

DEAD LANDS

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Under a Harrowed Moon:

Ground Zero

WEREWOLF
THE WILD WEST



Deadlands™ Dime Novel™ #6

UNDER A HARROWED MOON (PART THREE):

GROUND ZERO

Written by: Matt Forbeck

Production: Barry Doyle & Hal Mangold

Cover Art and Logo: Ron Spencer

Interior Art: Kevin Sharpe

Troop Cards: Ashe Marler **Maps:** Jeff Lahren

Special Thanks to: Justin Achilli, Shane & Michelle Hensley, John Hopler, Ann Kolinsky, Ashe Marler, Dave Seay, Ethan Skemp, Richard Thomas, Matt Tice, Mike Tinney, Stephen Wieck, Maureen Yates & John Zinser.

Deadlands created by Shane Lacy Hensley

Werewolf: The Wild West created by Justin Achilli & Ethan Skemp



TM

PINNACLE
ENTERTAINMENT
GROUP, Inc.



Pinnacle Entertainment Group, Inc.

P.O. Box 10908

Blacksburg, VA 24062-0908

www.peginc.com or deadlands@aol.com

(800) 214-5645 (orders only)

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GROUND ZERO



WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Since it's likely been a while since you read the first two parts of this harrowing trilogy of terror and adventure, you might want a quick recap to gently jostle your memories of what's already happened in this story. If you're one of those lucky few gifted with the ability to recall just what you had for breakfast last Thursday, you can skip this section and jump right into Chapter One. If you're just a bit less superhuman than that, read on.

If you haven't already had the pleasure of reading the first two parts of this trilogy (which runs on the *Under a Harrowed Moon* banner), run on down to wherever you got this book from and pick them up. Coming into a story two-thirds of the way through is like sitting down for a square meal and finding you're just in time for dessert. Sure it's sweet, but you've missed some really good stuff.

If you've already read through *Strange Bedfellows* and *Savage Passage* (good for you!), then here's a quick summary to jog that word-soaked brain of yours along.

The whole saga started out with Ronan Lynch (the undead hero of all our Dime Novels to date) investigating a Wasatch mining camp in the heart of Monument Valley in northern Arizona. He was hoping to discover some sensible reason for Dr. Darius Hellstromme to have sent up an operation in the middle of nowhere.

At the end of the night, Ronan hadn't found out a whole lot more than the fact that the Apache were working with Hellstromme here. Almost before Ronan could ask himself why that was, he was torn to pieces by a monstrous man-beast: a werewolf by the name of Billy Stormwalker.

GROUND ZERO

Stormwalker bit off more of Ronan than he could chew (literally), and the gunslinger eventually managed to crawl back into town to lick his wounds. There he was found and cared for by his loyal friends: Velvet Van Helter and "Bad Luck" Betty McGrew.

Velvet's a New Orleans huckster—a fellow who casts hexes by means of playing poker with otherworldly demons known as manitous. The things Betty can do with a rifle would make Annie Oakley turn emerald green, but take the gun out of the lady's hand and she's a disaster waiting to happen.

Once he'd recovered, Ronan and his friends were in the Monumental Saloon when they had a run-in with four more werewolves (they call themselves Garou where they come from) in their human forms. They were Proud Speaker (an Oglala Sioux), Earl Cotten (a white trapper), Isaiah Morningkill (a tinhorn from New York), and Annalee LaBelle (who was born a wolf but cuts quite a figure as a ravishing young lady), and they weren't from around those parts.

In fact, the Garou weren't from Ronan's world at all. Instead, they'd made their way from their world to Ronan's by tracking another werewolf through the space between their dimensions. (This part confuses Ronan too, so if you don't quite follow it, you're in good company.)

Anyhow, Garou have pretty sensitive noses, and they sniffed out Ronan's rotting hide right away. Being the sort who like to bite first and ask question of themselves over a bleeding corpse, the Garou attacked.

Velvet stopped the brawl before there were any casualties, and eventually he even got the Garou to talk. It turns out that the werewolf they were looking for had come this way recently, and they were bound and determined to bring the mad dog down once and for all. It didn't take Ronan long to realize they were after Stormwalker.

The two groups banded together as one to hunt down Stormwalker. They tracked him to the Wasatch camp where they discovered that Stormwalker and a Wasatch employee named Wendell Toomes were planning to blast a gateway between their two worlds. This would allow the manitous and their mysterious masters—the Reckoners—full access to a whole new world to terrorize.

To this end, Stormwalker and Toomes would have to set off a powerful bomb in both worlds at the same location. They'd chosen a tower of rock in the center of Monument Valley, and they were just about ready to pull it off when the heroes intervened.

The heroes foiled Toomes' efforts in this world, but they were unable to prevent Stormwalker from escaping. Assuming that the rogue was heading back home to wreak havoc there, the Garou

brought Ronan, Betty, and Velvet with them from one world to the next. Taza, the leader of the local Apache band, even came along. He'd been duped into allying his people with Stormwalker, and he was determined to make amends.

Once the heroes arrived in the world of the Garou, they found another mining camp at the base of the tower of rock in Monument Valley. They investigated and found that Stormwalker hadn't worked his evil here yet.

Someone else had beat him to it.

The camp was populated by a group from an evil tribe of Garou. These Black Spiral Dancers, as they were called, had long ago taken control of the area and corrupted a caern, a holy place of Garou power. They weren't about to give it up without a fight, not even to be protected from Stormwalker.

While the heroes poked around the camp, Velvet was captured by the twisted Garou. As he was about to be tortured into accepting the beasts' own corruption into his heart, the heroes launched an assault on the place, engaging the Dancers in a desperate battle.

Meanwhile, Stormwalker had been watching the heroes' efforts from a distance. Seeing his chance to further his ends, he attacked them while they were fighting the Dancers, forcing them into fighting two foes at once. Morningkill was nearly murdered, while Ronan's neck was snapped.

The Dancers defeated, Taza, Cotten, and Velvet faced off against Stormwalker in a cavern carved into the heart of the column of rock that towered over the Dancers' camp. The rogue Garou stood atop crates of dynamite the Dancers had stored there, long ago vowing to destroy the place rather than permitting it to fall into someone else's hands. They hadn't had the chance, but now Stormwalker gloated atop the sweating explosives, his victory at hand.

It was at that point that Stormwalker's latest ally stepped forth from the shadows. It was Ronan Lynch himself, his manitou—the evil spirit that animated his rotting frame—fully in control of him, body and soul.

Lynch lit a match and gave the heroes a ten-second head start before dropping it into the sweating dynamite. They barely escaped before the monumental tower of rock came crumbling down behind them as they dashed away.

Stormwalker had won this round, and now there was nothing standing between him and the completion of his horrible plans.

Nothing but the heroes.

Of course, there's more to it than that—enough to fill two other Dime Novels—but that should be enough to get you started. For the whole rest of the story, head on back to *Strange Bedfellows* and *Savage Passage* before really getting into *Ground Zero*. Trust us: It's worth it.

CHAPTER ONE

The moon rode low in the Arizona sky, glinting off the grimy gold in Albert Dinkins' grin. He had good reason to show his gap-toothed smile, or so he thought. He'd finally reached Desmondville early that morning with nary a stitch to cover his behind. He'd had to spend the night huddled naked in the desert, and the experience hadn't improved his outlook on life any.

His day might have started badly, but it was looking good now.

After convincing the owner of the local general store to loan him some rags, Dinkins had asked about Lynch at the Monument Saloon. The bartender let slip that the gunslinger had rented a room there, but he hadn't been around since the night before last.

"You a friend of his?" the man asked Dinkins.

"You might say that." An idea slid into Dinkins' head. "I was supposed to meet him here."

The bartender raised an eyebrow. "You don't say?"

Dinkins' nodded, his greasy hair falling into his eyes. He hadn't managed to wheedle a hat out of the store's owner.

"I was s'posed to bunk with him when I got into town."

The bartender spat suspiciously into the mug he was polishing.

"If you could see yer way clear to lettin' me wait in Lynch's room, I'd appreciate it."

That earned Dinkin's a hard look.

"I'll settle up with you this evenin'," Dinkin's offered slyly.

The bartender's face softened slowly, a smile crossing his face. "Well, I suppose it wouldn't hurt." He reached under the bar, then slapped a key down on the bar's polished wood.

"Not you, at least," Dinkins muttered as he picked up the key with a poor approximation of a smarmy smile.

Once in Ronan's room, Dinkins scrounged around for some better clothes, but everything stank like something had died in it. Of course, Dinkins didn't smell a whole lot better himself, and he was the furthest thing from proud. Ronan's clothes were in much better shape than the tatters he'd borrowed from the general store, so Dinkins rustled up Ronan's cleanest shirt and pants and traded them for the rags he was wearing.

While Dinkins was rummaging around, he found a double-eagle stuffed into the bottom of Ronan's saddlebags. Lots of wanderers kept hold-out cash tucked away somewhere secret in case of emergencies. Dinkins held Ronan's stash up between his thumb and middle finger and greedily watched it glitter in the afternoon sun. A smile creased his sunburned face.

Dinkins wore that same self-satisfied grin as he rode out of town that evening. He'd taken Ronan's cash down to the general store and completed his outfit. The new boots dug into his toes.

It would be a while before they'd be broken in the way he liked them. The same went for his new Stetson too. It just smelled too new.

The new pistol he'd bought, though, that was just fine. Dinkins swung the Frontier out of its holster and checked the sight again. It was straight and true.

Dinkins returned to his room to wait for night to fall. Once it did, he slipped out of the saloon through his back room.

He sneaked around to the front, where several horses were tied to the hitching post, some drinking from the wooden trough before them. He spied a roan that seemed docile enough.

With an ease that only came with years of horse stealing, Dinkins slipped the horse's reigns free of the post and coaxed the mare away into the Arizona night.

So Dinkins' day had improved by leaps and bounds. He'd started out naked, penniless, and on foot, and now here he was: new clothes (to him at least), new boots, new hat, and a new gun. He even had a horse and a little jingle left in his jeans.

Now all he had to do was find Ronan Lynch.

Kang—the Chinese warlord who ran the Iron Dragon Railroad—was paying Dinkins a lot of money to figure out what was happening in the Wasatch camp in Monument Valley, and the bounty hunter was eager to give the man good value for his money. He'd been on his way there when those four folks on foot had crossed his path.

Those four folks and that thing one of them had turned into.

Dinkins had seen all sorts of strange things out here in the frontier. A man in his line of work was bound to stumble into the unexplainable from time to time. It usually didn't bother him much. Strange or not, most things could be counted on to leave you alone after you filled them with lead.

But this beast hadn't. Despite its wolflike head, Dinkins could have sworn the thing had just smiled at him. That was the last thing he remembered before waking up that night, cold and sunburned with a buzzard picking at his ear.

Now Dinkins wasn't sure the whole incident hadn't been the product of a fevered mind. Of course, that didn't explain how he'd ended up buck naked in the middle of nowhere. He pushed it out of his head. It was over now, he was alive, and it didn't bear thinking on any longer.

The question at hand was what had happened to Ronan. The last anyone had seen him and his friends, they'd been in the middle of a fight in the bar. The bartender had shivered just before he clammed up about it. Dinkins hadn't pressed him.

After he'd stolen the horse, Dinkins lit out for the Wasatch camp. That's what Lynch had come for, too, Kang's man had told him, and there wasn't anything else around here worth worrying about.

It'd been a long time since Dinkins had seen Ronan, but the memories still smarted. No one had ever humiliated him like that before or since.

He was still thinking about the long-ago when he saw Lynch appear about 50 yards before him. It almost looked like the man had popped out of thin air, him and the Indian beside him. It had to have been a trick of the light. The moon was full and almost bright enough to read by, but these hills could fool the eyes during the day, much less this late in the night.

Still, Dinkins knew Lynch when he saw him—or so he thought. His shame had burned the man's face into his brain, but he was still too far away to be sure.

Dinkins drew his gun.

"Hold it right there, Lynch!" he shouted. His voice sounded feeble in the dry night air, and for a moment he hoped the gunslinger hadn't heard him.

Lynch and his traveling companion looked up at Dinkins. The hatless Yankee's face shone palely in the moonlight. It was him all right, even if he did look like something Death had warmed over and then forgotten about.

Lynch stared at Dinkins for a moment and then suddenly seemed to recognize him. An inhuman laugh crackled through the night.

Lynch started walking toward him. The Indian with the streak of white in his long, black hair just stayed where he was, watching.

Dinkins leveled his gun at Lynch. "I swore I was going to kill you, Lynch, and now it's finally time!" He let fly with a shot right at the gunslinger's chest.

Lynch was knocked back a step, but then he staggered forward and kept coming like he'd hardly broken stride. "You're going to have to do better than that," he rasped. He sounded as confident as the Devil himself.

Dinkins thumbed back the hammer of his gun and aimed at Lynch's head this time. But before he could let loose another shot, Lynch drew his Peacemaker and fired. Dinkins would have sworn that nothing human could have moved that fast, but he was too busy hurting to think about it.

The shot smashed into Dinkins' shoulder and knocked him back off his horse. He landed on a yucca plant, which cushioned his landing but knocked his arm sending his gun flying.

The bounty hunter lay there groaning, feeling the blood leaking out of him, turning the sandy ground into a sticky mud. He was going into shock, and there was little he could do about it.

Dinkins' eyelids fluttered open. He was looking straight up the barrel of a well-polished Peacemaker, and Lynch was standing behind it.

Dinkins watched as Lynch's finger slowly tightened on the gun's trigger. He was sure his number was up. "Just do it, ya sonuvabitch!" he growled. He was scared out of his mind, but he wasn't about to give Lynch the satisfaction of seeing him squirm.

Lynch just stood there over Dinkins for a long moment. The bounty hunter suddenly noticed the gun's barrel was shaking. How could the man who'd drew and fired so fast have such a problem pulling a trigger?

He looked and saw the pain and confusion in Lynch's eyes. The man's lips were trembling somewhere between a sneer and a scream. What the Hell was going on?

He wasn't going to get a chance to find out.

The gun went off, and everything went to black.

* * *

"Why didn't you kill him?" asked Stormwalker.

The slug had slammed into the dirt inches from Dinkins' head.

"He's one vile bastard," Lynch agreed. "I remember him."

The Indian snorted. "An old friend?"

"Hardly. I wanted to kill him, but my host chose to fight me."

"I thought you were entirely in control."

It was Lynch's turn to laugh. "Oh, I am, but Lynch is stubborn as a mule. It's one of the traits that attracted me to him. Ironical that it's causing me such grief now."

The Indian looked concerned. "Could you kill the man now?"

"Likely, but I risk losing control to my host if I push such a path of action."

Stormwalker looked down at Dinkins' unmoving body. The gunshot wound wasn't as bad as it looked. With luck, the man would survive. The Garou could put an end to that, but he didn't want to risk bringing Ronan back to control of his body. Better to let the sleeping dog lie.

"Well," said Stormwalker in a sarcastic tone. "You've got to choose your battles."

"Yes," Lynch smiled as he holstered his gun and started off toward the Wasatch camp. "And the biggest fight is yet to come."

CHAPTER TWO

The Monumental Saloon was as silent as a grave. Johnny Persimmons stood behind the bar, polishing his precious glasses over and over again. There had been a bit of excitement last night when Danny Burns' horse had turned up missing at the end of the night, but it was quiet now.

After he'd found his horse missing, Danny had rounded up a posse to see if they could find where the old nag had wandered off to. Danny swore up and down he'd tied his horse to the hitching post, but this wasn't the first time this had happened. Danny'd been pretty liquored up when he wandered into the bar.

Still, there'd been no sign of the horse in town nor anywhere around it. That mystified everyone for a while, until Johnny remembered Dinkins. He'd gone up to Lynch's room to ask Dinkins a few questions, but the man wasn't there.

In fact, the room looked like it had been ransacked. Johnny recognized Lynch's bags. They'd been thrown open and tossed around the place. Dinkins was nowhere to be seen.

Johnny had cursed and gone to tell the others. "He's long gone by now," he told Danny. He didn't mention the creature he'd seen in his bar the other night, the one that had gotten into a brawl with Lynch and his friend. All he remembered was a bunch of fur and teeth, and then he'd passed out. He wasn't sure what the Hell had happened, but he'd woken up a few hours later with no one around. He hadn't told anyone what he'd seen for fear of being laughed at or locked up.

He wasn't about to tell them now.

Johnny had come back to the bar and drunk himself into a stupor over his lost nag. It wasn't long before he started accusing his "friends" of robbing him, and minutes later he was lying on the floor with blood spilling from his nose. Johnny mopped it up after Danny's friends tossed him out into the dirt in front of the saloon.

Danny was gone when Johnny got up the next morning, and no one had been in the saloon since.

That didn't last.

The group stalked in through the batwing doors, one after the other. Johnny recognized the well-dressed woman in the riding skirt and the man in the dark blue velvet suit.

"Mr. Van Helder! Ms. McGrew! I thought we'd lost you for sure. Welcome."

"Thank you, Mr. Persimmons—I mean, Johnny," Betty smiled. "We're glad to be back."

Velvet stepped forward. "Please, sir, it's been a long trip. I would like a round of drinks for my friends back here." The huckster gestured at the table behind him.

Johnny glanced at the quintet. They were a motley crew. Three Indians, a trapper, and a gentleman from Back East.

One of the Indians didn't look familiar, but the others did. There were Indians in the area, lots of them, but not too many that ever came into Desmondville. The other two really caught his attention, though.

They got even fewer tin horns in these parts. There weren't too many reasons for a man of breeding to find himself in Monument Valley. The trapper was a different story, though. There was game everywhere out West if you knew—

The trapper.

It was then that Johnny remembered where he'd seen the trapper before.

The young man reached under the bar and grabbed the scattergun he kept there for dealing with trouble. This was the worst kind of trouble he'd ever seen.

"Step back, folks!" he yelled as he brought the two sawed-off barrels over the railing of the bar. He leveled the gun directly at the trapper's chest.

Cotten stood up slowly, his hands in the air. "I don't want any trouble, son."

"Dear God! Do you know what that man is?" Though Johnny fought to push it down, terror cracked his voice.

Velvet had a deck of cards in his hands, and he gave them a quick shuffle. "I'm afraid we do, Johnny." He grinned as the man turned to stare at him. "They're werewolves."

The bartender hauled up short and goggled at the huckster. "Are you off your rocker, mister?"

Velvet only smiled knowingly. "Don't fret about it. They're not all werewolves. Taza there's just a normal man."

"Taza?" Johnny's voice cracked again. "Lord above, mister! That's the leader of the Apache 'round these parts. He's as bad as—"

"As bad as a bunch of monsters?" Betty asked, batting her eyes innocently.

"Well, ma'am," he started, "you know what I mean."

"Yes," said Velvet as he slipped five cards off the top of his deck. "I'm afraid that we do."

With that, Velvet fanned his cards wide and showed them to Johnny. Betty snatched away the young man's gun as he crumpled to the floor behind the bar.

Annalee stood up from the table she was sitting at and craned her neck, trying to look over the bar. "Is he dead?"

Cotten snorted as he vaulted over the bar. "Naw, he's just sleeping like a baby. I figger ya could almost hear him snorin' from over there." A moment later he turned around with a handful of full mugs of beer. "Who's up fer a drink? Travelin' between worlds, a man works up a fierce thirst."

CHAPTER THREE

The door to Ronan's room was unlocked, so Velvet didn't have to break it down. He'd gone up to his own room to gather some supplies and get into a fresh change of clothes. He'd reached into the bottom of his steamer trunk and come up with the last of his silver bullets. He had six left, and he'd stuffed them in his pocket. He'd split them later between Betty and Taza.

As he walked into the gunslinger's room, Velvet caught a look at himself in a polished mirror. He cut quite a figure in the black velvet suit he was wearing, if he did say so himself. It was a bit formal, almost perfect for a party—or a funeral.

The huckster thought about it for a moment and supposed he might be in mourning. Poor Ronan had been able to keep his demon down for most of his life-after-death. It was horrifying to think of him out there with the manitou that kept his corpse animated in full charge of his body. The damage he could do.

Sure, the manitou had gotten loose before, but only for short periods of time. Ronan and Velvet had always been able to repair most of the damage fairly quickly, and to this point, no one had been seriously hurt or killed. It looked like that was going to change.

The room was a wreck. Clothes were strewn about the place. The bed was a mess, with sheets torn from the mattress. A heap of rags that Velvet didn't recognize was stuffed into one corner. They stank.

Velvet heard booted footsteps come up behind him, then a barely stifled gasp. "What happened here?" came Betty's voice.

"Hard to tell," Velvet said. "Perhaps Ronan was here to collect some of his things before heading into Monument Valley. Or possibly someone else rummaged through his room while he was gone. It could have been the owners of this fine establishment looking for some means of payment, but I don't see why they would have made such a mess of the place."

"It could have been Ronan's manitou."

Velvet thought about that for a moment. "Possibly, but I don't see why. If so, we're probably not that far behind him. Otherwise, it means that someone else is after Ronan too. Let's just hope we find him first."

The huckster turned and saw a single tear rolling down Betty's face. He reached up to wipe it away with a tender brush of his hand. "And what do we do then?" she asked, her green eyes shot through with red.

"If Ronan's in control by then, we're all happy."

"And if not?" Betty's voice was filled with dread.

"Then we'll just have to put him down ourselves. That's no way for a man to live—even if he's dead."

CHAPTER FOUR

Wendell Toomes cursed as the screwdriver slipped from his grasp. It had been a tough few days, but it wasn't in his nature to give up. That wasn't the way people climbed the ladder of success in the employ of Dr. Darius Hellstromme. If he came back to Salt Lake City—the so-called City of Gloom—and reported failure, his career at Wasatch was over, if not his life.

Hellstromme did not accept anything less than success.

The dark-haired young man bent over to pick up the screwdriver and banged his nose on his knee as he reached for it. Pain shot through Toomes' face, and he reeled onto his back.

That Indian had broken his nose, the young scientist was sure. He reached up past the stars swimming before his eyes and felt his injured face. He was bleeding again.

He wiped his hands off on his tailored shirt. It was ruined already from the blood dripping from his nose. An idea for a chemical additive for stain removal flashed through his mind, but he ignored it. Now wasn't the time.

He held his head back until the bleeding stopped. When he brought his head back forward, the gunslinger was there.

Toomes sucked his breath through his teeth and crab-walked backward across the tent's dirt floor. Before he got three steps, he smacked his head into the table he'd been working on—hard.

He collapsed into a ball and waited for the end.

He heard someone snickering.

"This is your great accomplice?" he heard the gunslinger rasp. He shivered uncontrollably.

"Oh, this one's delicious! The fear rolls off him in waves."

"That's enough," came Stormwalker's booming voice. The Garou had been the bane of Toomes' life for the past month, keeping him focused on the project with threats of violence. Now his voice was like a lifesaver tossed to a drowning man.

"Don't spoil my fun," said the gunslinger, annoyed. Toomes wrenched open his eyes to peer up at the man. Lynch glared down at him with soulless eyes that sparkled with twisted glee. The young scientist shivered despite himself. "This one's a treat."

"He's vital to my plan," Stormwalker growled. "Leave him be."

The Garou reached out a weathered hand to help Toomes to his feet. The man narrowly missed banging his head again on his way up.

"Thank you, Billy," Toomes began.

"Shut up, white man," Stormwalker barked. "I don't have the time."

"But—" Toomes winced as the Indian stepped toward him. "But what about him?" he demanded frantically, pointing at Lynch.

"Wasn't he with those people who ran you off?"

"Yes, he was, but—"

"And where the Hell have you been, anyhow?" Toomes let his anger overwhelm his fear—and his good sense. "This man and his friends beat me up, slapped me around, and disabled the bomb when you disappeared, leaving me here to die!"

"What do you have to say for yourself?"

Stormwalker stepped closer to the man, glaring into his eyes. He towered over the scientist, and Toomes was suddenly aware of the fact that his years in college and later in Dr. Hellstromme's employ hadn't done much for his scrawny physique.

The Indian leaned over and sneered into Toomes' face. With one long-nailed finger, he shoved the smaller man back until he sat down onto a rickety canvas chair.

"Don't be a fool," Stormwalker scowled. "I knew that those people would disarm your device. I simply needed time to get away. The bomb bought me that."

"But we could have all been killed. I could have been killed!"

Stormwalker took a step back and smirked. "That would have been tragic, but the path I needed to take was clear. Since I last saw you, I have managed to destroy the caern in my world. The other side of the bridge between our worlds is ready to be opened."

A look of realization dawned on Toomes' face. "It's just as I hoped, then. All we need to do is set off the ghost-rock bomb here." The scientist looked over at Lynch. "But what about him?"

The gunslinger drew his gun, twirled it on his index finger, and slammed it back into his holster in one smooth move. "I'm on your side now, kid." A savage grin split his face. "You might say I've seen the *night*." He cackled at his joke, his laugh like rusty barbed wire.

Toomes looked at Lynch uncertainly, then up at Stormwalker. The Garou solemnly nodded his approval.

"But," the scientist halted for a moment, his brain having trouble swallowing Lynch's swinging loyalties. "What about his friends?"

"That's why we're in a hurry, idiot. The kin who were on my tail, they're not dead yet. They're sure to figure out where I was headed and follow me here."

Toomes rubbed his rough-shaven chin and winced. Even touching his face made his nose hurt. After banging it on his knee, it was even more swollen and bruised.

"How long until they get here?" he asked, trying to keep his tone clinical and detached.

"They are not as adept at traveling between the worlds, but they shouldn't be too far behind. I estimate we have only a few hours."

Toomes cursed. "It's going to take me that long to rewire the detonator. You—" with this, he glared at Lynch, "—you did quite a job on it. I've had to reconstruct the device almost entirely from scratch."

Stormwalker reached forward and grabbed Toomes by his blood-stained shirt front. "That shouldn't have taken you that long. What have you been doing while we've been gone?"

Toomes placed a hand on the Garou's massive fist and peeled the fingers off of himself one by one. "Nursing a broken nose and one dandy of a headache for one," he said defensively. "But I've also been preparing for the return of Mr. Lynch and his associates."

"As soon as they were gone, I realized that once they returned they would be looking for me. I had two options: stand my ground or flee."

"I'm surprised to find you here," Lynch stated flatly. "A man like you is motivated by fear. Believe me, if there's something I know anything about, it's fear. I'd have bet my last dollar you'd have been as far away from here as your terrified little feet could carry you." Suddenly a light dawned in Lynch's face, then a sly smile. "Unless, of course, there was something else that scared you even more."

"Wasatch does not tolerate failure," Toomes agreed. "Besides, I was able to wire Salt Lake City for help."

"How could that possibly get here in time?" Stormwalker scoffed.

"Do not underestimate Dr. Hellstromme's resources," the scientist warned as he circled around his two compatriots. "There's little he cannot do when he sets his mind to it."

With that, Toomes turned and grabbed a large, grimy sheet that was covering some machinery in one corner of the huge laboratory tent. Beneath it, Lynch could see something made of brass and rivets. They were shaped like tremendous boots.

Toomes tore the sheet up and off with a grand flourish, entirely revealing what had lain beneath it.

Stormwalker and Lynch stood face to face with not one but five mechanical men. They were made of great brass plates riveted together and polished to a reflective sheen. They were vaguely human in shape, almost so that you might be fooled for an instance into thinking they were knights in strangely modern suits of armor. Upon looking at them for a few moments, though, it was apparent that nothing living could fit inside such a strangely shaped contraption.

"Automatons," Lynch whispered. Toomes wore a self-important grin. For once, he had the upper hand. "Rumors of the good doctor's most incredible inventions has reached even your ears? I suppose that's only to be expected. They are, after all, the greatest technological marvels of the modern world."

"Each one of these amazing contraptions was constructed under Dr. Hellstromme's personal supervision in Wasatch's home offices, overlooking the Great Salt Lake. Each is handcrafted by a specially trained team of engineers—"

Stormwalker cut off the man's rambling with a wave of his hand. In the ensuing silence, he stepped forward and gazed upon the monstrous devices. They each looked down upon him—he thought "looked" because of the strange plates of smoked glass mounted in what passed for each creature's head—standing at least a full foot taller. They were brassy, true, but this was apparently only a means of covering a much stronger steel frame. They looked impossibly bulky, as if they'd move like wounded buffaloes, but that did little to detract from their sheer impressiveness. The most menacing part of the automatons, though, was not their size, but what passed for their hands.

One arm terminated in a vicious pincer claw that looked like it could snap a man's arm in one lethal move. The other arm was, if anything, even more deadly. From the elbow down, it was a full-fledged Gatling gun.

"Let 'em come," Lynch laughed from over Stormwalker's shoulder. "I'd say we're ready!"

CHAPTER FIVE

The sun shone hot overhead, beating down upon the seven travelers as they rode through the rolling hills in the basin of Monument Valley. The group had been able to reclaim the horses they'd left at the livery in Desmondville before they'd headed out on their trip to the world from which the Garou hailed. The beasts had all been well-taken care of, seemingly eager to hit the trail and stretch their legs again.

They'd been riding gently for about an hour when Taza called a halt.

"What is it?" asked Betty.

Cotten sniffed the air, "Indians," he said, "off to the southwest."

"Do they know we're here?" asked Annalee.

"Yes," Taza nodded.

"How can you be so sure of that?" Morningkill demanded, his voice full of irritation. The crossing back and forth from one world to the next had been stressful for them all, and the Easterner was letting the strain show.

An arrow whizzed out of nowhere and removed Morningkill's derby cleanly from his head.

"Is that proof enough for you?" asked Proud Speaker, keeping any trace of sarcasm from his voice.

Morningkill dismounted and collected his hat. He pulled the arrow from it, cursing. "Holed a perfectly fine hat," he muttered. "I'll never be able to replace it in this part of the world," he said more loudly.

"If you don't like our part of the world, white man," a thickly accented voice came from the top of the next hill, "you should leave."

Morningkill looked up to see that the seven riders were surrounded by a score of Apache Indians. He swore inwardly.

Taza stepped forward and greeted his people in his own tongue. The exchange was pleasant at first, but it quickly became heated.

"What are they saying?" Velvet asked Proud Speaker.

The Oglala gave the huckster a funny look. "These are not my people. I do not understand much of their words."

Velvet grinned at him sheepishly, "But perhaps you can get the gist of it?"

The volume of the Apache argument grew.

Proud Speaker wore a sly smile. "All I know is that Taza is not happy with his people, nor are they happy with him."

"But anyone could tell that," Betty said exasperatedly.

Proud Speaker's smile widened slightly. He didn't say a word.

At that moment, Taza broke off from his discussion, waving his people away in disgust. "Fools!" he spat.

"What's goin' on?" said Cotten.

"These people have allied themselves with Toomes again. After we left, the fork-tongued Devil convinced them that although Stormwalker was a treacherous man, his plan still had merit."

"Are they insane?" yelled Morningkill. "That foul beast would have killed us all!"

"I have made this argument to them," Taza assured the tinhorn. "However, they choose to see what they call 'the larger picture.' It is true that Stormwalker's methods were bad, but that does not mean that his mission was. They support the idea of bringing power to our brothers and sisters in your world."

Taza stopped for a moment and gave Morningkill a grave look. "They claim that without the help of the manitous unleashed by the Reckoning, the tribes of your world are doomed to extinction."

Betty looked around nervously at all the Indians surrounding their little group. They were outnumbered nearly three to one. "What does this mean for us?"

Velvet rifled through a well-worn deck of cards. "I'm sure we'll, be fine, my dear. The Apache are a sensible people, and Taza can no doubt be quite persuasive when he puts his mind to it."

The Apache leader appraised Velvet silently, then spoke. "You speak wisely. I have tried to explain to my people what the world of the werewolves is like. It is a dark and savage place, and the coming of the manitous would only make it more so."

"So they're going to join us against Toomes!" Betty nearly squealed, then brought herself back under control.

"I fear not," Taza said flatly. "They wish to remain out of our dispute with Toomes. They will not fight alongside us, but they have promised not to challenge us either. They do this out of respect for me. Although they disagree with me, they will not side against me."

"That's certainly better than we might have hoped," Annalee offered, blowing out a long-held breath.

"What's the matter?" Morningkill demanded of Taza. "Why don't they listen to you? Can't you control your own people?"

Taza snorted. "I am considered a wise man in my tribe, a great warrior, and a great leader. That does not place me over them. They can choose not to listen to my words if they like, and I respect that decision," with this, he looked up the hillside at his people, "however misguided it may be."

CHAPTER SIX

"I don't know if it was such a good idea for us all to split up," said Betty. "Explain this to me again, Velvet."

The huckster shook his head, then took out a handkerchief to wipe the sweat from his brow. Monument Valley might be cool at night, but it was roasting during the day. "I'm not sure I understand it myself, dear, but it seemed like a good idea at the time. Without we humans along, the Garou can move a lot more swiftly and quietly than they could with us."

"But where does that leave us?"

Taza chuckled quietly.

"What do you find funny?" Velvet asked the Apache.

"You and your woman. My woman is much the same way, always asking questions."

Velvet flushed for a moment. "She's not, well..." He looked to Betty for some support.

Taza laughed loudly. "Do not deny it. I am not blind."

"But—" He floundered, then reached out to Betty. "Help?"

The pretty young woman favored him with a knowing smile, then laughed out loud herself. She reached out and patted his hand. "Well, Taza, we haven't had much of a chance to talk about it. Let's just say we care about each other—a lot." She looked deeply into Velvet's eyes. "Right?"

Velvet melted between her long lashes for a moment, then remembered himself. "Ah, yes! Yes, of course." He squeezed her hand in his for a long moment, then let go. "When this is all over, we'll have ourselves a chance to discuss this properly. Until then, we're here to, well, to save a world—even if it's not our own."

Suddenly, Betty let out a short scream before stifling herself. Just down the hill from them lay a man in pool of his own blood. He was wearing Ronan's clothes.

"It's him!" she cried.

Taza unslung his rifle, ready to provide cover. Velvet leapt down from his horse and raced to the fallen man, who was face-down in the dirt. The huckster knelt down next to him, turning him over with one hand as a derringer appeared in his other.

Velvet cursed under his breath as he saw the man's face.

"How is he?" asked Betty.

"It's Dinkins."

"Dear God! How?"

"Who?" asked Taza, his brow furrowed with concern.

"An old 'friend' of ours," said Velvet. "We haven't seen him since Deadwood."

While Betty was dismounting from her horse, her foot got tangled in her stirrup and she took a hard spill to the ground. Velvet was at her side in a flash, helping her to her feet.

"Are you all right?"

Betty spit out a mouthful of sand. "Yeah—yes! Darn it all." She flipped over and got more tangled in the stirrup until Velvet managed to ease her foot from her boot.

"What the heck is Dinkins doing out here anyway?" she asked exasperatedly as she put her boot back on.

"Bleeding," said Taza.

Betty looked up at Velvet, a question on her face.

"I'll help him," he sighed. He gave the range gal a reckless look before walking over to the injured man. "Seems like trucking with manitous isn't all working for the side o' darkness."

Taza grunted at that comment. Velvet noticed the Apache still hadn't lowered his gun. He ignored that fact, slipped out a pack of cards, and set to work.

Within minutes, the pasty color of Dinkins' skin had warmed, and his breathing worked its way toward normal.

Velvet mopped his brow with his handkerchief as he put his well-worn deck away. Taza spit on the ground, keeping his rifle on the fallen man, but Betty glowed at the huckster with pride.

"How do you know this man?" the Apache asked.

Velvet smiled grimly. "This man is a bounty hunter, a scoundrel of the worst kind. He was hounding an innocent in the free city of Deadwood when we crossed paths. Ronan put the man in his place. Painfully.

"He survived that encounter, although barely. He seems to have done little better for himself since."

At that, Dinkins groaned softly and began to stir.

"Perhaps he can tell us why," said Velvet as he smacked the man lightly across his cheek.

Dinkins moaned louder as he wrenched his eyelids open. As his eyes came into focus, he looked up and saw Velvet leaning over him. A look of surprise flashed across his face, then quickly faded to one of disgust. "Of all the people who mighta come along an' saved my skin here in the middle o' nowhere, it had ta be you."

"Pleased to see you again, too, Dinkins. I appreciate your choice in clothing. Much better than the rags you usually favor."

The wounded man grunted as he tried to sit up. His injuries were no longer life-threatening, but he wasn't going to be arm wrestling any time soon. "Real damn funny. I guess I shouldn't be too surprised. It was your pal that put me down, after all."

Velvet's arm snapped out and grabbed Dinkins by his hurt shoulder. "You saw Ronan?"

Dinkins yelped and wrenched himself away. "Saw him? I've been hunting the bastard all over the valley. Who the Hell do you think pierced my hide? I ain't never seen a man move so fast."

Betty chuckled nervously. "That's our Ronan, all right."

"Then he is alive," Taza stated flatly.

"You could say that," Dinkins nodded. "And he wasn't alone."

"He was with a tall Indian with a shock of white hair?" asked Velvet.

Dinkins nodded again.

"*Tres bien!*" the huckster exclaimed. "That's Ronan for sure."

"But he is with Stormwalker," said Taza.

Betty mounted back up onto her horse. "True, but he didn't kill Dinkins when he could have. Maybe his manitou's not in charge any more."

"That's a long shot, Betty," Velvet said, "but it might mean that Ronan's not as far gone as he might be. If we catch up with him soon, it might not be too late."

The huckster strode over to his own horse and climbed into his saddle.

As the trio made to ride off, Dinkins yelled after them. "What about me?"

"We've done everything we can for you now, Dinkins," said Velvet. "We'll come back for you later—if we're still able."

Dinkins struggled to his knees. "You tell that yella-bellied friend o' yers I'll shoot him dead if I ever cross paths with him again!"

Betty turned and stared the bounty hunter flat in the eyes as her horse trotted off. "You'd better pray we find Ronan and bring him to his senses before that happens. Otherwise, you'll get off lucky to escape with your skin."

Dinkins stayed there on his knees for a moment and watched the trio ride off toward the west. For a moment, he thought about following them toward the Wasatch camp. He reached down for his gun and noticed it wasn't there. The huckster had it, he was sure.

Hurt, unarmed, and horseless, Albert Dinkins cursed the day he'd ever met Ronan Lynch. Then he turned about and started the long hike back to Desmondville. His revenge would have to come another day.

He could wait.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Earl Cotten looked down on the floor of Monument Valley as it stretched out before him. It was a beautiful place, and it lifted his heart to see it. Unlike the valley in his own world, it was mostly unspoiled.

The tower of stone that had stood over the heart of the Monument caern still speared into the cloudless sky. The ground around it was uncluttered by rubble. The reddish rocks contrasted sharply with the almost-painfully blue sky. Only the cluster of tents around the base of the spire marred the perfection of the landscape.

As Cotten thought about the loss of the Monument caern, his cheeks flushed with shame. All Garou were champions of Gaia—well, all good ones, that was—and he and his friends had failed in the duty they'd been charged with. His world was now missing not only a sacred site of power but also a place of incredible beauty.

While it was too late to protect the tower in his own world, he solemnly swore that this time around he would not fail.

The trapper turned to the others. They had been down many roads together, traveled from one world to the next. He hadn't had a lot of use for them when they'd first met, but he'd come to consider them decent trailmates and even friends.

"Looks like that sidewinder Toomes hasn't missed a step."

Proud Speaker shook his head. Down in the valley, around the base of the tower, a few people scurried back and forth from tent to tent. Only occasionally would one of them step into one of the two larger tents for a moment, then return a few moments later. Many more men simply sat on the shady side of the smaller tents, mopping the sweat from their bodies, playing cards and knife games.

"No," said the Indian. "The scientist has as many men as he had before, perhaps more, and the camp is just as busy."

"It's almost like we were never there," Annalee said quietly.

There was a long moment of silence as the Garou contemplated the camp.

Morningkill broke it. "There's nothing between us and them but a quarter mile of sunny sand. Does anyone have a plan?"

"I say we give 'em the ol' alpha male routine," rumbled Cotten.

"Refresh my memory," Morningkill asked patiently. "How does that work again?"

The trapper looked up at him and grinned. "We run on down there, rip out some throats, and show 'em who's boss."

This got smiles all around. "I like that plan," said Annalee, "all except for the 'male' part."

"My apologies, darlin', but alpha 'person' just don't have quite the same ring to it."

"Bantering aside," Morningkill said, deadly serious, "let's put the plan to the test."

Within moments, all four of the Garou had shifted to their crinos form—the gigantic cross between man and wolf that was the stuff of legend in this world and theirs. The afternoon sun beat down on their glossy fur coats, and their tongues wagged out as they panted in the heat. Their great fangs shone whitely, and their razor-sharp talons glinted in the sun.

To some they might have seemed out of place, terrors of moonlit nights stalking about in broad daylight. To them, though, nothing was more natural than to be in their primal forms, racing through the unspoiled land.

They sprinted off toward the camp at full speed, kicking up a trail of dust behind them. A man relaxing in the shade of one of the smaller tents spied them several hundred yards off.

"Dust devil!" he cried as he sprang to his feet. "Or somethin'! I can't tell."

Another man stepped up beside him. "Whatever it is, it's big and coming this way. Sound the alarm!"

The first man ran into the center of the camp, near the cook's firepit. There, he picked up a large handbell and began ringing it as hard as he could.

"We've got trouble!" he shouted. "And it's comin' fast!"

* * *

Lynch, Stormwalker, and Toomes were all in the scientist's circus-sized tent. Toomes was still tinkering about with the detonator. He'd been working on it furiously, but he wasn't done with it yet. Every now and then, he'd glance at the others out of the corner of his eye. Each time, a murderous look from them reminded him how much he was under the gun—and how they'd likely make literal use of that phrase if he didn't hurry.

Stormwalker sat in a corner, silently steaming about how long it was taking the Wasatch man to finish the job. Occasionally, he snarled to himself. The pleasure he got from seeing Toomes jump at this was far too fleeting.

Lynch was amusing himself with his Bowie knife. He was testing the blade's sharpness on his own skin, carving his initials into the dead flesh on his arms and then watching it knit together and finally heal. "This stuff is great!" he cackled. "It doesn't even scar."

"What about that mark around your throat?" Stormwalker asked, mostly out of boredom. He pointed at the rope burn that encircled Lynch's neck.

"My host had that one before I entered him," the manitou explained. "That was the one that finally did him in. You might call it my personal entry wound."

Stormwalker snickered at that.

It was then that the alarm rang out.

"What the Hell is that?" Stormwalker demanded, leaping to his feet.

Sweat broke out on Toomes' brow as he answered. "Th-the alarm. My men are only supposed to ring it if someone attacks."

Stormwalker began shifting to his werewolf form right away. His rune-covered clothing seemingly melted away as the fur sprang from his skin. He turned around to find Lynch standing there, checking his gun.

"Haven't you learned by now?" Stormwalker growled. "Those bits of lead won't be any good against Garou."

"I'm fresh out of the silver variety," Lynch snarled back. "I'll just have to get creative."

"Wait!" Toomes shouted. "I just happen to have what you're looking for." He reached into a drawer under the bench at which he was working and produced a fist full of bullets. The tips shone brightly from their brass jackets.

Stormwalker glared at Toomes, suspicion filling his wolf-like eyes. "And why would you have silver bullets?"

Toomes took a step backward and bumped into his workbench. "They're not for—I mean, I made them because—"

"Yes?" Stormwalker rumbled as he stepped forward. This close to the edge of the tent, his long, furry ears brushed against the roof, emphasizing his tremendous height.

Toomes scrambled up onto his lab table and cowered there, ready for the blow that would end it all. "You said there was a chance that someone might follow you, people—werewolves—like yourself. I made them as a precaution. If you fall, I need to have some way to protect myself!"

Toomes could feel the Garou's warm breath on his face as it raced through his flaring nostrils. He watched in stark terror as Stormwalker brought one mighty talon up to brush against the soft, pink skin of his throat.

"Good answer," the werewolf growled. "If I'm foolish enough to buy it."

Just then, Lynch reached in between the two and pried the bullets from Toomes' grasp. "I'd take what he's selling, wolf-man."

A moment passed with only the sound of the bell desperately ringing in the distance.

Stormwalker turned on Lynch then. "And why should I let you have these bullets, monkey?"

Lynch looked at him flatly, his face like a gambler with a skip straight. "For one, if I don't have them, I'm not going to be much help against those other werewolves. You proved that yourself."

"Second, there's four of them against one of you. Those are long odds, and you're going to want some help."

"Third, you need to buy yourself some time so Toomes here can finish his work. If he gets that detonator finished, we don't need to worry about fighting these mutts. The job is done."

"E-excellent reasoning, Mr. Lynch," Toomes said as he squirmed down from his workbench.

"How long will it take you?" Stormwalker snarled at the scientist.

"It's hard to say," Toomes started slowly. When he saw Stormwalker's massive paws raise up, he continued along much more quickly. "I'm very close, though. I'd say no more than fifteen minutes."

"You've got ten!" the Garou growled as he stormed out of the tent.

Toomes and Lynch watched as the monster left. Once he was gone, Lynch turned to Toomes and said, "I'd get to work."

* * *

Toomes' men gathered together at the edge of the camp. They were all armed, mostly with rifles and pistols, although a few had shotguns at the ready for close-in fighting. The creatures heading toward them were almost in range. Despite this, the men couldn't tell for sure what they were. They just knew they didn't want them around.

A few of the riflemen started firing at the four oncoming beasts. Gunshots boomed like bass drums, pealing along the valley floor like rumbling thunder. One figure staggered for a moment but kept coming on. The others were unhindered.

"I got him! I swear I did!" yelled one rifleman. "What in Tarnation are these things?"

At that moment, a werewolf leaped over the line of gunmen from behind, vaulting over their heads and racing off to greet the encroaching creatures with a blood-thickening snarl.

"What the Hell was that?" shouted one man, nearly dropping his pistol in sheer terror.

"I don't know," sounded another as lowered his rifle to watch what was happening, "but I think it's one of ours."

* * *

"Here he comes!" Annalee yelled. She and the others were pounding along at full speed now. It would only be a moment before they met Stormwalker tooth-and-claw.

"His arrogance is amazing!" Morningkill exclaimed. "Does he really think he can take all of us on at once?"

"Yes," Proud Speaker stated flatly. "And if we do not work together, he will win."

Morningkill looked over his shoulder at Cotten. He'd caught a rifle bullet in his chest and was lagging a few yards behind. "Is he serious?" the tinhorn asked. The trapper was the only one of them who'd actually met Stormwalker in combat before.

"Deadly," Cotten grinned as he plucked the bullet from his flesh and threw it aside, his wound already closing. He was finally going to get his chance to tear out Stormwalker's throat, and despite himself, he was enjoying it.

* * *

A good stone's throw from the camp, Stormwalker hauled up to a stop. With exaggerated patience, he leaned over and drew a line in the sand with one, long talon. Then he stepped back and waited.

Morningkill, Annalee, and Proud Speaker slowed down for a moment, waiting to see what the rogue Garou had in mind. Cotten ignored them all.

"Trickster!" he screamed as he launched himself over the line and at his enemy's throat. "Today is your day to die!"

Stormwalker neatly sidestepped the trapper's attack and grabbed him by the scruff of his neck as he passed by. With a

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monstrously strong move, he wrenched Cotten up off of his feet and dangled him in the air above him. He glared directly into the trapper's eyes and spat, "You're about a week too late."

As the other Garou watched in shock at the rogue's monstrous strength, he reached up and tore a gash in Cotten's chest, then threw his bleeding body to one side.

"All right," he glared at them, the bloodlust raging in his eyes, "who's next?"

* * *

Taza stopped Betty and Velvet with a motion of his hand. They'd been riding along the rim of the valley, hoping to be able to come in at Toomes' camp from behind the tower of stone. They didn't like the odds of surviving a long race along the valley floor while being peppered with bullets from Toomes' men.

"Why don't you just pop your way over there?" Betty had asked. "You know, with your magic." She spat out the last word like it left a foul taste in her mouth.

"It doesn't quite work that way. I need to have a shadow I can step into and one I can emerge from, and I've got to be able to see the one from the other. Even could I find such shadows on a day like this, that's a long way to go with no guarantee I'd make it."

Betty grimaced. "So what good is it?"

Velvet laughed quietly. "You say you don't want anything to do with my powers—until they come in handy. These cards cut both ways, Betty, and there's more to them than you might guess."

After that, they had ridden in silence for a few moments until Taza stopped them.

"Can you hear that?" he asked.

They shook their heads.

"A bell, like an alarm. It's coming from the camp."

They all looked down into the valley and saw a trail of dust being kicked up by four tremendous figures sprinting for the stone tower. They could all hear the bell ringing now.

"I guess that's our signal to come running," said Betty. She looked over to see Velvet already shuffling through a deck of cards.

They took off at a gallop, heading right for the camp. When they were about half the way there, they saw Lynch step out of Toomes' tent with five monstrous machines following in his wake.

* * *

Morningkill ripped directly into Stormwalker's chest, his claws rending flesh and sending shreds of gore everywhere. Annalee ripped at their foe's legs, biting through muscle and catching on ropelike tendons. Proud Speaker tore into the rogue's back, his talons finding purchase in their enemy's meaty shoulders.

In a matter of moments, Stormwalker was down.

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The Garou held him pinned. Annalee and Proud Speaker each held down an arm while Morningkill sat on his legs. Stormwalker struggled and howled, but it was no use.

A ragged voice grated from over Morningkill's shoulder. "Don't kill 'im yet. He's all mine!"

Cotten staggered over from where the rogue had thrown him. He was still bleeding from the deep gashes in his chest, the blood matting his fur, but he wasn't about to let that stop him.

"Billy Stormwalker!" he shouted, relishing the feel of every word on his tongue. "You've had this coming for a long time."

The trapper was weak on his feet, but sheer determination pushed him onward. He reached down and grasped Stormwalker's head by the fur between his ears. Then he brought back his other taloned hand to throw down the killing blow that would tear out the rogue's throat.

In that deadly moment, Cotten hesitated for a moment, and Stormwalker started to laugh.

"You're not gonna find this so funny in Hell, monster!" the trapper shouted.

"You fool!" Stormwalker bellowed. "You've been fighting the wrong man. While I've kept you busy, Toomes has finished work on a new detonator for his bomb. And there's nothing you can do to stop it!"

"He's bluffing!" Cotten spat.

"Guess again, mutt!"

The voice came from just behind the gunmen. They'd been creeping closer and closer during the battle between the Garou, and now they parted, revealing the speaker. Lynch strode through the space the men had made, the five automatons rumbling noisily behind him, their ghost-rock fired steam engines pushing them steadily forward.

Lynch fired his six-shooter once. The bullet smashed into Morningkill's left arm, sending him spinning off of Stormwalker's legs.

Then the automatons stepped up and fired, their Gatling guns stitching a seam of death in the direction of the Garou.

The rogue didn't need an invitation engraved on his skull. When the machines started shooting, he wriggled away from Annalee and Proud Speaker, both of whom were scrambling out of the path of the bullets. Annalee's leg was grazed by a shot, but it did little to slow her down.

Once clear from the killing zone, Annalee and Proud Speaker circled around and attacked the automatons. Their talons tore long seams in the gleaming machines' armored skins, but the steam-driving monstrosities fought on.

* * *

Velvet, Betty, and Taza galloped up to the base of the tower, only to find that Toomes' men had fallen back. They were

escorting him from his private tent to the one the ghost-rock bomb had been hidden in—and presumably still was. In his hands, he cradled something that looked awfully similar to the sorcerous detonator Ronan had destroyed only two days before.

Betty cursed, then turned three shades of red. "Excuse my French."

"I'm from N'awlins, *cheri*," Velvet stated. "That's not French."

"Fine!" she said, exasperated. "Just tell me how we're going to get past all those guns and stop Toomes from setting off the bomb."

"I've got a few ideas how to get myself in that tent, but they're not going to do me much good if I pop up inside a gang of gunslingers. If we could just—"

Taza cut Velvet off with a wave of his hand. The Apache wasn't even looking at the huckster. He was just staring off into the distance with a wide grin plastered across his face.

Slowly, Velvet and Betty followed the direction of Taza's gaze and started smiling themselves. There, storming down from the edge of the valley, was Taza's entire band. Each of the warriors rode bareback on a speeding horse, their thundering hooves rumbling toward the stone tower and their leader.

"I knew they would not fail me," he grinned.

"They're good people," Betty agreed.

Velvet leapt from his horse, his cards in hand.

"Where are you going?" Betty demanded.

"In case you hadn't noticed, the sun's getting lower in the sky. I came this way for a reason. We're now standing in the shadow of the tower."

"And?"

"And from here I can see the shadow just inside the entrance of that tent Toomes' just went into."

Betty started to get down from her horse. "You can't go there by yourself!"

"I can't take you with me—the manitous just don't play that way—and someone's got to get in there to stop Toomes from blowing us all to Kingdom Come."

"But—" Betty was standing next to him now, emotion warring with her sense of duty.

"But nothing, love." The huckster gave his deck a quick shuffle and began dealing. After a moment, the shadows behind a boulder close at hand seemed to get a little darker.

Velvet leaned over and laid a solid kiss on Betty's lips. "For luck," he said as he dove into the shadow. "I'm going to need it."

With that, he disappeared.

* * *

The Apache rode into the fray like warriors born, their rifles barking left and right. Where they shot, men fell. Those that were left fired back desperately, hoping to bring their foes down.

The gunshots alerted Lynch to the arrival of the Apaches. A quick glance told him that the automatons were handling the werewolves. Two of them were already wounded, and it didn't look like the others would be long for this world—especially once they discovered the machines' deadly secret.

Lynch turned away from the fight and raced for the tent he'd just seen Toomes disappearing into. Killing the Garou was just for fun. Making sure the bomb went off, that was business.

* * *

Inside the tent, the racket from the gunfight seemed far off and yet at the same time almost ready to spill in through the canvas walls. To punctuate that thought, a bullet whizzed through one wall and another, letting sunlight in through the newly formed holes.

Velvet stepped out of the shadow just under the hole. He had to bend over to get through the recently shortened darkness, but he came through just fine.

The huckster looked around and saw two men pushing Toomes up onto the top of the steel cube that housed the ghost-rock bomb.

He riffled through his cards again and yelled, "Boo!" The three men turned around, and Velvet showed them his hand. It wasn't that he had to for the trick to work. He just didn't like blasting people in the back.

Ghostly white streaks of energy jetted out of Velvet's palm and slammed into the side of the cube. From there, the energy exploded, smashing the men with eldritch energies straight from the Hunting Grounds.

The three men dropped to the floor. The two hired guns were either dead or the closest thing to it. Blood streamed from their noses and pooled on the floor. Since Toomes had been halfway atop the cube, the burst had only caught the lower part of him. He fell to the ground atop his two helpers, the detonator still in his hands.

"My leg!" he cried, holding the broken limb with one hand and the detonator in the other.

Velvet strode forward.

"Get back!" Toomes screamed, holding the detonator in front of him with both hands. "This thing doesn't need to be right next to the ghost rock for it to work. I can set it off from here and kill us all!"

The huckster stopped dead in his tracks. The scientist grabbed a blue wire from one side of the contraption and a green one from the other. "All I've got to do is cross these two leads, and it'll go off."

Velvet considered the man's words for a moment, then started forward again.

"I'll do it!" the man screamed hysterically. "I swear it!"

Velvet reached down and plucked the device from Toomes' hands. The young scientist tried to crawl away but it was too painful, and he instantly gave up. "Nice try, Toomes, but you can't kid a kidder."

With that, Velvet took a few steps back and raised the detonator over his head, intending to smash it to pieces—and Stormwalker's plans along with it—once and for all.

It was then he heard the distinct click of a pistol being cocked.

"Bring it down gently, huckster-man." It was Lynch's voice. "This gun might be full of silver bullets, but I reckon they'll work just fine on you too."

Velvet turned around to face his friend—correction: the thing in his friend's body. Nothing of Ronan shone in that man's eyes. The huckster brought the detonator down until he was holding it in front of his waist. Then he slowly put it on the ground.

A mischievous look in his eyes, Velvet brought out his deck of cards and offered it to Lynch. "Care to cut for it?"

Lynch looked at him as if a second head had sprouted from his neck. Then he laughed. "I'm out of that game now, huckster. No more gaming with long-fingered idiots for me anymore, not since I found myself this fine corpse to walk the world in!"

"Ah well," Velvet said, a hint of resignation in his voice as he shuffled the cards once. "I just thought it was worth—"

Before the New Orleans dandy could finish his sentence, Lynch's Peacemaker was pointed at his forehead. "Forget it, huckster. Now who's trying to kid who?"

* * *

Morningkill struggled to his feet. The bullet that had pierced his arm had gone right through. He was hurt, but he'd live.

Toomes' gunmen had retreated. Only the machines remained.

In an instant, the tinhorn Garou assessed the situation.

Annalee was tearing away at one of the automatons, her leg wound already healing. Proud Speaker was slashing at another. He'd already torn off one of the things' arms—the one with the Gatling gun—and was using it to bash in the head of another.

Cotten and Stormwalker were still clawing at each other in the fiercest battle Morningkill had ever seen. Soon one of them was going to fall, but neither seemed willing to give in.

Morningkill turned back to the fray just in time to see Proud Speaker smash the tin-pot head clean off of one of the machines. The piece went flying through the air like an arrow shot from a bow.

As rest of the automaton crumpled to the ground, it suddenly exploded.

The blast knocked Morningkill off his feet again.

"Dear God!" he cried. "They've got some kind of self-destruct mechanism!"

Morningkill looked back to see what damage the explosion had wrought. Proud Speaker and Annalee had done a great job of herding the automatons together, hoping to keep them from being able to fire their Gatling guns in such close quarters. Now blackish smoke was drifting from the steam whistles of each of the remaining machines. Eerie faces seemed to loom in the dark puffs, like ghostly faces in the billowing filth.

Proud Speaker lay on the ground, dazedly looking at the crater that stood in the place of the automaton he'd just destroyed. Annalee stood nearby, having been shielded from the blast by the body of the machine she'd been tearing into. She wore a look of complete shock.

"Get back!" Morningkill yelled. "They're going to blow!"

But it was already too late.

* * *

"Drop it, Ronan, or I'll blow your head off!" Betty's voice shook, but there was no doubting the determination in her tone.

Keeping his gun on Velvet, Lynch turned around to see the range girl standing just inside the door of the tent, her rifle leveled directly between his eyes. He looked into her eyes and laughed at the terror he saw there. In a smooth motion faster than any man alive could have made, he brought his pistol around to point at her skull.

"Looks like we've got ourselves a standoff here, Betty," Lynch said in a mocking tone. "I'll tell you what. At the count of three, why don't we both shoot each other in the head and see who lives."

Seeing his chance, Velvet dealt himself a quick hand. With any luck, he could get off a hex that would help Ronan take back control of his body. If he failed, Betty was dead for sure.

Velvet entered the momentary trance his powers required of him. His mind slipped into the Hunting Grounds and found a manitou willing to game with him for a piece of its power against a piece of his soul. Time worked differently here. A hand of cards in the Hunting Grounds would take no time at all back in "reality."

The huckster dealt the cards out confidently, five each to himself and his opponent. He drew two cards, and his foe drew three. Velvet proudly showed his hand: a Full House. The manitou curled back its lips and laughed as it tossed down its cards: Four of a Kind.

Velvet's mind was hurled out of the Hunting Grounds. He found himself back behind Lynch, screaming in horrible pain. After an eternal moment of agony, he dropped senseless to the floor.

Lynch just smiled at Betty, his grin colder than a dead man's rictus. "Sounds like your boyfriend played cards with the wrong one of my cousins today."

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Betty glared deep into Lynch's eyes. This time, there was no fear there, only cursed stubbornness. She lowered her gun.

"If you're going to shoot me, demon, then just go ahead and do it. I'm ready to die."

A look of uncertainty passed over Lynch's face. He tightened his finger on his trigger slowly.

"But if there's any bit of my friend Ronan still left in there, I'm betting he won't let you get away with it."

Lynch sneered, jabbing his pistol forward so it rested right over Betty's heart. "What makes you so sure?" he asked.

She answered in a voice clear and strong. "Because I know Ronan."

* * *

Stormwalker raised his head. Earl Cotten lay across from him, stunned but struggling to his feet. The blasts from the self-destructing automatons had knocked them both flat.

As Stormwalker worked his way up to a standing position, he looked over and saw the other Garou—Proud Speaker, Annalee, and Morningkill—all lying on the valley floor, blood trickling from a dozen wounds on each of them. They were still breathing, though. If he had his way, that wouldn't last long.

A low growl came from behind him. He turned to meet Cotten's attack, catching his foe's talons across his snout. The blood flowed freely from his wounds, and he wavered dizzily. Still, he knew the trapper was on his last legs too.

The two circled each other like two punch-drunk prizefighters, each conserving his fading strength, looking for an opening, while waiting for his opponent to make a final move.

Then Stormwalker spotted his salvation. "Look!" he pointed over the trapper's shoulder. "Here comes the end of your life."

Cotten glanced to his side as he backed away from the rogue Garou, wary of a trick. It was then he saw Ronan striding toward them. Far behind the gunslinger, Taza and his last few Apache were finishing off Toomes' men, but it looked like they would be too late to do the trapper any good.

Almost too tired to move, Cotten simply raised himself up to his full height and made peace with Mother Gaia. He had fought as hard as he could, but he was still going to die. To pass from the world in this way at least, he thought, was fine. Finally ready, he closed his eyes.

It would be a good death.

Ronan stopped about six paces off and raised his pistol at the two scrappers. He looked like he had all the time in the world.

"What are you waiting for, fool?" Stormwalker demanded. "Now is your chance. Shoot!"

"If you say so," Ronan said. He took careful aim, then fired.

Cotten opened his eyes in disbelief. The undead gunslinger stood before him, his gun still smoking. The trapper looked to

GROUND ZERO

his side to see Stormwalker's swiftly cooling corpse laid out next to him. A dark hole punched right through his forehead, and the ground behind him was stained with red and gray.

Cotten turned back and fell to his knees. He looked up at the gunslinger and asked in disbelief, "Ronan?"

The dead man twirled his gun at the end of his finger, forward, backward, then smoothly into his holster. Then he favored the Garou with a winning smile. "Yep."

EPILOGUE

"Will you be able to handle matters from here?" Morningkill asked. The dying light of the setting sun cast everyone in a golden hue that reminded him of easier days.

Ronan looked over at the burned and battered man. Like the rest of the Garou, his wounds were terrible, but he would survive. He grinned. "Yeah, I think so."

Taza stepped forward. "Although we lost many men, we destroyed Toomes' forces entirely. He is the only one to survive."

The Apache leader pointed at the young scientist off to his left. "We will leave him with the nearest sheriff. He is harmless to us now, but he should stand up and take what your people call justice."

"And the detonator?" asked Annalee.

"It's right here," said Betty, holding up a small crate full of the shattered remnants of the device.

Velvet stepped forward. "Even though it's broken, I think you should take it with you back to your world. Here it could be rebuilt. There, well, it's not really worth anything."

"A wise idea," pronounced Proud Speaker, taking the small box from Betty.

"Let's get this over with, folks," Cotten interrupted. "We got a long way to go."

"Are you sure you won't stay for a while?" Betty asked.

"Your offer is very kind," said Morningkill, "but I'm afraid we'd have a hard time finding hospitality in Desmondville."

Cotten snickered at the memory as he stuck out his hand to Ronan. "I'm not much on sappy endings, so let's just say so long and be on our separate ways."

"I'm all for that," the gunslinger agreed.

After a heartfelt round of good-byes, the Garou stepped back. With a final wink from Cotten, the four of them shimmered, then disappeared.

"Do you think we'll ever see them again?" asked Betty.

"Dear God, woman," Velvet said laughingly as he took her in his arms. "Wasn't once enough?"

The End



GROUND ZERO

THE ADVENTURE

Whoa! That was one Hell of an ending to our epic, world-spanning tale, eh? Hope y'all enjoyed it as much as we did.

Still, that's not the end of it all. There's still the rest of an adventure to get through, the final installment in our trilogy of twisted Western terror.

If you just fell into this particular book and you're not sure what's going on, well, you've got some backing up to do. This third installment in a trilogy of Dime Novels™ featuring heroes from both the Weird West of *Deadlands* and the Savage West of *Werewolf: The Wild West*.

If you're not yet familiar with the concept of a Dime Novel, don't fret: It's pretty darn simple. You just read through the fiction part up front

(maybe you've already done that), and then play through the adventure part in the back. As a special bonus in this Dime Novel, we've included a scenario for use with *Deadlands: The Great Rail Wars*. (See the far back of this book for all about that.)

Even though we're working with two different games here (three, if you count *The Great Rail Wars*, don't work yourself into a lather. It all dovetails together a lot more smoothly than you might think.

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

Werewolf: The Wild West, so Marshals or Storytellers can just use their chosen game system and go—no conversions required.

So let's ride, pardners! The grand finale is almost in sight.

THE STORY SO FAR

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

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

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

Anyhow, Stormwalker was a Garou (that's a fancy name for werewolf) in the world of *Werewolf: The Wild West*, and

he was pretty annoyed by how he saw matters progressing in his world. As happened in our own history, the white governments kept breaking treaties with the Indian nations, shoving them further and further away onto smaller and smaller reservations.

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

JACKPOT!

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

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

Indians died at their hands, beside the bewildered whites.

Stormwalker saw all this as a good thing. After all, what was the sacrifice of a few of his own people if it propelled the rest of them to unheard of heights of power. He came up with a plan.

STORMWALKER'S PLAN

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

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

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



FOILED

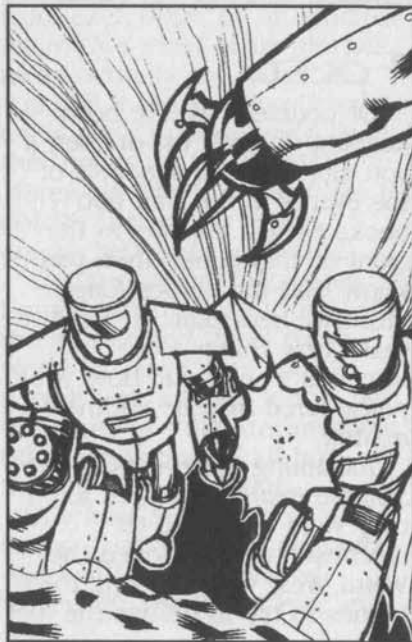
Of course, if you've been keeping up with us—or even if you just read the synopsis of the events in the first two books (which appears in the front of this book)—then you know that the heroes foiled Stormwalker's plan. At least, that's how things were intended to pan out. How your posse fared may be another matter.

Assuming the events in *Strange Bedfellows* went as they were supposed to, Stormwalker abandoned the Weird West while leaving the heroes to try to defuse the

ghost-rock bomb (which they succeeded at by the skin of their teeth—or fangs if that's appropriate). Once the dust settled, the villain was long gone, and it was up to the heroes to offer pursuit and bring the rogue werewolf to the kind of silvery justice that can only be dispensed from a gun.

EVIL TRIUMPHANT

Savage Passage, as the saying goes, is a whole other story. The heroes followed Stormwalker from the Weird West to the Savage West to track him down and bring his furry hide to justice. When



they got there, they headed over to the same stone tower the Wasatch camp was centered around in the Weird West.

In the Savage West, though, the tower is the site of the Monument Caern, an ancient place of power that's sacred to the Garou. This caern, however, had been captured and corrupted by the absolute worst of the Garou, an evil tribe known as the Black Spiral Dancers.

While investigating the caern, the heroes fell afoul of the Black Spiral Dancers. While they were busy trying to get themselves out of that sticky situation, Stormwalker took advantage of the situation to get into the center of the caern by means of a mine shaft carved into the heart of the tower. There, he found the Black Spiral Dancers had set up a means of destroying the place in case the good-hearted Garou ever managed to mount a serious attempt to take it back from them.

Stormwalker took advantage of his good fortune and immediately destroyed the place, then slipped back into the space between the worlds. He was headed back to the Weird West to complete the bridge that he'd finally managed to begin in the Savage West. It's here that our story begins.

THE SETUP

Getting the heroes involved in the adventure is a bit easier, assuming they already took part in the rest of the story (or at least the second act). If so, they're hot on Stormwalker's trail. Otherwise, it could take a bit of doing.

This is a pretty loose set-up for an adventure. It basically presents you with the situation and then lets you run with it in whatever direction you can prod your posse.

There's really not much of a plotline. The heroes (theoretically) already know about Stormwalker and are entirely aware of what his plans are. It's up to them to stop him before he succeeds.

The trick here is to emphasize that the clock's ticking. The heroes don't have any time to waste, and a desperate plan's better than no plan at all. Although no one beside the heroes and villains know it, nothing less than the fates of two worlds are at stake here. At the end of the day, they'd better win.

PICKING UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF

If you've already played through the first two parts of *Under a Harrowed Moon*, you're all set. Just jump right in.

The players need to figure out how to get from the Savage West to the Weird West, but that's not too much trouble. All they need to do is follow Stormwalker.

The posse is going to need a Garou to help them travel between the worlds. Such creatures can easily slip into the Umbra, while *Deadlands* heroes have a harder time entering the Hunting Grounds (as they call it).

Just pick up with the heroes arriving in the Weird West again, and you're ready to roll.

STARTING AT THE END

If you're the sort of person that reads only the last chapter of a mystery novel, that's your (warped) choice. Of course, you're missing out on a lot more than you might ever know, and a lot of the information in this adventure might not make too much sense to you. That doesn't mean you can't just play through this adventure and have a ball, but either way, you can't say we didn't warn you.

We're going to assume you know what you're doing. Maybe you just like doing things your own way. Or maybe you just can't find *Strange Bedfellows* or *Savage Passage*, and you can't wait any longer to get things moving along.

Anyway, here are a few ideas to get you going if you're starting with *Ground Zero*. You might find these suggestions useful if the heroes were wiped out by Stormwalker at the end of *Savage Passage*. Your players can make up a new posse of heroes to take up the gauntlet the last batch dropped with its dying breath.

WEIRD HEROES

If you've got a *Deadlands* posse itching to jump on in, there's one really easy way to get the heroes involved.

JUST IN TIME

The heroes arrive on the scene soon after someone else has managed to foil the rogue's plans as told in *Strange Bedfellows*. Perhaps this is a Garou, or maybe it's an angry Apache or even just a disgruntled Wasatch worker.

With his dying breath, this stranger tells the posse what's happened and begs them for their help. This is good, since it lets the heroes right up front just what's at stake and gives them an excellent reason to get involved.

A JOB TO DO

The fact that Wasatch has got a camp going in basically the middle of nowhere has aroused some suspicions

among the other rail barons. The gunfight that took place there two days ago (at the end of *Strange Bedfellows*) has raised more than a few eyebrows too.

The heroes could be hired by any of the rail barons (except Wasatch's Darius Hellstromme) to investigate the site and find out what's going on. If they're members of the Pinkertons, the Texas Rangers, or even just part of the local law, they might also be assigned to determine what all the ruckus is that's been going on there in the center of the valley. Even the middle of nowhere deserves justice, after all.

CHANCE MEETING

Of course, it's always possible (however unlikely) that the heroes could simply stumble upon Toomes' camp entirely on their own. It's right in the heart of Monument Valley, so it's not impossible.

However, it's a lot more reasonable for the heroes to run afoul of Stormwalker himself. The rogue Garou is a bit more paranoid now about someone meddling with his scheme, so he's stepped up his patrols of the surrounding area. Anyone wandering through is bound to find themselves on the business ends of Stormwalker's claws.

DEJA-VU

It's entirely possible that the heroes fought and defeated Stormwalker in the first act (*Strange Bedfellows*) and then were unable to follow him into the Hunting Grounds to take part in the second. They may then decide to set up some kind of surveillance of the region (even if just asking the locals to keep an eye on things) to let them know if and when the Garou returns.

This is a great option for Marshals who don't want to mess around with world-hopping. If you like your *Deadlands* games low-key, then you can skip all that traveling through the Hunting Grounds stuff and just pick up here a few days after the end of *Strange Bedfellows*. Assuming the heroes decide to stick around a few days to lick whatever wounds they might have suffered at Stormwalker's paws, they likely will not even have left the area when the Garou returns.

If so, as soon as they get the news that Stormwalker's back, they should instantly know what's going on. It's time to put a stop to his evil plans once and for all.

SAVAGE HEROES

If the heroes are Garou, then it's not quite as simple.

After all, they've got to have some reason to have followed Stormwalker from the Savage West to the Weird West. With a little thinking, though, it's not hard to come up with some excellent ways to prod them in that direction.

ON A MISSION

Stormwalker is a notorious name among many Garou elders. It's certainly possible that one of them would have gotten wind of the renegade Wendigo's plans for altering the state of their world, particularly considering the incredibly splashy destruction of the Monument caern.



Wise elders certainly aren't going to sit still while such a man wreaks havoc upon Gaia. Many of them are too old or don't possess the proper skills to take off after a Garou such as Stormwalker. However, they are certainly more than willing to call upon younger members of their sept (or of several different septs if need be) to come to the aid of their people. When faced with such a request, what proper Garou could refuse?

VENGEANCE IS MINE

Stormwalker is one mean s.o.b., and he's killed more people than he'd care to count. It's possible that in the destruction of the Monument caern—or in the preparation for it—he managed to murder someone close to one of the heroes' hearts. If so, the heroes have two reasons to go after the Garou. One might be more world-shattering, but the other is definitely more personal.

WHAT IF THE HEROES LOST?

Well, they were supposed to lose out to Stormwalker at the end of *Savage Passage*. That's what makes the stakes so high this time around. If Stormwalker walked away victorious at the end of *Strange Bedfellows*, too, though,

he's won entirely, in which case, there's no reason to continue with this adventure. See the end of this section for some ideas on how to handle such an eventuality.

Otherwise, we've got some ideas to help explain what happened.

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

MAJOR PLAYERS

There are two villains that the heroes are bound to meet in their efforts to keep the Weird West weird and the Savage West savage.

BILLY STORMWALKER

Stormwalker was born an Oglala Sioux, somewhere in Dakota Territory. He grew up in poverty and watched as the US Army waged war on his people, crushing them onto smaller and smaller reservations and stripping his once-proud people of what little was left of their dignity. It was too much for him to bear.

As Stormwalker came of age, he learned that he was, in fact, a Garou: a Wendigo

Theurge, as a matter of fact. ("Wendigo" refers to his werewolf tribe; "Theurge" speaks to the phase of the moon the man was born under and how this affects his personality.)

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

While on the run from the remaining members of a sept he had decimated, Stormwalker stepped sideways into the Storm Umbra and got decidedly lost. When he finally found himself, he was on the outskirts of another realm. It was then that his wanderings through the multiverse began.

Stormwalker is a thin man of medium height, at least in his Homid (human) form. Clean-shaven, he has long black hair, streaked with silver, that he wears in a warrior's braid. He has a scar down the left side of his cheek that he got in a fight with Earl Cotten many moons ago.

The years have not been kind to Stormwalker. Although he's only in his early 30s, he could easily pass for a man in

his late 40s. Perhaps it's the premature gray in his hair that does it, or maybe it's the hunted look in his eyes.

Stormwalker carries a scattergun with him but it's only for show. He much prefers to rip people open with his talons when in his Crinos form. He uses an oversized knife instead when in his Homid form.

The key thing about Stormwalker (and something we kept to ourselves the last time around) is that he's Harrowed. Soon after arriving in the Weird West, Stormwalker was put down by a posse of Texas Rangers with the right





kind of metal popping out of their guns. They didn't know he was from another world, and they didn't rightly care. All they knew was he was a monster that needed killing, and it was their job to take care of that little chore.

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

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

Having managed to destroy the Monument caern (see *Savage Passage*), Stormwalker is nearly dizzy with his success. Although he was foiled in the Weird West once before, he's confident that no one will be able to stop him this time around. This makes him cockier than ever before—maybe too much so. This shortcoming may prove to be his ultimate downfall.

WEIRD PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:4d10, S:5d8, Q:4d8, V:4d12

Climbin' 3d10, dodge 4d10, fightin' brawlin' 5d10, horse ridin' 2d10, quick draw: knife 4d8, shootin': shotgun 2d8, sneak 5d10, swimmin' 2d10, throwin': knife 4d8

Mental: C:2d10, K:4d6, M:1d10, Sm:2d8, Sp:3d8

Area knowledge: storm umbra 2d6, guts 3d8, native language: Sioux 3d6, language: English 2d6, overawe 3d10, professional: occult 5d6, scrutinize 4d10, search 5d10, trackin' 6d10

Edges: Sense of direction

Hindrances: Grim servant o' death

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

Special Abilities:

Harrowed: Ignore normal bleeding and Wind damage. Ignore two levels

of wound penalties. Can only be killed by a maiming wound to the head.

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

Bite: STR+2d6

Claw: STR+2d6

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

Gnosis: 7

Assimilation: The Garou can assimilate himself into any culture he likes. He makes a *scrutinize* check. The TN depends on how alien the culture is to him. If successful, the Garou does not suffer any prejudices against him from anyone in that society. This lasts for one day.

Command Spirit: The Garou can force a spirit to obey a single, simple command. To do this, he must spend a Fate Chip and make a *persuasion* check. The difficulty is determined by the strength of the spirit (Marshal's call here). On a success, the spirit obeys the command. Each new command requires a new Fate Chip. This does not

summon spirits, nor can it exorcise a spirit.

Dust Storm: The Garou spends a point of Gnosis, then makes a *Faith* check. The TN is determined by how dusty the terrain is (desert=TN 3; city=TN 11). If successful, a storm whips around the area, blinding everyone, fouling machinery (time for those Reliability checks), and coating everything in dirt. This lasts for two turns for each success.

Grasp the Beyond: This permits the Garou to step sideways with something or someone without having to dedicate it by means of ceremony. The Garou grabs the object to be taken with him, then spends a Fate Chip (white for small items, red for larger items, and blue for huge items, like a person). He then makes the usual roll to step sideways (see the end of this book). If successful, he and the object or person pass into the Hunting Grounds (or Storm Umbra). An unwilling passenger can resist with a Fair (5) *Faith* roll. Every success the passenger gets negates one of the Garou's. The Garou must have a success and a raise left to win the battle.

Persuasion: The Garou makes a Fair (5) *Mien* check. If successful, he adds +2 to all other *Mien* rolls with the current group of people (maximum of one hour).

Reach the Umbra: The Garou can step sideways into the Umbra (or Hunting Grounds) without having to look into a reflective surface.

Savage the Mind: The Garou spends Gnosis and makes *Spirit* contest with the target. If he gets at least a success and a raise, he can permanently destroy one die type step from the target's *Smarts* for every raise he got. He must spend 2 points of Gnosis for every die type destroyed.

Spirit Speech: The Garou can converse with spirits (including nature spirits and manitou). They won't necessarily listen to him though.

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

Savage Profile

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Dodge 4,

Empathy 4, Subterfuge 4, Animal Ken 3, Crafts 1, Firearms 2, Melee 5, Ride 2, Stealth 5, Survival 2, Enigmas 1, Linguistics 2, Medicine 1, Occult 4, Science 1

Gifts: Assimilation, Command Spirit, Dust Storm, Grasp the Beyond, Persuasion, Reach the Umbra, Savage the Mind, Spirit Speech, Tornado Rider

Special: Harrowed (ignore penalties for two Health Levels; can only be killed if Incapacitated by damage to the head), Cat Eyes (can see in complete darkness)

Age 10, Gnosis 6, Willpower 8

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

Wendell Toomes

Wendell Toomes is an aggressive young man who was born and raised in Salt Lake City, the notorious City of Gloom (so named for the constant haze of pollution that's settled over it). He's spent most of his life working for Hellstromme, and even graduated from the master scientist's Wasatch University.

Toomes is of medium height and build, with curly, dark hair kept short on the sides but permitted to go a bit wild up top. A kind of madness sparkles in his pale blue eyes whenever he starts talking about science. The sparkle

might be explained by the dark stains on Toomes' hands, since the man rarely ever takes precautions when working with ghost rock.

Toomes is bossy bordering on dictatorial. He expects his workers to follow his orders to the letter. When he tells someone to jump, he tells them how high, and they'd damn well better hit the mark.

Toomes has been taken down a peg since the recent defeat of his efforts to bring Stormwalker's plan to fruition (see *Strange Bedfellows*). He's no quitter, though, and has determined to rebuild the ghost-rock bomb's sorcerous detonator and complete the Weird West's end of the bridge.

The young scientist is afraid to return to Salt Lake City and face the wrath of Professor Darius Hellstromme, his employer. He knows that Hellstromme does not accept failure well. To return with news of what has happened would guarantee Toomes' dismissal from Wasatch if not from this mortal coil itself.

As such, Toomes has redoubled his efforts to get the ghost-rock bomb up and working. When Stormwalker returns, the young man finally knows his efforts may not have been for naught. All he's got to do now is complete the repair of the detonator before anyone can stop him.



Toomes has brought in some emergency aid to help protect his camp until he can pull off Stormwalker's scheme. Without informing Wasatch headquarters of his failure, he managed to get his superiors to send down five automatons to help "protect his encampment from possible attack at this critical juncture."

Weird Profile

Corporeal: D:3d6, N:2d6, S:4d4, Q:3d8, V:4d6

Climbin' 2d6, fightin': brawl'n' 1d6, horse ridin' 1d6, shootin': flamethrower 2d6, sneak 1d6

Mental: C:3d12, K:6d10, M:2d8, Sm:4d12, Sp:2d4

Guts 2d4, professional: occult 5d10, science: ghost rock 5d10, scrutinize 3d12, search 2d12, tinkerin' 5d12

Edges: Mechanically inclined

Hindrances: Curious

Gear: Peacemaker, box of 50 bullets, notebook full of untested designs, flamethrower.

Savage Profile

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Dodge 1, Empathy 1, Subterfuge 3, Animal Ken 1, Crafts 1, Firearms 2, Melee 1, Ride 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Enigmas 5, Linguistics 2, Medicine 1, Occult 5, Science 5

Willpower 8

Gear: Peacemaker, box of 50 bullets, notebook full of untested designs, flamethrower.

CHAPTER ONE: DESMONDVILLE

Desmondville, UT—Fear Level 3

There's not a whole lot to say about this almost-terminally sleepy little spot on the map. It's more a small collection of businesses than a real town. There are only four buildings in the entire place.

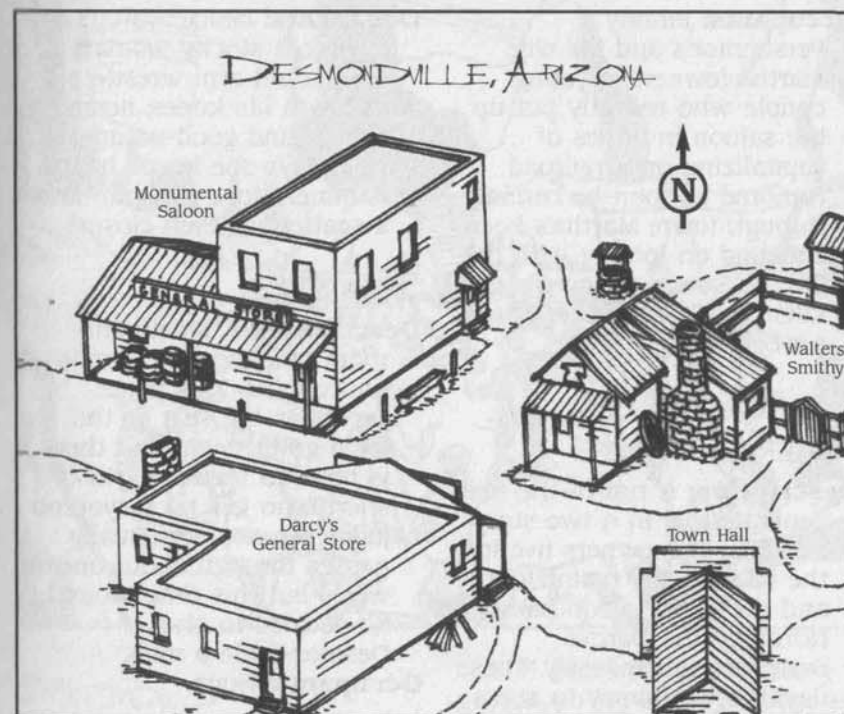
Most of the so-called residents of Desmondville are farmers and ranchers living off in the sticks surrounding the township. They come into town whenever they have the desire or the need.

The Fear Level in the surrounding area has gone up after the battle at the end of *Strange Bedfellows*. Werewolves and all other sorts of things running about, plus rumors of massive gunfights near that mysterious Wasatch camp, have really put people on edge around these parts.

WHAT'S THERE TO KNOW?

The people of Desmondville are usually happy to have some new visitors in town, although lately their collective patience is beginning to wear thinner than a cowpoke's longjohns after a cold winter. Anyone who enters this formerly peaceful town is greeted with suspicion just short of outright hostility.

The townsfolk know all about the Wasatch camp only eight miles distant. There have been rumors that Toomes' men found ghost rock in the valley and this is just a prelude to a rock rush to come. Folks know all about the Great Rail Wars (the bloody competition to complete a transcontinental railroad across the Weird West),



and they're not sure they like the idea of having that kind of violence in their backyards.

Still, no one's complaining about the extra business, and it's sure that a railroad through the region would generate even more. If Stormwalker's plans succeed, this is sure to happen, but by that time, most of the area will be a smoking crater.

The town is pretty much abandoned these days. Most of the local ranchers are holed up in their homes, setting up their defenses against the coming disaster they can feel coming in the wind. Of course, they're

unaware that no matter what preparations they make, they're bound to be of little help against a ghost-rock bomb.

MONUMENTAL SALOON

Description: Normally a fine place to wet your whistle and maybe find a bed for the night. These days, it's deader than a graveyard at midnight. The clapboard building consists of a main room, a storeroom, a kitchen, and five bedrooms, one of which is occupied by the owner and his young wife.

Occupants: Johnny Persimmons and his wife Martha (owners; a young couple who recently put up the saloon in hopes of capitalizing on a railroad rumored to soon be coming through town; Martha's been cheating on Johnny with the Darcys' son, a young man killed by Stormwalker about a week ago).

DARCY'S GENERAL STORE

Description: A run-of-the-mill general store in a two-story building. The owners live in the back of the main floor and the entire second story. Normally, the Darcys overcharge mercilessly. These days, they're happy to see a customer and will bargain.

Occupants: Alex and Wanda Darcy (owners; pleasant people in their middle years; they're unwilling to bargain on their prices) and their four children, ages 3 to 14. Alex Darcy is the only one who shows his face these days. The rest just hide upstairs.

WALTERS' SMITHY

Description: A small place with just enough room for a forge. There's a horse pen behind the smithy, and a shack behind that.

Occupants: Janice Walters (owner; a stocky woman who could arm-wrestle a sailor to his knees; normally cheery and good-natured, nowadays she keeps her hammer close at hand—and a scattergun even closer).

TOWN HALL

Description: A small, one-room building that stands unoccupied. This place serves as the seat of the local government, but there is none to speak of. No sheriff, no jail, no mayor, no judge. An assayer usually passes through about once a week, but this time around he decided to give Desmondville a miss.

Occupants: None.

CHAPTER TWO: MONUMENT VALLEY

Monument Valley is located in northeastern Arizona, high on the Colorado plateau and not too distant from other natural wonders such as the Grand Canyon. The valley is absolutely filled with the massive, towering rock formations like the one the Wasatch camp is based at. To see how this place really looks, check out one of John Ford's Westerns. Most of them were filmed in this place of staggering natural beauty.



PATROLS

Although no one wanders around Monument Valley much these days—at least not the part near Desmondville—Toomes is taking no chances. If he could, he'd have gunslingers scouring the entire place for any sign of someone looking to interfere with his operation.

Of course, since his recent setback, the young scientist doesn't have the local Apaches to rely on. Even if all of his own men were killed or run off in *Strange Bedfellows*, he's got a whole new batch of them now (they came down with the automatons).

Still, he's only got so many guards, so he employs them as carefully as he can. They work around the clock in rotating shifts, and they never wander farther off than a mile from the camp (and then only if investigating something).

Once Stormwalker returns to the valley, he remains in the camp until he's notified of trouble that needs his attention elsewhere. He is determined to protect Toomes and the ghost-rock bomb detonator at all costs, and he refuses to leave them unless there is a direct attack on the camp. He is wary of being led off by some sort of diversionary tactic.

CHAPTER THREE: TOOMES' CAMP

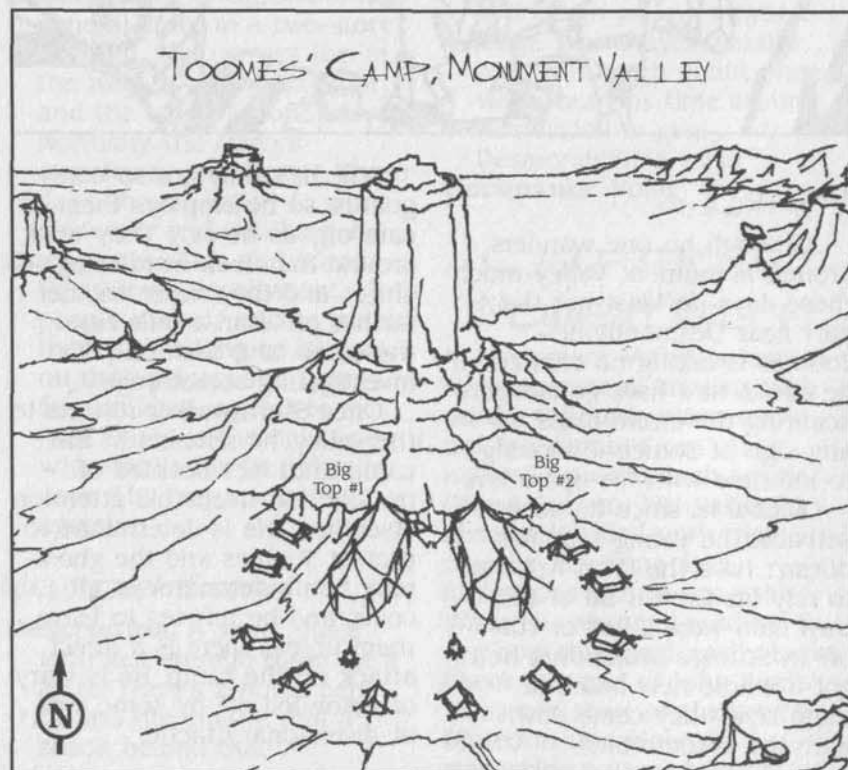
Wendell Toomes' camp is set up in the middle of a low point in Monument Valley. It consists of two large tents surrounded by 10 medium-sized tents.

The smaller tents house two or three Wasatch guards each. Toomes has a double reason for having 25 guards about. The men believe they're there to protect Toomes' project, about which they know little. (This

situation isn't too unusual for Wasatch employees unfortunately.)

The second—and no less important—reason is that the ghost-rock bomb needs the sacrifice of a couple dozen lives for the sorcerous detonator to be able to rip through the fabric of the multiverse.

All the guards are really sure of is that Toomes has gathered himself a half a ton of ghost rock in a metal box he keeps in Big Top #2. Also, Toomes



keeps tinkering around with the five automatons they brought down, plus some sort of smaller device he keeps in Big Top #1. This is the detonator, but no one but Toomes and Stormwalker knows what it is.

The gunmen are all extremely loyal to Wasatch and—by association—Toomes. They have been trained to fight in small teams, and they believe they're ready for whatever the Weird West has to throw at them. They don't know how wrong they are.

BIG TOP #1

This is where Toomes spends just about all of his time. This humongous tent is a combination laboratory, sleep space, and warehouse. The place is strewn about with plans for all sorts of things, most of which concentrate on various incarnations of the ghost-rock bomb.

All of the blueprints are dated, so it's easy to figure out which ones are the most recent. Given time to take a good look at the plans, a hero who makes an Onerous (7) tinkerin' check can determine just what it is that Toomes is trying to build: the most powerful bomb ever known.

Of course, there's no way to know what Toomes is building the bomb for without somehow

getting it out of him. Since he's rather easily intimidated, this shouldn't be too much of a push for someone who can get him alone for a few minutes.

The big secret in the tent is what's underneath the big tarp in the middle of the room: five deadly automatons. For more about these metallic man-machines of death, see Page 52.

BIG TOP #2

The second huge tent is where the big payoff is. This is where Stormwalker spends most of his time when he's not leaning over Toomes' shoulder, cursing his slowness, and pressing him to move more quickly.

It's also where the ghost-rock bomb is housed.

If the heroes haven't seen the plans for the thing (or been a part of *Strange Bedfellows*), they might not understand what it is. It looks just like a steel cube, 10 feet on a side. Chunky rivets hold the entire thing together, and the seams have been caulked with resin and pine tar, making the box airtight.

Atop the cube, there's a space in which someone can insert the sorcerous detonator that sets the whole thing off. The detonator is not in place—yet. Toomes is still working on the damn thing.

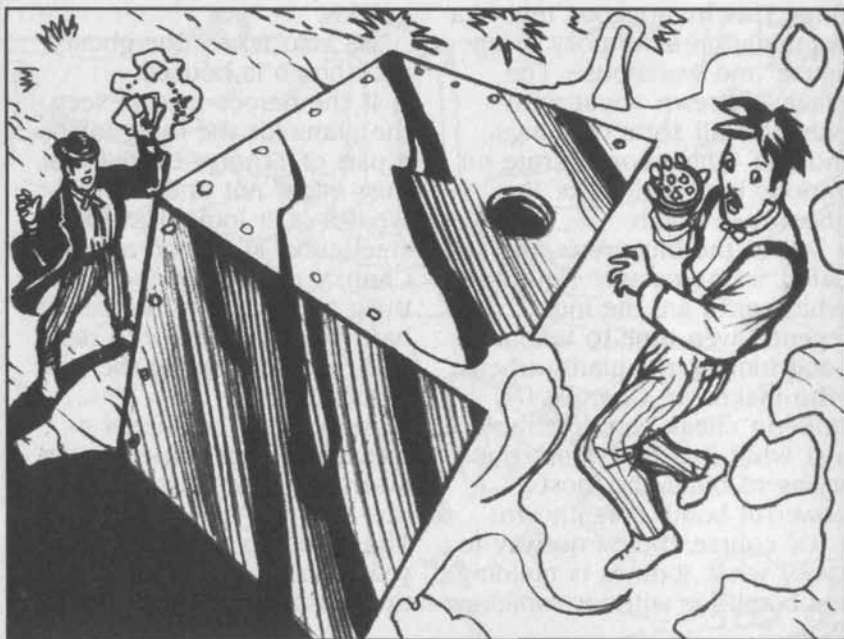
THE BOMB

Whenever the heroes make their move, Toomes rounds up some of his men to act as a guard. Then he makes his way from Big Top #1 to Big Top #2. Once in the other tent, he puts the sorcerous detonator in place and activates it.

The young scientist would like to have had a few more hours to test the detonator and make sure it would work, but it doesn't look like he's going to get that time. Desperate, he decides to go with what he's got and hope for the best (or worst, depending on your point of view).

The detonator has three wires coming out of it and snaking into the box. They are colored red, green, and blue. To defuse the bomb, all the heroes have to do is break the connection with the blue wire. If they choose the wrong wire, well...

Actually if they pick the wrong wire, nothing happens, but they don't need to know that. Play up the tension of the moment for all it's worth. Make them sweat a little before giving them the payoff. (Hopefully you never let on about this in the first adventure.) This was one of the detonator's flaws that Toomes



was hoping to fix before the heroes arrived. Luckily, he never had a chance.

AUTOMATONS

Those of you who have picked up *The Great Rail Wars* boxed set are already familiar with Dr. Darius Hellstromme's robotic monstrosities. For the rest of you, read on.

Although many automatons are crafted individually, Hellstromme is busily experimenting with mass-production techniques like the assembly line, so there are many things that can be said about automatons in general. Just keep in mind that what's true of one automaton isn't necessarily true of another (with a few obvious exceptions).

These strange creations of the president of Wasatch Industries lumber along like men of brass and iron. They stand nearly seven or eight feet tall on legs of pistons and gears.

An automaton's torso houses a small ghost-rock boiler which powers the creature. The door to the boiler is locked tightly, and the keys are held closely by the automaton's master.

One of the automaton's arms terminates in a pincer-like claw that it uses to manipulate objects, however

clumsily. The claw has a viselike grip, and it can even be used as a club if the machine gets into a pinch.

The automaton's other arm terminates in a Gatling gun that starts out at the elbow, giving the machine a wide field of fire.

All of this alone makes the automaton an asset on any field of battle. What separates automatons from any other machine is their intelligence.

Automatons can take simple orders from their recognized masters, and they execute them to the letter. Giving an automaton orders is like speaking in a strange kind of programming language, since you've got to choose your words carefully or risk disaster.

The big secret of the automatons is what's in their heads. These brassy cylinders sit atop the creatures' shoulders, a shiny black plate where eyes would be were they simply men in suits of armor.

Some of Hellstromme's rivals have guessed that his automatons are actually steam-powered battle suits operated by a legions of midgets. The truth is even stranger.

In fact, an automaton's head houses the pickled brain of a walkin' dead that's been electronically hooked into the machine. This undead gray matter is what drives the automaton.

With its own brain, the automaton is far more clever than any other clockwork device. They can assess new situations on the fly and make the necessary adjustments. They've even got a survival instinct that no other machine could have.

What's more the automatons have been instructed to keep their secret. To do so, they're willing to pay even the ultimate price. (Actually, it's not so much a matter of will as one of not having any choice. These brains aren't much like the human organs they once were.)

If an automaton is ever destroyed—or even just captured—it instantly activates an explosive charge in its “helmet” that instantly destroys the entire machine. The blast is powerful enough to wipe out any evidence of the zombie brain's existence.

Good luck to anyone who happens to be standing too close when the automaton self-destructs. More than one hero standing over a fallen automaton has had a victory cry cut off when he had his legs suddenly blown out from under him.

For more about these brassy man-machines, check out the new boxed set that focuses on Hellstromme and the empire he's carved out of Salt Lake City: *City o' Gloom*.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d4, S:2d10, Q:2d6, V:2d12

Fightin': brawlin' 3, shootin' automatics 3

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

Overawe 4, search 4

Size: 7

Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

Armor: 2

Gun Hands: Sentinels have a grasping claw in one hand and a Gatling in the other. If fully loaded, an automaton has 60 rounds for the Gatling.

Immunities: Automatons are unaffected by Wind and physical stress, as well as emotional stress (from fear and and kind of social skills, like *overawe* or *persuasion*).

Self-Destruct: If an automaton's armor is breached badly (with a mortal wound to the guts or noggin), the thing explodes immediately with the force of a single stick of dynamite. This is a mental command from the zombie brain to a detonator in its head, backed up by a gyroscopic detonator that triggers the explosion if the automaton is knocked over (though the zombie can halt this command if

it is conscious). The only way to stop the detonation is to somehow render the zombie brain “unconscious.” Walkin' dead don't take Wind, so this is usually impossible. Certain magical or weird science effects might find a way to short-circuit the brain, however.

Vulnerability: Since *soul blast* only works on animate objects, it affects an automaton only if it targets the noggin. In that case, ignore the armor. Only spells that affect objects can affect the automaton's frame.

EPILOGUE

There are two ways this whole thing can turn out: good or bad.

We'll start with the worse-case scenario (at least from the bias of the heroes' point of view).

A SAVAGE RECKONING

So the heroes blew it, and Stormwalker's walking between the worlds triumphantly—and right behind him come the manitous and all their kin. As far as the Savage West is concerned, it's the end of the world as the Garou know it—and Gaia's not happy.

Stormwalker's gate pops into existence, and just about every slaving manitou in Arizona and Utah (that's not already attached to something like a Harrowed) decides the grass is greener on the other side of the gate. They hustle on over to the Savage West faster than you can say “massive continuity problem.”

Suddenly you've got hucksters, ghost rock, mad scientists, blessed, and all the rest (including a whole passel of really weird monsters) wandering around the Savage West, wreaking havoc. A few of these creatures are going to be immigrants from the Weird West who figured out where the gate is and what it does, but most are going to be entirely home-grown in the Savage West.

Just give the place a few years to catch up with the craziness in the Weird West, and you're going to see some *really* weird things. (Vampire hucksters, anyone?)

The main problem with all of this (besides the fact that the players are going to have to create some new heroes to replace the ones who got slaughtered in the ensuing chaos) is that this plan is obviously not what Pinnacle Entertainment Group and White Wolf have planned for the futures of *Deadlands* and *Werewolf: The Wild West*.



Face it, you're not ever going to see new supplements to explain this brave new conglomerate of worlds the heroes have unfortunately permitted to be created (despite their best efforts).

Sorry, pilgrim. You want to walk down this path, you're on your own.

VICTORY!

Hey, what do you know? Everything turned out the way it's supposed to in these things. The heroes won, Stormwalker's (hopefully) dead, and everyone can go home.

Of course, if Stormwalker's not dead, there could be a problem. He could return at any time, ready to finish his plans once and for all. In this case, it's up to the heroes to hunt him down and put a final kind of ending to his threat. Otherwise, they can never rest.

If they don't have a way to follow Stormwalker, the heroes are in for a bit of trouble. That means they've just got to sit around and wait for the rogue Garou to show up again and make another stab at it. If this doesn't fit with your plans, though, the local Apache are only too happy to set up a 24-hour guard on the tower themselves. They see this as a fair way to make up for having been duped by Stormwalker in the first place.

Even if Stormwalker's dead, the heroes need to make sure they get a hold of the sorcerous detonator. If Toomes' manages to slip away with the thing, he might decide to finish Stormwalker's plans for him at any time. To Toomes' this probably seems like the best situation. He gets to open the gate between the worlds, but he doesn't have to worry about Stormwalker and his murderous ways.

If the heroes are clever and lucky enough, though, they'll find a way to ride roughshod over these concerns and put an end to this tale. Wish them luck. They're going to need it.

THE WAY OUT

Okay, we lied. There's a third way to handle all of this, but it's pretty darn sneaky.

If the heroes lose—say they fail to stop the bomb from going off and get blasted sky high—then it would seem that all is lost. Proceed directly to Plan B. Do not pass "Go." Do not collect \$200.

Well, that's not necessarily true.

It's entirely possible that Toomes failed to get the detonator working properly. Sure, the bomb goes off, Monument Valley gets a bit deeper, and everyone within a 10-mile radius dies.

But the gate doesn't open.

That's what a scientist gets when he doesn't have a chance to test his designs out before putting them to use in the field. This means that, even if the heroes blow it entirely, you don't have to scrap your entire campaign by having the gate muck up two perfectly fine Western settings.

If you're really feeling generous, you could make it so that Toomes' bomb doesn't work at all—it goes out not with a bang, but a whimper—but that robs the adventure of a lot of its impact. If the heroes really blow everything that badly, they should probably be on their way to the Hereafter anyhow, don't you think?

But like we always say: It's your game. Do what you think would be the most fun. We trust you.

BOOT HILL

APACHE BRAVES (25)

Attack:

Rifle 3d6/3d6

Knife 3d6+1d4

Defense:

Brawlin 2

TOOMES' GOONS (25)

Attack:

Pistol 3d6/3d6

Defense:

Brawlin 2



GROUND ZERO

THE GREAT RAIL WARS SCENARIO



As the saying goes, there's more than one way to skin a jackalope. When it comes to big battles in the Weird West, that's certainly true. Sure, you can play out large fights in a roleplaying game like *Deadlands* or *Werewolf: The Wild West*, but they tend to bog down with really large numbers.

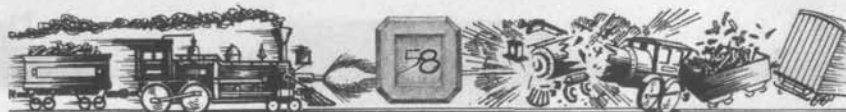
In such a case, you can always turn to *Deadlands: The Great Rail Wars*, Pinnacle Entertainment Group's miniatures battle game. If you haven't already got a copy of *The Great Rail Wars*, be sure to look for it at better game stores near you.

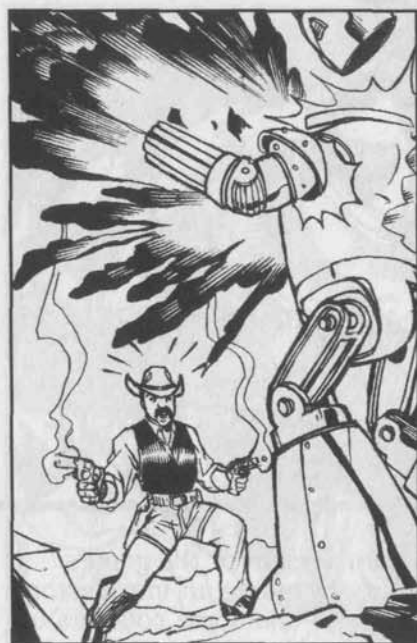
If you've got access to the Internet, stop on by our Weird Web site at www.peginc.com. We've put up *The Great Rail Wars Express* there, a trimmed-

down version of the game's rules, including an introductory scenario and some counters to get you started. It's entirely free, so check it out, and have fun!

The point is, we've got a scenario here for *The Great Rail Wars* that allows you to play through the climactic battle at the end of *Ground Zero*, which caps off the whole *Under a Harrowed Moon* trilogy.

There are two ways you can play this scenario. In the more traditional way, one player takes the roll of the story's heroes, and the other plays the Wasatch forces. The heroes' side has to make up five different heroes to work for it. See *The Great Rail Wars* rulebook for how to do this. These should be rolled up randomly.





If you've actually been playing the roleplaying game, though, and you want to actually use *The Great Rail Wars* to finish it off, you can try that too. Just convert the heroes from your roleplaying posse into *Great Rail Wars* heroes and use them in place of the heroes you were supposed to make up for the scenario.

FORCES

There are troop cards for Toomes, Stormwalker, and the Apache Braves on the last page of this section. The other troops you need can be found in *The Great Rail Wars*

rulebook, except for your heroes. You've got to make those on your own.

The Heroes: This side gets five heroes (this can be more or less if you're converting them from the roleplaying game) and five posses of Apache warriors.

Wasatch: This side gets Stormwalker, Toomes, five posses of Gunmen, and a posse of Automatons.

SETUP

Use the map of the Wasatch camp found on the following page. Use your own terrain pieces to try to make it as accurate as possible. In any case, the tents need to be in the center of the board, with the smaller tents surrounding the larger ones. The tower must be on the north side of the map, just north of the center of the tents.

DEPLOYMENT

Set up the Gunmen anywhere within 3" of the tents. Stormwalker starts out at point A, and Toomes and the Automatons start out at Point B. The bomb is at Point C.

The heroes' forces can march onto the board from any side they like, although they can't come down from the tower. The units can march on separately if they like, even from different sides.



BONUS

Toomes is still working on the detonator when the heroes arrive. It takes him two full actions to finish it. Then he can move into the other tent where the ghost-rock bomb is. Once inside the tent, it takes Toomes four full actions to install the detonator.

At the point the bomb is ready to go, Toomes' player must choose on which turn the bomb will detonate. It can be set to go at the end of any turn after the one in which the detonator is installed.

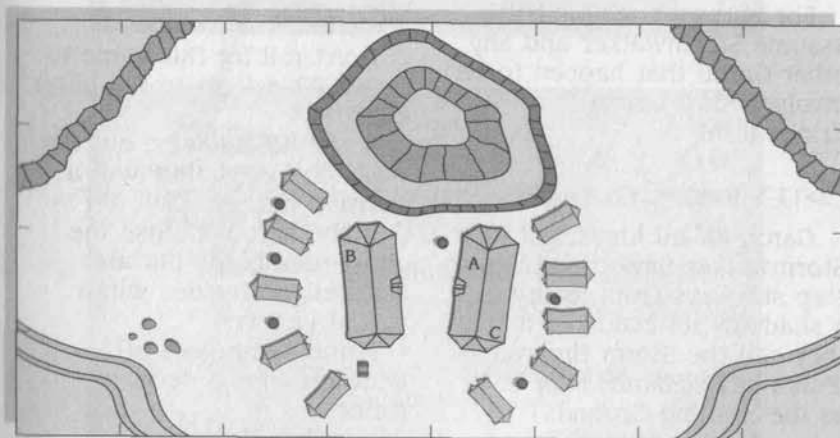
The bomb can be defused by any hero (or combination of heroes) that spends two actions on it while in contact with it.

SPECIAL RULES

Garou in general (and Stormwalker in particular) have a few powers that aren't covered in the *Great Rail Wars* rules. We obviously can't cover every possible Garou gift in the space allotted in this Dime Novel, but here are the conversions for the ones that Stormwalker has at least. These should get you started.

When converting other Garou gifts, use your best judgment. If possible, find something in *The Great Rail Wars* that seems similar. Work with your opponent to come up with a fair translation. Everyone playing in the game must agree to any new powers before you can use them.

GROUND ZERO: THE GREAT RAIL WARS MAP





DUST STORM

This power is just like the *Texas twister* hex. To use it, Stormwalker's player has to spend a Fate Chip. The Garou's level of power is determined by the chip spent. A white chip give him a d6, a red chip gives him a d8, and a blue chip gives him a d10.

SAVAGE THE MIND

This power is similar to *mental twist*, except its effects are permanent and it only works on the target's *Smarts*. Again, the Garou has to spend a Fate Chip to get the power to work.

The Garou's level of power is determined by the chip spent. A white chip gives him a d6, a red chip gives him a d8, and a blue chip gives him a d10.

SHAPESHIFTING

For purposes of this battle, assume Stormwalker and any other Garou that happen to be involved start out in their *Crinos* form.

STEPPING SIDEWAYS

Garou (of all kinds, not just Stormwalker) have the ability to step sideways from reality into a shadowy reflection of it that they call the *Storm Umbra*. (Folks in *Deadlands* refer to it as the *Hunting Grounds*.)

To step sideways, a Garou normally has to gaze into a reflective surface (although Stormwalker doesn't need to). Either way, doing this requires a full action and a Hard (8) *Guts* roll.

While in the *Hunting Grounds*, a Garou cannot affect or be affected by any other figure that's not also in the *Hunting Grounds*. Leave the Garou's figure on the table right where it left reality. It still moves normally, although it doesn't block line of sight like figures still in the regular reality.

A Garou can reenter reality at any time its player likes. This requires a full action and another Hard (8) *Guts* roll.

Because of his *grasp the beyond* Gift, Stormwalker can take a single figure with him into the *Hunting Grounds* and back.

VICTORY

Don't roll for this game to finish. It's a fight to the bitter end.

If the heroes wipe out the Wasatch forces, they win a decisive victory.

If the heroes defuse the ghost-rock bomb but are defeated, both sides win a partial victory.

If the bomb goes off, Wasatch wins a decisive victory.

Apache Braves

Posse

RAIL WARS

Strength	Smarts	Vigor
d8	d6	d8
Shootin'	Fightin'	Guts
d8	d8	d8

Special: Sneaky, Tough as Nails

Weapon	Range	ROF	Damage
Rifle	48	1	2d8
Bowie Knife			STR+1

RAIL WARS 85

17

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Stormwalker

Hero

RAIL WARS

Strength	Smarts	Vigor
d12+2	d10	d10
Shootin'	Fightin'	Guts
—	d10	d12

Special: Dust Storm, Fear, Frenzy, Unearthly (weakness: silver), Savage the Mind, Sense o' Direction, Stepping Sideways

Weapon	Range	ROF	Damage
Claws	—	—	STR+2

RAIL WARS 150

150

2

Toomes

Hero

RAIL WARS

Strength	Smarts	Vigor
d6	d12	d6
Shootin'	Fightin'	Guts
d6	d6	d6

Special: Arcane Background, Curious, Dinero, Mechanically Inclined

Weapon	Range	ROF	Damage
Flamethrower	—	1	2d10

RAIL WARS 70

70

2



DEADLANDS

When Worlds Collide!



Ronan Lynch's friends are in the worst spot of their lives. Not only have they failed to stop Billy Stormwalker from destroying a sacred caern in the Savage West™, but they've lost Ronan himself to the evil manitou wrapped around his undead soul. Now the lot of them have to hightail it off to the Weird West™ to put an end to the rogue Garou's twisted plans. What's at stake?

Saving another world from being ground under the boots of the Reckoners themselves!

Savage Passage is the third and final Dime Novel™ in the *Under a Harrowed Moon* trilogy. It includes the conclusion of a triple-length novella and a *Deadlands*™/ *Werewolf: The Wild West*™ adventure.



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