BRINGING IN THE SHEAVES

A Deadlands Reloaded Adventure

for 4-5 Novice Heroes by Bronto Awesome



There are three potential fights that the posse may take part in during this adventure. The Marshal will need to improvise the details, such as the starting placement of the enemies, for each encounter.

THE STORY SO FAR

Grassy Knoll is a rural town nestled in hilly country. Dairy production is ubiquitous and hay farming followed behind it as a natural outgrowth. One of the established hay farmers in Grassy Knoll is **Alfred Alfa**, who started his operation before the town even existed. He married young but his bride died in childbirth along with their baby. He has never remarried or even considered the notion. He has remained a bachelor ever since and has lived a lonely life. Over time, it has been emotionally rough on the man, who, past middle age, has started to slip into a state of dementia. His condition is irreversible. Just the sort of man upon which the manitous love to prey.

Shortly after Alfa purchased the hay ground around the *Pioneer Cemetery*, he was asked to maintain the small plot of land in exchange for a small stipend of money. He has cared for this graveyard diligently for the last two decades. Then the main town cemetery got full and the people of Grassy Knoll started reserving plots in the Pioneer Cemetery. The town undertaker, in an effort to get organized, staked out the open spaces in the Pioneer Cemetery using wooden stakes with the names of the future owner of the grave engraved on them.

The manitous, who over the years have whispered in Alfred's ears all sorts of maddening things, jumped on the opportunity. They convinced the hay farmer that he had become the Angel of Death and that the tombs that he saw staked out in the graveyard were for those waiting to be called to heaven. They also told him that if he should do what they asked, to take the lives of those appointed in such a manner, that it would outwardly demonstrate the faith of the victim. He would then be sure that the victim was bound for heaven. Over time, he became the embodiment of the Grim Reaper, which was proper as good and honest folk do not fear death. Then, Alfred died and became Harrowed. The manitous have granted him the appropriate magical powers befitting the Grim Reaper.

Alfa has killed many victims in the last few months and has fallen deeper and deeper into the Grim Reaper roll. Initially he used a scythe to claim his victims. Now he has started to use his horse-drawn mechanical mower to run down those that would resist the call of the Angel of Death. By the time that the posse arrives to help, at least fifteen have been killed.

GETTING STARTED

The posse is drawn into this adventure when they receive a letter asking for their help. The letter is signed by an entire church congregation, The First Christian Church of Grassy Knoll, on behalf of one of their members, the town undertaker. The letter asks the posse to come to Grassy Knoll to look into the matter of the recent murders. The local marshal has arrested the undertaker, a man by the name of **Barry Casketts**, under suspicion of the murders. Most of the congregation believes that the undertaker is innocent. They want the posse to prove his innocence and to stop the murders. They are willing to pay \$50 per hero, doubling it if they discover the true culprit.

WHAT THE POSSE KNOWS

By simply asking around, the heroes learn the following information:

♦There have been fourteen murders or disappearances so far. The locations range throughout the county. No one particularly young has been killed. All of the victims seem to have died in a violent way from a severe cutting stroke predominantly, but not exclusively, across the lower half of the body. All were alone and away from town when they were killed. They have all been laid to rest in the Pioneer Cemetery.

♦One man, *Kent Stand*, has miraculously survived and is recovering in his home. Both of his legs have been severed just below the knees. He remembers the Grim Reaper riding up on him on the road and frightening his horse so badly that he was thrown. Then Kent was cut down by the Grim Reaper's scythe when he tried to run away. Everyone thinks that Kent is delusional, but are quite sympathetic.

♦ The town marshal has arrested Barry Casketts because he stands to gain the most from all of the funerals being held. Miraculously, everyone that has been killed has reserved a plot in the Pioneer Cemetery and the marshal deems this as enough reason to arrest the undertaker. The posse is free to question Casketts in jail whenever they need. Barry insists that he is innocent.

SCENE ONE – STRAW MAN ARGUMENT Location: Old Pioneer Cemetery

The posse's investigations may lead them to the Pioneer Cemetery. They can get directions from anyone in town. On the way, the posse encounters a pair of elderly women returning from the cemetery. The women stop the posse long enough to complain about the ridiculous scarecrows that the groundskeeper, *Alfred*, has put up in the graveyard. They insist that they are tasteless and inappropriate with all of the funerals happening. Then they leave in a huff. In the past, the Pioneer Cemetery has been rarely visited, as the Mennonites that established it and once lived in the area have moved away. Lately there have been frequent funerals and there are far more flowers and wreaths decorating the grave. A dirt track is the only access to the place. It is nestled in the middle of a vast wheat field. The wheat field surrounding the cemetery is owned by Alfred Alfa. Technically, the county owns the cemetery. The original graveyard was a small place, roughly twenty feet square and surrounded by a fancy wrought-iron fence. It is full of simple stone markers. The western side of the fence line has been knocked down in order to accommodate newer graves.

The first thing that the posse notices are the five scarecrows erected around the perimeter of the graveyard. These scarecrows were placed here by Alfa to protect the graveyard. The scarecrows are made primarily of clothing stuffed with straw. Each holds a pitchfork or sickle. Each scarecrow is held up by an old broom or shovel handle that has been driven into the ground.

The markers for the reserved grave sites are still there. The next victims can be learned if the posse reads through them and makes the connection. There are fourteen new graves. With a successful Notice roll, the heroes discover that one of the older graves has recently been dug up and reburied. The tombstone reads:

Horace Winnie Farrier & Blacksmith 1814-1868

The heroes learn nothing if they take the time to dig up the grave. It once held a treasure and the manitou led Alfred to it. Four horseshoes were buried with the farrier and Alfred now uses them to summon his phantom steed.

If anyone touches the tools that the straw men carry or any of the new grave markers, the straw men animate and attack the heroes. This fight takes place in a 20 ft. x 30 ft. cemetery surrounded by a short fence with only a few

gravestones in it. The fence on the west side has been taken down. The wheat growing around the graveyard is tall and a great place to hide.

STRAW MEN (5)

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6 **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Sickle (d6+d4) or Pitchfork (d6+d6)

Construct: +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from called shots (except hands)

♦Fearless: Straw men are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

◆Invulnerability: Ranged attacks do no damage to Straw men. Bullets and arrows pass right through.

Weakness (Fire): Straw men are susceptible to fire. All successful fire-based attacks do double damage. The chance of catching fire from a fire-based attack is increased to 2 in 6.

Weakness (Tools): The magical power to animate the straw men comes from the tools that they wield. If a straw man is disarmed, it is immediately destroyed. -2 penalty to hit a straw man's arm. A Strength roll from the straw man must beat the damage of the attack in order for it to keep holding the tool.

SCENE TWO - SICKLED PINK Location: Alfred Alfa's Farm

The heroes may want to talk to the caretaker of the Pioneer Cemetery and the logical place to see him is at his homestead. Regardless of when they visit, Alfred is not home when the posse investigates his homestead. The Alfa farm is a small and simple place. There is a catalogbought, prefabricated cottage and a few outbuildings. There is a pen for livestock and three large haymows, roofed shelters for keeping may dry. Sitting underneath a makeshift shelter is Alfred's shiny, new mowing machine. Haystacks can be seen in the field next to the farmstead. The home contains the scant belongings one would expect from a bachelor farmer. What little decorations there are are religious in nature. With a successful Notice roll, the posse finds that a newspaper clipping being used as a book mark in a large family bible is actually the obituary of Alfred's Grecian immigrant wife, **Delta Theta**, from thirty years ago.

There are five tall haystacks in the field next to the farm. With a successful Notice roll, a heroes notices that there are quite a few more wagon tracks marking up the field and that a hay farmer would not be happy with this amount of his crop being destroyed. The tracks seem to lead to three particular haystacks.

When a new person is buried at the Pioneer Cemetery, Alfred digs them back up and brings them here to hide them, following the instructions of the manitous. Three of the stacks have a corpse stack hidden inside. The corpse stacks consist of four to six stiff bodies stacked together in a standing position and bound around the middle with rope. If the cadavers are disturbed, they animate and attack the heroes.

This fight takes place in a large, recently mowed field almost a quarter-mile square. It has twenty haystacks spread widely around the field. The Marshal should select which ones hold the corpse stacks.

CORPSE STACKS (3)

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8. Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d10 Pace: 4; Parry: 6; Toughness: 9 Gear: None

Claws: d8+d4

Fear (-2): When the Corpse Stack animates, all witnessing it must make a Guts roll (-2).

♦Fearless: Corpse Stacks are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

Oundead: +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage.

Weakness (Bindings): Magical rope keeps the

corpses together in a stack and animates them. If this rope is severed, the corpses tumble apart and are no longer animated. An attack at -2 is needed to hit the ropes. The ropes have a Toughness 4.

SCENE THREE – ON THE FIELD OF GORY Location: Freshly-Cut Field at Night

The next victim slated to be claimed by the Grim Reaper is *Melvin Cudders*. Mel is another local dairy farmer. The posse can figure this out by the marked grave sites at the Pioneer Cemetery. If they speak with him, they learn that Alfred Alpha has asked him to meet out at one of Mel Cudders' hay fields so that they can look at a mysterious insect swarm that appears at dusk and feeds on the crop. This is an excuse to get Cudders out of town, alone. The heroes can follow along if they wish. Alfred does not appear as his normal persona, only as The Grim Reaper.

If the heroes go to the freshly-cut field, with or without Cudders, they soon find that a thick fog starts to cover the area, dropping visibility to only a few feet. This is part of the trap set by the Grim Reaper.

The horse pulling the mower is an insubstantial ghost and the mower itself is being moved around by supernatural energies from the manitous that haunt Alfred. The heroes can discern that the horse is a phantom with a simple Knowledge: Arcana skill check. Otherwise, they learn quickly when they attempt to attack it.

Alfred's grass mower moves at a Pace of 10 and has a Toughness of 10 (2). Obviously, attacking the horse has no effect, but attacks can be directed at the mower itself. If the mower wrecks, the horse disappears. The heroes may attempt to knock Alfred off of his mower. If Alfred is hit with an attack that at least Shakes him, he must make a Driving check to stay on the mower.

The mowing section extends away from the main body of the cart to the left roughly ten feet (2 squares), and this is the lethal part of the machine. Alfred attacks by moving past victims and passing them on the right. Those who are struck by the slicing teeth of the mower suffers

3d6 damage. The mower is low to the ground, so a defender can attempt to jump over it with a successful Jump check. This does not require an action. Shaken victims must make the check at -2.

This fight takes place on another large field of burgeoning alfalfa. The grass is short and there are no real obstacles to hide behind.

PHANTOM HORSE

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Intimidation d12+2, Notice d12, Stealth d12+4

Pace: 10; Parry: 4; Toughness: 8

Ethereal: Phantom horses are immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks.

Fear (-2): When the phantom horse animates, all witnessing it must make a Guts roll (-2).

Fleet-Footed: Phantom horses roll a d8 when running instead of a d6.

Horseshoes: The phantom horse is bound to the real horseshoes on its feet.

***Kick:** Str

Size +2: Phantom Horses are the same size as a real horse.

ALFRED ALFA, THE GRIM REAPER (WC)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d10. Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Shooting d4 Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 7 Gear: Scythe (d10+d10)

Fear: When Alfred appears, all who see him must make a Guts roll.

♦Fearless: Alfred is immune to Fear and Intimidation.

Oundead: +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage. Ignores wound penalties.