

A Sample from Fred Adams Jr.'s upcoming novel Six Gun terrors Volume Two: Fang and Claw coming in 2015 from Airship 27 Productions:

At twilight, a mist rose from the plain below and crept up the mountainside like a thief. The moon would be up soon, and everyone in the camp was edgy. The guard around the camp was doubled and Durken was posted on the hillside over the mine entrance. A hundred feet to his right was McKenna, and Beckley to his left. Below, Butler sat alone at the fire pit, wrapped in his bearskin cloak, slumped as if he were dozing, but Durken knew full well he was wide awake and had all his senses tuned to the gathering darkness. Butler volunteered for the post and nobody argued. He'd set aside his Winchester in favor of an old style .52 caliber Sharps buffalo gun. "Whatever I hit with this," he boasted, "stays down."

The horses had been moved into the mine tunnel to prevent them from being run off and leaving the group stranded. "They didn't attack last night," Harper had said, "and maybe they've moved on, but maybe they haven't. We have to behave as if they're still out there. If they don't attack tonight, we'll move out in the morning and get off this damned mountain."

So they waited and they watched and they listened. The forest at night is never silent; there is always the call of a nocturnal bird, the snap of a branch, or the swish of some creature or another passing through the dense brush, but this night, there was no sound, as if the mist were a shroud over a corpse.

Below in the mine tunnel, Travis and his men were crouched just inside the entrance, rifles at the ready. If the Tonnewa raid us tonight, thought Durken, we'll give as good as we get. Like Butler said, they bleed the same as we do.

At the fire pit, Butler thumbed back the hammer of his rifle. His sharp ears had picked up just the faintest movement beyond the circle of the firelight. He raised an eyelid barely enough to make out a dim shape the size of a man in the mist. Come and get it, you bastard, he thought. I got one with your name on it.

The shape crept a step closer, and Butler ever so slightly turned the barrel of the Sharps toward the approaching target. Get him full in the chest, he thought.

At that moment, a night breeze sent the mist swirling away for a second, and Butler stared into the raw face of horror. It was a man, or what had once been a man, but its face was furred and angular, fanged like a cougar, and its sinewy arms ended in five fingered hands that hooked into claws. The beast gave a coughing snarl, and charged.

The Sharps roared, and the beast tumbled backward, knocked down by the shot. Butler jumped to his feet and jacked another shell into the chamber, swinging the muzzle to one side then the other looking for more attackers. And that was when he saw the creature he had shot rise to its feet again.

He fired a second shot into its chest and the beast fell again, but by this time, Butler had other things to worry about. At least twenty of them came charging through the trees into the camp.

Behind him, rifles roared, but had little effect. The catman that Butler had shot sprung at him but found the bearskin cape as effective as a chain mail shirt in deflecting its claws. The fanged head snapped at Butler's throat, but he pushed the jaws away before they could close on him. He dropped the Sharps and closed his hands around the furred throat, put his thumbs under the catman's chin and pushed upward, snapping its neck with a sharp crack.

A second beast jumped onto Butler's back and would have killed him for sure if a blast from the miners' .10 gauge shotgun hadn't taken its head off at the neck. Butler turned and saw Harper clutching the smoking gun. A catman pounced on Harper, knocking away the gun and ripping at the Captain's leg. With a feral roar Butler grabbed the creature with both hands by the scruff of its neck and swung it around, hurling it into the fire pit.

The beast rose in the pit its fur aflame, clawing at its face and making a sound that mixed the yowl of a panther with a human scream. It fell back into the fire and didn't rise again.

Durken fired three quick shots into another of the catmen but with no more effect than a hornet's sting. McKenna had scrambled down from his position and was dragging the Captain to the tunnel entrance when one of the creatures struck the back of the sergeant's neck with a blow that swiveled his head like a broken doll's.

Butler tackled the beast and wrapped his arms around it, holding it face to face. By this time, Durken and Beckley had dropped into the clearing. "Get him in the tunnel!" Butler shouted, squeezing the monster in a death grip as it sunk its fangs into his shoulder. Butler bellowed with pain and with a heave jerked the catman upward then down snapping its spine. The creature screeched and Butler dropped it to the ground where it flopped helpless like a landed trout.

But Butler's victory was short lived. Three of the catmen leapt on him and brought him down. Durken pulled his Bowie knife from its sheath and plunged it between the shoulders of one of the beasts. It yowled and tried desperately to claw the knife free, but its hunched shoulders wouldn't let it reach the handle.

Two more of the catmen charged at Durken, and he drew his Colt and fired two shots point blank into the face of the nearest one, knocking it backward into its companion. He cast a quick look at the pair ravaging Butler and realized that he was done. Durken spun and dashed toward the tunnel's mouth, the monsters closing on him.