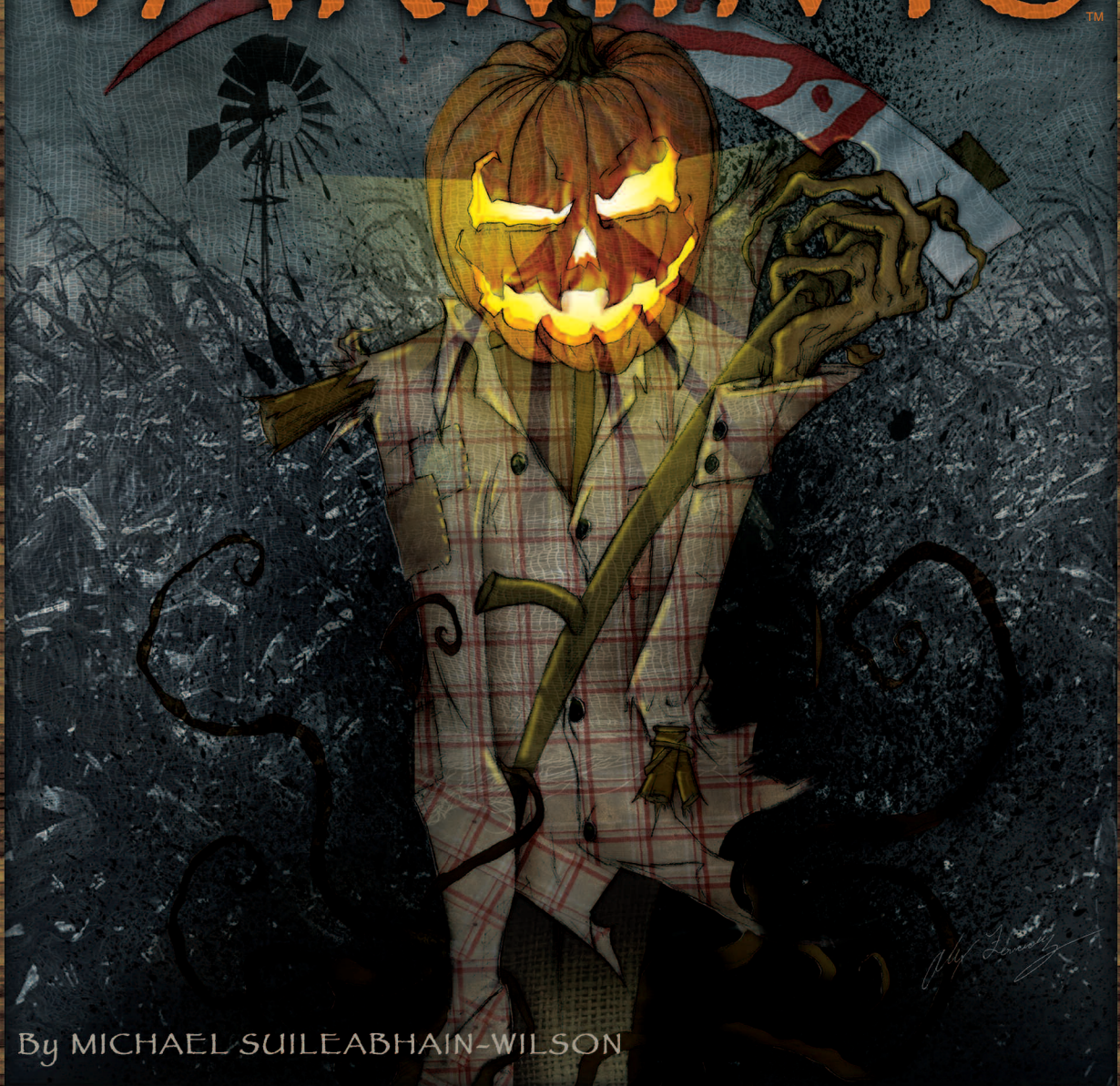


G U R P S[®]



VARMINTS[™]



By MICHAEL SUILEABHAIN-WILSON

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

CREEPY CRITTERS!



The West is overrun! Ever since the dead rose at Gettysburg, vicious beasts intent on terrorizing people into the grave (and right back out again) have plagued mankind. In the wilderness and in the cities, monsters lurk. Unless someone roots them out, humanity will surely perish. *GURPS Deadlands: Varmints* provides everything you need to take your *GURPS Deadlands* campaign into the lair of the beast. *Varmints* has:

- ☠ Abominations – the Reckoners' direct servants – like the terrifying Plague Rider.
- ☠ Dozens of varieties of unquiet dead – mummies, zombies, ghosts, and many more.
- ☠ Strange animals for every climate and terrain.
- ☠ Entirely new creatures, such as the Hive Buffalo and the Phrenomesmeric Zombie.
- ☠ Advice on creating and playing some of the West's weirdest creatures – as PCs!

GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition, Revised and Compendium I are required to use this supplement in a *GURPS* campaign. *GURPS Deadlands: Varmints* can be used with any roleplaying system.

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES
www.sjgames.com

FIRST EDITION, FIRST PRINTING
PUBLISHED JANUARY 2003

ISBN 1-55634-608-5

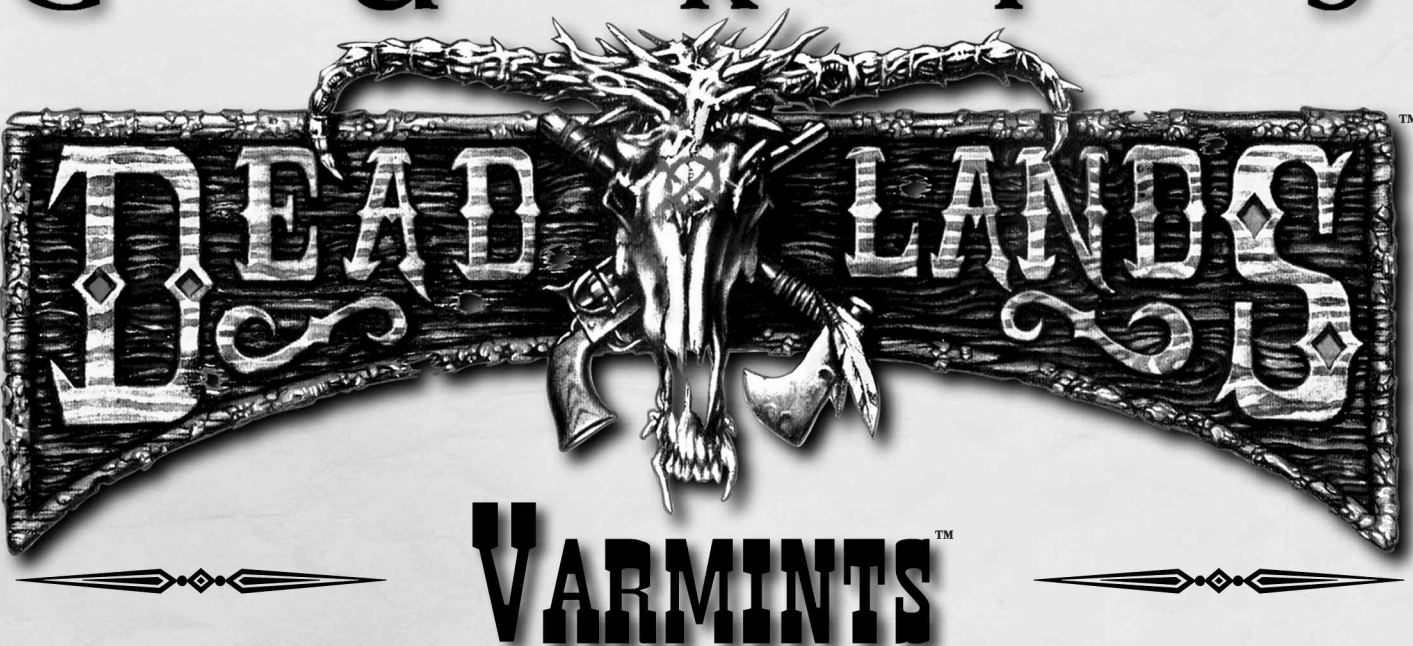


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SJG02295 **6762**

Printed in
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G U R P S[®]



DEADLANDS
VARMINTS[™]

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Edited by Andrew Hackard

Cover by Alex Fernandez ♠ Illustrated by Pinnacle Entertainment Group



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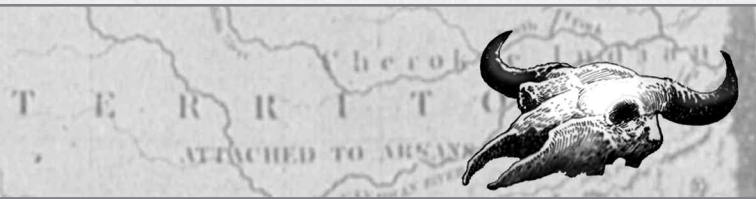
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PDF: stock # 30-6762 • Version 1.1 – April 2020

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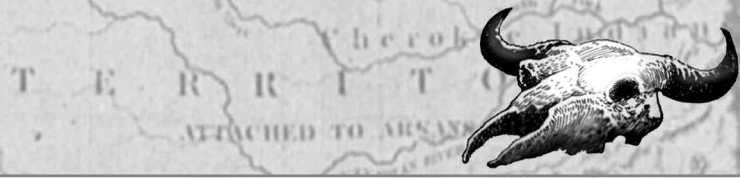
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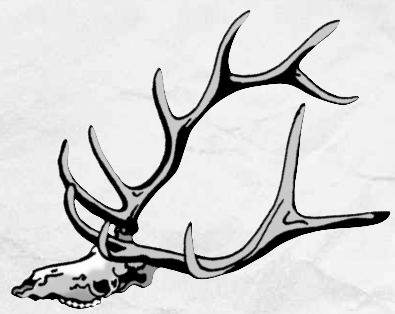
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INTRODUCTION



People have different opinions about when the Reckoning began: on the battlefield at Gettysburg, when the Last Sons killed the last Old One, or when the Great Quake tore open the earth and brought ghost rock to the world. Historians can argue all they want, but the common man knows the truth. The Reckoning isn't some stage show where the curtain rises promptly at eight. Every person's Reckoning begins at a different time, and deep down everyone knows exactly when that is.

The Reckoning begins the first time you see a monster.

Monsters *are* the Reckoning. They are the fears of men, walking around in the flesh. Everything else is just frosting. If the Reckoners are going to beat mankind, they're going to do it with monsters. And if mankind is going to beat the Reckoners, they're going to have to start by cleaning out all the varmints.

Load your Winchester and pack a lunch. It's time to go hunting.

This book contains over 300 new creatures for use in your *GURPS Deadlands* campaign, some of which are new monsters never seen in any *Deadlands* supplement. It also discusses organizations in the Weird West interested in monsters, monster-oriented campaigns, and character types involved with strange and unusual creatures, as well as rules for playing many of these creatures as PCs.

GMs will need the *GURPS Basic Set*, *GURPS Compendium I*, and *GURPS Deadlands: Weird West*. *GURPS Bestiary* may be useful, but is not required.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Suileabhain-Wilson has been writing gaming material since entering the cold, hard working world four years ago. His previous work includes an assortment of articles and reviews, as well as the *GURPS Deadlands* Conversion Notes and *GURPS Deadlands: Hexes*. Besides gaming, his interests run the gamut of ways to interact with food, books, and people. Professionally, he dances a deadly minuet with carpal tunnel syndrome, testing video games by day and writing freelance by night. He lives south of San Francisco with his fiancée, many hypothetical cats, and a fabulous sofa.

ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of *GURPS* players. We can be reached by email: info@sjgames.com. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources include:

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Store Finder (storefinder.sjgames.com): Discover nearby places to buy *GURPS* items and other Steve Jackson Games products. Local shops are great places to play our games and meet fellow gamers!

Bibliographies. Bibliographies are a great resource for finding more of what you love! We've added them to many *GURPS* book web pages, with links to help you find the next perfect element for your game.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Errata pages for *GURPS* releases are at sjgames.com/errata/gurps.

PAGE REFERENCES

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*. Other references are BE for *GURPS Bestiary*, CII for *GURPS Compendium II*, D:H for *GURPS Deadlands: Hexes*, DL for *GURPS Deadlands: Weird West*, and G for *GURPS Grimoire*. The abbreviation for *this book* is D:V. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at gurps.sjgames.com/abbrevs.html.



CHARACTERS



In the Weird West, everyone has to learn how to deal with varmints. On the frontier, unholy critters – the likes of which have never been seen – are a daily occurrence. Back East, where things aren't quite so weird, people still make sure not to walk by the old graveyard late at night. Some folks, however, decide to do more than just get by. They choose to step up and take on the mess of critters that afflict the human race – hunting them, taming them, or just getting rid of them at any cost.

ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES, AND SKILLS

In a land where unwanted visitors can include not only a scorpion in your boot and a rattlesnake in your sleeping bag, but a giant rat in your basement and a zombie in your closet, the usual rules tend to change a bit to accommodate those unwanted critters. To reproduce the wide range of monsters found in *Deadlands*, some traits have to be stretched a bit, and some abilities have to be introduced that aren't in the core books.

ADVANTAGES

ANIMAL EMPATHY

SEE P. B19

Animal Empathy is invaluable in a game that focuses on the unusual creatures of the frontier. For the purposes of the reaction roll bonus granted by Animal Empathy, almost everything in the *Monstrous Critters* section (see pp. 76-93) counts as a wild animal. The rest of the book is dedicated either to intelligent creatures, the undead, or unnatural beasts deliberately created by evil powers. The GM may rule that other monsters count as animals for this purpose; essentially, any nonsapient being who has some role in an ecosystem might be affected by Animal Empathy.

BEAST-KIN

SEE P. C121

Like Animal Empathy, Beast-Kin can be extremely useful for folks going up against a wilderness full of strange creatures. However, Beast-Kin is a double-edged sword. The prohibition against killing animals can be challenging when facing a beast like a catamount (see p. 79), which seems like a natural animal but is much more devious and evil than a normal beast.

Beast-Kin get a +2 reaction bonus from any creature which is not sufficiently natural or nonsapient to count as a wild animal, but is essentially animal in character, such as Animal Men (see pp. 39-40), the Buffalo Man (see p. 19), or even a clockwork tarantula (see p. 41).

INVULNERABILITY

SEE P. C159

Many of the more powerful monsters of the Weird West are immune to damage from normal weapons, except for certain attacks that do damage as usual. This is easy enough to represent for monsters in bestiary format, but it presents a challenge for monsters built as characters. This sort of power

should be modeled as Invulnerability (Any kinetic damage), a 300-point advantage; on the model of Vampiric Invulnerability (see p. C170), the first level of any Vulnerability is assumed to negate Invulnerability for that form of attack.

Some creatures take only half the usual damage from certain forms of attack – this is Invulnerability with a -25% Limitation, “Takes half damage.”



PLANT EMPATHY

SEE P. C129

Plant Empathy is not as widely useful as Animal Empathy, but the Weird West has its share of savage plant life running around – tumblebleeds (see p. DL115), bloodwire (see p. 91), and so on. Animate plants need not be fully sentient in order to get the reaction bonus for Plant Empathy; any plant that is mobile and responds vigorously to its environments is eligible. Abominations that resemble plants do not qualify, as they are supernatural creatures rather than true plants.

SPIRIT EMPATHY

SEE P. C146

Spirit Empathy is a difficult advantage to deal with. People who have it don't draw a qualitative distinction between the quick and the dead; spirits are just people who are done with their bodies. It can be a difficult philosophy to explain to your average torch-wielding mob. Spirit Empathy works on ghosts, zombies, manitou vessels, and certain abominations. It does *not* work on mummies or vampires, as those

More than anything, perhaps, human beings fear death. Other fears may be more nuanced and profound, playing on the uncertain nature of existence in a fleeting world, but the fear of death is the stuff of gut-wrenching, bladder-voiding panic.

As with all things fear-related, the Reckoners know this well; the fear of death is their bread and butter. They also know that no source of fear is inexhaustible, and that simply threatening people with death will, in time, cause them to stop fearing it. The Reckoners aren't that stupid.

Instead they turn to the undead, putting a dead man back on his feet and sending him lurching into town to show the locals, "Here is death. It's cold, it's lonely, and it smells bad. And it could be you." The Reckoners don't have to threaten people with death; they just have to remind folks of it . . . and wait for them to scare themselves into the grave.

COMMON UNDEAD ABILITIES

Undead monsters come in all shapes and sizes, but they share certain traits in common. Nearly all have the Injury Tolerance (No Blood) and Vampiric Immortality advantages. Many undead also possess Undead Invulnerability; however, instead of having Vulnerabilities to a particular attack form, they have Vulnerabilities to attacks on a certain target area – usually the brain or heart. This target area is referred to as the undead's "focus."

ZOMBIES

Zombies are the rank and file of the Reckoning. The Reckoners can't spare the terror-power to create an abomination in every place that needs scaring; even if they could, so many abominations would start to lose their impact after a while. Therefore, they require an alternate solution.

They have legions of manitous at their disposal, hanging around the Hunting Grounds with nothing to do but wait for a huckster to drop by. However, a manitou can't manifest itself on the mortal plane without a body to possess, and not every manitou has the mojo to take over a human body uninvited.

Fortunately for the Reckoners, the unending bloodshed of the Civil War and the Great Rail Wars has provided them with an alternative. In a dead body there's no one to fight with a manitou, and most manitous are powerful enough to get a corpse up and moving if they set their mind to it. The fact that seeing their safely dead and buried neighbors walking around scares the pants off most people is a delicious little bonus.

BLOAT

A bloat is a zombie created from a waterlogged corpse – one that has been submerged for quite some time before reanimation. Its lengthy exposure to water causes its flesh to turn pale, waxy, and distended. The stench is unbelievable. This gooey tissue isn't much affected by punctures and piercing attacks; they pass through with minimal resistance and the goo replaces itself.

ST: 15 **Move/Dodge:** 5/5 **Size:** 1
DX: 11 **PD/DR:** 0/0 **Weight:** 225 lbs.
IQ: 10 **Damage:** 2d+1 cr#
HT: 12/14 **Reach:** C **Habitat:** FW, SW, S

Skills: Brawling-13; Swimming-13.

Special Abilities:

Damage: A bloat may do 1d-1 cutting damage with its bite. Its hands are too soft to work as claws, but it can bash enemies with them for 2d+1 crushing damage.

Gear: Bloats cannot use firearms, as their fingers are too fat and swollen. However, they may have simple clubs and other weapons.

Horrific Appearance: See *Terror*, p. 7. Victims are at a -6 penalty to Fright Checks.

Imperturbable: See p. CI26.

Invulnerability: Guns and impaling attacks do only half damage to a bloat. Shotguns do full damage.

Stench: Any human within 10 feet of a bloat must make a roll vs. HT-2 to avoid being nauseated by the bloat's stink, losing a point of fatigue and suffering a -2 to all rolls for the remainder of the encounter. Only one roll is necessary for each time a bloat is encountered.

Undead: A bloat has the Independent Body Parts (Detachable Head), Injury Tolerance (No Blood, No Neck, No Vitals), Undead Invulnerability, and Vampiric Immortality advantages. It cannot be stunned or fatigued, and it suffers no debilitating effects from damage. Its focus is its head.

Vulnerability – Alcohol: Alcohol does 1d+2 points of damage when initially splashed on a bloat, 1d points of damage the next turn, 1d-2 points of damage the turn after that, and 1 point of damage the following turn.

PLANTAGRITO

Xitlan, the Aztec lich who raised Santa Anna's Army of the Dead (see p. DL55), developed an exotic strain of the coca plant to deal with the difficulties of keeping an army of zombies from going wild. This plant is called *plantagrity* after the shrieking noise it emits when harvested (from *planta*, meaning "plant," and *grito*, meaning "scream"). When mixed into a load of ground meat, it causes zombies to become docile and compliant. A zombie on plantagrity does not attack unless provoked; even then, all its rolls are at -2. Plantagrity also slows the decomposition of an undead creature, prolonging its useful life and reducing the stench. It takes about a week after plantagrity is withdrawn for a zombie to get back to its usual brain-hungry self.

Plantagrity is grown by Xitlan in a heavily guarded compound outside Mexico City; however, seeds might conceivably have found their way into the wild, or one of Santa Anna's lackeys might be persuaded to "liberate" a small quantity for a reasonable fee.

Plantagrity has a mild amotivational effect on Harrowed. It doesn't really slow them down much, but it dulls their focus. In game terms, a Harrowed who consumes plantagrity gains the Distractible, Dull, and Staid quirks for about eight hours. Most Harrowed don't like it. On the other hand, their manitous are also hampered by plantagrity; Harrowed gain a +1 bonus to resist being taken over by their manitous for the duration of the drug's effect.

BEASTS OF THE LAND

CARCAJOU

The carcajou resembles an unnaturally huge wolverine – three feet at the shoulder, with two rows of serrated teeth and three-inch claws that are hard enough to notch stone. It is even more ferocious than its smaller cousin. In order to feed such fury, the carcajou is always hungry, eternally in search of prey. It lies in wait, resting to conserve energy, under overhangs or behind fallen logs near game trails, waterholes, and other spots where game congregates. From this place of ambush it leaps out to fell its prey, which includes creatures up to and including a full-grown bear. If a carcajou kills more food than it can consume, it gorges until full, and then regurgitate its meal to make space for more.

The carcajou eats almost any meat: animals in traps, carrion, smokehouse stores, etc. Carcajous have demolished small herds of cattle that found themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. They are as clever as their smaller cousins, with a Craftiness level of 12.

ST: 20 **Move/Dodge:** 7/8 **Size:** <1
DX: 14 **PD/DR:** 0/2 **Weight:** 250 lbs.
IQ: 5 **Damage:** 3d+2 cut#
HT: 13/17 **Reach:** C **Habitat:** P, M

Skills: Brawling-19; Climbing-13; Intimidation-8; Stealth-15; Tracking-14.

Special Abilities:

Damage: A carcajou may strike with its claws for 3d+2 cutting damage or bite for 1d impaling damage.

High Pain Threshold: A carcajou suffers no penalties from pain.

Horrific Appearance: See *Terror*, p. 7. Victims are at a -2 penalty to Fright Checks.

Imperturbable: see p. CI26.

CATAMOUNT

The catamount is superficially similar to a 10-foot-long puma, but its true distinction is its devilish intellect. A catamount is smarter than a normal human, and its mind is directed only to the hunt. Catamounts possess a preternatural mastery of mimicry, paws with a limited ability to manipulate objects (like a raccoon's), and a coat which can subtly change its shade to match the catamount's surroundings. Their typical hunting pattern is to conceal themselves within a tree, lure an unsuspecting person underneath by mimicking cries for help, and swing down from their perch to snatch their chosen victim into the tree, there to be gutted and devoured. Catamounts are also capable of finding and moving traps to catch an unsuspecting trapper in his own device.

Fortunately, catamounts always hunt alone.

ST: 24 **Move/Dodge:** 9/9 **Size:** 2
DX: 14 **PD/DR:** 0/0 **Weight:** 250 lbs.
IQ: 11 **Damage:** 4d+2 cut#
HT: 13/20 **Reach:** C **Habitat:** F

Skills: Brawling-16; Climbing-17; Stealth-22*; Swimming-13.

* Includes bonus from Chameleon Coat.

Special Abilities:

Bad Grip: See p. CI101.

Caterwaul: After dark, the catamount may take a turn to terrify with its chilling yowl, which sends fear down the spine up to a mile away. Anyone within earshot must make a fresh Fright Check against the catamount's Horrific Appearance.

Chameleon Coat: Catamounts get a +4 bonus to Stealth from their camouflage-patterned coat.

Damage: A catamount may claw for 4d+2 cutting damage, or bite for 1d+1 cutting damage.

Flying Tackle: A catamount may leap up to six yards; this attack is equivalent to a Flying Tackle (p. B113), but the catamount may make a DX roll to keep its feet, and the victim is at an extra -2 to ST above and beyond the usual penalties for a flying tackle. The catamount may immediately follow the tackle with a claw or bite attack at +2 damage in the same turn.

Horrific Appearance: See *Terror*, p. 7. Victims are at a -2 penalty to Fright Checks.

Mimicry: Catamounts can alter their voice to sound like human voices. They cannot speak, but they can perfectly mimic the sound of crying or screams for help.

Night Vision: Catamounts can see perfectly well in any sort of light. See p. B22.

CATAMOUNTS AS CHARACTERS

A catamount would make a very strange addition to most parties. They are very intelligent but utterly inhuman in their thinking. They do not plan, or really think of the future much at all. They have fine memories, but rarely bother to use them. Their lives revolve around food, shelter, and mating; to occupy their powerful minds, they often make elaborate productions of all these things.

There are a number of ways a catamount might become involved in human society. A lazy catamount might trade protection to a small town in exchange for having its food provided. A catamount whose mate was kidnapped by a traveling menagerie might seek aid in getting her back. An unusually focused catamount might conceive a taste for vengeance against someone who did him wrong somehow.

CATAMOUNT

284 POINTS

Attributes: ST +14 [145]; DX +4 [45]; IQ +1 [10]; HT +3 [30].

Advantages: Chameleon 2 [14]; Claws [40]; Enhanced Move 1/2 [5]; Extra Hit Points 7 [35]; Mimicry [15]; Night Vision [10]; Penetrating Call [5]; Sharp Teeth [5]; Super Jump 1 [10].

Disadvantages: Bad Grip [-10]; Bestial [-15]; Bloodlust [-10]; Horizontal [-10]; Horrific Appearance (-2 to Fright Checks; see *Terror*, p. 7) [-10]; Inconvenient Size [-10]; Presentient [-20].

MARCUS LAFAYETTE

787 POINTS

ST 17 [80]; DX 14 [45]; IQ 11 [10]; HT 18 [125].

Speed 8.00; Move 8.

Dodge 8; Parry 11 (Brawling).

Advantages: Alertness +2 [10]; Charisma +3 [15]; Imperturbable [10]; Invulnerability [300]; Spirit Invulnerability [50]; Terror (-6 to Fright Checks) [90]; Vampiric Immortality [60].

Disadvantages: Berserk [-15]; Bloodlust [-10]; Bully [-10]; Callous [-6]; Nocturnal [-10]; Vulnerability (Hanging with barbed wire) [-3]; Vulnerability (Rear attack) [-10].

Skills: Area Knowledge (Chisholm Trail)-12 [2]; Brawling-17 [8]; Broadsword-16 [8]; Detect Lies-11 [4]; Guns (Pistol)-16* [2]; Intimidation-19 [18]; Riding (Horse)-15 [4]; Stealth-14 [2]; Tracking-14 [8].

* Includes +1 for IQ.

Marcus Lafayette has no particular qualifications for judgeship. He was just a rancher. However, he was the orneriest cuss in six counties, with a taste for claiming any and all land he liked the looks of, and no qualms about killing anyone who said different. Everyone along the Trail was terrified of Lafayette. The hangin' judges recruited him because they weren't sure they had enough clout to take him on.

Lafayette has minimal legal knowledge, or education of any sort, but he has lots of muscle and a fierce temper. When he was alive, no one dared question him if he decided to hand down rulings based on his whim of the day. Cowboys and ranchers always get a capital sentence from Lafayette, who calls them "rustlers."

He is the biggest of the judges, looming over the others at nearly seven feet tall. He carries a pair of the standard judge revolvers, but he prefers to fight with a large axe-handle wrapped with barbed wire. The axe-handle does sw+3 impaling damage; in Lafayette's hands, this comes to 3d+2 impaling damage. Anyone who attacks or questions Lafayette will cause him to go berserk.

Lafayette is Invulnerable to kinetic damage unless attacked from behind. If attacked from the rear, or with magical attacks, from any side he can be forced to dissolve for the night. He can only be killed permanently by hanging him with a noose of barbed wire. His vulnerability to rear attacks is known along the trail, but the barbed-wire noose hasn't occurred to anyone yet.

A Harrowed who counts coup on Marcus Lafayette gains the Hyper-Strength advantage (p. CI58) as a coup power. He also gains the Bully disadvantage (p. B31).

JOHN HENRY

489 POINTS

ST 18 [90]; DX 13 [30]; IQ 11 [10]; HT 14 [45].

Speed 6.75; Move 6.

Dodge 6; Parry 9 (Brawling).

Advantages: Alertness +1 [5]; Charisma +1 [5]; Harrowed [206]; Regrowth (No Reattachment Only limitation) [20]; Reputation +4 [6] (As greatest railroad worker ever; on 7 or less); Single-Minded [5]; Strong Will +5 [20]; True Faith [15]; Very Fit [15].

Disadvantages: Charitable [-15].

Skills: Axe/Mace-15 [8]; Bard-10* [1/2]; Blacksmith-9 [1/2]; Brawling-14 [2]; Demolition-12 [4]; Detect Lies-11 [4]; Intimidation-12 [4]; Mechanic (Steam Engine)-9 [1/2]; Metallurgy-9 [1]; Survival (Mountains)-10 [1]; Swimming-12 [1/2]; Theology-10 [2]; Throwing-13 [4].

* Includes +1 for Charisma.

John Henry was born around 1850. The story goes that his birth was attended with thunder and lightning, with a deep rumbling coming up out of the ground. They say John Henry came on out of the womb and went right to work on the railroad.

Legend aside, John Henry must have been the greatest railroad worker ever to walk American soil. He had incredible strength – bending steel rods with his bare hands, felling a man with one blow. While he worked for the C&O railroad, he blasted holes through the mountains for new track faster than anyone had ever seen before. He loved the work. The legend of John Henry spread far and wide, until the fatal wager of 1871.

His foreman took a bet that John, with nothing but his two sledgehammers, could out-dig a new ghost-rock-driven drill invented by Darius Hellstromme himself. With a mighty throng watching, John Henry and the drill went at it one fine morning.

John won the bet, but the exertion was more than even he could sustain. He died on the spot with his hammers in his hands, and they buried him the same way.

A few days later, a pair of souvenir hunters dug him up, hoping to steal his famous hammers. When they got the coffin open, however, John Henry opened his eyes and sat up. The two men, with one of the two hammers, headed for the hills before John could get his bearings. John Henry was back.

Since then, John has wandered the country trying to find his role in God's plan. His physical prowess keeps him employed; he's mostly drifted back into the railroad work he loves. He tries to do what's right, looking out for his fellow man. When there's trouble, John Henry can be relied to pitch in. He worries occasionally about his missing hammer. He knows that the remaining one has become special somehow, and the other might be dangerous in the wrong hands.



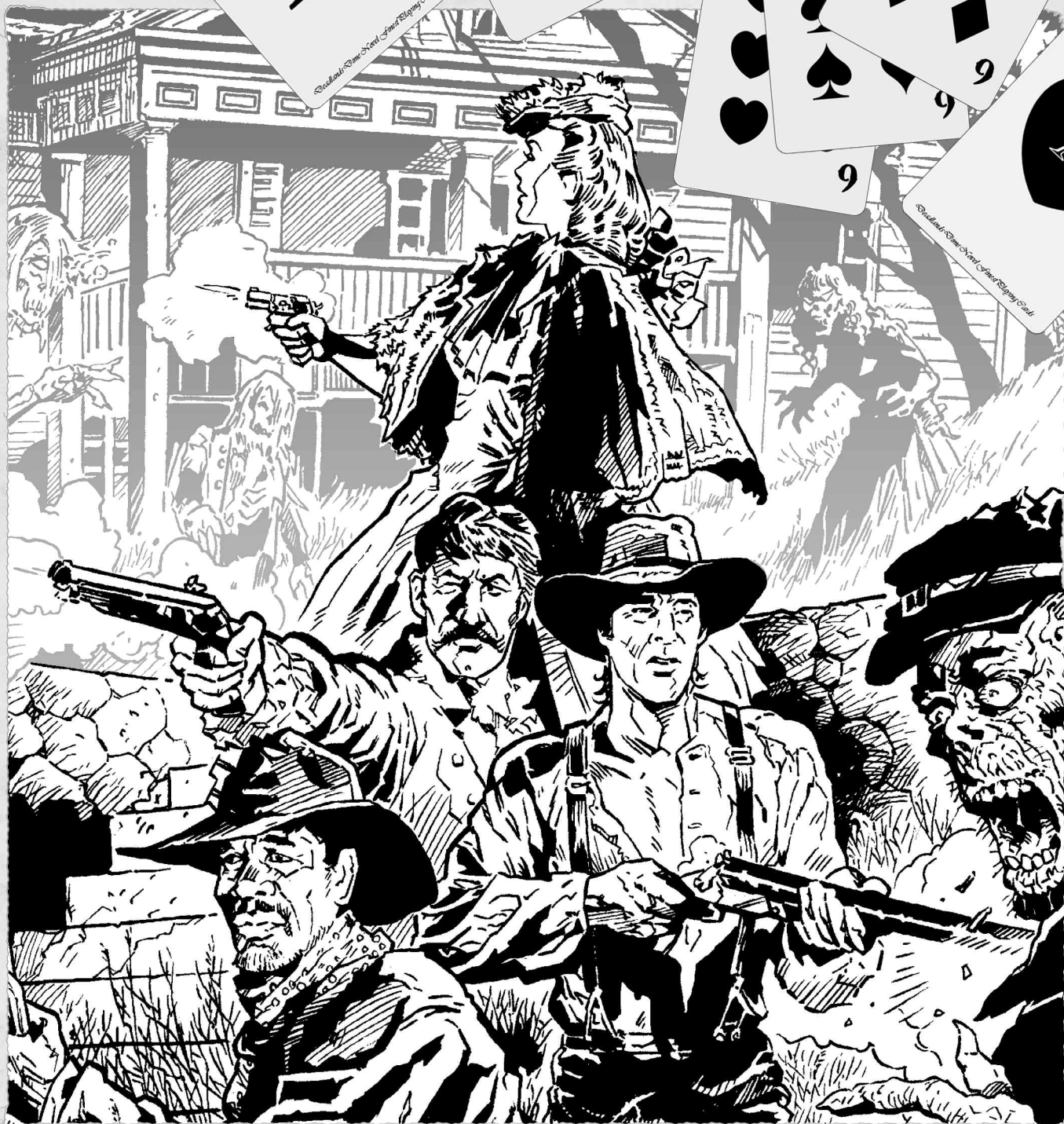
JOHN HENRY'S HAMMERS

John Henry's hammers are hefty 16-pound sledgehammers. Used two-handed, one of them has a Min ST of 15; in one hand, it would have a Min ST of 18. They do sw+6 crushing damage, and do not become unready when used, as if enchanted with Graceful Weapon (p. G41). They count as magic weapons for the purpose of fighting creatures only affected by magic weapons.

Power: In addition to their virtues in combat, the wielder of one of John Henry's hammers gets a +2 bonus to any roll related to building a railroad.

Taint: Anyone other than John gains the Nightmares disadvantage for as long as he possesses the hammer.

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