among you has lost family to the supernatural? Who among you has lost faith because of the supernatural? Or gained it?
- Why are there so few marriages in Briar’s Gulch? What happened to the town church last spring?
- Who among you is married? Who among you has lost love?
- Why does Briar Gulch maintain three separate cemeteries?
- What makes the name “Briar Gulch” a misnomer?
- Who is the Town Marshal? Who is her confidant? Her enemy?
- Who is the mayor of Briar Gulch? Is she straight as an arrow? Or crooked as a dog’s leg?
- Name and describe the undertaker. Who among you has seen her rob the dead?
- Name and describe two townspeople (opposite genders) who died within the last year, though not together.

MOTIVATIONS CHART

SUIT

- ♣ Confidently
- ♦ Ambitiously (or Overextended)
- ♥ Selfishly
- ♠ Impulsively

VALUE

- A Unpaid Debt
- 2 Curiosity
- 3 Duty
- 4 Envy or Greed
- 5 Desperation or Fear
- 6 Past Transgressions
- 7 Glory
- 8 Illness
- 9 Vengeance
- 10 Family
- J Wanderlust
- Q Love or Hate
- K Reward

Joker

Draw two and combine the results

Motivations are not to be confused with needs or goals. The goal is to tell the story of the spirits' upheaval. What motivates a character, though, is often unclear to others. And just because you are driven does not mean you are always winning... being courageously driven by your illness doesn't stop you from coughing at the wrong moment or being able to keep up with everyone.

RELATIONSHIPS CHART

SUIT

- ♣ Burdensome
- ♦ Complex
- ♥ Fortuitous
- ♠ Ominous

VALUE

- A Survival
- 2 Training
- 3 Loss or Reconciliation
- 4 Codependency
- 5 Reliable
- 6 Generous
- 7 Long-Term or Siblings
- 8 Monetary Gains
- 9 Worry
- 10 Trust
- J Rivalry
- Q Romantic
- K Brothers-in-Arms

Joker

Draw again, adding a third person to the Relationship

Traditional roleplaying games assume relationships of adventurous intent. But good drama unfolds when two players can develop a relationship beyond always agreeing to chase the gold. Let your relationships with others focus your gameplay and storytelling styles. But don't let it derail the story either. No one wants to watch a movie where two people bicker about everything.

GAME PLAY

The players take turns directing scenes in *Broken Hearts*. The active player of a scene is known as the director. Each turn the director draws two cards, which determine the scene type — Vignette, Interrogation, Interlude, or Ensemble — as well as the location. The director uses this to focus the point of the scene.

The scene's type (suit) and atmosphere (value) are determined by the first card, while the location is determined by the second card. *For instance, the director draws a ♦6 and a ♣7 indicating an Interrogation (♦) about a flashback or rumors at an abandoned (♣) general store or laundry.* A chart of scenes is on page 8.

THE OPENING SCENE

Two spirits are tearing the town apart by creating a raging storm. Exactly what that means, who it affects, how they died, what will lay them to rest, and everything else is the story your group will tell as the game evolves. The opening scene of the game is a Vignette at the law dog's office. The Vignette focus is either Collateral Damage or Cry for Help. Determine randomly which player narrates this Vignette, but do not draw any cards. Afterwards, take turns until every player has directed four scenes.

VIGNETTES: CLUBS ♣

Vignettes involve no actual dialog, they merely set the atmosphere for the story. The director determines the location from the card drawn and narrates a brief scene. A Vignette shouldn't take more than a minute or two to narrate.

At the end of the Vignette, the director gains one Grit Point.

The director draws a ♣10 for scene — Vignette about Safety in Numbers — and a ♦K — Guarded Cemetery. "The locals had a habit of keeping the dead far from the city proper. Zombies and all that. Made sense to us, but it also meant that we'd all have to go there together if it meant investigating who died around here and who didn't."

ADVICE

Keep your Vignettes short and simple. Narrate enough information to set the tone, but don't overdo it by dragging the action on too long. Concise sentences are a writer's best friend.

INTERROGATIONS: DIAMONDS ♦

Interrogations involve the director asking questions to one character. The director selects a player and steals one Drama Point from him. Then, the director asks one to five questions — in or out of character — which must be answered by that player in character.

If the Interrogation is in character, the director may ask the questions from the point of view of an NPC or his own character. This process should feel organic. If the Interrogation is out of character, the director asks the questions in an abstract fashion, as though going down a list. The questions can be anything fitting the theme.

The director draws a ♦4 for scene — Interrogation about Innocent Lives — and a ♠7 — Public General Store or Laundry. The director decides the drifter isn't trustworthy. While snooping around town, he is stopped outside the general store by the town marshal who asks him a series of questions about his past.

ADVICE

Ask leading questions. Avoid yes/no questions, or questions that can be reduced to short answers. What and why questions are great. Did or can questions are not. *"Why are you waiting for reinforcements?"*

RESOLVING CONFLICT

In Tall Tales, whenever two or more characters reach a moment of unresolvable conflict one of the following things happens:

- In an Interlude, the director decides who *wins* the conflict. The director then narrates the conclusion, and ends the scene.
- In an Ensemble, the scene ends, which leaves the conflict dangling.
- Should the players wish to override any of these rules, they must spend one drama point, or in the case of a tie, more drama points than anyone else. The winner narrates the conclusion.
- Should a scene end unresolved, this creates a cliffhanger effect. Players may wish to resolve this in the following scene. But this isn't always necessary. Use your best judgement. Sometimes the best things are left unsaid.

Vignettes and Interrogations have no conflict.

INTERLUDES: HEARTS ♥

Interludes involve two (and only two) characters with a pre-existing Relationship. Neither of these characters need to be the director's character. The director determines the location and sets the scene based on the cards drawn. The scene runs as long as the director likes, without being self-indulgent, calling "scene" when the characters have said or done enough. Interludes involve only one location. Should the characters leave the location, the scene ends.

All players **not** involved in the scene gain one Drama Point at the end of the Interlude.

The director has drawn the ♥5 for scene — Interlude about A Murder of Crows... — and the ♣8 for location — an Abandoned Merchant Exchange or Train Depot. The director decides that the drifter and huckster are out of ideas on how to proceed, so they head over to the abandoned train depot. The pair have a relationship of Complex Worry, further explained to mean that they are always expecting the worst to happen. The director does not have an agenda beyond this and wants to see where the characters take the story. She hints that before the scene ends they will come across a group of dead crows (felled by the storm).

ADVICE

Interludes are mostly about the drama between two characters. While the Interlude can be used to advance the plot, this is secondary to the interpersonal actions and reactions of the characters. An alternative example of the scene above could be the pair finding a locket in a severed hand that crows have been picking at.

NPCs

The director may add one NPC to an Interlude or Interrogation, but the characters remain the focus of the scene. Vignettes do not have dialogue, but any number of NPCs may color the story background. Ensembles may have NPCs, but they are controlled/run by the director. Other players may introduce NPCs by spending one drama point.

ENSEMBLES: SPADES ♠

Ensembles involve all of the characters. Like an Interlude, the director determines the plot of the scene, as well as the location. The director may preempt the scene as much as he likes, but once the Ensemble starts, the players should let things develop organically. The director still has the right to call "scene" at any moment, but any player may spend one Drama Point to end a scene early if he wants to override the director, or spend one Drama Point to extend a scene longer.

The director has drawn the ♠3 for scene — Ensemble about Spirits Cry — and the ♥6 for location — Isolated Homestead or Private Estate. The director decides the group — fearing the spirits' return — has rented a room at a private estate one mile outside of town. However, just as midnight hits, the storm gathers and from their vantage point they can also see the two powerful spirits razing the town with lightning and wind.

ADVICE

Ensembles involve everyone and should be allowed to run their course. But not too long. Eventually the characters will start spewing every kind of theory and idea, which slows play and distracts from the *Tall Tale*. Let everyone get a say, but once you resolve the scene's primary focus, it's time to end things. Don't forget, if there's conflict, the scene ends on its own, unless someone spends one Drama Point.

CONTINUED GAMEPLAY

Each player takes one turn directing scenes. The order is not important. Players may decide to take turns in a random order, clockwise order, or even bid to be the next director. Just make sure everyone is involved and no one directs two times in a row. Once everyone has directed four scenes, turn to page 11 to resolve the finale.

SCENES

SUIT

- ♣ Vignette
- ♦ Interrogation
- ♥ Interlude
- ♠ Ensemble

VALUE

- A Trail Runs Hot
- 2 Fear Takes Hold
- 3 Spirits Cry
- 4 Innocent Lives
- 5 A Murder of Crows...
- 6 Flashbacks or Rumors
- 7 Collateral Damage
- 8 Cry for Help
- 9 Trail Runs Cold
- 10 Safety in Numbers
- J Whirlwind
- Q (Spirit) Lover's Quarrel
- K (Spirit) Lover's Lament
- Joker
- Monologue

The scene values are purposely vague. They are the seeds. You provide the crop. These entries can mean a lot of different things, allowing each Tall Tale to be played again and again. Be creative with it.

LOCATIONS

SUIT

- ♣ Abandoned
- ♦ Guarded
- ♥ Isolated
- ♠ Public

VALUE

- A Cat House or Saloon
- 2 Factory or Railyard
- 3 Jail or Telegraph Office
- 4 Fort or Wilderness
- 5 Livery or Smithy
- 6 Homestead or Private Estate
- 7 General Store or Laundry
- 8 Merchant Exchange or Train Depot
- 9 Water-Related (river, well, etc.)
- 10 Hotel or Jail
- J Library or Town Hall
- Q Social Gathering
- K Cemetery
- Joker
- The Old Chapel

Sometimes the suit of a location can be hard to match up with the value. A guarded wilderness for instance sounds weird. But the wilderness is a big place. Who's to say the characters haven't stumbled upon someone's hideout in the middle of the desert? Or a small house in the middle of the prairie has more than its share of defensive measures? Don't let the results confine you. Let them guide you to better stories.

FINALE

Once everyone has directed four times, the finale begins. For each Drama Point you still possess, draw one card from the deck and consult the **Finale Chart**. Higher cards (9–A) provide a good ending for their character and lower cards (2–7) mean a bad ending for their character. A combination of cards produces mixed results, which each card represent a Vignette of said magnitude.

If a player has any Grit Points left, he can spend one Grit Point to draw one card to replace another, but must use the new draw even if it's worse — unless they spend another point of Grit to replace it.

If a player has no Drama Points at the end of the game, he draws two cards and uses the lower one.

After all finale cards are drawn, each player narrates (in turn) a Vignette about the spirits' final return to Briar Gulch, describing the ending based on the result of their draws. They can describe their results in any order they wish. However, the player with the most cards always narrates the final Vignette. If there is a tie, it the player with the high card showing.

EPILOGUE

After the finale is over, the players should take a few moments to answer these questions even if their characters never learned the truth. Who were the spirits? Were they lovers in their previous life? Or something else? What was the reason behind the wind? Why did it start when it did? What would have stopped it?

FINALE CHART

SUIT

- ♣ Your health is...
- ♦ Your wealth is...
- ♥ One of your relationships is...
- ♠ Your goal is...

VALUE

- A Epic. Dime novels will be written about you.
- 2 Worse than Death. Not just lost, but forever cursed.
- 3 Gone. Like it never existed.
- 4 Shattered. You'll carry your failure to the grave.
- 5 Failure. You'll bear the scars of your loss.
- 6 Flawed. It was close, but that's just a bitter reminder.
- 7 Lacking. But you can live with it. Probably.
- 8 Static. Nothing changed for better or worse.
- 9 Barely Edged Out... And it cost you in a horrible way.
- 10 Okay. You got what you wanted but lost something too.
- J Successful. It was close, but you pulled it out in the end.
- Q Improved. You end up a little better off, for a while at least
- K Incredible. What could be better than that?

Joker

The joker is wild! You can treat it as any other card you want.

SPENDING DRAMA POINTS

Drama Points are used to control the narration and finale. In addition, players may use Drama Points in the follow ways.

- The director may spend one Drama Point to discard a Scene or Location card and draw a new one.
- During an Interrogation, the player being interrogated may spend one Drama Point to avoid answering one question.
- If a scene ends with unresolved conflict, any player may spend one Drama Point to shift the conflict to an NPC who has already made an appearance in the story, or two Drama Points to shift the conflict to a new NPC.

SPENDING GRIT POINTS

Grit Points are used in a scene that is going against you. Whenever a Vignette or Interlude would result in your character on the “losing end” of a situation, one Grit Point may be spent to reverse the situation, turning things in your favor. A character spending one Grit Point may now take over the narration of his own fate, as it pertains to the scene.

The drifter is about to get thrown in jail by the town marshal, but instead of taking it lying down, the player spends one Grit Point and takes over the drifter’s fate, narrating how he gets out of the situation — perhaps through guile... perhaps through force.

OPTIONAL RULES

- If the same suit is drawn three times in a row for a scene or location, discard the card and draw a new one until a new suit appears.
- At the beginning of the game, shuffle the deck and remove 10 cards at random. Do not look at them. Remove them from play and only shuffle them into the deck if you run out of cards.
- Should a player ever run out of Drama Points, the director may give him one of his, regardless of the scene type.
- Once per game, the players may decide to award one Drama Point to a director who has framed a particularly good scene.
- Select a permanent director who does not play a character, but instead runs the game like a traditional RPG. Cards are still drawn for scenes. The game lasts for a number of scenes equal to four times the number of players, or as long as the director chooses.

OVERVIEW

CREATE CHARACTERS

- Shuffle a deck of cards
- Name characters
- Determine backgrounds (optional)
- Select roles
- Determine Motivations
- Determine Relationships
- Give each player one drama point

OPENING SCENE

- Vignette (Collateral Damage or Cry for Help)

SCENES

- Take turns directing scenes
- Draw two cards: one scene type, one location
- Gain one Drama Point during Interrogations and other players’ Interludes
- Gain one Grit Point during Vignettes

FINALE

- Take turns narrating Vignettes about the storms

END GAME

- Determine if the spirits are defeated or if the town is destroyed

SCENES

VIGNETTES: CLUBS

Vignettes involve no actual dialog, they merely set the atmosphere for the story. The director determines the location from the card drawn and narrates a brief scene. A Vignette shouldn't take more than a minute or two to narrate.

At the end of the Vignette, the director gains one Grit Point.

INTERROGATIONS: DIAMONDS

Interrogations involve the director asking questions to one character. The director selects a player and steals one Drama Point from him. Then, the director asks five questions — in or out of character — which must be answered by that player in character.

If the Interrogation is in character, the director may ask the questions from the point of view of an NPC or his own character. This process should feel organic. If the Interrogation is out of character, the director asks the questions in an abstract fashion, as though going down a list. The questions can be anything fitting the theme.

INTERLUDES: HEARTS

Interludes involve two (and only two) characters with a pre-existing Relationship. Neither of these characters need to be the director's character. The director determines the location and sets the scene based on the cards drawn. The scene runs as long as the director likes, without being self-indulgent, calling "scene" when the characters have said or done enough. Interludes involve only one location. Should the characters leave the location, the scene ends.

All players **not** involved in the scene gain one Drama Point at the end of the Interlude.

ENSEMBLES: SPADES

Ensembles involve all of the characters. Like an Interlude, the director determines the plot of the scene, as well as the location. The director may preempt the scene as much as he likes, but once the Ensemble starts, the players should let things develop organically. The director still has the right to call "scene" at any moment, but any player may spend one Drama Point to end a scene early if he wants to override the director, or spend one Drama Point to extend a scene longer.

NAME AND ROLE

BACKGROUND

MOTIVATION

RELATIONSHIP

NOTES

SCENES



DRAMA POINTS

Spend one to end or extend an Ensemble

Spend one to resolve conflict

Spend one to shift the conflict to an existing NPC

Spend two to shift the conflict to a new NPC

Spend one (during an Interrogation) to avoid answering a question

Spend during final narration

GRIT POINTS

CHARACTER SHEET

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Abe, Bianca, Carl, and Diana are sitting down to play Tall Tales: Broken Hearts. Following the order of play, Abe has selected a Blessed character, Bianca is an Cowpoke, Carl is a Veteran, and Diana is a Law Dog. They have named their character Eli, Fiona, Garret, and Hilda, respectively.

Drawing one poker card each, they determine (in order) that their motivations are selfishly past transgressions, confidently family, impulsively wanderlust, and impulsively love/hate.

From this, Abe decides that Eli is concerned about hiding his past sins from the others, even at the cost of his faith. Bianca's character is a local who is concerned about her family and is not afraid to defend them. Garret, the Veteran, cannot seem to settled down anywhere since the war. Diana's character, Hilda, has an impulsive hatred for lawbreakers.

Once motivations are settled, each player draws one card each to determine (in order) relationships. Abe selects a relationship between Eli and Fiona, drawing complex monetary gains. Clearly the pair work well together when money is involved, and not so much otherwise. Bianca selects Eli and Garret to have a relationship. She draws complex brothers in arms. The pair decide that they fought together on the same side during the war, perhaps this is when Eli's sins became an issue. Carl selects Fiona and Hilda to have a relationship drawing ominous survival. While the pair have been instrumental in the town's survival in the past, something tells them only one of them is going to make it out this one alive. Finally, Diana selects Eli and Hilda to have a relationship. She draws Burdensome trust, deciding that Hilda has always had her suspicions about Eli, even when the rest of town trusts his word.

Each player starts with one Drama Point and one Grit Point and they are ready to start. Abe decides to go first and narrates a **Vignette** about a **Cry for Help** in the law dog's office. This this is the opening scene, it does not count as one of the four scenes that Abe will direct. He does gain one Grit Point, however.

"We had all gathered together into Hilda's office after seeing the help wanted posters all over town. It was clear the storms were more than they seemed and the law dog was explaining that something didn't feel right about how the storms were targeting specific places in town..."

That's as complicated as a Vignette needs to be. It sets the tone for more to come and explains all the pieces of the draw (cry for help = help wanted posters). Being creative with the game elements means not doing the same thing with them every time.

Bianca goes next and draws ♦3 and ♥K, which is an **Interrogation** about **Spirits Cry** at an **Isolated Cemetery**. Bianca decides to interrogate Diana out of character, taking his one Drama Point away. Bianca sets the scene briefly, stating that Hilda has gone up to the cemetery to give his last respects to an old friend.

Bianca: "Why is the grave Garret visits unmarked?"

Diana: "My friend was buried as a deserter."

Bianca: "Is this cemetery for bad people, then?"

Diana: "Indians, outlaws, and the nameless."

Bianca: "Where are the blessed buried?"

Diana: "Three Dovetail Cemetery, up on Parchmont Knoll."

Bianca: "Anyone you know buried there?"

Diana: "My father and mother. But I don't go up there much anymore."

Despite the fact that Bianca could have asked questions in character or through an NPC, Bianca wanted to ask bigger questions than that, using the Interrogation as a way to giving Hilda her own internal monologue. Bianca decides not to ask a fifth question and ends her turn.

Carl takes his turn, drawing a ♥4 and ♣2, indicating an **Interlude** about **Innocent Lives** at an **Abandoned Factory** or **Railyard**. Carl decides to put Fiona and Hilda in the scene at the abandoned iron smelting plant. Since the two share a relationship and are both local to the area, Carl wants to see what they'll do with the scene. There was a ghastly murder here a few months ago and the two have both found themselves walking around, exploring the grounds.

Fiona: "Funny seeing you here?"

Hilda: "I was going to say the same thing. What brings you out here?"

Fiona: "Weird hunches. Hairs on the back of my neck kind of thing. That fella Iago died here, remember. Killed by that foreman."

Hilda: "I remember. I hung him."

Fiona: "Yeah. [Pause] His wife never forgave you for that."

Hilda: "He broke the law. I wasn't going to wait for a hanging judge to tell me what was the right thing to do."

Fiona: "Hey. I'm on your side, remember."

Having seen enough, Carl calls scene at that point. He and Abe each gain one Drama point each for not being in the Interlude.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Hilda goes next and draws a ♠J and ♠A. Carl needs to direct an **Ensemble** about a **Whirlwind** that takes place at a **Public Cat House** or **Saloon**. Hilda decides that in the middle of the night, the storm has hit the StarWest Saloon in the center of town, but nothing else. When the group arrives in the morning to investigate, everything is a mess and the crowd has gathered to inspect the ruins.

Hilda: “Everyone clear out of here. We’ve got work to do. Vamoos.”

Garret: “Damn shame. I didn’t even get to drink there yet.”

Eli: “What in tarnation? What do you think caused this? I mean. Storms don’t do *this*.”

Hilda: (to crowd) “I said git!”
(to group) “No they don’t. But this one did.”

Fiona: “If I didn’t know any better, I’d swear this storm had a plan.”

Garret: “Now I know I need a drink. Damn shame.”

Hilda: “Hush, Fiona. Ain’t no way to be talking.

Eli: “The Heavens would not allow a wind to take spirit form and plague a good town like this. It just is not in the divine plan.”

Hilda: “Look. All of you. Something is restless. This ain’t natural. And we ain’t talking about it in front of these people.”

Fiona: “Hilda is right. Let’s wait to talk about this when we’re alone.”

Garret: “That bottle looks like it was full when it broke. Sigh.”

Hilda: “Alright. Everyone grab a broom or a shovel. Let’s clear this out and look for clues... or something. Damn.”

Hilda calls scene at that point, clearly establishing what she needs about the situation. It’s still early in the game.

Abe would take a turn now, his first (since the opening scene doesn’t count) and he draws a ♥A and ♦8. He now has to direct an **Interlude** about **Trail Runs Hot** at **Guarded Merchant Exchange** or **Train Depot**. Abe wants to give Eli some ‘screen time’ and puts him in a scene with Garrett.

It’s a couple days later and there’s been little to explain the storms. Another wind swept through town again and flattened a barn on the edge of Briar Gulch. Garret has decided he’s had enough and he’s made his way to the Train Depot, where Pinkerton’s stand guard over a gold shipment heading East. Eli has caught up with Garret as he’s buying his train ticket.

Eli: “What are you doing?”

Garret: “I’m leaving. Can’t stay. You know the drill.”

Eli: “And you know what I’m asking. Don’t be coy.”

Garret: “Look. This ain’t normal. None of this is. This ain’t my town. It’s not even *your* town. You can dress up like a preacher all day, if you want. We both know the score.”

Eli: “So that’s it? Turning yellow?”

Garret: “Watch it, Eli.”

Eli: “It’s Father Eli now. Show some respect.”

Garret: “Go to hell.”

Eli grabs Garret by the shirt and pulls him close. It isn’t clear yet if this is conflict or just tension, so the scene continues to play out.

Garret: (pushing him away) “Get off me, Eli. I swear it.”

Eli: “What? You’ll do what?”

A crowd has started to notice their exchange.

Garret: “I don’t want to hurt you, but I will.”

Abe decides to call scene there, but Carl wants to keep going. So he spends one Drama Point and continues.

Garret: “I still keep two rounds in this hog-leg, Eli. I’ll use them both on you if I have to.”

Eli: “You do what you must, my son.”

Garret draws his pistol, clearly creating conflict. The scene ends on a cliffhanger. Any player could spend one Drama Point to resolve the conflict at that moment, but everyone decides this tension is better for the story. Clearly, whatever happened in their past, things are not over between Eli and Garret.

When the scene ends, Bianca and Diana draw one Drama Point each.

The game continues in this fashion three more times around the table. Once the last player has directed the final scene, gameplay continues to the finale where players take turn directing Vignettes for each Drama Point they still possess.

POST WORLD GAMES

