

THE  
**BOILERPLATE**  
STEEL HORSE CROSSING, THE IRON WORKS

## SCHLABST FAMILY DONATES FOOD – TRAGEDY STRIKES THE FAMILY

In a truly tragic turn of events, the Schlabst Family of Mill City recently lost their heir to a wierd Raider attack.

A prominent name in Mill City, most everyone knows the family name of the most popular beer of the Northern Ironworks. Due to a bad harvest in the north, and a harsh winter, many of the Citizens of the Iron Works were feeling the pinch. The Schlabst family decided to throw open their own grain reserves and give away thousands of pounds of food to those in need.

During the event, Raiders somehow were able to get in to the Schlabst family home. These Raiders then attacked guests and kidnapped Schlabst's daughter and heir. It is unclear at this time what motivated such strange behavior from these Raiders.

Mrs. Schlabst was seen to be quite distraught over the event and many stepped forward to look for the girl and try to find her.

The next night, after a medical syposium that was also hosted by

the Schlabst family, and light entertainment, Raiders returned again to the family home and were able to break past the defenses. During the fighting and confusion, it was discovered that the Schlabst heir had been infected with Bad Brain and was among the Raiders. While she did not appear to be fully gone, she was killed accidentally by those who did not know who she was and only saw the Raider Mask and colors and assumed she was another monster.

The Schlabst family was then brutally attacked. A bomb went off in their home, destroying a huge section of their wall and leaving them open to further invasion from zed. It is unclear at this time who is responsible for these attacks against such a celoeed family. The Iron Guard are investigating and any information you may have on these attacks should be immediatly reported to your local authorites.

We can not have such pillars of the community, seeking to help others in these hard times, be stuck down. Their example demands

that we, the Citizens of the Works, find a way to grant them justice for these horrible crimes. Out thoughts are with the family at this time.

### 20 YEARS ROACH-FREE

Life in Steel Horse Crossing (SHC) has gotten a little easier since the Lascarians left 20 years ago, and it's time to look back on the positive change the decision has made on our community.

Over the years, SHC has dealt with a variety of outside threats, from Cheezhead raiders to - if the stories are to be believed -

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Stay tuned in! Its a new year and the Boiler Plate has all sorts of new content doming the Steel Horse.

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## AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE CONSUL

Citizens,

I was sent to Mr. Schlapts' party to barter for food for our good town and arrived at Mr. Schlapts' party just in time to escort a hysterical Mrs. Schlapts into the hall and make a few inquiries into what had occurred before my arrival. Apparently there was a kidnapping, and the Schlapts family was in turmoil. I am sad to report that this means that I was unable to negotiate any assistance for our town.

That being said, our monthly shipment from the Ironwork should be arriving on Saturday of the usual trade weekend, and I am certain that additional provisions will be included.

We are expecting quite an influx of travelers this month (though why they would travel here during these awful cold months I'll never know) so be sure to make them feel welcome and comfortable. Hopefully the additional bodies don't attract anything too unsavory to the area, but I hold no doubt that it will. Be safe, be warm, but mostly, be aware of your surroundings. You never know what trouble travelers might bring with them.

As a side note, whoever is working on their ride down by the lake, please make sure to clean up after yourself. I've tripped over your mess more than once this week. We need to keep Steel Horse clean. It's the only way to assure that we won't be tripping over our own mess when the next wave of zed come.

Be seeing you,

Zell-Ann  
Consul  
Steel Horse Crossing

## THE STATE OF STEEL HORSE CROSSING

Greetings Ladies and Gentlemen  
(and all the rest of you as well),

I hope this letter finds you warm enough in these miserable sunless months. Even after 10 years here I don't think I will ever get used to the frigid bite of the winds here. It is amazing anything survives the winter.

Steel Horse Crossing has several issues that I would like to address in this letter. Let us start with the most pressing.

As the summer months drew to a close, we knew that our stocks and supplies were not going to make it through the winter. We did what we could to increase our stock, the RPM and the various Rover clans have been making emergency runs throughout the Ironworks to find us more supplies and I've sent in a request for assistance to the Navy and should be hearing back from them any day now. But despite these precautions winter is on us fully and the supplies are still dwindling.

Without the trains running we will have quite a few travelers winter with us here in Steel Horse Crossing. Opening our town to settlers is best done during the summer, when abundance can be shared, and food isn't so scarce. But time isn't always our friend, and turning away people now would surely mean their death. I ask that the citizens of our lovely City make sure that the travelers feel welcome and are helped to settle in

until the trains are working once more.

As always people are welcome to stay at my hostel. It is warm and cozy and I will do my best to make sure all available supplies are rationed out equally to those in need. Please, be aware that the raider population becomes more aggressive during times of low resource availability. Keep an eye out folks, the weather isn't the only danger out there. If you see the gentleman from the lighthouse without his shoes on and his pants rolled up to his knees please let me know. He nearly lost two of his toes last time. We all must look out for the unfortunate.

Also, do not leave your Iron Slaves out in this weather. They may be a resilient bunch but it gets cold enough to freeze even the hardiest of your stock. If you need help building a weather-proof shelters for your Irons please let one of the Natural Ones know. They are amazingly good at such things.

Stay warm, stay safe.  
Zell-Ann, Consul ■ Steel Horse Crossing

## ETHEL ROTTMYER'S WINTER RATIONS REPORT

Between the bizarre weather, strange animals, crazy men, and the blighted our crops had a terrible time this season. It's as if the world is stacked against us in these dark times. I told Earl just yesterday when we checked the stocks that this winter was going to be rough. He only grunted. What else could he say? We managed to

pull a meager harvest. Starvation is close on the horizon if we don't manage very, very carefully.

The livestock may not make it through the winter. The grain is low and getting lower every day. It will hardly make it through the winter even if we stretch it. We will have to rotate days on feed, and the animals will surely suffer.

Earl and I will be eating perhaps once a day. Today I made a soup that we will eat for the week and be grateful. The soup is sparse on actual food, but it fills the stomach. Next week, it will be the same, but we will try to get through it.

We can't host friends, family or attempt to help strangers without the putting ourselves at risk of starvation or being too weak to defend ourselves. It's such a cruel trick to be played at a time where community is what helps us survive the winter.

I pray for more potatoes to be found in the fields.

-Ethel

## MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE IRON NAVY

By Rear Admiral Michael Passavoy,  
Iron Navy

It has been interesting, these last few years, to hear the stories of what has happened out on the Great Lake, and the horrors that wait amid the dark water. These stories, sometimes based on partial truths, grow with astonishing rapidity and escalation, even taking the original story well past the possible.

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## WHERE IS OUR TRAIN?

By Ms. Pricilla Anastasia Helford-Southworth, Esq.

People are wondering if they're going to have to rely on hunting for food all winter. I have to know why they aren't bringing me makeup and clothing from Speedtown. People here rely on me to keep them abreast on the latest fashion and gossip. I do not intend to fail in finding out why the train has stopped coming with regularity.

Upon research and inspection, I have no information that could be considered fact as to why the train has not come with regularity. I do, however, have a laundry list of rumors, most of which are assuredly tall tales of drunken imbeciles. In the case that someone may think me unkind or unjust, I will list what I have heard from all the sorts. You can sort through the rubbish and decide what may or may not be true.

The rumors are as follows:

■ The shambler hoards on the way to Steel Horse Crossing have become so enormous, not even the train can push through them.

■ Someone of great influence is paying the train company to not stop in Steel Horse. Something was said about "choking the town out" so they can sweep in and buy it out.

■ Someone told a story about a huge animal covered in metal and the size of a train knocking the train off its tracks and ripping the passengers and cargo to pieces to get to the Reds' Saturday

Brownies stash

■ The Darwinists spilled some kind of green goo all over the train crew and now they're all zed of the worst sort. Its difficult to find good help and to train for such a tedious, important positions.

■ There is a group of train bandits interrupting the train runs. Nobody knows what they're looking for, but rumor says the Ironworks is going to increase security

■ Evil plants are eating the tracks. (yes, someone told me this in sincerity)

■ Some Lascarians survived The Incident and this is the first stage of their revenge

I promise you, dear readers, as soon as I know the real story, you will as well.

## TRISTAN FALLS: IT'S A TRAP

by Flood AKA V4701

Back in Mid-Autumn I followed the hug crowds headed east to Tristan Falls.

Tristan Falls. It promised to be a gathering the likes of which happen only every dozen winters or so. Word of the occasion had made it's way as far away as Wahoo and hundreds of intrepid and enterprising souls set wheels to road to meet for the festivities there. We all should have just stayed home.

What first looked to be a Trade-meet to end all Trade meets was, in reality, nothing but a well-

designed and categorically fatal Trap-meet. The Caravans rolled in and set down stakes only to discover an unsettling truth. The locals were, to a soul, missing.

Why? Where did they go? What happened to them? The Answer?

Whalestoe - A group of Morally reprobate monsters that even the Fifth Reich couldn't stomach. They were the architects of this travesty, and their goal? Absolute Annihilation. It was they who lured us to the Trap-meet with hopes of good trade, good plunder and good times. But like any group of megalomaniacal malignant narcissists, they failed to accurately account for the collective intellect and willpowers of those they sought to victimize.

The clues took a good long while to piece together. Skulls of the dead, found evidence, fragmented information, trailing echoes of ages past from the gluttonous memory of the local gravemind... But the truth would be known, and so it was.

Here it is, in pieces.

The Mine- The group known as Whalestoe orchestrated the entire event as a trap. Deep within the Mine that so many sought to loot laid a lab. Within this lab a deadly virus had been developed, affectionately referred to as the Skinvader virus. Whalestoos plan was to quietly infect the entire Trap meet and to have those people, who came from far and wide, take it home and infect their own kin. Thankfully, it didn't work.

The Wall- We were all informed that we'd need to do two full ticks of a time piece on Tristan

Falls' wall as "Payment" for attending the party. I did six. Many did more. This is not because we are all battle-crazed and harboring death-wishes... No. This is because to have our "Tickets" punched we were forced to rely upon runners who were not only directionally challenged but terminally slow in the head as well, to take care of said tickets for us. Many were taken under because of exhaustion from too long upon the wall... For some, we will never see them again.

The Medical Symposium- During a lecture on the evolution of the strains, one Doctor Poughkeepsie, and several others in the front row, became the unfortunate victims of a Bomb. What better way to ensure the spread of the Skinvader virus than to round up all the finest medical minds in one place and kill them?

The residents- Slowly but surely we began to see some of them again. Many had taken to the mines as test subjects but some had sold themselves into indentured servitude. The vast majority of these unfortunate souls had become the property of one Mr. Denver Jones... Vegasian, Slaver, Psionist, Criminal. Upon discussion with several of his "servants" a conclusion was reached that he had forced them into signing away their freedom with his more subversive psionist arts.

The end result of this collective misadventure was, however, arguably worth everything. We now know a considerable amount about how the world before met it's end and how and why we exist as we do now. I urge you to look for the writings of one Mr. Hoffa that have been circulating recently for more information.

Tristan Falls. Never Again.

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## I'M NOT COMPLAINING....

By Fred Fender via The RPM / Transcription by Abe Berken

I start writing with this statement, because it's perfectly relevant. I am not complaining. I'm confused, I'm hesitant, and I'm worried, but I am most assuredly not complaining. We haven't seen many zed in these parts for quite some time, and while we've had a small influx of people lately, the expected rise in undead activity hasn't really been realized. We've all heard it before ■ the more people you have in once place, the more likely the zed will come knocking at your door. Sometimes, that is more literal than anyone could want. It may be the navy or patrols taking care of the threat, but I've been on patrol. I've still not seen enough zed to concern myself with, even though we continue to go out armed and prepared. Where are they all?

I have an idea of what might be happening, but that's really all it is; an idea. We've been seeing an increasing number of natural one types lurking about the outskirts of the town. I hesitate to call the Natural Ones because even the Rovers don't seem to know them, which is an oddity around here. So if they're not actually from the local tribes, who are they? And why, when we approach, do they run off? I caught one pointing and, from what I can only assume was a form of communication, grunting wildly at one of the scouts as they came within firing distance. Their markings are crude, as if made by instruments not meant to mark someone. Their weapons are even more crude than their markings. But make no mistake, they're not stupid. They made short work out of an unlucky 'face that decided to take a closer look. We didn't get him back.

With all that, could they be taking care of the zed for us? Are we being protected in some fashion, or even watched over? Or are they really just a bigger threat in the long run? I've haven't seen much of the green and gold variety on them, so I doubt they're in line with the other raiders, but something is going on. I wouldn't feel too safe here, even if we've been experiencing a relative calm. We're due for some form of stupid to blow up in our faces sooner or later, and I'm betting these guys will be around to see it.

## MISS O'S GUIDE TO PLANNING DATES

Love is in the air! And that special guy/girl/redstar has

accepted your invitation to go out on a date! Congratulations! But what happens next? Now you have to plan it. Below are a list of options which can be customized to your hobbies or region. Rank your favorites, or make it a checklist and try to do them all!

- On a clear night, go to a large field and go stargazing. Splurge on a guard for the evening to give you the heads up when to run.

- Fill a basket or bag with snacks and go have a picnic outside on a warm day. Bring a blanket, and consider sitting on higher ground or hiring a guard.

- Have a meal catered by your favorite cook. You can either rent out a space or have it somewhere public, but the idea is that you're sharing something you love.

- Does your sweetheart like to fish or hunt like you do? Go on an excursion together. Make sure it's outdoors and mildly active. Blood will flow, hearts will pump, and feelings will grow.

- Find an artist and then the two of you can sit for portraits. Exchange them and carry the other with you. Probably not recommended for a first date.

Remember that the dates are about getting to know each other. If you go to watch a telling vision, there's less time to communicate between you two. Chaperones are okay to bring with you, or guards, because they'll keep out of your way and let you have conversation. Bring a friend along, and they'll hog (use up) your date's attention.

And remember to have fun! That is the most important part.

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— and —  
*Mrs. House*

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## HOROSCOPES

By Madame Dewey

**Kraken (Late Winter):** The new year is prime time for you to take charge of your public image and excel at the work of your choice. Kraken! It will need effort, but you're up to the challenge. You have more energy and staying power than most. Springtime may test your patience. Polish your techniques and approaches then, and test out new ideas on a small scale.

**Sheep (Early Spring):** Respect physical limits and don't over-commit in the new year. Resist the urge to sign up for too many events, gatherings, war parties, or putting in too much overtime at the bench or still. Your health and well-being are just as important as any extra praise or profit you might receive.

**Wolf (Middle Spring):** You are going to have a lot of energy, and you will want to find a way to work it out in vigorous but well-controlled activities. If badly managed, the excess of energy could expose you to injuries, infections, inflammations or other unpleasantness with rapid and painful evolution. Also, zombabies. I'm just saying.

**Fortress (Early Summer):** Fuck it. It is still cold out and this is not a great time. I suggest going back to bed and trying again next month. Really. It is the best plan.

**Market (Middle Summer):** This new year is the year for big, important changes, Market child. You can reinvent yourself from the ground up if you so choose.

People will see you differently this year, even if you change nothing. Be adaptable but firm, and be happy with yourself.

**Judge (Early Fall):** This year is going to bring you some new people, and perhaps a shift in personal tastes and opinions. Keep what you like and shrug off the rest. If there is anyone capable to sifting through the chaff, it is you.

**Home (Late Summer):** You're a rising star in the new year, but it will take constant effort to avoid slipping back down. Are you up for this? Of course you are!

Your attention is zeroed in on making progress, getting and holding on to those things you love most, and on not being rushed into making decisions. This year, you will ask all the right questions and refuse to proceed without solid answers and information.

Ha! Just kidding! You are going to fuck this up.

**Assassin (Middle Fall):** With Spring just around the corner, this may be your most accomplished and solid times. You can easily self-correct and nudge situations and relationships to where you want them. Home life should bring much satisfaction, and possibly some karmic insights, particularly in September and October. Family mysteries may be solved, or resolved.

**Gunslinger (Late Fall):** Emotional ties and romance are empowered in this month, but it may be awhile before things really settle down into something you can actually live with a build upon. But right now you are looking at a wild, and

rocky ride. Enjoy the crazy while it lasts.

**Devil (Early Winter):** This is your kind of year, Devil, when you can turn on that moonlit charm of yours and make sure that the people in your life are the ones you want most! Family and friends and victims are highlighted in all the best ways, with little or no extra stress or complications. Romance also is a strong point for you. Partners want to listen to you and make you happy. Let them make you their priority this year.

**Drowned (Middle Winter):** There will be plenty of surprises and opportunities to grow and advance in the world. Raise some eyebrows in the new year and make some new allies for your favorite causes. This will keep the springtime exciting and interesting in ways that have nothing to do with zed for once. Take your time and build a firm foundation for the daily life that you want.

Don't stress, respect your health, and enjoy a charmed year!

## RUMORS AND GOSSIP, OH MY!

Oh my gosh! Look at all these wonderful new additions to our quiet little town. I simply can not wait to hear all about these new additions and the juicy scandals you all bring.

- A little birdie told me that the old light house keeper actually left the light house and went all the way to Mill City recently! That old guy hasn't stirred in ages. Once can only guess what he is up to.

complete happiness, and the home-centred interests which rise up around the man who first finds himself master of his own establishment, were sufficient to absorb all my attention, while Holmes, who loathed every form of society with his whole Bohemian soul, remained in our lodgings in Baker Street, buried among his old books, and alternating from week to week between cocaine and ambition, the drowsiness of the drug, and the fierce energy of his own keen nature. He was still, as ever, deeply attracted by the study of crime, and occupied his immense faculties and extraordinary powers of observation in following out those clues, and clearing up those mysteries which had been abandoned as hopeless by the official police. From time to time I heard some vague account of his doings: of his summons to Odessa in the case of the Trepoff murder, of his clearing up of the singular tragedy of the Atkinson brothers at Trincomalee, and finally of the mission which he had accomplished so delicately and successfully for the reigning family of Holland. Beyond these signs of his activity, however, which I merely shared with all the readers of the daily press, I knew little of my former friend and companion.

One night—it was on the twentieth of March, 1888—I was returning from a journey to a patient (for I had now returned to civil practice), when my way led me through Baker Street. As I passed the well-remembered door, which must always be associated in my mind with my wooing, and with the dark incidents of the Study in Scarlet, I was seized with a keen desire to see Holmes

## WEATHER REPORT

Friday - Bundle up folks cause winter is not done with us yet! We are looking at highs only in the min-20s during the day and partly cloudy. At night, those temps are going to drop into the low 20s. Wear lots of socks!

Saturday - We are looking at a chance of snow as the daytime temperatures try to sneak up into the 30's. But once that sun goes away, temperatures are going to plummet again into the high teens. Perhaps the raiders will freeze to death?

Sunday - As you all pack up, the temperature will continue to hover in the 20s.

Stay warm, wear a hat and scarves. They are not just for Rovers!

**WANT TO WRITE FOR THE PAPER? READY, WILLING AND ABLE TO BE WHERE THE ACTION IS!**

**TALK TO VALENTINE AT THE FADED HEARTS CARAVAN, STEEL HORSE CROSSING, IRON WORKS**

- I heard someone actually injected themselves with Bad Brain. Seriously. Apparently it was for science. Really, these scientists need babysitters to sit on them.

- The Diesel Jocks have some pretty new rides out there. Got to wonder if this is all part of their courting rituals? Lots of paint and engine noises all over the place.

- I heard Ft Seymore can't keep their Irons in their place. Seriously, how hard can that be? You just tell them what to do.

again, and to know how he was employing his extraordinary powers.

His rooms were brilliantly lit, and, even as I looked up, I saw his tall, spare figure pass twice in a dark silhouette against the blind. He was pacing the room swiftly, eagerly, with his head sunk upon his chest and his hands clasped behind him. To me, who knew his every mood and habit, his attitude and manner told their own story. He was at work again. He had risen out of his drug-created dreams and was hot upon the scent of some new problem. I rang the bell and was shown up to the chamber which had formerly been in part my own.

His manner was not effusive. It seldom was; but he was glad, I think, to see me. With hardly a word spoken, but with a kindly eye, he waved me to an armchair, threw across his case of cigars, and indicated a spirit case and a gasogene in the corner. Then he stood before the fire and looked me over in his singular introspective fashion.

"Wedlock suits you," he remarked. "I think, Watson, that you have put on seven and a half pounds since I saw you."

"Seven!" I answered. "Indeed, I should have thought a little more. Just a trifle more, I fancy, Watson. And in practice again, I observe. You did not tell me that you intended to go into harness."

"Then, how do you know?" "I see it, I deduce it. How do I know that you have been getting yourself very wet lately, and that you have a most clumsy and careless servant girl?"

Tune in next month to learn more about this detective and his friend as they seek to solve the SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA!

## NRGC REPORT

Howdy Folks! Dahlia Clover here, totally checking in on NRG happenings.

There is like, SO much happening right now! So, I'm sure y'all have heard that supplies are runnin' low, and fair enough, they are. But we are super excited to hear that really sweet fella Joseph Schlabet has opened his home to folks who are need'n food. This is really a great way to promote community, and unity, and all the stuff we here at the Night Rider Grassroots Collective are all about! It's super sweet! It's like, we don't even have to tell you what we are about, 'cause Ol' Joe is SHOWING you! So cool. Anyway, Ma says I should tell you what we are about despite Ol' Joe's fair kindness, so be prepared to have your mind, like, totally blown.

The Night Rider Grassroots Collective is all about helpin' folks. Making sure our community is whole and healthy, just like it should be. Yeah, we don't buy into that slave-thought currency stuff, but we TOTALLY dig keepin' folks fed and clothed and protected. That's why we work so hard to make sure all that stuff happens! It's totally a thing, man!

Granted, I think that whole ban on addictive and mind altering substances is a bit of a buzzkill, but at least we've got Saturday, ya'know? The Hedons are well, religion just ain't my bag, but they certainly know how to party and the Ironworks knows that keep'n the Hedon's from partying is bad news.

I ain't got nothin' bad to say about it, keeps me in business!

## TALES OF THE WAS!

We are starting a very special story today, dear Readers! Today, we start...

### A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA

I.

To Sherlock Holmes she is always THE woman. I have seldom heard him mention her under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex. It was not that he felt any emotion akin to love for Irene Adler. All emotions, and that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind. He was, I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen, but as a lover he would have placed himself in a false position. He never spoke of the softer passions, save with a gibe and a sneer. They were admirable things for the observer—excellent for drawing the veil from men's motives and actions. But for the trained reasoner to admit such intrusions into his own delicate and finely adjusted temperament was to introduce a distracting factor which might throw a doubt upon all his mental results. Grit in a sensitive instrument, or a crack in one of his own high-power lenses, would not be more disturbing than a strong emotion in a nature such as his. And yet there was but one woman to him, and that woman was the late Irene Adler, of dubious and questionable memory.

I had seen little of Holmes lately. My marriage had drifted us away from each other. My own