

R.E.A.C.T. CASE FILE #011B16

MYSTERY MOUNTAIN

Sample file



Requires the use of
Savage Worlds by
Pinnacle Publishing

paNik
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Files included
in this Product:

Character_Map_Tokens.pdf
Character_Stand-Ups.pdf
Chase_Cards_Desert.pdf
Map_Bender_General.pdf
Map_Bender_Tactical.pdf
Map_Mountain_Trail.pdf
Map_Smuggler_Cave.pdf
Maps_VTT.zip
MM_OL1_
PlayerHandout.pdf
MM_Tablet_eds.zip
Mystery_Mountain_
polysystem.pdf
Mystery_Mountain_SW.pdf

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Introduction

Mystery Mountain is a roleplaying adventure module designed for 4 players with Veteran characters. It can be run as part of a R.E.A.C.T. campaign or in any modern-day setting with science fiction or mild fantasy elements.

Check the sidebars for suggestions on how to adapt R.E.A.C.T.-specific elements to a different campaign model.



Summary

The player characters arrive in Bender at the same time as the cast and crew of the reality television show *Bounty Hunter Mom*. Soon thereafter the film crew goes out into the desert to film B-roll and disappear. The state police arrive to investigate and caution the characters against leaving town.

Whether to clear their names or simply out of boredom, the player characters begin an investigation of their own and discover a group of smugglers operating out of a nearby cave. In the process they may or may not also discover the bodies of the film crew torn to shreds in the mountains.

Meanwhile, a half-dead Mexican immigrant crawls into town babbling cryptic warnings. The townsfolk argue against involving the police and make every effort to keep the player characters in town at least one more night. That night, the townspeople summon the Big Owl monster to town and try to feed it the immigrant, the player characters and any surviving smugglers. The players must find a way to defeat the flying monster and its cult of human allies.

Behind the Scenes

Bender is a tiny town near the Arizona – New Mexico border, originally founded by gold prospectors in 1887. There turned out to be only trace amounts of gold in Mystery Mountain but enough copper for the persistent few who remained to eke out a living. By 1890 the town had reached a peak population of 212. As would-be prospectors canvassed the nearby hills and mountains for more sources of ore, they inadvertently stumbled upon a species of carnivorous mutated owl who pursued them back to town. For the next seven years the townsfolk were in a state of perpetual war with the monsters they uncreatively named “Big Owls.” At night they were hunted by the owl-monsters. By day they scoured the mountains for nests to destroy. By 1897 half the town had either fled or been devoured and the big owls

Throughout this document if "Big Owl" is capitalized, it refers to the last surviving member of the big owl species, which is in lower case.

were on the verge of extinction. Tragically, it was only then that prospector James Shiloh discovered that eating big owl eggs had not only stopped, but partially reversed the aging process.

Ever since then, the people of Bender have cultivated a symbiotic relationship with the big owls, harvesting enough eggs to stave off old age while leaving enough behind to maintain a breeding population. As the years progressed, they've tended to err on the side of staving off old age and as a result the last remaining big owl is an inbred shadow of its ancestor's majesty. The 86 remaining citizens of Bender are faced with a dilemma; eat this year's clutch and enjoy their relative youth awhile longer or gamble that the eggs have been fertilized, let them hatch and ensure their health for another generation?



For the past century, the people of Bender have worked to ensure the health and welfare of the owl monsters, mostly by feeding other people to them. The Benderites have been responsible for the deaths of entire herds of cattle and more than a thousand people, mostly transients, illegal immigrants, and others who won't be missed. In the process of feeding them, generations of big owls have been conditioned to associate the sound of the Liberty Bell March with feeding time. The townsfolk can summon the remaining big owl anywhere by playing the song – especially if there's a victim to be devoured.

More recently, a band of smugglers loosely associated with La Eme, the "Mexican Mafia" have been moving drugs into the United States and guns into Mexico. They use one of the abandoned mines in the region as a supply cache, storing surplus goods there until they have a buyer lined up. Having watched too many episodes of Scooby Doo while stoned, the smugglers have acquired a set of ludicrous-looking owl costumes and four actually-frightening remote operated "rolling head" drones, with which they discourage the locals from investigating the mine.

Naturally, the smugglers aren't without enemies and are pursued by reality-show bounty hunter Cindy Morse. Along with action-movie star Devon Beagle and a 3-person film crew, Morse arrives in Bender the day before the players do.



Getting Started

This adventure is written under the assumption that the players sufficiently self-motivated to investigate either the smugglers, the town, or the monsters despite the potential distractions of the plot points listed below. The plot points are all sequential, but only the first two are attached to a specific timeline.

Introducing the Players

Assuming the player characters are R.E.A.C.T. agents, introducing them to the story is simple: Just assign them the mission of investigating reports of Rolling Head phenomena in the region near Bender, New Mexico.

This is a routine research mission, so the characters won't be assigned any special equipment other than airplane tickets and rental car vouchers, as needed. Player characters are still able to requisition any equipment they think they **might** need such as EMF detectors or sothonic stabilizers.

Unless your campaign is based in the southwest, the player characters will likely have to fly into the Albuquerque airport, rent cars, and drive to Bender.

Let each player make the appropriate Knowledge skill or Common Knowledge roll to see what their character already knows about the local legends and folklore. On the way to Bender they'll pass through a half-dozen similar small towns. The residents of these towns haven't ever seen any monsters themselves but they all have a friend whose cousin's neighbor did. If the player characters start to question these townies, they can make a Persuasion roll instead of Common Knowledge or the usual Knowledge skill to learn some of the local legends from Player Handout OL1. (If the player characters already know *some* of the information, instead let them use Persuasion as a cooperative) Each interview/skill check will take about 1 hour.

With only cursory preparation, the player characters should be able to identify Bender as the town closest to most of the sightings, making it the best place for a base of operations. (No rolls should be necessary). However, when they arrive they discover that the only hotel (the Washburn Inn) is booked solid. The Washburns will conveniently forget to mention this fact should the players try calling ahead. (Cindy Morse, Devon Beagle, and Jackie Evans each have their own room. Jordan Kennedy and Zak Hopkins are doubled up.)

During morning hours Cindy Morse, Devon Beagle, and the film crew will be conducting interviews with citizens of Bender, hoping to find some clue to the whereabouts of Roland Mosqueda and his band of smugglers. If the player characters arrive early enough in the day, it's likely that their field of investigation will overlap with that of the celebrities giving the two groups a chance to meet.

Morse, Beagle and the film crew will be courteous and as helpful as they can be (which isn't much) to the player characters, but will also make it clear that they're here to do a job and can only spare a few minutes of time. They will be more receptive to meeting up for dinner at the Washburn Diner – especially if the player characters offer to pay. It's also a chance for the player characters to try to negotiate with the film crew to give up one of their rooms.

Playtime

15 minutes

Difficulty

Investigate:
3/5

Action:
1/5

Not R.E.A.C.T. Agents?

If you're not running a R.E.A.C.T. campaign, have never heard of R.E.A.C.T., or your players *aren't* self-motivated there are still plenty of reasons for their characters to be in town. They could be:

Paparazzi hoping to get photos or interviews with Devon Beagle or Cindy Morse.

Cryptozoologists, investigating Rolling Head, Thunderbird, or La Lechusa sightings.

FBI, DEA, or BATF agents in pursuit of the smugglers.

Criminal enforcers looking to hinder La Emé's smuggling efforts.

Private Investigators hired by the families of illegal immigrants who have vanished in the area over the past 10 years.

Relatives or friends of one of the missing film crew. The crewperson has promised that they can be on television if the player characters meet them in Bender.

Alternately, they could be simply passing through and their vehicle suddenly breaks down. The folks of Bender are not above seeding the roads a few miles away from town with nails and other debris. When the drivers limp into town to get a new tire from Frank Twofeathers' gas station, Twofeathers always finds something else wrong with the car that forces the driver to stay for the night, possibly for multiple nights.