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# PARADISE

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A Multi-Genre Setting



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\$2.99

## How To Use This Book

This here's what we at Hex call a "Settin' Book." That means that you can use the people, places, things, and critters here as a setting for your role-playin' games. It's easy to use this book. Just read the sucker; then, next time your players are out in the middle of nowhere and you need a little hick town for them to wander into, just tell 'em:

"Excuse me while I whip this out."  
-- Sheriff Bart, *Blazing Saddles*

Then whip out the Paradise Qik Pak (unless, of course, they're about to run up on an atomic monster) and BAM! The PCs wander right into Paradise. You might be a little worried that Paradise will only be useful for games of a specific genre. Horsefeathers! While Paradise was originally created as a setting for a fantasy game, we've found that with just a couple of changes, it'll fit darn near anywhere. Watch the sidebars for details on how to use Paradise for a few of our favorite genres.

"There's a backwards old town that's often remembered, so many times that my memories are worn"—John Prine, "Paradise"

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# The History of Paradise

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## Where the Heck is Paradise?

Paradise can fit into all sorts of campaign worlds. It's best to locate Paradise out on the fringes of civilization—the frontier, or at least some out-of-the-way place. The only real requirement is that Paradise be located at the edge of a big swamp (the Hellmarsh) next to farmable land. Paradise sits on the edge of a river that runs into the swamp, and the nearest town is Santa Rosa, which is about two days travel by river. Here are a few hints on where to put Paradise, separated by genre:

**Fantasy:** Whether you're doing traditional or oriental fantasy, you should make sure that Paradise is far away from more civilized areas. While sheer distance will work, you can also isolate Paradise by placing monsters, wars, and other nasty things between the town and civilization.

(Continued on next page)

“It all started with ol’ ‘Two-fingers’ Lee. There are a lot of stories about why he ended up in the Hellmarsh. Some folks say he was runnin’ from trouble. Others say he was just crazy as a loon. Regardless, he was the first to discover Swamp Root, and once people figured out what you could do with it, he was set for life.

Once word got out, people came from all over the place to try to find a bit of the Root for themselves. There was plenty out there to find, too, if you was willin’ to look for it. For about ten years, Paradise was a bustlin’ town.

I guess things really started to go downhill when the Dragon Men started causin’ problems.

Everybody’d heard the stories, but most folks didn’t really believe ‘em. After that first attack, though, there weren’t no question that the Dragon Men was for real—and they were right nasty sumbitches.

Buildin’ the outpost helped the folks of Paradise fend off the Dragon Men better, but they were a constant threat. When Root got harder and harder to find, people started leavin’ town for greener pastures. A lot of folks had made a home here, though, and they stayed, most of ‘em pickin’ out a piece of land to farm or settin’ up shop at whatever trade they knew or could learn. The outside world’s forgotten about Paradise, and that’s just fine with us.”

—Jesse Gomezdelcampo, Town Elder

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## Places of Interest

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### The Outpost

*“How are you folks doin’? It’s sure nice to meet you. My name is Juan Montoya, and I’m the sheriff of Paradise. This here outpost is probably the first building you saw when you got into town. It’s kind of the oldest building in town. The outpost has been here since those first settlers built it to help hold off the Dragon*

*Men. ‘Course, most every board in the whole thing’s been replaced a few times since then. It’s kinda like the boat that Theseus feller had. Anyway, as you can see, there are three buildings inside the walls. Over there’s the Grainery, where folks can store their crops until a barge comes down from Santa Rosa. The big building right here’s the Town Meetin’ Hall, where the Council meets to make important decisions. And that there’s my office and the jail. If you cause any trouble while you’re in my town, you’ll get to know that buildin’ real well.”*

—Juan Montoya, Sheriff

### **Where the Heck is Paradise? (cont.)**

**Sci-Fi:** In a science fiction game, the Hellmarsh will occupy most of the planet where Paradise is located. The planet itself will most likely be located in some out-of-the-way system without much to offer. In all likelihood, the nearest spaceport will be located in Santa Rosa.

**Western:** The bayous of Louisiana are the best setting for Paradise in the Old West, but most Southeastern states have a few swamps where you could put Paradise. The Florida Everglades are also a good place for Paradise. Of course, a lot of Western games don’t veer this far East. If this is the case, parts of Texas and California will probably fit the bill. Consult your local atlas for details.

**Post-Apocalyptic/Dark Future:** In addition to the areas listed for Western, you can place Paradise in any coastal area that would be likely to flood in the event of a global catastrophe. In a post-nuclear war setting, there is probably lots of radiation between Paradise and more urban areas.

The Outpost is a small wooden fort that sits atop a small hill. To the south and west lie the swamps, to the east is the river, and to the north lies Paradise and the surrounding farmland. It’s a simple but sturdy structure, originally built to house the townsfolk during attacks by the Dragon Men. The Town Hall is one large room with enough space for the entire population of Paradise to gather (though not very comfortably). The sheriff’s office consists of two rooms: the office, which contains a desk, a locked weapons cabinet, and a cot; and the jail—a small, windowless room behind a barred and locked door containing a cot and a chamber pot. During the day (or at night, on the rare occasions when there’s a prisoner in the jail), either Sheriff Juan Montoya or one of his deputies can be found here.

Sheriff Juan Montoya is well-liked and respected by pretty much everyone in town. Montoya is a veteran of the last Dragon Man raid but isn’t a member of the Order of Horatius. He’s fairly easy-going and prefers to settle disputes peacefully but will use force if necessary. Play him as a cross between Andy Griffith and John Wayne.

Deputy Jorge Hernandez has been Montoya's second-in-command for years, though nobody's really sure why. He's lazy, inept, and a coward. Hernandez should be played for comic relief and to showcase Montoya's competence. When playing Hernandez, think of Barney Fife or Deputy Perkins (from *Sheriff Lobo*).

Deputy Toby Porter has only worked for Montoya for a few years. Toby is dedicated to his job, but is seldom taken seriously because of his youth (he is only 17). Most of the townsfolk still think of him as "little Toby Porter." Most people will admit, however, that if Montoya decided to retire, they would much prefer Toby as the new sheriff to Hernandez. Toby should be played as a cross between Deputy Dewey Riley (from *Scream*) and Birdie Hawkins (from *Sheriff Lobo*).<sup>1</sup>

### **The Church**

*"Brothers and sisters, have you heard the good word? I have heard the call of the great creator, the bringer of light into this world of darkness! I have been possessed by the Loa and taken to the mountain by the saints of days gone by! The Mother has spoken her words to me and told me that I, too, may be taught the Path of Light! It is said that he who is without sin may swat the Mosquito Goddess with impunity, but we know that we are all sinners! Each and every one of us has done something that breaks the laws handed down to us by the Celestial Court! But we can be saved! Let us pray."*

—Padre Miguel Santanna

The Church is the only stone building in Paradise. It is several generations old, but has been kept in relatively good repair. While on the outside it looks like any other church, the inside tells a different story. In addition to the standard pulpit, candles, and pews, there are bongo drums, rattles, skulls, masks, and just about any other religious artifact imaginable. Every Sunday, the entire population of Paradise (except the LaCroix family) gathers here for Padre's sermon, the latest gossip, and a pot-luck dinner.

Padre Miguel Santanna is a thin, plain-looking man in his early fifties. As the people of Paradise will tell you, "Padre's got a lot of religion." This couldn't be more true. Padre is obsessed with learning as much as he can about religion. His major shortcoming is that he doesn't seem to realize that there is more than one religion out there. Whenever he finds a new religious text or teaching, he immediately and without question adds it to the mish-mash of teachings he has already mastered. Luckily, Paradise is sufficiently out of touch with the rest of the world to assume that Santanna just knows a lot more than his predecessors. Padre should be played as sort of a multicultural

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<sup>1</sup> Keep in mind that even though his Deputies could be Perkins and Hawkins, you should NEVER play Montoya as Sheriff Lobo.

televangelist who is experiencing the effects of an ample dose of LSD. Padre will invoke and preach about any god, religion, or cult in the game world. In post-apocalypse worlds, feel free to have Padre quote from such scriptures as *Batman #540*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, and the *Illuminatus! Trilogy*.

### Olsen's General Store



*“This place here’s the hub of Paradise life. Aside from bein’ the main drop-off point for supplies, hardware, and dry goods from Santa Rosa, this is where most of the menfolk come after a hard day’s work to have a drink and talk about what’s going on in Paradise. Granted, that talk mainly centers on the crops, the weather, and the ‘skeeters, but a man’s gotta have some excuse to get away from his wife, y’know? Anyway, the women don’t mind too much. The town well—where the women-*

*folk gather to gossip and complain (mostly about the menfolk)—is right down the road, and they can keep an eye on the men and make sure they don’t get into any trouble. If you’ll be stayin’ in Paradise, and you don’t have any relatives or friends to put you up, I’ve got rooms upstairs where you can stay pretty cheap.”*

—Lief Olsen, Proprietor

Olsen’s General Store is located at the end of Main Street (or the closest Paradise has to such a thing) right next to the river. It’s a large two story building with a wide covered porch all the way across the front. There are several benches and some tables on the porch, where a few of the men of Paradise can usually be found. The inside of Olsen’s is a fairly typical general store filled with bags, barrels, and crates of just about anything folks in Paradise might need to buy.

In addition to being the town’s only general store, Olsen’s serves as Paradise’s only tavern, restaurant, and inn. A small kitchen run by Olsen’s wife and daughter offers fresh-cooked meals and various types of spirits and beverages. In addition to the tables on the porch, there are a few tables near the kitchen where customers can eat, drink, and play checkers. The top floor of Olsen’s is one large room accessible via an exterior stairway. It contains several cots, chests, and other basics as well as wooden screens that can be set up to offer some privacy.

Lief Olsen is a second-generation Paradisian, but has lived here all his life. Lief’s parents moved to Paradise and opened the general store

shortly before he was born. Leif is a very large nordic-looking man in his early fifties. He has blue eyes and what hair he has left is blond (unusual traits in Paradise). Lief is friendly but tends to be rather fatalistic at times. He's much like a Garrison Keilor Lutheran—in stable but serious condition—though the Minnesota accent is optional. Because the general store is located in the center of town, Lief usually knows what's going on in town.

Of course, if Lief misses or ignores a bit of information, you can usually ask his wife Gertrude, who makes it her business to know every bit of rumor, gossip, and news circulating throughout Paradise. She knows who drinks too much, who cheats at cards, and who hasn't paid off their bill at the store, and will gladly share that information very pointedly—provided that the person in question isn't around.

The final member of the Olsen clan is their daughter Faith, a lovely young lady of only 17. She's a perfect angel, as far as anyone knows. (Good-looking male PCs might find out otherwise if she corners them when her parents aren't around, however).

### **The Dragon Men**

Exactly who or what the Dragon Men are will depend on the genre for which you're using Paradise. Below are our suggestions.

**Fantasy:** You can use standard issue lizard men, or you can spice them up a bit by making them more like the Draconians from the *Dragonlance* series. Especially in oriental settings, you may want to make them humans that belong to some strange cult or religion. After all, it's a fantasy—anything is possible.

**Sci-Fi:** These will most likely be similar to the fantasy Dragon Men, though they'll probably be a bit more intelligent and possibly more technically advanced. Their villages, if you decide to let the PCs see them, will probably consist of simple mud huts, much like Yoda's dwelling in *The Empire Strikes Back*.

**Western:** Okay, first off it probably won't make much sense to call them Dragon Men in an Old West setting. The possible exception would be if you're setting the game in Florida and they're some secret cult that's based around European or Oriental tales of dragons. Alternately, the name can be the result of some mistranslation. More likely, they'll be Indians of some sort, in which case you can just substitute the name of the tribe in question. If you're running a more "Weird West" sort of game, you may actually be able to get away with monsters, perhaps "Gator Men."

**Post Apocalyptic/Dark Future:** This setting offers a lot of possibilities, depending on the nature of the civilization-ending cataclysm in your world. Mutated humans, mutated gators, and surgically enhanced gangs are just a few possibilities.

### **The Town Well**

*“I can’t believe such a thing could happen in Paradise—and right there in front of Padre, too. It just beats all I ever seen.”*

—Mabel Porter, Schoolmarm

The town well is located in the plaza in front of Olsen’s general store, and is the gathering place of the women of Paradise. Whenever the women of Paradise need drinking water, or when they just want to gossip, they head to the town well. At any given time, there will be several women gathered around the well and a small horde of children running wild around the plaza and the river’s edge. If you need to find out about anyone’s sins, shortcomings, and bad habits, this is the place to go.

### **Domingo’s Apothecary**



*“Swamp Root is but one of the many esoteric roots that can be used to reprogram both the mind and the body. However, it is without a doubt the best catalyst for greater insight and well-being. If you can find the root in the swamp, I can teach the path to enlightenment.”*

--Timothy Domingo, Apothecary

The Apothecary is unique in Paradise in many ways—the greatest of which is that he is probably the only person to ever return to Paradise after leaving the town. Domingo left Paradise as a young man to learn the art of healing. He returned a changed man. While most of the people of Paradise attribute this to his “big-city learnin’,” there’s much more to it than that. Domingo never actually completed his education. Instead, he left to study at the feet of the enlightened. Now, through the power of pharmaceuticals, Domingo has achieved personal enlightenment. Domingo does have some useful medical knowledge, but his true skill is in chemistry. Domingo should be played—well, as if he’s stoned out of his mind.

The front door of the shop opens into a small waiting area in front of the counter. Behind the counter is a jungle of beakers, tubes, burners, and other strange devices filled with multi-colored liquids, many of which are bubbling, steaming, or otherwise being extremely active. A cornucopia of interesting smells emanates from the work area. The walls are lined with jars containing preserved herbs and plants of various types, and more dried roots and plants hang from the rafters. Domingo has a small stash of Swamp Root, which he keeps in a locked box in his living quarters, located in the attic of the building.



### **The Blacksmith's Shop**

*"Jean-Marc's new in town—he's only been here about 8 years. He seems like a good enough fella, though. A little thick-headed, maybe, but a nice guy. He says he used to be a soldier, and I don't know any reason not to believe him."*

—Tom Porter, Farmer

Jean-Marc Serge runs the smithy in Paradise. Since he's still new to Paradise, nobody's got a really strong opinion of him. He seems like a nice enough guy, and he seems to know what he's doing. He has two apprentices, Angelo and Jimmy, who help him run the shop. Jean-Marc is indeed a former soldier and has a small stash of weapons and armor in his home, which is in the loft of the shop.

### **Pete's Butcher Shop**

*"Well, Pete's a little different, but he ain't like the rest of them folks. Sure, he's ugly as all get-out, and he ain't too bright, but ol' Pete's a good fella."*

—Jesse Gomezdelcampo, Town Elder

Pete the butcher has a small shop with an attached pen for holding livestock before it is butchered. He is a skilled butcher, but otherwise isn't very interesting. Except for the fact that he's racially or ethnically different from the other residents of Paradise. In an Old West setting, he's probably black, Chinese, or Indian. In a fantasy or science fiction setting, he may be a humanoid or alien. In a post-apocalypse setting, Pete's most likely a mutant of some kind. The people of Paradise aren't the most open-minded folks in the world, but they've come to accept Pete as one of their own.

### **The East River Trading Company**

*"That city slicker came into town a few months ago with his fancy clothes and big words—said he was gonna find himself some Swamp Root. 'Course he ain't doin' the work himself. No, he's got a whole buncha other city boys workin' for him. I figger he'll give up onced the gators get a couple of 'em."*

—Flint Snopes, Swamp Runner

The East River Trading Company is a small compound on the outskirts of town. It contains a small dormitory-style building, an office, and a smallish barn with just enough room for a wagon and a few horses, all surrounded by a wooden wall. It is the newest structure in Paradise.

There are approximately 10 people living in the compound, all outsiders. The head of the Trading Company is Giovanni Pitino, a smallish man who is always impeccably groomed and wearing fine, tailored clothing. He is rarely seen without his bodyguards, Julius and Vincent, who are likewise attired. The remaining employees of the

company work as Swamp Runners. Giovanni has moved here under the sponsorship of an influential businessman in another city to look for Swamp Root.

Pitino should be played as cold, calculating, and potentially shady. Julius and Vincent are generally silent, at least in public. As for the other Swamp Runners, feel free to model them on (and name them after) your favorite UK Wildcats or Boston Celtics.

### **The Cemetary/Vocapasado's Mortuary**

*"Oh...hello. I was talking to some people, but you scared them off. What's that? No, you wouldn't be able to see them. They usually only talk to Father and me. I guess I could show you around the cemetery, since my friends won't talk to me while you're around."*

—Nina Vocapasado, Undertaker's Daughter

The Paradise Cemetery lies behind the church. On the far corner of the grounds sits the Vocapasado House, which doubles as the town mortuary (and, occasionally, taxidermist). There are only



two members of the Vocapasado family still alive: Augustus, the town undertaker, and Nina, his daughter and assistant. Augustus is a tall, thin man with a very deep voice. He is very serious and often seems somewhat menacing. Nina is a pale girl of 16 with long, dark hair. She seems very shy, and spends most of her time in the graveyard. She often has her pet cat, Shadow, with her. Shadow has shed the mortal coil, but Nina doesn't seem to notice (though the cat has been stuffed and preserved). Nina claims that she can speak with the dead.

Most people in Paradise think that the Vocapasados are a bit odd, but they keep to themselves and don't bother anyone, so nobody really gives them much thought. If anyone manages to gain the trust of Nina or Augustus, they may learn that they are descended from an important royal bloodline with a gift for necromancy, and that Augustus can also speak with and command the dead.

The exact details of Augustus and Nina's powers will depend on the campaign being run. In fantasy games, they probably are necromancers, as they claim. In other campaigns, they may simply be insane. Even if they have no actual necromatic powers, coincidence will always suggest otherwise. For

example, a chill wind may blow just as Nina claims to have summoned a spirit, or strange lights may be seen in the household from time to time. It's best to keep the players guessing whether or not the Vocapasado family's claims are true.

### **The Lodge of the Order of Horatius**

*“Horatius was one of the first settlers of Paradise. The first time the Dragon Men attacked, Horatius was the one to warn the town they were coming. Then he took a small group of men to the bridge and held off the raiders long enough for the rest of the town to set a trap. Horatius and all his men died, but the time they bought allowed the people of Paradise to beat the Dragon Men. That's why he's Paradise's greatest hero. The survivors set up the Order to remember the sacrifice Horatius and his men made, and to prepare for future incursions by the Dragon Men.”*

—Gordy, Centurion Prime of the Order of Horatius

The Order of Horatius was once a proud order of soldiers. However, as Dragon Men raids have become less frequent (the last was nearly a generation ago), the order has become less of a martial order and more of a social club. They still occasionally conduct training exercises and form the closest thing Paradise has to a town militia, but these days the members are more likely to just play poker. Most important townsmen are members of the Order, the most notable exceptions being Sheriff Montoya and Jesse Gomezdelcampo.

The Lodge itself is a large house on the edge of town. A small sign with the order's crest (an eagle clutching a lightning bolt) hangs from the front porch. There is a large signal lantern mounted on the roof. Only members with the proper password are allowed inside, except during emergencies. The interior contains a few sleeping rooms, a small armory, a kitchen, and a large common room containing a liquor cabinet, poker tables, and the like. A map of Paradise and the surrounding area hangs on the wall of the common room, along with a tapestry depicting Horatius's final stand.

### **Paradise Locales**

The businesses here work for Old West and Fantasy settings, but may need a bit of updating to fit into a Science Fiction or Post-Apocalypse game. The easiest way to do this is just update the descriptions. Instead of an Apothecary's Shop, Domingo's Pharmacy will be a cross between a modern pharmacist's office and a head shop. Likewise, Jean-Marc Serge will have an electronics and mechanic's shop, with skills appropriate to the technology of the world. Most of the other businesses listed here will work in just about any setting with a few cosmetic changes. It should also be noted that the listing here does not necessarily include every business operating in Paradise. Feel free to add any structures and businesses that are needed for the campaign you are running. Just keep in mind that Paradise is a small place and its people are relatively self-sufficient. Also, some people may practice their trades from their homes rather than from a shop on Main Street.

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## Other Folks in Paradise

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### **Jesse Gomezdelcampo**

*“I guess Jesse’s the closest thing Paradise has to a mayor. He’s the head of the town council and he’s lived here all his life. Jesse was the Sheriff before I took over the job. Nowadays, he lives out at the edge of the swamp, and mainly spends his time fishin’ and brewin’. If you need to know anything about Paradise, the swamps, or just life in general, Jesse’s the man to ask.”*

—Sheriff Juan Montoya

Jesse Gomezdelcampo is a grandfatherly old man with vast knowledge of every aspect of life in Paradise. He’s easily approachable and is always willing to share his knowledge. However, he prefers for people to think for themselves and make their own decisions—Jesse believes that experience is the best teacher. He’ll give advice, but will never tell anyone what to do. This means that at times Jesse can be a bit cryptic. Think of him as a cross between Uncle Jesse from *The Dukes of Hazzard* and Yoda.

### **The Porter Family**

*“Heck, I guess everybody in town knows the Porters. They were one of the first families to settle in Paradise, and have had the biggest farm in town for as long as anyone can remember. Tom’s on the town council, Maimie’s the local school teacher, and their boy Toby’s one of Sheriff Montoya’s deputies. They’re good people.”*

--Lief Olsen, General Store Proprietor

The Porters are the closest thing Paradise has to royalty. Their farm is the town’s single largest employer, and all of the Porters are very active in town life. Mamie is the town historian, keeping archives and records of Paradise dating back to its founding. She also acts as the town’s educator, holding class in town square or at city hall. Maimie is well known for her baking skills, and her pies are legendary.

Tom is a simple, hard-working man who probably doesn’t deserve all the nagging he gets from Maimie. Lots of people suspect she’s the

### **Government in Paradise**

Paradise is governed by a Town Council, which consists of five elected council members. All adult male citizens of Paradise may participate in city government (the men run the town, and the women nag the men). They can attend council meetings and voice their opinions, but the council ultimately makes all decisions. Council members are normally elected for one year terms, but they can be voted out of office at any time by popular demand.

In addition to making important decisions, the town council is responsible for sentencing criminals and appointing the town sheriff. If the sheriff cannot settle a dispute between citizens, the case is brought before the town council.

reason he's on the town council, as Tom doesn't really seem like the type to harbor any ambitions more lofty than getting the field plowed and the crops planted on time. Tom is a normal farmer trapped by his wife's obsession with keeping the Porters' reputation as Paradise's "first family" undisputed.

### **Diego Cortez**

*"Cortez is still new in town. He moved here about 20 years ago and bought up a bunch of land north of town. Then he brought in his hired hands and cattle. A few other farmers followed suit and started raising cattle instead of crops. Sometimes the cows'll get off the cattle farmers' land and eat or stomp over our crops, but Diego and the others are usually pretty good about makin' things right—he's even bought up a few smaller farms to give his stock more room to roam."*

—Tom Porter, Farmer

Diego Cortez is a wealthy foreigner who runs a large cattle farm outside of town. Cortez has adapted to life in Paradise, even earning himself a spot on the town council. Some people in Paradise are still a little suspicious of Cortez, but most people have accepted him as one of their own. Cortez is actually rather selfish and conniving, hoping to expand his operations to include most of the good land in Paradise.

### **The Snopes Family**

*"Pa says that one a these days, we're gonna get some land and stop swamp runnin'. All we need to do is find some Swamp Root and we'll be able to settle down and become respectable farmers. Pa must be serious, too, because he's always sendin' us out to look for root."*

—Marcus Aurelius Snopes, swamp runner

Flint Snopes is one of the town's more respected Swamp Runners, in part because of the long feud between the Snopes clan and the LaCroix family. He is known for enforcing a strong work ethic on his family and teaching the children to look for Swamp Root at a very young age. He and his wife, Marge, currently have seven children (plus one on the way).

Flint Snopes is ruled by his greed. He wants to leave the life of a Swamp Runner behind to become a farmer, and puts this desire ahead of the love and well-being of his children. Roberta Suzanna will soon be of marrying age, and Flint is hoping to arrange a beneficial marriage between her and a member of one of the town's better families, possibly Toby Porter.

The oldest Snopes children are Spartacus and Caligula, the twins. They are not very bright and are fanatically loyal to Flint. The next in age is Marcus Aurelius, a 16-year old who is extremely bright and an excellent Swamp Runner. The only daughter is Roberta

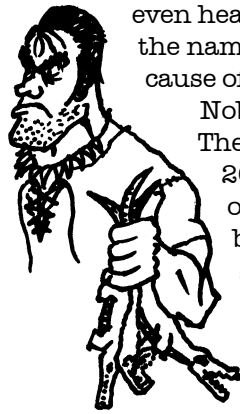
Suzanna, who is almost as good at swamp running as Marcus. The three younger children are named Octavius, Brutus, and Constantine. Three other Snopes children have been lost to the swamps.

### **The LaCroix Family**

*“Them LaCroix {ptooie!} people are just plum evil. Folks say that Pappy LaCroix climbed his way right up outta Hell and mated with a Dragon Man. They’re demons who was just too ornery for Hell. Nobody knows exactly how many of ‘em there are, but there are too damn many of ‘em.”*

—Marcus Arelius Snopes, Swamp Runner

There are many contradictory and always derogatory stories about the LaCroix. They are said to be black magicians, demons, and worse. They live in a run-down old house out in the swamps, and most of the people in Paradise wish they were farther away from town. It is traditional to spit after speaking (or sometimes even hearing) the LaCroix name. Whether this is because the name leaves a bad taste in people’s mouths or because of some superstition is unclear.



Nobody knows exactly how many LaCroix there are. The best known are Pappy LaCroix, said to be over 200 years old; Gramma, who is either Pappy’s wife or daughter; Grif, the town drunk; Marie, said to be a witch; Jody; and Tici. The LaCroix and the Snopes have hated one another for generations. Nobody really knows how it started, but it doesn’t seem likely to end any time soon. The feud has been fairly bloodless in recent memory.

### **Jose**

*“I reckon every town’s got somebody like Jose. Nobody really knows where he came from—he wandered into town a few years back, when he was about 12 years old. He ain’t too smart, and can’t do anything useful, but most folks take pity on him.”*

—Sheriff Juan Montoya

Nobody knows Jose’s story. All they really know about him is that he’s insane. Some people speculate that he watched his family get eaten by gators, or something equally horrible, which caused him to lose his mind. While nobody really likes Jose, he’s generally tolerated by the townfolk because of his condition. Every village needs an idiot, and Jose fills that role in Paradise.

### Swamp Root & Swamp Runners

Swamp Root is a very rare plant only found in the Hellmarsh, reputed to have many useful chemical and/or magical properties. Swamp Root is so rare that just a small amount can command high prices, if a buyer can be found. All attempts to cultivate the root have failed. When Paradise was founded, Swamp Root caused it to experience a brief “boom.” However, as Swamp Root became harder and harder to find, the town quickly went bust.

Even though very little Swamp Root has been found in recent memory, many people still spend their lives searching for it. These people are known as “Swamp Runners” or the more derogatory “Swamp Rats” by the people of Paradise. While actual Swamp Root is rarely found, Swamp Runners do manage to eke out a living by gathering other useful flora and fauna in the swamp.

As a GM it's your job to determine the exact nature of Swamp Root. In fantasy games it may have magical properties, while in other settings it may simply be a very useful plant with unusual chemical properties. Healing is probably the most common reputed property of Swamp Root, though it could also be a powerful narcotic or hallucinogen. In games where the history of Paradise is not well-documented or far in the past (such as a Post-Apocalypse, Fantasy, or perhaps Science Fiction game), Swamp Root may not even exist. The few examples of “Swamp Root” that have been found in recent history were something else entirely.

Regardless of the true nature of Swamp Root in your campaign, the people of Paradise will have many stories about the root.



## Adventures in Paradise

Paradise can be dropped in as a random frontier setting in any campaign. If this is the case, it is possible that one of these scenarios is under way when the characters arrive. Alternately, you can use the citizens of Paradise as characters in a one-shot adventure or short campaign.

### The Seven Swamp Runners

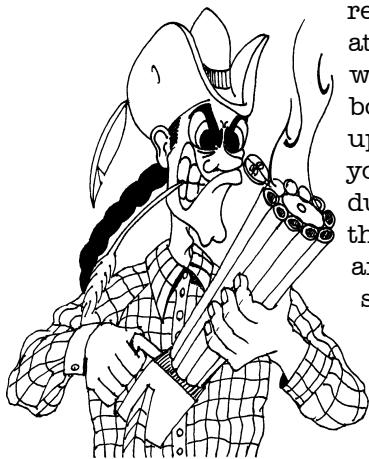
*“Boys, we got a problem.”*

—Gordy, Centurion Prime of the Order of Horatius

The bandit Enrique del Rojo has made his way to Paradise, and is causing trouble. For the past few weeks, Rojo and his bandits have been causing trouble for the farmers on the outskirts of town—stealing food and equipment, roughing up anybody who tried to stand up to them, and otherwise being just plain ornery. Earlier today, they took over Olsen’s general store, violently removing the customers and helping themselves to whatever they wanted. Rojo has proclaimed himself the new ruler of Paradise, and says that he

expects everyone to cooperate and pay their “taxes” when his men come around.

Obviously, Sheriff Montoya isn’t going to stand for this. There are two ways to run this adventure. If your characters are Paradise



residents, or you’re using the pre-generated characters in this book, the Sheriff will probably just gather up every able-bodied man he can find and try to come up with a way to defeat the bandits. If you want to use this adventure to introduce characters to Paradise, it’s possible that Montoya will realize that the bandits are too strong to beat alone. He’ll send someone to Santa Rosa to try to find someone a little more suited for the job than the farmers and Swamp Runners at his disposal. Your characters just happen to be in Santa Rosa that day.

### **Enrique Del Rojo**

*Body: 16 Brain: 13 Nerve: 17 HP: 20 YumYums: 3*

*Job: Bandit Leader (16)*

*Gimmick: Followers (15)*

*Weakness: Followers act out of fear, not loyalty (15)*

*Tag Line: “Boys, this one’s bein’ difficult. Kill him.”*

*WWPHitM?: Brendan Gleeson*

### **Bandits**

*Body: 13 Brain: 10 Nerve: 12 HP: 13 Yum Yums: 0*

*Job: Bandit (14)*

*Individual bandits will have slightly different stats, as well as unique Gimmicks and Weaknesses. Feel free to detail them as you see fit. The exact number of bandits in Rojo’s group depends on the skill level of the characters and the difficulty level you want for the adventure.*

### **The Lost Treasure of Vicini**

*“There’s been more strangers in town in the past few weeks than I ever seen. First that Heinrich fella came to town, askin’ questions and buyin’ up supplies. Then that guy with the funny hat showed up with his fancy clothes and strange talk. Both of ‘em say they’re looking for somethin’ called the Lost Treasure of Vicini. I ain’t sure what it is, but they sure seem determined to find it.”*

—Juan Montoya, Sheriff

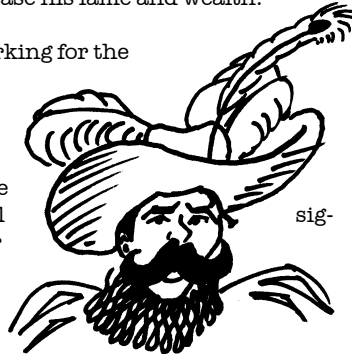


Vicini was a legendary pirate said to have a secret lair somewhere in the Hellmarshes. Vicini was said to have amassed a huge amount of treasure, most of which is thought to be hidden away somewhere in the swamp. Recently, new information about Vicini's treasure has been found, and the strangers are here trying to find it.

The first stranger to arrive was Heinrich Josef. Josef claims to be a famous explorer. Not surprisingly, nobody in Paradise has ever heard of him. Josef is hoping to find the lost treasure to increase his fame and wealth. He seems a bit full of himself.

Leonardo de Montilliano says he's working for the University of Florence (wherever that is). He wears strange, fancy clothes (including a big, puffy hat) and talks with a thick accent. Leonardo is obviously very rich, and seems to throw his money around with wild abandon. He says he's looking for the treasure for its historical significance. He carries a pair of fancy guns (or swords, for Fantasy campaigns), but probably doesn't know how to use them.

The exact location and contents of the treasure (if it even exists) are ultimately up to the GM. Josef and Montilliano both came to Paradise hoping to find the treasure for themselves, but may end up working together. In addition to the two newcomers, Giovanni Pitino is searching for the treasure. He found the new information about the treasure before the others and used the Swamp Root company as a cover. An adventure centering around the lost treasure of Vicini could lead to an exciting race to find the treasure, possibly causing division among the citizens of Paradise, as different people work with or against one explorer or the other. In some campaigns, Vicini may be a lost city rather than a pirate's treasure. Nearly any citizen of Paradise may become involved in this adventure. Both explorers will pay handsomely for guides and bodyguards, as well as for information about Vicini.



### **Heinrich Josef**

*Body: 16 Brain: 14 Nerve: 16 HP: 20 YumYums: 2*

*Job: Archeological Adventurer (16)*

*Gimmick: Escape Intricate Death Traps (1?)*

*Weakness: Intricate Death Trap Magnet (1?)*

*Tag Line: "I'm absolutely positive I disarmed the -uh oh."*

*WWPHitM?: Harrison Ford*

### **Leonardo de Montilliano**

*Body: 15 Brain: 16 Nerve: 16 HP: 17 YumYums: 2*

*Job: Renaissance Man (16)*

*Gimmick: Expert Gunfighter [or Swordsman] (16)*

*Weakness: Moral Code [Truth, justice, and American way] (16)*

*Tag Line: "No, you must let it roll off the tongue--Viceeeeni."*

*WWPHitM?: Liam Neeson*

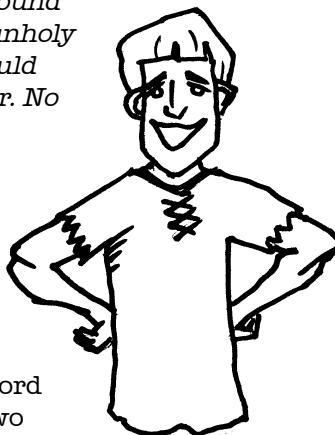
### **Star Crossed Lovers**

*"I wouldn't believe it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. I was out lookin' for Swamp Root when I thought I heard Roberta Suzanna's voice. I followed the noise and found her kissin' Jody LaCroix! It was the most unholy thing I ever seen! I'm not sure what I should do. I know if I tell Pa, he'll probably kill her. No matter what I do, I'm afraid something . . . tragic . . . might happen."*

—Marcus Arelus

Snopes, Swamp Runner

Of course, even worse than young love between the feuding Snopes and LaCroix clans, Flint Snopes and Tom Porter are about to announce Roberta Suzanna's engagement to Toby Porter. If word of Roberta and Jody's affair gets out, the two families will no doubt end up openly feuding once again. Jody might even end up getting banished by the Sheriff. Padre and Dr. Domingo may very well play an important role in the story, but don't feel confined to Shakespeare's version of the tale.



### **Other Adventures in Paradise**

There are many other possible adventures in Paradise, the details of which are left to the GM. Perhaps there is evidence of Dragon Man activity, causing the town to begin preparations for a raid. Or maybe Cortez finally makes his move, setting off a sort of range war between the crop farmers and the cattlemen. Anything is possible in Paradise.

## Paradise Character Stats

This section lists QAGS stats for key characters in Paradise.

### **Sheriff Juan Montoya**

*Body: 16 Brain: 13 Nerve: 17 HP: 25 Yum Yums: 5*

*Job: Sheriff (18)*

*Gimmick: Wisdom of Solomon (15)*

*Weakness: Getting Old (15)*

*Tag Line: "Way I figure it, you boys can work this thing out, or I can take you to jail. It's really up to you all."*

*WWPHitM?: James Garner*

### **Deputy Jorge Hernandez**

*Body: 10 Brain: 10 Nerve: 10 HP: 13 Yum Yums: 1*

*Job: Deputy (10)*

*Gimmick: Somehow keeps his job (19)*

*Weakness: Incompetent (19)*

*Tag Line: "I was just restin' my eyes, Sheriff."*

*WWPHitM?: Randy Quaid*

### **Deputy Toby Porter**

*Body: 14 Brain: 15 Nerve: 14 HP: 15 Yum Yums: 2*

*Job: Deputy (12)*

*Gimmick: Natural Detective (13)*

*Weakness: Green (13)*

*Tag Line: "I think I found somethin', Sheriff."*

*WWPHitM?: Rick Shroeder*

### **Marcus Arelus Snopes**

*Body: 13 Brain: 16 Nerve: 14 HP: 13 Yum Yums: 2*

*Job: Swamp Runner (13)*

*Gimmick: Likeable (14)*

*Weakness: Uneducated (14)*

*Tag Line: "Watch out for that gator over there--she looks kinda angry."*

*WWPHitM?: Edward Furlong*

**Jean Marc Serge**

Body: 17 Brain: 12 Nerve: 14 HP: 20 Yum Yums: 3

Job: Blacksmith (13)/Soldier (15)

Gimmick: Nerves of Steel (15)

Weakness: Stubborn (15)

Tag Line: "A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do."

WWPHitM?: Sylvester Stallone

**Jody LaCroix**

Body: 16 Brain: 12 Nerve: 19 HP: 20 Yum Yums: 1

Job: Swamp Runner (15)

Gimmick: Quite possibly the world's greatest unarmed combatant (19)

Weakness: Bad Reputation (19)

Tag Line: "You don't wanna make me mad. That'll get ya hurt."

WWPHitM?: "Stone Cold" Steve Austin

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## Possible Villains

**Diego Cortez**

Body: 13 Brain: 13 Nerve: 15 HP: 15 Yum Yums: 2

Job: Rancher (15)

Gimmick: Wealthy (13)

Weakness: Outsider (13)

Tag Line: "I'm sure we can come to some sort of agreement on this issue, sir."

WWPHitM?: Alan Rickman

**Giovanni Pitino**

Body: 12 Brain: 14 Nerve: 14 HP: 15 Yum Yums: 1

Job: Businessman (13)

Gimmick: Henchmen (15)

Weakness: Outsider (15)

Tag Line: "My God, I didn't think alligators got that big!"

WWPHitM?: Rick Pitino

**Gator**

Body: 15 Brain: 2 Nerve: 18 HP: 15

Job: Gator (16)

Gimmick/Weakness: It's a Gator

**Marie LaCroix**

*Body: 16 Brain: 13 Nerve: 15 HP: 16 Yum Yums: 2*

*Job: Voodoo Priestess (15)*

*Gimmick: Seduction (17)*

*Weakness: Bad Reputation (17)*

*Tag Line: "Now you wouldn't want to hurt me, would you?"*

*WWPHitM?: Salma Hayek*

**Dragon Men**

*Body: 15 Brain: 5-15 Nerve: 19*

*Job: Dragon Man Warrior (12)*

*Gimmick/Weakness: None*

The exact abilities of a Dragon Man will vary according to the setting. If they are simply humanoid lizards, they will just be able to fight with their claws and teeth. If they are a mystic cult or Indian warriors, they will have the ability to use appropriate weapons. All of these abilities are included in the job "Dragon Man." Individuals may have Gimmicks and Weaknesses, but these probably will not come into play unless that individual interacts with the PCs in a meaningful way or has some special combat ability or magical power.

## Inspirational Materials

What follows is a list of sources that may help the Paradise GM bring Paradise to life. Some of these works are useful because they offer small towns like Paradise. Others may help the GM convey the spookiness of the swamps.

**Movies**

*Desert Blue*

*Blazing Saddles*

*Support Your Local Sheriff*

*Angel Heart*

*Soggy Bottom, USA*

*Deliverance*

**Music**

"Dueling Banjos":

"Season of the Witch," Dr. John

"Marie Laveaux," Jim Stafford

"The Ballad of Wooly Swamp," The Charlie Daniels Band

**TV Shows**

*The Andy Griffith Show*

*The Dukes of Hazzard*

**Books**

The works of Mark Twain and Joe R. Landsdale

*The Snopes Trilogy*, William Faulkner (particularly “The Hamlet”)

*Preacher*, by Garth Ennis (especially the “Homecoming” and “Salvation” story arcs)



## Credits

The Yokels of Hex Games

Author.....	Steve Johnson
Special Consultant.....	Stacy Stroud
Editors.....	Rebecca Butler Leighton Connor Gena Chattin
Layout.....	Kevin Butler Steve Johnson
Cover Art.....	Robert Wilkerson
Cover Design.....	Ray Forsythe
Interior Artwork.....	Robert Wilkerson
Additional Interior Art....	Rebecca Butler

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## Also Available



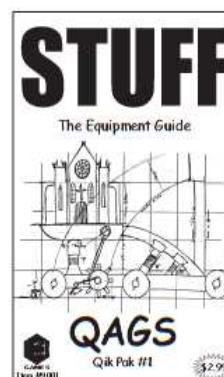
### Field Guide To Monsters Volume I

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"There's a little town at the edge of the swamps known as Paradise. The people there are what you might call . . . rustic. Simple, hard-working people. The salt of the earth. You know . . . Morons."

- One-Eyed Jack, on his stay in Paradise

Paradise is the first setting Qik Pak for QAGS. Inside this book, you'll find out how to add Paradise to your existing Fantasy, Sci-Fi, Old West, or Post-Apocalypse campaign. Or, you can use the characters and adventures in this Qik Pak as a starting point for an entire game based in the . . . err. . . rustic town of Paradise!

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