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THE BLOOD MENAGERIE

A *Savage Worlds* One Sheet™ By Ross Watson for use with *Savage Rifts*® for Novice characters.

A travelling show presents some trouble for the Coalition...but it also hides a sinister secret that threatens the Tomorrow Legion!

A group of Tomorrow Legionnaires have stopped in the small settlement of Nathan's Ford for the night. There, they encounter Professor Wickham's Travelling Menagerie, a collection of wandering sideshows and performers. The troupe puts on a play that is unflattering to the Coalition, winning many friends in the town. However, a dark mystery soon rears its ugly head—and the Legionnaires are the only ones who can bring it to light!

ARRIVING AT NATHAN'S FORD

The Legionnaires are headed to Nathan's Ford, a small but prosperous village of two dozen people in the wilderness between Missouri and Arkansas. The settlement is composed of six communal farms, run by the founders: a married couple named Jacen and J'tara Nathan (these two folks can be either humans or D-Bees, depending on the Game Master's preference for her campaign). To the Legionnaires' surprise, there is a new addition to the town: four large, brightly-colored trailers towed by Big Boss ATVs. Painted on the sides of the trailers is the visitors' name: **Professor Wickham's Travelling Menagerie**.

The professor is a tall, gangly man wearing a patchwork coat and a velvet top hat. His narrow face breaks out into a wide smile as he greets the Legionnaires.

"Welcome, welcome! We were just about to begin the show! Please, sit and enjoy our tale of 'The Black-Armored Buffoons' free of charge!"

■ **Professor Wickham:** see below.

As the title suggests, the troupe's play portrays the Coalition Army as foolish, gullible, and mean-spirited bullies. The subject of the play is well-presented, and the villagers applaud every scene. The highlight of the play is when Wickham and a dog named Rex take the stage. The two act out the part of a "dog boy" (Rex) threatening a "D-Bee" (Wickham wearing a mask) in hilarious fashion. Wickham brings the play to an end just after his scene, bowing to a standing ovation from the crowd.

Call for a Notice check. On a success, the Legionnaire spots that Rex's fur is dyed brown. On a raise, the Legionnaire further sees that Rex is actually a wolf, not a dog as Wickham introduced him. If the heroes are interested in learning more during the play, remember that Wickham has used his *conceal arcana* power on himself and Rex to make them both seem normal.

■ **Rex (Wild Vampire):** *Savage Foes of North America*.

THE MENAGERIE

After the end of the play, there is about two hours until midnight, when the Menagerie closes. If the legionnaires wish to tour the menagerie, they can wander through the following sideshows:

Klayton the Sharpshooter: This trailer is set up for some fairly simple trick shots—hitting thrown plates, rapid-fire shots at a stationary target, and lighting a candle on fire. Klayton is a sullen-looking fellow who doesn't talk much (Wickham is far better at the snappy patter) and wields a Wilk's laser pistol with decent (but not superlative) skill.

If any of the heroes watch this demonstration, call for a Notice roll. On a success, the legionnaire spots a wreath of Wolf's Bane on the wall of Klayton's trailer (as the sharpshooter has no desire to become a meal for Rex).



On a raise, the hero catches a glimpse of a TX-5 pump pistol and six solid silver slugs in a box (Klayton believes in being prepared to shoot the wild vampire if it comes down to it). These items can come in very handy during a conflict with Rex (see **The Blood Feast**, below).

- **Klayton (Wilderness Scout):** *Savage Foes of North America.*

Lusk the Beastmaster: Introduced by Wickham as “the amazing Beastmaster,” Lusk is a simvan monster rider who has a pair of trained falcons. Lusk’s *beast friend* power compels the falcons to perform some impressive tricks, including fetching hats from the audience and dropping rings onto bottles. For his part, Lusk is friendly enough, though his non-human appearance tends to scare off many onlookers.

- **Lusk (Simvan Monster Rider):** *Savage Foes of North America.*

Guess Your Age or Weight: Sharing a trailer with Lusk, Wickham himself calls up audience members to try and guess facts about them. Wickham’s psionic abilities come in handy for this part of the act. Combined with his natural persuasive ability, this sideshow typically makes the audience laugh regardless of the accuracy of Wickham’s guesses.

Rex the Wonder Dog: The main attraction of the menagerie is Rex. The audience is usually very impressed by Rex’s ability to understand human speech and carry out intricate tasks — Rex is an unusually smart dog! Typically, Wickham hosts the show and instructs audience members to ask Rex questions (“Am I a man or a woman? Young or old?”). Rex provides answers with coded barks, then navigates a simple obstacle course and places certain objects in colored pails arranged on a ladder.

In truth, Rex is not a dog at all, but a wild vampire, shapeshifted into wolf form. Thanks to Rex’s association with Wickham, the wild vampire’s normal feral behavior has become far more docile, willing to perform “tricks” in return for regular feedings. Wickham uses his conceal *arcana* power on Rex to hide the vampire’s true nature, and uses the travelling show as a cover for the disappearances of Rex’s meals.

THE BLOOD FEAST

Wickham’s plan is simple: entertain the villagers, kidnap one of them during the show, feed the victim’s blood to Rex, and leave town before dawn. The Professor reasons that most villagers will assume that anyone missing “ran off” with the travelling show (and Wickham certainly makes his life sound thrilling and easy during his banter with the crowd).

Observant or suspicious heroes may notice Wickham selecting a certain audience member — a young woman — calling on her as an assistant during one of the sideshows. When the menagerie’s shows end (roughly around 11 PM), Wickham uses his *puppet* power on the chosen victim, instructing her to accompany him to Rex’s trailer. Once she reaches the trailer, Rex assumes his humanoid form and begins to feed on the victim — unless the Legionnaires take action first!

If a confrontation occurs, Lusk and Klayton will rush onto the scene to engage the Legionnaires in combat.

- **Rex (Wild Vampire):** *Savage Foes of North America.*

PROFESSOR ARTEMIS WICKHAM

Wickham discovered a small cache of pre-Rifts horror novels during his journeys through the Colorado Baronies. He became obsessed with these stories, eventually believing that he could become an immortal master vampire if he could reach Mexico. Working his way south, Wickham found that he was a gifted showman, joining and then taking over a travelling show. The “Professor” (he has no actual scholarly title) lucked out when he encountered Rex feeding on a Black Market smuggler. Befriending the wild vampire took some effort, but once he had Rex, Wickham knew that his destiny was at hand! Now, the travelling menagerie is Wickham’s ticket to reach Mexico without arousing suspicion (and living well along the way).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Arcane) d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Psionics d10, Shooting d4, Stealth d6

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (5)

Hindrances: Delusional (wants to become a Master Vampire), Greedy, Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Attractive, Danger Sense, Major Psionic, Master Psionic

Powers (Psionics): *Armor, bolt, conceal arcana, mind reading, puppet.* PPE: 25

Gear: Huntsman Armor (+5, +1 Toughness), NG-33 Laser Pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d4+1, RoF 1, AP 2).

Special Abilities:

- **Expanded Awareness:** Wickham can use *detect arcana* at will as a free action.
- **Generally Feared:** Most folks are terrified of Mind Melters. They suffer -2 Charisma. In Wickham’s case, this only applies if it is discovered he is actually a Mind Melter, rather than just a psionically-gifted showman.
- **Mental Resistance:** +4 on opposed checks to resist psionic effects; +4 armor versus psionic damage.