

HIGH PLAINS SAMURAI



LEGENDS

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TALES OF GUNSLINGERS,
SAMURAI, GANGSTERS, BARBARIANS, AND STEAMPUNK
IN A POST-APOCALYPTIC WORLD OF QI WARRIORS



“THERE'S ONLY ONE LAW AROUND HERE AND IT'S THE WORST SURVIVE. THAT'S HOW IT'S ALWAYS BEEN SINCE CHAOS HIMSELF CAME DOWN TO WIPE OUT THE PARADISE WE ONCE HAD. UNTIL HIS CHILDREN STOPPED HIM HALFWAY THROUGH.

“THEY SHOULD HAVE LET CHAOS FINISH THE JOB.”

High Plains Samurai: Legends provides everything you need to start telling short stories in the One Land. A world where gunslingers, samurai, barbarians, gangsters, and steampunk exist with superpowers in a post-apocalyptic world that will soon need new heroes to save the people from themselves.

Includes full rules to play up to 3 one-shot adventures, 4 pre-generated lead characters, scene notes, and more.

HIGH PLAINS SAMURAI

LEGENDS

UNLEASH YOUR POTENTIAL

For 2-5 players. Ages 10 & up.
To play, you'll need dice (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12)
and pencils.



brokenrulergames.net
HighPlainsSamurai.com

HIGH PLAINS SAMURAI LEGENDS

CREATOR/DESIGNER/WRITER/LAYOUT: Todd Crapper

EDITOR: Vincent Harper

PROOFER: Mark Valente

ARTIST: Kieron O'Gorman

MAPMAKER: Jeff Brown

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Fraser Ronald, Kieron O'Gorman, Nick Dumais, Kurt Wimmer

PLAYTESTERS

Andre Brynkus, Amber Jean Cartier-Page, Tyler Daley, James Dillane, Joe England, Jesse Donavan Edmond, Bradley Grant, Chris Groff, Matlock Guse, Patrick House, Gilbert Isla, Patrick Knowles, Taejas Kudva, Tyler Lominack, William McLeod, Hans Messersmith, Kieron O'Gorman, Danielle O'Nanski-Huot, Bob Lai, Eric Paquette, Maria Rivera, Fraser Ronald, Fraser Simons, Nicholas Tsoukauls, Rob Wakefield, Kurt Wimmer, Zander

High Plains Samurai is copyright © 2018 by Broken Ruler Games
All rights reserved.

This product is a work of fiction containing rules for a roleplaying game where players use their imagination to create a place that doesn't exist with people that aren't real. Any similarities to actual people, places, cultures, or events is completely unintentional.

brokenrulergames.net highplainssamurai.com

Told with

ScreenPlay



This game is made possible by these honourable qi warriors.

Unstoppable Hunters

John Dwyer, Drew E, Matlock Hargrove, Maghinat, John Pozniak, Glenn Seiler

Hardened Outsiders

Chad Andrew Bale, Matthew B, Phillip Bailey, Bryan Bailey, Brandon Barnes, Kate Bullock, Erin Congdon, Ethan Deneault, Kent Devald, Ryan Dukacz, Chris England, Robert M. Everson, Gamerstable RPG Podcast, Richard Greene, Joel Grenon, David Paul Guzmán, Michael Howard, Chris Huddleston, Konig-Wolf, Darren Johnson, Mathieu Lapierre, Antoine Lenoir, David Lewis, Liam, Kenneth Linder, Alex Lopez, Kielo Maria Maja, Ian McFarlin, Suguru Oikawa, Eric M. Paquette, Charles Pugsley, Matthew, Philip Rogers, Brendan Rowe, Chad Stevens, Tom, Donald A. Turner, johnathan turner, Max Vanderheyden, Chase Walker, Clint Williams, Christopher Wilson, Kurt Wimmer, Jacob Wood, Curtis Y.Takahashi, Adam

True Believers

Rob Abrazado, Scott Alex, Isaac Alexander, Neil Anderson, Don Arnold, Chris Bak, Peter Baldwin, Chris Bekofske, Joshua Cameron, Robert Carnel, Frank Carr, Greg Chapin, Adam Coleman, Jason Corley, greg cueto, Sheila Davis, Chuck Dee, Alberto Martin del Campo Sola, Colin Fahrion, Michael Feldhusen, Mark Fenlon, The Freelancing Roleplayer, Chris Groff, Jack Gulick, Ryan H, Roger Hall, Scott W. Hill, Horizon Point Studios, Wayne Humfleet, Ross Hunter, Jack Krause, jaime a layton jr, Kevin Lemke, Kat Lim, Christian Lindke, Dennis Malloy, System Mastery, David R. Mondello, Liam Murray, David Nebauer, Matthew O'Brien, Douglas Peacocke, Francisco Peralta, John AW Phillips, Jason Pitre, Mark Richardson, james roberson, John "johnkzin" Rudd, Curtis Schmidt, Fraser Simons, Keiran Sparksman, Michael Stevens, Jim Stryker, Cody Swatek, James W. Sweetland, John Taber, Neal Tanner, Nicola Urbinati, George Valenzuela, Joseph Virnig, Steven Watkins, Drew Wendorf, John Wick, Jeff Williams, Terry Yau, Mark N. Ziff, Ivona Zimonjic, Charles, Mopsothoth, M, bestshot9, ambrosecollector, Rylai, Cody

Noble Warriors

Angus Abramson/Chronicle City, Geoffrey Allen, Ludovico Alves, Svend Andersen, Jason Aschberger, Alyce Atkins, Lorenzo Bandieri, Marek Beres, Andrew Bennett, Jonathan Beverley, Biohazard Games/Nocturnal Media, Ian Borchardt, Charles Boucher, Jackson Brantley, Adam C, Craig Campbell, Scott Cawson, Michael Charlton, Thom Colgan, Jason Cordova, Christopher D. Meid, Jason D'Angelo, Isaac "Will It Work" Dansicker, Daniele Di Rubbo, James Dillane, Nitro DiOxide, DivNull Productions, Chris Eliasen, Tim Ellis, Ong Eng Yian, Allen Erb, Kevin Farnworth, Declan Feeney, Andrew Ferber, James Forest, Donald Fougere, Thomas Grandison, Christopher Grey, Tomer Gurantz, Donnie Hanby, Ian Harriman, Patrick Harris, Paul Hayes, Ryan Hennesy, Michael Hill, Gilbert Isla, Jachari J, Wright Johnson, Josh Jordan, Tad Kelson, Rajan Khanna, Andy Kitkowski, Jeff Kloepfer, Patrick Knowles, Jonathan Korman, Daniel Kraemer, Taejas Kudva, Maxime Lacoste, Eloy Lasanta, Steven Lord, Dain Lybarger, Rich M, chris manning, Josh Mannon, Patrice Mermoud, Thomas Miller, Charles Moore, Tony Mott, Brandon Neff, Warren Nelson, Earl Scott Nicholson, Matt Nixon, Nathan Nolan, Matthew Paluch, Pete Petrusha (Imaging Games), Andrew Piseck, Ronald Pyatt, Jesse Quisenberry, Jared Rascher, Heather Rasmussen, Vance Rawson, Jesse Roberge, Adam Robichaud, Rich Rogers, Andrew Rosenheim, Dylan Ross, Ron Smay, Mark Solino, David Stephenson, Chris Stockton, QuillHound Studios, PK Sullivan, Dwayne Summerfield, Aaron Taylor, Jon Terry, Chris Tomlinson, Martin Trudeau, Paul Umbers, Stewart Walker, Benjamin Welke, Alexander Williams, Sean Wilson, adumbratus, ahabicher, alcethene necromancer, Arthreas, Ben, Boris, Damian, gigglestick, heretic888, Jarrett, Joey, Julian, Kergonan, Kevin, M.G., Michael, Morgan, Morgan, NecroNuke9, Rani, semiomant, Tim, tinomen

Rogue Scholars

Vincent Arebalo, Jordan Bodewell, Gaming and BS, Frank Hart, James, JD McDonnell, Will Power, Jeremy Scott, Trip the Space Parasite, TheBenHatton

Raw Apprentices

Nic Clark, Martin Greening, Ku Hap, Oli Jeffery, Storybrewers Roleplaying, W!, Darren

with Special Thanks to the following people

Eric Ausley, Kate Bullock, Dr. Tom the Frog, Jason Cordova, the IGDN, The Misdirected Mark Podcast (Chris Sniezak, Phil Vecchione, Robert M. Everson), Rich Rodgers, the Stop, Drop & Roleplaying group in Ottawa, Jacob Wood

and especially Chelsea and Logan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME ONE: THE WORLD ON FIRE

Book One: A Land Once Whole

One Land, Unlimited Opportunities	10
What Is High Plains Samurai: Legends?	12
Your World, Your Story	13
Your Characters, Your Way	13
Just The Beginning...	13

Book Two: The Way It Works

Writers and Directors	15
Players and Characters	15
Formats	16
Descriptions, Details, and Outcomes	17
Details	18
Table 1: REQUIRED DETAILS	18
Descriptions	19
Outcomes	19
The Rule of Initiatives	20
Rewrites	20
Complications	21
Removing One Complication	
With Another	22
Complication Rolls	22
Playing Characters	23
Table 2: COMPLICATION ROLLS	23
Homelands	24
Qi Powers	28
Potentials	29
Table 3: POTENTIALS	29
Defence	29
Table 4: COMMON STEP MODIFIERS	30
Step Modifier	30
Motivations, Connections, and Hindrances	32
Vitality	34
Optional Idea: Cutaways	36
Bringing It All Together	36
Scenes	36
The Opening Shot	37
Rounds and Turns	37
Resources	38
Absolutes	39
Challenges	39
Your Destiny Awaits	41

DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW...

If your PDF reader supports layers, be sure to check out all the different ways you can view **HPS Legends**.

VOLUME TWO: THE MEANS TO AN END

Book Three: Showdown In Yung Zhi

Scenarios	44
The Timeline	44
The Plot	45
Key Initiatives	45
The Supporting Characters	46
Dollface	46
Keen	47
Constance	47
Bolo	48
The Ryesh Boys	49
Formal Introductions	50
Trying The Easy Way Out	52
Street Fight!	53
Epilogue	53

Book Four: To Catch A Train

The Timeline	55
The Plot	55
Key Initiatives	56
Surviving the Wastes	56
The Supporting Characters	57
The Salvation	57
The Caravan	58
Warmechs	58
That's Not A Train	59
Outcasts' Ambush	59
Crack Open The Can	60
The Wastes Awaken!	61

Book Five: Black Scorpion

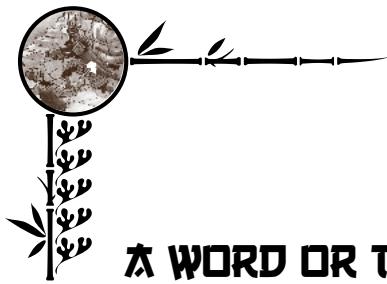
The Timeline	63
The Plot	63
Key Initiatives	64
The Supporting Characters	65
Black Scorpion	65
Jonas	66
Lord Shinzei	66
Monsoon Soldiers	67
Voiceover	67
Establishing A History	68
A Walk In The Jungle	68
The Serpent Guard	69
Catar Attack	70
Battle To The Top	71
She Takes What She Wants	72

APPENDIX: THE FINISHING TOUCHES

Pre-Generated Lead Characters	75
Scene Notes	79
Random Qi Powers	81



VOLUME ONE:
THE WORLD ON
FIRE



A WORD OR TWO FROM THE AUTHOR...

There's this odd experience in designing a game from scratch. It's not exactly the solo experience you'd expect. Don't get me wrong, there is a large chunk of time and energy invested into building a new game where you're sitting alone in a room of your choice hacking away at the keyboard, scrawling notes with a half-full pen, and tacking notes on a bulletin board (be it real or virtual). Yet those are not the defining moments of a game's completion. It's the moments where you discover something new and interesting with others, be they players, friends, team members, or simply random discussions with gamers and non-gamers alike. Those are the moments that can make or break your game.

Now add in the miracle of Kickstarter and even the smallest individual contribution establishes such a strong foundation for the game that you have books like the one you're reading right now. **High Plains Samurai: Legends** is only the beginning of the One Land's future in our world and it's a book that could only exist because of the contribution of everyone else who helped make this possible. It started off as a low-level entry point for backers to get hold of a smaller, Writer-friendly PDF of HPS and soon developed into something much, much more. **Legends** is now its own game and also the first chapter of a larger game to come (depending on when you pick up your copy of **Legends**). While the rules are simpler and focused on telling short stories in this devastated land of qi warriors, it also contains everything you need to run HPS at conventions and introductory one shots for your friends, complete with three storylines (AKA adventures) and pre-generated lead characters. Why? Because the contributions of people other than myself showed there was a demand, a need, and a want for it.

It's very humbling to know there are people out there waiting to play and others who will soon discover the potential that awaits them in the stories of High Plains Samurai. All because of people like you. As someone who has spent possibly the last five years bringing the One Land to this point, it makes me happy.

But not too happy. This is a post-apocalyptic game, after all.

Thank you for your support and I hope to hear all the exciting outcomes you create with your friends, new and old.

Todd Crapper
Father of Chaos



BOOK ONE

A LAND ONCE WHOLE

"My father always taught me some are born to rule. But in a land this scarred, even we must learn to take power by force. I remembered those words every day until I killed him in his sleep."

Grandfather, Warlord of Serenity Falls

Somewhere on the edges of a vast desert wasteland, a gang of beaten and battered motorcycles roars to a pause. Atop the rumbling machines ride qi warriors, each unique in dress and purpose. At one end, the deep gaze from under the wide brimmed hat of a gunslinger, the other end a traditionally clad samurai sporting a temporary reminder of her shame, a freshly cut ponytail. Between them, the smoke covered goggles of the group's resident engineer breathing through a vaporizer strapped to her back, and the hulking barbarian whose life is forever owed to the engineer, evident from his mechanical hand. Before them, a rising winter mountain disappears beyond the clouds, faded by the incredible distance between them and the massive domain of Khar'tep.

These are not the heroes we expected in our darkest hour of need. But they are the heroes we need. These new heroes will not be the glorious warriors of old. Those days are long gone.

Those who will rise from these ashes to reclaim our dignity and freedom will be those we once feared. Those who have claimed more lives than they have saved to survive the harshness of this new world. Those who still hold onto an ounce of morality, even if it is buried deep under a hardened shell. Sooner or later, they will be pushed too far and the revolution will begin. It will be bloody, it will claim guilty and innocent alike. But all stains wash away in time. For the moment soon approaches when Chaos will return to the One Land to finish what he began on that dreadful day.

This is **High Plains Samurai: Legends**.





ONE LAND, UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITIES

There is no single representation that locks down what **THE ONE LAND** is today. That is how torn our world has become since Chaos' rage nearly broke it. Rocky deserts, steam engine trains, and horse drawn carriages fought over by gunslingers and bandits give way to the controlled sword dancing of samurai warriors in their fortresses of wood and stone. Suddenly it shifts again into frozen peaks harboring barbarian tribes whose tradition survives through steel and bow, before morphing into the murky underground littered with scrap metal and wild inventions. The truth is that no one angle offers the whole picture. This is a world of vast differences.

This is a setting of personal honour set against the greed and depravity of a broader world. Against forces of darkness and revenge, heroes rise up and fight for their beliefs as only warriors can. Whether it is defended with lead from a bullet or the steel of a sword, a person's honour is their best currency. Those who agree with this view are the heroes and villains we need and they will change everything for good or ill.

All who survived Chaos' wrath and carried on in the ruins locked themselves within fortified communities known simply as **THE FIVE CITIES**, homelands to nine out of every ten surviving denizens of the One Land.

SERENITY FALLS, a desert-swept city of harsh depravity and lawlessness fuelling one warlord's insatiable greed

YUNG ZHI, where swaying towers loom above overwhelming poverty and overcrowded streets controlled by powerful gangsters

MONSOON, the samurai compound - located in the heart of ancient ruins - where strict order keeps back the surrounding poisonous jungle

KHAR'TEP, home of magnificent heights encompassed by jagged peaks and frigid blizzards controlled by the barbarian tribes

and **RUST**, a hidden city of wild inventions and rotting depths oppressed by a xenophobic cult

Each of these is a self-contained nation differentiated in size and scope. Khar'tep, for instance, is scattered across the northern mountains and exists as a collection of tribes united under one banner while Yung Zhi remains locked within the middle of a massive cavern known as the Devil's Throat.

Between them all lay **THE WASTES**, where Chaos' plan for demolition originated. What was once the home of a great and all but forgotten capital city that served as the source of all commerce and democracy in the One Land is now a barren crater of radioactive abnormalities. It is also the origin of all **QI POWERS** centralized in one nuclear apex. Its influence is global, though weakened and controllable by those born in the enforced safety of the Five Cities. Outcasts born to roaming gangs within the Wastes or along its edges are consumed by their unexpected qi power and grow to become freaks scarred by their own power's manifestation. They scratch out livings in rudimentary clusters of homes, raiding smaller settlements outside the Five Cities or aiming for the big score robbing the Salvation, a massive armoured caravan crossing from one City to the next through the heart of our world's terror.

Learn more
about the
One Land
starting on
page 24

Qi Powers,
page 28



THE ONE LAND

Then there are those who have no home. They wander between the Five Cities, skimming along the edges of the Wastes surviving by any means necessary. They are unshackled by the restraints of the warlords and walk with their own codes, personal values protected above all others. They are bandits, ronin, bounty hunters, and anyone else unable to coexist within the walls of the Five Cities. They are the unknown factors in many stories, the unexpected obstacles to well laid plans. They are the One Land's last hope.

Living in these conditions requires a cold heart, quick reflexes, and amazing power, the kind of power you can only unlock from your inner qi (pronounced "chi"). An unforeseen effect of the Wastes, these powers allow some to tap into abilities never thought possible: breathe fire, leap ten times higher, phase through walls, and perhaps even turn flesh to stone. These qi warriors remain spread out across the land, using their powers to survive or thrive, sometimes at the expense of others. They fill many roles, like:

- the Unstoppable Hunter, fulfilling the orders of the cities' warlords
- the Deadly Shadow, unseen puppet masters pulling strings behind the curtains
- the Rogue Scholar, seeking truth behind the mysteries that could save the One Land
- and many more!

Many of today's generation have learned to tap into their inner qi and harness the chaotic radiation to great effect. These powers are harnessed from within to create exceptional abilities, from moving with impossible speed to turning invisible to impressive strength. Influential characters can still be **UNTAPPED**, as the term goes, yet those holding the highest ranks of power are always extraordinarily tapped into their qi power.

WELCOME
TO THE
ONE
LAND AS
IT EXISTS
AFTER
CHAOS'
WRATH.

Qi Powers,
page 28



WHAT IS HIGH PLAINS SAMURAI: LEGENDS?

Behind all of this and soon to become forefront to the One Land's future are the six **ELEMENTAL SPIRITS**, worshipped for their creation of humanity and also cursed for the wretched lives created for them. The sole creator, **CHAOS**, birthed offspring to share in the care of his universe – **BALANCE**, **HONOUR**, **PATIENCE**, **STRIFE** and **INNOCENCE** – who in turn were allowed to create, between them, a single world of their own. When Chaos grew jealous of the devotion they gave to this world, he sought to wipe it out entirely and punish them for their transgression. This wrath yielded the state of the One Land today. In defending their creation, the five siblings defeated their parent and imprisoned Chaos within the Shard of Hope. What remains is the aftermath of this epic battle and the people forced to live in the ruins.

WHAT IS HIGH PLAINS SAMURAI: LEGENDS?

There is a world beyond our own steeped in darkness and struggling in the aftermath of a divine war; a world where its people fight not only to survive but to amass power, riches, and honour. A place of intense, high-octane wire-fu action set against the background of desert landscapes, high speed train robberies, and mutant warriors battling it out for supremacy. Nothing is as it seems in this world, and everything is possible.

High Plains Samurai: Legends (or **HPS Legends**) is a storytelling game of extreme mash-ups battling it out in a post-apocalyptic fantasy world of gunslingers, gangsters, samurai, barbarians, and steampunk where the residual energies of a divine battle have bestowed super-powered abilities to a select few. Those with these incredible abilities are **QI WARRIORS**; they are the lead characters of this setting.

Built using the ScreenPlay engine, **HPS Legends** is a collaborative story game with all players taking an equal role in the storytelling process. You and other players will tell a short story about a group of ragtag anti-heroes on the run, taking command of a situation, or starting a revolution to bring back the peace. You will do this by taking on the duties of Writers working with the Director to draft complete stories of action, suspense, horror, and survival. Through their lead characters, **WRITERS** actively drive the story and create epic action sequences as the central storytellers; **THE DIRECTOR** reacts to their descriptions while simultaneously challenging their characters along the way. For every description moving the story forward, another player will deliver its outcome to push it further, react to events, and embellish details with camera angles, special effects, even a character's demise.

In a world where everything is possible, dice rolls are not used to attempt success or failure, but as **COMPLICATIONS** against your enemies... and death is the ultimate complication. Characters roll dice based on the number of **DETAILS** built into their **DESCRIPTIONS** against an opponent's **DEFENCE** for the right to choose their enemy's fate or perhaps allow the enemy to choose their own. Each complication becomes incorporated into the story and can also be countered or removed by spending **VITALITY** until there is none left to give or the battle is over.

This book is also a preview of the full version of the **High Plains Samurai Roleplaying Game**, a storytelling game about grim anti-heroes going forth to fight the good fight and surviving the plights they daily face. This is an effort to provide both a condensed version of the game, a tool for telling short tales at conventions and one-shots, and a reference for those players who hold these stories firmly in their hands. Think of this book as what is yet to come when you are ready.

Writers and
Directors,
page 15

For more
details on
how to
play HPS
Legends,
go to Book
Two: How
It All Works

YOUR VERSION OF HIGH PLAINS SAMURAI



It is also your guide to telling stories in this world we call the One Land. A world split apart by violence and depravity, ruled by the few who dominate the many, filled with chaotic energies seeped into the soil by the anger of its divine creator. Where that very chaos has unlocked immense power controlled by the only currency respected from one corner of this world to the next: honour. And it will be a tale only your players can tell.

YOUR WORLD, YOUR STORY

This is your version of the One Land, yours and those who tell this story with you. What you will find in these volumes are agreed-upon initiatives used as a starting point for your story, the machinations of the major characters involved in this story, and a collection of scenarios previewing what can happen as everyone begins to play their pieces in this deadly puzzle. Piecing it all together is the experience created by telling this story.

It is also a game about creating a shared experience where everyone contributes to an exciting and engaging action-packed story full of all the martial arts, wire fu, gunfights, and chase sequences they can handle. By using the tools provided in this rulebook, everyone will be able to create a unique experience in a flexible world where anything is possible.

YOUR CHARACTERS, YOUR WAY

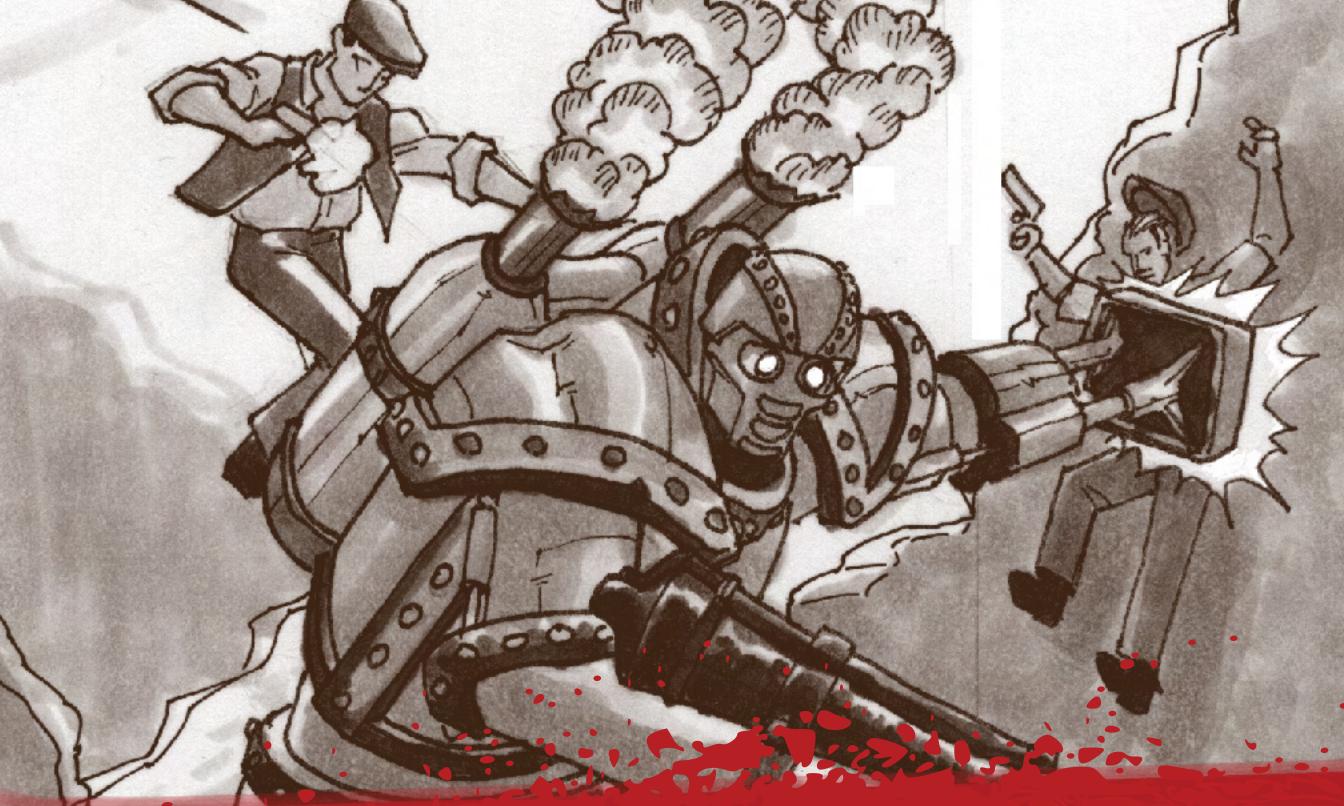
The One Land of the past was an age of incredible advancements brought on by a diverse assortment of people who worked together to solve their problems and make a better world for the next generation. While each of the Five Cities have locked themselves away from the rest of the world since that fateful day, this diversity has only grown in the aftermath of Chaos' Wrath. There is no one character type, race, orientation, or any other qualifiers we use to identify us as individuals in **High Plains Samurai: Legends!** Even if you see one character type on the pre-generated lead characters provided in this game, never feel beholden to that type. Make the character you want to play, how you want them to look, and who they love. The goal of this game is to create a foundation for what characters can do, not who they are.

JUST THE BEGINNING...

Everything found within these pages can exist as its own material, its own game. The material found in **HPS Legends** was designed to allow for short stories told over a single session or two using condensed rules for a brief introduction into the full game. It also serves to aid Writers by offering advice on approaching descriptions, details, and outcomes as the story progresses for both **HPS Legends** and the full version of the game found in the **High Plains Samurai Roleplaying Game** core rulebook.

This book is the tool you use to enter the One Land, but the rest is up to you. It begins by turning a single page...





BOOK TWO

THE WAY IT WORKS

"These are not mere contraptions built from the scrap metal of old, my dear apprentice. These are the foundation for a new world, and those who build them control its fate."

Deckland Burr, creator of The Salvation

A good story starts from somewhere deep. A long gestating idea or perhaps a sudden rush of imagination to get the wheels turning. They can begin within a single mind or shared across a table, the plot honed over countless iterations and research or sprung in the midst of a fight scene. So long as you are telling a story, there is no wrong way to tell it.

This guide (along with the assistance of your Director) will take you through a game we call **High Plains Samurai: Legends**, introducing you to the basic mechanics of play and working with you to create a truly unique character who will see the One Land through perhaps the most tumultuous period since Chaos attempted to wipe it from existence. Only through your creations and the story you help move forward can you save the people of the Five Cities (and yes, even the Wastes) from themselves.

Let us begin.



WRITERS AND DIRECTORS

Anyone participating in a game of **HPS Legends** is considered a player, and the players are divided into two roles. The majority of players will be **WRITERS**, those charged with bringing lead characters into the story as guiding lights in the tumultuous scenes ahead. At least one player will be **THE DIRECTOR**, tasked with ensuring the story stays focused, the One Land is represented to the characters, the goals and motivations of major characters are brought into the plot, and challenging the Writers as both co-creator and opponent.

Writers will each play one lead character. Directors also play supporting characters as well as extras to help flesh out the setting and create trouble for the lead characters.

Gathered around a long table set within the orange light of the fading sun are five friends. As it is Brendan who called the others here to play High Plains Samurai, he shall be their Director. This allows Chelsea, Nick, Kate, and Fraser to be the story's Writers.

PLAYERS AND CHARACTERS

There is a strict distinction between players and characters, and with good cause. **PLAYERS** are those in your world gathering together to tell a story; **CHARACTERS** are those in ours who experience the world and its dangers. Some of the text here will clearly mark out one versus the other. For example, an individual turn consists of a character's moment in the story while a round is complete when all players have been able to tell their characters' moments.

As a Writer, you have access to the following characters:

Lead Characters: Each Writer plays one **LEAD CHARACTER** that will influence the story. These characters are your primary source of storytelling. You will use your lead character to provide descriptions and deal with the outcomes provided by the Director to help move the story forward, engage in exciting combat, and so much more.

The Director will also have access to his own characters, including supporting characters (key antagonists in the story) and extras (nameless stand-ins offering minor challenges and obstacles to your leads).

Supporting Characters: Identical in almost every way as those played by Writers, a **SUPPORTING CHARACTER** presents the central obstacles and machinations confronting the lead characters. Concluding a story requires facing these characters, using their hindrances against them, and interfering with plans that could have long term consequences for the One Land. They are the best tools for Directors to impact the story Writers tell.

Extras: Generally considered those nameless goons looking to hinder the lead characters in some manner, **EXTRAS** both block the lead characters' efforts and help make them look awesome. Unlike other characters, extras can enter the story individually or in groups with no mechanical differences (save for their Vitality), all using the same potential to attempt complications.



FORMATS

As it is with any creative team, setting down boundaries and guidelines for your story requires placing some tracks well before the train has a chance to derail. How long will your story be? How does that translate into the number of sessions you will play? How violent, graphic, or sexual will the story be? Will it be anime, a comic book, series of novels, or a stand-alone film? All these are **FORMATS**, each one fundamental in establishing overall story goals and ensuring individual scenes do not stray too far from the path or wander on too long.

Before sitting down to do anything with the story, discuss the following formats as a group. Taken together, they help shape the tone, style, and approach all players can use in their descriptions and outcomes.

Genre: All stories fit into a **GENRE**. From wushu action to fantastic drama, there are a wide range of genres to choose from and the possibilities multiply when you explore genre combinations. Locking down the genre of your story will go a long way toward determining the other formats as well as the story everyone will tell over the coming sessions. For example, your players could decide on telling the story as a Shakespearean drama combined with Saturday morning cartoons or tell it as a 1980s "buddy cop" film.

Medium: There are many ways to tell a story and share it with the world. Do your storytellers want to share the magic of a good novel or express their rendition as explosive anime? Choosing a **MEDIUM** helps players building descriptions, imagery, and messages during play. Your choice of medium determines the cues and presentation for your story, such as relying only on visual descriptions for a movie or the inner dialogue and introspection of an engrossing novel.

Combat: There are many methods of hand-to-hand combat, from street fighting to martial arts renowned the world over. But this format extends to more than just establishing a common level of ability or generally known fighting styles. What exceptions to the common laws of physics will exist in your story? Can everyone defy gravity or just a qi warrior? Establishing a baseline for how combat looks and feels in your story will allow room for qi powers to go above and beyond.

Technology: Our world is a shadow of its former self, built atop the ruins of an ancient empire and the technology afforded the day before Chaos brought down his fury. What is the most common technology available in your story? The most common vehicles, weaponry and forms of communication? Knowing the baseline for the average citizen of the One Land helps guide descriptions and outcomes, as well as provide exciting additions to the setting and high-paced action scenes.

Rating: How violent will your story be? Will it be gratuitous or tame? How will adults relate? Will there be cursing? Film **RATINGS** have become common vernacular in our culture to help establish how hardcore or family-friendly a story is. Even if you choose a different style other than movies, using a rating system still allows everyone to work off of a consensus idea on how far to push the boundaries of decency. If you are not aware of your country's rating system, you can also determine an age recommendation for your story. Is it suitable for kids or adults only?

DESCRIPTIONS, DETAILS, AND OUTCOMES



Key Initiatives: Before deciding who the lead characters will be in this story, you need to know what the basic premise of the story will be? What is going to happen? What has to be stopped or started and what are the consequences if you fail? Who is involved and what is known about them at the start? These will become the story's **KEY INITIATIVES**, a series of main plot points, story beats, locations, and other central figures to the story about to unfold – each of these follows the same rules as those found under the Rule of Initiatives. Each of the three storylines provided in HPS Legends contains a list of key initiatives.

The
Rule of
Initiatives,
page 20

After explaining the formats to the Writers and discussing them with the group, Brendan has written down the final decisions. They are looking to tell a four-session story of monster hunters from the edges of the Wastes by blending high octane action with Hammer horror films. Because of the length of the story, everyone agrees to tell their story as a big budget movie. Only qi warriors, monsters, and any other supporting characters will be able to go full wire-fu and all technology will be very salvage heavy – all steampunk should look like it was found and assembled in a scrapyard. As for a rating, they decide to go with a hard R – lots of bloody violence and terror.

DESCRIPTIONS, DETAILS, AND OUTCOMES

At its heart, **HPS Legends** is about telling a story of unexpected anti-heroes venturing forth across the One Land in search of grand exploits while surviving magnificent dangers. Creating the storytelling experience requires an early understanding of the game's core tools: descriptions, details, and outcomes.

Your story will develop using **descriptions**, complete renditions told from a particular character's point of view. They are the "turns" of this game because a description encompasses a moment in the tale told to suit the formats chosen from the very beginning. Think of a description as a single paragraph in a novel or one shot in a movie. Each description can be broken down into **details** consisting of individual sentences providing a specific effort put forth by the character to create a complete description. Each character can apply a maximum number of details to their description until their description is complete and an outcome is created to suit the description.

Descriptions,
page 19

The **outcome** is the resulting observation, consequence, complication, and/or events brought on by a description. If a description explains how a lead character slides across the floor to knock over three extras, the outcome provides a possible reaction (such as one of the extras flying through a window while the others land on their backs just as the lead character flips herself back onto her feet). Outcomes are not structured in the same fashion as descriptions and do not have details – they can consist of as much or as little information as deemed necessary by the player.

Outcomes,
page 19

All turns consist of this back-and-forth exchange of descriptions and outcomes. For technical purposes, characters provide descriptions and players give outcomes. These are explained in greater detail later in this book.

DIALOGUE SCENES

Not all scenes require the strict use of details, particularly when action is not one of the scene's goals. Many of the early scenes in **HPS Legends** are considered **DIALOGUE SCENES**, meaning they require no complication rolls. When starting off with a new story, do not apply details to any descriptions during dialogue scenes. All players are encouraged to "freeform" their descriptions to become familiar with their characters and gameplay.

Details

Whenever a character provides a description in the story, they are restricted to a maximum number of possible actions based on the potential chosen at the beginning of the turn. These actions are known as **DETAILS**.

A detail is much like a sentence within the full paragraph. Based on the strength of their potential, a character can offer more details on how they move the story forward, conquer their enemies, and live to fight another day with as much flourish and information as desired before they run out of details and can make a complication roll. This is explained further in Complications Rolls on page 22.

To count as a detail, it must meet any of these conditions. If not, it is simply part of the Writer's presentation and narrative approach.

It requires concentrated and deliberate effort from the character

It requires a response from another character, either through dialogue or physical reaction

It may trigger a complication roll

It may require another character to use a detail to overcome or avoid what has been provided (when a complication applies).

Key Details: One of these details is considered the **KEY DETAIL** and is the primary action performed in the description. If a complication roll is triggered, it will be to determine this detail, leaving all others to work as additional moments and actions related to or assisting in building up to the key detail. The last detail in a description is normally the key detail, but this is not a requirement and remains at the describing character's discretion.

Required Details: Certain actions require the use of a detail; these are listed below for your convenience. Many of these are explained in greater depth throughout this book.

TABLE 1: REQUIRED DETAILS

	DETAILS
Equipping a prop	1
Gain a cover/concealment modifier	1
Maintaining an advantage, complication, or trigger	1 per detail used to activate

DESCRIPTIONS & OUTCOMES



Maintaining Details: Not everything ends when a description is complete; some details require repeated effort over the course of multiple descriptions. This is known as **Maintaining Details** and requires the same number of details used to introduce the element into the story to extend its use in every additional description the same character provides until it is no longer needed. If you needed a detail to activate a psychic shield against a barrage of bullets, you must continue using one detail each turn to maintain the shield until you no longer need it.

Descriptions

All of these pieces fall into place to provide descriptions. A **DESCRIPTION** is an active account of how a character interacts with a scene and drives the story forward using their details as a series of individual sentences to create a complete entry in the story. Whenever a character's account is provided on their turn, this is giving a description.

Outcomes

For every description, an **OUTCOME** will provide its conclusion. The outcome will be the result of a description or conflict revealing the effectiveness of a description or simply an observation achieved by completing the description, such as what a character sees when they are described opening the door to a new room. An outcome means that the character's turn is now complete and play moves to someone else in the round.

Unlike descriptions, outcomes are not limited and provide a lot of flexibility in how they are presented. It may actually be easier to list what they cannot do rather than what they can.

Outcomes cannot provide actions or responses that would technically count as descriptions. They can only react to the events established in the description and any possible complications introduced. This means characters involved in an outcome cannot perform anything that counts as an action, only as a reaction.

The Rule of Initiatives applies in all outcomes. If an initiating player disagrees with a character's involvement in an outcome, she can ask for a rewrite (all explained in the section on the Rule of Initiatives).

While there are no technical limits to an outcome's length, it should never run longer than a minute. This is simply for common courtesy to the other players and to help keep the game moving at an acceptable pace. This is more of a recommendation than a guideline and some outcomes work best when a player runs a little long. Consider this the average.



NEVER
UNDER-
ESTIMATE
THE
WARRIOR
OF
KHAR'TEP.



THE RULE OF INITIATIVES

Kate thinks for a moment before leaning forward with a sly grin on her face. She has 3 details to apply in her character, Xai's, next description. As she speaks, her fingertips mimic the actions of her character. "Xai leans forward and places her fingertips gently on the table. The camera pulls back between the assorted mugs, chips and playing cards to reveal the mug of beer with Samuel's hand over the handle. We then see several trails of ice sliding across the table from Xai's fingers right towards Samuel's mug before wrapping around the mug. As Samuel picks up his drink, the camera raises up with the mug and we see his beer is frozen solid. He stares at his mug, dumbfounded. And he never sees the dagger come flying across the table to land directly in his right eye."

The first detail is Xai using her icy qi power to freeze Samuel's mug. The second detail distracts Samuel from Kate's third detail that cuts straight to the point by attacking Samuel. Kate makes a complication roll, which places the outcome in Samuel's favour. Brendan rolls with the punches and brings in his own surprise for the outcome.

"The dagger stops a mere inch away from his open eye, hovering in midair and vibrating slightly. As the camera shifts its focus, we can see a young woman sitting next to Samuel has her hand out towards the dagger. She blows softly and the dagger disintegrates into dust."

THE RULE OF INITIATIVES

Our ways are not for the solitary mind; they were made for the co-operative experience. This means everyone works together and follows a practice of building upon the works of other players and accepting these elements as they are introduced to the story. Ensuring this practice remains reality involves the application of our most cardinal rule: **THE RULE OF INITIATIVES**.

Whoever introduces a character, element, setting, or any aspect of the story has final say on how it is used in the story. This includes any written material provided by the Director, including the rules of the game. If another player offers a description that does not agree with the initiating player, the description must be revised with assistance from the initiating player.

Rewrites

Should a character's description or a player's outcome dispute something already introduced into the story, be it intentional or not, the Director can determine a **REWRITE** is in order due to the Rule of Initiatives. It typically defaults to revising a single detail in the description or a portion of the outcome. Whichever player has initiative over the matter has final say on how much needs to be rewritten to comply.

Once an outcome has been provided, a rewrite is no longer possible for a description. If the next description has already begun, a rewrite is not possible for an outcome.

Brendan speaks up at the end of Fraser's description. "Don't forget we've already established the medallion inside the chest was once in Grandfather's possession. Nick, that was you who brought that up, right?"

Nick nods. "Yeah, before the robbery. The chest was marked with Serenity Falls' crest."

"Ah, right," Fraser replies. "So instead how about we get this guy to tell us he was driving the stagecoach when it was robbed?" Everyone thinks for a moment and agrees with this rewrite and Fraser revises this last detail.



COMPLICATIONS

Not everything is going to go a character's way, and when it doesn't that's a complication doing its job. A **COMPLICATION** is a forced limitation, viewpoint, penalty, or damage placed on a character as the result of a complication roll. Depending on the nature of the complication applied and whether or not the Director redeems a challenge to extend it further into the story (or even make it permanent), they can be removed by using descriptions depicting how the character confronts the complication.

Whoever created the complication assigns it a name based on how it functions within the scene. Complications are designed for creativity on the fly and to suit the situation at hand. Think of a complication as an effect placed upon a character as the result of bad luck or the concentrated effort of another character in the scene. If a character effectively grapples an opponent as the result of a complication roll, that character is complicating the other's desire to walk away or accomplish something else requiring the full use of his body. Once applied in a scene, the complication must be removed or incorporated into the scene, which typically makes things harder for the affected character.

Once a complication has been introduced to the scene and affects a character, it lasts until the end of the scene or until it has been actively removed by the affected character. The Director can determine a complication can have a longer effect by spending challenges. Long term effects of a complication can continue to come up in a story, such as the scars from many wounds or the character walking with a limp until they are able to remove the bullet. Removing any complication (other than damage) requires the character to use a full description detailing how they counter it, cope with it, or whatever method seems best at the moment. Each of the four types of complications provided offers a description guideline for removing them. Vitality can also be spent to reduce the description down to a single detail, leaving the character free to perform other feats on their next turn. There is more on Vitality in a later section of this book.

Challenges,
page 39

There are four types of complications. All are available through any complication roll and can be adapted to suit the scene.

Penalty: The affected character suffers a -1 step penalty to a single potential, but only after the character creating the penalty spends 1 Vitality. Multiple penalties can compound this penalty until the character is reduced to the base step (see page 30). Removing this complication requires the character to describe how they have countered or removed the penalty altogether.

Restriction: This complication removes a character's access to a single prop, set piece, or other aspect already introduced to the scene until the complication is removed. It prevents a character from being able to use a weapon, consider a previous statement, notice an object in the corner, or many other possibilities from their descriptions. Removing this complication requires the character to describe how they are able to remove the restriction.

Inception: The affected character is lead to believe something that is not true or re-interpret information from a different viewpoint. Until this complication is removed, the character may believe they heard a noise upstairs, become convinced a guilty person is harmless, or run the wrong way in a chase. Removing this complication requires the character to describe how they have come to believe the truth without using the falsehood as evidence.



Damage: Physical, mental, or emotional harm is inflicted on the affected character and they lose a number of Vitality equal to the difference between the complication roll's result and the Defence. Regardless of how **DAMAGE** is inflicted multiple times in a scene, it all compounds as the character's resilience is worn down, meaning it is plausible for a single character to suffer physical damage as well as endure emotional abuse and feel their sanity slipping away. When the character is reduced to 0 Vitality, they are removed from the scene in a manner chosen by the character inflicting the damage.

Removing One Complication With Another

Characters can apply a complication on another character for the purpose of removing one from a third character. For example, if one character has pinned another to the ground, a third character can place a complication called Stunned on the first character to prevent her from concentrating on applying the Pinned complication. Doing so requires a restriction complication where the restriction is on the ability to apply the specific complication applied to another character. Meaning the Stunned complication can only affect the previous Pinned complication and nothing else.

Complication Rolls

If it's simply a matter of a description's overall success or failure, the character should always succeed. **COMPLICATION ROLLS** are only intended to determine if a complication will occur. When it comes down to someone trying to increase the difficulty of accomplishing a current or future description, that's when complication rolls come into play. If one character is described as locking her arms around an opponent to hold them at bay, the success of grappling an opponent is not what the complication roll is deciphering; it's how **EFFECTIVE** that grapple is. If the complication roll is **INEFFECTIVE**, discretion is left to the players on how to provide the outcome and it may include "missing the target" entirely for the sheer sake of believability. That grapple could still occur, but it can be so easily shrugged off by the grappled target that it's barely worth any effort on their next turn. In other words, it does not require a detail to remove. Whatever the result of a complication roll may be, it becomes part of the outcome and is used to move the story forward, even if that movement is slowed or halted by the complication.

The Director is the final arbiter on whether a complication roll is triggered by a description. There may be times when the Director decides to spend challenges and force a character to make a complication roll. These are known as **CHALLENGE-BASED COMPLICATION ROLLS** and function as the Director attempting to complicate the scene by applying location-based obstacles, such as a slick floor caused by recent rainfall. Challenges are explained in greater detail starting on page 39.

Determining whether or not a complication occurs and which player creates it is based on whether the result of the complication roll was even- or odd-numbered. Consult the list below to determine the results and use them to craft an outcome to the description. "Roller" refers to the character rolling dice and "target" refers to the character setting the Defence. In short, even-numbered rolls favour the roller and odd-numbered rolls favour the target.

When Mauser landed on top of the vampire's back and began to jam two wooden stakes into its chest, a complication roll was triggered. With a d10 for his potential plus a bonus for the wooden stakes resources, he rolls a 6 against a Defence of 5. It's effective and Darius gets to choose the complication. As the difference will not be enough to kill the vampire, Darius goes with a restriction complication. "Since I'm strapped to his back using these stakes in its chest, it can't bite Darius for as long as he's there," Fraser announces.

TABLE 2: COMPLICATION ROLLS

RESULT	VS. OPPONENT	VS. CHALLENGE
Effective with an Even Number	The target gains a complication chosen by the roller.	Avoid the challenge and gain +1 Vitality.
Effective with an Odd Number	The target gains a complication of its choice.	Avoid the challenge.
Ineffective with an Even Number	The roller gains a complication chosen by the roller. The roller can choose to receive a complication and regain the use of a previously applied perk. Otherwise, nothing happens.	
Ineffective with an Odd Number	The roller gains a complication chosen by the target.	The roller gains a complication chosen by the Director.

Lotus' deadly fan attack has hit its mark after rolling an 8 on a d8! With her opponents' Defence a mere score of 3, she goes for a damage complication and is able to slice 5 Vitality from the group of extras surrounding her.

With a small army of ninjas in the temple's main hall on alert, Darius needs to complicate their efforts to keep him from getting to their master. Rolling a d10 against a Defence of 7, the result is a 3 – ineffective and the ninjas get to choose Darius' complication. Brendan's eyes light up and it becomes clear he has a devious idea. "As soon as Darius lets go of the rope, he can suddenly see a series of razor sharp wires lining the temple floor. Let's call the complication.... Watch Your Step."

PLAYING CHARACTERS

Without characters, there are no stories in the One Land. Otherwise, it would simply be a vacant graveyard of silence. Those who call this place home are the ones who drive the story forward and are both passive witnesses and active participants to one degree or another. Building the right characters to stand a fighting chance in this world is where this section comes into play.

Provided in the appendix for this book are four pre-generated lead characters to use in your short story. As you glance over your character and prepare to play, consider the following key features of playing a game of **High Plains Samurai: Legends**.

High Plains Samurai's key tropes can be compared to many black & white movie classics such as westerns, gangsters, and other genres mixed with stylish martial arts films. In other words, your characters will find themselves encountering gunslingers capable of shooting the pinkie off a man from 100 yards away, martial swordswomen who defy gravity as their blades slice through enemies like paper, and gangsters vying for power and money no matter who gets in their way.

All action is based on "wire-fu" cinema where your average combatant is capable of gravity-defying feats. Many of the restrictions of your world do not exist on ours. While there are still some restrictions your characters must abide by during play, if you describe your character leaping from a rooftop onto a galloping horse or racing along the side of a wall, it is completely possible so long as it fits the character and formats you've established.





Many lead and supporting characters have learned to unlock magnificent and unique qi powers from within. Everyone's qi is found only within that individual and these powers represent their soul, be it destructive or generous. As we will cover shortly, a character's qi helps reveal much about them and allows them to bypass restrictions and limitations even extraordinary characters must follow. For example, a blind woman who uses her qi to observe the world without sight is never burdened by matters such as total darkness and can feel the heartbeat of her enemies as they hide around the corner. Not everyone has learned to access their qi but those who have become famous – or infamous – across the One Land.

For this step, take some time to consider what concept you want to play based on these three aspects. For lead characters especially, consider the following stages and work with your Director to build the foundation for an exceptional individual who may one day save the One Land from doom.

Homelands

The One Land is populated by six key locations you will explore during the course of this story: the Five Cities and the Wastes. Everyone has to come from somewhere and the place you call home (even if you may be banished) helps define how your character begins this story.

See the Appendix starting on page 74

Your characters will originate from one of these six homelands. Each one includes a perk found on some of the pre-generated characters in the Appendix.

Serenity Falls, City of Despair

What was once a bustling City of furs and mining is now no more than a rusted trophy commemorating a long forgotten past. Ruled by the Tom family since before dark days fell on us all, Serenity Falls's resources were scant able to keep up with the eventual demand from a growing population seeking a promising life in the southeast border of the One Land. It now exists as a wind-blown shell embraced by thieves, murderers, and the foulest of personalities. They seek a place to rest their heads and feed their urges without the bother of settling down or leaving a mark as to their arrival and departure. Closer to the Wastes than any other City, it is now the epitome of corruption.

You can learn more about these locations, characters, and much more in the **High Plains Samurai Roleplaying Game core rulebook**.

Today it is ruled by Asoko Tom but you may probably know him more as **Grandfather**, the greedy protector of Serenity Falls. While the depraved and wicked come to his City wanted by other warlords, Grandfather tolerates their ways until they threaten either of the pair he truly cherishes: his money or his children. Those who forget this rule face a dedicated legion of trained marksmen that have become the signature of Serenity Falls, standing on rooftops with hawks' gazes on everything that goes on in the City. Anyone not killed by his **Watchdogs** face Grandfather's judgment: take your own life or suffer a life as a slave in the mines concealed behind the empowering fortress that is his home. His people pay heavy taxes to gain this harsh protection, as they have for generations. Grandfather is a staunch believer in the old ways and his quest to bring back the past has lead his City to ruin.

Standing at his side since her tenth year is **Kiki**, his adopted daughter and bodyguard. Raised in view of tortures, beatings, and murders, this graceful girl has grown to become a crazed killer when unleashed. Armed with her legendary Crescent Whip and her terrifying efficiency in dealing death, Kiki – and her ambitions – may have reason to fear for her life as there are stirrings in Serenity Falls of uncertainty within the Tom household.



Yung Zhi, City of Lights

There is much about Yung Zhi you cannot understand until you have wandered all its streets. At one moment, you may suspect this City to be the definition of impoverished as its people cram to fit within the towering walls of sandstone forming the jagged edges of the crevasse they call **the Devil's Throat**... and home. The desperate who made it inside literally dwell on top of each other as each ramshackle building flimsily stacks atop the last to create an outer rim of swaying buildings, creaking wood, and tragedies waiting to happen. And that is for those who can find room within this immediate zone, leaving the rest to camp along the windy chasm as unsettled refugees.

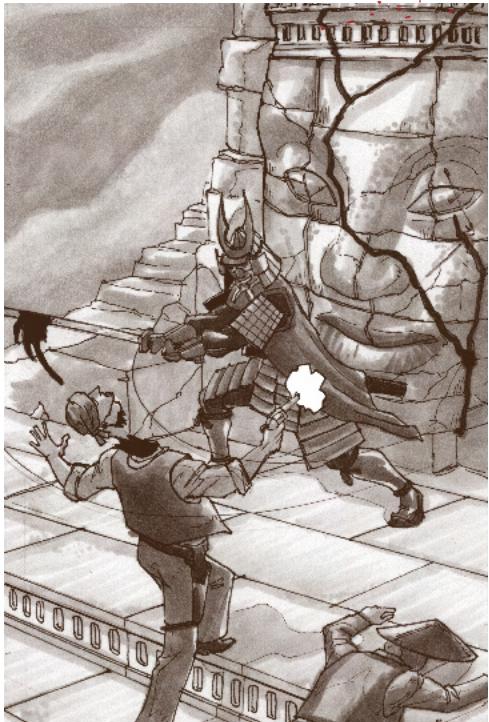
The heart of the City is a very different story, one of greed, power, and unappreciated technology. Yung Zhi's true power lies with its warlord, **Xang**, and her dominance over the rival gangs populating the illuminated streets of neon-fueled night clubs, polished automobiles, and heavy firepower. Caught up in their own opulence, these brash youngsters seek nothing more than good times at the cost of enforcing Xang's demands until such time as another will take the old woman's place. When blood does not run into the sewers, parties carry on well into the night and long into the morning hours. In Yung Zhi's heart it is not money that commands attention, but booze.

Many a skilled mercenary has answered Xang's call to join her gang, including a varied collection of qi warriors. Filling the role of second-in-command is a particularly vicious killer: **Bolo**, once the main enforcer of the very Desert Sun Gang that brought so much grief to Xang and her fellow warlords. A silent man and efficient killer, Bolo has sworn allegiance to his new master and proven himself invaluable to her family. Those who would dare question his loyalty faces the firm reply of his iron fists.

Monsoon, City of Ruins

Do not let the full name of this third City fool you. Monsoon is a place of true beauty and antiquity, one of the few to embrace the past, even if it is for nefarious purposes. Settled at an assembly of four tainted rivers running to the western coast of the One Land, Monsoon is located at the base of a waterfall where the rivers merge and flow down to give life to one of the few surviving jungles. Under the canopy of dense trees, and watched over by the singing birds and swinging monkeys that also call this place home, are ancient temples dedicated to the Elemental Spirits, libraries of vast knowledge, and a fortress from which the warlord Hoth Kap Sing, also known as **the General**, rules with absolute efficiency and determination.

Beyond its beauty and splendour lies a people under military rule. All who would call Monsoon home must serve at least three years in full arms guarding the walls and marching out into the One Land as the General sees fit. His forces are unmatched compared to the other Cities and this is what makes Monsoon so feared by the other warlords. Should the day ever come that the General feels obliged to take what is not his, the legion may be unstoppable. Yet no aspirations of power have crossed the General's mind to date. At least, not until he has learned the secret buried within the temples of Monsoon, a secret he believes will grant him the power to cleanse the impurities of the world and grant him right as supreme ruler of the One Land. Few outside of the General's inner circle are aware of the power he seeks in the ruins, but many have their own theories.



Having fathered no children in his lifetime, the General's life is dedicated to his military. Power is to pass on to his second-in-command. As of today, it is **Lu Qing**'s hands that grasp that title. Also known as the Winds of Death, Lu Qing is a fierce swordsman with lightning fast reflexes and the ability to summon tempest winds with a whistle. Lu Qing's loyalty to his commanding officer is unbreakable and many who have failed to bring the General his quest for ultimate power have left this world because of the Winds of Death's twin katanas.

Khar'tep, City of Mountains

There is a reason why the Five Cities have not turned to outright war due to so many harsh words and threats exchanged between them. When it comes to Khar'tep and its current warlord, **Khar of the Hawk Clan**, there is the slight matter of scaling the rocky mountains in which this City lies. While not a City in the traditional sense, what is known as Khar'tep is in truth a nomadic gathering of barbarians relocating from one peak of the mountains to the next as conditions demand. Out here, change is a constant. Even the name of the City is altered when a new warlord is proclaimed –

its former name was Roth'tep in favour of its previous warlord, Roth of the Goat Clan.

Life is firm and unrelenting in the heights of the northeastern mountains. While each clan tends to their own, they all form groups of hunters, gatherers, parents, gardeners, and warriors working apart but for the same purpose: the survival of the clan. Only their clan elders engage with the other clans and ensure little to no violence breaks out between them. Such peace between the clans is only maintained because of Khar's wishes as he prepares for the days of total war with the other Cities.

Home to a gathering of numerous clans, Khar'tep maintains order through might alone. These people have been raised to live a warrior's code: what is desired is taken and fought for. While not as organized and dutiful as the soldiers in Monsoon, they are indeed a force to be reckoned with. All manner of harsh crimes are permitted when raiding parties are sent out, and few that oppose them are left alive. Ruling them all is their unchallenged warlord. Never defeated in battle, it is told, this hulking warrior has slain ten people for every year of his life. The youngest of all the warlords, his quick temper and swift reactions make him the most feared of them all.

Rust, City of Industry

Tall spires of scrap metal pierce the horizon in this pocket of the One Land ripe with strong electrical currents as bolts of lightning bounce from one tower to the next. These towers are a monument to a world of bizarre creations and marvels that cannot be found until you begin to look underground. Buried beneath the barren soil, everything that is this final City is concealed beneath the earth. That is perhaps its greatest defense. Blending salvage engineering with religious devotion, Rust is a beacon of hope, for those who can both physically and morally endure, in an otherwise dreary hellhole. Yet most would rather take their chances in the Wastes.



Every street, building, and construct in Rust was built from the wreckage of the world before Chaos' wrath, and its people have completed wondrous feats with these remains. Despite the brown-flecked appearance of the metal applied in these inventions, its citizens have manufactured some of the most advanced forms of technology available today (some even more than what was possible before it was all destroyed). They even have the ability to harness the electricity flowing through the air around them (a lesser side effect of the storm-riddled northern landscape above) to provide heat and illumination. It is this ingenuity that makes Rust a powerhouse among the Five Cities as it sits on a powder keg of weaponry. While all the other warlords would unleash an army to seize this city for their own, none would dare face down a barrage of contraptions built for the sole purpose of tearing a man in half.

Ingenuity in the face of devastation is the signature conceit of this final City overseen by **the Council of Iron** and its messiah, **the Minister**. The people of Rust have built impressive technologies and architecture using the leftovers of the world before Chaos' judgement and have dedicated themselves to the worship of the Minister as their guide to the afterlife away from all of this toil and death. Total subjugation is the price for living in a city of electricity and advancement, with the Council of Iron acting as the Minister's voice. While they may seem to have it all compared to the remaining Cities, everything a family owns can be stripped at a moment's notice at the Council's whims. Those who have managed to flee with their lives intact speak of the Minister's madness and the rampant disease from a life surrounded in rusted metals and an unkempt populace.

The Wastes

Life in the One Land revolves around the Wastes; not only as the heart of the continent but as a blight on the whole world. Sand storms created by its slicing winds hurdle past its borders without warning, earthquakes from shifting mountains rumble in all directions, and an unseen ooze of corruption leaks out into the dried up riverbeds winding across the land. There is not a day that goes by without the Wastes, defying all reason, extending its reach and bringing misery to thousands.

Tainted by the anger of Chaos, this place is in a state of constant change. Even the land does not remain the same for long, creating a maze for those who do not wish to be found. Perhaps this is why it appeals to those who seek refuge from the anger of warlords or freedom from their oppression, even if the chances of death increase exponentially. While the whispers of city dwellers believe only the crazed and maniacal would call this place home, there can be more honour found here than most other places today.

Those who call it home have adapted to the harshness of it all. And what hardships they must endure: an eternal blasting sun that scorches the skin within minutes, stirring up the air to create a curtain of heat that blinds a weary traveller, or perhaps a sudden storm with waves of rain and hail pelting down on anyone without shelter. Another day could bring on massive earthquakes as the rock itself rises and falls to build new monuments of stone, sometimes wiping out entire settlements in minutes. Despite it all, those they call **Outcasts** call this home. Nomads, devout believers in their way of life, and incredible hunters, these few lead meagre lives because they are either unwelcome or wanted for dead by one of the five warlords. Part of the Outcasts' code is to aid all survivors and give them an opportunity to live a free life away from the oppression of the Cities.



Qi Powers

Certain characters in the One Land have tapped into their inner **QI** and unlocked extraordinary talents and abilities. It is said all those created by the Elemental Spirits possess an untapped qi waiting to be discovered. Perhaps your character can create fire, become invisible, have incredible speed, or exhibit the agility of a cat. Tapping into one's qi grants characters access to a **QI POWER** to do those very things once thought impossible. While your character's qi can be anything imaginable, there are limitations to its power you must consider.

Qi grants a character a single enhancement or supernatural ability. While there's no limit to how you can apply it during the game, it must always work within the confines of the qi's core. For example, if your character's qi allows her to create fire and you want to light a candle, that fits within your qi's core. However, should you wish to drain the heat from a person, that would not work as your qi creates fire; it does not control temperature nor does it remove something.

All qi comes from within. This means whatever your character's qi does effortlessly, it can only affect your character and how they accomplish actions and place complications. Targeting others with your qi power means it must originate from your physical body and extend outwards.

Using qi in the game does not have to grant you bonuses in every scene, but it does continuously unlock possibilities otherwise unavailable to other characters. For example, a character that can mimic the appearance of others can simply change their face to look like someone's superior and gain entry without question, whereas anyone else would have to find a way to deceive the guards using make-up, voice mimicry, and other tactics.

You can assign your qi power to a resource slot to gain a step or damage bonus. Even if you do not assign it to a resource slot, your qi power remains applicable to any description.

A qi power cannot prevent a complication roll. It can, however, block certain complications from coming into play. For example, a character with skin as hard as stone can still be shot at by an opponent but they cannot be damaged in such a way. This can be overruled by other qi powers and there are always other ways to overcome a qi power.

QI POWERS IN A WORLD OF WIRE-FU

It is important to remember a qi power is not required to run up the side of a wall or balance on the branch of a fig tree. Those actions equated to the cinematic trappings of wushu/martial arts films mimicked in HPS Legends are not gained from qi powers; they are possible to all characters, including extras should you wish it. Use your qi power to do something uniquely magnificent, deadly, or beautiful.

POTENTIALS



Narrative First

While there is opportunity to have your qi powers provide mechanical benefits during the story, their primary purpose is to provide a narrative tool in how you present your descriptions, visualize your character, and tackle problems. If a qi warrior can fly, she need no longer concern herself with scaling the side of a building or falling from great heights, just as another who can harden their skin to iron should not be concerned about getting shot in the chest. Qi powers are a way to bring your character to life and force opponents to find ways around the benefits of these incredible abilities.

While the leads' qi powers were determined at the very beginning of the creation process, three of the Writers have now defined them further (save for Fraser, who has chosen to portray an untapped character). Darius' power of invisibility meets all criteria for a qi power but Chelsea likes the idea of her character appearing like a wisp of fog when applied. Lotus' fighting ability will hinge on using her telekinesis on those deadly bladed fans so that she barely need move in combat. And Xai's power to create ice will be used to summon an endless supply of weapons but Kate also envisions her character sliding around on ice chutes like a certain mutant character from her favourite comic book series.

Potentials

In *High Plains Samurai: Legends*, there is no failure. There is no success. There are only complications, efforts made by other characters (or the Director) to make future descriptions harder, restricted, or bring a character's impact in the story to an end. All characters will face conflicts over the course of the story where complications are a real possibility. When this happens, Writers must roll dice to determine possible complications and will use potentials to determine what dice to roll, how to resist complications attempted against them, and how many actions are available to describe these complications.

A **POTENTIAL** is a wide-ranging, yet also specific, aspect of a character that defines them above all else. The exact name of a potential is entirely up to its creator; it can be a brief description, a single adjective, or a personal mantra.

Each potential provides three facets to define characters and how they complete their role in the story as well as complicate their enemies: a dice value, a Defence, and a maximum number of details. This chart links all three values together according to their dice value. For example, a potential of d10 always has a Defence of 7 and a maximum of 4 details unless they are modified by step bonuses or penalties (see below). Potentials are commonly referenced only by their dice value unless otherwise specified.

Complications,
page 21

TABLE 3: POTENTIALS

POTENTIAL	DEFENCE	DETAILS
d4 or less	1	1
d6	3	2
d8	5	3
d10	7	4
d12 or higher	9	5

Step
Modifiers,
page 30



STEPS & STEP MODIFIERS

All potentials are measured in **STEPS** and range from a d4 up to a d12. There are two kinds of **STEP MODIFIERS** adjusting this based on the exact moment in a story: a **STEP BONUS** allows you to treat a potential as if it were one or more steps higher; a **STEP PENALTY** forces you to treat it as if it were one or more steps lower. (They can also go above or beyond, so if you drop one step below a d4, you have to roll d4-1, if you rise one step above a d12, you roll d12+1, and so forth.)

A **FLAT BONUS OR PENALTY** simply allows you to increase or decrease the value of a dice roll by that amount; they have no effect on Defence or details. For example, a +1 flat bonus allows you to add +1 to the total value rolled. If you rolled a 5 and added this bonus, you would end up with a result of 6. Flat bonuses are optional in any complication roll; you are not required to use them with every roll.

Base Step

Whenever none of a character's potentials are applicable, you default to using the **BASE STEP** of d4. A potential cannot be reduced beyond its base step without suffering from a step penalty.

Common Step Modifiers

Certain events or situations allow characters to raise their die's step or force it to drop. The following chart provides the most common step modifiers available. Certain modifiers require a full description to apply and are marked with an asterisk (*).

Details,
page 18

Details and Step Modifiers: A step modified can only be used to increase the maximum number of details in a scene if a qi power is applied. For example, a character with incredible speed can use a step modifier to increase their d10 potential to 5 details.

TABLE 4: COMMON STEP MODIFIERS

MODIFIER	STEP MODIFIER	SPECIAL NOTES
Aid Another Character *	+1 steps	Requires a full description from the aiding character
Attacking Multiple Targets	-1 steps for every additional target beyond the 1st	Does not apply to extras if they act as a group but does apply when targeting more than one group
Cover/Concealment	+1 steps for light concealment/partial cover, +2 steps for heavy concealment/full cover	A character must use a detail to access this step modifier



Defences

You will not be the only one rolling dice, as the Director's characters will attempt to achieve their own ends and thwart your efforts during the course of the story. When this happens, Defences are used to determine what result a potential must roll against to be considered effective.

DEFENCES are always listed as odd numbers and range from 1 (automatic) to 11 (next to impossible). Whenever the Director rolls dice against your character, choose an appropriate potential's Defence. If you do not have one that applies, then the Defence defaults to the base step of 1 and any die roll is simply attempting to discern which character will set the complication.

Step bonuses can increase a Defence to no more than 11. This is the only means by which a Defence can reach this milestone.

Building Potentials

Simply choosing a potential as the source of a description is not enough to provide maximum effort in a complication roll. Characters must apply their maximum number of details in order to gain their maximum dice value (not including step modifiers); if they are unable to, they can only use the step value of the number of details they did apply. This is referred to as **BUILDING A POTENTIAL**. Once they reach their key detail, they must roll the dice built with their description. For instance, if a character with a d8 potential is only able to contribute 2 details to a description before reaching their key detail, the maximum dice they can roll is a d6. If they can reach their full potential of d8 (meaning 3 details), then they can roll a d8.

Characters with an ongoing step penalty applied to a potential are also limited to how far they can build their potential. If a character has an ongoing -1 step penalty applied to a d12 potential (5 details), they can only build it up to a d10 (4 details).

A helpful tool to keep track of how details are currently built into descriptions, players can use poker chips or tokens to note the number of details applied to a description.

Fleshing Out Your Fight Scenes With Potentials

It is easy to forget the strength of your enemy when you are only concentrating on yourself. Your opponents will block, parry, dodge, and rebuke up until a point but your actions are never completely effective. Every offensive strike faces a defensive move, an important lesson many warriors forget until they lay on the ground about to take in their last breath.

When building your potentials, use these additional details to showcase how your character is working up to the key detail. This includes having your opponents block your strikes, dodge bullets, even take a few hits without any serious burden or harm. Only when you reach your key detail are dice rolled but that does not mean the rest of your description need be mundane. Keep the whole description exciting and dynamic as you build your potential.

Lotus (played by Nick) will use her Deadly d8 potential (with 3 details) for the next description in a fight with a warmech outside the gates of Rust. "Leaping up in the air, Lotus lands on top of the warmech's head. Holding her hands outwards, she uses her telekinesis to grab hold of the machine by both hands before she leaps in front of the thing. Her body spins like a top and this causes the warmech to also spin around wildly as Lotus heaves the rotating automaton over her head and slams it down on the ground in front of her. Then when it lies on its back and struggles to get back up, she cries out with ferocity to unleash the full power of her qi. An explosion of telekinetic energy is unleashed against the warmech, slamming against its metal shell to crack it open and break the damn thing apart."



The key detail in this description is the telekinetic explosion designed to damage the warmech, which will trigger a complication roll. The previous two details were flourishes leading up to the key detail to help Lotus look as deadly as Nick always intended. Because she applied all 3 details in her description, she will roll her d8 for the complication roll.

Motivations, Connections, and Hindrances

Everyone is driven by **motivations** pushing them forward against the slicing winds of the Wastes and the oppressive regimes of the warlords, but the harsh reality of life in the One Land creates **hindrances**. For those rare few on the open road, with the luxury of camaraderie, establish **connections** with their fellow qi warriors, even if they risk more hindrances. All characters have at least one motivation or connection and one hindrance. They can expand themselves with further motivations and connections so long as they balance them out by learning to cope with more hindrances.

Players are encouraged to embellish their characters further by adding more motivations, hindrances, and connections as they see fit. The maximum number of motivations and connections allowed is based on the number of lead characters in the group.

Some supporting characters in the three storylines provided for **HPS Legends** include motivations and hindrance; each one provides its own unique functions, if applicable.

Motivations

A **MOTIVATION** is a personal, actionable goal for a character to achieve before the end of the story. It also drives them to complete scenes. Motivations may be directly related to the main plot or they can create subplots that Directors help weave into the central storyline. They can be major accomplishments of great strength or inner struggle as the character seeks to understand the events of the past.

Each lead character starts the story with at least one motivation. The more motivations you have, the greater chance of gaining Vitality while showing a wider breadth of character.

Closing A Motivation: The entire purpose of a motivation is for the character to achieve closure and move forward with the lessons learned from struggling to reach their long term goals. This is known as **CLOSING A MOTIVATION** and it can happen at any point and time in the story when the character's Writer and the Director agree that the motivation reached its natural conclusion. At the end of the session, the Writer is awarded Vitality.

Vitality,
page 34

Connections

A **CONNECTION** is a moment in the past (or past lives) of two or more characters that can have a serious impact on how those characters complete a scene's goals. Connections establish an emotional or historical bond between the characters, be they healthy or dangerous. This can include family, childhood friends, love, hatred, members of the same gang, former soldiers in a long forgotten war, even two survivors of a catastrophic disaster. There can only be one connection between two characters.

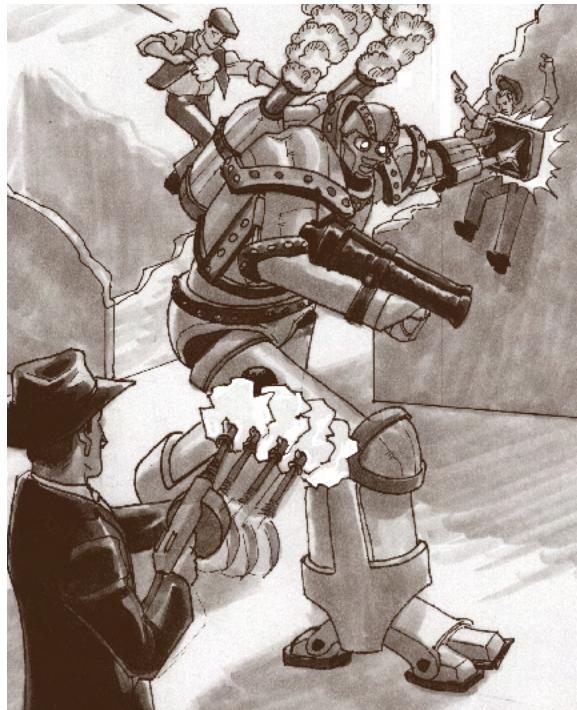
Similar to motivations, each connection must have a hindrance revealing a dark side to their bond. For example, a brother and sister could be haunted by the death of their mother at another sibling's hands. A new connection can be created at any point and time at the beginning of a new scene but it cannot be replaced by a previous connection.



Hindrances

HINDRANCES are physical, mental, or emotional obstacles that threaten a character's progress and increase the effort required at various moments in the story. A bad knee, a violent temper, memory loss, and a fear of heights are all examples of hindrances. Any character with a motivation or connection must also take a hindrance. For every additional motivation or connection beyond the first, a character must take on an additional hindrance. They work like motivations (a single sentence on your character notes) but can be manipulated by the Director spending challenges to create problems for your character.

A hindrance cannot be closed in the same fashion as a motivation. Characters may continue to carry the burdens that haunt them forever, though they may creep up less often than before. Someone haunted by the victims of a house fire must continue to live with such horrors even after their deaths have been avenged.



THE
BORDERS OF
RUST ARE
PATROLLED
BY GIANT
WARMECHS.

Challenges,
page 39

Kate wants to spend time addressing Xai's past and how her expulsion from Khar'tep, by the warlord himself, eats at her and is an issue she uses to make her strong enough to challenge Khar upon her return. She writes down *Conquer My Fears* as Xai's motivation. For a hindrance, Xai will be revealed to be *Reckless*, a woman driven by her barbarian temper.

Fraser decides to have Mauser on a contract when the story begins and hopes to use that towards these next few sessions. *Finish The Job* is the bounty hunter's motivation and involves bringing a wanted fugitive called Longshanks back to Yung Zhi. A hindrance called *Obsessive* balances out Mauser's motivation as this lead has been known to miss out on important facts when he is hot on the trail.

Lotus gains the *Avenge My Master* motivation. As a young apprentice to a lieutenant of Monsoon, her master was slain by a coward with a rifle named Longshanks. Since then, she has never been able to complete her training as a samurai and instead fell into an assassin's life. What she wouldn't give to get Longshanks' throat in her hand. For a hindrance, Nick chooses *Haunted By That Night* to represent how deep the terrible memories have burrowed into her heart.

Chelsea is not sure on a motivation for Darius just yet, but she likes the idea of having a connection with another lead character. So she and Fraser create one: *You Scratch My Back* establishes a convenient arrangement between the bounty hunter and the thief. Darius has helped out Mauser with information and access to private areas in the past while Mauser has used his influence and credibility to get the thief out of trouble here and there. Unfortunately, their hindrance is an *Opposite View Of The Law*. They often stand on the wrong side of the same issue and this will one day threaten to break this arrangement.



Vitality

Every character who calls this world home has limitations of physical and mental endurance. Traversing across the rugged hell scape that is the Wastes, riddled with gunshot wounds, pounded mercilessly from a barrage of powerful punches and kicks to the chest, pushing their abilities to the max, all of it eventually catches up with everyone.

VITALITY is used to track these limits until a character either completes a scene or falls in defeat. It is used to track how long your character can endure and how often they can push the boundaries of their abilities and adapt to intense moments of conflict in the game. When a character reaches 0 Vitality, they are removed from a scene or the story in an appropriate manner decided on by the character that put them there; this includes a character's unconsciousness or death.

Vitality is more than a character's lifeforce, energy level, or endurance. It is a measurement of their impact on the story and how engaging they are as a character. New characters in any story enter with their role firmly in hand, but only through the course of the story is their worth proven. Dull characters fade into the background or are killed off; engaging characters hold a place in the audience's heart and become people of greater purpose and interest to an audience. That is what Vitality brings to the story.

When damage is dished out, it reduces the affected character's Vitality by that amount. Vitality can also be used to alter various outcomes during play by sacrificing additional Vitality. Only 1 Vitality can be spent at a time for any single option but there is no limit to how much Vitality can be spent over the course of a round. Extras cannot spend Vitality to gain these benefits, only lead and supporting characters may do so.

Extras,
page 15

Complicating Groups: Placing a complication on a group of extras requires spending 1 Vitality. Individual extras can be affected as normal without spending Vitality.

Step
Penalties,
page 30

Complication Re-Roll: By exerting extra energy, characters can attempt to adjust their efforts at the last moment for a better (or possibly worse) result. By spending 1 Vitality, a character can re-roll a complication roll and must accept the new result. Additional re-rolls cost an additional +1 Vitality per use in a scene.

Complications,
page 21

Penalize: Placing a penalty complication on another character requires spending 1 Vitality.

Remove a Complication: A character can spend 1 Vitality to remove a complication with one detail instead of a full description.

Shift: Characters can spend 1 Vitality to increase or decrease the result of a die roll (either one they rolled or one rolled against them) by 1. This is called a **SHIFT**. If a character rolls an 8 on their complication roll, their opponent can spend 1 Vitality to reduce it to a 7 and choose their own complication. In turn, the other character involved in the complication roll can also shift the result back to an 8, but both characters can only shift the result once. Rolling an absolute see page 39 prevents another character from shifting the result.



Mauser fires off a volley of shots from both six-shooters against a Monsoon general and rolls a 6 on his complication roll – it's effective. But the general decides it best if she chooses the complication and spends 1 of her Vitality to shift it down to a 5. Even though he is already down to 7 Vitality in this fight, Mauser risks it and spends one of his own to bring the complication roll back up to a 6.

With his legs tied up from the ninja's whip, Darius needs to remove this complication and get back into the fight. By spending 1 Vitality, he can use a single detail to remove the whip by shooting it with his pistol and the remainder of his description is used to leap back onto his feet and deliver a barrel roll double punch into the ninja's chest.

Surrounded by a group of 4 extras simply frothing at the mouth to see her cooking on their fires tonight, Xai wants to create a sheet of ice underneath their feet and trip them all up. Because they are a group of extras, she will have to spend 1 Vitality to affect all of them with a single complication roll.

Regaining Vitality

When you complete a scene, all surviving characters receive Vitality based on their performance in the previous scene. This only applies to Writer-controlled characters; the Director applies a different technique for recovering supporting characters during the course of the story. Extras never regain Vitality between scenes.

Scene Goals: All characters receive +1 Vitality for completing all of the scene's goals. If they left a goal unfinished, they do not gain this point of Vitality.

Scenes,
page 36

Motivations & Connections: All characters gain +1 Vitality for each motivation and connection applied to the scene's goals. This refers to any character's motivations and connections offering something of value, direction, and purpose to accomplish at least one of the scene's goals. They must have been actively described in the scene or based on how the story has progressed to date. A connection does not need apply to both characters. If that history has not been introduced to the story, a character cannot gain Vitality for the motivation.

Motivations &
Connections,
page 32

Closing Motivations: If a character closes a motivation during the course of the story, they gain +3 Vitality. The character can now replace it with a new motivation, do so at a later time, or leave it blank for the remainder of the story.

Bonus Vitality: At the end of every scene in which the lead characters enter combat with at least one supporting character, the Writers can assign a number of bonus Vitality based on the total number of lead characters in a scene. If there are four leads in the group, for example, then there will be a total of four bonuses handed out at degrading degrees (+4, +3, +2, and +1). The Writers can then briefly discuss which of their characters should receive one of those bonuses based on whichever discretion they choose.

If a scene did not directly put the lead characters in harm's way, they cannot receive bonus Vitality.

OPTIONAL IDEA: CUTAWAYS

Certain moments in the story may be so intense that the Director decides to focus on one or two characters for a brief moment. When this happens, the chosen characters break off and form their own rounds (up to 3 or 4 rounds maximum). Once these cutaway rounds are completed, those characters cannot become involved with any remaining characters until the same number of rounds have been completed in regular play.

For example, if the Director plays out a cutaway of four rounds with one lead character as they fight off a group of ninja extras, the other lead characters in the scene must be allowed four rounds before the original character from the cutaway can provide a description again.

Any other characters associated with the cutaway, including outcomes or complication rolls, become part of the cutaway. All characters involved in a cutaway are part of the cutaway's turn sequence.

First Aid

Sometimes a Writer will describe their character pulling themselves aside during a wicked skirmish to bandage a horrible wound and cope with a life threatening injury. Other descriptions may see a medically trained character offering first aid to a comrade. In either case, whenever a character's description is used to regain Vitality, use one of the following effects.

Healing Vitality: A character can use their description to actively treat any injuries or replenish their energy or that of another character. If a character does so on herself, she regains 3 Vitality. If a character does so for another character, that character gains 4 Vitality. Healing any character requires a full description. This cannot be used to increase a character's Vitality higher than it was at the start of the scene.

Starting A New Scene From 0 Vitality: Any character allowed to continue participating in a story after she's reduced to 0 Vitality begins the next scene with 3 Vitality.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now we come down to the crux of the game: how to play. This step covers the rules of play and how you will be able to help the Director tell the story in **HPS Legends**.

Scenes

All stories are broken down into scenes. A **SCENE** is a particular moment in the story (not necessarily told in chronological order) played out by Writers and the Director. A scene can last any length of time and ends when the goal of the scene is completed or the goal is now firmly out of reach. There are three key questions to ask when creating a scene.

What is the goal of the scene? What are the characters trying to accomplish? When will the scene end? Different characters may have different goals or individual objectives to meet a single goal.

Which characters are involved in the scene? Knowing who's involved in the scene helps shape the scene's goals, setting, and more. (Note that the Director is not required to openly state all of her supporting characters and extras.)

Where will the scene take place? A scene's duration is not limited to a single location and it's also recommended to start a scene at an interesting point in the plot (for example, not every scene needs to demonstrate the characters travelling to a location).



The Opening Shot

Once these aspects have been determined by the players, the Director will provide **THE OPENING SHOT**, detailing the events leading up to the start of the scene and/or accounts of what characters witness as they begin the scene. More than simply a visual cue to start the scene, it is through the opening shot that Directors can immediately incorporate key initiatives for a scene.

Brendan hits play on the soundtrack to his favourite movie and waves his hands outwards, as if to reveal his grand opening shot. "We cut from black, the roaring thunder of a far-off storm echoing well into the first long shot of a hot, dry desert. From high above the tallest plateaus, we see a trio of tornadoes spinning destruction to the far left and rising plumes of steam to the right. Through it all, we hear the sound of a train whistle as the camera tilts down to reveal the tiny puffs of black smoke rising up from a caravan passing through the middle of the Wastes."

"So," he continues with a smile on his face. "Who wants to go first?"

Rounds and Turns

When the scene begins, all Writers and the Director have moments describing what all their characters will offer to the story. Once all characters have had a chance to offer a description, a **ROUND** is completed. Certain aspects of your characters cannot be repeated until the start of a new round.

The Director starts a round by choosing a Writer to complete a turn. Players can have multiple turns in a round based on the number of characters in play; a **TURN** only consists of a description for a single character at their disposal. No two characters can provide descriptions in a single turn. Once the description has been completed, the Writer chooses the next player, be they another Writer or the Director. If that person does not have any characters available in the current round, they must choose someone else instead.

Turns work best in the following order.

1. The character is chosen to take his turn by their player.
2. The character announces the selected potential and determines how many details are allowed in their description.
3. The character provides a description and builds their potential.
4. The Director determines if there are any step modifiers and triggers, including a complication roll. If so, it is played out accordingly and used to determine an outcome.
5. If the current player is a Writer, the Director will provide an outcome. If the current player is the Director, another Writer will be chosen by the Director to provide the outcome.
6. The player chooses another player to take their turn. If there are no other turns available, a new round begins and the player can choose any other player, including himself.

Players can select a particular character for the next turn so long as that character has not yet had a turn in the current round.



Resources

Unless you plan on walking into the first town in this story naked, your character will need clothes, supplies, weapons, and more. These are known as resources and some will provide a dramatic benefit to your character. Others may be part of your identity, something that helps others know your name and why they should fear you.

A **RESOURCE** is an item, a point of interest from a character's background, or skill of any type that aids your character's performance during a description. Each one can be as unique as a grain of sand or as common as the cold. What makes them stand out during the game is how they can boost your chances and possibly increase the damage you can cause with your descriptions. While you may come across any number of items during the course of the story, you will only have so many resources.

All characters have a set number of **RESOURCE SLOTS**. Within each slot, you can assign a particular item, skill, qi power, or other applicable resource at the start of a new scene. You can have multiple versions of the same resource, such as a collection of throwing knives, but you must stipulate exactly how many you have. You cannot split these resources into separate resource slots. You have unlimited access to anything appropriate to your character as it pertains to the story and its availability at any given moment but only those assigned to a resource slot count as a resource. Each resource will either provide a step bonus or a damage bonus.

Step Bonus: The resource provides a +1 step bonus to a complication roll's dice value or Defence when applied in the description.

Damage,
page 22

Damage Bonus: The resource provides a **DAMAGE BONUS** based on the criteria below;

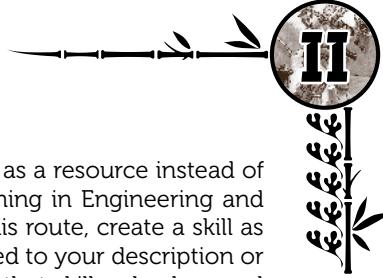
- If the resource can be used one-handed, it grants a +1 damage bonus. Only if the resource can be safely and securely used with one hand does this apply, otherwise it must be two-handed. Anyone using two one-handed resources simultaneously is granted a +2 damage bonus.
- If the resource must be used two-handed to utilize properly, it grants a +2 damage bonus.
- If the resource is a firearm or qi power, it grants an additional +1 damage bonus.
- If the resource creates an explosion, it grants a +1d4 damage bonus per use.
- Any knowledge, background or skill-based resource can provide a +1 damage bonus per potential connected to it.

Qi Powers,
page 28

You can only apply one resource at a time.

Props (AKA Items, Weapons, Armor)

Characters must use a detail to introduce a physical resource, known as a **PROP**, into a scene if it must be actively manipulated, but not to discard it or return it to its original space. For example, you must use a detail to draw a pistol or a sword, but not to re-holster or sheathe it.



Skills & Backgrounds

Characters have the option of creating a skill or background experience as a resource instead of an item. For example, a character from Rust could have advanced training in Engineering and apply it as a resource during appropriate moments. If you wish to go this route, create a skill as one of your starting resources; it grants you a +1 step bonus when applied to your description or a damage bonus equal to the number of potentials you can connect to that skill or background fact. A skill cannot be applied as a resource unless it can be connected to a character's potential or homeland.

Teachings

While many have forsaken the lessons taught by the Elemental Spirits, others have taken these teachings to heart. This allows a character to use the long forgotten (or disregarded) **TEACHINGS** of a particular Elemental Spirit (Balance, Honour, Innocence, Patience, Strife, and even Chaos) to serve as a resource. The Writer should explain an overall viewpoint based on the basic principles implied by their chosen Spirit (such as the belief that all people have rights as taught by Balance or fighting for those who cannot defend themselves as taught by Innocence) before the scene begins.

Absolutes

Whenever anyone rolls the highest value on their die roll, it's called an **ABSOLUTE**. While the roller can shift it up (or down), another player cannot spend Vitality to affect that value. In other words, if you roll an 8 on a d8, it remains an 8. Using a flat bonus to reach a die's maximum value does not count as an absolute.

Complication Rolls,
page 22

Kate rolls a 10 on a d10 – an absolute! Because she's had little success beating Kiki's Defense of 7 all night, she decides to take advantage of her opponent being unable to block this attack and inflicts 3 damage on Grandfather's bodyguard.

Challenges

Along with assisting the Writers in developing their story, the Director's secondary role is to excite and surprise them. Not to say the Writers cannot create their own exhilarating tales, but it can become far too easy for Writers to always write in their favour. That's where challenges come into play.

In the same way that characters earn Vitality for moving the story forward, Directors gain **CHALLENGES** as the lead characters delve deeper into their exploits and engage in incredible adventures. The short and sure-fire way to explain challenges is that Directors gain challenges to ensure the Writers are... well, challenged.

Whenever any of the following events take place during a scene, the Director gains challenges. Challenges carry over for the duration of the story until spent.

At the start of every new story, Directors begin with 1 challenge per Writer. Whether stockpiled for later or used right away, it's always good to have some ammo under the belt.

A Writer rolls an absolute. Whenever a Writer naturally rolls the best possible result on her complication roll (without shifting), the Director gains 1 challenge.

Absolutes,
page 39





All lead characters achieve a scene's goal. When all Writers receive Vitality for achieving the scene's goal, the Director also gains 1 challenge. The Director can gain no more than 1 challenge, regardless of how many Vitality are awarded to individual Writers.

A single challenge can be redeemed in the same way a milestone can, except these allow the Director to make alterations to the scene for the purpose of pitting the characters against a stronger threat. At any point during a scene during a Writer's turn, the Director can spend 1 challenge (or more) to accomplish one of the following.

Complications,
page 21

Place a complication on a character. This complication does not occur until after a complication roll (regardless of the result) or after the Writer has completed a description for that character. Directors cannot inflict damage on a character using a challenge and must use 2 challenges to inflict a penalty. If a challenge is used to place a complication on a character after a failed complication roll, the complication must be different from the rolled attempt. For example, if a Director attempted to trip a character and failed, she cannot spend a challenge to trip the character anyways.

Increase the duration of a complication. Directors can extend the duration of a complication the moment it is placed on a character by spending a certain number of challenges. This means characters afflicted with these complications cannot use descriptions or Vitality to remove them and must instead endure its effects for as long as the Director chooses. Damage cannot be extended using challenges.

- For 1 challenge, the complication remains until the end of the current scene.
- For 2 challenges, the complication remains until the end of the story.

Force a challenged-based complication roll. The Director can spend a certain number of challenges and force a Writer to make a complication roll against a Defence Level (see Defences).

- With 1 challenge, the roll is attempted against a Tricky Defence of 5.
- With 2 challenges, the roll is attempted against a Damn Hard Defence of 7.

Alter a set piece to create an additional danger requiring a full description to counter or bypass. This danger can come in the form of changing the setting or introducing opposing characters to start a fight scene. For example, characters racing to escape from a burning building suddenly discover the staircase leading to the main floor has collapsed. These alterations can interrupt the middle of a character's description and it must be plausible for characters to use descriptions to eliminate, overcome, or avoid these dangers.

Choose a supporting character to start a scene after the opening shot. This allows the Director to get a leg up on events in a scene, including triggering a complication roll.

Hindrances,
page 33

Use a character's hindrance to create a complication. Drafting an applicable reason why the hindrance would complicate matters for the character, the Director can spend 1 challenge to create a restriction or inception complication with the hindrance and 2 challenges to create a penalty complication.



As the blood of Lotus' enemy sprays across her face, Brendan sees an opportunity to make this fight a bit more interesting. The Director spends a challenge to turn Lotus' Haunted hindrance into a complication as the blood suddenly sends us back into a momentary flashback of a young girl witnessing the death of her master. A moment duplicated by the presence as a few drops of blood splatter onto her cheek. Lotus is now Haunted by this moment and cannot return to the fight until she removes the complication.

Mauser decides to place a complication called My Gun's Jammed on his rifle... and then Brendan spends a challenge. "That complication will now last until the end of the scene as the situation's too chaotic for you to address this problem." Fraser curses out loud. That was his favourite rifle.

Leaping off the side of the swaying tower above the streets of Yung Zhi, Darius goes to catch the swinging rope. That is when Brendan spends a challenge to trigger a complication roll. "Let's see if you can actually catch it, Darius. Tricky Defence of 5." As Darius was already using his Neither Seen Nor Heard d8 potential (as the guards on the roof above did not know Darius tied the rope there earlier), he rolls... a 3! This is not going to end well.

YOUR DESTINY AWAITS

Your patience and determination has brought you this far and now you have come to understand the basics of what lies ahead. Every effort has been made to ensure all matters on both sides are presented fair and accurate. Should you seek to continue your journey, the time has come for self-discovery and reflection. The wide open world of the One Land is largely undiscovered and filled with threats. Before you save our world, you must first help us create it.

May your light cut a path through darkness.



VOLUME TWO:
**THE MEANS TO
THE END**



BOOK THREE

SHOWDOWN IN YUNG ZHI

"Here's the thing about legends, kid. They spill a lot of blood to become one. For a while, it's everyone else's. Then one day... boom. It's their blood. All over the wall."

Kenshi Oto, head of the Oto family and owner of the Sundragon Casino

There are few laws honoured more in all of the Five Cities than that of the bounty: when one warlord calls for the apprehension of a person, it is honoured by the other warlords. It has been one of the protocols keeping intact the delicate truce between these rulers, and each turns a blind eye to what is to become of the criminal or why they are charged. It is for this reason bounty hunters have become so respected in the One Land; they can walk freely from one city to the next without impediment. So long as they pay a visit to the local warlord first to declare their business.

Today is a day like any other in Yung Zhi. And today is the day when a group of bounty hunters arrives in this city of both wealth and poverty to claim a bounty on a gunrunner named Dollface. Like any other day, this seemingly unimportant event could lead to a major power shift in the city's gangs.

SCENARIOS

All storylines in *High Plains Samurai* are provided as a collection of **scenarios**, each one a triggered moment in the story. These scenarios are provided for everyone to use as a guide for any number of scenes, goals, and overall development within this storyline. They offer a default series of events or a possible situation should the lead characters fail to intervene. Should your own group take the story in its own direction, feel free to disregard the written scenarios and go where the story takes you. Everything in these storylines can be accomplished in a single session and can also be used as a springboard for a longer story.

Each scenario includes its trigger, any goals it requires from the lead characters to gain Vitality, any supporting characters and extras, as well as the option for additional challenges Directors can incorporate into the scene. When played together, they help players reach an unexpected conclusion and an exciting action story. All scenarios are provided in a recommended chronological order.

THE TIMELINE

Each storyline provided in **High Plains Samurai: Legends** assumes you, the Director, have not played any other storylines before and therefore offers a suggested timeline for playing out this story within a 4-hour window. Below are suggestions for the best approach in playing out this scenario at the table; you may need to adjust to suit your own requirements.

How To Play (5 minutes): Review the basic premise of the game provided on pages 17 to 19 – descriptions, details, outcomes, and complications.

Character Review & Customization (10 minutes): Review the different aspects of the pre-generated lead characters provided with this scenario – potentials, resources, motivations, connections, hindrances and Vitality. Once the Writers have a rudimentary understanding of how to play, let them adapt their motivations, connections and hindrances should they choose to do so.

Formats (5 minutes): Review the formats provided on page 16. Use them to establish how everyone wants to present this particular storyline.

Read the
initiatives
for Yung
Zhi on
page 25

Establishing Your Version of Yung Zhi (5 minutes): While Yung Zhi is its own unique location in the One Land, there is no single interpretation. Present the basic premise of the storyline, the city of Yung Zhi as described on page 25, and the supporting characters. Work together to establish features and common experiences in your version of Yung Zhi. Create a rough map of scenes to reach the conclusion. This can be as minimal or as detailed as the group prefers.

Play (3 hours): Bring all the pieces together and see where the story takes you! Once it reaches a satisfying conclusion, bring it to an end and leave the Writers wanting more. The following scenarios were designed with the following timeline in mind.

- **Formal Introductions** (30 minutes)
- **The Golden Moon** (1 hour)
- **Trying The Easy Way Out** (30 minutes)
- **Street Fight!** (1 hour)

Epilogue (15 minutes): What happens as a result of these events? What befalls the survivors and who stands to gain from these outcomes? Discuss the experience and share critiques, both positive and negative, to improve the next story.



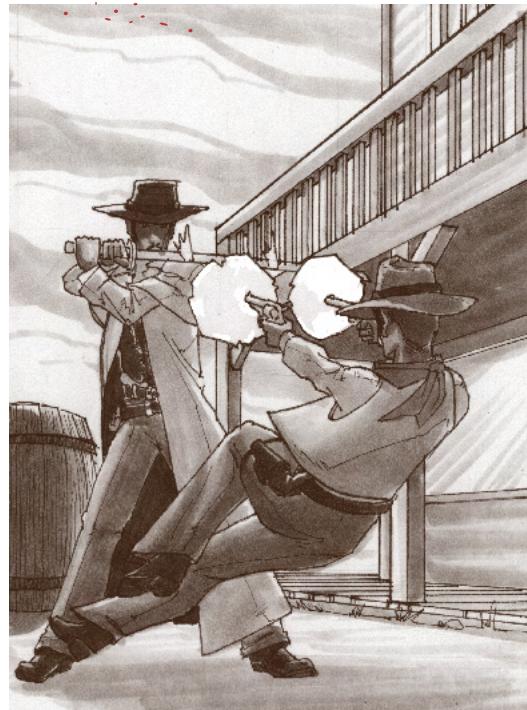


THE PLOT

Showdown In Yung Zhi is a story of bounty hunters out to collect on a gunrunner named **Dollface** after discovering the rather elusive fugitive has been spotted doing business with the **Ryesh family** in the inner sanctum of the city referred to as **the Pearl**. Facing threat of open war with rival families, Dollface's rather unique arsenal could turn the tide in the Ryesh family's favour before the first shot is ever fired... and that is something Xang, the warlord of Yung Zhi, wants to avoid. She grows weary of the Ryesh boys and their forgetful manners, finding it easier to have another family take over their prostitution operation as well as their popular nightclub, **the Golden Moon**. At the same time, a war between rival gangs always leads to a better outcome for those sitting on the sidelines, making this a win-win situation for Xang when a team of bounty hunters shows up looking for Dollface.

While it may seem excessive and violent to outsiders, there is a code to doing business in Yung Zhi. Even if that business is violent.

Nightclubs are off limits to violence; anyone found drawing blood when the music plays will find themselves on Xang's bad side. And you never stab your opponent in the back. Say nothing about gang warfare or petty disputes in the Pearl, but they are always out in the open with both sides facing each other armed to the teeth. It's why many bounty hunters come here in teams – it leaves room for a couple of expendable casualties.



THE DEBATE
BETWEEN
SWORDS
VS GUNS
CONTINUES.

KEY INITIATIVES

Below are the key initiatives for this story. They are a combination of this storyline's history and points of fact that remain one of the Director's initiatives when this storyline begins. If any Writer attempts to change any of these initiatives, the Director can request a rewrite.

The Rule of Initiatives,
page 20

This storyline takes place in the city of Yung Zhi, predominantly in the inner circle known as the Pearl. The material provided on this location on page 25 are also considered the Director's initiatives.

The lead characters are bounty hunters (whether full time or simply taking on this one job) in search of a gunrunner known as Dollface.

Dollface is currently working out a deal with the Ryesh boys, owners of the Golden Moon nightclub and purveyors of the Pearl's elite prostitutes.

Xang is eager to be done with the Ryesh boys and has instructed Bolo to (secretly) aid the lead characters in doing whatever is necessary to kill this deal and thereby weaken these upstart gang leaders.



THE SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

Here are the supporting characters of Showdown At Yung Zhi you will portray as the Director.

Dollface

Supporting Character

Homeland: Rust

Qi Power: Teleporting objects or weapons into her hands

Unique Features: A porcelain white mask on her face; Dollface can teleport unique steampunk designed weapons into her hands with only a thought.

Named because of the porcelain mask she wears to cover the horrifying burns over her face, this gunrunner and manufacturer extraordinaire has crossed paths with all sides of many disputes going on in the One Land today. If you need something to take down a warmech with one shot, she has what you need. Rumour has it she can even secure legendary weapons capable of incredible power but there are none alive who can attest to that. Her qi power is almost perfect for someone in her profession; she can teleport objects into her hands instantly and uses it to remain armed at all times with a variety of firepower at her beck and call. At the start of this story, Dollface has arrived with her trusted associates, Keen and Constance, along with a half-dozen bodyguards for protection.

Dangerously Unexpected (d10/7/4)
Shrewd Negotiator (d6+1/3/2)

Motivations & Hindrances: Anytime Dollface is able to earn a profit from a scene – including information that can lead to profit – she comes out on top. When Dollface finishes a scene using this motivation, she gains 1 Vitality for each lead character.

Vengeful (Hindrance): Whenever something or someone costs her money - or when they burn her face with acid - she wants to make them pay a price far beyond her losses. If triggered, any character currently in the scene can turn it into a complication against her.

Resources: Shotgun w/exploding rounds (+1 steps or +1d4+2 damage); 2x sai (+1 steps or +1/+2 damage); + 1 more

Vitality: 20

Damage Trigger: Whenever Dollface takes damage, she can immediately use a free detail with a d6 for any complication rolls.

Keen Sense of Danger: The continued threats from both government and environment leave many of Rust's citizens with sharp observations capable of saving them from getting crushed, lost, or locked up. Your character can be ready to avoid a physical danger by using a detail in advance of their next turn. This can only function once per scene and does not need to be held or maintained.

Fast and Accurate: You can spend 1 Vitality when you start a description using your qi power to arm yourself with a weapon to gain an additional +2 damage bonus within that same description.

Damage Bonus:
page 38



Keen

Supporting Character

Homeland: Yung Zhi

Qi Power: Telepathy

Unique Features: Typically stands close to her employer, Dollface, with her head bowed and draped over with a large hood of her crimson cloak. Throwing knives are her preferred weapons of choice.

Telepaths are highly prized amongst those who deal with dangerous people for a living, as it gives them an edge in negotiations and a heads-up when talks are about to get messy. Despite her silent mannerisms (brought on by a missing tongue), Keen is charged with keeping Dollface aware of her clients' intentions, and is her personal bodyguard.

Nothing Escapes Her (d8+1/5/3)
Bodyguard (d6/3/2)

Resource Slots: Throwing knives x3 (+1 steps or +1 damage); + 1 more

Vitality: 10

Read Minds: When Keen is maintaining her telepathy, she immediately knows all details that occurred in a description. Only effective complication rolls can be used to keep details from her telepathy. Keen has to already be aware of a character's physical presence to use this perk effectively.

Constance

Supporting Character

Homeland: Khar'tep

Qi Power: Duplication

Unique Features: Usually seen with at least two clones, she applies muay thai boxing to beat her opponents to death from all sides.

There is a story of a young qi warrior named Constance killed in a duel years ago. While Constance is alive and well today, there is no certainty if that is truly her original body or one of her clones surviving and thriving to take her place. Able to duplicate herself multiple times, she is Dollface's enforcer sent to eliminate problems before they can get in the way.

Outnumber Your Enemies (d8/5/3)
Always Hold the Upper Hand (d6/3/2)

Resource Slots: Muay thai boxing (+1 steps or +2 damage); + 1 more

Vitality: 15

Teamwork: When working with another one of her clones, she gains the Aid Another Character step bonus by using only a single detail. This bonus can only be applied once per description or can be used to increase Constance's Defence once per round.



Yung Zhi,
page 25

Resources,
page 38

Vitality,
page 34

Khar'tep,
page 26

Resources,
page 38

Vitality,
page 34

Step Modifiers,
page 30



Bolo

Supporting Character

Homeland: Yung Zhi

Qi Power: Fists turn to solid iron

Unique Features: A large, muscular master of kung fu with a long scar running down the left side of his head; missing his left ear.

A legend in his own right, Xang's second-in-command has decided to personally monitor the events about to unfold and ensure everything goes according to his warlord's wishes. Once a member of the famed Desert Sun Gang that terrorized the Wastes, Bolo has settled down into a kind of "retirement" living the life of a professional gang boss in the home of organized crime. Feared for the killing blows delivered by his iron fists, it takes a lot to draw this infamous qi warrior into a fight but not very much to incite his full fury once blood is drawn.

Bonebreaker (d10+1/7/4)

Trust No One (d6/3/2)

Refuses to Go Down (d6/3/2)

Loyal To A Master... And Himself (Motivation): While Bolo is a committed lieutenant to Xang, his allegiance will always be to himself first. Any opportunity permitting him to pursue Xang's goals and further his own at the same time is always a step in the right direction. When Bolo finishes a scene using at least one of his motivations, he gains 1 Vitality for each lead character.

Proven To Be The Best (Motivation): Bolo's reputation as one of the One Land's best martial fighters is there for a reason and this qi warrior is always looking to prove he has not rusted with age. When Bolo finishes a scene using at least one of his motivations, he gains 1 Vitality for each lead character.

Suspicious (Hindrance): A career spent in crime and treachery has made Bolo a very suspicious man and he has been known to make situations worse from time to time. Any inception complication used to trigger this hindrance can only be removed when Bolo uses his full description.

Unsocial (Hindrance): Resorting to physical violence means Bolo rarely needs to use social skills to solve problems and that can sometimes make delicate situations (especially in a high profile position) problematic. He suffers -1 step penalty to any social-based complication roll.

Resource Slots: Iron fists (+2 steps or +2/+3 damage); Kung fu (+1 steps or +2 damage); +1 more
Vitality: 30

Damage Trigger: Whenever Bolo takes damage, he can immediately use a free detail with a d6 for any complication rolls.

Grace of a Cat: Getting by in the outer reaches of Yung Zhi requires dexterity outside the reach of normal people, yet these survivors have learned to leap over swaying gaps and jump down a couple of floors with ease. Your character can automatically shift a complication roll without spending Vitality so long as their description takes place at dangerous heights. You cannot cause damage using this perk.

Intimidating Presence: Combining physical prowess, brute strength, and a fearsome reputation, anyone in Bolo's presence automatically receives the Intimidated inception complication. This causes them to be fearful of Bolo and they cannot make any aggressive moves against him or speak any lies until it is removed.

Stronger: Gain an additional +1 step bonus when using Bolo's qi power in a resource slot, but this step bonus can only be applied to complication rolls, Defence, or bonus details when used in an ongoing description. This bonus is already provided above.

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS (THE RYESH BOYS)



The Ryesh Boys

Supporting Characters

Homeland: Yung Zhi

Qi Power: Untapped

Unique Features: A trio of brothers who look nothing alike and speak with thick accents that are difficult to understand; they can speak to each other in code.

One of the newest families running legitimate and clandestine operations in the Pearl, the Ryesh boys never inherited their claim like every other family. They took it by force in a bloody coup against their former boss they felt was too weak to take business to the next level. Operating one of the most popular (and exclusive) nightclubs, the Golden Moon, allows them to run a massive prostitution ring and gain access to pillow talk that could one day give them leverage over another family or two. This is what has made them a target as their wild tempers do not lead other families to believe they have a serpent's tongue. The three brothers, every one of them untapped, would rather spray the room with bullets than work the long scheme and that is why Xang is eager to see them go.

Yung Zhi,
page 25

Power Hungry (d8/5/3)

Benefits To Being In Charge (d6/3/2)

Resource Slots: Wealth (+1 steps); + 1 more

Resources,
page 38

Vitality: 7 each

Vitality,
page 34

For simplicity, each of the Ryesh boys – Tarkov, Sergi, and Victor – use the same potentials.

**OPTIONAL
IDEA:
A HISTORY
WITH THIS
PLACE**

Each group will wish to start their story off with a scene or two that brings them into the streets of Yung Zhi and introduces the lead characters. This will be established when everyone builds their formats and creates their foundation for the city that will populate this tale. Once the Writers have created these introductions as they see fit, move to the Formal Introductions scenario.

Before you provide the opening shot, ask the Writers to think about the following;

- What is the bounty on Dollface? For what crime? Is she wanted alive or dead?
- Do any of the lead characters have a personal connection to Dollface or other members of her crew?
- Do any of the lead characters have a connection to Xang, Bolo, or any other interesting history connected to Yung Zhi?



FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS

Trigger: Shortly after the lead characters arrive in Yung Zhi.

Goals: Gain permission from Bolo to complete the bounty and learn where Dollface is currently staying.

Characters: Bolo, Yung Zhi Gangsters

Due to previous obligations, Xang is unable to meet with the lead characters when they arrive in Yung Zhi. Instead, they are directed to a slaughterhouse in the outer district of the city known as the Shell. Out here, the streets are vastly overpopulated and nearly every building was raised with shoddy construction, poor materials, and questionable engineering. Many of the people who live in the Shell do whatever is needed to survive and do not receive any protection from the powerful gangs who operate inside the Pearl. This includes a lack of electricity, gasoline, and other benefits found within the bustling nightclubs, hotels, and casinos owned by the numerous gangs under Xang's rule.

When the lead characters are brought forth to meet with Bolo in person, he is beating a man to a pulp in a slaughterhouse. The particulars on why this man is bearing the brunt of Bolo's wrath does not matter but Bolo can assure them it is purely business.

As tradition dictates, all bounty hunters must present themselves to a warlord (or a designated official) and receive formal permission to complete their bounty. If asked, Bolo is not aware of their mark's current location (because Dollface does not reside in Yung Zhi). If they want to track her down, they'll have to do it the old fashioned way – by earning it.

Yung Zhi Gangsters

Random Qi Powers, page 80

Extras (Group of 4)

Homeland: Yung Zhi

Qi Power: Various (see the Random Qi Powers table)

Do What The Boss Says (d6/3/2)

Resource Slot: Street fighting (+1 steps or +1 damage)

Vitality: 12

EXPLORING YUNG ZHI

Depending on the amount of time players have to invest in exploring Yung Zhi in search of Dollface's whereabouts, this is an excellent opportunity to flesh out the City as your group sees fit. Because finding their target is fundamental to moving the story forward, this search is entirely narrative. Allow the Writers to develop their own path to Dollface before moving onto the next scenario, *The Golden Moon*.

SCENARIO: THE GOLDEN MOON



THE GOLDEN MOON

Trigger: The lead characters arrive at the Golden Moon nightclub.

Goal: Confront Dollface and attempt to complete the bounty or challenge her crew to a fight.

Characters: Dollface, Keen, Constance, the Ryesh Boys, Dollface's Crew, Ryesh Enforcers

Entering through the well-guarded gates into the Pearl and arriving at the Golden Moon nightclub, the party is in full swing with loud music, dancing, drinking, gambling, and more. As no violence is allowed inside the club, everyone must leave their weapons with the unarmed bouncers at the door and qi powers are forbidden once inside. This means unless the lead characters can convince Dollface to leave with them (or slit her own throat), they will have to challenge her and her crew to a public fight in the streets. There are no immediate repercussions to violating club rules in Yung Zhi... but consequences are inevitable.

Dollface is meeting with the Ryesh brothers in a private room and will not be disturbed easily. If the lead characters are able to find their way in or wait for any of them to come out, Dollface laughs at their attempts and will try to force them into challenging her to a duel. Since these bounty hunters have entered the city with Bolo's blessing, she knows there will be little she can do to avoid them without direct confrontation. She will attempt to buy herself some time to set up an ambush later on in the evening or the next morning.

Dollface's Crew

Extras (Group of 6)

Homeland: Various

Qi Power: Various (see the Random Qi Powers table)

Random Qi Powers,
page 80

Eager To Get Violent (d6/3/2)

Resource Slot: Katanas (+1 steps or +2 damage)

Vitality: 18

Ryesh Enforcers

Extras (up to 24)

Homeland: Yung Zhi

Qi Power: Various (see the Random Qi Powers table)

Random Qi Powers,
page 80

Take Them Out Of The Picture (d6/3/2)

Resource Slot: Tommy guns (+1 steps or +3 damage)

Vitality: 3 each



TRYING THE EASY WAY OUT

Trigger: Hours after *The Golden Moon* scenario and before the *Street Fight!* scenario.

Goal: Dollface sends some of her crew to ambush the lead characters and get rid of them before their fight.

Characters: Ryesh Enforcers

Choosing to ambush them as they sleep or make it look like a random crime, Dollface has made arrangements with the Ryesh brothers to help her out with this inconvenience. The gang leaders decide to send in a bunch of their Enforcers, who act fast to catch the lead characters by surprise.

Option: Dollface asks Constance to go with the Ryesh Enforcers to make sure they get the job done right. If you wish to keep Constance around for the final scene, she makes an escape on her next turn when she is reduced to 10 Vitality or less.

Ryesh Enforcers

Random Qi Powers, page 80

Extras (up to 24)

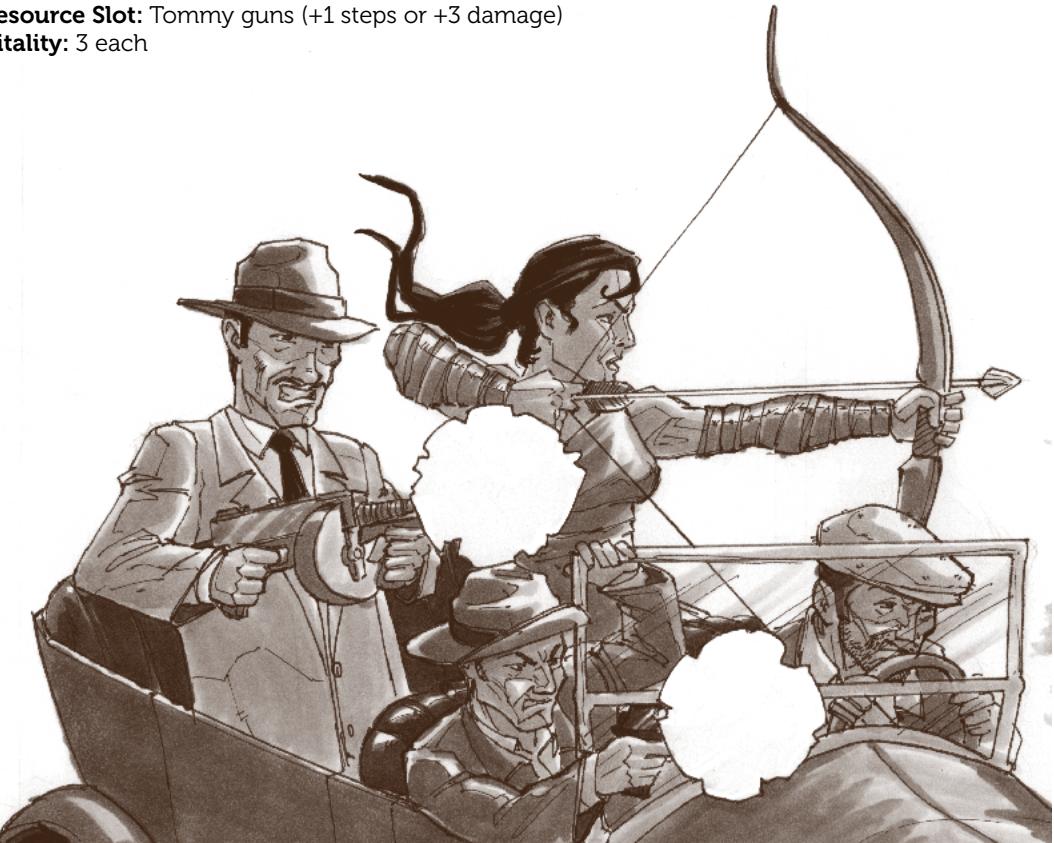
Homeland: Yung Zhi

Qi Power: Various (see the Random Qi Powers table)

Take Them Out Of The Picture (d6/3/2)

Resource Slot: Tommy guns (+1 steps or +3 damage)

Vitality: 3 each



A TYPICAL
DRIVE-BY
SHOOTING IN
YUNG ZHI.

SCENARIO: STREET FIGHT!



STREET FIGHT!

Trigger: At a time chosen by the lead characters and Dollface.

Goals: Complete the bounty by fighting Dollface and her crew.

Characters: Dollface, Keen, Constance, Dollface's Crew

The premise behind this scenario is simple and will take up a majority of the story: both sides meet in a public place (with a crowd gathered to watch, even if they end up in the line of fire) and fight to determine if Dollface faces her accuser or is delivered final justice by the lead characters' hands.

As she always does, Dollface will attempt to use the surroundings created by the Writers to her advantage and will position her crew to take advantage of those positions. For example, shooting at the lead character from a high vantage point, such as a rooftop.

Option: If the fight quickly shifts into the lead characters' favour early on in this scenario, you may wish to bring in some Ryesh Enforcers to even the odds.

Option: Dollface recommends they fight on the 30th floor of a swaying tower located in the Shell. Due to the shoddy construction, this building can easily tip over and pieces can break off with little effort to create a dramatic fight scene in a collapsing building that rocks from side-to-side. The fight can even take place outside the tower while people living there desperately try to escape. If you choose this option, use the following optional challenge below.

Unstable: By spending 1 challenge, you cause a character to fall a number of feet equal to $1d4 \times 10$. Assume each floor is 10 feet tall. If they are outside the tower, they can catch something at the last minute to stop their decent. If a character hits the ground, they take damage equal to the $1d4$ roll.

Dollface's Crew

Extras (Group of 2 per lead character)

Homeland: Various

Qi Power: Various (see the Random Qi Powers table)

Random Qi Powers,
page 80

Eager To Get Violent (d6/3/2)

Resource Slot: Katanas (+1 steps or +2 damage)

Vitality: 18

EPILOGUE

At the end of the story, once the dust has settled and the body count has been tallied, take some time to discuss the possible short term and long term consequences for, and changes to, Yung Zhi as a result of these events. What happens to the Ryesh brothers without access to Dollface's arsenal? Did Bolo gain anything for himself in this endeavour? Did the lead characters make any enemies during this bounty and what happens to Dollface when she faces her accuser?



BOOK FOUR TO CATCH A TRAIN

"The unwanted moment is always guaranteed to find you. You simply don't know when it will arrive."

The Laws of Chaos

For those who need to travel from one city to another, there's nothing safer than taking the Salvation. Simply because there is a chance you will arrive intact if you take the train. Yet that does not mean there is a degree of certainty one will arrive as they departed. Crossing through the anarchy of the Wastes comes with an inherent level of danger one cannot avoid without the armed escort and technological marvel of the engine and its caravan.

Today is simply an average day travelling through the Wastes aboard the Salvation. Some days are safer than others because probability (as much as it can be measured out here) dictates tranquility will occur as often as violence. It just so happens today finds its passengers caught in the midst of an Outcast raid that threatens to stir up the wild reactions of Chaos' wrath made incarnate in this desert graveyard.



THE TIMELINE

Each storyline provided in **High Plains Samurai: Legends** assumes you, the Director, have not played any other storylines before and therefore offers a suggested timeline for playing out this story within a 4-hour window. Below are suggestions for the best approach in playing out this scenario at the table; you may need to adjust to suit your own requirements.

How To Play (5 minutes): Review the basic premise of the game provided on pages 17 to 19 – descriptions, details, outcomes, and complications.

Character Review & Customization (10 minutes): Review the different aspects of the pre-generated lead characters provided with this scenario – potentials, resources, motivations, connections, hindrances and Vitality. Once the Writers have a rudimentary understanding of how to play, let them adapt their motivations, connections and hindrances should they choose to do so.

Formats (5 minutes): Review the formats provided on page 16. Use them to establish how everyone wants to present this particular storyline.

Establishing Your Version of the Wastes (5 minutes): While the Wastes are their own unique location in the One Land, there is no single interpretation. Present the basic premise of the storyline, the Wastes as described on page 27, and the supporting characters. Work together to establish features and common experiences in your version of this blemish on the One Land. Create a rough map of scenes to reach the conclusion. This can be as minimal or as detailed as the group prefers.

Read the initiatives for the Wastes on page 27

Play (3 hours): Bring all the pieces together and see where the story takes you! Once it reaches a satisfying conclusion, bring it to an end and leave the Writers wanting more. The following scenarios were designed with the following timeline in mind.

- That's Not A Train (30 minutes)
- Outcasts' Ambush (1 hour)
- Crack Open The Can (1 hour)
- The Wastes Awaken! (30 minutes)

Epilogue (15 minutes): What happens as a result of these events? What befalls the survivors and who stands to gain from these outcomes? Discuss the experience and share critiques, both good and bad, to improve the next story.

THE PLOT

Danger does not always require a scheme to overthrow power, seek revenge, or right a terrible wrong. Sometimes it is simply a matter of being in the wrong place at the wrong time and fighting to stay alive despite the odds. That is the case here with **To Catch A Train**: the lead characters are passengers connected to **the Salvation** as it makes its way through **the Wastes** towards any of the Five Cities. The destination does not matter. When a small legion of **Outcasts** attempt to rob the train and its passengers of anything they can get their hands on, the situation will quickly escalate as the Wastes reacts to the violence of the moment and tries to bring the Salvation to a crashing halt.





Everything in this storyline revolves around the Salvation, that mighty behemoth plowing its way through the Wastes as the sole mode of transportation from one City to another. Or rather, guide a near endless parade of brave travellers through hell. The storyline begins as the lead characters prepare to catch up with the Salvation and ends if they are separated from it or are able to continue with the Salvation once the raid comes to an end. (It carries so much importance that it is listed as a supporting character in the scene, along with its **Caravan**.)

KEY INITIATIVES

The Rule of Initiatives, page 20

Below are the key initiatives for this story. They are a combination of this storyline's history and points of fact that remain one of the Director's initiatives when this storyline begins. If any Writer attempts to change any of these initiatives, the Director can request a rewrite.

This storyline takes place along one of the many routes taken by the Salvation in the Wastes. For the sake of this storyline, no specific location is provided. The material provided on this location on page 27 are also considered the Director's initiatives.

The Salvation is always a Director-controlled supporting character. While Directors are encouraged to have their Writers add descriptors and interesting components to the train, it remains one of the Director's key initiatives.

SURVIVING THE WASTES

The Salvation leads a trail running along the outskirts of the Wastes, moving deeper into and further away from the toxic and highly unpredictable environment of this feared landscape; not a place for the faint of heart. The ground itself does not take kindly to trespassers and the air lashes out to destroy without rhyme or reason. Outcasts have learned to survive in this dangerous, harsh environment because they also believe in the failure of order. Combined with their highly enhanced qi powers, the Wastes favour any Outcasts above outsiders whenever possible. Then again, it's not a guarantee.

Every major location in **High Plains Samurai: Legends** includes its own dangers, each one available to become part of the scene by spending challenges. The Wastes are no exception.

Hindrances, page 33

Manifest Hindrances: While in the shifting borders of the Wastes, anything is possible. Illusions, elemental beasts, earthquakes, instant volcanoes... any possible barrier to finally cause the Salvation to stop (and not enough to make it stop; the goal of this scene is to provide the Outcasts with a chance to stop the Salvation). More than just random consequences and obstacles, the Wastes reacts as if it is sentient and capable of knowing one's greatest fears and darkest thoughts. It then spits them back at you in an effort to break you. By spending 1 challenge, the Wastes create a physical manifestation of a lead character's hindrance.

Secretly keep track of the total damage caused in the scene. Once a total of 10 damage has been caused, go to **The Wastes Awaken!** scenario.



THE SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

Here are the supporting characters of *To Catch A Train* you will portray as the Director.

The Salvation

Supporting Character

Homeland: The Wastes

Qi Power: N/A

Unique Features: A giant locomotive engine built like a tank with heavy firepower and warmechs.

A cross between the steam engine train and an armoured tank, this windowless, seemingly crewless masterpiece of engineering never stops for anything. Guarded by numerous automatons, including warmechs, every angle is covered by canons, flamethrowers, and other heavy firepower. Using an endless supply of gear and tactics to handle any obstacle the Wastes can throw at it, The Salvation has been known to reconfigure and repair most damage and restrictions by adjusting plates and components with ease. There are many who believe these adaptations are a sign of some form of intelligence, possibly conceived by the very chaotic radiations of the Wastes. It would explain many things, especially since no one (not even those in the Caravan) have ever seen an operator or engineer.

An Unstoppable Force (d12+1/9/5)

One Step Ahead (d8+1/5/4)

Protect the Passengers (d8/5/4)

Resource Slots: 3

Vitality: 50

Resources,
page 38

Vitality,
page 34

Adaptation: The key to the Salvation's endurance driving through the Wastes day after day for years are its back-up features and the ability to reconfigure its parts. These near flawless transformations are the Salvation's most amazing feature and the reason it can handle all forms of complications like any living character.

Bonus Challenges: The Salvation has a number of additional challenges it can use. These bonus challenges work exactly as regular challenges but can also be used for additional perks provided here. It starts the story with 1 bonus challenge per lead character.

Built To Take A Beating: Built to withstand and push through anything the Wastes can dish out, this marvel of modern steampunk can spend 1 bonus challenge to roll its potential's dice to determine its Defence. The Director can choose to use either the result or the potential's original Defence but the bonus challenge is spent either way.

Damage Trigger: Whenever the Salvation takes damage, it (or the Caravan, if the Director prefers) can immediate use a free detail with a d8 for any complication rolls.

A Little Help: The Salvation can spend 1 bonus challenge to grant the Caravan a second description in a round.

Challenges,
page 39

Defences,
page 29



The Caravan

Extras (Group of 3 per vehicle)

Homeland: The Wastes

Qi Power: Various (see the Random Qi Powers table)

Unique Features: A ragtag group of survivors in steam-powered motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles riding around the Salvation and the other vehicles riding under its protection.

Random Qi Powers, page 80

Always right behind the Salvation, and offering it support should things get out of hand, the Caravan is a well-armoured mobile defense keeping an eye out for the assorted vehicles brave enough to travel the Wastes in a group. Rotating between a rather impressive number of roaming biker gangs and rogue nomadic tribes scattered across the Wastes, many of them have developed a somewhat deific loyalty to the Salvation. For them, protecting the train is a way to fight back against everything that is wrong with the One Land and they will die to keep it running.

Nobody Can Stop Us (d6/3/2)

Resource Slots: 1

Vitality: 9 per vehicle

Heavy Firepower: The Caravan does not need to spend Vitality to complicate a group of extras.

Warmechs

Extras

Homeland: N/A

Qi Power: N/A

Unique Features: Humanoid automatons with weapons built right into their armoured appendages; attached to the Salvation with long hoses supplying them with steam.

Automatons built for one reason: protect the Salvation. Attached to the steam pipes with extendable hoses, these warmechs are able to unleash a scalding blast of steam at their opponents or batter them in close quarter combat with a variety of bladed arms, giant hammers, and more.

None Shall Harm Our Creator (d6/3/2)

Resources, page 38

Resource Slots: 2

Vitality: 3 each

Complications, page 21

Built To Last: Reinforced with steel plates to withstand a barrage of gunfire and various weaponry, Warmechs are only damaged by explosions. Warmechs can only be removed from the scene when they take at least 3 restriction complications to take them apart (i.e. remove the head, take out their legs, etc.).

Steam Powered: A warmech can exist up to 3 rounds without a supply of steam to maintain its power supply.

Rounds, page 37

THAT'S NOT A TRAIN

Trigger: N/A; this scenario can begin whenever the story is ready for the lead characters to "meet" the Salvation

Goal: Introduce the Salvation to the scene

Characters: The Salvation, the Caravan

When the moment is right for the Salvation to enter the scene, its arrival is heralded by the steam whistle slicing through the air from just beyond sight. Providing decent time for the "train" to come into view, it also becomes the clear it ain't stopping. If you want to join the parade, you've got to step on the gas!

It is recommended for the lead characters' unofficial goal in this scenario is to establish a clear objective on what they consider "riding the train." Are they already paid up with an existing vehicle following the Salvation or will their existing transportation attempt to keep pace with the behemoth? Establishing this objective will help the Director know when to begin the next scenario.

OUTCASTS' AMBUSH

Trigger: After the lead characters secure a ride with the Caravan

Goals: Survive the robbery; stay with the Caravan and the Salvation

Characters: The Salvation, the Caravan, Outcast Bandits (new)

After the lead characters have had a chance to properly meet and the Director is satisfied with character introductions, a massive raiding party of Outcasts attack the Salvation and attempt to rob as many in the Caravan as possible.

JUST
ANOTHER
DAY FOR
THE
SALVATION.



Outcast Bandits

Extras (Group of 20)

Homeland: The Wastes

Qi Power: Various (see the Random Qi Powers table)

Random Qi
Powers,
page 80

Resource Slots: 1

Vitality: 60

Show No Mercy! (d6/3/2)

Retreat!: Once the Outcasts are reduced to half their maximum Vitality, any not directly on board the Salvation or any other vehicles in the Caravan will retreat at the end of the current round. They will no longer count as a group and the Director will use them as individuals.

CRACK OPEN THE CAN

Trigger: At least one Outcast finds a way past its hull and gets inside the Salvation. Must be during the *Outcasts' Assault* scenario and before the Outcasts are defeated.

Goal: Discover the truth behind the Salvation

Characters: The Salvation, the Caravan, Outcast Bandits, Warmechs (new)

There is an undiscovered secret about the Salvation and how it is able to operate continuously without any signs of a crew behind the wheel. Only a select few knew in the early days and now it is about to be discovered when any Outcasts (and therefore the lead characters) find a way inside.

It has no crew. At the heart of the Salvation, surrounded by the engines and concealed within the steaming hot pipes and gears driving it forever through the Wastes, a human-sized brain rests secured behind thick panes of glass. It is the mind of the Salvation's inventor, Deckland Burr. His brain remains alive long after his body wasted away, and now controls the Salvation. Ever mindful of any threat, the brain has not been left unguarded and can unleash a set of steam-spewing warmechs (1 per lead character) to protect it and eliminate any threats.

THE WASTES AWAKEN!

Trigger: As the total amount of damage in this storyline grows...

Goal: Introduce the Salvation to the scene

Characters: The Salvation, the Caravan, Outcast Bandits

Once a total of 10 points of damage has been caused in this scene (regardless of how many characters), the aggressive energies of Chaos's remaining power become attracted to the battle and unleash fury down on the Salvation and everyone else along for the ride.

Every additional point above the baseline provided above unlocks a new threat to the scene. As the points continue to climb, these threats will morph into deadlier forces looking to bring this skirmish to an end.

11-20: A sandstorm blows over the area and engulfs the Salvation and the Caravan in a bronze darkness. As all characters would have to suffer Concealment penalties, it does not apply in this scene. However, characters cannot see beyond Close range.

21-30: Acidic rain falls down in the middle of the sandstorm. Anyone ending their description exposed to the rain loses 1 Vitality.

31-40: Whenever the Salvation uses at least one detail to continue racing through the Wastes, it sets off a trigger of giant spikes of solid rock piercing through the ground trying to knock the train over or bring it to a dead stop. The Salvation must use 1 detail to make a complication roll against a Defence of 3 or take 1d8 damage. This damage will also count towards the overall damage score in the scene.

41-55: The nearby rocky cliffs morph into giant elemental fists. Rather than attempt to destroy the Salvation, it creates sudden impenetrable columns. Whenever the Salvation uses at least one detail to continue racing through the Wastes, it sets off a trigger for the Salvation to make a complication roll against a Defence of 5 or else take 1d12 damage and a restriction complication.

56+: The Director creates something truly powerful. Go nuts, my friends and be sure to let us know what you created.

Calming The Wastes: All violence must reach a conclusion sooner or later, either because both sides reach a stalemate, or there are no more people to kill. But the Wastes do not like to be appeased with false sentiment and offerings of peace. For every round in which no characters take further violent actions against each other, reduce the total damage score by 3. As this lowers the overall score, adjust the Wastes' reaction accordingly. But as soon as violence steps up again within the same scene, increase the overall score by 10.

If your group plays out this scenario across multiple scenes, the Director may choose to adjust the overall score based on the amount of time passed from one scene to the next, if any.



BOOK FIVE

BLACK SCORPION

"Everyone freaks out about Chaos coming back and finishing the job, but no one remembers a thing about Black Scorpion. Most think she's a man, that's how much they remember. If she ever comes back to finish what she started, they'll wish Chaos had wiped us out."

Doz Ray, historian

Being a legend is one thing. Becoming a ghost story is another. That is what happened to Black Scorpion's history after the ambush, when her gang was decimated and betrayed by one of her most loyal lieutenants. The General of Monsoon had sent out a small army of his best soldiers to deal with her personally and they came back singing songs of her defeat, the body lost to the Wastes. The General was right to insist they bring back her head and proceeded to execute his general. Such was the threat all warlords felt about this rebel growing ever more popular with the people. The one they called Black Scorpion.

Yet after the stories of her defeat spread far and wide, her tale remained as a heroic underdog and soon she became no more than a hushed bedtime story whispered between siblings late in the night. What happened at that battle is known only to those who were there, and events suggest that a massive army launched back into the Wastes, only to never be heard from again. And so rumours have begun to stir again. Only this time, the legend is real.

And she's pissed.



THE TIMELINE

Each storyline provided in **High Plains Samurai: Legends** assumes you, the Director, have not played any other storylines before and therefore offers a suggested timeline for playing out this story within a 4-hour window. Below are suggestions for the best approach in playing out this scenario at the table; you may need to adjust to suit your own requirements.

How To Play (5 minutes): Review the basic premise of the game provided on pages 17 to 19 – descriptions, details, outcomes, and complications.

Character Review & Customization (10 minutes): Review the different aspects of the pre-generated lead characters provided with this scenario – potentials, resources, motivations, connections, hindrances and Vitality. Once the Writers have a rudimentary understanding of how to play, let them adapt their motivations, connections and hindrances should they choose to do so.

Formats (5 minutes): Review the formats provided on page 16. Use them to establish how everyone wants to present this particular storyline.

Establishing Your Version of Monsoon (5 minutes): While Monsoon is its own unique location in the One Land, there is no single interpretation. Present the basic premise of the storyline, Monsoon as described on page 25, and the supporting characters. Work together to establish features and common experiences in your version of this poisonous landscape. Create a rough map of scenes to reach the conclusion. This can be as minimal or as detailed as the group prefers.

Read the initiatives for Monsoon on page 25

Play (3 hours): Bring all the pieces together and see where the story takes you! Once it reaches a satisfying conclusion, bring it to an end and leave the Writers wanting more. The following scenarios were designed with the following timeline in mind.

- **A Walk In The Jungle** (30 minutes)
- **The Serpent Guard** (30 minutes)
- **Catar Attack** (30 minutes)
- **Battle To The Top** (1 hour)
- **She Takes What She Wants** (30 minutes)

Epilogue (15 minutes): What happens as a result of these events? What befalls the survivors and who stands to gain from these outcomes? Discuss the experience and share critiques, both positive and negative, to improve the next story.

THE PLOT

The life of the bandit leader and rebel hero, **Black Scorpion**, is one that will come to light in the months ahead. For now, here is what you must know to proceed with this storyline. Black Scorpion was the leader of the Desert Sun Gang who frequented the badlands between the edges of the Wastes and the various Five Cities. Raiders first, under Black Scorpion's command they quickly began to make organized strikes against warlord properties, shipments, and other sources of wealth. When the warlords decided to work together and send out a massive force to wipe out the entire gang, she was left for dead.

That was many years ago. Few know how she came to survive those harsh conditions, but there is no doubt as to why she has come back. Revenge.



KEY INITIATIVES

This storyline takes place at **the Serpent Guard watchtower** positioned on the southeastern border of **Monsoon**, deep in the poisonous jungle. As many travellers are welcome to the border communities and encampments to conduct trade and share information, watchtowers like these are a welcome shelter from the deadly jungle. Hired by a travelling merchant named **Jonas**, the lead characters come to the Serpent Guard and stay the night as Jonas negotiates passage to the central hub of the City. During the night, the watchtower is attacked by a swarm of catar ninjas, only to discover this near crippling strike was a diversion for a greater danger... to Jonas. Black Scorpion has returned after a long unexplained absence and is hunting the merchant. **She will kill anyone in the way of the information she seeks.** The lead characters quickly become caught in the middle of this tense situation and must help uncover the connection between this deadly assassin and the merchant before they find themselves staring at the tip of Black Scorpion's blade.

A Larger Part To Play: Black Scorpion is a key character in the future of the **High Plains Samurai Roleplaying Game** and the One Land. In other words, she is meant to survive this storyline and become a recurring character in future stories. Even if this storyline is a one-shot for your Writers, the Director is encouraged to keep her alive at the end of the story. Helping this is the Rule of Initiatives and the opening shot provided with this storyline. Because the read aloud text indicates that she lives on to fight another day, it is now one of the Director's initiatives and cannot be changed. Should you wish to leave her death an option in your storyline, simply remove that section from the text.

KEY INITIATIVES

The Rule of Initiatives, page 20

Below are the key initiatives for this story. They are a combination of this storyline's history and points of fact that remain one of the Director's initiatives when this storyline begins. If any Writer attempts to change any of these initiatives, the Director can request a rewrite.

This storyline takes place at the Serpent Guard watchtower, a few days walk from Monsoon. It is commanded by Lord Shinzei and maintains a healthy regiment of soldiers, militia, and samurai warriors. The material provided on Monsoon on page 25 are also considered the Director's initiatives.

The lead characters have been hired by the merchant, Jonas, to escort him safely to Monsoon where he plans to conduct business.

Black Scorpion comes out of hiding after she has been believed dead for many years and attacks the Serpent Guard in search of Jonas. The merchant has information on the fall of Heaven's Peak monastary in the Wastes.

Black Scorpion's qi power allows her to insert visions of pure terror in her opponents, typically revealing the terrifying ways she can kill them. These visions portray her as an unstoppable killing force capable of numerous qi powers, but these are all psychic implants caused by her true qi power. Anyone killed in these visions can be killed in reality as they suffer a heart attack or other fatal complication. Killing Black Scorpion in the visions simply returns her surviving opponents to reality; any damage caused to Black Scorpion while she utilizes her qi power does not transfer.



THE SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

Here are the supporting characters of **Black Scorpion** you will portray as the Director.

Black Scorpion

Supporting Character

Homeland: The Wastes

Qi Power: Terror

Unique Features: Half of this tall woman's face is covered by a white mask with a small black scorpion on the side of the temple; she wields a poisonous samurai sword believed to have once been used to slay a former warlord of Monsoon.

Once upon a bygone time, she was the leader of the Desert Sun Gang. A bandit captain turned legendary hero, she was believed to have been killed by a legion of Monsoon soldiers at an ambush deep in the Wastes. Something happened to Black Scorpion after all those years lost, believed to be a ghost. Whatever it was, it left a scar deeper than that ambush. Whatever it was, her first step towards the path of vengeance is at this watchtower outside of Monsoon.

Legendary Fighter (d10+1/7/5)

A Bandit To Be Feared (d8/3/2)

Seeking Information (Motivation): For this storyline, Black Scorpion seeks information relating to the attack that nearly killed her. Whenever she is able to finish a scene by obtaining information, she gains 1 Vitality for each lead character.

Unquenchable Rage (Hindrance): Seeing Monsoon soldiers brings back memories of the attack and this makes Black Scorpion want to kill every one of them on sight. She will always default to her A Bandit To Be Feared potential against a Monsoon soldier.

Resource Slots: Scorpion's Blade (+1 steps or +2 damage; see below); + 2 more

Vitality: 30

Motivations & Hindrances, page 32

Resources, page 38

Vitality, page 34

Challenges, page 39

Bonus Challenges: Black Scorpion has a number of bonus challenges she can use. These bonus challenges work exactly as regular challenges but can also be used for additional perks provided here. She starts the story with 1 bonus challenge per lead character.

Damage Trigger: Whenever Black Scorpion takes damage, she can immediately use a free detail with a d8 for any complication rolls.

Lasting Terror: By using 1 bonus challenge, Black Scorpion can inflict a qi-based complication on a character that lasts until the end of the current scene. Any character afflicted with this complication then suffers a -1 step penalty to all complication rolls against Black Scorpion whenever they meet again, regardless of the time between scenes. This step penalty lasts for the entire scene before it finally expires.

Scorpion's Blade: This katana is a legendary weapon, a rare artefact given life during a moment of great tragedy. It has bonded with Black Scorpion and will only provide this perk to her. Anyone who takes a damage complication from this sword will also take a penalty complication to one of its victim's potentials as its toxins weaken opponents. Only by applying a full description or using a qi power can this complication be removed.

Poisonous Mist: By using 1 bonus challenge, the Scorpion's Blade can be used to create a poisonous mist that also provides Black Scorpion with the light concealment step modifier. This mist lasts for a number of descriptions equal to the number of lead characters currently involved in the scene and can affect everyone within 30 feet.

Step Modifiers, page 30

Damage, page 22

Step Modifiers, page 30



SUPPORTING CHARACTERS (JONAS, LORD SHINZEI)

Jonas

Supporting Character

Homeland: Serenity Falls

Qi Power: Untapped

Unique Features: Jonas looks and sounds like a prospector who struck it rich.

Serenity Falls,
page 24

If anyone knew how merchants like Jonas survived all the dangers that come with traversing from one end of the world to another, they would not be able to charge these prices. Dealing almost exclusively with the wealthy families and officials of the Five Cities (including some warlords), Jonas has been to every end of the One Land, and something he knows has placed his neck under Black Scorpion's blade.

A Way With People (d8/5/3)

Contacts From All Over the One Land (d6/3/2)

Resources,
page 38

Resource Slots: 2

Vitality,
page 34

Vitality: 7

Resource Slots,
page 38

Something For Everyone: Stashed within his expansive travelling inventory, Jonas can produce one item per lead character that can then be used to substitute an existing resource slot.

Lord Shinzei

Supporting Character

Homeland: Monsoon

Qi Power: Untapped

Unique Features: Always seen in polished armour with his samurai sword, Naga, at his side, Lord Shinzei strikes an imposing figure and speaks like a drill sergeant.

Monsoon,
page 25

Guarding the border to Monsoon is a duty Lord Shinzei does not take lightly. While his watchtower is charged with offering trade and refuge to numerous outsiders from the other Five Cities, this long serving officer in the General's samurai order believes only those loyal to the General are suited to pass beyond his tower.

In Service To My General (d8/5/3)

Fierce Combatant (d6/3/2)

Resources,
page 38

Resource Slots: Naga (+1 steps or +2 damage bonus); + 1 more

Vitality,
page 34

Vitality: 15

Flat Bonus,
page 30

Trained To Perfection: To become masters, many soldiers of Monsoon focus on one specialty or weapon above all others. Choose a single resource, including a skill or weapon. Whenever that resource is assigned to a resource slot and applied to a description, your character gains a +1 flat bonus to any complication rolls.



Monsoon Soldiers

Extras

Homeland: Monsoon

Qi Power: Untapped

Everyone in Monsoon is conscripted into military service for at least five years. Those who wish to remain in the General's army train to become samurai warriors, the elite members of his personal legion. These soldiers stationed at the watchtower have yet to reach that point and are relatively new recruits to Monsoon's forces.

Loyal Soldiers (d6/3/2)

Resource Slots: 1

Vitality: 3

Teamwork: Monsoon Soldiers also grant a +2 damage bonus when they apply the Aid Another Character step modifier.

Monsoon,
page 25

Resources,
page 38

Vitality,
page 34

Step
Modifiers,
page 30

VOICEOVER

At the very beginning, read this text aloud to the Writers as a voiceover or introductory text incorporated with your opening shot. You may paraphrase so that the text works with other formats, initiatives, or personal touches your group has already established for this story.

In all of the One Land, perhaps the one true beacon of light and hope in all this darkness, is Monsoon. Located deep in the western jungles, there is an abundance of life rare within the aftermath of Chaos' wrath. Under the command of General Hoth Kap Sing and served by his army of dedicated soldiers and devout samurai warriors, the city is guarded by a series of watchtowers. Here, trade is permitted for those able to survive the treacherous journey through the poisonous jungle that hides the City from the rest of the world.

The moon shines its spotlight on one such watchtower, the Serpent Guard, and a legendary figure once believed dead; a terror many hoped had died with the hushed tales told in the poorest sections of the Five Cities. What happens here will be only the beginning of a long and bloody quest for revenge that will shake the world to its very core.

Tonight, Black Scorpion returns.

The key to this text is that it establishes Black Scorpion's survival in this storyline. In other words, once this text has been read out loud and incorporated into the story, it provides an option for Directors to ensure her survival as one of the storyline's initiatives.



ESTABLISHING A HISTORY

Unlike the other two storylines provided in **High Plains Samurai: Legends**, this one utilizes supporting characters as central figures in an ongoing event. There is a history between these characters and as these characters will likely be portrayed by the Director, there are some key questions to consider during play.

As a typical waypoint on his way to Monsoon, Jonas has visited and traded at the Serpent Guard many times. Is he well regarded or viewed with suspicion? Is there a specific reason for this reaction?

Upon hearing of Jonas' arrival, will Lord Shinzei attempt to avoid speaking with the highly disliked trader or will they shake hands as old friends?

One of Jonas' skills is his ability to pick up rumours capable of giving him a boost in negotiations and favours. How has he done this in the past? Was it through charm, bribes, or blackmail?

A WALK IN THE JUNGLE

Trigger: At the beginning of the storyline

Goal: Introduce the lead characters, Jonas, and Black Scorpion; discover the dangers of Monsoon (optional)

Characters: Black Scorpion, Jonas, Monsoon soldiers

This launching point for your storyline introduces the lead characters and their connection to Jonas. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate an impression of this gruff and rather blunt businessman that could cast a shadow of bias in a future scenario. Should the Writers also seek to encounter a fight scene along the way, it would be a good way to introduce qi powers, weapons, fighting styles, and more about these characters.

As the Writers are preparing to wrap up the scenario, they encounter a pair of Monsoon soldiers with swords pointed at a lone woman holding a severed head in one hand and a black katana in the other. The headless corpse of another Monsoon soldier lies at her feet. This is Black Scorpion, but this is not known to any other characters at this time. (For instance, she is not wearing her trademark white mask.) She lowers her sword and allows herself to be arrested for the murder of the soldier with the lead characters charged as witnesses to the crime. All of them are escorted to the Serpents Guard watchtower with Black Scorpion shackled in irons.

FEEL THE TENSION

While Black Scorpion will not utter a word to explain why she beheaded the soldier or say anything else, there is a piece of vital foreshadowing she can offer this scenario. Her eyes gaze at Jonas when she first catches sight of him, and the merchant, who does not recognize the woman, feels as if someone walked over his grave.



THE SERPENT GUARD

Trigger: Immediately after *A Walk In The Jungle*

Goal: Arrive at the watchtower & meet Lord Shinzei; the lead characters are offered a place to sleep for the night; introducing Black Scorpion

Characters: Black Scorpion, Lord Shinzei, Monsoon Soldiers, assorted extras

The lead characters arrive at the Serpent Guard watchtower with their escorts and the prisoner in tow. The soldiers call for the sergeant-at-arms to process the prisoner and take statements from the lead characters and Jonas. Shortly after this process begins, Lord Shinzei enters after hearing of the soldier's murder. As soon as he gets a good look at the woman in shackles, he instantly recognizes her and is shocked to discover she is still alive. He orders the watchtower to be locked down and guards posted at double watches. When asked, the commanding officer of the watchtower speaks her name with a cracked voice.

"That... is Black Scorpion."

He orders the prisoner be taken to his office for interrogation. Perhaps he gives the lead characters a hard time on why they "happened to arrive at the same time as this criminal" and has them brought in for interrogation as well. This would allow the lead characters to be in close proximity to Black Scorpion when she strikes in the **Catar Attack** scenario to follow.

When Jonas hears Black Scorpion's name, he becomes absolutely terrified and begs Lord Shinzei to leave the watchtower. His demands are denied. He then insists that he needs protection from Black Scorpion (though he may not explain why during this scenario) and even offers a bribe to Lord Shinzei. While this devout samurai commander will not accept any bribes, he offers to locate Jonas in his personal chambers at the top of the watchtower.

Jonas is panicking in disbelief. He rants on and on about how she is supposed to be dead and the General gave his word. When confronted, Jonas eventually reveals the following account.

During his many trips to the outlying mining towns and outposts at the edge of the Wastes, Jonas discovered an ancient monastery known as Heaven's Peak

There he met a young woman known as Sun Su Chi, who later turned out to be Black Scorpion in hiding

Eager to cash in on the reward, Jonas contacted the General and shared this information

In return, Monsoon soldiers marched to Heaven's Peak and destroyed the monastery, killing everyone inside.

With this information, it can now become clear that Black Scorpion is looking for revenge for the destruction of the monastery.

Use this scenario to explore the watchtower, interact with its people, and establish the setting and possible resources for future scenarios. Use this scenario to plot out your group's version of the watchtower and locate the following areas: barracks, officer's quarters, guest rooms, stables, a library, and the tower itself.

WHO ARE THE CATAR?

Native to the jungles of Monsoon for generations, the catar are a species of feline-humanoid hybrids born with a special resistance to the unlimited toxins dripping from every plant and animal in these parts. Long have they fought with Monsoon, and many skirmishes have led to all-out war on numerous occasions. Never victorious and yet never truly defeated, the catar continue to remain a thorn in the General's best laid plans to raise Monsoon from the ashes of Chaos' Wrath.

CATAR ATTACK

Trigger: Anytime during the first night

Goal: Survive an ambush by catar ninja

Characters: Lord Shinzei, Jonas, Catar Ninja, Monsoon Soldiers

Infiltrating this fortified watchtower while avoiding detection from highly trained samurai warriors and some of Monsoon's finest soldiers is not an easy task. Which is why Black Scorpion will create a very large diversion with the aid of a large number of half-feline ninja warriors known as the catar. In the middle of the night, as the majority of the watchtower's residents are asleep, the catar leap into action and try to take out as many of Monsoon's finest as possible.

Do not be afraid to openly discuss this attack with the Writers when determining the scene's goals. The purpose of this scenario is to allow Black Scorpion opportunity to be left alone with only a couple of guards and Lord Shinzei in the interrogation room. As the scenario progresses, be sure to establish Jonas' location at the top of the watchtower.



FEW HAVE EVER SEEN A CATAR AT NIGHT AND LIVED TO TELL THE TALE.

During the scenario, choose a single lead character who has been separated from the others or any one at random. For a brief moment amidst the anarchy of battle, they spot a lone figure moving from one rooftop to another or slipping across the street before they slip through one of the tower's windows. This figure is Black Scorpion, but cannot be identified by anything other than one or two key physical features (i.e. long black hair, half of a white mask on her face). Spend 1 challenge to allow Black Scorpion to disappear and remain impossible to follow, if needed.

When the catar have been defeated, or once they have provided enough of a distraction (meaning their

numbers have been cut down to at least half and they retreat back into the jungle), soldiers are sent to check on Lord Shinzei and his prisoner. Inside the interrogation room, the samurai is found dead (a particularly gruesome death, if the rating permits it) along with the other soldiers. Black Scorpion is missing.

If the lead character who witnessed Black Scorpion head inside the watchtower has not pieced these events together, a soldier screams as he stands on a narrow ledge towards the top of the tower. Rather than risk going back inside, he jumps to his death.

SCENARIO: BATTLE TO THE TOP



Catar Ninja (x20)

Extras

Homeland: Monsoon

Qi Power: Various (see the Random Qi Powers table)

A True Ninja Warrior (d6/3/2)

Random
Qi Powers,
page 80

Resource Slots: A ninjato sword (+2 damage bonus) or stealth (+1 steps)

Vitality: 3 each

Immune to Poison: All catar are immune to any poison-based complications, including damage.

BATTLE TO THE TOP

Trigger: Immediately after the Catar Attack scenario

Goal: Reach the top of the watchtower and prepare to face Black Scorpion

Characters: Crazed Monsoon Soldiers

As the lead characters enter the tower, evidence of Black Scorpion's arrival are quickly discovered. Various Monsoon Soldiers stationed inside and away from the battle are found dead from sword cuts; one of them appears to have died from a heart attack with his hair turned white. Another Monsoon Soldier is found quivering in a corner with his pants soaked in his own urine rambling on about a demon woman who ate his partner whole.

During this scenario, Black Scorpion is systematically working her way through the inner sanctum of the Serpent Guard in search of Jonas, applying her terrifying qi power to enhance her presence within the story. Think of this scenario as a horror film where Black Scorpion is the silent but deadly killer taking out her victims one by one until there is only a small group remaining who will stand and fight. The lead characters will be that final group.

First, the lead characters must make their way to the top of the watchtower facing a number of crazed, delusional Monsoon soldiers affected by Black Scorpion's illusions. (See Applying Black Scorpion's Qi Power on page 72.) There are several steps to setting up and running this scenario; as always, consult with the Writers as often as possible or desired.

1. Determine the total number of floors for the watchtower. Once they enter the first floor, each fight/obstacle/challenge will attempt to remove them from the tower or kill them outright. Anyone who is thrown or falls from any floor higher than the first can take 2 damage per floor from a complication roll.
2. Each floor will feature a group of Crazed Monsoon Soldiers that increases with each floor based on a total number of Vitality. The first floor starts with a total of 9 Vitality for the group and increases by +3 each floor until they are one floor below the top. The top floor is where Black Scorpion waits for them.
3. Set a timer. This scenario is intended to last one hour. By the end of that hour, Black Scorpion will have reached her target (Jonas) and have killed him, ending the storyline.

To increase the tension as the lead characters ascend the tower, do not end the scene until they are able to access the top floor and confront Black Scorpion face-to-face. This means their Vitality will diminish as the fighting continues and it may force them to think of options other than direct confrontation. That is the purpose of this scenario – the lower their Vitality when they confront the villain, the scarier it will be for the Writers.



Crazed Monsoon Soldiers

Extras (Group)

Homeland: Monsoon

Qi Power: Untapped

Frenzy (d6/3/2)

Resource Slots: Assorted melee weapons (+1 steps)

Vitality: Varies by floor

SHE TAKES WHAT SHE WANTS

Trigger: Just before sunrise on the first night

Goal: Keep Black Scorpion from achieving her goal

Characters: Black Scorpion, Jonas

This scenario is a final showdown with Black Scorpion, assuming she has not already killed Jonas. Let the Writers establish the environment, conditions, and advantages to this scenario as they see fit. From the moment the scene begins, the lead characters have been targeted by her qi power and what they describe takes places in their minds as she fills them with figments of a false battle and non-reality. Any damage or Vitality loss she suffers does not occur to her physical body and instead breaks the illusion.

One of three possibilities will occur.

Black Scorpion Achieves Her Objective: Whatever it is that she wants from Jonas, her mission is accomplished. Only if the surviving lead characters continue to stand in her way will she face them down (in reality). Otherwise, she makes a hasty retreat and lives to continue on with her plans for revenge. The deed has been done and it will not take long for word of her return to reach the warlords' ears... and the people they rule.

Black Scorpion Does Not Achieve Her Objective and Lives: Despite her incredible skill and power, the lead characters have persevered and made it abundantly clear she is outmatched... for now. This includes the lead characters disbelieving her illusions and confronting her in reality. With a greater mission in mind, Black Scorpion escapes into the surrounding jungle and leaves more questions than answers.

Black Scorpion Does Not Achieve Her Objective and Dies: Same as above, but this could become a problem if you plan to write and/or direct more stories in the One Land. Consult the Keeping Her Alive section on page 73 for advice.

Applying Black Scorpion's Qi Power

Rather than directly telling the lead characters they are suddenly terrified and want to run in fear, Black Scorpion's qi power is meant to invoke visceral reactions of fear and intimidation by creating visions of trauma and bloodshed that are presented to the Writers. Her power allows her to create mental images detailing her absolute dominance and the bloody consequences inflicted on those who interfere with her plans. Think of her use of this qi power as more of a psychic attack. This can be done using the following approaches to her descriptions and outcomes with this qi power.

SCENARIO: SHE TAKES WHAT SHE WANTS

Replicate numerous qi powers. If the Writers believe she has numerous qi powers at her command, she will become that much more intimidating.

She appears invincible. Her terror power can be used to make it look as if she does not suffer physical damage.

Alter her physical appearance and assume multiple forms. Appearing to have the ability to turn into terrifying monsters, demons, and other nightmarish forms can aid in applying her terror power.

Once the lead characters discover the true nature of her qi power, they can attempt a complication roll to break free of it. Otherwise, it automatically takes effect.

Whenever the lead characters are affected by her qi power, Black Scorpion wears half-a-mask over the left side of her face with a scorpion etched along the side. Once they have broken free of her power by thwarting her mission to kill Jonas or she succeeds, the mask is gone.

Keeping Her Alive

It is important to remember there is already an initiative in play that Black Scorpion survives. She has a role to play in the future of the **High Plains Samurai Roleplaying Game**. Should things get out of hand and the Director chooses to find a way to work with a possibly broken initiative (and not resort to rewrites), reflect on cheats in popular fiction that could provide the lead characters with the satisfaction of defeating a powerful enemy and keep her alive to tell another tale. For example, as the lead characters walk away and leave Black Scorpion's body on the jagged rocks at the bottom of the cliff, her fingers suddenly twitch as the story comes to a close.

You can also use the following trigger set to go off when Black Scorpion is possibly about to be fatally removed from the story. When she is reduced to less than 5 Vitality, tell the Writer who brought her there to describe how she exits the story (aka dies). At the start of the next round, she gets back up and gains +10 Vitality.

To learn more about Black Scorpion's origins and the events leading up to her rumoured death in the Wastes, go to **HighPlainsSamurai.com** and visit the **Ballad of a High Plains Samurai** short fiction by Fraser Ronald.



BEWARE
THE FURY
OF BLACK
SCORPION!



APPENDIX:
**THE FINISHING
TOUCHES**

HIGH PLAINS SAVANNA

CHARACTER NOTES



DESCRIPTION	POTENTIALS	RESOURCES	MOTIVATIONS/CONNECTIONS	Hindrances	VITALITY
<p>No One Gets In My Way</p> <p>d8+1 / 5 / 3</p> <p>Dice Defence Details</p>	<p>Finish the Job: Mauser strives to complete his contract, no matter the cost.</p>	<p>Obsessive</p>	<p>Darius</p> <p>You Scratch My Back: Mauser and Darius have worked together for years. Mauser uses his influence to keep Darius from getting locked up or taken by other bounty hunters.</p>	<p>Hindrance</p>	<p>Opposite sides of the law</p>
<p>Justice For All</p> <p>d6 / 3 / 2</p> <p>Dice Defence Details</p>	<p>Opposite sides of the law</p>	<p>Opposite sides of the law</p>	<p>Opposite sides of the law</p>	<p>Opposite sides of the law</p>	<p>Opposite sides of the law</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>1 / 1</p>	<p>1 / 1</p>	<p>1 / 1</p>	<p>1 / 1</p>	<p>1 / 1</p>

TABLE 3: POTENTIALS

POTENTIAL	DEFENCE	DETAILS
d4 or less	1	1
d6	3	2
d8	5	3
d10	7	4
d12 or higher	9	5

סילב אופטיק בעמ"ה

Table 2: Complication		VS. CHALLENGE
RESULT	VS. OPPONENT	VS. CHALLENGE
Effective with an Even Number	The target gains a complication Chosen by the roller.	Avoid the challenge and gain +1 Vitality.
Effective with an Odd Number	The target gains a complication of its choice.	Avoid the challenge.
Ineffective with an Even Number	The roller gains a complication chosen by the roller.	The roller can choose to receive a complication and regain the use of a previously applied perk. Otherwise, nothing happens.
Ineffective with an Odd Number	The roller gains a complication chosen by the target.	The roller gains a complication chosen by the Director.

High Plains Samurai is copyright © 2017 by Broken Ruler Games. Permission is granted by Broken Ruler Games to print or copy for personal use only. Downloads available at HighPlainsSamurai.com

HIGH PLAINS SAMURAI

CHARACTER NOTES



DESCRIPTION	POTENTIALS	RESOURCES	MOTIVATIONS/CONNECTIONS	HINDRANCE	VITALITY
<p>You Wouldn't Like Me When I'm Angry</p> <p>d8 / 5 / 3</p> <p>Dice Defence Details</p>	<p>Conquer My Fears: Choose a fear at the beginning of the storyline. Xai pushes herself to overcome that fear and prove herself a worthy warrior.</p> <p>Reckless</p>	<p>Damage</p> <p>Step</p>	<p>Hindrance</p>	<p>12</p>	
<p>There Must Be Balance</p> <p>d6 / 3 / 2</p> <p>Dice Defence Details</p>					<p>/ /</p>

TABLE 2: COMPLICATION ROLLS		VS. OPPONENT	VS. CHALLENGE
RESULT			
Effective	The target gains a complication chosen by the roller.	Avoid the challenge and gain +1 Vitality.	Avoid the challenge.
Effective with an Odd Number	The target gains a complication of its choice.	The roller gains a complication chosen by the roller.	The roller gains a complication chosen by the target.
Ineffective	The roller can choose to receive a complication and regain the use of a previously applied power . Otherwise, nothing happens.	The roller gains a complication chosen by the roller.	The roller gains a complication chosen by the Director.
Ineffective with an Odd Number	The roller gains a complication chosen by the target.		

TABLE 3: POTENTIALS

<p>Xai</p>	<p>NAME Khar'tep</p>	<p>HOMELAND PEAKS</p>	<p>Ignore the Pain Your character can ignore a single complication until the end of the current round. This can only be done once per scene.</p>	<p>Create Ice: Can create ice from any part of her body and shape it to suit her needs..</p>
------------	--------------------------	---------------------------	---	---

HIGH PLAINS SAW RYU

CHARACTER NOTES



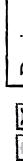
DESCRIPTION

POTENTIALS

RESOURCES

MOTIVATIONS/CONNECTIONS

(Connections)



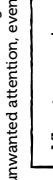
Darius

You Scratch My Back: Mauser and Darius have worked together for years. Mauser uses his influence to keep Darius from getting locked up or taken by other bounty hunters.

Opposite sides of the law

Hindrance

Keep Off Radar: Darius' past is starting to catch up to him and he needs to keep a low profile. This means not drawing any suspicion or unwanted attention, even on the job.



Kleptomaniac

10

VITALITY

TABLE 3: POTENTIALS

POTENTIAL	DEFENCE	DETAILS
d4 or less	1	1
d6	3	2
d8	5	3
d10	7	4
d12 or higher	9	5

NAME

Darius
Yung Zhi

HOMELAND

Grace of a Cat

Your character can automatically shift a complication roll without spending Vitality so long as their description takes place at dangerous heights. You cannot cause damage using this perk.

Perks

Invisibility: Can become invisible at will.

QI POWER

TABLE 2: COMPLICATION ROLLS

RESULT	VS. OPPONENT	VS. CHALLENGE
Effective with an Even Number	The target gains a complication chosen by the roller.	Avoid the challenge and gain +1 Vitality.
Effective with an Odd Number	The target gains a complication on its choice.	Avoid the challenge.
Ineffective	The roller gains a complication chosen by the roller. If the roller previously applied perk, nothing happens.	The roller can choose to receive a complication or gain the use of a previously applied perk. Otherwise, nothing happens.
Ineffective with an Odd Number	The roller gains a complication chosen by the target.	The roller gains a complication chosen by the Director.

THE DIRECTOR'S SCENE NOTES

CHALLENGES & CHARTS

EVERYTHING A DIRECTOR NEEDS TO CHALLENGE THE WRITERS & STAY IN TUNE WITH THE GAME'S RULES.



TABLE 1: REQUIRED DETAILS

	DETAILS
Equipping a prop	1
Gain a cover/concealment modifier	1
Maintaining an advantage, complication, or trigger	1 per detail used to activate

TABLE 3: POTENTIALS

POTENTIAL	DEFENCE	DETAILS
d4 or less	1	1
d6	3	2
d8	5	3
d10	7	4
d12 or higher	9	5

TABLE 2: COMPLICATION ROLLS

RESULT	VS. OPPONENT	VS. CHALLENGE
Effective with an Even Number	The target gains a complication chosen by the roller.	Avoid the challenge and gain +1 Vitality.
Effective with an Odd Number	The target gains a complication of its choice.	Avoid the challenge.
Ineffective with an Even Number	The roller gains a complication chosen by the roller. The roller can choose to receive a complication and regain the use of a previously applied perk. Otherwise, nothing happens.	
Ineffective with an Odd Number	The roller gains a complication chosen by the target.	The roller gains a complication chosen by the Director.

TABLE 4: COMMON STEP MODIFIERS

MODIFIER	STEP MODIFIER	SPECIAL NOTES
Aid Another Character *	+1 steps	Requires a full description from the aiding character
Attacking Multiple Targets	-1 steps for every additional target beyond the 1st	Does not apply to extras if they act as a group but does apply when targeting more than one group
Cover/Concealment	+1 steps for light concealment/partial cover, +2 steps for heavy concealment/full cover	A character must use a detail to access this step modifier

GAINING CHALLENGES

At the start of every new story, Directors begin with 1 challenge per Writer.

A Writer rolls an absolute.

All lead characters achieve a scene's goal.

APPLYING CHALLENGES

Place a complication on a character. Directors cannot inflict damage on a character using a challenge and must use 2 challenges to inflict a penalty.

Increase the duration of a complication.

For 1 challenge, the complication remains until the end of the current scene.

For 2 challenges, the complication remains until the end of the story.

Force a challenged-based complication roll.

With 1 challenge, the roll is attempted against a Tricky Defence of 5.

With 2 challenges, the roll is attempted against a Damn Hard Defence of 7.

Alter a set piece to create an additional danger requiring a full description to counter or bypass.

Choose a supporting character to start a scene after the opening shot.

Use a character's hindrance to create a complication. Spend 1 challenge for restriction or inception complications and 2 challenges for penalty complications.

CHALLENGES AVAILABLE

--

HINDRANCES

--



THE DIRECTOR'S SCENE NOTES

DIRECTOR'S CHARACTERS

A GALLERY OF SUPPORTING CHARACTERS AND EXTRAS
WHO WILL FACE OFF AGAINST YOUR HEROES.

NAME:

POTENTIALS	SUPPORTING / EXTRA
/ /	HOMELAND
/ /	PERK
/ /	
RESOURCES	QI POWER
/	
/	
SPECIAL FEATURES/NOTES	STAMINA

NAME:

POTENTIALS	SUPPORTING / EXTRA
/ /	HOMELAND
/ /	PERK
/ /	
RESOURCES	QI POWER
/	
/	
SPECIAL FEATURES/NOTES	STAMINA

NAME:

POTENTIALS	SUPPORTING / EXTRA
/ /	HOMELAND
/ /	PERK
/ /	
RESOURCES	QI POWER
/	
/	
SPECIAL FEATURES/NOTES	STAMINA

NAME:

POTENTIALS	SUPPORTING / EXTRA
/ /	HOMELAND
/ /	PERK
/ /	
RESOURCES	QI POWER
/	
/	
SPECIAL FEATURES/NOTES	STAMINA

NAME:

POTENTIALS	SUPPORTING / EXTRA
/ /	HOMELAND
/ /	PERK
/ /	
RESOURCES	QI POWER
/	
/	
SPECIAL FEATURES/NOTES	STAMINA

NAME:

POTENTIALS	SUPPORTING / EXTRA
/ /	HOMELAND
/ /	PERK
/ /	
RESOURCES	QI POWER
/	
/	
SPECIAL FEATURES/NOTES	STAMINA

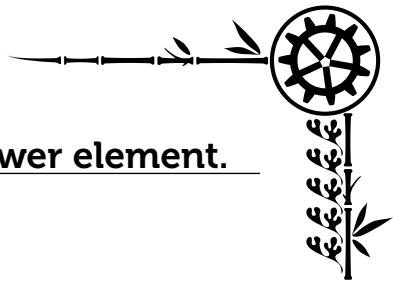
NAME:

POTENTIALS	SUPPORTING / EXTRA
/ /	HOMELAND
/ /	PERK
/ /	
RESOURCES	QI POWER
/	
/	
SPECIAL FEATURES/NOTES	STAMINA

NAME:

POTENTIALS	SUPPORTING / EXTRA
/ /	HOMELAND
/ /	PERK
/ /	
RESOURCES	QI POWER
/	
/	
SPECIAL FEATURES/NOTES	STAMINA

RANDOM QI POWERS



First step, roll a d8 to choose a dominant power element.

d8	Power Element
1	Fire
2	Psychic
3	Electricity
4	Strength

d8	Power Element
5	Awareness
6	Shadow
7	Agility
8	Motion

Next, roll a d6 on your power element's random table. This is your random qi power.

d6	Fire Qi Power
1	Manipulate/control existing flames
2	Create fire
3	Burning touch
4	Exploding touch
5	Create mist
6	Become consumed in flames

d6	Psychic Qi Power
1	Read minds
2	Compel others
3	Remote viewing
4	Invisibility
5	Alter personal appearance
6	Create illusions

d6	Electricity Qi Power
1	Shocking touch
2	Create electrostatic field
3	Control metals
4	Create lightning
5	Control winds
6	Disintegrating touch

d6	Strength Qi Power
1	Superhuman strength
2	Unbreakable
3	Jump great heights/ distances
4	Iron fists
5	Create stone
6	Create a concussive wave

d6	Awareness Qi Power
1	Witness auras
2	Telepathy
3	Incredible hearing
4	Tremorsense
5	See visions of the future
6	Cure illnesses/wounds

d6	Shadow Qi Power
1	Summon/create a weapon
2	Disappear into shadows
3	Teleport between shadows
4	Turn into mist/shadow
5	Perfectly silent
6	Pass through objects

d6	Agility Qi Power
1	Superhuman agility
2	Spider climbing
3	Slippery/cannot be grappled
4	Rapid fire attacks
5	Change size (shrink/grow)
6	Superhuman squeezing

d6	Motion Qi Power
1	Teleportation
2	Super speed
3	Levitate
4	Freeze people/slow objects
5	Create sound waves
6	Create vibrations/ earthquakes



