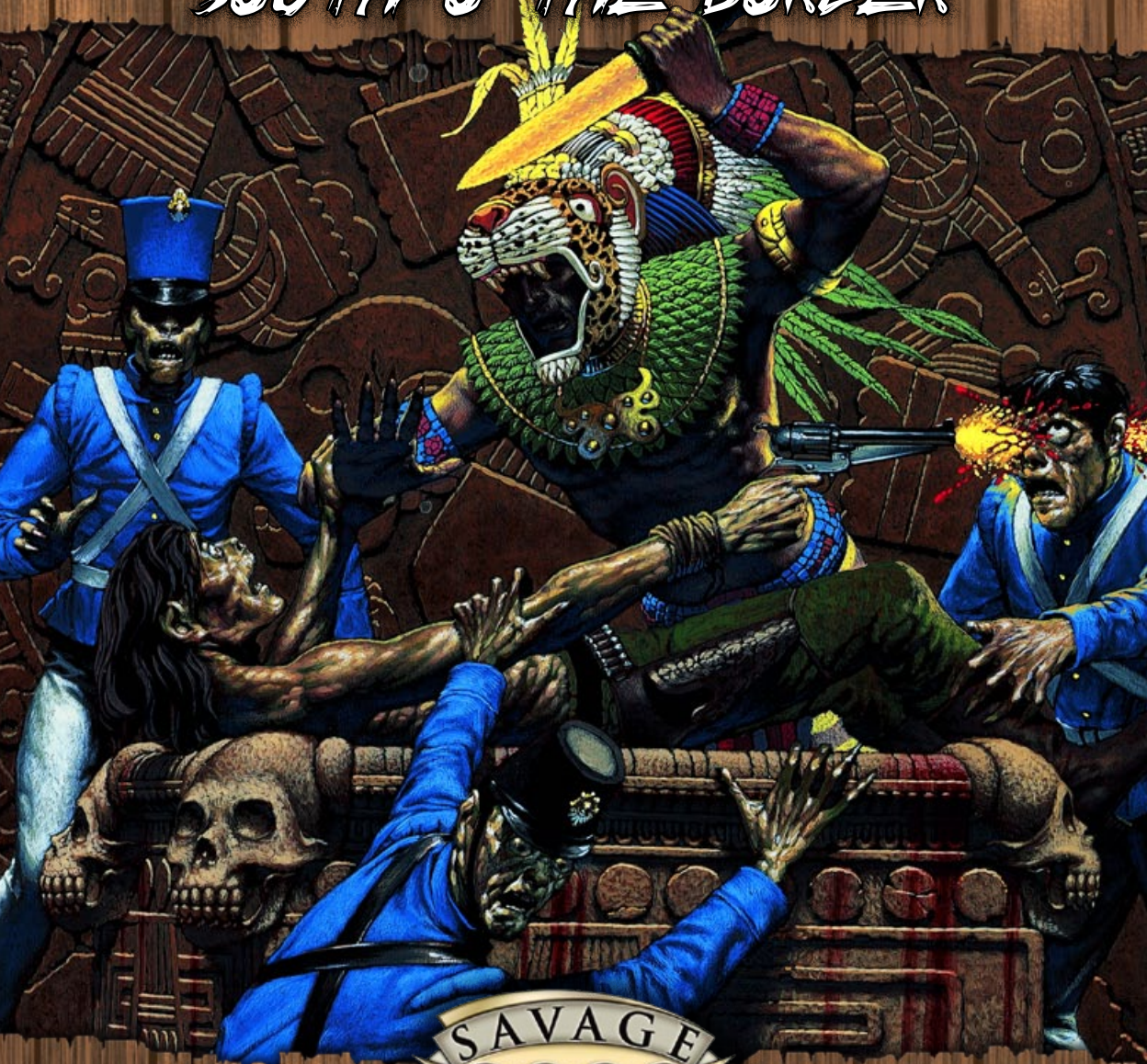




# TRAIL GUIDE: SOUTH O' THE BORDER







# Trail Guide: South o' the Border

SAVAGE WORLDS BY SHANE LACY HENSLEY

## Credits & Acknowledgements

BY MATTHEW CUTTER

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL: STEVEN S. LONG

EDITING: JOEL KINSTLE, PIOTR KORYS

TYPESETTING AND LAYOUT: JOEL KINSTLE

ARTWORK: RICHARD TIMOTHY BROADSTREET, PAUL CARRICK,  
JIM CRABTREE, TOM FOWLER, DAN FRAZIER,  
PAUL (PROF.) HERBERT, JEFF MENGES,  
WILLIAM O'CONNOR, JORDAN PEACOCK,  
ELLYM SIRAC

MAPS: AARON ACEVEDO

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# THE TOMBSTONE EPIGRAPH

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Special Travel Edition

Vol. 1, No. 1

Sunday, May 23, 1880

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## Author's Note

Things are changing fast in the Weird West.

The Rail Barons' marathon race of 1878-79 officially ended with the catastrophic Battle of Lost Angels, a clash whose blows resonated across all of North America, as far north as icebound Alaska and down into the emerald jungles of southern Mexico. It could be that we've not yet seen the full scope of the consequences, and some disasters have yet to unfold.

Now, with Santa Anna's Californian adventure and stunning defeat, the future seems as wide open as it is fraught with uncertainty. In this trail guide I hope to illuminate some of those uncertainties, and make the myriad possibilities a little more plain.

My name is Phineas P. Gage. A railroad agent by trade, I have been employed by every major Rail Baron at one time or another, and some other railroad companies besides. In my day I've personally secured over 100 rights-of-way. In my spare time I have been known to scratch out a traveler's guidebook or two, and it is for this reason I was tapped by Editor John Clum to take up the mantle of Mexican correspondent for the *Tombstone Epitaph*.

It is also my sad duty to inform our readership of the former Mexican correspondent's disappearance and probable demise. Charles Bascomb,

world traveler and sometime author, was last seen in March of 1879, as he departed Tombstone to investigate unexplained murders in the coastal city of Veracruz. No one has heard from him since, and most presume him dead. We ask our readership to report any information about Mr. Bascomb's whereabouts to the *Tombstone Epitaph* office in Tombstone, Arizona Territory, CSA, care of the Editor.

Regards,  
Phineas P. Gage



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## Santa Anna's Last Stand

Until recently, any treatise on the perils and places of Mexico was focused first and foremost on General Santa Anna and his so-called Army of the Night—or *Army of the Dead*, depending on who you talk to. The topic was well-justified, to be sure, given that any visit to Mexico requires passing through the Mojave or Sonoran Desert, where one was almost sure to meet up with Ol' One-Leg's many patrols.

With the so-called California Invasion of 1880, such considerations have been shattered, blown to smithereens as surely as a railroad trestle packed with nitro. If the words of witnesses can be believed, the march of Santa

Anna and his Mexican Army upon Lost Angels played out like a verse from *Revelation* come to life. They say the dead got up and walked by the hundreds of thousands. Others claim in their rapture that angels of vengeance stood stalwart and proud upon the city's walls. Again and again the angry dead crashed against the gates, like a surging, unclean tide.

The black-frocked Reverend Grimme appeared upon the walls with a host of his minions, and the tenor of the battle changed swiftly. First Grimme called down a clap of thunder from the heavens that slew scores of Mexican soldiers and instantly obliterated the dead. Then the angelic figures waded into the fray, terrible swift swords gleaming in the last rays of daylight, cutting down invaders and routing the few living soldiers on the field.





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# GUIDE TO OLD MEXICO

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Grimme's loyal servants called down their own, lesser miracles to smite the foe.

To be fair, the "trustworthy witnesses" to date are all loyal members of the Church of Lost Angels, which makes their reliability more than a little suspect in our eyes. No doubt something odd—maybe even *uncanny*—happened on that battlefield, but no conflicting accounts have yet arisen.

What we can tell you for sure, Dear Reader, is that the northern arm of the Mexican Army is no more. General Santa Anna himself is said to have gone missing somewhere in the far Maze, on a secret mission with his most elite troops. Only one account of Santa Anna's fate has surfaced so far, and that from the owner of a bait shop, Stanley Fish, whose establishment stands on a lonely, seaswept mesa. *[The tales of Stanley Fish, while colorful, have been deemed gravely unreliable, and his account therefore redacted. -Editor]*

Practically speaking, what this means for Mexico-bound travelers is a lot less fretting about running into Mexican troops. That doesn't mean one should forget the French Foreign Legion, the *Juaristas*, or the stealthy and vicious predators that stalk the border regions by night, and by day. Take it from us—you don't want to head south o' the border unless you've got a little salt to you.

For all you greenhorns, we hear Fort Lincoln is nice this time of year.

## The "Other" Civil War

No matter what you're thinking, it's Maximillian, the Emperor of Mexico, who still wields the power to utterly change the face of the Southwest. He's got a fleet superior to that of the Bluebellies or the Rebs, and an army ten times the size of anything the North or South could assemble on short notice. Problem is, he's about to be standing at the center of a full-blown civil war of his own.

With the failure of Santa Anna to take Lost Angels, dominoes have begun to fall. Attacks upon Mexican Army supply lines in the south by rebel *Porfiriatistas* have increased, and the north has seen countless hit-and-run attacks by *Juaristas* of the People's Government upon the Legion's border forts. Maximillian is reportedly eager to begin campaigns to suppress the rebellion, but other informants—who shall remain nameless in order to protect their lives—claim that Maximillian's closest advisors, like Field Marshal Achille Bazain, have been warning him of some other, greater threat.

For now the *Porfiriatistas* and *Juaristas* are primary dangers, since both factions used to rule Mexico and both of them want it back. In the north Benito Juárez's government-in-exile hides, while in the south General Porfirio Diaz leads an army of guerillas.

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## Geography

Mexico confronts travelers with a lot of different climates and terrain, so let's take a few moments to sort them out.

The mighty Rio Grande River forms about half of Mexico's border with the CSA. The rest of the border stretches across the Mojave Desert to touch the Pacific Ocean between San Diego and Mexicali.

The northern third of Mexico consists of the Sonoran Desert, a southern continuation of the Mojave. Full of red rock, scrub brush, cacti, and canyons, it also hosts several border garrisons of the French Foreign Legion, placed here to hunt down the *Juaristas*. The Legion, as they're known around these parts, are not lightly messed with. Northern Mexico is a harsh land, home to wild and hungry predators of all kinds. Despite the Legion's presence, it is still considered the domain of the *Juaristas*.

The central, mountainous section of Mexico is far more temperate and cool, and is known as the Valley of Mexico. "Valley" is a deceptive term, since most of the region is over 7,000 feet in elevation. It remains warm most of the time, but there's more water and a slightly longer growing season. Most of Mexico's population dwells here, where the French Empire and Maximilian's armies hold sway.

Southern Mexico tends to be warm and humid, unpleasantly so for "northerners" from the Great Maze, Arizona, and Texas. Much of the area

is mountainous, but almost all of it is covered by green, steamy jungles, especially the Yucatán Peninsula. The Phantom General, Porfirio Diaz, claims southern Mexico as his own, but some whisper that its true rulers are hidden behind acres of trees and vines. The Old Gods, say the folk tales, remain in the forgotten places of the Maya and Aztecs, waiting for their time to come round again at last.

## Camarón

The village of Camarón, where a whole company of the French Foreign Legion was destroyed by Mexican soldiers during the French invasion, remains abandoned even today. It lies about halfway between Matamoros and Veracruz, north of the rail line. Hardly anyone goes there, for they say the spirits of dead Legionnaires haunt the trails all around it.

## Chihuahua

Chihuahua's name derives from an ancient language, and means "between two waters." It is a relatively green grotto in the middle of northern Mexico's Sonoran Desert, and serves as the de facto seat of Benito Juárez' government-in-exile. The town was founded in 1709 by a Spanish explorer named Antonio Deza y Ulloa. In the 171 years since then, Chihuahua has grown from a meeting place for missionaries to a major center of Mexican industry, and a seat of government for the presidencies of Benito Juárez and Porfirio Diaz.

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## Colima

Colima is one of the oldest cities in Mexico, founded on the site of a former Aztec city. It has the greatest concentration of Zapotec Indians and pureblood Aztecs of any region in Mexico.

## Copper Canyon

Copper Canyon is one of the northern desert's most prominent features. It's not really one canyon, but actually a massive series of gorges stretching from Los Mochis, on the northern coast of Sinaloa, almost to the city of Chihuahua. In some spots it's bigger and more impressive than the Grand Canyon...and more dangerous too!

## Guadalajara

Founded in 1532, Guadalajara became wealthy and powerful thanks to the farms and silver mines of the region. Because it was far away from the political centers of Veracruz and Mexico City, it developed an independent streak still evident in the city's population, who are known as *Tapatíos*. Cross them or try to boss them around, and visitors learn pretty quick that such behavior simply isn't tolerated here.

## Matamoros

A small waystop on the rail line between Veracruz and Mexico City, Matamoros has traditionally been a farming and ranching community. These days the rail depot is used to export goods to the coast, and the



small town is home to a large garrison of Mexican regulars and Legionnaires.

## Mexico City

Cortés founded Mexico City on the site of the Aztec capital, *Tenochtitlan*, after he ordered the lagoons filled with earth. Using Aztec slave labor, he built the city in a European style, but along the old Aztec grid pattern. The Aztec ceremonial (and sacrificial) center became a public square ten acres across, known as the *Zócalo*, paved with stones from the Aztecs' primary temple. Now the city serves as the seat of power for Maximillian's French Empire.

Mexico City is located in the heart of the nation's central uplands. A railroad line accesses the city from Veracruz on the eastern coast, and many roads and trails lead to it overland. The nearby volcanoes *Popocatepetl* and *Itzacíhuatl* are prominent landmarks.



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## Monterrey

The biggest and most important city of northern Mexico, and undoubtedly the primary target for any initial strike the CSA might muster, is Monterrey. The city is capital of the state of Nuevo León. Founded in 1596, it's known to the Mexicans as *El Sultán del Norte* (Sultan of the North) because of its profitable industries and hellraising atmosphere.

## Veracruz

The other major city of central Mexico, and the other end of the axis of French-controlled Mexico, is Veracruz. Founded by Cortés, it's served as a gateway to Mexico for invaders ever since.

## La Gente

If you have the opportunity to travel in Mexico, you'll find a land not untouched by the famine, death, war, and disease that plague so many other places. The rampant misery in Mexico fuels the growing fires of discontent, and the civil war rapidly comes to a boil.

But under all the political machinations you'll find a nation of gracious and welcoming people, if you look hard enough. After an unfortunate encounter with knife-happy banditos west of Chihuahua, this intrepid reporter ended up gut-stabbed,

denuded of lucre, and left for dead. I was taken in by a family—father, mother, grandmother, and five children. They bandaged me and gave me a place to sleep. The next day they fed me, and we shared stories in pidgin English. Without any request for repayment, they sent me on my way.

Never count on such good fortune, Reader, but be aware that it exists.

## Unexplained Events

Although word out of Mexico has been limited due to the civil war, there persist tales of encounters with terrifying, fiery beings on the slopes of Mexico's biggest volcanoes. Lately I've heard of new towns springing up in isolated valleys throughout Mexico, where the gates are always closed and no travelers are permitted inside.

Everywhere society is strained by relations between those descended from the native Aztecs, and those whose forefathers were Spaniards. Different political views are just about to rip the country into three bloody pieces. Everywhere a dull patina of fear colors every perspective, and leaves folks ready to commit desperate acts in defense of their lives. Mexico seems now more than ever like a powder keg about to blow.

# Marshal's Handbook

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Now that we've given them pesky players somethin' to chew on, let's get right down to brass tacks, Marshal. Behind its shifting political alliances and warring factions, behind the pastoral veneer of its countryside, Mexico is clutched in the grip of malevolent powers and dwells under a cloud of dread.

Though the Reckoners have ultimate influence in the lands south o' the border, without a doubt the reigning fearmonger is an ancient, ornery varmint called Cipactli, who's been around since the days of the Aztecs. We'll tell you more about her and her ilk later on.

## SETTING RULES

The following Setting Rules hold sway over all of Mexico, making life a little easier for the bad guys—and pure Hell for your heroes.

### Fear's Touch

The power of Fear is more palpable in Mexico than anywhere else on earth. Since the Lords of the Obsidian Blade (more about them below) ultimately serve the Reckoners, high levels of Fear help them and hinder their enemies. After fostering so much Fear, the Lords have been rewarded by the Reckoners for their dread loyalty.

Whenever an Aztec sorcerer-priest uses a Black Magic power that causes damage, add the local Fear Level to the damage roll. Likewise, when using any power that calls for an opposed roll, the sorcerer gains a bonus to his roll equal to the Fear Level.

In practical terms, this means Xitlan and his allies are exceedingly dangerous on their own turf—yet another reason why heroes should be of Legendary Rank (or close to it) before they head down Mexico way.

### Sacred Wells

The *cenotes* (seh-NO-tays), or Mayan sacred wells, usually appeal to travelers as a source of fresh water or ancient treasures. People down the ages have thrown precious objects into the mirror-smooth pools as offerings to the gods. The posse with a mind to begin a salvage operation is almost certain to recover items of jade, silver, and gold, not to mention the occasional priceless artifact. Trouble is, the locals rarely take a kindly stance toward gringos who try to plunder their ancient sites of power.

At a cenote, the barrier between the world of the living and the world of spirits is thin. Arcane casters who physically touch the cenote's surface (usually with one's fingers) gain +2 on rolls to enact *exorcism*, *detect/conceal*





arcana, mind rider, sanctify, vision quest, or any other power used to contact the spirit world. Additionally, these powers cost half as many Power Points as usual (round up), but the typical amount to maintain. If the caster stops touching the cenote's surface, the Power Point cost returns to normal.

Rarely, cenotes are actually portals into the shadowy Hunting Grounds. Some require a certain action or word to function, some are only open at certain times of day or night, and still others remain open at all times. In all cases, a body has to dive into the depths to eventually surface on the other side. Manitous and other malevolent beings tend to lurk near cenotes, hoping to snag unwary swimmers between the worlds.

## RUMBLINGS OF WAR

Mexico is a land divided between three powers, and their relationship has never been more contentious. In 1862 the French invaded Mexico in an attempt to recoup their war debts, thus creating the French Empire of Mexico—as personified by Emperor Maximillian in Mexico City—which still rules over the middle regions of the country. The People's Government-in-exile, or *Juaristas*, led by Benito Juárez, claims most of Mexico's northwest. The rebel *Porfiriatistas* own the far south, under the command of their Phantom General, Porfirio Diaz.

### The Imperial Government

Emperor Maximillian rules Mexico with the Empress Carlota at his side. He receives advice from an Imperial Council

made up of several ministers and other important officials. They meet at the Emperor's behest to discuss various issues, but they have no real authority as a body.

The "first among equals" in the Council is, by all accounts, Arturo Balthazar de Morelos, the Minister of Justice. He's responsible for overseeing the court system and the *Policia Federal*—better known as the Rurales. There is also a Minister of Trade, a Minister of War, and the Emperor's close friend Jesús Flores y Maceda serves as a Minister without Portfolio. Most suspect him of being a "fixer" for the Emperor's more thorny problems.

Now that the Mexican Army's northern arm has broken itself on the shoals of Lost Angels, control of the military has ceded to Field Marshal Achille Bazain, supposedly one of Napoleon III's oldest and dearest friends. Bazain is a crusty old bird who travels around with a few bodyguards and runs the army with the help of second-in-command Colonel Philippe Castelnau and his aide-de-camp Corporal Willette, who was once a Legionnaire but somehow impressed Bazain enough to be appointed to run his staff.

The Mexican Army is composed of native troops, imported French soldiers, and about 8,000 members of the French Foreign Legion—none of whom are actually French, by the way.

Bazain has been warning the Emperor about Xitlan for years, but Santa Anna's defeat and the growing unrest have distracted Maximillian's attention. Meanwhile, Xitlan makes the final preparations to complete his master plan. Bazain, for his part, searches desperately for someone of influence in the CSA or US who will take action against the Secret Empire.

## The People's Government

Benito Juárez is a Zapotec Indian by birth, who served as President of Mexico from 1855 until 1862. During that time, his actions on behalf of Mexico's *campesinos*—or peasant class—led to the War of the Reform, which culminated in the French invasion of Mexico City in 1862. Juárez fled to the exile of northwest Mexico with his trusted followers.

Taking a page out of the Apaches' book, he adopted the life of the outlaw. Rather than fighting costly battles, his ragtag forces conduct night raids and live off the land. There's a simple reason why Juárez became the People's Rebel—he's a good man, and people like him. Recently he's been trying to disrupt Mexican supply lines to the Legion's border forts, and though he has no great love for *Americanos* he would be likely to ally with heroes looking to take down Xitlan.

## The Rebels

In most ways, the *Porfiriatistas* of Mexico's far south are the exact opposite of Juárez's faction. They claim to be "protecting" the people of Mexico, but in return they take whatever they want, when they want it. In general, the *campesinos* of southern Mexico know that to defy the *Porfiriatistas* means torture and death.

The rebels number around 3,600 men, under the command of the dreaded Phantom General, Porfirio Diaz. Diaz has been around Mexican politics for as long as Juárez, but where Juárez's experiences kindled within him a sympathy for Mexico's people, Diaz's military career only hardened his cruelty and selfishness. When the French invaded in '62, Diaz took his forces and vanished into the jungles of the Yucatán Peninsula,



where he's been hiding out and running raids ever since.

The Phantom General is a bit of a prickly pear, but even he might serve as an ally to heroes working in Mexico. Since the Great Quake, Diaz has become aware of some other presence in the jungles, one that hovers like ghosts around the old Aztec and Mayan ruins. The peasants know of it too, an ancient being returned to the earth to cause suffering for all of humanity—they call it Cipactli.

Diaz doesn't believe in old *señoritas'* tales of monsters in the jungle; he wants to kill whatever it is just for challenging his rulership.

### Bayou Vermilion & Mexico

One of the devil's bargains Santa Anna made during his most recent tour was with Baron Simone LaCroix, owner of the Bayou Vermilion railroad and practitioner of the darkest voodoo magics. Santa Anna came to believe that all Xitlan's powers somehow came from Baron LaCroix. The general figured he could cut out the middle man and go straight to the source for his revenant dead soldiers.

He got nowhere with that, but he was able to strike a different sort of deal with LaCroix. In return for Bayou Vermilion ferrying Mexican soldiers all over the Southwest, the general agreed not to damage any Bayou Vermilion property as they laid track toward the City of Lost Angels. In the end the deal wasn't much good for either party—it didn't help Santa Anna in his final battle, and it didn't help LaCroix win the Great Rail Wars.

What it did was make Xitlan an undying enemy of B.V. Fearing a threat to his own influence and power, Xitlan

focused the terrible might of the Secret Empire upon Bayou Vermilion. These attacks have cost LaCroix countless tons of rolling stock and resulted in the kidnapping and bloody sacrifice of hundreds of Bayou Vermilion employees.

Until recently LaCroix was hesitant to go after Xitlan, even though he was certain Santa Anna's advisor was ultimately responsible for the attacks. With Santa Anna's fall, Baron LaCroix would like nothing more than to see Xitlan destroyed. He has only just begun his investigations (both arcane and mundane) and not yet hired any freelancers or sent his own troops after the elusive sorcerer. That's certain to change, and soon.

### The Secret Empire

Xitlan's an Aztec shaman, all right, and he was born centuries ago. He witnessed firsthand the destruction of his civilization by whites. Now he's sworn revenge against the white man, and works tirelessly toward that end.

Until recently, he provided Santa Anna with the legions of walkin' dead that comprised his *Ejército de los Muertos*. He kept them under control by feeding them meat containing a special herbal mixture called *plantagrato*—a crop grown on only one plantation, near Mexico City in the ruins of Teotihuacán.

Since Santa Anna's fall, the Lords of the Obsidian Blade, also called the Secret Empire, have stepped up their timetable. Xitlan maintains an extensive network of pureblood Aztecs, almost all of whom have worked their way into positions of power, or at least positions that would allow for an easy assassination. For example, one of the Emperor's personal servants at Chapultepec Castle is an Aztec who serves Xitlan. With a mere

word from the ancient sorcerer, the servant will turn a knife upon his masters.

Xitlan has also been building his own little army in the ruins of Teotihuacán. Fearsome jaguar warriors train for their return to power in an ancient city patrolled by legions of the dead and even more fearsome things.

Santa Anna got his chance to invade the Great Maze, but it didn't put him back in power like he hoped. So Xitlan makes preparations to release his zombie army from the City of the Dead, conduct an apocalyptic ritual on the slopes of Popocatepetl, and call upon his Aztec followers to rise up across the land. Then, it is said, fire will ooze out of the earth and burn away the white man's taint forever.

Even Xitlan doesn't know what happens after that.

Xitlan was "inspired" long ago by Raven himself to set off a chain of volcanic eruptions that will destroy Mexico City and supposedly put the Lords of the Obsidian Blade in power forever, returning Mexico to its former glory. That's almost true, but it's still not the whole story.

Xitlan's plan will put him in power, but it will also release one of the Reckoners' greatest evils—Cipactli—upon the earth, and likely turn all of Mexico into a blasted Deadland.

## Cipactli's Brood

Some of the most obvious relics of the Maya civilization are the "sacrificial wells," called *cenotes*, scattered all across the Yucatán. The earth is riddled with limestone, which has been dissolved by water over the years to form a labyrinth of submerged caves spanning all of southern Mexico. When the earth over

one of these caves collapses, a natural well is formed whose bottom can only be guessed.

Precious objects were thrown into cenotes by the Mayans to pacify the spirits and ensure good luck, things like rubber balls, dolls, small pieces of jewelry, jade or gold, even pottery and other mundane tools. Some cenotes were thought to be gateways into Xibalbá, the Mayan underworld. They were much worse than that.

The great earth monster of Aztec myth is called Cipactli, a horrible cross between crocodile and toad, covered with hundreds of short, sharp spines and long, whiplike tentacles. Back when Raven was figuring out how to use the West Coast's network of petroglyphs to set off the Great Quake, he found Cipactli. She was trapped in a ruined Aztec city, stuck halfway between earth and the Hunting Grounds by ritual bindings. This place was only accessible by swimming down into one of the cenotes the ancient Maya avoided.

First Raven helped Cipactli's "children" escape into the Yucatán jungles—as one might guess, they're miniature versions of Cipactli and extraordinarily dangerous. Next he promised to devise a plan that would free the earth monster from its ancient trap. When Xitlan's volcanic eruptions have run their course, Cipactli will be freed and more powerful than ever...unless the heroes do something about it.

The Savage Tales in this trail guide make up a mini-Plot Point to take your posse through encounters with all of Mexico's major factions, and finally to a showdown with Cipactli herself. Just make sure your heroes are salty, gritty, and well-seasoned before they go too far south.



# Strange Locales

Here's where we dig into the details of Mexico's eerie geography. Each major location starts off with a short introduction, followed by some suggestions on how a posse might get there, then what they'll see as they wander around town, and finally a list of the Savage Tales set in that particular location (along with a handy page reference for each, so you don't drive yourself loco trying to find 'em!).

The overall Fear Level is 2 in Mexico, which isn't so bad. Specific locations have their own ratings, though—almost always higher—as listed below. Consult *Deadlands Reloaded* for general descriptions of how different Fear Levels affect the landscape. Those, along with the entries here, should give you some ideas for spooky descriptions.



## Encounters

Each day the posse spends traveling in Mexico, draw a card from your Action Deck. If you draw a face card, roll on the appropriate encounter table to see what the posse stumbles into. If you draw a Joker, the posse's in double trouble: roll twice on the appropriate encounter table and combine the results. Reshuffle the deck after every encounter.

### Northern Mexico Encounters

#### d20 Encounter

- 1-2 2d8 Legionnaires
- 3-4 2d6 San Patricio Battalion  
(50% chance of one Harrowed among them)
- 5 Serpente Sangrienta
- 6 1d6 Wall Crawlers
- 7-8 2d8 Juaristas
- 9 Piedra Gemira
- 10-14 Giant Vinegaroon
- 15 Rurale
- 16-17 Barranca Prowler
- 18-19 2d8 Banditos
- 20 2d6 Veteran Legionnaires

### Southern Mexico Encounters

#### d20 Encounter

- 1-2 2d6 Aztecs (50% chance that one is an Aztec Sorcerer)
- 3-4 2d8 Porfiriatistas
- 5 Cihuateteo
- 6 Brimstone Man
- 7-8 1d4 Feathered Serpents
- 9 Mictlan Owl
- 10-14 2d8 Mexican Soldiers
- 15 Rurale
- 16-17 Barranca Prowler
- 18-19 2d8 Banditos
- 20 Obsidian Knife Spirit

## CAMARÓN

*Fear Level: 4*

The village of Camarón, where a whole company of Legionnaires was destroyed by Mexican soldiers during the French invasion, remains abandoned even today—and with good reason. The remains of the dead Legionnaires still stalk the area, hoping to get revenge on the Mexicans who killed them and stole the gold they were guarding. They also take gleeful revenge on just about everybody else who passes through.

### Getting There

Camarón is located between Mexico City and Veracruz, about 40 miles east of Matamoros. A disused dirt road leads about 20 miles from the Emperor's rail line to the ruined town. Which means travelers who want to visit have to figure out how to get there on their own. Horses are a good bet, though a steam wagon or other vehicle could also negotiate the road with ease.

But why go to Camarón? It's a damn good question, Marshal. After all, we're talking about a near-forgotten ruin of a town, that's located pretty far from the beaten path, around which swirl constant rumors of evil and death. Why would any sodbuster in his right mind go to such a place?

The answer is to use Camarón as the *location* of your adventure, but construct a tale that involves a goal and some enemies. Then the undead Legionnaires of Camarón become an environmental hazard, rather than the whole point.

An obvious choice is Danjou's Hand, the relic described in the nearby sidebar. Scholarly types might come across some mention of it in a Legionnaire's old



## RELIC: DANJOU'S HAND

Captain Danjou, who led the doomed company, had lost his left hand some time before the battle and replaced it with a carved wooden prosthetic. That hand was lost during the battle, and has since been imbued with the dark magic of the Reckoning.

### POWER

If attached to an arm without a hand, it bonds instantly with that person's flesh and begins functioning as a normal, albeit wooden, hand. The hand has Strength d12 or its owner's Strength (whichever is better) and is considered to have Armor +2 versus all forms of attack except fire.

The hand's prodigious might can only be applied to tasks that a hand can reasonably do on its own. So the owner of Danjou's Hand could use its strength to crush a small object, but not to swing a sword or lift a barrel. In those cases the owner's Strength die is used instead. A punch from the hand does Str+d4+1 damage.

### TAINT

The wearer of the hand gains the Mean Hindrance, and over a period of months the hombre's wrist, forearm, elbow, bicep, and so forth, also turn to wood. This has no game effect, but is sure to drive a player batty. The only way the Hand can be removed is to hack it off. In combat this requires a Called Shot to the wrist (-2) and an Incapacitating blow.

journal. A treasure hunter or collector of historical objects might hire the heroes to go looking for it in Camarón. Or the posse might get wind of other folks—*not-so-nice* folks, preferably—who are after the relic.

Maybe the sought-after treasure isn't the Hand, but some other precious relic, treasure, or item of magic. Maybe the gold those undead Legionnaires are so keen to regain has been hidden right there in Camarón for all these years.

Whatever the goal, make sure to give the posse some competitors. A small cadre of Aztec warriors and their sorcerer leader, El Escorpión (see page 80) and his men following a stolen treasure map, the hired guns of a rival treasure hunter, or even a detachment of Bayou Vermilion rail warriors from north o' the border make great foes.

## Points of Interest

Since most of the town has fallen into disrepair and the former fort of the Legion is a crumbling ruin, we might as well concentrate on the remaining inhabitants—the dead.

About 25 Legionnaires are more or less intact and lurk here as walkin' dead. They can't tolerate sunlight, however, so they only emerge at night or on overcast days. Only a few of the Legionnaires have working firearms—most use clubs, knives, or their claws. They maintain a dark sense of humor about their fate, though they're pretty ornery around strangers.

There were also a good number of Legionnaires who were so shot up their bodies literally fell to pieces. For a while those revolting parts crawled, walked, or slithered around the ruins, until even they rotted away and were consumed by scavengers. What managed to stick around were the *hands*—and now those

crafty, cunning, idle hands are the Devil's playground.

The numbers listed below are the total found in all of Camarón. Draw an action card for an encounter every hour the posse wanders the ruins, using the usual system for determining whether one occurs (see **Encounters** on page 13). For each encounter, assume the posse meets up with 2d8 walkin' dead or 2d6 animate hands (Marshal's choice, or flip a coin). A Joker means some of each!

- **Walkin' Dead Legionnaires (25):** Extras. Use the Veteran Legionnaire stats on page 71, but add the Undead Special Ability (Toughness +2, +2 to recover from Shaken, no additional damage from Called Shots, immune to disease and poison). They also have the Vow (Recover their stolen gold, kill Mexican soldiers) Hindrance.
- **Animate Hands (40):** See *Deadlands Reloaded*.

## CHIHUAHUA

*Fear Level: 3*

Chihuahua's name derives from an ancient language, and means "between two waters." It is a relatively green grotto in the middle of northern Mexico's Sonoran Desert and serves as the de facto seat of Benito Juárez' government-in-exile.

The town was founded in 1709 by a Spanish explorer named Antonio Deza y Ulloa. In the 171 years since then, Chihuahua has grown from a meeting place for missionaries to a major center of Mexican industry and a seat of government for the presidencies of Benito Juárez and Porfirio Díaz.

Popular support for the *Juaristas* is very strong around Chihuahua, meaning Juárez' guerillas can always find sanctuary here if they need to.

## Getting There

To go directly to Chihuahua, one has to travel over miles and miles of rough desert, deep canyons, and badlands. A safer route involves taking the Ghost Trail east, and then cutting south on the Rio Grande Trail. Following one of the Rio Grande's tributaries into Mexico will also lead travelers to their destination.

## Points of Interest

Chihuahua is divided into several *colonias*, or neighborhoods. Residential, commercial, industrial, and educational activities each have their own designated *colonia*.

Chihuahua has the greatest population of mad scientists in Mexico, so its skies are frequently filled with auto-gyros and other flying machines. A scientific commune at the north end of town produces practical gizmos for use in local factories. They are known to sell various Infernal Devices (at the prices listed in *Deadlands Reloaded*), which are imported from Smith & Robards in Salt Lake City.

Support for Juárez and his men is spread throughout town and the surrounding region, but one establishment is known as their unofficial point of contact. If one needs to get in touch with the People's Government, the searcher visits the Grinning Skull Cantina. There one finds the usual fare—tequila, soiled doves, and gambling. A guerilla known only as *El Capitán* frequents the place and can arrange meetings with Juárez.

## Savage Tales

- **Border Crossing (page 27):** While attempting to cross the Copper Canyon region and avoid Legionnaires, the posse has a chance encounter with Marshal Bazain's steam wagon.



- **Wheels Within Wheels (page 30):** The Mexican Army's Marshal Bazain, acting against the duplicitous Xitlan, puts the posse in contact with the *Juaristas*.

### COLIMA

*Fear Level: 3*

Colima is one of the oldest cities in Mexico, founded on the site of a former Aztec city. It has the greatest concentration of Zapotec Indians and pureblood Aztecs—and members of the Lords of the Obsidian Blade—of any region in Mexico.

Porfirio Diaz, the Phantom General and leader of the rebel *Porfiriatistas*, has attempted to wrest control of Colima's black market and criminal sector from the Secret Empire, but has been unsuccessful so far. Diaz hasn't even been able to discover the identities of those who thwart his agents.

### Getting There

Colima being way down in southern Mexico, the easiest way to get there is by ship. That said, there's always an overland trail for those who can track or have the cash to hire native guides. More often than not, those guides are informers and spies for the Secret Empire.

Heroes have no trouble getting into Colima, but as soon as they do, the Lords of the Obsidian Blade are aware of them and send Aztec warriors and sorcerers to offer a suitable welcome—preferably one that ends with the heroes' hearts ripped out. This assumes the posse sticks out like a sore thumb; if they're natives, or suitably disguised, they might slip beneath the Secret Empire's notice.

### Points of Interest

The architecture of Colima is modern, mixed with the ruins of the Aztecs. The city is perched on a high shelf ringed on three sides by mountains, the fourth looking out onto the Pacific Ocean and small coastal villages below. Inland there is only the great green mass of the jungle, like a thick leafy blanket covering thousands of square miles. The jungle seems almost alive, but dark with mystery.

Colima's nickname is the City of Palms. Visitors without a lot of stress on their minds can have a wonderful time in the local cantinas and markets.

### Savage Tales

- **Cipactli's Place (page 40):** Following Xitlan's map, the posse hits a dead end and needs the help of the Phantom General.

### COPPER CANYON

*Fear Level: 3*

Copper Canyon is one of the northern desert's most prominent features. It's not really one canyon, but actually a series of gorges stretching from Los Mochis, on the northern coast of Sinaloa, almost to the city of Chihuahua.

The region is neither pleasant nor safe. People still live there because there's silver to be mined, but the real mining consists of a mother lode of pure Fear, raked in by the evil spirits of the Reckoning.

### Getting There

Copper Canyon is easy to get into, as it's near the national border and accessible from all sides. Getting out alive is the tough part.

## Points of Interest

In places Copper Canyon is about a mile deep and a mile wide. A few spots are deeper still, going farther into the earth than even the Grand Canyon. The peaks rise as high as 8,000 feet. It's a beautiful and desolate country.

Spanish colonists discovered this place and its inhabitants, the peaceful and semi-nomadic Tarahumara Indians, early on. More to the point, they discovered that the canyon's many caves contained silver. Before long there were scores of mines, and the Aztecs and Tarahumaras were laboring side by side in slavery to pull it out of the ground. Countless slaves died due to overwork, abuse, and disease, and their collective suffering has found new life in the *piedras gemiras* (see page 68).

Today there are still plenty of silver mines in the area, but many have been played out or abandoned. Banditos sometimes use the latter as hideouts, and a few serve as lairs for abominations.

The cliff sides and peaks of the *barrancas* (canyons) are a perfect habitat for wall crawlers (see *Deadlands Reloaded*), and plenty of them lurk here. Barranca prowlers (see page 63) are also an everpresent concern.

**The Taracha:** Many years ago, the war chiefs of the Apache drove from their people a degenerate group of tribesmen who were discovered to be performing rituals in which children captured from other tribes were sacrificed and eaten. Supposedly, these Indians believed that such children represented the soul of a people, and that by sacrificing and eating them they could destroy that soul, and thus triumph over their enemies. Apaches fight hard and give their enemies no quarter, but they considered such practices abhorrent and cast the offenders out.



These fallen Apache fled into the Copper Canyon region, where they soon encountered the Tarahumara. Most Tarahumara were as disgusted by them as their Apache brethren, but they swayed a few bands to their side. Eventually the groups interbred, creating a tribe called the Taracha.

Today the Taracha, a deeply inbred and malevolent group of Indians, still stalk the canyons, kidnapping and eating children. The Tarahumara and local residents fear them so much they won't even speak the tribe's name. Their shamans, including their powerful chief Heart Like Fire, use the Black Magic version of Arcane Background (Shamanism). They use children's blood as war paint and to create cave paintings.

Another important Taracha ritual centers around the drinking *tesguino*, a fermented corn beverage. Taracha warriors consume it before going into battle, and the effect of the "corn beer," combined with the frenzy of the ritual, gives them a boost of one die type to Strength and Vigor for about an hour.

**The Temple of Mictlantecuhтли:** Built in an isolated box canyon that's guarded



constantly by Jaguar and Eagle knights, this nine-level temple serves as the chief focus of the Secret Empire's worship of Mictlantecuhtli, god of the dead. Each of its nine levels represent one of the nine levels of Mictlan that the spirits of dead Aztecs pass through on their way to their final rest. Inside each level of the ziggurat, traps fashioned to resemble that stage on the journey through the underworld destroy any intruders who try to reach the final, inner sanctum—where the Aztecs store their treasure.

Many Aztec sorcerers and warriors dwell here, along with a few Aztec mummies (see *Deadlands Reloaded*), and Seven Vulture himself (see page 77).

## GUADALAJARA

*Fear Level: 2*

Founded in 1532, Guadalajara became wealthy and powerful thanks to the farms and silver mines of the region. Because it was far away from the political centers of Veracruz and Mexico City, it developed an independent streak still evident in the city's population, known as *Tapatíos*. Cross them or try to boss them around, and visitors learn pretty quick that such behavior simply isn't tolerated here.

## Getting There

Situated northwest of Mexico City in the state of Jalisco, Guadalajara has always been isolated by its location in the mile-high Antemajac Valley in the Sierra Madres. It has cliffs on three sides, and the 2,000-foot deep Oblatos Canyon on the other, making it generally a difficult place to get to.

The Oblatos Canyon is known to be infested with wall crawlers and barranca prowlers, who don't hesitate to try to make a meal of travelin' heroes.

## Points of Interest

The people of Guadalajara had the good sense to pick the toughest-minded, most stubborn cuss in town to serve as their *alcalde*, or mayor. Ramón Alphonso Delpaiz y Turino is better known as *El Toro*, "the Bull." They say Delpaiz used to wrestle steers to the ground with his bare hands. To look at him one can see how that might be true. He's not big, by any means, but his shoulders are broad as a barn, and he seems as strong as a team of oxen.

*El Toro* runs the town, and everyone knows it. If anyone wants to start a business, or if one's business brings them to town, they'll need a permit from the man in charge. They'll end up paying a kickback at some point too. Anyone who doesn't like it ends up dangling from a rope. Locals call the city hall *El Castillo* ("the Castle") because of the heavy-handed way *El Toro* runs things.

**Catedral:** Guadalajara gets a lot of religious pilgrims each year, mainly to visit two important churches. The *Catedral*, consecrated in 1618, is the centerpiece of the town. It has 11 magnificent altars—10 made of silver (gifts of King Ferndando VII of Spain) and one carved from Italian white marble. The altar pieces and other works of art housed here are of immense value. An elite squad of guards, hand-picked by the archbishop, protects the *Catedral* at all times.

In fact, the white altar was carved in the same year the Reckoning began, by a deranged—and manitou-ridden—artist named Paolo Tarrucelli. The supposedly religious carvings on the altar contain cleverly disguised occult and blasphemous symbols which prevent the *Catedral* from having the same effects as the *Basilica*, below. The *sanctify* power

can never be successfully used inside the *Catedral* until the white altar is removed.

**Basilica:** Most visitors make a beeline for the *Basilica de la Virgen de Zapopan*. It's the home of *La Zapoponita*, "Our Lady of Zapopan." Our Lady is a 10-inch-tall, corn paste statue of the Virgin Mary that has been known to cause miracles—spontaneous *healings* of deformities, sight for the blind, and so forth. From May to October, Our Lady tours the entire state, visiting every single parish church. An enormous street festival and celebration greets her return on October 12 each year.

La Zapoponita actually *sanctifies* the church in which she resides. She cancels the effects of the area's Fear Level for anyone inside the building. Faith rolls for all blessed miracles within the basilica are made with a +2 bonus.

**Lake Chapala:** Not far from Guadalajara is a vast lake, Lake Chapala. Ringed by towering mountains, it's always been a popular place for swimming, fishing, or just taking in the spectacular view. Guadalajarans often row out to the islands in the lake, such as *Isla de los Alacranes* (Scorpion Island) and *Isla de Mezcala*, to picnic.

### Savage Tales

- **Lake o' Sorrow (page 57):** Several picnickers have drowned in Lake Chapala recently, and El Toro is looking for some freelancers to investigate what might be foul play.

## MATAMOROS

*Fear Level: 2*

A small waystop on the rail line between Veracruz and Mexico City, Matamoros has traditionally been a farming and ranching community. These days the rail depot is used to export

goods to the coast, and the small town is home to a large garrison of Mexican regulars and Legionnaires.

### Getting There

From Mexico City or Veracruz it's a two-day train ride to Matamoros. As with most other places in remote, mountainous regions of Mexico, one can get here by foot or horse, but rails are the fastest means.

### Points of Interest

Not far from town is the *Casa de Lebron*, the deceased General Santa Anna's ancestral *hacienda* (or "estate"). Santa Anna's family has lived on this land, one of the largest and wealthiest ranches in Mexico, for centuries. The place has got dozens of servants, covers hundreds of acres, and holds more cattle and horses than a body can count in a week. It's well-guarded, too, by Mexican regulars.

## MEXICO CITY

*Fear Level: 3*

Cortés founded Mexico City on the site of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, after he ordered the lagoons filled with earth. Using Aztec slave labor, he built the city in a European style, but along the old Aztec grid pattern. The Aztec ceremonial (and sacrificial) center became a public square 10 acres across, known as the *Zócalo*, paved with stones from the Aztecs' primary temple.

Many of the buildings Cortés put up are made of *tezontle*, a volcanic rock with a color disturbingly similar to that of dried blood. It's a fitting tribute to all the Aztecs' sacrificial victims and all the Indians Cortés butchered and enslaved.

Visitors to Mexico City from north o' the border who don't know not to drink the water will find out soon enough.





Before Cortés killed Montezuma, the Aztec king cursed the valley forever. Now northerners need to worry about the interesting condition known as “Montezuma’s Revenge” (see *Deadlands: The Flood* for the icky details).

## Getting There

Mexico City is located in heart of the nation’s central uplands. A railroad line accesses the city from Veracruz on the eastern coast, and many roads and trails lead to it overland. The nearby volcanoes *Popocatepetl* and *Itzacíhuatl* are prominent landmarks.

## Points of Interest

The center of Mexico City’s civic life is the *Zócalo* (meaning “pedestal,” and named for the bottom part of a statue Santa Anna began building but never finished back in 1843). It’s big enough for everything from pleasant Sunday

afternoon strolls, to political rallies, to military parades. Plenty of important buildings line its edges. A massive stone building on the south side is the *Ayuntamiento*, or city hall.

**Cathedral of Mexico:** The grand Cathedral of Mexico dominates the northern side of the *Zócalo*. It took about three centuries to build, but it was worth the wait. It features five altars and 14 chapels, mostly done in an elaborate, Spanish baroque style. Gold and jewels encrust much of the décor. Even the non-religious can’t help but be awed.

A holy place sanctified by generations of worshipers and saintly men, the Cathedral of Mexico offers refuge to the fearful multitudes who have fallen afoul of the Reckoners’ influences. It cancels the effects of the area’s Fear Level for anyone inside it. In fact, all Guts rolls made while within its walls receive a +1 bonus. Furthermore, Faith rolls for all

blessed miracles within the Cathedral are made with a +2 bonus.

**National Palace:** The entire north side of the Zócalo is occupied by the enormous National Palace, a two-story building that serves as the seat of the Empire of Mexico—at least formally. The Empress doesn't like it much, so Maximillian and Carlota spend most of their time at Chapultepec Castle (see below).

When formal state occasions call for it, such as the elaborate balls the Empress likes to throw, they are held at the National Palace. Many government offices are located here as well. Because of the country's unstable political situation, the Palace is guarded tighter than a drum, and even tighter when the Emperor is around.

**The Zoo:** The Aztecs' Emperor Montezuma used to have a zoo that was the envy of other chiefs and astonished even Cortés and his conquistadors. Where his used to be is now located the state's Zoological Gardens—the *Jardín Zoológica*. It has creatures not only from Mexico, but also Europe, Africa, and the Orient. It's one of the Empress Carlota's favorite places to go.

**Bullfights:** One of the main forms of entertainment in Mexico City, and in many other cities throughout the land, is *el corrida*—the bullfight. The bullfighting season typically runs from November to March, and the biggest and best fights are held on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. In Mexico City, these fights take place at the *Plaza Méjico*, where the country's largest *plaza de toros*, or bullring, is located. *Olé!*

**Chapultepec Castle:** Surrounded by 1,500-acre grounds said to be the most beautiful in all of Mexico, Chapultepec Castle is the imperial residence. It sits in *Cerro de Chapulín* ("Grasshopper Hill"), and from that vantage point overlooks

most of the city. An Aztec palace once occupied the spot, followed by a gunpowder plant and a military school where a famous battle of the Mexican-American War was fought. The guards here are chosen from the most elite of the Legionnaires.

**Buildings o' Blood:** The *tezontle* stone in Cortes-era buildings sometimes does more than resemble dried blood—it actually oozes real blood! This doesn't happen often, and the blood doesn't gush out—it's a subtle effect that only some characters are likely to notice. Anyone who does has to make a Guts roll (-2). Any Phobia Hindrance developed because of the roll is hematophobia, the fear of blood.

**House of the Painting of Books:** Within Mexico City, the Secret Empire has managed to create several hiding places where it can hold minor rituals and perform other functions, such as processing *plantagruto*. One of these "hideouts" is the House of the Painting of Books, where Aztec scholars create the elaborate painted "codices" that record Aztec history and lore.

Anyone who infiltrates or breaks into the house (located in a secret basement of a building owned by a *mestizo* friendly to the Secret Empire's cause) finds a combination scriptorium and library where he can "read" all about the history and plans of the Secret Empire. Since the writing consists of elaborate, often symbolic pictograms, only characters with the Knowledge (Aztec Language) skill may attempt it. The house is guarded by 10 Aztec warriors and an Aztec sorcerer at all times.

**City of the Dead:** One of the most interesting features of central Mexico is located in a valley just a short distance from Mexico City. It's the ruin of an enormous city called *Teotihuacán* that dates from pre-Aztec times. The Aztec



priests who used it for rituals believed that their gods met there in a previous age, before they ignited the Fifth Sun and the current age began. Covering almost ten square miles, Teotihuacán was the center of a vast network of trade routes and had enormous cultural influence on the Zapotecs, Mayans, and other tribes.

Teotihuacán is one of the most important sacred sites of the Secret Empire, and as such they guard it fiercely. Characters approaching it are certain to be waylaid by Jaguar and Eagle warriors and Aztec sorcerers. The Aztecs tolerated the presence of white scientists excavating the ruins for a few years. When Xitlan judged that enough of the city had been uncovered, Professor Riley and his fellow archaeologists were seized and sacrificed in a bloody ritual. Then the valley was sealed from any further intrusion.

Since then Xitlan and his fellow sorcerers have used their powers to raise hundreds of undead abominations to populate Teotihuacán, now known to the Lords of the Obsidian Blade as *La Ciudad de los Muertos*, the City of the Dead. The city's dark influence is such that Aztec sorcerers' powers are magnified within its boundaries.

The centerpiece of Teotihuacán is a long paved street called *Miccaotli*—the Avenue of the Dead—that connects a large pyramid, the Pyramid of the Moon, with an area known as the *Ciudadela*, the Citadel, which includes the Temple of Quetzalcoatl. About a third of the way down the avenue from the Pyramid of the Moon sits another pyramid, the Pyramid of the Sun. Both of the stone structures have astronomical significance; they align with the rising of the sun on certain stars on particular days of the year.

Many other buildings that appear to be house compounds (series of rooms in a roughly square shape around a central

courtyard) were excavated by Riley and his crew before their untimely deaths. Now these are haunted by scores of malevolent dead raised by the Obsidian Blade, eager to rip the hearts from innocents.

The Aztecs guard the fields near Teotihuacán just as heavily as they do their necropolis. Those hidden fields are where the Lords of the Obsidian Blade grow *plantagruto*, the Reckoning-spawned plant that allows them to control Santa Anna's Army of the Dead. *Plantagruto* screams like a terrified child when it's harvested, so the Lords take care of that chore at night when locals are less likely to notice.

## Savage Tales

- **Audience With the Emperor (page 33):** The posse attends one of Empress Carlota's masquerade balls and tries to warn the Emperor of the threat posed by Xitlan.
- **City o' Death (page 36):** The heroes show up in Mexico City hell-bent on wrecking Xitlan's operation, but the ancient sorcerer is one step ahead of them.
- **At the Zoo (page 57):** A huge silverback gorilla—something no cowpoke is likely to have seen before—breaks out of the city zoo and goes on a rampage.

## MONTERREY

*Fear Level: 2*

The biggest and most important city of northern Mexico, and undoubtedly the primary target for any initial strike the CSA might muster, is Monterrey. The city is capital of the state of Nuevo León. Founded in 1596, it's known to the Mexicans as *El Sultán del Norte* (Sultan of the North) because of its profitable industries and hellraising atmosphere.

Despite the presence of a large cathedral and a Catholic bishop, there's something unholy about Monterrey. Many residents seem to scurry around furtively, afraid of drawing attention to themselves. Others, including the Legionnaires and those who cavort with them, seem intent on eating, drinking, and generally whoopin' it up, as if sheer excess will stave off the lurking darkness.

## Getting There

Situated amidst towering mountains, Monterrey makes for a difficult military target. General Taylor discovered this back in the Mexican-American War when it took him four days to force the Mexican defenders to surrender. And it's not as if the CSA can just go around Monterrey to strike more appealing targets; their supply lines would be obliterated by Mexican soldiers.

## Points of Interest

Monterrey has a booming economy based on several different industries. It's a center for silversmithing, with relatively easy access to ore from Copper Canyon mines. Everything from silver jewelry to fancy eating utensils to silver-plated guns is available for sale in local shops and outdoor markets.

Glassmakers and crystal-makers also do a booming business, though a lot of what they produce is carefully packed up and shipped by mule or wagon train to Mexico City, or even Texas. Several different brewers produce the famous Monterrey *cerveza*.

Monterrey is full of cantinas serving the local beer, along with *sangria*, *tequila*, *mezcal*, and *pulque*. The latter three are types of fermented cactus juice that folks





in Mexico have been drinking since the days of the Aztecs.

Observant heroes note, after spending a little time in the city, that there don't seem to be very many children around anywhere. Most Mexican towns have a lot of children playing in the streets, but Monterrey has none—the few they see are always accompanied by parents who hurry them away before any “strangers” can get a close look at them. The residents of the town are mostly unwilling to talk to outsiders about their plight.

**Monterrey Cathedral:** The heart of the city, geographically speaking, is a large cathedral built of pale yellowish stone. The early Monterreyans began building it in 1600, but didn't finish it until about thirty years ago. On Sundays you can find just about everyone in town attending services, except the Legionnaires and the sorts of folks who cater to them.

**The Obispado:** Located not far from the cathedral is the Obispado, a large residence where the Bishop of Monterrey used to live. Since they ejected him and his staff, it serves as the Legion's local headquarters. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the French Foreign Legion is based here, under the command of Major Kazimierz Zawicki, a Pole by birth. Unlike the usually lean and mean Legionnaire, he's a big, surly, slightly overweight fellow, possessed of a jovial bravado.

## Savage Tales

- **The Massacre Spirit (page 60):** Passing through Santa Isabella, the posse hears the undying echo of hundreds of victims' rage.
- **The Obispado Curse (page 61):** The posse discovers, to their horror, what has become of Monterrey's children.

## VERACRUZ

*Fear Level: 2*

The other major city of central Mexico, and the other end of the axis of French-controlled Mexico, is Veracruz. Founded by Cortés, it's served as a gateway to Mexico for invaders ever since.

Veracruz has a very different feel from Mexico City. An influx of Cuban and African slaves early in its history has given it a more diverse culture. For example, a form of music called *Son jarocho*, characterized by its strong African influence and performed by trios of street guitarists, is unique to Veracruz. There are also sprawling neighborhoods of poor mine workers nestled up against the inland side of the city, filled with folks doing their best to survive.

However, the French are just as prevalent here as in Mexico City. In order to keep the route to the sea open for French trade, the Legion has several companies here, and several more stationed along the railroad line that runs from Veracruz, through Matamoros to Mexico City in the mountainous regions above. Veracruz is packed with French and Mexican regulars to support the Legionnaires.

## Getting There

Veracruz sits on the Gulf of Mexico, at the lower southeast corner of what's generally considered French Mexico. Trade ships from Europe and steamers from Back East drop anchor continuously at Veracruz.

From the Great Maze it's a long haul to Veracruz, no matter what route one takes. There's the overland option, across the Sonoran Desert, eluding Legionnaire

patrols and Rurales, not to mention dangerous fauna. Then it's a climb over mountainous regions to Mexico City, and a train ride down to Veracruz on the east coast.

It's also possible to get to Veracruz by ship. Note we said "possible," and not "easy as pie." Vessels either put into port at Colima, forcing passengers to hike across hundreds of jungle-covered miles to reach the city, or they make the trip around Cape Horn, a stretch of ocean that plays host to some of the worst weather on earth.

## Points of Interest

Veracruz is a hot, humid place. It gets drenched by rain just about every day during some parts of the year, so visitors should be prepared for Gulf storms. Even worse is what's called a "norther," a fierce northern wind strong enough to capsize ships or run them aground, and at times rip houses right off their foundations. No wonder the nearby Aztec ruins of Zempoala were built around a circular temple to Ehécatl, the Aztec god of wind.

Veracruz was once the chief Spanish port in Mexico—the one that exported all the gold and silver their Indian slaves dug out of the ground. Naturally enough, this sort of activity attracted pirates. More than once, all of Veracruz's citizens were herded onto ships and taken to nearby islands by well-armed pirates, so they could ransack the town in peace. Eventually the Spanish got tired of this treatment and built fortifications along the coast: Fort San Juan de Ulúa and the Baluarte Santiago.

**The Fort:** Fort San Juan de Ulúa—or simply "The Fort"—stands on an island in the bay. Today it not only guards the bay, but also serves as the worst prison in all of Mexico. On average, a dozen

inmates die here every day. Santa Anna once imprisoned Benito Juárez there, but was stymied when the great leader of the people survived his experience.

The Fort is a maze of cellars, catacombs, ramparts, tunnels, towers, moats, and drawbridges. *Veracruzanos* say that even if an inmate could escape from his cell—which has never happened, to anyone's knowledge—he'd never be able to find his way off the island. While that's not exactly true, heroes who whip up trouble in the city bad enough to get them thrown in here will have a devil of a time getting out.

The evil out here is of the purely human variety: jailers torturing inmates, prisoners killing each other for scraps of food, and other brutality. We'll leave the details to you, Marshal, but make sure any escape attempt involves a Lockpicking roll (-4), multiple Stealth rolls, and encounters with the many elite Legionnaires who stand guard.

The Fort currently has one relatively famous inmate, though few would recognize him behind the tattered rags and scraggly beard he wears. Charles Bascomb ended up here a few years back, after an encounter with Phineas P. Gage in Veracruz. The vengeful railroad agent found Bascomb's comments and general demeanor so distasteful he filed a false report with the local authorities that Bascomb was a Confederate spy.

Though he was found guilty of espionage, Bascomb's death sentence was commuted by a sympathetic judge, who had him clapped in irons and tossed into The Fort to rot. To add insult to injury (and because it amused him to no end), Gage returned to Tombstone, Arizona, and claimed the now-vacant position of Mexican correspondent to the *Tombstone Epitaph*.





# Knives in the Dark

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The five linked adventures in this chapter form a short campaign—a *mini-Plot Point*, if you will—but they’re far more linear than you’d find in other Plot Point books. That’s intentional, so a posse that wants a quick tour of Mexico can head down south, take care of business, and then skedaddle for northern climes.

That said, you can stretch things out a bit if the group wants to extend their “vacation.” Give them some extra time between adventures to explore and run into your own creations or some of the Savage Tales provided in the next chapter.

## The Setup

There are plenty of ways to get your posse involved in the Mexican Civil War. Most of them involve being hired by some organization with interests south of the border—the Explorer’s Society (as a proxy for the Twilight Legion), a cabal of powerful Arizona businessmen represented by James Rogers (see *Don’t Drink the Water*), or even the United States or Confederate government. Considering how eager Baron LaCroix is to see Xitlan dethroned (see page 10), he’d also pay large sums of money to those cowpokes willing to do his dirty work.

The best setup involves the back-grounds of your particular heroes. If any of the heroes are Wanted, they

might be forced to cross the border to escape Texas Rangers hot on their trail. (Of course, the Texas Rangers don’t stop at the border either!) A hero with the Enemy Hindrance might hear rumors that her nemesis has fled south. Mexico is a fantastic place for breathless chases and steely eyed showdowns.

## 1. BORDER CROSSING

Run this adventure when you’re ready to send your group south o’ the border. You might want to wait until they’re at least Veteran or even Heroic Rank, on account of the enemies being so numerous and, at times, pretty darn powerful.

### Stirring the Pot

Santa Anna might be gone, but several organizations whose business it is to know about such things haven’t forgotten about the General’s top advisor, Xitlan. The Agency and Texas Rangers—and that’s just for starters—noticed his sudden disappearance from California when things went awry for the Mexican invaders. In fact, a good number of individuals think the current unrest south o’ the border might be all Xitlan’s doing.

That’s where the heroes come in—your group. Suffice to say they are contracted



## CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

Here's a rough outline of what happens in the essential chapters of *Knives in the Dark*. The first four parts are mostly linear, but heroes have plenty of time to travel and get in all sorts of trouble before the final chapter rolls around.

### 1. BORDER CROSSING

The posse has to cross the Mexican border, travel through the Copper Canyon region avoiding critters and Legionnaires, and eventually meet up with Marshal Achille Bazain and his entourage. The Secret Empire learns of the heroes' plans.

### 2. WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS

Marshal Bazain puts the travelers in touch with the revolutionary *Juaristas*, emphasizing that the threat posed by Xitlan is of concern to all factions of the civil war. The heroes meet Benito Juarez and ride an underground train to Mexico City, hounded by terrible spirits all the way.

### 3. AUDIENCE WITH THE EMPEROR

In Mexico City the diplomats dodge an assassination attempt by Aztecs, then try to talk their way into one of the Empress's costumed extravaganzas at the National Palace. Once inside, they have to get the Emperor alone and convince him that the threat of Xitlan is real. Maximillian puts it all together, and directs the posse toward Teotihuacán.

for sensitive work and good pay, and allowed to negotiate their own fee (give 'em what you feel is reasonable, Marshal). The mission is simply stated: get to Mexico City, secure a personal audience with Emperor Maximillian, and warn him about the threat posed by a fellow who goes by the name of Xitlan. Taking Xitlan out of the picture would be icing on the cake.

### What Do We Know?

A few years back, Xitlan trapped and exterminated a posse of brave heroes who'd been hired to spy on him. Before they went on to their eternal reward—service in the Army of the Dead—they got word to whatever employers you're using, Marshal. That information includes the following facts:

- Xitlan is an honest-to-badness sorcerer, and much older than he appears.
- Xitlan harvests some kind of plant to control his undead hordes. No one knows where it comes from.
- Xitlan maintains a far-reaching network of spies in Mexico, many (but not all) of them of Aztec descent.

They don't mention it unless they're pressed on the matter, but the heroes' employers have also made contact with Marshal Achille Bazain, who related his suspicion that Xitlan's network is to blame for the recent surge in fighting. Bazain fears Xitlan has something even worse than war in mind. Associations with Mexican military personnel are fairly taboo in the US and CSA, so mum's the word on that score.

In any case, the heroes' employers feel the above information about Xitlan should certainly be enough to shake Emperor Maximillian out of his paralysis. The trick is getting in and making the damn fool listen to reason.

## On the Ghost Trail

When the Ghost Trail forks, travelers into Mexico from California take the southern route, called the Rio Grande Trail, which passes through Mexicali. Crossing the border from Arizona, New Mexico, or Texas means traveling across the trackless wastes of the Mojave and Sonora farther east. Even with an experienced tracker, the Copper Canyon region is dangerous country.

Draw for encounters as usual along the trip south, and use the Wild Southwest table (see *Deadlands Reloaded*). South of the border, use the Northern Mexico encounter table found on page 13.

## Red Canyons

A few days into Mexico, the posse is traveling through rough land, and if they didn't bring enough supplies (notably water) they're likely to be feelin' the pain. Or at least the intense thirst (consult the *Savage Worlds* rules).

As the party passes through a narrow gap, read the following passage.

*Reddish canyon walls rise up on either side of the trail, dauntingly steep. Suddenly there's a clattering of rocks up ahead on the trail, as though they'd fallen from above. But there's nothing around that you can see. What do you do?*

Any character who really scrutinizes the canyon walls can make an opposed Notice roll to catch sight of the barranca prowler clinging to the rock up ahead (about 6" ahead on a battlemat, and 4" up). This specimen is particularly old, tough, and wily. It's also famished.

- **Barranca Prowler (1):** See page 63.

After the fight is over, another group approaches, drawn by the sound of fire-arms or the prowler's frenzied screaming as it dies. Unfortunately for the heroes,

## CAMPAIGN SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

### 4. CITY O' DEATH

Making their way into the ruined city of Teotihuacán—the ancient necropolis near Mexico City—the heroes encounter walkin' dead and worse, hear the hair-raising, shrieking *plantagrato* fields with their own ears, and race to interrupt Xitlan's crowning act of evil upon the slopes of the volcano Popocatepetl.

### 5. CIPACTLI'S PLACE

Traveling to the southern jungles of Mexico, the posse follows an enigmatic map to the source of Mexico's woes. A Lord of the Obsidian Blade moves to destroy the pesky posse once and for all. A short trek with the Phantom General and his *Porfiriatistas* takes the cowpokes to an ancient cenote, the entrance to the world of the Earth Monster, Cipactli. Time to choose between death or glory, amigos!



it's a large group of Legionnaires on horseback!

These troops are tough as nails and meaner than wildcats, and they fight until victory or death. They don't take kindly to *Californios* attempting to ride into Mexico during a time of war.

- **Legionnaires (2 per hero):** See page 71.
- **Captain Prucha:** Wild Card. Use the Veteran Legionnaire stats on page 71.

### Enter Bazain

Whether the Legion or the posse is victorious, their battle draws yet more attention.

*As the smoke clears and wounds are tended to, there's a far-off chugging and clanking noise, getting louder by the second. To all ears it sounds like a ghost rock boiler on overdrive. An armor-plated steam wagon speeds into sight at the far end of the canyon. It rolls up to you and screeches to a halt. The boiler hisses and pumps steam and black smoke from its stack.*

*The rear door slams open, and an impressive figure steps out of the vehicle. He's a crusty old bird with a monocle and a drooping moustache. His blue uniform, gold epaulets, and cavalry saber are all impeccable. He mops at his forehead with a handkerchief and approaches.*

*"Bonjour, Monsieurs. I am Marshal Achille Bazain, Commander of His Majesty Maximillian's Army of Mexico. I have been in contact with your superiors. You should come with me now."*

If the posse happens to be in the custody of the Legionnaires, Bazain dismisses the troops with a few words. If the posse is reluctant to go with Bazain, the marshal begins reciting details about their employers and the purpose of their mission. Pretty soon it's clear that Bazain

is either working with the American faction or has some damn good spies.

The Marshal has two bodyguards who ride with him in the steam wagon, but say nothing. In fact, they accompany him everywhere he goes. One is a Legionnaire named Corporal duMont, and the other is an Indian known only as Juan.

- **Steam Wagon Crew (4):** The crew is made up of loyal French soldiers. Use the Veteran Soldier stats in *Deadlands Reloaded*.
- **Marshal Achille Bazain:** Wild Card. See page 79.
- **Corporal duMont:** Wild Card. See page 80.
- **Juan:** Wild Card. See page 77.

When the posse gets into Bazain's steam wagon and speeds south, go on to the next chapter.

## 2. WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS

The *Juaristas*—loyal followers of Benito Juarez—are said to gather in Chihuahua at the Grinning Skull Cantina. They say if you can find *El Capitán*, you can find Juarez. But can you trust him?

### The Only Way to Travel

While traveling with Marshal Achille Bazain in his enclosed steam wagon, the officer offers the heroes water and food, then says,

*You seem surprised to find an ally here. Believe it or not, there are many of us. What you must understand is that Mexico is a divided land. His Majesty Maximillian rules the middle part of Mexico in the name of the French, while Benito Juarez—leader of the Juaristas—rules the northern part. He is the man I am going to put you in contact with.*



*But so far my pleas to the emperor have fallen on deaf ears. Maximillian needs to hear this from someone else, not me. It will have to be you. Your employers told me a little of your past exploits – I believe you should be able to reach Mexico City, especially with the help of the Juaristas.*

Go seek out El Capitán, Juarez's lieutenant, at the Grinning Skull Cantina. It's a tough place, but you look like you can handle yourselves.

*You'll excuse us for not coming with you – the Juaristas would not take kindly to our presence, I do not think. Au revoir!*

Soon after the heroes leave Bazain's company, Juan (aka Eight Rabbit) sends a message to Xitlan at Teotihuacán, telling the ancient sorcerer of the posse's meeting with Bazain, their alliance with Juarez, and their imminent arrival in Mexico City.

The Grinning Skull Cantina is decorated with at least a hundred of its namesake. Paintings, embroidered curtains, animal skulls hanging on the walls, and other knick-knacks radiate respect for the dead without seeming



like a shrine. It's a fine line, but the Cantina manages to walk it.

The place is full of outlaws loyal to Benito Juarez, including *El Capitán*. Unless there's a *Mexicano* in the posse, things have the potential to get ugly *real* fast. It's up to the posse to convince these hombres that it's a necessity they speak with Juarez. If they mention Bazain's involvement (which, on its face, sounds pretty dumb), the banditos are intrigued enough that the posse adds +2 to Persuasion, Intimidation, or Taunt rolls to effect a meeting with Juarez.

- **Outlaws (10):** Use the stats in *Deadlands Reloaded*.
- **El Capitán:** Wild Card. Use the Outlaw stats in *Deadlands Reloaded*.

Once the *Juaristas* are convinced—one way or another—to take the posse to their leader, they go over to the corner of the room and move some tables out of the way. They pull up a large section of floorboards, and revealed is a flight of adobe stairs descending in a square spiral into pitch darkness. The *Juaristas* light torches and lanterns, laughing at any heroes who seem hesitant. They jibe,

*Vamanos, gringos! Are you afraid of the dark?*

### The People's Railroad

*Fear Level: 4*

Escorted down a long tunnel carved from the surrounding rock, the party steps onto a high ledge overlooking a massive underground chamber. It is apparently still under construction, for hundreds of *campesinos* are working everywhere, building supports, chipping and moving rock in mine carts and wheelbarrows. The scale of the project is amazing.

The hall below is bisected by a rail line, which disappears into a yawning tunnel at one end of the chamber. Sitting on

the tracks is a shining locomotive with coal tender, two passenger cars, and a caboose. Apparently Dr. Hellstromme wasn't the only one to hatch the idea of burrowing a railroad line through the earth.

At the bottom of a huge flight of steps, the posse is taken before the man who seems to be giving the orders—Benito Juarez. He's a Zapotec Indian, short and portly, dressed in a black suit. He radiates a keen inner strength, and everyone here would willingly die for him.

- **Benito Juarez:** Wild Card. See page 81.
- **Juaristas (47):** See page 71.

Juarez listens to what the heroes have to say about their goals and reasons for being here. Surrounded by over 45 of his men, he's not worried about anyone trying anything. Once they've stated their case, one smooth talker needs to succeed on a Persuasion roll.

If the roll is failed, Juarez isn't convinced. He asks the posse to help him out with "a few other matters" until he's sure of their intentions. Use a few *Savage Tales* so the heroes can prove their mettle.

If they succeed, Juarez nods thoughtfully and says,

*Hard to believe that Bazain would put you in contact with me, Señores, unless I have seriously misjudged the man. No matter—you are here now, you have seen the People's Railroad, and I accept your story. I can tell when a man is lying to me.*

*This tunnel stretches hundreds of miles underground, all the way to the city of Querétaro, which is only a few days' north of Mexico City. From there you should be able to find your way to the capital city and the Emperor's palace.*

*Getting in? Ha! That's your problem, Señores.*

*One thing to watch out for—the ones known as the Secret Empire. That's all I know, they're so secret, except that they're almost all Aztecs, and they're everywhere. They serve Xitlan in the shadows, waiting to strike. Anyone could be one of their agents.*

Whenever the posse's ready, they board the train with Juarez and 20 of his men. Slowly the engine begins to pull into the darkness, then picks up speed. Soon the train is whipping along through pitch blackness, in a tunnel Juarez claims was dug by thousands of *campesinos* over the years, by hand. It's almost inconceivable that anyone could recreate Hellstromme's feat without the aid of a Hellbore (see *Deadlands: The Flood*), but here it is before the posse's eyes.

### **Demons in the Dark**

Unfortunately for the heroes, a pair of the Reckoners' servants have taken up residence in the secret railroad tunnel. They wander along its length searching for workers or lone travelers, since *campesinos* and other allies of Juarez sometimes use the tunnel to travel by foot. This has caused the Fear Level to rise all along the tunnel's length.

These demons, called *tzitzimime* (from the Aztec, "those who fell head-first"), love nothing more than to torture and kill human beings, feeding on their delectable flesh.

Two days into the journey, read the following out loud.

*As the locomotive chugs along beneath the earth, the passenger cars give a sudden jolt, and the electric lights go out for a few moments. When they flicker back on, you feel like icewater just drenched you.*

*Standing silently in the aisle at the end of the car, hackles raised, are the two largest black wolves you've ever seen*

*in your lives. Their green eyes gleam hungrily. They bare their teeth and growl.*

The demons can assume animal shape, and they do it mostly to get foes to underestimate them. Once they assume their gruesome true forms, call for Guts checks (-2).

- **Tzitzimime (2):** Wild Cards. See page 69.

### **Arrival at Querétaro**

After another day's travel the train reaches another underground station, this one beneath Querétaro. Juarez bids the posse farewell, wishes them luck, and offers the use of the People's Railroad for their return journey. He also warns them not to be too surprised if the French Emperor rebuffs them; he's not exactly known for listening to reason.

There are still a few days of travel ahead of the intrepid ambassadors. Draw for encounters as usual, or insert a Savage Tale or adventure of your own, and go on to **Audience with the Emperor** when the heroes reach Mexico City.

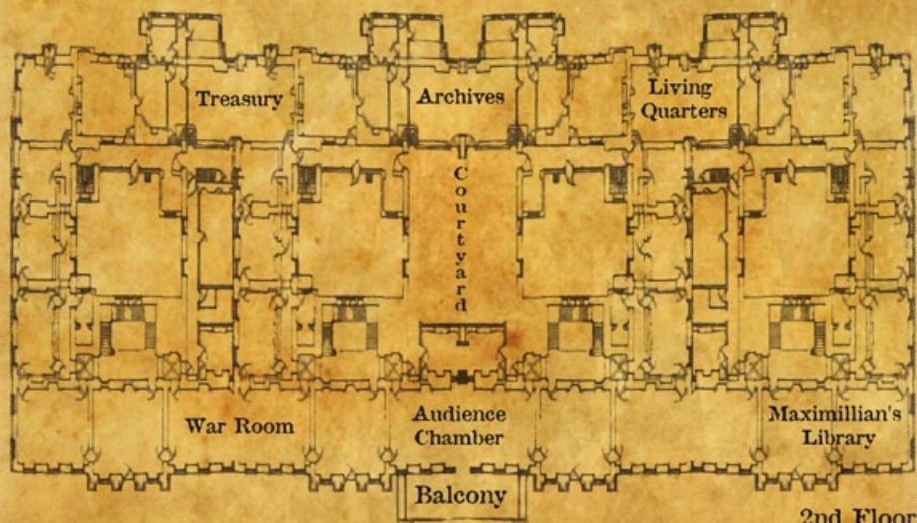
## **3. AUDIENCE WITH THE EMPEROR**

Run this adventure when the posse arrives in Mexico City, intent on warning the Emperor about Xitlan's evil deeds. It's either a simple matter of attending a party, or a very difficult matter of the posse getting rowdy and thrown in prison by French soldiers. The tale leaves it up to them.

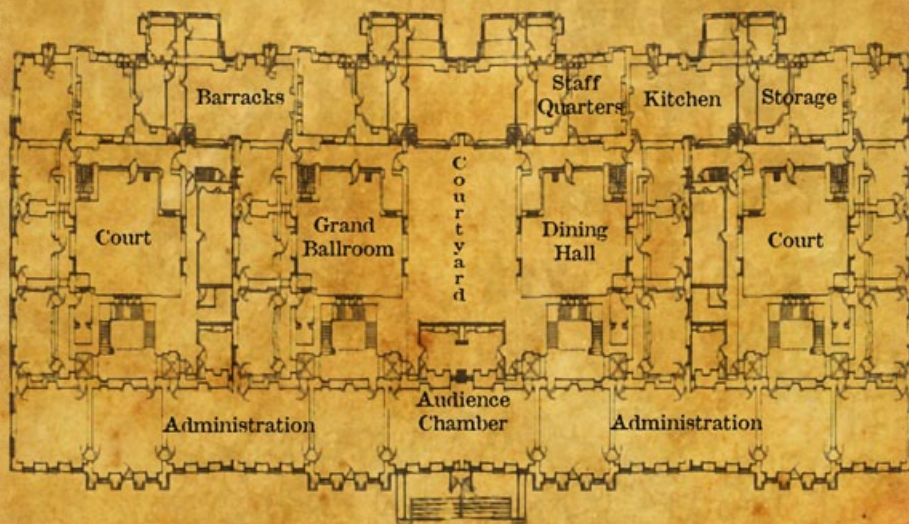
Unfortunately, before they can do either one, Xitlan sends a few of his trusted servants to eliminate Our Heroes. He received a telegram from Eight Rabbit, and with his plan so close to fruition he's not taking any risks (especially after what happened to Santa



# National Palace



2nd Floor



Main  
Entrance

1st Floor

Anna). The Aztec assassins strike just after midnight.

- **Aztec Warriors (2 per hero):** See page 78.
- **Aztec Sorcerer:** Wild Card. See page 78.

## The Masquerade

The Empress Carlota favors opulent costume balls held at the National Palace in Mexico City. Anyone wishing to speak to Maximillian should probably gain entry to one of these events.



A successful Streetwise roll (at -2 if the questioner doesn't speak Spanish) gleans the date of Empress Carlota's next costumed extravaganza—and it's only four days away. As usual, it's to be held at the National Palace, and the guest list is more exclusive than most. If you don't have the Connections, Noble, or Rich Edge, forget about it, hoss.

Unfortunately for our heroes, they can't forget about it. They need to warn the Emperor about Xitlan's towering evil. That means figuring out how to get into the masquerade.

### Best Laid Plans

Let the players decide whether to use sheer Persuasive talent, disguise (easy where a masquerade is concerned), or some other kind of subterfuge to gain entry. Let the group exercise its ingenuity, and use your best judgment as to what sorts of rolls they need to make to succeed.

It goes without saying that fighting one's way in isn't really an option. Even if the posse gets in the doors, they're swarmed by French soldiers before they can say "Bonjour," and they won't even get close to Maximillian or Carlota.

Each ground-floor entrance is guarded by five French soldiers, alert to possible threats.

- **French Guards (5):** Use the Veteran Soldier stats in *Deadlands Reloaded*.

The party is more sumptuous than anything the posse has seen lately, if ever. Especially after the poverty of Chihuahua and even Querétaro, the conspicuous consumption on display would be remarkable if the heroes weren't so busy stuffing their hungry mouths and drinking fine wine. Getting *too* exuberant might just garner unwanted attention from the everpresent guards.

### Maximillian Arrives

After about an hour of hob-nobbing, the party is called to attention and informed that His Majesty the Emperor and Her Majesty the Empress have arrived. To the applause of their guests, Maximillian and Carlota stride to the top of the great staircase, dressed in their capes and smiling broadly. Then they put on their masks with a flourish and descend to join the party.

Maximillian is typically watched by four bodyguards, all elite French soldiers. They're here, but they wear fancy suits, capes, and masks and thus blend right into the crowd.

- **Bodyguards (4):** Use the Veteran Soldier stats in *Deadlands Reloaded*.

When the heroes approach the Emperor and say anything, they immediately need to succeed at a Persuasion roll—apply a -2 to the roll if the heroes approach in a sudden, threatening, or impolite manner. On the other hand, the posse gains a +2 to the roll if they state right off the bat that Marshal Achille Bazain sent them. They might also gain other bonuses or penalties at your discretion, Marshal. Be sure to apply the speaker's Charisma modifier to the roll.

With a success, the Emperor excuses himself and accompanies the heroes to a nearby library to hear what they have to say.

### Maximillian's Tale

If the posse lays it all out for Max—Xitlan's Secret Empire, and their intention to betray the Emperor and France—there's no need for a Persuasion roll. As Marshal Bazain said, he's been telling the Emperor most of these things for a while now. He just needed to hear it from a third party. Not to mention several details of the posse's tale strike



the Emperor as significant in light of his own recent observations.

After the posse wraps up their story, the Emperor nods thoughtfully, and says with a faint German accent,

*Yes, I know what you say is true. I suppose I have suspected for some time, but failed to properly face the facts. And I fear my inaction may have permitted things to go too far.*

*A few years ago, a scientist named Professor Riley came to Mexico City with his entourage of archaeologists from Salt Lake City, in the United States. They told me of their grand plans to excavate the Aztec city of Teotihuacán, and of course I approved them.*

*They worked for a long time, and uncovered several of the Aztecs' temples and pyramids. It was quite exciting to be on the cusp of scientific discovery. We would have long discussions regarding the artifacts he recovered.*

*About a month ago I stopped receiving visits. Riley is gone, they say. The former advisor of Santa Anna, Xitlan, he comes and goes from Teotihuacán, but Professor Riley and his crew just departed? Saying nothing? It is very strange.*

*I sent a small platoon of Legionnaires to inspect the valley where Teotihuacán stands, but they were repulsed by fearsome native warriors, and—they said—dead things that walked.*

*Nonsense! I thought, and sent three times as many soldiers to investigate. That was five days ago. We have had no word from them yet.*

*Will you go to the valley of Teotihuacán and survey the situation? Discover what became of my friend Professor Riley if you can.*

The Emperor grants the heroes anything they might need to help them in their mission to Teotihuacán. That doesn't mean he showers them with

money, but various gear, ammunition, trail rations, and even dynamite are all possible, if the posse asks for them. When they depart for Teotihuacán, go on to **City o' Death**.

### 4. CITY O' DEATH

The Secret Empire has closed Teotihuacán in final preparations for a terrible ritual. Regulators are needed to put a stop to Xitlan's maneuvering!

It's only a few hours' hike out to the City of the Dead from Mexico City—see page 19 for more information on the ancient city.

#### The Stars Are Right!

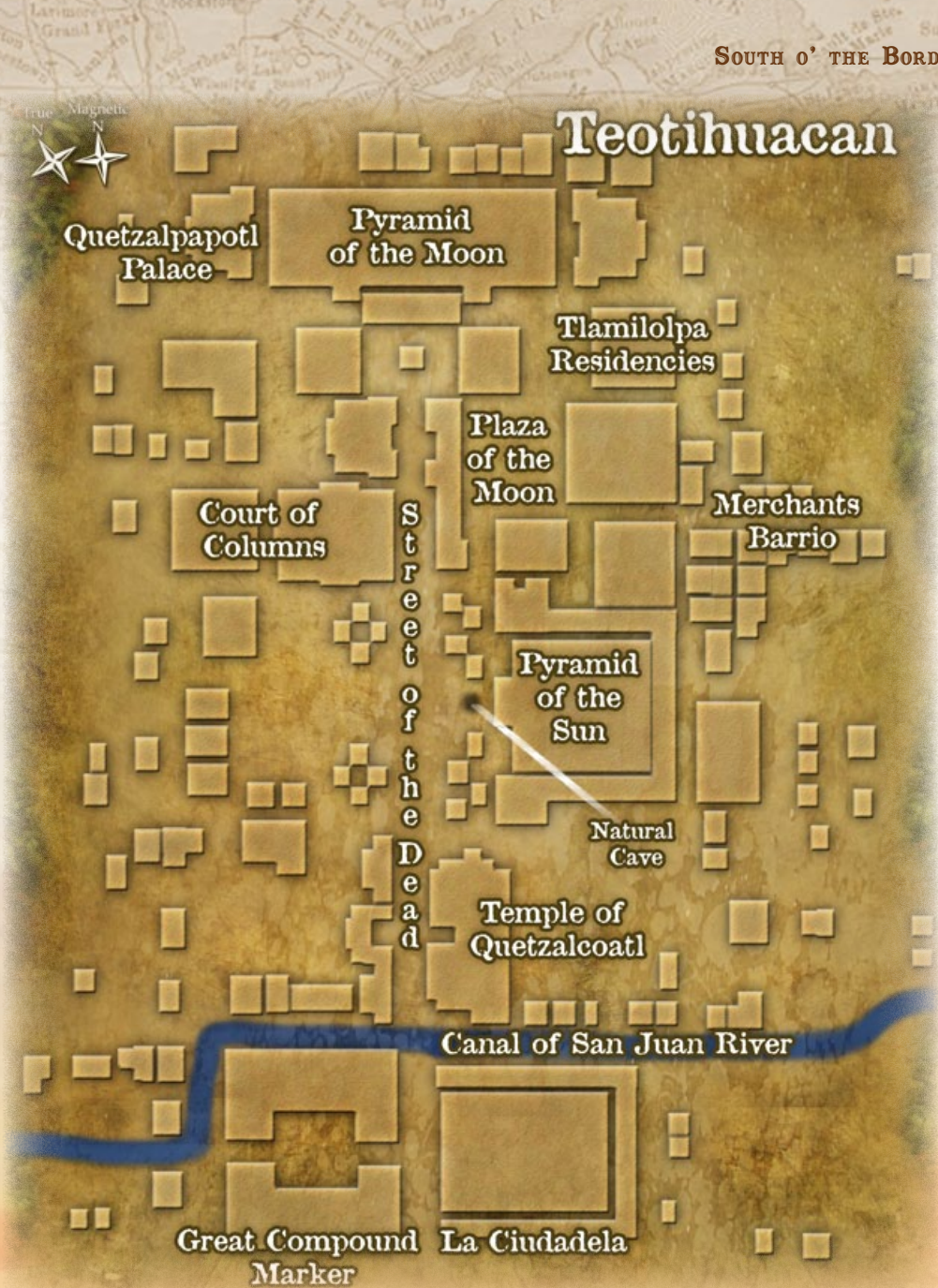
One of the reasons Teotihuacán is so important to Xitlan and the Secret Empire is that Aztec blood magic ceremonies performed there, on the appropriate pyramid on days or nights when the stars align with it, are particularly powerful.

Aztec sorcerers (and mummies!) receive a +2 to all Spellcasting and Faith rolls made within the valley. Xitlan receives the bonus to his Spellcasting as well as his Undead Mastery power—within the city he can even control 16 undead instead of 14. As always, Xitlan and his crew gain the benefits of Fear's Touch (see page 7).

Heroes with any sort of astronomical or astrological knowledge who study the night sky are certain that a major alignment of planets and stars is in the offing. With a raise, the character knows that an alignment of this magnitude probably hasn't occurred in over 5,000 years.

The time is right for the spirits of fire to be freed from Mexico's volcanoes, and for Cipactli's realm to be birthed fully into the world. The posse is going to have to work fast to prevent it.





### Green Feather Emperor

The leader of the Secret Empire, and the driving force behind it from the very beginning, is the Aztec sorcerer-priest Xitlan. Many who know of him,

including Raven, think that he's simply a priest who came back from the dead Harrowed. While he does superficially resemble a Harrowed (and, for that matter, a walkin' dead) in some ways,



he's not. He's been up and around and moving since long before Raven was born or the Reckoning conceived of, courtesy of the Aztec god of the dead. He doesn't have to fight any manitou for control of his body and mind. He's *undead*, not Harrowed.

Furthermore, his state makes him a master of lesser undead, including Harrowed and walkin' dead. He can create them, control them, or destroy them as he wishes. He's what the Germans would call a *liche*.

### Into the Ruins

The heroes have to sneak past the many patrols that guard the valley, unless they want to raise an alarm and bring the might of Xitlan's forces down upon them. If a pitched battle results, you might opt to have some of Maximillian's soldiers—helpfully sent along to observe—pull the heroes' fat out of the fire.

Patrols consist of eight Aztec warriors dressed in jaguar skins and carrying heavy obsidian swords. They're considered active guards, and the posse will have to avoid at least one of their pickets on the way in. If any scuffle goes on too long (more than three rounds or so), it draws the attention of all the city's guardians.

- **Guards (8):** Use the Aztec Warrior stats on page 78.

### Teotihuacán

*Fear Level: 4*

If the heroes are wise, they keep a low profile and get the lay of the land. Xitlan is nowhere to be found, but the ruins are rife with repulsive undead. Every half-hour the cowpokes spend in the ruins, draw a card for an encounter per the usual procedure, and use the Teotihuacán Encounters table for any unexpected meetings that result.

### Teotihuacán Encounters

d20	Encounter
1-2	Bone Fiend
3-4	1d4 Nosferatu
5	Cihuateteo
6	Walkin' Fossil
7-8	2d6 Aztec Warriors
9-14	2d8 Walkin' Dead
15	'Glom
16-18	Aztec Sorcerer + 2d6 Aztec Warriors
19	1d4 Obsidian Knife Spirits
20	Aztec Mummy (roll twice more for its escorts)

### Pyramid of the Moon

At the city's biggest pyramid, the heroes must succeed at a Guts check (-2) or suffer extreme nausea and sickness (Fear/Nausea). The steps of the pyramid are drenched in tacky gore, and at the bottom of them is a huge pile of headless and heartless corpses—some showing a few weeks' decomposition, most of them killed within the past week.

In any case, it's clear that they were killed at the top of the pyramid, decapitated and eviscerated there, and then the lifeless bodies allowed to tumble to the bottom of steps and rot. On closer inspection, the corpses are almost all Legionnaires.

### The Killing Field

If the heroes are sneaking around the ruins at night, call for Notice rolls (+2) when they pass close to the camouflaged fields. They hear what sounds like children screaming as they are slaughtered by the hundreds. With heavy hearts, the heroes can creep closer. The chilling sound alone provokes a Guts check from anyone who hears it.

The fields are shielded from view by tall bordering trees and camouflaged netting strung over parts of the crop. Lanterns hang at intervals, providing

light to the Aztec warriors and sorcerers who move among the strange, bright green plants with scythes. Every time the harvesters grab a stalk and slash it free from its roots, the plant lets out a dying, bone-chilling wail.

Any hombres who were listening closely when they were hired realize that this must be what Santa Anna used to control his undead army. They might try to torch the fields themselves, which is most exciting, but if they opt to report the fields' location to Maximillian, the Emperor strikes with a full company of soldiers and Legionnaires the next day. They overrun the fields and put them to the torch.

### The Grand Ritual

When the posse completes their survey of the City of the Dead, the sun is rising (if they went at night) or the last rays on sunlight are dying in the west (if their raid was a daytime operation). Read the following to the heroes:

*As you make your way along a high ridgeline overlooking the valley of death, and Mexico City to the north, the earth seems to shudder. For a second you think maybe you imagined it.*

*Then another jolt goes through the earth, sharp enough to stagger you. A distant **BOOM!** echoes across the region, fading into the distance. It's now that you realize Xitlan's plans were bigger than anyone knew.*

*A thick column of smoke and ash rises from the peak of the volcano Popocatepetl, where the explosion issued from. Not only that—even from this distance of four or five miles, you see a large number of people in brightly-colored robes gathered on the mountainside. They're no more than specks from this distance, but you've got a sneaking suspicion they're servants of the Secret Empire.*

*Now there's a new rumbling in the earth that continues to grow. You don't think you have many hours before the volcano blows its top and takes Mexico City with it.*

Xitlan and his most trusted servants are halfway up Popocatepetl, performing Raven's ritual. With the benefit of a spyglass, the heroes can see it clearly. It's designed to cause volcanic eruptions all across the Mexican Peninsula and bring Cipactli's realm into our own. If the heroes set out immediately, they can be there in six hours. Grabbing some horses cuts the time in half.

If the heroes don't scale Popocatepetl for whatever reason (fear of lava, and so forth), Xitlan completes the ritual. He, his servants, the City of the Dead, and Mexico City are all completely obliterated by glowing rivers of lava. The surge of fear and flood of souls into the Hunting Grounds provides the power Cipactli needs to enter our world. Within a week, most of Mexico has a Fear Level of 5, and when one gets close to Cipactli's jungle cenote it rises to 6. At your discretion, the heroes might eventually restore Mexico by killing Cipactli (but remember that the earth spirit can't be permanently destroyed in this world).

In short, failure to stop Xitlan's ritual signals a *major* change in your campaign's direction. If you're unwilling to go that route—and your players are slow to realize the threat—it's time to drop a few hints!

### Showdown with Xitlan

Xitlan is halfway up the mountain with a gaggle of his most trusted servants, busily making sacrifices out of their many bound prisoners. Unless the heroes attempt to use Stealth, or approach from a direction not easily observed, the Aztecs see them coming



from their high vantage and prepare for battle.

In a frenzy of devotion to his Aztec gods, Xitlan laughs maniacally and urges his servants to rip out the characters' still-beating hearts. He doesn't think there's any way he can fail now. While six of his sorcerers continue the ritual, Xitlan and the rest deal with intruders.

The stakes are high, Marshal. If the posse doesn't prevail here, or the sorcerers are allowed to keep chanting and murdering sacrificial victims for more than 13 rounds, the pact is sealed. All the terrible things we mentioned earlier come raining down on everyone's heads, and any hero who can't fly or otherwise skedaddle gets incinerated by red hot magma. That'd be a cryin' shame, now wouldn't it?

- **Aztec Warriors (2 per hero):** See page 78.
- **Aztec Sorcerers (6):** Extras. These ugly so-and-sos are busy conducting the ritual, so they don't fight unless they're attacked in melee. See page 78.
- **Aztec Mummy (1):** Wild Card. Use the stats in *Deadlands Reloaded*.
- **Brimstone Men (2):** See page 63.
- **Walkin' Dead (1 per hero):** Use the stats in *Deadlands Reloaded*.
- **Xitlan:** Wild Card. See page 74.

### Xitlan's Curse

If he's defeated, Xitlan falls to the ground and shudders with cold, cold laughter. As he crumbles away to dust he mocks,

*You still lose, you accursed Spaniards.  
Raven wins. Cipactli wins.*

And that should give any hero pause, no matter how much Grit he's got. A search of Xitlan turns up an odd map tucked into his robes. You can learn more about it in the next chapter, **Cipactli's Place**.

### Aftermath

If the heroes prevail against the Aztecs, the ritual is incomplete. During the next few hours the volcano rumbles a few times, and subtle tremors shake Mexico City. But then the great mountain returns to its dormant state, and Mexico rejoices.

The burning of the *plantagrato* fields also has a dramatic effect—within a week, Xitlan's unholy army at Teotihuacán is completely out of control and rampaging through the valley. Soon after, Maximillian's forces concentrate their military might (that is, artillery) upon the valley until it's little more than a series of smoking craters. The posse might even want to join in on the raid on Teotihuacán!

## 5. CIPACTLI'S PLACE

The Secret Empire's back is broken and the ancient sorcerer Xitlan is a pile of dust at the summit of Popocatepetl. Optimistic heroes might be ready to kick up their boots, buy a shot o' rye whiskey, and set a spell, thinking, *Nothing can top that!*

Not yet, hombre. Not yet.

### Mystery Map

In Xitlan's robes there's a ragged old piece of sheepskin with a crude map scrawled on it (in what looks like blood). It shows a coastline, some mountains, a city called Colima, and a dotted line going east from Colima to a big X. Beside the X is that word again, Cipactli (pronounced Kih-PACT-lee).

If any hero does some Investigation or uses Streetwise to learn more about Cipactli, a successful roll uncovers the following:

*Legends say Cipactli was a dreadful beast who shook the ground when she*



walked and had tough, gnarled skin like a crocodile. A titanic creature of Aztec myth, she is said to have bitten off Tezcatlipoca's foot before time began. In retaliation, Tezcatlipoca tore off Cipactli's lower jaw and flung it down, where it became the earth.

### Journey to Colima

Colima lies a good 200 miles west-southwest of Mexico City, across rugged mountains, volcanic ridges, and steamy jungles. Muddy trails are the best the posse can hope for, and there's no stagecoach line running the rough road ahead. Horses, if the posse can afford them, are the best bet—on horseback the heroes average 40 miles from sunup to sundown and reach Colima in five days.

Draw for encounters as usual along the way, using the Southern Mexico Encounters table on page 13. Feel free to use the Fatigue rules for Heat if it pleases you; the temperature easily reaches 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

The emerald green jungle is full of wildlife, colorful birds, and millions of insects. The howls and cries of the many beasts in the jungle are almost deafening at times. Buzzing and biting mosquitos are everpresent, as are the stifling heat and humidity and meaty stench of decomposition. You soldier on, drenched in sweat.

### Lingering Jaguars

With a successful Tracking or Notice (-2) roll, our heroes pick up the trail shown on their map east of Colima. Each attempt takes four hours.

After five days slogging through knee-deep mud, they might want to drop in and grab a few tequilas (or recover from wounds sustained along the way!). They find the cantinas of the so-called "City of Palms" quite welcoming.

Remember we mentioned how the Obsidian Blade Lords' back was broken by Xitlan's death? More like their head was lopped off. And now, well...they're runnin' around like a chicken with its head cut off.



Panicked, trying to figure out what's happened, the remaining leadership of the Secret Empire is gathered in Colima to plot their next move. Chief among those leaders is Four Jaguar, the Lords' war leader.

When word gets to Four Jaguar that a gang of gringos just showed up out of Mexico City matching an earlier description sent around by Xitlan, well... it's a safe bet the Aztec chieftain isn't going to be cheerful. In fact he's fit to be tied. That night, after the characters have had their shots and cervezas, Four Jaguar and his warriors drop in on whatever accommodations the heroes have made.

Deal initiative as the door busts in, Marshal. Four Jaguar and his boys are swingin' obsidian blades, as wrathful as you please. In other words, *that's one hell of a headless chicken*.

- **Aztec Warriors (3 per hero):** See page 78.
- **Four Jaguar:** Wild Card. See page 75.

### The Evil Brood

When Four Jaguar and his warriors are defeated, the posse is left alone for the rest of their stay in Colima. Run this section when they're healed, rested, and ready to hit the trail again. It's only a half day's travel to the spot marked X on the map; it's up to you whether you draw for an encounter. Either way, the posse feels the hairs standing up on the backs of their necks the closer they get. There's something definitely *not right* about this jungle. After a while they figure it out: there's almost no noise, and no wildlife, except for insects.

None that they can hear, at least.

At the spot marked X, the posse finds what was once a cenote, but is now collapsed and dried up. A huge hole remains, its edges and bottom completely cloaked in vegetation.

As the heroes search the area, call for Notice rolls. Success means a hero sees the leaves and vines rustling a bit at the bottom of the huge hole. Once everyone's attention is drawn, a *shikka-shikka* like the sound of a rattlesnake's tail is heard from below.

Deal out initiative now, Marshal. On its card, the Brood of Cipactli hiding in the cenote springs out to attack the closest compadres. Everyone with a line of sight needs to make a Guts check as soon as the big, weird, pissed-off thing pops into view, squealing unnaturally and chattering like a rattler.

- **Cipactli's Brood (1):** Wild Card. See page 65.

### The Phantom General

When the fight is over, read the following passage.

*Whatever the hell it is, it's dead.*

*You look up to see you're completely surrounded by a ragtag band of soldiers well over 100 strong. They might not have any uniforms, but they have one thing in common—every single one of them is armed and on horseback. A regal figure emerges from the jungle on his own horse, sitting tall in the saddle, dressed in a Mexican army uniform. He regards you with an expression of mild distaste.*

*Then he surveys the dead creature and shrugs, mildly impressed.*

This is Porfirio Diaz, the so-called Phantom General, and approximately 150 of his men. General Diaz is a feared man (the Fear Level of any region where's he's active jumps by 1), and hated by much of Mexico's population. Diaz has no love for northerners, who he always calls *gringos*, but he's more troubled by the evil that's been stalking the land lately, in the form of the thing Our Heroes just pulped.

- **Veteran Soldiers (150):** Use the stats in *Deadlands Reloaded*...but only if necessary!
- **General Porfirio Diaz, aka The Phantom General:** Wild Card. See page 83.

Diaz invites the posse to join his *Porfiriatis* and make a camp for the night. Once the fire is burning brightly and what meager food they've got has been shared out, the Phantom General sits by the fire to speak to the posse. The flickering flames cast shadows that leap and cavort like imps, as General Diaz gives the posse a stark reminder of who they're giving Mexico back to if they manage to defeat Cipactli.

*I rule this land, Señores.*

*Once I ruled all of Mexico, and one day—if God wills it—I will rule it again. But for now...this is the land that I rule. My name is whispered in the hope no one overhears. No one dares call me General Diaz. They call me Phantom General, and los campesinos—the peasants—they cross themselves and bar the doors when they hear I am about.*

*Evil abounds in this world. That evil things multiply...does this surprise you? I expect it. One cannot expect evil to act otherwise.*

*Since el Grande Temblor—the Big Quake—evil has grown by leaps and bounds. A dark presence has come to infest these jungles. Still, I am not particularly troubled by this. It keeps los campesinos in line, eh? Ha! Ha! You know what I mean.*

*Do you know what truly enrages me? The fear. The terror these simple people feel in their villages, just knowing that these unholy creatures are out there, unseen, stalking the jungles of the night. They pray to God to deliver them. They shiver and hide from the moon.*

*They should be so afraid of me! The Phantom General should inspire their nightmares, not some toothy beast! That is why I will take you to Cipactli, Señores.*

*We leave at dawn.*

Diaz stands and goes to his tent without uttering another word.

But the Phantom General is a man of his word. The next morning at dawn he takes the posse to another location about 25 miles south of their camp. The *Porfiriatis* ride in a long column, with Diaz and the posse right out in front.

## The Ruins of Yanhuitlan

*Fear Level: 4*

As sunset approaches, titanic statues are seen in the thick jungle growth. Vines and leafy foliage cover everything, but with a successful Notice roll Our Heroes realize that the strangely shaped hills surrounding them are actually ancient ziggurats. Massive Olmec heads stand here and there, some of them rolled on their sides or cracked in half. A feeling of immense antiquity seems to hang over this place, as well as an aura of fear.

At the center of the ruins is a huge cenote, nearly 40 feet across, and nearly filled with crystal clear water. Under the surface a dark cave yawns into unseen depths. It's not unlike standing above the mouth of some enormous beast, like a whale.

The General explains,

*The natives used to think this pool was a gateway to Xibalbá, the Underworld. What do you think?*

*Ha! Ha! It's all nonsense of course. I don't know about the Underworld, Señores, but that is where the evil things come from. That is Cipactli.*

*And this is where we leave you. Buena suerte, Señores, and may God walk beside you.*



## DEADLANDS TRAIL GUIDES

The *Porfiriatistas* and their Phantom General fade into the jungle and are gone.

The posse can figure it out on their own (with Smarts checks as a last resort), but a swimmer needs to descend into the pool until she hits the point where the fresh water hits the ocean brine. The two sides actually don't mix; they form a shimmering sort of barrier. This was what the ancient peoples thought of as a gateway, and in the case of Yanhuitlan, they were right. No roll is required to descend to the gate—it's quite easy to sink to it. At that point the hero feels disoriented and loses all sense of up and down.

With a successful Swimming roll, the swimmer's equilibrium rights itself, and she can rise to the surface. She finds herself drawing breath in a place completely different from the one she just left. If the roll is failed, consult the Drowning rules in *Savage Worlds*.

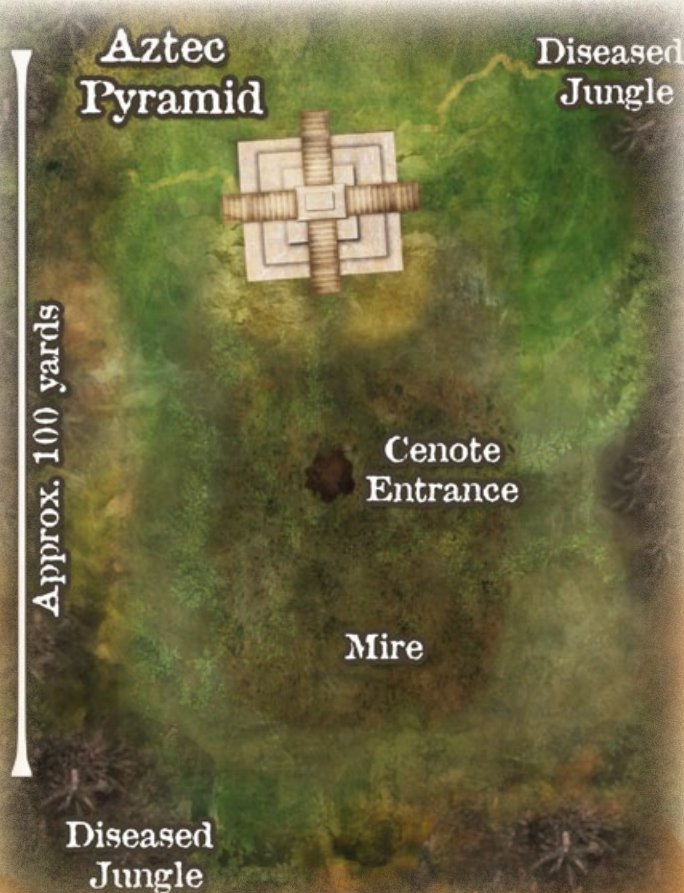
### Cipactli's Lair

*Fear Level: 5*

On the other side of the gateway is a large clearing much like the one the heroes left, but obviously not the same one.

*You break the surface and draw breath—air that's acrid and foul and burns your lungs. For a second you think you're in the same clearing. Then you notice that the trees grow more thickly around the edges of the clearing, diseased-looking and draped with repulsive brownish moss. A stagnant, muddy mire fills the area—you surfaced through a relatively clear spring at the center.*

*At the far end of the pool looms a huge, ominous Olmec ziggurat. Everything's utterly quiet here—no insects even—and you feel an unreasonable terror in your guts that's worse than any you've known.*



It's possible for heroes to swim in and out again, telling others of what they've seen. Nothing is stopping them (and it might be a good idea to make a waterproofed-dynamite run, if no one thought to tote it along). But as soon as anyone sets foot on the ziggurat or touches it in any way (even indirectly), read the following.

*The muddy mire starts to churn and bubble to one side of the spring. Slowly, what looks like a slimy, muddy island covered with spines rises up out of the swamp. But then the "island" rolls over, opens a huge mouth full of jagged teeth, and belts out a blood-curdling roar!*

Cipactli is awake, and she doesn't take kindly to trespassers.

Call for Guts checks immediately, and then deal initiative. Three of Cipactli's Brood are in the immediate vicinity; they arrive during the fifth round of combat (and luckily for the posse, they're not Wild Cards). Characters in the area of clean water flowing up from the cenote must swim to stay afloat, while the muddy mire itself is considered Difficult Ground.

Cipactli and her brood try to slaughter everyone who intrudes upon their sickly realm, which is trapped halfway between the Hunting Grounds and our world. Xitlan's ritual on Popocatépetl was supposed to free the Earth Monster and pull her lair fully into the real world, creating the seed of an enormous Deadland in the middle of the Yucatán jungle.

Since that didn't quite pan out, Cipactli is going to have to wait for another opportunity. In the meantime, she certainly isn't offering any tea and biscuits—she's pissed as all get out. Since the big ritual failed Cipactli still can't

leave this place, but her brood pursue anyone who swims back out through the cenote.

- **Cipactli's Brood (3):** Extras. See page 65. Deal initiative cards to them at the beginning of round five.



### Cipactli, the Earth Monster

Cipactli resembles a cross between an enormous crocodile and a toad, though she shows more of her crocodilian side. She's covered with thousands of short, sharp spines, each capable of delivering a painful prick. Lacking a jaw, Cipactli can only smash her bony upper teeth onto prey. At each of the hideous thing's joints is a mouth, filled with sharp teeth, constantly dripping blood and snapping at anything close by.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12+8, Vigor d12+8

**Skills:** Fighting d12, Intimidation d12+4, Notice d8, Swimming d12

**Pace:** 12; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 24 (4)

#### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** Cipactli is protected by a tough, crocodilian hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d10. Cipactli smashes down on foes with her massive upper jaw.
- **Fear -2:** The sight of Cipactli causes Guts rolls (-2).
- **Huge:** Attackers add +4 to attacks.
- **Ring o' Mouths:** Str. Every round as a free action, Cipactli makes a single Fighting roll and applies it to all adjacent enemies. Figure damage separately for each foe.
- **Size +8:** Cipactli is easily as big as a whale.
- **Spines:** Anyone punching, brushing against, or touching Cipactli suffers 2d6 damage from her spiny growths.
- **Swimming:** Pace 18.





### Rewards

If Cipactli is slain in her own realm, she is forever dead. Killing the great earth monster immediately lowers the local Fear Rating (in the real world) by 3.

Inside Cipactli's pyramid are a number of open tombs packed with mummies of ancient sorcerers and shamans, draped with the gold and jade jewelry they

wore in life. Once Cipactli is destroyed, the *curse* (as the Power) upon this gold is lifted—in all, it's worth about \$10,000 stateside. If the gold is somehow taken without killing Cipactli, anyone who participates is automatically affected by the *curse*, which can be lifted by the usual means, or by returning the gold to where it came from.

# Savage Tales

If your posse rides the trails (or the rails) all across Mexico, huntin' down Lords of the Obsidian Blade and preventin' geological disasters every which where they go, it's likely you're going to need a few adventures on the side. In this chapter you'll find a fine herd of short Savage Tales to keep those cowboys nice and busy, along with a passel of short encounters to drop into your adventures when the time is right.

## THE BAT GOD

**Location:** Oaxaca

The ruins of Monté Alban can be seen atop their mountainous perch from all over the Oaxaca Valley. It's here that the Zapotecs ruled, their civilization dominating the region until about 700 A.D. The Zapotecs are known for their underground tombs—only a few of which have been found—and the pottery urns they created, which depict spirits such as Rain God, Maize God, Bat God, and many others.

### The Setup

The reason your group goes to Monté Alban is best tailored to each individual posse. But don't get your britches twisted, Marshal—we won't leave you in the lurch without a few ideas.

- An obvious reason to go to Monté Alban is treasure; tales of undiscovered tombs circulate constantly. The Zapotecs favored precious jewelry fashioned of gold and jade.
- Maybe some banditos have taken up residence there, and the heroes are hired to drive them off. Better yet, the heroes could be looking to even the score with the bandits who robbed them, or doggedly on the trail of some other, personal enemy.
- If the heroes are actively fighting the Lords of the Obsidian Blade, stories about explorers and treasure seekers who have vanished at Monté Alban over the years might draw their attention.
- Sheer curiosity! Any cowpoke with the Curious Hindrance should be hell-bent on seeing Monté Alban up close, once he spies those distant ruins upon the hill.

## Monté Alban

*Fear Level:* 4

Something about this place ain't right. The extensive ruins are as still as the tombs they enclose, the only movement and sounds the rustling of dry grasses that grow among the rocks. Occasionally a bird's lonesome cry breaks the silence. The carvings and bas-reliefs upon the ancient buildings contain a disturbing





amount of what appear to be bats. The site is littered with slabs of stone, with intricate carvings depicting strange and twisted beings.

As the sun begins to set, the lengthening shadows resemble bats' wings overstretching the ruins. Explorers think they hear voices in the rustling of the grass, and straining they can almost make out words in an unintelligible language. As dusk sets in, from the corner of the eye one can see shadows flit between the buildings—a trick of the dying light, no doubt.

Any hero with the requisite Knowledge (Archaeology, History, or suchlike) may, with a successful roll and a few hours' investigation, determine that the Zapotecs who dwelled here worshipped a spirit called the Bat God. The slabs of stone depict various enemies who were vanquished in combat, or captured and sacrificed.

## Pokin' Around

One thing's for sure—if the posse came here on someone's trail, that hombre's nowhere to be found. The heroes find the remains of a camp, a trampled fire, and a few random items scattered about the site. Whether the quarry is dead or just moved on to some safer locale is up to you.

If the posse is here looking for riches, assume the camp belonged to the last group of explorers—whose bones now rest in a dark cavern deep below the mountain. Various supplies and broken surveying tools are thrown all over the place. If you're feeling generous, those supplies might include a large coil of rope, along with block and tackle.



Heroes who mount a full search of the ruins (which takes about four hours to complete) and succeed on a Tracking or Notice (-2) roll find several spatters of what looks like blood, along with some deep furrows dug into the grassy earth, in the area of the North Platform. If a tracker scores a raise, he spies a bloody handprint on the inside edge of a well at the center of the pavilion (see **Down to the Well**, below).

## After Dark

The posse that camps out in the ruins should be expecting trouble, and they get it. About an hour after dark, call for a Notice roll from any cowpoke who's awake. Success means the hero hears a leathery, fluttering sound from the north end of the ruins. A raise means the hero can hear almost imperceptible clicks and high-pitched bursts of sound. Read the following out loud.

*For a second, you strain your ears to hear more of that odd, high-pitched squaking. Seconds later the moonlit sky is thick with batlike silhouettes bigger than men, descending toward you, red eyes burning like embers in the dark!*

These devil bats are hungry, and they don't take kindly to visitors (unless the visitors are willing to be lunch). Heroes seized by the devil bats' Death From Above ability are dropped into the North Platform's well if at all possible (see **Down to the Well**, below). If the first flock is driven off or killed, an equal number arrives every hour thereafter.

- **Devil Bats (3 per hero):** See *Deadlands Reloaded*.

## Down to the Well

If the heroes decide to investigate the well's depths (or get dropped into it like a nugget down a coal chute) they soon discover that it holds no water. Instead,

the shaft descends into the heart of the mountain, where an ancient cavern waits. It is approximately 800 feet from the top of the well to the floor of the cavern below (with the cavern's ceiling about 200 feet high)—the explorers better have a lot of rope!

The cavern itself is nearly 300 feet across, and its floor is littered with countless precious items of gold and jade dropped into the well as offerings to the Bat God over the centuries. How much the heroes are able to recover in a full-scale salvage operation is up to you, Marshal, but if they can kill off all the devil bats there might be as much as \$5,000 American at stake. The main problem is the aforementioned devil bats.

- **Devil Bats (80):** See *Deadlands Reloaded*.

This colony is truly massive. Needless to say, if your posse is the kind to climb down any smelly old hole in the ground they find, there could be big trouble. Devil bats that wake up to find intruders inside their den are almost always very, very angry. When they're angry, devil bats get downright bitey.

There's an upside, however. The well is the only way in or out for the devil bats, so it's possible to seal off their cavern with a big enough chunk of stone, or other obstacle. That way the heroes can fumigate the well with some poisonous substance, or just leave the well capped until the devil bats starve to death (a cruel but efficient process that takes about four or five days). Once the bats are dealt with, the cavern is open for exploration.

## Temple of the Bat

Against one wall of the cavern is a large, open doorway partially covered by fallen rubble. The "door" is made of two fifteen-foot-tall slabs of stone, with



a third massive slab laid across the top. However, it's impossible to find out what treasures lie beyond until the rubble is cleared.

This process requires each participant to make a Strength roll (-4) for each hour of work. The tunnel is wide enough for up to a dozen men to work side-by-side. Characters can repeat the attempt as many times as it takes, but each roll requires another hour of hard work. Diggers with mining tools add +2 to their rolls.

Failure on the roll means the digger gains a level of Fatigue (removed after an hour of rest). Once the digging crew has accumulated 13 successes and raises on their rolls, the tunnel is cleared—opening the way to the ancient Temple of the Bat God.

The Bat God is an enormous devil bat that the Zapotecs worshiped and propitiated with human sacrifice and many valuable objects. For centuries it has slept in this cavern far beneath the hill, which is marked by the ruins of the great temples the Zapotecs built to honor it.

As soon as the rubble is cleared, the Bat God awakens and attacks. Though it can squeeze through the doorway into the cavern, the well is far too small for the Bat God to negotiate.



### The Bat God

The God of Bats—known by a variety of names among ancient Mexican peoples and in folklore—appears as a gigantic devil bat (see *Deadlands Reloaded*). The membranes of the Bat God's ears and wings are tinged a deep, blood red.

**Attributes:** Agility d12, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d12+1, Guts d12, Intimidation d12+1, Notice d12, Stealth d12+4

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 14

### Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Death From Above:** If the Bat God hits with a raise, it causes damage as usual. In addition, the thing grasps its prey in its claws and swoops into the air, moving the remainder of its flight pace. The next round the creature drops its prey to the ground (see falling damage in *Savage Worlds*). Characters on Hold or who have not yet taken their action may attempt to hold on by making an opposed Strength roll. If successful, the prey continues to struggle. With a raise, the victim forces the creature close enough to a landing spot to jump free without taking damage.
- **Fear (-2):** The Bat God is truly terrible to behold, and causes a Guts check (-2) from all who do.
- **Flight:** Pace 24".
- **Hellishly Quick:** The Bat God discards action cards of 10 or lower.
- **Large:** Due to the Bat God's great size, all attacks against it are made with a +2 bonus.
- **Screech:** As an action, the Bat God can utter an ear piercing screech. Place a Large Burst Template adjacent to the creature (a 6" area of effect). Every creature within the template must roll Vigor (-2) or be Shaken for 1d6 rounds, after which they can attempt to recover.
- **Size +6:** The Bat God is about as big as a bull elephant, with a 30-foot wingspan.
- **Weakness (Sonar):** The Bat God sees by sonar. It must subtract 4 from attack rolls if its prey stands stock still (assuming the prey are detected before they "freeze"). Standing still when the Bat God is sweeping down on you requires a Guts check (-2). Failure

means the victim flinches or moves, allowing the Bat God to “see” him.

## DEATH HUNT

**Location:** Guadalajara

Passing by Mayor Delpaiz’s office, a posse looking for quick cash notices a poster offering a bounty of 2,500 pesos—no small amount of dinero. Any chica who makes a successful Knowledge (Spanish) roll can read the rest. If none of the heroes speak the language (for shame, gringos!), a toothless old man in a rickety chair on the front porch helpfully translates.

*REWARD! 2,500 pesos for each wall crawler or canyon prowler head delivered to the office of Mayor Delpaiz. Oblatos Canyon is infested. Experienced hunters only!*

The rewards are apparently paid out by a saturnine clerk stationed at a desk in the lobby. He and his safe are watched over by a trio of armed men. Sure enough, they pay the full advertised price for any heads the posse brings in.

- **Clerk:** Use Townsfolk stats in *Deadlands Reloaded*.
- **Guards:** Use Veteran Gunman stats in *Deadlands Reloaded*. These hombres are packing Colt revolving shotguns (12/24/48, 1-3d6, RoF 1, Shots 5, Min. Str d6, Shooting +2) and Bowie knives (Str+d4+1, AP 1).

A bounty hunter who knows a thing or two about Mayor Ramón Alphonso Delpaiz y Turino—better known as *El Toro*, “The Bull”—knows that it’s best to avoid bothering the man. The clerk says as much, if asked. *El Toro* is probably busy, what with the civil war and all.

Anyhow, it’s much quicker to talk to the old man on the front porch. If asked about wall crawlers, canyon prowlers,

and suchlike, the old man answers shrewdly,

*Wall crawlers, barranca prowlers, whatever you call them, they all creep on the canyon walls, Señor! And sometimes you don’t see them coming until too late. So be watchful. The prowlers hunt like cats, and the crawlers more like reptiles... of a kind. You will see for yourself, if you go to the Oblatos Canyon. Ha! Ha! Good luck, Señores!*

According to the old man or any other source of information, the two-thousand-foot deep Oblatos Canyon is less than an hour’s ride north of town, but only rough, tough miners go there. Them, and anybody too desperately poor to fear what lurks there.

## Barranca de Oblatos

Oblatos Canyon opens onto the north side of Guadalajara, for all intents and purposes, beckoning explorers into its shadowy depths. Its twisting, multi-pronged reaches hold regions of forest, jungle, raging rivers, and a distinctive horseshoe-shaped waterfall. There’s a huge variety of wildlife to be found, but two predators sit comfortably at the top of the food chain: the barranca prowler and the wall crawler.

## The Mining Camp

*Fear Level:* 3

Those supposedly rough and tough miners the heroes heard about in town are anything but. Mostly they’re desperately trying to pick and hew a living out of the rock, while their numbers keep dwindling due to the canyon’s odd predators. Many of them have their families along, so the tent city at the canyon mouth has grown quite large. Still, just enough gold and silver are found to make the enterprise profitable.



## DEADLANDS TRAIL GUIDES

At the center of the makeshift town sit a general store geared toward mining supplies, a livery stable and blacksmith, and a ramshackle cantina. They get their water from the river flowing out of the canyon.

A successful Streetwise roll among the miners (+2 if the hero buys them a drink first) gains the hero an account of the beasts they're hunting. Strangely enough, the miners consider them odd, but perfectly natural creatures. Doesn't mean they're not scared of 'em!

*They are silent before they strike, Señores. The barranca prowler, they say it can bite through a rifle barrel—crack!—with one snap of its jaws. The wall crawler is a thing you do not wish to meet unprepared, as it combines the worst of scorpion and rattlesnake. Always watch the cliffs, for they hang there and wait like spiders. Bless you, Señores. The more of them you kill, the better my family will sleep at night.*

- **Miners (44):** Use Townsfolk stats in *Deadlands Reloaded*.





## Hunt 'Em Down

If there are trackers or scouts among the posse members, by all means encourage them to make use of their skills. A successful roll indicates the tracker has found the spoor of a single specimen (roll a d6; 1–4 means the trail belongs to a wall crawler, 5–6 indicates a barranca prowler). A raise means the hunters are on the trail of 2d6 wall crawlers, or 1d8 barranca prowlers.

Simply hiking into the canyon is a fine method for finding the critters as well. Eventually they'll come looking for fresh, tasty heroes to devour. In this case draw a card from the action deck each day, as you would for any random encounter. If the card drawn is between deuce and five, nothing is encountered that day. A card between six and ten means the posse meets one wall crawler or barranca prowler (determined as above). A face card means 2d6 wall crawlers or 1d8 barranca prowlers. A Joker is the same as a face card, only double the total. Good luck, hombres!

Barranca prowlers are masters of camouflage, and wall crawlers use their prodigious speed to rush out of hiding before they can be spotted. They always use these qualities to their greatest advantage, and they know the mazelike canyon *very* well.

Make sure the heroes realize they are being stalked before the predators show themselves, so they have time to imagine all sorts of horrible fates. A faint skittering of claws on rock, or a low growl echoing off the canyon walls, is better than leading off with a straight-up fight. Let the tension build for a spell before you deal out the action cards.

- **Wall Crawlers (1 or 2d6):** See *Deadlands Reloaded*.
- **Barranca Prowlers (1 or 1d8):** See page 63.

## DESERTER'S DELIGHT

**Location:** Copper Canyon

Run this odd little tale of revenge any time your posse is moseying through the Copper Canyon area. Whether they get past the first scene depends upon your posse's temperament—some won't even listen to Karl Katau's tale before they fill him full o' lead.

## The Story So Far

Discipline in the French Foreign Legion is notoriously harsh. It's nothing compared to the lengths the Legion will go to bring back deserters and punish them. Several years after the French arrived in Mexico (circa 1867), one Legionnaire—a German fellow by the name of Karl Katau—decided he'd had about enough.

Stealing away in the night, he fled north across the desert to El Paso, Texas. From there he made his way to St. Louis, where he landed a job with the Kansas City-Little Rock Railroad and married a local girl. Things went just fine for about 10 years, until the Legion got wind of Katau's whereabouts.

A squad of Legionnaires disguised as rail warriors made their way to St. Louis and ambushed Katau in the night. They clapped him in chains and dragged him all the way back to Mexico City. There Katau was tried, put in front of a firing squad, and his lifeless body tossed outside the city for the coyotes.

As we all know, sometimes death ain't more than an obstacle in the Weird West. Katau didn't much like being dragged away from his home and family to pay for a 10-year-old crime. The Reckoners sent him back Harrowed, fueled by his thirst for vengeance and desire to return



home. And he'll do it, too—as soon as he murders every last Legionnaire who was part of the firing squad that killed him.

There's only one of 'em left...

## The Setup

This adventure works best if the heroes are looking to attack, infiltrate, or avenge themselves upon a fort the Legionnaires call *Le Tombeau* ("The Tomb"), which lies roughly 100 miles southwest of El Paso. It's also possible the heroes are just passing through, and trying to avoid any face-to-face meetings with Legionnaires.

Either way, while traveling or sitting around the campfire they are observed by a lone stranger. Give the heroes a Notice roll every hour or so, until someone realizes the posse isn't alone. When somebody calls out or confronts the stranger, read the following.

*A fellow so slim he's almost skeletal emerges from the rocks. He stops about a dozen paces away. Clothes hanging in tatters, he has a long duster draped over his spindly frame and a Winchester rifle in one emaciated hand.*

*A wide-brimmed hat shades his face, but his eyes gleam with a hunger for something else besides vittles. "Howdy, strangers," he says in a gravelly voice. "I wonder if you'd be so kind as to lend me a hand?"*

Count on your players to start jawing about whether this hombre's alive, lickety-split. Don't fret, Marshal. The fact that Karl Katau is stone dead ain't no secret—a simple Healing or Notice (–2) roll after observing him for a spell reveals that fact. The smell alone forces anyone downwind to make a Guts check (–2) against Fear/Nausea.



Assuming the heroes let this ghoulish dude say his piece, he sits down on a rock and intones,

*My name is Karl Katau. I used to be in the Legion, believe it or not. That was a long time ago. Now I'm just trying to get home, back to my sweet Abigail Emma in St. Louis. But first I've got a score to settle with my former compatriots.*

*I'm going to kill the bastard that killed me. Then I aim to burn down the fort. And if you help me, you can have the loot. It's all yours.*

If the posse has further questions, Katau tells them whatever they want to know (see **The Story So Far**, above). He's honest about his motivations, and in truth he's still got Dominion over his manitou (although that's bound to change). His target is Corporal Thaddeus Grieves, after all these years stationed at *Le Tombeau*.

## Doom o' the Tomb

Lying east of the Copper Canyon region, *Le Tombeau* consists of three adobe structures, built atop a low mesa and surrounded by a tall wood stockade and eight watch towers. A single trail, wide enough for a wagon, winds around the mesa's sheer sides to the top, where it arrives at the gatehouse. The gatehouse holds eight Legionnaires, and each tower is manned by one soldier.

Inside the stockade are three stout adobe buildings—the barracks (which also serves as mess hall), armory (where numerous weapons, several crates of dynamite, and \$1,586 in gold coin payroll are stored), and officers' quarters, where Corporal Grieves is usually found.

If they've chosen to help out the deserter Katau, let the posse make up their own plan for taking out The Tomb, be it trickery, fire, frontal assault, or some other crafty gambit. The fort holds

a total of 46 Legionnaires, as well-armed as they are ill-tempered.

- **Legionnaires (45):** See page 71.
- **Corporal Thaddeus Grieves:** Wild Card. Use the Veteran Legionnaire stats on page 71.

At some point during this scene (choose the worst possible time for your heroes, Marshal), Katau's manitou makes a play for Dominion. If the spirit manages to grab the reins, Katau's goal switches from taking out Grieves to getting as many heroes killed as possible, preferably in a seemingly accidental fashion.



### Karl Katau, the Deserter

If Karl ever gets back home, he ain't likely to get the reception he's hoping for. While he was still lying out in the desert, coyotes and vultures bit off several pieces of him (including one of his eyes). Between that and the skeletal look he's taken on over the past 13 years, he doesn't exactly resemble himself anymore. A generous and clever posse may find some way to help the deserter find redemption, but his story's fairly likely to end in tragedy.

**Attributes:** Agility d12+1, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Gambling d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Knowledge (Carpentry) d6, Knowledge (English) d6, Knowledge (French) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d10, Survival d6, Taunt d6

**Charisma:** -6; **Grit:** 3; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Grim Servant o' Death, Mean, One Eye, Ugly, Vengeful (Major), Vow (Kill firing squad, return home, protect deserters)

**Edges:** Brawny, Fleet-Footed, Strong Willed, Supernatural Attribute (Agility)



**Gear:** Tattered clothes, duster, saber (Str+d6), Bowie knife (Str+d4+1, AP 1).

### Special Abilities:

- **Harrowed:** Katau's current Dominion is -3. Grit +1. Needs 1d6 hours of sleep per night. Only a head-shot can kill. "Death" only puts the Harrowed down for 1d6 days. Immune to poison and disease.

### Aftermath

If Karl survives the clash with Corporal Grieves and his men, he lives up to his word and relinquishes whatever loot, weapons, or other equipment the heroes wish to claim. Katau has no use for it, after all. If he's left to his own devices, the deserter heads northeast toward El Paso with nary a word, and is never heard from again.

## EL NOCHE DEL BUFÓN

**Location:** Veracruz

Run this encounter when the group goes to Veracruz, for Carnaval or other purposes.

Veracruz's annual Carnaval is the biggest party in the Weird West. If you go, be sure to pack your tequila...and your six-gun! Lately Carnaval-goers have been turning up dead.

Carnaval's bizarre costumes and behavior can be a little unnerving on their own. With the Reckoning's effects added, they can be downright intimidating. Any hero with the Yellow Hindrance must make a Guts check when first exposed to the sights and sounds of Carnaval. Failure means the hero suffers -1 on all Trait rolls until the festival ends, or the coward heads for the hills.

### 'Clownin' Around

The reason so many people have been dying or disappearing during Carnaval isn't Los Hermanos (see page 26)—it's something far more sinister. Never ones to miss the chance to turn a good time bad, the Reckoners have let loose a fiendish abomination called *El Bufón* (The Clown).

Able to appear as either a handsome man or a gorgeous woman, *El Bufón* always wears the most festive and exotic Carnaval garb. With his good looks, and charming, sexy personality, he lures partygoers away from the crowds, then tortures them and drinks their blood until they die. His appearance changes each time, so witnesses' descriptions are useless.



### El Bufón

The clown's true form is of a man in a traditional clown suit—red-and-white pantaloons and shirt, pointy red nose with a white conical hat. The face beneath the festive clothing is wrinkled and gray, with orange-red eyes and a drooling mouth filled with jagged yellow teeth and a black tongue.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

### Special Abilities:

- **Blood Strength:** For every level of Fatigue *El Bufón* inflicts with the Feast of Blood power, his Strength increases by 1 step. This effect lasts for 24 hours.
- **Claws:** Str+d4. In its true form, *El Bufón* can cause its fingers to elongate into claws as a free action.
- **Fear:** The true form of *El Bufón* causes Guts checks in all who see him.

- **Feast of Blood:** If El Bufón hits with a raise on a Fighting roll, he has also Grappled his foe. On this next action, he latches onto the victim's neck and starts sucking blood. This causes 1 level of Fatigue per round until death. The victim must break El Bufón's Grapple to survive.
- **Lure of Beauty:** As a free action, El Bufón can alter its form to appear as a suave hombre or fetching señorita. In this guise it has Charisma +6.
- **Undead:** Toughness +2. +2 to recover from Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison. Does not suffer wound penalties.

## AT THE ZOO

**Location:** Mexico City

The National Zoo in Mexico City is said to hold all manner of wondrous and mythical beasts—some never seen in the Americas before!

### Monkey Business

While the cowpokes are touring the sights in Mexico City, they hear screaming and commotion from just around the corner. If they run in that direction, read the following out loud.

*You round the corner just in time to see an entire fruit cart thrown into the air. It smashes down in a shower of bananas and oranges. Standing in the middle of the street is a huge, black-skinned beast covered with thick fur. A silvery-white stripe goes down its back, and it's covered in slabs of muscle. It raises itself to a height of over eight feet on its hind legs, beating both fists against its chest and bellowing in rage!*

The silverback gorilla—something none of the heroes are likely to have seen before—has gone completely berserk,

and sadly, shooting it down is the only way to end its rampage (unless the heroes can come up with another way to capture it!).



### Silverback Gorilla

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12+2

**Skills:** Climbing d12, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Notice d10

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 13 (1)

### Special Abilities

- **Armor +1:** The gorilla has thick fur and skin, providing protection from attacks.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Fists:** Str. The gorilla has the Two-Fisted and Improved Sweep Edges.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result on the gorilla doesn't cause a wound.
- **Size +3:** A silverback gorilla stands eight feet tall and weighs upwards of 800 lbs.

## LAKE O' SORROW

**Location:** Guadalajara

When they're in Guadalajara, all the talk heard by the posse revolves around some recent disappearances. Several picnickers at Lake Chapala have drowned, but no bodies were found. The locals want to know if it's a case of murder...or something worse. Heroes are offered 100 pesos each by the local *padre* to get to the bottom of the mystery.

### Lake Chapala

**Fear Level:** 3

Out at Lake Chapala, there's not much to be found. Take the opportunity to generate some suspense by describing the lonely, mountainous countryside, and the stiff breeze that blows ripples



across the lake and provides the only sound. Perhaps the searchers come upon a recent picnic site, where only a checked blanket and a child's broken doll remain. Maybe one investigator thinks he hears someone calling for help, while the others are sure it's just the wind. Best of all, use elements of your group's Worst Nightmares to really get their hearts pounding.

When things have gotten strange enough for your taste, the lurker in the lake becomes aware of the new arrivals and starts stalking them. At nightfall it makes the first attack, attempting to pick off a lone hero and drag her into the lake before anyone else is the wiser. Later it returns for more meat...

### The Brood

Not too long ago, one of Cipactli's children took up residence in Lake Chapala. The people who disappeared became its meals. However, they haven't done much to sate its hunger. Soon it will be forced to eat more people, or even to slither on down to Guadalajara and snap up a few unsuspecting *Tapatfos*—which is sure to send the area's Fear Level skyrocketing.

- **Cipactli's Brood (1):** Wild Card. See page 65.

## LOST TREASURES

### Location: Veracruz

When the posse is kicking around Veracruz, they catch wind of a treasure beyond belief, ripe for the taking. One only needs to know where to look.

## The Proposition

Just outside a cantina near the docks, the heroes are approached by a Mexican man—a mestizo—who is all smiles as he gestures to the posse.

*Eh, gringos! Come over here and talk with me, eh? I have a business proposition for you. I've been watching you, and I am convinced there are no better partners in Veracruz than you, for what I have in mind. A fortune in gold. You only need to know where to look, Señores. And I know exactly where to look.*

If the heroes express interest and buy him a drink, the hombre introduces himself as Abelardo Guzmán. He tells an intriguing tale, to say the least.

*You know of the prison in the bay, Fort San Juan de Ullúa, yes? Well, something happened there a long time ago, in 1568. The famous English pirates, John Hawkins and Francis Drake, limped into Veracruz with their five vessels. They had been battered by storms, and needed a safe harbor, which they were promised.*

*But then they were ambushed by the Spanish fleet, most of their men slaughtered, and three of their ships sunk. Two of them—the Swallow and the Angel—were never recovered. But with your help, and financing, we can salvage a fortune in gold from the bottom of the bay. I know exactly where the wrecks lie.*

Guzmán doesn't even have a boat, but he says he knows the precise locations of the wrecks, and what dangers to beware when exploring them. He learned the information from a deepwater diver who has since vanished without a trace. Guzmán suggests the posse charter a steam launch and a diving suit, at the very least.

- **Abelardo Guzmán:** Use the Gunman stats in *Deadlands Reloaded*.

## Salvagin' Some Shinies

As elsewhere, the daily cost to charter a boat is 1% of the ship's purchase price (just take away two zeroes). Good skippers ask up to twice this price, and certain lesser captains might offer "bargains," but they're rarely worth it. Diving suits may also be chartered. Guzmán assures the heroes time and time again that the treasure is worth far more than the paltry cost of a vessel.

Sure enough, the wrecks are exactly where Guzmán said they would be, in the relatively shallow waters off The Fort's docks. The problem is avoiding the many French ironclads and gunboats patrolling the waters around the prison. Would-be salvagers need to work by night, create some kind of lasting diversion, or come up with a dang good cover story, if they want to avoid any Imperial entanglements. At the very least, this requires a successful Persuasion roll when the first French gunboat drops in.

Under forty feet of water, the *Swallow* and the *Angel* lie half-buried in the reefs and sediment of the bay. Threats include sharks and other large sea creatures, along with the ever-present chance of a diving suit Malfunction (*Deadlands Reloaded* and *Deadlands: The Flood* contain a whole school of sea critters you might toss at your sailors).

A successful Notice roll (-4) is required to locate the treasure cache in each wreck. Once they've been found, it's only a matter of time before all that pirate gold can be hauled up to the steam launch. After four days' (or nights') work, the entire haul is safely tucked into the cargo hold—approximately \$23,000 in gold coins, jewelry, gemstones, and other valuables.

## STEAM LAUNCH

Cost: \$2,000

These are lifeboat-sized craft powered by a small steam engine (think *African Queen*). They are extremely common around Veracruz's waters, used as fishing boats as well as French patrol craft. Many larger ships carry one as a lifeboat, and the majority of the ferry services also use these useful little boats.

**Common Weapons:** Usually only the personal weapons carried by crew and passengers. In a pinch, you could fit a Gatling in the bow.

**Acc/Top Speed:** 4/10; **Toughness:** 8 (2); **Crew:** 1+7; **Cost:** \$2,000; **Notes:** Travels 40 miles per pound of ghost rock.

## DIVING SUIT

Cost: \$2,000

A diving suit provides a diver with fresh air and allows him to stay submerged for long periods of time. When using the diving suit with an air pump or tanks, you can explore beneath the sea indefinitely.

For \$2,000 you get the suit, metal helmet, an assortment of ballast weights, and all the fittings necessary to attach air hoses and tanks. Air tanks cost \$250 each, and a deluxe, steam-powered air pump costs \$900.

**Malfunction:** If a 1 is rolled on the user's Boating or Swimming die (either can be used to operate the suit), regardless of the Wild Die, the suit's air hose becomes clogged or tangled and stops functioning (but may be repaired). On a result of snake eyes, the helmet bursts, doing 2d6 damage to the wearer. In either case, consult the Drowning rules in *Savage Worlds*.



## Stabbed in the Back

In truth, Guzmán is a willing disciple of the Lords of the Obsidian Blade and the ways of the Aztecs. The deep-water diver vanished because Guzmán's buddies cut his throat and sacrificed him to The Flayed One, ensuring he wouldn't tell anyone else about the shipwrecks he discovered while diving for pearls.

Guzmán waits patiently for the posse to finish their work. On the last night, his "friends" silently approach the steam launch in two long canoes, then board the vessel and attempt to slay everyone they find, including the ship's captain and Guzmán too. He was only a pawn, and even he's destined to become a sacrifice to the Aztec gods.

- **Aztec Warriors (2 per hero):** See page 78.
- **Aztec Sorcerer (1):** Wild Card. See page 78.

## Here's Where the Fun Begins

If a whole bunch of shots are fired during the battle, someone of the French persuasion at The Fort is going to get wind of the salvagers' presence. Even if the fight is largely silent, maybe a prisoner in The Fort has been spying on the salvage operation all along, and tells his captors about it in return for his freedom. Maybe Los Hermanos hear about the salvage operation from the charter captain (who enjoys the protection of Los Hermanos for a nominal monthly fee).

The possibilities are endless. Suffice to say, Marshal, that even though the heroes have \$23,000 worth of treasure, getting it back home and spent requires a series of tales all its own. They'll have to smuggle or fight their way out of Veracruz, then sail north through rough

seas to Corpus Christi or Houston, Texas. If the treasure is loaded into steamer trunks (for overland or rail travel), it fills eight of them.

If at any point the salvagers are forced to grab whatever they can stuff into their pockets and flee, allow them to roll 1d20 for every round they spend gathering treasure (up to a maximum of five, at which point their pouches and pockets are full). Add up the total from all the rolls and multiply it by 10—that's the amount in dollars the hero gets away with.

## THE MASSACRE SPIRIT

**Location:** Santa Isabella

The little town of Santa Isabella, near Monterrey, was a thriving village until a brutal clash between *Juaristas* and Legionnaires in '72. Now it's rumored to be haunted.

Santa Isabella is located west of Monterrey, in the state of Coahuila. Most Mexicans remember it fondly as the place where the *Juaristas* ambushed a company of Legionnaires back in 1872 and massacred every single one of them—nearly a hundred men—except for one Frenchman who lived to tell the tale.

Folks who go there don't like the "feel" of the place, and claim that spooks lurk there. In fact, it's one big spook made up of all the victims.

The Massacre Spirit, composed of the collective enraged souls of the slaughtered Legionnaires, attacks anyone who comes to town and stays too long.



### Massacre Spirit

The Massacre Spirit looks like a huge, bloodied, bullet-riddled soldier dressed in the tattered remains of a Legionnaire's uniform. Its eyes glow with with supernatural anger, and its features are twisted in rage. Many other, smaller bodies seem to writhe within its pale skin.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Shooting d10, Stealth d12, Taunt d10

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10

#### Special Abilities:

- **Battle Terror:** The Massacre Spirit can inspire in its foes the terror of being ambushed and slaughtered. If the Spirit gets a Shaken result on an opponent in a Test of Will, that character loses 1 die type from all his Agility-linked skills for 1d6+1 rounds. He is frantic with the fear of his own death. This effect may only be used once on any given character in a single fight with the Massacre Spirit.
- **Fear -2:** The mere sight of the Massacre Spirit provokes Guts checks (-2) in all witnesses.
- **Improved Dodge:** Due to the Spirit's wily quickness, all ranged attacks against it suffer a -2 penalty.
- **Quick Draw:** The Massacre Spirit ignores the multi-action penalty for drawing and firing a weapon in the same round.

- **Size +2:** The Spirit stands about seven feet tall, and three feet wide.
- **Undead:** Toughness +2. +2 to recover from Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison. Does not suffer wound penalties.
- **Weapons:** Musket (10/20/40, 2d8, RoF 1, Shots 1, Reload 2 actions), heavy saber (2d8). These weapons work normally against most opponents, but deal double damage to Mexicans.

### THE OBISPADO CURSE

#### Location: Monterrey

Most towns have plenty of children—underfoot, playing in the streets, running about. But not Monterrey. Those families that do keep their children close, and hustle them indoors if strangers show up.

When the Legionnaires kicked the Bishop out of the Obispado so they could use it as a military headquarters, there was a lot of anxiety and fear among the faithful over the Legionnaires' desecration of the holy building. That fear was like porridge to the Reckoners—they lapped it up, and sent it back to Monterrey's residents in the form of a terrible curse.

Ever since the Obispado incident, all children born in the city have been malformed and sickly. They often don't even live beyond their sixth birthday;



those who do become ugly in body and soul. These *obispiños* are pure evil, courtesy of the Reckoners.

### Wild Youth

When they're walking the streets of Monterrey, the posse finds themselves surrounded by a pack of dirty, fiendishly deformed children wielding rusty knives, cleavers, hooks, and other make-shift weapons. They hiss and snarl, then rush to attack!

#### Obispiños (2 per hero)

Obispiños are wickedly malformed, dirty little children with a look of pure demented joy about them. They're happiest when they're killing someone.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Stealth d10

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

#### Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Fear:** The sight of an obispiño is unnerving and prompts a Guts check.
- **Rusty Weapons:** Str+d4+2. The obispiños' weapons are jagged and rusty.

### Aftermath

If any of the children are taken alive and questioned, they hiss and snap like animals. But they are children after all, and a successful Persuasion roll or Test of Wills forces them to spill their guts. They—or the evil spirits that possess them—know plenty about how to lift the Obispado Curse.

The only way to lift it, they say, is to get the French Foreign Legion to apologize to the bishop sincerely and ask his forgiveness, give him back his residence, and leave Monterrey altogether.

Maybe your group enjoys a challenge; maybe they chalk this one up and move on. It's up to them to devise a way to trick or convince the Legion to do what's required. It certainly shouldn't be easy. Although if the Emperor Maximillian owed them a favor for some reason...

# Encounters

The lands south o' the border are no place for the faint of heart, but even wanderers with some grit to 'em might meet their maker if they don't watch their step. The abominations spawned from the legends of the Aztecs, the fireside tales of *mestizos*, and the collective fears of a nation ravaged by civil war are some of the most fearsome ever to walk the earth.

## CREEPY CRITTERS

### Barranca Prowler

Travelers who've been lucky enough to survive a trip to northern Mexico's Copper Canyon area describe encounters with a creature they call *el gato del diablo*—the Devil's cat. This fearsome beast looks like an emaciated, hairless, sabertooth tiger, but one that's covered from head to tail with scabrous red growths exactly resembling the cavern walls. Its favorite food, much to everybody's dismay, is people.

The barranca prowler is a quiet and quick hunter, using its appearance to blend into the everpresent red rocks. Its formidable claws allow it to climb like a mountain goat, in some cases scrabbling right up the side of a sheer cliff face. The prowler's favored tactic is to crouch motionless until unsuspecting folks get too close, snatch one in its claws, and ascend the rock to a hidey-hole the victim's friends can't easily reach. Then it's lunchtime.

Bounties of \$25–\$50 (American) are often posted for prowler hides, and almost as often the would-be hunters don't come back.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d12, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d12

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

#### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** The barranca prowler has a scabrous, rocky hide.
- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6, AP 2. The prowler has razor-sharp, rock-hard teeth and claws.
- **Camouflage:** Ruddy, crusty growths cover the prowler from tip to tail, and bits of canyon rock become embedded in them over time, providing almost perfect camouflage. The prowler gains +4 to Stealth rolls in its natural habitat of Copper Canyon and environs.
- **Wall Walker:** The barranca prowler is rightly feared for its ability to easily traverse Copper Canyon's treacherous cliffs and trails. This ability works only when the prowler is situated on solid rock—not wood, soil, or anything else.

### Brimstone Man

Brimstone men (or *hombres de azufre*) are black, humanoid creatures made of molten rock, covered with a network of lava-oozing cracks. They attack with their fiery touch, drawing people and



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animals into their form, where they are swiftly killed by the intense heat.

Spawned by the fear of volcanic eruptions near Mexico City, these beings have long stalked the slopes of the volcanoes Popocatepetl and Itzacíhuatl, terrorizing sulfur miners, shepherds, and villagers. Aztec sorcerers call these beings the Warriors of Xiuhtecuhtli, and have perfected methods of summoning them into the “cold world” to do the sorcerers’ bidding.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Taunt d8, Tracking d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** The brimstone man’s form of molten rock grants protection against all attacks.
- **Fear -2:** The sight of a crackling, smoking brimstone man is terrifying.
- **Fiery Touch:** Str+2d10, AP 4. Anyone hit by a brimstone man’s fists must immediately roll a d6, and catches fire on anything *but* a 1.
- **Lava Form:** The brimstone man’s form is constantly burning, giving off poisonous chemicals and smoke. Anyone fighting the creature in a confined space must make a Vigor roll





each round or take 1 level of Fatigue. A wet cloth over the mouth and nose adds +2 to the roll.

- **Weakness (Water):** A brimstone man takes 3d8 damage for each canteen full of water that's thrown on him. A bucket full of water increases the damage to 3d12+2. Anyone adjacent to the brimstone man when he gets dunked takes 2d6 damage from superheated steam.
- **Coup:** A deader who absorbs the essence of the *hombre de azufre* gains the Hell Fire Edge.

### Cihuateteo

Cihuateteo resemble wan young women with long black hair, in head-dresses and long skirts. The hair pulls aside to reveal a skull's face with gaping black pits where eyes should be. The spirit's flesh has the pallor and stink of the grave, with horrifically sagging breasts and prominent rib bones.

The spirits of women who died in childbirth, cihuateteo seek vengeance on mankind. Filled with envy and hatred, they try to harm humans, particularly children and handsome men. They have the power to inflict curses upon their victims—diseases and deformities such as stroke, palsy, cataracts, deafness, harelip, clubfoot, spasms, and similar maladies. To keep them at bay, shrines to the cihuateteo dot the Mexican countryside. People offer prayers to the spirits at these shrines, or at any crossroads, and thus placate the ghosts' anger.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Notice d6

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

**Special Abilities:**

- **Fear -2:** Once a cihuateteo shows its face, you can bet some hombre's

gonna fail the Guts check and wet his trousers.

- **Flight:** Pace 15. Cihuateteo remain on their feet until their true nature is revealed, then they start swoopin' around and caterwaulin' something fierce.
- **Inflict Disease/Deformity:** On a successful Fighting roll, the cihuateteo can inflict a disease or deformity. Unless the victim succeeds on a Spirit roll (-2), roll a d6 to see which Hindrance she receives: 1 = Ailin' (Minor), 2 = Bad Eyes, 3 = Hard of Hearing (Minor), 4 = Ugly, 5 = One Eye, 6 = Lamé. The only way to remove such a curse is to be *sanctified* by a blessed whose momma truly loved him.
- **Undead:** Toughness +2. +2 to recover from Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.
- **Weakness (Propitiation):** Cihuateteo suffer -4 on Fighting rolls to harm those who have offered prayers to them within the past 24 hours.



### Cipactli's Brood

The children of Cipactli, an Aztec myth brought to life by the Reckoning, resemble their parent but aren't nearly as fearsome (see page 45 for details of Cipactli herself). An aggressive abomination, the brood are encountered across the southern half of Mexico—anywhere there's a stagnant lake or swamp.

Cipactli's brood resemble a cross between an extremely large crocodile and a toad, though they show more of their crocodilian side. Thousands of short, sharp spines, capable of delivering a painful prick, cover much of their bodies. Lacking lower jaws, Cipactli's brood can only smash their bony upper teeth onto prey rather than bite them. At each of the hideous thing's joints is a mouth, filled with sharp teeth, that



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constantly drips blood. Anyone close to the creature is at risk of getting bitten by these hungry, snapping maws.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d4, Swimming d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 12 (2)

### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Cipactli's brood are protected by a tough, crocodilian hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d10.
- **Fear -2:** Cipactli's brood are huge and fearsome enough to inspire a Guts check.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to attacks.
- **Ring o' Mouths:** Str. Every round as a free action, the brood of Cipactli makes a single Fighting roll and applies it to all adjacent enemies. Figure damage separately for each foe.
- **Size +4:** Cipactli's brood are easily as big as rhinos.
- **Spines:** Anyone punching, brushing against, or touching one of Cipactli's brood (which includes getting grappled by one) suffers 1d6 damage per round from the thing's spiny growths.
- **Swimming:** Pace 10.

### Feathered Serpent

This fabulous beast of Mexico, the *nahualli* of Quetzalcoatl, is a snake with feathers. Along its head and spine, it has blue-green feathers similar to those of the quetzal bird, for which it's named. The feathers taper down to a long tail. Along its underside it sports burnished, reddish scales.

Feathered serpents are accomplished fliers. They use this ability to swoop down on prey (including humans) and bite them with their poisonous fangs.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

### Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Fear:** A feathered serpent screeching from the sky is a shocking sight, forcing a Guts check.
- **Flight:** Pace 10.
- **Venom:** Anyone bitten by a feathered serpent must immediately make a Vigor roll (-2), or take an additional 2d6 damage each round for 5 rounds from the creature's deadly poison.



### Mictlan Owl

One of the reasons the Aztecs regarded owls as incredibly bad omens and associated them with the god of death is this creature. It looks like an unnaturally large owl, its jet-black feathers tipped

with red, with a demonic gleam in its large yellow eyes.

Its razor-sharp beak and claws are fearsome weapons in their own right, but the screech of the mictlan owl can strike dead anyone who hears it! Luckily, there aren't many of these creatures around, and when they're encountered they're almost always alone.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d4, Stealth d6

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

**Special Abilities:**

- **Beak/Talons:** Str+d6.
- **Fear:** There's something just *not right* about an owl that big, so anybody who sees one had best roll Guts.
- **Flight:** Pace 10.
- **Low Light Vision:** Mictlan owls are nocturnal creatures. They ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Screech:** Once every three rounds the mictlan owl can loose a soul-rending screech. Anyone within earshot must make a Vigor roll (-2). Those who succeed take 2d6 damage, and those who fail take 4d6 damage.
- **Weakness (Light):** Bright light, even that of a single lantern, disturbs and disorients mictlan owls. They'll usually flee such lights, but if extremely hungry or cornered they can fight on at -2 to all Trait rolls.

### Obsidian Knife Spirit

Aztec tradition was always strongly based on ritual sacrifice. Not all victims of the sacrificial knife went peacefully to the Aztec heavens. Some died promising vengeance, with rage in their hearts. Since the Reckoning, their phantoms have returned to plague the living, wishing to steal from men what was taken from them so long ago.

Stealthy as a whisper and quick as lightning, these terrible spectres, known as obsidian knife spirits, haunt areas where sacrifices took place often (primarily Mexico City) and prey on people, especially those of Aztec descent. They only hunt at night, as sunlight is the bane to their hateful existence.

An obsidian knife spirit has a vaguely humanoid shape, with oddly elongated arms and legs that trail away into vapors and mist. It looks black and glassy, like the obsidian knife that took its life, and its fingers are long, wickedly sharp, and made of the same material. Its eyes and mouth are barely visible depressions in its otherwise featureless face.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d4, Stealth d12

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7

**Special Abilities:**

- **Aztec Death:** Obsidian knife spirits get +1 on all Trait rolls made against Aztec characters.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Fear -2:** The knife spirit is a terrifying foe and forces a Guts check.
- **Flight:** Pace 10.
- **Ethereal:** Obsidian knife spirits are immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks. They are able to pass through walls, sink into the ground, and pass right through an hombre to scare him.
- **Undead:** Toughness +2. +2 to recover from Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.
- **Weakness (Aztec Fundamentals):** Obsidian knife spirits can be harmed by weapons made of substances the ancient Aztecs held dear: flint, gold, and jade.



## Piedras Gemiras

Early Spanish settlers used Indian *esclavos* (slaves) to work their claims. In some places, you could practically carpet the canyon floor with the bones of the Indians who'd died working the nearby silver mines. When the Reckoning began, the immense suffering that had seeped into the rocks was given a cruel form of life. The phenomenon is known as *piedras gemiras* ("moanin' stones").

Piedras gemiras are like emotional quicksand—anyone who gets too close runs the risk of being sucked into a quagmire of long-forgotten human misery and torment. The spirits of the Indians who died here in such despair have been given a voice, and with it they lure victims with whom they temporarily slake an unquenchable rage. Thing is, their powers only affect white men, never Indians.

Moanin' stones do exactly that—emit a sound like a man in agony. Anyone who doesn't know better is sure to investigate. Once that person gets within about six yards of the rocks, an emotional backlash hits him full-force. His mind is assaulted by images of the *esclavos'* suffering, almost like suffering it himself.

Some enterprising banditos have learned to take advantage of the stones' powers. They plug their ears with wax, then wait near the moanin' stones for curious victims to approach. Once the poor sods fall unconscious, they rob and kill them.

Piedras gemiras don't have "stats," per se, but we've included the relevant details below in a format that's familiar to you. A significant amount of dynamite is probably the most efficient way to deal with piedras gemiras.

**Attributes:** Agility N/A, Smarts N/A, Spirit d12+2, Strength N/A, Vigor d12+8

**Skills:** —

**Pace:** 0; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 15/20 (5)

### Special Abilities:

- **Embedded:** Armor +5. Some piedras gemiras are embedded in the surrounding rock, some aren't. Those that are gain the extra protection against damage.
- **Emotional Onslaught:** The terrible psychic backlash of the moanin' stones affects any white folk within six yards (3"). Each round, the stone and the victim make an opposed Spirit roll. For every success and raise on the roll scored by the stones, the victim suffers a level of Fatigue. A victim who stuffs his ears with cotton, wax, or a similar substance gains +2 on the Spirit roll. Victims Incapacitated by the onslaught fall unconscious for 2d6 hours. As soon as the victim begins to awaken, the attack occurs again. Those unable to escape eventually die of starvation (see *Savage Worlds*).
- **Size +3:** Free-standing moanin' stones are about the size of a large tree trunk, and ten feet tall.
- **Weakness (Dynamite):** Piedras gemiras, while extremely tough, tend to shatter when explosive force is applied. Dynamite inflicts double damage against moanin' stones.
- **Weakness (Exorcism):** A successful *exorcism* frees the tormented Indian souls from the stone.

## Serpiente Sangrienta

The waters and banks of the Rio Grande are stalked by an abomination that most folks can't even describe—a cross between a boa constrictor, a lam-prey, and the Lernean hydra from Greek mythology. Locals call it the *serpiente sangrienta*, and they avoid it like the plague.

Your average serpiente sangrienta has anywhere from two to 12 "tentacles," each

up to six feet long and as thick around as a man's forearm. Each tentacle ends in a lamprey-like mouth that can latch onto a victim, bore through his tender flesh, and suck blood. The tentacles all come together at one end to form a ropy, pulsating body reminiscent of a snake's, which is at least three feet long and holds the thing's heart and brain.

Serpiente sangrientas prefer large prey—people, cattle, horses, or other large animals—since they need a whole lot of blood to survive. They tend to hunt at dawn and dusk, when animals come to the river to drink. Victims drained of their precious bodily fluids are discarded on the riverbank, where the ravages of vultures and other scavengers make the death appear accidental. Anyone who inspects a victim and succeeds on a Healing roll knows better.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d10, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Swimming d12

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

**Special Abilities:**

- **Aquatic:** Swim 12.
- **Bite:** d6, AP 2. If it hits with a raise, the mouth latches on (treat as a Grapple) and begins draining blood. Each round the mouth draws blood, the victim must roll Vigor (-2) or suffer a level of Fatigue. A victim who is Incapacitated by this attack and suffers another Fatigue level dies. With bed rest, Fatigue levels due to blood loss are recovered at the rate of 1 per day.
- **Constriction:** The abomination's tentacles may be used to Grapple as well as bite, if the serpiente just wants to crush a victim or hold her at bay.
- **Fear:** Serpiente sangrientas are unnatural and powerful creepy, provoking a Guts check.

- **Tentacle Swarm:** A serpiente sangrientas has 2d6 tentacles. It can bite with all of them each round, with no multi-action penalty. Each tentacle has Reach 1.



### Tzitzimime

These demons are some of the most horrible things an hombre will be unlucky enough to set eyes upon. They are skeletal humans with bloody scraps of flesh still clinging to them, like corpses half-devoured by vultures, but at every joint they have a tiny skeletal mouth and eyes. Their limbs end in fearsome claws, they have rattlesnakes for private parts, and they wear human hands for earrings. A glistening necklace of alternating human hearts and hands completes the gruesome picture.

According to Aztec legends, the *tzitzimime* ("those who fell head-first") are female star-demons who will descend to earth during the chaos of the apocalypse to feast on all of mankind. Some *tzitzimime* took the Reckoning as an invitation to begin the feasting a little early. The Lords of the Obsidian Blade (see page 74) know special ceremonies and rituals to summon the *tzitzimime* and loose them on the Lords' hated foes. Independent *tzitzimime* wander the earth looking to spread terror and collect human hearts—activities that truly complement each other.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

**Special Abilities:**

- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Fear -2:** For sheer gruesomeness, the *tzitzimime* can't be surpassed. Anybody who looks at one has got to roll Guts (-2).



- **Rattlesnake Privates:** The rattlesnake dangling between the demon's legs can attack each round, biting for d4 damage, with no multi-action penalty. The snake's bite injects a deadly poison. Victims must roll Vigor (-2) or fall into a coma that results in death in 1d4 days. A Healing roll (-2) stops the poison's progress.
- **Shapechanger:** Tzitzimime can assume the shape of any common animal as an action. The transformation takes one round to complete.
- **Skeletal Mouths:** Str. In addition to attacking with its claws, the tzitzimime may make one Fighting attack for its tiny mouths against each adjacent foe, ignoring penalties.

- **Skeletal Eyes:** Thanks to its many sets of unblinking eyes, a tzitzimime can see in all directions at once. It receives a +4 on Notice rolls.



### Vinegaroon, Giant

Ordinary scorpions can be painful pests, and sometimes deadly. The giant vinegaroon scorpions of northern Mexico are always deadly, far too dangerous to be considered pests, and always best avoided. Truly monstrous in size, and decidedly mean in spirit, giant vinegaroons are fearless. They kill any men or animals they come across, dragging them off to devour the meat in enormous subterranean burrows.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d12+4, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 13 (2)

#### Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** The giant vinegaroon's thick carapace grants protection.
- **Claws:** Str+d8. A giant vinegaroon typically uses its claws to Grapple a victim, then follows up with a jab of the stinger (Fighting +2 against a Grappled enemy).



- **Fearless:** Too stupid to be afraid or anything or anyone, giant vinegaroons are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Large:** Attack rolls to hit a giant vinegaroon are made at +2.
- **Size +5:** The giant vinegaroon grows as large as a rhino.
- **Sting:** Str+d4. Anyone wounded by the vinegaroon's sting must make a Vigor roll (-2) or immediately become Incapacitated (death follows in 1d4 minutes). A successful roll means the affected location is paralyzed for 1d6 days (paralysis of the Guts or Head means unconsciousness for the duration).

## HUMANS

### Juarista

The *Juaristas* are a motley band of ex-farmers, bandits, and a rare soldier or two who've joined the fight for Mexican freedom. They have no "uniform," instead wearing their old work clothes or bits and pieces of uniforms they've scrounged during raids. For the most part they're a rowdy lot, fond of drinking and partying.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Tracking d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5;

**Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Wanted (Minor)

**Edges:** —

**Gear:** Spencer carbine .56 (20/40/80, 2d8, RoF 1, Shots 7, AP 2), 25 rounds of ammunition, clothing, rations, canteen.

### Legionnaire

The standard uniform of the French Foreign Legion is a blue greatcoat, with the skirts usually buttoned back for

marching, a red and blue *kepi* (brimmed cap) with a white *puggaree* (headcloth) dangling from behind to keep the sun off the head. In Mexico, many Legionnaires have adopted local garb, abandoning the greatcoat and exchanging the *kepi* for a broad-brimmed sombrero.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Gambling d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (French, Spanish) d4, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7;

**Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Outsider (Foreign Legion), Vow (Serve the Legion, protect France)

**Edges:** Block, Combat Reflexes, Marksman, Soldier

**Gear:** Minie rifle (24/48/96, 2d8, RoF 1, Shots 2, AP 2), 50 rounds of ammunition, uniform, canteen.



### Legionnaire, Veteran

All Legionnaires are fearsome foes and cunning soldiers, but those who have survived multiple campaigns are a cut above the rest. If ordered to by their commanding officers, these men will suffer any privations imaginable to come out on top in a conflict. If you take away their arms, they keep on fightin' with their teeth.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Gambling d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (French, Spanish) d6, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Survival d6

**Charisma:** -2; **Grit:** 4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9;

**Toughness:** 7

**Hindrances:** Outsider (Foreign Legion), Vow (Serve the Legion, protect France)

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes, Hard to Kill, Improved Block, Marksman, Soldier, True Grit



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**Gear:** Minie rifle (24/48/96, 2d8, RoF 1, Shots 2, AP 2), Bowie knife (Str+d4+1, AP 1), saber (Str+d6), 50 rounds of ammunition, uniform, canteen.

### Mexican Soldier

The French Foreign Legion only accounts for about half of Mexico's military might. The other half of the picture are the homegrown *soldados Mejicanos*. Thanks to Maximillian's prodigious wealth, Mexican soldiers are well-equipped, usually with American-made rifles. Mexican cavalry also carry spear-like lances on horseback. Their uniforms tend to be elaborate (bordering on gaudy), with different color patterns denoting particular battalions, companies, or squads.

The rebel *Porfiriatistas* of southern Mexico use the Mexican Soldier profile too, but they almost never use lances.

They just get in the way when you're riding through the jungles of the Yucatán. Instead, they have Tracking d6. Some old grunts might use the Veteran Soldier profile in *Deadlands Reloaded*.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5;

**Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Vow (Serve the Emperor)

**Edges:** Soldier

**Gear:** Winchester '73 (24/48/96, 2d8, RoF 1, Shots 15, AP 2), lance (treat as spear, only carried when mounted), 50 rounds of ammunition, uniform, rations, canteen, horse.







## Rurale

The *Policia Federal* (Federal Police), more commonly known as “Rurales” for all the time they spend in the wilds, are Mexico’s answer to the Texas Rangers. Unlike their counterparts, until recently the Rurales didn’t know much about the Reckoning and didn’t much care, since no one specifically charged them with seeking out abominations. Furthermore, Aztec conspirators close to the Emperor used their influence to discourage Rurales from investigating any strange claims. With Emperor Maximillian’s foundation of power fracturing by the day, curious Rurales are learning more about the terrifying phenomena all around them.

A Rurale typically wears a large Mexican hat, a decorated jacket, and black pants with silver ornaments along the sides. As dogged as any Texas Ranger, a Rurale makes a good ally or rival for a posse from up north.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (English) d6, Knowledge (Mexico) d6, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Survival d6, Tracking d6

**Charisma:** +2; **Grit:** 4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

**Hindrances:** Quirk (Intolerant of Texans), Vengeful (Minor), Vow (Enforce the law in all of Mexico)

**Edges:** Connections (Mexican Government), Dodge, Nerves of Steel, Noble (Lawman), Quick Draw, Tough as Nails, True Grit

**Gear:** Minie rifle (24/48/96, 2d8, RoF 1, Shots 2, AP 2), Bowie knife (Str+d4+1, AP 1), saber (Str+d6), 50 rounds of ammunition, uniform, canteen.

## San Patricio Battalion

Not all Americans fought the Mexicans loyally during the war. A group of them, about half of whom were Irish, defected to the Mexican side and were formed into the *San Patricio* (St. Patrick) Battalion. After the war they were captured and court-martialed for desertion. Those who were not shot or hung were whipped, branded with a D, and turned loose.

These survivors now roam the badlands of the Confederacy and the northern half of Mexico, and Confederate attention to the War Between the States has prevented anyone from going after them in force. Substantial rewards are offered for them, though.

Although most of the San Patricios are getting old, they’re tough from years of living a life of banditry in the wilderness. A few who died have come back Harrowed.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Texas) d6, Notice d6, Riding d10, Shooting d10, Tracking d6

**Charisma:** -2; **Grit:** 3; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Outsider, Wanted

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes, Duelist, Nerves of Steel, Quick Draw, True Grit.

**Gear:** Double barrel shotgun (12/24/48, 1-3d6, RoF 1-2, Shots 2, Shooting +2), knife (Str+d4), Colt Army (12/24/48, 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1).

## Village Priest

In the majority of villages and towns, the most influential person one’s likely to meet is the local priest or friar. Look hard enough and you’ll find many a corrupt or apologist priest out there, but for the most part a town’s padre is



a simple, devout man who believes in God and wants nothing more than to help his flock through the travails of life. Priests wield considerable influence and connections all over Mexico; your posse couldn't ask for a better ally—or worse enemy. (For padres who are honest-to-goodness blessed, use the Blessed stats found in *Deadlands Reloaded*.)

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Latin) d6, Knowledge (Theology) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Swimming d8

**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor, Pacifist (Minor), Vow (Minister to his flock)

**Edges:** Charismatic, Noble (Priest), Tale Teller

**Gear:** Crucifix, Bible, prayer beads.

### LORDS OF THE OBSIDIAN BLADE

Xitlan and his followers in the Secret Empire have infiltrated every level of Mexican society as servants. His power now encompasses not only the thousands of pure-blooded Aztecs living in hidden valleys throughout Mexico, but also a passel of well-placed spies. Xitlan, three of the most prominent Lords, and other members of his secretive cabal are detailed below.

Aztec sorcerers use the black magic equivalent of Arcane Background (Shamanism). This means they don't get their powers directly from the Aztec "gods" (which are extremely potent nature spirits). Instead the Aztecs call upon manitous, and those evil

beings force nature spirits to power the sorcerer's unholy rites. Nature spirits used in this way are usually corrupted into new manitous or destroyed. Since their powers are (indirectly) provided by nature spirits, Aztecs may only use powers to which shamans normally have access (Xitlan being the conspicuous exception).



### Xitlan

His people refer to Xitlan as the Green Feather Emperor—a decidedly gentle and artistic-sounding title for one so versed in the arts of black magic, sorcery, violence, and death.

Xitlan has the skin tone and typical facial structure of a pure-blooded Aztec of early middle age, yet he gives the impression of being older than he seems. His whole body appears dry and dessicated close up, but not so withered that anyone would recognize Xitlan as not entirely alive. However, anyone who watches him closely for a few minutes may notice that he doesn't seem to breathe.

He usually wears the simple garb of a lowly Aztec priest.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d12+2, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Healing d12+2, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (Battle, Occult) d12+2, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Survival d10, Taunt d8, Throwing d10, Tracking d8, Tribal Medicine d12+2

**Charisma:** +2; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11

**Hindrances:** Arrogant, Charismatic, Intolerance ("Spaniards"), Vengeful (Major), Vow (Retake Mexico for the Aztecs)

**Edges:** Command, Connections (Secret Empire), Fervor, Followers, Hold the Line!, Improved Tough as Nails, Inspire, Knack (Seventh Son), Master (Healing, Knowledges, Spirit, Tribal Medicine), Natural Leader, No Mercy, Reputation, Snakeoil Salesman, Strong Willed, Unholy Warrior

**Special Abilities:**

- **Black Magic:** Xitlan knows every power in *Deadlands Reloaded*. **Power Points:** 50
- **Fearless:** Xitlan banished his own dread long ago. He is immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Mastery of the Undead:** Xitlan can create, control, and destroy undead. He creates them with his *zombie* power, but he can use that power to create other types of undead than walkin' dead—he can make a corpse come back Harrowed or as a walkin' dead or nosferatu (see *Deadlands Reloaded*), for example. He can exert absolute control and dominance over a number of undead equal to his Spirit (i.e., 14). Others he must control through powers, persuasion, or force. Harrowed heroes can make an opposed Spirit roll to resist control, but Xitlan receives +4 on the roll. Xitlan's *bolt* power does base 2d10 damage to undead (rather than 2d6), or 3d10 for double Power Points.
- **Undead:** Toughness +2. +2 to recover from Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison. Does not suffer wound penalties.



**Four Jaguar**

Four Jaguar is the most physically powerful of the Lords, and he's a huge bear of a man. Ruler of an Aztec community located in a valley in western Mexico, Four Jaguar is a chief, and he's the son of chiefs who came



before. Since his earliest days his family has filled his head with tales of the brave deeds of his ancestors, and the cruelty of the Spaniards who slaughtered them. He has been raised to hate white men with a passion, and he always looks forward to the next opportunity to kill a few of them. He yearns for the day when he can meet the Spaniards in open battle and split their bodies in two with his enormous two-handed *macahuatl* (obsidian sword).

**Attributes:** Agility d12, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12+1, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d12+1, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Knowledge (Poison) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d12, Streetwise d6, Tribal Medicine d8

**Charisma:** -4; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 9

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Overconfident, Quirk (Intolerant of “Spaniards”), Vow (Retake Mexico for the Aztecs)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Black Magic), Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor, First Strike, Improved Block, Improved Tough as Nails, Level Headed, Natural Leader, New Powers, Power Points, Professional (Fighting)

**Powers:** *Armor* (cloak of evil), *beast friend*, *boost/lower trait* (blood sacrifice), *fear*, *smite*, *speed* (jaguar’s swiftness), *vision quest*. **Power Points:** 20

**Gear:** Two-handed obsidian sword (Str+d10), knife (Str+d4).



## Nine Lizard

Nine Lizard’s predecessor, a Lord named Twelve Motion, was tall, strong, knowledgeable, and wise—so much so he was routinely compared to Nezahualcoyotl, a philosopher-king of old. Needless to say Twelve Motion’s magnificence was an inspiration to all,

especially the lesser Lord Nine Lizard. It inspired in him a jealous, overpowering hatred.

After years of plotting, Nine Lizard’s machinations resulted in the bloody sacrifice of his rival in 1879. Given that Xitlan himself distrusted Twelve Motion’s popularity, it should come as no surprise that the Green Feather Emperor’s bodyguards delivered the killing blows.

Nine Lizard is now ruler of his Aztec farming community, which is hidden in the forests of a remote stretch of coast near Guadalajara. He serves Xipe Totec, the Flayed One, the Aztec god of spring and renewal. His people also venerate Xipe and engage in rituals to satiate him. The villagers capture a few hapless travelers each month, and then flay them alive as sacrifices.

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

**Skills:** Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Guts d12, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (English) d6, Knowledge (Farming) d8, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Knowledge (Spanish) d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Stealth d10, Throwing d10, Tribal Medicine d12

**Charisma:** +2; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Enemy (Major, Priests of Quetzalcoatl), Quirk (Intolerant of “Spaniards”), Vow (Retake Mexico for the Aztecs)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Black Magic), Charismatic, Command, Danger Sense, Dodge, New Powers, Power Points, Snakeoil Salesman

**Powers:** *Armor*, *beast friend*, *boost/lower trait*, *quickness*, *speed*, *wilderness walk*.

**Power Points:** 25

**Gear:** Nine Lizard normally wears a simple cotton loincloth, with just a few other items indicating his status as

priest and ruler. After a sacrifice to the Flayed One, he wears a bloody human skin as a head-to-toe garment until it rots away.



### Seven Vulture

Seven Vulture is a scrawny, crafty old man who's seen more years than any Aztec save Xitlan himself. He and his people, many of whom are skilled craftsmen and obsidian workers, live in Chicometlacalli, a network of caves in an almost inaccessible canyon in the northwestern part of the central plateau of Mexico.

Seven Vulture's patron god is Mictlantecuhltli, god of the dead (in actuality the Reckoner known as Death). The priest serves as chief of all major ceremonies at the hidden temple of Mictlantecuhltli, which the Secret Empire maintains in the northern desert. Death and dying obsess Seven Vulture, so he siezes any opportunity to study them. It would comfort him greatly to know that Death plans to return him Harrowed after his demise.

Though he's a skilled priest and devout worshipper of Mictlantecuhltli, Seven Vulture only pays lip service to the notion and goals of the Secret Empire. To his pragmatic mind, the idea of taking on the Spaniards is folly, and will only lead to more suffering among the Aztecs. He's content to remain where he is, ruling his own little domain with as little regard for the outside world as possible.

Seven Vulture lives up to his name—he looks like a scrawny old vulture all dressed up to go to a costume party. He's bald, with pale skin from years of living in a cave. He wears the elaborate robes of an Aztec ruler, or the skull-and-bones regalia of Mictlantecuhltli, depending upon the venue.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d12, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Aztecs) d8, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Knowledge (Spanish) d8, Notice d10, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Taunt d6, Throwing d8, Tribal Medicine d12

**Charisma:** +2; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Arrogant, Enemy (Major, Priests of Quetzalcoatl), Quirk (Intolerant of "Spaniards"), Quirk (Yearns to cheat death)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Black Magic), Charismatic, Command, Damned, New Powers, Power Points, Reputation, Strong Willed

**Powers:** *Aim, armor, boost/lower trait, burrow, deflection, detect/conceal arcana, dispel, environmental protection, exorcism, fear, healing, mind rider, sanctify, shape change (all Ranks), smite, speed, teleport, vision quest, windstorm.* **Power Points:** 35

**Gear:** Ceremonial robes, dagger (Str+d4).



### Juan, aka Eight Rabbit

Marshal Achille Bazain chose Juan as a bodyguard not only for his intimidating size and demeanor, but also because he speaks Spanish and Indian languages. He often translates for the Marshal. In addition, he helps Bazain keep tabs on Santa Anna's advisor Xitlan—or so Bazain thinks. In fact, Juan's real name is Eight Rabbit, an Aztec warrior devoted to the cause of the Lords of the Obsidian Blade. He spies on Bazain for the Lords and feeds the marshal false information.

**Attributes:** Agility d12, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d12, Fighting d12+1, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d10,



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Riding d12, Shooting d10, Stealth d12+1, Survival d6, Swimming d10, Taunt d6

**Charisma:** -4; **Grit:** 4; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Quirk (Intolerant of non-Aztecs), Vow (Retake Mexico for the Aztecs)

**Edges:** Alertness, Brawny, Dodge, Fleet-Footed, Harder to Kill, Strong Willed, Tough as Nails

**Gear:** Bow (12/24/48, 2d6, RoF 1, Shots 1), 15 arrows, knife (Str+d4).



### Aztec Sorcerer

In his plot to subjugate all of Mexico, Xitlan uses only the most ruthless, highly-trained killers as his most trusted bodyguards and assassins. These servants receive extensive martial training, and are taught underhanded techniques to blend into Mexican society until they are needed. Not only that, their descent gives them innate resistance to arcane powers. Many of them have been placed at critical positions in the Mexican government's hierarchy, so that Xitlan's eventual coup will go off without a hitch.

Aztec sorcerers use their wits to trick enemies into undoing themselves. If that fails, they cut loose with lethal black magic.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d4, Knowledge (Poison) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8, Tribal Medicine d8

**Charisma:** -4; **Grit:** 2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Vow (Retake Mexico for the Aztecs)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Black Magic), Improved Arcane Resistance, Level Headed

**Powers:** Boost/lower trait, deflection, smite.

**Power Points:** 10.

**Gear:** Ceremonial knife (Str+d4).

### Aztec Warrior

Aztec warriors do whatever it takes to get the job done, and the job is usually killin'. These fierce fighters are found in hidden Aztec villages throughout Mexico, or hiding in plain sight as servants and other members of the lower social classes.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Poison) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6

**Charisma:** -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7;

**Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Vow (Retake Mexico for the Aztecs)

**Edges:** Arcane Resistance, Level Headed, Two-Fisted

**Gear:** Ceremonial knife (Str+d4), obsidian sword (Str+d6).

## FAMOUS FOLKS



### Charles Bascomb

Former Mexican correspondent for the *Tombstone Epitaph* Charles Bascomb is, in his own words, "a man of no real profession or qualification." The heir of affluent Bostonites (and a former school chum of Lacy O'Malley), Charles Bascomb spent years traveling the world as a dilettante with his manservant, Henson, amassing a wealth of knowledge concerning far-flung locales. He also learned the secret art of hucksterism, as handed down in *Hoyle's Book of Games*. The history, customs, and culture of Mexico occupy a special place in his heart, making it his home away

from home. Since he was thrown into The Fort at Veracruz (see page 25), it's his permanent residence.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Gambling d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Aztecs) d6, Knowledge (Mexico) d8, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Notice d6, Spellcasting d10, Shooting d4, Taunt d6

**Charisma:** -1; **Grit:** 2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Curious, Habit (Shuffles cards constantly), Wanted (Minor)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Magic), Filthy Rich, Power Points

**Powers:** Bolt, boost/lower trait, deflection.

**Power Points:** 15.

**Gear:** Usually *Hoyle's Book of Games*, and some playing cards. Currently none.



### Marshal Achille Bazain

A Frenchman, Achille Bazain may dress like a court dandy but underneath he's made of iron and vinegar. Although he's over 60 and has spent much of his life in the field leading troops, the Marshal has barely slowed down. He brooks no disrespect or disobedience and doesn't give ground to anyone but the Emperor Maximillian. Bazain's biggest soft spot is his devotion to his young wife, Soledad, who he left back in Paris.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Guts d6, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Shooting d10, Swimming d10, Taunt d6

**Charisma:** +2; **Grit:** 3; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Elderly, Outsider, Quirk (Intolerant of Mexicans), Vow (to the Emperor)

**Edges:** Charismatic, Command, Dodge, Inspire, Strong-Willed, True Grit

**Gear:** Colt Revolving Rifle .56 (24/48/96, 2d8, RoF 1, Shots 5, AP 2, Reload 2), cavalry saber (Str+d6), Colt Navy .36 (12/24/48, 2d6, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1), 20 rounds for each gun, dress uniform.



### "One-Eyed Rafael" Velasco-Burgos

The bullet that took Rafael Velasco-Burgos' eye did more than that—it killed him. But not for long! The flying lead didn't tear up his thinker too much, so after a few days of nighmarish visions he came back Harrowed. The way he tells the story, he woke up after the battle and stumbled into a village where the *campesinos* nursed him back to health. Sadly, the village was "destroyed by the French" shortly after he left. (In reality, Velasco-Burgos killed every man, woman, and child, then burned the town so no one would ever speak of his return.) Unfortunately for him, he didn't finish the job, and some of the survivors are still looking for revenge.

Velasco-Burgos and his manitou get along just fine. He doesn't mind going along with the ideas it whispers in his mind from time to time. He plans to stick close to General Díaz until he feels the time is ripe, then kill him and take over his position as *el jefe*.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Gambling d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Knowledge (English) d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d10, Survival d6, Swimming d10, Taunt d6, Throwing d8, Tracking d8

**Charisma:** -2; **Grit:** 6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Enemy (Major, massacre survivors), Grim Servant o' Death, Mean, Vengeful (Major)



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**Edges:** Berserk, Brawny, Command, Implacable, Improved Tough as Nails, Nerves of Steel, Strong Willed, Supernatural Attribute (Vigor), Tale Teller

**Gear:** Winchester '73 (24/48/96, 2d8, RoF 1, Shots 15, AP 2), Colt Dragoon (12/24/48, 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1), Bowie knife (Str+d4+1, AP 1), 30 rounds of ammunition for each gun, 50 feet of rope.

### Special Abilities:

- **Harrowed:** Grit +1. Needs 1d6 hours of sleep per night. Only a head-shot can kill. "Death" only puts the Harrowed down for 1d6 days. Immune to poison and disease.



### Corporal duMont

DuMont is a veteran of the French Foreign Legion. He's got the scars to prove he's been in plenty of fights, and his skin has the sunburned, rawhide look of a man who's used to the great outdoors.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d10, Fighting d12, Guts d8, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d10, Shooting d12, Stealth d10, Streetwise d6, Survival d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7

**Hindrances:** Loyal, Outsider, Quirk (Intolerant of Mexicans), Vow (to protect the Marshal)

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes, Fleet-Footed, Harder to Kill, Improved Dodge, Level-Headed, Tough as Nails, True Grit

**Gear:** Colt Peacemaker single-action (12/24/48, 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1), knife (Str+d4), 20 rounds ammunition, uniform.



### El Escorpión

The feared bandit leader *El Escorpión* is the scourge of the northern deserts. He adopted the scorpion as his namesake due to an encounter he once had with a giant vinegaroon. He claims



the beast stung him repeatedly, but he was immune to its venom. He even has the scars to prove it!

**Attributes:** Agility d12, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d12, Gambling d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (English) d6, Knowledge (Northern Mexico) d6, Riding d12, Shooting d12+1, Stealth d12, Survival d8, Swimming d12, Taunt d6, Throwing d12, Tracking d8

**Charisma:** -4; **Grit:** 3; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Vengeful (Major), Wanted (Major)

**Edges:** Fleet-Footed, Nerves of Steel, Quick Draw, Professional (Shooting), Strong Willed, Tough as Nails

**Gear:** Bullard Express rifle (24/48/96, 2d10, RoF 1, Shots 11, AP 2, Min. Str d8), Colt Frontier (12/24/48, 2d6, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1), 40 rounds for each weapon, knife (Str+d4), rope, horse.



### Benito Juarez

Juarez is just about the only hero in Mexico these days. He's not a foreign invader, like Maximillian and his French soldiers; he's not a potential demagogue harboring dreams of revenge, like the oft-deposed Santa Anna; he's not seeking power for its own sake, like Diaz. He's just a man with a vision of equal treatment for everyone, high and low alike, in a modern and democratic Mexico. He's tired of seeing his people trod upon by foreign invaders, the wealthy, and other exploiters.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Law) d8, Knowledge (Mexico) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d10, Tracking d8

**Charisma:** +2; **Grit:** 3; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Enemy (the French, Santa Anna), Heroic, Vow (Free Mexico from invaders)

**Edges:** Command, Connections, Dodge, Fervor, Natural Leader, Reputation

**Gear:** Winchester '73 (24/48/96, 2d8, RoF 1, Shots 15, AP 2), Colt Peacemaker double-action (12/24/48, 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1), 50 rounds ammo for each gun, riding horse.



### Minister Jesús Flores y Maceda

Jesús Flores y Maceda serves Emperor Maximillian as a troubleshooter and spy. These days he spends most of his time scouting rebel forces and troop movements, as well as keeping a close eye on the Confederate border. He uses a steam wagon to get around quickly.

Flores y Maceda has been investigating Xitlan and his activities for several years now. He still lacks any hard evidence of the sorcerer's activities, but has spoken to enough witnesses to know Xitlan is up to no good. He'd make a great ally for a posse in dire need of friends.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Driving d10, Fighting d10, Gambling d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d12, Knowledge (French, Spanish) d6, Knowledge (Mexico, Southern California) d6, Notice d12, Persuasion d8, Riding d10, Shooting d10, Streetwise d8, Survival d8, Throwing d8, Tracking d12

**Charisma:** 0; **Grit:** 4; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Cautious, Curious, Quirk (Intolerant of Texans), Vengeful (Minor)



**Edges:** Command, Dodge, Fleet-Footed, Level Headed, Marksman, Nerves of Steel, Rich, Scout, Wilderness Man

**Gear:** Winchester '73 (24/48/96, 2d8, RoF 1, Shots 15, AP 2), double-action Colt Peacemaker (12/24/48, 2d6, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1), 50 rounds for each gun, Bowie knife (Str+d4+1, AP 1), rope, steam wagon, two weeks' rations, 128 pesos, \$78 Union scrip, \$157 Confederate scrip.



### Corporal Willette

Marshal Achille Bazain's aide-de-camp is named Willette, though no one knows his first name. A former Legionnaire, Willette is a quiet and sober man called "the Padre" by the soldiers because he looks just like a Mexican friar.

Unknown to Marshal Bazain, the ever-efficient Corporal Willette has loyalties other than France. Specifically, he is an eighth level initiate of the Royal Court, a secretive group of hucksters devoted

to the Reckoners' service. Anticipating Mexican attacks on the Confederacy as a result of the current unrest, the Court has advised Willette to stay exactly where he is—in Bazain's inner circle, gathering information on French and Mexican intentions.

Willette has long suspected that "Juan," the Marshal's bodyguard, is more than he appears to be. He remains suspicious of Xitlan. Kept busy by his cover job, his mission for the Court, and the renewed civil war, he has been unable to investigate either of these men more closely.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Gambling d10, Guts d8, Knowledge (Battle) d10, Knowledge (French) d10, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Knowledge (Spanish) d10, Persuasion d10, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d8





**Charisma:** 0; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6;  
**Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Cautious, Greedy (Minor),  
Quirk (Randy)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Magic),  
Card Sharp, Connections (Royal Court),  
Dealer's Choice, Dodge, Improved High  
Roller, New Powers, Old Hand, Power  
Points, Quick, Quick Draw, Snakeoil  
Salesman

**Powers:** *Boost/lower trait, bolt, healing,  
hunch, mind rider, telekinesis, trinkets.*

**Power Points:** 20

**Gear:** Winchester '73 (24/48/96, 2d8, RoF  
1, Shots 15, AP 2), Derringer (5/10/20,  
2d6, RoF 1, Shots 2, AP 1), 10 extra  
rounds for each weapon, friar's robes,  
*Hoyle's Book of Games.*



### General Porfirio Diaz, "The Phantom General"

Diaz himself has been around Mexican politics as long as Benito Juarez. He's a *mestizo* who was born in Oaxaca way back in 1830. Like Juarez, he first studied in the seminary, then left it to attend law school. However, unlike the *Juarista* leader he never completed his legal training, instead opting for a military career.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6,  
Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d12, Guts d6,  
Intimidation d12, Knowledge (Battle)  
d8, Notice d8, Riding d12+1, Shooting  
d10, Stealth d12, Survival d8, Swimming  
d12, Taunt d6, Tracking d8

**Charisma:** -2; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 8;  
**Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Mean, Vengeful (Major),  
Vow (Major, conquer all of Mexico)

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes, Command,  
Fleet Footed, Improved Hip-Shooting,  
Inspire, Marksman, Quick Draw,  
Reputation, Speed Load, Steady Hands,  
True Grit

**Gear:** Winchester '73 (24/48/96, 2d8,  
RoF 1, Shots 15, AP 2), Colt Peacemaker  
single-action (12/24/48, 2d6+1, RoF 1,  
Shots 6, AP 1), cavalry saber (Str+d6),  
Mexican army uniform, riding horse.

