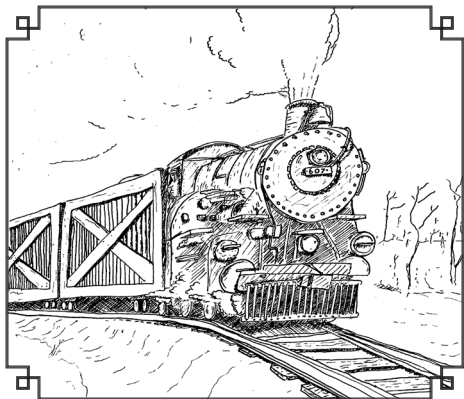


Conductors' Guide

A FEW TINY NUGGETS OF ADVICE AND
SOME TABLES TO HELP YOU RUN THE GAME



Bordercholly

For Use with The Knights of the Road

This is a game for a small group of friends or acquaintances. One player will be the Conductor (kind of exactly like a GM, but you know... trains), while the others take control of a Knight: a wandering adventurer who rights wrongs, and fights monsters. Work together to tell a fun story, solve puzzles, improvise, joke, eat, and enjoy your time together.

This book assumes that you have a basic understanding of RPG conventions, lingo, jargon, and other nonsense.

Written and Drawn by:

bordercholly (Liam Murphy)

Rules Based on:

Into the Odd and Electric Bastionland

by Chris McDowall

(www.bastionland.com)

Inspired by:

Mausritter by Isaac Williams (mausritter.com)

Cairn by Yochai Gal (cairnrbg.com)

ARC by Momatoes (arc-rpg.com)

UltraViolet Grasslands by Luka Rejec
(wizardthieffighter.com)

Black Hack by David Black



A Quick Disclaimer



Because this game takes place in a close analog to the United States in the early 20th century, it is likely you might run into situations that will be uncomfortable, or offensive to you or your fellow players. Please respect your friends enough to be sensitive to that, especially if you feel comfortable.

I would highly recommend implementing some of the safety tools in the **TTRPG Safety Toolkit**, compiled by Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk. See this link for more info:
bit.ly/ttrpgsafetytoolkit

Make sure to discuss everyone's comfort level at the start. Should the story, for example:

- Reflect racial issues to any extent?
- Be centered on colonialism or capitalism? Or only have it act as a secondary or even lesser theme compared to outdoor exploration?
- Involve serious depictions of mental or emotional distress?

Consider setting up Lines and Veils, especially if your group is interested in approaching sensitive yet still very relevant topics from 1920s America and beyond.



A Few Tips



TRUST YOURSELF - You are a fun person full of creative potential. Unleash it. These rules are pretty bare bones, but you should break and bend them to work for you. You know what works at your table.

RESPECT YOUR PLAYERS - These are fun people full of creative potential. Let them unleash it. They probably think very differently than you. Respect that.

COMMUNICATE - Understand your players' expectations. Ask them what sorts of things they want to get into, or not get into. Go along with them on that journey. Tear up your script.

REWARD CREATIVITY - Players come up with whacky plans and ideas. They're often the most fun. Accomodate these creative strokes, and reward them with a fun or unexpected outcome.

DEALING WITH DISTANCE - I like a simple **Engaged, Close, Far** mechanic. But you do you.

GO EASY ON YOURSELF - Don't prep too much. Trust yourself to have fun and improv where you need to. Take a break if you need to think.

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, HAVE FUN



5d6 Quest Generator

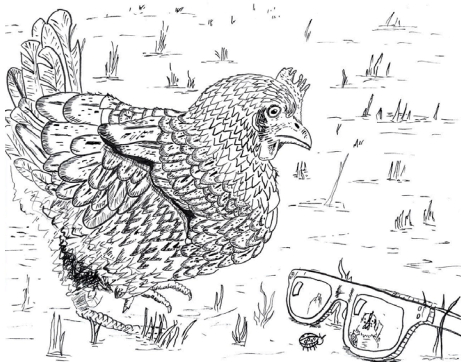


Quest Giver

- 1 A frazzled and overwhelmed member of the village council nervous to reach out
- 2 A local farmer selling peaches out of the back of their truck
- 3 A drifter who's heard rumors about
- 4 A traveling preacher who's noticed something strange
- 5 An exasperated county sheriff tired of red tape
- 6 A local merchant who's business is about to close because of

Apparent Problem

- 1 Local livestock are dying at an alarming rate
- 2 A nearby mine has gone silent
- 3 Train crews are refusing to unload freight (they know something's up)
- 4 The abandoned mansion nearby has a blood trail leading to the front door
- 5 There is a strange glow in the Eastern sky at midnight every night
- 6 Local children are gathering at night chanting in a strange language and remember nothing in the morning



Cause of Problem

- 1 A vampire is Scooby Doo-ing the town to buy up cheap property
- 2 A diabolical cult is attempting to summon The Devil Himself
- 3 A Mothman has moved into the area and set up a nest
- 4 A werewolf has set this area up as their new territory
- 5 **3d6** chupacabras escaped from a passing train
- 6 Debt collectors using monsters to scare townsfolk into paying up

Quest Generator Continued

Complication

- 1 The local sheriff is in the pay of the baddies
- 2 The Pinkertons (private detectives) are in town hunting you
- 3 The mayor is actually a werewolf
- 4 A black mold infestation (**Test V**, on a failure, lose one max **L** for the day)
- 5 A local priest is convinced this is a righteous punishment from god
- 6 Pizza Rats are coming through on their annual migration

Reward

- 1 Cash (**4d6** Dollars)
- 2 1st class train tickets as far as you want
- 3 A get out of jail free card (Monopoly style)
- 4 A strange artifact (+2 **L**)
- 5 Free medical care for the year (only in this town)
- 6 A strange bible that seems to glow at night (can be used to repel the Devil)



The Western States



Check out the map is on the next page. The dots are train junctions at important towns and cities. It takes about 2 days rail travel between each point.

MARQUETTE - Like the Upper Midwest. Think bootleggers, factories, cities, corn fields, apples, and lumber in the North Woods. **Movie:** Road to Perdition.

GREENE - Like Appalachia/Ozarks. Think green mountains, forests, moonshiners, and coal.

Comic: Moonshine by Azzarello and Risso.

ACADIA - Like the Mississippi Delta. Think swamps, vampires, alligators, and blues.

Movie: Oh Brother, Where art Thou?

NORTH PRAIRIE - Like the Dakotas/East Montana.

Think vast expanses, werewolves, and wind.

Movie: Slow West.

SOUTH PRAIRIE - Like Oklahoma/Texas. Think oil men, cattle drives, cowboys, and the dust bowl.

Movie: There Will be Blood.

MONTAGNE - Like the Rocky Mountain states. Think impossible mountains, gold mines, and strikes.

Song: The Ludlow Massacre by Woodie Guthrie.

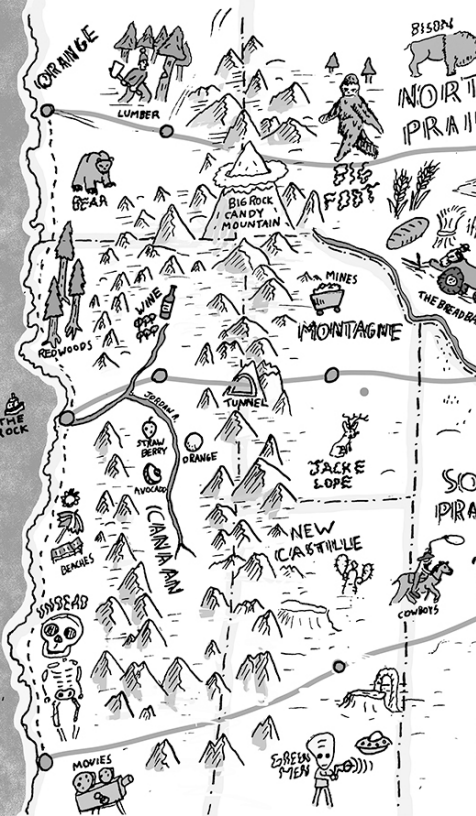
NEW CASTILLE - Like Arizona/New Mexico. Think burning man, buried gold, aliens, and tumble weeds.

Movie: Treasure of the Sierra Madre/City Slickers 2

ORANGE - Like the Pacific NW. Think lumber, dense ancient forests, and fog. **Movie:** Emperor of the North.

CANAAN - Like California. Think Hollywood, endless farm fields, wineries, water politics, and zombies.

Movie: The Goat (1921)



ORANGE

LUMBER

BISON
NORTH
PRAIRIE

BEAR

BIG FEET

BIG ROCK
CANDY
MOUNTAIN

MINES

MONTAGNE

THE BREADBA

REDWOODS

SERRANA

TUNNEL

THE ROCK

STRAW
BERRY

ORANGE

JACK
LOPE

SO
PRA

AVOCADO
CANAMAN

NEW
CASTILLE

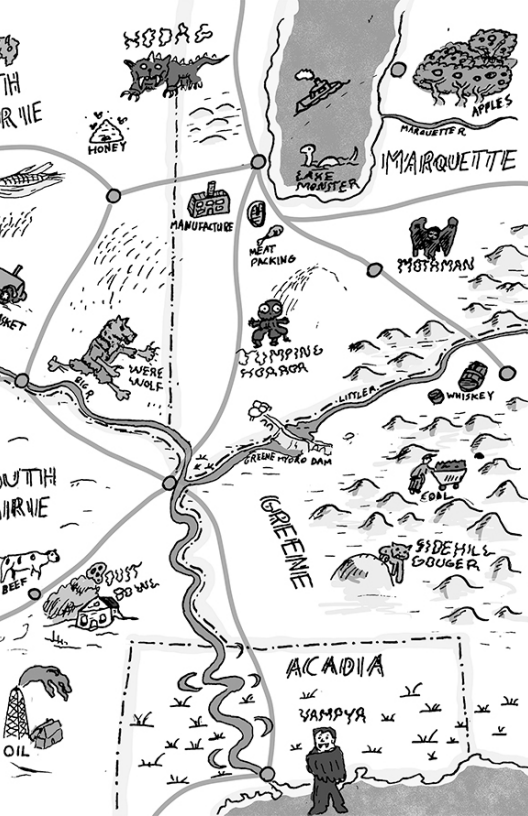
COWBOYS

BEACHES

UNDEAD

MOVIES

GREEN
MEN





Encounters and Events



This section contains a few lists of potential events organized by the states on the map in this booklet. Use them as encounter tables, or as brain fodder for setting up an adventure.

Marquette

1. A broken down car at the side of the road. **1d4** skeletons are trying to break into the trunk.
2. Two gangsters (**d8** tommy guns) in crisp suits, offer you a \$20 cold cash to drive their car into the next town. No questions asked.
3. A nearby copse of trees has been knocked over, and there are tell-tale signs of a Hodag in those woods.
4. A beached Lake Monster is thrashing about on the shores of a nearby lake. A local naturalist is trying to convince three cops (**W:7, D:d6** billy club) not to shoot it.

Greene

1. You stumble on a working moonshine distillery in the woods. 4 moonshiners (**d6** pistols) greet you. Roll **1d6** - 1: they think you're cops, 2-4: they are unfriendly and tell you to get lost, 5-6: they invite you in for a drink!
2. A sidehill mountain gouger is charging through the woods straight towards you!
3. Beside a large stream in the woods, you find a old man with a fishing pole raving about **The Big One** (**V:13, S:12, W:7, L:8, D:d6** bite), an enormous

catfish. If you bring him a chicken for bait, he swears he can catch it. It'd be good eating.

4. You've frightened a huge skunk (V:5, W:4, D:d4 bite; Skunk Spray does **d6 S** damage and makes people dislike you for 2 days).

Acadia

1. **1d6** alligators (V:12, S:8 W:3, D:d8 bite) are sunning themselves on the bank of a bayoux. **Test S** to see if they notice you.

2. A circus troupe is stopped next to the road. They're looking for help, and if you have interesting talents, they might let you join.

3. A family of **2d4** skunk apes (like big foot but stinky).

4. An abandoned boat in the swamp with a bloody treasure map next to the bench.

North Prairie

1. A truly massive herd of buffalo crests the next ridge. It must be hundreds of thousands.

2. As you pass a prairie dog mound, one of the little scamps runs off with someones wallet. Prairie dogs are willing to trade if you approach with respect. Any player that tries violence suffers a blinding pain in their chest and is incapacitated.

3. You contract disentary. Take a **Poisoned Condition** until medical help is found.

4. A blinding hail storm pelts you for **d6** damage per turn until you find shelter (treat like combat).

South Prairie

1. With The Dust looming on the horizon, you come across a broken down truck packed to the brim with a family's belongings. They need your help repairing the truck.
2. A cattle train looking for extra hands to protect them from werewolves as they drive their train to a ranch in North Prairie.
3. Old trading post with **2d4** Skeletons inside.
4. An oil well drilled too greedily and too deep. They've awoken The Devil Himself.

Montagne

1. A lost mountaineer (**d6** climbing picks) asks for your help getting back to town. He's very hungry.
2. You come across a poisoned well. Some animal carcasses are nearby. Anyone who drinks from it takes a diseased condition.
3. A sparkling gold vein peaks out from behind a boulder. It takes 1 day to mine 1 lb. If taken to market, it turns out to be fools' gold.
4. A crew of workmen are in heated competition against a machine. Their leader, one John Henry, says he'll give you his hammer (**d10**; **Test V**, on fail you can't lift the hammer) if you help them win.

New Castille

1. Aliens with glow sticks desperate for batteries.
2. Slue-Foot Sue and Pecos bill are in an argument over who's mount is faster, her catfish or his mountain lion. To settle the bet, they ask two of

you to race. Use the rules for motorcycles on p. 12 of Knights of the Rails.

3. 2d4 chupacabra looking for food.

4. A cowboy (**d6** pistol, always shoots first) dressed in all black challenges all who approach to a duel. The winner will get his pistol.

Orange

1. Some railroad men stole a bigfoots baby. The bigfeet need your help getting the young'un back.

2. You fall into a cave full of booby traps and treasure, Goonies style! (insert fav dungeon)

3. Glowing lights peak through the misty woods. As you approach you smell popcorn. Strange folk in blue shirts are inside an impossibly bright glass building selling tiny black boxes that somehow hold moving pictures inside.

4. A mind-bogglingly large axe is lodged 30ft up in a massive redwood next to a giant skeleton.

Caanaan

1. A beautiful, elaborate movie set of ancient Egypt stands in the a dusty plain. Unfortunately, the mummy (**V:12**, **S:12**, **W:7**, **D:d6** punches) they got as a prop turned out to be real. They need help.

2. A werewolf!

3. A farmer in a truck drives by. Says he'll pay \$1 a day to help in his fields. He has a hungry glint in his eyes

4. 3 of your IBIS brethren need help hunting a vampire. The vampire has **2d6** railway men as henchmen.

Example of Play

CONDUCTOR: Alright, so you've found the edge of the quiet lumber camp, its a bloody scene around you. One tent still stands in the camp. There are porcupine quills littering the ground around you, and some trees look like they've been knocked over and not cut down.

PLAYER 1 (SLIM): I grew up around here, and moonshined in these woods. Do I recognize what could have done this?

CONDUCTOR: Yes! You've only heard of this before. But this bears all the hallmarks of a Hodag.

PLAYER 2 (GRETCH): Oh jeez. I'd like to check out that tent. See if anything's inside.

CONDUCTOR: OK, **Test S** for me,

Gretch rolls a 14, 2 more than her **S** score 12

GRETCH: I failed,

CONDUCTOR: A whimpering man fires a pistol blindly from the tent. You take **d6** damage... it's a 3.

Gretch takes 3 damage to her **L**. She has 2 left.

CONDUCTOR: You hear a large rumble from outside the camp.

WHIMPERING MAN: Oh God, it's back...

CONDUCTOR: A huge Hodag appears in the clearing. Bits of flesh and porcupine quills stick to its snarling face. What do you do?

SLIM AND GRETCH: SHOOT IT!

Slim rolls **d6** for damage and gets a 2. Gretch rolls a **d8** and gets 7. So the Hodag takes 7 damage to its **L** of 8.

CONDUCTOR: The shots fly just wide, but were close enough to startle the Hodag. He begins rushing towards you.

SLIM: I want to throw a stick of dynamite into its mouth.

GRETCH: I'm gonna try to shoot the dynamite.

CONDUCTOR: God damn, that's too cool not to try. Slim, **Test S** to see if you land the throw.

Slim rolls a 2. A pass!

GRETCH: I shoot.

CONDUCTOR: BOOM! a bloody stump sprays powdery blood from what used to be a hodag head. Nice one!

Inspirational Media

Movies:

Emperor of the North (1971)

Oh Brother, Where art Thou? (2003)

Road to Perdition (2000)

Novels and Novellas:

Ironweed by William Kennedy

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

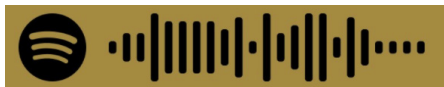
Tortilla Flats by John Steinbeck

Graphic Novels:

Big Rock Candy Mountain

Music:

Spotify link to soundtrack below



Other RPGs:

Hobomancer - Hex Games

Cthulu Hack - Just Crunch Games

Call of Cthulu - Chaosium Games

