

## Caleb Morner (formerly Pastor Solomon

Crosby)

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**Renowned cardsharp, former priest**

Once, you were a wild, fire and brimstone priest of a particular faith, which had sought its promised land in the Wild West. No more: now you are a wanderer, a gambler, and occasionally a drunkard or an outlaw. But primarily a gambler.

See, your church had decided to enforce its beliefs by sending armed men (and occasionally women) from town to town, decreeing who was just and who was not. These men were chosen for strength of their beliefs, which meant that they were fanatical in their actions. And that fanaticism meant that when people would not listen to them any more, they would resort to the way of the gun to force their will upon innocent townsfolk. Often, these "**Watchdogs of the Lord**" would cause more tribulation and sorrow than they solved.

Once, you were one of these Watchdogs. After one town turned out particularly bloody, you decided to quit. You never returned to report to the church elders, you never explained your reasons for quitting. You just made yourself a new life on the frontier, living by your wits.

In the years since you left, you tried several jobs of varying morality and legality. Eventually, you discovered that you had a knack for cards, most specifically poker. You have built up some fair amount of fame and wealth travelling on riverboats and gambling for a living. Sometimes you are flush with winnings, sometimes you are penniless and looking for any way to make a buck. Unfortunately for you, your current situation is the latter one: it has been months since you won anything, so your funds are almost entirely tapped out. You're here in **Providence Junction** to win big, and don't want to let anything get in the way.

Being broke these last few months, you've had to take on a sizable debt. So now you owe the loanshark **Lulu Kingsbury** bigtime. If you can win the tournament pot (or otherwise obtain a bunch of money) then you can probably pay off your debt to her.

Aw, shoot. You're here to play some poker, and two of God's Watchdogs show up to start trouble. You know that's going to end badly: they'll decry the immorality of gambling and drinking and everything else happening here. Someone will stand up to them, telling them that they don't have any authority over folks not of the Faith. Arguments will escalate to violence, and someone will wind up dead. You hope it ain't you. Even worse than that, you recognize one of the Dogs, and no doubt he recognizes you: he's **Brother Artemis Cook**, your former protégé. Once, he was a wild, murderin' criminal,

and you took him in, showed him the faith and made him into the church's wild, murderin' zealot. You hope he ain't as violent as he used to be, but you're prepared to defend yourself if he is. You don't recognize his associate, **Sister Fidelia Baum**. Maybe she can be reasoned with, or maybe she can keep Cook in check. You wonder if she knows the list of robberies, murders and miscellaneous crimes Cook's wanted for in a variety of states and territories.