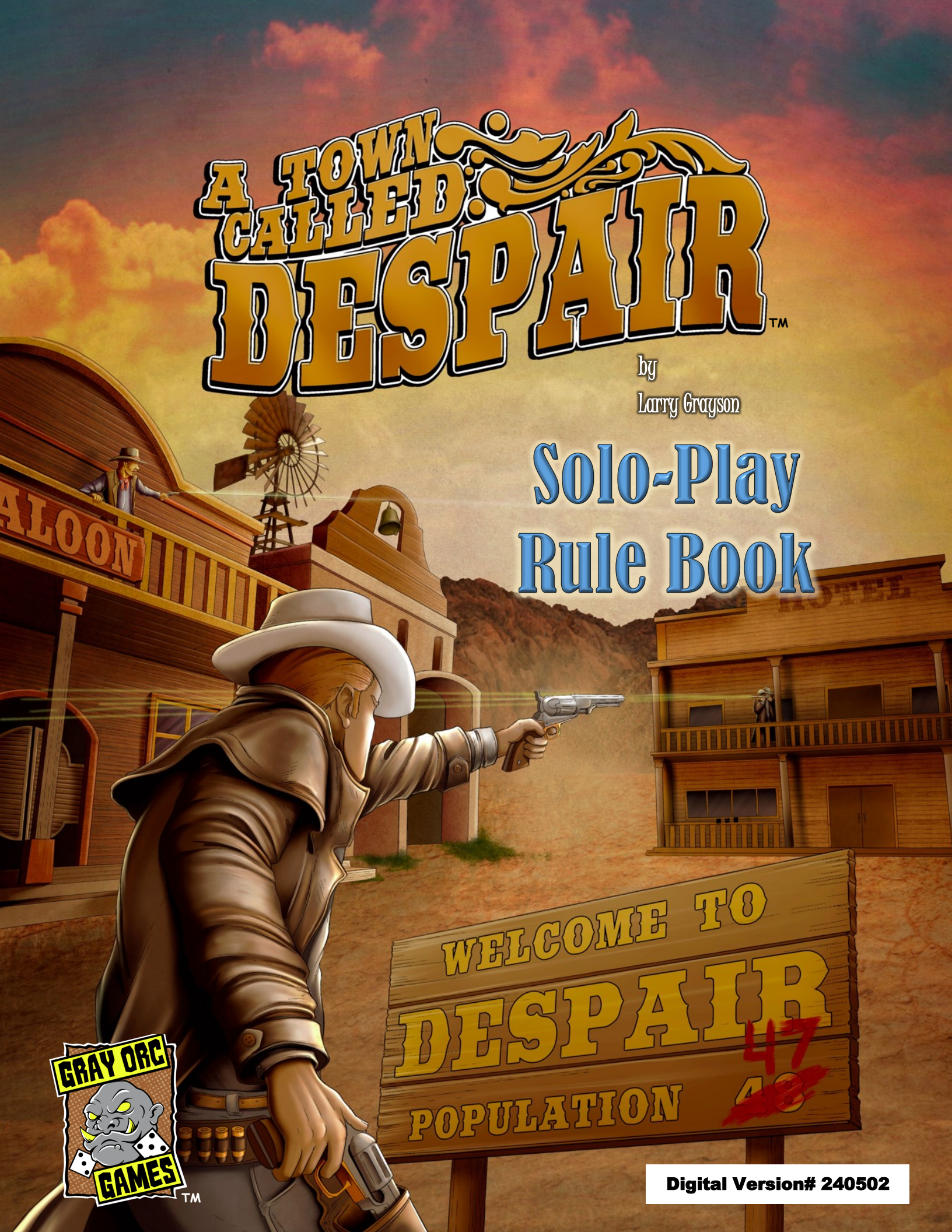
A TOWN CALLED DESPAIR™

by

Larry Grayson

Solo-Play Rule Book



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"The price of being a sheep is boredom.
The price of being a wolf is loneliness.
Choose one or the other with great care."
Hugh Macleod

Special thanks to Cristyan Moreno for his assistance in getting these solo-play rules edited and play-tested.

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[1.0] INTRODUCTION TO SOLO-PLAY

From the designer:

A Town Called Despair was designed from the start to be highly interactive and was never intended as a solo game. The interactive nature of using the playing cards for initiative strategy, gunplay, and brawling does not lend itself easily to a one-player game.

And, as the designer, I have never been overly fond of solitaire games or even online versions of board games or war games. In the recent years, we seem to have become more and more socially disconnected and reliant on keyboards and mobile phones. Friends have invited me to play several wargames online and my response is usually something like, "Sorry, but if I'm going to kill someone, I want to be able to look them in the eye while I do it."

However, enough people have asked about solo-play modes and I can see the attraction for some of us that are in remote locations where getting a group of friends together at the same time can be a considerable challenge.

So, for that "lone wolf" in all of us, here are solo-play rules and scenarios that are both challenging and entertaining while keeping the flavor and simplicity of the original game intact.

This is in no way meant to be an end to the discussion. Feel free to come up with your own solo game rules and scenarios. If you think they have merit, please send them to us at ***info@grayorc.games*** so that we can share them with everyone.

We will update this booklet from time to time with new ideas.



[1.1] USING THESE RULES

Except where specifically noted in the following scenarios, all rules in the Base Game Rule Book and any expansion rule books apply.

The solo-play scenarios are designed to have challenging, yet achievable objectives. A number of random factors are included to make each scenario re-playable without becoming boring.

Each scenario's rules describe how to set up the town and deploy your gang, along with any variations in the rules that apply specifically to that scenario.

You may want to try "tweaking" the scenario rules to increase/decrease their challenge level. You can find recommendations in **[4.0] TWEAKING SOLO-PLAY RULES**.

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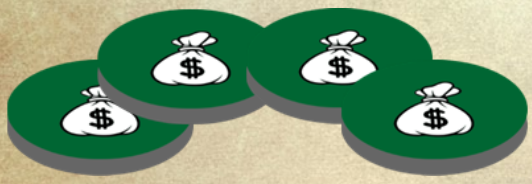
[2.0] THE GAUNTLET

[2.1] OBJECTIVES

This game mode pits your marauding outlaw gang against a posse of lawmen trying to protect the town's recent gold shipment.



Your objective is to cash in $15 worth of money bags at the edge of town or kill all of the lawmen. Money bags can be found in the wagons and in some of the loot crates. No cash is awarded for wounds or kills when playing The Gauntlet.

[2.2] THE TOWN

Set up the town as shown on the following page. The front/rear doors and trap doors of all buildings are locked. Outlaws cannot enter buildings through doors or trap doors, but may climb up and down ladders on the outside of the buildings.

[2.3] THE LAWMEN



The three Sharps rifles and three Winchester rifles from the tan, blue, and red gangs will act as lawmen protecting the town. Put names on their cards and place the six lawmen on the roofs of the six buildings as shown on the following page.

Roll a six-sided die for each lawman. For each 5 or 6 rolled, draw a card and assign the skill to that lawman. Redraw if you draw a Gunfighter or Dirty Cheat. Two lawmen may have the same skill.

[2.4] YOUR GANG



Your gang consist of five outlaws from the grey gang: two with twin pistols, one with a sawed-off shotgun and a pistol, one with a Winchester rifle and a pistol, and one with a Sharps rifle and a pistol.

Give each gang member a name and pick a leader.

Give your leader the Gunfighter skill. This skill gives your gang one additional action each turn that must be taken by your leader.

Draw four cards from the top of the deck. Redraw if you draw a Gunfighter, Dirty Cheat, or a duplicate skill.

After drawing four unique cards, assign one skill to each of the other four outlaws in your gang.

[2.5] DEPLOYMENT

Deploy your gang members starting in the center 12" on either the North or South edge of town as shown in the yellow shaded areas on the following page. You may deploy gang members in either or both deployment areas. They do not need to be in base contact with each other.

During deployment, each of your gang members gets one free 6" movement, but cannot climb stairs or ladders.

Reshuffle all of the cards back into the deck and deal yourself a hand of five cards.

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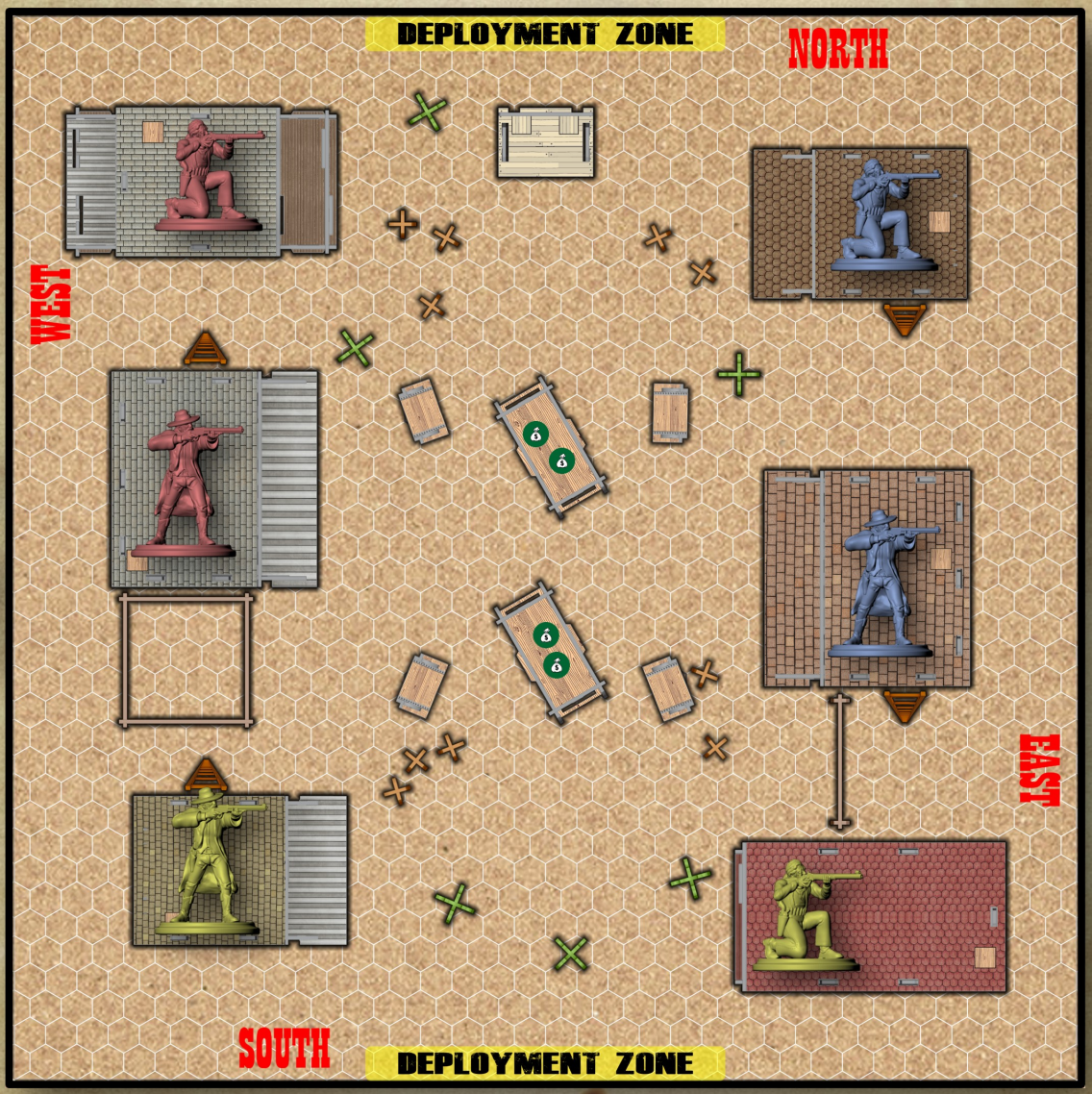
[2.0] THE GAUNTLET *(Town Setup)*

[2.6] TOWN SETUP

- Place six buildings to form a main street between them with two wagons in the center. Place the Gunsmith Shop and Hotel/Saloon on opposite corners of the town and ladders against the sides of all one-story buildings. Place a loot crate on top of each of the four grey hexes. Fences, cacti, and barrels can be placed around the town to provide additional cover.
- Mix up the money bag markers. Place two money bags face down in each wagon and the remaining money bags face-down to one side in a reserve pile.
- Place the three lawmen with Sharps rifles on the roof of the Gunsmith Shop, Hotel/Saloon, and one of the two other corner buildings, behind the sign. Place a lawman with a Winchester rifle on the roof of each of the other three buildings, behind the sign. Place their gang cards in front of you so that you can use them to record wounds and rounds fired for each lawman.



RESERVE MONEY BAGS



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[2.0] THE GAUNTLET *(Play Rules)*

[2.7] INITIATIVE

Play one card from your hand face-up at the start of each round as your initiative card.

Draw one card for each lawman and place it next to him on the roof. If your initiative card ties with a lawman, the lawman goes after you. If two lawmen's initiative cards tie, go in the order of suits; Spades first, followed by Hearts, Diamonds, and Clubs last.

[2.8] YOUR TURN

On your turn, you may take up to three actions, You may take one additional action with your gang's leader (Gunfighter skill).

[2.8.1] OUTDRAWING

A lawman will ***always*** attempt to outdraw when being shot at if he (a) is not stunned, (b) not in base contact with an outlaw, (c) has at least one round in his pistol, and (d) your initiative card is ***not*** a Joker.

Lawmen draw their outdraw card from the top of the deck. If the card drawn is ***not higher*** than your initiative card, ignore it and you take your shot as normal.

If the card drawn is ***higher*** than your initiative card, the outdraw is successful and ***cannot be countered***. The lawman gets a free snapshot that hits on a 6 (5 or 6 if outdrawing with a Joker), but ***does <u>not</u> move***.

[2.9] LAWMEN'S TURN

On each lawmen's turn, they will take ***one*** of the following actions in the order shown, i.e. will take Action 1, if possible; if not, then Action 2, etc.

[2.9.1] MOVE BEFORE SHOOTING

If there are no enemies within range or line of sight of a lawman on his turn ***and*** moving up to 6" would enable the lawman to shoot with one of his loaded weapons, the lawman will ***first*** move up to 6"and ***then*** shoot. This movement is free and does not count as an action. A lawman will never move off the roof.

[2.9.2] TARGETING

Lawmen will pick targets in the following order:

1) The closest outlaw on the same roof.
2) The closest outlaw ***carrying a money bag.***
3) The closest outlaw ***not*** carrying a money bag.

ACTION 1: FAN PISTOL

If the target is within 8" and he has at least four (4) bullets in his pistol, he will fan with his pistol

ACTION 2: SINGLE SHOT - PISTOL

If the target is within 8" and he has less than four (4) bullets in his pistol ***OR*** the target is within 14" and his rifle is empty, then he will attempt to fire a single shot with his pistol.

ACTION 3: SINGLE SHOT - RIFLE

If his rifle is loaded, then he will attempt to fire a single shot with his rifle.

ACTION 4: RELOAD - 3 ROUNDS

Otherwise he remains where he is and reloads three rounds in his weapons, in the following order: (1) One round in rifle, (2) fill up pistol, (3) remaining rounds in rifle.

[2.9.3] OUTDRAWING

If your gang member being shot at is not stunned and has at least one round in their pistol, you may choose to outdraw by playing a card from your hand that is ***higher*** than that lawmen's initiative card. ***The lawmen cannot counter your outdraw.*** You get a free snapshot that hits on a 6, along with a 2" movement. If you outdraw with a ***Joker***, your snapshot hits on a 5 or 6 and ***if you score a hit***, the lawman on the roof falls off and dies.

[2.10] BRAWLING

You play one card from your hand first. Then, draw ***two*** cards from the top of the deck and use the ***highest*** as the lawman's brawl card. The attacker wins ties.

[2.11] END OF ROUND

Recover any stunned lawmen (stand them back up). Refill your hand.

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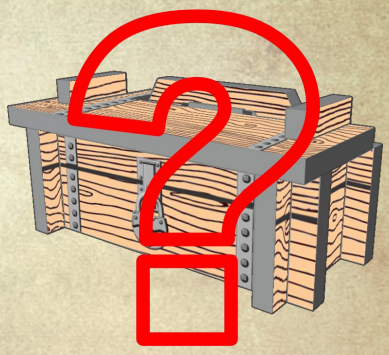
[2.0] THE GAUNTLET *(Loot Crates)*

[2.12] LOOT CRATES

You may loot a crate by using a ***move*** action to get into base contact with the crate. Roll two 6-sided dice and consult the following chart.

If a crate is flipped onto its back (see below), it is empty and cannot be looted again. It still provides cover.



DICE ROLL	CRATE CONTENTS	RESULTS
2	**KABOOM!**	The crate has been booby-trapped with ***two*** sticks of dynamite. Any outlaw within 1" of the crate takes a wound (roll wound die). Remove the crate and any barrels or cacti within 1" from play.
3	**BOOM!**	The crate has been booby-trapped with ***one*** stick of dynamite. Roll a six-sided die for each outlaw within 1" of the crate. On a roll of 4+, they take a wound (roll wound die). Remove the crate and any barrels or cacti within 1" from play.
4	**MEDICINE BAG**	The outlaw may heal ANY one wound. Flip the crate onto its back.
5-9	**GOLD SHIPMENT**	The outlaw draws one money bag from the reserve pile. Place two more money bags from the reserve pile face-down on top of the crate. For the rest of the game, when this crate is looted, do not roll the dice and take one of the money bags from on top of the crate. When the last money bag has been removed from the crate, flip it onto its back.
10	**AMMO CACHE**	The outlaw may reload up to 6 rounds. Flip the crate onto its back.
11	**EMPTY**	The crate is empty. Flip the crate onto its back.
12	**NEW SKILLS**	Draw a skill card from the top of the deck for this outlaw. If you draw a duplicate of any of your gang's skills or Dirty Cheat, discard it and draw a new card. If the outlaw already has a skill, you ***may*** replace it with the new one. Flip the crate onto its back.

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[3.0] THE PLAGUE

[3.1] OBJECTIVES

Your gang arrives in town only to discover that the entire population of Despair has succumbed to a zombie plague. Your objective is to rid the town of the walking dead by killing every zombie in town before your entire gang turns into zombies.

Money bags and loot crates are not used. No cash is awarded for wounds or kills when playing The Plague.

[3.2] THE TOWN

Set up a town with six buildings as shown on the following page. Do not place any money bags or ladders in town. Doors and trap doors are not locked.

Shuffle the four zombie cards into the deck.

[3.3] THE ZOMBIES



Place 10 of the zombies in town as shown on the following page. Place the remaining six zombies off to one side in a reserve pile.

If a zombie is killed during the game, place it in the reserve pile.

If a gang member is killed during the game, replace it with a zombie from the reserve pile.

[3.4] YOUR GANG



Your gang consist of five outlaws of one color: two with twin pistols, one with a sawed-off shotgun and a pistol, one with a Winchester rifle and a pistol, and one with a Sharps rifle and a pistol.

Give each gang member a name and pick a leader.

Give your leader the Gunfighter skill. This skill gives your gang one additional action each turn that must be taken by your leader.

Draw four cards from the top of the deck. Redraw if you draw a Gunfighter, Dirty Cheat, or a duplicate skill.

After drawing four unique cards, assign one skill to each of the other four outlaws in your gang.

Reshuffle all of the cards back into the deck and deal yourself a hand of five cards.

[3.5] DEPLOYMENT

Deploy your gang members starting in the center 12” on either the North or South edge of town as shown in the yellow shaded areas on the following page. You may deploy gang members in either or both deployment areas. They do not need to be in base contact with each other.

During deployment, each of your gang members gets one free 6” movement, but cannot climb stairs or ladders.

Reshuffle all of the cards back into the deck and deal yourself a hand of five cards.

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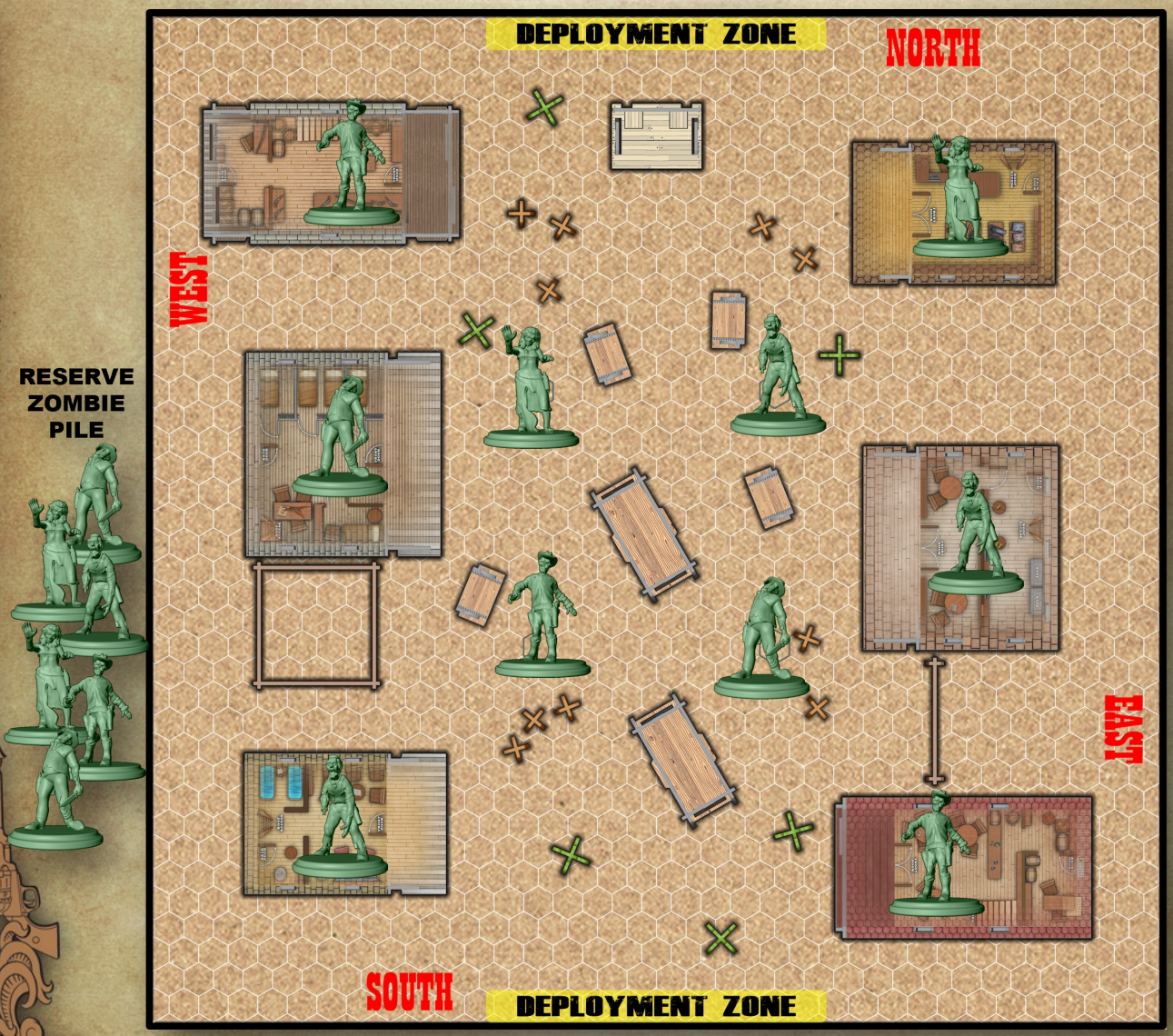
[3.0] THE PLAGUE *(Town Setup)*

[3.6] TOWN SETUP

- Place six buildings to form a main street between them. Place the Gunsmith Shop and Hotel/Saloon on opposite corners of the town. Do not place ladders against any buildings.
- Fences, cacti, wagons, crates, and barrels can be placed around the town to provide additional cover.
- This scenario does not use money bag or loot crate rules.
- Place one zombie just inside the front door on the first floor of each building and one zombie on each of the four grey hexes in the center of town. Place the remaining six zombies off to one side in a reserve pile.



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[3.0] THE PLAGUE *(Play Rules)*

[3.7] INITIATIVE

If you draw a zombie card in your hand, discard it and draw a new card. You cannot play zombie cards from your hand.

Play one card from your hand face-up at the start of each round as your initiative card.

Draw a card from the top of the deck for the zombies' initiative card. In the case of a tie, the zombies go last. If a zombie card is drawn for the zombies' initiative card, the zombies go first and each zombie moves ***twice***.

[3.8] YOUR TURN

On your turn, you may take up to three actions. You may take one additional action with your gang's leader (Gunfighter skill) as long as your leader is alive and standing.

[3.9] ZOMBIES' TURN

On the zombies' turn, ***each*** zombie that is not already in base contact with a living gang member will move up to 4" towards the closest living gang member that it can see.

If a zombie cannot see a living gang member, it will move towards the closest living gang member that it cannot see (it smells the living).

In either case, zombies move in as direct a line as possible towards a living gang member. Zombies climb over low obstacles (barrels, crates, fences, etc.) with no movement penalty.

Zombies move through doors freely and move up and down stairs/ladders at a cost of 2" of movement.

Zombies climb freely through first-floor windows if that is the most direct route to a living gang member. Going through a window does not harm a zombie.

Zombies will jump from roofs, balconies, or second floor windows only if this is the fastest way to reach a gang member they can see. Zombies do not take a wound when jumping.

[3.9.1] EVADING ZOMBIES

Evading works similar to outdrawing. To attempt to evade the zombie, when a zombie moves into base contact with a gang member, play a card from your hand that is ***higher*** than the zombies' initiative card.

You may not attempt to evade a zombie if you are stunned, are already in base contact with a zombie, do not have a loaded pistol, or the zombies' initiative card is a Zombie card or Joker.

If you successfully ***evade*** a zombie, that gang member ***first*** moves 2" and ***then*** gets a snap shot at that zombie (hits on 5 or 6). If you evade using a ***Joker***, your snap shot hits on a 4, 5, or 6.

[3.10] BRAWLING

Each zombie in base contact with a gang member at the end of the zombies' turn will brawl with that gang member.

Each gang member in base contact with one or more zombies at the end of your turn must brawl with ***one*** of the zombies they are in base contact with.

Play one card face-up from your hand and then draw a card from the top of the deck as the zombie's brawl card. The attacker wins ties.

If a zombie card is drawn for a zombie's brawl card, the zombie wins the brawl and ***rolls two wound dice***.

If a zombie card is drawn for a ***stunned*** gang member's brawl card, discard it and draw a new card.

[3.11] END OF ROUND

Refill your hand. If you draw a zombie card, discard it and draw a new card.

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[4.0] TWEAKING SOLO-PLAY RULES

This section describes ways that you can "tweak" the rules for solo-play and the scenarios to increase/decrease the difficulty level.

[4.1] GENERIC TWEAKING

[4.1.1] GAME ROUNDS

You might consider keeping track of the number of game rounds it takes to achieve the objectives and then try and beat the scenario again within a fewer number of game rounds. If you beat it again, try reducing the number of game rounds. If you find it too difficult, you can increase the number of game rounds.

[4.1.2] COVER

Reducing the amount of cover, e.g. cactus, barrels, fences, etc. will normally make a solo-play scenario more challenging.

[4.1.3] GANG SIZE

Adjusting the number of gang members you start with will increase/decrease the challenge level.

[4.1.4] SKILLS

Instead of automatically assigning skills to each member of your gang (other than your gang leader), roll a six-sided die for each gang member and only assign a skill if you roll a 5 or 6. This will make the scenario more challenging.

[4.2] SOLO-PLAY COMPETITION

If you want to play against a one or more other players remotely using solo-play rules:

- Set up the town and send a picture of the setup to the other player(s) so that they can duplicate the building and terrain setup.
- Keeping track of game rounds. The player that completes the objectives in the fewest number of game rounds wins.

[4.3] THE GAUNTLET

[4.3.1] MONEY OBJECTIVES

The most obvious way to adjust the challenge level is to raise/lower the amount of money you need to get to the edge of town.

[4.3.2] EXTRA DEPUTIES

If you want to increase the challenge level, place an extra deputy with twin pistols in each wagon. These deputies may move to obtain line-of-sight or range, but will never leave the wagon. Any opposing models in the wagon are considered to be in base contact with each other and brawling.

[4.3.3] SKILLED LAWMEN

If you want to increase the challenge level, instead of rolling for skills for each lawmen, draw a skill card for each. Discard Gunfighter, Dirty Cheat, or duplicates, and redraw.

[4.3.4] WATER TOWER

Place the water tower in the center of town and move one of the lawmen with a Winchester rifle into the water tower.

[4.4] THE PLAGUE

[4.4.1] NUMBER OF ZOMBIES

To increase the difficulty level, place one additional zombie on the front porch of ***each*** one-story building, leaving two in reserve. Note that this may create a situation where a gang member dies and there are no more zombies in the reserve pile. In this case, simply remove the gang member.

[4.4.2] NO EVASION

Another way to increase the difficulty level is to eliminate the ***evade*** rule, e.g. if a zombie moves into base contact with a gang member, they have no choice but to brawl.

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