PALEOMYTHIC

Stone and Sorcery
in the land of Ancient Mu

By

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Imagine a world before recorded history…

Contents

PALEOMYTHIC

Stone and sorcery in the land of Ancient Mu.

Imagine a world before recorded history, when tribes and kingdoms fought over primordial lands, when warriors struggled against savage and gigantic beasts, and when nefarious priests conceived their evil plans, whilst hidden away in their mysterious stone temples. This is a world where weapons are made of stone, wood and bone, and where armour is a thick hide or fur. It is a world where fabulous gems reward the bold, and where the curious can explore cave cities and discover strange new tribes. This is the era before time, the time that never was, the Paleomythic.

What is Paleomythic?

Paleomythic is a Stone & Sorcery RPG, a phrase coined to describe a genre in which the adventure concepts of sword and sorcery are applied to a stone age setting. In a sword and sorcery game, players characters are typically humans armed with little more than a sword, facing malevolent mages or hideous monsters in their quest for wealth and renown. Their rewards are chests filled with gold, or the gratitude of exotic princesses and rich kings.

Stone and sorcery takes these ideas back in time to a mythic stone age. Here, the hero is also recognisably human, but armed with a simple wood spear, a cudgel or flint weapon. The rewards are similar, though marvellous gemstones replace gold coins. The dangers are many and varied. Characters may face evil priests and nefarious witch doctors, as well as prehistoric beasts and savage beast men.

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

For those players new to role playing games, here's a brief description of some basic concepts:

A role-playing game (RPG) is a game in which players act out the roles of characters in a fictional setting. This is done with the aid of a set of guidelines or rules, that help to govern the outcome of actions taken by the player characters (PCs). The rules are administered by a referee, called the Games Master / Mistress (GM). It is the GMs responsibility to play the roles of the other characters within the setting, known as non-player characters (NPCs), and to create the outline and details of the story within which the PCs participate. The GM provides the descriptions of all of the elements of the game world, the things the characters perceive and the results of the characters actions.

Role-playing games are typically played sitting around a table, and the game proceeds with the players and GM describing the various actions of characters. For example, a player might say "My character enters the cave" and the GM would relate the consequences of doing so, such as what the character sees, or the actions of a non player character within the cave etc. If a player has his character attempt an action where there is an element of doubt as to wether he would succeed, the RPG rules can be applied to resolve the action. In most RPGs, the GM acts as the arbiter of the rules, deciding when the rules should be employed, and the outcome of actions.

Role-playing games usually have a plot outline and descriptions of events, locations and non-player characters created by the GM. This is the game 'scenario' or 'story', and provides the framework within which the player characters interact. An example of a simple plot might be:

A tribal chief asks the PCs to help find a stolen relic.

The GM would describe the chief, and would talk to the characters as the chief when discussing the task. The players in turn would respond as their characters, perhaps negotiating a reward for successful completion of the task.

The GM would have notes about the chief (such as his name, physical description, personality and game statistics), the events that occur whilst the characters travel, the details of any antagonists they meet and so on. These would be kept secret by the GM, and would be revealed only when the appropriate point came within the game.

Unlike most other games, a role-playing game has no definitive ending. Instead, a game may have a conclusion to a particular story, but

the characters generally continue on to the next adventure. In this sense, a role playing game more closely resembles a series of books that feature the same characters.

Likewise, a role playing game doesn't really have 'winners' and 'losers'. If the player characters survive an adventure, the players can be considered to have 'won', but then the death of a player character may also be considered a 'win', if the circumstances surrounding the death were entertaining to the players. The GM 'wins' if he manages to both have fun and create an entertaining game for the players. It should be evident then, that to be victorious in a role playing game one simply needs to enjoy the experience.

Dice

Paleomythic uses standard six sided dice. The dice are used in several ways, and are noted in the rules in a manner based on their intended use. Some of the ways dice are used in the game are as follows:

1d: The roll of a single die.

1d3: The roll of a single die, with the result divided by two and rounded up. This means rolls of 1 or 2 count as a result of 1, 3 or 4 as a 2, and 5 or 6 as a 3.

2d: The roll of two dice, adding the results together. The number preceding the letter 'd' defines the number of dice to roll, so 3d means roll three dice, 4d for four dice and so on.

11-66: The roll of two dice, reading the results separately to achieve a score of between 11 and 66. The best way to do this is to have dice of different colours, such as a red die and a white die. Players can then roll both dice, and read the red die first (as a 'tens' die) and the white die second (as a 'units' die). For example, a roll of 3 on the red die and 4 on the white die would be a result of 34.

ANCIENT MU

Step back in time, many thousands of years, to the land of Ancient Mu...

Ancient Mu is a large continent which has existed for many millennia. It was once the home of the great and terrible beasts known as the saurians, creatures that seem to have vanished from the world.

Ancient Mu is now the domain of man, though there still remain areas of the continent that are wholly untamed, where monsters and strange beast men dwell.

Ancient Mu has a varied terrain, with vast jungles, barren wastes, arid deserts, dense forests, mountains, hills and grassland. In these places, many different sorts of people dwell, including strange tribes with peculiar ways and customs, and dwellers of ancient cities, that live amongst crumbling ruins and uncanny obelisks.

The inhabitants of Ancient Mu are much like modern humans, though perhaps a little hardier. Like modern humans, the people of Ancient Mu have a variety of different skin colours, hair styles, manners of speech and of dress. The player characters will be from amongst these types of people.

Ancient Mu also has other sorts of human-like beings, and these are the various types of 'beast men' that can be encountered in some of the wilder areas of Ancient Mu. The beast men are typically savage, backward peoples and are invariably hostile.

The continent of Ancient Mu is discussed more fully in a later section.
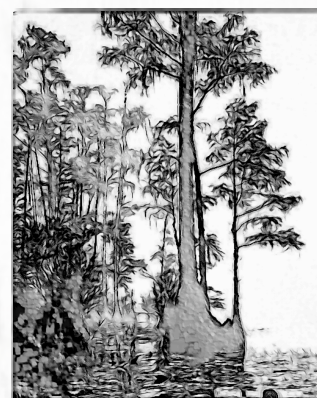
GAME MECHANICS

Paleomythic uses a simple game mechanic to resolve activity. This is used throughout the rules, and involves the roll of a single die to resolve a 'test'.

Tests are used to determine the results of activities where the outcome is uncertain.
To make a test players roll a single die. Characters typically have a 3 in 6 chance of performing a challenging action successfully. This means a roll of 1, 2 or 3 on the die indicates success.

If a character has a talent relevant to an activity or task, the chance is increased by 1 (to 4 in 6).
If a character has a flaw relevant to an activity or task, the chance is reduced by 1 (to 2 in 6).

See the Characters section for details on talents and flaws.

Success margin

Sometimes the degree of success is a consideration for certain activities. The degree of success, or 'success margin', is the amount by which the die roll is lower than the chance of success. This means a roll of 2 on a chance of 3 for example, gives a success margin of 1.

Opposed tests

When a character opposes another person (usually a non player character), the result of the players test must beat that of the opponents. To determine this, a test is made for each character.

If one of the characters succeeds and the other fails, the winner of the test is the character whose player rolled the success.

If both tests succeed, the winner is determined by working out the success margin of each test. The individual with the higher success margin wins.

If both tests fail, neither character has achieved success. For example, in combat if neither side succeeds with their test the participants are both considered to have failed to hit their adversary.

Generally, if an opposed test results in a tie, the test is made again. Combat is an exception, since here a tied result usually means the combatants have reached a stalemate for that turn of combat, though may continue to fight on successive turns.

Difficult tests

Sometimes an activity will be deemed difficult, but not impossible to perform. In such cases, the GM may impose a penalty to the chance of success. This is typically a modifier of -1 applied to the chance of success. Thus, a standard chance of success (normally 3 in 6) would be reduced to a 2 in 6 chance.

Rolls of 6

A test roll of 6 always counts as a failure. If a character, because of various bonuses, has a chance of success of 6 or greater, a roll of 6 still means a test fails. However, a high chance of success is still desirable, since it will give the character a greater margin of success.

CHARACTERS

To begin creating a character, players should decide on a few fundamental character details, such as sex and age.

Characters can be of either sex, and may be any age. If a player wishes, their characters sex can be determined randomly by rolling a die. A result of 1-3 indicates the character is female, a 4-6 indicates the character is male.

To determine age randomly, make a two dice, '11-66' roll (as described above). this will result in a character age of between 11 and 66.

Name

Should players be short on inspiration for a character name, the below table can be used. First, roll a die to determine how many syllables the name is composed of:

Syllable table

1-3 One syllable - roll once on the name table
4-5 Two syllables - roll twice on the name table
6 Three syllables - roll three times on the name table

Three syllable names are often hyphenated, such as 'Jaldar-Kur' or 'Amshal-Var'.
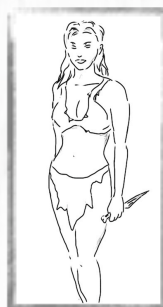
Once the name composition is determined, make an 11-66 roll on the name table for each syllable. The name table lists two possibilities; either may be chosen to form a name.

Female names:
To create a female character name, use the procedure above, adding a suffix to the result as follows (roll a die):

Suffix table

1 add 'a'
2 add 'ala'
3 add 'ea'
4 add 'en'
5 add 'ia'
6 add 'u'

Name table

11 Am / Arn
12 As / Az
13 Baal / Bal
14 Char / Chak
15 Dak / Dhu
16 Dar / Dor
21 Dun / Du
22 Far / Fay
23 Gan / Gon
24 Gar / Gor
25 Hak / Hek
26 Han / Hin
31 Hod / Hom
32 Jad / Jod
33 Jal / Jul
34 Kat / Kut
35 Ker / Kern
36 Kul / Kur
41 Lok / Lor
42 Mir / Mun
43 Nah / Nar
44 Neb / Nu
45 Orm / Orn
46 Rah / Rig
51 Sef / Set
52 Shal / Sho
53 Sol / Sun
54 Shul / Sul
55 Taal / Tal
56 Tor / Torv
61 Tul / Tur
62 Ulf / Ulv
63 Var / Vor
64 Vul / Vun
65 Zan / Zor
66 Zol / Zul

Example
Creating a one syllable name for a female character, a result of 35 on the name table gives us 'Ker' or 'Kern'. Deciding to use 'Ker', a roll is now made on the suffix table. The result is 2, 'ala'. Added to the name 'Ker', this gives us a female name of 'Kerala'.

Spirit

Spirit measures a characters power, life force and will to live. Spirit is represented by a score, with a higher score indicating greater power.

Players may choose to have their character begin with a spirit of 9, or may opt to randomly determine spirit by rolling a die and adding 6 to the result (which gives a potential score of 7 to 12). Players should choose which method to use prior to making a roll.

Spirit may increase over time; see the change section for details.

Spirit is often noted in a shorthand manner using the letter S. Thus, S9 means the character has a spirit score of 9.

Talents and Flaws

Talents represent those areas of skill and natural ability in which the character excels.

Characters begin with at least one talent.

Players may choose additional talents, to an initial maximum of three. However, for each talent chosen, a player must also select a flaw.

Players may choose from the below list of talents. If a player wishes to trust to luck, a two dice roll can be made on the table to determine the characters initial talents.

A flaw is the opposite of a talent, and represents an area of ability in which the character is weak. A flaw reduces the chance of success for tests involving the associated activity by 1. Flaws are noted alongside the opposite talent.

Characters begin with a single flaw. They may take others in order to acquire additional talents.

Note that a characters flaw must not be the opposite of any talents he possesses (so, a character that's 'resilient' may not also be 'sickly' for example).

Talents and Flaws table (2d)

The below table lists talents first, with the associated flaw in italics.

2 **Accurate** (the ability to aim, throw and shoot). *Inaccurate*
3 **Agile** (the ability to leap, balance, climb, tumble and dance). *Clumsy*
4 **Aware** (the ability to notice, search, eavesdrop and detect hidden items). *Oblivious*
5 **Brave** (the ability to fight, brawl and use melee weapons). *Meek*
6 **Charismatic** (the ability to persuade, negotiate, inspire and sway others). *Dull*
7 **Dexterous** (the ability to work delicately, do sleight of hand tricks, steal). *Awkward*
8 **Guileful** (the ability to be sneaky, to remain hidden, to conceal things). *Careless*
9 **Resilient** (the ability to resist pain, illness, poisons and other hardships). *Sickly*
10 **Strong** (the ability to perform feats of strength, to lift, carry, shove and so on). *Weak*
11 **Wilful** (the ability to resist failure, coercion, stress and to keep trying). *Passive*
12 **Wise** (the ability to deduce, learn, comprehend and conclude). *Ignorant*

Class

Each player character begins with a single class. Classes represent special and potent skills, training or mystical abilities possessed by the character. Although a character begins with just one class, it is possible for additional classes to be acquired (see the change section). Players may choose their characters class, or can determine it randomly with a 11-66 roll.
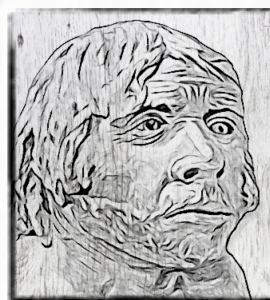
Class table (11-66)

11 Ape Man
12 Barbarian
13 Beast Master
14 Brawler
15 Cannibal
16 Caster
21 Cave Painter
22 Crafter
23 Cultist
24 Dancer
25 Fire Maker
26 Fisher
31 Gatherer
32 Head Shrinker
33 Healer
34 Hunter
35 Medicine Man
36 Mystic
41 Priest
42 Prowler
43 Ritualist
44 Savage
45 Scavenger
46 Seer
51 Shaman
52 Slave
53 Slaver
54 Snake Charmer
55 Soothsayer
56 Storyteller
61 Summoner
62 Tracker
63 Trapper
64 Warrior
65 Wild Man
66 Witchdoctor

Ape Man

Characters with this class have an ability possessed by the ancestors of human species. Ape men (and women) have the unique ability known as 'brachiation', or tree swinging locomotion. Characters in forest or jungle terrain can opt to travel using this type of locomotion, and when doing so can travel twice as fast as normal movement speed (i.e' spirit multiplied by two). In addition, an ape man character adds +1 to all climbing and balancing tests, and 1d3 to the distance the character can leap. See the activities and hazards section for details.

Barbarian

A character with the barbarian class has the ability to deal greater damage with a melee weapon. For each hit the player should add 1d3 to the damage caused, in addition to any other damage bonuses.

Beast Master

The beast master (or mistress) class allows a character to have animal companions. Characters get a number of animals equal to their spirit score divided by three. Animal types should be chosen when the character first obtains the class, with an extra animal chosen when spirit increases sufficiently. Animals stay within the vicinity of their master or mistress, and will appear when required, at a signal chosen by the player (typically a special call or gesture). Animals will aid a beast master in performing a specific activity, as long as the character spends a few turns observing the animal. Players may determine their animals randomly by rolling 1d:

1 Bat: Although not much of a help in combat, a bat is an asset when navigating in darkness. A bat can be held aloft as if holding a torch, and will provide echo location navigation in complete darkness (using body movements and squeaks to direct the character). This can do this as many times as is required.

2 Cat (fang): In addition to be a useful companion in combat, the fang cat will show the character the best sneaking path, giving the character a +1 to a sneak test once per day.

3 Lizard (cave): Cave lizards make good fighting companions, and aid in navigation in caves. On command a cave lizard can, once per day, lead the character back through caves and caverns to where they started.

4 Monkey: Though not a particularly good fighting companion, a monkey will show the character the best way to climb and leap, giving a +1 bonus to a single climbing test, and adding 1 to the distance a character leaps, once each per day.

5 Rat: These small creatures can be used to spread disease to foes with their bites when commanded to do so (see the beasts section for details). A rat can also lead a character to the nearest source of food (such as an animal carcass, nest, edible plant etc) once per day.

6 Wolf: In addition to being a loyal partner in combat, a wolf also aids in tracking, adding +1 to a test once per day.

Animals will fight with the character if capable of doing so, using their natural abilities. If an animal is killed, another animal of the players choice will appear to the character in 2d days. See the Beasts section for descriptions of animals.

Brawler

Brawler characters are skilled improvisational wrestlers, relying on their innate abilities as much as their weapons. A brawler character receives a +1 bonus for the combat techniques of 'bashing' and 'grabbing' foes. In addition, brawler characters add 1 to the damage the do in unarmed combat.

Cannibal

This rather unsavoury class confers an ancient ability to acquire abilities from the dead. The character must consume some flesh from the deceased person, then a test is made, with resilient the applicable talent. If successful, the character temporarily acquires a talent or class that was once possessed by the deceased person. The success margin of the test determines the number of hours the character has the ability, with a minimum of 1 hour (if the success margin is 0). Only one attempt to gain an ability is possible (per cadaver).

A character may acquire just one ability from a cadaver, and the GM decides which one is obtained. A character may possess several of these extra abilities at a time, up to a limit equal to his spirit score divided by three (round up).

Caster

The caster class confers great skill with ranged weapons. When making ranged attacks, the character gets to make a number of attacks per turn equal to his spirit score divided by three (round up). These may be at the same or different targets. For example, a caster with S9 could fire three arrows per turn (making a test to hit for each one), or throw three rocks per turn and so on.

Cave painter

A cave painter is an artist, able to decorate caves and depict scenes on cave walls. A cave painter also has the ability to summon animal spirits with his art. The cave painter must spend a turn drawing the desired spirit on a nearby wall. The success margin of a test (with wise applicable) then determines if the spirit will appear, based on its' type.

A rat or spider spirit requires a success margin of 0 or higher.
A cat, lizard, or snake spirit requires a success margin of 1 or higher.
A scorpion or wolf spirit requires a success margin of 2 or higher.

When a spirit appears, it will obey one command issued by the character (such as attack a foe). Once it has completed this task, the GM should roll a die to see what the spirit does. On a 1-5 it will depart the area, to find a place to haunt. On a roll of 6 it will attack the cave painter himself.

When an animal spirit has taken damage equal to its spirit score, it is banished back from whence it came. A character may not bring forth additional spirits until the most recently summoned one has either completed its' task, departed or been banished.

Crafter

A character with this class is skilled at creating items (carving wood, knapping flint and so on). Crafters are able to search for materials to craft items (rather than trade for them). The success margin of a test (aware applies) indicates the number of uses of a particular material have been found. Each search takes 1d hours and use the talent aware.

When crafting an item, the character gets a +1 bonus to the test (see crafting in the activities and hazards section). In addition, a crafter gets a +1 bonus to tests to evaluate the value of a craft item.

Cultist

Cultists are characters that zealously follow a deity, spirit or supernatural being. Cultists believe they are rewarded for their devotion by being lucky and emerging from dangerous situations unscathed.

Each day, the player may roll 1d3. The result is the amount of cultists luck the character

has that day. Each time the character is exposed to something that would cause harm, a point of luck can be used to completely avoid the effects. Thus, the character, about to be struck for several points damage, could completely avoid the hit by using a point of luck. Points of luck cannot be accumulated; they are lost if not used up by the end of the day (midnight).

Dancer

Dancers are popular entertainers, and are typically able to perform a variety of dances, be they sensual dances performed for the amusement of tribal chiefs, the rhythmic dances performed at rituals, or the acrobatics and tumbling dances that amaze onlookers at tribal gatherings. A dancer gets a +1 for performance tests (see the activities and hazards section). A dancer is also quick and extremely agile, and gets a +1 bonus for tests to evade attacks (when purely dodging), and to avoid the effects of traps.

Fire maker

Characters with this class can easily make fire, and are resistant to its effects.

When making fire, the character gets a +1 bonus to the test. Fire makers may also search for fire making materials, rather than trade for fire making kits. Finding materials is a test, and the success margin determines the number of uses of fire making materials that are found. Each search takes 1d hours and uses the talent aware.

When using fire to attack a foe (such as with a burning torch), a fire maker adds +1 to the duration the foe burns. If attacked themselves by fire, a fire maker gets a +1 bonus to the test to resist fire.

Fisher

Fisher characters gain a +1 bonus for tests to swim in rough conditions, and +1 to tests to avoid drowning. Fisher characters are able to use boats and rafts, and travel at 3d metres per turn when doing so. Characters without this class travel at just 2d metres per turn.

Fisher characters can catch fish if they have a spear or net. The success margin of a test (dexterous applies) determines the number of fish caught per 1d hours, with each fish counting as a meal.

Gatherer

Gatherers gain a +1 bonus for foraging tests (see the activities and hazards section).

A gatherer may also forage for gums and resins, used to create incense. This is treated as per normal foraging, but the character finds a number of uses of resin rather than meals.

Gatherers are observant and alert, and are able to locate hidden items and concealed entrances more easily, gaining a +1 to tests. Gatherers also gain a +1 bonus to tests to eavesdrop and listen for quiet sounds.

Head Shrinker

Head shrinkers learn a secret process which allows them to shrink the heads of the dead, to make them roughly the same size as a clenched fist. The grisly heads, once shrunk, are typically worn hanging around the head shrinkers neck, and can be used for a variety of magical purposes.

A character must collect a head before it can be shrunk. This can be from the body of a fallen foe, from a grave or purchased from a trader. The process of shrinking a head takes 1d hours. A test is required, and the success margin of the test determines the possible types of head the character has created. The player may choose the type of head equal to the margin, or a lesser type if preferred. A head will perform its particular function, based on its' type, once (upon the command of the head shrinker). Once a head has performed its function, it is no longer magical, and becomes a curio unusable by the head shrinker. A head shrinker is limited to possessing, at any one time, a number of shrunken heads equal to his spirit.

Success margin 0: Shouting head: The shouting head is an alert. Left in a particular spot, such as a cave entrance, it will shout and call the character when a certain condition is met, such as a stranger entering the cave, or on the approach of a dangerous animal.

Success margin 1: Lurking head: This head is left in an area, and when collected will report on what it has seen and heard. The head will describe the activity that occurred in the area it was placed, though it will retain only limited information and will not be particularly eloquent in its report (such as; 'men wearing wolf skins came into cave, took gems hidden

under pot'). The lurking head cannot be questioned or made to elaborate, it will simply state what it perceived then fall silent. If left in an area for a considerable time, the head will report on the most significant event that occurred, as judged by the GM.

Success margin 2: Hungry head: This head is cast towards a foe. It hits automatically, latches on to the foe, and proceeds to bite. Each turn it will attack with its bite, causing damage with a successful hit (and treated as a +1 weapon). The head must be destroyed to be removed, and for this purpose it has a spirit score equal to the head shrinkers own divided by three (rounded up).

Success margin 3: Shrunken man: This head has attached to it a withered body. On command, the diminutive man animates and performs the will of the head shrinker. Once it has performed one task, or a day has elapsed, it dies. In combat, the shrunken man is treated as having a spirit score equal to the head shrinkers own, divided by two (round up). The shrunken man attacks with a +1 bite, or may use a weapon if one is to hand.

Healer
The healer class allows a character to heal himself or others using mysterious lore and locally found materials (herbs and so on). The subject of the healing is immediately healed of damage equal to the healers spirit score divided by three (round up). Once a character has been healed, he may not be healed again with this ability until further injury is received (though he could still receive treatment through other means).

Hunter
A character with the hunter class has the ability to deal greater damage with a ranged attack (either thrown or fired). For each hit the player should add 1d3 to the damage caused, in addition to any other damage bonuses.

Medicine man
The medicine man or woman has the power to cause pain and injury merely by pointing an object called a fetish at a target. A fetish is a focus for the magic, and is typically an object such as a stick or bone decorated with carvings, feathers and animal skulls.

Any single target within sight can be affected, and the target of the attack suffers damage equal to the medicine mans spirit divided by three (round up). No test is required for this attack, but if the target possesses the talent wilful, he is immune to the effect.
A medicine man can make one such attack per turn, and once a target is affected they are thereafter immune to further attacks by the medicine man for the remainder of the encounter. Armour has no effect against the damage caused.
If two medicine men launch their magical attacks against each other, the magic conflicts, and an opposed test is made. The winner causes damage to the loser, but takes no damage himself. If either of the combatants has the wilful talent, they are immune to the power of their foe.

Mystic
The mystic class confers the ability to recall ancient memories, forgotten lore and obscure knowledge. In effect, whenever a mystic character is faced with a problem that requires problem solving, or any knowledge or intellect based test, the player can make two tests simultaneously and take the best result. For example, a character faced with the task of remembering the directions to a place visited by his tribe decades ago could have two rolls made for the test. Likewise, a character trying to work out the meaning of a cave painting, or curious symbols used to decorate a statue could apply this ability.

Priest
Priests (and Priestesses) are representatives of organised religions, which are mostly established in settled areas (rather than amongst tribes). A priest is able to gain the favour of his god with a successful test (charismatic being the applicable talent for the test). This can be attempted once per day. If successful, the priest character gets a number of favours equal to the success margin of the test, with a minimum of 1. These favours take the form of 'second chances', allowing a player to re-roll a failed test at the cost of a favour. Favours are available for a single day, and if not used by midnight are lost (though the character could test for new favours for the next day). A priest may 'bless' others, granting them one or more of his favours if he so wishes (which are again lost if not used

before the end of a day). A priest may also increase his chance of gaining favours (and thus increase the number he receives) by making a sacrifice. The sacrifice varies with the deity; many require the slaughter of an animal, or else require goods or food to be offered to them (and left on an altar, or else cast in a fire, river, lake etc). The more powerful the character, the greater sacrifice he must make to gain the bonus. Therefore, the value of the sacrifice in gems must equal at least the characters spirit score, and such a sacrifice adds +1 to the chance of success when making a test for favours. This bonus accumulates with each multiple, so a character with S9 gets +1 for a sacrifice worth 9 gems, and +2 for a sacrifice worth 18 gems. For these purposes, assume food has a value equal to the number of meals it provides (thus a piece of meat good for 2 meals is the equivalent to an item worth 2 gems). The sacrifice of a person (if the god requires such an unsavoury practise) has a value equal to the victims spirit score.

Prowler

The character is able to contort his features, adjust his posture and use shadows to become inconspicuous, unrecognisable or even appear to be another creature.

The success margin of a test (guileful applies) determines the penalty applied to any test to recognise the character. This same penalty is used for tests to spot the character when sneaking. Likewise, if the character is attempting to appear to be an animal (of roughly the same size, such as a wolf or deer), the success margin is the penalty applied to tests for onlookers to determine the characters true form. The character may maintain his concealed form for minutes equal to the success margin. Thereafter, the character must rest and may not again use the ability for 1d minutes.

Ritualist

A ritualist can perform a selection of rites which produce a variety of effects. A ritualist must spend time performing a ritual. The potency of a ritual is called its power, and this is determined with a test (with the talent wise applicable). The success margin of the test is the power score of the ritual. Each character with the class dancer that participates in the ritual adds 1 to the test

chance, up to a maximum equal to the ritualists spirit score divided by three (round up). For example, a ritualist of S9 could have up to 3 dancers assist in the ritual, which would add 3 to the test chance (and in this regard would make it an almost certain success, with an above average success margin and ritual power score). A ritual takes 1d hours to perform, and requires the burning of ritual incense (one use per ritual).

A ritual provides a certain benefit to its participants, depending on the type chosen:

Curse: A number of named persons equal to the ritual power are afflicted with a disease (a minor disease such as 'fever').

Famine: A number of named persons equal to the ritual power suffer from lack of food for a limited period. For days equal to the ritual power, these people will be unable to find food, and will be unsuccessful in their hunting. Note however that affected characters can still receive food as gifts or via trade.

Fertility: A single female participant has their chance of pregnancy enhanced by an amount equal to the power of the ritual. For this purpose, the GM should assume that for each copulation, the female has a 1 in 6 chance of conception. This means that a ritual of power 3 gives the woman a 4 in 6 chance of conception (following the next copulation).

Healing: A single participant is immediately healed of damage equal to the ritual power.

Plenty: A number of ritual participants equal to the ritual power acquire food. The number of meals worth of food acquired each day equals the ritual power. The effects last for days equal to the ritual power. Note that the food will not simply appear; instead it will be found when gathering, or take the form of additional animals killed when hunting.

Protection: A number of ritual participants equal to the ritual power gain +1 to their combat tests. This bonus lasts a number of days equal to the ritual power. This bonus may not be 'layered', a character can benefit from just one protection ritual bonus at a time.

Savage

Characters of the savage class are especially tough, and function as if they were armoured. Each time the character receives an injury, the damage is reduced as if the character were wearing armour. Note however that the

character does not get this benefit if actually wearing armour.

Scavenger

Scavengers are thieves, able to steal items and break into places with ease. When making a theft attempt, the character gets a +1 bonus to the test. In addition, a scavenger gains a +1 bonus to open locks.

Seer

A character with this class has the ability to affect the outcome of an event or undertaking, by foretelling its' outcome. The character must ponder the subject, for roughly an hour. The player makes a test for the character, with wise the applicable talent. If successful, the character gains a +1 bonus for all tests associated with the event or undertaking. For example, if the character knew he would be facing a particular enemy in battle, he could use the ability to 'predict the outcome', adding +1 to his combat tests if the test was successful. Note that the ability must be applied to a specific event, rather than a generic undertaking (such as 'the next fight my character has').

If the test roll is a 6, the omens are bad, and the character receives a -1 to tests relating to the prediction.

Shaman

A shaman has the ability to repel and banish spirits, ghosts and undead beings. As his action, the shaman can command a single Otherworld creature within sight to depart. If the creature has a spirit score equal or less than that of the shaman, it must leave the vicinity and flee for a number of turns equal to the shamans spirit score. Thereafter it may do as it pleases, and is immune to the effects of the shamans' power.

If the creature has a spirit score equal to half or less that of the shaman's (rounded up), it can instead be instantly banished to the Otherworld (if not there already), disappearing before the eyes of onlookers, if the shaman so wishes. Alternatively, the shaman can attempt to gain control of such a creature. This is an opposed test, with wilful the applicable talent. If successful, the shaman gains control of the creature and may give it one instruction (such as attack). Once the action is completed, the ghost is again free to do as it pleases. If this test fails, the creature

is free to act and is immune to the power of the shaman thereafter.

A shaman may also pass into the Otherworld, and take others with him if they are willing. See the Otherworld section for details.

Slave

Slaves, having spent a good deal of their time being restrained, eventually become skilled at escape. When trying to escape bindings of any kind, a slave gets a +1 bonus to the test. Likewise, a slave gets a +1 test bonus when trying to escape any sort of confinement (such as a pit, a cage or blocked cave). Slaves are also accustomed to hard work and maltreatment, and can more easily deal with hardships such as starvation and back breaking work. A slave can endure one extra day without food, and may carry one extra item beyond that normally allowed for characters. See the activities and hazards section for details.

Slaver

A slaver, accustomed to using threats and coercion, can attempt to get a non player character to do his bidding (becoming his slave). This may only be tried against those persons with a spirit score of half or less than that of the slaver. Forcing someone to become a slave is an opposed test, with the talent wilful applicable to both parties. If successful, the victim feels intimidated enough to become the servant of the slaver, and will do his bidding. Such slaves will perform menial tasks, but are unlikely to put their lives in danger on behalf of the slaver, unless there is clearly no other option.

Each day an escape test is made for each slave. This test is a roll made by the GM for each slave. A result of 1 indicates the slave runs away. For each slave over the slavers spirit score divided by 3 (rounded up), the chance of an escape attempt for each slave increases by 1. Thus, if a slaver with S9 has 4 slaves, they each have a 2 in 6 chance each day of trying to escape. Add 1 to the escape chance if a slave has been treated especially harshly (such as by being beaten or starved).

Snake Charmer

A character with this class is a special type of beast master, with power over snakes. The character is immune to snake venom, and when confronted by a snake (including a

snake spirit) may test to try and control the creature. The test is opposed, and the talent charismatic applies applies to the test. If the character wins, he may issue a simple command to the snake which must be obeyed (unless the command would lead to obvious harm, such as ordering the snake to move into a fire). Typical commands include ordering the snake to leave the area, commanding it to attack a foe and so on.

If the player rolls a 1 for the test to charm a snake, the creature is befriended, and will thereafter serve the character until commanded to leave, or until it dies. Note however, that the character may not befriend more snakes than the characters spirit score divided by three (round up). Snake charmers require an instrument with which to charm snakes, such as a bone flute or drum.

Soothsayer

Soothsayers have the power to cause fear, dread and indecision in a person, using their powerful voice to issue warnings of doom and to evoke visions of horror.

A single foe can be targeted as an action, and an opposed test is made. If the soothsayer wins, the success margin of the test determines the number of turns during which the foe is stunned and may not act, with a minimum of one turn. The talent wilful applies to both persons involved in the test. Stunned persons cannot perform any actions, and in combat will barely be able to defend themselves (opponents get a +1 bonus to hit, and the stunned character tests to merely evade attacks). Once a foe has been a target of this ability, they may not again be affected for the remainder of the encounter.

Storyteller

A storyteller is able to recite stories and sayings in such a manner as to affect the morale of others. As his action, the storyteller may utter a tale or rousing phrase. The utterance will affect a single comrade, who gains a +1 bonus to tests for turns equal to the success margin of a test, with a minimum duration of 1 turn. The talent wise applies to the test.

A person may only be the subject of this ability once per day, and the storyteller may not use it on himself.

Storytellers may also entertain others with their stories, and get a +1 bonus when performing (see the activities and hazards section).

Summoner

This class allows a character to summon forth a specific type of spirit, an ancestral spirit otherwise known as a ghost. The use of a fetish, a decorated bone or wood item, is required to use this ability. Once a ghost is summoned (which takes a turn), it is free to act in any manner it wishes unless the summoner that called forth the ghost can control it, which takes a further turn. This is an opposed test, with the talent charismatic applicable for the summoner. If successful, the ghost will perform one action of the characters choosing (such as attack or scare someone etc). The capabilities of a ghost are defined in the section on the Otherworld.

If the test to control the ghost fails, it is released into the world and may act as it pleases. If the GM wishes, he may roll a die to determine what the ghost does. On a roll of 1-5 it departs. On a roll of 6, the ghost attacks the summoner.

When a ghost has taken damage equal to its spirit score, it is banished back from whence it came. A summoner may not call forth additional ghosts until the most recently summoned one has either completed its' task, departed or been banished.

Tracker

A tracker is skilled at identifying and following animal tracks, finding pathways, navigating and ambushing. When trying to track an animal or person, the tracker adds +1 to tests to both spot and identify tracks (the talent aware also applies). A character with this class will also be able to find the quickest or safest route through an area with a successful test (also with +1 bonus). Trackers are able to navigate most terrain, and will also be able to find north. Unless very far from the characters homeland, a tracker will be able to navigate back to his home area.

A tracker is able to find the best ambush position, and given several minutes chance to assess an area, will be able to plan an effective ambush. When the ambush is sprung, the targets of the ambush will have their combat tests penalised by 1 for turns equal to the success margin of a test (with wise the applicable talent). Trackers are themselves less susceptible to ambushes, and subtract 1 from

the number of turns they are themselves affected.

Trapper

A character with this class may construct a device or trap, if suitable materials are available. Traps are defined by a difficulty number, from 0-3. To create a trap the player describes the nature of the trap to the GM, who then gives the trap a difficulty rating. GMs can use the trap descriptions in the activities and hazards section for an idea of trap difficulties. The time taken for a character to build a device or trap equals one hour, plus an additional number of hours equal to the difficulty of the trap.

When searching for a trap, the character gets a +1 bonus to the test to spot one.

When disarming traps, the character gets a +1 bonus to the test. See the activities and hazards section for details on traps.

Warrior

The warrior class confers great skill with melee weapons. When making attacks with a melee weapon, the character gets to make a number of attacks per turn equal to his spirit score divided by three (round up). These may be at the same or adjacent targets.

Wild Man

The character is an untamed wild man (or woman), and fights like a savage beast. When unarmed, a character with this class may make a number of unarmed attacks per turn equal to the characters spirit score divided by three (round up). These can be at the same or adjacent targets.

Witchdoctor

This class confers the ghastly power to animate cadavers and skeletons. This requires the use of a fetish, which is pointed at the corpse to be animated and counts as the witchdoctors action for a turn. Cadavers are typically animated from dead foes, skeletons are animated from burial sites or ancient battle grounds. There is no limit to the number of undead a witchdoctor can animate, but each animation counts as an action. If there are no corpses or burials in the area, the witchdoctor cannot use this power. Animated undead creatures will attack the nearest of the witchdoctors foes, unless the character directs the corpse or skeleton to attack a specific target. Once the corpse or skeleton has defeated a foe it becomes independent, and can no longer be commanded by the witchdoctor. Such beings typically wander off, or attack another person nearby (such as the witchdoctor himself, or a comrade). The GM can roll a die to determine the action of the corpse; a roll of 1-5 indicates it wanders off, a roll of 6 indicates it attacks the nearest person.

Cadavers and skeletons have a spirit equal to the witchdoctors own score divided by two (rounded up). If the corpse held a weapon when it died, it will continue to use the weapon once animated. Likewise, if the corpse wore armour upon death, the armour still counts when animated. This can be determined randomly by the GM if desired (50% chance each of a weapon and armour). Animated cadavers and skeletons have no talents or other abilities. When such a creature has taken damage equal its spirit it is destroyed and may not be animated again.

EQUIPMENT

Characters begin with an item of clothing, a hide loincloth if male, or a hide 'bikini' if female (the bikini is not a modern innovation; bikini type garments have been depicted on ancient wall paintings and mosaics).
Characters also have other items with a value in gems equal to the roll of 6d.

In the Paleomythic world, there is no coinage. Trade is conducted either by barter, or by exchanging gems. Gems are precious or semi precious stones, usually small fragments that have been polished. They are rarely much larger than fingernail size.
Gems are used as a convenient way to trade goods, and many settlements will accept them as payment for goods. Gems are usually seen as having the same value, irrespective of the type.

The below goods are given values in gems. The value is usually variable, depending on local availability, and is thus given as a dice range with an average. Thus, an item noted as '1d, 3' can cost from 1 to 6 gems, and on average costs 3. For initial purchases, players may assume the average value is the one that applies.

Armour

Characters may wear one type of armour at a time. Armour comprises either heavy furs, thick hides or bone. Armour is noted in the format:
Armour name, strength rating, cost

Bone armour 17, 6d, 21
Bone armour comprises a skull helm, with arm and leg wraps made from pieces of bone attached to hide.
Heavy furs 14, 5d, 17
These take the form of a tunic, or a fur cloak combined with fur arm and leg wraps.
Hide shield 7, 3d, 10
Tough hides stretched across a wooden frame.
Thick hides 10, 4d, 14
These are usually thick pieces of hide, sewn together to make a tunic or leg and arm wraps.
Wood shield 10, 4d, 14
A shield made from sections of wood.

Weapons

Weapons are described in the following format: Weapon name, damage bonus, cost

Axes

Antler pick +2, 2d, 7
This weapon is a piece of antler or bone, with a section long enough to form a haft, and sharpened section useable as an axe or pick.
Hand axe +1, 2d, 7
A hand axe is a flint block, with one end smooth and suitable for holding, and the other sharpened.
Hafted axe +3, 3d, 10
A hafted axe comprises a sturdy wooden haft topped with a piece of sharpened flint.

Bludgeons

Bone +1, 1d, 3
A length of bone, such as the thigh bone of a large animal.
Cudgel +1, 1d, 3
A simple length of wood.
Rock +1, 1d3, 2
A well shaped rock for bashing or throwing.
Skull topped cudgel +2, 2d, 7
A length of wood, to which is attached a skull.
Staff +2, 1d, 3
A long length of wood, requiring two hands to use.
Stone topped cudgel +3, 3d, 10
A length of wood, topped with a heavy stone block.

Knives

Antler spike +1, 2d, 7
A piece of antler shaped into a spike
Bone knife +1, 2d, 7
A piece of sharpened animal bone
Flint knife +1, 2d, 7
A long piece of flint, attached to a short wooden handle

Missile

Bow +2, 5d, 17
A bow fires flint tipped arrows, which cost 1 gem each.
Sling +1, 3d, 10
A sling made from hide, used to fire stones.

Spears

Bone tipped spear +2, 3d, 10
A wooden haft topped with a sharpened bone.
Flint tipped spear +3, 4d, 14
A long, heavy wooden haft topped with sharpened flint. Requires two hands to use.
Fire hardened spear +2, 3d, 10
A length of wood with a fire hardened tip.
Wood spear +1, 2d, 7
A simple length of sharpened wood.

Swords

Bone sword +2, 3d, 10
A long section of bone shaped into a blade
Flint shard sword +2, 3d, 10
A slim length of wood with edges made from sharpened flint.

Whips

Fang whip +2, 3d, 10
This whip comprises a 2m length of hide, with snake fangs attached to one end.
Hide whip +1, 2d, 7
This is a simple whip made from hide, and about 2m long.

Containers

Quiver (holds 12 arrows) 1d, 3
A hide container for arrows
Bag, fur 1d, 3
A small fur bag with hide strap
Bag, hide 1d, 3
A small hide bag with strap
Basket 1d, 3
A woven container
Box 3d, 10
A open topped box made from wood strips bound and glued
Chest 4d, 14
A wooden box, bound and glued, with a lid secured using a bone clasp
Gourd 1d3, 2
A water container, with a wooden stopper
Pouch 1d3, 2
A pouch made from hide, with sinew attached for carrying.

Clothes

Belt, hide 1d3, 2
A thin strip of hide, tied at the waist
Bikini, fur 2d, 7
Clothing covering the groin, buttocks, and breasts
Bikini, hide 2d, 7
Clothing covering the groin, buttocks and breasts
Bikini, linen 2d, 7
Clothing covering the groin, buttocks and breasts
Boots, fur 3d, 10
Leg and foot wraps, sewn together to cover the feet and lower legs
Cloak, fur 2d, 7
A large fur skin tied at the neck
Hood, fur 2d, 7
A hood covering the head, neck and shoulders
Hood, hide 2d, 7
A hood covering the head, neck and shoulders
Loincloth, fur 1d, 3
Clothing covering the groin and buttocks
Loincloth, hide 1d, 3
Clothing covering the groin and buttocks
Loincloth, linen 1d, 3
Clothing covering the groin and buttocks
Sandals, hide 2d, 7
Open shoes tied at the ankles with a hide thong
Shawl, fur 2d, 7
A fur wrap
Shawl, hide 2d, 7
A hide wrap
Shoes, hide 2d, 7
Foot covers made from sewn hide
Tunic, fur 3d, 10
A sleeveless, tabard like garment sewn at the sides
Tunic, hide 3d, 10
A sleeveless, tabard like garment sewn at the sides
Tunic, linen 4d, 14
A sleeveless tabard made from flax fibre linen
Wraps, fur 1d, 3
Pieces of fur (a pair) that can be tied around the arms or legs
Wraps, hide 1d,3
Pieces of hide (a pair) that can be tied around the arms or legs

Curiosities

Fetish; Coiled snake stick 2d, 7
A bone carved to look like a snake coiled around a stick.
Fetish; Feather stick 1d3, 2
A simple fetish; a stick with feathers attached.
Fetish; Gem stick 4d, 14
A carved stick studded with polished gems.
Fetish; Lizard stick 1d, 3
A fetish made from a lizard skull atop a stick.
Fetish; Talon stick 2d, 7
A bird of prey talon atop a stick.
God statuette, crude 1d3, 2
A small statuette depicting a god or spirit, made cheaply using wood, bone or clay.
God statuette, detailed 2d, 7
A small god statuette, intricately carved from bone or polished stone.
Head, severed 5d, 17
A human head that has been cut from a corpse.
Incense 1d, 3
Aromatic resins derived from plants, enough for 6 ritual uses.

Tools

Awl 1d3, 2
A boring, probing tool often made from bone
Bow drill 1d, 3
A wooden drill with bow used for boring holes
Bowl, skull 1d, 3
A bowl made from a human or animal skull
Bowl, wooden 1d, 3
A bowl made from wood
Bowl, pottery 2d, 7
A bowl made from clay
Brick 1d3, 2
A simple clay brick or tile, used fo building houses, walls, steps etc. Price is per 100.
Burin 1d3, 2
A flint tool used for carving wood or bone
Core 1d3, 2
A block of flint from which flint tools can be made. A character will normally be able to get 1d tools from a core.
Cup, simple 1d3, 2
A small bowl made from wood or a small skull
Cup, pottery 1d, 3
A small bowl made from clay
Flaker 1d3, 2
A piece of antler or bone used to knap fine edges on tools and weapons
Fire kit 1d3, 2

Flint and pyrite or marcasite with tinder in a small pouch. The materials are enough to make 10 fires before needing to be replaced.
Fur 1d3, 2
An animal fur, used to make clothing, bags and so on.
Glue 1d, 3
A gourd of animal bone glue, enough for 6 uses
Hammerstone 1d, 3
A stone used to knap flint to create tools and weapons
Healing herbs 2d, 7
A collection of herbs applied to a wound, with a strip of hide to hold them in place, with enough for 1 use.
Hide 1d3, 2
An animal hide used for making items such as clothes.
Oil 1d3, 2
Oil extracted from plant material, or fat derived from an animal, for use in lamps. The cost is for 6 hours worth of illumination.
Lamp, simple 1d, 3
A small stone lamp that burns oil or animal fat. Holds 3 hours worth of oil.
Lamp, fine 2d, 7
A pottery lamp that burns oil or fat. Holds 6 hours worth of oil.
Mat 1d, 3
A simple woven mat used to cover a floor
Needle, bone 1d3, 2
A needle made from a slender piece of bone
Rope 1d3, 2
Rope made from vine or other plant materials. The cost is per 10m.
Scraper 1d3, 2
A flint tool used for preparing skins, shaving and sharpening
Screen 2d, 7
A woven, wicker screen used as a partition in a room
Sinew 1d3, 2
A thread used for sewing (value is per metre)
Sled 3d, 10
Wooden poles connected to a platform which can be loaded with goods, pulled behind a person.
Sleeping fur 1d, 3
A soft but poor quality fur used as a 'blanket', that can be rolled up and tied for easy carrying.
Torch 1d3, 2
A piece of wood wrapped with animal fat soaked hide, burns for an hour

Luxuries

Anklet, bead 1d, 3
Jewellery made from sinew and wooden or stone beads
Anklet, bone 1d, 3
Jewellery made from sinew and carved bone
Bead, bone 1d3, 2
Small bone bead to plait into hair, beard etc
Bead, stone 1d3, 2
Small, polished stone bead
Bead, wood 1d3, 2
Small wooden bead
Bracelet, bead 1d, 3
Jewellery made from sinew and wooden or stone beads
Bracelet, bone 1d, 3
Jewellery made from sinew and carved bone
Bullroarer 2d, 7
A musical instrument; a carved wooden sliver attached to a cord, twirled to make a sound
Comb 3d, 10
A wood or antler comb, often delicately carved
Drum 3d, 10
A drum, made from a hollowed log and hide.
Ear feather 1d3, 2
Jewellery, a small feather shaped to be worn in a pierced ear
Ear tooth 2d, 7
Jewellery, a small wolf or shark tooth worn in a pierced ear
Feather 1d, 3
A large feather useful for painting or decoration
Figurine 2d, 7
A small pottery figure, such as the 'venus' figurine.
Flute, bone 2d, 7
A small musical instrument made from a hollow bone.
Necklace, bead 1d, 3
Sinew and wooden bead necklace
Necklace, bone 1d, 3
Sinew and bone bead necklace
Necklace, dog tooth 1d, 3
A necklace with dog teeth attached
Necklace, feathers 2d, 7
A necklace with feathers attached
Necklace, shark tooth 5d, 17
A necklace with shark teeth attached
Necklace, wolf tooth 4d, 14
A necklace with wolf teeth attached
Nose bone 2d, 7
A bone shaped to be worn in a pierced nose
Oil, sweet 2d, 7
A sweet smelling oil used as perfume
Pigment 1d3, 2
Used for decorating ones face, or painting
Shaker 2d, 7
A musical instrument, a wooden ball filled with dried beans
Statue 4d, 14
A large (roughly child size) figure made from clay or wood

Food and drink

Fruit or vegetable, 1d, 3
A piece or handful of fruit or veg, such as a wild apple, plums, pears, pomelo, dates, olives, fern, brassica, berries, nuts. The type depends on the location, with rarer items worth double or triple.
Juice 2d, 7
A gourd of juice, squeezed from fruit (such as grapes).
Meat or fish 2d, 7
A hunk (handful) of meat, such as deer, goat, pig, rabbit, horse, trout, salmon, mammoth, lizard. As with fruit, the type depends on location, and meat from rarer or more dangerous animals is worth double or triple.
Sour juice 3d, 10
A gourd full of juice that has fermented, making it alcoholic.

CHANGE

Characters that survive adventures go on to become more powerful and more skilled. The longer a character endures, the more potent he or she becomes. To reflect this, players should check for character change at the end of each adventure.

Note that an adventure may take several game sessions to play through. As a rough guide, a GM should aim to have players check for character change after about 1-3 game sessions.

To determine if spirit increases, players roll 3 dice and total the results. The final score must be greater than the current spirit score for an improvement. In this case, spirit is increased by one point.

If the player rolls equal to or less than the current score, there is no improvement in spirit, but the player may choose consolation.

Consolation takes the form of a new talent, a new class or the elimination of a single flaw of the players' choice. However, note that a character may not possess more talents, or more classes, than their current spirit score. In this case, the character must eliminate a flaw or, if they no longer have any, the character receives no consolation.

Example: A player rolls for an increase in his characters spirit (currently 9) and gets 7, so it does not increase. The player may now choose either a new talent, or a new class, but his character may not possess more than 9 talents and 9 classes (until S increases).

If a player would prefer consolation (a new talent or class, or ridding the character of a flaw) rather than a spirit increase the GM should allow this, with the above proviso on the limit to the number of talents and classes a character may possess.

COMBAT

Many situations result in characters having to resort to fighting; this is a fact of life for characters, who are required to hunt and defend themselves regularly in the Paleomythic world.

Combat is resolved in turns, which represent several seconds of frenetic activity. In a turn, a character may perform one action, such as engaging in combat with a foe or attempting to run away.

Movement

Characters can move a distance in metres per turn equal to their spirit score. If involved in a chase, participants make an opposed test, with agile the applicable talent. The success margin of the test winner is added to the base movement rate of a character to find the distance he has moved that turn.

If a character comes within two metres of a foe, they are considered to be in melee range and attacks can be made by either party. Opponents that are more than two metres apart are deemed to be beyond melee range, which means only ranged attacks can be used.

Fighting

When characters fight, an opposed test is made (with the talent brave applicable). The winner of the test causes injury or some other effect to his opponent, depending on the desired outcome. If both fail or tie, this indicates the turn is a stalemate, with neither combatant gaining the advantage that turn.

There are a number of tactics that can be employed during combat, and the success margin of the test determines their impact.

Injury: The most common tactic used when facing a foe is to cause them injury. If a character chooses this option, the damage caused to the character is based on the success margin of the test (with various modifiers, see 'damage' below).

Other tactics include:

Bash: This tactic uses the talent strong rather than brave. Instead of causing damage to a foe, they are instead forced back a number of metres equal to the success margin of the attack. A test is then made for the foe, with strong the applicable talent, and failure indicates the foe falls over. Fallen foes must either use an action to get up, or else fight from a prone position with a -1 modifier to attacks. Note that only foes of roughly equal or smaller size and weight can be affected by a bash.

Grab: This tactic uses the talent strong rather than brave. A character grabs and restrains a foe for a number of turns equal to the success margin of the attack. While a foe is restrained, they may not perform actions. If the character wishes, he may cause 1 point of damage per turn to the foe.

Evade: This tactic indicates the character is doing his best to avoid being struck, while making no attempt to attack. The tactic uses agile rather than brave, and success indicates the character avoids being struck, without causing any harm to the opponent.

Multiple attacks

If a character faces multiple foes (or multiple attacks from a single foe), the player rolls a test for each one, but may only affect one of the foes (if facing several), irrespective of how successful the tests are. The player should state which foe his character will attempt to affect prior to any rolls being made. If the character makes successful tests against the other opponents or attacks, he is deemed to have merely defended himself against them.

Ranged combat

When characters make ranged attacks, with thrown weapons or missile weapons (such as bows), the combat test is made as normal. However, the talent accurate applies to the attacker. If the attacker wins, he injures his foe. If the foe wins, he does not cause injury. Instead, he is deemed to have merely avoided being injured himself.

The talent agile applies to targets of a ranged attack, but only if they are engaged in no

other activity (i.e; they aren't fighting anyone else, and are solely trying to avoid being hit). Ranged attacks are possible only if the target is two or more metres from the attacker. The maximum range in metres of a thrown attack equals the characters spirit multiplied by 3. The maximum range for a missile attack (bow or sling) is spirit multiplied by 20 metres.

Damage

If a character elects to injure a foe, the damage caused by the attack equals the success margin of the attack roll. If a character is using a weapon, the damage bonus of that weapon is added to the damage total. If the target of the attack is armoured, damage is divided evenly between the character and armour, with odd points being allocated to the character. For example, a character in armour that received 3 points damage from an attack would suffer 2 points of damage himself, the other point would be absorbed by the armour. See also weapons and armour, below.

Once total damage exceeds the characters spirit score, the character falls unconscious. Once total damage exceeds the characters spirit score multiplied by two, the character dies.

Characters that have been knocked out will regain consciousness after minutes equal to the excess damage have elapsed. If such a badly injured character receives further damage, he will immediately fall unconscious again.

Recovery

Characters naturally heal at the rate of 1 point of damage per day.

Bandaging a wound immediately heals a point of damage, but can be done once only until further damage is received. A character with the healer class is also able to assist wounded characters (see the section on class, above),

Armour

When a character wears armour, the damage from each hit they receive is evenly divided between the character and the armour. However, armour will always allow at least one point of damage through to a character.

Armour can withstand a certain amount of damage before it is destroyed. This is the strength rating of the armour. Each time armour prevents damage, the armour strength is reduced by the amount of damage it prevented. For example, if a character in armour was hit for 3 points damage, the strength of the armour would be reduced by 1 point, and the remaining 2 points would be allocated to the character.
Shields also count as armour. If a character has both a shield and wears armour, the player decides which one will take the damage.

Armour can be repaired by a crafter, who charges 1 gem per point of strength restored (up to the original value).

Weapons

There are a variety of weapons available to characters, including various types of bludgeons, spears and axes.
Weapons provide a bonus to the damage inflicted by each attack, ranging from +1 for light weapons, or weapons that are crudely made or damaged, to +3 for large, heavy or finely crafted weapons.

Criticals

When a combat test results in a roll of 1 for one of the combatants, that character is deemed to have produced a dramatic effect called a 'critical'. Criticals take the form of a beneficial effect for the character whose player made the die roll of 1. The player may choose from the following suggestions, though the GM has final say as to what is possible in a particular situation. Critical effects occur in addition to the intended effect of the attack.

Armour critical: The opponents armour is damaged. The damage equals the success margin of the test, and this damage is in addition to any that may result from damage caused to the foe.

Damage critical: The foe suffers an additional point of damage. This is added to any damage caused by the attack itself.

Environmental critical: This includes such events as furniture being smashed, a lamp getting sashed, pots being knocked over, hides getting torn, statues toppling over and so on. These effects typically cause an opponent some inconvenience, such as falling over, dropping an item, tearing clothes, having a cloak catch fire etc.

Weapon critical: The opponents weapon is jarred, bent, chipped or cracked in some manner. This reduces the weapons damage bonus by 1. If the weapon has a damage bonus of only 1 to begin with, the weapon is instead broken and useless.
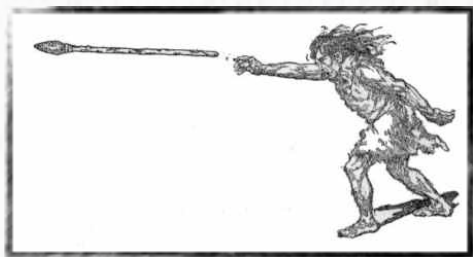
ACTIVITIES AND HAZARDS

Characters will often engage in a number of activities other than combat, such climbing high cliffs, leaping snake pits and disarming dangerous traps. Such activities inevitably expose characters to numerous hazards.

Generally, when a character engages in any of the below noted activities, a normal test is made with the most relevant talent applied. The success margin of the test determines the outcome of the activity, with a greater success margin usually indicating a better result.

Failed tests often indicate the character failed to perform the activity, or else performed the activity to a bare minimum standard.

A roll of 6 for an activity often has a negative effect, and this is noted in the activity description. Some classes provide a bonus to tests for certain activities. This bonus will always be in addition to a bonus obtained from a relevant talent.

Bribery

Characters attempting to bribe someone must make an offer, typically a number of gems or an item of an equivalent value. The level of bribe depends on the person, and it should be noted that some people will be immune to bribery (at the GMs discretion). If a person can be bribed, the GM can use a default rule that assumes the subject has a bribery level (a value in gems) equal to their spirit score. The success margin of the test reduces this level by one gem per point of success, with a minimum reduction of 1. A failure means the level is unchanged, and a roll of 6 indicates the subject takes a dislike to the character, and no amount of bribery will work. The talent charismatic applies to the test.

If a character makes an offer of coins well beyond the persons bribery level, a bonus can be applied to the test. This bonus is +1 per multiple of the subjects bribe level. For example, a character with S9 usually requires a bribe of at least 9 gems. If the character offered 20 gems (over twice the persons bribe level), a +1 would be added to the test.

Crafting

Characters may attempt to craft items, especially if the character possesses a class that includes such activity.

Materials are required to craft an item, and these typically cost gems equal to the usual item cost divided by two (rounded up).

To craft an item a normal test is made, with the talent dexterous applicable. The success margin of the test enhances the value of the item by 10% of the items usual value per success point. For example, a success margin of 1 for an item worth 20 gems increases its value to 22. Failure indicates the item is produced, but is of poor quality and worth 10% less than its usual value. A roll of 6 indicates the item produced is flawed, broken or useless (such as a pot that leaks, or a knife that breaks on its first use).

Climbing

To determine the number of metres per turn a character climbs a test is made, with agile the applicable talent. The distance climbed equals the success margin of the test, or just 1 metre for a success margin of 0. Failure indicates the character makes no progress that turn. A roll of 6 indicates the character slips and falls 1d metres. A test is then required to arrest the characters descent (agile again being the applicable talent). If successful, the character ceases to fall, and is assumed to have managed to grab onto something. Failure indicates the character continues to fall. For every 1d metres a character falls, the character takes damage (from bumps, grazes and cuts) equal to the distance fallen divided by two (rounded up).

Disease

Characters can be exposed to a variety of diseases, as they combat pestilential beasts or explore ancient tombs. Diseases are defined by their duration (noted as a random number of days) as well as their effects. When a character is exposed to a disease, a test is required to resist it, with the talent resilient applicable. The success margin of the test reduces the number of days the disease lasts, with a minimum reduction of 1 (for a 0 success margin). If the success margin reduces the duration to zero days, the character has managed to completely resist the disease. Failure indicates there is no reduction in the disease duration, and a roll of 6 indicates the disease takes effect for the maximum duration.

Some example diseases are:

Fever - A minor disease causes -1 to tests involving physical actions, and lasts for 1d days.

Pox - A standard disease causes -1 to tests, and 1 point damage per day, for 1d days. This disease also stops natural healing for its duration.

Plague - A serious disease causes -1 to tests, and 1 point damage per day, for 2d days. This disease also stops natural healing for its duration.

Escape

Characters may find themselves bound or trapped on occasion. In such cases, an attempt to escape can be made. Bindings have a difficulty level, which indicates the success margin required to escape them. The test success margin is compared to the level, and if it equals or exceeds it, the character breaks free. The talent dexterous applies to the test.

Failure indicates the character cannot escape, but may try again. Each attempt takes a variable amount of time, as judged by the GM (based on the circumstances, but as a default GMs can assume 1d multiplied by ten in minutes per attempt)

A roll of 6 indicates the character injures himself trying to escape, and takes a point of damage. In this case, further escape attempts are only possible if the GM decides as such.

Success margin 0: Escape from torn linen bindings.
Success margin 1: Escape from sinew bindings.
Success margin 2: Escape from torn hides or furs.
Success margin 3: Escape from vine ropes, bamboo cage.
Success margin 4 or more: Escape from wooden cage.

Fire

Fire making is a test, and each successfully started fire consumes one use of fire making materials in a fire making kit. The success margin of the test determines how quickly the fire is made; a fire takes 6 minutes minus the success margin to start. A failed test indicates the fire doesn't start after 1d minutes, and another test is required. A roll of

6 indicates the fire doesn't start, and one use of the fire making material is used up.

Characters struck by a burning object, such as a torch or flaming arrow, may catch fire (in addition to being injured by the object that struck them). Typically, fire from such an attack burns for 1d turns, causing a point of damage each turn. The success margin of a test to prevent the fire reduces the duration of the fire by one turn per point of success. The talent agile applies to the test.

Characters exposed to a a more powerful source of fire (such as being cast onto a bonfire) may burn for a longer duration, such as 2d turns. A continuing source of fire (such as being tied to a stake atop a bonfire) has an effectively unlimited duration, and characters in this predicament must hope that they can somehow get free before being burnt to death.

Foraging

Finding food can become a vital activity when travelling great distances in wilderness areas, and once characters have consumed any rations they may have they will need to resort to gathering foods or hunting. See the rules on starvation for the effects of going without food.

Foraging takes a day, and thus no travel progress can be made if a character forages.

A successful test results in a character finding a number of meals worth of food equal to the success margin, with a minimum of one meal found (for a zero success margin). The talent aware applies to the test. Failure indicates no food is found. A roll of 6 indicates there is no foragable food in the area, and the character must go 1d days before further foraging attempts can be made in that area.

Random foods:

The type of food gathered by a character can be determined randomly using the below table. This gives a food description and some examples of the food type. When characters gather foods, the GM may roll 4d on the below table once for each meal found.

4 Bitter leaves (kale)
Dark leaves with a bitter taste, chewed or crushed in water.

5 Brown root (cassava)
A bitter tasting root vegetable that can be roasted, seared and baked or eaten raw.

6 Brown seeds (flax)
Small seeds, which can be ground or seared on a hot stone.

7 Dark berries (blackberries, blueberries)
Sweet dark berries eaten whole or crushed to make a sweet pastes and juice.

8 Flowers (Borage flower, elderflower)
Edible flowers, eaten raw or added to water.

9 Fungi (edible mushrooms)
Various types of edible mushroom.

10 Green fruit (apple, pear)
Firm green fruit usually eaten raw.

11 Green seeds (peas)
Seeds from a pod, eaten raw or mashed.

12 Nuts (hazelnuts, cashews)
Various types of nut, eaten raw or ground to a paste.

13 Oil fruit (olives, dates)
Succulent fruit, eaten raw or made into a paste and oil.

14 Red fruit (strawberry, raspberry)
Soft, sweet fruit eaten raw.

15 Sap (syrup, honey)
Sugary sap harvested from trees. For game purposes this can include honey. Eaten raw.

16 Small root (garlic, shallot)
Root vegetables with a strong flavour and aroma, eaten raw, roasted or baked.

17 Sour berries (gooseberry)
Eaten raw, or made into a juice

18 Stone fruit (plum)
Sweet fruit with a stone. Eaten raw, or dried.

19 Sweet berries (grapes)
Succulent berries eaten raw or made into a juice.

20 Sweet leaves (sorrel)
Sharp, sweet leaves eaten raw, or boiled.

21 Sweet root (sweet potato)
A sweet root vegetable, eaten raw, roasted, baked or seared.

22 White grain (spelt)
A grain that can be ground and stored, or made into a mash.

23 White root (parsnip)
A sweet root that is eaten raw, roasted, baked or seared.

24 Yellow grain (maize)
A sweet grain, used to make a paste or stored for later use.

Hunting

When characters hunt animals for food, the majority of the time spent during the hunt is devoted to actually locating prey.

Hunting takes a day, and the success margin of the test determines the type of animal encountered by a character (see below). The talent aware applies to the test. Failure indicates no animal has been located. A roll of 6 indicates the character encounters a dangerous animal, such as a lion, poisonous snake, wolf etc. The type of dangerous animal encountered is chosen by the GM. Note that many dangerous animals are not a good source of edible meat.

Once an animal is located, it must be killed. This proceeds as a normal combat encounter. Each type of animal provides a certain number of meals worth of food. This is shown on the below table.

Success margin 0: snake, lizard, rat (1 meal)
Success margin 1: rabbit, monkey, dwarf deer (1d3 meals)
Success margin 2: deer, goat, ape (1d meals)
Success margin 3: boar, moa, elk (2d meals)
Success margin 4 or more: aurochs, bison, horse (3d meals)

Leaping

When characters leap, the player should roll 2d3. The character clears a distance in metres equal to the result.

Add 1 to this result if the character has the agile talent. For vertical leaps, divide this result by two.

If a character fails to clear the required distance, over a pit for example, he is considered to have fallen. See the climbing rules for details of falling.

Load

Characters can become burdened and weighed down when carrying many items, which will have an effect on their physical capabilities. To reflect this, characters are assumed to be able to carry a number of items equal to their spirit score.

Add 1 to this amount if the character has the talent strong, and another 1 if the character has resilient, and a further 1 if the character has wilful.

An item in this sense is defined as an object that can be held in one hand, such as a weapon, pouch, torch and so on. Some

smaller items can be counted as one object, even though they may comprise of a number of items. Thus, a pouch of gems counts as one item. This should be kept within reasonable limits however; a bag containing an flint axe, several items of fruit, a pouch and a gourd inside is hardly one item.

Once a character exceeds his load capacity, he suffers a penalty to tests involving physical actions (such as fighting, climbing etc). The penalty is -1 per excess item over the load capacity. If this means the character gets zero chance for tests, he has encumbered himself to the point where he can no longer move.

Note that clothing and jewellery do not count towards load, but armour and weapons do.

Locks

Paleomythic locks are typically simple levers, latches, hooks or rope bindings. A tool is required to open a lock, such as a flint knife or bone needle. Locks are defined by a difficulty level, from level 0 (easy to open) to level 3 (very difficult to open). The success margin of the test determines the level of the lock opened. Thus, a success margin of 2 opens locks with a difficulty level of 0, 1 or 2. The talent dexterous applies to the test.

If a test is a failure, the character does not open the lock, but may make another attempt if the character has time, since each attempt to open a lock takes 1d minutes. If the test die roll is a 6, the character breaks the tool he is using to open the lock.

Performance

Characters may at times be required to perform, perhaps by singing, dancing, playing a drum, chanting etc. The success margin of a test determines the overall success of the performance, as well as the number of onlookers that may bestow a gift on the character. If a gift is given, it will have a value of around one gem per point of success. For example, a success margin of 2 indicates up to two people may give the character a gift worth around 2 gems each. Gifts may be gems, or could be food, a tool, an item of jewellery etc.

The talent charismatic applies to the test on most occasions, though some performances may utilise different talents (such as agile for dancing). A test failure indicates the performance was not received particularly well by onlookers. A roll of 6 indicates the onlookers detested the performance, and may well boo and hiss the character.

Poisons

The poisons, venoms and toxins to which a character can become exposed are many and varied. Generally, poisons cause damage to a character, though some may have other effects.

When a character is exposed to a poison, a test is required to resist it, with the talent resilient applicable. The success margin of the test reduces the duration of the poison. Poison durations are expressed as turns, minutes, hours or days. The success margin therefore reduces the effect in an amount appropriate to the interval, be it turns, minutes etc. The minimum reduction for a successful test is 1, (for a 0 success margin). If the success margin reduces the duration to zero, the character has managed to completely resist the poison.

Failure indicates there is no reduction in the poison duration, and a roll of 6 indicates the poison takes effect for the maximum duration.

Blade poisons are pastes applied to a weapon, and delivered with a successful hit. Once applied to a weapon, a blade poison lasts until a hit is scored or 1d hours have passed, after which time the poison is dried out and no longer effective.

Some poison types include:

Stomach worm: A weak poison that causes 1 damage per hour for 1d hours.

Black thorn: A medium strength poison that causes 1 damage per minute for 1d minutes.

Burning blood: A powerful poison that causes 1 damage per turn for 2d turns.

Starvation

A character must eat a minimum of one meal per day. A meal, for game purposes, is a portion of food that can fit into a characters hand (a couple of items of fruit, a handful of nuts, a piece of meat etc). Note also that, to avoid overcomplicated record keeping, a meal might also consist of an appropriate amount of water (as well as, or instead of, food).

Each time a character misses a meal (i.e. goes a day without food), two things occur. Firstly, healing ceases. This includes both natural healing, and healing received from other means (such as a healer). Healing will not take place until the character eats food. Secondly, the character takes 1 point of damage. Since the character cannot heal, this damage will become serious after several days.

As soon as a character has a meal, the effects cease. The character will begin healing, starting the next day, and will not suffer further damage.

Characters with the talent resilient are able to endure one missed meal without any ill effects.

Example: Kulgan, with S9 and the talent resilient, is unable to find food whilst wandering the barren wastes. Following the first day without food, he suffers no ill effects, thanks to his talent. On day two of no food, he suffers a point of damage, and by day five has taken 4 points damage. During this period he has been unable to heal. Luckily, on day 5 he finds some plants with edible roots and eats a meal. By the next day he's feeling a little better, and natural healing begins to take effect.

Swimming

Characters are assumed to be able to swim. In calm waters, such as a pool or still lake, a character can swim without difficulty up to a maximum speed in metres per turn equal to his spirit score. In difficult conditions, such as a stormy sea, fast flowing river etc, a test is required. In such conditions, a character may swim a number of metres per turn equal to the success margin of the test (the talent resilient applies). Failure indicates no progress is made. A roll of 6 indicates the character gets into trouble, and begins to drown. When drowning, a character goes under water for 1d turns and takes a point of damage. A test is then made to resurface (with resilient the applicable talent). If successful, the character resurfaces, is no longer drowning and may continue to try and swim further. Failure indicates the character remains under water for another 1d turns, takes another point of damage and must try to resurface again (with another test being required, and so on).

Theft

An opposed test is made when characters try to steal something from another person (such as stealing an item from a bag, or taking an item from a nearby basket). The test uses the talents dexterous (for the thief) and aware (for the victim). If the thief wins, he steals the item. If the victim wins, the theft attempt fails and the victim becomes suspicious, making further attempts impossible against that victim for the remainder of the day. A roll of 6 indicates the victim catches the culprit red handed.

Trading

An opposed test is required when trying to buy or sell an item, with charismatic the applicable talent. The winner of the test is able to affect the price of an item by 10% per point of the success margin, with a minimum of 10% for a zero success margin. The price is affected in favour of the test winner, so a character selling an item obtains more money for it, while a character buying an item does so at a cheaper price.

Traps

To detect the presence of a trap a character must search for it. This requires a test, with the talent aware applicable. Especially well concealed traps may cause a penalty of -1 or more to the test to find it.

Traps are defined by their difficulty level, which is a number from 0 (easy to disarm) to 3 (very difficult to fathom). The success margin of the test to determines the level of trap that is disarmed. The talent dexterous applies to the test. If the test is a failure, the trap is neither disarmed or triggered, and the character may try again if desired. Each attempt takes 1d minutes. If the test die roll is a 6, the trap is triggered and affects the character trying to disarm it.

Example traps:

Boulder trap (difficulty 1)
This trap is a concealed boulder attached to a vine, that swings towards the character when triggered. Typically the trap is triggered by disturbing a twig or piece of sinew stretched across a path or passage.
A test can be made to avoid the boulder (agile applies), with failure indicating the character is struck for 1d+1 points damage.

Pit trap (difficulty 0)
This is a simple covered pit. When activated, the character falls through the covering (such as twigs covered by a fur) and into a pit below. A test is allowed to avoid falling (agile applies), with success indicating the character manages to grab onto the edge of the pit. If the character falls into a pit, he suffers damage (usually equivalent to a fall of 1d metres). If the pit is lined with stakes, add 1d to the damage sustained.

Spike trap (difficulty 1)
This trap is very similar to the boulder trap, but the trap comprises flint or bone spike attached to a wooden pole, which swings towards the character when triggered. A test can be made to avoid the trap, with agile applicable. Failure indicates the character suffers 1d points damage.

BEASTS

The continent of Mu is a place filled with many dangerous beasts. Many of these are formidable enough to pose an extreme threat to individual characters, and defeating these beasts is a challenge for groups of highly skilled warriors rather than individuals.

Likewise there are many creatures which are of no real threat to a character, and these beasts more often than not become a characters next meal...

The following descriptions are for a selection of creatures characters may encounter. Animals and monstrous beasts are classified as having 'spirit', which works in a similar manner to that of player characters. Beasts may also have unique skills or bonuses, depending on type.

A beast attacks in a similar manner to normal combat tests. A beast may be described as 'brave', which means it is treated as if it had the equivalent talent for combat purposes. In addition, a beast might be described as 'armoured'. This means the damage from attacks is reduced as if the beast were wearing armour. However, beast armour does not have a strength rating and is not depleted. A beast may also receive a bonus to the damage it causes, as noted in its' description.

Like characters, beasts fall unconscious once damage exceeds their spirit. They can then usually be killed with a final blow.

Amphicyon

An amphicyon, otherwise known as a dogbear, looks like a bear, with a head somewhat similar in appearance to that of a dog. They are powerful beasts, that dwell in forest regions.
Spirit 16, +2 damage bonus

Ape

There are many species of ape, most of them dwelling in forest, jungle or mountain areas. Some apes make use of sticks and stones when attacking, typically throwing them at foes. Otherwise, apes attack with fists and bites.
Spirit 7, +1 for tests involving climbing and tree swinging (brachiation).

Ape (giant)

Giant apes are huge creatures that grow up to 4 metres in height. They dwell in forests and tall grasslands, living on a vegetarian diet of nuts and roots.
Spirit 13, +1 damage bonus, +1 for tests involving strength

Aurochs

An aurochs is a type of cattle. They are large beasts that inhabit grassland and wilderness areas, and when forced to defend themselves attack with their large horns.
Spirit 16, +1 damage bonus

Bat

Bats are encountered at night, and dwell in dank caves. They are often encountered in swarms of 2d in number.
Spirit 3, causes only 1 damage irrespective of the success margin. Can navigate in absolute darkness.
Bats cause minimal damage when they bite, but may cause disease. When a bat attacks successfully a test is made to resist disease (resilient applies). The disease lasts 2d days and causes -1 to tests involving physical activity (fighting, jumping, climbing etc).

Bat (giant)

Giant bats are similar to standard bats, but up to 50% larger.
Spirit 6, causes normal damage plus disease (as for a standard bat).

Bear

Bears inhabit forest regions, and are attracted to food which they can scent from a great distance away.
Spirit 17, + 1 damage bonus

Bear (cave)

These large bears inhabit caves, and can be a nasty surprise when characters find a hospitable looking cave.
Spirit 19, + 2 damage bonus

Bison

These huge beasts are typically encountered in large herds. When they charge, they can be very dangerous.
Spirit 14, + 1 damage bonus

Boar

These tough beasts are encountered in forests, where they are occasionally hunted. Boars have vicious tusks that can be used for a gore attack.
Spirit 9, +1 damage bonus

Boar (giant)

These beasts are up to twice as large as standard boars.
Spirit 15, +2 damage bonus

Cat

Small cats of various types are often found throughout Mu, stalking small creatures such as rodents.
Spirit 3, +2 for stealthy actions.
Cats have a unique talent of being able to sense hidden and unseen persons within an area, and will usually hiss when a hidden person is nearby. In such circumstances, the GM can make a test for the cat with a +1 bonus, with success indicating it has detected a hidden person.

Cat (scimitar)

These large cats are similar to modern lions, but possess huge curved fangs. They prowl various areas of the world, and are especially adept at stalking prey.
Spirit 15, +1 for stealthy actions, +1 damage bonus

Crocodile

Crocodiles inhabit areas near rivers, preying on creatures that come to the riverbank to drink. They are dangerous creatures with tough hides.
Spirit 15, +2 damage bonus, armoured

Deer

Deer, and similar creatures, inhabit various types of terrain, from open grassland to woodland areas.
Spirit 5

Deer (dwarf)

These creatures are a small species of deer, inhabiting woodland.
Spirit 4

Deinotherium

A hoe tusker, in modern times called a deinotherium, is an elephant like creature with downward curved tusks jutting from its' lower jaw. It can attack with these, causing serious injury if it hits.
Spirit 22, +3 damage bonus, armoured

Doedicurus

This is the dangerous 'spike tail', of the same family as the glyptodont, but with a long, spiked tail which causes severe injury to foes. These creatures are solitary, forest dwelling beasts.
Spirit 21, +3 damage bonus, armoured
A character struck by a doedicurus tail must make a test (strong applies) or be knocked 1d metres, for a further 1d3 damage.

Dog

Dogs can be encountered as both wild animals, often in small packs of 2d, or as trained pets and guard animals.
Spirit 6, +2 spirit for larger dogs.

Elasmotherium

This is a large creature, akin to a rhino, but with long legs. The beast, called by some the 'rhino horse', has a single long horn like that of a rhino.
Spirit 23, +2 damage bonus

Elephant

Elephants inhabit warm areas of the world, and are typically encountered as part of a herd. When encountered alone, this may be a particularly aggressive, 'rogue' elephant. Elephants attack with their tusks.
Spirit 20, +2 damage bonus, armoured

Elk

Elks have large, elaborate antlers which they can use as weapons when threatened.
Spirit 16, +1 damage bonus

Glyptodont

This is the great 'armour beast', later to be known as a glyptodont, a sort of giant armadillo over 3 metres long. It has a thick hide which gives it excellent protection. These

beasts rarely attack, and will typically rely on their armour. If forced to defend themselves they use their armoured tail to strike foes.
Spirit 25, +2 damage bonus, armoured.
A character struck by a glyptodont tail must make a test (strong applies) or be knocked 1d3 metres for a further 1d3 damage.

Goat
Goats are encountered in hilly and mountainous areas, where they deftly clamber amidst rocks searching for vegetation.
Spirit 6, +1 for tests involving agility in mountain areas.

Horse
Horses are not commonly used as mounts in the Paleomythic era. When encountered they are likely to flee rather than fight.
Spirit 16

Hyena
A hyena, though small, has a powerful bite.
Spirit 7, +2 damage bonus

Leech (giant)
Giant leeches can be up to half a metre in length. They inhabit swamps and jungles, and attach themselves to hosts as they move past the leech.
Spirit 2
A giant leech has a 1 in 6 chance of attaching itself as each character passes by. If the creature attaches itself, it immediately begins to drain blood. Each turn after the first, the giant leech will cause 1 point damage to the host, and will continue to do so until it causes 2d damage or the host dies, after which it will unattach and slither away. To remove a giant leech a successful test is required, with strong the applicable talent. If the character receives assistance, add 1 to the test success chance. Attacking the leech is possible (and receives a +1 to hit bonus), but will cause it to bite harder. Each successful hit causes an additional 1 damage to the host. If killed, the leech will drop off.

Leopard
Leopards are stealthy cats with a talent for tree climbing. They dwell in the wooded areas of Mu, and are mostly solitary.
Spirit 13, +1 damage bonus, +1 for stealthy actions.

Lion
Lions are encountered in various areas of Mu, including grassland and wilderness areas. Whilst they can be encountered as solitary beasts, it is often the case that when a single lion is seen, there will be others nearby. Thus, if characters encounter a lion, the GM can assume 1d others will follow, each appearing 1d turns after the first.
Spirit 15, brave, +1 for stealthy actions, +1 damage bonus.

Lizard
Small lizards of various species can be encountered in warmer climates.
Spirit 2, +1 for tests to hide in nooks and undergrowth

Lizard (Cave)
Large cave lizards can grow to over a metre in length. They are usually encountered in damp caves, cave pools and jungle ruins.
Spirit 8, +1 damage bonus.

Lizard (Giant)
Giant lizards are found within large caverns, or lurking amidst desert crags. These beasts can grow to an enormous size, as much as 10 metres in length including the tail, and are typically covered with tough hides.
Spirit 18, +2 damage bonus (bite), +1 (tail), armoured
A giant lizard can attack both with its' bite and tail. The two attacks are directed at different foes, with a test made for each. The test for the tail sweep is made with a -1 penalty. If the tail sweep hits, it causes damage and a test is required (strong applies) to avoid being knocked 1d3 metres for another 1d3 damage.

Mammoth
These huge beasts are encountered in the cold wastes of Mu. They are formidable creatures, and only the most heroic hunters would take on such a beast.
Spirit 30, brave, +3 damage bonus, armoured
A mammoth attacks with its' massive tusks. Anyone hit by a mammoth must make a test (strong applies) or be knocked a number of metres equal to the damage inflicted.

Megatherium
This beast is an elephant sized sloth. It is covered in thick fur and has long fore claws

which it uses to attack, being able to stand on its' hind legs in order to do so. They inhabit forest areas.
Spirit 20, +1 damage bonus, armoured

Moa
These creatures are large flightless birds, akin to a modern ostrich, which stand at over 3 metres in height. In combat, these creatures peck with their massive beaks, or kick with their feet.
Spirit 9, +1 damage bonus.

Monkey
Monkeys are found in forests and jungles. They are typically smaller than apes, and most possess tails.
Spirit 5, +1 for tests involving agility, climbing, brachiation (tree swinging)

Rabbit
Rabbits, and similar creatures, are found in many areas.
Spirit 2, +1 for tests to hide in burrows and undergrowth

Rat
Rats can be encountered almost anywhere, but are especially abundant in underground areas. Rats may be encountered in variable size packs (roll 1d multiplied by 1d3).
Spirit 2, causes damage plus disease.
A rat bite causes just 1 point damage, but has a chance of transmitting disease. If the bite hits, a test is made, with resilient applicable, to resist the disease. The disease causes nausea and fatigue. Each time the player rolls a 1 on any die rolled for the character, the character vomits and is incapacitated for 1d3 turns, unable to act. The fatigue causes a -1 to tests involving physical actions. The disease lasts for 1d days.

Rat (Giant)
These beasts are grotesquely large versions of normal rats, growing to a length of up to two metres. They are typically encountered in packs of 1d.
Spirit 6, causes damage plus disease.
Giant rats cause normal damage plus have a chance of transmitting disease (see above).

Rhino
These tough beasts are encountered in grassland areas. They are cantankerous beasts, and when angered attack by charging.
Spirit 22, brave, +3 damage bonus, armoured
A rhino charges opponents. Anyone hit by a charge must make a test (strong applies) or be knocked a number of metres equal to the damage inflicted.
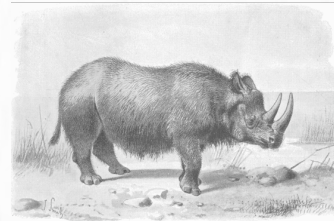
Rhino (woolly)
These large beasts are like modern day rhinos, but have a 'woolly' hide to protect them against the cold.
Spirit 30, brave, +3 damage bonus, armoured
A woolly rhino charges opponents. Anyone hit by a charge must make a test (strong applies) or be knocked a number of metres equal to the damage inflicted.

Sabretooth
Sabretooths are solitary, cat like beasts, dwelling in hilly, jungle and forested areas. They are stealthy, and when first encountered may ambush characters.
Spirit 18, +1 for stealthy actions and ambushing, +2 damage bonus, brave
A sabretooth can ambush characters. Each character within a party of adventurers must make a test, opposing their rolls against those for the sabretooth, who gets a +1 bonus. The talent aware is applicable to the test. Those characters for whom the test failed are surprised and stunned for the first turn of combat, able only to defend, and it will be one of these characters that the sabretooth attacks.

Scorpion
Scorpions are found in many areas, and particularly hot climates such as deserts. Scorpions avoid contact with humans, but if surprised will use their sting.
Spirit 2

The sting of a scorpion does no more than a point of damage. However, it will also deliver a potent poison, and a test is required to resist it. The poison causes 1 point damage per minute for 2d3 minutes.

Scorpion (giant)
These scorpions are a metre in length, and inhabit caverns in the hotter areas of Mu.
Spirit 5
In addition to causing damage, a giant scorpion delivers a lethal poison which must be resisted with a test. The poison causes 1 damage per turn for 2d turns.

Snake
Various types of snakes, many harmless, can be encountered. Most are found in warmer climates.
Spirit 2

Snake (poisonous)
Poisonous snakes are found in many areas and climates. They are usually encountered alone, though some villainous tribes are known to keep pits full of them.
Spirit 2, Poison bite
The bite of a poisonous snake causes no more than 1 point damage, but contains poison, which is delivered if the snake causes damage to a character. Snake poison causes 1 point damage per hour for 1d hours. The duration is reduced with a successful test (resilient applies).

Snake (giant)
Giant snakes can reach a length of over five metres. Such snakes kill prey by constricting.
Spirit 11, brave
If the attack of a giant snake is successful, it has wrapped itself around its' opponent. On successive turns, it automatically causes 1d3 damage, and the victim may either attempt to attack the snake, making a test (with brave applicable) to cause damage as normal (with no damage from the snake other than the 1d3 automatic damage), or the victim can try to break free. In this latter case, an opposed test is made, with strong the applicable talent. If successful, the character breaks free of the snake, who no longer inflicts automatic damage.

Spider (cave dweller)
Large, cave dwelling spiders are more a nuisance than a threat. They can be encountered in groups of 2d.
Spirit 1, causes no damage but is poisonous.
The bite of a cave spider causes no damage, but the victim must make a test to resist venom, with resilient applicable. The venom causes 1 point damage per turn for 1d3 turns.

Spider (giant)
These creatures are encountered in shady areas, amidst crags, jungles, caves and so on. Giant spiders can be up to a metre wide. Like their smaller kin, giant spiders are poisonous. They often have elaborate abdomen markings that betray their poisonousness, such as designs that look like skulls.
Spirit 7, poisonous.
The bite of a giant spider causes normal damage and is poisonous. The poison is similar cave spider venom, but causes 1 damage per turn for 1d turns.

Spider (jungle)
These spiders are typically small and brightly coloured. Their venom makes them highly dangerous.
Spirit 1, poisonous.
The poison from a jungle spider causes causes 1 damage per turn for 3d3 turns, unless the victim resists the effects with a test (the talent resilient applies).

Thylacoleo Carnifex
Otherwise known as a 'pouch lion', thylacoleo is a marsupial 'lion', with long limbs that allow it to more easily climb trees (in a manner similar to a modern leopard). It is in fact a marsupial rather than a member of the lion family, but has a distinctly lion like appearance. It inhabits grassland and woodland areas, and attacks with claws and a nasty bite.
Spirit 15, +1 to stealthy actions, +1 damage bonus.
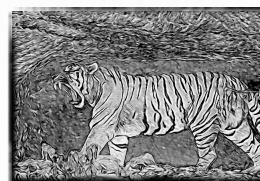
Tiger

Tigers are powerful cats that inhabit forests and jungles. They are well camouflaged, and very difficult to spot. Tigers are typically solitary beasts.

Spirit 17, +2 for stealthy actions, +1 damage bonus, brave

Toad (poison)

Toads and similar amphibians can be found in marshy conditions and near ponds, lakes and rivers. There are a wide variety of such creatures, and most are harmless. A few secrete poisonous substances from their skin, so that if handled or eaten raw they will affect a character.

Spirit 1, no attack other than poison effects.

A typical toad poison causes 1 point damage per hour for 1d hours.

Toxodon

This is the huge toxodon, a 'rhino beast', roughly 3 metres long and up to two metres high, and weighing more than 1500kgs. The beast has a body akin to that of a rhino, with a head like that of a hippo. A toxodon can usually be found grazing near river banks, and are not aggressive unless frightened or provoked. They attack by rearing at foes and stomping them.

Spirit 30, +3 damage bonus, armoured

Wart hog

Wart hogs are unpredictable beasts. In combat they charge and use their sharp tusks to gore foes.
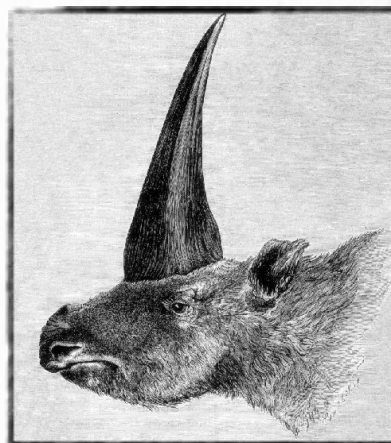
Spirit 7, +1 damage bonus

Wolf

Wolves are often encountered in wilderness areas, where they hunt in packs of 2d.

Spirit 9, +1 damage bonus, brave when part of a pack of 3 or more.

Wolf (dire)

Dire wolves are a larger species of wolf inhabiting the forested mountain regions of Mu. They roam in packs, of 1d in number.

Spirit 13, +1 damage bonus

BEAST MEN

There exists, in the wilder areas of Mu, strange races of beast men. These races are often primitive, with crude, backward cultures, or else are malevolent; the worshippers of vile spirits and demons, typically ruled over by villainous tyrants.

Beast men, being basically humanoid, are treated as non player characters rather than beasts. A few examples are shown below:

The Ape Men of the Wilds

These hunched, primitive men dwell amidst the crags within the mountainous areas of Mu. They are covered in coarse black or brown hair, and wield crude wood spears or clubs. The Ape Men are known to eat human flesh, and have on occasion ambushed travellers, who end up as feasts for the Ape men tribe.

Spirit 1d3+8, 1-2 of the following talents: agile, resilient, strong.

The Ape Men have the flaw ignorant.

The Ghouls of the Deep Caves

These foul men have skin as grey as ash, and dress in loincloths made from human skin. They are devourers of human flesh, and sharpen their teeth to points, to better rend the macabre meat.

The Ghouls are dwellers of the Deep Caves, a labyrinth of tunnels beneath various areas of Mu. The loathsome ghouls emerge from these tunnels at night, seeking humans to murder, or else lurking at burial sites in search of the recently deceased.

Spirit 1d+5, 1-3 of the following talents: aware, guileful, brave, resilient.

In a group of ghouls, there may be one or two 'priests'; ghoul leaders who possess a class of some sort. Roll 1d for each ghoul encountered to determine if they possess a class:

1 Cannibal
2 Head Shrinker (with 1d3 heads)
3 Medicine man
4 None
5 Soothsayer
6 Witchdoctor

Ghouls often fight unarmed, though a few fight with bones or bone knives.

Ghouls that fight without weapons use their filthy, flint hard fingernails to scratch at the victim and their sharpened teeth to bite. A successful hit from an unarmed ghoul attack causes normal combat damage, and if the die roll for a successful attack is a 1 the character must make a test (resilient applies) to resist a disease. The disease causes wounds to fester, so that the character will not naturally heal for 1d days.

The Dog Men of the Mountain of Skulls

The hunched, diminutive Dog Men are detestable creatures found throughout Mu. They are lean and nimble, with pointed faces and overly large canine teeth, as if a dogs head had been placed onto the body of a diminutive man.

The Dog Men have a hidden stronghold, which lies within a dense forest, and where it is said there exists a huge mountain made from the skulls of Dog Men ancestors.

This is where the Dog Men worship their ancestor spirits, to whom they make sacrifices.

Spirit 1d3+4, 1-3 of the following talents: accurate, aware, dexterous, guileful.

The Dog Men have the flaw passive.

Roll 1d for the weaponry of a typical Dog Man:

1 Antler pick
2 Bone
3 Bone knife
4 Bow and bone knife
5 Cudgel
6 Wood spear and hide shield

Dog Men may use poisoned weapons. For each one encountered, roll a die. On a roll of 1 the Dog Man has a poisoned weapon. When a character is struck by such a weapon, a test is required to resist the effects (with resilient applicable). The poison causes wounds to burn, inflicting 1 damage per turn for 1d turns A Dog Man weapon will have only one dose of poison applied to it, which is used up with a successful hit.

The Serpent Men of the Forgotten Ruins

The Serpent Men are hunched beings with snake heads and patterned, scaly skin. They dwell amidst ruined complexes hidden beneath an ancient ruined stone structure, which was built by a forgotten race of beings. The structure is hidden away within a dense jungle,

and appears to have had a regular, pyramid type shape at some point in the distant past. Within their strange home, the Serpent Men perform macabre rituals, and evoke spirits to do their bidding.

Spirit 1d+7, 1-3 of the following talents: dexterous, guileful, brave, strong, wilful.

The Serpent Men have the flaw oblivious.

Roll 1d for the Serpent Men weaponry:

1-2 Bone knife
3 Bone tipped spear
4 Fang whip
5 Skull topped cudgel
6 Staff

Serpent men are ruled by the 'Emerald Priestesses', a class of female Serpent women who are distinguished from their lowly brethren by wearing green gem headbands to identify their status.

Emerald Priestesses have a class from the following list:

1 Cave painter
2 Cultist
3 Priest
4 Medicine man
5 Snake charmer (with 1d3 snakes)
6 Summoner

The Toad people of the Black Obelisk

The hideous toad people are short, gangly limbed beings with bloated bodies and wide mouths, giving them the appearance of large toads.

The toad men dwell in dark forests and jungles, and their stronghold is said to be a black obelisk which sits amidst a clearing within a damp, festering marsh. Atop this obelisk, the toad 'queen' is said to dwell. She is an especially huge toad person, who occasionally crawls down from the obelisk to demand rituals and sacrifice in the name of their deity (Heqtet, the toad goddess).

Spirit 1d3+4, 1-3 of the following talents: accurate, agile, dexterous, guileful.

Toad men have the flaws weak and ignorant.

Roll 1d to determine if a toad man has a class from the below table:

1 Cultist
2 Medicine man
3-4 None
5 Priest
6 Slave

Toad men arm themselves with bones, cudgels, slings and wood spears.

The Troodon people

These strange humanoid beings appear to be upright bipedal reptiles. They are pallid of skin, short, with thin limbs and a slender tail. Their ancestors were a species of the great saurians, now all but extinct (save for a few specimens that still exist in the lost and forgotten places of Ancient Mu). The Troodon people live in underground strongholds, building complexes of regular shaped rooms and passages. Within these strongholds, the Troodon people farm strange creatures, such as white sightless lizards, bloated maggots and insects.

Spirit 1d+5, 1-2 of the following talents: agile, dexterous, guileful.

The Troodon people have the flaw inaccurate.

The Troodon people revere fire, and hold those who can make fire in high regard. Amongst their own kind, fire makers are their leaders, and a leader always carries a staff topped with a burning torch to denote his rank.

Roll on the below table to determine the class of a Troodon person. A result of 'fire maker' indicates the individual is a leader, who may command others that are present.

1 Fire maker
2-3 None
4 Scavenger
5 Storyteller
6 Trapper

In combat, a Troodon person uses guile more than brute force. They will attempt to use fire if available, as well as to lead characters into traps. They use weapons made from stone or bone (roll 1d for each Troodon person encountered):

1 Bone
2 Bone knife
3 Bone sword
4-5 Rocks (1d, some used for throwing)
6 Skull topped cudgel

THE OTHERWORLD

The Otherworld exists alongside the mortal world, but can be seen and accessed only by ghosts or a shaman. The Otherworld is a cold, dark mirror of the mundane world, where the ghosts wander aimlessly, in a state of perpetual decay. The Otherworld has its' own rulers and kings, its own lands and its own cities. The ghostly lands are populated by the ghosts of the dead, who once were mortal, though these ghosts are shadows of their former living selves and lack much of the memories of their former lives.

The Otherworld has many of the same features, terrains and structures as the mortal world, in roughly the same places. Sometimes, the Otherworld retains features that have long since been changed or lost in the mortal world. Thus, in the Otherworld there may me ancient ruins that have long been rubble in the mortal world.

The Otherworld is gloomy during the day, as if illuminated by perpetual moonlight. At night, it is dark, and illuminated only by meagre torches, or eerie luminescent mists. There is no food in the Otherworld; fruits either do not grow, or else what grows is an incorporeal shadow of the food, which dissipates if it is picked. Likewise, animal spirits merely dissipate into mist and dust when killed, leaving nothing edible.

Given the bleakness of the Otherworld, it would seem unlikely that anyone would willingly enter such a place. However, the Otherworld, as bleak as it is, is also a place of lost and obscure knowledge. A shaman will know this, and it is for this reason that they pass into the Otherworld.
Hidden amongst the mysterious ruins, the forgotten temples, the dead forests or within the foreboding caverns, there are the ghosts who can be interrogated, and who will impart knowledge to a shaman.

Entering the Otherworld

When a character enters the Otherworld, it is their spirit self that makes the journey. The spirit self is a copy of the mortal self, and has the same appearance and belongings as the mortal self. The mortal, physical self remains in the mortal world. The physical form lies motionless as if asleep, and cannot be woken. If the physical body of a character is killed, the spirit is trapped forever in the Otherworld (unless by chance it is called back into the mortal world through some magic). It should be evident then, that when a character enters the Otherworld, their physical form is extremely vulnerable.

A shaman may enter the Otherworld by performing a ceremony. This takes roughly an hour to do, and often requires certain materials (such as herbs to burn on a fire). Acquiring these materials may form part of an adventure, if the GM so chooses.

Once a ceremony has been conducted, a shaman can automatically enter the Otherworld. In addition, the shaman may bring other willing subjects into the Otherworld, if they are present during the ceremony. However, a shaman is limited in the number of persons he can bring, and this limit equals the shamans spirit score.

Each hour within the Otherworld, a test is made by the shamans' player for each person in the Otherworld (with the talent wilful applicable). Success indicates the character may choose to remain in the Otherworld, or may return to his physical form. Failure indicates the character must remain in the Otherworld, the character has no choice in the matter. This can occasionally result in one or more characters becoming 'lost' in the Otherworld, unable to return for many hours.

Encounters in the Otherworld

Each hour, there is a cumulative chance a shaman or group of characters may encounter spirits or ghosts of some kind. The number of ghosts is 1d3-1 for the first hour, 2d3-2 for the second hour, 3d3-3 for the third hour and so on.

For each ghost, roll a die for the type that is encountered:

1 Animal Spirit (chosen by the GM, such as a Cat Spirit or a Snake Spirit).
2 Ghost
3-6 Shadow

As should be evident, the longer one remains in the Otherworld, the more ghosts are drawn to the characters, and the more dangerous the place becomes.

Combat in the Otherworld

Combat in the Otherworld proceeds exactly as it does in the mortal world. Injuries received in the Otherworld take effect just as they would in the mortal world. However, such injuries appear merely as blemishes and bruises on the physical body of the character.
If a character is killed in the Otherworld, their physical body will also die in the mortal world. However, there is a short period of an hour or two when the body is still alive, and susceptible to possession by a ghost if one is nearby (in the mortal world). To randomly determine if this occurs, the GM may roll a die. Possession happens on a die roll of 1.

Possessed characters are effectively the same as walking cadavers (see the section on 'the dead').
Note that shaman characters may not banish ghosts when in the Otherworld, but may still seek to control them (including the spirits of other characters that are present in the spirit world).

Finding a wraith

The reason a shaman risks his life to enter the Otherworld is to find a wraith. Wraiths are ancestor spirits that have retained much of their memories, and that were renowned, powerful or notorious in life.

Each hour in the Otherworld, a test can be made for the shaman character to see if a wraith is located. The talent aware applies to this test.
Other characters may also try to locate a wraith, but the test for these characters is difficult (a -1 penalty to the test). The talent aware applies however.

If a wraith is encountered, they must be persuaded to impart their knowledge. This requires a test, with the talent charismatic applicable. If successful, the wraith will answer the question asked of it. A failure indicates the wraith is unresponsive, and another test is required after a wait of an hour. During this time, it is possible other ghosts may be encountered, and a roll should be made as described above.

The knowledge a wraith can impart varies depending on the question. Wraiths are able to access knowledge of their past, of current events in the mortal and Otherworld, and of certain lost or obscure knowledge. They are not fortune tellers, and will be no more successful at answering questions about future events than a mortal might.

Simple questions concerning mundane matters can usually be answered by the wraith. For example, a wraith might be able to reveal the location of an enemy, or the number of warriors guarding a location, or the nature of a monster hidden within some caves etc. Occasionally the wraith may not be able to give a full answer, and in such cases is likely to be cryptic in its' response.

Likewise a wraith can usually supply details of past events, especially those concerning its' own past life (as devised by the GM). Wraiths can thus talk about the history of a place, the people of a particular area, major events (such as great catastrophes) from the past and so on.

Obscure, lost or forbidden knowledge may also be possessed by a wraith. To obtain this sort of information, a character may need to do more than persuade the wraith. In such cases, the wraith may insist on a task being completed (in either the Otherworld or mundane world), or may instead challenge a character to combat and impart the knowledge only if the character manages to subdue the wraith.

Examples of obscure knowledge:

A new class is acquired upon defeating the wraith.
A new talent is acquired upon defeating the wraith.
The location of a fabulous treasure is revealed.
The entrance to a long forgotten tomb is revealed.
The location of a strange herb which can bring a person back from the dead is revealed.
The location of a magical weapon or ancient artefact is revealed.

THE DEAD

This category of beings includes those who are not of the mortal world, the spirits of dead men and of animals.

In the Otherworld, ghosts are treated like other beings, and normal combat rules apply.

When ghosts pass to the mortal world, they are even more incorporeal and indistinct, and are thus barely affected by mundane objects such as weapons. Any attack upon them, with the exception of magical attacks (such as those made by medicine men), will cause just 1 point damage, irrespective of the degree of success or type of weapon.

This category also includes the animated dead; cadavers and skeletons of men and animals bought to life by witchdoctors. Such creatures are rotting, decayed things that have been given a semblance of life by having a spirit forced back into the original body. Such beings are mostly mindless, and governed more by instinct than reasoning.

Once a ghost takes damage in excess of its' spirit it dissipates and fades from the mortal world. Likewise, an animated undead being that takes damage in excess of its spirit is destroyed, and the inhabiting spirit fades from the mortal world.

Note that these creatures are all vulnerable to the power of the shaman class.

Cadavers and skeletons
A cadaver is the body of a recently deceased person, animated by magic. Such creatures are ghastly things, often encountered near burial sites. An ancient cadaver, reduced to nothing more than bones, is an animated skeleton. Both have similar capabilities.
Cadavers and skeletons have a spirit equal to half that of the person that created them. If this is unknown, the GM can simply roll 2d3.
These beings have no skills or abilities, but are able to use weapons if there is one to hand when they are first animated. See the description of the witchdoctor class for more information on these beings.

Cat Spirits
These spirits appear as vague, misty cat shadows that flit and dart about. They are encountered in the darkest of woods or amidst shadowy hills.
Spirit 2d
Cat spirits are difficulty, vague targets. In order to have a chance of attacking one of them, a test is required each turn, with aware applicable. If the test is a success, a normal attack can be made. If the test fails, the character is considered to be merely defending himself that turn, and will not inflict damage to the spirit.

Ghosts
The spirits of the dead, known as ghosts, are those called forth by summoners. They are the restless dead, who dwell within forgotten burial mounds and within burial caves. These are the dead souls, existing in a perpetual state of anguish, fear or rage. Often these beings exist within the mortal world because they have been called forth by magic, and are then abandoned and unable to return to the Otherworld.
Spirit 2d+1
Ghosts are incorporeal, translucent beings that appear to be macabre, decayed versions of the living.
When a ghost successfully attacks a character, the character takes normal damage from the chilling touch of the ghost. Each time the character is hit, a test is made for the character, with wilful applicable. If the test for the character is a failure, the character is momentarily struck with fear, doubt and indecision, and may not act on the following turn, though may still attempt to defend against any attacks by the ghost.

Lizard spirits
Lizard spirits dwell in dank swamps, and amidst overgrown ruins. They are large creatures, at least three metres long, with sickly green skin and black, snake like tongues.
Spirit 2d
Lizard spirits can make ranged attacks (by spitting), and this will the first type of attack they use until characters close to within a metre or two. The viscous, oily spit of a lizard burns like acid, with a +1 damage bonus.

Rat spirits

Rat spirits are typically drawn to areas of decay and ruin. The rat spirit appears as a vague, black and shadowy creature, and is usually quite large (the size of a dog).
Spirit 1d
If a rat spirit successfully bites a character, a test should be made for the character to resist contracting the rat spirit disease (the talent resilient applies to the test). The disease causes 1 point damage per day and lasts for 1d days.

Scorpion spirits

In the mortal world, scorpion spirits can be found in ancient tombs and caverns. They appear as translucent beings with venom dripping from their stingers.
Spirit 3d
If a scorpion spirit stings a character, a test is required to resist the venom. The venom causes paralysis and damage. Each turn, the character takes a point of damage, and suffers a cumulative -1 modifier to tests (i.e, -1 for the first turn, -2 for the second turn etc). If the negative modifier reaches a point where the character can no longer attack, they are paralysed for the remainder of the poison duration. The poison lasts for 2d3 turns.

Shadows

These are barely visible, dark and eerie forms that appear to be vaguely human. They are the fading ghosts, who have existed for so long within the Otherworld that they are beginning to dissipate into nothingness. Shadows are rarely encountered in the mortal world, but are numerous in the Otherworld.
Spirit 2d3
Shadows attack by attempting to claw at foes with sharp, needle like fingernails. If they hit, they cause a single point of damage.
When first encountered, the intangibility of the shadow spirit means characters will be surprised, and during the first turn of combat may not attack (though can defend).

Snake Spirits

The snake spirits can be encountered amidst festering swamps and vine tangled jungles. They appear as translucent green serpents that writhe and twist in mid air.
Spirit 2d
If a snake spirit successfully attacks a character, it does normal damage plus delivers spirit venom. This venom is resisted with a test, with resilient being the applicable talent. The venom causes drowsiness, which is a -1 to combat tests for the next 1d turns.

Spider spirits

Spirit spirits lurk in dark caves, alcoves, pits and tunnels. They appear as shiny black creatures, with metre long legs and translucent bodies.
Spirit 1d
Each turn of combat, there is a chance the spider spirit will use its' webs as an attack. To determine if the spider spirit uses the attack, the GM should roll 1d, and on a roll of 1 or 2 the web attack is used against one character.
A successful hit entangles the character in shadowy strands of web, which inhibit movement. While entangled, the character is attacked at +2. To break free of the web a successful test is required, with the talent strong applicable. The character may attempt this once per turn.

Wolf Spirits

Wolf spirits are encountered in barren, cold wastes. They appear as glowing, translucent white wolves with eyes of red.
Spirit 3d
Each turn of combat with a wolf spirit the GM should roll a die. On a roll of 1, the wolf spirit howls as its' action. All those who hear the howl must make a test, with wilful applicable. Those that fail the test are overcome with fear, and will be unable to attack for 1d3 turns. They may still defend themselves however.

Wraiths

A wraith appears as a ghastly, luminous human figure in a state of decay. They are potent ghosts, that dwell in ghostly temples, hidden ruins and ancient crypts.
Spirit 2d+3
A wraith attacks by exuding foul tendrils of essence from its' mouth, which swirl in the air around a single target. This proceeds like a normal combat test, and is treated as a +2 damage weapon.

TRIBES

Player characters may be part of a tribe, and their tribe serves as a 'home base', from which the characters can travel on their adventures. This is a useful device for players, since it gives the characters something to work for, defend and turn to when things get tough. Likewise, the tribe offers the GM an easy way to introduce and initiate adventures; there will always be someone in the tribe that needs help in some way...

The characters tribe represents the familiar and predictable aspects of the characters life, and helps players envisage what the 'norm' means to their characters.
Player characters will often be members of the same tribe, though there may well be a few 'foreigners' in the tribe; people from neighbouring tribes or even exotic, far off peoples.

To assist the GM, the below rules can be used to help create a tribe. These rules answer some of the questions players may have about the tribe, such as who their leader is, and what beliefs the tribe has.

Belief

Early beliefs and religious practices are thought to have involved the veneration of ancestors and the belief in spirits, which were thought to exist in all things (animals, plants, stones and so on). Perhaps the earliest beliefs concerning a deity featured the worship of the 'venus figure', a type of mother goddess deity, and examples of figurines depicting this deity have been found in several areas of the world.

The central belief of a tribe can be determined using the below table. The GM can use the result as a starting point to define other details of the tribes beliefs.

1 Ancestors (venerated ancestors, such as great warriors, healers or chiefs)
2 Animal spirit (such as a cat, snake or wolf)
3 God or goddess (see the section entitled 'the gods of Ancient Mu' for details).
4 Object spirit (for example, a mountain, tree, river, rock formation, cave etc)
5 Phenomena spirit (such as the wind, fire, rain, storms or night)
6 Supernatural (such as a monstrous lizard, a strange subterranean race or an undead being)

Ceremonies

Tribes have ceremonies for many aspects of tribal life, including births, the naming of a child, deaths, hunting, the changes of the season, marriage, tribal calamities, war and so on. It is highly likely that the tribe will also have a special annual ceremony for their particular deity or belief. This annual ceremony can be defined using the below table. Other ceremonies can be detailed as required.

The events which warrant ceremonies are thus typically:
Annual ceremony for the deity or spirit, Births, Burials, Calamities, Child naming, Coming of age, Hunting forays, Leadership changes, Marriages, Seasonal changes.

When the GM decides an event occurs, such as one of tribes children coming of age, the nature of a ceremony can be determined using the below table:

1 Celebration (singing, dancing, feasting, storytelling)
2 Gifts (the giving of gifts, such as jewellery, tools or food)
3 Magic (a magical or spiritual act, such as use of hallucinogens, or dream interpretation)
4 Offerings (offerings to the deity or spirit, such as food or tools left at a holy place)
5 Sacrifice (the ritual slaughter of an animal, or even a person)
6 Task (the completion of some task, such as a journey, or the construction of a structure)

Dwellings

A tribe will have a traditional type of dwelling, which is often tied to the terrain they inhabit. To determine the usual tribal dwelling, the GM can roll a die on the below table:

1 Cave (one or more caves within a cliff face or hill side)
2 Hut (a permanent wooden structure, such as a roundhouse, made of wood or bone, possibly daubed with mud)
3 Mound (a home dug into a hill, reinforced with stone blocks and timbers)
4 Shelter (a structure typically made from branches bound together to form a 'lean to' or similar)
5 Tent (made from hides or furs)
6 Unusual (a unique or rare dwelling, such as tree houses, or amidst ancient, strange ruins)

Leader

The type of leader a tribe has can vary, and reflects the needs of the tribe and demands of the environment in many cases. Some leader types are shown below, and GMs may determine this randomly when creating a tribe if they so wish.

1 Champion (the position of leader is traditionally gained through might, proving oneself in combat)
2 Chief (the position is hereditary, passing from father or mother to son or daughter, or is granted by an assembly of adult tribe members)
3 Elders (a group of wise men or women govern the tribe)
4 Master (the most skilled or potent person within a particular class governs the tribe, such as a Witch doctor, shaman, healer, soothsayer etc).
5 Sage (a wise man or woman, a spiritual advisor, governs the tribe)
6 Supernatural (the tribe is governed by something mysterious, such as a spirit, an undead being, or a monster. The wishes of the being are interpreted by an advisor or by consensus of tribal adults).

Size

Tribes can vary greatly in size, and the size of a tribe is dictated by many factors (including terrain, available resources and other tribes in the area).

As a rough guide for the size of a tribe, the GM can roll 2d for the number of females, 2d for the number of males and 1d3 for the number of children each sex. Larger tribes will of course exist, perhaps even numbering in the hundreds, but such tribes are the exception, and should be custom designed by the GM as required.

An imbalance of sexes within the tribe might reflect a serious problem faced by the tribe, and can be a source of adventures. For example, a tribe of many females, a few males and few children might reflect ongoing tension and war between neighbouring tribes, which causes a regular loss of male warriors (if most of the warriors in the tribe are traditionally male). A tribe of many males and females, but few children, might reflect an inbreeding problem, and require fresh members from other tribes to avoid the tribe dying out altogether.

The following information details a small tribe called 'The Cloud People', which can be used by the GM as a guide.

THE CLOUD PEOPLE

On the edges of an area of southern Mu known as the Red Wastes, there are three tribes living close to one another. The largest of these is known as 'The Ferocious Lizard Clan', the two smaller tribes are 'The Fire People' and 'The Cloud People'.

The Cloud People are the smallest tribe, and are defined below as an example of a tribe.

Belief: Phenomena Spirit

The Cloud People worship the clouds, which they believe are a type of spirit. The clouds hold knowledge, which they impart to the Cloud People in their shapes. To this end, the Cloud People will often spend long hours lying on their backs, watching the clouds, and trying to interpret their shapes. The most skilled at interpretation usually go on to become the tribal leader.

Ceremony (annual): Task

Each year, at the beginning of the hot and dry summer, several tribe members (usually the most able bodied) make a journey to the nearby mountain (known as 'ember mountain', since it occasionally spits hot ash). At the highest point, the tribe members watch the clouds, looking for signs and portents for the coming year. When they return, the images they have seen are interpreted by the tribe leader, who determines if the omens are good.

Dwellings: Shelter

The Cloud People construct simple shelters from wood, tied together and covered by hides. These are constructed on top of large boulders, with wooden walkways between some of the boulders. These simple shelters are well positioned, offering a good view of the surrounding terrain.

Leader: Sage

The leader of the Cloud People is called Hak. He has a great talent for interpreting the clouds, and it was this ability that made him the natural leader of the tribe.

Size: Females 4, Males 4, Children 3 (1 boy, 2 girls).

The Cloud People are few in number, and are vulnerable to attack from enemies and wild animals.

The tribe members comprise of:

Amdar

Amdar is a male aged 21. He is the husband of Narea, and the father of the child Jod. Amdar is a bad tempered soul, and often fights with his wife. He is a mediocre hunter.
Spirit 10, Guileful, Resilient, Inaccurate, Dull. Fire Maker.
Wood spear +1, Hand axe +1

Azala

Azala is a female, aged 16. Azala is slender and agile. She wears a tunic decorated with beads. Azala is an inquisitive and perceptive young woman.
Spirit 9, Agile, Aware, Meek, Weak. Prowler.
Bow +2, Flint knife +1

Dun

Dun is a male aged 15. Dun is a naive young man, keen to do well but lacking in any great ability. He proudly wears a necklace of large animal teeth he has collected over several years.
Spirit 9, Dexterous, Ignorant. Tracker.
Wood spear +1

Hak

Hak is male and aged 51. Hak is the oldest member of the tribe, and his once black hair is now mostly grey. Hak is respected for his great knowledge and wisdom, and was chosen to lead the tribe several years ago. Hak is a calm and gentle soul, with an ability to inspire loyalty and courage in others.
Spirit 12, Charismatic, Wise, Oblivious. Seer, Shaman, Storyteller.
Staff +2

Jod

Jod is a male child aged 5. Jod is the son of Narea and Amdar. He is a quiet, introverted child, that enjoys sitting alone playing with insects and small animals.
Spirit 5, Careless, Weak

Munia

Munia is female and aged 32. Munia is married to Zan, and is the mother of the children Nuala and Sefia. Munia is a short, sturdy woman with a generous disposition.
Spirit 10, Charismatic, Resilient, Clumsy, Passive. Gatherer.
Antler pick +2

Narea

Narea is a female, aged 25. She is married to Amdar, and is the mother of the child Jod. Narea is a hot tempered woman with a fondness for jewellery. She fights with her husband often.

Spirit 11, Wilful, Ignorant. Soothsayer.

Cudgel +1

Nuala

Nuala is a female child aged 9. Nuala is a skinny, talkative girl. She is the daughter of Munia and Zan.

Spirit 7, Aware, Weak

Sefia

Sefia is a female child aged 7. Sefia is a dreamer, fond of making up stories. Hak has stated that she may well become a shaman. She is the daughter of Munia and Zan.

Spirit 6, Dexterous, Meek

Tulu

Tulu is a female, aged 22. Tulu is a foreign female. She was found in the barrens a few years ago, starving and weak. The Cloud People adopted her, and she has remained with the tribe ever since. Tulu has slightly darker skin than the rest of the tribe, and keeps her hair short. She cannot speak, but usually gets her message across with gestures. It is generally accepted that Tulu was abandoned by her former tribe, but no one knows why. She was given the name Tulu by Hak.

Spirit 11, Brave, Wilful. Healer, Slave.

Bone tipped spear +2

Zan

Zan is male and aged 41. Zan is a powerful warrior, and although no longer in his prime, is still a fearsome opponent. Zan is married to Munia, and is the father of Nuala and Sefia.

Spirit 12, Accurate, Strong, Awkward. Hunter, Savage, Trapper.

Bow +2, Flint knife +1

PALEOMYTHIC SOCIETIES

Human life in the lands of Ancient Mu is highly varied, and it would thus be incorrect to say that there is a single society or culture. Ancient Mu is home to numerous tribes, some settled and some nomadic, gathering and hunting in traditional areas. Settled tribes sometimes establish communities and take to living in well made, permanent structures, where they may farm or survive through trade.

In the hot regions of Ancient Mu (to the south of the continent), there are many tribes of dark and olive skinned people. Some of these southern tribes have created large settlements, using mud bricks and stone to create small dwellings built close together to form narrow streets and alleys. Others live in tents made from hides or linen, and these tribes are often nomadic, moving from oasis to oasis along established routes.

The people of the south tend to wear clothes of linen or thin hide. Men often wear only a loincloth, or else a short linen skirt and loose tunic. Women wear 'bikini' style hide garments, or linen skirts and dresses tied loosely at the waist.
The people of the south have dark hair, which is worn in a variety of styles. The men of some tribes shave their heads, and some women tie their hair into a knot, or use a piece of linen to keep it in place.

The north of the continent of Ancient Mu is cold, and in the far north permanently covered in snow and ice. The people who dwell in this region tend to be light skinned, and their hair may be blonde, or various shades of brown. Many tribes in the north live in small settlements, and build houses from timber, or else find caves suitable for use as homes. There are also some who build homes using a combination of earth and stone, to create turf covered mound houses. The nomadic tribes of the north often use tents made from furs, hides and sturdy timber.

The people of the north wear fur and hide clothing. Men usually wear a loincloth, a heavy tunic, and wrap their arms and legs in fur. They will also wear a fur cloak when outside. Women usually wear a fur or hide 'bikini', as well as a tunic and wraps for arms and legs, and a cloak when outside. Some women braid their hair, others leave it long and flowing for extra warmth. Men often have beards and long hair.

Although the customs of the many tribes of Ancient Mu vary, there are a number of practises which are mostly universal.

Amongst most tribes and communities, it is the custom to live a monogamous life with one partner, and most tribes have some sort of marriage ceremony. Some tribes and settlements may have somewhat more unusual customs, such as a leader having concubines, or a priestess having many 'husbands'. When people marry, they typically move to a new dwelling, or to the dwelling of one of the families. Some tribes, who use communal dwellings, instead have simple personal sleeping areas for wives and husbands.

When there is a death in a tribe or community, there is usually a funeral ceremony of some kind. These vary, and it may be that the body of the deceased is buried, burned or disposed of in some other manner. Offerings, prayers or celebrations may also be part of a burial ceremony.

Tribes and communities will often trade with others from nearby communities. In this way, goods may travel great distances, as they are traded again and again. Trade encourages travel, and there may well be those within a tribe or community that specialise in this activity. Trade may involve simple barter, or the exchange of gems for other goods, or even payment for goods with a service of some kind. Sometimes whole communities come together at great gatherings, and this is often when partnerships are formed, and members of tribes arrange inter-tribal marriages.

Tribal laws are often based around the notion of 'taboo'. Essentially, a tribe will have a rigid set of beliefs concerning certain practises, and to act contrary to these is taboo. If a taboo is broken, it is the belief of the tribe that bad things will occur, both for the person breaking the taboo as well as the tribe itself. This practise helps to ensure rules are kept and strongly enforced, since anyone acting outside the rules, breaking a taboo, is hurting both

himself and the tribe. Typical taboos include those actions which in modern society would likely be viewed as immoral and illegal, such as murder and crimes of serious violence, sexual relations with a close family member, crimes of theft, adultery and so on. Tribes may also have taboos peculiar to their own particular customs, history or environment, and these are often put in place as ways to protect the tribe. For example, a tribe may have a taboo against going to a specific place, and this may be for a variety of practical reasons (it is the territory of an enemy tribe, there are poisonous plants growing there, it is a burial ground where spirits dwell etc). In addition, most tribes have taboos relating to their beliefs, burial sites and sacred artefacts.

Punishments for breaking a taboo can range from relatively minor penalties (the return of stolen property, with interest) to extreme measures, such as torture, banishment or death. Such extreme punishments are often reserved for serious violations, such as putting a tribe at risk (for example, by helping the attack of an enemy tribe) or the murder of a member of the tribe (and in this sense, murder means that there was no good reason for the killing, since most tribes will excuse the killing of someone if there was cause, such as the victim being a traitor to the tribe).
Some tribes indulge in the practise of slavery, and being traded into slavery is sometimes a punishment for taboo breakers. In this way, a tribe gets rid of its' trouble maker, and makes a profit with the sale of the slave as well.

THE MANY LANDS OF ANCIENT MU

There are many lands on the continent of Ancient Mu, and the GM is encouraged to create colourful sounding regions from which the player characters may come from and travel to.

The Barrow Land

In the north of Ancient Mu is Barrow Land, a forested region and home to many tribes. The land here is fertile, and the tribes do well, having plenty to hunt and to gather. Within this land however, there is a place where the tombs of ancient shamans are numerous, and the area is known to be haunted by many spirits. Despite this, it has attracted many travellers, thanks to the rumours of great wealth hidden within the barrows. Few who enter the area of the barrows are seen again.

The City of Dust

In southern Mu, within the windswept wastes, a city of low mud brick buildings has been created. The place originally began as a handful of small structures built around an oasis, and has over the years grown in size so that it now numbers more than a hundred buildings of various shapes and sizes. Here the traveller will find people from many lands, and this is a place where many strange goods are sold. The city has no single ruler, but instead is governed by several chiefs, each of whom watches over an area of the city. Often, various areas of the city can become dangerous, as thieves and slavers prowl the narrow alleys. The city is therefore not for the faint hearted.

The Island of Bones

There are many islands off the coast of Ancient Mu, and one of the largest of these is known as the Island of Bones. The whole island is ruled by a tyrannical family, known as the Oligarchy. The island is effectively a large city, with white buildings made from the bones of dead slaves. On the island there exists a three tiered hierarchy; the Oligarchs are the most powerful, below them are the wealthy slavers, and lowest are the slaves. The slavers use large boats to travel from the island in search of new slaves, and along parts of the coast of Mu, the slavers are greatly feared.

The Obsidian Desert

The Obsidian Desert lies to the south of the continent. It is a large expanse of wasteland, where very little grows, and only the hardiest of creatures survive. Strewn over the surface of the region are shards of obsidian, some of which have been fractured over time, and shine when the sun is at its' highest. In some areas of the desert, it is said that the obsidian shines so brightly it can send a man blind.

Amidst this harsh landscape there are a few nomadic tribes, and the people of these tribes are said to know the way to ancient ruins within the desert, where strange creatures dwell, and where fabulous gems can be found.

The Reeking Swamp

The largest swamp on the continent is known as the Reeking Swamp, a land ruled by the Swamp people. The Swamp people have created, in the centre of the swamp, a city built on stilts. Here, the Swamp people trade with the outlying tribes, selling animal skins, fish and strange curios made from fish bones, dried amphibians and swamp plants. The Swamp people are accomplished boat builders, and for a fee will transport travellers safely through the swamp.

The Many Lands

In addition to the places noted above, there are numerous other lands yet to be discovered by the player characters. As an aid in creating such lands, the below tables are provided, which can be used to create a name for these unexplored territories.

To create a land, roll once on table A and once on table B. For example, a roll of 9 on table A gives us 'Forgotten', and a roll of 12 on table B gives us 'Marsh', so the land is known as 'the Forgotten Marsh'.
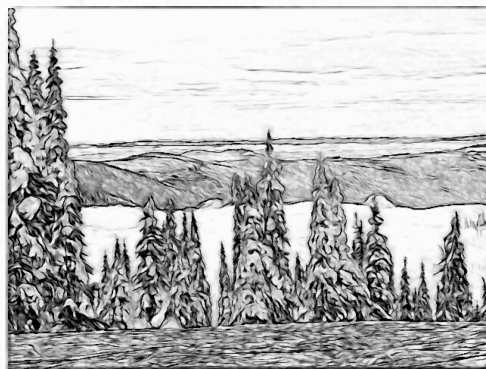
The Many Lands - Table A

3 Ancient
4 Beast
5 Black
6 Dark
7 Dying
8 Forbidden
9 Forgotten
10 Lizard
11 Lost
12 Mad
13 Mystic
14 Red
15 Serpent
16 Spirit
17 Weird
18 Wild

The Many Lands - Table B

3 Barrens
4 Coast
5 Crags
6 Desert
7 Forest
8 Hills
9 Island
10 Jungle
11 Lake
12 Marsh
13 Mountain
14 River
15 Swamp
16 Valley
17 Wastes
18 Woods

THE GODS OF ANCIENT MU

Amongst the more settled people of Ancient Mu, there are those who worship deities rather than spirits or ancestors.

In some lands, temples have been constructed to various gods, and 'henge' monuments, stone and wooden circles, are constructed by some tribes.

The below is a list of some of the gods of Ancient Mu.

Ajokk
A favourite of witchdoctors, Ajokk is the god of corpses and reanimation. During storms and heavy rain, priests of Ajokk demands sacrifices to appease him.

Albas
A demonic goddess, whose statues depict a taloned woman. The few depraved tribes that worship her sacrifice children, and will often steal them from neighbouring tribes.

Badamo
The lord of spirits, the god of shamans. Badamo is worshipped by those who regularly pass into the Otherworld.

Belbog
A god of the northern tribes of Mu. Belbog is the god of luck, and worshippers pray to him before hunting and battle.

Devwica
The goddess of hunting and nature, Devwica is called upon to bless spears and bows by her followers.

Fah
Fah is the god of prophecy, and is able to see all that will be. His worshippers include many prophets, who claims to channel his wisdom.

Heqtet
The toad goddess. She is a goddess of fertility, and followers are known to hold debauched rituals in her name.

Humbawa
A god of forests, fertility and hunting. Humbawa is seen as a fearsome giant of a man, and followers believe he lurks in dense forest, where he hunts anything (including people).

Kang
An insect god, usually depicted as a preying mantis. Kang is worshipped by a handful of depraved tribes that engage in human sacrifice.

Kolada
Kolada is the snow god, worshipped by tribes in the north of Mu. He is strongest in winter, and followers make offerings to him to ensure they endure the harsh cold.

Mulaku
God of a few degenerate tribes, as well as the Ape men. Statues of Mulaku depict a monkey or ape.

Nebka
A scorpion god who is believed to dwell in the Otherworld. Many of Nebka's followers are summoners and shamans.

Nyoka
Nyoka is the many armed spider god. His worshippers engage in such unwholesome activities as brewing poisons. Many followers of Nyoka are inbred, and often have disfigurements of some kind.

Polvoi
Polvoi is a nature god, the guardian of gatherers. Polvoi is depicted in crude clay figurines as a diminutive human, and these are often worn as an amulet by followers.

Shakpata
Shakpata is a god of disease, worshipped by a few tribes that inhabit the forgotten burial grounds of Mu.
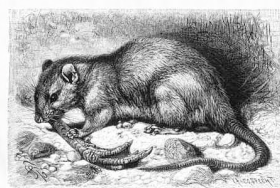
Udjet

Udjet is a snake goddess, and a favourite of snake charmers. Several desert tribes worship her

Uhlang

A goddess, the queen of swamps and bringer of swamp fever. Her followers are the swamp dwelling tribes.

Wolos

Wolos is the god with the horned head of an aurochs. He is the god of cattle, and it is he who allows such beasts to be hunted. Followers usually make an offering Wolos when they kill an aurochs.

Yalik

God of storms and lightning. The tribes that worship Yalik are typically warlike and known to raid other tribes.

Zaku

The god of dreams and portents. A god worshipped by prophets, mystics and soothsayers.

GAME STYLE OPTIONS

Paleomythic has a very specific style, defined as 'stone and sorcery', in which characters are adventuring heroes in a fantasy prehistoric world. The Paleomythic world assumes a variable level of technology and society, somewhere around what archaeologists used to call the various 'stone ages' (the Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic), but also influenced by early civilisations such as those of ancient Mesopotamia. However, Paleomythic also lends itself to a number of different types of game, and a GM may decide to choose a different style of play to suit the tastes of the gaming group.

The Pleistocene epoch

Paleomythic can be run as a semi-realistic game in the Pleistocene epoch. During this period, modern humans appear, and other species such as Neanderthals gradually become extinct. Pleistocene 'megafauna' is abundant, including mammoths, cave bears and sabretooth cats. Choosing this style makes the focus of the game survival, and allows some major events in human prehistory to be played out, such as establishing the first burial practises and the development of expertly knapped tools.

If a GM chooses this style of game, some of the more fantastic aspects of the game, such as the various 'beast men', the magical abilities of some classes, and the use of gems as a form of currency should be down-played or eliminated altogether. The GM may also wish to incorporate various hominin species:

Sapiens
This is the Sapiens species within the Homo genus, of which modern humans are part of, and represents the standard character in the Paleomythic RPG.

Neanderthal
This is a species within the Homo genus that died out roughly 30,000 years ago. They are robust, stocky humanoids well suited to harsh and cold environments. Contrary to the popular notion of Neanderthals being somewhat dimwitted, it is likely that their intellect was comparable to that of modern humans.
When a Neanderthal character is chosen, the first class a character must have is 'Savage'. This class reflects the inherent toughness of Neanderthals.

Floresiensis
This is a diminutive species of Homo, which may have existed as recently as 12,000 years ago. Floresiensis were little more than a metre tall, and have been given the nickname 'hobbits' by the media. They had arms and hands suitable for tree swinging, while still being able to perform tasks such as tool making with a good degree of manual dexterity.
When a Floresiensis character is chosen, the first class a character must have is 'Ape man'. This reflects the unique anatomical advantages of the species.

Classic Sword and Sorcery

Paleomythic encourages games that are already very close to the sword and sorcery genre, but for those GMs who want to create authentic sword and sorcery adventures, there are a few simple changes that need to be made. These are summarised below:

Advance technology
In a traditional sword and sorcery setting, the technology is somewhere between the bronze age and early medieval Europe. There are thus swords of bronze, iron and steel, coins, the use of horses as mounts, carts, boats and ships. Metal armour is also present, though its use and value as protection is lessened in the sword and sorcery genre. Adding metal weapons to the Paleomythic mechanics is simple enough, their properties will be slightly better than their stone age equivalent (add 1 to the damage bonus for metal weapons, so an iron sword would be a +3 weapon for example).
Armour will have a strength rating far beyond that of the Paleomythic armour types. Leather armours have double the strength of hide and furs, plate and mail armours have a strength up to four times as much as hides and furs.

Emphasise civilisation
Paleomythic has less of the trappings of civilisation, so for a traditional sword and sorcery game these need to be introduced. These include defined nations, with rulers for those nations, as well as cultural features specific to each nation. There will be cities, ports and towns. There will be large buildings,

strongholds and stone temples, and there will be religions and customs peculiar to civilised society. Of course, the GM should probably avoid trying to create all of these things in one go, and is advised to simply make a few notes of some of the nations, places and cultures within his world. To make things easier, it is often useful to note an ancient civilisation to which the culture has some similarities. For example, a GM might decide to create a culture based on ancient Egypt, and could thus note that the culture has a pantheon of deities, and constructs pyramid structures.

Downplay the prehistoric fauna
Traditional sword and sorcery fiction concerns itself primarily with human antagonists, such as evil sorcerers, corrupt rulers and devious merchant thieves. When monsters do appear, they are most often very unusual and exotic creatures that appear at the climax of a story. Such monsters are usually horrific and powerful beasts, such as giant lizards or demons.
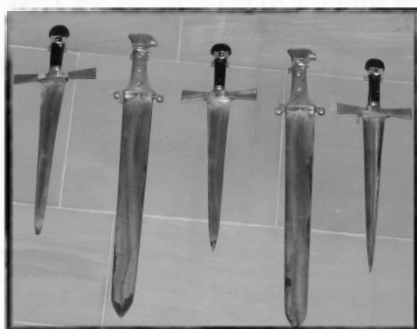
PALEODELVING

Although many different types of stories can be told with the Paleomythic rules, amongst the most enjoyable (especially for new players) are those that involve exploration in underground caves and amidst forgotten ruins. Such stories hark back to the early days of fantasy role playing games, the days of 'dungeon delving' adventures. These types of games are easy to design, since there is little in the way of plot beyond a simple premise such as 'You have been hired by local villagers to hunt down an evil sorcerer'.

The 'paleodelving' style of game requires no modification to the main rules, and simply shifts the focus of the game to simple dungeon type adventures. However, since most players will not be as familiar with the Paleomythic world as they might be with the fantasy genre, the below guidelines and tables are provided to assist the GM in creating paleodelving adventures.

Delving locations

A delving location is typically a series of rooms (areas, such as a caves) within an interconnected complex. Such locations can be natural formations or constructed structures, or a combination of the two. For example, the base of an evil shaman might comprise a stronghold of wooden structures and rooms, built near a mountain with connecting caves.

Examples of other locations include a series of wooden houses connected by walkways over swampland, an ice fort built into a glacier, a series of caverns deep below ground, caves built into a cliffside and connected by wooden walkways, tree homes connected by rope bridges, earth mounds connected by underground passages and so on.

A delving location is thus a complex made up of several areas (rooms, caves, passages etc). The nature of the areas within a complex can be designed using the below information.

Area type

The type of areas used may be dictated by the location, or it may be based on other factors (such as how defensible the location is).
To randomly determine the type of area, the below table can be used (roll a die).

1 Cave (a naturally formed space with irregular walls, floor and ceiling)
2 Cavern (a large cave)
3 Passage (a tunnel, bridge, ledge or other interconnecting section)
4 Room (a constructed area, perhaps hewn from stone or constructed with timbers)
5 Space (an area that has one section absent, such as a cave without a ceiling, a bottomless pit, or a room with one wall absent and open to the elements)
6 Unusual (an uncommon feature, such as a suspended platform, a cage, a pit, a flooded room, a lava pit, a room made from bones and so on)

Illumination

The way in which an area is lit may become important should characters attempt particular activities in an area, and lack of sufficient illumination may cause penalties to certain tests at the GMs discretion. To randomly determine the light source, roll a die.

1 Bugs (bioluminescent insects in the area, which give off a dim light)
2 Embers (glowing embers, a smouldering fire or hot ash)
3 Fungus (phosphorescent fungus, which produces an eerie green glow)
4 Lamp (a pottery or stone lamp burning oil or animal fat)
5 Mineral (a luminescent mineral, which gives off light when near heat or when struck, or molten hot rock)
6 Torch (a burning, oil soaked torch or brand)

Features

An area will have one or more notable features, such as an item of decoration or useful object. To randomly determine features, roll once or twice on the below table.

11 Alcove (recess in a wall)
12 Altar (a stone block or wooden table)
13 Bag (contains 1d3 items)
14 Bones (human or animal)
15 Bowls (1d3 wood or skull bowls)
16 Carcass (animal corpse)
21 Chest (contains 1d3 items)
22 Corpse (a human corpse)
23 Dais (a raised section made of stone or wood)
24 Flakes (flint chips and fragments)
25 Flint (large block)
26 Fruit (a pile of fruit)
31 Fungi (mushrooms, toadstools)
32 Hanging (wall mounted skin or linen hanging)
33 Hearth (a stone area for a fire)
34 Lichen (or moss)
35 Logs (or kindling)
36 Meat (piece of butchered meat)
41 Mineral (a vein of sparkling mineral, or a block of unusual coloured stone)
42 Pit (for a fire, or refuse)
43 Plants (collected, or growing in the room)
44 Pool (a small pool of water)
45 Rocks (small pile of rocks)
46 Rubble (pile of loose stones and dirt)
51 Seat (stone block or wooden stool)
52 Skins (1d3 animal skins)
53 Skull (a human or animal skull)
54 Spring (a bubbling spring)
55 Stream (a narrow stream flows through the room)
56 Stone blocks (several cut blocks)
61 Table (wooden table or large stone block)
62 Tool (a single tool, such as an awl or burin)
63 Torches (1d3, not alight)
64 Vegetables (collection of vegetables in a pile)
65 Wall painting (depicting animals, or people, or activities etc)
66 Water (dripping, damp walls or a puddle)

Floor

The surface of an area may be worth noting, especially if characters are attempting to find tracks or signs of habitation. To randomly determine the floor type of an area, roll a die.

1 Blocks, cut stone or dried mud blocks
2 Earth, packed dirt or dried mud
3 Sand or another grainy, loose material such as loose earth or snow

4 Stone, uneven rock, pebbles etc
5 Rushes, vegetation such as rushes, straw or twigs covering earth
6 Wood, such as wooden boards, logs or bound branches

Portal

Thought should be given to the way in which an area is accessed. This may be a simple opening, or it may be something that presents a challenge, such as a stone block that needs to be heaved aside. To randomly determine the type of portal, roll 2d.

2 Archway, cut into stone, carved into wood etc
3 Crawlspace or narrow gap
4 Door, crude wooden sticks bound together
5 Door, heavy logs bound together
6 Door, wooden 'portcullis' type which is lifted by a rope
7 Hide, fur or linen covered opening
8 Space, a natural opening or gap
9 Stone block, counter balanced to open easily
10 Stone block, heavy to move aside
11 Stone slab, well crafted and light enough to move aside
12 Vegetation door, made from vines, leaves, ferns, twigs etc

Walls

The construction of the walls and ceiling may be similar to the type of floor in an area, or it may differ depending on the type of location. In addition, certain locations may prescribe the nature of the walls in most of the areas of a complex (for example, a complex of rooms carved into a glacier will likely have rooms comprised of walls of ice).
To randomly determine the nature of the walls (and ceiling) in an area, roll a die.

1 Earth, packed dirt or dried mud
2 Stone, natural, unworked rock
3 Stone, worked slabs or blocks
4 Wood, such as logs bound together, or timber boards
5 Wood, woven branches or twigs, with dried mud daub
6 Unusual, such as ice blocks, sewn hides, piles of stones, bound bones etc

Theme

It may be useful for a GM to think about an area in terms of its' theme. The theme of an area defines its' purpose, from creating a particular mood to presenting puzzles, rewards or dangers. An area may have more than one theme, such as a cave that contains both a trap and treasure. Roll a die to determine the theme randomly.

1 Atmosphere
The area has a feature which evokes a particular atmosphere. The GM should try to conceive of a description of the area that promotes a certain mood. For example, entering a room in which there is blood spattered over the floor is likely to make the characters wary, and perhaps afraid, whereas describing a room as being warm, with the faint smell of cooking food, may promote a comforting atmosphere, and remind the characters of home. Other examples include describing a scene where it appears innocent slaves or even children have been killed (to engender feelings of outrage and revenge), describing a room in which sweet incense burns, soft furs abound, the lighting is dim and lewd pictures are drawn on the walls (to promote lusty thoughts).

2 Fight
The area contains an enemy, and a fight will ensue. The nature of the foe, and at what point the fight begins, can vary. For example, the foe might be a startled beast, which would otherwise have ignored the characters, or a creature hiding in an alcove. Likewise, the foe could be guards, waiting for the characters to appear, or members of an enemy tribe surprised by the characters appearance.

3 Puzzle
The area contains a puzzling feature of some kind. This may be an actual puzzle, such as a series of runes that must be deciphered, or it can simply be a feature that seems out of the ordinary, or out of place. Examples include; a circular pattern of skulls on the floor of a room, a strange symbol drawn on a wall, a strange scene painted on the ceiling, hundreds of fragments of pottery strewn about the area, curious stone figurines stacked against a wall and so on.

4 Sensory
Sensory areas help remind both GM and players that games can be as much about the senses of hearing, touch, taste and smell as they are sight.
This area has a sensory feature other than something to just see. Examples include:
A strange noise emanating from a place within the area (perhaps the movement of some creature, a draught making a whistling sound, or the drip from a leaking roof).
A smell, such as the scent from petals collected to make a scented oil, the smell of rotting meat, or perhaps faint whisps of smoke carry a smell of burning.
A material that promotes touch, such as several soft furs hanging from the ceiling, a strange, colourful substance (such as a powder or liquid) stored in a bowl, or an unusually smooth and polished stone carving.
An item that encourages tasting, such as an unusual, succulent looking fruit, a jug containing a sweet liquid, or a substance that requires testing to identify it (such as a white, grainy powder which may be salt, but needs tasting to confirm).

5 Trap
The area contains a trap or danger of some kind. This may be a trap designed to catch out the unwary (see the traps section), or it may be a danger associated with the area itself. Examples include a worn, rickety bridge over a pit, a partially collapsed wall supported by rotting timbers, a poorly placed oil lamp (next to a pile of highly flammable cloth) and so on.

6 Treasure
An area with treasure could simply contain scattered gems, strewn about the floor, but might also contain items that are not immediately evident as treasure. Examples include a bundle of furs, from a rare creature, or a crude wooden box, which contains jewellery.
There are other items which may also count as treasure, depending on the characters current situation. For example, a feast laid out on a stone table would be treasure to starving characters, as would a store of weapons to characters with none.

ADVENTURE

Lair of the Scarab Women

An adventure for 2-5 beginning characters.

Thieves!

During the night, thieves crept into the shelters of several members of the tribe and stole a number of items, including valuable hides, jewellery, food and weapons. One of the stolen items, an amulet of strange carved bones, is of particular importance to the tribal leader, and he has offered 10 gems for its return. By the time the alarm was raised, the thieves had disappeared into the night.
The best hunters of the tribe, including the player characters, set out in the morning to track the thieves. By late afternoon, the player characters spotted some tracks which may have been made by the thieves. The tracks led the characters to a cave, and the characters have decided to investigate...

This is a simple adventure designed for a small number of player characters. The characters may be part of the above noted tribe, or may be travellers, hired by the tribe to help search for the thieves (in which case, they will have been offered a small reward, such as food and a few gems). If the GM wishes, the example tribe detailed in the tribes section can be used (the 'cloud people'), or the GM may decide to detail another tribe using the guidelines in that section.
If the number of player characters is three or less, the GM may wish to either reduce the number of antagonists the characters encounter, or add a non player character to assist the player characters.

The Scarab Women
The scarab women are a small cult of thieves, led by a woman known as the scarab queen. This all female group operates in wilderness areas, though there may be a few followers appearing in other places.
The scarab women worship the scarab spirit, and decorate themselves with scarab tattoos, jewellery and paint. They view men as lesser creatures, to be treated as slaves. If captured, a scarab woman will not speak to a male. They will respond to female

characters, but unless the character is skilled at interrogation and torture, would rather risk death than reveal information about their fellow cultists. A captured slave will be more forthcoming, and with a little coaxing may be persuaded to assist the characters. However, the slaves are not allowed in all areas of the cave, and so will not be able to reveal much about the cave layout.

The Caves
The scarab women have made their home is some natural caves, within a nearby range of hills. They have made a few additions to the caves, adding doors and hides at various places, as well as carving a few areas of the caves, but the cave is otherwise a natural formation. When travelling in the caves, characters will usually only be able to move in single file along the passages. The caves are large enough for several characters to easily stand and move about however. Unless noted otherwise, the caves are dark and require a torch or lamp to navigate safely.
If the players need to judge the time taken to travel in the caves, the GM can assume characters travelling cautiously take 1d multiplied by 5 minutes to navigate a passage, and 1d multiplied by 10 minutes to thoroughly check a cave. These times can be reduced to turns if the characters are attempting to move rapidly, but they will then be unable to effectively search areas.
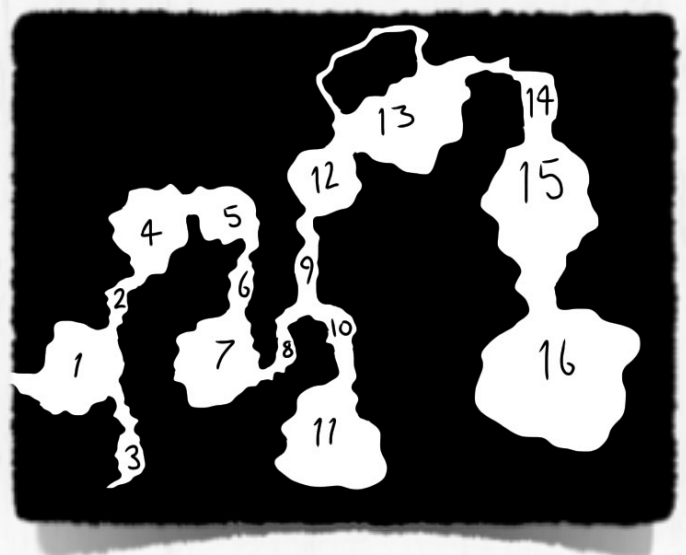
In the below cave descriptions, the theme is noted in italics along with the name of the cave.

1. The entrance cave - *puzzle*
At the side of a small range of hills, between a few dusty boulders, lies the small entrance to a cave. From a distance, the entrance is barely noticeable, and only when close can a small gap be seen between the rocks and bushes. There are several tracks leading to this area, as if a number of people entered the cave within the last few hours.
Crawling through the entrance, the characters will immediately note that the area is illuminated by sunlight; there are small gaps in the ceiling which allow thin beams of light through. The cave is roughly circular, and large enough for all of the characters to stand in. There are two openings in the cave (not counting the cave entrance). One opening is to the left, the other is on the right hand side of the cave.
A quick search of the cave reveals the remains of several large scarab beetles forced into alcoves about the cave. All of the scarabs face the same direction, and astute characters may realise that they look towards the left of the two openings in the cave.

2. The sloping passage (leading from the opening on the left) - *trap*
This narrow passage allows one person to crawl down at a time. It slows quite sharply, and a test is required to avoid sliding down (if the characters wish to make a slow descent). The talent agile applies. Failure indicates the characters slide rapidly down the passage, and are deposited roughly at the bottom, into a dark cave. A roll of 6 indicates the character lands badly and suffers a point of damage. This passage leads to the fire cave (see below).

3. The winding passage (leading from the opening on the right) - *fight*
This passage is also narrow, and winds left and right until, after roughly 30 metres, it ends abruptly. The last few metres of the dark passage are notable for the amount of webs hanging from the walls and ceiling. At the end of the passage, crawling from small gaps in the rock, several cave spiders appear as soon as the characters approach.

Although the passage is narrow, the spiders can quickly run over the walls and are therefore able to attack several characters. Thus, for each character the GM should roll 1d3 for the number of spiders that attack. Note that unless the characters have a source of light, they will suffer a -1 penalty to actions in the dark passage.

Cave Spiders
Cave Spiders have S1 and cause damage by poison (1 point per turn for 1d3 turns, test to resist with resilient applicable).

4. The fire cave - *fight*
At the end of the sloping passage the characters will find themselves in a large cave, illuminated by a large fire in the centre. The fire burns in a large pit, illuminating the cave, and is tended by two of the thieves (who will be somewhat surprised if the characters appear suddenly, by falling from the sloping passage). Nearby, attached to a vine leash, is a slave of the scarab women, who will be unleashed on the characters as soon as the women recover from their surprise.

Setea, a scarab woman
Setea is a lithe woman whose body is decorated with painted, scarab symbols.
Spirit 8, Agile. Savage.
Wood spear +1

Varala, a scarab woman
Varala is dressed in a filthy hide tunic, and her hair is wild and matted.
Spirit 9, Strong. Warrior.
Skull topped cudgel +2

Balhek, a scarab slave
Balhek is a wiry, shaven headed male dressed in a hide loincloth. His body is marked by a multitude of scars, a result of his ill treatment at the hands of the scarab women.
Nonetheless, Balhek is fiercely loyal, and will attack with zeal.
Spirit 5, Aware, Passive.
Unarmed.

These thieves carry little of value, and the only things of use in the cave are the firewood, stacked near to the fire pit, and handful of torches (roll 1d3) and some hunks of meat wrapped in a piece of hide.

Of note however, is that this cave is decorated with several worn and filthy hides which are hung on the cave walls. One of these is decorated with a crude image of a scarab beetle, and behind this is a portal leading to another area, the bloody cave. Of note is that the image shows a scarab facing upwards (the beetles mandibles are pointing to the ceiling). This is the manner in which all scarab symbols are shown by the scarab women, and will be useful for the characters to note when they face a puzzle further on in the caves.

5. The bloody cave - *atmosphere*

By moving one of the worn hides, the entrance to this cave is revealed. This cave is damp, and with light the characters will be able to view the strange properties of this cave. Dripping down one of the walls is a thin trickle of a red brown liquid, which has stained the wall blood red. The liquid empties into a red pool, and over this pool is a slender wooden bridge leading to the far side of the cave, some 5 metres away. Crossing the bridge is tricky, since it is slick from the liquid (which is in fact simply water, coloured by the mineral content in the rocks). When characters cross the bridge a test is required, with agile applicable. Failure indicates the character falls into the waist deep pool, which is freezing cold, but otherwise harmless. A roll of 6 indicates the splash attracts one of the pool rats, which will try to take a bite at the character:

Rat
Spirit 2, bite causes 1 damage plus test to avoid disease (see the beasts section for details).

If characters decide to spend some time searching within the icy water, a test can be made (with aware applicable). Each successful character will find 1d3 chunks of a red stone which can be knapped to produce red bladed items. This will increase the value of the knapped item by 1d. Each chunk is good for 1d3 uses.
On the far side of the cave there is a small opening, which leads to the passage of steps.

6. The passage of steps - *atmosphere*
This short passage has several rough hewn steps leading up to a door, made from sturdy logs lashed together. The door is quite heavy, and requires a shove to open. Beyond the door is an unexpected sight, a cave filled with vegetation, the cave of vines..

7. The cave of vines - *fight, treasure*
This is a roughly circular 6 metre diameter cave with, high above, a narrow opening that allows sunlight to penetrate the darkness of the cave. There are vines growing down the walls, stretching from the opening in the roof. With a good deal of effort, it would be possible to climb these and exit the cave via the roof, some 30 metres above.
About the cave there are small areas of vegetation, and clumps of weeds, which gives the air a smell of damp earth. In here also are more thieves, who appear to be examining some stolen weapons. When they first see the characters, one of the thieves will exit the cave, squeezing between some vines through a concealed portal. Allow characters a chance to spot this exiting thief with a test (aware applies). The remaining three thieves, and a single slave, defend themselves, and prevent characters pursuing their comrade (who has left to warn their leader).

Vorea, a scarab woman
Vorea is a pallid, gaunt woman with crazed, bloodshot eyes.
Spirit 7, Wilful, Sickly. Hunter.
Bow +2, Antler spike +1

Shala, a scarab woman
Shala is a short, wiry woman with beetle shaped beads threaded through her hair.
Spirit 9, Brave, Weak. Scavenger.
Bone tipped spear +2

Shulu, a scarab woman
Shulu is a shaven headed woman that wears bone jewellery, including necklaces and bracelets made from lizard bones. She carries a slender stick, the top of which is decorated with a carved scarab gem, which is her fetish. This is worth around 10 gems.
Spirit 10, Guileful, Aware, Clumsy, Weak.
Medicine woman, Slaver.
Flint knife +1

Hantor, a scarab slave
Hantor is a gaunt man with numerous injuries, including a badly damaged leg, which he drags

when moving. He is naked, and scarred from many beatings.
Spirit 5, Clumsy, Careless, Weak, Meek
Unarmed

Within this cave are some of the spoils of the previous nights theft. With a successful test (aware applies), the characters will be able to find bundles of hides stolen from the tribe, as well as baskets containing food, hidden amongst the vegetation in the cave. There are also a number of weapons stacked in the centre of the cave, including a handaxe, a flint knife, a wood spear, a damaged bone tipped spear (does +1 rather than +2) and a cudgel. The tribal leaders amulet of carved bones is nowhere to be found however. If the characters didn't notice one of the thieves make an exit through the vines, the exit will be discovered when the characters search the cave.

If the characters climb out of the roof of the cave, they will discover they are on the top of a hill, some 100 metres from the cave entrance, further down the hill. There is no sign of the thieves here however, and the characters will need to find the concealed portal amidst the vines to continue.

8. The concealed passage - *puzzle*
This passage is accessed from an opening partially hidden by vines. The passage is narrow and dark, and winds downwards. The passage eventually splits into two, and with a successful test (aware applies) characters will notice a scarab image painted above each passage. One image depicts a scarab facing up (on the left hand passage), the other shows the scarab facing down. The passage to the left is the one that leads further into the lair of the scarab women, the passage to the right leads to the dangerous cave of the cave dweller. Characters may well recall that the image of the scarab in the fire cave matches that shown for the left hand passage.

9. The left hand scarab passage - *sensory*
This passage continues to wind downwards, as narrow and dark as the previous passage.
At the end of the passage there is a crude door made from mouldy logs, and beyond this is the stinking refuse cave, which the characters should be able to detect as they get close.

10. The right hand scarab passage - *atmosphere*
This passage is slightly wider, but cold and still very dark. The passage ends at a ledge, and there is a drop of 2 metres into the cave of the cave dweller.

11. The cave of the cave dweller - *fight*
This cave is dark, and roughly 10 metres in diameter. There are rocks and bones strewn about the floor, and shadowy nooks and smaller caves in the walls of this large cave. The walls are rough, and it is possible to climb them to a concealed exit in the ceiling (some 25 metres above). This exit is hidden by a boulder, and when removed the boulder reveals the exit is positioned at the side of the hill amidst an area of thorny bushes. Within this cave is the cave dweller, a huge beast man from a long forgotten people. The creature sleeps in a shadowy alcove, and will stir once characters enter the cave.
The cave dweller looks somewhat similar to a gorilla, but has a bald head. The cave dwellers arms are massive and powerful, and it is able to hurl large boulders at foes.

Cave dweller
Spirit 14, Brave, Agile, Strong. Ape man.
The cave dweller will initially, for the first one or two turns, attack by hurling boulders. These are +2 damage weapons due to their size. In close combat, the cave dweller uses his powerful fists to bash foes.

Once defeated, the cave can be searched. Characters will find the remains of a long dead adventurer in the cave, and on the skeleton is a necklace of green stones worth 12 gems. Near to the skeleton is a still useable antler spike knife, and a gourd filled with oil for burning in lamps.

12. The refuse cave - *atmosphere, sensory*
This small cave is filled with refuse; broken bones, food scraps, bits of mouldy wood and so on. If characters search the refuse, they find nothing of use, but may expose themselves to a disease (this will be a 'fever', requiring a test to avoid -1 to tests for 1d days). At the other end of the cave there is a mouldy skin which covers a narrow portal leading to the pit cave.

13. The pit cave - *puzzle, trap*

A short passage opens into a large, dark cave. Roughly 2 metres from the opening, the floor disappears and the remainder of the cave seems to be a deep pit. Dimly, in the distance, the characters may be able to make out the other side of the cave, where there is a small ledge in front of an opening. This ledge is around 5 metres away, which is a difficult leap for all but the most agile of characters. If a character tries this leap and fails to achieve 5 metres, they fall (see the hazards and activities section for details of falling). The pit is 10 metres deep, with no way out other than to climb the sides (a climb test with a -1 penalty). At the bottom of the pit there are rats, and each character in the pit will be attacked by 1d3 of them:

Rat
Spirit 2, bite causes 1 damage plus test to avoid disease (see the beasts section for details).

Fortunately, there is a way to avoid the leap, since near to the ledge there is a secret entrance to a tunnel, covered by a piece of hide painted to appear to be rock. Characters searching for an alternative route will find this with a successful test (aware applies). The hidden tunnel leads to the ledge on the far side of the cave. The portal near this ledge leads to the windy tunnel.

14. The windy tunnel - *sensory*

As characters move down this tunnel, they will become increasingly aware that a cool wind blows from somewhere beyond. This wind gets increasingly stronger, and makes torches and lamp flames flicker and splutter. While in the tunnel, there is a 1 in 6 chance of a torch or lamp being extinguished. If this occurs, it will be impossible for anyone other than character with the fire maker class to light a torch or lamp in the tunnel, and the characters will need to go back to the previous cave in order to do so. At the end of the tunnel there is an opening leading to the cave of flying.

15. The cave of flying - *trap*

A mysterious, powerful wind buffets characters as they reach this cave. At the far end of the cave, the characters will notice that two knotted vines are attached to sturdy wooden posts either side of an opening. The wind is so powerful that the vines trail in the air horizontally.

The vines are there to enable a person to pull themselves towards the opening, since without them the wind would force them backwards. Characters that attempt to approach the distant opening without using the vines will quickly realise this, as they are forced, flying through the air, back to the cave entrance.

It takes three turns to reach the other side of the cave using the vines. Each turn a test is required to remain holding the vines whilst moving against the strong wind (the talent strong applies). If this test fails, the character is lifted into the air by the wind and blown backwards. Another test is then required, this time with the talent dexterous applicable. Success indicates the character moves backwards, but manages to grab the vine (essentially, moving back one turn). Failure indicates the character is swept all of the way back to the cave entrance, and must start again. A roll of 6 on the test indicates the character is swept backwards, and suffers a point of damage as he is battered against the wall.

Clever characters may well devise methods to assist themselves through the cave, such as using some sort of tether to attach themselves to the vine. Such creative thinking should be encouraged.

Once the characters reach the far end of the cave, they will be able to see the source of the wind. Far above them the ceiling is open, and the shaft that leads to this opening is the very top of the hill. As the wind travels down the shaft, it is made intense by the narrowness of the shaft.
Between the large wooden posts that hold the vines in place, there is a wide opening which leads to a large cave, the cave of the scarab queen.

16. The cave of the scarab queen - *fight, treasure*

This cave is a large circular area, with a 2 metre high ledge at the far end which is accessed by a set of stone steps. On the ledge there is a fire burning in a large stone bowl.

Nearby, the cave is decorated with paintings of scarabs, and hide hangings. There are stone seats carved into the cave walls, with hides and furs on them, and the place appears to be able to be able to house a dozen or so people.

Near to the fire stands the scarab queen, waiting for the characters to appear. Next to her is the thief who earlier left the cave of vines to warn the scarab queen. In addition, perched on ledges on either side of the cave there are two other scarab women.

If a character decides to pause and scan the area further, the GM should allow a test (with aware applicable) to spot a trap. There are two vines hanging from the ceiling, attached to heavy boulders on the ledges at the sides of the cave. These are triggered by the scarab women on the ledges, who remove the wooden blocks from the boulders as the characters move into the cave, causing the boulders to swing into the room. Characters that move more than a metre or so into the cave are vulnerable to the boulders, and a test is required to avoid being hit by one of them (agile applies). Failure will result in a character being struck for 1d damage. Once the two scarab women have triggered their trap, they will move to join their leader near the fire at the other end of the cave. The boulders swing and remain dangerous for 3d turns, before finally slowing enough to be easily avoidable.

Zolu, the scarab queen
Zolu is a tall, imposing woman dressed in pale hides, and wielding a white bone sword.
Spirit 12, Charismatic, Guileful. Soothsayer, Slaver, Insect Mistress (see below).
Bone sword +2

Zolu's fetish is a slender bone wand, carved into the shape of many scarab beetles. She also wears the amulet stolen from the tribe, which contains the bones of an ancient lizard creature. This is worth around 20 gems.

Vulala, a scarab woman
Vulala is a young woman with a muscular physique, with scarab tattoos on her arms.
Spirit 11, Strong, Agile, Careless. Ape woman.
Hide whip +1

Lokala, a scarab woman
Lokala is a crazed woman, who foams at the mouth when she fights.
Spirit 8, Wilful, Clumsy.
Bone +1

Varen, a scarab woman
Varen wears a grey fur tunic, and has a jagged scar on her cheek.
Spirit 9, Brave, Dull.
Bone knife +1

New class:

Insect mistress

A variant of the beast master class, a character with the insect mistress (or master) class is able to call forth loathsome insects using a fetish of some kind (typically insect related, such as a bone carved with an insect design). This counts as a characters action for the turn, and affects a single target within sight. The target is attacked by a swarm of bugs, beetles, gnats, centipedes, wasps and so on. The victim must make a test, with agile the applicable talent. If successful, the character manages to avoid the most of the bugs, and merely suffers a -1 penalty to his next test. Failure indicates the character is bit and stung by the insects, and suffers damage equal to the insect mistresses spirit divided by three (round up). Armour counts as protection against this damage.

The scarab women will fight fiercely to protect their queen. Once one of the scarab women falls, Zolu the scarab queen will attempt to flee. At the rear of the cave there are small hand holds cut into the rock, which lead up to an exit 20 metres above. Zolu will attempt to escape, and if she manages to ascend to the exit, she will move a boulder over the opening, which will slow down pursuers long enough for her to escape.

Once the scarab women are defeated, the characters may search the cave. They will find belongings stored in stone chests near to the stone seats, and within these there are spare tunics, torches, fire making gear, strips of hide for bandages (about 10) and a few weapons (bone knives and hand axes). Near to the fire there are hunks of fresh meat and baskets of fruit.

The characters may also find a pouch of gems (20) and a few items of jewellery (a necklace of wooden beads worth 3 gems, a bone ring carved into the shape of a scarab worth 4 gems).

If the characters recover the stolen amulet, by capturing or killing the scarab queen before she escapes, the tribal leader will be most grateful, and will hold a feast in honour of the characters (with freshly roasted meat, dancing, music and so on). If the characters return without the amulet, but with other stolen items, the leader will be still be grateful. However, the feast will be less of a lavish affair.

~ the end ~