

Fallout: New California Dreaming



A One-Shot Anthology

Chapter 1: Dear Hearts and Gentle People



A story set in Yosemite Valley in the year 2252, a mysterious tribe named The Ciphers are due for a full siege by a roaming band of the sinister Vipers – a large cultish raider tribe that worship snakes. The existence of their village is threatened, and their nomads have recruited a party of mercenary wanderers to help them defend their village from siege.

Section 1: The Ciphers

$$\begin{aligned} F &= Kt + \psi \Delta \theta \left[\ln \left(1 + \frac{F}{\psi \Delta \theta} \right) \right] & x &= \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a} & R &= \frac{3pl}{2bd^2} \\ \psi &= \left(\frac{1}{2} \right)^{1/2} & \nabla \cdot E &= \frac{\rho}{\epsilon_0} & f &= \frac{mv^2}{D^{1/3}} & \nabla \times E &= -\frac{\partial B}{\partial t} \\ D &= \frac{Eh^2}{12(1-\nu)^2} & \frac{\partial_1}{\gamma} + \frac{z_1}{2g} + \frac{v_1^2}{2g} &= \frac{\partial_2}{\gamma} + \frac{z_2}{2g} + \frac{v_2^2}{2g} & \nabla \cdot B &= 0 & I &= I_e = \frac{2\pi(1 + \dots)}{2\pi(1 + \dots)} \\ V &= \frac{k}{n} R_0^{1/3} S^{1/2} & \frac{1}{\sqrt{f}} &= -\frac{2.0}{\ln(10)} \ln \left[\frac{k_s}{3.7D} + \frac{2.51}{Re \sqrt{f}} \right] & \nabla \times B &= \mu_0 J + \mu_0 \epsilon_0 \frac{\partial E}{\partial t} & E &= mc^2 \\ \Sigma F &= \rho Q (V_{out} - V_{in}) & y &= mx + b \\ t_c &= \left[\frac{0.0078 \cdot L_c^{0.77}}{S_c^{0.385}} \right] \cdot \left[\frac{2 \cdot n \cdot L_o}{3 \cdot \sqrt{S_o}} \right]^{0.467} \end{aligned}$$

In the weeks following the Great War, a group of scientists and soldiers left the destroyed laboratory at Area 51, Nevada, and wandered west with a band of other survivors, looking for a place of relative safety. They assumed that they were the only "civilized" people left, since everyone else they encountered attacked them, trying to take their food, water, and clothes. They eventually set up camp in the rural canyons of Yosemite Valley.

The group carried only a limited amount of technology with them. The soldiers had pistols and rifles, and the scientists carried one barely working computer, enough parts to build several water makers and a crude wind turbine to power them, and a box of experimental tesla technology, and a small supply of medicine. The rest of the band had a variety of miscellaneous gear which most contributed to group use.

A decade later, the computer began to fail. Fearing that the technology of the Old World would be forever lost, the scientists began painting and carving electronic schematics into the walls of the pit. At the same time, they insisted that mathematics be emphasized when educating the village children so that their descendants would understand how to use the schematics.

Culture:

Because they were steeped in mathematics from a very early age, the villagers tend to use a lot of mathematical terms to express themselves. This occasionally confusing, cryptic way of speaking caused them to be dubbed "Ciphers" by educated wasteland dwellers who thought they might be speaking in some type of code. The Ciphers merely shrugged and accepted the name.

As the years passed, the Ciphers forgot their disciplined, scientific roots and became more concerned with everyday survival rather than meaningless scientific theories. When it comes to electronic devices and weapons, the Ciphers know more about how it works than why it works: "The symbols say put this and this together, and then this happens. Why? Who knows? As long as the numbers are right, who cares?"

The emphasis on mathematics in their culture has led to Ciphers to assign an almost mystical significance to specific numbers. It is the closest thing to a religion they have. Each Cipher is believed to have a personal number, determined by the Nemonik at their birth. Ciphers will take their personal number into consideration when doing almost anything, from heading out to hunt on the sixth day of the month to choosing whom to marry. It's all very confusing to outsiders. They cover themselves in tattoos and tribal paintings of mathematical and scientific formulae. They are led by "The Counter", an elder decorated with an Old World pocket calculator to signify his rank.

Periodically they send out "Cipher Nomads" either alone or in bands to collect technology for blueprint study and disassembly.

The Village:

The village is built within a canyon of the vast Yosemite Valley, it has three main entrance points and is entirely unfortified. One entrance to the south, one entrance to the north and one to the east. A river runs through their canyon that splits the village. The Ciphers live in adobe housing carved from the canyon walls and constructed in the floor of the canyon as their population grew larger - the spiritual center of the village is a "kiva" - a large and rather deep sandcrete circular pit on the east side of the river where the interior walls are covered in their entirety by ancient blueprints, calculations and formulae - a ladder leads to the bottom where the Nemonik studies the ancient formulae and gives lessons to the gathering tribesmen.



The village sustains itself in two ways - the first through a Brahmin farm on the outskirts of the canyon where there's more wasteland grass to graze, and on the clifftops of the canyon where they have a wind-turbine powered hydroponics farm constructed out of junk. Deep in the canyon walls there is a cave which the original settlers enlarged into three chambers, each with a junk-constructed door that has remained sealed since the passing of the first generation. In the first, broken down and old assault rifles, sniper rifles and US Army Combat Armor held in storage. There are four assault rifles, four sniper rifles and four sets of US Army Combat Armor. In the second there is a broken-down Vault-Tec Computer that requires a power-supply to restore. In the third, a crate of experimental tesla technology.

Key Characters:



Azkee

ST 4 PE 6 EN 5 CH 6 IN 7 AG 5 LU 5

Male human. Middle-aged. The Counter, the leader of the Ciphers. Shaved head, wears an old pocket calculator around his neck as the symbol of his office. He's progressive, and would like to see the Ciphers start using more and more technology to improve their lot in life. He's willing to ally the Ciphers with outsiders, regardless of the consequences. He was the one who sent out Battery, the Cipher Nomad, to recruit the players.

The Nemonik

ST 3 PE 6 EN 4 CH 6 IN 8 AG 4 LU 5

Male human. Old guy who looks a little like Obi-Wan (the old version). The "memory keeper" for the Ciphers. He's a conservative, believing that the Ciphers will come out much better in the long run by limiting their use of technology. He's worried that Azkee will bring trouble to Yosemite. He also believes that encouraging Trig's inventions is the wrong path for her to take, and won't be very happy if the PCs helps complete her death cannon, and wishes for the PCs to leave the village entirely - believing they bring more trouble, and that they should just give tithe to the Vipers and leave be. Many of the tribe share his opinion.

Trig

ST 5 PE 7 EN 5 CH 5 IN 7 AG 6 LU 5

Female human in her late 20s. Skilled and smart, but tends to overestimate her own abilities. Can build a lot of electronics. She sings the schematics aloud as she works: "ahr 1, 3 vee resistor, wire sequence 1 dash 29, 3 dash 103 dash 109, ahr 2, 1 point 5 vee resistor...".

Denom

ST 6 PE 5 EN 6 CH 5 IN 5 AG 5 LU 4

Male human. Has been walking around lately looking quite pleased with himself thanks to the mysterious prosperity of the crops. The mechanic/gardener responsible for maintaining the wind turbine, water makers, and greenhouses

Hex

ST 5 PE 6 EN 5 CH 4 IN 6 AG 5 LU 5

Male human. He's the Cipher who seems to be perpetually on duty whenever the PCs enters the village. Armed with a "blaster", effectively a junk-recharger rifle that uses Tesla technology and glows a luminous amber.

Radian

ST 5 PE 5 EN 4 CH 3 IN 5 AG (2)5 LU 5

Male human. A Cipher suffering from a nervous disorder. Shakes a lot, especially in his hands. He was one of the Cipher Nomads captured by the Vipers - though not the one who gave up their location (so he claims). He managed to escape with his life and warned the tribe of the coming of the Vipers. He knows the most about their numbers and outfitting, as well as the location of one of their scout camps.

$$f(u) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f(x) e^{-i u x} dx$$

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{E} = \rho, \quad \nabla \times \mathbf{E} = -\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t}, \quad \nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} = 0, \quad \nabla \times \mathbf{B} = \frac{\partial \mathbf{E}}{\partial t} + \mathbf{J}$$

$$\rho \left(\frac{\partial^2}{\partial t^2} + v \cdot \nabla \right) T = -\nabla p + \nabla T + f$$

$$H = -\sum_n \rho(x) \log p(x)$$

$$\frac{1}{2} G^2 S \frac{\partial^2 V}{\partial S^2} + r S \frac{\partial V}{\partial S} + \frac{\partial V}{\partial t^2} - r V = 0$$

$$TC(Q, q, m) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left[\frac{D_n}{m q_n} S_n + C_n D_n + \frac{q_n H_n^V}{2} \left(m_n \left(1 - \frac{D_n}{p_n} \right) - 1 + 2 \frac{D_n}{p_n} \right) \right] i$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \frac{d \Delta_p(s, \phi)}{d \phi} \\ \frac{d \Delta_M(s, \phi)}{d \phi} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \delta - \Delta & -\beta \\ -\beta & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \Delta_p(s, \phi) \\ \Delta_M(s, \phi) \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\int_0^{\infty} (\log \sin x)^2 dx = -\frac{1}{2} (\log 2)^2$$

Section 2: The Players Introduction



The players begin the one-shot travelling with Battery through the Sierra Nevadas on their way to The Ciphers. They've received payment in the form of NCR Dollars - there are hints scattered around the village that they have murdered previous lone wanderers and stolen their belongings. They would not have this money otherwise. The one-shot begins with the party rolling against Endurance to see if they are knocked down by the sudden emergence of Radscorpions from the soil, once the Radscorpions are defeated, the players continue onward into the Cipher Village. The villagers are nervous and many cower from the strangers - they are given a shared adobe home to live inside whilst they stay with the tribe. Roleplay should ensue as they introduce themselves and settle in.

The morning after settling in, the village is approached by four Viper Scouts equipped with Leather Armor and poison-tipped Spears, declaring that Asp - the Great Snake - is coming for them in six days and to surrender their things now. If one is left alive, they will surrender and can reveal the location of the Viper's Den. Diplomatic resolutions are likely impossible - The Vipers are in the hills of NCR territory and are absolutely desperate It's all or nothing for them.

Section 3: Preparing for the Battle



There are six days before the Vipers attack. The players can either go on the **Defensive** or the **Offensive**.

The Defense:

Each day each player may commit themselves to a single task. Players may come up with their own tasks, but below is a list of possible tasks with suggested results. There is a pool of 30 able-bodied Ciphers who are able to be assigned to these tasks. Multiple players may work on the same task. If the task does not require townsfolk or if there are enough for each player to have their own set, then each player rolls separately for any Skill checks. If there are not enough Ciphers, a second player may help the first and give them advantage if they have a tag in an appropriate skill.

- **Build Defenses:** It will take two days to scavenge the materials from the remnants of the National Park and build a fortification for each entrance to the village canyon - with a successful Charisma -3 Check followed by a successful Prospecting check this can be decreased to one day by inspiring the Ciphers to push harder and utilizing Prospecting to more easily scavenge junk.
- **Build and Set Traps:** One player with a group of 10 townsfolk will be able to build a 5'x5', 10' deep Punji-Stick trap in one day. The modifier against Viper Perception to spot the pit trap is set by a Survival, Sleight, or Security check by the player. Furthermore, Coyote Traps can also be received by using Prospecting to search the National Park.
- **Train the Tribe:** HtH characters can spend a day training a group of ten Ciphers. It takes two days of training to grant that group a +20% Melee Skill to attacks with a Melee roll or one day with a Survival check by a character with Melee Weapons tag. Each group of Ciphers may only receive this bonus once.

- **Craft Weapons:** Working with Hex, the players can produce 15 Spears a day utilizing Survival and then Repair checks. If these fail, it is reduced to 7. Hex can build five on his own, if prompted.
- **Rebuild Firearms:** If a Security -20% Check is passed and the concealed cave rooms are opened, Repair or Small Guns checks can be used to assemble the firearms. Small Guns characters can similarly train Ciphers in the usage of the guns. This takes one day. If the roll fails, the firearms are too old to be assembled to functioning condition.
- **Make a Tesla Super-Cannon:** Trig will suggest an idea she's had for a long time - Hex's "Blaster" but on a much, much bigger scale. She has plans for a stationary cannon that can be fired once before overloading. It takes two days to build this, each day requiring a Lab Science check - if it fails, it requires an extra day. The players must choose which entrance they plan to place the cannon on. If fired, it will destroy ten vipers. It cannot be fired at any targets within the village as it will cause massive destruction. If the players restore the computer and retrieve the box of Tesla tech, they only have to make a single Repair roll and can have it built within a day.



The Offense:

If players opt instead to hunt the Vipers down, they must first succeed in tracking their den in an abandoned mine in the mountains. If the players captured a Viper Scout, they may be able to force the location out of him, in which case it takes them one day to reach the lair. Otherwise, they will need to succeed on a series of Survival checks to track his location. Before they leave, Azkee begs them to not spend too long searching, as they will be left defenseless while the party is gone.

For each day of tracking each member of the party can make a Survival or Perception check with a disadvantage to look for clues to the location of the Viper's Den. In total, the party needs successful checks equal to the number of party members to find it. The results of players rolls are described as finding signs of footpaths and temporary camps. Once the players have made at least half of the required successes, describe that they are moving east towards the mountains. If players figure out that the den is likely in an abandoned mine, give them advantage on remaining checks. Depending on how many days it took them to find the den, there could be half of their force (18 warriors), the full number or they could already be marching out.

Section 4: The Battle



At sunrise, the Vipers will arrive. The attack comes in three waves. If the players have not fortified all entrances to the canyon, Azkee suggests the players and Hex defend the most vulnerable spot and the Ciphers defend the fortified positions. Otherwise, it's up to player choice to plan the defense.

The strength of the Cipher's Defense is determined by a "Progress Clock" - the Vipers will have to roll against a 1d6 - on a 4-6 they fill one slice of the "clock" - the complexity or existence of the clock depends on the strength of preparations. The clock represents the outcome of a battle not involving the players. Every two defense "points" adds complexity to the clock. By default, there are no clocks. Every two turns of battle the Vipers make a roll. If they complete the clock, the Vipers defeat the defensive barrier.

- Add 1 for every 10 Ciphers who are trained.
- Add 1 for every 10 Ciphers who have spears.
- Add 2 if a fortification has been completed or 1 if half finished.
- Add 1 for every gun given to the Ciphers
- Add 1 for every trap set around the areas guarded by the Ciphers



If the Tesla-Super Cannon is completed, it wipes out 10 Vipers in one blast before overheating and melting down. The breakdown of the Vipers forces is as such, there are 36 total that attack the village:

6 Viper Chuckers - Leather Armor, 5x Molotov Cocktails, 10x Throwing Spears

12 Viper Gunners - Leather Armor, Double-Barreled Shotguns

18 Viper Warriors - Leather Armor, Poison-Tipped Spears

Finally, Asp "The Great Snake" (Heavy Metal Armor, Grenade Rifle) and four of his Viper Soldiers (Metal Armor, Hunting Rifles) will make a final attack on the player's side of the defense.

Section 5: The Aftermath



The battlefield is eerily quiet, the aftermath of the battle is highly dependent on the players. Many of the Ciphers could be dead, barely any, and several of the players may have died in the Ciphers defense. Either way, they'll be shocked that they won, and will begin to bury their dead. The Ciphers will urge that it is time for the players to leave - their reward is whatever they can take from the bodies of the dead, as the Ciphers have nothing to offer them but knowledge they can't possibly understand.