Menace of Moca

Credits

The characters, situations, and worlds of ZWEIHÄNDER are a work of fiction. This adventure was designed and produced by a team with diverse beliefs, experiences, and identities.

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No AI was used in the creation of this work.

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Introduction

Menace of Moca (mo-cah) is a desert survival horror adventure you can run for players new to **ZWEIHÄNDER**. Although much of the adventure follows a mystery-driven structure, it encourages creative thinking, social interaction, and survival instincts as the players uncover the truth behind a string of brutal killings.

This adventure is inspired by the desert paranoia of *Tremors*, the creature horror of *The Thing*, and the folkloric dread of Latin American cryptids like El Chupacabra. Players must take initiative and piece together the mystery to prevent further bloodshed.

This adventure should take one or two sessions to complete.

Survivor Generation: *Menace of Moca* is balanced for 2-6 Basic Tier Survivors. It can also be played one-on-one, following the rules outlined in **Chapter 11: Game Mastery**.

Adventure Location: This adventure can be run independently or inserted into an existing campaign. It takes place in the borderland village of Moca, a remote desert settlement struggling under the weight of fear and economic collapse. For the purposes of this text, it is assumed the Survivors are dispatched from the palacio of a local caballero and arrive in Moca by coach at the height of summer. The story begins several days after a villager has gone missing.

Content: This adventure contains themes of isolation, grief, and body horror. Content includes exsanguinated corpses, animal death, desert survival, manipulation, and encounters with an alien predator.

Adventure Overview

Word has come from the eastern reaches of the duchy, along the border of the desert, that one of the villages has reported a shocking amount of livestock having been slaughtered in the night. As *siervos/siervas* to the local caballero, the Survivors have been tasked with discovering the cause of these disruptive and brutal acts of violence. Upon arrival in the village of Moca, the Survivors find that during the week they spent traveling to this outlying village, a young woman has been abducted. With only one eyewitness, the young woman's grandmother, there is not much evidence.

Recently, a star fell outside the town. Because of this celestial omen, the village was considered lucky until the killings began. Now, there is talk of merchants giving this place a wide berth and people relocating to other places outside the duchy. Without the taxes and profit from the *ranchos*, the *caballero's* treasury would begin to decline.

The villagers are ill at ease, and the once-jovial village sits desolate along the arid border of the sun-baked desert sands. The days scorch the throat, and the nights chill the very bones. Villagers whisper that someone, or some-*thing,* has been glimpsed skittering near the paddocks at dusk. None are confident in their recollections, so it is up to the Survivors and their fellows to discover who, or what, plagues this place. The local constabulary is baffled, so it falls to the Survivors to locate and silence the Menace of Moca.

Synopsis:

In this adventure designed for two to five Basic Tier Professions, the Survivors are called up by the *caballero* to go investigate an alarming number of livestock found slaughtered in the night. The Survivors discover upon their arrival that the killings of livestock have escalated to the disappearance of a young woman. This adventure is designed so that the Scenes after discovering the young woman's disappearance may be played non-linearly.

- The moment the Survivors step off the coach, they are greeted by the tense and sweaty *Alcalde* Diego, who informs them that Madelyne Tolentino disappeared last week, just as the Survivors were setting out from the *caballero's palacio*.
- As the investigation gets underway, the Survivors discover the village is near shambles with terror. After Madelyn's disappearance, the villagers fear for their lives and the lives of their loved ones.
- The investigation takes the Survivors out into the great desert, where they follow the trail of the vanished woman. The scorching heat of the day and numbing cold of the night are not the only dangers that lurk in the wasteland.
- Eventually, the Survivors discover the missing woman's corpse and learn that this is no mere beast from the desert. The only option left to them is to avenge Madelyn and ensure this doesn't continue to happen.
- Finally, the Survivors attempt to confront the creature and discover a horror from beyond the stars.

Character Hooks

- **Homecoming** - One of the Survivors was born and raised in Moca before growing up and seeking their fortune elsewhere. Somehow, the village seems smaller than they remember, and the people are all glad to see a familiar, if slightly more worn, face.
- **Den of Thieves**—The *Camarero* of *El Dragon Escarlata* has been running a reasonably successful smuggling operation out of their establishment. One of the Survivors is returning the hefty amount of coin they made pawning stolen goods in the West, but the *alguacil* is beginning to become suspicious.
- **Academic Interest** - Alongside their investigation for the *caballero*, one of the Survivors has been tasked by a *profesora* from the west with investigating a fallen star that was rumored to have landed in this area two months ago. They have been paid half a decent sum of coin, the other half to be gained when they return the fallen star to the *profesora*.

Spanish Vocabulary Guide
Abuela (ah-bway-lah): Grandmother
Alcalde (al-cal-day): Mayor
Alguacil (al-gwa-seel): Bailiff
Caballero (cah-bah-yay-roh): Lord
Camarero (cahm-ah-rae-doh): Bartender/Waiter
Diputado (dip-you-tah-doh): Deputy
El Dragón Escarlata (el drag-ohn es-car-lah-tah): The Red Dragon
Moca (mo-cah)
Palacio (pal-ah-see-oh)*:* Palace
Profesora (prah-feh-sor-ah)*:* a female professor
Siervo/Sierva (see-ere-voh/see-ere-va): Serf

Dramatis Personae

Abuela Tolentino
Identity: Villager, 70 years old
Social Class: Commoner
Disposition: Helpful
Motivation: To find (or seek vengeance for) her missing granddaughter
Creature Profile: *Commoner*
A pillar of the community and the sole witness to her granddaughter's (Madelyne) abduction. She is more than willing to help in any way she can, but she has almost nothing to offer. All she saw was a low, hunched shape darting out of the shadows near the goat paddock and seizing Madelyne.

Alcalde Diego
Identity: Mayor, 55 years old
Social Class: Aristocrat
Disposition: Polite
Motivation: To keep his family (and his wealth) safe.
Creature Profile: *Aristocrat*

The chosen leader of the village and the person who called for the Caballero's aid. A tense and sweaty man whose skittishness is only matched by his girth. He is used to a sleepy and quiet village, and all of this talk of "monsters" contributes to his rapid aging and is not suitable for his heart murmur.

Secret (If *Alcalde* Diego is pressed too far or asked too many difficult questions (at the GM's discretion), his heart murmur may become a full-on heart attack and kill him (Withstand Horror: Resolve Normal), thus earning the ire of the townsfolk and dropping their dispositions to Unfriendly. If Diego dies, Miguel will become the interim *alcalde* until a new one can be elected. Miguel will still help the Survivors, but will be unpleasant about it.)

Alguacil Miguel
Identity: Villager, 40 years old
Social Class: Aristocrat
Disposition: Indifferent
Motivation: For the village to return to normal and for the killings to end.
Creature Profile: *Constable*
The sheriff of Moca fervently disbelieves any stories of "creatures" attacking farm animals. He is the person who collected the evidence of the killings (i.e., the animal corpses). He is gruff and overly serious, but a decent man who wants his village to return to normal. *Alguacil* Miguel can be convinced to help the PCs with any of their plans and will bring his two Diputados. with him

Diputado - **Tomás** & **Luis**
Identity: Villagers - 30 years old
Social Class: Commoner
Disposition: Indifferent
Motivation: For the village to return to normal and for the killings to end.
Creature Profile: *Knave*
A *diputado* working directly under the *alguacil*. These men are gruff, blunt, and tend to keep their opinions to themselves. They keep to themselves, as men whose skills are only those of death and destruction, and the other villagers are uncomfortable around them.

The Camarero
Identity: Villager of indeterminate age
Social Class: Commoner
Disposition: Helpful
Motivation: To make as much money as humanly possible.
Creature Profile: *Knave*
As the village's only liquor purveyor, the Camarero sees and hears more than nearly anyone else in the area. The Camarero is inflating any stories that they hear; the terror and intensity are good for business! Almost all of their second-hand stories are utterly unreliable. Though they are Helpful, they still lie through their teeth. If a Survivor attempts to discern that The *Camarero* is stretching the truth, coloring the facts, or outright lying, it is a Hard (+20%) Guile/Interrogation Test.

They have been adding to the stories by having some of their unsavory associates kill livestock with a three-bladed dagger to make it seem like there is more than one monster.

Jorge Burgos
Identity: Villager, 38 years old
Social Class: Commoner
Disposition: Impolite

Motivation: To be compensated for the loss of his livestock.
Creature Profile: *Commoner*
The first ranchero to lose livestock. He blames the *caballero* and the appointed leaders of the village for not being strict enough in their security. He thinks, while tragic, Madelyn's disappearance isn't anyone's business but the Diazs and the local constabulary.

Andreas Diaz
Identity: Villager, 42 years old
Social Class: Commoner
Disposition: Unfriendly
Motivation: To kill whatever took his niece.
Creature Profile: *Commoner*
The last ranchero to lose livestock and the uncle of Madelyne Tolentino. He is attempting to gather a posse to track down whatever took his niece. Diaz will immediately flip to become Helpful if any Survivors mention a rescue attempt or avenging his niece.

The Timeline:

- **Two months ago** - a shooting star was spotted out over the desert.
  - The villagers took this as a sign of good luck and had a small celebration to commemorate the event.
  - No one suspects that it had anything to do with the deaths or disappearances.
  - Oddly, there have been no sightings of foxes, coyotes, wolves, or other predator animals since the star fell.
- **Last Month** - Jorge Burgos found and reported the loss of two of his goats.
  - A day later, the goats were discovered two miles into the desert, completely drained of blood, and missing their livers, with a strange pattern of puncture wounds in the shape of an inverted triangle.
- **Three Weeks Ago** - Two *ranchos* reported missing livestock: four goats and twelve chickens.
  - These bodies were discovered similarly to the previous killings, which prompted the rancheros to pack up and leave their land.
  - The remaining *rancheros* have begun laying out traps and guarding their livestock more closely.
- **Two Weeks Ago** - More animals have been taken in the night at the Diaz Rancho, despite the best efforts of the *Alguacil*, his *diputados*, and the *rancheros*.
  - Tracks have been discovered at this point. Long, wide feet with four broad toes and large scrapes possibly indicating talons or claws. Drag marks leading in the direction of the desert have also been found.
  - The width of the feet leads to an even weight distribution, allowing very few complete footprints (just like an elephant).
  - The *rancheros* and their *peones* have taken to patrolling their paddocks in pairs, though they have been unable to catch whatever has been attacking their animals.
- **Last Week** - Madelyne Tolentino went out to feed the animals near dusk and was subsequently tackled to the ground and abducted.
  - Her *abuela* is the sole witness to the event.
  - The creature is described as short, with a hunched back and arms too long for its frame. *Abuela* Tolentino barely got a look at it, as she mentions the speed of the creature as it darted from the shadows. She will also note that her granddaughter put up no fight and made no sound. She seems angrier than anything else about what has happened.
  - The Chupacabra is incredibly dense for its size, and poor Madelyne was killed on impact due to the speed at which she was tackled to the ground.

➔ **Today** - The group of Survivors arrives in Moca by a rickety coach. There has been another attack during the night, according to the *alguacil,* who meets you at the drop-off just outside of his house (where the Survivors will be staying for the duration of your investigation).
  - ◆ The attack occurred at *Rancho* Diaz, where two more goats were taken in the night.
  - ◆ (There is only one of these creatures here, but now that it has the taste of human blood, it will begin attacking any person caught outdoors alone at night.)

Gazetteer

- **Moca Village**
  - A large town of approximately 300 people.
  - Most people make their living as *rancheros* or working on the *ranches*, but some businesses and services can also be found in other villages.
  - There is no standing garrison of soldiers. Only the *alguacil* and his *diputados* have any formal military training.
  - There has been a small outbreak of a minor Disease in the village, likely due to the villagers' continuous hiding among their livestock.
- **The *Alcalde*'s Manor**
  - A large house located in the middle of the village. The *Alcalde* lives here with his wife and three daughters. It is furnished after the manner of a wealthy merchant.
  - *Alcalde* Diego just had silver candlesticks delivered two months ago from the capital, and while he is very proud of them, he may be convinced to part with them following a Hard (+20%) Charm/Guile Test.

- ***El Dragon Escarlata***
  - The only *cantina* in the village, the proprietor refers to themselves only as The *Camarero*. The villagers pack in here night after night to drown their sorrows.
- ***Rancho* Burgos**
  - Site of the first attacks. People still live and work here.
- ***Ranchos* Castillo and Delgado**
  - Abandoned, but they each have paddocks, barns, and houses still standing,
- ***Rancho* Diaz**
  - The last, and smallest, ranch to be attacked.
  - The site where Madelyne Tolentino was abducted.
- **Lair of the *Chupacabra*** - *Mesa de la Muerta*
  - A cave set in the southern face of a mesa, one day outside of Moca. There is a rocky path that leads up to it.
  - It is rank with the scent of death, and cluttered with the bones of all manner of animals.
  - Fighting the Chupacabra is possible, though ill-advised unless the Survivors have a number advantage or can determine the Chupacabra's weaknesses. The Survivors must make a Hard (+20%) Resolve Test or suffer 1d10 Peril when they discover Madelyne's exsanguinated corpse.

Act 1

As the Survivors are unloading their gear from the carriage, *Alcalde* Diego approaches them in a rush. After babbling apologies and wiping his brow thoroughly, Diego tells the Survivors that a young woman named Madelyn Tolentino was abducted six days ago. The Survivors are quickly introduced to the *alguacil* Miguel who rushes them to the place where Madelyn was abducted to begin conducting their investigation.

Scene 1 - The Abduction Site

Type: Narrative, Investigation
Location: *Rancho* Diaz
Creatures/NPCs: *Abuela* Tolentino*, Alguacil* Miguel, Townsfolk (as *commoners)* , livestock

Homecoming: The Survivors who grew up in Moca know Madelyn Tolentino personally. They are familiar with the whole family and understand that Abuela Tolentino isn't prone to exaggeration.

The following text should be read aloud to players.

- You aren't given any time but to grab a few essentials from your gear stowed in the stagecoach. As the scorching noon-day sun blazes overhead, the *alguacil* leads you two hours outside of the village proper to *Rancho* Diaz. As you approach, it is eerily quiet. You would expect to see fieldhands and livestock among the paddocks at this time of day, but all you can spot through the heat shimmers are a few cracked doors at the farmhouse with tense faces peering out. The only sounds you can hear are the muted and distant bleating of goats from inside the sealed barn. An uncomfortably warm breeze blows in from the east, bringing no relief from the arid landscape. As you cross the yard just outside the farmhouse, the door bangs open and a weathered old woman steps out onto the porch.

What *Abuela* Tolentino & *Alguacil* Miguel know

- Abuela Tolentino will answer any questions the Survivors ask, although she may not know the answers to pointed questions about what happened.
    - She was sitting on her porch, packing her evening pipe, and watching Madelyn cross the yard to feed the chickens. A blurred and shadowy shape came careening from behind the barn and crashed into Madelyn faster than Abuela Tolentino could see. In a blink, Madelyn was dragged off eastward. She didn't even have time to cry out.
    - Her son-in-law, Andreas Diaz, works the *rancho* with five fieldhands. None of them saw anything or were around at the time. The fieldhands will not speak to the Survivors.
- Miguel will provide the Survivors with a rundown of the timeline if asked (he will omit the fallen star unless specifically asked about it). He will also tell them that Madelyn's uncle is likely trying to gather people to go after his niece at *El Dragon Escarlata*.
    - Miguel has a few animal carcasses in the cold cellar underneath the building they use as an office. He will allow the Survivors to look over them if they ask.
    - Resolve Tests related to the investigation of the animal carcasses should be considered Easy (+20%). If a PC makes a successful Normal Leechcraft Test while examining the animal carcasses, they will notice that the distinctive inverted triangular puncture marks are located directly on the jugular vein of every animal. Two of the goats are missing their livers.
    - A second Hard (+20%) Leechcraft Test will reveal that the punctures on the chicken corpses are different from the punctures on the goats. The chickens have straight entry wounds, very clearly indicating a blade, and the goats have curved entry wounds, very clearly indicating teeth of some kind.
    - A Normal Occult Test will reveal that there's something mystical about the tooth punctures; they're potentially Beyonder in nature.

The tracks of the *Chupacabra* are challenging, at best, to follow. A Hard(+20%) Survival Test can be made in an attempt to find the trail, and another Hard(+20%) Survival Test can be made to follow it. Each Survivor should only be allowed one attempt at these Tests, since it has been several days since the woman was taken.

If the Survivors manage to follow the tracks left by the *Chupacabra*, or decide to strike out into the desert to the east, they will not find anything unless they continue for an entire day. If they continue for a whole day into the desert, they will come upon *Mesa de la Muerta,* where the Lair of the *Chupacabra* is found. (*Move to Act 2 - Scene 1)*

The Survivors may conclude that they need to interrogate more people in relation to this situation. Miguel can suggest that the only place townsfolk gather and gossip is at the only winesink in town, *El Dragón Escarlata*. It is the only place to stay informed about the village and gather information.

The Survivors may conclude that they need to examine more of the animal corpses or perform autopsies to gather more information. Miguel will tell them that he has everybody recovered in the cold cellar under the sheriff's office.

NOTE The *Chupacabra* will make appearances at dawn and dusk each day. It will continue to attack people who travel alone at night, and it will continue to consume livestock.

Scene 2 - Down at the winesink
Type: Narrative, Investigation, Potential Fight Scene
Location: *El Dragón Escarlata*
Creatures/NPCs: Andreas Diaz, Jorge Burgos, The *Camarero*, Townsfolk (all as *commoners),*

Den of Thieves: The Camarero will drop their overly friendly façade when the Survivor gives the passphrase, "Stormy nights are coming," after receiving their payment. Miguel will be suspicious if the exchange is made in front of him, and demand to know what is happening. Miguel has never liked the *Camarero* and will use any excuse to arrest them and search their premises.

The three-bladed dagger that has been used to kill livestock is in the *Camarero's* private quarters.
If the dagger is found, the *Camarero* will be arrested and prepared to be hanged for the murder of Madelyn Tolentino.

Academic Interest: The Survivors can gather all manner of information about the fallen star here at the winesink. Most people curse the day the star fell, while others talk about how lucky it made the village. There was a noticeable drop in the number of predator attacks after the star fell, and the lack of deaths bolstered the herds. No one is exactly sure where the star fell, but most agree that it is somewhere to the east within the great desert, reasonably close to the village.

The following text should be read aloud to players.

- The sun is beginning to dip on the horizon as you return to town. The winesink isn't tricky to find, as there is a large painted sign depicting a naked man and woman astride a red dragon out front. People mill around the outside, worried looks and drawn faces gazing out at you as you approach. From inside, you can hear what sounds like an escalating argument. As you enter, a noticeable split down the middle of the common room is immediately apparent. On one side, there is a red-faced giant of a man screaming into the face of a much shorter, though heavily muscled, man. Through the shouting, you determine that the large man is Andreas Diaz and the shorter man is Jorge Burgos.

Andreas Diaz and Jorge Burgos are near blows when the Survivors enter the winesink. Burgos is the primary source of townsfolk not believing in a monster. He has, loudly, claimed that the only fault is with Diaz himself, not taking better care to watch for desert beasts. Diaz is rightfully angered by this. The Survivors will have to talk Diaz down, using Hard (+20%) Charm Test, to de-escalate the upcoming brawl. Mention of the Survivors helping his niece will also circumvent the need to talk him down out of fighting Burgos.

If they are successful, Diaz storms out and heads back to his ranchero; the only reason he was here was to try to gather a posse to search for his niece. The *Camarero* thanks the Survivors and gives them free drinks and information for the duration of their stay.

If they are unsuccessful, Diaz makes the first move and attempts to beat Burgos into a bloody mess. The fight breaks out into an all-out barroom brawl, but none of the combatants are genuinely trying to kill each other. 3 townsfolk join the battle on Diaz's side, and 5 join in on Burgos' side. At the end of the fight, Miguel will arrest both Diaz and Burgos and take them to the two jail cells in the sheriff's office. The *Camarero* understands that sometimes fights can't be avoided, and will give the Survivors free drinks and information for the duration of their stay.
Miguel will also arrest anyone who kills any townsfolk, and prepare to hang them for murder the following day.

Diaz loves his niece and would do almost anything to get her back. If the Survivors express that they want to help him find her, he will immediately join their group and be eager to strike out into the desert. He knows the way to *Mesa de la Muerta*, but he doesn't know that's where the *Chupacabra* resides; he only knows it as a landmark and a way of orienting in the desert near the village.

There is not much real information to be gained at the winesink, since the *Camarero* will tell any story or half-truth that they've heard about the monster, and no one else has seen anything. Half of the townspeople don't believe in the tales of a monster, thinking there must have been a coyote or some other predator involved, and the other half are ready to pack up and leave.

Scene 3 - Optional Confrontation with the Chupacabra
Type: Combat
Location: Varies
Creatures/NPCs: El Chupacabra, Diputados, Alguacil Miguel, Andreas Diaz

GMs may include this Scene if they wish, but the Chupacabra can just as easily avoid the Survivors if the GM so chooses.
Should the Survivors attempt to capture, attack, or otherwise confront the Chupacabra by lying in wait for it, the fight will play out as it may. The Chupacabra is fearless and will fight until it is killed. It will attempt to get into wide, open spaces to leverage its superior speed and ability to crash into opponents. NPCs listed are the only people in town who will assist the Survivors if asked.

Act 1 Conclusion:
All signs point the Survivors to the great desert. The evidence is clear that, despite the *Camarero's* efforts at inflating the danger, there is actually some sort of creature terrorizing Moca. The best place to start is the *Mesa de la Muerta*, a day's journey into the desert.

Act 2

Scene 1 - Blazing sands
Type: Narrative, Travel
Location: The Great Desert
Creatures/NPCs: None - Only the Survivors

Homecoming: You remember wandering about in the desert as a child. You were warned about predators, but you mainly were told to never go out of sight of the village without at least two days' worth of water. You never went so far out as the *Mesa de la Muerta*, but you wandered the hills just beyond the village. Survivors who grew up in Moca will automatically gather 2SR of water if they can carry it before heading into the desert.

The following text should be read aloud to players.

- You strike out into the desert early in the morning, hoping to find whatever killed the livestock and took Madelyn Tolentino. As the sun quickly becomes an angry, flaming sphere on the horizon, temperatures begin to rise. Sweat beads on your bro,w and rivulets run down your back. The air lies stagnant, not even a hot breeze. You're sure you're being watched as you struggle across uneven terrain and slide maladroitly down the dunes, but you can spot nothing as you crane your neck. The only comfort is the shared suffering of your companions, and the temporary respite of the shadows cast by dunes.

Travel through the great desert is grueling and challenging. Usually, there would be creatures to worry about, in addition to the danger from sun exposure, but the sands are strangely silent as the Survivors proceed.

The *Mesa de la Muerta* is difficult to find, as it sits in a valley amongst a ring of dunes and doesn't stick up above the sands. It is a helpful landmark, being distinctive, butit is not a place people go. The incline of the dunes makes getting to the bottom treacherous, and getting out is equally so.

If the Survivors are led by someone who knows the way, they have little chance of becoming lost. (Use the Fast Travel method of Travel.)

If the Survivors are attempting to follow the beast's tracks, they will not have a chance of becoming lost unless they lose the trail. (Use the Fast Travel method of Travel, unless the Survivors lose the trail.)

If the Survivors are not led by someone who knows the way, there is a good chance they will become lost in the desert. (Use the Journey method of Travel)

- Hard (-20%) Terrain - uneven rocky areas interspersed with large dunes. Little to no vegetation.
- Moderately Dangerous - 2d6 - Hazards only, no Creatures.
- Medium Stretch - It is only a day's Journey, but there are no maps and no roads. The Mesa is easy to miss if you don't know exactly what you're looking for.

D100	Desert Hazard Encounters
1 to 8	A wicked sandstorm begins to kick up. The static build-up could cause lightning strikes for 1d10 Damage. 40% Chance to Strike, defers to Survivors in metal armor. Resist with Normal Coordination Test when struck or knocked Prone and suffer 1d10 Peril.
9 to 16	The dune you're sliding down begins to avalanche, potentially burying you

D100	Desert Hazard Encounters
	in sand! Hard (+20%) Coordination Test to avoid. Survivors buried suffer 2d10 Peril.
17 to 25	Heat shimmers in the distance, looking like an oasis. As you approach Normal Resolve Test or suffer 1d10 Peril, you feel the hope of respite draining away.
26 to 33	You've slipped into a patch of dry quicksand! Normal Coordination Test or be sucked down into the pit. Hold your breath for a number of minutes equal to [BB]. For every minute after that, you suffer 2D10+2 Peril from Suffocation.
34 to 41	You lose your footing sliding down a dune and begin to roll wildly. Normal Coordination Test or lose 1SR of 1d6 Consumables on your person.
42 to 49	You didn't cover up as well as you thought and have developed an intense sunburn. Suffer -2 to your Peril and Damage Thresholds for a week.
50 to 58	You stumble upon the remains of several coyotes. They're mouldering and exsanguinated. A Normal Leechcraft Test will reveal they're only about two weeks dead, and two have the inverted triangle puncture wound found on the livestock in town. The others look to have been ripped to shreds and have significant blunt force trauma.
59 to 67	The wind begins to howl eerily through the dunes. Easy Resolve Test or suffer 1d10 Peril.
68 to 76	You haven't been paying close enough attention to your path; the Guide must make a Normal Folklore/Survival Test to avoid becoming lost. Failure adds a day to your Journey.
68 to 76	A dust devil swirls up, limiting visibility and requiring faces to be covered. Easy Resolve Test or 1d10 Peril.
77 to 85	The temperature is getting to you. Normal Toughness Test or 1d10 Peril.
86 to 92	Excessive dehydration wracks the Survivors. Normal Toughness Test or lose 1SR of water.
93 to 99	The ground here is rocky and hard to navigate. Normal Coordination Test or slip and fall for 1d6+2 Damage.
100	Fortune smiles upon the Survivors, as the Journey was simple and straightforward. You don't know why the villagers told you it was dangerous. The GM immediately refunds all spent Fortune Coins.

Type: Narrative, Combat, Climax
Location: *Mesa de la Muerta*
Creatures: *El Chupacabra*

Academic Interest: There is a large crater on the far side of the top of the mesa. You can see blackened rocks and a hole from your vantage point atop the dunes, looking down into the valley. The fallen star must've ended up here, and your payday is only a few hundred yards away.
Secret There is no actual, tangible fallen star. The *Chupacabra* is the thing that crashed into the mesa. Returning the body of the creature to the *profesora* will yield the rest of the payment.

The following text should be read aloud to players

> As your group drudges the final distance to the edge of the valley, you can see what the villagers call the *Mesa de la Muerta*. It's hard to make out from this distance, but the mesa appears to be no less than 10 storeys tall, and incredibly wide. The glint of water can be seen peeking out from the surprising amount of foliage on top of the mesa. The side you can see from your vantage is pocked with several holes and caves going up.

The trek down to the mesa is challenging, but not overly perilous. As long as the Survivors take their time and are careful, they will reach the bottom of the valley and the base of the mesa without incident.
There is a path that leads up to the top of the mesa; a Normal Survival Test will reveal it. The path leads past several of the larger caves dotting the cliff of the mesa, including the cave that the Chupacabra is using as its lair. The Chupacabra sleeps during the day and night, and is only active at dawn and dusk. If the Survivors find it sleeping, it will awaken and put up a fight.

Within the cave, the remains of several animals, including those of Madelyn Tolentino, will be found. The Survivors must make a Hard(+20%) Resolve Test or suffer 1d10 Peril when they discover the young woman's remains.

If Andreas Diaz is with the Survivors, he will become insensate when Madelyn's body is discovered and throw himself at the Chupacabra relentlessly until one of them is dead. If he survives the fight, he will insist on recovering Madelyn's body and bringing it back to his *rancho* to be properly buried.

The Chupacabra has no morale to speak of, and will fight until it kills everyone or is slain itself. However, it will attempt to get the Survivors outside where it can utilize its greater speed. The creature will make a mad dash for the top of the mesa as soon as it can.

Act 2/Adventure Conclusion
The body of the creature falls to the ground with a heavy thud. The Survivors have defeated the beast that had been terrorizing the village, and can return successfully to the caballero.

Madelyn Tolentino's murder has been avenged, though it is of little comfort to her friends and loved ones.

If Andreas survives: Andreas Diaz sells his rancho to Jorge Burgos, and takes his mother westward to find greener pastures. They find peace in the west. Andreas marries, and they name their firstborn daughter Madelyn.

If Andreas dies, *Abuela* Tolentino does her best to continue running the rancho, but ultimately fails and is forced to sell to Jorge Burgos for a pittance. She lives out the rest of her days from the porch of her house, forced to watch someone else take her family's land and livelihood.

If Diego survives*: *Alguacil* Miguel is commended for his bravery in the face of hardship and is made *Alcalde* in the next town election. With help from Diego, Miguel learns to maneuver politically, and Moca becomes a jewel of the duchy. The Duke knighted Miguel and given lordship over the region. Diego retires peacefully as Miguel's advisor.

If Diego dies, Miguel is made interim *Alcalde* and can never quite get his footing politically. He does his best, but Moca suffers greatly under his governance, and the town eventually either dries up and falls apart, or falls under the influence of the *Camarero*.

If the *Camarero* isn't found out: The *Camarero's* smuggling business booms, especially with most people looking the other way during the time of crisis. They expand their *cantina* into a major enterprise, and Moca becomes a hive of scum and villainy. *Miguel's efforts to stop criminal activity will relegate the *Camarero's* dominion to one section of the growing village.

If the *Camarero* is found out: The *Camarero* is driven out of Moca, and the town regains some semblance of normalcy. *Rancheros* come back, business increases, and the village begins to do better than it was before the star fell.

El Chupacabra

Chupacabras are small, gray-skinned humanoids from distant parts of space, standing around four feet tall but weighing over 300 pounds due to their dense, muscular bodies. Their thin, cadaverous appearance features short legs with reversed, dog-like knees, long, broad feet for weight distribution, and enormous, protruding black eyes for exceptional low-light vision. They have spines running from their heads to their emaciated backs, with long, spindly fingers tipped with curved claws. Their most distinctive trait is their circular, lamprey-like mouth, equipped with three hooked teeth for latching onto their victims. Chupacabras primarily consume blood, often tearing out their victims' livers as well, and are known to kill for sport when not hungry. They are vulnerable to diseases and have severe allergies to garlic, silver, and copper, with exposure to these allergens causing significant damage.

Risk Factor: Moderate
Size & Classification: Medium Beyonder
Initiative: 2D10+8
Special Senses: Darkness, Ethereal, Hidden
Immunities: Peril, Poison
Damage Thresholds: 8/14/20/26 (Natural 2)
Special Movement: Teleport

Agility: 55% | 5
Brawn: 60% | 6
Combat: 35% | 3
Fellowship: 30% | 3
Intelligence: 35% | 3

Perception: 45% | 4
Willpower: 35% | 3

Weapons
Wicked Claws: 45% Melee (Close), 2D6+3 Damage.
Vampiric Bite: 40% Melee (Close), 1D6+3 Damage; Face 6 causes the Chupacabra to move up one place positively on the Damage Tracker.
Crash: 60% Melee (Close), 2D10+6 Peril; If it moves from Far to Close, it may crash into a target, knocking it Prone. Resist Hard(+20%) Brawn Test.

Traits
Damage Immunity: This creature can only be harmed after being exposed to silver, garlic, or copper and it takes double Damage from any such source. Exposure to any Diseases also renders this creature vulnerable.
Grappler: If this creature succeeds on both a strike from its Wicked Claws and a Vampiric Bite, it latches onto its prey and begins making automatically successful Vampiric Bites on its victim, only requiring a Damage roll every turn. In addition, any Attack made against this creature while it is entangled with a victim may inadvertently strike the victim on a missed attack (requiring another Attack roll for the victim). The affected victim may make a Hard(+20%) Brawn Test in an attempt to free themselves from the deadly hold.