

# DIABLO PASS

*by Chaos Steve Todd*

## THE MISSION

The posse begins the adventure outside a Hellstromme Industries field office in southern Utah. The scientist in charge, Dr. Winters, has hired the posse to look into the disappearance of a recent expedition into the Utah Badlands. The expedition left a week ago to test a new experimental apparatus. The expedition has disappeared. Dr. Winters would like the posse to find out what happened to the expedition and, more importantly, return the apparatus to the Hellstromme Industries' field office. He describes the apparatus as being about three feet tall and vaguely egg shaped. It weighs about 60 pounds and may be giving off a slight glow or emitting odd noises. Dr. Winters will say nothing more about the apparatus or its function. For this he will pay the posse \$50 each, plus an additional \$100 bonus each if they return with the apparatus intact. As an additional incentive, and to help insure the successes of the posse, Dr. Winters will give each posse member a Greased Lightning Pill.

## DIABLO PASS

On the afternoon of the second day out, the posse comes to a pass between two large rocky hills. Each posse member who makes a Notice roll will hear strange noises from up ahead inside the pass. The sounds seem out of place in this desolate area: clanking and thuds...maybe even voices. Now

the posse must decide how to approach the pass.

## EXPEDITION FOUND

Once inside the pass, the posse can see two steam wagons. One is completely smashed as if a massive rock fell on it. The other one is noticeably damaged as well, but could be fixed with a Repair roll and a couple hours work. Five men are rifling through the wagons, throwing things here and there, obviously looking for something. One whoops as he finds some coins in the dirt. A sixth man with a weathered face and a shock of white hair sits on his horse watching them.

## SEARCHING

On a successful Common Knowledge roll, any player connected to the law (a lawman, ranger, bounty hunter, etc) will recognize the man on the horse as Whitey Stump. Any other posse member will need a raise to recognize Whitey. Whitey is wanted in Utah for murder and robbery. There's a \$400 reward for his capture. The reward drops to \$100 if brought in dead. The posse is going to have to deal with these outlaws before continuing their investigation. The steam wagons have Hellstromme Industries painted on them. They obviously belonged to the ill-fated expedition the posse is in search of. It's strange that the expedition would stop on this particularly rough piece

of the pass—the ground here is very uneven, almost like it was churned up by something. Of course, Dr. Winters wasn't exactly gushing with information about the contraption either—maybe this is what it does...for whatever reason. The apparatus is nowhere to be found.

## YOUNG 'UNS!

Have the posse make Notice rolls. The posse member that rolls the highest, finds an opening in the wall of the pass large enough for a man to walk through. The opening would normally be hidden from anyone riding through the pass. Looking at the ground he can see that something heavy was dragged through the opening.

The opening in the wall leads to a small canyon. Sitting at the far end of the canyon, amongst the churned up ground, sits a vaguely egg-shaped, slightly glowing apparatus-- Just as Dr. Winters described. It's even emitting the strange sounds the doc mentioned. Lying against it though is a large (about 3' tall) worm with a head full of tentacles. The rattler young 'un seems to be comforted by the apparatus.

The rattler young 'uns will not want the apparatus disturbed and will put up a good fight trying to stop the posse from leaving the little canyon with it. There should

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## Rattler



Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+6, Vigor d12+2

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 26 (2) Special Abilities:

- Armor +2, Burrowing: 18", Fear (-2), Size +15, Bite: 2d12+3.
- Gargantuan: Heavy Armor. +4 to ranged attacks from man-sized creatures. Using its entire bulk, a rattler can slam itself down upon a foe or an obstacle. Add Size bonus to Strength for damage. Rattlers can effect an area equivalent to a Cone Template with their slam attack.
- Seismic Sensors: Rattlers sense their prey by vibrations in the sand. They can detect the movement of a man up to 100" (200 yards) distant. This is an opposed Notice versus Stealth if the prey is trying to step lightly (-2 if running), otherwise just a Notice roll for the rattler. Horses are detected at double the distance, wagons at triple.
- Tentacles: Rattler tentacles are 20" long. Once they grapple a target, they begin dragging them toward their maw. Each success and raise on an opposed Strength test drags the victim 1d6" closer to the hungry mouth. Each tentacle can take a single wound, but has a Toughness of 12. Bullets and impaling weapons cause half damage, while blunt attacks inflict no damage. Wounds inflicted on tentacles do not harm the rattler.
- Weakness (Nerve Cluster): Rattlers have a cluster of nerves deep in their bodies at the nexus of their tentacles. If targeted with a called shot (-6), damage ignores

both the Size modifier and Heavy Armor of the rattler. Of course, the danger is in getting close enough to the rattler to take the shot!

## Rattler Young 'uns

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 4

Special Abilities:

- Bite: d6+d4.
- Blizzard of Tentacles: A lone rattler young 'un gains an automatic +1 Gang-Up bonus on its prey.
- Burrow: 15".
- Quick
- Size -1: Rattler young 'uns are three feet long.

## Outlaws

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Gambling d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Charisma: -2; Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Wanted Edges: Quick Draw

Gear: Colt 45 Pistol (Range 12/24/48, 2d6+1, AP 1, Dbl Tap), Knife (d8+d4), Win '73 (Range 24/48/96, 2d8, AP2, 15 shots)

## Whitey Stump



Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Notice d6, Spellcasting d8, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

Charisma: -1; Pace: 6; Parry: 2; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: Wanted (Major) Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Quick Draw, Marksman, Speed Load, Two-Fisted

Spells: Aim, Deflection, Obscure, Quickness; Power Points: 15. Gear: 2 Colt 45s (12/24/48, 2d6+1, shots 6, AP 1), Knife d6+d4



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be at least one burrowing young 'un per posse member. Remember that the apparatus is a little heavy for just one person to carry quickly.

## WAGONS HO!

Once the posse has the apparatus back in the pass and loaded up, their problems are far from over. The ground will begin to shake as momma rattler comes to her children's aid. This is not a fight the posse is supposed to win. Hopefully they have enough sense to make a run for it. This is an excellent time for a chase. If the posse successfully escapes they have no further problems getting the Apparatus back to the Hellstromme field office. This should be a dramatic, run for your lives ending so play it up big. Note that if given a choice the rattler will always follow the apparatus. You can also have any posse member that might have a reason to know it to make a Common Knowledge roll to know about the rattler's weakness: its nerve cluster.