DEAD MAN'S PASS

An Insta-Role® Game
50 ready to play adventures



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English

INSTA-ROLE

Insta-Role® Rule Book



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INSTA-ROLE

Insta-Role®

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Presentation

A zero-prep role-playing game: just add players.

Insta-Role® is a 'zero-prep' role-playing game that allows an experienced Game Master (the Story Teller, or Teller) to lead a role-playing session without any prior preparation. The play duration is set before the game begins, so as to allow for an experience tailored to the available player count, with the challenge of a time-boxed session.

Insta-Role® is a 'traditional' role-playing game, in that the Teller brings a pre-written scenario to life for a group of player-managed Characters, using game rules to handle the obstacles and oppositions encountered by the Characters during the game. It also has more modern elements, such as shared narrative authority.

Insta-Role® is set in pop culture universes that players can immediately relate to. The micro-scenarios, independent and easily combinable, allow tailoring the duration of play to match players' available time.

The Teller or one of the players will be the Rules Referent. They must have read and understood the rules before starting a game. The other players do not necessarily need to know the rules: the rules referent can explain the minimum to them before starting and elaborate during play, introducing rules in context when they become necessary. No other preparation is required: once the basic rules are understood, the Teller can start a game immediately!

NB: Insta-Role® is not intended to be an initiation rpg, however an experienced Teller will probably find it suitable to initiate novice players to role-playing gaming.

Number of players and duration of games

Insta-Role® is designed for one Teller, and 2 to 5 players. It is possible to play head-to-head or with more than 6 players, but this makes the Teller's task more complex and requires a little more experience.

Insta-Role® is specifically designed for improvised and quick games: The time-boxed duration is a very important aspect of the game. The scenarios are designed specifically to work in limited time. If you are looking for games without time limits, there are many other role-playing games on the market that better meet this need.

It is also possible to play several sessions in 'campaign' mode while keeping the same characters in the same universe from game to game.

Target audience

Insta-Role® is designed for experienced role-players who lack opportunities to play.

As Insta-Role® is targeted at experienced Tellers, this rulebook does not provide an introduction to roleplaying. The same applies to anything related to emotional safety, and handling any sensitive themes that may surface in game: This game is targeted at experienced players, who already have a good grasp of these aspects. **Each group of players is encouraged to adapt the game to their needs and practice.**

Goal of the game

As a reminder, there are no winners or losers in a role-playing game. The real goal of the game is to have a good time and to build an interesting and coherent story together, one that will be remembered. As such, it is possible to fail miserably at the scenario goals, yet for the game session to be a resounding success in terms of gaming pleasure and shared memories.

Each game session is in some ways similar to writing a movie or a novel together, and playing a campaign can very well be compared to writing a complete season for a television series.

Game Materials

Insta-Role® consists of this rulebook, as well as a series of universes, which are available individually.

This rules booklet contains all the information needed to organize a game in one of the universes, as well as 'Character' and 'player aid' sheets (feel free to photocopy them!)

The universe booklets, available separately, each contain a copy of this rulesbook, a complete description of a pop culture inspired universe, with a series of important Characters and places, Organizations to which the Characters can belong, various play aids, and most importantly a large number of short scenarios set in this universe.

Additional materials (not provided)

You will need a few accessories in addition to the book, which you probably already have on hand:

- 'Fate' and 'Injury' tokens used to keep track of variable elements (Use whatever you have: poker chips, coins, matches, beans, wooden cubes,...) You can even write it down and keep count on a piece of paper.

- A ten-sided dice (d10). If you don't have a d10 handy, you can use the seconds digit on a digital clock, or the last digit of the page number of a randomly opened book, or any other 1-10 random generation system that the players agree on. D10 are used to make the game as portable as possible with the least friction to start playing.

- A few sheets of paper and something to write with for each player

- A few copies of the Character sheets and play aids for the players

Set up

One of the players is the 'Teller' and will master the game. The Teller must have experience in mastering a role-playing game, and be able to improvise a little. The Teller and the Rules Referent must have read and understood the full rules of the game before the game. The Teller is also responsible for managing the session time limit. (Don't fret, this comes easily with practice. When in doubt, go for it!)

1° The Teller and the players begin by setting the duration of the game together. (See 'time management' under the Teller's role.) 2 hours is recommended for the first games.

2° The Teller then reads or paraphrases the presentation of the universe being played, and the description of the organization all their Characters will be members of, to the players. (Each group of Characters is linked to a single organization so they can start as a team.)

3° They then invite the players to create and then introduce their Characters to the group. During that time they read a scenario for the session.

4° They finally describe the starting scene to the players, and launch the scenario(s).

This whole setup should take less than 15 minutes!

Some universes may introduce specific rules that complement or replace normal rules, such as rules for managing madness in a "gothic horror" universe. The Teller and Rules Referent will make sure that they are applied accordingly.

The Characters

Characters have three characteristics: **Physics, Intellect, Technics and Intuition**, which can range from 1 to 10.

Physics (P) represents the Character's physical strength, muscles, and agility. Physics also represents their ability to resist damage (hit points).

Intellect (I) represents their intelligence, their knowledge and their wit.

Technics and Intuition (TI) represents their intuition, magic in the universes where magic exists, and/or technology (which is similar to magic to the uninitiated) in the universes where it exists.

An average human would have P5, I5, TI5. Levels above 7 correspond to superhuman beings and are normally not allowed for Player Characters.

Character building and Destiny tokens

- Each player distributes 15 points between the three characteristics of his Character, with a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 7. They will normally not be able to exceed these starting levels.

- The player records this distribution on their Character's sheet.

- The Players begin each session with a common pool of 2 Destiny Tokens per player participating in the session. (6 tokens for 3 players.)

- The Teller starts with 1 Destiny Token per player participating in the session.

Players and the Teller will be able to use Destiny Tokens during the session to influence the narrative course of the session (see below).

The unused tokens are not kept from session to session! The pool of tokens circulates in closed circuit between the Teller and the players during the session.

Description and Life Goals

Each player briefly describes their Character to the group, along with their character's life goals. This helps build a common frame of reference and provides a clear and shared understanding of the group of Characters being played.
The Teller and the group validate these Characters together, so that everyone agrees on the characters team composition. 'Lone wolves' and Characters needing much off-group handling time are not desirable for this system designed for short and fluid games. It may be necessary to make some

compromises so everyone at the table can have a good time. The Teller will arbitrate such situations.

Organisation

In each universe, each team of Characters belong to a same organization, which provides a story opportunity engine and ensures team cohesion even if the Characters are very different.

The players and the Teller then decide together what circumstances brought the Characters together, in the context of the organization to which they belong. This will help the Teller build a coherent world for this team.



Example

A group consisting of a doctor, a firefighter, a schoolgirl, and a retiree. They all have a keen interest in the occult and met at the local library, where they regularly consulted the same books. They all belong to the same organization, the Crowley Circle ('Ardéchoise' chapter), which brings together occult enthusiasts from around the world.

Characters Equipment and Game Materials

The Teller will freely create game material for the players and cards describing equipment available to the Characters, money, etc. during the game. We recommend using paper sheets or index cards to create a physical artifact of this equipment and its description. Only the most important objects are concerned, avoid creating pointlessly detailed inventories. The system is intended to be lightweight and non-simulationist, to emphasize the role more than endless lists of stuff or skills.

Weapons, explosives, vehicles, magical objects and other supercomputers or powerful stuff are always subject to prior approval by the Teller at the start of the session.

When an important item is brought into play, the Teller will describe its exact effects to the players, if they know them at all.

Example 1: Open information

> You find a healing potion. You have used those before and do know that it's a one-time use potion, and that drinking it immediately restores you to your maximum 'physical' ability.



Example 2: Closed information

You find a Decker data chip. You have no idea what programs it contains, but you do know that viruses can sometimes be found on these chips. (The Teller knows exactly what programs and protections are on the card, but the players will have to figure that out in-game.)



Tests, obstacles and trials

The game system is based on tests. A test always involves a characteristic score plus a d10 roll, and may include a modifier (called a difficulty factor, or modifier).

Simple Tests

During the game, the Teller may ask players to perform simple tests. These tests are used to determine whether the Character succeeds in an action complex enough to require a test, or whether they succeeded overcoming a passive obstacle.

To perform a simple test, the Teller indicates the characteristic to use, and sets a target threshold for success.

Examples of target thresholds:

Automatic action: no testing required.

Easy Action: 10+

Average Action: 15+

Difficult Action: 17+

Impossible Action: 20+

These thresholds are provided as examples only! The Teller sets the thresholds freely based on tests and the Characters' abilities. They do not communicate the threshold to the players, they only tell them whether it is an easy, medium, or difficult test. If the Teller adds modifiers for things the Characters cannot be aware of, they do so secretly.

The Player rolls [1d10 + characteristic] and must obtain a result greater than or equal to the target. **An unmodified roll of 1 on the d10 is always a failure and is called 'Critical Failure'.**

The Teller will determine the consequences of critical failures as they see fit. Such failures should have dramatic consequences, but not lead to irreparable failure of the scenario.

Passive Obstacles

Player Characters may face passive obstacles during their adventures. For example, a blocked door, or a wall to climb. These obstacles are generally resolved by a simple test.

The Teller will stage the obstacle for the players, and tell them the Characteristic to use and the target to overcome it (easy/medium/hard). Some obstacles can be faced collectively and others must be faced individually, as assessed by the Teller.

If the Teller allows it, the players whose Characters are involved can pool their efforts to act together. A single test is then made, using the characteristic score of one of the characters involved with the highest score in that characteristic as a base, with a +1 per participant. If the Teller assesses that the action does not lend itself to a team effort, they will require an individual test.

The Teller may also decide to let the players offer alternative ways to overcome the obstacle, and designate an alternative characteristic and target accordingly. They may even decide on a different cost, such as Destiny Tokens, or reputation loss, depending on the situation.



Example 1:

The Characters are searching for an ancient formula established by a renowned alchemist. They come across a book written by one of his disciples, which may contain the precious formula. The book is written in an esoteric code, and is full of incomprehensible illustrations. It is all a code, that the Characters will attempt to decipher.

The Teller tells them that this code is an obstacle, to be solved collectively as a team, with a target threshold of 15 (medium), using Intellect and/or Technics and Intuition as Characteristic.

The players discuss the matter, and remember that their Characters have previously met an expert who might be able to decipher this code. They ask the Teller to call on the expert rather than attempting to decode the book themselves. The Teller agrees and tells them that the expert will require a payment of 100 gold pieces. The player characters have the 100 gold pieces and decide to pay the expert to address this obstacle.



Example 2:

A Character is trapped in the airlock of a spaceship. The Characters decide to try to modify the airlock control circuit to free him. The Teller tells them that this is an obstacle that can only be resolved by a single Character, with a test in Technics and Intuition with a target of 12 (easy). One of the players whose Character has a Technics and Intuition characteristic of 5, rolls a 7 on the die (5+7=12), and thus frees the captive in the nick of time.



Example 3:

The Characters are at the back of a dojo and decide to climb on its roof. The Teller says that it is a fairly easy obstacle that they must solve individually, with a target of 12 in Physics. The Characters propose to help each other by giving each other a leg up, and using the first Characters to have climbed to pull the others up the wall. The Teller grants them a reduction of the threshold to 10 instead of 12 to take their teamwork into account.

Active Obstacles and Adversaries: Opposition Tests

Player Characters may face Adversaries or Active Obstacles during their adventures. An enemy determined to block their path, an artificial intelligence whose goals are not aligned with those of the players, or even another player's character opposing their actions.

When it is necessary to resolve an opposition test, the Teller sets the characteristic to be used for this test. An Opposition Test is then made between the Character(s) involved against the Teller (or against the opposing Characters).

Opposing players add up the best characteristic score of the team for the set characteristic, and any modifiers that apply, to the roll of 1d10. The Teller plays active obstacles or enemies in the same way. The highest total wins.

The winner's side states the way they wish to have this resolved, and the Teller weaves it up in the thread of the story, with respect to the scenario and the universe. In the event of a tie, no one clearly wins and the Teller improvises the outcome of the attempted action, with mixed outcomes.

Combats

All combats are resolved using an opposing test.

Each encounter is resolved using a single test for the whole group. Keep in mind that this is a cinematic game system where narrative and story are far more important than simulation and tactical details.

The Teller describes the situation precisely to the players, who then each in turn describe how their Character will approach the encounter. The Teller then sets the targets and modifiers, and the combat is resolved in a single opposing test. The Teller decides the outcome based on the test results and describes it to the players.



Example 1:

A bear attacks the team of player characters.

The Teller tells them that this is an opposition to be resolved with the Physical characteristic. He sets 4 as Physical for the Bear.

One of the Characters is a magician, he only has 3 in Physical but he knows a spell allowing him to spend a Destiny Token to add 7 to his Physical characteristic for 20 minutes, strengthening him to a total of 10.

The magician steps in front of the animal and wins the opposition test with a roll of 6 on the d10 for a total of 16, against a roll of 6 for the Teller for a total of 10.

The Teller receives the Destiny token spent by the magician to cast the spell no matter the results.

Example 2:

The player characters' group has found an ancient statue covered in strange runes, glowing with a faint purple aura. Some of the characters want to destroy the statue, which they believe is evil, while others want to leave it untouched, believing it would be dangerous to destroy it.

The discussion lasts for a while, and the Teller decides that they will have to resolve this decision as a test of intellect between themselves, to resolve the debate. The characters form two opposing groups, and ultimately the supporters of destroying the statue win the opposing Intellect test.

The Characters destroy the statue, and the Teller makes a mental note that they are now all cursed for the rest of the adventure.



Outcomes Scale

The Teller can use the outcomes scale to qualify the outcomes of the tests and actions undertaken by the Player Characters:

Outcome: description

Catastrophe: The action fails, and the situation worsens unexpectedly

Failure: The action fails

Partial failure: The action fails but the situation improves slightly

Equality: The action is not resolved satisfactorily, and the situation stagnates.

Partial success: The action succeeds, but the situation gets a little worse

Success: The action succeeds

Exceptional achievement: The action succeeds, and the situation improves in an unexpected way

(We deliberately do not provide numbers in this scale; it is up to the Teller to determine the most appropriate targets based on the circumstances in play and the desired style of play.)

Skills and Modifiers

Insta-Role® does not use skills, only the 3 characteristics. However modifiers may apply, created by the Teller, or predefined in the scenario.

Items or equipment (stuff) that brings a bonus or penalty can be provided in game by the Teller. Some stuff will be single-use (a potion for example), others will have a cost in Destiny Tokens for a given effect, and others will have a permanent effect.

The Teller just needs to write on a card what the Character knows about the stuff, and give it to the player to materialize the stuff. In game terms, the Character whose player holds the card is the bearer of the stuff.

Example 1:

A revolver. Gives +4 in Armed combat. Use limited to 1x/combat. Depending on the desired playing style, counting ammunition will be completely ignored or, on the contrary, strictly enforced by the Teller.





Example 2:

A 'Physics Potion', which adds +3 to Physics to the Character drinking it (They may temporarily exceed their maximum but will come back down to their normal characteristic if still over it after 4 hours). Single use.

Example 3:

A portable Decker console, which does reduce (-1) the target of an obstacle using the Technics and Intuition characteristic. Use 1x/obstacle.



Exhaustion, Wounds and Death

When a Character fails an opposition test during a combat, or fails a test in a situation where failure could cause injuries, they receive an Injury Token. In the case of a critical failure (1 on the die roll aka catastrophic failure) of such a dangerous test, they receive two Injury Tokens instead.

When a Character has received a number of Injury Tokens equal to or greater than their Physics characteristic, they lose consciousness, and if Physics becomes 'negative' (received more wounds than his Physics) they continue to bleed and their condition will worsen until they are stabilized, or healed, or they die: They receive one Wound token for each hour spent until stabilized or healed or dead.

To stabilize an injured character who is 'negative', medical skills and equipment are required! The Teller may, if deemed appropriate, grant a Technics and Intuition test to compensate for the lack of specific skill and/or equipment.

When a Character has accumulated a number of Injury Tokens equal to or greater than their [Physics x 2], they die. Depending on the universe played, death can be final or merely a temporary inconvenience.

When Characters heal or rest, the Teller will allow them to discard Wound Tokens. The Teller will determine the healing rate according to the story needs. A base of 1 wound token per 4 hours rest would be suitable for humans in a realistic universe.

If a Character dies, once the action that caused the Character's death has been resolved, the Teller will take a short break to create a new Character, and tell the players a short flashback or side story to integrate the new Character into the existing team. Announce that the new Character was withdrawn and discreet, but following the group from the beginning, or that they are being sent as a replacement by the organization the Characters are members of, for example. As the game is played in short sessions with a fixed duration, it is preferable to prioritize the rapid return of the player to the game over strict realism.

Destiny Tokens and

Sharing the Narrative Authority

'Shared narrative authority' means that the Teller is not the only one in charge, and that all players are going to be able to actively take part in shaping the story.

The Destiny tokens are a currency circulating between the Teller and the players during the game. Players keep their Destiny tokens in a common pool, usable by the whole group. In case of disagreement between players on the use of the tokens, the players vote, and the Teller arbitrates if necessary.

Players and Teller freely spend their tokens to change the course of the game during play.

The players can spend a Destiny token to:

• Activate an ability that requires spending a Destiny token, such as casting a spell or the activation of an ability requiring such an expense.

• Suggest a story development, which the Teller may or may not accept. (The token is not spent if the Teller refuses.)

• Automatically succeed at a Normal difficulty action, without making a test.

• Being allowed to attempt a test for an action that would normally be outside of one's capabilities (+10 bonus to the die roll. The token is spent BEFORE rolling the die).

• "Undo": Cancel an event that just happened and doesn't involve a failed test. In practice, it's a 'rewind' in history, offering a second chance, always subject to the Teller's agreement.

• Get a big 'helping hand' from the Teller: providential assistance from a passerby, notice an important clue that you've overlooked until now, etc.

• Avoid the death of a Character. This specific case costs all of the remaining Destiny tokens, with a minimum of 1.

These expenses are always subject to the Teller's approval!

In practice, at any time, a player can interrupt the game to suggest a development of the story to the Teller. He makes his proposal and offers a Destiny Token - only if the group agrees. The Teller can accept the proposal and keep the token, or say no and return the token.

The Teller will decide what is or is not acceptable based on the universe and the scenario, ensuring that he is fair and, a priori, favorable to the players.

The tokens spent by the players are given to the Teller, who adds them to his

own.

The Teller can give players opportunities to recover Destiny tokens, generally by accepting negative effects:

• Automatically fail a test (instead of throwing the die).

• Accept a negative effect or story development proposed by the Teller.

• Let a captured enemy escape.

• Players can also offer that their character undergo negative effects to recover Destiny tokens.

• He can finally give a Destiny token to players to reward a good action / idea / initiative.

Example 1:

The team of Characters visits the village bank to meet with the manager. One of the players suggests spending a Destiny token and says, 'Uh oh... This scene smells like a robbery.' The players spontaneously agree.

The Teller agrees, pockets the Destiny token and tells the players that two bandits burst into the bank while they are in the manager's office.





Example 2:

A Character attempts to hack into a journalist's computer. The Teller requires a Technics and Intuition test for this hack, which he succeeds. The Teller tells him there isn't any very useful information on the computer disk. The player suggests spending a Destiny token for luck. The group agrees. The Teller takes the token and tells the player that upon closer inspection, their character finds a link in the browser's bookmarks, pointing to the computer system of the newspaper the journalist works for, and which contains the sought after information.



Example 3:

The Characters are investigating a gold prospector who recently died. One of the players grabs a Destiny token on the table and announces, 'As he's missing, his spirit will probably try to contact us to tell us what happened to the prospector.' The players agree on the spending. The Teller however returns the token: 'Sorry, but this is the historic Wild West, and ghosts don't exist here.' The Teller declines the request because it falls outside the scope of the game.



Example 4:

The Characters have just broken into the office of a person they are investigating. When they leave, the teller offers the players to recover a Destiny token in exchange for the team having been filmed by a surveillance camera, and being identifiable. The players agree, and the Teller gives them a Destiny Token from his pool.

The next day they may have to answer questions from the police, unless the owner of the office sends them some muscle instead...

Example 5:

After a long investigation, the Characters finally manage to arrest a dangerous criminal, who has become their sworn enemy. At the end of the trial, the Teller offers the players to give them two Destiny tokens per player if they agree to their captured enemy's escape during his transfer to prison. They agree, knowing that they will have to continue hunting him for a long time to come.



The Role of the Rules Referent

Their role is to ensure the fair application of the rules of the game, and to inform the players and the Teller of relevant rules points during the game. Above all they are a facilitator, ensuring the smooth running of the purely mechanical aspect of the game.

The rules referent does not necessarily have to be the Teller. This allows the Teller to be relieved of the rules management burden and gives them time to read the scenario and prepare the game while the rules referent manage the creation of the Characters and the explanation of the rules of the game to the players.

The Teller always has the final say on outcomes, setting targets, modifiers, etc.

The Role of the Teller

The Teller are more **a host, a referee and a narrator** than a 'Game Master': they will make the universe and scenarios come to life, while taking into account the suggestions and perceptions of other players.

They are also the **guardian of time**. They will also ensure that the time limit set at the beginning of the session is enforced, as well as arbitrate ties and points of disagreement. Once the allotted time has elapsed, they will announce to the players that the session is over, and will improvise an ending to the scenario, taking into account what has been played so far. The Teller will ensure that they do not accept any time extension or prolongation of the session: the time limit is set at the beginning of the session and must be enforced.

The specific format of Insta-Role®allows you to easily change Tellers from one session to another, to allow rotation within a group of players.

Time Management

Insta-Role® is played in limited time! The duration of the session is set at the beginning and must be strictly enforced.

At the start of the session, the Teller and the players determine how long the session will last ("we'll play 2 hours", "We'll play until midnight").

During the game, the Teller will ensure that the remaining playing time is taken into account and indicated to the players. Don't hesitate to place a timer visible to all on the table.

The Teller dynamically manages the difficulty to account for the remaining time: If there is little time left, the Teller may provide more clues to the Characters to help them progress faster. Or, on the contrary, he could let them investigate leisurely but put some pressure on them by reminding them of the remaining time... Each Teller has his own style. Just make sure everybody has a good time.

The Teller must take their role as 'timekeeper' very seriously and make it a point to strictly adhere to the time limit set at the beginning of the session. The limited playing time creates an interesting element of tension in the game. In addition, the scenarios are designed to operate within a limited playing time, in order to offer dynamic games. If players want to continue playing further, start a new session with a new time limit.

The Teller will make sure to combine a number of scenarios appropriate for the agreed playing time. Scenarios are designed so that they can easily be combined within the same universe. For a short session, one will be enough, and for a full weekend of play, several scenarios will be used. It is possible to run several scenarios in parallel to combine them, but keep in mind that combining scenarios rather than playing them in sequence will increase playing time because players will have to sort through information from each parallel scenario by themselves. This is intentional: Scenarios from the same universe are designed to create some confusion between scenarios when combined, which lengthens sessions but enhances immersion.

The system is intended to be completely modular in this regard. As a Teller, you will need to learn to manage this 'time master' aspect from game to game. For a short session, it's best to keep the adventure linear: For a one-hour game, use a single scenario sheet. For two or three hours, use two sheets, but wait until the first scenario is resolved before launching the second. For games lasting four to eight hours, launch two combined scenarios from the outset, and add a third along the way if necessary, and so on.

The Teller's role is clear: to bring the scenario to a resolution, positive or negative, right at the end of the time allocated to the session. **If the deadline arrives and the scenario is not resolved, the Teller will improvise a conclusion to end the session.** No extensions, just "a short story and then go to bed".

Session Management

Insta-Role® is a game designed for short, unplanned, one-shot games, although it is also possible to play in a campaign.

Since playing time is limited, the Teller must ensure that the time available provides players with maximum immersion and adventure.

- Keep the time spent on setting up the world and creating characters to a minimum. 10-15 minutes should be enough to create the group and start the session. It is always possible to clarify any missing details during the game.

- If possible get help from a rules referent player, who will allow you to concentrate on the scenario and managing the session while the rules referent handles the explanation of the rules, the setup and the creation of the Characters with the players.

- At the start of the session, immediately immerse the players in the action. "Action, now." There's no point spending an hour visiting all the townspeople before deciding what to do; the action must be immediate, compelling and obvious: the saloon burns down, the Vikings attack the village, the lights go out and strange noises come from the cellar, a gunshot is heard, etc. Take inspiration from film and television techniques to quickly set the scene and get the players into the game. When in doubt, focus on action.

- Minimize discussions about non-diegetic elements (anything that is not 'in game') such as technical questions about the game system, details of the equipment possessed by the Characters, digressions about cinema and sports, etc. Only what brings gameplay and immersion to the whole group really deserves play time. The Teller arbitrates if necessary, reminding the players that they are in a 'one shot' game with a limited duration, and quickly resuming the flow of the game.

- Keep in mind that an entire combat scene is resolved using a single test. No division into initiative, action turns, etc. Describe the overall situation, quickly

go around the table to get the goals and intended actions of all the Characters present, evaluate the characteristics and modifiers to use, and quickly resolve the whole encounter in a single roll. The game engine is only a support for the story and must remain secondary. The important thing is not to know exactly how many bullets are left in the villain's gun, but just to know if he is arrested or if he manages to escape, if the warehouse is on fire, etc.

- If the players are procrastinating or disagreeing, ask them to make an opposing roll between them to break the situation, and resume play.

- Be aware of downtime and systematically restart the action. In a game lasting one or two hours, it is important to maintain a steady pace. Only in longer games can the Teller offer his players the luxury of boredom. When players engage in time-consuming actions, use ellipses to quickly move through these phases of play: "You spend three days questioning the local government and doing research in libraries and you find the following..."

- For the investigation and research aspects, the Teller will take care to keep the pace of the session, by simplifying these phases of play to leave more time for action. The Teller asks the players what type of research/investigations they intend to carry out, possibly accompanied by a test, and provides them with the results.

Universes

An Insta-Role® universe is essentially materialized by a series of sheets for the Teller. They are grouped in the form of a book for convenience, but they are independent from each other in their use and purpose.

Universe Sheet

A description of the pop-culture inspired universe in which scenarios take place: western, medieval fantasy, giant robots, space opera, cartoon, etc.

The Teller or rules referent reads it to the players at the beginning of the session so that everyone knows in which setting their Characters will evolve. These presentations are intentionally succinct and only provide the Teller with a basis on which to develop and bring this universe to life in their own way.

They are based on pop culture in order to facilitate the immersion of the players. The Teller will make sure to be open to the players' vision of the universe played, without imposing his own, and to help the group to build a common vision of the universe played.

Before a first game with a group in a given universe, it is appropriate to do a quick round table to answer the players' questions about the universe that will be played and align everyone on a shared vision.

It is possible for an experienced and adventurous Teller to mix universes for more original games. The Teller will then have to adapt the universe and the scenario on the fly to reflect the combination of universes used. They will briefly indicate to the players how they intend to combine these universes for the upcoming session.

Example 1:

> The Teller tells the group before starting the session that she plans to mix two universes: a futuristic universe where Mars is actively colonized, and a western/gold rush universe. She tells the players that the scenarios will come from both universes, and that everything will be presented from the perspective of near-future Mars, adapting the Western scenarios to this futuristic universe.



Example 2:

The Teller tells the group before starting the session that she plans to mix two universes: An 'American Bikers' universe and a 'Three Musketeers' universe. She tells the players that the scenarios will come from both universes, and that everything will be presented from the perspective of a near future where a new generation of motorcycle clubs is heavily inspired by the period of the Musketeers, and the Musketeer scenarios will be transposed into the biker universe.





Example 3:

The Teller tells the group before starting the session that he plans to mix two universes: A 'Victorian London' universe and a 'Kaijus and giant robots' universe. He tells the players that the scenarios will come from both universes, and that everything will be presented from the perspective of Victorian England, where mad inventors try to destroy the city with steam-powered robots and laboratory grown monsters.

Organization Sheet

Each universe also provides a general framework to ensure the coherence of the games and to help the Teller structure their improvisations.

Characters will always be members of a same organization (government agency, secret society, clan, club, corporation, sect, hierarchical structure, etc.) which gives them common medium and long-term goals as a team from the start.

The Teller will decide which Organization is most appropriate when creating the Characters team. At the beginning of a game or campaign, the Teller will invite the players to specify their Character's position and goals within the organization.

Intro Sheet

These allow players to start a game immediately, providing a clear reason for them to be together in a specific place at the start of the game. They provide an easy introduction to a session. For a campaign, an intro sheet will be used for the first session and then the Teller will improvise based on the previous session's outcomes. These intros are totally optional, they are play aids designed to facilitate a quick start.

Scenario Sheet

Each Scenario sheet contains a complete mini-scenario that should last about two hours of play and reads in less than 10 minutes. Scenarios within a given universe are written to form a coherent whole and can be played in any order. There should be no conflicting elements between scenarios within the same universe.

A Scenario consists of two parts: a public part and a secret part. The information in the public part is read or paraphrased to the players by the Teller, and will introduce them into the session. The informations in the secret part are known only to the Teller and provide the background of this mini-scenario and the foundation to their improvisation.

During a campaign game, after each successful scenario the Teller is encouraged to reward the Characters in the way that seems most appropriate: resources (money, tools, weapons, etc.); promotions within the organization; contacts or Characters willing to provide them with services; or even Destiny Tokens from their reserve at the start of the next game.

Character characteristics should not evolve from one session to another, to avoid power creep and keep things balanced.

Other Sheets

The universe can also include other kinds of sheets: recurring characters, specific places and objects, maps, newspaper articles, rumors, illustrations, etc. The Teller will use these freely to flesh out the games. The Teller can also create additional sheets during the game as they find it useful or necessary.

Insta-Role® Character Sheet

Player: _____

Character Name: _____

Organisation : _____

Occupation : _____

Description : _____

_____

_____

(creation: distribute 15 points, min. 2 max. 7)

_____ **PHYSICS**

_____ **INTELLECT**

_____ **Technics and Intuition**

Notes : _____

Insta-Role® Play Aid

Tests: [1d10 + characteristic + modifiers] >= target

Opposing tests: [characteristic + 1d10 + modifiers]

Outcomes scale

- **Result** (difference between the result and the threshold): description
- **Catastrophe**: The action fails, and the situation worsens unexpectedly
- **Failure**: The action fails
- **Partial failure**: The action fails but the situation improves slightly
- **Equality**: The action is not resolved satisfactorily, and the situation stagnates.
- **Partial Success**: The action succeeds, but the situation gets a little worse
- **Success**: The action succeeds
- **Exceptional achievement**: The action succeeds, and the situation improves in an unexpected way.

Injuries:

[Physics] = coma 2 x [Physics] = death Rest = 1 per 4h

Destiny Tokens - Players

- Suggest a development of the story
- Automatically succeed in a normal difficulty action (no roll)
- Attempt an action that would normally be too difficult (+10 to the die roll)
- Cancel an event that just happened (and doesn't involve a failed test).
- Get a big 'boost' or 'tip' from the Teller
- Prevent the death of a Character. This costs all the Destiny tokens of the group (minimum 1).
- Accept a negative effect to recover a token

Destiny Tokens - Teller

- Player agree to automatically fail a test (no roll)
- Player accept a negative effect or development
- Reward an interesting initiative/action
- Players agree to let an enemy escape

Play more often!

An experienced storyteller, a few friends, and you're good to go!

Insta-Role® is the role-playing game designed for those moments when you want to play but didn't plan for it. Everything is ready to play immediately. For those who love to improvise or enjoy a quick session, it's ideal. Once you know the rules, you can play in fifteen minutes.

Two-hour sessions where every minute counts

Each scenario is designed for a two-hour session: You know from the start how long the game will last. A perfect format for playing without hogging the whole evening, or for playing several games in a row in an improvised campaign.

A streamlined system designed to support your improvisations

Each character is defined by three attributes, and a single dice roll is all it takes to resolve anything. The system remains discreet: with no skill trees or tables to consult, it leaves all the room for the story. The Teller uses the provided material to support their improvisation, and narration flows naturally. The result? A spontaneous and lively experience, focused on what matters most: the gameplay.

Players shape the story

Thanks to the Fate Tokens, players participate in building the narrative: influencing the story, proposing plot twists, or triggering fateful events. Narrative authority is shared between the Storyteller and the Players.

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Insta-Role® is role-playing that matches your lifestyle.

No preparation, no waiting, no frustration.

Just the desire to play, your friends, and a story to live.

DEAD MAN'S PASS

An Insta-Role® Game
50 ready to play adventures



FLATLINED GAMES

English

INSTA-ROLE

Welcome to Dead Man's Pass

This book provides a comprehensive overview of this universe, structured to guide you throughout your games. This section offers a general introduction to the world in which the adventures will take place, presenting its iconic characters and locations, as well as the organizations that operate within it. It is followed by a series of scenarios that can be played directly within this universe.

This section is designed as a reference tool for the Teller: it is not necessary to read it in its entirety before playing, but it can support your improvisations and enhance immersion as you play. All the scenarios presented have been designed based on these elements, in order to form a coherent whole. This common foundation is also useful for creating your own new adventures in this universe.

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Introduction for the Teller

Dead Man's Pass is a bustling mining town in Northern California between 1866 and 1890. Originally a simple stopover for wagon trains of settlers and gold seekers, the discovery of rich gold deposits in the surrounding hills quickly transformed it into a vibrant hub of activity. Prospectors flocked to the area, hoping to strike it rich before the major mining companies takeover completely. The construction of the railroad also attracts its share of laborers, engineers, and merchants, while outlaws take advantage of the surrounding chaos to thrive in the shadows.

The city is a crossroads between civilization and the wild territories still largely controlled by Indigenous tribes, particularly the Paiute, who see their lands inexorably shrinking. The Paiute oscillate between resistance and treaty negotiation with settlers and federal forces. The US. Army, stationed at Fort Eldridge, is often called upon to arbitrate these conflicts, but its decisions are rarely fair and only fuel the already explosive tensions.

The authority of Dead Man's Pass rests largely on its sheriff, John "Lame" Carter, a world-weary but incorruptible man. Aided by a few deputies and the sporadic support of the Pinkertons, he tries to maintain order in the face of ever-evolving crime. Outlaws, led by figures like Billy "Red" Murphy, impose their own law in remote areas where official justice has little presence. The rise of banks and commercial infrastructure, driven by influential figures such as Ezra P. Wilkinson, fuels a subtle power dynamic between legal and illegal activities.

But Dead Man's Pass also holds older secrets. The surrounding mountains, rumored scenes of strange disappearances and tales of cursed gold, harbor occult forces that only the indigenous shamans seem to understand. Chogan Black Bear, respected among the Paiute, warns of the spirits awakened by the miners' relentless drilling, but few heed him. Some gold seekers pushed by greed have already ventured too far, never to return.

Social tensions run high: former Confederate and Union soldiers struggle to coexist, and the growing presence of immigrants, primarily Chinese and Mexican, further exacerbates the divisions. Between dreams of fortune, turf wars, and the ever-present threat of violence, Dead Man's Pass is fertile ground for all kinds of adventures. Whether it's a showdown at the Silver Spur, a race against time to prevent an arms shipment from falling into the hands of outlaws, or an investigation into a series of unexplained disappearances, the city offers a dynamic and unforgiving environment where only the most cunning and determined survive.

Presentation of the Universe, to Be Read or Paraphrased for the Players

Welcome to Dead Man's Pass, a place where anything can happen and where things usually end badly for those who can't adapt. If you're here, you're looking for something. Gold, perhaps? Or a fresh start, a hideout, an easy score? Whatever it is, know this: this city is unforgiving and gives no quarter.

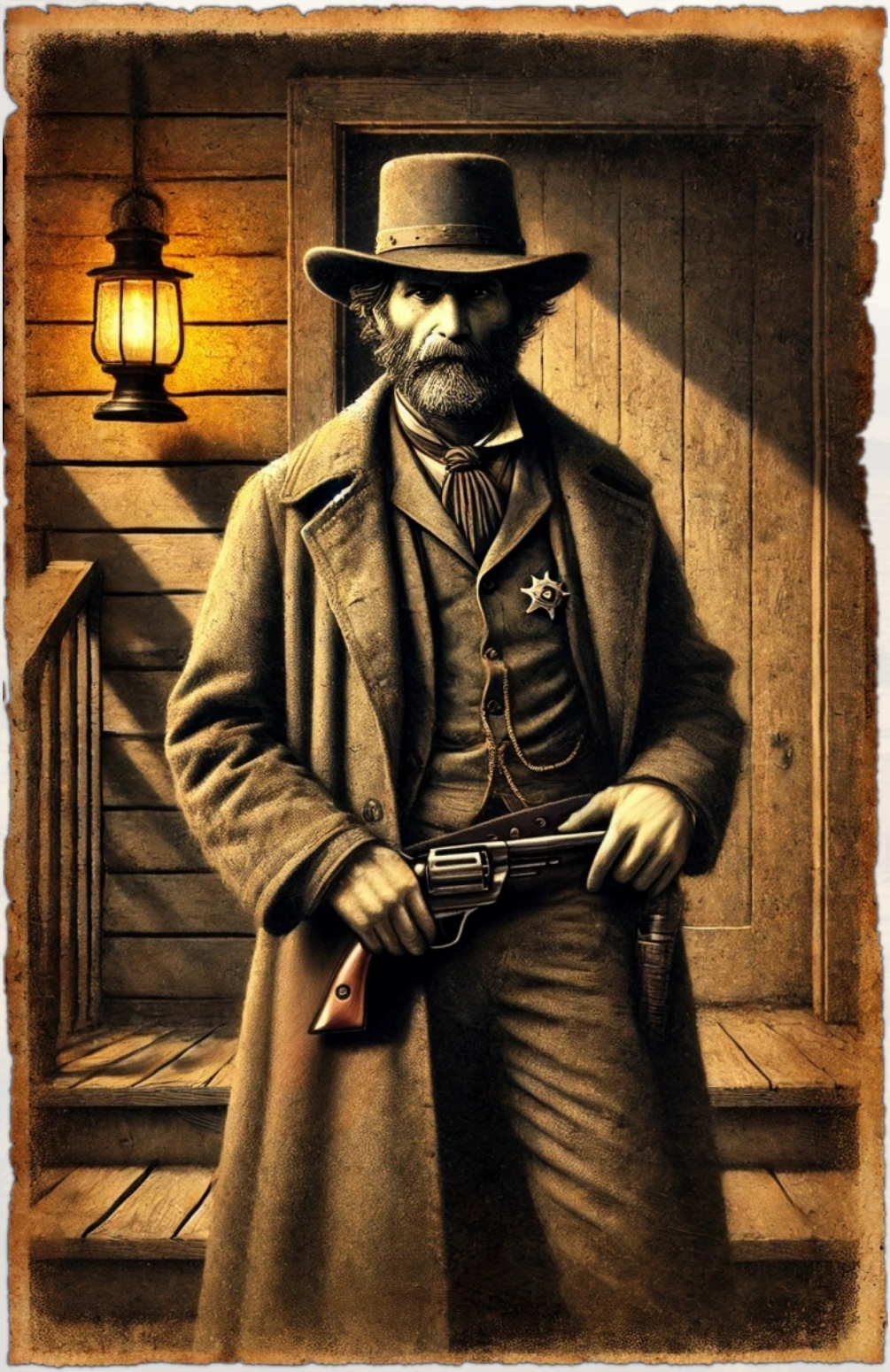
Just a few years ago, it was a simple stagecoach stop. A remote corner where travelers would halt before braving the mountains. Then someone had the bright idea to dig, and it turned out the earth was teeming with gold. Since then, the town has grown faster than a prairie fire. Saloons, banks, brothels, and hotels sprang up almost overnight. But with gold came greed, and with greed, violence. Dead Man's Pass is a viper's nest: desperate prospectors, ruthless outlaws, Pinkertons with dubious methods, soldiers on edge, and Natives enraged by the invasion of their lands. Add to that rumors of ancient curses and vengeful spirits, and you'll quickly understand that this is not a town for the faint of heart.

If you need a drink and a place to listen to local gossip, head to the Silver Spur. That's where it all happens, and where it all begins. Mary Whitmore, the landlady, knows everything about everyone, but she doesn't talk for free. If you're looking to do business with more reputable people, you could try Wilkinson's bank... but be warned, the guy has powerful friends, and he doesn't take kindly to deadbeats.

The law? It stands thanks to Sheriff Carter, an upright man, but worn down by the years. His office is full of arrest warrants he'll never have the resources to execute. It's not that he lacks courage, he simply lacks the men and bullets to maintain order in a city where justice is a luxury few can afford.

Looking for action? Go dig in the mines, but don't be surprised if you find something other than gold. Some say there are tunnels no one has ever dug, and those who venture into them vanish without a trace. If you're the type who enjoys a challenge, you could also try collecting a bounty on an outlaw's head... but remember, these guys are just as quick on the draw as you, if not quicker.

In short, Dead Man's Pass is America in the throes of upheaval and the gold rush. Opportunities are plentiful, but the risks are even greater. So keep your eyes peeled, keep your revolver ready, and above all, trust no one. In this town, the only law that matters is the law of the cleverest.



Main Characters

In this section, you will be introduced to the main characters of this game universe. Some are well-known, others more discreet, but all have a role to play. They may cross paths with the player characters, help or hinder them, and will become recurring figures in their adventures.

Each character presented in this section is accompanied by a complete description for the Teller. This sheet includes: their full name, their role in society or their cover if they lead a double life, a brief physical description, an overview of their personality and reputation, their main motivations, and any dark secrets they may have. The text also details, where relevant, their relationships with other characters or organizations within the universe. These profiles are designed to be directly usable in games or to serve as inspiration for new plots.

John "Lame" Carter : Dead Man’s Pass' Sheriff

John Carter, nicknamed "Lame" because of an old war wound, is the man trying to maintain order in Dead Man's Pass. A former Union soldier who survived the Civil War, he came here looking for a place to rebuild his life. His stiff right leg prevents him from galloping like he used to, but he compensates for this handicap with unwavering patience and determination. At forty-five, he has seen too much violence to harbor any illusions about human nature.

Physically, Carter is a massive man, his face weathered by sun and dust. His sharp gaze misses nothing, and his deep voice commands respect. He wears an old blue Union Army uniform under his long, dusty coat, a memento of his years of service. His Colt, worn but still functional, rests at his hip, ready to be drawn if necessary.

In the city, he is seen as a fragile bulwark against the surrounding chaos. The population respects his integrity, but some believe he is too isolated and too weary to make a real difference. He has a few deputies, but none have his experience, and several are easily corrupted. The shadow of the Pinkertons looms over him, these mercenaries just waiting for an opportunity to seize control of law enforcement.

Despite everything, Carter doesn't back down. He knows Dead Man's Pass needs justice, however shaky. His goal is simple: to prevent the town from descending completely into violence and anarchy. He walks a tightrope between corrupt politicians, greedy mining companies, outlaws, and rebellious Natives. Perhaps his only true ally is Mary Whitmore, the saloon owner, who occasionally provides him with crucial information.

But Carter harbors a secret: during the war, he committed acts he isn't proud of. One night, after drinking too much, he let slip fragments of his troubled past. Some say he participated in a punitive expedition against a Southern


SILVER S
Mary Mary Wintmore

village; others whisper that he did even worse things in the chaos of battle. Few know the truth, but some enemies might well use it against him.

For Carter, Dead Man's Pass is his last stand. As long as he's sheriff, he'll do everything he can to keep this town from becoming a lawless hellhole. But he knows that sooner or later, someone faster than him will pull out his revolver... and on that day, he'll have to taste the desert dust, like so many others before him.

Mary Whitmore : Owner of the Silver Spur

Mary Whitmore is the most influential woman in Dead Man's Pass, though no one says so out loud. As the owner of the Silver Spur, the largest saloon in town, she controls a constant flow of money, information, and various alcoholic beverages. The saloon is more than just a place for miners and weary travelers to relax; it's a nerve center where alliances are forged and broken, duels are challenged, and some men's futures are decided around a poker table.

Mary hasn't always been here. Rumors about her past are numerous and contradictory. Some say she was married to a wealthy merchant in San Francisco before a scandal forced her to flee. Others swear she was the partner of a notorious outlaw, and that after his hanging, she used the gang's hidden gold to buy back the saloon. She herself neither confirms nor denies these stories, preferring to maintain an air of mystery. What is certain is that she knows how to run her business with an iron fist.

Physically, Mary is a slender woman in her forties, always impeccably dressed. Her brown hair is tied back in a tight bun, and her piercing gaze betrays a sharp intelligence. She never carries visible weapons, but those who underestimate her quickly realize that she always has men ready to defend her. Her establishment is well-guarded, and she knows who to call if anyone tries to harm her.

She maintains ambiguous relationships with several figures in Dead Man's Pass. With Sheriff Carter, she shares a mutual respect. He knows she knows more than she lets on and that she could be a valuable ally... but he remains wary. With Ezra P. Wilkinson, the banker, it's a different story: they tolerate each other out of necessity, but Mary despises his arrogance and greed. Outlaws, like Billy "Red" Murphy, respect her but know her saloon is no den of iniquity for their shady dealings.

Mary is playing a dangerous game. Her safe, hidden beneath the floorboards of the Silver Spur, contains more than just a fortune in gold: it holds compromising documents over influential figures in the city. Letters, fraudulent contracts, written confessions... She has enough to bring down several powerful people. This secret is her insurance, but also her greatest threat. Should anyone discover what she hides, she would be an immediate target.



Her primary motivation is simple: to survive and thrive. In a city where men believe they hold the power, Mary knows that information is the true currency. Her goal is to secure an untouchable position. She discreetly finances certain businesses in the city, ensures her employees are loyal, and always keeps an escape route ready in case of trouble.

But all power comes at a price. Mary understands that every night in Dead Man's Pass could be her last.

Jedediah "Goldtooth" Jackson : Former Prospector Turned Smuggler

Jedediah Jackson, nicknamed "Goldtooth," is a key figure in Dead Man's Pass. A former prospector who struck it rich with a gold vein, he lost his fortune as quickly as he got it, to bad investments, gambling, and over-trust in dubious partners. Forced to reinvent himself, he used his local knowledge and contacts to launch another, equally lucrative, business: smuggling.

Today, Goldtooth controls a vast network trafficking alcohol, weapons, and other illegal goods between California, Mexico, and Native American territories. He knows every hidden trail in the region and exactly who to bribe to get a shipment across discreetly. His influence extends far beyond the city: he has deals with bandits, Mexican smugglers, and even some soldiers at Fort Eldridge, only too happy to get coin in exchange for a sideways glance.

Goldtooth owes his nickname to a glittering gold tooth, the result of a lost bet that forced him to have a molar extracted and replaced with an expensive prosthesis. He has made it a symbol of wealth and defiance, displaying a predatory smile that leaves no one indifferent. His robust physique, sun-tanned complexion, and long, graying beard give him the appearance of a gold rush veteran. But beneath the guise of an old adventurer, he is a cunning, ruthless man, always ready to strike first.

Goldtooth is known for never letting a debt go unpaid. Anyone who betrays him or tries to double-cross him ends up disappearing into the desert. He prefers to resolve problems with words, but doesn't hesitate to use force if necessary. He plays several roles: he discreetly supplies weapons to the Paiutes while selling alcohol to the soldiers at Fort Eldridge. He maintains ties with Billy "Red" Murphy, the notorious outlaw, while also keeping a foothold in respectable society through secret agreements with Ezra P. Wilkinson.

His biggest secret? A lost gold vein he discovered and hid deep in the mountains. Few people know that Goldtooth still has access to a vast fortune, but he hasn't exploited it, preferring to maintain the facade of a man always on the lookout for new opportunities. He's waiting for the right moment to claim this wealth and disappear, but rumors are starting to circulate. Several groups, including Billy Murphy's gang and the Pinkertons, suspect he's hiding



something and are watching his every move.

Goldtooth has only one rule: never be fooled twice. If someone betrays him, he never risks giving them a second chance. For him, Dead Man's Pass is just a playground, and he fully intends to be the one to collect the final prize.

Captain Thomas Eldridge : Cavalry Officer Stationed at the Nearby Fort

Captain Thomas Eldridge is a man of duty, a soldier whose unwavering loyalty to the United States Army is both his strength and his weakness. At forty-two, he commands the garrison stationed at Fort Eldridge, an outpost designed to maintain order in the region and manage the growing tensions with the Paiute tribes. A fervent patriot and a rigid officer, he firmly believes in the army's civilizing mission, which often puts him at odds with the local population, whether Native Americans or recalcitrant settlers.

Physically, Eldridge is a tall, slender man with impeccable posture and piercing eyes. His uniform is always meticulously maintained, and he demands the same level of discipline from his men. His brown hair is graying at the temples, and he sports a thin, precisely trimmed mustache. His authoritative voice leaves no room for ambiguity: he gives orders, he does not negotiate.

He served during the Civil War, where he led operations against the Confederates in Louisiana. Some say this experience hardened him to an extreme degree. He tolerated neither weakness nor dissent, and he considered negotiations a waste of time. For him, Native American tribes were an obstacle to American expansion and had to be subjugated or eliminated. He implemented a policy of harsh repression, which made him hated by the Paiutes and their allies.

His influence extended far beyond the walls of Fort Eldridge. He maintains close ties with the Union Pacific Railroad, which was pushing for the expansion of the railroad through Native American territory. His orders are often carried out without consulting local authorities, including Sheriff Carter, whom he considers too lenient and idealistic. This generates constant tension between them.

Eldridge has no true allies in the city, but he inspires fear and respect. He knows his authority rests solely on the strength of his men and his ability to impose his vision. He despises the Pinkerton mercenaries, whom he considers too motivated by money and not by military honor.

His biggest secret is tied to an expedition into the mountains, where several of his soldiers disappeared. Officially, they were killed in a skirmish with bandits or Natives. But the truth is more disturbing: something inexplicable happened, something he refuses to admit. Since then, he has avoided returning to the area and silences anyone who asks too many questions.



In his mind, Dead Man's Pass is just a temporary outpost. His ambition is clear: to climb the army ranks and obtain a prestigious position in Washington. But as long as the situation in the city remains unstable, he's stuck here, at war with an enemy he doesn't fully understand.

Chogan Black Bear : Shaman of the Paiute Tribe, Keeper of Ancient Mystical Knowledge

Chogan Black Bear is one of the last great shamans of the Paiute tribe, a man respected as much for his ancestral knowledge as for his involvement in the struggle against the settlers. At fifty-eight, he has become the guardian of traditions and one of the few who still practice the ancient rituals forbidden by the Church and the US. military. His name is whispered with respect and fear, for some say he can speak to the spirits of the mountains and control forces that white men cannot comprehend.

He is tall and slender, his face etched by time and hardship. His brown skin is etched with deep wrinkles, and his dark eyes reflect ancient wisdom. He wears a bison-hide robe, adorned with beads and feathers representing his clan. His long, carefully braided hair is often decorated with small bones and sacred stones.

Chogan has never trusted white people, and for good reason: he has seen his people massacred and their lands stolen. He fights for the survival of his culture, but knows that weapons alone will not suffice. His war is as much spiritual as physical. He predicts that Dead Man's Pass will be consumed by its own greed, and he warns those who listen to him of the dangers they have unleashed in the mines.

He is the sworn enemy of Captain Eldridge, whom he considers a tyrant blinded by pride. Conversely, he respects Sheriff Carter, even though he doubts the man has the courage to act to protect his people. He dislikes Jedediah "Goldtooth" Jackson, whom he accuses of plundering the sacred land's natural resources.

His greatest secret is that he glimpsed the future in a shamanic vision, and what he saw terrifies him: Dead Man's Pass will be the site of a devastating supernatural event. But he doesn't yet know how to prevent it. He desperately searches for signs that might reveal the approaching threat.

The young warriors of his tribe want to take up arms, but Chogan hesitates. He knows that if the Paiutes go to war openly against the settlers, his people will be exterminated. So he plays a complex game, navigating secret negotiations, veiled threats, and rituals to try to influence the future.

He fights not only for his people, but for the very balance of the world. What lies hidden beneath the mountains must not be awakened... and yet, he senses that the white men have already dug too deep.



Ezra P. Wilkinson : Influential Banker with Dubious Ties to Pinkerton

Ezra P. Wilkinson is one of the richest and most influential men in Dead Man's Pass. At fifty-two, this banker with a predatory smile has built a financial empire in a town where life is sometimes worth no more than a handful of dollars. His bank is the most secure in the region, and anyone looking to invest their gold or obtain a loan must go through him. But those who fail to repay their debts quickly discover that Wilkinson doesn't forgive debts, ever.

From a physical standpoint, Wilkinson is a thin, wiry man with an angular face and features etched by years of stress and constant calculation. He wears impeccably tailored suits, always with a gold pocket watch that he consults at regular intervals. His piercing eyes constantly assess the value of everything he looks at, be it property, a contract, or a human life.

He is profoundly pragmatic, a cold and calculating businessman, devoid of any romanticism or idealism. He doesn't believe in luck, only in planning and the power of money. Unlike many influential figures in the city, he never directly resorts to violence: he leaves that to others. He has tacit agreements with the Pinkerton Agency, which discreetly oversees his affairs in exchange for substantial compensation.

His relationship with Sheriff Carter is ambiguous. He knows Carter is incorruptible, but that doesn't stop him from trying to influence the town's laws through other means. With Mary Whitmore, the owner of the Silver Spur, he maintains a rivalry tinged with respect: they both wield considerable influence, and neither wants to give the other an advantage.

His biggest secret is that he's secretly financing the expansion of the Union Pacific Railroad and has bought up parcels of land around the town under different names. He knows the arrival of the railroad will cause the value of this land to skyrocket, allowing him to build an empire far beyond Dead Man's Pass. But he has to be careful, because if this information were to leak, he would become a target for corrupt politicians, greedy outlaws, and even some of his own associates.

He is playing a dangerous game, but he is convinced of one thing: bullets may kill a man, but money can buy armies.



Father Emilio Santiago : Missionary Priest, Advocate for Indigenous Peoples

Father Emilio Santiago is a man of faith, but also a man of action, even though he refuses to use weapons. A Catholic missionary, he was sent to Dead Man's Pass to evangelize the local people and bring a semblance of morality to a town riddled with violence and greed. But after several years there, he knows this fight is almost certainly lost.

Of Mexican descent, Emilio Santiago grew up on the dusty streets of Mexico City before being sent to the United States to study theology. He quickly realized that the world was more complex than the Church had taught him. In California, he witnessed persecuted Indigenous people, families torn apart by war, and men willing to kill for a few nuggets of gold. When he arrived in Dead Man's Pass, he expected to have to convince lost souls to return to God. He hadn't anticipated that the town itself would be a trial.

Physically, Father Santiago is tall and robust, with broad shoulders and an upright posture. His dark hair is beginning to gray, and his short beard frames a face weathered by the sun. His dark eyes reflect both compassion and weariness, witnesses to the horrors he has seen. He wears a threadbare black cassock, too warm for the Californian desert, and a silver cross hangs around his neck. Unlike many men of faith, he does not speak loudly or preach excessively. He listens more than he speaks, and when he does, his words are carefully chosen.

Santiago has earned the respect of the Paiutes, especially Chogan Black Bear, though their relationship remains ambiguous. He wants to help them but refuses to accept their shamanic beliefs, which he considers pagan and superstitious. He teaches them the Gospels, but in return, they teach him the ancient stories of the land. This duality haunts him: he no longer knows which truth is correct, and each day erodes his certainties a little more.

His presence in the city has earned him many enemies. Captain Eldridge considers him an agitator, an obstacle to the pacification of the Native territories. The Pinkertons see him as a dangerous man because he preaches against greed and corruption, values that threaten their employers. But the greatest danger comes from Ezra P. Wilkinson, the banker, who suspects Santiago of gathering evidence against him and his allies.

Father Santiago harbors a secret: a journal he has been keeping since his arrival, in which he records the crimes and abuses committed in Dead Man's Pass. He notes military atrocities, concealed massacres, and the dubious dealings of the city's wealthy elite. His goal is to send this document to the Diocese of San Francisco, hoping that the Church or the federal government will eventually take action. But he knows he could be killed before the journal leaves Dead Man's Pass.


Billy Red Murphy

Despite everything, he refuses to leave. He still believes in redemption, even in a place as damned as this city. But he knows that one day he will have to choose between his vow of non-violence and taking action.

Billy "Red" Murphy : Leader of an Outlaw Gang, Wanted in Several States

Billy "Red" Murphy is a name that inspires fear throughout Northern California. At thirty-seven, he's one of the West's most wanted criminals, a ruthless gang leader who leaves nothing but ashes and corpses in his wake. His gang, known as the "Sons of the Devil," is responsible for dozens of robberies, lootings, and murders across the state. But it's to Dead Man's Pass that he always returns, like a malevolent specter that refuses to disappear.

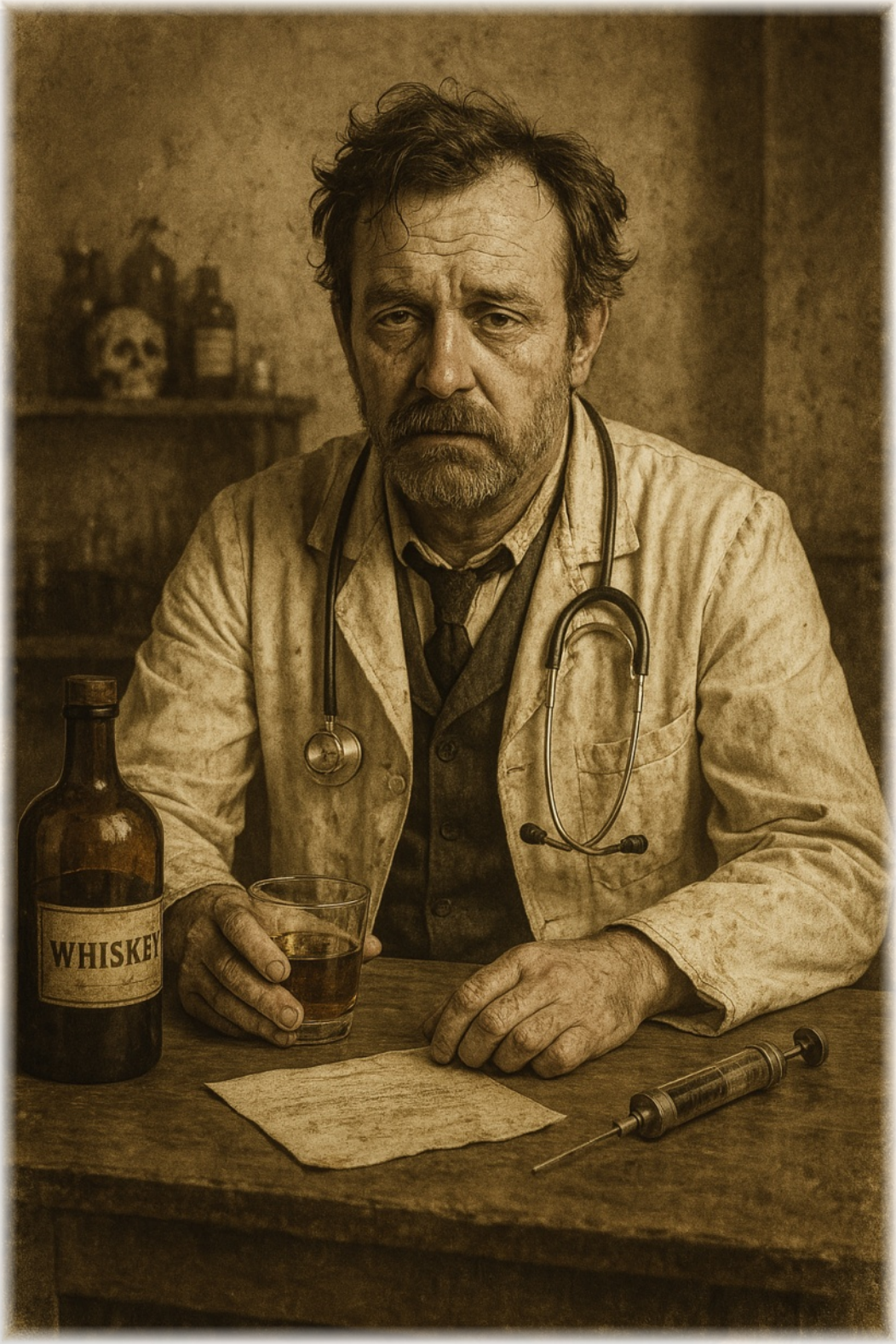
Physically, Murphy is tall and lean, with angular features and a red beard that earned him his nickname. His steely blue eyes are cold and calculating, and his smile reveals teeth stained by tobacco and violence. He always wears a long black leather coat, riddled with bullet holes, and carries a revolver with an ivory grip that has already claimed more lives than can be counted.

Born into a farming family in Louisiana, Murphy lost everything during the Civil War. At seventeen, he joined a Confederate guerrilla regiment, learning the art of irregular warfare and organized looting. After the war, unable to reintegrate into a society he despised, he turned to crime, assembling a gang of former soldiers and outcasts. He believes the world belongs to those who dare to take it, and respects only brute force.

In Dead Man’s Pass, he’s as much a scourge as a myth. Some see him as a demon incarnate, others as a man who simply refused to be a victim. What’s certain is that he has enemies everywhere. Sheriff Carter has sworn to capture or kill him, but he knows Murphy is always one step ahead. The Pinkertons have put a price on his head, and even Jedediah “Goldtooth” Jackson, with whom he sometimes collaborates, knows that Murphy can’t truly be controlled.

His biggest secret is that he knows his days are numbered. The world is changing, and he senses the era of outlaws is drawing to a close. With the railroad and the federal banks, it's becoming increasingly difficult for men like him to survive. He has one last big score in mind, a large-scale heist that would allow him to disappear forever. But he also knows that every mistake could be his last.

His plan? To rob Wilkinson's bank, steal a fortune in gold, and flee to Mexico. But to do that, he'll need loyal men, and loyalty is a rare commodity in Dead Man's Pass.


WHISKEY

Dr. Harold Mayfield : Physician and Notorious Alcoholic, but a Scalpel Genius

Dr. Harold Mayfield is both a blessing and a curse to Dead Man's Pass. He's the only competent doctor for miles around, yet he's often too drunk to hold a scalpel. A surgical genius, he could practice in the biggest cities on the East Coast if he weren't consumed by guilt and alcohol.

Mayfield is a stocky man, well into his fifties, with unkempt gray hair and a scraggly beard that betrays his lack of self-care. His breath reeks of whiskey, and his bloodshot eyes bear the marks of sleepless nights spent drinking to forget. He always wears a once-white doctor's coat, now stained with blood and sweat, and carries a revolver that he never uses, but whose presence suggests he knows that one day he may have to end it all himself.

A former Union Army surgeon, Mayfield has seen more horrors than he can bear. He amputated the legs of hundreds of wounded soldiers, often without anesthesia, holding their legs in one hand and a bottle of bourbon in the other. After the war, he was never able to return to a normal life. He exiled himself to the West, thinking he could start over. But Dead Man's Pass only exacerbated his vices.

Despite his deplorable condition, everyone comes to him in case of serious injury. He can retrieve a bullet stuck in an intestine or reattach a severed arm, and his hands, although trembling from alcohol, always regain their surgical precision when it comes to saving a life.

Sheriff Carter tolerates him, but has forbidden him from practicing medicine while drunk. Wilkinson, on the other hand, holds him in debt, supplying him with alcohol on credit in exchange for discreet medical services. Chogan Black Bear, the Paiute shaman, deeply despises him, seeing him as the very symbol of white degeneracy.

What no one knows is that Mayfield has a much heavier secret to bear. In a notebook hidden under his bed, he records all his medical experiments. He details attempted transplants, experimental operations, and forbidden techniques he has developed in secret. He believes he has discovered a method for instantly cauterizing serious wounds, but he doesn't dare test his theories on a living patient... not yet.

He knows his body won't last much longer. His liver is in tatters, his breath increasingly short. But he refuses to die like a mere drunkard. His greatest dream is to leave his mark on the history of medicine. But for that, he would need one last flash of lucidity, one last chance to prove he is more than just a broken man.

The question is: will he find this redemption before it's too late?



Catherine "Cat" Douglas : Breeder and Owner of a Successful Ranch

Catherine "Cat" Douglas is a woman no one dares underestimate. In a world where men rule, she has risen through strength, cunning, and tenacity. At thirty-four, she runs the largest ranch in the region, an estate her father, Robert Douglas, built with his own hands. After his mysterious death three years ago, she took the reins of the operation, refusing to let anyone dictate her actions.

Physically, Cat is tall and athletic, with a confident stance that commands respect. Her dark hair, often tied back in a ponytail, sometimes falls over her piercing, unforgiving gaze. Her face bears the marks of a hard life in the West, but it is also full of determination. She wears dusty boots, sun-tanned leather pants, and a red scarf tied tightly around her neck. Her Winchester rifle, meticulously maintained, is her most faithful companion.

Cat learned to survive on her own. After her father's death, she had to face the vultures: Ezra P. Wilkinson tried to buy her land for a pittance, assuring her that the railroad would soon make her ranch obsolete. The Pinkertons came circling, perhaps on Wilkinson's orders, or perhaps for other hidden agendas. Even Billy "Red" Murphy tried to convince her to use her ranch for his bootlegging, but she sent him packing with a bullet fired just over his head.

But the real threat doesn't come from outside. Cat knows her father's death wasn't a simple accident. He was supposedly killed by cattle rustlers, but something doesn't add up. Just before he died, he left her a letter, which she keeps hidden under a floorboard in her bedroom.

In this letter, his father alludes to an impending betrayal. He writes:

"Cat, if you're reading this, something's gone wrong. There are men in town who want to see our name wiped clean. This isn't about cattle, it isn't about gold. It's bigger than that. I thought I had allies, but I was wrong. Someone we know well is involved. Watch out for Wilkinson; he's pulling the strings, but he's not alone. There are other forces at play, older, more dangerous. If you want to survive, don't trust them under any circumstances. And above all, never dig under the old barn north of the ranch. I love you. Don't let Douglas Ranch fall into their hands."

For three years, Cat has been trying to understand these words. Who really ordered her father's death? Who are these hidden forces he mentions? And above all, what is under that old barn?

She knows she's missing something, but she's ready to do anything to uncover the truth. And if that means killing, so be it.

What Really Happened with Cat's Father and What's in the Barn.

Robert Douglas was murdered on the orders of Ezra P. Wilkinson and the Union Pacific Railroad Company. Douglas refused to sell his land, which was blocking the railroad extension to Dead Man's Pass. After several attempts at intimidation, Wilkinson bribed a group of corrupt Pinkertons to have him killed under the guise of a cattle rustling. Douglas was shot in the back, and his killers staged an outlaw attack to cover up their involvement.

As for the barn north of the ranch, it conceals the evidence of the crime. Before his death, Robert Douglas had discovered Wilkinson's railroad plans, proving that the bank and the mining company had already signed agreements to illegally purchase land under fictitious identities. There was also a ledger of bribes paid to judges and the Pinkertons to cover up the murders of recalcitrant landowners. Knowing he was in danger, Douglas hid these documents in the barn, buried beneath the wooden floor, hoping his daughter would one day find them.

Cat had never dared dig under the barn until now, out of respect for her father's last words. But if she did, she would finally have the evidence to confront Wilkinson and make those responsible pay. The only question was: would she live long enough to use it?

Iconic Places

In this section, you will discover the iconic locations that make up the game world. Some are vast and well-known, others more secret or forgotten, but all can host significant events. They can serve as the backdrop for a scene, a recurring point of passage, or a central element in a plot, and will quickly become memorable staples in your adventures.

Each location is presented with its name, location, function within the universe, an immersive and evocative description, as well as some secrets or tensions that permeate it. If the location is linked to a character or organization, these relationships are clearly indicated, providing the Teller with material to create in-game connections.

The Silver Spur Saloon

The Silver Spur is more than just a saloon; it's the beating heart of Dead Man's Pass, the place where everything is known, where everything is negotiated, and where many destinies are decided over a glass of whiskey or a game of poker. Located on the corner of Main Street and the Grand Place, it stands proudly with its solid wood facade, its large windows filtering in dim light, and its sign adorned with a silver spur, the house symbol. The smell of tobacco, leather, and cheap liquor permeates the air as soon as you step through the swinging doors, while bursts of laughter, the clinking of glasses, and the notes of an old piano drift continuously from the street.

Originally, the Silver Spur was just a shabby shack, a makeshift trading post run by a prospector too old to dig but still shrewd enough to sell liquor to those toiling away in search of their fortune in the surrounding hills. That was in 1867, when the town was nothing more than a chaotic jumble of tents and wagons. The place grew with the town, adapting to its burgeoning activity, attracting ever more customers, from the penniless prospector to the wealthy investor from San Francisco. When the gold rush transformed Dead Man’s Pass into a veritable city, the Silver Spur followed suit.

In 1872, the current owner, Mary Whitmore, bought the establishment and set about transforming it. Hailing from the slums of the East Coast, a former dancer and formidable businesswoman, she knew better than anyone that in a town like this, power resided not in a sheriff's badge, but within the walls where important decisions were made. With the help of mysterious financing, she doubled the size of the building, adding a floor, private rooms where the biggest deals were concluded discreetly, and even a stage where traveling entertainers performed to draw crowds.

Today, the Silver Spur is the undisputed institution of Dead Man's Pass. It's where cowboys come to drown their sorrows after a long day's work, where prospectors squander in a single night what took them months to extract from

the earth, and where local politicians and town dignitaries meet to discuss the region's future. Sheriff John Carter is a regular, not for drinking, but to listen to the gossip and keep an eye on the comings and goings. Jedediah "Goldtooth" Jackson, the former prospector turned bootlegger, has his own table and entertains his associates there under the watchful eye of Mary, who tolerates neither fighting nor disturbances in her establishment.

But behind its veneer of respectability, the Silver Spur also hides many secrets. Clandestine deals are struck there every night, whether they be illegal markets, negotiated ransoms, or duels arranged behind closed doors. Some say that the Pinkertons themselves have their informants there and that Mary Whitmore, despite her apparent neutrality, doesn't hesitate to sell information to the highest bidder. It's also rumored that the Silver Spur's cellar contains more than just a stock of alcohol. Some curious onlookers claim to have glimpsed underground passages leading to forgotten tunnels, and others speak of a well-guarded vault containing compromising letters and valuables whose history predates the city's founding.

It's not just a place to drink and gamble; it's the soul of Dead Man's Pass, a place where alliances are forged and broken, where even the best-kept secrets never stay secret for long. Whether you come for serious business or simply for entertainment, the Silver Spur always leaves its mark on those who walk through its doors.

The Sheriff's Office : Last Stand of the Law

The Dead Man’s Pass sheriff’s office stands at the corner of Main Street and Railroad Avenue, a short walk from the bank and the saloon. It is a modest building, constructed of rough wood, with a stark facade topped by a sign that reads “Sheriff’s Office.” Two large windows flank the main door, one always obscured by yellowing wanted posters and the other, more often broken than complete, letting in the dim light of the street complement the oil lamp that burns perpetually inside.

The place is spartan, unadorned, functional above all. A large main room serves as a reception area, with an old desk marked by the marks of crushed cigars and the nicks of old knife fights. Behind this desk sits a worn chair, often occupied by John "Lame" Carter, the town sheriff, a tired but incorruptible veteran who has seen far too many dead men to still be moved by bloodshed. The office is littered with unfinished reports, empty bottles, and overflowing ashtrays. An official register, rarely updated, sits on a dusty shelf, a testament to the meager efforts at administration in this town where the law is a fluid concept.

Off to the side, a door leads to the holding cells, three iron cages housed in a poorly insulated annex where the stifling summer heat and biting winter cold are additional forms of torture for those held there. The bars bear the marks of

numerous escape attempts: file scratches, remnants of broken blades, and even a few bullet holes dating back to the days when scores were settled without going through the courts. An old Native American man, Moses, whom everyone believes to be half-mad, claims that a ghost haunts these cells, of a wrongfully hanged outlaw. A legend that Carter despises as much as he despises corrupt judges and corrupt lawyers.

At the rear of the building, a hidden door opens onto a small courtyard where the deputies' horses are tied up. It's also where the Pinkertons and certain prominent citizens come to speak with the sheriff unseen. Carter isn't fooled: Ezra P. Wilkinson, the local banker, regularly tries to influence the law to his advantage, and Mary Whitmore of the Silver Spur always seems to know about investigations before they even begin. But as long as he wears the star, Carter clings to the illusion that he can still prevent the town from descending completely into chaos.

The sheriff's office is a nerve center in the city. It's where arrest warrants are issued, where crimes are reported, and where citizens come seeking protection. Yet everyone knows that upholding the law here is a losing battle. Carter can only rely on a handful of deputies, some of whom are barely more honest than the criminals they arrest. Faced with outlaw gangs, railroad barons, unscrupulous landlords, and angry Natives, the local police are often overwhelmed.

And yet, it's the last line of defense against total anarchy. When prisoners are jailed here, their allies often try to free them, and when a duel is scheduled, Carter is tasked with recording the combatants' wishes before they kill each other. There are also the stories no one dares mention aloud: corpses left outside the door in the dead of night, anonymous messages slipped under the doorway, and those nights when the sheriff stays alone in his office, a loaded revolver on the table, staring at the door, waiting for someone to come and claim his head.

The sheriff's office is much more than just an administrative building: it's a powder keg ready to explode, a place where every decision can affect the fragile balance of Dead Man's Pass. Carter knows his retirement is approaching, and that after him, there will likely be no one left to prevent the town from collapsing. But as long as he's on the job, he's doing what he can with the limited resources available, in a town where justice carries little weight against gold and bullets.

Dead Man's Pass Gold Mine : The Curse of the Vein

Nestled in the steep hills surrounding Dead Man’s Pass, the gold mine is the economic heart of the town, but also the source of its greatest conflicts. It was once nothing more than an insignificant rocky crevice, a narrow passage where only hunters and Native American nomads dared to venture. Yet, when the

first golden flakes were discovered in 1868, everything changed dramatically. In less than a year, a swarm of prospectors descended, digging into the mountain with a frenzy worthy of the great gold rushes. Claims were made, mining companies moved in, and very quickly, the earth of Dead Man's Pass opened up to reveal its treasures... and its dangers.

Today, the main mine officially belongs to a consortium of San Francisco-based investors, whose influence is locally wielded by Ezra P. Wilkinson, the city's banker. However, a multitude of individual claims dot the surrounding area, belonging to gold prospectors of varying degrees of luck, men who have gambled their last dollar on a hypothetical vein. The area around the main entrance resembles a chaotic anthill more than an organized industrial site: makeshift tents, precarious shacks, and makeshift facilities have sprung up haphazardly. Every morning, dozens of miners descend into the tunnels, picks and lanterns in hand, hoping to return with a bag full of nuggets.

But accidents are frequent, and some even speak of a curse. Several tunnels have collapsed, trapping men under tons of rock. Bodies never recovered haunt these underground passages, and the most superstitious whisper that the spirits of the Natives murdered for control of these lands are demanding vengeance. It is said that sometimes, at night, strange lights dance between the support pilings, and that those who wander too deep in the tunnels never come back.

Working conditions in the mine are appalling. The air is foul, the temperatures stifling in summer and freezing in winter, as far as ventilation can reach. The miners, whether employed by the main company or independent, work for a pittance and risk their lives daily. Some are paid in vouchers redeemable only at employer-owned businesses, trapping them in a cycle of perpetual debt. Revolt is brewing among these men, and the Prospectors' Union, a fledgling organization, is attempting to organize resistance against the owners' abuses. But all dissent is brutally suppressed: the strikebreakers hired by Wilkinson do not hesitate to use force, and some union leaders have disappeared under suspicious circumstances.

Sheriff John Carter avoids getting involved in these conflicts as much as possible: the mine is a powder keg where the slightest incident can escalate into a bloodbath. Yet, he knows that tensions have become explosive. Recently, a young prospector named Tommy Grayson was found dead, his throat slashed, near the entrance to the main shaft. Officially, it was a fight between gold diggers, but everyone knows he was about to testify against the mining company before being silenced.

Besides labor disputes, the mine is also a hotbed of all kinds of trafficking. Jedediah "Goldtooth" Jackson, a former prospector turned smuggler, uses the tunnels to hide shipments of alcohol and weapons. Rumors circulate about the existence of a secret underground passage connecting the mine to an old shaft

behind the Silver Spur, used to escape cavalry raids. No one can confirm its existence, but the most daring still search for the entrance to this hidden tunnel, convinced it contains much more than just a simple emergency exit.

The Mystery of Shaft No. 3

But the miners' greatest fear is neither the collapse of the tunnels, nor the guards' whips, nor even the threat of outlaws prowling in search of easy loot. It is what they discovered at the bottom of shaft number 3. The excavation of a new tunnel revealed an ancient space, a vast chasm where indecipherable inscriptions cover the walls. Some say it is an ancient Paiute burial chamber; others claim it is the remains of a forgotten civilization. One thing is certain: since this discovery, disappearances have multiplied. Men have begun talking in their sleep, carving strange symbols on the walls, before vanishing into the tunnels without a trace.

The inscriptions discovered in shaft number 3 are neither a coincidence nor a mere archaeological curiosity. They are the remains of an ancient, secret sanctuary, a forbidden place dating back several centuries, long before the arrival of European settlers. The local Paiute tribes know of its existence as "The Maw of Shadow," a place whose access their ancestors forbade under penalty of awakening the sleepers below.

According to the few fragments of oral history passed down by the elders of the reservation, this cave was carved out centuries ago by a civilization predating the current tribes, a forgotten people who once lived in these mountains. This people, whose very existence is now disputed, is said to have worshiped a subterranean entity they believed to be a god or an ancient spirit, capable of granting visions and power to those who listened to it. But something went wrong. The inscriptions found indicate a forced sealing of the cave, as if the builders had tried to lock something inside. They sealed the entrance with enormous stones engraved with occult symbols, some seemingly warnings, others desperate prayers.

But today, those seals have been broken by the miners, who have reopened the Maw of Shadow without understanding what they are unleashing. Since then, those who descend into gallery number 3 report strange whispers, shadows moving in the darkness, and haunting dreams filled with images of faces ravaged by time and clawed hands lurking beneath the rock. The most superstitious claim that those who vanish are not lost in the tunnels, but are snatched away by something that has been biding its time for centuries.

Some are still trying to silence these rumors, but the Paiute elders have stopped coming near the city, whispering that the mountain itself has begun to breathe again.

Wilkinson's Bank : The Beating Heart of Corruption

In the heart of Dead Man’s Pass, between the sheriff’s office and the Silver Spur, stands Wilkinson’s Bank, a massive hewn-stone structure that contrasts sharply with the rudimentary wooden buildings surrounding it. Its imposing appearance, with its entrance columns and heavy iron doors, inspires both confidence and fear. It is here that gold extracted from the mines is stored before being shipped to the major cities of the East. But beneath this respectable facade, the bank is far more than a simple vault: it is a central hub of financial and political manipulation, controlled with an iron fist by its owner, Ezra P. Wilkinson.

Before arriving in Dead Man’s Pass, Wilkinson was an unscrupulous financier who had narrowly escaped a banking scandal in San Francisco. Drawing on this experience, he ensured he built his empire on solid but opaque foundations. His close ties to the Pinkerton agency guaranteed him ironclad protection, while his connections with the Union Pacific Railroad Company ensured him near-absolute bargaining power over local land and mining claims. Anyone wishing to establish a permanent presence in the city eventually fell under his control, whether by taking out a loan, securing their profits, or accepting his “help” in a shady deal.

The bank's main hall is a sober yet elegant space: dark wood teller windows protected by ornate iron grilles line the walls, while a discreet staircase leads to the private offices where Wilkinson receives his most influential clients. Behind a heavy armored door the supposedly impenetrable main vault houses gold bars, property deeds, and compromising documents that if revealed would bring down several of the city's most prominent figures. Wilkinson also maintains a blacklist of debtors, a meticulous compilation of the outstanding debts and weaknesses of his "partners."

Illegal transactions are commonplace within these walls. Many independent miners unable to pay their royalties find themselves indebted for life, forced to sell their claims at rock-bottom prices. Mexican arms and whiskey dealers use the bank's anonymous accounts to launder their money, while some more cautious outlaws prefer to deposit their loot there rather than hide it in the desert. Wilkinson never gets his hands directly dirty but he knows everything, controls everything, and is always one step ahead of those who think they can outsmart him.

Sheriff Carter knows perfectly well that Wilkinson is pulling the strings in town but he can't prove anything. He's already tried questioning former bank employees but most have disappeared or refuse to talk, fearing reprisals. Meanwhile, Mary Whitmore of the Silver Spur seems to have an ambiguous relationship with Wilkinson. They're rivals in some areas but rumors persist about secret deals between them, perhaps connected to matters far larger than simply controlling Dead Man's Pass.

Underground, hidden tunnels lead to a room unknown to the public where Wilkinson holds private meetings with mysterious investors, perhaps corrupt politicians or government agents with dubious intentions. Some claim that negotiations regarding railway expansion take place there in the shadows, involving fraudulent purchases of Indigenous lands, suspicious mining accidents, and assassinations disguised as settling of scores.

For the citizens of Dead Man's Pass, the bank is a necessary evil. It allows the most cunning to prosper but for the majority, it is a gilded cage where the dream of fortune gradually transforms into a nightmare of debt and servitude.

Fort Eldridge : The Army's Hand on Dead Man's Pass

A few miles north of Dead Man's Pass, Fort Eldridge overlooks the valley from a rocky promontory, watching over the town and surrounding land with military vigilance. Built in 1865, just after the end of the Civil War, its initial purpose was to ensure the safety of settler wagon trains and protect trade routes to California. Today it serves primarily as a military stronghold, housing about a hundred soldiers under the command of Captain Thomas Eldridge, an officer known for his brutal methods and unwavering conviction.

The fort is a massive structure of wood and stone with ramparts of pointed logs and a shallow moat designed to slow down potential attackers. A watchtower rises in the center of the complex, allowing sentries to scan the horizon day and night. The fort's interior is organized around a large courtyard where soldiers train daily. A central building houses the command quarters, the captain's offices, a rudimentary infirmary, and a small prison where military prisoners and civilians deemed dangerous by the army are held.

Although its official mission is to protect settlers, the fort's presence is a source of constant tension with the Paiute tribes, who consider these lands sacred. Captain Eldridge views the Natives as a threat and advocates the systematic suppression of all opposition. His men have conducted several punitive raids against villages suspected of harboring rebels and numerous rumors circulate about summary executions ordered without trial. This ruthless attitude has earned him the hatred of the Paiute, as well as the concern of the residents of Dead Man's Pass who fear that his actions could trigger open conflict.

The fort does more than just maintain order; it also plays a major economic role. Soldiers spend their pay in the town's shops, and some officers have tacit agreements with Ezra P. Wilkinson to secure the transport of gold extracted from the mines. Officially, the army does not interfere in local affairs but it is common knowledge that discreet transactions took place between Wilkinson, Mary Whitmore, and Eldridge, where documents, concessions, and promises of protection changed hands.

While the garrison guards trade routes, it is also involved in controlling fugitives and wanted criminals. Some captured bandits are sent to the fort

rather than to the state penitentiary, and it is said that those who cannot pay their bail disappear on "special missions" from which they never return. A secluded wing of the fort is reserved for covert operations, and witnesses claim to have seen prisoners transported there in the dead of night, never to be seen again.

Eldridge also has a personal interest in the land south of Dead Man's Pass, a region rich in natural resources. He seeks to expropriate it from the last remaining farmers and ranchers clinging to it, likely under the influence of the Union Pacific Railroad which wants to build a new line through the area. This puts him in direct conflict with Catherine "Cat" Douglas, owner of the most prosperous ranch in the region, who refuses to sell her land. Their rivalry could easily escalate into armed conflict if the army decides to impose its authority.

Fort Eldridge is thus much more than a simple garrison: it is a fortress of influence and power, a bastion of the federal army, but also a hotbed of corruption and mysteries whose true scope far exceeds what the inhabitants of Dead Man's Pass can imagine.

The Ancient Artifact of Fort Eldridge

But the fort's true secret lies in its cellars, where it is whispered that a military expedition recently brought back a strange artifact discovered in the mountains. Some soldiers claim to have heard strange noises emanating from the caverns, and men are said to have abandoned their posts after seeing moving shadows underground. Eldridge, though skeptical, is said to have reinforced the guard around this area, barring even his most loyal officers from entering.

The artifact in question was discovered by a military expedition sent into the mountains north of Dead Man's Pass under the pretext of mapping the terrain and locating any hostile Paiute camps. In reality the expedition was following information found in old reports by 16th-century Spanish explorers, which mentioned a lost temple built by a forgotten civilization predating the local tribes. This temple, buried under a landslide for centuries, was believed to have been a place of worship dedicated to a mysterious entity venerated not as a benevolent god, but as a sealed spirit, a force that had to be kept imprisoned at all costs.

The artifact brought back to Fort Eldridge is a black stone idol, a relic of a vanished civilization that sealed it within a temple that collapsed centuries ago. This object is not simply a religious symbol: it imprisons an ancient consciousness, an entity that Paiute shamans call "The Listener", an immaterial force capable of infiltrating the thoughts of those who approach it. Contrary to local superstitions, it is not a demon in the Christian sense, but a parasitic will, a presence that infiltrates dreams, amplifies doubts, and manipulates the decisions of those exposed to it for too long.

When Eldridge's soldiers entered the cave, they found the idol broken in two, yet

still imbued with a strange, almost tangible energy. Since its transport to Fort Eldridge, disturbing phenomena have begun to occur: recurring nightmares among the guards, footsteps in the deserted corridors, and oil lamps going out for no apparent reason. Some men have begun to suffer from strange visions, describing dancing figures in the shadows and voices whispering in an incomprehensible tongue. Two soldiers deserted after spending a night on guard duty near the cellar where the object is kept, after claiming they saw something move beneath the stone, as if the fortress itself were breathing.

Several factions are now interested in the artifact. The Paiute Shaman Circle knows what has been awakened and wants it destroyed before it's too late, but they lack the resources to infiltrate the fort. Meanwhile, the Order of the Sacred Chalice, a secret religious society operating in the shadows, believes the idol contains an ancient power that can be harnessed and has reportedly sent an emissary to negotiate its acquisition. Wilkinson, who learned of the matter through his spies, sees a commercial and political opportunity and might well seek to seize it through mercenaries.

Captain Eldridge himself remains skeptical, but his behavior is changing: he sleeps little, talks to himself in his office, and seems haunted by doubts he hadn't previously expressed. He has ordered increased patrols but has yet to inform any federal authority of the discovery. Some of his officers believe he wants to understand for himself what he has brought back, or perhaps is the idol whispering in his ear, gradually influencing his decisions.

If the idol remains at the fort, the influence of the Listener will grow until it finds a true human host to possess, and Eldridge is the ideal candidate.

The Church of San Miguel : A Sanctuary Between Two Worlds

Located on the southern edge of Dead Man's Pass, San Miguel Church stands on a small hill overlooking the town, its solitary bell tower silhouetted against the dusty horizon. Built in 1871 by Mexican Catholic missionaries, it was originally intended to evangelize settlers and local tribes. Today, it is much more than a place of worship: it is a point of convergence between European beliefs and Indigenous spiritual traditions, a neutral ground where religious and cultural tensions find a fragile balance.

The building is modest but sturdy, constructed of adobe and stone, with a red-tiled roof and a facade adorned with frescoes worn by time, depicting biblical scenes interspersed with elements clearly inspired by indigenous iconography. The interior, bathed in golden light filtering through rudimentary stained-glass windows, offers a striking contrast to the tumult of the city: rough wooden benches, a simple altar surmounted by a statue of the archangel Michael, and a series of perpetually burning candles, a testament to the prayers left by souls seeking solace.

The church is led by Father Emilio Santiago, a Mexican-born missionary priest whose unwavering faith makes him both a spiritual guide and a mediator in local conflicts. Unlike other churchmen, Santiago does more than preach: he offers refuge to the poorest, cares for the wounded, and tries, despite the prevailing hostility, to establish a dialogue between the colonists and the Paiute. But his commitment to the indigenous people has earned him powerful enemies. Ezra P. Wilkinson, who sees him as an obstacle to his ambitions, and Captain Eldridge, who considers his clemency toward the Natives a betrayal, seek to discredit him or force him out.

San Miguel is also a sanctuary for those fleeing the violence of Dead Man's Pass. Indebted miners, abused women, and repentant criminals come seeking protection. Sheriff Carter, while respecting Santiago, knows that this policy of asylum attracts trouble: bandits looking for their prey have already tried to burn down the church, and Wilkinson's henchmen have been seen lurking around the sanctuary, no doubt looking for a pretext to close it down permanently.

But the church also holds secrets far older than the presence of missionaries. Beneath its main altar, a hidden cellar contains a mysterious reliquary, sealed with Latin inscriptions and esoteric symbols blending Christianity and pre-Columbian iconography. Santiago claims to be unaware of its origin but some Paiute elders, like Chogan Black Bear the tribe's shaman, whisper that the church was built on a forgotten sacred site, a place where the ancestors practiced rituals to contact their forebears.

The reliquary hidden beneath the altar of San Miguel Church does not date from the time of the Spanish missionaries, but rather from a much earlier

period, going back to the pre-Columbian indigenous civilizations. Long before the arrival of Europeans this site was a sacred sanctuary of the elder tribes, used for shamanic rituals aimed at communicating with ancestors.

This place of prayer was situated over a natural well, a fissure in the rock where, according to Paiute beliefs, the souls of the departed could be heard by those who knew how to listen. To prevent malevolent spirits from crossing this boundary, the ancient shamans crafted a ritual artifact: a stone engraved with tribal symbols, enclosed in a container made of bone and tanned leather. This object was not intended to seal away an evil force, but rather to maintain the balance between the world of the living and the world of spirits, preventing lost souls from haunting the living.

When Spanish missionaries arrived in the 18th century, they built the church directly on this site, ignoring or disregarding its spiritual significance to the Paiute. The shamans then sealed their reliquary beneath the altar, hoping that the Christian presence would not disturb the ancient spirits. But over time, this spiritual seal weakened, and troubling signs began to appear: shared dreams, visions of ghostly figures, and whispers within the walls.

If the reliquary were to be moved or destroyed, there would be nothing left to contain the wandering forces of the past, and the church could well become a true breaking point between the two worlds.

Disturbing signs begin to appear: unexplained visions among the faithful, shared dreams among those who sleep under his roof, and a strange mark carved into the altar stone, which was not included in the mission's original plans. Is it a miracle, a curse, or a warning from the past? Santiago refuses to see it as a sign of danger, but some nights as the wind blows through the hills he seems to hear voices praying in a forgotten language, echoing within the very walls of the church.

Between political ambitions, ethnic tensions and the mysteries hidden beneath its foundations, San Miguel is much more than a place of worship. It is a silent battleground, where faith, history, and the shadows of the past clash in a precarious balance.

The Settlers' Cemetery : A Place of Rest and Mysteries

Away from the town, on a windswept hill, lies the Settlers' Cemetery, a place as steeped in history as it is in secrets. Created in 1868, during the first waves of settlement, it holds the graves of pioneers, ill-fated miners, soldiers killed in action, and countless anonymous souls who perished in obscurity. At first glance, it is simply a field of wooden crosses, broken headstones, and dusty stone slabs, but those who linger too long soon sense a pervasive unease, as if each tombstone still whispers the stories of those who lie beneath.

The graves are scattered without any real order, the most recent at the

entrance and the oldest relegated to the back of the plot, where the ground is more unstable and where coffins sometimes surface after heavy rains. A special section is reserved for victims of epidemics, notably a cholera outbreak that ravaged the region a few years ago, claiming dozens of lives in a matter of weeks. The crosses marking these graves are darker, as if the wood itself had absorbed the misfortune of the souls buried here. The locals avoid this area, convinced that the disease might still be dormant, ready to strike again.

The cemetery caretaker, a taciturn old man named Elias Crowley, is one of the few who ventures there after nightfall. He claims to have seen shadows moving between the tombstones and heard voices whispering in an unknown language. Few people take him seriously but even the most skeptical avoid entering the cemetery after dusk. One night, a rider reportedly saw a man in a black coat digging an empty grave before vanishing without a trace.

The cemetery is also a discreet meeting place for some residents of Dead Man's Pass. Illegal transactions take place there, far from the sheriff's watchful eye, and outlaws sometimes stash their loot, taking advantage of neglected graves to conceal their riches. Jedediah "Goldtooth" Jackson is believed to be responsible for several of these caches, burying bags of gold under unmarked crosses before retrieving them later. But it seems that not all of his caches have remained untouched, some have been found broken into, their contents gone, with no footprints leading to the thief.

The outer perimeter of the cemetery runs alongside an old, abandoned trail, said to have once served as a route for Indigenous tribes before colonization. It is whispered that this trail follows a much older, perhaps even sacred, path, and that anyone who disturbs the souls buried here might awaken forgotten forces. Chogan Black Bear, the Paiute shaman, refuses to approach the hill, claiming the earth there is "broken" and that some souls have never found rest.

Whether one comes to pay homage, to bargain, or to search for hidden riches, one thing is certain: the settlers' cemetery is not simply a place of rest. It is a book of unfinished stories, a border between the living and the dead, where some secrets refuse to be forgotten.

The Obelisk

Not far from the center of the cemetery, one tomb stands out from the others. A black stone obelisk, its inscriptions erased by time, rises amidst the oldest graves. No one knows exactly who lies there, but rumors abound. Some say it is the tomb of a wealthy prospector who amassed a fortune before dying mysteriously; others claim it is the final resting place of an ancient Paiute sorcerer, buried alive after being accused of casting curses on settlers. Occasionally, passersby find rudimentary offerings left at the foot of the monument, animal bones, painted stones, symbols carved in the earth, evidence that some traditions persist despite the years.

The black stone obelisk in the Dead Man's Pass cemetery is a relic of a bygone era, predating the arrival of settlers. It was erected by an ancient group of Paiute shamans in the late 17th century, when their people still lived freely on this land. This monument is not simply a tombstone; it is a ritual seal, intended to bind the spirit of a traitor, a man whose name has been erased from memory, but whose story still haunts the elders of the Paiute.

According to oral tradition, this man was once a powerful shaman, initiated into the mysteries of the spirits and respected among his people. But, blinded by ambition and a thirst for power, he is said to have attempted to manipulate forbidden forces, seeking to establish direct contact with entities from the other world. He is said to have used forgotten rituals to open a passage between the world of the living and the world of spirits, hoping to gain power. What he invoked was not simply an ancestral spirit, but something more ancient, a faceless whisper, a gaze in the shadows, which began to seep into his mind.

The other shamans, realizing the threat too late, captured their corrupted brother and led him to a remote hill, the one that would become, decades later, the settlers' cemetery. There, they buried him alive beneath a black stone stele, sealing his body and spirit under a series of ritual carvings meant to prevent his influence from spreading beyond his grave. These sacred inscriptions, now erased by time and erosion, formed a true spiritual lock, a warning to those who would dare disturb his rest.

But the seal weakens with the centuries. There are signs that the spirit trapped under the obelisk is trying to break free: whispers heard by the gravediggers, feverish dreams striking those who sleep nearby, and anonymous offerings left by descendants of the Paiute who, although despised by the colonists, continue to honor ancient traditions out of fear rather than respect.

If the seal were ever to be completely broken (by time, the greed of a grave robber, or the ignorance of a curious onlooker) the imprisoned spirit could find a new host among the living, continuing the work interrupted more than a century ago. The Paiute elders still watch from afar, guarding the stone, knowing that some secrets must remain buried, lest they awaken a shadow that no exorcism could banish.

The Paiute Reservation : Last Bastion of a Culture in Survival

A few kilometers west of Dead Man's Pass, hidden between rocky valleys and arid plains, lies the Paiute Reservation, a poor and inhospitable land where members of the tribe have been relegated by local authorities. This territory was not chosen at random: it is dry, difficult to cultivate, and far from trade routes, making the survival of its inhabitants nearly impossible without depending on the goodwill of traders and settlers. Yet the Paiute who live there refuse to leave these lands, seeing them as the last bulwark against the erasure of their culture and identity.

The heart of the reservation is a village of adobe huts and tepees, clustered around a precious underground water source, though insufficient to meet the needs of the entire community. Many Paiute live in precarious conditions, dependent on the meager resources of hunting and bartering with the few benevolent settlers. Some young people, driven to despair by the situation, leave the reservation to seek work on ranches or in the mines of Dead Man's Pass, often exploited for meager wages, or even cheated by unfair contracts.

The village's spiritual leader is Chogan Black Bear, a respected shaman who strives to preserve his people's traditions despite increasing pressure from settlers and the military. He teaches the young people ancient rituals, legends, and the importance of protecting the region's sacred sites, particularly the northern mountains, which the elders believe are inhabited by protective spirits. But for the past few months, rumors of military activity in these mountains have been worrying the tribe: Captain Thomas Eldridge, commander of Fort Eldridge, has been leading expeditions into the area, ostensibly to secure the roads. The elders understand it's not just about security: the army is after something.

Tensions between the reservation and the town are constant. Ranchers from the Ranchers' Union regularly accuse the Paiute of stealing cattle, often without evidence, and organize violent reprisals against families living near the reservation's borders. Local authorities, influenced by Wilkinson and the economic interests of the settlers, turn a blind eye to this violence. The Pinkertons, meanwhile, begin infiltrating the region, seeking to identify the leaders of the Native resistance and neutralize them discreetly.

But the reservation is not only a place of misery and tension: it is also a refuge for Native Americans seeking to escape persecution, and a rallying point for those who refuse to submit to the expansion of settlers. Some young warriors form clandestine resistance groups, sabotaging mining and railway infrastructure, and conducting night raids to harass merchant convoys. These acts, though sporadic, risk triggering a brutal military response, and many fear that Fort Eldridge is preparing an offensive against the reservation under the guise of retaliation.

On the darkest nights, ritual fires burn atop the hills, ancient chants echo across the plains, and stealthy figures move among the shadows. The elders know that the earth itself watches over them, and that if the settlers go too far, they will awaken forces they cannot comprehend.

The Stagecoach Relay : Last Stop Before the Unknown

On the eastern edge of Dead Man's Pass, where the dusty road stretches toward the arid plains and distant mountains, stands the stagecoach station, a strategic crossing point for travelers, merchants, and fugitives. This massive wooden building, reinforced with beams to withstand storms and attacks, is the last place to find rest, food, and information before venturing into the dangers of the desert. It is also a place of tension and transactions, where government messengers, bounty hunters, smugglers, and desperadoes seeking to disappear all cross paths.

Built by a former Pony Express scout, Horace "Old Man" Finnegan, this coaching inn has since been expanded and fortified, becoming a veritable stronghold for passing travelers. The main inn, a two-story building, houses a smoky common room where the smell of stale coffee and tobacco mingles with the shouts of card players. A solid oak counter is manned by Margaret Finnegan, the founder's daughter, a strong-willed woman who knows every rumor circulating between towns and remote roads.

The coaching inn also has a shed for stagecoaches, where horses can be watered and shod, as well as a small workshop where a farrier, Ezekiel Boone, handles urgent repairs. Some say that Boone also works for more discreet clients, sometimes hiding secret compartments for stolen gold or incriminating documents in the wood of the vehicles.

The relay station is more than just a rest stop; it's an information hub for those who know how to listen. The Pinkertons sometimes stop there to interrogate travelers, searching for clues about fugitives on the run. Outlaw gangs, like Billy "Red" Murphy's gang, send scouts to observe the comings and goings, looking for convoys to attack. Wilkinson, the town's banker, keeps a watchful eye on the place through informants, ensuring his business and wealth are safely in transit.

But the coaching inn also harbors its own mysteries. For the past few months, several coaches have disappeared after leaving the establishment, without a trace. Some accuse bands of marauders, but others believe that something is prowling the desert, an unseen presence that strikes at night. Margaret Finnegan herself found stray horses, panicked, with no sign of their riders.

The elders of the region say that before the arrival of the settlers, this place was a crossing point for the Paiute, a place where Indigenous travelers prayed to the spirits of the wind before embarking on long journeys. Some believe that the settlers disrupted an ancient balance, and that something unseen still

watches over those who cross these lands, waiting for the right moment to claim what is owed to them.

Douglas Ranch : Dead Man’s Pass Cattle Empire

A few miles south of Dead Man’s Pass, in a valley bordered by arid hills and seasonal streams, lies the Douglas Ranch, the largest and most prosperous in the region. It’s a vast territory, covering several hundred acres of wild prairies and pastures, where hundreds of heads of cattle graze under the watchful eyes of experienced cowboys. Founded in 1845 by a former Scottish trapper, Robert Douglas, it is now run by his daughter, Catherine “Cat” Douglas, a strong-willed woman who has asserted her authority in a male-dominated world.

The ranch is the region's primary supplier of meat and hides, a key economic player that wields considerable influence over local markets. Caravaners, railroad companies, and even the army at Fort Eldridge rely on Douglas' cattle for supplies. This dominant position has earned Catherine powerful allies, but also formidable enemies. Ezra P. Wilkinson, who controls the town's bank, seeks to pressure her into selling some of her land, while Captain Eldridge of Fort Eldridge covets her grazing lands, contemplating expropriation under the guise of military necessity.

The Douglas Ranch is structured around a main corral, where the herds are gathered before being transported to town or to buyers. A large wooden building, serving as both family home and office, dominates the property, flanked by barracks for the workers, a blacksmith shop, and a repair shop for wagons and saddles. The immense barn houses winter fodder, as well as some secret stores of weapons and supplies, in case the situation escalates into armed conflict.

But the ranch is also a powder keg: tensions between ranchers and farmers are increasingly high. Small landowners, accusing Douglas of monopolizing water access, are beginning to band together to challenge her authority. Sabotage has already occurred: fences burned, livestock poisoned, horses stolen. The ranch's cowboys patrol day and night, watching the fences and hunting down saboteurs, but the threat is growing. Some accuse the Paiute, others suspect Wilkinson's men, seeking to provoke a crisis to force Catherine to sell.

Rumors abound around the ranch. It's said that caves in the surrounding hills provide refuge for fleeing bandits, and that some ranch hands have secret agreements with these outlaws. Some even claim that strange fires are sometimes seen on the ridges at night, signals that are neither from cowboys nor Native Americans, but perhaps from something even more ancient, watching over these lands since long before the arrival of settlers.

Between power games, attempts at intimidation and territorial conflicts, the Douglas ranch is much more than a simple farm: it is an economic, political and mystical battleground, where every decision can trigger open war.

Influential Organizations

In this section, you will be introduced to the organizations that influence the game world. Some are well-known, others operate in the shadows, but all play a role in the balance, or imbalance of the world. They connect the player characters and will become recurring entities throughout the adventures.

Each organization is presented with its name, general purpose, main activities, internal structure, and what the general public knows about it... and what they don't. The reasons that might lead player characters to join are specified, as are its potential connections to other elements of the universe. These descriptions provide a solid foundation for seamlessly and believably integrating these groups into your scenarios.





Pinkerton Agency : The Men in the Shadows

The Pinkerton Agency is a key player in Dead Man's Pass, as feared as it is respected. Officially, it's a private detective agency specializing in protecting gold convoys, securing banks, and tracking down outlaws. In reality, Pinkerton is much more than a simple surveillance service: it's a militarized and structured organization, used by major mining, railroad, and financial companies to ensure their economic and political dominance over rapidly developing regions.

The agency was founded in 1850 by Allan Pinkerton, and it quickly established itself as the enforcer for the powerful in the West. In California, its influence grew with the rise of mining and railroad companies, which needed men capable of breaking strikes, monitoring workers, and neutralizing threats to their advantage. In Dead Man's Pass, Pinkerton was particularly active, having been hired by Ezra P. Wilkinson the local banker, to protect his interests and ensure control of the gold mined in the area.

Pinkerton's structure is paramilitary, with a strict hierarchy and missions assigned to experienced agents. In Dead Man's Pass, the agency operates under the direction of Nathaniel Grayson, an austere and methodical man whose orders come directly from the regional office in San Francisco. Grayson has a permanent team of ten agents, supported by mercenaries and local informants, which allows Pinkerton to maintain pervasive surveillance. The agency uses an official cover of private detectives and armed escorts, but its true activities extend far beyond that.

Pinkerton agents patrol the city, observing the movements of influential figures and infiltrating criminal circles to identify threats before they escalate. Their presence is particularly noticeable around Wilkinson's bank, the mines, and major commercial transactions. But they also readily intervene directly in local conflicts, manipulating tensions to serve their employers.

Their role goes beyond simply protecting property and people: Pinkerton infiltrates, manipulates, and eliminates. They maintain detailed files on influential figures in Dead Man's Pass, cataloging each person's weaknesses, debts, and secrets. This information is used to influence local decisions, ensuring that any opposition to the interests of the mining and railroad companies is neutralized before it even has a chance to emerge.

The agency is not without its enemies. The Prospectors' Union, which defends exploited miners, sees them as assassins in the pay of the bosses. Several union leaders have disappeared or been arrested after attempting to defy Wilkinson and Pinkerton. Sheriff Carter, though wary, cannot expel them without risking the loss of his already fragile authority. Even Captain Eldridge, from the nearby Fort, prefers to avoid direct conflict with the agency, knowing that Pinkerton has contacts far higher up than he does.



The Pinkerton Agency will stop at nothing to maintain the established order. Their presence in Dead Man's Pass is not temporary: they are there to shape the town in their image, imposing absolute control over the gold, power, and future of the region.

The Prospectors' Union : The Mine Workers' Struggle

The subsoil of Dead Man's Pass is rich in gold, but those who extract it rarely see the fruits of their labor. Crushed by taxes, debt, and inhumane working conditions, the independent miners and concession workers have finally banded together to defend their rights. Thus was born the Prospectors' Union, an organization that tries to give workers a chance of survival against the large mining companies and banks that control the town.

The union's roots go back many years, to when early prospectors were fleeced by speculators who bought their claims, often earned through grueling labor, at rock-bottom prices. Wilkinson, the influential banker, locked down the gold market, forcing miners to sell exclusively to his bank at below-market prices. Gradually, voices rose up against this system. What began as clandestine meetings in the back rooms of saloons has grown into a structured organization, now boasting hundreds of active members, ranging from laborers to small-claim owners seeking to protect their independence.

The union is led by Luther McBride, a former prospector hardened by the injustices he has suffered. Once naive about the laws of the West, he has learned that the rich do not share and that promises of prosperity only apply to those who already hold power. Under his leadership, the union has organized itself into autonomous cells, each group with a leader responsible for gathering grievances, organizing strikes, and ensuring resistance.

The union's demands are simple but difficult to achieve: fair wages, an end to excessive taxes, and the right to sell gold without going through Wilkinson. They also demand safer working conditions, as landslides and accidents are frequent and rarely compensated.

Faced with this growing power, the mining companies and Pinkerton reacted violently. Union leaders were arrested on false pretenses, raids were organized to break strikes by force, and some union members disappeared without a trace. Yet the resistance did not weaken: sabotage of equipment, organized ore leaks, and secret negotiations with certain influential figures gradually undermined Wilkinson's monopoly.

The union is now on the brink of direct confrontation with local authorities and companies. Some members advocate radical action, while others still hope to find a compromise. But if nothing changes, there is no doubt that a bloodbath will erupt underground, where no one will be able to hear the cries.



The Brothers of the Path : Guardians of the Forgotten Place

Far from the bustle of Dead Man's Pass, deep in the mountains, a discreet network guards a forbidden place, a sacred site whose very existence is unknown to most of the town's inhabitants. The Brothers of the Path are neither a cult nor a group of mercenaries: they are the last custodians of ancient knowledge, knowledge they protect not to control it, but to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. They are the local branch of a national organization. The Brothers of the Path protect numerous prehistoric sites across the nation.

The origins of the Brothers of the Path predate the arrival of the colonists. According to Paiute legends, an inexplicable event occurred in the mountains in time immemorial. Some speak of an encounter with beings from elsewhere, while others speak of a gateway between worlds that was opened by mistake. Regardless of the truth, what is certain is that traces of this event still remain beneath the rock. During the first Spanish expeditions, Franciscan friars found engravings impossible to interpret, rock formations that seemed carved by unknown hands, and the remains of architecture that corresponded neither to the local indigenous people nor to any known cultures. Faced with these discoveries, they sealed the entrance to the cave and burned all their records before fleeing the region.

The current Brothers of the Path are the heirs of several lineages of guardians, descended from both local tribes and European pioneers who gained access to these forbidden truths. They operate in secret, infiltrating the daily life of Dead Man's Pass under various guises: some are miners, others cartographers, a few work as scouts for caravans. Their network is compartmentalized, each member knowing only two or three other initiates to avoid any compromise should one of them be captured or turned by the enemy.

Their main objective is simple: to protect the forbidden site. To do this, they employ several methods:

- Disinformation: They spread local legends about curses, vengeful spirits, and invisible dangers to discourage explorers and prospectors.
- Discreet sabotage: If an excavation threatens to unlock the secrets of the mountains, they intervene by falsifying maps, causing "accidental" collapses, or bribing workers to slow down the work.
- Infiltration and observation: They monitor the Pinkertons, mining companies, and groups of researchers who might inadvertently get too close.

Their greatest threat comes from two opposing groups:

- The Order of the Sacred Chalice, which seeks to discover and recover these artifacts, believing they hold a hidden truth about the history of the world.



- The Union Pacific Railway Company, whose engineers could, without even realizing it, open access to the prohibited site by digging a tunnel in the wrong direction.

Time is running out for them. The Brothers of the Path know that with time, someone will go too far. And when that happens they will be the only ones standing between the unknown evil buried beneath the mountains and the rest of the world.

The Order of the Sacred Chalice : The Guardians of Forbidden Truths

In the dusty alleyways of Dead Man's Pass, under the indifferent gaze of gold prospectors and cowboys, a silent struggle unfolds between men who seek neither fortune nor political power, but something far older and more elusive. The Order of the Sacred Chalice, a secret brotherhood operating under the guise of missionaries and scholars, is searching for forgotten relics, convinced that fragments of truth have been scattered and hidden throughout history.

The Order is not content with preserving Christian relics or documenting the traces of the first Spanish missionaries in California. Its members are convinced that world history has been falsified, that certain discoveries have been buried forever, and that the knowledge held by some ancient peoples could rewrite humanity's place in the universe. It is this obsession that led the Order to establish itself discreetly in Dead Man's Pass. Rumors of mysterious remains discovered in the mountains, indigenous legends of non-human beings having walked these lands, and unexplained objects found by miners have made this town a prime target for the brotherhood.

At the helm of local operations is Father Emilio Santiago, priest of the San Miguel church, who is much more than a man of faith. Officially, he is here to evangelize the settlers and protect the indigenous people from the oppression of mining companies and the army. But behind the scenes, he orchestrates a hunt for artifacts that leads him to interact with prospectors, Paiute shamans, and even some local criminals. Whenever an ancient object is discovered (be it an inscription on a stone, a piece of jewelry with unknown symbolism, or a text carved in a forgotten language) Santiago is always the first to know. Through generous donations, alliances with scholars, or promises of salvation, he recovers these objects before they can be studied by outsiders.

The Order of the Sacred Chalice operates with subtlety and influence. It cannot afford to use brute force like Pinkerton, nor to be too conspicuous like mining companies. Its methods are based on three main pillars: buying, concealment, and the elimination of any incriminating evidence. When a prospector finds an object of interest, they are first approached peacefully and encouraged to sell it. If money is insufficient, the Order employs other means: religious pressure, the veiled threat of excommunication, or, if necessary, the orchestration of an



“accidental” misfortune so that the object falls into better hands.

But this quest for absolute knowledge is not without its dangers. Some members of the Order, obsessed with the relics they discover, have begun to doubt the very foundations of their faith. If the Paiute myths are true, if these objects come neither from God nor the Devil, then what place does humanity truly occupy? Internal tensions are shaking the Order: should they continue to conceal these discoveries or seek to exploit their secrets?

The Order is not alone in Dead Man’s Pass. The local chapter of the Brothers of the Path, which seeks to bury the past rather than unearth it, is a major obstacle. The two organizations operate in a constant power struggle, each attempting to manipulate local authorities and control the discoveries before the other. Ezra P. Wilkinson, the town’s banker, is also beginning to take a keen interest in the Order’s research, seeing in these relics a financial opportunity he can exploit.

Far from being mere guardians of the faith, the members of the Order of the Sacred Chalice are men torn between their beliefs, their mission, and their growing doubts. They seek to unravel mysteries whose full implications they have yet to grasp. But in their quest to understand the inexplicable, they risk revealing truths none of them is prepared to face.

Billy "Red" Murphy's Gang : The Desert Wolves

While Dead Man’s Pass is the stage for a struggle between settlers, miners, and the authorities, it is also a town where the law of the strongest is enforced in gunpowder and blood. And few men embody this law better than Billy "Red" Murphy, an outlaw whose name is whispered with fear in every trading post in the region. His gang, some thirty individuals hardened by life in the desert, is a veritable pack of wolves: fast, brutal, and elusive. If the player characters are members of this gang, the Teller will ensure that the scenarios are adapted to reflect the fact that the characters are not the good guys in this story. This organization is specifically local, but obviously the leader has contacts with other, more nationally established criminal organizations.

A former Confederate soldier, Murphy saw the Civil War destroy everything he had. A wanted deserter, he wandered the West, living by plunder and menial jobs, before grasping a simple truth: men obey those who hit the hardest. He then assembled a band of unscrupulous raiders and mercenaries, attracting disgraced former soldiers, criminals fleeing the noose, and unattached outcasts.

Murphy's gang's attacks are precise and organized, unlike the more chaotic outlaw groups that plague the region. Their preferred targets are stagecoach convoys, especially those carrying gold or funds for Wilkinson's bank. Supply convoys for military garrisons are also prime targets, as the gang knows the army doesn't negotiate with outlaws: if a cavalry detachment gives chase, they



have no choice but to exterminate them or disappear into the desert.

Murphy is no ordinary highwayman. He has established contacts in Dead Man's Pass, informants who keep him informed about convoy movements and lucrative opportunities. Some even believe he has secret ties to Wilkinson himself, who could use the gang to sabotage rivals or create an atmosphere of insecurity that would solidify his monopoly on financial transactions. Others whisper that he has a tumultuous relationship with Mary Whitmore, the owner of the Silver Spur, and that she might be his only weakness.

But Murphy's gang isn't invincible. While his attacks are swift and brutal, they've earned him an ever-growing list of enemies. Pinkerton has sworn to eliminate him, the cavalry at Fort Eldridge has put a price on his head, and even other outlaw gangs are beginning to see him as an obstacle. A man like Murphy knows his reign won't last forever. But as long as he's in the saddle, he'll make sure his name is etched in legend... or on the tombstones of those who dared to challenge him. Every member of the gang has a bounty on their head, dead or alive.

The Union Pacific Railroad Company : The Railroad Empire

In Dead Man's Pass, conflicts between prospectors, merchants, and outlaws punctuate daily life. But a far more imposing force is advancing inexorably toward the town, a force that neither gunpowder nor gold can stop: the railroad. The Union Pacific Railroad, an industrial giant backed by the economic powers of the East, is expanding rapidly, and Dead Man's Pass lies in its path.

The Union Pacific is not just a railroad company. It is a sprawling empire, backed by banks, industrialists, and even certain political circles in Washington. Its goal is to connect the West and the East, laying miles of track across plains and mountains, regardless of who stands in its way. Wherever it establishes itself, it leaves no room for small businesses, independent ranchers, or local communities. Its workers advance like an army, destroying land, obliterating villages, and redrawing borders with steel and coal, all in the name of the nation's unstoppable progress.

Dead Man's Pass has not yet been completely absorbed, but the first signs are already visible. Wilkinson, the town's influential banker, is actively supporting the company, financing land purchases under assumed names, discreetly buying up mining claims, and pressuring ranchers to relinquish their grazing lands. Through these maneuvers, Union Pacific is preparing for total control of the region.

The company will stop at nothing to impose its advance. It employs lawyers and legislators to force land sales at rock-bottom prices, but also henchmen and mercenaries to intimidate those who refuse to cooperate. Officially, it commits no crimes: every transaction is legal, every piece of land acquired



follows established rules. But behind the scenes, those who oppose the company too vehemently disappear, fall victim to sabotage, or suffer tragic accidents.

The Union Pacific faced several obstacles at Dead Man's Pass. Ranchers who depended on the vast plains for their herds refused to cede their land, threatening to join forces against the company. The Paiute, whose reservation was directly threatened by the railroad route, began organizing raids against construction crews and supply convoys. Sheriff Carter, though aware of the danger posed by the company, could not act without concrete evidence and had to contend with forces far greater than himself.

Ultimately, it is inevitable that Union Pacific will take possession of Dead Man's Pass, as it has done with other towns before it. But the question is at what cost. If the conflicts escalate, the company might be forced to resort to armed force, triggering open warfare between its men and the town's inhabitants.

For now, its agents work in the shadows, observing, buying, bribing. The railroad will reach Dead Man's Pass, whether we like it or not. And those who refuse to adapt will be buried under the rails

The Ranchers' Syndicate : The Last Stand

Long before the arrival of prospectors and bankers, the land around Dead Man's Pass belonged to ranchers. These vast plains, dotted with rivers and hills, were the realm of ranchers, men and women who built their fortunes on raising and trading cattle. But today, this land is coveted. The development of the railroad, the rise of mining companies, and the voracious appetite of bankers threaten the very existence of independent ranches.

Faced with this threat, the largest landowners united, forming an alliance that was as much economic as it was military: the Ranchers' Syndicate. This was not simply a group of ranchers. It was an organized force, ready to do anything to defend its interests.

Under the current leadership of Catherine "Cat" Douglas, a woman as ruthless as she is respected, the syndicate imposes its own rules. It sets cattle prices, controls access to water sources, and ensures that ranchers' land remains in their hands. Every independent rancher must abide by its rules, or risk isolation, ruin... or worse.

The Union Pacific Railroad is the biggest threat to the ranchers. If the railroad reaches the town, the herds will lose value due to imports and increased competition, and the ranchers will lose their influence over the local economy. Cat Douglas and his people know this isn't just about trade, it's about survival. So they've started fighting back.

The Union uses various methods to slow down rail expansion:



- Trade blockade: They refuse to sell livestock to traders affiliated with the railway company.
- Corruption and alliances: Some roving judges and local politicians receive bribes to delay or invalidate Union Pacific acquisitions.
- Intimidation: “Accidents” occur on the coveted lands. Fences are torn down, wells poisoned, warehouses burned in mysterious fires.
- Direct actions: Some members of the union do not hesitate to physically eliminate traitors and railway agents.

However, not all the threats come from the railroad. Internally, tensions are rising. Some ranchers, seduced by the promises of fortune made by Union Pacific financiers, are considering selling. Others believe that open warfare with the railroad is a mistake and that a compromise must be found. Cat Douglas is thus faced with a dilemma: unite the ranchers under a single banner, or watch their empire crumble from within.

The army at Fort Eldridge is also monitoring the escalating tensions. If the conflict between the railroad and the ranchers spirals out of control, the cavalry could intervene, which would permanently alter the balance of power at Dead Man's Pass.

The Ranchers' Union is a bastion of resistance, the last bulwark against industrial expansion. But it cannot hold out forever against the infernal machine of progress. Cat Douglas and her allies will have to choose their side: fight to the bitter end, or make a pact with the enemy they hate.

The League of Virtue of Dead Man’s Pass : The Vigilantes of Moralism

In a city like Dead Man’s Pass, where the law is still fragile and order often depends on financial power or the fastest guns, some citizens have decided to take matters into their own hands. The rise in crime, the proliferation of gambling, alcohol, and prostitution have driven a segment of the population to form a reform movement, an organization claiming to be the guarantor of traditional values and moral justice: the Virtue League.

At first glance, it appears to be a simple group of well-meaning citizens advocating a return to Christian values and righteousness. But beneath this facade lies an organized and influential group, ready to use intimidation, violence, and social pressure to impose its vision of order. The League of Virtue is not content with sermons and petitions; it orchestrates reprisal rallies, foments smear campaigns, and mobilizes angry crowds to shut down establishments deemed undesirable.

Its leader, Nathaniel Barlow, a wealthy merchant and staunch advocate of moral discipline, orchestrates the League's actions from his office above his trading post. Officially, he is a simple businessman concerned with the well-



being of the town, but behind the scenes, he controls local militias, funded by his own money and that of influential sympathizers. These pressure groups target gambling dens, brothels, and even certain businesses accused of encouraging debauchery.

The League's methods are varied and often brutal. They use religious propaganda, posting leaflets and shouting inflammatory sermons in public squares. They exert pressure on the authorities, pushing the sheriff to turn a blind eye to certain punitive actions. Sometimes, they organize nighttime raids, where entire establishments are ransacked under the pretext of "purification."

But the League doesn't only target outward vices. It also monitors individual behavior, denouncing citizens who fail to adhere to their imposed moral code. A single accusation can ruin a reputation: a merchant suspected of having ties to organized crime can see his customers flee overnight, a minor accused of impure behavior can be ostracized from city circles, and a prominent citizen criticized by the League can find himself socially isolated.

Despite its influence, the League of Virtue is not invincible. It has many enemies:

- Mary Whitmore, owner of the Silver Spur, openly fights against their actions, refusing to give in to their demands.
- The miners and workers, who see them as moralists seeking to prohibit their only leisure activities.
- Sheriff Carter, who, although forced to tolerate their influence, does not appreciate their methods and seeks to limit their power.

As the city grows, the League's fight becomes more aggressive. The conflict between the defenders of an old world and the proponents of progress is only just beginning, and Dead Man's Pass could well become the stage for an ideological war with an uncertain outcome.

The ‘Cousins’ of Mexico : The Smuggling Network

Dead Man’s Pass’s official trade is based on gold, cattle, and goods from California’s major cities. But beneath this legal facade thrives an equally flourishing black market, fueled by men whose names don’t appear on any official register. These men, operating in the shadows of the hills and canyons, transport precious and forbidden cargo, feeding the desires and needs of a population that cannot or will not rely on official channels. They are known as the ‘Cousins,’ and their network extends far beyond the town.

From the plains of northern Mexico to the remote valleys of California, these smugglers have meticulously planned their routes, utilizing forgotten trails,

hidden rivers, and caches concealed within isolated ranches. The desert is both their ally and their prison: they know how to traverse these arid expanses undetected, how to evade military patrols, and, most importantly, how to ensure their clients remain discreet. At Dead Man's Pass, they supply what cannot be obtained through official channels: alcohol for saloons, weapons for outlaws, and sometimes even resettling arrangements for those seeking to disappear.

The network is run by Miguel Herrera, a former Mexican army officer who traded his uniform for the freedom offered by illegal trade. Sharp-witted and charismatic, he leaves nothing to chance. He doesn't just manage the transport of goods; he ensures the right people are in the right positions, the routes remain open, and the bribes reach the right people. Nothing must disrupt the flow of trade. A rail car intercepted by the cavalry? A shipment seized by overzealous customs officers? He makes sure those responsible pay for their mistake... or disappear before they can do it again.

The 'Cousins' have infiltrated every corner of the town, embedding their men among the mine workers, warehouse employees, and street vendors. Some run modest shops where you can buy far more than what's on the shelves. Others work on the surrounding ranches, ensuring that stocks of weapons and whiskey remain hidden in the barns until they're shipped out. Their presence is invisible to those who don't know where to look, but everyone in Dead Man's Pass knows someone who knows someone who can get what they need.

Their main commodity remains alcohol. The city's saloons are always hungry for quality whiskey, and gambling den patrons have no desire for the law to impose restrictions on their consumption. But it is weapons that constitute the network's true wealth. Rifles and revolvers circulate discreetly across the border, finding their way into the hands of outlaws, local gangs, and sometimes even ranchers seeking to protect their land from railroad agents. Some of these rifles have already been used to kill American soldiers. Others will end up in the hands of Paiute warriors, ready to defend their last remaining territories.

The existence of the 'Cousins' is not without its perils, however. The army stationed at Fort Eldridge understands that smuggling will not cease until it strikes at its root. Patrols are regularly sent to monitor trade routes, convoys are intercepted, and smugglers are captured. But the army is not their only problem. The Union Pacific, seeking to establish total control over the local economy, is beginning to view this illegal competition thriving in the shadows with suspicion. If the railroad is to make Dead Man's Pass a major economic center, then any unregulated alternative must be eliminated, and the 'Cousins' are first on the list of obstacles to be removed.

Herrera knows his network is in danger. The city is growing, and with it come new eyes, new laws, new authorities seeking to establish their own control. He can no longer simply operate as he always has. Some of his men advocate more

aggressive measures: bribing more officials, eliminating opponents, imposing a stronger presence in saloons and centers of power. Others believe it's time to find common ground with the rising powers, particularly Wilkinson and the Union Pacific. For while bootleggers know how to adapt, they also know that open warfare with the established order never ends well for those who wield the weapons.

For now, the ‘Cousins’ continue to operate as they always have: in the shadows, with discretion and efficiency. As long as there are clients, as long as there are needs that the law cannot meet, their presence will be necessary. But how much longer can they remain invisible before the city crushes them under its inexorable advance towards modernity?



The Circle of Shamans : The Guardians of the Ancient Spirits

Long before the mines transformed Dead Man's Pass into a hotbed of wealth and violence, long before the first wagon train of settlers crossed these plains, this land was alive. It belonged to the spirits of the wind, the guardians of the rock and water, and the people who worshiped them. Among them, some were chosen to listen, understand, and maintain the balance of the world. Today, these men and women still exist: they form the Circle of Shamans, a secret spiritual society dedicated to preserving sacred places and protecting ancestral traditions.

The Circle is a dispersed but influential network, bringing together the last Paiute shamans and a few other elders from more distant tribes, who refuse to see their culture disappear under the weight of progress and greed. The Circle does not function like a conventional organization: it has neither a single leader nor a defined center of power, but relies on oral traditions, initiation rites, and alliances among its members. Those who belong to it do not all share the same vision of the struggle to be waged: some advocate diplomacy with the settlers and the authorities, while others believe that war and revolt are the only solutions.

The Circle's role is multifaceted. It protects sacred sites, particularly caves and mountains where ancestors left their marks. It monitors the actions of settlers, the military, and mining companies, and intervenes when they threaten to breach barriers that should not be crossed. It also serves as a refuge for those fleeing the destruction of their way of life: young Paiute, forcibly removed from their land, come to learn ancient traditions before they disappear. Some of the Circle's healers still practice a form of medicine that even settlers are beginning to respect, using plants and rituals where modern science fails.

But within the Circle, a great debate is tearing its members apart. Some believe they must adapt, negotiate, and survive in this new era by accepting that the settlers will never leave. Chogan Black Bear, one of the last great Paiute shamans, champions this view, convinced that the Circle must exist in the shadows, preserve what it can, and subtly influence events. Others, younger and more enraged, refuse any form of submission. They want to launch attacks against the settlers' infrastructure, burn the mining camps, and terrorize those who defile the sacred lands. This division jeopardizes the very survival of the Circle, because if the factions tear each other apart, their enemies will no longer need to fight them: they will disappear on their own.

For outsiders, joining the Circle is no easy feat. This organization is first and foremost tribal, rooted in a culture few understand. Yet, the world is changing, and some of its members are beginning to see an opportunity in individuals from the outside. Those who have proven their respect for tradition, who have aided the Circle in its missions, or who have shown themselves to be trustworthy, can be initiated into ancient knowledge. Scouts, healers, scholars,

and even mercenaries have already been accepted on an exceptional basis, for the Circle knows that to survive extinction, it must sometimes open its doors to those who share its struggle.

A group of players could join the Circle in several ways:

- After saving a member in danger, thus proving their worth.
- By being guided by Chogan Black Bear, who might see them as allied spirits, coming from another path but sharing the same mission.
- By having mixed origins, a Native parent who would have passed on to them a link with these forgotten traditions.
- By being mercenaries hired by the Circle, to protect a sacred site or investigate a threat coming from the city.

The Circle of Shamans is a secretive yet powerful organization, possessing knowledge that the colonists despise, but whose true scope they fail to grasp. Their struggle is a silent war, waged in their minds as much as in the mountains. Their very existence will depend on their ability to adapt to this world that seeks to erase them.

Introductions

In this section, you will find a series of introductions designed to allow a group of player characters to immediately begin an adventure in this universe. Each introduction explains how the characters arrived together in the game and leaves them free of any obligations, ready for adventure.

Each introduction is written as a short text to be read or paraphrased at the beginning of the session. The Teller will find this a useful tool for quickly starting a game, without having to justify the presence or cooperation of the characters at length.

End of Convoy

For two weeks the convoy had been winding its way along the arid trails of the south, two weeks of dust, skittish cattle, cold nights, and simmering tension. The contract was simple: escort a wagon train belonging to the Hartman & Bales company to Dead Man's Pass, carrying supplies, provisions, a few tools, and a handful of families who had come to try their luck in the West. You were part of the escort, out of self-interest, necessity, or habit, and today, the mission is drawing to a close.

The convoy entered town this morning, its wheels crunching on the uneven planks of the main street. Children ran to the water pump, mothers asked where they could stay, and the foreman handed you a handful of dusty bills as payment. A few words, a nod, and it was over. Work done, everyone was free.

You find yourselves together at a crossroads, in the shade of a porch, gazing at this town you don't yet know. Dead Man's Pass isn't large, but it has that nervous air of places where things move quickly and badly. A saloon beckons, the stables have already collected the animals, and Hartman & Bales' wagons are pulling away, leaving in their wake an impression of interrupted clamor.

Nothing binds you to the caravan anymore. You're together because the roads brought you together, and it's safer to travel in a group. Now, you face a town that knows nothing of you, and that will offer you what you know how to take from it. Rumors circulate that the drought has begun to affect the wells, that prospectors are stirring in the hills, and that the garrison at Fort Eldridge is recruiting more and more men for reasons that remain unclear. The atmosphere is tense, the sheriff is watching everything that moves, and prominent citizens like Wilkinson are always on the lookout for new pawns to place.

So here you are, paid, released, free. No contract binds you. You can have a drink, look for a place to stay, or simply let yourself be carried away by the murky currents that stir the city. The streets are full of curious glances, rickety carts, and skittish horses. Something is brewing in the air. And you're in the right place, at the right time, to dive in headfirst.

Railway Recruitment

The sky is low, the heat oppressive. For three weeks, you've been accompanying a group of engineers and surveyors sent by the Union Pacific to conduct the initial surveys for a railway line between Fort Eldridge and the southern border. You were recruited as an escort: guards, scouts, handlers, snipers. The kind of profiles that are useful in a region where problems are sometimes settled with a Colt.

But this morning, everything changed. In the small camp set up two kilometers from Dead Man's Pass, the team leader, a man named Whitlow, gathered you at daybreak. With palpable nervousness, he announced that the project was suspended until further notice. Local pressure, political maneuvering, veiled threats... Union Pacific preferred to back down. The pay was done, the contract terminated. Now you were free and idle.

Whitlow advised you to stay in the area, "just in case," before heading east with the other engineers. You are now the only ones left behind. Late in the morning, you reached the town, your belongings on your backs, your horses dusty, your weapons at the ready. The main street is bustling, filled with the cries of vendors, the clatter of hooves, and the clinking of bottles. You attract a few glances, but nothing significant.

Dead Man's Pass is used to seeing strangers pass through, sizing them up, testing them. They say it swallows souls and spits out the most tenacious. You still have a few coins, a little energy, and no ties. Before you, a city that wasn't expecting you, but that might just need you. Behind you, a failed mission. Around you, a world on edge. It's up to you to decide what you'll do with this day... and the days to come.

Release from Prison

Just three days ago, you were locked behind the gray walls of Fort Carron prison. Your sentence has been served, your belongings and weapons returned to you. A handful of dollars in hand, you were escorted to the first station. Dead Man's Pass. The end of the line for the forgotten, a new beginning for the broken. None of you chose this city, but this is where you were dropped off, together, your eyes seared by the sun and your muscles numb from months of silence and surveillance.

The road from the train station to the city is dry, dusty, and lined with silence. You walk in a group out of habit: it's safer, more familiar. The uniforms have stayed behind, but the mistrust lingers. You entered together, and for now, nothing compels you to separate. The city unfolds before you with its share of sidelong glances, stifled conversations, and curses hurled out of thin air. Some might recognize you. Others couldn't care less. What's certain is that you have no commitments, no ties, and an urgent need to prove, or conceal, who you truly are.

Dead Man's Pass is known for its rough treatment. But it offers opportunities to those who know how to seize them, to those who have nothing to lose. The saloon, the mission, the mine, the garrison... all are looking for workers, sometimes without asking too many questions. And then there are the deals made in the shadows, the power plays among the local bigwigs, the simmering tensions between communities. By sticking together, you'll increase your chances. The streets of this town are unforgiving to loners.

That morning, you enter Dead Man's Pass on foot, pack slung over your shoulder, weapons still well-oiled despite months of inactivity. You have your reasons for being there. Maybe to flee. Maybe to start over. Maybe simply to survive. Whatever the reason, no one is waiting for you. But everything can begin here, now.

Broken Caravan

Dust is everywhere: on your boots, on your weapons, in your parched mouths. Four days ago, you were still part of a large caravan of settlers heading north from the southern border. Some forty souls, a few families crammed into rickety wagons, emaciated livestock, and dreams of a better world. Then the raiders came. A swift, brutal attack. You resisted, covered the civilians' escape, salvaged what you could, mourned your fallen comrades. And then you pressed on north, leading what remained of the caravan.

Today, you enter Dead Man's Pass. The survivors have been entrusted to the Catholic mission, the wounded to Dr. Mayfield's small clinic. You remain standing, weary, covered in dust, but together. The convoy is gone, the contracts are broken, the leaders are dead or gone. You have no mission, no objective. But you are alive. That's something, at least. What happened on the road has bound you together more surely than any promise.

The city buzzes with rumors. War in the hills. Mines reopening. The Fort recruiting. Prominent figures plotting. You have a choice. And this time, no one will tell you what to do. The desert has taken much from you. It will be up to you to decide what the city gives back.

A Necessary Step

They were looking for you. The law, a rival gang, an old debt. It didn't matter. You followed the least exposed path, changed your route, crossed the state line. And this morning, you arrived in Dead Man's Pass. It wasn't the plan, just a stopover. But maybe this town, lost between canyons and dust, is what you needed.

You've known each other for a while. Partners in business, in arms, or in silence. The kind of group that doesn't talk much, but knows how to act when necessary. You arrive together, coming from the south, a cloud of sand in your wake. None of you speaks. The horses are tired, and so are you. But you're still standing, together.

The town wasn't expecting you, but it's not rejecting you either. It's seen worse. Closed faces, tired eyes, well-maintained weapons. Here, everything has its price: loyalty, strength, information. They say Wilkinson is looking for men. That the garrison needs recruits. That the saloon sometimes hires without asking too many questions.

You're free, for now. Nothing ties you to Dead Man's Pass. But every step you take in this town could be the beginning of a story, or its end. And you know it: sticking together has saved you more than once. That's not about to change.

Scenarios

This section forms the heart of the game: here you will find a selection of around fifty scenarios designed to be played without preparation (the Teller must have read the game rules before starting a session). They are self-contained but firmly rooted in the presented universe and are all based on the characters, locations, and organizations described previously.

Each scenario begins in the thick of the action, launching the game immediately. It is structured into several sections designed to guide the Teller: the facts for the Teller, an introduction to read or paraphrase for the players, possible solutions, success and failure criteria, and a suggested timeline. These elements are designed for immediate use, striking a balance between narrative freedom and clarity of stakes. Each scenario is ready to play, takes 5-7 minutes to read, and can be played without preparation. All the main elements of each scenario are clearly defined, allowing the Teller to easily improvise everything else and make the plot their own.



The Betrayal of the Pinkertons

The facts for the Teller

The body of a Pinkerton agent, James T. Calloway, was found hanging behind the Silver Spur, the largest saloon in Dead Man's Pass. His still-fresh corpse swung from a rope attached to a beam, and a sign reading "Bosses' Spy" was nailed to his chest.

The Pinkerton agency, present in town to ensure the security of the mining operations, immediately accused the miners of the murder, claiming it was an act of sedition intended to intimidate the companies that controlled the deposits. Wilkinson, the town's influential banker, supported this version and urged local authorities to act swiftly. He demanded an exemplary execution, threatening to close the mines and cut wages if the culprits were not handed over.

But things aren't as simple as they seem. Calloway wasn't well-liked among the miners, but none of them would have chosen to kill him that way. Locals had heard Calloway speak in the days leading up to his death. He had been conducting a discreet investigation for several weeks, asking questions about Wilkinson's finances and some suspicious transactions related to the mining claims. He seemed too inquisitive for someone supposedly just "protecting the investors' interests."

Actually, Calloway was betrayed by his own superiors. He had discovered that the Pinkerton agency, in collaboration with Wilkinson, was falsifying documents to resell already exploited mining claims to new investors, thus ruining dozens of victims. He intended to expose these frauds, but his employers decided to eliminate this agent who had become too much of a liability. His murder was disguised as an act of rebellion to justify a brutal crackdown on the miners and crush any attempt at protest.

Sheriff John Carter, distrustful of the Pinkertons, asks the Characters to investigate discreetly before the town descends into a bloody purge. But time is running out: the miners arrested by Pinkerton as culprits are scheduled to be executed at sunrise.

Intro for the players

The morning hangs heavy with tension in Dead Man's Pass. In the back of the Silver Spur, a body sways gently in the morning breeze, hanging from a beam behind the building. James Calloway's hat has fallen to his feet, and his frozen face seems to capture the horror of his final moments. Around him, onlookers murmur as armed Pinkerton agents surround the area, their eyes hardening and their fingers on the trigger.

Sheriff John Carter signals you to approach, visibly concerned.

"The Pinkertons want blood. They say the miners did this and they intend to make them pay. I don't know if it's true, but one thing is for sure: if they don't find a culprit by tonight, they'll pick one at random."

Wilkinson, arriving on the scene in an elegant jacket, speaks in a sharp tone.

"Gentlemen, we have a city to protect. If we let these thugs kill our protectors without reacting, it will be the end of all authority. We must make an example."

Nearby, the miners' representatives are gathering, worried but furious. Their eyes are turning towards you.

Resolution

The investigation begins at the crime scene, where an examination of the body will reveal signs of a struggle on the wrists and rope marks on the ankles, suggesting that Calloway was bound before being hanged. He was therefore not executed in the street, but transported there after his death. If the characters miss this information, the medical examiner or the undertaker can explain it to them, if they ask.

While searching Calloway's hotel room, the Characters find detailed notes on Wilkinson and confidential documents mentioning fraudulent transactions involving mining claims sold to multiple investors simultaneously. This evidence indicates that Calloway was not investigating the miners, but his own employers, Pinkerton.

Another lead points to a local informant, a former thief named Jeb Rawlins, who claims to have seen Calloway being abducted by two men in suits the day before his death. He says these men dragged Calloway behind the mining company's warehouse, a building secured by Wilkinson and the Pinkertons.

If they infiltrate the warehouse, the Characters discover a hidden room containing torture equipment and falsified records. Calloway was not killed by the miners, but interrogated by his own colleagues, before his execution was staged to justify a brutal crackdown.

The Characters must then decide how to use this information. Confronting the Pinkertons directly is suicidal, but leaking the evidence to the press or to European investors could be enough to put Wilkinson in a difficult position.

Criteria for success or failure

If the characters gather solid evidence and present it before the miners' execution, the hangings are called off, and the Pinkertons are forced to back down. Wilkinson loses much of his influence, and an external investigation into the mining fraud is launched. He will, of course, emerge unscathed, thanks to his contacts in the legal system.

If they find the truth but don't act quickly enough, miners are hanged, and the city descends into a cycle of violence. The workers revolt, and the Pinkertons impose a reign of terror, summarily executing the leaders of the protest.

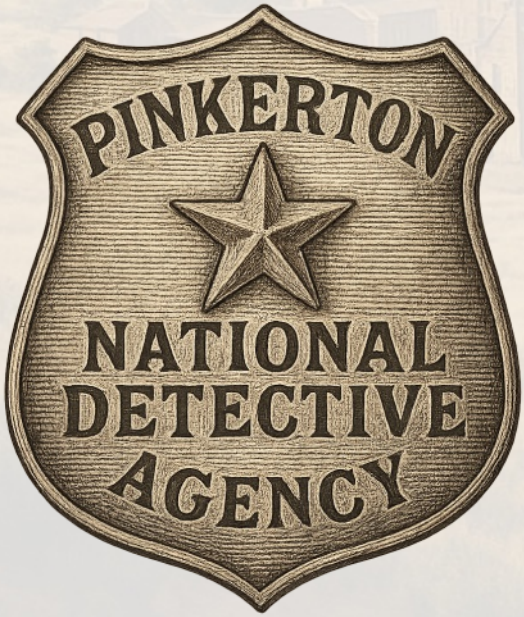
If the characters ignore the investigation and let events take their course, Wilkinson strengthens his grip on Dead Man’s Pass, the Pinkertons crush all opposition, and the city becomes a corporate stronghold where the law belongs to the richest.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Pinkertons publicly accuse the miners and announce executions for sunset, causing shock and unrest throughout the city.

After 60 minutes, Wilkinson convinces the notables to hasten the trial, and a scaffold is erected on Main Street, accentuating the urgency and the fear.

After 90 minutes, the first man is hanged: a foreman known for his involvement in the creation of a union. The crowd is on the verge of erupting, a mix of panic and anger, and any attempt to intervene must be made instantly.



Dr. Mekaniqq

The facts for the Teller

In one of the region's most remote canyons, far from any known trails, Dr. Mekaniqq has begun construction of a monumental dam. This brilliant but deranged scientist is not acting out of philanthropy: his goal is to divert the main course of the river that feeds Dead Man's Pass, the Paiute Reservation, and Fort Eldridge. By draining the region, he intends to impose his monopoly on drinking water and control the population through thirst. But that's not all: Mekaniqq also aims to generate electricity on a large scale using experimental turbines, hoping to become the sole power provider for all of Western California.

The project is already well underway. In the steep canyons, under the watchful eyes of ruthless mercenaries, exhausted workers tirelessly work stones, steel beams, and steam engines designed by Mekaniqq himself. The mechanisms are powered by lightning generators, while rudimentary and unreliable robots assist the guards in monitoring the construction site. The deafening noise of the work, controlled explosions, and test detonations echoes all the way to the mountains.

In town, the population is already feeling the effects of the construction: wells are low, springs are drying up, tension is rising. Wilkinson, a greedy and pragmatic banker, is seriously considering supporting Mekaniqq in the hope of profiting from control of the water. The Paiutes denounce the desecration of their sacred lands and are preparing to take action, even if it means triggering a conflict. Sheriff Carter struggles to maintain order, caught between the anger of the townspeople, the machinations of the local dignitaries, and the fear of open warfare.

Several factions are discreetly contacting the Characters. Farmers ruined by drought, officers from Fort Eldridge anxious to protect their men, merchants threatened by shortages, and even Mekaniqq's rivals, all are seeking to recruit individuals capable of intervening before the dam's completion. Construction is so far advanced that little time remains before the river is permanently diverted and Dead Man's Pass falls under the Doctor's control.

Intro for the players

The back room of the Silver Spur is gloomy today. The smell of tobacco and whiskey permeates the walls, and the city's whispers filter through the gaps in the floorboards.

Around a rickety table, Jedediah "Goldtooth" Jackson awaits you, his expression dour. "You've noticed, I bet. The river is dying, and it's not an act of God.

A certain Mekaniqq is damming the river in a well-hidden corner of the

mountains. If he succeeds, we'll have no water, and the city will be brought to its knees. I'm looking for people to go see what he's up to, and if possible, stop him before it's too late. Are you in?"

Resolution

The dam construction site is defended by about thirty experienced mercenaries, stationed around the canyon rim, the main site, and observation posts. Steam-powered guard robots patrol at irregular intervals, complicating any infiltration. The dam rests on precarious foundations, weakened by the use of salvaged materials and the canyon's unique configuration. By identifying these weaknesses, the Characters can plan targeted sabotage capable of causing a massive collapse, without needing to dynamite the entire structure.

Lightning generators, housed in a reinforced warehouse below, power heavy machinery and automated defense systems. Sabotaging or destroying these installations could paralyze the entire construction site, significantly slowing down the work. However, this area is one of the most heavily defended, protected by armed engineers and fixed automated systems.

The Characters can also stir up the anger of the workers, already exhausted and terrified. Some foremen, distrustful of Mekaniqq, are susceptible to the idea of a mutiny if they are offered a realistic way out of the mercenaries' reprisals. By gaining their trust or providing them with an evacuation plan, the Characters can trigger an uprising that will completely disrupt the site's defenses.

Finally, technical documents, kept in Mekaniqq's office or in the hands of his lieutenants, reveal the dam's instability and the danger it poses to the entire region. By bringing this evidence to Wilkinson or other investors, the Characters could halt the project by cutting off its funding. However, these documents are well guarded, and retrieving them without alerting Mekaniqq will require cunning and precision.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to stop the construction or make its completion impossible, the city and its inhabitants can breathe again. Water flows once more from the wells, tensions with the Paiutes subside, and Mekaniqq disappears, furious but powerless, leaving behind rumors and fears of his future return.

If the Characters only manage to slow down the work, Mekaniqq retains enough resources and support to resume the work in the medium term, leaving the city with only an uncertain reprieve.

If Mekaniqq is left undisturbed, the river will be diverted, water will become a scarce commodity controlled by Mekaniqq, and Dead Man’s Pass will descend

into poverty, exile, or submission. The town is lost, and its future belongs to the mad scientist.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters learn that the construction site patrols have been doubled. The Doctor fears interference and orders a general increase in security.

After 60 minutes, Mekaniqq conducts the first test of the dam's turbines. The success of this step boosts the workers' confidence and accelerates the pace of construction. The site is almost ready.

After 90 minutes, Mekaniqq orders the gradual closure of the river's natural channel. If no decisive action is taken before the end of the game, the dam will be activated before the city can react effectively, and the consequences will be irreversible.



The Devil's Pact

The facts for the Teller

Jasper "Black Hand" Crowley was once the most feared marksman in Dead Man's Pass, known for never refusing a duel and winning every single one flawlessly. However, his reputation as a sharpshooter rested on a secret more sinister than mere talent: Crowley had supposedly forged a pact with a preacher from the East, a disturbing man with unnaturally blue eyes, guaranteeing him victory in exchange for a fragment of his soul. This occult pact ensured him an invincibility that was feared by all for years.

But as Crowley's reputation grew, he stirred fear among the city's powerful notables, including Ezra P. Wilkinson. Dreading the increasing influence of this uncontrollable gunslinger, these men hatched a plan to eliminate him. They sponsored a rigged duel, and while Crowley had the upper hand, a treacherous blow to the back ended his legend. He was hastily buried far from the city, in an area avoided by the Paiutes, fearing the spirits that dwelled there.

Twenty years later, under a veiled moon, his tomb opened. The unfinished pact brought Crowley back from the dead, driven by an irrepressible need to complete the final duel. For three nights now, he has returned to challenge the best marksmen of Dead Man’s Pass. His victims, unable to wound him, fall under his bullets or end up terrified and mad if they refuse the duel. Wilkinson is clearly his target, but Crowley seems determined to take down anyone who might stand in his way. The Characters will have to unravel the threads of this curse, understand the preacher’s role, the history of Crowley’s weapon, and discover how to break this deadly cycle before the town is completely emptied of its living.

Intro for the players

The Silver Spur is unusually quiet. Mary Whitmore avoids your gaze, and the regulars stare at you fearfully. Near the window, an old man smooths his beard with a trembling hand. "You saw him, didn't you? Crowley. He's back." His whisper chills the room. "Yesterday, Tom McGraw fired first. His bullets went right through Crowley. This morning, he was found dead, with fear frozen on his face." He lowers his eyes. "Tonight, another will fall." In the street, the shadow of a man passes slowly. Night is falling, and with it, Crowley's grim ritual.

Resolution

The Characters may discover, while investigating Crowley's grave, that the coffin is ripped open, marked with carved symbols, and partially unsealed. Examination of the site reveals that the body rose again, leaving behind ominous signs that point to a supernatural resurrection. Elderly witnesses, the sheriff's records, and some Paiutes gradually reveal the story of the pact

between Crowley and the mysterious preacher from the East. This pact had only one condition: Crowley had to triumph fairly in his final duel. Wilkinson's treachery prevented the fulfillment of this commitment, condemning the gunman's soul to return and finish it.

As they continue their investigation, the Characters discover, in the sheriff's records or through the testimony of an elderly resident, that Crowley once possessed a peculiar weapon, forged by a blacksmith versed in the occult: the Eye of Judgment. Its last known owner was Jonas Eddington, a former deputy sheriff, who disappeared shortly after Crowley's death. By tracking him down and exploring the isolated cabin where he had taken refuge, the Characters are able to recover the revolver and a single bullet engraved with ancient symbols. Eddington's journal explains that to break the curse, they must duel Crowley, let him fire first, and then strike him precisely where his original wound was.

The Characters can also discover, by questioning Chogan Black Bear or other ancient Paiutes, the existence of an ancient ritual of severance capable of dissolving the bond between Crowley and the pact. This solution requires rare ingredients, a specific location, and an understanding of the symbols engraved on the weapon and the tomb.

Crowley still wears his old dueling clothes, covered in dust, the mark of his betrayal still visible on his chest. He remains silent and aloof, speaking only to voice his challenges. He ignores attempts at intimidation or negotiation and only responds to topics related to the duel, his pact, or the preacher. When he encounters the Characters, he observes them unless they provoke him. Only known marksmen or those who seek to arrest him truly attract his attention.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to use the Eye of Judgment while precisely respecting the conditions of the duel, or to successfully complete the ritual known to the Paiutes, Crowley disappears permanently and the city is freed from his grip.

If the Characters fail to obtain the weapon, to gather the components of the ritual, or fail to properly execute any of these solutions, Crowley will continue his cycle of deadly duels.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, Crowley provokes and shoots another gunslinger, fueling the panic.

After 60 minutes, the Characters discover the existence of the pact and obtain concrete leads to break it.

After 90 minutes, Crowley becomes uncontrollable: the duels cease to be formal and he now kills indiscriminately.

The Missing Children

The facts for the Teller

The disappearance of four settler children on the edge of the Paiute reservation raises tensions in Dead Man's Pass. The worried settlers accuse the tribe of kidnapping. In response, the Paiutes, led by Chogan Black Bear, categorically deny the accusation and threaten retaliation, should a punitive expedition take place. The Virtue League, a fanatical anti-Native group, seizes the opportunity to incite hatred and sow discord. Sheriff John Carter, overwhelmed, calls upon the Characters to investigate and prevent a bloody conflict.

The children, Elsie Garner (9), Nathaniel "Nate" Ellis (11), Miriam Duval (10), and Tommy Bell (8), were friends and often explored the area together. Their families are devastated: Joseph Garner is calling for revenge, Reverend Ellis is urging restraint, Lucille Duval is quiet but deeply affected, and Helen Bell is actively searching for clues. Just days before their disappearance, the children had been talking about a secret place in the hills.

In reality, they are trapped within an ancient ritual site, protected by a mystical barrier they accidentally reactivated by manipulating an old engraved rock. Caught between worlds, they are now only visible from the outside as shadows, inaccessible. Only the reenactment of the opening ritual can break the seal and free them. If the Characters fail, the city will descend into violence and the children will perish, forgotten behind the barrier. They know neither hunger nor cold, but their time is running out.

Intro for the players

Tension is palpable on the main street of Dead Man's Pass. A crowd of settlers gathers in front of the sheriff's office, clearly ready for a fight. Armed figures also appear from the direction of the hill, where the Paiutes watch in silence.

Sheriff John Carter beckons you over and addresses you sharply: "Four children have disappeared. The settlers are calling it a kidnapping, the Paiutes deny everything, and the Virtue League is fanning the flames." He pauses, worried.

"I won't be able to control this crowd for much longer. The situation is explosive, and I can't investigate and maintain calm in the city at the same time."

He stares at you for a moment before concluding, more calmly: "I need assistants for this case. Would you be willing to help me?"

Resolution

The investigation begins around the places where the children were last seen. By questioning their families, the Characters learn that the children often played together and mentioned a "secret hideout" discovered in the hills. A

meticulous search reveals lost objects, leading to an ancient path. This path leads to a remote site, known to the ancient Paiute as a gateway between worlds.

By consulting the tribe's elders, particularly Chogan Black Bear, the Characters gain some information: the site is protected by a mystical barrier activated by ritual symbols. The children have been trapped there ever since they triggered an ancient seal by manipulating an old engraved rock.

The site is a clearing surrounded by engraved stones. An invisible barrier forbids entry. The silhouettes of children are visible there, but untouchable and inaudible. To free them, the Characters must perform the opening ritual, but it requires a special amulet, a relic of an ancient Paiute spiritual leader.

The Characters can learn about the ritual by gaining Chogan Black Bear's trust or by consulting with tribal elders about the location. Once the site is discovered, they must identify the trigger for the magical seal, linked to a displaced motif on the central stone, understand how the stones works (each engraving representing a step in the ritual) and gather the components necessary to open the barrier: the amulet, a peace offering accepted by the land, and a forgotten sacred word, to be found in Paiute stories or on the stones at the site. Chogan can assist them if the Characters demonstrate their sincerity and willingness to avoid conflict. However, he will ask them to remain discreet so as not to inflame tensions.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters deactivate the barrier in time and bring the children back safe and sound, the truth will come out, tensions will ease, and the League of Virtue will be discredited.

If the children are found but the conflict still breaks out, their rescue is marred by a deadly confrontation between settlers and Paiutes, leaving lasting scars on the region.

If nothing is done, the children will perish, forgotten while Dead Man’s Pass descends into civil war. The reservation is attacked, the reprisals are bloody, and the town never recovers.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the colonists are seriously arming themselves. The tension becomes critical.

After 60 minutes, a member of the League of Virtue organizes a punitive expedition. The attack becomes imminent.

After 90 minutes, without any evidence or decisive intervention, a shot is fired. Conflict erupts.

Aliens Steal Livestock

The facts for the Teller

For several nights, ranchers in Dead Man's Pass have been reporting the unexplained disappearance of their cattle. The phenomenon is affecting several properties around the hills to the west. The accounts are disturbing: no normal tracks, but burn marks on the grass, irregular footprints, and mechanical noises heard in the distance. Bluish glows have been reported, as well as brief appearances of dark figures.

Anxiety is spreading among the population. The most nervous ranchers are organizing armed patrols. The Ranchers' Union is trying to downplay the events to avoid panic, while Sheriff Carter, though skeptical, tasks the Characters with investigating to prevent the situation from escalating. A punitive expedition is already being discussed.

In reality, the disappearances are caused by the Brothers of the Path, an ancient esoteric group seeking to protect a ritual site in the hills. They use technological and ritual devices to generate illusions and unsettling sounds. Their goal is to deter cattle from grazing on this territory, which they consider sacred. The frightened cattle are diverted and then released elsewhere or used in obscure rituals.

One of their devices, damaged, is found at an affected site: a partially buried, rattling, faintly pulsating metal sphere. Analysis of this object, with its unusual structure and patterns, leads the investigation toward an organized group operating in the hills. By cross-referencing other clues (engraved symbols, testimonies from former settlers, and similar objects mentioned in local stories) the Characters are able to identify an isolated location linked to these manifestations: hidden in the hills and protected by rituals of intimidation. This area is sensitive: the Brothers of the Path use it to manufacture and maintain their strange machines, which they use to keep out the curious.

If Characters are members of the Brothers, the Teller will have to reverse the dynamic: their objective will be to divert the investigation and protect their sanctuary without exposing their order.

Intro for the players

The atmosphere is tense outside the sheriff's office. A dozen ranchers have gathered there since dawn. Voices rise: disappearances of cattle, strange tracks, abnormal lights. Some brandish weapons, others demand that the sheriff act immediately.

As you approach, John Carter signals to you. He looks exhausted. "I suppose you've heard about the disappearing animals? Stories of lights in the sky, the clanging of metal, hooves vanishing into thin air... I mostly see men ready to

shoot anything that moves."

He considers you for a moment. "I need people capable of looking for facts. If you agree, start with Grady Turner's ranch. Twelve heads gone. And if you can stop those idiots from mounting an expedition tonight, you'll be doing me a huge favor."

Resolution

Turner Ranch is the starting point. There, the Characters find several anomalies: scorched grass, unidentifiable tracks, a heavy silence... and above all, a partially concealed device: a cracked metal cylinder with complex grooves that pulsates faintly. If they speak to a local craftsman or former soldier, he will confirm that the object is nothing like any known tool.

Other accounts point to the hills: an old hunting trail leads there, rarely used. Some mention a strange man, Ezra Whitlow, living alone near this area. By searching his cabin or observing his habits, the Characters can uncover clues to his Brotherhood affiliation: symbols identical to those engraved on the object found at the ranch, coded notes alluding to ancient rituals, or tools similar to those used for illusions. By confronting him, they can push Ezra to reveal his ties to the Brothers of the Path, provided they act tactfully or under pressure. If they have gained his trust, he will lead them to the camp. If they hunt him down, he will try to flee or trap them.

The Brothers' camp is an isolated enclave, organized around a circle of stones and ritual machines. The Brothers are preparing a new, large-scale illusion. They are not inherently hostile, but they are uncompromising in their defense of the sacred site. An open confrontation will result in losses. Negotiation is possible if the Characters respect the rituals or propose a lasting solution.

The Teller will have to manage this phase as a tense diplomacy test, where every misstep can trigger panic or the collapse of the Characters' plan.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters reveal the truth at the right time and defuse tensions, calm returns. The ranchers, reassured, refrain from expanding their pastures into the affected areas, at least temporarily. The Brothers remain hidden but cease their operations.

If an agreement is reached with the Brothers without publicly exposing their existence, the disappearances will cease, but the Characters will have to lie or manipulate the settlers to protect the sacred area.

In the event of failure, paranoia spreads. An armed expedition attacks the hills, targeting the Brothers, Paiutes, and innocent civilians. Several deaths ensue, and Dead Man's Pass descends into fear and reprisals.

If the Characters fail to convince anyone, scapegoats are lynched. The city becomes a place of constant tension where no one trusts anyone anymore.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the first ranchers seriously discuss a punitive expedition. The sheriff hesitates to stop them, torn between maintaining order and public pressure.

After 60 minutes, an armed delegation leaves the city heading towards the hills. If the Characters do not stop them or manage to calm the situation, the risk of escalation becomes imminent.

After 90 minutes, shots are exchanged in the hills. Ezra Whitlow disappears, and the Brothers of the Path activate their camp's defenses. Fear intensifies.

The Child of the Wendigo

The facts for the Teller

Elias Harper was found six years earlier, alone in the snow, by a trapper named Jonah Griggs. The child, about four years old, wore only a linen robe and seemed unaffected by the cold or hunger. He had no memory of his previous life. He was adopted by a farming couple, Daniel and Rebecca Harper, who raised him as their own son. Since then, Elias has grown up in Dead Man's Pass, seemingly without incident. But his behavior is puzzling: he sometimes seems distant, as if he perceives invisible things, and strange phenomena are regularly reported around him.

What the city doesn't know is that Elias was born into a remote mountain tribe, the son of a shaman named Nahima. From birth, the elders designated him as "marked", born under the aurora borealis, a sign of a link between the living and the spirits. At a very young age, disturbing phenomena occurred around him: snow melted beneath his feet, animals became agitated for no reason, and he seemed to converse alone at night in an unknown language. After a series of misfortunes, the elders concluded that he was connected to the Wendigo, an entity of hunger and misfortune. His mother was forced to perform an ancient ritual of separation and abandon him in the mountains. According to tradition, the child was destined to perish or disappear into the spirit world. But he survived.

Today, Mukwooru, a respected elder of the tribe, arrives at Dead Man's Pass with a small group of warriors to reclaim the child. According to him, Elias should never have been saved: by disrupting the ancient balance, the settlers have condemned the region to suffer the Wendigo's vengeance. Signs are beginning to appear: sick livestock, deformed births, icy drafts in the houses. Sheriff Carter, caught off guard, fears the conflict will escalate. He seeks the help of the characters to understand Elias's origins and, above all, to determine how to prevent the impending catastrophe. Elias is calm but often dreams of black mountains and silent shadows.

Intro for the players

On the main street, a nervous crowd has gathered. In front of the church, Daniel Harper and Mukwooru face each other. Between them, ten-year-old Elias watches the scene, his gaze lost.

Sheriff Carter calls out to you. "Mukwooru wants to take the child. He's talking about a curse. Harper is ready to fight. Things could escalate quickly."

Mukwooru declares aloud, "This child was abandoned on purpose. He was meant to join the spirits. You have disrupted the balance. If he remains here, evil will befall you."



Harper retorts angrily, "He's my son. I adopted him. He's staying with me!"

Voices rise, glances meet, and the crowd tenses. One word too many, and everything could change.

Resolution

The Characters can question the Harpers. They'll learn that Elias is immune to the cold, heals quickly, and sometimes speaks in his sleep in an unknown language. Some neighbors say they have seen him talking to animals or frozen in the snow with his eyes wide open. Others claim he triggers strange dreams in his house. Plants wither in his presence, and a neighborhood cat disappeared shortly after following him.

A journey to the reservation leads to an encounter with Mukwooru. He reveals that Elias was marked at birth and abandoned according to an ancient rite. His survival disrupted the natural order. The tribe believes the child attracts the Wendigo through him. They demand that a purification ritual be performed in the mountains, or that Elias be entrusted to the spirits to decide his fate.

The Characters can also find an old scout from Fort Eldridge. He recounts a similar case from years earlier. A child taken in by settlers was followed by disasters: unexplained deaths, illnesses, and the disappearance of game. The cycle seems to be repeating itself.

By consulting the tribe's elders, the Characters learn that the separation ritual can be repeated or undone through a complex, rarely practiced ceremony. Another approach is to demonstrate that Elias is not bound to the spirit by confronting him with symbols or places that tradition considers indicative of malevolent influence (such as a broken salt circle, a purification totem, or spirit-marked wood) in the hope that he will react or that the truth will be revealed. A trial could be organized to convince Mukwooru.

Several approaches are available to the Characters: returning Elias to the tribe, organizing a collective ritual, or challenging superstition by confronting the omens to reality.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters calm the situation and negotiate a ritual acceptable to the tribe, Elias can live. Mukwooru agrees to spare Elias on the condition that he be placed in his care. He invokes an ancient right of hospitality: as long as he lives under the shaman's protection as an apprentice, Elias will no longer be seen as a threat, but as a spirit in training. The connection with the Wendigo may weaken over time, as he learns to control his being. Peace is maintained, but the child must leave his adoptive family, which breaks the Harpers' hearts.

If they refuse any spiritual solution, fear takes hold. Livestock fall ill, people murmur prayers. Strange incidents multiply. The child becomes an outcast. His

life is in danger.

If the Characters fail to act or to convince the tribe, a confrontation erupts. Violence spreads, and Dead Man's Pass becomes a symbol of doom. Survivors flee or remain haunted.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the first provocations fly between the two sides. Some call for taking up arms.

After 60 minutes of play with no progress, an altercation breaks out. A threat or a sudden movement throws everything into disarray. The tension is at its peak.

After 90 minutes, a gunshot rings out. A man falls dead. Chaos ensues.

Oil, and a Missing Teacher in Dead Man's Pass

The facts for the Teller

Thomas Welles, the schoolteacher from Dead Man's Pass, had been conducting discreet geological research for several months. Officially for educational purposes, his studies were in reality aimed at confirming the presence of oil in the region's subsoil. He had observed intriguing signs: black deposits in wells, unusual odors in riverbeds after floods. To test his hypothesis, he partnered with Benjamin Harcourt, an industrialist from the East Coast, who was visiting discreetly. Harcourt, sensing enormous potential, financed Welles's research in exchange for a promise of secrecy.

But this discretion wasn't enough. Welles's repeated absences, his changes in habits, and his sudden interest in the lands to the north aroused suspicion. Ezra P. Wilkinson, the all-powerful banker in Dead Man's Pass, sensed that something was slipping out of his control. He knew of Harcourt by reputation and feared that a drilling project would end the mining hegemony he maintained.

Three days before the start of the story, Welles disappears after being kidnapped by men in Wilkinson's employ. His horse remains in the stable, his house is untouched, but an annotated map found on his desk marks specific areas in the hills. A young rancher claims to have seen riders escorting a bound man out of town at dusk. Rumors fly: escape, kidnapping, accident... but no one dares speak of it too openly.

Sheriff John Carter, weary but clear-headed, doesn't believe it was a voluntary disappearance. He suspects a staged intervention. Wilkinson is pressuring everyone to close the case. Harcourt is nowhere to be found.

Intro for the players

Silence reigns around the closed school. For three days, no one has seen Thomas Welles. The sun beats down on the closed shutters, and dust accumulates on the steps. The air feels heavy.

At the sheriff's office, John Carter greets you with a somber expression.

"Did you hear? The schoolteacher has disappeared. He's not the kind of man you'd run into at a saloon or on the roads. But for some time now, he'd been searching the earth like a gold prospector. And he's probably found something."

He shows you a hand-scrawled map. Several crosses encircle areas to the north.

"A kid told me he saw him studying this the day before he disappeared. Then nothing. Not a word, not a message. His horse stayed. His house is in order. And people are starting to ask questions... or to make answers disappear. It smells like oil and gunpowder."

"Will you help me investigate Welles' disappearance? I'd rather you find him than Wilkinson's men, or worse. If you agree, and he's still alive, you'll decide what to do next. And if he's not... we'll have to find out who tried to silence him."

Resolution

The characters can investigate various locations: the school, Welles's house, the hotel where he met Harcourt, the stables, and the hills marked on the map. They quickly discover that Welles was secretly working with a former prospector, Jedediah "Goldtooth" Jackson, who helped him analyze the samples. Jackson can confirm that Welles seemed convinced he had located a viable oilfield.

Some witnesses mention a group of recently arrived strangers staying in an abandoned outbuilding of the sawmill. Monitoring their movements reveals that they discreetly leave town at nightfall. By piecing together clues and following horse tracks, the Characters identify an old smuggling route leading to a remote canyon. There, they discover a makeshift camp guarded by several mercenaries. Welles is being held, bound but alive, in a rudimentary shack. The group's leader is waiting for a signal from Wilkinson to execute him. One of the men, Caleb Bowers, has doubts about the mission and may be susceptible to influence.

If the Characters free Welles, he reveals to them that the soil of Dead Man's Pass contains a medium-sized oil deposit, large enough to attract covetous eyes.

Once freed, several paths open up: escorting him out of the city, convincing Harcourt to protect him, or publishing the results on the spot. But Wilkinson doesn't remain passive. If the Characters are identified, they become targets.

Criteria for success or failure

If Welles is rescued and his discovery passed on, Dead Man's Pass enters a new era. Investors arrive, the mines decline, and an economic war looms. Wilkinson loses power but retains influence. The balance of power is disrupted, and the town is about to change drastically.

If Welles remains in town, protected by the Characters, tensions rise. Wilkinson mobilizes his men and puts pressure on the authorities. Merchants and miners take sides, fueling tensions and divisions. Unexpected support may emerge, but betrayals are just as likely.

If Welles dies, the secret disappears with him. Wilkinson tightens his grip. The Characters are seen as a nuisance. They risk death or exile. Welles's notes are destroyed. Hope dies.

If a mistake is made, the Characters can be accused of complicity. They become

fugitives, hunted by Wilkinson and his allies. The truth remains buried.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters identify the first witnesses and locations to search. The first rumors point to Wilkinson. Some speak of a man seen tied up.

After 60 minutes, the Characters reconstruct Welles' movements. They discover the trail leading to the hills and the mercenaries. A suspicious encampment is mentioned by a concerned scout.

After 90 minutes, the camp is located. The assault or infiltration is organized. Bowers may hesitate to end Welles, the tension is rising.

The False Accusation

The facts for the Teller

During the night, Thomas Caldwell, an inspector with the Union Pacific Railroad, is found dead in an alley behind the Silver Spur. His body has a bullet wound in the chest, a revolver lies on the floor, and a blood-soaked waitress's apron suggests the saloon's involvement. Alerted by Joshua Lorne, a miner, Sheriff John Carter arrests Mary, the saloon's owner.

But the scene was staged. Caldwell was actually killed elsewhere, in a house owned by the railroad company. He was investigating a fraud ring orchestrated by Ezra P. Wilkinson, the banker. Wilkinson, aided by Jedediah "Goldtooth" Jackson, a notorious smuggler, had Caldwell murdered to prevent him from passing his findings on to federal authorities. Jackson and his men moved the body and fabricated a scene involving Mary.

The incriminating testimonies are false. Joshua Lorne, under pressure from Jackson, claims to have seen Mary flee the scene. Lucy Harper, a bank employee and Wilkinson's accomplice, maintains that Mary had incurred debts and that Caldwell had come to collect them. It's all fabricated. Mary never had any debts, but if she is found guilty, Wilkinson will be able to get his hands on the Silver Spur at a bargain price.

Meanwhile, Wilkinson and Jackson are fueling tensions. They bribe prominent figures and manipulate the crowd. A summary execution is being planned, under the guise of mob justice. Sheriff Carter, who suspects a setup but lacks sufficient evidence to act openly, discreetly enlists the Characters' help to uncover the truth.

Mary, locked in a cell, proclaims her innocence but refuses to flee. She knows that leaving would only worsen her situation. Other witnesses, such as Doc Mayfield or Jedediah Jackson himself, could be approached by the Characters, but every action risks being observed by Wilkinson's henchmen. If no one intervenes in time, Mary will be hanged. Wilkinson will tighten his grip on the town, and the Caldwell investigation will die with it.

Intro for the players

Day is barely breaking over Dead Man's Pass. A worried crowd is gathering in front of the sheriff's office. Rumors are circulating about murder, arrest, and hanging.

Sheriff Carter ushers you in. His office is messy, his gaze tired.

"Mary Whitmore is accused of killing a Union Pacific inspector. It all seems too obvious. I don't believe it."

He shows you the depositions.

"Someone wants her dead, and fast. Can you help me with this?"

Outside, a cry: "Hang her!"

The sheriff stands up.

"If she is guilty, she will be tried. But I don't want to hang an innocent woman!"

Jedediah Jackson enters with three men.

"Carter, people are tired of waiting."

The sheriff isn't responding. It all depends on you.

Resolution

To save Mary, the Characters must expose the deception. They must investigate quickly and discreetly, as Wilkinson's allies are everywhere. The situation is tense, and witnesses can be intimidated or bribed at any moment.

The first line of inquiry is Caldwell's body. A visit to Doc Mayfield reveals that the wound doesn't match the revolver found. The caliber and angle are inconsistent. Red mud on his boots suggests another location, likely a house belonging to the railroad company. If the Characters press him, Doc can also reveal that the body was unusually rigid for such a short time, evidence that it was moved several hours after death.

Second lead: the witnesses. Joshua Lorne can be turned, either under pressure or by offering him protection. He will admit that Jackson forced him to lie, but he will demand a guarantee for his safety. Lucy Harper possesses falsified internal documents. A discreet search of her office or a confrontation could reveal the manipulation, especially if the Characters obtain copies or find evidence that she has falsified other accounts for Wilkinson.

By retracing Caldwell's last movements, the Characters can identify an abandoned house in the suburbs. Inside: shell casings, signs of a struggle, and dried blood. It becomes clear that the man was killed here and then transported. An impact mark on the wall and the presence of a bloodstained glove provide irrefutable proof that the scene at the Silver Spur was staged.

Once the evidence is gathered, the Characters must act quickly. They can try to convince Carter, publicly present the evidence, or directly confront Wilkinson and Jackson. The latter will try to block any initiative: propaganda, pressure on Carter, or even physical aggression. The risk of a riot is real, especially if the crowd learns that evidence is being concealed.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters prove Mary's innocence in time, she is released and a trial is initiated. Wilkinson and Jackson are discredited, the town returns to a semblance of calm, and Mary keeps the Silver Spur.

If the evidence is incomplete or delayed, Carter postpones the execution, but the tension remains high. Mary is released under escort, Wilkinson plots his revenge, and the city remains unstable.

If they fail, Mary is hanged, Wilkinson takes control of the saloon, and fear grips Dead Man's Pass. The characters become suspects or must flee to survive.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, Sheriff Carter explains the situation and invites the Characters to get involved. They can interview the first witnesses and investigate the crime scene.

After 60 minutes into the game, the first doubts begin to surface. Witnesses start to lose faith, inconsistencies emerge, and the Characters discover disturbing elements. The crowd becomes more menacing.

After 90 minutes, the evidence is converging. The true location of the murder is identified, but Jackson tries to exert pressure. Citizen groups demand an immediate execution. Any confrontation becomes risky.



The Curse of the Pioneers

The facts for the Teller

The village of Hollow Creek, a day's ride from Dead Man's Pass, was found deserted by a patrolling scout. The houses were intact, the rations still in place, the fires extinguished but recently lit. Yet, the village was frozen in time. The inhabitants were petrified, their bodies stiff, their features contorted by fear. Two sheriff's deputies sent to investigate never returned. Only their horses came back, terrified. Since then, rumors of a curse have spread, and fear has gripped the town.

A few months earlier, an itinerant preacher named Elias Crowley had been welcomed to Hollow Creek. Charismatic and fervent, he claimed to have received a divine revelation: the valley's lands were cursed. He asserted that only an act of spiritual purification could prevent the coming of a great evil. The pioneers, initially skeptical, eventually listened to him, driven to despair by poor harvests, disease, and the deaths of several children.

Crowley had discovered an ancient cave not far from the village, containing tablets engraved with forgotten symbols, predating the Paiute presence in the region. He claimed these were sacred writings that allowed him to communicate with a higher power. In reality, they were from a forbidden rite linked to a supernatural entity, long imprisoned in an outerdimensional space. Obsessed with his "awakening", Crowley broke the seal that held the entity captive.

During its final ritual, a breach was opened. The entity silently invaded Hollow Creek, freezing its inhabitants in place, their souls trapped in a spectral limbo. Crowley was transformed: his body is partially intangible, his mind unstable. He still wanders the cave, repeating fragments of prayers, tormented by the voices of the villagers he condemned.

If no one acts, the breach will continue to widen. The first signs are already appearing at Dead Man's Pass: animated reflections in the hot air, voices in the wind, motionless silhouettes in the shadows. The passage is unstable, and the entity's presence is spreading.

Intro for the players

A rider arrives hastily at Dead Man's Pass. Ben McCall, a well-known scout, disembarks, his gaze haunted. He tells the sheriff he found Hollow Creek deserted, its inhabitants frozen, as if paralyzed by fear. No sign of a fight. No survivors. "They are standing, frozen, their eyes wide open..."

John Carter, visibly worried, signals to the Characters to follow him aside. He lowers his voice.

"I've already sent two men. They never came back. Their horses returned alone,

covered in foam."

He pauses, looks at the street with a somber eye.

"I don't have the resources to send any more deputies. But if you agree to go, I can promise you a reward, and all the recognition Dead Man's Pass can offer. Find out what happened. And if it's dangerous... stop it from reaching us."

Resolution

The Characters discover Hollow Creek frozen in a spectral silence. The villagers are petrified mid-action: one raises an axe, another clutches a child, a third kneels, hands clasped. Their hard, gray skin seems mineral. As night falls, a bluish halo surrounds them, and a cold mist descends upon the village.

The prayer house contains symbols carved in wood, forming a partially erased circle. Notes signed "E. Crowley" refer to an ancient sanctuary in the hills, "where spirits speak through stone."

Following these directions, the Characters find a path leading to a cave hidden in the rocks. The air is icy, the walls are covered with unknown symbols, and a faint spectral light flickers between the stones.

Crowley wanders through the cave. His translucent body oscillates between materiality and absence. He mutters broken prayers, staring at the walls or speaking in hushed tones to those who are absent. He does not react to speech, but he senses hostility: he becomes agitated at the approach of ritual symbols or if anyone tries to interact with the breach.

Touching Crowley has no physical effect: the contact passes through his body, causing intense cold and a brief vision of nothingness. It does not injure but profoundly disturbs the senses: dizziness, silence, confusion. His silhouette becomes difficult to follow, gliding from one point to another.

To close the breach, the Characters must study the symbols and complete the circle with a mixture of ash and ritual dust. Meanwhile, others must repel Crowley with sacred objects or light. Outside the circle, his connection to the entity weakens.

If the ritual succeeds, the breach closes. The souls are freed, and Crowley disappears. Otherwise, it remains open, and the curse spreads.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to close the breach, the entity is repelled. The souls are freed, and Crowley disappears. Hollow Creek remains empty but harmless. The Characters are either welcomed as saviors or viewed with fear, depending on how they handled the ritual and interacted with the forces present.

If the ritual fails, the breach remains open. Signs of the curse appear in Dead

Man’s Pass, residents disappear, and fear takes hold. The village becomes a volatile hotbed.

If the Characters give up or flee, the breach slowly widens. The valley becomes cursed, and people flee the city.

If they choose to destroy the cave, the breach is physically sealed but not closed. The site remains active and dangerous, a gateway between worlds.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters discover the frozen bodies in Hollow Creek and spot the first traces of the ritual in the prayer house. The light fades abnormally quickly, and an icy mist settles between the buildings.

After 60 minutes, the Characters reach the cave. There, they find the engraved inscriptions and sense Crowley's unstable presence. The walls vibrate slightly, and whispers can be heard in the darkness.

After 90 minutes, the entity's influence becomes tangible. The lights flicker, Crowley becomes more aggressive, and the breach's energy disrupts any attempt to close it. If nothing is done, the curse will become uncontrollable.

The Abandoned Mine

The facts for the Teller

North of Dead Man's Pass, nestled in the foothills of the Pine Ridge, an old silver mine known as Silver Sky had been abandoned for nearly twenty years after a collapse that claimed the lives of several miners. Since then, the site had remained untouched, considered dangerous and cursed by some of the village elders. Yet, under increasing pressure from the demand for precious metals, the Prospectors' Syndicate, led by the powerful and influential Caleb Hornwright, decided to reopen the mine, hoping to revive mining activity in the region.

No sooner had the first tunnels been cleared than the miners discovered ancient artifacts: pottery, tools, engraved symbols, and stone carvings. These objects were quickly identified by Chogan Black Bear as sacred Paiute relics, remnants of an ancient burial sanctuary embedded deep within the mountain. Chogan and his spiritual council were adamant: the mine was not simply a silver deposit, but a sacred place, guardian of the memory and spirits of their people.

The news spread quickly. The Syndicate, driven by greed and economic pressure, refused to halt operations. Caleb Hornwright, calculating, claimed that these were merely ancient artifacts of no real value and that no official treaty protected the Paiute people on these lands. However, several miners were uneasy about these discoveries, and some quietly abandoned the site after reporting strange phenomena: whispers in the dark, furtive figures, echoes of unknown voices, and tools being moved without explanation.

Chogan, worried, tries to halt the mining operations through diplomatic channels, going through Sheriff John Carter and the authorities at Dead Man's Pass. But the Syndicate is supported by several local notables and merchants who hope to profit from the mining revival. Some settlers and prospectors, increasingly nervous, also fear escalation and worry that Paiute intervention could degenerate into open warfare.

Caleb Hornwright, is considering securing the mine by force, recruiting mercenaries to protect the site and intimidate the local people. Behind the scenes, some members of the Syndicate are secretly hoping that Chogan and his people, provoked, will initiate hostilities, thus legitimizing the permanent appropriation of the site and the expulsion of the Paiutes from the surrounding valleys.

Tensions are running high. If nothing is done, conflict is inevitable. The desperate Paiutes are ready to defend their sanctuary, even at the cost of bloodshed, and the prospectors are armed and convinced they are acting in the best interests of Dead Man's Pass. The situation could change in an instant.

Intro for the players

For the past few days, the town has been buzzing with anxiety. Miners are quietly leaving Dead Man's Pass, refusing to return to Silver Sky, the old mine the Syndicate has just reopened. Conversations in the saloon revolve around rumors of strange discoveries: ancient pottery, mysterious engravings, and even carefully arranged bones.

In the main square, Chogan Black Bear is having a serious discussion with Sheriff John Carter, under the watchful eyes of a few curious onlookers.

"This is a sacred place. If you desecrate it further, the spirits will hurt you", Chogan warned gravely.

Facing him, Caleb Hornwright, flanked by several prospectors and notables, displays a contemptuous smile.

"These are just rocks and trinkets from savages. This mine is the future of Dead Man's Pass."

Murmurs ripple through the crowd. Some fear what might happen if the work continues, others hope for the benefits of a new rush for silver.

The mine is a few hours away by horse, but time is running out. If no one acts quickly, the tension risks escalating into open conflict.

Resolution

The characters will have to find a way to prevent the escalation without triggering a bloodbath. Several options are available to them.

Investigating the mine, they are able to confirm that the site was indeed an ancestral sanctuary: they find burial chambers, ceremonial artifacts, and the remains of an altar dedicated to the spirits of the desert. Some prospectors left the mine upon learning the truth, especially after witnessing the strange phenomena that intensified there at night.

They may try to convince the sheriff and some prominent citizens to temporarily halt mining operations, notably by revealing the scale of the site and the risks of a Paiute uprising. Other characters may seek to infiltrate the Syndicate to sow discord, as some members are beginning to question Hornwright's brutal methods.

If Caleb Hornwright feels his project is threatened, he may try to hire mercenaries to force the passage, or even deliberately provoke a bloody incident to justify the expulsion of the Natives.

The peaceful solution lies in the official recognition of the site as sacred land, negotiated with the administration of Fort Eldridge or other authority figures capable of exerting pressure on the Syndicate. This path is difficult, but not impossible if the Characters gather sufficient evidence and allies.

If no action is taken, or if the Characters fail, conflict will erupt. The Paiutes will attack to protect the sanctuary, and the prospectors will retaliate with the help of armed men. The mine will be stained with blood, and the valley will forever bear the mark of this betrayal.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to convince the Syndicate or obtain official recognition of the sacred site, the mine will be sealed, and peace preserved, even if some prospectors and traders harbor resentment. Relations between the Paiutes and settlers will improve.

If the Characters fail but limit the damage by avoiding a massive confrontation, the sanctuary will be partially protected, but the region will remain tense, and the fragile balance could easily collapse.

If no action is taken or negotiations fail completely, war breaks out. The valley becomes the scene of a brutal confrontation. The Paiutes suffer heavy losses, but also inflict damage on the prospectors. The mine is exploited nonetheless, but at what cost: murder, curses, and terror grip the inhabitants of Dead Man's Pass.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters learn of the mine's reopening and the discovery of sacred artifacts. Rumors circulate in Dead Man's Pass, and the first tensions are palpable.

After 60 minutes, an investigation takes place in the mine and around the town. The first signs of dissension within the Syndicate emerge. The Characters can gather evidence and attempt to influence the local dignitaries or the miners.

After 90 minutes, attempts at negotiation or direct intervention. Hornwright reinforces his position or shows his intention to resort to force.



The Duel at Dawn

The facts for the Teller

For the past few weeks, Dead Man's Pass has been buzzing with rumors: Beauregard Finch, a former Confederate captain known for his poor discipline and his duels, has returned. He left ten years ago after the fall of the Confederate States, leaving behind debts, grudges, and a few dead bodies. His return, initially discreet, quickly attracts attention: in a faded uniform, he roams the city in search of Victor Langley, an influential banker in the local notables.

What the public doesn't yet know is that Finch and Langley share a tragic past. During the war, Langley, who was a Confederate army supply commissioner, embezzled gold and supplies, causing the deaths of soldiers under Finch's command. Finch, discovering the treachery, deserted to try and save his men, but was unable to prevent the massacre of his company. Since then, he has harbored a deep-seated hatred for Langley.

Finch returned to demand retribution and challenged Langley to a duel, according to the Confederate code, demanding a dawn confrontation in the center of Dead Man's Pass. Although Sheriff John Carter tried to prevent escalation, Langley accepted, confident that his influence would protect him.

But behind this duel lies a greater stake. A stranger dressed in black, who has been keeping a low profile for several days, watches the scene. This lone rider, Mr. Blackthorn, is a soul hunter sent by an occult society. He is there to judge Finch and Langley, waiting for one of them to succumb to violence or cowardice so he can claim their soul.

Sheriff Carter fears that the event will definitively jeopardize the town's fragile stability, already strained by tensions between the notables, the Ranchers' Syndicate, and recent incidents on neighboring ranches. If the duel takes place the consequences will extend far beyond a simple confrontation between two men.

Intro for the players

Late this afternoon, an unusual tension hangs over Dead Man's Pass. In the town square, Sheriff John Carter is having a heated exchange with two councilors, while a crowd gathers in front of the saloon: a note signed Beauregard Finch announces a duel at dawn against Victor Langley.

The townspeople are in turmoil. Some remember Finch as a feared officer, others speak of the power of Langley the banker. The duel is divisive: archaic for some, just for others.

A man dressed in black is causing a stir. Discreetly, he has been observing Finch for several days. Seen near the church or talking with the elders, his presence is

fueling all sorts of rumors.

Everyone seems to be waiting for someone to take action.

Resolution

The Characters can try to sabotage the duel by convincing one of the duelists to back down, or by gathering evidence of Langley's past betrayal to turn public opinion against him. If they attempt to question Finch or Langley, they will discover that each remains true to their version of events, one demanding justice, the other denying any involvement in the past.

If the Characters investigate further, they may discover that Finch possesses a campaign journal detailing Langley's betrayal, and also that a faction within the notables has a vested interest in suppressing this story. The mysterious Mr. Blackthorn, meanwhile, always seems to appear where tensions are highest, silently observing and never intervening.

The Characters can attempt to publicly reveal the truth before dawn, thereby shattering Langley's honor or causing Finch to back down, thus calming the situation. But if they fail or do nothing, the duel will take place.

If Finch wins, the notables will demand revenge, triggering an open crisis. If Langley wins public opinion will turn against him, suspecting a rigged duel, and the notables' legitimacy will be undermined. In any case, Mr. Blackthorn will get what he came for, and one of the two men will have his soul consumed by this enigmatic being. (See Blackthorn's description below)

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to prevent the duel, either by revealing the truth or by easing tensions, the stability of Dead Man's Pass is preserved. Finch leaves town, and Langley, though disgraced, retains his influence, albeit diminished.

If the duel takes place, but the Characters manage to limit its consequences (by controlling the population or by partially revealing the notables' maneuvers) the unrest is contained, but the atmosphere remains tense and permanently marked by this confrontation.

If the Characters fail or choose not to intervene, the duel will escalate. Regardless of the victor, the repercussions will be severe: riots, settling of scores, and open divisions within the city. Furthermore, Mr. Blackthorn's presence and intervention will leave a mark that some in the city will perceive as a bad omen.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters become aware of the announced duel and notice the growing tensions in the city, marked by a divided population and an

increasingly tense atmosphere.

After 60 minutes, they investigate Finch and Langley's past, discover the campaign journal, and catch their first glimpse of Mr. Blackthorn, prowling the streets or near the cemetery.

After 90 minutes, the notables' pressure intensifies as the Characters must decide whether to intervene to prevent the duel or limit its consequences.

Mr. Blackthorn, Soul Hunter

Mr. Blackthorn is a discreet man, dressed in a long, dusty black coat, a wide-brimmed dark hat, and always wearing gloves. His upright posture, pale face with its fixed features, and piercing gray eyes give him an unsettling presence. He walks calmly, silently, and those who pass him often have the strange impression that he leaves no trace behind him.

Cold and distant by nature, Blackthorn never loses his temper and speaks with the detachment of someone from another world. His scrutinizing gaze often makes people uneasy, a feeling amplified by his frequent presence at the worst moments. His words, few and carefully chosen, are sometimes tinged with a world-weary fatalism, but never become aggressive. He neither laughs nor smiles, and remains courteous, even when challenged.

No one in Dead Man’s Pass truly knows this man. Some claim to have seen him once in other towns, just before some tragedy or disaster struck. These memories remain hazy, almost uncertain, as if time itself were reluctant to record his presence. To most of the locals, he is just another stranger, but the more observant sense that he is not simply a traveler.

In reality, Blackthorn serves a secret society known as the Brotherhood of Accountants, tasked with collecting the souls of those whose moral debts have become irredeemable. He never intervenes directly, but waits for the moments when humanity's own sins condemn them. His role is not to judge or influence, but to wait, relentlessly, for the weight of choices leading to the inevitable.

Behind his impassive facade, Blackthorn hides a disturbing power, of which the inhabitants only have a suspicion when they notice that he always seems to be present when death strikes without warning. Some elders of the desert whisper that he may no longer be entirely human.

Blackthorn does not kill and never forces the hand of his targets. His role is not that of an executioner, but of a collector. When an act of betrayal, cowardice, or an irredeemable crime renders a soul vulnerable, his mere presence is enough. If he is close enough, a single glance at the moment of fall or death is enough to detach the soul. The instant is imperceptible: the victim dies ordinarily (from a bullet, a fall, a heart attack) but the soul is drawn into Blackthorn's shadow, without a cry or a struggle.

This collection sometimes leaves a subtle clue: an icy chill in the air, a barely audible whisper in the wind, or the sensation, for the most sensitive, of an immediate emptiness in the room or the street.

The souls thus harvested are not destroyed but brought to the Brotherhood of Accountants, to which Blackthorn is connected. Their exact destination remains unknown, even to those familiar with this occult society. Some elders claim they are weighed, categorized, or used in dark rituals to preserve a forgotten cosmic balance. Others believe they are simply held in a limbo, deprived of judgment, forgiveness, and rest.

Blackthorn needs no ceremony, object, or preparation: his mere presence suffices, provided the guilty party has sealed their fate through their actions. However, he can do nothing against the innocent or against those who accept their sins without attempting to escape them, even in the face of death. These souls elude him.

Blessings, weapons or amulets have no effect on him, unless they come from ancient rites capable of acting on the order of souls, a rare, almost extinct knowledge, transmitted by certain indigenous traditions or forgotten secret societies.

Blackthorn is human, and mortal : P4 I5 T&I 6.



Ambush at Fort Eldridge

The facts for the Teller

North of Dead Man’s Pass, the small military outpost of Fort Eldridge has recently been placed on alert to monitor the border valleys, due to rising tensions between settlers, traders, and Indigenous groups. Captain Thomas Eldridge, a rigid but loyal veteran, commands about twenty men. Among them are young, inexperienced recruits and a few more zealous officers, notably Lieutenant Granger, an inflexible man convinced that only force can guarantee order.

Two days earlier, a patrol led by Eldridge had been attacked in a narrow canyon east of the fort. The ambush left several soldiers wounded, and one died of his injuries that night. The attackers wore clothing imitating that of Paiute warriors, but in a crude manner: clumsy paint jobs, feathers haphazardly sewn onto military jackets, and settler boots crudely concealed under ill-fitting furs. Eldridge, a man of action, immediately perceived inconsistencies and doubted the authenticity of these attackers.

In reality, the attack was orchestrated by a band of anonymous mercenaries linked to a group of speculators seeking to seize land or weaken the military presence for their own gain. Their scheme aimed to frame the Paiutes, provoke a war, and thus create a climate favorable to their interests. Those responsible vanished without a trace, leaving behind a deliberately chaotic scene.

Despite the captain's doubts, Lieutenant Granger immediately raised the alarm throughout the region, claiming that the Paiutes had broken the fragile peace agreement. He demanded swift retaliation. This decisive stance quickly inflamed passions in the isolated farms and neighboring villages. Settlers began organizing for self-defense or revenge, while fear grew among the most vulnerable. Pre-existing racial and territorial tensions were once again reignited.

The Paiute tribe, settled further north, categorically denied any involvement in the attack. Their chief sent a respected emissary, Tahu, a man of his word and a peacemaker, to ease tensions and plead their innocence before the fort's command. Although he speaks calmly and clearly, Tahu knows this will not be enough to overcome the prevailing anger and prejudice. He is willing to cooperate, but he fears his voice will be silenced.

The region is on the brink of conflagration: a word, an action, or a misstep could ignite a bloody war. Time is running out, and the Characters may be the only ones capable of preventing the worst.

Intro for the players

The air is heavy in Dead Man's Pass. Rumors of an ambush against a Fort Eldridge patrol are spreading, and some clues point to an attack carried out by Paiutes. Yet, several details are troubling, and nothing allows for a definitive conclusion.

Sheriff John Carter has sent you a message. He doesn't believe the Paiutes are guilty, but his voice is drowned out by the louder calls for vengeance. He hopes you will agree to conduct your own investigation, free from the local prejudices and power struggles. You are under no obligation to do so, but if you decide to act, you may be the only ones who can prevent a conflict with irreversible consequences.

Resolution

The Characters can travel to Fort Eldridge to observe the atmosphere, question the soldiers, and speak with Captain Eldridge. Although deeply affected by the events, the Captain remains open to dialogue. He doubts the Paiutes' guilt but is under intense internal pressure. Lieutenant Granger makes no secret of his impatience and tries to rally other officers to a swift intervention.

By questioning the wounded or consulting reports, the Characters can confirm certain inconsistencies in the official account. Upon visiting the site of the ambush, they discover suspicious elements: traces of colonial boots, the remains of an abandoned horse-drawn carriage, and dummy objects. Everything points to a crude setup intended to falsely portray the Paiutes.

Meanwhile, their investigation in town might lead them to a merchant who recently sold equipment to a shady group, or to an informant who saw suspicious men leaving Dead Man’s Pass heading towards the canyon. Gradually, a picture emerges: a band of mercenaries or agitators orchestrated this attack to provoke a war, hoping to profit from it by seizing land or weakening the fort's authority.

The Characters can then try to rally credible witnesses, gather evidence, and convince Eldridge to suspend all operations. If they delay or are thwarted, Granger could force the captain's hand and hasten events. A confrontation with the lieutenant or his supporters is a possibility. Everything will depend on the Characters' ability to uncover the truth and neutralize the warmongers.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters succeed in exposing the deception and convincing Captain Eldridge to wait, war is averted. The fort withdraws, relations with the tribe are eased, and Tahu departs gratefully. The tension gradually subsides.

If the evidence is discovered too late, a skirmish ensues, resulting in injuries on both sides, but the conflict remains contained. Military authorities remain

suspicious, and the Paiutes demand reparations.

If the evidence is insufficient or ignored, Granger obtains authorization or takes the initiative to strike. Fighting breaks out, losses are heavy, and war ensues. Fort Eldridge becomes the symbol of an avoidable disaster, and hatred takes deep root.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters are informed of the attack, meet Sheriff Carter, and learn about the stakes. They begin to gather initial testimonies and organize their movement.

After 60 minutes, they investigate the ambush site, discover disturbing evidence, encounter Tahu, and follow the trail of the real culprits through the accumulated clues.

After 90 minutes, they return to the fort to confront Eldridge, resist Granger's pressure, and try to stop the downward spiral. The ultimatum is approaching, and every decision could tip the balance between peace and war.

The Specter of the Itinerant Judge

The facts for the Teller

Ambrose Greely was a traveling judge, famous throughout the West for his severity and final judgments. Feared by outlaws and corrupt officials alike, he rode through isolated towns on horseback, holding court in saloons or deserted churches, always dressed in black. He arrived in Dead Man's Pass a week ago, lodging in a spartan room above the telegraph office, with the stated purpose of judging several pending cases: land disputes, abuses of power, and the controversial case of Billy Murphy, a young man recently arrested for assaulting a local notable.

Three days after his arrival, Greely was found dead, his skull fractured, at the front of the old abandoned jail. Officially, he had fallen down a flight of stairs, but the circumstances are murky. His briefcase was missing. No witnesses came forward. Sheriff John Carter, visibly embarrassed, closed the case as an accident, under pressure from the Syndicate of Notables.

In reality, Greely was murdered by two henchmen working for Elias Dorr, a very influential landowner. Dorr feared that Greely, already possessing evidence against him, would deliver a damning verdict. Before the murder, Dorr had Billy Murphy released on bail thanks to a false witness, to divert attention from the case and muddy the waters by making him a suspect.

Since then, every night, a spectral figure appears near the abandoned courthouse. Horses panic at nightfall, dogs howl, and a dull dread grips the town. The town's leading citizens no longer venture out after dark, and even the saloon closes early. Those who have glimpsed it describe an imposing figure draped in a black robe, holding a tarnished gavel, its face masked by a cold, frozen shadow.

The specter is immaterial: it cannot be touched or physically harmed, and weapons pass through it without effect. It cannot speak distinctly but whispers names in an icy breath, audible only to those concerned. It does not pass through walls or closed doors, but moves silently through open streets and buildings. Although it has not yet harmed anyone, its presence grows heavier each night. For now, it cannot inflict direct physical injury: any attempt to confront or contain it fails, blows passing through it without effect. However certain signs (shattered glass, flickering flames, frozen clocks) suggest that it is gradually influencing matter. It could become capable of more violent interactions, such as starting fires or causing accidents.

Sheriff Carter, though skeptical, acknowledges that something is troubling the town. An elderly woman, a former court clerk named Abigail Monroe, approaches the Characters. She confides her suspicions about Elias Dorr and believes the ghost is demanding justice.

Intro for the players

Night has fallen on Dead Man's Pass. A chill runs through the streets, windows close, lamps go out earlier than usual. You arrive in a city on the brink of collapse. It is said that a judge died here a few days ago, and that since then, his ghost returns every night, calling to those he deems guilty.

One morning, an elderly woman named Abigail Monroe approaches you discreetly. She claims the town is on trial, and the judge's spirit will not find peace until the truth is revealed. She begs you to investigate. You are free to refuse, but if she is right, the specter will not cease until the true culprit is identified.

Resolution

The Characters can begin by investigating the judge's death: examining the abandoned jail, consulting the records, and questioning witnesses who saw him in his final days. The sheriff remains evasive, mentioning an accident but refusing to answer certain questions. The town doctor privately admits that the injuries do not correspond to a fall.

If the Characters question Billy Murphy, they discover a troubled young man, torn between fear and resentment. He denies any involvement but hints that he has been caught up in matters beyond his control.

By cross-referencing the doctor's statements, the sheriff's absences, the dubious circumstances of Murphy's release, and certain testimonies from servants working for Elias Dorr, the Characters can trace the murder back to its true mastermind. Dorr, whom Greely was about to charge with extortion and witness tampering, then appears to be the primary beneficiary. Several indirect witnesses, servants or employees, can provide information if the Characters gain their trust.

If the evidence is gathered and made public, or if the culprit's name is officially proclaimed where the specter appears, the apparition vanishes, leaving a peaceful silence. If the Characters choose to ignore the call or accuse an innocent person, the manifestations intensify, the city descends into panic as the specter becomes more aggressive, shattering windows and lanterns, and starting fires.

Another possibility is to help the specter judge the guilty himself by bringing them to the scene, but this involves giving in to a form of occult justice, with unpredictable consequences for the city.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters reveal the name of the person who ordered the murder and confront him publicly (Dorr), the apparition ceases, and the town returns to calm. The sheriff is forced to act, and the Syndicate loses its influence. Abigail

thanks the Characters, and an atmosphere of relief settles in.

If the Characters identify the culprit but fail to have them arrested or brought to justice, the specter disappears eventually but the population remains divided. Some speak of justice served, others of unfinished revenge. The city's equilibrium remains fragile.

If the Characters either fail to uncover the truth or to convince anyone, the specter returns night after night, becoming more menacing. Many residents flee the town, businesses collapse, and Dead Man's Pass becomes a ghost town in every sense of the word.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters hear about the judge's death circumstances and the subsequent nighttime apparitions.

After 60 minutes, they explore the crime scene, interrogate Billy Murphy and discover inconsistencies in the official version.

After 90 minutes, they confront the prominent figures involved, gather the evidence, and must decide whether to take justice into their own hands or reveal the truth publicly.

The Ghost Train

The facts for the Teller

For several weeks, a strange rumor has been circulating among the residents of Dead Man's Pass. Some claim to have seen, in the dead of night, a locomotive wandering along the abandoned tracks of the old railway line. With no visible driver, it crosses the desert in an eerie silence, leaving behind only an icy wind and a spectral whistle. Others insist that dark figures can be glimpsed in the dilapidated carriages, as if invisible passengers were continuing their journey through the void.

Incidents are multiplying. A supply train rerouted onto a section of the disused track inexplicably derailed after a collision with the apparition, which then vanished. A stagecoach carrying passengers eastward was nearly struck on a railroad crossing that had been unused for years. Fear is beginning to grip people, and the more superstitious whisper that this train track is cursed, carrying vengeance from beyond the grave.

Behind this legend lies a forgotten tragedy. Ten years ago, a train driver named Ezekiel Morrow was injured in a derailment on this line. The accident was caused by poor track quality and cost-cutting measures on safety equipment such as brakes and wheel block anti-torsion bars, and could not have been avoided by the driver. Wrongfully accused of causing the accident through negligence, he was subsequently lynched by an angry mob before he could prove his innocence. His body was buried in the desert without any markings, and since then, disturbing signs suggest that his spirit has never left the railway. Some say his ghost still haunts the tracks, seeking to make those who condemned him without evidence pay.

The Characters are hired to investigate these events and uncover the truth behind this supernatural phenomenon. Whether working for Sheriff Carter, anxious to quell the panic, or a wealthy mine owner seeking to secure his trade routes, they must solve the mystery before more victims are added to the legend of the ghost train.

Intro for the players

Night has fallen on Dead Man's Pass, and with it, a tension that's hard to ignore. In the saloon, conversations cease as soon as the subject of the train comes up. Some laugh nervously, refusing to believe it, while others discreetly cross themselves, as if to ward off an ancient evil. Mary Whitmore, the owner of the Silver Spur, absently wipes a glass before resting her elbows on the counter.

She observes you for a moment, then leans slightly towards you, her voice lower than usual.

"They say the old Morrow locomotive has returned. That it runs alone at night,

with no one on board, and that those who cross its path never return."

She casts a worried glance towards the street, as if she expects to see the silhouette of a train pass by the window.

"The sheriff would like someone to go and see what's going on. But if I were you, I'd stay away from the tracks once the sun has set."

The air is thick with superstition and unspoken truths. The task awaits you, whether it be to confirm a legend or to prove that it is merely a fabrication.

Resolution

Exploring the old railway line allows the Characters to find disturbing clues. The rails still bear the marks of the derailment that occurred ten years earlier, and some remnants of the wrecked train are still visible, eaten away by rust and the elements. A careful inspection reveals inscriptions etched into the metal, words repeated relentlessly: "Innocent. Vengeance."

By questioning the town's elders, they learn the story of Ezekiel Morrow. His name, once synonymous with shame and incompetence, is now shrouded in silence. Those who were present at his lynching avoid the subject, but a few well-placed drinks can loosen tongues. Some confess that the evidence against him was flimsy, and that his death was hastened more by panic than by justice.

A night spent observing near the tracks allows one to witness the locomotive's appearance, as if emerging from another time, its chimney emitting no smoke and its wheels making no noise on the rails. The image of Ezekiel Morrow is sometimes visible in the moonlight, his empty gaze fixed on those who observe him. He never speaks, but stares at the Characters for long periods with an impassive, reproachful expression. He answers no questions and disappears as soon as anyone tries to approach him.

Direct attacks against the apparition are ineffective: bullets pass through its spectral form without disturbing it. If the Characters persist in this approach, the apparition becomes more aggressive: the train may suddenly appear at full speed, suck the Characters into a freezing blast, or violently hurl nearby objects. These manifestations are not intended to kill, but to drive away or frighten, like an instinctive response to an intrusion.

Communication with Ezekiel is extremely difficult: he doesn't speak, doesn't answer questions, and seems trapped in a spectral cycle. However, he is sensitive to symbolic gestures. An attempt at dialogue during an act of reparation, such as placing a lantern near the derailment site or calling his name as the locomotive appears, can elicit a reaction: a slowing of the train, a change in the specter's demeanor, or a prolonged appearance of his silhouette. This allows the Characters to understand that he perceives their actions, even though a true verbal exchange is impossible.

Confronting him requires understanding his torment and gathering enough evidence to reconstruct the exact circumstances of the accident. The Characters can obtain this information by questioning some elders, searching through municipal or railroad company archives, or inspecting the locomotive's remains to highlight construction or maintenance flaws. Once this evidence is gathered, they must convince a local authority figure such as the sheriff or mayor to make this truth public through an official announcement or a rehabilitation ceremony. If this is accomplished with sufficient fanfare, Ezekiel's spirit finally finds peace and ceases to appear. Conversely, if they attempt to confront him directly without seeking to understand his story, or if they ignore the clues presented to them, the curse intensifies, and the locomotive continues to haunt the nights of Dead Man's Pass.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters discover the truth and clear Ezekiel Morrow's name, the apparition ceases. The town returns to calm, and the train no longer haunts the tracks. Some witnesses swear they saw the conductor's silhouette raise his hat one last time before disappearing forever.

If they fail to prove Morrow's innocence but manage to convince the town that the train's presence is a threat, the railway line is condemned and the inhabitants henceforth avoid that area. The train continues to haunt the night, but no one approaches it anymore, and the accidents cease.

If they find no explanation or ignore the warnings, the curse intensifies. The train becomes more aggressive, appearing more and more frequently and causing new disasters. Dead Man’s Pass becomes a town that teaches you to live with the fear of a hiss from beyond the grave.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters gathered several disturbing testimonies: the appearance of the train seemed more and more credible, and fear began to spread through the city.

After 60 minutes, a concrete event occurs: a convoy of goods is attacked by the apparition, causing damage and injuries. If the Characters do not intervene quickly, the situation worsens.

After 90 minutes, local authorities are losing patience. Influential figures are demanding an immediate solution. Some are advocating the use of explosives to neutralize the danger, while others are considering handing the situation over to the Pinkertons, even at the risk of exacerbating local tensions.

The Fugitive of Fort Eldridge

The facts for the Teller

Tawodi, a young Paiute woman in her twenties, is a messenger and scout for her tribe, known for her intelligence and knowledge of hidden routes through the desert. She has never taken up arms against the federal army, but she possesses compromising information about the activities of Fort Eldridge: A month ago, she was captured by a patrol after witnessing a summary execution carried out by soldiers from the fort. A group of Paiute civilians, who were peacefully negotiating with a military officer, were gunned down in an ambush set by Eldridge. Tawodi escaped the massacre, but she knew that if the truth came out, it would cause a scandal and possibly a war between the Native Americans and the federal forces.

Captain Thomas Eldridge, anxious to bury the matter before it reached higher authorities, had Tawodi imprisoned without trial, labeling her a spy and an agitator. His plan was simple: keep her captive until tensions subsided, then orchestrate her "disappearance" in the desert under the pretext of an escape attempt.

But before that plan could be put into action, Tawodi managed to escape from the fort, wounding a guard and using a sandstorm to cover her escape. Now hunted, she seeks refuge in the city, but she knows that nowhere is truly safe. Eldridge is determined to bring her back alive, not to put her on trial, but to ensure she never talks. He has discreetly sent men in plain clothes to Dead Man's Pass to monitor comings and goings, ready to act as soon as any clue about Tawodi surfaces, while avoiding any attention that might raise suspicions about his actions.

The Characters are thus faced with a moral and strategic dilemma: help an innocent woman and risk the wrath of the army, or hand her over to protect the city, at the cost of an irreversible injustice?

Intro for the players

The air is stifling in Main street, not because of the heat, but because of the palpable tension. In front of the telegraph office, Captain Eldridge addresses the crowd, his voice harsh and implacable.

"An Indian criminal has escaped from Fort Eldridge. She is dangerous and must be arrested immediately."

His gaze slowly glides over the assembly, seeking to capture reactions.

"If she's handed over without delay, this city will have nothing to fear. But if she finds refuge here..." He paused, letting the silence hang heavy like a threat. "I will be forced to consider Dead Man's Pass as hostile to federal forces."

In the alley behind the Silver Spur, a figure lurks in the shadows. Tawodi, the woman everyone is searching for, is there, injured and breathless. When you approach her, she raises a defiant gaze, but her hands are trembling.

"I'm not a criminal", she whispers. "But if you hand me over, I'll die before sunrise."

The Characters must choose their side before fear transforms the city into a battlefield.

Resolution

If they decide to capture Tawodi and hand her over to the soldiers, they avoid a direct confrontation with the fort. However, they will never learn the truth about what really happened and will see the consequences of their choice when they learn that the prisoner was executed without trial. The Teller can immediately move on to another scenario, as this one is considered a failure.

If they seek to understand why she was imprisoned, several leads stand out. By questioning locals who recently worked at the fort, they learn that Tawodi is no ordinary criminal. She was imprisoned after denouncing the unlawful execution of several members of her tribe by soldiers at the fort. She witnessed the actions of certain officers, which would explain why Eldridge wants her captive at all costs.

Another lead points to a guard at the fort, a man at odds with his superiors' methods. Under pressure, he reveals that Tawodi was to be summarily tried and executed before the truth came out. By helping her escape, they have a chance to expose the fort's corruption and prevent a needless massacre.

If the Characters choose to protect Tawodi, they must find a way to get her out of town undetected. A diversion, a temporary hiding place, or a direct confrontation with the soldiers are all possible options.

But whatever they decide, Captain Eldridge will not let this matter go unaddressed.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to help Tawodi escape discreetly, they will save an innocent person and expose the truth about the fort's actions. However, Captain Eldridge will not forgive this humiliation and will keep Dead Man's Pass under surveillance.

If they try to negotiate her release by proving her innocence, they must convince the town's leading citizens, who have an interest in avoiding open warfare with the army. This might force Eldridge to back down, but at what cost?

If they fail to prevent her capture, Tawodi is taken back to the fort and quietly

executed. Soon after, tensions arise between the Paiutes and the army, and Dead Man's Pass becomes a battleground of escalating conflict.

If the Characters choose to directly confront the fort's forces, a confrontation will erupt in the town. Regardless of the outcome, Dead Man's Pass will now be targeted by the federal army, and life there will become more difficult.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the fort's soldiers begin a methodical search of the town, persistently questioning the inhabitants. Tawodi is hiding somewhere, but her tracks are fresh, and the patrols are gradually tightening their grip.

After 60 minutes, a climate of fear and paranoia takes hold: citizens, fearing reprisals from the army, spontaneously form a local militia to support the search. Some businesses close and the streets empty, while anonymous denunciations multiply.

After 90 minutes, if Tawodi hasn't been taken to safety or extracted, she is located by federal forces, captured, and immediately brought back to the fort. Once there, she disappears without a trace, and the city realizes too late that no explanation will ever be given for her fate.



The Revenge of the Oppressed

The facts for the Teller

For several months, Elias Roarke, an unscrupulous landowner, has been extending his control over the farmland on the outskirts of Dead Man’s Pass. Through fraudulent purchases, intimidation, and sabotage, he forces small farmers to sell him their land for next to nothing. Those who refuse find their crops burned, their wells poisoned, or their fences destroyed by anonymous henchmen.

Local authorities remain passive, either out of fear or because Roarke has bought their silence. Even Sheriff John Carter, renowned for his integrity, hesitates to act without concrete evidence. The population is divided: some consider Roarke a legitimate businessman, while others whisper that he behaves like a tyrant who believes he can own the entire valley.

Desperate, a group of ruined farmers turned to a more radical solution. They pooled their meager savings to hire armed protection. A group of mercenaries was contacted to drive Roarke's men out, and some farmers are even talking about executing him. Another rumor claims they've hired a lone vigilante, a legendary sharpshooter seeking revenge against Roarke for a past debt.

Upon learning of this initiative, Roarke prepares a brutal counterattack. He, in turn, hires a band of gunmen to crush any attempt at rebellion and impose his authority once and for all. If nothing is done, Dead Man's Pass will soon become the scene of a bloodbath.

Intro for the players

Silence reigns in the Silver Spur when you enter. At a table in the back, a small group of farmers are talking in hushed tones, their faces drawn with fatigue and anger. As you approach the bar, Mary Whitmore, the owner, mechanically pours you a drink and whispers a few words.

"They're at their wits' end. Roarke is stripping them bare one by one, and the sheriff can't do anything. They accuse him of threats, sabotage, intimidation, and all sorts of other shady dealings with the land and parcels, but they can't prove anything."

She places the bottle in front of you and continues whispering.

"They say they've found a solution. That they've hired people to fix the problem... in their own way."

At the far end of the saloon, a solitary stranger drinks in silence, his hand resting on his revolver. His dusty boots and threadbare coat betray a man who has seen too many fights. His dark gaze sweeps across the room, sizing up the farmers without a word.

Sheriff John Carter pushes open the saloon door and approaches you, looking serious.

"I need to know what's going on. If Roarke finds out that these farmers have hired people, he'll retaliate. And if these mercenaries are as dangerous as I fear, then Dead Man's Pass is likely to experience the worst bloodbath in its history."

The choice is yours: let the situation deteriorate or intervene before it's too late.

Resolution

The Characters can investigate the situation by questioning the farmers, who describe in detail the acts of sabotage, forced contracts, and threats received. By searching the affected land, they may find physical evidence: sabotage tools, poisoned wells, or falsified records. They can also speak to a town clerk who witnessed an illegal transaction, or to a veteran farmer who overheard a conversation between two men from Roarke's posse.

They can also infiltrate or follow the recruited mercenaries, and observe their preparations: this allows them to draw up a profile of their command structure, to identify those who are still open to dialogue, and those who are only looking for conflict.

The farmer's hired gun, Isaac Graves can be approached discreetly. By searching his room or belongings, the Characters may discover a letter never sent to his sister, expressing his desire for revenge. Questioning him frankly, or comparing his memory with the facts, may offer a chance to convince him.

Finally, the Characters can build a solid case to hand to the sheriff by gathering consistent testimonies, suspicious contracts, or evidence of intimidation by one of Roarke's henchmen caught in the act. This investigative work can also be strengthened by getting prominent citizens of the town to testify under public pressure or moral blackmail. But Roarke is not the type to surrender without a fight.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to organize the farmers' defense without it turning into a bloodbath, Roarke loses his grip and leaves the region, his power broken. The town remains standing, and justice prevails without a bloody conflict.

If they do not control the mercenaries, the attacks against Roarke's men become uncontrollable, and Dead Man's Pass descends into a spiral of retaliation and brutal violence.

If Isaac Graves kills Roarke, he disappears quickly and discreetly, leaving the city in the hands of those with weapons, where violence trumps any semblance of established order, and where the panicked elite call for outside intervention to restore control. The Pinkertons and the investors will react harshly, sending

troops to restore order in their own way.

If the Characters do nothing, Roarke will crush the farmers' rebellion, expelling or executing the leaders and consolidating his power. Dead Man's Pass will become a territory dominated by might, where the weak have no place.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, Roarke is informed that the farmers have hired mercenaries. In response, he discreetly orders his men to launch a preemptive attack on an isolated farm, hoping to intimidate the others before they take up arms.

After 60 minutes, the mercenaries summoned by Graves arrive at Dead Man’s Pass. As they settle in, some make contact with the farmers, but others seem more drawn to the impending chaos. If left unchecked by the player characters, they could unleash uncontrolled violence.

After 90 minutes, Isaac Graves attempts to approach Roarke to kill him. If he succeeds, it triggers an immediate escalation: Roarke's gunmen seek revenge for their employer, the farmers panic, and the town's leading citizens retreat into silence for fear of reprisals. Open warfare looms in the dusty streets of Dead Man's Pass.

The Rigged Duel

The facts for the Teller

Dead Man's Pass is abuzz with excitement. Tomorrow at noon, Sheriff John Carter will face Jed "Blackjack" Marston in a duel in the town square. This confrontation, seemingly a simple settling of scores, is in reality a trap carefully orchestrated by Ezra P. Wilkinson, who seeks to eliminate Carter without exposing himself.

For several weeks, Wilkinson had been fueling the rumor that Carter was out of his depth. He hired Marston to provoke a public duel, convinced that a sheriff who refused would lose all authority. Marston agreed in exchange for a rigged duel, a large sum of money, and safe passage out of town.

Wilkinson's plan relies on several elements. An accomplice hidden in the crowd will use a mirror to blind Carter at the critical moment. If this fails, snipers positioned on rooftops will fire as soon as the first shot is fired. An unscrupulous referee, Henry Caldwell, has dictated the precise location of the duel to guarantee the ideal firing angle. He can also slow things down or manipulate the rules if necessary.

Caldwell is a former judge loyal to Wilkinson. He will deny any involvement unless confronted with evidence. If exposed, he will try to flee. This could force Wilkinson to hasten the duel.

Without outside intervention, Carter will die and Wilkinson will take control of the city by placing a sheriff that is on the take. Player characters may perceive suspicious signs in the setup of the duel, the movements of Wilkinson's men, or the behavior of influenced notables.

If they choose to intervene, the Characters will have to act quickly. They can try to locate the snipers and sabotage their operation, spot the man with the mirror and prevent him from carrying out his role, or publicly expose the manipulation before the duel, creating enough of a commotion to prevent the confrontation. Time is running out: once Carter and Marston face each other, it will be too late to act.

Intro for the players

Since dawn, Dead Man's Pass has been buzzing with activity. The anticipated duel between Sheriff Carter and Jed Marston is the talk of the town. Bets are flying, but the atmosphere is unsettling. Wilkinson exudes an unsettling confidence, and his men are keeping a closer eye on the rooftops than usual.

In the streets, some shopkeepers seem nervous. A vendor hurriedly packs up her stall. At the Silver Spur, Mary Whitmore discreetly signals to you. "Wilkinson cares more about this duel than he lets on. Marston isn't acting alone. If I were

you, I'd ask questions."

Something is amiss. If no one investigates what's being planned, tomorrow at noon, this duel could be the beginning of something far darker. If you let things continue as they are,Dead Man's Pass could witness much more than just a duel.

Resolution

The characters can follow several leads to unravel the trap. Mary Whitmore reveals that Marston is acting on orders and that Wilkinson hastily arranged the duel. Further questioning reveals she overheard about an accomplice tasked with blinding Carter with a mirror at the moment of the shot.

While observing from the main square, they can spot suspicious crates on the rooftops. Armed workers are operating discreetly. A merchant, after some hesitation, admits to seeing men take up positions on the roofs and indicate their locations. One of Wilkinson's men, too talkative and overheard, confirms that they are ready to intervene.

The Characters can sabotage the shooters' setup, intercept the man with the mirror, or discreetly alert Carter to change his position. They can also try to implicate Henry Caldwell, the duel's arbiter. To do this, they will need to obtain concrete evidence: a copy of a message between him and Wilkinson found in the telegraph's records, or a direct testimony from one of the shooters he allegedly recruited. This evidence can be uncovered by infiltrating the telegraph office undercover or convincing a hesitant operator to talk in exchange for protection. They can also create a public disturbance before the duel, making shooting difficult.

If they fail to act in time, Carter will be killed and Wilkinson will win. If they manage to disrupt the plan, the duel could swing in Carter's favor or be called off, exposing the attempted manipulation.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to neutralize the shooters and prevent Carter from being blinded, the duel will be fair. Marston, deprived of his advantage, will have little chance against the sheriff and will likely end up shot or fleeing. Wilkinson, though shaken, will not be directly involved but will lose influence over the town.

If the Characters publicly expose the plot, the duel will be called off under public pressure. Wilkinson will try to downplay the incident, but his control over Dead Man's Pass will be weakened. Marston and his men might have to flee to avoid being publicly executed.

If the Characters fail to intervene or act too late, Carter will die. Wilkinson will install a trusted man as sheriff and take absolute control of the town. Any attempt at resistance will become much riskier in the future.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters can spot unusual behavior, hear disturbing rumors, and identify the first logistical anomalies related to the duel. Some witnesses mention nighttime comings and goings on the rooftops or unknown men observing the main square.

After 60 minutes, the snipers take up positions while the man carrying the mirror is spotted in the crowd. Wilkinson, who is in town, begins receiving reports from his men, and his henchmen actively monitor the onlookers. Every action becomes riskier, but the Characters can still maneuver discreetly.

After 90 minutes, all the elements of the trap are in place: the referee has arrived, the man with the mirror awaits his signal, and the shooters have locked in their angles. The crowd is restless, and the slightest intervention could trigger widespread panic. The Characters have only a moment to act before the duel begins.



The Death Games

The facts for the Teller

For several months, an underground gladiatorial combat system has been thriving in the seedy underbelly of Dead Man's Pass. Officially, the city is calm, but in reality, a deathmatch circuit attracts a wealthy clientele who bets on bloody confrontations. Behind this organization is Liang Zhu, a seemingly respected businessman who runs an illegal network from his restaurant-laundry business. He enjoys the protection of Ezra P. Wilkinson, who tolerates these activities as long as they generate profits.

The fights take place beneath an abandoned warehouse. Some participants go there voluntarily, others are forced: indebted workers, captured travelers, outcasts. Once locked inside, they must kill to survive. The arena is guarded by Zhu's men, armed and loyal. City dignitaries discreetly observe.

The Characters are alerted when a local acquaintance disappears: Tom Holsgrove, a saloon employee they knew personally. Burdened with debt, he had resigned himself to entering the arena. Rumors link his disappearance to Zhu's establishment. Other disappearances have occurred. All the missing people have been seen near the restaurant-laundry building, often late at night. Access to certain rooms is restricted, and some employees never leave during the day.

The authorities remain silent. Carter claims to lack evidence, Wilkinson looks away, and no one dares speak. Witnesses mention a suspicious back room, nighttime corridors, and doors always left ajar. It seems a secret known to all is circulating in hushed tones, yet no one dares confront it. The Characters can ignore these signs, but if they decide to investigate, they enter a world where violence is a spectacle, and where the truth can cost lives.

Intro for the players

The unrest in town is unusual. This time, it's not rumors of prowling bandits or disputes between miners that are causing the stir, but unexplained disappearances. Several men have left their jobs or gambling tables and never returned home. No bodies have been found, and no leads seem to point to fugitives or criminals. Just figures vanishing into the night, without a word.

The authorities have done nothing yet. Wilkinson has other things on his mind, Sheriff Carter claims he lacks evidence, and no one dares speak up. Yet those who observe the town more closely sense that something is amiss. At certain times of the night, suspicious comings and goings occur near Liang Zhu's restaurant-laundry, a respected establishment that never fully closes. Some employees never venture out during the day, and those who disappeared always seemed to have been last seen nearby.

Resolution

The Characters can investigate by questioning the locals. Rumors are circulating about secret fights. A waiter at the Silver Spur mentions shady bets. A maid whispers that some of the restaurant's patrons never leave. A laundry worker saw prisoners being escorted out at night. By observing the establishment, the Characters will notice restricted areas and suspicious activity. By infiltrating discreetly or posing as customers, they can discover access to the warehouses and locate the cells where the fighters are being held.

They can also approach illegal gambling dens. By gaining the gamblers' trust, they might witness a fight. There, they'll see how the network operates: captives locked up, organized fights, armed security. By analyzing the premises, they can plan an escape or sabotage.

Another approach is to pose as fighters. This allows them to infiltrate the system directly, observe its weaknesses from the inside, and make contact with other captives. This gives them the opportunity to plan a revolt or free prisoners before a fight. This approach is risky, as they will risk their lives in the arena.

They can also attack the network's political and financial backers. By gathering evidence against Wilkinson or publicly exposing his ties to Zhu, they could cut off resources and isolate the organization. A public operation, an uprising, a sting, or a targeted release could bring down the entire operation.

If they fail, they will be captured and forced to fight, and the network will survive.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters succeed in publicly exposing those responsible for the network and dismantling the fighting arena, Zhu is arrested or forced to flee, Wilkinson is discredited, and the complicit notables are revealed. Public opinion shifts and the disappearances cease. The city regains a semblance of equilibrium, however precarious.

If the Characters free prisoners or disrupt the organization without being able to dismantle it entirely, Zhu can escape or relocate his operations. The fighting temporarily ceases at Dead Man's Pass, but the threat remains. The Teller can reuse the organization in future scenarios.

The capture of the Characters and their forced participation in the fights marks a complete failure of the scenario. Their survival depends on their cunning or their strength. If all fail, the arena continues to operate without opposition, Zhu tightens his grip, and fear spreads. The city sinks into a silent complicity where the law of silence prevails.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters will have begun gathering clues about the disappearances by questioning witnesses. They will discover that several men last seen near Liang Zhu's laundry restaurant have never been seen again, and that some employees work there exclusively at night.

After 60 minutes, they will have established a link between the restaurant and the clandestine activities. They will then have to decide on their method of action: infiltration as spectators by gaining the trust of the bettors, direct participation as combatants, or a frontal attack against the organization's infrastructure.

After 90 minutes, access to the arena becomes possible. Those who opted for infiltration will observe the fights as spectators, discovering the brutality of the system and identifying key figures in the network. Those who posed as fighters will be locked in cells, in contact with other captives, and will be able to plan their escape or action from within.



The Cursed Players of the Silver Spur

The facts for the Teller

For several weeks, numerous patrons of the Silver Spur have died shortly after losing a poker game to Luther Voss, a lone player who arrived with no background or connections. The deaths follow no apparent pattern: some collapse in the street, others sink into a slow agony from freak accidents, bankruptcies, or suicidal behavior. All share a recent defeat against Voss, in a poker game played without incident or apparent cheating.

Luther Voss plays with precision, carefully selecting his opponents. He targets those with potential, charisma, or obvious luck. When he wins a game, something intangible happens: the air freezes, the lights flicker, a brief chill sweeps through the room. His power, which he calls "the touch of chance", absorbs his opponent's fortune. This transfer rejuvenates him, making him more vibrant, more present, more captivating, while his victim is gradually drained of all will.

This process is not immediate. The victim appears unchanged for a day or two, then begins to consistently lose at gambling, sleep poorly, and withdraw into themselves. Next comes a phase of deep mental and physical exhaustion that often ends in social disappearance, or a sudden death. Voss always remains close, like a spectator to the decline he has set in motion.

He has already repeated this cycle elsewhere. He changes his name, his appearance, but not his method. He seeks an ideal prey, a player whose defeat will permanently amplify his power. He knows he is vulnerable in the event of a public defeat, especially against a prepared opponent. When he loses, the touch of chance turns against him: the vitality he has absorbed dissipates abruptly, and he enters a state of extreme weakness. His features change, and those who observe him notice a brief loss of confidence, as if his appearance and presence suddenly fade. He becomes pale, feverish, and his voice seems to lose its authority. If he knows he is being observed in this state, he will hastily leave the scene before suspicions can take hold. This weakness forces him to maneuver, to provoke without exposing himself, to avoid traps while pressuring his targets to the table.

In Dead Man’s Pass, the sheriff can’t prove anything. Mary Whitmore, the owner of the Silver Spur, has seen her customers’ condition deteriorate. She has no proof, but she understands Voss is at the heart of the problem. Characters may be connected to a victim, or simply intrigued by the player’s unsettling aura. The entire town is watching Voss, but no one understands what he truly is. The trap has already been set.

Intro for the players

For the past few days, strange rumors have been circulating around the Silver Spur. Several regular players have died or succumbed to sudden madness after losing to a certain Luther Voss. The atmosphere in the saloon is tense, and even the regulars are now avoiding certain tables.

Mary Whitmore takes you aside. She confides her doubts: the victims weren't just unlucky, they seemed devoid of all will. She asks you to keep a sharp eye out.

You are here tonight. Luther Voss sits at his table, impassive, awaiting his next opponent. Mystery surrounds him, fear hangs in the air. And the game has only just begun.

Resolution

The Characters will first be able to examine the victims' bodies. A doctor or undertaker will confirm the absence of any visible cause of death: no poison, no injuries, no marks. All seemed exhausted, drained of their strength, as if they had withered from within. By questioning witnesses, the Characters will discover that the deaths all followed a defeat against Luther Voss, and that they were preceded by episodes of extreme bad luck, strange dreams, or feelings of emptiness.

A former traveling gambler will recognize Voss under another name: Ethan Blake. He saw him in Carson City, where similar deaths had occurred. He will recount that only a public defeat inflicted on Blake seemed to have stopped the deaths. This testimony leads the Characters down a path: Voss's power seems linked to his victories, and a public defeat could weaken or break him.

The Characters can attempt to set a trap game, preparing a player capable of defeating Voss, all under the watchful eyes of key witnesses. They can also sabotage the game or create conditions that force Voss to flee. If they succeed in provoking a clear and undeniable public defeat, his power will dissipate.

Another approach is to prevent Voss from playing for several days. Without wins, Voss slowly becomes exhausted.

A third option is to stir up fear in the city to force his expulsion or provoke a lynching. Each option depends on the information gathered and the Characters' ability to turn their environment against him.

If they fail to act in time, Voss will complete his ritual by challenging an opponent of equal worth, and leave the city in search of other worthy opponents.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters force Voss into a real and public defeat, his power will

temporarily dissipate. He will become vulnerable, visibly weakened, and forced to flee or disappear to regenerate. This loss of influence will be perceived by those observing him as a collapse of his confidence, a kind of imbalance in his aura. Voss will then seek to leave the city and slowly rebuild his power elsewhere, as he has done before.

If they succeed in preventing him from playing for several days, he will lose his strength and flee before being fully exposed, unable to finish his work at Dead Man's Pass.

If they succeed in angering the population against him, Voss will narrowly escape before a public lynching.

If they fail to understand his modus operandi or if they take too long, Voss will complete his ritual and leave the city, leaving behind a trail of deaths and a mystery that will haunt Dead Man's Pass for a long time.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters will have questioned the witnesses and examined the bodies of the victims, discovering that no physical cause explains the deaths, but that all did seem drained of energy.

After 60 minutes, they will have realized that Voss absorbs something from his opponents when he wins a game. They will begin to connect this ability to a larger ritual and will realize that he is looking for a very specific target.

After 90 minutes, the Characters will have to act: set a trap for Voss by forcing him to lose, sabotage his attempts at the game to weaken his power, or mobilize the population against him before he succeeds in completing his ritual.

A Pact with the Devil

The facts for the Teller

A mysterious merchant named Silas Harrow has arrived in Dead Man's Pass, setting up his wagon on the outskirts of town. Unlike typical peddlers, he sells neither provisions nor tools, but ancient and precious objects, often adorned with strange symbols or engraved with incomprehensible designs. He claims they come from hidden treasures, forgotten ruins, and legends of another age, offering his customers promises of luck, power, or protection. But these objects are no ordinary ones: they all carry a curse.

Silas Harrow is more than just a merchant. He is an initiate of the Order of the Sacred Chalice, an ancient sect that once practiced unholy rituals to bind souls to artifacts. These objects are not merely cursed; they are vessels of ancient and uncontrollable energies. Harrow has been tasked by the Order with disseminating these artifacts, for their power grows each time a new owner willingly agrees to a bargain with him.

Harrow is aware of the harm he spreads, but he doesn't see it as a crime. To him everyone makes their own choice, and he never deceives his clients: he sells them a dream, a hope, a power they desire more than anything. If that hope turns against them, it's not his fault, but their own greed. His ultimate goal is to spread these objects throughout the region, to fuel the influence of the Sacred Chalice and allow its masters to strengthen their grip on the world.

Each artifact sold by Harrow is designed to grant a wish, but at a price its owner will only understand too late. A revolver that never misses will eventually force its wearer to kill those they love. A pocket watch that reveals the future will lead its user to visions so horrific they will drive them mad. A medallion that brings luck and prosperity will ultimately demand the life of a loved one in return.

Harrow never imposes his objects on others. He offers them, makes them seem appealing, stirs desire and curiosity. He knows that humans are weak in the face of greed and that the mere desire for an object can be enough to seal a tragic fate. He always remains calm, polite, and charismatic, convinced that he is simply giving people what they truly want.

If no one stops him, the cursed objects will spread throughout the city, and their effects will grow over time. The first buyers will experience isolated incidents, then, gradually, Dead Man's Pass will become a place haunted by madness, fear, and death. Harrow himself will disappear before being confronted, leaving behind a shattered city and a secret order more powerful than ever.

The Characters will have to discover who Harrow really is, how his objects work, and how to stop their spread before Dead Man's Pass becomes a cursed

city from which no one can escape.

Intro for the players

For the past few days, a merchant with an enigmatic smile has set up shop near the Dead Man's Pass market. His rare and strangely alluring wares captivate passersby: engraved jewelry, antique watches, perfect weapons. Some claim to have been lucky since their purchase, while others experience a sudden change in behavior. No one knows who Silas Harrow really is, but rumors are spreading. It's whispered that he sells more than just objects: perhaps fragments of destiny, or worse. And every day, a new buyer is added to the list.

This morning, you see a nervous young man get out of Harrow's cart, clutching a small black box. Moments later, he stumbles in the street, staring at the object with a mixture of fascination and terror. Around you, eyes avert. No one seems inclined to comment on the scene.

Resolution

The Characters must uncover the true nature of the artifacts sold by Silas Harrow and prevent their spread. By questioning the buyers, they obtain contrasting accounts: some witness miracles, others inexplicable misfortunes. These objects always provoke some form of dramatic counterpart, and an engraved symbol links them all to the Order of the Sacred Chalice, a forgotten sect.

They can try to expose Harrow publicly by gathering evidence and witnesses. This will require gaining the trust of victims willing to speak, and creating a credible body of circumstantial evidence. Harrow will respond calmly, turning the accusations around or casting doubt on the Characters' intentions.

Another possibility is destroying the objects but this requires a specific ritual, which the Characters can find among Harrow's possessions in a grimoire or notebook hidden in his wagon. By destroying the central link between the artifacts using the ritual, they might be able to reverse their effects.

They can also choose to confront Harrow directly. He possesses supernatural powers and defensive artifacts. He offers the Characters a deal: join his creation or oppose him. In the event of an open confrontation, he will use the artifacts to his advantage. If defeated, he will flee, but leave behind his creations, still active. Without a purging ritual, the city will remain marked by his influence.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters succeed in publicly exposing Harrow by proving that his artifacts are cursed, he will lose all influence over the city. His panicked clients will try to get rid of the objects, and he will be forced to flee without achieving his goal. This will halt the spread of the curses, but the objects already in

circulation will remain dangerous. The Characters will then have to find a way to neutralize these artifacts before they cause further havoc.

If they can discover and destroy the source of Harrow's power, such as a central object that binds all the artifacts or a ritual that reverses the pacts, they can sever the connection to the Order of the Sacred Chalice. This will require knowledge of the occult or research into forgotten documents, but it is the only way to permanently neutralize the threat and ensure the city does not suffer the long-term effects of the cursed objects.

If the Characters confront Harrow directly and manage to defeat him, he will die, leaving behind his hoard of artifacts, but the curse will not disappear with him. His possessions must then be burned using a specific ritual or sealed away from the city to prevent further tragedies.

If they fail to stop him, or if they take too long, Harrow will have sold enough artifacts to irrevocably corrupt the city. He will disappear before he can be caught, but the remaining artifacts will continue to cause unexplained deaths and inevitable tragedies. In the long run, Dead Man’s Pass could become a city haunted by its own mistakes, where no one dares touch an object without fearing it is cursed.

Finally, if the Characters themselves are caught up in a bargain with Harrow, their victory will be ambiguous. They may have repelled the merchant, but at the cost of a debt whose consequences they do not yet know.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters will have investigated the first buyers, noted strange incidents and identified a common mark on the objects, laying the foundations for an occult force at work.

After 60 minutes, they will have discovered the link between the artifacts and the Order of the Sacred Chalice, and identified Harrow as the source of the curses. They will then have to choose a strategy to stop him: expose the truth, destroy the objects, or confront the merchant.

After 90 minutes, the effects of the artifacts will intensify in the city: mysterious deaths, madness, and manifestations. The outcome will depend on their actions: either Harrow will be defeated or driven out, or the city will fall into a lasting curse.



The Ghost Convoy

The facts for the Teller

The Fort Eldridge supply convoy, consisting of four wagons and a twelve-strong escort, left Dead Man's Pass at sunrise, carrying provisions, ammunition, and a chest containing the troops' pay in gold coins. Under the command of Lieutenant Andrew Forsythe, a methodical and respected officer, the convoy took the usual route across the arid plains toward the fort, a half-day's journey away. It never arrived.

Three days later, cavalrymen sent on a reconnaissance mission found six stray horses, still saddled, near an old, abandoned coaching inn. There was no sign of soldiers or wagons. No trace of fighting, no corpses, nothing to explain what could have happened. Yet the horses, although visibly exhausted, were uninjured.

In reality, the convoy was attacked by a band of raiders led by Billy "Red" Murphy, a former Confederate scout turned outlaw. But this was no simple raid. Red Murphy knew that Fort Eldridge's military payroll passed through this convoy, and rather than confront the escort in open combat, he set up a supernatural ambush.

Red made a pact with a mystical shaman, Isabella Nocturne, a woman with a troubled past who claimed to be able to summon desert spirits. She performed a ritual of confusion on the convoy, creating ghostly illusions and whispers in the wind that panicked the soldiers. Some fired at their own shadows, others fled, abandoning their mounts. Those who resisted were eliminated one by one, unable to distinguish their true adversaries from the apparitions created by Isabella.

The wagons and bodies were transported to a hidden canyon far from the roads, an old abandoned camp where Murphy and his gang plan to dismantle the wagons, sell the supplies, and melt the gold into ingots to make it untraceable. Meanwhile, Isabella continues to perform rituals to mask their presence and frighten anyone who might try to follow their trail.

If the Characters do not act quickly, the convoy will be permanently dismantled, and the clues will disappear with it. Furthermore, if the Fort Eldridge army does not receive its pay, Captain Thomas Eldridge will consider this an act of aggression and may order a punitive expedition against the local tribes, convinced that it is a Paiute plot.

Intro for the players

The sun beats down on Dead Man's Pass as tension grows outside the sheriff's office. Several soldiers from Fort Eldridge are in town, visibly nervous. One of them, Sergeant Nathan Briggs, pounds his fist on the saloon counter, demanding

answers.

"The convoy should have arrived three days ago! Where are our men?"

No one has an answer. Some settlers whisper that it's a bad omen. Others are already starting to accuse the Paiutes of attacking the convoy.

Nearby, a man in a lieutenant's uniform discreetly observes the scene with a calculating gaze. Andrew Forsythe, the leader of the missing convoy, is presumed dead... but is it possible he survived? The army wants answers, and fast.

A soldier approaches :

"Captain Eldridge wants to know if you can help finding this convoy. We don't want a needless massacre. But if we don't find anything by tomorrow, he will send his men in retaliation."

In a corner, an old scout stares gloomily at the soldiers before spitting into the dust.

"If you ask me, this isn't an ordinary attack. Horses without a rider, not a single body? It's like witchcraft..."

Resolution

The Characters must locate the hidden canyon where the raiders transported the wagons and neutralize Billy "Red" Murphy and Isabella Nocturne before they permanently dispose of the cargo.

A first lead lies with the stray horses found on the outskirts of the city. By examining their hooves and condition, an experienced scout can determine that they fled at full speed over a much greater distance than reported, indicating that the convoy was attacked well before its supposed location. Once the place of the attack is reached, there are strange markings on the ground, footprints vanish suddenly, as if men had simply disappeared. By questioning the Paiutes of the Circle of Shamans, the Characters can learn that these markings correspond to an ancient ritual of confusion, used to disorient travelers and make them lose their way.

To find the old abandoned camp, the Characters can use several clues. A witness claims to have seen smoke north of the valley, unaware that Murphy's men were actually burning uniforms and military documents. A captured mercenary mentions that a ritual is underway to conceal the camp. A careful examination of the tracks reveals that a group left the main road with wagons, taking a hidden passage.

As they approach the canyon, the terrain appears empty, but muffled sounds and shadows betray an unseen presence. A simple test with thrown sand or a mirror will reveal a barrier of illusion. To dispel it, the Characters can disturb the ritual altars or interrupt Isabella's concentration. This makes the

encampment visible, exposing Mallory and his men. A confrontation may ensue, but infiltration or the betrayal of one of the raiders could offer a more subtle alternative.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters recover the cargo and neutralize Murphy, the army gets its pay back, and Captain Eldridge has no further reason to retaliate. Forsythe, if he survived, can testify to the attack, thus preventing any false accusations against the Paiutes.

If the Characters only recover partial evidence, the army agrees to delay its expedition, but mistrust remains. Wilkinson could use the incident to push for a more permanent military presence in the city, which would shift the balance of power in Dead Man's Pass.

If the Characters fail completely, the convoy is lost and the army takes action. A military expedition is sent against the Paiutes, triggering a bloody conflict that permanently poisons relations between the garrison and the Natives.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters will have identified the stray horses, noted the anomalies in the tracks and begun to hear rumors about rituals or witchcraft related to the disappearance.

After 60 minutes, they will have gathered enough clues to suspect the involvement of supernatural forces and locate the hidden canyon. Tensions with the army will be higher, and the threat of reprisals imminent.

After 90 minutes, the Characters will face Murphy's masked encampment, will have to overcome magical protections and choose between frontal attack, infiltration or negotiation to prevent a bloodbath.

Nightly Arsons

The facts for the Teller

For the past week, Dead Man's Pass has been rocked by a series of unexplained fires affecting only buildings on the outskirts of town. Each night, a new structure is reduced to ashes: a supply depot, an old barn, the coach house. The flames appear without any direct witnesses, and each time, no trace of oil or a torch is found. Rumors are rife. Some speak of a curse, others suggest an act of sabotage.

The Circle of Shamans, a group of mystical Paiutes still respected by some of the town's residents, is convinced that these fires are not natural. Chogan Black Bear, their spiritual leader, claims that the flames are of mystical origin. Strange markings have been found near the burned areas: charred footprints in the earth, pieces of burnt wood bearing distorted tribal designs. He warns of a raging spiritual force that he believes has been awakened by the settlers.

In reality, these fires are not the work of an evil ritual, but of a twelve-year-old pyrokinetic boy named Billy Crane. Billy lives on the outskirts of town with his uncle, a violent farmer who regularly beats him. He accidentally discovered that he could control flames when he is in a state of intense emotional distress. Frightened by this power, but also fascinated, he slips away every night to light small fires, watching them dance before they become uncontrollable. He doesn't understand the magnitude of what he is doing and doesn't know how to stop.

The fires, however, have attracted the attention of very real forces. Wilkinson, the banker, plans to use the situation to pressure farmers and small landowners into selling their land. Jedediah "Goldtooth" Jackson, meanwhile, begins to suspect a wider conspiracy and may try to put the blame the Paiutes, triggering an escalation of violence.

If the Characters don't uncover the truth in time, the town will descend into uncontrollable paranoia. A larger fire could destroy a key building in the town, and Billy could be accused of witchcraft or hunted down by enraged settlers.

Intro for the players

The smell of burnt wood still lingers in the morning air as the residents of Dead Man's Pass gather around the smoldering ruins of a barn. This is the third night in a row that a building has gone up in flames without explanation. Conversations are tense.

"It's a curse, I tell you!" growled an old herder, pointing his finger at the Circle of Shamans. "They did something, and now the earth is taking its revenge!"

Nearby, Chogan Black Bear observes the scene in silence, his face impassive. When he meets your gaze, he approaches, ignoring the murmurs that rise as he

passes.

"Did you see the traces this time?" he asked calmly. "This isn't just a simple fire. These flames aren't natural."

Sheriff John Carter, stationed nearby, shakes his head in exasperation.

"I'm willing to believe many things, but I need solid proof before accusing anyone. If it's a man setting these fires, find him. If it's something else... I prefer not to think about it."

A shout suddenly catches your attention. A group of men are stirring, pulling a boy with ash-covered clothes towards the center of the gathering.

"We found him near the flames!" yelled a farmer. "That dirty kid lit them, that's for sure!"

The frightened boy struggles, his eyes wide with panic.

"It wasn't me!" he stammered. "It's... it's not my fault..."

The atmosphere is becoming electric. In a few moments, the crowd might well decide to take justice into its own hands.

Resolution

The Characters must understand what is happening before Billy is lynched by the angry mob or the fires get out of control.

The first key piece of evidence is the charred fingerprints found around the burned areas. They are light and too small to belong to an adult. By investigating further, the Characters discover that Billy had already been seen several times near the crime scenes before the fires. A statement from Maggie Lorne, a shopkeeper who knows the boy well, may provide a clue.

Next, Billy himself must be questioned. But the young boy is terrified and convinced the flames are chasing him. He doesn't know he's the cause of the fires and believes he's being haunted by an uncontrollable force. If the Characters push him too hard, he risks being overwhelmed by fear and unintentionally starting a fire in the middle of the city. To get to the truth, they'll have to gain his trust and calm him down.

Chogan Black Bear can be a valuable ally. He understands what Billy is going through and knows that some young mediums can unwittingly channel forces they can't control. He offers a purification ritual to help Billy contain his abilities, but this requires Billy's voluntary participation.

Another option is to hide him outside the city until things calm down, but this means he will never truly control his powers and could cause further disasters in the future.

If the Characters don't find a solution quickly, tensions in the town will explode. Wilkinson and Goldtooth manipulate the situation to divert the

population's anger against the Paiutes, claiming they are using witchcraft to drive out the settlers. A punitive expedition could be launched against them, resulting in unnecessary bloodshed.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to prove Billy is responsible and find a way to prevent him from starting more fires, the threat is contained. Chogan Black Bear proposes a ritual to calm the energy within him and teach him to control his gift, but this requires Billy's cooperation. Another solution is to send him away from Dead Man's Pass, under a new identity, to prevent him from being lynched. The fires cease permanently, and the tension subsides.

If the Characters investigate too slowly or don't gather enough evidence, Billy is publicly accused, but without absolute certainty. The sheriff hesitates to make a decision, and Wilkinson takes advantage of this to stoke paranoia. Chogan and his people are accused of protecting a "bewitched" child, and some of the settlers demand their expulsion. If the Characters continue to try to defend Billy without concrete proof, they risk being associated with his accomplices and making enemies among the town's leading citizens.

If the Characters fail completely to prove the truth, Billy is lynched by the mob, and his power vanishes with him. But the situation doesn't calm down. The brutal execution shocks the town, and tensions erupt between those who wanted a trial and those who participated in the murder. Wilkinson uses the ensuing anarchy to consolidate his control over Dead Man's Pass by buying up the land of those fleeing the chaos. Goldtooth, meanwhile, accuses the Paiutes of having "cursed" the child to further inflame the situation.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters will have explored the site of the last fire, confronted the contradictory statements of the sheriff and Chogan, and felt the growing unrest among the inhabitants.

After 60 minutes, Billy will have been captured by furious settlers. The Characters will have obtained revealing testimonies and begun to understand that the child is connected to the fires, without being entirely in control of them.

After 90 minutes, Wilkinson and Goldtooth's manipulations will plunge the population into paranoia. The Characters will have to act quickly to save Billy and prevent an outbreak of violence against the Paiutes.

The Douglas Ranch Revenge

The facts for the Teller

For several years, Catherine Douglas has managed one of the largest and most successful ranches in the region, the Douglas Ranch, located west of Dead Man's Pass. Born into a family of pioneers, she has kept her operation afloat despite hardships, droughts, and growing tensions with the Ranchers' Union, led by the ambitious and influential Jared Olsen. This union, made up of the region's leading ranchers, claims to defend their common interests but often acts as a lobbying organization to control land, herds, and the cattle trade.

For the past few months, Catherine Douglas has been openly opposing Jared Olsen and his methods. She refused to formally integrate her ranch into the syndicate and vouched for several small ranchers who refused to give in to Olsen's pressure. This opposition provoked open hostility from some syndicate members, but the situation deteriorated further when Jared's younger brother, Benjamin Olsen, saw his own herds struck by disease and his reputation ruined among the other syndicate members. Accusing Catherine Douglas of bringing him bad luck and undermining his authority within the syndicate, Benjamin decided to act behind the scenes.

In secret, Benjamin recruited a few loyal henchmen and planned the arson attack on the ranch. Taking advantage of a moonless night and a strong wind, they set fire to the east wing of the property, burning several barns and pastures, and wiping out part of the livestock. Catherine, though shaken, managed to contain the fire with the help of her cowboys and some neighbors, but the damage was extensive. For most of the residents, the cause of the blaze was uncertain, and some still believed it was an accident due to the drought or the carelessness of one of the employees.

In reality, Benjamin hopes to push Catherine to the breaking point and provoke a violent reaction, thus triggering an open vendetta. His objective is twofold: to ignite a bloody conflict that would justify the Syndicate's armed intervention and to discredit Catherine in the eyes of the public and Sheriff Carter. Jared Olsen officially ignores his brother's actions and makes no attempt to stop him, secretly hoping to profit from the situation without becoming directly involved.

In the shadows, Benjamin continues to maneuver, sending false messages and spreading rumors to inflame the situation.

If nothing is done, violence is inevitable.

Intro for the players

Two days after a devastating fire at Douglas Ranch, you arrive at Dead Man's Pass. Everywhere, rumors are flying: Accident? Sabotage? Revenge? Catherine

Douglas narrowly saved her ranch, but the damage is extensive. Some suspect the hand of the Ranchers' Syndicate.

The atmosphere in the saloon is electric. The ranch's cowboys, silent and armed, watch the room, while whispers of reprisals circulate. In the square, Sheriff Carter tries to calm tempers. Nearby, Catherine speaks briefly with her men, her face grim. The tension is palpable, and everyone who crosses your path seems to be waiting to see which way you'll go in this affair.

Resolution

Several avenues of investigation are open to the Characters. They can try to identify those responsible for the fire. By questioning the ranch hands, the small ranchers, and the residents of Dead Man's Pass, they may learn that a small group of men was seen loitering near the ranch a few days before the tragedy, among whom one of Benjamin Olsen's men was reportedly recognized. By examining the ruins, physical clues may also lead back to Benjamin: a branding iron typical of his ranch, found partially melted, or hoof prints leading to the valley he controls.

Furthermore, some members of the Syndicate are worried about the way things are going. Although they are bound by their allegiance to Jared, not all of them want an open war which would jeopardize their businesses. The Characters can try to negotiate with them, gather their testimony, or even provoke internal dissension, thus isolating Benjamin and his supporters.

Benjamin, aware of the precariousness of his position, will not hesitate to escalate tensions. He will circulate false messages and attempt to ambush Catherine's cowboys to provoke a bloodbath. If the Characters manage to intercept or thwart this maneuver, they can prevent the spiral of violence.

Jared Olsen still has to face the music. Officially out of the picture, he's playing a double game. If the Characters gather enough evidence and gain the support of certain Syndicate members, Jared may be forced to publicly disavow his brother to avoid losing his influence. Otherwise, he could be drawn into the vendetta and mobilize the entire Syndicate against the Douglas ranch.

If no action is taken quickly, Catherine's men may launch their own punitive expedition against Benjamin, provoking a brutal response from Olsen and his allies, turning the valley into a veritable battlefield.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to prove Benjamin's involvement and win over some Syndicate members to their cause, Jared Olsen will be forced to abandon him to preserve the Syndicate's unity. Catherine, though scarred by the ordeal, will keep her ranch, and peace will return, at least temporarily.

If the plot is discovered but Jared refuses to back down, or if Benjamin manages

to provoke a confrontation, armed conflict will erupt. The violence will be costly for both sides, but the Characters can still limit the losses by negotiating afterward or forcing a truce.

If no evidence is found or the Characters delay in taking action, the men from the Douglas ranch will launch a retaliatory attack, triggering the Syndicate's full mobilization. War will erupt, leaving behind devastated lands, ruined farms, and countless dead on both sides. Dead Man's Pass will remain trapped in this deadly rivalry.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters will have taken stock of the tension between the Douglas Ranch and the Syndicate, heard the rumors in the saloon and perceived the threat of an imminent conflict.

After 60 minutes, they will have collected clues about the fire, followed Benjamin Olsen's trail and started to interact with members of the Syndicate to gauge their respective positions.

After 90 minutes, the pressure mounts: Benjamin tries to provoke a direct confrontation and the Characters must act to avoid a bloody vendetta or gather enough evidence to force Jared to react.



The Stolen Will

The facts for the Teller

Samuel Whitaker, patriarch of the Twin Rivers Ranch, is one of the last independent landowners in the valley to resist the expansion of the Ranchers' Syndicate. His local influence, his integrity, and his distrust of Wilkinson have made him a troublesome obstacle for the Syndicate. Sensing his end approaching, ill and weakened, Whitaker consults Marcus Bell. He is a lawyer renowned for his integrity, whom he charges with drafting a will naming his niece, Elizabeth Hawthorne, as his sole heir. The document is ready but not yet officially signed. It is kept in a discreet safe in Whitaker's room, and he and Bell agree to meet again to formally notarize it three days later.

The day before the signing, Samuel died suddenly, officially of a heart attack. But certain details raised eyebrows: the window was ajar despite the cold, the carpet was stained with dried mud, and the safe was empty. The local doctor, connected to the Syndicate, signed the death certificate without an autopsy. The very next day, Ezra Wilkinson invoked an old, supposedly unpaid debt and, thanks to a compliant judge, obtained an immediate seizure of the ranch. He brandished a writ of seizure that had been ready for weeks, without even consulting Elizabeth.

Actually, Wilkinson learned of the will's existence through a corrupt servant, Harry Malden. He sent two henchmen, Cole Barrett and Frank Leary, who broke into the house at night. Samuel, weakened by age and illness, was caught off guard and instantly succumbed to a violent heart attack. The men methodically searched the premises, seized the will, and vanished into the night. The document was hidden in a remote barn belonging to an associate of the Syndicate, guarded by two sentries.

Elizabeth tries to make her side of the story heard, but without proof, she is accused of trying to profit from her uncle's death. Marcus Bell possesses a draft copy of the will, unsigned and therefore unusable. Sheriff Carter refuses to intervene without evidence. The town is divided. Some support Elizabeth's account, while others believe Wilkinson brings stability. The characters can be involved as witnesses to the scene, allies of Elizabeth, law enforcement officers, or simply curious onlookers drawn by the commotion around the ranch.

Intro for the players

The winter wind blows through Dead Man's Pass. The town slowly awakens under a low sky, heavy with news that arrived during the night: Samuel Whitaker, owner of the Twin Rivers Ranch, is dead. Rumors suggest a heart attack in his house. But on the streets, no one seems willing to confirm anything.

The atmosphere in the saloon is tense. Whispers ripple through the room, and several patrons cast furtive glances toward the bar, where representatives of

the Ranchers' Syndicate have already taken their seats. There's talk of a window left open despite the cold, of mud stains in the house. Yet the official version remains unchanged, reinforced by the Syndicate's public announcement: the ranch legally reverts to Wilkinson to settle old debts.

In the square, Elizabeth Hawthorne tries to rally support. Tired but determined, she claims her uncle wrote a will in her favor. Without proof, the law is against her. You observe the faces around her: some look away, others smile coldly. The city is on edge, and your presence could very well tip the scales.

Resolution

The death of Samuel Whitaker triggered a long-orchestrated maneuver by Wilkinson: to seize the ranch on behalf of the Syndicate. The missing will was the only obstacle, but its absence allowed Wilkinson to advance his agenda unhindered. He used the Syndicate's influence to pressure local authorities. Most of the residents, though wary, dared not publicly oppose him.

Elizabeth, alone or with the help of the Characters, tries to assert her rights. Sheriff Carter's position is ambiguous: he hesitates to get involved in the case without tangible evidence. Marcus Bell confirms having written a will, but only possesses an unsigned copy, which has no legal value. The Characters can investigate the circumstances surrounding Whitaker's death. Their investigation leads them to question the servants, examine the deceased's house, and follow the trail of two Syndicate henchmen.

The Characters can choose to investigate discreetly in the town and around the ranch. Several clues will allow them to identify the true circumstances of the tragedy. They will learn that two men close to the Syndicate, Cole Barrett and Frank Leary, were seen loitering near the ranch the night of the death. The clues are piling up: footprints, witness statements, objects moved in the room where Samuel was found. Everything seems to point to a break-in. If the Characters question some former ranch hands or neighbors, they may overhear snippets of conversations about these two men, known for carrying out Wilkinson's dirty work.

Following this lead, the Characters can discover that Barrett and Leary frequent a secluded barn discreetly owned by the Syndicate, hidden on the edge of the hills to the south. By searching the premises, they can find the will, hidden in a false bottom of a locked trunk. The task will not be easy, as the barn is regularly visited and sometimes guarded by other Syndicate men, suspicious and brutal.

The challenge now is to present the document to the right people at the right time. The local judge, under pressure, might nevertheless accept the evidence if enough witnesses support Elizabeth's version of events. The sheriff, convinced, will then decide to restore legal order. Public opinion, hitherto passive, could then shift in favor of the young woman.

But if the Characters fail to gather evidence or encounter insurmountable obstacles, Wilkinson will retain the advantage. He may even have Elizabeth accused of usurpation or subversion. The situation can also escalate if the Characters attempt an illegal action: theft, kidnapping, armed confrontation. They will then be considered outlaws. The ranch can only be liberated after a prolonged, perhaps bloody, resistance.

Criteria for success or failure

For the ranch to rightfully return to Elizabeth, the Characters will not only have to find the stolen will, but also gather enough evidence to demonstrate the Syndicate's maneuvers: testimonies from indirect witnesses, complicity of the servant, and above all the public support of lawyer Marcus Bell, who is able to formally attest that this will was indeed in accordance with Samuel Whitaker's wishes, even without his final signature.

If they act effectively and in time, Elizabeth will gain full ownership of the ranch. The Syndicate, though humiliated, will not disappear, but Wilkinson will be temporarily weakened, and the Characters will gain in reputation. The town, meanwhile, will regain a fragile equilibrium.

If the Characters fail to gather the evidence or locate the will before Wilkinson's legal proceedings are finalized, the ranch officially falls under the Syndicate's control. Elizabeth, dispossessed, will have to leave the area or resign herself to dependence. The Syndicate's power grows permanently, and Dead Man's Pass falls even further under Ezra Wilkinson's control.

It is also possible that the Characters will act rashly or brutally, for example by stealing the will without being able to authenticate it or by directly confronting the Syndicate's men without legal support. Such an outcome could lead to immediate retaliation, accusations against the Characters of theft or violence, and the creation of a climate of fear that strengthens Wilkinson's power. Even Elizabeth could be forced into exile, unable to assert her rights.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters learn of Whitaker's death, the tensions surrounding the inheritance, and the version broadcast by Wilkinson.

After 60 minutes, they identify the Syndicate's henchmen, spot the signs of forced entry and locate the hiding place of the will.

After 90 minutes, they must act: retrieve the document, convince the authorities, or confront Wilkinson's forces directly.

The Enchanted River

The facts for the Teller

For several weeks, residents of Dead Man's Pass have been developing alarming symptoms: fever, cramps, vomiting, and then extreme dehydration. Rumors are spreading: the northern river is cursed. Nighttime hallucinations, sudden deaths, and demented screams in the hills are fueling the fear. Some blame an indigenous curse, others suspect an old, abandoned mine. Actually, the river is contaminated by a decomposing coyote carcass trapped in a dead tree upstream from the town, near an old abandoned prospectors' camp.

It all begins when a sick coyote, perhaps injured or poisoned by discarded remains, dies of natural causes and drifts to a side channel of the river, where its carcass becomes trapped in stagnant water. The stagnant water slowly spreads its bacteria downstream. This invisible and slow phenomenon goes unnoticed until several families fall ill within a few days. Dr. Mayfield, too drunk to make a coherent connection, suggests seasonal fevers. Captain Eldridge, however, accuses the Paiutes of ritual poisoning and calls for military intervention. Sheriff Carter, overwhelmed, tries to prevent a bloodbath while searching for a rational explanation. Mary Whitmore, at the Silver Spur, begins distributing rainwater to her customers, which only amplifies the panic.

The dead coyote, bloated and iridescent, lies beneath branches. If no one acts, the epidemic will spread rapidly, threatening the town's drinking water supply and fueling widespread panic. Some residents are already preparing to flee, while others are organizing punitive expeditions against the local tribes. Father Santiago tries to preach calm, but even his parishioners doubt the effectiveness of prayer.

Intro for the players

A persistent rumor poisons the air of Dead Man's Pass: the river water drives people mad. There are tales of a child who suffered convulsions after drinking from it, of an old man who died screaming that he saw his own corpse, of a farming couple found delirious, tied up in their own barn. In the town square, peddlers sell amulets against the "spirits of the river," and Father Santiago calls for prayer. Signs have even appeared at the town's entrance, hand-carved, warning visitors not to touch the water.

Sheriff Carter discreetly summons you. He doesn't believe in curses, but he fears an outbreak of violence. He asks if you would be willing to investigate away from prying eyes, before fear implodes the town. All he knows is that all the sick people drank from the northern part of the river. Carter gives you a list of names: three affected families, a young prospector who died in his tent, and an old woman who came to fetch water near the indigenous camp. He hopes you will find a connection before the Pinkertons or Eldridge act on their own.

Resolution

Following clues left by the sick or witnesses, the Characters establish a correlation between the contaminated water sources and a remote section of the river. An old woman says she saw a bloated animal trapped under the roots of a tree. A child recounts seeing the water "shine" in a specific spot. Exploring the north bank, the Characters notice a foul odor emanating from an isolated bend in the river. They can also question a trapper who avoids this area, claiming that "nature is angry there." The Characters gradually make their way upstream to a side channel of the river, barely visible and difficult to access. There, they discover displaced branches, a strong, persistent odor, and an oily film on the surface of the water. Examining the surrounding area, they find matted fur, claw marks in the mud, and an abnormal concentration of insects circling a tangle of submerged roots. The coyote's carcass, bloated by the water, is lodged in the branches but visible.

Doc Mayfield can identify the source of the danger. If he is sober or helped by a war veteran, he recognizes the signs of a cholera-like illness. He can also be guided by Father Santiago or by a secondary lead: a little girl who speaks of a dead animal that is "crying in the water." A successful test in Technique and Intuition allows him to reconstruct the chain of contamination.

The Characters must then act quickly: convince the sheriff to prohibit access to the water, organize a makeshift cleanup, or divert the river's flow. Captain Eldridge, ready to accuse the Paiutes, can be calmed by tangible evidence. On the other hand, if he becomes impatient, he could launch a punitive offensive, triggering open warfare. A peaceful solution will require diplomacy, coordination, and speed. A violent solution could quickly escalate.

A return to normalcy requires cleaning up the source, removing the body, and an official statement from the sheriff or doctor to restore confidence. Support from Father Santiago or Mary Whitmore could hasten this return to calm. But if the evidence is misrepresented or if panic continues to escalate, the town could spiral into uncontrollable fear.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to identify the source of the contamination and take effective measures to clean up the river, the town will be saved. Sheriff Carter will be able to declare the incident closed and restore order. Doctor Mayfield, with the help of the townspeople, will be able to limit the casualties and prevent a wider epidemic. Father Santiago or Mary Whitmore could also play a key role in calming the population and preventing panic.

If the Characters fail to act in time, the contamination will spread and the city will be doomed to a water shortage. Fear will spread rapidly, and social tensions will escalate.

Finally, if the Characters only manage prophylactic measures to slow the effects of the contamination without stopping it at the source, the epidemic might subside in the short term but the situation will remain fragile. The water might be temporarily disinfected, but the city will remain vulnerable to a new crisis if the source of the contamination is not permanently resolved.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters discover the first cases and rumors of the curse, and meet Sheriff Carter. They begin their investigation.

After 60 minutes, the Characters gather testimonies and head north towards the abandoned camp.

After 90 minutes, exploration of the premises, confrontation with those in charge, and important decisions regarding the intervention to be carried out.



The Last Telegram

The facts for the Teller

On October 17, 1878, at dawn, Elijah Burr, a substitute telegraph operator stationed at Dead Man's Pass until the regular operator recovers from illness, intercepted a message sent toward Fort Eldridge. The message's contents were alarming: it announced an imminent attack without specifying the target or origin. The message was signed "Salamander", a call sign abandoned since the end of the Civil War, once used by a former battalion specializing in clandestine operations. However this battalion had been disbanded twelve years earlier, and its call sign long removed from circulation.

Alerted to the threat, Sheriff John "Lame" Carter cannot ignore the message even though he suspects a hoax. He contacts Captain Eldridge at the fort, who denies any involvement and refuses to move his men without concrete evidence. Meanwhile, Mary Whitmore, owner of the Silver Spur, mentions the name of Amos Jebediah King, a former military operator who disappeared years ago, known for his paranoia and his belief that the army is still hiding active conspiracies. He was reportedly seen recently loitering near isolated relay stations to the north.

King worked for a long time on the experimental military lines of the Union network. After returning to civilian life, he disappeared after denouncing an alleged surveillance program initiated by the Pinkertons. Since then, he is believed to have lived in seclusion in the hills, while continuing to intercept transmissions.

Civilian scouts also reported seeing an unidentified armed group moving in military formation in the hills. After cross-referencing with previous reports, it appears that this was likely a group of Confederate veterans recently seen in the area, who may have been approached by agents connected to railroad interests. No concrete evidence confirms the involvement of the Paiutes or the Pinkertons at this stage.

The worried population begins to organize itself into militias. Influential members of the city council discreetly discuss the possibility of requesting a permanent army presence in the city. Tensions rise as the message spreads quietly among the leading figures. Carter, isolated, must send a discreet team to determine if the threat is real, if it targets the city, the fort, or if it is a decoy orchestrated to precipitate chaos.

Intro for the players

You are summoned first thing in the morning by John Carter to the sheriff's office. A coded message, sent during the night, announces an imminent attack. No one knows its origin or who the target is. The fort's captain denies any

involvement. Rumors spread, and the settlers grow alarmed. Carter, whose position is becoming increasingly precarious, is looking for individuals capable of investigating without causing panic. He gives you no orders: he asks you to help him, or if he should look elsewhere for help, but he may not have the time to do so.

The streets of Dead Man's Pass are already tense. Some shopkeepers are closing their doors, men are arming themselves, and looks are becoming suspicious. At the Silver Spur, conversations stop as you walk by. News of the telegram hasn't yet leaked out, but the more perceptive among them sense that something is about to happen.

Fear here can kill as surely as a bullet. If the message is genuine, we need to understand who is threatening whom, and why. If it's just a decoy, then someone is trying to sow discord and they might still be in town.

Resolution

The Characters can trace the trail back to Amos Jebediah King by cross-referencing local observations, testimonies from telegraph workers who have seen anomalies near certain relay stations, and rumors circulating in the town. A reliable lead takes them to a cave carved into the hills, accessible only to those who know where to look.

Once there, they must establish Amos Jebediah King's intentions. A thorough search of his cave reveals draft telegrams, an annotated map of the area surrounding Fort Eldridge, and coded excerpts from transmissions. These items, correctly interpreted, confirm that he has intercepted messages planning an actual attack by a small group of radical Confederate veterans, based in the hills to the west. They possess stolen weapons and plan to attack the military depot within the next two days. The Characters can then alert the fort, trap the group in a strategic canyon, or mount a preemptive operation in collaboration with Carter.

If they fail to locate King in time, they can follow the trail of a civilian informant, a former comrade of King's now a waiter at the Silver Spur, who possesses a partial copy of the telegram and can lead them to a secondary relay station where King has stored his notes. This allows them to piece together the sequence of events and identify one of the agitators, a former Confederate officer named Lyle Harcrow, known to some Pinkertons but still at large. His hideout is located in an old, collapsed mine north of the pass. An infiltration or a targeted attack could neutralize the threat.

In the absence of swift or coordinated action, the attack takes place: the veterans set fire to a military convoy, provoking a brutal reaction from the fort, and the Pinkertons take advantage of the situation to impose martial law on Dead Man's Pass.

Criteria for success or failure

The Characters' objective is to discover the origin and true nature of the message before it provokes a disastrous response. If they act quickly, identifying the true sender and preventing an unjustified attack or repression, the city can regain its fragile balance.

If information is obtained too late, or only partially understood, tensions erupt, violent actions are taken, and innocent people may pay the price, even if a more serious outcome is avoided.

If the plan fails, the attack occurs, leading to deaths, the subjugation of Dead Man's Pass, and a gain in power for the Pinkertons. The choices made leave a lasting mark on the local balance of power.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters realized that the intercepted message might not be what it seemed and began to see contradictory leads.

After 60 minutes, the atmosphere in the city becomes tense, some residents arm themselves, while clues about Amos King or a clandestine faction become clearer.

After 90 minutes, the Characters find themselves facing a strategic dilemma where their decision will weigh on the outcome of the crisis: contain the unrest, act preventively or risk making a mistake with serious consequences.

Railway Sabotage

The facts for the Teller

For three weeks, repeated acts of sabotage have targeted the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad near Dead Man's Pass. Explosives planted on the tracks, destroyed equipment, and rumors of nighttime disappearances are sowing panic. Each week, a new act of sabotage slows the work and creates tension between the laborers, settlers, and military personnel. There are no obvious leads, those in charge are evading responsibility, and mistrust is taking root.

The Railroad Company is pushing for the investigation to move forward, while the town is becoming increasingly divided. Settlers and merchants are making baseless accusations against the Indigenous population, and spontaneous militias are forming in the outlying districts. Captain Eldridge, stationed at Fort Eldridge, threatens to intervene without Sheriff Carter's approval, which could trigger a violent escalation.

In reality, these acts of sabotage are orchestrated by a group of Mexican smugglers nicknamed "The Cousins." Their goal is to slow the railway's progress in order to maintain a strategic passage through the hills: an old smuggling route that will be blocked as soon as the railway is operational. The group's leader, Tomas Ortega, has set up a depot in an abandoned warehouse near the stagecoach station. The location is discreet but guarded, and the supply of explosives is routed through accomplice relay stations south of the town.

A recently dismissed worker, Silas Moore, who has been at odds with Ortega since a disputed division of spoils, might betray his former associates if he receives a guarantee of protection. He knows the comings and goings around the warehouse, the saboteurs' schedules, and even the names of several middlemen still active in the bars of the lower town. However, he is afraid to speak without assurance that he will then be protected.

Intro for the players

The Union Pacific Line construction site is at a standstill, frozen in time after a violent explosion in the nearby hillside. Figures are moving about, workers are shouting, and rumors are flying. This time, a witness claims to have seen a figure fleeing with a crate toward the stagecoach relay.

In a converted trailer away from the commotion, Sheriff Carter beckons you over. His voice is low but tense: "We're walking on eggshells. The Company wants culprits. The army is ready to descend on the Paiute settlement, but I have a feeling it's not them." He stares at you for a moment, then adds, "If you're willing to dig a little deeper into this, I can cover for you. Deputy pay."

Resolution

The Characters can follow several leads: questioning the construction workers, monitoring the area around the coaching inn, or investigating a persistent rumor about suspicious deliveries of large crates. By piecing together these clues, they can locate the warehouse serving as the Cousins' logistical base.

The building appears abandoned, but it is regularly visited by two men. Its ground floor is empty; a trapdoor leads to a reinforced cellar containing crates of dynamite, construction worker clothing, annotated maps of the train's route, and coded documents looking like ledgers. A closer inspection also reveals the remains of recent meals and footprints toward a secondary track. The site shows signs of recent activity, with cleaned tools, fresh footprints, and a still-warm kettle.

Silas Moore can be identified through information gathered from an injured worker who recognized one of the saboteurs, or through the discovery of handwritten notes found in a stash at the relay station indicating his name in connection with suspicious transactions. If he is approached tactfully and reassured of his safety, he will confirm that Tomas Ortega is planning another act of sabotage the day before the official opening of the section. By gaining his trust the Characters learn that the Cousins are expecting a shipment of imported detonators, to be delivered in an unmarked cart from the south. They also have an accomplice infiltrated among the construction workers, tasked with signaling the opportune moment to detonate the charges.

The Characters will need to be creative: booby-trapping the warehouse, orchestrating an arrest with Sheriff Carter, or tailing the saboteurs to catch them red-handed are all possibilities. Hasty action could compromise the evidence or trigger a premature explosion. Conversely, a delayed intervention could lead to a successful attack on a railway bridge and reignite the military escalation. Precision, coordination, and caution are the keys to a favorable outcome.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters clearly identify the saboteurs, gather the evidence, and coordinate an arrest with the sheriff, those responsible are neutralized before their next move. The army is forced to retreat, tensions subside, and the unfounded accusations against the Native Americans are publicly dismissed. The relieved Railroad Company issues a thank-you notice and resumes work with renewed vigilance. The Characters are recognized for their crucial role, and doors open for them in influential local circles.

If one or more saboteurs manage to escape, the evidence is nevertheless sufficient to halt the military intervention. Tensions persist, but public opinion begins to shift. The Characters are seen as effective mediators, although they

remain under surveillance.

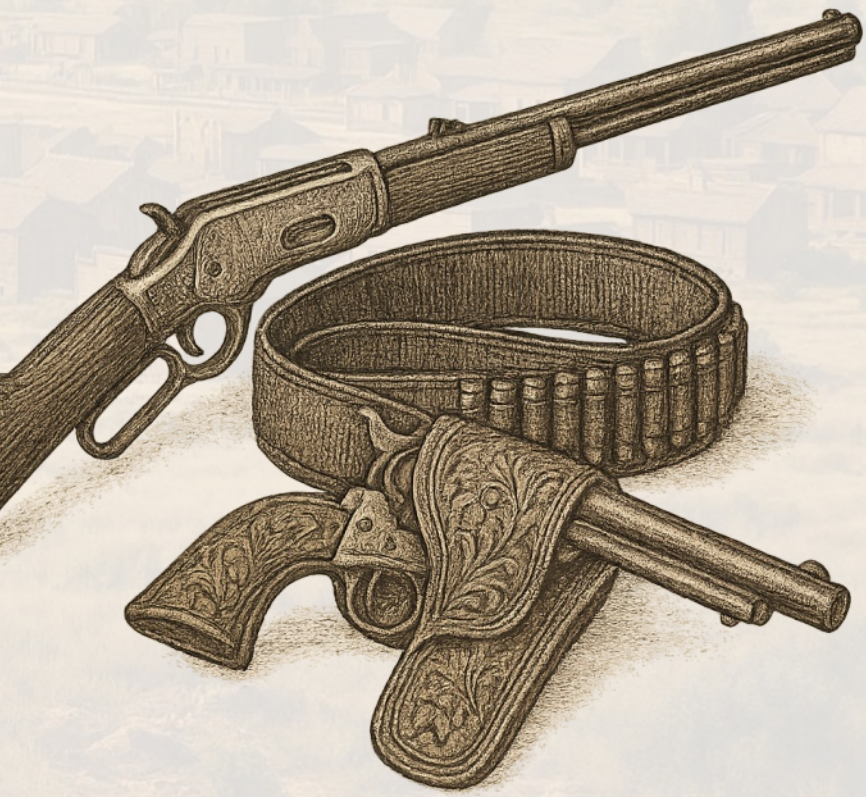
If the Characters fail to prevent it, sabotage strikes again, causing heavy damage to a section of the construction site. The army then launches a punitive operation against the neighboring camps, despite the lack of tangible evidence. Violence erupts, and the saboteurs take advantage of the chaos to disappear. Construction is suspended, the city is tense, and the settlers demand justice at any cost.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, a public meeting stirs the town. Workers and shopkeepers demand strong measures. Sheriff Carter looks for a way to prevent the Union Pacific from calling in the army.

After 60 minutes, a railway worker is fired at near the construction site. A crowd gathers, and rumors accuse the Paiutes. Captain Eldridge prepares an armed expedition.

After 90 minutes, a saboteur is spotted near a depot. If no action is taken quickly, an explosion will occur, causing irreversible damage. The army launches an offensive at dawn.



The Return of the Missing Marshal

The facts for the Teller

Federal Marshal Roy Callahan disappeared five weeks ago during a prisoner transfer mission between Dead Man's Pass and Fort Eldridge. The prisoner, a former Pinkerton agent, possessed compromising information about covert operations conducted on behalf of the Railroad Company. The ambush took place in a remote canyon: a remotely triggered rockfall blocked the passage, followed by the release of a soporific gas using a rudimentary mechanism. Callahan and his prisoner were captured and taken to an old, abandoned mining network, known to prospectors but long since condemned.

This tunnels complex had been reorganized by henchmen working for Horace Black, a senior Pinkerton agent whose reputation in private circles rested on his ability to discreetly "solve" sensitive cases. Black had been given the unofficial mission of eliminating all traces of the now troublesome prisoner, while simultaneously discrediting Callahan by accusing him of desertion. The mine's tunnels, teeming with bioluminescent fungi, served to create an environment conducive to illusion. Callahan was exposed to spores that caused hallucinations, disorientation, and memory impairment. His masked and protected captors had also placed crude artifacts, ancient tools, and staged bones to simulate a non-human presence, evoking a form of forgotten ritual.

After several weeks of captivity in extreme conditions, a rockfall allowed Callahan to escape through a secondary tunnel. Wandering through the hills without food, weakened and still under the influence of the toxins, he reached the outskirts of Dead Man's Pass. There, he recounted being captured by unknown entities in a cavern. His testimony, inconsistent in places but consistent in its narrative thread, sparked increasingly wild rumors, ranging from supernatural abduction to traumatic delirium and federal conspiracy.

Horace Black, convinced that Callahan would not survive, rushed back to town as soon as news of his return reached him. He led a small group of Pinkertons with the objective of erasing all evidence, silencing witnesses, and having Callahan imprisoned before he could reveal too much. The official narrative suggested a disguised desertion and post-traumatic stress disorder due to prolonged isolation, while emphasizing the marshal's unstable mental state.

The local sheriff ordered a medical examination. Dr. Abigail Lorne, who happened to be in the area on a medical tour, diagnosed Callahan with atypical lesions, extreme sensitivity to light, and marked sensory disturbances. Meanwhile, the locals reported strange phenomena in the valley: greenish halos at night, unexplained cries, and panicked animals leaving their enclosures or injuring themselves. These manifestations are caused by spores released by fungi, drifting through the nearby woods from fissures created by the landslide. The cries are those of bats disturbed by the release of gas and

dust, which disrupts their colony in the upper part of the mine.

Callahan is eventually placed under surveillance and care in a wing of the mission. Public opinion oscillates between fascination, fear, and skepticism. The Pinkertons seal off access to the canyon, threaten onlookers, and claim that the marshal's unstable mental health justifies their intervention to maintain a semblance of order in the city.

And the former Pinkerton agent ? Well, at this point he's not part of the story anymore.

Intro for the players

The Silver Spur's common room is unusually quiet. Worried glances are exchanged through the smoky light. Mary, the proprietress, beckons you closer, whispering, "Have you seen Callahan? He's back." She lowers her voice even further. "He says he was captured by creatures... Things that came out of a hole in the rock. And now the Pinkertons want to have him committed." She stares at you for a long moment. "What he says might be true. Or maybe we're all being lied to. You could probably untangle this mess."

Resolution

The Characters can question Callahan. His account, confused but consistent, mentions caves, an eerie light, and an unseen surveillance. He sometimes draws abstract shapes or murmurs incoherent phrases in his sleep. By piecing together his words and sketches, the Characters can trace their way back to the isolated canyon, where they find traces of a campsite, a collapsed descent, and scattered military artifacts. The underground tunnels are unstable and filled with ominous echoes. The spore-laden air clouds their perception, causing dizziness or fleeting visions.

The Pinkertons are trying to cover up the affair. Agent Bramley, a young recruit uneasy with Black's methods, can provide information if his trust is gained. He knows about the booby-trapped tunnel and has heard of a depot used to store smuggled goods. Dr. Lorne notes symptoms in Callahan consistent with prolonged exposure to certain natural toxins. By piecing together their findings, the Characters can establish the origin of the hallucinations, understand what happened in the camp, and demonstrate a deliberate manipulation.

An isolated cavity contains objects deliberately placed there to create confusion: unusable tools, skeletal fragments, and inscriptions recently painted on ancient walls. The Characters can choose to reveal everything publicly, summoning witnesses and the local press, or use their information to discredit the Pinkertons behind the scenes by gaining the support of a prominent citizen or a passing judicial official.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters prove the kidnapping and expose the staged event, the Pinkertons withdraw. Callahan is exonerated, the masterminds are discredited, and the town regains a fragile equilibrium. The marshal can become a lasting ally, perhaps even a regular contact for other sensitive matters.

If Callahan is protected but remains discredited, the affair gradually fades into obscurity. The Characters retain some support, but their role remains ambiguous in the eyes of many. A segment of the population continues to believe in the existence of a conspiracy or a larger threat.

If they fail, the Pinkertons regain control. Callahan is interned, the evidence disappears, and the city descends into paranoia. The Characters become outcasts, monitored or forced into exile, and their attempts to raise the alarm are ridiculed.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the tension rises around the mission building: the Pinkertons are screening the visitors.

After 60 minutes, Callahan suffers a seizure and attempts to flee. Authorities consider permanent sedation.

After 90 minutes, Horace Black announces that the case is closed. Without immediate reaction, Callahan disappears.

The Legend of the Prospector

The facts for the Teller

The old man found dead in the mission's backyard was named Eustace “Old Dusty” Keel. A former solitary prospector, he had been missing for over two months after leaving Dead Man’s Pass, vowing to search for one last vein before winter. No one expected to see him again. His reappearance in town the previous evening had caused quite a stir. Haggard, covered in dried mud, and visibly weakened, he proclaimed in the saloon that he had discovered a huge gold deposit in a crevice north of the mountain range. He hinted that he was being hunted, without specifying by whom, then collapsed from exhaustion. His incoherent speech mixed gold, living tunnels, and "whispers from the stone".

During the night, he left the shelter he had been given, and his body was discovered at dawn, his limbs mangled, his torso ripped open as if by a giant claw. There were no human tracks around the body, only the irregular prints of a wide, cloven hoof leading up the hills. The sheriff quickly evacuated the area, suggesting the presence of a wild animal. But rumors began to circulate: some spoke of a creature from Native American legends, others claimed that Dusty had awakened something that was meant to remain buried. A woman said she saw a winged shadow above the river, while a child claimed to have glimpsed a membranous wing, larger than his arm.

In reality, Keel had indeed discovered an old mine tunnel, collapsed decades earlier, opened by a recent mudflow. At the bottom of this tunnel, he found remnants of ancient mining, but above all, a series of galleries dug directly into a very pure gold vein of unusual size. This gallery also intersected a natural cavity containing the nest of a giant bat. Its agitation was caused by the humidity and light introduced by Keel. Disoriented and injured by a drilling tool, the bat escaped.

The creature, a colossal bat with a strange skeleton, ventured as far as the city. It killed Keel in a panic or by reflex, then fled. Its erratic behavior makes it difficult to track. If the Characters investigate, they can find the breach, the remains of Keel's equipment, and traces of scratches, footprints, abnormal organic excrement, and the bones of dead animals. The unstable tunnel threatens to collapse at the slightest tremor. Underground gases can also alter visitors' perceptions.

The Pinkertons, alerted by reports of gold rush and civil unrest, send an armed patrol under the command of Rawley Finch. Their official mission is to secure the site for geological survey. Their real goal is to initiate the expropriation of the area. Finch is loyal but ruthless; his men are torn between obedience and the lure of profit.

Intro for the players

The tension is palpable in the saloon. The smell of blood still lingers. On the counter, Mary nervously wipes a glass. "Old Dusty... He was here last night, saying he'd struck gold. A pure vein. But this morning... they found him gutted like a deer." She stares at you. "I don't know what he saw up there, but he seemed really scared. He said the rock was moving, that he heard screams. If you don't go, others will. And some won't come back."

Resolution

The Characters can inspect the murder scene, speak to Keel's last witnesses, examine his belongings, and question an old Native American, Moon-Wanderer, who mentions in his legends a "winged shadow of the caves" linked to ancient massacres of miners. He also speaks of the "black breath" that only the elders still fear. By following the clues, the PCs can reach the fissure: the ground is unstable and eroded, the walls still ooze moisture from recent rains, and phosphorescent fungi have begun to grow there.

In the tunnels, they find claw marks, a broken lamp, a sodden notebook with sketches of the creature and furious annotations. The smell is strong, animalistic. Further on, in a natural chamber, lies the skeleton of a winged beast, piled-up animal remains, and heaps of webbing and dried hide, resembling rudimentary nests for young. The creature is still alive. Wounded, it tries to flee, but could become aggressive if cornered. If killed, its acidic blood fumes on the ground; if left undisturbed, it flies off into the darkness.

Meanwhile, the Pinkertons arrive. Their leader, Rawley Finch, declares the area under federal authority. He threatens to arrest the Characters and orders the immediate closure of the tunnel. But some of his men, already equipped with backpacks, are discreetly prospecting. A confrontation is possible, through trickery, negotiation, or force. If the tunnel collapses, everyone is trapped.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to negotiate access, eliminate or repel the creature, and map the tunnel without causing its collapse, they can convince Finch to quarantine it. They leave with samples, the sheriff's gratitude, and a few grams of discreet gold. The gold remains hidden, and the rumors die down.

In the event of a partial success, the Characters survive, but the site collapses. The Pinkertons leave without any evidence. The story of Keel becomes just another legend. A few weeks later, another wounded beast is found in an abandoned barn, but nothing connects the incident to the tunnels.

If the attempt fails, the Characters are arrested, injured, or killed. The creature remains free, and gold prospectors and livestock disappear in the following weeks. The town turns a blind eye. The site is declared a military zone, and no

one is allowed to approach it.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, another team of gold prospectors discreetly heads towards the hills.

After 60 minutes, the Pinkertons set up a barricade and block access. Finch organizes an armed inspection of the tunnels.

After 90 minutes, the creature attacks again, either inside or outside the gallery, depending on the Characters' actions. If they are not present, the event causes panic in the city.



The Missing Arms Convoy

The facts for the Teller

Five days ago, a convoy of four wagons carrying crates of weapons, ammunition, and military equipment bound for Fort Eldridge left the Dry Hollow rail yard. Escorted by a small cavalry detachment, it was to take the Red Bluff Pass, a steep but faster route than the main road. The convoy never arrived. The fort was expecting these reinforcements to secure the area, which had been plagued by recent raids.

The last point of contact was at an isolated relay station where the drivers spent the night. The following morning, they set off before dawn and disappeared after leaving the canyon. The fort, on high alert, dispatched an initial patrol which found discontinuous tracks in a side ravine, then nothing more. The army imposed a censorship on the incident to prevent panic and speculation. Rumors, however, began to circulate among smugglers and prospectors.

The robbery was actually orchestrated by a group of deserters mixed with local bandits, led by Jeb Carter, a former sergeant demoted for violence and embezzlement. Having been tipped off about the convoy by a contact at the depot, Carter meticulously planned an ambush: felled logs, triggered landslides, and frightened horses to sow chaos. The surviving soldiers were either killed or forced to flee uphill. The wagons were driven into an inaccessible canyon, hidden in a cavern concealed beneath a seasonal waterfall. Sentries take turns guarding the surrounding area.

Their plan is to sell the weapons to a private militia operating south of the border in exchange for gold and protection. But the operation is delayed. Transport conditions are precarious, the crossing point is under surveillance, and the contact is slow to materialize. Internal tensions arise. Several accomplices begin to have doubts, some want to flee with their share. One of them, suspected by Carter of betraying them by contacting an acquaintance in town, is found dead, stabbed in his sleep. Carter sows doubt, hoping to reinforce fear as a means of control. A climate of suspicion takes hold within the group.

The situation is becoming critical: without weapons, the fort cannot secure its patrols or hold its position in case of attack. Captain Wilkes, bound by secrecy, discreetly calls upon civilians. He chooses individuals outside the chain of command to avoid leaks.

A lone trapper named Old Mac claimed to have seen a hijacked wagon train several days earlier but was not taken seriously. He asserted that he saw figures carrying crates towards a wood to the north, then the lanterns disappearing under the trees.

A young Paiute scout, Takoma, discovers unusual tracks in the forest: fresh sawdust, a sign of recent logging; the smell of gunpowder, from a fire that burned too brightly; and military rags hanging from branches, torn as if someone had moved hurriedly through the undergrowth.

Meanwhile, Carter's accomplices are trying to eliminate potential witnesses. They set fire to a shepherd's hut, where a wounded and hidden army scout could have raised the alarm.

Intro for the players

In the back room of the saloon, Captain Wilkes speaks to you in a low voice. "We've lost a convoy. Weapons, ammunition, a whole stockpile for Eldridge. Officially, there was a delay. Actually, we haven't had any contact for five days. The army can't investigate openly without attracting the vultures or arousing the curiosity of those who covet the cargo. If we let the information leak, there'll be a stampede to the hills." He pauses, crosses his arms. "I need a discreet group. Self-sufficient. Who know how to go off the beaten track and keep their mouths shut when necessary."

He glances towards the door. "Trails lead to Red Bluff. And some crazy old guy, Mac, swears he saw the wagons turning off towards the hills. He was ignored. Perhaps wrongly. He knows the trails, and he has no reason to make up stories."

He stares at you for a long time. "I will pay you. Not as officers. Not as soldiers. As ghosts. No one must know. You leave tonight."

Resolution

The Characters can question Old Mac, who describes the sound of hooves in the night, covered lanterns, and nervous voices. He shows them an unmarked path leading to an old lumber camp, now overgrown with brambles. Along the way, they encounter Takoma, who is concerned about recent signs: tracks of shodden horses with carriages, smoldering fires, and strips of military clothing. Following these clues, the Characters arrive in an area of red rock marked by a collapse: the tracks disappear near a seasonal stream.

A thorough search reveals a hidden passage behind a waterfall. Inside, the carts are camouflaged under tarpaulins and guarded by three armed men. Other accomplices are positioned on higher ground, keeping watch over the surrounding area. The site's layout makes any confrontation risky: the higher ground gives the guards an advantage. The Characters can disguise themselves, pretend to be messengers, or attempt infiltration. A diversion (fire, animal cry, falling rocks) can force the guards to scatter.

Once inside, the Characters can inspect the wagons, identify the weapons, and find coded documents describing the sales agreement, and an annotated map of the border. A notebook mentions a partial payment received and a buyer preparing to cross the border within two days. Searching personal bags, they

discover that some guards planned to escape with their share. This could be used to divide the accomplices.

If captured, the bandits will talk under duress. Carter is in an abandoned hamlet further up the road, with the remaining crates, two loyal men, and a lamp to signal for contact. A race against time begins: either prevent the transaction or intercept the buyer's convoy, expected at dusk. The Characters can also set up in their exit road to turn the ambush around.

The final situation could escalate into a shootout in the hamlet, a chase through the hills, or a difficult negotiation. If Carter tries to flee, he has a horse ready in a shed. A storm is approaching: the rain could obliterate the trails or trigger a landslide. If the Characters exploit the bandits' weaknesses and the weather, they can turn the assault against their adversaries.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters locate the weapons and hand them over to the army without raising alarm, they earn Wilkes's recognition and a substantial reward. The trafficking is disrupted, and Carter is captured or killed. The fort can resume operations in the area, and the Characters become key contacts.

If the weapons are recovered but some bandits escape, success is partial. The army covers up the incident but remains vulnerable. An internal investigation is launched, and tensions arise among officers regarding convoy security.

If the weapons cross the border, the operation fails. The fort is attacked a few weeks later. The characters are suspected of having been manipulated or compromised. They must flee or prove their innocence at the risk of reprisals.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, a scout for the bandits spots suspicious movements from afar and returns to warn his companions, without clearly identifying the Characters or confirming their position.

After 60 minutes, the Characters reach the hidden camp. A storm threatens, making movement more difficult.

After 90 minutes, Carter triggers the evacuation of the remaining weapons via a secret path. The Characters must act immediately to intercept or abandon the operation.

The Railway Sabotage

The facts for the Teller

The explosion that occurred in the dead of night near Fort Eldridge obliterated a crucial section of the railway linking Dead Man's Pass to the rest of the territory. This act of sabotage immediately sent shockwaves throughout the region. The army, under the command of Captain Thomas Eldridge, promptly accused the Paiute, citing old disputes and alleged open hostility. This version conveniently suited some officers eager to end the protracted negotiations, as well as the railway company, which saw it as an opportunity to demand increased military protection and ask for financial compensation.

The attack was actually planned and executed by an extremist faction of the Ranchers' Union, secretly led by the powerful Orville Sloane. This radical minority fiercely opposes the construction of the railroad, which they perceive as a government intrusion threatening their control over the rangelands and the autonomy of the large landowners. They hope armed conflict between the army and the Native Americans will permanently weaken both sides, allowing the ranchers to regain control of the region. The success of their plan hinges on secrecy and speed: all evidence of their involvement must disappear, and suspicion must be directed squarely at the Native Americans.

The saboteurs used explosives, likely stolen from the mine or taken from a military depot. After the explosion they carefully staged the scene: crudely made arrows were stuck into trees, moccasin prints were imprinted using fake soles, and a message claiming responsibility was left in an imperfect Paiute dialect, riddled with errors that would be obvious to a Paiute speaker. Some local witnesses are beginning to doubt this version of events but are afraid to speak out, fearing reprisals. Some traders close to the Indigenous community suspect the deception but are keeping their observations to themselves.

Under pressure from his superiors, Captain Eldridge is planning a reprisal attack on Paiute territory. He is a man of principle but his loyalty to the army compels him to act quickly. Sheriff Carter, though skeptical, is forced to cooperate due to a lack of solid evidence contradicting the army's claims. A race against time ensues for if the true culprits are not identified soon, a bloodbath is inevitable. Some mid-ranking soldiers, local traders, and a few moderate ranchers could prove to be valuable allies, provided their trust can be earned and their sense of loyalty respected.

Intro for the players

A deep rumble shook the earth last night. By morning, rumors were rife in the dusty streets of Dead Man's Pass. A section of the railway line had been blown out not far from Fort Eldridge. In the Silver Spur, feverish whispers mingle with worried glances. Some are already talking about war. Mary Whitmore remains

silent, but her expression betrays her anxiety. The atmosphere is as tense as a piano string. The explosion hasn't just damaged the tracks; it has deeply shaken the very fragile balance of the town.

As you enter, Sheriff Carter gestures for you to approach discreetly. He seems preoccupied, almost dejected. "The road is cut off. Supplies, ammunition... everything is blocked. The army is on edge. They think it's the Paiutes. And the high command wants to react quickly. Too quickly." He stares intently at you, his weathered features contorted with anxiety. "If it isn't the Paiutes, we have to prove it. Quickly. Otherwise tonight the cavalry will march on the reservation. And it will be a massacre." Behind him, a crumpled telegram lies on the desk, signed by the regional commander and confirming that the order to attack must be issued immediately if no evidence exonerates the Paiutes.

Resolution

The Characters can follow several leads. A careful examination of the explosion site will reveal the presence of dynamite and gunpowder residue, typical of explosives used in the region's mines or army depots. Analysis of the debris will reveal a precise execution requiring advanced explosives handling skills and access to strictly controlled stockpiles, such as those of a mine or military depot. Such resources clearly are beyond the reach of an isolated group of Paiutes. Questioning the line workers, some will report seeing unfamiliar figures loitering several days prior. A local craftsman can identify the origin of the detonators used: a warehouse run by Syndicate members. One of the carters might recall an unusual cargo being transported north at night.

The key lies in a small, isolated ranch owned by a discreet associate of Orville Sloane. Upon arriving there, the Characters can find stockpiles of identical explosives, scribbled plans of the railroad, and a coded journal detailing the preparations for the sabotage. An accounting ledger also mentions the anonymous purchase of an unusual quantity of gunpowder. If they can coerce one of the saboteurs into talking, or steal these documents, they will have solid evidence.

They can also convince one of the fort's officers, Lieutenant Braddock, an upright but hesitant field officer, to verify the information before launching the attack. To do this, they must present him with clear and irrefutable evidence. His testimony could carry significant weight and force the captain to call off the assault.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters can prove the Ranchers' Syndicate's involvement in the sabotage, the town will be saved from a bloodbath. Sheriff Carter will be able to prevent the attack on the Paiutes, and the situation will return to normal. However tensions will remain high between the local factions and the

Syndicate, which may seek revenge. The Characters' victory will restore peace, but the bonds between the different communities will now be more fragile.

If the Characters fail to identify the true culprits or cannot provide sufficient evidence to challenge the official version, the army will attack the Paiute reservation. This massacre will trigger a violent reaction, not only from the Paiutes, but also from many residents of Dead Man's Pass, who will see their town ravaged and destroyed. The Characters will have to bear the responsibility for failing to prevent the war.

In the event of partial success, where the Characters manage to slow the attack but not completely prevent it, the violence will be limited, but the damage will be significant. The army might temporarily withdraw, but mistrust between the communities will soar like never before. The Characters will have bought themselves some time, but the situation remains extremely volatile.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, a military messenger arrives at the Silver Spur with troubling news: Captain Eldridge is gathering his officers to discuss armed action. A window for negotiation remains open, but it is rapidly closing.

After 60 minutes, anomalies are noted at the explosion site. A crudely carved arrow intrigues the Characters, while a witness mentions a suspicious figure on the night of the incident. The hypothesis of a staged event begins to take shape.

After 90 minutes, the tension rises. A small group of soldiers leaves the fort without official orders, determined to avenge the attack. The Characters must stop them or alert the sheriff before it's too late. If nothing is done, the assault becomes imminent at the end of the game.



The Besieged Sheriff

The facts for the Teller

Dead Man's Pass is going through a particularly tense period. For the past few weeks, Billy "Red" Murphy and his gang, the "Sons of the Devil", have been prowling the outskirts of town, committing robberies, intimidation, and isolated murders. Their ultimate goal is clear: to take control of Dead Man's Pass and establish an operational base from which to extend their influence throughout the region. John "Lame" Carter, the aging but respected sheriff, has made several appeals for help to Fort Eldridge and neighboring authorities, but no response has yet been received. The well-organized gang, composed of about twenty armed and experienced members, is blocking the main access routes to the town to deter any reinforcements.

Murphy sent Sheriff Carter an ultimatum: surrender the town without resistance, or face a full-scale assault by sunset. Carter, incorruptible and determined, categorically refused to yield, knowing that surrender would mean ruin and enslavement for the townspeople. Yet, due to his integrity and the town's limited resources, he found himself alone in the face of the immediate danger. The terrified and powerless townspeople hesitated to take sides, fearing reprisals if Carter failed.

Furthermore, some influential residents, notably Ezra P. Wilkinson, the banker, secretly see an opportunity to increase their influence by discreetly negotiating with Murphy, willing to betray the sheriff to ensure their own survival and keep their property. This double game further complicates the situation, jeopardizing any attempt to unite the townspeople against the attackers. Wilkinson has secretly financed Murphy's gang, hoping to play both sides in this conflict.

Sheriff Carter does however possess a few discreet advantages: he has hidden several weapons, as well as limited supplies of ammunition and explosives, in his office. He is well aware of the city's tactical weaknesses and has discreetly placed a few choke points on the main streets to slow down a potential attack. His immediate objective is to hold out until the hypothetical arrival of outside help, while minimizing civilian casualties.

Carter knows he can't rely solely on choke points and hidden weapon caches. The citizens, though frightened, are capable of defending themselves if motivated to unite. He could call upon local leaders to rally the inhabitants and convince them to take up arms. But a pervasive sense of fear and mistrust persists among the population, especially since some prominent figures like Wilkinson are trying to manipulate events to their advantage.

Intro for the players

The sun is setting over Dead Man's Pass, bathing the streets in an ominous reddish light. In front of the sheriff's office, John Carter stands straight, his gaze fixed on the surrounding hills, aware of the imminent danger. He turns to you, his voice calm but firm: "Billy Murphy wants to take the town before nightfall. I have no one to help me, but if anyone here cares about Dead Man's Pass, now's the time to prove it. Together, we have a chance to mount a defense. Without you, the town will be lost before dawn."

Resolution

The player characters must act quickly to help Sheriff Carter organize the town's defense. At the first signs of attack, they must either rally the citizens by explaining the gravity of the situation or begin organizing the town's limited resources, such as weapons and traps. They can help convince residents to join the resistance by appealing to local leaders like Mary Whitmore, who wields some influence over the population. If the characters succeed in persuading the majority of the inhabitants to fight, it would significantly boost the town's defense.

Once the townspeople are mobilized, the Characters can organize the defense of key buildings in the town. The sheriff's office, the bank, and the Silver Spur are the nerve centers, and the Characters will have to set up barricades, monitor access points, and establish choke points. They will also have access to the traps prepared by Carter to slow the attack and sow confusion among the assailants. If they manage to exploit these traps correctly, it could inflict significant losses on Murphy's gang before they even reach the strategic points.

Meanwhile, the Characters must conduct a discreet investigation to identify any traitors within the town. By uncovering the secret intentions of Wilkinson or other prominent citizens, they can expose their duplicity, further disorganizing the attackers and rallying the townspeople to the sheriff's cause. The Characters can use clues such as overheard conversations, intercepted documents, or witnesses who may have seen Wilkinson speaking with members of Murphy's gang. If the Characters succeed in exposing the traitors, it will bolster the morale of the defense and destabilize the attackers.

Murphy's gang, though determined, will begin to doubt and disorganize if they see the defenders putting up a strong resistance and the population rallying to their cause. If the Characters manage to sow panic among the attackers, either by disrupting their supplies or by killing or capturing key members of their group, this could tip the scales in the town's favor.

If the Characters manage to hold out long enough, reinforcements from Fort Eldridge will finally arrive, repelling the attackers and saving Dead Man's Pass. However, if the resistance weakens or if the internal betrayal is not identified

and contained, the town will quickly fall under the control of Murphy's gang, and Carter will have to flee if he survives, leaving a portion of the population under the criminals' thumb.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters succeed in effectively defending the town, thwarting the traitors' internal plans, and surviving until reinforcements arrive from Fort Eldridge, Dead Man's Pass will remain free, enhancing Sheriff Carter's reputation and prestige. The townspeople will realize the importance of a united community in the face of external threats, and Murphy's accomplices will be discredited and socially isolated.

If the Characters fail to coordinate an effective defense or to prevent internal betrayals, the town will quickly fall into Murphy's hands. Sheriff Carter, if he survives, will become a fugitive seeking to rally a resistance, but the grip of the "Sons of the Devil" will be brutal and difficult to break. The population will be subjected to violent rule, and any hope of rebellion will be crushed.

In the event of a partial failure, where the city is preserved but with significant human or material damage, Dead Man’s Pass will become a darker, more distrustful and divided city, leaving the survivors facing a difficult moral and physical reconstruction.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters organize the defense, gather the inhabitants, and prepare for the imminent attack. They assess the situation and begin using available resources to reinforce strategic points in the city.

After 60 minutes, Murphy's gang begins its assault, with initial attacks targeting key buildings. The Characters must manage the waves of attack and use the traps they've set to slow the assailants. Meanwhile, signs of betrayal begin to emerge, and the Characters must act quickly to neutralize this internal threat.

After 90 minutes, reinforcements from Fort Eldridge begin to arrive, but the situation remains precarious. If the Characters succeed in maintaining the morale of the inhabitants and organizing an effective defense, the attackers will begin to doubt their victory. If they fail, Murphy's gang could gain the upper hand and force the defenders to retreat.

The Ghosts from the Cemetery

The facts for the Teller

For the past few weeks, the oldest graves in the Dead Man's Pass cemetery have been left gaping open. Nothing suggests a typical desecration: the ground has collapsed from within, and the coffins are empty. The caretaker speaks of figures prowling among the stones at dusk.

Two settlers were found dead in their locked house, their faces contorted with fear. The doctor, powerless to help, suggests a sudden cardiac arrest due to fright. A back window had been left ajar. Everything indicates they were surprised inside their bedroom. The town is gripped by shock.

At the root of these phenomena lies the Order of the Sacred Chalice. Under the guise of spirituality, its members initiated a ritual intended to atone for the sins of the dead. The goal was to allow spirits to symbolically complete what they left undone in life. But the practice spiraled out of control: bodies rise, devoid of consciousness, and mechanically reenact fragments of their past. These dead do not speak, do not act of their own volition, but may wander to a formerly familiar place.

The link between these creatures and their burial sites is occult seals, hidden beneath certain tombstones. These symbols were traced by hand, in gall ink and blood, by the Order's acolytes. The Characters can suspect the existence of the seals by observing open tombs: some display symbols carved in the stone or traces of dried fluids around the base. A careful comparison between violated and undisturbed tombs reveals a pattern, suggesting a deliberate and ritualistic act. Analyzing specific symbols or residues on certain tombs can also provide clues for the Characters.

The dead do not fight. They wander, slowly, as if called by an inner echo. Their flesh is cold, their gaze empty. If one of them is seized or restrained, it struggles without hostility. A bright light, a splash of salt, or a sudden sound can temporarily disorient it. Only the destruction of the seal corresponding to its tombstone immobilizes it permanently.

The Order operates from the walled-up crypt of the White Hill Chapel. This cursed place, sealed for decades, has been secretly reclaimed. Brother Malachi, who leads the cult, believes the city must be reborn by atoning for the unacknowledged sins of its dead. Influential figures are among his followers and will protect the Order.

Sheriff Carter, overwhelmed, receives complaints he no longer understands. Several children disappear one night only to reappear haggard at dawn, marked by a silent fear. No assaults have been reported, but several of them describe, in fragments, memories of walking in the dark or of ancient chants heard in their sleep. Disturbingly, these nocturnal wanderings sometimes

follow the now mostly forgotten routes of the town's old funeral processions. Dogs refuse to approach certain houses near active graves. Several families report having the same dreams, in which familiar faces stared at them from mirrors. Lamps suddenly go out, without a draft, and reflections appear in windows, even in the dark. These signs, still subtle, contribute to build a palpable tension throughout the town.

Intro for the players

The wind stirs up dust between the leaning crosses. The caretaker waits for you, his face drawn. "Another empty grave... Look: the wood is broken from the inside." He trembles. "That's the third this week. And last night, I saw Henry Morrow... he was walking near the gate. Dead since February, that boy."

Further on, Sheriff Carter signals to you. "I've heard about you. If this crazy old man is telling the truth, I need to keep this quiet. The town mustn't panic." He lowers his voice. "Two witnesses have already died of fright. This isn't an investigation anymore, it's a cry for help."

Resolution

The investigation begins with an examination of the open tombs. The Characters quickly notice that some of the headstones bear occult symbols, engraved at the base or concealed within the ornamentation. Around these stones, traces of dried fluids sometimes form irregular circles. These elements, absent from the other tombs, suggest a ritual.

The undertaker, if spoken to, mentions an old case. Thirty years earlier, after similar desecrations, a rumor had circulated about a group performing rituals at the White Hill Chapel. He still has a notebook belonging to his predecessor, with sketches of the marks found at the time, resembling those visible today.

By cross-referencing these clues with local archives, the Characters can discover that several prominent figures present today are linked to the chapel's past renovations. Work records reveal names and expenses. Once the chapel is identified, they can look for signs of recent activity: tools moved, traces in the dust, padlocks forced or relocked. Nighttime surveillance or a search reveals a man in a dark robe, placing objects inside. By discreetly following him, they can identify him as a member of the Order of the Sacred Chalice.

Questioning him or searching his home confirms the existence of the Order and provides details about the ongoing ritual. The crypt beneath the chapel houses a black altar, symbolic frescoes, suspended bodies, and a stone circle. A manuscript there explains the ritual's purpose: to open a permanent passage between the world of the dead and the world of the living, because the Order believes that the souls of the unjustly judged possess forgotten knowledge capable of revealing the truth about the town's occult origins. By gathering

these souls and maintaining their presence in the world of the living, they hope to obtain forbidden revelations capable of altering the known history of Dead Man's Pass and overturning the current order.

The Characters have several levers at their disposal to try and interrupt the ritual. By destroying the visible seals on the identified tombs, they can stop the animation of the associated revenants and thus disrupt the overall process.

An infiltration into the crypt would allow them to destroy the artifacts necessary to stabilize the passage between worlds, leading to the collapse of the ritual.

Finally, if they manage to establish conclusive links between the Order and certain notables, public action could destabilize the cult's support network and force them to stop.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to interrupt the ritual before the new moon, break the seals, and uncover the instigators, the dead will return to peace and the manifestations will cease. Calm will return to Dead Man's Pass, although the authorities would prefer to suppress the matter to avoid any panic.

If the ritual is stopped but the Order is not fully dismantled, the spirits of the past continue to haunt certain areas. The prominent figures involved remain untouchable, and a climate of unease persists. The population tries to resume normal life, but the disquiet is palpable.

If the Characters fail to prevent the ritual's completion, the dark moon signals the mass awakening of the dead. Dead Man's Pass descends into panic, the population flees, and the Order secretly establishes itself as an occult force. The entire region then enters a period of supernatural chaos.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, another empty grave is found. Panic sets in at the Silver Spur.

After 60 minutes, a Character spots a familiar figure in a deserted street. Anxiety rises.

After 90 minutes, a member of the Order attempts to eliminate the investigators. If nothing is done, the ritual will be completed at nightfall.

The Shadow of the Coyote

The facts for the Teller

For the past week, Dead Man's Pass has been plagued by a series of disturbing events: perfectly healthy horses are found dead and emaciated each morning, crops are inexplicably turning black, and the water in several wells is becoming foul-smelling. Settlers speak of whispers heard at night, voices in the wind, and the silhouette of a black coyote prowling the ridges. A climate of fear is rapidly taking hold. Some see it as divine punishment, others accuse the Paiute of witchcraft. Sheriff John Carter tries to contain the tensions, but Ezra Wilkinson is exploiting the panic to incite violence. Secret meetings are being held, and weapons are circulating discreetly in the streets.

In reality, these phenomena mark the liberation of the spirit of Ohanzee, a former Paiute sorcerer banished by Chogan Black Bear for his forbidden practices. Ohanzee has been dead for a long time, but his spectral essence had been contained deep within the desert by a sacred artifact: the Coyote Claw. This talisman acted as a spiritual seal, keeping the spirit out of the world of the living and preventing its influence from spreading. As long as the Claw remained in its sanctuary, the balance was maintained.

The breaking of this seal unleashed Ohanzee's influence. The origin of this disaster can be traced to Jedediah "Goldtooth" Jackson, an opportunistic businessman who had heard of a mystical artifact that could bring in a fortune. Thinking he'd found a good deal, he ordered his men to desecrate a sacred cave in order to seize the Coyote's Claw. Unaware of the object's true nature, he hid it in his warehouse, waiting to resell it. With this reckless act, Jackson shattered an ancient balance and released a spiritual force that should have remained sealed forever.

Unable to manifest physically, Ohanzee acts as a diffuse force: apparitions, corruption of flora and fauna, visions, fevers, nightmares, and mental disturbances. His presence fuels tensions, stirs resentment, and pushes the city to the brink of collapse. Once freed, he unleashes the Coyote's Fury, a creeping and uncontrollable curse. He does not seek confrontation, but rather to prevent any attempt at banishment. He seeks to reclaim the Claw or, failing that, to destroy any possibility of restoring the seal.

Intro for the players

The wind carries the stench of carrion across the plain. Near an enclosure, farmers gather around a dead horse, decomposing in just a few hours. Their faces are tense, their murmurs anxious. A heavy silence falls over the scene, broken only by the buzzing of flies and the sharp crunch of boots in the dust. A somber atmosphere hangs in the air, thick with incomprehension and superstition.

"It's the devil himself", mutters an old man, tracing an awkward religious sign in the air.

On a nearby hill, a black coyote stares at the scene. It doesn't flee, doesn't tremble. It watches, and disappears. Sheriff John Carter approaches slowly, his brow furrowed and his features drawn with fatigue and worry.

“Seven horses in two days. The wheat is turning black. The wells stink. Now some say we’re cursed.”

A farmer leaps out of the crowd.

"It's those Paiutes! I saw one of them prowling around last night! What are we waiting for?!"

All eyes turn towards Chogan Black Bear, who observes in silence. He then advances with a calm, but firm step.

"This is not our magic. But I fear the spirit of a sorcerer I once exiled has returned. Ohanzee is back."

Resolution

The Characters must identify the source of the curse and attempt to counter it before armed conflict erupts or the city collapses. Chogan can provide them with information about Ohanzee's past, his banishment, and the dangers associated with the Coyote's Claw, as well as the approximate location of the cave where it was kept. Upon arriving at the site, the Characters may discover that the sacred place has recently been desecrated: signs of forced entry, abandoned tools, and a fragment of canvas bearing the trademark of a supplier known to work with Jackson.

Back in town, they can cross-reference these elements with other rumors or documents (inventories, witnesses who saw strange equipment being moved to Jackson's warehouses), which will arouse suspicion against him. They can then try to extract information from his men, discreetly observe his movements, or break into his warehouse to search for evidence. Jackson will deny any involvement, but physical evidence and indirect testimony will gradually incriminate him.

Once the Claw is located and recovered, the Characters can try to understand its connection to the curse. Certain symbols on the walls of the desecrated cave and the stories of Chogan Black Bear, if he is trusted, will reveal that the Claw did not possess an active power, but acted as a seal banishing Ohanzee from the world of the living. Ohanzee, a former Paiute sorcerer and enemy of Chogan, has in fact been dead for a long time, and his spirit has survived only in spectral form, imprisoned in the desert.

Ohanzee cannot be located or confronted physically; his presence manifests only through visions, whispers, or supernatural phenomena. To reseal the seal,

the Claw must be used in a ritual led by Chogan, intended to permanently banish Ohanzee's spirit. This ritual requires a sacred space and the willing participation of the Characters.

If the Claw is destroyed instead of sealed, the curse worsens dramatically. The earth cracks, mass hallucinations appear, and Ohanzee's influence spreads throughout the region. There is another, older and more dangerous ritual that can permanently sever the connection to the spirit. This ritual, also led by Chogan, requires a voluntary human sacrifice: only such an act can restore the balance shattered by the desecration.

Meanwhile, Reverend Ezekiel Thatcher seeks to seize the Claw in order to purify it according to biblical rites. Blinded by his faith, he ignores the warnings. If he succeeds, the curse will worsen. If he fails, he will denounce the Characters as agents of evil.

Wilkinson is pushing to mobilize the settlers, organize a punitive expedition against the Paiutes, and re-establish an order based on terror.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Coyote Claw is recovered intact and used in a ritual led by Chogan Black Bear, the spirit of Ohanzee is repelled and the curse gradually dissipates. The animals cease to die, the land becomes fertile again, and the population begins to regain a fragile balance. Chogan publicly acknowledges the Characters' help and their role in restoring the ancestral seal.

If the Claw has been destroyed, the Characters can attempt an older ritual of severance, requiring a voluntary human sacrifice. If this ritual is successful, the curse ends but leaves behind a spiritual scar: the site of the sacrifice becomes cursed, and the memory of this act permanently divides the inhabitants.

In the event of inaction, disorganization, or ritual failure, the curse spreads without limit. Ohanzee, though immaterial, consumes the spirits of the living. The city gradually empties under the influence of madness, fear, or death. Wilkinson and his followers blame the Natives, launch a bloody expedition, and seal the hatred for all to come. Any attempt at purification led by Reverend Thatcher only exacerbates the scourge, or even destroys the Claw's power if it falls into his hands.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the town is plunged into fear as animals die, crops wither, and tensions rise between settlers and Paiutes, prompting Chogan to speak of Ohanzee.

After 60 minutes, the Characters discover that Jackson has stolen the Coyote's Claw, causing a spiritual imbalance, while Wilkinson incites the settlers to

violence.

After 90 minutes, the Characters perform a ritual with the Claw or must consider a sacrifice to stop the curse, triggering either appeasement or a supernatural calamity that will decide the fate of Dead Man's Pass.



The Convoy in Danger

The facts for the Teller

The convoy left Sacramento six days ago, under civilian cover. To avoid attracting attention, the army disguised the shipment as a delivery of railway equipment. On board, hidden under unmarked crates, were several dozen automatic rifles destined for the garrison at Fort Eldridge. Captain Thomas Eldridge himself ordered the discreet transport, deeming the local situation too unstable for a conventional military convoy. However, this precaution backfired: the route was leaked to Billy "Red" Murphy's gang by an anonymous informant, likely paid by the smugglers connected to Goldtooth Jackson, who would indirectly profit from any competition in arms trafficking.

The attack occurred in a narrow passage late in the day. Two guards were killed, the drivers captured or scattered, and the bandits now control the site. Their objective is clear: to resell the weapons to hostile factions or redistribute them, sowing chaos and weakening the military presence. Goldtooth's mules are on their way to collect the cargo before nightfall. Some survivors from the convoy have taken refuge in the surrounding forest.

Time is running out and if no one intervenes the weapons will be lost, and with them the already fragile balance of the region. Sheriff Carter is unaware of the convoy's true contents but is beginning to suspect it wasn't just a shipment of spare parts. Mary Whitmore, on the other hand, seems to know more than she's letting on. She was tipped off by one of her contacts in the Sacramento warehouses that a sensitive shipment was passing through Dead Man's Pass and discreetly had the route monitored to find out more. Although she hasn't directly alerted the authorities, she's closely monitoring events, ready to intervene if it serves her interests or strengthens her influence in the city. Inaction would have dramatic consequences: an increase in convoy attacks, escalating tensions in the region, and a loss of control over the city by law enforcement. The situation is explosive, and every minute counts.

Intro for the players

The door of the Silver Spur slams shut as a breathless rider, his coat covered in dust and his eyes filled with fear, bursts open. “The wagon train has been attacked up in the hills! They need help, quick!” he calls out, his voice rippling, immediately drawing the attention of the saloon's patrons. A heavy silence falls, quickly broken by the clinking of glasses hurriedly placed on the bar and the scraping of a chair being pushed back as someone rises. The air, thick with dust, fear, and urgency, hangs heavy in the room, as if suspended. Sheriff Carter, already standing by the door, slowly wipes his brow and scans the faces around him, searching for a spark of courage. “I can’t leave town, not now. But you, you have horses... and a chance to make a difference.” He pauses. “This wagon train might be more important than just cargo.”

Resolution

The Characters can use a smugglers' trail known to one of the locals, which leads to the higher ground from the west. Observing the camp, they spot three lookout posts and an armed group gathered around the crates. They can choose to wait until nightfall to attempt an infiltration, create a diversion in the valley by calling on accomplices, or engage in direct combat.

Once there, surprise is their greatest asset: the bandits don't expect a swift reaction. If they free the survivors, they can provide valuable information about the camp's layout and the location of the weapons. By inspecting the crates, the Characters discover their true contents.

They must then make a strategic choice: complete the delivery themselves, send a messenger to the fort, or negotiate an escort via Mary Whitmore, who could mobilize her own networks.

Another option is to set a trap for Goldtooth by simulating a double game from Murphy, in order to provoke a confrontation between rival factions.

Depending on their methods, the Characters can uncover the informant's identity, thereby compromising a wider chain of corruption. By questioning the convoy's survivors, they may learn that one of the drivers seemed particularly nervous before the attack, asking insistent questions about the route. A thorough search of the bandits' camp may reveal a crumpled note containing the exact departure times, annotated in the handwriting of a Sacramento warehouse employee. Back in town, a confrontation with this suspect or a discreet investigation of the post office records can establish a connection: coded telegrams sent to an address known to belong to Goldtooth. This evidence formally establishes the informant's involvement and exposes a network of collusion between civilian transporters, smugglers, and criminal factions.

If the bandits manage to escape with the weapons, a wave of coordinated attacks will sweep across the region.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to regain control of the convoy, secure all the crates and deliver them directly to Fort Eldridge before nightfall, their intervention is praised by the military authorities. Captain Thomas Eldridge grants them an official award and assures them of increased protection going forward. This operation temporarily strengthens the sheriff's authority and restores the military balance in the region.

If the Characters neutralize the attackers but leave the convoy behind, or if they entrust its protection to unreliable third parties, the weapons are recovered, but their delivery to the fort remains uncertain. The military

command expresses distrust of the methods employed, and the alliance between the local authorities and Fort Eldridge is weakened. Tensions persist, and the promised support is not fully delivered.

If the Characters fail to prevent the bandits from escaping with their weapons, the region quickly faces a resurgence of violence. Targeted attacks hit militia outposts and trading posts. Sheriff Carter loses control of several areas, while Goldtooth Jackson strengthens his influence through a thriving black market. The population lives in fear, and the army prepares for a more drastic intervention.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the hidden survivors of the convoy are spotted by a scout who returns with two armed men.

After 60 minutes, the crates are transferred onto the mules which begin the descent towards the smuggling relay.

After 90 minutes, Billy "Red" Murphy arrives to oversee the departure, personally taking command of the escort.

The Secret of the Douglas Ranch

The facts for the Teller

For several weeks, Catherine "Cat" Douglas's ranch has been the target of repeated acts of vandalism: fences cut, panicked cattle, contaminated water supplies, and tools found broken as if by an invisible force. These events are severely disrupting the ranch's operations. It is located a good distance from the city, on the edge of an ancient Paiute sacred site.

Catherine initially suspected revenge from competitors or a former employee, but no motive seemed to fit these events. One evening, she saw a hooded figure lurking near the family well, then she found an ancient symbol engraved on a stone in the corral.

By questioning an old scholar in Dead Man’s Pass, she learns that the ranch rests on the ruins of a forgotten sanctuary. Her grandfather, Silas Douglas, is said to have discovered and sealed an artifact during its construction. This ancient object attracts the attention of an esoteric faction affiliated with the Brothers of the Path. They are convinced it is a “heart of earth,” a relic containing ancient power.

Troubled, she turns to Chogan Black Bear to verify this hypothesis. He recognizes the pattern as a mark used to denote places imbued with sacred power. By comparing it with the stories left by her grandfather Silas, Catherine accepts the idea that an ancient and dangerous object might be buried on her land. It is then that she decides to seek help from people outside the ranch.

The attackers, followers of a syncretic cult blending occultism and distorted indigenous rituals, seek to precisely locate the artifact. Their actions are coordinated. They operate discreetly and try to avoid any open confrontation. Their leader, a certain Eliphas Narek, poses as an itinerant herbalist and secretly recruits followers by exploiting local superstitions.

The artifact is located in a sealed underground crypt, hidden beneath the ranch's old stone cellar, buried near the house and protected by a still-active mineral seal. This seal is a complex assembly of crystals, powered by specific lunar cycles. If the group does not intervene, the seal will be broken at the next new moon, unleashing uncontrollable power.

Sheriff Carter knows nothing about the case, but Mary Whitmore has heard of strangers searching for an old esoteric map recently stolen from the mission library. This map, a reproduction of a topographical survey annotated by Silas Douglas, is the key to pinpointing the exact entrance to the sacred vault. It was stolen two weeks ago from the mission library by an unidentified individual, likely connected to the cult. According to Mary Whitmore, it might be in the possession of someone named Eliphas Narek or kept in a temporary hideout used by the followers near the old, abandoned post house at the northern exit

of Dead Man's Pass.

Intro for the players

The sun was setting over the plain when a rider stopped in front of your table. His saddle bore the colors of the Douglas Ranch. He dismounted silently, removed his hat, and stared at you, his expression somber. "Mrs. Douglas would like to speak with you. There's something going on on her land. And it's not the work of simple thieves." He paused. "For three nights in a row, the cattle have been bellowing for no reason, the fences breaking without any sign of a struggle. They say the ground trembles beneath their boots, and some have seen bluish lights floating between the hills. She thinks someone is looking for something. And she prefers to deal with people who know what they're doing."

Resolution

The Characters can retrieve the map by questioning Mary Whitmore. She directs them to Father Clancy, the mission leader, who confirms that an ancient map was recently stolen. By questioning the mission's regulars, they learn that a stranger, possibly a member of the cult, had been consulting the archives. This individual was staying in the old post house. By searching the premises, they can find an annotated copy of the map, hidden in a box beneath a loose floorboard.

They can inspect the ranch. A careful search reveals traces of human activity, remnants of ritual chalk, and a spiral mark carved into the wellstone. This motif, linked to the entity Kahetuma, suggests an ancient presence. Further research, or the assistance of Chogan Black Bear, reveals that the artifact is protected by a seal, likely composed of quartz and mineral glyphs. However, without the map, locating the entrance to the vault remains extremely difficult.

Once the entrance is identified, the Characters can decide whether to take the artifact or protect the vault again. They can also consider moving the artifact to a safer location, although this transport carries risks of magical instability and any careless handling could weaken the remaining protections around the object.

Meanwhile, the attackers are increasing their presence around the ranch. Sentries are seen at nightfall, watching the buildings from the higher ground. An abandoned sheepfold on the edge of the property appears to have been requisitioned as a rallying point. The Characters might overhear a discreet exchange between two followers or stumble upon a tethered mount with no apparent owner. By following these clues and exploring the surrounding area, they discover that the cult is planning an armed incursion to seize the artifact of power. A direct confrontation then becomes inevitable if the Characters don't take the initiative to act beforehand.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters identify the culprits and neutralize their operation before the seal is broken, the artifact remains buried and the ranch regains its peace. Catherine gains their trust and can become an ally in other supernatural events.

If the Characters intervene too late but manage to recover the artifact after its release, they prevent the cult from using it, but magical instability manifests: visions, agitated animals, and rumbling earth.

In the event of inaction or poor choices, the cult seizes the object, triggering a series of disturbances in the hills, attracting other factions or creatures to Dead Man's Pass.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, a new act of sabotage occurs: the stable is set on fire during the night, and a shadow flees towards the wooded border.

After 60 minutes, the Characters discover elements confirming the supernatural origin of the site and locate the protected vault.

After 90 minutes, the cult gathers its members near the ranch to try to open the seal using a partially corrupted ritual.

The Shadow of the Pinkertons

The facts for the Teller

Three weeks ago, Caleb Rourke, a clerk in the Northern Gauge Railroad Company's archives, disappeared following an arson attack on a company depot in Flagstone. Rourke was accused of stealing confidential documents, but in reality, he had uncovered a scheme to illegally expropriate Indigenous families living along a proposed railroad route. The stolen documents included copies of forged deeds of sale, compromising letters between company executives and private investors, and records of payments to local intermediaries. Fearing for his life, Rourke sensed he was being watched and fled to Dead Man's Pass, a town he knew because he had distant relatives there.

The real mastermind isn't Northern Gauge, but Elias Brawley, an influential Chicago banker who invested heavily in the expansion projects. Brawley is using the Pinkerton Agency to find Rourke and, more importantly, to retrieve or destroy the evidence before it becomes public. Three agents are currently on site, operating in plain clothes: Edward Mears, Ruth Malone, and Silas Croft. Although they present themselves as bounty hunters and avoid any official interaction with Sheriff Carter, their regulation mustaches, their posture, and their methodical approach betray their affiliation with the Pinkerton Agency to attentive observers. Mary Whitmore, informed by her contacts, quickly realized that their presence at Dead Man's Pass conceals something else. She is following the case discreetly.

Rourke is hiding in a disused attic belonging to a former miner, Abel Ryman, on the northern outskirts of the city. He has a leg injury, a fever, and his only possessions are a bag containing documents protected in a metal box. He is hesitant to trust anyone, but knows his only chance is to involve strangers who can protect him and, more importantly, deliver the documents to the right people. If no one intervenes, the Pinkertons will eventually find him. The documents will be destroyed, and the expropriation operation will resume in secret.

Intro for the players

Rain drums on the saloon roof as Mary Whitmore approaches your table, glancing quickly toward the entrance. Without sitting down, she gives you a discreet nod and walks off toward the back room. If you follow her, she leads you aside to a dark corner where the din only partially drowns out her whispers: "The Pinkertons are questioning anyone who will answer, but never in front of a witness. There's a man in hiding. Not a bandit, more like someone we should listen to, before they silence him for good." She stares at you for a moment, then walks away as if nothing had happened.

Resolution

The Characters can begin by monitoring the Pinkertons' movements. Edward Mears regularly goes to the post office to collect coded messages. Ruth Malone spends her days discreetly questioning residents under the guise of genealogical research. By following them, the Characters learn that the agents are restricting their search area to the northern district, near the old mining workshops.

A stable boy mentions helping an injured man up a spiral staircase behind an abandoned shed. This clue may lead the Characters to the attic where Rourke is hiding. Once located, they must convince Rourke that they are not connected to the Northern Gauge. He is suspicious but agrees to a trade if they prove they want to help him.

The Characters can decide to contact Mary Whitmore to arrange Rourke's escape via a lightly patrolled old trade route. They can also choose to involve Sheriff Carter, although he is reluctant to oppose the Pinkertons without concrete evidence. A third possibility is to set up a decoy to divert the agents from the real escape route.

If the Characters decide to hand Rourke over to the Pinkertons, he tries to destroy the documents in a final act of panic.

If, on the other hand, they manage to get Rourke and the evidence out, they can pass everything on to a contact of Mary's en route to Flagstone, where an honest federal lawyer will be ready to open an investigation.

The solution hinges on their ability to protect the fugitive while ensuring the transmission of evidence, before the next arrival of Pinkerton reinforcements.

If Rourke is handed over to the sheriff, political pressure mounts. If Mary intervenes, the documents can leave town, but her network becomes a target.

If they confront the agents, the conflict becomes public. In any case, if the documents fall into the wrong hands, the scandal will be hushed up. Rourke's survival and the release of the evidence must be ensured concurrently.

Criteria for success or failure

For Caleb Rourke to survive and for the incriminating documents to be released, the Characters must both protect him and find a safe way to get the evidence to the right people without attracting the attention of the Pinkertons. If the Characters succeed in fulfilling both conditions, the federal investigation will begin, the expropriation plans will be suspended, and Northern Gauge will face public repercussions. Their intervention will shift the balance of power in the region, exposing the company's illegal activities and forcing the authorities to react publicly.

If only one of the two actions is taken, protecting Rourke or getting the documents to the right people, the matter has less impact. The company can still maneuver to cover it up, and the Characters will have saved a life without influencing the system, or vice versa.

If Rourke is recaptured or killed and the documents are lost or destroyed, the expropriation network remains active, the Pinkertons cover their tracks, and Mary Whitmore loses faith in any outside help. The Characters are marginalized or held responsible for the disappearance of a key witness.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, Ruth Malone begins questioning the merchants of the northern district, while Edward Mears retrieves a sealed message from the post office.

After 60 minutes, a witness reports the presence of an injured man in an attic hidden above an old workshop, which allows the Characters to locate Rourke.

After 90 minutes, the Pinkerton agents are getting dangerously close to the refuge, forcing the Characters to choose between confrontation, flight, or an attempt at diversion.



Attack at the San Miguel Church

The facts for the Teller

On the morning of Sunday mass, as the faithful gathered in San Miguel Church, an explosion ripped through the stone walls, sending shards of wood and glass flying across the nave. Father Santiago, a respected figure in Dead Man's Pass, was seriously injured and several parishioners were hit by the blast. Panic quickly gripped the town and rumors, fueled by fear and anger, are already circulating.

The Ranchers' Union, always on the lookout for an opportunity to consolidate its influence, accuses the Paiutes of being behind the attack. William Grant, a spokesperson for the union, claims that the attack is just further proof of the Native Americans' barbarity and demands their immediate expulsion from the surrounding lands. The Paiutes, represented by Chogan Black Bear, deny any involvement and denounce an attempt at manipulation meant to justify their forced displacement.

But this attack was not the work of the Paiutes. Behind this explosion lay a far more insidious maneuver orchestrated by men working for Ezra P. Wilkinson, the city's influential banker. Wilkinson saw this attack as a perfect opportunity to buy up Paiute land at bargain prices under the guise of security measures. His goal was simple: to pressure local authorities and obtain legal justification for expropriating tribal lands, which he could then resell to mining companies.

Sheriff John Carter is under pressure. He knows that if the mob is left to its own devices a bloody vendetta will erupt before the smoke even clears. He needs proof, and fast. If no one uncovers the truth soon, violence will engulf the town and the Paiutes will be driven away with no hope of return.

Intro for the players

The bells of San Miguel Church have fallen silent. In their place, an oppressive silence hangs over the mission, broken only by the cries of pain and the whispers of residents still in shock. The explosion shook Dead Man's Pass like a thunderclap, shattering the church's stained-glass windows and scattering debris across the churchyard. The dust clouds haven't completely settled yet when you arrive.

A crowd has gathered in front of the gaping gates of the holy place. The glances exchanged are heavy with anger and suspicion. On one side, William Grant, the iron man of the Ranchers' Syndicate, harangues his men in a loud and confident voice.

"This is where we've come to! Savages who dare to attack our church, our priest!"

Facing him, Chogan Black Bear and several Paiute warriors remain silent, their

expressions grim. Their dignity contrasts with the clamor of the ranchers, but the tension is palpable.

Sheriff Carter, standing between the two groups, casts a desperate glance in your direction before gesturing for you to approach. He speaks in a low, urgent tone.

"Everyone wants blood. Grant wants a hanging before sunset, and the Paiutes have no intention of letting that happen. If we don't find out who really planted this bomb, the town will burn."

He is interrupted by a groan. On the steps of the church, Father Santiago, lying on a wooden bench and surrounded by a few parishioners, struggles to remain conscious.

"We're running out of time. If you find a lead, follow it. But I need something solid before this whole thing falls apart."

The crowd murmurs, stirs, tempers flare. It won't take much for the situation to degenerate.

Resolution

The investigation must be carried out quickly, before the anger of the ranchers turns into a lynching.

An initial inspection of the church reveals that the bomb had been placed under Father Santiago's lectern, indicating that the attack was directly targeting the clergyman. A closer examination of the debris reveals traces of black powder and copper, in a more sophisticated assembly than the earthenware pots filled with gunpowder typically used by the Paiute people.

If the Characters question the witnesses present at the time of the explosion, some mention seeing a hooded man leave the church hurriedly moments before the blast. By pursuing this lead, they may learn that an individual matching this description was seen near Wilkinson's warehouses the previous night.

By questioning mine personnel and those at Fort Elridge about explosives, they can discover that Jedediah "Goldtooth" Jackson, a well-known arms dealer, recently sold a batch of shells to an anonymous buyer. Under pressure he'll eventually confess that the order was placed through an intermediary, whom he suspects of working indirectly for Wilkinson.

By gathering this evidence the Characters can stage a public confrontation, for example at the sheriff's office or in the saloon, with key witnesses like Mary Whitmore or John Carter present. By presenting the facts in order, the purchase of explosives through a middleman, the connection to Wilkinson's warehouses, and the precise location of the bomb, they can trigger a reaction from Wilkinson. Caught off guard, he might lose his composure, contradict

himself, or threaten a witness, thus providing a usable indirect confession.

To exonerate the Paiutes, the Characters must highlight the technical differences between the explosives used and those known to have come from the stockpile. By comparing the fragments recovered from the church with those found in military depots or purchased from Goldtooth, they can demonstrate that the Paiutes possess neither the materials nor the expertise to manufacture such a bomb. Presenting these findings to authority figures or at a crisis meeting will dispel the rumors and sway public opinion in their favor.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters gather the evidence and present it in time, the Ranchers' Syndicate will be forced to retreat, and the Paiutes will escape the massacre. Wilkinson, though caught off guard, will undoubtedly find another way to pursue his ambitions, but for now, his plan is thwarted.

If they discover the truth but fail to expose it publicly, the crowd will not listen to them. The attack against the Paiutes will take place, triggering an outbreak of violence that will leave the city scarred.

If they fail completely or waste too much time, the situation escalates into open warfare. The ranchers launch a punitive expedition against the reservation, and the town is forever scarred by this bloodbath. Wilkinson, in the shadows, watches events unfold according to his plans and profits from the surrounding chaos.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, tensions rise sharply as William Grant begins to mobilize his men for a punitive expedition, raising fears of an imminent attack on the Paiute reservation.

After 60 minutes, Father Santiago, briefly regaining consciousness, murmurs a few confused words that direct suspicions towards a group outside the two factions, reinforcing the urgency of obtaining tangible evidence.

After 90 minutes, rumors are growing in the public square and a first armed group leaves the city towards the hills; without quick intervention, violence will break out momentarily.

The Faceless Riders

The facts for the Teller

For several weeks, the roads around Dead Man's Pass have been the scene of brutal attacks. Convoys of traders, settlers, and even armed patrols have been targeted by a group of masked horsemen operating with military precision. Dressed in black and wearing masks, they leave behind shocked witnesses and organized tracks resembling those of an army on campaign.

These attackers do not simply loot or frighten. They methodically select certain targets, spare wealthy convoys to attack ordinary transports, and seem to be looking for specific documents or passengers.

These masked riders are former Confederate soldiers led by Colonel Elias T. Rourke, a Southern officer presumed dead in action. Reported missing at the end of the war, he secretly rebuilt a network of veterans who refused to surrender. They live in the remote hills between tribal territories and poorly guarded military zones. He trained them in a method of covert insurrection and promised them a powerful return of the South.

Several victims were executed at point-blank range, targeted because of their role in the military administration or their past ties to the Union Army. Each target was on a list obtained by Rourke from an intercepted old military communications log, and these executions were intended to disrupt federal logistical networks while eliminating potential sources of information about the upcoming convoy. The riders' modus operandi and discipline betray military training.

Their target is a military document being transported by an undercover federal emissary, listing dormant Confederate cells still active in the West. Rourke is determined to intercept this convoy before the information reaches Fort Eldridge. In his possession, this data could reignite the Southern cause. He's not after gold or weapons: he wants war.

If no one stops the horsemen, they will reach their target within three days. Their attacks are designed solely to eliminate witnesses and cover their tracks. The only reliable lead is the survivor of a recent ambush, found alive but gravely wounded after helplessly witnessing the methodical execution of his companions. He was spared only because he lost consciousness too soon for the attackers to notice. Since then, he has been murmuring a few enigmatic and frightened words over and over, referring to "sealed orders,""faceless men", and the repeated phrase: "The union will fall into silence."

Intro for the players

For several days now, you've been hearing tales of violence on the roads surrounding Dead Man's Pass. Nighttime attacks, masked men, targeted

executions. Those who survive have little to say, except that the assailants strike without a word and vanish like ghosts. This morning, a gutted stagecoach arrived at the edge of town. The driver was killed instantly. Inside, only one survivor: a uniformed messenger, covered in blood, who stammers between convulsions: "They took the papers... They killed Pratt..."

Resolution

The Characters can begin by questioning the survivor, whose delirious ramblings contain useful fragments: a description of the masks, an overheard piece of a password: a forgotten military phrase. By cross-referencing his statements with those of former soldiers in town, they can connect the case to a missing Confederate regiment.

At the attack sites, they discover revealing details: firing positions, discipline, precise tactical choices. These elements point to a planned military operation, not an act of banditry. The victims were not robbed, but targeted. One of the sites contains a shell casing engraved with a forgotten Confederate insignia, corresponding to a regiment disbanded at the end of the war. This marking was not left by chance: it was a recognition signal for the other members of Rourke's cell, indicating that the target had been hit and that the operation could proceed as planned.

A contact from Fort Eldridge discreetly approaches the Characters. He expresses concern: a military messenger carrying a confidential letter was recently sent to Dead Man’s Pass, but he hasn’t received confirmation of his arrival. The man was supposed to travel incognito, hidden in one of the upcoming stagecoaches. The contact has no further information about his identity or the precise date of the journey, but fears that a hostile group is already on his trail.

The Characters can identify the most likely routes for the next stagecoaches by cross-referencing clues gathered in town with known routes. They can position themselves at strategic points along these roads and watch the surrounding area for any suspicious activity. As soon as a convoy is attacked or threatened, they can intervene quickly to defend it or capture an assailant, hoping to intercept the riders before they reach their true target.

Another option is to locate the scout who prepares the attacks. He observes the convoys, noting their habits and escorts, then relays the information discreetly. If they manage to intercept this man, they can trace the chain of command back to a fortified cave used by Rourke.

By confronting Rourke or his officers, the Characters can disrupt the chain of command, trigger a mutiny, or sow doubt through skillful disinformation. Rourke, though inflexible, remains a rational man: any serious disruption to his logistics or authority could jeopardize his mission. But a poorly planned attack against his men risks causing a massacre. Rourke has about twenty disciplined,

well-armed, and trained veterans at his disposal, entrenched in a fortified camp equipped with ammunition stores, spare horses, and a line of escape to the hills. Any unprepared frontal assault would likely be immediately repelled by well-organized crossfire.

The Characters' choices will determine whether they succeed in saving sensitive information and dismantling the threat, or whether they merely delay a wider conflict.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to prevent the cavalry from intercepting the document, whether by protecting the stagecoach, eliminating the attackers, or disrupting their command structure, the sensitive information remains in the hands of the federal authorities. The convoy reaches Fort Eldridge, Rourke's group disperses, and the clandestine Confederate operation fails without having been able to spread.

If the convoy survives but Rourke manages to escape, or if only part of the cavalry's plan is thwarted, tensions remain. The federal army is on high alert, the region is placed under surveillance, and even if the uprising is averted, the danger is not completely eliminated. The Characters are recognized for their intervention, but the situation remains uncertain.

If the Confederates manage to seize the document or kill its bearer, the consequences are immediate: the information falls into Rourke's hands, who can then organize further coordinated actions in the West. Panic ensues, the authorities react with authoritarian measures, and Dead Man's Pass becomes a strategic point under constant military pressure.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, a traumatized witness reveals that the attackers were looking for something specific and mentions a code name heard during the attack.

After 60 minutes, the Characters identify the convoy's route or locate a scout linked to the riders, opening a trail to their base.

After 90 minutes, the attack is triggered: either the convoy is intercepted, or the infiltration is discovered, forcing the Characters to act urgently to prevent the worst.

Race Against Death

The facts for the Teller

A major diplomatic incident threatens to erupt at Dead Man's Pass following a dramatic accident in the border region. Naiche, son of Paiute Chief Wana'ka, was severely injured in a fall on the wooded hills overlooking settler lands. His leg is badly fractured, and the injury requires immediate reduction and stabilization by a professional, or gangrene or a systemic infection could quickly set in. Braving his people's distrust of settlers, Wana'ka dispatched a messenger to seek the help of Dr. Harold Mayfield, the only experienced physician in the area. But when the messenger arrived, Mayfield was nowhere to be found.

A competent doctor, but one consumed by guilt and excess, Mayfield had once again relapsed into alcoholism. The previous evening, he was seen at the Silver Spur, staggering and publicly humiliated after an altercation with a creditor. Some witnesses claim he left the saloon alone, while others say he was forcibly escorted out by two men. Accounts suggest a dispute with Ethan Boyle, a local loan shark known for his brutality. Boyle allegedly ordered his men to seize the doctor, intending to pressure him into repaying his debts in kind or sell him to the highest bidder. Boyle owns several properties outside the city, including a barn that was sometimes used as a hideout for his men.

The sheriff has heard rumors but refuses to get involved. The town's leading citizens, aware of what's at stake, turn a blind eye. The population, however, begins to fear that a refusal to intervene will provoke open warfare with the tribes. Merchants suspend their convoys, and miners avoid the paths near the hills. Tensions are rising rapidly.

Wana'ka, an elder and respected chief, tries to restrain his young warriors, angered by the lack of response and already convinced that the settlers are letting the child die out of revenge or contempt. If Naiche dies, the fragile balance between the communities collapses, and retaliation will become inevitable. A swift and violent attack on Dead Man's Pass could then be launched before the federal military authorities can even react. But if Mayfield is found and operates in time, it could restore trust by showing goodwill and postpone the war.

Intro for the players

The hooves of Paiute horses kick up a fine dust at the entrance to Dead Man's Pass. About twenty riders wait silently, observing the town without moving. At dawn, one of them delivered a message: Naiche, Chief Wana'ka's son, is between life and death and only Doctor Mayfield can still save him. But Mayfield has disappeared.

Rumors are circulating: some say he's succumbed to alcoholism, others that he's

been kidnapped by creditors. The name of a certain Boyle keeps coming up. The sheriff looks away, the prominent citizens remain silent.

All eyes are now on you. The sheriff doesn't move, the town's dignitaries remain silent, but everyone knows that if anyone can find Mayfield in time, it will be you. The minutes tick by. Naiche is dying. And outside, the tension mounts.

Resolution

The Characters can begin their investigation at the Silver Spur. By questioning the waitress, a poker player, or a bouncer, they obtain a series of converging clues: Mayfield was humiliated, beaten, and then discreetly escorted by two men to the stables. A witness mentions an isolated barn north of town, known to serve as a hideout for Boyle's men. By following this lead, the Characters can discover the hideout and observe the situation before intervening.

The barn is guarded by two henchmen. Mayfield is locked inside, unconscious, tied to a post. Boyle is sometimes present in the barn to monitor the situation or force Mayfield to treat wounded accomplices, write false certificates, or repay his debt by supplying medical products. The Characters can attempt stealthy infiltration, a diversion, or a frontal assault, but each option carries risks. Negotiation is possible, but the price will be high, either in money or services owed. It is also possible to exploit Boyle's fear of public scandal or of imminent Paiute revenge.

Once freed, Mayfield is still under the influence of alcohol. He struggles, is delirious, and refuses to cooperate. The Characters must find a way to make him operational. They will then have to convince him, remind him of his professional oaths, or, if that fails, threaten or coerce him. Coffee and a bucket of cold water should help.

The journey to the Paiute camp is short but perilous. Scouts are watching the approaches. It is possible that the Characters will be intercepted and interrogated before reaching Naiche's tent. Once there, the atmosphere is icy. The medic will have to operate under the gaze of ten armed warriors, surrounded by a heavy silence. The slightest misstep or hesitation could be interpreted as an act of contempt or hostility.

Every step can fail. If Boyle injures Mayfield or if he dies in the escape, if he collapses before arriving, or if he refuses to act despite all efforts, the child will die. In that case no amount of speech will be enough to contain the young warriors' anger. The city could be stormed within the hour.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to locate the hiding place, extract Mayfield alive, nurse him back to health, and escort him to the child in time, the operation succeeds. Naiche survives, tensions ease, and Wana'ka orders his men to

withdraw. A channel of negotiation is reopened, and the Characters' reputation with the local and tribal authorities is strengthened.

If Mayfield is found but arrives too late, or if he reaches the camp in too poor a condition to operate properly, the child dies. Tensions erupt despite the Characters' efforts. Isolated acts of reprisal begin, the town is barricaded, and a military garrison is called in as reinforcements. The region's equilibrium becomes unstable, and the consequences will be felt for months.

If Mayfield is never found, dies, or fails to intervene, the child will die without help. Wana'ka cannot contain the anger of her people. An attack is launched within hours. Dead Man's Pass is ravaged or deserted, the survivors flee, and the region descends into open conflict.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters identify Boyle's involvement and the barn lead is confirmed.

After 60 minutes, they manage to locate the cache, assess the forces involved and begin the operation to recover Mayfield.

After 90 minutes, the doctor is desintoxicated and escorted back to camp, where he attempts the operation or has to accept the failure.

The Betrayed Shaman

The facts for the Teller

Several months ago, Chogan Black Bear and Ezra Wilkinson made a pact in the presence of three witnesses: Horace Milligan, a city lawyer who recorded the exchange in his notes; Samuel "Red" Duggan, a foreman working for Wilkinson at the time; and Sister Abigail, a Christian missionary who attended the meeting as a neutral mediator. The agreement concerned the transfer of an old mining plot, abandoned for several years, which Wilkinson promised to return to the Paiutes in exchange for their peaceful withdrawal from another area coveted by settlers.

But as the year drew to a close, Wilkinson broke his word. He sold the claim to a group of independent prospectors and sent armed men to secure the site and prevent any Paiute claims. When confronted, Wilkinson denied everything and claimed the agreement never existed, asserting it was merely a verbal commitment with no legal standing. He relied on falsified documents to assert the claim had always been under his control.

Chogan is furious. His people are divided between those who want to reclaim the land by force and those who fear that any revolt will provoke terrible reprisals from the settlers and the army. Wilkinson manipulates public opinion by claiming that the Paiutes are trying to illegally claim gold-rich lands, and pushes the city to demand their expulsion.

Milligan avoids taking sides, aware that Wilkinson could ruin his career if he were to testify against him. His notes still exist, filed in his study, but he will have to be convinced to produce them.

Samuel Duggan was fired shortly after the agreement was signed and left Dead Man's Pass to work at a stagecoach station a day's drive away. He harbors resentment toward Wilkinson and could testify if he is located in time.

Finally, Sister Abigail is still in town, but she believes that divine justice will punish Wilkinson in due time. She might be persuaded to publicly intercede on behalf of the Paiutes.

If no one intervenes, tensions will escalate. The Paiutes could be forcibly evicted, or some disgruntled warriors could attack the concession, justifying a bloody retaliation.

Intro for the players

The wind stirs up dust in front of Wilkinson's bank, where a crowd has gathered. On one side, anxious settlers and prospectors eager for riches. On the other, a group of silent Paiutes, their jaws clenched.

In the center, Chogan Black Bear, with a hard stare, faces Ezra Wilkinson,

comfortably seated on the steps of his bank.

"You gave your word."

Wilkinson shrugs, a sly smile playing on his lips.

"I didn't sign any papers."

A murmur ripples through the crowd. Some turn towards Sheriff John Carter, who observes the scene in silence, arms crossed.

“Heaven and earth heard this oath, and three witnesses heard it also: Milligan, Duggan, and Sister Abigail. You cannot erase it.”

Wilkinson sighs, raises a hand to calm the crowd, and speaks in an affable tone:

"Come now, Chogan... If you have proof, show it. Otherwise, leave."

A heavy silence falls. All eyes turn towards you.

Resolution

The characters must defuse the conflict or choose a side.

If they decide to obtain proof of the pact, they can investigate Horace Milligan, a city lawyer who recorded the agreement in his private notes. Milligan, though intimidated by Wilkinson, might be persuaded to reveal its contents, especially if he is protected from potential retaliation. Once they have this evidence, the Characters can present it publicly, forcing Wilkinson to back down.

Duggan and Sister Abigail will be able to reveal the details of the case and testify about the pact made if they are found and questioned.

Another lead points to the prospectors exploiting the land. Most are unaware that they have been manipulated. Jedediah "Goldtooth" Jackson, who oversees the site, possesses a fake land claim provided by Wilkinson. If the Characters manage to recover it or prove it is fraudulent, the town itself might demand that Wilkinson return the land to the Paiutes to avoid a scandal.

If no legal solution is found, Chogan might be tempted to reclaim the land by force, sparking a revolt that would provoke a bloody reprisal from the settlers and soldiers of Fort Eldridge. The Characters can try to appease the Paiute warriors by offering them an alternative, or conversely, aid them in a risky attack against Wilkinson's men.

If the Characters choose to support Wilkinson, they will have to publicly discredit Chogan and prevent the disclosure of evidence. This strengthens Wilkinson's power and definitively crushes any Paiute claims, but at the cost of increased tensions in the city and further expropriations, or even possibly war with the Paiutes.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters obtain proof of the pact and expose Wilkinson, the town is forced to acknowledge the betrayal and revoke his land grant. Chogan reclaims the land, and tensions ease, though Wilkinson seeks a more subtle form of revenge.

If the evidence is discovered but dismissed, Wilkinson manipulates public opinion to portray the case as an attempted usurpation. Chogan and his people are permanently deprived of any rights to their land, and Wilkinson becomes even more powerful.

If the Characters fail or do not take a stand, the situation escalates into open conflict. Wilkinson, sensing the threat, pushes for military intervention to expel the Paiutes from the region. Violence breaks out, and the Characters' reputation in the city will depend on how they acted.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters identify Milligan as a notary witness to the pact and consider contacting Duggan or Sister Abigail.

After 60 minutes, they obtain a key testimony or document, or trigger a confrontation with Wilkinson's supporters.

After 90 minutes, they either make the evidence public or witness direct action by the Paiutes, depending on the path chosen.

The Fake Sheriff

The facts for the Teller

Walter Crane learned through a former military contact that Sheriff John Carter had recently been called on a temporary assignment outside of Dead Man's Pass, as part of a high security transfer operation.

He takes advantage of this absence, confirmed but with secret reasons, to present himself in town with a letter of accreditation signed by a federal colonel stating that he was appointed sheriff to cover Carter's absence.

The man is well-dressed, charismatic, and perfectly understands the codes of military authority. He was welcomed without suspicion by the town's notables, who were seeking order after a period of tension with prospectors and outlaw gangs.

Crane quickly seized control of the sheriff's office, issued orders to the local militia, and launched a series of investigations against his opponents. He ordered the arrest of an influential innkeeper, closed the gambling den of a debt-ridden notable, and impounded a shipment of gold on the pretext of tax irregularities. These actions, while seemingly legal, actually benefited a small circle of Crane's associates. He began redistributing patrol rights to men of his own faction and is already proposing a bill to strengthen the militia's powers.

Actually, Walter Crane is a forger and a wanted criminal in several states, using various aliases. His letter is a forgery, and the colonel mentioned has been dead for years. He exploits Dead Man's Pass's administrative isolation and slow communications to consolidate his power before a genuine military representative arrives to inspect the town. He is aided by two accomplices: Louise "Big Lou" Thompson, a powerfully armed woman who acts as his bodyguard and instills fear, and Terrence Moss, a former military clerk turned rogue, who manipulates records and hides evidence.

The former deputy of the previous sheriff, a man named Ellis Fry, began to have doubts. Discreet and loyal, he possessed no direct evidence but sought help to investigate without drawing attention. He knew that any open challenge to Crane's authority would be met with immediate violence or legal repercussions.

If no one intervenes, Crane will have consolidated his power in less than a week. He will be able to plunder the city's resources, impose sham trials, and unleash a purge targeting all those who doubt him. The consequences will be irreversible.

Intro for the players

The sheriff's office sign has just been replaced. Walter Crane, the new arrival,

claims to have been appointed by federal authorities to restore order to Dead Man's Pass. He has already ordered several arrests, closed businesses, and confiscated an entire shipment under the guise of an investigation. Some applaud this return to order. Others remain silent, their jaws clenched.

This morning, Ellis Fry, the former deputy, whispered a few words to you away from the saloon. He doesn't know if Crane is really who he claims to be, but he swears something's wrong. The town has never been so quiet... nor so tense.

Resolution

The Characters can choose to discreetly investigate Walter Crane and his associates. By questioning the telegraph office employees, they may discover that the colonel mentioned has officially been dead for several years, thus calling into question the new sheriff's entire legitimacy. This information can be obtained from a telegraph operator, an abandoned military report, or a source familiar with the military. If the Characters manage to compare records or obtain a copy of the letter, they can prove the deception.

By infiltrating Terrence Moss's office, they would discover a cache containing several counterfeit documents, fake requisition orders, threatening letters, and a version of the falsified letter.

Regarding Big Lou, forgotten wanted posters in the judicial archives link her true identity to violent crimes committed in other counties. Travelers or bounty hunters in town may recognize her if the Characters encourage them to talk. A public confrontation would shake Crane's authority.

The Characters can also infiltrate the militia network to extract compromising information: unjustified mission orders, summary executions, or embezzlement. By exposing these abuses, they undermine the foundations of Crane's propaganda.

Protecting Ellis Fry is crucial. By keeping him mobile and limiting his public appearances, the Characters can prevent his capture. He can write a detailed report, supported by evidence, which the Characters will deliver via a circuitous route to Fort Eldridge. A reliable messenger or an independent mail relay will help avoid Moss's surveillance. Launching a military investigation will suspend Crane's authority, allowing the town to regain a semblance of stability.

Impersonating a federal official is a serious crime: if the evidence is handed over to the appropriate authorities, it can trigger federal legal proceedings. In the absence of an immediate military presence, the Characters can also hire a private agency like the Pinkertons to issue a proper arrest warrant.

If the Characters choose a more direct approach, they can call a meeting of the town's leading citizens and confront Crane with the evidence they have gathered. This initiative requires a sufficiently tense atmosphere that has

already made the townspeople suspicious of the new sheriff. If successful, this could lead his allies to betray or abandon him. If, on the other hand, they prefer to negotiate, they can obtain a confession or a withdrawal in exchange for their silence. This option requires concessions and does not completely eliminate the threat, but it avoids bloodshed and preserves local order until the army arrives.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to gather irrefutable evidence, secure the transmission of the case to Fort Eldridge, publicly weaken Crane's allies, and rally a majority of the local dignitaries to their cause, the fake sheriff is neutralized without bloodshed. Ellis Fry is recognized as the legitimate replacement, order is restored, and the Characters gain the gratitude of the townspeople and authorities, potentially leading to a position of local or regional influence.

If certain elements are in place but the dissemination of evidence is delayed too long, or if the city's leading figures remain divided, Crane may attempt to flee before being arrested. In this case, he manages to take some of the embezzled gold with him and leaves behind a city torn between those who supported him and those who opposed him. Fry serves as interim leader but remains controversial, and the Characters must contend with ongoing tensions.

If the Characters fail to prove the fraud or are neutralized before they can act, Crane consolidates his power. He launches a purge against his opponents, severs communications with Fort Eldridge, and executes or imprisons any dissenting voices. Fry disappears, the Characters are forced to flee, and Dead Man’s Pass falls under a brutal local dictatorship, isolated from the rest of the territory until military intervention.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters receive a discreet alert from Ellis Fry and begin to check the first suspicious elements.

After 60 minutes, they confront one of the accomplices or intercept a compromising document.

After 90 minutes, they orchestrate a public revelation or decisive act that exposes or confronts Crane.

Chogan Black Bear's Revenge

The facts for the Teller

Three weeks ago, Samuel R. Mayfield, an ambitious entrepreneur with no connection to Dr. Mayfield, set up a construction site on Omen Hill, an ancient Paiute burial ground a half-day's walk from Dead Man's Pass. Despite warnings from the local people, he blasted a section of the site to access a granite vein, officially to quarry stones in order to build a bank. Sources suggest he is instead exploiting a more profitable tellurium deposit. This project, supported by Judge Elridge and apothecary Mavis Holt, aims to revitalize the local economy.

Chogan Black Bear, a respected Paiute shaman and guardian of the site, tried to alert the authorities at Dead Man's Pass. He was repelled, publicly humiliated, and beaten by Mayfield's henchmen. Since this incident, he has left the villages and retreated to the canyons, where he has begun ancient rituals that even his own tribe considers dangerous. Three Paiute witnesses, former apprentices of the shaman, claim that he has awakened ancient forces connected to the desert ancestors and the protection of sacred lands. They now refuse to approach him. One of them, Shodo, says he saw Chogan paint symbols with his own blood on a collapsed stele.

The manifestations began subtly: lingering fog, fleeing animals, unnatural silences. Then, carts were found overturned without any sign of violence, wells dried up overnight, and a woman was found in a state of shock, her gaze vacant, unable to speak. Construction machinery inexplicably stopped, its mechanisms jammed by wet sand in the midst of a drought. Children claimed to have seen ghostly figures in the hills. Local leaders spoke of a panic epidemic or a mass hallucination. The prospectors, meanwhile, began to flee the region.

Chogan Black Bear remains missing, but ritualistic signs have been observed near three locations: Mayfield's work site, the old well at Kelso Ranch, and the entrance to an old, abandoned Paiute trail. These markings correspond to a major condemnation rite, which, according to oral tradition, can only be interrupted by the intervention of an outside mediator willing to sacrifice something of value. Tensions are rising at Dead Man's Pass. Mayfield has hired two gunmen to protect his work site. The Paiute community is in mourning but does not want to enter into open conflict. The council of elders has decided not to intervene unless outsiders take the initiative to understand what is happening and calm tempers before it is too late.

Intro for the players

The wind seems to have frozen over Omen Hill. In Dead Man's Pass, from the saloon to the porches of the houses bordering the desert, everyone speaks in hushed tones of an ancient anger that haunts the hills. Several prospectors have

left town without even asking for their pay, and carters now avoid certain roads at dusk. It is in this tense atmosphere that a member of the Paiute community, Shodo, discreetly approaches you. He says that the elders refuse to budge, that the notables are deaf to the situation, but that something serious is afoot. He gives you only one name, in a low voice: Chogan Black Bear.

The shaman has retreated to the highlands, and those who approach speak of visions, whispers, and the earth trembling beneath their feet. They say he is no longer a man, that he turned himself into a living link between the living and the dead, that he has begun a ritual condemnation, and that only a sincere sacrifice can stop him. Shodo asks for your help.

Resolution

The Characters can choose to approach one of three locations marked with ritual symbols to investigate the extent of the forces at play. At Omen Hill, the manifestations are strongest: a supernatural aura clouds the senses, the vegetation appears frozen, and Mayfield's men avoid the site despite their orders. By observing the markings and consulting the few eyewitnesses, the Characters can understand that a complex ritual is underway, intended to symbolically condemn the entire territory of Dead Man's Pass.

At the well on Kelso Ranch, they discover that the water has been replaced by a blackish liquid with a pungent odor. Analysis or comparison with Paiute oral traditions reveals that this is an advanced stage of the ritual, where even vital resources are corrupted. By questioning members of the tribe or consulting local records, the Characters learn of a forgotten counter-rite: a voluntary offering made to a guardian spirit, sealed in an act of reconciliation. To be effective, this offering must be genuine, precious, and visible. It is not enough to simply deposit an object; the act must be accompanied by a renunciation or a public acknowledgment of wrongdoing.

If they manage to find Chogan Black Bear in the canyons, the Characters can try to convince him to interrupt the ritual. He will refuse any negotiation if he perceives the approach as self-serving or tactical. On the other hand, a sincere act of reparation, such as publicly taking a stand against Mayfield, defending a sacred site, or handing over an important personal item, may awaken in him a willingness to engage in dialogue. The ritual could then be reversed or transformed into a purification ceremony.

If the Characters choose a violent approach, they can destroy the ritual artifacts, scatter the marks, or even attack Chogan. This interrupts the ritual but provokes unpredictable consequences: unnatural disturbances, a lingering curse, and increased hostility from the Paiutes. Such a path cuts off any possibility of lasting reconciliation and exposes the city to spiritual or political reprisals in the following weeks.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to understand the nature of the ritual, meet Chogan Black Bear, and perform a sincere and public act of reparation, the shaman agrees to lift the curse. The spirits are appeased, the territory is freed from ritual hostility, and a fragile peace is restored between the Paiute community and the inhabitants of Dead Man's Pass. The Characters' reputation is strengthened in the eyes of both sides.

If the Characters defuse the ritual without Chogan's direct intervention, or force Mayfield's withdrawal through pressure, a temporary lull ensues. But the symbols remain visible, and fear lingers. Tensions between the Natives and settlers are reduced but not resolved.

If the Characters choose confrontation or ignore the signs, the ritual concludes without interruption. A series of abnormal phenomena befalls the town: fevers, miscarriages, localized famines. The territory is perceived as cursed. Relations with the Natives become hostile, and Dead Man's Pass enters a period of lasting decline. The Characters can even be held responsible for inaction or for exacerbating the situation.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters receive testimonies about the strange effects around Omen Hill and begin to identify locations linked to the ritual.

After 60 minutes, they can locate Chogan Black Bear or discover the elements needed for a ritual offering that may appease the spirits.

After 90 minutes, they make a crucial decision: perform an act of reparation, confront Chogan, or attempt to interrupt the ritual by force, triggering the lasting consequences of the scenario.



Nightly Attack on the Paiute Reservation

The facts for the Teller

Last night, under a hazy sky, the Paiute reservation was the target of a brutal attack. Horsemen appeared at dawn, setting fire to tipis and dwellings, slaughtering cattle, and sowing panic among sleeping families. When they disappeared into the darkness, they left behind several dead, wounded, and a community in shock. This morning, anger is simmering among the survivors, and already, eyes are turning toward the local ranchers, with whom the Paiutes have been in conflict for years.

But this attack is a carefully orchestrated setup. Billy "Red" Murphy and his gang are the real culprits. Their goal is simple: to provoke a bloody conflict between the Paiutes and the settlers to divert attention from their real scheme. While the town and the sheriff are preoccupied with managing an impending war, Murphy plans to attack a gold wagon train that will pass through the area in two days. A confrontation between the ranchers and the Native Americans would leave Dead Man's Pass undefended and allow the bandits to act unopposed.

This morning the situation is explosive. The Paiutes, led by Chogan Black Bear, are demanding justice and immediate retaliation. In town the Ranchers' Syndicate, represented by William Grant, denies any involvement but is already mobilizing men, convinced that a Paiute attack is imminent. Caught between these two groups, Sheriff John Carter is trying to calm tempers but he is alone and he knows that violence could erupt at any moment.

If no one discovers the truth soon, a massacre is inevitable. The Characters must unmask the real culprits, expose their motives, and prevent the war before it begins.

Intro for the players

The tension is palpable in Dead Man's Pass. At dawn shouts filled the main street, and already an angry mob had gathered in front of the sheriff's office. On one side the Paiutes, faces painted with ash as a sign of mourning, demanding vengeance for their dead. On the other the ranchers, rifles in hand, swear they had nothing to do with the attack but declare themselves ready to defend their land by any means necessary.

Sheriff John Carter is at the center of this confrontation, arms outstretched to prevent the first shot from being fired. When he sees you he gestures for you to approach, his clenched jaw betraying his concern.

"This is going to end badly" he said, staring at you. "Someone attacked the reservation last night, and everyone seems convinced it was the ranchers."

He glances at William Grant, the representative of the Ranchers' Union, who is

clenching his fists.

"We have nothing to do with this!" he growls. "But if these savages want war, we'll give it to them."

On the other side, Chogan Black Bear steps forward, his voice as hard as stone.

"They burned our homes during the night. They killed our children. We will not let this affront go unanswered."

The sheriff turns his eyes towards you again.

"I need proof. No rumors, no assumptions. If you don't find out who did this this city will be a battlefield before nightfall. I have to stay here to calm things down."

The investigation is only just beginning, but time is working against you.

Resolution

The Characters must gather evidence and expose the truth before the first shot is fired. If they go to the scene of the attack they can examine the tracks left by the assailants. A successful Technics and intuition roll reveals that the bullets used are not those of the ranchers' usual weapons, but rather match those found on the black market. By observing the tracks, they can note that the horses' horseshoes are worn unevenly, a characteristic of Murphy's gang's mounts, caused by the canyon rocks.

By asking around town they learn that Jedediah "Goldtooth" Jackson, a well-known arms dealer, recently sold a crate of rifles to an anonymous buyer. By pressing him they'll manage to get a name: Hank Mercer, one of Murphy's lieutenants.

If they manage to locate Hank Mercer, they will find him with two other men in a saloon on the outskirts of town, celebrating their heist. A verbal or physical confrontation forces him to confess: Murphy orchestrated the attack to divert attention from his next crime.

Once they have this evidence, they can prevent the confrontation. Sheriff Carter will agree to intervene if the evidence is solid, but the Paiutes and ranchers may refuse to listen to reason. Convincing Black Bear and Grant will require the right words and a clear demonstration. If the Characters fail, war will break out anyway.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters reveal the truth in time and prevent the confrontation, tensions gradually subside. Murphy, seeing his plan fail, abandons the convoy attack and disappears. Sheriff Carter and the town will be grateful.

If they uncover the evidence but fail to convince the opposing factions, a battle

will still erupt. Even if Murphy is later exposed, the damage will be irreparable, and the city will forever be scarred by this bloodbath.

If they fail completely to uncover the truth or take too long, the Paiutes and the ranchers will clash in open warfare. The town becomes a battlefield, and Murphy's attack on the gold convoy goes off without a hitch.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the city is in turmoil, the first witnesses are speaking out, but no concrete evidence has yet been discovered.

After 60 minutes, tensions rise a notch: the ranchers mobilize a militia, and the Paiutes prepare their weapons, ready to defend themselves.

After 90 minutes, if the Characters have not yet acted effectively, gunfire will break out on the outskirts of the city and war will become inevitable unless there is immediate intervention with solid evidence.

Mysterious Robbery at the Wilkinson Bank

The facts for the Teller

Wilkinson's Bank, reputed to be the most secure in Dead Man's Pass, was robbed during the night but there were no visible signs of forced entry. The vault, though sealed and under surveillance, was emptied of its contents without any guards hearing a thing. The Pinkertons, immediately summoned by Wilkinson to investigate, are baffled by the lack of typical clues: no signs of forced entry, no underground tunnel, and no witnesses who can explain what happened.

Faced with the enormity of the mystery, the Pinkertons, outwardly pragmatic but prone to seeing conspiracies everywhere, openly accuse the Circle of Shamans, a secretive group of Paiutes practicing ancient rituals. According to them, only supernatural means could explain such a flawless heist. Wilkinson, furious at having lost a colossal sum, encourages this theory and threatens to mobilize local forces against the Paiute if no one proves otherwise.

The truth is far more rational, but just as impressive. The robbery was carried out by a team of professionals using a novel method: an experimental sound-wave drilling device. The robbers, posing as security inspectors a few days earlier, had scouted the premises and discreetly obtained a copy of the key to the rear entry, which was kept in Wilkinson's office. They returned at night, incapacitated a guard with a tranquilizer dart, and entered through the back door silently, thanks to a well-planned study of the patrol schedules. They then used their experimental device to open the safe without alerting anyone.

During the heist, one of the robbers miscalibrated the sonic drilling device, causing an internal crack in the mechanism. Knowing it would no longer function and that it would be too risky to carry it during their escape, the thieves chose to conceal it under the floorboards, hoping no one would notice. By meticulously investigating the crime scene, the Characters may find traces of a strange liquid seeping from the mechanism, or burnt metallic residue, indicating on a successful Technics and Intuition test that the device was overloaded. This discovery not only reveals how the robbery was committed but also traces the tool's manufacturer, leading them to the true culprits.

The Characters are hired to find the culprits and defuse the situation before an intercultural conflict erupts and plunges the city into violence.

Intro for the players

At dawn, Dead Man's Pass is in turmoil. A crowd has gathered in front of the Wilkinson bank. Men in dark jackets, wearing Pinkerton badges, stand guard while Wilkinson himself fumes on the steps.

Sheriff John Carter spots you and calls out to you.

"This reeks of trouble." He lowered his voice and cast a worried glance at the Pinkertons. "The bank was emptied last night. No signs of forced entry, no tunnel, nothing. And they..." He nodded toward the detectives hired by Wilkinson. "...are already accusing the Paiutes of using 'sorcery'."

He shakes his head in frustration.

"I'm no expert on safes, but I know a real mess when I see one. If you don't help me find out what really happened before things get out of hand, the city could go up in flames."

Further on, Pinkertons are questioning witnesses in a threatening tone, while a merchant is already whispering that "the Indians put a spell on the chest so that it would open by itself."

Time is running out.

Resolution

The Characters can begin their investigation with a thorough search of the crime scene. A careful touch inspection would reveal micro-cracks invisible to the naked eye on the safe's frame, indicating that the metal vibrated under an unknown force. Hidden beneath the floorboards, a small, abandoned metal device, ornated with glass tubes and copper filaments, emits a faint crackling sound.

By questioning local artisans and engineers, the Characters can learn that this type of technology is not accessible to ordinary people. One of the town's inventors, Samuel "Twitch" Holbrook, might mention an experimental invention capable of "breaking open a safe without touching it." However, such a device would require advanced knowledge and a considerable financial investment.

The Characters can trace the origins of the damaged device found at the crime scene. By questioning a mechanic or consulting the order records of a specialized hardware store, they might discover evidence of a recent purchase of rare components, made under a false name. This lead would take them to a fence operating on the outskirts of town who, under pressure or after negotiation, might reveal that he sold the parts to a Luther "Fox" Rawlings.

The culprits are a gang of robbers led by Rawlings, a former army bomb maker who stole the plans of a military inventor. Their strategy relies on seemingly impossible heists, designed to sow confusion and divert any serious investigation.

If the Characters don't progress quickly enough, tensions between settlers and Paiutes could escalate. Wilkinson might order unjustified arrests, precipitating a crisis that would be difficult to contain.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters reveal the true culprit and expose the technology used, the accusations against the Paiutes will collapse. Wilkinson is forced to accept the truth, though he is not pleased that his bank's security has been publicly compromised.

If they discover the culprits but delay too long in acting, the Pinkertons force a confrontation with the Paiutes. Even if the Paiutes are exonerated, tensions do not completely disappear, and the town bears the scar of this affair.

If the Characters fail to uncover the truth, the Virtue League and the Ranchers' Syndicate take advantage of the situation to fuel racial tensions. Wilkinson, convinced of the Paiutes' involvement, tries to have them expelled from the region under pressure from local forces.

If the Characters are persuaded by the Pinkertons' accusations, they participate in a violent crackdown. But weeks later, another bank will be mysteriously robbed in a neighboring town, proving the truth was quite different. By then, it will be too late to right the wrong.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters discover the first anomalies on the chest and hear rumors of an accusation against the Paiutes.

After 60 minutes, they get their hands on the faulty device hidden under the floorboards and begin hunting for rare components from local craftsmen.

After 90 minutes, they locate the hideout of Luther Rawlings and his men, and must decide whether to intervene directly or report their evidence before the Pinkertons trigger a wave of arrests.



The Dogs of War

The facts for the Teller

For several weeks, the trails around Dead Man's Pass have been patrolled by armed, brutal, and organized riders. This group, known as the War Dogs, is led by Abel Redd, a former cavalry sergeant dismissed for insubordination. Charismatic and ruthless, Redd has gathered around him about twenty hardened men, former soldiers, deserters, and hardened criminals. This gang has launched a campaign of terror, systematically eliminating any groups that still dare to compete for control of the region's roads and resources.

Isolated farms, coaching inns, and small trading posts fell one after another, their owners killed or forced to flee. The Autumn Brothers, a local band of raiders, were mercilessly massacred in their own camp. Witnesses recount that the War Dogs always move in military formation, striking swiftly and decisively before vanishing. They seize weapons, supplies, and horses, demanding the complete submission of those who remain. Those who comply are branded with the Dogs' mark, a fang-shaped notch on the forearm, under penalty of being considered enemies.

Redd has no wild ambitions: he wants to establish military control over the region, where farmers, prospectors, and traders will obey his laws. His strategy is methodical: secure trade routes, subdue settlements, and eliminate all resistance. His base of operations is located in a remote canyon, fortified with salvaged weapons.

The situation in Dead Man's Pass is critical. The town has so far been spared, but Redd is already sending anonymous emissaries to offer a deal: submission in exchange for safety. Several prominent citizens, including Wilkinson and some ranchers, are considering accepting. Sheriff Carter is overwhelmed by the scale of the threat and refuses to act openly, for fear of triggering a premature bloodbath.

Furthermore, some settlers are beginning to succumb to fear and join Redd's ranks, hoping to save their own lives or gain a share of power. Among them is Tom Burrows, a respected former rancher in the region, now Redd's lieutenant, who knows the town's customs intimately and could be preparing his assault.

If no one intervenes, Redd will take Dead Man's Pass without a fight, relying on internal betrayals and intimidation. The city will become the centerpiece of his authority, and the region will fall under a regime of organized terror.

Intro for the players

The atmosphere in Dead Man's Pass is heavy and unsettling. The streets are deserted, shutters often closed, and even the saloon chatter has fallen silent. For the past few days, the news circulating has been increasingly alarming. Isolated

farms have been burned, entire families have gone missing, and trails once safe have become dangerous. Everywhere there are tales of armed men prowling the area, striking swiftly, leaving ruins and corpses in their wake.

In the dusty streets a few frightened riders dismount, laden with hastily salvaged belongings. The stories are always the same: an armed, well-equipped, disciplined group, marching under the command of a certain Abel Redd, a former soldier turned warlord, and his band, already nicknamed the Dogs of War. It is said that they mercilessly crush all opposition and mark with their brand those who submit.

At the saloon bar, faces are tense. Sheriff John Carter, his gaze grim, half-listens to a breathless messenger reporting that the Autumn Brothers' relay station is now nothing but a pile of ashes. No one doubts that the gang is closing in. Some whisper that Wilkinson and other prominent figures are already secretly negotiating to salvage what they can.

In the surrounding farms, workers barricade doors and windows, while others gather their belongings and prepare to flee before the storm. Yet, for Dead Man's Pass, it already seems too late.

Resolution

The Characters must decide how to react to the growing threat. The Dogs of War are preparing to strike. They are well-armed, organized, and already enjoy the tacit support of some desperate or opportunistic settlers. A direct assault on their base in the canyon is virtually impossible without preparation, but the Characters can still try to weaken Redd before the attack by sowing discord, cutting his supply lines, or finding allies among the farmers and outcasts.

Sheriff Carter, though hesitant, is willing to discreetly support any attempt to organize a defense, but refuses to directly risk the lives of his deputies without guarantees. Several influential ranchers and merchants, including Wilkinson, are already seeking to protect their interests by negotiating with Redd and could betray the town at the slightest sign of weakness.

If the Characters manage to find and convince the few resistance fighters hiding in the region, by searching through old mutual aid networks established during previous conflicts or by identifying farms where the War Dogs have not yet made their mark, they can organize ambushes on roads frequented by the War Dogs, coordinate targeted attacks on their supply convoys, and spread false information to sow distrust among Redd's lieutenants, thus breaking the gang's cohesion. They will then have a chance to prevent the city from falling.

A betrayal by Tom Burrows, Redd's lieutenant, could also play a decisive role if he is confronted with his old ties to the community or threatened by the collapse of the gang.

If the Characters fail to organize or waste too much time, Redd will launch the

assault. He will have internal support, and the city will fall without real resistance, subjected to the merciless law of the War Dogs. The population will be silenced, and the region will come under de facto military control.

Criteria for success or failure

If Redd is neutralized, either by death or by the disbanding of his gang, Dead Man's Pass escapes occupation. Victory does not erase the losses, but the town retains its independence, and the survivors, scarred by the events, begin to rebuild.

If the gang is weakened but not destroyed, the town remains under threat. Some farmers give in and pay tribute, while others try to resist. The town survives but is divided and weakened, while the roads remain under the partial control of the War Dogs.

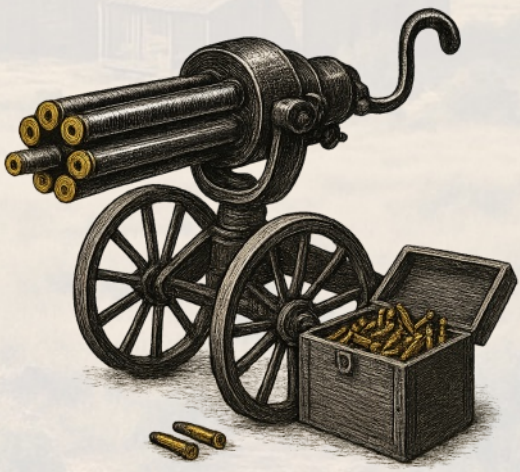
If Redd wins, Dead Man's Pass becomes an outpost under his control. The inhabitants are disarmed, opponents executed or exiled, and supporters of the new order impose their authority. The sheriff is removed from office or eliminated, Wilkinson and other prominent citizens adapt to the situation, and the town's future is now written under the Law of the Dogs.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters observe the state of extreme tension at Dead Man’s Pass, learn of the threats made by Redd’s emissaries and become aware of the urgency of the situation.

After 60 minutes, they can identify the gang's support in the city, try to rally resistance fighters or prepare sabotage actions against the Dogs of War.

After 90 minutes, the assault on the city is becoming more defined, and the Characters must act immediately to provoke a mutiny, intercept an attack or organize a final line of defense.



Betrayal within the Pinkerton

The facts for the Teller

For several months, the Pinkerton agency has been carrying out numerous confidential missions in the Dead Man's Pass area. Officially tasked with protecting convoys and investigating smuggling networks, their agents are increasingly interfering in civilian affairs, monitoring prominent figures, and influencing the town council's decisions. Several residents report intimidation, arbitrary arrests, and unsolved disappearances. The agency's omnipresence is beginning to worry the residents, though no one dares to truly oppose it.

Agent Henry Talbott, a respected veteran of the agency, has recently changed his ways. After discovering that his superiors are using the agency to manipulate local elections and cover up illegal money transfers, he has begun gathering evidence. He has discreetly contacted an independent journalist, Sarah Donnelly, to whom he plans to deliver an explosive dossier containing names, documents, and wax cylinder recordings of incriminating phone calls. Talbott fears for his life. He knows the agency will not tolerate such betrayal. He has chosen Dead Man’s Pass as the meeting place with the journalist, believing it would be easier to blend in with the crowds and travelers there.

Two Pinkerton agents, Lewis Kerrigan and Doyle Hatch, were sent to find him. Officially, they were tasked with his extraction, but their real mission was to prevent him from talking. They still didn't know exactly where Talbott was hiding, but they had begun questioning shopkeepers, searching the boarding house rooms, and monitoring the train station. A rumor was spreading that an agent was on the run with incriminating documents. Tensions were rising.

Sarah Donnelly, the journalist, is already in town, but doesn't know Talbott's identity or the exact location of the meeting. She's waiting for a signal. The Pinkertons are tightening their grip. Wilkinson, always well-informed and anxious to protect his position, hesitates to intervene, unsure whether Talbott is a threat or an opportunity. If no one protects Talbott, he will be captured or killed before he can talk. If the files disappear, the agency will emerge stronger and more uncontrollable than ever.

Intro for the players

The stifling afternoon heat hangs heavy over Dead Man’s Pass. From the train platform, the Characters spot two mustachioed men in dark coats moving among the passersby, casting scrutinizing glances at the faces they encounter. In the saloon, the atmosphere is quieter than usual, and conversations break off at the approach of strangers. The locals seem nervous, as if something is about to happen.

Walking up the main street, an old acquaintance, the innkeeper Mallory, waves to the Characters from his terrace. "Do you still have contacts around Fort

Eldridge?" he whispers. "Because a shady character came by asking me questions about my customers, and not like a marshal. I think things are getting heated. If you'd like to help someone who's in their crosshairs, there might be a hand you can lend... but you have to act fast."

Resolution

The characters can begin by discreetly investigating the Pinkertons' presence, observing their movements, and questioning the shopkeepers who have been interrogated. By following the agents' trail, they can identify their primary objective: to find a recently arrived man who is avoiding all contact. They may also encounter Sarah Donnelly, who presents herself as a journalist but avoids revealing the reason for her visit. A diplomatic or intuitive approach would allow them to connect her to Talbott.

If the Characters manage to contact Talbott before the agents, he will confide his fears to them. He possesses solid evidence: signed letters, transcripts, and falsified mission reports. He wants to leave the city alive and deliver the files to Sarah, but refuses to appear in public until he is certain he can give her the documents without being intercepted.

The Characters can stage a fake exchange to trap the agents, sow confusion in the town, or create a diversion. They can also try to obtain discreet assistance from the sheriff or a prominent citizen suspicious of the agency. Any overly conspicuous action risks triggering an armed confrontation.

If they fail to secure the meeting, Talbott could be captured and interrogated. The files, if they fall into the wrong hands, will be destroyed or used to blackmail those involved. On the other hand, if the Characters succeed in protecting Talbott and delivering the files to Sarah, the affair will break out and will be handled by Fort Eldridge, permanently weakening the Pinkertons' influence in the region.

Criteria for success or failure

If Talbott manages to escape unharmed with the journalist and the evidence is made public, the consequences are immediate: several agents are called to Fort Eldridge, and the agency's illegal activities are exposed. The town regains a degree of autonomy, and the Characters are quietly praised by those opposed to the established order.

If Talbott survives but the evidence is compromised or incomplete, the impact is more limited. The agency is forced to reorganize, and some agents are relieved of their duties, but the network as a whole remains active. Talbott disappears, and the public remains divided over the veracity of his accusations.

If Talbott is captured or killed, and the file is lost, the Pinkertons consolidate their power. Any attempt at dissent becomes riskier, and the city descends into

heightened surveillance. The Characters may be suspected of aiding a traitor and will have to face the agency's retaliation.

If Talbott is killed but the journalist manages to escape with the file, she publishes its contents as an explosive article that reaches Fort Eldridge. Talbott's death makes him a martyr in the eyes of some, and the scandal partially weakens the agency, leading to internal restructuring. However, reprisals are brutal in Dead Man's Pass, and the Characters will have to lie low for a while.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters identify the unusual presence of the Pinkertons and may hear about a wanted fugitive.

After 60 minutes, they can locate Talbott or understand the journalist's role, and consider a strategy for organizing the transmission of evidence.

After 90 minutes, the tension reaches its peak: the agents are getting closer, and the Characters must act immediately to save Talbott and allow Sarah Donnelly to escape.

Bank Trap

The facts for the Teller

For several weeks, Wilkinson Bank had been experiencing unusual activity: fund transfers to Fort Eldridge, massive arrivals of gold bars supposedly destined for redistribution to mining companies, and discrepancies in the accounting records. A group of four outside-town robbers had been informed by an accomplice teller of the exact time the vaults would contain several days' worth of untransferred deposits. This teller, named William Smalls, had been hired recently. He convinced the robbers that security would be minimal on that date due to the departure the previous day of a convoy escorted by the Pinkertons.

The robbery takes place in broad daylight. While two of the assailants burst into the main hall to hold the staff down, the other two enter through the back alley with the help of Smalls, who has given them a maintenance key. They used a rudimentary mixture of nitroglycerin and gunpowder to open the vault. The explosion was moderate, but it reverberated throughout the city. Their plan was to force open the vault, retrieve the gold, and leave the bank through the back alley where two saddled horses awaited them. If they encounter resistance, they intend to use the hostages to demand safe passage and escape through the warehouses that line the telegraph tracks, heading west.

Sheriff Carter left to escort a prisoner, and entrusted security to his deputy Lane Travers. Travers tried to rally some volunteers but doubts their effectiveness. The bank is in the center of town, so a shootout could easily hit innocent people. Passersby reported seeing children running toward the school. Bullets had already shattered the windows of Mrs Perkin's haberdashery. This situation makes Travers nervous. He fears he will have to announce the deaths of innocent people.

A crowd gathers in the street. The bandits demand safe passage out of town. Smalls remains hidden in the back room. He tries to find a way out without encountering any witnesses. Wilkinson and a few prominent citizens want to avoid chaos. They prefer to open negotiations.

One of the robbers has been identified: Graham Poe is a wanted criminal. If the Characters don't act quickly, the thieves could escape with the money. This would damage the reputation of the city and its bank.

Intro for the players

In the shadow of the hardware store's porch, a dull thud echoed through the street. Then a cloud of dust rose from the direction of Wilkinson's Bank, followed by panicked screams. Horses whinnied, passersby threw themselves to the ground. Voices shouted from inside: orders, threats.

Deputy Lane Travers emerged from the side street, rifle in hand. "Looks like they've blown the safe up!" he shouted to no one in particular. "Come and help us!"

Around them, panic gives way to a suspended tension. All eyes turn to you. No one dares to move forward. A quick decision could change everything.

Resolution

The Characters can begin by securing the area around the bank, organizing the evacuation of civilians, establishing safe lines of fire, and determining the exact number of robbers present.

They might also notice fresh footprints leading to the back door, or observe suspicious movement in neighboring buildings, suggesting a possible planned escape. A discreet approach would allow them to access the back alley and observe movement inside undetected. Rooftops are another option.

They might attempt to negotiate to buy time or trap the bandits. Clues left by the complicit cashier (the missing key, abandoned papers) could raise suspicions of inside help. By questioning the employees on the sidelines, they could isolate Smalls, whose nervous behavior betrays his involvement. Once identified, Smalls could be persuaded or coerced into cooperating to facilitate the operation.

If the Characters choose to assault the robbery site, they must maneuver with precision: the attackers are armed and use hostages, employees, and customers as human shields. A direct approach would result in casualties, as the attackers have reinforced the entrances with overturned counters propped against the doors and sandbags they brought in. Each entrance is covered by a sniper ready to return fire at the slightest provocation. The characters can also create a diversion, establish a makeshift entrance through the walls or roof, or discreetly neutralize a lone robber.

If the Characters manage to capture the bandits, documents recovered from them or Smalls' confession will link the case to a larger network involving other accomplices in the region. If they fail, the survivors will flee west, and the bank, discredited, will see its customers withdraw their funds.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to capture all the robbers without civilian casualties and prove Smalls' involvement, the bank is saved from scandal, and their efficiency is praised. The investigation uncovers an interstate network of robberies, and Dead Man's Pass reinforces its reputation as a safe city.

If some of the robbers are captured but one or more hostages are injured or killed, the consequences are more ambiguous. Although the heist is foiled, the population is deeply affected by the losses. An independent investigation is

launched to determine responsibility, and the Characters may face criticism or suspicion depending on their choices.

If only some of the robbers are captured and Smalls manages to escape, the heist is narrowly averted. Rumors persist about the authorities' ineffectiveness, and Wilkinson temporarily suspends his bank's operations pending an inspection by an expert sent from Fort Eldridge. Tensions erupt between the ruined customers and the stressed employees, and the Characters may be summoned to testify about their role in the case or to participate in the protection of sensitive documents.

If the robbers escape with the money and the accomplice isn't identified, the bank is ruined, and the residents lose faith in the city's safety. The name Dead Man's Pass becomes synonymous with powerlessness against organized crime.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters can establish the situation, identify points of vulnerability and consider a plan of action.

After 60 minutes, they can discover traces of internal complicity and prepare an infiltration or a diversion depending on the information gathered.

After 90 minutes, the robbers prepare their escape and threaten to shoot the hostages if no solution is offered to them immediately.

The Curse of the Lost Ranch

The facts for the Teller

The Callahan Ranch west of Dead Man's Pass was one of the largest ranches in the area. Silas Callahan, his wife Martha, and their two sons, Evan and Jonas, lived there. The family prospered despite the difficult conditions. Then strange events began to plague the ranch. Cattle were found dead, drained of blood without any visible injuries. Several barns were destroyed by unexplained fires. Despite warnings from Sheriff Carter and their neighbors, the Callahans refused to leave.

The tragedy culminated on a moonless night when a major fire ravaged the eastern part of the ranch. The next day, neighbors and sheriff's deputies discovered the bodies of Silas, Martha, Evan, and Jonas. All were frozen in postures of terror. Their skin was grayish and hard as stone, with no apparent burns. The interior of the house and barns showed signs of a struggle, but no assailant could be identified. Witnesses reported seeing strange shadows and lights during the night, but nothing tangible explained the deaths.

Investigators found an engraved stele buried in the foundations beneath the barn floor. No one could determine its exact origin, but the Paiute mystics of Chogan Black Bear's circle identified the motifs as a precolombian sacred seal, intended to protect a very ancient burial site. Silas, unknowingly, had built his ranch on a forgotten ritual site.

After these events, the ranch was abandoned. Officially, it no longer belongs to anyone, as the Callahan family had no known heirs. The Ranchers' Union, under the leadership of Jared Olsen, unofficially claims the land, although Sheriff Carter refuses to validate the annexation, out of respect for the family's memory and fear of local superstitions.

Recently, a group of prospectors moved into the ruins of the ranch to set up camp. During their work, they unearthed the stele and erected it in the center of the yard, ignoring the warnings. Since then, the old signs have reappeared: panicked cattle, dried-up wells, furtive figures, and lights that appear every night. Some of the prospectors have fled. Others seem fascinated by the stele and remain. They wander sleeplessly, murmuring incomprehensible words.

The Paiutes know the seal has been broken, releasing the spirits of the place, but refuse to act directly, believing the fault lies with the settlers, who never learn. The Syndicate, for its part, sees this as an opportunity to legally occupy the land under the pretext of securing the region. If the stele is not ritually returned to its original location, the curse risks spreading, causing the land to wither, the livestock to die, and then the men, until Dead Man’s Pass itself is struck.

Intro for the players

The wind blows across Dead Man's Pass, whipping up clouds of dust that shroud the hills. An unusual tension hangs over the town. Conversations are hushed, especially about the Callahan Ranch. Abandoned for five years, it has suddenly become the focus of discussion once again.

Rumors abound. Some say the cattle refuse to approach the ranch grounds and that the horses rear up for no reason. Women claim to have seen nighttime lights dancing among the ruins, moving like lanterns shaken by the wind. Others speak of strange howls and a massive figure seen from the ridge.

Some miners recount how a group of prospectors from the east set up camp on the site, ignoring warnings. They unearthed an engraved stone and erected it in the center of the courtyard, mistaking it for a worthless antique. The six-foot (180 cm) tall stele is carved from dark rock veined with red. Its surface bears animal figures and abstract symbols. At its center, an inverted tree, branches pointing towards the ground, creates a palpable sense of unease. Even in sunlight, the stone remains cold to the touch.

Sheriff John Carter remains silent, but his gestures betray his nervousness. Chogan Black Bear has returned to town accompanied by two elders. His unusual presence leads some to believe that the old curse is not just a myth. In the dusty streets of Dead Man's Pass, anxiety is rising.

Resolution

The Characters must uncover what is happening at the Callahan Ranch before the curse spreads to the rest of the region. While exploring the area, they discover that the stele erected by the prospectors is an ancient ritual seal. This seal held back the spirits associated with an old Native American shrine. The Callahan family had unknowingly built their buildings on top of it. The buried stele acted as a fragile lock. Its removal has unleashed the forces it contained.

The supernatural manifestations are just the beginning. The freed spirits seek to extend their influence beyond the ranch, into the pastures and perhaps even as far as Dead Man's Pass. By consulting Chogan Black Bear or other Paiute elders, the Characters can learn that a complete ritual is necessary to close the breach. The stone must be returned to its exact location, and a rite inspired by ancient traditions must be performed. If Chogan trusts them, he will help them rediscover the forgotten gestures and words of the ritual.

The Ranchers' Syndicate, led by Jared Olsen, wants to seize the Callahan lands. It refuses any intervention from the Paiutes and opposes the lands becoming sanctuaries. The Syndicate could send men to block the ritual or claim the area by invoking public order.

If the ritual succeeds, the stele will seal the spirits. The valley will be pacified and the phenomena will cease. But if the Characters fail or take too long, the

curse will take root. The land will become barren, the springs will dry up, and the first human deaths will soon confirm that evil has reclaimed the place.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, the Characters become aware of the local concern, hear about the prospectors settled on the Callahan ranch and discover the first supernatural signs linked to the erected stele.

After 60 minutes, they can explore the ruins, interrogate the survivors, identify the stele as a ritual seal, and begin to understand the nature of the curse.

After 90 minutes, they can enlist the help of the Paiutes to reconstruct the ritual, while facing attempts by the Syndicate to block the intervention and take advantage of the chaos.

The Forgotten Tomb

The facts for the Teller

Work to expand the settlers' cemetery west of Dead Man's Pass was halted after a disturbing discovery. While digging a new row of graves workers unearthed an unmarked burial, buried deeper than the others. Upon opening it, they discovered ancient artifacts and symbols carved into the walls, marks no one in town can identify. Since that day, several workers have disappeared. Those who remain refuse to return to the site.

The elders whisper that it is a forgotten grave, perhaps dating back to long before the first settlers. Some believe the cemetery land was already cursed before the arrival of white men. The Paiute, however, refuse to discuss it and turn away when the subject is raised.

Over a century ago, long before Dead Man's Pass became a thriving town, this land was already a thoroughfare, a contested territory between various Native American tribes and early explorers. The tomb discovered beneath the cemetery dates back to this ancient time. It was no ordinary burial site. It was a ritual prison designed to contain in the afterlife the spirit of someone deemed dangerous by the Paiute people.

The man buried here was not a warrior or a tribal chief, but a fallen shaman, a sorcerer rejected by his own people. Known as He-Who-Walks-Between-Worlds, he is said to have defied his people's traditions by attempting to use forbidden practices to prolong his own life. Obsessed with immortality, he manipulated forces he did not fully understand. His brethren exiled him and condemned him to be buried alive in a tomb sealed with symbols to imprison him between the living and the spirits.

Over time, the earth closed over the burial site, and its presence was forgotten until cemetery workers unearthed it while excavating to expand the current burial grounds. When they opened the tomb, they found a perfectly preserved skeleton, dressed in ancient finery and surrounded by ritual objects whose meaning eluded them. Among these artifacts was a mask carved from black stone, a talisman the shaman wore during his rituals, and which, according to Paiute legends, still contained some of his power.

When one of the workers, out of curiosity or recklessness, removed it from the deceased's skull, something stirred. Witnesses claimed to have felt an icy breeze rise from the ground, despite the desert heat. From that day on, the men who had participated in the excavation began to disappear one by one. Those who were found wandered aimlessly in the desert, unable to speak, their eyes fixed on an invisible point. Some eventually died, their bodies found without any trace of injury, as if their life force had simply been drained away.

What has been awakened is not a traditional ghost, but a presence that should

not exist in this world. Without his mask, the shaman's soul desperately seeks reincarnation, creeping on those who opened his tomb to draw them into a trance-like state where he can gradually possess them. If nothing is done, the presence lurking in the shadows of Dead Man's Pass will grow stronger, and the disappearances will no longer be limited to the cemetery workers.

Sheriff John Carter doesn't believe in superstitions, but he knows when a threat is coming. He has no logical explanation for what's happening, but he can see that fear is spreading. He fears the entire town will be consumed by paranoia if a solution isn't found quickly. He hires the Characters to find the missing mask, figure out how to seal the tomb, and stop the growing influence of the cursed shaman before the town descends into madness.

Intro for the players

The air is heavy on Dead Man's Pass's main street. The temperature is normal, but a heavy feeling hangs over the town. Conversations are more subdued, glances more averted. As you walk past the Silver Spur, Mary Whitmore calls out to you in a low voice from the front steps.

"Have you heard about what's happening at the cemetery?"

She looks around anxiously then beckons you over.

"The workers who were digging there found an ancient tomb that they should never have opened. Since then, some have disappeared, and those who have returned are no longer the same."

She stops when she sees a man in the distance, wandering like a ghost along the buildings. His clothes are covered in dirt, his vacant gaze fixed on some invisible point. As he passes near you, you hear a strange murmur. The language is inhuman. He is clearly in an altered mental state.

Mary Whitmore swallowed and stared at you again.

"We're all going to die."

Resolution

The investigation begins at the cemetery where the unmarked grave was discovered. The site has been abandoned by the workers, but traces of their labor are still visible. Examining the carvings on the stone, the Characters notice unfamiliar symbols. These glyphs resemble neither those of the colonists nor those of the Paiutes. Further excavation reveals an ancient object, still partially buried: a cold-to-the-touch metal amulet engraved with precolombian symbols similar to those on the grave.

By questioning the surviving workers, they learned that all those who touched the objects found in the tomb began to sense supernatural presences the following night. Some heard whispers in their sleep. Others saw shadows in their rooms. Those who disappeared spoke of recurring nightmares before

eventually losing their minds. Physically they are healthy, but mentally they are traumatized.

The Characters can beseech answers from the Paiute elders, but most will refuse to speak. Finally, an old man agrees to reveal what he knows: the land on which the cemetery was built was never untouched. Long before the settlers, a group of outcasts exiled from their own people had found refuge here. They worshiped an ancient power. Their leader, named He-Who-Walks-Between-Worlds, was buried alive in this tomb as punishment. His spirit, bound to the recovered amulet, was condemned to wander between worlds, unable to find rest.

If the Characters do not act, the presence will grow stronger and the inhabitants will slowly descend into madness. To stop the tomb's influence, the amulet must be placed back inside and the tomb resealed according to a specific ritual known only to some ancient Paiute practitioners. Diplomacy and persuasion will be required.

Criteria for success or failure

If the Characters manage to close the tomb with the correct ritual and replace the amulet, the threat is contained, and the influence of the past gradually disappears. The workers slowly regain their senses. The town becomes calm again, but some will remain haunted by their nightmares.

If they delay too long, the curse spreads, and the disappearances multiply. Soon, inhabitants begin to wander the streets at night, their minds broken by whispers from another world.

If the tomb remains open and the mask stays removed, the once-trapped spirit is freed, taking form in the night and wandering the city in search of new souls to take with it. From that point on, Dead Man's Pass is nothing more than a city on borrowed time.

Chronology

After 30 minutes, another worker disappears without a trace, and fear grips the residents of Dead Man’s Pass.

After 60 minutes, witnesses reported seeing shadows wandering in the streets, but any attempt to approach them resulted in their disappearance.

After 90 minutes, the Characters can locate the mask, find a Paiute shaman, and attempt to launch the ritual to close the tomb before the shaman's spirit becomes uncontrollable.

Insta-Role® Character Sheet

Player: _____

Character Name: _____

Organisation : _____

Occupation : _____

Description : _____

_____

_____

(creation: distribute 15 points, min. 2 max. 7)

_____ **PHYSICS**

_____ **INTELLECT**

_____ **Technics and Intuition**

Notes : _____

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Insta-Role® Play Aid

Tests: [1d10 + characteristic + modifiers] >= target

Opposing tests: [characteristic + 1d10 + modifiers]

Outcomes scale

- **Result** (difference between the result and the threshold): description
- **Catastrophe**: The action fails, and the situation worsens unexpectedly
- **Failure**: The action fails
- **Partial failure**: The action fails but the situation improves slightly
- **Equality**: The action is not resolved satisfactorily, and the situation stagnates.
- **Partial Success**: The action succeeds, but the situation gets a little worse
- **Success**: The action succeeds
- **Exceptional achievement**: The action succeeds, and the situation improves in an unexpected way.

Injuries:

[Physics] = coma 2 x [Physics] = death Rest = 1 per 4h

Destiny Tokens - Players

- Suggest a development of the story
- Automatically succeed in a normal difficulty action (no roll)
- Attempt an action that would normally be too difficult (+10 to the die roll)
- Cancel an event that just happened (and doesn't involve a failed test).
- Get a big 'boost' or 'tip' from the Teller
- Prevent the death of a Character. This costs all the Destiny tokens of the group (minimum 1).
- Accept a negative effect to recover a token

Destiny Tokens - Teller

- Player agree to automatically fail a test (no roll)
- Player accept a negative effect or development
- Reward an interesting initiative/action
- Players agree to let an enemy escape





Play more often!

An experienced storyteller, a few friends, and you're good to go!
Insta-Role® is the role-playing game designed for those moments when you want to play but didn't plan for it. Everything is ready to play immediately. For those who love to improvise or enjoy a quick session, it's ideal. Once you know the rules, you can play in fifteen minutes.

Two-hour sessions where every minute counts

Each scenario is designed for a two-hour session: You know from the start how long the game will last. A perfect format for playing without hogging the whole evening, or for playing several games in a row in an improvised campaign.

A streamlined system designed to support your improvisations

Each character is defined by three attributes, and a single dice roll is all it takes to resolve anything. The system remains discreet: with no skill trees or tables to consult, it leaves all the room for the story. The Teller uses the provided material to support their improvisation, and narration flows naturally. The result? A spontaneous and lively experience, focused on what matters most: the gameplay.

Players shape the story

Thanks to the Fate Tokens, players participate in building the narrative: influencing the story, proposing plot twists, or triggering fateful events. Narrative authority is shared between the Storyteller and the Players.

Welcome to Dead Man's Pass

Dead Man’s Pass is a mining town during the gold rush, haunted by corruption, racial tensions, and fear of what horrors lurk in the mountains.
On the frontier between civilisation and chaos, it equally attracts the ambitious, cowards, opportunists and fanatics. Mercyless outlaws, Pinkerton agents, native chamans, military forces always on the edge and occult societies precariously co-habitate. Everyone struggles to survive, bend the law to their advantage, or to dig up secrets earth itself would rather keep buried.
Some are looking for redemption, others for revenge, and a few idealists still dream of justice. But the fact is, even the best intentions can die in blood and in the dry dust of Dead man's pass.

COMPLETE GAME - Contains everything needed to play!

This book contains the full game rules, a description of the city and its inhabitants, and 50 ready-to-play scenarios playable each in 2 hours.

Insta-Role® is the roleplaying game that matches your lifestyle.
Zero preparation, no waiting, no frustration.
Just the desire to play, a few friends, and a story to live.

A game by Eric Hanuise, published by Flatlined Games
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