

DEADLANDS

THIEVING MAGPIES

A SAVAGE WORLDS ONE SHEET™ BY PHILIPP CHRISTOPHEL

A TOWN WITH A PROBLEM

When gold was found in the surrounding hills, the town of Avery's Bluff came into existence practically overnight. Now that some of the townsfolk have stumbled upon ghost rock, it truly is a boomtown.

In all the commotion it almost went unnoticed that more and more silver and gold trinkets began to disappear. Eventually, people started saying either thieving magpies must be gathering all the shineys or a gang of thieves is responsible for the missing items.

In truth, the atmosphere of greed has led to the appearance of a greed maggot, a creature with latent mind control abilities and a hunger for treasure. The greed maggot resides on the lowest level of an old, depleted gold mine and has gathered a bunch of desperate miners under its influence. They constantly supply it with more gold and silver to devour and satiate its never-ending hunger. It's up to the posse to put an end to this mischievous varmint!

THE RUSTY LANTERN

FEAR LEVEL: 2

The posse enters the scene as they quench their thirst in the Rusty Lantern Saloon & Bar, a popular watering hole in Avery's Bluff. A successful Notice roll spots an old, shabby-looking miner pocket a gold watch lying on a card table nearby. The watch belongs to Buster Brannigan, an enforcer for the Donovan Mining Company. Buster also noticed the pickpocket and isn't amused. He grabs the poor man by the collar and shakes him, which results in more silver and gold trinkets falling from the miner's pockets.

In a packed saloon, the situation quickly evolves into a full-blown bar fight, especially since some of the less savory patrons of the Lantern might want to take advantage of the

commotion and make a move for the valuables dropped on the floor. Let the posse have some fun, but the brawl ends when Town Marshal Burn shoots a few holes into the ceiling to signal he means to restore order.

The marshal wants to hear what transpired. Once the posse tells him about the miner's attempt to steal from the wrong guy, the marshal welcomes the fact that he's finally come across a lead on all the stolen valuables. Depending on how the posse behaved in the brawl, this might be a good opportunity to get on the good side of the law in town. Marshal Burn welcomes any help he can get. Keeping the peace in Avery's Bluff is a full-time job.

The thieving magpie is quickly identified as Ebenezer Finch, an old timer who has called Avery's Bluff his home since the early days of the town. An opposed Intimidation or Persuasion roll makes him talk. With a success, Finch admits he's part of a gang of thieves that all work in the lowest level of the Donovan gold mine. With a raise, he hints something down in the mine makes them do it. Finch is clearly not the brightest rock crusher in town, but apart from that a successful Notice roll also reveals there seems to be a slight golden gleam in his eyes (a hint he's under the influence of the greed maggot).

- ✳ BUSTER BRANNIGAN: Use the Veteran Gunman profile from *Deadlands: The Weird West*.
- BRANNIGAN'S BOYS (1 per hero): Use the Gunman profile from *Deadlands: The Weird West*.
- RUSTY LANTERN PATRONS (8): Use the Townsfolk profile from *Deadlands: The Weird West*.

PERMISSION TO INVESTIGATE

The posse probably wants to take a closer look at the mysterious lower level of the gold mine owned by Andrew Donovan and the Donovan Mining Company.

Just walking into the cave is obviously not possible. The mine's entrance is always guarded by at least four of Brannigan's boys and they search every sidewinder leaving the mine for valuables (but not those entering). The posse can either find a way to sneak in, which is a good opportunity for a Quick Encounter (see *Savage Worlds*), or choose to discuss the matter with the boss, Andrew Donovan. Donovan doesn't care much about the gold in the mine anymore, he has the impression it's basically depleted. He makes his money on ghost rock now. Even so, he isn't too keen on the idea of letting a bunch of strangers snoop around his mine. It takes a lengthy discussion to sway him. Convincing him to let the posse visit it is a Social Conflict. If the posse gains 0 Influence Tokens, Donovan denies them entry and they must find another way into the mine. With 1–3 tokens, Donovan wants to know what's going on and lets the posse into the mine, but only if they agree to report back to him and be chaperoned by Buster Brannigan and his boys. With 4–5 tokens, he trusts the posse and offers Buster and his men as support but doesn't insist they tag along. With 6 or more tokens Donovan allows them to inspect the mine on their own and doesn't push for an explanation once they leave.

⊛ **ANDREW DONOVAN:** Use the Townsfolk profile from *Deadlands: The Weird West*.

DEEP DOWN IN THE MINE

FEAR LEVEL: 4

The lowest level of the mine is only accessible by a Weird Science powered elevator, an infernal contraption that makes a terrible noise and moves slowly. This makes a quick escape from the following scene very difficult.

On the lowest level of the mine the posse eventually finds a pile of half molten silver and gold trinkets. As they get closer to this hoard, the greed maggot erupts from the ground. Several miners under its influence attack from the darkness, their eyes shining with a golden gleam.

■ **DESPERATE MINERS** (2 per hero): Use the Townsfolk profile from *Deadlands: The Weird West*. They're armed with mining tools (see **Improvised Weapons** in *Savage Worlds*) and always Wild Attack. Once the maggot is dead, they stop fighting and can't remember anything.

⊛ THE GREED MAGGOT

The greed maggot is a fat, fifteen-foot-long worm. Under its white, partially translucent skin pulsate golden and silvery veins. It normally attacks by jumping onto its victims (using a grappling attack) and then biting it with its many-fanged maw.

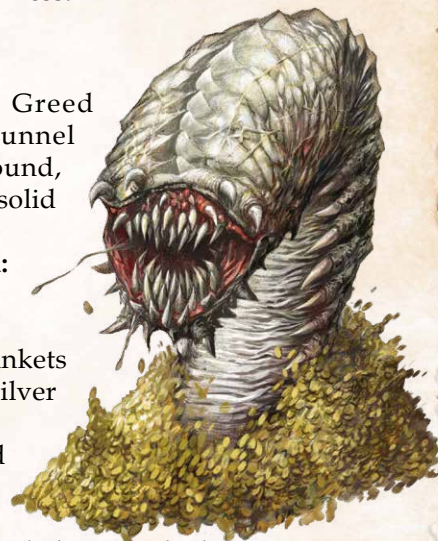
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d10, Stealth d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 12

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Burrow (8''):** Greed maggots can tunnel through the ground, blocked only by solid bedrock.
- **Easily Distracted:** Tests against maggots get a +2 if using shiny trinkets like gold coins, silver spoons, etc.
- **Fear (-2):** Greed maggots are a terrible sight.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a Wound to the greed maggot.
- **Mind Control:** The maggot has 10 Power Points and knows the *puppet* power. The miners under its influence are not victims of *puppet*, but are instead controlled by long exposure to the maggot's power.
- **Size 4 (Large):** Greed maggots are very thick worm-like creatures about 15' feet long.



AFTERMATH

Once the beast is slain, greedy cowpokes might want to plunder the corpse of the beast for rare metals. At the discretion of the Marshal, about \$500 worth of silver and gold can be scavenged from the hoard and the body. Getting it out of the mine without Donovan or his men noticing is another story. Marshal Burn is willing to sweep the deaths of the miners under the rug if he can be convinced the creature was real. Otherwise the party might just find themselves wanted if the miners are slain.

