

WHEELS-UP LANDING



A ONE SHEET ADVENTURE FOR THE DAY AFTER RAGNAROK BY H. M. 'DAIN' LYBARGER

This One-Sheet can be dropped into a campaign at any time the heroes need to travel by air over bad territory; anywhere in the Poisoned Lands north of Chicago, flying from Oslo to Stockholm, or in Central Asia, Manchuria, or Mongolia. Change the description of the town if need be.

Fair warning: this adventure is likely fatal for a group of heroes lacking Pilot and Repair skills.

The heroes wind up paying for passage aboard a beat-up old Ford Tri-Motor—its seen better days, and many repairs, but it's the kind of near-indestructible aircraft that stays in service near the edges of civilization. Trouble is, it's only *near*-indestructible.

TWENTY MINUTES AGO

The pilot warned you of heavy weather coming in. "Sky hasn't been right since Serpentfall. Didn't used to get thundersnow much 'round here, even in a bad winter. But now... Still, it's not as bad as it was, right? Two years of solid winter up here then... Things got pretty lean." His banter fell silent as he concentrated on the bucking control-yoke. When lightning struck the starboard engine, causing it to stream fire and smoke, he cursed. The snow-covered hills were coming up fast... "Buckle up, folks! 'Fraid we're goin' down hard..." On first impact, the landing gear struts ripped free, and the Tri-Motor bounced briefly skyward. Then the belly of the plane slammed hard into the powdery snow, and everything went dark.

ANY LANDING YOU CAN WALK AWAY FROM..

The heroes awaken inside the downed Tri-Motor. The pilot set them down in the only clearing he could find, a narrow frozen lake between forested hills. Taking stock of the situation, they discover that the aircraft is badly damaged; the electrical wiring in the starboard engine is fried, a rudder control cable has snapped, and part of the underbelly ripped away when the landing gear went—taking the majority of the heroes' luggage and supplies with it, tumbling out through the hole in the fuselage. The Tri-Motor has taken three vehicular Wounds from the crash, with Critical Hits to its Locomotion, Controls, and Chassis.

If one of the heroes is a Pilot, the pilot-owner of the Tri-Motor didn't survive the crash. Otherwise, he's alive, but with a broken arm and a mild concussion he won't be able to do much except (barely) fly the plane—if the heroes can fix it! Treat him

as an Incapacitated Extra. He's 'walking wounded'; coherent enough to give a little grim advice about the area, but that's it. If he's the only pilot, the heroes *must* keep him alive, no matter what.

The pilot's map and navigation notes show that the Tri-Motor went down somewhere just north of a small town. The map is pre-Serpentfall, of course, so the marked town may not even exist anymore. Still, without supplies or tools, it's the heroes' only real chance of rescuing themselves.

WALKING AWAY

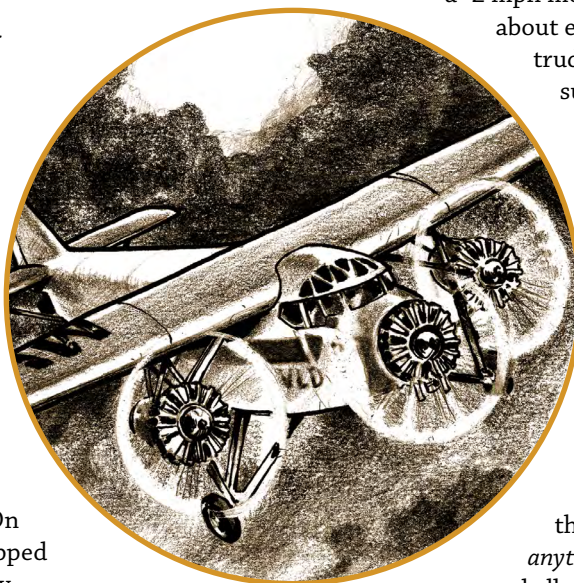
The woods and heavy snowfall make travel difficult, giving a -2 mph modifier to overland speed. The town is about eight miles away as the crow flies, but trudging that distance is rough, and hauling supplies back to the downed aircraft even rougher. Snow can be melted for water, but remember the hazard rules for Hunger, Cold, and Fatigue. The heroes are in a bad spot, and should be constantly aware of it.

SCROUNGE OR DIE

The "shopping list" for repairing the Tri-Motor isn't long, but it's pretty specific: a 4'x5' piece of corrugated sheet metal, twenty feet of 1/8-inch braided cable, electrical wiring for the starboard engine, and something—*anything*—that can replace the landing gear and allow for a takeoff on snow. Last but not least, something to raise the fuselage high enough to work underneath and make those repairs.

The town on the map, when they reach it, doesn't look like it survived the "lean years" the pilot talked about. It seems abandoned. There are burned-out ruins of houses and a few businesses along the main street, dead power lines still attached to poles, and a couple of rusting cars abandoned where they sit. The general store, the bakery, and the Main Street diner have long ago been stripped of anything edible, as have the few remaining residences. A barber shop, a Post Office, and a gas-station/garage fill out the rest of Main Street. A gutted church and the deserted City Hall anchor the ends of the only major cross-street. Everything is covered in a foot or more of freshly-fallen snow, making it easy for the heroes to see where they've been.

Likely ways to find items on the "shopping list" include pulling down a segment of tin roof or the metal gas-station sign for sheet metal, stripping power lines for braided cable, adapting the spark-plug wires from a car to fit the starboard engine, and



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scavenging more sheet metal or a car's hood to make a takeoff skid. The heroes may have other ideas that are just as plausible.

Repair rolls are at a -2 without access to basic tools. The garage in town has those in abundance—and even better, it has a tripod chain hoist used to lift engine blocks out of cars. Ungainly and difficult to haul back to the Tri-Motor, but perfect for raising the nose to conduct repairs.

NOT ALONE

As they explore, the heroes get the feeling that they're being watched. Allow Notice rolls if any player says that they're being extra vigilant. Successes give the heroes clues about what's coming. Tracks in the fresh snow that none of their party made; drag marks in the dust across a building's floor, sounds of something moving in the shadows...

If the heroes split up during their search in order to save time, select someone who is alone to be the first victim. If they stay within earshot of one another, select someone at the edge of the group. The attack happens no earlier than sundown. Fast and silent, out of the swirling snow comes a pack of gray-skinned, feral-faced sub-humans, reeking of rotting meat!

Two Ghouls per hero plus two for the pilot should provide a challenge. The ghouls make an initial mass attack, but if driven off they change tactics; hiding, lurking, and harrying their prey all night. The heroes might fortify one of the remaining solidly-built structures in town (the garage or the City Hall, for example) and make a stand there. Heroes who choose to defend a location with only one way in or out, such as the bell-tower of the church, may be surprised by the bestial ingenuity of their foes.

WALKING BACK

If the heroes defeat the Ghouls and survive the difficult trip back to the crash site, a series of Repair rolls can get the Tri-Motor airworthy again. Cooperative rolls can speed up the process—and given the extremely limited availability of food, the quicker they can get airborne the better. Heroes with the Survival skill might be better employed hunting for food than assisting with the repairs, but that's a stop-gap measure at best.

COLD NIGHT

Repair work takes time. Night falls—and with it comes a wendigo drawn by the smell of fresh meat! Once the heroes are bedded down for the night inside the fuselage, it strikes. The first sign of the wendigo's presence is the creature's unearthly howl, just outside the plane! The second is the crashing sound as it leaps atop the Tri-Motor, looking for a way in!

The biggest danger of the wendigo attack is irreparable damage to the Tri-Motor. The heroes may be forced to use themselves as bait to lure the creature away from the vulnerable plane. The wendigo fights to the death; it won't flee.

A WING AND A PRAYER

Once everything is repaired that can be repaired, all that remains is taking off. The frozen lake makes an adequate runway, but the jury-rigged plane comes with no guarantees.

If the pilot-owner is still alive, he's recovered enough to do the job. If not, one of the heroes must make the attempt. Each unrepaired Wound on the plane is a -1 modifier to the roll.

If they make it to their destination, the heroes will have proof: flying really *is* safer than traveling on the ground...

Ghouls

See page 84 of **DAR**.

Wendigo

See page 95 of **DAR**.



FORD TRI-MOTOR 4-AT-B

Last manufactured in 1933, the "Tin Goose" has three 220 horsepower Wright J-5 Whirlwind engines, one mounted on the nose and one on each wing-root. Corrugated sheet metal forms the body and wings. Even its control surfaces are corrugated metal, not fabric. The control cables for those surfaces run along the outside of the aircraft for easy access. Even the gauges are mounted externally, directly on the engines; pilots read them through the windscreen.

The Tri-Motor's simple construction and ease of repair make it an ideal choice for frontier work. Skis or floats can replace the standard landing gear, allowing it to get passengers into places other planes can't.

ACC/TOP SPEED: 10/50 **CLIMB:** 10 **TOUGHNESS:** 12(2)

CREW: 2 (pilot, co-pilot) + 12 (passengers)

COST: \$40,000 (\$10,000 with Bush Pilot edge)

Credits

Writing & Design: H. M. 'Dain' Lybarger

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Graphic Design & Art Direction: Hal Mangold

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