WHERE THE TRAIL ENDS

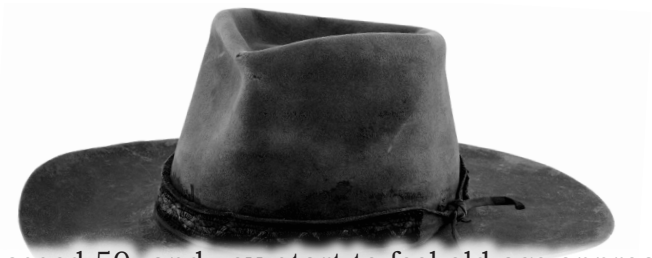
A Fastaval scenario by
Anne Ratzer & Lars Kroll

THE VETERAN

"Grit"

You keep your breathing calm and slow. Fear is almost as sure to kill you as a bullet, and over time you have taught yourself to stay calm, almost no matter what situation you are in, to control the fear and sense it in your enemies, never in yourself. So you keep your breathing under control, because it is the first place you can see and hear the fear.
Your gaze flickers for a moment, up and to the right. The sun is high in the sky, but the angle is in your favor, and the light won't be in your eyes.
You look around at the others, searching for signs of fear, overconfidence, nervousness, all the things that can decide the outcome of a duel before it has started. You don't find what you are looking for. The others are of a special breed, as you are, each and every one of them at your level, each of them different from the others.
***The Gambler** - he lives and breathes for the thrill of the game, any game. For him fear is like that woman you really shouldn't be seeing, but you just can't stop. It is something he seeks out not despite the danger involved, but because of it. He is addicted to the thrill, the excitement, the fear, but unlike other people it does not make him weaker. On the contrary.*
***The Bounty Hunter** - someone you do not make the mistake of underestimating. Many have done that, and they are now stuck in a cell, wondering how they got beaten by a woman, or six feet underground, not wondering about anything anymore.*
***The Outlaw** - in many ways he is so different from you. In others, he is someone you envy. He makes his own rules, and doesn't take orders from anyone. A loner, independent of others, a free spirit. And clearly very skilled, if he can live this long with so many bounties on their heads.*

The others, like you, are waiting for the right moment. Who draws first? And more importantly… who will fire at you? You know what if any of them try to shoot you at this distance, they won't miss. So who should you shoot at? Maybe this is your final shootout. Maybe this is the time you die. You draw another breath, and it is just as calm and slow as before. Maybe it is about time.



You have passed 50, and you start to feel old age approaching. Your body complains more than ever about aching joints and sore muscles, your reactions are slower, and you have to squint to see clearly at short distances, like when you have to read. On the other hand, you have an amount of experience that far exceeds most people you meet - an experience earned over many years, in some of the worst confrontations and hotspots: The Mexican War, the California Gold Rush, the Civil War, the Indian Wars… You have seen it all, been everywhere, and built up a reputation that has, over time, become almost a legend. Some see you as a hero, others as a villain, but when it comes down to it, lead and blood have the same colors, no matter what you fight for - or against. And maybe you are getting too tired to fight anymore. Maybe you just want peace.

QUESTIONS FOR INSPIRATION

- **Why are you always drawn towards conflict and war? Is it for the cause? For the money? For personal reasons?**
- **Have you ever changed side in a war? Why?**
- **Is there something you would never do, even if it was a direct order, given in war time?**
- **Which dreams have you had for your life? Have you achieved any of them?**
- **Who will miss you when you die?**