



Fortress o' Fear



Devils Tower

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Fortress o' Fear

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Dedicated to:

The team at Pinnacle—East and West.
We've built a lot more than just this fortress.

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TABLE O' CONTENTS

Chapter One:

The Plot

Thickens 5

The Story So Far 5

The Setup 7

The Heart o' the Matter 7

What's Really Going On 9

Major Players 10

How Tough Do

You Want It? 11

Chapter Two:

On the

Road Again 13

Time Waits for No One 13

The Race Begins 14

Who's Got the Heart? 15

Breaking the Heart 15

That Dusty Trail 17

Fast Train to Hell 17

All Aboard! 18

Hot Time in the

City o' Gloom 20

Sioux Nations or Bust! 24

Chapter Three:

A History

Forgotten 27

The Mystery Revealed 27

From Beyond the Stars 27

The Rebellion 29

The Scattering 29

Escape to Devils Tower 29

Crossbreed Society 31

Techpriests 33

Enter Iron Dragon 34

The Heart o' Darkness 35

The Evil Within 36

Chapter Four:

The Fortress 39

The Maps 39

The Tower 39

Deadwood 41

Getting In 41

The Belle Fourche 44

Prairie Dog Town 46

Kang's Entrance 48

The Eyrie 50

Home, Sweet Home 54

The Garden 56

Home o' the Folk 62

Soldier's Barracks 67

The Techpriests' Home 69

Training Grounds 71

The Caverns 73

The Upper Caverns 74

The Middle Caverns 76

The Lower Caverns 78

The Underground Lake 80

The Cavern Critters 82

The Portal 89

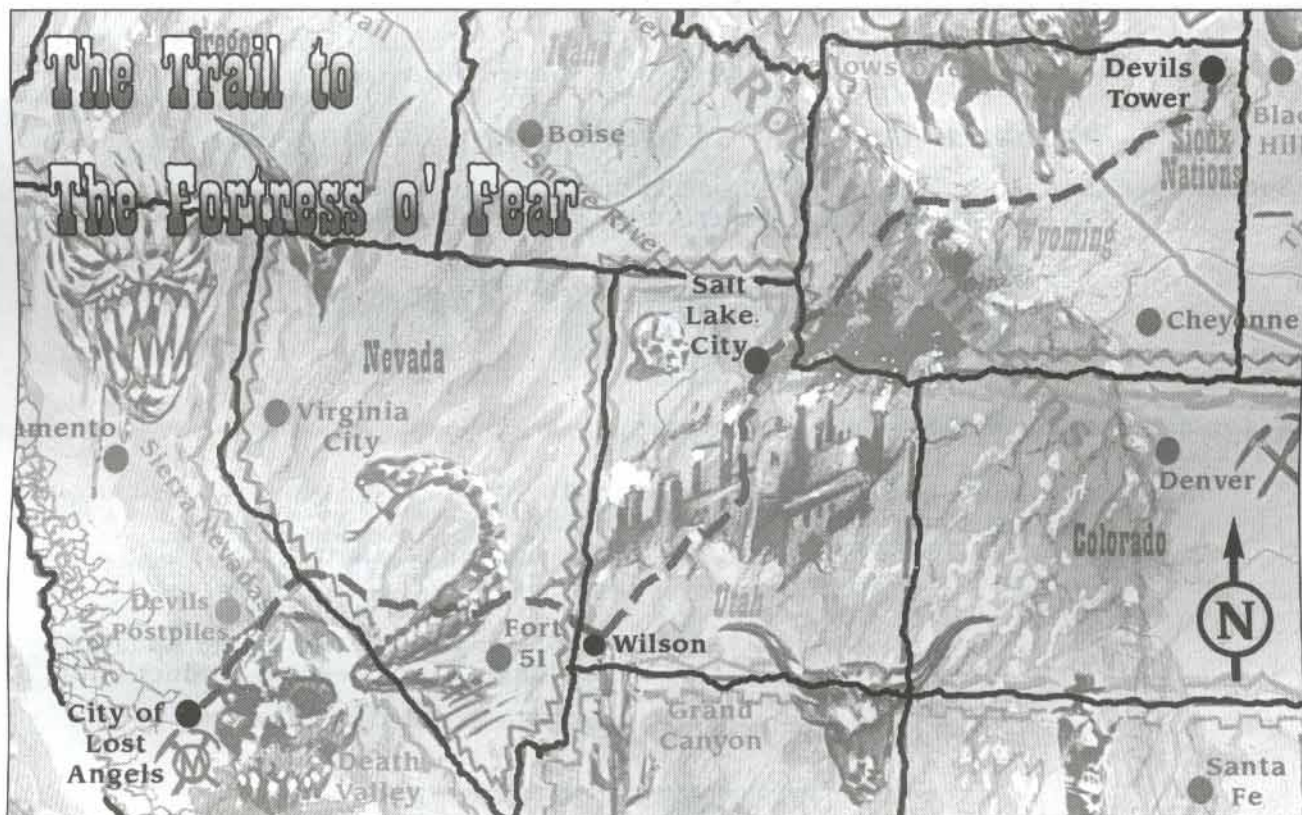
Captured! 90

Stone 91

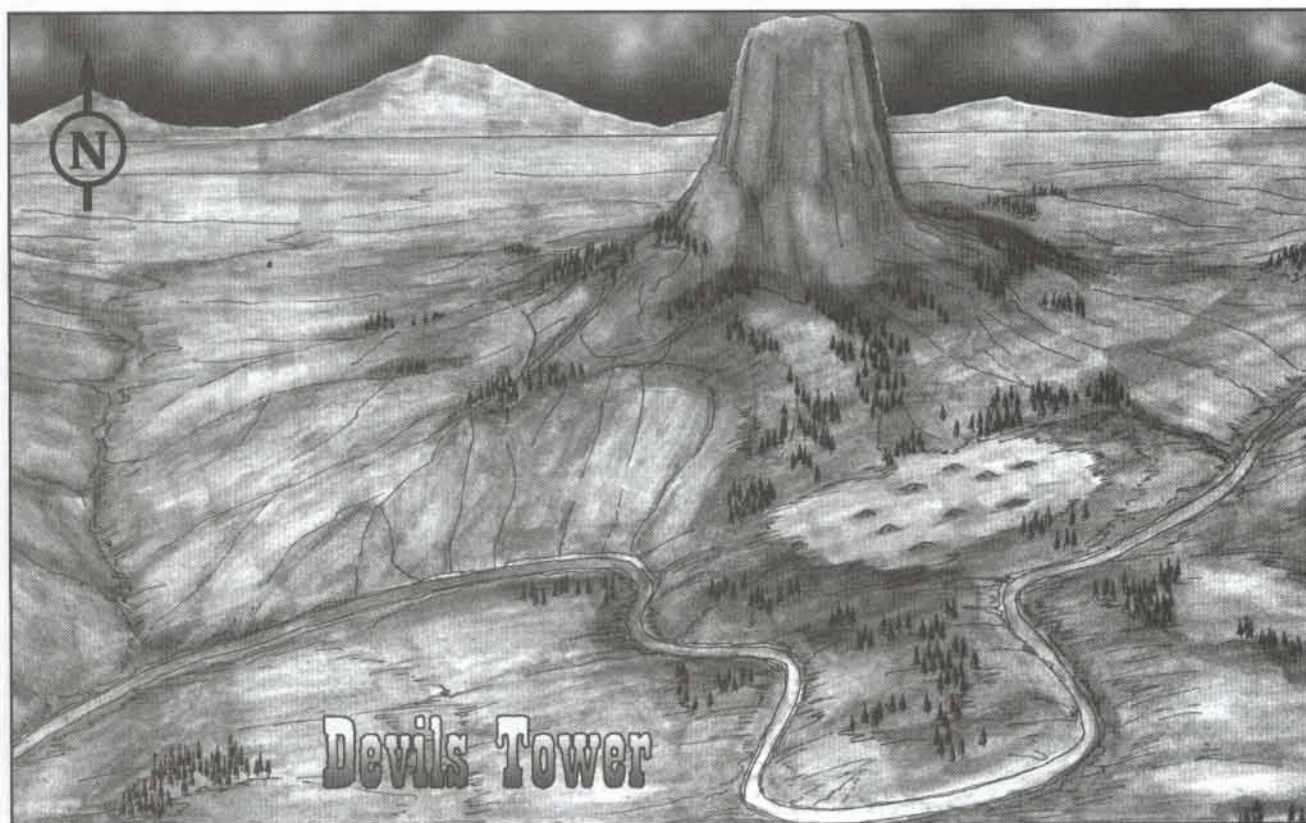
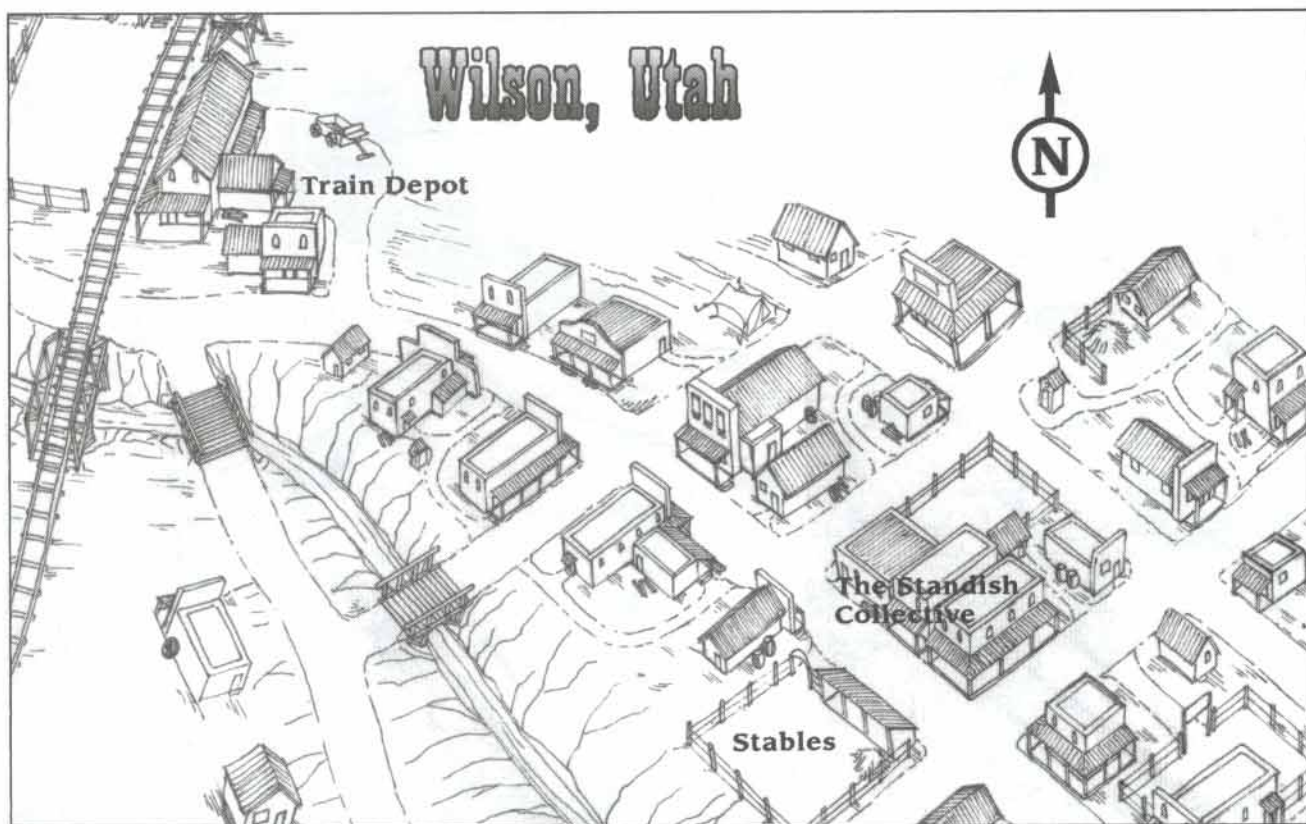
The Big Decision 93

Aftermath 93

Boot Hill 94



MAPS



PLOT THICKENS



MARSHAL: 4



CHAPTER ONE: THE PLOT THICKENS



Welcome to *Fortress o' Fear*, the third and final installment in the *Devils Tower* trilogy of adventures. If you haven't already picked up the first two parts (*The Road to Hell* and *Heart o' Darkness*), it's a good idea to head back to your local game store and plunk down your hard-earned dollars to complete your collection.

Strictly speaking, you don't have to have the first two parts of *Devils Tower* to read and play *Fortress o' Fear*, but it certainly helps. Besides which, those are some darn good adventures, and you're missing out if you don't have them on your bookshelf.

THE STORY SO FAR

Again, if you've got the first two parts of this trilogy of terror, then you already know a lot about what's going on here. Even so, it's a twisted enough tale to deserve a quick recap.

It all began a couple weeks back in Salt Lake City, the fabled City o' Gloom (see the *City o' Gloom* boxed set for all about the boomtown presided over by the notorious Dr. Hellstromme). Actually it began several centuries before, but the heroes got involved a bit more recently than that. We're going to cover the deep history in Chapter Three. Just hold your horses until we get to it, partner.

Anyhow, the whole story centers around a mysterious jewel, the legendary Heart of Darkness. This black diamond makes the Hope

Diamond look like a pinhead, but it's not how many greenbacks it's worth that gets it all the wrong kind of attention. Again, we'll get to that in a bit.

The important thing is that some machete-waving yahoo from the Explorers Society (or most likely one of his underlings) found the Heart in the jungles of South America, and soon after, the infamous Dr. Darius Hellstromme got his ghost-rock-stained mitts on the jewel. He immediately turned it over to a top team of his scientists, ordering them to analyze it with an eye toward figuring out how to use its rumored mystical powers (all in the name of science, of course).

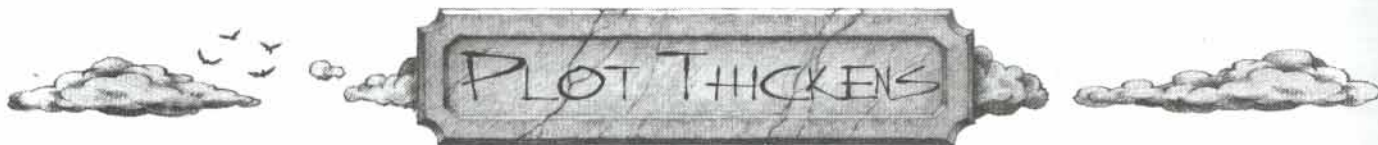
Before these people of science could figure out what the Heart is all about, they were savagely murdered. Their laboratory was sacked, and the jewel was stolen.

That's when the heroes came in.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

If the heroes played through *The Road to Hell*, they were approached by Hanuman, an Indian man (dot, not feather) in the employ of Dr. Hellstromme. They were offered a great deal of money to figure out who killed the scientists and then bring the murderers in. Of course, in the process they were supposed to recover the Heart of Darkness (which was what was most important to Hellstromme).





PLOT THICKENS

After poking around beneath the Steel Sky in the City o' Gloom (the Gentile part of town affectionately known as Junkyard), the heroes learned that an outlaw by the name of Rex Tremendae was behind the killings. Rex and his gang of deadly misfits were holed up in an old foundry on the outskirts of town.

The heroes confronted the Tremendae Gang in their hideout and, after a bitter struggle, won the day. Once the smoke cleared, though, the heroes discovered that Tremendae no longer had the Heart of Darkness in his possession.

Soon after sacking the lab, Rex sent the mysterious rock off to the City of Lost Angels by whirligig with one of his gang members, Doc Snead, to a man known only as Stone. Apparently, this same man was the person who had hired Rex and his fellows to grab the Heart of Darkness, making him the mastermind behind the whole evil plot.

LOST ANGELS, HERE WE COME!

As told in *Heart o' Darkness*, the heroes reported the Heart's location to Hanuman, who immediately hired them to get themselves to the City of Lost Angels (the home of the mysterious Reverend Ezekiah Grimme) and recover the jewel from Stone. The heroes headed off and soon found themselves in the heart of the shattered California coast, the area now known as the Great Maze (Sound familiar?).

The heroes had recovered Stone's address from Tremendae, so they immediately went to his place to confront him. When they got there, they found the place had been ransacked, and there were signs of a vicious struggle.

Questioning Stone's neighbors, the heroes learned that Reverend Grimme's elite warriors, the notorious Guardian Angels, had raided the place a few days back. Stone was home at the time, and he put up one Hell of a fight, but he was eventually overwhelmed. Last anyone heard, Stone was hauled off in chains and thrown onto the Rock.

For those of you who don't know (and shame on you if you don't—be sure to pick up *The Great Maze* boxed set to get all the dirt on the Maze, along with a good summary of Lost Angels), the Rock is the island prison sitting smack in the middle of Prosperity Bay, looking right down on Lost Angels itself. Grimme doesn't put up with a whole lot of guff in his city, and the Rock is the most obvious part of that. No one's ever escaped from the Rock, and no prisoner who's been taken there has ever left.

While the heroes were poking around, a man in an iron-bound wooden mask approaches them. This was Old Pete, who claimed to be the only person to ever have escaped from the Rock. While there, he was tortured by his captors, the flesh flayed from his face, which is why he wore a mask.

Old Pete told the heroes that if they would break into the rock and rescue a very powerful ally and "close friend" of his, a man named Stone, he could help them get the Heart of Darkness back. Little did they know that this was the last man they wanted to see right now.

Why should they do this? Old Pete explained that Heart of Darkness was being held in Grimme's private sanctum on the Rock. Stone could help them find it if they could find him, and poor ol' Stone's been framed, anyway.

The heroes fell for it—um—agreed to Old Pete's mad plan, and they soon found themselves on the Rock. They discovered Stone in a dungeon cell and rescued him, but he told them Grimme had the Heart with him and had something big—and definitely not good—planned. It was up to the heroes to stop this insane plot.

If you want to know what Stone looks like, you only have to go as far as the cover to the *Deadlands* rulebook. Yep, that's him in all his Harrowed glory. You might think it strange we've never told you anything about our cover model until now, but we've been planning this whole shebang for a long, long time.

A DARK DAY IN LOST ANGELS

The heroes (with Stone and Old Pete in tow) dashed off to the Cathedral in the center of the City of Lost Angels, only to find their efforts to reach Grimme thwarted at every turn. At the climax of the mass, a giant demon burst through a stained-glass window of the church, and he and a bunch of his smaller brethren began to slaughter the churchgoers.

Grimme and his Guardian Angels leaped to defend their flock (sure, Grimme's as evil as they come, but he wasn't ready to reveal that to the world quite yet). In the confusion, Old Pete managed to get his hands on the Heart of Darkness and escape. Stone and the heroes rendezvous with him at the Sorenson & Co. Warehouse that night in the Waterfront district of the city.

When the heroes got to the meeting place, they were surrounded by a gang of walkin' dead. Old Pete stepped from the shadows, laughing, and pulled off his mask, revealing himself to be





Stone's spitting image, right down to being Harrowed himself. With that, Stone and Old Pete ordered the heroes' deaths and left (as all good villains do).

Hopefully, the heroes survived.

THE SETUP

To play in *Fortress o' Fear*, the heroes need to start off in the City of Lost Angels. They don't necessarily need to have taken part in *The Road to Hell* and *Heart o' Darkness*, but they're probably going to have a lot more invested in seeing this adventure through if they've been with it from the start.

PICKING UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF

If the heroes have been with the *Devils Tower* trilogy from the start, then you're all set. They're already clued into the background (at least as much as they should know of it right now), and they've likely got reasons of their own to go after the Heart of Darkness. If so, just skip on down and jump right in.

STARTING IN THE MIDDLE

If your posse hasn't played through *The Road to Hell* and *Heart o' Darkness*, then you've got a bit more work to do. The easiest way to get the heroes involved is to just have them already in the City of Lost Angels for some reason.

Maybe you're fresh off "Pass the Salt," the adventure in *The Great Maze* boxed set. By a happy coincidence, that tale winds up in Lost Angels, putting the heroes right where you want them.

If the heroes aren't in Lost Angels already, get them there. Trust us, it's going to make your life a whole lot easier.

If you can't seem to come up with any real reason for your posse to wander out to Lost Angels, then you're still not entirely out of luck. The bulk of this adventure takes place in Devils Tower itself, smack dab in the heart of the Sioux Nations, after all, not Lost Angels.

Chapter Two of this book details the crazy mishaps on the road from the Great Maze to the monolith. It's going to take some work, but if you're just determined to have it your way, you can just skip over all that stuff and get right to the tower itself. Sure, you're going to miss some of the fun along the way, but if you're clever, you might be able to work some of that into the heroes' trek to Devils Tower.

THE HEART O' THE MATTER

The morning after the big battle at the end of *Heart o' Darkness*, the heroes receive a visitor. It doesn't matter if they're camping out in Ghost Town or staying in the poshest hotel in town. She finds them either way, just after dawn.

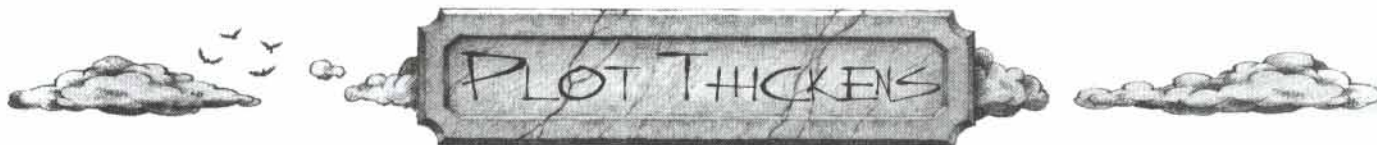
Read the following to the players:

A lone woman steps into the room. She's a striking beauty, nearly six feet tall with close-cropped blond hair. You could almost mistake her for a man if not for her obviously feminine body, which her mannish clothing (a vest, white shirt, dungarees, and boots) does little to disguise.

She strides forward confidently into the light, the several rings in her ears glittering with each step. She stops in front of you, her right hand resting casually on the grip of her holstered Gatling pistol.

"I was watching you people last night. I went after Stone as he left the place. I shot at him, but he got away clean," she says, then spits on the ground, something apparently on her mind.





"My name's Jackie Wells. I come from the year 2094, and believe it or not, I need your help."

She lets that sink in for a moment before she continues on, waving off your questions for the moment.

"I know you've probably got lots of questions. Let me finish. I'll get to them."

"Like I said, I'm from the year 2094, and I've come back to 1876 from the future to track down a servant of the Reckoners, a man who goes by the name of Stone."

"If you don't know who the Reckoners are by now, I might just be wasting my time with you. They're the folks the evil shaman Raven unleashed upon the world in 1863. They're the masters of the manitous and just about every other supernatural beast around these parts, whether it knows it or not."

"Their names are War, Pestilence, Famine, and Death."

"If you've ever gotten to the end of the Bible—you know, the part where God gets peeved—you probably recognize them. Yeah, they're the Four friggin' Horsemen of the Apocalypse."

"Anyhow, this Stone's one of their best soldiers, a real fair-haired child of destruction. In my time, well—damn."

"Look, I really don't have the time to talk about your world's future—at least a probable future—at length right now."

At this point, she reaches into her back pocket and pulls out a journal and offers it to you (Hand the players the booklet "A Primer on the Future.").

"It's all in there," she says. The eggheads made me write it all down before I left. They said it would sound more authentic if it was in my own words.

"Don't bother reading it now. It's too damn long, and we don't have the time."

"In a nutshell, the Reckoners won the war. Where I come from, the world's been pretty much entirely taken over by them. Just about every square inch of land's full of horrors you couldn't dream of on your worst night. If the Hellspawn sent by the Reckoners don't get you, the muties will."

"It's really a Hell on Earth."

"Anyhow, the human race might be down, but we're not all dead—or even Harrowed—yet. Some of us have formed an armed resistance against the Reckoners, and some days we don't get our butts kicked. The West is still a lot of wide-open spaces, and there are lots of places to hide."

"One of our most vital outposts is located right in the heart of Devils Tower. The thing's all hollow inside, and better yet, there's a portal to the Hunting Grounds right in the center of it. And we've got it—for what it's worth."

"One wise guy finally caught on. Stone came back here in time to 1876 to give the Reckoning a kick in the pants. If he can get things jumpstarted here, the Reckoners might be able to make their way to Earth even earlier, wiping out humanity before we're ready for them."

"If that happens, we're all doomed."

"The key to this whole thing is the Heart of Darkness. That rock is bad news. It's to ghost rock what a diamond is to coal. In the wrong hands, it can be used to create a Deadland—an area infused with the power of fear—in any powerfully mystical spot."

"That's what I think Grimme almost did here today (intentionally or not), but I don't think it worked. That's also what Stone's got planned for himself too, I figger. My guess is he's heading back for Devils Tower. If he can manage to turn that area into a Deadland, he scores twice."

"First, he deals a blow to the heart of the Sioux Nations, bringing about their end even earlier. Second, assuming he can maintain the place until 2094, the outpost I came from will never actually come to be."

The woman looks each of you in the eyes as she wraps up her monologue. You've never seen someone so deadly serious in your lives.

"I've missed Stone every time I've tried to track him down so far. As much as I hate to admit it, I can't do this alone. The man's too tough and wily. He didn't survive a couple hundred years as a hero-killer by being a brainer—uh, moron. You're already mixed up with this. All I can hope is that you're willing to see it through to the end."

"Are you with me?"



PLOT THICKENS



WHAT'S REALLY GONG ON

Hold on to your hat, Marshal, because you're in for one Hell of a ride.

Everything Jackie Wells is saying to the heroes is true. This is not an imaginary story. She is not delusional. (She is mad a lot of the time, but in a really angry sort of way.) And yeah, believe it or not, the Reckoners really do win the war.

For all the lowdown on this, read through "A Primer on the Future." It's guaranteed to knock your socks off. Once you're done with that, be sure to check out *Deadlands™: Hell on Earth™*, the new roleplaying game set in Jackie's future.

PUT YOUR SOCKS BACK ON

Pretty heady stuff, eh? Put down the book and go take a few deep breaths if you need them. We'll wait.

Now that the heroes know what's at stake, how could they refuse to help? Well, there are always some skeptics in every crowd. Jackie's ready for them as much as she can be.

Jackie's ace in the hole is her gun. Sure it looks like a Gatling pistol, but it's actually a full

automatic that fires caseless rounds. If she demonstrates the device, the weapon is powerful enough to shatter stone (no pun intended) or punch through an automaton's armor, and fires as quickly as a steam Gatling, with far better accuracy.

Some doubting Thomas is sure to point out that the heroes are living in a world of rapid technological development. It's entirely possible that some mad scientist developed this weapon in the present day and Jackie's just using it to back up her amazing tale.

There's also the pamphlet that Jackie's brought back with her. The printing technologies used to produce it are far beyond 1876 capabilities. Still, that may be a subtle point for many cowpokes.

There's just no helping people from Missouri. The truth is so fantastic they're never going to believe until they see the future themselves.

That's fine. Jackie points out that whether or not the heroes believe her, they still want Stone and the Heart of Darkness. She knows where they are, and she's leaving to go after them right now. She could use their help, but she's heading out either way.

PLOT THICKENS

DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR GAME

Hey, just because the world's coming to an end doesn't mean it's all bad news.

Deadlands: Hell on Earth is one possible future for *Deadlands: The Weird West*.

Even after *Fortress o' Fear* is over, *The Weird West* will still be around. Sure, the way things are going, it looks like the Reckoners will eventually win, but it doesn't have to be that way.

So what's going to make the difference between salvation and damnation? The heroes, that's who, and now the heroes know exactly what the stakes are.

All this leads into our brand-new *Deadlands: Hell on Earth* game, and at the end of this adventure, the heroes (if they've been good or lucky enough) are going to get to make a choice. Should they continue the fight here in the *Weird West*, or should they take the battle to the Reckoners in the *Wasted West* of *Hell on Earth*?

MAJOR PLAYERS

There are only two extras that really come into play throughout the entire adventure, and they're real doozies.

JACKIE WELLS

Jackie's a hard woman who's had a hard life, but that doesn't stop her from having a sense of humor. When she's not perforating bad guys, she's cracking dirty jokes that'll make the raunchiest of cowpokes blush. She grew up in a world ruled by the Reckoners, and she's been fighting them since she was old enough to point a gun. Despite this, she's still an optimist.

Jackie's sunny outlook stems from her overwhelming self-confidence. Her self-confidence is justified as well, she's very competent but she also won't let her pride stand in the way of completing her mission (which is where the posse comes in). To her mind, there's little she can't do, and that includes doing the Reckoners some harm—she knows she's on the

mission of her life here. If she can grab the Heart of Darkness, she's sure to deal a blow to the Reckoners' plans, and to her mind, that's worth any risk. The continuation of the human race is at stake here, and if she plays her cards right, she might even prevent the apocalypse.

Jackie doesn't put up with whiners, her standard rebuff to any gripes starts out, "You think you've got it bad here?"

When roleplaying Jackie, think of her like a condescending older sister. In 1876, she often feels like she's trapped among primitives, no matter how sharp or powerful they may be. There are few problems she figures she can't solve with a few well-placed bullets. It galls her that she needs to ask some of the locals for help, but she grudgingly admits to herself that at least she's fallen in with some of the best people she could find.

PROFILE

Jackie's stats aren't listed here for a good reason. We don't want her to get killed off.

She's a plot device, and she's important to moving the storyline along.

In combat, assume Jackie's a fearless dynamo. She can take out about one opponent with every round (deal her 1d4+1 cards each round, just to make things seem like they're on the up-and-up). The trick here is to balance battles so that the heroes don't come to rely on her too much.

Jackie's gun is basically a Gatling pistol that fires caseless ammo. Treat this just like a regular Gatling pistol, except it's got a Rate of Fire of 6, and it doesn't have a Reliability rating. It's just as reliable as any regular weapon.

She's got plenty of ammo for the length of the adventure, but she starts running short toward the end. She has enough to get her through to the end, but the player's don't have to know that. Have her gripe about running low from time to time, just to emphasize in one more way how desperate the situation is.

STONE

According to some folks, this man's where the phrase "stone-cold killer" came from—and if not, it should've been.

Stone started out just like most of the rest of us, but somewhere along the line he turned into one evil son of a bitch. As Captain Jasper Stone of the Confederate Army, he was at the battle of Gettysburg with the 13th Alabama when the Reckoning slapped the world in the face, and he was killed that same day—by his own men.



PLOT THICKENS



The soldiers under him decided they'd rather risk a court-martial for insubordination than follow Stone's suicidal orders. When he pulled his sidearm on them, they figured nobody would miss another Confederate officer in the disastrous Battle of Gettysburg.

The first thing Stone did when he sat back up on that blood-soaked battlefield was hunt down each and everyone of his men—all went down with bullets in their brains.

Although he's Harrowed, Stone's got complete Dominion over his manitou. This is a gift directly from the Reckoners. They looked into his soul and realized this crafty devil's spirit was blacker than any manitou's, so they put him in charge of his body for good.

Being over 250 years old, Stone's seen a lot of death in his time, mostly spat from the barrel of his own guns. It doesn't bother him at all. He usually plugs his victims right in the brain-bucket, so they don't dig themselves out of the boneyard to come after him.

Even though Stone's a killing machine, he's not vicious about it. To him, killing another person's like swatting a fly. You don't do it because you're afraid of the fly. You do it to make the damn thing stop buzzing.

Of course, that doesn't mean he doesn't enjoy pulling the wings off a fly from time to time. A man's got to have hobbies, after all.

Stone tries to fit into the Weird West as much as possible. He didn't get to be 250 years old by being foolish. He does his best to blend in and to try not to attract too much attention.

This in mind, he relies almost entirely on his trusty Colt Walkers. Not only are they in common use in 1876, but he knows that if they get damaged or lost, they can always be fixed or replaced. Only when he's in trouble, or there are no witnesses (aside from the victim) will he call upon his Harrowed powers to cut down his enemies or *ghost* himself away from the scene to kill another day.

When roleplaying Stone, think sociopathic serial killer. Human life means absolutely nothing to him. All he's interested in is furthering the cause of the Reckoners. They've made him immortal, after all, and given power beyond his wildest dreams. He's willing to fight to keep it.

Stone's the farthest thing from cackling mad though. Perhaps the creepiest thing about him is how damned serious and deadpan he can be. He doesn't talk about killing someone, he just shoots her—and he usually goes for overkill (just to be sure).

PROFILE

Stone's as much of a plot device as Jackie is, possibly more so. If you really want to heighten tension, Jackie could meet her Maker at some point in the story (preferably at the hands of Stone, illustrating just how lethal he actually is), leaving the posse responsible for getting the Heart of Darkness to Jackie's friends across the Hunting Grounds. Stone, on the other hand, is entirely off-limits. This goes for both the young and old versions.

Stone's *two-fisted* (check out the *Deadlands: The Weird West* cover to see him in action), and he's got access to any Harrowed power he wants at level 5. There's little that can stop him.

HOW TOUGH DO YOU WANT IT?

One of the hardest things to do when preparing an adventure is making sure that it's going to be challenging for a broad group of players. There's just no way for us to guess at how a single posse is going to handle the adventure, much less the people you play with.

So we're looking to you, Marshal, to even things out.

Make no mistake about it: *Fortress o' Fear* is meant to be tough. In fact, if run properly, it's likely that many heroes in your posse aren't going to survive the adventure.

That's fine. A little death among the heroes helps to heighten the tension, to raise the stakes that much further. When the hero next to yours dies, the game's no longer just about saving the world. It's about personal survival as well.

That said, there's no way for us to make sure this adventure is tough enough for your posse. The posse is definitely outmatched, but Jackie Wells is there to even things out a bit. The way *Fortress o' Fear* is written, it should be plenty tough for all but the most experienced of posses. If you've got that kind of a bunch rolling through your show, then it's up to you to make things even tougher.

The other side of this coin, of course, is you've got to be fair. There's little point in massacring hero after hero, sending the players scurrying back to their rulebooks to come up with new heroes to try to save the day yet again.

As mentioned before, this adventure is for experienced heroes. New heroes are likely going to get their heads handed to them. If your players are making up new heroes for this tale, suggest to them that they take the *veteran o' the Weird West* edge. They're going to need all the help they can get.

PLOT THICKENS





CHAPTER TWO: ON THE ROAD AGAIN



This part of the adventure takes the heroes from Lost Angels, across the salt flats of Utah, and back to the City o' Gloom. From there (if things go like they should), they head straight out for the Sioux Nations and end up at their ultimate destination: Devils Tower itself.

Of course, getting there is half the fun.

TIME WAITS FOR NO ONE

Once Jackie convinces the heroes she's telling the truth (or at least that they should follow after Stone with her anyhow), she and the heroes should have a chance to talk. If anyone mentions anything about Old Pete and Stone being the same man, she scowls.

Read the players the following:

"That explains it. You see, we knew someone was helpin' ol' Stone out—but never suspected he was helping out himself. I guess he's found another one of those portals to the Hunting Grounds.

That black-hearted scavvie-shagger has gotten in our face at every turn back home. It always seemed like he could be in more than one place at once. I guess he really was. Pretty trippy.

"Anyway, Stone—and I guess Old Pete as well—are as Harrowed as they come. Some say he was the first of the Harrowed. Others claim he's just the first that was

evil enough to put his manitou to shame. Course, no one knows for sure but Stone and the Reckoners, and they're not talking.

"Anyhow, just because a man's Harrowed doesn't mean he's not dead, and the dead don't get any deader, if you know what I mean. It's a rough kind of immortality, but it gets the job done if living forever's all you care about. The eggheads tell me Stone was likely born somewhere around 1830, but he's still around in 2094. At least he was until he made the jump back here.

"We knew Stone had his hands on the Heart of Darkness at one point or another in his past. He used the friggin' thing to turn Devil's Tower into a Deadland. When he first got back here, he must have looked his old self up to find it again. That might explain a lot about his timing.

"You see, time travel's not all its cracked up to be. You don't just hop into a machine, flick a few dials, and end up at whatever time you want. It's not that simple. It never is.

"In fact, time travel's one of the hardest things a person can do. First, you got to figure out a way to get into the Hunting Grounds. And I don't mean just sending your spirit off into the ether like the shamans you've got around these parts. Nope, you have to get yourself there bodily.



"That's not a simple thing, even in 2094. I don't know how Stone got here, but the gate I came through I thought was the only one that existed, 'a supernatural phenomenon' or some such geek-speak.

"Once you get there your troubles are just beginning. If you've ever been in the Hunting Grounds, you know what I mean. Then you've got to find yourself another portal out, and most times this is as dangerous to get out of as the first one was to get in through.

If I wouldn't have had the beam to follow through the Hunting Grounds, it would have taken me a lot longer than a day to find my way out, in fact, I may have never made it out. Even with the beam, I lost my dog, Shane, who was a few feet behind me. Believe it or not a giant, flaming bird flew off with him. One of these days, I'm going to go back and get that friggin' bird...

"It can't be just any portal. Most only let you move from one place to another. It's a rare one that lets you step through time.

"The strange part is a portal drops you off at a point in time that's linked to the time you left. If I leave on a certain date in 2094, I end up on the same date in 1876. If a day passes here in 1876, a day passes in 2094 too, and it stays linked that way.

"This means I can't just go back to 2094, then come back here three days earlier. Time marches on, and it's pretty darn reluctant to bend its rules for anyone, no matter which side you're on.

"Anyhow, 'Old Pete's' got to be the older version of Stone. 'Pete' means rock, you know. It's a bad joke, and he was just waving it in your face.

A STONE BY ANY OTHER NAME

The next question that likely leaps to mind is: Which Stone should the heroes be going after?

According to Jackie, that's a simple choice. If a hero brings up this issue, read the following:

"There's really no choice. We go after Stone." Jackie cracks a wry grin as she realizes what she's said.

"I mean, we go after Old Pete. He's got the Heart of Darkness, I'm sure of it. Hell, the two Stones might be together still for all I know, but if they split up, we follow the rock.

TIME EXPRESS

A sharp hero might point out that the posse could kill either one of the Stones and put an end to the problem, Heart of Darkness or not. Why not go after the younger (and presumably less powerful) one? If so, read the following:

Jackie laughs bitterly. "Well, I'm still kind of confused myself about how this time travel thing works, and I'm no brainer... but what I'm trying to say is—I don't know if that would work. That's not the worst part, either.

"The eggheads back home aren't sure that turning Devils Tower into a Deadland was what turned the tide in the Reckoner's favor, and now that I know about ol' Petey, I'm not sure myself. It'll hurt em' though, and I don't know if all of us together are tough enough to take out Stone. So we'll just do what we can."

THE RACE BEGINS

No matter what, the first problem the heroes face is figuring out where the Heart of Darkness is. Jackie's studied Stone's methods. She knows he's not interested in attracting attention, and he's not likely to rely on something as prone to disaster as a steam wagon. He knows what powers the things after all.

She predicts that Stone's heading straight for Devils Tower, likely riding hard to the nearest railhead. They should do the same. Even if they somehow miss Stone on the trail, they know his ultimate destination is Devils Tower. If, by some stretch of the imagination, they can get there before he does, then they might even have time to set a trap for him.

The real advantage the heroes have right now is Stone thinks they're dead at the hands of his underlings. Also, he has no idea Jackie Wells has followed him into the past. Even if the heroes did manage to survive his underlings' attack, Stone's got no reason to think they'd have any idea where to look for him.

He thinks he's in the clear, but that doesn't stop him from riding like the Reckoners were chewing on his horse's tail. He heads straight out for Devils Tower at top speed.

This chapter is full of different types of encounters that the heroes can have with Stone on their way to Devils Tower. You don't have to run every one of the encounters. We're just trying to help you cover all the bases.

WHO'S GOT THE HEART?

Throughout the following series of encounters, the Heart of Darkness is bound to change hands several times. Each of the encounters is written as if Stone has the Heart, since that's the more likely situation. He's one tenacious killer (even death couldn't stop him!), and he's not going to give up the jewel easily.

If Stone does end up losing the Heart to the heroes at some point, he immediately does his level best to get it back. With his powers, this shouldn't be too tough, but it can make for some really dramatic scenes.

Stone could, for example, use his *ghost* power to slip into a locked room and take the Heart while the heroes sleep. Or he could use his *death mask* power to impersonate members of the posse so he can infiltrate them without anyone suspecting, then walk off with the Heart at any time.

In the end though, he'll face down the heroes with both six-shooters blazin' if all of his other tricks fail him. Besides, a bullet in the brain-bucket is the only way to make sure they don't come back to bother him again.

TRAITOR IN OUR MIDST

Stone could even kill off one of the heroes and take her place, just so he can observe the heroes without much fear of discovery. He's got all the time in the world, after all, and he's learned to be cautious over the years. A bit of trickery often goes a lot farther than a bullet.

If Stone tries this, remember that *death mask* only lasts as long as he maintains concentration on it. He can manage this for hours at a time, as long as nothing happens to distract him.

In the middle of a fight, for instance, Stone is likely to drop the *death mask* and just start fighting like Hell. Maintaining a disguise just isn't worth his life.

Also, Stone's got to rest for a few hours every night. While he does this, the *death mask* comes down, so he goes to great lengths to ensure that he's not discovered while he sleeps.

FUTURE SHOCK

For the first part of the adventure, Stone's not really all that interested in killing the heroes. They're a lot more amusing to him alive. He's faced tougher foes in his long life (or so he believes), and he's fairly certain he can handle them in a fight—fair or preferably not.

If and when Stone realizes that Jackie Wells is from the future, his attitude toward the heroes changes. Up until that point, he just sees them as pawns of Hellstromme, after him only because they're being paid to recover the gem their employer so desperately wants. Once he learns they're allied with his enemies in 2094, he sees them as a real threat.

That's when Stone goes from malevolent trickster to cold-blooded killer.

Of course, Jackie knows this, and she's careful not to let it slip. She also cautions the heroes against talking about it at all if they can help it.

Being from the future can be a dangerous thing to advertise about yourself. Jackie's got a job to do, and she doesn't have time to waste with every yahoo who wants to talk ancient history with her. She's trying to keep a low profile, and having herself proclaimed "Woman from the Future!" would not help her case.

BREAKING THE HEART

The Heart can change hands several times throughout the journey. It doesn't really matter who's got it, as long as it makes it to Devils Tower eventually.



Of course, once the heroes get their hands on the gem, getting to Devils Tower is likely the last thing they've got in mind. They're probably thinking of getting their butts back to the City o' Gloom so they can collect the reward from Hellstromme.

Jackie can't let that happen. She's bound and determined to get the rock to Devils Tower herself.

Since that's exactly where Stone wants to bring the Heart so he can pull off his ceremony to turn the area into a Deadland, Jackie's demand is bound to make some heroes suspicious. They don't know a whole lot about the woman, after all.

If this happens, read the following to the players:

Jackie stops and looks you each in the eye.

"I didn't bust my hump to come back to this ass-backward time and chase this frickin' demon across half the continent just so you skeezers can turn this thing in to Hellstromme for cash. You do know he's responsible for blowing up the world, right? Anything in the name of science

and all that crap. Your employer's working for the wrong side, muchachos, sorry to be the one to have to break it to you.

"Do you have any idea what we're really up against here? We're talking about the survival of humanity. If we fail here, we're talking about possibly total extinction."

Jackie takes a moment to compose herself, then continues on.

"The Heart of Darkness must be destroyed, and you know what? The thing's darn near indestructible. This isn't your average rock. Just think about how hard a regular diamond is. Then try to imagine how hard a diamond made from ghost rock would be.

"Even if you could break the thing, that might not be enough. Even the dust from the damned thing could be dangerous.

"There's nothing in this world that could destroy it completely—at least not yet. In my time, there's hope, a slim chance we could do it. At the very least, we could be sure it wasn't back here in 1876 when Stone could use it to alter history as we know it—for the worse.

"The only way to get back to the future is through that portal in Devils Tower. The eggheads in my time have got a homing beacon that they're fired through it from 2094 to 1876. That's how I found my way here, and that's how I can get home.

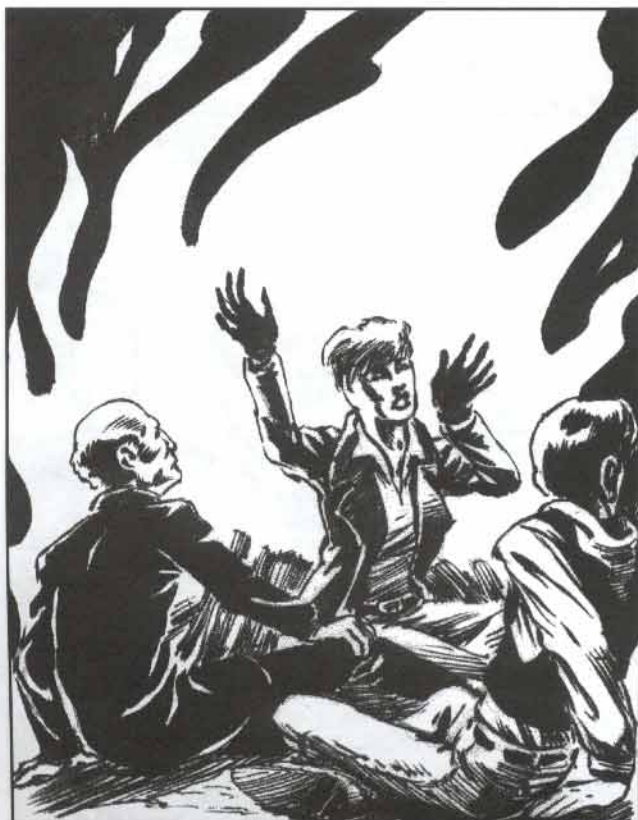
"Maintaining the beam sucks a tremendous amount of power, though, and they can't keep it up forever. We're running against the clock here, folks. If I don't get that damned diamond back to the heart of Devils Tower by the end of the month, the beacon will be down, and my chances of ever finding my way back home are shot to Hell."

Jackie gives you a sarcastic grin.

"So, do you folks still want to drop the gem off with Hellstromme Industries, and doom the world, or are you with me?"

A THREE-WAY RACE

Of course, some players are just plain stubborn. They may come up with all sorts of schemes to turn the Heart over to Hellstromme and then somehow steal it back. They may decide they don't give a rat's rear end about a future that—even according to Jackie herself—might not even happen to their world. Or they might just not believe her.





ON THE ROAD



If the heroes really aren't willing to help Jackie save the world, she takes matters into her own hands. At first she acts like she understands their decision and she's willing to compromise, to work with them until they can come to some kind of understanding.

Then, the first decent chance she gets, she steals the Heart of Darkness and takes off for Devils Tower on her own. If they catch up to her, the only real way to stop her is with a bad case of lead poisoning, although Jackie will not fight the posse unless it is absolutely necessary.

This means that the following encounters can now take place between the heroes and Stone, the heroes and Jackie, or all three. (Don't worry about encounters between Jackie and Stone alone. They can happen "off-screen" if you like, but if the heroes aren't involved, you should just decide who you want to have the gem and give it to him or her.)

Try to steer the heroes away from this route if you can, since it makes things a whole lot more complicated. Besides, what kind of heroes are they if they refuse to help save the world?

THAT DUSTY TRAIL

Stone doesn't have to rest much (the Reckoners didn't entirely relieve him of that requirement though—they need some time each day to remind him who his bosses are, and the night terrors they send him work just fine), but his horse doesn't have the same luxury. Not wanting to attract any attention on the trail with a rotting horse, he's stuck with a live one.

Stone pushes his horse to its limits, but never past. You can assume the heroes are going to do the same. If that's the case, they're never going to catch him on this leg of the journey. You might as well skip ahead to the next section.

However, if the heroes have some faster means of transportation, they're likely to use that instead of a pack of horses. If so, there's a fair chance they're going to catch up with Stone before he makes the railhead. If so, the encounter should run something like this.

STONE, I PRESUME

Stone's not really all that interested in having anything to do with anyone while he's on the trail by his lonesome. He knows the place is infested with bandits and worse. He doesn't have much to fear from such assailants, but they are distractions that waste his time and squander his energies.

Still, if the heroes catch up with him, Stone treats them politely enough (even if he knows them from the events that transpired in *Heart o' Darkness*). He figures it's easier to talk to intruders than to start an all-out battle with them. He plans on killing them all in their sleep though, given half a chance. If they get violent, he returns in kind.

Jackie knows Stone by reputation only, never having laid eyes on him before. Stone, on the other hand, doesn't have a clue who Jackie is. He may have heard tell of her exploits in 2094, but he's got absolutely no idea what she looks like. Also, he's got no reason to suspect that anyone else might have come from the future into the past, so he's hardly expecting her.

Eventually the heroes are going to confront Stone and attempt to take the Heart of Darkness from him. They're welcome to try—sometimes the best way to teach humility is with a good butt-whuppin'.

Stone's not particularly willing to cooperate, of course. If things really seem to be going against him, Stone raises a *hell wind* at level 5 and rides the whirlwind away. This means he's got to leave his horse behind, and that he's likely going to attract a lot more attention, but getting away is more important to him than those secondary concerns.

FAST TRAIN TO HELL

Stone hops a stage coach across the Sierra Nevadas and gets on the first train out of Wilson, a small town in southern Utah, the nearest railhead that leads to the City o' Gloom. He heads straight for Salt Lake City, figuring from there he can make it across the Rockies to the Sioux Nations and his ultimate goal: Devils Tower.

Stone pumps himself full of liquor to pickle his corpse, and he does his best to fit in with the living passengers. Unfortunately, there are no private compartments on this train, so he's forced to ride with the rest of the passengers in a regular car. He stuffs the gem in the bottom of his saddlebags, which he hangs from the hook over his seat.

Stone's not much of a conversationalist, and he manages to scare off any potential traveling companions with a scowl and a not-so-subtle exposure of his shooting irons. Eventually, everyone near him decides sitting on the other side of the train would be best for all concerned, and he soon finds himself alone, just the way he likes it to be.





ON THE ROAD

ALL ABOARD!

Getting on the train is the heroes' first priority. If they happen to catch up with Stone before the train leaves the station, then they're all set. All they have to do is find the man and figure out the best time to make their move.

Otherwise, they've got to catch the train somehow—which is a lot easier said than done. If the heroes ride into town on exhausted horses, they've got little chance of catching up with the train. Their best bet is to grab the next train and hope to catch up with Stone in the City o' Gloom.

Of course, there's always another way. Heroes with access to things like steam wagons or other vehicles could stand a good chance of catching the train. After all, the train's got to make stops to pick up passengers and the like. Also, it's a coal-burner, so it's got to stop for fuel more often than a ghost rock-burner.

A posse with fast, fresh horses might have a chance of catching the train too, but the heroes are likely going to have to pick those up in town if they're coming in just after the train leaves (which is dramatically appropriate).

You can have the train leave any time that works for you. Rail schedules this far into the frontier are as irregular as a soiled dove's dance card.

It's the most fun if Stone manages to get out of town before the heroes have a chance to stop him. The station master remembers Stone well if anyone thinks to ask about him. Stone's not the kind of person you forget, even when he's trying to blend in. "Those kinda eyes leave an impression on a man," says the station master, a shiver running down his spine.

Then the heroes have to chase the train across the desert, hoping to catch it before it gets to Salt Lake City. Jackie points out that they may never have a better chance to recover the Heart. Once Stone gets to the City o' Gloom, he can blend in with the crowd, and they may never find him. There are few places to hide on a moving train, and even fewer places to go once they've got him cornered.

FOLLOW THAT TRAIN!

Wilson isn't much of a town, but as a center of transportation in the area, it's got a few amenities you might only expect to find in a city 10 times its size. Case in point, it's got a mad scientist collective that's experimenting with passenger aircraft.

The collective is headed up by Professor Ethan Standish, a reedy man with curly gray hair and a wild look in his pale blue eyes. Standish is well-known by everyone in town, and he's avoided by those who know better. He's got bills posted up all over the place—especially near the train station—that offer to take people from Wilson to Salt Lake City in half the time of a train, for only \$50 each.

The only trick, of course, is that the passengers have to ride in a large wicker basket suspended under Standish's massive, custom-built auto-gyro. If the heroes can put up with the rickety ride and the price, though—as well as putting their lives in the hands of a pilot that's seen more hours in a barroom than behind the controls of the auto-gyro—then they may just have found the answer to their prayers.

If the heroes explain to Standish that they need to catch the train that just left town, he just laughs and says, "Catch it? My good people, we can pass it right by."

If the heroes further explain that they need to actually get on the train, Standish refuses to help them. He simply can't understand why anyone would have anything to do with a train when they can ride in his super-gyro. He further explains how he will not endanger his creation with any such tomfoolery, even if McCormick is the best pilot in the west.

The pilot, though—a daredevil by the name of Carter McCormick—is a bit more understanding. He overhears the argument between the heroes and Standish and intervenes.

"Don't you worry yerselves, folks," he says in his lilting Irish brogue. With a wink he tells them, "Ol' Ethan here just wants us to be careful with his bird. It's his pride and joy, to be sure."

With a devilish grin, he adds, "Don't worry, lads. Just pony up the fee Ethan's looking for. I'll get ye where ye want ta be goin'."

McCormick's as good as his word. He's a fantastic pilot (*drivin': auto-gyro 4d10*), and he actually likes to take risks. If there aren't too many heroes, McCormick offers to ditch the passenger basket, as it slows the super-gyro's Pace down to about 30 (it's normally 50).

The super-gyro seats four comfortably (including the pilot), although two more could probably squeeze in if they really wanted to. This makes for a pretty uncomfortable ride for all concerned, though, and the extra passengers have to make Fair (5) *Strength* rolls to hold on every time McCormick tries any fancy flying (like evading bullets).



ON THE ROAD

McCormick's willing and able to hover right over the train and let the heroes down on to the roof of any car by means of a good, thick rope. If he's got the basket (which holds up to eight people total), he might even be talked into setting the whole basket down on a thundering train. He refuses to try to set the auto-gyro down on the train, though. He's foolhardy and daring, not suicidal.

Of course, he's also capable of being swayed with cash or a really good story. If the heroes offer him enough cash or even just a tale he can get his heart behind, he'd even be willing to set his craft down a top a likely-looking box car. This is a Hard (9) task—or an Incredible (11) task if he has to set it down with the basket still attached—but McCormick's willing to give it a go for the right reasons.

Getting on to the train from a rope requires an Onerous (7) *Nimbleness* roll. If this is missed, the hero can hold on to the rope and try again on her next action. If the roll's a bust, the hero falls on to the train and must make a Hard (9) *Nimbleness* roll or fall off the train. In addition to the falling damage, the hero then takes 6d6 *brawlin'* damage for the tumble she takes when she hits the ground at speed.

RIDING THE RAILS

The train itself is only 10 cars long. There's the engine, the coal car, four box cars (these are locked—if anyone breaks into them, they only find foodstuffs and fairly uninteresting dry goods), three passenger cars, and the caboose.

The passenger cars aren't even half full. There are only 40 people on the train. Of these, there are 15 in each of the first two cars, and there are only 10 in the car in which Stone's riding.

Once the heroes get on the train, they've got to find Stone and get the Heart from him. If they come by means of auto-gyro, Stone hears them coming, and he's ready for them.

Because he's a paranoid old bugger, Stone assumes the people in the auto-gyro are coming for him, but the rest of the people in the train don't know that. Stone starts shouting about how someone's trying to rob the train, and then he smashes out his window and lets loose at the heroes with a hail of lead (10d12+10 *shootin'*, but don't shoot the players down unless they're being really stupid, just scare em').

Up to six other armed passengers join in the fun (depending on the numbers of heroes—there shouldn't be more than one armed passenger per





hero). When McCormick sees Stone bust a window, he knows what's coming and centers the auto-gyro right over the train. Stone's the only one gung-ho enough to actually lean far enough out of the train to get a clear shot at the heroes. The rest of the gunmen are just there to make noise and keep the heroes on their toes.

These gunmen are just trying to protect themselves and their fellow travelers, so the heroes should be careful with them (unless they're into slaughtering innocents). Stone, on the other hand, is happy to hide behind human shields.

In fact, if the heroes get too close to him, Stone hauls a woman from under one of the seats and takes her hostage, putting her body between him and the heroes. If the heroes hesitate at this point, Jackie takes charge and shoots the hostage.

The shot goes clean through the hostage's shoulder and hits Stone in the right arm and he drops that gun. She levels her gun at Stone. "This gun's got bullets that can take care of your kind just fine," she growls. Then she points the gun directly in his face. "And I know exactly where to put them. Now tell me: Where's the rock?"

Dropping his other pistol to the ground, Stone looks up at his saddlebags and—patting them—laughs. "You want it so much," he smiles coldly, "you can have it. And all you got to do is take it."

When her eyes follow his up to his to look at the saddlebags, quicker than lightning he knocks her gun arm to one side, then reaches out and lifts her off the ground by her neck. He starts sucking her life away with his *soul eater* power.

Hopefully one of the heroes steps in at this point. At the sign of any potentially lethal attack, Stone switches to his *ghost* power, then steps back, laughing coldly again. "You can't hurt me, but I can hurt you," he sneers.

"Wrong again, corpse." Jackie coughs out as she lets loose a blast with her gun. Even though Stone's *ghosted*, the bullets stitch across his chest as if he was solid. The bullets knock Stone's intangible body straight back and down through the floor of the train. Before he knows it, he's lying in the middle of the tracks, a half mile behind the speeding train.

The bullets that hit him are imbedded in the floor of the train, still as tangible as ever.

Upon investigation of Stone's saddlebags the heroes find the old Harrowed was telling the truth. They've got the Heart of Darkness in their hands.

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes catch up with Stone: 2 points.

The heroes recover the Heart of Darkness: 5 points.

The heroes help the injured hostage 1 point.

The heroes avoided harming any innocents 1 point.

HOT TIME IN THE CITY O' GLOOM

Having left Stone in the middle of the desert, hoofing it after a train speeding off into the distance, the heroes may think they're in the clear. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Stone, after dusting himself off, moves off the tracks and sets himself down in the sand—not really the best idea in these parts, but the worms like their meat fresh anyway—and uses his *soul flight* ability to invisibly follow the train. He sticks around until the posse mentions something that will tip him off to their plans, like "Whew, that was close! Now all we have to do is get the gem to Devil's Tower..." Then he goes back to his body and high-tails it after the heroes, assured in the fact that he knows where their final destination is.

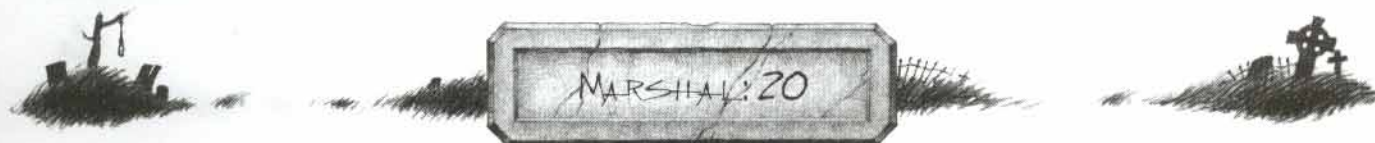
If the heroes poke around in Stone's saddlebags some more, they find Stone's wallet. This handsomely made bit of leatherworking is full of cash, about \$500 worth in Union bills.

It's also got a piece of one of Stone's molars sewn into a secret pocket—a small piece, but large enough to feel if someone is actively searching. If any of the heroes holds onto the wallet, they're making a big mistake. From here on out, Stone can follow her wherever she goes by means of his *trackin' teeth* power.

Stone hops the heel-toe express and ends up in the next town along the way hours behind the heroes. The train has already long since left. He noses around a bit and finds himself a windrigger, a kind of platform on wheels with a sail stabbing right out of the middle of it.

Folks with more time than sense use these things to get around the salt flats of Utah. Most times, the wind's up and you can outrun a salt rattler (a smaller cousin of the notorious Mojave variety) on one of these things. When the wind dies, though, you'd better pray it finds you again before one of those giant worms does.

So Stone steals a windrigger. (Trust us, you don't really want to know what happens to the rightful owner. Stone's mean enough when he's



in a good mood, and he's a long sight from that today.) Soon enough, he's blazing along the flats on his way to the City o' Gloom and another rendezvous with the heroes and Fate.

Just because Stone manages to get to Salt Lake City in a timely manner doesn't mean he finds the heroes, of course.

There are two ways this can go.

LIKE SHIPS IN THE NIGHT

If the heroes were smart enough to ditch Stone's wallet or don't have his piece of tooth on him for any other reason, then he's basically got no chance of finding them. He realizes this quickly, and he gets himself set for a trip to Devils Tower.

After his confrontation with Jackie, Stone knows she's from the future. He also guesses that she's going to try to bring the gem back to the future with her. If that's the case, eventually she's going to have to go through the portal in Devils Tower. When she does, he plans on being there waiting for her.

To prepare himself, Stone robs a bank in the middle of the night, using his Harrowed powers to slip in and out without anyone the wiser. With the money, he hires a one-man auto-gyro so he can fly himself straight into the Sioux Nations.

At this point, he's not too worried about attracting attention, since he doesn't have the Heart to protect. He just needs to get to Devils Tower as quickly as possible to make sure that Jackie doesn't beat him there and escape into the future.

He's not entirely desperate yet, though. He knows what's awaiting the heroes when they reach the tower, and that's going to slow them down for sure.

PICKPOCKET BLUES

If you really don't want Stone to catch up with the heroes yet, run the following encounter.

The heroes arrive in Salt Lake City in one piece. Jackie keeps the Heart of Darkness on herself at all times. To her, this is nonnegotiable. She's grateful to the heroes for their help, but she doesn't trust anyone else to hold the fate of the future in their hands.

The heroes are welcome to any of Stone's other possessions if they like. There's not a whole lot in his saddlebags. There's his wallet, a half-dozen fifths of whiskey, and a few pounds of dried meat.



If a hero keeps Stone's wallet (not to mention the contents), he's a marked man. Stone's going to track him down eventually unless he somehow loses the wallet.

Fortunately, one of the friendly citizens of the City o' Gloom is willing to help the hero out with this particular predicament. Sandy Swanson (a greasy little kid who grew up most her life in Junkyard, wearing a bandanna over her mouth and crawling around in the Steel Sky) waits until one of the heroes is about to turn a corner and then bumps into him.

"Scuse me, mister," she offers as she transfers Stone's wallet from the hero's possession to her own (*slight o' hand* 3d10). If the hero notices the lift, Sandy takes off like a bat out of Hell, laughing the whole way. She shouts taunts as she zigzags through the streets, like "Yer gonna hafta run faster than that, ya old fart!" Otherwise, she simply saunters calmly away smirking until out of sight, then she runs until she reaches the safety of Junkyard.

If the hero does notice, there's bound to be a big chase through the streets of the City o' Gloom. If they're not already in Junkyard, Sandy heads there as quickly as possible. Once there,



she climbs into the Steel Sky and tries to lose the heroes. If she makes it that far, the heroes might as well give up. She's been crawling around in the pipes and wires since she could walk, and they've got almost no chance of catching her there in the crowded and confusing streets.

Once she gets away, Sandy plucks the cash out of the wallet and then tosses the empty thing down the nearest chimney. As an experienced thief, she knows better than to hang on to that kind of evidence. Wallets are a lot easier to identify than dollar bills.

Stone eventually finds his tooth in the ashes of someone's fireplace or stove. This is not going to make him happy, and you can bet the residents of this unfortunate place are going to be the ones to pay.

If the heroes catch Sandy, she hands back the wallet and begs for mercy, "Don't hurt me mister! I wuz just joshin' with ya. After my pa died, we didn't have any food ta eat and all." They can hand her over to the local law if they like. The deputies are only too happy to haul her away.

Unfortunately, then they're still stuck with the wallet, and that's really bad.


ALWAYS LOSE THE WALLET

If the heroes still have the wallet, they're going to regret it. Stone's got a bead on them, and he's coming straight for them with both guns blazing.


Stone can sense how close he is to his missing tooth, as well as which direction it's in, but his power doesn't show him the best path to the tooth. It's up to him to figure that out on his own. That's the only thing that gives the heroes a fighting chance—that and the fact Stone needs them alive if he's going to find the Heart of Darkness again.

Soon after the heroes roll into town, Jackie holes up in a hotel room in Junkyard (she claims this part of town reminds her most of home). The sun's going down, so leaving town again today is shot. She's planning on lying low and then hiring transportation out of town first thing in the morning—if Stone has his way, she'll never get the chance.

What happens that night depends on the heroes—in particular, the hero who has Stone's wallet. If that hero hunkers down at the hotel, that's where Stone finds her. If she opts instead to check out the nightlife in Junkyard, then Stone's going to catch up with her in the streets beneath the Steel Sky.



ON THE ROAD



WAKE-UP CALL

If the hero with the wallet stays at the hotel, Stone comes calling late that night. He *ghosts* his way through the room's door, guns drawn, and starts demanding whoever's there to tell him where the Heart of Darkness is.

Chances are good Stone's going to get the drop on the heroes, even if they set a watch. The real question now is: How are they going to survive the night?

The heroes have a couple things on their side. First, it's pretty likely that the whole posse isn't bedding down in one room. Jackie, for instance, refuses to share a room with any men. She's had too many rough encounters with men in 1876 already, and she's not looking to push her luck. She's willing to split a room with any female members of the posse, but that's it.

If the heroes being accosted by Stone can somehow manage to alert their friends to Stone's presence, they could get some help from that quarter.

Similarly, the proprietor of the hotel is a massive, well-armed man named Andy Heisler. Andy's not one to put up with any sort of funny business in his place, certainly not a Harrowed from the future killing his paying guests.

Andy's a light sleeper too. He hears Stone shuffling through the place, looking for the room with his wallet in it. Andy waits for the intruder to enter a room, then tiptoes up to the threshold and waits there, listening at the door. At the appropriate moment, he bursts in, a double-barreled scattergun in his hands, ready to put an end to any trouble.

In the end, it's up to the heroes to get away. They might be able to do it by tossing the Heart of Darkness out the window and scrambling while Stone goes for the gem, but Jackie's certainly not going to be happy with that solution.

Heroes who decide to fight Stone toe to toe are destined to lose. Jackie should have made this clear to them by now, but she repeats it if no one's clear on it. She got lucky with him before, and she can't count on it again.

NIGHT LIFE

If Stone catches up with the heroes in the streets of Junkyard, though, it's a whole different story. With an Incredible (II) *Cognition* roll, a hero can spot him coming. Stone uses his *death mask* power to look as inconspicuous as possible, and blend into the crowd.

If the heroes don't spot Stone (or if he chases them down and catches them), he jams his guns into their backs and directs them into the nearest alley. If they comply, he demands the gem and then his wallet, in that order.

If the heroes don't have the gem, Stone doesn't ask for his wallet quite yet. He doesn't want to tip the heroes off as to how he found them.

In that case, Stone waits for the heroes to make their move (they always do, you know), and then he lets them get away.

That doesn't mean he doesn't make a big show of chasing them down though (bullets just barely miss, he slips while climbing a fence, etc.). Stone wants the heroes to go running back to Jackie and the gem as quickly as possible.

Stone races around with the heroes until he gets tired of playing with them, then lets them lose him. He gives them a five-minute head start, then begins tracking them down again.

Ideally, the heroes get back to the hotel and wake everyone up. Jackie tells them they need to get the Hell out of there right away. She tells everyone to split up and rendezvous at Standish Aircraft's Salt Lake City office at 9 o'clock the next morning.

Before they go their separate ways, Jackie realizes how Stone's been tracking them. She tells them to get rid of everything of Stone's that they still have: saddlebags, wallet, money, or whatever.

Just as the words leave her lips, though, Stone shows up. See the previous section for some ideas on how to handle this.

The heroes are on their guard this time, though, and they should be able to get away clean. If the heroes really do split up, Stone goes after whichever of them seems to be the leader (this is up to you, Marshal). He's wary of going after Jackie because of her bullets. He knows she's likely to have the Heart, but tonight he's willing to settle for someone who might know more about her and her mission.

LIFE & DEATH ON THE ROAD

Hopefully Stone fails to catch any of the heroes, but it's up to you as to what happens. If Stone captures a lone hero, though, you can bet on a night of torture and a lingering death for that poor soul.

Sure, killing one of the heroes with so much of the adventure left to go might seem a bit harsh, but it makes the rest of the tale that much more desperate, and deadly.

ON THE ROAD



If a hero does die (whether in the City o' Gloom or somewhere else along the way), don't worry about it. To be perfectly honest, it's bound to happen unless you have an extremely bright or powerful posse. As long as it happens before the heroes enter Devils Tower (which they're going to have to do soon enough), the player of the doomed hero can always come up with a replacement character fast enough.

It's up to you to figure out how the new hero enters the storyline. Perhaps she's a pilot who takes the place of Carter McCormick, or maybe he's a Sioux shaman that offers to help the heroes in their quest. With heroes as desperate as the ones in this posse, it shouldn't be too hard to persuade them to take on some extra aid.

Once the heroes make their way into Devils Tower, working a new hero in is going to be next to impossible. If you take out a hero in there, ask the player if she'd like to take over the role of one of the extras, maybe even Jackie Wells herself, but be careful with that.

You can maintain control over the extras with certain things (like providing hints)—just make sure the player knows that before hand.

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes manage to evade Stone: 3 points.
The heroes lose Stone's wallet on purpose: 3 points.

SIoux NATIONS OR BUST!

Eventually, the heroes are going to get their butts out of Salt Lake City and headed for Devils Tower. How they get there is up to them, but Jackie's got some ideas of her own.

Sure, the heroes could take the Denver-Pacific Railroad straight to Denver, hop the leg up to Cheyenne, and ride out from there, but that's the long way around. Under normal circumstances, that kind of traveling would be fine, but Jackie's only too happy to point out that these are hardly normal circumstances.

Jackie suggest the heroes hire another super-gyro to get them where they're going. To that end, she urges them to all rally at Standish Aircraft the next morning.

HITCHIN' A RIDE

When the heroes arrive at Standish Aircraft, they're met by Eric Standish, Ethan's younger brother. Eric looks a great deal like his brother, except his hair is still a dark brown and curly—what little there is left of it around his balding head, that is.

Eric's just as eager as his brother to sell people on the idea of commercial air travel. It's just a matter of getting a few bugs worked out of the aircraft, he says. "Heck," he claims, "they're already safer than steam wagons or even trains. When was the last time you heard of an aircraft being robbed? Never, right?—Well, unless you're in The Maze, and they're all lawless heathens anyway. And if the aircraft are all supplied with aircatchers..."

Eric tells the heroes he's happy to charter a flight to wherever they'd like to go, and he has the most capable pilot on the west coast and very competitive rates as well. If they mention the name Devils Tower, though, his wide grin slips right off his face.

Devils Tower is in the middle of the Sioux Nation, and Eric's not prepared to violate Sioux airspace. His younger brother Edgar is in Deadwood right now, trying to establish a contract with the Sioux to give Standish Aircraft permission to fly in and out of Deadwood, and Eric doesn't want to do anything to jeopardize the negotiations.



It's just then that Carter McCormick rolls in, looking more than a little hung over. He takes a belt from a hip flask before he recognizes the heroes from their adventure over the train. "Hair of the dog," he mutters with a winning grin before he remembers his manners and offers the heroes a sip.

McCormick is only too happy to vouch for the heroes' character. He introduces them to Eric as the group he "lost" on his way up from the Wilson office. "They decided they'd like to take the scenic route in to the city instead," he explains with a sidelong wink at the heroes.

"And don't you folks worry," he tells them happily. "We'll get ye where ye want to be goin'."

When Eric protests that the heroes want to go to Devils Tower, McCormick raises his eyebrows in amazement and nods with grudging approval. "Of course, we can't be doing such a thing for them now, can we, Eric? Fret not, lad. I've got things well in hand. We may not be able to take these fine folks all the way to Devils Tower, but we can take them to the borders of the Sioux Nations, can we not?"

Eric mulls this over for a moment, then seems to resolve a conflict within himself and agrees. "A fine plan, Carter. I'll leave these people in your capable hands."

Once Eric's gone, McCormick turns to the heroes. "Now that the wanker's gone, let's get down to brass tacks. I'll be happy to take ye wherever ye'd like. There's only the matter of the fee. Eric's going to want \$100 a head to set you lot down in some God-forsaken place where we don't have ourselves even a semblance of an airstrip."

Assuming the heroes agree to this fee, McCormick flashes them a knowing grin. "Of course, there's the small matter of the gratuity I'll be expecting for remembering to forget that young Eric has asked me not to fly over Sioux territory. That'll be the same as his fee: \$100 each."

If anyone objects to McCormick's profiteering, he points out that he's risking his life, his craft, and his job, and he expects to be compensated for it. On a Difficult (9) *Persuasion* roll, he may bump it down to \$75. Otherwise they can find someone else to help them. "Sure, there are dozens of scientists building aircraft in the City o' Gloom. Good luck finding one that can keep his crate in the air, especially on short notice."

When the heroes agree to his terms (assuming they do), he grins. "I knew ye'd see it my way. That will be all up front, of course."

THE WILD BLUE YONDER

Of course, no matter what the heroes do, Stone's right behind them in his one-man auto-gyro (don't ask where he got it from). Unfortunately for Stone, the aircraft's a bit slower than the McCormick's super-gyro, so the heroes should get to Devils Tower well before he does.

Even so, it's going to take the heroes nearly two full days to reach their goal. At the end of the first day, McCormick sets the super-gyro down in a peaceful valley in the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains, high in central Wyoming.

Stone would continue on through the night, but there's no moon and he's unwilling to try navigating the auto-gyro through the Rockies in such darkness. He puts down on the near side of the Front Range just as the sun goes down behind his back.

McCormick explains that they shouldn't have any problems getting to the tower, as long as they avoid the devil bats. The Sioux are (at least nominally) followers of the Old Ways. If a hunting party should spot the super-gyro, there's little the warriors could do about it. At the altitude McCormick is planning to fly, even the chance that a long-range rifle shot could find them is remote.

As for the devil bats, the ones in the Sioux Nation tend to nest in the Badlands, several miles to the southeast of Devils Tower. Sometimes they range a bit farther, but there's no helping that. Again, there's little hope of any such creatures sneaking up on the super-gyro, as long as the heroes keep a vigilant eye on the skies.

The night passes uneventfully, and the heroes are up at dawn the next day and on their way. The tension mounts as the day wears on, and occasionally Jackie swears she can see something following them in the distance, but the pinprick of darkness against the sky always disappears before long. McCormick tells her it's just a vulture circling in the distance, but she remains unconvinced.

That evening, as the sun lowers into the west, the heroes finally spot their ultimate destination standing lonely against the far horizon, stabbing out of the ground like the stump of a massive broken bone protruding from the earth.

They've made it to Devils Tower at last.

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes make it to Devils Tower: 4 points.



A HISTORY





CHAPTER THREE: A HISTORY FORGOTTEN



The plot's getting thick enough you'd need a pack of dynamite to stir it, but there are some things you need to know about Devils Tower before you move on. More accurately, you need to learn more about the society of creatures that live inside the tower and how they got there.

THE MYSTERY REVEALED

Those of you who've been following *Deadlands* from the start already know a bit about Devils Tower, or mateo tepee (bear lodge) as the local Sioux call it. According to those same Sioux, the place is infested with strange creatures they call the paha wakansica, or mountain devils.

Most people think the Indians are just making up stories to keep them away from one of their most sacred sites, but—what do you know?—The white folks underestimated the Indians once again.

The fact is that Devils Tower is like a termite-gnawed tree. From the outside, it looks just fine, but it's all hollow inside.

Of course, being the kind of geological phenomenon that it is, Devils Tower wasn't always hollow. Someone carved out the insides like you'd hollow out a pumpkin with a big, greasy spoon.

So who's got the kind of technology to be able to cut their perfect tunnels through the solid rock, to form a home for themselves in the

most massive monument in the High Plains? Hellstromme? Nope, not yet. It's no one from this planet, that's for sure.

That's the ticket, you see. The wakansicas aren't from around these parts. By that, we don't mean they're not native to Wyoming. They're not native to the planet.

As you might have guessed by now, the wakansicas are aliens.

FROM BEYOND THE STARS

Actually, like most things in *Deadlands*, it's not quite that simple.

The wakansicas aren't entirely alien to Earth. To understand that, we've got to go back more than a few years—two thousand in fact.

Back when the Aztecs, Mayans, and Incas were the rulers of Central and South America, the natives received strange visitors from another planet, a spaceship full of aliens.

These odd creatures were mostly friendly, only occasionally burning fields or zapping away upstarts with beams of crimson flame. In fact, with all their incredible powers, the locals took them for gods.

These "gods" remained in South America for some time, exploring the region and interacting with the peoples. It was under their direction the pyramids were built across the region, tall structures that stood above the trees and acted as beacons for the aliens' spaceships as they





skipped across the skies. The notorious Nazca lines were drawn for them to be able to see from tremendous altitudes and navigate their enormous ships by.

The aliens' time with the natives was mostly peaceful. The natives had no hope of standing against them, and so there were few moves made against the aliens. Those that did happen were crushed without comment—or mercy.

For the most part, the aliens were standoffish, like the gods for whom they were often mistaken, keeping their affairs separate from those of the people who lived nearby. Most of them, it seemed, saw little of value in the "savages" who populated the planet. Once the natives learned who was boss, the two races coexisted rather peacefully. Exactly why the aliens were here is a story for another day...

That wasn't true of them all, though. Some of the aliens spent a great deal of time with humans, although they never treated the locals as equals. The visitors apparently felt there were things they could learn by interacting with us, and so they did.

In some cases, though, they did more than interact—they crossbred.

THE CROSSBREDS


That's not to say the aliens managed to mate with the natives. Some things are beyond the abilities of even the weirdest "science".

No, this union began in a lab.


The first human/alien crossbreeds were miserable failures. Their genetic makeups were simply too different to blend smoothly. The aliens were reptilian in form and physiology, a far cry from the mammalian locals. The aliens were determined to succeed, though, and eventually they did.

Today's crossbreeds are virtually identical to the ones who were fished out of the gestation chambers in the aliens' lab. They stand anywhere from three to five feet tall (averaging a little over four), and they weigh 100 to 200 pounds (averaging about 145). Their skin is green and scaly like a lizard's. Their teeth are long and needlelike. Their eyes are almost all black, with some small variations in tone and color. They have long, sharp claws on their hands and feet. They've got faces not even their mothers could love—kinda like that of a Mexican Dragon and the backside of a monkey.

The aliens hoped the mixing of alien and native genetic potential would create a powerful new race of creatures they could exploit. They



A HISTORY



got their wish. In fact, they got several different types of creatures, all of which may look different but are all pretty much the same under their oddly shaped frames. Collectively, these are all called crossbreeds.

The crossbreeds were enormously successful, and the aliens bred thousands of them in their myriad forms to act as their proxies on this brave new world. These strange new children took over the alien's positions on Earth, standing in for one parental race, while oppressing the other.

Eventually, the aliens left Earth, although the reasons for this have long since been lost in the swirling sands of time. They left the crossbreeds in control, charging them with the task of keeping the native population under control until the aliens' return. The crossbreeds were only too happy to accept their new duties, until they screwed things up, that is.

THE REBELLION

Once the aliens left, the crossbreeds immediately set about conquering the planet. Unfortunately, although the aliens had given the crossbreeds many bits of incredibly advanced science with which to carry out their plan, they hadn't given the crossbreeds the brains to execute it.

The crossbreeds' control over South America lasted for several years, but their power base never actually grew. In fact, it shrank smaller and smaller as the years wore on, mostly due to their inability to actually take aggressive action against the natives. It wasn't for a lack of wanting, but the crossbreeds never seemed to be able to fire themselves up enough to expand their territory against new peoples.

This isn't to say the crossbreeds were kind or even benign overlords. To the people they did have some control over, they were incredibly cruel. They enslaved whoever they could and simply killed those few who resisted.

Eventually, the people the crossbreeds were oppressing got organized and took up arms against their "benevolent leaders." This was the first time an entire group of natives had actually tried to rise up against the crossbreeds. The aliens had beaten back a few such riots early on in their occupation of the territory, and the ferocity of their response immediately convinced the locals they were better off on bent knees.

The aliens, it turns out, left the planet just before the Old Ones closed off the Earth from the Hunting Grounds. When this finally

happened, the crossbreeds were sealed off from a great portion of their power. They had managed to keep this a secret from their subjects for many years, but in the end, it didn't matter a whole lot. The natives were going to attack the crossbreeds—even if they faced obliteration for doing so.

The crossbreeds had never faced violent opposition before. Their legendary powers having betrayed them, they did the one thing none of the natives expected: They folded like a house of well-worn cards.

The natives outnumbered the crossbreeds by over 100 to 1. Despite the crossbreeds' fantastic weapons and defensive systems, the natives were able to overwhelm their oppressors by sheer force of numbers. The locals took heavy casualties, but in the end they were finally free.

THE SCATTERING

The crossbreeds know the time after their defeat as "the scattering." To avoid the wrath of their former subjects, the creatures went underground (quite literally in some cases), hiding from the natives as best they could.

To do this, they were forced to split their numbers. They divided mostly along family lines, scattering themselves to the four winds.

The crossbreeds fled as best as they could, but their distinctive appearance made it impossible for them to blend with human society. They hid in the wilderness instead: desert islands, caverns, and thick jungles.

Many enclaves of crossbreeds were discovered and killed by the natives. Others were discovered years later and exterminated by locals who believed they had stirred up a nest of demons straight from Hell. Eventually, nearly every pocket of crossbreeds was demolished. By 1876, there was only one large enclave left.

ESCAPE TO DEVILS TOWER

The last of the crossbreeds migrated far north over the years, eventually ending up in the lands of the Sioux, an area known to the white governments as Dakota Territory. The crossbreeds' traditional method upon moving to an area was to locate a place of mystic power—something rumored among the locals to be haunted or evil—and take it over. Then they simply reinforced the already existing legends and scared off anyone who might have the inclination to poke their noses into the crossbreeds' lives.

A HISTORY



In the Sioux lands, the crossbreeds stumbled upon Devils Tower. Tired of running, they decide to take up permanent residence.

The Kiowa story about how Devils Tower came to be goes something like this. There once was a boy who had seven older sisters. The boy was playing with his sisters when he suddenly transformed into an angry grizzly bear. The sisters ran and ran, but they could not get away from the bear.

As the sisters ran through the valley, they found a large tree stump and climbed up on to it to get away from the bear. The bear saw this and tried to climb to the top, but he couldn't reach. That's when the bear started to grow. The sisters saw this and started to pray to the gods.

Suddenly, the tree stump started to grow even faster than the bear. It grew until it was taller than the tallest trees, and then it kept going. Eventually, it was as high as a mountain, but the bear still kept growing. It clawed at the sides of the stump as it grew, slicing large furrows into the side of the tower that can still be seen today.

The sisters were still afraid of the bear, though, and being so close to the sky, they stepped into it, becoming stars in the heavens. White folks call this constellation the Big Dipper. Thwarted, the bear went away. The stump still stands, though, and today this is called Tsoai, or "rock tree" by the Kiowa and mateo tepee, "lodge of the grizzly" by the Sioux. (For more information on this legend, check out *The Way to Rainy Mountain* by N. Scott Momaday.)

THE HOLLOWING

The crossbreeds were only too happy to take this legend and twist it to their own ends. To start with, they took control of all of the grizzlies in the area, fitting strange devices into their brains, allowing them to control the beasts from a distance. Then they used their genetic warping techniques to thicken the bears' skins, making them gray, hairless beasts. They also lengthened the creatures' nails and teeth, transforming them into killing machines capable of patrolling the region around Devils Tower and scaring off any investigators.

Once their security was established, the crossbreeds set to carving out a new home for themselves—literally. Using massive drilling machines and larger versions of their ray guns, they bored their way under and up into the center of Devils Tower, hollowing out the inside of the monolith.

This is where the crossbreeds still live today.



A HISTORY



CROSSBREED SOCIETY

Crossbreed civilization has changed a lot over the years. The enclave that set up shop in the heart of Devils Tower was—long ago—just one of many groups that had migrated to North America. For centuries, they were able to communicate with their fellows, despite the vast distances between them.

Today, however, they are the last of their kind, at least as far as they know. And the years have not been kind.

Over the decades, the crossbreeds have gradually lost touch with the roots of their ancient authority. They still cling to some scraps of the technology that once permitted them to reign supreme (and with the coming of the Reckoning, this power is on the rise once again), but they are but shadows of their former selves.

So long out of touch with the space-faring society which spawned them, the crossbreeds have degenerated to the level of those they once called savages, and are perhaps worse.

No longer are the crossbreeds ruled by logic and science. These days, they operate by superstition, dark magic, and following maintenance and repair rituals they don't really understand anymore, their true meanings lost as the years marched by.

The crossbreeds are ruled over by a prime leader (as they call him). The prime leader's role is close to that of tribal chief.

The prime leader is supported by a council of three other important crossbreeds, each representing a different portion of the crossbreeds' way of life. They represent the warriors (war pleader), the techpriests (tech pleader), and the common people (folk pleader).

Each of the pleaders "pleads" the case of the crossbreeds that he is privileged to speak for. The prime leader listens to their pleas and their advice, then makes the decision on his own. Although the pleaders each have a tremendous amount of sway with their leader, in the end, the prime's word is the law.

THE PRIME LEADER

The prime leader is a massive crossbreed by the name of Zabrox. Well, he's massive for a crossbreed, at least, standing almost five feet tall and weighing in at 200 pounds.

Zabrox was the former war pleader until the last prime leader died. He was appointed to his position by the unanimous assent of the pleaders at the time. Some crossbreeds rumble

that Zabrox only attained his position by strength of horrible threats against the other pleaders, but this is a time-honored tactic in crossbreed politics. For this reason, few crossbreeds have any serious objections.

Zabrox is full of bluster, usually getting his way in any argument by shouting the pleaders down. In the end, this is pointless, since his word is the law either way. He knows this, but he really just likes shouting people down to emphasize his power. That's how he got where he is today—by being the loudest and most obnoxious of the pleaders—and he hasn't seen any reason to change tactics now that he's the prime leader.

For all that, Zabrox is a fine leader. He's the first of the prime leaders to actually negotiate successfully with humans in the last several hundred years (for more on this, see **Enter Iron Dragon**). Considering his personal mannerisms, it's amazing that he was able to repress his nature long enough to have a conversation with Kang, much less actually agree on anything.

Zabrox is nothing if not crafty though, and he has the best interests of his people at heart. Kang sensed this immediately and was able to use this fact to the mutual advantage of both the crossbreeds and Iron Dragon.

WAR PLEADER

The crossbreed war pleader is Clabrox, the eldest son of Zabrox (yep, nepotism is alive and well in crossbreed society too). Clabrox is a marvelous warrior and a decent leader of soldiers, but he lacks his father's bluster. This sometimes puts him at a disadvantage with other warriors, especially since bluster is considered to be a mark of a warrior's prowess. After all, if you don't have ultimate confidence in your ability to succeed in battle, who will?

For this reason, Clabrox's position is coveted by many of his lieutenants. Every time someone makes a challenge for the war pleader's job though, Zabrox steps in and shouts the upstart down. This causes Clabrox some concern, but one thought gives him comfort. No other warrior can stand up to Zabrox as well as Clabrox. No one else would be as effective in the war pleader's position as he is.

For this reason, Clabrox is a passable war pleader, although he sometimes doesn't seem to have much of his own mind. He relies on his lieutenants to help him form nearly all of his opinions, and there are few times that he actually manages to speak from his own heart.

A HISTORY

The war pleader is traditionally the most influential of the pleaders. Not only is he entirely responsible for the safety of his people, he also manages any and all interaction with the outside world.

FOLK PLEADER

The folk pleader is a female crossbreed by the name of Serba. She is a wizened old thing, her green scales flaky and pale with age and her nails have become so long that they have begun to curl around. Still, her eyes burn brightly with the wisdom of her age, and she uses it to speak for her people.

Serba's constituents consist of any crossbreed who's not a soldier or a techpriest. This is the most massive portion of the crossbreed population, but it's the least influential. The folk (as the crossbreeds refer to themselves in general and the commoners in particular) are the crossbreeds who handle all the grunt work of the society, cleaning the halls, growing the food, raising the few children, and so on. Their jobs may not be glamorous, but they're essential. If the folk fell down on their jobs, the soldiers and techpriests wouldn't be far behind.



Serba is an excellent diplomat as crossbreeds go. She waits for someone to speak his piece before she tears into him savagely (although only verbally). Serba's a fine representative of the crossbreed population, when she's gone, the folk will have a hard time finding a replacement—exactly what Norbando (the Tech Pleader) hopes.

Serba's main concerns are maintaining the folk's food supply and their status as the best-kept secret in the Sioux Nations. She's willing to go to just about any length to meet those ends. Right from the start, she's been against the tenuous alliance the folk have developed with Kang. The Chinese warlord's an outsider, to her eyes, outsiders can do no right—in this particular case, she might be correct.

TECH PLEADER

Norbando came to his position as tech pleader by one of the oldest ways in the book: He killed his way to the top. Of course, like all good killers, Norbando kept his crimes a secret. Competition is tight within the ranks of the techpriests (for more on this essential part of crossbreed society, see below), and murder is not an uncommon means of advancement within the ranks. It's almost considered acceptable, as long as it's kept discreet.

Getting caught in the act of murder, on the other hand, is one of the most heinous of crimes in crossbreed society due to the dwindling population. It's a bizarre way of thinking, and one which Norbando has exploited to its fullest.

As leader of the techpriests, Norbando's only real goal in life (besides becoming The Prime Leader) is the preservation of the knowledge about crossbreed technology. All else comes second. From Kang's people, Norbando has learned of the resurgence of weird science in the world at large, and he's intrigued by this. He's comforted to know that the "savages" (as he and most of the crossbreeds still refer to humans) haven't surpassed ancient crossbreed tech yet, but he worries that they will soon.

Norbando guards his people's technology jealously. He's only given up small pieces of it to Kang under direct orders from Zabrox. He's willing to kill to get any part of it back at any opportunity.

Norbando has absolutely no tact at all. He's ascended to his current position not by politics, but callous ruthlessness. He cares not for the hollow words of the living, putting his trust only in the wisdom of the ancient folk.

FOLK CROSSBREED

Corporeal: D:4d8, N:4d8, S:4d8, Q:4d8, V:4d8
Climbin' 4d8, dodge 4d8, fightin': stunstick 4d8, sneak 4d8

Mental: C:2d4, K:2d4, M:3d6, Sm:2d4, Sp:2d8
Area knowledge: Devils Tower (inside) 3d4, language: crossbreed 3d4

Special Abilities:

Claws: STR+1d6

Gear: (Not all folk carry the following.) Stunstick, two powercells.

SOLDIER CROSSBREED

Corporeal: D:4d10, N:4d10, S:4d10, Q:4d10, V:4d10
Fightin': brawlin' 4d6, Climbin' 4d10, dodge 5d10, fightin': stunstick 4d8, quick draw 5d10, shootin': raygun 5d10, sneak 4d10

Mental: C:2d4, K:2d4, M:4d8, Sm:2d4, Sp:2d8
Area knowledge: Devils Tower (inside) 3d4, language: crossbreed 3d4, overawe 4d8

Special Abilities:

Claws: STR+1d8

Gear: Bioclaw, crossbreed armor (covers guts), darkgoggles, raygun, stunstick, three powercells, any other crossbreed gear as appropriate.

TECHPRIEST CROSSBREED

Corporeal: D:3d6, N:3d6, S:3d6, Q:3d6, V:3d6
Climbin' 2d6, fightin': brawlin' 2d6

Mental: C:2d6, K:4d8, M:2d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d8
Area knowledge: Devils Tower (inside) 4d8, language: crossbreed 4d8

Special Abilities:

Claws: STR+1d4

Gear: Two powercells, any other crossbreed gear as appropriate.

TECHPRIESTS

The techpriests hold control over every bit of technology the crossbreeds have managed to maintain over the centuries. For full details on a good number of these devices and how they might fit into your game, check out *Field Report #666*, one of the smaller booklets that comes in the *Fortress o' Fear* boxed set.

The techpriesthood is a hereditary business, with the knowledge held by each techpriest passed down from parent to child throughout the generations. The crossbreeds don't put much value in paper though (only the Techpriests know how to read anyway). That flimsy stuff crumbles with age, and it's too easy for the ink to get wet and run.

Instead, the techpriests pass down their knowledge by means of a complex form of hieroglyphics embroidered in long, sleeveless coats. Every techpriest has his own long vest which he embroiders himself. As he is given responsibility for each device under his purview, he unwraps the ceremonial cloth the object is kept wrapped in. He then painstakingly copies the embroidery from the cloth into his own vest.

The more hieroglyphics the techpriest has on his robe, the more power he wields in the techpriest hierarchy. Those just starting out only have a few lonesome characters on their vests, while top techpriests are covered with these pictograms. Norbando's vest is almost more embroidery thread than cloth. He's actually taken to adding sleeves to his vest to make more room for more hieroglyphics.

In general, the crossbreeds don't know a whole lot about their technology. In fact, if something gets damaged, it's difficult for them to fix it. There are few spare parts for anything, mostly cannibalized from the other bits that have fallen apart over the years.

Worse yet, only the techpriests actually understand the hieroglyphics, and they've only managed this after years of intensive study. Maintenance of the technology has become more a matter of ritual than knowledge. The techpriests go through the motions as described on their vests, but they really have no deeper understanding of the underlying principles of any of their devices. For these reasons, the technology has become a religion for them rather than a subject of rational science.

The techpriests are held in reverent awe by the rest of the folk. Many soldiers and commoners make use of the technology, but they do so only under the direct guidance of the techpriest responsible for the device in question.

Loss or damage of a crossbreed device is a crime of the highest order, as bad as murder if not worse. It would be a capital crime were there not so few crossbreed to begin with. Loss of a life hurts the crossbreeds nearly as much as the loss of a device, and neither is regarded lightly. The devices that Kang has stolen from them over the years have almost brought the two groups to all-out war on several occasions. So far, cooler heads and diplomacy has prevailed—strangely enough.

Since the Reckoning, some of the techpriests have begun dabbling with devising technology of their own or even repairing devices long since abandoned as irreparable. Most attempts have



failed miserably, but some (with the same "supernatural inspiration" that the mad scientists receive), have met with success. The biggest triumph as of yet is the recreation of the devices that create and control the weird grizzlies that patrol the area around Devils Tower. These things actually take real grizzlies and genetically transmute them into deadly killing machines controlled by the techpriests and the crossbreed soldiers with an iron hand.

The current big project is reconfiguring the weird grizzly devices to work with human DNA. Zabrox figures that if Kang can steal his devices, than the crossbreeds can take a couple of the rail workers to perform their experiments on. So far the mind-control aspect works (for the most part) with their implantees, but the genetic transmutation always kills the subjects. Norbando assures Zabrox that his techpriests should have the process perfected shortly—who knows how this will effect the terms of their agreement with Iron Dragon.

Norbando knows that his techpriests are the crossbreed's only chance to regain their former glory, and as soon as he comes up with that one big breakthrough (like the human version of the weird grizzly device), he plans on overthrowing Zabrox and leading the crossbreeds to victory over the Sioux nation.

ENTER IRON DRAGON

The most momentous event to happen to the crossbreeds in the last several years (since the Reckoning at least) is their encounter with Kang. The notorious Chinese warlord and owner of the Iron Dragon Railroad got into the Great Rail Wars (the competition to build a transcontinental railroad across the Weird West) late, and because of that he was at a large disadvantage. Most folks counted him out of the running right away.

Kang didn't see things that way though. Where others saw impossibilities, he saw opportunity. It was simply a matter of choosing his battles wisely.

In deciding where to run his railroad, Kang took a decidedly different stand. While everyone else was doing their best to avoid the newly ascendant Indian territories, Kang went straight for the heart of the most powerful of them. He went directly to the leader of the Sioux Nations, Sitting Bull himself.

At first, Sitting Bull ignored Kang's requests for an audience, but eventually he relented, more out of curiosity than anything else. He was persuaded by the Chinese man's insistence that—

unlike the other rail barons—Kang was no puppet of the white governments. He fought only for his people, his railroad, and himself.

Still, Sitting Bull was not convinced that Kang deserved the right-of-way to build a railroad through the heart of Sioux lands. The Old Ways movement (which the Sioux Nations nominally subscribes to) had a lot of things to say about "advancements" like railroads, and none of them were good.

Kang asked the great Sioux leader if there was some task he could undertake to prove his friendship to the Sioux. Sitting Bull thought about it for a while, then got back to the rail baron.

Sitting Bull explained about the wakansica living around Devils Tower and the other problems the Sioux in the area had been having (people disappearing, and the like). He told Kang that if he could solve these problems for the Sioux, then Sitting Bull would consider his request for the right-of-way—that's how desperate the problem was with the constant raids by the crossbreeds and their grizzlies.

A CLOSE ENCOUNTER

Kang set to work right away. He sent a troop of his finest warriors to the monolith, and he never heard from them again. Two weeks later, another group was sent into Devils Tower. It never returned either.

Only one man came back from the third group, the notorious leader of the Silver Tiger Society (Kang's elite troops, see The Great Maze for more information on these vicious killers), Lo H'si Chang, the legendary tiger man. Chang had managed to penetrate the several layers of defenses surrounding the tower, and he had made the first human contact with crossbreeds in centuries.

Chang had accosted Zabrox himself, and he had actually been able to reason with the prime leader. During his attempt to enter the tower, Chang realized that someone inside really didn't want to see him or anyone else from the outside. He proposed to Zabrox that Kang actually help maintain the security around the tower. In exchange for this assistance, the crossbreeds would cease their attacks on any Sioux that wandered nearby.

After discussing the idea with his pleaders, Zabrox agreed to it, although not without reservations. Zabrox plans to turn on Kang and bring the pathetic humans to heel the first chance he gets. Right now they're a useful tool.



A HISTORY

With Chang's agreement in hand, Kang returned to Sitting Bull. Kang promised to keep the devils in Devils Tower well in hand in exchange for the right-of-way through the Sioux Nations. Otherwise, Kang intimated that the attacks would return with renewed vigor.

Sitting Bull discussed the idea with his council, too, and agreed to it, although with his own set of misgivings.

So Kang's people now act as a buffer between the crossbreeds and the Sioux in exchange for the right to lay track through the heart of the Sioux Nations. There's a permanent Iron Dragon encampment located just outside of the monument. The fact that Kang's also secretly running guns to Sitting Bull's chapter of the Order of the Raven is the icing on the cake. So everyone's happy, right?

Well, nothing lasts forever.

THE HEART O' DARKNESS

So what's all this got to do with the Heart of Darkness? Glad you asked.

The powerful gem was originally brought to Earth by the aliens who spawned the crossbreeds. They cut the rough diamonds into their perfect forms. In its final shape, and the gem became a device of incredible (and evil) energy, powerful enough to drive their ship through the stars. The Heart of Darkness is the only one of them still on Earth.

How does this stone come by so much power? Well, when normal coal is compressed over thousands of years, it transforms itself from a common lump of fuel into a priceless diamond. When ghost rock is compressed over thousands of years, enchanted with the most heinous of dark rituals, and well—you get the idea.

Here's a quick metaphysical explanation. When someone dies, his soul either gets sucked into any ghost rock that's nearby (if he's evil), or it goes to the Hunting Grounds. From the Hunting Grounds, the soul eventually travels to "Heaven" or "the Deadlands" where the Reckoners dwell (Hell).

Pretty much, the Heart is a power outlet that uses the magical energy from Hell. Just like ghost rock, the Heart of Darkness sucks souls into itself, and—here's the kicker—sends them directly to the Deadlands.

The alien technology was totally powered by this evil energy, as was the crossbreed's, and the reason the crossbreeds are holed up in Devil's Tower is the portal. They use the energy of the Hunting Grounds to power their machinery.



The Heart was lost by the crossbreeds years ago during the rebellion of the tribes, and it was only recently recovered in South America by Sir Seamus Byrne, a member of the famous Explorer's Society (see *Rascals, Varmints & Critters*). The gem has the power of ultimate evil in it and, if harnessed, could be disastrous for the world.

THE PLAN

That's how Stone intends to use the thing to create Deadlands on Earth. In fact, if he can get the Heart of Darkness to the top of Devils Tower, he can perform a ceremony (much like the one that Grimme used to expand his area of influence around the City of Lost Angels) to bring this about. With the additional power of the portal added to this, the size of the Deadland created would be enormous. If this happens, it would be a crushing blow to the Sioux and would help establish a powerful foothold for the Reckoners in the Weird West.

The heroes (along with their friend Jackie Wells) are the only people who stand between Stone and his goal—they and a whole mess of monsters, including the last of the crossbreeds.



THE EVIL WITHIN

At this point, you might be asking yourself: "What's wrong with these crossbreed folks anyhow? They seem like a fairly nice sort of people to me."

Well, that's certainly could be true, but up until now, you've only gotten the tinhorn travel-guide version of the history and society of the creatures known as the crossbreeds. In fact, there's a lot more going on inside Devils Tower than farming, raising kids, and simply clawing away at maintaining a rapidly disappearing way of life.

In fact, not all crossbreeds are evil—no more than all humans are evil—although they are prone to doing things that most hometown folks would have some serious problems with. They come in all stripes (morally and ethically speaking), but in general they do show a marked disregard for what they consider to be lower forms of life—which in their minds is every species other than their own, with the sole exception of the alien race that spawned them in the first place.

HUMAN/CROSSBREED RELATIONS

Up until Kang's people had their showdown with Zabrox, crossbreeds generally looked on folks like cattle: dumb beasts that aren't good for much else but fattening up for a feast somewhere down the road. For centuries, the crossbreeds preyed on the local Indian tribes (mostly the Lakota Sioux, Sitting Bull's people), sometimes even going so far as to launch midnight raids into their villages. These actions led to the Indian legends about the place being infested by "paha wakansica," the mountain devils with stone-like skins (forceshields) and mysterious, magical weapons that can "melt the flesh off a brave's bones" (rayguns).

The crossbreed raids didn't happen too often, maybe once a year, and always on a moonless night. Still, they were regular enough for the Sioux to warn everyone they knew (or liked well enough) to steer clear of Devils Tower.

The crossbreeds often captured Indians in their raids, often just a few warriors, sometimes an entire band. These folks seemingly just disappeared off the face of the Earth, leaving few traces as to how or why they might have disappeared. Until the settlers brought guns to the area, the Indians had little means of defending themselves from these attacks. That's changed now.

Sometimes, especially in later years, the crossbreeds would simply slaughter everyone in their path on the fateful night of their raid. There seemed to be no reason for this change in tactics, although the Sioux began to suspect that perhaps it wasn't the legendary wakansica after all, but some new abomination awakened by the Reckoning.

THE REASON FOR THE RAIDS

When he was war pleader, Zabrox led the raids himself, but since his relatively recent ascension to power 10 years ago, his son Clabrox has taken the point. The raids are nothing more than the final rite of passage to adulthood for the new crossbreed soldiers. According to crossbreed tradition, there's no substitute for achieving manhood that's topped by covering yourself in an opponent's still-warm blood, and that's what all the kidnapping and killing have been about.

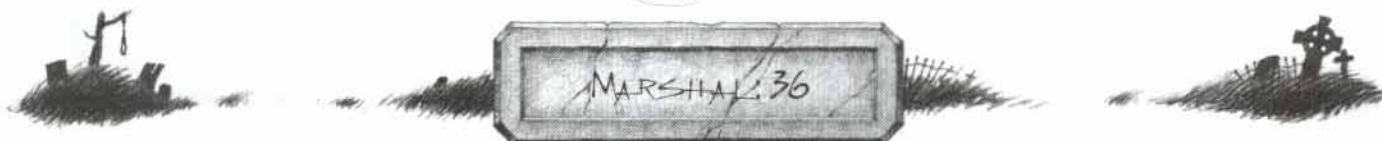
Back when Zabrox was leading the raids, he was a bit more cautious about the wholesale slaughter of large groups of humans. This was back before the Reckoning, when the crossbreeds were at the low point of their power. Since that point in time, however, things have changed.

Once Clabrox took over, he decided to up the ante. Instead of kidnapping Indians and taking them back to the monolith to slaughter them and share their blood among all the gathered soldiers, they were instead to each go out and gut their own prize. This way they not only got the blood they needed, they also proved their mettle in battle. The crossbreed soldiers train relentlessly, but since they rarely leave the tower, they rarely get a chance to test themselves out against any real foes. They relish these annual excursions for the chance they give them to revel in a real battle.

A TECHPRIEST RECKONING

The real effect of the Reckoning upon the crossbreeds, though, was felt most strongly by the techpriests. For centuries, the techpriests had fought a losing battle of inches to maintain the dwindling amounts of alien technology that was left to them. In 1863, though, this trend reversed itself.

Actually, the techpriests didn't get any better at maintaining their older tech. However, like the mad scientists of humanity, they suddenly found all sorts of inspirations for new bits of fantastic





technology that they hadn't even been capable of thinking about before. Suddenly, all sorts of new ideas were creeping into their heads, whispers from the manitous ringing in their alien ears.

Unlike the mad scientists of the Weird West, though, the techpriests thought not of traditional technology. Even with the help of the manitous, they were unable to entirely comprehend the amazing devices their alien ancestors gave them. Instead, they found their minds turning more and more to thoughts of crossbreeding other creatures, the likes of which are found in the caverns beneath Devils Tower.

Normally, creating these kinds of mongrel monstrosities are impossible to create, but with some guidance from the manitous and the unique properties of the energies captured from the portal, the crossbreeds were able to make some headway. It wasn't until Clabrox became the war pleader that Norbando realized what the missing ingredient was in his genetic recipes: human blood.

THE WAR-TECH CONNECTION

Entirely unknown to Zabrox and Serba, Norbando and Clabrox began forming a clandestine cult within the crossbreeds, one capable of inspiring and actually creating new forms of crossbreeds. Eventually, every soldier and techpriest became involved in the cult, working toward its evil ends.

The first thing Clabrox did was step up the ferocity of his raids. In fact, for the first few years after he came to power, he increased their frequency too. Soon enough, the wakansicas were no longer the stuff of Sioux legend. Instead, they were part of their horrible new reality.

The raids became more savage and frequent until the Sioux pretty much made a point of never traveling within 20 miles of Devils Tower. Even this wasn't enough. Desperate for human bodies and blood, Norbando spurred Clabrox on to forays ranging further and further from their base, some reaching far into the Black Hills, the sacred lands of the Sioux, which they were not about to leave.

Matters were growing worse when Kang stepped in. Eager to please the Sioux leaders in any way, the warlord promised to take care of the wakansicas, and so he has. No raids have left the tower since Kang stepped in. The only thing Kang didn't reveal is how he was going to put an end to these rites.

THE NEGOTIATIONS

By this point in time, Zabrox had learned of what Norbando and his son were doing. Seeing the progress they were making, he refused to put an end to it, despite any complaints from Serba. The folk pleader vigorously objected to the increased raids, not on moral grounds but because of the fact that the aggressive attacks were inevitably going to attract the wrong kind of attention. She was sure the crossbreed soldiers wouldn't be able to withstand an assault upon the tower. These fools were jeopardizing their very existence.

Although Serba was outvoted by the rest of the council, the debate wasn't over. Nearly all of the women sided strongly with her. This was an issue that threatened to tear crossbreed society apart. It's then that Kang stepped in.

THE SOLUTION

Once Kang's people won an audience with Zabrox for him, it didn't take him long to come up with a solution. If the crossbreeds needed human victims for their evil ends, then Kang was only too happy to provide them, as long as the crossbreeds agreed to stay in the tower.

Kang's main problem then was finding a reliable source of bodies that no one was going to miss. He didn't have to look too far for a solution.

The area around Deadwood was filthy with prospectors, many of which regularly strayed outside of the Sioux-designated mining areas to hunt for ghost rock, silver, and gold. Many of these renegades went missing at the hands of Sioux raids, and no one ever batted an eye. All Kang had to do was have his people get to the miners before the Sioux did. Kang called on his servants in Deadwood's Chinatown, and they leaped to the response.

Sometimes these killers troll around the Black Hills, looking for solitary mining camps. Other times, they simply abduct the worst addicts from the opium houses. Either way, they never lack for bodies, which keeps the techpriests happy and well-stocked in human flesh and blood.

In the end, everyone gets what they want. The Sioux don't have to fight the crossbreeds, the crossbreeds get their bodies, and Kang gets the right to run tracks for his Iron Dragon railroad straight through the heart of the Sioux Nations. The only people that lose out are some miners who aren't going to be missed.

You can almost hear the Reckoners laughing.



THE FORTRESS





CHAPTER FOUR: THE FORTRESS



Devils Tower, Wyoming Territory—Fear Level 4.

You might notice from the little note above that Devils Tower isn't all that far from becoming a Deadland already. It's not going to take a great deal to push the place right over the edge, and Stone's got the shiny, little answer right in his undead hands—or least he did until the heroes got their hands on it. Now he's hell bent on getting it back, and maybe taking care of a little thorn in the Reckoner's proverbial sides—the posse.

It's up to the heroes to put an end to Stone's plans and put a dent in the Reckoners' armor at the same time. And stay alive in the process.

THE MAPS

This boxed set comes with two double-sided, full-color poster maps. These maps depict several of the places described throughout this part of the book. The maps are clearly labeled, so you shouldn't have any problems figuring out which descriptions in the text match up with which pictures on the maps.

Be sure to study these maps carefully. They show exactly how places are positioned relative to each other, and if you know just how things work, your life is going to be a whole lot easier. After all, when the heroes are barging through the heart of Devils Tower at top speed, you need to know where that next turn is going to take them.

THE TOWER

Devils Tower stands in the northeast corner of Wyoming Territory (as the Union used to like to call it). Nowadays, that's smack in the heart of the Sioux Nations. This part of Wyoming is mostly rolling prairie interrupted by small forests of ponderosa pine and burbling streams. For the most part, it's untouched wilderness, and the Sioux intend to keep it that way.

Devils Tower is composed of a brownish-red rock that forms in hexagonal columns that span the height of the tower. These can be up to eight feet wide at the tower's base, but they taper to only about four feet wide at the top. Several of these columns have cracked off over the years and lie in heaps of rubble around the tower's base. Some of these are as long as 25 feet.

According to those learned-types Back East, the tower is actually the core of a long-extinct volcano, no matter what the locals might have to say about its origins. The thing burst out of the surrounding landscape millennia ago, and the outer parts of it were worn off by erosion. Devils Tower is what's left after all that time.

From a distance, the tower looks brownish, but up close it takes on a greener hue. The green comes from the lichen that covers the monolith in a thin layer (a particularly hearty strain that escaped from the Gardens—page 56), almost making it the color of faded, ancient copper (it really looks like a giant tree stump).



THE FORTRESS

The base of the tower pokes out of a stand of ponderosas standing 400 feet above the Belle Fourche (pronounced: bell forsh) River winding through the prairie grass below. From there, the tower stabs 865 feet into the air.

At its base, the tower is roughly 800 feet in diameter. This narrows toward the monolith's weatherbeaten top. At its nearly flat summit, the tower is 180 wide (east to west) and 300 feet long (north to south).

Devils Tower got its English name in 1875 from Colonel Richard Dodge, a Union soldier who led a force into the nearby Black Hills to support Custer's claim that there was gold to be found there. The local Sioux told him the place was called "Bad God's Tower," which he then put his own colorful twist on (after losing several of his men to the weird grizzlies).

The region around the tower is full of wildlife, both of the normal and supernatural variety. Bald and golden eagles soar through the air, sharing the skies with turkey vultures and hawks of all stripes. Deer bound through the woods, and prairie dogs burrow the lands between the tower and the Belle Fourche.

Of course, there are some more interesting critters in the area too. We'll get to those in a bit.

THE LAYOUT

The interior of Devils Tower is made up of 10 layers, as shown on the poster maps that came in the boxed set. Here's an overview of them from top to bottom.

Level One: This is the top of Devils Tower, open to the elements. The crossbreeds rarely show themselves here.

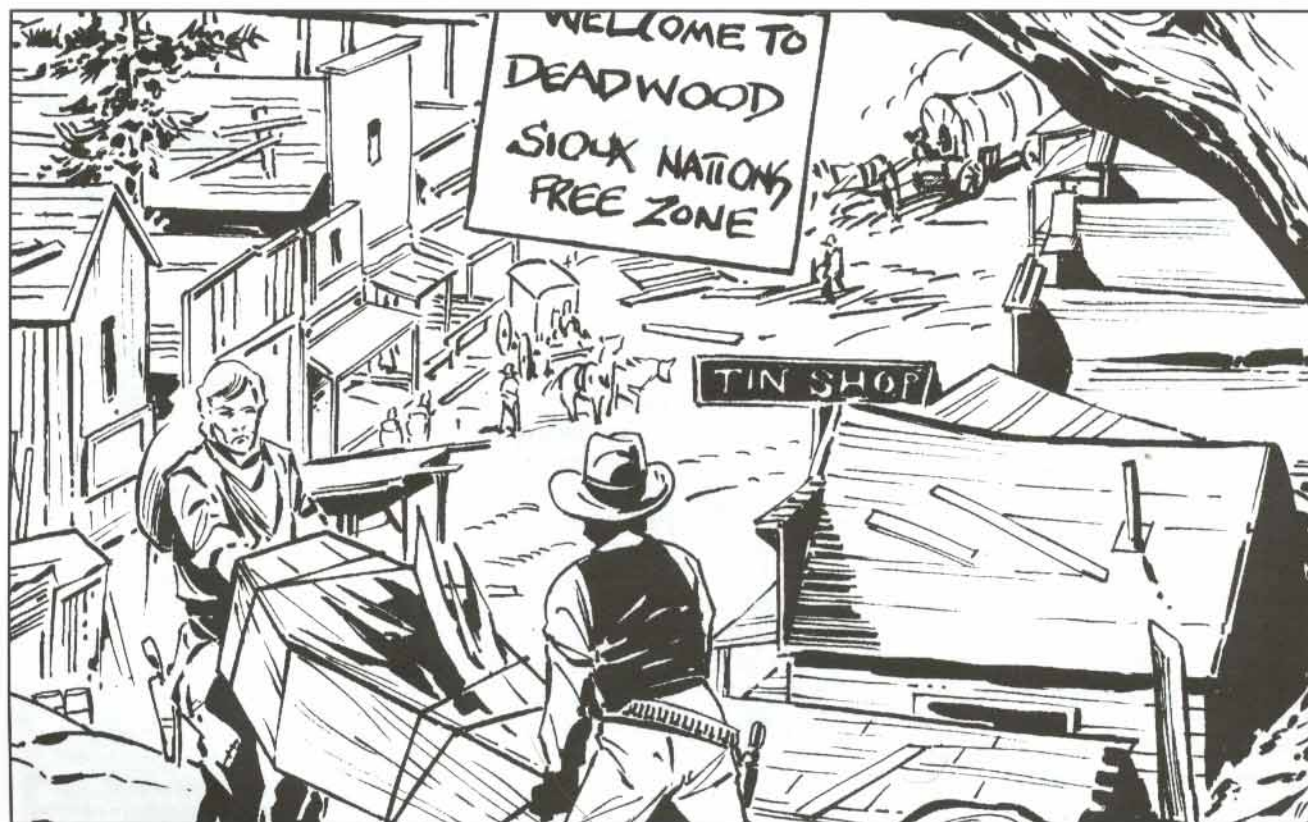
Level Two: This is the garden level where the crossbreeds grow the strange foods that sustain them in their subterranean lifestyle.

Level Three: This is the top level of the crossbreed living quarters. This area is populated mostly by the creatures under the folk pleader's guidance. The prime leader's home is here too.

Level Four: The lower level of the living quarters houses the followers of the war pleader and houses the kitchen.

Level Five: This is where the techpriests live and work on their devices and maintain the portal which is the source of their home's power.

Level Six: This is where the soldiers train for the war with the outside that they know will eventually come. It's also the crossbreeds' first line of defense against invaders from the lower levels.





THE FORTRESS



Level Seven: This is the first of three levels that are packed with all sorts of wild creatures that both threaten and protect the crossbreeds.

Level Eight: The second of the wild levels, the main entrance to the interior of Devils Tower is here. Kang's people guard it well.

Level Nine: The third wild level is full of more beasts that go bump in the night.

Level Ten: The lowest level houses an underground lake, the source of the crossbreed's water.

Outside: The maps also cover the prairie dog town outside the tower, as well as part of the Belle Fourche River.

DEADWOOD

While Devils Tower may be in the Sioux Nations, the Indians tend to give the place a wide berth. They don't call it "Bad God's Tower" because they like to rest in its shade. White folks aren't allowed in the area at all, but that's not got anything to do with Devils Tower in particular. Non-Indians are only permitted in a few portions of the Sioux Nations, the most notorious of which is Deadwood.

Deadwood's about 75 miles to the southwest of Devils Tower, which means the heroes aren't going to be spending their nights in town and their days poking around the tower. Unless they've got some really fantastic form of transportation, it's just too far to go.

Still, that doesn't mean the heroes can't use Deadwood for a staging area for their assault on the monolith. It's the only place they're likely to be able to pick up supplies, for instance, at least without going all the way outside of the Sioux Nations.

Of course, with the laws of supply and demand being what they are, the prices in Deadwood are enough to make most city slickers flinch. The miners in town grumble about it a lot too, but they don't really see as how they've got much of a choice. After all, if you're going to dig gold out of the ground, you've got to go where the gold is.

Of course, if the heroes need some extra hands or if you want to introduce a new hero into the posse, Deadwood's the answer. Whether the posse goes to Deadwood for help or the help comes from Deadwood to them, you can be sure this rapidly growing boomtown is going to be involved somehow.

Deadwood's been in quite a stir lately because miners have been disappearing, the posse may pick up on this if they stay a while.

If the heroes are smart, though, they're never going to get anywhere near Deadwood. The clock is ticking, and taking the time to get all the way down to Deadwood and back is not what more cautious folks would call prudent.

For the full dirt on Deadwood, check out *The Quick & the Dead*. It tells you all about what's happening there and in the rest of the Sioux Nations.

GETTING IN

There are lots of ways to get into Devils Tower, although Jackie Wells only knows of one for sure. She got into the tower by means of the portal into the Hunting Grounds. Unfortunately, she had no idea what she'd be facing when she stepped through to the other side.

Jackie was in a hurry and didn't stop to ask questions on her way out of the tower. She shot the crossbreeds that got in her way and stormed her way to the exit as quickly as possible. (Hey, we never said diplomacy was her strong suit.)

Jackie battled her way from Level Five all the way down to the underground river, taking no prisoners as she went. The whole time, she was busy fighting for her life against the crossbreed sentries and the horrible monstrosities that guard the lower caverns. Several darklings almost got her near the river, but she made it through—and now there's only three of them.

This means that Jackie doesn't know a whole lot about the interior of Devils Tower. She ran the entire way from the portal to Kang's gate, and she didn't stop to sightsee along the way. She does know roughly where the portal is, and she's sure she can find Kang's gate. Getting from one point to the other though, that's something else entirely.

The older Stone (Old Pete) entered 1876 in roughly the same way as Jackie. He was even less polite about it.

After two breaches in less than two months, both the crossbreeds and Kang's guard have stepped their security efforts up, closing off the fortress more tightly than ever before. Getting into this place is not going to be easy.

PICK A DOOR

There are four main ways to get into Devils Tower. Heroes can swim in through the Belle Fourche. They can barge in through Kang's guard. They can crawl in through the prairie dog town. They can even get in via the tower's top, assuming they can reach it.

THE FORTRESS



How the heroes choose to get into the monolith is going to color the adventure a lot. The angle they take determines the kinds of creatures they're going to run across—or manage to avoid. Heroes who go in thorough the river have a tough journey ahead of them, while those who come in down the air shaft might just make it to the portal relatively unscathed.

For this reason, the heroes don't have to have a run-in with every creature described in the part of the book. In fact, if they're smart (or just lucky), they should manage to avoid as many of the encounters as possible.

That's not to say the heroes can just walk right in, take care of their business, and leave. Things never work that smoothly. You wouldn't let them, would you, Marshal? Of course not.

MAKING A DOOR

All of the entrances described above assume that the heroes are walking, crawling, flying, etc., in through them bodily, just like average cowpoke could (or at least could try). Of course, some heroes have powers that allow them to get around petty things like doors, walls, and the like. Let's talk about them for a moment.

HARROWED

Folks evicted from their graves have a few powers that could come in handy when dealing with Devils Tower.

Burrow: This could seem like a great way for a Harrowed to work his way into the tower, but it's not quite as useful as he might think. For one, the Harrowed can't dig lower than 6 feet under the ground. Since Devils Tower is made of solid rock, it can't be burrowed through, and it goes a lot further than six feet under the ground, so there's no tunneling up beneath it. However, *burrow* can be used to get right up next to the tower if that's a concern.

Ghost: This can be an amazing power for getting into Devils Tower, but there can be some problems with it. When walking through massive amounts of material, the *ghosted* Harrowed has a chance of getting lost, just like with the *burrow* power (see *Book o' the Dead*). Also, the hero may underestimate how much rock needs to be traveled through or where a certain hollow part of the tower is. If the Harrowed runs out of Wind while still *ghosted* in solid rock, the results are going to be painful, messy, and fatal.

Spider: With this power, a Harrowed could climb right up the side of the Tower, unfortunately, he can't bring the posse with him. He's also in trouble if the Devil Bats happen to see him coming.

Undead Contortion: This can help the Harrowed get through small areas, but remember that when the Harrowed is *contorted*, he's incredibly vulnerable. But what kind of Marshal would kick an undead gunslinger when he's down? The right kind!

HUCKSTERS

Students of Hoyle have their own sneaky ways to get around obstacles. Here's some advice on how to handle these.

Earthwrack: Does the hero really need to be told how dangerous using this could be? Not only could the posse be killed in any collateral damage (assuming the heroes are in the tower too), but there's a chance the chamber in which the portal to the Hunting Grounds sits could collapse, sealing off the portal forever.

Incognito: This can be a helpful hex, but remember that it only works on one person. Also, it's hard to concentrate if you're bumping around in the dark. If the *incognito* huckster is forced to use a light to navigate the darkness, this gives a +5 to anyone making a *Spirit* roll to see the huckster.

THE FORTRESS

Looking Glass: There aren't many mirrors in Devils Tower, and there are even fewer large enough for a huckster to step through. In fact, there are, well, there aren't any.

Private Eye: This hex doesn't work on abominations either.

Shadow Walk: Don't forget the huckster has to be able to see the shadow he wants to appear in. This is going to have limited use inside the tower and is entirely useless for getting into it.

SHAMANS

Dealing with a shaman can be difficult, what with his ability to step in and out of the Hunting Grounds. Theoretically, a shaman could find a portal somewhere (like the one in Old Faithful), bring the entire posse into the Hunting Grounds and then travel to the portal in Devils Tower, bypassing the bulk of this adventure. (This is all from *Ghost Dancers*, by the way.)

Of course, you don't really want that to happen. There are some ways to prevent that.

First, this portal isn't your typical portal. Sure, it lets the heroes (or anyone else) get into the Hunting Grounds, but it also allows them to travel forward in time. The TN for locating this extremely rare kind of portal is 19.

Second, it's impossible to just find the portal that dumps into the *Hell on Earth* setting. That can only be reached by the portal in the identical location in the past. This means that to reach the Wasted West, the heroes would have to enter the Devils Tower portal in the Weird West, then step back into that portal again.

Third, the portal's blocked. Before Stone walked through the portal, the crossbreeds just looked at it as a source of power. Those who went into it never returned, almost as if they'd been disintegrated (they were actually lost in the Hunting Grounds forever). They didn't see any reason to guard it.

That sense of security was shattered when Stone stepped through, of course. Even then, the crossbreed techpriests told the prime leader that since such a thing had never happened before, it was unlikely to ever happen again.

Jackie Wells made them liars, and the embarrassed techpriests have since taken great measures to ensure no one else can use the portal to get into their home. Part of what the heroes have to do to get to the portal is bring down its defenses. This is simple enough to do from the reality side of the portal, but impossible from the Hunting Grounds.





Open Portal: Heroes may think to use the Hunting Grounds as a means to beat Stone to the monolith. This is a darn smart move, and it might even earn them a bit of a headstart. Of course, if the travel time roll is bad (see *Ghost Dancers* for more on this), they may end up there after Stone and could find him waiting for them. Jackie counsels against this risky tactic, but she goes along with whatever the posse decides.

THE BELLE FOURCHE

Map Sections E & F

Though it's not an obvious entrance to Devils Tower, the heroes may decide to take advantage of the river for other reasons. It's the only major source of fresh water in the area, and even if the heroes are willing to skip their weekly baths, they (and any horses they might have) need to drink something.

Nearby Devils Tower, the river is clean and fresh. The water is a bit murky from silt stirred up on the bottom, but it's certainly drinkable. Hungry heroes might even try their luck at fishing and not go away disappointed.

The river's about 40' across at its widest point, and it's deep enough to require swimming to cross. The nearest ford isn't for several miles in either direction, but the heroes shouldn't have too much need to cross the river.

At point A on the map, the river forks. A good portion of it is diverted to an underground stream, while the rest continues on in its ancient bed. The mouth of this underground river can be reached by anyone willing to poke his head under the water and swim for it. It's only about six feet below the surface.

Of course, it takes a brave soul to allow himself to be sucked into a subterranean river. There's no way of knowing where it goes or if there are any air pockets along the way.

The underground waterway actually extends all the way to a hidden lake in the base of Devils Tower. (For more on this, see **The Underground Lake**, on page 80.) There are frequent pockets of air along the way, so a determined hero could certainly make it all the way from the river's mouth to the lake. This is not an easy trip though.

ROLLING DOWN THE RIVER

The real problem with entering Devils Tower this way is the lack of light. Without magical help, there's no way to keep a light source dry for long, and it's as dark as the pits of Hell

otherwise. This means the only way to find air pockets or even the safest way down the river is by touch. This is a lot easier said than done, particularly when the current's pulling you along and you're doing your best not to run headlong into an unseen outcropping or wall.

The Belle Fourche's current is not normally terribly strong (only a Pace of 2). When it's funneled into the restrictive space of the underground branch though, it's vicious (Pace 8).

When a hero is swimming along in a river, move her the river's full Pace in the direction of the current at the beginning of the turn. The hero can fight or go with the current as she likes.

That said, it's almost impossible to swim against the current in the underground river. A hero's best bet is to simply let it drag her along.

If the hero's got a light source somehow, she can easily avoid hurting herself on the sides or top of the river's tunnel. Otherwise, she's got a decent chance of getting hurt.

At the end of every round the hero moves down the river at the current's Pace or less, have her make a standard *swimmin'* roll for a rapid river (TN 5). Success means the hero avoids injury. Otherwise, she takes 2d4 damage from knocking into the walls. If she goes bust, she automatically takes the hits to the noggin (don't roll for hit location).

If the hero decides to race down the river (maybe she's being chased, or possibly she just needs air), the difficulty increases to Onerous (7).

There are air pockets every so often along the way. If the hero makes a Fair (5) *swimmin'* roll, she can find a handhold in an air pocket long enough to grab a breath. Otherwise, she sails on, missing the opportunity.

Every round the hero goes without air, have her make a Fair (5) *swimmin'* roll. If it's failed, she takes the difference in Wind.

THINGS IN THE DEEP

The crossbreeds, aware the river could be used as an entry into their home, stocked it with a watery sort of protection. These strange fish resemble freshwater barracuda, but with sets of tentacles crowning its gills. These venomous tentacles are capable of encircling and temporarily paralyzing a man, after which the fish digs into the hapless victim with its toothy maw.

The barrasentries, as they're called, travel in schools of 2d4. They mostly stick to the bottom of the river, waiting until they hear something



THE FORTRESS

large and land-borne splashing about in their environment. Then they sneak up behind their intended victim and strike at the poor cowpoke's most vulnerable moment.

The barrasentries live perfectly well in either portion of the river, foul or fresh. They generally keep within a few miles of Devils Tower, but some have been found in other parts of the Sioux Nations. The Indians who have caught these creatures while fishing consider them a bad omen.

BARRASENTRIES

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

Fightin': brawlin' 3d8, sneak 4d8, swimmin' 6d8

Mental: C:2d4, K:1d4, M:2d10, Sm:1d4, Sp:3d6

Size: 4

Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

Poison Tentacles: On a successful *fightin'* brawlin' roll, a barrasentry can grab a victim it's fighting with. The victim can free itself with an opposed *Strength* roll. Each round the barrasentry has a hold of its victim, it injects a paralytic poison. If the victim does not make a Fair (5) *vigor* roll, he is stunned for the round and may perform no actions while the Barrasentry is gnawing on his gizzards, and he takes 2d4 Wind for drowning.

Bite: STR

DOWNRIVER

The underground river eventually returns from Devils Tower, meeting up with the Belle Fourche proper at point B on the map. From this point on, the river is fouled with the waste of the crossbreeds and the creatures they care for within the tower. This is diluted well enough a few miles downstream, but right where the rivers rejoin, it's a disgusting mess.

A hero could try to swim up the stream of waste to the underground lake under Devils Tower, but he'd be fighting the current (Pace 8) the entire time. That's not even considering the problem of choking past the filth. If someone's crazy enough to try this, the hero must make an Onerous (7) *Vigor* check at the beginning of each round or lose the difference in Wind.

On the upside, there's plenty of air almost the entire way up. The spot where the two rivers join is even close enough to the surface to be obvious from the shore. Still, the hero's going to stink like a well-used outhouse if he makes it to the other side.



THAT'S A BEAR?

There's one other hazard of hanging around by the river. That's where the weird grizzlies described in *The Quick & the Dead* like to come for a drink and a swim. They actually like to roam around the entire area, but when they want water, they come here (although never south of where the sewage runs in).

The weird grizzlies are strange beasts created by the crossbreeds when they first moved into Devils Tower many years ago. They came from the bears after which they're named, but they're hairless, with thick gray skin like a rhinoceros, although with scales like lizard. Their teeth and claws are extra long, and they've got a green glowing gizmo stuck in the back of their noggins.

This strange device is the means by which the crossbreeds program the weird grizzlies to do their will. Basically any weird grizzly must obey the orders of any crossbreed who speaks to it. The grizzlies are programmed to recognize rank, so in case of conflicting orders, they always go with those coming from the person with the highest authority. Recently, the number of usable mind-control devices has dwindled.

THE FORTRESS

The grizzlies' standard orders are to patrol the region around Devils Tower and kill anything that's not a crossbreed. This has recently been amended to extend the protection to anyone wearing a large amulet with the Iron Dragon logo stamped into it—although this is a well-kept secret.

WEIRD GRIZZLIES

Corporeal: D:1d6, N:2d8, S:3d12+2, Q:3d10, V:2d12+2
Climbin' 3d8, fightin' brawlin' 3d8, sneak 2d8, swimmin' 1d8

Mental: C:3d8, K:2d4, M:4d10, Sm:2d4, Sp:2d6

Size: 10

Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

Armor: 1

Bite: STR+1d6

Claws: STR+1d8

Control Box: A single wound to the control device destroys it (-8 called shot to hit it). This releases the grizzly from the crossbreeds' control. That doesn't change the fact the heroes have a mad mutant grizzly on their hands, but they might be able to scare the critter away now if they try.



BOUNTY PONTS

Each barrasentry the heroes defeat: 1 point.

Each weird grizzly the heroes defeat: 2 points.

Each hero that gets into Devils Tower by means of the underground river: 1 point.

PRAIRIE DOG TOWN

The region that lays between the Belle Fourche and Devils Tower is fraught with its own kind of danger, although of a fairly subtle variety. Play this one close to your chest, then spring it on the heroes when they least expect it.

The prairie dog town marked on the map is a region of prairie grass marred by dozens of small mounds of dirt, each less than a foot tall and pierced by a hole the size of a man's head. Sharp-eyed cowpokes who have spent any time in the Weird West should instantly recognize these as prairie dog holes.

Prairie dogs are timid rodents about the size of a large rabbit or a raccoon. Their pelts are golden in color, often matching closely the dry dirt in which they dig their homes. Their nests are connected beneath the earth by a complicated series of connected tunnels. If a prairie dog goes down one hole, it can be hard to predict which hole it might reappear from—and each nest always has at least two ways in and out.

Prairie dogs are considered a nuisance by most folks, since horses and cattle (not to mention careless folks) occasionally step into their holes and sometimes break their legs. Many ranching communities pay a bounty on each critter's pelt.

Prairie dogs are communal, and they've developed some interesting ways to support each other. When a person walks through a prairie dog town, the critters all start barking at the intruder. (This sounds more like an angry chirp than a dog's bark, but they're only so big, so you take what you get.)

As the intruder moves through the town, the critters to the front hide, while the ones to the rear reappear. In this way, the prairie dogs keep track of the intruder. Their barks help them communicate with each other and keep track of the stranger until he leaves.

Prairie dogs are shy as can be, and they never attack unless they're somehow cornered and have no choice. A good, thick pair of gloves can be enough protection against this.

The creatures living near Devils Tower are a whole other breed.

THE FORTRESS



PIRANHA DOGS

These little suckers are related to the prairie dogs, since that's what they originally were before the crossbreeds got their hands on them. These days, though, there's only a passing resemblance.

Still, that resemblance is enough for these pack hunters to exploit. From a distance, they look enough like regular prairie dogs. It's only when you get close that you can see their vicious teeth and their sharp claws.

By itself, a single piranha dog isn't much of a threat to a cowpoke. It lays in with its teeth, which can hurt like Hell, but it's only one little guy. The thing is, you rarely ever find just one piranha dog. In the shadow of Devils Tower, there are dozens of these things.

The reason they're called piranha dogs is the way they attack. Like the South American fish they're named after, they swarm all around a victim like a cloud of teeth. They can strip an adult buffalo of all its flesh in a matter of minutes, leaving nothing but bones to gnaw on. Those usually don't last long either, as the critters use the harder bits of a victim's corpse to sharpen their teeth.

Heroes might be tipped off to the piranha dogs' nature by the remains of a weird grizzly that still sits in the middle of the town. The poor creature strayed a bit too far into the piranha dogs' home and paid with its twisted life.

There's not much left of the weird grizzly but a pile of swiftly bleaching bones which look to have been cracked and gnawed (that they're not bleached yet might indicate to a watchful hero that the kill is fresh) and the gizmo that sticks out of the back of the thing's head. This might prove a lure to the heroes, particularly any scientifically inclined types who could find it hard to resist examining.

If the heroes venture into the piranha dog town, the critters act just like prairie dogs, barking and hiding, keeping track of their prey by means of the barks and chirps. Once the moment seems ripe (say after the heroes realize the gizmo they're looking at is from a weird grizzly—and what could kill a bear like this?), the piranha dogs attack.

Up to 10 different piranha dogs can attack a single hero at a time. There are over 200 of these creatures in the town, and they keep coming in waves. Within 100 yards of the piranha dogs'



town, each dog that falls is replaced at the beginning of the next round. Outside that range, new dogs refuse to follow, but the ones that still have a shot at a hero keep at it until dead.

The best way to get away from the piranha dogs is to jump into the Belle Fourche. The dogs are decent swimmers, but they're not willing to risk drowning just for a meal. They instantly break off the attack if the victim dives into the water. Any of the little suckers that are latched on to a hero hop off and swim to shore. Then they watch from the shore for a while before returning to their town.

Also, like most wild animals, the piranha dogs aren't too fond of fire. Heroes with a stack of torches might be able to navigate the piranha dog town with only a few nips at their ankles.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d4, N:2d10, S:2d4, Q:3d8, V:3d6

Fightin': brawlin' 3d10, sneak 2d10

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

Size: 2

Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

Bite: STR

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes survive a piranha dog attack: 4 points.

KANG'S ENTRANCE

The most straightforward means of getting into Devils Tower is through the front door. Unfortunately, the place has "No Solicitors" posted on the front of it in six-foot tall letters in the form of Kang's elite guard.

Actually "elite guard" isn't entirely accurate, although that's certainly the term Kang used when negotiating with the crossbreeds' prime leader. These guys would be working on the railroad all the livelong day if they hadn't pulled guard duty here at the tower.

Kang's rail bosses use guard duty at the tower as a punishment. If you screw up while on guard, you're bound for Devils Tower tomorrow.

The turnover rate among the guards is high. They're stuck out in the middle of nowhere with nothing to do and few people to talk to. Worse yet, they've got to contend with occasionally overzealous weird grizzlies (the protective amulets only work if the grizzlies see them before they attack) and all the other weirdness in the area.

Of course, few guards are ever permitted to leave their post. Many desert, but of those, most are lost in the wilderness or to Sioux patrols. The Indians may not know exactly what's going on in Devils Tower, but they know the Chinese guards are supposed to stay there and not roam the surrounding wilderness.

The entrance to Devils Tower is carved straight into the rock. It goes right through the rubble surrounding the base of the monolith and from there into the core of the tower itself. The portion that works through the rubble looks to have been melted by some great heat, fused together into its own very stable support.

The mouth of the entrance cave is fitted with a massive, steel-bound, wooden door about a foot thick. It's barred from the outside with a massive slab of hardwood that's a full foot thick itself.

There are eight people on guard here at all times. Two of them are notable: Joe Liu (the guard boss) and Minnie Chung (his lover and lieutenant).

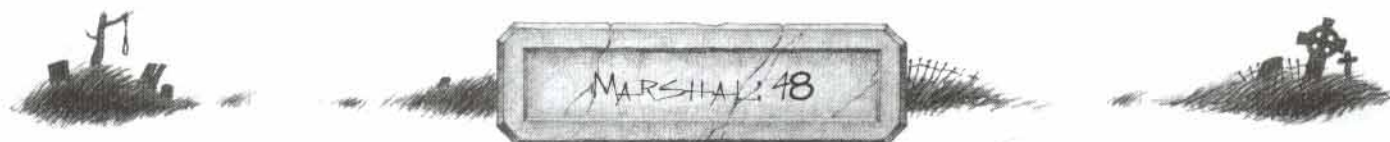
Joe's a likable fellow who just managed to really annoy Kang at the wrong time. Once a top-level administrator in Iron Dragon's hierarchy, he made the mistake of suggesting that treating the workers better might make them more productive. Kang opted instead to show Joe just how much worse the workers could have it.

Joe met Minnie soon after assuming his post, and the two of them have shared his tent ever since. Female companionship is rare in the camp, and Joe guards his relationship with Minnie jealously. It's not as if Joe has to worry about Minnie. It's the rest of the guards who keep him on his toes.

Joe's had to kill more than one man who threatened to take from Minnie what she wasn't willing to give. After the first, it got easier. Joe's not much on killing, but a man's got to do what a man's got to do.

Minnie's perfectly capable of protecting herself in any case. She's carved a few notches on her belt for the men she's had to put down. She doesn't mind it nearly as much as Joe, but she'd rather not pull her gun if she can help it.

Fortunately for them both, days in the shadow of the monolith aren't all that exciting. The Indians give the place a wide berth, and since Devils Tower is in the middle of the Sioux Nations, no one else has any kind of business being nearby—except for Kang's other men, that is, and they're no threat.



THE FORTRESS



Too bad that's not going to last.

Despite the two recent departures from the tower (Stone and Jackie), things have remained pretty much the same around Kang's camp. Liu and his people never knew about either escape. Stone just *ghosted* his way out through the door in the middle of the night—the lax night watch never even saw him—and it's probably a good thing for them that they didn't see him.

Jackie Wells left the fortress by means of the river of sewage. She's not proud of it—and it was a week before the smell went away—but it worked. It also means she's not really sure about a good way to get back into the tower. She's got a good idea about where the underground river (see **The Belle Fourche** section) might start, but she knows that's not going to be an easy way in. She's tough enough to handle it, for sure, but she's not alone this time, and she's loathe to leave behind the help she's likely going to need.

LIU AND THE GANG

Joe and his helpers maintain a round-the-clock watch on the gate into Devils Tower. They're not really concerned about anyone breaking in—more about things breaking out.

For this reason, security's pretty relaxed around the gate. The guards know that they've got a monstrous door between them and whatever's inside the monolith. Anything that can break down the door is sure to be more than enough of a match for them.

The only real plan the guards have in case of a breakout from inside the tower is to run. There are only four horses kept on the rim of the camp, and they're kept ready to go at nearly all times. Off-duty guards often ride around the area, trying to keep their riding skills up.

No horses are permitted to leave the camp without either Joe or Minnie for fear of the guards simply taking off. For this same reason, Joe's the only one in the camp with a raygun (see *Field Report #666*). The others are armed with Gatling pistols and flamethrowers, as well as a considerable knowledge of Kung Fu.

If something starts to break down the door from the inside, Joe and Minnie (along with whoever's lucky enough to grab the other two horses) are sure to be halfway to Deadwood before it gets through. Explaining their actions to Kang might be difficult, but no one ever said they had to report back to him either.



The gate is a new addition to the crossbreeds little fortress of fear. Kang's men installed it shortly after arriving to keep everything inside from getting out.

The guards are woefully unprepared for any attack from the outside of the tower. If this comes, though, they return fire for fear of their lives. Given a chance, they run, but that's not likely to happen given the fact they're caught between the attackers and the gate.

If the heroes try to parley with Joe, he's a pretty amicable fellow. He's cagey, though, and entirely mistrustful of them. If they ask him to open the door for them, he flat-out refuses.

Joe can be bribed or threatened into complying without too much pressure. He's not prepared to give his life for Kang's interests, and if some fools want to get into the tower (something he finds very hard to believe), then let them. He raises the bar, opens the door (it's not locked, just barred), and sweeps them in.

Of course, convincing Joe to open the door back up once the heroes have been barred inside is something else altogether. If this happens, Joe realizes he's dealing from a position of strength, and he milks it for all it's worth.

His top demand is an escort out of the Sioux Nations for Minnie and himself. If the heroes agree, he's more than willing to help them out. The other guards won't interfere, and even ask if they can come along.

In any case, the guards keep the secret of their Iron Dragon amulets to themselves. There are just enough to go around, and none of them are willing to risk a weird grizzly attack by giving them up.

JOE LU

Corporeal: D:3d10, N:3d8, S:2d8, Q:4d10, V:3d6
Climbin' 2d8, dodge 3d8, fightin': drunken style 4d8, fightin': stunstick 2d8, horse ridin' 2d8, quick draw 3d10, shootin': automatics 5d10, shootin': pistol 3d10, sneak 2d8, swimmin' 1d8

Mental: C:3d12, K:2d6, M:4d10, Sm:2d8, Sp:3d8
Area knowledge: Devils Tower 3d6, area knowledge: Shan Fan 2d6, ch'i 4d8, language: Cantonese 3d6, language: English 2d6, leadership 4d10, persuasion 4d10, professional: management 4d6, scrutinize 3d12, search 2d12, survival: plains 2d8

Edges: Enlightened, martial arts training

Ch'i Points: 24

Ch'i Powers: Many arms of the spider 3

Gear: Gatling shotgun, raygun, stunstick, three powercells, crossbreed translator, two horses.

KANG'S GUARDS & MINNIE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:3d8, Q:2d6, V:3d8
Climbin' 2d6, fightin': eagle claw style 3d6, shootin': flamethrower 2d6, shootin': automatics 3d6, sneak 2d6

Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:2d8, Sm:2d6, Sp:3d6
Area knowledge: Devils Tower 1d6, language: Cantonese 2d6, language: English 1d6, search 2d6

Edges: Martial arts training

Gear: Gatling pistols (6), flamethrower (1), plenty of ammo, suit of stitched-together crossbreed armor (covers guts, arms, and legs).

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes enter Devils Tower through Kang's entrance by force: 2 points.

The heroes enter Devils Tower through Kang's entrance by trickery: 4 points.

THE EYE

Well, we've covered by land and by sea. Here's how the heroes can get into Devils Tower by air.

The top of Devils Tower is flat and open, with only a bit of scrub blocking the view, a perfect place to land an aircraft, right? Not exactly.

If the heroes are flying an auto-gyro or have rocket packs (or anything else that doesn't need a runway to touch down gracefully on), they can try landing on the top of the monolith.

Otherwise, they're pretty much out of luck.

If you remember correctly, the heroes have a good chance of having been brought to Devils Tower in a super-gyro. McCormick's just crazy enough to try just about anything the heroes' are likely to ask, including landing on top of the tower. "Looks big enough to me," he laughs.

Of course, if that's what the heroes want to do, they're going to have to contend with the nest of devil bats that live smack dab in the middle of the landing area. Being the predatory creatures that they are, the devil bats are always on the lookout for an easy meal, and to them a bunch of wingless heroes sitting in a wicker basket looks a lot like a picnic lunch.

HIGH NOON ON DEVILS TOWER

As foolhardy as he may be, McCormick's not interested in trying to land his super-gyro atop the tower after dark. He's brave, for sure, but that hardly means he's suicidal. Chances are good the heroes are going to have to go for a landing during the day.



THE FORTRESS

Kang's guards are sure to see the super-gyro approach. These contraptions aren't all that quiet after all. But if McCormick has his way, he comes in so high (about 300 yards above the base of the tower) that the Chinese have little or no chance of hitting him with their guns.

That doesn't mean they won't try. Any time the heroes fly around the tower, Kang's guards spot them and let loose with a hail of lead. Liu's not foolish enough to waste his raygun's precious powercells at that range, but the rest of the guards have standing orders to fire at anything (besides themselves) that moves and doesn't identify itself.

They're particularly wary of the devil bats that live on top of the tower. For the most part, the critters and the guards leave each other alone, having built up some amount of mutual respect for each other over the past several months. Every now and then, though, a devil bat's appetite gets the better of it, and it makes a daring grab at an unwary guard.

On the other side of the coin, some of the guards like taking potshots at the devil bats as they cruise the skies at dusk. They almost never hit them, but the attacks help warn the critters off. Besides which, Kang's supplied the guards with plenty of ammo, and the target practice helps them entertain themselves in the middle of nowhere.

Sometimes the devil bat gets the guard, and sometimes the guard gets the devil bat. Either way, the two sides keep each other constantly on edge, honing their paranoia to a razor's edge.

This all makes it that much harder for the heroes to reach the tower unannounced, especially by air. If the heroes approach during the day, Kang's guards are sure to see them and begin firing. The noise awakens the devil bats (who are nocturnal and so normally sleep during the day), alerting them to the super-gyro's approach.

The devil bats are clever hunters, and they've dealt with flying machines before. (Sharp-eyed heroes might spot the aged wreckage of two of Kang's ornithopters not too far off from the tower.) They wait for the craft to near within 20 yards of the tower before they attack.

The super-gyro's meant to be a form of mass transportation, not a warship. It is equipped with a steam Gatling gun on a pintle mount, but that's about it. McCormick's going to have his hands full trying to maneuver his way away from the devil bats, though, so it's up to somebody else to staff it.



THE FORTRESS

AIRBORNE TACTICS

There are five devil bats, and they're hungry. They all attack at once, diving in and out of range of the heroes' guns until an opportunity opens up to grab someone or slash at a support rope. They go for the ropes holding the basket first, knowing that if they can sever these, they can munch on the contents at their leisure.

There are five of these ropes, one reaching to each of the basket's corners and a backup rope that threads through the center of the basket's floor. These are good, thick ropes, but the devil bats' claws are sharp. They can each take 20 points of damage before giving away.

Use your judgment to determine what happens when a rope is cut. At the very least, any heroes in a precarious position (say standing out at the edge of the basket, firing at the devil bats) must make an Onerous (7) *Nimbleness* roll to avoid falling out of the basket.

If a hero fails this roll and you're feeling generous, give her a Hard (9) *Nimbleness* roll to grab onto one of the basket's mooring lines (which dangle beneath the basket). If this is failed too, the hero's taking the express elevator straight into the dirt.



McCormick knows something like this could happen, and he's well aware of Kang's men on the ground (assuming they've been shooting at him already). Unless ordered otherwise, he does his best to keep centered over the top of Devils Tower once the fighting begins. If they're lucky, falling heroes should only have 2d20+20 feet of freefall before slamming into Mother Earth.

If they're not over the tower, you should just kiss them good-bye.

DEVIL BATS

For your convenience, here's a quick recap of these creatures from the *Deadlands* main rulebook.

These huge, winged predators attack by grabbing prey with their taloned feet (an opposed *fightin'* *brawlin'* roll). If the bat gets a success, it does normal damage. With a raise, it drags the victim into the air at Pace 12 or flies off the top of the tower at the same rate.

If the victim doesn't break free by the time he's 50 yards up, the bat lets go (10d6+50 points of falling damage) or tries to slam the prey against Devils Tower. If the hero's already 50 or more yards in the air, the devil bat simply lets him go over open air.

The victim's best hope is to grab onto the devil bat and force it down. This is an opposed roll between the critter's *Nimbleness* and the hero's *Strength*. If the bat gets a raise, it shakes the hero loose. If the hero gets a raise, he forces the creature within 10 yards of the ground, or more likely the top of the tower. From there, she can jump free.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d10, N:3d12, S:1d12+2, Q:3d10, V:2d8
Dodge 3d12, *fightin'*: *brawlin'* 3d12, *sneak* 1d12
(5d12 from the air)

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

Size: 6 (8' tall)

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Claws: STR+1d4

Flying: Pace 24

Weaknesses:

Noise Sensitivity: The devil bat "sees" by sonar. If the prey has the guts to stand still among other obstacles, the thing must make an Onerous (7) *Cognition* roll to pick her out of the clutter. If the prey does this, her *fightin'* skill is not added to the TN of the devil bat's attack.

THE FORTRESS

FLYIN' BY NIGHT

If the heroes fly toward the tower in the middle of the night, they're pretty much asking for some real trouble. The devil bats attack just like before, but they've got sonar, so they can "see" perfectly well, even in the worst darkness.

Fortunately, the moon shines down on the monolith bright and full when the heroes arrive. This means they're not stuck in complete darkness, but they're still at a disadvantage. Double the range penalties for any ranged attacks.

THE NEST

If the heroes manage to kill all of the devil bats (this is their home, and they're not about to be driven off by anything less than a visit from the Grim Reaper), they can land safely on the top of Devils Tower. The monolith is pretty flat on top, and there's little peril of someone falling off unless she's standing near an edge.

Unfortunately, the heroes aren't alone.

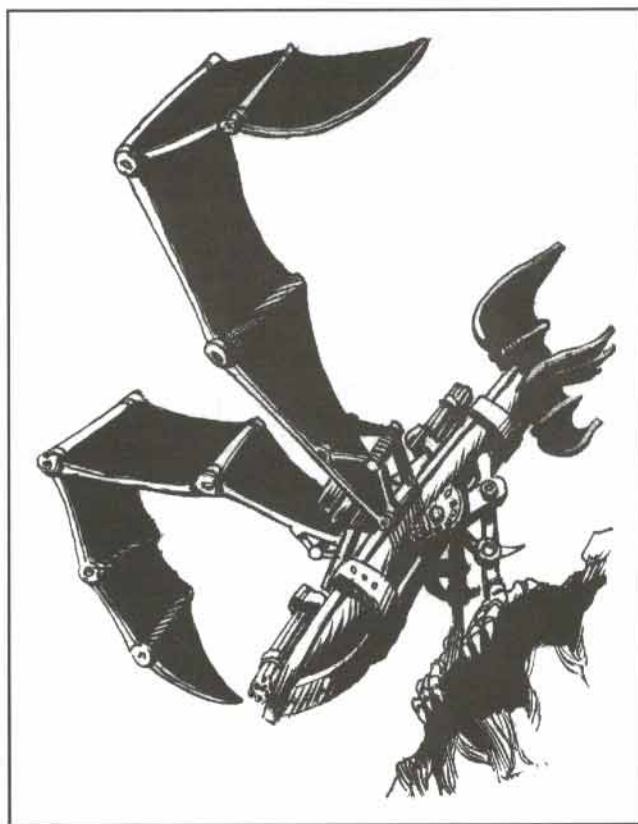
The devil bats' nest is a small niche located in a stand of gnarled bushes smack dab in the middle of the plateau. If the heroes decide to investigate it, they find a niche in the top of the tower lined with pine branches, pine needles, and leaves. Bones of past victims litter the place. These include rabbits, wolves, deer, and even humans.

Just as the heroes poke their noses over the rim of the nest, they're attacked by two young devil bats. (Be sure to check for surprise.) These have the same statistics as their parents, except their *Strength* is only 1d10, their *Mien* is only 1d8, and their flying *Pace* is only 18.

If their parents are already dead, the youngsters aren't so eager to die. If after the first round of combat the battle seems to be going against them, they take off. They fly low to the ground, and once they reach the edge of the tower, they dive for the ground, hoping to use the trees as cover from the heroes' guns.

And no, the heroes can't capture the young devil bats and train them as pets.

Once the heroes clear out the youngsters, they can search the nest. A Fair (5) *search* roll reveals a handtorch. An Onerous (7) *search* roll reveals a crossbreed skeleton at the bottom of the heap. This long-dead corpse is still wearing an operational bioclave (which apparently didn't do its owner a whole lot of good). The bioclave will immediately attach itself if a hero puts it on (see Field Report #666 for more information).



THE SHAFT

In the southwest corner of the tower, there's another stand of bushes. These sway gently, and heroes making an Incredible (9) *Cognition* roll can tell just from looking at the plants that something's wrong. The breeze seems to be coming from below!

Any hero that gets within 40 feet of the bushes hears an eerie moaning sound. This can easily be followed to the stand of bushes.

Heroes who make a Fair (5) *search* roll in the stand of bushes find a shaft leading straight down into the tower. The air rushing up and down the shaft makes it sound like breathing. Scientific or well-traveled heroes may recognize this effect as a common feature of many caves.

It's impossible to see the bottom of the shaft without some kind of help). Torches thrown or lowered into the shaft are blown out by the stiff breeze that flows up and down the shaft. If the heroes do figure out a way to see down the shaft, they find it goes about 100' straight down and then abruptly turns to the northeast.

For more about the shaft and where it leads, see **The Garden** below.

THE FORTRESS

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes defeat the devil bats: 4 points.
The heroes defeat the young devil bats: 2 points.
The heroes discover the shaft: 2 points.

HOME, SWEET HOME

The inside of Devils Tower is a strange place, the like of which is found nowhere else on Earth. It's an underground structure carved out of the heart of an ancient volcano that's had its outer soil stripped off it like flesh from the stump of a broken femur.

The crossbreed home within Devils Tower was created hundreds of years ago by crossbreeds fleeing the wrath of the tribes they had formerly enslaved. The crossbreeds had created many such places, almost all of which have been lost to natural disasters like earthquakes or the simple ravages of time. Their creators were all slain but one. Devils Tower is the last inhabited fortress of its kind.

Of course, the crossbreeds never guessed the castle they planned to carve out of Devils Tower would one day become their prison instead. It's here that the last of the crossbreeds hide from the rest of the world, waiting for the day they will inevitably be discovered by the world at large.

In a very real way, that day has already come and gone with the advent of Zabrox's deal with Kang. The crossbreeds of today live in a world their ancestors could only have dreamed of in their worst nightmares. Not only have the crossbreeds been wholly dethroned from their rightful position on this planet as masters of the lesser species from which they were evolved, they actually have been forced to turn to one particular group from that species to protect them from the rest of their rapidly advancing humankind.

The crossbreeds know that their day of reckoning is not far off, especially since two humans (Stone and Jackie Wells) have stormed through their home from the inside out. Never did they imagine such a thing was possible, and





it has put all their carefully laid defense plans to waste and made a sham of their deal with Kang. Now they're just mad.

The atmosphere inside Devils Tower can only be described as desperate. The crossbreeds are ready and willing to savagely defend their home. It's just that they have no actual foes to focus their anger against.

In walk the heroes.

While it's possible that the heroes might be able to find a means to communicate with the crossbreeds (whether by use of a crossbreed translator or the blessed miracle *parlay*), it's not likely going to do them a whole lot of good. With few exceptions, the crossbreeds are scared of outsiders, and their first reaction is going to be to kill first and play with the corpse later.

The heroes need to take care here. If they're careful, they can take out or get past a group of crossbreeds without the crossbreeds raising the alarm. This is their best bet for getting to the portal in one piece.

BEFORE & AFTER THE ALARM

Until the alarm is raised, the crossbreeds are going to be surprised just about every time they see a hero. No human (besides Stone and Jackie) has ever set foot inside of Devils Tower. Even the meetings with Kang were held outside the tower, at the spot where Kang's people now stand guard. Most crossbreeds simply can't conceive of such a thing. This blind spot is the heroes' only real advantage.

When the heroes encounter a crossbreed who's not seen any of them before, they can count on getting surprise automatically for the first round. After that, the crossbreeds can react normally.

The first round the crossbreeds can act, they're going to look around and make a decision. If they think they can take the heroes, they give it a try, not bothering to raise the alarm or ask for help. They're in the thick of bloodlust at this point, and they're not interested in strategic retreats of any kind.

If one of them is dead, though, they quickly realize that the outside world has changed a great deal from the times when their ancestors were the top of the food chain. They tuck their (metaphorical) tails between their legs and run for help.

It's up to the heroes to keep any runners from getting help or raising the general alarm. If this happens, the heroes are going to be in for a world of hurt.

How bad could it be? Well, first off, most of the crossbreeds won't be surprised while the alarm's raised. The same isn't true of the heroes though. They're wandering around in a strange place they've never been in before, while the crossbreeds are protecting a home they've never left in all their years.

Second, if the crossbreeds can determine where the heroes are or where they're headed, they immediately move to stop them (or set up ambushes for the intruders). The real trouble here is the lack of an efficient means of communication.

The only way for the crossbreeds to get everyone in their home on the same page is by the ringing of the main siren in **The Soldiers' Barracks** (see page 67). This is normally used to call everyone together for meals, mass meetings, and so on, by means of a simple pattern of rings. When the siren goes off constantly, that means someone's actually managed to breach the tower. When the all-clear signal is given, the disaster is over.

This means that to raise the alarm, a crossbreed that knows of the heroes' presence has to make it down to the soldiers' barracks. Once this happens, the heroes have to contend with a forewarned foe.

Really diplomatic heroes might actually be able to work out a means of communicating with the crossbreeds. Chances of the crossbreeds working with the heroes are pretty much nil, but certain circumstances (like greed) may change that.

THE INTERIOR

The carved-out parts of Devils Tower share many features. The levels in which the crossbreeds live (from the garden down to the soldier's training grounds—maps H through L) were originally each carved out as single large rooms. Walls were then fitted into these places, dividing each level into rooms and hallways.

The walls are made of melted stone reconstituted to look as if they were part of a naturally occurring cavern. Doors (where they exist) are made of thick wood bound together with iron. Furniture is made of similar wood (mostly the local pine), and nearly all of it would be considered ancient by the finest antique shop Back East. The crossbreeds take great care of their belongings, since they risk discovery if they have to leave their home to get the materials to make more things (or simply repair the ones they've already got).





THE FORTRESS



Each level has a working fountain of water pumped up from the underground lake. This clean water is available to all, and the crossbreeds collect it in jugs to take back to their living quarters for personal use.

Nearby the fountains (although not too close), the crossbreeds have a sewer into which they can dump their chamberpots. These sewers are little more than small chutes that run down to the sewage pond near the underground lake. They're constantly flushed with the excess water from the always pumping fountains, ensuring the place stays relatively clean.

The chutes are only about one by two feet wide, so there's little chance a hero could use them to travel around through the tower. If someone was able to get small enough to fit into the chute, he'd find it extremely slippery (and very disgusting). He'd also likely find himself swimming in the sewage pond in no time at all. Where they'll quickly meet the reclusive sewer leviathan who resides there.

Meals are served in a massive common eating area in the soldier's barracks (map J). They're served in two shifts so that the parts of the home that need constant monitoring or maintenance are never left unstaffed. The siren in the soldier's barracks signals the beginning of each meal.

Air is pumped through the entire interior by means of a large fan that sits near the top of the ramp that leads up to the garden level from the home of the folk. Since there are no doors between the levels (although there are locked grates at certain spots), the air can flow freely between the top of the monolith and the underground lake that sits beneath it.

Except where noted on the maps, the ground is generally flat and level. The major exceptions to this rule are the ramps that connect the upper levels, as well as the stairs that link the lower levels.

Gunshots on one level aren't likely to raise attention in other parts of the crossbreeds' home. They are simply too spaced out. As much of an echo chamber the place often seems to be, the long, twisted ramps and stairs that connect levels kill noise before it gets very far.

The exception to this is any gunshots fired in the ramps or stairs. These can be heard very clearly by anyone directly on either end of the ramp or stairwell. Ray guns and stun sticks are pretty quiet though, so these are pretty safe to use without warning crossbreeds on the other levels.

THE GARDEN

The crossbreeds' garden is the top level in the interior of Devils Tower. It's here that the crossbreeds grow and harvest their mostly vegetarian diet. They occasionally send groups of hunters into the area surrounding Devils Tower to supplement their diets with venison, buffalo, and other meats (human included), but the arrangement the prime leader has made with Kang has curtailed this of late—they've been saving a few miners for special occasions.

Also, the prime leader is leery of attracting too much attention to his people's home. He's well aware of the fate of the rest of his kind, and he does his level best to make sure his particular enclave survives. So far, he (and his predecessors) have had a great amount of success, but the world is changing, even more quickly since the Reckoning, so Zabrox has become even more cautious.

To that end, Zabrox has stepped up the maintenance of the garden. He knows that starvation would be the one thing sure to drive his people out of their home, and he's taken great pains to develop the fertile ground in the monolith's upper level.

The garden is full of plants of all sorts, most of which the posse should recognize: corn, peas, apples, wheat, and so on. There are some other things like bananas which the heroes might never have seen before (since they're native to tropical areas), but there are no alien crossbred foods. Everything in the tower is native to this hemisphere.

The garden is hot and humid, the water nearly dripping right out of the air. In fact, it comes from the stalactite-covered ceiling 30 feet overhead. The entire top of Devils Tower basically works as a rain collector, and the water is funneled directly into the area above the garden. This mineral-rich water slowly works its way through the rock until it drips through the ceiling of the garden, straight onto the crops.

Of course, plants don't live on just water. They need light as well. For that, the entire chamber is filled with dozens of large light sconces. These are turned on for 12 hours a day (from about 7 A.M. to 7 P.M.), feeding the plants the full spectrum of light they need.

The lights are built directly into the wall and are wired into the power grid that runs through the entire crossbreed complex. The lights have a bluish hue to them, casting everything in an unearthly, sterile color.

THE FORTRESS

The earth the plants grow in is anything but sterile. Much of the waste from the crossbreeds and their creatures is collected and tilled into the soil here, working as an effective fertilizing agent. (The rest of it ends up in the lowest part of the tower; see **The Underground Lake** for all the details on this.)

The plants are all well-groomed. Nothing is left to waste. There's not a bit of fallen fruit or vegetable on the rich, black soil. Also, the plants are all in neat, ordered rows, eliminating any questions as to whether they were planted there intentionally or not.

The food that can be plucked from the garden (only some of it is ripe at any given time) is of the best quality, although it may taste a little funny. The crossbreed varieties of these plants are raised a bit differently than those found in a typical farmer's field, to say the least.

The garden is an entirely controlled environment. To start with, there are no unwanted vermin to be found in the entire level. Anything that might find its way to this part of Devils Tower is instantly and relentlessly exterminated. There are no insects to eat the plants' leaves (the mantabats eat anything coming through the air shaft, and the gardeners, rockworms, and cleaners get the rest), and no blight to sicken them either (genetic engineering has taken care of that).

Of course, that hardly means the place is devoid of danger.

GETTIN' IN & OUT

There are only two ways in or out of the garden level. There's the wide ramp in the northeast corner. This winds down to the top level of the crossbreed home. There is no door on the outlet of this ramp, although there are walls that stretch up 20 feet. These are capped by a circular roof to prevent the water dripping from the ceiling getting straight into the rest of the tower.

Then there's the airshaft in the southwest part of the garden. This is the same shaft that feeds down from the monolith's roof.

The shaft lets out between a couple of light sconces in the southwest portion of the orchard that occupies the southern portion of this immense room (which is in total about 220 long by 110 feet wide). The shaft's opening is covered with a metal grate of bars each about 4 inches apart. Air shifts in and out of the shaft in a regular fashion, almost as if Devils Tower itself was breathing through this blowhole.





THE FORTRESS



The grating over the shaft can be pried off with some small effort. This requires a Hard (9) *Strength* roll, but two people can pull on it at once if they like. If either one succeeds, the grate pulls free.

The grate is heavy, though, and once free, it requires an Incredible (11) *Strength* roll to keep from dropping it. If this is failed, the grate clatters on the hard stone path that follows the garden's outer rim, making one Hell of a racket and alerting anyone in the entire level.

The walls of the shaft are pretty darn smooth, and the shaft itself runs from 8 to 10 feet wide, making it nearly impossible to scale the thing. If someone was to lower a rope from the top of the tower, 100 feet above, this could be used to hauls people or objects up and down, but otherwise it's going to take a clever idea on the part of the heroes.

If someone is coming down a rope from the top, it's a pretty simple task to slide down the rope to the floor of the shaft. All the hero's got to do is contend with the nest of mantabats that have made their home here.

MANTABATS

About midway up the shaft, there's a small indentation in the almost uniformly smooth walls. It forms a ledge six feet wide and four feet deep. The indentation is six feet tall, so three or four people could actually stand here if they found a reason to.

The ledge is home to a small nest of mantabats, strange crossbred creatures that look something like tiny manta rays that flap through the air. The mantabats don't really fly very well (Pace 6), but they rarely have to get somewhere quickly. They live an idyllic life, wandering up and down the shaft, never going further than the top of Devils Tower or the exit from the garden to the crossbreeds' proper home.

The mantabats spend their nights wandering from plant to plant or flying around the tower, looking for insects to feed upon, and, pollinating them as they move from blossom to blossom. They will voraciously devour any unwanted creatures that happen to cross their path. These are usually only things like plant parasites, but it can include larger things like a stray bird—or a hero.

The mantabats might not look too fearsome at first. Sure, they're nasty little creatures, but they're small, only about as big as a large (traditional) bat. They've got a few tricks on their side though.

First, mantabats have vicious sets of teeth capable of chewing through just about anything given time. They are carnivores, first and foremost. They eat bugs for the most part, making them excellent guardians for the garden.

Second, each mantabat has a long tail with a vicious stinger embedded in it. A good slap with this injects a neurotoxin capable of paralyzing smaller animals and making larger folks wish they were dead as they puke their guts up.

If the mantabats discover a hero in their shaft (which they do if ever there's one there—humans are clumsy and loud compared to these creatures), they attack in a cloud of wings. They lead off with their stingers, but some of the smarter ones set to work chewing on the rope holding the hero up. (Most ropes can take about 10 points of chewing damage before giving away.) If the hero's stung while hanging from a rope, he must make a Fair (5) *Vigor* check or fall to the bottom of the shaft, where the mantabats make a quick meal of his fresh corpse.

The best way to get rid of a mantabat is to smack one with a torch. Their wings go up like a moth touching an open flame. They're aware of this limitation and avoid any fire (or even bright light) presented toward them. Other than that, though, they're pretty fearless.

The mantabats don't just hang out in the shaft either. They can often be found in the garden, although this is only when the lights are off. They're nocturnal, so during the day they stay in their nest.

There are 13 mantabats that call the garden airshaft their home.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d6, N:4d10, S:1d4, Q:4d8, V:2d6
Dodge 3d10, fightin': brawlin' 3d10, sneak 2d10
(4d10 from the air)

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

Size: 2 (2' long)

Terror: 5

Special Abilities:

Bite: STR

Flying: Pace 6

Sting: On any *fightin'*: *brawlin'* hit, the mantabat's tail injects a nasty toxin. The victim must make an Onerous (7) *Vigor* check or fall ill for 2 hours. During this time, the victim is -4 to all Trait and skill rolls. This is not cumulative.

Vulnerability to Fire: Any fire-based attack does triple its normal damage to a mantabat.



THE FORTRESS

ROCKWORMS

The aliens didn't just come up with efficient killing machines when they crossbred their various creatures. They also created some helpful smaller creatures.

Okay, most of the creatures are both helpful and killers. Those aliens got as much mileage out of each creation as they could. Why come up with something that could just help you farm when you could make it a protector of your crops too?

That's exactly the story behind the rockworms. These little beasts look like huge earthworms, larger than the largest nightcrawlers, over a half inch round and a foot long. They crawl around in the dirt in the garden, automatically tilling the soil and making sure the mix of nutrients in the dirt is just right.

The thing that separates these critters from typical worms is that they can literally burrow right through rock. These creatures turn the rock into nutrients for the soil, carving out just an inch or less of rock every few years, eventually lowering the garden's floor. The rock is gradually replaced by the mineral-rich waters that drip from the ceiling. Instead of forming stalagmites, these young formations are chewed to bits by the rockworms and ground into the soil.

The heroes may not actually know about the rockworms unless they go walking through the garden without the proper protection. The gardeners use specially hardened shoes so they can work in the rows between the plants. Anyone else can simply walk along the outer rim of the garden (on the rock path that encircles the place) and be absolutely fine. If she happens to stray into the garden proper, though, she risks being attacked by rockworms.

Rockworms start out by burrowing through a victim's boots and into her feet. This can be surprising and painful. Chances are good that a hero that gets "bitten" by the acid a rockworm secretes is going to simply yank the critter out of her boot and hightail it out of the garden. The rockworms aren't intended to be a lethal threat. They're just there to show the heroes how alien the world they've broken into is.

If a hero knows what she's looking for, she can spot an oncoming rockworm by the furrow it leaves behind itself as it crawls near the surface of the dirt. Rockworms never crawl too deep unless they're running away, so these furrows can easily be spotted by anyone watching the soil. All it takes is a Foolproof (3) Cognition roll.

Rockworms aren't terribly aggressive by nature. They're slow and easily squished under the heel of a boot, and they also aren't much smarter than an earthworm. As soon as any of them are killed (or any of their kind within 10 yards is hurt), they burrow deep within the ground, becoming nearly impossible to find.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d6, N:3d6, S:1d4, Q:1d4, V:1d4

Fightin': brawlin' 3d10, sneak 2d6 (4d6 in the dirt)

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

Size: 1 (1' long)

Terror: 5

Special Abilities:

Acid Skin: 2d6 damage with any touch of the rockworm's front tip.

Burrow: Pace 4

ROCKWASPS

It's one thing to come up with a great way to fertilize your soil, but that's not the only thing you need to grow crops. It's not ever really easy tending a garden (or especially a farm) in the Weird West, but doing it inside a towering monolith of rock really takes some doing.





THE FORTRESS

The fact is that once plants get going, they're usually fine, barring any kinds of problems with pests. You've got to think long-term though.

If a plant doesn't manage to pollinate, it's never going to reproduce. Most plants can't manage to do this on their own, although there are a few that do. The rest of the kingdom relies on a symbiotic relationship it has with flying insects.

Bugs like bees poke their noses into flowers to grab at the nectar and rumble around in the pollen. Once they're done with one plant, they move on to another, bringing the residue of the last plant's pollen with them. In this way, the bee manages to help the plants reproduce.

The crossbreeds knew all about this when they set up their underground garden. Regular bees might have worked fine for their purposes, but this is one race of creatures that never likes to leave well enough alone.

Instead, the ancient techpriests engineered a vicious kind of wasp that could perform the same pollination functions as a bee. However, it would also savagely attack any sort of intruders that it came across, acting as another level of security system at the same time.

The rockwasps can't stand the smell of the crossbreeds (they normally stink pretty bad to humans as well), so they usually give them a wide berth. Nothing like having your own body scent work as an insect repellent.

In comparison, humans and most other types of creatures smell like candy to a rockwasp. Any time the rockwasps detect an intruder that pushes their buttons (which is all of them that don't smell like crossbreeds), they're after it like a pack of wolves on a wounded sheep.

The wasps only come out during the day, so the posse gets a break if they've just been assaulted by Mantabats. Individually, the rockwasps aren't much to worry about. Sure, a sting hurts, but unless the victim has a severe allergic reaction, one sting's not going to do much more than annoy. The problem is these things generally travel in large groups.

Every minute that a hero spends in the garden, roll 1d6. On 5 or more, he's been spotted by a rockwasp.

The first round, only that single rockwasp tries to sting the hero. The next round, 1d6 more rockwasps join in. The same happens each round after that, until the hero manages to somehow kill them all or just get away. Careless heroes can expect to soon be attacked by a veritable cloud of rockwasps.

You don't have to roll an attack for each separate rockwasp. Instead, divide the rockwasps attacking each hero up into groups of up to six critters each. Treat each group as an individual, rolling their *Quickness* (1d4 for each rockwasp) separately. Then make one *fightin' brawlin'* attack for each group, rolling 1d6 for each rockwasp in the group.

So, if a hero's being attacked by 15 rockwasps, divide them into three groups, with six of the little stingers in the first two groups and three in the last. The first two attacks each roll 6d4 for *Quickness* and 6d6 to hit, while the third rolls 3d4 for *Quickness* and 3d6 to hit.

Once you determine if an attack has hit, roll for hit location normally, as if the group of rockwasps was a single attack.

Now you need to figure out how many of the stingers actually penetrated the victim's skin. Each success on the attack roll counts for one sting. Only up to six stings can hit with a single attack.

If an rockwasp attack rolls 13, that's two successes. That means two stings get through at that hit location. Each sting does 1d4 damage. Roll these separately.

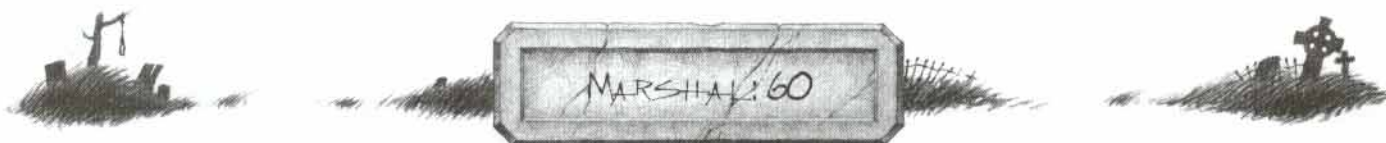
Chances are that the heroes aren't going to take too many wounds from the rockwasps, but they might run out of Wind pretty darn quickly if they're unlucky. Of course, then they're at the mercy of the insects unless someone comes to their aid.

If anyone does try to help out someone being stung by rockwasps, she risks attracting their attention as well. When this happens, roll 1d6. On 2 or more, a wasp finds the helper, and then she's got to deal with a growing horde all her own. It's tough being a good friend.

There are a few different ways to stop the rockwasps. Like most flying insects, they don't care for smoke much. It lowers their Pace to 2.

Rockwasps aren't all that fast, either, so it's possible to outrun them if the hero's speedy enough. Slowpokes are pretty much doomed.

Flamethrowers are wonderful against rockwasps, since they can attack bunches of them at once. The flame automatically singes their wings off too, making them easy to get away from. Any flamethrower attack instantly kills any rockwasps it hits. Of course, using a flamethrower to scour rockwasps off of a friend might not be advised, since the friend is going to take full damage too. Sure, he's not going to have any rockwasps on him, but the cure could hurt a lot worse than the disease.



THE FORTRESS

A hero that drops and rolls can crush every rockwasp on him in one round. Of course, he's still got to deal with the new ones coming at him.

Lastly, the rockwasps' stings are completely useless against any kind of armor at all. In their case, this includes things like heavy or leather jackets or chaps, hats, or other articles of heavy clothing. A heavy blanket or bedroll would offer fine protection as well, although the hero would have a hard time seeing out of it. Thin shirts and dresses aren't going to do a thing, and bare flesh is a real problem.

The rockwasps don't follow the heroes out of the garden level either, unless they're already attacking them. Smart heroes are going to run like Hell toward safety and then kill the insects trying to crawl under their clothes.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d4, N:1d6, S:1d4, Q:1d4, V:1d4
Fightin': brawlin' xd6

Mental: C:1d6, K:1d4, M:2d4, Sm:1d4, Sp:1d4
Overawe (buzzing) xd4

Size: 1 (1' long)

Terror: 3

Special Abilities:

Sting: See the full description above for all the gory details.

Flying: Page 8

GARDENERS

The plants and animals that live in the garden aren't alone. In fact, most of them couldn't live there without the help of their caretakers, a group of folk crossbreed who spend their days ensuring their people have food.

There are 6+1d4 folk crossbreeds up here during the garden's lit hours. At night, the place is abandoned to the flora and fauna that call the garden home.

Most of the time, the gardeners spend their work hours puttering away in the garden or making minor repairs to equipment in the storage room on the north end of the garden. The place is filled with various farming tools, many of which can be used as bladed weapons (STR+1d6). Most crossbreeds don't bother with such things, though, preferring to rely on their own claws, which are plenty sharp.

None of the crossbreeds that work the garden have anything in the way of strange technologies available to them. The only thing they can do is kill the heroes with their claws or run like Hell to raise the alarm.



THE STORAGE ROOM

If the heroes investigate the storage room, they find a whole lot of farming implements, basically just about what you'd expect to find in a typical barn. All of the tools bear the unmistakable stamp of crossbreed workmanship. They've all been carved with hieroglyphics that tell the story of the people who have used them over the years. They'll also find all whole bunch of chemicals the crossbreeds use in the garden (it's up to the Marshal to decide if the posse can find anything useful).

On a Foolproof (3) search roll, the heroes hear something sniffing behind a stack of baskets (normally used for the transport of food). If they look behind the baskets, they find a crossbreed child cowering in the corner.

This child is an innocent creature scared for his life. That said, he's perfectly capable of gutting an unwary hero that makes as if to attack him. (Use the same profile as for a regular folk crossbreed, but change his *Strength* to 2d6.)

This is really a test for the heroes to see how bloodthirsty they are. If they make to kill the child in cold blood, Jackie objects, asking which side of the war the heroes are on. If they point

THE FORTRESS

out she shot a human child being held hostage by Stone, she flatly claims, "That's different. I saved the girl's life. If we'd let him get away, Stone would have killed her anyway. She lived, didn't she?"

If the heroes ask, there's plenty of rope around the place for them to use to tie the child up. There are even rags to use as a gag if they're so inclined.

Of course, once the heroes decide not to take the child's life, it's not over. They've still got to get the child to comply.

If the heroes approach the child slowly and speak softly, showing the child the ropes, the kid picks up on what they want and offers his hands to be tied up. If they just try to grab him, he fights as if his life depends on it.

If the heroes leave the child alive, he's found a few hours later by the Gardeners. Of course, that is if Stone doesn't find him first.

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes get by the mantabats: 4 points.

The heroes avoid the rockworms: 2 points.

The heroes defeat the gardeners 2 points.

The heroes do not harm the child: 4 points.



HOME O' THE FOLK

This level is where the crossbreed folk live, the average people whom the techpriests care for and the soldiers protect. The bulk of crossbreed life goes on here, although some of the more exciting stuff happens on the other levels. The Prime Leader also makes his home here, although most of his time is spent tending to duties elsewhere in the tower.

GENERAL LIFE

The crossbreeds are an insular people, and inbreeding has hurt them down through the centuries. Even the dumbest farmer knows you can't keep crossing a small herd with its own kind—unless, of course, you like having the occasional two-headed calf. Unfortunately, the crossbreeds haven't had much of a choice.

The crossbreeds are genetically different enough from both of their parent races—humans and the aliens—to make them incompatible from a breeding point of view. Sure, they could try to make things work, but the cold facts are that they can't. This means they're stuck with each other.

Unfortunately, there aren't a whole lot of crossbreeds left, just about 400 of them in total, crammed into less than 8,000 square feet of living space. That's less than 20 square feet of living space for every crossbreed, for those of you who are counting. That's not a whole lot of space, but it's been worse.

The crossbreed population has been slowly declining over the past several decades, for no reason they can explain. (It's got to do with genetics and an insufficiently diverse population, but that's a bit above the heads of the crossbreeds—or most mad scientists in the Weird West for that matter.) The crossbreeds are extremely long-lived (median lifespan is anywhere from 150 to 200 years), and this has kept the monolith full, even with the lack of children to replace the dying adults.

Because of this, children are prized highly by the crossbreeds. They fight savagely to protect them, ready to risk life and limb to ensure their safety. In fact, if the crossbreeds somehow encounter a human child (a hero with the *kid* Hindrance, for instance), they hesitate to harm her. Only if the child personally attacks do they respond in kind, and they prefer to use nonlethal methods in such cases. They know how much their children mean to them, and they are loath to destroy the offspring of even a hated foe.



The crossbreeds expect the same kind of respect from their adversaries. It's nearly inconceivable to them that someone would purposely injure a child. If this happens (accidentally or not), the attacker can expect no mercy from any crossbreed who knows of his act.

Crossbreed society encourages promiscuity among its adults. With such a small genetic pool to swim in, they don't like the idea of any of their people being bound to another. Crossbreeds can form couples for periods of time, but these are not binding. In fact, the couples are expected to find outside partners on a regular basis. Those who fail to do so are thought to not be doing their part in creating future generations.

For this same reason, women are not allowed to be soldiers. It's their duty to birth and raise as many children as possible, not get themselves killed in some fool battle. A woman's status is entirely determined by the number of children she's given birth to. Nothing else really matters.

Men, on the other hand, are valued for their scientific prowess. The crossbreeds know that their grasp on their technology is slipping, and without it, their way of life is finished. Their settlement in Devils Tower cannot survive without their technology, and when it fails they are going to be forced to make their own way in the outside world.

If a man hasn't the mind to become a techpriest, the next best thing is becoming a soldier. Nearly all men are either one or the other, with children being the only exceptions.

Once a man becomes too old to serve as either a techpriest or soldier, he is brought into the church of the techpriests and—at his own request—ritually beheaded. His useful life has come to an end. He can no longer father or protect children, and he has no skill for raising them like elderly women do, and so he removes himself so that he's no longer a burden to the society.

You might think this is barbaric, and from a human point of view it certainly is. Remember, though, that the crossbreeds are only half-human, and that in name only.

Because of this, the crossbreed folk are only women and children. Men are allowed up on this level, but only to talk with the women and play with the children. If a man and a woman wish to meet privately, they do so in the man's chambers. All of these are in either the soldiers' barracks (Map D) or the techpriests' home (Map E).

Women and children are not allowed in the training grounds (Map F). This area is dangerous, and only the soldiers are really prepared to handle it. Techpriests are allowed here, but rarely exercise their "honor."

The only exception to the above rules is the prime leader. He lives with the folk as a symbolic connection between the crossbreed men and women. He is considered the leader of all the different sorts of crossbreeds, and so he's allowed to go anywhere he likes.

SHARP AS AN AX HANDLE

Another result of the inbreeding is a bit more insidious. The crossbreeds just aren't all that smart. Sure, the lights are on, but no one's answering the door, no matter how loud the knocking may be. This is the reason they treat their technology with religious reverence.

Without any smart cookies left in the jar, the crossbreeds are forced to pass on what they know about their technology by rote memorization. This is the function of the vests the techpriests wear, as well as why they need to embroider them. This simple act ensures that the details stitched into the cloth are also forever embedded in the techpriest's mind.

Technology is highly valued in the crossbreeds' society, coming second only to their children. They are careful to maintain everything they have, and they jealously guard it from others. The few bits of crossbreed tech that have been traded to Kang were given grudgingly.

The fact that some of Kang's guards have stolen some bits of crossbreed technology for themselves (usually taken from crossbreeds found outside on one of their rare hunting raids) is a constant source of irritation. This friction threatens to put an end to the deal with Kang. The war and folk pleaders complain incessantly to the prime leader, to put an end to the murdering, thieving, humans, but Zabrox and the tech pleader point out that the crossbreeds really have no choice at this point. If they start a fight with Kang, they may very well find themselves eradicated. All the while, the two-faced Norbando performs his manitou-inspired experiments on the kidnapped miners.

TOWER SECURITY

In general, the security inside the tower is pretty lax. Despite the two recent breaches, the crossbreeds are confident there are few ways for anyone to break into the tower from outside.



THE FORTRESS

There are two exceptions to this. The techpriests have called in a squad of crossbreed elite soldiers to guard the portal. Their job is to immediately shoot anything that might come through the it. Fortunately for the heroes, the guards' attention is turned inward and not outward.

The other exception is at the gate leading down from the soldiers' training grounds (Map F) into the upper caverns. This area is always heavily guarded. The crossbreeds fear attacks from things in the lower parts of the tower, but they also don't trust Kang not to launch a sneak attack at the crossbreeds when they least expect it. To prevent that from happening, they are forever vigilant in these parts, and have concentrated lately on keeping this area stocked with the monstrosities their genetic experiments create.

This means there's not a lot preventing heroes coming down from the garden from just rampaging through the home of the folk. The crossbreeds have a big blind spot when it comes to the garden. They've never had anyone get past the devil bats, much less find the ventilation shaft and evade the mantabats. To their mind, that avenue of entry is sealed off.

KEEPING THINGS CLEAN

One of the most amazing things about the area in which the crossbreeds live is the way in which it's kept clean. It's a large place, and there are enough crossbreeds in it to make a big mess of the place if they weren't entirely dedicating to keeping the place immaculate—which they're not. The folk are too often preoccupied with their crafts and feeding the rest of the enclave. And guess what? Every part of the crossbreeds' living area is spotless.

How do they do it? Well, they don't. They have a machine that does it for them, of course. Amazingly enough, the device has managed to survive down through the centuries, keeping the entire area so sanitary you could literally eat off the floor.

That's not to say the machine (the crossbreeds call it the Cleaner, although it was originally named a rayglobe) hasn't ever broken down. The crossbreeds, however, have been able to repair it every time with few problems. In fact, one particularly sharp techpriest was able to soup the thing up quite a bit about 10 years back, and now the Cleaner does double duty as both an automatic maid and a security system.

THE CLEANER

The Cleaner is a floating, metallic globe that wanders the halls of the crossbreeds' living quarters on a mostly random basis. It roams in and out of each room, cell, lab, and hall, scouring the walls, floors, and ceilings clean with a low-grade energy blast.

The Cleaner looks innocent enough (except for the fact that it's floating in midair with no apparent means of support), right up until it powers up. It gives off a low hum for about three seconds, then projects a sheet of energy out in a plane that bisects it vertically, stretching from wall to wall and ceiling to floor.

The rays destroy everything in their path that hasn't been treated to resist them. Usually this only affects dirt and the like, but it also kills off smaller pests and can even harm larger creatures (like humans).

The Cleaner's been programmed to avoid damaging a crossbreed. Otherwise, it happily lets go at any opportunity, scorching everything in its path.

Avoiding the Cleaner is easy enough. It doesn't move very fast, and it hums right before it lets off with a blast. Of course, that's once you know what it is, a luxury the heroes aren't going to have the first time they encounter the Cleaner.





If the heroes are nearby when they encounter the Cleaner (it's up to you when this happens—just toss the Cleaner in any time things start to get slow), the device powers up and then lets loose with an energy sheet that does 2d6 damage to anything in its path.

The Cleaner moves at a Pace of 6 (it cannot run or pick up its Pace), and it moves from one end of a room or a hall to the other. To get past it, the heroes must either run through its sheet of energy (taking damage as they do) or destroy it by taking out the floating globe in the center.

Unless the heroes happen to be standing in a really bad spot when the device starts up, they're likely not going to be accidentally hurt by it. However, they'd better get out of the way. You can use this device to help herd the heroes in a direction of your choosing. Of course, they can always fight against the hint, but they're going to have to pay the price to do so.

The Cleaner also doubles as a security system, but it's a crude one. It doesn't have a sophisticated means of targeting foes. All it does is fire off a raygun blast at anyone that attacks it, until the offender is either dead or out of sight. This simple tactic can be pretty darn effective, so the heroes had better choose their attacks carefully.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:3d8, S:1d4, Q:3d8, V:3d8
Dodge 3d8, fightin': brawlin' 3d8 (for defense purposes only), shootin': raygun 1d8

Mental: C:—, K:—, M:—, Sm:—, Sp:—

Size: 2

Terror: 5

Special Abilities:

Energy Sheet: 2d6 damage to anyone in its path.

Raygun Blast: Shots 10, Speed 2, ROF 1, Range 20, Damage 3d10, Durability 10/2, Reliability 16 (see Raygun in *Field Report #666* for Malfunction information).

LIVING QUARTERS

The majority of this level is filled with living quarters for the crossbreed folk (and a few other notables like the folk pleader and the prime leader). If there's anyone in these quarters depends mostly on when the heroes arrive.

The quarters are mostly meant only for sleeping in. Other activities are generally communal. During the day, the crossbreeds gather in the meeting hall or the workshop. There they putter away at various tasks, teach

their children about their society and the terrors of the bright and dangerous world that shines outside the safety of the darkness of the tower.

Most everyone is assigned some sort of task by their pleader (in this case, the folk pleader). The crossbreeds may not be smart, but they're industrious, and they take their duties seriously. This might be a civilization in its final days, but they're not going out with a whimper. They're going to struggle along right until the end.

If a hero enters one of the living quarters during the day, roll 1d6. On 1-5, no one's there. On 6, 1d4 crossbreeds are in the room, taking care of daily business.

If a hero enters one of the living quarters at night, roll 1d6. On 1, no one's there. On 2-6, there are 1d4 crossbreeds sleeping here.

By human standards, the living quarters are Spartan at best. There are enough beds for everyone (1d4 in total). They're made of tanned hides stuffed with leaves, straw, anything soft the crossbreeds can find. There are no blankets. The crossbreeds are perfectly comfortable inside the tower, which maintains itself naturally at about 50 degrees.

There are no chests for clothes. The crossbreeds don't wear much of them, and what they do have hangs from a series of pegs set into the walls.

The most amazing parts of each room are the walls. They're covered with crossbreed hieroglyphics which tell the tales of every crossbreed who ever lived in the room. The records have been kept here for centuries, and the walls are filling up. The pictograms near the tops of the walls are much larger than those toward the bottom. Apparently the crossbreeds finally realized the need to conserve space.

When a room's walls are entirely covered, the crossbreeds begin on the ceiling. In some of the rooms, even these surfaces are becoming filled, and it's only a matter of time before the crossbreeds run out of room. The crossbreeds would consider this a bad omen, pointing to the fact that their time on this planet is coming to an end. This is sure to happen soon, and the crossbreeds can read the writing on the wall (if you'll forgive the pun).

NIGHT & DAY

Like the garden, the crossbreed home levels (Maps B-F) are lighted by power generated by the portal. The bluish light sconces are hardwired into the walls. They cannot be removed without damaging them permanently.





Every light in a room turns on or off with a single touch of a plate near the door or the bed. The lights in the hallways and main rooms are on at all times. The portal generates plenty of power, and the lights never burn out.

This can give the place an eerie feeling in the main areas, like it's always day. The crossbreeds are entirely used to this, but it may disturb the heroes a bit.

FOLK PLEADER'S HOME

The folk pleader's home is about twice the size of any other crossbreed folk's (with the notable exception of the prime leader). The furnishings are similar, but there's a rack in one corner, on which hangs the folk pleader's vest of office (this is red with white stitching, the opposite of the techpriests')—at least when she's sleeping there.

Serba lives with her young son, her two young adult daughters, and their two children. Serba has had five children of her own, something of a record in modern crossbreed history. This is one of the reasons she was appointed folk pleader, but it's not the only one.

There's only about a 50% chance that Serba is in her own bed on any given night. The rest of the time, she's with Zabrox, her lifelong companion. She is not Clabrox's mother, although she watched the war pleader grow from an infant into a powerful warrior.

PRIME LEADER'S HOME

The prime leader's home is about three times as large as the typical crossbreed living quarters on this level. The amount of space he is accorded is one of the many benefits due a man in his position. The furnishings in the room are similar to those in the folk pleader's place, except there are more of them.

Zabrox's home is filled with his three current consorts and two of his young children, a boy and a girl. It's the closest thing to a traditional (human) nuclear family you're going to find in the tower, but it's hardly your average homesteader's shack.

This home is divided into two rooms. There's a main room where most the family sleeps, and then there's Zabrox's private chambers where he can entertain whoever he likes.

This place is unusual in that there are weapons and armor in it. Zabrox keeps a full suit of crossbreed armor here, along with two rayguns, a stunstick, and an extra forceshield.

THE WORKSHOP

This is where the folk get together to craft the devices and items they need to live comfortably within the heart of Devils Tower. This includes things like the minimalist clothes the crossbreeds wear, their furniture, their beds, and so on.

The room is usually packed during the middle of the day with 30-50 crossbreed women. At night, there are still 1d6-2 women here, putting away at some personal project. (Note that there might not be anyone here, depending on the roll.)

There are no weapons, per se, in this room, but there are lots of tools that would work just as well in a pinch. These are only good as clubs (STR+1d6) and small knives (STR+1d4). Most crossbreeds prefer to use their claws when attacked, but the heroes might find something here they can use if they're in need of a weapon.

THE SCHOOL

This is where the crossbreed women teach their children how to read and write and develop into proper adults. There are no desks or chalkboards. The women and children sit and stand about the place, chatting and playing. The kids play with blocks made of stone and balls of animal bladders, and they learn to write on a blank bit of wall that's scrubbed clean every night. Occasionally, a woman spits a reprimand at a child, but this is rare enough, and the child almost always responds instantly.

During the day, there are 40-60 women here, caring for 35-40 children, the entire population of the crossbreed young. At night, there's no one here at all.

If the children are threatened in any way—even by a hero's false move—the women leap to their defense. They attack the intruders savagely, being sure to place themselves between the strangers and the children. A few of the women hang back and hustle the kids out of the room where they dash away toward the lower levels, screaming for help the entire way.

If the heroes stumble into anyone in this room, there is going to be trouble, so be ready for it.

THE MEETING HALL

This is where the entire crossbreed population gathers when the prime leader calls a meeting. The only exceptions are the guards standing around the portal and at the gate to the lower levels. Everyone else is here.



THE FORTRESS

Otherwise, this place is mostly quiet and abandoned. There are no places to sit, but during the day 1d6-1 crossbreeds may be found here. They're studying the walls which contain the epic tales of the crossbreed people from their very beginnings all the way up to the modern day.

Crossbreed children spend many hours here before undergoing the ritual that admits them to adulthood. To pass it, they must be able to recite a good portion of the legends of the crossbreeds entirely by heart. The ability to do this determines where the crossbreed is to be placed as an adult. Men with great memories are made techpriests, while others become soldiers. Women who excel at the trial are made teachers, and the rest are sent to labor in the workroom or the kitchens in the next level down.

At night, there is no one here.

If the crossbreeds manage to corral the heroes in this room, they attack gleefully. They hope to fulfill an old legend that states that the walls of the room will one day be painted with the crossbreeds' enemies' blood.

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes pass through the level without raising the alarm: 4 points.

The heroes get through the level: 2 points.

SOLDIERS' BARRACKS

This level is where the crossbreed soldiers live when they're not spending their time in the training grounds two levels down. Women are allowed here at any time of day—in fact, they're encouraged to visit the soldiers as often as they like.

The crossbreed soldiers have a lot of time on their hands. The crossbreeds' best defense against the outside world is the secrecy of their very existence. While the soldiers certainly see the wisdom of this, it means that they don't really have anyone outside of their direct circle to hone their skills on.

For this reason, the crossbreeds spend a lot of their time competing with each other, and sometimes the edge on the competition gets sharp enough to slash open more than a losing soldier's ego. There are currently two factions within the soldiers, and with the two recent escapes from the tower (Stone and Jackie), tensions are running a bit high. Each side blames the other's incompetence, heightening the already tense atmosphere.

One faction is lead by Clabrox, the war pleader himself. Clabrox stands for tradition, honor, and doing things the way they've always been done. (It's easy to stand for those things when your father's the prime leader, after all.)

A crossbreed named Brogan is Clabrox's rival. Brogan is massive for a crossbreed, standing over six feet tall. He's a hulking brute of a creature, and he believes in the creed that might makes right. Although the crossbreeds lack the numbers needed to take on humanity at large, Brogan's sure they can make up for their shortcomings with their far-superior technology. (He's wrong, of course, but that doesn't keep him from shooting his mouth off about his opinions as much as possible.)

THE CELLS

Each cell houses a single crossbreed soldier that's as Spartan as a monk's. All that's inside is a rough bed on the hard floor, a single light sconce, and the soldier's small number of personal belongings, including a few bits of clothing. All weapons are kept in the armory collectively and, with few exceptions, are used communally.

Of course, that's just how things are supposed to work. Crossbreeds are hardly mindless drones, and the soldiers, for all their training, are the most independent-minded souls of the lot. If the heroes spend some time poking around a cell and make a Fair (5) *search* check, roll on the following table to see what they find. Assume everything found is fully charged.

CELL CONTENTS

1d10	Contents
1-5	Nothing.
6	A handtorch.
7	1d4 powercells.
8	A tunic of armor (covers all guts locations).
9	A stunstick.
10	A raygun.

During the day, there's little chance of someone being in the cell (roll 2d6; on 2, there's a crossbreed soldier in here). At night, there's a much better chance that the heroes are going to stumble across someone. This is, after all, where the soldiers sleep.

After dark, roll on the following table to see who's in the cell.

THE FORTRESS

CELL OCCUPANTS

Id10	Occupants
1	Empty. The soldier must be on guard duty someplace else.
2	One crossbreed soldier who's wide awake.
3-8	One crossbreed soldier fast asleep.
9-10	A soldier and his mate (for the night, at least).

THE KITCHEN

This where the crossbreed folk come to prepare meals for the rest of the crossbreeds. The biggest features of the place are a massive stove and oven in the rear of the place. These are powered by the energy generated by the portal and so are entirely smokeless, something most Weird Westerners should be pretty impressed by.

The room is filled with all sorts of things that would make great impromptu weapons: pots, pans, knives, and so on. Leave it up to the heroes' imagination to figure out how to make use of the tools in the place.

The kitchen is busy all day long. During the day, there's a 100% chance that there are 3d4 crossbreed folk prepping, cooking, and cleaning here. It's a neverending job, and the folk swap shifts in and out regularly. No one ever has to prepare more than one meal each day, but many folk volunteer to assist with as many meals as they can. It's considered an honor to prepare food for the rest of the crossbreeds, and the head cook (a folk by the name of Wrantaag) often has to send people away.

At night, a few crossbreeds occasionally sneak into here for a late snack. Roll Id10. On 1-3, there are Id6 crossbreeds in here, stuffing their faces.

THE COOLER

To one side of the kitchen, there's a walk-in cooler. The cooler's separated into two rooms. The first is what modern folks would think of as a refrigerator. It keeps food cool but ready to eat.

The rear part of the cooler is even colder than the front. Ice hangs on the walls and racks, and the foodstuffs here are frozen solid.

If the heroes somehow get caught in the cooler, they've got trouble. The door to the outside and the door between the two rooms are made of thick, solid wood, each with a small window set about four feet off the ground. This window is made of some kind of unbreakable

glass (the crossbreeds don't know how it's made anymore either), and it allows folks on the outside to spy on those inside, and vice versa. The doors are barred from the outside with thick slabs of wood (there was a locking mechanism here once, but it's long since broken).

If the heroes are just in the refrigerator, they're probably fine, as long as they're wearing decent clothing. Sure, it's cold, but they've had worse nights on the High Plains.

If the heroes get stuck in the freezer, though, they've got real problems. Unless they happen to be immune to cold (like they're Harrowed), or have warm enough clothes, after each hour, have each hero make a Hard (9) Vigor roll. Those that fail lose Id4+2 Wind.

If the crossbreeds know the heroes are in the freezer, they just wait them out. When the heroes have all succumbed to the cold, they fish them out. See **Captured!** (page 90) to find out what happens next.

THE DINING HALL

This massive hall is where the crossbreeds eat their meals at long, rough-hewn, wooden tables. Meals are served promptly at 10 A.M. and 6 P.M., and everyone who's not on guard duty or engaged in otherwise important work attends. Those who cannot be there have their meals brought to them directly after everyone else is finished eating.

Crossbreeds only eat twice a day normally, although the kitchen is always open for snacks. Meals are a big part of their culture, and everyone who can is expected to attend and enjoy. The prime leader and his three pleaders sit at the head table (farthest from the kitchen). These crossbreeds are served last to emphasize their status as servants of the rest of their people.

During mealtimes, there's a great chance of finding just about every crossbreed in the place here. At other times during the day, there are always Id4 people in here, cleaning, setting places, and so on.

At night, this place is abandoned. Crossbreeds who pop in for a snack stay in the kitchen, not wanting to disturb the places which have already been set for breakfast.

THE ARMORY

This is paydirt for those heroes who have been lusting after some of that crossbreed tech. The place is packed with more bits than the heroes can hope to carry.

THE FORTRESS

True, the crossbreeds have lost much of their tech to wear and tear over the years, but their own numbers have decreased even more quickly. This is where all the extra stuff is kept, in addition to the weapons used daily by the soldiers in the training grounds.

The armory is filled with rack after rack of rayguns, stunsticks, and various bits and pieces of armor, but no forcesshields here—only the pleaders and elite guard have access to that powerful technology. For most of the other kinds of crossbreed tech, the heroes are going to have to either find it on someone or venture into the techpriests' home on the next level down.

The armory is always guarded. This didn't used to be so. The prime leader always figured that by the time an invader got to the armory, it would be too late. The incidents over the past couple months have set the crossbreeds on edge, and they're not willing to take any chance that their only edge (superior technology) might be taken from them.

There are four crossbreed soldiers here at all times. They are fully armored and each have bioclaws, rayguns, and stunsticks. Two of them even have jumplegs (which may not do them a whole lot of good in these quarters).

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes pass through the level without raising the alarm: 4 points.

The heroes get through the level: 2 points.

The heroes find the armory: 2 points.

THE TECHPRIESTS' HOME

This is where the techpriests live most of their lives, often only venturing out to the dining hall in the next level up to join in the communal meals. Most techpriests would ignore even this most basic of crossbreed customs were it not for the fact that the prime leader would use their heads for target practice with his raygun (which he's done before). This level is where the most heinous of the genetic experiments take place, and screams from the mangled remnants of animals and humans on the operating tables can be heard day and night.

The portal to the Hunting Grounds (and the source of the crossbreeds' energy) is located on this level as well. That's such an important place, though, that it's got its own section. Jump on ahead to page 89 if you can't wait to see what it's all about. Otherwise, just read on.





LABS

The smaller rooms around this level are a series of labs in which the techpriests struggle to maintain the bits of alien technology they've managed to keep hold of. This isn't as easy as it sounds, since none of the techpriests really understand any but the most basic principals behind the technology they've been charged with. Mostly they just spend their days wrestling with hieroglyphic instructions that have been passed down from techpriest to techpriest by means of their embroidered vests.

The techpriests are careful to copy the embroidery from one vest to another with the utmost care, but mistakes do happen. The oldest vests are kept in the **Reliquary** (see page 70), and they are only referred to in times of utmost need. There's a movement among the techpriests to grant free access to the ancient bits of clothing to help them acquire a better understanding of the devices they work with, but this has been shot down by Norbando every time. He's not willing to risk the crossbreeds' fading power on what he sees as a desperate attempt to recover the unrecoverable.

Each lab is populated by 1d6 techpriests who live and work in the same room, day in and day out, leaving only for meals in the dining hall upstairs. That's just about the only time, day or night, that the labs are empty, and even then, there's usually at least one techpriest in each lab, tinkering away at some project he's too involved in to bring himself to leave.

There's little chance of a working piece of equipment being in one of these rooms. Those are kept in the reliquary. There's even less of a chance of even a mad scientist being able to make the cognitive leap necessary to repair any of the malfunctioning bits left in the labs (try absolutely zero).

The most notable features in these labs are the human body parts that are often strewn about the place. Just about every other lab has a dissection table upon which rests a human or animal corpse in some state of dismemberment.

In one of the labs, there's the poor sod that Norbando has been experimenting on. The miner has been opened up, and his skin has been peeled back and pinned to table. The man's arms have been implanted with bioclaws, and his teeth have been replaced by metal fangs. There are tubes pumping a viscous green liquid into the body (which is keeping the unfortunate subject alive). Viewing this requires a Hard (9) guts check. The man begs the heroes to kill him.

If the heroes poke around, they may even find rough notes about what the techpriests are hoping to accomplish with their more vile experiments. While the heroes certainly aren't going to be able to read the crossbreed hieroglyphics, they may be able to puzzle out the horrible truth from the various sketches included throughout the notes.

There's no way to duplicate the techpriest's efforts here, even for the craziest mad scientists. There are simply some things that humanity was not meant to know—at least not yet.

NOVITIARY

Sure, it's a big word, but the novitiary is where the crossbreeds train their novices in the arcane bits of knowledge they're going to need to take their places alongside their older kin. The place is full of writing desks and chairs in which the novices can sit as they embroider their vests with the paltry bits of knowledge the elder techpriests toss them. (The elder techpriests have to embroider new bits of tech into their vests as well, but they prefer to do this in the privacy of their own labs.)

There are 4d4 novices in here at any given time. If he's not here, a novice can usually be found sticking his nose into one of the other labs or possibly taking a rare meal. These numbers hold true day or night, since the novices often bed down in whichever lab they might be assisting in.

THE RELIQUARY

This is the jackpot. All non-weapon bits of crossbreed tech that aren't actually being used by anyone can be found here, along with all the vests from every techpriest who ever lived in Devils Tower (at least those that could be recovered).

If the heroes are looking to pick up any crossbreed tech, this is the place to do it. There's plenty here for everyone, certainly more than the heroes could carry out of here (assuming they could get it all past the crossbreeds, of course).

Like the armory upstairs, the reliquary has four guards at its front door around the clock. These crossbreeds are the most vigilant of the war pleader's soldiers. It's considered a great honor to guard the reliquary, second only to guarding the portal itself, but that doesn't make it any less boring. Still, the crossbreeds deal with boredom easily, and the guards are always attentive.



THE FORTRESS

HOSPITAL

This is where the sick and injured of the crossbreeds come for aid. The crossbreeds don't know much in the way of traditional healing, since they rely so much on their medikits. The whole idea of anything more than first aid is entirely alien (so to speak) to the crossbreeds.

This place is usually empty, but not always. During the day, roll 1d6. On a 1, 1d3 soldiers are here, recuperating from wounds sustained in the training grounds. They are being tended to by two techpriests who are operating the medikits.

At night, there's about zero chance of anyone being here.

This place is full of medikits, but there's little else that might be interesting to the heroes.

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes pass through the level without raising the alarm: 4 points.

The heroes get through the level: 2 points.

The heroes find the reliquary: 2 points.

The heroes give the unfortunate miner final peace: 2 points.

TRAINING GROUNDS

This is where the crossbreed soldiers train for the coming war with the outside world that the techpriests have prophesied since Devils Tower was first occupied. The two recent breakouts from the portal have convinced the crossbreeds that this day of reckoning (no, not that Reckoning!) is soon at hand, and Clabrox is working his men all day long to ensure that they're ready for it. He's determined that his people will emerge victorious, or all die valiantly—taking as many humans with them as possible.

The entire level is basically a reconfigurable deathtrap under Clabrox's control. During the day, Clabrox populates the place with crossbreed soldiers and then runs a few "volunteers" representing invaders through the gauntlet. These unfortunate souls must navigate past both their fellow soldiers and the numerous mechanical traps that riddle the place. Few make it through unscathed.

At night, Clabrox leaves the traps activated as an extra precaution against intruders. The guards down at the gate don't even know how to get past the devices. The next morning, their first task (after their relief shift comes) is to try to run the gauntlet themselves.



Clabrox changes the traps regularly to keep his soldiers on their toes. Whenever a hero enters an area marked as a trap, roll on the Traps Table below.

The sections marked for traps feature false ceilings and floors that permit Clabrox to come up with innovative ways to endanger his soldiers' lives. If you've got any great ideas of your own, feel free to stick them in here in place of the ones we've come up with—just be fair.

There should always be some sort of way to either detect or escape a trap (or both!). No one likes instant death without warning. It's anticlimactic to say the least.

TRAPS

1d8	Trap
1	Pit
2	Tripwire
3	Ceiling blade
4	Slamming walls
5	Instant dead end
6	Crossbreed attack
7-8	Nothing



Soldiers usually go through the gauntlet with a forceshield and a full suit of crossbreed armor to protect them from any fatal damage. Any heroes who find themselves having to run the gauntlet may not be so fortunate.

After the heroes hit the first trap or two, they're certain to get a bit more cautious. If they try to search every section of floor, it's going to slow them down a great deal. Searching any portion of the place requires a full action. Searching the entire level is not something that can be reasonably done if the heroes are in any kind of a hurry at all.

PIT TRAP

The false floor gives away once 200 pounds rests (or walks) upon it. This means that a single crossbreed could walk across the floor without any troubles. Clabrox uses these traps to keep his soldiers from clumping up while running through the halls.

Once the floor starts to give away, there's nothing to be done to stop it. Heroes above the trap that make Hard (9) *Nimbleness* checks can leap to safety before they fall into the pit.

The pits are only about 10 feet deep, but the real question is what's in them. To find out, roll on the table below.



1d8 Contents

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1-2 | Nothing: Of course, falling 10 feet can hurt a dude. |
| 3 | Spikes: Falling 10 feet onto a set of spikes hurts even worse. Each hero falls on 1d4 spikes, each doing 1d6 damage to a random location. |
| 4 | Water: The landing doesn't hurt so much, but there's a barrasentry in here, and it's hungry! |
| 5 | Web: The bottom of this pit is nice and soft—and sticky! Those who fall into it don't take any damage, but they must make a Hard (9) <i>Strength</i> roll to free themselves from the webbing. |
| 6 | Stinger: The bottom of this pit is just as hard as normal. Unfortunately, the victim is not alone. There's a stinger (see the description in the Upper Cavern section) in here, and it's not happy about having its nap disturbed. |
| 7-8 | Failure: A techpriest has decided to test out one of their latest creations. The pit contains a failure (see page 84). |

TRIPWIRE

There's a wire strung across the hallway, and any hero that crosses it hits it with his foot. When this happens, a low-level charge falls out of a small pocket in the wall and explodes. It does 2d20 points of damage. Ouch!

It's an Incredible (11) *Cognition* roll to spot the tripwire. If the heroes are looking for it, it's only a Fair (5) *search* roll.

CEILING BLADE

The hero steps on a pressure plate, releasing a pendulum hanging from the ceiling. It's a Hard (9) *Nimbleness* roll to avoid the pendulum the first time one of these traps is tripped. After that, it's only Fair (5).

The blade does 4d6 points of damage.

SLAMMING WALLS

The floor gives way, but not all the way. It bends on a hinge that runs the length of this section of floor, and the victim's weight brings the walls (which are on rails) slamming into the center. This causes 4d6 points of nonlethal damage.

The worst part is crawling out of the trap after it's sprung. This requires a Fair (5) *Nimbleness* roll, or the victim takes another 2d6 points of nonlethal damage.

INSTANT DEAD END

When the hero steps onto this section of floor, a wall drops down from the ceiling, sealing off this part of the gauntlet. The wall is made of stone, and it's about six inches thick. It falls into a six-inch-deep rut, making it impossible for a hero to get his fingers underneath it.

If someone's got a crowbar, he might be able to work the door up, but it would take an Incredible (11) *Strength* roll. Even then, the hero would have to have something to wedge up underneath the door to hold it open. It's heavy, and the hero's not likely going to be able to hold it up by himself for long.

In the moment between when the pressure plate goes and the door falls, the hero could leap forward to skitter underneath the door. This requires an Onerous (7) *Nimbleness* roll. The real problem is that the hero's then stuck on the other side of the door from his friends.

Fortunately, there's a release on the other side of the wall that allows someone to crank the wall back up into the ceiling. This can be tough in combat, since the hero can only crank the door up one foot with each Action Card.



THE FORTRESS

CROSSBREED ATTACK

During the day, there are 1d4+2 crossbreed soldiers here, waiting in a secret alcove straight above this section of floor. Unlike the other traps, there's nothing here to trigger off, physically speaking. The soldiers simply sit up there, waiting for someone to come along, and then they jump down on them for some sparring.

Normally, the victims are other crossbreeds, and the sparring is friendly (although always competitive). If the victims are heroes, the attacks are deadly serious. The attackers are wearing no armor, and carrying only stunsticks and hand torches.

Spotting the hole in the ceiling requires a Hard (9) *Cognition* roll. Make this in secret so you don't tip the players off that something's coming.

If the heroes are watching the ceiling specifically, they can spot the hole on a Fair (5) *search* roll.

THE GATE

Heroes are likely to try to enter this level via the gate that sits at the top of the ramp, blocking access to the lower levels. The gate is made of iron strips cast together into a giant grate of squares each about 1 foot wide. These holes are nearly impossible for an adult to fit through, and they keep out all of the meaner beasts from the lower levels.

The gate is locked from above, although the lever that works the lock is visible in the rock wall, only four feet past the gate. This is too far for anyone to be able to reach it without help, but the heroes might be able to come up with some innovative means of tripping the lever.

The lever was purposely positioned so that someone could reach it from the gate with something the length of a stunstick. This was done after a couple crossbreeds were killed by some stingers while they were trapped in the caverns, unable to get past the gate.

The gate is guarded by four crossbreed soldiers, each carrying rayguns and stunsticks, wearing full crossbreed armor, and each bearing a bioclaw.

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes pass through the level without raising the alarm: 4 points.

The heroes get through the level: 2 points.

The heroes trip no traps: 6 points, less -1 for each trap triggered.

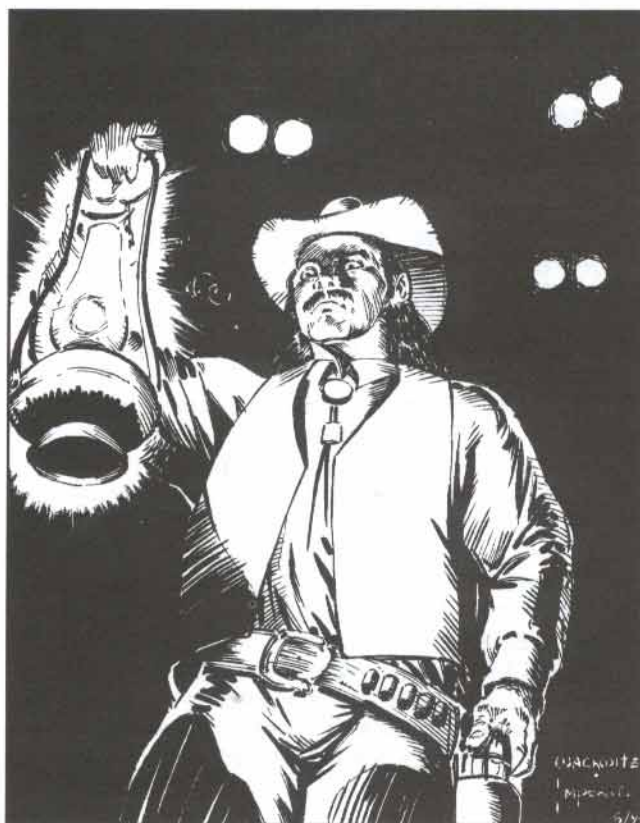
THE CAVERNS

The caverns that run through the lower part of Devils Tower wind this way and that. They twist and turn, and they're easy to get lost in.

Besides the obvious walkways (which are shown on the poster maps), there are dozens of smaller cracks, crevices, and crawlspaces that spin off from the beaten paths. With Jackie's help, the heroes should know they don't have to bother with these lesser areas. Their mission is to get to the portal as quickly as possible, and they don't need to be sidetracked (literally) by these other tunnels.

That's not to say there's nothing interesting down these other routes. It's just that they're not relevant to the current plot. If your heroes insist on crawling down the road less taken, you're on your own. Make up whatever you like, and have a good time with it.

The cavern levels are packed full of all sorts of hazards. Some are stationary, and others are mobile, wandering about, hoping to stumble across some kind of prey. The mostly stationary ones are described in the following sections, near to the places in which they live, feed, and kill.





The rest of the creatures are described toward the end of this section. Check out **The Cavern Critters** on page 82 for the details on these abominations and how you might want to use them in your adventure.

THE LAYOUT OF THE LOWER LEVELS

For simplicity's sake, we've divided the caverns into three different levels. These are separated from each other by yards of rock, so they function in many ways like different floors of a building. They're pretty much distinct areas, connected only by ramps or stairwells.

The ways up between the levels are fairly simple to navigate, as are the levels themselves (except where noted). The place is even lit in many areas so that the crossbreeds can get around. You can assume it is unless you're told otherwise. Remember those places and crawlspaces that aren't on the map? They're not lit either, making it fairly obvious which way the heroes should go.

The lights are held in sconces that are set into crevices and around edges, so they rarely if ever provide any direct lighting that would shine in the heroes' faces. This also means they're well protected from stray shots, wandering critters, and the like. It takes concerted effort to find one of the lights, much less actually damage it.

A favorite crossbreed trick, however, is to shut the lights off and then use darkgoggles to take advantage of the heroes' blindness. Keep this in mind if it ever looks like the crossbreeds are losing a fight. The controls for the lights are hidden behind rocky panels near the entrances and exits of each level.

THE UPPER CAVERNS

The upper caverns are slightly different from the others in that they're not mazelike passages the heroes have to navigate. That's not to say it's easy to get around this place, but the terrain is less of a problem here.

The real challenge is the wildlife: genetically engineered crossbreeds between vicious guard dogs and their alien equivalents. These creatures stand three to four feet tall at the shoulder, have elongated heads that terminate in several rows of massive, knifelike teeth, and wag tails that end in spikes full of more venom than a sack full of rattlesnakes. That last bit's why they're called "stingers."

The crossbreeds and the stingers have a solid relationship based upon mutual distrust that's been going on for centuries. They may not always be the friendliest of neighbors, but it's an arrangement that works.

It wasn't always this way. Once, the stingers were entirely domesticated critters, happy to sit at their masters' feet and wag their sheathed tails. Over the centuries, this formerly friendly relationship deteriorated. The stingers were bred more and more for guard duty, which meant they weren't wonderful to have in the household.

The breeders prized viciousness and tenacity in the new generations, and they got what they were after. It was inevitable that a crossbreed child who was pulling on a stinger's tail suddenly found herself impaled on the business end of it. She died instantly, but the furor over the incident lasted much longer.

Many crossbreeds were ready to destroy every one of their pets, but cooler heads prevailed, pointing out the stingers' value as guards. Instead, the stingers were banished from the living areas in the upper part of Devils Tower, consigned forever to the caverns.

The current arrangement works well, even if it's a lot colder than it once was. The stingers basically patrol the caverns for the crossbreeds, hunting down and killing any intruders they might encounter. This includes any kind of hapless wildlife as well as strangers of the two-legged variety.

In exchange, the crossbreeds feed the stingers. There's not nearly enough game wandering around the caverns, so the stingers rely on the crossbreeds for the vast bulk of their food. Without it, they would soon starve.

So, basically for the use of their table scraps, the crossbreeds get a cunning and aggressive security force that stands as a buffer between their living area and any invaders from the outside world. Kang has lost more than one curious guard to these creatures, and they're one of the main reasons the guards keep an eye on the tower doors, even when locked and barred.

The stingers tend to keep pretty much to the upper caverns these days. The other parts of the caverns have creatures of their own in them, and the stingers have learned the hard way not to go where they're not wanted. Their numbers aren't all that large (there are only about 30 stingers in the entire place), but they've managed to mark their territory pretty well, and they're prepared to defend it savagely against all comers—heroes included.



THE FORTRESS



THE STINGERS

The stinger was originally created to fulfill many of the same purposes as faithful dogs do for humanity. They were playful, friendly, and the crossbreed's best friend. They helped to herd cattle (human cattle, in some cases), protect land, and defend homes. Unfortunately, the crossbreeds went a little overboard in the defense department.

Stingers have a vicious biting attack that can rend flesh to hamburger in seconds. Usually, this is all it takes to destroy a foe. If that fails, thought, they've always got their tails.

The tip of a stinger's tail works much like a scorpion's. It whips forward from the animal's rear, striking things to its front, perhaps already locked in its jaws. When it strikes, it injects a powerful poison into the victim. This kills smaller creatures instantly, but it only paralyzes things as large as human adults as the poison sends wracking pain through its victim. Unfortunately, someone who's frozen stiff around a stinger might as well be dead. Unless there's someone else there to defend the poor cowpoke, it's only a matter of time—and not much, at that.

The creatures are covered in a chitinous shell (usually red and black in color), which protects them from their enemies' weapons and makes them look like giant insects. In some of the packs, the color of their shells have varied due to inbreeding.

Stingers tend to hunt in packs, particularly when they're going up against larger game. This tactic works really well, and the Devils Tower stingers have even brought down a rattler on their own this way (see **The Lower Caverns** for more about this).

Stingers like to scuttle around their prey, setting them up for a surprise attack. They're close-combat fighters only, but they haven't been challenged by anyone for decades, so they're cocky enough to actually chase gunslingers down hallways these days.

That doesn't last long, though. After the first few stingers go down to long-range weapons, they get a bit more cunning, working to their advantage the tunnels they know so well. The heroes better watch themselves. There's no telling how many stingers might be lurking behind the next turn. And even one is bad news for a beat-up posse.



THE FORTRESS



PROFILE

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

Fightin': brawlin' 6d10, dodge 4d10, sneak 4d10

Mental: C:3d8, K:2d4, M:4d8, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d8

Guts 4d8, **Overawe** 4d8

Size: 5 (4' tall at shoulder)

Terror: 7 (in their habitat; 5 otherwise)

Special Abilities:

Armor Shell: The armored shell of the stingers gives them Armor level 1. In dimly lit areas, the mottling of the shell also makes the stingers harder to see (-1 to *Cognition* rolls to see or shoot them).

Viselike Bite: STR+1d6. When the hero is hit, the stinger's teeth dig in and clamp down. The hero must win a contest of *Strength* (with a raise) to break free. On any later action that the hero's still got the stinger's teeth in him, the bite automatically inflicts normal damage.

Stinging Tail: Once a hero is bitten and held, the stinger tries to jab it with its tail. Since the hero's held, he cannot add his own *fightin'* skill to the TN of the stinger's attack. The tail does STR damage and injects the venom.

Stinger Venom: This venom is lethal to small animals and even young children. In adults (or even adolescents), the extreme pain caused by the venom has a paralyzing effect. The hero must make a Fair (9) *Vigor* check at the beginning of each round or fall victim to the venom. This lasts until the hero succumbs, or gets some kind of healing help (*lay on hands*, *helpin' hand*, or even just cutting open the wound and sucking the poison out). If the hero gives in to the poison, he's paralyzed for 1d6+4 rounds. This may not sound like a lot, but it should be long enough for a stinger to finish the victim off, if he's unfortunate enough to be alone—hopefully he won't be, then the posse would miss all the fun.

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes get through the level: 2 points.

The heroes defeat the stingers: 4 points.

THE MIDDLE CAVERNS

There's a reason the stingers stick to their territory in the upper caverns. There's something here in the middle caverns that even they can't fight, and their fear of it keeps them from venturing too far from their lair.

If the heroes simply race right through this part of the tower, they might be fortunate enough to avoid the creature that lives in the darkness, but there's little chance of that. This is a "natural" cavern, after all, with twists and turns and low ceilings and tight spots. Also, this place isn't nearly as well lit as the rest of the tower's caverns. Many parts of it (as shown by the shaded parts on the map) are fully shrouded in darkness, and even with their own light sources, the heroes should take caution.

Jackie fled through this level, but she was alone and had a flashlight (which she's since lost). She moved quickly through the caverns and made her way to the exit before the thing could move to stop her.

No matter how dangerous she might be, she was surely nothing compared to the threat of the creature (which Kang's people have dubbed the darkblob).

THE DARKBLOB

The creature known as the darkblob is actually an intelligent colony of microscopic bits of slime mold that haunt the spaces in the middle caverns. The colony is controlled by a nebulous hive mind that has no physical location.

The cells communicate with each other psychically. This means the cells don't have to be in contact with each other to be able to share in their overmind. Literally, each cell could be in a different part of the tower, and the hive mind would still be "alive" and entirely functional.

This upshot of all this is that it's almost impossible to entirely kill the darkblob. For one, it always keeps a small portion of itself secreted away in a part of the cavern that no human or animal could ever reach, even if they somehow managed to find it.

If the heroes (or anyone else) ever figured out how to destroy the vast bulk of the darkblob, the remaining portion would live on, eventually regrowing itself to its former stature and maintaining itself as a threat in the tower. Short of disintegrating the entire tower (or at least the middle caverns), there's literally no way to kill the darkblob for good.

Of course, damaging a mass of intelligent but unattached cells is easier said than done anyhow. Most fighting weapons (knives, clubs, and so on) don't do any damage to it at all. Neither do bullets, which just pass right through. Sure, a few cells might be smashed, but their loss is less than negligible.

THE FORTRESS

Still, there are a few ways to hurt the darkblob. Fire works best and is the easiest to use. The darkblob isn't particularly flammable (it doesn't catch fire once it's been exposed to it), but it fries up nicely from a strong flame, like that of a flamethrower.

Electricity works fine as well. In fact, electrostatic guns and stunsticks do actual damage instead of just Wind. Rayguns and hand torches actually scare the creature off (the creature has learned to fear bright lights...).

Dynamite would blast the thing to pieces too, but heroes should be strongly cautioned against setting off explosives in a contained area like the caverns. They're likely to bring the roof down onto their heads. Since the roof's composed of several tons of rock, this could harm the darkblob, but it's certain to kill the heroes as well. There's just too many ways for something like this to go wrong. If your heroes are foolish (or desperate) enough to try it anyhow, it's your call as to the exact results. Let the (Fate) chips fall where they may.

Magical damage works normally too, as long as the damage is directly attributed to the magic (as with *soul blast*) and not something more mundane that's propelled by magic. It's your call, Marshal, as to exactly what can hurt the darkblob. When in doubt, err on the side of the darkblob. It's made of pretty tough stuff.

If the body of the darkblob takes over 30 points of damage in a single round, it decides the heroes aren't worth the trouble. It pulls back and retreats. If the heroes pursue it, it simply melts into a crevice in the ground and disappears. It's not going to bother them any more this day. (Tomorrow's another matter.)

The darkblob attacks by forming semisolid tentacles from its mass, wrapping them around its prey, and drawing the hapless victim into its bulk. Anyone within reach of the darkblob (about eight feet) is attacked by 1d6 tentacles on each of the darkblob's actions. The darkblob can form as many tentacles as the space it's in allows. This is normally no more than 10 in a typical middle-cavern corridor.

Once hit by a tentacle, the victim suffers the listed damage and must win a contest of *Strength* to break free. Each tentacle has a *Strength* of 1d6. When trying to break free from the darkblob, the victim works against all of the tentacles on it at once. For example, if a cowpoke's got four tentacles drawing him in, the darkblob rolls 4d6 against him in the contest of *Strength*.



On any later action, the darkblob then tries to pull the victim (or at least the body part it's attached to) into its mass. This requires it to win a contest of *Strength* (with a raise) against all the tentacles it's got on that victim at the beginning of the action. On the same action, the darkblob can attack with as many tentacles as it can form (just like normal). Any that hit this turn don't count for the darkblob's attempt to draw a victim in (although they do count on later turns). A victim can only have up to eight tentacles attacking him at a time.

A tentacle can be cut loose. Once a tentacle takes 10 points of damage, it's destroyed. Bashing weapons, bullets, and fists don't do much good against the tentacles—they're just too resilient—but they're not totally useless. Each such attack does only half the normal amount of damage. (Don't forget to round down.)

The darkblob doesn't take Wind from any kind of damage, so you can feel free to ignore this entirely.

Once the victim's been drawn into the darkblob, he's in real trouble. Remember, only parts of the body that have been hit by a tentacle are drawn in.



THE FORTRESS



The creature "eats" by dissolving its prey in an acid it secretes. This does 2d6 damage to every covered hit location at the start of each round!

Worse yet, if the victim's head has been drawn into the darkblob, she's got to worry about suffocating. She must make an Onerous (7) *Vigor* roll at the start of each turn. If she fails it, she loses the difference in Wind. Needless to say, a winded victim stuck inside a darkblob is not long for this world.

Of course, companions can grab onto a hero and try to help her from being dragged in (or can pull her out). A lariat or whip might be used to try this from a safe distance too. (They pass through the creature, but not the prey.)

Any attacks made against the darkblob while a hero's inside of it have a chance of hitting the hero instead. This is going to vary a lot depending on the circumstances and where the attacker is standing, compared with the hero and the creature. A good rule of thumb is that if an attack misses the darkblob, have the attacker roll to hit the creature's prey too, use the innocent bystanders rules from page 94 of the *Deadlands* rule book.

The darkblob likes to play with its food, so to speak. It often puts forward a small portion of itself to test the mettle of an intended prey before it sails headlong into battle. It uses the information it gleans from that encounter to prepare for its real attack. This often comes as a two-pronged pincer movement, trapping the prey between two portions of itself.

When looking at the profile below, each piece of the darkblob should be treated as if it was a separate entity, despite the fact all these pieces are actually all part of the same thing. Numbers listed in parentheses are statistics for individual tentacles.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d4, N:2d4 (3d8), S:5d10, Q:3d8, V:4d12

Fightin': brawlin' 4d8, sneak 3d8

Mental: C:3d6, K:1d4, M:2d4, Sm:2d4, Sp:1d6

Size: Varies from 12 to 1

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Tentacles: 1d6 acid damage. Entangles victim to pull into main body.

Acid Bath: Any part of a victim in the darkblob's body takes 2d6 damage at the start of each round.

Immunities: Body can only be hurt by fire, electricity, explosives, and magic. Tentacles can be cut as well.

KANG'S DOOR

The way to the door that Kang's people are guarding stabs out from the caverns on this level. This hallway is notably different from the rest of the caverns, and has actually been eroded away by the darkblob's acid.

This was where the crossbreeds first cut their way into Devils Tower so many centuries ago. When they got inside, they discovered the caverns, as well as the darkblob.

The crossbreeds were able to use their superior technology to drive back the darkblob. (They originally thought they'd killed it, but they were soon proven wrong. They've "killed" it many times since, but it never takes.) After that, they were able to work their way to the top of the upper caverns and then finally carve their new home out of the inside of the monolith. The darkblob has now learned to fear bright light sources that remind it of the crossbreed's ray weapons.

The way to Kang's door is smooth and easy, and the tunnel is well lit. It's only once the heroes get into the caverns proper that they're in danger. The darkblob doesn't have any desire to leave its home in the middle caverns.

That fact hasn't helped Kang's guards to sleep any easier though. In their occasional forays into the tower, they've lost more than one of their own to the darkblob and the other denizens of the monolith. Nothing's going to convince them that they're not the only thing standing between the darkblob and freedom to rampage across the countryside.

Most of Kang's people aren't so altruistic to want to give their lives to save the Sioux in the area. However, since they're in between the darkblob and the Sioux, they do their level best to make sure the foul creature remains in its lair.

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes get through the level: 2 points.

The heroes defeat the darkblob: 5 points.

THE LOWER CAVERNS

Unless the heroes come in by way of the underground lake (see page 80)—or they're just terminally curious, they should have little reason to poke around in this level. But you know how it is, heroes being the nosy folks they are though, they just might find themselves here. If they're going to go looking for trouble, there's no reason to disappoint them.



THE FORTRESS



These caverns are pretty empty. There's not much here but a few pools of water that drain down by unseen cracks into the underground lake. In fact, there are really only two things of interest, and they're related.

THE DEAD RATTLER

This part of the map looks like a giant worm twisting through the rest of the caverns. This appearance is absolutely accurate. In fact, anyone who walks down this corridor finds himself standing inside the corpse of a massive Badlands rattler (the kind of "Mojave" rattler native to the area). These creatures like to swallow their prey whole.

Most times, these critters don't stray too far from their home in the Badlands where they're regularly fed corpses by the Worm Cult (see *The Quick & the Dead* for more information). Every now and then, however, they stray a bit farther afield, which really annoys the local Sioux. Somehow, one of them managed to burrow its way up under Devils Tower. The thing managed to find its way through some tunnels into the Lower Caverns, where it got stuck, and the stingers made a feast of it.

The massive corpse has been well-preserved in the cool cave. Its exterior has calcified a bit, making it permanently part of the tunnel it once carved through the earth. The water dripping through it has even caused stalactites and stalagmites to form inside of it.

To someone not in the know, this place looks just like a cave, although perhaps a bit too regularly round. On a Hard (9) *Cognition* roll, a hero who's actually seen a rattler of some sort before suddenly realizes what he's walking through. This number falls to Onerous (7) if the heroes have a good source of light (the inside of the worm is dark, of course). Add +2 to the Target Number if the hero hasn't seen a rattler of any kind before.

A hero who realizes what's going on must make an Onerous (7) *guts* roll immediately, obviously not believing that the creature's dead.

Heroes that fail the *guts* check run back the way they came. Once they've calmed themselves down, they can think about trying it again. If someone can prove the creature's dead, then no more *guts* checks have to be made. Otherwise, the heroes have to make Fair (5) *guts* checks to reenter the rattler's body.



THE LIVE ONE

Of course, the dead rattler's just a setup for the encounter with the live one, so try to make sure the heroes run across the dead one first. If the heroes are coming up from the underground lake, this isn't a problem, since the tunnel from the lake to the lower caverns is actually the ancient worm's path. Otherwise, wait until the heroes wander down that path, and then hit them with the real thing later.

This rattler hangs out in the center of a hallway, much like the dead rattler. Its mouth is open, and the heroes can walk right into it. Again, the cavern is dark here, which may tip the heroes off to the fact that something's wrong.

The rattler's teeth resemble stalactites and stalagmites, but there's one big difference between this rattler and the last one: This one's warm. Anyone who touches the "walls" finds them soft and slimy, obviously alive. This immediately causes an Incredible (11) *guts* check.

The worm is awake and just waiting for the heroes to fall into its trap. Its managed to get a few crossbreeds in the past this way, and even one of Kang's guards. It waits for the heroes to wander down its ever-narrowing gullet. Eventually, one of them is going to have to touch the creature's insides or start walking back. When either one of these things happen, the worm closes its mouth and swallows.

Needless to say, if the heroes happen to be inside the rattler when it swallows, this is a bad thing.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d4, N:3d6, S:5d10+10, Q:2d6, V:4d12+10

Fightin': brawlin' 4d6, sneak 3d6 (when underground or shamming as a cave)

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

Size: 10 (7' tall and 80' long)

Terror: 11

Special Abilities:

Armor: 1

Bite: 2d20

Burrowing: Underground Pace of 12. Cannot be doubled by running. Cannot be used in the caverns of Devils Tower, unless the creature is somehow below the lower caverns.

Surprise: Travelers who don't recognize the rumblings of a rattler beneath them (or that they're already inside one) subtract -4 from their surprise checks.

Swallow: With 2 raises on an attack (or automatically if the prey's already in its gullet), the rattler can swallow a victim whole. The victim takes 4d6 points of damage at the start of each round from the crushing gullet and stomach acids. The only way out is to cut a hole with 20 points of damage from a shotgun or cutting weapon. If the rattler's underground though, this can still be trouble. Wish the hero luck on digging his way out.

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes get through the level: 2 points.
The heroes defeat the rattler: 5 points.

THE UNDERGROUND LAKE

This area houses the crossbreeds' only source of clean water, as well as the means by which they get rid of all their garbage and waste. The area near the stairwell is well lit, as is the edge of the lake's beach and the area over the water pump. The rest of the place, most notably the sewage collection area, is shrouded in darkness.

The water is clear and cold. It rushes in from the Belle Fourche River to the southwest and exits to the southeast, pulling along the filth from the sewage pond as it goes. Surprisingly, the stench from the pond is not terribly noticeable until you get right up next to it. The fresh water that runs through the cavern constantly flushes the area out, so there's little time for the waste to linger and rot.

THE WATER PUMP

This monstrous device (it stands 10 feet tall, and it has a footprint that's 12 by 10 feet) is just a massive, electrically powered water pump. The tender parts of the machine are all well protected (Armor 3), and it hums along quietly—particularly when compared to the steam-powered engines the heroes are probably used to.

The pump moves water from the lake to a holding tank just over the garden level. There's no way in or out of the tank without some serious digging. For this reason, the crossbreeds take great care to make sure that nothing goes wrong with their water source.

The system's pretty foolproof, assuming the pump works, and it supplies the upper levels with all the water the crossbreeds could ever need. To keep things simple, the water's only available in public areas and to flush out the waste chutes. This way, the techpriests in charge



THE FORTRESS

of plumbing don't have to handle too many different potential problems at once. It also cuts down on the chances of leaks.

Breaking the pump isn't easy. The thing was built to last, and it's covered with shaped steel. Of course, a couple sticks of dynamite would do the trick. Assuming the heroes have something that can get through the armor, it takes 50 points of damage to deactivate the pump. If the pump takes 100 points of damage, it's destroyed beyond repair.

If the heroes do even 1 point of damage to the water pump, an alarm goes off in the portal chamber in the techpriests' home. The crossbreeds send down 20 of their best soldiers to investigate the problem. If those fail to return, they send down another 20, then 40, and so on.

Smart heroes could just camp down here and wait for the crossbreeds to come to them (assuming they can take them all). The crossbreeds take their water supply seriously, and they're prepared to do anything to defend it.

THE LAKE

The lake is cold and clean. The barrasentries avoid it if at all possible. Sometimes one of them gets sucked in, but it quickly swims out the other way. They're not the smartest fish, but even they can sense there's something not entirely right here.

THE SEWAGE POND

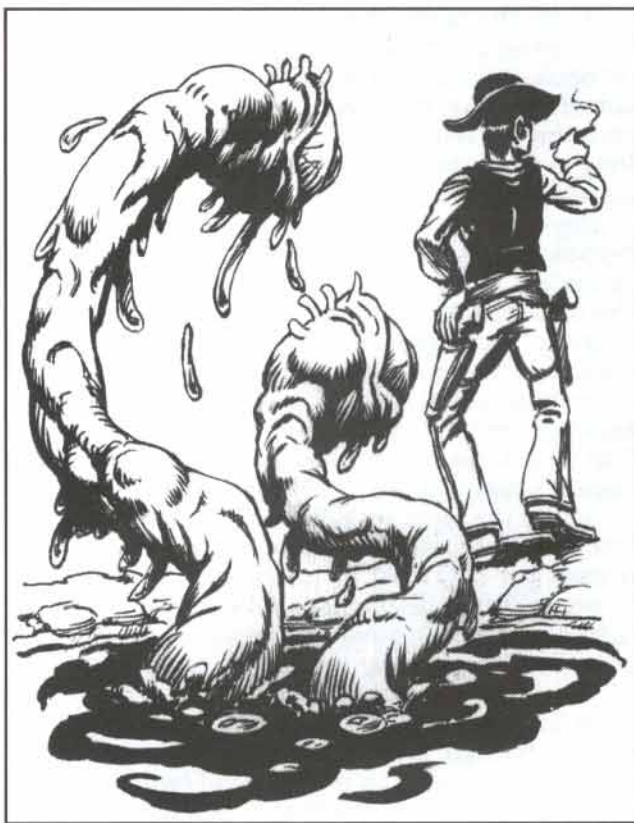
The reason something's not right is the sewage pond. This is where the waste of the entire crossbreed community accumulates before being flushed out into the Belle Fourche.

Unfortunately, this pond of filth is not as mundane as it might seem. A strange beast lives in its murky depths, feeding on the leavings of the crossbreeds and acting as the guardian of this entrance into the tower.

SEWAGE LEVIATHAN

The sewage leviathan is a smaller cousin of the river leviathan (see *Rascals, Varmints & Critters* for all the details on that creature). This beast usually hangs about in the sewage pond in the northwest part of this level, hiding under the crossbreeds' collected waste, upon which it feeds.

The crossbreeds know all about the sewage leviathan, and they give the sewage pond a wide berth. When the techpriests must come down to this level for maintenance of the water pump,



they bring a squad of guards armed with rayguns, flightbelts, and forcesshields to keep the creature at bay. Usually this works, but sometimes it still manages to grab one of the crossbreeds.

Over the years, the leviathan has learned to beware two-legged critters, and these days it doesn't just attack as soon as anyone strolls into the cavern. It's a bit more careful, so it waits until some unwary soul steps within easy reach of its 15-foot-long tentacles.

The leviathan carefully watches any and all traffic in its home level, hoping to score itself one of its rare warm meals. It does this by means of its eyestalks, which it pokes up from the depths like a periscope from a submarine. It takes a Hard (9) *Cognition* roll to spot these hovering orbs, unless the heroes have a light to point in this direction. In such a case, the difficulty drops to only Fair (5). It would be higher, but the leviathan lowers its eyes to water level at the first sign of a new light source.

Unless the heroes hug the shore of the water, they're likely to wander within the beast's grasp. When this happens, check for surprise, and have the creature attack.



THE FORTRESS

Under the murk, the leviathan resembles a large, greenish-brown colored, freshwater octopus, twisted by the Reckoning into something foul. It's about 20 feet across, not counting its tentacles, it has 2 fist-sized eyes on long (5 foot) stalks, and it sports a vicious serrated beak.

The creature rarely surfaces, though, and the heroes may at first think they're fighting a pack of eyeless snakes. The heroes may simply attack the tentacles, but this doesn't really hurt the creature. It can grow any missing appendages back in a matter of about a week.

Because of this, the tentacles are considered separate entities for the purpose of wounds. Every hit location on a tentacle is "tentacle," and once it's maimed, it's been severed.

Unlike the river version, the sewer leviathan tracks its prey by sight rather than heat. It doesn't get confused by torches or other fires. However, it can be blinded, whether by flashes of light or attacks against the eyestalks (also considered separately for wound purposes).

The sewer leviathan has long since grown too large to leave its home. If it looks like its going to lose, though, it retracts its tentacles and retreats to the depths of the pond (which goes about 40 feet down). Foolhardy heroes are welcome to go in after the creature, but the beast has nowhere to retreat, so it fights like the cornered wild beast it is.

PROFILE

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

Fightin': brawlin' 4d8, sneak 4d8, swimmin' 4d8

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

Size: 18 (body), 3 (tentacle), or 1 (eyestalk)

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Bite: The beast's beak, 4' across, does STR+2d4 damage.

Wounds: The creature can take twice as much Wind as expected (40 instead of 20) before getting winded. For attacks that cause wounds, roll location normally. Legs and arms results translate to tentacles. All others work normally.

Tentacle Grab: On a successful *fightin'*: *brawlin'* roll (with a raise), the leviathan can grab a victim. The creature then needs only two rounds to drag the victim into its maw. The victim can be freed with a successful opposed *Strength* roll (with a raise), or by maiming the tentacle (with 15 points of damage).

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes get through the level: 2 points.

The heroes defeat the sewage leviathan: 4 points.

THE CAVERN CRITTERS

Some abominations just can't be pigeonholed nicely and neatly into little rooms. It's in their nature to roam about, hunting for the kind of trouble that leads to grub, usually in the form of dead heroes—or anyone else foolhardy enough to poke around in the darker parts of the caverns.

Most of the crossbreeds stay far away from the caverns (most), and of course, there's the occasional excursion by Kang's guards, looking for more samples of the crossbreed technology.

Still, a critter can't live on the occasional meal. All sorts of other beasties wander through the caverns from time to time. In fact, most of the bigger buggers in the cavern get a lot of their nutrition (to use the word loosely) from feeding on things like barrasentries, piranha dogs, and the less dangerous fauna in the area.

Anyhow, the critters cataloged on the following pages are beasts you should feel free to toss into the adventure whenever you think the heroes are in dire need of smacking around (uhh, a new challenge). Things should never be easy for any intruders in Devils Tower. It's up to you to make sure that's so. These abominations are your tools.

DARKLING

If you don't know about the darkblob in the middle caverns by now, head on back to that part of the book (see page 76) and read up on it quick. Then hustle your butt back here.

The darkblob's been haunting the caverns under Devils Tower since about the dawn of time (or near enough to it that no one's able to tell the difference). In its long, mysterious history, it's taken down many victims, some of them tougher than others.

The toughest of the darkblob's victims have come along since the Reckoning. (Hey, heroes aren't the only ones bothered by the abominations created by the Reckoning, you know.) Among these, there have been even some who have returned from the other side of the veil.

In and of itself, that's not terribly strange. It's just that some of these Harrowed foes were actually crossbreeds. (For more on Harrowed crossbreeds see page 85.)



THE FORTRESS

When a darkblob absorbs a Harrowed crossbreed, something totally unexpected happens. The crossbreed's skeleton stays together, including its skull, and the Harrowed's brain remains intact in its brainpan. Instead of heading off to the Hunting Grounds for a second and final time, the much-abused sod is on his way back to the land of the living for yet another encore.

The Harrowed crossbreed's skeleton actually takes on some of the darkblob's excuse for flesh as its own, replacing its own rotten meat (which has now been dissolved into the darkblob's mass) with the acidic, black goo. The bleached skull (still containing the brain) still sits atop the humanoid body of the creature. It then separates from the darkblob, able to walk off and live as an entirely separate creature.

This new being (which is known as a darkling) goes off to another part of the caverns to find prey of its own. It does not want to compete with its "mother" for food (but often compete with each other for the few scraps that are to be found).

The existing darklings haven't developed any Harrowed abilities beyond coming back from the dead, but the Marshal can change this if need be. Powers like *stitchin'*, *fast as death*, *undead contortion* and *spider* might prove pretty useful for these creatures (and make them a lot tougher as well).

Much like the darkblob, a darkling can actually squeeze through some of the tightest spots in the caverns, as long as it can fit its skull into the opening. It uses this ability to move around its prey in ways that solid hunters can't come close to. You can use this to really freak out the heroes. The darkling can attack them from behind, run away and disappear down an hole in the floor, then reappear in behind the heroes in a whole new area.

Stealth and darkness are the darkling's greatest tools, and it uses them constantly. It never steps into a well-lit area, and it doesn't know the meaning of the phrase "fair fight." In fact, it prefers to attack lone targets or at least unwary people in the rear of a group marching through the caverns.

There are actually three different darklings wandering around the caverns, and they can work in concert if need be, although they do so rarely. They don't like to share their kills, preferring to keep the feasts for themselves. If the heroes seem like they really need a challenge though, hit them with three at once.

PROFILE

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

Fightin': brawlin' 4d8, sneak 3d8

Mental: C:3d6, K:1d4, M:2d4, Sm:2d4, Sp:1d6

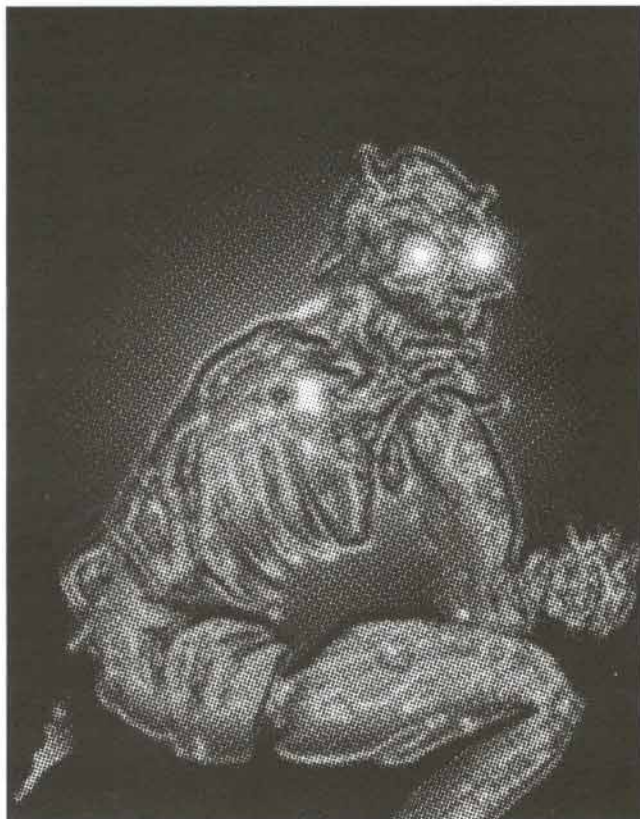
Size: 6

Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

Acid Grab: If the darkling gets a raise with a brawling attack, it grabs on to the affected body part. From then on, that location takes 2d6 damage at the start of each round. The victim can free itself by winning a contest of *Strength* (with a raise).

Immunities: Can be hurt normally by fire, electricity, explosives, blades, and magic. All other attacks are made as if the darkling has Armor 3. This reflects the difficulty of finding and hurting the creature's bones, since its flesh is entirely immune. The Armor is only 2 on its head (the skull actually produces more shrapnel). Only a maiming wound to the noggin can kill the darkling permanently. If it's "killed" in another way, it simply loses cohesion and melts into a pile of bones and tarry goo, until it heals enough to ooze away. As with Harrowed, darklings aren't effected by Wind.



THE FORTRESS

FAILURES

One of the most horrific kinds of creatures to be found underneath Devils Tower are the latest of the techpriests' creations: failed attempts at crossing humans with other creatures. Most of the techpriests' experiments die on the operating table (which is probably for the best), and all have been considered failures—but some of them have managed to avoid death—if not dismemberment.

Although the techpriests have been disappointed in the failures, they haven't condemned them to death. Instead, they've decided to let them loose in the caverns beneath the crossbreeds' living area, as both protection and food for the other abominations.

The theory is that if the failures die, they're saving the techpriests the trouble of killing them. If instead they somehow manage to survive, then they're proving themselves to not be the failures they're supposed to be. About a month after each batch of failures is released into the wild, the crossbreeds send a party of soldiers into the caverns to find any survivors and bring them back to the techpriests. So far, no failures have managed to pass this test.



The last batch of failures was released into the caverns about a week ago, and there are still a few of them left (one of which has been implanted with the mind-control device). The bones of the others litter the caverns, providing you with plenty more fodder with which to creep the heroes out.

The same goes for the failures, actually. They're not really much to look at (in fact, they're terrifying), and they don't have much of a chance to survive against the creatures in the caverns. All of the failures are sent into the caverns naked, with no weapons to defend themselves. Most of them don't last even a week.

Don't toss a failure at a posse hoping to cause any real threat. Instead, think of them as a means of really shaking the heroes' confidence and giving them a few clues as to the kinds of evil taking place inside Devils Tower.

Failures come in all different stripes, but they're mostly men, miners who were kidnapped by Kang's people and whisked away to the techpriests' labs—at least that's what they were. These days, they look a little less human.

Most failures have had a limb or two amputated and replaced with that of a bear or wildcat. Some have had the coats of fresh-skinned animals stitched onto them to replace their own recently removed skins. Others have had animal eyes, fangs, or claws implanted in them. Few of these things have actually taken well, and most of the failures are going to die of rejection symptoms if something else doesn't eat them first.

Some "promising individuals" who looked like they might survive the transmutation process have had the human version of the weird grizzly device implanted in the back of their heads. In every case, the device has turned these unfortunate individuals totally insane. They are now feral beasts, totally devoid of any semblance of humanity—just the way the crossbreeds like them. The statistics for these creatures are listed in parentheses if different from the standard failure.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:2d6, Q:2d6, V:1d4 (2d6)
Fightin': brawlin' 2d6 (4d6)

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

Size: 6

Terror: 8 (9)

Bite: STR

Claws (if relevant): STR+1d4 (1d6)

Horns (if relevant): STR+1d6 (1d8)

THE FORTRESS

HARROWED CROSSBREEDS

For centuries, the crossbreeds have been burying their dead in various spots throughout the caverns. Since the Reckoning, they've realized that perhaps they should've decided to burn the bodies instead.

A crossbreed can become Harrowed just as easily as a human being, although it's relatively rare. Most manitous aren't interested in being stuck in the caverns for the rest of their unlives, and that's pretty much exactly what happens. Even just getting out of a grave in the rock of Devils Towers can be a tall order.

There's currently only one Harrowed crossbreed haunting the caverns beneath Devils Tower, a grim ex-soldier named Dabrox. That's right—he's the father of Zabrox and a former prime leader of the crossbreeds.

Dabrox hasn't revealed himself to his descendants yet because he's worried about the effect his return would have upon his people. Of course, his manitou's got entirely different ideas about that. Every chance it gets, it takes over for a bit to haunt the crossbreeds as much as it can.

Fortunately for the crossbreeds, Dabrox's manitou hasn't been able to get him any farther up in the tower than the gate at the bottom of the training grounds. Some of the guards there have reported seeing the old man from time to time, and the news has caused Zabrox and Clabrox each more than a few sleepless nights, since he died under mysterious circumstances.

Dabrox may not be ready to rejoin his family, but that doesn't mean he's willing to let anyone else just walk in and rampage through his home. He's ready to take on anyone he runs across in the caverns, although he's somewhat less than diligent in his self-appointed guard duty.

It's really up to you whether or not Dabrox makes an appearance in your adventure. He's not essential to the plot, but he can be an additional source of horror for the heroes, letting them know that they're in for a fight with a race that some manitous actually consider advanced enough to take on as their host bodies. Also, in the darkness, the heroes might confuse Dabrox for Stone, even if just for a moment, and the resulting panic might be worthwhile all by itself.

While Dabrox doesn't want to see his people come to harm, he's pretty darn attached to his new lease on life. If pressed, he simply uses his ghost power to walk through a wall or floor and escape. Even in life, Dabrox was a cautious man, and he's even more so since his death.



PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d10, N:2d12, S:2d10, Q:4d10, V:3d6
Fightin': brawlin' 2d6,

Mental: C:3d12, K:2d8, M:5d10, Sm:3d8, Sp:2d8

Size: 6

Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

Harrowed: Dominion 4

Harrowed Powers: Cat eyes 4, ghost 2, stitchin' 3

ROCK LION

In the insect world, ant lions are small creatures that dig large (to an ant at least) pits of sand with slippery sides. Then they burrow themselves into the center of the pit, hide under the sand there, and wait for an ant to come skittering along. If the ant lion's lucky, the ant steps into the sand on the edge of the pit and slips. From there, it's a short slide down a sandy slope and to an honored spot as guest of honor at the ant lion's next dinner.

A crossbreed techpriest saw this technique and started wondering about how it could be modified to work against larger creatures,

THE FORTRESS

perhaps as a portion of the tower's security. He started working with a variant of the rock worms, and it wasn't long before he had something for more insidious.

The rock lion is basically a gigantic, six-foot-long, black beetle with three-foot long, razor-sharp mandibles. Of course, there's just a little bit more to it than that. Nothing in the Weird West is ever that simple. (Okay, there might be a few things, but those are the exceptions that prove the rule, right?)

The rock lion can actually burrow into solid rock, grinding it into sand. For this, it secretes an acid that actually riddles through the rock, breaking it down into a sandstonelike consistency. Then the creature uses its powerful pincers to rend the weakened stone into a fine sand.

When a hero walks within range of the rock lion's sandtrap, she must make an Onerous (7) *Nimbleness* roll to maintain her footing. (Feel free to modify this up or down depending on whether the hero is looking for trouble or is somehow distracted.) If the hero fails the check, she slips from her feet and slides down into the center of the sand-sided pit (usually about 10 feet across).



When the hero reaches the bottom of the trap, the rock lion leaps out from its camouflaged pit-home in the center of the depression. It prefers to attack with its sharp and powerful pincers against its off-balance prey, rending a victim to pieces and then dragging it into the bottom of the pit, where the rock lion can feed at its leisure.

The hero cannot use her own *fightin': brawlin* to defend herself against this attack (or any other for that matter) until she manages to regain her feet. Doing this requires an Onerous (7) *Nimbleness* roll.

Once the hero recovers, she must still make another Onerous (7) *Nimbleness* check at the beginning of each round she's in the sand pit. If she fails, she slides back down toward the center of the pit again, right toward the rock lion.

If the rock lion needs to defend itself against more-distant attackers, it's happy to switch to another form of attack. It simply starts spitting acid at anyone within range.

Each acid spit attack affects a single person on each action, much like a gunshot. Anyone within 30 yards is eligible to be hit (although this is a heck of a shot for an attack with a Range Increment of 5). The rock lion always attacks closer targets first, then moves against foes further away.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:3d10, S:3d8, Q:5d12, V:3d6
Fightin': brawlin' 3d10, *sneak* 2d10 (4d10 when in a sandtrap of its own making)

Mental: C:3d8, K:1d4, M:2d4, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d4

Size: 6

Terror: 5

Special Abilities:

Acid Spit: 3d8 damage, Range Increment 5
Armor: 2

SCRAP FIEND

Most of the creatures wandering around in the depths of Devils Tower are either beasts of the Reckoning or twisted genetic experiments of the crossbreed techpriests. The scrap fiend, on the other hand, is something entirely different. In fact, it's not even from this era.

The scrap fiend actually comes from the year 2094, the time of *Deadlands: Hell on Earth*. It managed to get trapped in the Hunting Grounds, and stumbled across the Path of Stone (see Jackie's journal for all the details on this), possibly at the direction of the Reckoners. (Gee, you think?)

THE FORTRESS

In the end, the beast managed to find its way through the portal in the center of Devils Tower, just a day or so after Jackie Wells burst through. This scared the techpriests badly, but the security force of crossbreed soldiers who had been stationed in the room managed to drive the thing off with no casualties.

The scrap fiend found itself in the caverns beneath the crossbreeds' living area, battered but alive. It began to plot for a way to get out alive. So far, it's not managed to figure out how to get out of the place. It can't get past the locked and barred door that Kang's guards protect, the crossbreeds are more than ready to drive it back into the caverns, and it hasn't figured out about the underwater exit yet.

A scrap fiend is a near cousin to the bone fiend (see *Rascals, Varmints & Critters*). It's basically a manitou that's managed to infest itself into the essence of a human skull instead of a brain, turning the material pitch black. Then, instead of finding all sorts of bones to surround itself with, it reaches out and builds itself a body of scrap steel and iron.

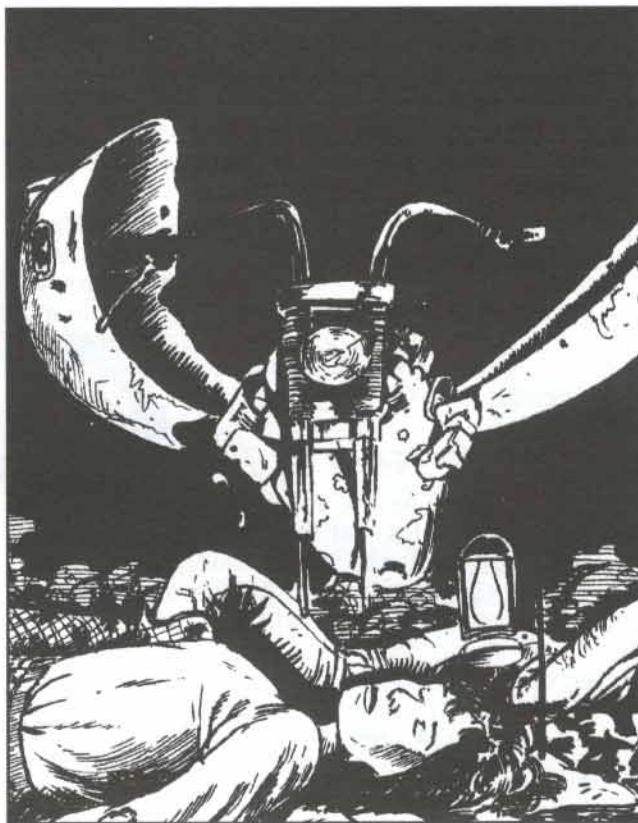
Most scrap fiends look like walking piles of junk, but they prefer to swipe body pieces from cars and larger things. It's a rare scrap fiend that's made entirely of paper clips and other office supplies, but they have been seen (at least in *Deadlands: Hell on Earth*).

The scrap fiend under Devils Tower has a motorcycle's fuel tank for a chest and car fenders and bumpers for arms and legs. Its head is the front portion of a motorcycle, including the headlamp and handlebars. The light glows redly in the dark, a bitter reflection of the evil in the manitou's soul, and the handlebars jut above its head like the horns on some giant stag.

The beast's skull is protected in the fuel tank riding in the center of the thing's body. Not only is it concealed from sight, but it's also protected from things like bullets.

The scrap fiend can't be destroyed permanently unless its skull is maimed. The skull's actually Size 1, but you should treat it as Size 6 for damage purposes—one tough noggin!

As long as there's metal around for it to draw upon, the scrap fiend can't be permanently destroyed. Serious wounds knock affected pieces off of the creature, although they can be replaced the following round with but a single action (for all of them at once if necessary). Any maimed pieces are bent beyond recognition and made useless (at least until the scrap fiend has some time to itself to affect repairs).



Scrap fiends can normally have up to six legs and four arms, but this one's only got two legs and four arms. It can use each arm in a single action (with the appropriate penalties, of course) to attack up to four people at once.

When the scrap fiend moves around in the caverns beneath Devils Tower, it sounds just like what it is: a shambling mound of metal. There's absolutely no chance at all for the heroes to not hear it coming (no risk of surprise).

PROFILE

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

Fightin': brawlin' 4d8

Mental: C:3d10, K:2d8, M:3d8, Sm:2d8, Sp:4d2

Size: 7 (1 to 9)

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Armor: 3

Shrapnel: If the scrap fiend is in desperate straits, it can actually cause its body to explode in a hail of shrapnel. This works just like a bundle of dynamite, except it does 4d10 damage. It takes the fiend two full rounds to reassemble itself after this. The heroes might be able to prevent this

THE FORTRESS

from happening by simply keeping a hold of vital missing pieces. How this works exactly is your call, Marshal.

Steel Arms: The scrap fiend has four steel arms (car fenders and the like) which it can use to club and slash at foes. STR+2d6 each.

Variable Size: The scrap fiend usually maintains Size 7, but if it can find other scrap, it can grow to Size 9. Alternatively, it can shed its pieces and reduce itself down to Size 1, although it would only do this in an emergency, perhaps to convince the heroes that it's dead.

Undead.

TUNNEL CRITTERS

Tunnel critters are basically giant insects (they look like huge ants) that live in deep mines and caverns throughout the Weird West. (See *Rascals, Varmints & Critters* for more details on these overgrown bugs.) They're entirely blind from living their entire lives in the near-solid darkness of their subterranean homes. To compensate, they've developed their sense of touch to the point where they can actually sense subtle vibrations in the rocks around them.



Young tunnel critters are harmless, but they don't stay that way for long. They quickly develop hard shells and venomous glands.

Tunnel critters come in all sizes in the Weird West, but there are only two different types found under Devils Tower.

Tunnel critters attack by rearing up, then grabbing and biting at their foes, hoping to inject them with a paralyzing poison. If the *fightin' brawlin'* attack hits, the target is held in the critters' pincers. (The victim must win a contest of *Strength* to break free.) Every action after that, the critter tries to bite the victim and inject him with poison.

If a hero is poisoned, he's instantly paralyzed unless he makes a *Vigor* roll. The TN is Foolproof (3) for the small critters and Fair (5) for the medium ones. The TN to resist any later poisonings in the same combat is raised +2 each time.

If the victim is actually paralyzed, the tunnel critter doesn't feast on his warm body. Instead, it bites the hero again (which causes more damage) and then lays its eggs in the wound. The victim remains paralyzed for the next 2d10 hours, and the eggs hatch in about 12 hours. Removing the eggs requires an Onerous (7) *medicine: surgery* roll.

If the eggs hatch while they're still inside the victim, the larvae immediately set to turning their host into their first meal. If the poor sodbuster's still paralyzed, this may be an instant ticket on the Afterlife Express, destination: the Hunting Grounds.

Being sensitive to vibrations, tunnel critters can be driven off by large vibrations, like from explosions or—perhaps not-so-coincidentally—rattlers. Smaller vibrations, like those caused by footsteps, just draw the creatures in, since they associate these sensations with food. A smart posse might be able to lure the critters off into a trap.

PROFILE (SMALL TUNNEL CRITTER)

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

Fightin': brawlin' 2d6

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

Size: 2

Terror: 5

Special Abilities:

Armor: 1

Bite: STR

Pace: 9

Paralyzing Poison: Requires a Foolproof (3) *Vigor* roll to resist.

THE FORTRESS



PROFILE (MEDIUM TUNNEL CRITTER)

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

Fightin': brawlin' 2d8

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

Size: 4

Terror: 5

Special Abilities:

Armor: 1

Bite: STR

Pace: 12

Paralyzing Poison: Requires a Fair (5) *Vigor* roll to resist.

THE PORTAL

The portal room is located to the south of the techpriest's home (Map E). It's so important to the adventure, it deserves a section to itself.

The portal room was the first room in all of Devils Tower. It's always been here, since long before the place was settled by the crossbreeds.

The portal formed in the center of Devils Tower, in a natural cavern almost entirely unreachable by human beings. That's the way it stood for centuries, dark and unused, until the crossbreeds discovered it centuries ago.

The crossbreeds didn't know anything about the Hunting Grounds, but they recognized the portal as a source of tremendous power they could harness with the technology of their alien parents. Soon, they succeeded at their plan, and the portal was generating enough juice to keep the entire crossbreed settlement humming merrily along.

When entering this room, the first thing that catches the eye is the portal itself. This is a glowing rift in the very fabric of reality (it looks kind of like a tear in a film), and a bright blue laser beam is shooting out of it. (This is the beacon that's going to show Jackie her way home.)

The next most impressive thing is the contraption containing the portal. The bulk of this is a glassy cylinder that entirely encircles the portal. It's floored with a metal disk full of circuitry etched to look like crossbreed hieroglyphics, and it's capped off by a conglomeration of wires and cables drawing the energy out of the chamber.

Normally, the portal's chamber is entirely sealed. There's no way in or out. When Stone came through, he simply *ghosted* his way out of

THE FORTRESS

the cylinder. Jackie was forced to resort to less subtle means. There's a big steel patch over the hole she punched through the cylinder with a burst from her gun.

The laser beam smacks straight into the patch. It's not powerful enough to do any damage. It's only meant as a beacon, and it performs that job well.

Around a dozen techpriests scurry about the chamber, day or night. These days, they share their space with a complement of 10 crossbreed elite guards armed to their spiky teeth. They've got rayguns, full armor, stunsticks, forceshields, flightbelts, and whatever else they might need. This includes a tracker in case the intruders decide to try to escape back into the monolith.

The head of the techpriests spends most of his days here, and he sleeps near the portal (on the rare occasions he actually sleeps these days). He's nominally in charge of the entire operation, including the soldiers, but everyone in here is prepared to fight to the death. They know their way of life depends on the portal, and they're willing to defend it to the very end.

It's possible to reason with Norbando or one of the other techpriests if the heroes can find a way to communicate with them. Norbando had a

translator of his own, but unless the heroes make an overt gesture of peace, he's not interested in anything they have to say.

Getting Jackie and the Heart of Darkness into the portal is the heroes' ultimate aim. If they manage it, see **The Big Decision** on page 93.

BOUNTY POINTS

The heroes get through the level: 2 points.

The heroes get Jackie into the portal: 4 points.

The heroes defeat Stone: 6 points.

The heroes get the Heart of Darkness through the portal: 10 points.

CAPTURED!

If the heroes are captured by the crossbreeds, there could be a real problem. After all, the crossbreeds aren't likely to just toss the heroes into the Hunting Grounds at their request.

The crossbreeds aren't particularly happy about the presence of humans in their home—the soldiers show this by knocking the heroes around when their leaders aren't looking. That's why their soldiers spend their day training to defend themselves against the coming war with the folks outside the monolith.

Captured heroes are taken up to the soldiers' barracks and tossed into an empty cell. The heroes are stripped of all their belongings, except their clothes. The techpriests are curious about everything the intruders have, and they take it all away for study. They're particularly interested in the Heart of Darkness, and Norbando himself takes it to his lab in the portal chamber.


The heroes are then to be held until the prime leader decides what to do with them. Norbando himself comes down with his translator to relay this fact to the captives.

No matter how the heroes might plea, Norbando's unwilling to set them free on his own authority. Zabrox's orders are quite clear on this matter, and the tech pleader refuses to go against them, no matter what story the heroes might come up with.

Jackie points out that time is certainly running out. If the heroes don't manage to get the Heart of Darkness into the portal soon, the beacon home may fade away. There's no way to tell for sure how long the beacon might last, but it couldn't be for much longer.

So how are the heroes going to get free? There's one simple possibility (although clever heroes may come up with another on their own).





THE FORTRESS

A TRAITOR IN THEIR MIDST

Norbando's greatest opponent is a techpriest known as Lanchart, a power-hungry crossbreed willing to sell out his people to further his own ends. The only problem is that Lanchart's got no one to sell to. The heroes could fill that gap nicely.

If Lanchart has a chance to get the heroes alone (for instance, if they're captured), he uses a crossbreed translator to talk with them. Lanchart's willing to let the heroes free if they promise to do one thing for him: kill Norbando.

Most heroes just aren't going to go for that, but they can always try to bluff. Lanchart's a savvy crossbreed, though, as suspicious as they come. He has a *scrutinize* of 4d8.

If the heroes just can't agree to kill Norbando, Lanchart's willing to settle for them simply trashing his rival's part of the lab. (In fact, he seems relieved if they refuse to stoop to murder. He wants to become tech pleader badly, but killing is a steep price, even for one as ambitious as him.)

Either way, the heroes have to agree to get to the portal and then leave without damaging any of the equipment or killing anyone else. On this condition, Lanchart refuses to budge.

If the heroes and the traitor come to an arrangement, he slips them a couple rayguns from under his belt. Once he's gone, they are to take one of the guards hostage and make their way quickly to the portal.

STONE

By this time, you may have forgotten that the heroes have another reason to get to the portal fast. They're supposed to be racing Stone there. The sad part is that they're destined to lose.

Sure enough, as much as the heroes might be glancing over their shoulders the entire time, they're looking in the wrong direction. Stone's a bit behind the heroes when they first show up, but he's not worried about the particulars on getting into the tower. He simply *ghosts* himself in through Kang's gate and walks past (or through) any threats that might come his way in the caverns.

After that, he *ghosts* his way straight up into the portal chamber. He actually rises right through the floor of the portal's cylinder, in plain sight of anyone who cares to look. Of course, the crossbreeds have long since learned not to look directly at the laser (it's awfully bright), and they don't see him.

Stone then sets up guard directly behind the portal, out of sight of anyone in the chamber. As the oldest Harrowed around (certainly in 1876), he's learned how to be patient.

When the heroes burst into the chamber, Stone holds his fire. He waits until someone breaks into the portal's cylinder, and then he steps out and opens fire. Don't forget to check for surprise.

Once Stone puts down one hero, he recocks his gun at whoever has the Heart of Darkness and demands it from him.

Of course, you don't have stats for Stone, but you need something to work with in combat. Assume he automatically gets 5 cards every round, and he's got 10d12 in every stat or skill he might need. (Stone's been around a looong time.)

If Stone is somehow "killed" by the heroes (hey, it could happen), he doesn't really die, even if he takes a maiming shot to the noggin. That would be a waste of a perfectly good villain. He just falls into the portal and disappears.

IF THE HEROES LOSE

Game over.

Seriously, if the heroes lose, there are hard times ahead for the good guys. Of course, there's losing, and then there's losing.

A TEMPORARY SETBACK

If Stone gets the Heart of Darkness from the heroes, he only bothers to kill anyone who gets in his way as he heads up to the top of the tower. With the black diamond in his possession, he's all set to turn the area into a deadland, and there's little that could stop him.

Except the heroes, that is.

From here, the adventure turns into a race to get to the top of the tower as quickly as possible, maybe even with help from the crossbreeds at this point (if the heroes can manage to explain what's going on).

When the heroes get to the top of the tower, Stone's already in the middle of his ceremony. He's torn the heart out of a devil bat and spilled its blood all over the jewel. The Heart of Darkness itself glows as if it were white-hot and the blood sizzles, but Stone is unharmed. He's spitting out words in a language that hasn't been spoken for over a thousand years, and stormclouds overhead form a dizzying spiral, almost as if they're going to touch down atop the center of the tower itself—if the heroes look close enough, they can see vaguely humanoid forms swirling in the gloom.

THE FORTRESS



Lightning flashes and thunder crashes nearby as Stone raises the Heart of Darkness to the lowering sky. It's now or never for the heroes to make their move.

Stone's had enough of the heroes' interference by now. This is a fight to the finish.

If the heroes somehow defeat Stone, skip on down to the section about that. The stormclouds spin away, and the immediate threat is over. However, the heroes still have to get the Heart of Darkness back through the portal before Jackie's beacon home fades into nothingness.

A FINAL LOSS

If the heroes really blow it, the entire area is transformed into a Deadland. This encompasses a 20-mile radius around Devils Tower. This is really bad...

The most notable effect is the creatures inside the tower go wild. The crossbreeds struggle valiantly to defend themselves, but in the end, they're doomed to fall to their own creations—it's not nice to fool with Mother Nature.

Kang's guards are next on the hit list, and they go down under a tidal wave of piranha dogs. Any hapless fools unfortunate enough to wander

within a mile of the tower can expect the same, if they somehow manage to get that close in the first place. Unfortunately, the heroes might still need to get out.

If there are any heroes still around, their best bet is to hightail it out of the area as fast as they can. Carter McCormick might even swoop down to give them a hand if they can signal him from wherever they left him.

Because of the proximity of this particular gate to the Hunting Grounds, if Devil's Tower becomes a Deadland, heroes that die in the area draw three additional cards to come back Harrowed. Unfortunately, their manitous have full Dominion, and in the Deadland, they're not likely to lose it any time soon.

Of course, we're expecting your heroes to pull their fat out of the fire, so in the official *Deadlands* continuity, Stone fails. However you want to handle that is up to you. It's your game after all.

IF THE HEROES WIN

Just because Stone's one of the toughest and meanest folks walking the planet doesn't mean he can't be beat. There are two ways this can happen: directly and indirectly.

If anything happens to Stone that would normally kill him (this is the direct method, by the way), he looks up at the heroes that have put him down. With a sneer, he becomes translucent and then melts into the ground.

Stone's just *ghosted* himself to freedom. Although he's in no shape to take on the heroes again—at least not immediately, he's plenty strong enough to find himself an out-of-the-way cranny somewhere in the monolith where he can recuperate from his wounds in peace (maybe even the portal).

He's sure to be back again. The heroes can count on it haunting their dreams and possibly their lives for some time to come. There's a good chance Stone will come looking for the heroes who defeated him and choose to stay in the Weird West (that's his job, you know...).

Even if Stone goes down, the heroes still have the crossbreeds to deal with. Of course, by this time, getting to the portal may only require a desperate dash across the chamber.

Either way, Jackie Wells is happy to remind the heroes their job isn't finished until she leaps into the portal safely with the Heart of Darkness in her hand. Until that happens, the Heart remains a threat to the entire history (future?) of the Weird West.

THE FORTRESS

THE BIG DECISION

Once the heroes manage to get Jackie to the portal, they face a choice. Should they go to the future with her or stay where they are? If the heroes take off to the future, the time of *Hell on Earth*, then they risk very likely never being able to return to their home time.

Moreover, the decision affects your game. If you allow the heroes to travel to the *Hell on Earth* timeframe, then you'll be playing *Hell on Earth* instead of *Deadlands: The Weird West*.

No matter what the heroes decide, Jackie's on her way out, so if they're not coming with her, they'd better say good-bye.

If the heroes do decide to follow Jackie into the future, then you'd better go get yourself a copy of *Deadlands: Hell on Earth*. In the meantime, check out Jackie's journal to see what's in store for you and your posse.

Just because the Heart of Darkness has made it to the year 2094 doesn't mean the world's safe. That's not going to happen until the jewel is destroyed once and for all. It's up to Jackie and the heroes to do just that, but they're going to have to brave the horrors of the Wasted West to pull it off.

AFTERMATH

Even if the heroes save the day and decide to stick around, that doesn't mean the adventure's entirely over. The heroes have to get back out of Devils Tower after all.

If the heroes are lucky, they've managed to establish communications with the crossbreeds. If they lay down their weapons and spin a good tale, they can expect to be escorted out of the monolith via Kang's gate. Their belongings are returned to them once they see daylight.

Otherwise, the heroes may find themselves having to fight their way out of the tower. It should be a bit easier going this time. At least they don't have to worry about Stone chasing them down—as long as they don't take too long, that is.

Of course, there's nothing to say that either version of Stone (old or new) might not crop up in the posse's path at some later date. The heroes should probably count on it. Stone's got a long memory, and he hates losing.

Try not to be too hard on the heroes on their way out of Devils Tower. After all, they've just done the world a good turn, and they deserve one in return.



BOOT HILL

BOOT HILL

THE TRAIN

CARTER MCCORMICK

Attack:

Monkey Wrench 4d6/3d8+1d4
Pistol 2d8/3d6
Gatling Gun 4d8

Defense:

Brawlin' 4

Special Abilities:

Mechanically Inclined
Nerves o' Steel

TRAIN PASSENGERS (1-6)

Attack:

Fist 2d6/2d6
Pistol 2d6/3d6

Defense:

Brawlin' 2

CITY O' GLOOM

SALT LAKE CITY DEPUTIES (4)

Attack:

Fist 2d8/1d8
Shotgun 3d8/2d6+4d6

Defense:

Brawlin' 2
Dodge 2d6

ANDY HEISLER (HOTEL PROPRIETOR)

Attack:

Club 3d6/1d8+1d4
Shotgun 2d8/2d6+4d6

Defense:

Brawlin' 2

Special Abilities:

Light Sleeper
Sand
Size 7

OUTSIDE

BARRA-SENTRIES (2DA)

Attack:

Bite 3d8/2d8
Brawlin' 3d8/poison

Defense:

Brawlin' 3

Special Abilities:

Size 4
Tentacle Grab
Terror 7

DEML BATS (5)

Attack:

Claws 3d12/1d12+1d4+2
Brawlin' 3d12/Fallin' Damage

Defense:

Brawlin' 3

Special Abilities:

Flying: Pace 24
Noise Sensitivity
Terror 9

PIRANHA DOGS (1-10/ HERO)

Attack:

Bite 3d10/2d4

Defense:

Brawlin' 3

Special Abilities:

Size 2
Terror 7

WERD GRIZZLY

Attack:

Bite 3d8/3d12+1d6+2
Claws 3d8/3d12+1d8+2

Defense:

Brawlin' 3

Special Abilities:

Control Box
Size 10
Terror 7

THE GATE

JOE LIU

Attack:

Drunken Style 4d8/2d8+1d6
Gatling Shotgun 5d10/2d6+4d6
(1-2 hits)

Raygun 3d10/1d10 (per charge)

Stunstick 2d8/2d8+1d8 (per
charge)

Defense:

Brawlin' 4

Dodge 3

Special Abilities:

Ch'i Points 24
Many Arms of the Spider 3
Martial Arts Training

KANG'S GUARDS & MINNIE

Attack:

Eagle Claw Style 3d6/3d8+1d6
Flamethrower 2d6/1d10 (per
shot)

Gatling Pistol (6) 3d6/3d6 (1-3
hits)

Defense:

Brawlin' 3

THE UPPER LEVELS

THE CLEANER

Attack:

Raygun 1d8/3d10

Defense:

Brawlin' 3

Dodge 3d8

Special Abilities:

Energy Sheet
Size 2
Terror 5

BOOT HILL

FOLK CROSSBREED

Attack:

Claws 3d6/4d8+1d6
Stunstick 4d8/2d8+1d8 (per charge)

Defense:

Brawlin' 3
Dodge 4d8

SOLDIER CROSSBREED

Attack:

Bioclaw 4d6/4d10+2d8
Claws 4d6/4d12+1d8
Raygun 5d10/3d10/1d10 (per charge)
Stunstick 4d8/2d8+1d8 (per charge)

Defense:

Brawlin' 4
Dodge 5d10

Special Abilities:

Armor 3 (vest)

SOLDIER CROSSBREED (ELITE)

Attack:

Bioclaw 4d10/4d12+2d8+2
Claws 4d10/4d12+1d8
Raygun 5d10/3d10/1d10 (per charge)
Stunstick 4d8/2d8+1d8 (per charge)

Defense:

Brawlin' 4
Dodge 5d10

Special Abilities:

Armor 3 (full-body)
Flightbelt: Pace 40
Forcefield

TECHPRIEST CROSSBREED

Attack:

Claws 2d6/3d6+1d4

Defense:

Brawlin' 2

MANTABATS (13)

Attack:

Bite 3d10/1d4
Brawlin' 3d10/poison

Defense:

Brawlin' 3
Dodge 3d10

Special Abilities:

Flammable
Flying: pace 9
Size 2
Sting
Terror 5

ROCKWORMS

Attack:

Brawlin' 3d10/2d6

Defense:

Brawlin' 3

Special Abilities:

Acid Skin
Burrow: pace 4
Size 1
Terror 5

ROCK WASPS

Attack:

Special

Defense:

Special

Special Abilities:

Flying: Pace 8
Size 1
Sting
Terror 3

THE LOWER LEVELS

DARKLINGS (3)

Attack:

Brawlin' 4d8

Defense:

Brawlin' 4

Special Abilities:

Acid Grab
Immunities
Terror 7

FAILURES (5)

Attack:

Bite 2d6/2d6
Claws 2d6/2d6+1d4
Horns 2d6/2d6+1d6

Defense:

Brawlin' 2

Special Abilities:

Terror 8

FAILURE IMPLANTEE

Attack:

Bite 4d6/2d6
Claws 4d6/2d6+1d6
Horns 4d6/2d6+1d8

Defense:

Brawlin' 4

Special Abilities:

Terror 9

HARROWED CROSSBREED

Attack:

Claws 2d6/2d10+1d8

Defense:

Brawlin' 2

Special Abilities:

Cat's Eyes 4
Ghost 2
Terror 7
Undead

STINGERS (1-30)

Attack:

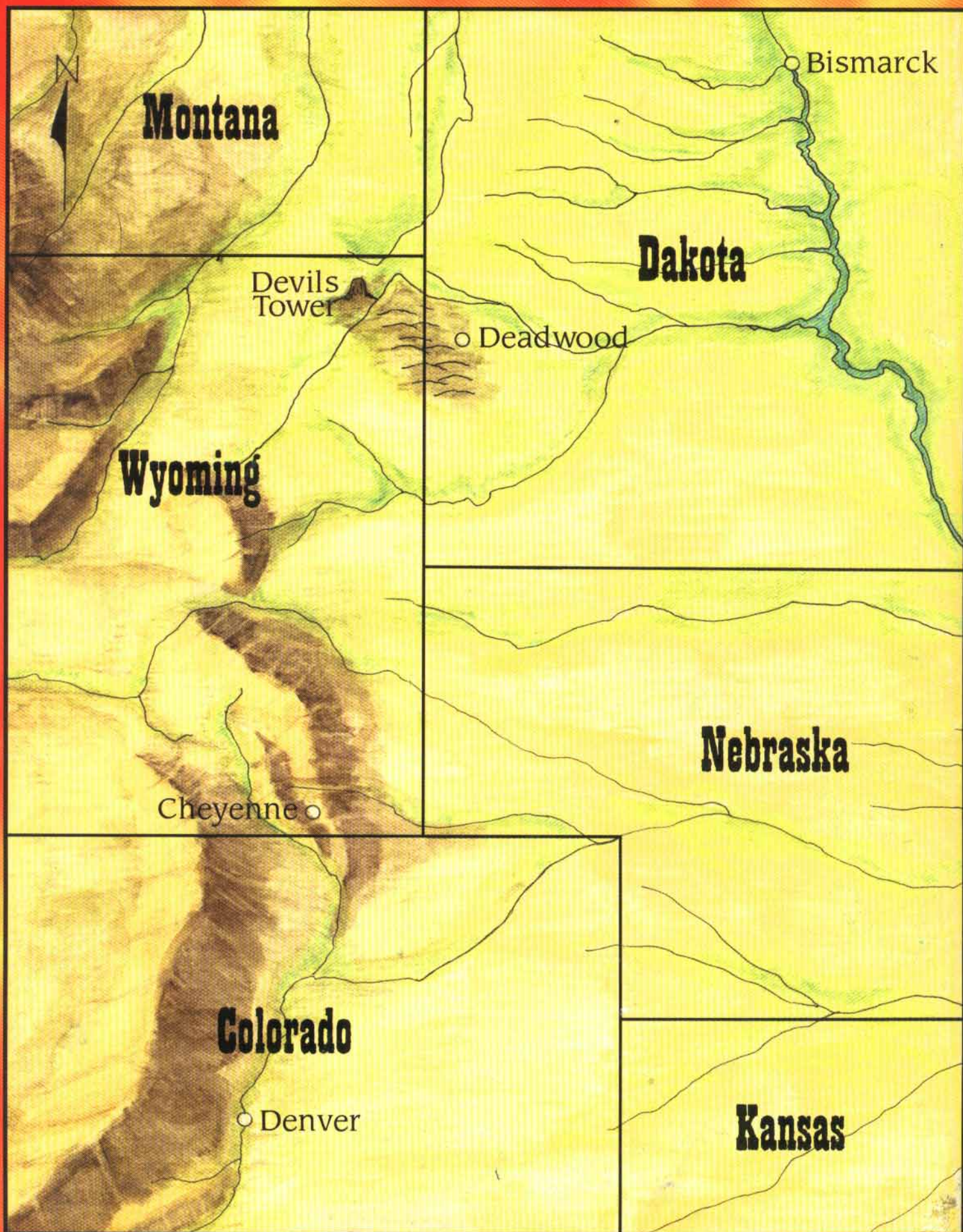
Bite 6d10/4d10+1d6
Stinger 6d10/4d10+venom

Defense:

Brawlin' 6
Dodge 4d10

Special Abilities:

Armor 1
Camouflage
Poisoned Stinger
Size 5
Terror 7
Viselike Bite





Jackie Wells

The Journal of Jackie Wells

My name is Jackie Wells, and I'm from the future. The year 2094 to be exact. I realize how difficult that's going to be for a person in 1876 (if that's in fact where I end up) to swallow, and that's what this little journal's all about.

If you're reading this, there are only a few possibilities as to who you might be. Hopefully you're a heroic soul I met in the American West of 1876. If so, you probably don't believe my story about coming from the future. Sure, you've seen lot of outlandish things in your time (especially since 1863 for some strange reason, right?), but people from a distant time? That's a whole other gallon of wildness to have to choke down.



Of course, you might just be someone in 2094 who's picked up my journal (or a copy of it) in my home time. In that case, you're sure to not be too worried about what year I came from, although you're probably pretty astonished by my claims that I'm going to be traveling through time. That's the only sane way to be. Three months ago, I'd have doubted it myself—but I've seen a lot of things since then to change my mind.

On the other hand, you might be some fool in 1876 who picked this bit of paper and ink off my dead body. If so, that means I've failed in what I've set out to do. In that case, I can only hope that you take the tale I'm going to spin here shortly to your heart. If you do, there just might be hope for humanity yet.

A Bit of History

Damn, these vocal dictation sets are great. I can't believe the eggheads here in Devils Tower managed to salvage one after the Last War, but—well, I'm getting ahead of myself, aren't I?

Once upon a time (my daddy told me once that all good stories start off that way, and who am I to buck tradition?), the world was a pretty wild place. Magic of all kinds worked, and all sorts of things went bump in the night. All that guff about Merlin and Hermetic magic and that kind of stuff, all those bits about the ancient gods—well, it's probably not entirely true, but it's a lot closer to the truth than you might think.

The Journal of Jackie Wells

Anyhow, the means behind all these strange happenings were evil spirits from a nether realm between the worlds. The Indians called this place the Hunting Grounds, although Christians and most of the rest of the world's major religions had different words for it. The spirits were known as manitous, fiends, devils, demons, whatever. No matter how you sliced them, they were pure trouble.

Eventually, a bunch of the most powerful Indian shamans on the American continent convened a council to see what they could do about all of the problems the manitous were causing. They came up with a desperate solution. They had to go into the Hunting Grounds and seal it off from the Earth for all time.

And that's just what they did.

The Old Ones

We call this band of shamans the Old Ones. They probably called themselves something different, but we've got no way to know what. Ever since the Last War, archaeology's been a low priority around these parts. Hell, most folks can't even tell you what was going on in 1876, much less centuries before that.

Anyhow, the Old Ones walked into the Hunting Grounds to rumble with the manitous. For a while, things went according to plan. Then the Indians ran into the manitous' bosses: the Reckoners.



The Journal of Jackie Wells

Maybe you've heard of the Reckoners, and maybe not. If so, you know this was bad news for the Old Ones. If not, you're going to have to take my word for it. This was not good.

The Old Ones knew they couldn't stand against the Reckoners by themselves, so they called upon some friends for help. The Hunting Grounds have a lot more in them than just manitous, and some of these spirits called the Old Ones their friends.

The Old Ones made a pact with their friends, creatures they called nature spirits. The nature spirits would prevent the manitous from entering the Earth as long as the Old Ones stayed with them in the Hunting Grounds.

Why the nature spirits agreed to this, no one's sure. Maybe the Old Ones forced them into the deal. Or maybe the spirits were simply bored and wanted some humans to hang around with. Or maybe there's a more sinister reason.

Anyhow, like my daddy used to say, there's no reasoning with a ghost. (He's one himself these days, so he ought to know. He's sure doing his best to live up to his words too. He's more ornery now than he ever was in life. But that's another story.)

Whatever the reason, the nature spirits made good on their end of the bargain, so the Old Ones held up theirs. They stayed in the Hunting Grounds, constantly helping to shore up the Earth's defenses against the manitous and their evil masters.

Back on Earth, magic faded into the background, monsters stopped bumping around under people's beds, and the world pretty much got back to what most folks would call normal. Of course, the weirdness didn't entirely go away. There were still periodic reports of things like werewolves and vampires and sea serpents and similar things throughout the years. They just didn't pop up nearly as often.

Most of the world's peoples didn't have any idea what had happened. Some mourned the loss of their arcane powers. Others celebrated the return of sanity to their lives. The tribes the Old Ones had left behind rejoiced, even as they mourned the leaders they had lost to the Great Spirit War.

The Quiet Times

The eggheads I hang around with here in 2094 call the time after the Old Ones' victory "the Quiet Times." For a long time, the world just wasn't as weird as it once was.

This was a time of great progress for humanity. Finally, we weren't relying on certain folks with incredible and arcane powers to protect the rest of us from things we couldn't possibly understand. Nope, we were forced to stand on our own two feet and start figuring things out on our own. Instead of calling on spirits from other realms, we had to think and innovate for ourselves.

The Journal of Jackie Wells



I'm proud to say we rose to the task. Coming from a Euro-centric point of view myself, I can say we managed to haul our butts out of the Dark Ages and (after a bit) right into the Renaissance and even something called the Age of Enlightenment.

Too bad it didn't last.

In the end (speaking again from my Euro-centric point of view), it was all our fault. Okay, we didn't cause it directly, but we sure had a hand in it.

Relieved of the worries of having to deal with unholy beasts snapping their heads off every night, Europeans found themselves with an urge to go exploring the rest of this crazy world. Eventually they

ended up stumbling across a part of the planet they called the "New World."

There was nothing new about the place, as the folks who lived there tried to point out, but the Europeans ignored them. The new arrivals even called the natives "Indians," thinking they were actually somewhere else halfway around the planet. Inaccurate as it might have been, the name stuck, and we still use it some even in 2094.

That's one of the things that caused our downfall: pride. Even with 600 years to get around to it, most folks don't bother with correcting that mistake in nomenclature made by some lost Italian navigator so many years ago.

That pride also told the Europeans that they had the right to take the New World from the "savages" who were sitting on it at the time. No matter that several of the "savage" tribes had advanced civilizations of their own, nor that their ancestors had lived on these lands for thousands of years. Nope, it was ours.

Of course, the locals didn't always take kindly to the Europeans throwing their weight around, but as often happens in these things, the side with the superior technology carried the day. The Indians got shoved further west year after year, until there was no place for them to go.

It was while the Europeans were clearing the "savages" off their "new" lands that they made a horrible mistake. They destroyed the village of a young Susquehanna man called Raven.

The Journal of Jackie Wells

Raven's Revenge

Raven was a young Indian shaman-in-training when he saw his entire village slaughtered at the hands of the encroaching white men. It was a moment that shaped the rest of his life—and history as well.

Consumed with grief and rage, Raven set about coming up with a plan for his revenge. As the last son of his tribe, it fell to him to enact retribution for the crimes committed against his people, and he swore he would not rest until he saw justice done.

Now, I'm not trying to stick up for Raven here. The man's a sick, evil bastard, and he's done more harm to the world and even to his people than even the whites.

Still, if you've lost anyone close to you, perhaps you can understand a bit of how he felt. Try magnifying that by seeing every member of your community—your parents, your brothers, your sisters, your friends, and everyone else you've ever known—brutally murdered by strangers whose only justification was greed.

You can see how the return of the Reckoners was almost inevitable.

That's exactly what Raven intended to bring about. As a shaman-in-training, the young man had heard tales of the Old Ones and the sacrifice they had made to save the world from the Reckoners and their terrible servants. He made it his business to find out if those stories were true.

Like I said before, magic wasn't nearly as powerful in the Quiet Times. It took a whole lot of mojo just to figure out for sure if it was going to rain, much less to call down a thunderstorm. That makes what Raven did all that much more amazing.

Maybe you think I'm impressed with Raven and what he did. That's not exactly true. I'm in awe.

Sure, he's a murderous son of a bitch who's responsible for more destruction than anyone else in the history of the world, but you've got to respect the kind of drive the man must have had to do what he did.

That doesn't make him any less of a bastard—just a truly awesome one.

Anyhow, Raven traveled around the American West, visiting with many other oppressed tribes and talking with their shamans about the Great Spirit War. Along the way, he met others who had lost their families to the settlers encroaching upon their lands. These poor souls joined Raven in his travels one by one, and eventually he was leading a whole band of these orphans along on his travels.

They called themselves the Last Sons.

The Journal of Jackie Wells

Into the Hunting Grounds

Eventually Raven discovered a means of entering the Hunting Grounds. In 1876 and even 2094, this isn't much of a feat. Even the youngest shamans learn how to do this in spirit form, but physically stepping over is another ball of wax. During the Quiet Times, though, stepping from our world into the next was less common and not quite as easy.

After years of research, Raven found a portal into the Hunting Grounds, a means of walking physically into the reality that underlies our own. The eggheads back home aren't sure which of the known portals he used—if any—but that's not really the point.

Raven gathered together his Last Sons with all of their most powerful weapons and magics, and they made the leap.

When the Last Sons got to the Hunting Grounds, their shamanic powers increased a hundredfold. Suddenly their access to the source of their powers had been opened wide, like the gates of a dam being let loose. They almost went mad with the rush of power. Maybe some of them did.

Raven used his newfound power to hide the Last Sons from prying eyes for a while, giving him and his disciples the time they needed to adjust to their amazing abilities. They used the time to train, to talk, and to plot.

Eventually they were ready.



The Journal of Jackie Wells

The Reckoning

One by one, Raven and his Last Sons (Sounds like some sick rock-and-roll band, huh? Ah, forget it. That's after your time.) hunted down and killed each of the Old Ones. By the time the Old Ones figured out what was going on, the Last Sons had already killed off more than half of their number, and in the process diminished their power.

The Old Ones tried to mount a counteroffensive against the Last Sons, but it was too late. That's not to say the Old Ones went down without a fight. The war between the two sides lasted for years and years and years. (Time flows a little differently

in the Hunting Grounds than it does in our world, so it's nearly impossible to tell for sure how long the war went on.)

Eventually, though (and unfortunately for all of us), the Old Ones lost.

That's when the Reckoning began.

Before I go too much further, let me clarify something. Lots of folks think that the Reckoning is an event, and in one sense that's true. It wasn't the kind of event that happened instantaneously and was over though. No, the Reckoning lasted for centuries.

It's more accurate to think of the Reckoning as a period of time, an era like the Renaissance or the Dark Ages. As is the case with these things, it's often difficult to pin down just when an era starts or ends. Some folks put the start of the Reckoning at the day the Last Sons stepped into the Hunting Grounds, but most people take a different point of view.

In 2094, we're pretty darn sure when the Reckoning started. We define it by the first notice the Earth had that things were going wrong: July 3, 1863.

Whether you're from the past or the future, you probably know things started getting strange around then. Folks in the future don't care too much for history these days. We're too darn busy struggling with undead and mutants to pay much attention to those kinds of niceties. Still, 1863, that's a year everyone knows.



The Journal of Jackie Wells

Some folks in the know can actually pin the beginning of the Reckoning down to the exact date. That's when Raven killed or ran off the last of the Old Ones himself. The nature spirits' pact with the ancient shamans was broken, and the manitous were unleashed upon the Earth once again.

Basically, all Hell broke loose.

The Weird West

The first indication we had that the Reckoning was taking place (at least according to my sources, which are admittedly biased toward the American West) is that the dead started walking around.

Even at the height of the Reckoning, having a stiff stand up and say "hi" was a relatively rare thing, but this day was different for two reasons. First, when the manitous cruised through to our world from the next, they had a lot of pent-up frustrations they wanted to let loose. There's nothing like centuries of imprisonment to give a spirit a wicked case of cabin fever.

Second, there was a lot of death going on.

For those who don't remember, July 3, 1863, was smack dab in the middle of the American Civil War (or the War of Northern Aggression as they like to say south of the Mason-Dixon line). Point in fact, it was at the height of the legendary Battle of Gettysburg, one of the most bitterly fought parts of the war.

The Reckoners couldn't have picked a better time to make their presence known.

As soldiers on both side of the battle watched, bloody corpses that had just fallen next to them clawed their way to their feet and attacked their own comrades in arms. Worse yet, strange conglomerations of bodies, heads, and arms formed in the centers of the worst fighting, making for sheer terror in the heart of the battlefield. Fighting between the two sides ground to a halt as the soldiers turned to their recently fallen friends and desperately tried to put them back down on the ground.

Since that watershed moment, things have been pretty weird all over the world. For some reason, the worst of it seems to have taken place in the American West. There are a lot of theories about why that's happened.

The best one is based on another theory that seems to have held up well over the years: The Reckoners feed on fear.

Of course, it's hard to prove something like that, and there's no way for some egghead to just step up and start asking the Reckoners about their motivations, but there's some evidence that it's true. For one, the ways of the Reckoners are more subtle than you might expect. They didn't just step into the world in 1863 and run roughshod over every human settlement on the planet. (That didn't happen until much later.)

The Journal of Jackie Wells



No, it's not that simple. The Reckoners needed to have the way prepared for them. To do that, they've set up a burgeoning system of fear. In essence, they began "terrorforming."

Basically, the Reckoners empower something weird in a part of the world. This thing, whatever it is, causes fear in the local populace. The manitous then collect that fear and bring it back to their masters.

The Reckoners, being canny sorts, don't suck down all that fear at once. No, they turn the power right back around and use it to create more weirdness. This in turn gets them more fear.

This fear-growing effect spirals steadily upward until the area the weirdness is centered in becomes something the eggheads call a Deadland. If you've run across one of these areas, you're sure to have recognized it. The power of fear actually warps the world, right down to the very landscape. The sky is always low and dark, even on the brightest days. The rocks and trees become twisted and gnarled, and the area takes on a menacing aura. Even the birds are transformed into hideous reflections of their more wholesome selves.

The thing about a Deadland is that, unless someone does something about it, it tends to grow larger and larger. Theoretically, even a single Deadland could expand to cover an entire continent, given enough time. Unfortunately, there are a lot more potential Deadlands than just one.

Anyhow, that's how the West got weird.

The Journal of Jackie Wells

Living in the Weirdness

Of course, walking dead aren't the only thing that cause fear in the world. There are all sorts of monsters of myth and legend crawling around all over the place, things like vampires, werewolves, and wendigos. Worse yet, there are all sorts of stranger things that seem like not even the most twisted excuse for a human being could have dreamed them up, much less cast them in reality.

On top of all that, Raven wasn't done yet. He still had one more task to complete.

No one's sure if it was at the Reckoners' bidding or not, but you've got to suspect those masters of evil were somehow behind it. In any case, their manitous were certainly the ones who gave Raven the power to execute his horrible plan.

Back in 1868, only five years after the Reckoning began, Raven walked into California, right within spitting distance of the San Andreas Fault. This time, all by his lonesome and without the help of any of the surviving Last Sons, Raven unleashed a terrible bit of magic that called down the worst earthquake the world had ever seen.

The Great Quake of '68 rocked the entire state and parts beyond. Massive parts of the landscape simply fell into the Pacific and disappeared beneath the waves. To say the loss of life—both human and otherwise—was tremendous is like saying it's a long walk from London to Denver. Words can't capture the magnitude of the understatement.

The Great Quake did more than just kill a lot of people though. It tossed a great deal of dirt into the ocean and let the sea waters advance far into the state through the labyrinthine channels that were left behind. This shattered ground became known as the Great Maze.

This is where the beauty of the Reckoners' plan really starts to shine. In the walls of the jagged cliffs that were left behind in the wake of the Great Quake, the survivors found deposits of a brand-new mineral, something no one had ever seen before. This stuff, which burned a thousand times better than coal, was called ghost rock. It began popping up everywhere.

Ghost rock gets its name from the eerie sounds it makes when burned, which seems almost like the wailing of the damned. Also, if you look closely at the smoke, you can almost see the faces of the folks making those horrible noises.

In this case, at least, appearances aren't deceiving at all—but I'll get to that in a minute.

Folks thought this ghost rock stuff was great. It spawned whole new branches of science dedicated to using the mineral to make amazing devices that would have been inconceivable only years before. Soon ghost-rock powered steam wagons were

The Journal of Jackie Wells

rolling across the High Plains while clockwork ornithopters flapped and soared overhead. The number of innovations were staggering, and it was all the government patent offices could do to keep up with the deluge of applications they received over the next few years.

Your basic laws of economics should explain what happened next. A low supply of ghost rock was in extremely high demand. The price shot through the proverbial roof.

Of course, this demand was spurred on even further by the fact that the Civil War was still staggering on. Despite original predictions by pundits that the war couldn't possibly last, it was still going strong in 1868, and the last I hear, it was pounding along as late as 1876. (That's when my information about the time ends, but since that's the year I'm supposed to be traveling back to, I suppose it hardly matters.)

While the Civil War was causing plenty of fear Back East, ghost rock was inspiring all sorts of its own out West. If you think about it, it was the perfect spur for the Reckoners' plans.

After all, the ghost rush sent thousands of people out West at a time when the focus of the USA and CSA should have been Back East. This put a lot of people into situations in which it was easy to breed fear. They were alone, surrounded by the unknown, and unexposed to the horrors of the Reckoning (people get jaded to even the most horrible things so quickly). This was a breeding ground for terror.



The Journal of Jackie Wells

Better yet, with the price of ghost rock skyrocketing, it became a source of tension among people. They competed for it, fought over it, and even stooped to murder. People became afraid of each other, and the Reckoners never even had to send in even a single tumblebleed to stir things up.

Beating the Reckoners

The only way to break this cycle of fear is for someone to go in and tear out the causes by the roots. Of course, this is a lot easier said than done. The Reckoners aren't just going to roll over for a bunch of folks who just claim they're not really afraid.

It's hard to convince yourself there's nothing to be afraid of when you've got a murderous beast drooling down your neck. It's just not a natural act. (And no one's that good an actor—the Reckoners (being what they are) *know* when you're afraid.)

The trick, then, is to go in and get rid of the source of the fear. This is akin to plunging in and ripping out every last weed from the Garden of Eden. The place is getting choked by all the bad stuff, but you can't just till the whole thing under. You do that and the garden goes away too.

That means you've got to go in and tear out every weed by hand. And you've got to be sure to rip the damn things out by the roots, or they're certain to grow back. (Can I beat a metaphor to death or what?)

As you might guess, this is a massive undertaking, and there's only a few things on the side of the good guys. The biggest thing is that the Reckoners can't just come out and kill every living thing. For one, they're not that powerful—at least we hope they aren't that powerful. For two, it just doesn't work that way.

If you've been reading closely, you'll recall the Reckoners feed off of fear, and the subtler the fear, the better.

Let's talk about Mojave rattlers by way of example. Most folks think these massive worms are like whales that swim under the land. They're perfectly natural, and the only mystery is why we didn't clue in to them faster. But hey, they're only found in the West, and there's a lot of wide, open spaces out there. We might have just missed them, right?

Wrong. These things were created (at some point in time) by the Reckoners themselves, and believe it or not, they're one of their less-successful experiments. Sure, they cause a lot of destruction and folks in 1876 are rightfully respectful of their power, but they're not truly scared of them.

Okay, when a rattler's pounding along under your feet, your heart's in your throat, and your brain's telling you to get the Hell out of Dodge (That's a figure of speech in my time, you know. Dodge City is now in ruins). But you're working on adrenaline, not fear.

The Journal of Jackie Wells



For crying out loud, even in 1876 people were actually hunting rattlers for meat and hides. That's hardly what you'd do of something you're terrified of, is it?

The fact is, once you're exposed to something enough, even if it's really horrible and nasty, you get used to it. Fear's in the eye of the beholder, after all.

Once people got used to the idea of rattlers, they simply thought of them as really nasty animals (which they are in a sense—*really* nasty!). That takes fear out of the equation.

Fear comes from the unknown, from things that go bump in the night, not critters you can drag down Main Street at high noon. That means it's up to us to get out there, crawl into the dark holes, and drag those monsters out into the light where people can see them for what they are. That's how you pull the weeds out of the garden.

That's what heroes do.

Reversal of Fortune

Fact is, that's what good-hearted people (like the ones I hope read this booklet) did for years and years. Over the decades and centuries, they bravely walked through the valley of darkness, shedding light wherever they went. Eventually, the darkness was no more, and the fear was gone (at least as much as it could ever be).

The Journal of Jackie Wells

The Reckoners were defeated.

I suspect the people called this era the Good Times. The major source of evil and fear in the world had been all but eradicated, but the magical powers that people were able to tap from the Hunting Grounds were still around. It must have been a time of incredible peace and prosperity. It almost brings a tear to my eye to think about it.

Of course, I've never seen it.

The land I come from is a shattered place, even more so than ever before.

In the history I know, the one I grew up with, the world went to Hell in a handbasket (or a bucket, if you like) in 1863, and things only got worse from there. Eventually, in 2081, the major powers in the world got pissed off at each other and bombed everyone nearly back to the Stone Age.

Bad is such a lousy word for how it was. I can't even begin to describe the destruction in any way that could possibly do justice to the billions that died in the nuclear fire of the irradiated ghost-rock bombs.

I can't speak for the rest of the world, but in North America, every major city disappeared in mushroom clouds that bore the grinning face of death.

And, no, I'm not speaking metaphorically.

Believe it or not, the bombs weren't the worst part. Where these things fell, they instantly created Deadlands. And they fell everywhere.

It turns out that this was exactly what the Reckoners were waiting for. It seems they live in fear like a pig in slop. All they needed to break into our world was a big enough pen, and they finally had it.

The Apocalypse

I know folks back in your day paid a lot more attention to the Bible. This was straight out of the Good Book's last chapter. For those of you not up on your Christian references, that's the Book of Revelations, also known as the Apocalypse of St. John the Apostle. That's right, the end of the world.

It sure seemed like that all right, because soon after the bombs fell, we ended up with Four Horsemen riding rampant across what was left of the High Plains. No joke, it was War, Plague, and Famine, followed by Death close on their heels, riding that damned pale horse.

The worst part of it was that no one really knew what was happening at the time. When the bombs fell, they knocked out all of our electronics, even our communications systems. That meant that no one had the big picture all at once. All you ever got were pieces.

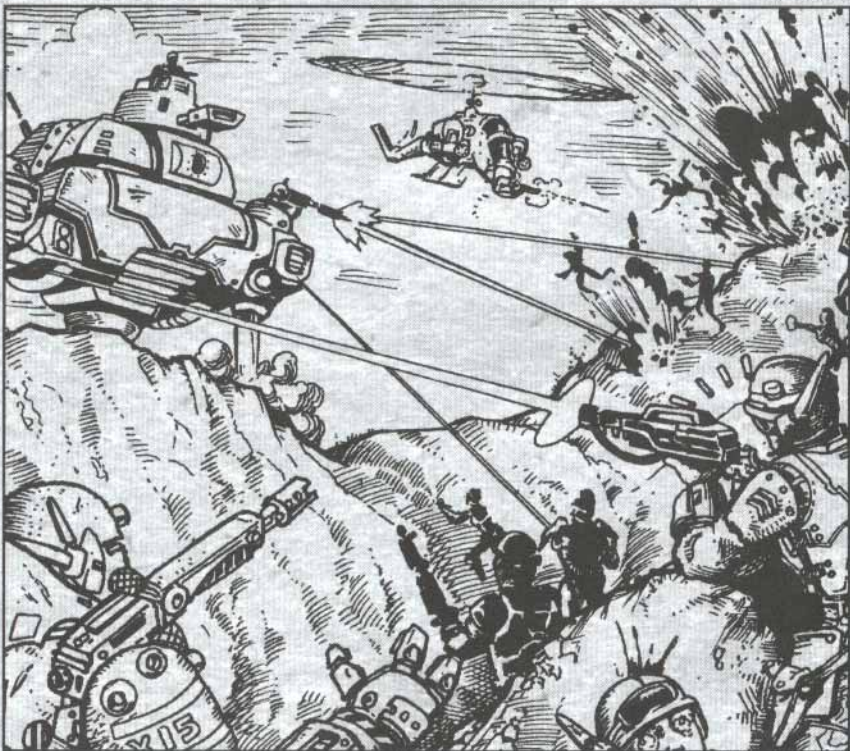
The Journal of Jackie Wells

For instance, if you were hunkered down in the desert when Famine galloped through, all you saw was a skinny guy riding a black horse. Then, before you knew it, you were starving to death, ready to rip the arms off the guy next to you for something to eat.

Sure, that was strange, but we'd had all sorts of reports of hunger spirits and faminite outbreaks over the years. Who was to know this wasn't just another pretender to the throne? We had heard the world cry wolf one too many times, and we still weren't ready to believe this was the end.

The Four Horsemen didn't stick around too long. Their work here was done. Those of us who were unfortunate enough to encounter the horsemen and survive didn't look like we'd make it through the month. After stomping around the West and causing unparalleled destruction, they lit out of here for Back East in search of more mayhem.

Rumor has it the Horsemen have been spotted in Europe and places farther east, but no one's got any way to confirm any of that. To most folks' minds, it's just a matter of time before the Four Riders make their way back here to finish the job they started.



The Journal of Jackie Wells



The Aftermath

In the meantime, of course, we're not just sitting around here on our hands. I'm sure the Horsemen just expected humanity to roll up into a ball and wait for the final blow to land, even if it's never going to come. That's just what some are doing. The Reckoners would like that, just soaking up enough fear so they can come back and scare the living daylight out of every last one of us.

Of course, there are some who theorize that's exactly why some of us are still alive. After all, what's a scary place without someone to frighten with it? Right now, the world's as terrifying as it's ever been,

but if there's no one around to witness it, what good does that do the Reckoners?

Then there are those who point out that we really know squat about the Reckoners when it comes right down to it. For all we know, they're just toying with us, enjoying the last little morsels this world has to offer before they clean their plate and move on to the next course.

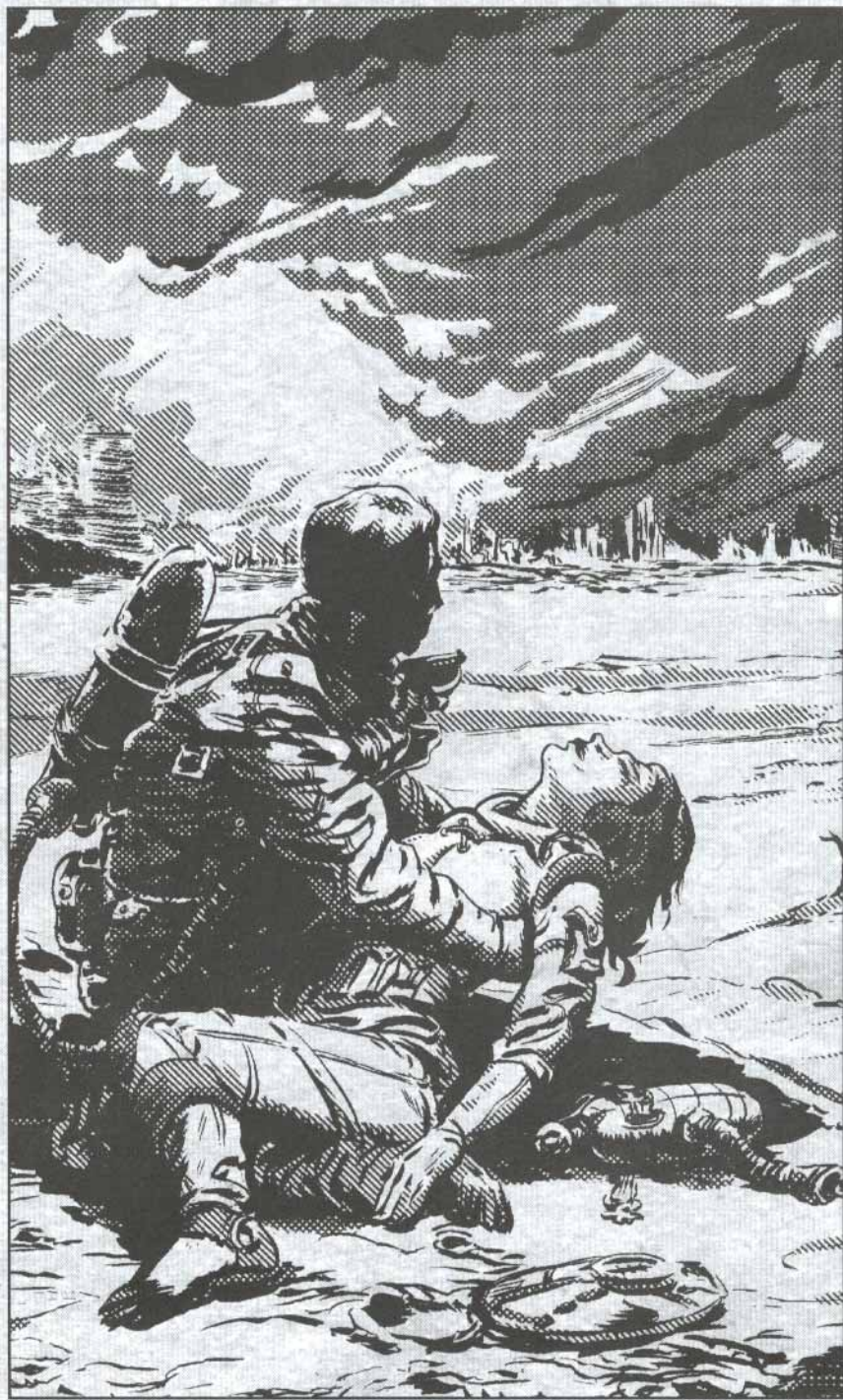
Either way, few folks are willing to rely on the Reckoners' better nature to see them through. All sorts of factions of people have cropped up across the nations, banding together to help themselves in the absence of any outside help (which just isn't coming). Let me tell you about a few of those.

The Wasted West

Back in 1876 (or likely even before that), there used to be a newspaper called the *Tombstone Epitaph*, a rag that actually, despite what everyone Back East might have thought, printed the truth about what was going on out West more often than not. Their lead reporter was a man named Lacy O'Malley, and it was he who first coined the term "Weird West."

As you probably know, that stuck like white on rice, and even up until a few years back people were still using that term. That was before the Last War and the coming of the Reckoners though. Nowadays, we call this place we live in the Wasted West.

The Journal of Jackie Wells



The Journal of Jackie Wells

In some ways you wouldn't recognize the place. We've got things like interstate highways (what's left of them) and cities that once held millions of people (before the bombs fell). Of course, the Last War changed all that.

On the other hand, the prairie's still pretty much the prairie—at least on the surface.

You remember what I told you about fear in the Weird West, how it had to be subtle, not show its hand too soon or too often? Well, that's not necessarily true anymore. The Reckoners seem to have gotten all they really need from us, and now their pets are having their wicked ways with us. Some days it seems like you can't swing a dead radrat without smacking into some beastie looking to bite your head off.

Worse yet, the infrastructure we used to rely on so heavily's entirely gone. Things are even worse in the future than in your "backward" (no offense intended) time. At least in 1876 you had Smith & Robards to deliver necessary things like bullets and guns nearly anywhere you could write them from. These days, you're on your own.

That means things like bullets are just about worth their weight in gold. When you've got a horde of wormlings bearing down on your Caddy, there's no limit to how much you're willing to pay for a full clip of ammo. Prices may be lower in less-desperate circumstances, but you can't really count on such things in the Wasted West. Every day's a battle.

Fuel's even harder to lay your hands on. The demand for spook juice hasn't slowed down one bit, even though folks know what the Hell it actually is these days.

Guess what? It's the solidified souls of the damned!

At least that's what the eggheads tell me, and they're rarely wrong about things they spend that much of their time working with. You know how dinosaurs turn into coal? (Trust me, they do.) Well, the souls of the damned turn into ghost rock.

And then we burn them. That's why they make that awful noise as the fires consume them. That's enough to send you back to Sunday school right there.

Kind of fitting though, huh?

The Future

Anyhow, the future's a wild place. I used to like it a whole lot before they blew it all to Hell. Of course, I was just a kid then, so what did I know?

One of the wildest things we did is reach for the stars. Einstein's Theory of Relativity proved that there's no way to travel faster than light—at least not in normal space. If there's one thing the Reckoning's shown the world, though, it's that space is anything but normal.

The Journal of Jackie Wells



A man named Dr. Darius Hellstromme (I'm told he was alive in your time too, although I'm not sure how that could be) built something called the Tunnel, a big, bright ring of metal and wires hanging in a stable orbit around Earth. When this thing gets juiced up, it actually folds space and then pokes a hole through it like a needle through a ruffled skirt. Things that pass through one side of the Tunnel pop up on the other side, just like you'd expect.

The trick is the other side's light-years away.

Specifically, the other end of the Tunnel pops open in another solar system in a distant part of the galaxy, circling a star called Faraway.

It turns out that one of the planets (a place called Banshee for the screaming winds that whirl around it) circling this star is even populated. That's right: They're aliens—but these aren't little, green men. They're big and purple.

They call themselves "anouks," and they're a peaceful sort of people, in tune with their natural surrounding and at nowhere near our own level of technology. Sound familiar?

Sure enough, eventually someone found ghost rock on Banshee, and suddenly these "primitive" people that we'd gotten along with fine for so long became our worst enemies. It wasn't much of a war at first, but the anouks didn't go gently into that good night. They stood their ground and fought.

That's when we brought the sykers in.

The Journal of Jackie Wells

Back in 1876, I understand folks called hucksters gambled with the manitous for access to the power of the Hunting Grounds. Well, the sykers aren't into playing games. If they want power, they just take it.

Unfortunately, the anouks weren't exactly powerless in the weird abilities department. Their "skinnies" matched the sykers blow for blow, and the Faraway War raged on for years.

It all came to a halt when the Last War broke out back home. The warring governments called back the standard troops first, leaving the sykers behind as an elite guard for the colonists that remained on Faraway. It was nearly a year before the sykers followed.

Shortly after that, the Tunnel collapsed.

When the sykers touched down in the neutral spaceport of Houston, they found a world ravaged by the Reckoners. They also found they weren't alone.

The Doomsayers

The place was lousy with mutants, innocent people whose bodies had been twisted by the radiation from the bombs. Most folks simply die from radiation poisoning. Some aren't that lucky.

I've got nothing against mutants in general, but not too long after the end of the Last War, a man named Silas Rasmussen popped up with a whole army of the rad-damned. He called his followers Doomsayers, and he claimed that their vocation was to

usher in a new age of evolution, one in which the mutant would be recognized as the genetically superior species on the planet. (Rasmussen is, of course, a mutant.)

The problem is that Rasmussen thinks the best way to point this out to those not gifted (with the special powers that radiation bestows upon them) is to plant a bullet between their eyes or blow up their heads with some kind of freaky microwave power. Most folks object to this kind of malevolent treatment, so they avoid the people in the green robes like they've got the plague (which, in a sense, they do).



The Journal of Jackie Wells

have suffered a schism over Rasmussen's methods. You can tell the "peaceful" Doomsayers by the color of their robes, which are purple instead. I say shoot them all and let the Reckoners sort them out.

The Junkers

I don't know if word on this had leaked down to you folks yet, but those "mad scientists" you got back in 1876 usually end up losing their minds because the "muses" that inspire them were actually manitous.

After the Last War, the manitous that used to lend a hand to the scientists packed up and left. Seems they didn't see any need to keep helping us kill ourselves once the Reckoners took a direct hand in exterminating us all by their lonesome.

The junkers are scientists who figured out what was going on and decided they could mend it. If the manitous weren't going to lend them a hand voluntarily, they'd just nail them down and take the information from them.

I've got no clue just how this actually works, but the fact is that lots of junkers end up poking around in still-hot parts of cities, looking for bits of wasted technology they can cobble back into something worthwhile. Radiation from these places sometimes means radiation sickness, which sometimes means mutants.

The Mutants

Some mutants start out as normal folks who actually managed to get through the Last War without their underwear glowing. Then for some reason they stick their noses into someplace "hot," and they end up paying for it, and sometimes in some pretty grotesque ways.

Mutants have been transformed by their exposure to the radiation, and some of them develop some unusual powers. Not all mutants are bad, but this isn't an "ask questions first" kind of world we're living in. It's almost better to shoot first, and ask questions later.





The Templars

You'd think that with all the events of literally biblical proportion we've seen over the past 13 years, we'd have more folks in churches, begging for salvation. Well, most of the churches were destroyed along with the cities. Even so, most folks figure the End's already here. It's a little late to be asked for forgiveness.

Not everyone thinks that way though. Case in point is one Simon Mercer, the leader of a group of zealots known as the Templars. The group takes its name from the ancient order of knights that used to be connected with the Freemasons and had something to do with the

Crusades. Like I said before, history's not my strong suit. Some of these guys are religious, some aren't, some are the friendliest people you'll ever meet, others are meaner than the abominations they battle. They're a rather eclectic bunch, held together only by their one cause—the last crusade.

Anyhow, Mercer started up this order of modern-day knights, men and women armed with guns, faith, and—get this—swords. Don't laugh too hard. They're pretty damn good with those things. I've seen more than one zombie go down with its head spitted on one of those glorified pig-stickers.

Even less laughable is the fact that the Templars can actually call on mysterious powers of their own. Don't get on the wrong side of these folks if you can help it.

Just to make things complicated, Templars are a pretty secretive lot. Their stated reason for existence is to help the deserving—and it's up to them to decide whether you're deserving or not. Lots of times, they enter a needful town in disguise, only revealing their true nature when they're sure the folks they're considering helping are worth the effort.

Once a Templar's revealed herself, you can spot her from a mile away. They wear a long, white tabard emblazoned with a bright, red Maltese cross. Folks who run up against them joke that the uniform's just like a giant target painted across a Templar's chest. They don't laugh though when the only thing standing between them and a horde of muties is the Templar.

The Journal of Jackie Wells

The Law Dogs

There's one other major faction wandering the Wasted West. (Actually, there are dozens of factions, even within the larger ones, but these are the largest groups, and I've only got so much time to generate this journal, so a broad overview is what you're going to get.) These are the Law Dogs.

One thing about the Law Dogs is for sure: These are the good guys. (Of course, there are exceptions to every rule, so tread carefully. I've heard of bandits posing as Law Dogs too. They don't normally last all that long, but you only need to screw it up once, right?)

The Law Dogs is composed of those brave souls who once were part of all the other law-enforcement organizations in the Wasted West: the Pinkertons, the Texas Rangers, the US Marshals, and so on. Once the Last War ended, most folks gave up on the law in general. Chaos reigned everywhere, and trying to stop it seemed a thankless task. Hell, it was hard enough to just get through the day looking out for yourself, much less everyone else around you.

For that reason, you can be pretty sure anyone wearing a Law Dog badge takes law enforcement seriously. In some places, wearing a badge is an open invitation for a gunfight. In others, it's literally a badge of honor.

Law Dogs are sworn to uphold the law (as they understand it) to the best of their ability and to help those in need whenever possible. There's no court system around these days, so Law Dogs are judge, jury, and executioner. There's no court of appeals.

Every Law Dog I've ever met has been an instant friend (I happen to be one myself), but I know there are a few rotten apples out there. These folks generally believe their hearts are in the right place, but they run roughshod over anything resembling due process or even rules of evidence. To them, you're guilty until proven innocent. While I don't approve of their methods, I do understand their reasons. I've seen more than one of my companions get strung up by the people they were trying to protect.



The Journal of Jackie Wells



It's a tough job, but nothing's more rewarding. After all, if you can end folks' fears, you're a thorn in the Reckoners' side. What could be more important than that?

What's the Point?

So, why am I telling you all this? If it's all fated to happen, what's the point?

That's the kicker: It's not.

Let me back up a little bit. You should recall from earlier when I mentioned an era I guessed might have been called the "Good Times" by the people who lived in it. Unfortunately—at least to me—it's a time that never was.

The fact is that time is not a fixed story. You can move

through it, and you can change it.

I'm living proof of that. I was born in 2061, and here I am, walking around in 1876. If you don't believe me, look at this book carefully: the paper, the binding, even the type on the pages. Face it, there's no way this thing could have been created in 1876. It just wasn't within the realm of possibility at the time.

If that doesn't convince you (hey, I'd doubt me if I were you), check out my gun. Sure, it may look a lot like a gun you've seen before, but it's not. The same goes for my clothes. Many of these things couldn't have been made in 1876. It's a subtle difference, but it's there.

So why don't I just bring something back from the future that would be proof positive? I asked the eggheads that myself. It would certainly have made my life easier.

The trick is that although we do want to change the past, we want to be careful about it. There are certain things we can do, histories we can alter and predict what might happen. Everything else—like leaving a piece of extremely high-tech machinery lying around where it might fall into the wrong hands—we want to avoid. And it's not like we can just keep jumping back and forth. This is a one way ticket to a specific point in time, and that time moves forward day for day, just like back home.

Anyhow, that's beside the point. You're either going to believe me or you're not. After the story I'm going to spin for you now, I wouldn't blame you if you looked at me like I was a mutant.

The Journal of Jackie Wells

History Is a Lie

You remember how I was going on about how humanity could actually defeat the Reckoners if we could just chip away at them long enough? Well, that's exactly what happened.

The first time through history (the way things should have happened), the Reckoners lost.

At least that's what I'm told. This information comes straight from Coot Jenkins, a man known popularly around these times as the Prospector. Maybe you've heard of him, maybe not.

Coot actually made his way to the future through the Hunting Grounds. It turns out you can do it, but it takes a dynamite mixture of skill, determination, and luck.

Good old Coot plumb ran out of luck. He led an army of Harrowed (those are undead folks, for those of you not in the know) heroes through a portal into the Hunting Grounds, much like the one Raven and his Last Sons used so long ago. When he finally got into the Hunting Grounds, things didn't go quite the way he was hoping.

He got lost, and it took him over 200 years to find his way out.

Whether Coot actually had to live through 200 years or not, I couldn't tell you. (He's a man just full of surprises, so you really can't be sure.) All I know is he walked into the Hunting Grounds in 1876 and popped out in 2094.

That's one Hell of a wrong turn.



The Journal of Jackie Wells

Anyhow, when Coot was wandering about, he ran into an old shaman who told him all about how things were supposed to have worked out. I say "supposed to have" because that's obviously not what happened.

The fact is that once the Reckoners realized they were going to lose this game, they changed the rules. They used the last of their formidable power to forge a path through the Hunting Grounds, one that led from their time to the past—to 1876 to be exact.

Even so, they had to choose someone to attune to the path. (Apparently they didn't have enough power to turn their path into a superhighway.) They picked one mean son of a bitch by the name of Stone.

By now, I'm sure you know who that is. Stone was one of the first Harrowed created after the Reckoning began, possibly *the* first. And he was tough enough to live all the way through to the 2094 in which the good guys won. Now that's one tough hombre.

Anyhow, Stone was their first and only choice as their envoy to the past. He leapt at the opportunity to serve his masters and cause even more mayhem, so away he went.

When he got back to 1876, he started right in at doing what he'd always been good at: killing the heroes who stood against the Reckoners. Ever since the Reckoning, there was one truism about fighting the good fight. If you were good enough at it, sooner or later (but always too soon, it seems) you got a visit

from Stone. Some folks managed to survive an encounter with the man, but no one ever managed to beat him—at least not permanently.

Eventually, Stone (who apparently sometimes calls himself Old Pete in this era) got the idea to meet up with his past self and fill him in on all the gory details. Between the two of them, they managed to wreak enough havoc across the Weird West to tip the scales in the Reckoners' favor.

That led to the future that I'm from—which I've already told you about—a place that's literally Hell on Earth. It's a place you wouldn't want anyone to live in.



The Journal of Jackie Wells

Back to the Future

So history had changed, but in my era, we knew nothing of this. We just knew the Reckoners had won.

I was working with a group of Law Dogs protecting an enclave of junkers holed up inside Devils Tower. This fortress of fear had once stood at the center of a massive Deadland—one that had been created back in 1876—but we had managed to reclaim the area over the course of the past few years. Fortified as it was from the dangers of the outside world, we made the place our base of operations, the one place in the entire region we could feel safe.



One amazing thing about Devils Tower is the fact that it's actually been hollowed out in the middle. More impressive yet is the fact that it's got a permanent portal to the Hunting Grounds right smack in the middle of it. Our junkers were able to rig up some machinery (please don't ask me how it works) to draw power directly from the portal, making us one of the few places in the entire Wasted West with a secure and dependable source of electricity.

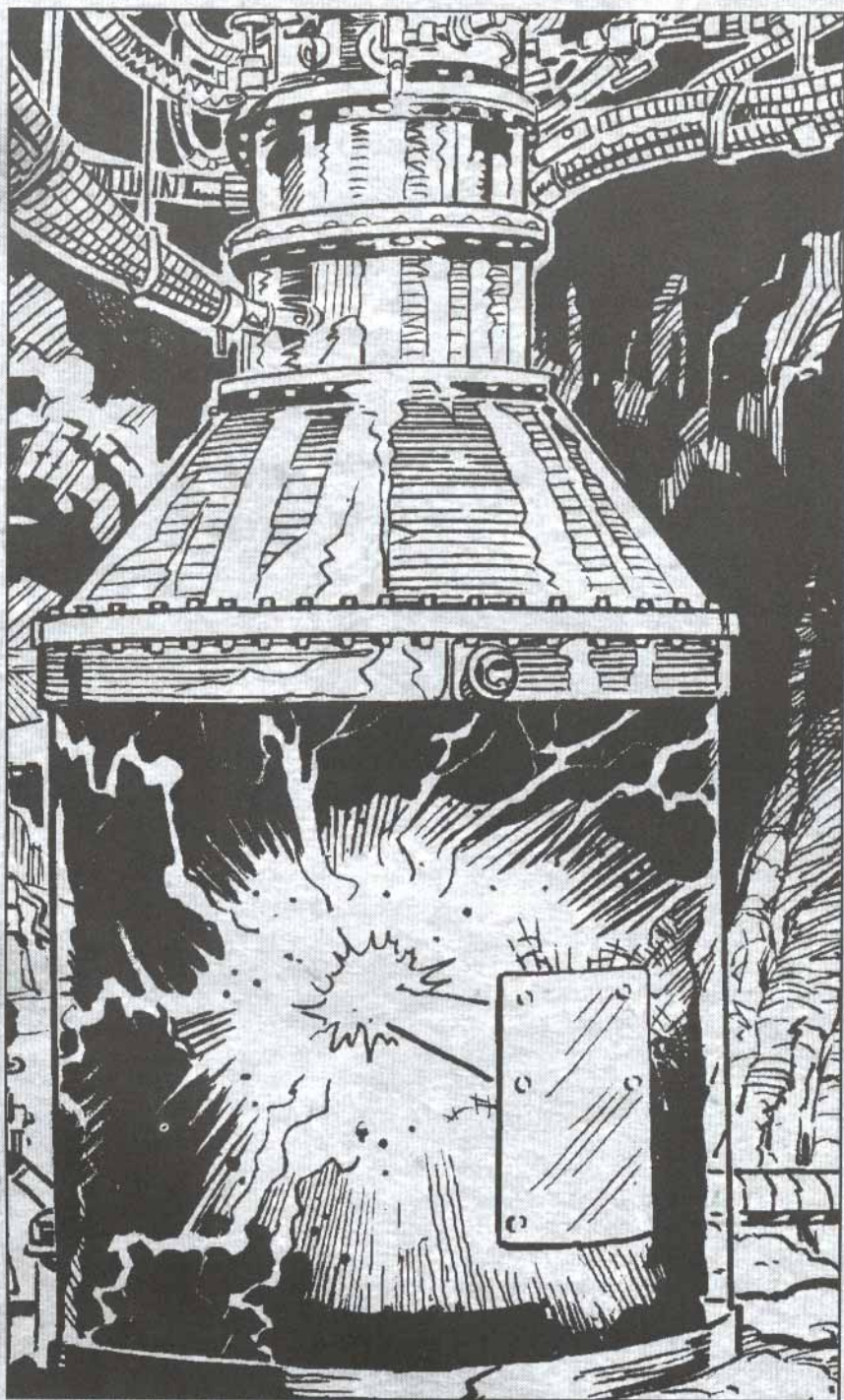
Despite the fact that the portal apparently went straight into the Hunting Grounds, there weren't any volunteers ready to walk into it to test that theory out. It was bad enough on Earth. No one wanted to go in to check out what was going on in the Hunting Grounds.

Weren't the eggheads surprised then when someone walked out?

It was Coot Jenkins himself, along with his few surviving (if that's a word you can apply to the Harrowed) friends.

The junkers around the portal had been totally unprepared for such an event. Sure, when they first got into Devils Tower, they'd been suspicious of the portal, but over the years, they'd become jaded. They respected it as a seemingly limitless source of power, but despite a few late-night stories told around the mess hall, no one really believed anything could actually walk out of it. Even the shamans they'd consulted with had told them the chances of something like that happening were remote. Hell, some of the junkers were even using the thing as a wastebasket.

The Journal of Jackie Wells



The Journal of Jackie Wells

Needless to say, Coot and his buddies got the drop on the junkers. By the time security got wind of what was going on, Dave Wilson, the head of the tower's junker contingent, was chatting with the Prospector like old friends.

The Portal

Once Coot explained what had happened, our course of action was clear: we needed to send someone back into the past to return history to the way it should be.

Wilson and the other junkers pointed out that doing so was fraught with danger. Even if we did manage to get someone back to 1876, there was no guarantee she'd be able to make a difference. Even thinking about that was getting ahead of ourselves. As Coot's journey had made clear, the most likely thing to happen to anyone who entered the Hunting Grounds is that they would get lost, possibly forever.

We Law Dogs are a brave and selfless bunch (or so we tell folks), but we're not interested in throwing our lives away for no reason. If there's a reason, then sure, just point us in the right direction, but otherwise, forget it.

Wilson's team set to work at once. Surprisingly soon, they came up with a solution, our own version of the Path of Stone. By firing a tightly focused laser beam through the portal, it might actually poke out through the same portal, providing a wanderer through the Hunting Grounds with an easy-to-follow guide along the path. The only real problem was that none of our lasers were powerful enough to actually pierce into the Hunting Grounds.

Then Wilson hit on the solution: a fabled gem known as the Heart of Darkness. It was the device that Stone had been reputed to use to turn Devils Tower into a Deadland in our history. Once Stone had completed his foul ceremony, he had abandoned the consumed shell of the gem at the top of the monolith. It had laid there for centuries, safe in the whirling heart of the Deadland, until we finally managed to reclaim the place a couple years back.

Wilson's team had found the fabled gem about seven months ago and begun testing it. The consumption of its dark powers had robbed it of its evil, and it had turned entirely clear. Despite its lack of evil abilities, it was still nearly indestructible.

Wilson's plan was to tap the incredible power the portal continually unleashed, and then run it into a powerful laser beam focused through the depleted Heart of Darkness. If his theory was correct, only a gem with the unique properties of the Heart of Darkness was capable of turning the portal's power against itself so the laser could pierce the veil.

It worked.

The Journal of Jackie Wells

After that, the only problem was selecting a team to go back into the past and change history back to the way it should be. Seven of us are setting out. Who knows how many will return?

I was selected to write this journal of our history (such as it is) and our mission, and each of us will carry a copy of it on ourselves as we embark on our journey into the past. It's a responsibility I take seriously, for if we fail in our mission, this booklet may be the only record of our attempt that survives.

Time and Again

Even if we do manage to make it into the past, our troubles are hardly over. By our calculations, we should arrive in 1876 with just enough time to find the Heart of Darkness before Stone does.

If we can manage this, everything else should be comparatively easy. All we have to do then is make our way back to Devils Tower and into the portal. If we can do even that much, we'll have put a large dent in the Reckoners' plans to change our history.

If we succeed, though, what then? Will our future actually change? If so, what will we be coming back to? Will we, in fact, have anything to come back to?

We have no way to answer any of these questions, but that doesn't mean we don't have a few guesses. Wilson has consulted with Wildrider Johns, a local Indian shaman who knows more than a bit about the Hunting Grounds, and his input's been pretty helpful.

Wildrider tells us he's heard of people traveling to the Weird West by means of the Hunting Grounds before, but it's a rare and dangerous thing. He thinks our laser guide may help us (Wildrider was in on the design of the device), but there's no way to be sure until we actually try it.

One thing Wildrider's pretty sure about is that making the journey is not as easy as one might hope. When you do it, you're basically violating just about every law of nature that we have come to expect, and this isn't something that the universe is wild about. Think about it. You step into this portal and walk out at another point in time. Crazy, huh?

Even with the Reckoners' power behind the Path of Stone (which we hope the laser beam lies along) it should only go from one point in time to another. At least that's the theory.

That's not to say the path only runs from July 4, 1876, to July 4, 2094. Well, actually in one sense that's accurate, since at one point, it did. The way it really works is this: No matter when you enter the path, it takes you either 218 years forward or back in time, depending on which direction you enter from. If you spend a month there, a month passes here.

The Journal of Jackie Wells

Since this is the only means of travel known at this point, this means there's no chance of going back and forth in time to different points and crossing over your own path. That also means we're only going to get one shot at this.

If we blow it, that's it. Game over.

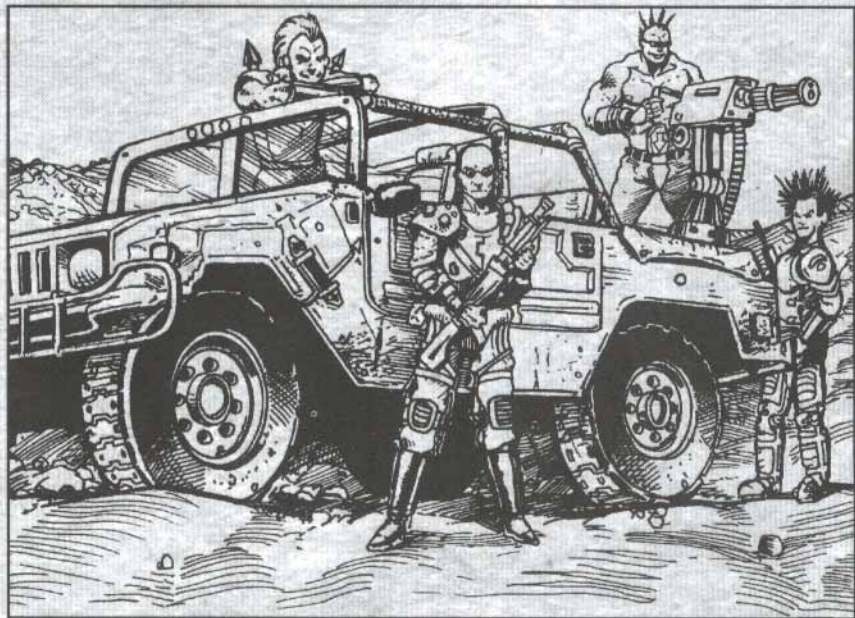
The Challenge

If you're reading this booklet and my friends and I are dead or missing, I beg you to take up our mission on your own. Whether we keep Devils Tower out of the Reckoners' hands or not—whether we live through this or not—our job is still not over. It can't be.

In fact, from the standpoint of 1876, there's never going to be a way to tell whether we've succeeded or not. Even if we manage to stop Stone—or even kill him—in the newly created timeline the Reckoners might simply send someone else back to do their work instead. There's just no way to be sure if the good we do is ever going to be enough.

In other words, the only solution is to keep chipping away at the Reckoners on every front we can find, every chance we get, for as long as we can. You see, what I just wrote there isn't strictly speaking true. Eventually, we will be able to figure out if we've done any good. Of course, we'll have to get to the future the old-fashioned way.

One day at a time.



The Journal of Jackie Wells



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Field Report #666:
Crossbreed
Technology

FIELD REPORT

#666

Property of the Pinkerton Detective Agency

Dear Allan:

Never a dull moment working in your employ. Did I forget to thank you for letting that last report I wrote fall into the wrong hands? Now I can't show my pitiful face around Shan Fan again under pain of death.

As you know, I'm not all that afraid of dying (what field operative is?), but being strung up by a mob of my angry countrymen isn't exactly my idea of a great send-off on my way to meet my ancestors. Next time, be sure to inform your operatives not to leave their reading materials lying around where someone might find them. Remember that idea Hellman proposed for paper that would self-destruct after you read it? I'd look into it.

That said, I'm not terribly worried about someone discovering my latest work for you. No one in his right mind would take this thing as gospel—at least, not if he hadn't already seen some of it himself. Few folks (that I know of) are in that kind of position, Kang and a few of the people in his employ being the notable exceptions.

I'll fill you in on all the (often gory) details when I get called in for my next assignment. For now, I'll let my report speak for itself as well as it can. I've sprinkled some sketches throughout the text to help explain some of the stranger pieces. What good does it do to warn someone about something if he can't recognize it, right?

Elsewhere I've already told you as much as I could learn about the inner workings Devils Tower and the creatures that call it home. This pamphlet covers the kinds of things that folks outside of the "paha wakansica" influence might run across in their travels. Consider it a kind of primer for Pinkertons that get involved with technology beyond the means of even our most advanced science.

Sure, our people aren't going to run across this stuff very often, but when they do, they need to know what they're up against. And yeah, anyone with this stuff in his possession should be considered an adversary (unless, of course, he's already one of us). I recommend immediately apprehending anyone discovered with any crossbreed equipment.

It's bad enough we've got all sorts of nameless creatures stalking the High Plains. What are folks going to do if they find out about this stuff? It's just too dangerous.

I'll be in Kansas City next week, ready for my next assignment. I wouldn't mind something slightly less deadly this time around.

Huang Li

Huang Li

CROSSBREED TECHNOLOGY

First things first. This little booklet is top secret, eyes only. The information in here is meant only for Pinkerton operatives with the appropriate clearances. It's up to Allan himself as to if and when that rule can be broken. Any ops who feel like violating this on their own discretion can expect themselves to be violated as soon as I can track their sorry hides down.

In this booklet, I've included thorough descriptions of every kind of strange technology of the crossbreeds I've run across. This doesn't mean I got them all. Devils Tower is a big place, and I've only seen the barest parts of it. There's a lot of the place yet to be plumbed by human beings, and some parts of it may always remain unexplored.

What I've done here is gather everything I could find out about the crossbreed technology into one place. Not all of the details are from firsthand experience. Many times, they come from several sketchy reports I've managed to piece together into a reasonable whole.

If you manage to personally get your hands on one of these devices, I recommend you hide that fact as well as you can and then haul your butt into the nearest Pinkerton office as soon as you can. Allan himself is going to want to see what you've discovered, and he doesn't like to be kept waiting.

RECOGNIZING CROSSBREED TECHNOLOGY

Of course, with all the strange kinds of technology already roaming around the West, you might be wondering how you can spot gear from a civilization far more advanced than our own.

It ain't all that hard.

Our "technologically advanced" stuff is big and clunky, with handcrafted brass plates held together by nuts, bolts, and rivets. By way of contrast, crossbreed technology is small and sleek.

The differences between the two aren't like those between a fresh mustang and the old bay that gets your granny to market. It's more like the difference between an old blunderbuss and a Gatling gun, only about a hundred times that.

There's flat-out no way for even our most accomplished scientists to duplicate this technology. It's not a matter of a lack of desire. We're just too far behind this stuff to be able to understand even its most basic principles. You might as well hand a pencil to your horse and ask it to take a letter.

That means this stuff is extremely rare and precious. Someday, after years of research, we might be able to understand one or two of the devices' most basic principles. If so, this could usher in a whole new age of enlightenment that would put our current advances to shame.

The flip side of this, of course, is that we don't want these things falling into the wrong hands. By "wrong hands," I mean anyone but us.

It's bad enough that a madman like Kang already has a few pieces of crossbreed equipment in his ever-growing arsenal. Imagine what would happen if the Confederates got their hands on these things. If they could ever entirely figure them out (before we did, at least), the war would be over faster than Jeff Davis could get "CSA Forever" tattooed on his arm.

The point is for you to not worry about whether or not you'll be able to pick out crossbreed technology when you see it: don't. If you're still not convinced, check out some of my sketches in this booklet. Like I said before, it's like picking out a virgin in a cathouse: It ain't all that hard.

USING CROSSBREED TECHNOLOGY

If you do manage to run across some crossbreed technology, you might decide that you'd like to try it out for yourself. I've got two words of advice for you: don't bother. I've seen many of these devices turn on their users—which is usually fatal.

Crossbreeds have arms and legs, fingers and toes just like you and me. Even though they're shorter than the average recruit these days (they get younger every year, don't they?), they're shaped mostly like us. This means that they use their tools pretty much the same way we do. In turn, this should mean we can use their tools just fine, right?

Well, we both know life's not always that simple.

The first problem is identifying what it is that you've got. Otherwise, you might end up looking down the barrel of that raygun when it goes off. I've seen this happen, and take my word for it: This is not how you want to die.

So the easiest and best thing for you to do is wrap the damned thing up in a blanket, stuff it in your saddlebags, and ride like Hell for the nearest Pinkerton office. Barring that, seal it up in a package and send it off to us from the nearest Smith & Robards office. Send it by the fastest method possible. Allan will be happy to pick up the tab.

Just make sure you don't give the Smith & Robards folks any idea what it is you're shipping with them. Old Jake and Cliff would love to get their ghost-rock-stained hands on some of this stuff, and it's up to you to not just hand it over to them. Valuable packages like these have been known to get "lost," if you know what I mean.

Of course, you probably don't have the good sense God gave a turnip. If you did, you sure wouldn't be risking your life for the amount of money Allan pays you. (That's a joke, Allan. You know we all love our work.)

Sometimes, despite your better judgment, you're going to get yourself into a situation in which you're willing to try anything. If you've got some crossbreed equipment with you, "anything" is definitely going to include putting that stuff to the test.

That's what this booklet is all about. Believe me, I'm not telling you that you should use crossbreed technology, but you may find you've got one of these strange devices and a real need to use it.

As per Allan's instructions, I've got to advise against it, but we trust you to use your own judgment.

That's the spirit this report's been written in. Better you be forewarned than get caught with your pants around your ankles when you've got a need for some highly-technological help.

GETTING CAUGHT

Speaking of getting caught, don't. In other words, don't let anyone see you using this kind of technology. To most folks, technology this advanced might as well be magic—and you know what they do with folks like hucksters...

Unless you want to be the guest of honor at a hemp necktie party, keep a low profile. If some cowpoke sees you wearing a crossbreed helmet or blasting away at a bandit with a raygun, he's not going to say, "Nice stuff. I didn't know Smith & Robards was making those yet." Nope, he'll go running for the hills.

Of course, once he gets to the hills, he's going to gather himself a posse and come hunting for you and any other folks he's seen "consorting with the Devil."

Just do your best to avoid this kind of trouble. First of all, these pieces are just plain too valuable for you to waste on some petty bandits or the like. Second, if you end up getting into a confrontation with some frightened townsfolk, some poor folks whose only crime is being suspicious of strange things are going to get hurt. Third, even if you do survive the encounter (which is likely), your use as an operative in that part of the world is now zero.

REPAIRING & RECHARGING

If you get into a fight and pull out some crossbreed devices to help even the odds, chances are good that you're going to damage or deplete the device. It's pretty much inevitable. The next question, of course, is how do you return that device to like-new condition.

If you're really asking that question, you're not thinking this through. Crossbreed equipment is rare and wondrous stuff, and we don't really understand at all how much of it actually works. If it gets damaged or even broken, there's no way were going to be able to fix it.

Similarly, if that raygun runs out of ammo (smart ops know this is what's happened when the damn thing stops firing for no apparent reason), it's not simply a matter of running down to the general store to pick up a new box of rays. Unless you happen to have an in with the crossbreeds themselves, you're just flat out of luck.

Either way, don't just put the device on your mantle or—worse yet—toss it out with the trash. Empty or even broken, it can still mean a lot to our scientists. Bring that thing in!

THE DEVICES

I want to emphasize that this is not an exhaustive catalog of all the different types of crossbreed devices. I wasn't with Kang's men long enough to learn everything there was to know about these strange creatures. In fact, I never even crossed the threshold into the interior of Devils Tower myself, and I've only seen a few stray crossbreeds myself.

Most of what I've described here are things I've seen in Kang's camp outside Devils Tower. The people there jealously guard what technology they've managed to capture on one of their infrequent forays into the heart of the monolith, but they are often proud to show these devices off. And everyone's happy to gossip about what others have stolen from the caverns.

To be sure, there's a lot of the area that's not been explored, and more crossbreed technology to be found.

ARMOR

Personal body armor isn't something that's really caught on yet. It's stiff, heavy, and a real pain in the posterior to wear. Plus, unless it's the middle of winter and you're wearing a lot of thick clothes over the armor, it's hard to walk around in it without everyone knowing you're spoiling for a fight.

The crossbreed stuff is truly amazing. It's light, fairly flexible, and most of it can be worn under a duster without attracting too much attention. In fact, it looks just like regular clothing, although with the crossbreeds' eye toward fashion, which doesn't exactly match up with ours.

Unfortunately, we humans can't exactly see eye to eye with a crossbreed unless the bugged's standing on a soapbox. They're at least a foot shorter than an average man. This means that their armor rarely fits most folks, particularly if they're tall or burly. Kids and shorter folks (under 5 feet) are in luck, though.

Crossbreed armor works differently than the kind Smith & Robards sells. It's made out of some strange kind of substance that's usually soft and flexible, but when struck by something like a bullet, it turns harder than ghost steel.

This isn't quite as useful as it might seem at first. Sure, it can keep a bullet from piercing your heart, but it doesn't do a whole lot to keep it from knocking you over. Near as I can figure it, bullets don't bounce off this stuff like they do off steel plates. Instead, the fabric absorbs the force of the bullet and spreads it out over a wide enough area to make it mostly harmless.

By "mostly," I mean the bullet can knock the wind out of you, but otherwise, you're going to be fine. Not a bad trade-off if you can find yourself some of this stuff that fits your frame.

One of Kang's men had some luck slicing up several suits of this stuff and stitching them back together into a patchwork duster. I saw the man laugh off a burst from a Gatling pistol—after he scraped himself back up off the ground, that is.

Crossbreed armor usually comes in tight-fitting vests and sometimes as shirts and pants. I've also seen some boots and gloves, although the crossbreeds seem to use them.

I've even seen some crossbreeds in Zabrox's escort with skullcaps of one kind or another. These have pieces that drape down over the ears and neck, protecting everything but the face, or even just the eyes.

The real problem with any of this armor is that the fabrics are embroidered with all sorts of pictograms or hieroglyphics. You're not going to be able to wear these uncovered without raising more than a few eyebrows. Kang's men have taken to dying the colored thread of the strange symbols to hide them.

Of course, the easy answer is to simply wear the armor under your clothes. The fabric doesn't breathe very well, so this is less than comfortable on warm days, but you can tolerate it.

It's a lot harder to get away with wearing a skullcap though. You might be able to keep it tucked up under your hat, but sooner or later you're going to have to take that hat off, and then you're going to have some explaining to do.



One last word on this stuff. It works great against blunt things like bullets and shells, but it doesn't do squat against sharp or pointed weapons. If you come up against someone (or something) wearing crossbreed armor, pull out your Bowie knife and rush him. And if he's got a gun, pray he misses.

ARMOR RULES

Crossbreed armor doesn't provide any protection against edged or pointed weapons. Arrows and knives pass right through the cloth like it was cotton.

Against bullets, clubs, and fists, crossbreed armor provides 3 points of Armor protection to all areas that it covers. It only provides protection against wounds, though, not Wind. To simulate this, after you've assessed any wounds inflicted by an attack (less the armor), roll the dice you would against an unarmored defendant to determine the Wind caused.



Ronan fires his Peacemaker at a crossbreed wearing an armored vest. The shot smacks into the crossbreed right where its heart should be—right into the armor. Normally, the attack would do 3d6 damage, but the armor reduces this to nothing. Still, Ronan's player rolls 3d6 and scores 2 wounds. This causes the crossbreed to lose 2d6 Wind.

Durability

35/7

Reliability

19

Skullcaps: These things don't cover the cowpoke's face. When a character wearing a skullcap gets hit in the noggin by a bullet, roll 1d6. On 1-3, the skullcap is hit. On 4-6, the poor sodbuster catches the slug in the face. This rule applies for standard shots from straight on. The Marshal should feel free to adjust the numbers to reflect the actual situation. A called shot to the face takes a -8 modifier.

ARMOR MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: The attack finds a weakness in the fabric. The armor only reduces the attack by 2 die types.

Major Malfunction: The attack smacks into a seam in the fabric, severing some of the stitching. The armor only reduces the attack by 2 die types until the seam is repaired (this can be done with needle and thread).

Catastrophe: Ouch! The attack's effect is reduced by only 1 die type, and the armor has a large hole blow in it. Half of the attacks that hit this region ignore the armor (roll randomly each time).

BIOCLAW

This is one of the crossbreeds' most common weapons. It consists of a lightweight metal cage that fits over the forearm (it's adjustable to just about any length when fitted). This brace clamps down snug against the skin, so that it feels almost like a part of the user.

The brace terminates in five vicious claws that follow along the wearer's fingers, almost like the savage nails of a bear's paw. These blades are razor-sharp and can slice through flesh (and not-so-coincidentally crossbreed armor) like a Bowie knife through a hard-boiled egg.

The blades can be retracted, and the whole device is low-profile enough to fit underneath a duster and a calf skin glove.

The real trick with these things is how they're implanted. That's right: implanted.

A cable runs from the back of the wearer's arm, snakes along his back and then burrows into the flesh just above her nearest shoulder blade. From what I can tell, the cable then attaches itself directly to the user's spine. I'm no doctor, but I'd guess this is how the user can extend and retract the blade with but a thought, something like an overgrown wildcat.

The worst part about these devices is that you don't need a doctor to get one attached. I was present when one of Kang's men stripped a bioclave from a dead crossbreed. He was able to peel the brace from the creature's skin, and the cable slipped from the thing's back like a rope pulled from a well.

Everything seemed perfectly normal—well, given the circumstances—until the man put the bioclave onto his own arm. The brace instantly bonded with his skin, its fingers flexing with his own. The smile the man wore quickly faded, though, when the cable suddenly sprang to life and chewed its way through his skin and into the flesh of his back.

The man writhed screaming on the ground for a full minute while the device went about its task. Nothing we could do seemed to help. Pulling the thing from him would've required peeling off a good part of the skin on his arm. We probably would have killed the guy as well, or at least paralyzed him.

Soon enough, though, it was over. A few minutes later, the man stopped all his screaming, and we inspected his wounds. He was still semiconscious, and the hole in his back had already stopped bleeding and was beginning to heal over. Within the week, the man was as good as new—better even, with his augmented arm.

Despite this, no one offered to try on the claw we'd stripped from the dead crossbreed's other arm.

BIOCRAW RULES

The bioclaw's blades can be extended or retracted at will. The bioclaw also augments the wearer's *Strength* in the affected arm, boosting it by +1 die type. This is in effect at all times, even when the blades are retracted.

When a bioclaw is implanted, it causes a light wound to the affected arm. Due to healing enzymes in the cable, this wound heals entirely in only one day.

If the affected arm is hit in combat, roll 1d6. On 1-3, the arm is hit. On 4-6, the bioclaw is hit, and the arm gets Armor 2 coverage.

Speed

1

Damage

STR+2d8

Durability

10/2

Reliability

19

BIOCRAW MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: One of the blades gets stuck. Roll 1d6. On 1-3, the blade is extended. On 4-6, it's retracted. This cannot be repaired, but an extended blade can be trimmed off with a file and a lot of time. Either way, the weapon's damage is reduced to STR+2d6.

Major Malfunction: One of the blades slices through the wearer's finger, doing standard damage. The blade is stuck extended out, and it's going to be difficult to help the finger impaled on it (Onerous (7) *medicine: surgery* roll). Of course, if the finger took a critical wound, you don't have to worry about this, since it's been amputated.

Catastrophe: The bioclaw is dead. The claws are stuck where they are (either extended or retracted). The device can be removed with an Onerous (7) *medicine: surgery* roll, sure to do a serious wound to the arm, even under the very best of circumstances.

FLIGHTBELT

Smith & Robards has nothing on this device. Sure, they've got their rocket packs, and they've even managed to make some improvements on them over the years. The Flying Buffaloes do a Hell of a job with them too. They're the terrors of the sky wherever they fly.

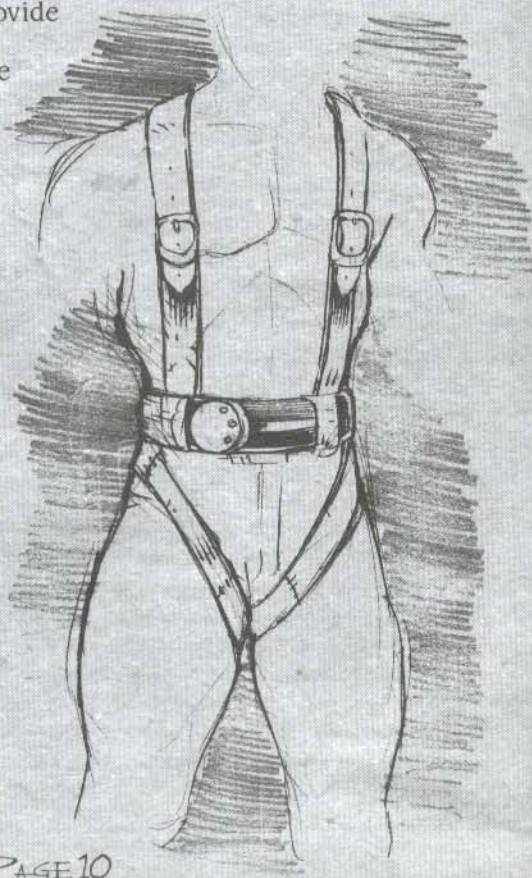
You might notice you don't see them around Devils Tower too often. Sure, some of that's got to do with violating the Sioux Nations' airspace. Sitting Bull's people can be touchy about that, especially with their nominal adherence to the Old Ways movement. But there's another reason.

The crossbreeds have developed a belt—a harness is more accurate—that actually allows them to defy gravity. This may not have a whole lot of applications in the heart of Devils Tower. After all, there can't be a whole lot of open spaces in that place, even as massive as it is. Even so, the flightbelt has its uses, mostly for coming and going from the tower at will.

With the devil bats all around the place, Kang is reluctant to provide his guards with air power. He seems to think it's much more prudent to leave his people on the ground where they can cover beneath the trees and pick off the devil bats at a safe distance.

His way has some merit. Who in his right mind would want to take on such creatures in their own element. They're born to the sky, and it always seemed pretty likely to me that they'd maintain their dominance there—at least until I saw my first flightbelt.

A person who knows what she's doing in a flightbelt (I'm only aware of one such person, and she works for Kang) is as quick and maneuverable as a bird. What's more, she's as quiet as the hummingbird she's nicknamed for.



I saw Hummingbird fly circles around a devil bat once, and she was only forced from the sky by a flock of the creatures all ganging up on her at once. She's an amazing sight, even on the ground. In the air, she's transcendent.

FLIGHTBELT RULES

Using a flightbelt requires the *flyin': flightbelt* Aptitude (which the flyer is likely going to have to learn from the School of Hard Knocks). Aptitude rolls are required at takeoff, landing, and on the flyer's first action in each round of combat. The difficulty is usually Foolproof (3), but the Marshal should feel free to modify this according to the situation.

On a failed roll, the flyer must make a Reliability roll. If the flyer goes bust, he automatically fails the roll.

The flyer can travel vertically as easily as horizontally. Unlike the rocket pack, it climbs at a 1 to 1 ratio. It can move sideways or backward with the same ease.

The listing under "Fuel" is how many powercells it requires to fly for a single hour. Power is consumed more rapidly when flying in combat, about four times so. This means that a full powercell is only good for 15 minutes of dogfighting.

The flightbelt is considered to have a *Strength* of 40 for purposes of determining the effect of a load on its Pace. This means it can carry up to 400 pounds (which is a heavy load for it). It can't carry more than 500 pounds at any rate, though.

The flyer's weight is included in the load, so flyers over 120 pounds count as a light load. The belt was built for the smaller crossbreeds after all.

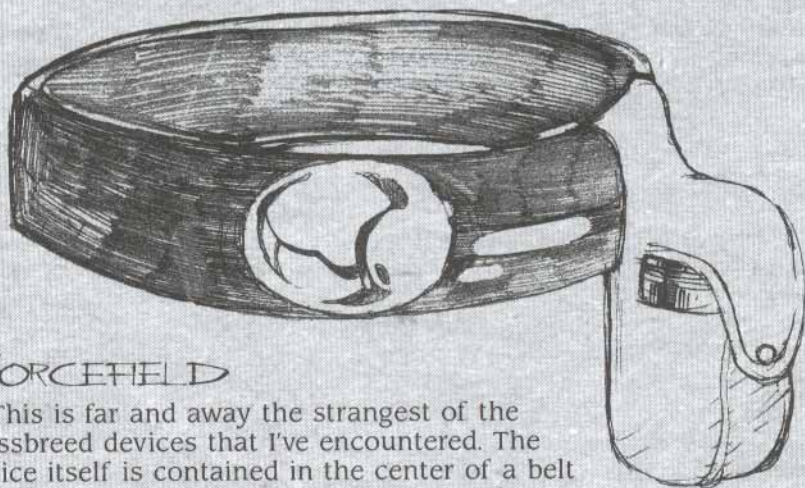
Dur	Pace	Climb	Turn	Travel	Fuel	Rel	Modifier
10/2	40	1 to 1	3	30 m.p.h.	1	19	—

FLIGHTBELT MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: The flightbelt's *Strength* falls to 20 for 1d6 rounds. The maximum weight the belt can hold is 250 pounds. Hope the flyer's traveling light.

Major Malfunction: The flightbelt decides that up is down and vice versa. Invert the flyer immediately. It takes an Hard (9) *flyin': flightbelt* roll for the flyer to right herself. This requires a full action. Until this happens, all other *flyin': flightbelt* rolls are Onerous (7).

Catastrophe: The device immediately drains the powercell of every bit of power. Here comes the ground. Hope the flyer wasn't too high up.



FORCEFIELD

This is far and away the strangest of the crossbreed devices that I've encountered. The device itself is contained in the center of a belt worn about the waist. The belt is made of some kind of slippery black material, and the buckle is a polished golden color. A powercell sits in a holster hanging from the left hip.

Pressing a stud on the side of the belt buckle activates the device. Suddenly it hums to life, projecting an egg-shaped forcefield around the belt's wearer. The field is visible in the air, crackling against the bits of dust and sand that touch its surface.

The same thing happens if something more substantial, like a bullet or a fist, smacks into the forcefield. The field crackles noisily, sputtering raw power. The trick here, though, is that nothing can get through the field. Nothing.

That means anyone inside the field (it's only large enough for one person) is entirely protected from any kind of damage.

This is at least as powerful as it sounds. I saw a man in a forcefield take a flying leap off the top of Devils Tower and actually walk away unharmed. Nothing gets through this thing—at least not while it's working properly.

The forcefield sucks power like a starving snake in a henhouse. It goes through powercells faster than any other kind of device, at least if you're in any kind of a fight. Still, as rare and precious as those powercells are, I'd be happy to trade them in place of my life. I've only got one of those.

Things that smack into the forcefield don't really bounce off. Bullets don't ricochet, and blades aren't turned. They just kind of stop. It's as if the field simply absorbs the attack's energy.

This doesn't seem to hurt the attacker at all. For instance, if you punch a crossbreed with a forcefield, the field makes a bunch of noise, but your hand just stops short of hitting its target. It's not like you're crashing into something solid.

Theoretically, a man in a forcefield could catch someone who leapt off of Devils Tower and both of them would walk away without a scratch. I wouldn't try it myself, though. If you miss the catch, you're going to be short a friend.

FORCEFIELD RULES

The forcefield works just as billed. It simply absorbs any kinetic energy directed at it and dissipates it harmlessly into a noise and light show. It's simply impossible to hurt someone inside a forcefield—up to a point.

When a person with an active forcefield is hit by an attack, roll damage normally, ignoring any bonuses for gizzard or noggin shots. Total up the number of wounds (the forcefield is considered Size 6) and apply them to the device.

Every wound a forcefield takes sucks 2 charges from the thing's powercell. When these are gone, the forcefield fails.

If the forcefield only has enough energy to stop part of the attack's wounds, the rest of the wounds still have no effect. This means that a forcefield can protect its user from any single attack, no matter how powerful it might be. After that, though, the user is fair game.

The forcefield is unaffected by Wind damage. It can soak up punches all day long.

If someone is somehow attached to the user when the forcefield is activated, the device pushes them away. The field is slippery and has no edges on it, so there's simply no way for the person to hang on. This is one Hell of a way to break out of a wrestling hold, for instance, but it's pretty darn effective.

Durability

15/3

Reliability

19

FORCEFIELD MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: The forcefield sputters and fails. It cannot be used for 2d4 rounds.

Major Malfunction: The forcefield looks just fine, but it's not doing a damn thing. The next attack against it during this fight goes right through it like it wasn't there.

Catastrophe: The forcefield starts to constrict the user and refuses to shut off. This does 1d6 points of damage to the user for every charge left in the device. Apply the wounds randomly about the body, and ignore damage bonuses for noggin or gizzard hits. (And no, the forcefield offers no protection against this damage—it's causing it!)

HANDTORCH

This simple device is a small hemisphere that fits nicely in the palm of your hand, kind of like an orange sliced cleanly in half. The exterior of it is some kind of black rubber. When squeezed gently, the device is activated, and a blazing beam of light stabs out from the flat side. (It's turned off the same way.)

By rotating the curved part of the device, the focus of the light can be adjusted from that of a diffuse and pleasant sunset to a pencil-thin beam that can temporarily blind anyone who catches it in the eye.

The light itself gives off no heat, although it can be seen from several miles away on a dark night. The light is tinted with a bluish color, much like the lights inside the catacombs under Devils Tower. This appears to simply be a portable version of those devices.

The handtorches often come with an adjustable band of some kind of elastic material. I've seen this used to bind the handtorch to a man's hand, but it could just as easily be made to attach the device around a person's head or waist for hands-free light.

HANDTORCH RULES

The handtorch's light extends 100 feet when diffuse and up to 10 miles when focused tightly. If flashed into a foe's eyes when focuses tight, the victim must make a Fair (5) *Cognition* roll to close or avert her eyes in time or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.

Speed
1

Damage
Blindness

Durability
10/2

Reliability
19

HANDTORCH MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: Whoops! Guess you shouldn't have been looking that way. The user shines the light into her own eyes. If it's diffuse. She's only blinded for 1 round. Otherwise, it's 1d4 rounds, just like normal.

Major Malfunction: The device gets a short in it. Every time it's turned on, roll 1d4. On 1-3, it works fine. On 4, it refuses to light. Usually this can be fixed by shaking it hard, but not always on a Fair (5) *Smarts* roll (this takes an entire action.) Every minute that it's on, check again to see if it stays on.

In combat, check on the user's first action of each round. (All that jostling around makes it more likely the handtorch will go out). This cannot be repaired.

Catastrophe: The light goes out. There is no way to recharge it or repair it.

JUMPLEGS

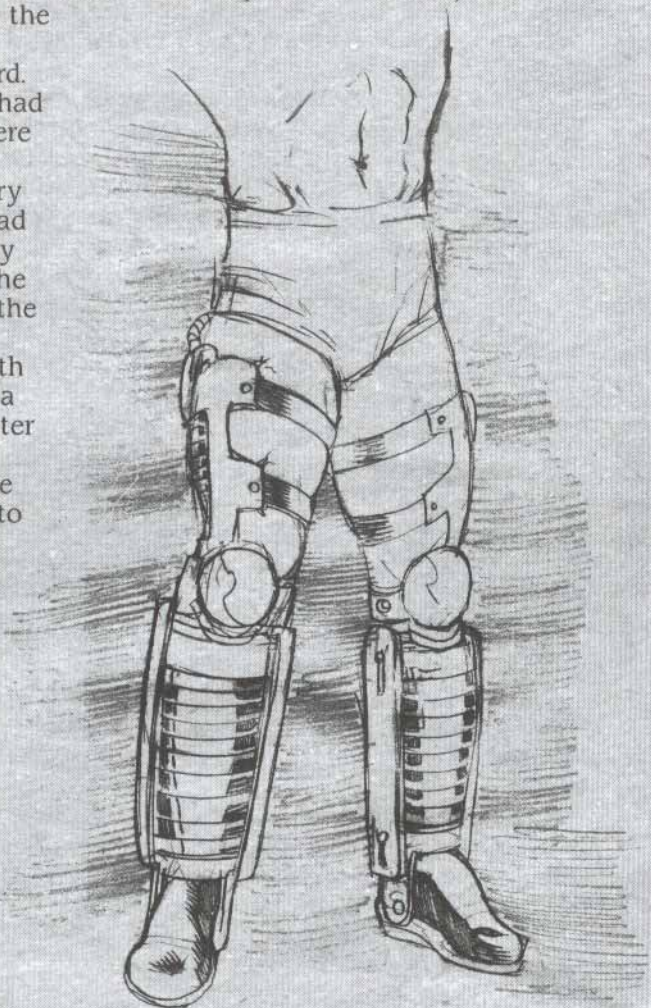
These devices work a lot like the bioclave, except they always come in pairs (one jumpleg doesn't do you a whole lot of good). They fit onto your lower legs and bind instantly to your skin. Then a cable snakes out from their backs and burrows itself into the small of your back. This is painful, but survivable. Again, I don't think the things can be removed without killing the current user.

Kang's men found a new recruit who was willing to try on the jumplegs. He hadn't been around when the man with the bioclave had it implanted, so he didn't know any better. Joe Liu, the leader of Kang's men, made it clear that anyone who informed the recruit of that incident would take his place as the subject of the experiment with the jumplegs.

No one said a word.

Once the subject had been cleaned up (there wasn't much blood from the cable's entry point, but the fool had knocked himself silly trying to get away), he was able to try out the jumplegs. The legs increased the strength of his own by quite a bit. He could run faster than any of us, and more amazing yet, he could leap clear up to the roof of a single-story building!

Again, though, there were no volunteers to take the legs from the recruit's corpse after he miscalculated a jump. The jumplegs were fine after we hauled his corpse out of the Belle Fourche, but as far as I know, they go unused to this day.



JUMPLEGS RULES

The jumplegs are always on, ready to go to work. They augment the wearer's *Strength* in his legs, boosting it by +1 die type. This can be used to help with kick attacks, although the jumplegs are not generally useful as weapons themselves.

When a pair of jumplegs are implanted, the bore into the implantee's spine much like the bioclave. They cause a light wound to the wearer's guts as the cables work their way into the spinal cord. Due to healing enzymes in the cable, this wound heals entirely in only one day.

The wearer's Pace increases by +6, and he can ignore any penalties for running. Also, from a standing position, he can leap up to his Pace in feet, straight up into the air. That means a cowpoke with a regular Pace of 8 now has a Pace of 14 and can leap 14 feet into the air.

Also, with a running start, the wearer can leap his modified Pace in yards. To continue the example above, the wearer could then leap 14 yards along the ground or over a gap.

If the wearer's legs are hit in combat, roll 1d6. On 1-3, the legs are hit. On 4-6, the jumplegs are hit, and the legs get the benefit 2 points of Armor.

Durability

15/3

Reliability

19

JUMPLEGS MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: The jumplegs go off without warning. If the wearer is standing still, he leaps into the air as high as he can. Good luck to him if he's under a ceiling. (He takes the modified STR of his legs in nonlethal damage.) If he's moving, he leaps forward as far as he can (taking nonlethal damage as above if he hits something). If anyone's watching, he may have some explaining to do.

Major Malfunction: One of the jumplegs' functions shorts out. Roll 1d6. On 1-2, the wearer's *Strength* is no longer augmented. On 3-4, the wearer doesn't get an assist when leaping upward. On 5-6, the wearer doesn't get an assist when jumping lengthwise. If you get a result you've already had, roll again.

Catastrophe: The jumplegs are dead weights on the wearer's legs. They can be removed with an Onerous (7) *medicine: surgery* roll, sure to do a serious wound to the leg, even under the best of circumstances. Until then, the wearer's Pace is reduced by -2. Of course, the leaping abilities are lost either way. The jumplegs cannot be repaired.

MEDIKIT

The world the crossbreeds have carved out for themselves beneath the summit of Devils Tower is a dangerous one. Treacherous caverns are often the last thing you need to worry about. The place is filled with all manner of vicious critters, ready to fight tooth and nail to protect the place they call home.

To protect themselves, the crossbreeds have their armor and their rayguns, but sometimes these things aren't enough. Even the toughest soldier takes a wound from time to time. That's where the medikit comes in.

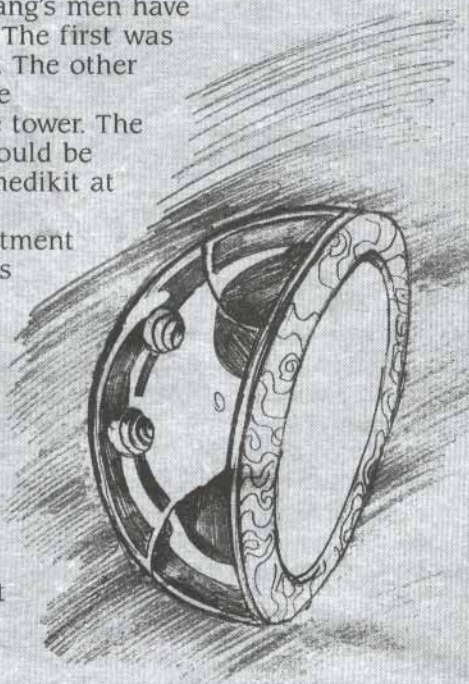
This amazing device can actually heal a victim's wounds like magic. All you have to do is slap it down over the wounded area and press the button. The device does the rest.

Apparently crossbreed and human bodies are close enough for the medikits to work, but that's not always the case. On some rare occasions, the device can actually do more harm than good, simply by trying to "repair" human organs that are in good working order. Still, this has only happened once that I know of. It seems that the benefits can far outweigh the risks, particularly if you're in dire need of decent medical care and miles from even the nearest country doctor.

These things work on powercells (I'll get to those in a minute—hold your horses!), but they consume them like a starving man wolfing down pork and beans. Still, given a choice, I'd always have one by my side. Kang's men have collected two of these devices. The first was sent off to the warlord himself. The other has been put to good use in the encampment at the base of the tower. The number of Kang's men there would be far fewer if they didn't have a medikit at their disposal.

Some of the men refuse treatment from the medikit. They think it's some kind of infernal device that heals a person's body by sucking on his soul. This is obviously just a superstition, but it seems to have lodged permanently in the minds of these few.

A medikit looks like a medicine ball cut in half. (The crossbreeds apparently have a thing for hemispheres.) It weighs nearly as much too, about 10 pounds.



To use it, all you have to do is lay the flat side down on the wounded area. It automatically senses the injury, then suddenly becomes soft and actually wraps itself tightly around the wound, enclosing it entirely. It works its magic for a few minutes, depending on the severity of the wound. When it's done, it sloughs off and then reforms into its standard shape.

MEDIKIT RULES

A medikit does just what it's supposed to: It heals the wounded automatically and fast. It can set bones, stop bleeding, and even stitch cuts, all on its own. It can even be used to reattach severed body parts if the missing parts can be found. In fact, if applied within moments of a maiming wound to the guts, it can even bring a patient back from the just-about-dead.

The medikit uses 6 charges from a powercell to heal 1 wound level. To heal an arm with a serious wound, for instance, requires 18 charges. Healing a maiming wound takes all 30 charges from a full powercell.

It takes the medikit five minutes to heal each level of wound. That serious wound, for example, would take 15 minutes to heal. Once the medikit sloughs off of the patient, though, she's entirely healed—at least in that one area.

To heal a maiming wound, the medikit must be applied within 20+1d10 minutes of the wound being dealt. If this happens, the wound can be healed just like any other. If the medikit is applied too late, it cannot reattach a severed part or heal maimed guts, but it otherwise works fine.

The medikit cannot heal a maimed noggin. It's just too delicate an area, even for such a machine.

Durability

10/2

Reliability

19

MEDIKIT MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: The medikit works just fine, but it refuses to relinquish its hold on the wounded area. Its stuck on for 4d20 minutes. During this time, the patient has a hard time doing anything with the affected area. She suffers at least a -4 penalty to any Trait or skill rolls involving that body part, at least until the medikit lets go.

Major Malfunction: The medikit fails to work, and it drains 3d6 charges from its powercell.

Catastrophe: The device tries to repair crossbreed physiology that doesn't exist in a human. It causes 1d4 wound levels to the area it was supposed to heal.

DARKGOGGLES

This strange device fits over the wearer's eyes, just like the kinds of goggles you see on velocipede drivers across the Weird West.

Instead of shading the user's eyes from the sun, though, these actually allow the user to see in pitch darkness. When they're active, they give off a soft, red glow, lending a demonic look to a user in a dark room, which the crossbreeds often use to their advantage.

These things are great, but they don't turn night into day. Instead, they give the user a red-tinted version of the real thing, but better than stumbling around in the dark.

If you can manage to somehow shade the reddish glow from these goggles, they make for a great means of sneaking up on someone on a dark night. Either way, most folks aren't going to spot a couple of small red disks floating in the distance, and if they do, the smart ones just run like Hell.



DARKGOGGLES RULES

The user can see in complete darkness as if through red-tinted glasses on a sunny day. Still, the vision is good enough that the user can entirely ignore any darkness-related penalties. He's effectively colorblind, but that's really the only penalty.

If someone attacks the user in the dark, she can use the glow of the goggles to guide her shots or blows. Shots to the head are only at -6 in total darkness.

The real drawback with these things is if someone turns the lights on, the user's in for a world of hurt. He gets a Fair (5) *Cognition* roll to prevent being blinded for 1d4 rounds. If he makes it, though, he's still got his eyes shut or covered. It takes a full action to remove or turn off the goggles in this situation.

Durability
10/2

Reliability
19

DARKGOGGLES MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: The darkgoggles stop working for 3d4 rounds and become entirely opaque. The wearer must make a Fair (5) *Cognition* roll or waste his next action in surprise at his instant blindness (at least until he takes the goggles off or finds light).

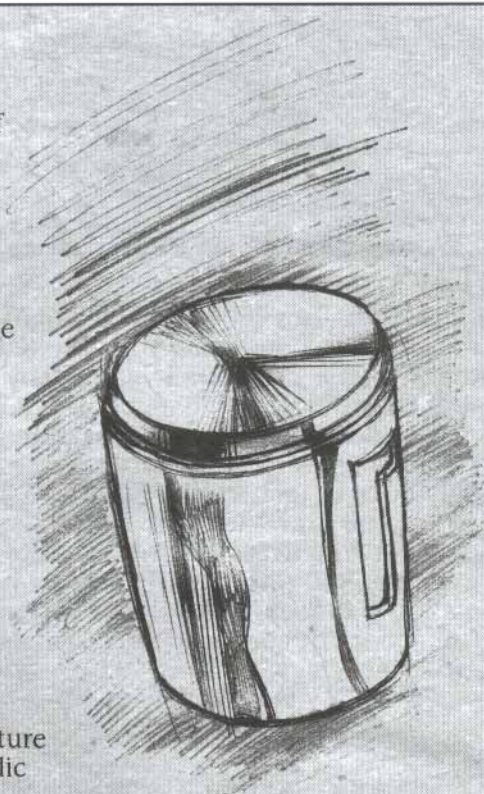
Major Malfunction: The darkgoggles don't stop working, but they're warped badly enough to give the user -4 to any Trait or Aptitude rolls made to see or affect things more than 20 yards off. It takes a Fair (5) *Cognition* roll to realize the goggles aren't working properly. This condition is only temporary, and it corrects itself in 2d4 rounds.

Catastrophe: The darkgoggles switch into overdrive, blasting out an incredible flash of light visible for miles around before burning out. This is not good for the person wearing the goggles. The user is blinded for 5d20 minutes and must make a Fair (5) *Vigor* roll or pick up a 5-point *bad eyes* Hindrance for the spots permanently swimming in front of his vision.

POWERCELL

Many of the crossbreeds' devices require some kind of power. Some, like the jumplegs and the bioclaws, apparently draw their power directly from the wearer's movement, if such a thing is really possible. Some, like the translator and the darkgoggles, apparently need no power to work. Others are self-contained, like the stunstick and the flightbelt. These devices require a powercell in order to operate. Hey, don't ask me, I just work here.

Powercells are relatively simple to operate, even if I don't understand how they work. I'm told they are something like stable, miniature versions of the massive, acidic



batteries some scientists use to power their electrical devices, only better—the powercells rarely explode.

Anyhow, they are usually visible on the outside of a device that requires them. They have a glowing display on their exposed sides that gives a rough determination of how much power they have remaining in them. Once this is exhausted, the display turns entirely black.

There's no way to recharge these powercells (at least no way that we know of), but they can be replaced. It's a simple thing to pop one powercell out and plug another in, just like slapping a fresh cylinder in a revolver.

Powercells seem to be interchangeable too. By this, I mean that there's only one kind of powercell, and it fits into a number of different kinds of devices. The most powerful and common of these (if you can call any crossbreed device common) is the dreaded raygun, which I'll get to in a moment.

POWERCELL RULES

Powercells don't do much on their own, but they power a number of different types of high-demand devices the crossbreeds use.

A powercell has up to 30 charges in it. Different uses can call on a different number of charges, as determined by the powered device. In any case, Weird Western science has no way to recharge the powercells—yet.

Powercells don't normally use their own Reliability number. Instead, whenever a device they're powering fails a Reliability roll, you need to roll to determine if it's the device or the powercell that fails. Either way, it usually means trouble. The reliability number listed below is what should be used if someone actually attacks the powercell itself.

Just roll 1d6. On 1-4, the powered device fails. On 5-6, the powercell fails.

Durability
10/2

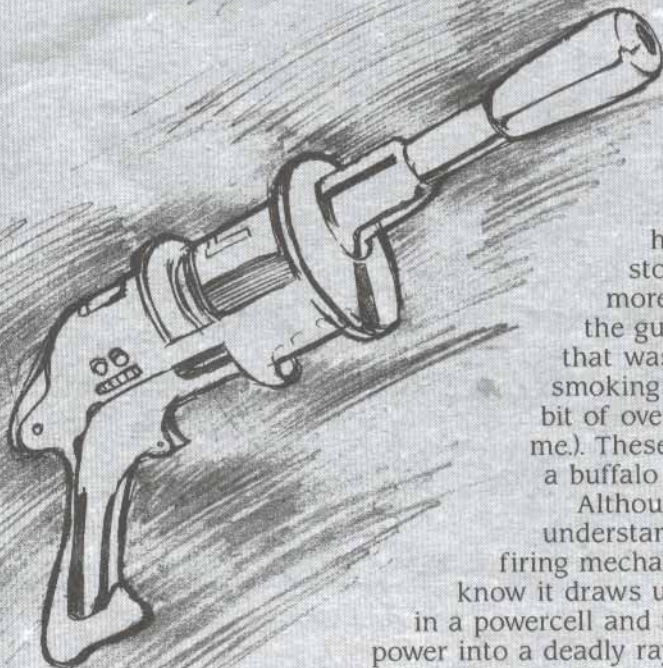
Reliability
16

POWERCELL MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: The powercell loses 1d6 charges.

Major Malfunction: Every time the powercell is used, the device consumes twice the normal number of charges.

Catastrophe: The powercell explodes like a tiny pack of dynamite. For every charge still left in the powercell, it does 1d6 points of damage.



RAYGUN

The first time I saw one of these things fired, my heart almost stopped. I was a lot more fortunate than the gun's victim (all that was left was a smoking pair of boots... a bit of overkill, if you ask me.). These things put even a buffalo rifle to shame.

Although I don't understand the thing's firing mechanism at all, I know it draws upon the energy in a powercell and focuses that power into a deadly ray.

The ray is some kind of deathbeam of concentrated heat, and shoots from the barrel in crackling display of greenish light. The gun can actually be used to melt metal or even drill through rock. So far, I've only seen the handheld variety, but that doesn't mean there couldn't be larger, industrial versions. Such devices could explain how the tunnels and chambers were carved into the heart of Devils Tower in the first place. Or perhaps some other technology was used.

Using a raygun is simple. You just point and shoot. The closer you are to the target, the more damage you're going to do. The beams tend to lose their gusto as they get further out.

The funny thing about these guns is, unlike the regular kind, they're kind of quiet. They make a loud humming noise, and the air crackles as the ray passes through it, but this is nothing like the thunder you get from a .45. There's no kick to the things either, making them even easier to aim and fire.

Stranger yet, the device can be set to stun instead of kill. Somehow, the energy can be made more diffuse, able to knock out a victim without leaving a mark on his body. The beam it shoots when it is "set to stun" is fatter and more blue in color. The rail worker who Kang's men "volunteered" to test this out just fell over and twitched for a couple of minutes. It was like someone had shorted out his brain. They had him up and working again fifteen minutes later. This is really different from the melted flesh and blackened burn marks left by the more deadly variety of blasts.

RAYGUN RULES

Rayguns are about the size of a sawed-off shotgun. All of these guns have a built-in folding stock, with a glowing digital readout just below the powercell that shows the extent of the charge left in the battery. Of course, a hero isn't likely to be able to read this, but with some practice and a bit of attention, she might be able to know which hieroglyphics stand for which numbers.

Rayguns are fueled by the standard crossbreed powercells, they snap into the top of the weapon. The gun requires no other ammunition—but can use up the power cells pretty quickly—when fired they consume anywhere from 1-6 charges, depending on whatever the gun is set at. (Roll this randomly if you're not sure.)

Each charge inflicts 1d10 points of damage. Once the raygun is out of charges, it takes one full action to remove the old powercell and slap in a new one.

A raygun can also be set for either lethal or nonlethal damage with a simple flick of a switch (as long as you've figured out which one).

It takes one full action to change the stunstick's settings. With a Fair (5) *quick draw: raygun* roll, doing this takes no action at all.

Shots	Speed	ROF	Range	Damage	Dur	Rel
30	1	1	20	1d10/charge	10/2	16

RAYGUN MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: The raygun doesn't shoot, but a charge builds up. The next time the gun is fired, add the number of charges that was to be fired this shot to the blast. If, for some twist of fate this Malfunction occurs on the next shot, the gun explodes causing 3d10 damage to anyone within 10 feet of the blast.

Major Malfunction: The raygun's controls are damaged. No matter what it's set at, it fires a random number of charges (1d6) with each shot. Roll another 1d6. On 1-3, the damage is lethal. On 4-6, it's nonlethal.

Catastrophe: The raygun's barrel falls off, letting loose its lethal energy. Everyone in the firer's front (180 degree) arc is subject to a random attack. The range is reduced to 10 and each shot does 1d6 charges worth of lethal damage until the raygun runs out of charges. This all happens in a single action. Hope the firer's friends weren't standing in front of her.

STUNSTICK

This weapon looks something like a staff, but with thick, rounded pads on each end. Despite how it might look, this is hardly a the kind of stick you'd find in the hands of some farmer used to swinging ax handles.

A dead (unpowered) stunstick actually works a whole lot like the padded bo sticks I used to play with as a child in the streets of Shan Fan. One with a powercell slapped into either end (or both ends), however, packs one Hell of a kick.

When you clobber someone with the business end of a stunstick, the impact sets off a preset number of charges from the powercell. These course through the stick and into the sorry-looking customer on the wrong end of it, knocking him silly.

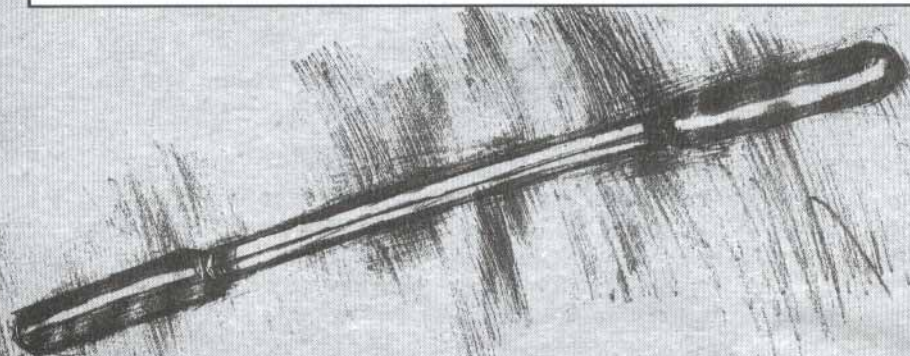
Better yet, the stick has two kinds of damage settings. Much like the raygun, the stunstick can be set to kill instead of stunning someone. Be careful if you run up against anyone with a crackling bo stick. One good smack from one of these things can make you the latest guest of your local undertaker.

STUNSTICK RULES

Using a stunstick properly requires the *fightin': stunstick* aptitude, although similar skills can be used at the standard -2 penalty.

The stunstick can deliver up to 6 charges with each hit. The stunstick can be set to deliver either lethal or nonlethal damage. Either way, the part of the damage due to the fighter's *Strength* is nonlethal (the stick only counts as a light club normally). Only the charges can be made lethal.

It takes one full action to change the stunstick's settings. Once the stunstick is out of charges, it takes one full action to remove an old powercell and slap in a new one. Each end of the stick can take a powercell, so the user with a fully charged stunstick has access to up to 60 charges.



Defensive Bonus

+2

Speed

1

Damage

STR+1d8/charge

Durability

10/2

Reliability

16

STUNSTICK MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: The stunstick stutters. No matter what its set at, the next hit is nonlethal damage.

Major Malfunction: The stunstick's controls are damaged. No matter what it's set at, it lets loose a random number of charges (1d6) with every hit. Roll another 1d6. On 1-3, the damage is lethal. On 4-6, it's nonlethal.

Catastrophe: One of the stunstick's business ends falls off. Anyone who touches the piece gets all the remaining charges smacked into him at once. Whether this is lethal or not depends on what the stunstick was last set for. The other side of the stick can still be used, but it's unbalanced now, so all attacks are at -2.

TRACKER

I've seen a trapper track a wounded bear for days before finally bringing the mad beast down. I've heard tell of Indians able to follow a man across rivers or even through the worst downpours.

They're nothing. Not even the best bloodhound can top this little device.

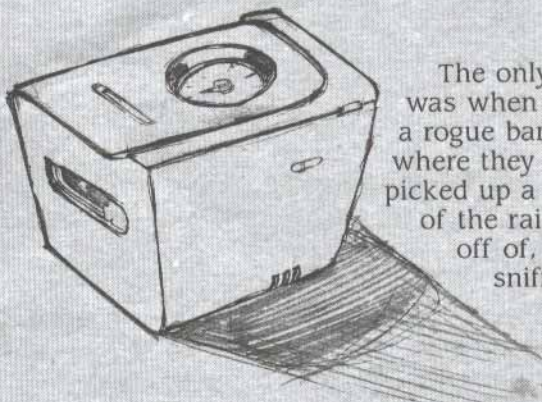
The tracker is a box less than half a foot on each side. On the top, it's got a funny kind of compass, and on the front, it's got what Kang's men call a "sniffer."

To track someone, all you've got to do is open the sniffer's little door, pass an article of your quarry's clothing over it—or even something he's handled—and then close the sniffer. Once that's done, the needle spins around madly for a minute before settling straight and true in a single direction.

The needle points along the quarry's trail. It doesn't tell you where the quarry is now or how far away he is. It simply follows the quarry's path no matter where it goes.

This thing can follow a fresh trail better than the most faithful hound. It can even find and track people several days gone, although the farther along they are, the more trouble the tracker has.

Stuck as I've been with Kang's men, I haven't had a chance to see the tracker in action many times, but I can just imagine how such a thing could help us Pinkertons in our work.



The only time I saw it in the field was when Kang's camp was raided by a rogue band of miners wandering where they shouldn't have been. Joe Liu picked up a chewed-up chicken wing one of the raiders had gnawed the meat off of, and he waved it front of the sniffer.

The miners had good horses, and they got to Deadwood a long time before we did, but the tracker

wasn't fazed. Even through the muddy streets of the only white city in the Sioux Nations, it unerringly found its quarry. Liu shot the man dead in the No. 1 Saloon—right after he beat the location of the bandit's friends out of him.

TRACKER RULES

The tracker is an amazing device that works pretty much as outlined above. Just wave some clothing of the intended quarry (or something handled by him), and the device follows his path.

For game purposes, the tracker has 6d12 *trackin'*, and it's not put off by things like water or weather. For every day old the trail is, though, the tracker takes a -2 to its skill roll.

Durability

10/2

Reliability

18

TRACKER MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: The tracker loses the quarry's trail and picks up someone (or something) else's. It's up to the Marshal to figure out what, although bears are commonly mistaken for smelly trappers in bearskin coats, and so on. The tracker can be used normally once the user figures out that something's wrong.

Major Malfunction: The tracker spins slowly in a constantly random direction, leading its user on a wild goose chase. The user might not figure this out unless he stops dead and realizes that the needle is still moving. The tracker can be used normally once the user figures out that something's wrong.

Catastrophe: The tracker explodes, doing 3d6 points of damage. The user (and anyone else within three feet of her) is also covered in a tremendous stink worse than that of a dead skunk. This can only be removed by bathing in tomato juice (a common folk remedy for such things). Even after the user is cleaned up, dogs and other sensitive creatures tend to avoid her company for the next 2d6 days.

TRANSLATOR

A few of the crossbreeds have actually learned a couple words of English—at least according to Kang's guards—but these are few and far between. Apparently they only come out of Devils Tower to talk to really important folks like Kang himself. Even then, they set the time and place of the meeting, usually in hard-to-reach places like the top of the monolith itself.

The rest of us have to get by the best we can if we run into one of the crossbreeds. This doesn't happen too often, mind you, and when it does, it's usually a violent encounter.

The point is that Kang's people have recovered a strange device that allows people who speak different languages to talk with each other. This looks like a strange talisman that you wear on a thong around your neck, but it's a lot more powerful than any old necklace.

The thing automatically activates whenever you're in the presence of someone speaking a language other than your own. (Apparently the device is smart enough to pick up on what language you speak by eavesdropping on you in normal conversation.)

Whenever the translator hears something in another language, it digests it, chews it around, then spits it back out in your mother tongue. Sometimes it takes a while to actually handle the translation, but only about as long as a human translator would. The effect is a bit disconcerting at first, but you quickly pick up how to tune out the people talking at you and just listen to the translator's voice instead.

Speaking of which, the device's voice is something all its own. It speaks in a lifeless monotone flatter than a board, and if you didn't know better, you might suspect it was recorded by someone on the other side of the grave.

This thing isn't really a whole lot of good in a fight where lead's flying faster than words, but if you've gotten to that point, you're already past parleying anyhow.

Kang's men use the device to converse with the Sioux and the local miners. The translations from Mandarin to English (I don't speak Sioux, so I can't comment on the device's abilities there) is a bit sloppy but it's good enough to get through most conversations, especially with a bit of handwaving on the part of the talkers.

The device can also translate your words into a language that someone listening to you can understand. It can only work with two languages at a time though—yours and the person you're talking to—so don't try to use it to speak to a well-mixed crowd. All it has to do is hear your intended audience speak, and it automatically shifts to that language.

Overall, it's a pretty darn useful bit of steel.



TRANSLATOR RULES

The translator works roughly as outlined above. It can translate back and forth with just about any language the heroes are likely to encounter, at the Marshal's discretion.

Assume that the translator's skill with any language is 2d6. This is enough to get by in many situations, but it's not capable of handling tricky wording or more advanced concepts. It still does its best, though, which can make for some occasionally hilarious mistranslations.

The translator only works with spoken words. It's no good with anything written down.

Durability

10/2

Reliability

17

TRANSLATOR MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: The translator messes up a translation, causing some confusion. All social skill rolls relying on the translator are at -2 for the rest of the encounter. (The Marshal decides when the encounter ends.) This goes for both sides of the conversation.

Major Malfunction: The translator screws up the translation in a particularly colorful way. All social skill rolls relying on the translator are at -6 for the rest of the encounter. (The Marshal decides when the encounter ends.) This goes for both sides of the conversation.

Catastrophe: The translator gets stuck on a strange turn of phrase and freezes up. It no longer works at all, but it still makes a snappy talisman.

WEIRD GRIZZLY IMPLANT

One of the "weird grizzlies" that the crossbreeds use to patrol around Devil's Tower decided to try to make a meal of me when I was snooping around the base of the tower near the Belle Fourche one evening (I didn't have my Iron Dragon amulet on me for fear of it reflecting in the moonlight, pretty stupid on my part.). Well, I wound up emptying my Gatling shotgun into the thing before it finally went down. I didn't make it out of the encounter totally unscathed, and I now have a new set of scars from when Joe Liu had me flogged for breaking curfew (it's a good thing the man likes me, so I got off easy).

I managed to dig the mind-control device out of the thing's skull intact and get out of there before any more showed up. That fact, in itself, probably saved my life. Kang had never managed to retrieve one of the devices in one piece.

His top doctors—who still use leeches, by the way—began experimenting with the gizmo, killing the first dozen or so dogs they had attempted to implant, finally they succeeded in keeping one alive.

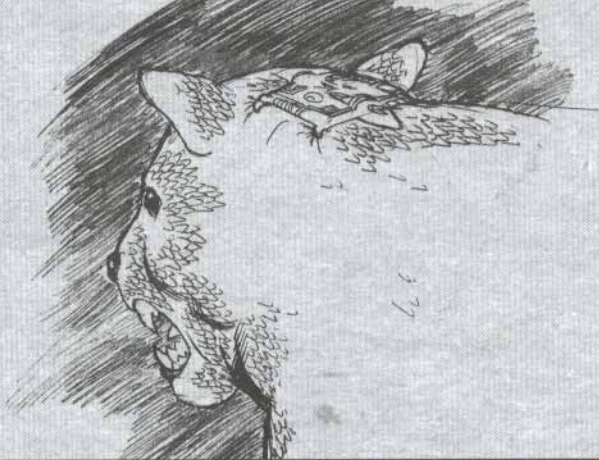
The dog ran away the first chance it had, no matter what kind of commands they yelled at it. It took three Tong gangs using trackers to find the poor creature.

After weeks of experimentation, they figured out why it wouldn't obey any of their commands—it couldn't understand them. So apparently you need one of the translators (or you have to be a crossbreed) to make the mind-control device work.

The dog began following simple instructions with no problems—sit here until I tell you, fetch my bottle of saki, roll over—that's my sleeping mat—stupid dog, kill that lazy railworker, etc.—you get the point. The creature obeyed without hesitation, and did not stop until his job was completed. Apparently you can program the device with multiple commands as well—patrol this area, kill anything that isn't human, kill any humans that don't wear the Iron Dragon symbol.

The stupid animal attacked a steam wagon and got run over. The last I heard, they were planning on implanting one of the rail workers with the device. It's a good thing I did some tinkering with it before I left—they won't be using that thing on anything anymore. Hopefully they won't be getting their hands on any more of them any time soon.

If you run into one of these "weird grizzlies", run for the hills. The things are programmed to kill anyone they don't recognize and they're mean and fast enough to do it. If you have no choice but to fight, aim for the device—without that, they're not obligated to kill you and you might be able to scare it off. If you manage to kill the thing with the mind-control device intact, destroy it. These things mustn't get into the wrong hands.



WEIRD GRIZZLY IMPLANT RULES

To successfully implant the device into someone or something's brain, three successful Incredible (II) *medicine: surgery* rolls are required or the implantee dies. The device allows someone who has *language: Crossbreed* at level 2 (or a translator) to command the implantee to perform any basic actions it is able to perform. For example, you could command a grizzly to guard the entrance to a mine shaft, but commanding it to paint you a portrait of Kang might get you a promotion to human bomb if you show him the results.

Anyone who speaks crossbreed can command the implantee, but the higher ranking members in crossbreed society can override any previous commands (each device contains a database of their voice patterns). The device will store multiple commands, and execute them in chronological order. There's a reset button on the device which will clear all previous commands.

Durability

10/2

Reliability

18

WEIRD GRIZZLY IMPLANT MALFUNCTIONS

Minor Malfunction: The implantee misunderstands a command and sets off to complete the incorrect task (which is up to the Marshal to come up with).

Major Malfunction: The gizmo has come loose, and no longer functions until reimplanted (this requires an Incredible (II) *medicine: surgery* roll). The implantee is going to be pretty hacked off in the meantime, and might just decide to take it out on whoever's been ordering him around the most.

Catastrophe: The device overloads in a shower of sparks, cooking the brain of the implantee and destroying itself in the process.

ZABROX'S STAFF OF POWER

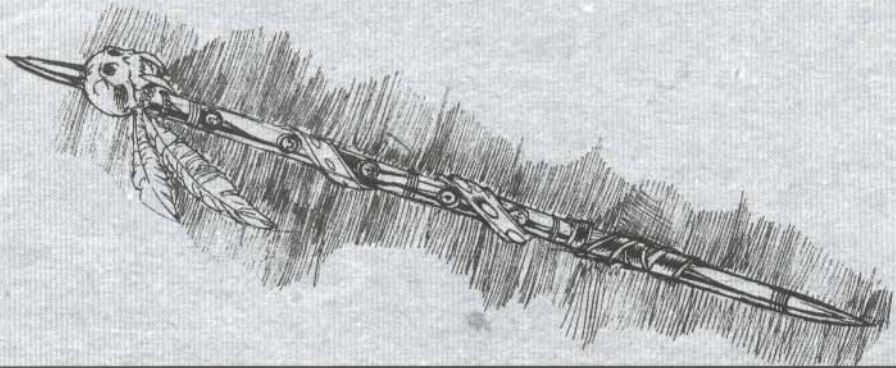
Mind you, all of this information is second hand, but I thought that it was definitely worth mentioning. According to Kang's elite, the prime leader of the crossbreeds (who calls himself Zabrox), carries an ornate staff crusted with gems and strange runes that grants him strange and incredible powers. The other crossbreeds treat Zabrox with fear and reverence and run cowering when he begins ranting and waving his staff around (which, it is said, he does often). Joe Liu told me that for a crossbreed (other than the prime leader) to touch the staff means certain death—now I don't know if that meant that the staff would kill them itself, or the other crossbreeds would put the culprit to death—just in case, I wouldn't go rushing to grab the thing if Zabrox happens to leave it laying around.

So here are the powers that the thing is rumored to possess:

Instant Transportation- Zabrox and his entourage, in their meetings with Kang and his elite guard, always just popped into existence in a flash of blue light. All but the one time when they actually walked out to Kang's camp (which was a half a mile away from the tower), this is the only time that Zabrox did not have his staff with him at one of these meetings as well. I'm assuming it's the staff that allows him to instantly transport like that.

Lightning- This story's been told over and over again through the camp, how the great Kang showed up the mighty Zabrox on his home turf. Everyone was used to Zabrox ranting and waving his staff around at the meeting between he and Kang, but apparently at one such meeting he got a little overly spunky. In a debate over fishing rights in the Belle Fourche, Zabrox decided to emphasize his point by frying one of Kang's guards with a lightning bolt from the top of the staff (all that was left was the man's smoking, blackened skeleton). Kang coolly gestured at two of Zabrox's elite warriors, and a huge, glowing, green dragon came out of the earth, bit the two in half (forcefield and all), and sank back into the earth. The point of the story is—Zabrox can shoot lightning out of his staff.

Healing- Apparently the staff works like a big ol' medikit as well. Joe Liu was telling me how he was on watch one night when a crossbreed fell from the sky and crunched into the ground about 10 yards outside of his camp. The thing wasn't dressed like the warriors we always saw, so I'm assuming that it was a worker that had gotten grabbed by a devil bat who figured it needed a little "tenderizing". Anyway, suddenly Zabrox and a group of soldiers flashed into existence and he touched the staff to the tangle of bones that used to be a crossbreed. The whole body glowed, and five minutes later all of them were walking through the front doors into the tower.



ZABROX'S STAFF OF POWER RULES

The symbol of ultimate power in the crossbreed community is the ancient staff that has passed down through the prime leaders of Zabrox's clan since the time when they shared rulership of the Earth with their alien ancestors. The sacred staff is not only a symbol of authority, it grants its wielder incredible powers to enforce his leadership.

All that is needed to activate the various powers is to depress the correct rune (except for activating the beacon). This merely requires trial and error. The staff never malfunctions, but only works within a half a mile of the gate to the Hunting Grounds. The staff will not kill anyone but Zabrox who picks it up—he just likes people to think so. Here's the rundown on the abilities.

Healing: The staff works exactly like a medikit, except it does not use any charges and does not Malfunction.

Instant Transportation: The staff can transport the wielder and up to nine others anywhere within the functioning range of the staff (1/2 mile from the portal). The wielder merely has to depress the rune and think of the place she wishes to travel to. This works flawlessly with crossbreeds, but the Marshal might want to have some fun as the staff tries to interpret human thought patterns.

Lightning: The staff can launch bolts of blue energy at the wielder's opponents (and friends).

Shots	Speed	ROF	Damage	Range
Unlimited	1	1	2d20	15

Phone Home: The main function of the staff—are you ready for this?—Is to call back the alien ancestors. Zabrox doesn't even know if it would work anymore, but he sure as hell isn't about to try, seeing as how bad the crossbreeds have messed up the whole world-domination thing. Anyone screwing around with the thing might just figure out how to call the ancestors back on an Incredible (11) *tinkerin'* roll. The rest is up to the Marshal.



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Devils Tower:

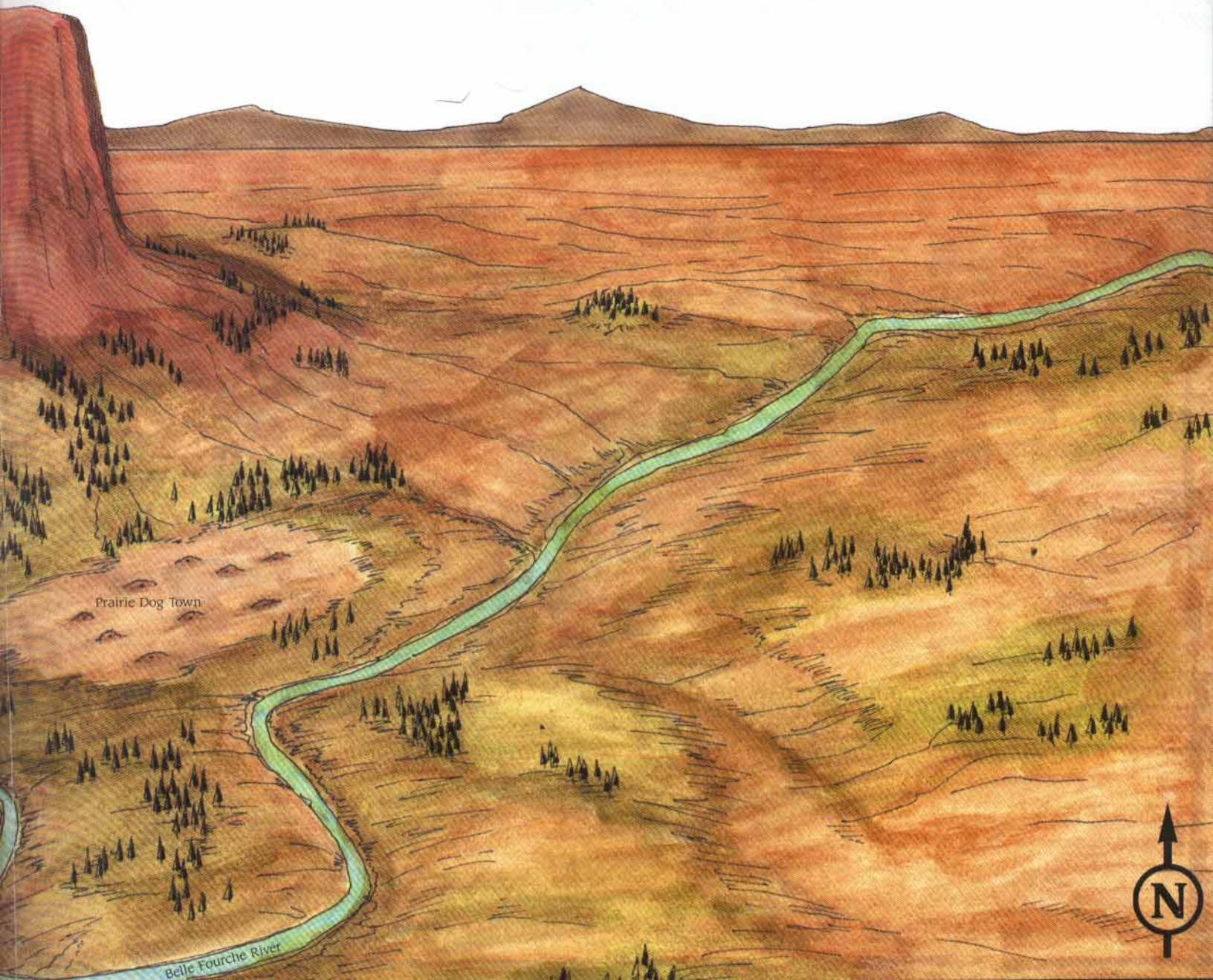
1 inch



Fortress o' Fear

500 feet

its Tower

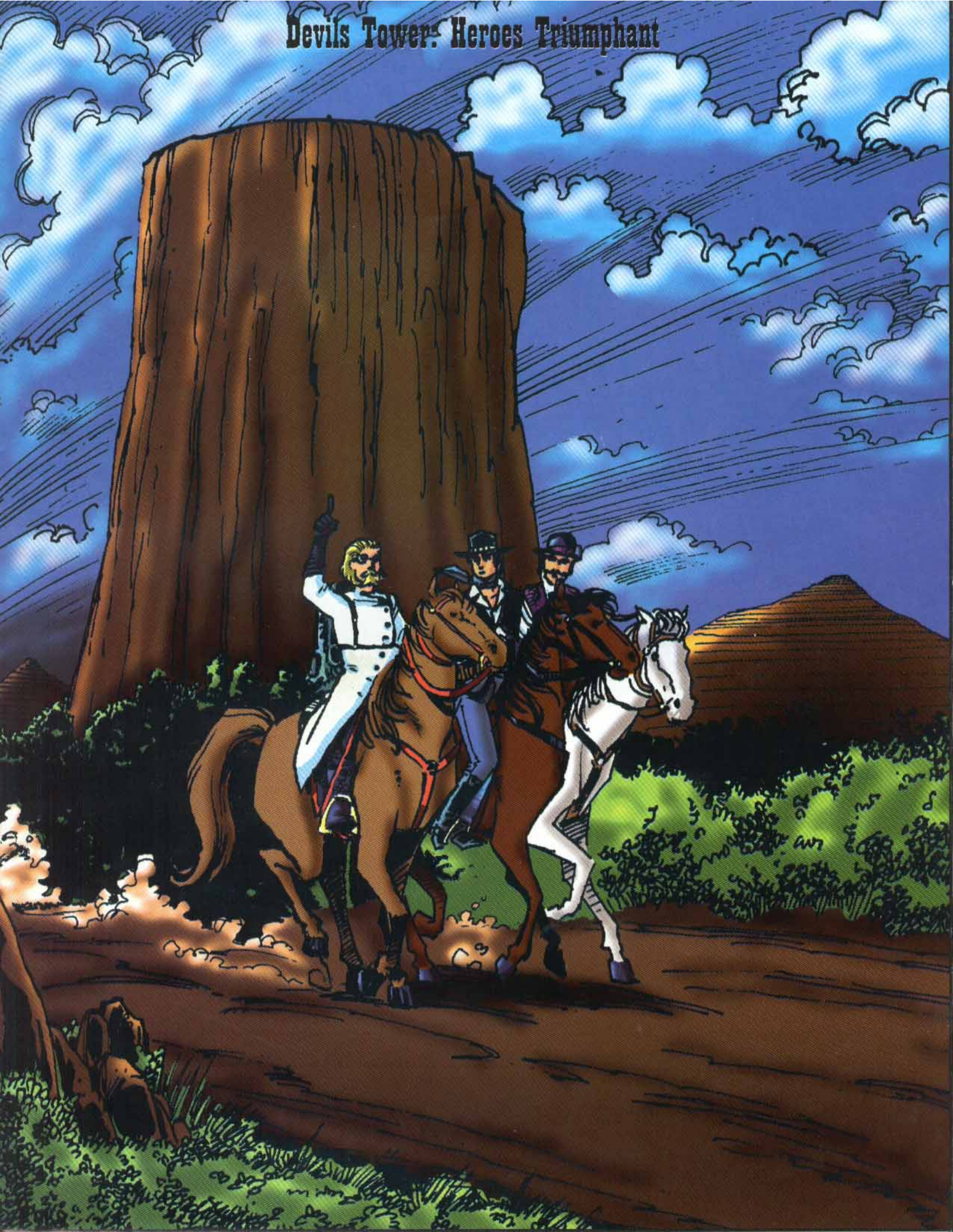


Prairie Dog Town

Belle Fourche River

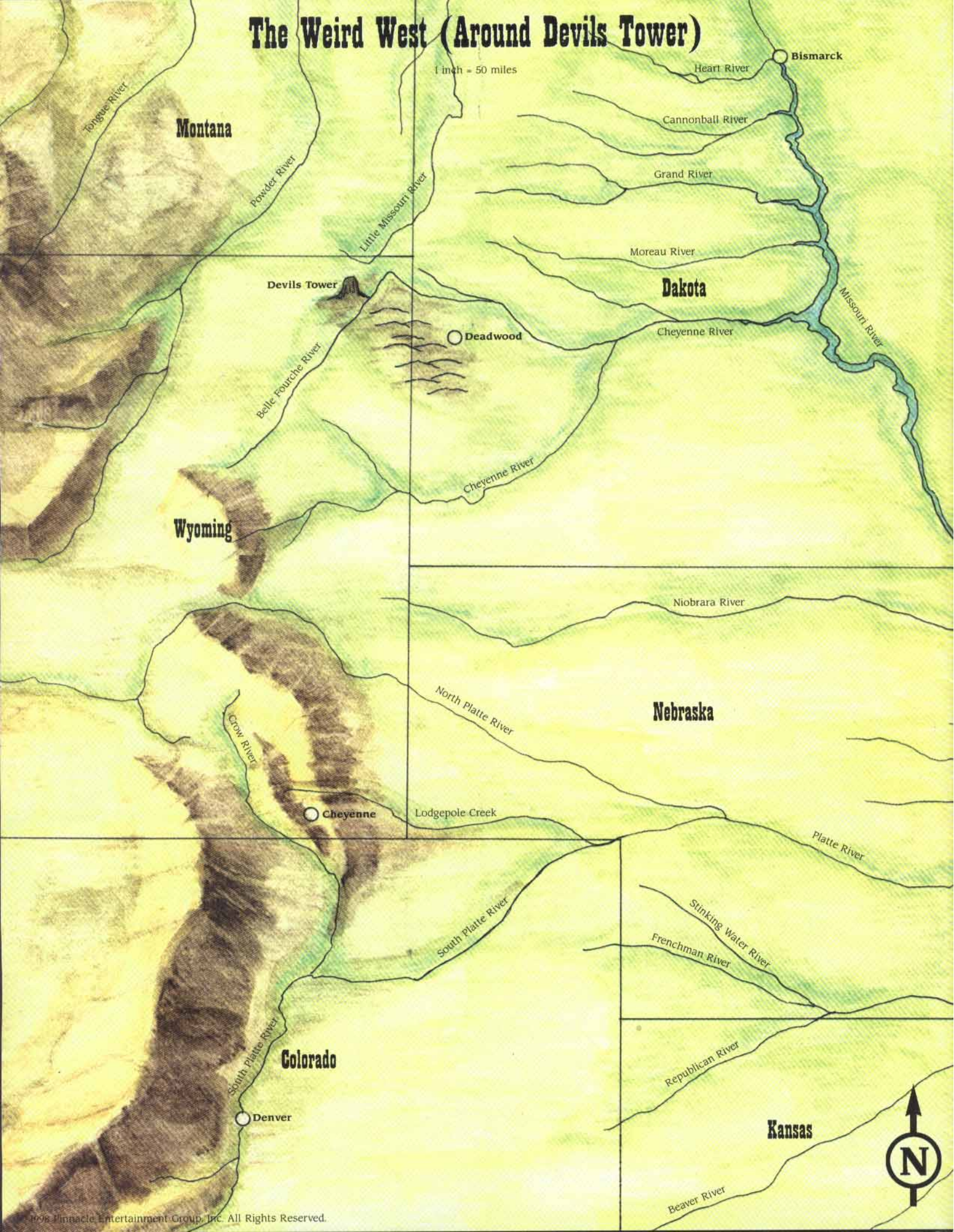


Devils Tower: Heroes Triumphant



The Weird West (Around Devils Tower)

1 inch = 50 miles



Bismarck

Heart River

Cannonball River

Grand River

Moreau River

Dakota

Cheyenne River

Missouri River

Deadwood

Devils Tower

Belle Fourche River

Cheyenne River

Wyoming

Niobrara River

Nebraska

North Platte River

Cheyenne

Lodgepole Creek

Platte River

Crow River

South Platte River

Frenchman River

Stinking Water River

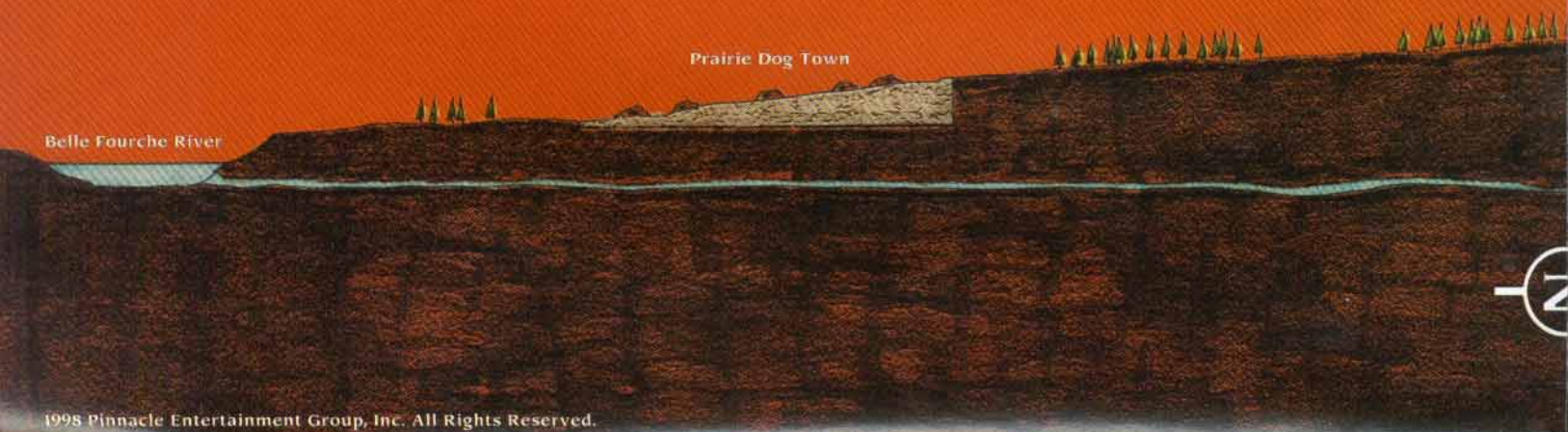
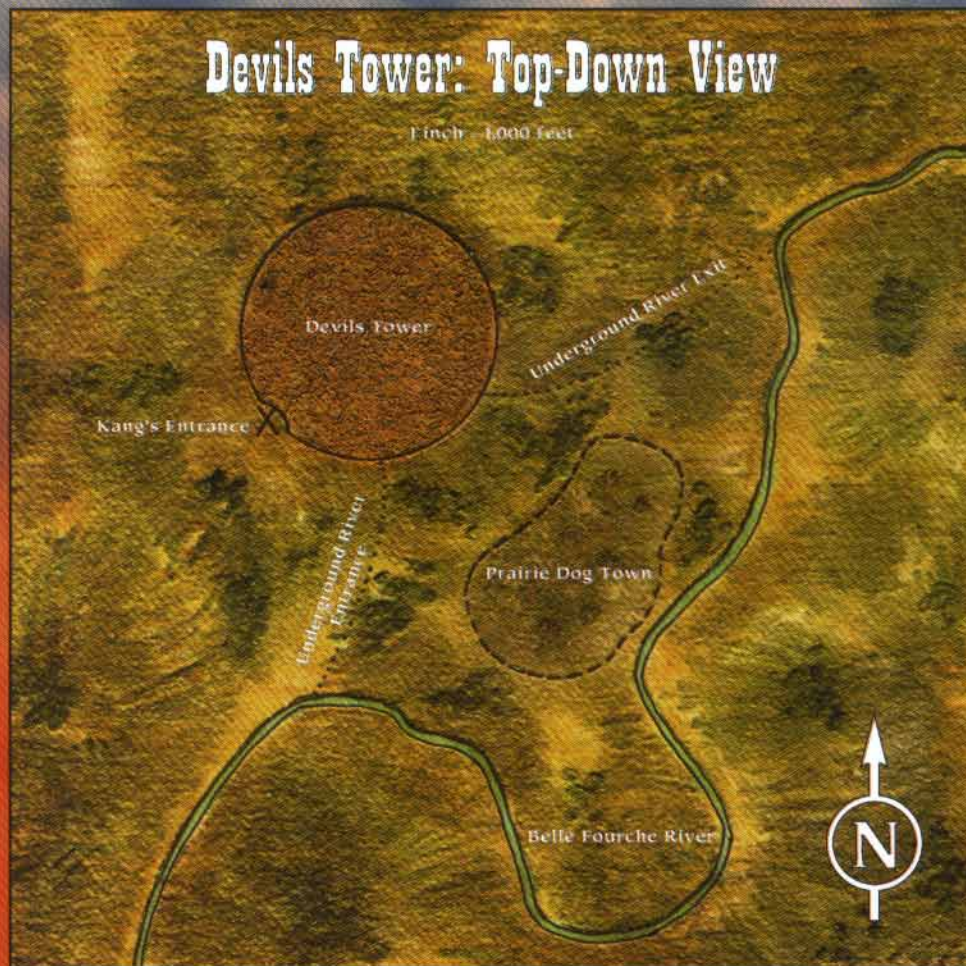
Republican River

Colorado

Denver

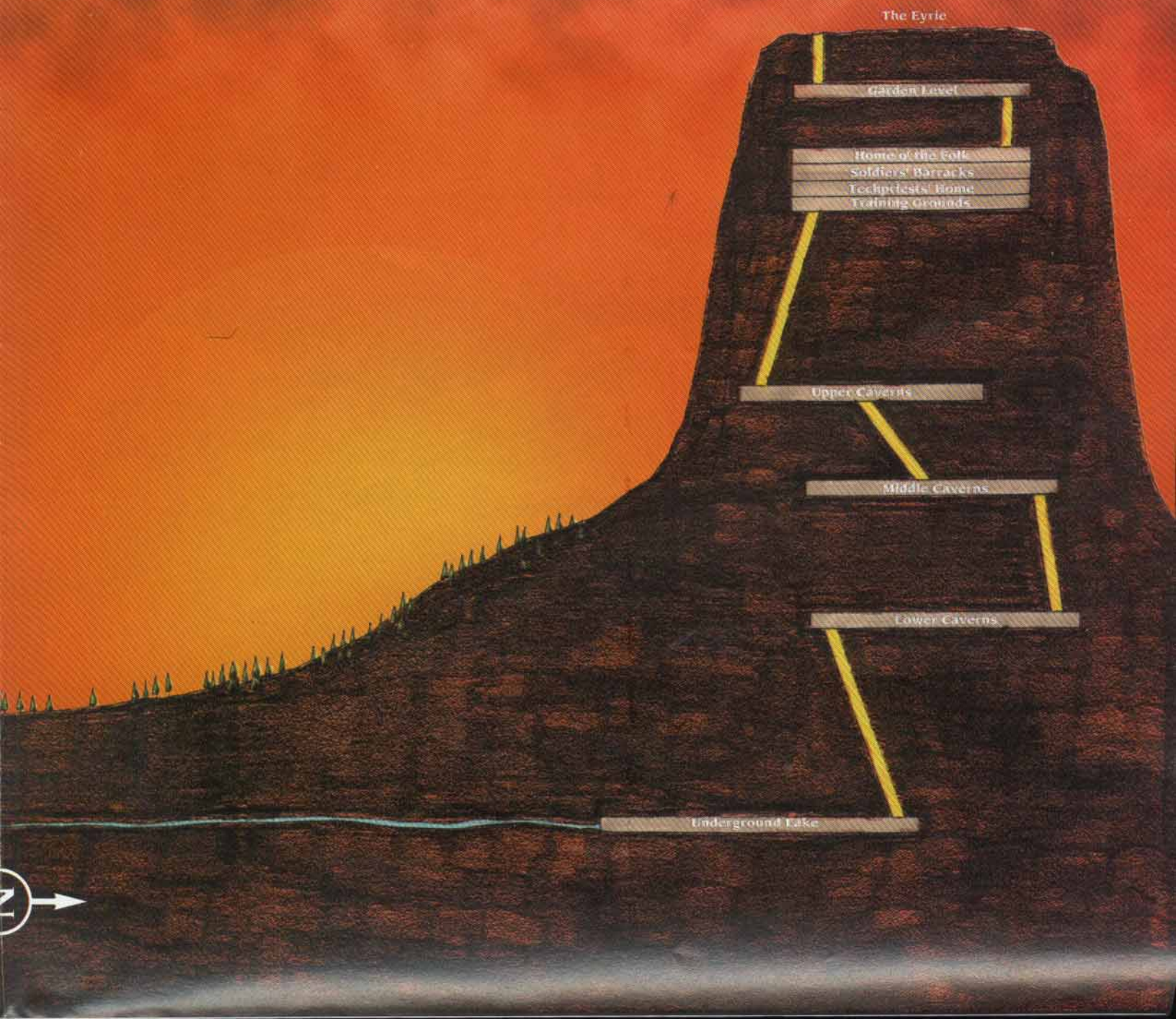
Kansas





Cutaway View

225 feet



Top Level

1 inch = 10 feet



Garden Level

1 inch = 10 feet

Light Sconces

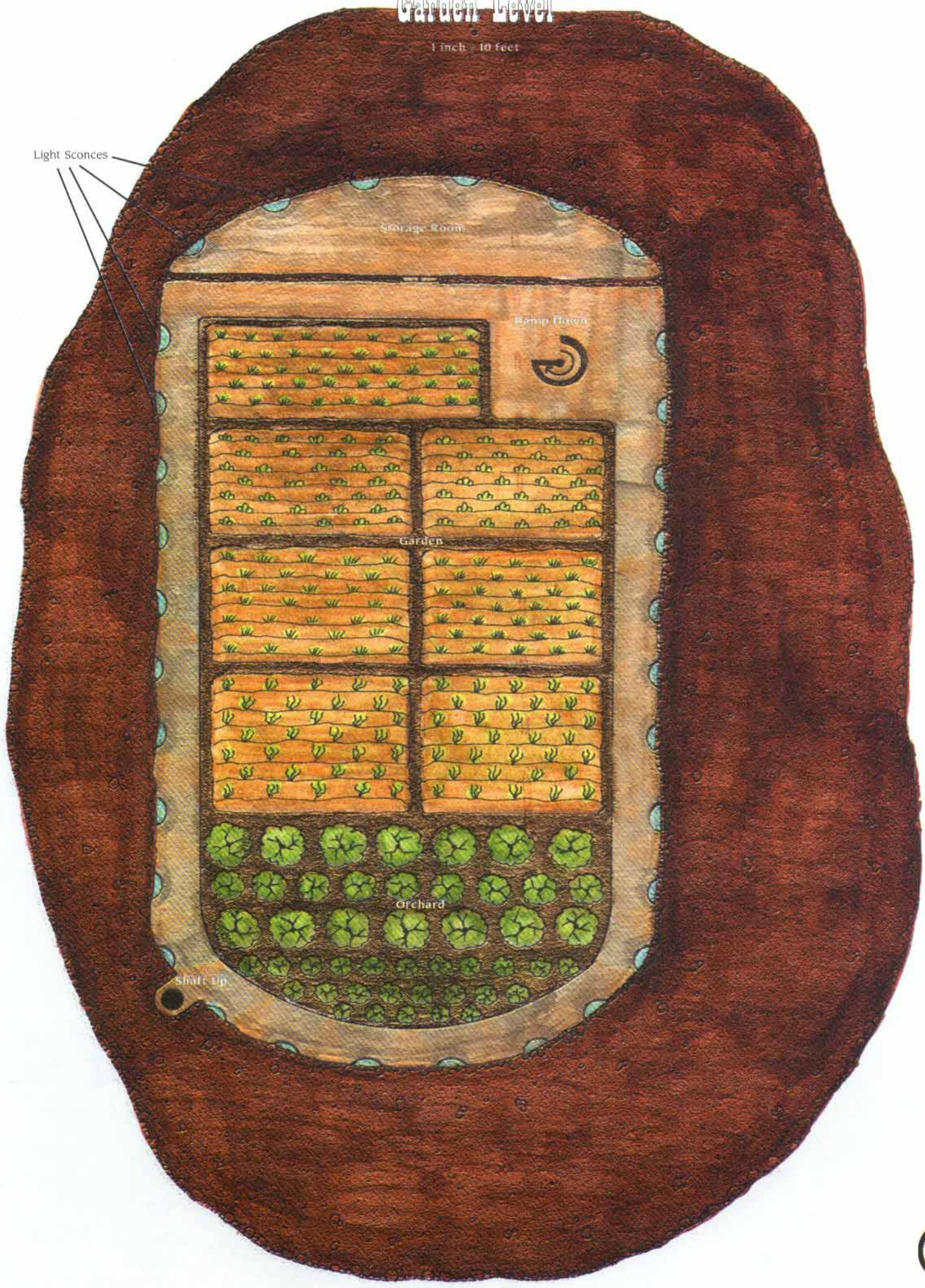
Storage Room

Ramp House

Garden

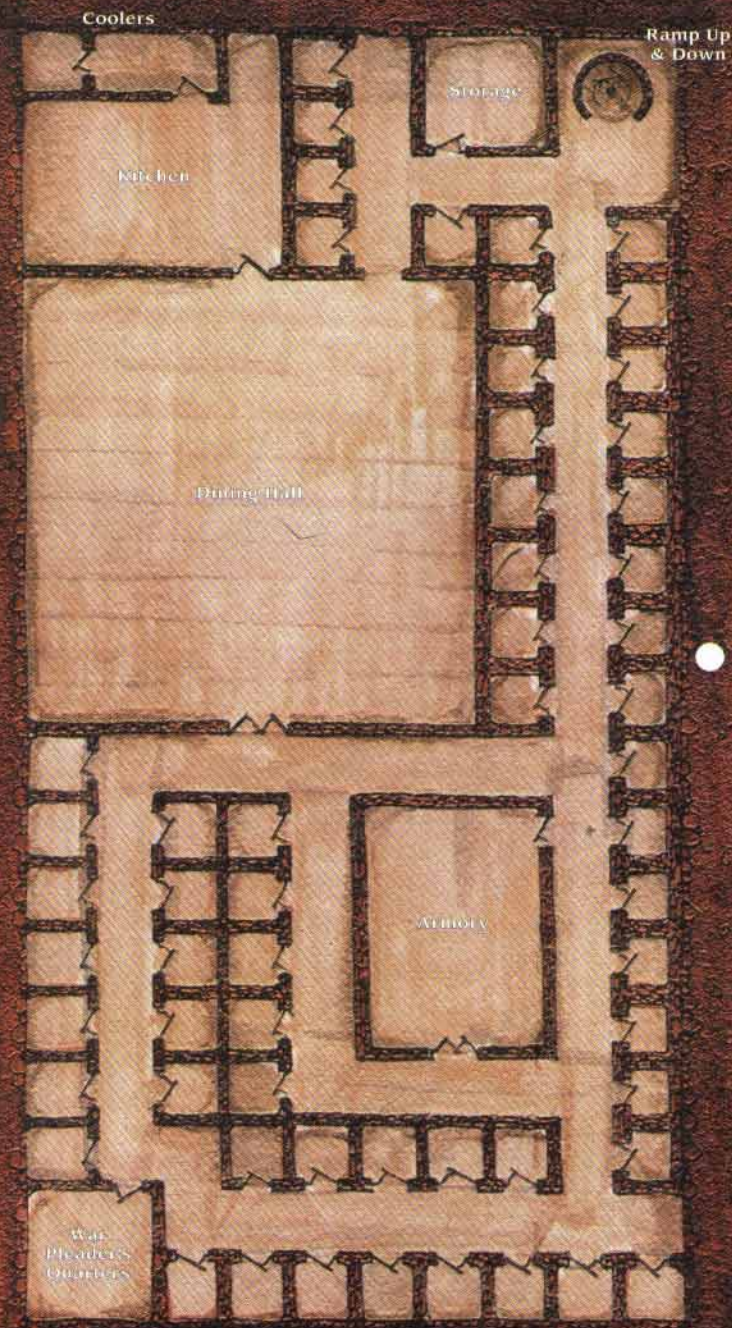
Orchard

Shaft Up



Soldiers' Barracks

1 inch = 10 Feet



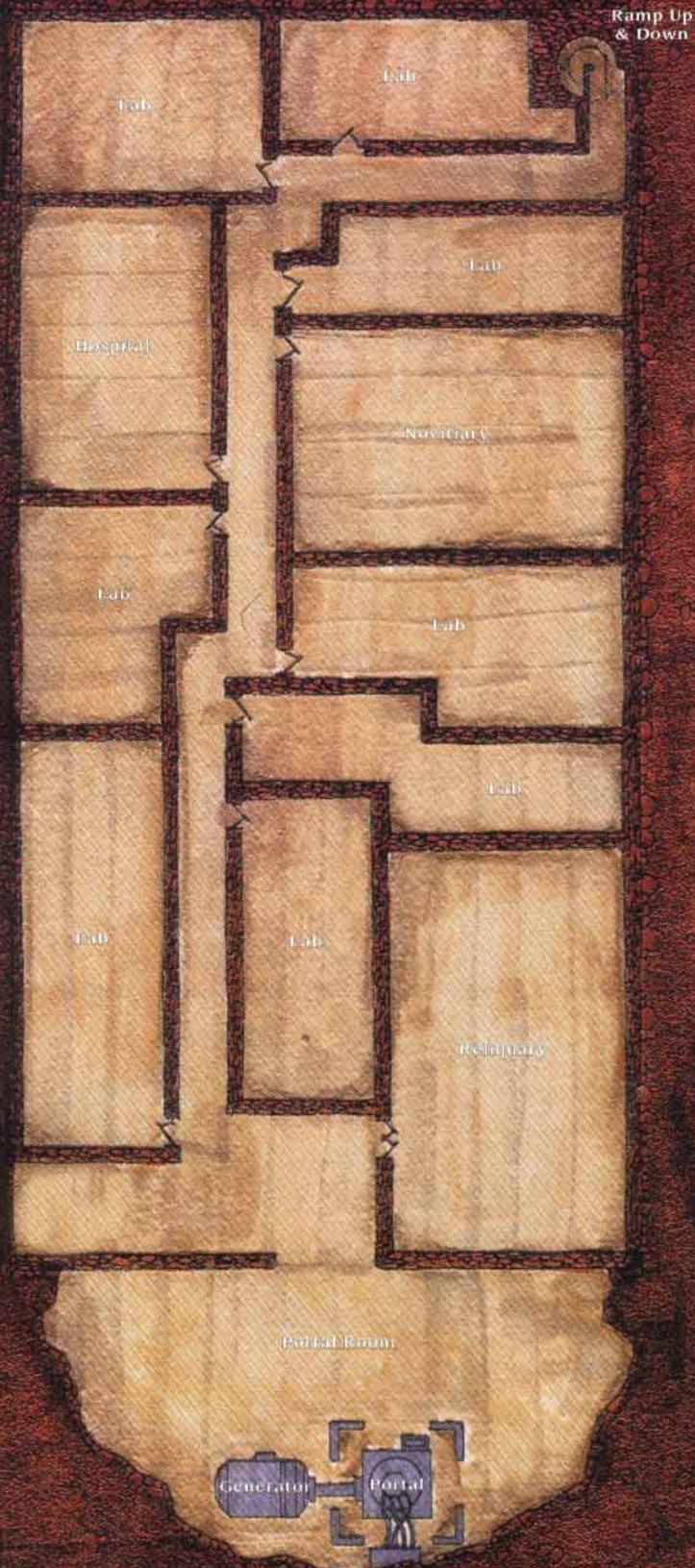
Home o' the Folk

1 Inch = 10 feet



Techpriests' Home

1 inch = 10 feet



Training Grounds

1 inch = 10 feet



Upper Caverns

1 inch = 10 feet



Middle Caverns

1 inch = 10 feet

Way
Down

Way
Up



To Surface Entrance

Lower Caverns

1 inch = 10 feet

Way Up

Dead End



Way Down



Underground Lake

1 inch = 10 feet

Way Up

Water Pump

Sewage Pond

Fresh Water Lake



River Entrance

River Exit

