

# **Campfire Tales**

## **Horriſying Tales From The Dead I**

**by Drac von Stoller**

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We had just gotten back from a Halloween party when John, being the only non-believer in ghosts, asked Karen and me if the stories about the many sightings of spirits in the old ghost town were true. Of course, we said they were all true, and of course, his response was, „These stories are just a bunch of made up stuff to keep nosy people from vandalizing the old town.“

„Well, if it’s not true, then why don’t all of us camp out tonight at the ghost town and put these old stories to rest once and for all?“ I replied. I told John that I would get my tent and some blankets. Karen volunteered to bring some food and flashlights, and John said he would bring some firewood, beer, and his guitar. I

decided we would all ride together in my car. Everyone was excited about telling our friends at school all about our spooky tales when we got back, but little did we know that there would be no tales to say because we would never be heard from again.

As we were driving down the dusty, country road, John was strumming on his guitar as we all sang along joyfully. We were having the time of our lives just being together because we were such great friends. Just up ahead of us was a man in the middle of the road on a horse.

„Slow down!“ Karen exclaimed. I immediately slammed on my brakes. John doesn't scare easily, but this man on the horse in the middle of this dark, deserted road gave John the willies. The closer we got to the mounted figure the more frightened we all became, but we just kept driving. We blamed it on the beer we were drinking and proceeded to the old ghost town. We couldn't face all of our friends the next day and say we were too scared to camp out there. We would be the laughing stock of the school, so we continued onward.

As we approached the entrance to the town, the car stalled. We were not going to walk back home since it was too far and we didn't want to end up running for our lives from that mysterious man on the horse. So, we gathered our belongings and crossed through the entrance. We turned our flashlights on and looked for a safe place to camp for the night.

„Where did that man on the horse go?“ Karen asked as we walked.

„Who knows and who cares,“ John quickly replied.

All of a sudden, the mounted figure appeared and charged full steam ahead in our direction. The figure's eyes were as red as fire. We all froze in our tracks. The figure rode right through us as if we were the ghosts. It was enough to turn any skeptic into a believer. I told everyone to get our cell phones out and call our parents to come to pick us up, but none of our phones would get a signal.

„Well it looks like we're stuck here for the night, and we may as well make the best of it,“ said John.

„This looks like a good place to pitch a tent—right next to the saloon and bank,“ I replied. John placed the firewood on the ground and tried to get the fire started while Karen and I got the tent set up. We all gathered around the campfire to keep warm and sang a few songs to try to lighten the mood. Karen decided after a while that we should tell some stories about the old ghost town.

„All right, who wants to tell their story first?“ Karen asked excitedly.

John put his guitar down, took another gulp of beer and said, „Since I'm the biggest skeptic, I'll tell my story first. My father told me this tale when I was a little boy. You see, my father's grandfather used to be the sheriff in this ghost town and would always run into trouble with some of the gunslingers. That was especially true with a man nicknamed Six Gun Jones. Every time Six Gun Jones drank too much whiskey while playing poker, someone ended up dead. When Six Gun lost a game, he would tip the table over and shoot every player in the head. He'd grab up all the money, run out of the saloon, jump on his horse and ride out of town. Until one day the Sheriff had enough. 'This time I'll be ready and waiting to shoot him in both legs,' the Sheriff said. 'I'll drag him out of the saloon and hang him high in the middle of town.'

„Sure enough, Six Gun Jones was back in town with his whiskey in one hand and his six-gun in the other. Everyone scattered about the saloon as Six Gun took a swig of whiskey. He shot his gun in the air and said, ‚Let’s play some poker boys!‘ After a few rounds of poker and whiskey, losing every hand, he threw his whiskey bottle down and flipped the table over. He was getting ready to shoot every player in the head and make his getaway with the money, but little did he know that one of the players was the Sheriff in disguise.

„The Sheriff drew his guns and shot Six Gun in both of his legs before he even got his hand on his weapon, Six Gun Jones fell to the floor, begging for help. The Sheriff came over, just as he planned to do, and dragged Six Gun out of the saloon. He took him to the gallows and hung Six Gun for all the killings in the town.“

After John had finished, it was Karen’s turn. „So, what’s your story?“ he asked her.

„My story dates a few years before yours,“ Karen said. The town had just struck gold, and the people were pleased and enjoying life. That is until Tombstone Willie came to town and tore it all apart. Willie was a very selfish and mean man who stood about 6 feet 6 inches tall. I hope you all don’t have a weak stomach because this story is pretty gruesome.

„It all started on a dusk day when Tombstone got into a fight with another man over a woman. Tombstone said to the man, ‚Let’s go outside the saloon and finish this. No guns, just fists.‘ The man agreed and followed him outside. Little did he know that this would be his last fight.

„Tombstone reared back and threw the first punch. He struck him so hard that the man spun around, hit the ground, and passed out. Tombstone ran one of his spurs from the top of the man’s head to the bottom of his leg and dragged him behind the saloon. Tombstone dug him a shallow grave and buried his lifeless body. The next day, he returned with a headstone to mark the grave of his first kill. That was how Tombstone Willie got his nickname. He went on to kill about 10 of the townspeople, and the name stuck.

„I’m sure you would like to know what happened to Tombstone Willie. Well, one day he was burying a man behind the saloon and a horse came alongside him. Before Tombstone Willie turned around to see who it was, one of the fathers of his victims was on the horse, swinging his lasso above his head. He threw it around Tombstone Willie’s neck and dragged his lifeless body out of town. The enraged father cut off Tombstone Willie’s head and buried the body. To this day, no one knows what happened to Tombstone Willie’s head.“

At this point, I was shaking in my boots by their tales. „Well guys, I’m not sure if I can top your stories, but I’ll give it a try. This outlaw I’m about to tell you about is horrible too. He goes by the name of Lasso Bill, and if he catches you cheating at poker, you’re a dead man.

„One rainy night, Lasso Bill entered the saloon, ready to play some poker. He needed some money to eat on since he didn’t have much money. Lasso Bill was pretty good at poker and never cheated. To him, there was nothing better than winning big. The Kingston Clan are notorious for cheating and didn’t care what the townspeople thought of them. It just so happened that on this day, Lasso Bill decided to play against the clan. While they were playing, Lasso Bill noticed one of

the Kingston brothers sliding an ace under his cards and he knew something was up. Lasso Bill was getting dealt one bad hand after another, so he slammed his cards down on the table and yelled, „No one—I mean NO ONE—cheats Lasso Bill out of his money!“ The Kingston clan just sat back and laughed at his threats.

„You think this is funny? I’ll show you funny!“ He quickly pulled both six shooters out and shot the cheating clan to death. Lasso Bill kicked the table over and got out of his chair, grabbing his lasso from the floor. He pulled the bullet-filled bodies of the Kingston clan together and swung his lasso around in the air until it slipped over their corpses. Lasso Bill pulled the rope tight and dragged the boys out of the saloon and tied the rope around his horse and rode out of town. He went all the way to the top of the hill and buried the brothers. When word got out about what Lasso Bill had done, he was the town’s hero.

„That’s my story. I know my tale had a happy ending, but Lasso Bill was still a fearless outlaw during the old western days.“

„Hey, John, did you hear something?“ said I.

„Yes!“ Karen and John exclaimed at the same time. „It’s the man on the horse with the fiery red eyes! And this time he’s not alone!“

„It can’t be! No! It can’t be!! Please don’t hurt us. We were only camping out and telling stories about the old ghost town! We meant no harm!“

„No! No! No!!!“

The next morning, as school was in progress, the roll was called.

„John?“ No answer.

„Karen?“ No answer.

„Mike?“ No answer.

Only the charred campfire, untouched tent, and broken-down car remained. No trace of John, Karen and Mike were ever found.

