

HELNAU'S GUIDE TO WASTELAND BEASTIES



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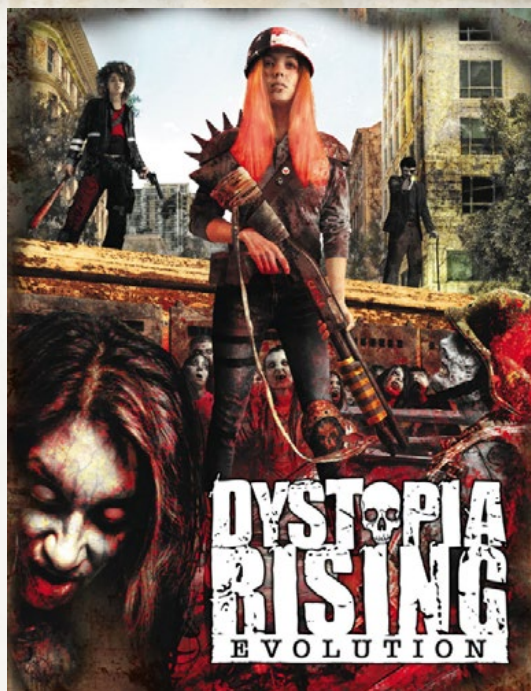
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From Everyone: Thank you for buying this book. If you found it through some illicit means online, we hope you like it well enough to purchase a copy.



Requires the use of the
Dystopia Rising: Evolution
Rulebook



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **Hel nau's Guide to Wasteland Beasties**, a supplement for **Dystopia Rising: Evolution**. This book outlines some of the incredible and often dangerous creatures from the point of view of a Diesel Jock named Hel nau as she travels through the wasteland. Her partner, Brooks, a quiet woman with a keen eye for danger, joins her in this effort. Accompanying them is Sami, who first suggested Hel nau's need to record what they have learned about these creatures; Freeda, a scout and close friend; and, finally, Aria h, who has recently joined the group after his Pops' unfortunate death. This section covers how to make the most of this book, so grab your character sheet, your dice, and strap in. Hel nau is about to take you for one hell of a ride.

Using this book with **Dystopia Rising: Evolution**

The wasteland of **Dystopia Rising** is filled with danger, mystery, and pockets of humanity holding out, trying to build a community in an unforgiving world. The wasteland's mutated and irradiated creatures are just as big of a threat as the shambling undead that roam the Nor'East's wastes. **Hel nau's Guide to Wasteland Beasties** enhances the source material for the **Dystopia Rising: Evolution** corebook, presenting more options in a journal-style format. Familiarity with the core rules and setting of **Dystopia Rising** is needed to make the most of this supplement, as this book assumes the Storyguide is familiar with the terms and mechanics referenced in this book. Additionally, this book is by no stretch a comprehensive guide to all the setting's critters, let alone the Nor'East region! Storyguides are always encouraged to alter creatures as needed for your group, or even create your own creatures for characters to encounter.

Creating a Story

As Storyguide, each of Hel nau's accounts provides inspiration for your own narrative. As an

example, if you chose to include a Club-Tailed Turtle as part of your adventure, you may introduce this creature through a bounty offered by a local town to follow up on reports of missing livestock and find the cause – similar to Hel nau's own experience. Your players must then track the creature and either scare it off, or kill it to collect the bounty.

When introducing a creature to your narrative, story is important. Where did it come from? Why is it there? Developing a reason behind your creature makes for both a more impactful appearance and interesting adventure for your players. Use Hel nau's adventures as a guide for inserting creatures into your own narrative. For more information, reference *They're Coming: Making Encounters* (**Dystopia Rising: Evolution** p. 209).

Creating Custom Creatures

Some of the creatures in this guide may not precisely fit your particular narrative, or their statistics may not be appropriate for the group of characters that you have as a Storyguide. With that in mind, modify the creatures' statistics contained in this guide as appropriate for your group, or you use the statistics as a template for a new type of creature.

As the first step when creating custom beasts for your game, consider the general regional flavor of your location. Is it within the frigid roadways of the Nor'East, or a humid, sweltering trek through the Rum Coast? Is it within the arid heat of Vegasia, or the crumbling ruins of the Shattered Coast? Once you have the location decided, you can begin to populate your location with giant rattlesnakes, disease-spreading rats of high intelligence, or mammoth-sized bovines with nasty tempers.

Once that is complete, consider the characters in your adventure. Do they thrive in close-quarters combat, or prefer to act as snipers? Is one of them good at tracking or spotting things? When designing

THREAT LEVEL	PRIMARY POOL	SECONDARY POOL	TERTIARY POOL	ENHANCEMENT	DEFENSE	HEALTH
MINOR THREAT	6	4	2	0	3	3
MEDIUM THREAT	7	5	3	1	3	4
MODERATE THREAT	8	6	4	2	4	5
MAJOR THREAT	9	7	5	3	4	6
COLOSSAL THREAT	10	8	6	4	5	8

your creatures, keep individual character strengths in mind, making sure that each of them has their moment to shine in your story. Use the table below, also found in **Dystopia Rising: Evolution**, when crafting your own creature to derive the base numbers for each threat.

Special Abilities is a great way to further customize your creature. This guide includes Special Abilities that may be useful for a range of new creatures. You

can also consult the **Dystopia Rising: Evolution** core book for more of these abilities to add to your creatures. Similarly, if the Special Ability of a creature in this guide does not match what you want for your adventure then feel free to substitute other Special Abilities or simply do not use them in the encounter.

With that in mind, let's see what Helnau has to show us!





A DAY IN HELL

They call me Helnau. You can probably guess where I got that nickname; it's the thing I say whenever I see a beastie that's a bit too hellish for my liking - and take it from me, I see a lot that fit into that particular category. That's how the wastelands are; they're full of monsters and beasties that are looking for their piece of the pie. And sometimes, that piece happens to be your friend's leg!

First things first, though - I should tell you why I'm writing this all down: it's because while nature adapts, sometimes we don't always make it out clean. Sometimes we don't get up, even with a nearby Morgue.

Sometimes, even with my crew and our skills, I can't save all the people who get themselves in nature's maws.

Ariah tended the meat that night. From that pack he keeps close ever since I met up with him, he had found some herbs - looked like a combination of mint and parsley and some other assorted greens - and was pounding it with a pestle, probably to serve up with the roast. Brooks sat next to him, all lean muscle and readiness as she cleaned her gun. She glanced up and smiled at me - it was the sort of smile that had made my head turn the first day I met her. Then she went back to cleaning the gun as if it were the only thing that mattered. Maybe it was; I've caught her cuddling up with her gun at night as if it was her damn teddy bear. Of course, she was on guard duty tonight so I figured she probably wanted to be ready for anything that came at us.

Ariah interrupted the moment as he spoke up from the fire, eyes fixed on the meat. "Pops used to say this area was known for wood, farms, that sort of thing. No wonder there's an outpost: it's good soil out here."

I glanced at him, replying dryly, "Didn't know you for a farming man." I regretted it as soon as I said it. People who knew plants and crops and soil had reputations as big, or even bigger, than the entire crew I had combined. Of course, my "entire crew" right now was a band of four people, and our fourth was taking a leak. Thankfully, Ariah cracked a thin smile at me and nodded his head, his smile standing out against the dark of his skin.

"Been awhile, but I keep it up. Know damn well you're not going to be cooking anything any time soon." Ariah smiled again, as I grimaced. He was right. I was a terrible cook. He continued, "My Pops was always better, though. Knew how to find all sorts of plants; was the town herbalist because no one could even come close."

I had met Ariah and his Pops a few months ago; unfortunately, Pops Ariah didn't survive his encounter with a Club Tailed Turtle wrestling him for his irradiated greenery collection. The Ariah in front of me now - the son - became part of my crew after that and we got him a ride; hell knows we'd lucked out on that, considering how badly all of us were at cooking.

Ariah knew I tried to save his Pops, and I was glad to have him, but sometimes I could see the hurt in his face. Life was hard out here, but I think Ariah had expected a little more time with his Pops.

He stirred the pot, slowly added the herb mix to it. I remained silent, thinking things over.

"Helnau." It wasn't Arianh - it was Sami, looking at one of their knives. They were quiet like that, but when they spoke, I learned to listen. They had their hair cut short, almost shaven down into silver-white stubble. Hair got caught in things, they'd say, and a tracker could use it if they knew who to go to, who to ask. I never bothered to ask about the hair color. Could have been dye, could have been radiation. They were one of the best in terms of fighting I'd seen; lean and nimble and often in their linen coveralls, and one of the few that stuck to their reasons. I've seen them fight zed, seen them fight all sorts of beasties; but they were the best at dealing with the living, especially if those living folk didn't strike us first over some politics or some imagined slight. Sami was always the one finding the more peaceful solution among us, or trying to get more information from people.

"Yeah?" I replied.

"Chiefess back there said this used to be fox country. Said that some folks to the west been seeing rad yotes coming in, causing trouble."

"That's to the west, past the mountains. We were going to track back north and go..."

But Sami didn't stop. "I figure, would be good to write down some of our tricks. Maybe not the best tricks, but if we can tell folk what environments those turtles or those elkhorns like, or what draws them... maybe trade posts can avoid being in the middle of a territory fight. Or not interrupt dominance contests if they see them."

Freedra came back, adjusting her belts. Her knives were already clean and her packs secured, but her belts and trousers showed signs of dirt and blood. Probably not her own - she was my best scout. "Sorry it took me awhile. Put down some misdirection if anyone else has tracking folk, and by the time they track us we'd be back on our rides. Do we have enough fuel?"

"Yeah. Checked," I replied, though my mind was on other things. Sami's suggestion made a certain amount of sense. I liked the work, but we couldn't be at every outpost and town in the Wastes. And I did have my letters: being a Diesel Jock wouldn't be enough if I couldn't read what manual scraps I could find, if I couldn't identify parts, read labels. If I could write down bits at a time, send them off to other crews to spread copies throughout the Wastes...

It was risky, but doable; and the benefits would be enormous to us, as well.

I looked at Freedra again. "Think we got enough spare for another hour on the lamps?"

"We should have enough to make it into Del Phia, at least. Just watch your time, else we'll have to stop to salvage fuel, and I'm not keen on wrestling with Pure Bloods or Yorkers out for a fight over an oldcestor car-cass." She pronounced the word deliberately, and tried

to smile at her own joke, but then busied herself with getting bowls from packs. "Not keen on being stuck along with all those oldcestor cars, even if they're good salvage. Place creeps me out. Why the sudden interest in the lamps?"

"Not all of them - just maybe one headlight."

Sami looked up at me, realizing why I was asking - or at least a moment later they were already rummaging around their gear, trying to find me something to mark on.

I smiled. "See, I got this suggestion..."

That was the start. My name might be the most well-known, but I want everyone to know that it's because of Sami, it's because of Ariah and his Pops, it's because of Freeda, and it's because of Brooks that you have my notes in your hands now. If more people are aware of what makes these beasties tick, more people can avoid them - or if they got no choice but to fight, to fight them with the right kind of information.

Avoid these beasties when you can, though. As a monster hunting crew that seems like I'm just telling you because it gets us work, right? But it's what we do, too. Most of them just leave well enough alone, but sometimes there are territory fights or dominance contests, or some fool doesn't look where he's going and his foot is right on a turtle about to grind that offending limb off with its multiple rows of teeth. That's where these notes can help.



Rad Yote

A Rad Yote is exactly what you'd think: a mangy, dog-like animal that used to be pretty harmless before its land got steeped in radiation like over-brewed tea. Now they rove in packs with fur that same sort of yellow I associate with ration packs, poison, and pus; and with about the same temperament as that hopping mad Yorker who tried to go after my ride back when I was cruising on 95. The packs might be small-usually, only about four or five yotes in a pack-but even those four or five can prove difficult to deal with if you're in a tangle with them. Another reason for my name: even I say "Hell, naw" when facing a pack of these, but if a post or village gets the word out about Rad Yotes in their area; that word gets to me -to us.

That's exactly what happened when we were just outside Old York. The wind rustled the leaves in the small clearing off the side of the road at which we had stopped one warm night. Brooks' head bowed over an old map she'd bartered while she busied herself plotting our course for tomorrow. Arianh laid a place for a fire, while Sami practiced their knife trick -the one where they flip one of their knives in the air and catch it behind their back. Freeda was out scouting the area, making sure everything was safe. Fireflies winked in and out among the tall grasses near our camp. I should have known then that we weren't going to have a peaceful night.

As I headed over to see how far along Arianh had gotten on the fire -mostly because I was hungrier than a pack of zombies-Freeda came bursting through the trees around our camp. Out of breath, sweat slicking to her face, she called out, "Helnau, we got a problem!"

"More description," I replied. I had told her before that saying "a problem" wasn't going to tell me or anyone else shit.

Freeda collected herself when I said that, placing her hands on one of her knives, "Rad yotes. About five or six. A kid in the town nearby found one of the pups earlier in the day and decided to take it home."

This was bad. Really bad. Fun fact about rad yotes: They won't fight back too hard during the day. They act sluggish when the sun's up. Hell, you can probably get within a spitting distance of them and they'd do nothing. But when the sun goes down? That's when you got to watch out. Their fur glows at night, which helps you see them coming, but they hunt and track in the dark; and they're downright vicious-especially when one of their pups is involved. Odds were that the kid had found the pup during the daytime, and the Rad Yote parents weren't bothering to get it back until after dark.

I grabbed my gun and checked that I had my machete before glancing at the others, "Saddle up. We got some hunting to do."

The others stared at me for a moment before they realized I wasn't joking. The thing with rad yotes is that because they're more vicious after dark, the best way to deal with them is to wait until morning and hunt them then. Problem was that if a pup was in the town, then we



didn't have until morning. They'd eat anything they could get their teeth into—crops, livestock, people. You name it. And then they'd probably get into the local Morgue to gnaw on some bones.

They all began getting ready. Brooks grabbed a few more guns, and Sami put a bandolier of knives across their chest. Ariah doused the beginnings of the fire he had started, and ran to grab his bat and pistol. Once she saw everyone was ready, Freeda jerked her head back toward the woods, "This way. We're not gonna want to ride there. If we make noise, they may try to break into one've the houses for safety."

I nodded and we followed Freeda through the woods. It was tense. The humid air stilled as we crept toward the town. As we got closer, I could see the faint, telltale glow of the rad yotes through the trees.

"There they are," Brooks murmured as she loaded her shotgun.

I loaded my own pistol and Sami readied her throwing knives. Another fact about Rad Yotes is that they got a nasty bite, so you don't want to get anywhere within range of their teeth. Some folk just call it necrosis, but some outposts and towns call this yote rot. Basically, if you're among the living and you get bitten—or even if livestock does —and survive, there's risk of the rot getting so bad that tissue near the bite starts turning into black drudge, so you might be facing some knives or surgery anyway. If not treated right away, the infection can spread.

I nodded to the crew and walked forward. Rad yotes are nimble when they want to be, and clever. If they catch a whiff of you and think

you're closing in on them, odds are they'll circle up and close in on you instead.

We could see them clearly now, their fur glowing green-yellow in the dark. They were making a huge ruckus with yips and yowls as they scratched at a wooden door that looked like it led into a granary. Yotes get into everything and everything-grain stores, crops, herbs, that sort of thing. The less protected, the more convenient, the higher chance they'll go for it.

Fortunately for us, the yotes were so interested in getting to the food, they weren't paying attention to us. We fired, and four went down. The last two scattered. We found out later that the pup had clawed its way outside and had disappeared, but not before biting the kid and his parents. Ariah helped deal with the yote rot that the group had, and we gave them some advice about dealing with rad yotes in the future. I figure that the advice we gave them will probably serve others well, so read up and make sure you know what you're dealing with.

First, get your crew kitted out with ranged weaponry and don't forget food security. Yotes travel in packs, so if you see one skulking about or see their fur caught on something, you best know there are more nearby and they'll overwhelm a simple gate latch by just throwing the entire pack at it. Rushing it, is what I call it. Not an attack so much as just throwing themselves at something or someone. Get your folk to have multiple latches, get some bolts on those doors and gates. Put a guard rotation on your warehouse or barn if you don't have one already and give them a weapon they can fire at range. Plus, if yotes get into your storehouse for more than a few minutes, your food can get irradiated and you'd have to spend some time trying to clean it all.

At the end of the day, you've got to be proactive about rad yotes, and you'd better not ever mess with their pups unless you're willing to face the consequences.

OPTIONAL RULE: EATING RAD YOTES

At the discretion of the Storyguide, if an animal raised for food (whether via pasture lands/farmlands or via a kept lake) gets infected via a bite, the animal can be diagnosed and treated within the first 24 hours if someone notices the bite and can get the proper diagnosis. If not diagnosed and treated within the first 24 hours, if the animal is slaughtered for food any time afterwards, any meat obtained inflicts food poisoning as if it was irradiated. If a survivor takes the time to cook the meat, food poisoning is treated as per normal with the Non-Lethal tag. In games with more focus on survivors within towns and outposts, this may be useful to illustrate the threat a single pack may have on an outpost or town's food supplies, in addition to the more direct threat they pose to its inhabitants.

Additionally, if a pack is within grain or stored vegetable crops for longer than 6 hours (such as if the yotes break into a storehouse and stay there overnight), the Storyguide may choose to rule that the crops are now irradiated and must undergo decontamination. Again, this is optional but may be used at Storyguide discretion to elevate the sense of fighting for survival, finding adequate food supplies to establish or sustain a settlement, and so on.

LONE YOTE

Commonly a sick, injured, or old yote, but sometimes also a pup separated from its mother or a young adult separated from a pack.

Initiative: 3

Melee Attack: 4

Ranged Attack: 0

Defense: 2

Health: 3

YOTE ALPHA

The leader of a small pack tends to be female, sleeping in shelters and small dens along with the rest of their pack during the day. At night, however, they are at their most fierce. During the day, yote alphas are -1 to their Initiative calculations due to sluggishness and sleep. During the night, when they are primed for a hunt, yote alphas gain +1 to Initiative ranking.

Initiative: 4

Melee Attack: 4

Ranged Attack: 2

Defense: 3

Health: 3

Working alongside another Rad Yote, single targets can become trapped between them (flanked or led into a bottleneck). This tactic does not come into play when encountering a lone Rad Yote or the single remnant of a pack.

YOTE PACK (HORDE)

Initiative: 3

Melee Attack: 4

Ranged Attack: 2

Defense: 3

Health: 3

Scale: 2

Rush: When threatened, Rad Yote pack may rush an opponent and strike as a group. Everyone within or adjacent to the yote pack is caught in the rush, the aim of which to disorient and knock prone rather than to attack.

A Rad Yote bites with its sharp teeth meant to rend flesh from bone. If a successful bite inflicts damage of any sort, it also inflicts the Yote Infection Condition. See Necrotizing Bite below.

Necrotizing Bite: Also called yote rot, this refers to the necrosis caused by Rad Yote bites. Pus-filled swelling forms around the tissue near the bite which, without medical intervention, bursts, spreading the infection into nearby tissue and eventually necrotizing. Loss of limbs follows—either through the tissue necrotizing and turning into black sludge; or through interventions, like amputation, to prevent the infection from spreading.

This effect is the same as the Necrosis disease (see **Dystopia Rising: Evolution**, p. 131) and should be treated as such, complete with gaining the additional modification of the "It's Zed!" Strain Condition.

Irradiated Meat: Not so much an attack as a caution: Survivors able to take out a Rad Yote pack might be tempted to treat them as many other animals and make some meat out from their felled corpses so they can last another day. If a survivor attempts to eat Rad Yote meat, they gain irradiated food poisoning (Deadly tag as per Indirect Damage instead of Non-Lethal; **Dystopia Rising, Evolution**, p. 117). This applies even if the survivor prepares and cooks the meat; the meat of a Rad Yote is suffused with the effects of radiation and mutated beyond the ability to give even Strains nutrition.

Elkhorn Deer

Before we get started, I want to make a confession: I love Elkhorn Deer. When I find hoof prints or musk in the wild, I start tracking them. Sitting on high and watching a herd thunder across a plain, I can hear my heart speed up and beat alongside their hooves. If I find discarded horns at the end of a season, I do my damndest to bring them home and fashion just about anything I can from knife handles to buckles. You might think this is practical with herds leading to fresh water and horn being resilient, and that certainly shines a light on how my fascination started. I'd like to say that the herds moving and surviving among the Waste gives me hope for humanity and our own future in all of the muck and rust. Truth is, though, that I just like them. It's not any more complicated than that. With that said, Ariah insists I mention that Elkhorn Deer are about as stubborn as I am and that that's why they're like my brothers. Ridiculous. My brother's a socket wrench.

Not everything that's got antlers and four legs is a deer. If you come upon a herd and they are way bigger than any deer that you ever stumbled upon in the wild then you're likely looking at an Elkhorn Deer. Initially, you might look at a herbivore like this and estimate that you could take one down by gun or bow and have steaks for a week. Don't let their grass-eating lifestyle and your own stomach fool you and read carefully.

First off, do not think that genetic lottery saying these are "prey" means that they are dumb. Elk are out there surviving in a world full of zombies, rad yotes, and hungry people all wanting to get a slice of their shank, so if they're still alive it means they figured some things out and might know more than you do about surviving. Expect to find them traveling in herds that sometimes number in the hundreds or even the thousands. Hell, one time while I was up north and we came across a field that had been trampled flat by damn near a thousand hooves. Every piece of shrubbery had been kicked to pieces. When we saw blood, we thought some new war machine had been invented. After some tracking we found some zombies had spooked a herd and had then been pulped by nature's steam roller. Incidentally, let me tell you, causing a stampede to get rid of a pack of zombies is about as effective burning your own house down around you to get rid of the zeds inside; which also, from experience, doesn't work.

Individually, an elk is stronger than any three people, even among the most precocious Strains out there. When you get Elkhorn Deer in a stampeding herd, you may as well be caught in a granite avalanche and make peace with whatever bizarre god you decided to follow in this world.

Following a herd of elk to water sources or to find flat land for traveling over isn't a terrible idea. If you're lucky, some of the more pragmatic predators might just decide that one of the weaker members of the herd is easier pickings than you are. However, you should remember the water source for later and not try to mess with



the elk as they drink. One time, my crew followed a small elk herd down to a creek, and we were going to just tank up and be on our merry way. When an elk started chasing Freeda, we all thought it was funny until we were all getting chased. Wound up sweating out more than we could drink the next day when we returned.

If you follow elk around for a hobby (like my crew), you find that they've divided themselves into herds of stags and hinds. Around the beginning of fall, herds start converging for mating season, and believe me you do not want to be around for that. I'm not trying to shame anyone for looking at animals in the act; that's just nature. The problem is the stags show off for the hinds, and a great deal of that involves antler wrestling and trying to best the other stags. If one of them sees you, they may decide tossing you into the air is the most romantic move possible to impress a hind; and while they go off to deer-prom, you'll be laying in the mud with three compound fractures and unable to turn your head.

You may be the best lead pipe swinger to ever strap a stop sign shield to your arm, but if you think going hand-to-hand with an elk is a good idea, get anything fragile out of your pockets and hand it over to your friends first; they and you are not about to survive the trampling you're about to receive. Your best bet is to take out an elk from a distance and to do so with overwhelming force, such as a well-placed rifle shot or an arrow. After the rest of the herd has panicked, an elk that falls to the ground right away will still be there while a panicked, injured elk can run for miles faster than you, and now you've lost them.

If they're so dangerous in herds then why not just take them out when they're alone? Not a terrible idea, but bear in mind that you won't be the only predator in the woods after that prey. Elk are especially resistant to diseases; great for them as survivors, but this also means they're carrying a dozen odd probably unheard of diseases. A solitary one dying could be carrying around two dozen infections that would scare the mask off a Retrograde. In some cases, you might even see an elk run straight through a field so radioactive you can see it glowing at noon. Sure, they'll be dayglo for a few days, but then they'll be fine. If you think eating their magic glowing meat is a good idea, you may as well roll around in that rad field yourself and see what happens.

Now let's say that you've listened and learned and managed to pull off downing one of these elk, and now think you've the makings of a barbecue. Remember when I said they were probably carrying a dozen unheard of diseases? Well, just because you shot that sucker in the eye when you didn't see any of the standard zombification, doesn't mean those lousy bugs just disappear. You'll need to cook that meat until its damn near tough as a rock. It may keep you going a while, but it's hardly cuisine worth breaking your neck. For the real treat, you need to skin that elk; though once again be careful not to nick yourself with the blade in the process, and make sure the tanner does an extra round of boiling. If you can get all that done, you have yourself a tough yet supple piece of leather that protects you better than the average vest knitted out of squirrel carcasses. Their horns are beautiful when polished, but more importantly are both strong and flexible, and so can make some of the best bows you can imagine if you're strong enough to bend them. Your best route there, if you're following the elk herd, is to wait until early winter when they shed their antlers naturally.



PLAGUE ELK

If you see an Elkhorn Deer on its own and without a herd, especially outside of mating season, you might be dealing with a Plague Elk. Naturally resistant to disease, your average Elkhorn Deer walks around with more diseases than a zombie's teddy bear. Some elk resist disease to a point where you almost think they thrive on it, but end up with more disease than the herd can handle. Unfortunately for these genetically blessed creatures, they are ostracized for the health of the herd. On their own they are less scrappy than a buck in heat, but are more dangerous in many ways. If you encounter a Plague Elk or, more likely, one standing in the way of something precious, like that backpack you really thought would be secure in that spot, then you have a handful of options. Like most things, I recommend shooting from afar if at all possible. If you try to fight up close, you are not only asking to be impaled on its horns but, if you win, you're looking at splattering the infected blood across yourself; odds are, you won't have time for a full body disinfectant. If you're lucky, you get a cold and if you're unlucky you're looking at a combination of potentially septic infection while every zombie in a five-mile radius smells chum and wants to get chummy with you.

Initiative: 3

Melee Attack: 4

Ranged Attack: 0

Defense: 3

Health: 3

Horns: Elkhorn Deer are functionally always armed. They can use their sharp horns as skilled melee weapons to fight, defend, and even disarm a foe. They receive a +1 Enhancement to melee attack and defensive rolls.

Toss (Stunt, 2s): A character on the receiving end of this Stunt relocates to short range and receives an additional 1 damage to represent the falling damage. In some cases, they may have to contend with other natural hazards, such as brambles.

Infected Blood: Every time a Plague Elk is injured, there is a risk of infection to anyone splattered by its blood. Anyone within short range makes an Endurance roll (Difficulty 2) to resist becoming diseased. Multifarious diseases infect the Plague Elk so this is at the Storyguide's discretion. Characters with their mouths and eyes covered, including Lascarians, need not make this roll.

ELKHORN DEER HERD (HORDE)

When confronting an Elkhorn Deer herd, you might be able to pick off some stragglers to get supplies but you run the danger of them trampling you in response.

Initiative: 4

Melee Attack: 4

Ranged Attack: 0

Defense: 3

Health: 3

Scale: 2

Stampede: When a threatened herd Stampedes, it attacks as a Shockwave (**Dystopia Rising: Evolution**, p. 97).

Spooked: When frightened by any event, such as a gunshot, the Elkhorn Deer may Stampede in the direction of the noise or attack.

Club-Tailed Turtle

My mama used to say that long ago, in the oldcestors' oldcestors time, there were things like state mascots: state flowers, state birds, state animals, that sort of thing. Basically, it was like they decided that a flower or a bird or some other shit represented a location...personified it, you know. And one place had a contest to see what the state animal should be, and people being people, they got some interesting responses. One feature of this was that snapping turtles became the place's mascot.

My mama also would tell this story to tell another one: that in those days, stories told of snappers and crocs attacking people in their homes. Although told as if real, it was always some friend that heard from some other friend that heard it from somewhere they couldn't remember properly; that sort of thing. But in our day, she'd say, we got the Club-Tailed Turtles, and they're as real as you and I stand here today.

And yes, I do know of stories where people have gone to a river to do laundry or washing or doing some other business of theirs and accidentally stepped on a Club-Tailed Turtle, or found a nest, and not all those people came back the same - if at all!

The good news is that if you spot them early enough, they'll try to go downriver or go underwater. Club-Tailed Turtles don't go after us first. In truth, Club-Tailed Turtles are a combination of opportunistic and lazy; their hunting methods of choice are more of the "wait and see what comes by" variety. Being massive creatures, this makes sense for them - less energy wasted going after prey that can get away. Another point of good news: Club-Tailed Turtles do serve a purpose or two apart from an exotic turtle soup. They eat the irradiated clams, oysters, fish, crawdads and plants, and they help filter some of the radiation out of the water they're nearby. Plus, their leavings often help fertilize plants used in medicines and feed other, less angry beasties.

The bad news: they're massive, so it's easy to get within snapping or swiping range by accident, or even step on them. If you're within 10 feet of them or their nest they bite, swipe at you with their tail, or drag you underwater, and they do not stop until either you or they are dead. When they feel threatened their attitude is comparable to their huge, five-ton size. I've heard them called Scaled Yorkers as a compliment. Their shells have that brownish purple and green pattern to them-the kind of colors as their home water and soil-making them hard to see. I mean, yes, it doesn't look quite right up close - shells have different textures from dirt, water, leavings and algae - but if you're close enough to tell the difference, you're within attack range already. Since they make their homes in marshland, in swamps, and by rivers, there's a lot of outposts and settlements within their territories without even knowing, which means a lot of us are going to come up on them and aggravate at least one. Just because they don't go after us first doesn't mean they accept being stepped



on, anyone being too near their nests, or anyone stealing what they see is their rightful lunch.

There's no exception made to those no longer among the living. Club-Tailed Turtles eat all sorts of things, and that includes zombies just as much as fish, insects and plants.

So, what can you do about them?

First: learn how to identify areas prone to Club-Tailed Turtle nests. Eggs are usually in bog-type areas, where the ground is neither full soil nor full water. If you have an area with standing water that looks almost purple-brown, that's a good indicator of a nearby nest; the purple-brown coloring is from their leavings combined with the salt in the water.

Nests only tend to contain three to five eggs, and young Club-Tailed Turtles are not as aggressive as adults. I've heard stories of settlements raising younglings from captured eggs that learn how to hunt what the humans give them; I'm still checking the sources on this, though, because every Club-Tailed Turtle my crew and I have ever met has been spitting-angry.

Due to their size, adult Club-Tailed Turtles thankfully travel and set up for their feeding solo. It might be just one adult you're facing, but that one adult takes a team to handle. That's how I met Arish.

Word had reached me of a town having trouble with some missing livestock. Apparently, a massive turtle was chowing down on the animals, which meant that it was pretty likely that the turtle would

start chowing down on people soon, too. Brooks, Sami, Freeda and I were all down by the local river, looking for signs of the turtle. We'd equipped ourselves with guns in case things got hairy, but were hoping to scare the turtle somewhere else instead of using them.

It was a hot day-the sort of day where you wish you could strip down buck naked and jump in the nearest body of water. The sun beat down on my shoulders as I sweat through my armor, following Freeda and the others as we made are way along the muddy bank. The whole river smelled like decaying things and water and rot, and I was a bit grumpy on account of we'd been looking for the damn turtle all morning and hadn't seen hide nor hair.

That's when the scream came. High and panicked, it sounded like someone had gotten themselves into a load of trouble. I glanced at Freeda, "Where?"

She nodded forward, "This way." That's all she needed to say; we knew what to do when there was an emergency-find the problem and get there fast. We ran through weeds and shrubs on the bank, splattering mud behind us. As we rounded a bend in the river, we saw the turtle.

It was enormous; at least 12 feet high at the top point of its shell. It was already riled up and angry, swiping its clubbed tail back and forth. I saw a middle-aged man trying to get out of the reach of its jaws, and a younger man yelling at him to "get the hell outta there."

We sprang into action. Brooks let off a few shots with her shotgun toward the turtle's shell; wouldn't do a lick of good in terms of hurting the thing, but it sure as hell would do a fine job of getting its attention.

The turtle turned toward us and I just about shit my pants. The turtle was probably the biggest I'd seen. With that size, it had to be a female, and I had to guess that the older man probably strayed too close to its eggs. I grit my teeth and fired off a few shots, the recoil sending jolts along my arm. We weren't going to be able to scare this one off; it was out for blood.

The turtle swung its tail around and Brooks and I jumped out of the way in time. Freeda was already sprinting toward the old man to try to get him out of the way; the younger man had picked up a stick and was holding it like a weapon - as if that would do anything against a raging Club-Tailed Turtle.

It was over in a second. As the turtle swung its tail toward me, it snapped its jaws at the old man, grabbing his leg in its maw. I heard a sickening crunch as bone snapped. The old man cried out and went down with a thump.

The young man sprang forward with a cry, whacking the turtle with his stick. I think he surprised the turtle more than anything else, but the action did cause it to stop chomping on the old man, which gave Sami enough time to throw a few of her knives into the soft flesh of the turtle, and for Freeda to follow up with a few bullets of her own.

I'll spare you the rest of the details, but with the old man's injuries, it looked like it was going to be his last time through. No standing by at the Morgue waiting on him. We managed to finish off the turtle, but it wasn't in time for the old man. The young guy who whacked the turtle with a stick? That was Arianh. He asked to join up with us that day, and I didn't have the heart to say, "no."

Arianh figured if he could help other folk from meeting the same end as his Pops, hanging out in my crew was worthwhile. Plus, Arianh knows some herb lore as well as a decent amount of medical knowledge. He might not have saved his Pops, but his soil-dark hands have sewed us all up and healed our burns more than once.

CLUB-TAILED TURTLE

Initiative: 2

Melee Attack: 6

Ranged Attack: 1

Defense: 4

Health: 5

Outside of their home territory or not within short range of a body of water, Club-Tailed Turtles have -1 to their Initiative calculations as they attempt to navigate unfamiliar and more solid ground.

Bite: The Club-Tailed Turtle bites with powerful jaws. Damage from a Club-Tailed Turtle bite always has the Melee, Lethal, and Messy damage tags. If a target survives the attack, bite wounds can be quickly identified as from a Club-Tailed Turtle.

Tail Slam: The Club-Tailed Turtle uses its tail to inflict Bashing damage on a target. The impact from the tail inflicts the same effect as a weapon with the Pushing tag (the Storyguide can opt to knock the Club-Tailed Turtle's target prone, after any damage to the target has been resolved).

Club-Tailed Turtles do not have ranged attacks as such: even with their large size, their bite and tail attacks only impact in the close range band. However, see the special notes below, as there are still effects that impact characters depending on range band.

Camouflage: The Club-Tailed Turtle disguises itself to better blend in with its environment, which makes it more difficult to differentiate between it and its surroundings. If it has not taken damage, any of its opponents within the medium and long range bands take +1 Difficulty on all attack actions due to the difficulty in pinpointing the turtle's exact location.

Living Shield: A Club-Tailed Turtle is five tons and likes to preserve its energy. It may be a nasty surprise

at a delta, reservoir, or in smaller rivers and creeks if one takes up the entire width to devour whatever is unlucky enough to enter its attack range. However, the Club-Tailed Turtle still affects the environment around it, and displaced water must go somewhere: usually by flooding the banks or some other sign. By doing so, the environment (Close Range and Short range bands, relative to the Club-Tailed Turtle) becomes more difficult to traverse, and any creature entering these range bands receives a 1 Complication on any actions that require movement to different positions, except when retreating to a range band farther away from the turtle. If the Complication: Living Shield is not bought off, a character trips and falls into the zone to which she was moving.

Example: A survivor trying to gather medicinal herbs or setting up crab pots—i.e. moving from one position to another—within close range of the Club-Tailed Turtle takes 1 Complication. The 1 Complication is not inflicted if the survivor is attacking from their same position, or fishing from their same position and only moving for gear next to them.

After an initial encounter or after one week spent with another character that has been in combat with a Club-Tailed Turtle, a crew may realize that they can figure out where the Club-Tailed Turtle is from this dam-like impact on its environment, making efforts to attack it, trap it, or to avoid being in range of its bite or tail much easier. Upon Storyguide discretion, if a character takes the time to note the environmental changes (either after a combat encounter themselves, or educated and trained for one week by someone who has), the +1 Difficulty posed by Camouflage is negated. While the environment changes due to the turtle are still in place (and thus Living Shield effect is applied in situations where applicable), the exact location of the turtle is more apparent, and can thus be attacked or trapped with greater precision.

Undead Terror

Conventional wisdom says you won't find an undead larger than the Goliath. "Don't worry," they say. "There's nothing bigger to be afraid of." Let me tell you right now: They're wrong. Sure, be afraid of Goliaths; but make sure you never run across an Undead Terror.

Campfire tales abound as to where these things come from, but the truth is that no one really knows. Are they some sort of animal? Are they some messed up, undead creature spawned from a local Morgue?

Well, I'm here to tell you that one of those campfire tales is truer than any of you want to believe. When I was younger and dumber, and hadn't yet met Brooks, I wound up shacking up with one of the many-lauded chicken farmers of Egg Town. Yes, the Egg Town from the stories, but I was there when the chicken shit hit the fan-literally. I had settled down there for a few weeks after dealing with some Elkhorn Deer. I'm pretty handy with machines and whatnot, so I'd volunteered to help repair a fan to ventilate the farm. I remember thinking that I could spend my days tinkering about, making things better and more civilized for that little patch of Earth.

Problem with a settlement like that was the same problem as everywhere else: people die and then you have to do something with the bodies. Bury too many too close, and you start to have problems.

So let's assume that while you were staying in this small little town, you decided to camp out in a tent because you valued your independence and didn't want to stay cozy and safe in the nearby farm. Let's say that you didn't realize you'd camped near a Morgue. And let's say that your presence near the Morgue may have disturbed something and while you were working on a chicken fan, this thing comes lumbering out of the horizon and your nightmares (not that I'd ever do something like that. Nope.). This could probably go for every beastie, monster, Raider, or wildfire, but the first rule remains: don't panic. If you panic, you wind up running in different directions and getting yourselves killed.

I was young. I was naive. And I panicked. A clawed paw the size of my first buckboard came down on the coop where I was making the fan, sending chickens and everything inside of them spraying across me and my partner in what can best be described as the opposite of a shower.

You might think on that adage "I don't have to be faster than the beastie; I just have to be faster than my buddy." Assuming you don't care whether your travel mates live or die, I suggest you let them know now, and hope they don't decide they just need to be faster than you. However, even that strategy doesn't work. Maybe it would work for an animal whose legs are regular size, but we're talking about one whose stride tops eight times yours. The chestnut for this situation: divide and conquer. When the Terror scoops you all up and swallows you down one at a time, don't say I didn't warn you.



For example, let's say your partner (let's call him "Jed") has decided to book it out of there, leaving you behind when this giant monstrosity shows up. Apart from being the sort of dick move that probably can't be repaired in therapy, he's still a target. Not only that, but Jed probably is going to look more like prey when he's running for his life.

Speed doesn't matter as much as you think, because distance doesn't matter as much as you think. You may not realize this, but you're just transposing the rules of fighting a normal sized beastie onto a creature the size of a pre-virus rusting tower. A beastie never gathers up a clod of dirt and flings it at you like so much useless dirt spray. If an Undead Terror grabs a clod of earth and flings it, you then either have a boulder crushing your spine or a loose glob of mud as big as a house swallowing you up as you roll down the hill to be collected later as a loamy digestive after your crew has been gobbled.

So what's a Terror look like? Well, think of one of a giant, furred creature that's about the size of a house. If you ask me, it looks a bit like a Plague Bear, if a Plague Bear had a flat face and round, yellow eyes that glowed faintly in the dark, and looked like it tore itself out of the Grave Mind itself (yeah, it's a bad time when these things come out at night). Fungus and decaying matter covers its matted fur, and it has claws the size of my forearm on its front limbs. It uses these to scoop up mud and rocks to throw; and if that weren't terrifying enough, the thing likes to stand and move on its hind legs a lot of the time.

That being said, if you see a Terror gathering up said clod of dirt to throw at your recently estranged lover, it might be a good time to relocate yourself if you can look for cover. This is especially true if the rest of the town has decided to panic and run helter-skelter about while flinging everything from pans to bricks at the Terror in a sorry attempt to slow it down.

While we're talking about ranged combat, you might think that your sniper rifle has the key to this whole problem. "Aim for the head and the head is the broad side of a barn" were the last words I heard from one cocky gunner before I high-tailed it out of there. Sure, your bullet may have a good chance of hitting, but adjusted for scale it's an annoying splinter or a bee sting and that wouldn't slow a Terror down from snack time. It certainly didn't for the one I saw.

To the best of my knowledge, no Terror has ever been defeated. Instead, they grab a snack from the local town, destroying most of it in the process, and then go back into the Morgue. As far as I can guess, these things make their homes in there, and largely hibernate unless they're disturbed or are in need of something to eat.

In some ways, this becomes the lesson of the Terror. If you've been going through life thinking a Goliath is the worst thing you could run into, you might be prepared for that. If you go through life thinking you know what the worst the wastes can throw at you is, you're just setting yourself up for slack-jawed amazement and a quick death. There's probably something out there even bigger than Undead Terrors.

Here are my last parting words: kill it with fire. They may ignore a bullet or a basic knife, but fire and explosives still work. Ideally, run to your encampment and arm the homemade bomb that you've been lying to your now-ex about. When the Terror eats the rest of the town and comes for you, looking to get one last morsel, it might be the one thing that makes them decide they don't need that last bite.

After the whole Egg Town incident, I wound up packing what was left of my things and taking Jed's dog, Scout. I figured Jed wouldn't want the dog anymore after he came out of the Morgue, especially because he'd probably recognize the dog deserved to have someone that wasn't a damn coward as an owner. I was on the road and headed north with the dog before I came to the realization that to deal with something that big and horrifying, I was going to need more than myself. I was going to need a team of people trained for these sorts of situations.

That's where it all began, really. After I saw that Undead Terror, I realized I needed to be better and more organized to deal with the type of threats that reared their ugly heads in the wastelands. I needed people who wouldn't run, and who would instead stay and fight. A few weeks after that, I met Freeda. Then I met Sami and Brooks and Ariaiah. All of them are people I'd trust with my life.

I guess that's another thing I should let you know: surround yourself with people you trust when dealing with these beasties. You never know when you're going to wind up in a situation where you need to rely on someone else, and it never hurts to have someone watching your back.

UNDEAD TERROR

Matted fur and rotting flesh, thirty feet high and at times balancing on its hind legs; imagine claws the size of your arm, round yellow eyes that glow in the dark, a flat face, and teeth that look like giant needles. The Undead Terror is something out of your worst nightmares.

Initiative: 8

Melee Attack: 10

Ranged Attack: 4

Defense: 6

Health: 8

Scale: 3

Destroyer: Existing on a much larger scale than normal people, a Terror may destroy buildings and structures normally outside the realm of possibility for even vehicles.

Clod Thrower: Gather up a lump of dirt or rocks or a car and fling it at targets. Functionally, they are always armed for ranged combat.

They've Got Me! (Stunt; successes equal to opponent's Dexterity): On a successful Melee Attack, the Terror spends successes equal to the character's Dexterity to seize them with their prehensile, giant claws. If they still have hold of the character on the next round, the character moves to the Titan's mouth and is attacked with their Melee skill (doing lethal damage with their teeth). When Taken Out, the character is swallowed and considered dead. Characters may then emerge from a local Morgue after the fight is over.

Thick Skin: When taking damage, the Terror is considered to have one level of hard armor. This does not apply to fire or explosive damage but only to bullets and blades.



Rad Spider

Of all the nasty beasties I've run across, I gotta say that I'm not a fan of spiders; they give me the heebies with their furry legs with extra joints and way too many eyes. And when those spiders are big honking ones that appear out of nowhere like one of those popweasel toys... well, let's just say that my dedication to this humble account puts me up close and personal with things I'd rather see growing smaller in my rearview mirror. My pain is your gain, however, because my group learned so much about these crawlies, called Rad Spiders- especially how to murder the bastards.

We first encountered one of these things about a two days' drive from Philly Del Phia, and let me tell you, shit went from zero to sixty in barely a blink, if you know what I mean. We were hauling some "research specimens" back when suddenly a whole mess of legs came scrambling up from the underbrush right in front of us! We managed to avoid a head on, but the critter started chasing us, gaining on our caravan. Someone, maybe Brooks, yelled that we should detach our haul to free up weight. Well, we dumped that faster than a Saltwise drops chum and what do you know, the creepy crawly stopped dead in its tracks, grabbed the Elkhorn we were hauling and dragged it back to the underbrush into some hole it must have been living in. "Aww," Sami said, smiling as they yelled over the engine, "Little guy was just hungry!" I think the look I shot poor Sami let them know that their joke was about as funny as roadkill because they shut up real quick. So yeah, Rad Spiders are fast, and they aren't above chasing you down for a meal. Lucky for you, we got up close and personal with them so that you don't have to.

Most of the time you'll find a solitary Rad Spider; they don't seem too keen on the communal life unless it's time for them to start a family in the spring. If that's the case, you best hope that you don't encounter them during their short mating season of about fifteen days, or find a momma with eggs. Oh, and when those eggs hatch, they like to stay with Momma Rad Spider for about a month, so overall you're looking at a very aggressive springtime for these beasties. Thankfully, they don't like to nest near settlements often, favoring the more desolate areas where they can nab their meals in peace. They remain dormant in the winter; so dormant that it's almost like hibernation.

A single Rad Spider makes its burrow in damn near anything, since the gunk it produces sticks to anything and dries solid as stone. We once encountered one in an old heap of metal and oldcestor refuse. The burrow's trapdoor was a large sign and, let me tell you, that thing was heavy! The inside walls of the burrow are smooth, which makes for a hard time leaving for any poor critter or fool that enters it. This means that if you get grabbed by one, escaping the burrow is rough, so our advice is to avoid that whenever possible. They hunt by peeking out of their burrows, waiting to feel something move close, and then they jump up from their hole to grab whatever is walking by. They feel



prey through vibrations, which explains why driving by a nest is a surefire way to have one chase after your ride. You look like a meal on wheels at that point.

If a Rad Spider gets you out alone, you're pretty much screwed. After our group watched a pair of Rad Spiders take down a Club Tailed Turtle, we learned some horrifying but interesting facts. First, the fangs of Rad Spiders are wicked strong; the hide of one of those turtles is tough, but the spiders had no problem sinking those fangs in. Second, their bite seems to cause drowsiness, fast. That turtle didn't have time to fully tuck in before the poor thing was out. While they seem to have a good amount of strength, it did take a lot of hustle for the pair of Rad Spiders to get that turtle to the burrow. Brooks suggested that someone play distraction while the rest went to check out what the burrow looked like. Not too keen on the idea of going into a burrow big enough to fit a giant turtle, I elected to burn rubber by the burrow and lead the creepy crawlies on a chase while the rest of the group went into the burrow.

Ariah, Sami, Brooks, and Freeda learned a lot. That toxin from the bite? It causes a fast case of necrosis; but considering how out of it the turtle was, per their report, it's safe to assume that the venom has a numbing effect as well. This means that its bite is most definitely worse than its bark.

The best way to avoid being caught by one is to keep your distance, preferably with a fully loaded shotgun to show that sucker why getting closer is a bad idea. Anything with range or a reach on it helps

you fend off a Rad Spider until it decides to find an easier meal. If you're unlucky enough to face one without any protection, stay extremely still. Yeah, I know; it sounds crazy, but it turns out these things can't see for shit even with all of those gross eyes they have. I guess that's why they rely on feeling vibrations to hunt. So play dead, do your best tree impression, become a statue; whatever helps you not move a muscle as it skitters around trying to figure out where you went. Eventually, it should get tired and mosey off back home. From there, carefully and softly move outside of its nesting zone. While it's possible to speed away from it, it's something you should only attempt with a ride. Carts, bikes, or anything else smaller than a proper ride makes you spider lunch. They can spit their venom, but their poor eyesight makes this a last-ditch attempt at best.

A benefit of these nasty buggers is that they are equal opportunity predators. Living or carrion, they eat it. This means that zombies are easy prey since they don't know to be wary. This also means that areas with a Rad Spider are relatively free from the undead, which is good, but potentially bad if having a giant irradiated spider nearby worries you - which it should. Thankfully, we have a few more tips to pass on to make your travels easier in the wasteland.

Rad Spiders are extremely territorial, so give areas where there are signs of spiders a wide berth. What are the signs? Well aside from a lack of zed, there will be some sort of pile or mound where the burrow starts. Also, Rad Spiders mark their territory with some of their venom, which glows at night. These marks are at the edges of a Rad Spider's territory and the faint glow is visible on rocks, trees, or ruins at night. Rad Spiders sleep during the day, so only a lot of activity around the burrow brings it out. So maybe not have your next party by a sleeping spider's burrow, unless you really hate your party guests. Now, an agitated Rad Spider is fast, but only for short bursts, so our advice is to keep moving while you pump that sucker full of lead. Since they hunt and track based on vibration, you can trick them while hiding. Yep, for once the old "throw a rock" trick comes in handy! At the very least it can give you a head start on trying to escape. Now if you have to fight it, blast it with everything you got. Pump it full of holes, set it on fire, try to crush it under something heavy - whatever it takes. The largest of these bad boys is about the size of an average ride, so while it's not the biggest beastie out there, it ain't anything to sniff at.

I still think the best advice is to avoid these things at all costs. We haven't found any use for parts we've scavenged from them, and no one has been dumb enough to try eating one of them. Times can be lean when travelling the wastes, but never that lean. I hope none of y'all have to get up close and personal with them but in case you do, take the advice here to heart and you may just live to tell your friends about the experience over a round of drinks.

CONDITION - SEDATED

The venom of a Rad Spider destroys living tissue, but also has a numbing sedative effect. The combination means bite victims can lose limbs without any accompanying pain to wake them. There have been rumors of survivors coming out of the sleep to find themselves missing arms or legs from the rot. The drowsiness induced by the Rad Spider's venom has been compared to overindulgence in alcohol combined with a cold. This condition affects all rolls that require the Intellect, Might, or Dexterity attributes.

Momentum Trigger: Any time the target fails one of the above rolls.

Resolution: Eight hours of rest and medical attention.

RAD SPIDER

Rad Spiders are fast, strong, and excellent hunters. While normally solitary, pairs or groups of them can be found during the spring, when the spiders mate and the females raise their young.

Initiative: 9 (-2 during the day)

Melee Attack: 8

Ranged Attack: 3 (+3 Enhancement in some situations, see below)

Defense: 4

Health: 6

It's Huge! Rad Spiders have Scale of 2 for melee attacks and defense due to their size. Rad Spiders have been known to grow large, with some making burrows that a Diesel Jock could drive through. Not every Rad Spider grows that large, however, so Storyguides should only use this if they feel the players need the challenge ramped up.

Crushing Bite: If a Rad Spider damages the target, it may spend extra successes to use the Stunt *Establish Grapple* to give the target the Grapple Condition (**DR:E**, p. 112). They cannot use the Gain Control, Pin, Takedown, or Throw stunts on the Rad Spider. To use the *Break Free* Stunt, they must spend successes equal to the number it spent on the *Establish Grapple* Stunt. If the target does not break free within one turn after the grapple is established, the Rad Spider injects them with venom and the target gains the Sedated Condition (see sidebar.) Each round without treatment causes one Injury Condition as their flesh necrotizes and rots, though they do not feel pain from the injury.

Venom Spit: A Rad Spider uses its venom as a ranged attack if pursuing a fleeing target. This attack gains +3 Enhancement if the target is in the Rad Spider's burrow. If the target is hit with the venom, it begins to rot the organic material it touches; clothing, rope, and flesh sizzles and pops. Unless the venom is washed off with water or other neutral liquid, the target takes one Injury Condition and gains the Radiation Poisoning Condition (**DR:E**, p. 128) after three rounds. If the target is Taken Out while under this condition, they go straight to Bleeding Out.



Gun Monkey

The first time I encountered a Gun Monkey, I thought I was just seeing a really hairy band of Raiders. An entire troop surrounded me and the caravan I was guarding with my crew, and began waving their guns around. After all of us got over the fact that these weren't raiders and were friggin' monkeys, we wound up chuckling a bit. Serves us right, dropping our guard; the lead started flying, and suddenly the situation was roughly 1000% less funny. We managed to drive them off, but it was more trouble than I signed up for when taking the escort job. So now let me tell you about one of the strangest beasts we've seen so far.

Gun Monkeys seem to conduct their strange reign of terror up by Old York, around the Brokelands. At least, I haven't seen any outside of there. They live in heavily forested areas, and venture out to raid for supplies - mostly ammo. We haven't seen them use their guns for anything other than raiding. When not looking for supplies, these Gun Monkeys seem content in their trees, searching for food like any other critter. The fact that they raid encampments is still a puzzle. It seems they use the guns for raids, but only raid to gain ammo with food as a secondary goal. Part of me suspects that guns are used in some sort of weird mating ritual, where the male monkeys try to show off who's the strongest - or who has the best aim.

At first glance, these monkeys don't look like anything special. They've got mangy and matted fur, stink to high heaven, and make the worst screeching noises imaginable. A troop of them screeching and hollering is honestly worse than having to deal with them.

I keep something to plug up my ears in case I see the buggers again, and I suggest you do the same. It should help; one of the rovers in that caravan we escorted couldn't hear and seemed to come out of things a lot better than the rest of us. Poor guy ended up having to take care of a group of folks puking their guts out and too dizzy to do much of anything. He was a champ about it, though, and I made sure to do right by him once we got to the settlement. Gave him some of the ammo those monkeys left, and Freeda gave him a book to write in. It was the least we could do after he put up with a whole convoy that was nearly useless for a day.

If you encounter a Gun Monkey, be prepared for its friends nearby. These little fuckers are notorious for having a lone monkey visible while the others sneak around or jump tree to tree, getting into a better position. Once they have you surrounded, the visible one starts trying to get you to run straight for the rest. This is usually accomplished by shooting wildly in your direction. If you find yourself in this situation, know that you're likely to encounter at least three more ready to show you the business end of their guns. Now, for all their shooting and whooping and flinging literal shit, the main goal of these guys is to rob you for all of your ammo and anything else that attracts them: shiny objects, food, really anything if it strikes their fancy.



Larger groups of them raid small settlements. The walls don't do much to keep them out since they can just climb them as easily as they climb any tree. Once inside, they make their way to wherever they think the largest store of weapons and food. Gun Monkeys prefer making these settlement raids at night, but that doesn't mean the daytime is going to make taking these critters on any easier. That said, they prefer the night because they're unfortunately smart enough to know that they have better cover under darkness. Most Gun Monkeys troops have one to three monkeys that can squeeze through small, open windows and let the larger monkeys in. Each troop has one larger monkey that seems to be the leader, who coordinates the raids and attacks through a combination of sign language and their own vocal coordination. We know they use sign language because well, that deaf Rover I mentioned? He let us know afterwards that the Gun Monkeys were using sign language to let each other know about where things were and basic instructions like directions to move.

Now, let's get down to the meat of how to deal with these annoying beasties. You heard the expression "Never bring a knife to a gunfight?" It's your new mantra. Repeat it. Don't forget it.

However, don't think you're screwed if you leave your shotgun at home. When the monkey first sets you up, they don't have their guns out. This means that you have a moment to act quickly and either charge at it to try to grab their gun or find something to drive them off with. Throw rocks, make yourself big and scary, or try scaring it off with something on fire. If they don't have their guns pointed at you then they are likely to run away.

If these monkeys are locked and loaded, your best bet is to move fast. While they can and will shoot at you, they are still just damn monkeys with guns. Most of them aren't as good of a shot as your average wall guard, and moving fast makes you a harder target to hit. Run like you're being chased by a Rad Gator or something. That's right, zig-zag so they can't get a bead on you. It may feel silly while you're doing it, but at least you'll be able to escape with your life. If you can outlast them, I have good news for you. Monkeys don't wear pants, so except for the occasional bandolier, once they run out of ammo those guns are just clubs. And you can take a monkey with a club, right? If you're travelling by caravan, just keep moving if you see one of these things. If they start screeching and howling, kick that caravan in high gear and plug your ears.

Overall, Gun Monkeys aren't the worst thing you'll see, but the absolute bizarreness of these creatures is what gets you in a mess of trouble. They may not look like much, but they absolutely ruin your day if you aren't expecting them. If you're alright with losing valuables, then sure, pay them off with ammo, food, or whatever else. But then that just means the little highwaymen are going to do it to the next unlucky survivor they find, and you don't want to encourage that behavior, do you? I once saw a sign in some old place in the Brokelands that said "Please do not feed the monkeys" and that seems like pretty solid advice to us.



GUN MONKEY

Gun Monkeys are simple monkeys that have learned how to use guns somehow, operating in troops of four to ten. There is always at least one Gun Monkey Scout and exactly one Gun Monkey Brigand. Gun Monkey Troops operate in troops at all times. If there is a solitary Gun Monkey, that means something a lot meaner and scarier got to their troop.

GUN MONKEY SCOUT

Gun Monkey Scouts are often small or young Gun Monkeys that are faster and more agile than their larger troop mates. While not much of a threat on their own, Gun Monkey Scouts are never without at least three troop mates. Gun Monkey Scouts are usually equipped with light pistols and know rudimentary sign language.

Initiative: 7

Melee Attack: 3

Ranged Attack: 4(+2 Enhancement)

Defense: 5

Health: 3

Tight Spaces? No Problem!: Gun Monkey Scouts have a 2 Enhancement to their Initiative or their defense when maneuvering in small places.

Suppressing Fire: Gun Monkey Scouts often act as bait or decoys for a troop ambush. They are able to use the small pistols they are given to herd victims towards the larger and older monkeys. This ability allows the Gun Monkey Scout to have +1 Scale when attacking larger opponents. For example, a Gun Monkey Scout affects a Scale 2 vehicle as if both were Scale 2. To affect a Scale 3 vehicle, the Gun Monkey Scout must spend bonus successes. However, a Gun Monkey Scout still has a Scale of 1 against another opponent that had a Scale of 1.

Screech from Hell: This ability uses the ranged attack dice and has Shockwave (**DR:E**, p. 97). If successful, all targets able to hear the screech gain a Stress Condition. This attack can only be used once every scene.

GUN MONKEY SOLDIER

Gun Monkey Soldiers are the average Gun Monkeys that make up the bulk of Gun Monkey Troops. They are often equipped with rifles or larger handguns and know rudimentary sign language.

Initiative: 6

Melee Attack: 4 (+2 or +3 Enhancement; see below)

Ranged Attack: 5

Defense: 4

Health: 4

Contaminated Bullets: Gun Monkeys are filthy creatures, and their bullets are similarly disgusting. If struck by a contaminated bullet, take a Stress Condition in addition to any Injury Conditions.

Scoped Out: Gun Monkey Soldiers often have rifles with scopes attached. This gives one ranged attack +3 Enhancements once per scene. Otherwise, ranged attacks have +2 Enhancement.

Screech from Hell: This ability uses the ranged attack dice and has Shockwave (**DR:E**, p. 97). If successful, all targets able to hear the screech gain a Stress Condition. This attack can only be used once every scene.

GUN MONKEY BRIGAND

Gun Monkey Brigands are the leaders of Gun Monkey Troops. They are larger and older than Gun Monkey Soldiers, and seem to have some knowledge of tactics. They often have shotguns and know rudimentary sign language. These formidable creatures are known to be able to coordinate their troops with alarming intelligence and efficiency.

Initiative: 5

Melee Attack: 4

Ranged Attack: 6 (+2 Enhancement)

Defense: 4

Health: 5

Bolstering Howl: A Gun Monkey Brigand is an impressive leader, all things considered. They are able to grant their +2 Enhancement to a target within the Field that the howl encompasses. The target may not receive another Enhancement from Bolstering Howl until it has used the current one.

Contaminated Bullets: Gun Monkeys are filthy creatures, and their bullets are similarly disgusting. If struck by a contaminated bullet, take a Stress Condition in addition to any Injury Conditions.

Screech from Hell: This ability uses the ranged attack dice and has Shockwave (**DR:E**, p. 97). If successful, all targets able to hear the screech gain a Stress Condition. This attack can only be used once every scene.

CONCLUDING NOTES

Two years ago, my crew and I took a job to escort a bunch of Pure Bloods across a longer trek than I've ever taken a group that big. Winter winds bit us the whole way and the Pure Bloods had some cockamamie map that they thought was going to lead to some sort of promised land bunker full of supplies. The "treasure map" should have been my first clue, since I've never seen one of those that wasn't more trouble than it was worth. My second clue should have been ringing bells as loud as some nightwatch newbie realizing he was sitting too close to the fire and now his shoe laces are lit up. I needed the supplies, though, and I thought I knew the territory well enough to get twelve Pure Bloods over to where they wanted to go.

Six times my crew finished this run and all six times had zombies somewhere along the path. I was pretty convinced there was a Morgue somewhere in the area, and over the course of these trips we'd triangulated the most likely location. I say "we," but Freeda really did all the work; she's still one of the best trackers I've ever met, and the kind of mapper that makes me look at all other people trying to chart the land like some half-baked kids scratching the ground and putting down stones to plan a pretend raid. Freeda was the kind of Natural One that was a true survivor; she'd always have her knives, compass, map tools, fire starter, rope, and other handy tools that would help her and us out in a pinch.

Freeda assured me that, based on her maps, the Morgue was not close. We took the job.

Final Lesson 1: I don't know everything

About a week out on our trip we were less than half of the distance and should have been two thirds of the way done. Mia, the de facto leader of the Pure Bloods, argued with me about supplies and the rate we were making time through the woods. More people meant more opportunities for things to go wrong with twisted ankles and bathroom breaks and Mia was irate that they hadn't yet gotten to their destination. My argument that myself and my crew were not at fault stood iron clad, but Mia didn't see it that way and our argument went from logical to loud. Stupid move, but having her dress down my crew in front of her people would have lost my authority and we'd cut

down a handful of walking corpses the day before so I figured we were through the worst of it.

Mia was ticked off, though. In the fight we had lost her second-in-command, Raj. At the time, I'd already figured out that Mia and Raj had a history or were more than just the two ranking members, and I knew there was going to be some kind of argument, but I hoped it would get saved for the end of the trip.

Final Lesson 2: What you don't know is trying to kill you

In hindsight, the first one to get taken was a Pure Blood named Mark. He'd stepped outside of the fire circle to answer nature's call with some joke about adding a river to the land. We only figured this out later when we were counting heads. Mia was still shouting at me even as she stomped off. She was choked off mid curse, and that's how we knew the shit was on. My crew circled up on instinct and tried to coordinate the Pure Bloods like we'd done with the fight two days beforehand, but without Mia to coordinate them the Pure Bloods were falling apart. Some of them were grabbing supplies instead of weapons, as if protecting jerky matters when you're getting stabbed.

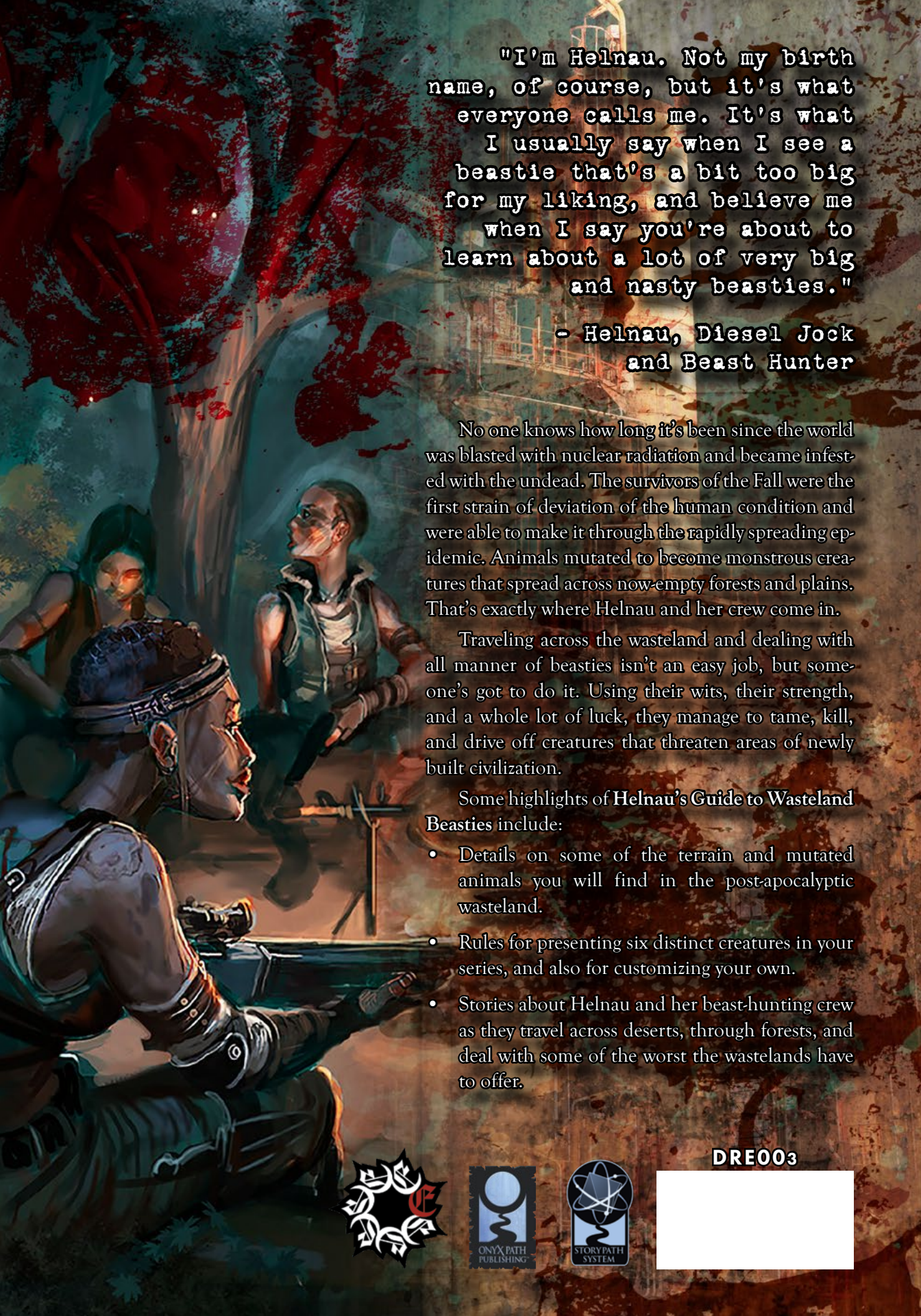
Jetty, the only one of the Pure Bloods that wasn't panicking, managed to get into the circle. Whatever moved in the darkness did so fast. I heard clicks from the darkness as they were snatched. There might have been more than one, and the clicks were them talking to each other. I shouted for everyone to circle up, but in just a few seconds most of them were gone and everything was still. I checked in with my crew, and we stood there with blades and guns out for the rest of the night; we only moved our group enough to get back to the wood pile and keep the fire going. I told the remaining Pure Bloods right then and there that I didn't want their money; I was getting me and my crew out of there the next day.

Final Lesson 3: Tell people what you saw

Freeda's map had marked down a possible town based on from where other travelers had told us they'd set out, and at least that treasure map bore fruit on that trip. My crew and I made it to town and suffered the indignities of inspection to make sure we weren't some sort of undead, or a trick to get behind their defenses. Finally, they deigned to share a thin broth with us and some clean bandages.

Some of the people in town were interested in the map to the bunker the Pure Bloods had given us, and traded that in exchange for supplies enough to get us back to our normal wintering quarters. Never did find out if they made it to the bunker. When we got back, supplies were tight but I wrote up what I'd seen and paid to get word back to the area about what happened. Word is that I'm still wanted by the remaining Pure Bloods for questioning, but I spoke my peace of what little I knew and would prefer to not find out if they want me for their own sense of justice.

So read this book. Be less stupid. Help others be less stupid. There's your inspiring speech.



"I'm Helnau. Not my birth name, of course, but it's what everyone calls me. It's what I usually say when I see a beastie that's a bit too big for my liking, and believe me when I say you're about to learn about a lot of very big and nasty beasties."

- Helnau, Diesel Jock
and Beast Hunter

No one knows how long it's been since the world was blasted with nuclear radiation and became infested with the undead. The survivors of the Fall were the first strain of deviation of the human condition and were able to make it through the rapidly spreading epidemic. Animals mutated to become monstrous creatures that spread across now-empty forests and plains. That's exactly where Helnau and her crew come in.

Traveling across the wasteland and dealing with all manner of beasties isn't an easy job, but someone's got to do it. Using their wits, their strength, and a whole lot of luck, they manage to tame, kill, and drive off creatures that threaten areas of newly built civilization.

Some highlights of *Helnau's Guide to Wasteland Beasties* include:

- Details on some of the terrain and mutated animals you will find in the post-apocalyptic wasteland.
- Rules for presenting six distinct creatures in your series, and also for customizing your own.
- Stories about Helnau and her beast-hunting crew as they travel across deserts, through forests, and deal with some of the worst the wastelands have to offer.

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