

Handsome Ranch:

Handsome Ranch, part I

Part one of the Handsome Ranch adventure path

How is Handsome Ranch important to this adventure series?

The Handsome Ranch campaign assumes that the player characters have been employed at the ranch for some time, possibly as long as a month or more. This grants the characters enough time to assume some things as taken for granted, such as knowing what their basic duties around the ranch are, how to do them and even having some insight into the personalities and expectations of the NPC's at the ranch.

For the portion of the adventure path taking part on the ranch itself it is assumed that young ranch hands, mostly orphans, make up the bulk of the folk on the ranch. Only two adults are referred to (Mr. Handsome, the owner, and Mrs. Belford, the horse trainer). Others may crop up as needed but we're working on the assumption that everyone else on the ranch is young, if not well below legal drinking age.

The pilot episode, a two-parter (of which this is part one), focuses mainly on painting a fairly accurate picture of life on the ranch while providing the players with some fun and challenging competition with another group of ranch hands. Above and beyond this, it is part of a group of initial adventures taking place on the ranch that are all designed to ingratiate the characters (and the players, naturally) to Handsome Ranch itself. This in turn is intended to enhance the conflict that will eventually erupt with the "forces of evil" that the adventure path primarily concerns itself with. The player characters will, after all, be forced to eventually leave the ranch and confront the bad guys.

Our goal here is to actually make this particular decision a difficult one. If we can cause our players to grieve the loss of their simple life on the ranch, we will have accomplished our goal. This painful separation from the simple life of an orphaned ranch hand and of being thrust headlong into the life of a Big Damn Hero is what this adventure path is all about.

Background:

Handsome Ranch is a large, sprawling horse ranch covering nearly three hundred acres. Most of the land is relatively untouched and the action takes place mostly in and around

the house and barns. Though the land surrounding this immediate area is littered with trails and is generally well patrolled, the animals themselves and the tended fields (all the main work of the ranch, in other words) are all close to the main house and bunkhouse.

Handsome Ranch sports six large barns with twelve stalls each, two round pens each shared by three of the barns and two large arenas to either side. The main house is separated from the rest of the buildings by the gravel road leading down to the main gate. The bunkhouse where all of the young hands are housed sits off to the side of the main house, though nearer the actual work. Mr. Handsome and Mrs. Belford share the main house, though rumors of any involvement between the two beyond the purely professional aren't true. Mrs. Belford happens to be dallying with the local preacher on the sly.

The young hands are divided into three roughly equivalent groups whom Mr. Handsome has designated, unimaginatively, One, Two and Three. The player characters make up Group Two and are currently assigned to the southern three barns. Group Three are to be their main rivals for the immediate future and are assigned to the northern three barns. Group One is currently out of favor, taking most of the "scut work" such as spreading manure in the fields, tending to the outhouses and, worst of all, working with the hogs.

Another group of young hands stays in the house, tending primarily to the cooking and tending to the housework itself. They are largely considered separate from the other three groups and not even referred to as "hands" at all, rather as "the house girls". As the name suggests, most of the young girls working on the ranch stay to the main house and few are assigned to one of the three groups of ranch hands. Few prefer that work, after all, and vice versa in regards to the boys.

Synopsis:

This adventure is comprised of an opening scene and four acts.

In the Opening Scene the PC's are out exercising the horses they've been assigned, trotting and running them a bit before they bring them in, tend to them and hike themselves up to the main house for supper.

In the process of working their horses they come within shouting distance of Group One, who are doing the same. Challenges are issued and the player characters have the opportunity to race Group One as part of the horse's exercise (the prize being little more than personal honor and maybe a Plot Point reward). At the finish line the players have the opportunity to stumble across a clue that indicates trespassers may have intruded on ranch recently.

In Act I the player characters return to the ranch, attend to supper and learn along with the rest of the youths that Mr. Handsome has a new job opening up. The house girls have decided they want more meat in the kitchen and Mr. Handsome has decided it's cheaper to send one of the groups out hunting two or three times a week. Competition ensues for the coveted new duty that's now up for grabs. Group Three's leader, Greg, is quick to threaten our player characters in the hopes they won't put up much of a fight for the job. (We find out why in Part II, when it's revealed they're working with the horse thieves). The following morning Group Three finishes their chores a few minutes early, long enough to saunter over and try to pick a fight with the pc's while they're trying to complete their work. The goal here will be to either avoid fighting or doing it in such a way that it doesn't get back to Mr. Handsome and reflect poorly on them. And, of course, finish their chores before dinner.

Following these events an accident occurs with Group One that both the player characters and Group Three then work together to resolve, showing Group Three isn't *all* bad...just mostly. We'll be holding out hope the player characters can bring them around to the good-guy side by the end of Part II of the pilot episode.

In Act II Mr. Handsome teaches the young hands a lesson about breaking horses and uses our player characters to do it. If they are thoughtful they might come out on the right side of things and score major points with Mr. Handsome. If not, no harm done. They simply lose the chance to outshine everyone else and have some fun bronco-busting while doing so.

Following this the player characters have to deal with a snake in the barn spooking the horses (put their by Kurt in Group Three as a

means of sabotage) followed by an impromptu competition staged by Mr. Handsome during their evening studies. Here again they have a good opportunity to score some points over their rivals, Group Three.

In Act III things begin to heat up. If the player characters have managed not to perform abominably so far then Mr. Handsome has already come down to deciding between them and Group Three. Now he settles the matter with an old-fashioned turkey shoot before the sun goes down. This will probably be the deciding factor in his decision. Whether or not the player characters pull hunting duty will factor heavily in Part II.

In Act IV, regardless of whether or not they win the hunting spot, Greg from Group Three will have already developed some serious personal animosity toward the player characters, if only as perceived rivals. While the pc's are sleeping that night he and Vincent sneak back to the ranch from patrol to set fire to one of the barns, intending to frame them for it. The player characters must rescue the horses first and foremost and save as much of the material in the barn as they can. Whether they are held responsible for the blaze or not may well change Mr. Handsome's decision regarding who gets the hunting spot. If it can be proven someone *purposefully* set fire to the barn however, it will be a major upset for the whole ranch.

This half of the pilot wraps up with the players either held responsible for negligence leading to the barn catching on fire, their proving it was an accident (or, at least, that they aren't responsible) or proving someone purposefully set the blaze. This, in addition to whether or not they have the hunting spot, will impact Part II of the pilot and Group Three's behavior during it.

Opening Scene: The Race Is On!

Our pilot opens with Group Two, our player characters, out exercising some of the more valuable horses in their care. This consists of simple walking the horses for a mile, trotting them for another, loping for three miles and finally a good, solid all-out run for maybe half a mile. This is typically the last chore of the day and only done once a week or so anyway. All the young ranch hands prefer this duty over any other but supper time is looming and they're eager to get to it. As our player characters lope along they come within a shout of Group One, who are also out having a significant amount of fun running their horses. Good natured insults and challenges are exchanged and Group One soon decides to challenge our player characters to a little race. They have to run the horses anyway, right?

The prize? Well, everyone's desert at supper and the honor of skunking another team of ranch hands, of course. And a Plot Point, if the GM is feeling generous.

The race consists of a short half-mile run down a common trail, ending in a leap over a fallen log which stands in lieu of a proper finish line. The task before our pc's is to get ahead of the competition just enough to qualify for a compared roll at the end to determine who "wins by a neck".

Horse stats:

Basic statistics for the horses are thus -

Agl d8, Str d10, Vit d10

Alr d8, Int d2, Will d6

Init d8+d8, LP 16

Running d10, Brawling d8

The race is represented here by five turns of sprinting which ends with a leap over a fallen log. Each turn all participants make a horse riding check that determines whether their horse moves at a full sprint or misses a step. Only those that cross the finish line (the log) on an even footing will participate in the final check to determine the winner.

For each of the five turns all participants make the following check using the horse's Agility attribute and the rider's Animal

Handling/Riding skill:

Running at a full sprint.

(Hard Agility + Animal Handling/Riding)

Botch: Your horse stumbles, falls *four* steps behind and you make a Formidable Agility + Animal Handling/Riding check to avoid falling off (and thus falling out of the race completely).

Failure: Your horse loses a step.

Success: You maintain a full sprint this turn.

Extraordinary Success: You pull away from the others slightly, gaining a full step.

Once all those horses and riders "in the lead" reach the log, they must jump over it. All those that make the jump compare their rolls, the highest roller being the winner and securing victory for their team.

Leaping the fallen log at a full sprint.

(Hard Agility + Animal Handling/Riding)

Note: This is considered a separate action from the sprint itself and we're allowing a sprint plus an additional action all in one turn only in this particular instance. This is most definitely the exception to the rule. However, this does mean the jump carries a -1 Skill step penalty.

Botch: Oops. You're face first in a cow patty. Not only that but your horse is injured, you have to beg a ride off someone else back to the ranch and you have to lead the poor, limping critter back by the bridle. Not to mention that you have to explain what an idiot you are to Mr. Handsome. Sucks to be you.

Failure: Your horse balks and refuses to jump the log. Make a Formidable Agility + Animal Handling/Riding check to avoid falling off (and thus falling out of the race completely).

Success: You made the jump. What, do want a medal or something?

Extraordinary Success: Not only did you make the jump you did it quite gracefully. If this were an official competition you'd probably win something. As it is, you probably only won someone else's desert. That cute boy/girl on the other team is sure impressed with you, though.

Falling off your horse:

Either as a result of a botched sprint check or a horse balking at the jump a character may make and fail a check of their own and actually fall off. If they do fall then the falling rider must roll Agility + Athletics/Gymnastics

to avoid the unforgiving effects of gravity. The Difficulty is Easy but since this is secondary to the sprinting check *and* the attempt not to fall off the horse in the first place, it's considered a third action that turn and thus made at a -2 Skill step penalty. If this occurred at the log jump then it's a fourth action and that brings a -3 Skill step penalty.

If the damage is not avoided, the fall is treated as an attack with a roll result equal to its Difficulty. Damage is Basic type. Ouch. Falling off the horse means you're out of the race completely. No way you can catch up. No, don't even bother arguing with the GM. Really, now. You lost. Get over it.

And the winner is...

Once the final jump rolls (of those that managed it) are compared the winner should be obvious. Whoever rolled highest. In case the two different group's riders tie for first place then the race is, of course, a tie. No one wins but we had fun anyway.

Only those that haven't fallen a "step" or more behind the others are determined here, though. Anyone a step or more behind has already lost the race. You might want them to roll for the jump anyway to see if anyone botches but there's no chance of winning here.

Our Group One ranch hands are:

Grant Bigglesworth
Timothy Pranks
Allison Buford
Benny Simples
Handy Kimble

As the "dunces" of the class, consigned to scut-work and generally less skilled than everyone else at the ranch, I simply assigned D6 to all their attributes and D4 or D6 (rather arbitrarily) to their skills. These are the folks our player characters should routinely trounce in opposed rolls, so I didn't feel compelled to flesh them out too deeply. I didn't even assign them any Traits at all.

Feel free to increase or reduce their numbers to roughly match that of the player character's group. Though they are outclassed by our Plot Point wielding player characters, we don't want to make it too obvious they haven't got a chance. The two teams should be pretty evenly numbered.

Using their horse's Agility and their own riding skill these kids all roll D8 + D6 for their sprint checks and D8 + D4 for the final jump (tacking on the Skill step penalty here). If at least one of your players doesn't cross the finish line first and win this race, chastise them severely.

Once the race is over there are no hard feelings and everyone is good-natured to one another. Group One may be a bunch of hopeless misfits but they're a decent enough bunch.

Everyone's in a good mood, the horses have been properly exercised (hopefully remaining uninjured) and everyone's ready for supper. Off to the main house we go to see what the house girls cooked up for us today.

What if a horse is injured in the jump?

Well, in that case...sucks to be you. Mr. Handsome will be quite beside himself at your character's utter negligence and disregard for that poor animal's safety. He may never trust you again. And you'll probably have your pay docked for the next two years to pay for that horse's tending.

Really. What were you thinking? You should be ashamed of yourself running about jumping over logs and such with other people's horses.

But, wait...what's *that*?

Once everyone is over the log and the race is over the good natured ribbing begins, sure. But there on the ground lies another trail of hoof prints neither group made. Here we have evidence for the player characters to stumble across indicating there are trespassers coming onto ranch lands. Of course, they have to notice the faint trail and realize there are trespassers about.

Spotting the poacher trail

(Hard Alertness + Survival/Tracking or Perception/Tracking)

Success: You spot the trail and realize neither you nor anyone in Group One made it. This trail was laid down two or three days ago. That may not mean anything, though.

Extraordinary Success: There were at least four ridden horses that passed by here about three days ago and two additional horses without riders were lead along with them.

If, and only if, the players spot the trail and

score an extraordinary success should the fact that Handsome Ranch is missing two horses (that supposedly got loose from their stalls three days ago) be mentioned. This trail then indicates those horses didn't so much wander off as they were flat-out stolen. That's still a hanging offense on some moons. (Well, not *this* moon but still. Serious business anyway.)

If the player character decide to follow the trail to pick up more clues remind them that this will make them late for supper. That's not something most ranch hands care for. If that doesn't dissuade them then let 'em at it. If they manage to follow the trail for the next hour they'll come to a campsite where the poachers kept the horses overnight before leading them off Mr. Handsome's land the next morning, two days ago. If the fact that the ranch is missing two horses hasn't been mentioned yet, mention it now.

At this point it's clear the horse thieves felt pretty comfortable hanging around with stolen horses, despite the fact that armed ranch hands patrol the land at night, every night. In fact, Group Three has been on patrol every night this week and it's Group Two's turn next week. Odd that they didn't come across any sign of this during all that time...

Returning with such news may make the player characters late for supper but it'll earn Mr. Handsome's gratitude, free roam in the kitchen for a while and a stern talking to with Group Three.

Act I, Scene I: "I Know You Are, But What Am I?"

The player characters eventually return to the ranch, brush down their horses and pen them up in the barn again, then report for supper. During supper they are informed that the girls in the kitchen are demanding fresh meat and Mr. Handsome has decided to form a hunting detail to go out three times a week to procure it. This will save them a bit of money (bullets are cheaper than store-bought meat) and provide good practice for the hands. Everyone is excited and everyone volunteers immediately, leaving Mr. Handsome to defer

the decision until later. This is clearly understood to mean he'll be watching everyone like a hawk for the next couple of days, looking to reward good behavior and hard work with the coveted job.

Naturally, this sets Group Three on edge right away. They *need* to secure this new hunting duty. Working with the poachers to steal horses from Mr. Handsome isn't going to go very well with a second armed group of ranch hands running about the place. Greg, Group Three's leader, immediately confronts the pc's on the matter, threatening (with Kurt's backup) to make life difficult for them if they try to compete.

Now, I think we can all safely assume this won't intimidate the players. More than likely it will make them all the more eager to compete with Group Three over this.

The events of the next day will give plenty of opportunity for both groups to show up the other and win Mr. Handsome's approval. Right now, though, they have to wash up, hit the sack and get to their duties tomorrow morning. There's work to be done and all other concerns will have to wait until the following evening.

Group Three isn't big on waiting, though. They want this settled right now. If Group Two (the pc's) haven't given them some indication that they won't be rivals in securing the hunting duty, they'll begin acting immediately to *remove* them as rivals.

Greg is smart enough to whip his team along in their duties the following morning. The plan being to get done early, then head on over to Group Two's area and harass them. At worst maybe he can pick a fight, claim Group Two started it and hopefully get them in some disfavor with Mr. Handsome. At best, though, he and the rest of the group can distract the pc's long enough to keep them from completing their assigned work.

Meanwhile the pc's have a little problem that's going to delay their completing their chores in a timely manner. One of the horses has come down with Equine Protozoal Myeloencephalitis (EPM), a pretty debilitating neurological disease. The symptoms aren't exactly obvious but it is the kind of thing a good ranch hand looks for when tending to the horses. It's most certainly something the hands on Handsome Ranch have been taught

to keep an eye out for. We will assume then that the pc's are, in fact, keeping an eye out for it.

***Spotting symptoms of EPM
(Hard Alertness+Animal
Handling/Veterinary)***

Success: You spot the symptoms, recognize the illness it indicates and know to report this to Mrs. Belford.

Extraordinary Success: You not only spot the symptoms but locate the 'coon bite on the horses leg that probably led to the infection. You know to advise Mrs. Belford that one of the horses has this disease, quarantine the horse immediately and advise Mr. Handsome there may be infectious raccoons running about the place.

If the player characters fail to spot the symptoms then Mrs. Belford will catch it herself a couple of hours later, nearer dinner time, when she comes to make a cursory inspection. Ranch hands who failed to spot this illness and quarantine the infected horses will *not* be looked upon favorably.

If the pc's spot the disease but fail to immediately quarantine the horse, they get some small praise for spotting the symptoms (something expected of them) but are chastised for not quarantining the horse immediately. That's actually pretty crucial. Again, Mrs. Belford is not pleased. Not furious perhaps, but not at all pleased.

If the pc's spot the symptoms, recognize the disease and immediately quarantine the horse they do indeed get praise from Mrs. Belford, who will then report favorably on the pc's to Mr. Handsome.

"What'd you say about my momma?"

Regardless of how this all plays out, it will delay the player characters finishing their chores before dinner. They'll have to hustle just a bit to get done in time. But now they have another problem interfering with them completing their work. Group Three has already finished their chores early and have come for a visit.

Now, take a look at the player characters in your group. Make special note of any pc's who have such complications as Anger Issues or Chip on Your Shoulder (depending on which set of rules you're using). Individual character backgrounds and those with low

Willpower, too. Your player characters have been on Handsome Ranch long enough to get to know the other characters there, but they've gotten to know them right back. Greg and his goons know just what buttons to push to pick a fight.

A few opposed Willpower + Discipline checks, modified by traits, should settle the matter here. Greg's goal is to goad Group Two until one of them throws the first punch. Then he and his group can beat the stuffing (he assumes) out of Group Two and claim in all honesty that they didn't start it.

Mr. Handsome is a firm believer in two complimentary principles here. "Sticks and stones..." and the right to defend oneself. In his opinion there's no excuse for being goaded into a brawl by mere words and whoever threw the first punch without being directly threatened first is in the wrong. Beyond this, Greg knows (from firsthand experience) that Mr. Handsome is pretty good at spotting falsehoods tossed his way. He intends to be able to say in all honesty that he and his team were just picking on Group Two, all innocent like, and got jumped out of the blue. They were defending themselves and that's that.

If the pc's fall into this trap it won't score any huge points for Group Three with Mr. Handsome but it will cause him to look with disfavor on Group Two. In Greg's book, that's a victory for his side.

If the altercation doesn't degenerate into a fight then Group Three will be disappointed but that's about it for now. The dinner bell will be rung and everyone's off to eat. Typically, such things are put on hold for dinner at the Handsome Ranch. Even an all-out brawl will grind to a quick halt for the dinner bell.

If Greg and his group are successful and manage to get at least one player character riled up enough to fight, they'll fight to win. They're not above dirty fighting either (dirt tossed in the eyes, knees to the crotch, etc.) but this is a good old fashioned tussle. It won't occur to anyone to pull a knife or draw guns. At worst, one might snatch a handy length of board for a good brawling smack but that's about it. The fight will end when one side or the other is unconscious, has given up or the dinner bell rings.

Remember also that Greg's secondary goal is to distract the player characters from completing their chores before dinner. This will reflect ill on them with Mr. Handsome. Not so much as fighting would perhaps, since they can always just go wrap up the last of their chores *after* dinner and then proceed on to their other work.

Even if Greg doesn't manage to get an actual fight started that he can blame them for, he might just keep them from finishing their work and looking unreliable or lazy. If the players spend too much time dealing with Group Three's taunting (pretty much doing anything other than totally ignoring them) then their previous delays with the ill horse's quarantine in addition to this cause them to fail to complete their assignments before dinner.

If the team does manage to avoid a fight but fails to finish their work before dinner anyway, there is one obvious way out of such a mess. Simply work through dinner. This will not only be looked on favorably by Mr. Handsome (he certainly admires a strong work ethic) but if they can manage to convince him the delays they suffered weren't their fault it might even score them a point or two with him. Missing one meal won't grant them any notable penalties as player characters so the players themselves should see this as an acceptable option. Don't mention it to them unless they bring it up first, though. Their characters may have a good handle on how Mr. Handsome will react to this or that but this doesn't suggest you should do all their thinking for them.

Act I, Scene II: Stumped

On the way to the house, both groups (Two and Three) hear a crash from behind the south barn and someone yelling out. Both teams rush around to find Jack Dingo has run the mule up on a stump while Group One was spreading manure and has turned it over. Two of the kids are trapped under the mule, one of them is clearly hurt bad and the other seems less injured than simply stuck. However Group Two reacts, Eileen will immediately dash off for the bunkhouse to fetch her doctor's bag to treat the injured. Maia will head straight for the main house to

inform the adults that there's been an accident and some of the hands are injured.

Greg knows opportunity when he sees it, so he immediately whispers to Kurt to run off and plant a snake in one of the south barns during all the commotion. He and Vincent then pitch in to lift the mule off the two kids so they can be pulled out from under and be given first aid.

Now, if the player characters are smart they'll do all these things themselves. The stronger characters will get to work with Greg and Vincent to lift the mule. Anyone with medical training will be fetching first aid kits and medical bags. Anyone weak but fast will be sprinting for the main house alongside Maia.

Once the medics are on hand and the mule is lifted, whoever else is handy (likely Jack Dingo at least) will get the two kids snatched from under the mule. Anyone with at least d4 Medical Expertise nearby has the opportunity to save the more injured boy further damage by noting his broken leg and advising the others how to move him quickly *and* safely.

Spotting Benny Simple's broken leg before he's yanked from under the mule
(Hard Alertness + Medical Expertise/General practice or Perception)

Failure: Jack Dingo and anyone else helping move the boy quickly to safely but hurt him so bad in the process that he's rendered unconscious.

Success: You spot the broken leg and quickly advise Jack and any others on how to move him quickly without causing further injury. The boy remains conscious and suffers no further damage.

Extraordinary Success: You also manage to walk Jack and the other boys through immobilizing the leg to prevent further injury while you render first aid. No check necessary for treating the leg.

Once the two kids are safe from under the mule those characters with medical training can attempt first aid. If none of the pc's have any notable Medical Expertise skill then that leaves Eileen, who scores a point for her team with Mr. Handsome by having both children properly seen to herself by the time he arrives.

First Aid in this instance merely refers to diagnosing any injuries the two boys have and

preventing any further damage, stopping any bleeding, etc.

Benny Simple is banged up a bit but his worst injury is the broken leg. First Aid in his instance is detecting that broken leg, determining how best to immobilize it and then doing so.

Noting Benny Simple's broken leg after he's pulled to safety and during routine first aid

(Average Alertness + Medical Expertise/General Practice or any First Aid skill)

Once noted, the leg must be immobilized to prevent further injury.

Immobilizing Benny's broken leg without causing further injury

(Average Alertness + Medical Expertise/General Practice or any First Aid skill)

Timothy Pranks is merely bruised up a good bit but he did cut his scalp on a rock nearby. He won't be in any real danger if this isn't seen to but a good medic will spot and tend to it anyway.

First Aid for Timothy, including addressing minor bleeding head injury

(Average Alertness + Medical Expertise/General Practice or any First Aid skill)

Also, any perceptive characters standing around watching have a chance to notice Kurt sneak off during all this.

Spotting Kurt sneak off or noting his conspicuous absence during the excitement

(Average Alertness + Perception/any relevant specialty)

Any questions later regarding his whereabouts will be met with a standard, "Mind yer own bizness!" If his absence is pointed out to Mr. Handsome, however, Kurt will claim to have been looking for Allison from Group One (who also has medical training). Allison was in the main house already, preparing for supper, and so wasn't on hand

at the time of the accident.

In the end Mr. Handsome and Mrs. Belford arrive quickly with most of the kids who were preparing for dinner. The two boys will have been already tended to (either by Eileen alone or with the help of any player characters with medic training). Mr. Handsome will be quite impressed with either Eileen alone or with both groups as a whole, depending on who did what and how well.

Mr. Handsome then has Jack Dingo fetch the truck, load the two injured boys onto it and Jack and Mrs. Belford head for town right away to find a doctor. Mr. Handsome ushers everyone else back up to the house for dinner.

Group One, those that aren't on their way to town injured, still have to put the mule away and spread the last of the manure. First things first, after all. They'll be later for dinner.

On the way up to the main house Kurt pops up out of nowhere and any character that didn't make note of his absence earlier will notice it now. Kurt was busy fetching a rattlesnake he and Greg found that morning and tossing it into the empty stall left by the now-quarantined horse.

He and Greg reason, rightly, that once Group Two return to their duties after dinner they'll stir that snake up enough that it'll wander over into another stall and spook a horse or two.

Act II, Scene I: Bronco-Bustin'

After dinner it's time to hack the horses. The team heads for the south barn and runs the farm horses through their regular workout, then turns their attention to the show horses. As they're winding up they hear that Mr. Handsome is at the west barn bringing out one of the newer, un-broken horses (one he purchased quite recently to replace one of the two that went missing). Finishing up quickly, they head there to see what's up and find he wants someone to get to work on the new horse.

All the boys volunteer immediately, of course, not willing to pass up the opportunity to establish their machismo before their peers. Which is exactly what Mr. Handsome is

counting on, the assumption that he wants some brave hand to jump on there and break that horse the old-fashioned way.

Now there's a reason this particular method isn't one Mr. Handsome agrees with. Jumping up on a unbroken horse and riding them into submission makes for a great tale and all but it's not the way a professional horse trainer goes about it. Trust is established between trainer and horse, a bond is forged and a relationship is developed. One sets about to teach the horse that the horse and rider setup is mutually beneficial. A horse properly trained will view riding a human around as something to look forward to and even take pride in doing well among the other horses of the herd. Horses have been known to jockey amongst themselves to be chosen by riders that they view as "better" than others. How well a horse "rides" and the favor of certain riders goes a long way toward establishing one's place in the herd, in fact. It can be rather a status symbol among horses. A horse who's spirit has been broken, who's been rode into the ground by a proper round of bronco-bustin', isn't likely to be of much use in the future. This is a significant setback in that horse's training and one any trainer worth his salt will always avoid. It's a good time saver if you're caught in the wild with nothing but wild horses on hand to get you back to civilization but not a great technique for a horse ranch.

Hence, when Mr. Handsome calls for volunteers to break the new horse in and doesn't specify just how he expects this to be done, he's counting on some knucklehead volunteering to jump up there and break that horse like a real bronco-bustin' cowboy. He's willing to let that take its course until someone is able to break down that horse's spirit and lead it into submission. At which time he'll point out the horse's demeanor and how this isn't all that conducive to training a good riding horse. Certainly not a show horse of any sort.

This is the player character's opportunity to jump in and question this method from the get-go or even simply to specifically ask Mr. Handsome if what he wants exactly is someone to "break" this horse. He won't pass up the opportunity to praise anyone who even suggests a proper training approach and any

group of ranch hands that does so will score big points with him.

If one of your player characters has a decent Animal Handling/Animal Training score you might even consider suggesting the proper method of training or even nudge them in the right direction. It's quite possible a group of players who haven't even had a good gunfight up to this point in the gaming session would rather ignore that and tackle some bronco-bustin' anyway. Let them have their fun but they'll miss out on an opportunity to truly impress Mr. Handsome.

Bronco-bustin'

If none of your player characters steps forward to question the proposed bronco-bustin' then everyone at that arena begins raising a ruckus to be chosen. At this point Mr. Handsome calls for each of the three groups to front one rider or trainer to represent their group. Now it becomes obvious to all that this is another instance where he'll be judging each group by the actions of certain members. Once each group has shoved one of their number forward the three have an opportunity to convince Mr. Handsome they get first crack at the horse. A simple opposed Willpower or Intelligence + Persuasion check among the three will set the order in which they try out.

Bronco-bustin' is simple enough. Two or three boys hold the very proud and very non-cooperative horse by the bridle while the rider vaults up into the saddle. Then they let go. And the horse goes nuts.

The rider must stay in the saddle long enough for the horse to even consider they might be outmatched. This usually requires enough running, bucking and jumping that the horse actually gets tired first.

With a horse's Vitality of D10 that means ten full turns of hard bucking and jumping. Each turn of which the rider must win an opposed check to stay on. The check is fairly evenly matched. Though the horse is a natural at shaking something irritating off its back, the rider has saddle, rigging and hopefully some training to keep them firmly in place.

Bronco-bustin'

Opposed check: (Horse's Strength + Brawling vs. Rider's Agility + Animal Handling/Riding.)

Horse stats:

Agl d8, Str d10, Vit d10

Alr d8, Int d2, Will d6

Init d8+d8, LP 16

Running d10, Brawling d8

A rider that fails even once is thrown (see *"falling off your horse" rules in the Opening Scene for possible damage*) and they're out of the running for now. The horse has enough time to rest up for another ten full turns of bucking before they're roped, grabbed by the bridle and the next of the three volunteers takes to the saddle.

The first rider to make it all ten turns (if any of the three even do) forces the horse to make a Hard Willpower + Willpower check to give up. Clearly these humans are too darned hard to buck off. It probably gives up...for now. While it doesn't resist being mounted any longer, it's hardly in agreement with being ridden around or with responding to prompts by the rider. In fact tomorrow, once it's works up it's pluck a bit, it'll have to be broken all over again.

Whether anyone successfully "breaks" the poor horse for now is really immaterial. Once it's broken or all three boys have failed, Mr. Handsome then launches into his lesson detailing exactly why that's so horrible a method for a professional horse trainer to utilize. If the horse is actually broken at that time, all the better. It will be far easier to point out how unmotivated the horse is now to learn to work together with a human.

Proper trainin':

If someone has actually piped up and questioned all this to begin with, Mr. Handsome will have already given them the horse to train and they will have scored well for their group in Mr. Handsome's estimations. Otherwise, whoever lasted the longest on the buckin' bronco gets the job, though their group may not necessarily be seen in any more positive light.

The character then will be expected to spend the next days and weeks developing a working relationship with the new horse and "breaking them in" with their new herd, which is to say the other horses on the ranch and the human riders and trainers as well.

Act II, Scene II: Snake Charmin'

Immediately following the horse breakin' lesson by Mr. Handsome, the team will return to the barn to clean up, put gear away and finish tossing hay to the horses. If one of the player characters has managed to get tapped for breaking the new horse, they'll be off doing that and separated from the rest (you may want to allow them a couple of rolls to see how well they're doing so they don't feel left out.)

At this point the rattler that Kurt dropped in the empty stall finally wanders over into an occupied stall...scaring the hell out of the horse in there. The horse suddenly begins to whinny and startle, every other horse in the barn instantly picks up on the "snake!" vibe being put out and all hell essentially breaks loose in a confined space.

The player characters won't know what the heck is causing all this of course, so it's assumed their initial reaction is to figure that out. If so, allow them to make a check to intuit that there's something threatening the horse in that stall.

Ascertaining that something in the stall is frightening the horse

(Hard Alertness + Animal Handling)

Otherwise, anyone who approaches the horse in the attempt to calm it has a similar chance to spot the snake.

Spotting the rattler in the stall

(Average Alertness + Perception)

As long as that rattler is in the stall rattling and rearing at the horse, it won't calm down. In fact, it will start beating itself to bits in the attempt to get out of the stall and away from the snake. Each round left in the stall with the snake the horse will inflict 1w+d2 basic damage on itself by repeatedly charging the stall door or attempting to leap over.

Snake stats:

Agl d12, Str d2, Vit d8

Alr d10, Int d2, Will d6

Init d12+d10, LP 14

Stealth d10, Climb d12, Hearing d8, Bite d10

Poisonous: Unless treated quickly, standard venom will cause d10W damage and force an Hard Endurance check to avoid another d10W in twelve hours.

Naturally, the snake isn't focused exclusively on the horse here. It's reacting instinctively to really big moving targets invading it's personal space. This will automatically extend to any humans attempting to hassle it as well and it has no problem with sinking it's fangs into anything and everything that gets within striking distance.

The horse itself won't likely get close enough for it to feel compelled to attack. So far it's been compliant in trying to get the hell away, as the snake prefers. The player characters however will have to get up close and personal or at least attack the snake in order to neutralize it as a threat to the horses. Unless they handle this intelligently, the snake will react by attacking one of them, which could well prove deadly to the pc in question.

Use a little common sense in addressing the snake's attacks on a human or horse. Though their Agility is d12 and Bite skill is d10, it doesn't follow that a bite is especially damaging. It really isn't, actually. I would impose a standard d2 basic damage per bite, regardless of the outcome of the attack roll. The venom itself is another matter, of course, and it's assumed that any bite that causes wound damage inflicts a good dose of venom as well.

Once the snake has been dealt with (killed and removed from sight or otherwise removed) then the characters can work on calming down the horse.

I would resolve this with a simple opposed check, Willpower + Discipline. Once the spooked horse is calmed the others will naturally calm down as well and the player character can reassure all the horses in the barn with just a minute or two of petting and droning.

Any injuries the horse has suffered in the attempt to flee the snake will have to be addressed before the pc's leave the barn, though. If it's discovered the following day that they left the horse injured to go have supper (and you can bet Mrs. Belford will discover it) then Mr. Handsome will most certainly respond most negatively to *that*.

Act III, Scene I: Pop Quiz!

Supper time comes and everyone heads into the house, stopping to wash up on the way. Once there they all eat and chat amiably, then the educatin' begins.

Once the hour of "book learnin'" is over, Mr. Handsome decides to quiz the kids on what was covered to see if everyone was paying attention. Each of the six areas of study touched on the previous week are covered and each gives our player characters a chance to flex their Knowledge skills. Barring that, someone with a high Intelligence might just get lucky. For each of the six pop questions each of the three groups appoints someone to represent them. Yet again it's obvious Mr. Handsome is scoring the teams here in regards to who will get the hunting job.

The player characters can have anyone on their team answer any category or even all of them. Group One will more or less pick someone at random, since they're all equally uneducated. Group Three will appoint Eileen for nearly all the questions, though Greg will take it up on himself to address Law and Literature. He incorrectly believes himself to be well educated in these areas.

Each question is resolved by a simple opposed check of Intelligence and the relevant skill to determine who answers correctly first. The character in question must answer *correctly* as well, of course, so the check must actually succeed.

Just for fun, here are the questions I whipped up for my group (I knew they'd want to know). It's not necessary even to supply any, of course. You can simply resolve this matter with the appropriate opposed checks and move on. The crux of this Act is the turkey shoot, after all.

Mathematics: "You have a three gallon bucket and a five gallon bucket. But the animal you're trying to feed requires exactly one four gallon bucket of grain and you haven't anything to measure four gallons with. How can you resolve this dilemma with the tools at your disposal?"

Answer: Fill the 3 gallon bucket with grain and pour it into the 5 gallon bucket. Then fill it again and from it top off the 5 gallon bucket, leaving 1 gallon volume of grain in the 3 gallon bucket. Then empty the 5 gallon bucket back into the grain barrel and pour the 1 gallon volume of

grain into the 5 gallon bucket. Now fill the 3 gallon bucket and pour that into the 5 gallon bucket. The 5 gallon bucket now holds a 4 gallon volume of grain.

Hard Intelligence + Knowledge/Mathematics

History: *"Who was the first person to travel outside of Earth-That-Was' gravity well?"*

Answer: Trick question. None of the early Earth astronauts ever escaped Earth's gravity well. The first person to ever do so would be Colonel William R. Sabot, the captain of the Intrepid, the flagship of the Anglo-Sino Alliance Ark fleet. As first on the bridge, closest to the nose of the ship when it left the solar system, he would have been the first to truly escape Earth's gravity well.

Formidable Intelligence + Knowledge/History

Law: *"What is the tanbai principle?"*

Answer: A philosophy of law that addresses the importance of confessions, applying leniency where the accused is compliant and confesses their crime while increasing pressure and adding punishment where they do not. Primarily this philosophy attempts to compromise with Anglo traditions of "innocent until proven guilty", which is essentially the opposite approach.

Hard Intelligence + Knowledge/Law

Literature: *"What literary work has topped the Harper and Rand official yearly best-seller list so consistently and for so long that they have ceased even bothering to list it over one hundred years ago? Hint: In fact, the only mention it has gotten on the listing in over one hundred years was the single instance eleven years ago when it took second place."*

Answer: The Bible.

Average Intelligence + Knowledge/Literature or Hard Intelligence/Culture

Philosophy: *Why?*

Answer: I don't know. *[It's a joke around the Handsome Ranch concerning philosophical studies. Point goes to whoever answers first, everyone knows this one.]*

Easy Intelligence + Knowledge

Religion: *"What is the oldest known religious text?"*

Answer: The Pyramid Texts, detailing funerary inscriptions from the early Egyptian pyramids of Earth-That-Was.

Formidable Intelligence + Knowledge/Religion or Knowledge/Culture (as a fairly common bit of trivia)

At this point how well or poorly the player characters have behaved and how hard they've worked comes into play at last. Mr. Handsome is ready to make a decision as to who gets the hunting job. Unless the player characters have performed

in a truly stellar manner up to now or done incredibly poorly, he's pretty much convinced to give them the job.

Consider the following points. Did anyone return to the ranch in the Opening Act with a wounded horse from a bad jump? Did the player characters discover and follow the trail from the trespassers and report this? What was the fallout from Group Three attempting to pick a fight in Act I? Were they late for dinner? Did they have a good reason to be? They didn't fail to complete their morning chores, I hope! Throughout the episode up to this point there have plenty of opportunities for the player characters to show themselves hard working, well behaved employees.

Hopefully you've kept a rough tally of the player character's behavior and work ethic during the first two Acts and the Opening Scene. Compare it now to Group Three's general behavior, at least as far as Mr. Handsome is aware. Unless the players have done exceptionally well or poorly, the turkey shoot will decide between the two groups. Even if they have, Mr. Handsome will likely hold the turkey shoot anyway, if only for some entertainment. He will already have made his decision and be prepared to present it afterward, regardless of who wins the shoot.

Act III, Scene II: Turkey Shoot

You didn't expect we'd go the whole session without at least getting to shoot something, did you? Of course you didn't.

Mr. Handsome announces immediately after supper that it's come down to Groups Two and Three as to who gets the hunting job. To that end he's holding an impromptu turkey shoot both to decide this matter and provide the house girls some fresh turkey to hold them off until the hunters can bring in some big game.

Down by the turkey pen there's an old brick wall. Handy Kimble is sent along to take six turkeys in hand and wrangle them off behind that wall. Each shooter will fire from the porch at a stand, a distance of about 600 feet. With Handy giving each turkey a good shake

before setting them off toward the pen, the shooter will have two turns to drop that turkey before they're "out of bounds". Each group will choose two shooters and all six shooters will have a shot at a turkey.

Now the range we're dealing with here, the size of the turkeys and the fact that they're running flat out for the turkey pen when the shooters start shooting makes this a fairly difficult challenge. With any luck, your player characters haven't spent all their Plot Points on the day-to-day challenges of ranch life. Because now Group Three proves themselves a truly formidable bunch of marksmen.

Furthermore, let's hope your players are smart enough to send their characters off to the bunkhouse to fetch their rifles rather than try to pin a turkey at 600 feet with a pistol.

Turkey stats:

Agl	d6	Str	d2	Vit	d6
Ale	d4	Int	d2	Wil	d4
Init	d6+d4	LP	10		

Turkeys are considered Moderate targets due to size.

Total penalties to hit a moving Turkey:

Long range : -3 skill step

(600' feet is long range for a standard rifle, this may vary if your characters have spent starting credits on Newtech firearms, rifle scopes, etc.)

Moderate target: +4 Difficulty

Innate defense: d6

Effectively, difficulty will be 1d6+4, rolled each turn. It's the skill step penalty for range that's the real killer, though.

Group Three will tap Greg and Maia for the shoot. With 10 Life Points these turkeys will already be tough to drop in two turns, especially at that range.

Greg and Maia both sport D10 Agility and Rifle skill, so they're tough opponents to beat. The pc's will need whatever Plot Points they've managed to accumulate up to this point.

Greg and Maia (and whichever two shooter from Group One) use standard light rifles

(damage: d8W, Range: 10/225/450/675)

Remember also that if Mr. Handsome hasn't already decided who gets the hunting job the player character may well be bumped out of the running if they lose. This will make life a bit harder for them during Part II of this adventure.

Once the turkey shoot is over, the winner is announced and which team gets the hunting job is determined, everyone congratulates the winner and heads off to the bunkhouse for the night.

On the way back, no matter who wins the job, Greg purposely bumps into whatever player character he views as Group Two's leader and viciously whispers, *"I warned you all not to take us on. You're gonna regret it. You mark my words."*

Yes, things are about to get ugly.

Act IV: Scene I: Fire!

That night, as Greg and Vincent are out on patrol, they break off and sneak back to the ranch, heading for one of the barns Group Two is assigned to. While Greg lights a lantern inside and tosses it onto a pile of hay he's placed near the wall, Vincent dismantles a long section of the pen on the far west side, out of sight from the barn.

Their plan is to set fire to the barn, then leave and watch from the woods nearby. Once the fire is in full blaze and the horses are properly panicked, someone will come along and let the horses into the pen and out of the barn. Those horses will then charge right on out of the pen once they see the collapsed section of the fence while everyone else is busy battling the fire.

When the horses are all running free outside the pen, out of sight from the barn, they can grab two or three and head into the woods. There they can turn them over to the horse rustlers, collect a nice bit of change and setup the player characters for the whole mess.

What every ranch hand knows about a fire:

Get the horses out first. Greg and Vincent know this and it's exactly what they're counting on. In a fire, you don't waste time

trying to calm the horses, put out the fire or save any expensive equipment. There's simply nothing in the barn more valuable than the horses. The drill is to pop the stall doors and get out of the way. That's pretty much it. After the horses are out of the barn, then you get what you can out before it catches fire and even battle the fire if you think you can do any good.

Well after midnight, when everyone at the ranch is asleep, the panicked whinny of the horses in the south barn wakes everyone in the bunkhouse first, then Mrs. Belford, Mr. Handsome and the house girls some time after. The problem is immediately apparent with just a glance out the window. The barn is on fire.

It should be noted that since Group Three has patrol duty this week, that means two of them are out each night on patrol. The others are in the bunkhouse sleeping like everyone else. In this case Eilileen, Maia and Kurt. None of them had any idea what Greg and Vincent have decided to do, so they're just as surprised as anyone else that a fire has broken out.

A properly trained ranch hand, such as our player characters, won't even bother putting on boots and pants. They'll head at a sprint straight for the barn to let those horses loose. Once our pc's get there however, no matter if they grabbed their boots or not, they'll find the fire already in full blaze.

As GM it's your job to point out the players what their characters know and what they're trained to do. It's entirely up to them whether they go along with that or decide to come up with something better. Simply inform them that they've been trained to get the horses out first in such a situation and leave it at that. If they do anything but that, and it's apparent to Mr. Handsome or Mrs. Belford when they arrive, they'll both be more than a little displeased with the player characters no matter if they had a "better idea" or not.

When the pc's first enter the barn several things will be immediately apparent. First of all each barn has twelve stalls for twelve horses and since this is the barn the infected horse from Act I was housed, that leaves eleven horses to get out.

Second, the fire clearly originated from a pile of hay at the back of the barn and has already spread up the wall and into the loft...where a couple dozen bails of hay now blaze merrily. On the ground floor only the far side of the barn is on fire but it's already spreading across the underside of the loft.

Third, a lantern lying on the dirt floor near the origin of the fire seems to indicate that's where the trouble started.

If the player characters move quickly they should be able to get all eleven horses out of their stalls with time to spare for some of the equipment as well. If they waste time fighting the fire, let them spend a turn or two doing so before informing them that even a full-blown bucket brigade can't touch this fire now. The barn is lost. If they insist on wasting time then set fire to a horse's mane or two. If that doesn't get them moving then feel free to catch a whole horse on fire. Seriously, if they're that pig-headed...

The only trick here will be making sure to have oneself out of the way when you open a stall door. These horses aren't going to be especially concerned with trampling someone who stands between them and anywhere there isn't a raging fire going on. Mind you, they'll step aside rather than bother with trampling someone but only because that's more expedient. If it's at all more convenient to step on a human, they won't mind doing so one bit.

So long as the pc's make a point of being out of the way, they should be fine. Otherwise smack them with a solid unarmed attack by a horse, using it's Brawling skill, to get the point across.

Once the horses are out of the barn the pc's can focus on grabbing anything else of value from the barn, fighting the fire or running out of the barn themselves to watch over the horses.

If they decide to save whatever else they can, you needn't detail this. Simply inform them that they spend the next few turns grabbing a few expensive sacks of grain, various gear and tackle, and generally saving the ranch quite a bit of expense. Mr. Handsome will thank them.

If they fight the fire, as previously stated, let them at it for a turn or two before informing them they're wasting their time.

If the stay with the horses, however, things get dicey. It will only take a moment for the pc's to realize the back fence is down and the horses are dashing madly right out into the night. If they attempt to stop the horses without so much as a lasso or something to ride after them on, they won't have much luck. Nevertheless, this will give them a chance to spot a couple of vaguely human figures on horseback out in the dark lassoing two of the runaways and leading them off. Unless they just happened to have brought rifles with them to fight the fire, they won't be able to do much about that before they're long gone.

Who gets the blame?

Naturally, once the Mr. Handsome and Mrs. Belford arrive they'll be glad the player characters saved the horses while simultaneously irritated that they've all broken out of the pen and run off. This really isn't a major concern, though. Horses get loose now and again. They usually return on their own and even when they don't it's not hard to find them and lead them back. It is rather irritating but much preferable to a few thousand credits worth of horsemeat barbeque.

A quick glance at the barn's remains once the fire dies down (the following morning before breakfast) will reveal what the pc's probably already know. A lantern seemingly falling atop a pile of hay started the whole thing. Which leads to questions of who left a lantern burning in the barn and why were there piles of hay left scattered about? The natural assumption is that Group Two did. They're assigned to that barn after all.

The only thing that's going to save the pc's bacon and keep them in the running for the hunting job (as opposed to replacing Group One on the scut-work detail) will be two bits of evidence. Neither will be noted if the player characters don't actually do a bit of looking. To everyone else, this seems an open and shut case.

First, even a cursory glance at the downed fence from closer than fifty yards away will reveal that the boards lying about were all pried loose and tossed around. No stampede of horses broke through that fence. It was purposefully disassembled.

Second, the lantern that supposedly set fire to the pile of hay and started the whole mess is laying some ten feet away from the hay it was supposed to have ignited. This is because Greg set fire the hay after he set the lantern on top of it. Naturally the hay burned away quickly, dumped the lantern off without even igniting the oil in it and it rolled away. Only later did the oil ignite from the fire that was already raging.

Both these points are pretty obvious when pointed out but easy to miss if no one's looking. If the player characters aren't looking, no one else will. They'll be bumped down to scut-work and that's that.

If the do note these thing and point them out to Mr. Handsome, it will be obvious to him someone set fire to the barn for the purpose of driving the horses out into the night. When all but two of the horses are recovered the next day...well, he's not a complete idiot. He'll put two and two together and come up with horse thieves.

Act IV: Scene II: Wrap up

The morning following the barn burning several things can happen to wrap up this half of the pilot episode and set the stage for Part II.

First, Greg and Vincent return from patrol in time for breakfast.

If the pc's have pointed out evidence the barn was set fire to so horses could be stolen, Mr. Handsome will have some hard questions for them. Mainly how horses could be stolen right out of the barn a few days ago and how trespassers can set fire to a barn right across the road from his house while Group Three is supposed to be out on patrol.

Their group is pulled off of patrol for the remainder of the week and Group Two is tapped for that duty. Mr. Handsome will apparently be heading to town to contract some men to go hunting horse thieves.

If Group Two is largely held to blame for the fire then Greg and his group are informed they'll be spending the day tracking down the eleven horses that broke loose last night. Meanwhile Group Two will cover all their

chores for the day before swapping places with Group One on scut-work.

If the player character end this half of the pilot with both patrol duty *and* hunting then things are going to get very interesting. Greg and his bunch know full well they can't even contact the horse thieves if they can't leave the ranch. Not to mention, Group Two could easily stumble right over the them while out on patrol or while hunting. Which could lead right back to them.

In this case Group Three decides it's time to cut ties with Handsome Ranch. While Group Two is out on patrol and Mr. Handsome is heading for town to recruit some gunmen, they'll raise a little hell at the ranch before riding off.

If they've managed to hold on to either hunting or patrol, however, the group will come to a crossroads when Greg decides it's time to take the pc's out of the picture completely.

Non-Player Characters

The Adults

Karl Randolph Handsome

Owner and operator

Agl	d8	Str	d6	Vit	d8
Ale	d8	Int	d8	Wil	d10
Init	d8+d8				
LP	18				

Traits: Advanced Education d6, Faith d4, Good Natured d4, Political Pull d2, Renowned d2, Illness d12.

Karl Handsome is dying and he knows it. But since there isn't a thing in the 'verse he can do about that it's made him pretty mindful of doing what good he can with the time he has left. To that end he started taking in orphans and poor kids nearly six years ago who otherwise wouldn't get either an education nor a reliable roof over their heads. His only concerns at present are simply keeping the ranch running, helping as many kids as he can before he dies and trying to figure out who to leave all his property to when he finally kicks the bucket.

Mrs. Addie-may Belford

Adult animal handler/trainer

Agl	d8	Str	d6	Vit	d6
Ale	d8	Int	d6	Wil	d8
Init	d8+d6				
LP	14				

Traits: Talented d6 (Animal Training, Riding) Lustful d6

Skills: Animal Handling d6 (Animal Training d10, Veterinary d6), Influence d6 (Teaching d10, Seduction d8).

Addie-may is a rather unassuming individual who keeps mostly to herself and takes her works seriously. While she cares well enough for the kids she trains she probably cares more for the horses. As such, she's generally fair with the ranch hands and treats them well, but when they fail in their duties she can leave a young hand quaking in his boots and messing his trousers.

Since her husband passed on some few years ago, she's taken advantage of Mr. Handsome's generosity to secure a place to stay and steady work. She's also taken advantages of rumors about the two to help cover up a secret dalliance with the local preacher.

Jack Dingo

Truck driver

Agl	d6	Str	d6	Vit	d8
Ale	d8	Int	d6	Wil	d8
Init	d6+d8				
LP	16				

Traits: Overconfident D4, Cool Under Fire D2, Advanced Education D2.

Planetary Vehicles d6, Mechanical Engineering d6 (Repair d10, Maintenance d8), Technical Engineering d6

Jack was one of the first young hands Handsome took on. Since taking him up on his offer of employment, Jack has watched the regular hands go their way and slowly be replaced with others like himself by the attrition of the years since then. As such he's been granted something of a top-dog position by virtue of seniority but rarely exercises his influence with Mr. Handsome. Jack is largely content with his private room in the house and

his duties on the ranch. As the oldest hand on the ranch and an experienced driver he's mostly found operating the trucks and mules on the ranch, though he's known to chip in with the back-breaking work when needed.

Group Three

Greg Katzenburger

Leader of Group Three

Agl	d10	Str	d6	Vit	d6
Ale	d6	Int	d4	Wil	d6
Init	d10+d6				
LP	12				

Traits: So Say We All D4, Glory Hound D4

Animal handling d4, Athletics d6 (Dodge d8), Craft d2, Discipline d6 (Leadership d8), Knowledge d4, Survival d6 (Trapping d8), Guns d6 (Pistols d10, Rifles d10), Mechanical Engineer d2, Pilot d2, Planetary vehicles d4, Unarmed combat d6

Karl's your basic self-involved jerk. While he has a bit of natural talent as a leader, his exercise leaves something to be desired. Presently he's lead his team of ranch hands into a fairly foolish agreement with a small band of horse thieves, which he still believes he can get away with.

Kurt Clifford

Animal Wrangler/Intimidator

Agl	d6	Str	d6	Vit	d6
Ale	d6	Int	d8	Wil	d10
Init	d6+d6				
LP	16				

Traits: Formidable Presence D4, Lazy D4

Animal handling d6 (Animal Care d8, Animal Training d8, Riding d8, Veterinary d8), Athletics d6 (Dodge d8), Craft d2, Discipline d6 (Intimidation d10, Morale d8), Knowledge d2, Survival d2, Guns d6, Mechanical Engineering d2, Pilot d2, Planetary vehicles d2, Unarmed combat d6 (Brawling d8, Wrestling d8)

Karl is big, scary and lazy as the day is long. The only reason anything ever gets done around Karl is either because he made someone else do it for him or Greg talked him into it. Fortunately he's fairly skilled with the animals on the ranch or Greg wouldn't bother

with him. He's also fairly skilled at keeping the other kids in line with Greg's leadership.

Vincent Butcher

Worker/Muscle

Agl	d8	Str	d10	Vit	d6
Ale	d4	Int	d4	Wil	d6
Init	d8+d4				
LP	12				

Traits: Anger Issues D2, Brawler D2

Animal handling d6 (Animal Care d8), Athletics d6 (Dodge d10, Lasso d8), Craft d6 (Carpentry d8), Discipline d2, Knowledge d2, Mechanical Engineering d6, Survival d2, Guns d6 (Rifles d8), Pilot d2, Planetary vehicles d2, Unarmed combat d6 (Brawling d10)

Vincent just likes working on the ranch. If he has any complaints it's that he doesn't get to beat people up nearly enough. That's pretty much his favorite thing to do and any opportunity to do so without serious repercussions will be seized upon. Thankfully, Greg is thoughtful enough to provide someone now and again who requires an attitude adjustment. So far then Vincent remains loyal to him.

Eileen Travis

Tracker/Scrapper

Agl	d8	Str	d8	Vit	d6
Ale	d8	Int	d6	Wil	d4
Init	d8+d8				
LP	10				

Traits: Anger Issues D4, Greedy D4

Animal handling d6, Athletics d6 (Dodge d8), Craft d4, Discipline d4, Knowledge d6, Survival d2, Guns d6, Medical Expertise d6, Pilot d2, Perception d6 (Tracking d10), Planetary vehicles d2, Unarmed combat d6 (Brawling d8)

Much like Vincent, Eileen just likes to fight. Arguing, screaming insults, fisticuffs or a good old fashioned cat-fight...it's all the same to her. The only thing she likes better is getting paid, which is the only thing keeping her loyal to Greg these days.

Maia Lin

Animal Wrangler/Shooter

Agl	d10	Str	d6	Vit	d8
Ale	d6	Int	d6	Wil	d4
Init	d10+d6				
LP	10				

Traits: Paranoid D4, Athlete D4

Animal handling d6 (Animal Care d8, Animal Training d8, Riding d8), Athletics d6 (Dodge d8), Craft d2, Discipline d2, Knowledge d2, Survival d4, Guns d6 (Pistols d8, Rifles d10), Pilot d2, Perception d6, Planetary vehicles d4, Technical Engineering d4, Unarmed combat d4

Maia doesn't care much for the direction Greg has led them but since she doesn't care much for anyone else on the team or what they're doing, it hardly matters. She mainly concerns herself with making sure no one turns on her and stabs her in the back, something she's certain everyone intends to do.

The Horse Rustlers

Agl	d8	Str	d8	Vit	d8
Ale	d6	Int	d6	Wil	d6
Init	d8+d6				
LP	14				

Traits: Greedy d4, Friends in Strange Places (criminal connections) d4.

Skills: Athletics d6, Discipline d4, Guns d6 (Pistol d8, Rifles d8), Animal Handling d4, Perception d4.

The horse thieves don't show up much in this part of the episode but their stats are included here just in case.