

PALLADIUM BOOKS® PRESENTS:

DEAD REIGN® SOURCEBOOK TWO:

DARK PLACES™



By Kevin Siembieda

Warning!

Horror, Violence, Zombies & the Supernatural

The *fictional* world of **Dead Reign®** contains subject matter that deals with the supernatural, death cults, zombies, conspiracy theories, the paranormal, magic, war and extreme violence.

The setting is our modern world taken over by the walking dead – zombies. Hideous animated corpses that feed upon the living. The heroes are ordinary people who battle for their own survival and to reclaim the world from the dead. Human civilization has collapsed, our cities and towns are infested with zombies, madmen and cultists.

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Dark Places™ is a sourcebook
for the ***Dead Reign®*** zombie role-playing game.

Dedication

To *Wayne Smith*, my friend and my go to guy at Palladium Books. I've watched Wayne come on board at a young age and grow into an amazing, capable, creative and reliable top executive. He's a Jack-of-All-Trades who knows his stuff and has our backs. Thank you Wayne, you are one of the Heroes of the Megaverse at Palladium Books.

– Kevin Siembieda, 2009

The cover, by *E.M. Gist*, depicts a man left behind as “live bait” for zombies. However, he is not ready to go gently into the night. He is ready to fight to the bitter end and if he doesn't manage to survive, he plans to take as many zombies down as he can before he dies.

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Dark Places™

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– *Kevin Siembieda, 2009*

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Dark Places

Excerpted from the Road Reaper's Survival Guide

A lot of people have their own ideas about surviving the Zombie Apocalypse. Most of them are stupid or based on pre-apocalypse movies and fiction. Believe what you want, but I'm giving you real survival tips that work. Things that have kept me and the Road Reapers alive. You want to live, this is what you need to know.

Now that the dead reign, the whole world has become a *dark place*. What electricity and lights exist at places are flukes or the work of ambitious survivors. From time to time, survivors with the skill and know-how get the local grid up and running to bring lights to a zombie-filled city or survivor community. Lights are welcomed, but they only help so much, and unless there is somebody to maintain them, they go out again in a matter of weeks.

Most cities and towns are devoid of lights and electricity. That makes every home a small, dark cave and large buildings cavernous pits of darkness. Growing up in the world before the Zombie Apocalypse, you forget what it is like not to have light. Light, back then, only a few short months ago, was practically inescapable. Today it is a precious rarity. Today, we are controlled by the cycle of our planet. When night falls, we are its prisoner.

The walking dead have the advantage in the dark. While we fumble around in the blinding black of night, zombies see just fine. More than that, they see us, the living, aglow with life like fireflies that glow in the dark. It's invisible to us, but to the walking dead, our life energy shines like a bright lightbulb or neon sign that says, "Dinner right here. Come and eat." The light we exude is neither dim nor a faint halo that can be covered up with a bulky jacket or tarp; we glow like one of those infrared images you see on a thermal imaging device, only brighter and with a warm, yellow light, or so I was told by a *Mock Zombie* before I put a bullet in his skull.

Surviving the Night

If you think there are a lot of walking dead out during the daytime, their numbers multiply five to ten fold at night.

The reason is simple, during the day, the light radiated by the living is washed out by sunlight and unless the dead are within a couple hundred yards of us, they can't see "our light." Furthermore, the vision of most walking dead is only fair to poor, and they rely more on their senses of smell, hearing and the ability to see life energy than they do their eyesight. That means during the day and in bright light, they don't see as well as we do. We can hide outdoors or prowling through the streets with much less chance of being spotted.

At night and in dark places, it is a different story.

Zombies can see about as good in the dark as they can in the day, which may be fair to poor, but it's better than we can see. We need light. Be it from a candle or flashlight, we need to light our way in the dark. That light, as well as the light we apparently radiate from our bodies, agitates and attracts the walking dead. Even in total darkness they see as if their eyes were cheap nightvision goggles, and can see at least 100 feet (30.5 m) to navigate in total darkness.

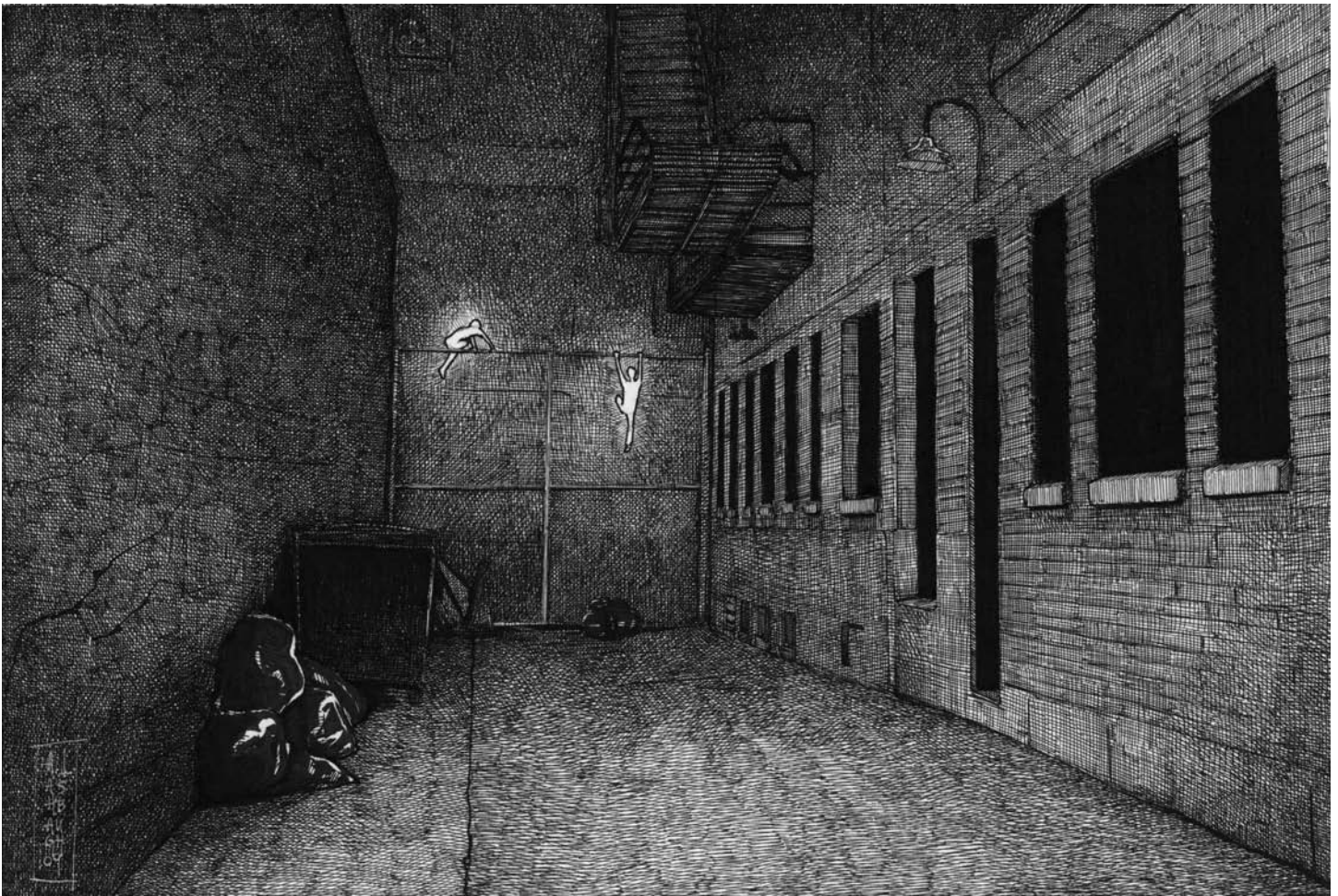
Where the walking dead have the greatest advantage is their ability to see our life energy, which, at night, makes us glow like neon signs. Think about how a single porch-light stands out on a dark street. Now picture that light being the size of a man and you start to get the idea. We stick out at night a mile away like a beacon. To hide, you need to crawl into a barrel or behind closed doors, be it inside a house or the trailer of a truck, inside a dumpster, or something else that has solid or thick walls that don't allow light to escape. Even then "our light" may leak out through the cracks, unless we take precautions to prevent it.

Don't forget, the walking dead don't need to see you to find you. They have exceptional hearing, can smell fear and track you by scent alone. They can also *sense* the living at close proximity. Thankfully, that sensing range is fairly short, at about 25 feet (7.6 m), double that range for large groups clustered together. Inside a house or building, that range can have a longer reach than you might think. Walk overhead on the floor above a zombie, and he'll sense your presence and seek a way upstairs to get you. You have to think about up and down as well straight ahead and side to side when dealing with the walking dead, and that takes some getting used to. At night though, it is the glow of life that is likely to get you spotted and killed.

I've heard some people say the light seen by zombies is our psychic aura. You know, the life force energy that some psychics used to claim they could see back in the day. I've had other people say it is the light of our eternal souls. I don't have a clue what it is, and if I was you, I wouldn't waste too much thought on it. All you need to know is that you are a *human glowworm* to zombies – a beacon in the night that can be seen at considerable distance.

If a zombie sees your light bobbing along a mile down the road, he's going to head in your direction. All the zombies who see you start heading in your direction. It's not a convergence at this point, but it's nearly as bad. Hell, it may be worse, because without the moan, you don't even know they are creeping up on you. **Flesh-Eating Zombies** are likely to stalk that light like a pack of wolves after a deer. You won't know you're being stalked unless you happen to catch a glimpse of one or until they attack in tandem. **The other undead** just start heading toward the light, like sharks attracted to a location by the smell of blood in the water. When one or more of the zombies get within a thousand feet (305 m) of the light, they cut loose with the moan, and the convergence begins in earnest and at a quicker pace. *Fast Attackers* are likely to rush at you and try to keep you off balance and cornered while the others gather in that tightening circle of theirs. Be it day or night, zombies attack and converge anytime they sense or see human prey.

You can run all you want, but if the walking dead can see you glowing in the dark, they pursue the light like hungry



wolves. Zombies may be dumb, but they converge in large numbers that grow as the circle of walking dead tightens and grows as more and more join in the convergence. Most Slouchers, Crawlers, Juggernauts and other zombies just shamle toward the light hoping they get close enough to snuff you out and share in the feeding on your life energy released when you die. The smarter ones, like *Fast Attack Zombies*, *Mock Zombies* and *Flesh-Eating Zombies*, not just the *Thinkers*, might try to loop around and cut off your avenue of escape, jump you, or set up an ambush.

When the dead start to moan, you're in trouble, and you better do something fast. The problem is, hiding or eluding pursuers is no easy task when you are a walking neon sign. If just one little piece of you is exposed and sticking out, the walking dead will see it like a candle in the night. You can try ducking inside a building or a tunnel, but the zombies outside will have seen where you went, and they will follow you. You also have to contend with any zombies that may already be lurking inside. It's like the zombies are following the bouncing ball, only you're the ball, and if you get caught you die. Even if you luck out by entering a building free of walking dead, you need to stay away from windows and openings, even cracks and holes in the wall, or your light will shine through the openings, the walking dead will see it, and they will converge on your location.

Seeing the light of your life essence excites the monsters. As the crowd of walking dead grow in number and all begin to moan, the uproar can be horrific, and zombies in front and all around you will heed the call and head toward the moan. That

means you will be running a gauntlet of undead until you can put enough distance between them and you, or get out of sight. However, every new pocket of zombies you encounter pick up the call, moaning and pursuing, so they all keep coming from all directions. Where a horde of walking dead might give up or lose your trail in daylight, if they can see you glowing in the distance at night, they continue to follow. Even if you can dodge out of sight, the zombies will keep looking for you twice as long as they do normally. If they can sense you are locked up inside some structure, they'll keep circling and searching for a way in, as other zombies join them.

Again, you can try to hide, but you are dealing with numerous counts against you. You can't just hide under the covers or a tarp, because your light shines through thin material. Same thing with hiding under the bed, or behind something, the light of your essence is going to shine out and be seen.

If you lock yourself in a room, you have to stay away from any windows or openings, you need to shove a blanket, jacket, rug or something into the crack under the door, and you better plug the keyhole, cover any windows, and even cover the peephole in the door, otherwise your light may shine through the crack and the walking dead will find you.

All of this is a lot harder than it may sound. We don't perceive ourselves as light. We can't imagine being radiant beings, so we can't easily compensate for it. Furthermore, because seeing our light drives the zombies into a frenzy, they keep sniffing around the last place they saw "the light." If they get too close, their other senses will catch wind of us even if they can't see us.

Some Night Survival Tactics

Where do you hide at night when zombies see you as a human firefly glowing in the dark?

The way I see it, when the walking dead have spotted you at night, you have four options:

1. **Get out fast, like a bat out of Hell and don't look back.**
2. **Go up, and out of sight and sensing range.**
3. **Go down, and out of sight and sensing range.**
4. **Be prepared to fight till you die, and hope for a miracle.**

If there is a fifth option, it is to stay holed up wherever it is you feel safe and secure at night, and NEVER VENTURE OUT INTO THE DARKNESS.

One: Get Out Fast

I've said it before and I'll say it again, when the convergence starts, it is time for you to leave. The first two to six minutes is your window of opportunity. The walking dead are spread wide apart and their numbers are going to be as low as they are ever going to be. Every two minutes after that, their numbers grow geometrically. Get out and get out fast. Run and keep running.

During the day, you can find cover or a hiding place, duck out of sight and slip away. At night, you are that walking neon sign I have been talking about, and every zombie in the dark is looking to snuff your light out. Once a convergence starts you are probably on the hoof through a gauntlet of walking dead. Every time you pause, a new convergence begins. You will be sought out and followed for miles. As long as you "fireflies" are seen all lit up in the night sky, you are hunted and vulnerable.

This is why I'm known to tell people you need at least 4-6 exit routes whenever you go into any area dominated by the walking dead. At night, you might want to make that 6-10 exit routes. If you have a safe house or other good hiding place, this might be the time to go there, but if even one zombie sees you enter it, and you let it live long enough to moan, your location will be converged upon.

My advice is it's time to get out of Dodge, head for the trees and lose yourself in the country someplace. You may end up running and fighting half the night, but you'll live.

Two: Go Up

At night the streets are crawling with walking dead in the first place. When a convergence starts to circle in on your location, your best avenue of escape *may* be going up. Get inside a building, stay away from windows, and go up and out of the zombies' range of senses. Once you accomplish that, hole up deep inside until morning when the number of walking dead should be considerably less.

WARNING: This option is not as safe or easy as it may have just sounded. If you are plunging into a building you don't know, you have no idea what waits for you inside. You could be leaping out of the frying pan and into the fire.

Again, this is where advance scouting and preparation can save your life. Know your surroundings. Have a failsafe plan (or six). Have a designated location to retreat to, hide or to make your dusk till dawn stand. Do this and your odds for survival improve. Don't and you are fireflies waiting to get eaten. Don't read this paragraph wrong. The walking dead are not vampires. They don't skulk away when the sun rises and rooster crows. If the walking dead have converged on your location they'll keep you surrounded day and night, until they can get you or until they no longer sense your presence, get discouraged and wander away. However, every time they get a glimpse of the living, catch a whiff of your human scent or taste your fear, it keeps them entrenched at your position and working on ways to get to you. They may be stupid, but they are relentless if they know you are present. The trick is to make them think you're gone. Do that, and the majority leave, giving you a shot at making run for it. Fail, and you are trapped until you die of thirst or hunger. Of course, that's better than becoming one of them in my book.

Here's what you are up against when you run inside an unknown building.

Your first impediment is you don't know jack about the layout. Even if you can secure the door behind you, you don't know how long it might hold, if there are other entrances, where the stairs are located, or what obstacles may be in your way. There could be a hundred unknown variables in your way.

Second, if you thought it was dark outside, it is darker inside. Without lights, buildings are damn caves and pitch black. Outside you have moonlight, starlight, reflected light and possibly other sources of light. That all adds up to a lot more light than you realize. Indoors, especially inside large buildings, skyscrapers and apartment buildings, it is as dark as pitch. It's like entering a cave. There is no light coming in through the windows from streetlights, because there are no streetlights. It is pitch black. That would have been hard to imagine before the dead rose. Our old world before the Zombie Apocalypse was filled with so much light it was hard to get away from it. But today, all you survivors know exactly what I'm talking about. Now, when the sun goes down, night is a time of utter, terrifying darkness.

If you don't have a flashlight, lamp, torch or some means of illumination you can't see your own hand in front of your nose. If you can't see, you are likely to run into doors and walls, trip over furniture and debris, and bump into each other. If it weren't a life and death situation, it might be comical. You are in a panic situation, running for your life. Your own flashlight is your friend and your enemy, because while it helps you navigate through the darkness, it also serves as a beacon for the walking dead. It betrays your location and indicates the direction you are headed. In utter darkness, a flashlight only illuminates so much, and you can still stumble right into the hands of a Sloucher or trip over a Crawler. Or you might break your own damn neck falling down an open elevator shaft or tripping over your own feet.

Third, you have no idea who or what waits for you inside. Like I said, running headlong into an unknown building could be jumping from the frying pan into the fire. The building could be crawling with zombies. The stairs to the upper levels could be missing or blocked by survivors, bandits or raiders who have already claimed this building for themselves. If already occu-

pied, the inhabitants could prove to be friends or foes, but you should expect foes. You lead a horde of walking dead to somebody else's sanctuary and even the good guys might shoot you down to get the zombies following you to leave. No life essence, no zombies. You could disturb a den of feral dogs, wolves, a bear, puma, or other animal that's going to tear the face off each one of you until it is killed. Mainly, though, it is the walking dead you need to worry about. There could be just as many inside as there are outside. This is especially true of apartment buildings, government buildings, hospitals, police stations, shopping malls, churches, schools and many downtown office buildings. Any building that was densely occupied when the dead rose is still crawling with them. You need to find a building that was largely unoccupied back then.

Even if a building is not full of walking dead, you'll have your share of run-ins with them. Such encounters may be with a single Sloucher or a small handful to several dozen. Better pray the office building was closed the day the dead rose, but even if it was, zombies are likely to have entered since then, but their numbers will be small compared to any of those densely occupied. Regardless, you need to be prepared for a roaming or dormant zombie waiting around the next dark corner.

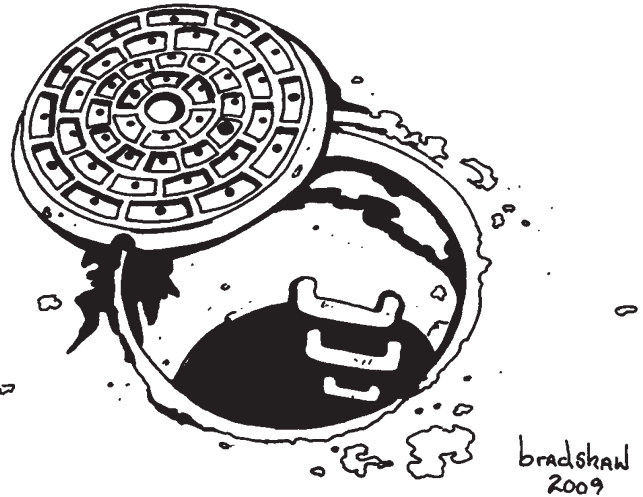
All that having been said, here's why going up might save your life. If you can go up, block as many entrances as you can, and get up high enough, the zombies following you will lose your trail. When that happens they'll wander around aimlessly for several hours. If you can keep out sight and out of sensing range, and stay quiet, they'll eventually leave. That might take 4-24 hours, but it works. In the meanwhile, all you have to worry about is what's on the floor you are hiding out on, and above you. You are, in effect, nestled inside the cavernous belly of a dark place that could be your salvation. After all, the zombies don't know how to navigate its corridors any better than you. In fact, they are only following you. You disappear and they have no reason to be there.

I recommend going up at least five or six floors, maybe higher. If the walking dead are in hot pursuit, you don't have time to investigate the floors as you pass them. Go up. Pause to assess your situation. If the floor you are on seems safe, secure your position, have an alternative exit or three, and sit tight. Just stay alert and ready for action. Remember, you will still have to contend with whatever might be present on the floor your holed up on. There will probably be zombies. Take them down fast and as quiet as possible, and you should be okay, unless there are too many of them. In that case, you are on the move again. If the walking dead keep coming in large numbers, it means either your floor is infested, there is another way in, and/or you are not out of their sensing range. Whatever the case may be, you need to move to someplace more secure. If the zombies come from above while other zombies remain below, you could be in serious trouble; relocate fast. Two-thirds of your survival will depend on how fast you adapt to your changing environment; the rest, I'm afraid, is pure luck. But hiding deep inside a building, the odds are in your favor you can survive. Clear out and secure a building in advance, and your survival is practically guaranteed – unless the site has been compromised by an outsider when nobody was home.

Personally, I like getting to a rooftop. I get claustrophobic inside some dark place I don't know. On the rooftop, I know if I

blocked the stairs on a lower level, I'm definitely out of the range of zombie senses. Barring there being a zombie convention on the top floor, I'm safe. Stick to the middle of the roof, you can see in all directions. There's typically only one or a few entrances to the roof and I like having the sky above me. The rooftop may or may not allow access to a neighboring building or a back way out via an exterior fire escape. Don't count on the latter, as most modern buildings do not have fire escapes running along the exterior wall. In the end, it's all about advance planning, speed, flexibility, and luck.

Game Design Note: There will be an entire sourcebook dedicated to life and travel in skyscrapers and tall buildings.



Three: Go Down

If you can't travel on the street and don't cotton to going inside a building, you might consider going down and traveling under the streets.

I am not talking about subway transit systems that were in service when the dead rose. Those places are usually crawling with the walking dead. I'm talking about *sewers* and *storm drains*. Most every city has them and they are a forgotten labyrinth under our feet. Some cities may also have old, abandoned subway tunnels that haven't been used in years, steam tunnels, old mine shafts and even a natural cave system. Use them as a means to enter and exit a city unseen, as well as an avenue of escape.

There are seldom many zombies at such forgotten and out of the way places. Furthermore, unless you leave the manhole cover off or loose, or you let the zombies see you go down, the walking dead are too stupid to figure out where you went. Even if they can sense you nearby, they don't realize you are underground. Best of all, in the sewers, the 10-20 feet (3-6.1 m) of earth and concrete immediately shields you from their other senses. Like I said, it's like you vanished. Make sure you keep moving and do not pause below the manhole cover or grate. You're a firefly, remember. If a zombie looks down and sees the radiance of your life essence through any opening, it will try to follow, and a manhole cover or iron grate is not going to stop it. Go down, get out of sight and keep moving.

I can't stress enough how vital it is that you are not seen going down through a sewer cover. Zombies may be stupid, but they are relentless pursuers. If even a Sloucher gets a good look at you going down a manhole and pulling the cover over after yourself, it will remove the cover, and climb down after you with the rest right behind it. Trust me, you do not want to be in the sewers with even a few hundred walking dead on your trail. A Thinker or Mock Zombie who sees a human going down into the street follows him to that spot where he vanished, and seeing a manhole cover, the creature is likely (01-60% chance) to figure out what just happened. Whether it follows or sends down an army of zombies in hot pursuit will depend on the individual monster (01-40% chance of one or the other).

Sewer systems and storm drains are vast networks that honeycomb most cities and towns. Using them confounds the walking dead even if an unseen human presence is sensed. Zombies, even the smart ones, do not consider movement under the street.

Note: There is much more on the urban underworld in the section after On the Right Track.

Four: Fight to the Death and Hope for a Miracle

If your situation looks hopeless, I say make a stand and fight to the bitter end. Take down as many of the walking dead as you can on your way out and you'll make your last breaths of life worth living. You'll become one of them after they kill you, but if you killed 8, 10 or 20 before you died, at least it cost them, and you died in the service of humanity.

As for the miracle part, all you can do is hope and wait for an opening that might allow all or some of you to escape. It may sound impossible, but I've seen it happen. That's why it's a miracle.

As a rule, the zombies converge in an ever tightening circle of death. Eventually, they press so tight together that you couldn't slide a sheet of paper between two of them. They become a mass of flailing arms trying to grab hold and rip you apart. However, sometimes the mob parts and there's a momentary line of exit same as Moses parting the Red Sea. When that happens, go for it before the opening closes up, and it will. That kind of mad dash is probably suicide, but what do you have to lose?

In the alternative, you can try to secure a position, battle to keep them from entering, and pray that somebody comes to your rescue. Again, that might sound like a pipe dream, but I've seen it happen. A gang of Street Protectors, Road Reapers, soldiers or other survivors might show up because of the commotion and pull your bacon out of the fire. Don't count on it, but you just never know what might unfold three seconds from now. Just make sure you are prepared to take advantage of any opportunity that comes your way. Hesitate and you might die.

Bright Lights, City Streets

I want to leave you with one more thought about survival at night. Us humans are creatures of light. What I mean by that, is we are not, by nature, nocturnal. We need light to see. Light, be it sunlight, a campfire, flashlight or matchstick, brings us com-



fort and makes us feel safe. That's too bad, because in the world of the walking dead, light will get you killed. Light, even fire, attracts zombies. Be it instinct or some dim human memory, the walking dead equate light with humans and life. Zombies are not attracted to light like moths to a flame. Nor do they mistake artificial light for what seems to be our own radiant life essence that I have been talking about. However, the walking dead will shamble over to investigate any light source. That investigation is probably one or two zombies at a time to a group of a dozen or two. They wander over, look around trying to sniff out any living people and, if they don't sense any, shuffle off. (**Note:** Roll on the *Random Zombie Encounter Table* starting on page 141 in the **Dead Reign™ RPG**, or any of the expanded or location specific tables in this sourcebook, once every 10 minutes the light shines.)

Light that moves, like somebody carrying or running with a flashlight, lantern, burning torch and even the headlights of a car, also attracts the walking dead, particularly the more alert, intelligent and predatory zombies, including *Flesh-Eating Zombies*, *Fast Attack Zombies*, *Thinkers*, *Impersonators*, and *Mock Zombies*. That's bad news, because these walking dead tend to travel in pairs, trios and small groups, and are more stealthy than Slouchers and most of the dumb zombies. Each type of walking dead represents its own unique danger. Of course, moving light may attract bandits and other human villains, so be careful how and where you use illumination at night. Once the monsters get close enough to smell the living or see the light of your life energy, the hunt is on. *Flesh Eaters*, *Thinkers*, *Mock Zombies* and *Impersonators* may not necessarily let loose with the moan. They may rather make the kill themselves and feast without sharing with other zombies via a convergence. On one hand that's good, because it means you probably only have to contend with 1-10 walking dead instead of a thousand crawling out of the woodwork. On the other hand that's bad, because these zombies are more cunning and use the elements of surprise, ambush and teamwork.

Regrettably, fire and artificial light are not enough to lure a horde of zombies to one spot and hold their attention for very

long. To attract the walking dead en masse, cause a convergence, and hold their attention for more than five or ten minutes, there needs to be the potential for a meal. Some unscrupulous souls have started using “live bait” exactly for that purpose. That repugnant tactic is discussed elsewhere in this book.

Lights do have their advantages. Human beings need light to see. It is better for us to have streets lit up than try to navigate in darkness. It's just that getting any large area lit up these days is nearly impossible. You need to find someone who knows what they are doing, find a power station, clear it of walking dead, get it up and running, secure the power station, and keep it going. Lights are more likely to be used on a smaller scale via generators or localized power sources to light up an individual house, fortification, killing field, or even a city block or skyscraper.

It's kind of funny, but light probably attract *the living* more than it does the walking dead. Think about how excited you get the next time you see a house lit up with electric lights, let alone an entire city block or town. Light offers us living the promise of finding other survivors, safety in numbers, security and comfort. Just remember, half the time it's a trap or a pipedream that quickly turns into a nightmare. Like I said, light attracts all sorts of people, including the dangerous ones. Bandits, raiders, lunatics, and survivors sick with contagious disease are all likely to see lights as an opportunity. *Retro-Savages* who hate technology will want to turn those lights off and yours along with them. *Terror* and *Death Cultists* may see a location powered by electricity as a threat or they may want to take it for themselves. Cultists, Zombie Masters, and other bad guys may also use lights to lure survivors to them. The most likely reasons a cult may want to make contact with you are to get their hands on potential recruits and worshipers, to engage in trade (be careful not to get cheated), and to capture people for human sacrifices, enslavement, or to feed to the zombies they keep. Bandits, Raiders, Street Gang Protectors, Shepherds of the Damned, and others may also use light to attract people for just about any purpose you can imagine, good or bad. Exercise caution.

Remember, lights do not scare, blind or chase away the walking dead – they just illuminate them, and all things considered, you might not want see that. Good luck.

– Brad Ashley, leader of the Road Reapers

Random Zombie Encounters in Response to Moving Light

Zombies shuffle over to investigate lights. Lights that move are even more indicative of human life, and get a more excited and immediate response. The faster moving and more intelligent zombies are the most likely to arrive on the scene first, as well as any walking dead who might be in the immediate area. **Note:** Though it was the light that originally attracted the zombies, the creatures do not focus on the character carrying the light source – they attack any human being they can get their hands on.

01-10% Three Fast Attack Zombies. Once they have one or more opponents cornered or knocked off their feet they will start to moan. A convergence will occur unless the moaning can be stopped within the next two melee rounds. Should a convergence begin, 1D6 additional Fast Attack Zombies are the first on

the scene, followed by an ever increasing mob of Slouchers and Crawlers as is usual for such an event.

11-20% 1D4+1 Flesh Eaters come to investigate the moving lights. They silently stalk the living, attacking the first person or pair to break from the larger group to make a kill and feed on their still warm bodies.

21-30% 1D4 Slouchers come to investigate the moving lights. They moan when they see a living human is within 200 yards/meters.

31-35% One Impersonator Zombie quietly investigates the moving lights. This smart zombie tries to figure out what the lights/people are doing, where they are doing it, and the path from which they come and go. It also listens closely to one or two voices so it may imitate them if the opportunity arises. Then it circles around, gathering 1D6 Slouchers, 1D4 Crawlers and two Fast Attack or Bug Boy Zombies to follow it, picks a place to set a trap, assigns hiding places for each of the other zombies and waits until one or more people come close enough to lure them into its clutches.

36-45% 1D6+4 Flesh-Eating Zombies come to investigate the moving lights. They silently stalk the living. They are bold and aggressive due to their large numbers and are likely to jump the entire group from an ambush position.

46-50% Two Trash Crawler or Sewer Crawler Zombies come to investigate the moving lights.

51-55% 2D4 Slouchers come to investigate the moving lights. They moan when they see a living human is within 200 yards/meters.

56-60% 1D4 Juggernauts come to investigate the moving lights. They moan when they see a living human is within 200 yards/meters.

61-70% One Thinker or Mock Zombie. He is likely to hide and observe from a distance. If the humans separate, he will try to pick off and kill the one or two who appear most vulnerable. If that goes well, he may consider picking off another character, otherwise he'll slink away, his hunger sated, for the moment. In the alternative, the Thinker may observe for a while and then round up 3D4 zombies (any type) to launch an attack. Once the attack and moaning begins, other zombies join in the convergence.

71-75% One Impersonator Zombie quietly moves close to the moving lights and watches. This zombie figures out why the lights/people are going into a particular location and waits until they are gone before setting its trap for their return (or the appearance of others). It gathers 1D6+5 Slouchers, 1D4 Juggernauts or Pretty Zombies, 1D4+1 Crawlers or Trash Crawlers and one Bug Boy or Worm Meat Zombie as part of its ambush squad and waits.

76-80% One Thinker leading a trio of Fast Attack Zombies. Another 1D6+1 Slouchers (or mixed group of zombies) are 2D6 melee rounds (30 to 180 seconds) behind him. The Thinker commands this group of dead and will direct them in basic strategies and tactics to attack. The moment the attack starts, the moaning begins and more zombies will begin to converge at the location. Double the number of zombies every two minutes.

81-85% One Mock Zombie. This deluded zombie may believe itself to be, or pretend to be, human. It knows lights mean

people – “other survivors like itself” – and will try to join the human group, help the group, and then pick one of them off as a meal when the opportunity presents itself. Think of a Mock Zombie as a serial killer looking for his next victim.

86-90% One Impersonator Zombie leading 1D6+1 Slouchers or 1D4+1 Juggernaut zombies (or zombies of the G.M.’s choice).

91-95% 1D4 Bug Boys or Worm Meat Zombies.

96-00% One Thinker accompanied by one or two Bug Boy or Worm Meat Zombies. He serves a Death Cult and will observe the lights and people for a while, and then go tell the Death Cult Priest what he has seen. This can only lead to trouble. The other zombie protects the Thinker and may be used to delay any pursuers so the Thinker can get away.



No Place Like Home

Excerpted from the Road Reaper’s Survival Guide

We’ve all heard it said, “there’s no place like home.”

Too bad that doesn’t mean what it used to. Since the dead rose, home ain’t what it used to be. Personally, I say get the hell out of your home town and make yourself a new home.

Staying in your home town has its obvious advantages:

1. You know the lay of the land. That might include the roadways, shortcuts, hiding places and inside information that can serve you well. You know how long it takes to get from A to Z, what to expect, at least from a geographical point of view, and you probably have a good idea of available resources in town.

2. You may have friends and family you can count on.

3. It’s home. You love it there. It’s full of fond memories. You feel comfortable there. You feel like you belong there.

All of those things may seem positive at first glance, but they are more likely to get you killed than help you survive. That’s why you need to get out fast. I haven’t been back to Chicago since the big battle, and I have no intention of ever going back.

Here’s why.

One, home provides a comfort zone that takes the edge off. Only you need that edge, that sense of uncertainty and fear, to survive in a hostile and changing environment. You can’t let yourself ever feel completely safe or let your guard down. Oper-

ating in your home town is liable to do exactly that, and it will get you killed.

Being on your home turf and knowing the lay of the land makes you *feel* smart, safe and superior, but it’s not true. It’s an illusion that puts you in danger and encourages you to take stupid risks. This is no longer the place you *think* you know. Feeling smart makes you overconfident and stupid. Feeling safe when danger is all around you dulls your reaction time and will get you killed. Feeling superior makes you lazy, distracted and careless.

Those shortcuts, roads and resources you know about as a native to the area may still be there, but the landscape is all changed and deadly. You don’t know what’s down your secret alley shortcut or hideaway. There’s no living people to maintain it, and on any given day, at any given hour, you don’t know what zombies, maniacs or animals might be lurking there. This is not the home you think you know, and that wrong perception of feeling safe, in the know and in control, is exactly what’s going to get you killed. This isn’t your home anymore. Get out and don’t come back.

Two, home is where you may have friends and family you can count on. That’s sweet. Now round them up and haul ass out of there if you want them to survive. Again, this is not your home anymore. It’s not the place you remember, and those fond memories are going to tug at your heartstrings, distract you, slow you down, make you hesitate, and get you killed.

Surrounding yourself with friends and family creates that comfort zone I was talking about, and shaves off your edge. Anybody who has experienced it themselves – and I think most of us have at one time or another – knows it’s when you feel safe that you are in the greatest danger. You stop expecting trouble, you stop looking for danger and you aren’t prepared when it comes for you. That’s when you and your family are exposed and most vulnerable. Don’t put yourself in that situation.

When all hell breaks loose in your cozy, familiar place, maybe you do manage to scoop up your family and get out. You make a beeline for that secret shortcut or other safe place you know about in your home town. Only you find that shortcut is blocked off by an overturned semi or a couple of burned out cars that weren’t there yesterday. Worse, the place is crawling with zombies, because the people who used to own those wrecked vehicles led them to this “safe” place before they died and got turned into walking dead themselves. Now what? All of a sudden you don’t know what you thought you knew. You panic. Where to go now? You may know the streets and the buildings around the corner, but you don’t know what might be waiting for you there. And if you run blind, because you think you know another safe place, but it’s not, or it’s cut off by walking dead too, you really panic. The sense of terror, confusion and panic are all multiplied because suddenly the places you once knew and felt safe are gone. Your world is topsy-turvy and it paralyzes you. Seeing what you know and love destroyed or taken over by the walking dead is much more debilitating than running into the unknown. For one thing, there is a sense of attachment, sentiment and loss that hits you in the gut like a sledgehammer.

At a place you don’t know or care about, you are on edge all the time. You are prepared for anything and know that you have to think on your feet, scout ahead, and be ready for whatever you find. You aren’t likely to have brought your friends and

family members with you. They're safe back at your reinforced bunker, safe house, or a safe haven community. But when you're *home*, when you feel safe and think you know what lies ahead, the emotional baggage is terrible. It's panic and pure terror. It's that moment when you stand frozen in time and wonder, "Oh God, now what? Let me think." Only you don't have time to think, and you have your family in tow. It's always harder to make a fast decision and take action when you have to worry about the welfare of other people, especially noncombatants. Especially women and children. And doubly so when they are *your* women, children and loved ones.

Friends and family are exactly why you need to leave your home town. You think it's difficult taking down a zombie that's a child, attractive woman or old man who reminds you of your grandfather? It is a hundred times harder when that zombie is your child, your high school sweetheart or grandad! Odds are, most of your friends and family are dead. Walking dead! So get out of town, so you don't have to think about that every day, or it will crush your soul. Get out so you don't have to put a bullet in the head of the zombie that used to be your mother or wife.

You stay in your home town and you are going to encounter zombies that are people you know. Scratch that, abominations of people you once knew. When you see that familiar face in a horde of converging zombies you are struck by a deluge of emotions. Sorrow, loss, anger, confusion, and others. None of which you can afford in a combat situation. Odds are, you'll be flooded with memories and numbing sadness, that, even if it's for a moment, leaves you distracted and vulnerable. You are lost in thought and an emotional tidal wave that freezes you in your tracks and chops you down. It is almost certain to dull your reaction time, cloud your judgement, and cause you to fumble and screw up. (**Roll to save vs momentary emotional shock.** Take the character's M.E. attribute number, reduce it by half and roll on a D20. He must roll under his halved M.E. number to save. A successful save means the character only loses initiative and one melee attack/action, and cannot roll for Perception. If the character fails to save, the following penalties apply. Penalties from emotional shock: No initiative, no Perception Rolls, reduce Spd by 20%, loses 1D4 melee attacks/actions per melee round, -5 on all combat rolls and maneuvers, and -25% on skill performance. Duration of shock and penalties: 1D4 melee rounds.)

That momentary lapse or screw up might get you or someone else killed. Don't think it can't happen to you. I've seen battle hardened, zombie-killing machines drop to their knees and sob when faced with their mother, father, sibling, spouse, best friend, the neighbor's child, or their own child. When you imagine this scenario, you tell yourself you won't hesitate. That you will cut the zombie down without thinking twice about it. If only that were true.

The reality is, it doesn't matter that you *know* the person is the walking dead. Even if you know the person is a stinking monster intent on tearing your throat out, the experience is numbing. It's not like the stupid movies where the hero pauses and cries out, "mother," then blows her head off and keeps on going. Hell no. You know your mother is a zombie. A monster. You know she's not the woman you loved. And you know there's nothing left of her. What you aren't prepared for, and what paralyzes you, is the overwhelming emotion when you are confronted with the *reality* right before your eyes. It's one thing

to know, in your head, that your mother, sister, spouse, child and countless loved ones are *missing*, and odds are they're all the walking dead. It's another thing entirely standing there face to face with the monstrous truth. The sorrow, the horror, it's much more than you can imagine, and you are *never* ready for it. Trust me on that. The emotions of the encounter and the sudden sense of loss, sorrow, and anger are overwhelming. They will stop you in your tracks, and that could spell your doom.

It might not be so bad when it's the bully from fifth grade or the gym teacher you never liked, but you'd be surprised how you feel even then. When the zombie you face is someone you once knew, it is a whole new ball game. The horror becomes deeper and personal. This isn't some nameless stiff that needs to be dropped. This is your mom, or your friend, the waitress you thought was cute, or the friendly bus driver. It's different when it is someone you recognize. If the encounter doesn't get you killed, it will leave you depressed and melancholy for a week.

And that's my point, do NOT put yourself through that. Leave your home town as fast as you can and never look back.

Three, those fond memories and attachment to home, the feeling this is where you belong, it's all a lie. You are fooling yourself. You don't belong there anymore. Your home town is the domain of the walking dead now, and those warm and fuzzy memories are baggage weighing you down and compromising your decision making abilities.

When you are in your home town, there are places that have sentimental value to you, and that sentiment will cloud your judgement and slow your actions. You may be more reluctant to burn down the church you went to, or the high school you attended, in order to destroy a nest of zombies. You might be distracted for a moment, and sometimes a split second can make the difference between life and death. The situation doesn't even have to be that dramatic. You may find yourself cutting through the park you know and love so well. The way the sun beams across the flowers and trees reminds you of the day you spent the night in the park with your sweetheart. You proposed to her that morning or it was your first kiss. All those memories pop into your head and you pause with a smile on your face as you drink in the warm memories of that special day. You are momentarily distracted, so you don't notice the two Crawlers in a tree branch overhead until they drop down on you.

You can't let yourself be distracted, and home will do that to you.

There's also a negative psychological aspect that can come into play when you are based in your home town. Seeing the decay and destruction, the friends and acquaintances turned into the walking dead, it wears on you because it has deeper meaning and significance. Someplace you don't know or care about, where there is no history, no attachment to it, you'll burn down a building, blow up the train station, drop zombies by the dozens and do whatever is necessary to stay alive and save lives without thinking twice. If it's home, there will be hesitation, stupid compromises, attempts to avoid damaging a building that has personal meaning, and there is too much sorrow.

The past is dead. There is only madness and sorrow looking back or staying at home. You need to forget the past and look forward to the future. I'm sorry, truly I am, but you should leave your home before it destroys you and those you cherish most in the world.

A Christmas Yarn

You'll hear a lot of crazy theories and stories about how the dead rose to reign over the Earth, and how to destroy them. Take them all with a grain of salt. Truth is, nobody knows why this happened or how it's all going to end.

There are some people who speculate that because the dead rose last Christmas, that salvation is coming next Christmas, which isn't all that far off at this point. According to them, the dead will cease to walk the earth and return to the grave. I guess that means we get to start all over and get things right this time.

Retro-Savages have a spin on that story. According to them, the above will happen one Christmas Day, but not until all of us

survivors who still cling to technology have repented or been destroyed.

I wouldn't put any stock in either story. Granted, I'm not a religious man, but I don't think the Good Lord had anything to do with the dead rising. I don't believe there will be any Christmas miracle or that us sinners need to die for the world to be free of walking dead. Eat your Christmas goose in a bunker and expect nothing different after Christmas. Do what you need to survive, but do it without sacrificing your fellow man.

For me, Christmas, Hanukkah or whatever special day you celebrate, will be a good day if it passes without incident and we all live to see the dawn of the next day. Find your happiness where you can and fight the good fight.

— Brad Ashley, leader of the Road Reapers

New Types of Zombies

Bug Boys

A Zombie Aberration

“The more time that passes and more places I see, the more variant zombies we seem to encounter. Two of the most disgusting I've ever seen are what we call *Bug Boys* and *Worm Meat*. They're found everywhere, but are more numerous in the southern United States, Mexico and further south where it is hot and humid.

“Some folks will tell you they are only bug encrusted Slouchers and nothing to be worried about, and they'd be misleading you. They may move and think slow, like Slouchers, but they represent a whole new level of danger. You grapple with a *Bug Boy* and you'll get infested with disease carrying insects. Meanwhile, any bite or claw attack of a *Worm Meat* that breaks the skin, has a much higher rate of serious infection, *Zombie Rot* and other disease. I recommend doing away with these insect infested monstrosities from a distance, and avoid direct contact whenever you can. If you get bit or scratched by one of these walking dead, wash that wound out thoroughly as soon as you can, and keep a close watch on it.”

— Brad Ashley, Leader of the Road Reapers

Bug Boys and *Worm Meat* zombies are effectively decaying Slouchers whose bodies are infested with insects that live in the clothing and flesh of their zombie host. Bug Boys are typically covered in *lice*, *fleas*, *bedbugs*, *ticks*, and *biting gnats*, all of which feed on human blood or flesh. A Bug Boy may also have nests of cockroaches, flies, mosquitoes, silverfish, centipedes and other insects on or inside of them and their clothing. Many of these insects feed on the zombie's flesh, while other insects use the zombie as a place to nest and as means of finding more suitable, *human hosts* to feed upon. Even insects like ordinary flies and cockroaches which are not a threat to humans, are disgusting and repugnant to most people. This means the Horror Factor of a Bug Boy (and *Worm Meat*) is greater than an ordinary zombie, and in addition to the usual Horror Factor penalties, characters may have to deal with panic and vomiting.



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Grappling with a Bug Boy even for a few seconds enables its parasitic hitchhikers to leap from the zombie onto the living human. *Head lice, fleas, bedbugs, ticks* and their kind are more than an annoyance and no joke. The insect bites cause itching and scratching, discomfort, rashes, swollen bumps (bite marks), and possibly a more serious allergic reaction. This can lead to open wounds, bleeding scratches, infection and disease. Moreover, the smell of blood, even from a scratch or small wound, helps zombies “sniff out” that person (+10%), making him a liability to his teammates. The itching can be a distraction that reduces Perception Rolls by half and skill performance by -5%. All of this spells trouble for those up against one of these horrid walking dead.

So extreme is the insect infestation, that some Bug Boys seem to be covered in dust or haze until one realizes that it is not dust at all but clouds of fleas, lice or gnats hopping, crawling or hovering over its body. This adds to the Horror Factor of the Bug Boy zombie, as most humans abhor the insects it carries.

Like Slouchers, *Bug Boys* wander the streets and freeways, and converge with other zombies to get human prey. Approximately 1 in 50 zombies is a Bug Boy. That number increases to 1 in 8 when dealing with zombies that wander the sewers, damp cave systems, swampy/marshy areas and the southern United States, Mexico, Central America, and other hot, humid environments in South America and similar places in the world. Like Slouchers, Bug Boys are slow and shuffling creatures whose danger lies in their gathering with vast numbers of other zombies, their brute strength and their utter relentlessness. However, Bug Boys have the additional threat of biting insects that cause itching, infection and disease. Many a survivor has suffered itching, rashes, bug bites, illness and even death days after an encounter with a Bug Boy he tussled with for only a melee round or two. Like Slouchers, Bug Boys are easy to evade when dealing with only a handful of zombies, but not when fighting a horde of dozens or hundreds of converging zombies. It is usually impossible to recognize a Bug Boy (or any specific type of zombie) until the thing is right on top of the character, when it may be too late to avoid the creature.

All Bug Boys and Slouchers are at their most dangerous in large groups, and since they are everywhere, they gather in massive numbers. They are also formidable in confined spaces where humans have little room to maneuver. Bug Boys are susceptible to the influence of *Death Cult Priests, Thinkers, Impersonator Zombies* and *Mock Zombies*, who are able to command them, at least for awhile. Of course, Bug Boys can only follow simple commands and are only really useful at killing, standing guard and hauling away garbage and debris, or carrying or dragging stuff.

Bug Boy Insect Infestation Penalties

There are so many insects on the Bug Boy that characters who encounter one can usually see them crawling and hopping across the zombie’s body, often en masse or as a cloud. This is frightening, disgusting and repugnant to most humans, giving the Bug Boy a Horror Factor of 16.

Every melee round a character engages with a Bug Boy, 2D6 parasitic insects leap onto him. Within 2D4 minutes, the bugs will find their way through the character’s clothes and onto his body where they will feed and procreate. Double the number

of bugs if the character grapples with, is held by, or is pushed into the deadly embrace of a Bug Boy zombie. An additional 6D6+4 insects will hop onboard every additional melee round (15 seconds) a character is held by or grapples with a Bug Boy. **Note:** Fleas and lice can leap three feet (0.9 m) and are too small to easily see, find and pluck off, especially on the head and other hairy parts of the body. Ticks can also leap that distance but are huge by comparison, ranging in size from the size of a grain of rice to that of a pea.

Likewise, every time a character punches, kicks or hits a Bug Boy, 2D6 bugs fall or leap onto his fist, foot or weapon.

Revulsion Reaction to Bug Boy Zombies

Facing a zombie covered in bugs is so disgusting to most people that an additional *Revulsion Reaction* may occur.

Roll to save vs the zombie’s Horror Factor (needs a 16 or higher to save vs the H.F. of Bug Boys) to determine the normal H.F. reaction. If the character saves vs Horror Factor do NOT roll for Revulsion.

If the character failed to save vs H.F., roll a second time for one of the following additional reactions to encountering such a disturbing horror. The *Revulsion Reaction* lasts for 1D4 melee rounds unless specified otherwise.

01-17% Revulsion and avoidance. Makes an extreme effort to avoid being touched by the zombie or touching it, goes around the Bug Boy, even if it puts him at risk of being attacked by other zombies or enemies, and may even dodge behind other characters to avoid it. This also means the character is too pre-occupied and busy avoiding the Bug Boy to fight or do much of anything else. He can only use one melee attack/action to do something other than dodge, hide from and avoid the Bug Boy, and even then does so with half his usual bonuses and skill performance is -20%.

18-33% Frenzy. Screams and goes wild in an attempt to break free from the zombie’s clutches or tries to kill it! +2 melee attacks/actions and +2 to strike, parry and dodge, but ONLY against the Bug Boy(s). While in this state of mind the character cannot attack any other target and is unaware of anything else going on around him, -30% on skill performance, and can think of nothing else but escaping or killing the Bug Boy.

34-50% Involuntary reaction of vomiting. A failed roll to save vs Bug Boy Revulsion Reaction (roll under H.F. number) causes the character’s stomach to turn and he throws up. The vomiting character cannot perform any skill nor attack, parry, dodge, or move while vomiting, may get some on his clothing, loses initiative, loses 1D4 melee attacks for that round and all combat bonuses are half for the rest of that melee round. Duration is one melee round.

Note: 01-50% chance of vomiting or gagging (with the same penalties as vomiting) whenever one or more insects from the zombie go inside the character’s mouth. It is a natural gag response.

51-66% Panic flailing. The second the character breaks free from, or avoids, the zombie he stops and spends 1D4 melee rounds (15-60 seconds) frantically brushing himself off over and over again. This may leave the character open to further attack. He may also peel off the top layer of clothing and leave it behind. The character may also shout or scream something like,

“Get them off. Get them off! Are any on me?!” the entire time. During this moment of panic stricken revulsion, the character has only two melee attacks/actions, and without his usual combat bonuses. All other actions go toward brushing and/or taking off clothing. During this panic and flailing he is unaware of much of anything happening around him, has no initiative or Perception Rolls, and performs any skills at -40%. The character is likely to be paranoid about having lice or fleas for the next 1D6 days and may seek cleansing and medical treatment just in case.

67-83% Creepy, buggy sensation. Even if no insects actually got on the character, he gets chills looking at (or even thinking about) the insect infested zombie, and feels as if bugs are crawling on his body. That makes him distracted and disoriented: -10% on skill performance and reduce Perception Rolls and initiative by half for 1D4 hours after an encounter with a Bug Boy. May desperately want to change clothes and/or shower.

84-00% Nerves of steel or delayed reaction. No penalties at this time, but the character finds the zombie repulsive and nauseating. Roll on this table again, 1D6+2 melee rounds after an engagement with the Bug Boy, to see if there was a delayed reaction (reacts accordingly). If this percentile range (84-00%) is rolled again, the character remains fine and is +2 to save vs Horror Factor from any zombie, gore or insect encounter for the next 12 hours.



Bug Boy Pestilence

Bedbugs

Bedbugs might be thought of as vampire fleas who don't stay around. Like vampires, they usually come out at night, feed on their victim and go back to their hiding place. Unlike other parasitic insects, bedbugs climb onto a person, feed for a few minutes, and crawl or hop back to a nice, dark, cozy corner or crease in the bed, under the bed, in the blanket or linens, under the carpet, inside crevices of other furniture, etc. That makes them extremely hard to exterminate from a dwelling because the damned things could be hiding almost anywhere, except on the people they are feeding on.

The bites usually appear on the arms and legs as a small red welt, but can be anywhere on the body. They itch similar to a flea bite but are at half the risk of becoming infected. The usual treatment of calamine lotion and other anti-itch medicines can be used to sooth the bite and reduce the itching.

Penalties from a Non-Infected Bedbug Bite (Distracting): -1 on Perception Rolls, -1 on initiative, -5% on skill performance, and after a while, the itching can become quite maddening.

Extreme allergic reaction is rare (2% chance), but can be severe, causing *anaphylactic shock* – an extreme, system-wide allergic reaction that can lead to death. Shock drops blood pressure, causes swelling and results in low blood pressure and cardiovascular collapse.

Penalties from an Infected Bedbug Bite (Potentially Deadly): -6 on Perception Rolls, no initiative, reduce Spd, attacks per melee, and combat bonuses by half, breathing is labored, the heart races, fatigues in 20% the usual time, and -30% on skill performance. Continued strenuous activity (fighting, running, heavy labor) has a 01-55% chance of causing heart failure, roll to save vs coma/death; roll for possible heart failure for every two minutes of activity.

Cloud of Gnats

A cloud of biting gnats or flies nip and sting, inflicting 1D6 bites every melee round a character encounters or engages a Bug Boy. The bites do no permanent damage nor have any lasting side effect. For most people it is nothing more than a sensitive red spot of soreness that fades away within 2D6+4 hours. There is a 01-10% chance a character has an allergic reaction causing soreness and itching for 1D4 days before the bite goes away (-1 on initiative and Perception Rolls, and -5% on skill performance for the duration of the symptoms).

However, if some of the insect swarm flies into a character's open mouth (01-60% chance per melee round), roll to save vs the Bug Boy's Horror Factor. A failed roll (rolling under the H.F. number) results in one of the following reactions:

01-50% Momentary disgust and distraction: Results in losing one melee attack, initiative, and -10% on skill performance for the rest of the melee round.

51-00% Involuntary vomiting: The vomiting character cannot perform any skill attack, parry, dodge, or move while vomiting, may get some vomit on his clothing, loses initiative, loses 1D4 melee attacks for that round, and all combat bonuses are -2 for the rest of that melee round.

Fleas

Fleas are tiny, ugly insects that feed on the blood of humans and animals. The most common are those that feed on animals, but they will also bite and feed upon human beings, especially fleas that come from Bug Boys.

Fleas are most active in warm weather. They don't generally stay on people, though there is a species that preys upon humans. Fleas are most likely to be found in on the head, legs, other hairy parts of the body and in clothing, bedding, carpeting and plush furniture. Fleas feed on the blood of their hosts. Most people are familiar with the variety of fleas that afflict dogs, cats and other pets and livestock, but while animals are these fleas' primary target, they will feed upon humans as well.

Females lay 30-40 eggs per day. Eggs hatch in 4-12 days (the short end of the spectrum in warm and humid conditions). For every one flea a person sees, there is the likelihood of another 200 eggs in the area. Fleas, lice and bedbugs multiply at an alarming rate. The bugs spread to other characters/people the in-

fectured person meets, particularly those with whom he has frequent contact, including family and teammates. Most of these insects are fast and tiny. So tiny that you don't even feel them on your body. What the victims feel is the itch from their bite. Fleas and head lice lay tiny eggs on the hair follicles which are not easily found and are impossible to pluck off by hand. To kill the lice requires shampooing with over the counter or doctor prescribed medicines, but the eggs must be combed out with a special, very, very fine toothed comb. Shaving one's head can go a long way to eliminate or greatly reduce human fleas, as the hair on the head is the main breeding ground and nesting place for the insects. However, fleas, in particular, and lice to a much lesser degree, may also be found on other parts of the body and in articles of clothing and fabric.

Scrubbing one's hair and body within 12 hours after an encounter with a Bug Boy zombie removes or kills 2D4x10% of the nasty insects, but the clothing must also be washed, ideally in hot water, and the remaining insects must be killed using medical procedures.

Flea bites: Flea bites usually form into a non-swelling bump on the skin and become quite itchy, but should improve and disappear without further complications in 1D4 days.

Penalties from Common Flea Bites (Distracting): -1 on Perception Rolls, -1 on initiative, -5% on skill performance, and after a while, the itching can become quite maddening.

01-33% chance of infection: Where problems come in is from scratching the bites. They itch like crazy and it is very difficult not to scratch. Scratching is likely to tear the skin and cause redness and bleeding. Bleeding makes the character easier for zombies to sniff out (+10% to smell and track blood), and more seriously, can become infected. That's especially true of fleas that come from Bug Boy zombies. **Note:** Use the Infection Symptoms and Penalties Table found in the **Dead Reign™ RPG** on page 31.

An allergic reaction to a flea bite (2% chance) results in the bite being larger, swollen, extremely itchy and more prone to infection.

Symptoms of an Allergic Reaction from a Flea Bite: It is likely to be accompanied by an itchy red rash (01-85%; increased and widespread itching), hives (01-50%), obvious swelling of the skin around the bite (01-90%) and shortness of breath (01-60% chance). The bite and the accompanying discomfort last 1D6+4 days longer and the itching and scratching is likely to cause bleeding and severe infection (01-66% chance).

Penalties from a Flea Bite Allergic Reaction: -2 on Perception Rolls, -2 on initiative, -2 to parry and entangle, reduce Spd, M.A. and P.B. attributes by 20% (unsightly rash, ugly red bumps and scabs on the hands, arms, face and neck, as well as constant scratching or rubbing), fatigues in half the time and has difficulty breathing after 1D6 minutes of running, fighting or strenuous activity (reduce attacks/actions per melee by half). These penalties are in addition to those that may result from infection.

01-66% chance of Infection when an Allergic Reaction Occurs: **Note:** Use the Infection Symptoms and Penalties Table found in the **Dead Reign™ RPG** on page 31.

Flea Bite Treatment: Wash the area with cool water and antiseptic soap to prevent infection, a topical anti-bacterial appli-

cation is also effective. Calamine lotion, mild antihistamine, hydrocortisone, ibuprofen gel or anesthetic creams may be used to soothe itching and prevent rash. An ice pack may be used to reduce swelling. The bite should improve in 1D4 days.

Getting Rid of Fleas: There are a variety of methods and treatment to get rid of fleas. Scrubbing down, removing/shaving hair, and thoroughly washing clothes (or getting new clothing) are all effective ways to remove fleas. Eating garlic can help rid and repel fleas and ticks because the garlic smell is excreted through the skin, making it inhospitable for the fleas. A repellent can be made from steeped lemon extracts for use on animals and clothing. Natural apple cider vinegar fed to dogs works the same as the garlic remedy. Lemon skin rinse also kills and repels fleas.

One home remedy: One tablespoon of baking soda, with two cups of clean, warm water in a spray bottle, sprayed on hair thoroughly. Don a shower cap to hold the fleas in, wait 15 minutes for the baking soda to work, then comb thoroughly with a fine-tooth comb. Then wash hair with lemon scented dish soap, rinse and comb again. Then apply apple cider vinegar to the hair, use the shower cap again, wait 15 minutes, and comb out again. Rinse. This should rid your hair of fleas. Flea combs made for dogs and cats can be effective on body lice and fleas on humans.

Clothing, blankets, and other fabric that might be infested with fleas (or lice) should be washed in hot water or replaced with clean ones.

Head Lice

As the name suggests, head lice live, breed and feed in the hair on a person's head. They are tiny, brown, hopping and crawling insects smaller than a grain of rice. Their bite causes itching. The eggs are laid on individual strands of hair and are difficult to see and impossible to remove without a very, very fine-tooth comb. Shaving the head and disposing of the hair is also a good, easy solution. However, a serious infestation will have lice living in the bed linen, blankets, and even possibly on stuffed animals, clothing, hats, and soft furniture. Lice are typically spread by human contact as the little buggers crawl and hop onto other people as the infected person makes contact. Lice (and fleas) can leap three feet (0.9 m) and float on a breeze or a strand of hair.

Lice Bites: Of all the parasitic insects carried by Bug Boy zombies, lice are the least dangerous. Their bite itches like crazy and can become a distraction. Plus the idea that tiny bugs infest your hair is, well, disgusting, but there are no serious medical complications.

Penalties from Lice (Distracting): -1 on Perception Rolls, -1 on initiative, -5% on skill performance, and after a while, the itching can become quite maddening. There is little chance of infection from the bite of head lice, unless one scratches his scalp raw (01-33% when that happens).

Lice Treatment: There are a number of over the counter and doctor prescribed medicines that kill live lice. Here's the drill: Remove clothing and wash in hot water. Apply medicine to the hair and head to kill the live lice (typically comes in a shampoo form). Then use a very fine-tooth comb to comb through the hair to remove nits and eggs and repeat over the next 2-4 days. This is

the only way to remove the eggs from the hair other than shaving one's head (they are seldom found in other body hair). Lice do not last long without a human host and typically die within 6-14 days. Wash all blankets, clothing, etc. in hot water or replace with clean, new clothes. Shaving the head is another option.

Ticks

Ticks are the nastiest and most dangerous of the possible insect infestations resulting from an encounter with a Bug Boy zombie. Ticks are larger than the other parasites and carry a host of diseases that can cause infection and other illnesses. The sooner a tick is removed, the less likely the chance of becoming infected with a disease.

Ticks burrow only their mandibles or heads into their victim's body to feed on their blood. They feed on both humans and animals. You do not want to leave the mouth parts in the body as it will cause irritation and may cause infection. The other problem with ticks is they stay attached to the body for a long period of time with their head and mouth buried into their host's body. On humans that can be anywhere, but is typically the legs, arms, back, neck and head. Ticks attach themselves to the skin and draw blood by sending long, needle-like projections that are part of their mouth and head into the flesh.

Tick Bite Treatment: Step one is to remove the tick attached to the body. There are special tweezers made to remove ticks from animals which can be used to remove them from humans as well. Use a fine tipped tweezer to remove the tick – these are not normal tweezers but rather resemble needle-nosed pliers in tweezer form. If tweezers are not available, cover your hands with tissue paper and use your fingers to pull the tick out of the skin. Do not touch the tick with bare hands. Do not squash the tick or grab or squeeze its bloated belly, as such actions push the contaminated contents of its stomach into the bite wound where the tick is attached and cause infection (01-95% likelihood). Grab the tick as close to the mouth/head as you can and gently, but firmly pull the tick *straight out* until it lets go. Do not twist or you'll tear its head off and leave the head and mouth under your skin.

Do not try to smother a tick with rubbing alcohol, petroleum jelly, nail polish or gasoline as such tactics are likely to cause the thing to disgorge its stomach contents into the wound and cause infection (01-90% likelihood). Likewise, burning a tick with a burnt match or cigarette is equally likely to cause it to regurgitate the contents of its belly into the wound as a reaction to pain. After removing the tick, wash your hands thoroughly.

Rubbing a tick in a gentle, circular motion for 1D4+2 melee rounds has a 01-45% chance of annoying the insect and causing it to back out of the skin, at which point it will hop off or can be flicked off.

After the tick is removed, wash the area of the bite with lots of warm water and dish soap. If it becomes irritated, apply an antibiotic ointment.

Tick Bite Treatment: The bite will ache and itch. Avoid scratching. Scratching is likely to cause bleeding and infection (01-85%). Apply cold packs for relief. Benadryl, calamine lotion and similar anti-itch ointments help relieve itching.

Penalties from a Non-Infected Tick Bite (Distracting): -1 on Perception Rolls, -2 on initiative, -5% on skill performance, and after a while, the itching can become quite maddening.

01-66% chance of infection (increase to 88% if the wound is not cleaned and treated within 12 hours): Ticks are nasty, and infection can occur even if the character refrains from scratching and cleans the bite (66% chance). Bleeding from scratching or infection makes the character easier for zombies to sniff out (+10% to smell and track blood). If the bite becomes infected, an itchy, expanding red rash appears, and the character suffers from fever and flu-like symptoms. **Note:** Roll on the Infection Symptoms and Penalties Table found in the **Dead Reign™ RPG** on page 31 or the nastier Infection Table under the *Worm Meat zombie* in this sourcebook.

Bug Boy, Sloucher Variant

Also known as: Toxic Zombie or Infectious or Infested Zombie.

Alignment: Considered Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4, M.E. 1D6, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2x Strength when alive (typically 2D6+18), P.P. 1D6+1, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 1D6, Spd 1D4+6.

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +2, but all Main Body S.D.C. must be depleted first before Hit Points can be affected.

Note: See *S.D.C. by Location* and *Hit Points* in the **Dead Reign™ RPG** for more details.

S.D.C. by Location:

- * Hands (2) – 1D6+4 each
- * Arms (2) – 1D8+6 each
- * Feet (2) – 1D6+4 each
- * Legs (2) – 2D6+6 each
- * Lower Jaw – 1D6+3
- ** Neck – 1D6+10
- ** Head – 2D6+14
- *** Main Body – 3D6+30

Armor Rating: 14

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E. 1D4

Natural Abilities: Standard. See **Dead Reign™ RPG** for details.

See Life Energy (P.P.E.): 9,000 feet (2,743.2 m) at night or in darkness.

Sense Life Energy (P.P.E.): 25 feet (7.6 m) to sense 1-6 people, 50 feet (15.2 m) to sense a group of 7-24 people, and 100 feet (30.5 m) to sense a group of 25 or more people. Half that range to sense animals. One quarter that range, 6.2 feet (1.9 m), when a zombie is dormant.

Recognize Human Scents: 83%. This also tells the zombie that humans are nearby, or have been present recently.

Track Humans by Scent: 18% chance, +10% if the human is sweaty or hasn't bathed in three or more days, +10% to follow the scent of blood, +5% if there is more than one human present in the same area, +5% to smell perfume, cologne or aftershave. All bonuses are accumulative.

Smell Fear in Humans: Makes zombies more aggressive: +1 on initiative and +1 to strike or disarm. If the level of fear is fever pitched or five or more people are terrified, the zombie is also +1 attack per melee around.

Zombies Can See Without Eyes: The eyes glow with a red light inside empty eye sockets.

Keen Sense of Hearing: Can pinpoint location of a Zombie Moan after hearing it for only 30 seconds.

Impervious to Most Everything: Only decapitation, destroying a zombie's brain, and fire can kill a zombie. Does not need to breathe, and survives underwater and in a vacuum.

S.D.C. and Hit Point Regeneration: 1D6+3 S.D.C. and 2 Hit Points are automatically restored every hour. Extra P.P.E. may also restore S.D.C. and Hit Points at a rate of 1D6+2 S.D.C. and one Hit Point per extra P.P.E. point. **Note:** See **Dead Reign™ RPG**, page 38, for details.

No Life Energy of Their Own: Zombies are cold, dark creatures without body heat or an aura. They cannot be seen by infrared and thermal imaging optic systems. Rather, zombies register the same as a piece of timber.

Go Dormant: A stasis sleep that keeps zombies from decaying. Walking dead hide when they go dormant and can be waiting anywhere.

People Slain by the Zombie Rise as One: Victims slain in a zombie attack, their P.P.E. absorbed, rise as the walking dead within 2D4+4 minutes after expiration.

Insect Related Attacks, Illness & Penalties: See details in the body of the description.

Risk of Infection from Insect Bites: 01-40% for each bite unless noted otherwise.

Skill of Note: Climb 40%/30%.

Attacks per Melee: Three from the zombie, usually by biting and hitting with fists, but the insects transferred from the zombie to the human who comes in contact with it also bite and cause itching, bite marks and possible infection. See *Risk of Infection from Insect Bites* above and the description of parasitic insect bites, symptoms and treatment as described in the body of the description.

Damage (S.D.C./Hit Points):

Bite: 2D6 damage and a chance of infection if the wound isn't treated shortly after receiving it (standard as per most zombies). P.S. damage bonus does NOT apply to bite attacks.

Bug Bites: As noted in the description, the Bug Boy is likely to infest opponents with biting insects that may cause irritation, infection and disease.

Head Butt: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Punch/Claw Attack: 1D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Power Punch: Not possible by Bug Boys.

Kick Attack: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Weapon: Rare, but sometimes a Bug Boys may use a melee weapon or handheld object as a weapon to bludgeon/hit with.

Note: Leap Kick, other kicks, body flip, and martial arts attacks are NOT possible by Bug Boys.

Bonuses: +2 to strike; also see Natural Abilities.

Penalties: -2 to initiative and -7 on Perception Rolls.

Vulnerabilities: Dumb, animalistic, easily tricked, slow moving, can't swim, poor climbers, head shots, decapitation and fire kill, severe cold reduces speed. Fear of fire holds them at bay; Horror Factor 16.



Worm Meat

A Zombie Aberration

“One of the most sickening things I’ve ever seen is Worm Meat. The name pretty much says it all, a Sloucher whose head and body is covered, encrusted even, in maggots, leeches and worms. Just don’t get distracted by all them squirming thingies because these germ infested zombies have a nasty habit of biting. And you don’t want to get bit by Worm Meat or you’ll come down with a case of Worm Rot or Zombie Rot. I always recommend avoiding contact or killing them from a distance.”

— Brad Ashley, Leader of the Road Reapers

Worm Meat Zombies are decaying Slouchers encrusted and filled with worms, slugs, leeches, maggots and other insect larvae that feed on necrotic flesh. These insects live and feed on the body of the zombie, but also bite any humans with whom they come into contact. Creatures such as leeches drink human blood when they bite and leave an infected wound as a reminder of their encounter. Bites and claw attacks from Worm Meat zombies as well as the bites of the disgusting creatures that live in them have a much higher rate of causing infection than those from other zombies and ordinary insects.

Grappling with Worm Meat even for a few seconds gets maggots, worms, slugs and/or leeches to crawl or fall onto the living human. The Worm Meat is so permeated with “worms” that punching it or striking the zombie with a weapon leaves 3D6 maggots/larvae or 1D6 leeches on the fist or the end of the weapon that made contact.

The leech or insect bite creates a tiny open wound. Unless cleaned and treated immediately, a rash, redness and itching is likely to occur within six hours. The smell of blood or infection, even from a scratch or small wound, helps zombies “sniff out” that person (+10%), making him a liability to his teammates.

The itching and soreness can be a distraction for the character that reduces Perception Rolls by half and skill performance -5%.

Worm Meat are repulsive and disgusting creatures that have a higher Horror Factor (H.F.) than most other zombies. Like the Bug Boy, dealing with this hideous, larva-encrusted monster is so disturbing that many people experience a revulsion response (roll under Horror Factor number).

Revulsion Reaction to Worm Meat Zombies

Having to face such an abhorrent monstrosity is so disgusting to most people, that in addition to the usual reaction and penalties associated with Horror Factor (H.F.), there is likely to be a *Revulsion Reaction*. Roll a second time using the H.F. number to determine if the character has an additional reaction. Rolling above or equal to the H.F. number saves vs Revulsion and the character performs as normal. Rolling under the H.F. number means the character fails to save and has a Revulsion Reaction.

Roll under the zombie's Horror Factor first to determine the normal H.F. reaction. Even if the character saves vs Horror Factor, roll again for Revulsion. The *Revulsion Reaction* lasts for 1D4 melee rounds unless specified otherwise.

Use the same Revulsion Reaction Table as the Bug Boy.

A Worm Meat Zombie's Bite is Poison

"Not treating a zombie bite immediately is asking for trouble and can lead to serious infection, loss of limb or death. Not treating a Worm Meat's bite is suicide. Don't take any chances and be thorough or you'll find yourself with Worm or Zombie Rot and a slow, agonizing death."

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Road Reapers*

Any zombie's bite or claw attack that cuts deep and draws blood is at serious risk for infection and disease unless it is cleaned and treated; the sooner the better. The bite and claw attacks from *Worm Meat* as well as the bites from its worms or leeches are among the most infectious and deadly of any zombie.

Standard treatment of washing the wound out with soap and water, treating with antiseptic or alcohol, and regularly replacing the bandages with clean ones should prevent infection. However, the germs from a Worm Meat's bite are virulent.

Like all Slouchers, Worm Meat are at their most dangerous in large groups, though left on their own, they are usually part of mixed group of Slouchers and other zombies. Only in swamps, sewers, and other damp subterranean settings is one likely to encounter several Worm Meat together or in gathered in large numbers. Worm Meat are susceptible to the influence of *Death Cult Priests*, *Thinkers*, *Impersonator Zombies* and *Mock Zombies*, who are able to command them, at least for awhile. Of course, Worm Meat can only follow simple commands and are only really useful at killing, standing guard and hauling away garbage and debris, or carrying or dragging stuff.

Roll on the following **Worm Meat Zombie Infection Table** for bites and wounds caused by this particular walking dead. If the infection becomes bad, the character may need professional treatment, preferably treatment from a Medical Doctor. Unlike the typical zombie bite that is likely to start out as a mild infection, a Worm Meat's bite can turn into a serious infection, gan-

grene, Worm Rot, or Zombie Rot, overnight, unless immediately and thoroughly cleaned and treated.

Save vs Disease/Poison

When a character gets an infection or catches any disease, he gets to make a *saving throw vs disease* after treatment. This is basically the same as save vs lethal poison. Since the *Worm Meat* (and Sewer Crawler) zombie's infection is potent, the character must roll a **16 or higher to save**.

If the wound is not treated, the character still gets to roll to save vs disease, but does so with a penalty of -3 to save.

A successful save means the character suffers the penalties listed under the symptoms of his particular type of infection for *half* the usual period, the infection heals in half the time, there is no permanent damage, and any wounds heal with minimal scarring, unless stated otherwise. **Note:** P.E. attribute bonuses apply to saving vs disease.

Worm Meat and Sewer Zombie Infection Table

The following is the likelihood of infection occurring based on how quickly and thoroughly a wound from a bite or deep claw attack is cleaned and treated. Roll on the one that fits the situation for the wounded character.

01-15% chance infection occurs even when the wound is treated promptly, thoroughly and properly, as well as kept clean for that initial week.

01-50% when the wound is initially treated, but care is not continued or is poorly administered, or the wound is exposed to unsanitary conditions afterward.

01-70% when the wound is not cleaned well or is poorly treated (no antiseptic or clean bandages) in the first place, or if the bandages are changed but not as often as required, or bandages are swapped out with torn pieces of cloth/rags rather than medical bandages, or when changed under dirty conditions in the field.

01-80% chance for infection if the wound is not cleaned and treated within the first hour of getting it, but is treated within 24 hours.

01-90% likelihood of infection if the wound is barely attended to at all initially, or if cleaning and follow-up treatment after the initial cleaning is not maintained daily.

01-98% Infection is a near certainty when the wound is not treated, or just bandaged and ignored.

Worm Meat and Sewer Crawler Infection Symptoms and Penalties

If infection results from the bite or a deep claw attack from a Worm Meat or Sewer Crawler zombie that draws blood, roll percentile dice for random determination of the type and severity of the infection. Treating a wound caused by Worm Meat or Sewer Crawler Zombies quickly and thoroughly can avoid gruesome and life-threatening consequences (see table above). However, the fact that both are most often encountered in sewers, caves, swamps, garbage dumps and other unsanitary settings, means immediate treatment and clean conditions may be impossible.

01-10% Mild Infection: The arm aches and the wound has areas that are nasty looking and ooze pus. If not properly treated in the next 48 hours it will turn into a *Severe Infection*. Proper treatment requires antibiotics, removal of the pus, thorough re-cleaning, new clean bandages and regular care and cleaning as noted previously.

11-30% Severe Infection: The wound is pus-filled and terrible looking, and the area around it is red, swollen, and hurts to the touch. The victim has low fever that spikes several degrees when the character exerts himself.

Penalties: -1 on initiative, -2 on Perception Rolls, -1 on all combat rolls, and -10% on the performance of any skill. **Note:** Requires immediate and thorough treatment, and because it got so bad, it takes 1D6+7 additional days to get the infection under control and the wound to start to heal properly. During that time all penalties remain in force. If left untreated or exposed to filth, it worsens and turns into *Severe Infection and Muscle Damage*.

31-45% Severe Infection and Muscle Damage: Same as *Severe Infection*, above, plus the wound has grown in size by 50% and deeper, down into the muscle tissue. This results in a loss of strength in that limb, and the entire limb aches, from fingers to shoulder (or toes to hip).

Penalties: -1 on initiative, -2 on Perception Rolls, -1 on all combat rolls, and -10% on the performance of any skill, plus the P.S. and P.P. (or P.S. and Spd if a foot or leg) of the infected limb are reduced by half. *If a hand or arm*, adjust P.S., P.S. damage bonuses and P.P. bonuses to strike, parry and dodge accordingly. Furthermore, skills requiring aiming (reduce usual bonuses by one quarter), or manual dexterity and/or hand or arm strength are performed with a penalty of -20%; this includes most Electrical, Mechanical, Medical, Physical, Rogue and Wilderness skills.

If a foot or leg, adjust the P.S. and Spd accordingly – reduce Spd by 25%, -2 to dodge, and skills that require leg strength, surefootedness, or stealth, such as Climb, Prowl, Swimming and Tailing, are -20%.

Note: Requires immediate and thorough treatment, and because it got so badly infected, it takes 2D4+10 additional days to get the infection under control and the wound to start to heal properly. During that time all penalties remain in force. If left untreated or exposed to filth, it worsens and turns into *Gangrene*.

46-60% Gangrene: The wound is ulcerated, parts of it look as if it is rotting, it has grown to three times its original size, the entire limb is red, swollen, feels hard and is painful to the touch. The infection has spread into the blood and the character is feverish and feels weak.

Penalties: -4 on initiative, -5 on Perception Rolls, reduce Spd and all combat bonuses by half, including W.P. bonuses, and -25% on the performance of any skill.

If a hand or arm is gangrenous, the limb hangs limp and any skills that require the use of that limb take great effort, twice as long, and are performed with an additional penalty of -25% (that's a total skill penalty of -50%); this includes most Electrical, Mechanical, Medical, Physical, Rogue and Wilderness skills.

If a foot or leg is gangrenous, the limb is numb, can barely move, and the character walks with an obvious and painful limp. Reduce Spd by 75%, -5 to dodge, and skills that require leg strength, sure-footedness, or stealth, such as Climb, Prowl, Swimming and Tailing, are -50%.

Note: Requires immediate and thorough treatment, and because it got so bad, it takes 3D4+12 additional days to get the infection under control and the wound to start to heal properly. During that time all penalties remain in force. Hospitalization and bed rest during that time are strongly suggested! *If the wound is exposed to filth or is left untreated*, it worsens in 1D4+1 days. At that point, the limb must be amputated or the victim will die. Amputation puts the character into a coma and the player must roll to Save vs Coma and Death.

61-80% Worm Rot: Same as Gangrene, above, with all the same penalties, plus the wound is filled with maggots and other insects that eat dead and dying flesh. The ulcerated parts of it look as if it is rotting, the size of the wound spreads to four times its original size, the entire limb turns a sickly greenish gray color, and feels numb and cold to the touch. The infection has spread into the blood and the character is feverish and feels weak.

Penalties: -4 on initiative, -5 on Perception Rolls, reduce Spd and all combat bonuses by half, including W.P. bonuses, reduce P.B. and M.A. by 20%, and -35% on the performance of any skill.

Same penalties for hand/arm and foot/leg infection as Gangrene.

Note: Requires immediate and thorough treatment, and because it got so bad, it takes 3D6+12 additional days to get the infection under control and the wound to start to heal properly. During that time all penalties remain in force. Hospitalization and bed rest during that time are strongly suggested! Even after the wound heals it leaves ugly scarring; reduce P.B. by 10% when the wound is visible. *If the wound is exposed to filth or is left untreated*, it worsens in 1D4 days. At that point, the limb must be amputated or the victim will die. Amputation puts the character into a coma and the player must roll to Save vs Coma and Death with a penalty of -10%.

81-00% Zombie Rot: The wound closes and seems to heal, but the flesh and muscle *underneath* the skin rots away to create a pus-filled pocket four times larger than the wound's original size. Furthermore, the entire limb turns pale green and feels cold to the touch, like that of a corpse. The character suffers from intermittent numbness and shooting pain in the infected limb, and from a low, but constant fever.

Penalties: -4 on initiative, -2 on Perception Rolls, reduce P.S., P.E., and Spd attributes by 30%; adjust bonuses accordingly. Also reduce S.D.C. by half, Hit Points by 20%, and -15% on the performance of any skill. All penalties remain in effect until the wound starts to heal. Left untreated it only gets worse and has terrible consequences.

Note: To heal requires the pus-filled mass to be lanced (cut open) and then all the green pus squeezed out. This is incredibly painful and inflicts 3D6+2 points of damage direct to Hit Points. The wound must then be cleaned and treated as usual, with proper follow-up care. Since it got so bad, it takes 2D4+10 addi-

tional days to get the wound to heal properly. During that time all penalties remain in force, and Hit Points and S.D.C. lost to infection *do not heal* until the infection is brought under control and the wound starts to heal. Hospitalization and bed rest during that time are strongly suggested! *If the wound is exposed to filth or is left untreated*, it worsens in 1D4+1 days. At that point, the character collapses into a coma and the player must roll to Save vs Coma and Death. If the character survives, roll on the following table for permanent side effects.

01-10% Lucked out, no permanent damage.

11-25% Emotional trauma, roll for one random Phobia and the character is -1 to save vs Horror Factor and Insanity.

26-40% Permanently reduce Spd attribute by 10%.

41-60% Permanently reduce P.B. attribute by 10%.

61-75% Permanently reduce S.D.C. by 20%.

76-90% Permanently reduce P.E. attribute by 10% and the character is -2 to save vs infectious disease.

91-00% Becomes a *Half-Living!* Provided the G.M. allows it. If not, re-roll.

Worm Meat, Sloucher Variant

Also known as: Worm Zombie, Worm Eaten and Maggot Nest.

Alignment: Considered Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4, M.E. 1D6, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2x Strength when alive (typically 2D6+18), P.P. 1D6+1, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 1D6, Spd 1D4+6.

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number, but all Main Body S.D.C. must be depleted first before Hit Points can be affected.

Note: See *S.D.C. by Location* and *Hit Points* in the **Dead Reign™ RPG** for more details.

S.D.C. by Location:

* Hands (2) – 1D6+5 each

* Arms (2) – 1D8+7 each

* Feet (2) – 1D6+5 each

* Legs (2) – 2D6+7 each

* Lower Jaw – 1D6+4

** Neck – 1D6+11

** Head – 2D6+16

*** Main Body – 3D6+32

Armor Rating: 15, boosted slightly by a covering of worms.

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E. 1D4

Natural Abilities: Standard. See **Dead Reign™ RPG** for details.

See Life Energy (P.P.E.): 9,000 feet (2,743.2 m) at night or in darkness.

Sense Life Energy (P.P.E.): 25 feet (7.6 m) to sense 1-6 people, 50 feet (15.2 m) to sense a group of 7-24 people, and 100 feet (30.5 m) to sense a group of 25 or more people. Half that range to sense animals. One quarter that range, 6.2 feet (1.9 m), when a zombie is dormant.

Recognize Human Scents: 83%. This also tells the zombie that humans are nearby, or have been present recently.

Track Humans by Scent: 18% chance, +10% if the human is sweaty or hasn't bathed in three or more days, +10% to fol-

low the scent of blood, +5% if there is more than one human present in the same area, +5% to smell perfume, cologne or aftershave. All bonuses are accumulative.

Smell Fear in Humans: Makes zombies more aggressive: +1 on initiative and +1 to strike or disarm. If the level of fear is fever pitched or five or more people are terrified, the zombie is also +1 attack per melee around.

Zombies Can See Without Eyes: The eyes glow with a red light inside empty eye sockets, and in the case of Worm Meat, the eyes or sockets may be filled with maggots and worms.

Keen Sense of Hearing: Can pinpoint location of a Zombie Moan after hearing it for only 30 seconds, even if the ears have maggots or leeches in them.

Impervious to Most Everything: Only decapitation, destroying a zombie's brain, and fire can kill a zombie. Does not need to breathe, and survives underwater and in a vacuum.

S.D.C. and Hit Point Regeneration: 1D6+3 S.D.C. and 2 Hit Points are automatically restored every hour. Extra P.P.E. may also restore S.D.C. and Hit Points at a rate of 1D6+2 S.D.C. and one Hit Point per extra P.P.E. point. **Note:** See the **Dead Reign™ RPG**, page 38, for details.

No Life Energy of Their Own: Zombies are cold, dark creatures without body heat or an aura. They cannot be seen by infrared and thermal imaging optic systems. Rather, zombies register the same as a piece of timber.

Go Dormant: A stasis sleep that keeps zombies from decaying. Walking dead hide when they go dormant and can be waiting anywhere.

People Slain by the Zombie Rise as One: Victims slain in a zombie attack, their P.P.E. absorbed, rise as the walking dead within 2D4+4 minutes after expiration.

Insect Related Attacks, Illness & Penalties: See details in the body of the description.

Infectious Bite: See details in the body of the Worm Meat description.

Risk of Infection from Insect Bites: High, see details in the body of the Worm Meat description.

Skill of Note: Climb 40%/30%.

Attacks per Melee: Three from the zombie, usually by biting and hitting with fists, but the insects transferred from the zombie to the human who comes in contact with it also bite and cause itching, bite marks and possible infection. See *Risk of Infection from Insect Bites* above and the description of parasitic insect bites, symptoms and treatment as described in the body of the description.

Damage (S.D.C./Hit Points):

Bite: 2D6+2 damage and a high risk of infection and disease if the wound isn't treated shortly after receiving it. P.S. damage bonus does NOT apply to bite attacks.

Head Butt: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Punch/Claw Attack: 1D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Power Punch: Not possible by Worm Meat.

Kick Attack: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Weapon: Rare, but sometimes a Worm Meat or Sloucher may use a melee weapon or handheld object as a weapon to bludgeon/hit with.

Note: Leap Kick, other kicks, body flip, and martial arts attacks are NOT possible by Worm Meat.

Bonuses: +2 to strike with most attacks, +3 to strike with a bite attack; also see Natural Abilities.

Penalties: -2 to initiative and -7 on Perception Rolls.

Vulnerabilities: Dumb, animalistic, easily tricked, slow moving, can't swim, poor climbers, head shots, decapitation and fire kill, severe cold reduces speed. Fear of fire holds them at bay (H.F. 16).



Sewer Crawlers

A Zombie Aberration

“Gators and pythons in the sewers are not myth, they exist, but they are the least of your problems. It’s Sewer Crawlers you need to worry about. These zombies skim across the water and crawl along the pipes and conduits overhead like a snake. Like any zombie, YOU are the main meal on their menu. Thankfully, they only swim on the surface of water and can’t swim underwater, so you should see one coming if you’re alert. And when they climb and skitter along the pipes they usually make noise doing it. Just don’t underestimate them just because they’re not

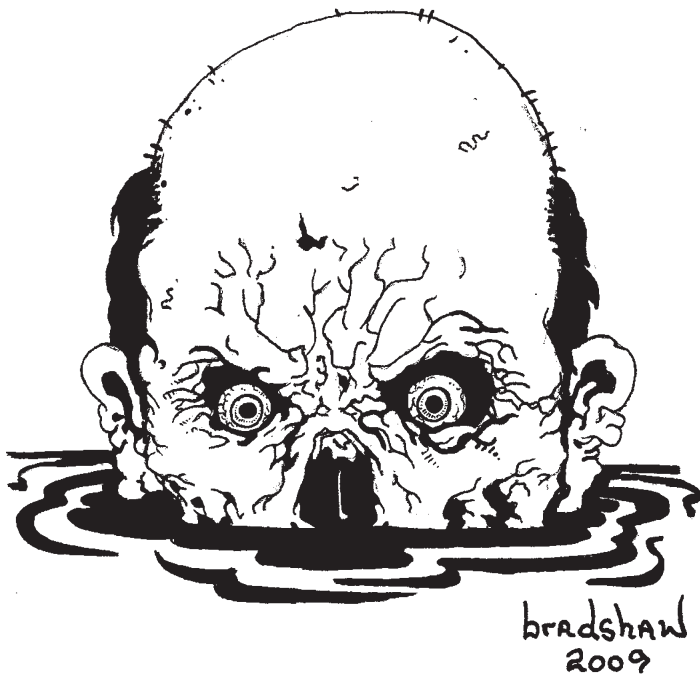
whole. In the sewers, they are just as dangerous as a Bug Boy or Worm Meat.”

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Road Reapers*

Sewer Crawlers are variations on Crawlers, zombies who have lost half their body or several limbs, and now walk on their hands or crawl along on their bellies like snakes. Like traditional Crawlers, *Sewer Crawlers* often hide in dark crevices and climb along smaller pipes and conduits that hang from the ceiling or run along the sides of sewers, storm drains and access tunnels. When crawling on top or along the pipes and conduits, the zombie makes a pitter-patter or soft clunking sound that should alert humans of its/their approach. However, the sound of the Sewer Crawler’s approach is quiet enough that if there is conversation, battle, work or ambient background noise going on, it is probably enough to mask the monster’s approach. Furthermore, Sewer Crawlers like to stuff themselves in dark corners and lay on top of hanging pipes and wait until human prey walks under them, and drop down on their unsuspecting victim to bite and hit. When such an opportunity avails itself, the Sewer Crawler usually attacks first and tries to make a fast kill and eat all of the life energy itself. When that doesn’t work out immediately (within one or two melee rounds), the Sewer Crawler moans and presses its attack as other walking dead in the area converge and join the battle. In between human meals, Sewer Crawlers prey upon rats, mice, snakes, and wild dogs.

Without a lower body or missing limbs, many Sewer Crawlers are half the size and weight of a whole body. This enables them to fit and crawl through openings, pipes and tunnels Slouchers and other full-sized zombies cannot. In fact, unless a Thinker tells them to do so, most walking dead are not smart enough to get down on their hands and knees and even try to crawl through narrow pipes. They just reach into the pipe, moaning and growling at the human prey getting away. Crawlers and Sewer Crawlers, on the other hand, will dive into a narrow opening or tunnel without hesitation. This may explain why *Sewer Crawlers* are the most common walking dead (50%) encountered in sewers, tunnels and subterranean environments. *Slouchers* are the next most common due to their sheer numbers, followed by *Bug Boys* and *Worm Meat* respectively. *Flesh Eaters* and *Juggernauts* are the least often encountered in narrow tunnels and sewers.

While Crawlers climb, Sewer Crawlers both climb and swim. Somehow the monsters have learned to *float and swim* in water and sludge. Since they are already dead, contaminants, chemical pollution, disease, toxic gases and raw sewage have no effect on them, other than making Sewer Crawlers carriers of disease and infection from slopping through stagnant water and sewage. Their bites and claw attacks are as infectious as *Worm Meat zombies* (use the same Infection Table). Likewise, the walking dead do not breathe and can survive underwater indefinitely. While only *Thinkers* and *Mock Zombies* are smart enough to try to deliberately drown human prey, Sewer Crawlers and other zombies may unwittingly drag a character into water where drowning may become a threat. A human pushed faced down into even shallow water (less than a foot/0.3 m) can drown. Sewer Crawlers are also found in swamps and marshlands, where they slither among the reeds and lily pads as well as across pools of algae, mud and muck with equal ease.



Although Sewer Crawlers have learned to swim to some degree, they can only swim in *shallow water* and only on the *water's surface*. Though they can swim twice as fast as they can crawl and climb, they are, at best, fair to poor swimmers. They function best in shallow water 1-6 feet (0.3 to 1.8 m) deep, and flounder in deep water, which for them is 20 feet (6.1 m) or deeper (-20% to Swimming penalty). They also struggle against a strong current and large waves (same -20% penalty). Strangely enough, Sewer Crawlers *cannot swim underwater*, and if pulled or pushed under the surface, especially in water deeper than 20 feet (6.1 m), the zombie is likely to sink like a stone. (**Note:** Roll under the creature's Swimming skill with a -30% penalty every melee round underwater. If the zombie fails its Swimming skill roll before reaching the surface it sinks.) Once the zombie reaches bottom, it crawls across the floor until it can find a way up and out, or finds its way into shallow waters where it can again swim to the surface and float. As a type of Crawler, unlike most other dumb, walking dead, the Sewer Crawler instinctively climbs up anchor chains, moorings, netting, dock pillars, debris, or any other structures that will get it to the surface where it can exit the water or swim across its surface.

Unable to swim underwater, the simpleminded Sewer Crawlers do not attempt to drag their prey underwater to drown them, even though it would be the easiest way to kill human beings. Instead, the zombie uses the water as a medium in which it can sneak up close to human and animal prey and lunge at them, clawing, hitting and biting to kill. In this regard, the Sewer Crawler's attack is reminiscent to an alligator or crocodile attack in which the predator lunges up, out of the water to grab its prey in its jaws. However, even the alligator is smart enough to pull its prey into the water where it has the advantage. By contrast, the Sewer Crawler pulls itself out of the water where it flails, punches, claws and bites in an attempt to kill. To make matters worse, Sewer Crawlers swim silently and can *Prowl* through water to strike without warning. In water, Sewer Crawlers tend to travel and hunt as solitary hunters, in pairs, or in a small group of three or four. Crawlers and Sewer Crawlers prowling in dry areas and along pipes may gather in packs of as many as

twelve (3D4). Most first try to take down living prey on their own. It is only when the zombie's opponent fights back or knocks the Sewer Crawler(s) away that the cursed thing begins to moan and draw other zombies to its location. If it can make a kill without calling other zombies, it will do so.

Sewer Crawler: A Variant Crawler Zombie

Also known as: Sewer Zombie, Swamp Crawler, Sludge Swimmer and Floater or Zombie Floater.

Alignment: Considered Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4, M.E. 1D6, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2x Strength when alive (typically 2D6+18), P.P. 1D6+3, P.E. 1D6+10, P.B. 1D6, Spd 1D4+3 (double swimming on the surface of water).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number, but all Main Body S.D.C. must be depleted first before Hit Points can be affected.

Note: See *S.D.C. by Location* and *Hit Points* in the **Dead Reign™ RPG** for more details.

S.D.C. by Location:

- * Hands (2) – 1D6+4 each
- * Arms (2) – 1D8+6 each
- * Feet – Not applicable
- * Legs – Not applicable
- * Lower Jaw – 1D6+2
- ** Neck – 1D6+8
- ** Head – 2D6+12
- *** Main Body – 1D6+26

Armor Rating: 14

Horror Factor: 13

P.P.E. 1D4

Natural Abilities: Standard. See the **Dead Reign™ RPG** for details.

See Life Energy (P.P.E.): 9,000 feet (2,743.2 m) at night or in darkness.

Sense Life Energy (P.P.E.): 25 feet (7.6 m) to sense 1-6 people, 50 feet (15.2 m) to sense a group of 7-24 people, and 100 feet (30.5 m) to sense a group of 25 or more people. Half that range to sense animals. One quarter that range, 6.2 feet (1.9 m), when a zombie is dormant.

Recognize Human Scents: 83%. This also tells the zombie that humans are nearby, or have been present recently.

Track Humans by Scent: 18% chance, +10% if the human is sweaty or hasn't bathed in three or more days, +10% to follow the scent of blood, +5% if there is more than one human present in the same area, +5% to smell perfume, cologne or aftershave. All bonuses are accumulative.

Smell Fear in Humans: Makes zombies more aggressive: +1 on initiative and +1 to strike or disarm. If the level of fear is fever pitched or five or more people are terrified, the zombie is also +1 attack per melee around.

Zombies Can See Without Eyes: The eyes glow with a red light inside empty eye sockets.

Keen Sense of Hearing: Can pinpoint location of a Zombie Moan after hearing it for only 30 seconds.

Impersonator Zombies

A Zombie Aberration

By Steven Dawes and Kevin Siembieda

“It may sound like a woman, child or your best friend, but it may be a damn zombie so proceed with caution. All you heroes who like to charge in to save the day had better start reining yourselves in and exercising extreme caution. In addition to unscrupulous bandits, lunatics and cultists who might be setting a trap for you, there’s a zombie that sets ambushes and can mimic voices and sounds to lure you into its deadly embrace. No kidding.

“We call such an abomination an Impersonator Zombie. It seems to be related to the Thinker in that it is smarter than the average Sloucher, sets traps, uses other zombies in its ambushes, and knows what to say and what voice to say it in, to lure you into trouble.”

- Brad Ashley, leader of the Road Reapers

Impersonator Zombies look just like any other Sloucher, but they are smart, like a Thinker. They seem to have retained a sense of self awareness and intelligence, use simple tools and camouflage, notice things in their surrounding environment and use them all to their advantage. An Impersonator is not quite as smart or resourceful as a Thinker and seems to lack the Thinker’s deductive reasoning, but it is trouble.

As the name suggests, its talent is mimicking sounds, particularly sounds of distress. An Impersonator Zombie can mimic the sound of a man calling out for help, a woman crying, a child laughing, a dog whimpering or barking, birds chirping and even engine sounds and music. Worse, if it has heard you or your teammate talking, it can imitate your or his voice any time it wants, and use it against you or him. Impersonators typically speak in simple phrases and words (“Please, help me.” “Is someone there? Thank God.” “Come in.” “I’m upstairs.” “I’m hurt.” “I’m trapped.” “I need help.” “My foot is stuck.” “I think my leg is broken.” “Bandits left me tied up.” “Forget about me. Save the children.” and so on), but can string together a decent sentence when they need to. However, they cannot engage in conversation, and tends to play the role of injured and delirious victim who keeps repeating the same line or two. Furthermore, Impersonator Zombies can mimic the sounds of human emotion, so the tone of the voice accompanying the words sounds true and fits the situation. The voice may sound weak and frail, or filled with pain, or full of joy that someone has come to his rescue. It may have the bounce of a child or the worried tone of a mother or father. It may sound happy, sad, desperate, pained, or strong, but it always sounds human and fits the situation. That’s how clever Impersonators are in this regard.

Impersonator Zombies are adept at hiding and setting up simple ambushes and traps. The monster uses its ability for mimicry to lure its prey closer to it. Like Thinkers, an Impersonator has the ability to communicate with other zombies and give them simple instructions and commands. In this case, the Impersonator gets other zombies to hide at a particular location it designates, and wait for his signal to attack. Also like the Thinkers, an Impersonator is smart enough to hunt and set traps in loca-

Impervious to Most Everything: Only decapitation, destroying a zombie’s brain, and fire can kill a zombie. Does not need to breathe, and survives underwater and in a vacuum.

S.D.C. and Hit Point Regeneration: 1D6+3 S.D.C. and 2 Hit Points are automatically restored every hour. Extra P.P.E. may also restore S.D.C. and Hit Points at a rate of 1D6+2 S.D.C. and one Hit Point per extra P.P.E. point. **Note:** See the **Dead Reign™ RPG**, page 38, for details.

No Life Energy of Their Own: Zombies are cold, dark creatures without body heat or an aura. They cannot be seen by infrared and thermal imaging optic systems. Rather, zombies register the same as a piece of timber.

Go Dormant: A stasis sleep that keeps zombies from decaying. Walking dead hide when they go dormant and can be waiting anywhere.

People Slain by the Zombie Rise as One: Victims slain in a zombie attack, their P.P.E. absorbed, rise as the walking dead within 2D4+4 minutes after expiration.

Infectious Bite: High, same as the Worm Meat zombie.

Risk of Infection From Zombie: High, same as the Worm Meat zombie, see page 20.

Skills of Note: Acrobatics 40%, Climb 65%/55%, Prowl 30% out of the water, Prowl 60% in water, and Swim 50% in shallow water.

Attacks per Melee: Two, usually by biting, head butting, hitting with fists or claw attack.

Damage (S.D.C./Hit Points):

Bite: 2D6 damage and a chance of infection if the wound isn’t treated shortly after receiving it. P.S. damage bonus does NOT apply to bite attacks. **Note:** Sewer Zombies are so filthy and disease laden that their bite or deep claw attack that draws blood is as infectious as the Worm Meat. Victims of the bite must roll a 16 or higher to save vs disease/infection. If the character fails to save, roll on the **Worm Meat and Sewer Crawler Infection Symptoms and Penalties Table** when a wound from a Sewer Zombie becomes infected. See page 20.

Head Butt: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Punch/Claw Attack: 1D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Power Punch: Not possible by Sewer Crawlers.

Kick Attack: Not possible by Sewer Crawlers.

Weapon: Rare, but sometimes a Sewer Crawler may use a melee weapon or handheld object as a weapon to bludgeon/hit with.

Note: Leap Kick, other kicks, and martial arts attacks are NOT possible.

Bonuses: +1 to strike and +2 to entangle on dry land, +2 to strike and +3 to entangle in or from water; also see Natural Abilities.

Penalties: -2 to initiative and -7 on Perception Rolls.

Vulnerabilities: True Sewer Crawlers are dumb, animalistic, easily tricked, slow moving, fair swimmers, and fair climbers. Head shots, decapitation and fire kill them. Severe cold reduces speed. Fear of fire holds them at bay (fire has an H.F. of 16). They sink in deep water.



tions where humans are known to visit and travel. It likes to set up traps where humans are at a disadvantage, such as cramped quarters, dead ends and where its prey can be easily surrounded or cornered. An Impersonator also seems to have an innate sense of how to fit in with its surroundings, including the most appropriate voice to use. In a nursing home or house once occupied by the elderly, the zombie's voice will have the sound and cadence of an old man or woman. Inside a child's bedroom the Impersonator may hide among the stuffed animals or under the bed and use the voice of a child. It is downright uncanny how an Impersonator seems to always select the right voice for the setting and situation.

Another unique aspect of Impersonator Zombies is that their ability to sense life energy is more acute, and the monster can sense even a single human within a 100 foot (30.5 m) radius, *even when it is dormant*. This enables the Impersonator to wake up when a human gets close enough, and rather than attack or moan, begin to perform whatever impersonation it chooses to lure the person or people into its clutches. Other dormant zombies in the area remain dormant until the trap is sprung or the humans enter their shorter sensing range (typically 6.2 feet/1.9 m) and awaken.

Unlike Thinkers, Impersonators do not ever lead large mobs of walking dead, nor do they wander around very much, make observations or behave in a proactive or leadership role. Instead, Impersonators set ambushes and lure people to their doom. An Impersonator Zombie likes to find a spot it thinks humans will visit or travel near, then it gathers no more than 24 other zombies (4D6), typically Slouchers, Crawlers and their variants (Juggernauts, Pretty Zombies, Bug Boys, etc.), and hides them

at strategic locations suitable for an ambush; this may include inside a house or building and nearby outside as quick backup when the moan goes out. Then it waits. When the Impersonator senses or sees potential prey, it uses its abilities of mimicry and impersonation to lure the unsuspecting person(s) into its trap like a spider's web. When the victims get close enough, the Impersonator springs the trap by moaning and all converge and attack. It is interesting to note that somehow, the Impersonator manages to convey to the other, stupider walking dead to wait until it gives the signal to attack when it moans. Thus, even if the other zombies that are part of the trap sense humans, they hold their position and wait, even playing possum, pretending to be a real, unanimated corpse, until the Impersonator moans. As a result, if a character manages to kill the Impersonator *before* it moans or within the first few (1D6) seconds, the other zombies are likely to continue to wait for the signal and not attack. However, because the other zombies are active participants in the trap/ambush, they respond the moment the Impersonator moans (one full melee round/15 seconds); they do not need to wait a few melee rounds to get a bead on the moan's location. When they hear the moan, they know food is within the location parameters of the trap.

Impersonators are a problem and nuisance to Scroungers, Shepherds of the Damned, Street Gang Protectors and other heroes who actively seek out and help fellow survivors. It is nearly a guarantee that heroes and rescuers will run into an Impersonator at some point, and such individuals are more than likely to make the mistake of walking into one of their traps. Even the most experienced parties may fall for an Impersonator's trickery.

Unlike most zombies, Impersonators are more independent and focused on laying traps and ambushes than anything else. Consequently, while they can be influenced and commanded by *Death Cult Priests* and *Thinkers*, at least for awhile, they are not as easily lead unless allowed to do what Impersonators do best, establish a trap, ambush or sent to lure humans to, or away from, a specified location. Comparatively smart, Impersonators can follow fairly elaborate assignments and commands. Impersonators recognize *Mock Zombies* as deceivers and trickster themselves, and are not easily influence or led by them. Instead, Impersonators tend to ignore Mock Zombies.

Impersonator Zombie R.C.C.

Note: Considered to be a variant Thinker and part of the 4% Thinker Zombie category due to their similarities. One in every ten Thinkers is an Impersonator.

Also known as: Sobbing S.O.B.s, Mimics, Sounders and Chick Flickers.

Alignment: Considered Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+7, M.E. 1D4+9, M.A. 1D4+6, P.S. 2x Strength when alive (typically 2D6+14), P.P. 1D6+3, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 2D4, Spd 1D4+8.

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +6, but all Main Body S.D.C. must be depleted first before Hit Points can be affected.

Note: See *S.D.C. by Location* and *Hit Points* in the **Dead Reign™ RPG** for more details.

S.D.C. by Location:

- * Hands (2) – 1D6+6 each
- * Arms (2) – 1D8+8 each
- * Feet (2) – 1D6+6 each
- * Legs (2) – 2D6+10 each
- * Lower Jaw – 1D6+6
- ** Neck – 1D6+14
- ** Head – 2D6+16
- *** Main Body – 3D6+30

Armor Rating: 14

Horror Factor: 13

P.P.E. 1D4+3

Special Abilities of the Impersonator:

Simple Awareness and Reasoning: Same as described under the *Thinker Zombie R.C.C.* on page 48 of the **Dead Reign™ RPG**.

Use Simple Weapons and Tools: Same as described in the *Thinker Zombie R.C.C.* on pages 48-49 of the **Dead Reign™ RPG**.

Simple Communication with Zombies: Same as described in the *Thinker Zombie R.C.C.* on page 49 of the **Dead Reign™ RPG**, but does not lead large groups of zombies.

Imitate/Impersonate Sounds of Distress: The Impersonator has the unique ability to mimic voices and sounds, impersonate voices, emit sounds of anguish, sorrow, pain and misery, and imitate animals and even machinery as a ploy to attract human prey. No one is entirely sure how they do it, but the popular theory is that when the human was killed by a zombie, the vocal cords mutated during the process of becoming the undead, enabling the thing to emit a variety of sounds and

tones. There is a rumor going around that says a Thinker Zombie has to kill the human who becomes an Impersonator Zombie, but there has been no proof to substantiate this.

It is important to note that the Impersonator Zombie can speak words, but only in simple phrases and short sentences. It cannot hold a conversation. It can, however, seem to recognize and understand what people are saying on a basic level. However, like a parrot they have the ability to *mimic* a few choice words right along with a specific voice. They are also smart enough to use the voice of someone the character may know when that person is out of sight. Impersonation extends to either gender, children, animals and even some common machine sounds. Base Skill: 70%, -10% if imitating a specific person or animal known to the character(s). A failed roll means that the words are garbled and unintelligible or sound stilted, awkward or dispassionate/synthetic. This *may* tip off those with experience in dealing with Impersonators that there's something odd going on, but most Impersonators are smart enough to keep it simple and repeat the same words in a frail or muffled voice.

Natural Abilities: Standard, unless stated otherwise. See the **Dead Reign™ RPG** for details.

See Life Energy (P.P.E.): 9000 feet (2,743.2 m) at night or in darkness.

Sense Life Energy (P.P.E.) SPECIAL: 100 feet (30.5 m), no matter how many humans are present. Note that this range is in effect even when the Impersonator Zombie is dormant.

Recognize Humans by Scent: 83%. This also tells the zombie that humans are nearby, or have been present recently.

Track Humans by Scent: 18% chance, +10% if the human is sweaty or hasn't bathed in three or more days, +10% to follow the scent of blood, +5% if there is more than one human present in the same area, +5% to smell perfume, cologne or aftershave. All bonuses are accumulative.

Smell Fear in Humans: Makes zombies more aggressive: +1 on initiative and +1 to strike or disarm. If the level of fear is fever pitched or five or more people are terrified, the zombie is also +1 attack per melee round.

Zombies Can See Without Eyes: The eyes glow with a red light inside empty eye sockets.

Keen Sense of Hearing: Can pinpoint location of a Zombie Moan after hearing it for only 30 seconds.

Impervious to Most Everything: Only decapitation, destroying a zombie's brain, and fire can kill a zombie. Does not need to breathe, and survives underwater and in a vacuum.

S.D.C. and Hit Point Regeneration: 1D6+3 S.D.C. and 2 Hit Points are automatically restored every hour. Extra P.P.E. may also restore S.D.C. and Hit Points at a rate of 1D6+2 S.D.C. and one Hit Point per extra P.P.E. point. See the **Dead Reign™ RPG**, page 38, for details.

No Life Energy of Their Own: Zombies are cold, dark creatures without body heat or an aura. They cannot be seen by infrared and thermal imaging optic systems. Rather, zombies register the same as a piece of timber.

Go Dormant: A stasis sleep that keeps zombies from decaying. Walking dead hide when they go dormant and can be waiting anywhere.

People Slain by the Zombie Rise as One: Victims slain in a zombie attack, their P.P.E. absorbed, rise as the walking dead within 2D4+4 minutes after expiration.

Skills of Note: Climb 45%/30%, Detect Ambush 55%, Detect Concealment 40%, Land Navigation 60%, Language: Native Tongue (understand only) 50%, Prowl 40%, Tailing 40%, and Tracking (People) 30%.

Attacks per Melee: Three and may use simple weapons.

Damage (S.D.C./Hit Points):

Bite: 2D6 damage (and a chance of infection if the wound isn't treated shortly after receiving it), P.S. damage bonus does NOT apply to bite attacks.

Head Butt: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Punch/Claw Attack: 1D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Power Punch: 2D6 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any), but counts as two melee attacks.

Kick Attack: 2D4 damage + P.S. damage bonus (if any).

Weapon: May use simple weapons and tools. See Special Abilities.

Note: Leap kick, other kicks, body flip, and martial arts attacks are NOT possible by Impersonators.

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 on Perception Rolls, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +1 to disarm, and pull punch, and +2 to roll with impact; also see *Special Abilities* and *Natural Abilities*.

Penalties: Impersonators fire guns and other long-range weapons with a penalty of -3 to strike, and the zombie does not know, nor is it able to figure out, how to reload a gun, or recharge/refuel tools and devices, and may even try to use them a few times before realizing they are out of fuel/ammunition and abandoning them.

Vulnerabilities: The usual: Slow moving, can't swim and poor climber. Head shots, decapitation and fire kill it, severe cold reduces speed. Fear of fire is as strong in an Impersonator as any zombie and holds it at bay; Horror Factor 16. Plus: Impersonators have only the most rudimentary powers of reason and the ability to recognize patterns, figure out puzzles and formulate simple ideas; cannot read. Some exhibit a sardonic sense of humor or irony.

Blow Fish

"We call them Blow Fish, walking dead that have been in water filled sewers, tunnels or underwater so long that their skin and bodies are all swollen and puffy like a corpse that has been decomposing in water. That also means they're slimy as hell and have chunks taken out of their flesh where fish have been eating them."

— Brad Ashley, leader of the Road Reapers

Blow Fish is the slang term that refers to a Sloucher that has been rotted and swollen from being in/under water for a long period of time. Such zombies have pale grey or white skin and bloated bodies. They may also be covered in slime, sludge, muck and seaweed. They are found only in damp, wet and water-filled environments such as along swamps and docks, and in

sewers, storm drains, tunnels, caves and other subterranean environments filled or partially filled with water.

Blow Fish are ugly, bloated, waterlogged **Slouchers** with exactly the same stats, except for the following: Blow Fish are usually wet and slimy, making them slippery and difficult to grab, hold on to, or grapple with; -5 to pin, entangle, grapple, bear hug, strangle and related holds. **Note:** A Blow Fish is a Sloucher, thus it is not given any more of a description or stats than what's here.

Travel in the World of the Dead

Excerpted from the Road Reaper's Survival Guide

Roads are dangerous.

Many highways and thoroughfares remain blocked by multiple car pileups, overturned big rigs, and collapsed bridges. Others are a sea of bumper to bumper vehicles that extend for dozens of miles, especially the main arteries in and around major cities. Accidents and traffic snarls made escape from the big cities impossible and turned highways and main streets into parking lots and dead ends. As the dead rose at a geometrically increasing rate, the zombies scrambled to find new victims to devour. People inside vehicles trapped in the gridlock became sardines in a can waiting to be eaten. The end result is what survivors today call **vehicle graveyards**. Many of the cars found in these vehicle graveyards have smashed out windows where the zombies dragged away their victims, smashed in their skulls or ripped out their throats and feasted on their life energy. Every few minutes, the recently slain, rose to join the onslaught in an ever growing tidal wave of walking dead. Many of the abandoned vehicles are splattered in blood or show signs of having been pummeled by hammering fists and stomping feet. A few have had their doors torn from their hinges and some are overturned. Just as many appear untouched by the tidal wave of death. These are vehicles that were abandoned when their owners fled on foot to escape the advancing wave of walking dead. Most never made it.

These vehicle graveyards are more than empty vehicles, they are the haunts of Crawlers, Slouchers, Fast-Attack Zombies and other walking dead, as well as wild animals and bandits. The seas of vehicles offer many places for animal and human predators to lurk and wait in ambush. Vehicles without windows or doors have quickly become nests or lairs for a wide range of animals. As for the walking dead, the back seat of a sedan or mini-van or the underbelly of an SUV are nice places to curl up and go dormant. Sometimes one of the monsters can be seen sitting upright in the front seat or behind the wheel of a car. Zombies may wander among the wreckage, crawl under the bel-

lies of cars, or lurk inside, alongside, or behind a vehicle. Meanwhile, any dark corner inside, under or outside the vehicle may be deemed a good place to go dormant and wait. It is interesting to note that zombies seem to instinctively seek out dry places to go dormant, as moist and water filled locations double the rate of decay.

An ocean reef is teeming with life, but there are so many hiding places that with the first hint of danger, vast schools of fish and sea animals seem to vanish in a blur of motion. Hidden away in a thousand nooks and crannies. Vehicle graveyards are rather like an ocean reef in reverse. At first glance, the expanse of vehicles may appear to be quiet, uninhabited and safe, even inviting. The abandoned vehicles seem to offer places to scavenge and find food, clothing, weapons and shelter from the elements. However, once a zombie senses a visitor's presence, it rises from whatever dark place it had lodged itself and lets loose with "the moan." Within seconds, other walking dead rise, wail, and begin to converge. Sometimes their numbers are light, a few dozen perhaps, other times they rise by the hundreds or even thousands.

The roads and highways of the city are worse. Zombies wander the streets and alleys in search of food. That would be *you*. In addition, the houses, buildings, dumpsters and piles of debris may contain and conceal any number of walking dead. All you need is one to spot you, wail, and summon thousands to feast on you.

The Highways and Byways

There are long stretches of highways and roads that have been cleared by well intentioned *big-rig truckers*, *Shepherds of the Damned*, *Road Reapers* and *Apocalyptic Soldiers*.

Clearing the streets makes road travel faster, but anything but safe. In most cases, "clearing the road" simply involves knocking abandoned vehicles and wrecks *off to the side of the road* or *into a pile*. The rusting carcasses of these vehicles remain piled up in a line or heap just *a few yards off the road*, where they remain lovely hiding places for wild animals, bandits and the walking dead.

Unless the road is maintained by a survivor community, there is no one to keep the thoroughfare clear of debris, tree limbs, toppled telephone poles, car wrecks, dead bodies, or zombies curled up on the side of the road. The walking dead carry all kinds of crazy items, from knives to pots, pans and timber. Inevitably, some drop their junk in the street, which can cause trouble for someone driving fast or in the dark without lights. A street that might have been clear yesterday may be blocked by the remains of one or more burned out vehicles today or tomorrow. A location where zombies had always been few may suddenly be crawling with them thanks to any number of possible scenarios.

I will say this over and over again: in the world of the dead, the environment is constantly changing. You can NOT expect what you knew yesterday to hold true for today. You never know what waits for you around the corner even if you have traveled that road a hundred times before. Never let yourself feel safe or complacent. Always be careful and alert. Roads are not safe. Use extreme caution at all times!



City Streets & Back Alleys

Get into an urban area, and the threat from zombies *along the side of the road* multiplies due to the sheer number of walking dead that inhabit the urban landscape. I once heard a statistic that even if you didn't see it, there was a spider no farther than six feet from you at any given time, anywhere you went. If you're smart, you think about zombies in the same way. Whenever you go into an unknown environment, there are probably several zombies within close proximity.

Even if a particular highway, road or back alley seems clear, odds are the walking dead are nearby. Those who have not gone dormant shuffle down the city streets and alleys. Others walk around inside homes and buildings along the streets. Those that get bored and frustrated find a nice cozy corner and go dormant, but they awaken the second they hear a noise or sense your presence. If you travel on the streets, by foot or by vehicle, sooner or later, you will be spotted by a zombie. If you're not spotted by a zombie, it will be a barking dog, or pack of wild canines. Either way, there will be a commotion and the noise will attract zombies, the moan goes out, and the fight or flight begins.

There are back streets and alleys that are less traveled and therefore, generally, much less dangerous, but one needs to be an expert on the area to know which ones, and as I have noted, the environment may change every few days. Zombies are dumb creatures that converge in thronging hordes. Thus, a place that may have been devoid of zombies for months might, one day, become filled with them. All it takes is one group of survivors or scroungers to inadvertently lead a horde of zombies to a new area. Once there, the zombies eventually disperse, but they have no homes or lairs to return to, and simply wander around or go dormant someplace new. Likewise, a band of humans might cause destruction to a particular street, building or part of town. They might start a house fire that guts one of your favorite safe houses or hiding places. Hell, they might set off a chain reaction

that burns down the entire block of homes or buildings. Remember, there aren't any firemen to put out fires. So while fire scares and kills zombies, it is a destructive force that once unleashed, may cause carnage you can't stop.

Combat with the walking dead might cause other damage that leaves the path blocked off or brings an area to the attention of walking dead, bandits, death cultists and other villains. The point is, there ain't no place that's safe. Your secret shortcut could one day turn into a war zone or zombie domain. The landscape is constantly changing. Survivors need to be aware of that and adapt as necessary.

Zombies Swarm

The walking dead are most numerous in urban settings where they roam the streets. While it is not uncommon to encounter one, two or three zombies, they tend to gather in groups. That's why when one dormant zombie is activated, several others within the same structure inevitably rise and join the battle. If one zombie sees two other zombies wandering by across the street, it is likely to join them (roll percentile, 01-60% it joins the others). The larger the group, the more likely a single or pair of wandering zombies will join it (01-80% chance). Over time, individuals, pairs and trios will splinter off to wander in some other direction, but the walking dead seem to have a group or swarming mentality. Whether this behavior is a fragment of and old social memory or instinct, nobody knows, but the fact is, zombies tend to gather in groups even without being summoned to feed by the moan. Consequently, in urban settings, it is not unusual to see or encounter the walking dead in small groups of three to a dozen (3D4).

That number holds true out in the country too, particularly at places once inhabited by people. Farms, homes, rest stops, diners, parkland and towns are all places where the odds of encountering 2-200 walking dead are not in your favor. Thing is, you could encounter a horde of them in some isolated meadow just as easily.

The Open Road

There are two big problems traveling the open road out in the country. One, you get used to there being *fewer* zombies, and two, you get careless. The fresh air, open space, and comparative peacefulness of the countryside puts travelers at ease. That's bad because no place is safe, and when you drop your guard, you open yourself to attack.

I've known people who found themselves in a world of hurt when they were suddenly confronted by 40-240 zombies in the middle of *Nowhere, USA*. Yes, the country has fewer walking dead – a fraction compared to the cities – but they're out there and looking for you.

The biggest mistake most survivors make is assuming they are safe out in the woods or traveling along a country road. Folks think unless they are near a town, farm or house, there aren't any zombies in the countryside. If there are, they figure it will only be 2-6 hillbilly boys. Consequently, they are shocked and at a loss when they run into 40-240 (4D6x10) hungry, converging monsters streaming out from the trees. Being unprepared and on the defensive is bad. You are panicked and not

thinking straight, and that can spell dead. If this happens to you and there's still time to escape, do it. Run for the hills, catch your breath and regroup. If you can avoid the country swarm, do it. If you have to make a stand and fight, or battle your way through them, get your best battle plan ready.

What some survivors forget is that a lot of people already lived in the country, and the zombie plague happened everywhere. People also fled the cities in droves, and died out in the country. Anywhere people may have gathered en masse, there will be zombies numbering from the dozens from the hundreds, and even the thousands. That includes campgrounds, fairgrounds, hiking trails, parks, and nature preserves. When these folks died and rose as the walking dead, they had to end up someplace, and the someplace is wandering around the countryside or lingering at the campground or park where they met their death.

Remember when I pointed out that zombies tend to gather in groups? Well, it happens in the country, too. Only here, out in the open, the dead gather into larger groups; 3-10x larger than those found in the city. They may be spread out across a half mile or mile area (0.8 to 1.6 km), rather than a tight cluster, but once they start to converge, you are still up the creek without a paddle. I've seen fifty to a thousand zombies scattered across the landscape, all traveling in the same direction. When one of them sees the living and lets loose with its moan, the whole pack is on the hunt.

I have heard people smarter than me speculate that the walking dead gather in larger groups out in the wilderness because they, on some base level, feel vulnerable in the open and safer in large groups. I don't know or care. All I know is that when you do run across a zombie or two in the sticks, odds are there are another 20-100 nearby. Kill them fast and be on the lookout for more.

So where might you find gaggles of walking dead in the country? Just about anywhere. Of course, the obvious places are the most likely, and you best trust your instincts and avoid them. Farms, barns, homes, roadside diners, gas stations, State Police outposts, and towns are guaranteed to be crawling with zombies. So are campgrounds, churches, schools, gymnasiums, and town halls. I see a church steeple, I give the place a wide berth. Churches are the worst, somehow, at least for me. I don't know why. Maybe it's because you know all these god-fearing people came there with prayers on their lips and it did them no good. Or maybe it's because you know it was families just like you and yours who died there. I don't know, but church zombies and zombie children are the most painful to fight, at least for me.

Remember, churches, schools, hospitals, police stations and community centers were all places frightened people gathered at by the hundreds. They came seeking aid and protection during the Wave and filled these locations to overflowing. These were also places where the sick, dying and dead were taken. When the dead rose, these places became slaughterhouses and remain zombie central in most communities. Bus terminals and train depots are too, even if they are located out in the middle of nowhere.

For that matter, avoid any buses you see on the side of the road. School buses, commuter buses, tour buses, all kinds of

buses were used to carry people out of the cities to safety out in the country. Coming across even one bus sets my hair on end and warns me that there is likely to be more zombies in the area than usual. If it's a convoy of buses, watch out. Many campgrounds and parks are often trouble spots too. After all, the 150 members of that family reunion or caravan of fleeing city-dwellers are all zombies now.

Even traveling down what might seem like an open and empty country road with no or little sign of human life is dangerous. For one, you are out in the open. On a clear day, you might have a line of sight that extends for miles and that means you can be seen. Worse, that ribbon of concrete or asphalt runs along and connects with towns and communities where zombies are certain to be found. Every crossroads gas station, rest stop, roadside diner, farm, barn, house, truck, tractor, car and drainage ditch is a potential hiding place for the walking dead. My advice, ignore them, give them a wide berth, be prepared for trouble and move past them quickly. The advantage you have out in the country is the number of zombies is likely to be a fraction of what you see in the city, and even if the walking dead can see you at a long distance, you can see them, but even one zombie can get you killed if you aren't careful.

Thickets, fields of tall grass and underbrush, reeds, and woods obscure your vision, provide places for zombies to hide, and impair your movement, so watch yourself and be prepared at all times. Likewise, travel along rivers and lakes, fishing and other activity near water isn't as safe as you might think. Remember, the walking dead can survive underwater and they can pop up from the watery depths when you least expect it. They can't swim, except for maybe a Thinker or Mock Zombie, so they are most likely to be encounters along the water's edge, at a dock or marina, inside a boat, and so on. I once saw a dozen zombies, half of them Crawlers, hole up under a dock where they waited until survivors came snooping around on the houseboat tethered to it. Personally, you'll never get me onto a boat. Too many places for the dead to hide, I feel cut off from the world, and I hate the water.

Roads Less Traveled

Stop thinking about the world the way it was. That world is gone. We need to adapt. We need to think smart. That means looking at the world in different ways and using what we see to our advantage. We may be outnumbered a thousand to one, but we're a hell of a lot smarter than the walking dead. Think. Be smart. Improvise. Survive.

On the Right Track

For months you've probably been trying to navigate the back alleys and side streets to get where you are going. You've been dodging the walking dead whenever you can and fighting your way in and out of every urban setting you have ever entered. News flash: there has been a way in, out and through every city

you've ever entered. You are going to kick yourself when you hear this one.

Forget about the highways and main streets. They'll get you killed. You want to get to *Anywhere, USA* without battling the walking dead every step of the way? You want to travel across the urban landscape unnoticed? Learn the rail system and *walk the rails*. Railroad tracks are a network of travel that cuts across the country. It is connected to most cities and towns, and is comparatively devoid of the presence of zombies even in the biggest cities.

By the 21st Century, travel by train in the United States and Canada was all but extinct and forgotten. For most people like you and me, cars, motorcycles, buses and airplanes were the way to travel. Trains were forgotten or abandoned for more personal and private means of travel. Unless it was part of a commuter system in large metropolitan areas, such as New York City, Washington D.C. and Chicago, most people never considered using a train. Hell, most Americans never rode on a train more than once or twice in their lifetime, except as an amusement park ride. Except for the occasional railroad crossing cutting across the street, most tracks are invisible. Concealed by underbrush and trees that work like natural walls of vegetation. Folks just don't think about trains or where the tracks may lead. That includes most survivors of the apocalypse, and that's tragic, because the rail system runs from coast to coast, and into Canada and Mexico.

Out of sight, out of mind

Don't beat yourself up for not thinking of them sooner, us Road Reapers did the same thing at first. When it hit us, it was like one of those cartoons with a lightbulb going off above our heads. Out of sight, out of mind. We didn't ever use the train so we didn't think about train tracks or using them for travel. I'm telling you, learn them and use them. Train tracks are like a secret highway that cuts across North America.

Train tracks link to every city and most towns and communities except maybe the smallest and most remote. Even then, odds are there are tracks within 50-100 miles (80 to 160 km) of it. Train tracks go just about everywhere. While the public may not have had much use for trains, they remained a vital source for transporting cargo and commercial goods. Consequently, the rail system was well maintained right up to the rise of the dead and the collapse of human civilization, and is still in good shape. Even when the road is jam-packed with vehicles or blocked by debris, odds are the railroad has its own overpass, bridge, tunnel or thoroughfare that goes over, under or around the impediment.

Best of all, the vast majority of train tracks are invisible, obscured, concealed, and out of the public eye. These days that means out of the sight and mind of the walking dead, and that's good news for us humans. Remember, zombies are attracted to urban settings. They gather in, and wander around, areas where humans were once plentiful. They like to hide in places once inhabited by people and where the living are likely to return or are known to frequent. As a result, zombies are found in large numbers throughout cities and suburbia, along roads, highways, parking lots, and in urban centers large and small.

Zombies tend to avoid the country and open spaces. That includes parks, fields, industrial parks, and *railroad tracks*.



When the walking dead are encountered along the rails, it is typically a lone wandering Sloucher, a pair of Crawlers, or a small group (2D4+1 zombies).

Train tracks are long ribbons of rail that, by their very nature, are wide, flat, open expanses, where humans did not congregate, and where humans are not known or expected to be found. And perhaps because railroad tracks were not a strong part of the human consciousness, they are not in the feeble minds of the walking dead. Most tracks, even those in the big cities, have few zombies wandering them, especially compared to the multitude one can encounter on city streets and suburban neighborhoods.

In short, zombies are seldom found walking the rails, which means YOU should be.

Commercial train rail systems have their own network of tracks, bridges, tunnels, and avenues of travel, making them that *secret highway* for human survivors I mentioned. The tracks often run parallel to main thoroughfares, and have trestles and bridges that go over streets choked with vehicles or roaming zombies. Even in the biggest cities, a single track has 15-60 feet (4.6 to 18.3 m) of space on both sides of the rails. That is a swath of 30-120 feet (9.1 to 36.6 m) of open field and scrub zombies avoid. Increase that by 50% when there are two or three sets of tracks, double it if there are four to six tracks, and multiply that space by 10-20 times at hubs or big city main line and commercial districts where there may be 20-50 sets of tracks covering an area as wide as 2-5 football stadiums set end

to end. The same holds true for main train terminals and heavy industrialized areas.

Walking the Rails

I am not suggesting finding a locomotive and using trains for travel along the rail system. The sound of an approaching train would be heard for miles and attract the walking dead, not that the monsters could stop or easily board a moving train. I'm talking about using railroad tracks as a *secret trail* for silent travel by foot and bicycle. If you travel the rails, keep quiet, stay alert, and you can travel in and out of cities without interference or impediment from the walking dead. At least until you leave the tracks to explore or scavenge the city.

Don't shake your head or wonder if what I'm telling you is true. It is. *Road Reapers* follow train tracks all the time, especially for scouting operations and slipping into the city without being seen or heard. Remember when I've talked about having three or more avenues of escape from a city or neighborhood? Train tracks are always one or two of them. We also use them to navigate a city or town and scout out an area before we enter in force or wage an attack. Railroad tracks are also used by *Shepherds of the Damned* and *Hound Masters* to get people in and out of danger zones right under the noses of the walking dead, cultists and other villains.

As I said, train tracks are wide open spaces that are forgotten or go unnoticed by zombies and the living alike. Even when a zombie comes across one, he is not likely to wander along its path for long. All this works to your advantage.

Typical layout of the rails. Starting at the center is one, two or more sets of train tracks: metal rails set five feet, two inches apart and anchored to heavy wood beams set into the ground. The standard *wooden, railroad relay tie* measures 6 x 6 inches x 8 feet long (0.15 x 0.15 x 2.4 m). A railroad tie weighs 120-140 pounds (54-63 kg) each and most are recessed halfway into the ground. *Switch ties* are about double the length. There is typically a 7-10 foot (2.1 to 3 m) approach on the side of the tracks that is covered in loose gravel to keep underbrush clear of the tracks.

Beyond the gravel is a field of tall grass, wildflowers, weeds, bushes and young trees. In marshy places there may be tall reeds. This expanse of brush growing along the tracks is 15-60 feet (4.6 to 18.3 m) wide on each side of the tracks, and is, in effect, a **wall of vegetation** that obscures the tracks from the road, neighborhood homes and industrial buildings. Looking up from the street or a parking lot, it looks like a line of shrubs and trees, an empty field or undeveloped land. Unless you walk through the vegetation, you would never know there was a gravel trail and train tracks nestled in the middle of them. Back during civilized times this was done in part to make the neighborhood look attractive by hiding the ugly tracks, and in part to keep people away from the tracks.

The fields along the sides of railroad tracks are also home to pheasants, quail, geese, ducks, rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, groundhogs, and other *small game animals*, making the tracks a good place for hunting. During the right season, you can also find edible berries, grapes, and apple, pear and other fruit trees, as well as other food you can eat right off the vine. Concealed by the tall weeds and brush, the rails make an ideal place to take a break to catch one's breath, set up a temporary camp, or establish hidden supply caches, among many other uses.

Traveling across railroad ties is uneven and bumpy, but doable. Likewise, almost all railroad tracks have gravel on both sides of the tracks which is not ideal for foot traffic or bike riding, but again, is manageable. The crunch of the gravel under the foot should also alert travelers and campers of the approach of one or more zombies or other threatening menaces as they approach. Likewise, the open expanse should reveal anyone stepping out of the underbrush. None of the conditions along a railroad track – the uneven and bumpy railroad ties, the gravel, or the tangle of weeds – are ideal for travel, but they are better than the zombie filled streets. When you consider that the number of zombies you are *likely* to encounter is less than two percent compared to the main roads of the typical neighborhood just a stone's throw away, railroad tracks are an enviable road for travel. **Game Note:** Reduce Spd for humans (and zombies) by 30% when running or riding a bicycle on the ties and half on the gravel (-12% skill penalty for bicycling); -25% skill penalty to Prowl. Likewise, ground vehicles riding on the ties, gravel or brush suffer a -20% piloting skill penalty when going faster than 35 mph (56 km); double that penalty for evasive or trick maneuvers or when traveling faster than 50 mph (80 km).

Weapons and equipment along the rails. Even before the Zombie Apocalypse, you'd be amazed at what you would find along train tracks. Pieces of heavy metal clamps, large springs, large bolts and screws the size of a man's hand, metal plates, metal spikes, other hunks and pieces of metal, rusty crowbars and tools, lengths of pipe, shovels, rakes, axe handles, broom-

sticks, metal switch handles, bottles, bricks, half-bricks, large rocks, pieces of wood, and even commercial goods stolen and dropped along the way. Today, most metal objects can be turned into instant, makeshift, handheld weapons against dead and living enemies alike. Many of the objects can also be thrown from a distance. Other items found along train tracks include empty glass and plastic bottles, plastic containers, aluminum sheeting, empty oil drums, rusty tools, and these days, a canister of gasoline, lantern, flashlight, or backpack, survivor gear and even the occasional gun, box of ammo, coil of rope, cigarette lighter, canteen, bottle of booze, and canned food dropped by a survivor on the run. You can even run across a bicycle, motorcycle, jeep or railroad track inspection truck from time to time. Of course, there are also burnt out wrecks, crashed cars, trucks, trailers, refrigerators, and other junk and debris, especially in the field area. Most is probably garbage, but sometimes you'll find something useful, even lifesaving. Train tracks have a lot to offer. **Game Note:** See random tables for finding such items and random encounters.

Zombies on the rails. Taking down a zombie or three encountered along the tracks without gunfire keeps the walking dead from converging and a traveler's presence undiscovered by other zombies or people who may be nearby. That's especially important if the tracks run through an urban area. Big city rail systems used for freight eventually run by any number of warehouses, truck yards, light and heavy industrial parks, factories, highways, fields, open country and other low population areas where the presence of zombies is usually minimal, at least along the rails. Inevitably, there are places where the train tracks cross a road or run through a densely populated location. However, again, because the areas along the tracks are open fields and gravel, the zombie presence along the tracks *should* be light and encounters minimal, provided travelers are quiet and do not linger at any one location for too long. The chance for trouble and the number of zombies doubles at night.

Danger zones along the rails

Don't misunderstand. Walking the rails is not free of danger. Not every location along the rails is nearly devoid of zombies. Caution is always warranted and some locations are death traps.

As usual, avoid abandoned cars and trucks, burned out wrecks, refrigerators, debris piles, mounds of railroad ties (some 20-40 feet/6.1-12.2 m tall), shacks, supply huts, and truck trailers and boxcars, as such places often harbor one or more dormant zombies, madmen, bandits or wild animals. I'm happy to report that Retro-Savages tend to avoid railroad tracks, as they see them as the "bones of technology" and man's corruption. Still, there are plenty of evildoers who wander the tracks looking for victims to mug, rob or kill.

When traveling through any neighborhood or city, try not to venture near the edge of the field. Staying on the tracks should be enough distance between you and any walking dead on the road or inside nearby buildings to keep you out of the zombies' range of senses. Get too close to the border, homes and buildings and you are likely to be seen or detected by any zombies wandering around in the area.

All train depots, whether a commuter or industrial train terminal, are likely to be crawling with zombies. A place like *Cen-*

tral Station in New York City is a deathtrap inhabited by tens of thousand of walking dead, with thousands more in the nearby streets and buildings. *An industrial train depot*, where there are several sets of tracks, warehouses, dockyards, factories and dozens to hundreds of boxcars and trains, is not as overwhelming as someplace like Central Station, but is likely to harbor hundreds to a few thousand walking dead. After all, this was a hub for transporting freight and the workplace of hundreds to thousands of workers. Furthermore, the expanse of tracks (20-50 sets, sometimes more) means you and the walking dead are both out in the open without the usual fields to hide your presence. Yes, you can skirt the length of a train or dodge between boxcars, but that's exactly where zombies and human predators are most likely to be encountered. A truck or stockyard with hundreds to thousands of boxcars or semi-trailers might seem like a boon at first, but they can become a deadly maze if you are not careful.

Once inside a boxcar maze, you become cut off from the outside world, unable to see beyond the walls of the next few boxcars. Unless you've been marking a trail, it is impossible to tell where you are, where to go, or how to get out. Get separated from your teammates, and it might take hours to reconnect. Find yourself running from zombies and you can really get turned around and lost. Find yourself fighting for your life within a boxcar maze as zombies converge from every direction, and you are in a world of hurt. Hole up inside a boxcar, and it is likely to become your tomb. If the walking dead saw you enter the boxcar and converged, you can bet a thousand have surrounded it and wait for you outside. The zombies closest to the container hammer and claw against the outer walls and roof in a relentless cacophony guaranteed to drive those locked inside mad. It's like being inside a drum with devouring monsters waiting on the outside.

The big terminals and depots are a lose, lose situation. It is best to go around such railroad depots and work centers. Even the streets are probably safer. If you *must* go through a train depot, make it as fast as possible, do not stop to investigate anything, and be prepared for the fight of your life.

Anytime you come across an actual locomotive or boxcar, expect trouble. Multiply the potential for danger if you come upon a string of boxcars or a train crash, especially if some of the boxcars are cracked open or overturned. Increase the threat level a hundred-fold if the train wreck is a commuter train that was carrying passengers before it met its unhappy fate.

On one hand, finding a train and boxcars can be a boon, as the container cars may be filled with goods, parts and items human survivors can use, trade or sell. On the other hand, finding a train and/or boxcars almost always means a dangerous encounter with zombies, wild dog packs, coyotes, squatters, cultists, raiders, bandits, madmen or others with foul intentions. It doesn't matter if the train or boxcars are found in an urban environment or open country, they are always a risk, and in the country, you might encounter predatory animals like a wolf pack, coyotes, a bear, or mountain lion, as well as human predators or zombies.

Meeting up with another survivor or group of strangers should always be done with great caution. Many innocent rail travelers duck out of sight, hide and wait until strangers pass, or give them a wide berth. Those who welcome strangers or seem friendly, or ask for help could be legit, but it has been my experience

that half of the time they are villains looking to take advantage of you or cut your throat. That friendly chap on the road or rails could be a scout for bandits, raiders, Retro-Savages and others up to no good. He could be sizing you up, stalling you until his no-good buddies arrive or get into a position for an ambush, or be looking to lead you into a trap. If you should stop to exchange words or trade goods with even a single stranger, be careful of what you tell him, be alert, and use extreme caution. These days, I don't trust anybody I don't know.

Random Destination or Location Table for Rail Travel

01-03% Airport; large, commercial aircraft.

04-05% Airport; small, private aircraft.



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06-07% Water tower.

08-10% Rock quarry or mining operation; stone, coal, salt, ore, etc.

11-15% Rural farmland.

16-20% Open countryside; woodlands, grassy plains or other wilderness.

21-25% Inner-city neighborhood.

26-30% Light industrial park, offices, warehouses, shipping, printing and light manufacturing.

31-35% Suburban Neighborhood.

36-38% Light to medium trucking/shipping depot with a main office, parking lot and a few semi-trucks and trailers.

39-45% Heavy trucking/shipping depot or truck yard. A common freight carrier with 2D6x10 semi-trucks and trailers, 3D6x10 boxcars in its holding area, 1D4 cranes, and other heavy means of freight storage, shipping and transportation. Includes a main office building, 1D4 garages, 1D4 fuel stations and a large parking lot. A warehouse district, public gas station, 1D4 motels, 1D4 bars, an all-night diner and a fast-food burger place are likely to be nearby.

46-50% Warehouse district. Fairly desolate. In addition to the warehouse buildings, half the buildings have lots containing 6D6 boxcars for additional storage and shipping (70% are empty), and/or 2D4 semi-trailers (80% are empty). Ten percent of these warehouse facilities have their own fuel pumps.

51-52% Factory district; manufacturing.

53-54% Foundry or Cement or Lumberyard.

55-56% Fuel depot. Gasoline and/or other fuels.

57-60% Heavy industrial park; manufacturing.

61-65% Downtown district of a city.

66-70% Runs parallel to a major highway for 1D6x10 miles (16 to 96 km).

71-75% Train depot; small. Has fuel and water. A diner, motel and gas station are likely to be nearby.

76-80% Small town.

81-85% Train depot and stockyard; large. Has 2D6 locomotives, 4D6x10 boxcars on wheels and on the railroad tracks, 2D6x100 boxcars not on wheels; half are empty, half contain goods for shipping, most (80%) are locked. Also has 2D4 cranes, large fuel depot, 1D4 repair and maintenance garages, 2D4 on-site warehouses, one main office building and a large parking lot or two. A large truck depot, 2D4 small truck depots, a warehouse district, 1D6 motels, 1D4 public gas stations, an all-night diner, pharmacy, 1D6 bars, and 1D4 fast food places are likely to be nearby.

86-88% Construction supply yard/manufacturer/storage compound. Roll again to determine type: 01-25% Cement, concrete and brick or stone. 26-50% Metal and steel sheets, beams, rods, coils, wire, etc. 51-75%. Lumberyard; massive. 76-00% Large construction machines (bulldozers, steam shovels, tractors, cranes, etc.).

89-90% Dump site: Garbage or toxic.

91-95% Waterfront dock and shipping district; small or private, visited by small ships and barges. Used to receive shipments by rail as well as ships and barges.

96-00% Waterfront dock and shipping district; large commercial depot with additional truck yards and cranes, a massive parking lot, dockyard filled with 2D4x100 boxcars (half are empty), etc. Surrounded by warehouse districts, heavy industrial park and/or factories, truck/shipping yards, etc. Used to receive shipments by rail, ships and barges.

Weapons Found Along the Rails Random Table

Roll percentile on this table when looking for an object along the tracks for use as a weapon.

01-05% A large, rusty crowbar or sledgehammer; does 2D6 damage as a blunt weapon.



06-10% Rusty old shovel, large; does 2D4 damage as a blunt weapon.

11-17% Three or four foot (0.9-1.2 m) length of pipe or metal rod; does 2D6 damage as a blunt weapon.

18-24% Large knife or a large screwdriver; does 1D4 damage as a cutting or stabbing weapon.

25-30% Baseball bat, axe handle, or piece of timber; does 2D4 damage as a blunt weapon.

31-36% Three or four foot (0.9-1.2 m) length of heavy chain; does 2D4 damage as a chain weapon.

37-47% Broken pieces of a heavy metal clamp. These are found all along the railroad tracks. The clamp weighs 3-5 pounds (1.4 to 2.3 kg), and part of it extends out from a clenched fist by 3-5 inches (7.6 to 12.7 cm). Used as a blunt weapon, the metal end does 1D6 damage or adds +2 damage to normal punches.

48-55% Large, heavy, piece of a metal spring, bolt or broken screw the size of a man's hand. Can be used as a thrown weapon that does 1D6+1 damage; throwing range is half the usual distance due to weight and shape.

56-60% Glass liquor bottle; does 1D4 damage as a blunt weapon, but has a 01-70% chance of breaking (useless when broken) each time it is used to strike.

61-65% Broken bottle; does 1D4 damage as a cutting or stabbing weapon, but has a 01-85% chance of breaking (useless when broken) each time it is used to strike.

66-70% Short length of pipe or hunk of metal, two feet (0.6 m) long; does 1D6+1 damage as a blunt weapon.

71-75% Rake, broom handle, or heavy stick/tree branch suitable for use as a staff or club; does 1D6 damage as a blunt weapon.

76-80% Brick, full size or rock. Does 1D6 damage as a blunt or thrown weapon; throwing range is half the usual distance due to weight and shape.

81-85% Metal spike; does 1D4+1 damage as a blunt or thrown weapon; throwing range is one half the usual distance due to weight and shape.

86-90% Brick, half piece. Does 1D4 damage as a blunt or thrown weapon; throwing range is one half the usual distance due to weight and shape.

91-95% Machete, hatchet or short sword; does 1D6 damage as a cutting, chopping weapon.

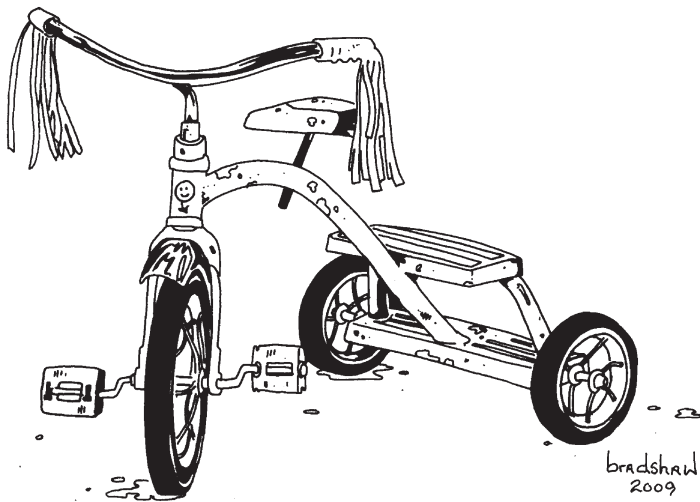
96% Road flare; does one point of damage, but will get most zombies to back away for at least one melee round (15 seconds).

97% Gun: .38 or .45 caliber revolver with 1D4+1 bullets in the cylinder; does 4D6 damage per bullet. In the alternative, the character might find a bow (crossbow, composite bow, etc.) and a quiver with 2D6 arrows (each arrow inflicts 2D6 damage).

98% Gun: 9 mm pistol with 1D6+2 rounds in the clip; does 3D6 damage per bullet.

99% Gun: Hunting rifle with 1D6+2 rounds; does 4D6 damage per bullet.

00% Gun: Shotgun with 1D4 solid slug rounds in it; does 5D6 damage per slug.



Random Items Found Along Railroad Tracks Table

Roll percentile on this table when looking for salvage and chance finds of usable items found along the rails.

01-02% Box of ammunition (G.M.'s choice of caliber).

03-05% Dead body half eaten by animals (or was it Flesh-Eating Zombies; 01-25% chance that 1D4+1 Flesh Eaters are in the vicinity).

06-07% Backpack: Contains a pair of cloth work gloves, deck of playing cards, Rifts pocket calculator, baseball cap, pocket knife (1D4 damage as a weapon), a pair of scissors, a tube of toothpaste, a toothbrush in a travel container, a bar of soap, a bottle of aspirin, two chocolate bars, and a Dean Koontz novel.

08-10% 1D6 empty glass or plastic bottles with lids/caps.

11-12% A canteen

13-14% Backpack or duffle bag, empty.

15-16% Two gallon, plastic fuel container, empty.

17-18% Two gallon, plastic fuel container, full.

19-20% A large or medium flashlight that works.

21-22% A wooden staff or branch used as a walking stick.

23-24% Backpack: Contains a pair of leather gloves, wire cutter, pry bar, box cutter, roll of duct tape, pair of binoculars, a pocket mirror and disposable cigarette lighter.

25-26% 2D4 foot (0.6 to 2.4 m) length of chain.

27-28% Coil of rope, 2D4+10 feet (3.6 to 5.4 m).

29-30% Backpack: Contains a blanket, a towel, an XL T-shirt, a roll of toilet paper, a fork and knife, box of matches, a half used candle, pack of chewing gum, two bottles of water, note pad, and black pen or marker.

31-32% Tent in a travel bag.

33-34% Common caliber pistol or revolver; out of ammo.

35-37% Disposable cigarette lighter.

38-40% Bottle of whiskey.

41-42% Sack with 2D6 pounds (0.9 to 5.4 kg) of potatoes or apples in it.

43-44% Tool kit, basic or 2D6+2 different rusty, but salvageable tools scattered along the tracks.

45-46% Backpack: Contains 2D6 bottles of water, or juice or tea, 1D6 granola snack bars, a disposable cigarette lighter and two road flares.

47-49% Sack with 4D6 cans of beans, vegetables and/or chicken soup, or other canned food.

50-51% A blood stained man's jacket.

52-54% Fishing pole and tackle.

55-56% A cardboard box contain 3D6 cans of baby formula, 1D6 cans of powdered milk and 1D4 boxes of crackers.

57-59% Compass.

60-61% Motorcycle in the bushes. Roll again. 01-50% Broken down, but can be easily repaired. 51-00% It is in working order, the keys are in the ignition, and it has a half a tank of gasoline.

62-64% Backpack or duffle bag: Contains three sets of men's or women's clothing.

65-67% Bicycle in the bushes in good working condition.

68-70% Six pack of beer or other beverage.

71-72% Sleeping bag. It is soiled but in otherwise good shape.

73-76% Refrigerator, closed. Roll percentile again to see what is inside: 01-20% A Crawler zombie. 21-40% Empty. 41-50% 1D6x10 twenty ounce bottles of water. 51-60% A dead body; may be human or animal. If an animal, this is a fresh kill put in the fridge to keep it safe from wild animals and relatively cool. It also means people (good or evil) are active in the area. 61-70% Filled with various packages of food, cereal, cookies, grain, flour, etc., put inside the refrigerator to keep them safe from wild animals. May be someone's secret cache. 71-80% 1D4+1 canteens Filled with water, 1D6 blankets, a duffle bag, flashlight, large crowbar, and a shotgun with 4D6 buckshot rounds. This seems likely to be someone's secret cache. 81-85% Filled with toilet paper, 12 rolls of paper towel, and a 10 mm pistol with a full 16 round magazine. May be someone's secret cache. 86-90% Filled with beer or wine. 91-95% filled with a variety of canned goods. 96-00% *Weapon stash.* 2D6 7.62 mm rifles with 288 rounds of ammo, 2D4 shotguns with 60 solid slugs and 72 buckshot rounds, 1D4 .22 caliber pistols with a box

of 144 bullets, 1D6 9 mm pistols with two extra magazines for each and an additional 432 rounds of ammo, six road flares, two smoke grenades and one fragmentation hand grenade. Definitely someone's secret cache.

77-78% Large flashlight or lantern.

79-81% 2D6 plastic bottles or containers of varying size.

82-83% 2D6 sheets of aluminum.

84-85% First aid kit or over the counter medicine or gear (bandages, painkiller, etc.).

86-87% Backpack: Contains 1D4 bottles of wine or rum.

88-90% 2D4+2 new tires for a car or SUV.

91-92% A pile of lumber or bricks.

93-95% Abandoned Jeep or SUV. 01-50% Broken down, but roll on this table again to see what salvage it might have inside. 51-00% The vehicle is still in working order, the keys are under the mat, and it has half a tank of gasoline.

96-97% Abandoned semi-truck and trailer. Roll again with the following results: *01-33%* Empty. *34%-50%* Someone or several someones have been living inside the trailer and may come home any minute. Roll again on this table to determine useable salvage items, but the player characters are, in effect, looting someone's home. *51-65%* Searching the cab and trailer: Same as roll on the Refrigerator sub-table presented under #73-76% above. *66-00%* Jackpot! The trailer is filled with cases of stuff; roll on the **Random Boxcar Contents Table**, that follows, to determine contents.

98-00% Crashed car. Cannot be driven. Contains a woman's purse with a pocket mirror, cigarette lighter, makeup, package of mints, and car keys with a mini-flashlight. Roll again on *this table* to determine salvage goods in the trunk or back seat. **Note:** 01-50% chance of 1D4 dormant Slouchers or Crawlers present in, under or near the vehicle.



101 Random Boxcar Contents Table

Game Masters, YOU and you alone determine whether a boxcar or the trailer of a semi-truck contains any salvageable goods and what those goods may be. When you want a random determination of such goods found in a boxcar, trailer, or even a corner of a warehouse, please feel free to use this table.

01% Apparel: Running Shoes/Sneakers (various sizes). May be substituted with dress shoes.

02% Apparel: Men's Clothing. 01-40% Casual. 41-70% Dress. 71-00% Work clothing. 01-50% All the one same type. 51-00% A variety of many different kinds.

03% Apparel: Women's Clothing. 01-40% Casual. 41-70% Dress. 71-00% Work garments. 01-50% All the same one item. 51-00% A variety of many different kinds.

04% Apparel: Jackets and Coats. 01-50% Spring & Fall. 51-00% Winter. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% many varieties of different styles.

05% Appliances: Kitchen. Stoves, refrigerators, microwave ovens, etc.

06% Appliances: Laundry. Washers and driers.

07% Automotive Batteries. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% several different kinds.

08% Automotive Maintenance Supplies. Basic hoses and belts, filters, spark plugs, motor oil, brake fluid, transmission fluid, window wipers, window washer fluid, and similar items and small parts. 01-50% all the same one item. 51-00% A vast array of items as listed above and more.

09% Automotive Engine Parts. Batteries, radiators, fuel pumps, other engine parts, as well as mufflers, exhaust systems, shocks, bearings, etc. 01-50% All the same one item. 51-00% A vast array of items as listed above, possibly more.

10% Automotive Tires. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% A large variety of different tires.

11% Automobile: Basic Sedan.

12% Automobile: SUV or Jeep.

13% Automobile: Pickup Truck.

14% Automobiles: Recreational Vehicles. Motorcycles and/or dirt bikes, and/or snowmobiles or ATVs. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% all different kinds.

15% Bicycles. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% A variety of different types.

16% Books. 01-50% All the same book. 51-00% A variety of many different titles and subjects.

17% Books: Cookbooks or how to books. 01-50% All the same one title. 51-00% Numerous different titles.

18% Books: Fiction or role-playing games. 01-50% All the one same book. 51-00% All different titles with 2D4x10 copies of each. Good kindling if nothing else.

19% Breakfast Cereal (boxed). 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% Several different kinds and brands of cereal by the case. In the alternative, it could be snack cakes or jars of peanut butter by the case.

20% Candles. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% A variety of different kinds, different shapes and sizes, scented and unscented, etc.

21% Candy: Chewing gum. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% Many different flavors and varieties..

22% Candy: Hard candy. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% Many different flavors and varieties.

23% Candy: Soft candy or chocolates. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% Many different flavors and varieties.

24% Canned Fruit. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% Many different varieties by the case. In the alternative, could be cans of fruit juice, or vegetables by the case.

25% Canned Jam or Jelly. 01-50% All the same type. 51-00% 3D6 different kinds. In the alternative, could be syrup and/or honey.

26% Canned Fish. Tuna, salmon, sardines, etc. 01-50% All the same one or two types. 51-00% Many different varieties by the case.

27% Canned Meat. Chicken, ham, Spam, etc. 01-50% All the same one or two types. 51-00% Many different varieties by the case.

28% Canned Sauces. Tomato sauce, gravy, etc. 01-50% All the same type. 51-00% Many different kinds by the case.

29% Canned Soup. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% Many different varieties of soups and/or stews and broths by the case. In the alternative, it may be cans of pasta dishes (ravioli, spaghetti, macaroni and cheese, etc.).

30% Canned Vegetables. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% Many different varieties. May include cans and/or jars of vegetables, beans, pickles, etc.

31% Coffee. 01-50% All the same type. 51-00% Many different blends. In the alternative, could be tea or powdered hot chocolate.

32% Dry Goods: Rice and/or Noodle Dishes. Dry package meals like Rice-a-Roni, Hamburger Helper, Macaroni and Cheese, and other rice and/or noodle based foods that come with all the basic ingredients, just add water (and meat when needed), boil or pan simmer and eat. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% Many different varieties.

33% Dry Goods: Cookies. 01-50% All the same type. 51-00% 4D6 different kinds. May substitute with other snack foods like potato chips, popcorn, pretzels, etc.

34% Dry Goods: Crackers. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% Many different varieties, and may include rice cakes, rice crackers and others. May be substituted with cans of nuts (peanuts, almonds, cashews, mixed, etc.).

35% Dry Goods: Baking. Flour, wheat, sugar, corn starch, bread mix, cake mix, and similar items. 01-50% All the one same type. 51-00% Many different varieties.

36% Dry Goods: Grains or Spices. 01-50% Flour, wheat, oats, rice, peas, beans and other dried vegetables for making soups and such. 51-00% Herbs and spices, salt, pepper, chili powder, chicken and beef stock, etc. May be substituted with or include condiments (mustard, ketchup, barbeque sauce, mayonnaise, spice mixes, etc.).

37% Dry Goods: Noodles. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% Many different varieties.

38% Electronics: Digital cameras. 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% Many different varieties.

39% Entertainment: Flat screen televisions, DVD players, digital music players, and similar items.

40% Electronics: Laptop computers. Laptops and handheld electronic notebooks and/or cellular phones: 01-50% All the same one type. 51-00% Many different varieties.

41% Electronics: Videogames. Videogame platforms/players and cases of 4D6 different game cartridges. In the alternative, may be DVD movies and/or music CDs.

42% Fabric by the bolt. Sewing fabric of numerous types and patterns of material (2D4x10 cases of different fabric). May

be combined or substituted with sewing and knitting materials, tools and supplies (thread, yarn, needles, etc.).

43% Fuel: Gasoline. May be substituted with diesel fuel, crude oil or kerosine. Could even be jet fuel for aircraft.

44% Fuel: Propane, lamp/torch oil or kerosine.

45% Fuel: Coal or charcoal for outdoor grills.

46% Furniture: Living room/den.

47% Furniture: Office. Desks, chairs, filing cabinets, shelving, etc.

48% Guns and Ammunition. A variety of common types of *handguns* from 22 caliber to 9 mmm, and 1D6 cases of ammunition (3456 rounds per case) for each.

49% Guns and Ammunition. A variety of common types of *hunting rifles* and *shotguns* from low caliber to high-powered, and 1D6 cases of ammunition (1728 rounds per case) for each. May be substituted with hunting bows and arrows of various types.

50% Hardware: Building Supplies. Basic lumber, paneling, aluminum, plaster, drywall, caulk, cement, asphalt, asphalt sheets, tar, tar paper, roofing shingles, tile, linoleum, brick, stone, and similar.

51% Hardware: Common Tools. Hammers, screwdrivers, pliers, cutters, scissors, saws, axes, axe handles, shovels, crow-bars, etc.

52% Hardware: Nails, screws, bolts, and similar.

53% Hardware: Paints and Painting Supplies. Includes paint, brushes, pans, buckets, rollers, scrapers, tape, plastic sheeting, etc.

54% Hardware: Power Tools. Drills, chain saws, etc. of various types.

55% Hardware: Binding. Rope, cord, twine, string, wire, fishing line, tarps, duct tape, cable ties, and similar binding material.

56% Hardware: Heating. Electric, kerosene, and propane portable heaters. 01-50% All items are one type. 51-00% A variety of direct types of heaters.

57% Hardware: Lawn and Yard Goods. Seed, rakes, shovels, tiki torches, torch oil, water hoses, wheelbarrels, etc.

58% Lighting: Fixtures and More. Light fixtures, bulbs, extension cords, work lamps, electrical tape, and related electrical supplies.

59% Lighting: Portable. Flashlights, matches, disposable lighters, candles, outdoor torches, oil lamps, lamp oil and even a few small gas or propane powered generators.

60% Linens: Bathroom. A variety of bath towels, hand towels, face cloths, toilet seat covers, small rugs, and so on. May be all the same brand or several different.

61% Linens: Bedroom. Bed sheets, blankets, quilts, comforters, pillow cases, etc. In the alternative, may be drapery or kitchen linens (table cloths, hand towels, etc.).

62% Lumber. Sheets of wood paneling, two by fours, etc.

63% Medical Supplies: Household. Aspirin, cough and cold medicine, and other over the counter drugs and basic supplies.

64% Medical Supplies: Drugs. Commercial/clinical drugs that may include antibiotics, antidepressants, painkillers, heart medicine, etc.

65% Medical Supplies: Hospital. Bandages, antiseptics, scalpels, sutures, hospital scrubs, and other common medical goods found at a clinic or hospital.

66% Metal Sheeting: Light. Aluminum sheets, rolls, gutters, exhaust piping, etc. as well as chicken wire, wire mesh, screens, and similar.

67% Metal Sheeting: Heavy. Steel and other types of metal. May include metal plates, sheets, rods, beams, pipes, etc.

68% Paper Goods for the Household. Roll to determine what type. 01-25% Toilet paper. 26-50% Paper towels. 51-75% Facial tissue. 76-00% Paper plates. See Office Supplies for other paper and writing supplies.

69% Pillows. 01-50% All the same type. 51-00% 3D6 different kinds and sizes. May be substituted with children's clothing or toys.

70% Plastic containers. 01-50% re-useable Tupperware type containers of various types and sizes. 51-00% Disposable types of plastic containers (which can actually be washed and reused several times), many different sizes; may include a variety of plastic sealable plastic bags. In the alternative may be glassware (drinking glasses, mugs, dishes, etc.).

71% Potatoes. 1D6x10% are still edible. May be substituted with dried corn, rice, wheat, beans or peas.

72% Produce. One particular fruit or vegetable, at this point all are rotten. May substitute with baked goods, bread and similar goods all rotten, or livestock, all dead.

73% Office Machines. Computers, printers, copiers, calculators, ink cartridges and similar items.

74% Office Supplies: Furniture. Business chairs, desks, lamps and furnishings.

75% Office Supplies: Paper. 01-50% White paper by the ream, all of the same type. 51-00% 4D6 different kinds and may include note pads and binders.

76% Office Supplies: Writing. Writing implements of many different varieties, from pencils and mechanical pencils to ink pens and markers, 2D4x10 different kinds, but likely to be one or two specific brands. May be substituted with art supplies (paints, brushes, colored pencils, markers, sketch pads, tracing paper, sheets of drawing board, and more).

77% Outdoors: Boating. Canoes, kayaks, row boats, motor boats, etc.

78% Outdoors: Camping and Hiking Gear.

79% Outdoors: Fishing Gear. Poles, tackle, etc.

80% Outdoors: Hunting Gear. Everything except the actual guns and ammo.

81% Outdoors: Grills. Various types and sizes of grills for cooking, from those requiring charcoal bricks to propane canisters (not included), and portable camping grills.

82% Outdoors: Maintenance. Riding and push lawn mowers or snow blowers, the oil for them, and plastic gasoline cans.

83% Pots and pans. May be substituted with or include cutlery and eating utensils, forks, knives, etc.

84% Road Repair Equipment. Tools for spreading and smoothing tar/ asphalt and cement, 1D6 dozen orange barrels, 1D4 dozen orange cones (small), a case of caution tape, 1D4 cases of work gloves, 1D4 cases of orange vests, 1D4 cases of hard hats with lights on the top, 2D4 cases of road flares, one case of flashlights, 1D4 electrical generators, and 2D4 banks of flood lights.

85% Road Repair Materials. Roll to determine what type of material. 01-20% Drums of tar. 21-40% Crates of asphalt in 50 lb (22.5 kg) bags. 41-60% Crates of cement. 61-80% Lumber. 81-00% All of the previous in roughly equal portions.

86% Sports Drinks. Gatorade or similar drinks. May be substituted with juices and/or flavored water.

87% Sports gear. Baseball bats, hockey sticks, balls, pucks, and related equipment.

88% Tanker. Carrying gasoline, kerosene, crude oil or jet fuel.

89% Tanker. Carrying industrial waste or toxic chemicals.

90% Thermoses and Coolers. Various types of thermoses and insulated coolers.

91% Toothpaste, Mouthwash and Toothbrushes.

92% Soap: Hand and Body Soap or Shampoo.

93% Soap: Laundry Detergent or Dish Soap.

94% Waste. Contains debris and junk, but there might be salvageable items and materials. In the alternative, contains rotting garbage.

95% Water. Contains case after case of plain, bottled water; small 16 or 20 ounce bottles.

96% Water. Large gallon or commercial 5-10 gallon bottles of water.

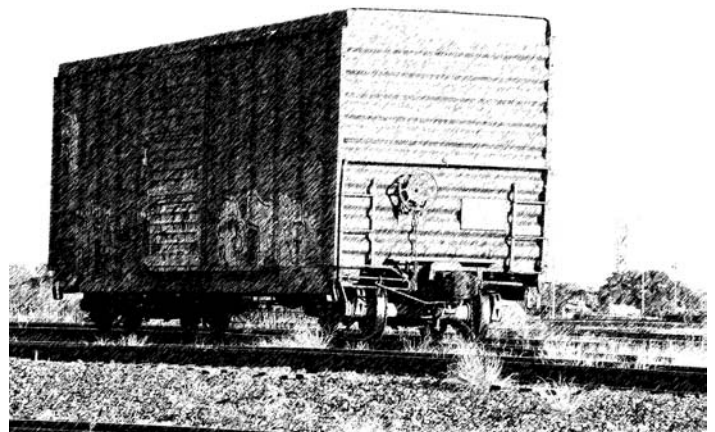
97% Wine. Cases of wine. 01-50% All one type. 51-00% A variety of red and white wines, champagnes, etc.

98% Beer. 01-50% All one type. 51-00% A variety of 2D6 different types of beer.

99% Hard Liquor. Includes whiskeys, bourbons, gins, rums, vodkas, etc.

100% Mixed freight cargo in the same boxcar. Roll twice on this table.

101% Mixed freight cargo in the same boxcar. Roll four times on this table.





Encounter Tables Along the Rails

Random Encounters Along Rural Train Tracks

Roll once every five hours or as the G.M. deems suitable. Always roll again upon entering and exiting a town, city, park or rest stop area.

01-10% 1D4 Game Animals. Can be anything from rabbits or raccoons to pheasant or geese. **Stat Note:** Small animals have 1D6 Hit Points and 1D4 S.D.C., larger animals have 2D6 Hit Points and 1D6 S.D.C.

11-20% Wild Dog Pack: 2D6+2 wild canines of various types. They are just as dangerous as a wolf pack. The wild dogs attack any group with less than six people, starting with those who are small, injured, sick or elderly. They give up the attack in 1D6+1 melee rounds if their prey puts up a fight or when half are injured. They give up immediately if the pack leader is slain. **Stat Note:** See page 74 of the **Dead Reign™ RPG** for *Canine Stats & Combat Notes*.

21-25% Stray Dogs: 1D6 friendly dogs or a mommy and 1D4 six month old pups looking for a pat on the back and a handout. All are friendly and not aggressive. They bite only if attacked or cornered. Any of them could easily be adopted and made into pets or trained animal helpers and companions. Unless the characters try to keep the dogs, the strays run off after they are done eating. **Stat Note:** See page 74 of the **Dead Reign™ RPG** for *Canine Stats & Combat Notes*.

26-30% Coyotes: 1D4+2 coyotes try to steal any available food, including any food in backpacks or sacks. They may also attack any animals with the travelers, from livestock and pack animals to a canine companion. The coyotes are skittish and back off if threatened or attacked. They only attack if they are facing one or two humans and one of the people is injured or sick. Same stats as a large dog. See page 74 of the **Dead Reign™ RPG** for *Canine Stats & Combat Notes*.

31-35% Wolf Pack: 2D6+6 wolves attack any group with less than eight people. The wolves start by attacking any animals in the group, including dogs, as well as children, injured, sick or elderly people. The animals give up the attack only after half their numbers are killed. 01-50% chance of fleeing immediately after the pack leader is killed. **Wolf Quick Stats:** Hit Points: 4D6+6. S.D.C.: 2D6+20. Attacks per Melee Round: Three. Damage: Claws: 1D4 damage, Bite: 2D6+3 damage. Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +5 to strike, +4 to dodge, +2 to save vs

poison/disease, and +5 to save vs Horror Factor. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 120 feet (36 m), Prowl 50%, Swim 65%, and track by smell 88% (can smell prey and blood up to one mile/1.6 km away), can leap 4 feet (1.2 m) high and 8 feet (2.4 m) across from a standing position, double with a running start. Speed: 50 (35 mph/56 km), with bursts of speed up to 55 (37.5 mph/60 km) that last for 2D4 minutes.

36-40% Fox: 1D4 foxes try to steal food and may attack any small animal or toddler in the company of the player group. Otherwise, they fight only if startled, threatened, cornered or attacked first. Foxes are easily chased off. Same stats as a typical dog. **Fox Quick Stats:** Hit Points: 3D6. S.D.C.: 1D6+6. Attacks per Melee Round: Two. Damage: Claws: 1 point of damage, Bite: 1D6 damage. Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, +4 to dodge, +2 to save vs poison/disease, and +2 to save vs Horror Factor. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 120 feet (36 m), Prowl 55%, Swim 55%, and track by smell 55% (can smell prey and blood up to one mile/1.6 km away), can leap 3 feet (1.2 m) high and 5 feet (1.5 m) across from a standing position. Speed: 44 (30 mph/48 km), with bursts of speed up to 50 (35 mph/56 km) that last for 2D4 minutes.

41-45% Bear: Black and Brown Bears are most common to North America. The animal is aggressive and attacks, targeting one specific member of the group, regardless of size. It fights everyone who threatens or attacks it, and fights to the death. **Bear Quick Stats:** Hit Points: 1D4x10+10. S.D.C.: 3D6+12 (double for Grizzly and Polar Bears). Attacks per Melee Round: Three. Damage: Claws: 1D6+6 damage, Bite: 1D6+2 damage. Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +3 to strike, +2 to parry, +3 to dodge, +3 to save vs poison/disease, and +2 to save vs Horror Factor. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 120 feet (36 m), Climb 84% (trees only), Prowl 35%, Swim 80%, and track by smell 66%. Speed: 22, with bursts of speed up to 44 (30 mph/48 km) that last for 2D4 minutes.

46-50% Mountain Lion/Cougar/Puma: Always attacks if threatened, cornered or attacked first. If everyone stands still there is a 01-88% likelihood it will move off and disappear in the underbrush. That's not as good as you might think. One, it suggests that one or more of the big cats live and hunt in the area. Two, the mountain lion is likely to shadow the group for 1D6x10 minutes and attack any individual who separates from the group or who is left behind, especially if injured. May also attack, kill and run off with an animal companion smaller than a German Shepherd or a pack animal. **Mountain Lion Quick Stats:** Hit Points: 4D6+10. S.D.C.: 2D6+20. Attacks per Melee Round: Three. Damage: Claws: 2D6 damage, Bite: 2D4 damage. Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +6 to strike, +4 to parry, +3 to dodge, and +4 to save vs Horror Factor. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 200 feet (61 m), Climb 89%/60%, Prowl 66%, Swim 44%, and can leap 20 feet (6.1 m) high and 40 feet (12.2 m) across from a standing position. Speed: 22, with bursts of speed up to 44 (30 mph/48 km) that last for 1D4 minutes.

51-55% Large Wild Dog Pack: 3D6+12 wild dogs of sizes and breeds from medium to large. Due to the size of the pack, they are aggressive and attack any group with less than ten people. The wild dogs start by attacking any animals in the group, including other dogs, but people are next. The animals give up the attack only after half their numbers are killed or severely injured. 01-50% chance of fleeing immediately after the pack

leader is killed. **Stat Note:** See page 74 of the **Dead Reign™ RPG** for *Canine Stats & Combat Notes*.

56-60% 1D4 Flesh-Eating Zombies. Like wild dogs or wolves, they fight until half of their members are killed; the rest run off into the woods.

61-65% 1D4 Crawlers.

66-70% 1D4 Bug Boys (+2 if near a garbage dump or junkyard).

71-75% 1D4 Juggernauts or Slouchers.

76-78% 1D4 Fast Attack Zombies and 1D4 Slouchers.

79-81% 1D4 Worm Meat Zombies (+1 if in or near a swamp, marsh, bog, drainage runoff, lake or other body of water).

82-84% 1D6+1 Slouchers.

85-87% Two Sewer/Swamp Crawlers (+1 if in or near a swamp, marsh, bog, drainage runoff, lake or other body of water).

88-90% 1D4 Travelers/Survivors. People of a good alignment, they are willing to trade food and extra supplies, and exchange information about what they've seen or know about the area, but they are only recent arrivals.

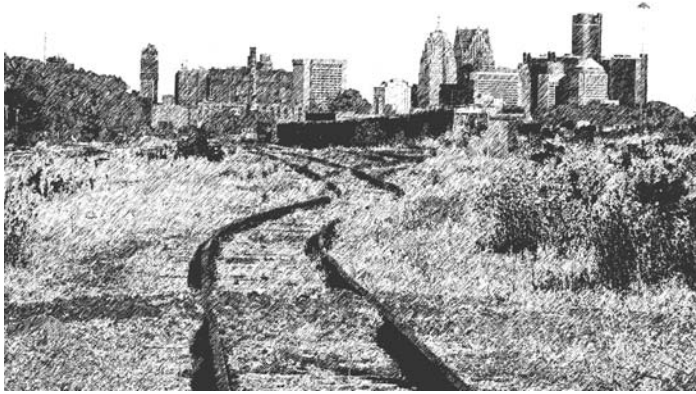
91-93% 1D6 Travelers/Survivors. People of a selfish or evil alignment, they *may* be willing to trade food and extra supplies, and exchange information about what they've seen or know about the area. However, they do not share vital information and are out for themselves. They may lie, cheat, and overcharge for the items they trade, and a couple may try to steal items. If caught stealing, they'll insist it was an accident and fight if pushed. These people are hostile and don't take well to threats.

94-95% Shepherd of the Damned (Principled or Scrupulous alignment) on his way into a nearby community to look for survivors. He may ask the player characters if they'd like to join him on his rescue mission. If they join him, he tells them they need to trust him and follow his lead. He has information about a couple places where there are rumored to be survivors. It is okay if the group declines to help, and he is happy to answer a few questions and warn them about any serious dangers currently in the area. However, he (or she) is on a mission and doesn't have time to stand around chatting and moves on.

96-97% Hound Master (Principled or Scrupulous alignment) on his (or her) way to rescue canines and thin feral dog packs. The Hound Master is part of a group of local survivors, but will not take strangers to them. However, he will warn them about any serious dangers currently in the area before heading off. The Hound Master may be willing to (01-50%) accompany a group of strangers who seem like they have good intentions. If the Hound Master likes how they behave the group may be able to win his trust after a few additional adventures together. He still won't take them to the survivors' camp or his own base of operations, but is willing to establish a place and time to meet.

98-00% 1D6+4 Bandits: Most are Anarchist alignment, 1-3rd level and nervous. This is a group of armed robbers only looking to take supplies and goods for their own survival or profit. They are even likely to leave the members of the player group with their weapons, half of their extra ammunition and basic gear, but everything else is fair game to these rogues. They

fight only if they are met with resistance and flee when two or more of them are killed or half of them are injured (down by half their Hit Points). They are not likely to attack a well armed or powerful looking group of travelers, but will give them the eye before slipping out of sight. **In the alternative**, the villains could be *Retro-Savages*, however, Retros seldom travel the rails because they are symbols of the fallen, evil technology. But it is possible to encounter them from time to time along railroad tracks, especially if the Retro-Savages are looking for victims to kill or sacrifice to the zombies.



Random Encounters Along Urban & City Train Tracks

Roll once every two hours or as the G.M. deems suitable. **Note:** In an urban setting, loud sounds (from shouting voices and dogs barking to gunfire), prolonged battle (more than three minutes), or moaning by other zombies, attracts 2D6 walking dead (mixed variety but mostly Slouchers 74% and Crawlers 10%) within 2D4 minutes. Double the previous number for every additional two minutes that goes by once zombies start to converge.

01-10% 1D4 Game Animals. Can be anything from rabbits or raccoons to pheasant or geese. **Stat Note:** Small animals have 1D6 Hit Points and 1D4 S.D.C., larger animals have 2D6 Hit Points and 1D6 S.D.C.

11-15% Wild Dog Pack: 2D6+2 wild canines of various types. They are just as dangerous as a wolf pack. The wild dogs attack any group with less than six people, starting with those who are small, injured, sick or elderly. They give up the attack in 1D6+1 melee rounds if their prey puts up a fight or when half are injured. They give up immediately if the pack leader is slain. **Stat Note:** See page 74 of the *Dead Reign™ RPG* for *Canine Stats & Combat Notes*.

16-18% Stray Dogs: 2D4 friendly dogs or a mommy and 1D6 six month old pups looking for a pat on the back and food. All are friendly and not aggressive. They bite only if attacked or cornered. Any of them could easily be adopted and made into pets or trained as helpers and companions. Unless the characters try to keep the dogs, the strays run off after they are done eating. **Stat Note:** See page 74 of the *Dead Reign™ RPG* for *Canine Stats & Combat Notes*.

19-21% Coyotes: 1D6 coyotes try to steal any available food, including any food in backpacks or sacks. They may also attack any animals with the travelers, from livestock and pack animals to a canine companion. The coyotes are skittish and

back off if threatened or attacked. They only attack people if they are facing one or two humans and one of the people is injured or sick. Same stats as a large dog. See page 74 of the *Dead Reign™ RPG* for *Canine Stats & Combat Notes*.

22-24% Wolf Pack: 2D6+2 wolves attack any group with less than eight people. The wolves start by attacking any animals in the group, including dogs, as well as children, injured, sick or elderly people. The animals give up the attack only after half their numbers are killed. 01-50% chance of fleeing immediately after the pack leader is killed. **Wolf Quick Stats:** Hit Points: 4D6+6. S.D.C.: 2D6+20. Attacks per Melee Round: Three. Damage: Claws: 1D4 damage, Bite: 2D6+3 damage. Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +5 to strike, +4 to dodge, +2 to save vs poison/disease, and +5 to save vs Horror Factor. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 120 feet (36 m), Prowl 50%, Swim 65%, and track by smell 88% (can smell prey and blood up to one mile/1.6 km away), can leap 4 feet (1.2 m) high and 8 feet (2.4 m) across from a standing position, double with a running start. Speed: 50 (35 mph/56 km), with bursts of speed up to 55 (37.5 mph/60 km) that last for 2D4 minutes.

25-27% Bear: Black and Brown Bears are most common to North America. The animal is aggressive and attacks, targeting one specific member of the group, regardless of size. It fights everyone who threatens or attacks it, and fights to the death. **Bear Quick Stats:** Hit Points: 1D4x10+10. S.D.C.: 3D6+12 (double for Grizzly and Polar Bears). Attacks per Melee Round: Three. Damage: Claws: 1D6+6 damage, Bite: 1D6+2 damage. Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +3 to strike, +2 to parry, +3 to dodge, +3 to save vs poison/disease, and +2 to save vs Horror Factor. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 120 feet (36 m), Climb 84% (trees only), Prowl 35%, Swim 80%, and track by smell 66%. Speed: 22, with bursts of speed up to 44 (30 mph/48 km) that last for 2D4 minutes.

28-30% Mountain Lion/Cougar/Puma: Always attacks if threatened, cornered or attacked first. If everyone stands still there is a 01-88% likelihood it will move off and disappear in the underbrush. That's not as good as you might think. One, it suggests that one or more of the big cats live and hunt in the area. Two, the mountain lion is likely to shadow the group for 1D6x10 minutes and attack any individual who separates from the group or who is left behind, especially if injured. May also attack, kill and run off with an animal companion smaller than a German Shepherd or pack animal. **Mountain Lion Quick Stats:** Hit Points: 4D6+10. S.D.C.: 2D6+20. Attacks per Melee Round: Three. Damage: Claws: 2D6 damage, Bite: 2D4 damage. Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +6 to strike, +4 to parry, +3 to dodge, and +4 to save vs Horror Factor. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 200 feet (61 m), Climb 89%/60%, Prowl 66%, Swim 44%, and can leap 20 feet (6.1 m) high and 40 feet (12.2 m) across from a standing position. Speed: 22, with bursts of speed up to 44 (30 mph/48 km) that last for 1D4 minutes.

31-33% Tiger or African Lion: A solitary hunter or pair of tigers or 1D4 lions escaped from a zoological park or a private owner are on the loose. Zombies make lousy eating, so a live human, pack animal, livestock, dog or smaller animal makes welcomed prey. Both types of big cats would find the tall grass and brush that grows along unkept railroad tracks inviting, but thrive equally well on city streets, in neighborhoods and inside buildings! They fight to the death.

African Lion Quick Stats: Hit Points: 5D6+20. S.D.C.: 4D6+20. Attacks per Melee Round: Four. Damage: Claws: 2D6+4 damage, Bite: 2D6 damage. Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +4 to strike, +3 to parry, +4 to dodge, and +6 to save vs Horror Factor. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 600 feet (183 m), Climb 40%/20%, Prowl 60%, Swim 60%, and can leap 10 feet (3 m) high and 20 feet (6.1 m) across from a standing position. Speed: 18, with bursts of speed up to 33 (22.5 mph/36 km) that last for 1D6 minutes. Note: Hunt in prides of 4-8 adult animals and are most active at night; 200-400 lbs (90 to 180 kg).

Tiger Quick Stats: Hit Points: 4D6+24. S.D.C.: 4D6+30. Attacks per Melee Round: Four. Damage: Claws: 2D6+8 damage, Bite: 2D6+2 damage. Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +5 to strike, +4 to parry, +4 to dodge, and +7 to save vs Horror Factor. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 400 feet (122 m), Climb 50%/20%, Prowl 70%, Swim 80%, and can leap 15 feet (4.6 m) high and 30 feet (9.1 m) across from a standing position. Speed: 22 (15 mph/24 km), with bursts of speed up to 50 (35 mph/56 km) that last for 1D4 minutes. Note: Hunts as a solitary animal or in mated pairs. The tiger is the largest of the big cats at 400-700 lbs (180 to 315 kg).



34-36% 1D6 Flesh-Eating Zombies. Like wild dogs or wolves, they fight until half of their members are killed; the rest run off.

37-41% 1D4 Slouchers.

42-45% 1D4 Crawlers and a Sloucher.

46-49% 1D4 Bug Boys (+2 if near a garbage dump or junkyard).

50-53% 1D4 Juggernauts.

54-57% 1D4 Fast Attack Zombies and 1D4 Slouchers.

58-60% 1D4 Worm Meat Zombies (+2 if in or near a sewer, water treatment plant, chemical factory, subway or body of water).

61-65% 2D4 Slouchers.

66-69% 1D6 Sewer Crawlers.

70-73% 1D4 Travelers/Survivors. People of a good alignment, they are willing to trade food and extra supplies, and exchange information about what they've seen or know about the area, but they are only recent arrivals.

74-76% 1D6 Travelers/Survivors. People of a selfish or evil alignment, they *may* be willing to trade food and extra supplies, and exchange information about what they've seen or know about the area. However, they do not share vital information and are out for themselves. They may lie, cheat, and overcharge for the items they trade, and a couple may try to steal items. If caught stealing, they'll insist it was an accident and fight if pushed. These people are hostile and don't take well to threats.

77-79% Thinker accompanied by 1D4 Slouchers or Bug Boys. The Thinker is smart enough to recognize whether or not he and the other zombies are powerful enough to take the group of humans down. If not, the Thinker points and moans, and so do the Slouchers. However, as the Slouchers move forward, the Thinker tries to slip away. It will gather more walking dead (2D6+2 this time) and return with them in 1D6+1 minutes. **Note:** If the zombies left behind are slain within two minutes (8 melee rounds), no other zombies arrive until the Thinker returns. If they are not silenced quickly, 1D6 zombies (any type) arrive within 2D4 minutes in response to the moaning.

80-82% Shepherd of the Damned (Principled or Scrupulous alignment) on his way to a nearby community to look for survivors. He may ask the player characters if they'd like to join him on his rescue mission. If they join him, he tells them they need to trust him and follow his lead. He has information about a couple places where there are rumored to be survivors. It is okay if the group declines to help, and he is happy to answer a few questions and warn them about any serious dangers currently in the area. However, he (or she) is on a mission and doesn't have time to stand around chatting and moves on.

83-85% A cry from the bushes. Off to the side of the railroad tracks is the sound of whimpering and soft crying. It sounds human and possibly a woman or a child. The sounds are coming from behind a pile of debris, or wooden railroad ties, or a wrecked vehicle, or other similar shelter obstructing a clear view.

If the player characters call out, a woman's voice pleads for help. If the group asks her to show herself, she peeks her head out and waves before bobbing back behind the shelter. She won't leave because she is caring for an injured loved one. She keeps repeating, "I can't leave him. He's hurt. Please, won't you help? Please help us." She's probably in shock.

The brush around the woman's location is thick at many locations or there are other large piles of junk and debris all around her. Sneaking around the shelter or approaching outright reveals an attractive woman. Her face is streaked with dirt and her clothes are tattered. She is holding another person (may be

an adult, teen or child) who is covered in a blanket, tarp or long coat. All that can be seen of this person is his head. The pretty woman appears to be in shock and turns to them with a blank expression and says, “Won’t you help us? Please.”

She and her companion/loved one/child were traveling with a Shepherd of the Damned or Hound Master (could be someone the group met before) with 1D6 other survivors when they were jumped by a couple dozen walking dead led by a Death Priest, Thinker or Impersonator Zombie. She and her companion managed to escape and ran and ran until the other person collapsed. She’s been hiding here for . . . not sure how long. An hour? Maybe longer. Her story is true and she needs help. She’s traumatized with fear and functions at below normal capacity (half speed, half skill performance, etc.). The other may be injured, sick or just collapsed from exhaustion. It’s up to the G.M. as to what happens next. If the group takes her with them, she and the other frightened “civilian” will slow them down and be a liability. If they leave them behind, they will die at the claws of a monster or animal. The immediate questions are: Where are the zombies or people who attacked her group, are they nearby, looking for her and a danger to the group? G.M.’s discretion.

86-88% A cry from the bushes. Off to the side of the railroad tracks is the sound of whimpering and soft crying. It sounds human and possibly a woman or a child. The sounds are coming from behind a pile of debris, or wooden railroad ties, or a wrecked vehicle, or other similar shelter obstructing a clear view.

If the player characters call out, a woman’s voice pleads for help. If the group asks her to show herself, she peeks her head out and waves before bobbing back behind the shelter. She won’t leave because she is caring for an injured loved one. She keeps repeating, “I can’t leave him. He’s hurt. Please, won’t you help? Please help us.” She’s probably in shock.

The brush around the woman’s location is thick at many locations or there are other large piles of junk and debris all around her. Sneaking around the shelter or approaching outright reveals an attractive woman. Her face is streaked with dirt and her clothes are tattered. She is holding another person (may be an adult, teen or child) who is covered in a blanket, tarp or long coat. All that can be seen of this person is his head. The pretty woman appears to be in shock and turns to them with a blank expression and says, “Won’t you help us? Please.”

All player characters should make Perception Rolls. Those looking at the woman roll to see if they realize her mouth isn’t moving and the words came not from her lips but from the covered figure. Characters keeping a lookout or looking around, roll to see if they notice a stinking zombie hiding/peeking out from one of the other debris piles or clumps of thick brush. If they do and warn the others, our heroes have the initiative, and each get two attacks or actions (like getting the heck out of there) before the zombies come out of hiding and attack. The woman is a Pretty Zombie. The cloaked figure is an Impersonator. 1D4+1 Slouchers, 1D4 Fast Attack Zombies, one Juggernaut and two Crawlers or Sewer Crawlers are all part of the attack group.

In the alternative, this could be the trap of bandits, raiders, Terror Cultists or Retro-Savages.

89-90% A lone figure. Can be a woman, man or child seen staggering along the tracks a good distance of several hundred

yards/meters up ahead. The figure stops, sways in the wind and then sits down in a heap. It could be any of the following: A lone zombie of any type (Sloucher, Bug Boy, Worm Meat, Pretty Zombie, Juggernaut, Pattern Zombie who was a railroad worker, Thinker or Mock Zombie). An exhausted, sick or injured survivor. A Hound Master, Shepherd of the Damned, Road Reaper or Street Gang Protector in shock or distress. A drunk hermit/Ghost Walker, Lunatic: Backstabbing Cretin, or Lunatic: Paranoid, or Lunatic of any kind (see the **Civilization Gone™** sourcebook for ideas). Bandit or Raider in distress. Retro-Savage in distress. An escapee from a Terror or Death Cult, or escaped prisoner from a Zombie Lover or other lunatic. Game Master’s discretion. G.M.s, think about the bigger picture and what other adventure this encounter might lead to. It could be a lost child who wants his family, or there could be other innocent people being held prisoner someplace or in need of medical help, or trapped in the city with no way out, and so on.

91-92% Hound Master (Principled or Scrupulous alignment) on his (or her) way to rescue canines and thin feral dog packs. The Hound Master is part of a group of local survivors, but will not take strangers to them. However, he will warn them about any serious dangers currently in the area before heading off. The Hound Master may be willing to accompany (01-50%) a group of strangers who seem like they have good intentions. If the Hound Master likes how they behave the group may be able to win his trust after a few additional adventures together. He still won’t take them to the survivors’ camp or his own base of operations, but is willing to establish a place and time to meet.

93-94% A Half-Living. The character is of Anarchist alignment, well armed, and looks tough. He is a lone wolf out for himself. He has been living in the city and knows several hot spots, including a survivor camp, a Death Cult community, a bandit’s camp, some of the best resources for looting supplies, a safe house (or two), the rail network throughout the city, and a couple access points to storm drain tunnels, but why should he help you? He looks the player group over and keeps on walking without saying a word, unless he is stopped or followed and bothered with questions. If threatened, he will try to escape or play along until he can slip away. If threatened or forced into helping the group, he’ll lead them into trouble, like a zombie infested area where he can walk right among the zombies while the player characters are attacked. He’ll probably make such an encounter look like an accident in case he and the player characters should ever cross paths again. Note that he would never take the group to his own hideout/home.

95-96% 1D4+1 Scroungers on their way to or from some place to loot. They are leery of strangers, but might be willing to help a good cause or serve as native guides for the right trade goods. They know the railroad tracks and the sewer systems in at least one side of town (east, west, north or south), have a few contacts, know where the zombies are most numerous, know a couple of good hideouts, and know valuable bits of local information. They are not likely to take the group to their own hideout/home.

97-98% Apocalyptic Soldiers, Road Reapers or Street Gang Protectors. They have 2D4 innocent survivors in tow and have a throng of 4D6+20 zombies, bandits, raiders, or Death Cultists and zombies in hot pursuit of them. The bad guys will be at the player characters’ location within 1D4 melee rounds.

The player group can join the fleeing heroes and help them fight and escape the evil forces after them, or they can try to run in a different direction and hope to avoid conflict. If seen, the player characters are assumed to be part of the other group and attacked. Nothing they say or do changes the bad guys' minds, so they need to join forces or head for the hills. Doing nothing or trying to deny any association will get them killed. Making a stand, even against other humans, brings more zombies to their location and sees the geometric increase of a zombie convergence. It's probably best to make this a fight on the run.

99-00% 2D6+4 Bandits or Raiders. They could be bandits only looking for a quick score, or Raiders out to rob, kill and worse. They could also be Raiders or mercenaries hired by a local Death Cult to capture innocent people as slaves or to be fed to zombies, or whatever the Game Master wants. Whatever the case, they are very bad people who mean to give our heroes some grief. **In the alternative**, the villains could be *Retro-Savages*, however, Retros seldom travel the rails because they are symbols of the fallen, evil technology. But it is possible to encounter them from time to time along railroad tracks, especially if the Retro-Savages are looking for victims to kill or sacrifice to the zombies.

Random Encounters at a Train Depot, Train Station, City Dock or Downtown Area

Roll once every 10 minutes, or around every corner, or as the Game Master (G.M.) deems suitable, depending on the situation and actual location. **Note:** In all cases, the sound of gunfire, shouting, screaming or prolonged battle (more than 3-4 minutes) will cause 2D6 zombies to investigate (74% Slouchers, 10% Crawlers, 16% variants and others).

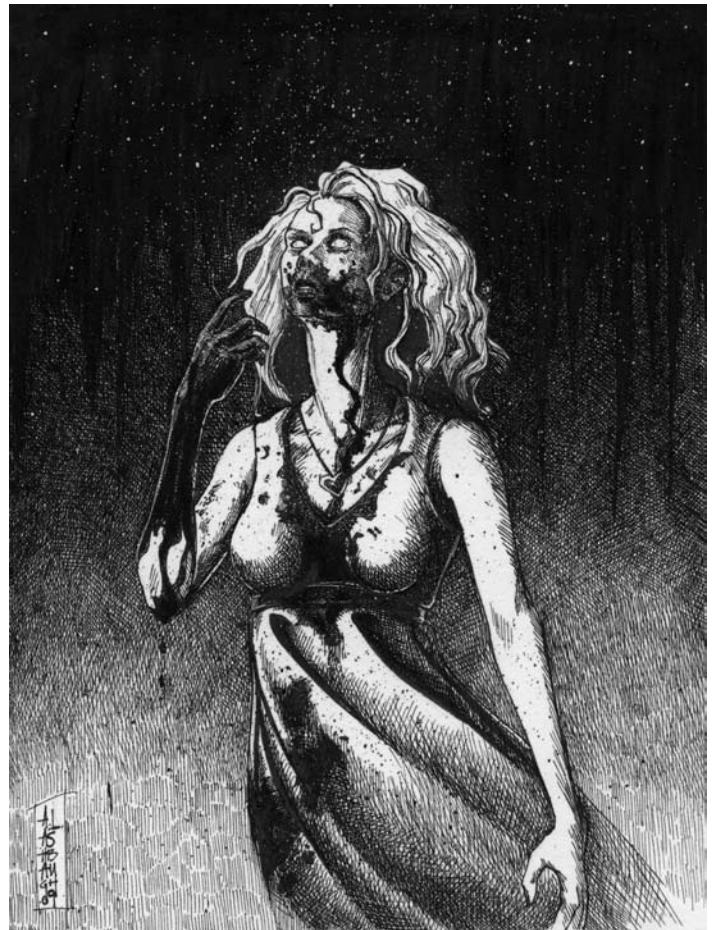
This table may also be used where a locomotive and/or boxcars are found, especially if there are a lot of boxcars. Roll every 30 minutes, or around every fourth corner or boxcar. Or as the G.M. deems suitable.

01-10% An attractive woman shuffling along. Odds are she is a Pretty Zombie, but can the Principled or Scrupulous heroes in the group make that assumption and leave her to her fate? If the group goes to help the woman, roll to determine what she is and what happens next:

01-25% She's human, alright and in shock. She welcomes help and, if the characters move swiftly and silently, they can get her out of sight before a zombie sees them and bellows.

26-50% She's a Pretty Zombie, just as you suspected. The witch seems to grin and cuts loose with the Zombie Moan. 1D6 Slouchers are on the group within 1D4 melee rounds, with 2D6 more arriving 30 to 120 seconds later (2D4 melee rounds). Slow moving, they are easily outrun, but they continue to moan and pursue. All the zombies in a mile (1.6 km) radius are on alert that the living are present, and begin shuffling toward the general direction of the moan. Subsequent sightings of live people keep the convergence going and our heroes may find themselves running through a gauntlet of zombie clusters (1D6+5 walking dead) and growing zombie hordes (1D6x10 walking dead).

51-75% She's a damn Impersonator Zombie and you've walked into her trap. She moans as 2D4 Fast Attack Zombies



charge out from their hiding places to attack and contain our heroes. 2D6 Slouchers, 1D6 Bug Boys or Worm Meat, 1D6 Crawlers and two Juggernauts lumber out a melee round later to join the battle. For the next 10 minutes thereafter, 3D6 zombies of various types (mostly Slouchers) join the battle every two minutes. After that, a full blown convergence is under way with the geometric increase in numbers every two minutes.

76-00% She's a Thinker Zombie that unleashes a moan. If killed without gunfire, within two melee rounds, no other walking dead appear. If the Thinker can elude destruction or last longer than 30 seconds (2 melee rounds), her moan brings 1D6+4 other zombies (mixed group, predominantly Slouchers) to advance the attack and continue the moan. At that point, 3D6 additional zombies appear two minutes later and a full convergence begins with the same results as #25-50% above.

11-20% 1D6 Slouchers.

21-25% 1D6 Sewer Crawlers (+3 if in or near a sewer, water treatment plant, chemical factory, subway system or body of water).

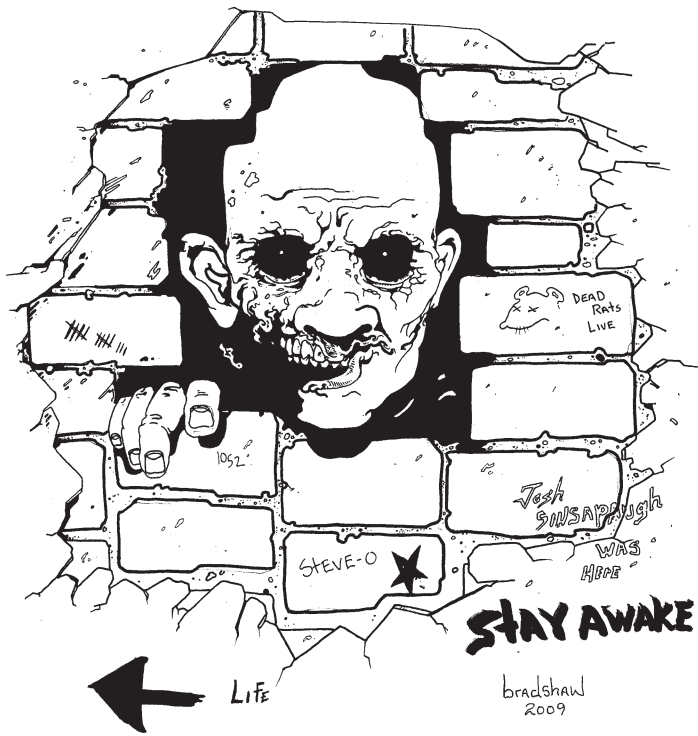
26-30% 1D6 Bug Boys.

31-35% 1D6 Fast Attack Zombies and 1D4 Slouchers.

36-40% 1D6 Juggernauts and 1D6 Slouchers.

41-45% 1D4 Worm Meat Zombies (+3 if in or near a sewer, water treatment plant, chemical factory, subway or body of water).

46-50% 1D6+1 Flesh-Eating Zombies. They fight until half of their members are killed; the rest shriek and run off. 1D6 Slouchers or one Thinker who heard the shriek come to investigate.



51-60% 2D6+2 Slouchers, 25% are Pretty Zombies, 25% are Bug Boys.

61-70% 2D4 Crawlers or Trash Crawlers.

71-80% Thinker or Impersonator Zombie leading 2D6+4 walking dead; 25% are Slouchers, 25% are Juggernauts, 25% are Bug Boys or Sewer Crawlers, and 25% are Fast Attack Zombies.

81-90% 4D6 Slouchers, 25% are Blow Fish, 25% are Worm Meat or Bug Boys.

91-00% 2D4+2 Flesh-Eating Zombies.

Random Table for a Cavalry Rescue

Is the player group in over their heads and in trouble? Do they need the proverbial “cavalry” to arrive to save the day? Here you go, though the ultimate outcome may not be exactly what the player characters were hoping for.

01-10% A man appears out of nowhere and says to follow him if they want to live! He is a **Shepherd of the Damned** (or Hound Master or Ghost Walker) who can lead them to a way out if they move fast. That way out may be down into a sewer or other subterranean tunnel. G.M.s may throw some zombies at the group, but it shouldn’t be anything they can’t handle. All (or most?) make it out alive and to safety. If the man leading them should get killed, finding their way to a safe exit may become a matter of luck.

11-20% A man appears out of nowhere and says to follow him if they want to live! He is a **mad man** or Ghost Walker with good intentions. He leads them safely to a point with no or a couple minor zombie encounters the group handles with ease, then stops and starts to cry, whimper or mutter to himself. He can’t remember the rest of the way out and doesn’t know what to do. Although 2D6 minutes behind away, a zombie horde of 6D6+6 zombies (mixed types) is following behind them. He’s bought them some time, but now they are on their own.

21-30% A man appears out of nowhere and says to follow him if they want to live! He is a **Street Gang Protector** (or Road Reaper) and leads the group to 1D4+2 other members of his gang, but they are all pretty chewed up. He tells the group they can’t stay where he’s just brought them for more than another 10 minutes before the zombies find them. He leads them out with his buddies and knows a short cut and path of least resistance, but they’ll still have to fight through a gauntlet of zombies to get out alive. This should be a tough battle, but not a suicide run, at least not for the player characters.

31-40% A man appears out of nowhere and says to follow him if they want to live! He is an **Apocalyptic Soldier** and leads the group to 1D6+10 other members of his company. They are well armed and raring for a fight. They point the player characters in the right direction – down a subterranean tunnel or path of least resistance, with a hand scrawled map and simple directions. The Soldiers want the player characters to go ahead of them, clear the path of any zombies and hold the exit door for their escape. The Soldiers tell them they’ll follow 2D6+4 minutes later, after they take down several dozen walking dead and seal the door to this exit route behind them. The player group needs to linger at the end of the trail to make sure no new zombies come in from the other end and get the Soldiers trapped between two zombie hordes converging at both ends of the tunnel. The following problem arises: 20 minutes pass and there is no sign of the Soldiers. Do our heroes wait and keep the exit clear, or leave? Or do some (or all) of the group go back to see if the Soldiers need help?

Game Masters, here are four possible endings to this situation. Pick one, or roll for a random determination, or create your own.

01-25% The Soldiers are coming, except they were all killed and are now zombies leading the other walking dead to our heroes’ location.

26-50% Things went badly, the Soldiers are coming but they are being pursued by the zombie horde at the other end. Making a run for it is good odds, but other individual zombies and small groups coming to investigate the commotion bar the way. If our heroes move quickly, and work at getting away, not fighting, the opposition they face should be light and they can escape. The Soldiers will go a different direction with zombies following behind and more appearing ahead of them every 2-3 minutes. If the player group goes with the Soldiers they have a much harder battle ahead of them. However, they will be able to make sure that they and the Soldiers can escape the converging zombie horde.

51-75% The Soldiers arrive late, but intact. The zombies are locked out at the other end and cannot pursue. However, a *Thinker* figured out where the trail was leading and has circled around with 2D6+18 walking dead (mixed group) to cut off their escape. They can’t go back the way they came, so they’ll have to fight the zombies ahead of them. If the player characters waited for the Soldiers, they are in the same predicament. If they left before the Soldiers appeared, they can escape with little opposition. However, they can hear heavy gunfire and shouting to know the Soldiers are in trouble and may need help. If they go back to help the Soldiers, they can get the walking dead in a crossfire. Still, the monsters’ moan gets a new convergence started, all of which adds up to the player characters and Sol-

diers fighting through a gauntlet of zombies. This should be a tough battle, but not a suicide run, at least not for the player characters.

76-00% The sound of battle and moaning at the other end, and waiting 20+ minutes, has given 2D6+2 slowly converging zombies a chance to get close enough to the exit location to see the player characters and moan. Unless our heroes act quickly to silence the moaning, a convergence at their location begins, with more showing up every two minutes. The Soldiers arrive 1D6 minutes later, but now everyone is in the same situation as #51-75%.

41-50% A man appears out of nowhere and says to follow him if they want to live! He says he is a Scrounger or fellow Survivor, but he's really a **Mock Zombie** pretending to be human. He looks completely human, alive, and healthy. He believes what he tells them and is friendly, brave and fights zombies, so the group may not realize he's really a Mock Zombie. He really does save their lives (or tries to) and leads them to safety, but as usual, he is a murdering walking dead in human skin and will turn on them or secretly prey on some other humans sooner or later. His goal is to join the player group or be taken to another group of survivors or to a survivor camp where he can secretly prey on humans at his leisure.

51-55% A man appears out of nowhere and says to follow him if they want to live! He is a **bandit** who leads the group to a location that is presently safe from zombies, but it's an ambush. 2D6+6 other bandits get the player characters in a crossfire, rob our heroes of all obvious firearms, ammo, and supplies and then run off through a tunnel, locking the door behind them. The door can be forced and our heroes can follow the fleeing bandits, but they don't know where the bandits are going. Likewise, they don't know where the tunnel leads or which way to go to get out safely. Furthermore, by this point, zombies are converging on their location. The group needs to take the plunge into the dark tunnel and hope for the best. Game Masters, be merciful or lead them to a new adventure.

56-60% A man appears out of nowhere and says to follow him if they want to live! He is a **Zombie Deathbringer** armed to the teeth. He leads them through a network of railroad tracks and back streets. "This is it," he says with a confident grin. "You're on your own from here." But turning the corner, a horde of 2D4x10+12 walking dead (mixed group) block their exit. "Damn," the man says. "Sorry. I had a tussle with these bad boys earlier. I thought they'd be gone by now." He laughs as the moaning erupts like a choir of the dead, and says, "We could go back only more zombies will be down that way. Or you boys can try to squeeze through their right flank as I attract their attention with some hot lead. Don't worry, I'll open up your exit with this grenade. Better move fast after I throw it." And the rush through a zombie gauntlet begins.

61-70% A man appears out of nowhere and says to follow him if they want to live! He says he is a "**Savior of the Living**" and, sure enough, leads our heroes to a quiet, safe location. At that location, he is met by 1D4+2 "friends," each well armed. He turns to the player group and tells them he has saved their lives through the grace and power of his god and invites them to join his flock. Roll percentile dice to see who the man is and what kind of group he represents. In all cases, he is the group's leader. 01-20% Retro-Savage. 21-40% Zombie Death Cult.

41-60% Terror Cult who worships gods of Death and Chaos their leader has made up. 61-80% A delusional, but well intentioned Messianic Leader with nearly 100 survivors who trust and follow him. 81-00% An insane Zombie Master who has decided he is, himself, a god, and invites the characters to worship him as their god. Two of his Slouchers, a Worm Meat and a Thinker are nearby in case of trouble.

In each case, the man and his associates are willing to let the player characters go, even if they refuse his offer, but warns them they had their chance. The next time they meet, they'll be enemies. If the player characters should decide to join the group (for whatever reason), it is the catalyst for a whole new adventure; G.M.s, be creative.



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71-80% A man appears out of nowhere and says to follow him if they want to live! He is an **Impersonator Zombie** who stays ahead of them in the shadows, waving them on to follow him down corridors or tunnels, or a back alley, until they reach his ambush point away from the other, much larger throng of walking dead. Suddenly 1D4+2 Crawlers drop down on the player characters and the Impersonator Zombie, 1D4 Slouchers and two Fast Attack Zombies ambush them and attack. As bad as this is, it's better than what they were facing. If our heroes

can destroy or get away from these fiends they can make good their escape.

81-90% A man appears out of nowhere and says to follow him if they want to live! He is a **Half-Living** who can lead them to a way out if they move fast. That way out may be down back alleys, railroad track, sewer or subterranean tunnel. G.M.s may throw some zombies at the group, but it shouldn't be anything they can't handle. All (or most?) make it out alive and to safety. If the man leading them should get killed, finding their way to a safe exit point may become a matter of luck. If they handle themselves well and with courage and honor, the Scrupulous aligned Half-Living may be willing to become one of their contacts and allies, or even join the group (but only if the G.M. would like him to).



91-00% A man appears out of nowhere and says to follow him if they want to live! He is a **Road Reaper** and takes the player characters to a band of 1D6+10 other Reapers. All are armed and loaded for bear. They've already had their fun for the day, and tell our heroes to hop into the back of one or more vehicles and ride off to safety! They can drop the player group off at any safe looking location away from the zombie horde, take them to a Safe Haven Community, or let them "hang" with them for a while, provided the characters pull their weight and make good travel companions. Otherwise, the Road Reapers will eventually just drop them off someplace safe looking (at gun-point if necessary).

Random Encounters in the Open Countryside

This table applies away from railroad tracks in the open country.

Roll once every five or six hours, or as the G.M. deems suitable. Always roll again upon entering and exiting a large, sprawling farm or granary, ranch that once raised cattle, horse or

other livestock, slaughterhouse and/or meat processing plant, town, city, park or rest stop area.

01-05% A family of farmers turned into zombies: 1D6+1 all Slouchers, except one which is a Crawler.

06-10% Group of travelers, townsfolk or tourists turned into zombies. 3D6+4 zombies; mixed group of Slouchers and Sloucher variants like Juggernauts, Pretty Zombies, Bug Boys, and Worm Meat.

11-13% **Zombie Master and 1D4+1 of his gun-toting kin.** They keep 1D4+1 Slouchers, one Juggernaut, two Pretty Zombies, one Crawler, and one Worm Meat as pets and watchdogs. They rob passersby whenever they can, particularly small groups with six or fewer members.

14-15% **Zombie Lover.** A lunatic who likes to invite strangers to his house or farm, where he tries to lure them into the clutches of the zombies he keeps.

16-20% Group of travelers, townsfolk or tourists turned into zombies. 1D6+4 zombies; mixed group of Slouchers and Sloucher variants like Juggernauts, Pretty Zombies, Bug Boys, and Worm Meat.

21-25% **1D6+1 Travelers/Survivors.** People of a good alignment, they are willing to trade food and extra supplies, and exchange information about what they've seen or know about the area, but they are only recent arrivals themselves.

26-30% **One lone Sloucher or Crawler.**

31-33% **1D6+1 Travelers/Survivors.** People of a selfish or evil alignment, they *may* be willing to trade food, extra supplies, and exchange information about what they've seen or know about the area. However, they do not share vital information and are out for themselves. They may lie, cheat, and overcharge for the items they trade, and a couple may try to steal items. If caught stealing, they'll insist it was an accident and fight if pushed. These people are hostile and doesn't take well to threats.

34-36% **1D4 Crawlers.**

37-40% **1D6 Survivors/Farmers.** People of a good alignment, they are willing to trade food and extra supplies, and exchange information about what they know about the area and rumors about Safe Haven communities they've heard about. They will let travelers they deem to be honest to spend the night. Possibly longer if the group is helpful, pulls their weight and don't bring trouble with them.

41-43% **Mixed group of 2D4 zombies.** 25% Slouchers, 25% Juggernauts, 25% Crawlers, 25% Fast Attack Zombies.

44-46% **1D4 Bug Boys (+2 if near a garbage dump or junkyard).**

47-50% **2D4 Retro-Savages.** Warn the group to stay out of trouble and to get out of their part of the country, or else. May come back later with more men to bushwhack and kill the player characters or capture and leave them for the zombies, or lure/force them into a confrontation with zombies.

51-53% **1D4+1 Slouchers or Worm Meat.**

54-56% **2D6 Bandits or Raiders** on horseback or light all-terrain vehicles. They'll steal whatever they can get. Raiders kill anyone who opposes them.

57-60% **An Impersonator Zombie or Thinker with 1D6 Slouchers and 1D4 Pretty Zombies.**

61-63% **Mixed group of 3D6+4 zombies.** 25% Slouchers, 25% Juggernauts, 25% Crawlers, 25% Fast Attack Zombies.

64-66% 1D4 Pretty Zombies or Juggernauts.

67-69% 1D6 Road Reapers. They'll tell the group about what they've seen from where they came, but they know nothing of the area where they meet the player group. These Road Reapers are passing through on their way to a new city.

70-73% Wild Dog Pack: 2D6 wild canines of various types. They are just as dangerous as a wolf pack. The wild dogs attack any group with less than six people, starting with those who are small, injured, sick or elderly. They give up the attack in 1D6+1 melee rounds if their prey puts up a fight or when half are injured. They give up immediately if the pack leader is slain. **Stat Note:** See page 74 of the *Dead Reign™ RPG* for *Canine Stats & Combat Notes*.

74-77% 1D6 Game Animals. Can be anything from rabbits or raccoons to pheasant or geese. **Stat Note:** Small animals have 1D6 Hit Points and 1D4 S.D.C., larger animals have 2D6 Hit Points and 1D6 S.D.C.

78-80% Pack of Wild Pigs: 2D4 wild pigs that are just as dangerous as a pack of wild dogs. They'll charge into a camp grabbing any food items they can, biting and bowling people over, and bite, head butt, stomp and trample anyone who gets in their way. If cornered or attacked first and wounded, a wild pig will fight to the death. **Feral Hog/Pig Quick Stats:** Hit Points: 6D6+2. S.D.C.: 2D6+8. Attacks Per Melee Round: Two. Damage: Bite: 1D6+1 damage. Head Butt or Stomp Attack: 1D4 damage. Trample: 1D8 damage. Charging Ram Attack/Body Block (counts as two attacks): Does 1D8 damage plus there is a 01-90% likelihood of knocking a human opponent to the ground. Victims of a knockdown lose initiative and two melee attacks/actions. Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, +2 to dodge, and +3 to save vs poison/disease. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 60 feet (18.3 m), Prowl 40%, Swim 50%, and track by smell 50%. Speed: 20 (13.5 mph/21.6 km), with bursts of speed up to 40 (27 mph/43 km) that last for 1D4 minutes. Pigs weigh 250-450 pounds (112.5 to 202.5 kg).

81-83% Stray Dogs: 1D6 friendly dogs or a mommy and 1D4 six month old pups looking for a pat on the back and a handout. All are friendly and not aggressive. They bite only if attacked or cornered. Any of them could easily be adopted and made into pets or trained animal helpers and companions. Unless the characters try to keep the dogs, the strays run off after they are done eating. **Stat Note:** See page 74 of the *Dead Reign™ RPG* for *Canine Stats & Combat Notes*.

84-86% Coyotes: 1D6+2 coyotes try to steal any available food, including any food in backpacks or sacks. They may also attack any animals with the travelers, from livestock and pack animals to a canine companion. The coyotes are skittish and back off if threatened or attacked. They only attack if they are facing one or two humans and one of the people is injured or sick. Same stats as a large dog. See page 74 of the *Dead Reign™ RPG* for *Canine Stats & Combat Notes*.

87-90% Wolf Pack: 2D6+6 wolves attack any group with less than eight people. The wolves start by attacking any animals in the group, including dogs, as well as children, injured, sick or elderly people. The animals give up the attack only after half their numbers are killed. 01-50% chance of fleeing immediately after the pack leader is killed. **Wolf Quick Stats:** Hit Points: 4D6+6. S.D.C.: 2D6+20. Attacks per Melee Round:

Three. Damage: Claws: 1D4 damage, Bite: 2D6+3 damage. Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +5 to strike, +4 to dodge, +2 to save vs poison/disease, and +5 to save vs Horror Factor. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 120 feet (36 m), Prowl 50%, Swim 65%, and track by smell 88% (can smell prey and blood up to one mile/1.6 km away), can leap 4 feet (1.2 m) high and 8 feet (2.4 m) across from a standing position, double with a running start. Speed: 50 (35 mph/56 km), with bursts of speed up to 55 (37.5 mph/60 km) that last for 2D4 minutes.

91-93% Fox: 1D4 foxes try to steal food and may attack any small animal or toddler in the company of the player group. Otherwise, they fight only if startled, threatened, cornered or attacked first. Foxes are easily chased off. Same stats as a typical dog. **Fox Quick Stats:** Hit Points: 3D6. S.D.C.: 1D6+6. Attacks per Melee Round: Two. Damage: Claws: 1 point of damage, Bite: 1D6 damage. Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, +4 to dodge, +2 to save vs poison/disease, and +2 to save vs Horror Factor. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 120 feet (36 m), Prowl 55%, Swim 55%, and track by smell 55% (can smell prey and blood up to one mile/1.6 km away), can leap 3 feet (0.9 m) high and 5 feet (1.5 m) across from a standing position. Speed: 44 (30 mph/48 km), with bursts of speed up to 50 (35 mph/56 km) that last for 2D4 minutes.

94-96% Bear: Black and Brown Bears are most common to North America. The animal is aggressive and attacks, targeting one specific member of the group, regardless of size. It fights everyone who threatens or attacks it, and fights to the death. **Bear Quick Stats:** Hit Points: 1D4x10+10. S.D.C.: 3D6+12 (double for Grizzly and Polar Bears). Attacks per Melee Round: Three. Damage: Claws: 1D6+6 damage, Bite: 1D6+2 damage. Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +3 to strike, +2 to parry, +3 to dodge, +3 to save vs poison/disease, and +2 to save vs Horror Factor. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 120 feet (36 m), Climb 84% (trees only), Prowl 35%, Swim 80%, and track by smell 66%. Speed: 22, with bursts of speed up to 44 (30 mph/48 km) that last for 2D4 minutes.

97-99% Mountain Lion/Cougar/Puma: Always attacks if threatened, cornered or attacked first. If everyone stands still there is a 01-88% likelihood it will move off and disappear in the underbrush. That's not as good as you might think. One, it suggests that one or more of the big cats live and hunt in the area. Two, the mountain lion is likely to shadow the group for 1D6x10 minutes and attack any individual who separates from the group or who is left behind, especially if injured. May also attack, kill and run off with an animal companion smaller than a German Shepherd or a pack animal. **Mountain Lion Quick Stats:** Hit Points: 4D6+10. S.D.C.: 2D6+20. Attacks Per Melee Round: Three. Damage: Claws: 2D6 damage, Bite: 2D4 damage. Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +6 to strike, +4 to parry, +3 to dodge, and +4 to save vs Horror Factor. Natural Abilities: Nightvision 200 feet (61 m), Climb 89%/60%, Prowl 66%, Swim 44%, and can leap 20 feet (6.1 m) high and 40 feet (12.2 m) across from a standing position. Speed: 22, with bursts of speed up to 44 (30 mph/48 km) that last for 1D4 minutes.

100% Large mixed group of zombies. 2D6 Fast Attack Zombies, 2D6+6 Slouchers, 1D6 Bug Boys, 1D6 Worm Meat, 1D6 Juggernauts and 1D6+1 Crawlers. The Game Master may include a Thinker or a few other types among them or alter the number and composition as he sees fit.



The Urban Underground

Excerpted from the *Road Reaper's Survival Guide*, by Brad Ashley

Not all dark places are bad.

There's an entire world most of you know nothing about, and it's right under your feet. An underworld of pipes and steam tunnels you need to discover and make your new world – at least as a means of travel.

As survivors of the Zombie Apocalypse we need to stop thinking about the world the way it was, forget what we know, and find new ways to get around. Your first step in that direction is to take a hard look at places you once ignored or considered to be dark and foreboding. It's these dark places that may now represent your salvation and survival. Dark places, for humans, are locations where ordinary people did not tread.

As I have stated before, the walking dead don't gather at locations where humans seldom went. They don't like open spaces and, with a few exceptions, they don't explore. They roam the surface streets, nest in our homes, rummage through buildings, and just wander around in search of food. Since we're their first choice for a meal, the walking dead go where their rotting brains remember people used to be and where people still go. That would be main streets, downtown, city hall, hospitals, the pharmacy, stores, schools, churches, workplaces, apartment buildings and neighborhoods.

They don't go where people aren't found or where people don't lead them, and that's *railroad tracks*, *rooftops*, and *the urban underground*.

What's the urban underground? I'm talking about steam and utility/access tunnels, sewers, storm drain tunnels, abandoned subway tunnels, mines, and even natural caves, all beneath the streets and sidewalks of our home town. Most every city and town in North America has a subterranean labyrinth that can get you in and out of a city without ever setting foot on the zombie-filled streets above. If you're smart, you'll make them another one of your *secret highways*.

I'm going to focus on sewers and storm drains for the moment, but let me mention a few other tunnel systems you might have in your locality. There are all kinds of public and private underground tunnels.

Steam and Utility Tunnels. Most cities, factory districts and college campuses have *steam tunnels* or other type of "utility" or "access tunnels." Steam was still used in many older new cities and sites, but some new ones too. It was cheap, clean and efficient. Steam tunnels were used to transport high-temperature steam from a central boiler to all the buildings of the downtown area, district, complex or campus, as well as conduct cold air. Those same tunnels or similar utility tunnels are likely to contain power cables, fiber-optic cables, phone lines, wiring, natural gas pipes, and so on. Unlike sewers and storm drains, these tunnels are mostly free of large puddles or areas of standing water. Finding the entrance to these utility tunnels is a little tricky, but once you get in the groove, you'll start recognizing them more easily.

Private tunnels. Most skyscrapers, factories, and college campuses have public and private utility tunnels under the build-



ings and under the streets of the land they occupy. These private tunnel systems usually connect with the public ones at more than a few junction points. In addition, a factory compound might have one or more sub-basements, underground storage facilities, utility and even maintenance crew transit tunnels connecting one building to another.

Government buildings and government contractors may also have a network of secret tunnels connecting with other surface buildings, as well as secret underground bunkers, secret storage or research facilities, laboratories, and escape routes. It is rumored that at least one General Motors (a military contractor) factory complex has an underground tunnel system that goes on for miles to a secret military research and manufacturing center, and another that leads under the river and to Canada. Cities like Detroit, Chicago and Milwaukee are likely to have a number of tunnels that lead under waterways to a secret location – many of which date back to Prohibition and bootlegger days. There are at least two little known tunnels such as this that go from the banks of Detroit to Canada across the Detroit River, and there are probably several others. Gangs and criminal types may have had their own underground tunnel networks. Some of this may sound like urban myth, but it's not.

Government bunkers, missile silos, and tunnel systems are scattered across the Southwestern United States, hundreds of them abandoned long before the Zombie Apocalypse. If you live in those parts of the country, you'll do yourself a favor by trying to find some of them. They'd make ideal Safe Haven survivor communities, which is why there are so many rumors about such places existing in those parts.

Mines. Many cities have old mines under them. For example, Detroit is sitting on top of an elaborate salt mine. Elsewhere that

mine may be coal, silver or just about anything. Just be careful, as most have been abandoned and left to deteriorate for decades.

Natural caves. Depending on where you live, there may be a labyrinth of caves under your feet. Kentucky and Tennessee have massive cave systems that were not explored or mapped even before the dead rose.

Old Cities and Subways. Many cities are built on the bones of the old cities that came before them. For those who can find them, there are tunnels of such places deep underground. The same holds true of old, abandoned subway systems that exit under or parallel to the current transit tunnels.

Explore the possibilities and use the urban underground to survive.

Sewers and Storm Drains

Virtually every modern city in the world has a drain system to quickly run off rainwater. That drainage system is usually a network of concrete tunnels that run off into a nearby river or lake.

Sewers tend to be smaller and narrower and designed to carry raw sewage.

Storm drains are designed to run off water that gathers on the surface when it rains and carry the water to a spillway on the bank of a river or lake.

Both are typically made of concrete and vary in size from 3-20 feet (0.9 to 6.1 m) in diameter. Storm drains are generally larger on average at 6-15 feet (1.8 to 4.6 m).



Lights and gear. Remember, it is pitch black in these tunnels, so you will need a light source. You'll want at least one good sized, high-powered flashlight, maybe a lantern, and probably one good backup flashlight of comparable illumination and 2-3 smaller ones as additional backup. You'll also want to take along extra batteries, a compass, pocket knife or box cutter, gloves, first aid kit or at least some antiseptic, bandages, and band-aids. Any food you bring along, you'll want to keep in waterproof containers. Same goes for your drinking water. And you'll want it all strapped in a pack on your back or belt so it can't get washed away. As suggested previously, I highly recommend air filters or better yet, some sort of professional grade respirator or gas mask. Wear good boots and clothes you can throw away, if you need to. I'd also recommend wearing a cap on your head as there are spiders, bugs and crap dangling and falling from pipes and ceilings that you don't want dropping on your head or into your hair.

As a survivor of the zombie apocalypse, I assume you already have a crowbar, if not, bring one. Not only is it useful for fighting zombies but you'll need it for getting thorough barriers like metal mesh gates, metal rod grilles, the door to a supply closet, breaking open locks and chains, and prying open rusty grates, grilles, and manhole covers. A small tool kit and 8-15 feet (2.4 to 4.6 m) of rope or climbing cord can come in handy too. The cord is not so much for climbing as it is for lashing yourself to pipes in case of a flash flood, tying things shut and even as a line to keep everyone together like mountain climbers. You could bring professional climbing and spelunking gear, but I think it's heavy, awkward and unnecessary.

Zombies, Sewers & Tunnels

Most walking dead are too stupid to find access to the sewers on their own. They don't even recognize a manhole cover, grate or other access portals to the world below their feet. Out of sight, out of mind, even Thinkers, Impersonators and Mock Zombies don't think about the subterranean tunnel systems or where a grate in the street might lead to. Being dumb as rocks, as long as the zombie doesn't see you open up a manhole cover or sewer grate and go down, you might as well have vanished. Even if the dumbbells can still sense your presence they can't figure out where you are or how to get to you. Besides, the several yards (meters) of earth, concrete and pipes are almost al-

ways enough to cover your presence below their feet. Even Thinkers aren't likely to figure out where you are unless it saw where you went or the manhole cover is left off or ajar. While walking dead may not be able to figure out how to go down below, they'll sure as hell *follow you down* if you let them see you, so don't let that happen. You leave a sewer cover off the entrance in the street or let the walking dead see you descend down one, and a thousand of them will follow you into the abyss as if you were the Pied Piper. You let that happen and you just ruined everything for everybody, because those stupid brutes aren't likely to ever find their way out again, so they'll be wandering around in the dark until some survivor runs across them or someone like me and the Road Reapers go on an extermination run. Be smart and careful. This is another one of our "secret highways" and we want to keep it secret and as free of walking dead as possible.

Don't get me wrong, you'll find zombies in the underground networks, but unless a horde of them followed someone downstairs, they are a tiny fraction compared to what you'll encounter on the street. You may have the occasional zombie and even a small group of Slouchers, Crawlers or Flesh Eaters, but nothing like the multitude on the streets. I'm talking 1-8 at a time. And if a convergence starts, you aren't likely to see more than a dozen new walking dead join the pack every five or ten minutes. The only exception is if someone before has led a few hundred or a thousand down the rabbit's hole; then, you might be in trouble. Still, it's been my experience a zombie horde that numbers into the dozens or hundreds tend to stay clumped up in one of the larger open areas rather than wander the tunnel network. When they do wander the network, the walking dead tend to disperse and spread out, so we are back to encounters of 1-8, maybe a dozen, at a time.

Unfortunately, you'll encounter some of the most disgusting and dangerous varieties of dead in dark places. You'll find a disproportionate number of Worm Meat, Sewer Crawlers and Bug Boys in sewers, storm drains, and damp, wet tunnels of all kinds. In the urban underground, I'd say half the walking dead are Crawlers, Trash Crawlers and Sewer Crawlers. I suspect that's because all varieties of Crawlers travel low to the ground and like to squeeze into small, dark places, including open gutters and drain vents. Once in the underground tunnels, half probably can't find their way out, but it is also an ideal environment for them and they thrive there. When there isn't larger prey, they feed on vermin, snakes and stray dogs. In wet environments, including sewers and storm drains, you'll encounter mostly Sewer Crawlers, Worm Meat and Blow Fish, but don't rule out any of the walking dead. You'll run into Bug Boys too, but they are more likely to be found in dry areas full of rags, rotting flesh or food, and animal waste. Like their environment, Sewer Crawlers, Worm Meat, Blow Fish, and Bug Boys look revolting and are disease ridden.

Most Common Types of Zombies Encountered in Sewers

The following types of walking dead are the most likely to be encountered in sewers, storm tunnels, access tunnels, caves and other subterranean environments. Specific situations and environment may vary from the norm, below.

50% Sewer Crawlers

- 20% Slouchers
- 15% Worm Meat
- 7% Bug Boys
- 3% Crawlers (the type that cannot swim)
- 2% Fast Attack Zombies
- 3% Other; any.



Random Zombie Encounters in the Sewers, Storm Drains and Other Subterranean Environments

In most cases, unless the G.M. decides otherwise, 1D4 Slouchers or 1D6 Sewer Crawlers are not far away. They respond to sounds of battle, lights, the smell of blood, and sensing and seeing human life, as well as the zombie moan within 1D6+1 minutes.

- 01-05% One Pretty Zombie.
- 06-10% One Bug Boy Zombie.
- 11-15% One or two Juggernauts.
- 16-20% One or two Slouchers or Blow Fish Zombies.
- 21-25% One Worm Meat Zombie.
- 26-30% 1D4 Fast Attack Zombies.
- 31-40% One or two Sewer Crawlers.
- 41-45% 1D6 Crawlers or Trash Crawlers.
- 46-55% 2D4+1 Slouchers.
- 56-65% 1D6+2 Sewer Crawlers.
- 66-70% 1D4+1 Worm Meat Zombies.
- 71-75% 1D4+1 Flesh-Eating Zombies.
- 76-80% One Impersonator Zombie looking for a good place to set a trap. He is accompanied by 1D4 Slouchers and 1D6 Sewer Crawlers or 1D4 Worm Meat.

- 81-85% 1D6 Bug Boy Zombies.
- 86-88% One Mock Zombie. He is lost or looking for easy prey.
- 89-92% One Thinker commanding 1D4 Slouchers and 1D4 Worm Meat or Sewer Crawlers.
- 93-95% 2D6+4 Sewer Crawlers.
- 96-00% One or 1D4 other types of zombie of choice. May be a mixed group. May substitute with a small band (1D4+1) of bandits, raiders, cultists, Retro-Savages, madmen or villains, even a few Half-Living who are bad guys. Or perhaps, Scroungers, Survivors, Soldiers, Street Gang Protectors or other person or people in need of help.

A Hostile Environment for Humans

Use it right, and the urban underground can take you anywhere right under the zombies' feet without them ever knowing you are there until you surface. *Road Reapers*, *Scroungers* and *Shepherds of the Damned* use storm drains, sewers and tunnel networks all the time. They allow us to perform scouting missions and slip in and out of cities without anyone being the wiser.

Unfortunately, traveling underground through sewers is no picnic. There are a large number of problems and precautions. One is navigation. Sewers and most tunnel systems are like a maze and it is very easy to get lost in the labyrinth or go in the wrong direction. Most are not lighted even if the city electricity is working, so you must have a means of illumination, be it a flashlight, lantern or makeshift torch. There can be pockets of gas that stink to high heaven and may be toxic to breathe. Areas of gas so volatile and unstable that they explode when exposed to even a spark of flame are not common to sewers and storm drains, but may become an issue in some mines.

Traversing underground networks requires smarts and discretion. When entering an old, abandoned mine, tunnel, exterior building, or building that shows signs of deterioration for that matter, use extreme caution. Make sure support beams are sturdy, watch out for signs of crumbling ceilings, water damage and running water. Even if it's a trickle, it might indicate broken water pipes or an underground river that's ready to explode through the wall or ceiling and flood the tunnel you are in. Do not run across timber and flooring even if you have walking dead hot on your heels. Rot and decay may have made wooden flooring weak or created soft spots that will drop you through it as if stepping through paper. Test the floorboards gingerly, the same way you would test for thin ice. If you can tell where the support beams and struts are likely to be located, move along them as they should offer the strongest support, though not always.

Disease and airborne contaminants. Abandoned buildings, sewers, storm drains, tunnels and caves that have become the sanctuary and outhouse for bats, birds and other animals are also breeding grounds for disease. You might think bacteria and mold are two of your greatest dangers, and you'd be right, so mitigate that danger by wearing an air filter or doctor's surgical mask, even a scarf wrapped tightly over your nose and face. Wear a long sleeve shirt, a hat or something over your head, and gloves. Work gloves, heavy plastic gloves, or leather are best, but any will do. Try not to touch much, as everything is covered



in filth, dust, mold or other crud. That's easier said than done. We humans are tactile beings. We like to touch things without even thinking about it. Well, break yourself of that habit and keep your unprotected and unwashed hands away from your face, nose and mouth. While we're at it, get yourself a good pair of boots. I recommend steel toed boots or hiking boots.

Other dangers are plentiful. Many underground environments, as well as abandoned houses and buildings exposed to the elements, especially water and dampness, have rusty nails, screws, and pieces of metal that invite *tetanus* and cause infection. You get cut or stabbed by a rusty nail or shard of metal, you need to treat it like was a *zombie bite*. Clean it immediately and thoroughly to avoid infection, and it may be wise to follow

it up with a tetanus shot. Better yet, get a tetanus shot in advance. The shot lasts for 10 years. Get it now, because God only knows if we'll have such things a decade from now. Even if you've recently gotten a tetanus shot, you might want to get another if the wound is especially nasty or deep. Actually, the cleaning to avoid infection applies to any cut you might get in any filthy or damp environment.

Asbestos fibers breathed into your lungs can cause cancer and more immediate lung and breathing problems. Breathing in tiny particles of lead, mercury, and chemicals, and fecal matter can also cause lung and breathing problems, illness and infection. Sewers and storm drains are the conduit through which canine feces and raw sewage are washed away and spilled into the river system. Caves, storm drains, sewers, sections of mines and tunnels may become infested with vermin like rats, mice and cockroaches, or become the habitat for dogs, birds, bats, and other animals whose *fecal matter* builds to levels dangerous for human beings. Again, wearing a good quality air filter that covers the nose and mouth offers fair to poor protection. A **half-face respirator** with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters is much better and highly encouraged. They are available at most hardware stores, paint supply companies and hazardous work suppliers and provide very good protection. Industrial, military or CDC air filters or gas masks are even better. I know they are heavy, awkward and unpleasant to wear, but they could save your life from getting sick from any number of bacterial based infections, mold spores, stale and polluted air, toxic gases, and airborne contaminants that can develop in sewers, caves and underground tunnels. Remember, fresh air is not a common commodity, especially in deep tunnels, tunnels sealed off from the world, and the smaller tunnels. If you have allergies, asthma, or other chronic breathing problem, a good quality gas mask or half-face respirator is a necessity. I would also advise bringing your asthma inhaler, some antihistamine and any other medication you might need to counter an allergic reaction. Otherwise, it's best if you stay out of the urban underground.

Don't even think or worry about *radon gas*, if it's there it is odorless, tasteless and colorless. If you're passing through, odds are it will not hurt you, but it is another reason you want to use subterranean networks as a means for travel, not a place to inhabit.

Hazardous chemicals are another problem. If you don't have the sense not to drink water in a sewer, storm drain or standing water, then you deserve whatever happens to you. Sewers and storm drain systems both carry raw sewage. Yes, I said storm drains. When the sewers overflow, they back up and sewage enters the storm drain system. With most people gone and factories and chemical plants offline, you'd think chemical spills and pollution would be a thing of the past, but you'd be wrong. Dead wrong. First, our water was pretty polluted in first place. That includes water from that clean looking river, lake or spring. Half the underground water fed systems are polluted too. Second, there are all kinds of industrial waste, mercury and chemicals leaking into the water supply and leaching into our groundwater.

Boil any water that doesn't come from a sealed bottle for at least 20 minutes before using it to wash your dishes or drink it. For my money, that includes rainwater. Boil. Boil. Boil, before use. *Never drink standing water.* Even if it's not polluted with

benzene, mercury, lead, or a thousand other chemicals, it's alive with bacteria and other microscopic organisms that can cause illness and dysentery. Of course, boiling doesn't do anything to get rid of chemical contaminants, so you will want to find a filtration and water cleaning system. That may not be top priority now, but it will be when the supply of bottled water runs out. You can also get simple water testing devices that will indicate if dangerous chemicals are present. Some are available at hardware stores, especially the big national chain stores, others you'll have to find in a laboratory, military base or other source.

You'd be surprised at the amount of *deadly, toxic chemicals*, acid, mercury, caustic, biological material, industrial waste, and other hazardous chemicals that have been "dumped" at dark and forgotten places, such as abandoned buildings, along railroad tracks, in mines, caves and the urban underground. If you see a 50 gallon drum, ignore it and keep on walking. Especially if you come across several drums or container. If it's rusty and leaking, do NOT touch the liquid coming from it. My advice is never open anything in a large sealed containers, especially if it holds liquid. If you do, odds are the fumes released will knock you out or burn your lungs, damaging you for life, or it might kill you and everyone within 100 feet (30.5 m) of you. If it's not noxious, the liquid inside is likely to melt your hands off.

Wet and wild. Even in caves, mines and tunnels that are not designed as sewers or for drainage, the environment is likely to be humid and damp with puddles and small streams of water, to chambers and areas filled with water. There is always a damp earthy smell, and sometimes worse. The smell of rotten eggs or garlic could mean sulfur, methane gas, or an animal den is nearby. Wet and humid conditions also means algae covered walls and floors that can make for slippery conditions. Mold, mildew, insects and spiders also thrive in this moist environment.

Ancient and alive. You would be surprised at the wildlife you'll find inside – not just the mice and rats most people expect – but frogs, toads, salamanders, fish, bats, birds, dogs, wolves, maybe a bear, all kinds of snakes, and all kinds of insects. Some of these drainage and tunnel systems in North America are a hundred years old, a few even older. In Europe and Asia, who knows how old some of these subterranean domains may be.

Words and marks. People from across the ages have written, scratched and painted things on the walls. From names and graffiti to messages, directions, arrows, location markers, and, nowadays, warnings about zombies, other dangers and final farewells. As for warnings and messages, be cautious. Many are legitimate, but some no longer apply and some are lies written by madmen, cultists and bad guys. Never assume what you read on the wall of a sewer, tunnel, house or anywhere is accurate or well intended. Always exercise discretion and caution.

If you plan on marking your path or leaving a message, make sure you are using a permanent latex or enamel/oil based paint. The latter will last longer than the former, but both get the job done, and both come in spray cans as well as paint that requires a brush. Chalk is good for temporary marks but it will fade over time and can be wiped and washed away. Big, thick magic markers can be useful as well. Even children's crayons make good temporary marking tools. I've seen people use stickers as well. Just remember, if you are marking a trail, anyone – you,

good guys, bad guys and maybe even a smart zombie – can follow it later.

Bones of the dead. You'll find the occasional corpse, body part, and set of bones, human and animal, at these places, especially in sewers and storm tunnels. Sewage, waste, and bones eventually get washed down into the sewers. When it rains, the water carries or pushes the bones and debris farther down the line and into storm pipes, and ultimately washes out in the river or lake. The most bones and debris are found at these spillways and the waters around them, making for a rather disturbing scene. Zombies are also washed out during storms. On one hand, that's a good thing because it clears the sewers and storm tunnels of the walking dead. On the other hand, these spillways are the main entrance and exit for those of us using the pipes under the streets, which means the areas around and inside these openings have the greatest concentration of zombies. That could make the start of your trek and the end of it harrowing. Expect to fight your way in and your way out. Now fortunately, even at these riverside entrances/exits, the number of zombies is comparatively light. Maybe 10-20 of them, 40 at most (roll 1D4x10), and even then they'll be scattered in the area around the opening and inside the first 1000 feet (305 m) of the tunnel. Think of it as a light gauntlet with six zombies barring your way here, two or three there, and so on. Even a full on convergence isn't likely to have more than 60 zombies (roll 1D6x10) show up in the first 10 or 15 minutes.

Getting lost in a maze of tunnels and getting out. Tunnel systems, especially sewers and storm drains, are mazes and it's easy to get lost, lose track of time and any sense of where you are in relation to what's located above your head. At least when it comes to sewers and storm drains, they ultimately lead to a spillway that dumps water into a river or lake. Find that opening and you can get out of the drain tunnel. You may be miles out of your way, but you're out of the underground maze.

Rain Spells Trouble

Even during a dry spell, sewers and storm drains are likely to have water in them. They are, after all, drains. That keeps these places wet and damp.

Rain flushes sewers and storm drains. When it starts to rain, you need to get out of sewers and storm drains as fast as you can. If you are already inside and don't know what the weather is like outside, you'll see signs where you are. Heed them and get out. You'll know it's raining when the water level in the tunnels starts to rise or the water starts to move more rapidly. You may also hear a soft rumbling sound in the distance, but by then you probably only have (1D6) minutes to get out or get caught in a flash flood and drowned. Another sign is seeing rats, mice, and even cockroaches running away or vanishing through cracks and holes. Follow their lead and get out.

A light rain will cause water levels to rise up to your waist and create rushing rapids. Rapids are likely to wash gear away, create a constant rumble that requires you to shout in order to speak to your buddy only 10 feet (3 m) away, and if you slip, odds are (01-50%) you'll be swept down the tunnel several hundred yards (1D6x100 yards/meters). (**Note:** Reduce walking speed by one third going with the current because the characters need to resist it or be swept away, and reduce speed by two

thirds/66% when going against the current. Also reduce attacks per melee round by one, combat maneuvers and bonuses are -2, and skill performance is -12%, all due to the loud, turbulent environment, and pushing of the water.)

A moderate rain is worse, with water that comes up to your neck, stronger currents, sudden rushes of current and water that may cause you to lose your balance or slip (01-75% chance) and wash you hundreds of yards down the tunnel (2D6x100 yards/meters). (**Note:** Reduce walking speed by half going with the current because the characters need to resist it or be swept away, and reduce speed by 90% when going against the current. Also reduce attacks per melee round by half, combat maneuvers and bonuses are -4, and skill performance is -40%, all due to the loud, turbulent environment, and strong pushing of the water.)

A heavy rain or a persistent rain that lasts for half the day, all day or even several days, is certain death in the sewers and drains below. The sewers and drain tunnels fill up completely. There are no air pockets, no ledges to cling to, no elevated platform to wait it out, only water from floor to ceiling. There is no place to go. No way to escape, except to get out before the tunnels fill. It happens fast too, within minutes (roll 2D4) after the water level begins to rise, and the tunnels stay full like that for hours, sometimes days. Whenever you see large puddles in the street, let alone any degree of flooding, the sewer and storm drain tunnels below the streets are so full they can't dump the water out fast enough. It also means sewer and drain water flow into one another and sewage intermingles with the rainwater. The current in a heavy or prolonged rain is strong and swift. Only a zombie has the inhuman strength to hold onto something to be kept from being washed out to the river or lake, and even most of them lose that battle.

Melting snow in cold parts of the country is the same as a moderate to heavy rain, so take it into consideration.

Flash floods can seem to come out of nowhere and hit you like a freight train. It's easy to forget that all these sewers and storm drains are connected and run off to the same handful of outlets. That means you don't worry if it's not raining by you. What's more, you may not even be aware that it's storming 5, 10, 20 miles (8, 16, 32 km) away, but you need to, because that rain water is coming your direction.

Warning signs of a flash flood coming your direction include an increase in the speed of the water current, a rushing sound, a rattle or clunking sound from large debris being batted around as it rushes down the tunnel, and a slight breeze caused by the oncoming water. You notice any of that and you need to get up and out, or secure yourself, as in tie yourself to something anchored in a wall, hold your breath and pray. Oddly enough, the water level seldom rises like you might think it would.

A flash flood in a storm drain or sewer is not likely to fill the entire tunnel, though it can. If you get as close to the ceiling as you can without getting swept away, you may be able to breathe the entire time (65% chance). However, it's best to get out if you can. If the flash flood fills the tunnel completely (35% chance), pray the water subsides before you run out of air. I'm happy to inform you that a flash flood like that seldom lasts more than a few minutes (roll 1D6 minutes) before the water level evens out to half or one third the height of the tunnel. You'll still have to contend with a strong current or waiting it

out (1D4 hours), but the risk of drowning from flooding should be over, provided you got out of the way or were tied down.

Getting swept away in a tunnel flash flood is bad news. You could drown, you're going to be batted around against walls and debris, and you could be swept miles away and even out to the river or lake.

Game Note on Consequences of a Flash Flood

Game Masters (G.M.s), let's be nice and make the presumption that a player character does not drown and avoids breaking any bones. However, all of the following consequences will occur.

Damage: 5D6 damage, comes off S.D.C. first. If S.D.C. is reduced to zero and there is damage remaining, it is subtracted from Hit Points. Of course the character and everything he has is soaking wet.

Loss of Gear: Anything the character was holding in his hands is gone and lost with no hope of recovery. Food not sealed in a watertight container is ruined. 01-90% likelihood that any item carried in a pocket is gone. In addition, 1D4x10% of the gear that may have been carried in a backpack, satchel or sack is also gone. Items firmly secured to a belt, such as a holstered pistol, knife, canteen, etc. remain intact and in the character's possession.

Distance: The character is swept 1D6x1000 feet (305 to 1828 m) away. Furthermore, he may have been swept down twisting and turning tunnels and may be lost (50% chance). We are assuming the current slowed down enough that the character could grab on to something to stop his being swept out to the river or

lake. However, the G.M. may decide if that's what happened or not. Be kind.

Zombies! If the character stops himself, so can walking dead who were also swept up in the flash flood. Roll on the **Random Zombie Encounters in the Sewers, Storm Drains and Other Subterranean Environments Table** earlier in this section to determine how many and what kind. If swept out to the river or lake, triple the number of zombies present.

Zombies in the Water (Optional): Our hero(s) is not the only person or thing swept up in the flood; so are zombies. If the G.M. deems it appropriate, the character(s) carried away by the flood waters may also have to battle a zombie that is trying to grab him and kill him as they shoot the rapids. Roll to determine type on the following table:

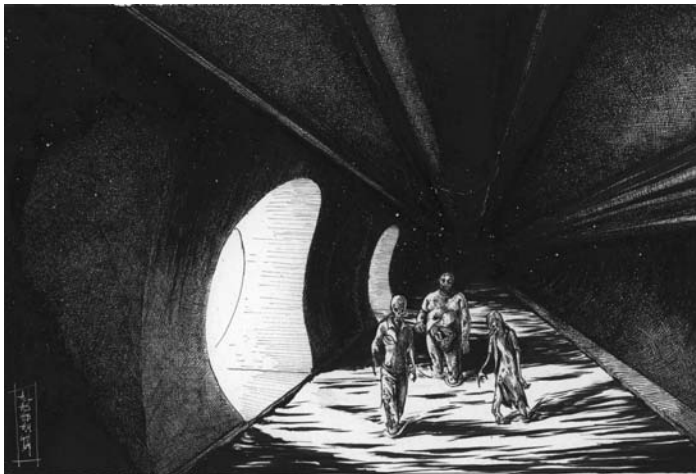
- 01-50% Sewer Crawler
- 51-70% Sloucher
- 71-75% Worm Meat
- 76-80% Bug Boy
- 81-85% Fast Attack Zombie
- 86-90% Pretty Zombie
- 91-95% Juggernaut
- 96-00% Thinker or Impersonator Zombie.

Game Note on Drowning

The average human can hold his breath for 30-60 seconds, and drowns within two minutes. Only professional divers, swimmers and Navy Seals can hold their breath longer. The former for 2-4 minutes, Navy Seals up to an amazing 7 minutes.



The best odds for successful resuscitation is to get to the victim of a drowning within the first five minutes after death; roll under First Aid, Paramedic or M.D. medical skill. Without one of those medical skills, the chance of success is only 20%. If the victim has been dead for more than five minutes, there is a -10% skill penalty, if 10 minutes -20%, if 15 minutes -40%, if 20-30 minutes -80%. Longer than that, no chance unless the water was frigid; triple the times if the water was icy cold.



Game Note on Zombie Wash Outs

If there is any good news here, it's that heavy or long periods of rain that flood the tunnels purges them of the walking dead, washing them away. After a good rain and after the sewers and storm drain tunnels have had a chance to drain out, they will be much safer than they were prior to the rain. That's one of the cool things about these water removal tunnel systems, the walking dead can never dominate them because they are regularly washed away. They are too dumb to find their way back to them, and have no reason to go back, so they just float down the river, or eventually find their way back to dry land and wander away.

1D4x10+55% of all zombies inside the sewers and storm drains at the time of a heavy rain are washed out to the river. Most of the Sewer Crawlers (75%) find their way back and return to the underground labyrinth of pipes within 1D4 days, as do 10% of the Worm Meat Zombies, Slouchers and Blow Fish, but the rest wander the floor of the river or lake until they find a spot where they can walk or climb out to roam the surface streets once again.

Don't Drink the Water

Remember, this water is polluted with sewage and filth. Even rainwater washes in from the streets and brings whatever dirt, filth and grime was in the street with it. When storm drains fill up, even in a moderate rainstorm, they inevitably mix with sewers and sewage. The point is, this isn't a dip in the pool or even the lake; if you are in water in a storm drain or sewer, the water is extremely fouled. Don't drink the water! That having been said, if you find yourself walking through even shallow puddles, you might get splashed with water and get some in your mouth, nose or eyes. Swimming through it or getting caught in a flash flood is a near certainty that you will swallow more than gulp.

Even dripping water from condensation on the ceiling and pipes can be a problem. That problem is bacteria and contamination that can make you sick. Even touching the walls or getting your hands wet, an inevitability, and later touching your face, mouth or nose can transmit disease. You get caught in a flash flood or have to swim through or wade through waist deep sewer water or higher, and water will get into your mouth, nose or eyes. Don't panic, it comes with the territory. You probably aren't going to die, but you may get sick, even very sick. A nasty cold, flu-like symptoms, fever, stomach poisoning, and dysentery are most likely, and all can lay you up for awhile.

Random Illness Table

From Exposure to Polluted Water

If the character swallows more than a gulp of foul water, *roll to save vs disease*. Include any applicable P.E. or other bonuses. If the character saves, he's fine. If he fails to save, roll for one of the following illnesses and penalties. Duration: Unless stated otherwise, all symptoms and penalties last 1D6 days.

01-10% Cold, Severe: Feels sick and run down, suffers from mild headaches, intermittent low fever, running sinuses, watering eyes, lack of appetite, and food and drink lack taste or taste funny. If the victim tries to push himself and engages in more than two hours of physical exertion, working out, labor, running, exploration, and similar, his illness gets worse; roll again on this table. If Cold is rolled again, double the penalties for the duration and double the duration of the illness. Penalties: Reduce Spd and P.E. by 30%, -1 attack per melee round, -2 on all combat bonuses, no Perception Roll or initiative, and -10% on skill performance.

11-20% Cough and Soar Throat: A nagging cough, sore throat and mild fatigue. Penalties: Reduce Prowl and all stealth and public speaking or performance skills by half. Reduce Spd by 10%, -1 on Perception Rolls, initiative and all combat bonuses.

21-30% Dysentery: Stomach upset, some cramping and diarrhea. The character feels weak and fatigued, cannot hold down food, and suffers from dehydration. Penalties: Reduce S.D.C. by half, reduce P.S. and P.E. attributes by half, Spd by 30%, -1 attack per melee, no initiative, -2 on Perception Rolls and all combat bonuses, skill performance is -15% and the character is unmotivated and drained. When the character is struck with a sudden, unstoppable bowel movement accompanied by cramps (lasts 1D4 melee rounds), he has only one melee attack/action, no initiative, no Perception Roll, and no combat bonuses!

31-40% Fatigue and Muscle Ache: The character has a low grade fever, feels weak, tired and his muscles ache. This makes sleeping and feeling comfortable difficult. Penalties: Reduce Spd and P.S. by 25%, reduce attacks per melee, Perception Rolls and all combat bonuses by 25%, skill performance is -15% and the character is unmotivated and just wants to sleep and rest, if only he could get comfortable.

41-50% Fever: The character is burning up with a high fever, suffers from chills and dehydration, feels dizzy and weak, vision is blurred, the body aches and it is difficult to concentrate. Penalties: Reduce Spd, attacks/actions per melee round, all

combat bonuses and skill performance by half; no Perception Rolls and no initiative.

51-60% Flu-Like Illness: The character has a terrible cough, runny nose, moderate fever, no appetite, and aching muscles. He feels awful and wants to lay down. Penalties: Cannot Prowl, all other skills suffer a -30% penalty, no Perception Rolls or initiative, reduce Spd, attacks/actions per melee round, and all combat bonuses by half, reduce P.B. and S.D.C. by half.

61-70% Murderous Headache: The head pounds with a brutal, throbbing headache. It makes concentration difficult and sudden or rapid movement painful. Penalties: -1 attack per melee round, reduce all combat bonuses by half, -30% to all skills, reduce Spd by half, and cannot run or leap without throbbing pain (loses two additional attacks/actions).

71-80% Lung Infection: The character feels tired, has difficulty breathing, coughs, wheezes and cannot catch his breath when even moderately active. Penalties: Running, combat or heavy labor for more than one melee round (15 seconds) results in chest pains and shortness of breath. When this happens, reduce Spd, attacks per melee and all combat bonuses by half, no initiative. +2 days to the duration.

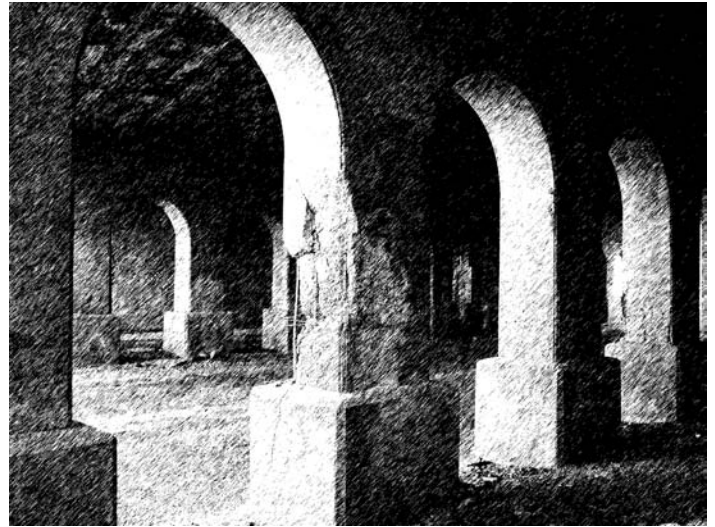
81-90% Nausea/Stomach Poisoning: Severe stomach upset, cramps and bloating, accompanied by a low fever and vomiting. Cannot hold food down and may become dehydrated. Penalties: Generally feels uncomfortable and tired, reduce Spd by 20%, -1 attack per melee and -15% on skill performance. Strong odors, bad odors, fast or sudden movement, and eating causes vomiting. Likewise, combat, running or heavy labor that last more than 1D4 minutes causes the character's stomach to turn and he throws up. The vomiting character cannot perform any skill nor attack, parry, dodge, or move while vomiting, and may get some on his clothing, loses initiative, loses 1D4 melee attacks for that round and all combat bonuses are half for the rest of that melee round.

91-95% Poisoned: The character feels weak, feverish, and nauseous. Penalties: -10% to Spd and skill performance, reduce P.S. and P.E. by 20%, reduce S.D.C. points by 90% and reduce Hit Points by 1D6x10%. The Hit Points and S.D.C. recover as normal with rest and sleep, but only after the poison to the character's system has run its course (i.e. the duration of the illness).

96-00% Rash: A large, ugly rash forms on the character's hands and arms, neck, legs or abdomen. The rash is constantly itchy, annoying and distracting. Penalties: Perception Rolls are half, no initiative, attacks/actions per melee and combat bonuses are at -2, and M.A. and P.B. are -2. Scratching could lead to bleeding and infection.

Infected Wounds

There is a 01-88% likelihood that unhealed and open wounds exposed to polluted water or sewage become infected unless cleaned thoroughly and proper medicine and care is received as soon as possible. If infection occurs, roll on the **Worm Meat & Sewer Crawler Infection Symptoms and Penalties Table**, on page 20. However, also roll to *save vs disease* (16 or higher). If the roll is successful, the wound is infected but the usual symptoms, penalties and duration are half.



Other Dangers of Sewers, Tunnels & Underground Labyrinths

There are other dangers to keep your eyes open for.

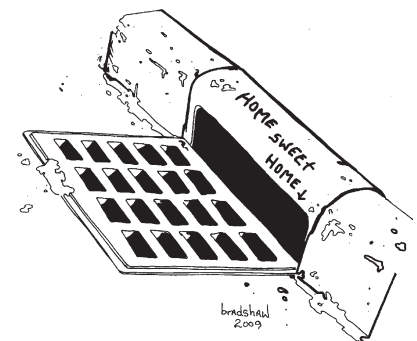
Vermin: Rats, mice, snakes, etc., can be a problem, but are unlikely to attack humans outright. Unless they are cornered, the same is true of wild dogs, coyotes, cougars and other animals that might go into the storm drains and tunnel systems to hunt. Animals like bears, wolves and dogs that make lairs and dens are attracted to dry, warm tunnels, caves and underground places, but the runoff of water and flooding keeps them from making lairs in sewers and storm drains.

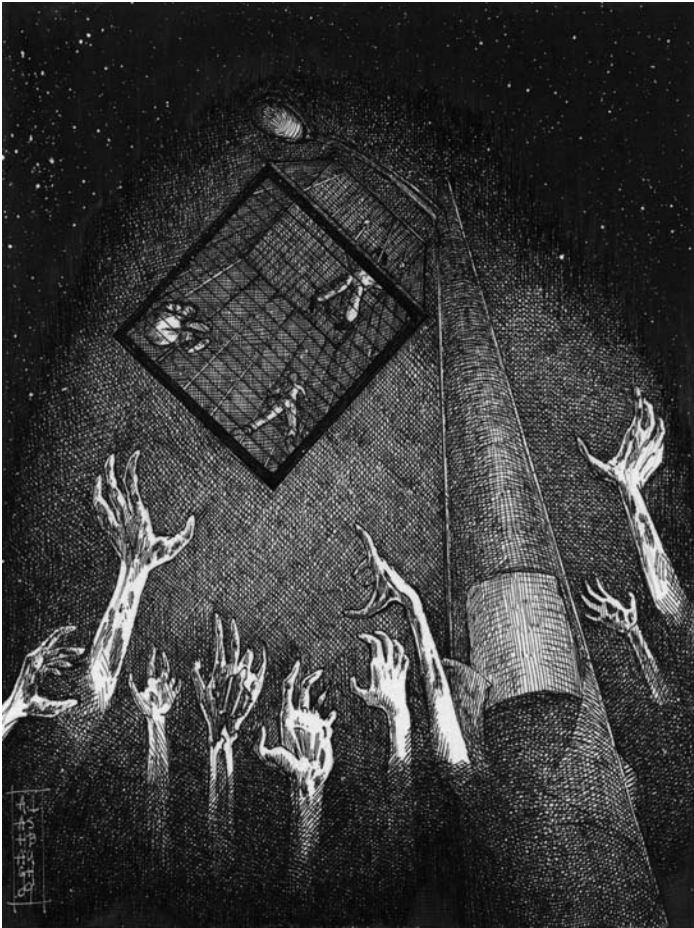
Sewer Predators. Don't laugh, but there really are pythons and alligators, especially down south in warmer climates, but also as far north as New York. However, the walking dead, spiders and human animals are what you need to worry about.

Cultists and madmen. Terror and Death Cultists read too, so I knew I took a risk revealing our secrets in a book that anyone can read. I just figured more people would benefit from this data than be hurt. Besides, I'm amazed at how many people never heard of the Road Reapers or this Survival Guide. Anyway, some cultists will deliberately lead or send the walking dead into the sewers to get humans like us. That's okay, there are still a heck of a lot fewer zombies down below the streets than walking on them. If you run into a gaggle of dead down below, and they seem to stick together, you probably have a Death Cult Priest or Thinker to thank for it.

Good luck. Stay alive. Think dark places.

— Brad Ashley, Leader of the Road Reapers





Heart of Darkness

An excerpt from the Road Reaper's Survival Guide

I once heard a preacher say, "there is no place darker than a man's soul."

From what I've seen, I would have to agree.

People, human beings, not the walking dead, do things to their fellow human beings that make me sick inside.

I've seen people hoard supplies, medicine, and food, and I've seen them kill to get it. I've seen them turn those in need away at the end of a shotgun. I've seen them fight like dogs in the street over a bone. I've seen people fight and kill over women, weapons, booze, a can of gasoline and even a sandwich. I've seen torture, rape, and acts of savagery, most of which are best not recounted here.

Live Bait

There is a disturbing practice that seems to be growing in popularity among some miscreants. There was a time when you'd only see Bushwhackers, Retro-Savages and crazy people do this, but I'm starting to see it happen a lot, everywhere, and it makes me sick. It's the practice of using other people as **live bait**.

You heard right. Putting a man, woman or child in a cage and hanging him or her out for zombies as "live bait." It's done to draw out hordes of zombies and lure them to one particular location. While the zombies are gathered, moaning and trying to get

at the "live bait," the S.O.B.s who set the bait can go about looting or other business elsewhere in the neighborhood with little interference from the walking dead. I'm sorry to say it works, too. The zombies crawl out of the woodwork, gather round the caged human dangling above them, transfixed like a horse to a carrot on a stick.

The trick is to make sure the "live bait" is easy to see but hard for the walking dead to get at. To attract a large convergence of zombies, the people setting the lure must make the walking dead work for their meal. There are a lot of ways to do that. Some of the simplest and most effective are to tie or chain one or more live victims up, slice one of them to make him bleed, or kill one of them. The scent of blood works the zombies into a frenzy, attracts them in droves and holds their attention. The "live bait" is hoisted up to the top of a telephone pole, electrical tower, steeple, or even outside a second or third story window or low rooftop. You make sure your "bait" is caged or hog-tied so they can't wiggle free or climb to safety, and time does the rest. Cages can be made of iron bars or wire mesh, but something that when the walking dead finally get to it, they can reach into and kill the people inside, or open the cage and drag them out to kill them.

The "live bait" can't be hoisted too high, because the human bait needs to be within the zombies' range of senses. The idea is to let them sense, smell and see the "bait." A proper lure also gives the monsters the notion they can reach the bait, at least sooner or later. If done right, you can attract thousands of zombies from within a mile (1.6 km) radius, and keep the majority of them distracted for at least 40 minutes (4D4x10 minutes), often much longer. That means finding a place or setting the caged bait in such a way that Crawlers or Flesh Eaters can't easily climb up to it. That might require barricading a door or two, or rigging up a barrier of barbed wire or firewall to keep the walking dead from climbing up to the cage for awhile.

Until the zombies can get to the cage, the converging horde circles, moans, and climbs onto each other in an attempt to get at the caged people. As I said, while the "live bait" holds their attention, other people in the area can go about their business with little fear of running into more zombies. Even if the group who set the "live bait" lure should encounter a few zombies here and there, the moaning around the "live bait" is so loud the horde isn't likely to hear short bursts of gunfire, shouting or battle. Even if a few of the zombies do notice a commotion elsewhere, they are likely to ignore it in favor of the meal that is dangling right in front of them.

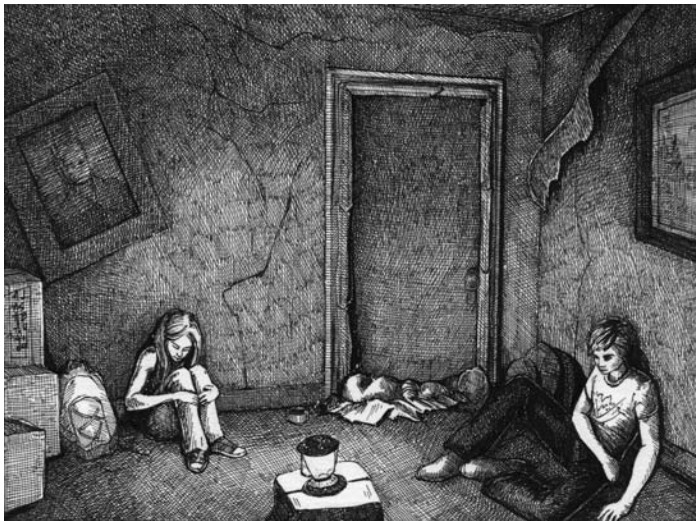
Relentless as they are, the walking dead will eventually reach the bait, kill them and consume their life energy. After the kill, the zombies begin to disperse, wandering off in all directions. A few minutes later, the slain victims rise as walking dead and join them.

I have had more than one sick S.O.B. tell me that *women and children* make the best live bait because they usually cry, whimper and scream the entire time until the zombies get them. The noise of the captives excites the dead and holds the zombies' attention better than "bloody meat just swinging in the wind," as one guy put it. "Bloody meat" referred to *men* who tend to hold their tongue. Of course, being silent doesn't make much difference, as zombies can smell fear as well as sense and see your

life energy, so they know you are alive whether you are screaming your head off or buttoned up tight.

There are a lot of variations to “zombie bait” and similar lure techniques used by unscrupulous dirt bags. Not all involve the bait getting killed and turned into zombies, but most of them do.

I try not to judge people, even when they do something I find repugnant. These are terrible times, and one often finds himself facing terrible choices and situations. Me and the Road Reapers are not the law and we don’t pretend to be. However, when it’s clear you’re dealing with a mad dog who uses innocent women and children as zombie bait, the only humane thing to do is to put that animal down before it hurts someone else.



The Bait Shack

One of the most effective zombie lures is something called the **bait shack**. You find an abandoned house or building that has already been fortified with boarded up windows and such. Or one that can be quickly and easily reinforced enough to hold off zombies for a few hours. You may be surprised, but 5-8 motivated adults can do that in under 25 minutes. A small place is ideal and can be prepped in half that time. Once the building is modestly secured, you put your “live human bait” in the house, and lock or nail them in so they can’t get out. Those who take the time, might put one or more of their human bait locked inside at different locations to make the zombies seek them out and occupy more of the walking dead’s time hunting for food and knocking down doors. The “live bait” may be free to run around a sealed room – typically doors that are nailed shut and windows that are boarded up – or the “live bait” may be tied up or chained. However, even those who are tied are often secured in such a way they can eventually work themselves loose in an hour or hour and a half. The idea being that people trapped inside the building, but able to move around, make noise that keeps the zombies agitated and trying harder to get them. If the “live bait” runs or fights back, that’s good for the bad guys who set the bait lure, because it keeps the zombies occupied longer. If the “live bait” should manage to escape, it’s a win-win for everyone, because the “bait” kept the zombie horde busy converging on that one location, while the villains were busy doing what they needed to get done elsewhere.

The Bait Shack works very similar to dangling “live bait” out in the open. To attract the zombies in the first place, a bat-

tery operated music player and/or light is usually put outside on the roof, on a balcony, hung from a gutter, or even the tree next to the house, where the victims inside the building can’t reach it. The scum setting up a *Bait Shack* zombie lure also cut one or two of the people locked inside so the walking dead can smell the scent of blood. When the zombies come to investigate the sound and light, they’ll also detect the blood scent, fear scent and human life essence and converge on the Bait Shack. As noted, if the “live bait” inside get loose, all the better, because they’ll make more noise trying to escape the locked up building or reinforcing the half-baked fortifications, all of which holds the zombies’ attention and keeps them occupied. Do a *Bait Shack* right and you can get the walking dead to converge and probably keep them diverted to that one particular area occupied for (2D4+4) hours.

Don’t get me wrong, I am NOT encouraging the use of living breathing people as zombie bait for any reason. Not even if they are bad guys, sick, old or already injured and dying. I’m telling you about the “live bait” and the people who use it so you do not become “live bait” yourself, and so you understand what you are witnessing when you see it happening to someone else. And sooner or later, you will.

Don’t become live bait or a victim of the lure

I don’t expect any of you to use your fellow man as “live bait,” but I want you to know about it, so when you see people screaming from a cage dangling from the side of a low building, you’ll know what you are dealing with. And so you don’t become “live bait” yourself.

I know some of you will be inclined to try to rescue people in these situations. That’s fine. Road Reapers have rescued our share of people from predicaments just like that, but there are some things you need to consider before you play hero.

First, sometimes the person or people hung out as a meal for the walking dead are wicked individuals not worth saving. So you may be risking your life for a slime bag or lunatic who will thank you later by robbing or killing you the first chance he gets. Be careful.

Second, when you feel compelled to try to save the lives of the people being used as live bait, stop and think about it for a minute. Here is my advice on that: If there is an opening and a *real chance* to save lives without getting you and your crew killed, then take the chance. Just do it fast, because there will be more zombies joining the party every minute. If there are too many zombies and odds are you’ll get yourself and your buddies all killed, I’m sorry to say it, but that’s one of those moments where you need to say a prayer for those people and leave them to their fate. There is nothing noble about committing suicide, even if it is trying to rescue innocent people. Save your anger, frustration and adrenaline for somebody who *can* be rescued. Yeah, it blows. It’s one of those times where you have to make a terrible decision and learn to live with it. Get used to it if you expect to last more than a few months out here on the streets.

Third, the people who set the trap are not going to be happy if you save the people and ruin their plan. If these dirt bags discover it was you – and that’s easy if you have the rescued peo-

ple in tow – you can expect retribution, later if not at that moment.

Last, don't be fooled, "live bait" can be used to lure *you* into a trap just as easy as it can zombies. Bushwhackers, Death Cultists, Retro-Savages and other villains may use humans as bait to lure *you* into a trap or ambush. Be careful and don't ever jump to conclusions, even the ones that seem obvious. Trust what you know. Question everything else. I've seen bushwhackers use their own women and children pretending to be survivors in need of help, to get inside a group to rob them or lead them into an trap. I've even seen them use their own people as "live bait" just as I have described it, only the whole scene is rigged, the zombies can't really get the apparent victims, and the bad guys are trying to lure *you* into getting captured. Once they succeed, they use YOU for "live bait." This tactic might not even involve suckering you with someone dangling in a cage. They might lure you into a building with cries for help or a woman or child being chased by a fake zombie inside a house or building. You run in, they lock you inside, make a bunch of noise, and leave you to deal with the zombie horde that comes searching for a live meal.

These are just a couple of possible scenarios that could leave you hanging out to swing in the wind. Sometimes madness plays a role in such detestable practices, other times it is desperation, meanness, or sheer evil. The important thing is that you understand there are bad people in the world and be prepared to deal with them.

What kind of people would do that to another person? The usual suspects, to begin with: Terror Cultists, Death Cultists, Retro-Savages, Raiders, Bandits and madmen. They aren't the only ones. I've seen the self-righteous, cruel and desperate do the same thing. I think for half the folks surviving out there, if it becomes a question of them or us, most people pick "them" so they (us) can live. Those people, at least, I can understand. It's the ones who sacrifice others to get enjoyment or feel powerful that I don't get.

Bad people do bad things

It's a fact. Bad people do bad things. Get used to the idea. Expect it, and steel yourself to it. It's the way things are. Don't become a victim.

I'm not suggesting you be cold-hearted, and I'm certainly not endorsing the practice of using "live bait." When you become that heartless and self-serving, you become like them, the human vermin and the walking dead out only for yourself, hunting and killing to survive, nothing more.

I'm saying you don't have the time or luxury to be outraged, indignant or even horrified. See it, make note of it, and move on. It's like being a soldier in a war zone, you can't let the horror you see around you *every day* get to you or tear you down. Sure you see it. Sure you feel it. But you can't let it affect you. You can't let it get inside you and fester, or it will tear you up and drive you mad. You have to let it become part of your everyday life, like taking out the garbage. It's not pleasant but someone has to do it. You have to accept the unacceptable and tolerate the intolerable. You have to say to yourself, "This sucks. I hate it, but there isn't anything I can do about it right now."

Lastly, you need to find your purpose, make it your mission, and let that mission consume you. It's the only way you can survive without going crazy or becoming a mad dog yourself.

Here's how me and the Road Reapers do it:

One, we have accepted that the world we knew and loved is gone.

Two, that world has been replaced by Hell. A Hell dominated by the walking dead and bad people.

Three, though we walk through Hell, we refuse to become monsters ourselves.

Four, *our mission* has three components: Save lives, destroy the walking dead, and remain human to the bitter end.

That last part is the hardest. It means staying as sane as we can, doing what we believe is right, and keeping the ability to feel compassion for others. That means we need to maintain a certain level of feelings and connection to other people or else we lose our own humanity. We can't let that happen, or we become just another monster in Hell. We want to see humanity survive and blossom, but help in ways that suit us best and make us feel useful. So Reapers help by killing zombies, clearing roads of cars and zombies, saving lives, and pointing survivors to Safe Haven communities. That might sound like plenty to some, but you won't see us doing the heavy lifting and hard work of *building* a haven community. That's for someone else. Maybe you. Us, we have our mission, it gives us purpose, and we stick to it. Like I said, it's saving lives, destroying monsters, and staying human while doing it. For *us* it's what keeps us sane and keeps us going. It helps us face the horrors no one ever imagined before the apocalypse, and it makes us feel like we're doing something worth living for. Something we know is right. Maybe one of us will die around the next corner, but we hope to die well, die human and die saving other human lives or destroying the walking dead.

That's how us Road Reapers do it. *Your mission* may be bigger, smaller, or something entirely different. It doesn't matter what it is as long as you have one. Just make your mission about something that is bigger than yourself. Make it positive and hopeful. Make it involve other people and the living. Take the high road and stay on it. Trust me, you won't regret it.

Having a mission will help a lot, but it won't insulate you from the Hell we all live in or the evil that abounds there. You have to deal with that on you own. Take it in stride. The savage, ruthless way others may live is not our way or yours, but you need to accept that it is out there.

When you see bad people haul out an innocent person, chop off his hand and drop him in the gutter or tie him to a post to distract the walking dead so the rest of them get away, don't judge, don't stand there in horror or sobbing about man's inhumanity to man. And don't do something stupid. If you think you can help the man bleeding out, do it, but if you can't, move on and don't think twice about it. I mean it.

As for those responsible, it's probably not your place to judge them or administer what *you* may consider to be justice. For all you know, the man they left to die is a stone cold killer or rapist who deserves his fate. The point is, stop being surprised when bad people do bad things, and don't let yourself become one of those bad people.

My Mama always said, hope for the best and prepare for the worst. I hear her words now more than ever. It's good advice, and in a world where the dead reign, it's a way of life.

Desperate people can be worse than bad

I've seen a lot of things that have turned my stomach. Me and the Road Reapers refuse to become animals. I'd go down fighting before I'd ever sacrifice another human being to the walking dead. As long as I have breath in my lungs, I intend to do right by my fellow man and fight the good fight. Despite what some folks will tell you to the contrary, you do not have to become some kind of ruthless, self-serving predator to survive. There are plenty of good people still out in the world.

I've also seen good people do bad things.

Desperate people are capable of anything, especially when they are panicked or their backs are up against the wall. You'd be surprised what even *you* might consider under the right set of circumstances.

A man trying to save his family is liable to say or do whatever it takes. Most people will say or do just about anything to save a loved one or their own skin. Most people aren't ready to look death in the face and accept his embrace. They fight, screaming and kicking every step of the way. A starving man might sell you out for a slice of bread. To escape being used as "live bait," a person might be willing to trick you into taking his place.

Not every thief is a bandit. Remember that. He might just be starving and desperate.

Not every smiling face is a friend. He might be a cultist, a raider, bandit or killer.

A soft curvy body and a gentle touch isn't an invitation for something more. Watch yourself, and don't take advantage of some sweet thing who is in shock or so scared or desperate that she'll give up her body for a momentary connection to another human being, or a dry cot or a warm meal. You can't be afraid of everyone, but you need to be careful. Careful of them, and careful that your own needs and feelings don't lead you astray.

Watch your back. Cover your buddy's back and trust only those who have earned it. Keep your friends close and your weapons closer. Do what you know is right whenever you can and forgive yourself when you stumble or circumstances dictate otherwise. You're only human, and that's a blessing. Be grateful for that.

Advice for you heroes out there

I never thought of myself as a hero, but here I am trying to save lives and destroy monsters.

That seems to make me and the other Road Reapers heroes in the eyes of most people. To us, it's just a matter of doing what's right for us. If you have a shred of decency in your bones and want to see humanity survive, then you do what you have to do. In our book, that's helping other survivors and fighting the damn things out to destroy us all. If that's what makes us heroes, then I can tell you there a lot of heroes walking around out there. You're probably one yourself, you just don't know it yet.

Here's the thing, guts and glory is for fools and lunatics. You need to be smart and you need to be a survivor.

That means picking your fights, saving the people you can save, and walking away from those you can't. Let me repeat that last part. Learn to walk away from the people you can't save. You ain't doing them or anyone else any good if you get yourself killed in a fight you know you can't win. Worse, you come back as one of the walking dead – one more monster for us to fight. Don't do it. Yeah, it's hard to turn your back on someone begging for you to save them. It's gut wrenching hard. But if they're beyond rescuing without getting yourself or half of your crew killed, then that's what you have to do. We are outnumbered ten thousand to one. We need every living, breathing body we can get against the creeping doom, so don't be throwing your own life away on battles you can't win. This isn't about how you feel, or you surviving a battle, it's about you helping the people you can. You die in a stupid fight you knew you couldn't win in the first place, God might slap you on the back when you reach the Pearly Gates, but the people you could have saved next time, they're going to die because you aren't there to help them. Understand? Be smart, help those you can, and let God sort out the rest.

Like I said, I never thought of myself as a hero. I don't think any of the Road Reapers do. Somehow we've fallen into that role and people give us more credit than I reckon we deserve. We just try to do right by each other and help other people. That's noble I suppose, it's certainly idealistic, but it's the choice we've made for ourselves. We talk about the good we do and the lives we've saved, but what haunts us when we sleep are our failures and the lives we couldn't save.

If you plan to be a hero, you better be ready to give it everything you have, because people are going to put their faith in you and their lives in your hands. Desperate and frightened people will follow you blindly, so you better know what the hell you are doing, and you can't bail on them when the going gets rough. If you do, they die. If you do, something will die inside of you as well.

Here's the thing about being a "hero" – it is scary as hell.

It's nerve-racking when you are on the prowl trying to avoid zombies, especially if you have innocent people in tow. It's scary when you find one or two walking dead. It's scarier when you encounter a horde of them or a nest where they start popping out of the damn woodwork and walls. That wail of theirs, I don't think I'll ever get completely used to it. I let it get me mad and start my adrenaline pumping to shut the damn thing up. The minute one starts to moan I want to knock its damn head off.

It's scariest when you have buddies or innocent people screaming for you to help them or to tell them what to do next. What you say or do next could mean their life or death, and that responsibility, for me, that's scarier than anything else. I was afraid to write this Survival Guide. I mean, who am I? What do I know? What if I forget to include something important? What if something I tell people gets someone killed? Fear will paralyze you if you let it. You have to push through the fear and do what seems right at that moment. As long as you are true to yourself and do what you can do, even if you fail, you've done your best. That's all you can ask of yourself.

Don't be surprised if there is occasion to wet yourself. I'm not admitting to having ever done it, but it happens. Don't beat yourself up about it, dwell on it or freeze in shame. Odds are everyone else is so scared and occupied that they don't even notice. It's another one of those human moments. Be glad you're human. There may be other moments where you panic or freeze, not knowing what to do for a minute. That's okay, too. Take a deep breath and pull yourself back together as quick as you can, and don't abandon the people counting on you. I never hate a man who freezes for a minute. I don't even hate the man who runs out on me – *once*. I'll give you once, because nothing can prepare you for the world we live in these days where the dead walk and want your throat, but I better never see you again if you run out on me or mine a second time. I understand fear. We're all afraid, whether we wear that fear on our face or not. But I've got no stomach for cowards and you better keep running if you ditch me or my crew a second time.

Being a hero can save lives, and sometimes a hopeless situation ain't so hopeless. You'll hear people tell you once a zombie has grabbed hold of your buddy, you need to forget him and keep going. Save yourself. That's probably good advice and I don't hold it against no man who does just that. I just can't wrap my head around leaving a man behind if I can help it. I don't know if that's my military background or whether I'm just too damn stupid or stubborn to quit when the going is good. It just doesn't set well with me. I'd be dead three times already if my crew held that attitude.

Most walking dead are slow and stupid. Even the Thinkers and Mock Zombies lack any real fighting skills, strategies or tactics. Sure they're strong and their grip is like a steel vice, but just because one grabs you or a buddy, it's not a death sentence. Not if you act fast. As always, be smart. You don't have kill a Juggernaut or a Sloucher to save your pal, all you may need to do is sever its grasp by chopping off its hand at the wrist, elbow or shoulder. Jam an axe handle, crowbar or either end of a rifle into the zombie's mouth so it can't bite your buddy anywhere. Likewise, block/parry an attack it might try to make at your friend with its other arm. If it's holding your pal in one hand and you have it so it can't bite him or hit him, the rest of you have time to pull him free, chop off the zombie's limb, or blast it back to Hell. Just take the corpse down fast and get out before others arrive and start flailing and grasping with a dozen other arms and hands.

Slow a walking dead down by blowing out its knee caps or taking off the lower leg. You need to buy you some precious seconds? Take down one or two Juggernauts or Slouchers in a doorway, or at the opening of a corridor, or the bottom of a staircase, and watch the pile up. Yeah, it's only seconds (one or two melee rounds) before they climb over the fallen corpse, but those precious seconds can buy you time to reload, barricade a door, pull a friend to safety, or even catch your breath and think of your next move.

You're fast. Zombies are slow. That means you can dodge, dance, bob and weave between several of them, just be prepared to bat away grasping hands and biting mouths. Fast Attackers are a different story, which brings us back to maiming and crippling running corpses. They aren't so fast when missing a foot, leg or knee cap. Road Reapers try to identify fast runners, lure them to run out of the zombie pack and take them down first.

Bottom line is, unless you're facing an advanced convergence where the walking dead are packed tight as sardines in a can, you probably have many more options than you might imagine at first blush. Maximize your options and use them.

Oh, and if you wade into more than a handful of zombies to save someone else's life, do it knowing that you might not be coming out. If it's a risk you are willing to take, then do it.

Survivor Guilt

If you're reading my Survival Guide, you're one of the living. That makes you rare and precious. Don't give in to depression and sorrow. If you want to keep living, you don't have the luxury or the time. Don't feel guilty for having survived when so many others have perished. Don't even start down the "why me guilt trail" because it's a trip you're not likely to return from. Survivor guilt leads to madness and death.

You have nothing to feel guilty about. People died by the billions. The multitude of loved ones you lost personally, they'd want you to keep fighting and keep living. They'd be happy for you. Hold on to that and believe it, because it's true.

If you must ask why, let me give you the answer that works for me: Because humanity isn't wiped out. Because it's up to you and the rest of us that are left to keep humanity going. To stay alive and take back our world. It's not fair. It's not easy and it's a terrible job, but it's ours. Let's get to it.

– Brad Ashley, *Leader of the Road Reapers*

Author Notes

I tried to write this book in such a way that it was both entertaining and scary, while at the same time, making it a sourcebook useful to both players and Game Masters.

Many of the more elaborate and descriptive random tables are written with the deliberate intent of providing ideas that can be expanded into larger adventures, or to expand the reader's view of the world. I want to give players an idea of the adventures, challenges and dangers waiting for them, and G.M.s avenues for creating their own encounters and adventures.

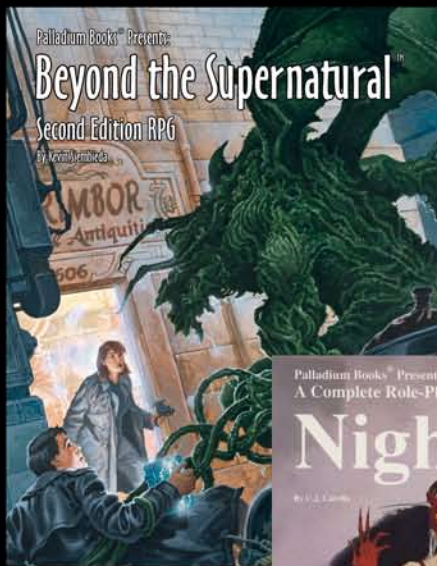
I hope you liked the more literary, storytelling approach, but still find the game data plentiful and easy to find.

I'd like to thank the artists whose work help make this book and the **Dead Reign™** setting so dynamic and rich. I'd also like to thank Kathy Simmons for running round with life-sized zombie props for photo shoots along railroad tracks and risking getting arrested for trespassing. It was fun and we got great results. Some of them appear in this sourcebook, others should be seen in future books.

Ultimately, my goal is to push the envelope. To push the envelope when it comes to storytelling, gaming, design and presentation. But more than that, to push the envelope when it comes to the *zombie genre* and the *new stories* you can tell. I want to take you places where you have never gone before, even if it might be along railroad tracks or down into the inky depths of sewers and storm drains where Worm Meat and Sewer Crawlers await. Thanks for coming along for the ride.

Spread the word and keep those imaginations burning bright.

– Kevin Siembieda, *Leader of Palladium Books*



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