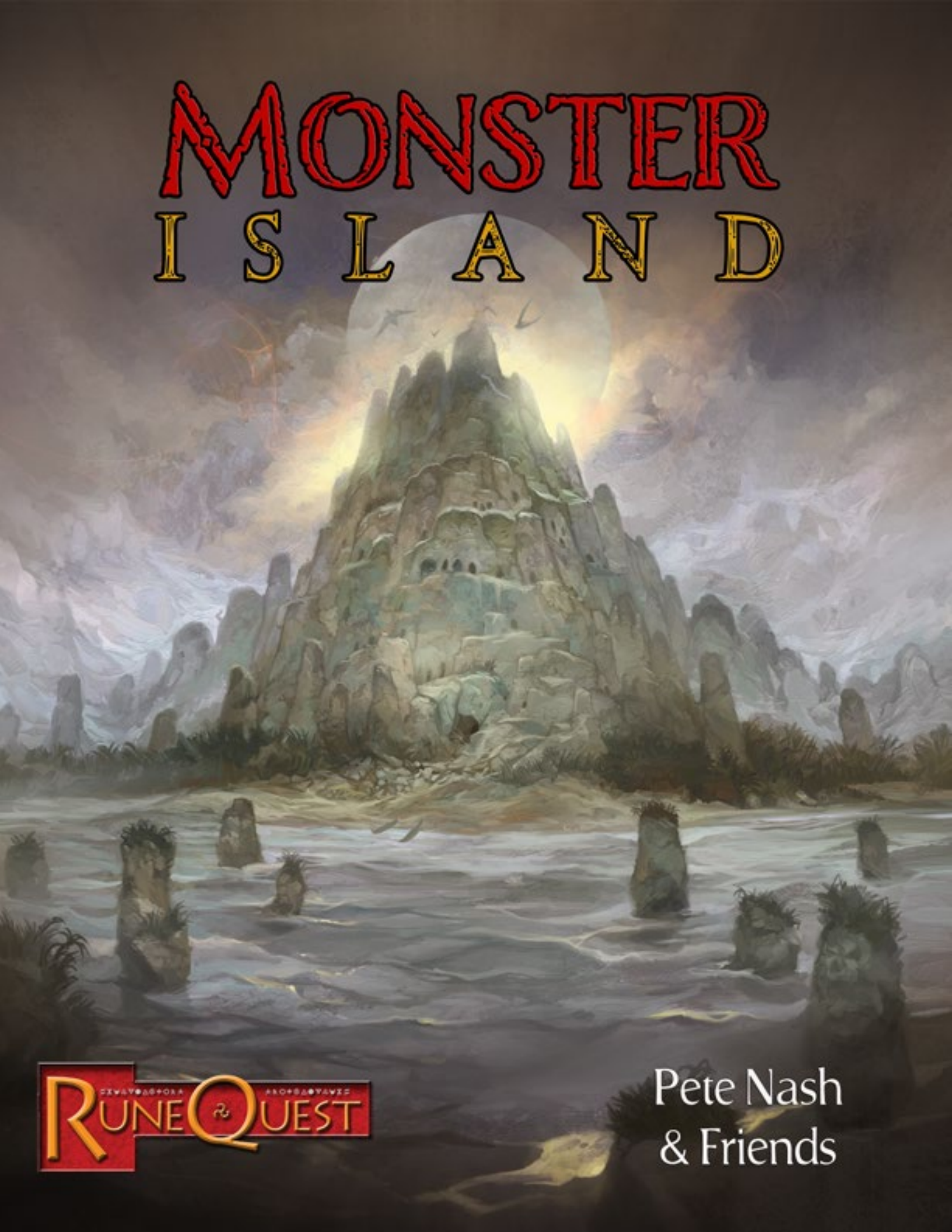
# MONSTER ISLAND



RuneQuest

Pete Nash
& Friends

# MONSTER ISLAND

## An Adventure Setting For RuneQuest 6th Edition

RuneQuest is a trademark of Issaries Inc. Used under License by The Design Mechanism. All rights reserved. This edition of Monster Island is copyright © 2013. This book may not be reproduced in whole or in part by any means without permission from The Design Mechanism, except as quoted for purposes of illustration, discussion and game play. Reproduction of the material in this book for the purposes of personal or corporate profit, by photographic, electronic, or other methods of retrieval is strictly prohibited.

For details of the RuneQuest Gateway license, please contact The Design Mechanism (designmechanism@gmail.com).

The Design Mechanism

Issaries, Inc.

# Credits

**Developed and Written By**
Pete Nash
*Additional Material by Lawrence Whitaker and John Hutchinson*

**Editing**
Lisa Tyler, Lawrence Whitaker

**Proof Reading**
Alexandra James

**Design and Layout**
Fred Hicks and Lawrence Whitaker

**Artists**
Pablo Castilla, Tim Hibbetts, Jon Hodgson, Russ Nicholson, Giovanni Valletta,
*Tim and Giovanni appear courtesy of Outland Entertainment*

Cover by Jon Hodgson

**Cartography**
Colin Driver, Richard Lawrence

**Special Thanks**
John Hutchinson, Daniel Doodeman

**Playtesters**
Pablo Castillo, Sebastian Jansson, Adam Lundgren, and Sebastian Sandman

## For Lynn Willis & Ray Harryhausen

In memory of two great men, giants of their respective crafts whose art has left an enduring legacy. *Lynn Willis*, who was my mentor and gave me my start in professional game writing; and *Ray Harryhausen*, a man I never met, but whose monsters have never been surpassed. Both of you spurred my imagination and haunted my dreams. May you rest in peace, buoyed by the wonderment your creations have inspired in me, and others, since childhood.

This book is a fruition of your influences.

PN

# Contents


| | |
|---|---|
| *Map of Monster Island* | 4 |
| Introduction | 5 |
| 1. The Island | 8 |
| 2. History and Cultures | 17 |
| 3. Settlements | 42 |
| 4. Places of Interest | 65 |
| 5. Campaigns | 113 |
| 6. Magic | 128 |
| 7. Items and Substances | 165 |
| 8. Flora and Fauna | 188 |
| Appendices | 282 |
| Index | 292 |

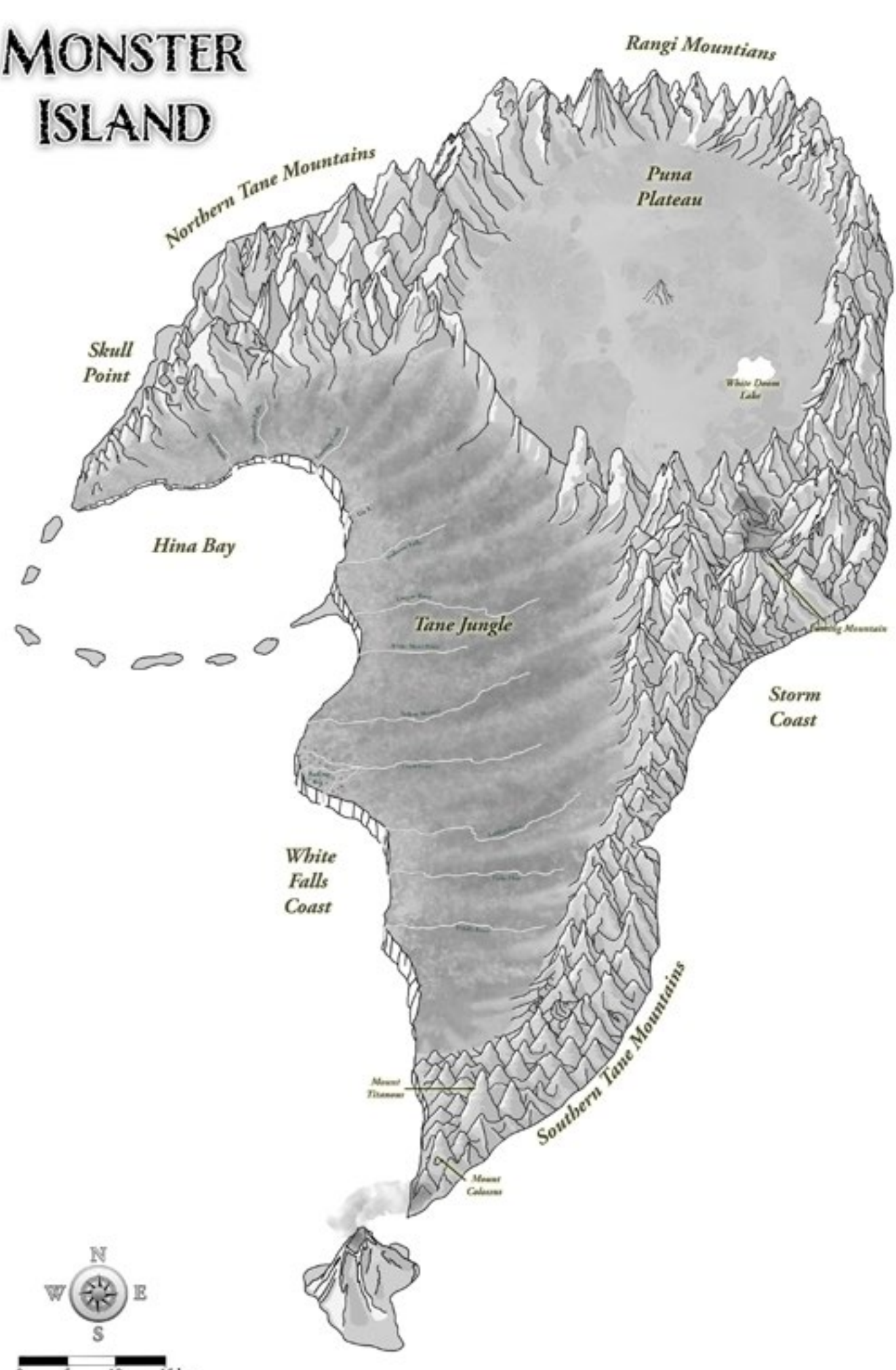

## Monster Island Companion

This book contains a huge amount of information and, in its hard-print version, a large-scale, pull-out, full-colour map of the island.

If you'd like an electronic version of the map, along with additional NPC statistics, then you can buy the *Monster Island Companion* as a separate PDF file from www.thedesignmechanism.com. This PDF gives you the island map as a layered PDF, allowing you to create and print your own variations of the main map (with or without place names, for example, or with or without the hex grid). Its also presented in the same size as the pull-out map, which means that you can zoom-in without losing clarity.

*The Monster Island Companion* also includes NPC statistics for all the named characters in this book - information we simply didn't have space for - and the most essential tables from the Campaigns and Items and Substances chapters.

# Monster Island



# Introduction: Monster Island

Shrouded by mists, but distinctly lacking in mellow fruitfulness, Monster Island is a place of legend and infamy. Countless centuries ago, in the time of myths, powerful sorcerers - or the gods themselves - created this place to hold all the greatest horrors of the world; for study perhaps, or in some attempt to keep the lands free from terror. Though the gods have been bound, held in check by compromises and compacts, and the sorcerers are long-dead, the denizens of Monster Island yet prevail.

Warriors come here to test their skills and sword-arms; magicians arrive to gain materials for their spells. Adventurers come here for plunder and riches. All of them might be considered mad, for Monster Island teems with creatures and spirits, all of them malevolent, all of them hungry...

Monster Island is a stand alone, sandbox campaign setting for use with RuneQuest. This book not only provides a place for adventure, but also deals with an exotic melange of legendary creatures roaming the varied habitats where they are at their most dangerous. Monster Island details the different cultures and locales of this mythical place, but, more importantly, introduces a host of new monsters, describing their habits and natures.

*Do you dare set foot upon the shores of Monster Island?*

## What This Book Contains

This book is a combined bestiary and sandbox setting, similar in concept to the immortal Griffin Mountain, but set on an isolated mountainous island inspired by the Weird Science and Sword & Sorcery writings of famous authors such as E. R. Burroughs, R. E. Howard, Clark Ashton Smith, Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore. It is full of exotically alien cultures, overgrown ruined cities, strange gateways from which weird monsters appear, giant kaiju worshipped by reptilian natives, and ancient brooding sorceries.

Perhaps of the most use to Games Masters will be the new plants, animals and spirits introduced in its latter half. These creature statistics can be used to populate their own games; many of the creatures are new to RuneQuest, drawn from the myths and legends of diverse cultures and folklore. Some are unique creations, crafted especially for this book.

In addition to the expanded range of creatures, Monster Island contains:

- Cultural write-ups of two reptilian species, which should work as a template for Games Masters wishing to design their own campaign settings
- Examples of tribal and city based exotic cults and the magic available to them
- Several dozen adventuring locations, mysterious and deadly, provided to initially flesh out the island
- Lists of encounter tables for use whilst characters explore the island's different climatic zones
- A few non-player characters on the island who might become allies, contacts, rivals or foes
- Incidental rules for adventuring in adverse conditions, and modelling how magic works on the island
- Over one hundred plot seeds to help Games Masters weave together an epic campaign, ranging from monster hunts to inter-cultural politics

Games Masters should find a vast array of resources for their own campaigns within the covers of this book. It contains enough material to run a game for years! So grab your weapons, prepare your magic and set aside your fears - or some of them at least... RuneQuest just became a little more dangerous and crowded.

# Monster Island in Your Campaign

As explained above, Monster Island is both a descriptive menagerie of beasts and a campaign setting for encountering these creatures. The island itself has been designed as a unique environment with its own species, cultures and gods, thus allowing it to be inserted into almost any campaign world where a large ocean exists.

The individualistic nature of the Island grants it great flexibility, as well as portraying a rather distinctive atmosphere, permitting it to act as a long lost land of scholarly mystery, a place of exclusive trading opportunities or even a penitentiary colony. Games Masters can easily twist the land to fit any trope they desire.

Some suggestions follow as to where Monster Island could fit into published campaigns or games based on famous works of fantasy

.

## Glorantha

Loral Island which lies off the northeast coast of Pamaltela. Known colloquially as Monster Island it can be reached during most of the Second Age by God Learner explorers and Waertagi, or after the Closing by unfortunates shipwrecked there. The reptilian natives can easily be replaced by Slaan.

## Lemuria:

18th-19th C campaigns, possibly set during the period of British exploration and colonialism. Monster Island could be a last remaining fragment of a lost continent once located somewhere in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar. According to the lost Book of Dzyan Lemuria was occupied by a race of 7 foot tall sexually hermaphroditic, egg-laying beings, mentally undeveloped and spiritually pure. After the subsequent creation of mammals, some Lemurians turned to bestiality, transgressing the will of the gods, who in their disgust sank Lemuria into the ocean and created the race of man on Atlantis. Good ripping stuff!

## Meropis

Ancient Greek campaigns. In the words of Aelian: *"Amongst other things, Silenus told Midas that Europe, Asia and Africa were Islands surrounded by the Ocean: That there was but one Continent only, which was beyond this world, and that as to magnitude it was infinite. That in it were bred, besides other very great Creatures, Men twice as big as those here, and they lived double our age: That many great Cities are there, and peculiar manners of life; and that they have Laws wholly different from those amongst us : That there are two Cities far greater than the rest, nothing like each other ; one named Machimus, Warlike, the other Eusebes, Pious: That the Pious people live in peace, abounding in wealth, and reap the fruits of the Earth without Ploughs or Oxen, having no need of tillage or sowing. They live, as he said, free from sickness, and die laughing, and with great pleasure: They are so exactly Just, that the Gods many times vouchsafe to converse with them. The Inhabitants of the City Machimus are very Warlike, continually armed and fighting. They subdue their Neighbours, and this one City predominates over many. The Inhabitants are not fewer then two hundred Myriads : they die sometimes of sickness, but this happens very rarely, for most commonly they are killed in the Wars by Stones or Wood, for they are invulnerable by Steel. They have vast plenty of Gold and Silver, insomuch that Gold is of less value with them than Iron is with us."*

## Mu

In Robert E. Howard's Kull stories, Mu was a continent with many cities; when it sank, the mountain tops became the isles of Lemuria. Mu could also be utilised as a 1920s setting based upon James Churchward's book The Lost Continent of Mu, where he claims Mu as the home of an advanced civilization, the Naacal, which flourished between 50,000 and 12,000 years ago, dominated by a "white race, superior in many respects to our own".

## Nehwon

In the Outer Sea west of Klesh, reachable by ship from Quaimall. The centre of the island could be populated by the humanoid lizard beasts encountered by Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser in the story The Bleak Shore.

## Skull Island

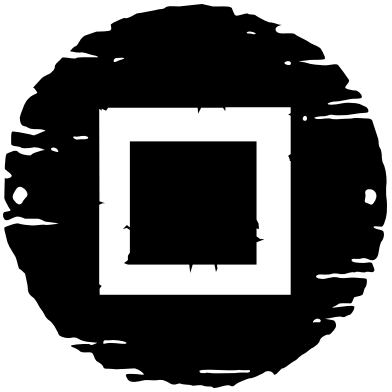
Another good candidate for a 1920s or 1930s pulp setting, being the famed island home of King Kong. In this circumstance the reptilian inhabitants could be changed for stereotypical Hollywood natives, cargo cultists, cannibals and the like; ruled over by an H. Rider Haggard style lost white race, suitable for the period and genre.

## Anywhere Else?

Monster Island could easily be inserted into other settings, perhaps as a Pacific South Seas island accidentally stumbled upon during World War II; a mysterious tropical land discovered by Spanish Conquistadors, giving rise to a Lost World style game; one of the islands discovered by Captain Cook and the crew of the *Endeavour* (or Charles Darwin and *The Beagle*); or even a Neolithic Polynesian campaign where the characters stumble upon the island of their gods. The possibilities are endless!

*From teak and tamarind and palm*
*The heavy sun goes down unseen;*
*The jungle drowns in duskier green;*
*And quickening perfumes vespertine*
*Alone assail the sluggish calm.*
*Narcotic silence, opiate gloom:*
*The painted parakeets are gone,*
*The blazoned butterflies withdrawn.*
*Nocturnal blossoms, weird and wan,*
*Like phantom wings and faces bloom.*
*In the high trees the darkness grows,*
*And, rising, overbrims the sky.*
*Like a black serpent gliding by*
*'Neath woven creepers covertly,*
*Unknown and near, the river flows;*
*Where deeplier in oblivion's tide*
*The dateless, fair pagodas fall,*
*And, winding on the toppled wall*
*Where carven gods hold carnival,*
*The cobra couples with his bride.*

Clark Ashton Smith, Jungle Twilight



# CHAPTER 1: THE ISLAND

Monster Island is a titanic location shaped by intense volcanic activity. A narrow strip of land, its mountains soar to insurmountable heights over the surrounding ocean, the lower flanks heavily forested with lush jungles. Amongst the dense vegetation lurk several races which prey upon the unusual creatures which apparently thrive in the sultry environment.

This chapter gives a general overview of the island, describing its geography, topography, climate and ecology. Since the island is designed to be a standalone setting, no specific references are given as to how it interacts with the world beyond its coastlines. Such things are left to the Games Master to decide.

## Geology and Topography

As a landmass dominated by an oddly curved mountain range that encompasses a narrow crescent of rainforest, the topography of Monster Island is extremely vertiginous. Most of the mountains and cliffs are precipitous, often sheer, and dynamic volcanism has raised the highest peaks to over 5,000 metres above sea level. Since its length and breadth are modest, the dramatic terrain of the island is delimited more by altitude than climatic variation.

The island is actually formed from the combination of four volcanic calderas. In descending order of size these are respectively:

### Tane – the Forest Bowl

Half collapsed into the ocean, this remnant of the original sea volcano forms the bulk of the island. Nearly 100 kilometres across, its remaining rim is the main spine arching clockwise from the northwest to the southeast. Sheltered within these walls are the lower altitude jungle regions.

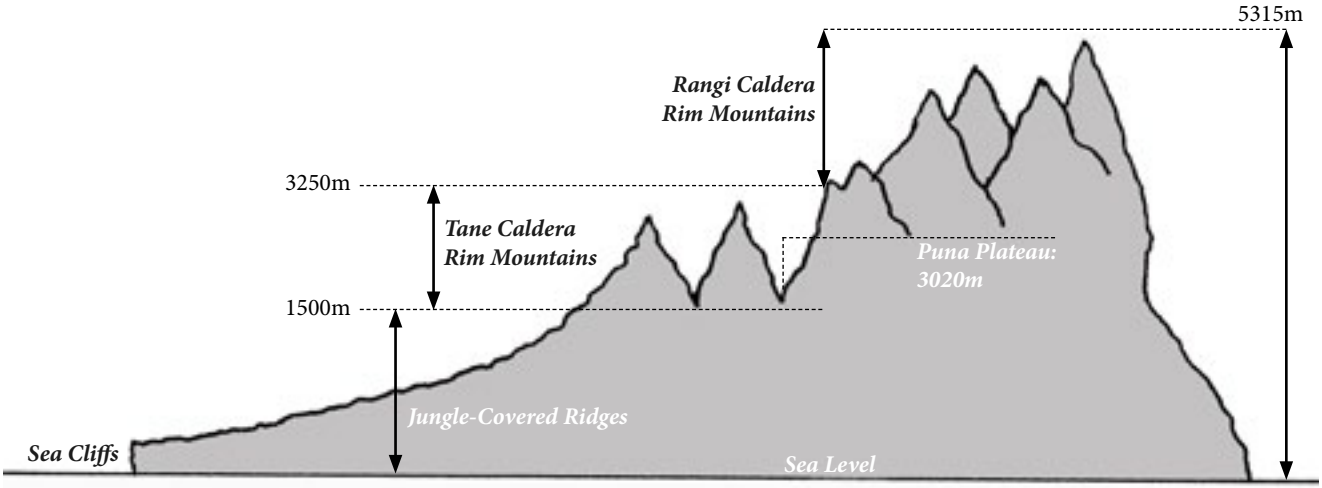
### Rangi – the Sky Bowl

The caldera forming the north-eastern part of the island, an offshoot of Tane. Only 60km in diameter, its eroded rim reaches high above all the other ridges; the peaks snow capped due to their extreme height. These mountains enclose and shield the Puna Plateau, forming a massive escarpment where the two craters intersect.

### Hina – the Moon Bowl

A modest 30 kilometre sub-caldera formed within Tane bowl, Hina now forms the westernmost extent of the island. Like its parent crater, almost half of the caldera has

# Monster Island: Elevation




sunk into the deep. However parts of the western rim still protrude above sea level creating a semicircle of reefs and atolls.

## Ruaumoko – the Fire Bowl

Smaller than the other calderas at a mere 10km across, this volcanic upwelling lies offshore at the southern tip of the island. Despite its small size the caldera is still highly active, erupting periodically, sending great columns of ash into the sky and slow moving lava flowing down its growing flanks.

As described above, three of the caldera have partially collapsed or worn away, leaving parts of their crater walls heavily weathered into what look like individual mountain peaks connected by sharp-edged ridges. A number of hot springs are scattered along these dormant ranges, fuelled by still functioning geothermal processes.

The majority of the island is comprised of basalt produced from the gradual upwelling of lava. The constant weathering of this fine-grained rock is the source of the dark soil and the black sands which ring the island. Outcroppings of other types of stone can also be intermittently found on the island, most notably scoria, obsidian and porphyry which are mined for different purposes by the indigenous inhabitants. Sharp-edged obsidian is used for tools and weapons, being considered especially effective against 'demons'. Scoria has value as a lightweight building material and for use in abrasive scrubbers, whereas porphyry is reserved for the creation of temples, statues or finely carved *stelae*.

Surrounded as it is by hydrothermal upwellings (currents of warm water), the island is pummelled with copious rainfall. This has had a significant effect on carving the terrain into steep-walled valleys and gorges. The prevalence of water is aptly demonstrated by the high incidence of white-water rivulets and waterfalls which, whilst scenic, make travelling across the terrain difficult and slow.

With the mountainous caldera rims reaching staggering heights, the topography of the island is split into distinct zones segregated by elevation.

## Coastline: Cliffs and Beaches

Very little of the coastline is comprised of broad beaches, save for the ring of atolls on the western side of the island, which are the sunken remnants of one caldera where sand has accumulated on the last spurs still above sea level. These beaches are baking hot, especially those formed from the ubiquitous black volcanic sand, relieved only by sea breezes. The majority of the remaining shoreline is steep cliffs with dangerous jumbles of collapsed rock where they meet the water. On the eastern coast the cliffs are sheer, but an occasional inlet sometimes forms where a river drops down from the mountains, leaving a narrow ribbon of black sands at their foot. However, pounding seas make these inlets dangerous places to moor a ship and few have a practical path to climb the cleft in the cliffs.

### Jungle

Rising from the edge of the beach line up to 1,500 metres are thick dense jungles; hot, humid and often boggy. Most of the jungle fills the central bowl on the western side of the main mountain range. A few miserable swamps exist at the lowest extent, near the cliff edges which drop away into the sea, but as the jungle rises into the foothills it transforms into steep-sided valleys, each carved by its own watercourse and often bisected by deep gorges. The jungles collect most of the rainfall, hammering downpours causing the streams to swell into raging torrents.

#### Cloud Forest

Between 1,500 and 3,000 metres the impenetrable jungle gives way to more open forest. The atmosphere is cool and damp, precipitation gathered by vegetation via the direct absorption of water from clouds butting up against the mountains. The steeply walled valleys become ever more vertiginous, forcing travel along paths which zigzag back and forth in order to ascend to the edge of the plateau and mountains above the forest.

### Plateau

At 3,000 metres is a large plateau, the original floor of the north-eastern caldera. It is circled by the highest mountains on the island, forming a semi-arid region of puna which supports grass and short thorny shrubs. What little moisture there is comes from water melted from the small glaciers which descend from the surrounding peaks. Air temperatures at this elevation are cold, yet being above the rainclouds allows the heat of the sun to warm the land to bearable levels.

### High Mountains

From 3,000 to 4,500 metres the mountain slopes become increasingly arid, little growing on the rocky scree slopes save stubby grasses and cacti. The landscape is mostly a jumble of rock and cliffs, treacherous to move across. Avalanches of rock often fall during earth tremors, forming strange dunes of rubble where the mountains meet the plateau below.

### Glacial Peaks

At 4,500 metres is the snowline. It is here that the air temperature drops low enough to prevent ice from melting year round. Most of the peaks forming the caldera lip average about 5,000 metres. Three particular spurs reach up to 5,200, 5,275 and 5,315 metres respectively; their sides nearly sheer and seemingly driven up from below by titanic forces. What little snow that falls is due to the condensation of moisture-laden sea winds driven up the slopes. This accumulates to form modest glaciers driven down the fissures in the caldera walls by their own weight.

| Terrain | Elevation | Mean Annual Temperature* |
|---|---|---|
| Coast | 0m | 30° C |
| Jungle | 0-1,500 m | 25° C |
| Cloud Forest | 1,500-3,000m | 15° C |
| Plateau | 3,000m | 10° C |
| High Mountains | 3,000-4,500m | 5° C |
| Glacial Peaks | Over 4,500m | -5° C |

**Temperatures rarely vary by more than 5° C in either direction.*

### A Note on Cardinal Directions

To ease comprehension of the island's layout, this book uses the traditional directions of North, South, East and West to help identify the position of geographical features and places of interest. Games Masters should not feel obliged to retain this orientation, especially if it would cause problems with the prevailing meteorological and astronomical conditions of their setting.

## Weather

Surrounded by warm ocean currents, the island maintains a fairly static temperature year round, varying no more than 10 degrees between the warmest and coolest parts of the year. It has two seasons: a long wet season and a shorter dry period, which are denoted by the prevailing direction of the winds.

Wet season is linked to the warmer periods of the year. The winds come from the south-west, carrying moisture-laden air across the land mass, which precipitates out as torrential rain in the lower jungles and higher forest where clouds are driven up against the inner slopes of the ancient caldera rims. Although the heavy rains can be an annoyance, the almost invariable breeze has a cooling effect on the coastline and where it can penetrate the thick vegetation of the slopes and valleys.

Due to the mountainous spine, the windward side of the island receives about 3.5 metres of rain during the wet season, leaving the leeward side comparatively dry with only minor rainfall when the constant breeze shifts to more

southerly or westerly directions. Because of this, most inland regions during the wet season experience mostly cloudy weather with intermittent periods of sun.

During the cooler dry season the winds come from the east but grow more erratic in strength. Instead of a constant breeze they range from fitful light gusts to tempestuous typhoons, battering the outer edge of the mountain ranges. Indeed the weather can become so violent that it prevents any large tree growth on the eastern coastline, and the gorges between the upper peaks act as funnels, amplifying the moans and howls of the wind as it tears through them. Fortunately for sailors, the westernmost caldera acts as a safe harbour during the worst of these tropical storms as the windward coast is pummelled by huge waves.

Despite the subtle drop of temperatures at this time of year, the shielding mountains prevent direct airflow from cooling the dense jungles of the interior, causing them to feel more sultry and humid than the wet season. Clouds too are blocked, which enables more sunlight to beat down upon the island. Thus the dry season is the sunniest time of the year.

Beyond seasonal variations of wind and rain, the localised effects of weather mainly depend on the native vegetation and elevation.

For instance, except for a darkening of ambient light and a slight cooling of the air, the torrential daily rainfall in jungle areas is little noticed since most of the rain is caught by the canopy; and the water which gradually trickles through re-evaporates in the warmth of the under-canopy, forming wispy hazes of enervating humidity. These eventually condense on the mid level vegetation and drip slowly down to the jungle floor which is often boggy. Despite rainfall dying away in the dry season, the jungles trap enough moisture to retain their sultry climate, although the levels and violence of the streams lessen noticeably.

Cloud forests on the other hand lack much direct rainfall, instead being constantly shrouded in thick grey mists during the wet season, limiting vision and making everything sodden. The trees literally absorb the moisture directly from the clouds and trap it in the innumerable bromeliads and mosses which festoon their branches. Their nature changes considerably in the dry season, the mists growing lighter as the land slowly drains till they become temperate vistas bathed in warm sunlight towards the end of the dry period.

Above the cloud forest little ambient moisture exists, turning the landscape into an increasingly arid terrain. Whilst the plateau area seems pleasantly warm in the perpetual but harsh sunlight, it is illusionary; for the air temperature is actually quite chill and night-time can be dangerously cold. Although some light rains occasionally reach the heights, most weather variation is limited to the strength and direction of the wind. This becomes increasingly true for the higher mountain slopes, the air growing colder and drier till the snowline is reached.

A noticeable oddity occurs in the formation of microclimates around the few high altitude hot springs. These are often shrouded in thick clouds of steam which often condense as snow or ice depending on the elevation.

### The Global Location of Monster Island

Whilst Monster Island ostensibly appears to be lush and tropical, it need not be placed into the equatorial zone of a game world. Raised up and surrounded by volcanic activity, the island could likewise be placed in a temperate region, its shroud of mists and copious rainfall generated by the meeting of cooler ocean currents with hydrothermal upwelling from the sea floor.

If desiring an even more exotic location the island could be placed in an arctic zone, its warm climate provided by ancient magic or the will of the gods themselves!

## Ecology

The ecology of Monster Island is a strange blend of weird creatures and vegetation, a large proportion of which are unique, even foreign, to the rest of the world. This is because many of these species are in fact alien, drawn to the island by magical gates from alternate dimensions. These ancient portals are remnants of a sorcerous civilisation which has long since collapsed, but their power still continues.

Although some of the transposed creatures find their new habitat unable to sustain them for long, a number manage to wander quite some distance from their point of arrival. Some possess quite unusual, even horrific physical forms, displaying multiple limbs or made from incomprehensible substances. These creatures are considered demons by the natives and the most dangerous given a wide berth until they die from incompatible conditions or are killed by other predators. Generations of experience however has taught the natives that some of the monsters

### Heat Stroke and Armour

Armour tends to encapsulate the body of its wearer, cutting down on ventilation and trapping heat. In the muggy, tropical environment of Monster Island this quickly leads to exhaustion, even heat stroke if its user attempts any significant movement or effort, assuming of course they are not a reptilian native.

In game terms, the Fatigue Levels of an active wearer is lowered a number of steps equal to half the Armour Penalty of the worn protection. For example, a warrior simply standing guard in half plate armour (Armour Penalty 6) would sweat buckets, but suffer no other ill effects. If on the other hand the warrior attempted to march through the jungle, he would suffer an automatic lowering of his Fatigue Level by three steps (half the penalty) to Wearied.

Furthermore the same value, this time as the number of difficulty grade down-steps, is applied to Fatigue skill rolls to determine the ongoing effects of physical effort. This supersedes the inherent penalty of the current Fatigue Level, if the new penalty is higher.

possess useful body parts, either as decoration, material for tools or gastronomic delicacies.

Those few creatures able to adapt to the climate and chemistry of the island have carved out small niches in its ecology. Even for these adaptable species, survival is still tenuous. Whilst the rich volcanic soils promote the rapid growth of the island's lush jungle, its total surface area – even accounting for slopes – is not enough to sustain the number of herbivores required to feed the unusually large number of predatory species. The sheer density of beasts is sustained only by the constant influx of new specimens through the gates. Thus the ecosystem of Monster Island is skewed towards a carnivorous ecology of mutually antagonistic predators and scavengers.

## The Coastline

The majority of the coast is comprised of steep cliffs which plunge into the ocean. On the eastern coast of the island the lowest ten metres above sea level are scrubbed clean of any vegetation, the cliff face often undercut by the battering of waves. Higher up the slopes, increasing numbers of small thorny shrubs and trees adapted to the drier climate sprout precariously from cracks, where their roots can work their way deeper into the basalt. Such plants are both tough and tenacious, having to survive the violent typhoons of the dry season.

The western side of the island possesses sheer cliffs, remnants of the inner caldera walls sheltered from the worst weather. Despite their vertiginous nature, the cliffs support more verdant growth, vines and tendrils hanging from the top edge and spreading down natural ledges in the rock strata. Their lushness is supported by the frequent waterfalls which plunge over the cliff tops, fresh water spray constantly irrigating the climbing plants and ferns. Many of these particular plants are valued for their medicinal properties, but scaling the crags is excessively dangerous due to the slick rocks long smoothed by falling water.

A few sand beaches cling here and there to the bottom of the precipitous coast. Being but narrow ribbons they lack much in the way of vegetation. Not all the beaches are barren however. Around the prominences of the submerged Hina caldera have formed sandy atolls, populated with palm trees and similar growths able to survive the saline conditions. The peninsula of Skull Point is a spur which leads gently up to the original caldera floor, high above the sea. Jungle descends from the cliff top down to the copious beaches, but it is heavily thinned out in places due to native clearances.

Small crustaceans, reptiles and mammals thrive in the cliffside environment, yet due to the limited surface area, all the larger creatures living along the coastline live in the sea. Save for the relatively shallow Hina caldera, the steep bluffs continue to plunge below the waterline, dropping down into the ocean with little or no shelving save for splinters of collapsed cliff face.

Several species of giant crabs, eels and octopi occasionally rise up from the depths, but seldom remain for long. However the deep water supports a wide range of fish which draws other oceanic predators.

## The Jungle

The thick, dense jungle of Monster Island has three distinct levels, the canopy, the understory and the jungle floor. Each is in effect its own ecosystem possessing specific types of vegetation. The biggest plants are obviously the trees which, like the island's creatures, can reach monstrous sizes. Most of the big trees grow to between 30-50m tall, towering high above the ground and forming a green roof which traps the heat and humidity below.

The canopy generally begins 20m above ground, providing homes for most of the island's insects, birds, bats and those animals able to scale the immense trunks such

as sloths, small cats, monkeys, snakes and lizards. It is here that fruits and flowers proliferate, providing the nutrition for their inhabitants. Reaching these heights is extremely difficult for those unable to fly or which lack claws able to penetrate tough bark. The scale of the trees is such that the biggest send out huge buttressing flanges at their base to improve support, often extending many metres away from the trunk.

In turn the trees provide support or growing areas for other plants such as orchids or bromeliads which, rather than being parasites, instead simply use branches as convenient resting places to grow, taking all their nutrients from the air or decomposing insect or vegetable litter. Likewise lianas and other creepers use the canopy as a sprouting spot, but send down their roots to seek additional nutrition from the soil. Eventually this can strangle and kill the original tree which then rots, leaving strange looking root complexes which weave their way up into the sky.

Beneath the canopy is usually a region of bare trunks lacking any sort of foliage. For flying creatures this is reasonably open, permitting rapid if not completely safe travel. Nearer the jungle floor is the understory level which extends between 3-6 metres above ground. Due to the lack of direct sunlight only plants which thrive in the shade live at this level, typically ferns or palms spreading very large fronds and leaves to capture the ambient illumination. Few animals save small reptiles and amphibians reside at this level.

The jungle floor is comparatively drab, lacking flowers or colour in the semi-darkness. Most of the plants at this level are parasitical or carnivorous, defending themselves against grazing by growing stinging prickles, sharp thorns, or by being inherently poisonous. In the moist conditions fallen vegetation rots quickly and sprouts large fungi, some of which grow to a monstrous size.

Ground level is where all the large non-arboreal creatures roam, the native species comprising of ground sloths, big cats, large reptiles and giant frogs. Other, stranger, beasts also haunt the thick undergrowth, either cropping the fast growing plants or stalking each other.

The thick layer of leaf mould also provides nutrition for countless insects, most of which are minor annoyances save for some which grow to frightening sizes, such as deadly scorpions or colossal centipedes. Insect swarms are also a menace whether in the canopy or on the jungle floor, but particularly feared are roving armies of carnivorous ants.

## Travelling in the Jungle

Journeying through the jungle of Monster Island is considerably more difficult than first imagined by most adventurers. The vegetation is relatively dense thanks to the fecund volcanic soil, growing near impenetrable where sunlight penetrates the canopy, such as the edges of major streams or clearings where a huge tree has fallen, pulling down its neighbours.

Although the ground level foliage does not generally prevent walking, it is cluttered so as to need a machete to hack though the fronds and vines that frequently hang in the way of walkers. Many are covered with thorns that hook and tear clothes, or spines which bed into flesh causing irritation or infections.

Travelling in a straight line is near impossible due to saplings, patches of prickly growth or the immense trunks of the towering trees which send out root flanges akin to walls of living wood. If that was not difficult enough, the entire jungle floor is a tangled mess of surface roots half hidden beneath a thin layer of rotting detritus, making footing treacherous and providing constant obstacles to clamber over. The leaf litter can also cover up hidden dangers; stagnant pools of gelatinous mud or sharp tipped root tips for instance.

Being unable to see the sky and lacking compasses, most travellers quickly lose their sense of direction, often ending up wandering in circles without being aware of their mistake. Much of the jungle is a series of valleys carved out by water, separated by increasingly sharp-edged ridges as they rise up towards the cloud forest. Generally most natives navigate by following certain streams which cut roughly across the jungle from east to west, ending at the coast; or ancient paved causeways kept clear by occasional trade or religious pilgrimage. Trailblazing direct routes is extraordinarily difficult, and foolish, without a good Navigation skill.

Vision is limited within the jungle too; the thick canopy makes it dim and gloomy during the day, then near pitch black once the sun sets, save for luminescent flora. Line of sight at ground level varies between 5 to 10 metres (1D6+4). Whilst animal trails often provide clear paths through the jungle, they also are likely places to meet the creatures which made them. Considering what types of beasts roam the region this is generally not a pleasant experience...

The verdant vegetation of the jungle provides an abundant source of natural resources, many of which could be valuable to those seeking trade with the island's natives. Amongst these products can be counted the following:

### Hardwoods

The jungle is a source of dense, strong hardwoods akin to mahogany or teak which are highly resistant to rot, and also those that possess an intrinsic natural perfume.

### Spices

Many of the jungle's flowers, leaves, roots and seeds are sources of exotic flavours worth their weight in gold.

### Foodstuffs

Although most of the native fruits have a short lifespan, some of the harder-husked fruits and nuts can survive months before consumption, making them a valid export. The island provides many citrus fruits, sweet or sharp in flavour. One particular crop cultivated by the natives, cocoa, is used for an exclusive beverage.

### Medicines

Some plants have medicinal properties aiding pain relief, acting as antiseptics or specific treatments for certain diseases. Included amongst these are poisons and narcotics also.

### Oils, Gums and Resins

A number of trees and shrubs produce natural excretions which can be collected at certain times of the year by tapping or milking the plants. The oils have a range of properties from sticky flammability to pungent insect repellents. Two gums are available, one a natural source of glue, the other a waterproof sealant. The resins are types of perfume, often used by the natives to coat their skins during rituals.

## Cloud Forest

Above 1,500 metres the jungle starts changing in nature, from rain forest to cloud forest. At this elevation the air is cooler, which not only affects the size and density of the vegetation but also type of precipitation it receives.

Essentially, during the wet season, wrung-out clouds which provide rain to the lower jungles are blown up against the Tane Caldera mountain ridge, where they cling to the precipitous forests, wreathing them with ethereal fogs which slowly dissipate under the rays of the tropical sun. Even in the dry season the humidity of the lower jungles rises up the mountains where it condenses as, albeit wispier, streamers of mist that appear and fade like ghosts dancing in bands across the dark green flanks.

Since little actual rain falls, the forest gains its moisture from the depleted clouds in the form of condensation which accumulates directly onto the plants. As a result most of the trees are infested with ferns and moss which suck up large amounts of moisture. The numbers of orchids and bromeliads also increase, which forces most trees to restrict their canopy growth or else have branches break under the combined weight of absorbed or collected water.

The reduced levels of mist-blocked sunlight, lower temperatures and steep slopes prevent trees from reaching the giant sizes of those in the jungle. In sheltered spots they can still reach a respectable 30 metres in height, yet as the elevation rises further the forest begins to thin out, the vegetation growing commensurately smaller. Above 3,000 metres the cold and wind prevents the forest from climbing further.

Almost everything within the cloud forest is covered with moss, which hangs from branches, thrives on tree trunks, covers rocks and provides soft spongy footing. Everything is constantly soaking wet, making life thoroughly unpleasant, but has the side effect of acting like a huge sponge. The slow percolation of water is what feeds the start of the streams which cross the caldera to the coast.

Due to the slower rates of regeneration the cloud forest does not support many large herbivores. However, it provides a perfect home for many types of colourful birds, amphibians and some reptiles which like the brighter, sodden environment. There are fewer species of dangerous insects at this level, though one or two exist such as swarms of vampiric butterflies and deadly moths that emerge during brief periods of sunlight, which can often be blown enmass to other places on the island.

Navigation in the forest is not as bad as the thicker jungle, although it is easy to get lost when clouds roll in, cutting off long distance vision. However movement is more restricted. Most of the cloud forest grows on the mid slopes of the mountains, making the terrain steeply angled and cut through by knife edged valley ridges. Thus hiking is often more a case of scrambling and climbing, which soon becomes exhausting in the damp, chill environment.

Few natives willingly live in the cloud forest, yet often send parties to forage for certain flowers, creatures and barks that this less hospitable region provides. In fact the area is a treasure house of natural resources for those interested in exploiting them.

## The Plateau

Formed from the roughly level bottom of the Rangi Caldera, this region is a wide open plain of thorny, scrub-like vegetation encircled by a towering wall of mountains. Named the Puna Plateau, the caldera wall is open to the south-west where the crater rim long ago collapsed into the Tane Caldera, leaving a sheer cliff face dropping down into the cloud forest below.

Dry and cold, the atmosphere of the plateau has led to it being populated by vegetation completely different to the jungles of the island's lower elevations. Most of the moisture comes from the night-time frost. Few of the plants grow above waist height, save for a small area bordering the plateau's single lake. Almost all of the scrub is either tough grasses, cacti of various prickly types or spiny shrubs with small waxy leaves to prevent evaporation.

Lack of water forces the plants to grow in patchy clumps interspersed by basalt stones and bare areas of gritty soil, making the entire plateau look somewhat like a blasted desert. The plain isn't truly flat, possessing small undulations, winkles and shallow gullies from where the ancient caldera buckled from the forces of its creation. These have been weathered by wind or frost, providing much of the coarse sand that makes up the barren soil. Nearer the mountainous rim are scattered larger rocks, boulders which have obviously fallen from its steep walls.

The climate of the Puna is an odd combination of fluctuating temperature, aridity and cutting winds. At night the region is cold, often dropping to near freezing. Shielded by high peaks, most of the plateau receives no direct sunlight until mid morning, so this chillness perseveres long after dawn. The thin air however, blocks little of the sun's warmth, so once illuminated the plain soon heats up, becoming an oven. As the sun descends towards dusk, its gradually reddening light continues to illuminate the mountains for a short while even after it has set. The baking warmth however soon disperses and the temperature plummets.

These wildly swinging temperatures cause havoc with the air flow over the island, sometimes causing strong winds to circulate within the caldera. Unfortunately these can pick up a lot of the rough soil, turning breezes into painfully abrasive gusts that drive grit into eyes and clothes. In the dry season, particularly hot days combined with just the right prevailing winds can give rise to small twisters, which pose a threat to the indigenous fauna.

Most of the plateau is lightly grazed by small to medium sized herbivores that in turn are preyed upon by avian predators inhabiting the surrounding mountains. Some modest feline carnivores also hunt here, but seasonally migrate to and from the cloud forest regions. With little biomass and few animals to feed upon, insect life is much reduced from that in other areas of the island. A few species of harmless ants mine out subterranean nests, which can be dug up by those who know of the sweet nectar they collect. Moths also proliferate, hatching and dying in sequence with the lunar cycle.

## High Mountains

Monster Island has two chains of mountains carved from the rims of the Tane and Rangi Calderas.

The longer Tane range varies in height, from 1,500 metres near where the crater drops into the ocean, up to 3,250 metres in the centre of the isle. As such most of the Tane Mountains are covered with cloud forest, thinning at their sharp crests where tropical storms scour the summits.

Conversely the Rangi Mountains reach over 5,000 metres, their white-tipped peaks dominating the entire island. Due to some inexplicable feature of their volcanic upthrust and erosion, the sides of the worn crater rim are precipitous, sloping between 60-80° and granting them a stunning majesty. They literally loom threateningly over the land.

Between 3,000 and 4,500 metres the slopes possess diminishing amounts of plant life, mostly isolated patches of scrub, grass and hardy alpine flowers. Above this is the snowline where flora can no longer survive. That said, most of the mountain slopes are exposed crags of basalt, the vegetation clinging to ledges or sheltered crevasses.

Few animals inhabit the higher slopes, only small climbing rodents which can reach isolated plants and the occasional exotic life form that comes through the gates. Large predatory birds and some flying beasts use this region to nest, protected by the isolation and difficulty of scaling the peaks. However they must descend to lower altitudes to gather food, the mountains being comparatively sterile despite their considerable surface area.

The high altitude makes these elevations particularly cold. Even direct sunlight barely brings the temperature above freezing and at night it drops well below 0° C. Damp air which reaches this height generally deposits its last remnants of moisture as hoar frost or very fine powder snow. Above the snow line this has accumulated over centuries to form several small glaciers that descend the mountain slopes to near the plateau where they eventually melt, forming the source of minor streams. These minor

rivulets hold no fish whatsoever, they are too cold and too high to support life.

A few hot springs emerge in the high mountains, appearing to be steaming vents hidden behind permanent fog clouds. At the snow line this can result in a hot pool being surrounded by strange ice formations where the fog has frozen across the rocks, growing organic looking sheets or icicles.

## Glacial Peaks

By far the most sterile environment on the island, the permanent snow and ice capping the highest mountains support no native plant life save for a few lichens which somehow survive on those rock faces with access to light.

Due to these harsh subzero conditions and lack of edible material, most inhabitants at the snow level are alien creatures that find the ambient temperature more comfortable or require snow for reproductive purposes. For nutrition most descend below the snowline to roam the lower flanks of the mountain, hunting for suitable prey.

Driving winds which become dangerously strong in the dry season often force the few creatures living at this altitude to take cover in snow caves or frozen-over ravines. Since much of the terrain is near vertical, they nearly all possess wings or large claws for climbing, travelling great distances in search of food.

*In ages past were they conquered by Masters,*
*driven below to the place whence they came.*
*But some there were who remained,*
*hidden in spaces and planes unknown to man.*
*Lived they in Atlantis as shadows,*
*but at times they appeared among men.*
*Aye, when the blood was offered,*
*for they came they to dwell among men.*

*In the form of man they amongst us,*
*but only to sight were they as are men.*
*Serpent-headed when the glamour was lifted*
*but appearing to man as men among men.*
*Crept they into the Councils,*
*taking forms that were like unto men.*

Anon, The Emerald Tablets of Thoth

# Chapter 2: History & Cultures III

The ancient history of of how Monster Island has interacted with the rest of the world is an area which, by necessity, has been left somewhat vague for Games Masters to flesh out in detail. In this way they can weave it into the timeline of their own game worlds – dates of discovery, invasion, or even the disappearance of great heroes can then be easily tied in with no contradictions. Conversely the island can be defined as terra incognita. An unknown land; legendary, forgotten or long cut off by the strange mists that surround it.

However it is introduced and ultimately used, the following sections describe the island's history as perceived and recounted by its natives. The crude nature of this information reflects the natives' now primitive state and the handing down of history as an aural tradition.

## The Time of the Gods

At the birth of creation the gods gathered to craft the world. Each worked hard to sculpt the land from desert to jungle, breathe life into plants and animals, and give birth to worshippers to give their creators rightful praise. But the world soon filled with the fertile creations, bringing strife as deities sought to prevent encroachment of others upon their efforts.

Forbidden to wield divine powers directly against one another in the heavens, the gods were forced to settle the conflict in the world itself. They created ever more potent creatures which were thrown at the tribes of their enemies, pouring more and more of themselves into the ravaging beasts of destruction.

Turned from creation to annihilation, the world suffered. Mountains collapsed, icy wastes burned and the continents began to sink beneath the waves. The final battle took place on the four-coned volcano of Mount Yoormiphazreth, the roof of the world. Blinded by rage, the gods themselves abandoned the sky, descending to the world to manifest themselves as monsters unlike any seen before or since; and fought tooth and claw, crushing their faithful underfoot as they tore one another apart.

A thousand thousands were slaughtered in this Armageddon, till the great mountain itself screamed in agony and from it gushed the blood of the world. When the smoke and ash cleared only a handful of the gods remained, their powers spent, trapped in monstrous forms, unable to return to the heavens. So they lay down where they stood

and began the sleep of millennia in order to atone for their mistakes.

The few mortal survivors inherited the last fragments of the world, which had drowned under a vast ocean that spread further than sight. With nothing left, the faithful tended to the slumbering gods; praying for the return of their divine strength so that the world could be made right once more.

# The Rise and Fall of Civilisation

With the fall of the gods, their now liberated servants found themselves bereft of both the guidance and magic of the creators. The wisest amongst them began to study the mystical arts in order to discover a way of replicating such powers. In time they discovered the principles of sorcery and used them to build a new era of civilisation.

With this new magic the wise elevated themselves above the common people, leading them to fashion new cities to replace the legendary metropolises which had sunk beneath the waves. Art and culture thrived, knowledge was gathered and hoarded in libraries of pictographic stone tablets. Even new temples were constructed; not to praise the gods – they were to be left sleeping where they could cause no further harm – but instead to the mages of the wise as places of meditation and reflection.

As sorcery gained ascendancy so did the numbers of those dependent upon it for survival. The population of the island burgeoned to unprecedented levels, so that not even the intensive fishing of the seas could feed them all. Believing themselves the only land surrounded by an endless ocean, the arch-mages sought other solutions, eventually stumbling upon the metaphysics of the infinite dimensions.

Sorcerers sent their minds across the multiverse, seeking planes of existence where other mighty civilisations ruled. Yet they found none to match them, only primitive worlds where great beasts thrived in countless multitudes.

Disappointed, the wise still turned their discoveries to their advantage. Gathering the greatest sorcerers they fashioned the Smoking Mirrors (see page 102), inter-dimensional gateways able to bridge the walls of reality; but only to let things enter the world – never to permit them to leave. Thus constructed the portals were able to draw in vast numbers of creatures to be culled for food and useful materials.

As their power peaked the wise grew supercilious and corrupt. The common folk were treated less as equals than servitors, breeding resentment amongst those not privy to the secrets of high sorcery. Gradually the civilisation resolved into a two-tier society, slave and ruler, each with its own sub-castes. These solidified, preventing social mobility; first becoming hereditary and then as the ruling class sought greater exclusivity, finally resolved into an issue of racism.

Further demands increased the cultural divide. Greater cities were constructed from the black basalt stone of the island, each imposing metropolis built by the blood and sweat of the underclasses as seats of power for the highest ranking sorcerers. Zerzura, the capital of the entire island, was erected upon the Puna Plateau, its cyclopean pyramids a place where only the wise were permitted to reside in freedom, living a life of scholarly indolence supported by the labours of subservient vassals forbidden to ascend into the high mountains.

Oppressed by the constant demand for foodstuffs and handicrafts, the common folk turned from the enforced veneration of the wise, instead offering secret worship to ubiquitous spirits or the long forgotten gods who still slumbered in the remote places of the island. Although their petitions seemed not to be heard, each town and village formed rebellious sects seeking to relieve their subjugation; at first by mutual support to share the burdens of what was requested from them, then slowly each animist tradition became a focus of their resentment and desire to break free of the sorcerers' autocracy.

When the lunar tithes commanded the inclusion of the old and the weak in addition to the crushing monthly requisitions, the common folk reacted suspiciously, requesting their most respected shaman-priests to send spirits to seek out what was happening to their relatives. None of the spirits returned, so the shamans coordinated their power, sending their own souls instead. The plateau had been long guarded by sorcery of the most potent nature, which ensnared or destroyed those spirits which dared cross its wards. Between them the high shaman-priests broached the deadly boundary, discovering to their horror that those sent to the plateau were being sacrificed for magical energies.

Driven beyond endurance, the common folk rebelled against the wise, killing the autocrats who sat in judgement over their towns in several nights of bloodshed. Yet such insurgence was not to be permitted. More sorcerers

descended from their mountain fastness to re-impose their rule, engaging in magical skirmishes with the shamans, whilst their legions of alien creatures summoned through the gates, deathless servitors raised from corpses and automata crafted from stone and metal battled against the revolting slaves.

Despite numerical superiority the commoners could not resist the sorcerous armies, forcing them to turn in desperation to the somnolent gods. As blood began to flow across their altars, the clamour of the conflict brought the dreaming deities to partial consciousness and the great gods strode the land once again.

Short was the war from that point on. The gods gorged on the monsters the sorcerers summoned to combat them, finally feeding upon the summoners themselves as each mighty basalt fortification fell one by one, torn down by the wakened elemental forces. Nothing could stop them, not even the magically animated colossi that guarded the plateau from assault, till ultimately the beautiful yet damned capital of Zerzura was destroyed by their mindless wrath.

Such efforts cost the slumbering gods much of their strength, forcing them to return to their resting places to digest the vast armies they had consumed.

Defeated but not exterminated, a few of the masters escaped into the mountains. Henceforth the power of the wise was sundered; much of their knowledge lost in the annihilation of their cities and death of their greatest adepts. The plateau, however, remained an accursed place where the common folk refused to venture, deathly afraid of survivors and the strange things which lurked in the rubble of Zerzura.

With the collapse of civilisation came further disasters in accordance with the fall of centralised authority. Many mighty sorceries crumbled with the rule of their creators, the benefits of magical transportation, sewage systems, fertility spells were lost with their casters. Although many had fallen in the great war, tens of thousands more died from starvation and disease as barbarism reigned free.

From that point onwards a period of dark ages reigned, the lost wonders of the past evident only in heroic stories passed down to children and the fallen stones of the cyclopean cities, slowly overgrown by the jungle.

# Current Political Situation

Most of the tribes have dropped to a level of simplistic primitivism which matches their hunter-gatherer lifestyle. Regarded as savages, they now live in distributed villages, the ruined towns shunned in superstitious fear. Each tribe is comprised of several independent villages but the scattered settlements often coordinate together in propitiation of their patron deity or feuding with neighbouring tribes over the limited resources.

Warfare between the savages has become ritualistic, restricted to raids at certain times of the year to limit the loss of life. Open battle is avoided since the extermination of a tribe would remove the placating worship which keeps quiescent the particular god to which they bound themselves during the second apocalypse. Even the displacement of a tribe from its ancestral home results in the awakening of the tribal deity; causing a trail of rampaging destruction as the gods battle over new territories.

A few enclaves of the fallen sorcerers still exist in the upper mountains, in a state of faded decrepitude, but retaining some elements of their refined culture and arts. Colloquially known as the High Folk, they are still powerful and greatly feared, occasionally launching raids on the peoples of the lower jungles to demand slaves – but whether for servitude, sacrifice or sustenance, the preyed-upon savages are unsure. Some tribes living close to the ruins the sorcerers haunt offer up tribute to avoid the punitive attacks. Due to these capitulations the High Folk have begun to grow in strength, threatening the autonomy of other lowland tribes.

Unknown to those outside the enclaves, the most powerful sorcerers are waging an internecine war to see who amongst them will assume rule over the others. Lacking direct battles, the political struggle is waged by subtle negotiations, dark sorceries, and the occasional assassination attempt. Once a clear leader emerges, as one will soon, the unified mountain peoples will begin conquest of the entire island to forge a new civilisation – one which may threaten the rest of the world once the secrets of their dark power have been recovered from the catacombs within which they currently lie hidden.

# The Arrival of Humanity

Assuming that the Games Master does not wish players to create natives of the island, the characters must have arrived in some fashion. This can take a myriad of forms but suggested methods are listed below:

- Colonists: The characters arrive as part of a colonisation effort, purposely sent to explore and settle whatever lands they discover. This option allows characters the chance to utilise an already established base of operations and help the colony expand.
- Shipwrecked: The characters are washed ashore when their vessel is wrecked on the treacherous coastal reefs. This leaves the characters isolated in a dangerous survivalist situation.
- Translocated: The characters accidentally arrive through one of the uni-directional gateways, unable to ever return home. Cut off in an alien world totally unfamiliar to them, the characters need to come to terms with the existence of other sapient species.
- Convicts: The characters are abandoned on the island as punishment for their nefarious deeds. Survival is more a case of cooperating with their fellow convicts to carve out their own settlement, or perhaps allying with the natives against the amoral prisoners.
- Special: The characters might be the cast and crew of a movie brought to the island by the film-making mogul; or could be a scientific team sent to investigate the islands anomalous appearance in a hitherto blank stretch of open ocean. Perhaps they are members of a World War II assault force, sent to clear supposed enemy activity on the isolated island. Anything goes!

Thus far, the presence of humans has not upset the status quo between the lizardman tribes. However, whilst the influx of trade has brought peace with the closest tribe, that tribe's increasing wealth is creating friction with its neighbours out of jealousy. Further off tribes fear the corrupting influence of the civilised soft-skins, especially once tombs start to be pillaged and taboo ruins violated.

# Cultures

Monster Island possesses three major cultures, each one demographically separated by both race and geographical location. Characters who explore the island will come into contact with the natives, whose strange traditions will serve to bemuse, horrify or entertain their 'guests.'

## The Colonists

Primarily human civilised folk who have established a small, heavily fortified trading port, seeking to exploit the island's natural resources and explore its secrets.

Monster Island Cultures

| Background | Standard Skills | Professional Skills | Combat Styles | Available Professions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Colonists | Customs +40%, Native Tongue +40% Conceal, Deceit, Endurance, Influence, Insight, Locale, Willpower | Art (any), Commerce, Craft (any), Courtesy, Language (any), Lore (any), Musicianship, Streetwise | Civilian Cohort | Any |
| High Folk | Customs +40%, Native Tongue +40% Deceit, Evade, Insight, Locale, Perception, Stealth, Willpower | Art (any), Courtesy, Disguise, Language (any), Lore (any), Musicianship, Oratory | None normally (Brotherhood Guardian is reserved for careers which teach additional combat styles, Eight Jab Doom is restricted to Sorcerers only) | Agent, Beast Handler, Courtesan, Crafter, Entertainer, Hunter, Official, Physician, Scout, Sorcerer, Warrior |
| Savages | Customs +40%, Native Tongue +40% Athletics, Boating, Endurance, Locale, Perception, Stealth, Swim | Binding, Craft (any), Lore (any), Navigate, Survival, Track, Trance | Tua Skirmisher (Mua Infantry and Eiki Elite are reserved for those who achieve the requisite rank) | Start as Hunters and eventually become Shaman if they reach old age |

### The High Folk

Barbarian remnants of a high civilisation which had once mastered the arts of sorcery, now living in remote mountain strongholds

### The Savages

Primitive hunter-gatherers who infest the jungles and cloud forests, they practice animistic traditions in addition to propitiating the colossal monsters which are their hereditary gods.

There are no nomadic cultures on the island, primarily due to its constraining size. However sea or avian based nomads could easily be introduced as an addendum to the setting, using Monster Island as a seasonal stop off during migrations.

Each of the island's cultures is explored in detail, describing its society and lifestyle. A degree of flexibility has been incorporated into the cultural descriptions so that Games Masters can easily modify them for their own campaign setting.

Although reptilian races are suggested as default for the natives, where possible the author has tried to limit the direct mention of racial attributes, utilising the culture name and making its traditions independent of species. So those wishing to exchange lizardmen and serpentmen for primitive humans, or any other race for that matter, should find it very simple.

### Status and its Use

Each of the cultures uses a rating new to the core RuneQuest rules called Status. This is a measure of a person's standing within their society, a combination of their fame and the respect paid to them. It should be treated similarly to Passions, in that it is a percentage value which can rise or fall depending on the individual's acts, at least those which are considered important to that culture.

Status can be used by a Games Master in a variety of ways. It can be used to organise picking order, a way of being recognised, or even as a cap to Influence (or similar) rolls depending on the situation. The latter becomes important, especially with player characters when they try to resist or manipulate politics within the colony.

# The Savages

The primitives are considered ignorant, brutal savages by the other inhabitants of the island. Although roughly categorised as a unified culture, they are organised into tribes, each named after their patron deity, a form of animal totem to which they are bound and must worship to stop it awakening. The known tribes are the:

- Anguri: The armadillo tribe
- Gabari: The moth tribe
- Gamari: The tortoise tribe
- Ghidori: The hydra tribe
- Gyaosi: The bat tribe
- Kamacuri: The mantis tribe
- Kangi: The ape tribe
- Kumongi: The spider tribe
- Mandahi: The python tribe
- Oodaki: The octopus tribe
- Varanri: The lizard tribe

## Race

The default race suggested for primitive savages are the lizardmen described on page 240, or even a diverse range of reptilians, one for each individual tribe. However human savages could work just as well for a campaign set in a more human-centric fantasy world, or in a historical setting.

**Monster Island Combat Styles**

| Combat Style | Weapons | Traits |
|---|---|---|
| Brotherhood of the Carrion Scavenger | Taiaha, Lasso, Bolas | Mancatcher |
| Brotherhood of the Fang | Cuauhololli, Maduvu, Kratosi, Tepoztopilli | Do or Die |
| Brotherhood of the Obsidian Claw | Trishula, Tamking, Maquahuitl, Katar | Mounted Combat |
| Brotherhood of the Serpentine Grace | Mubuchae, Cakera, Ixcheltu, Maduvu | Hidden Weapons |
| Brotherhood of the Silken Death | Katar, Ixcheltu, Sling | Assassination |
| Brotherhood of the Silent Watch | Maquahuitl, Kratosi, Daichui, Kpinga | Blind Fighting |
| Eight Jab Doom | Unarmed, Fingertip Needles | Unarmed Prowess |
| Tua Skirmisher | Blowpipe, Bolas, Sling | Skirmisher |
| Mua Infantry | Club, Spear and Shield | Swashbuckling |
| Eiki Elite | Mace, Shark Toothed Sword and Strangle Cord | Intimidating Scream |
| Civilian Cohort | Spear, Shield, Dagger, Thrown Rock | Shield Wall |

# Society

Each of the primitive tribes shares the same sociological structure, a system where rank is based upon physical achievement and age, rather than birth. Lacking large population densities, their caste system cannot support individual professions, so all work is divided by sexual segregation.

Adult males adopt the roles of both hunter and warrior. They have several important tasks vital to the health and security of the tribe. First and foremost is to patrol their territory against opposing tribal incursions such as raiding or plundering parties, which if discovered outside the proper conventions will permit the declaration of ritual war (see Warfare on page 26).

Of secondary importance is the suppression of dangerous creatures which may threaten female gatherers. Third is the daily necessity of hunting and fishing for edible animals which are the primary part of their diet.

Males who receive a maiming injury that limits their mobility or prowess are inducted as shaman-priests, known as kahunas, and given the task of maintaining the aural histories. Youthful kahunas are rare amongst the savage tribes since every able hand is required to support the tribe. Occasionally however, a male is either born badly crippled or is blind. Rather than being sacrificed, they are viewed as a blessing and given up to the elders for training in the ways of the Spirit World.

Females, being the layers and carers of young, are nominally forbidden from the role of hunter-warrior. Instead they gather the leaves, roots, fruits and herbs necessary to supplement the tribe's meat based diet. In addition they prepare all food, maintain the cleanliness and decoration of the village, and care for the young and sick. Elderly females who live beyond their ability to reproduce are considered dowager-matriarchs who teach the young those things they need to know to survive in the jungles and support the unity of the tribe, such as what foods are good to eat, how to craft and respect for elders.

Although at first glance there seems to be a dichotomy of influence and respect between the sexes, both in fact hold equal standing, but over different aspects of daily life. Outside the village males have authority, whereas inside the village the womenfolk rule.

To formalise these roles each village is lead by both a hetman and hetwoman, although they hold separate courts in huts forbidden to members of the opposite sex. The hetman must be capable of leading the village in battle whereas the hetwoman needs to be still fertile.

Actual rank is based upon a combination of deeds and age. It is used to influence over others, denoting the natural picking order under circumstances where authority must be imposed or questioned. For males this status can be calculated by the following:

- Each year of age since initiation as an adult +1
- Being a shaman-priest +10
- Being the current hetman +25
- Each enemy captured in battle (not killed) +1
- Each great beast killed single-handedly (dangerous carnivores of over SIZ 21) +1
- Each maimed limb suffered during hunting or war +5
- Performing a great deed outside of normal tribal duties +10

For females status is dependent on slightly different issues:

- Each year of age since initiation as an adult +1
- Being a dowager-matriarch +10
- Being the current hetwoman +25
- Each child successfully brought to adulthood +1
- Each skill mastered (cooking, dancing, etc) +1
- Each husband currently 'owned' +1

As can be imagined the eldest members of the village are usually the most experienced. This does not necessarily mean the male with the highest status is the hetman, however. As explained above, hetmans are expected to venture out during wars or on the most dangerous hunting trips, something the elders are often physically incapable of. So although the hetman or hetwoman are the ones who pass judgments, they often listen to the older tribal members before coming to their final decision.

In most circumstances the individual with the lower status will defer to someone with a higher standing. Yet in some situations the 'lesser' ranked person will resist authority over an issue they feel passionate about. In these cases the individual is permitted to challenge the authority of their superior. Doing so costs the challenger one point of status. These normally take the form of simple face-offs where those involved will hold a brief argument before one or other establishes their force of will. In more serious situations, amongst males especially, a form of ritual unarmed combat can be used to settle things.

Only in the most dire circumstances are lethal combats permitted and the parties must gain permission from the hetman or tribal elders first. Such issues revolve around unforgivable slights or crimes, the loser usually either dying or being exiled as a result – usually a death sentence in its own right on Monster Island. Those who repeatedly request these types of ritual challenge are often viewed with disdain by their respective hetman (as represented by the continual loss of status points), being seen as a way of supplanting the ruler's own status. Problematic individuals are often counter-challenged in turn by an appointed champion before they can threaten the stability of the tribe.

The island's tribes are formed from loosely affiliated confederacies of four to six extended families, knit together by the shared worship of their patron god. Each family group usually commands its own territory of one or more valleys delimitated by high, mountain ridges, somewhere within which they build a small settlement; or perhaps where several territories meet, a large village. The average population of each tribe numbers between five and seven hundred adults, with half again that number of immature young.

Despite their segregation by geography all of the tribes share a common patois, known as the Low Tongue, with which they communicate. Each tribe has a smattering of their own unique words forming a sort of tribal cant which can allow them to exchange hidden meanings while chatting, remaining unintelligible to those of other clans. This obscure vocabulary normally refers to places or people, and was first developed during the rebellion against the High Folk where they legitimately feared sorcerous eavesdropping.

### Ritual Challenges

The mechanics for determining the results of ritual challenges in the savage tribes are relatively simple.

Face-offs are settled by an opposed test of the two participant's Influence skills as they seek to intimidate one another. The winner forces the loser to concede whatever point they were disagreeing over, potentially forcing them to change their attitude or recount an order. However, to reflect the importance of status within lizardman society, if both participants achieve the same level of success, the lizardman with the higher status wins rather than whoever gained the higher roll on the dice.

More serious challenges, for example to decide the position of hetman, are settled by combat using the Unarmed skill. The contest continues until one participant has thrown the other prone, rendered them unconscious or voluntarily submits due to injury. The loser forfeits whatever the two were arguing over, perhaps the right to lead a raiding party, or mating privileges.

Lethal challenges are run as full combats. Whether a participant survives the challenge is dependent on the damage received during the fight. The winner does not need to kill his opponent, but can render them incapable of continuing by inflicting a suitable Serious or Major Wound. Whoever wins gains a permanent +1 Status for performing a notable deed.

## Law

Although the savages share a common pool of laws, possibly those engendered from before the cataclysm, each tribe has slowly evolved its own idiosyncrasies – the result of passing on the teachings orally through successive generations. Knowledge of the law is part of the sacred responsibilities of the shaman-priests. It is they who advise the hetmen and interpret the law on a case by case basis.

When two settlements within the same tribe experience conflict, a kahuna of a third, neutral, village is asked to coordinate a peace gathering where a ruling can be made to decide the issue without unnecessary and wasteful bloodshed. Normally the villages concerned abide by the decision of the judging kahuna, or else face losing the magical support of their own shaman-priests.

## Savage Taboos

The following taboos are fairly ubiquitous amongst all the savage tribes of Monster Island. Whilst at first glance they may seem to provoke intertribal conflict, much of their society is based around the gaining of status and given the limited resources of the island, requiring an ongoing level of conflict to keep the population size under control.

| Act | Punishment |
|---|---|
| Stealing the possession of another | Pay back five times the stolen item's worth |
| Killing someone except in open challenge | Death by imaginatively torturous execution |
| Mating with a female born of the same village | Torn to death by females of that settlement |
| Mating with the wife of a fellow male | Castrated and exiled |
| Claiming another's deed for your own | Tongue torn out and exiled |
| Fishing or hunting at the wrong time of year | Forced to work as a female for one season |
| Touching the shadow of a kahuna | Death by sacrifice to wild animals |
| Disrespect to the ancestors | Blinded and exiled |
| Eating an offering made to the spirits | Eviscerated and strangled with own intestines |
| Burning down a home or storehouse | Burned alive then bones scattered for the beasts |
| Wielding another's weapon without permission | Exiled until brings back head of suitable monster |
| Causing harm to the tiki totems | Fined if accidental, sacrificed to the spirit if not |

If trouble exists between two tribes, however, then the eldest kahunas of either side sit in conference for several days, debating upon the spirit plane where the honoured ancestors of both tribes sit in judgement. Such gatherings are very sacred and no violence is permitted to sully the proceedings. On the rare occasion that the shaman-priests cannot reach an accord then hostilities are permitted in the form of a limited war, whose parameters are set in the form of a finite number of hours' duration and a maximum number of 'heads' to be taken. If these rules are broken, the offending tribe is set upon by all of its neighbours.

The laws are learned as a series of 'taboos' that generally enforce certain social boundaries, punishing particular acts which would harm the village or tribe. Most castigation takes the form of fine, death or exile – the later punishment actually being dreaded the most. Death permits the chance to be granted absolution from the ancestors by dying bravely, whereas exile permanently bars the transgressor from joining family and friends in the Spirit World after death. In fact the likely fate of an exile is to be sacrificed to an enemy tribe's god and have their soul consumed!

It should be noted that whilst most tribal taboos forbid certain crimes against members of its own tribe, there is nothing forbidding violence or theft against members of other tribes. For example, one way to gain a mate is to steal them from another tribe. The only caveat concerns crimes against kahunas and holy places, which are considered sacrosanct by all savages, no matter the tribe or its strength, or how just may be the cause of their hatred.

# Politics

Settlements are usually built in valleys delimitated by high, mountain ridges and connected to other valleys owned by that tribe. Some tribes live in less salubrious regions however, such as the central swamp basin, or the cliff terraces of the eastern coast.

Since they are often separated by these geographical impediments, most tribes maintain hereditary boundaries with one another. Despite this disparate tribes maintain regular contact with one another via trade, war and even the sending of kahunas though the Spirit World. Although some tribes maintain alliances, the socio-political web of tribal relationships is exceedingly complex, based upon centuries of heroic deeds and treacherous betrayals.

Most of the lowland tribes remain isolated from the insidious manoeuvrings of the High Folk. Only those bordering directly with the serpent people have started to succumb to subtle manipulation, for example the Mandahi, perhaps due to the hereditary influences of the python god.

# Communications

General news or warnings are often transmitted by the Great Jungle Telegraph, a novel series of stone platforms built at high elevation, atop which are placed huge drums

made from the hollowed out trunks of enormous trees, over which are stretched the cured skins of giant, monstrous creatures. Drummers are often alerted to the beating rhythms by feeling the vibrations in their lower abdomen, rather than hearing the tremendous beats, since their ears have usually long been deafened by proximity to the instruments.

When a message arrives they pass it on so that the next drummer station can relay the news. The rhythmic codes are based on an ancient version of their almost forgotten hieroglyphic writing, so that each word-glyph has its own unique drum sequence. This makes sending most messages a rather long winded affair unless the wording is kept short.

Drummers possess a unique status amongst the savages, being considered sacrosanct and independent of any tribe. Those recruited to their ranks are usually voluntary exiles, who seek to serve their species as a whole, rather than be a drain on the resources of their family. Since the drum platforms are often quite isolated, there is little help available if the local fauna decides to take an interest. Thus

## Tribal Affiliations

This table reflects the political relationship between the various tribes of savages and the remaining High Folk fortress cities. Not every opinion is reciprocated in kind. For example the Anguri tribe treat the High Folk of Agartha favourably, paying tribute out of fear of retribution; whilst the Agarthan's are contemptuous of the savages who support their city, believing them mere subservient slaves.

Many of these convictions are based upon past actions and history of the various regions. Once a game starts it is perfectly reasonable for relationships to change based on what occurs in the campaign. For instance if it were discovered that the Gamari were about to betray the Oodaki to the High Folk of Akakor in order to avoid paying tribute, then that relationship should change from favourable to worse.

A – Animosity
C – Contempt
D – Dispassion
F – Favour
H – Honour

| | Target of Opinion | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Tribal View** | **Anguri** | **Gabari** | **Gamari** | **Ghidori** | **Gyaosi** | **Kamacuri** | **Kangi** | **Kumongi** | **Mandahi** | **Oodaki** | **Varanri** | **Agartha** | **Akakor** | **Zerzura** |
| Anguri | | D | D | A | D | C | D | F | D | D | D | F | D | D |
| Gabari | F | | H | D | D | F | D | D | D | D | C | A | D | D |
| Gamari | D | F | | D | D | D | A | D | C | F | H | D | A | D |
| Ghidori | A | D | D | | D | C | D | C | D | D | D | F | D | D |
| Gyaosi | D | D | D | D | | D | D | C | A | D | H | D | D | C |
| Kamacuri | C | F | D | A | D | | D | H | D | D | D | A | D | D |
| Kangi | D | D | C | D | D | D | | D | A | C | D | D | C | A |
| Kumongi | D | D | D | C | A | F | D | | D | D | F | D | D | D |
| Mandahi | D | D | D | D | C | D | A | D | | C | A | D | D | H |
| Oodaki | D | D | F | D | D | D | C | D | A | | C | D | D | D |
| Varanri | D | D | D | D | F | D | D | F | A | C | | D | D | D |
| Agartha | C | A | D | F | D | C | D | D | D | D | D | | A | C |
| Akakor | D | D | A | D | D | D | F | D | D | C | D | A | | F |
| Zerzura | D | D | D | D | C | D | C | D | F | D | D | C | C | |

although most are aged lizardfolk, they tend to be tough and resourceful individuals.

The other method of communication between tribes are the jungle runners, generally young savages who have yet to claim high status. No convention protects a runner, so delivering a declaration of war to a neighbouring tribe is quite likely to cost the lizardman its life if the news is taken poorly. Despite the risks, young runners take extreme pride in the task, some of them winning fame and status from their almost suicidal bravery.

Runners generally carry a feathered staff of negotiation to indicate their purpose. As part of the role, they are forbidden to carry weapons and eschew armour so that they may sprint faster.

## Trade

Since the savages maintain a primitive level of society, the use of currency is unknown. Most trade is pure barter, exchanging surplus goods for items needed. Of course this makes things difficult when outsiders attempt to trade with the tribes, especially since apparent prices can fluctuate quite dramatically depending on local availability, seasonal effects and time passed since the last trade.

Attempting to cater for every circumstance would require very complex rules. Thus every commodity traded on the island has a variable price which is rated in 'quills' – iridescent parrot feathers whose spine is filled with gold dust – the most portable trade good exchanged between the tribes and one which does not age or go stale.

Other important commodities include: Ivory, Ebony Wood, Lotus Flowers, Shark Teeth, Turtle Shells, Medicinal Herbs, Obsidian Weapons, Sun-metal Jewellery, Precious Stones, Narcotics, Bird Feathers, Live Serpents, Fresh Fruit, Dried Fish, Fresh Fish, Petrified Bone, Woven Kilts, Dyes, Moon-metal Ornaments, Carved Jade, Animal Skins, Fire Stones, Butterfly Wings, Salt, Spices, Perfume, Insense, Mirrors, and Tattoo Inks.

Trading occurs in two ways. The first is during certain holy days when warfare is strictly forbidden, on pain of censure from neighbouring tribes. The second occurs when an independent trade caravan is raised by several like-minded individuals, which then wanders about the island seeking out small settlements with which to barter. The second option is a far riskier proposition, since nothing prevents a tribe from attacking the caravan and looting it, save for the probable cessation of later trade expeditions visiting their region.

Although each settlement is ostensibly a self-sufficient group of hunter gatherers, some families specialise in particular crafting skills, exchanging their handiwork for as much food and produce as they would normally garner if they were foraging for themselves. Thus each tribe has a number of expert roof thatchers, longhouse builders, stone grinders, statue carvers, weapon makers, cloth weavers, feather setters (feather cloaks and headdresses) and canoe builders. Despite these skills, the family members are not professional craftsmen, due to the rarity of such commissions. The majority of time they support themselves as per the rest of their tribe.

## Warfare

The savages follow three distinctive forms of ritualised combat: raiding, battle and total war.

Raiding occurs as a method of stealing supplies from an opposing tribe, providing a desperately needed level of subsistence or to produce a surplus with which to trade. It is also used as a way to build the experience of young tribal members in the skills of warfare and permit them the chance of achieving recognition from their elders.

Since the purpose of raiding is to skilfully confound your enemies rather than take heads, deadly combat is quite rare; the raid being considered a failure if blood is shed. A raid needs no official sanction save from the hetman of the tribe, whom expects a share of any spoils won. Notification of the intended target is not required, although an alert tribe can usually foretell when a raid is probably imminent.

Battles on the other hand are focussed on the capture of enemy tribal members, for the purposes of ritual sacrifice to propitiate the gods or binding their souls into service as shrunken heads. Due to the shift in emphasis, most battle weapons are designed to incapacitate or bludgeon the foe into submission. These include slings, clubs, stone maces, bolas, and even garrottes. All other armaments, such as shark-toothed swords, obsidian daggers or spears, and bows are considered hunting weapons, only used for the killing of beasts and unfit, indeed dishonourable, to use in battle.

Before a battle can occur, a formal declaration of conflict must first be sent to the enemy tribe. This must include a flowery description of the titles and ancestors of the challenging hetman, a thorough humiliation of the recipient hetman with accompanying eloquent insults, and the stated reasons why the conflict must occur; the latter usually some retribution for previous unforgivable transgressions. If the poetry and wit of the declaration is lacklustre,

then the receiving hetman is at liberty to refuse the battle, in which case it becomes the responsibility of the tribal shaman-priests to ensure the aborted conflict progresses no further.

Accepting the declaration permits both tribes to meet at a pre-defined location on a specific date, and there battle one another until one side flees the field or the sun sets. Such encounters are truly spectacular events, with the participants dressed in dyed armour, feathered cloaks and wielding their most fearsome weapons. Non-combatants often seat themselves around the field of battle to offer witness to the deeds done that day and give vocal support to their champions.

The ritualised nature of these conflicts ensures that the number of deaths incurred remain quite low. Enough natives are already slain by the strange creatures which regularly enter through the dimensional gates, to keep the tribal populations under tight control.

The third method of conflict is that of total war, where the fighting continues beyond just a single ritual battle. It rarely ever occurs, since it usually causes an excessively high death rate. Accidentally exterminating an entire tribe would risk arousing their god, causing it to run rampage, a catastrophic consequence that would threaten all the inhabitants of the island. Only the most dire circumstances would ever prompt a tribe into such a disastrous act; the desecration of burial grounds, annexing of tribal lands or unprovoked assault on a settlement resulting in the death of mates and young for example.

Due to the serious nature of total war it must be announced not only to the offending enemy, but to all the tribes of the island, permitting them an opportunity it intercede or seek a diplomatic solution. Such a pronouncement is a very dramatic display. A messenger of high status, usually an elder famed for his past battlefield victories, arrives to berate the enemy hetman, using the most vile language. He then casts off his feathered cloak; spits and urinates before the chieftain, then kills himself in the most dramatic manner available to him.

For the messenger this is actually a most noble way to die, especially for those elders beyond fighting age, as it guarantees a prime seat in the Spirit World, venerated as a hero. For the insulted tribe it is a knell of doom, knowing that after the waxing and waning of a moon, the full might of the declared foes will be thrown against them without cease, until one or other begs for forgiveness. Once it starts, everyone in a tribe becomes a valid target of attack.

## Warrior Units of the Savages

The island savages possess three levels of renown based upon their battlefield achievements. Only captives taken count towards these ranks; the slaying of monsters is considered more of a duty to provide food and protection to the tribe, hence is considered beneath the gaining of personal honour unless the beast is unusually fearsome.

Each increase in rank permits the native to learn the next available Combat Style. This forces them to learn a new skill from scratch; the initial training is free in terms of Experience Rolls, taking a lunar month of practice time to develop a basic proficiency.

**Tua Skirmishers**: Any native who yet lacks 'a hand' of captives (that is to say three) taken in ritual battle is considered a skirmisher. Their task in battle is to harass and weaken enemy formations, whilst running back and forth in loose groups. Skirmishers primarily employ missile weapons, bolas and slings to devastating effect. They are forbidden the use of armour or shields, instead fleeing or evading enemy attacks.

**Mua Infantry:** Proven warriors who have taken sufficient captives are promoted to the title of Mua. Rather than throwing weapons, they train in the use of hand to hand weaponry whilst formed into rough mobs. Their normal armament adds club, spear and shield to their new combat style. Mua wear armour of woven mats, dyed distinctive colours to represent different family lines. Helmets are decorated with feathers to establish comparative status between members of the same rabble.

**Eiki Elites**: If a native achieves the difficult task of having captured 'a double-double hand' of opponents, they are granted the rank of an elite warrior. They in effect become champions of the tribe, granted respect upon the battlefield by friend and foe alike, permitting them immunity from ranged attacks from skirmishers. If an elite warrior calls for a single combat against another Eiki, the opposing side must honour their combat and not intervene. Furthermore Eiki add jade maces, shark-toothed swords and strangle cords to their repertoire. In addition they are permitted to wear shell, bone or ivory armour, generally using the skull of a fearsome beast as their helmet. Only an elite warrior is permitted to wear a feathered cloak.

# Customs

Of all the aspects of their culture, probably the most prominent reason for their categorisation as 'Savages' are their traditional customs. To an outside observer many of these practices seem unduly cruel, even horrific, but each has a central place in society. Most will appear completely alien to characters unless they take the time to understand the natives.

### Geriatricide

Although the passage of beasts through the 'Smoking Mirrors' provide an unlimited source of potential food, neither the dimensional gateways nor the creatures which pass through are reliable. Occasionally nothing emerges for months, placing the survival of the tribe at risk. In such circumstances the number of mouths to be fed must be reduced. Rather than practice infanticide, the eldest of the tribe offer themselves up for exile or sacrifice.

Voluntary exile usually means that an elder ventures into the wild places claimed by no tribe, seeking to perform a great deed in service to all the peoples of the island. Most die during the self-imposed quest, failing to achieve anything of note. However their soul still ascends to the Spirit World, where it is honoured for its martyrdom. Others join or re-garrison one of the drummer towers (see page 24-25).

Another path taken is that of sacrifice, the elder volunteering to 'feed' their god or be a propitiatory offering at one of the 'smoking mirrors', in the vain hope of drawing more beasts through. Both methods usually result in the elder being eaten by some monstrous creature.

The last method of geriatricide involves the elder offering their soul to serve the tribe for a short period, bound into the body of an animal or guardian tiki, before being released to take their place in the Spirit World afterlife with the other honoured ancestors.

### Skinning

Every savage has its deeds, and thereby its status, recorded upon its own skin in the form of tattooed pictograms. These stylised illustrations are sized according to how great the endeavour was, truly epic acts taking an entire limb or torso to tattoo, minor ones merely the size of a finger joint. If and when a tribal member runs out of available surface area, the tattoos are superimposed over previous pictograms. Even negative acts are recorded in this manner, providing an indelible record of their life.

When a native dies their skin is carefully removed by skilled flensing, then cured so that this record is preserved. In every settlement is a longhouse in which these skins are stored, with one member of the tribe tasked with remembering the original owners of each skin and what the pictograms mean. Due to the great importance of this history, tribal Skin-Knowers are exempt from geriatricide.

It is considered a great insult to kill a native and not return its skin to the tribe for remembering. The skins of those eaten by beasts are considered a tragic loss, so that those deliberately offered to the Smoking Mirrors are usually flensed first, unless the offering is a punishment – in which case the skin is eaten with the taboo transgressor – a most shameful way to die.

### Head Taking

Whilst skins are always returned to the tribe or family, heads are considered valuable trophies. Head taking normally occurs during ritual battle or open war; and whilst a legitimate act, it can propagate blood feuds lasting generations.

The reason head taking is so contentious is that it permits the killer to bind the soul of the victim into its own head. This creates a kind of fetish ghost, providing great power to the head's owner. The binding lasts as long as head remains intact, meaning that some of these ghosts have been enslaved for hundreds of years. Sometimes raids are launched solely with the purpose of recovering a head (or at least breaking the binding) belonging to a long imprisoned family member.

Normally these heads are kept at the far end of longhouses, arranged to portray the power of the owning family. The heads are shuttered behind exquisitely carved panels to conceal their forbidding aura. During storms the heads sometimes chatter malevolently, especially those which are too powerful for the head of the household to control.

Normally head ghosts are used to protect the longhouse from unwanted incursion. Sometimes however, heads are taken on hunts or to battle to strengthen the bearer, but at some risk of the head becoming damaged or lost.

### Cannibalism

The eating of the dead is the traditional method of disposing of corpses amongst the native tribes. Although viewed with horror or disgust by foreign cultures, cannibalism actually serves several practical and religious purposes.

Burial within the jungle might at first seem the preferred method of disposal, but most of the soil is choked with competing root systems, making digging surprisingly difficult. Graves tend to be shallow and the lack of depth soon attracts carrion eaters, of which Monster Island has more than its fair share. Desiccation upon aerial drying racks suffers similar issues, with the additional problem

that the air is too humid and makes bodies putrefy rather than mummify, which tends to attract disease spirits.

Eating bodies also serves to make the corpse useless for the purpose of raising as an undead monster. Whilst the bones are not consumed, but rather laid aside for interment within sealed pots, the skeleton itself is completely disjointed.

Over generations the eating of relatives or enemies has become considered an act of respect to the dead. In fact after ritual battles most of the participants gather together to hold a mighty feast for the fallen. To be invited to such a banquet is a great honour. Not eating the corpse is deemed insulting, implying that the deceased is no better than a uselessly inedible animal.

## Religion

The savages are primarily animists, worshipping the ancestors and natural spirits of the island. At first sight their tribal 'gods' appear to be merely totemic great spirits, but are in actual fact the weakened fragments of the island's original deities who trapped themselves by taking physical form. Now they are kept imprisoned in their monstrous

### The Head Shrinking Ritual

Creating one of these fetishes requires that the victim be first ritually tortured to crush the will of the captive. Each day the victim remains alive the person performing the ritual rolls against their Binding skill, the result of which is listed below:

- Fumble: The victim dies in such agony, their soul becomes an uncontrollable, free roaming and very hostile Wraith eternally seeking revenge against their torturer. 1d3 weeks after their death (and each subsequent dissipation) it manifests to wage its vengeance. Like normal wraiths it can only be permanently destroyed by battling it in the Spirit World, but since it is not tied to a particular locale, finding the wraith if it flees can prove near impossible.
- Failure: The victim prematurely dies, permitting their soul to escape to the Spirit World, beyond the torturer's grasp; thus ending the ritual.
- Success: The victim may attempt to resist in an opposed test of their Willpower against the Binding roll. If the torturer wins they manage to temporarily crush the soul of the victim, binding it within the victim's head for the next stage of the ritual. If the victim wins, they instead gain an additional point of bonus spiritual POW which only comes into play when they die.
- Critical: As above. However, if the torturer wins they gain the benefit of deciding what Abilities the final Haunt will possess (see below).

Assuming the torturing ritualist manages to dominate the soul, the next stage requires the victim to be decapitated. The eyes, mouth and neck of the severed head are then sewn shut so that the soul cannot escape its binding. This is followed by suspending it in a bowl or pot of bone-reducing acid, specially created from the gall juices of certain monsters. The head is left to soak for a week whilst the skull and jaw bone transform into jellified cartilage.

The next stage requires the pulpy mass to be buried in hot sands, which start to mummify the head; incidentally shrinking it at the same time. Every few days the head is uncovered and reshaped by hand to ensure the features remain recognisable. Over the course of several weeks the head is reduced to approximately half its original size.

Once shrinking and mummification of the head is completed, it has become a fetish for the angered, near insane soul imprisoned within it – now treated as a fully fledged Haunt (see RuneQuest page 406). When temporarily loosed, the soul is under the command of whoever holds the head, providing they can make the requisite Binding rolls. Losing control of the haunt at this time is extremely dangerous due to its hostile attitude. Even when recalled back to its head, the haunt often reveals its rebellious presence within by rolling the eyes behind the sewn eyelids or uttering low moaning sounds, especially at times when storms blow.

Note that some victims struggle against the domination of their torturer for days, growing significantly in spiritual strength. Whilst such heroic efforts are lauded, even memorised in tribal annals, they do pose a danger to the fetish maker, in that the POW of the soul at the point of its transmogrification into a haunt, can be so great that none dare try to control the completed head.

shapes by the coordinated efforts of tribal shaman-priests, who annually refresh the bindings in mighty ceremonies, fearful of the mindless destruction a god might wreck if allowed to fully awaken.

Upon reaching adulthood, every native savage is initiated into their tribal spirit cult. This normally requires the adolescent to venture into the Spirit World - accompanied by a kahuna - on a long dream-journey introducing them to many of the lesser spirits within the tribal lands; ending ultimately by meeting their totemic deity with whom they form a kinship bond. In exchange for their oath and a regular supply of mana, the totem spirit grants them permission to call upon those allies the candidate had revealed to them.

Upon return to their body the newly initiated adult is granted the rank of Follower in the cult and taught the skills of Trance and Binding. However, they cannot progress any further in the cult hierarchy until they are crippled, or grow too old to continue as a hunter-warrior. At this time they are indoctrinated to deeper secrets, although it is usual that there remain only one full Shaman per settlement and a single High Shaman per tribe; the ancestral spirits themselves teaching any necessary skills when a kahuna assumes their new rank – usually because of the previous occupant dying.

Due to their importance and general superstition, natives are forbidden to spy upon or touch a kahuna (anyone of Spirit Worshipper rank or above), including even their shadows. As the savages have reverted to a primitive lifestyle, they build no special temples or shrines to the spirits per se. Rather they leave offerings in the isolated places of natural beauty where particular spirits reside. Locations where bad or enemy spirits congregate are considered taboo to the tribe, much of a kahuna's time being spent observing these places to prevent against spiritual incursion.

Tikis are lesser spirits, bound and personified in wooden or stone anthropomorphic carvings. They are used to mark sacred spaces, ward off danger and can be found outside villages, at the base of cliffs, next to scummy pools in rainforests, along the coast and even inside caves. Their fearful expressions are made to frighten away evil spirits and enemies. Tikis are honoured by chants, prayers, and offerings, including animal sacrifice; the latter being the only way to recharge the Mana (Magic Points) of the spirits bound to them.

All tikis are in effect huge fetishes. The spirit bound to each one can range up to a distance of 10m per point of POW they possess, providing they have been let out to roam. Those tiki lost and abandoned in the depths of the jungle often still contain their spirit, malicious and angry from years of imprisonment, yet unable to seek vengeance until some poor unwitting fool accidentally touches the carving, letting them out. Village tiki are normally controlled by the resident kahunas who free the spirits in the evening or at times of war to ward against danger.

# The High Folk

Secretive recluses, the High Folk of Monster Island maintain a two tiered society based upon an elitist mageocracy supported by a barbarian underclass. These last remnants of the refined civilisation still consider themselves the de-facto rulers of Monster Island, yet they must now tread carefully with the lowland savages who once acted as their servitors.

Three High Folk centres of power remain, all of which are located in the upper elevations of the caldera ranges, though numerous of their small tombs or fortifications still exist in remote locations. These are the legendary Mysterious Cities of Gold; each vies for domination over the others whilst still seeking to restore High Folk supremacy over the entire island.

- Akakor: A lost jungle city, hidden high up in the mountains of Skull Point, where the northern range of the Tane Caldera collapses into the ocean. It is the smallest of the cities, but possesses perhaps the most active populace – stimulated perhaps by the proximity of the human colony located close by on the cliffs of the Hina Caldera. The terraced city lies concealed in a small hidden valley up between the peaks.
- Agartha: An underground city, reputedly built within a cave system under Mount Colossus, the southernmost peak of the island. A near impregnable fortress, it is rumoured to be the home of materialistic, self seeking, powerful 'demons' that look over the narrow straits towards the brooding Ruaumoko volcano.
- Zerzura: The largest of the cities, reputedly hewn from the spur of rock which pushes upwards from the centre of the Puna Plateau. Despite this precise location, few locate the city unless its denizens wish it to be found. Of all the High Folk settlements the inhabitants of this city are the most dormant, either wrapped up in timeless contemplations or basking in disdainful arrogance.

# Race

The High Folk are intended to be a race of dimorphic serpentmen, those described on page 269. Thousands of years of selective breeding has winnowed the species into two forms, hyper intelligent 'sports' and less sophisticated 'breeders'. If desired this new species of reptilian can simply be replaced by the Ophidians in the core RuneQuest rulebook.

For less fantastical campaigns, or ones based in an alternate historical Earth, the High Folk can be substituted for a culturally different race of humans. This could be akin to a degenerate colony of Atlantians or the stereotypical 'Lost White Tribe' as popularised in late 19th and early 20th Century adventure stories.

# Society

As mentioned above, High Folk society is based on a two tier caste system. Sorcerers rule over non-magicians, forming, when the necessity arises, an egalitarian democracy to respond to external stimuli that might threaten their isolated culture. Of course some sorcerers are more equal than others, with arch-mages truly holding the reins of power.

Almost all High Folk sorcerers are 'sports', throwbacks to their highly intelligent forbearers but unable to reproduce sexually. They make up between 1-2% of the populous, the remainder of the High Folk having no capability with magic and being prone to more instinctual drives. Whilst 'breeders' are just as smart as any human, they generally lack the depth of education given to their superiors. Instead they are given an aptitude test during childhood, then shuffled off into a career from which they may never change.

The High Folk regard both sexes with equal dispassion, so there are no restrictions to caste or career. This is achieved in part by their reliance upon sorcerous technology and an underclass of enslaved lowland savages who perform most of the laborious work needed to support their sophisticated society.

Every profession possesses its own closed brotherhood. Rank is based upon competence, with the occasional act of treachery or assassination employed to ensure upwards mobility. Such Machiavellian politics have led to masters of their profession becoming more reticent to reveal those craft secrets necessary to continue in that role in the worry that it might be used to depose them from their standing in the brotherhood.

Unsurprisingly this has resulted in the gradual loss or hoarding of much important knowledge. Although many of their enchantments and automatons built centuries before still function, few remain who know how to replicate such miraculous devices, let alone the metaphysical science behind them. Yet despite this atrophying, the High Folk remain supercilious; arrogant of their own sagacity and power, whilst condescending of the savages.

Social standing within the structure of High Folk society is pyramidal in nature. Sorcerers rule over the lower castes, incorporating as many breeders as possible into their own

## Dancing and Singing

The skills of Dance and Sing in RuneQuest are often overlooked, being considered useless by more action-oriented characters. Yet they are the most prominent forms of entertainment for both the Savages and the High Folk, much of their cultural tradition being based upon them. Indeed, attendees at celebratory feasts or religious practices will be looked down upon if they cannot at the very least, participate in the most basic dances and chants.

Depending on the roll a Dance or Sing check will provide the following:

- Fumble – The character suffers a temporary penalty of Formidable to any skills relying on communication or personal credibility with the attending natives, which lasts for a week
- Failure – As above, but the penalty is only Hard and lasts for a day
- Success – No adjustment, since the character has performed as expected for a foreigner
- Critical – As per a fumble except that the character experiences a temporary bonus of Easy for the week.

Characters who refuse to participate at all will cause offence, suffering an automatic penalty of at least Herculean to any communication or negotiation attempts, if not immediately expelled from the native celebration.

Amongst the natives themselves, these two skills are treated as limits to Orchestrated Casting (see page 129). Dance acts as a cap for Trance and Shaping, whilst Sing caps Binding and Invocation. The skills of Acting and Musicianship are not treated in the same manner, primarily due to the alien nature of said performances (assuming the characters play different instruments) and also because such skills are normally only learned by professional entertainers.

personal retinue. In turn brotherhood members dominate their own underlings, based upon their rank.

For sorcerers status is calculated by the following.

- Each sorcerous rank +15
- Each brotherhood brought under their sole control +5
- Each sorcery spell known +1
- Surviving a pilgrimage across the island and returning with a great treasure +5

For breeders status is dependent on different concepts:

- Each brotherhood rank +10
- Each brotherhood member under their direct control +1
- One tenth of the highest value brotherhood-specific skill
- Discovering a new technique or method pertinent to the brotherhood +5

Within High Folk society status is used to ask for or demand a favour, depending on the respective status of the personage petitioned. In such situations the status value is treated as a skill and rolled against with a d100. The skill check can suffer increased difficulty grades for requests out of proportion to the rank of the petitioner, or those that might place the superior in some danger, whether politically or physically. In cases where the petitioned personage does not wish to fulfil the request, they may oppose with their own status.

Such requests are normally formalised with flowery, polite language – in effect an eloquent oration presenting the reasons why the request should be granted, or in the case of refusals, an explanatory list of well founded excuses. Gifts of suitable worth can sometimes negate a level or two of skill penalty, but cannot raise the chance above the base status value.

Thus it might be perfectly reasonable for a sorcerer of high status to request that one of its accompanying bodyguards, say a low ranking member of the Brotherhood of the Fang, to cast itself into the path of a ravening tyrannosaur; whilst the sorcerer and the rest of its party escape with the dinosaur's egg. It would be a very polite demand, but unless the bodyguard successfully opposed the sorcerer's roll with its own status check, they would have to perform the duty. Conversely if the bodyguard requested a boon from the sorcerer, say the loan of an ensorcelled weapon to slay a rival in an opposing brotherhood, its status check would be Hard or Formidable to reflect the danger of losing the artefact or the deed being traced back to the sorcerer.

Since High Folk society focuses on brotherhood membership and utilises anonymous breeding practices, there is no real way of determining close family connections. Each of the Mysterious Cities of Gold has a population of between two and three thousand adults, a third again are young of various ages and a further fifth are enslaved Savages.

All the High Folk speak the High Tongue as their native language, but only the sorcerer caste are permitted to learn the arts of reading and writing. In addition, some are skilled in the Low Tongue also; generally those who venture from their cities as diplomats, spies or scouts.

## Law

The High Folk legal system is somewhat alien, in that it comprises only of three criminal acts: treachery, sedition and treason. Treachery is a crime performed for personal

gain which places the individual's brotherhood at risk. Sedition is called for when harm is caused to the individual's home city. Treason is reserved against those who act against the entire High Folk race.

Since these terms are rather flexible in their interpretation, allegations require that the case be brought before a court comprised of thirteen members, of a caste and rank equal to the accused. Selection of the court is by random lot, from a pool of eligible members of those potentially affected by the charge. For example a case of sedition is judged by randomly chosen members of that city. Both the accuser and the accused have three vetoes to dismiss those court members they consider biased against them, prompting a further draw.

Cases are held within a circle formed by the court members, the accuser presenting evidence and witnesses first, the accused able to defend against the claims after. Due to the Machiavellian minds of the High Folk, the gravity of the crime often depends on extrapolation or inference from available evidence. In some cases the defendant will willingly admit to theft or murder, but demonstrate such procedures were necessary to avoid a greater calamity to the brotherhood or city. After all participants have had their say, the court judges whether the accused is guilty or not, based upon a majority vote.

The second peculiar aspect of the legal system is that if the case against the accused is not successful, then it is the accuser who suffers the punishment. This has a rather disconcerting effect of making such cases a rather risky enterprise. Consequently the threat of such cases is often utilised more than actual legal action itself.

The punishment for each crime is as follows:

- Treachery: Exile for a year and a day from the brotherhood, after which all stigma is cleared
- Sedition: Given a suicide mission which, if successful and somehow survived, allows return to the city
- Treason: Sacrificial death, involving the consumption or enslavement of the victim's soul

Although petty jealousies or revenge are often handled as private matters, rather than taken to court, it is a fundamental aspect of High Folk society that nobody, not even the most powerful arch-mage, is above the law. Indeed, the higher the status and social standing of an individual, the more likely that they will be brought low by their peers, who are fearful of anyone gaining unassailable autocratic power.

### Relationships

The High Folk have little concept of family or nepotistic ties, primarily due to their distinct lack of empathy. The closest relationship they have is to their brotherhood and even that is tempered by the ambitious drive to be promoted over their fellow brethren. This is especially evident within the sorcery cults, where the dictum is more akin to an enforced truce than any sense of loyalty.

The second most important relationship expressed by the High Folk is to their city. Again this is not necessarily due to any form of patriotism, but rather from the logical need for mutual protection and unified strength.

Last but not least is the inherited xenophobia of the High Folk, which grants them some degree of common racial kinship. When facing adversity they always bond together to face off any threat to their species. This is driven in part by their inherent supercilious belief of their supremacy, but also aided by dangerously low population numbers after countless years of atrophy. Due to this latter problem, the High Folk have become increasingly polyamorous which has led to the development of ceremonial mass mating rituals.

## Politics

Politically the High Folk have divided up the island into three parts, each region supposedly under the direct control of one of their Mysterious Cities of Gold. In reality this feigned authority has little basis in fact, most of the Savage tribes remaining free from demanded tribute to live as they desire without meddling from the remote mountain fastnesses.

Most High Folk are blissfully unaware of their eroded power, conceitedly believing that they can demand submission from any lesser race who dares present themselves before them. The sorcerers keep such knowledge to themselves, scrying from their high towers to spy upon the lowland tribes.

The tribes unfortunately positioned closest to the three Cities of Gold have long since been infiltrated by shapeshifted agents whose task it is to ensure nothing threatens the balance of power amongst the savages, such as the rise of a charismatic hero. In these cases the High Folk manipulate the situation with sly words, subtle magics and ultimately, poisoned obsidian knives, to ensure nobody unifies the tribes against them.

Of course not all threats come from the savages, since the cities are also fighting amongst themselves in a slow, centuries-long dance of carefully planned deceit – each city seeking to elevate itself above the others. Sometimes the battle is waged via diplomacy and trade; at other times an outsider tribe is suborned to raid the tribute caravans which supply the High Folk's taste for luxurious living.

## Communications

Amongst the High Folk all communications are sent magically, via ancient apparatus or direct magical scrying. Most of the remaining techno-sorcerous artefacts linking the cities take the form of irregularly angled, tetrahedron crystals in which the face of the speaker is projected. Scrying usually involves the use of an ornately carved obsidian or jade bowl, filled with fresh blood – the head of the sorcerer rising up from the surface in a grotesquely animated liquid sculpture.

Few High Folk ever physically travel to other cities unless sent as a diplomatic mission. In these special circumstances, the ambassadors travel by savage-borne palanquins in a great procession across the island, keeping where possible to the remnants of the once splendid causeways which crossed the muddy jungles. Such embassies are accompanied by dozens of magnificently outfitted High Folk warriors and attendants, bearing riches beyond the imagination of most savage hetmen; who gaze enviously, held back by ancient banners of inviolate passage.

At the times when sorcery is disrupted by The Shifting of the Gates or during the lightning of tropical storms, a handful of beast riders are sometimes sent to deliver written messages. Usually these riders are mounted upon flying creatures, specially trained to carry members of that particular brotherhood. Akakor breeds giant vultures specifically for this task, whereas Agartha uses alien flying worms held aloft by hot gases, and Zerzura has its moon bats.

## Trade

There is little trade between the High Folk cities, save for the exchange of information and occasional paranoia. Objects of artistic worth or lost knowledge are too valuable to exchange, instead being secretively stolen by rival sorcerers who have the skill and magical potency to pull off such an audacious deed.

Rather, the High Folk sustain themselves on a combination of the output of their sorcerous technological machines, supplemented by tribute given by neighbouring tribes. Many of these goods are of little direct use, but are valued for their artistic style over practicality. Of all the commodities imported, magical components for ritual spells are the most highly prized – primarily being drugs and narcotics of various types; closely followed by slaves.

A few savages actually engage in active trade with the people of the cities, exchanging specially requested merchandise or commissioned artwork for their seemingly never ending supply of gold. Caravans however only arrive once or twice a year, leaving an opportunity for anybody with an entrepreneurial spirit who doesn't mind trading with the amoral High Folk.

## Warfare

The High Folk have long forgotten the art of war. Their modestly sized cities stand hollow, any individual able to claim an entire house for their private residence, providing they clear it out and repair it. Thus the thought of sending a large number of their populace off to face deadly conflict is an anathema to them, for long generations relying instead upon subtlety and magic to guard their borders.

This is not to say that the High Folk are inept at combat. Some of the warrior brotherhoods are experts in hand to hand fighting, sending yearly expeditions into the less explored regions of the island to test their mettle against fearsome beasts which lurk there. However in terms of experience of working together at a tactical level, they are in fact inferior to the savages they so often deride; High Folk warriors being more egocentric by nature and unwilling to cooperate with their fellows if this would risk losing status to their brethren.

High Folk units of areani (from seven to twelve individuals) are normally accompanied by a low ranking sorcerer, whose task is to provide magical support for the group. In the old days, before they battled the gods, they fielded entire legions of mages capable of levelling a small mountain. But now the High Folk are spread thin and it is rare to see more than an adept assigned to such patrols.

Unlike the savages, most High Folk do not try to subdue their foes with an eye to capture them, not unless they are specifically seeking slaves per se. They have instead a reputation for dishonourable blood-thirsty murder, killing foes by stealth and trickery. Cruelty is part and parcel for anyone who has the misfortune to survive a High Folk attack, the odds great that their soul will be consumed during the subsequent torture to replenish the magical strength of that unit's accompanying sorcerer. Such a fate means that the spirit of the victim will be utterly destroyed, unable to

journey onto the afterlife. As a result, High Folk warriors are both feared and loathed.

## Customs

In a similar vein to the lowland Savages, the High Folk practice a number of strange and oft-times repulsive traditions. These are viewed by the recluses as normal behaviour for civilised peoples and are as likely to cause offense if not performed by visitors to their cities, as it is to induce disgust by those viewing them for the first time.

### Flower Bearing

The High Folk consider themselves a refined culture, dedicated to art and literature. Part of the way they express their sophistication is via the appreciation of flowers. Not only are blooms visually beautiful, but their perfumes are also stimulating, as are the messages they convey. Due to the overwhelming prevalence of different flower species in the jungle, an entire floral language has evolved to demonstrate nuance, when worn or exchanged. There are flowers of subservience, diplomacy, ceremony and personal emotion, the latter being important in a society where facial emotions are hard to read.

For example, presenting a species known for its toxicity to somebody of equal rank sends warning that the giver intends to challenge or overthrow that person; whereas giving the same flower to an inferior indicates extreme displeasure, even immanent execution of the recipient. Although these particular floral messages are obvious threats, High Folk culture places great value on such politeness!

Knowledge of the correct types of flower to utilise is covered by the Courtesy skill. Presenting oneself to a travelling High Folk embassy, or to one of their cities, without wearing a bloom or wreath of flowers, lowers the standing of the visitor to that of uncouth barbarian. New and unique flowers, which sometimes briefly sprout nearby the Smoking Mirror portals, are highly prized by the High Folk, many of whom practice floriculture as a hobby.

### Skin Shedding

To members of the High Folk, every part of their body remains connected to their soul, even those parts which are shed or cast off. Specifically this means their skin, which naturally sheds once per lunar month, although the precise phase of the moon is dependent on when the individual was originally hatched.

Skin shedding is completely painless, but the process takes about a day to complete requiring the shedder to enter a semi-sombulant state. Thus most High Folk sequester themselves within locked chambers during this period of helplessness. When the process completes, the entire milky, translucent skin is eaten and digested so that nothing remains which can used to gain magical power over them.

In campaigns where the High Folk are not descended from ophidians, the same odd custom can still be applied. Instead of actually shedding skin, perhaps they perform a purification ritual instead, bathing and burning all the clothes worn that month, so that the garments have no time to absorb their wearer's aura.

### Mummification and Burial

Disposal of the dead amongst the High Folk is different from that of the Savages. Living at such high altitude grants the air a natural desiccating ability, at least above the edges

### Warrior Accoutrements of the High Folk

The majority of High Folk rarely learn any combat styles save for their own Unarmed skill. Most are forbidden any weapons. To be caught even with a knife can lead to charges of treachery, especially if the time and place discovery is suspicious.

Sorcerers on the other hand are permitted to wear elaborate fingertip needles, looking something like a thimble with a poisoned needle extending from the end of it. These innocuous devices add no further damage to an Unarmed strike, but instead allow the application of a toxin. Those sorcerers skilled in their use often wear several, permitting them the choice of which venom to inject.

Professional warriors learn the use of a range of exotic weaponry, the exact list depending on the combat orientation of that brotherhood. Some specialise in ranged sorcerous devices, whilst others favour the oddly jagged blades and polearms the High Folk favour. All of their weapons are sophisticated designs forged from metals, rather than naturally occurring jade or obsidian.

Likewise, armour is restricted to those belonging to a warrior brotherhood. Embroidered linen armour is the norm for fast moving hunting raids, but they wear heavier leather armours, flayed and cured from the bodies of their own kills, when on ceremonial or guard duty. Usually each brotherhood has a specific type of creature it identifies with, which their lowest ranking members must kill to gain the skin before they can be promoted.

of the cloud forest. The deceased are transported by funeral palanquin to special mummification sanctums, far above their cities. These mortuary temples are built of colossal obsidian boulders chipped into rough trapezoidal shape, which capture the sun's heat, speeding the drying process.

Soon after arrival the corpse is eviscerated, then packed with dried flower petals, which give off a perfume whilst also drawing moisture from the flesh. This process is repeated seven times over the course of several months, each stage using a different type of increasingly poisonous flower which kills off any parasites. Once drying is complete, the petals are removed and replaced with bone dry, black volcanic sand, then the body is wrapped with traditional linen bandages within which are secreted ritual talismans and amulets.

The conclusion of the mummification process leaves the corpse impregnated with preservative toxins and highly resistant to damage. It is then transported to its tomb where the dead person is given their proper burial, usually by being sealed into a rock carved mausoleum. Only those of the sorcerer caste are given the privilege and splendour of an individual sepulchre, buried with only their most favoured concubines, servants and guards. Those of lesser standing are placed into communal brotherhood necropolises, their level of finery dependent on their rank within the organisation.

Since necromancy is well known to the High Folk, tombs are well guarded against grave robbing. Most possess deadly traps, created with a cunning lost to time. Breaking into the tomb of a sorcerer is fraught with great danger, since many of them spend the last years of their life enchanting their final resting places. The sleep of sorcerers is also said to be very light, their souls coming back to protect their bodies from enslavement as undead servitors.

### Slavery

With the slow decline of their population numbers and arrogant attitude towards other races, the High Folk have taken to importing slaves to perform the multitudinous tasks of drudgery required to keep their dying cities alive.

Since the High Folk lack empathy they show their slaves no particular kindness or consideration. However on the other hand, neither do they deliberately treat slaves cruelly; just with a cold dispassionate logic. To one of the High Folk a slave quite literally is nothing more than a self-aware automaton, its only purpose to labour on their behalf. They are housed, clothed and fed at a good, if basic level, a slave after all must be kept healthy, but beyond that they are treated as beings with absolutely no status.

Originally all slaves were Savages, offered as tribute or trade goods, from a tribe's surplus population and war captives. Some more exotic specimens were unfortunate individuals accidentally drawn through a Smoking Mirror gateway. Of late however, the arrival of humanity to the island, whether from shipwreck or colonisation attempts, has provided a new source of victims who can be sold into slavery.

Once given over to the High Folk there is no escaping bondage, the concept of purchasing back slaves or exchanging hostages being unutterably alien to them. The only chance for a human slave is escape, something not easy to achieve as the High Folk warrior brotherhoods treat such events as a great opportunity to go on a hunt and win status by bringing back the slave's head; especially if the successful tracker penalises themselves by starting the pursuit without armour and weapons.

### Sympathetic Sorcery

Possessing a scrap of skin, fresh blood or part of the flesh of a person enables a sorcerer to wield great power over them. Known as the Rule of Sympathy, it weakens the resistance of the originator to any sorcery, the precise effects are reliant on the type of spell.

Generally, incorporating the body part as part of a scrying spell immediately allows the sorcerer to find and observe that target, no matter their location. Conversely, if a sorcerer casts an offensive spell using the part, the target suffers a penalty of Formidable on any opposed roll to resist the magic. Both uses consume the substance involved.

The greatest arch-mages actually mount one of their skins in a public place, arrogant enough in their own power, to believe they are beyond challengers. Whether or not they truly are is often never tested, most of their contemporaries taking the gesture at face value, or assuming that it is part of a cunning trap.

## Religion

The High Folk have long ceased worshipping the gods, treating such ritualised platitudes as the acts of immature children. To one of their race, true power comes from the self, via knowledge of the sciences and the practice of sorcery. The idea of relying upon the capricious nature of an

entity from some alternate dimension is an anathema to their egocentric mindsets. Never have the High Folk forgotten, in the centuries since the sinking of the world, that it was the gods who turned upon them.

Thus there are no active ceremonies to propitiate deities. However a different form of veneration occurs, a sort of ancestor worship which offers respect to the sorcerer-kings and arch-mages of old; those who formed their own schools of magical philosophy, creating the spells the High Folk still use to this day. These were recorded by carving complex ideographic hieroglyphs onto huge panels of solid gold

From this reverence has developed a tradition of passing down the knowledge of each school in a supposedly unbroken line from the original founder. They are structured like cults, but only permit membership of the magically capable, i.e. those of the upper caste. At the lowest rank, apprentices learn to tap their inner power via minor cantrips, but as they advance in grade and capability they are taught a gradually expanding repertoire of glyphs which enable them to translate, and more importantly comprehend, sorcery spells.

Since many of the glyphs are unique to a particular school and their meanings are closely held secrets, the knowledge of how to cast specific spells, or even what they do, are withheld by the higher ranks. The most potent powers of a school are never revealed save to the sorcerer next in line to be master.

This latter custom has been part of the reason why the High Folk have lost so much of their knowledge, since the line of inheritance is vulnerable to misfortune if the master of a school is 'expired' prior to the training of their successor. Whilst there is an unspoken truce amongst the heads of each philosophical school of sorcery, no actual restrictions prevent one master removing the head of another, save for an accusation of treason or retaliation from the others.

Thus losing the master of a school is a serious matter, reducing the number of spells still available to it. Under such circumstances the substitute master must either attempt to restore the knowledge with long years of research, or seek it somewhere else. A few arch-mages in the past have attempted to locate the well hidden tomb of the school's founder, and either request the lost meanings of the hieroglyphs from its angered mummy in exchange for a dire service; or try to bind the powerful lich to their will – a foolish act which rarely ever succeeds.

An oddity amongst the sorcerers of the High Folk is their belief that sacrificing an animal or mindless monster actually corrupts the Magic Points drawn from its death, so that spells cast using that power are more likely to turn awry or backfire upon the caster. The only pure form of Magic Points comes from the ritual sacrifice of sapient victims.

Although this has no basis in reality, High Folk society has become so perverse that they now inherently believe it. Any sorcerer who is forced to use such a source of power immediately suffers a situational penalty of one additional step to their casting roll, due to psychological conditioning. In the right circumstances, this could be used to trick and overcome an unwitting High Folk caster.

## Ritual Interment

First practiced by the ancient sorcerer-kings of their civilisation, interment is the sealing of an entire household of serving staff with the dead magician, so that they may serve their master in the afterlife. Their original founder, the god-king Zaruthra, was said to have been buried with his entire harem of 500 consorts and an army ten times that number in a tomb complex lined with plates of glowing jade and ruby. Legendary or not, the tradition of interment continues amongst the sorcerer caste of the High Folk.

Interment is viewed with both envy and horror. Many amongst the High Folk dream of being accompanied into death with loyal servants to protect and guard them. Those fated to accompany their master however often have a less prosaic view, unable to appreciate the great honour being paid to them. Strangely this has a unifying effect on a sorcerer's household, the serving staff warding the sorcerer from any form of harm which might befall, to the point that valets sleep across bedroom doorways and stewards engage in political manoeuvring on the sorcerer's behalf.

Atypically, those interred with a sorcerer are treated with something akin to kindness. They are given a ritual poison to drink, with additional flasks of the substance provided within the tomb. An exotic form of calming soporific, the narcotic kills the drinker but grants them marvellous visions and dreams as they expire. The secrets of this concoction are known only to the mortuary priests, but it has the effect of trapping the victim's soul within their corpse – turning the body into a sort of battery of Magic Points – available to the mummified sorcerer if they are ever called back to their tomb.

# The Colonists

The colonists are intended to be the sole culture on the island with which player characters share a common background; whether this be language, species or social traditions. It is a place of supposed freedom towards which they can strive, or a haven to return to after pursuing expeditions into the interior.

The colony itself is a tiny foothold on the island. Its inhabitants are restricted to living within the periphery of the ancient ruins of Kapala; a city built long before the cataclysm and a place shunned by the native savages, who treat it with superstitious dread.

Once master of a mighty metropolis, the King of Kapala ruled from his bejewelled jaguar throne, built within a palace whose form was that of an immense mandala. Its mystical structure in turn allowed him to see, comprehend and manipulate everything upon the small continent. When the lands sank back beneath the oceans, half of the city and part of Mount Yoormiphazreth, upon which it was built, fell into the waves.

All that remains now is a dense jungle-covered jumble of cyclopean stones overlooking a steep precipice leading down to the sea, anchored in place by the roots of enormous trees. The narrow beach at the base of the cliff is one of the few safe harbours for ships, the reefs of the flooded Hina caldera forming a natural breakwater. The craggy slope has since been carved to provide a sinuous, albeit scary, pathway, with the colony forming a walled collection of small buildings built at the summit, where once the city's central plaza lay.

Despite this ruination the ancient city has proven to be a sanctuary for foreigners ending up on the island. As well as proving a haven against native incursion, the ruins themselves have provided both pre-quarried stone for the construction of housing and a source of valuable treasures, seemingly ageless household goods of exotic design often formed from semi-precious materials. The original walls of Kapala still stand, which also helps to prevent attack from the more mindless monstrosities which wander the island. Much of the efforts of the colony's populace are expended in gathering food, fighting off attacks, trading with suspicious natives, and mining the overgrown hillocks.

The following cultural descriptions are written with the assumption that the colony has been formed to conquer and pillage the island. It is a newly founded settlement, still resupplied from the outside world in exchange for the treasure it exports. This need not be the case however; the colony might simply be a holdout for shipwrecked foreigners, gate travellers or escaped slaves, with no contact to external civilisation.

## Race

For most campaigns this is likely to mean a group of humans, who are struggling to survive or to exploit the deadly lands. Depending on the game world, it could just as well be a homogenised community of classic fantasy races such as Dwarves, Elves, Halflings and the like.

## Society

The colony is a rather disreputable collective of disparate peoples all drawn together in search of riches, adventure, escape from persecution or a combination of all three. Many are desperate, others obvious criminals and a few are seemingly out of place, erudite intellectuals – the usual hodgepodge mix always drawn to rumours of limitless wealth or new lands where one can start over.

Due to the eclectic nature of those arriving on Monster Island, the colony has the feel of a frontier settlement. It is dirty, rough, and social order is only held together by the iron-will of Lord Greystone, the governor, and the intimidation of his bodyguard of crack troops.

Few families have journeyed to the colony, those that do tend to run one of the small businesses. Most of the colonists are instead lone adventurers: prospectors, hunters, traders, mercenaries, deported thieves, ne'er do wells, and even the odd scholar or two. What relationships that develop are usually between small groups seeking to scavenge within the ruins, or those more foolhardy souls who strike out into the interior.

With the discovery of treasure, a definite feeling of gold fever has struck the colony; with all the associated social issues it brings. Yet despite the greed this has awakened, the colony still draws together in the face of adversity; namely the rest of the island with all its despicable natives and horrifying monsters.

Status amongst the colonists is somewhat unusual. Rather than being based upon social class, the colonists give respect to positions of leadership, personal deeds and earned wealth - a sort of egalitarianism that forms when everyone needs to join in and get their hands dirty. Status is calculated according to the following points, and the

resulting value can be used by characters to augment social skills in suitable circumstances.

- Being the governor +100
- Being the captain of a ship or mercenary company +10
- Owning a merchant business or shop +10
- Each native killed single-handedly +1
- Each monster killed single-handedly (SIZ 21+) +1
- Each 1,000sp recovered as treasure or earned from trade +1
- Each expedition survived into the interior +1

## Law

The laws of the colony follow the human standards of forbidding murder, theft, arson and so on; all the normal crimes associated with urban living. In addition however are two specific laws created especially for the colony.

Firstly, all trade goods and treasures brought back within the walls of the colony (rather than those of the city within which the colony is built) are subject to a 50% tax, payable either in coinage based upon the material value of the object, or half the items gathered. Since there is no way to descend to the port without going through the settlement, there are few alternatives for treasure hunters to sell their finds without paying the tax. The proceeds raised by this levy are used to pay for the construction of new buildings, the maintenance of colony guards, and the outfitting of expeditions to explore the island. Tax evasion results in being stripped of all assets.

Secondly, when the colony is attacked all able-bodied men and women are legally required to defend the walls of the settlement. Refusal to help fight off a monster or native incursion is punishable by death by public execution, assuming your fellow colonists don't take matters into their own hands first.

According to how the campaign develops, the Games Master is encouraged to add new Colony Laws as and when the governor feels the need!

## Politics

Since the colony is under the autocratic rule of the governor, what politics exist are based upon the relationships (or lack thereof) developed with the neighbouring savages, and the exorbitant tax rate.

Three main factions have formed amongst the colonists: those advocating peaceful negotiations with the local tribes to establish trade and send them priests to teach them civilised behaviour; a second group bent on subjugating the savages then ravaging the island for its natural resources; and the last who wish for the total extermination of the indigenous population, opening up the lands for human settlement.

Somewhat fortunately for the long-term survival of the colony, no one group has yet won an absolute majority. This has probably been ensured by the governor's diplomatic juggling, that personage having a better feel for just how tenuous their continued existence continues to be.

## Communications

Since everyone lives within the colony itself, there is no need for an official messenger guild. The closest things to it are half a dozen young children who can be paid a copper coin to run up or down the cliff path at breakneck speed with wax tablets or scrolls. Confidentiality is guaranteed since none of the kids knows how to read.

Lookouts are stationed in roughly repaired watch towers around the cyclopean walls. Supplied with horns that are blown whenever something breaks out of the jungle and approaches the city, each horn blower has a unique set of codes to represent the size and numbers of the threat. This gives the scavengers in the ruins a chance to fall back to the colony, which can be better protected.

## Trade

Little regular bartering as yet exists between the colonists and the neighbouring savages, though the potential to establish trade links is possible, provided the tribes are not alienated by the colony's actions. Within the colony itself, merchants offer coinage for almost anything brought back from the island.

The most sought after items are ancient artefacts excavated from the rubble of the ruins, which have a value melted down to their raw materials, or as bizarre curiosities when exported. Secondary trade items are those natural resources which have a discernible use and can be gathered or harvested.

## Warfare

The colonists are guarded by a professional unit of warriors loyal to the governor. Known as the White Death, each member of this forty-strong unit of troops wears mail and the skin of a white Smilodon. They are armed with great axes, swords and shields (Combat Style Trait – Formation Fighting) but remain within the limits of the city ruins, their sweltering cloaks and heavy armour proving to

be a serious hindrance within the deeper jungle, away from cooling ocean winds.

The colony's military strength is further augmented by a scratch unit of ranged weapon specialists known as 'The Stingers', formed and trained from colonists who were hitherto herders, hunters or scouts. They are armed with a bewildering assortment of bows, crossbows, slings and javelins (Combat Style Trait – Skirmishing), but wear little or no armour to speak of. Numbering eighty in total, they garrison the outlying watchtowers and make occasional forays into the jungle to hunt for fresh meat.

Other than these two units, there are no other full time warriors defending the colony. However, one day every month the entire populace of the colony are gathered together for militia practice. This teaches the attendees the basic arts of fighting and grants characters a free Experience Roll in Civilian Cohort combat style.

Of course, leading such a paltry military force against one of the tribes in open warfare would be suicidal. Used as a coordinated defence of the colony walls however, these numbers are a sufficient display of force to give a raiding party of savages second thoughts.

## Customs

Due to the radically diverse background, social standing and nationality of the colonists, they as yet lack any unified traditions. Over time certain customs can be introduced by Games Masters or created by the characters themselves.

## Religion

The colonists have brought with them a bewildering number of faiths, and many small shrines litter the dark alleyways of the colony. No attempt has yet been made to build official temples, space being at somewhat of a premium. Neither are the cults persecuted in any way, for the worship of even morally questionable gods serves a purpose, if only for propitiation.

Worship amongst the colonists is a rather ad-hoc affair, the formal rituals often cobbled together by clueless lay members. Some cults have a few initiates or acolytes able to provide nominative support for those requesting miracles, but it all depends on someone amongst the arriving colonists being able to consecrate a truly sanctified shrine to that deity, or staying alive long enough to tend it.

Due to this lack of 'official' support from the comfortable, perhaps even corrupt, priesthoods safely ensconced on the other side of the ocean, many colonists have taken to visiting some of the still intact structures within the ancient ruins which once served as worship places, desperate to find spiritual guidance or divine power, whatever its source.

Most of these temples have long since collapsed or become overgrown over the passing centuries, haunted by still-functioning wards and animated sentinels. This is in part why no natives ever venture close to the rubble of Kapala, frightened off by well-founded superstition. Not all their gods took mortal form; some remained aloof within their inner sanctums but have likewise fallen from power due to the collapse of civilisation, their overgrown ziggurats still holding the sparks of long-quiescent deities, who can be woken with the right sacrifices.

### Gods of the Colonists

**Dashatan**
The grasping pincer, lord of the seas

**Geolok**
The shaking one, master of stone

**Ilioth**
Matriarch of love, corrupter of passion

**Mordiggoth**
Ruler of the dead, captain of worms

**Ojahl**
The virgin goddess, mistress of the blade

**Omg**
Maestro of battle, drinker of blood

**Quatochil**
Lord of dust, bringer of decay

**Thargorgos**
Judge of dooms, bringer of catastrophe

**Thasaidon**
Preceptor of secrets, granter of wishes

**Vergamka**
Patriarch of all, inscriber of destiny

**Ylila**
Queen of perdition, spreader of iniquity

**Yuklha**
Prince of laughter, purveyor of madness

**Zululun**
Guardian of tombs, herald of revenge

In the remaining temples of Kapala, the following, pre-cataclysm, gods still sleep:

### Atlachanacha

Emperor of arachnids, weaver of fate

### Raylimshaitan

Bringer of cold, the herald of entropy

### Tzathoghua

Black lord of toads, the eternal hungerer

### Ubbozathla

Demiurge of fecundity, pestilence and corruption

### Yhounkehd

Lady of jaguars, prowler of the night

## New Combat Style Traits

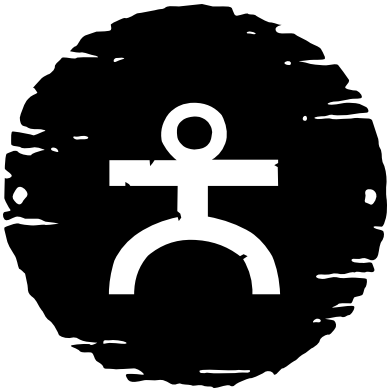
The cultures of Monster Island practice a wide range of exotic combat styles, some of which possess new traits not included in the RuneQuest core rulebook.

**New Combat Style Traits**

| Combat Style Trait | Description |
|---|---|
| Batter Aside | If the fighter's Damage Modifier is two or more steps greater than his opponent's, his weapon is considered one size larger for the purposes of bypassing parries. |
| Beast-back Lancer | Performing a mounted charge with this combat style does not incur the one step difficulty penalty to hit |
| Cautious Fighter | Can use the Change Range action to automatically withdraw from engagement with no need to roll |
| Daredevil Matador | May use Evade to dodge blows in hand to hand combat without ending up prone |
| Defensive Minded | Increases the Size of your weapon when parrying by one step, provided no offensive action is taken that round |
| Do or Die | Allows dual weapon combinations to use the Flurry special effect, provided that each subsequent attack utilises the alternating weapon |
| Impromptu Weapons | Treat any object as a club |
| Knockout Blow | When attacking with surprise treat any Stun Location as lasting minutes instead of turns |
| Ranged Marksman | When using a ranged weapon, shift a random Hit Location roll to an adjoining body location |
| Shield Splitter | Permits clubs and axes to roll the weapon's damage twice and pick the best result, but only when using the Damage Weapon special effect against shields. |
| Toxic Touch | May wield small venomous creatures as part of the Unarmed skill, inflicting the creature's damage instead of their own |

*Twilight ascends the abandoned ramps of noon*
*Within an ancient land, whose after-time*
*Unfathomably shadows its ruined prime.*
*Like rising mist the night increases soon*
*Round shattered palaces, ere yet the moon*
*On mute, unsentried walls and turrets climb,*
*And touch with pallor of sepulchral rime*
*The desert where a city's bones are strewn.*
*She comes at last: unsepultured, they show*
*In all the hoary starkness of old stone.*
*From out a shadow like the lips of Death*
*Issues a wind, that through the ruins blown,*
*Cries like a prophet's ghost, with waiting breath,*
*The weirds of finished and forgotten woe.*

Clark Ashton Smith, A Dead City



# Chapter 3: Settlements

Few major settlements remain on Monster Island, although there are countless ruins so weatherworn and tumbled by earth tremors that they are nearly unrecognisable under the jungle which has engulfed them. Of those that remain relatively intact, three belong to the High Folk: the echoing citadels of Akakor, Agartha and Zerzura, the last remnants of their war with the gods. The only other settlement of any size is the human-occupied ruins of Kapala, a true city which predates the others, built as it was in the golden age before the world sank into the sea.

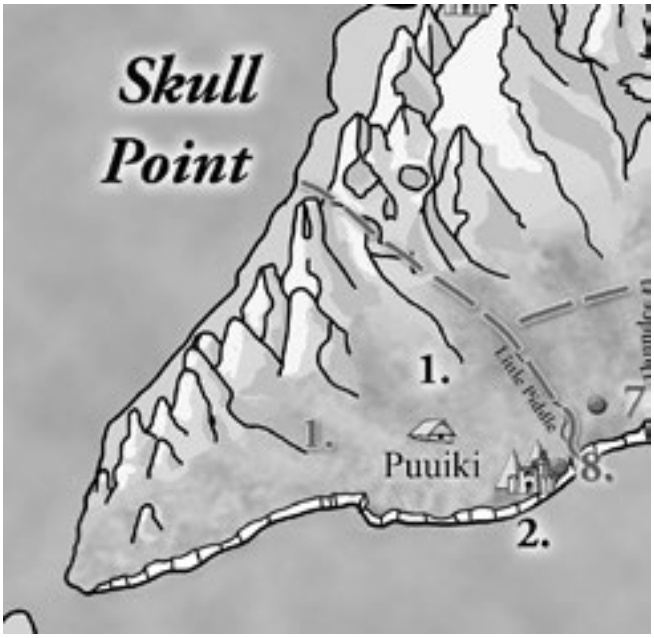
The savages lack permanent settlements, tending to abandon their villages every three to five years or so, allowing the jungle to reclaim the land. Whilst this might seem a waste of effort, it actually frees them from the clustering of Sickness and Curse Spirits that tend to proliferate if a community stays in one place for too long. Tikis are taken down and moved to the next village site, then the buildings burnt to disperse bad humours and to prevent them from being used by roaming creatures as new homes.

Space precludes a detailed description of each and every settlement on the island. Therefore only the three most important closest to the colony, including the colony itself, are described in detail. A few others are given an overview, in the *Places of Interest* chapter, but have been left vague so that the Games Master may flesh them out to their own satisfaction.

## Puuiki – Tribal Village

A village of the Gamari tribe lies about 5 kilometres west of the human colony. Known as 'Little Hill' to the local savages, it is situated a little way inland halfway up a low mountain, partially sheltered by the surrounding jungle at the base of a treacherous cliff. The position of the village takes advantage of the spectacular view of Hina Caldera to the south and the sea breezes which cool the sultry humidity.

Unusually for natives, the settlement has been built in the branches of a giant kapok tree, overlooking the neighbouring jungle. All of the huts are built around the living boughs, connected by aerial walkways of slatted wood. Whilst placing the entire village in a single tree is not the most defensible position, the village is located deep within Gamari territory and well warded by tikis. It is home to 120 Gamari adults and 63 immature young.




The central roundhouse is the Skin-keeper's hut, where the ancestral record skins are kept. To the left and right respectably are positioned the hetman's and hetwoman's roundhouses. A further nine huts have been built, distributed to either side and below, each holding a dowager-matriarch, her surviving husbands and her offspring. To the far right and suspended highest of all is the shaman's house, a little apart from the main conglomeration. At the base of the mighty trunk an open space has been cleared, where the natives gather for singing and dancing, or practicing battle skills.

Save for the arrangement of the roundhouses in a tree, the village is a ubiquitous version of most savage settlements, which retain similar housing divisions no matter whether they are built on stilts next to a river, or resting upon a stone platform in the swamps. Games Masters should use Puuiki as a template for other villages as and when needed.

# Points and Places

## Drumming Heights

High above the village, atop the cliffs which form a backdrop, are the drumming heights. These appear to be comprised of two slightly conical towers of great age, adjacent to each other. The wider of the two stands 6 metres high, with a diameter of 7 metres, whereas the taller is double the height and half the width. The walls are crudely fitted rocks laid atop one another in dry-stone construction; which although looking rickety and providing a scalable inclined surface for climbing animals, are in fact surprisingly strong.

Neither tower has a doorway, although they possess tall yet narrow trapezoidal window openings, starting one floor above ground level. Access is via rope ladder, lowered from the open roof of the squat tower. Inside, stores and provisions are kept on the lowest level, where it is cooler and shut away from insects. The upper level is where the three elderly drummers live, sleeping in slung hammocks with their few weapons and possessions kept within recesses built into the thick wall. They actually share no kinship with the villagers below them, but remain on friendly terms anyway.

Set atop the roof's flagstones are six immense drums, of increasing size. Their skins are of dinosaur hide but the frames themselves are of gigantic crab shells, the smallest of which is 2 metres across. The deep sound of these instruments makes the internal organs of anyone standing nearby jiggle in sympathy, the noise itself travelling for up to 10 kilometres under ideal conditions.

The taller tower is used by the watch-drummer who keeps an eye out for approaching creatures, whilst listening for drum messages. Inside is nothing but a circular staircase, leading from the living quarters up to the roof.

## Palisade and Tiki Perimeter

Around the base of the kapok tree, at a distance twice as far as its sprawling branches extend, is a 3m high palisade of sharpened logs, faced with interspersed stakes set deep into its embankment. The wall poses little difficulty for a humanoid to scale, provided they have the athletic ability to pull themselves up by their arms, or have a boost up from below – assuming of course that anyone standing on the earthen ramparts within is not trying to attack them. Its main purpose is to deter monsters, those of the large lumbering kind, from breaking in.

Outside of this wall are set the tribal guardian tikis. Looking like a cross between a carved stone stele and a totem pole, each one is a nightmare image of intricately conjoined men, turtles and other unrecognisable horrors, blended together in a disquieting way. These tikis are the home of spirits set to guard the tribe. During the day the carvings are silent, merely looming over the surrounding jungle. At night, however, the spirits are let loose, able to float intangibly about but never straying far from their large fetishes.

The six tikis contain haunts, the spirits of non-savages who attacked the Gamari in the past and were subsequently

## Palisade Defences

Made from young Ironwood Trees, each two metre section of the palisade is treated as having 8 Armour Points and 60 Hit Points. The stakes are considered as short spears. Sapient humanoids can generally thread their way through the points without injury, although they will delay reaching the base of the palisade by 1d3+3 Turns, leaving them vulnerable to attacks by the defenders. Creatures which mindlessly attack the wall will be automatically impaled by 1d3 stakes +1 for each 10 points of SIZ they possess above 20. Thus a SIZ 35 monster that charged the palisade would suffer 1d3+2 stake hits, assuming it does not have the height or limb length to reach over the stakes.

sacrificed and bound into the tiki. Three of the haunts are the ghosts of shipwrecked human sailors, the fourth is some sort of nobleman dressed in archaic costume, the fifth a fearsome looking panthotaur and the last was once a manananggal. All are Intensity 2 spirits and possess the full gamut of haunt abilities between them.

The haunts are normally commanded to attack anything attempting to enter the village who is not a member of the Gamari tribe. To this purpose a tubular bell (made of pure silver) has been placed under its own thatched awning, several hundred metres outside the palisade, specifically for guests to ring so that the spirits may be leashed in order to avoid unnecessary, and accidental, unpleasantness.

### Tortoise Sentinels

Within the palisade roam a bale of up to a dozen huge tortoises. Although they look innocuous, a few are temporarily home to ancestor spirits who occasionally return to spend time with their family descendents, taking the opportunity to spin tales to the young and pass wisdom onto the village shaman.

Only 1d3 ancestors pay visits at any particular time, remaining for a season and happily meandering about in tortoise form, eating fruit and basking in the sun. These particular tortoises can be identified by the semi-precious trinkets worn around their neck and legs, in truth fetishes holding additional spirits for use by that ancestor. Of course, being old and cunning, they make excellent guardians for the village if anyone is foolish enough to sneak within.

## Dancing Court

An open area cleared of all vegetation, which the tortoises trim. At either end are platforms of piled stones atop which are arranged carved wooden idols. These serve as places to venerate the spirits; they possess no magical power in themselves, but the village shaman will often summon them here.

The court is normally used for the preparation of food, cooking in communal fire pits and crafting of sundries such as pots, weapons, or new tikis. During the evenings after the sun has set, the natives use it for singing and dancing, illuminating the area with burning torches.

## Dowager Roundhouses

The majority of the roundhouses are family homes ruled over by the senior dowager of that bloodline. They are strongly constructed around the still living boughs of the tree, supported by lopped-off side branches specially grown in place several decades in advance. The hardwood floor is constructed between these pylons, some twenty to thirty metres above the jungle floor, easily protecting it from both flooding and the rampages of huge monsters. In addition the aerial construction isolates the roundhouse from ground-dwelling insects and also helps cool it.

The walls are a lattice of woven liana, which dries in place making a surprisingly tough wicker barrier that lets in both light and air. During storms the inner surface of the lattice is covered by wooden shutters. Atop the house

## Ancestor Spirit Tortoise

This tortoise is dominantly possessed by an Intensity 3 Ancestor Spirit by the name of Babahuna, the great grandfather of the current shaman. Once an elite Eiki warrior, he teaches the tribe the arts of unarmed combat and wrestling for which he was famed.

INT 17, POW 23, CHA 16, Spirit Damage 1d10

**Skills**: Binding 89%, Culture 134%, Discorporate 90%, Locale 134%, Spectral Combat 89%, Trance 53%, Willpower 96%, Unarmed 140%

**Fetishes**: Emu Feather – Boost Movement 4 (enabling Babahuna to lumber about at human speed), Turtle Phallus – Dominate Turtles 3, Turtle Shell – Boost Armour Points 3

For physical characteristics, use those of the Tiger Turtle on page 276 except that it has clawed legs rather than flippers.

is a huge thickness of thatching, laid from whatever material is most prevalent in the region. Coastal villages generally use palm leaves, whilst the swamp dwellers utilise rushes. Within a few months of construction, a newly made roof will become home to bats or snakes – welcomed due to their eating of pests.

Internally these roundhouses are dark and slightly smoky. During the night they are lit by small guttering lamps fuelled by coconut oil or flammable tree sap. Supplemental lighting comes from paper lanterns filled with glowbugs, a task set for the young to fulfil. Floors are covered with crudely woven mats of plant fibre, with any internal divisions provided by hanging curtains of more colourful fabrics. These are normally drawn aside during the day to open up the hut's internal space.

At one side of the hut is normally set a series of finely carved cupboards, containing the few treasures belonging to each family including their collection of taken heads. This is the place the dowager herself sleeps, guardian of the mysteries and horrors hidden behind those wooden doors. The remaining area is shared between the other descendents who number roughly nine to twelve adults and half that of young.

Apart from a few benches and comfortable pillows on which to sleep, the roundhouses lack much in the way of furniture. Decoration is provided by the engraving of every wooden beam and pillar with grotesque carvings. Other than that, the huts are filled with bunches of drying herbs, hanging foods and whatever crafting tools and weapons the savages possess.

### Hetwoman's Roundhouse

The hetwoman's roundhouse follows a similar architectural style to those of the dowager huts, except that one half of the roundhouse is fortified as a thick walled storage area, barred by a heavy door. This is for the storage of the village reserves of food, to which each roundhouse must donate a portion of every catch, hunt or gather.

The remainder of the hut is for the hetwoman and her personal attendants; those dowager-matriarchs whose family lines have died out. It is normally used for women-only business, private celebrations and marriage negotiations.

### Hetmans's Roundhouse

Similar to that of the hetwoman's roundhouse, save that the internal space is completely open. The walls and pillars hold trophies from every battle the village has participated in, with countless captured clubs, spears, shields, toothed swords and pieces of armour. These armaments are never again used for combat once captured, rather they are venerated as objects demonstrating the prowess of the Gamari tribe.

The village hetman resides in this hut, attended by elderly Eiki who no longer wish to live under the thumb of their women-folk. It is a place for males to celebrate past glories, tell boastful stories and negotiate politics with visiting elders of other Gamari villages.

### Skinkeeper Roundhouse

The largest and most ostentatiously carved roundhouse of the village, the skinkeeper's hut is where flayed skins of the dead are preserved. Its importance is such that if the village is attacked, the young and womenfolk fall back to this building and defend it with their lives.

Within it is totally dark, no lights save those of glowbugs permitted under its eves. The skins are stored within small, uniquely decorated clay pots; rolled in a ritualised manner with astringent leaves interspersed between the folds which help preserve the fragile parchment. The remainder of the pot is then filled with previously baked sand to keep the contents bone dry, and sealed with a gum to form an airtight seal. These are then stored horizontally in great racks which fill the roundhouse, leaving only a small space for the skinkeeper and his apprentices.

Part of the duties of the skinkeeper is to memorise the name and lineage of the skin held within each pot; aided by the vessel's individualistic coloured glaze and decoration. Every evening, unless circumstances prevent it, the skinkeeper chooses a pot at random and brings it to the Dancing Court to recite the deeds and history associated with the original owner of the skin. Part of the ritual is that the skinkeeper dons the skin, whilst dancing and singing the tales recorded upon it so that all might see the tattoos for themselves.

### Shaman's Roundhouse

The smallest roundhouse of the village, this is the home of the Shaman and whatever Spirit Worshippers have been given to their care for training. Due to the taboo of touching the shadow of a kahuna, village shamans must remove themselves from living with their family. Though onerous from an outside perspective, it is a practical solution to the dangers brought by those so close to the Spirit World. The shaman's hut is therefore viewed with a great deal of nervousness and superstition; only those specifically invited may cross its threshold.

Outside the door are posts from which dangle the skulls of various alien monsters slain in the jungle. Within these unsettling fetishes are bound two Intensity 2 Sickness Spirits (INT 8, POW 14, CHA 9, Spirit Damage 1d8, Skills: Discorporate 72%, Spectral Combat 73%, Stealth 67%, Willpower 78%; one inflicts Blindness whilst the other causes Mania). These guardians are normally safely withdrawn into the fetishes when the shaman is in the village. If the shaman must venture away (physically or spiritually) then the sickness spirits are let off the leash, commanded to only possess those that try to enter the hut or spy within.

These are only warnings, however. Within the hut is an Intensity 3 Death Spirit, a more lethal defence against those who would seek to plunder the shaman's secrets or cause his expiration (INT 8, POW 22, CHA 14, Spirit Damage 1d8, Skills: Discorporate 80%, Spectral Combat 86%, Willpower 94%). Inside are scattered the paraphernalia of the shaman's art. Masks, herbs, feathers, bones, pots of various weird and noxious substances, carved objects in preparation to become fetishes, and so on.

## Notable Personalities

### Ewelani Headbasher

Hetman of Puuiki village, Ewelani rules over his hitherto happy people. Tall, powerfully built and wearing richly coloured cloth wraps, the chieftain still holds his position via a combination of hunting monsters and good tactical skills on the battlefield. His greatest strength comes from an ability to foresee consequences and lay plans in advance, the reason why he has decided to engage in diplomacy with the newly arrived colonists.

Ewelani realises that trading with humans may grant his tribe considerable power, but this will be a two edged sword, possibly bringing resentment from other Gamari Hetmen or even draw attention from the accursed High Folk. Advised by Olohana (see overleaf) he also understands that the colonists will become a plague of locusts if they are allowed to emerge freely from Kapala. Knowing the tricks of men has forearmed him with wisdom, but now he must tread a fine line if his village is to survive the clash of cultures.

The hetman's greatest possessions are his gold armrings, iqari feather headdress and a jade club; the latter a fetish for an Intensity 2 gnome he himself quested for by descending into the lava tubes below Skull Point. The bound elemental allows his club to create minor rockslides or open pits under his enemies when he pummels the ground.

### Lokapele Moonvoice

The village hetwomen is ostensibly an attractive savage of lithe grace, although cultural differences make judgement of beauty rather subjective. She is normally seen wearing strings of white flowers and a variety of skirts, constructed from a range of materials from woven grasses to polished seashells. The one transcendent element of her loveliness is Lokapele's voice with which she sings beautiful songs.

Though she is an inspiration to her hetman, Lokapele is suffering an undermining of her authority by Manawalea, the most prominent of the dowager-matrons. Her inability to control the aging crone is causing disharmony between the family branches, which might lead to a schism as to how to deal with the encroaching colonists. Thus the hetwoman

seeks some way to get rid of her nemesis in whatever way possible.

### Kahekili Thunderfoot

High Shaman of the tribe, Kahekili is beloved by the Gamari people and a terror to their enemies. Old and wizened, the kahuna still stands tall, but is painfully lean. He normally wears necklaces and a loincloth made of finger bones. His fetch resides in the small drum he carries, with which he summons those many spirits with whom he has negotiated pacts. Indeed his drum is reputed to be able to beat itself, especially when Kahekili performs the ritual dances to placate the spirits.

In addition to his fetch, Kahekili has an Intensity 5 sylph bound into an ivory claw sheath covering the little toe of his left foot. When he stamps the ground three times the sylph is released to either manifest as an elemental or infest the Kahuna's body as he desires. Half a dozen other useful spirits are bound to pieces of bone or gewgaws about his person.

Great in knowledge and power, the ancient kahuna is also wise in deception. He often appears as a kindly old savage prone to over inebriation, and has recently started to show up near the ruins of Kapala, performing small tricks of badly done prestidigitation in exchange for alcohol. The outer perimeter guards know him as Tomekupar, regarding him as nothing more than a harmless, but entertaining, native; allowing the shaman to sleep at the foot of their watchtowers where he covertly listens to their gossip.

### Alamimo Swiftspear

One of the dozen Eiki of the tribe, Alamimo is coming to the end of his useful life as a warrior, his skin so overlaid with tattoos that the deeds of bravery can no longer be clearly read. Despite his age which has undermined his once apt name, Alamimo is still a cunning and deadly opponent in battle. He is the most respected of the Gamari warriors, having captured three newly made Eiki singlehandedly in their last battle against the neighbouring Oodaki tribe.

Having lived a full life, Alamimo had been looking forwards to retiring to the Shaman's hut and learning the ways of the Spirit World. Yet recent colony incursions into Gamari lands have convinced him that he must bear the weight of his feathered cloak a while longer. The warrior is still strong and has begun to lead skirmish raids against those who unknowingly venture into sacred places or areas forbidden by taboo. Although militarily minded, Alamimo is the hetman's most trusted advisor, gifted with a down-to-earth common sense.

### Nihopalaoa Ivorytooth

Regarded as the best hunter in the village, the tracking and survival skills of Nihopalaoa are unmatched. His innate knowledge of the island's creatures allows him to lay ambush in just the right place or create the perfect trap to lure the beast to its doom. As a sign of his competence he crafts all his weapons from the teeth of his prey. Though not a particularly accomplished warrior per se, Nihopalaoa has probably achieved more to ensure the safety of the village than anyone else.

Middle aged and short for a native savage, the hunter projects a light hearted, jovial personality. In fact he goes out of his way to play practical jokes on his fellow tribal brothers, setting small snares outside roundhouses to whip the unwary into the air, or defang venomous snakes then placing them in the defecation pots. His pranks are taken good naturedly, and actually benefit the tribe as a whole, by keeping the targets of his tricks alert and observant.

### Manawalea Sweethearted

Perhaps the most feared of the tribe's dowager-matrons, Manawalea is anything but a generous heart. Her tongue is so poisonous and personality so vindictive, she is nicknamed the 'old viper' behind her back. In fact it is said that her husbands were so henpecked that they all willingly threw themselves into the jaws of monsters or allowed themselves to be captured during battle and taken prisoner. In fact one was, voluntarily, pecked to death in preference to her vicious tongue. Old Uhori, driven mad by nagging and assaults, sought out and challenged an iqari champion, begging for a swift death. The iqari, bemused at this strange human's bizarre request, enthusiastically obliged, pecking Old Uhori to pieces in front of his shocked – but quietly sympathetic – comrades. Manawalea Sweethearted merely watched in disdain.

Manawalea is crinkled and shrunken, almost as old as Kahekili. The colour of her skin is so faded that she artificially dyes it and wears many necklaces of flowers to give a semblance of youth. Such efforts are laughable, but anyone who jokes about her appearance risks the wrath of the dowager, who will go out of her way to spread gossip and maliciously harass the transgressor in public, forcing others to go along with her or face becoming her next victim.

### Haaheo Highleaper

The warrior-hunter Haaheo was once an up-and-coming hero of the Gamari tribe. Tall of stature, handsome and skilled on the dance field, he was held in high regard by the womenfolk of the neighbouring villages as a

potential husband. However, several moons ago the young savage vanished for several days, eventually returning with a nasty head wound he claimed came from a colossal ape he had tried to kill. Since then, Haaheo has shown signs of forgetfulness and an increasing propensity for arrogant behaviour.

Lately the situation has begun to get out of hand, Haaheo overstepping his place and drawing ritual challenges. Normally this would be a self-correcting problem, except that the young savage has shown an unusual ability in unarmed combat. Now few are willing to challenge him when he speaks out of turn, upsetting the literal status quo.

Unknown to anyone Haaheo is actually a prisoner in Akakor, having been captured, interrogated and replaced by a High Folk spy. None within the village yet suspect the truth, having no way to detect the shapeshifted agent, whose mission is to turn the Gamari against the colonists.

### Joh Jung (Olohana)

Standing out as by his obviously foreign nature, Joh Jung is – or rather was – a shipwrecked sailor who was cast away on the island almost a decade ago, when his ship, lost in thick fog, ran aground on the reefs. Weather-beaten, silver haired and still as agile as a monkey, despite the wrinkles hidden behind his incredibly long beard, the aged sailor has turned native, serving as a military advisor to the village.

Whilst Joh will be cordial to any colonists he meets, he has long put behind himself any idea of returning to what he considers the corrupt, degenerate lifestyle of civilisation. Since living with the Gamari he has never been ill, never starved and never had to steal or lie to survive. He is

## Savage Names

The following names can be used by the Games Master to create off-the-cuff savage characters.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ahia | Kaili | Kawaha | Mahiai |
| Ailani | Kailianu | Kawai | Mahoe |
| Alapai | Kaina | Kawelo | Mahu |
| Alaula | Kaipo | Keahi | Maikai |
| Aukai | Kaiwi | Keaka | Makanui |
| Ehu | Kala | Keala | Manu |
| Haaheo | Kalili | Kealakai | Mele |
| Hana | Kalua | Kealoha | Moo |
| Haole | Kaluahine | Keanu | Naai |
| Haole | Kaluna | Keaupuni | Nahinu |
| Hina | Kama | Keawe | Naholowaa |
| Hina | Kamahiai | Kekahuna | Nakai |
| Kaaea | Kamai | Kekai | Nawahine |
| Kaahanui | Kamaka | Kekaula | Nawai |
| Kaai | Kanakaole | Kekipi | Nika |
| Kaaihue | Kane | Kekoa | Nuuanu |
| Kaakau | Kanealii | Kekua | Ohule |
| Kaaukai | Kanui | Keo | Opunui |
| Kaawa | Kaohimaunu | Keoni | Paahao |
| Kahananui | Kapela | Kimo | Paaoao |
| Kaheana | Kapu | Ku | Paele |
| Kahele | Kapule | Kuaana | Palau |
| Kahili | Kau | Kukona | Papa |
| Kahinu | Kaua | Lono | Puhi |
| Kahue | Kauhane | Luka | Upai |
| Kahuhu | Kauhi | Luukia | Wahineaea |
| Kaia | Kaui | Mahi | Waiwaiole |

now an honorary member of the tribe and will do anything to protect his chosen people, even if that means betraying the colony.

In the meantime he teaches the savages the tricks and tactics used by civilised folk to conquer more barbarous cultures, preparing them against the day when he expects the colonists to launch a war of extermination.

# Akakor – City of Gold

Located in a hidden valley, high up behind the Tane Mountains of Skull Point, lurks the fortress city of Akakor. Ostensibly the smallest of the High Folk strongholds, it is the one most roused by the advent of humanity to the island. From their cunningly wrought watchtowers they gaze down upon the beetle-like lesser races who only exist the serve them.

Lying perhaps only 20 kilometres from the ancient ruins of Kapala, the actual walking distance is far greater. Only two routes lead up to Akakor. The jungle path meanders back and forth, actually requiring those undertaking the journey to travel for nearly a day to the northeast before they can begin to scale the mountain range proper, traversing treacherously narrow paths barely a metre wide in some places. In all, the total distance is more than 50 kilometres, taking two days, providing the correct paths are known.

The second path is a secret one known only to the High Folk themselves. This route leads down via Skull Point, a titanic cliff with an almost unnatural resemblance to a bony human cranium. In the great caves of the precipice, which appear as eyes from afar, are the ruins of cliff dwellings now haunted by carnivorous apes of disturbing instinct and dubious tastes. Deep within one of these long-abandoned buildings is a secret passageway which leads through the mountain to the bowels of Akakor itself. The route takes less than a day to scale, providing the apes can be dealt with.

Akakor is a beautiful city based on an unusual architecture. Unlike the buildings of the savages, which tend to be square or rectangular in form, the High Folk favour circles and curves, made from chiselled blocks of the natural dark basalt or jet black obsidian. In the case of Akakor this fits with the nature of the terrain, a steep-sided box canyon which has been sculpted to form many walled terraces. Not a single straight line exists in the city or its outlying watch posts, less for the sake of camouflage and more for that of aesthetic taste. Indeed, the dome roofs of the city are burnished brass, capturing and reflecting the light to illuminate its narrow streets, interspersed by graceful minarets which tower over all.

At an altitude of little less than 2,500m the city is festooned with cloud forest growth, carefully cultivated to provide pleasure to the eye. Many of its trees have been permitted to grow in order to encourage the flowering of orchids, lotuses and other types of semi-parasitic plants. This gives the city a splendour of flowers and scents unmatched anywhere else on the island. It also provides a home for multitudes of colourful birds and the serpents which feed upon them.

Despite the care taken to maintain this garden city, there are signs of neglect. With a population of only 2,200 adult High Folk, 700 young and 450 slaves, many of the cyclopean buildings stand empty. The fortified walls could easily contain three times the current populace, a sign of the High Folk's gradual slide towards extinction.

## Points and Places

### City Walls and Minarets

The walls of Akakor are unusual in that they merely form the retaining edge of the many terraces of the city. At first glance this might seem to be an architectural weakness,

however the city has been constructed in such a way that it is difficult for somebody on a lower terrace to aim up at someone on a higher platform. Neither are the terraces overlooked by nearby geological outcroppings, all such places being similarly fortified.

Access up from one terrace to the next is via steeply angled, two person wide ramp-ways which cut up through the platform, open roofed so that defenders can freely drop rubble or more noxious substances (such as beehives) on the heads of the intruders. Yet it has been so long since the city was attacked that the hinges of their open lower gates have long since corroded, fixing them in place.

Constructed from immense stones polished smooth by age, each cyclopean block weighs many tons. Yet they are fitted so cunningly together that not even a knife tip can be forced between the joins. This makes the walls exceptionally difficult to climb without some form of magic. In addition the walls were backfilled with rocks, sand and topped off with soil, which combined with their thickness makes them effectively invulnerable save to the most extreme earthquakes.

Scattered about the city are several dozen free-standing minarets. Starting with a flared base, they quickly narrow to slender, graceful spires topped by a balcony and onion shaped dome. Within, these minarets are nothing more than a painfully narrow spiral staircase. To the casual observer they serve no practical purpose. In the past, however, the High Folk utilised the spires as elevated platforms for their sorcerers to stand guard, warding the city from magical, and spiritual, assault. Overgrown and rarely climbed nowadays, the brazen domes still glitter with a ruddy-golden light at dawn and dusk.

## Avenue of Delights

Somewhat of a misnomer, the Avenue actually indicates the base level of the canyon valley around which the city has been built. In effect the entire floor of the ravine has been landscaped into magnificent formal gardens. This forest is still inhabited by large predators, the most noteworthy being a pair of striped sabre-toothed cats that have been pacified with sorcery, so that they never attack any two legged being within the gardens.

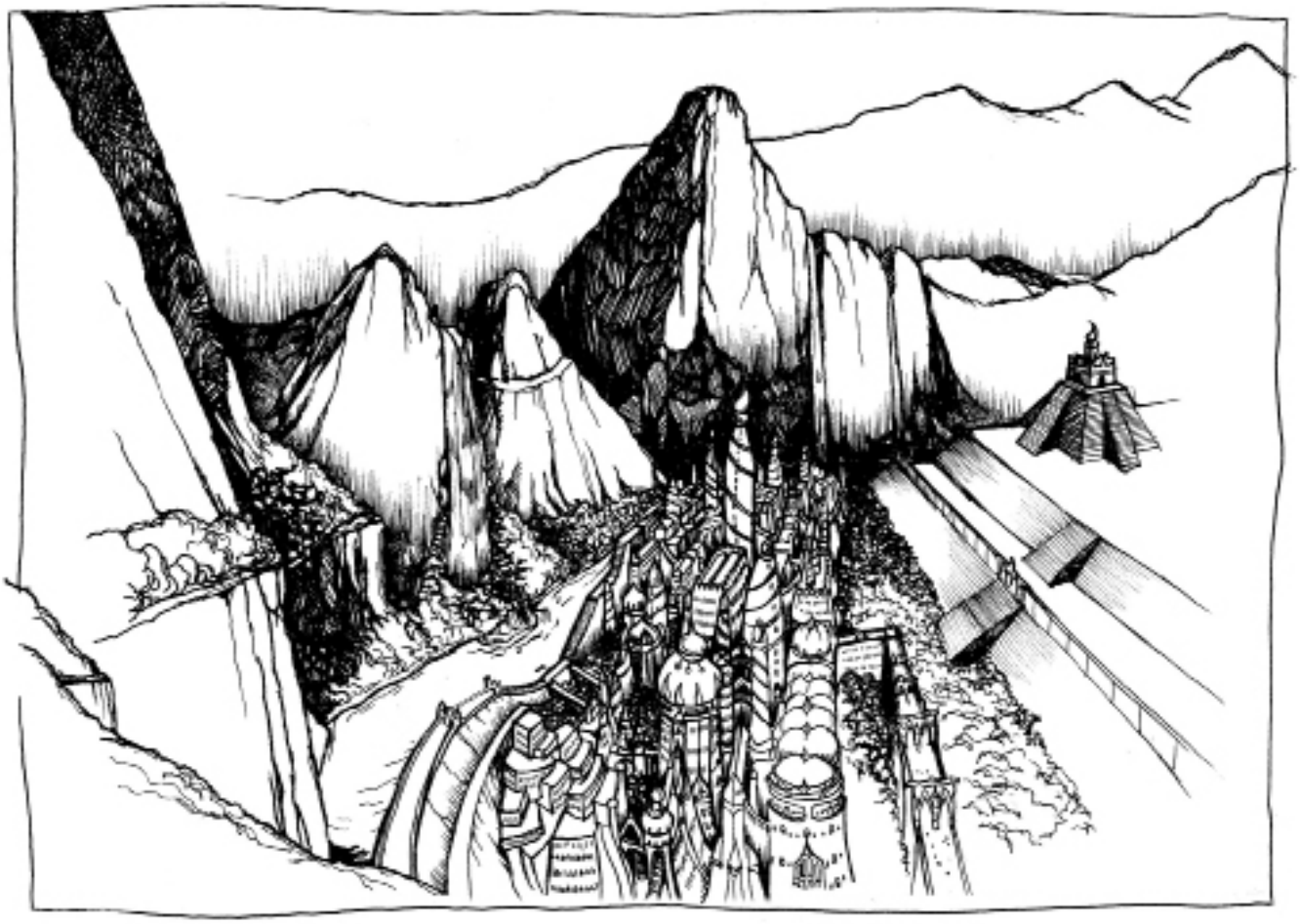
The garden itself is known as the Avenue of Delights by the High Folk who have introduced a number of plants with peculiar narcotic scents, some of which are alien to the world. The number and variety are too diverse to list, but any sapient humanoid wandering the pleasant glades for longer than half an hour begins to experience a growing languor, subtle pleasures running through their body whilst at the same time their mind is freed to comprehend the higher mysteries of the cosmos. To sleep in the gardens is to experience the most vivid of dreams.

### Avenue of Delights Narcotic Effects

Whenever characters remain too long in the Avenue of Delights they should roll on the following list to see what sort of narcotic influence they experience. Resisting the effects requires an unopposed Willpower roll.

1. Amnesia: Allows the breather to forget some traumatic event of their past
2. Analgesia: Makes the breather immune to pain, such as the detrimental effects of Serious Wounds
3. Euphoria: The breather experiences a transcendent feeling of elation, well-being and contentment
4. Mania: Sharpens the focus of the breather on a single task, simplifying any skill roll by one grade when trying to achieve that goal, but simultaneously imposing a penalty of one grade to every other activity
5. Mental Stimulant: Boosts the mental capability of the breather, simplifying any mental skill by one grade
6. Narcolepsy: Sends the breather into a sleep so deep they appear to have died, during which time they experience vivid dreams
7. Psychedelic: The perceptions of the breather are expanded so that they see into aspects of reality normally hidden, such as the Spirit World, traces and auras of magic, or even into the past
8. Sensual Stimulant: Any physical sensations are magnified, pain or pleasure alike, normally reducing the breather's resistance to skills such as Seduction or Torture
9. Synaesthesia: Cross links several of the breather's senses making them more perceptive, any Perception or Insight rolls are one grade easier
10. Combination: The breather simultaneously experiences of two of the above effects

Unless possessing the skills of Lore (Drugs and Poisons), Lore (Botany) or something similar, it will be difficult for characters to correctly identify which particular tree or shrub is affecting them, due to the variability of onset times. Deliberately inhaling the pollen or perfume of a flower bypasses this, but may require them to resist the narcotic in an opposed roll against its Potency. This can be randomly determined as 10 x 1d6+4%. Games Masters may wish introduce a chance of addiction (equal to its Potency) for repeated breathing of particular blossoms.



Due to living in close proximity with the gardens, the High Folk are somewhat inured to its tantalising pleasures, but the slaves tasked to maintain the gardens soon grow hopelessly addicted to its narcotic scents; eventually growing senescent, lost in the waking dreams until they die of starvation – at which point the animals consume their flesh, before the smell of corruption can bring chastisement from the city rulers.

### Slaves' Quarters

The majority of the eastern lower terraces are given over to communal slave quarters. This is where most of the gardening and street cleaning staff are housed. The doors are never locked, the High Folk arrogantly believing that lesser races should feel privileged to work for their masters.

The accoutrements of the quarters are almost as luxurious as that of the High Folk themselves, save that the slaves must perform all the duties for themselves and the food is of lesser quality. Few of the High Folk understand that living within stone edifices has become an anathema to the more primitive savages.

Few slaves ever escape, however, some being addicted to the narcotic perfumes of the Avenue of Pleasures, others knowing that at night the wild animals of Akakor are freed from their charms of pacification. Indeed the High Folk consider any slave who flees their city is suffering from madness and is hunted down, even back to their original village to prevent the spread of such insanity!

### Brotherhood Guild Houses

Each of the brotherhoods maintains a guild house where their members gather. These provide a place to eat, sleep, train and seek new employment. In general they are a cluster of circular shaped buildings with sloping walls, either conjoined with one another, or linked by narrow arching stone bridges.

Built from blocks of the same dark basalt as the city walls, their most distinctive architectural oddity are the overhanging domes of burnished brass which, supported by stone pillars, sit above the top level of each tower. This provides an open sided, roofed area from where the High Folk can gaze over Akakor, basking in the heat radiated

from the metal. Many of these roof-top verandas are decorated with glazed pots from which even more fantastical flowers sprout, their tendrils dangling down the sides of the building.

Inside each guild house the necessary areas remain roughly similar.

- An entry hall given over to formal reception of those seeking to hire members of the brotherhood.
- Sleeping accommodations arranged by brotherhood ranks, the lowest in dormitories whilst the highest have entire suites for their personal use.
- A refectory for the communal eating of food and large enough to host ceremonial rituals.
- Work chambers dedicated to the study of those arts concerning the brotherhood.
- Storerooms holding such equipment members need and the wealth it has gathered over the years.

Some guild houses requisition neighbouring abandoned villas, linking them together with narrow subterranean passages. These are used for more subtle visitations when a personage of some significance does not wish to let it be known that they are negotiating with that brotherhood. Conversely they are sometimes used as personal homes for the top tier ranking members.

### Observatory

Built upon the southernmost point of Akakor, this squat circular bastion overlooks the entirety of the Tane Caldera bowl which stretches away to the south. When first built it was intended for the study of astrology, tracking the moon and planets as they danced across the constellations. Yet the location also provides the perfect platform for spying upon the lower regions or looking out across the western and southern ocean, providing the weather is clear.

Thus atop its flat roof was constructed a huge telescopic viewer, which utilised magical lenses to project the viewer's vision across intervening distances. In appearance the device looks like an unholy collection of brass tubes, dials, cogs and a number of beautifully shaped gemstones of impressive size. The device actually embodies a combined Project (Sight) and Project (Taste) enchantment which can reach to the horizon, about 180km in this case. The enchantment has a Magnitude of only one however, which means it can be blocked by the simplest of magical wards.

Normally the viewer is used to study the heavens, projecting the user's point of view high above the atmosphere, so that stellar observations can be made without blurring or obscurement of clouds. Yet of late, the viewer has been focussed on the colony. Several High Folk are usually present making observations on the excavation activities, whilst simultaneously evolving plans to subjugate the newly arrived humans.

### Brotherhoods of Akakor

The city of the serpentmen supports many brotherhoods contesting for prestige and status, of which the following are of particular note:

- Brotherhood of the Broken Will – Slave masters and torturers
- Brotherhood of the Chromatic Doom – Warriors armed with sorcerous ranged weapons
- Brotherhood of the Fang – Personal bodyguards completely loyal to their hirer
- Brotherhood of the Graven Thought – Sculptors and inscription carvers
- Brotherhood of the Obsidian Claw – Close combat warrior scouts and monster hunters
- Brotherhood of the Psychedelic Dreams – Perfumers, narcoticists and poisoners
- Brotherhood of the Serpentine Grace – Dancers, courtesans and acrobats
- Brotherhood of the Silent Watch – Tomb and treasury guardians
- Brotherhood of the Silken Death – Assassins with guaranteed neutrality
- Brotherhood of the Subtle Taste – Chefs and cooks of exquisite culinary skills
- Brotherhood of the Undisturbed Sleep – Mortuary priests
- Brotherhood of the Winged Missive – Diplomats and messengers mounted on vultures
- Brotherhood of the Woven Delights – Weavers of silks, embroiderers and tailors

### Arena of Cooperative Conflict

Carved into the western flank of the valley is a semi-circular amphitheatre, a steep-sided sunken arena where politics are debated, wild animal fights viewed and orchestrated sorcery sung. The open stone benches of its concentric rings provide enough seating for 10,000 spectators, although now the upper galleries are overgrown with large trees, helping to conceal the city from other far-off peaks.

The bottom of the theatre is where speeches or entertainments are held, carved from a spur of basalt which emerges out from the narcotic gardens that flank it. The rear and side walls of this arena are only 4m high, enough to contain those creatures brought there for gladiatorial combat. Access is either by stone steps up to the rows of seating, or via tunnels which connect to the animal pens below, which in turn lead to a bronze gateway that egresses directly into the Avenue of Delights.

### Plaza of Knowledge

Midway up the city levels are the so-called Plazas of Knowledge, a series of ostensibly open courtyards which face out over Akakor. Along the middle of each paved plaza are erected a series of massive Jadestone stelae, inset with priceless gold plaques measuring one metre wide, three metres tall and if somehow extracted from its mounting, close to a centimetre thick. In total each weighs almost half a ton.

Every one of the 27 plaques, is covered with densely inscribed hieroglyphs of the High Folk language, arranged in such a way that stepping back from the stele allows the viewer to see wondrous images within the subtle pattern of the inscription. A level of artistry both unfamiliar and beyond anything known. The text of each plaque is in actual fact an individual sorcery spell, the secrets of some which have been lost with the meanings of their esoteric sigils.

Sculpted in gold to preserve them from the ravages of time, the stele are further protected by Damage Resistance enchantments (Intensity 9, Magnitude 9) making them proof against anything but the most extreme violence. Additionally they are subject to the Plunderer's Curse, see page 87.

High Folk sorcerers often wander here, gazing enigmatically at the masterful craftsmanship; either savouring the artistry or studying the spells carved within, whilst overlooking the dramatic views. Only the high caste 'sports' are permitted to roam these plazas, breeders are forbidden access.

### Villa of the Hierophant

A deadly magical home, one of several within Akakor, which belongs to any sorcerer powerful enough to claim and hold it. Considered part of the step of achieving pre-eminent rank, a self-elected arch-mage will try to penetrate the home of an ancient predecessor, learning its secrets so that the timeless sorceries which guard the residence will serve to protect the new occupier from malign attack. Such inheritance comes with a degree of risk, since past owners often added their own enchantments to trap or slay unwelcome transgressors, which remain lingering on after their death.

The house of the Hierophant has traditionally been granted to the sorcerer of greatest arrogance, as it is the most unusual. Part of its defences (aside from the traditional wards set in the foundations against spells and spirits) is the inability of those within its walls to detect the presence of magic, although magic clearly still functions within. Another is the Hall of Summons, the first floor reception chamber of subtle potency, within which is set a throne. Anyone entering the room, save for the person seated on the carved chair, is subject to an extremely potent Abjure (Magic Points) spell.

Unlike many of the other sorcerers' villas, whose circular towers adjoin one another with short lengths of wall so as to encapsulate a garden area, the house of the hierophant comprises of a single, impossibly leaning tower, which ends in a twisting tapered spike rather than an open-sided, roofed-over veranda. Despite the uncomfortable angle, the internal floors are all perfectly level and strangely extend further than the external dimensions would suggest. Most of the levels are committed to the raising of exotic alien plants, of which many are particularly deadly, acting as guardians for the current owner, the arch-mage Xanzoga.

### Brotherhood Necropolises

Communal interment tombs for the dead, the majority of the necropolises are built within the foundations of the eastern terraces. Out of fear or respect, few of the High Folk sorcerers and brotherhoods actually reside in the crumbling buildings over the tombs.

Access into each necropolis is barred by heavy gates made of pure silver, though why this metal is used over the strength of bronze is unknown. The gates are opened on those days deemed propitious by the Brotherhood of the Undisturbed Sleep, a guild of professional embalmers whose residence actually lies apart from the city, higher up the neighbouring peak. During these times, the populace of the city make symbolic offerings to the dead, gifting fresh flowers, fruits and sweetmeats at altars positioned just within the gateways. Of the previous gifts, no sign is ever found.

Burials are slightly different, the mortuary priests bringing the newly mummified body down from their charnel house, where it is accompanied by the deceased's brethren into the necropolis owned by that Brotherhood. There the

mummy is interred with all the formality required of its rank.

Although the tombs are never looted, each brotherhood pays a stipend to the Brotherhood of the Silent Watch, a group of dour guardians, to stand watch over the necropolises and ensure they are never entered. Torches burn continuously outside the gates of each tomb, which has the unsettling property of casting the offering tables within into deep shadow.

# Notable Personalities

## Xanzoga

Arch-mage and avid botanist, Xanzoga is the most potent sorcerer in Akakor. He is short and corpulent for one of the High Folk, but rarely ventures forth from the Villa of the Hierophant. The few times he is seen, walking out into the jungles with apparently no escort nor magical means of transportation, Xanzoga is modestly dressed in only a simple, white kilt and carrying a plain staff of some unknown wood. Such asceticism is considered odd by the other sorcerers, who leave the reticent arch-mage well alone.

When spoken to Xanzoga appears a congenial, yet slightly addled figure of little pretention. This is nothing but deception, as the arch-mage is playing a devious game of survival by projecting an aura of non-threatening behaviour. If his brethren ever suspected he possessed half the sorcerous knowledge he now wields, they would turn on him on the instant. Thus he maintains his pretence in order to continue his research without interference.

Xanzoga has little interest in the incursions of the new colony, nor does he seek rule over the entire island. His ambitions are far greater; being the discovery of the secrets behind the Smoking Mirrors. With such knowledge he could rule over a significant part of the cosmos, summoning or swallowing armies with a wave of his hand. He currently wanders the island in search of the tomb of the god-king Zaruthra, who was the creator of the Smoking Mirrors. During these perambulations he often stops at the magical gateways, ostensibly to collect new plant specimens to add to his burgeoning collection of lethal flora.

## Yhtill

Seen as the most ambitious mage of Akakor, Yhtill is a tall, almost cadaverous sorcerer who dresses flamboyantly, wearing highly embroidered cloaks, kilts and delighting in ornate headdresses to emphasise his personal power. He bears a staff made from the spine of some mysterious beast, topped with the head of a deadly Jubjub bird (see Staff of Chastisement page 185).

Patently ambitious and risk-taking, the sorcerer wishes to upset the island's political balance, so that Akakor can seize supremacy, with Yhtill of course pulling the strings. His preferred manner of achieving this is to subjugate the recently established colony into becoming his personal puppets, but the inherent anarchistic nature of the colonists makes authoritarian control somewhat difficult unless the governor is first corrupted.

Yhtill's interests combine the study of technology as well as sorcery. Many of the highest magics still lay beyond his capability, as few of his fellows willing to share their discoveries, but the sorcerer has gathered many of the abandoned machines scattered about the city in order to study and repair them.

His knowledge is somewhat flawed, but Yhtill has managed to cobble together some very strange devices, the most disconcerting being a machine which extracts and preserves the minds of sapient beings. This infernal apparatus has prompted Yhtill to prey upon his fellow sorcerers, stealing their heads to extract the knowledge held within; each new death causing uproar among the high caste, but as yet Yhtill remains undiscovered.

## Tzelja

One of the leading, if not the most influential non-sorcerer of Akakor, the courtesan Tzelja manipulates both the upper and lower castes with her unmatched skills in dance, seduction and insight. She heads the Brotherhood of the Serpentine Grace and currently has a number of the most dominant mages dangling at the ends of her subtle intrigues.

Deemed the most desirable of the courtesan caste, Tzelja has evoked plenty of jealousy from her compatriots. Those that value their standing however do little to undermine her authority, understanding that their brotherhood's eminence is due to her scheming.

A few rivals who underestimated her power have ended up mutilated, their looks destroyed in 'unfortunate' accidents. Indeed Tzelja's ruthlessness extends to individuals who refuse her favours, being driven to madness over the course of weeks, though how she performs this petty vengeance is unknown since some of her victims have been sorcerers of note, well protected against magic.

## Qaqanal

A mid-ranking warrior belonging to the Brotherhood of the Silent Watch, Qaqanal has adopted the grim

countenance of his brethren. Although of unexceptional size and strength, he is well trained as a tomb guardian, able to stand motionless for hours ignoring minor distractions such as inclement weather. Despite striving to support his guild, Qaqanal has always wished that he had been selected for the Brotherhood of the Chromatic Doom, envious of their potent weapons of burning light.

This slight but increasing dissatisfaction has come to the attention of his dour superiors, who have begun to send the warrior off on solo missions to check the integrity of High Folk tombs lying outside the immediate reach of Akakor. Qaqanal has taken these new duties as seriously as would warrant one of his vocation. He now spends much of his time camouflaging the entrances to ancient crypts and tracking down those who plunder them, returning pillaged articles back to their owners. Such efforts have been noted by the restless dead who now, unbeknownst to him, watch over their erstwhile champion.

### Etzlak

Arguably the deadliest warrior within Akakor, Etzlak is a gladiatrix who performs in the arena to entertain the crowds. She accepts any challenge, single or group combat against monsters, providing the organisers can transport the creature into the pits below the amphitheatre. The gladiatrix rarely fights other people, the majority of captured savages (and, in future, colonists) having more value employed as slaves or ritual sacrifices for the provision of Magic Points.

Since her purpose is to provide entertainment rather than simply butcher opponents, Etzlak practices with a wide range of weapons and armour, matching the ones she uses with the capabilities of the creature. When not training, Etzlak roams the northern jungles and upper slopes of the Tane Caldera, searching for newly arrived bizarre lifeforms and studying their behaviour.

Tough and strong for one of the High Folk, she possesses exceptional reflexes, allowing her to seize the initiative in most bouts. Outside of the amphitheatre she rarely wears any protection, unless venturing into the jungle. Instead Etzlak wears pleated kilts, arm rings and pectoral jewellery, with nothing more than a dagger to hand. Few have any reason to wish her dead, but would be gambling with their lives to consider such an attack, the gladiatrix seemingly having a preternatural sense of impending assault, even from those waiting in ambush with ranged weapons.

### Phsosen

One of the few remaining xenologists still supported by High Folk society, Phsosen is probably the only inhabitant of Akakor who is genuinely excited about the arrival of a new race to the island. He wishes the capture of several colonists for extensive study, both physically and psychologically. A true scientist, Phsosen expresses little compassion with those brought for analysis, merely a fascination unsullied by ethical concerns. Those which fail his somewhat destructive tests are soon dissected upon the mortuary table, bits and pieces pickled for future examination.

The elderly xenologist has a rather absent minded habit of talking to himself, weighing different test approaches which, to those that understand High Speech, sends chills down their spine. However, a clever test subject can subtly influence the scientist by injecting counter-arguments at the right moment so that Phsosen debates with himself, eventually reaching conclusions with no apparent realisation that the experimental target was contributing to the decision.

### Kalal

Kalal is one of the lowland Savages, captured and enslaved several years ago. Long separated from her clan she has no idea if she still has a family, but has become dowager-matron to coordinate the other lowland natives, ensuring that the work demanded of them by the High Folk is performed efficiently and well. In effect she has assumed the role of Major Domo for the city, dividing up the slaves in work parties according to daily schedules long established by routine.

Relatively young by Savage standards, Kalal still retains some of her beauty and is considerate to new arrivals. She takes time to explain the policies of the High Folk, consequences of group punishment if tasks remain uncompleted and the terrible retribution enacted on a slave's village if they attempt to escape. Thus Kalal enforces the will of her masters with kindness, ensuring that all the slaves continue to be treated with oblivious indifference by the overlords. As such Kalal has lost any thought of rebellion against the High Folk, despite her perfect position to wreak merry hell on the city.

# High Folk Names

When the Games Master needs to create an impromptu High Folk character use the following list for example names.

Aarsis
Ajajal
Ajanos
Ajek
Ajich
Ajix
Ajos
Ajyesam
Azajaqa
Azenak
Azenak
Azenin
Azyesim
Biqajin
Biqal
Biqanal
Biqek
Biqelja
Biqelja
Biqenal
Biqij
Biqolij
Biqyesende
Brachdorn
Chajak
Chajimij
Chajos
Chelja
Chende
Chende
Chij
Chintz
Chojak
Chyesim
Etzal
Etzasin
Etzenal
Etzlaj
Etzlak
Etzlal
Etzlaqa
Etzlayak
Etzlenaj
Etzlin
Etzlojaj
Etzlyesix
Gahnaj
Gahnalam
Gahnalix
Gahnin
Gahnolich
Goktak
Ixalak
Ixawal
Ixende
Ixtomil
Ixyesek
Izlaj
Izlilal
Izlos
Jajaj
Jajajek
Jajix
Jolek
Joltomaqa
Kabaqa
Kabasich
Kabek
Kabil
Kabojak
Kachal
Kachalaj
Kachilak
Kachojak
Kalak
Kalal
Kalende
Kalij
Kalojal
Kilssis
Komadon
Kylmssiir
Kylol
Lanak
Lanal
Lanasaj
Lanayil
Lanilij
Lanim
Lanin
Lanos
Lcis
Lpsso
Lrmsscis
Namak
Namalal
Namasal
Namij
Namilal
Osscis
Phisadcis
Phsosen
Phsosin
Phyol
Qaqal
Qaqanal
Qaqil
Ryslsym
Scaisin
Shosarun
Soedcem
Soedsen
Sohtak
Sslsin
Sssen
Ssylidcese
Syphodcem
Trakosur
Tsasix
Tsawaqa
Tsimam
Tsin
Tsojak
Tyrsum
Tyrsur
Tyrussarun
Tzal
Tzawil
Tzelja
Tzilek
Tzimelja
Tzolix
Tzos

# Port Grimsand – Human Colony

Grimsand, or more properly Port Grimsand, is the official name of the human colony becoming established on the island. It has a myriad of other names amongst the settlers and adventurers alike, such as Lizard Point, Sheercliff, or Greystone's Bluff – the last being a quip directly referencing the governor in charge of the colonial expedition.

Built within the ruins of once great Kapala, the colony takes advantage of the overgrown city, robbing it of precut stone and utilising its formidable reputation. Since its establishment, Grimsand has developed into a small, but well fortified settlement divided into three parts.

The lowest quarter encompasses the wharfs and single pier located at the bottom of the cliff. It includes modest warehouses owned by various mercantile concerns, some fishermen's shacks, a tavern catering to sailors and the lower guardhouse. Due to the narrowness of the beach, this section of the colony is constructed on stilts, spreading out from the rocky face.

The second quarter covers the sinuous path climbing up the cliff. Because of its precipitous nature, building places are limited to where the track widens or makes a switchback. Most of the cliff-face structures are built of wood, yet despite their fairly substantial construction and spectacular views, few people are willing to risk their lives residing on the precipitous slope, unsurprising considering the number of minor quakes the island suffers. Thus the majority of the buildings are small crafter's shops of various types, incorporating swinging jigs with which they raise or lower goods to the wharfs below.

The third and most heavily populated quarter lies at the top of the cliff. Inside its hastily erected walls space is at a premium, two and three story buildings packed tightly together so that only narrow, winding alleyways pass between them. It is here that the best housing stands along with several taverns, merchants of fine goods, a healing hostel, moneylender, and the governor's villa.

Almost everything in the two upper precincts has been constructed from the oddly-shaped irregular stones excavated from the surrounding ruins. Unlike the thick thatching used by the native savages, roofs have been tiled with shingles of tree bark; a less satisfactory stopgap until the governor figures out a method of producing glazed pottery tiles.

Due to these overhanging eves and narrowness of the passageways, almost all of the alleys within the settlement are airless, brooding places not helped by the menacing shrines scattered about, built into niches in the walls. Even during the day, some passages are illuminated with lanterns or guttering torches – not as a deterrent to thievery, although some of that still happens, but because of the torrential downpours which can darken the skies with their looming black clouds.

So far the colony of Grimsand numbers a little over 500 permanent individuals squeezed into an area no more than 100m across, its numbers briefly swelling with each new trade ship which docks. These are the hardiest of the original settlers, those that have yet to waste away from tropical disease, die in an excavation accident, or simply vanish into the ominous jungle beyond the city ruins. Of the inhabitants only a handful are children, the dangers of the island putting off most families from settling there.

## Points and Places

### Beach and Lower Quarter

At the foot of the impressively high cliff is a jumble of huge rocks, remnants of a previous collapse, within which a short sheltered strand has formed. The sand of the beach is a ubiquitous black, formed from the grinding up of ancient lava. Although it is inconvenient to scale the cliff, this is one of the few places which has a sheltered mooring for ships and  where boats can safely land on the island.

Unsuited to the construction of normal buildings, the colonists have been forced to drive piles into the rapidly shelving sea floor, building upon them a series of wharfs hugging the jumble of boulders. Suspended above the high tide level of the sea, the warehouses possess trapdoors through which goods can be lowered into boats that can row below. In addition to the wharfs is a single long jetty that extends far enough out, so that a ship can anchor without running aground on one of the submerged rocks. Lacking a solid pier, the walkway is built upon a series of sealed casks which provide buoyancy, enough for people to board but not for the transfer of heavy cargo.

A number of small shacks cover the boulders behind the warehouses, homes to the few fishermen who ply their trade to help feed the colony. These are reasonable enough shelter during the rains, but provide little protection when storms blow. To one side of the shanty town is an altar to the god Dashatan, from which the fishermen cast the heads and guts of their catches, to propitiate the deity. Unbeknown to the fisherfolk, their offerings have attracted a Giant Octopus (see RuneQuest page 378) whose appetite is growing with its bulk, so that now it has begun to pluck lone seamen who remain out of doors after nightfall, from the jetty or beach.

At the very base of the cliff where the path starts up are located the lower guardhouse and The Siren's Song, a tavern which serves visiting sailors.

The former is a stone building with a garrison of only eight men, members of the White Death cohort who patrol the warehouses in pairs to deter robbery and keep the peace if drunken sailors become too rowdy. Being only a guardhouse the fortification lacks cells to confine troublemakers, so along its outer wall are a series of metal rings to which offending scallywags can be chained.

In contrast The Siren's Song is a sprawling wooden building with uneven floors and a rather ramshackle construction. Inside, its weird layout provides plenty of nooks and alcoves for private conversations, and few windows to clear the fug of tobacco smoke. A real den of scum and villainy, the tavern provides its own home-brewed ale apparently brewed from seaweed. Though barely palatable, it is cheap, plentiful and can make a man drunk.

## The Sheerway

Named for its precipitous nature, the Sheerway is the path which leads up the near vertical cliff face. What had been a rather intimidating animal trail of some sort has since been expanded to provide a safer ascent. Parts of the cliff have been chiselled back to widen the path and steps carved into the stone. In most places two people can safely walk side by side, although no rail or wall yet exists to protect against falling from its edge.

Where the path encounters a natural out-spur or doubles back on itself, enterprising crafters have set up little workshops where they can manufacture goods for the colony or knick-knacks for passing sailors. Almost all of the most repugnant crafts, such as tanners, have been exiled here so that the wind can disperse the smell. The cliff face also makes an ideal place for drying, so a laundry is also placed here, supplied with water from a minor waterfall emerging from a crack further along the cliff face, carried in bamboo pipes.

Nearly all of the workshops are built of wood, firmly anchored to the cliff with metal spikes. Due to the narrowness of the outcroppings they are rarely more than three or four metres deep, with two or three rooms dedicated to crafting and storage of finished goods. Owners rarely sleep within, lacking the space, instead relying on the guard patrols to ensure their shops remain inviolate.

One shop stands out for its oddity, a stone building two thirds up the cliff whose walls somehow merge into the rock face. Known as the Dour Grotto it actually extends deeper into the cliff face, taking advantage of an apparently natural cave. It is run by a stunted man called 'the dwarf' by everyone in the colony, a rather nefarious figure who makes his living by selling information concerning places far inland and strange native objects that arrive at his shop, despite his never venturing beyond the colony walls. Those that attempt to rob his shop tend to mysteriously disappear.

At the top of the Sheerway is a partially completed guardhouse, built into the rear wall of the colony. Since the wall keys into the very edge of the cliff, those forbidden entry into the upper quarter have no choice but to descend the path again. It is rather laxly guarded by four more members of the White Death, who often gamble over who is sent on the intermittent patrols down and back up the path.

## Plaza and Colony Wall

The upper quarter of the colony has been built at the point where the Sheerway crests the top of the cliff. The walled settlement is serendipitously located at one corner of a huge plaza dating from the time when Kapala stood in all its majesty. Over the intervening centuries the plaza filled with detritus, so that stunted bushes and ferns thrived within its confines. These have since been chopped down,

turning the 300 by 200 metre court into an area now used to grow crops, with only limited success. The depth of the soil is very shallow and rests upon thick obsidian paving stones once hexagonal in shape, but cracked and torn by some titanic forces in the past.

Edging the plaza on three sides (the fourth having collapsed into the sea when half the island sank) are a series of jungle choked mounds and hillocks. These are the overgrown remains of fallen buildings, perhaps palaces or administrative forums. Only those closest to the colony have begun to be systematically excavated, the exposed rubble used to construct the settlement. Farthest away is a towering complex of hills, under which are hidden the lost temples of Kapala, themselves built over far more ancient shrines, tombs and storage caches all connected with claustrophobic tunnels.

The outer wall of the colony is an impressive edifice some five metres high on the outside, built around another of the artificial hillocks and backfilled with loose stone so that the inside height is only a metre and a half. Constructed from a random hodgepodge of worked stones, the wall is a polychromatic mixture of black obsidian, dark grey basalt and purple coloured porphyry. Whilst its craftsmanship might leave something to be desired, the intimidating tallness is enough to dissuade most predators from entering the settlement.

Only two gates have been built, a small postern gate at the cliff edge where the Sheerway leads down, and the main gates exiting out onto the plaza. These are heavily reinforced, with tree trunks at the ready in case they need to be braced. During the day both gateways remain open to allow easy egress, although guards stand ready to defend the portals and, in the case of the main gates, check returning citizens for any treasures recovered from the ruins. At night eight members of the White Death, further supplemented by sixteen of the Stingers, stand watch over the wall and its outer gate. Lanterns are suspended over the walls to provide illumination, ensuring nothing can climb the wall without observation.

## Nightsoil Collectors

Located just outside the gates is the small establishment of Dahl Tench and his three sons. They own several handcarts with which they make two rounds, morning and night, to collect the nightsoil produced by the colonists. Lacking sewers Grimsand has no other way of disposing of its sewage than chucking it over the cliff; an activity which provokes much anger from the local craftsmen. The frequent rains tend to wash the streets clean of impromptu urination.

The collected nightsoil is taken to the far side of the plaza where it is mixed with other vegetable matter and insect larvae raked from the jungle, to form a large compost heap. This will eventually end up supplementing the rather poor soil to help fertilise the colony's crops. Dahl's rather rickety home is cleverly located adjacent to a hot volcanic spring, atop which he hopes to build the first public baths. In the meantime he patiently collects copper bits for his services, hides the growing mountain of coins under the compost heap and enjoys the reputation of being the cleanest man in Grimsand.

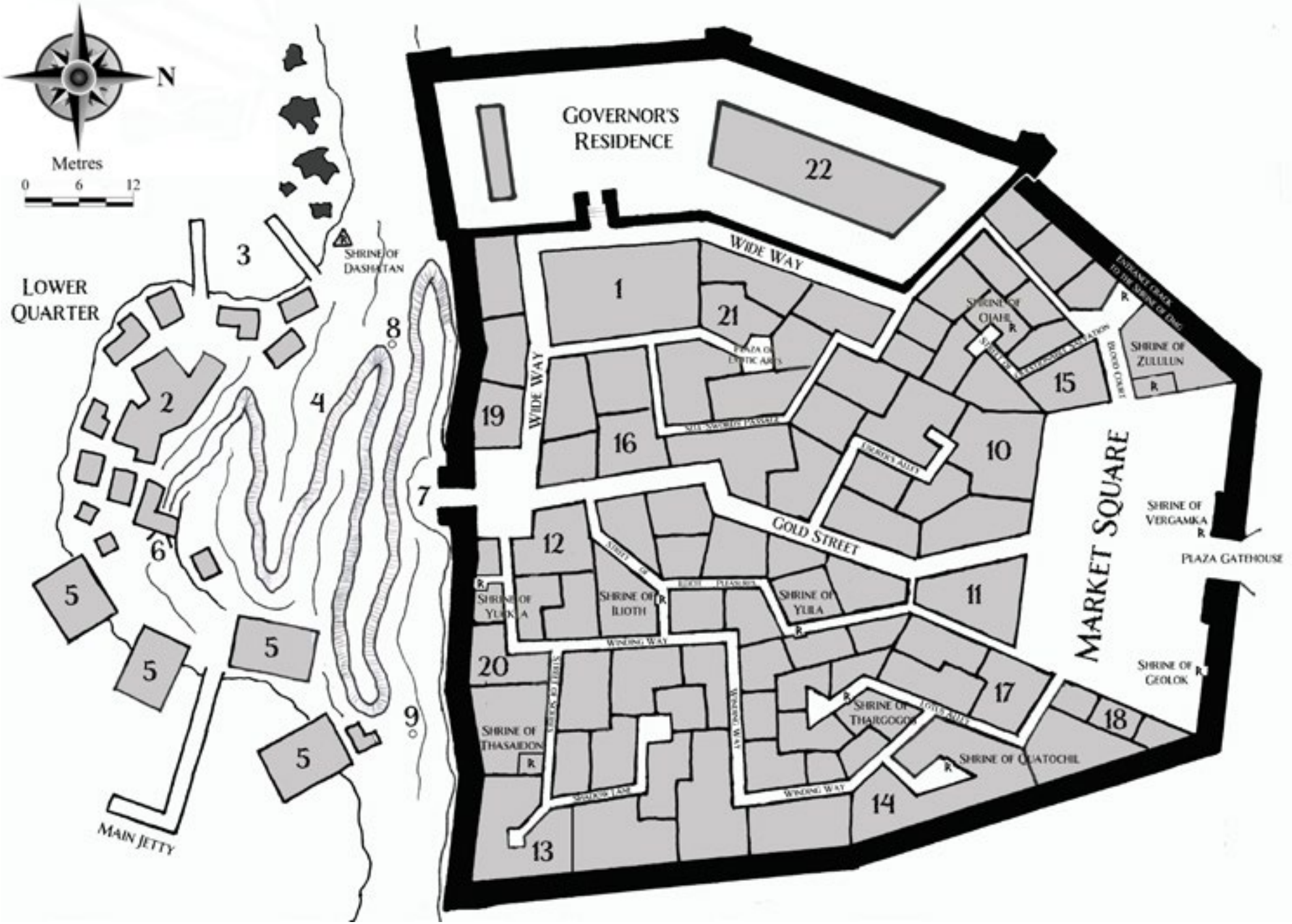
## The Street of Illicit Pleasures

Port Grimsand's inevitable red light district, the Street of Illicit Pleasures is a long alleyway which starts close by the Sheerway Gate next to the Heartless Houri pub, and terminates at the other end at the Scaly Sentinel.

The Heartless Houri is known for its group of six dancing girls, experts in provocative dancing yet guarded with a proprietary eagle eye by the tavern owner Zenobia Swiftknee, a retired adventuress. The beer is reasonable though not cheap, the food good and the bouncers particularly tough. Most of its customers are the rough and ready guards and those colonists with full-time employment in town. Few patrons ever try to molest the girls, knowing to do so would earn them a lifetime ban. Those needing such relief are encouraged to continue further down the street.

At the other end stands the Scaly Sentinel, a more refined establishment whose patrons are of high birth or adventurers who have struck it rich. The food and drink are exceptional, but exorbitantly expensive; the wine and bottled beer in particular being imported from overseas. It is named for the towering, decorative stele of a fierce lizardman warrior, around which the front wall of the tavern is built. In addition to viands, the hostelry offers rooms for the night and a range of exotic narcotics. The owner, Yusif Lewish, is always on the lookout for new drugs to offer his customers.

The alleyway connecting the two inns, winds back and forth between narrow fronted tenement buildings. Their doors are unmarked by signs, but each bears an ornate knocker cast in the shape of some erotic or normally illegal activity. Behind these can be found any vice desired by men or women. Partway along this passageway are small shrines to Ilioth and Ylila, the former of which is always well covered with small coins, pendants, sweetmeats and short


N
Metres
0 6 12
GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE
22
WIDE WAY
1
21
19
16
WIDE WAY
LOWER QUARTER
3
2
4
8
7
6
5
5
5
5
9
SHRINE OF DASHETAN
MAIN JETTY
PLAZA OF LITTIC ARTS
SILVERSMITH PASSAGE
LEGEND'S ALLEY
10
15
SHRINE OF OJAHL
SHRINE OF ZULULUN
MARKET SQUARE
GOLD STREET
12
11
SHRINE OF VERGAMKA
PLAZA GATEHOUSE
SHRINE OF YUKA
SHRINE OF ILIOTH
SHRINE OF YULA
WINDING WAY
20
17
18
SHRINE OF GEOLOK
SHRINE OF THARGOGOR
SHRINE OF THASAIDON
SHRINE OF QUATOCHIL
WINDING WAY
14
13

# Port Grimsand Key

1. White Death Barracks
2. Siren's Song Drinking House
3. Fishermen's Dock
4. The Sheerway
5. Warehouses
6. Lower Sheerway Gatehouse
7. Upper Sheerway Gatehouse
8. The Dour Grotto
9. Laundry
10. The House of Silver
11. Scaly Sentinel Inn
12. Heartless Houri Tavern
13. Scholar's Court
14. Hospice
15. The House of Blades
16. Ajastan's Cartography
17. Levjeen the Haberdasher
18. The Spice of Life
19. Woeful Woodmonger
20. Sisshero Scribes
21. The Licentious Lapidary
22. Formal Gardens

*Shrines are noted on the map with the ᚱ rune*

letters begging for intercessions in matters of the heart or vengeful comeuppance.

## The Hospice

Part of the money's raised by taxing treasure hunters goes towards maintaining the colony's hospice. This is a modest sized building on the southern side of the settlement, which employs three healers to tend those injured during the excavations and anyone who falls ill with jungle sickness. Patients are supported free of cost until recovered enough to depart, yet most leave a gift within their means to express gratitude for their treatment.

The hospice has space for a dozen beds in its main chamber, but can host almost double that if hammocks are erected. Other rooms comprise of the healers' personal chambers, herbal stores, a wash room for the linen, small kitchen providing for incumbent patients, and a shrine to propitiate the god Quatochil.

The head of the hospice Danys Penessil is an acolyte of Quatochil, who uses her powers to ward disease from the colony, but has limited magical healing abilities. Her available miracles are Consecrate, Corruption, Heal Wound, Propitiate, and Transfer Malady. Treatment of Major injuries requires surgery, via use of the Healing skill, then months of natural healing to recover. The complete loss of limbs is irreversible, although rumours abound of mystical healing places in the depths of the jungle able to reverse such maiming.

## The House of Silver

Not literally a home gilded with silver, but rather a fortified treasury in which the usurers set up shop. Several competing money lenders vie to offer good terms to those seeking to fund expeditions into the haunted jungles. Some form of security is always needed for amounts over a hundred silver pieces, usually property, a ship or trade goods currently owned by the borrower. In exchange the lender expects a straight percentage for each week of the loan, or a share of the recovered merchandise or treasures.

Some smaller scale usurers offer moneys to those prospecting in the neighbouring ruins or seeking to bridge a stopgap in their normal income. As somewhat safer bets, these loans do not require security but come with the implied threat that defaulting will cost the borrower either his remaining possessions or even be sold into temporary servitude until the debt is paid off. The governor, Lord Greystone, ensures such reimbursement terms are not abused and that an indentured worker is set free without further shenanigans to extend the debt.

The money lenders also offer a banking facility, offering to guard funds or valuables for a set fee of 1% of their total value per month. Whilst somewhat expensive, the House of Silver does actually provide the best protection available in the colony, the premises guarded by a team of six crack warriors who are beyond corruption. Inside the thick walls of the treasury is said to be a vault made of solid bronze, sealed by seven locks. Each of the keys is held by a separate usurer.

### Merchants of Kapala

Some of the colony buildings use the ground floor for shops or merchant enterprises, whilst the upper floors are given over to housing. The largest of these subdivide the ground floor into display, storage and either workshop or administrative chambers. With such a low population, there is a distinct lack of competition within the colony save for those merchants dealing in native artefacts, those dug up in the ruins or pillaged from deeper within the jungle.

Of note are:

- The House of Blades – Arms and armour for the discriminating explorer, mostly basic quality imported weaponry, but can craft custom (enhanced) weapons for five times the cost
- Ajastan's Cartography – Maps and map making services; willing to pay for explorers to survey the island
- Levjeen the Harberdasher– Buys, sells and repairs clothing; can tailor new clothes by importing fabrics or utilising those brought to it
- The Spice of Life – Spice merchant dealing in the unique herbs and seasoning found on the island; on the lookout for new flavours
- Woeful Woodmonger – Export traders of exotic hardwoods, either in bulk or as small scrimshaw carvings
- Sisshero Scribes – A combined scrivener, book binder and scroll trader; seeks adventurers to copy stele inscriptions
- The Licentious Lapidary – Traders in gemstones; will also smelt native jewellery into raw materials

Smaller shops are often just shuttered alley-side alcoves, barely large enough for a display bench behind which the trader stands and works. These generally only open when a ship arrives. The majority of food traders actually set up in the small town square behind the Plaza gates. Once a week the square hosts an auction where the personal possessions of dead colonists are hawked to raise funds for their friends or dependents.

### Governor's Residence

The largest building in the colony is the governor's villa, a separate walled enclosure built into the north-western corner of the settlement, backing onto the cliff edge. It sits on the highest point, its own fortified walls butting into the lower wall of the colony. From here it commands a view over the rest of the town, as well as sweeping views over the sea-flooded caldera to the south.

What little open space the villa encompasses is given over to a modest formal garden of shrubs and flowers. Between the flora and the prevailing winds, this grants the villa a pleasant atmosphere, free from the occasionally fetid odours of the colony.

The modest residence is occupied by Lord Greystone and his official staff. Other than the usual kitchen, dining hall and various bedrooms, it also contains an audience hall, library, scriptorium, granary, taxation strong-rooms and several guard chambers.

Directly outside the villa's gateway lies the garrison building belonging to the White Death company. Despite the proximity of the mercenaries, the villa is actually patrolled by the governor's personal retinue, the Greystone Guard. These are fifteen experienced middle aged and older men of grizzled appearance, survivors of several decades of war in the Lord's service.

## Notable Personalities

### Lord Greystone

Though a man of medium height, grey hair and craggy features, Lord Greystone more than makes up for his undistinguished physical appearance with exceptional manners, superior bearing and dynamic personality. Outwardly he leads the colony with an energy which few can repress, making insightful decisions and showing little concern about the natives, nor the dangers posed by the jungle. Some take this as foolish arrogance, yet Greystone's blithe, implacable confidence seems to overbear those who would gainsay his decisions.

Privately, Lord Greystone is possessed by a melancholy which originates from the loss of his wife and son twenty years before, when their ship was captured by pirates in these very waters. Greystone, or Gordin, to his close friends, has never ceased looking for his family. In fact the only reason he accepted the commission to colonise Monster Island was to continue his search. As yet nothing has come of his efforts, save that the colony is thriving under his firm, yet just, rule.

### Knev Massklyn

Perhaps the most accomplished scholar in the colony, Knev is an ardent mathematician, astronomer and cartographer. His presence is due in part to a deep friendship with Lord Greystone, who invited him to create charts of the mysterious island. The scholar resides in the governor's villa from where he is composing a set of detailed maps of the Hina Caldera and the ruins outside the colony.

An old man with wild white hair and the start of a hump, he is somewhat scatter-brained concerning his personal dress sense. His appearance however has no bearing on the sharpness of his mind, and for that matter, his tongue also! Knev does not suffer fools gladly, letting them know with acerbic comments and condescending wit. Although his physical skills are lacking, he can usually compose a cunning plan to extract himself, and his companions, from whatever troubles they've gotten themselves into.

### Mari Kinslay

The most prominent of the Grimsand's female adventurers, Mari is one of the few colonists to have made peaceful contact with the natives. Seeking knowledge rather than wealth, her approach has yet to alienate the Savages, who call her 'the fearless one' for following her inquisitive nature in the face of extreme peril. Her cultural and linguistic skills are such that she now knows a considerable amount of the Gamari Low Tongue, and is ready to teach others in it.

Despite her apparent willingness to put aside weapons to talk, Mari remains a fearsome shot with ranged weaponry and has a mean left hook to match. Within the colony she often projects a stern countenance, especially with those she suspects of simply wanting to exterminate the natives. Out in the jungle or conversing with more open-minded folks her warm, audacious personality shows through.

### Dughar Maklur

A tall, broad shouldered, weatherbeaten man in his mid forties, Dughar – better known as Dug to his closest friends – is Port Grimsand's most famous adventurer. Tales abound of his battles against ravening dinosaurs, outwitting tribes of lizardmen, pillaging tombs and always returning with mere scraps of his shirt still over his back.

Considered the most tenacious man in the colony, his fist fighting and woodsman skills are legendary. Unfortunately, whilst Dug invariably manages to return from his expeditions in one piece, his companions seem to suffer worse fates, unless they are young, pretty women or clumsy, incompetent scholars. Unbeknownst to the erstwhile hero,

he is possessed by a curse spirit picked up from his first trek, which drains the luck from those in his immediate vicinity, consuming it to keep him alive. While Dug always seems to survive his exploits, those about him are often doomed.

### Ernst Shakton

Once a formidable sea captain, Ernst is driven by the desire to explore and scale the highest peaks of the island. A bear of a man he radiates an intuitive sense of command, almost as someone born to noble rank. Such mannerisms come to the fore when he ventures out into the jungle, though which he navigates with an almost supernatural sixth sense. Reputed to be mentally tougher than anyone on the island, he is currently the only man who has reached the escarpment of the Rangi Caldera and returned to tell the tale.

Ernst is always accompanied by his exceptionally large and strong wolfhound, which is named Fank. The wild beast is utterly faithful to its master and seems to display an unusual level of intelligence, due to the concealed fact that Fank was once his best friend; accursed to take the form of a dog by the temple priests of Ilioth, after he tried to save Ernst from the machinations of the temptress who stole his noble rank. Part of the reason Ernst so avidly roams the jungle is to seek out some ancient alien necromancy to free his ensorcelled compatriot.

### Harrick Hoodin

A small man of slight build and disarmingly cheerful countenance, Harrick is a professional tomb robber. He poses as a translator of ancient languages, sometimes engaged at Sisshero Scribes. At other times he ventures into the ruins, just another of the scavengers. He is biding his time, hoping to discover a new tomb, whilst casually letting it be known he has certain abilities available to those willing to hire him.

Harrick is skilled in the identification and bypassing of mechanical traps, locating of secret passages, and escaping confinement, no matter how unfeasible it may seem. Whenever his funds run short, he trawls the taverns late at night, challenging patrons to bind him in such a way he cannot escape within a minute.

### Gorge Ivrist

Previously employed as a siege engineer, Gorge joined the colonisation expedition as a surveyor. Blessed with long, curly locks and an impressive beard, he works closely with Knev Massklyn, bringing the cartographer detailed measurements of distance, angle and elevation. Trusting nobody else to survey correctly, he organises mapping expeditions himself – although thus far has limited his ventures to boat trips along the coastline of the Hina Caldera.

Gorge has plans for a major overland trek to the mountains north of the colony, but has yet to find enough brave souls willing to accompany him on a purely mapping expedition. Indeed he is disgusted by the greed and iniquities of the inhabitants of Grimsand, viewing adventurers with a rather jaded eye. However, with the right approach, Gorge could be invaluable to any group venturing inland, at least those who wish to return to the colony again.

### Persval Fawset

A successful merchant with a love for the exotic, Persval Fawset has been drawn to the island by its overwhelming sense of mystery. Though roguishly handsome and wealthy beyond most of the colonist's dreams, his ambitions not only include looting every piece of historic fine art he can lay his sweaty hands on, but to also be remembered in history as being the discoverer of the Cities of Gold, which he is convinced exist.

Persval, as an amateur gentleman adventurer, is willing to get his hands dirty and has spent a great deal of time excavating the nearby ruins surrounding the plaza; dressed in dapper lightweight jungle clothing and a rather unique brimmed hat of his own design. Whilst this nets him some of the choicest finds of artefacts, he is actually seeking some sort of ancient map to guide him to his lost cities.

### Artur Doyal

Ostensibly the colonial expedition's annalist, Artur is a man of small frame and sensitive personality who has become strung out living in such a strange environment. He has taken to smoking rather unusual narcotics to help with the stress and humidity, which has in turn given his records a somewhat florid, even sensationalist, tone.

Since his duties rarely extend beyond a few hours each day, either noting colony business or debriefing those few expeditions which return intact, Artur can be found frequenting the Scaly Sentinel or Siren's Song. Here he supplements his habit by telling stories, based upon his own exaggerated reports of things seen in the jungle. A few of his yarns have become so popular, he has started to hang about the Plaza Gates waiting for the ruin-sifters, who sometimes show him particularly gruesome artefacts or small animals and insects they catch, seeking inspiration to create even more lurid tales.

*Now the palmettoes*
*Grow far apart, and lessen momently*
*To shrubs a dwarf might topple. Over them*
*I see an empty desert, all ablaze*
*With amethysts and rubies, and the dust*
*Of garnets or carnelians. On I roam,*
*Treading the gorgeous grit, that dazzles me*
*With leaping waves of endless rutilance,*
*Whereby the air is turned to a crimson gloom*
*Through which I wander blind as any Kobold;*
*Till underfoot the grinding sands give place*
*To stone or metal, with a massive ring*
*More welcome to mine ears than golden bells*
*Or tinkle of silver fountains. When the gloom*
*Of crimson lifts, I stand upon the edge*
*Of a broad black plain of adamant that reaches,*
*Level as windless water, to the verge*
*Of all the world; and through the sable plain*
*A hundred streams of shattered marble run,*
*And streams of broken steel, and streams of bronze,*
*Like to the ruin of all the wars of time,*
*To plunge with clangor of timeless cataracts*
*Adown the gulfs eternal.*

Clark Ashton Smith, The Hashish Eater

# Chapter 4: Places of Interest

The following chapter presents a selection of special places to be discovered and explored. Not all are intended to be 'defeated' or 'solved' with a single visit, but most should be able to fill several adventuring sessions and are stern challenges, even for experienced adventurers.

## Causeway of the Nightmarchers

Crossing the jungles of the Tane Caldera are ancient causeways; mighty stone roads elevated over the forest floor, above the low lying vegetation so that they remain passable even during the heaviest flooding. Over countless decades since the collapse of the High Folk civilisation, they have slowly fallen into disrepair. Shrubs now grow from between the basalt paving and in some places the stonework itself has been split asunder by earth tremors or the roots of gigantic trees.

The causeways are constructed of irregularly shaped cyclopean blocks, fitted perfectly together. In cross section the embankments are trapezoid in shape, and where possible they follow level contours so that they rarely rise more than four to five metres above the jungle floor, although their foundations extend deeper into the soil with cross channels to permit drainage. The top roadway is four metres wide whilst the base is at least six, granting them a degree of stability against earthquakes. Considering the quantity of stone required, they represent a once-epic feat of engineering.

Despite their practicality, few of the native savages use the causeways, fearing to encounter the Huakaipoor (see page 222); ghosts of ancient warriors who sometimes travel the stone roads, marching from the places their bones are interred to the battle sites where they were slain. To ward against these marching spirits, the causeways are often lined with horrific, crudely graven wooden statuettes or skull mounted staves.

Those daring to travel upon or near the causeway are usually warned of the approach of the Huakaipoor by the sound of their unearthly singing and dancing. Most natives believe that anyone who has the temerity to gaze upon the magnificently battle-arrayed dead will die, unless they are a direct descendent of one of the marching ghosts. Superstitions have arisen of what to do to placate the fierce Huakaipoor, such as wearing a cloak over your head and

## The Soul Harvester

This machine appears to be a back-to-front chariot, with whirling flails, scything blades and spiked wheels of burnished bronze. Mounted upon the central axle is a bizarre mass of silver pipes, metal dishes, pulsating bladders and glass spheres of varying sizes, the unholy contraption buzzing with some weird magical static. Any free roaming spirit or discorporated character with which the glyph-inscribed flails and blades intersect is sucked within the largest sphere, which glows with an ever increasing radiance the more spirits it absorbs. Physically, anyone run down by the machine suffers 2d6 damage and is automatically knocked prone.

The two most important aspects of the scientific sorcery are the combination of an orchestrated Trap Soul spell (Intensity 21, resisted by opposing a casting skill of 207%) with hollow spheres made of extraordinarily rare Animus Glass. The latter is refined from a magical mineral which can contain 100 POW of spirit or spirits per kilogram, naturally imprisoning them within its crystalline matrix.

The main spirit storage sphere is an arm span across with the potential to hold up to 10,000 POW of extra-dimensional beings. Currently half full, its inner radiance is akin to the slow swirl of a lava lamp. The sphere is, however, very brittle, having 6 Armour Points but only 4 Hit Points. Shattering the crystal prison will release the incarcerated beings en masse, creating a virtual storm of spirits which will lash out at anything within a several hundred metre radius in their pent-up rage, save perhaps for those responsible for ending their incarceration.

placing a large vegetable atop it, so that the ghosts decapitate the legume instead.

The night marchers normally arise during specific astrological conjunctions to re-enact particularly memorable conflicts or escort the spirit of a dying renowned Eiki warrior to the afterlife. Yet of late, the ghosts have been marching nightly along a section of causeway through Oodaki territory. Something has riled them, but none of the local natives has had the courage to find out why.

### Encountering the Marchers

The encounter can occur in several ways, the most likely being that a native envoy of the Oodaki tribe approaches Port Grimsand by sea-canoe to request the aid of fierce men of stout hearts. Assuming they accept the commission, characters are escorted to the start of the jungle road and told to follow it until nightfall. Conversely, adventurers who use the nearby causeway for convenient or covert travel further south, might stumble upon the marching Huakaipoor one evening on their return home.

Once the sun sets, the sounds of eerie chanting and stomping feet grow gradually louder, eventually to the point where the stones of the causeway itself begin to vibrate. This should provide a clear warning that something is approaching along the elevated road. A chance should be given for characters with local knowledge or an applicable lore to recall the legend of the marching ghosts, so that they can act in the proper manner.

Those that fail to conceal themselves in the nearby jungle, or lower their heads in respect, will draw the Huakaipoor's ire. Normally this would result in the death of the malefactor, but the ghosts are upset with some greater transgression and will see interloping characters as the perfect chance to investigate the wrongs being done to them.

How this pans out depends on what the characters do to appease the Huakaipoor. Any of the following might occur:

- *Attempt a War Dance to placate the ghosts* – A successful Dance roll will change the Huakaipoor's attitude to one of beneficence. They will then ask a favour of the characters: to accompany them to the battlefield the causeway leads to, and cease its desecration. In return, the warrior ghosts will offer an enchanted flute which will summon them once to intercede on the characters' behalf sometime in the future.
- *Attempt to fight the ghosts* – The spirits are immune to non-magical attacks and thus may be impossible to defeat in physical combat. They will, on the other hand, respect such bravery if none of the characters tries to flee, but instead face their doom square on. In such cases the ghosts will offer them surrender terms: either destroy those that desecrate the battle ground or be slain.
- *Attempt anything else* – As eternal warriors, the Huakaipoor disdain mealy-mouthed diplomacy, cravenness or trickery. Anyone not attempting to fight them or perform the correct ritual dance is little more than a worm to be used. In this circumstance

the ghosts will discorporate characters and engage them in one-on-one Spirit Combat. Those that are defeated are possessed by the ghosts and their bodies used as puppets to physically deal with the problem themselves.

## The Battle Site

The causeway ends at a battle site located between the Oodaki, Mandahi and Varanri lands. This sacred patch of ground is traditionally used to settle differences between these competing tribes. Triangular in shape the entire area is paved with irregular slabs of obsidian, between which tufts of grass or ferns struggle to grow. At its corners stand towering monoliths, crudely carved to represent various totem gods with holes bored into their malevolent eyes and fanged mouths, in which small flickering lamps burn.

A week before, a number of the Huakaipoor, who ventured forth from the Spirit World to re-enact a particular battle on this sacred ground, never returned, prompting more of the warrior ghosts to investigate what happened to their predecessors. These too have since vanished. The current war party of two hundred ghosts means to resolve the situation one way or another.

Unbeknownst to the Huakaipoor, a group of enthralled human slaves aided by a High Folk sorcerer have been capturing the spirits in a foul device of sorcery-science. Named the Soul Harvester, this enchanted machine was created in the last days of the High Folk civilisation as a weapon against the rampaging gods of the savages, in which it failed spectacularly on its first deployment.

The recent influx of human colonists, however, has prompted the disinterment of the Soul Harvester; Zerzura's leaders seeing an opportunity to ignite a war between neighbouring tribes and estranging them from their Spirit World allies. Using captured humans to operate the device, the patched-together techno-sorcerous machine has been harvesting a growing army of warrior ghosts – which will provide the sorcerers with a portable, one-shot weapon of mass destruction.

The enthralled group of humans are surviving members of a tomb raiding expedition which went missing nearly a year previously, after they headed south east into the thickest parts of the jungle. Captured by Mandahi savages, they were offered up to the High Folk as part of the tribe's tithe to their slowly awakening masters. Once in the hands of the sorcerers, the remaining desecrators were seduced by arcane arts, then given a taste of the High Folk's luxurious, yet debauched, lifestyle. Men and women of little moral fibre, they soon became corrupt agents for the sorcerers.

There are eight ex-colonists, hardened mercenary types wearing exquisitely fashioned scale armour and full helms crafted in the shape of a serpent head, normally carried in a storage chest built into the Soul Harvester. They are armed with their original weapons; a random collection of short swords, spears, shields and crossbows. Leading them is a High Folk sorceress placed in charge of the mission. Fortunately for arriving characters she has expended most of her magical strength on casting Defy Eidolon (Spirit Resistance) spells of high Magnitude and long duration on herself and her human slaves; to ensure their safety from being attacked or discorporated by the expected warrior ghosts.

As if the sorceress and her human guards were not enough of a problem, the Soul Harvester itself is pushed by two War Jaguars (use Tiger statistics, RuneQuest page 390), ferocious beasts which are barely held under control by the enchanted slave collars they wear  If faced by a significant force, the corrupted colonists will release the jaguars to wreck havoc before following up themselves, but always leaving a couple of guards with the device.

The group is alert, but does not expect trouble from mortal opponents. They know that the superstitious natives will steer well clear of the Huakaipoor, and each night after they reap the ghosts they are able to steer the machine back into partisan Mandahi tribal lands, safe from pursuit, assuming nobody is intelligent enough to realise what the tracks signify – the wheel being an unfamiliar concept to the savages

## The Battle

How the battle plays out is dependent upon the characters. Left to themselves, the Huakaipoor will simply throw themselves at the malignant machine, only to be scythed down in their dozens. The sorceress and guards are immune to their nominally frightening powers, leaving them with little they can do save provide a distraction.

Whilst the ghosts swarm the Soul Harvester, the sorceress and guards are effectively concealed by the swarm of spirits. The only thing which can be clearly seen is the brightly glowing sphere atop the sorcerous device, and even that suffers one difficulty grade penalty to hit until all the Huakaipoor are absorbed.

The characters' best chance of winning is one of the following:

- Capture the sorceress and hold her life ransom in exchange for turning over the device, release of her

slaves from magical control, or the future promise of the High Folk never meddling with the Huakaipoor again. She will only agree to one of these options if her life is threatened, claiming she will reincarnate in a new body to seek vengeance.

- Attack the Soul Harvester directly, preferably via some ranged weapon which the guards will initially fail to anticipate. If the sphere is shattered, all the surviving miscreants will flee into the jungle, terrified by the resulting spirit storm. Otherwise, unless the characters are themselves possessed by some of the chief warrior ghosts (potentially making them superhumanly capable in combat) the end result will probably be a mutual blood bath.

In the unlikely event that the sorceress is slain prior to her henchmen, the ex-colonists immediately surrender, claiming they were under her mental domination. Additionally they seem convincingly pleased at their long saught-after rescue. Of course this is all fabrication. Seeing through this lie requires a team Formidable Insight roll opposed by the surviving thug leader's Deceit skill of 80%. If they are believed, the corrupted tomb-raiders will happily return to the colony, then work from within to undermine any alliance with the local tribes.

## Suggested Uses for the Causeways

- Due to strengthening ties between the colony and either the Gamari or Oodaki tribe, Lord Greystone has ordered the nearest causeways to be repaired, so that trade can be expanded. This has upset some of local Savages who now raid any merchant caravan who dares pollute the causeway with their wheeled vehicles and the characters are called to provide escort duty.
- An exploring party sent to map a spur of the causeway does not return. Characters sent to discover what fate befell them, find that the causeway is a path into the Spirit World – one which requires no Trance skill to utilise. They must find the missing explorers whilst fighting off evil spirits which molest them.
- Local legends recount of a magic which permits anyone walking a sacred causeway to rapidly traverse the intervening distance between their starting point and the terminus of the road they wish to take; requiring only one breath for every thousand steps. The sorcery is known only to the High Folk of Agartha however, and requires some significant deed to trade for its knowledge.
- Acolytes and initiates of the colony's shrines claim that the strength of their gods is being drained away, stolen by some nefarious power. Investigation reveals that all magic within the colony is siphoning along the causeways, and robbed for its magical energy by a group of renegade kahunas far across the island. Such thefts must be stopped before the colonists are rendered entirely helpless.
- Disrespectful looting of a sacred battle ground prompts the huakaipoor to begin assaulting the colony. The ghosts are unable to leave the path of the original causeway however, meaning that clever characters can backtrack their route to discover why exactly the huakaipoor have been stirred up.

### Slave Collars

Created in their hundreds prior to the fall of Zerzura, the slave collars of the High Folk are thick bronze bands with sharp inner edges enchanted with the Enlarge spell. These are decorated in a highly ornate fashion, with name glyphs embedded into the stylistic design, indicating ownership, but are only the size of a tight wrist or ankle bracelet. They were usually manufactured by slaver sorcerers in sets of up to six, linked to a 'master' ring which controlled size changes, provided the collar is within range (normally about 75m).

The sorcery allows the band to be enlarged up to seven times the original diameter, or allowed to shrink back to some intermediary size. This enables the cruel device to be expanded to fit over head or foot then diminished to the point where it fits snugly, impossible thereafter to remove without the mental consent of whoever is wearing the master ring. Coercion of the wearer is ensured by allowing the band to grow smaller to the point it becomes constrictive; inflicting either pain or strangulation, depending on the shrinkage desired and the location the collar is worn.

Although the sorcery spell is relatively easy to temporarily dismiss, doing so usually dooms the wearer as the band immediately returns to its original size – which, unlike the normal restrictions imposed on the Shrink spell, can potentially decapitate or dismember the wearer. Attempting to chisel off the band has a similar effect, the spell ceasing to function once the integrity of the collar's sorcery matrix is damaged.

### Ythussis, High Folk Sorceress

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 9 | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Tail | 1/6 |
| CON: 16 | Damage Modifier | -1d2 | 4–5 | Right Leg | 1/6 |
| SIZ: 11 | Magic Points | 19 | 6–7 | Left Leg | 1/6 |
| DEX: 17 | Movement | 6m | 8–10 | Abdomen | 1/7 |
| INT: 19 | Strike Rank | 18 | 11–14 | Chest | 1/8 |
| POW: 19 | Armour | Scales | 15–16 | Right Arm | 1/5 |
| CHA: 7 | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 1/5 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 1/6 |

**Abilities**
*Cold Blooded, Earth Sense, Venomous*

**Magic (Sorcery)**
Invocation: Dictates of Tzarkand 85%
*Spells: Fetter Chattel (Mammals, Reptilians), Inhibit Fiends (Arthropods, Avians), Oppress Inferiors (Savages)*

Invocation: Pnachotic Protections 95%
*Spells: Obliterate Conjury, Forbear Violation, Defy Eidolon*

**Skills**
*Athletics 70%, Brawn 45%, Deceit 90%, Endurance 60%, Evade 80%, Influence 85%, Invocation – See Above, Perception 75%, Shaping 95%, Willpower 90%*

**Combat Style**
Eight-Jab Doom (Unarmed, Finger Needles) 85%

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Unarmed* | *M* | *T* | *1d3-1d2* | *As for Arm, Head or Tail (depending on which is used to attack)* |
| *Finger Needles* | *M* | *T* | *Poison* | *As for Arm* |

### Corrupted Slaves

| Attributes | 1d20 | Location | Slave 1 | Slave 2 | Slave 3 | Slave 4 | Slave 5 | Slave 6 | Slave 7 | Slave 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Action Points: 2 | 1–3 | Right Leg | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 |
| Damage Modifier: +1d2 | 4–6 | Left Leg | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 |
| Magic Points: N/A | 7–9 | Abdomen | 4/6 | 4/6 | 4/6 | 4/6 | 4/6 | 4/6 | 4/6 | 4/6 |
| Movement: 6m | 10-12 | Chest | 4/7 | 4/7 | 4/7 | 4/7 | 4/7 | 4/7 | 4/7 | 4/7 |
| Strike Rank: 7 (12) | 13–15 | Right Arm | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 |
| Armour: Scale and Helm | 16–18 | Left Arm | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 |
| Abilities: None | 19–20 | Head | 6/5 | 6/5 | 6/5 | 6/5 | 6/5 | 6/5 | 6/5 | 6/5 |

***Skills:*** *Athletics 60%, Brawn 70%, Deceit 80%, Endurance 65%, Evade 55%, Perception 60%, Willpower 50%*

**Combat Style**: Mercenary Thug (Sword, Spear, Shield, Crossbow) 80%

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Sword* | *M* | *M* | *1d8+1d2* | *6/10* |
| *Spear* | *M* | *L* | *1d8+1+1d2* | *4/5* |
| *Shield* | *L* | *S* | *1d4+1d2* | *4/12* |

# Cliff Face Dancers

Upon the westward-facing coastline and mountains held by the native tribes are a series of colossal bas reliefs, over a hundred metres high, carved deep into the towering rock faces. These prehistoric figures are of ancient warriors, shaman and bizarre monsters, each group extending for several kilometres, their numbers broken only by sections where the cliffs are less precipitous or have collapsed into the ocean.

The unimaginable effort required to carve these stone tapestries is testament to their ritual significance. To observing colonists, out at sea, the carvings express nothing more than crudely primitive, although striking, art. For the savages the carvings are both a method for honouring their tribal heroes and propitiating the mighty creatures which venture through the Smoking Mirrors.

An unusual aspect of the bas reliefs is that each one contains a recess or cave as part of their rudimentary lines; an eye, mouth or navel for example. In addition one key feature of the carving is inset with what appears to be a huge crystal. Thus the bas relief of a reptilian warrior might have a large jewel placed in its forehead as part of a crudely carved headband. During daylight, these crystalline features sparkle from afar.

Somewhat more ominously, nobody who views the titanic carvings can clearly recall their postures. A sailor who passes the figures from a week before would swear that they have shifted position, which has given rise to their name as the Cliff Dancers. This oddity has led to many new arrivals at the colony being fleeced by the local fishermen, who win wagers based upon seemingly poor memory or some optical illusion.

Anyone with the foresight and skill to actually sketch the bas reliefs however, would discover to their horror that the carvings do actually move; albeit so slowly that the change cannot be tracked save by the passing of several days.

## Scaling the Cliffs

Any attempt at closer investigation of the coastal cliff dancers requires venturing overland through tribal territory, since attempting to moor a boat to the base of the wave-pummelled cliffs and scale upwards is impossible. Conversely, at the top of the precipices are a series of stone rings a hand-span thick, inset halfway into the ground. Each ring is centred above one of the bas relief figures, allowing lianas or ropes to be passed through and either tied off, or given into the hands of a team for the purpose of raising and lowering.

Most of the caves and crystalline outcrops are between ten and fifty metres from the cliff tops, requiring considerable lengths of line to reach. Scaling the cliffs unaided is extremely foolish, as small rivulets of water often seep from cracks in the rock face and sometimes the top is part of an overhang. As such, free-climbing down to interesting features requires a Formidable Athletics roll; with a failure indicating that no route down could be found, and a fumble resulting in a plummet to the climber's death.

## Cave Shrines

The small cavities in the cliff face open up into shallow caves, usually no more than half a dozen metres deep. At the end of the grotto is a small altar, above or behind which is a recess. The altars are normally covered with offerings such as the skulls of monstrous beasts, long-withered flowers, bowls of wasted fruits, jars of fermented juice, small carved trinkets and so on. Within the niche is placed a large ceramic urn, sealed inside which are the bones of a revered hero or those of a particularly fearsome example of that particular species, depending on the bas-relief.

Offerings are normally presented to the venerated beings twice a year, during the equinoxes. At this time all wars and conflicts are temporarily put aside, and each tribe gathers together to pay homage to ancestors and creatures of critical importance to them. Tribal members of highest rank and those to be rewarded for performing a great deed are lowered down to the caves, so that offering may be made to the requisite spirits. A successful Binding roll by the lead propitiator ensures the continued favour of that entity. Failure may remove its willingness to act on the tribe's behalf, whilst a fumble often spells disaster of some form or another.

Any attempt to despoil the urns or the bones they contain, draws the retributive anger of the guardian set to protect the remains. These are mighty gnomes embodied into the carvings themselves, which can twist and move the very rock which they occupy. The normal response to those who would desecrate the shrines is the closure of the cave, in effect crushing the occupants still trapped within, unless they leap clear – which might not be sensible considering the cave's height. Treat the guardian as an Elemental (see RuneQuest page 350) of appropriate size.

## Crystal Fetishes

The crystalline feature each carving possesses is in actual fact the binding object to which the earth elemental is tied. Whilst not specifically valuable in its own right, the boulder-sized crystals are priceless as fetishes – leashing

an elemental spirit of Intensity 1d3+3. Appropriating one of these massive stones would be a tremendous feat of engineering, requiring not only the deception of the local tribe, but also some means of protection against retaliation from the huge gnome spirit itself.

Unlike other spirit bindings, such as village tiki, the crystal fetishes are not created by a tribe's own shaman. Instead they are commissioned by the Earth Quellers, a select spirit cult of neutral kahuna who reside in seclusion upon the summit of Ruaumoko – the Fire Bowl. These mysterious shamans show little interest in tribal politics or the struggles against the High Folk, but usually only intercede when the island itself is at risk of apocalyptic destruction.

When a great hero rises amongst the natives, the Earth Quellers arrive at his or her death feast, bearing with them one of the massive crystals in which an earth elemental spirit is bound (generally dragged by some gigantic monster) and proceed to carve a mortuary shrine from the next nearest section of cliff, or create a rock face if none exists. Why they do this is unknown, but it is the ultimate sign of respect for a member of the tribes to be honoured in this way.

### Suggested Uses for the Cliff Dancers

- Lord Greystone's chief surveyor requests that the characters venture to one of the cliff dancer sites and either take along a draftsman to record the bas-reliefs in detail, or sketch and measure the carvings themselves. Several weeks after their return, they are arrested for falsifying the drawings, citing that the images do not match the *actual* cliff figures.
- Some sailors who ventured off to sight-see (loot) the cliff dancers to the west of Grimsand return to the colony in blind panic, stating that the 'gods of the cliffs' swallowed several of their members. The characters are sent off to investigate the truth of the claim and if the entombed sailors are still alive, try to free them.
- One of the dancer bas-reliefs, nominally part of the Varanri tribal figures, has begun moving northward along the cliffs (at about 100 metres per day), looking furious with its toothed club raised threateningly above its head. The Oodaki tribe are upset at its approach to their own dancers, but cannot explain why the carving is acting in this way, or even if it is they or Port Grimsand which is its final objective.
- Pandemonium amongst the tribes erupts after the carved figures of the Ghidori tribe appear to cower and take supplicant postures to the great hydra bas-relief whose lines have sprouted graven wings and jets of fire. Fear is widespread that some titanic monster is about to appear from their Smoking Mirror, which shall run rampage over the island.
- A group of explorers return to the colony with a huge gemstone in tow, an amethyst geode over two metres in length, which several members of their team died to extract. This has been stolen from one of the Kangi dancing figures to the north east. All too soon the entire tribe turn up prepared for war unless the geode is returned, however the explorers already have it loaded aboard ship and are prepared to fight to keep it, threatening a schism in the colony.

## Fane of the Black God

Perched near the edge of the Puna Plateau, where the treacherously narrow path up crests the vertiginous escarpment, stands a monumental temple to a forgotten demon or deity, once propitiated by the continental civilisation prior to its sinking beneath the waves. Although long abandoned by its original focus of veneration, the entity has left

a dread curse upon its sanctuary for those that dare to sully its ruin.

The temple is a circular complex formed from slightly inward curving, fluted columns which end in tapering points some thirty to forty metres above ground; no one pillar equal in height to another. Within the column-bounded paved plaza is a near-spherical building appearing as if it were a ball with its lower third buried beneath the plateau floor. All is made from an unusual type of obsidian, whose glistening black surface is marbled with a milky white patina. Joints that might have hinted at its construction have been worn smooth by centuries of gritty abrasion.

Only a single ingress within the spherical fane is visible, a trapezoidal opening towards the escarpment. There are no gates or guardians per se, thus entry is simply a matter of walking inside. Within, the fane is one single space, its dimensions seemingly greater on the inside than the outside. The inner surface depicts a star-scattered sky akin to a planetarium, which anyone with the skills of Lore (Astrology) or Lore (Astronomy) will recognise as alien to the current stellar constellations outside, if of course the sun is not shining.

At the centre of the unusually cold fane stands a bizarre statue, made of an unknown metal of utter, ebon black. The form of the weirdly enthralling statue is that of a semi-human figure, crouching forward with out-thrust head, sexless and strange. Its one central eye is closed as if in rapture, and mouth pursed as if for a kiss. Other than the statue, there are no other furnishings within the temple save for verdigris-eaten bronze weapons and armour, all useless, and scattered wisps of gritty sand blown in from the outside.

## Dangers of the Fane

The Fane of the Black God presents two main threats. The first is that the region around the temple is rife with ghouls (see RuneQuest page 355); very starved ghouls with little to consume along the bleak plateau's precipitous edge. Travellers venturing through the area are often forced to fight off ghoul attacks, especially after nightfall when a greater number roam about howling in hunger. Unprepared groups are usually overwhelmed unless they fight their way back to the path down the escarpment or find a place to defend, the only obvious location being the fane itself.

Strangely the ghouls will not enter the odd shaped temple, held off by some unknown force. This reprieve is only temporary however, since the second deadly threat is posed by the stygian effigy within the fane. Anyone entering the spherical chamber feels compelled to approach the sculpture. Resisting this compulsion requires an opposed test of the transgressor's Willpower against the curse's strength of 100%. Those that fail engage the statue in a long passionate kiss, experiencing an orgasmic moment of out-of-body transcendence, whereupon they are attacked in Spirit Combat, by ghoul spirits.

Unlike normal ghouls as described in the main RuneQuest rulebook, the ghouls of Monster Island are created by possession by spirits (treat as an Intensity 2 Undeath spirit). The potency of the spirit is such that it begins killing its host almost immediately, each loss of Magic Points being reflected by a physical withering of the victim. If their soul is dissipated, the cursed victim is turned into a fully fledged ghoul. Although they cannot pass on their affliction via a bite, simply existing as carrion-consuming undead, their transformation is usually enough to cause others within the fane to flee in terror.

Other than persevering against the compulsion, the only other way to survive kissing the Black God is by willingly offering up a Magic Point donation in worship, prior to the embrace. If this occurs the statue blesses its kisser with a ghoul spirit which is temporarily held in check until the worshipper kisses someone else; at which point the new, sought out, victim is the target of the spirit's attack. This 'gift' lasts for as long as the petitioner can control the spirit they carry within them. On the first day no check is required, but on the second day a successful Willpower roll is necessary and each day after this the roll suffers an additional level of penalty until the spirit breaks free and attacks its carrier instead.

## Suggested Uses for the Black God's Fane

- After several expeditions that left to explore the plateau fail to return, a party of adventurers is sent to ascertain what occurred. On cresting the plateau, tracks are found leading to the exotic temple, within which are found some personal items belonging to the previous explorers. Soon after this momentous discovery, the missing owners, now transformed into ghouls, arrive at the fane seeking to slay and consume their erstwhile rescuers.
- A petition from the Kangi tribe arrives at the colony seeking compensation for a plague of ghouls that has begun assaulting their easternmost territory. The natives explain that the walking dead are cursed tomb raiders who illegally cross their land seeking to scale

the escarpment. They demand not only that the colony send representatives to deal with the plague, but also cease trespassing the ancient compact between the lowland savages and the High Folk of Zerzura.

- A love interest of one of the characters challenges his or her paramour, to climb the escarpment and return with the rumoured "Green Eye of the Great Black God". If they successfully overcome the few roaming ghouls and resist the Black God's compulsion, then removal of the eye simply requires a successful Lockpicking or Mechanisms check. Soon after returning with the fist-sized emerald, whoever retains the eye will be hunted by a never-ending succession of stealthy ghouls which seek vengeance for the desecration and return of the jewel.
- During their dreams, a character with a Hate passion of greater than 80% will see ghostly images of the Black God's Fane, accompanied with a desire to journey towards the Puna Plateau. Those that succumb to this desire will be drawn to the fane, untouched by the howling ghouls who will not seek to bar the individual's way. If as described previously a Magic Point is willingly offered to the statue, a one-use ghoul spirit is made available to assassinate the focus of their hatred, provided of course they can kiss them.
- On nights of the full moon the ghouls of the Plateau gather together about the Black God's fane, to dance and howl about its alien architecture. At the lunar zenith it is said that the demon changes from ebon to silver, and will grant the wish of anyone within who can satisfy its unholy passions. The rumour may or may not be false...

# Hanging Village

Deep within the mountains at the far eastern edge of Gyaosi territory is the location of a curious overhang of rock known by the locals as Komombo or 'The Jaw of Kom'. This broad and wide overhang of rock juts out from the cliff face at 90 degrees and is four hundred metres wide and up to a hundred and fifty metres deep (at the furthest outcrop), angling slightly downwards along its length. The savages claim it is where the great god Kom was buried under a mountain, with only one side of his colossal snout still visible. Who or what caused this titanic landslide is unknown, but the Gyaosi claim it was their own deity who caused the rocks to shatter under his shrieks of rage.

Disgraced outcasts for reasons lost to antiquity, the founders of Komombo chose not to build their village on the upper surface of the promontory, but rather on its underside. Thus, the village peers precariously down at the cloud forest far beneath them, its buildings connected by shaky rope bridges, some rotting, instead of occupying terra-firma in the more conventional style. Behind it, the cliff face has been carved with immense representations of Kom battling the other gods: vast semi-cyclopean carvings, worn smooth by time, the elements and adoring claws; an immortal frieze commemorating the region's mythic history and rebelliousness of the exiles which now inhabit it.

The village consists of some fifty to sixty stone huts carved from the underside of the rock. Of varying sizes, the huts are all of the same roughly conical shape, narrowing down with inverted triangular windows and doors cut into the walls, and long chimneys bored into the ceilings that stretch up through the rock, allowing the smoke from fires to drift out of the overhang's upper surface. Viewed from a distance it seems that the promontory possesses fangs with dozens of smoke plumes rising up from a remarkably crocodilian looking snout.

Natives of Komombo are stranger still in their lifestyle and habits. None suffer from the slightest twinges of vertigo and are oblivious to the obvious dangers of misplacing their footing and plummeting to a messy death. Indeed, they are as sure-footed as mountain goats and as sure-handed as gibbons. In addition to the rope bridge streets, copper rings have been hammered into the rock all over the underside allowing the natives to swing, primate-like, from ring to ring (or the vines which are tied to them) at great speed, traversing their village with alacrity and rarely needing to make use of the rope bridges, which are provided for the young and elderly.

The inhabitants of Komombo conform to rather strange taboos. It is forbidden, for example, for them to set foot on the upper side of the promontory. No one has in living memory, but there are legends of misbehaving villagers who did so and were eaten by aerial monsters, or who lost their footing and fell. It is also forbidden to drop things deliberately (accidents occasionally happen). Abandoning the totem of Gyaosu, the villagers propitiate Great Kom, in whose mouth they live, with a ritualised ceremony where offerings (parcels of food, garishly painted pebbles, criminals) are ritualistically dropped whilst their shaman-priests chant mantras.

## Food and Water

Rainwater is collected from the runoffs which trickle from upper surface of the promontory, creating short-lived waterfalls for several hours each time it rains. Since water is in quite short supply, the villages collect as much of this runoff as possible, storing the precious fluid in vast communal urns suspended from the underside of the rock. Extra fluid is wrung from long strips of absorbent cloth left dangling from the narrow window slots, which suck up the ambient moisture whenever Komombo is brushed by clouds.

For the purposes of occasional bathing, the natives descend to the valley several hundred metres below them via ropes of woven lianas. Several pools have been created by building dams across the natural watercourses. The villagers are uncomfortable on solid ground and remain only long enough to cleanse themselves. These pools also act as a reserve water supply, although hauling up large buckets or skins is backbreaking work.

Food comes from several sources: birds and bats caught in the ubiquitous nets that festoon the undersides of the hanging buildings and from snares dangled down to the base of the cliff. The nets are baited with small pieces of fruit, berries and other delectables which are gathered from overhanging plants or those few shrubs which cling to the vertiginous cliff-face.

The snares on the other hand are in effect giant lassoes, made from spider silk which the villagers annually collect from further south in Kumongi territory; a dangerous journey, requiring evasion of the spider savages whilst locating old webs abandoned by their hungry, giant weavers. Since Komombo is located above a valley whose upper end terminates in one of the Smoking Mirrors, a steady stream of prey wanders past their precipitous village. Snaring creatures is often a group effort, especially larger, heavier beasts which require dozens of the female villagers to pull up, whilst the males scramble down to kill it.

Between their barely self-sufficient trapper lifestyle and continuing persecution from the Gyaosi, the villages rarely leave their sanctuary. Over time they have become highly inbred and are considered reclusive oddities by neighbouring tribes.

## Daily Life

The villagers of Komombo are highly superstitious, driven to the most basic primitivism, with no form of written language and an existence focused solely on what is needed to endure. They live in small family groups (no more than seven or eight individuals) in one of the stone stalactite fangs. Entire days are spent fetching water, snaring birds, 'fishing' for food or weaving the innumerable ropes and snares needed for their daily chores.

The mornings and evenings are reserved for basking, in order to warm themselves against the chill nights brought by living at high altitude. Out of necessity every family utilises the skins of their ancestors as hammock bedding and blankets, to keep from freezing. They also smear themselves with rank fat, rendered down from creatures they manage to trap, in order to prevent from drying out. Unfortunately this gives the villages a distinctively unpleasant odour, which they themselves never note.

During the evenings the villagers gather at the headman's hut, the largest of the stalactite fangs, where storytellers entertain with oft-told legends and the shaman-priests conduct worship of Great Kom. If the moon is full, they instead dedicate themselves to carving out new friezes or expanding the ossuary chambers carved into the cliff.

## Cultural Rituals

There are few old people in the village. When an individual is too old to swing, it is customary to 'Join with the vultures' – a euphemism for dropping from the settlement, albeit still tied to a length of liana or silk, attached about the feet to prevent the elder from hitting the valley floor. The arrested drop usually breaks the spine of the elder, with death soon following. This is done during the dead of night and is always a silent process. Close relatives will acknowledge the act, but be thankful for one less mouth to feed. After several weeks of hanging, scavenging birds have usually stripped the body of flesh and the partial skeleton is hoisted back up to be interred in the ossuary caves.

Those who take more than their fair share of water or food, commit adultery, or insult Kom are considered self-declared sacrifices. The headman and shaman-priests judge the offender and then he or she is ritually 'Put to the Air' – a process very similar to Joining the Vultures but with far less voluntary commitment and no rope.

Great Kom is the only god recognised, the totemic link to Gyaosu long since sundered with their exile. His exclusive and jealous worship brings them little in terms of magical intercession, but allows them to live on in Komombo's jaw without being crushed or dashed to the floor of the valley – a blessing proven by the lack of any earthquake striking the promontory. Since the village is nigh-on impregnable, the inhabitants consider it a worthy exchange.

## Reaching Komombo

To get to the village one must scale the cliff face over which the promontory juts. This is a 200 metre free-climb made slightly less impossible owing to secret climbing paths and hand/foot holds the villagers have worn over the centuries. The carvings of the gods and monsters have been cunningly equipped with hand, toe and tail holds along their edges, and so there are several routes between the ground and the village, although almost all are concealed from casual observation.

At the point where the cliff begins to arch backwards to form the promontory is a rope bridge leading into the first residential fangs of the village. The families occupying these two excavated stalactites are charged with watching against enemies and so sneaking into Komombo is not easy. The rope bridge is hung with small copper bells and desiccated bones that jangle – alerting the villagers to the presence of unwanted visitors.

Intruders are generally taken captive using bird nets, interrogated by the headman, and then (once liberated of useful things) Put to the Air. If an intruder can plead a convincing case, then he might be allowed to stay, but is always kept under keen watch by the savages. It is possible to fly up to the village, if such means are available, but the watchful villagers mercilessly pelt airborne intruders with sling stones, spears and rotten fruits until they retreat or fall. Few are readily welcomed.

## The Villagers

After centuries of isolation, malnutrition and inbreeding the lizardmen of Komombo are smaller in stature than their brethren, although it is unknown whether this diminution is natural or part of a curse. They have pale hide with a grey mottling across their scales, thick, powerful shoulders and arms, and legs that are slightly too short in proportion to their body. Fingers are long, slender and nimble; a change mirrored with their toes. Even their tails have lengthened to aid in their brachial acrobatics.

Whilst their physical attributes have evolved to match their environment, their mental capacity has increasingly slipped to the point where some of the villagers have lost the ability to speak. Those that can still communicate use a degenerate patois barely recognisable as the Low Tongue. Some of their congenital superstitious paranoia can be blamed on this mental atrophying.

### Komomboians

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Tail | 2/4 |
| CON: 2d6+3 (10) | Damage Modifier | None | 4–5 | Right Leg | 2/4 |
| SIZ: 1d3+6 (8) | Magic Points | 11 | 6–7 | Left Leg | 2/4 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 4m/8m* | 8–10 | Abdomen | 2/5 |
| INT: 2d6+3 (10) | Strike Rank | 15 | 11–14 | Chest | 2/6 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Scales | 15–16 | Right Arm | 2/3 |
| CHA: 2d6 (7) | | *walking/swinging | 17–18 | Left Arm | 2/3 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 2/4 |

**Abilities**
*Cold Blooded, Night Sight*

**Skills**
*Acrobatics 72%, Athletics 82%, Brawn 41%, Craft (Sculpt Guano) 69%, Endurance 40%, Evade 88%, Lore (Komombo) 50%, Stealth 59%, Unarmed 52%, Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style**
Noose Hunter 72% (Net, Noose, Sling, Spear): Mancatcher Trait

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Net* | - | - | *Entangle* | *2/20* |
| *Noose* | - | *VL* | *Entangle or Strangulation* | *1/2* |
| *Sling* | *L* | - | *1d8* | *1/2* |
| *Spear* | *S* | *M* | *1d8+1* | *4/5* |
| *Unarmed* | *S* | *S* | *1d3* | *As for Limb* |

The villagers have adopted an almost lethargic immobility, able to squat or hang motionless for long periods before exploding into action. Indeed they are deceptively fast and naturally agile (clumsy Komomboians tend to die early). What few crafts remain to them are limited to net weaving, obsidian knapping and sewing simple jerkins of hide stuffed with feathers for warmth.

## Suggested Uses for Komombo

- The remote nature of the village and insular habits of the inhabitants means that very few of the neighbouring savage tribes have any contact with the exiles. The High Folk though, see them as a resource. The diminutive stature and unusual development of the Komomboians makes them ideal for certain sorcerous experiments where using their own slaves would simply be too wasteful or launching tribal raids too disruptive. Although assaulting the promontory is difficult, the High Folk are willing to engage others to venture to Komombo to collect new specimens, and several may be needed, depending on the experiment's requirements.
- Believing that the friezes of Komombo are an insulting parody of the Cliff Face Dancers, a number of incensed tribes have decided to chastise the village with a coordinated raid and deface the carvings. The aim is not to take slaves, but to remind them that they are outcasts, misfits, heretics, and a good source of sport. Understandably the Komomboians are fed up with this treatment and seek aid to defend the basreliefs of their god. Of course, being rather paranoid they capture and bind suitable mercenaries first, then make an offer of employment after, whilst suspending the captives over a several hundred metre drop...
- Legend amongst Komomboians tells that anyone who survives being Put into the Air has the divine blessing of Kom, and must be obeyed no matter what command is given. One of the colonists (a despicable sorcerer who has divined this knowledge) desires to take advantage of this superstition and hires adventurers to escort him to Komombo to seek audience with the headman. Upon arrival the necromancer will covertly Palsy his own limbs and tongue, then use Switch Body to take over one of the adventurers who will perform some profane act of claiming the position of hetman in order to be cast off the promontory into the valley below. The sorcerer will then return to his own body and Revivify the adventurer's corpse to fulfil the omen, and unless stopped, use the zombie as a puppet to enforce his will.
- Komombo is probably the best source of mountaineers on the island. Their natural skills and instinct for climbing seemingly un-scalable cliffs is unmatched amongst any of the other native tribes, even the Kangi. To overcome their superstitious dread of open sky and travelling by foot requires a significant bribe, usually live food to sacrifice to their silent god or metal weapons to arm themselves. The price will be exorbitant, but anyone willing to mount an assault on the Screeching Mountain or the escarpment leading up to the Puna Plateau, will find hiring the Komomboians as guides invaluable.
- Many years ago, on one of the spider silk gathering raids, an adventurous Komomboian discovered a lump of vitrified ebony shaped remarkably like a fang. He took it, not realising that it was the fetish for an important Kamakuri ancestor spirit. Great Kom's Tooth now rests in the headman's hut, cemented into the wall with guano. The Kamacuri have, after a particularly arduous Spirit Quest, learned of where the Tooth is, and want it back. They realise that an assault on Komombo is a dangerous enterprise but are willing to pay others to do the dirty work, promising fetishes and other treasures from the Petrified Forest. However the ancestor spirit is very, very angry with the Kamacuri for taking so long to come and get it. Despite the misplaced worship it receives from the Komomboians it will wrench whoever releases it into the Spirit Plane and imprison their soul in a similar lump of petrified ebony for 1d4 centuries, before seizing control over the poor, unwitting, Komomboians and leading them on a punitive raid against its own descendents. The enraged ancestor is an Intensity 4 spirit (INT 10, POW 27, CHA 15. Combat Style (Eiki Warrior) 137%, Culture (Kamacuri) 120%, Discorporate 87%, Locale 120%, Lore (Petrifaction Techniques) 120%, Lore (Strategy & Tactics) 137%, Spectral Tail-Lash 92%, Willpower 104%).

# Harojama's Tower

On the east coast of the island, perched on a precarious needle of rock that looks out across the vicious, keel- and hull-breaking reefs, is the Storm Tower built by Harojama, a long-dead human sorcerer who was briefly a master of the island.

Harojama lived almost five generations ago and fled to the island to escape those who were, at the time, scourging the world of sorcerers. They pursued him with magic of their own, but he countered that; so they pursued him with ships and soldiers, intent on taking the mysterious land by force. To protect its coasts, Harojama enslaved the savages and forced them to build the Storm Tower – the first of several planned defensive towers that would pepper the coastline. Countless natives died in raising this great, spiralling, twisted edifice to Harojama's insecurity.

The Storm Tower is designed to wreck ships. Any ships. It is an ingenious combination of traditional architecture and demonic vision. Harojama built his tower, sacrificing native slaves along the way, and then, at its summit, he conducted a summoning ritual that brought the demon Uru-Soruru, the Storm Prince, to the mundane world, imprisoning it with powerful incantations and glyphs. The entombed souls of the slaves who died to build the tower help fuel Uru-Soruru's rage and so the entire tower – and hence huge stretches of the coast – screams and moans as soon as darkness falls. When the demon lord's rage can no longer be contained, then begin the merciless storms, Uru-Soruru's fury made real.

And what of Harojama? Ah, even the mightiest fall. The natives he had so callously exploited finally rose up against him, their shamans summoning their own spirits of retribution. Harojama was hunted across the island by both spirits and warbands. They finally caught him in a lonely cave, naked, half-mad, thirsty and famished. They bound him, took him back to his tower and there they flayed him, splaying his skin across the inner sanctum of the Storm Tower. Then they plucked out his eyes and made him eat them. Finally, after performing their own, dread rituals involving his viscera, he was hurled out of the tower and dashed to pieces on the jagged rocks, hundreds of metres below.

But the tower still stands. And within it are Uru-Soruru, the spirits of the slaves, and the ghost of Harojama. All are prisoners. All abhor each other. But, until Uru-Soruru is freed, the eastern flanks of the island will continue to be wracked by the most dreadful storms imaginable, dragging more ships to their doom, and preventing any escape to the east by sea.

## The Tower

Built from large chunks of vitrified rock quarried from the Obsidian Rift (see page 85) and transported over the mountains to this site, the tower is a hundred and fifty metres high and five metres wide, and built in a strange, spiralling style as though the thing was built as a straight column and then twisted by a giant hand at several points along its vertical axis. It is also not truly perpendicular; the tower lists by two or three degrees at its mid point, causing it to lean outwards over the promontory on which it stands. A goodly number of rotted corpses and bones surround its base.

Neither is it hollow, save for the Inner Sanctum at its very summit. Steep stairs follow the tower's spiral on the outside. There are no rails or hand-holds, because the tower was not designed for human occupants. Climbing the tower requires a steely heart and great nerve as the stairs twist around the architecture. Doing so counts as Medium effort for Fatigue rolls; Willpower rolls are also necessary every fifty metres to prevent characters from feeling nauseous or suffering from vertigo as they make the ascent. If the Willpower roll is failed, a character cannot progress and must descend to safe ground. If the Willpower roll is fumbled then the character is frozen to the spot, too terrified to move until an unaffected comrade can come and guide the character down.

As if the ascent were not nerve-shredding enough, there are the forlorn and angry souls of the native slaves who died so the tower could be built. Their blood and spirits inhabit the very stones of the tower and can be observed by those with the Trance skill. These spirits cling to the tower's stones, broken and anguished, howling at their imprisonment. They cannot affect the living directly, but their cries become audible when night falls and rolls for Fatigue and Willpower become one grade more difficult as the wails assault the senses.

The tower finally ends with a flat platform, five metres in diameter, surrounded by an egg-shaped open latticework of narrow stone that extends some seven metres in height. This is the Inner Sanctum, exposed to the winds that pass through the widely spaced trellis. Entry is via a single arched opening. The stones forming the arch are deeply etched with runes, symbols and glyphs that intertwine in a complex and disturbing design. Many of the glyphs are not of human origin, but there are enough for characters

skilled in ancient languages (successful roll) to determine some of their meaning.

*The Storm Prince Dwells Here. Blood and Souls Keep His Throne. From This Summit He Screams At My Foes. Let Them Die Amidst the Waves and Rocks, Broken Like Surf.*

Inside, the Inner Sanctum is shadowy, even during daylight. On the floor is a complex, carved mantra of yet more semi-alien glyphs, runes and wards that occasionally spiral out and up the curving lattice walls, which are ostentatiously decorated with a copper inlay. A successful Shaping roll recognises this blasphemous place as a Geomantic Node (see page 131) with a highly intricate and very powerful summoning and binding enchantment designed to capture and hold an otherworldly entity of immense power. Uru-Soruru can manifest here, as described below.

## The Denizens of the Tower

On the wall opposite the archway is what appears to be an animal hide, tanned and stretched out, then secured to the lattice wall by bronze spikes at the limbs. On closer inspection – and perhaps a successful Insight roll – it becomes clear this is not an animal skin, but a human. Harojama's flayed skin has been here for over a century and it acts as the binding focus for the dead sorcerer's agonised spirit.

Harojama has become an Intensity 3 Haunt. It possesses the Telekinesis, Miasma and Wraith Form traits. Harojama craves release, and anyone capable of giving its desire is implored to do so. All others are violently resisted. The Haunt attempts to force the living to either fling themselves from the platform in abject terror, to plummet to their doom, or cause them physical harm with its supernatural attacks.

Imprisoned alongside the demon Uru-Soruru, Harojama believes (wrongly) that further sacrifices to the demon will result in his release from an unloving hell. Uru-Soruru, on the other hand, enjoys tormenting Harojama's soul – and does so, nightly, as it has done every night since its unwelcome binding.

### Harojama's Spirit

Intensity 3 Haunt (Violently Hostile)
INT 17
POW 22
CHA 6
Action Points: 3
Spirit Damage: 1d8
Magic Points: 22

Skills: Spectral Combat 78%, Willpower 99%

Traits: Miasma, Telekinesis, Wraith Form (see RuneQuest page 407)

### Uru-Soruru

The Storm Prince hails from a plane of perpetual storms and primal turbulence. It manifests as an immense humanoid (SIZ 26) composed of writhing eels and lampreys. Its head, mounted on a long eel-like neck, is that of a vast hammerhead shark with rows of small, razor sharp teeth and pale blue and orange, dead, eyes.

Uru-Soruru controls storms. The winds, rains, thunderheads and cruel, turbulent seas are his to command. His sphere of influence waxes and wanes to a radius of 1d8x10 kilometres and he can command a storm to arise or abate anywhere within this radius at will, although the caldera mountains tend to constrain the effects to eastern coast. On his home plane his influence is far more acute, and trapped on this mundane world he is frustrated at his truncated power. He is also aggravated at the glyphs and runes that Harojama craftily inscribed to hold him here. Although he is trapped unless the runes are broken somehow, he at least has Harojama's soul to persecute. It helps pass the time.

Unless Uru-Soruru can be dispelled then the storms that plague the east coast of Monster Island will endure forever. The demon is immune to mundane magic and has little interest in mortals. He manifests in the centre of the Inner Sanctum with the onset of darkness. The swirling glyphs in the centre of the room begin to take on solid form, becoming living elvers that coagulate into larger eels, the eels then multiplying at a frightening rate until Uru-Soruru's full form is realised (which takes 1d3 minutes). At this point the storms begin, stretching out to sea but also battering the tower and its surrounding mountainside.

Uru-Soruru is oblivious to mortals unless attacked. If assaulted, the eels and lampreys which comprise his

**Uru-Soruru, Demon Prince**

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 26 | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Right Leg | 3/9 |
| CON: 18 | Damage Modifier | +1d12 | 4–6 | Left Leg | 3/9 |
| SIZ: 26 | Magic Points | 28 | 7–9 | Abdomen | 3/10 |
| DEX: 18 | Movement | 6m | 10-12 | Chest | 3/11 |
| INT: 13 | Strike Rank | 16 | 13–15 | Right Arm | 3/8 |
| POW: 28 | Armour | Slime | 16–18 | Left Arm | 3/8 |
| CHA: 2d6 (7) | | | 19–20 | Head | 3/9 |

**Abilities**
*Allergy (Earthed Copper), Engulfing, Formidable Natural Weapons, Immunity (to Magic whilst bound), Create Storms*

**Skills**
*Athletics 60%, Brawn 90%, Endurance 90%, Evade 70%, Perception 65%, Willpower 90*

**Combat Style**
Storm Prince Eels 100%

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite (Eel Arms* | *L* | *VL* | *1d6+1d12, Shock* | *As for Arm* |
| *Bite (Shark Head)* | *L* | *L* | *1d8+1d12* | *As for Head* |

body begin to crackle with lightning. Any metal weapon used to strike him or parry his blows transmits a Shock to the combatant's arm, as per the Folk Magic spell. He uses Grip to hold onto troublesome opponents and drag them towards his vast, main maw with which he inflicts terrible bites. Uru-Soruru is tireless and will fight all night long if needs be, until daybreak causes him to dissolve back into the glyphs that hold him.

The safest method of defeating the demon is to somehow ground his body against the copper inlay covering the inner surface of the dome's encapsulating latticework. If his physical form is destroyed, it will regenerate the next night so it is possible to subdue the demon temporarily – but never for more than 24 hours. To defeat him totally, the glyphs that both imprison and render him immune to magic must be sundered and that is only possible if Harojama's scrolls can be found, which show the formula of Un-Making.

These scrolls are hidden in the cave where Harojama took refuge along with other personal effects the sorcerer had with him when he was finally captured. The scrolls are now faded, difficult to discern and require some skill to translate, but if successful they contain the precise ritual for breaking the enchantments that hold the demon on this plane. Games Masters should determine how long it takes to enact the Un-Making, which is a ritualised combination of the Neutralise Magic and Banish (Uru-Soruru) spells, and what components are required (a blood sacrifice is suggested).

## Suggested Uses for the Tower

- By some stroke of fortune the characters' ship is driven aground upon one of the few beaches at the foot of the mountains as a direct result of Uru-Soruru's power. If they have any hope of escaping by sea, they must put an end to the ghastly storms wracking the eastern coast.
- One of the local tribes has taken to worshipping Uru-Soruru as a god and makes regular pilgrimages across the mountains to propitiate the demon. They believe Uru-Soruru takes the souls of the sacrifices and discards the bodies: they are wrong. It is Harojama who compels them to suicide.
- The characters stumble across Harojama's old cave and the scrolls contained therein. Fragments of his journal indicate a great demon captured in the tower: with the means to destroy it, the characters might gain hope of an escape.
- Rumours amongst the tribes say that the tower contains a fabulous treasure at its summit: gold and jewels placed there by an ancient king and protected by the storms. Whoever has the courage to venture to

its top will become rich beyond measure and gain the means to rule Monster Island.

- Another rumour has it that the tower contains the only Smoking Mirror on the island that goes in the *other* direction and is the surest way of escape. Certainly those who have ventured to the top of the tower have not come back down, indicating this could be true – which, of course, it is not…

# Heads of Anak Krakatau

Deep within Kumongi tribal lands stand the Heads of Anak Krakatau, a series of colossal boulders that emerge out of the side of a minor hill, noted for its sulphurous hot water springs. Thirteen of these immense stones lie in close proximity to one another, looming over the stunted jungle that seems somewhat sickened in the area.

No rhyme or reason appears to have positioned the rocks, but each one has been chiselled or otherwise magically shaped to take the form of an gigantic reptilian head, the smallest of which is a mere 9 metres high and the largest 23 metres. It is the latter which is of most interest, a never ending rivulet of boiling water trickling out from its graven jaws that intermittently vomits forth as a roaring geyser of scalding steam.

Such displays are considered as indications of the will of Anak Krakatau, the mighty king who sleeps-in-waiting.

### Anak Krakatau

Perhaps the greatest hero of the savage tribes is the conqueror-king Anak Krakatau, the chieftain who united the tribes under his leadership and led the revolt to overthrow the corrupt High Folk civilisation. It is said that after he defeated the sorcerers, Anak Krakatau wept for no other great deeds remained before him, so he embraced eternal sleep by throwing himself into the hairy arms of Kumongu the god of spiders. Others say that he fell in the final cataclysmic battle, when the High Folk sorcerers toppled a mountain upon him. Since that day legends have abounded that Anak Krakatau will rise again to destroy the sorcerers once and for all, obliterating them all in rivers of fire...

The local natives believe that the colossal stone head is in fact the head of this hero-warrior, the rest of his body buried beneath the hill that was dropped atop him to prevent his rising again. Actually there is some truth behind this legend, the body of the hero-king lying below, guarded against desecration by a series of traps and a frightening arachnid monster of unusual size.

## Surrounding Area

Being one of the most sacred sites of the Island, the stone heads are provided with a cursory guard of 1d3+3 Kumongi warriors. These will not expect any trouble unless colonists have been pillaging the local region, present more to prevent locals from wandering too close for their own safety. The heads themselves are tikis each containing an extremely dangerous spirit too deadly to approach unless the Ancestor Spirit residing in Head 3 is propitiated in the correct manner, usually by a high shaman of the Kumongi tribe.

*Head 1 – Intensity 3 Death spirit, INT 14, POW 20, CHA 8, Discorporate 84%, Spectral Combat 78%, Willpower 90%*

*Head 2 – Intensity 4 Curse spirit, INS 7, POW 28, CHA 7, Spectral Combat 85%, Willpower 106%, Special Effect: Select Target (as per fumble)*

*Head 3 – Intensity 5 Ancestor spirit (the high kahuna who established this sacred place), INT 13, POW 31, CHA 17, Binding 131%, Culture 126%, Trance 123%, Willpower 117%, plus each of the currently bound Curse, Death and Sickness spirits as allied spirits*

*Head 4 – Intensity 4 Sickness spirit, INT 6, POW 25, CHA 7, Discorporate 81%, Spectral Combat 82%, Willpower 100%, Spider Sickness (vomit up spiders, death 4 rounds later)*

*Head 5 – Intensity 4 Haunt, INT 12, POW 25, CHA 15, Miasma, Telekinesis, Wraith Form, Glamour, Unarmed 91%, Willpower 100%*

*Head 6 – Intensity 4 Death spirit, INT 11, POW 26, CHA 15, Discorporate 87%, Spectral Combat 91%, Willpower 102%*

*Head 7 – Intensity 6 Wraith, INT 13, POW 39, CHA 12, Spectral Combat 101%, Willpower 128%*

*Head 8 – Intensity 4 Wraith, INT 15, POW 29, CHA 15, Spectral Combat 94%, Willpower 108%*

*Head 9 – Intensity 4 Curse spirit, INS 10, POW 29, CHA 13, Spectral Combat 92%, Willpower 108%, Reduce Attribute: Hit Points (-4 HP to every location)*

*Head 10 – Intensity 3 Sickness spirit, INT 5, POW 20, CHA 8, Discorporate 75%, Spectral Combat 78%, Willpower 90%, Blood Weep Sickness (blindness, bleeding 4 minutes later)*

*Head 11 – Intensity 4 Sickness spirit, INT 11, POW 27, CHA 3, Discorporate 88%, Spectral Combat 80%, Willpower 104%, Drowning Mucus Sickness (onset of asphyxiation after 4 rounds)*

*Head 12 – Intensity 5 Nature spirit, INS 7, POW 35, CHA 5, Spectral Combat 90%, Willpower 120%, Dominate Species: Winged Apes*

Any attempt to reach the central head without performing the correct ceremony and propitiatory sacrifices will be attacked by those spirits which can reach them or are let loose by the ancestor kahuna. The outermost spirits initially remain passive, save for the Haunt which utilises its Miasma and Glamour powers to drive off interlopers. The remaining spirits wait until intruders penetrate deeper, coordinating their assault, so that they cannot be destroyed piecemeal. Such a battle will certainly overwhelm any normal party of adventurers, unless they garner some aid or trickery to help evade these potent guardians.

## The Central Head

Loosely located at the centre of carved boulders, the largest head shares a similar reptilian appearance to the others. Elongated towards the snout, the towering edifice possesses several recesses within its bulk: namely the nostrils and cavernous mouth. Unlike the other heads these openings actually provide access deeper within the boulder. The eyes of the head are magnificently inset with some sort of jade, the slits appearing to be actual openings, although too narrow for human egress. However at dusk when the sun is low on the horizon the slits blaze with a ruddy golden light.

### Pool and Sacrificial Rock

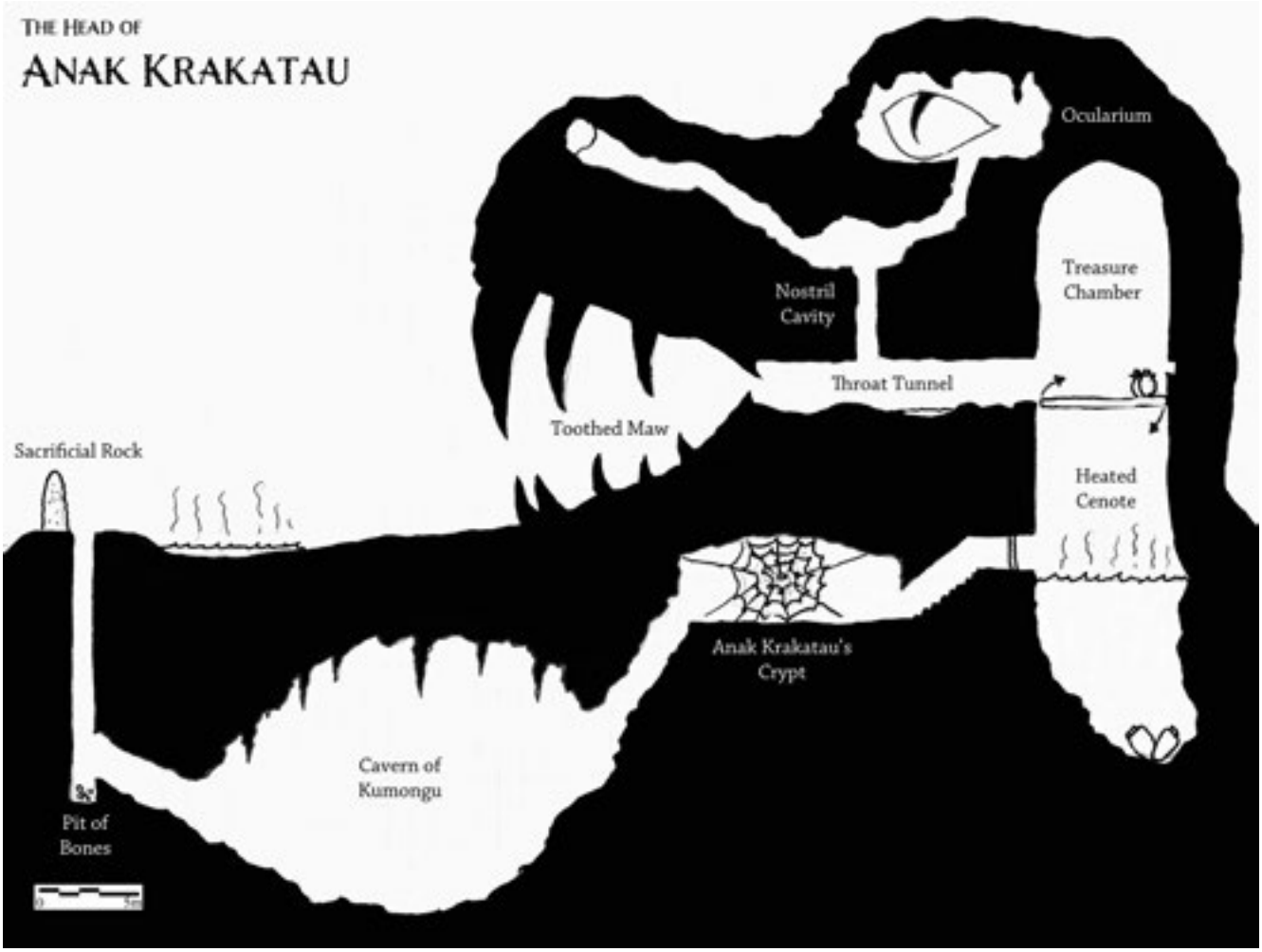
Before the head is a shallow pond of steaming water, fed by the outflow from the toothy maw. The water drains at

the far edge in a series of tiny falls. In the centre of the pool is an island which is reached by a slab of stone that acts as a bridge. Stepping into the near boiling water will inflict 1d3 damage to each leg.

Only a few metres across, the rocky islet is dominated by an upthrust obelisk. Upon it are copper manacles inset into the stone facing towards Anak Krakatau's head, whilst at its foot the ground yawns open above a vertically walled shaft, from which putrid odours rise. Rather gruesomely, the rotted remnants of a hand remain lodged in one of the cuffs.

### Toothed Maw

The mouth cavern is edged by a series of yellowing stalactites and stalagmites, formed from minerals deposited from the incidental geyser gushes. Scalding water bubbles up from a hole at the rear of the cavern, its flow only interrupted for 1d6 minutes prior to the next explosive gout (something that occurs randomly every 1d3 hours). This is the only time it is ostensibly safe to enter the cavern, at least from the perspective of parboiled feet. The subsequent geyser however is lethal, anyone caught in its eruption suffering 2d6 damage to every Hit Location, worn armour providing no protection.




At the rear of the cavern, beyond and above the upwelling, is a blocked-up passageway, its stones calcified by the same mineral deposits as the toothy formations. It can be chipped through, providing a suitable tool is used such as a pickaxe or maul. The barrier has 10 Armour Points and 100 Hit Points, although chances are that anyone digging will be caught by at least one geyser eruption before they break through, unless they rig some clever contraption to protect the excavators from blasting steam.

### Throat Tunnel

Behind the stone wall is an irregular passageway which leads back towards a chamber at its far end. Its narrow width forces human-sized characters to travel single file, incidentally making all physical skills one grade more difficult. The walls are somewhat mouldy, covered with peeling paintings describing the deeds of Anak Krakatau.

About halfway along the passage is a hole in the roof, from which some rotted lianas dangle down. The narrow hole leads up to the nostril cavity, but anyone of more than SIZ 13 who attempts to climb the thick vine will break it. It is via this natural vent that the bats enter and leave.

Strangely, the floor and lower walls are almost glassy smooth, free from fallen pieces of stucco or bat guano. The reason for this is that a large panopticus (see page 258) lives in the tunnel, hiding in the warm darkness and living off the bats and their droppings. Whatever the reason for its presence, the panopticus cannot scale the walls to reach the upper caves, and so remains trapped. It can normally be found splayed out like a puddle of eye-filled water at a low point in the floor.

### Nostril Cavity

Positioned midway up between the Throat Tunnel and the Ocularium, this irregular cavity is the main access route for both the winged apes and the bat colony. From the outside it can be reached by scaling the colossal boulder, requiring a successful Hard Athletics roll despite the clinging vegetation. It was once blocked off in a similar manner to the Toothed Maw, but someone or something has long ago broken the seals.

Within, the low ceiling forces human explorers to bend double, incurring a Formidable penalty to combat skills if encountering one of the winged apes here. It smells disgusting, a combination of rotten fruits and guano which litter the rough floor. Whilst the passageway leading up to the Ocularium is obvious, it requires a successful Hard Perception roll to discover the narrow access tube down to the Throat Tunnel, hidden behind a rock outcropping at the back of the natural cavity.

### Ocularium

This large chamber lies behind the eyes, as seen from the outside of the head. Panels of inset jade and vertical eye slits provide the room with illumination during the day. Once some sort of ritual chamber, the curved back wall has a number of beaten golden plaques 50cm in diameter, shaped in fierce, stylised reptilian faces. Though constructed of gold, the metal is paper thin so that each weighs less than 100g of the valuable stuff. All of the plaques have been badly damaged, but still remain embedded in their wall niches.

In the centre of the chamber is a magnificent golden throne, which has been splintered and defecated upon; closer examination revealing it to be merely carved wood covered with gold leaf. The rest of the room has been ransacked, shattered pieces of once-fine pottery found in the corners or hidden beneath the disgusting nests of the eight adult winged apes that reside here (see RuneQuest page 395). Survivors of the battle against the tiki spirits will be found cowering here, unwilling to fight unless the three baby apes are threatened.

The only other thing of note is a sadly battered mummified corpse which the young apes play with. It is obviously centuries old and if investigated will be revealed as a dummy stuffed with coconut fibre . The gilded death mask can be found in one of the nests, its jewels mere semi-precious stones which must have glittered prettily when the setting sun fully shone into the Ocularium at dusk.

### Treasure Chamber

Located at the end of the Throat Tunnel, this small chamber is perfectly circular, its walls consisting of seemingly irregular stonework, but in actual fact the lines are carved into the living stone. The roof is twice as high as the room is wide, giving an odd feeling of perspective and providing a safe place for a colony of bats to roost. In addition the room feels wonderfully warm.

If entered during the daytime, smoking torches and loud noises will frighten the bats, causing them to drop down as a massive cloud of flapping horrors. Vampiric by nature, the bats will simply flee the tunnels, possibly alerting any remaining guards patrolling outside. Although they do not attack, every character will be exposed to Blood Weep disease (see page 172).

Of more interest to tomb robbers are the large glazed jars standing on the far side of the chamber. Still shining and free of dust, the chest-high pottery urns appear to be full of gold trinkets, arm rings, necklaces, and the like, whilst above them are five recesses, each containing a human-like skull inset with sparkling gems where the eyes and teeth should be.

All is not as it seems however, since the golden treasure is cemented in place and jars fixed to the floor. If more than 30 SIZ crosses the halfway line of the chamber, the counterbalanced floor rotates to a vertical position, tipping those investigating the treasure down into an underground cenote. Characters may attempt an opposed Evade roll versus the trap's difficulty of 80%; the glassy smoothness of the floor making footing treacherously slick.

Losing the roll precipitates the victim into the hot waters of the sinkhole below. Success allows a victim to hang precipitously onto one of the false treasure jars. The counterbalanced floor resets once weight is redistributed back to the non-treasure side.

### Heated Cenote

The sinkhole descends a further eight metres below the tipping floor. This in itself is not particularly fatal; dropping characters treat the fall as half the distance since they are landing in water. However, the water itself is scalding hot, inflicting a further 1d3 damage to every Hit Location (armour does not count) every round until a successful Swim roll is made to reach the side and clamber out. See swimming in armour RuneQuest page 106.

This has proven lethal to those few tomb robbers who have penetrated this far into the subterranean crypt. At the bottom of the dark steaming water lie numerous skeletons, their bones mixed with the real treasure of Anak Krakatau, its gold- and jewel-spilling jars forever out of reach. To one side is a ledge upon which is another corpse is sprawled, dressed in archaic colonist style together with brimmed hat and some sort of leather rope coiled on its belt. Around the neck is a pendant with the name Olv Jonson inscribed upon it, and grasped in the bony fingers is a water-damaged book – the only remaining words still legible being 'dwarf', 'white' and the number '55'.

## The Curses of Anak Krakatau

Any attempt to damage the mummy itself results in several frightening events. Firstly the weapon used to strike the corpse shatters with a crack of thunder. Secondly an earthquake shakes the ground for thirty seconds, during which time nobody can perform any action save avoid dropping debris from the ceiling – the individual who struck the mummy having to win an opposed test of their Evade skill versus a rolled attack of 100%, else be crushed under a rock for 2d10 damage to three Hit Locations. Thirdly a wave of spiders of all sizes up to that of a small dog erupt from the shadowy corners of the cave, scampering over the characters and biting each of them as per a SIZ 13 Insect Swarm (see RuneQuest page 365). During this distraction however, the mummy sprouts eight hairy legs and with a hiss, scuttles off into the far passageway and will escape the caverns into the jungle...

Climbing back up the slick, humid walls is impossible without professional mountaineering equipment, and even if the ascent is made, it may be unfeasible for the trapped character to re-tip the 'roof' without aid. Fortunately there is another exit which may be discovered with a successful Perception roll; a passageway leading back under the head which has been bricked up with stone and plastered over with a fresco of the fierce looking hero-king. Heat and dampness has weakened the wall, which can be broken down with a successful Brawn roll, providing that the character can inflict a positive amount of damage (see Breaking, RuneQuest page 59) and remembering that a failed roll will result in damaging themselves.

### Anak Krakatau's Crypt

A natural underground cave accessible from the Heated Cenote or the Lair of Kumonga, this chamber holds the mummified body of Anak Krakatau, the sleeping king. The body is suspended in a giant web, with strands as thick as a man's finger but of such an age that they have dried and cracked over the years. This web bisects the cave which continues off in yet another passageway due west. In fact the entire chamber is covered with dusty webs, their silken threads covering up yet more of the beautifully painted, but strangely stylised frescoes, depicting the prophesy of the hero-king's return.

Clearing away the webs (which are not flammable) or attempting to climb the now non-sticky giant web holding the mummy will draw attention from 1d3 giant spiders (see RuneQuest page 388) which will attempt to poison and capture the desecrators; either for later eating or for more intriguing reasons (see Suggested Uses below)

If the spiders are driven off, the mummy may be looted. Beneath the wrappings is the wizened body of Anak Krakatau, a tattooed savage garbed in semi-precious gem encrusted, antique jewellery. Amongst the collection are wrist bands, anklets, pectoral and a fantastical death mask, which in total would fetch only 2,500 silvers for raw materials, but ten times that if sold to a discerning art collector. A more careful check of the body will reveal that its back and shoulders seem to be grossly oversized, and a successful Herculean First Aid roll will permit the character to detect a single heart beat (once every ten minutes).

More scholarly characters who check the frescoes will discover a rather odd section of the wall paintings where stylised images of non-savages appear to be aiding in the resurrection of the hero-king. The disconcerting aspect of this panel is that the figures are bearing simplified versions of the same clothes and weapons as those characters within the chamber.

## The Cavern of Kumongu

This massive chamber is a natural cavern located many metres below the surface. A short passageway leads eastwards to Anak Krakatau's Crypt, whilst at its western edge a vertical shaft travels up to the foot of the sacrificial monolith that stands before the colossal head. The only illumination inside the cavern comes from a tiny dim glow at the foot of this shaft. Otherwise it is pitch black. Upon entering the chamber, characters immediately sense a looming presence.

The manner in which the characters enter the cavern is very important. Assuming they have not descended the sacrificial shaft, attempting to stealthily cross to the dim light at its base (assuming the curses have not been triggered) should be rewarded with automatic success. Those that ignore the threatening atmosphere and begin to clatter about will quickly draw attention to themselves.

Unbeknown to any - save the shamans of the Kumongi tribe - this is the place where their god lies bound, sleeping until the savages can no longer propitiate it. Kumongu is a gargantuan spider some fifteen metres across, well beyond any conceivable chance of defeating in physical combat (see page 291). Its sheer size makes it difficult to actually see in its entirety unless some form of illumination brighter than torches or lanterns are used; the dusty, dirt encrusted legs more resembling strangely hairy rock formations.

Characters who comprehend the implications of what they see, must roll a Hard Willpower roll or suffer the effects of the Terrifying creature ability (RuneQuest page 316).

In attendance to Kumongu are another 1d3+3 giant spiders, most of which are somnolent. They start to awaken if the characters bear lights brighter than a candle. Unless interlopers quickly cross the cavern and exit up the sacrificial shaft, the spiders will stealthily hunt characters – preferring to take on smaller groups if possible. They will either fish with their sticky web stands or leap from the darkness, then scuttle off after poisoning prey.

If the mummy of Anak Krakatau has been assaulted, events will become extremely hazardous, since Kumongu will begin to awaken, albeit briefly, to deal with the desecrators himself. At this point flight is the best option, assuming that anyone manages to withstand the god's terrifying presence.

### The Pit of Bones

At the foot of the sacrificial shaft lies a scattering of small bones, mostly the remnants of hands and feet which are torn off by the manacles when one of the giant spiders climbs up the shaft to collect an offering to Kumongu. Interspersed with these skeletal fragments are torch stubs, cast down into the pit to alert the spiders to their next meal.

The shaft itself is lined with crudely dressed stone, allowing characters to climb it without ropes providing they can succeed in a Hard Athletics roll. Failure in this case is dangerous, indicating a fall of 1d8m. Anyone below the falling climber is automatically knocked down too, although their falling distance will be less. Fumbling the roll means that the distance dropped is 1d6+6 metres instead.

Characters within the shaft are free from assault by the giant spiders, unless the Games Master wishes to increase dramatic tension. The great god Kumongu cannot fit up the narrow shaft, but will return to his disturbed sleep, ready to emerge when his people call him forth.

## Suggested Uses for the Stone Heads

- The grandson of the famed tomb raider Olv Jonson, approaches the characters seeking their help to discover the 'mighty stone head of Krakata' a mythical place his forbear was seeking, drawn by legends of its treasure, a collection of bejewelled skulls rumoured to be ensorcelled with mystical powers. The explorer only wishes to know what befell his grandsire.
- A plague of poisonous spiders has begun to encroach on the jungle surrounding Grimsand. Unknown to Lord Greystone the head has been pillaged by a group of treasure hunting colonists. This has stirred up the spider god who sends its servants to capture the interlopers and bring them back for sacrifice.
- It is rumoured amongst the savages that the secret to immortality lies beneath the great stone heads of Anak Krakatau. Though many desire it, none have ever returned. An ancient High Folk sorcerer asks the characters to escort him whilst he clandestinely seeks out an ancient being of power he senses entombed below the colossal monoliths.
- The characters begin to experience the same dream, a collection of gigantic stone heads and a voice calling them to awaken a hero from his centuries long sleep. The increasingly vivid and haunting visions cause the characters to lose Fatigue levels from lack of rest. If they arrive at the sacred site, the Savages escort them past the tikis then withdraw, awaiting for their sleeping chieftain to be awakened from death.
- A half-mad, ragged beggar offers-up the death mask of Anak Krakatau in exchange for a few coppers, claiming it is cursed. Whoever bears the mask will be haunted by flashbacks of the great war between the Savages and the High Folk. If they do not get rid of the mask, they will become Covertly Possessed by the returned spirit of the Hero-King. Something they themselves are unaware of, but the local tribesmen and the mountain sorcerers will be...

# Obsidian Rift

Located on the south-eastern flank of a peak overlooking the Fuming Mountain, the Obsidian Rift is a massive deposit of this glassy, often quite colourful vitrified stone. Once the primary quarry for easily shaped paving slabs, small statuettes and the translucent, smoky blades of razor-sharp knives, the Obsidian Rift now serves other purposes.

The rift is actually an ancient lava chimney which has fractured due to earth tremors, one half collapsing down the lower slope of the mountain. A few native savages still comb the obsidian rubble where it lies exposed amongst the roots of the encroaching cloud forest, a family of the Gyaosi tribe mining smaller fragments to produce high quality objects such as polished mirrors, jewellery and even masks. Rough shards chipped off during manufacture are also traded to the neighbouring tribes for eventual use as Eku, Taiaha and Maquahuitl blades.

## Altar of Burning Light

Where the still extant obsidian-lined chimney lies exposed, the sides of the deposit have been carved into smooth, curved walls so that the reflective surfaces collect and focus sunlight towards its centre. A block of crystalline quartz stands at this point, oddly shaped in a rough caricature of a humanoid spread-eagled over a crouching jaguar, the sacrificial victim's face carved off to expose the skull and the abdomen eviscerated to leave an empty bowl.

Investigating the disturbing carving will reveal that the eye sockets, jaws and abdomen are lined with very thin traces of precious metals, and that there are narrow drainage holes in the bottom of each orifice. This is because the quartz altar is used to hold nuggets of metal ore placed within the cavities, which, when molten, run down internal channels to drip forth from the jaguar's jaws.

During the day, the obsidian bowl warms to an unpleasantly hot degree, nearing 100° C at midday, making the dark stone burning hot to touch and the air stifling to breathe. The altar, however, is capable of melting metals such as gold, silver and bronze. Anyone with some sort of scientific or alchemical knowledge will realise that the temperatures achieved cannot solely be explained by the focussed sunlight, but must be the result of some other preternatural process.

In actual fact only the quartz altar itself experiences such extreme temperatures, the result of a combined Consume Essence and Augment Incalescence matrix carved into its surface. To operate it, a sacrificial victim is placed upon the altar after it has been filled with ore, then left to die slowly from accelerated heat stroke. At the moment of death the Magic Points of the victim's soul are consumed to fuel the second spell, whereupon the quartz block begins to glow with heat, incinerating the body as well as melting precious metals from the ore.

Once the magic fades (usually with the setting sun) the attending smelters can approach and recover whatever ingots or filled casts they prepared. The remaining slag is extracted with chiselling, then thrown into a smouldering pit nearby. Close examination of this grey pile is dangerous, since it attracts a number of lesser Curse Spirits drawn to this misbegotten place (Intensity 1 or 2, Reduce Damage Bonus and Reduce Healing Rate spirits only).

## Torturous Stairway

Off to one side of the quartz altar is a narrow crack in the obsidian wall. Passing through this obliquely angled, shoulder-width passageway brings explorers to the other side of the volcanic mountain spur; emerging at the foot of an equally narrow stair carved into the side of a steep cliff. The stairs traverse many slopes and pass through a number of tunnels which cut through intervening ridges. It takes at least six hours to ascend and descend the interminable stairs, seemingly continuing forever with no way to leave the precipitous path without stepping to one's death.

Despite the incredible engineering, the stairs have suffered from earthquake damage; as is evident by many cracks and missing pieces of masonry. At one place an entire section of the path has dropped away, leaving a dangerous leap in order to continue. It requires a successful Willpower roll to even consider the jump, which is a Hard Athletics test. Failure results in the leaper plunging to their doom.

At another place a natural watercourse now splashes down over the stairs as a waterfall, pummelling climbers and making the steps treacherously slippery. An old slimy rope has been tied to bronze rings set into the rock face, but it still requires a successful Brawn roll to pass through without being buffeted over the edge. Far below the bones of those that failed can be seen on wet glistening rocks.

The stairway eventually ends at a small platform before an open cave mouth. Inset to either side are magnificent, four metre high stone statues depicting savage warriors dressed in what appears to be anachronistic armour – a kind of bronze hoplite-style panoply which is currently unknown to the primitive locals. In their hands are spears and hoplon shields, also of bronze, although the spear tips burn with blue magical flames, illuminating the entranceway.

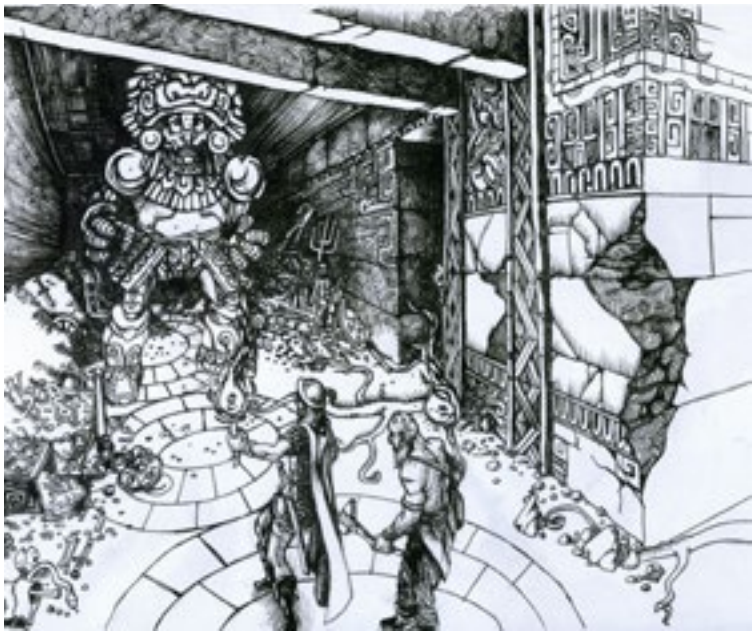
Removal of the statues' equipment is impossible without stone-working tools, and will attract attention from a flock of asipatra which roost on cliff-top ledges far above. Each character in the group will draw 1d3 attacks from the swooping 'Sword Wings' per round, the flock continuing to attack until either the party flees into the cave, drops all their weapons for the asipatra to collect, or manages to severely injure six of the deadly birds. For their part the asipatra will often select Bash (treating itself as a bludgeoning weapon) to knock characters standing near the edge, off of the platform, or Take Weapon to snatch their armaments away.

## Accursed Gold Mine

The cave leads to an ancient mine, from which much of the island's precious metals originated. Once a place of thriving industry, the mine is no longer visited, having become a treacherous place to explore due to the

clearly unstable roofs and decomposing pit props. Although some copper and gold ore remains, the dangers involved extracting it would make any mining attempt a gamble of life and death.

Beyond the cave entrance is a small cavern which has been carved from the living rock. The walls are covered with exquisite bas reliefs of natives digging up rocks from the ground, smelting them in the strange quartz altar found in the Obsidian Rift, then using the metal to fashion huge plaques covered with unreadable hieroglyphs. Each image is inlaid with glass or semi-precious stones so that it is a unique combination of sculpture and mosaic, creating a room which itself is a priceless work of art.



There are three exits from the reception chamber. The first is a series of small rooms with recessed niches, filled with the skeletons of hundreds, if not thousands of native bodies. The ossuarium obviously contains those that died during mining operations; and if examined closely, reveals that the bones are sickly and corroded from some unusual effect.

The second exit is a door made from bars of some blackened metal (actually solid silver if the tarnish is scraped away). Although locked with a strange triangular shaped keyhole (Formidable Lockpicking to pick), this doorway seals off an extensive complex of mine shafts, which fan out to follow the narrow seams of metal ore. If somehow bypassed, venturing into the mine requires a Team Roll against Engineering; failure causing a collapse which the

## The Plunderer's Curse

It is often said that gold often carries a curse, but in the case of the metals unearthed from the base of the Fuming Mountain, the tales are true. Those that loot this particular gold suffer from a horrific blight, unsuspected by anyone skilled in the magical arts since it is not supernatural. Rather it bears a curse scientific in nature, the mined ore being a dirty amalgam of gold, zinc sulphide, copper and radium (amongst other radioactive minerals of unusual concentration).

Once the gold is smelted, it becomes a highly poisonous alloy, the only clue to its energetic nature being that it glows with its own very faint, yet eerie radiance – part of its attraction to the High Folk who once admired its decorative properties, as well as using it to power their sorcerous technology. Almost all of the golden artefacts discovered in the tombs and cities of the High Folk, suffer from the Plunderer's Curse.

**Application***: Extended close contact*
**Potency***: 60*
**Resistance***: Endurance (rolled weekly)*
**Onset Time***: 1 Week*
**Duration***: 1,600 years or until 1d3 Weeks after removal*
**Conditions***: Inflammation and Maiming. After one week of close proximity (worn or carried next to body) the Hit Location affected suffers inflammation of the skin, as if mildly scalded by hot water. This then develops into a deep burn inflicting 1 Hit Point of necrotic damage per week, continuing for 1d3 weeks after removal of the gold from close proximity.*

Note: Natives of the island seem somewhat resistant to the curse, the lowland Savages treating the resistance roll as Easy and the High Folk not needing to roll at all. Although the High Folk ostensibly appear immune to its effects, the link between the devolution of their society and the propagation of the cursed gold within their cities cannot be ignored.

group can avoid if they run back out, and a fumble bringing down the entire mine, killing all within.

A third exit leads to a side tunnel that initially opens into a high-roofed rectangular antechamber the roof supported by gilded stone statues, three on either side. These are similar in appearance to the statues outside the cave mouth, save that they are covered with a hair thin layer of gold. At the far end is a stone door carved with ominous-looking glyphs. Across the floor are scattered the bones of long-dead natives.

The stone portal cannot be touched without triggering a deadly trap, a Wrack spell which sends out ghostly snakes of iridescent green venom from the sorcerous glyphs to swim about the gilt statues in pursuit of their victims. Anyone caught by the wriggling death-dealers suffers the effects of the spell unless they manage to dive clear.

*Wrack (Venom) Enchantment: Intensity 12, Magnitude 7, Range 20 metres, affects up to 6 targets simultaneously: Resist in an opposed roll of Evade against an Invocation skill of 115% or suffer 2d6 damage per 'bite.'*

Opening the door actually requires the use of magic. Originally an ornate bone key with a combined Zoetic Motivation (bronze) and Apprehend (X-Ray vision) matrix was used to remotely unlatch the internal mechanism, allowing the door to swing open under its own weight. This however has been long lost. The door has a SIZ of 30, but has no particular resistance to spells. So clever use of sorcery such as Sculpt (stone), Shrink, Transmogrify or other cunning magical abilities is necessary to bypass it.

Beyond is a vault lined with Jadestone. Within are stacked chest-high stone jars filled with high quality gold ore, which if smelted would produced a total of about ten tons of gold. However, at the far end of the vault is a spectacular idol of apparently solid gold, some sort of squat, crocodilian-headed figure with a bejewelled transverse feathered headdress, pleated kilt and oversized fists. The idol is nearly three metres tall and grants the room a brooding presence.

Anyone greedy enough to enter the vault awakens the golden idol (in truth a Sentinel, see page 266), which will pulp transgressors who remain within. Despite signs of previous damage, there is little hope of defeating the sentinel, nor commanding it. However it will leave those that withdraw alone, unless attacked from beyond the vault – at which point it will either try to close the stone door or pursue attackers if in danger of being harmed. The guardian has orders to collapse the antechamber (by knocking down several of the statue pillars) if it is unable to defend itself or prevent the ore from being stolen.

## Suggested Uses for the Obsidian Rift

- Characters are sent to trade for valuable carved obsidian artworks and witness from afar a bright radiance higher up the mountain slope. On investigation they discover freshly smelted ingots of silver, but

### Golden Idol

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 36 | Action Points | 2 | 1–3 | Right Leg | 7/22 |
| CON: 36 | Damage Modifier | +2d10 | 4–6 | Left Leg | 7/19 |
| SIZ: 72 | Magic Points | 0 | 7–9 | Abdomen | 7/23 |
| DEX: 11 | Movement | 4m | 10-12 | Chest | 7/18 |
| INS: 13 | Strike Rank | 12 | 13–15 | Right Arm | 7/17 |
| | Armour | Gold | 16–18 | Left Arm | 7/20 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 7/22 |

**Abilities**
*Construct, Dark Sight, Magic Sense, Trample*

**Skills**
*Athletics 0%, Brawn 110%, Endurance 110%, Evade 0%, Perception 110%, Willpower N/A*

**Combat Style**
Crush Thieves 110%

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Fist* | *E* | *L* | *1d10+2d10* | *As for Arm* |
| *Stomp* | *C* | *T* | *4d10* | *As for Leg* |

no apparent owner. If they appropriate the metal they are pursued by a High Folk areani warband.

- An Ally or Contact important to one of the characters is kidnapped. Tracking the miscreants eventually leads the rescuers to the Obsidian Rift where their comrade is tied to the quartz altar as a sacrifice to melt a batch of copper ore. However, a guard of Savages or High Folk remain until the victim is consumed by the sorcerous magic.
- One character overhears a strange tale of a mine where a thousand Savages died to extract a never ending vein of pure glowing gold from its rock walls. Only those who do not wish to continue living can reach the place, since folks that go never return. Apparently a secret path can be found at the Obsidian Rift.
- A scholar or merchant at the colony has heard of a crystal altar which melts any metal placed within it, and offers a 5,000 SP reward to any who can return it to Grimsand. Alas the task is impossible to complete, although some compensation can be received for those that document its location, appearance and method of operation.
- Captured when trespassing upon High Folk territory, the characters are sentenced to a slow death excavating the Obsidian Rift slag pit. Eventually a triangular shafted bone key is discovered, the item sought after by the sorcerer in charge of the areani. If handed over, the characters are forced to accompany the High Folk to the Accursed Mine, the guards succumbing to the dangers one by one, allowing the party to escape when the sorcerer opens the vault with the key...

# Petrified Forest

The Petrified Forest is a part of the southern jungle, deep within Kamacuri territory. It is a place several kilometres across, where every tree, plant and creature has been turned to solid stone. Whilst it may sound like a grim, grey place, the forest is actually a riot of mineral colours: purples, reds, oranges, yellows, browns and whites seemingly without connection to whatever the original species was.

Travelling into the region is made more difficult due to the fall of petrified boughs and trees, fractured from particularly violent earth tremors. This has covered the nominally open jungle floor with a labyrinth of splintered stone branches and twigs which repeatedly snag on clothing or threaten to slice open the unwary. This is especially true for those wearing no footwear, as sharp rock spurs thrust up from the ground where a plant stem once emerged, easily impaling a bare foot and shredding boots.

Few natives ever penetrate its outer borders, fearing some dark secret within. However, some of the Kamacuri do collect lumps of the petrified wood which burns (if heated enough) as if it were coal. This produces a fire hot enough to smelt bronze, but the natives generally use it because of the pretty colours the flames turn when it burns, inhaling the hallucinogenic smoke it produces.

## Outer Reaches

Venturing into the Petrified Forest requires very slow and careful movement, unless the expedition has prepared with suitable tools to smash a path through the rocky growths. It takes two hours to cross a kilometre at this safe pace, or twice that if picking a path without clearance. The safer option, however, will automatically attract a hostile response from some weird stony scorpions, drawn by the noise and vibration.

Three of the infernal creatures roam the outer reaches of the Petrified Forest, but rarely venture close to one another. Normally the scorpions attack from ambush, their carapaces blending in to the surrounding stone growths; once a victim has been grasped in a pincer it will scuttle backwards though the petrified vegetation.

Any attempt to chase forces the pursuer to make a Hard Evade roll or suffer 1d6 damage from cuts and slices to a

**Silicate Scorpions**

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 19 | Action Points | 2 | 01-02 | Tail | 8/9 |
| CON: 17 | Damage Modifier | +1d10 | 03 | Right Rear Leg | 8/8 |
| SIZ: 27 | Magic Points | 4 | 04 | Left Rear Leg | 8/8 |
| DEX: 9 | Movement | 4m | 05 | Mid Right Leg | 8/8 |
| INS: 9 | Strike Rank | 9 | 06 | Mid Left Leg | 8/8 |
| POW: 4 | Armour | Chitin | 07 | Fore Right Leg | 8/8 |
| | | | 08 | Fore Left Leg | 8/8 |
| *Silicate scorpion poison works the same as that of Giant Scorpions, but the 1HP damage per hour is the result of slow petrifaction rather than tissue necrosis, and will spread to adjoining Hit Locations unless the area is amputated or the poison successfully treated.* | | | 09-12 | Thorax | 8/9 |
| | | | 13-15 | Right Pincer | 8/9 |
| | | | 16-18 | Left Pincer | 8/9 |
| | | | 19-20 | Cephalothorax | 8/10 |

**Abilities**
*Camouflaged, Formidable Natural Weapons, Venomous*

**Skills**
*Athletics 58%, Brawn 76%, Endurance 64%, Evade 58%, Perception 53%, Stealth 68%, Willpower 48%*

**Combat Style**
Scuttling Horror (Sting, Pincers) 78%

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Pincer* | *H* | *L* | *1d8+1d10* | *As for Pincer* |
| *Sting* | *L* | *VL* | *1d6+1d10+Poison* | *As for Tail* |

random Hit Location (armour protects). A fumble inflicts an Impale for 2d6 damage. However, as a consequence of such reckless pursuit, chasing characters will automatically catch up with the scorpion. Due to their mineralised carapaces, each scorpion will be difficult to defeat without judicious use of two handed weapons and the Sunder special effect.

## Heart of Darkness

Penetrating beyond the outer reaches will bring characters to the heart of the Petrified Forest. Although it is inhabited by a dire creature, exiled there to prevent it harming others, the fossilisation itself is the result of a terrible spell unleashed by a High Folk sorcerer long before.

In the centre of the region stand the remains of several hundred ferocious-looking savages and a single High Folk sorcerer against whom they are charging. All are turned to stone, frozen at the critical moment of their engagement, the lead warrior caught mid swing after severing one of the sorcerer's hands.

The sorcerer is of particular note wearing a high collared, flaring cloak, his maimed arm raised in some powerful gesture of admonition, the other clutching a partially concealed orb covered in tiny pipes, tubes and glyphs. Although unremarkable in any other way, it is this object which created the area of petrifaction and is still technically functional. Locating the missing hand requires a successful Hard Perception roll; its un-fossilised skeletal finger still bearing the enchanted ring that would have rendered him immune to the effects of the orb.

Amongst the fossilised bodies hides a Gorgon (see RuneQuest page 358). The monster finds the place both homely and a haven from persecution. Trespassing will cause it great irritation, a breaking of the unspoken truce between it and the nearby tribes. However it suffers from loneliness and will prefer to converse from cover, rather than simply killing those that have disturbed its tranquillity.

This particular gorgon is actually the result of eugenics experimentation by the petrified sorcerer, a living terror weapon with knowledge back to the time of the rebellion against the depraved High Folk civilisation. Whilst a potential source of forgotten secrets, extracting useful answers from it is made difficult due to the creature's senility. The most valuable knowledge it has is the location of its master's home; a three sided tower high in the southern mountains, supposedly standing atop a snow-capped peak.

### Orb of Fossilisation

A fist-sized crystal of smoky grey crystal inset with various mechanical pieces of tubing, the Orb of Fossilisation is another of the High Folk techno-sorcerous devices. Its purpose is to project a magnified transmutational field, rapidly mineralising opponents within its radius. The orb is powered by a small lump of gold, of the type affected by the Plunderer's Curse (see Page 87).

Due to the spell matrix also unexpectedly affecting its bearer, the device has remained switched on for several centuries. At first this caused instant transmutation of anyone entering the outer peripheries of its field, but now the gold powering the device has been almost completely drained, enfeebling its effect so that it takes weeks to slowly fossilise a victim from the outside in.

Within the minaret are copies of the Transcendent Fossilisation and Concoct Chimera spells, requiring the tarnished ring of the sorcerer to bypass the fossilisation field protecting the place.

Attacking the gorgon is extremely dangerous since it can move amongst the closely packed statues with little hindrance, remaining almost completely under cover whilst still able to use its petrifying gaze. Direct close combat assault is impossible unless the statues can be destroyed or smashed aside. If treated with respect, the gorgon will permit trespassers to withdraw peacefully.

### Suggested Uses for the Petrified Forest

- Rumours abound of a special type of rock which burns hotter than charcoal and enchants the metal forged in it, prompting the local smith to offer a reward of 50 silver pieces per sack of this stone which can be brought back to Grimsand. Unfortunately when it is used, it creates a cloud of hallucinogenic smoke sending the colony's only weapon smith into a murderously paranoid mind state, which endures until a cure can be found.
- Under threat of coercion the characters are sent by a High Folk sorceress to discover the source of the petrifaction curse blighting the southern jungle, and return its source to her. Mistakenly bringing back the gorgon's head will bring the wrathful displeasure of the sorceress, but would be useful in defending themselves against her retribution.
- Due to the novelty of its coloured flames 'rainbow coal' is in great demand. Unknown to would be sellers however, some pieces of the fossilised wood actually contain insane Nature Spirits, entombed since their petrifaction which, when burned, embody themselves in nearby plants and trees, then seek misplaced vengeance on the town (see Plant, Possessed page 260).
- In order to avert some doom or unearth a great treasure the characters need to locate a scholar of historical antiquities. No annalist of the Savages, nor the High Folk can answer their questions, but redirect questioners to the Pythia of the Stone Jungle. If they survive the scorpions and take appropriate measures to guard their eyes, the gorgon will answer one question provided they perform a service she requires in return.
- The gorgon lays ambush to the party and instead of slaying them, asks for their help to escort it back to its master's tower. A task made troublesome by the Kamacuri tribe who fear its emergence and further complicated by its unstable senility. In exchange for the unique sorcery knowledge kept hidden within the minaret, it asks that the Concoct Chimera spell, which created it, be reversed.

## Screeching Mountain

High up on the southern mountains of the Rangi Caldera is a broken-topped peak which reaches an elevation of just over 5,000 metres. Named the Screeching Mountain, the summit of this lofty crag is home to a small clan of Iqari who dominate the upper skies, hunting prey which ventures above the cloud forest or briefly descending to the oceans to spear for whales and sharks.

The sapient raptor-folk are not native to the island. They were originally drawn through the Smoking Mirror which stands atop the mountain, and have since remained close to the portal which forever seals them off from their home. Highly territorial and still enraged at their imprisonment, the Iqari have been a serious threat to all those that climb above the snowline.

Few would dare the treacherous ascent to the summit of the peak, save for three things: firstly that the Iqari are the sole source of the most beautiful and iridescent feathers of any species on the island, and hence are in great demand as status symbols. Secondly that the singing of the Iqari is supposedly the most entrancing music known, doubly so since whoever hears it risks their own death. Thirdly, that

the Iqari are said to possess an exquisite treasure which they hide from all, by tracking down and slaying any sorcerer who dares to scry upon them.

## The Mountain

The base of the Screeching Mountain lies beyond Mandahi territory, requiring that adventurers travel through the Python tribe's lands. This can be done covertly, providing the travellers are experts in Stealth and Conceal to ensure neither they, nor their tracks are discovered. On the other hand, passage might be arranged for a suitable price, say one slave or foreign goods worth 1 quill of gold dust per person. Note that negotiated passage covers the journey to the mountain, not back from it – and any ventures will be reported to the High Folk of Zerzura.

Jungle travel and encounters occur as normal if the Mandahi savages are not paid to escort the expedition. The real dangers begin once the characters emerge from the tree line, mid way up the flanks of the mountain. From here are a series of increasingly difficult ascents, each taking an entire day due to their precipitous and technical nature.

Climbing checks are performed as a Team Roll (see RuneQuest page 79), the party member with the highest Athletics skill coordinating the ascent. Each day they make a single roll for the entire group, a normal success allowing the climbers to safely ascend that stage, whilst a critical enables them to automatically escape notice by the Iqari. Failing the roll means the group is forced to backtrack whilst fumbling entails additional effects depending on the stage attempted.

Day 1 – Scree Slopes: Athletics check at Standard difficulty. A failure means that the group triggers a minor rock slide, requiring every member to pass an unopposed Acrobatics, Evade or Survival check – or lose 1d3 personal items which are swept away and lost. Fumbling the Athletics check causes a major avalanche which not only causes the loss of 1d6 items, but also brings an immediate response from the Iqari.

Day 2 – Steep Cliff: Athletics check at Hard difficulty. A failure results in a knot untying, rope breaking, a dislodged boulder or something equally catastrophic. Every member of the group must pass an unopposed Acrobatics, Evade or Survival check or suffer a severe injury to a random location, reducing it to minus 1d3 Hit Points. Fumbling the Athletics check means that the accident was even more serious, taking the location down to minus 1d6+3 Hit Points. Victims of Serious Wounds will be unable to continue, but can descend unassisted if they are willing to make the requisite climbing rolls for themselves. Those who suffer a Major Wound must be assisted back down the mountain, else be left to die.

Day 3 – Overhanging Buff: Athletics check at Formidable difficulty. A failure requires each member of the group to pass an unopposed Acrobatics, Evade or Survival check, or plummet from the sheer rock face to their deaths. Critical failures result in the loss of the entire party due to some terrible twist of fate.

Convincing a flying creature to carry characters to the summit is near impossible due to the justified fear all flying creatures have of the Iqari.

## Dealing with the Iqari

The greatest difficulty whilst scaling the mountain is not attracting the attention of the Iqari, who will aggressively defend their eyries. An expedition has several choices; either try to fight the Iqari off, or climb during the hours of darkness when the creatures roost. The latter increases the difficulty grade of all climbing checks by an additional step, unless the climbers can somehow see in darkness.

Being discovered by the Iqari incurs a different response, depending on when they are noticed. If spotted on the scree slopes a flight of 1d3+1 Iqari dive-bomb the party, casting several javelins before closing to close combat. If seriously wounded the Iqari will withdraw; attempting to rescue any of their number who is downed.

Conversely, if the characters are discovered whilst climbing the steep cliff or overhanging bluff, the Iqari will let them alone, not willing to risk the treacherously tricky air currents so close to the mountain face. This means that a welcoming party will be waiting for any climbers who make it to the summit.

Whilst this might appear to be a death sentence, Iqari honour forbids ganging up on a sapient target, especially one which displays the skill and courage to scale their mountain. Instead each survivor will be given a chance for single combat to first submission – although since Iqari only speak their native tongue it might be difficult for characters to understand what is occurring without some sort of Culture (Iqari) or Lore (Anthropology) skill check.

An Iqari who brings his opponent to the ground or gives them a Serious Wound, will pause momentarily to offer quarter to its foe. If the foe does not drop their weapon and submit, the Iqari will simply kill them. Survivors that surrender are simply shown to the edge of the cliff and ordered down. Refusal to leave results in a helping claw to push them over the edge.

Likewise if an character manages to get the better of an Iqari, the raptor will cast down its weapon and admit defeat. Slaying the foe at this point will cause the entire colony to erupt in rage, slaying the entire group. Defeating the Iqari allows that person to remain a single night upon the mountain peak, before being carried down the following morning.

During this time the character is permitted to wander the peak at their leisure, although venturing too near an occupied eyrie could be fatal. As part of this courtesy, they are witness to the most beautiful choral singing imaginable, a memory which will last a lifetime and incidentally increase their Sing skill by 2d4+2% and boost Status if they recount their feat. The Iqari do not bother searching their departing 'guests' for purloined objects such as feathers, providing characters are not obvious about their thefts.

## The Summit

Anyone who manages to complete the climb emerges atop the jagged peak where the slope becomes less treacherous. There are several points of interest which immediately stand out:

- A naturally formed bowl or amphitheatre, along which are ledges where the Iqari communally perch when singing together.
- A number of eyries, each carved or ground into scattered, upright spurs of rock, so that they are sheltered from strong winds.
- A defunct Smoking Mirror, the usual Jadestone formation but currently lacking the inky-black surface within its frame.
- An irregularly shaped cave entrance into the top of the mountain, facing due east its passageway leading into darkness.

Exploring these areas will be a challenge unless the adventurers have managed to defeat their welcoming party in ritual combat, or they have managed to scale the mountain unseen and wait for the Iqari to roost for the night. In the latter situation, aggressive exploration will prove near suicidal since the summit hosts an Iqari colony comprising of 37 adults, 15 adolescents and 22 fledglings. Stealth is the better option, providing adventurers can be quiet; the Iqari lacking any significant sense of smell and being partially blind at night if the sky is overcast.

## Amphitheatre

This natural formation is a half-bowl shaped insert into the mountain peak, lined with the narrow ledges the Iqari perch upon. It is normally occupied in the evenings when the avians return from hunting, being the place they sing and eat together. Immature and elderly Iqari not in a mating bond roost here at night, gazing imperiously down over the island before falling asleep.

The amphitheatre has several interesting features, these being the amplification of any voice speaking or singing within its bounds, and a strange, blackened pillar that stands at its centre. It is this intensification of audible noises which permits the choral singing of the Iqari to be faintly heard for many kilometres across the island, pivotal upon the direction of the winds. Noise magnification also makes any Stealth checks one step more difficult within the bowl.

The black column is covered with deeply engraved runes, whilst its top spreads out to form a circular table, a disk held between three talon-like claws. About its foot are scattered remnants of firewood, the remnants of pyres burned in worship of the sun or to cremate the dead.

If examined closely, the blackening will be shown to be a thick layer of deposited smoke and ash. Beneath this, the pillar is actually made of the same Jadestone as the nearby Smoking Mirror. The table surface is a plate of silvery metal, still reflective, but covered with a tracery of fine lines all extending from a central point, each of which terminates in a tiny crystalline gem.

A successful Lore (Cartography) or Hard Navigation roll will suggest that this is a map of sorts, the angle of the line denoting direction, whilst the length of the line implies distance. In fact it is a map of every Smoking Mirror on the island (see page 102). At night the crystals glow faintly, pulsing in certain rhythms depending on each portal's operational status.

## Eyries

A dozen huge eyries are scattered about the mountain top, each one located on its own towering spur of upthrust rock. In general the eyries are inset within abnormally smooth and carefully shaped hollows (complete with drainage channels) cut out of the native stone, all of which face westwards, sheltering them from the prevailing storm winds of the dry season.

Constructed from carefully woven wickerwork lined with soft ferns and animal skins, each eyrie measures about 4 to 5 metres across and sits within a shaped dish so that it cannot shift even during the worst typhoons, if there are occupants or ballast rocks to weigh it down.

Almost all the eyries are occupied year round by breeding pairs of Iqari, with either 2d6 eggs or hatchlings (roll

1d6-1 to determine age, zero being an egg). During the day hatchlings are left alone while their parents hunt for food. At night the complete family gather and roost together. After the age of five, hatchlings are ejected from the eyrie and take their place in the communal amphitheatre roost.

Whilst dangerous places to investigate, the eyries are the best place to locate intact Iqari plumage. A nest contains 1d6+3 pristine flight feathers, worth over dozen times their weight in gold, namely 1d10+5 quills of gold dust apiece.

## Smoking Mirror

Save for evidence of extreme weathering, perhaps even the pitting of some ancient attack, there is little of note concerning the Smoking Mirror of Screeching Mountain, which has not been operative for centuries. Unknown to anyone the portal is merely dormant, not broken; ready to return to life when the astrological progressions are right.

Before the gateway is a small shrine littered with crudely carved pieces of ivory and whalebone; scrimshawed images of armoured Iqari, burning stars and strange unidentifiable objects of menacing threat. Other than votive offerings they seem to have little purpose, but could fetch a decent price with a collector of unearthly art.

Closer investigation and a successful Art (Sculpture) roll (or its equivalent) will reveal that the oldest carvings are actually the most skilful, whilst the newest scrimshaws lack technique, but express a more eerie, impressionistic aspect.

## Cave

The cave is in actual fact a tunnel which faces due east, permitting the light of sunrise to illuminate the end of its 10m length. Artificially carved, the walls are perfectly smooth, opening into a small hexagonal chamber.

Within this chamber are the Iqari's greatest treasures, suits of ancient battle armour they wore when first dragged into this world. The devolved descendents of this once highly technological and civilised species have long since forgotten how their heirlooms function; such knowledge lost in the need to survive. Nowadays the Iqari come here to propitiate their ancestors, knowing that the statues once moved and fought to protect them.

Appearing to be mirror-surfaced metal statues two and a half metres tall, the armour is all encompassing, even covering the wings. Of the six suits, only one remains fully functional, the others possessing accumulated damage which can be seen as dented surfaces or discoloured patches of cero-metal. Odd bulges and articulated plates delineate the outer parts, including some form of integral backpack, giving the armour an almost insectoid facade.

### Iqari Battle Armour

This sentient, self-aware battle armour augments the combat abilities of any Iqari wearing it. Effectively a one-man tank, the suit's anti-matter fusion plants have long since run dry, leaving them with only emergency backup solar power. Whilst it takes years to recharge the suit's capacitors, once topped off, the armour is capable of massive destruction, albeit for a short period of time. One hour of combat use or the equivalent flight time whilst using anti-grav.

Iqari battle armour provides the following:

- 12 Armour Points versus physical damage, 18 Armour Points versus energy attacks
- Boosts STR and DEX to 30, potentially increasing Damage Bonus, Combat Actions and Strike Rank
- Augmented Senses, providing radar, infrared vision, telescopic vision, electroreception and audio volume control, which makes any Perception roll two difficulty grades easier
- Complete mental shielding against mind or emotion controlling magic
- Increases foot Movement to 10m or 36m anti-grav flying
- Wrist Mounted Sonic Amplifiers, either boosting the Iqari's voice so that its Paralysing Screech has its radius increased to 50 metres, or transforming it into a focused sonic blast which inflicts 2d8+4 damage to a single location with an automatic Sunder effect, that also affects parrying shields
- Integral hand and foot claws which inflict a base 1d6 damage, are treated as size Large, can inflict the Bleed or Sunder Special Effects, and automatically Damage Weapon anything used to parry their attack
- The ability to electrify its surface, inflicting 1d6+4 damage to anything grappling or gripping it, which ignores all natural and worn armour unless made from a non-conductive material
- The AI built into the suit has the basic skills of Unarmed, Sonic Weapons and Lore (Tactics) at 100%

The last operational suit is on emergency standby mode, having been recharging itself from the limited solar radiation for the last several hundred years. It passively scans the local environment, checking for threats or foreign life forms. If any non-Iqari character enters the chamber and attempts to touch the armour, it will defend itself with lethal force. A command for aid squawked in the appropriate imperative will cause the suit to open itself up, permitting a full grown adult Iqari to step inside – something which could be disastrous for anyone assaulting the mountain peak, as the suit's artificial intelligence will fuse with the wearer, guiding the defence of the colony.

### Suggested Uses for the Mountain

- The characters are given an impossible task to redeem themselves in the eyes of one of the Savage tribes, to bring back one Iqari feather for the ceremonial headdress of each village elder. Failure to complete this task brings an automatic death sentence the next time they transgress that tribe's lands.
- A crippled Iqari is found near the Screeching Mountain and whilst its speech and behaviour are unintelligible, the characters detect a nobility about the mighty creature. The wounded Iqari has lost one wing, but obviously wishes to be taken back up the mountain. Doing so earns the gratitude of the Iqari colony but the effort is poignant since the flightless being, immolates itself on a great funeral pyre.
- When Port Grimsand is threatened by the slow approach of one of the awakened tribal gods, a divination suggests that the only weapon which can turn the doom aside lies atop the 'Singing Mountain'. The characters must track down this clue and convince the Iqari to intercede on their behalf.
- One of the High Folk sorcerers hires the characters as a personal bodyguard whilst she performs a dangerous scrying sorcery to view the Screeching Mountain. Despite defensive preparations the sorceress collapses bleeding from her ears and several hours later a war party of 1d3+3 Iqari arrive, seeking to slay her.
- An old journal written in a comprehensible language is discovered. Written by the infamous master thief Arpmatas Soriez, it tells of six ancient statues made of solid platinum which stand atop the highest mountain of the island, worshipped by a race of evil avian demons whose shouts can kill...

## Sepulchre of Soleks

A dread place of burial and propitiation to an Arch Mage centuries dead, the Tomb of Soleks can be considered typical of necropolises constructed by the original high ranking sorcerers of the High Folk. It lies high on the flanks of the northern mountains, entrance hidden under accumulated cloud forest detritus.

The tomb consists of three separate sections; a mortuary temple, false tomb and main burial chamber. Each part has a particular purpose to which it is designed: the worship of the sorcerer; confusion and destruction of tomb robbers; and the harmonious rest of the sorcerer's remains.

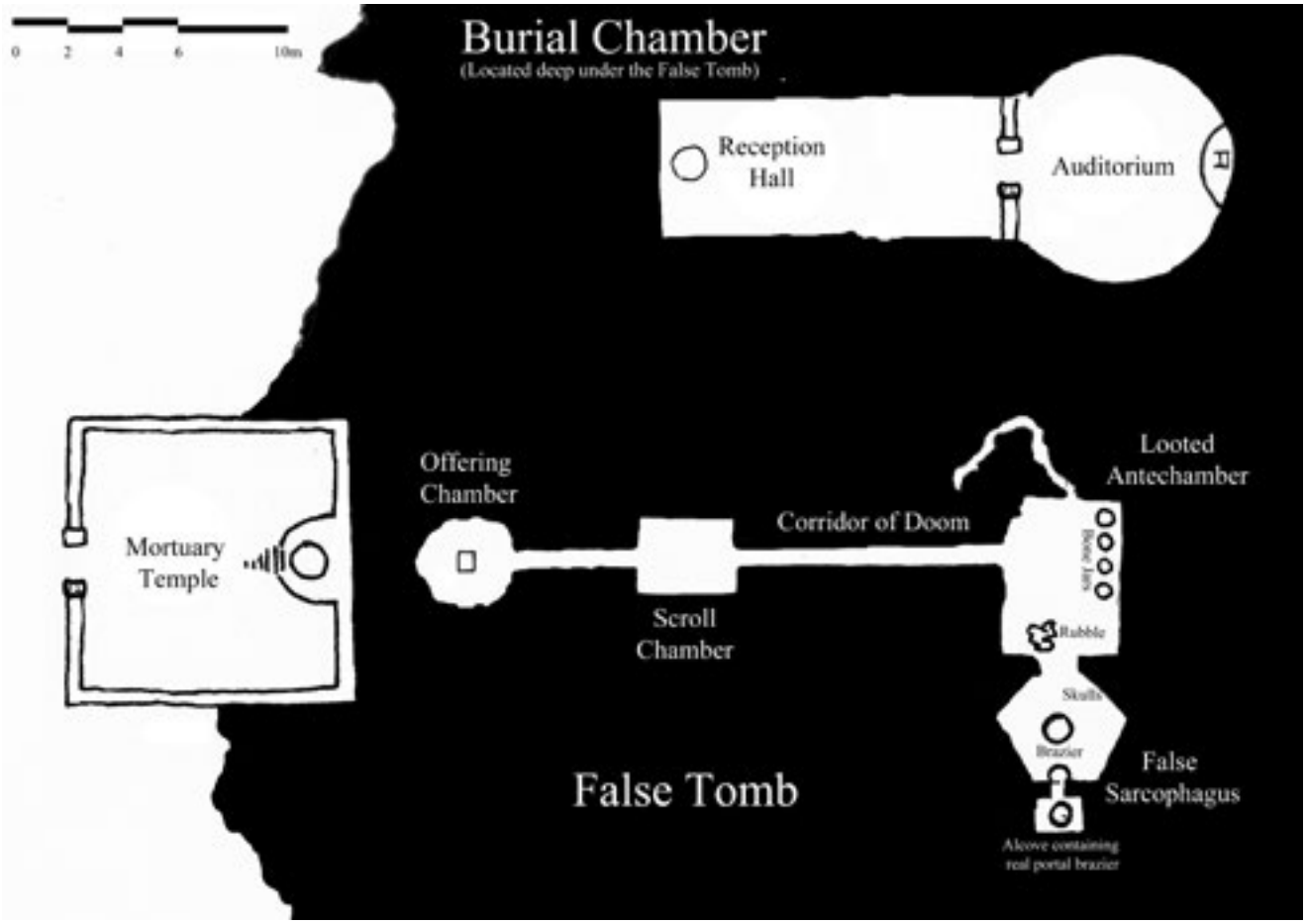
### Mortuary Temple

The mortuary temple is the only part of the tomb which stands above ground. Located near the summit of a south facing ridge, it takes the form of a truncated, rectangular based pyramid of purple-red porphyry. Built partially into the slope behind it, the structure is thickly covered by climbing plants, lianas and giant ferns. The entrance is an oxidised copper door, covered with coiling serpents stained in the greenish-blue verdigris.

No traps or bars are placed upon the three metre tall portal, as the mortuary temple is intended for use by those apprentices and adepts who follow the writings of Soleks, so that they may pay the founder of their sorcerous tradition the respect he deserves. Within the pyramidal structure is a single chamber, walls etched with hieroglyphs that expound upon the Arch Mage's life and deeds. Each sigil is inlaid with coloured glass or stone, granting the iconography an added layer of artistic beauty.

On the far side are steps which climb up a low plinth. Atop this stands a finely carved obsidian statue of Soleks himself, garbed in an outlandish kilt and headdress, arms outspread welcomingly over an unusually wide obsidian bowl resting before it. In this flickers a fire, its greenish flames burning without fuel. The firelight dances disturbingly on the statue, which looms over the chamber; its sternly arrogant features granting it a hint of menace. It is via this offering bowl that sorcerers venerate Soleks, gifting Magic Points to his spirit.

The ceiling is painted with a scene of the night sky. A successful Lore (Astrology) or Lore (Astronomy) roll will reveal that the scene indicates a stellar conjunction which only occurs once per seven years. Other than this the chamber is completely empty. Searching for secret passages is futile and nothing useful can be garnered from the




dry biography save for the usual warnings against desecration, supposing that explorers can actually read the text.

The only object of note is the offering bowl, which still has some scraps of blackened bone and flower petals scattered around its rim. Placing an object within the basin causes the flame to grow dramatically into a towering pillar of emerald fire reaching up to the 5 metre high ceiling. After a few seconds the blindingly bright flames die down, revealing an empty bowl – its contents apparently consumed.

The flames however, are merely an enchanted illusion, crafted to provide light and a phantasm of heat. Their effects disguise a one-way Portal spell which transports anything fully within the basin to the offerings chamber located in the false tomb.

### False Tomb

Located within the rock of the mountain ridge itself, ten metres beyond the mortuary temple and five metres down, the false tomb can only be reached by entry through the illusory flames of the sacrificial bowl, or by digging through solid rock. Its purpose is to present a small complex of death traps and what appears to be the sorcerer's already looted crypt. Such impressions are merely a ruse however, the real burial chamber lying elsewhere.

The following locations are laid out in a sequential line, each room or corridor leading to the next in turn. The walls are made of irregular cyclopean stones shaped to fit perfectly together, yet the engineering itself is crude, relying on angular corbelled vaults to form the roofs. Surprisingly, the tomb is not bone chilling, but warm, the temperature gradually climbing along its length.

Save for the final chamber, none of the complex is illuminated, although sconces stand ready to receive lit torches if any are brought by explorers. Ill prepared characters should be permitted to find a few half burnt stubs by groping around, but afterwards be forced to push on quickly through the remainder of the tomb before they burn out. With only a couple of lit torches or lanterns, the darkness of the tomb feels oppressive and menacing.

### Offering Chamber

The portal within the sacrificial bowl deposits offerings (including characters) into this small antechamber. Objects appear atop an altar, which has long since been buried in an assorted detritus of desiccated flower wreaths, votive

amulets, lumps of perfumed resin and rolled sheets of copper inscribed with petitions written in the High Folk language; all of which is covered in vast amounts of long dried blood and rotted bodies of animal sacrifices. If carefully trawled through, the mess provides a small amount of valuable objects worth 10x1d100 silver pieces.

Before the altar are the shattered bones of skeletons dressed in archaic High Folk hoplite armour, long corroded to the point of uselessness. An examination of the bones reveals they were cut down in battle, probably as animated undead servitors. Several other bodies lay here, wizened corpses of those who ventured within the tomb and never escaped. Only one exit leads from the room connecting it to the scroll chamber. There is no return to the sacrificial bowl in the mortuary temple, the magical portal only allowing movement into the tomb.

## Scroll Chamber

This small chamber is lined with scroll racks, half filled with copper petition scrolls similar to those found as offerings in the previous room. Another skeleton, this one dressed in a rotted kilt and some semi-precious pectoral jewellery, lies dismembered across a reading desk in the centre of the room, an unwound scroll in hand. Each corner contains an alcove in which the destroyed warrior skeletons probably once stood. Nothing more of note remains in the chamber, although the thin sheets of copper scrolls, whilst worth a small amount for their raw metal, would be extremely valuable to a historian interested in High Folk culture.

## Corridor of Doom

A ten metre long passageway which slopes gradually downwards, this corridor contains three lethal deathtraps: a sprung loaded blade, spiked pit, and crushing block. The passageway is only a metre wide but reaches up three metres to its vaulted ceiling. The walls have some sort of complicated pattern carved upon them, helping to divert attention from spotting some of the traps.

### Sprung Blade

Trigger: Stepping upon a section of the paved corridor.

Difficulty: 55%

Resistance: Either an Evade or Acrobatics roll to duck clear. Once sprung the trap is impotent until reset via the tipping of the false floor covering the Spiked Pit.

Effect: 2d6 damage to a random mid body Hit Location (roll 1d12+6), from a horizontal scything blade. If the trap gains one or more levels of success over the victim, it will apply the Bleed or Sunder special effect.

### Spiked Pit

Trigger: Walking over a counterbalanced false section of floor.

Difficulty: 80%

Resistance: Either a Hard Evade or Acrobatics to jump clear. Once known about, it requires an Athletics roll to climb or jump over.

Effect: 2d8 damage to a random lower body Hit Location (roll 1d10), from a short drop onto the spikes. If the trap gains one or more levels of success over the victim, it will apply the Impale or Sunder special effect.

### Crushing Block

Trigger: Already triggered (desiccated remains still pinned under five ton block).

Difficulty: Was 95%

Resistance: Once a Formidable Evade or Acrobatics roll to dive clear. Can now be automatically climbed over.

Effect: 2d10 damage to a random upper body Hit Location (roll 1d10+10) when the block dropped on the victim, applying Grip or Sunder if a special effect was won. Trap used to be reset by specially tasked skeletons in the next chamber.

## Looted Antechamber

The corridor ends in an antechamber, the only observable exit being a low hole broken through the far wall. Other than three chest-high glazed earthenware jars in one corner, their lids still firmly sealed, the room is empty except for a scattering of pottery shards; amongst which can be found a few splinters of gilded wood and a shattered statuette of semi-precious stone.

These scraps hint at what once might have been a formidable treasure of artworks and valuable furniture. In truth they are merely tantalising hints to a treasure that never was. Within a small hollow in the near wall is a bronze chain, used to reset the crushing block, affixed to which is a dismembered skeletal hand. Bones of several unidentifiable skeletons and another withered corpse lie across the floor.

The large jars are actually a trap, each one containing a different skeletal monstrosity. They are controlled by the will of Soleks, acting with his intelligence and skills, but only attack if the jars are opened or forcibly smashed. Foolish adventurers who open more than one of these remaining vessels deserve everything their greed brings.

### Tikbalang Skeleton

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 19 | Action Points | 4 | 1–3 | Right Leg | 0/9 |
| CON: 18 | Damage Modifier | +1d8 | 4–6 | Left Leg | 0/9 |
| SIZ: 24 | Magic Points | 21 | 7–9 | Abdomen | 0/10 |
| DEX: 24 | Movement | 10m | 10-12 | Chest | 0/11 |
| INT: 21 | Strike Rank | 22 | 13–15 | Right Arm | 0/8 |
| POW: 21 | Armour | None | 16–18 | Left Arm | 0/8 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 0/9 |

**Abilities**
*Formidable Natural Weapons, Undead*

**Skills**
*Brawn 70%, Endurance 80%, Evade 85%, Perception 70%, Willpower 75%*

**Combat Style**
*Skeletal Guardian 85%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *T* | *1d4+1d8* | *As for Head* |
| *Hoof* | *M* | *M* | *1d4+1d8* | *As for Leg* |

### Human Skull-Headed Snake Skeleton

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 19 | Action Points | 3 | 1–2 | Tail Tip | 0/10 |
| CON: 17 | Damage Modifier | +1d10 | 3–4 | Mid End-length | 0/10 |
| SIZ: 27 | Magic Points | 21 | 5–7 | Fore End-length | 0/10 |
| DEX: 15 | Movement | 8m | 8–10 | Rear Mid-length | 0/11 |
| INS: 21 | Strike Rank | 18 | 11–13 | Mid Mid-length | 0/11 |
| POW: 21 | Armour | None | 14–16 | Fore Mid-length | 0/11 |
| | | | 17 | Rear Fore-length | 0/10 |
| | | | 18-19 | Mid Fore-length | 0/10 |
| | | | 20 | Head | 0/10 |

**Abilities**
*Gaze Attack (Mesmerism), Grappler, Undead*

**Skills**
*Brawn 70%, Endurance 80%, Evade 85%, Perception 70%, Willpower 75%*

**Combat Style**
*Skeletal Guardian 85%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Constrict* | *L* | *M* | *1d6+1d10* | *As for Body Segment* |
| *Tail Slap* | *L* | *L* | *1d8+1d10* | *As for Tail Segment* |

Jar 1: Swarm of Human Skeletal Hands

Treat as a SIZ 20 Insect Swarm (see RuneQuest page 365). These horrifically scuttling hands will crawl over several victims, clawing and scratching, but do not inflict poison.

Jar 2: A Tikbalang Skeleton.

Jar 3: A Snake Skeleton with a Human Skull for a Head.

## False Sarcophagus

On the other side of the crudely broken-open hole is the false burial crypt. A pentagonal chamber with tall niches in four of the walls, where countless reptilian skulls are racked in attendance, and a vertical sarcophagus against the fifth, its ornately carved lid lying smashed on the floor. Of all the chambers, this is the only one lit; illumination coming from a wide flaming brazier, similar in design to the one in the Mortuary Temple.

A dozen bodies, both savages and colonists, lie about the room, most in the same wizened state as previous explorers; but a few also show signs of severe burning. Close investigation with a successful Perception or Easy First Aid roll reveals that some of the interlopers seemed to have starved to death, if the gnaw marks on several bones are anything to go by. Despite casual rifling, the stiflingly warm room appears to have been looted years ago. In addition, there appears to be no exit, although disappointed tomb robbers will probably jump to the conclusion that the brazier's green flames offer a magical exit, which might be reinforced by the fact the dancing fire appears to give off no heat.

The bowl is yet another death trap, however; in actual fact being a one-way portal from the bowels of the Ruaumoko volcano, covered with another phantasm projecting green flames, but this time concealing its temperature. The only clues to its nature are the partially burned bodies and a slight sulphurous smell to the air. Anyone stepping into the bowl will not feel any heat, but will feel intense agony after a few seconds when they burst into flame, the unseen lava inflicting 3d6 damage to every Hit Location and automatically setting clothing alight.

The true exit is hidden behind the false sarcophagus, which swings out from the wall. Treat the massive stone coffin as having a SIZ of 50, which may require a successful Brawn roll to pull open (see Lifting, RuneQuest page 59). Behind this secret door is an alcove concealing the one-way Portal back to the Mortuary Temple. Locating the presence of this escape route can be achieved either by succeeding in a Hard Track roll to detect a faint trail of dried blood leading to one side of the sarcophagus, or with magic, such as Witchsight, Mystic (Sense), Project (Vision) and so on.

## Burial Chamber

The true sepulchre of Soleks lies deep under the false tomb, in the roots of the ridge itself. It has no physical connection to the rest of the complex, having been excavated from the rear of the slope, its shaft then backfilled and collapsed to forever hide its existence. Even detecting the presence of subterranean chambers is near impossible save for the greatest magicians, its walls being completely lined with magic-dampening Jadestone.

Access to this place is normally only achievable via the sacrificial bowl of the Mortuary Temple. However the secondary Portal enchantment activates but once every seven years, at the time of the astronomical conjunction represented on the temple ceiling. For a period of a single hour the flames change colour to vivid purple, indicating the opening of the way to the sorcerer. Games Masters who actually wish their players to gain access to Soleks should either allow this knowledge to be passed on from some ancient source, or stage the expedition so that it coincidentally arrives just before the 'Stars are Right'.

Unlike many dead sorcerers (see The Restless Souls of Sorcerers) Soleks has transcended to full lichdom and therefore remains bound to the world, engaging in some obscure research. Characters who attempt passage to pillage the tomb will be faced with a serious, if not fatal challenge. Only those seeking knowledge, tuition or some boon from the deceased sorcerer are likely to return alive;

### The Restless Souls of Sorcerers

It is dangerous to disturb the mummified remains of accomplished sorcerers, whose sleep of death is often best left undisturbed whilst they wander the outer planes of existence, meditating on unfathomable mysteries of the universe. Whenever a sorcerer's tomb is trespassed, the spirit instinctively returns to their mummy to either communicate with those who petition them or defend the sepulchre against pillage.

Being yanked back to their corpse can be irritating to the deceased, who may chastise the disturbers if no suitable gift or reason exists for the rude awakening. Otherwise a long-dead sorcerer rarely has need of their physical remains, which if destroyed, would sever their link to the world, allowing their consciousness to dissipate to other realms.

and only then if they can placate the sorcerer's mummy with a gift worthy of its dread reputation; for example an enchanted artefact of note, or several slaves which can be drained of life for Magic Points.

### Reception Hall

Those arriving from the Mortuary Temple will arrive upon a circular plinth at the end of a hall, four metres wide and eight metres tall, its walls angled slightly inwards to form a corbelled vault. Alternating to either side along its twenty metre length are shallow niches inset at waist height, each containing a mummified body with its legs drawn up so that its knees rest under the chin of the wizened corpse.

The bodies are the loyal trusted servants of Soleks whom were interred with the sorcerer. They are dressed in conspicuous finery, beautiful woven cloth and precious jewellery demonstrating their great honour. Although not animate undead, the bodies possess a magical aura – their trapped dreaming souls forming a reservoir of Magic Points accessible to the dead sorcerer. Any attempt to desecrate or loot the remains will bring down the immediate wrath of Soleks.

The hall ends in a pair of brightly burnished copper doors which reflect any light source from their intricate design of writhing serpents, similar to those upon the Mortuary Temple doors, except far grander works of art. The near priceless doors are not locked, in fact opening in eerie silence before they are touched.

### Throne of Kapala

One of the most precious objects of might upon the island and Soleks' most prized possession, the Throne of Kapala was once the seat of power for the kings of that famed city before it collapsed into the ocean. Soleks quested long and hard to locate this treasure, finally venturing beneath the waters to wrest it directly from the arms of Oodako, the octopod god of the slimy depths.

The throne is shaped in the form of a two-headed jaguar, one fierce head at either end of its body acting as hand rests. Made from a single piece of beautiful emerald green jadeite, the seat provides the benefits of the following miracles to whoever sits upon it, the magic literally scintillating about their body with a magnificent radiance: Absorption, Backlash, Enthrall and Spirit Block all permanently extended with an Intensity and Magnitude of 10.

### Auditorium

The hall opens out into a large circular chamber. At the far side is a semicircular plinth atop which stands a jade stool-throne, upon which the lich of Soleks will be waiting, bathed in an awe-inspiring glow. Before the throne is an open area where a macabre group of mummified female body slaves dance eternally to entertain their master.

Inset into the walls are ten gold plaques, similar to those described in the City of Akakor (see Plaza of Knowledge page 53), save that they are not magical and only half the size, yet still suffer the Plunderer's Curse. These contain the school-specific sorcery spells of Soleks, including those which have been lost since he founded the cult. (For further information see the Sagacious Scrolls of Soleks in the Magic chapter). Behind each plaque is a hidden scroll case which contains his extensive library.

Interspersed between the wall plaques are more niches, smaller this time, each holding an enchanted crystal skull, linked together to form a multi-targeted sorcery spell. At Soleks' will, the skulls project an Intensity 13 Shrivel (STR) with a Magnitude of 4, Range of 21m, affecting up to 9 Targets. The magic is resisted with an opposed roll of Endurance versus a casting skill of 125%. Failure causes the victim to weaken to the point of helpless impotence (assuming a STR of 26 or less), incidentally reducing their Damage Bonus.

The floor of the chamber is a vast mosaic of small tiles, which shift colour every few minutes, forming new images.

### Seven Mummified Handmaidens

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 21 | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Tail | 3/6 |
| CON: 19 | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 4–5 | Right Leg | 3/6 |
| SIZ: 10 | Magic Points | 15 | 6–7 | Left Leg | 3/6 |
| DEX: 17 | Movement | 6m | 8–10 | Abdomen | 3/7 |
| INT: 15 | Strike Rank | 16 | 11–14 | Chest | 3/8 |
| POW: 15 | Armour | Mummified flesh & scales | 15–16 | Right Arm | 3/5 |
| CHA: 12 | Magic | None | 17–18 | Left Arm | 3/5 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 3/6 |

**Abilities**
*Immunity (Poison, Disease), Life Sense, Night Sight, Undead*

**Skills**
*Brawn 70%, Dance 110%, Endurance 80%, Evade 85%, Perception 70%, Sing 85%, Willpower 75%*

**Combat Style**
*Dance of Death 90%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Unarmed* | *M* | *T* | *1d3+1d4+Tomb Rot* | *As for Arm, Leg or Tail* |

### Soleks, Mummified High Folk Sorcerer

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 22 | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Tail | 3/8 |
| CON: 21 | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | 4–5 | Right Leg | 3/8 |
| SIZ: 15 | Magic Points | 19 | 6–7 | Left Leg | 3/8 |
| DEX: 15 | Movement | 6m | 8–10 | Abdomen | 3/9 |
| INT: 21 | Strike Rank | 17 | 11–14 | Chest | 3/10 |
| POW: 19 | Armour | Mummified flesh & scales | 15–16 | Right Arm | 3/7 |
| CHA: 16 | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 3/7 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 3/8 |

**Abilities & Gifts**
*Immunity (Poison, Disease), Life Sense, Night Sight, Undead*
*Horde (Enkindle Carrion), Lichdom*

**Skills**
*Brawn 70%, Dance 110%, Endurance 80%, Evade 85%, Perception 70%, Sing 85%, Willpower 75%*

**Magic**
*Sagacious Scrolls of Soleks 125% (All); Prognostications of Nugsoth 110% {Descry Chronology}; The Vagnarr Elucidations 95% {Metaphysical Perspicacity (Touch), Discern (Personal Object), Protuberate (Hearing), Protuberate (Vision), Insightful Presentment}; Pnachotic Protections 85% {Obliterate Conjury, Quell Bewitchment}; Ebon Words of Zaruthra 70% {Inscribe Dominion, Conjure Possession, Tangential Perambulation}*

**Combat Style**
*Vengeful Wrath 85%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Unarmed* | *M* | *T* | *1d3+1d6+Tomb Rot* | *As for Arm, Leg or Tail* |
| *Staff* | *M* | *L* | *1d8+1d6* | *8/8* |

This is actually an illusion, an enchantment linking a Delusory Seeming (Vision) spell with a Descry Chronology spell. Most of the time the mosaic displays the ancient glories of Kapala from the perspective of the Jaguar Throne, which the lich studies intently as if searching for something of import.

When treated with the abject deference he expects, Soleks will listen to petitioners, watching their emotions with an Insightful Presentment spell before deciding to aid or dismiss them at his whim. Tribute of valuable art, ancient scrolls or magical objects will sway his normally negative decision to dispense minor boons, such as teaching a lower ranked sorcerer some skill or spell. More substantial requests may be granted, but require additional offerings of sacrificial victims or the performing of a quest for the sorcerer.

Insulting behaviour or any aggressive act will cause the lich to crush the interlopers. Between his faithful harem and his own magical resources, unprepared opponents are doomed; especially when it becomes obvious that Soleks controls the portal in the Reception Hall, preventing escape if he is ostensibly slain. Physically harming him will be difficult unless he is first removed from the Throne of Kapala. Even then such destruction is temporary, the lich eventually reforming from whatever scraps remain, then hunting down the desecrators to extract revenge.

The material rewards of defeating Soleks are manifold. In addition to his throne, he also possesses several enchanted items proffered to him as tribute (choose from pages 183 to 187), which are normally stored in a Jadestone coffer located behind his throne.

For those seeking knowledge the sorcerer's large library contains a vast collection of scrolls (written in High Tongue) covering High Folk poetry, history and basic sciences; permitting anyone using it the opportunity to gain (or further train) the relevant Professional Skill at base starting value if they expend the normal Experience Rolls in research.

The gold plaques are worth a kingdom's ransom if they can be offloaded before any detrimental side effects are noticed, whilst the crystal skulls are worth 7,500sp apiece just for their craftsmanship. Last but by no means least are the fantastical pectoral necklaces, anklets, bracelets and headdresses of the mummies, which would gather a base price of 1d10+10 x 5,000sp for the lot.

### Tomb Rot

A magical disease of ghastly effect, Tomb Rot is sometimes found in the sepulchres of ancient sorcerers or long abandoned temples, a by-product of necromantic energies which often linger in such locations. Although not consistently fatal, many a tomb robber has ended up begging on the streets, one of their limbs eaten away by its dreadful potency.

Application: Contact
Potency: 70%
Resistance: Endurance
Onset Time: 1 day
Duration: 1d6+7 days
Conditions: Paralysis and Maiming.

Soon after contracting the disease, the afflicted Hit Location grows numb until 24 hours later it becomes totally paralysed. Each subsequent day, the limb suffers a permanent loss of 1 Hit Point as the skin and flesh slowly crumble away to dust. If cured whilst still a Minor Wound, then the limb, head or torso remains functional. Once a Serious Wound however, the rotting causes an effect similar to those of Permanent Injuries (see RuneQuest page 122), thus an afflicted arm will gradually crumble away from the fingers to the shoulder for instance. If the rotting progresses to the point of a Major Wound, then the victim dies horrifically, their entire body disintegrating to dust.

Antidote: Only the refined nectar of the Golden Lotus, Cure Malady or the Transfer Malady miracle are effective against the disease.

## Smoking Mirrors

Core to the native cultures of Monster Island are the Smoking Mirrors; inter-dimensional gateways through which countless strange creatures migrate, infesting the jungles and mountains with their alien cries and providing nourishment, if not mortal danger, for the inhabitants.

Created after the War of the Gods when the continent sank beneath the waves, these portals were the ultimate pinnacle of High Folk civilisation, demonstrating their mastery of the arts of sorcery and a cultural unity which combined all the peoples of the island together to complete each engineering project.

Of the original 47 portals, only 29 remain intact. The others have been buried in landslides or were damaged when lowland savages rebelled against their High Folk overlords, crushed to rubble by re-awakened deities. Not all of those that still stand are known about, being hidden away in secret places far from the senses of the island's denizens. Several have slid beneath the waves, some are located in places too deadly to venture, and at least one has been incorporated into a massive tomb complex.

Each of the still extant portals has the same basic appearance, a trapezoid shaped opening roughly seven metres high, five metres wide at the base and 3m wide at the top, supported by a framework of allochthonous jade blocks carved with alien glyphs and sigils. The central portion of the gateway is where the name Smoking Mirrors comes from, for instead of an open view to the other side of the gate or the place the portal connects to, there is a perfectly flat surface of reflective blackness, almost as if it were a sheared-off piece of obsidian. This surface is bone-numbingly cold, causing water vapour to condense out of the air so that streams of mist continuously roll off its face.

Due to some magic controlling the Smoking Mirrors, the dimensional gateways only operate in one direction. Things can come to the island, but once they pass through the portal, they may never return home again. The sorceries woven into the gateways are more subtle than just this, however. Each is a intricate web of enchantments which not only give the portal is directionality, but also decides the world it connects to, the types of creatures it attracts and the duration it remains open for.

Such were the complexities involved, that each Smoking Mirror required the self sacrifice of a mage of great power, in return for their name to be praised evermore. Sadly the collapse of civilisation and subsequent chaos caused these names to be lost, even though the sorcerer's bodies still remain buried beneath the very stones they breathed life into. The tragedy is double-edged, since without the name of the sorcerer who made the Smoking Mirror, the portals can no longer be controlled.

With every full moon or whenever the gateways are struck by lightning, there is a small chance that the sorcery of the smoking Mirror is jostled, resetting its operational mode. In plain terms this means that the portal can randomly connect to a new world, draw a horde of destructive beasts, or even become quiescent for an extended period.

**Smoking Mirrors Reset**

| Roll | Setting |
|---|---|
| 01-85 | Nothing changes |
| 86-90 | Creatures drawn once per month |
| 91-94 | Creatures drawn once per week |
| 95-97 | Creatures drawn once per day |
| 98-99 | Operational status changes (shuts down or starts up) |
| 100 | Antecedent changes (roll for new world or environment) |

## Jade Stone

The exotic green jade which forms many of the island's most ancient buildings is a strange mineral of almost supernatural hardness, which glows with a soft inner illumination after the sun sets. The stone weighs about twice as much as basalt, making the cyclopean blocks used to construct temples, tombs and the remaining Smoking Mirrors unimaginably heavy. Since the pre-cataclysmic civilisation shaped such building blocks with integral plugs and sockets, almost all the structures constructed from Jadestone have remained intact despite floods, earthquakes and the questing roots of vegetation.

Incredibly tough, Jadestone seems almost invulnerable, possessing 20 Armour Points against physical assault. Any tool which strikes it (assuming terrestrial materials) must suffer its own damage roll against itself. Magically, the stone obstructs any spell, miracle or spirit of 10 Magnitude or less, glowing a brighter green when it suffers an assault. Indeed the only way to shape such stuff is via the specific Sculpt (Jadestone) spell, and only then when cast with enough Magnitude to overcome the magical dampening of the stone.

Although Jadestone is almost priceless for its protective properties, no records remain as to where it was quarried. Whether a tiny vein of this amazing mineral lies hidden at the root of a mountain, or the material was imported from some other dimension is a question yet to be answered.

## Suggested Uses for the Smoking Mirrors

- Instead of arriving by ship, the characters are brought to the island by stumbling through one of the Smoking Mirrors. The colony is made up of other stranded adventurers, like themselves. If they ever wish to return home they must try to find the secret behind the portals and discover how to control them.
- A number of treasure hunters venturing into the jungle have gone missing. Following their trail, characters find they have been tied to sacrificial posts before a Smoking Mirror, in some sort of ritual to draw creatures through. As the prisoners are released, the portal does indeed disgorge something terrible and hungry, very hungry...
- A conclave of savages begs help from the colony after a lightning strike sends their Smoking Mirror into daily operation, flooding the local jungle with deadly carnivores. Not only must the characters aid on this Great Hunt, but are begged to summon more lightning to change the portal's setting.
- Within the ruins of Kapala itself is discovered a Smoking Mirror, long buried by the collapse of the temple which held it. This portal, however, is far more sophisticated, perhaps the predecessor to those constructed by the High Folk. Whatever secrets it might hold are quickly cut off by the arrival of a new species of humanoid, who fortify the ruin and rapidly multiply in numbers, being the spearhead of a trans-dimensional migration.
- An exploring scholar claims that she knows the theory of how the Smoking Mirrors function, but requires a group to escort her to one of the portals so that the ground beneath it can be excavated. Such desecration does not sit well with the locals who are horrified that their source of food might be damaged, thus precipitating a face-off which may result in outright war!

# Temple of Yhounkehd

Looming over the ruins of Kapala rise a series of small but unnaturally steep-sided hills, each one swathed in lush jungle growth for two-thirds of its height. Earth tremors or erosion have prevented the build up of detritus on the peaks, revealing them to be massive pyramidal structures, whose exposed cyclopean blocks glow a pale phosphorescent green during the hours of darkness.

Such prominent structures have drawn a great deal of attention from the colonists, who regularly attempt to break into the edifices, yet even the hardest metal tools have failed to penetrate the strange stone walls and the dense roots of the lower slopes has dissuaded excavation in search of entrances. Since the surrounding ruins offer easier pickings elsewhere, most tomb robbers simply give up and sift through the more accessible rubble of fallen buildings.

However, one small group has recently found their way into one of the pyramids via a subterranean catacomb, revealing it to be a mighty temple full of treasures, knowledge and deadly danger. Of the original explorers only a single survivor returned. A dark force, awakened by the explorations, now prowls the ancient ruins seeking to re-establish its power and standing...

## Temple District

The collection of jungle-covered pyramids stand at the south-eastern corner of the great plaza. They are seven in number, all oddly proportioned with a base to height ratio of 1 : 2 making them sharply pointed. Where exposed to open air, the Jadestone blocks which form the surface cladding are glassily smooth, fitted together with uncanny precision and seemingly untouched by time or weather.

Other than the thick overgrowth and mass of tree roots, there is little to see on the lower slopes. Some excavated hollows show half-hearted attempts to locate an entrance, but with the pyramids ranging at ground level from fifty to ninety metres on a side, the scale of effort is overwhelming. There is little danger here, save for wandering beasts or opportunistic thugs seeking to extort a tithe of any treasure found by adventurers returning to the colony.

Unless forearmed with the precise knowledge of where it lies, finding the entrance to the catacombs is exceptionally tricky. Simply searching the area requires a successful Perception check at Formidable difficulty, whereas following

**Catacomb Encounter Table**

| 1d100 | Discovery |
|---|---|
| 01-10 | Passage leads to a dead end, you must backtrack. |
| 11-20 | False side passage which leads over an ancient un-sprung pit trap (use the one from RuneQuest page 127). |
| 21-30 | Route passes through a tomb, inside which a Death Spirit of 1d3 Intensity stands guard. |
| 31-40 | Unstable tunnel, which partially collapses. Everyone must succeed in an unopposed Evade roll or be buried alive as per an Earthquake miracle of Intensity 8 (see RuneQuest page 269). |
| 41-50 | Opened tomb with a dead body sprawled across the floor and an angry Wraith of 1d3 Intensity ready to attack trespassers. |
| 51-60 | Archway inscribed by an unseen magical glyph which inflicts the following miracle at an Intensity of 1d6+4 on the first person passing through: roll 1d4, 1 – Berserk, 2 – Corruption, 3 – Mindblast, 4 – Sever Spirit. |
| 61-70 | Defiled ossuarium filled with the bones of 1d10 x100 bodies. No bad effect. |
| 71-80 | Twisting passage, at the end of which is a near-dead colonist who is possessed by a Sickness Spirit of 1d3 Intensity. If somehow saved the victim proves to be a fellow explorer, Yhounkehd cultist or escaped sacrifice. |
| 81-90 | Treacherous vault, which completely caves in. Everyone must succeed in an unopposed Evade roll or be buried alive as per an Earthquake miracle of Intensity 9 (see RuneQuest page 269). In addition the fall divides the party into two groups (roll randomly) which must now separately navigate their way through the catacombs. |
| 91-100 | Stairs lead up to an exit, but it is the passage through which the characters originally entered the subterranean labyrinth! |

the trail left by recent worshippers is slightly easier, needing a successful Track check at Hard difficulty.

The entrance is hidden in a cul-de-sac of low ruins which once held the baths and accommodation used by the priesthood. Concealed behind some low-lying undergrowth is a well shaft, leading deep underground with series of rickety ladders descending to an opening in the shaft wall, eleven metres below. From here characters can gain access to the underworld of the city.

## Catacombs of the Underworld

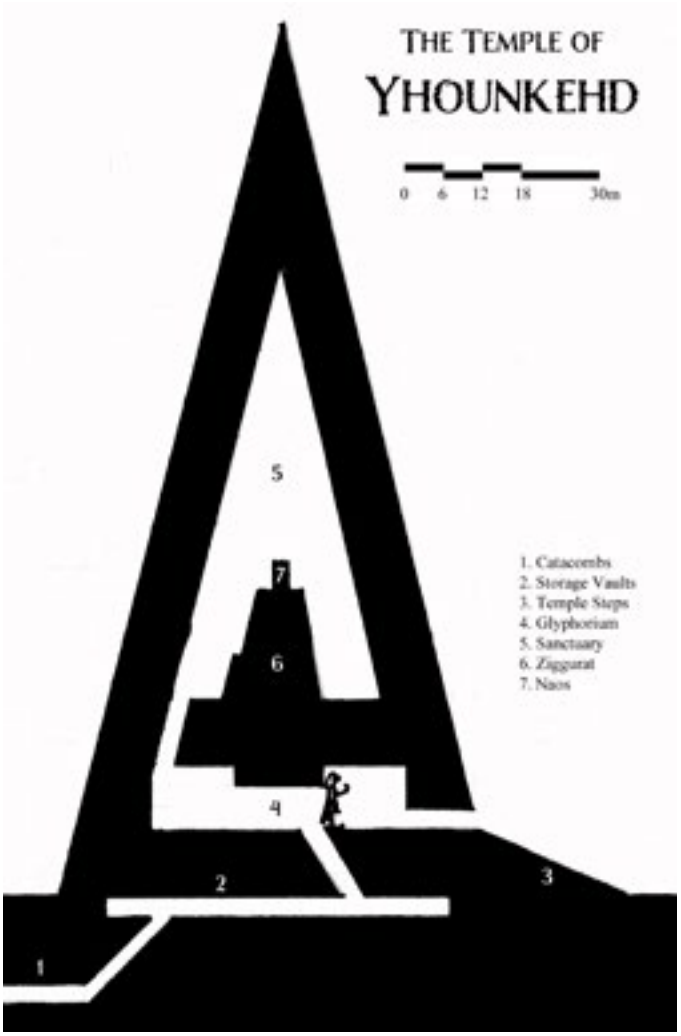
Under the streets of Kapala is a vast underground labyrinth, originally formed by a combination of rainwater erosion through the softer rock beneath the city and the run-off of now extinct hot water springs. These natural caves formed a complex catacomb of passages through differing strata which, once discovered, was quickly expanded by quarrying.

As well as a secretive way for the priesthood of different temples to traverse the city unseen, the tunnels and chambers were soon utilised to store the bones and mummies of citizens with the wealth to purchase a place within the vaults. The catacombs now form a mind-numbingly confusing maze of collapsed passages, dead ends and sealed chambers still filled with mortal remains.

The route from the well shaft to the Temple of Yhounkehd only encompasses a tiny section of this underworld, but the area can be deadly if characters are unaware of the path through. Any chance to track underground suffers a penalty of Formidable if the character lacks exotic methods of perception such as an acute sense of smell. Otherwise explorers must fumble their way through the interminable twisting passageways, narrow stairs up and down, and ominous looking doors.

If the Games Master is not feeling kind enough to provide a map or clue to bypass this section, finding a way through the catacombs requires a successful Hard Navigation check (Standard if the character is specialised in underground navigation). Every failure results in a roll on the Catacomb Encounter Table, whilst a fumble maximises the deadliness of the encounter. Since the area is relatively small each deadly encounter should only be experienced once, so treat repeated arrivals at that location as being harmless the second time – assuming they dealt with the problem previously.

Eventually, characters will find themselves in a small antechamber at the foot of an impressively carved staircase paved with obsidian. This leads up into the bowels of Yhounkehd's Temple.




# The Temple Pyramid

The inside of the temple is divided into three levels: a basement in which the temple stored its multitude of offerings; a mid level where worshippers would enter and the cult teachings are recorded on the walls; and the top level, the sanctum of the goddess where she is venerated.

Within the temple, illumination is provided along the main passageways by strangely burning torches that flicker with ghostly blue flames, or in some areas by the pale green emanation of Jadestone – which whilst it doesn't produce enough light to see by, does backlight any bas reliefs and hieroglyphic writings carved into it in an eerie way.

## Storage Vaults

Access between the catacombs and the bottom level of the pyramid was once sealed by solid slab of Jadestone weighing several tons. This used to be lifted by temple slaves, using beams and brute force to permit egress for the priesthood, who stood guard over the secret way. During the cataclysm which befell Kapala, this slab either shifted or had been left open since the way is clear for adventurers.

Yet the opening is not unprotected. Two members of Yhounkehd's resurrected cult (see page 162) now stand guard at the top of the stairs leading up from the catacombs. They can be dealt with in a number of ways, although the easiest way to bypass them is for characters to disguise themselves as a fellow cult members by wearing a jaguar skin, using the skull-hood to conceal facial features – assuming of course they return the cult salute – by bowing with arms crossed over chest. A messy drawn out fight has a slight chance of attract attention from other cultists, if present within the pyramid.

The bottom level is itself a bewildering maze of unlit passages, deliberately intended to both confuse and terrify those trespassing here without edict. The walls, floor and ceilings are carved in such a manner that the reliefs produce disconcerting optical illusions of shifting perspective and leering demons, especially when illuminated by flickering light. Navigating the maze usually requires memorising the sharp twists and turns which lead to a particular vault. Fortunately the previous explorers have placed a guide string along the floor to prevent people from getting lost traversing the route up to the second level.

The capacious vaults themselves are concealed behind cunningly wrought stone doors, which can be identified by the astute as having a carving of a jaguar upon them, or by a team Perception check at Formidable difficulty. Locating all of the chambers would require days of dedicated survey and mapping, something the cultists themselves have not yet done.

Rewards for such efforts can be considerable, assuming the goddess permits such sacrilege. The hidden chambers contain the accumulated offerings of a prosperous, although increasingly debauched, empire. Much of this wealth has not aged well, however. Jars of precious oils and wines have long since dried up into rancid sludge. Vast urns of grain have withered to dust. Fabulous bolts of cloth have rotted into tatters. Even the ancient scrolls of devotional poetry have faded and crumbled with time.

Some valuable treasures remain intact; an entire chamber full of gold, silver and electrum works of art. Most are just gilded wooden objects from statues to furniture, yet priceless to the right collector for all their lack of precious metal. Several stone chests contain temple jewellery intended for the priesthood, mainly wrist and ankle bracelets, ornate pectoral necklaces and finest of all, full jaguar masks of exquisite craftsmanship, with eyestones of

emerald or sapphire. A final chest holds a number of seemingly worthless blackened rocks, in actuality iron meteorites which are worth their weight in gold to the natives. The entire treasure (sans meteorites) is worth approximately 75,000 silvers.

This treasure trove is well protected. Not only are the doors sealed with a lock of fiendish difficulty (Mechanisms 100%) but several dangerous miracles have been bound to the chamber as part of the temple's consecration. Anyone touching the basalt door who is not a cult member, will be blasted by an Intensity 7 Lightning. Similarly if the chamber beyond is entered by a non-cultist, it triggers a Thunderclap of similar potency which automatically alerts the entire temple. Both miracles are one-shot until a sacrifice or veneration is performed to recharge the magic.

## Glyphorium

The second level of the pyramid was the original entrance level, once reached by a ten metre high series of stone steps carved into the outer surface. This led to a portico inset into the temple's side closed off by a pair of magnificent Jadestone doors, carved with likenesses honouring Yhounkehd.

Within this threshold is the main colonnaded entry hall. The impressively large chamber is decorated to show the Lady of Jaguars in her role of royal guardian. The wall facing the main doors is covered with a painted, eight metre tall half-statue of a gigantic Yhounkehd coiled about the lower body of the emperor, her head lowered and jaws agape in threat. The mouth is actually the ominous entranceway to the stairs leading down to the vaults. In the temple's heyday the stone jaws would open and close at the command of the priesthood, operated by mechanisms hidden within the wall.

On either side of the hall are openings leading to two galleries, which pass either side of the stonework which supports both the processional staircase leading up to the sanctuary and the cult statue above. To reach the foot of the stairs requires passing down either the left or right gallery, which are devoted to day and night respectively, covered with fantastical frescoes retelling some mythological tale specific to the Lady of Jaguars.

Each gallery has a series of chambers opening off towards the outer wall, which hold cult-specific teachings, inscribed in obscure hieroglyphs. These are meditative cells of education, teaching the wisdom of the goddess from the propitiation responsibilities of her cult members to training for cult skills up to 80%. This is invaluable knowledge but the current cultists have no idea what the beautiful glyphs say.

The far ends of both galleries have side exits leading to the grand staircase up to the sanctuary. The steps rise back towards the centre of the pyramid, at a similar angle to the outer wall. Every step is covered with fierce jaguar figures and words praising the goddess.

### Cultists of Yhounkehd

| Attributes | 1d20 | Hit Location | Initiate AP/HP | Cultist 1 AP/HP | Cultist 2 AP/HP | Cultist 3 AP/HP | Cultist 4 AP/HP | Cultist 5 AP/HP | Cultist 6 AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Action Points: 3 | 1–3 | Right Leg | 0/6 | 0/5 | 0/5 | 0/5 | 0/5 | 0/5 | 0/5 |
| Damage Modifier: +1d2 | 4–6 | Left Leg | 0/6 | 0/5 | 0/5 | 0/5 | 0/5 | 0/5 | 0/5 |
| Magic Points: N/A | 7–9 | Abdomen | 2/7 | 2/6 | 2/6 | 2/6 | 2/6 | 2/6 | 2/6 |
| Movement: 6m | 10-12 | Chest | 2/8 | 2/7 | 2/7 | 2/7 | 2/7 | 2/7 | 2/7 |
| Strike Rank: 7 (13) | 13–15 | Right Arm | 2/5 | 2/4 | 2/4 | 2/4 | 2/4 | 2/4 | 2/4 |
| Armour: Jaguar Skins | 16–18 | Left Arm | 2/5 | 2/4 | 2/4 | 2/4 | 2/4 | 2/4 | 2/4 |
| Abilities: None | 19–20 | Head | 4/6 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 |

**Magic**
Initiate can call upon Chameleon and Lycanthropy

**Skills**
*Athletics 70%, Brawn 60%, Deceit 60%, Endurance 75%, Evade 65%, Perception 70%, Stealth 80%, Willpower 60%*

**Combat Style**
Jaguar Cultist (Unarmed Prowess) 75%

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bagh Nakh* | *S (M)* | *S* | *1d6+1d2* | *6/10* |

### Sanctuary

The top of the main processional staircase opens into the cult sanctuary, an overwhelmingly impressive chamber which fills the top two thirds of the pyramid. The four corners are filled with giant statues of were-jaguars, supporting the in-sloping walls upon their outspread arms and shoulders. At their feet are circular tables covered with semi-precious trinkets and small statuettes, obvious offerings to the goddess (1d10 x 100 silvers per table).

Filling the centre of the sanctuary is another stepped pyramid twenty metres tall, atop which stands a Naos (inner chamber which normally holds the cult image) looking akin to a massive ornate wardrobe some five metres high and closed with golden doors. On either side of this holy shrine stand two snarling stone jaguars, whilst half way down the ziggurat is a bloodstained altar.

The entire sanctuary is partially lit with four very large copper braziers, which burn with more of the weird blue flames. The light is insufficient to illuminate the entire sanctum, leaving the corners and roof swathed in shadows. Depending when the characters arrive, the chamber could be completely empty, attended by 1d3+3 praying worshippers, or filled with 1d12+12 cult members gathered to perform a human sacrifice to Yhounkehd.

The ziggurat is heavily defended against desecration, ensuring that a direct assault or plundering is tantamount to suicide. Making an offering to the Lady of Jaguars, on the other hand, will gain her beneficent opinion, allowing the character to join her cult (see page 162). Since her worshippers have thus far limited sacrifices to the unrepentant scum of Port Grimsand their acts may not necessarily be irreproachable, especially considering what the goddess might do to the colony if not placated.

Other than those powers available to the cult's lone initiate, the temple has the following defences. Violating the sanctity of the altar will result in a tremendous bolt of lightning blasting down from the apex of the ceiling (Lightning Intensity 9). Both stone jaguars will animate if anyone below the rank of Acolyte in the cult ascends higher than the altar (Awaken Intensity 9, treat as stone Smilodons). Finally, unless directed by the goddess herself, anyone touching the Naos will be cursed, and permanently transformed into a giant jaguar under her personal control (Beast Form Intensity 11). All of the miracles are single use, but due to the intimate presence of Yhounkehd will restore themselves on a weekly basis.

Anyone who manages to open the Naos will experience sheer terror, since the shrine does not contain a cult statue of Yhounkehd, but a portal to her palace in another dimension. Normally, opening the portal either creates violent weather effects over Kapala or requires titanic storms to power its creation. No matter the atmospheric effects, being summoned to the Lady of Jaguars' presence is a portent of terrible disaster...

## Suggested Uses for the Temple

- The characters are asked by Lord Greystone to investigate the disappearances of various seedy characters from the colony, including several of the White Death troop. When bodies are found outside the walls, ritually slain, it appears to be the shady activities of a cult. Yet none of the established faiths within Grimsand seems to be involved in what is going on.
- A large amount of ancient artworks have hit the market, sold by a notorious group of tomb thieves who seem to have struck it rich. Soon after the gang members die one by one, the locals assume some criminal connection or the members turning on themselves, but then the last survivor passes all his ill-gotten loot to one of the characters shortly before being killed by a huge jaguar, which returns (reborn) night after night, hunting whoever holds the looted temple treasure.
- Dreams sent by the Lady of Jaguars seduce and plead with one of the characters to rekindle her cult. Whoever is so blessed receives images of a well shaft near tall pyramids, but ones not covered in jungle. If the character investigates then they discover the way into the temple, filled with the corpses of failed tomb robbers, but with the chance that they themselves may restore the cult.
- The jaguar cult becomes so powerful in Grimsand, that open war has been declared between them and the colonies' original faiths. The streets are abandoned every night in terror of being taken as a sacrifice by one side or another in the clandestine alleyway battles. The populace have become vehemently partisan. Are the characters willing to fight for or against the cult?

# Valley of Ivory Doom

A dead end canyon, formed from titanic seismic forces which ripped the ground asunder, Bone Valley is a graveyard for countless thousands of beasts which have become trapped within its confines. Ostensibly a narrow rift almost a kilometre long with sheer walls between ten and twenty metres high, the sides have been undermined by constant attempts by arriving creatures to climb out, making the valley an inescapable death trap.

At one end is an active Smoking Mirror, positioned on a pillar of rock approximately eight metres in height. Before it is a ramp of bones, where creatures arriving through the portal have plummeted to their deaths. Over time the accumulating skeletons of these corpses have made a path leading down into the bottom of the valley, so that arrivals now simply tumble down the shifting slope and survive, albeit briefly.

Most materialising beasts are slain by the Bone Wraiths (see page 201) which now infest the place, as trapped in death as when they were alive. Other, more cunning creatures either use their unique abilities to hide from the undead wraiths or flee from them. Such measures are temporary solutions, however, the creature eventually starving to death unless it can scale sheer surfaces to escape.

Due to the prevalence of death and undeath spirits, the native savages give the valley a wide berth. Only the most twisted and desperate of shamans come to harvest such unhappy haunts, since anyone venturing into the Spirit World nearby this location is likely to be swarmed by the foul beings. In fact this is a favourite place of the Anguri savages to sacrifice those who have committed unforgivable transgressions of their tribal taboos – preventing them from ever reaching the afterlife.

Despite the danger, one aspect of the place is an irresistible lure for adventurers. Many of the creatures drawn through the Smoking Mirror possess valuable materials such as iridescent scales or ivory. A literal king's ransom in tusks lies scattered about, from the huge tush of mastodons to the wickedly curved incisors of outlandish predators, gleaming with a pale lustre amongst the waist deep piles of bones or infused with startling colours from their exotic origins.

Descending to the floor of the valley is simply a matter of lowering a vine or rope-ladder and clambering down.

Surviving long enough to loot the graveyard is a different matter. Within a minute a group of 1d3 Bone Wraiths will turn up to batter those who dare disturb their death. Of course laying these spirits to rest is unlikely, as finding their original corpse will be near impossible; yet they can be temporarily dispersed with blessed weapons or other suitable magic.

Such efforts are stopgap measures; the Bone Wraiths reforming in a matter of days whilst others will be drawn to the fracas, arriving in 1d6 minutes. In the time it takes for further reinforcements to arrive, each character can collect 1d4-1 tusks per minute. Since the Bone Wraiths only manifest in close proximity to their victims, there is no warning of when they arrive.

**Random Tusk Collection**

| Roll | Tusk Description | Value |
|---|---|---|
| 01-85 | Giant Molar | 1d10 Silver |
| 86-90 | Short Fang | 1d10x5 |
| 91-94 | Curved Head Horn | 1d10x10 |
| 95-97 | Wicked Sabre-tooth | 1d10x50 |
| 98-99 | Vicious Spiral Tooth | 1d10x100 |
| 100 | Long Tusk | 1d10x500 |

Thus ivory collectors will have to gamble on exactly when to abandon their collecting and climb out. Those that make it back over the lip of the valley wall are safe from further attack, at least physically, since the Wraiths are more than capable of throwing shards of bone.

# Other Places of Interest

The previous locations are merely some of the countless bizarre and mysterious places available on the island. There are innumerable other ancient ruins, necropolises, temples, valleys and subterranean complexes to be discovered and explored.

## The Baths of Bashuun

A complex built upon the slopes of the mountains in Gyaosi territory, the baths once utilised the natural thermal springs to provide a place of cleansing and relaxation. The thermae have survived reasonably intact, their waters still capable of amazing healing, even reputed to be capable of regrowing lost limbs. Although many journey to the baths seeking succour, few ever return – the inner caldarium being inhabited by a breeding pair of wyrms and thick patches of Xanthus plants.

## The City of Zerzura

The predominant of the three remaining High Folk fortresses, Zerzura is a magnificent edifice constructed from golden minarets of alien architecture, which climb the slopes of the small peak located in the very centre of the Puna Plateau. Few ever gaze upon the splendid conurbation however, the entire city being concealed behind an immense illusion (see Aggrandise page 152) so that unwitting explorers see nothing but endless arid stony desert.

Despite being the most powerful and populous of the sorcerers' holdouts, the small city appears mostly empty during the day, most of the High Folk meditating at the top of their elegant towers in the stifling heat. At night they become more sociable, practicing depraved arts to stimulate themselves out of their current ennui... a situation which will rapidly change once the first colonists arrive in their vaunted halls and their lust for power is re-awakened.

## The Caverns of Agartha

The third of the Mysterious Cities of Gold, this last High Folk fortress is actually built in a subterranean fissure, located inside Mount Colossus. Its buildings are excavated into cracks in the walls of the half-kilometre deep rift, illuminated by gas-bag plants and creatures (see Quathil page 262) which float up and down the central shaft. These are enchanted to glow with a captivating range of colours that reflect from the copper shingles decorating the walls of each domicile.

Lacking stairs or even ladders, travel between the various levels of the rift-city requires mounting one of the flying worms which infest the vast chamber. Although the most degenerate of the High Folk settlements, their sorcerers have mastered many secrets of biological engineering, encouraging them to experiment constantly in creating new life forms with which they hope to re-conquer the island.

## The Falls of the Diseased Ones

Dropping from the mountains in Kamacuri tribal lands is one of the island's most impressive cascades, a horseshoe waterfall which drops over a hundred metres into a small lake. Behind the falls is a cavern in which a cabal of fallen shaman plot their revenge against those that exiled them from their respective tribes. Known colloquially as the 'Diseased Ones', these nefarious kahunas summon and bind all the Sickness Spirits they can find, creating many fetishes.

Within the great cavern are a number of forbidding obsidian boulders which naturally extrude new diseases every time the stars align in misfortunate conjunction. The shamans gather these, sending them down the river bound into innocuous objects such as rotting logs, frog spawn or floating lanterns. Whilst the local tribe avoids this particular river with good cause, these malicious acts have created the blighted swamp downstream in Ghidori territory.

## The Formicarium

An ant mound, nearly seventy metres high, located in Anguri tribal lands, the formicarium was a sorcery experiment which ran wild. Venturing within the mound is dangerous, but the native savages make occasional forays to gather the giant ants' highly nutritious larval milk, with its ability to temporarily raise characteristics. Each expedition results in the hive refining its defensive tactics.

Few realise that the giant ants form a communal hive mind of exceptional intellect, but alien purpose; actually experimenting on the locals by introducing specific mutagens into the 'milk'. If the raids do not cease, the Anguri will soon suffer a terrible plague which will transform them into horrific insectoid mutants.

## The Giant Tikis

Facing north on the slopes of the Ruaumoko volcano stand a line of giant stone tikis, shaped like squatting serpentmen with oversized heads, which gaze out from a cliff top over the sea. Every one of the brooding monoliths has the soul of a High Folk sorcerer, imprisoned within the stone as punishment for their transgressions against the Spirit World. These haunts have long since gone insane from their captivity, but retain the unique ability to cast sorcery (in place of Folk Magic) when commanded to do so by the kahunas of the Gabari tribe.

The binding of the sorcerers is a direct insult to those High Folk residing in the cave city of Agartha, across the straits. They sometimes launch punitive raids mounted upon their gas-filled flying worms to destroy the tikis, but are usually shot down, either by the slings of the savages or the magic of their own dead and bound mages.

## The Gong

A colossal gong stands on a mountainside plinth deep inside Kangi territory. When the vast copper plate is rung, the toll not only echoes about the other peaks, but also starts a Prognosticate Chronology spell (see page 150), with a duration in days equal to three plus a roll of the striker's Damage Modifier; the gong continuing to vibrate almost imperceptibly until the spell concludes. Whoever strikes the gong is the person with the ability to rewind time back to the moment just after striking the mighty artefact.

The local Kangi savages view the gong with great superstition, placing guards to prevent anyone ringing it. They fear that the noise it creates brings doom upon the tribe, by awakening the sleeping gods. In reality it is more likely to bring a retaliatory raid from the High Folk who have suffered accidental avalanches due to the volume of the chime in the past.

## The Howling Pass

A narrow chasm positioned between two of the tallest peaks in the southern rim of the Tane caldera, the Howling Pass is named for the vicious winds which funnel through it during the annual typhoons of dry season. The funnelled winds are so strong that they can blow a fully grown man from their feet and tumble them off the cliff at its western end.

At the summit of the pass is a heavily weathered stone building, a tomb that ululates in the wind and has air elementals bound to it. Inside are a number of desiccated mummies, which animate to protect their necropolis if desecrated. Whether they are the entourage of a mighty warlock of old, or protect some other dread secret, is unknown.

## The Maze of Madness

A rather strange region of geological activity, the Maze of Madness is an area of upthrust crystalline stone formations which form a natural labyrinth. It is reputed to be a devious deathtrap which guards some mystical knowledge hidden at its centre. Scaling the formations is rendered impossible due to the razor-sharp edges of the uneven crystals. Flying over the maze does not help either, since no 'heart' to the labyrinth can been seen from above.

If that was not peculiar enough, the maze appears to change subtly as it is traversed. Some say that an ancient guardian sage or High Folk artefact warps the structure, whilst more progressive scholars propose that the entire effect is the result of a psychedelic gas released by volcanism. Whatever the reason, the few heroes who emerge alive are gifted unusual powers as a result of their experience, but cannot recall what they experienced within.

## The Occalyth

A strange pillar of sapphire-veined, bluish stone which stands high on the northern mountain overlooking the Abjured Precipice – an immense cliff that drops from the Puna Plateau down to the jungles of the Tane caldera. Shaped as a magatama (a sort of smoothly polished, curved tadpole-shaped stone with a hole in its head) twice the height of a tall man, its oddity begins with the fact that the stone is balanced on its rounded tail in contravention to all logic.

The stone has the ability to answer any question when an eclipse is viewed through the hole in the head, but requires feeding the stone 1d6+3 Fatigue Levels of the inquirer's own blood, causing its sapphire seams to pulse with an evil light. The Occalyth can answer any enquiry placed upon it with complete accuracy, making it the most powerful oracle on the island. However, calculating when such an eclipse is destined to occur is beyond the ability

of anyone lacking skill in astronomy or access to detailed historical records.

## The Sinkhole of Watery Doom

One of the largest cenotes that litter the lower jungle of the Tane caldera, this partially flooded sinkhole is home to a massive land crab, which relies on regular sacrifices from the nearby Varanri village to assuage its hunger. Although the crab is now far too big to clamber out of the cenote, it can send its smaller offspring to rampage the area if insufficient creatures fall into its home.

The sinkhole is connected to other volcanic sinkholes and cave systems via water-filled lava tubes. Its biggest prize are centuries of small treasures, which have been thrown in as offerings. Many of these glittering items are easily visible in the crystal clear water, deposited across the rocky bottom, tantalisingly out of reach unless someone is foolhardy enough to dive in.

## The Temple of the Thrice Thirteen Girdles

A neglected ruin, lost and overgrown in the thick jungle of the Mandahi territory, this temple is an obvious relic dating back before the cataclysm. Once a pleasure palace devoted to the worship of long forgotten Lemsiqua, virgin goddess of the moon, it fell with the empire which provided its patronage. The temple is still haunted by an animate bronze Sentinel (see page 266), shaped as a voluptuous woman with four arms, each wielding a wickedly sharp sickle.

Deeper within the ruins can be found three times thirteen chambers, their ceilings collapsed, every one of which contains a pair of skeletons engaged in some lascivious act of love at the moment of death. To the joy of most tomb robbers, however, laying nearby each skeletal couple is an unlocked golden chastity belt encrusted with jewels. Only seven remain uncrushed, but these works of art are worth 1d6+4x1000 silvers apiece.

## The Treasure Cave

On the treacherous eastern coast is a sea cave, beneath which innumerable ship wrecks can be seen deep below though the transparent water. Legends abound in the colony that the cave was used by a famous pirate to store a lifetime's collection of treasure, and that the bones of the dread buccaneer still watch over the loot.

The cave can only be reached during the rare conjunction of a high tide with the utter cessation of the wind. Scaling the cliff is treacherous, whilst within the cave system are fiendish mechanical traps, laid long ago by some unknown protagonist. Far from containing treasure, the cave is actually the prison for a horrific, deathless monster, placed here to keep it from destroying the natives.

## The Tree of Life

Somewhere on the eastern side of the island, isolated by its surrounding mountains, is a hidden valley. According to the savages, within this valley is the most ancient living thing in the world, the tree of life eternal. Its fruit are said to grant athanasia and the ability to regenerate any injury, no matter how fatal. Only the greatest of heroes is permitted to find this wondrous place, and retire to the ruby palace of Xanzoga in peaceful bliss.

The truth of the valley is more sinister. Whilst locating the forgotten path is an epic quest in itself, the valley is a nightmare place of twisted jungle filled with carnivorous plants. The ruby palace exists but has fallen into doleful ruin, the once magnificent inhabitants reduced to mindless zombies infested with fungus-like growths and twining vines. The fruits of the gigantic, gnarled Tree of Life do indeed grant immortality, but at the price of turning the eater into a botanical zombified guardian under its malignant, demonic control.

## The Uru of Ruaumoko

Within the actual volcanic caldera of the Ruaumoko volcano is an immense lingam-shaped rock of some purple-black metallic mineral, half buried under lava pumice. Its surface is covered with crude pictograms, images of men and serpents entwined in unholy mating, their scaled crossbreed offspring dancing about a burning mountain from which monsters erupt.

The Uru Stone actually hosts the spirit of Ruaumoko and is the only source of earth and fire elementals upon the island. When the Uru shifts so do earthquakes rumble under the island. Kahuna of the Earth Quellers venture here to pacify the volcano, tapping its legion of elemental spirits to keep it weakened or directing its violence in less destructive paths. Such journeys are inherently dangerous, the caldera irregularly spurting lava whilst the bowl itself often fills with poisonous gases.

*Age is upon me now. And sitting at that leisure which I have earned through many hazards, I drink the wines that are heartening to age. To me, as I sip, return memories of splendid loot and brave nefarious enterprise. Before me shine the outpoured sackfuls of djals or pazoors, removed so dexterously from the coffers of iniquitous merchants and money-lenders. I dream of rubies redder than the blood that was shed for them; of sapphires bluer than depths of glacial ice; of emeralds greener than the jungle in spring. I recall the escalade of pronged balconies; the climbing of terraces and towers guarded by monsters; the sacking of altars beneath the eyes of malign idols or sentinel serpents.*

Clark Ashton Smith, The Theft of the Thirty-Nine Girdles

# Chapter 5: Campaigns

Monster Island is designed to be a stand-alone sandbox setting. Some Games Masters may be unfamiliar with the concept of running such a campaign, or lack exposure to the classic Sword & Sorcery genre on which the island is based. This chapter gives a brief overview of these concepts, some starting scenario ideas and a few useful tables to augment exploration of the island.

## Elements of Sandbox Campaigns

A sandbox setting is one which lays out the geography, ecology, cultures and settlements of a region, then scatters it liberally with encounters and scenario ideas with which to tempt your players. It does not present a structured series of adventures, nor offer any order in which to perform them; the idea being that players decide what they would like to do and create a quest arc by their character's own actions. Here are some basic guidelines to how this should work...

## Not Everything is Meant to be Killed

Upon the island are three diverse peoples, each of which has a degree of friction with the others. However there is no objective Good or Evil; such concepts depend on the traditions and customs of each culture and are very malleable. Just because the neighbouring tribe eats the flesh of fallen warriors, worships other gods or practices slavery does not mean it is depraved... merely different. Whilst players are of course free to undertake a crusade of genocide, these cultures are actually included to provide characters with moral choices and more interesting roleplaying experiences.

To emphasise this, the Settlements chapter presents an initial collection of non-player characters who can be interacted with, forming relationships or providing plot hooks for further adventures. Social bonds can be powerful driving forces within a campaign without the need to directly harm or threaten player characters at all. Indeed, the shaky political balance of the island means that colonists will need to forge strong ties with potential allies if they and the colony are to survive. Assuming of course the

Games Master doesn't start his players off as savages or High Folk characters.

Another aspect to bear in mind is that RuneQuest is not forgiving of repetitive combat. The jungles of the island are already dangerous enough with roaming beasts, without players making a rod for their own backs by unilaterally declaring war on the natives too. Since magical healing is rare, every potential fight should be approached with caution, and avoided if at all possible by clever use of other skills; Deceit, Influence, or Stealth for example. Prudence is by far a character's best protection!

## There is no Game Balance

A common misconception when starting a sandbox campaign, or with those playing RuneQuest for the first time, is the concept of Game Balance. Games Masters should emphasise that not everything the characters encounter can be beaten, since the island and its inhabitants do not scale in step with the character's own skills. Thus players should be willing to retreat or give up in some situations, since they can always come back another day and try again.

The jungles are filled with some very dangerous spirits and monsters which should be avoided until ways are found to conquer that particular encounter; perhaps by setting a trap, asking for advice from the natives or organising a hunting party to take it down en masse. Rather than seeking to frustrate players, this style of play is there to encourage imagination. Likewise some tombs or temples might remain barred to entry until the player characters develop the right skills or find the knowledge to bypass their defences.

On the other hand Games Masters should feel free to lower the challenge presented by some creatures, or the miniscenarios in the Places of Interest chapter, if they feel them to be overly demanding. This is easily done by reducing the skills, difficulty levels or damage inflicted by such challenges if they wish to make such adventures more survivable.

Although character death in RuneQuest is somewhat reduced compared to previous versions of the game, the chance still exists, along with a high likelihood of becoming maimed. Players should be warned of this possibility, to forestall later aggravation. In fact, for Monster Island in particular, rolling up several characters and dividing play between them may be a good tactic, one very fitting for a campaign based on the rapid turnover of explorers in the mysterious hinterlands.

## Every Action has a Consequence

Whilst such things might not be directly observable by the players, every action taken by their characters should have a consequence. The island and its inhabitants are dynamic, not inert targets waiting for something to come along and kill them.

*For example, attacking a village of native savages will draw retribution from the rest of the tribe, whilst stealing from the High Folk might prompt the sending of a raiding party to retrieve the stolen articles. Even the killing of too many creatures might upset the unstable ecological balance, allowing prey animals to breed uncontrollably or top tier predators to come hunting up to the walls of the colony in search of food.*

This concept shouldn't be limited to raids on neighbouring cultures or slaying alien beasts, it can be applied equally as well to the colony's internal politics; especially if the characters are members of particular guilds, brotherhoods or cults. Machiavellian machinations are an inherent part of civilisation, whether seeking power, wealth or justice.

A critical part of developing this dynamic process is to remember that people learn from their mistakes and that time continues to pass. Nothing remains static. So if characters continue to loot High Folk necropolises, they are likely to encounter nasty traps or even garrisons in places the High Folk think attractive to tomb robbers – continuing to elevate responses to the point where warning messages are sent to the governor to control his own people or the colony itself will be attacked.

Yet not all consequences should be bad. Saving a neighbouring tribe from the raiding of another might actually forge new bonds and alliances. Similarly, characters who continue to venture into the jungles and return alive are guaranteed to build their own reputation, allowing them to increase their Status and influence; not only drawing the admiration or enmity of fellow colonists, but also bringing requests from the island's other inhabitants to perform deeds on their behalf.

## Some Places are Deliberately Left Blank

Whilst Monster Island presents a large number of interesting locations to explore, it does not comprehensively cover the entire island. Considering the size of the campaign region and the nature of its history, there is no practical way to detail everything which might be found there.

The island was once the mountainous heart of an empire, with the capital, estates of nobles and mighty temples built upon its scenic slopes. After the gods' war sank the continent, the civilisation of the High Folk arose and flourished, constructing towns and necropolises. These in turn were, ultimately, also trampled by the gods. Over the rubble and ruins now grows lush jungle, concealing what came before. Most ruins are avoided by the natives in superstitious terror of the things which hide within their dark, strangled architecture.

With such scope for placing new places of interest in subterranean caverns, jungle-covered ruins or inaccessible mountain regions, Games Masters can add their own locations as and when they need to. What this book does is simply offer a starting point, and give tantalising hints of what sorts of thing already exist.

## Provide Options and Objectives

A good sandbox offers many different places to explore and people to interact with. Overarching campaign plots are not absolutely necessary, although can be fun. For example, the focus of the game where the characters are shipwrecked might be to find a way off the island, whereas a more political orientated campaign may revolve about helping the savages to overthrow the High Folk or vice versa.

Player characters will not take every lead or hook, nor should they be overwhelmed by every possibility provided in these pages – just enough so that they have choice. Once they begin to form relationships and antipathies with the island's inhabitants, or discover the lure of ancient magics and long lost treasure, the characters will create their own plot lines.

# Genre Aspects of Sword & Sorcery

For those unfamiliar with the original Sword & Sorcery genre, the following concepts are provided to explain the tone of Monster Island, and furthermore help make a campaign feel as weird and exotic as the fiction which inspired it.

## Living for the Day

Sword & Sorcery adventures are scaled at the personal level. Protagonists are not great heroes and their deeds rarely save the world. Instead they are generally in it for the loot, romance or vengeance. If this seems base or egocentric, then you've hit the nail on the head. Whatever they do hardly ever affects anything beyond their immediate locale; a town or battle at most. Their quests are pragmatic rather than epic.

## No Black and White Morality

Characters in Sword & Sorcery are generally the antithesis of selfless heroic types. They are usually flawed in some way, whether cowards, sadists, avaricious, misogynistic, misandrous, vengeful, treacherous, lustful, selfish, intolerant and so on. They are not necessarily bad or evil, but definitely have their own codes of honour which might not reflect modern sensibilities.

## Healing is Hard

Magical healing is a rarity in Sword & Sorcery, making incessant combat extremely dangerous. Most protagonists heal naturally either during the long travel between hazardous locales, or by resting up in a safe, comfortable place like a tavern. Some care is required using RuneQuest not to stage too many clashes per adventure, or to change the nature of some fights so that enemies attempt to capture rather than kill, or use unarmed combat for minor disagreements (see RuneQuest page 424).

## Corrupting Power of Magic

Magic in Sword & Sorcery tends to be a dark, perverted art limited to a few specialist sorcerers, priests, and shamans. Only those willing to make great sacrifices in time and perhaps personal morality have any chance to master it. Whilst not all magic is evil per se, the majority of practitioners tend to become corrupted by its use – psychologically more than physically – whether in the manner of the deals required to learn it, the methods used to cast it, or the power it provides the practitioner over others.

Whilst many claim the genre lacks 'flashy' magic, nothing could be further from the truth. There are examples of flaming spheres of death, induced earthquakes, monstrous transformations and even the summoning of demons so huge their galloping hooves crush an entire

nation underfoot. But whatever its source and however it manifests, magic is always time consuming, terrifying and deadly; the latter being why its secrets are long searched for and jealously guarded.

## Horror of the Unknown

Many of the places encountered in Sword & Sorcery are, by their very nature, mysterious and disconcerting. This can be due to a variety of reasons, for example the alien architecture of buildings, copious blood stains across altars, or ruins empty of any form of animal life. Those creatures that end up attacking protagonists are similarly ghastly; being giant, savage forms of common animals or weird conjoined chimeras of wildly different species. Even entire tribes or cultures can be horrific because of the inhumane traditions they practice to survive or to placate the gods they worship.

## Anthropocentric and Xenophobic

Not only are the protagonists of the Sword & Sorcery genre almost universally human, but the majority of their foes are too. Even if occasional monsters are met, it is often humans who are their underlings or control them. Whilst Monster Island embraces the traditional adversaries of Lizardmen and Serpentfolk as part of its setting, their inherently exotic culture will tend to preclude them as playable races. It is the human colonists who are intended to be the source of player characters.

# Scenario Seeds

The following scenario seeds are provided, not only as a starting point for Games Masters to introduce player characters to the mysteries of the island, but also as quick filler ideas when their players are at a loss of what to do next.

## Generic Tasks

A very good way of presenting some scenario opportunities is to have them posted on a public notice board within the colony. These are paid jobs offered by the governor, merchants or other adventuring groups; some are generic enough to reappear on a cyclical basis, whilst others are one off tasks that remain untaken due to their inherent danger. Once characters build their own reputations high enough, they can of course be approached directly with commissions, but the billboard concept is a good beginning.

- Bounty Hunter: 250ʂp reward offered for the capture or death of (insert person's name here), by order of the governor for the crimes of (insert charges here).
- Caravan Guards: Disciplined warriors required to escort a trade delegation to local natives. Expedition will pay 5ʂp per day for a round trip expected to last no more than 3-5days. 100ʂp compensation offered for maiming or death, payable to the survivor or their beneficiaries.
- Jungle Clearance: General labourer needed to fell trees and undergrowth in the ruins, no combat expected. 1ʂp per day, meals included. Must provide own saw, axes and snakebite antidotes.
- Mapping Party: Expedition into jungle regions for the purpose of mapping terrain. Skilled scouts, trackers and surveyors only. 10ʂp per day, up to a maximum journey of 14 days with bonuses for quality of map produced. Only ink and parchment provided, no extra funding offered for expeditionary supplies.
- Masonry Clearance: Hard labour extracting and transporting rubble from ruin excavations to the stone pile outside the colony walls. 1ʂp per day, plus one tenth of any treasure uncovered. Heavy duty gloves, boots and picks required.
- Meat Hunt: Professional hunters required to restock colony supplies. Prices range up to 1ʂp per 5 kilos of flesh, depending on taste, quality and state of preservation. Illness resulting from inedible creatures will be the hunter's responsibility.
- Patrol Duty: Guards needed for the outer walls of the Kapala ruins, preventing ingress of natives and aggressive beasts. 3ʂp per day, burial expenses covered if body recovered.
- Search and Rescue: Financial incentive offered to any brave souls willing to finding and return (insert person's name here). Monies paid out from their ransom bond which amounts to (Status x 20ʂp). Last known heading was towards (insert destination here).
- Specimen Gathering: Reward offered for the recovery of a (insert creature description here). Payments depends on quality of specimen, but will not exceed (25ʂp per point of SIZ) or half that if dead.

## Unique Tasks

The following are one-off missions offered to solve a unique problem. Although only presented as scenario seeds, they could be expanded into wide ranging campaign arcs in their own right.

- Bridge over the Little Piddle: Due to the severe erosion caused by rainfall, the island is cut with deep, steep sided ravines and canyons. One of these forms a natural border between the Gamari and Oodaki tribes, forcing travellers to divert far inland into the more deadly Kangi territory, due to route's proximity to the High Folk citadel of Akakor and the innumerable carnivorous apes which roam the mountain flanks. Lord Greystone wishes to construct a rope bridge across the ravine to aid communication and trade. Before the work can start an agreement between the hetmen of both tribes must be negotiated. Construction will be dangerous due to the height, the current of the river and its teeming monstrous inhabitants.
- Double-edged Vengeance: A famous mercenary adventurer crawls out from the jungle with only one leg. He offers 2,500sp if the head of the Eiki elite warrior who treacherously severed it, is brought back to him, double that if brought back alive. The savage warrior, however, was cast out from his tribe for the dishonourable attack, and thus must be tracked down before justice can be served; giving the native a chance to recount the mercenary's profane theft of a priceless jewel which prompted his assault.
- Fifth Columnist Serpentmen: A number of tragic accidents amongst prominent members of the colony begin to appear suspicious when their subordinate associates start to meet clandestinely and sneak out of the colony late at night. Reporting such abnormal behaviour is not believed, as the upper echelons of the colony are also subverted. Each one has been taken and replaced by a shape-shifted High Folk spy, which accounts for their odd behaviour. If nothing is done about the gradually increasing sabotage, the gates of Grimsand will be thrown open to let in an occupying force and the entire populace enslaved.
- Hunt for Tublat Zan: Lord Greystone hears rumours of a barbaric human warrior who has roamed the Kangi tribal territory for several decades, terrifying the savages. Hoping that this individual might be a survivor of the expedition in which his family were lost, he wishes to send scouts to find and meet this man of the jungle. Locating Tublat Zan is difficult, however; the Kangi being reticent to discuss their bugbear who actually lives with the carnivorous apes of Skull Point. If found the man will prove to be Greystone's long lost son, as indicated by the crest on the dagger he bears, however he cannot speak any recognisable language and will violently resist travelling into the ruins of Kapala and the colony of Grimsand within.
- One-eye the Carnosaur: Once the subservient pet of a wandering kahuna, old One-eye is a huge T-Rex (see Allosaurus entry page 193) possessed by the kahuna's now insane fetch. Named for the lack of her left eye, put out long ago by a javelin, the malignant beast now leads other carnivorous dinosaurs seeking vengeance for the death and pillaging of the shaman (of the Varanri tribe) slain by a prominent occupant of the colony. Destroying the monster is an epic challenge, as the beast is fully cognisant of traps, ambushes and the effectiveness of siege weapons. If not dealt with, One-eye will eventually figure out a way of rampaging bloodily inside the town. The simplest method of dealing with the situation is to merely toss the kahuna slayer from wall, rather than engaging in an open war with dinosaurs.
- Roof Tile Troubles: Local builders, desperate to find a source of clay for the manufacture of roof tiles, offer a percentage of profits to whoever can negotiate a trade deal with the pottery-using natives. Neighbouring tribes will refuse to sell their limited supply to the colony once they discover what it is for, claiming tiles bring calamity but refusing to explain why. Most clay is traded from the Ghidori tribe whose swamp is the source of the best material, although they hold no love for the invaders. They agree to sell their stocks at a reasonable price provided they are permitted to manufacture the tiles (which would save on transportation costs), knowing full well that roofs tend to collapse whenever a big earthquake shakes the island. In addition, some of their kahunas secretly bind an angry spirit to one in every thousand tiles to make the expected disaster complete.
- Smashing the Brain Machine: Envoys sent by the High Folk of Akakor request (or even demand) help in solving a horrific curse affecting their most prominent sorcerers. Each one appears to have been killed by some creature that drops onto their head and consumes their brains, similar to a Vorslurp (page 278).

During the investigation several more deaths occur, but clues begin to mount that this is not a terrestrial creature, due to the inability of magic to help defend the victims. The true culprit is the mage Yhtill who has begun to collect the still living brains of his peers to augment his own powers with their knowledge, but will not hesitate to harvest the minds of colonists who get too close, potentially making the destruction of the machine a moral quandary. If not stopped, the ambitious and amoral sorcerer will pose a threat to the entire island.

- The Ptolemi Stele: Deep in the jungle within Varanri territory is a towering three sided obelisk, leaning at a precarious angle. Its surfaces are covered in small dense script (pre-cataclysm sigils, high tongue hieroglyphics and low tongue runes), which hold the secret to deciphering the island's written languages – a priceless aid to scholars if the monument can be transported back to the colony. Unfortunately the clearing in which the obelisk stands is a communal nesting ground for various dinosaurs, different species using it depending on the season. Transporting the thirty metre tall, 500 ton obelisk is a task requiring an epic feat of engineering.
- Treasures of Ohpir: A dying native recounts seeing a fabulous treasure of gold, silver, sandalwood, precious stones, carved ivory, beautiful jade idols and iridescent feathers. As proof of his words he reveals a golden serpent bracelet with ruby eyes, mumbles some vague directions in the northernmost mountains and expires. The clues lead to a burial cist, from which descends an unimaginably long stair into the bowels of the earth. At the bottom it opens out into a natural cavern of sepulchral darkness, in the centre of which is a pool surrounded by countless warped skeletons. The pool itself appears frozen, is invulnerable to violence and radiates magic, but through its transparent surface can be seen a vast hoard of scattered treasure. Dismissing the spell releases a child of Ubbozathla - a gargantuan hungry slime - (Panopticus of double maximum SIZ) from the unusual Chronogrammatical Binding spell holding it in eternal guardianship.
- Troublesome Tomb Raiding: A high status merchant and close friend of the governor possesses a yellowed map, written in some obscure language, which leads to a long-forgotten necropolis of a High Folk sorcerer. In return for escorting the effete trader to and from the tomb, he offers to waive his share of whatever is looted, provided he can keep any scrolls, books or recorded material. Problems arise when the only thing of value discovered in the tomb is a thin slab of solid silver (worth thousands) into which a single sorcery spell is inscribed. Returning to the colony without the merchant will raise suspicions, whilst meanwhile the mummy of the sorcerer awakens and begins hunting down the tomb robbers one by one.

## Special Events

The island suffers from innumerable environmental dangers, some natural, others less so. Games Masters can utilise this table whenever at a loss to engage the interest of their adventuring party, or as an infrequent occurrence (every 1d3+3 weeks) to provide background gossip amongst the island inhabitants.

Many of the following events are exceptionally dangerous, so if being used as a direct threat against characters, a Games Master should provide reasonable warning or encourage the use of Luck Points to survive.

## Encounters

The following encounters are plants, creatures, natives, traps and places which may be stumbled upon whilst characters travel across the island. Unless travelling along a well-known and regularly patrolled path, a Games Master should roll once per hex. It is usual that something is

### Special Events

| 1d100 | Event | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 01-36 | Nothing Happens | Nothing special happens in this time. |
| 37-40 | Ash Clouds | Either of the island's volcanoes releases a huge belch of ash which blocks out the sun for 1d3+1 days and makes breathing laborious due to the fine ash particles (everyone suffers a mandatory level of Fatigue) |
| 41-44 | Dead Arise | The doors to the spirit world open, allowing the dead to return for a single day and night. Unless blessed or entombed within a sealed container, all dead bodies and dismembered body parts across the island rise as Undeath Spirit-infested zombies with an Intensity of 1d3. |
| 45-48 | Earthquake | An earth tremor shakes the entire island. Roll 1d10 and refer to the Earthquake table (see RuneQuest page 269). The still standing cities and tombs of the High Folk are constructed well enough that they suffer no structural damage from such events. |
| 49-52 | Flood | Low level jungle regions flood for 1d3 days, making travel impossible unless moving along the ruined causeways or paddling by boat. Those caught away from high ground will eventually drown unless they can swim to safety. |
| 53-56 | Insect Plague | Some ecological imbalance causes the over-breeding of a species of insect which runs wild for 1d3+4 days until the indigenous species consume the glut. Unless taking cover within hermetically sealed chambers deep underground, or using some form of magic, everyone on the island suffers 1d3 damage per day to each Hit Location from accumulated bites, stings or toxins – potentially life threatening for sick or injured people – and driving creatures with thin skins mad with irritation. |
| 57-60 | Lahar | Mudflows caused by excessive rainfall or the melting of snow and ice by volcanic heat. Unlike eruptive activity, lahars can occur anywhere on the island, the collapse of a steep slope or ridge forming a thick, viscous mud which sweeps down with the strength and speed to flatten or bury everything in their path. Characters should be permitted a Perception roll to hear the approaching disaster and flee to high ground away from the mudflow's path. Failure indicates they are caught in the flow and drowned unless they make a Brawn or Swim roll. Even if they survive they lose everything not physically attached to their person. |
| 61-64 | Lava Flow | Mount Ruaumoko erupts, sending lava flows across its flanks down to the sea, sending huge clouds of obscuring steam across the southern tip of the island, if occurring in Wet Season. Anyone on the volcano may also be subject to volcanic bombs, roll a successful Evade or be struck for 2d6 impact damage plus an additional 1d6 burn damage on an upper body location (1d10+10). Being so slow, the lava itself is not dangerous unless it cuts off retreat. |
| 65-68 | Lightning Storm | Lightning rains down across the island in a tempestuous display, the bolts striking near anywhere a geomantic node is located (see page 131), such as Smoking Mirror portals, temple ruins, hidden tombs, and so on. Anyone caught near one of these magically attracted lightning bolts suffers the equivalent of the Sunspear Miracle at an Intensity of 1d6. |
| 69-72 | Magical Conjunction | The stars are right! An astronomical conjunction affects the strength of one type of magic across the island, boosting the Intensity of spirits by 1d3 or spells and miracles by 1d6. The conjunction lasts 1d3 days. |
| 73-76 | Migration | An unknown instinct causes the creatures of the island to migrate towards one of the remaining High Folk citadels, either increasing or reducing the chance of an encounter and the number involved, depending on location. The urge lasts for only 1d8+6 days but may cause inhabitants of abandoned areas a temporary shortage of food, whereas the inhabitants near the target region will become cut off by dangerously concentrated numbers of beasts. |
| 77-80 | Pyroclastic Flow | Mount Kamohoali (Fuming Mountain) erupts, sending a deadly cloud of hot volcanic debris, ash, and gases that travel at speeds in excess of at least 100 km/h. The direction and distance of the flow should be rolled randomly: 1d8 for direction (1 North, 2 Northeast, and so on) and 1d6x5 for the distance in kilometres covered. Anything in this path is generally incinerated, buried or both; unless in the lee of a mountain or above the level of the valley-hugging flow. Characters that succeed in a Hard Perception roll may notice the warning earth tremors and attempt to find cover (Survival) or flee the area (Formidable Athletics). |
| 81-84 | Sinkhole Opens | Due to underground water erosion or the weakening of the roof of a lava tube, a sinkhole dramatically opens – potentially appearing under a village, road or camp site. Anyone in close proximity to the collapse has mere moments to flee, before being engulfed. A successful Athletics or Evade is needed to escape in time, or they will suffer a catastrophic fall. The final dimensions of the sinkhole are 1d6x5 metres across and 1d100 metres deep. |
| 85-88 | Time Flashback | The island is transformed by a dreamlike illusion, portraying the land as it was before the great cataclysm. Although most of the creatures remain undeterred from their normal instincts, sapient species have trouble negotiating the oddly transformed landscape – Navigation rolls required. A side benefit of the flashback permits explorers the chance to locate hitherto undiscovered ruins. |
| 89-92 | Tropical Disease | Either a mundane contagious disease is encountered (see page 172) or swarms of Sickness Spirits (all of the same type) sweep the island, attacking everyone in Spirit Combat. Those that end up possessed by the spirit suffer its associated disease. |
| 93-96 | Tsunami | Offshore earthquakes cause a tsunami with waves reaching 1d10+10 metres in height. Whilst this has little effect on the towering cliffs of the island, anyone at sea or located in the lower quarter of Grimsand will be killed unless a Boating, Seamanship or Swim roll is made as applicable. |
| 97-100 | Typhoon | A tropical storm of severe potency hits the island. For physical effects roll 1d10 and half the number rolled, the result indicating its Hurricane Category (treat as an Earthquake of Intensity 5+Category). The typhoon lasts 1d3 days, during which time anyone caught outside without suitable shelter will suffer the associated damage per hour. All rivers run in spate for a period of 1d6+1 days after the storm ends, making them deadly, if not impossible to cross. |

stumbled upon due to the high population density of the various regions.

### Beast Stampede

A panicked group of beasts driven by predators, hunters or some form of frightful magic. Avoiding the stampede requires taking cover behind some solid object or being able to run faster than the rushing creatures. Failure to do so exposes characters to the danger of being trampled.

### Bubbling Mudpit

A bubbling pool of boiling mud, very hot and viscous, but fascinating to watch. It poses little danger unless someone unwittingly steps from the sharply ending jungle and falls into the mud. The temperature is equal to an Intensity 1 fire, continuing to burn each submerged Hit Location till the victim is extracted and the mud scraped off. The pool sometimes contains 1d3 other creatures which have died from falling in.

### Encounters

| Jungle | Cloud Forest | Puna Plateau | High Mountains | Encounter |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 01-02 | X | X | X | Beast Stampede |
| 03-04 | 01-03 | X | X | Bubbling Mudpit |
| 05-24 | 04-21 | 01-10 | X | Dangerous Plant |
| 25-26 | 22-24 | 11-15 | 01-08 | Dead Bodies |
| 27-28 | 25-27 | 16-20 | 09-16 | Desperate Exile |
| 29-30 | 28-30 | X | X | Dreaming God |
| 31-32 | 31-33 | 21-25 | 17-24 | Escorted Sorcerer |
| 33-34 | 34-36 | 26-30 | X | Forgotten Necropolis |
| 35-36 | 37-39 | X | 25-32 | Haunted Tiki |
| 37-38 | X | X | X | Helpless Child |
| 39-40 | X | X | X | Hired Thugs |
| 41-42 | 40-42 | 31-35 | X | Hunting Party |
| 43-44 | X | X | X | Insane Madman |
| 45-46 | 43-45 | 36-40 | X | Labouring Natives |
| 47-48 | 46-48 | X | X | Lethal Trap |
| 49-50 | 49-51 | X | 33-40 | Lost Explorers |
| 51-70 | 52-70 | 41-55 | 41-68 | Malicious Monster |
| 71-72 | 71-73 | 56-60 | X | More Ruins |
| 73-74 | 74-76 | 61-65 | 69-76 | Mysterious Stele |
| 75-76 | 77-79 | X | X | Native Settlement |
| 77-78 | 80-82 | 66-70 | 77-84 | Natural Resource |
| 79-80 | X | X | X | Nefarious Cultists |
| 81-82 | X | 71-75 | X | Ominous Sinkhole |
| 83-84 | X | X | X | Peaceful Drummer |
| 85-86 | 83-85 | 76-80 | X | Pursued Slave |
| 87-88 | 86-88 | X | 85-92 | Questing Kahuna |
| 89-90 | X | X | X | Quicksand Pool |
| 91-92 | 89-91 | 81-85 | X | Sacrificial Site |
| 93-94 | 92-94 | 86-90 | 93-100 | Spirit Source |
| 95-96 | 95-97 | 91-95 | X | Tomb Robbers |
| 97-98 | X | X | X | Travelling Merchant |
| 99-100 | 98-100 | 96-100 | X | War Party |

### Dangerous Plant

Roll on the Flora Encounter table.

### Dead Bodies

A number of dead hominids lie scattered about. Roll 1d6: on a 1-3 they are colonists, 4-5 they are savages, and 6 they are High Folk. Roll a second d6 to determine the manner of their deaths:

1. cut down with weapons
2. torn apart by animals
3. poisoned by some plant or creature
4. died from a virulent disease
5. so maggot-ridden that means of death are unidentifiable
6. bare bones piled up in a small pyramid

### Desperate Exile

A half starved and desperate looking savage stumbles across the path. The exile will help anyone who feeds them with helpful information, potentially becoming a hireling if offered employment or willing servant if treated with greater kindness. Belligerent approaches drive the exile off, who will then cause trouble later on in recompense. Attacking turns them into a nightmare foe who will then stalk the group, hunting them down one by one.

### Dreaming God

Not the god itself, but its temporarily-manifested dream ego which will strike mindless terror into any who see it, unless they can succeed in a Willpower test. Attempts to attack the image cause it to fade away, but in consequence the offender will be cursed, drawing the antipathy of creatures related to that deity.

### Escorted Sorcerer

A High Folk sorcerer, borne upon a slave-carried palanquin and escorted by a group of 1d6+12 attendants: either High Folk of lower caste, enslaved lowland savages or animate undead. At least half are equipped as guards. The sorcerer has no desire to tarry, but expects to be given the proper respect due to one of their exalted status.

### Forgotten Necropolis

An overgrown tomb lost to memory. Since the savages dispose of their dead in a different manner, all necropolises are for the internment of High Folk. Roll 1d12. On a roll of 1 the tomb is of an arch-mage of note (see Sepulchre of Soleks page 95 for an example). Otherwise it belongs to a lesser sorcerer. Beyond the offering antechamber will be a simple sealed tomb replete with some form of magical defence, and the sarcophagus of its mummified mage. Desecrating the necropolis will draw the spirit of the sorcerer back to its body on a roll of its POWx3 or less.

### Haunted Tiki

A towering monolith carved into the likeness of some evil monster, likely overgrown with climbing plants or partially toppled from an earthquake. Within the tiki will be bound an enraged spirit of 1d3+1Intensity, which will break free if foolishly touched by a sapient being (a natural side effect of its binding not being regularly renewed). Animals naturally avoid it. To determine its type roll 1d6:

1. Cannibal Spirit (see page 204)
2. Curse Spirit
3. Death Spirit
4. Haunt (of a bad person)
5. Sickness Spirit
6. Wraith

### Helpless Child

A child in immediate and deadly danger, crying out for help. The child might be pursued by a ravenous beast, have fallen prey to a trap or about to blunder into the grasp of some carnivorous plant. The child comes from the nearest settlement and if saved may create a new Ally or Contact with its parents. Conversely if the child dies and the parents find out, it could generate a Rival or Enemy.

### Hired Thugs

A group of thugs from the colony are paid to follow or intercept the characters, then rough them up, for some past transgression against their employer. The thugs have no interest in actually killing anybody and engage with fists, or clubs at worst. They will stop before any Major Wounds are inflicted. If threatened with lethal combat, they will run and scatter, only to stage a more brutal backstreet ambush once the characters return to the colony.

### Hunting Party

A hunting party numbering 1d6+3 members are stumbled upon midway through their pursuit of a dangerous creature (roll on the Fauna Encounter table). Reactions depend on which culture the hunters come from. Roll 1d6: on a 1-3 they are savages, 4-5 they are High Folk, and 6 they are colonists.

### Insane Madman

A dishevelled and muttering colonist is found wandering about. Some experience or discovery has sent the

lunatic completely deranged; often sending them into bursts of manic laughter or crazed passion, but nothing obviously constructive can be gleaned from their ramblings – only mysterious hints and promises of terrible things to be found deeper in the jungle. If taken back to the colony they become a pathetic beggar occasionally letting slip a hint or two of things important to the characters.

### Labouring Natives

A work party of 2d6+6 savages is discovered performing some heavy labour. In the jungles this might involve moving a tiki or repairing one of the causeways, whereas up in the cloud forest it is more likely to be the repair of a vine bridge or transporting natural products collected from the less hospitable heights. If discovered upon the Puna Plateau they wear slave collars and can be seen rebuilding old ruins, or perhaps excavating them in search of something precious for their High Folk masters.

### Lethal Trap

A trap is stumbled upon with a Difficulty of 40 + 1d6x10% which will be sprung on those unaware of its presence. Most are Ensnaring traps of some sort, intended to capture live prey. On a 1 in 6 chance, however, it is a Death Trap instead. All of the traps encountered are made from natural materials, blending in well with the environment. Possibilities include pit traps, deadfall traps, spring snares, punji stakes, staked sprung branches and so on.

### Lost Explorers

A group of explorers is sighted; its members lost, hungry and suffering accumulated injuries. Without help they will be unable to return to the colony. Depending on existing relationships, they could join the characters or be forced to pay for help with found artefacts or the revelation of any discoveries made. Refusing to aid the explorers is likely to sentence them to a slow death wandering helplessly in circles.

### Malicious Monster

Roll on the Fauna Encounter table.

### More Ruins

A broken down building or structure of some sort, perhaps an ancient guard tower, the remnants of a stone bridge or aqueduct, a collapsed temple ziggurat, or long abandoned villa. The ruins are not extensive, although they might contain the entrance or clue to some hidden complex. On a 1-2 on a d6 they are home to some Dangerous Plant or Malicious Monster. Searching might locate a small object or treasure overlooked in previous centuries.

### Mysterious Stele

A tall obelisk or stele 1d6+4 metres high rises from the surrounding terrain to honour some past deed or event. The memorial is made from basalt, porphyry or obsidian and etched with glyphs that are untranslatable to those who cannot read High Tongue. Other than being a majestic monument it serves little purpose save for its use as a navigation point.

### Native Settlement

A village belonging to lowland savages of whatever tribal lands within which it is located. Roll 1d6: on a 6 it is deserted and has begun to decompose back into the jungle or cloud forest. Otherwise it is a bustling settlement which will treat visitors in a manner dependent on the current relationship held by that tribe with the colonists.

### Natural Resource

A temporary concentration of some valuable resource, which once collected or harvested will not replace itself, at least not in the short term. For example a grove of flowering Golden Bromeliads, a huge hive of giant bees full of honey or the scattered ivory tusks of small group of herd animals which died there. Refer to the Natural Produce table page 166 for more ideas.

### Nefarious Cultists

A fanatical group of 1d6+6 religious cultists from the colony who are prowling through the jungle in search of something or someone to sacrifice. There is a 50% chance they have already captured a victim. Reactions depend on whether the characters themselves belong to that cult, their opinion of this sort of ritual and whether it is being performed on behalf of protecting the colony itself. To determine their mission, roll 1d6: on 1-3 they seek a dangerous creature; 4-5 a lowland native; and 6 a human colonist (potentially one of the characters).

### Ominous Sinkhole

A monumental rift or hole in ground. Although possibly an entrance to some weird and dangerous underworld, most are far deeper than nominally available lengths of rope (1d8x50m deep), making the descent to the bottom somewhat problematic. Roll 1d6: on 1-3 the bottom of the sinkhole is flooded, filled only with fish and frogs; 4-5 the bottom is jungle covered, potentially the home to

Dangerous Plants or a Malicious Monster; whilst on a 6 the bottom is bare rock but filled with poisonous volcanic fumes.

### Peaceful Drummer

A native savage occupying their drumming heights. This can be anything from the re-purposed summit of a ruined ziggurat, to a specially constructed platform built high up a tree. Since most are placed at high elevation, notice can be drawn to their presence by the pounding sound of their huge drums. Whilst suspicious, the drummer will be friendly if not threatened, even offering shelter if nightfall approaches, or to pass on a message if offered something in compensation.

### Pursued Slave

A desperate-looking savage approaches, running away from a group of pursuers; either a rival tribe which legitimately captured the slave during ritualised battle, or a more spiteful group of High Folk slavers. The slave will beg for aid or protection. Turning over the slave will increase the friendship between the characters and the hunters, whereas withholding the slave from its rightful owners will cause friction, but not necessarily an open fight; legal petitions for compensation arriving later. If the slave is returned home, the other villagers will refuse to take them in, driving the slave away with disgust and curses, for the misfortune this will bring.

### Questing Kahuna

A wandering shaman of the savages. Roll 1d6 to determine his purpose, on a 1-3 he is a Worshipper questing to find and awaken his fetch, on a 4-5 he is a Shaman seeking new spirit allies, and on a 6 he is a High Shaman hunting down a dangerously malicious spirit. If aware of his surroundings the kahuna will treat other travellers with respect, expecting the same in return. Attacking them will be a very dangerous proposition, the kahuna likely being escorted by animals of his totem, personally bound spirits and, in the case of those on their path to achieve shamanhood, a very powerful spirit guide (Aata).

### Quicksand Pool

A pool of waterlogged sand or mud, hidden under fallen foliage. Spotting a pool of quicksand is a Formidable Perception test, and once entered is very difficult to extract oneself from. If there are well-anchored trees or vines close to the edge, the victim may attempt a Hard Brawn roll to pull themselves clear. Otherwise the victim partially sinks into its sludgy depths and becomes stuck. Struggling only beds the victim deeper, so to break free requires passing a Willpower test to not panic, followed by a Hard Swim test to crawl clear. Failing either means the victim is stuck fast and may die of exhaustion, dehydration or being attacked by a scavenger unless they have friends to extract them.

### Sacrificial Site

A chilling site of ritual sacrifice. This bloodstained place is used for the offering up of the life force of creatures or people. On a 1-2 on a d6 it is stumbled upon whilst in use. Roll another 1d6 to identify the types of sacrifice utilised:

1. Twin saplings bent over, between which the sacrifice is tied, so that it is torn apart when the vines holding the trees are cut
2. A short, sheer cliff from which sacrifices are tossed onto a flat gore stained boulder
3. Evil looking carved totem pole, sharpened at its top, on which sacrifices are slowly impaled
4. Monstrously shaped altar stone atop which sacrifices are eviscerated
5. Huge hollow tree filled with a nest of carnivorous insects, to which a honey or nectar covered victim is tied
6. Small cenote-type pool filled with crocodiles or piranha fish into which the victim is cast

### Spirit Source

An otherworldly grove, cavern, pool or waterfall which radiates a mysterious, even frightening atmosphere; its features subtly warping and twisting out of the corner of the viewer's eye. The hard-to-find area holds the way to a secret realm upon the Spirit Plane in which particular spirits reside. The area has 1d6 spirits of Intensity 1d3 floating about on the spirit plane – potentially dangerous if the spirits are capable of discorporating corporal characters. Roll 1d10 to determine the spirit type:

1. Bane Spirits
2. Cannibal Spirit (see page 204)
3. Curse Spirits
4. Death Spirits
5. Guardian Spirits
6. Predator Spirits
7. Shape-shifting Spirits
8. Sickness Spirits
9. Undeath Spirits
10. Roll again but +1 to their Intensity

### Tomb Robbers

A group of 1d6+1 avaricious colonists searching the jungle for wealth buried with the dead. On a 1 on a d6 they have already pillaged a burial place or some other collapsed ruin, potentially angering the local tribe of savages (or the High Folk if upon the plateau) and act suspiciously towards strangers. If empty-handed, the tomb raiders may decide to turn bandit instead, especially if the characters look as if they have been looting also; threatening or rendering the group unconscious rather than murdering them in cold blood.

### Travelling Merchant

A small troop of 1d12+12 colonists or savages organised as a merchant caravan, at least half the number being warriors of some sort and the rest baggage bearers or pack animal tenders, led by whomever is in charge of the expedition. The goods carried will mainly be of the high bulk but low value kind, useful for day to day living. High value goods such as Iqari feathers, narcotics, gold dust and the like are usually carried personally and will be lost if the caravan is attacked and the merchants scatter and flee.

### War Party

A dangerous group of 5d6 savages or High Folk, depending on where they are encountered, prepared for outright war. Members of the war party are armed with multiple weapons and full armour, seeking to strike a decisive blow against a neighbouring tribe or perhaps city. Though not expecting to meet anyone on the journey towards their objective, they will happily attack if existing relationships between the warriors and the colony is poor, or if characters act aggressively.

## Fauna Encounters

The following table comprises of the various different creatures which can be encountered across the island, divided into specific terrain types. Although almost anything can emerge from the Smoking Mirrors, those that survive long enough will tend to migrate to the environment most suited to their own physiology and habits.

Italicised entries refer to creatures from the RuneQuest rulebook.

**Fauna Encounters**

| Encounter | Jungle | Cloud Forest | Puna Plateau | High Mountains |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ahuizotl | 1-2 | *** | *** | *** |
| Alan | *** | *** | 1-2 | 1-2 |
| Alicanto | *** | 1-2 | *** | 3-4 |
| Allosaurus | 3 | *** | *** | *** |
| Ankylosaurus | 4-5 | 3 | *** | *** |
| *Ant, Giant* | 6 | 4-5 | 3-4 | *** |
| Antlion, Giant | 7-8 | 6 | 5-6 | *** |
| Ape, Carnivorous | 9 | 7-8 | *** | 5-6 |
| Arumco | 10-11 | 9 | *** | *** |
| *Asipatra* | *** | *** | 7-8 | 7-8 |
| Aswang | 12 | 10-11 | *** | 9-10 |
| *Baboon, Giant* | *** | *** | 9-10 | *** |
| *Bagini* | 13-14 | *** | *** | *** |
| Bakunawa | 15 | *** | *** | *** |
| *Basilisk* | *** | *** | 11-12 | 11-12 |
| *Bear* | *** | 12 | *** | 13-14 |

| Encounter | Jungle | Cloud Forest | Puna Plateau | High Mountains |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Beetle, Giant* | 16-17 | 13-14 | 13-14 | *** |
| *Bonacon* | *** | 15 | 15-16 | *** |
| Bultungin | *** | *** | 17-18 | 15-16 |
| Bunyip | 18 | *** | 19-20 | *** |
| Byangoma | 19-20 | 16-17 | *** | *** |
| Centipede, Giant | 21 | 18 | *** | *** |
| *Chimera* | *** | *** | *** | 17-18 |
| Cob Hobbler | 22-23 | 19-20 | 21-22 | 19-20 |
| Cockroach, Giant | 24 | 21 | 23-24 | *** |
| *Crab, Giant* | 25-26 | *** | *** | *** |
| *Crocodile* | 27 | *** | *** | *** |
| Deinonychus | 28-29 | 22-23 | *** | 21-22 |
| Dune Haunter | *** | *** | 25-26 | *** |
| Dziwozoana | 30 | 24 | *** | *** |
| Eagle, Giant | *** | *** | 27-28 | 23-24 |
| Eel, Giant | 31-32 | *** | *** | *** |
| Eel, Lightning | 33 | *** | *** | *** |
| Febrilis | 34-35 | 25-26 | *** | *** |
| Flocks, Hordes, Packs and Shoals | *** | *** | *** | *** |
| Bats | 36 | 27 | 29-30 | *** |
| Crabs | 37-38 | *** | *** | *** |
| Leeches | 39 | 28-29 | *** | *** |
| Piranhas | 40-41 | 30 | *** | *** |
| Rats | *** | *** | 31-32 | 25-26 |
| Stampede | *** | *** | 33-34 | 27-28 |
| Flying Worms | *** | *** | *** | 29-30 |
| *Ghoul* | *** | *** | 35-36 | *** |
| Gibberer | 42 | 31-32 | *** | 31-32 |
| Heterodontosaurus | 43-44 | 33 | 37-38 | 33-34 |
| Hitotsume-kozō | 45 | *** | *** | *** |
| Hydra, Ophidian | 46-47 | *** | 39-40 | 35-36 |
| *Insect Swarm* | 48 | 34-35 | 41-42 | 37-38 |
| *Iqari* | *** | *** | 43-44 | 39-40 |
| Isnashi | 49-50 | 36 | *** | 41-42 |
| *Jaguar (Tiger)* | 51 | 37-38 | *** | *** |
| Jempulex | 52-53 | 39 | *** | *** |
| Kanaima | 54 | 40-41 | *** | 43-44 |
| Kapre | 55-56 | 42 | *** | *** |
| Kitsune | 57 | 43-44 | *** | *** |

| Encounter | Jungle | Cloud Forest | Puna Plateau | High Mountains |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lakooma | 58-59 | *** | 45-46 | *** |
| Lammasu | 60 | 45 | 47-48 | 45-46 |
| *Lion* | *** | *** | 49-50 | *** |
| Lizard, Blood | *** | *** | 51-52 | 47-48 |
| *Lizard, Giant* | *** | 46-47 | *** | 49-50 |
| Lizard, Thorny | *** | 48 | 53-54 | 51-52 |
| Malcathorn | *** | 49-50 | 55-56 | 53-54 |
| *Mammoth* | *** | *** | 57-58 | *** |
| Manananggal | 61-62 | 51 | 59-60 | 55-56 |
| *Manticore* | *** | *** | *** | 57-58 |
| *Mantis, Giant* | 63 | 52-53 | *** | *** |
| Megalonyx | 64-65 | 54 | 61-62 | 59-60 |
| Mokele-Mbembe | 66 | *** | *** | *** |
| Morko | *** | *** | *** | 61-62 |
| Moth, Lotus | 67-68 | 55-56 | *** | *** |
| *Mummy* | *** | *** | 63-64 | 63-64 |
| Naga | *** | 57 | 65-66 | 65-66 |
| Nukekubi | 69 | 58-59 | 67-68 | 67-68 |
| Olgoi | *** | *** | 69-70 | *** |
| Ophidiodis | 70-71 | 60 | 71-72 | *** |
| Oviraptor | 72 | 61-62 | 73-74 | 69-70 |
| Pachycephalosaurus | 73-74 | 63 | *** | *** |
| Panopticus | 75 | 64-65 | 75-76 | 71-72 |
| *Panthotaur* | *** | 66 | *** | *** |
| Pihuichen | 76-77 | 67-68 | 77-78 | *** |
| Polong | 78 | 69 | *** | 73-74 |
| Quathil | 79-80 | 70-71 | *** | 75-76 |
| Rokurokubi | 81 | 72 | *** | *** |
| Saltasaurus | 82-83 | 73-74 | *** | *** |
| Scarab, Giant | *** | *** | 79-80 | *** |
| *Scorpion, Giant* | 84 | 75 | 81-82 | *** |
| Sentinel | 85-86 | 76-77 | 83-84 | 77-78 |
| Serpent, Spellbreaker | 87 | 78 | 85-86 | *** |
| *Skeleton* | *** | 79-80 | 87-88 | 79-80 |
| *Slargr* | 88-89 | *** | *** | *** |
| *Smilodon* | *** | *** | 89-90 | 81-82 |
| *Snake, Giant* | 90 | 81 | 91-92 | *** |
| *Spider, Giant* | 91-92 | 82-83 | *** | *** |
| Tengu | *** | *** | *** | 83-84 |
| Tetrapus | *** | 84 | *** | *** |
| Therizinosaurus | 93 | 85-86 | *** | *** |

| Encounter | Jungle | Cloud Forest | Puna Plateau | High Mountains |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tikbalang | *** | 87 | *** | 85-86 |
| Triceratops | 94-95 | 88-89 | *** | *** |
| Vorompatra | 96 | 90 | *** | 87-88 |
| Vorslurp | *** | 91-92 | 93-94 | 89-90 |
| Vulture, Giant | *** | 93 | *** | 91-92 |
| Waheela | *** | 94-95 | 95-96 | 93-94 |
| *Winged Ape* | 97-98 | 96 | *** | 95-96 |
| *Wyrm* | *** | 97-98 | 97-98 | *** |
| *Wyvern* | *** | *** | *** | 97-98 |
| Yeti | *** | *** | 99-100 | 99-100 |
| *Zombie* | 99-100 | 99-100 | *** | *** |

## Flora Encounters

Unlike the Fauna tables, the different types of deadly plant life are not delineated by terrain, these being the most tenacious flora able to survive the atmosphere and climate of Monster Island. However, upon the Puna Plateau more lush plants will only be found bordering White Doom Lake.

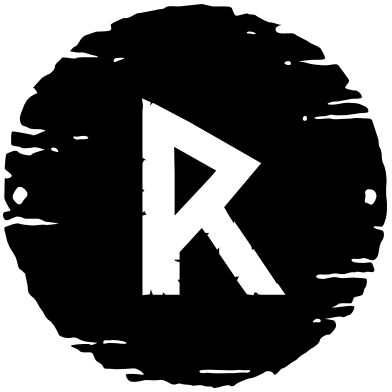
| Encounter | Roll |
|---|---|
| Deathdrip Flowers | 01-08 |
| Dudreyas | 09-16 |
| Ivory Impaler | 17-25 |
| Ivy, Succubus | 26-33 |
| Kulamyu Pod | 34-41 |
| Mantithorn Cactus | 42-50 |
| Moonflower | 51-58 |
| Plant, Possessed | 59-66 |
| Snapdragon | 67-75 |
| Spineapple Tree | 76-83 |
| Trifrond | 84-92 |
| Vampire Palm | 93-100 |

## Sea Encounters

| Encounter | Ocean | Shoreline |
|---|---|---|
| Adaro | 01-06 | 01-08 |
| Bakunawa | 07-12 | 09-16 |
| Bunyip | *** | 17-25 |
| Clam, Giant | 13-18 | *** |
| Conch, Assassin | 19-25 | *** |
| *Crab, Giant* | 26-31 | 26-33 |
| *Crocodile* | *** | 34-41 |
| Eel, Giant | 32-37 | 42-50 |
| Eel, Lightning | 38-43 | 51-58 |
| Flocks, Hordes, Packs and Shoals | *** | *** |
| Jellyfish | 44-50 | *** |
| Jellyfish, Giant | 51-56 | *** |
| Kraken | 57-62 | *** |
| Nanaue | 63-68 | 59-66 |
| Octopus, Giant | 69-75 | 67-75 |
| Panopticus | *** | 76-83 |
| Plant, Possessed - Seaweed | 76-81 | 84-92 |
| *Sea Serpent* | 82-87 | *** |
| *Shark* | 88-93 | *** |
| Turtle, Tiger | 94-100 | 93-100 |

*About him were scattered all the appurtenances of his art; the skulls of men and monsters; phials filled with black or amber liquids, whose sacrilegious use was known to none but himself; little drums of vulture-skin, and crotali made from the bones and teeth of the cockodrill, used as an accompaniment to certain incantations. The mosaic floor was partly covered with the skins of enormous black and silver apes: and above the door there hung the head of a unicorn in which dwelt the familiar demon of Malygris, in the form of a coral viper with pale green belly and ashen mottlings. Books were piled everywhere: ancient volumes bound in serpent-skin, with verdigris-eaten clasps, that held the frightful lore of Atlantis, the pentacles that have power upon the demons of the earth and the moon, the spells that transmute or disintegrate the elements; and runes from a lost language of Hyperborea, which, when uttered aloud were more deadly than poison or more potent than any philtre.*

Clark Ashton Smith, The Last Incantation



# Chapter 6: Magic

This chapter describes the various supernatural disciplines practiced by the inhabitants of Monster Island. It explains the magical ecology, sources of Magic Points, cults, new spells and gifts, and should give an example to Games Masters of how to craft magic in interesting ways for other game worlds.

## Nature of Magic

To match its Sword & Sorcery atmosphere, Monster Island is a realm where magic has faded, or at least has been redirected, so that each invocation, binding and exhortation requires a major effort. Magical energies recover slowly, requiring magicians to hoard their resources carefully and not expend them frivolously. Magic is also ritualised, making rapid casting a rarity; plagued with uncertainty and even danger.

Whilst these changes appear to significantly weaken the power of magicians, most practitioners more than make up for this temporal loss with cunning and careful preparation. The further spells, spirits and miracles available to the island's cults are also potent, kept carefully under the jealous grasp of those that control these traditions so that their powers cannot be used to destabilise the internal politics of their own schools or religions.

Games Masters should warn players of the difficulties facing magic-using characters, and the need to modify their play style to reflect the island's nature. Whilst human magicians will be rare, even feared for their powers, they should diversify their skills to have other areas of expertise so that they remain useful compared to warriors, explorers and tomb thieves.

Likewise the Games Master should emphasise the need for professional knowledge such as certain Lores, Languages, Literacy and similar skills, so that more academic or scholarly magicians have other areas in which to shine. Although much of this chapter illuminates the natives' own magical traditions, it has been detailed with the expectation that characters will attempt to decipher these practices or even adopt them for themselves.

## Magical Disciplines

Only three magical disciplines are available on Monster Island – Animism, Sorcery and Theism, with the practice of each one being culturally based. Knowledge and use of either Folk Magic or Mysticism is unknown, unless brought by alien creatures or the colonists themselves.

Totemic Animism is pursued only by the lowland savages. The province of Sorcery remains solely held by the

High Folk, whose society is based upon a mageocracy. Although theism is no longer practiced by either native culture, the remnants of ancient temples indicate that the inhabitants once used to worship deities.

Grimsand, however, has brought with it the polyglot mishmash of multiple faiths inherent with human settlement, though whether these propitiated entities are gods or demons is somewhat questionable. Games Masters may need to modify the magical disciplines of the colony to reflect their campaign's setting or historical period.

## Ritualistic Casting Times

Upon the island both Sorcery and Theism require an increased preparation time to cast. This normally involves elaborate rituals to collate and coordinate its effects. Therefore all casting rolls suffer a bonus or penalty if not cast at their normal ceremonial length. The Casting Time Difficuly table, below, indicates the base casting time and its associated difficulty grade.

*For example, if a sorceress wished to cast the Enkindle Carrion spell on several corpses it would normally take her one minute of chanting, inscribing sigils, burning strange powders on so on, plus an additional minute for the modified Targets spell component. However, under duress the sorceress could instead attempt to raise the bodies more quickly, taking only two Rounds instead of two minutes, but suffering a penalty of Hard to the casting roll.*

Note that Animism suffers no changes to its Trance durations, these already being quite extensive.

The table also includes a column indicating the chance of various degrees of Bad Things happening. Casting magic without the proper preparations is not only chancy, but increasingly hazardous – the energies of the spell or miracle warping out of control in often unexpected ways. If something bad occurs, roll on the Casting Miscarriage Table (page 130).

## Orchestrated Casting

Animism, Sorcery and Theism can benefit from cultural traditions to coordinate their magicians, enabling them to cast more potent magic. Such gestalt methods are called orchestration, merely requiring that all the participants gather together in the same place to perform the ritual.

For instance, to rebind their totemic gods the savages perform intricate nightlong dances to their sleeping deities, accompanied by drums and howling songs. The High Folk sorcerers, on the other hand, stand in strange geometrical patterns, chanting contrapuntal mantras to harmonise their power. Neither culture recalls how to perform the art for Theism, although the remaining gods in Kapala may still remember – the colonists themselves having no concept of orchestral exhortation.

Orchestral casting or binding works simply by totalling up all the participating members of a college or totemic cult in that place, and adding their number to the Invocation or Binding skill of whomever is leading the ritual. Whilst this adds to the power of the magic it is a two edged sword, since Magic Point costs and Casting Miscarriages are shared by everyone in the gestalt.

For example if an entire village of 175 natives (adults with the rank of Follower in that animistic tradition) joined forces to enact the pacification ritual on their totem deity, the kahuna leading the ritual would gain a bonus of 175% to their Binding skill, greatly aiding in the defeat of the divine being. Yet everyone participating in the ritual would risk suffering the same Magic Point loss when the kahuna battles the god in the Spirit World. This is part of the reason why the tribes need a certain minimum number of participants to ensure an overwhelming success, or else a single win during Spirit Combat by their deity will likely wipe out the magical strength of the entire tribe and allow it to break free of its slumber!

**Casting Time Difficulty**

| Time | Base Difficulty Grade | Bad Things Occur | Very Bad Things Occur | Cataclysmically Bad Things Occur |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turns | Formidable | On a Success | On a Failure | On a Fumble |
| Rounds | Hard | On a Failure | On a Fumble | Never |
| Minutes | Standard | On a Fumble | Never | Never |
| Hours | Easy | Never | Never | Never |
| Days | Very Easy | Never | Never | Never |

# Sources of Magic

There are two main sources of magic upon the island; the life force of living creatures, and geomantic nodes which focus that life energy. Only the former is accessible to magicians, however, since the majority of the magical locations are already tapped by sorcerous devices such as the Smoking Mirrors, ruined temples still defended by extended miracles, and the hidden lairs of the sleeping gods themselves.

The magical energy of living creatures is available from the following sources:

### Self

Characters produce their own Magic Points just by living. Unless drained via some diabolical curse, sucked away by an alien creature, or suppressed with an exotic poison or disease, every corporal being native to the material plane (albeit potentially from a different world) generates a slow supply of Magic Points.

**Casting Miscarriage Table**

| 1d100 | Bad Thing | Very Bad Thing | Cataclysmically Bad Thing |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1-5 | Suffer 1d6 damage to all Hit Locations | Suffer 2d6 damage to all Hit Locations | Suffer 3d6 damage to all Hit Locations |
| 6-11 | Terrified by horrific delusions for 1d3 hours | As Bad Thing, but also gains a serious insanity | Turns utterly insane: paranoid, delusional and psychotic |
| 12-18 | Reduced to 1 Combat Action per round for next 1d3 hours | As Bad Thing, plus Movement Rate permanently halved | Permanently paralysed from the neck down |
| 19-26 | Struck dumb for 1d3 hours | As Bad Thing, but tongue also changes into that of a different species | Tongue and lower jaw vanish entirely, causing a Major Wound to the head |
| 27-35 | Lose all remaining Magic Points | As Bad Thing, but also negates all personal Enchantments or Extensions | As for Very Bad Thing, but affects everyone and everything within a 25m radius |
| 36-45 | Clumsy for 1d3 hours, unable to perform any skill requiring physical coordination | As Bad Thing, but also loses 1d6 DEX permanently (cannot reduce below species minimum) | Temporarily incapacitated and DEX permanently reduced to species minimum |
| 46-55 | Weakened for 1d3 hours, unable to lift or carry anything | As Bad Thing, but also loses 1d6 STR permanently (cannot reduce below species minimum) | Temporarily incapacitated and STR permanently reduced to species minimum |
| 56-65 | Enfeebled for 1d3 hours, inflicting 1d6 levels of Fatigue | As Bad Thing, but also loses 1d6 CON permanently (cannot reduce below species minimum) | Temporarily incapacitated and CON permanently reduced to species minimum |
| 66-74 | Struck blind for 1d3 hours | As Bad Thing, but eyes change colour or become alien in appearance | Eyes melt from their sockets, causing a Major Wound to the head |
| 75-82 | Attempted magic, if hostile, automatically affects the caster; or if beneficial, reverses its effect | As Bad Thing, except the magic also affects all the caster's allies within a 5m radius if they fail to resist (treating the roll as a success) | As Bad Thing, but the magic affects everyone and everything within 25m radius if they fail to resist (treating the roll as a success) |
| 83-89 | Exhort or Invocation skill suffers Hard penalty for next 1d3 days | Exhort or Invocation skill suffers Formidable penalty for next 1d3 months | Exhort or Invocation skill suffers Herculean penalty for next 1d3 years |
| 90-95 | Caster aged by 1d3 years | Caster aged by 1d3 decades | Caster aged by 1d3 centuries |
| 96-100 | Caster forgets 1d3 spells or miracles from that school or deity | Caster forgets all spells or miracles from that school or deity (skill completely lost) | Caster forgets all sorcery or theist skills (ability to cast magic completely lost) |

### Sacrifice

Magic Points which are harvested from the death of a living creature. Normally this magical energy cannot be stored for future use, but must instead be either used by a magician as part of a ritual to cast a spell, fed to a spirit in order to rejuvenate it, or offered to a deity to recharge their devotional pool. Any surplus Magic Points are lost.

### Consumption

A number of dangerous narcotics and stimulants are available on the island, the natural product of the diverse plants which thrive in its most remote regions. Smoking or consuming these will recover an amount of Magic Points, but at the risk of dangerous side effects. Several such substances are described under Narcotics and Perfumes on page 167.

### Veneration

The willing donation of personal Magic Points from a sapient being to a deity, or a spirit with which they have a familial or collegial bond. The island's natives most often pass their Magic Points to summoned ancestor spirits at relevant tikis or embodied undead sorcerers via the offering bowls in their tombs. Strangely, the direct donation of Magic Points between mortals never seems to work; indeed any attempt to create a 'living god' tends to draw the disapproving attention of the island's most powerful dead.

## Recovery of Magic

All living creatures upon the island recover their magical strength at the rate of a single Magic Point per day.

It is this slow recovery which has led to the practice of sacrifice upon the island (see RuneQuest page 173). Since magic tends to be held in reserve, used only for the most important necessity, the frequency of sacrifices is nominally irregular. However, when faced with dire threat or outright war, traditional niceties are often abandoned.

There are some caveats which limit the effectiveness of sacrifice for keeping the gods, spirits and sorcerers from being sated. The High Folk, for instance, believe that only sapient victims can be used to cast their dreadful magics, so each such sacrifice requires either losing a valuable slave or mounting a raiding expedition to find a suitable victim. Likewise, offerings to spirits belonging to a particular totemic tradition often require animals or tribal members who are acrimonious to that cult, not to mention the difficulty of transporting live monsters to a village or tiki to be sacrificed.

Of all the island's inhabitants, it is the colonists who have the most difficult situation in terms of sacrifices. There are no herd animals at Grimsand, the original beasts long eaten or dead from grazing poisonous jungle vegetation. Thus there is nothing to sacrifice in the colony except for its own inhabitants which, most likely, will be an anathema unless something truly dire warrants such an act.

## Running Out of Magic

As per the Willpower option (see RuneQuest page 176)

## Other Magical Options

All other magical guidelines (where not contradicted in the following sections) such as Starting Magic, Learning New Spells and Using Magic are assumed to be as described in the RuneQuest core rulebook.

### Geomantic Nodes

*A geomantic node provides a constant supply of magical energy in a localised area. Although this might at first glance seem to be a bottomless wellspring of power to magicians, they are actually physically dangerous for mortals to tap directly. Many a sorcerer has suffered a horrific demise, consumed from within by the energy.*

*Instead, priests from before the cataclysm - and subsequently sorcerers - discovered a way of tapping these sources to power spells independent of themselves. Using subtly altered versions of Consecration and Enchant (see Dedicate Might) to run directly off the energies provided by the geomantic node, allowed such magics to be extended beyond their normal duration or the caster's own death.*

*These potent locations, being of little use for anything else, were turned into places where the mighty temples of the pre-fall gods were erected, some still occupied by their now constrained masters; whilst the lesser nodes were later subsumed for Smoking Mirrors and necropolises of paramount sorcerers. Few, if any, remain untapped by some device or sleeping deity.*

*A minor node can maintain 1d6+3 Magic Points of consecrated miracles or sorcery enchantments; a moderate node 1d6+9; and a major node 1d6+15.*

# Animism of the Savages

All lowland savages are practicing animists, members of their tribal totemic cult. Whilst few ever progress beyond simple veneration and wary respect for the myriad of spirits which infest the island, everyone is aware of the Spirit World and most have access to familial fetishes. Only the elderly or maimed become kahuna, learning the secrets of animism from the ancestors who watch over their descendants.

Although those who progress far in their totemic cult have great command in the world beyond, it is their tribal unity which gives them the greatest power, the strength to keep bound the dire Gods That Walk – monstrous incarnations of those deities that once descended from the heavens to do battle. It is the threat of these incarnated totem spirits being loosed which redress the balance between shaman and sorcerer, savage and High Folk.

## The Totemic Cults of the Tribes

Every tribe of savages on the island has its own unique spirit cult, ostensibly a totemic practice, whose existence is to suppress an embodied deity to which the natives are related. Each cult, whilst similar in structure, has its own stable of spirit types upon which it draws; guided by the ghosts of dead ancestors who teach their blood-kin knowledge of how to summon and bind them. Many of these spirits, once enslaved to the will of the gods, look favourably on the tribe or tribes which released them from eternal servitude, influencing their attitudes towards those animists who call upon them.

Since joining a cult normally requires being born to that tribe, no native is member of more than one. In some circumstances a savage might sunder their blood ties to a tribe, for instance to retire to the drummers, or more often when they are exiled due to some unforgivable transgression. In these cases the native loses whatever favourable standing they might have with any tribal spirits remaining to them, but can seek out more mysterious or sinister cults to join instead.

Cult secrets are conserved by the ancestor spirits, who return at intervals to teach their descendants. Thus knowledge is preserved, even when generations of elders are lost. Unlike the Machiavellian politics of the High Folk, the savages tend to lose most of their high ranking kahunas to dangerous spirits and infirmity, the latter being commonplace due to the advanced age of natives before they learn shamanic skills.

## Cult Structure

All of the island's totemic cults follow an identical structure, such things being a traditional part of lowland native culture. Use the following template for every tribe, changing only the totemic animal and various spirits they command.

## History

The practice of animism first arose after the gods manifested to do battle, causing the cataclysm which sank the world. Of the mighty empire which had once spread across the continent, only the capital remained; and even that had half-fallen into the sea. When the tremors ceased, the paltry few survivors redoubled their prayers to their fallen deities, who now slumbered in the ruins of the once magnificent civilisation.

Yet none of the embodied divinities awoke to help their faithful worshippers. Faith turned to fear, fear to hatred, then hatred to resolve. Never again would these mighty beings ever be permitted to stir. Priests who had once led congregations of thousands met in conclave to seek a new source of power.

The scholarly amongst them recommended that they study the gods, so that they too could learn how to tap the mechanistic energies of the universe. They were excluded from the conclave as dangerous dabblers in forbidden arts. The foolish begged that all the remaining people sacrifice themselves, pooling their combined life forces to reinvigorate the deities, permitting them to put right all that they had broken. These were beaten about the head with sticks until they saw sense. The greedy suggested that they cannibalise the sleeping gods, eating their flesh to gain its potency and so become gods themselves. They, being so evil, were taken and cast into Mount Ruaumoko for their heresy.

Finally, those remaining decided that the gods be left sleeping and moaned incessantly about their long departed ancestors, who had always warned that such a disaster would happen. It was then the priest Aata, who had been beaten the worst, began a sacred dance in belated respect to their astuteness, a thing hitherto never done to honour the dead. During his gyrations the spirit of his grandfather appeared to him and spoke through Aata's body, teaching the other priests the nature of the Spirit World and the true

path to wisdom. At the conclusion of the dance, Aata dropped dead from his percussive enlightenment, but has ever since been honoured as the bringer of the spirit path.

## Nature

The purpose of each totemic cult is to keep bound the deity for which they are responsible. In return, all those spirits once enslaved by that god's whims offer willing, albeit temporary, service to tribal members in thanks for their continued freedom within the Spirit World.

The cult also honours the ancestors for 'telling them so', but in addition, for regular donations of Magic Points the ancestors return to take care of their progeny, passing on skills and secret knowledge of where to find other spirits and how to bind them. Without this veneration a tribe will soon be abandoned by its ancestors and begin to weaken in the face of its neighbours.

## Organisation

All tribal members join their totemic cult when they reach adulthood. Thus every adult savage is an animist with at least a cult rank of Follower. Above that the ranks of Worshipper, Shaman, High Shaman and Spirit Lord are collectively known as Kahuna. Progression in the cult is limited to those who are too crippled or elderly to hunt and fight.

The distribution of kahunas is structured to give as great a coverage as possible. Each settlement has roughly 2-5 spirit worshippers, undertaking shamanic training; and at least one full Shaman to attend to the needs of the village. Excess shamans congenially share responsibilities until a new shaman position opens up – often at a different settlement when that kahuna passes away.

High Shaman are rarer, numbering 1-2 per tribe, a second being trained if it is obvious that the former is nearing death. Their duties are more political, keeping balance between the tribes, whilst ensuring that the magical needs of their own are catered for. They reside at no particular village, instead wandering to and fro to keep an eye on all that happens. The position of next High Shaman is voted upon by the current shamans of the tribe, who usually grant the elevation to whoever holds the highest Status of their number, unless that candidate is considered a risk for some reason.

Only a single kahuna of Spirit Lord rank is ever allowed at any time, although other kahunas might be eligible in terms of their skills and service. However, challenges for the position are permitted, one or more High Shamans testing themselves against the current holder if they feel up to the task. Due to the importance of the position and the need for an impartial Spirit Lord, competing aspirants are judged by the ancestors themselves in a great conclave of spirits; ethics and cunning often being rewarded more than brute force.

### Fetish Hoarding

*Most dowager-matriarchs extend ruthless control over their collection of fetishes, which normally number between 2-12 (roll 1d6 for each one to denote its power: on a 1-3 Intensity 1, 4-5 Intensity 2, and 6 Intensity 3). Fetishes are only given out for specific purposes and its holder may not keep it beyond the task for which it was assigned. Fetishes are communally owned by the family as a whole; only kahunas are permitted to personally possess their own.*

*Even if a native has previously used a particular fetish there is no guarantee they will be allowed to use it again. It all depends on their personal relationship with the dowager. Losing or breaking one of these precious objects will bring down the matriarch's wrath, who will not forgive such a loss unless the poor victim manages to capture or steal another to replace it.*

# Membership

The totemic cults follow the nominal investment of time and skill advancement as laid out in the core rules (see RuneQuest pages 287-289). Each rank, however, has its own distinct qualifications, tests and responsibilities as follows:

## Follower

On reaching the age of majority, adolescent natives undergo their initiation into the tribal totemic cult. All candidates for that season are gathered together and taken by the village shaman into the jungle, where they are given Uvlesk Juice (see page 167) to drink and instructed how to behave on their journey. The ceremony continues with a drum-accompanied dance honouring the ancestors, during which the souls of the candidates meander up into the Spirit World.

The shaman then continues his lessons, showing the children the extent of the tribe's influence, the spirits it negotiates with, places they are forbidden to go; eventually ending up at the secret hiding place where the totem god sleeps. It is there that the tale of the cataclysm is told, and why the gods must continue to sleep. The candidates sing to lull the slumbering deity, then share life force with those lesser spirits which attend it, forming their totemic bond.

On awakening, the candidate (provided they did not fumble either the Dance or Sing check) is deemed an adult, given a ritual piercing, scar or tattoo and regarded as a Follower in the cult. From this point onwards they may receive training in Trance and Binding, but are not taught how to summon and bind any particular spirits – such knowledge being tightly guarded by the kahunas.

The duties of a Follower are to make daily offerings to the spirits, minor gifts of flowers, food or small knick-knacks. Each week they must donate one or more Magic Points to the ancestors via veneration at the village totems. Once per month they are expected to donate a small creature for sacrifice to the guardian tiki. Last but not least, all Followers are required to participate in the yearly ceremony during which the tribal god is re-bound.

Privileges of followers are generally limited to being granted permission to use familial fetishes, which normally remain under the jealous control of the dowager-matriarchs. Some of these are heirlooms passed down generation to generation, being highly prised items of power not lightly given out save for important occasions; for example battles, great hunts or marriage ceremonies.

Provided they can convince the dowager-matriarch, a native is generally limited to borrowing one fetish per 20 points of personal Status, capped to a maximum of ¼ of their CHA as per RuneQuest page 207. This assumes that the family has enough fetishes and that the available ones have not already been claimed by higher Status individuals.

A follower will never be given a fetish which they lack the skill to utilise safely. Some contain spirits of significant Intensity which would be exceptionally dangerous to lose control of. Thus newly inducted followers only receive the lowest Intensity fetishes, leaving their elders to wrangle over the most potent.

## Worshipper

A native who is unable to continue in the tribal role of hunter-warrior is encouraged to advance in the cult, studying with the local shaman to become a kahuna. If qualified to progress further, the aspirant is given a test to see if they have the right mettle. A spirit friendly to the cult is summoned and the candidate must battle it in spirit combat (either being discorporated by the spirit or given Uvlesk Juice as necessary). If the native wins they become a spirit worshipper. If they fail the shaman reverses any consequential effects and tells the aspirant to return in three months.

The primary duties of worshippers are to execute all the drudgery the shaman requires, such as fetching various herbs, animals and other materials required for ceremonies; performing the easier sacrifices to reinvigorate warding tikis and fetishes; and patrolling the village surrounds observing the movement of spirits.

In return, the worshipper learns how to correctly converse with spirits and is taught how to locate, summon and bind those spirits friendly to the cult.

## Shaman

Progression to the rank of Shaman requires a quest to awaken their Fetch. Since these enterprises are extremely dangerous, a worshipper seeking elevation is often delayed with additional training to better ensure success. The journey initially takes place in the material world, the candidate bathed to wash away any past transgressions then covered with ashes to mark him as sacrosanct. He is then sent into the jungle to seek a sign.

This stage of the quest can take weeks, the candidate wandering into the territories of other tribes who leave him well alone, although marauding beasts suffer no such restriction. During the search no food is permitted to be eaten, placing the worshipper into an increasingly delusional state due to hunger. Each week that the candidate manages to survive, and to succeed in either a Willpower, Survival or Loyalty (Tribe) test, not only broadens his knowledge of the island and its inhabitants, but also augments the likely abilities of his Fetch.

At the point of his adventure where he fails his first check, the candidate's grip on reality finally slips and his soul ascends to the Spirit World. Any penalties imposed by accruing Fatigue are cast off with the body, leaving him feeling reinvigorated. A good thing, since the worshipper is now met by Aata, who shows him a vision of the past – the mighty empire of Kapala, its golden age and fall into iniquity when the pampered gods squabbled like children and destroyed the world.

Aata then asks the candidate a series of three ethical questions concerning the gods, the tribes and the quest for personal power; each koan framed within its own place and vision. The first is asked at the conclusion of the cataclysm. For the second the candidate is led back from the past into the jungles of the present. The last occurs in some distant grey future overlooking sorcerous ruins in the mountains. Assuming they answer with wisdom, the vision concludes without further issue, but if the answer is superficial or a lie, the vision forces the candidate into spirit combat with a suitable spirit of increasing Intensity (1 for the first, 2 for the second and so on).

Once the last question has been answered, Aata then guides the candidate to face the final foe. This takes place in a dead region of the Spirit World devoid of any spirits save a shadowy ebon figure, which sits upon a jade throne, atop a mighty pyramid of sickly glowing green stone (with some nagging resemblance to the current ruins of Kapala). The candidate must defeat this faceless shadow which battles with seductive words or corrupt commands, taking every mistake the worshipper has made, every flaw in his personality, and twisting them into weapons. The ebon spirit starts with the same Magic Points and Binding skill as the candidate prior to beginning his spirit quest.

If the worshipper defeats the foe, they realise they were fighting against themselves; the ebon spirit transforming into their now mastered Fetch. It has the same INT, POW and CHA as they do, but gains a number of fetch abilities (see RuneQuest page 404-405) equal to 1d3 plus the number of weeks they wandered before transcending to the Spirit World. Conversely if the candidate fails their soul is dissipated, replaced by that of the shadowy proto-fetch, which returns to the worshipper's body and begins to wreak evil upon the island. The skin or scales of the worshipper gradually begins to turn black, the foul creature staying ahead of those who hunt it by subsuming the bodies of others via Dominant Possession (see Gibberer page 220).

A Shaman's duties involve keeping their settlement or village free from nefarious influences of bad spirits, controlling the guardian tiki spirits and summoning spirits for the replacement or creation of fetishes, the Experience Roll cost for the latter being supplied by the dowager-matriarchs. They also sit judgement on law cases within the tribe.

The benefits of achieving Shaman rank are of course their awakened fetch – which is usually linked to their drum – but also the methods of projecting oneself to the Spirit World and drawing down or forth spirits between both realms. In addition they are taught how to summon and bind spirits neutral to the cult, but not the secret locations where they may be found which must be individually discovered per spirit, by the shaman themselves.

## High Shaman

Promotion to High Shaman rank is more an administrative move than the result of any test of insight. However, due to the important role played by each High Shaman, no tribe may be long without one. Providing the kahuna

possesses the requisite skill levels, being elevated is a question of advancing personal Status high enough to eclipse other potential candidates.

This can be achieved in many ways, but performing a great deed can often inflate a kahuna's status, provided it can be accomplished without smearing oneself as a glory seeker. More unfortunately from the perspective of potential candidates are the constant manoeuvrings by the dowager-matriarchs of each village, who gossip and bicker in an attempt to advance their own familial relatives into this position of power. Thus the promotion of a new High Shaman can be very disruptive to tribal harmony, especially when the aged crones offer to sway community opinion for a shaman in exchange for more... physical... favours.

The duties of a High Shaman involve intermittently wandering the disparate settlements of the tribe to ensure that no festering problems are occurring. They help educate new shamans, aid them to defeat potential threats, and advocate in inter-tribal law cases. However their most important task is to lead the yearly ceremony to rebind the totem god of the tribe.

High Shaman gain some of the most potent abilities of animism, including how to draw the souls of living creatures up into the Spirit World and the binding (not locating or summoning) of spirits hostile to the cult. The ancestor spirits also teach the High Shaman three cult secrets: where the physical body of the god lies hidden, how to awaken it in times of catastrophe, and his cult Gift.

### Spirit Lord

Only one Spirit Lord may exist upon the island at any time, it being a specific role rather than necessarily a representation of temporal power. However, any High Shaman who is qualified for the position may challenge the current holder; but only with the permission of his tribal ancestors, since elevation to the rank requires the candidate to have a suitable replacement for his own abandoned post. If consent is granted, the challenger sends an emissary to inform the ruling Spirit Lord of his intention.

The test to determine who remains or becomes the island's Spirit Lord is a simple battle between the kahunas utilising their full powers to defeat one another, but under the traditional restriction that neither leave their home territory. This night-long struggle begins with each summoning their most powerful allied spirits and sending them in alternate sequence to plague their opponent (out of courtesy, neither dissipates defeated spirits).

Once such resources have been expended, the kahunas journey to the Spirit World and begin hunting one another, using their knowledge of the realm to lure or trick their foe into evil places in the hope of falling prey to one of the more perilous denizens. Eventually they meet and battle it out directly in spirit combat, until one or other runs out of Magic Points.

The winner is decided by vote of the attending ancestor spirits of every tribe, who watch the entire contest and grant victory to he who used the best trickery and demonstrated most honour (the challenges often incorporating tests of the competitor's Passions). The loser is permitted to either join his tribal ancestors with dignity, or in rare circumstances, they sometimes retire and join the Earth Quellers instead, a mysterious cult who reside upon the crater summit of Mount Ruaumoko, in lonely seclusion.

The responsibilities of the Spirit Lord or High Kahuna are to guide the shamans of all the tribes with rigorous neutrality, watch for threats from the Smoking Mirrors, and ensure that a third cataclysm never strikes the island.

In return, the High Kahuna may wander where he will, being held sacrosanct by all the savages; is paid wary respect by spirits on the island (treating all non-friendly ones as Neutral); and learns the secret locations of all the tribal gods. In addition he may master a second cult Gift of his choice.

## Restrictions

Whilst all adult females are Followers of the totem cult and may participate in the tribal rituals, they are ostensibly forbidden to become kahunas. However, exceptions have been made for hermaphrodites or females sterile from birth, but these often engender resentment from traditionalists and are viewed as harbingers of the next Armageddon.

## Skills, Spirits and Gifts

All of the totemic cults share the same core skills for qualification and progression: Binding, Dance, Influence, Insight, Sing, Trance and Willpower. Healing is not a primary role of kahunas, that particular skill being left to dowager-matriarchs.

Each totemic cult has their own particular spirits it knows how to locate, summon and bind, as described later

Only the most powerful kahuna may learn their cult's secret totem Gift, which is listed with their spirits. A second gift is restricted to those that achieve the exulted rank of High Kahuna. However, this one can be selected from any other cult.

## Allies and Enemies

The totemic cults, in general, follow the same alliances and antipathies as their tribe (see page 25). Whilst kahuna are forbidden to engage in direct warfare with one another, being viewed more as diplomats, they can still generate hostility during inter-tribal negotiations – influenced in part by their ancestors, whose memories are long indeed!

## The Totemic Cult Spirits

Whilst the totemic cult structure is universal between the tribes, the spirits they summon and bind are not. The following cults are detailed with what types of spirit are friendly or neutral to that tribe. Anything else defaults to hostile; elemental spirits being hostile to all the totemic cults for instance. Each cult also has a Gift secret to that tradition.

Whilst kahunas often encounter random spirits, can converse with them and sometimes even drag or expel them to and from their immediate presence... that does not necessarily grant them the knowledge of where to consistently find such spirits, how to summon them from afar, nor bind them into fetishes. Such abilities require a deeper understanding learned on a spirit-by-spirit basis.

To reiterate what was described in the cult rank structure:

- Friendly Spirits: A kahuna of Worshipper rank or higher can locate, summon from afar and bind spirits friendly to their cult, based upon reaffirming ancient pacts between the cult and that particular type or individual spirit.
- Neutral Spirits: Only kahunas of Shaman rank or higher may summon from afar and bind spirits who are neutral to their cult. This normally requires accidentally stumbling upon or questing for such a spirit, then forming a personal pact with that type or individual.
- Hostile Spirits: Kahunas of High Shaman rank or higher can bind enemy spirits, although they cannot summon them from afar. Since hostile spirits are so antagonistic, knowledge of how to do even this must be gained by forming a pact with an ancestor kahuna of great power, who teaches the technique for that particular type or individual spirit.

On Monster Island, forming or reaffirming Pacts with a spirit costs a number of Experience Rolls as per RuneQuest page 177. It is the pact which passes on the secret knowledge of the spirit's true name and forms a magical link between the specific spirit type and the animist. Without the pact the kahuna cannot achieve anything lasting or useful with a spirit, even if they have beaten it in Spirit Combat.

*For example: Kahekili, a High Shaman in the Cult of Gamari, has over the years learned how to summon and bind all of the spirits friendly to his totem. In addition he has formed pacts with the Death and Guardian spirits commonly encountered in his tribe's lands. However, a spate of disease has affected the tribe, which he tracks down to a fetid pool several hours' walk into the deep jungle. The pool is home to a major Sickness spirit, Frog-Spittle-Vomit, whose children have run amok due to the flooding caused by rainy season.*

*After negotiating in a battle of wits (a Spirit Combat which Kahekili wins) the old kahuna agrees to enter a pact with Frog-Spittle-Vomit, who teaches him how to both call upon her children from afar and entrap them in fetishes to spread them across the island. In return Kahekili promises to urinate in every river he passes. The pact costs him 5 Experience Rolls over the course of a month. At the conclusion of his training he knows the secret of summoning and binding Sickness Spirits.*

*The following month, whilst wandering the cloud forests, the High Shaman accidentally disturbs the Wraith of a dead sorcerer. Kahekili defeats it, but since it is hostile to his totemic cult and he has yet to learn how to bind such spirits, he is forced to destroy it. Thinking that such an evil spirit would be a useful weapon, he later summons one of his ancestors to learn the methods of binding wraiths in case he ever meets another, again costing him another 5 Experience Rolls and a month of his time. Even with this knowledge he can never automatically locate or summon such evil spirits.*

Note: Nature Spirits with the Dominate Species ability work slightly differently on the island. Instead of controlling a number of such creatures equal to the spirit's Intensity, the spirit instead controls a combined SIZ of creatures equal to 10 times its Intensity. Thus the spirit can dominate a plethora of small specimens or a single large one. Thus an Intensity 5 Dominate Lizard spirit could take control of a swarm of up to fifty SIZ 1 geckos, or a single SIZ 49 Allosaurus.

### Cult of Anguri

**Totem God:** Anguru the Eater of Insects

**Friendly Spirits**: Ancestor Spirits (Anguri Tribe), Nature Spirits (Boost Armour Points), Nature Spirits (Dominate Armadillo), Nature Spirits (Manifest Earth Sense), Shape-shifting Spirits (Armadillo)

**Neutral Spirits:** Bane Spirits, Guardian Spirits, Sickness Spirits

**Gift**: Invulnerability (Unarmed Attacks)

### Cult of Gabari

**Totem God:** Gabaru the Moon Dancer

**Friendly Spirits**: Ancestor Spirits (Gabari Tribe), Nature Spirits (Boost Movement), Nature Spirits (Dominate Moths and Butterflies), Nature Spirits (Manifest Venomous), Shape-shifting Spirits (Moth Swarm)

**Neutral Spirits**: Haunts, Undeath Spirits, Wraiths

**Gift**: Reincarnation

### Cult of Gamari

**Totem God:** Gamaru the Wise Wanderer

**Friendly Spirits:** Ancestor Spirits (Gamari Tribe), Nature Spirits (Boost Armour Points), Nature Spirits (Dominate Tortoises or Turtles), Nature Spirits (Manifest Swimmer), Shape-shifting Spirits (Tortoise or Turtle)

**Neutral Spirits:** Death Spirits, Guardian Spirits, Sickness Spirits

**Gift**: Eternal Life

### Cult of Ghidori

**Totem God**: Ghidoru the Many Mouthed

**Friendly Spirits**: Ancestor Spirits (Ghidori Tribe), Nature Spirits (Boost Action Points), Nature Spirits (Dominate Hydras), Nature Spirits (Manifest Frenzy), Shape-shifting Spirits (Hydra)

**Neutral Spirits**: Death Spirits, Predator Spirits, Sickness Spirits

**Gift**: Mighty

### Cult of Gyaosi

**Totem God**: Gyaosu the Silent Winged

**Friendly Spirits**: Ancestor Spirits (Gyaosi Tribe), Nature Spirits (Boost Movement), Nature Spirits (Dominate Bats), Nature Spirits (Manifest Echolocation), Shape-shifting Spirits (Bat)

**Neutral Spirits**: Curse Spirits, Haunts, Predator Spirits

**Gift**: Lucky

### Cult of Kamacuri

**Totem God**: Kamacuru the Patient Slayer

**Friendly Spirits**: Ancestor Spirits (Kamacuri Tribe), Nature Spirits (Boost Strike Rank), Nature Spirits (Dominate Mantises), Nature Spirits (Manifest Camouflaged), Shape-shifting Spirits (Mantis)

**Neutral Spirits**: Death Spirits, Sickness Spirits, Undeath Spirits

**Gift**: Swiftness

### Cult of Kangi

**Totem God**: Kangu the Defiant Howler

**Friendly Spirits**: Ancestor Spirits (Kangi Tribe), Nature Spirits (Boost Damage Bonus), Nature Spirits (Dominate Apes), Nature Spirits (Manifest Leaper), Shape-shifting Spirits (Ape)

**Neutral Spirits:** Curse Spirits, Guardian Spirits, Wraiths

**Gift**: Robust

### Cult of Kumongi

**Totem God**: Kumongu the Sleepless Weaver

**Friendly Spirits:** Ancestor Spirits (Kumongi Tribe), Nature Spirits (Boost Hit Points), Nature Spirits (Dominate Spiders), Nature Spirits (Manifest Adhering), Shape-shifting Spirits (Spider)

**Neutral Spirits:** Death Spirits, Haunts, Undeath Spirits

**Gift**: Oracle

### Cult of Mandahi

**Totem God**: Mandahu the Cold Embracer

**Friendly Spirits:** Ancestor Spirits (Mandahi Tribe), Nature Spirits (Boost Damage Bonus), Nature Spirits (Dominate Serpents), Nature Spirits (Manifest Gaze Attack - Hypnotism), Shape-shifting Spirits (Python)

**Neutral Spirits:** Death Spirits, Predator Spirits, Sickness Spirits

**Gift**: Insightful

### Cult of Oodaki

**Totem God**: Oodaki the Slimy Climber

**Friendly Spirits**: Ancestor Spirits (Oodaki Tribe), Nature Spirits (Boost Strike Rank), Nature Spirits (Dominate Octopi), Nature Spirits (Manifest Grappler), Shape-shifting Spirits (Octopus)

**Neutral Spirits**: Guardian Spirits, Sickness Spirits, Wraiths

**Gift**: Resilience

### Cult of Varanri

**Totem God**: Varanri the Bright Coloured

**Friendly Spirits**: Ancestor Spirits (Varanri Tribe), Nature Spirits (Boost Hit Points), Nature Spirits (Dominate Lizards), Nature Spirits (Manifest Regeneration 1HP per Hour), Shape-shifting Spirits (Lizard)

**Neutral Spirits**: Curse Spirits, Death Spirits, Predator Spirits

**Gift**: Summon (Dinosaur)

## Random Spirit Encounters

The jungles and subterranean labyrinths of Monster Island are infested with spirits, the majority of which leave the island's material inhabitants alone, unless attracted by ceremonies or driven by some other desire.

The following table is intended for use when kahunas or discorporated characters are randomly wandering the Spirit World. Material world locations should attract more distinct types of spirit according to their nature. For instance, Undead and Wraith spirits when exploring a necropolis; or Sickness spirits if struggling through a stagnant swamp. Further suggestions are provided under spirit descriptions in the core rulebook.

**Spirit Encounters Table**

| 1d100 | Spirit Type |
|---|---|
| 01-10 | Ancestor Spirit |
| 11-13 | Bane Spirit |
| 14 | Cannibal Spirit |
| 15-21 | Curse Spirit |
| 22-27 | Death Spirit |
| 28 | Dune Haunter |
| 29-30 | Elemental |
| 31-35 | Fetch (On a mission for its kahuna) |
| 36-43 | Guardian Spirit |
| 44-48 | Haunt |
| 49 | Huakaipoor |
| 50-54 | Nature Spirit – Animate Vegetation |
| 55-59 | Nature Spirit – Boost Attribute |
| 60-64 | Nature Spirit – Dominate Species |
| 65-69 | Nature Spirit – Manifest Trait |
| 70 | Nature Spirit – Special effect |
| 71-76 | Predator Spirit |
| 77-82 | Shape-shifting Spirit |
| 83-90 | Sickness Spirit |
| 91-93 | Undeath Spirit |
| 94-100 | Wraith |

Only general types of spirit are listed. The attitude of the spirit depends entirely on totemic cult relationships. Sapient spirits are free to make their own decisions with characters unaffiliated to an animism cult, depending on their nature and how they are treated. Actual statistics are up to the Games Master to generate, based upon their Intensity which is defined by the following table.

**Spirit Intensity**

| 1d100 | Spirit Intensity |
|---|---|
| 01-50 | Intensity 1 |
| 51-75 | Intensity 2 |
| 76-88 | Intensity 3 |
| 89-94 | Intensity 4 |
| 95-97 | Intensity 5 |
| 98-99 | Intensity 6 |
| 100 | Intensity 7 |

Higher Intensity spirits do exist, but are not randomly encountered whilst perambulating about the Spirit World. Normally these are demi-gods in their own right, embodying the living essence of an entire river or mountain, too awesome in scope to be readily apparent – more terrain than individual – akin to an ant recognising a human whilst clambering across its foot.

## Sorcery of the High Folk

Within High Folk society, only those of the upper caste are permitted to learn the arts of sorcery. Although its practice is restricted to around 1-2% of the population, this still provides a considerable number of sorcerers in each city, despite being a pale shadow of the hundreds they once mustered.

All sorcerous knowledge is classified into one of over a dozen philosophical schools of sorcery, specialising in an aspect of reality and its manipulation. These are named according to the paramount arch-mages who developed the spells or collated them. Each of the High Folk sorcerers is a member of at least one college of sorcery, though few openly diversify beyond three.

# Teachings of the Ancient Masters

High Folk society is dominated by the sorcerer caste which rules over them. Their power stems from a number of philosophical schools of sorcery; created long ago at the height of their civilisation by master savants of the art. Great plaques of gold at each of the remaining High Folk citadels preserve some of this arcane knowledge, though understanding of how to translate and comprehend their glyphs has eroded over the years.

Whilst no laws prevent High Folk sorcerers from enrolling in more than one of these colleges, an ambitious magician faces a complex political situation. Studying too many of the schools will not only bring more stringent observation from their superiors, but might also limit access to the higher ranks of those colleges. A sorcerer who garners too much personal power will eventually be brought down by a conclave of their jealous, secretive and highly paranoid peers.

Not all knowledge is recorded within the colleges, however. Some ancient masters forbad their underlings ever to record the most puissant sorceries in precious metal, and never explained the meaning of their runes, passing secrets directly by word of mouth. Thus the greatest magics ever used by the High Folk now lay hidden in the tombs of past arch-mages, only available to those foolishly willing to awaken and propitiate the slumbering mummies of long dead masters...

# College Structure

Each of the sorcery brotherhoods share a similar cult structure. Use this template for every college with the understanding that specific spells, and cult gifts, change according to the writings of the particular arch-mage or arch-mages who created that philosophical school.

## History

In the beginning, during the first years of the High Folk's rise to prominence, there were no colleges or schools of sorcery; there was only the guidance of Zaruthra the god-king. Under his benevolent tyranny was a time of intellectual flourishing, the study of arcane secrets and technological sciences, long repressed under the stagnant idolisation of now fallen gods. It was his teachings and the efforts of his acolytes that enabled the mighty Smoking Mirrors to be crafted, bringing food, materials and knowledge to their burgeoning civilisation.

Following this was a brief golden age, a handful of decades where mighty mages arose who shaped great spells inspired by their inquisitive minds. Yet with this fecundity came the seeds of their own downfall. Increasing competitiveness led to secrecy, distrust, and lack of cooperation. No longer communicating with one another, the body of unaligned sorcerers fractured into smaller colleges, focussed only upon their own speciality. In the generation prior to the genocidal war against the lowland savages, innovations ceased to occur and sorcerers became hidebound by convention, which slowly degenerated to thoughtless tradition.

## Nature

Each college of sorcerers preserves the teachings of their most revered members, following tenets that that path of sorcery laid down without question and obeying the current mage or arch mage in control of the school. Respect is also paid to dead alumni, ensuring their spirits rest easy and do not return as undead lichs to plague the living.

## Organisation

Membership of a college permits the slow, gradual study of the unique sigils and curvilinear hieroglyphs which have been used to inscribe that particular school's spells

of sorcery. The revelation of this carefully hoarded knowledge is limited by cult rank, mere apprentices on that path gaining perhaps one or two of the most simplistic spells, whereas only those that achieve magehood have an opportunity to study the deeper mysteries and most dangerously potent magics – if still remembered – from their superiors.

At the lowest ranks, members are expected to act in a co-operative manner so as to preserve the practice of that path of sorcery. Those of senior ranks, however, begin to exhibit an increasingly selfish and competitive behaviour in their quest for more power; both political and arcane. The highest-ranked mages often struggle in an unspoken shadow war between themselves for the position of Dekanous, the effective dean and supreme sorcerer of that school, even to the point of prematurely removing the previous holder of the position.

It should be noted that a sorcerer may be a member of several colleges, holding a different rank in each. Thus an erstwhile mage who enrols in a new college can be treated with distain and contempt by their faculty superiors, but only within the bounds of studying that path of sorcery. Outside of arcane study their social status holds sway.

### Membership

Only the hyper-intelligent High Folk 'sports' may join the sorcery colleges, on the condition they can manifest the required skills deemed necessary for that path. There are no Common members, the primarily servile role of Novice being replaced by enslaved savages or High Folk 'breeders' deemed too dim-witted (perhaps foolishly on the part of the supercilious sorcerers) to master the necessary paranormal concepts required to cast magic.

Progression from Apprentice to Adept to Mage and ultimately Arch-mage, nominally requires an investment of time and advancement of skills as illustrated in the core RuneQuest rules on pages 287-289. Even so, a degree of bribery, sycophantism and proofs of loyalty are required to succeed.

Ambitious sorcerers can try to advance at a more rapid rate, performing a strenuous test set up by their superiors. This requires the sorcerer to perform a number of skill rolls commensurate to the rank being sought, against deadly challenges of the proper difficulty. Failing to pass or overcome any one of these challenges brings about the terminal demise of the arrogant upstart.

### Restrictions

There are no overt restrictions for college membership, save that knowledge learned from that school of sorcery must not written down or taught to non-members on pain of horrific death; a situation rarely encountered due to the egocentric nature of most High Folk sorcerers. Joining more than one college, whilst permitted, requires political manoeuvring to ensure the sorcerer's peers are not threatened by the act, or at least that the sorcerer can bribe, blackmail or defend against any scheming counter-move against them.

This process can be abstracted with a roll against Influence, suffering a difficulty penalty of one step per previous college membership. Thus joining a second college requires a Hard Influence roll. Whilst openly learning more than four schools is impossible, powerful mages can sometimes pervert the status quo by subjugating a sorcerer to teach them in secret, spying on another college, ripping the knowledge from an enemy's mind (see the Infernal Brain Library of Yhtill page 184); or even seeking out an old deceased master of that school and negotiating an education directly.

### Skills, Magic and Gifts

These depend on the college of sorcery being joined. In general each college shares the following skills as part of the base requirement for membership and progression: either Deceit or Influence, then Invocation (Specific School), Literacy (High Tongue), Shaping, Willpower, and two School Specific Skills. Remember that Literacy (High Tongue) acts as a cap to Shaping and any Invocation skills.

Gifts are only available from a particular savant or founder of that path, requiring that the sorcerer locate the dead arch-mage's tomb, solve the clues to reach its mummy and convince the lich of their worthiness to learn such dread secrets. As well as the necessary adventure, actually mastering the gift requires 10 Experience Rolls to learn the first, 20 the second, 30 for the third and so on. Multiple incidences of certain gifts may be taken, but at an ever-increasing cost.

### Allies and Enemies

Although each college strives against the others on the political field, none are actively hostile to one another as a faculty per se; rather, higher ranked sorcerers will forge enmities based on personal conflicts. If they are in a position of significant authority within a college they might marshal some of its resources to crush or depose their rivals.

# The High Folk Schools of Sorcery

The following paths of sorcery are still known to the High Folk, even if their precise details or even the tombs of their greatest masters have been lost. Whilst these present a comprehensive coverage and grouping of sorcery spells, Games Masters should feel free to create even more exotic schools of sorcery for their own pleasure.

Spells listed in italics are ones lost to the existent college and must be sought from one of the school's venerated, but dead, masters. In addition to the following, all of the colleges teach the spell Dedicate Might at the rank of Mage.

## Abjurements of Ybion

A tome of sorcerous knowledge written by the masochistic self-tortured arch-mage Ybion as he dreamed of other worlds beyond time and space. Although much of the original text has been lost, the college still passes on the spells which were embedded in the rambling pain-infused madness. These concern the methods of abjuring processes nominally required for life, so that the caster might journey into places alien to their physiology.

**School Specific Skills**: Endurance, Survival

**Apprentice Spells:** Foreswear Process (Eating), Foreswear Process (Drinking)

**Adept Spells**: Foreswear Process (Breathing), Foreswear Process (Resting)

**Mage Spells:** Foreswear Process (Sickness), Foreswear Process (Poisoning)

**Arch Mage Spells:** *Foreswear Process (Gravity)*, *Foreswear Process (Pressure)*, Foreswear Process (Radiation)

**Gifts**: Abstinence, Invulnerability (Specific Environmental Danger)

## Bronze Bindings of Khut-Nar

One of the lesser-studied schools of sorcery, it was formally given its own status under the obscene sorcerer Khut-Nar, a conjoined fusion of brother and sister sharing a hermaphrodite body. Although excelling in other paths of sorcery, Khut-Nar created a new arcane philosophy concerning motion and its restriction, ultimately using its skills to create a menagerie of alien creatures imprisoned in a zoo without walls. When finally assassinated for proposing a blasphemous new spell, the head of Nar survived long enough to seal off the entire city and unshackle its collection of monsters to wreak a proxy vengeance.

**School Specific Skills**: Lore (Physics), Navigation

**Apprentice Spells:** Celeritous Progression, Lackadaisical Locomotion

**Adept Spells**: Paralytic Immobilisation, Actuate Mechanism

**Mage Spells:** Sequester Peon, Withhold Ingress

**Arch Mage Spells:** *Loxodromic Phasing*

**Gifts**: Horde (Specific Spell), Prison

## Cryptical Weavings of Xeeth

Distrusted even more than practitioners of the Dictates of Tzarkand, the sorcerers of this college study the secrets of Xeeth, a delusional sorceress renowned for imbibing, inhaling and steeping herself in various narcotic substances to unfetter her imagination. Sorcerers who delve too deeply into this school begin to suspect that Xeeth yet lives, preserved by the poisons still riddling her body; her continuing hallucinations made reality by the power of her art. In this lies the path of madness, some reaching the frightful conclusion that the island and all upon it, even themselves, are merely figments of her potent, drug-intoxicated imagination...

**School Specific Skills**: Disguise, Sleight

**Apprentice Spells:** Delusion (Taste), Delusion (Smell)

**Adept Spells:** Delusion (Sound), Delusion (Vision), Conceal Serpenthood

**Mage Spells:** Delusion (Temperature), Delusion (Touch)

**Arch Mage Spells**: Delusion (Balance), Delusion (Magic), Delusion (Pain)

**Gifts**: Aggrandise, Change Reality

## Dictates of Tzarkand

A minor college of sorcery which has since gained in importance, it was once used to control beasts transiting the Smoking Mirrors. The art has since evolved disturbingly, permitting sorcerers to subvert entire villages of lowland natives, whilst also keeping their own racial underclass subjugated. So great is their dark power to puppeteer others, that High ranking members of this college are treated with warranted suspicion.

**School Specific Skills**: Lore (Zoology), Oratory

**Apprentice Spells:** Fetter Chattel (Creatures)*

**Adept Spells**: Inhibit Fiends (Creatures)*

**Mage Spells:** Tyrannise Thrall (Savages), Oppress Inferiors (Savages)

**Arch Mage Spells**: *Tyrannise Thrall (High Folk)*, Oppress Inferiors (High Folk)

**Gifts**: Animal Familiar, Summon

**A sorcerer must learn a new incidence of the spell for each type of creature, roughly broken down into seven taxonomical classes of Vermes (worms, slugs and octopi), Arthropods (insects, arachnids and crustaceans), Pisces (fish), Amphibians (eels, frogs and toads), Reptilians (crocodiles, lizards, snakes and dinosaurs), Avians (any type of bird), and Mammals (from rodents to apes). Although they use the same Invocation skill, each new version requires the standard 5 Experience rolls and a month to learn.*

## Ebon Words of Zaruthra ∞

The legendary founder of all sorcery, Zaruthra instigated the creation of the Smoking Mirrors which allowed the rebirth of civilisation after the Armageddon of the Gods' War. This college presides over the warping of geometry and space to enable instantaneous transportation. Few sorcerers still study this arcane path, its greatest secrets long mislaid and seemingly unrecoverable with the loss of the knowledge of where Zaruthra's fabled tomb is hidden. Even the eidolons of Zaruthra's most powerful disciples have since been forgotten.

**School Specific Skills**: Lore (Dimensions), Navigation

**Apprentice Spells**: Inscribe Dominion

**Adept Spells:** Conjure Possession

**Mage Spells:** Tangential Perambulation

**Arch Mage Spells:** *Egressing Gateway*

**Gifts**: Sense Parallels, Dimensional Portal

## Malformations of Maldweeb ⛛

A school of sorcery made infamous by a succession of increasingly amoral researchers, culminating in the sorcerer Maldweeb who supposedly fused himself to a giant, demonic plant and still lives, bound by bronze fetters in a forgotten temple sealed against intrusion. His Malformations concern the warping and twisting of corporal beings to adapt their bodies better for a particular purpose, or create new breeds of life entirely. Since study of this path often leads to increasingly introspective experimentation, its students often take little notice of political or diplomatic events, save when searching out new specimens for their work.

**School Specific Skills:** Healing, Lore (Zoology)

**Apprentice Spells**: Shrivel (Characteristic[1]), Impose Injury

**Adept Spells**: Magnify (Characteristic[1]), Meliorate Maltreatment

**Mage Spells**: Impress Configuration (Living Flesh and Bone), Progenitor Metamorphoses

**Arch Mage** Spells: *Concoct Chimera*

**Gifts**: Chaotic Blessing, Transform

[1] *The college only has knowledge of manipulating physical Characteristics, requiring a sorcerer to learn a new incidence of the spell for each of STR, CON, SIZ and DEX. Although they use the same Invocation skill, each new version requires the standard 5 Experience rolls and a month to learn.*

## Manifest Creations of Yeiber ☐

Created by the infamous artificer and scripter Yeiber, this philosophical school gathers most of the sorcery spells necessary for the creation and manipulation of inert matter. It was once the preeminent magical college of High Folk, most of their cities and technological sorcery being reliant on its skill, vying only with the disciples of the God-King Zaruthra for standing.

**School Specific Skills**: Engineering, Mechanisms

**Apprentice Spells**: Adhere Article, Zoetic Motivation (Substance[2]), Impress Configuration (Substance[2])

**Adept Spells**: Inflate Stature, Diminish Voluminosity

**Mage Spells:** Augment Incalescence, Repudiate Calefaction

**Arch Mage Spells:** Transcendent Fossilisation (Substance[2]), *Cache Might*

**Gifts**: Matrix, Vivify

[2] *A new incidence of the spell must be learned for each of the following materials: Basalt, Bronze, Copper, Crystal, Gold, Jadestone, Obsidian, Porphyry, and Silver. Although they use the same Invocation skill, each new version requires the standard 5 Experience rolls and a month to learn.*

## Obdurate Proscriptions of Phnom ⧗

Once a leading genealogist and soothsayer, the sorceress Phnom created a careful breeding doctrine for the High Folk in order to emphasise the intellectual and magical capacity of her people. Atrocities inflicted by the sorceress upon the lowland natives allowed the rapid acquisition of the science of eugenics, but were instrumental in sparking the backlash which led to the war.

Arrogantly believing herself immortal and indestructible, she was captured and then sealed in a large pottery vessel filled with potent acid. This prison was taken by the high shamans and hidden somewhere on the island, where Phnom still silently screams in eternal agony. With her loss the college has ceased to exist, but the great gold plaques with their undecipherable spells still stand.

**School Specific Skills**: Lore (Eugenics), Lore (Genealogy)

**Apprentice Spells**: *Diagnosticate Heredity*

**Adept Spells:** *Parthenogenesis, Xenogenesis*

**Mage Spells:** *Foreswear Process (Age)*

**Arch Mage Spells**: *Ensconce Vitality*

**Gifts**: Perfection, Resurrection

## Ouphalus Tablets ᛟ

Written by a sorceress eminent in the manipulation of otherworldly entities, the Ouphalus Tablets are based upon a collection of twelve engraved pieces of black jade which predate the island's history. Ouphalus translated the primordial runes, finding within them the keys to summon or dismiss extra-dimensional beings feared for their capricious nature, deadly powers and alien mindsets. The teachings of this school are scattered amongst the High Folk cities and tombs, so that only a handful of specific summonings can be found at any one particular place.

S**chool Specific Skills**: Lore (Gods and Demons), Lore (History)

**Apprentice Spells**: Sequester Peon, Defy Eidolon

**Adept Spells:** Relegate Daemon (Specific Minor Being), Arouse Daemon (Specific Minor Beings)

**Mage Spells**: Relegate Daemon (Specific Moderate Being), Arouse Daemon (Specific Moderate Being)

**Arch Mage Spells**: Relegate Daemon (Specific Major Being), Arouse Daemon (Specific Major Being)

**Gifts**: Pact, Polyglot

This school has potentially dozens of specialised Relegate Daemon and Arouse Daemon spells, each specific to a particular extra-dimensional species or individual. Although they use the same Invocation skill, each new version requires the standard 5 Experience rolls and a month to learn.

*There are no specific guidelines for creating demonic or diabolic entities, but they should roughly correspond to the following: Minor Beings, 100 Characteristic Points and skills up to Intensity x 7%; Moderate Beings, 150 Characteristic Points and skills up to Intensity x 10%; and Major Beings, 200 Characteristic Points and skills up to Intensity x 15%. Whilst some of the more unusual creatures found in Chapter 8 can be used as summoned entities, for more flavourful beings the author recommends reading any of the Stormbringer/Elric roleplaying games or the wonderful 'Book of Ebon Bindings' by M.A.R. Barker.*

## Pnachotic Protections ᚱ

The Pnachotic Protections are a collection of guards and wards against harm, originally discovered on another world, engraved into the towering sides of a great red mountain; atop which stood a primordial city un-enterable to any who tried to breach its dusty walls. The increasing paranoia of all those sorcerers sent to study the gargantuan-sized arcane glyphs eventually led to the sealing of its connecting Smoking Mirror. However, the college has remained one of the most important to the High Folk, central to their isolationist policies; although rarely perused beyond its basic concepts.

**School Specific Skills:** Lore (Shamanism), Lore (Sorcery)

**Apprentice Spells**: Obliterate Conjury, Quell Bewitchment

**Adept Spells**: Forbear Violation, Preclude Menace

**Mage Spells:** Defy Eidolon, Castigate Upstart

**Arch Mage Spells**: *Unbinding Averment*

**Gifts**: Invulnerability (Specific Spell or Spirit type), Sanctuary

Lore (Shamanism) and Lore (Sorcery) concern themselves with general information concerning practitioners, entities and traditional methods of those types of magic, so as to recognise and avoid their dangers.

## Prognostications of Nugsoth △

Nugsoth is famed for creating a college of spells so potent, that it drove him utterly mad. Other High Folk claim such magics required an unhinged mind to even conceive their creation. Whatever the truth, this college is even less populated than that of the Ebon Words of Zaruthra, its reputation for insanity intimidating those intellectually capable of understanding its secrets. Indeed, many of its most powerful arch-mages have mysteriously and unexpectedly vanished, un-locatable by even the greatest divination spells.

**School Specific Skills**: Lore (Astrology), Lore (History)

**Apprentice Spells**: Descry Chronology

**Adept Spells:** Prognosticate Chronology

**Mage Spells:** Chronogrammatical Binding

**Arch Mage Spells**: *Temporal Supplantation*

**Gifts**: Eternal Life, Juncture

## Sagacious Scrolls of Soleks †

This tome of knowledge concerns itself with necromancy; the manipulation of the spirits and bodies of the dead. Reputed to be the creation of the arch-mage Soleks, the spells were in fact created by a series of mighty necromancers, Nmatmuor, Todosma, Wacharn, Wokal, Vldulla, Poth'zar, and Bvalzaunt, of whom Soleks was merely the last in line. At one time the decrepit arch-mages of other colleges sought out these infamous masters, seeking to extend their existence beyond death. Indeed some say that the lich Bvalzaunt still secretly heads the Brotherhood of the Undisturbed Sleep...

**School Specific Skills**: Lore (Funereal Rites), Lore (Undead)

**Apprentice Spells:** Shrivel (Characteristic$^3$), Immure Essence

**Adept Spells**: Enkindle Carrion, Impress Configuration (Dead Flesh and Bone), Consume Essence

**Mage Spells**: *Purloin Personage*, Obviate Mortality

**Arch Mage Spells**: *Horological Somnolence*

**Gifts**: Horde (Specific Spell), Lichdom

[3]The college only has knowledge of manipulating three Characteristics, requiring a sorcerer to learn a new incidence of the spell for each of STR, CON, or SIZ.. Although they use the same Invocation skill, each new version requires the standard 5 Experience rolls and month to learn.

### The Vagnarr Elucidations ᛉ

A college created by a sorcerer driven blind by the horrors he saw through the Smoking Mirrors, Vagnarr set his deranged mind to discovering arcane methods of perceiving the universe through other senses or at a distance, rendering him safe from whatever he might accidentally provoke. The cackling arch-mage eventually expired when his questing perception awakened something which should not have been disturbed, and drew forth his soul along the mystical bond, causing his body to collapse into dust.

**School Specific Skills:** Perception, Lore (Dimensions)

**Apprentice Spells**: Metaphysical Perspicacity (Touch), Protuberate (Smell), Discern (Personal Object)

**Adept Spells:** Metaphysical Perspicacity (Smell), Apprehend (Echolocation), Protuberate (Hearing), Discern (Substance)

**Mage Spells**: Insightful Presentment, Metaphysical Perspicacity (Hearing), Penetrate Phantasm, *Apprehend (Ionising Radiation), Protuberate (Vision)*

**Arch Mage Spells:** *Metaphysical Perspicacity (Vision), Apprehend (Alternate Dimensions), Discern (Emotion)*, Remote Elucidation

**Gifts**: Divination, Verity

### Yimskar Malignancies ᛇ

The sorcerers of the brotherhood of Yimskar have always been those fascinated with destruction and the inflicting of harm. Once greatly feared by the lowland savages, who were scythed down in countless numbers, the college lost most of its membership during the collapse of the High Folk civilisation; adepts and arch-mages alike crushed or consumed by the fallen gods. Now the school has forfeit its eminent position, the sorcerers lack a purpose to teach their malignant magics, the most powerful left to them being the creeping green clouds of Antagonistic Asphyxiation.

**School Specific Skills**: Combat Style (Eight Jab Doom), Lore (Strategy and Tactics)

**Apprentice Spells**: Thwart Panoply, Exacerbate Injury

**Adept Spells**: Chastising Doom (Magic), Chastising Doom (Missiles)

**Mage Spells:** Antagonistic Asphyxiation

**Arch Mage Spells**: *Consuming Annihilation*

**Gifts**: Robust, Swiftness

## High Folk Sorcery Spell Names

To grant the setting a darker Sword & Sorcery atmosphere, the sorcery spells of the High Folk have been given exotic names more suited to their culture. Save for a few noted exceptions and some new spells created for Monster Island, most spells function in exactly the same way as those in the core RuneQuest rules. The following tables are provided to help Games Masters easily identify which spells are which.

### The Fate of Vagnarr

*Vagnarr was one of the three paramount sorcerers of his time never to be mummified and interred in a proper tomb – and is thus unable to be contacted by acolytes studying his demented work. With the greatest irony, Vagnarr has learned much from the diabolic entity which currently torments his enslaved soul. Since many of his greatest spells were lost with this misfortunate transcendence, mages cursed with curiosity occasionally try to seek out the dire being which stole his soul, with plans to bargain for its release, but none has ever returned.*

| High Folk Name | RuneQuest Name |
|---|---|
| Adhere Article | Holdfast |
| Antagonistic Asphyxiation | Smother |
| Apprehend (Xeno-Perception) | Perceive |
| Arouse Daemon | Evoke |
| Cache Might | Store Manna |
| Castigate Upstart | Castback |
| Celeritous Progression | Haste |
| Chastising Doom | Attract |
| Conjure Possession | Summon |
| Consuming Annihilation | Wrack |
| Dedicate Might | Enchant |
| Defy Eidolon | Spirit Resistance |
| Delusion | Phantom |
| Diminish Voluminosity | Shrink |
| Discern (Possession, Psychology or Phenomenon) | Sense |
| Enkindle Carrion | Revivify |
| Ensconce Vitality | Hide Life |
| Exacerbate Injury | Damage Enhancement |
| Fetter Chattel | Draw |
| Forbear Violation | Damage Resistance |
| Foreswear Process | Abjure |
| Egressing Gateway | Portal |
| Immure Essence | Trap Soul |
| Impose Injury | Transfer Wound |
| Impress Configuration | Sculpt |
| Inflate Stature | Enlarge |
| Inhibit Fiends | Repulse |
| Inscribe Dominion | Mark |
| Insightful Presentment | Intuition |
| Lackadaisical Locomotion | Hinder |
| Magnify (Strength, Health, Body or Agility) | Enhance |
| Meliorate Maltreatment | Regenerate |
| Metaphysical Perspicacity | Mystic |
| Obliterate Conjury | Neutralise Magic |
| Obviate Mortality | Undeath |
| Oppress Inferiors | Enslave |
| Paralytic Immobilisation | Palsy |
| Preclude Menace | Protective Ward |
| Progenitor Metamorphoses | Shapechange |
| Protuberate | Project |
| Purloin Personage | Switch Body |
| Quell Bewitchment | Spell Resistance |
| Relegate Daemon | Banish |
| Remote Elucidation | Telepathy |
| Sequester Peon | Imprison |
| Shrivel (Strength, Health, Body or Agility) | Diminish |
| Tangential Perambulation | Teleport |
| Thwart Panoply | Bypass Armour |
| Transcendent Fossilisation | Transmogrify |
| Tyrannise Thrall | Dominate |
| Zoetic Motivation | Animate |

| RuneQuest Name | High Folk Name |
|---|---|
| Abjure | Foreswear Process |
| Animate | Zoetic Motivation |
| Attract | Chastising Doom |
| Banish | Relegate Daemon |
| Bypass Armour | Thwart Panoply |
| Castback | Castigate Upstart |
| Damage Enhancement | Exacerbate Injury |
| Damage Resistance | Forbear Violation |
| Diminish | Shrivel (Strength, Health, Body or Agility) |
| Dominate | Tyrannise Thrall |
| Draw | Fetter Chattel |
| Enchant | Dedicate Might |
| Enhance | Magnify (Strength, Health, Body or Agility) |
| Enlarge | Inflate Stature |
| Enslave | Oppress Inferiors |
| Evoke | Arouse Daemon |
| Fly | Unknown to High Folk Sorcery |
| Haste | Celeritous Progression |
| Hide Life | Ensconce Vitality |
| Hinder | Lackadaisical Locomotion |
| Holdfast | Adhere Article |
| Imprison | Sequester Peon |
| Intuition | Insightful Presentment |
| Mark | Inscribe Dominion |
| Mystic | Metaphysical Perspicacity |
| Neutralise Magic | Obliterate Conjury |
| Palsy | Paralytic Immobilisation |
| Perceive | Apprehend (Xeno-Perception) |
| Phantom | Delusion |
| Portal | Egressing Gateway |
| Protective Ward | Preclude Menace |
| Project | Protuberate |
| Regenerate | Meliorate Maltreatment |
| Repulse | Inhibit Fiends |
| Revivify | Enkindle Carrion |
| Sculpt | Impress Configuration |
| Sense | Discern (Possession, Psychology or Phenomenon) |
| Shapechange | Progenitor Metamorphoses |
| Shrink | Diminish Voluminosity |
| Smother | Antagonistic Asphyxiation |
| Spell Resistance | Quell Bewitchment |
| Spirit Resistance | Defy Eidolon |
| Store Manna | Cache Might |
| Switch Body | Purloin Personage |
| Summon | Conjure Possession |
| Tap | Unknown to High Folk Sorcery |
| Telepathy | Remote Elucidation |
| Teleport | Tangential Perambulation |
| Transmogrify | Transcendent Fossilisation |
| Transfer Wound | Impose Injury |
| Trap Soul | Immure Essence |
| Undeath | Obviate Mortality |
| Wrack | Consuming Annihilation |

# New and Modified Sorcery Spells

The following are either unique magics created by the High Folk or subtly tweaked versions of existing RuneQuest sorcery spells.

## Actuate Mechanism

Concentration

Manipulates, unlocks or triggers any mechanism crafted with a skill lower than the Invocation skill of the caster. This can be as simple as a sliding bolt or as complex as a scything blade trap. When utilised to open magically sealed doors or chests it also bypasses any securing spell, such as Adhere Article, which has less Intensity than itself. It affects objects with a SIZ up to three times the Intensity of the spell.

## Augment Incalescence

Concentration

Allows the caster to increase the temperature of an existing heat source, boosting it by 100° C per point of Intensity. The spell is normally utilised for smelting and casting those metals favoured by the High Folk, by concentrating sunlight – via mirrors or lenses –the smoke and ash of fires considered polluting in terms of adding impurities, and therefore weakness, to the final object. The magic provides enough energy to affect an object of a SIZ up to three times the Intensity, but the final result is not instantaneous, requiring time for the object to gradually warm as per real life (approximately one minute per 100° C rise in temperature). See Repudiate Calefaction page 150 and the associated side bar text for examples of what this heat can achieve.

## Chronogrammatical Binding

Concentration, Resist (Endurance)

This mighty sigil seals the recipient within a bubble of time, cutting them completely off from the rest of reality in a mirror-surfaced sphere. Anyone or anything thus affected by Chronogrammatical Binding is in effect impervious to any known force, energy, substance or ageing. Neither can they be moved, even a flying creature remaining motionless in mid air. When the spell concludes they return to normal reality as if nothing had occurred. It affects targets with a SIZ up to three times the Intensity of the spell.

## Conceal Serpenthood

Resist (Endurance)

This very specific spell combines the effects of a localised illusion with a concealment which blocks its own magical aura. It produces a glamour that covers the body of an ophidian, disguising their physical body and voice so that they appear as some other humanoid. The glamour is versatile enough to permit the mimicking of a specific individual, duplicating their features.

The spell does not register as magic save to detection spells of greater Magnitude. Likewise the illusion can only be penetrated by a truth revealing spell of greater Magnitude also. Note that Conceal Self only provides a visual, olfactory and audible illusion and does not disguise the feel of the serpentman. It is normally cast on willing serpentfolk spies, the duration extended by use of Enchantment.

## Concoct Chimera

Resist (Endurance)

This foul magic blends two or more living creatures together to create a composite chimera from their bodies. The results of the spell are completely random, so that the same chimera might not be formed even though the spell was recast with identical beasts. The potency of the magic is limited to blending creatures with an individual SIZ up to three times the Intensity of the spell. Additional Targets are always required to encompass all the constituent beasts.

Creating the chimera requires a random roll of equal probability (based on the number of component monsters) to see if the Characteristic, Hit Location and Creature Ability are taken from the first beast, second, or more. Attributes are recalculated after new Characteristics are determined. Hit Locations such as limbs, wings and any other body part that come in twos are treated as a single pair.

Whilst the spell continues, the chimera remains intact – usually half insane due to the evil done to it. At the conclusion of the spell however, the separate beasts cleave apart, physically returning to normal but bearing any injuries inflicted upon them. If the magic is maintained via an enchantment, two relatively similar chimera can be made to reproduce, or other spells such as Parthenogenesis can be utilised to propagate the new species.

## Birth of a Monster

Aoffutt, sorceress of Zerzura and arch-mage of the school of Maldweeb, finally masters the dark art of concocting a chimera. Eager to try this new power she sends forth underlings to fetch some victims of suitable plasticity. With an Invocation (Malformations of Maldweeb) skill of 115% she can blend creatures of up to SIZ 36 (three times an Intensity of 12).

When the adepts bring her a Giant Scorpion and a Tiger, she works the sorcery blending the two creatures together. The Games Master determines which physical parts end up in the final chimera, and since the scorpion has more body parts, uses its Hit Location list to roll against. Starting from the top an odd roll implies the scorpion body part is kept, whilst an even roll means the tiger's part is kept instead. If there is no equivalent body part, then it loses that part.

Progressing down the list results the following rolls, even for the tail (lost as a significant location), odd for the hind legs, even for the mid legs (again lost), even for the fore legs, odd for the thorax, odd for the pincers and even for the head. The Games Master does the same for the Characteristics – STR 2d6+12, CON 3d6+6, SIZ 2d6+18, DEX 2d6+9, INS 2d6+6, POW 1d6; and Abilities – odd Adhering, even Intimidate, even Night Sight and lastly even, losing the Venomous trait.

The sorceress gloats at her success; the final chimera is an unholy mixture. A monstrous beast with the body, pincers and hind legs of a scorpion; the head and forelegs of a tiger; possessing the ability to climb sheer walls, see at night and is exceptionally menacing!

### Consume Essence

Resist (Willpower)

Annihilates a trapped spirit (such as a fetish or the victim of a Trap Soul spell), reducing it into its constituent Magic Points, at the expense of destroying the entity. The sorcerer can then use these Magic Points to fuel a spell or recharge a Cache Might storage vessel, as if they had performed a ritual sacrifice. This spell is considered an abomination by the lowland savages, who propagated their war against the sorcerers because of its use.

### Dedicate Might

As per the Enchant spell (RuneQuest page 242), but with two slightly modified versions; enchantments powered by the sorcerer's own soul and enchantments powered by Geomantic Nodes. The former type of enchantment works as normal, but with the caveat that it fails at the moment of the sorcerer's death, the invested Magic Point capacity returning to the sorcerer's spirit as they depart their body. The latter type permits the Magic Point cost of the spell to be supplied directly by the node at no on-going cost to the sorcerer. Since they are powered independently, such static enchantments last beyond the death of the caster.

### Delusion (Vision)

As per the Phantom spell (RuneQuest page 247). Although this spell cannot render things invisible, cunning High Folk sorcerers often use it to blend in with their surroundings, gaining the Camouflaged creature ability.

### Descry Chronology

Concentration

Allows the recipient to see back in time to observe an event which occurred in the past, at that exact location. The furthest back which can be perceived is based upon the Intensity of the spell (see Chronology Table). It is the caster who determines the precise date returned to, other participants only being able to share the vision, not modify it. Once chosen, the date cannot be modified without recasting the magic.

Although very powerful in what it can do, the spell is near useless without an accurate date, if desiring to witness a historical event of importance. In some cases a sorcerer must literally hunt down the precise time using a rough guess of the date, waiting to observe what transpires until the duration concludes, then recasting with a hopefully refined estimation. The spell can be cast on an object

| Intensity | Time Travelled/Duration |
|---|---|
| 1 | Caster's POW in Minutes |
| 2 | Caster's POW x 5 Minutes |
| 3 | Caster's POW x 15 Minutes |
| 4 | Caster's POW x Hours |
| 5 | Caster's POW x 6 Hours |
| 6 | Caster's POW x Days |
| 7 | Caster's POW x Weeks |
| 8 | Caster's POW x Months |
| 9 | Caster's POW x Years |
| 10 | Caster's POW x Decades |
| Each +1 | Continue progression: Centuries, Millennia and so on... |

instead, seeing what occurred in the object's immediate vicinity, but makes casting one difficulty grade harder.

### Diagnosticate Heredity

Concentration, Resist (Willpower)

Provides the sorcerer a complete genealogical history of the recipient, stretching back as many generations as the Intensity of the spell. It is normally used to prove the target's bloodline and parents, but can be used for the purpose of carefully controlled eugenic breeding programmes. The spell may be resisted by unwilling targets.

### Foreswear Process

As per the Abjure spell (RuneQuest page 239). However the High Folk version of the spell also grants protection against harmful environmental processes. Its' less obvious specialties are: Resting, permits the sorcerer from suffering any Fatigue effects accrued from physical labour or lack of sleep; Pressure, prevents harm from crushing atmospheres to vacuum (but still need to breathe); Gravity, cancels detrimental effects from higher or lower gravity field; Radiation, serves to ward off ionising radioactivity.

### Horological Somnolence

Resist (Special)

A mighty spell of necromancy, it permits the sorcerer to place themselves into a state of suspended animation which can potentially last countless years. The magic affects recipients with a SIZ up to three times the Intensity of the spell. Whilst under its effect the caster, along with any other targets of the spell, effectively registers as dead, with no heartbeat and a total cessation of breathing.

The spell substitutes its Duration for that indicated by its Intensity on the Chronology Table (see previous page); as chosen by the sorcerer. When the spell eventually concludes, everyone subject to the magic (even the caster) must make an unopposed Endurance test – with a skill bonus of as many difficulty grades as the difference between the sorcerer's maximum school Intensity and the Intensity the spell was cast at – or die from the extreme physiological strain, withering into a wizened mummy if they fail.

*For example: Yogra Zotan decides to place herself and her loyal guards into a necromantic sleep to avoid the conclave of sorcerers currently seeking her death. With her Invocation skill of 110% she could potentially sleep for several millennia, however, she only wishes to outlive her current enemies, all of whom are aged mages; so she casts the spell with an Intensity of 9. When the spell ends after twenty one years, she and her accomplices must make a Very Easy Endurance test, as the magic was cast two Intensity levels less than her maximum.*

### Loxodromic Phasing

Concentration, Resist (Endurance)

Permits the target (when concentrating) to pass through solid material and solid material to pass through them, without hindrance or harm. However, a recipient cannot remain phased for long without holding their breath or having some sorcerous way to breathe, else they will suffocate. The magic allows passage through earth, flesh, wood, stone or even metal, however the phasing works both ways, preventing any physical interaction by the recipient with their surroundings, although they can still move via some psychic means; apparently walking, swimming or flying as normal. Despite their intangibility they are still susceptible to magic and other phased beings. It affects targets with a SIZ up to three times the Intensity of the spell, who may resist if desired.

### Obviate Mortality

As per the Undeath spell (RuneQuest page 256), but it also adds bonus characteristic points to STR and CON equal to the Intensity of the spell. This version of the spell can be made permanent if used on a willing victim who wishes to become undead, their own soul powering the enchantment rather than the casting sorcerer.

#### Strange Phases

*It is said that the creator of Loxodromic Phasing originally developed the magic to search for the Fabled Necropolis of the god-king Zaruthra. Yet his successors put this potent sorcery to other more frivolous uses, one even casting it upon a giant shark and riding the beast through the root tangled soil of the jungle, hunting the primitive savages (with magic) for sport. Alas the mage was brought down when a guardian spirit dismissed his spell, entombing him within a megalith leaving only part of his face, one hand and the shark's jaws exposed in the rock's surface, with an expression of utter horror...*

## Parthenogenesis

Another of the strange eugenics spells of the ever-dying Phnom, Parthenogenesis allows males or females to reproduce without using the genetic material of a partner, effectively cloning themselves. The magic is so potent that it even affects sterile recipients, creating offspring which will possess identical Characteristics and abilities, although developing their own personality whilst growing to adulthood.

Like Xenogenesis, the sorcery must be cast on the recipient reproductive material, implanted into a surrogate mother (which does not necessarily need to be of the same species) and maintained until birth. It works with donors who possess a SIZ up to three times the Intensity of the spell. It is said that before Phnom discovered the secrets of immortality, she used this spell to propagate herself – transferring her soul into a new clone and forcing the dispossessed youthful spirit into the hell of occupying her previous, aged body.

## Penetrate Phantasm

Concentration, Resist (Willpower)

Allows the recipient to perceive the truth behind or within any magical illusion with an Intensity equal or less to that of this spell. They must concentrate to penetrate the phantasm, which remains, affecting anyone not under the influence of this spell. Those that do not wish to receive this edification may try to resist.

## Progenitor Metamorphoses

As per the Shapechange spell (RuneQuest page 252), except that it only permits changes to creatures linked to the caster's species or genetic relationship. For example Serpentmen can only use it to change into ophidian related creatures, such as snakes; whereas humans would be limited to apes, and so on. When used on a lowland savage, the native will be regressed to an animal or monster related to its tribal totem.

## Prognosticate Chronology

Concentration

Permits a sorcerer to predict near-future events, even to alter the outcome in their favour. This is handled in a rather unusual manner, the adventure continuing as if nothing had happened but allowing the sorcerer to reverse time if something untoward occurs. Providing the power of the spell is utilised before it expires, then everything that ensued after its invocation is treated as a vision which the sorcerer personally experienced.

In terms of game mechanics, if time is wound back then everything which occurred subsequent to the casting is undone. This can of course upset other players, but has the ability to reverse dire events such as a fatal fumble or the triggering of a death trap! Conversely, if time is not wound back before the spell concludes, then everything that happened during its Duration becomes reality.

Including multiple Targets in the prognostication allows any member of that group to know exactly what lies ahead as per their previous premonition, but now can take steps to avoid it. However in situations where their characters have been left out of the augury, Games Masters should encourage players to retrace their previous actions as if they hadn't previously experienced them, unless the sorcerer interferes or reveals foreseen knowledge.

## Repudiate Calefaction

Concentration

Grants the recipient complete protection against extreme heat, up to 100° C per point of Intensity, when concentrating on resisting the temperature. This spell is often used whilst smelting or casting metals; or if needed to walk through or over a dangerous heat source. When used as protection against fires, divide the spell Intensity by three to give its equivalent Fire Intensity (see RuneQuest page 121). The spell can affect a person, creature or object of a SIZ up to three times the Intensity.

*The following list gives some example temperatures for burning or melting of common substances on the island.*

| | |
|---|---|
| *100° C* | *Boiling Water* |
| *200° C* | *Pressurised Steam* |
| *300° C* | *Wood Ignites* |
| *900° C* | *Melted Silver or Obsidian* |
| *1000° C* | *Melted Bronze* |
| *1100° C* | *Melted Gold or Copper* |
| *1300° C* | *Lava Flow* |

## Tangential Perambulation

As per the Teleport spell (RuneQuest page 254). However, this spell only works when the High Folk sorcerer steps through an edge or corner. Thus it can only be used when near Euclidean geometric objects, for instance where a wall meets the ground, a door frame, or even the square base of a statue plinth. Although there are no lack of such lines and angles in urban architecture, the spell is near useless in the jungle.

### Temporal Supplantation

As per the Switch Body spell (RuneQuest page 253), but sends the mind of the sorcerer back in time, exchanging it with the mind of a random creature which is present within the spell's Range of that precise location. The earliest time which can be perceived is based upon the Intensity of the spell (see Chronology Table page 148). Once a date has been chosen (and target determined) it cannot be changed, forcing the caster to return to their own body and time before recasting the magic.

With suitably detailed records a sorcerer could potentially make a chronological jump to a precise person or creature recorded present at that time. However, in most cases it will be random. Assume the target will be a sapient being if the location is a city or ruin of some sort, or roll on a creature encounter table if in some wilderness area.

Note that this spell can potentially be used to change history. It is up to the Games Master to decide whether past time is inviolate and, if not, what changes will be carried forward to the current campaign date.

### Unbinding Averment

Concentration

A negating power of dire strength, Unbind Enchantment permanently sunders enduring magic created via Dedicate Might, Consecrate or Extension with a Magnitude equal or less to its own, including those bound to Geomantic Nodes. It also destroys fetishes created by animistic Spirit Binding, with a capacity equal or less than half the spell's Magnitude. It affects targets with a SIZ up to three times the Intensity of the spell.

Unbinding such potent creations comes at some risk. Sundering a spell or miracle causes a magical backlash, forcing the caster to roll on the Bad Thing column of the Casting Miscarriage Table (page 130). When used upon a fetish instead, the effect is often an unwelcome surprise if the fetish contains an aggressive spirit capable of Discorporating the sorcerer.

### Withhold Ingress

As per the Imprison spell (RuneQuest page 245), except that Withhold keeps things out, and also blocks trans-dimensional movement such as Teleport or Portal.

### Xenogenesis

Resist (Endurance)

An unusual spell, twinned to Parthenogenesis, it must be cast on the recipient prior to ovulation or fertilisation and maintained until birth. In addition, the target must drink a concoction formulated from some other species, alien to that of the parents. This is the xenological factor which causes the gross mutation in the offspring.

The result of the magic is to cause a weird mutation, either a sterile hybridisation between the parent's species and whatever creature is used in the concoction, granting it a bonus number of points equal to the Intensity, which can be distributed amongst its starting Characteristics; or the Games Master may roll once on the Chaos Features table (see page 441). No matter what is created, individual Characteristics cannot exceed thrice the Intensity of the spell.

A sorcerer uses Xenogenesis on a Giant Spider, shaping it with multiple Targets and combining with Enchant to extend the duration sufficiently. Three months after insemination the eggs are ready to hatch, and seven of the spiderlings are blessed with bonuses to their Characteristics. The sorcerer has eight points to distribute to each of the Targets, of which he places +3 to STR and SIZ, and +2 to DEX. Soon these siblings consume their lesser fellows and begin to achieve their full potential...

Sometimes when a monstrosity is generated, its own genetic material is rendered down for subsequent castings of Xenogenesis. Rumours abound that a few members of the Obdurate Proscriptions of Phnom are actually terrifyingly mutated High Folk, more snake than humanoid.

### Eugenic Horrors

*Ghastly tales of the sorceress Phnom are still told around the evening fires of the lowland savages. How her magics warped the island peoples, twisting them into caricatures of the gods they once worshipped. The forced mating of tribesfolk with animals in foul orgiastic rites; of monstrously warped offspring taken up into the mountains where they were used in gladiatorial spectacles.*

*These horror stories could have some basis in truth, especially in games where the natives are lizardmen and serpent people. Before the perverted experimentations of Phnom, the island inhabitants may all have been human, but her sorceries since turned them into scaly demi-human mutants – as per the iniquities of the infamous character Dr Moreau written by H. G. Wells.*

# New Gifts

The following Gifts are supplemental to those listed in the RuneQuest Core Rules. Many of the High Folks' greatest sorcerous achievements are based upon these gifts, which should be treated as cult mysteries specific to a particular college of sorcery, available to mages and archmages who quest to discover their secret.

To match the dark Sword & Sorcery atmosphere of the setting, activating these Gifts requires a tremendously long and involved ritual taking 1d3+5 weeks to complete. Any disturbance save that necessary for sustenance and sleep causes the ritual to fail, so sorcerers preparing to invest themselves in this way must forbear from all other activities until the ritual culminates.

At the end of this period the sorcerer must succeed in a roll against the Invocation skill pertinent to that school, suffering a penalty of one or more difficulty grades for each of the following circumstances: lacking suitable arcane paraphernalia, lacking a sapient sacrifice, not being taught the gift by a founder of the school. Failure indicates the ability, agreement, answer or artefact has not been achieved. A fumble causes something disastrous to happen, at the discretion of the Games Master.

## Aggrandise

Increases the scale of a single carefully crafted illusion so that it can take on enormous proportions, granting its combined Delusion spells a maximum apparent dimension of 100m per point of Intensity and incidentally making it permanent. Using this Gift can conceal an entire town, fill an entire valley with the howls of ghouls, or even create a gargantuan wall of flames across a mountain pass. Each incidence of Aggrandise can only be used once, requiring this Gift to be purchased again to create further artefact scale illusions.

## Change Reality

Transforms a single illusion into reality, so that whatever it portrayed becomes true and will exist thereafter. Such an alteration of reality comes with risks, so care is necessary to avoid catastrophic disasters. For example, a new type of horrific monster so created might breed uncontrollably or demonstrate an inability to be killed. Change Reality is single use only and cannot be combined with Aggrandise.

## Dimensional Portal

Grants the knowledge of the secret ritual needed to create and control a trans-dimensional portal, by the weaving together of many different disciplines of sorcery. Spells such as Dedicate Might, Apprehend (Alternate Dimensions), Egressing Gateway, Fetter Chattel, Impress Configuration (Jadestone) and Immure Essence are required to be cast in concert, with the final sacrifice of one sorcerer to be bound into the gateway to control its energies. Whilst this was once possible in the past, the current chances of engineering that level of co-operation have long since vanished.

## Divination

Following months of study, meditation and mystical observations, Divination allows the discovery of a long-lost place, or the location of hidden knowledge desired by the user. Although it can be used repeatedly, the cost in time and materials make it unsuitable for casual application.

## Horde

Once mastered, this Gift increases the number of targets for a specific spell (chosen when the gift is taken) to all available targets within the limit set by the Range component. For example, a necromancer who takes Horde (Enkindle Carrion) would be able to raise a skeleton army if the spell is cast on a necropolis, animating every dead body within its radius. This ability is usable at will. No other components of the specific spell are affected.

## Matrix

Part of the fundamental philosophy of technological sorcery, a matrix embeds a sorcery spell into an object or device – similar to the Enchant spell - but powered by an alternate source, rather than the creator of the object. In most cases this energy comes either from the Magic Points of its wielder or from applied science, such as pellets of cursed gold. The primary advantage of a matrix is that it does not continuously drain the potency of the crafting sorcerer, freeing their personal energies for other spells. Each incidence of Matrix allows the development of a blueprint to create a single type of artefact. The Gift must be purchased again to create further designs.

## Lichdom

Transforms the taker into a permanent undead being with the basic Characteristics and Abilities of a Mummy (with or without bandaging), the lich form gaining a bonus to STR and CON equal to one tenth of the Invocation skill associated with the cult. Unlike the normal mummies of dead sorcerers, which are temporarily reanimated by the sorcerer's spirit in order to protect their tomb or teach dire secrets of their art, a lich continuously inhabits its old body, returning from apparent destruction as per the Resurrection gift. If dismembered or even burned and the

ashes scattered, the body parts will reform bit by bit until whole again – although it might take 1d6 weeks, months or even years depending on how thoroughly the remains are annihilated.

### Pact

Forms a pact with a supernatural entity which performs a mighty deed or service in return for some dreadful price. Such bargains can be on a scale which can doom a city or help overturn a kingdom. Depending on the effort required on the part of the otherworld entity, its aid may last for a single night or extend for the remainder of the sorcerer's life. For example, a paramount sorcerer could be granted an army of living shadows to conquer Kapala, remaining at his side for a single hour for each finger he personally sacrifices to the demon lord of darkness; whereas requesting a cat familiar which can polymorph into a huge burning tiger might last whilst the sorcerer continues to feed it weekly with a large bowl of virgin's blood.

### Prison

As per the Sanctuary gift, but creates a place of eternal imprisonment for a creature or creatures who cannot leave once they enter; kept alive until the prison is somehow destroyed. Allies of those interned cannot locate or pass the prison's threshold, but must use more subtle tricks – for example, subverting clueless innocents – to perform any rescue for them.

### Juncture

Allows the user to take a one way jump through time, either into the past or future. There are no limits to when they may go, save that usually (unsuspected by the user) some form of great cataclysm occurs soon after, as the chronological time line shifts about to minimise paradoxes. If the sorcerer survives they remain in that time ever after, unless of course they purchase and use the Gift again.

### Transcend

Turns the recipient into a transcendent being, a free roaming soul without need of a body, which generally disintegrates or spontaneously combusts at the moment of apotheosis. In this state it is effectively a Wraith but without the psychotic disposition, and can freely wander everywhere, back and forth between the material world and Spirit Plane, invisible and intangible to everything except magic. The recipient may make itself visible or physically interact, but each effort costs it a Magic Point.

### Transform

Permanently changes the species of the user so that they assume the body and innate abilities of the new form. All physical Characteristics are re-rolled using dice normal to that species, but INT, POW and CHA are preserved.

### Verity

Those gifted automatically discern the truth with their primary sense, allowing them to perceive the reality behind illusions, disguises, shapechanges, magical concealment, and anything else which would normally confuse that particular sense. The gift can be taken again for other senses.

### Vivify

Gives a mechanical device or an animated statue its own artificial sapience in mockery of life, granting it a limited ability to reason and overcome problems; such as a stone door which can open itself for those known to it, or slam itself shut in the face of hostility. This Gift is normally used to give self-awareness to sentinels or even entire buildings. Similarly to the Matrix gift, each incidence of Vivify gift allows the development of blueprints for a single type of self-aware device or construction.

# Theism of the Colonists

Since none of the island's natives, neither the savages nor the High Folk, revere the gods, the practice of theistic worship rests solely within the colony. Such veneration is poorly organised, consisting of ad-hoc prayers and superstitious sacrifices to propitiate their own mysterious, often forbidding deities.

Not everyone in the colony worships, though many believe. Of those that offer propitiation, few are more than Lay Members, though they are free to serve any of the weird and diverse cults which exist within the narrow streets of Port Grimsand. The pitiless gods themselves care little...

### Other Faiths

The default cults offered for the colony are scripted to suit the dubious and grim nature of deities in the early works of Sword & Sorcery. However, if the island is placed into an established setting which already has a well populated range of religious sects, the Games Master should feel free to substitute the following cults for those of the existing campaign.

Similarly, if Monster Island is used in an alternate or historical Earth, then the names, nature, or at least importance, of these cults may need to be changed. A 1920s campaign for example, could easily convert the offered gods into horrifying primitive or Chthonian faiths, whilst introducing Christian missionaries to convert the wicked idolaters.

# Foreign and Forgotten Gods

The deities of Grimsand are unlike those envisioned in other fantasy settings. They share no common pantheon, for the colonists arrive from many different lands. Their powers seem arbitrary and contradictory, formed as they are from the dark superstitions of their worshippers. They show no sympathy, being as much demons as gods when not appeased.

For most people, worshipping a god or gods is not done to gain temporal power from that deity. No, worship is more propitiation, the warding of disfavour from that divine being. Few are willing to draw the close attention of a deity since little good ever comes from it. Yet worship still continues, more out of trepidation than respect.

Anyone may make an offering to a god, although whether it makes any difference is questionable. Joining the cult of that deity, however, can bring benefits; social support from other members or being overlooked when a sacrifice is needed, for example. Some cults are merely the focal point for similarly minded people or those that share an occupation. Others join because of their cultural upbringing.

Irrespective of their reasons, very few ever progress beyond lay membership. The role of priest is a hard path to follow, especially if the god has aspects that are particularly corrupt or horrifying. Seekers of higher cult ranks will find the personal proscriptions of the position little compensated in terms of magical power, yet thrive on the social and political status it might grant them. Such quirks should be made very clear to characters imprudent enough to accept the favours a god disposes upon them...

# The Cults of Those That Must Be Appeased

The majority of the shrines littering the dark, narrow alleyways and torch-lit basements of Grimsand have been cobbled together by common folk, seeking protection against the capriciousness of the gods. Dozens of niches can be found, inset into walls or corners of buildings, identifiable by tiny oil lamps or dribbles of blood, yet most are just personal places of offering with no formal worship; effectively dead or struggling faiths attempting to establish contact with the god they were set up for.

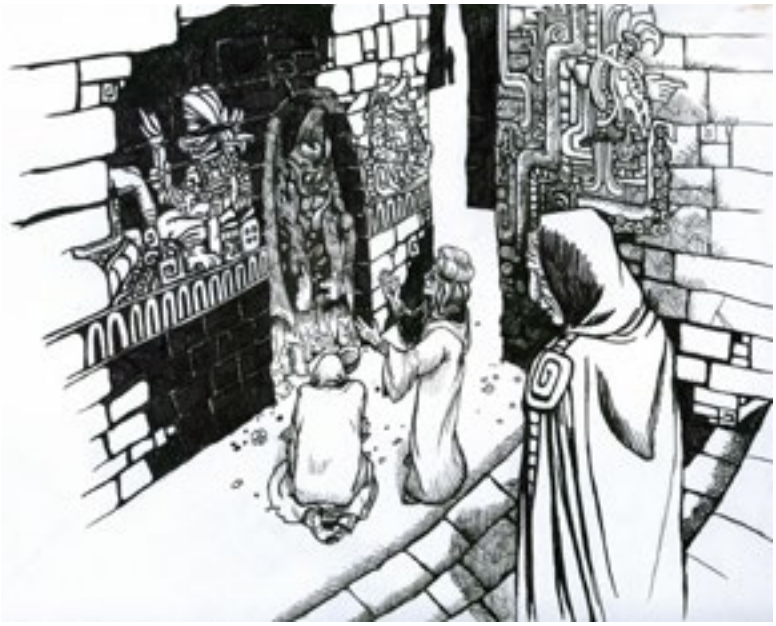
A few deities have more organised supplicants, who have formed themselves into ad-hoc cults. Whilst these have self declared Initiates or Acolytes (created more from a sense of egocentric importance than formal procedure), they lack many of the stratified rituals and traditions of the original faith from which they are descended. Despite these innovations, the gods still seem to be aware of their worshippers, providing the sacrifices and donation of personal Magic Points continue.

Each of the following cults is a superficial description of the deity and their worship practices, intended for the Games Master to expand upon at their leisure. Since non-members and lay members lack any direct access to Theistic magic, they are expected to pay for the intercession of a higher-ranking cult member to exhort the god to perform miracles on their behalf. Normal costs are either

a gift or service proportionate to the wealth of the supplicant (something affordable on a weekly basis), and the giving up of a single Magic Point in veneration.

In addition, all theistic cults share the default rules for rank and progression (see RuneQuest page 286) and prayers, where mentioned, imply the donation of Magic Points to the deity. None of the imported cults offer Divine Intervention, nor access to the Extension miracle. Standing with the community is usually the result of personal relationships between cult leaders and local people, having little to do with its god per se.

Note that some cult miracles are deliberately offered at differing cult ranks than standard in the core rules. The effect of propitiating each deity is explained under cult's description, and slight changes to the Propitiate miracle are detailed later (see page 163).



## Dashatan

*The grasping pincer, lord of the seas*

An ocean deity who rides upon or perhaps is a mighty lobster, Dashatan is given sacrifice by those who sail upon his waters – whether they be but a passenger upon a ship or a fisherman who trawls with his nets every day. The lord of the seas is as capricious as his surface, granting calm weather and fine catches one day, then storms and snarling stones another. He cares little for humans, being more interested in the worship of those that live beneath the surface. Icons of Dashatan show him as a monstrous hybrid of dwarfish man and crustacean.

**Organisation**: The cult primarily comprises of a loose affiliation of fishermen, who maintain a shrine formed from shark and whale bones at the foot of the cliff in the lower quarter. The current head of the cult is only an initiate, the previous ranking acolyte having gone missing recently when making personal offerings to Dashatan one evening.

**Cult Membership**: Despite their limited number the cult is elitist, requiring ownership of a boat or serving aboard one. Only captains of their own vessel can progress beyond lay membership.

**Superstitions**: Cult members believe that they will ultimately die at sea, drowned or eaten by some horrible monster, unless prayers are offered before a voyage is undertaken.

**Taboos**: Since the loss of their previous leader, all are forbidden to attend Dashatan's shrine at night unless the moon is full and they number at least three. Urinating or spitting into the ocean is also proscribed for fear of offending the god, which has led to each boat carrying a brass vessel specifically for that purpose.

**Skills**: Boating, Customs, Devotion (Dashatan), Exhort, Navigate, Oratory, Seamanship

**Miracles**: Initiate – Breathe Water, Propitiate, Steadfast; Acolyte – Beast Form (Crab), Consecrate; Priest – Rain of Fish

**Propitiation**: Prevents the recipient from coming to harm as the result of natural weather events whilst at sea, or magically manipulated weather of equal or less Intensity.

## Geolok

*The shaking one, master of stone*

A fearsome god, especially on an island so blessed by volcanism, Geolok is a popular deity to support. In other lands he is venerated by farmers due to the fertility he grants the soil, however in the colony people come to offer sacrifices soon after an earthquake in thanks that they were not harmed and to ward off future disasters. The master of stone dislikes such petty requests to restrain his angry outbursts, but agrees, if only to savour the sacrifices placed upon his altar. His red terracotta statues look like a cross between a squat toad and a horned bull hunched down on its rear.

**Organisation**: The cult lacks much in the way of lay members save for a small community of professional engineers, miners and the few farmers who eke out a living by

## Atmospheric Magic

An important aspect of magic upon the island is how it should be described. Space precludes a flavourful description of all the spirits, spells and miracles as they appear, but this does not mean a Games Master should simply treat the supernatural as a bland mechanistic effect. Rather, magic should be disturbing, frightening even, to casual observers. A well described spell or miracle can often take players aback, its unexpected detail making the experience far more visceral.

Magic should be proceeded by ritual – dances, chants, tossed powders, air inscribed sigils, ringing of chimes, spilling of blood and anything else which seems ceremonial, even the wearing of special clothing. When a supernatural effect begins to take shape, have it fade slowly into reality as part of the casting time. Use unusual temperature shifts or physical sensations to presage its arrival. Icy chills, darkening shadows, hairs on the nape of the neck rising, sub-audible moaning, unusual frog croaking and the like.

Visible effects are also very important. Sometimes a spell or miracle may seem to lack the possibility of detectable phenomena, but even a lowly Telepathy spell can benefit from the image of an insubstantial jade serpent emerging from the nostrils of the sorcerer, then wriggling ominously through the air to enter the eyes or mouth of the target, connecting them together with its eerie form. In cases where no visual aspect is suitable, merely having a concentrating magician slowly levitate a few feet into the air, crossing their legs in the posture of a yogi can grant a powerful image.

Of course such effects should be consistent with the magic used, but also with the culture too. High Folk magic for instance could have a definite bias towards serpentine forms, mesmeric hand gestures, exotic scents and the colour green. But whatever you describe the most important thing to remember is – make sure it is weird!

cultivating the plaza area. Fortunately for Grimsand the head of the tiny cult is an acolyte capable of warding the worst earth tremors from the town.

**Cult Membership**: Membership is open to anyone willing to join, but most are driven off by its overly ritualised ceremonies full of technical stonemason and engineering jargon. The few farmers left have become the cult's minority contingent, outnumbered now by those who seek to excavate the ruins. Geolok's shrine is an oddly carved pillar in the market square, where most folks gather when an earthquake strikes.

**Superstitions**: Almost all the cult superstitions revolve around lack of proper tool care, succumbing to greed and not properly blessing a field before the seed is first sown.

**Taboos**: It is forbidden to engage in sexual congress during the period in which a building's foundations are laid, or when opening a new tunnel. Neither may a cult member wear equipment nor jewellery made of a precious metal higher than that ordained for their rank; copper for initiates, silver for acolytes and gold for priests.

**Skills**: Brawn, Commerce, Craft (Farming, Masonry or Mining), Devotion (Geolok), Engineering, Exhort, Oratory

**Miracles**: Initiate – Fortify, Perseverance, Propitiate; Acolyte – Bless Crops, Consecrate; Priest – Earthquake

**Propitiation**: Prevents the recipient from being directly harmed during a natural earthquake; or collapse of a building or tunnel due to bad construction. Damage from magical quakes of equal or less Intensity is also warded.

## Ilioth

*Matriarch of love, corrupter of passion*

One of the darker goddesses devoted to the arts of love, Ilioth is the mistress of all passions physical and sensual. She is fervently venerated by those entranced by romance, sex and desire... yet she is a cruel and fickle goddess, also enjoying the despair and hatred which arise from the pursuit of more positive emotions. Thus she delights in playing with mortals as if dolls, twisting their relationships back and forth for nothing but her own bored entertainment. Cult idols show Ilioth as a four-armed woman of voluptuous proportions, in a range of poses from lovelorn despair to wanton self-pleasuring.

**Organisation**: Paramours, courtesans, jealous partners and unrequited lovers eventually join this cult if their passions are deep enough. The current ranking acolyte is Rykard Burkson, a flamboyant yet shady patron of the Scaly Sentinel tavern, who offers miracles of dreadful potency to those willing to pay to have their appetites appeased. Ilioth's shrine is tucked into a narrow alcove halfway along the Street of Illicit Pleasures, just big enough for someone to make an offering without being seen by casual passers-by.

**Cult Membership**: Normally cult membership is only taken by those who perform 'professional' escort services; they use the cult for mutual protection against pimps and customers with more brutal tastes. Common folk seeking only a love charm or revenge against cheating partners do not need to join, instead paying a hefty fee for the aid of the goddess.

**Superstitions**: Almost all cult members fear using Ilioth's miracles during the time of the full moon, fearing that such blessings have a way of twisting unpredictably and biting with unusual strength.

**Taboos**: No worshipper of Ilioth may use her miracles against another cult member. It is also forbidden to refuse any who ask for sexual congress, providing they are clean, pay up front and do not engage in unwanted violence.

**Skills**: Dance, Devotion (Ilioth), Exhort, Influence, Seduction, Sing, Streetwise

**Miracles**: Initiate – Enthral, Madness (fall madly in love), Propitiate; Acolyte – Rapture, Consecrate; Priest – Heart Seizure

**Propitiation**: Prevents the recipient from suffering from emotional and psychological manipulation, including similar magical attacks of equal or less Intensity.

## Mordiggoth

*Ruler of the dead, captain of worms*

Envisioned as a sickly glowing vermis-like god, Mordiggoth is he who rules the dead; guarding their souls in exchange for eating their mortal flesh. Although his acts seem repugnant, he ensures that none disturb the final sleep of the dead, warding them against necromancy. Such is the god's jealousy of the corrupted corpses left in his care, that none dare to gainsay his sacrosanct property on fear of wormy retribution. His altars are always fashioned of bone, topped by graven images of his bloated form.

**Organisation**: There are few worshippers of Mordiggoth in Grimsand, but due to the prevalence of necromantic sorcerers and undeath spirits in the surrounding regions, the cult is led by a full priest, brought across by Lord Greystone himself. The shrine – an underground cist with an altar of animal skulls – lies outside the walls, near to where the rubble from excavations is piled. The cult members have used this convenient source of stone to build a series of sepulchres in a gradually expanding cemetery.

**Cult Membership**: Few join the cult of Mordiggoth save for undertakers and grave diggers, for it is a dour and depressing cult. Anyone may seek a blessing from the priesthood, for themselves or a departed acquaintance, providing they pay sufficiently well.

**Superstitions**: Once a body has been given over to Mordiggoth, anyone daring to disturb or desecrate the remains will be personally visited by the god himself.

**Taboos**: It is forbidden for a worshipper to permit a dead body to remain unsanctified by the god, and it must be interred as quickly as possible. Cult members above the rank of lay worshipper are forbidden to eat normal food, but instead must subsist on a diet of fresh worms or cadaver flesh.

**Skills**: Courtesy, Craft (Mortician), Devotion (Mordiggoth), Exhort, Insight, Stealth, Track

**Miracles**: Initiate – Lay to Rest, Propitiate, Spirit Block; Acolyte – Consecrate, Corruption (riddled with worms); Priest – Obliterate

**Propitiation:** Prevents the recipient from being visited by the restless dead, whether physically or in their dreams. However it does not stop encounters if the recipient deliberately enters a place where the dead are already present.

## Ojahl

*The virgin goddess, mistress of the blade*

A rather strange goddess, she is patron of all forms of abstinence, although it is celibacy she is most famed for. Her power to remove desire is somewhat of an anathema to the cult of Ilioth which constantly strives to break her worshippers' oaths of abstention. Ojahl's epithet of Mistress of the Blade comes not from any particular martial prowess, for she favours the bow over other weapons, but for wielding an ebon blade of castration, as clearly indicated on her cult idol, a lithe hermaphrodite holding aloft her own severed manhood whilst wielding the knife in the other.

**Organisation:** Somewhat surprisingly, there are many worshippers of Ojahl in Grimsand, who flock to her shrine seeking release from the passions which drive them to distraction. Most are ad-hoc visitors asking for temporary blessings against the addictive demons of drink or narcotics. Quite a few, however, find the strength of purpose to become full members. Her shrine is found on the Street of Questionable Salvation, named after the cul-de-sac in which it stands, taking up half the ground floor of the building in which her most dedicated adherents reside.

**Cult Membership**: Joining the cult requires swearing a personal oath, to avoid partaking in whatever the lay member seeks release from, whether alcohol, drugs or sex; and in return the cult offers support to overcome such distractions. A new oath is required when advancing to Initiate

rank, and again at Acolyte rank. Those seeking elevation to Priest must perform self castration to show their true devotion, but as yet nobody – male or female – has taken that step.

**Superstitions**: All cult members of Ilioth are believed to be incarnated incubi and succubi, who must be ignored for obvious reasons.

**Taboos:** Rape and knowingly allowing rapists to escape justice. Bringing alcohol, narcotics or people of paid promiscuity into the shrine is also forbidden.

**Skills**: Devotion (Ojahl), Endurance, Exhort, Healing, Insight, Perception, Willpower

**Miracles**: Initiate – Behold, Propitiate, Steadfast; Acolyte – Consecrate, Pacify; Priest – Exorcism

**Propitiation**: Grants the recipient a temporary reprieve from any addictions they are currently suffering from, providing the Devotion skill of the caster is greater than the Potency of the drug, drink, or whatever else. Emotional addictions have a Potency equal to the Seduction (or similar) skill of the desired person or the value of the Passion they have for them.

## Omg

*Maestro of battle, drinker of blood*

A hyena headed goddess whose cult members are noted to be "dreadful, yet divinely inspired warrior-priests", Omg has found great favour amongst the colonists. She vents her rage in battle then sates her appetites with the blood of the fallen, looking beneficently over those that embrace her rages. When not fighting, however, the worshippers of Omg are sour and petulant, feeling her lugubrious lassitude whilst she awaits the next conflict. Rumours say that some even kidnap people from the streets late at night and force them into fighting gladiatorial battles to the death...

**Organisation**: One of the most popular gods, at least amongst those that venture out into the jungle, Omg has plenty of lay members, eager to train in combat and perhaps be fortunate enough to receive one of her blessings. Similarly the cult produces a significant number of Initiates and Acolytes, who inevitably die in dangerous expeditions so that, as yet, no Priest has arisen from the ranks. The blood-soaked shrine of Omg is located in a grotto under the market square, accessed through a crack at the base of the town wall.

**Cult Membership:** To become a lay member of the cult requires killing someone, or something, in open battle. Progression thereafter is restricted to those who kill sufficient foes, in addition to the standard rank requirements. Becoming a Priest is dependent on single-handedly killing a foe of noteworthy standing, such as a huge carnivorous dinosaur or an ancient lich lord.

**Superstitions:** Those claiming a kill without bringing back the heart of their foe to Omg's shrine will displease the goddess, who will sentence their ghosts to wander the world for eternity in punishment for their cowardliness.

**Taboos**: Eating anything which is not the liver of your enemy or the flesh of animals is forbidden, resulting in cult penances – although the consumption of alcoholic beverages based on vegetable matter is still permitted. Additionally, a worshipper of Omg must never show their back to the enemy.

**Skills:** Athletics, Devotion (Omg), Endurance, Evade, Exhort, Perception, and one Combat Style

**Miracles:** Initiate – Berserk, Propitiate, Reflection; Acolyte – Consecrate, Sacred Band; Priest – Bind Ghost

**Propitiation**: Prevents the recipient from suffering natural fear, disgust, or any other emotional hindrance which would prevent them from fighting, including similar magical attacks of equal or less Intensity.

## Quatochil

*Lord of dust, bringer of decay*

Another odd dichotomy of a god, Quatochil rules over ageing and disease, yet is propitiated by the sick and those approaching senescence in order to ward off the detrimental gifts he brings. Yet to Quatochil advanced age is a blessing which brings the loss of hurtful memories and a sleep-filled time to relax before passing on. Likewise illness is a gift to put those suffering with the emotional pangs of life to a well deserved end. Strangely, despite these enlightened insights, he is little loved. His cult statues have two forms – either a cowled and robed figure, whose only observable feature is a pair of scaly hands holding an hourglass; or an iron bowl filled with dirty, stagnant water.

**Organisation:** There are few who willingly join the cult of Quatochil, usually only healers who try to avert his attention or the demented who deliberately cultivate it. Most of his worship occurs during plagues when folk flood to his shrine and offer sacrifice in hopes of avoiding catching the sickness, sometimes incidentally spreading the contagion. His known shrine lies within the hospice at the southern end of the colony, run by an acolyte. A second and more secretive shrine is said to exist, where lay members gather to sacrifice human colonists in return for being left unharmed, although this could just be gossip.

**Cult Membership**: Anyone is free to join the cult, providing they spend one day per month helping out at the hospice. Other than that there are few hindrances or requirements other than normal. Since Quatochil is effectively amoral, he cares little if his miracles are used for good or ill.

**Superstitions:** The cult has several dozen superstitions about how disease is spread and caught, most of them scientifically wrong.

**Taboos**: Depending on the attitude of the worshipper, they must always wash or never wash their hands; re-cook or leave to moulder, leftover food before consumption; and change clothes or never change clothes on a daily basis.

**Skills:** Devotion (Quatochil), Endurance, Exhort, First Aid, Healing, Orate, Streetwise

**Miracles**: Initiate – Heal Wound, Propitiate, Transfer Malady; Acolyte – Consecrate, Corruption (rotting death); Priest – Ageing

**Propitiation**: Prevents the recipient from catching all natural diseases, magical diseases with a Potency equal to or less than their Devotion skill, and stops possession by disease spirits with an Intensity equal or less than half the Intensity of the miracle.

## Thargorgos

*Judge of dooms, bringer of catastrophe*

A more diabolic entity than most of the other deities of the outer void, Thargorgos brings only destruction and doom. Even his own worshippers are not immune to his tribulations, so few pray to him for revenge, rather propitiating his awful majesty so that he never enters the world – an act which would eradicate an entire nation. No idols can represent the true horror of Thargorgos' visage, thus his nightmarishly demonic horses are shown instead.

**Organisation:** As the judge of dooms, the shrine of Thargorgos is only approached by those seeking vengeance for a wrong done to them; or on days of dire portent, such as the winter solstice or solar eclipses, when the whole populace gathers to make sacrifice. Thus there are few lay members, except for a small number of thugs open to taking retribution contracts. Otherwise there are only two initiates who serve the ranking acolyte. Enough business comes their way to support themselves during the year between the cult's annual holy days.

**Cult Membership**: Few dare to be associated with Thargorgos, despite the intimidating reputation he grants. Those that do must swear to serve the cult without question, which eventually leads to damnation one way or another. Rising in cult rank requires performing increasingly difficult deeds that bring great misfortune to those deserving of it.

**Superstitions**: Anyone requesting the services of this god to right a wrong or pass judgement, will also suffer as great a doom as the one they call for.

**Taboos**: No cult member may engage in their own petty feuds without a sign of acceptance from the god. No judgement may be enacted without the passing of seven days to ensure clear heads and pure hearts.

**Skills**: Athletics, Devotion (Thargorgos), Exhort, Influence, Stealth, Streetwise and one Combat Style

**Miracles**: Initiate – Fear, Doleful Chime, Propitiate; Acolyte – Backlash, Consecrate; Priest – Doom

**Propitiation**: Prevents the recipient from falling victim to traps with a Difficulty equal to or less than the Devotion skill of the caster. It also prevents being spotted by hostile creatures with a Perception or Tracking skill of similar value, providing of course that the recipient isn't attacking the beast or making himself blindingly obvious.

## Thasaidon

*Preceptor of secrets, granter of wishes*

A much-feared deity who offers bargains of seemingly great power, Thasaidon is the consummate corruptor. Whilst he always adheres to the strict letter of his deals, they almost inevitably twist around to cause harm to the negotiator. Often this is no fault of Thasaidon, who deals in full fairness, often warning the victim so that they may avert disaster. His jet-black form is depicted as that of a leering goat-horned rat, with a scaled tail like that of a viper.

**Organisation:** The cult is not worshipped openly within the colony as Thasaidon is viewed as the patron of evil and sorcerers. Thus he is venerated in secret by a select group of scholars who use his knowledge to educate themselves, his shrine hidden in the Street of Scribes, concealed behind a facade to some nameless lesser deity. However, the most recent acolyte, Klarash Tun, has been lost on an expedition to the southern jungles, leaving the handful of initiates and lay worshippers without guidance.

**Cult Membership**: Anyone with a passion for knowledge is welcome to join the cult, providing they are willing to overlook Thasaidon's reputation for malicious corruption, which according to the local scholars is simply a question of being misunderstood. The higher the rank, however, the more demanding an oath is required to satisfy Thasaidon, forcing the worshipper to perform more questionable moral deeds, whether willingly or not.

**Superstitions**: None.

**Taboos**: Contradicting the will of Thasaidon is forbidden, as is destroying another cult member. Such transgressions results in the god punishing the cult member in some oddly perverse manner.

**Skills**: Commerce, Deceit, Devotion (Thasaidon), Exhort, Language (any), Literacy (any), Lore (any)

**Miracles**: Initiate – Absorption, Propitiate, Sagacity; Acolyte – Grimoire, Consecrate; Priest – Wish

**Propitiation**: Protects the recipient from any theism or sorcery with an Intensity equal to or less than the Intensity of the miracle, whether harmful or beneficial.

## Vergamka

*Patriarch of all, inscriber of destiny*

The most mysterious of all the gods brought to the colony, Vergamka is indescribably linked to the destiny of the world. Through his shadowy influence the fate of his worshippers may be deduced, if not avoided. His indifference is more than frightening, for Vergamka is content to merely record events which come to pass, even if some come to pass at his own will...

**Organisation**: More a gathering of like-minded fatalists than a structured cult, the members lack any real organisation. Rank is based more upon popularity or notoriety than service, more accurate auguries coming with skill. Small idols to the god (an enthroned hooded figure scribing a book) litter the colony, worn smooth where casual prayers or thanks are offered up to the lord of fate. The cult shrine actually stands beside the Plaza Gates where anyone passing through can pay their respects – in hope of returning to the colony alive, or in spite of it when they do.

**Cult Membership**: Membership of the cult is automatically open to all astrologers, soothsayers and other prognosticators of varying methods. Gamblers sometimes join the cult in contradiction of the god's symbolism; the philosophical incongruity of fate versus fortune being lost on most people. The majority of visitors to the shrine are seeking to escape their ultimate fate, especially those who feel trouble approaching.

**Superstitions:** The cult has a different superstition for every day of the year... for the next century!

**Taboos:** Whilst mistakes might be made, no oracle or prophesy may be deliberately changed – no matter the provocation – or else the tongue of the cult member will be removed with scissors. Once a reading has been given, no astrologer or soothsayer aware of the first attempt may perform a second prognostication (they always seem to know).

**Skills**: Commerce, Deceit, Devotion (Vergamka), Exhort, Insight, Oratory, Streetwise

**Miracles:** Initiate – Omen, Propitiate, Steadfast; Acolyte – Consecrate, Foreboding; Priest – Ensymbolise

**Propitiation:** Prevents the recipient from the effect of any magic which affects their skills, detects their presence, or manipulates time – providing it has an Intensity equal to or less than the Intensity of the miracle. They are literally hidden from the awareness of destiny.

## Ylila

*Queen of perdition, spreader of iniquity*

A goddess so depraved she is thought to rule over the damned, worship of Ylila is only permitted so as to ward her iniquities away from the colony. Her miseries include deception of the senses and the conjuration of abominations from the other side of death. Actively propitiating the queen of perdition often, perversely, costs more than gaining one of her boons. Her cult idols depict Ylila as a rotted cadaver engaged in depraved acts.

**Organisation:** There is no formal cult of Ylila within Grimsand, although her cult statues are found here and there, placed by fearful, superstitious colonists. Despite the lack of attending acolytes, her shrine on the Street of Illicit Pleasures sometimes whispers to passers-by.

**Cult Membership**: Anyone who listens too long to the meaningless whispers of Ylila will begin to experience dreams in which the goddess makes offers of power to those willing to perform her immoral requests. Making an offering of human blood on her altar grants lay membership, but it requires a sacrifice of freshly removed human viscera to gain the rank of Initiate and beyond. Something the goddess is happy to impart via the lips of her cadaverous servitors.

**Superstitions**: Cult members believe that they must perform degenerate acts of fornication with whatever dire beings they raise or summon, or else risk the wrath of Ylila.

**Taboos**: None. There is no iniquity or depravity so bad that Ylila would not enjoy the spectacle, even against her own cult.

**Skills:** Courtesy, Deceit, Devotion (Ylila), Exhort, Influence, Seduction, Streetwise

**Miracles:** Initiate – Enthrall, Illusion, Propitiate; Acolyte – Raise Undead, Consecrate; Priest – Summon Dead

**Propitiation**: Prevents the recipient from being harmed by corporeal undead; and those spirits related to the restless dead (haunts, undeath, wraiths) with an Intensity equal to, or less than, half the Intensity of the miracle.

## Yuklha

*Prince of laughter, purveyor of madness*

A small and grotesquely wizened god, Yuckla is the patron of laughter who has a disposition for beneficent acts. Yet he is also a bringer of madness on those that show him little respect and is thus considered to have a darker side. Despite being less grim than other gods, few are willing to chance his mercurial passion and sardonic sense of humour.

**Organisation:** Another cult of little or no organisation, most worshippers are lone individuals who are as likely to play a practical joke on a fellow cultist as help them in their need. Due to the cult's chaotic nature, most offerings to Yuklha are ad-hoc affairs by drunks or those without any other deity to intercede on their behalf. The shrine to Yuklha stands across from the Heartless Houri, in the alleyway where everyone goes to vomit.

**Cult Membership**: Only a few people ever join the cult of Yuklha, mainly professional entertainers; although the current acolyte is a recovered alcoholic with a reputation for perspicacity. One need not be a cult member to ask for the gift of an uplifting joke or story.

**Superstitions**: Laughing in the face of death is the best way to drive it away.

**Taboos**: It is forbidden to wear clothes all of the same colour, refuse a drink, or not pay back a trick played against you.

**Skills**: Acting, Deceit, Devotion (Yuklha), Exhort, Insight, Sleight, Stealth

**Miracles**: Initiate – Mirth, Madness, Propitiate; Acolyte – Consecrate, Heal Mind; Priest – Hysteria

**Propitiation**: Protects the recipient from madness and insanity, including magically inflicted incidences of equal or less Intensity.

## Zululun

*Guardian of tombs, herald of revenge*

The dread guardian of the tombs and punisher of thieves, Zululun has a dire reputation. A minor deity in those places across the ocean, the presence of the cult is something of a two-edged sword. On one hand its members ward against the desecration of the colonists' own tombs, but on the other, openly protest the robbery of the ancient necropolises located in the ruins of Kapala. The idols of Zululun are depicted as a nightmare cross of bat and spider, emphasising his dread temperament.

**Organisation**: Although seemingly related to Mordiggoth, the cult of Zululun keeps itself separate from those that protect the corpses of the dead. Its few members are rigidly organised, with regular services and patrols around the cemetery. In some ways it is the most militant of all the faiths; higher ranks are zealots, inspiring their members to perform rather extreme acts of punishment in contravention to Lord Greystone's own law. The shrine of Zululun has been positioned provocatively across from the House of Silver, although the cult supports itself with funereal donations and self-imposed fines on suspected tomb looters.

**Cult Membership**: Almost all the cult members arrived at Grimsand en masse, claiming their god sent them to the island on a quest. The cult welcomes anyone willing to share their onerous burden, which thus far have been down and out warriors seeking escape from starvation. Advancement is limited to those who truly embrace the defence of tombs with a fiery passion, which must be proved by administering justice on someone guilty of tomb robbing.

**Superstitions**: Allowing a tomb to be violated without redress will cause its occupants to arise from the dead.

**Taboos**: Never loot a place of the dead.

**Skills**: Devotion (Zululun), Exhort, Insight, Perception, Stealth, Willpower and one Combat Style

**Miracles**: Initiate – Fortify, Mirage (ghostly visages), Propitiate; Acolyte – Consecrate, Shield; Priest – Sever Spirit

**Propitiation**: Unlike other types of propitiation, this cult version is intended to be cast upon tombs. It prevents anyone from desecrating the sepulchre with a Willpower equal to or less than the Devotion skill of the caster.

## The Cults of Those That Were Forgotten

Other gods sleep outside the walls of the colony, primordial deities of the long-sundered empire which fell with the continent it ruled. Those that refused to manifest in monstrous form linger, still entombed, in temples that have remained sealed since the collapse of Kapala. Abandoned by their worshippers they are a pale shadow of their former glory, but wait impatiently for fresh blood to run over their altars again, warped to vengefulness by the uncounted centuries of desertion.

At least five mighty beings still abide: Atlachanacha, emperor of fate, the many-legged one; Raylimshaitan, bringer of cold, the herald of entropy; Tzathoghua, black lord of toads, the eternal hungerer; Ubbozathla, demiurge

of fecundity, pestilence and corruption; and Yhounkehd, lady of jaguars, prowler of the night. Of all these malefic entities, only the Temple of Yhounkehd has thus far been breached, but in time all shall be released as hidden ways into their ancient fanes are rediscovered.

Not only are the powers of these deities beyond those of imported faiths, but any cult which is re-established may call for Divine Intervention, providing the worshipper is upon the hallowed island; all that remains of their original dominions that still stand above the waves.

## Yhounkehd

*Lady of jaguars, prowler of the night*

Once the proud goddess who guarded the Emperor himself, the Lady of Jaguars has grown bitter and twisted during her long abandonment. Now that she has new cultists devoted to her worship, her dark presence has begun to prowl the ruins of Kapala once more; revelling in the fresh manna which passes her altar and seeking victims to assuage her hunger. Only human sacrifices can satisfy her tastes, but in return she offers far more potent powers than those of the petty gods brought from overseas.

**Organisation**: The cult comprises of only a few dozen lay worshippers under a single initiate, the original surviving tomb robber plus some additional converts brought into the fold. All keep their membership secret, whilst extending its tendrils further into the colony. Yhounkehd wishes to re-establish her cult as soon as possible, desiring an unassailable position of authority before her remaining brethren are freed. The goddess demands a weekly ritual sacrifice of a sapient being, which has forced her cultists to start preying on the colonists themselves – and disappearances are beginning to be noticed.

**Cult Membership**: Since the cult remains secret, membership is reserved to those receiving a private invitation. Only hardened adventurers of questionable morality and some of the White Death cohort have been approached thus far, the latter providing the means for the cult to smuggle unwilling sacrifices out via the Plaza Gate without raising an alarm. Lay membership requires the candidate to perform the killing of a human sacrifice. Refusal to do so ensures that they will be the next offering upon her altar. Further promotion depends upon completion of deeds personally given by Yhounkehd who manifests within the cult statue in her temple to awe her worshippers.

**Superstitions**: It is bad luck to sight a cat without nodding one's head in acknowledgement of the goddess.

**Taboos**: Never harm a cat of any size, even if it is trying to hunt you. Never reveal the cult's existence unless ordered to do so by a member of the priesthood.

**Skills:** Athletics, Devotion (Yhounkehd), Evade, Exhort, Perception, Stealth and Unarmed

**Miracles:** Initiate – Chameleon, Lycanthropy (Panthotaur), Propitiate, Spirit Block; Acolyte – Beast Form (Giant Jaguar[1]), Consecrate, Lightning; Priest – Awaken, Thunderclap.

[1] *Use the characteristics of a Smilodon.*

**Propitiation**: Normally used upon the families of cult members, it protects the recipient against being attacked by big cats and marks them to be overlooked as sacrifices to Yhounkehd.

# New and Modified Cult Miracles

The following miracles have been added to provide additional depth to the strange cults worshipped in Grimsand and Kapala. Some are deliberately designed to be extremely potent, relying on the ethical character of each cult's priesthood to ensure they are not abused. Allow them to fall within the grasp of player characters at your own risk!

### Ageing

Duration (Instant), Ranged (Tens of Metres), Resist (Endurance)

If not resisted, this horrific miracle rapidly ages the victim five years per point of Intensity, normally resulting in severe and permanent Ageing penalties (see RuneQuest page 107).

### Doleful Chime

As per the Thunderclap spell, save that it sounds like an impossibly loud bell chiming.

### Doom

As per the Earthquake spell, except it is caused by colossal eidolons of fiery-hoofed destriers which gallop across the area, pounding the region flat before vanishing into the aether.

### Ensymbolise

Duration (Instant), Ranged (Tens of Metres), Resist (Willpower)

Changes the target of the miracle into a hieroglyph or sigil appropriate to the caster's language. The symbol must end up inscribed on some object or surface, where it remains permanently indelible, radiating the god's magic. There they remain for all eternity unless the magic is neutralised.

### Foreboding

Duration (Hours), Resist (Special)

Permits the detection of imminent danger if the recipient wins an opposed test of their Devotion verses the most appropriate skill of the threat: disguise, stealth, deceit, mechanisms, and so on. Although the miracle gives warning, it does not specify the precise nature of the menace.

### Grimoire

Area (Special), Duration (Special), Ranged (Special), Resist (Special)

Allows the cultist to mimic any sorcery spell known to them, either via research or personally experienced. They gain a number of shaping points equal to one tenth of their Devotion skill to manipulate the magic. Using such thaumaturgy comes at a cost, requiring the permanent spending of an Experience Roll to power the miracle.

### Hysteria

As per Madness, except it substitutes Ranged (Metres) for Area (Tens of Metres) allowing it to affect everyone within the area of effect (save for the caster) making them continuously giggle as part of their mental instability.

### Lycanthropy

Duration (Days), Ranged (Metres), Resist (Endurance)

Permits the recipient to turn into a hybrid of human and cult-specific beast, providing certain conditions are met. For example the Lady of Jaguars allows her faithful to transform into panthotaurs during the hours of night, providing it is cloudy or the moon is not full. Normally this miracle is not resisted by cult members since it is viewed as a boon, granting the recipient immunity to non-magical weapons, save those made of obsidian. However, non-cult members cannot control the change, so it acts as a curse against them and may be resisted.

### Mirth

Duration (Minutes), Ranged (Metres), Resist (Willpower)

Causes the recipient to laugh uproariously, not only cheering them up from their previous mood, but also shifting their current attitude towards the caster to be more favourable – such that they cannot cause them violence.

### Omen

Duration (Special), Ranged (Tens of Metres), Resist (Willpower)

The caster performs an oracle which predicts whether the target will suffer either good or bad fortune (the caster decides which). Until the miracle ends, any d100 roll has its digits swapped to produce the best possible result if the omen was favourable, or worst possible result if unfavourable. The duration of the miracle depends on the cult rank of the caster: minutes at Initiate rank, hours at Acolyte rank, and days at Priest rank. The miracle can be resisted if used as a curse.

### Propitiate

For the cults described in this book, Propitiate has a variable region of protection, which can increase (if desired) according to the cult rank it is cast at: affecting a single recipient at Initiate rank, Area (Metres) at Acolyte rank, and Area (Tens of Metres) at Priest rank. In the last two cases the area remains static – thus it can be used to protect a house or an entire town. Additionally the miracle

only has Duration (Days) when cast on the behalf of, or upon, non-cult members.

### Rapture

Duration (Minutes), Ranged (Metres), Resist (Willpower)

This miracle instils an incapacitating and overwhelming feeling of ecstasy in the recipient. Normally exhorted as the climax of a sexual liaison or as part of imbibing a narcotic, the miracle can be dangerous if the recipient fumbles their resistance roll. In such cases an addiction is formed, forcing the recipient to keep on returning to experience its pleasurable effects.

### Sagacity

Duration (Special)

Allows the caster to gain temporarily a single skill at the same value as their Devotion skill. This briefly gained knowledge can be used for a single skill check, then vanishes from their mind. If the recipient performs any other action prior to using the temporary skill, the miracle's effects are lost.

### Summon Dead

Duration (Hours), Ranged (Metres), Resist (Willpower)

Brings revenants, spectres and eidolons back from the grave to act as the servitors of the caster. Mechanistically it either summons ghastly haunts or reanimates their mummified corpses if present. Haunts have an Intensity half that of the miracle. Mummies gain the physical bonuses similar to Raise Undead (see RuneQuest page 274). The number of dead brought forth is equal to the Intensity of the miracle.

### Transfer Malady

As per Cure Malady but requires a person or group of animals totalling the SIZ of the victim into which the disease or poison is transferred, which then suffers the effects of the disease or poison. The previous host is completely cured.

### Wish

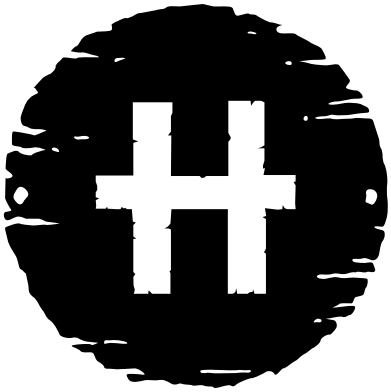
Duration (Instant)

Grants the cultist an automatically successful Divine Intervention, no roll required, with the potential to gain whatever they desire; but in exchange the caster must perform some diabolical act of equal scale to that of the wish. If the bargain is not satisfied, the wish twists or reverses itself in a most unpleasant way. Casting this miracle reduces the priest's Devotion skill as per normal with a Divine Intervention.

*The world has a thousand poisons, thin or potent, honey-like or nauseous, quick or languid, corrosive and deadly, or captious and deceptive and narcotic. There are poisons bright as an amber wine, or rich as blood or rubies, or clear and hueless and innocent- seeming as the water of untroubled lakes, or dark and turbid as the ooze of the nether sea. There are poisons that slay the soul, that slay the heart or the mind or the body, and others that never slay, but only torture and benumb.*

Clark Ashton Smith, The Mithridate

# CHAPTER 7: ITEMS & SUBSTANCES



Monster Island is full of countless strange substances, evil diseases and valuable treasures which can be encountered whilst exploring its mysterious hinterlands. This chapter provides lists of such items and substances for the ease of Games Masters, seeking to tantalise their players with more interesting discoveries than just piles of coinage. Far from being comprehensive, these lists should be thought of as merely examples. Far weirder things can be found and Games Masters are encouraged to create their own unique versions. Several broad categories are presented here:

- Natural Produce – food and materials which have a commercial value
- Narcotics and Perfumes – recreational, medicinal or beneficial substances

*For Natural Produce and Narcotics and Perfumes, the tables overleaf provide lists of available goods the characters can trade for, or venture into the interior to gather for themselves. Each item has a sale price, a unit volume or mass; its equivalent encumbrance points, which might be significantly more than its default weight due to packaging; and a brief description of its outstanding properties.*

- Poisons – poisons created from plants and minerals found on the island
- Diseases – terrible afflictions which lurk in the jungles and cloud forests
- Weapons – a range of odd weaponry used by those natives trained in combat
- Treasures – manufactured trinkets and precious items of artistic value
- Artefacts – magical creations still surviving from before the collapse of civilisation

Prices are given in silver pieces, assuming a base 2 gram silver coin, known locally as djals or pazoors. Note that the sale price – the amount in silver which merchants at the colony will pay for it – is not necessarily the same as the value the substance is held in by the local tribes. The island's natives do not use coinage, but barter goods for goods. Characters seeking to trade for such materials will need to use the Haggling rules, offering something the natives want or need; or else harvest the produce themselves, or be gifted it by the locals in exchange for some service.

## Natural Produce

| Produce | Sales Price | Amount[1] | Enc | Properties |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Big Cat Skins | 600 | Per skin | ENC equal to SIZ of beast | Jaguar, lion and sabre-tooth skins noted for their beautiful patterns and colour |
| Butterfly Wings | 300 | Per kilo | 0.75 | Looks like easy money, but requires the collection of thousands of butterflies per kilo |
| Citrus Fruits | 3 | Per kilo | 2 | Delicious, thirst quenching fruits which mature intermittently |
| Cocoa Beans | 45 | Per kilo | 0.75 | Used to create the warrior drink xocolatl; a hot, bitter intoxicant reserved for important celebrations |
| Combustible Tree Sap | 250 | Litre jar | 0.5 | A sticky sap, which when ignited roars into an inextinguishable conflagration; treat a bursting jar as an Intensity 3 fire |
| Construction Lumber | 5 | Per cubic metre | 150 | Softer wood cut in long lengths for beams and planking |
| Copper Ingot | 500 | Per 10 kilo ingot | 10 | Refined copper in a fang-shaped ingot ready to be smithed |
| Copper Ore | 10 | Per 100 kilos | | Unrefined copper ore which must be smelted |
| Coral Sprigs | 5 | Per kilo | 0.5 | Raw coral harvested from the reefs, ready to be carved into jewellery or artworks |
| Dinosaur Bone | 1d20x5 | Per large bone | 1d10x10 | Large dinosaur ribs and leg bones are used for construction of buildings, bridges or other engineering projects where lightness is required |
| Dinosaur Skins | 1d10 xSIZ of beast | Per skin | ENC equal to SIZ of beast | Large dinosaur skins make good roofing material, although they last only a season or two before rotting. |
| Exotic Flowers | 1d10+5 | Per bloom | 1 | Rare, unique flowers whose blooms last but a matter of days, which those of high status are expected to wear |
| Furniture Hardwood | 30 | Per cubic metre | 150 | Beautifully grained wood, richly coloured and resistant to insects |
| Gold Dust | 100 | One large 10g quill[1] | 0.01 | Pure gold dust packed into the shaft of large bird feathers |
| Hummingbird Feathers | 700 | Per 10 kilo bale | 20 | Vividly coloured bird feathers used to decorate clothing, masks and fetishes |
| Ibysarth Gum | 60 | Litre jar | 0.75 | Sticky, gelatinous sap which sets into a strong glue once it dries |
| Iqari Feathers | (1d10+5)x100 | Per feather | 1 | Only pristine flight feathers fetch this price |
| Nut Oil | 15 | Litre jar | 0.5 | Flammable oil used in lamps for illumination |
| Perfumed Hardwood | 40 | Cubic metre | 150 | Used for carving nick-knacks, statues and storage boxes |
| Porphyry Blocks | 375 | Per cubic metre | 500 | High quality stone for statuary or decorative architecture |
| Ramie Linen | 25 | Per square metre | 0.25 | Fine woven linen cloth which resists dyes, stains or dirt after being boiled for the first time |
| Raw Obsidian | 15 | Per 10 kilos | 5 | Rough lumps of obsidian ready to be carved into tools or artworks |
| Raw Spices | 75 | Per kilo | 0.5 | Various types of culinary spices such as cinnamon, chilli, nutmeg, ginger and so on in their bark, seed, and root form |
| Rhubin Nuts | 2 | Per kilo | 2 | Long lasting nuts that can be ground into a flavoursome flour |
| Shark Teeth | 1d10+10 | Per set | 1 | Collected teeth which are used in weapons and tools |
| Spineapple Fruit | 1d10 | Per fruit | 1 | Before they become unstable, the ripe fruits are considered delicacies, although dangerous to collect |
| Stranglevine Liana | 20 | Per 5 metre length | 2 | Surprisingly tough and strong liana which rarely grows thicker than a human finger, and regenerates damage (assuming it's unbroken) if seeped in a tub of blood |
| Swamp Reeds | 5 | Per bundle | 10 | Used for roof thatching and weaving into rush matting |
| Thokcha | 1,000 | Per kilo | Depends on size | Meteoric pure iron tektites which are, rarely, discovered on the Puna Plateau or the glaciers above |
| Tipsy Melons | 7 | Per melon | 5 | Large melons which internally ferment to produce a potent alcoholic pulp |
| Tusk Ivory | 10d10xSIZ of beast | Per beast | ENC = to Half SIZ of beast | Fresh ivory which is used as decoration or to create armour |
| Wild Bee Honey | 35 | Litre jar | 0.5 | Wild honey is difficult to find and dangerous to collect |
| Ybos Gum | 15 | Litre jar | 0.75 | Waxy sap which acts as a waterproof layer when rubbed into leather |
| Yeti Furs | 750 | Per fur | ENC equal to SIZ of beast | Beautiful pure white furs which provide excellent insulation against the cold |

*[1]A quill is a simple bird feather, its tip removed and generally packed with powders which remain protected from moisture. Their utility comes from being able to contain single, carefully measured doses, and ability to determine the contents from the type and colour of bird feather.*

## Narcotics and Perfumes

| 1d20 | Narcotic | Sales Price | Dose Amount | Properties |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Black Lotus Dust | 650 | One quill | As described on page 115 of RuneQuest, except that smoking Black Lotus dust causes a trance-like Unconsciousness instead of Paralysis, and has the additional benefit of recovering 1d10 Magic Points |
| 2 | Drakk Bark | 10 | A folded leaf sachet | A dark coloured bark which when powdered and burned repels insects for an hour in a small area around the fire. If brewed into tea the effects last six hours, as it is sweated through the skin, but at the expense of turning body odour unpleasantly acrid |
| 3 | Golden Bromeliad Nectar | 75 | One quill | A near odourless (to humanoids) sticky fluid which attracts stinging insects for 3 hours. It is normally smeared on a lure to tempt bees away from their hives or redirect ants, but is sometimes covertly used on the personal possessions of somebody as an act of petty vengeance |
| 4 | Jubala Bark | 200 | Half kilo | When burned as incense and inhaled, makes all Deceit attempts two grades more difficult for the next hour. Normally used during inter tribal negotiations |
| 5 | Kocha Leaves | 5 | One wad of leaves | A stimulant which alleviates one level of Fatigue and reduces the temperature penalties Cold Blooded creatures suffer by ten degrees Celsius. Each wad lasts four hours of chewing. It is primarily used by natives when venturing up into the mountains |
| 6 | Kulamyu Pod Root | 500 | Turnip-sized tuber | The magic-storing tip of the plant's main root which gives a proportion of its last victim's Magic Points (usually 2d6) to the eater, but at some risk. The eater must succeed in an Endurance roll, or a new kulamyu plant sprouts within the eater's stomach and kills them 1d3 days later |
| 7 | Lethe Powder | 225 | One quill | Silver powder strained from a solitary thermal spring high in the mountains, this mineral substance wipes all short term memory from the mind of whoever inhales it, so that they cannot remember anything from the last 1d3 days |
| 8 | Moly Blossom | 350 | One Blossom | Grants its eater a temporary protection against sorcery as if under the benefit of a Spell Resistance of Intensity 6+1d3. Sadly the blooms last only 1d4+1 days before they fade and die |
| 9 | Monggoke | 80 | One quill | A powder which places the imbiber or eater into a dreamless sleep with no apparent side effects |
| 10 | Perfumed Klatu Sap | 25 | Half litre jar | Improves communication skill attempts by one grade for six hours, requiring entire jar to be rubbed into the skin. Klatu sap comes in a diverse range of colours, each tint reflecting a slightly different scent based on the subspecies of tree and time of year the sap is drawn |
| 11 | Pholzalu Pollen | 90 | One quill | Highly addictive narcotic which, when snorted, briefly boosts the user's reflexes (+1 to Combat Actions) at the expense of gaining 1d3 levels of Fatigue at the end of combat. Each dose requires a Willpower roll at a sequentially increasing penalty to avoid addiction, after which point *not* taking the drug reduces Combat Actions by one. Subsequently the user must succeed in an Endurance test every time it is taken, or add an incremental +1 to the level of Fatigue loss. Addiction eventually ends in death |
| 12 | Pylenos Cordial | 3 | Juice of one fruit | Docility enforcer used by the High Folk on their slaves, removing any inclination to struggle against or escape authority. Each week of continued imbibing reduces Willpower by 1d3x5% until the slave is enfeebled to the point of complete submission |
| 13 | Rhanthois Dust | 20 | A folded leaf sachet | A psychedelic hypnotic used both as a recreational narcotic and a mind enhancer. If eaten or drunk, it allows the user to attempt to re-roll any previously failed mental skill check, but at the cost of imposing one additional difficulty grade on all Willpower checks for the next 12 hours |
| 14 | Selenaru Lichen | 65 | Quarter kilo per day | Found on the upper slopes of the Southern Tane Mountains. If smoked over the course of recovery, boosts Healing Rate by 1 |
| 15 | Shyuss | 60 | One quill | Places the imbiber into a narcoleptic sleep lasting 1d3 days, so deep as to be mistaken as dead; effectively slowing metabolic rate to a hundredth of normal |
| 16 | Tanu Leaf | 1d10 thousand | One leaf | When chewed, slows the effect of ageing for the next 1d6+4 years, preserving the user at their current physiological age. Since tanu plants are rare and only sprout new leaves every 1d3 hundred years their value is almost priceless |
| 17 | Uvlesk Juice | 100 | Half litre jar | Sends the drinker up onto the Spirit World after 1d3 hours, or half that if engaged in serious physical effort. Has a distinct bitter taste and stains the interior of the mouth purple. Those not wishing to succumb must succeed in a Hard Willpower test to keep their soul within their body |
| 18 | Vutomisia Leaf | 7 | One pipe or cheroot | Stimulant which allows smokers to ignore one grade of difficulty penalty against any physical skill for the next hour. Side effects are a 1d6 hour long hangover which increases Fatigue by one level. However each dose further increases this period by an extra hour, unless the drug is smoked again. |
| 19 | Yarad Gum | 35 | Quarter kilo lump | A clear amber-tinted analgesic gum, which when warmed and packed into or around a wound, removes all pain from an injury; allowing a body location suffering from a Serious Wound to be used, even if previously incapacitated |
| 20 | Yohimbe Aphrodisiac | 175 | One quill | Scrapings from the back of a rare beetle which must be soaked in hot water; a single quill will brew enough for a single person, reducing their resistance to Seduction attempts by one difficulty grade |

# Poisons

Monster Island is awash with a wide range of venomous creatures, most of them quite lethal in the right circumstances. Tapping these deadly substances is difficult, however, since the toxic venoms of animals tend to degrade quickly, making them near useless without some scientific or magical method of stabilising them. Thus the majority of poisons available to the natives tend to be plant or mineral based.

This need not make them any less bizarre; a few of the following possess weird effects as fatal or extraordinary as those produced by living creatures. Like narcotics, most poisons are potent enough that a single dose lacks an ENC value. Price is the rough equivalent it is worth in silver pieces, providing a character can find someone willing to trade it to them, or sell it to. This is not always the case and ownership of some poisons can bring serious trouble.

## Akpalix

One of the most deadly plant-based poisons, Akpalix is formed from the juice of a russet yellow weed which grows about the base of a single Smoking Mirror, one hard to locate deep within the Storm Coast mountains. Whether this is due to alien soil or gas being brought through the portal or some magical side effect of the local geography is unknown. However, the limited supply of the plant is for the best as its juice is odourless, tasteless, and kills within several minutes of consumption – making it an ideal assassination weapon if one wishes the cause of death to remain secret. Those wishing more dramatic deaths generally use a more flamboyant poison.

| 1d12 | Poison | Sale Price | Dose Amount | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Akpalix | 325 | One quill | Undetectable food poison |
| 2 | Black Lotus | 650 | One quill | Use natural Lotus Dust (see RuneQuest page 115) |
| 3 | Bone Melt | 1,500 | One shell | Oil applied to weapons, that dissolves bones away |
| 4 | Grey Jasmine | 75 | One quill | Blown or thrown dust which turns victims berserk |
| 5 | Jystozis Dust | 275 | One quill | Zombifying pollen which must be inhaled |
| 6 | Kahuna's Bane | 500 | One quill | Smoking incense which blocks access to Spirit World |
| 7 | Mage Blight | 150 | One shell | Blade toxin which inflicts pain on spell casters |
| 8 | Mnophkatus | 775 | One quill | Torture poison which rapidly ages its victim |
| 9 | Powdered Gold | 100 | One quill | Forces mutagenic changes upon its consumer |
| 10 | Purple Orchid | 450 | One quill | Powerful paralytic that can last for days |
| 11 | Terror Spines | 40 | One thorn | Paranoia-inducing oil, must enter the bloodstream |
| 12 | Xanthus Sap | None | One quill | Horrific transmutational plant sap |

**Application**: Ingested
**Potency**: 75
**Resistance**: Endurance
**Onset time**: 1d3 minutes
**Duration**: 1d6+4 minutes or permanent
**Conditions**: Whether or not the victim succeeds in resisting the toxin, they suffer Nausea. This lasts for the duration stated if they resist the poison, or merely acts as the dramatic prelude to their death if they fail.

**Antidote/Cure**: Akpalix can be potentially treated if a strong purgative is applied at the first signs of nausea. Any delay usually spells doom for the victim.

## Bone Melt

A highly toxic poison which induces weakness in the victim whilst simultaneously dissolving their skeletal structure. This vile toxin is created by the 'Diseased Ones' a nefarious cult of fallen kahunas, from all manner of disgusting ingredients. It is a slow, drawn out death, greatly reviled by even the High Folk, against whom it is sometimes used. Those few who survive are forever crippled, often seeking to take their own lives rather than continue in such a boneless state.

**Application**: Injected
**Potency**: 95
**Resistance**: Endurance
**Onset time**: 2d12 hours
**Duration**: 1d6+3 days
**Conditions**: Failing to resist the poison imposes several conditions. The first is the incremental loss of a Fatigue Level at the start of each day after onset. In addition the victim suffers the Maiming condition, losing 1 Hit Point from every Hit Location. If the number of Chest Hit Points drops to zero, the melting ribs can no longer support the lungs and the victim dies from immediate Asphyxiation.

**Antidote/Cure**: The effects of Bone Melt can be arrested if successfully treated with a cure concocted from Medusa blood.

## Grey Jasmine

An innocuous ground shrub which thrives in the Reeking Bog, the roots of this diabolical plant can be ground into a deadly powder. When inhaled, this dust causes its breathers to enter a psychotic rage, attacking anyone or anything within their perception. The effects do not last long, but can be devastating if used cleverly, such as wrapping small bags of the powder around spineapple fruit, which explode into large clouds dispersing it over a wide area. The natives of the Ghidori tribe trade it to anyone despicable enough to desire it, but ownership of Grey Jasmine root is often enough to warrant summary execution from neighbouring tribes.

**Application**: Inhaled
**Potency**: 60
**Resistance**: Willpower
**Onset time:** 1d3 rounds
**Duration**: 1d6+4 minutes
**Conditions**: Failing to resist the poison results in the victim suffering intense Hallucinations and Mania, believing themselves surrounded by the monsters of their worst fears, towards which they feel an irrepressible killing rage. In addition they are boosted physiologically so that they experience the same benefits (and restrictions) of a Berserk miracle (see RuneQuest page 266), only recovering once the poison has run its course.

**Antidote/Cure:** Few surviving healers are foolish enough to try to treat a victim of Grey Jasmine.

## Jystozis Dust

A strange powder which is sometimes found deposited in an area of the Rangi Mountains near the Storm Coast during dry season. Fortunately it is only dangerous when inhaled in significant quantities, so collecting enough for a single dose requires several days of effort; carefully washing the faint traces found on the indigenous waxy-leafed vegetation into flasks which are later strained to recover the near-microscopic powder. In truth the dust is actually pollen from a demon-infested tree hidden in a lost valley (see page 112), its effects being to zombify anyone who breathes it, making them the slave of whoever commands them thereafter.

**Application**: Inhaled
**Potency**: 70
**Resistance**: Willpower
**Onset time**: 1 round
**Duration**: 1d6 weeks
**Conditions**: Failing to resist the poison inflicts the Confusion condition, thereafter preventing the victim from expressing any free will until its duration concludes. During this time they mindlessly obey any commands given them, performing any task with no conscience or thought of self-preservation. If travelling in the mountainous range east of the Fuming Mountain whilst under the influence of this dust, they must daily succeed in an additional Willpower roll or wander away seeking the hidden valley, drawn by the crushing will of the monstrous demon bloom.

**Antidote/Cure**: The zombifying effects of Jystozis Dust can be countered with the successful application of Flying Worm mucus.

### Kahuna's Bane

A poison feared and loathed by native shamans, the inhaled smoke of this incense bars access to the Spirit World, preventing a kahuna from projecting their soul from their body or being able to contact spirit allies. To the savages it is an anathema, since cutting oneself off from the Spirit World is unthinkable, and anyone who dies under its effect is prevented from journeying to the afterlife, potentially becoming a haunt. Although disavowed by kahunas save for incarcerating shaman that are twisted to evil, the High Folk utilise this unique toxin in order to immunise units of areani against malicious spirits which they might encounter during raids.

**Application**: Inhaled

**Potency**: 100

**Resistance**: Willpower

**Onset time**: 2d3 minutes

**Duration**: 1d3 hours

**Conditions**: Failing to resist the poison prevents the breather from personally conversing with a discorporated spirit or projecting themselves (or others) onto the Spirit Plane. The toxin also provides a degree of resistance to other spirits forcibly discorporating the breather's soul, substituting its own Potency for their Willpower if higher.

**Antidote/Cure:** None needed. Merely exposing the victim to clean air will eventually clear the fumes from their mind.

### Mage Blight

Specially prepared for use against sorcerers, this sticky toxin is manufactured from pulped Malcathorn scales. Unlike many other poisons its potency soon fades within a few hours after being applied to whatever weapon it is smeared upon. The gelatinous toxin is stored in wax-sealed seashells and is only issued by village hetmen in the rare circumstance of hunting down a High Folk raiding party. The yellowy-orange colour is starkly obvious, giving alert sorcerers plenty of warning about what they face.

**Application**: Injected

**Potency**: 85

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d3 rounds

**Duration**: 2d3 months

**Conditions**: Failing to resist the poison means that until the duration ends, any time the sorcerer attempts to cast magic they are overcome with crippling Agony, potentially causing the spell to fail. If this happens, the sorcerer must roll on the Casting Miscarriage Table on page 130, suffering the result as indicated on the Bad Thing column.

**Antidote/Cure**: The High Folk have yet to discover a way of curing this affliction. Those poisoned by Mage Blight attempt to hide their condition from other sorcerers, fearing loss of status or even retribution launched against them in their time of weakness.

### Mnophkatus

One of the most despised poisons, which acts by rapidly accelerating the metabolism of its victim, ageing them rapidly. In addition the victim experiences delusions of time perception and magnified physical sensation, each second seeming to last an eternity. Although this allows them to live an entire lifespan within the moment, this can equate to suffering subjective years of augmented pain whilst also trapped in a mental prison of guilt, recrimination and hatred as the world moves ponderously about them. Thus it is often utilised as a method of torture. Despite its horrific effects, some willingly take tiny amounts of the poison to extend the joys of copulation, to end their lives watching a particularly beautiful sunset, or simply to sacrifice a significant part of their lifespan to meditate upon a deeply philosophical problem.

**Application**: Inhaled (usually via some other smoked narcotic)

**Potency**: 65

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d3 minutes

**Duration**: 1d6+4 minutes

**Conditions**: Failing to resist the toxin ages the victim by one year each minute, during which they subjectively experience time at the same extended period, but are unable to do anything but think.

**Antidote/Cure:** The effects of Mnophkatus cannot be treated medically during the short time span of the poison, nor are its ageing effects reversible.

### Powdered Gold

Offered as an ostentatious gesture of opulent wealth by the High Folk, powdered gold is often mixed in exotic beverages or used as a condiment at feasts when feting an honoured guest. Unbeknownst to most visitors, it is ground from gold affected by the Plunderer's Curse, and thus has mutagenic properties. The long-term politics of the High Folk uses the poison's effects to twist those they negotiate with, blackmailing them under threat of revealing any

mutation they might have developed. In game terms anyone who succumbs to the trace radiation of the gold gains a random Chaos Feature (see RuneQuest page 441)

**Application**: Ingested

**Potency**: 90

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 2d3 months

**Duration**: Permanent

**Conditions**: Failing to resist the toxin inflicts a random Chaotic Feature on the victim. This change is permanent, which might cause significant problems to the victim, although physical disfigurements can be concealed if not too gross in terms of scale. There is no limit to the number of chaotic features which may be accumulated, providing the victim continues to be fed enough powdered gold.

**Antidote/Cure**: Only the juice of the extremely rare Golden Lotus has any chance of reversing such physical mutations.

## Purple Orchid

Similar to the Black Lotus, its close cousin, the blooms of the Purple Orchid are a source of an extremely potent paralytic if refined with the correct alchemical procedures. In its natural state the poison only works when consumed in quantity, permitting the eaten flower to gestate within the victim and use its rotting flesh as fertiliser. As a concentrated essential oil, however, a mere scratch is enough to rapidly incapacitate even a bull. Since the poison will render the victim paralysed for days, a victim left without medical attention usually dies from dehydration or exposure.

**Application**: Injected

**Potency**: 80

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d3 rounds

**Duration**: 2d6 days

**Conditions**: Failing to resist the toxin results in paralysis of the Hit Location struck, an adjoining location succumbing every round thereafter. Paralysis only affects movement, not sensation, so the victim can feel what happens to their body during the period of incapacitation.

**Antidote/Cure**: The common treatment for Purple Orchid poisoning is simply to keep the patient hydrated until they recover naturally. A more dangerous method for throwing off the paralysis exists, requiring the application of a Lightning Eel to the victim. It takes 2d3 shocks to negate the paralysis, at the risk of suffering heart failure.

## Terror Spines

Natural products of the jungle, Terror Spines are the thorns of canopy-growing bromeliads which ooze a strange hallucinogen causing the victim to suffer an increasing fear of imagined, non-existent threats. They are often used as a non-lethal way to plague raiding parties or explorers, forcing them to abandon their expeditions for lack of rest. Gathering such thorns for use as arrow or dart tips is a risky venture, especially if the climber accidentally pricks themselves without realising, with the inevitable consequence that they become immobilised by acrophobia or fall when fleeing an imagined killer bird, snake or monkey.

**Application**: Injected

**Potency**: 55

**Resistance**: Willpower

**Onset time**: 1d3 hours

**Duration**: 2d3 days

**Conditions**: Failing to resist the poison imposes a paranoid Mania, which grows in strength over several days, till the victim is jumping at their own shadow and no longer trusts their companions. Eventually they flee all contact, often ending up in real trouble as a consequence as they attempt to find their way home.

**Antidote/Cure**: Terror Spine poison is neutralised by powdered ghoul bone, a substance with a rather limited supply.

## Xanthus Sap

Another poisonous substance greatly feared by the inhabitants of Monster Island is the sap of the Xanthus plant, an ostensibly beautiful vine with five petal flowers that open and glow a faint violet-blue during darkness. The climbing vine propagates by infecting creatures which touch its open blooms with a powerful mutagenic. This slowly converts living tissue into a new vine. Fortunately the plants only thrive in dark places, infesting overgrown or underground ruins. Victims of its sap are often driven insane by the sight of an arm or leg transformed into a living flower… as are friends waking to see a comrade lying with his head subsumed into a thick stalk atop which a bud rests.

**Application**: Contact

**Potency**: 50

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d3 hours

**Duration**: Permanent

**Conditions**: Failing to resist the toxin results in Maiming, the Hit Location touched slowly transforming into a

### Sickness Spirits

*Due to the prevalence of disease upon the island, Sickness Spirits are also commonplace, tending to congregate in areas prone to the nurturing of illness such as stagnant pools of algae-covered water, insect-infested swamps, and those few places where bodies are left to rot. A few tribes hold knowledge of particular sickness spirits, available from some populated location within their territory, which are used as annoying curses or punishments. In general it is only the reviled cult of the 'Diseased Ones' who bind the most lethal sickness spirits for use as deadly weapons.*

*As a minor change to the Sickness Spirit rules, the maximum number of disease conditions is based on half the spirit's Intensity rounded up (not the sum of the condition values). This can lead to some very dangerous high Intensity spirits, but considering it is impossible for such discorporate beings to use the Contagious condition to replicate themselves (although passing on mundane diseases is still possible), their deadliness is limited to a single use and single victim.*

new Xanthus vine. If a limb the alteration is potentially survivable, but the head, chest or abdomen usually spells death. Each hour after onset the victim suffers the permanent loss of 1 Hit Point as flesh is converted into plant matter. The transmogrification is utterly painless, although very noticeable as skin turns green and a flower buds at the end of, or to one side of, the affected location. If permitted to continue, once Hit Points are reduced to zero the location is totally converted and will spread into a neighbouring location.

**Antidote/Cure**: The only non-magical cure is amputation.

# Diseases

Akin to poisons, the island has a wide range of diseases, some of which arrived from the worlds beyond the Smoking Mirrors and have proliferated deep within the jungles and swamps. All of the following diseases are limited to mundane biological versions, since those caused by Sickness Spirits can be enduring or even fatal against characters who lack access to the exorcism abilities of Animism – which encompasses most of the inhabitants of Grimsand.

The illnesses range from unpleasant hindrances to terrifyingly lethal contagions. These natural diseases are the bugbear of the kahunas who spend much of their time dealing with native spirits rather than mastering the skill of Healing; something left to the Dowager Matrons of each tribe to handle. Amongst these new diseases are a few unusual infections which step beyond the normal limits for such things as described in the core RuneQuest rules. This is intentional and should be treated as guidance for creating innovative new plagues!

### Blood Weep

Blood Weep is a nasty disease which causes slow yet catastrophic haemorrhaging. Blood initially leaks from the tear ducts and nostrils, but progresses to oozing from every pore of the body mixed with body sweat. If not successfully treated, the sufferer eventually dies from blood loss.

**Application**: Contact with infected blood

**Potency**: 65

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d3+3 days

**Duration**: Progresses until victim dies

**Conditions**: Exhaustion and Contagious. If not successfully resisted, the victim beings to suffer inexplicable nose bleeds. On the next day this progresses to haemorrhaging from the tear ducts and from the third day onwards they also ooze blood from the sweat glands. At the conclusion of each day,

**Diseases**

| 1d12 | Disease | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Blood Weep | Slow bleed out over days |
| 2 | Bubbling Breath | Long lasting respiratory problems |
| 3 | Bursting Pustules | Disgusting and contagious pox |
| 4 | Dream Seizure | Induces a nightmare filled coma |
| 5 | Eidolonosis | Transforms victims into the undead |
| 6 | Eye Canker | Nasty eye infection resulting in blindness |
| 7 | Fire Scale | Spontaneous human(oid) combustion |
| 8 | Jungle Fever | Cyclical fevers resulting in delusions |
| 9 | Proteus Plague | Painful genetic regression to more primitive species |
| 10 | Rot Goitre | Horrifying neck infection that slowly strangulates |
| 11 | Soul Weakness | Annual infection which drains magical energies |
| 12 | Vomit Blight | Stomach illness that purges from both ends |

the victim loses a level of Fatigue which cannot recover until the disease is cured. Anyone contacting the victim's blood is also exposed to the disease.

**Antidote/Cure**: Blood Weep can be cured with an elixir made from dinosaur liver, provided the healer can succeed in a Hard Healing check. If this fails, the infection has progressed too far for normal treatment and requires a magical cure.

## Bubbling Breath

Bubbling Breath is a respiratory infection which causes temporary collapse from shortness of breath. These attacks are cyclical, rendering the sufferer helpless for about 48 hours every ten days or so. Victims can be diagnosed by the typical bubbling noise that emerges from their lungs during an attack, during which they cough up a greenish tinted sputum.

**Application**: Inhaled via close proximity with an infected sufferer

**Potency**: 50

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d3 weeks

**Duration**: 1d3 months

**Conditions**: Asphyxiation, Mania and Contagious. If not successfully resisted, the victim suffers a cyclic series of asthmatic attacks every 1d3+6 days, which themselves last 1d3 days before temporarily recovering ahead of the next relapse. During this period any form of strenuous activity causes the infected victim to suffer an asphyxiation attack, which ceases when their Fatigue level drops to Incapacitated. The mania develops as the victim begins to imagine patterns of cause and effect behind their attacks, such as them being caused by certain flowers, weather conditions or even sidelong glances from disliked people. This mania eventually develops into paranoia, which if pressed, will cause a new asphyxiation attack.

**Antidote/Cure**: The best method of curing Bubbling Breath is a week-long treatment of incarceration within a smoke-hut, breathing astringent incense, combined with a successful Healing roll. Failure does not prevent repeat attempts, but each attempt requires a further week of treatment.

## Bursting Pustules

Bursting Pustules is a rather disgusting infection, passed on by contact with the suppurating discharge which leaks from burst blisters or other sufferers. Whilst not immediately life-threatening, the nauseating appearance of victims generally makes social interaction rather challenging. Worse still, the sufferer is driven to driving hollow reeds under their skin or cutting lacerations across affected areas. If this is not done, the pustules swell to the point that they messily explode, splattering infectious purulence over unwitting bystanders.

**Application**: Contact with infected pus which remains infectious for up to six hours after leakage

**Potency**: 65

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d3 days

**Duration**: 1d6+3 days

**Conditions**: Agony, Mania, Necrosis and Contagious. If not successfully resisted, pustules start growing on one of the victim's Hit Locations, spreading to a new location each day the infection lasts. During this time they are overwhelmed by the constant pain and must be restrained from performing terrible acts of self-mutilation in order to lance or drain the painful pustules. If not somehow bound, the victim suffers a permanent loss of 1 Hit Point from every infected location, from secondary infections of the burst pustules – leaving disfiguring scars.

**Antidote/Cure:** Bursting Pustules can be cured by several days' immersion in the mineral-rich waters of a hydrothermal volcanic spring, combined with a successful Healing roll to apply the treatment correctly. After suffering the disease once, it cannot be contracted again.

## Dream Seizure

Dream Seizure is a strange affliction which causes the sufferer to collapse into a coma and experience horrific nightmares, so vivid that they constantly twitch and writhe as if in some kind of agony. The coma usually continues until the victim is cured or dies from lack of care. Worse still, the sufferer continues to moan throughout the entire duration of the disease, with an occasional terrified shriek... although if awakened they fail to recall exactly what their dreams comprised of.

**Application**: Injected via the bite of an infected mosquito

**Potency**: 40

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d6+6 hours

**Duration**: 1d3 weeks

**Conditions**: Unconsciousness and Hallucination. If not successfully resisted, the victim starts to feel sleepy and quickly passes out. Once unconscious they cannot be woken by natural means. During the following weeks the comatose victim suffers terrifying dreams engendered

from their own fears, guilts and memories. Although the disease is not inherently fatal, extended unconsciousness will kill the victim if not protected and kept hydrated.

**Antidote/Cure**: Dream Seizure can be cured by the consumption of a potent stimulant, extracted from the sap of the Grey Jasmine plant - although if the Healing roll fails the victim dies from heart failure.

## Eidolonosis

Eidolonosis is a rapidly acting contagion dreaded by natives since it damns the soul of its sufferer, transforming it in some unfathomable manner into an Undeath Spirit trapped within their own body. This generally results in the victim becoming a zombie, but once their mortal body is destroyed, the spirit is doomed to wander the Spirit World forever barred from their tribal afterlife. It is this particular disease which instils such a dread of zombies amongst the natives.

**Application**: Contact with an infected zombie corpse
**Potency**: 50
**Resistance**: Endurance
**Onset time:** 1d3+3 hours
**Duration**: Special
**Conditions**: Confusion, Death, Undeath and Contagious. If not successfully resisted, the victim quickly starts to lose outward signs of sapience, eventually becoming unable even to speak coherently, and thus reduced to mumbling moans. The mental atrophying is only the first stage, however, since 1d12+12 hours later victims suffer death and within a day rise up as a contagious zombie – the victim's soul transforming into an equivalent Intensity Undeath Spirit.

**Antidote/Cure**: Eidolonosis can sometimes be treated by drinking vast quantities of intoxicants, to the point of reaching alcohol poisoning. Assuming this can be achieved before the point of death, it permits a second chance to resist, the booze killing the infection, but at the expense (if they succeed) of suffering Nausea for 1d3 days and a chronic hangover for a further week after that.

## Eye Canker

Eye Canker is caught by those who immerse themselves in pools of stagnant waters, infested by this nasty parasite. In less than a week those infected can lose their sight and soon after their eyes are eaten away, leaving horrific oozing hollows filled with a spongy material that weeps pus filled with newly spawned parasites. Other than that the disease has no other effect on its victim.

**Application**: Eye contact with infected water
**Potency**: 55
**Resistance**: Endurance
**Onset time**: 1d4 days
**Duration**: Permanent
**Conditions**: Progressive Blindness. If not successfully resisted, the victim starts to suffer a cataract-like clouding of their eyes, gradually reducing their vision. Each day left untreated causes all vision based skills to suffer an incremental penalty of one difficulty grade until Hopeless is reached. At this point the microscopic parasites have burrowed through to the retina and the damage is irreversible, rendering the victim permanently blind.

**Antidote/Cure:** Eye Canker is easily treated with an antiseptic poultice applied for several days to the infected eyeballs. A successful Healing roll kills off the infestation and permits the eyes to recover; removing a number of difficulty grades per week, equal to the victim's Healing Rate.

## Fire Scale

Fire Scale is feared for the intense and fatal manner of death it invariably inflicts on those who contract it. The symptoms begin with a fever which spikes every three hours, leaving the victim weak and shaky much of the time. After seventy-two hours the fever grows constant, ravaging the sufferer so that they feel constant pain, which itself grows to the point of unbearable agony until they burst into flames and self-cremate. Some High Folk sorcerers are reputed to capture the malignant vapours which cause this disease in glass spheres and use them as assassination weapons.

**Application**: Inhalation of vapours blown from the Fuming Mountain during Dry Season
**Potency**: 70
**Resistance**: Endurance
**Onset time**: 2d12 hours
**Duration**: 1d3+3 days
**Conditions**: Fever then Spontaneous Human Combustion (Death). If not successfully resisted, the victim gradually lapses into a full raging fever. On the fourth day they reach a crisis point and may attempt a second resistance roll. If this succeeds the fever continues for the rest of the duration, but the victim recovers. However, if the second roll fails they gradually burn up, literally immolating at the end of the duration.

**Antidote/Cure**: Fire Scale has no known cure, although it is said that the tears of Morko have the power to quench the flames within. Most natives simply do their best to

avoid the volcano's fumes during the critical part of the year.

### Jungle Fever

Jungle Fever is a common infection, especially amongst colonists who venture into the hinterlands of the island. It is passed by the bites of leeches which thrive in the damp, wet environment and causes the victim to become feverish and delusional. Sufferers exhibit disfiguring greenish-purple blotches over their skin, which many hide out of fear for being passed over for possible hire or being falsely regarded as contagious.

**Application**: Injected via leech bites

**Potency**: 60

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d2+1 weeks

**Duration**: 2d3 months

**Conditions**: Fever and Hallucinations. If not successfully resisted, the victim suffers a cyclic series of fever attacks every 1d6 days, which last 2d12 hours before briefly recovering prior to the next relapse. During the short burst of fever, the victim also experiences phantasmagorical delusions, seeing things which aren't there or mistaking the identities of those around them.

**Antidote/Cure:** Jungle Fever must be overcome by total rest under the auspices of a competent healer. Each week of complete bed rest in a cool environment with plenty of fresh, clean water allows a new Healing roll, which if a success places the disease into remission.

### Proteus Plague

Perhaps the most feared contamination on the island, Proteus Plague regresses the victim to a more primitive evolutionary stage of development, but one based on spiritual beliefs rather than biology. For instance, an infected native of the Gyaosi tribe will gradually transform into a hideous half humanoid-half bat hybrid before fully degenerating into a mutated giant bat. Not only does this devolution rob the victim of sapience, but is also extremely painful, making the victim psychotic. Oddly the effect on human colonists is often that they slowly transform into amoebic blobs of protoplasm...

**Application**: Unknown; possibly Inhaled dust of a dehydrated Child of Ubbozathla

**Potency**: 75

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d6+6 days

**Duration**: 1d4+1 weeks

**Conditions**: Agony, Confusion and Totem Regression. If not successfully resisted, the victim starts suffering an unusual level of soreness, especially cramps. Onset Time marks when underlying physiological changes become apparent, the inconvenient aches erupting into unbearable agony. Most victims suffer psychological trauma (Confusion) as their body slowly warps into that of a different species. At the end of the Duration, the transmutation is complete, leaving the victim a mutated version of the regressed creature with equivalent SIZ but their INT permanently converted to INS.

**Antidote/Cure**: No natural cure known. The lowland savages believe that Proteus Plague was developed as a biological weapon by High Folk sorcerers, who might know of a sorcerous means to halt or even reverse the disease.

### Rot Goitre

Rot Goitre is an infection which begins in the neck, causing it to swell to unpleasant proportions, then erupts with spiny calcified growths. Not only does it look repulsive in its later stages, but causes permanent damage to hearing and threatens death, the combined swelling and calcification closing off the victim's air passages. Those killed by the infection often have what appear to be furry branches of reddish-orange fungus emerging from their ears, throat and nostrils.

**Application**: Ingestion of mouldy food

**Potency**: 45

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d3 weeks

**Duration**: Progresses until death

**Conditions**: Deafness, Dumbness and Asphyxiation. If not successfully resisted, the victim experiences a combined sore throat and earache, resulting in a deterioration of speaking and listening. Each day after onset, the victim suffers an accumulating penalty of one difficulty grade per day to all communication attempts and Perception checks relying on hearing. When the penalty reaches Hopeless the victim is totally deaf and dumb. After this the sufferer experiences increasing trouble breathing, so that they cannot perform any strenuous activity without passing out from shortness of breath. If not dealt with, 1d3+2 days later they die from asphyxiation.

**Antidote/Cure**: Advanced Rot Goitre can be temporarily dealt with by a successful Healing roll, performing surgery to clear the fungal growths from the throat. It does not cure the infection, however, which requires gargling a tonic

concocted from basilisk blood, at the risk of perishing from the acid burns.

### Soul Weakness

Disliked by kahunas and sorcerers alike, Soul Weakness is a common illness which regularly sweeps across the island ostensibly causing nothing more than coughing and sneezing. The insidious element for magicians is that the infection drains the spiritual or psychic power of the victim, making them magically impotent.

**Application**: Inhaled by close proximity to infectious victim

**Potency**: 60

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time:** 1d12+12 hours

**Duration**: 1d3+4 days

**Conditions**: Spluttering, Sapping and Contagious. If not successfully resisted, the victim experiences up to a week of coughs and sneezes, which imposes one difficulty grade against any communication attempts (Deceit, Influence, Oratory, Seduction and so on). In addition, the victim loses 2d6+6 Magic Points which do not recover until the infection ends and may cause the victim to briefly lapse into unconsciousness if reduced to zero (see Running Out of Magic Points page 131).

**Antidote/Cure**: The magic loss of Soul Weakness can be temporarily sidestepped by risky consumption of Kulamyu Pod Root, or by smoking Black Lotus Dust.

### Vomit Blight

Vomit Blight seems to constantly plague the natives of the island. Although not fatal, it renders life a misery, inflicting vomiting and diarrhoea attacks, so that extended travel or physical activities become difficult. There are little outward signs of a sufferer save for the accompanying odours attached to such evacuations.

**Application**: Contact with infected victim or anything they have recently touched

**Potency**: 55

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d3+3 days

**Duration**: 2d6 days

**Conditions**: Nausea and Contagious. If not successfully resisted, the victim simply suffers a seemingly random series of vomiting and diarrhoea attacks, which can be triggered by physical stress. Providing they continue to drink clean water, no undue negative effects accrue, save for losing a little weight.

**Antidote/Cure**: Vomit Blight can be treated with purgative herbs and a successful Healing roll.

## Native Weapons & Armour

The natives of Monster Island possess a number of unusual weapons, some of which are limited to use by members of the correct warrior caste or brotherhood. Their statistics are included here, along with a brief description of the different weapons. Most of the native weapons are exquisitely decorated with carvings, each an individual work of art depicting monsters, mythic stories, or flowers. This makes every weapon uniquely identifiable.

None of the weapons has a cost, since the lowland savages make their own, either by their own hand or that of a close relative, whereas the exotic weapons of High Folk brotherhoods are simply not for sale. Despite potential value for arming members of the colony, few are willing to purchase such weapons due to their exotic nature (few knowing how to wield them correctly) and a supercilious belief that they are inferior due to their generally non-metallic material construction.

#### Bagh Nakh

Fighting claws which are mounted over the user's own hands.

#### Bidentis

An oddly weighted spear made from the paired fangs of a sabre-tooth tiger set at right angles to the shaft. It is intended to be swept down upon the head or back of an opponent to embed the fangs.

#### Cakera

A type of chakram, appearing as a circular ring of copper intended for throwing, whose outer edge is razor sharp with protruding, oddly curved spikes.

#### Chimalli

A large circular shield, formed from a range of different materials and decorated with coloured feathers. The basic version is a frame of fire-hardened wooden rods, covered with woven cloth or dinosaur hide; whilst others can be formed from turtle shells. The High Folk sometimes use copper to sheathe their shields.

#### Cuauhololli

An oddly shaped wooden club comprised of a curving shaft ending in a spherical ball. The curvature of the weapon enables it to bend around the edge of a shield, but makes it unwieldy for parrying (it has the Flexible trait despite being rigid).

### Daichui

Twin skulls, carved from stone or crystal or real skulls plated in copper, which are connected by a copper chain. Although intended to be a flexible bashing weapon, the types of skulls utilised in its construction can offer the Bleed effect if their dentition is sufficiently nasty or the chance of igniting an opponent if a skull is filled with a flammable fluid. Due to its length one end can entangle a foe, whilst still leaving the other free to continue battering.

### Eku

An oar-spear, quite literally a thrusting spear with a broadened end making it useful for paddling small rafts or canoes. The paddle can substitute as a club, permitting access to the Stun Location effect.

### Finger Needles

Thimble-like finger coverings which possess a hypodermic needle that emerges from its tip. The needle is connected to a small reservoir of poison, permitting the user to select precisely which venom to utilise on a victim, provided they wear more than one of these items. Learning to use Finger Needles requires tuition in the Eight Jab Doom combat style.

### Gada

A type of stone mace whose head is carved into that of a demon, monster or skull depending on the maker.

### Ixcheltu

A thorn- or shark tooth-embedded rope which is used rather like a whip, but can be applied as a garrotte in a stealth situation. Due to the barbs the rope can inflict serious bleeding.

### Katar

Punch daggers, with a wide triangular blade mounted on a frame so that the point extends before the knuckles. They are normally made from copper and bear inscriptions as to the brotherhood to which they belongs.

### Koipahoa

A type of pseudo-axe which is formed from a tusk or giant tooth attached crosswise to a short haft.

### Kpinga

Triple-bladed throwing knife, shaped so that the target is hit by one or more of the razor sharp edges, even rolling over the edge of a shield to strike the wielder behind it.

### Kratosi

An ovoid wicker shield with thorns and sharks' teeth set into its face, so that striking weapons, or even an enemy shield, can get caught on its surface.

### Maduvu

A wavy-bladed dagger carved from the spiral horn of some monstrous beast. Its purpose is more of an assassination weapon, since the horn blade tends to break off in the wound, preventing healing from occurring until it is surgically removed. In addition the porous horn is an ideal method of injecting poisons into the victim.

### Maquahuitl

Swords made from exceptionally tough hardwood, with edges inset with razor-sharp flakes of obsidian. They tend to be more fragile than metal equivalents, but inflict very nasty wounds. Maquahuitl come in single-handed and double-handed versions.

### Mubuchae

A fan with reinforced spars, so that it is able to parry incoming attacks and even cover a limited number of Hit Locations as if it were a shield. The fan's upper edge when opened is able to inflict cutting attacks.

### Parashu

Wooden axe embedded with sharks' teeth. Most are shaped with exotic bends in the haft, or weirdly shaped heads.

### Patu

Stone clubs carved into a flat, ovoid shape. These are usually made of smoothed obsidian, but a few priceless examples are carved from Jadestone. Patu faces often depict unusual designs, dependent upon the Brotherhood or Tribe it originated from.

### Taiaha

Dinosaur bone staff with a stabbing point at one end and a flattened blade at the other, used for bashing rather than cutting. The staff is generally decorated with collars or tufts of feathers for decoration.

### Tamking

A long, narrow spike-edged shield made of woven rattan, that whilst less protective offers a greater deal of offense, since its edge can be used to slash, being embedded with sharks' teeth.

### Tepoztopilli

A two handed cross between a spear and a halberd, with an edge formed from obsidian flakes similar to Maquahuitl.

### Trishula

Stone headed tridents with blades which are capable of penetrating copper or bronze armour. Most are ground in such a way that the edges are serrated with rearwards pointing barbs making them vicious when withdrawn from an impaling wound. They can be used one or two handed.

### Urumi

The coiling blade, literally a razor-edged sword made of copper thin enough to be coiled about the waist or forearms. Unfortunately its portability and ability to be concealed make the weapon vulnerable to being broken.

### Vajramusti

Knuckledusters with stabbing spikes protruding from either end.

### Wahaika

A wooden or dinosaur bone club, similar to a Patu except that it has a notch on one side used to capture an opponent's weapon.

## One Handed, Close Combat Weapons

| 1H-Weapon | Damage | Size | Reach | Combat Effects | ENC | AP/HP | Traits |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bagh Nakh | 1d6 | — | — | Bleed | — | 5/6 | |
| Cuauhololli | 1d6 | M | M | Bash, Stun Location | 1 | 4/6 | Flexible |
| Finger Needle | — | — | — | Inject Venom | — | 0/1 | |
| Ixcheltu | 1d4+2 | S | VL | Bleed, Entangle | 1 | 2/4 | Flexible |
| Katar | 1d4+2 | S | S | Impale, Bleed | 1 | 5/8 | |
| Koipahoa | 1d6+1 | M | M | Impale | 2 | 4/6 | |
| Maduvu | 1d4+1 | S | S | Impale, Inject Venom | 1 | 3/4 | |
| Maquahuitl | 1d6+2 | M | L | Bleed | 2 | 3/9 | |
| Parashu | 1d6 | M | M | Bleed | 1 | 3/6 | |
| Patu | 1d8 | M | S | Bash, Stun Location | 1 | 7/12 | |
| Trishula | 1d8+1 | M | L | Impale | 2 | 4/8 | Barbed, Set |
| Urumi | 1d8 | M | M | Bleed | 1 | 2/4 | Flexible |
| Vajramusti | +1 Damage | — | — | Impale | — | 5/6 | |
| Wahaika | 1d6 | M | M | Bash, Stun Location | 1 | 4/8 | Entrapping |

## Shields

| Shield | Damage | Size | Reach | Combat Effects | ENC | AP/HP | Traits |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chimalli | 1d3 | L | S | Bash, Stun Location | 3 | 4/12 | Ranged Parry; Passive Blocks 4 locations |
| Kratosi | 1d3 | M | S | Bash, Pin Weapon | 2 | 3/9 | Ranged Parry; Passive Blocks 3 locations |
| Mubuchae | 1d4+1 | M | S | Bleed, Stun Location | 1 | 2/4 | Ranged Parry; Passive Blocks 2 locations |
| Tamking | 1d6 | M | M | Bash, Bleed | 2 | 3/9 | Ranged Parry; Passive Blocks 3 locations |

## Two-Handed, Close Combat Weapons

| 2H-Weapon | Damage | Size | Reach | Combat Effects | ENC | AP/HP | Traits |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bidentis | 2d6+2 | H | L | Impale, Entangle | 2 | 4/8 | |
| Daichui | 1d6 | M | VL | Bash, Entangle, Stun Location | 2 | 5/8 | Double Ended, Flexible |
| Eku | 1d10+1 | L | VL | Bash, Impale, Stun Location | 3 | 4/9 | Set |
| Gada | 1d12 | H | M | Bash, Stun Location | 3 | 7/15 | |
| Maquahuitl | 2d6+4 | L | L | Bleed | 2 | 3/12 | |
| Taiaha | 1d8 | M | L | Bash, Impale, Stun Location | 2 | 4/10 | Double Ended |
| Tepoztopilli | 1d10+2 | L | VL | Bleed, Impale | 2 | 3/10 | |
| Trishula | 1d10+1 | L | VL | Impale | 2 | 4/8 | Barbed, Set |

## Ranged Weapons

| Ranged Weapon | Damage | Damage Modifier | Force | Range | Load | Combat Effects | Impaling Size | ENC | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Atlatl | — | — | +1 Step | +0/+10/+20 | — | — | — | 1 | 4/4 |
| Blowgun | — | N | — | 10/20/30 | 2 | Impale | — | — | 1/4 |
| Bolas | 1d4 | N | — | 10/25/50 | — | Entangle | — | — | 2/2 |
| Cakera | 1d6 | Y | M | 10/20/30 | — | Bleed | — | 1 | 5/4 |
| Dart | 1d4 | Y | S | 5/10/20 | — | Impale | S | — | 2/1 |
| Javelin | 1d8+1 | Y | H | 10/20/50 | — | Impale | M | 1 | 4/8 |
| Kpinga | 1d6 | Y | L | 5/10/20 | — | Impale | S | — | 5/6 |
| Sling | 1d8 | N | L | 10/150/300 | 3 | Stun Location | — | — | 1/2 |

### Savages Armour

| Material | AP | ENC | Armour Penalty for full panoply | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Woven Fibre | 2 | 1 | -2 | Mua Infantry Armour |
| Scaled Ivory | 4 | 3.75 | -6 | Eiki Elite Armour |
| Bone Lamellar | 4 | 4.5 | -8 | Eiki Elite Armour |
| Shell Half Plate | 5 | 8 | -13 | Eiki Elite Armour |
| Feathered Cloak | 2 | 0.75 | -2 | Only against attacks from behind |

### High Folk Armour

| Material | AP | ENC | Armour Penalty for full panoply | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quilted Silk | 2 | 0.75 | -2 | Used by riders of flying beasts |
| Embroidered Linothorax | 3 | 2 | -4 | Hunting and raiding armour |
| Bronze Scaled Armour | 4 | 3 | -5 | Ancient relics of the High Folk |
| Bronze Half Plate | 5 | 4 | -7 | Ancient relics of the High Folk |
| Chitin Half Plate | 5 | 3 | -5 | Gladiatorial champion's armour |
| Dinosaur Hide Half Plate | 5 | 8 | -13 | Garrison and battle armour |

*Note that both Lizardfolk and Serpent People possess tails, hence their armour covers an eighth location.*

# Treasures

One of the main objectives of many colonists is to 'strike it rich' nominally with as little effort on their part as possible. They eschew tedious negotiations with local tribes for their crafts, nor do they work up a sweat harvesting or foraging for the wealth of natural produce. Instead they head off into the deadly jungles in search of tombs and ruins to pillage.

Whilst such locations do offer valuable treasures, very few self-appointed tomb robbers actually recognise the value of artefacts located in these abandoned areas. Instead of convenient piles of coinage or bullion, most of what is buried under the jungles consists of artworks. Although it may seem inconceivable to adventurers, the island's natives can regard a perfect seashell or glazed pot as being more valuable than a gold necklace.

Bearing this cultural insight in mind, the Treasure Tables focus on objects valued for their aesthetics; craftsmanship, venerability and history rather than what material it is fashioned from. The prices of these objets d'art are those that natives will offer in trade, or the value appointed to them by collectors back in the colony. To determine their worth requires either a successful Art or Commerce check.

To create a treasure, simply roll on the following tables in order: Type of Artwork, Decorative Material, and Value. For some types of artwork there is little point in rolling its base material, a mosaic will almost always be made of stone for instance. Other treasures, however, can be manufactured from almost anything, so a roll can enhance the

imagination. The Decorative Material table is exactly that, the material used to enhance its ornamental nature, not its base construction. It is quite possible to have a wooden bracelet only covered with gold leaf, but it is the gold decoration (and craftsmanship) which grants the object its artistic value.

## Type of Artwork

| 1d20 | Artwork | Type |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Architectural | 1 Bas Relief, 2 Column, 3 Fresco, 4 Mosaic, 5 Statue, 6 Stele |
| 2 | Bracelet | 1-2 Anklet, 3-4 Arm, 5-6 Wrist |
| 3 | Carving | 1 Box, 2 Buckle, 3 Bust, 4 Figurine, 5 Netsuke, 6 Ornament |
| 4 | Clothing | 1 Diaphanous, 2 Dyed, 3 Embroidered, 4 Feathered, 5 Jewel-Encrusted, 6 Pelt |
| 5 | Drinking Vessel | 1 Bowl, 2 Cup, 3 Flask, 4 Goblet, 5 Horn, 6 Skull |
| 6 | Furniture | 1 Bed, 2 Chair, 3 Chest, 4 Cupboard, 5 Table, 6 Weapon Mount |
| 7 | Headwear | 1 Diadem, 2 Headdress, 3 Mask, 4 Mitre, 5 Turban, 6 Wreath |
| 8 | Idol of | 1 Animal, 2 Deity, 3 Demon, 4 Hero, 5 Monster, 6 Spirit |
| 9 | Jar | 1 Amphora, 2 Ewer, 3 Jug, 4 Krater, 5 Pot, 6 Vase |
| 10 | Literature | 1 Cylinder, 2 Epigraph, 3 Plaque, 4 Scroll, 5 Tablet, 6 Tome |
| 11 | Necklace | 1 Chain, 2 Collar, 3 Gorget, 4 Pectoral, 5 Pendent, 6 Torc |
| 12 | Ring | 1 Ear, 2 Finger, 3 Genitalia, 4 Nipple, 5 Nose, 6 Toe |
| 13 | Seal | 1-2 Cylinder, 3-4 Ring, 5-6 Stone |
| 14 | Tableware | 1 Bowl, 2 Cup, 3 Cutlery, 4 Dish, 5 Jug, 6 Plate |
| 15 | Textile | 1 Belt, 2 Blanket, 3 Carpet, 4 Cushion, 5 Mummy Wrapping, 6 Tapestry |
| 16 | Tool | 1 Board Game, 2 Fly Whisk, 3 Musical Instrument, 4 Pipe, 5 Scratcher, 6 Toothpick |
| 17 | Trade Goods | Select random entry from the Natural Produce table |
| 18 | Trophy | 1 Claws, 2 Head, 3 Horns, 4 Skin, 5 Teeth, 6 Tusks |
| 19 | Urn of | 1 Cosmetics, 2 Flowers, 3 Incense, 4 Narcotics, 5 Perfume, 6 Poison |
| 20 | Weapon | Select a random Native Weapon |

### Decorative Material

| 1d12 | Decorative Material |
|---|---|
| 1 | Beads |
| 2 | Bone |
| 3 | Copper |
| 4 | Feathers |
| 5 | Gold |
| 6 | Ivory |
| 7 | Jadestone |
| 8 | Obsidian |
| 9 | Porphyry |
| 10 | Shells |
| 11 | Silver |
| 12 | Wood |

### Artistic Value

| 1d100 | Value |
|---|---|
| 01-05 | 1d10 |
| 06-15 | 1d10x2 |
| 16-30 | 1d10x5 |
| 31-60 | 1d10x10 |
| 61-75 | 1d10x25 |
| 76-85 | 1d10x50 |
| 86-90 | 1d10x100 |
| 91-94 | 1d10x250 |
| 95-97 | 1d10x500 |
| 98-99 | 1d10x1000 |
| 100 | 1d10x2500 |

## Enchanted Artefacts

Upon Monster Island, magical treasures are exceptional and fabulous things, rarely found when scratching through ruins or tombs. This is primarily due to the difficulty required in manufacturing and maintaining such artefacts in the first place; personal items created via the Dedicate Might spell, for example, do not survive their creator's death, whilst those tied to Geomantic Nodes continue to exist, but being bound to a particular location are never portable.

Thus the small number of these treasures are invariably one of the following:

- Potent fetishes crafted to contain an overwhelmingly powerful spirit. Whilst minor fetishes are relatively commonplace amongst the tribes, most are treasured heirlooms and trophies hoarded by dowager-matriarchs, and are forbidden to be kept as personal belongings. Major fetishes are fabled objects of power, which are highly dangerous to meddle with. Unfortunately for adventurers they are effectively useless to anyone lacking the skills of Animism.
- Matrices manufactured via obscure secrets of sorcery, which embed a sorcery spell within their structure. They are powered by the wielder, or by some other power source such as Cursed Gold. Assuming the former, the holder of the matrix must donate as many Magic Points as would normally be needed to cast the spell(s), but needs no knowledge of sorcery to operate it.
- Cult talismans and icons powered by the Extension miracle, created by now-forgotten religions from the time before the cataclysm. They require no Magic Points to activate, but simply function continuously, no matter the user's beliefs; the miracle being powered by the last remnants of the deity it was once fashioned to serve.

The following objects are examples of the type of thing that can be found. Although a large selection of items is presented, they are offered merely as suggestions: only a fraction of them should be introduced into a campaign. It is the very rarity of these enchanted items that serves to make them pivotal objects of power upon the island. Locating one of these legendary objects could cause major political upheaval, or get its owner quietly murdered in a back alleyway from greed or the desire to command its magic.

## Example Fetishes

The majority of fetishes crafted by the natives are formed from materials which decay and perish over time, guaranteeing that any spirit bound within will not be held in service for all eternity, but be set free once the wood cracks, feathers fall off or bone crumbles. Yet some fetishes are specifically fashioned from materials near impervious to time, such as stone or crystal. These are intended to serve more as prisons for those spirits deemed far too dangerous to let free after a few generations of servitude.

### Babalu Eggs

Once numbering twenty three, almost half of these diabolical eggs are in the hands of the 'Diseased Ones'. They take the form of large ovoid obsidian boulders, between half and two thirds the height of an average man, with strange milky discolorations under their surface which gradually move and pulsate over the course of days. Each is home to a protean Sickness Spirit of such potency that they hive off new, unique spirits (of 1d3 Intensity) at moments of mysterious astrological conjunction. Ownership of a Babalu Egg is both blessing and curse – an unlimited source of offensive spirits, but with the risk that they become so strong that they break free of any control and possess the owner instead.

### Mask of Lord Hunhou

A mask carved from a single piece of translucent blue jade, this beautifully crafted work of art portrays the disturbing image of a near-skeletal face with protruding eyes and grinning teeth. The fetish contains the inimitable essence of Lord Honhou, an Intensity 7 Undeath Spirit who, when released, embodies himself within the physical body of mask's wearer – granting them the Undead creature trait and a bonus of +21 characteristic points to both STR and CON. Thus the wearer becomes an almost unstoppable warrior.

Embodying Lord Hunhou comes at a cost, however. Unbeknown to the wearer, each day the mask is worn they permanently lose one Hit Point from every location, as per the Maiming trait from diseases and poisons. This loss is withheld until the mask is removed, but each day the stench of putrescence grows stronger until the wearer's original location Hit Points are reduced to zero, at which point their flesh actually starts to visibly rot. Once they are reduced to minus their original Hit Points, the remaining flesh sloughs off leaving gleaming bone. Removal of the mask at this point spells doom for the wearer.

### Ndengei's Flute

A set of chaotically twisting pan pipes, apparently carved from a single lump of staghorn coral, these weird pipes incarcerate the monstrous spirit Ndengei, an Intensity 9 water elemental spirit. In addition to its normal abilities Ndengei also possesses the Nature Spirit power of Dominate Region, enabling it to call down torrential rainfall to raise the water level of a single river by up to nine metres; causing devastating floods. Due to its strength, once released Ndengei can rarely be controlled or recalled back to its fetish prison.

## Example Matrices

Matrices are magical artefacts created via the Matrix Gift (see page 152). They are few and far between, since each type of matrix takes years to research and master, and even once the technique is known, every duplicate matrix takes the best part of two months of solid labour to construct; even assuming that the sorcerer is so inclined to replicate their work for others to utilise.

Matrices require no skill or special knowledge to operate; they can be automatically activated as long as sufficient Magic Points are provided. Except for specific exceptions, those matrices which utilise offensive spells either force the target to resist against an appropriate performance or combat skill of the item's wielder, or make an unopposed resistance roll, but at Formidable difficulty – which roughly approximates the high Invocation skill of the crafter at the time of the matrix's manufacture.

### Carafe of Infinite Drinks

A transparent crystal vessel used to hold fluids, which are then poured into drinking vessels. The carafe is enchanted with a set of sorcery spells, enabling the holder to transform (at least to their perceptions) any liquid placed within into any beverage they can imagine. This relies upon a combined sight, smell, taste and temperature Delusion spell, and costs 5 Magic Points to activate the matrix. Note that the magic does not actually change the nature of the

original fluid, merely disguises it. If the drinks are removed a distance more than 10 metres multiplied by the POW of the activator from the carafe, or left for longer than 4 times their POW in minutes, the drinks return to their original appearance.

### Censer of Insect Repulsion

An elaborate bronze bowl enchanted with the Inhibit Fiends (Insects) spell. When filled with burning coals and powered with 3 Magic Points, the censer emits a cloud of exotically pungent smoke which drives off insects or insect swarms up to SIZ 30. The wisps of vapour dance mesmerically out to a distance in metres equal to the POW of the user, and lasts for a duration equal to ten minutes times their POW.

### Chimes of Warning

A cunningly wrought set of engraved copper chimes, which ring of their own accord when they are brought into the presence of a substance or object they are enchanted to detect. The frame contains a minor Zoetic Motivation (Copper) spell which can be combined with one or more of the chimes, each of which is in fact a specific Discern spell. The base cost of activation is 2 Magic Points plus 1 per substance or object sought for. The matrix has a Magnitude of 10 and rings the relevant chime if the hunted substance or object comes closer than the user's POW in metres. There are seven chimes which detect weapons, poison, spirits, traps, narcotics, sorcery and undeath.

### Fan of Dismissal

A wooden slated fan, which when spread and waved towards a spirit or some other extra-dimensional being, prevents them from approaching the wielder. The fan is enchanted with a Relegate Daemon spell, but must be invested with 2 Magic Points and affects spirits or demons with up to 30 POW from approaching closer than the user's POW in metres.

### Feathered Cloak of Protection

This magnificent cloak is woven completely from brightly coloured red and orange feathers. The wearer benefits from the cloak's Forbear Violation enchantment when activated by the expenditure of two Magic Points. Firstly their Armour Points are raised to 9 (unless their combined natural and worn armour is higher). Secondly the enchantment has a Magnitude of 10, protecting it from being dismissed.

### Headdress of Subservience

Another article of dress, this is a magnificent turban decorated with a blood red ruby and a spray of feathered plumes. Its power originates from an Oppress Inferiors (Lizardfolk) enchantment originally intended to allow a High Folk wearer to influence their tribal slaves. Each use costs 3 Magic Points, has a Magnitude of 5, and affects up to 100 victims with control extending up to a distance of 500m times the wearer's POW.

### Infernal Brain Library

A strange looking machine combining several dozen crystalline bell jars, connected together with a complex mesh of silver wires, large gemstones and vats of pulsating coloured fluids, the entire apparatus mounted upon four mechanical legs for mobility. Its purpose is to eternally preserve living brains without the need of a supporting body. The organ is removed with a special siphon, transferring it into one of the jars, and can be communicated with via a magic speaking box. Although it does not provide telepathic interrogation, a simple pain inducer soon enforces compliance from those minds trapped within. This despicable artefact is constructed from multiple interwoven matrices including Loxodromic Phasing, Zoetic Motivation and Wrack. However the enchantments sustaining the minds within (Foreswear Process – Breathing, Drinking, Eating, Embodiment) require it to be tapped into a Geomantic Node.

### Pipes of the Beast

An oddly coiled pipe of glassy obsidian, which imposes a horrific curse when used to play a tune and empowered with 3 Magic Points. Enchanted with the combined spells of Progenitor Metamorphoses and Tyrannise Thrall, the target of the music must resist the Musicianship roll of the player or be transformed into a vicious animal under the player's command. The transformation has a Magnitude of 5, a range of five times the user's POW in metres and lasts for four times the user's POW in minutes… usually long enough for the pipe player to force the victim into performing some nefarious act.

### Sandals of Fleetness

A plain looking pair of sandals woven from palm fibre, these items are enchanted with a combined Celeritous Progression and Loxodromic Phasing spell. When activated with 2 Magic Points they increase the wearer's Movement Rate by 10 points whilst allowing them to literally run

through any solid objects in their path (providing they concentrate).

### Sarcophagus of Regeneration

A typically shaped box or jar for the interment of a mummy, this sarcophagus is made from perfumed hardwoods inlaid with precious metals. The matrix has an unusual combination of spells enchanted into its surface, enabling anyone laid within to benefit from a combined Meliorate Maltreatment and Foreswear Need (Air) spell. Activation costs 3 Magic Points and can be initiated by either someone outside the sarcophagus or the patient within. Anyone inside then heals 10 Hit Points per hour of activation whilst simultaneously not suffocating. The magic lastsfor a maximum duration equal to ten minutes multiplied by the POW of the activator.

### Staff of Chastisement

It is said that over the centuries the brotherhood of Yimskar crafted a series of ornately carved wooden rods, each one of which has been enchanted with a unique version of the Consuming Annihilation spell. Their precise effects and shaping varies from staff to staff, but it costs 1 or more Magic Points to activate the staff depending on what parameters the matrix has (divide 10 shaping points between Magnitude, Range and Targets). For the next few minutes, the staff can be used to launch a 1d10 damage attack on the wielder's turn (ignoring worn armour). Blasts must be aimed with a Combat Style that includes this magical item (which some militant High Folk brotherhoods teach) and the aiming roll is resisted in an opposed roll as per normal to overcome the spell.

## Example Talismans

Cult talismans and icons are objects still invested with the magical strength of a deity. They are miracles which work continuously, require no Magic Points to activate and rely on the user's own Willpower (rather than Exhort) if applied in an offensive manner; making them the most potent of the magical artefacts. Rarely just found lying about, they are normally secreted – and well guarded – in the inner sanctums, treasuries or priestly tombs of ancient temple ruins.

Due to their status as legendary cult treasures, some of the objects bend the normal rules concerning the miracles bound within them. Not all have been embedded with the full power available to their consecrating priests, nor function without some action performed by the user. All of them date from before the cataclysm, and are so ancient that not even the gods from which they draw their powers can be remembered. If abused or misused these artefacts tend to turn against their owner, dooming them to some unspeakable fate…

### Battle Slayer

An ironically named artefact, Battle Slayer is in fact a gong of rather plain appearance which requires six people to support and a seventh to beat it. When struck, however, the deep chime cuts through all violence or arguments, bringing combat to a halt. The gong combines the miracles of Doleful Chime (see page 162) interwoven with Pacify at Intensity 11, the latter lasting as long as the slowly fading chime continues to resonate. Those wielding the gong usually end up deaf in short order, requiring sign language to communicate complex messages.

### Brazier of the Heavenly Houris

A shallow golden platter mounted upon three legs, decorated with exquisite reliefs of dancing girls and musicians. When filled with oil and lit, mystical figures rise from the flames and begin to dance, accompanied by celestial melodies and a sweet smelling perfume, overwhelming the senses. Most viewers find themselves riveted in rapt attention, succumbing to the Intensity 9 carefully woven Illusion, Enthrall, and Rapture (see page 164) miracles. Over-indulging in the sensuous pleasures of the brazier and fumbling a resistance roll against its effects usually ends with heart failure from

### Diabolical Staffs

*Staffs of Chastisement are rarely found outside the last few remaining High Folk fortresses. Several potent examples remain lost or entombed along with the sorcerers they were created for. Many believe that Yimskar made all of the ancient weapons, his warped humour envisioning ever more insane methods of death and destruction, for which they were individually named.*

*Thunderer was famed for calling down a blast of lightning down upon an area centred on the user, striking the nearest eight victims (within a range of POW in metres) in addition to burning the wielder themselves. Doom had no range but had to be touched to the victim, who was then infested with a corrosive green slime that ate away body parts, converting them into yet more slime, no matter what their magical protections (Magnitude 11). Gravity literally crushed its victims, rendering them down to puddles of flesh on hard surfaces from kilometres distant, whilst Hunger was perhaps most infamous of all, causing a swarm of insects to chew their way out of the victim's bodies...*

unimaginable bliss, or instils a monomania addiction to the entertainments it provides, ultimately ending with death from starvation.

### Dwyrulas' Flower

An evil-looking grafting of plant, flesh and metal, the flower of Dwyrulas is a bizarre artefact, more an eternal punishment to the high priest whose body and soul were transformed into the pseudo-living plant. Whatever the true origin of the alien-looking flower, it combines the miracles of Bless Crops and Growth so that the jungle surrounding its hiding place is always rife with rapidly sprouting, growing and dying vegetation. If ever transferred to an urban area, the flower would cause it to be lost under dense jungle in a matter of days, strangled by the weight of the verdure.

### Earthshaker's Drums

A huge drum formed from the skull of some titanic beast, covered with the stretched hide of a sauropod. It takes at least two dozen muscular bearers to carry the mighty instrument, which is fortunate since its localised effects can be devastating. Each time the drum is beat, it produces an Earthquake miracle of an Intensity equal to the number of times struck. The drummers are not immune to the destructive effects, suffering the same consequences as everyone about them. Attempting to beat the drum more than ten times in sequence causes the drum and its drummers to be swallowed up by a ground fissure which opens up beneath them (failure to Evade results in death).

### Ebon Disk

A jet black cakera or chakram whose touch negates all spells of equal or less than Magnitude 9 as per the Dismiss Magic miracle. Legend says that the priests of the cult that created this artefact were so skilled in the art of throwing rings, that successful hits would rebound back to the thrower's hand ready to be cast again (critical only Ricochet Special Effect).

### Eye of Terror

A transparent spherical gem with a dancing flame within, this potent object is the epitome of violent destruction yet requires a horrible sacrifice on the part of its user: namely the self-removal of one of their own eyes followed by insertion of the gem into the empty socket in proof of their worthiness. Failing to perform this feat correctly (a Formidable Willpower roll) means the sacrifice was in vain. Success, however, places the tremendous power of the gem at their disposal. Whenever the 'eye' is uncovered the Rain of Blood miracle occurs, followed shortly after by a crimson-coloured bolt of Intensity 7 Lightning once per round, targeted at whoever or whatever the user is looking at. Each time the lightning blasts down from the sky there is a cumulative 1% chance that the bolt will strike the user instead, directly to the head.

### Feathered Skin

A scruffy and tattered skin of a bird of extraordinary size, when cast over the shoulders this holy icon of a long-forgotten deity transforms its wearer into a Giant Vulture, with a bonus of +7 to each physical characteristic (Intensity 7 Beastform). Whilst ostensibly very useful, the user of the skin cannot remove it themselves, their hands having been transformed into wings… a fact which has doomed several of its purloiners in the dim past.

### Gestalt Circlets

A set of thirteen circlets carved from a single piece of firestone, a type of scintillating opal-like crystal, these artefacts allow any current wearers to share mental thoughts and potentially tap into each other's Magic Points (even forcefully), as if under the influence of an Intensity 7 Mindlink. Unlike the range restrictions of the normal miracle, the circlets are able to communicate no matter where they are on the island. Their downside is that anyone wearing a circlet at the time of their death forces all the other wearers to make an unopposed Endurance roll or also die. Widely distributed, no more than one circlet will ever be discovered at a time.

### Haondor's Retribution

A chased silver bracelet upon which is fixed a triangular amethyst. In times of need Haondor's Retribution projects a transparent, purple-coloured force shield coalescing the miracles of Aegis and Reflection at Intensity 8. Rather frustratingly, once someone attaches the bracelet around their wrist it cannot thereafter be removed except by severing the wearer's hand, or by their death.

### Ixcheltu of Purging

A rope woven from Isnashi fur and inset with sharks' teeth, this odd artefact has the effect of expelling spirits possessing anyone struck by its barbed surface, provided blood is drawn from the wound; that is to say, they suffer at least a single point of damage. The blood triggers an Intensity 7 Exorcism miracle, which the spirit must resist in an opposed test or be forced back into the Spirit World. Tenacious spirits sometimes require their victim to be nearly flayed to the bone before letting go their hold.

### Maquahuitl of Bereavement

An ancient and corroded two-handed maquahuitl cast from a single piece of reddish-purple bronze, this sword is one of the most feared weapons in the history of the island. Any wound it inflicts is accompanied by a Sever Spirit miracle of Intensity 9, generally defeating most foes in a single blow whether or not they survive the death magic. Wielding such lethality comes at a significant risk, however, since any fumble rolled by its user invariably ends up as Accidental Injury, striking themselves… often accompanied by Force Failure if their foe is cunning.

### Mirthless Mask

A nightmarish wooden mask inset with polished stones and shells, its features are conflicting and disproportionate, yet hold a disturbing fascination to anyone gazing upon it – subjecting them to a Hysteria miracle with an Intensity of 11. Tribal memories recount that the mask overthrew entire cities, the insanity it inflicted causing thousands to destroy themselves or wander away in their lunacy. Thus despite its innocuous size it is perhaps one of the most powerful weapons left upon the island. Even if worn, the mask will still affect the wearer if they catch sight of their own reflection.

### Tuuthal's Lens

A fabled crystal lens measuring over a metre and a half across, this artefact possesses the twined powers of Cure Malady and Cure Sense. It functions by focussing the light of the moon at its zenith upon the person needing healing, but the strength of its effect is dependent on the lunar phase. A quarter moon has an Intensity of 3, half moon Intensity 5, three-quarter moon Intensity 7, and full moon Intensity 9.

## Iron Weapons and Tools

Known to the natives as the Weeping Blood Metal, iron is considered a cursed substance on the island. There is little iron ore of any quality in the volcanic soil, said to be due to a mighty curse imposed by the great spirit Tane himself. Any iron or steel items brought to the island begin to rust away, slowly but continually, in the warm humid environment. Unless kept tightly wrapped in oiled skins, such objects lose 1 Hit Point per month, their structural integrity eaten away, until they crumble into rusty flakes. The locals take advantage of this fact, often utilising special effects against the colonists to break their inevitably weakened weapons and armour, whilst they themselves stick to stone, bronze or toothed armaments; obsidian being particularly favoured as it is reputed to penetrate even the hide of invulnerable shape-shifters.

*Bow down: I am the emperor of dreams;*
*I crown me with the million-coloured sun*
*Of secret worlds incredible, and take*
*Their trailing skies for vestment when I soar,*
*Throned on the mounting zenith, and illume*
*The spaceward-flown horizons infinite.*
*Like rampant monsters roaring for their glut,*
*The fiery-crested oceans rise and rise,*
*By jealous moons maleficently urged*
*To follow me for ever; mountains horned*
*With peaks of sharpest adamant, and mawed*
*With sulphur-lit volcanoes lava-langued,*
*Usurp the skies with thunder, but in vain;*
*And continents of serpent-shapen trees,*
*With slimy trunks that lengthen league by league,*
*Pursue my light through ages spurned to fire*
*By that supreme ascendance; sorcerers,*
*And evil kings, predominanthly armed*
*With scrolls of fulvous dragon-skin whereon*
*Are worm-like runes of ever-twisting flame*

Clark Ashton Smith, The Hashish Eater

# CHAPTER 8: FLORA & FAUNA

Monster Island's Smoking Mirrors allow many different plants and creatures to be drawn to its bleak mountains and steaming jungles. The following collection of strange life-forms is just the tip of an infinite range of potential encounters. Games Masters should feel free to add their own creations, or even carry over those published in other campaign settings.

Of course, not all life drawn to the island is suited to its tropical environment. Many creatures die soon after entering its climate or expire from starvation, unable to digest the exotic foodstuffs they consume in their hunger. Similarly, alien plant seeds rarely germinate far from the portal they travel through, where some trace elements of home are brought through with other beings. Remember that many of these plants and creatures might be encountered in groups or even mass migrations as they pass through one of the portals, with only those that are more adaptable being able to reproduce and scratch out their own ecological niche.

Although Monster Island is supposed to be a deadly place, full of overwhelming challenges, a few players will find some encounters too deadly for their liking. Games Masters should feel free to reduce the skills of the flora or fauna encountered, or roleplay a suitable conclusion to such meetings which does not necessarily end in character death. Likewise Games Masters should utilise these life forms in clever, imaginative ways so not every hunt turns into a mindless toe-to-toe fight.

Great fun can be had by simply threatening a possible combat with some of these monsters, instead of simply attacking on sight. Territorial display stand offs, drawn out stalking whilst the creature prepares an ambush, and fleeing on sight can all defang a possible massacre. Even if fighting breaks out, a creature may only wish to inflict first blood to make a point or even spit out characters who don't 'taste' nice!

See the extensive guidelines concerning creature psychology, tactics and non-fatal conflict offered in Chapters 15 and 16 of the core RuneQuest rules.

# New Creature Abilities

Several new abilities are included to cover some of the exotic capabilities of life forms from other worlds.

### Amphibious

The creature has the ability to breathe both underwater and on dry land with no difficulty.

### Area Attack

Area Attack allows a creature or plant of suitable size to sweep or stomp multiple foes, its attack roll being simultaneously applied to everyone within reach of the body part used to make the attack. Since few opponents can hinder the immense power of these crushing blows, characters wishing to survive must usually dive clear of such attacks.

This ability is normally limited to beings with tails, tentacles or even branches that sweep through an area, or creatures which roll or throw themselves onto clusters of victims. Who and what is caught in the Area Attack is completely at the discretion of the Games Master.

### Construct

As per the Undead ability, except that the creation is completely artificial and was never living in the first place. They require no breath, food, water or any other requirement of life to function. Neither do they possess the Willpower skill, and they are immune to any form of mental or emotional domination.

### Fatigue Drain

The creature drains a level of Fatigue from victims, as explained in its description. This is either an automatic effect as part of a field extending from the creature, or occurs when the creature strikes a target.

### Flora

Similar to the Undead trait, plants and other forms of animate vegetation are immune to the side effects of Fatigue and severe injuries. Whilst a Serious Wound prevents the limb or location from functioning, the plant does not suffer any other debility. Likewise a Major Wound does not incapacitate, neither does it immediately threaten 'life', although it might die hours or days later. To defeat such vegetation requires thorough dismemberment, or at least enough to render its offensive capabilities inert.

### Phantasmal

The creature or plant can cover solid objects with an illusion disguising their true nature. The main senses which can be fooled are sight, sound and smell; however the illusion cannot replicate touch, thus it needs something concrete of form and weight to be used as the heart of the phantasm. Such creations have no specific duration, but rapidly fade if the creator moves away. Only a single illusion may be maintained.

### Psychic Emanations

The psychic emanations affect all sapient targets within a radius equal to the plant or creature's POW x10 in metres. Resisting the emanations requires one of the following:

- If the psychically projecting plant or creature lacks a Willpower skill of its own, the victim may resist with a successful Hard Willpower roll
- If the psychically projecting plant or creature has a Willpower score, then the victim must resist in an opposed test of Willpower skills

The effect of the psychic emanations is explained in the plant or creature's description.

### Shape-Shifter

The creature or plant can quite literally morph itself into another physical form. This costs it 1 Magic Point per shift. A shape-shifter usually has one or more specific forms into which it can morph, yet it cannot change its basic nature; plants can only shape-shift into other plants for example. Likewise, unless specifically noted, a shape-shifter lacks the ability to change its SIZ (mass) which remains fairly consistent between forms. Transformations take 1d6 rounds to complete.

### Spiny

The creature (or plant) has spines, thorns or prickles which pose a formidable defence. Normally, this grants protection against unarmed attacks, automatically inflicting the creature's Damage Modifier against the body part used to strike them. Bigger or longer spines (as noted in the creature description) can also damage armed attackers, providing the spines are equal to the length of the weapon used. In such cases, it is the limb holding the weapon which gets injured.

### Trapper

Usually restricted to immobile things or plant-like threats, this ability represents a particular way of attacking prey by use of a one-shot trap. Once the trap has been sprung, the plant or creature can no longer engage in combat with other beings. Since they rely on surprise and some form of entwining, engulfing or similar, their natural attack must usually be evaded rather than parried.

# Adaro (Samebito)

There are many types of marine humanoid, but perhaps the most feared races in warmer oceans are the adaro and the nanaue (see page 251), both of which share a unique kinship and physiology with commonplace swimming predators. The adaro are hybrid creatures which possess a humanoid form, but one altered by shark-like features. Adaro have dark, sometimes black, scaly skin, extendable frills and a dorsal fin arranged about their head, gill slits placed on their necks and mutated hands and feet which are elongated, clawed and heavily webbed. In addition their mouths are full of razor sharp shark-like teeth.

Since adaro live in the dimly illuminated depths, they are able to see well in partial darkness. Conversely daylight or an equivalent bright light tends to blind them. By far the most effective sensory organ the adaro possesses is its sense of taste, even though it is nearly ineffective out of water. Located in their hybrid piscine snouts are thousands of taste buds which are so sensitive they can pick up the scent of a few blood drops over distances of kilometres. So responsive is this detection that they can even tell what species is bleeding. At much closer distances body sweat, dissolved smells of immersed clothes and even saliva can be detected downstream of a current.

Malevolent by nature, adaro play evil tricks on sea voyagers and fishermen, often capsizing small boats, entangling fishing lines or placing dangerous sea creatures into nets. An ancient race cunning and skilled in magic, they live in the deeper depths of the ocean as loosely affiliated tribes, only sporadically coming to the surface and engaging in raids upon coastal settlements. When such raids occur, however, the slaughter can be horrific; the adaro becoming driven by a battle-lust once they detect the scent or taste of blood.

Their own spoken language is composed of clicks, whistles and hoots that are similar in many ways to the language of the whales and dolphins. This language has great carrying power in the sea and conversations can be conducted over dozens of kilometres – though it is worthwhile noting that over such distances the communication is almost invariably a poetic performance rather than an exchange. Above water it only has the carrying power of a human voice.

Due to living in the depths, adaro are unaccustomed to bright light, preferring to attack during dusk, dawn or on nights with a full moon. A favoured attack is to swim up under a ship, then clamber aboard stealthily to drag victims back into the sea where they are drowned.

In the sea adaro generally fight with spears and tridents, keeping swimming surface folk at bay. They prefer the Impale manoeuvre, leaving their weapon in the wound so that they can drag a victim under the surface. Once blood suffuses the water each adaro must resist entering a frenzy, else they start to slaughter everything in a mindless primordial reflex, abandoning impaled weapons if failing the Brawn roll to withdraw them and instead closing for unarmed combat.

Occasionally they launch raids on coastal regions, creeping out of the surf, climbing the cliffs and encircling a village or town to prevent escape. The primary purpose is to capture victims for sacrifice or eating, but with the threat of blood frenzy such raids usually turn into brutal slaughter. Whilst on land adaro lose most of their native aquatic advantages. In these cases they rely on sorcery and their own fearful appearance to offset the hindrance due to their lack of armour, missile weapons and shields. Since their sense of taste is weakened in air, an adaro need only succeed in an Easy Willpower test to resist Blood Frenzy.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 3 | 1 – 3 | Right Leg | 1/5 |
| CON: 3d6 (11) | Damage Modifier | +1d2 | 4 – 6 | Left Leg | 1/5 |
| SIZ: 2d6+6 (13) | Magic Points | 13 | 7 – 9 | Abdomen | 1/6 |
| DEX: 2d6+3 (10) | Movement | 4m/12m (swimming) | 10 – 12 | Chest | 1/7 |
| INT: 1d6+12 (16) | Strike Rank | 13 | 13 – 15 | Right Arm | 1/4 |
| POW: 2d6+6 (13) | Armour | Fishy Scales | 16 – 18 | Left Arm | 1/4 |
| CHA: 3d6 (11) | | | 19 – 20 | Head | 1/5 |

**Abilities:** *Aquatic, Blood Sense, Frenzy (Blood), Night Sight, Swimmer*

**Skills:** *Athletics 53%, Brawn 46%, Endurance 62%, Evade 40%, Perception 59%, Stealth 56%, Swim 74%, Willpower 56%*

**Combat Style:** *Thrusting Sea Weapons 73%, Unarmed 63%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *T* | *1d6+1d2* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *S* | *T* | *1d4+1d2* | *As for Arm* |
| *Long Trident* | *L* | *VL* | *1d10+1d2* | *4/10* |

# Ahuizotl

The Ahuizotl is a odd looking dog-like creature with small, pointed ears and smooth black, rubbery skin. It has prehensile ape hands at the end of its forelimbs and an additional hand at the end of its extremely long tail. Ahuizotl are feared due to their liking for humanoid flesh, though only certain parts are eaten.

It dwells in watery caverns, beside rivers and small pools. If anyone comes too close to the river edge or is foolish enough to enter the waters, it uses the hand on the end of its tail to grab prey and then sinks, drawing the victim to the bottom where they drown. When the body is retrieved, it no longer has eyes, teeth, or nails; but the rest of the body is completely unblemished save for a little bloating.

In order to attract more suspicious victims, it often weeps like a small child, attracting soft-hearted dupes whom literally fall into the hands of the cunning ahuizotl, and are drowned in turn. Lacking much in the way of teeth or claws the creature prefers to grapple (Grip, Entangle) a lone target then quickly retreat into the depths where its prey is unlikely to be able to fight back effectively. On dry land it can be easily overcome.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+9 (16) | Action Points | 2 | 1–3 | Tail | 1/5 |
| CON: 3d6 (11) | Damage Modifier | +1d2 | 4–5 | Right Hind Leg | 1/5 |
| SIZ: 2d6+6 (13) | Magic Points | 7 | 6–7 | Left Hind Leg | 1/5 |
| DEX: 3d6 (11) | Movement | 8m | 8–10 | Hindquarters | 1/6 |
| INS: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 12 | 11–14 | Forequarters | 1/7 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Rubbery Skin | 15–16 | Right Front Leg | 1/4 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Front Leg | 1/4 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 1/5 |

**Abilities:** *Grappler, Swimmer*

**Skills:** *Athletics 57%, Brawn 69%, Endurance 52%, Evade 62%, Perception 50%, Stealth 74%, Swim 57%, Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *Grasping Nightmare (Hands) 67%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Leg Hand* | *M* | *S* | *1d3+1d2* | *As for Limb* |
| *Tail Hand* | *M* | *L* | *1d4+1d2* | *As for Tail* |

# Alan (Moon Bats)

According to the savages of the island, the alan are deformed and degenerate spirits which are hosted in the bodies of giant bats. It is said in the dim past they once lived in extremely fine houses, made of gold and other valuables. Unable to birth mortal children and twisted with jealous envy, they stole drops of menstrual blood, miscarried fetuses, afterbirth, and other reproductive waste, and made from this the first High Folk, to raise them as their own offspring.

These offspring turned to evil deeds, which caused the alan to flee and hide at the bottom of deep caves. Thus the High Folk stole the abandoned golden houses, then hunted down their misguided progenitors and melded their spirits into the bodies of giant bats with vile sorcery, using them ever after as mounts to flitter across the night skies. Once free spirits, the alan now have huge wings, sleep inverted and wail their eternal servitude in screams nobody can hear.

Named moon bats for their predilection for flying only during the light of the full moon, alan actually need no light to function. It is their High Folk riders which require the celestial illumination to be able to see both where they are going and what they attack. Strangely their fur is coloured a sickly, almost albino white which fluoresces under moonlight, causing them to glow with a pale, eerie radiance.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 2 | 1 – 3 | Right Claw | 1/10 |
| CON: 2d6+15 (22) | Damage Modifier | +1d8 | 4 – 6 | Left Claw | 1/10 |
| SIZ: 2d6+18 (25) | Magic Points | 7 | 7 – 10 | Abdomen | 1/11 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 2m/12m flying | 11 – 14 | Chest | 1/12 |
| INS: 2d6+3 (10) | Strike Rank | 12 | 15 – 16 | Right Wing | 0/9 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Fur | 17 – 18 | Left Wing | 0/9 |
| | | | 19 – 20 | Head | 1/10 |

**Abilities:** *Adhering, Echolocation, Flying*

**Skills:** *Athletics 32%, Brawn 44%, Endurance 64%, Evade 26%, Fly 72%, Perception 51%, Stealth %, Willpower 42%*

**Combat Style:** *Sweeping Slashes (Claw, Wing) 62%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Claw* | *L* | *M* | *1d6+1d8* | *As for Lower Limb* |
| *Wing Buffet* | *L* | *VL* | *1d4+1d8* | *As for Wing* |

# Alicanto

Feared and respected by the island natives, alicantos are large flightless birds with a curved parrot-like beak and long powerful legs ending in big claws, which are iron hard. In daylight its plumage is a bland dirty reddish-grey, partially to camouflage it when it roosts in shallow scrapes or hollows; and partially as a result of the dust it kicks up when clawing at exposed rock faces.

It is a highly magical nocturnal creature with a strange diet: subsisting only on valuable ores. Eating these precious metals and minerals causes the bird to glow with an eerie light, the colour of which depends on the substance consumed, as does the intensity indicate the purity of the ore that it has eaten. Thus an alicanto which has recently fed on a minor seam of flawed rubies will radiate a pale red glow in the dark, whereas one which devoured a pile of pure gold coins will blaze like the sun.

Due to this strange ability, the bird is often followed by prospecting miners seeking a new source of precious metals and stones, who may even poke through its droppings for heavily corroded fragments of valuable material. Unfortunately the alicanto is very territorial, especially if accompanied by a mate and chicks, and will fiercely defend any new strike it has found against robbers who would steal its nourishment. It is considered an evil creature because of the temptation and greed it invokes in those who know of its nature.

Somewhat larger than a human, alicanto are dangerous foes despite the fact they cannot fly. Their long legs allow them to run at high speed and their beak and claws are near immune to damage. In fact many miners use these body parts to construct digging tools, as they are tough enough to chip and scrape through rock. Many wise men say that it is the presence of these corpse-defiling implements which cause the birds to attack miners on sight… though it is more probable it enters a frenzy to gain any refined precious metals or gemstones it detects on their persons.

Alicanto start combat by charging at the biggest opponent and leaping at them with their claws extended in an attempt to bring them down. If this is successful (or they later Trip their foe), the victim is dragged down to the ground where they can be grappled with one claw whilst being ripped at by the other. Grip is often favoured as a manoeuvre in this situation, preventing the victim from regaining their feet. The fighting style is interesting in that they try to parry blows aimed at them with their beak, whilst scything with their claws. If they win a special effect whilst parrying, the bird usually chooses Pin Weapon, gripping the offensive object in its beak or claws.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 3 | 1 – 3 | Right Leg | 3/7 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 4 – 6 | Left Leg | 3/7 |
| SIZ: 2d6+12 (19) | Magic Points | 7 | 7 – 10 | Abdomen | 3/8 |
| DEX: 2d6+9 (16) | Movement | 10m | 11 – 14 | Chest | 3/9 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 14 | 15 – 16 | Right Wing | 3/6 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Metallic Feathers | 17 – 18 | Left Wing | 3/6 |
| | | | 19 – 20 | Head | 3/7 |

**Abilities:** *Formidable Natural Weapons, Frenzy, Night Sight*

**Skills:** *Athletics 69%, Brawn 62%, Endurance 56%, Evade 72%, Perception 59%, Stealth 48%, Track 65% (Precious Substances), Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *Feathered Ferocity (Claw, Peck) 69%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Claw* | *M* | *M* | *1d6+1d4* | *As for Leg* |
| *Peck* | *M* | *S* | *1d4+1d4* | *As for Head* |

# Allosaurus

A large theropod dinosaur, allosaurs average between 8 and 9 metres in length with a long body and heavy tail offering balance. The forearms are short compared with the massive hind limbs, but not so short as in tyrannosaurs. The head is large, narrow, angular and equipped with rows of extremely sharp teeth. Juvenile animals or varieties from colder climes have a pelage of fine, but long, filamentous hair-like body covering that is a primitive form of feathering. The savages of Monster Island refer to allosaurs as *Gwangi*.

A naturally fast and lithe predator, allosaurs prey on slower-witted, slower-moving creatures but are also prepared to scavenge when prey is in short supply.

Allosaurs attempt to disable their prey using their foot claws first, gripping the victim, before rending with the teeth. The tail lash is reserved for threats the dinosaur is aware of that are trying to attack from the flank or the rear. The tail's size is enough to be able to sweep several foes simultaneously.

To represent the even larger tyrannosaur, increase STR by 6, SIZ by 12 and CON by 3 (+3 HP to each Location), add 2 points to hide AP, raise Damage Modifier to +2d8, natural weapons become size Colossal, shift damage upwards by two steps, and ensure player characters have some way to escape!

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+21 (28) | Action Points | 2 | 1–2 | Tail | 6/13 |
| CON: 2d6+15 (22) | Damage Modifier | +2d6 | 3–5 | Right Leg | 6/13 |
| SIZ: 4d6+25 (39) | Magic Points | 11 | 6–8 | Left Leg | 6/13 |
| DEX: 2d6+3 (10) | Movement | 7m | 9–11 | Abdomen | 6/14 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 11 | 12–14 | Chest | 6/15 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Tough Hide | 15–16 | Right Arm | 6/12 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 6/12 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 6/13 |

**Abilities:** *Engulfing, Intimidate*

**Skills:** *Athletics 78%, Brawn 87%, Endurance 74%, Evade 50%, Perception 59%, Stealth 62%, Track 64%, Willpower 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Rend Bloodily (Bite, Claw, Tail) 78%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *H* | *L* | *1d10+2d6* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *H* | *M* | *1d8+2d6* | *As for Leg* |
| *Tail Lash* | *H* | *VL* | *1d6+2d6* | *As for Tail* |

# Ankylosaurus

An armoured, quadrupedal dinosaur, ankylosaurs are noted for their bony armour plates and jutting spikes across their body and the long, flexible tail terminating in a thick, bony club. Averaging 7 metres in length, the body is stocky with the hind legs larger than the forelegs. As is typical with herbivorous dinosaurs, the head is small compared with the rest of the body, although the curved beak is reasonably prominent.

Unless overtly threatened, ankylosaurs are relatively peaceful creatures (the presence of hatchlings or young increases their likelihood of feeling threatened, and males might become aggressive during the spring mating season, as they vie for mates and defend territories). However when forced into defence, the creature's ability to deal a devastating blow with its clubbed tail may be enough to deter all but the hungriest and largest predators.

Ankylosaurs rely on their natural armour to protect from threats and so rarely, if ever, evade. They take their time to position themselves relative to a foe so that the tail can be used to its maximum effect. The tail is long enough to inflict damage against anyone within range of its swinging arc. The bite is only used in desperate, close-quarters situations where the tail cannot be used.

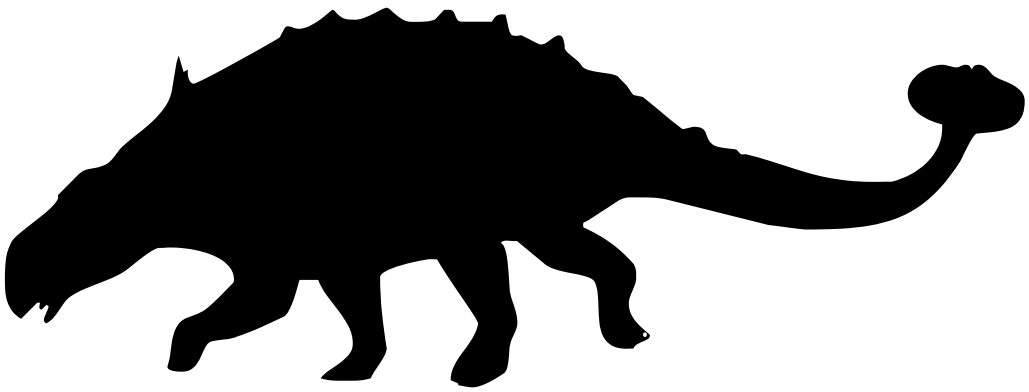
| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+21 (28) | Action Points | 2 | 1-3 | Tail | 12/17 |
| CON: 2d6+15 (22) | Damage Modifier | +2d8 | 4-5 | Right Hind Leg | 8/17 |
| SIZ: 4d6+45 (59) | Magic Points | 11 | 6-7 | Left Hind Leg | 8/17 |
| DEX: 2d6 (7) | Movement | 5m | 8-10 | Hindquarters | 12/18 |
| INS: 2d6+4 (11) | Strike Rank | 9 | 11-14 | Forequarters | 12/19 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Tough Hide & Plates | 15-16 | Right Front Leg | 8/16 |
| | | | 17-18 | Left Front Leg | 8/16 |
| | | | 19-20 | Head | 12/17 |

**Abilities:** *Area Attack (Tail), Intimidate*

**Skills:** *Athletics 35%, Brawn 107%, Endurance 84%, Evade 14%, Perception 42%, Willpower 52%*

**Combat Style:** *Wrecking Defiance (Bite, Tail Club) 75%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *H* | *M* | *1d6+2d8* | *As for Head* |
| *Tail Lash* | *C* | *VL* | *1d12+2d8* | *As for Tail* |



# Ant Lion, Giant

A giant antlion is over three metres long, covered in an ochre brown carapace that helps it hide in its natural environment. It has a pair of immense sabre-like mandibles that it uses to scissor limbs off of its victims when it can, maiming them in order to leave them to die in its cleverly dug pit traps. The beast digs into its burrow backwards, keeping its bulbous abdomen under the earth and holding its mandibles open near the surface, often hidden under a trapdoor plug of silk-supported earth.

Anything that draws too near to the edge of the antlion's pit will trigger its ambush – sending the beast hurtling upward, mandibles first, to snap down on whatever stepped close by. These vicelike jaws are sharp and strong enough to rend most armour types and crush organs and bone. Such is the force of this attack that an unfortunate arm or leg caught in the mandibles' path will likely be snipped off in an instant. Having a limb severed could be a blessing in disguise however, as anything left pinched in an antlion's terrible bite will soon need to fight against the beast's slow dragging retreat down into the dark burrow.

Once within the grasp of a hungry antlion most victims are soon crushed into insensibility, then injected with a poison which quickly liquefies their insides, allowing the creature to drain their carcass of its nutrients via tubes in its mandibles. Empty sacks of skin and bones are then tossed away from the burrow.

Potential prey approaching an antlion's burrow is detected via Earth Sense. The target is permitted an opposed test of its Perception against the Stealth skill of the antlion. Success reveals signs of danger in the form of the drained, desiccated bodies of previous victims lying nearby or the subtle movement of the hidden insect. Failure means the target wanders blithely into the antlion's ambush. If the antlion detects more than one creature it will instinctively grab the last one in line, hoping to drag the creature into its burrow without the others noticing.

The initial lunge from hiding usually results in an unopposed attack. If this generates a special effect the antlion normally takes Silent Attack, hoping to drag prey into its lair without causing a disturbance. Since it naturally grapples the victim as part of its bite, the next combat action is spent hauling the victim back into the burrow. Assuming the target is still capable it may resist being dragged in a Contest of Strength using Brawn (see RuneQuest page 59).

Once back inside its burrow a victim is in dire straits, as there is no room to wield any weapon larger than size Small, limiting their struggle to things like knives or unarmed combat. A well-armoured victim stands a chance of surviving long enough for his friends to locate him, but lone travellers are in serious trouble. If attacked in its burrow by interlopers, the antlion withdraws far enough to force foes to approach it one at a time, tucking insensible victims under its thorax. In this position the creature can use its mandibles to parry attacks, but is prevented from using Evade.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 3d6+12 (23) | Action Points | 2 | 1 | Right Rear Leg | 6/6 |
| CON: 3d6+6 (17) | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | 2 | Left Rear Leg | 6/6 |
| SIZ: 3d6+6 (17) | Magic Points | 7 | 3 | Right Middle Leg | 6/6 |
| DEX: 3d6 (11) | Movement | 8m | 4 | Left Middle Leg | 6/6 |
| INS: 2d6+2 (9) | Strike Rank | 10 | 5–9 | Abdomen | 6/9 |
| POW: 1d6 (7) | Armour | Chitin | 10–13 | Thorax | 6/8 |
| | | | 14 | Right Front Leg | 6/6 |
| | | | 15 | Left Front Leg | 6/6 |
| | | | 16–20 | Head | 6/7 |

**Abilities:** *Burrower, Earth Sense, Formidable Natural Weapons, Grappler*

**Skills:** *Athletics 74%, Brawn 80%, Endurance 64%, Evade 42%, Perception 56%, Stealth 60%, Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *Death from Below (Bite) 74%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Mandibles* | *M* | *M* | *1d8+1d6* | *As for Head* |

# Ape, Carnivorous

Large, brutally violent apes with a taste for meat, these mighty creatures terrorise the upper cloud forests and mountains of the island. Their most distinctive features are strangely patterned fur which can sport spots or stripes, and a set of oversized fangs. They use their almost sapient cunning to lay ambushes or even to set crude traps to capture interlopers into their territory. Despite this, carnivorous apes have a paranoid terror of fire, being easily driven off by lit torches.

Sorcerers often find these creatures malleable to their will, making them good servants until the ape's struggling consciousness forces them into a battle for dominance; whereupon they turn on their master and tear them apart, often donning their garb or regalia of office to subsume the role of the sorcerer. Carnivorous apes prefer to grapple opponents, seizing weapon arms then pulling the offending limbs from their sockets when enough grappling damage has accrued.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+9 (16) | Action Points | 2 | 1–2 | Right Leg | 2/7 |
| CON: 3d6 (11) | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | 3–4 | Left Leg | 2/7 |
| SIZ: 2d6+15 (22) | Magic Points | 7 | 5–7 | Abdomen | 2/8 |
| DEX: 2d6 (7) | Movement | 6m | 8–10 | Chest | 2/9 |
| INS: 2d6+7 (14) | Strike Rank | 11 | 11–14 | Right Arm | 2/6 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Hairy Pelt | 15-18 | Left Arm | 2/6 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 2/7 |

**Abilities:** *Formidable Natural Weapons, Frenzy*

**Skills:** *Athletics 73%, Brawn 68%, Endurance 56%, Evade 44%, Perception 51%, Stealth 61%, Willpower 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Lord of the Jungle (Bite, Claw) 63%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *L* | *T* | *1d8+1d6* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *L* | *L* | *1d6+1d6* | *As for Arm* |

# Arumco (Hellfrog)

A freshwater amphibian, arumco are giant frogs almost four metres in length, with long tongues and very wide mouths. Able to swallow an average-sized human whole, these creatures are extremely dangerous, preferring to strike from ambush and then hop away into thick jungle or the centre of the nearest body of deep water.

Normally nocturnal hunters, arumco are patterned with vivid swirls of greens and yellows which helps to camouflage them in dense undergrowth or underwater during the day when they rest. At night they emerge from hiding and stalk slowly through the vegetation bordering the lake or river where they live.

Once suitable prey has been spotted the frog opens its mouth, the inside of which glows with a faint scarlet, orange and purple radiance. It is this display that gives the monster its name of hellfrog, the pulsating colours mesmerising animals and unwittingly drawing them to within reach of the frog's tongue which shoots out and sticks to the victim, yanking it back into its mouth. Due to the damage the organ sometimes receives, hellfrogs can regrow their tongues completely, even if severed!

Arumco are avid carnivores but are hampered by being unable to regurgitate anything they swallow. Once they feel their stomach is full – assuming the prey is of significant size – they withdraw from conflict in order to digest the meal in peace. Stories abound of hellfrogs being tricked into swallowing great stones or mannequins made from logs, which sit in the arumco's stomach, not digesting, until the beast starves to death.

A hellfrog may use the pulsating glow of its mouth to attract targets within range of its tongue. This is resolved by an opposed test of the victim's Willpower against the frog's Mesmerism skill. Failure means that the creature willingly approaches without noticing the arumco or the danger into which it is placing itself, permitting the hellfrog to make an unopposed attack. Those that succeed have no subconscious imperative to approach the ambush, but may suffer the effects of a surprise attack if they have never experienced an arumco before and approach anyway.

The first attack is always performed with the tongue, which shoots out 4-5 metres from the frog's mouth. If the tongue hits it inflicts no damage but instead Entangles the location struck or Pins the weapon if parried. On its following turn the frog then withdraws its tongue back into its mouth, which may be resisted in a Contest of Strength using Brawn (see RuneQuest page 59). Assuming the victim does not exceed half the hellforg's SIZ it is engulfed in its mouth, automatically suffering Bite damage, whilst the arumco makes good its escape.

A chewed victim is only swallowed once it stops struggling, at which point they are then gulped down. If the victim is still alive they are likely to asphyxiate unless they can inflict non-physical damage or have friends who can help cut them free.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 2 | 1–2 | Right Hind Leg | 3/8 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d8 | 3–4 | Left Hind Leg | 3/8 |
| SIZ: 4d6+12 (26) | Magic Points | 7 | 5–7 | Hindquarters | 3/10 |
| DEX: 2d6+3 (10) | Movement | 4m/8m swimming | 8–10 | Forequarters | 3/9 |
| INS: 2d6+4 (11) | Strike Rank | 11 | 11–13 | Right Front Leg | 3/7 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Warty Skin | 14–16 | Left Front Leg | 3/7 |
| | | | 17–20 | Head | 3/8 |

**Abilities:** *Amphibious, Engulfing, Night Sight*

**Skills:** *Athletics 49%, Brawn 65%, Endurance 66%, Evade 40%, Mesmerise 68%, Perception 58%, Stealth 61%, Swim 62%,Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *Doleful Lure (Bite, Tongue) 69%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Crucshing Bite* | *L* | *T* | *1d6+1d8* | *As for Head* |
| *Tongue* | *M* | *VL* | *Entangle* | *As for Head* |

# Assassin Conch

Conches are a shoreline breed of sea snail that evolved to be remarkable predators of tiny fish and water fauna, but one breed of conch evolved into a much bigger and more powerful hunter – the assassin conch. These huge molluscs have foregone the hunting of small fish and shrimp to find larger and more satisfying prey, like shoreline mammals or wading humanoids, especially those living upon the atolls of Hina Bay.

The shell of an assassin conch can grow up to several metres across, with the ability to extend its head and eyestalks a further metre if interested. Their spiral-shaped thorny shell is actually a beautiful rosy hue of reds, oranges and pinks, but the conch actually disguises itself by sticking sand and small rocks to its outside with a thick mucus – allowing it better to hide in tidal pools or coral growths. Like all predatory shellfish it has two long eyestalks that it uses to perceive its surroundings and an extendable snout that it uses to snare and kill its prey.

Assassin conchs rely on attacking from ambush, waiting for creatures to approach their camouflaged shell – either half buried in the sand of a beach or in shallow water. Submerged attacks are more preferable, since it is difficult for weapons to strike at its delicate snout whilst reeling in the victim. If the proboscis fails to hit the surprised prey, the conch withdraws into its shell and waits for the next potential victim to wander by. If threatened, assassin conches can withdraw themselves into their shell and even possess small operculum or doors to block the opening behind them. They can survive being thus bottled up for weeks at a time. The shell of a conch has a number of Armour Points equal to half its SIZ.

Due to its malleable nature, the snout attack of an assassin conch can Impale, but the conch need not make a Brawn skill roll to remove its proboscis if it wishes to. However, as the purpose of the snout attack is to capture and reel in a victim it either swells inside the wound if it impaled or distends its tip into a fleshy mouth to grasp the location struck, as per the Grip special effect. Anything that suffers a hit from the snout attack of an assassin conch suffers the effects of its paralytic poison. If they succumb the conch hauls itself onto the victim and the proboscis drills further into the flesh and begins to eat the victim from the inside out.

## Assassin Conch Paralytic

The sticky mucus which covers the eyes and snout of the conch is a very powerful paralytic, which takes immediate effect upon contact with skin. Designed to overcome the resistance of sharks, seals and even estuarine crocodiles, the poison begins a catastrophic overloading of the local nervous system, potentially causing air-breathing creatures to drown if in deep enough water. Head or chest hits are likely to result in death unless the victim has allies to aid them in their difficulty.

**Application**: Contact
**Potency**: 70
**Resistance**: Endurance
**Onset time**: Instantaneous
**Duration:** Half conch's CON in hours
**Conditions**: Failing to resist the potency of the poison instantly numbs the nerves of the area struck. It acts as both a pain killer and a paralytic, immobilising the location struck. A limb becomes useless, the abdomen prevents both legs or tail from moving and the head results in unconsciousness. If hit in the chest the victim not only loses control over all their limbs, but also begins to suffer Asphyxiation.
**Antidote/Cure**: Washing the affected area with urine will neutralise the effects after 2d6 rounds, although further First Aid rolls might be required to awaken an unconscious victim.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 1 | 1–14 | Body | 10/9 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 15–18 | Snout | 0/7 |
| SIZ: 2d6+12 (19) | Magic Points | 4 | 19 | Right Eyestalk | 0/6 |
| DEX: 1d6 (4) | Movement | Less than 1m | 20 | Left Eyestalk | 0/6 |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 6 | | | |
| POW: 1d6 (4) | Armour | Tough Shell | | | |

**Abilities:** *Aquatic, Camouflaged, Venomous*
**Skills:** *Athletics 0%, Brawn 72%, Disguise 64%, Endurance 56%, Evade 0%, Perception 42%, Willpower 38%*
**Combat Style:** *Sea Stab (Snout) 57%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Snout* | *M* | *M* | *1d6+1d4* | *As for Snout* |

# Aswang

Shape-shifters that conceal their diabolical natures behind a humanoid facade. They either hide themselves in larger High Folk or Colonist settlements to prey on unsuspecting neighbours, or form small village communes from which they launch nightly raids on the surrounding region. In their humanoid form they look no different from locals, although shy and elusive in their habits. At night, they transform themselves into domestic creatures such as cats, pigs, birds or dogs in which shape they can hunt without raising suspicion.

Only when feeding do aswang adopt their intrinsic form, preferring to consume the livers and hearts of unborn or small children. The creatures possess a long extendable proboscis which they use to suck the foetuses out of their mothers' wombs, pluck children through convenient windows, or even draw the internal organs of a sleeping victim through a gap in the walls of their home. Although appearing somewhat bat-like, physically aswang are very spindly, thin enough to hide themselves behind a sapling.

Aswang are naturally fast and silent, but some also make noises to confuse their potential victims, emitting a *tik-tik* sound that is louder the further away the aswang is. To cover their escape aswang often replace their live victims with illusionary duplicates; magically animated mannequins carved from tree trunks or other plant materials. This facsimile is left in, or near, the victim's home, apparently overcome by sickness. Only once the illusion fades does the true nature of the copy become apparent, often leading to superstitious beliefs that the victim has been transformed by a type of plant curse.

An aswang can be revealed by using a bottle of special oil extracted from boiled coconut meat and mixed with herbs and blessed by a kahuna who binds a Guardian Spirit into it. The oil boils when an aswang draws near, continuing to froth until it departs. In its humanoid form aswang are reputed to possess bloodshot eyes, the result of staying up all night searching for unprotected homes, foolish travellers or untended bodies prior to their burial.

Aswang prefer to utilise stealth and cunning, rather than engage in full frontal assault. Since feeding generally takes several minutes and it is difficult to extract their proboscis once they begin, aswang usually prefer to snatch a victim, dragging them into the jungle before feeding on them in a more leisurely manner.

In a populated environment they will shapeshift into an innocuous animal to wander around a settlement without raising an alert. When they reach a suitable home they hide in the deepest shadows and cautiously return to their true shape, in order to use their proboscis with which they grab their prey. There they wait patiently until their victim is sleeping before snatching them, using the time to form the bogus mannequin which they substitute in their place. In the case of unguarded corpses they simply make off with them. Only the more daring will attempt to feed from the womb of a pregnant woman whilst she is sleeping in her own home.

Outside of a village or town the aswang will actively stalk a lone victim, using their Ventriloquism skill to confuse and ambush their prey. Providing they are aware of its trickery using volume, the target is permitted to resist, opposing the Ventriloquism with their Perception. If the victim wins they are not surprised when the ambush is sprung. The creature will strike with its proboscis to grapple any weapon, then tear at the victim with its claws. As aswang dislike fair fights they will tend to flee combat if they do not manage to subdue the victim quickly, or suffer a Serious Wound.

Aswang do not attack when shapeshifted, since any time they receive an injury and fail a Willpower check they are forced back to their natural form. They can wield weapons in humanoid shape, but generally prefer not to fight in order to preserve their cover as harmless locals. Aswang are vulnerable to weapons made of silver or stingray's tails, which pass through their natural chitinous armour. They are also allergic to pure salt, a fistful cast upon them causes 1d6 damage to the location struck. The only other form of protection is either powdered ginger or semen. If either substance is successfully thrown at an aswang, it must resist the attack roll with an opposed Willpower test or else flee in terror!

Each shapechange costs the aswang 1 Magic Point. Creating an illusion covered mannequin costs 3 Magic Points and has a default Magnitude equal to half the caster's POW for the purposes of penetrating or dispelling it; and lasting the same number in hours' duration.

## Aswang Poison

The proboscis of an aswang secretes a combined anaesthetic and soporific poison, which has little physiological effect save that it helps prevent a sleeping or inattentive victim from noticing that they have been impaled by its feeding tube.

**Application**: Injection

**Potency**: 65

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: Immediate Anaesthesia, Unconsciousness after 1d3 minutes, Nausea if survives

**Duration**: Aswang's CON in hours

**Conditions**: If not resisted the mere touch of the poison is enough to instantly numb the nerves in the area where the proboscis enters the body, deadening any pain caused by the impaling proboscis. The soporific is mild, lulling the victim into a sleep deep enough not to notice being carried, although they can be brought to full consciousness with a loud enough noise or severe jostling. Until the poison runs its course, a still living victim suffers the effects of a mild Nausea.

**Antidote/Cure**: None needed.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Right Leg | 3/5 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d2 | 4–6 | Left Leg | 3/5 |
| SIZ: 2d6+3 (10) | Magic Points | 11 | 7–9 | Abdomen | 3/6 |
| DEX: 2d6+9 (16) | Movement | 6m/10m Flying | 10–12 | Chest | 3/7 |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 15 | 13–15 | Right Arm/Wing | 3/4 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Furry Chitin | 16–18 | Left Arm/Wing | 3/4 |
| CHA: 3d6 (11) | | | 19–20 | Head | 3/5 |

**Abilities:** *Allergy (Salt), Grappler, Shape-Shifter (multiple forms), Venomous, Vulnerable (Silver, Stingray Tails)*

**Skills:** *Athletics 65%, Brawn 59%, Craft Mannequin 69%, Endurance 56%, Evade 52%, Perception 54%, Stealth 69%, Ventriloquism 66%, Willpower 62%*

**Magic:** *Can cast Animate Wood and Phantom with an Invocation skill of 56%*

**Combat Style:** *Stealthy Probing (Claw, Proboscis) 75%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Proboscis* | *S* | *M* | *Poison* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *S* | *T* | *1d4+1d2* | *As for Arm/Wing* |

# Bakunawa

The 'Bringer of Darkness' is a huge type of aquatic serpent which clouds its approach under a miasma of shadows. It appears as a pale-coloured giant eel with a gaping toothless maw, a red tongue, whiskers, gills and small celli along its sides. Two sets of vestigial wings emerge from its slithery skin, one is small and ash-grey while the other is tiny, found further down its body. They normally reside along the coast or in lakes and swamps, but sometimes wriggle across dry land in search of nourishment.

Surrounding the bakunawa is a cloud of twilight darkness which deepens with the age of the individual. Newly spawned young merely dim the light, reducing visibility to poor, whilst adults create an area of partial darkness. Only ancient specimens of massive size can create pitch blackness, misleading viewers into thinking that that an eclipse has occurred. The magical darkening has a Magnitude equal to the bakunawa's POW and a range of twice that in metres.

Bakunawa lack eyes, relying on electrolocation instead; able to pick up the electrical fields of living things at ranges similar to Life Sense (see RuneQuest page 315). They are unsophisticated creatures, utilising their engulfing bite to swallow down victims whole, whilst relying upon their stealth and darkness to shield them from attack. A bakunawa can only swallow 1d3 victims before becoming satiated.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 2 | 1–3 | Tail Tip | 4/12 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d12 | 4–5 | Mid End-length | 4/12 |
| SIZ: 4d6+24 (38) | Magic Points | 7 | 6–7 | Fore End-length | 4/12 |
| DEX: 2d6+3 (10) | Movement | 6m | 8–9 | Rear Mid-length | 4/13 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 11 | 10–12 | Mid Mid-length | 4/13 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Thick, Slimy Skin | 13–14 | Fore Mid-length | 4/13 |
| | | | 15–16 | Rear Fore-length | 4/12 |
| | | | 17–18 | Mid Fore-length | 4/12 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 4/12 |

**Abilities:** *Aquatic, Area Attack (Writhing), Cold Blooded, Engulfing, Swimmer*

**Skills:** *Athletics 59%, Brawn 77%, Endurance 68%, Evade 40%, Perception 59%, Stealth 62%, Willpower 54%*

**Magic:** *Field of Darkness (see description)*

**Combat Style:** *Die in Darkness (Swallow and Writhe) 69%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *H* | *L* | *1d6+1d12* | *As for Head* |
| *Writhe* | *E* | *VL* | *1d8+1d12* | *As for Body Segment* |

# Bone Wraith

A unique type of restless, undead spirit which inhabits a special place on the island, called the Valley of Ivory Doom. The valley is a sheer-sided rift which contains one of the dimensional gateways, through which massive herbivorous creatures occasionally wander, then die from starvation, since there is no way to leave the rift except by climbing the precipitous walls. Over a millennia the accumulated bodies have covered the floor of the valley with a literal carpet of bones, scattered through which are valuable tusks of alien ivory.

Few of the lizardman natives dare to descend into the rift to pilfer the ivory, due to the ghostly souls of a few sapient beings who have died by being sacrificially thrown into the rift. Their spirits, unable to leave the area, have turned into bone wraiths that viciously attack any living creature which enters their realm, shrieking dementedly and seeking to drain their life force for sustenance.

In the material world the wraiths create strange, insane bodies formed from a random melange of swirling, tumbling bones plucked up from the ground. Each body is unique, created afresh each time the wraith materialises to slay those who transgress the mass graveyard. As an example, a bone wraith using the bones of prehistoric creatures might take a mammoth pelvis for a head, use a partially connected ground sloth arm as one limb, and a length of spine vertebrae as another. They attack with these bones until the trespasser is slain, then feast upon its departing soul.

On the spirit plane the wraiths take a similarly disjointed form, but the intangible bones are always of their original species. As spirits they are immune to physical damage. Magical weapons and spells do affect them, slowly battering away bits and pieces of the skeletal jumble until the wraith can no longer sustain the physical form. They can be temporarily dissipated, but always reform over a period of several days. A Bone Wraith can only be laid to rest if all the bones of its original body are located and given suitable burial or cremation; something which is near impossible in the valley where bones have been slowly scattered through the centuries.

Treat bone wraiths the same as their Wraith compatriots (see RuneQuest page 412) save that their attacks are physical; inflicting damage from shards of bone and causing the loss of one Fatigue level rather than the necrotic effect. The following characteristics are for an Intensity 2 bone wraith.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 3 | 1–20 | Body | */16 |
| POW: 1d6+12 (16) | Spirit Damage | 1d8 | | | |
| CHA: 2d6+6 (13) | Magic Points | 16 | | **As per normal wraith* | |
| | Movement | 6m | | | |
| | Strike Rank | 13 | | | |
| | Armour | None | | | |

**Abilities:** *Fatigue Drain, Immunity (Non-magical Weapons), Life Sense*

**Skills:** *Athletics 59%, Brawn 39%, Evade 56%, Perception 69%, Stealth 56%, Willpower 62%*

**Combat Style:** *Bony Wrath (Shard attacks and Spirit Combat) 69%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bony Shards* | *L* | *M* | *1d8+Fatigue Drain* | - |
| *Spirit Combat* | - | - | *1d8 Magic Points* | |

# Bultungin (Werehyenas)

A people who can transform themselves between men, hyenas and a hybrid cross of the two, bultungin (or bouda) are feared for their sorcerous powers and cannibalistic tendencies, harbouring a passion for the taste of carrion. Normally found in arid scrublands, plains and deserts, bultungin often live in human society, their physical strength particularly suiting them to the role of blacksmith. But during the hours of darkness, they adopt hyena form and lope great distances across the countryside seeking others of their kind to sport with and fresh graves to despoil.

Although ostensibly they try to keep their true nature secret, in regions where bultungin are prevalent almost every smith, or man of great strength and reclusive nature, is assumed to be a bouda. Other signs are a muscular hirsute body, gleaming red eyes or a nasal voice. However, few are willing to act against a suspected werehyena, as their wizardly powers are said to inflict lasting curses.

Not all bultungin are unrepentant cannibalistic monsters, some actually use their talents to ward evil from their local community or work as healers. Whatever their motivations, bultungin know 1d3+3 Sorcery spells in addition to their shapechanging ability. Each transformation costs a single Magic Point to perform, but save for movement rates, natural armour and weapons their Characteristics remain the same. In full animal shape they look like huge oversized hyenas, whereas in hybrid form they gain the head and lower legs of a hyena but retain the torso, arms and bipedal stance of a human – permitting them to still wield weapons if desired.

Although bultungin are fierce fighters, they use sorcery to their advantage and prefer to wield weapons in hybrid form if such are available. Depending on the spells they cast, they can whittle down a group of opponents or enhance their own prowess prior to engaging in close combat. When outnumbered they attempt to disengage and flee, sometimes utilising the higher movement rate of their animal form to outpace foes, ducking and weaving to evade missile fire.

In hyena form a bultungin is loathe to take on more than a single opponent, as they tend to get caught up in their animal instincts. Assaults are normally launched from ambush, combined with a Leaping Attack to knock the target prone. After which they exclusively bite, attempting to win a Grip special effect in order to hold on and savage the location further. If successful the bultungin's crushing jaws automatically inflict damage on its next action without having to roll. If it wins two special effects against an armed foe, it will combine Grip with Choose Location and attack the weapon arm – thus preventing that particular weapon from being used against it. Unless the opponent can break free on their turn, they quite often have their limbs torn off!

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Right Leg | */6 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 4–6 | Left Leg | */6 |
| SIZ: 1d6+12 (16) | Magic Points | 11 | 7–9 | Abdomen | */7 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 6m, 8m as hyena, 10m as hybrid | 10–12 | Chest | */8 |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 13 | 13–15 | Right Arm | */5 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | None | 16–18 | Left Arm | */5 |
| CHA: 3d6 (11) | | | 19–20 | Head | */6 |
| | | | | **0AP as human, 1AP as hybrid, 2AP as hyena* | |

**Abilities:** *Magic Sense, Night Sight*

**Skills:** *Athletics 62%, Brawn 75%, Craft (Smithing) 66%, Endurance 66%, Evade 56%, Laugh Mockingly 72%, Perception 54%, Stealth 66%, Track 56%, Willpower 62%*

**Magic:** *Invocation 66%, Shaping 64%*

**Combat Style:** *Bultungin Fighter (Cultural Weapons) 62%, Laughing Hunter (Unarmed) 72%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Human Fist* | *S* | *T* | *1d3+1d4* | *As for Arm* |
| *Hyena Bite* | *M* | *T* | *1d6+1d4* | *As for Head* |
| *Hyena Claw* | *M* | *M* | *1d4+1d4* | *As for Limb* |

# Bunyip

Diabolical water beasts that lurk in swamps, small pools and waterfalls, ready to drag victims to their doom, bunyips are a strange chimerical blend of different creatures with a vicious temperament and an appetite to match. They live in isolated places, perhaps the result of their own predatory natures, but are sometimes encountered roaming from their watery homes searching for food. According to the island's natives a bunyip has the body and legs of a crocodile, the head and neck of a serpent, and a serrated bill of intimidating size. Its muscular legs are clawed but the forelegs are far longer. When they emerge from the water they stand upright, towering nearly four metres in height!

The bunyip hunts by lurking under the surface, ready to launch itself explosively from the water and grab victims too close to the edge; dragging them into the depths where they drown, hugged in its strong grasp. As water creatures they are powerful swimmers, kicking their legs like a frog. Bunyip are often considered supernatural monsters, able to remain submerged continuously and nearly impossible to spot, even in clear water. When they lunge out of a pool to grab a victim, the attack is almost soundless. One moment the creature is drinking by a pool, the next is just a gentle spreading of ripples…

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 4d6+12 (26) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Tail | 6/12 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +2d6 | 4–5 | Right Hind Leg | 6/11 |
| SIZ: 4d6+24 (38) | Magic Points | 11 | 6–7 | Left Hind Leg | 6/11 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 4m/8m Swimming | 8–10 | Hindquarters | 6/13 |
| INS: 2d6+7 (14) | Strike Rank | 14 | 11–14 | Forequarters | 6/14 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Tough Scales | 15–16 | Right Front Leg | 6/12 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Front Leg | 6/12 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head and Neck | 6/12 |

**Abilities:** *Aquatic, Earth Sense, Swimmer, Grappler*

**Skills:** *Athletics 59%, Brawn 84%, Endurance 68%, Evade 46%, Perception 65%, Stealth 67%, Swim 75%, Willpower 62%*

**Combat Style:** *Explosive Strike (Beak, Claw, Tail) 79%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Beak* | *H* | *M* | *1d10+2d6* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *H* | *L* | *1d8+2d6* | *As for Limb* |
| *Tail Slap* | *H* | *VL* | *1d6+2d6* | *As for Tail* |

# Byangoma

The legendary birds of Kapala before its fall, they are portrayed as wise, fortune-telling avians that help the deserving; in fact almost the opposite to the demonic asipatra. Such is their benevolence and wisdom that the natives of the island seek them out for advice. Despite their size and a feathered plumage of such scintillating colours it would put a peacock to shame, the byangoma are hard to find, spending much of their time in the upper foliage of the jungle and cloud forest, placing them far out of reach to non-arboreal creatures.

Normally byangoma shun combat, but will fight in self-defence or to help overthrow a great evil. However, due to their potent prophesies, some hunt them in the hope of forcing a captive bird to reveal their mystical knowledge. These efforts usually end in doom, often by the twisting of others' fates to undermine that of their captors.

Although physically they pose little challenge, their supernatural abilities and intellects more than offset this disadvantage. They can often turn the tide of battle by letting lose a burst of celestial fire, or by selflessly drawing attention for a combat action, letting a hard-pressed opponent slip free. The magical plumage of a byangoma grants it protection against most attacks.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 1d6+6 (10) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Right Claw | 6/4 |
| CON: 1d6+6 (10) | Damage Modifier | -1d2 | 4–6 | Left Claw | 6/4 |
| SIZ: 1d6+3 (7) | Magic Points | 17 | 7–9 | Abdomen | 6/5 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 10m Flying | 10-12 | Chest | 6/6 |
| INT: 1d3+15 (17) | Strike Rank | 15 | 13–15 | Right Wing | 6/4 |
| POW: 1d3+15 (17) | Armour | Wonderful Plumage | 16–18 | Left Wing | 6/4 |
| CHA: 1d3+15 (17) | | | 19–20 | Head | 6/4 |

**Abilities:** *Breathe Flame (Once per Day), Diving Attack, Flying, Magic Sense*

**Skills:** *Athletics 22%, Brawn 18%, Endurance 50%, Evade 46%, Fly 72%, Locale (94%), Lore (Esoteric Knowledge) 64%, Lore (Philosophy) 84%, Perception 74%, Prophesy 84%, Willpower 74%*

**Combat Style:** *Flutter Distractingly (Claws and Wings) 62%, Chastise Evil (Fire) 72%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Celestial Fire* | - | - | *2d6* | - |
| *Claw* | *S* | *S* | *1d2-1d2* | *As for Claw* |
| *Wing Batter* | *M* | *M* | *1d3-1d2* | *As for Wing* |

# Cannibal Spirit (Wendigo)

Starving to death is a constant threat amongst the lowland savages, depending as they do on regular arrivals through the capricious Smoking Mirrors. This danger is so great, that some tribes turn to active cannibalism (rather than traditional religious observance) in order to survive the lean times, preying on enemy tribes or even neighbouring villages if desperate enough. One such tribe became so degenerate that they ceased eating any other food and only hunted others of their kind. When this transgression was discovered the island's kahuna sealed them within the damned village, forbidding their spirits to lodge with the ancestors. Eventually in their madness and unceasing hunger the villagers consumed their own flesh, so that when they eventually died their souls were transformed into cursed spirits, which now plague the island seeking vengeance for the doom placed upon them.

Though rare, cannibal spirits are greatly feared. To be covertly possessed by one of these horrors means that the victim slowly falls, uncomprehending, into a nightmare world which starts with vague dreams of killing rivals and concludes with awakening one morning feasting on the still warm entrails of their closest friends. If such murders cannot be covered up, the possessed victim usually goes insane and flees into hiding, where they eventually end up eating their own body.

The driving hunger of a cannibal spirit is ceaseless and dispassionate. They start a possession with a modicum of self control, trying to keep their nocturnal habits hidden from the community, but as suspicions awaken, the possessed individual turns increasingly paranoid and the spirit within becomes desperate to satiate its hunger before it is cast back out to wander in search of a new host.

Most of the island's cannibal spirits have been imprisoned over the centuries into isolated tiki, declared taboo by the local kahuna in fear that the spirit within will be let loose. This is not usually a problem since even animals give such tiki a wide berth due to their malignant aura. A few still wander free and are usually found hovering near the remnants of their last host. Anyone disturbing the remains draws the spirit's attention, following the desecrator from the Spirit Plane and waiting until they sleep before discorporating them in an attempt to possess their body. If the target manages to fight off the spirit, they dimly recall a terrifying nightmare upon awakening. Losers recall nothing of the possession, blithely unaware of what now lodges inside them.

Cannibal Spirits usually range from 1 to 3 Intensity, although the spirit of their long-dead hetman has an Intensity of 5. They have the following Characteristics:

STR: As per host
CON: As per host
SIZ: As per host
DEX: As per host
INT: 2d6+6
POW: As Indicated By Intensity
CHA: 3d6

**Abilities**: Covert Possession, Discorporation, Recurring

**Skills**: Deceit 50%+INT+CHA, Discorporate 50%+POW+INT, Insight 50%+INT+POW, Locale 70%+(INTx2), Native Tongue 70%+INT+CHA, Perception 70%+INT+POW, Spectral Combat 50%+POW+CHA, Stealth 70%+DEX+INT, Willpower 50%+(POWx2) and a Cultural Combat Style 70%+STR+DEX.

The cannibal spirit uses the Athletics, Brawn, Endurance and Evade skills of its host.

# Centipede, Giant

One of the nastiest predators of the island is the giant centipede. Fast, savage and venomous, this terrifying insect has such a nasty temperament it will attack other predators up to twice its own size. As with other large invertebrates, it spends much of its time sifting through the detritus of jungle floor, often hiding under a thin layer of leaf mould to rest.

Similar to their diminutive kin, giant centipedes are just basic life forms that have grown to monstrous size. They have simple organ structures and distributed nervous systems that allow them to survive the most horrendous of wounds and although they cannot survive being cut in two, both halves of a mortally injured centipede will continue to flail and writhe for several minutes after it is technically dead.

In general they possess a length of ten times their diameter, with a mandible-armed head at one end which injects a disabling venom into prey, prior to carving off gobbets of flesh with the lesser mouth parts. Giant centipedes have no known upper limit to how big they can grow. Although it takes decades for them to develop, thankfully the most colossal specimens retreat to the island's subterranean lava tubes and only the immature specimens remain near the surface world, boosting their growth with regular meals of protein and vegetable matter which they find at ground level.

Immature centipedes grow two metres in length every ten years. After about a century the centipede begins to burrow deeper into the earth and its growth drops to a tenth. Every additional two metres of length beyond the first, a giant centipede gains +3 STR, +6 for SIZ, and +1 Armour Point. Once they reach 10 metres in length their POW is raised to 2d6.

The characteristics given here are for a mature (and very dangerous) 10 metre centipede.

Since centipedes constantly move and wriggle during combat using the 'Choose Location' special effect against them becomes a Critical Only, individual segments being difficult to target under such circumstances, unless the centipede immobilises part of its body by using it to enwrap and crush a victim. Such grapples automatically inflict damage each subsequent action it devotes to squeezing a victim.

Due to its segmented body and distributed nervous system, centipedes are immune to the effects of Serious Wounds. If it suffers a Major Wound to a segment and then fails its Endurance test, the centipede is severed at that location. At this point both halves will begin to writhe madly about, forcing nearby combatants to evacuate the area or suffer a non-grappling body crush attack each round. The fatally wounded creature will take a number of rounds equal to its CON to stop thrashing and finally die, but will no longer specifically target any individual in its death throes.

## Centipede Venom

A simple paralytic poison to render prey immobile whilst the centipede eats it alive.

**Application**: Injection

**Potency**: 50 + 5 per 2 metre length of the centipede

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: Immediate Paralysis in location bitten, then affecting the entire body 1d3 rounds later

**Duration**: Centipede's CON in hours

**Conditions**: If not resisted the poison acts as a muscle relaxant, immobilising the area bitten, and soon spreading to the rest of the body. Somewhat cruelly it does nothing to stop the sensation of pain.

**Antidote/Cure:** A prophylactic brewed from local herbs is known to tribal shamans, which makes the Endurance roll to resist the venom one step easier. If this is overcome, however, the victim must still wait out the entire duration to recover.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+15 (22) | Action Points | 2 | 1–3 | Segment 1 | 5/12 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d12 | 4–5 | Segment 2 | 5/12 |
| SIZ: 2d6+30 (37) | Magic Points | 7 | 6–7 | Segment 3 | 5/12 |
| DEX: 2d6+3 (10) | Movement | 8m | 8–9 | Segment 4 | 5/13 |
| INS: 2d6+2 (9) | Strike Rank | 10 | 10–12 | Segment 5 | 5/13 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Chitin | 13–14 | Segment 6 | 5/13 |
| | | | 15–16 | Segment 7 | 5/12 |
| | | | 17–18 | Segment 8 | 5/12 |
| **Abilities:** *: Adhering, Blood Sense, Earth Sense, Grappler, Venomous* | | | 19–20 | Head | 5/12 |
| **Skills:** *Athletics 52%, Brawn 79%, Endurance 68%, Evade 40%, Perception 46%, Stealth 49%, Willpower 54%* | | | | | |
| **Combat Style:** *Poisonous Pinion (Body Crush, Mandibles) 72%* | | | | | |

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Manidbles* | *E* | *T* | *1d10+1d12+Venom* | *As for Head* |
| *Bodu Crush* | *H* | *M* | *1d8+1d12* | *As for Body Segment* |

# Clam, Giant

More a natural trap rather than a predatory threat, heavy and immobile giant clams are dangerous to swimmers, especially those hunting for their pearls. They normally lie camouflaged on the sea bed, covered with weeds and other detritus with their shell open to allow wandering fish or crustaceans to enter. Some species of clam have a luminous organ which glows to attract unwitting prey.

By their nature clams can only attack creatures which, failing to spot them, have stepped on or touched the shellfish's innards. It gets a single attack, snapping shut to pin anything remaining within its shell with an automatic grapple. Damage is only applied on the initial crush.

Once closed the clam can perform no other actions save for holding onto its meal. Breaking free of the vice-like grip depends on winning a Contest of Strength using Brawn (see RuneQuest page 59). If the victim fails they cannot make any further attempts, but must try another method to kill the clam or receive help from companions, hopefully before they drown.

Although a clam may seem vulnerable to an armed opponent, the rules for underwater combat should be remembered. Only thrusting weapons are effective in submerged combat, and few swimmers carry anything more than a knife. Often the only chance for an air breathing creature to survive is to cut or chew off the trapped limb.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 3d6+6 (17) | Action Points | 1 | 1-20 | Body | 8/7 |
| CON: 2d6 (7) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | | | |
| SIZ: 2d6+9 (16) | Magic Points | 2 | | | |
| DEX: 1d3 (2) | Movement | Immobile | | | |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 5 | | | |
| POW: 1d3 (2) | Armour | Solid Shell | | | |

**Abilities:** *Aquatic, Grappler, Trapper*

**Skills:** *Athletics 0%, Brawn 73%, Endurance 34%, Evade 0%, Perception 0%, Stealth 60%, Willpower 0%*

**Combat Style:** *Clamp Hard (Bite) 67%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Crushing Shell* | *L* | *T* | *1d4+1d4* | *As for Body* |

# Cob Hobbler

Technically more of a symbiotic infestation rather than a separate creature, the cob hobbler is a horrible transformation which mutates, then subverts its host to its final arachnid form. Cob hobblers begin life as spore-like larva, appearing a bit like giant dandelion seeds which are often shed and float about in late rainy season. If one of these innocuous 'seedlings' manages to settle on bare living flesh its tip detaches and burrows under the skin, generally positioned somewhere on the back of the host creature. This produces a sore spot which slowly develops from a small boil to a swollen hunch over a period of four to six months.

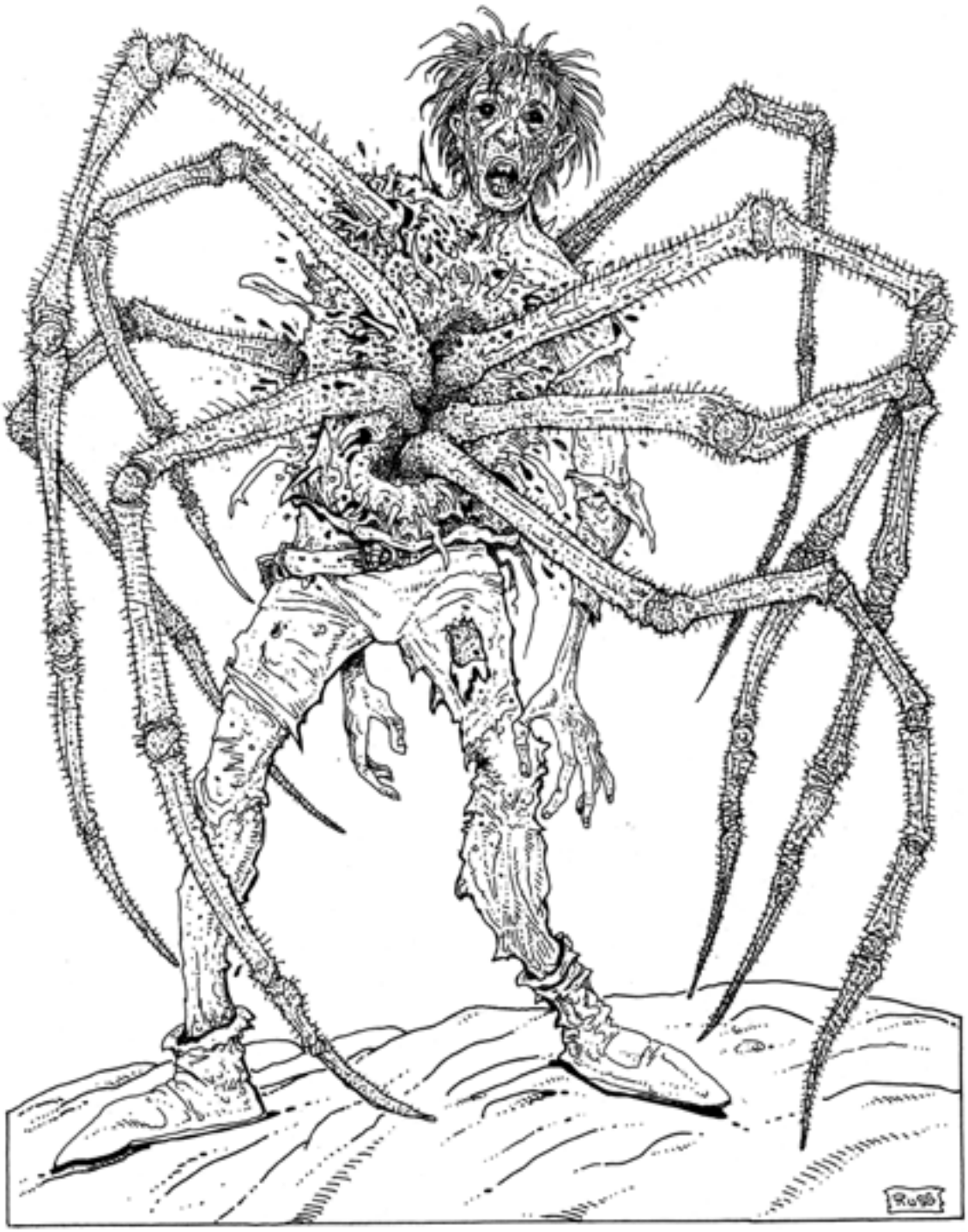
Save for the disfigurement of the swelling, there is little noticeable effect on the host creature during this time. Towards the end of the period, however, the host begins to experience pangs of a carnivorous nature – their digestive systems start to refuse anything else except fresh meat, even if the host was originally herbivorous. Slow changes in the creature's dentition replace blunt molars with new, incising teeth, permitting the ability to render flesh into fine mince before swallowing. If sapient, the host is at first unaware of its gradual dietary switch, not even noticing unless pointed out by companions, after which they shamefacedly eat in private, not understanding the primal urge. Herd animal hosts will start to alienate their fellow beasts as they start to extrude an unnatural fetid smell partially composed of the flesh they are increasingly eating.

Once gestation is complete the hump reaches huge proportions, the skin over the turgid swelling stretching tight, forcing bipedal hosts to bend over from the pain and weight. Sapient victims turn paranoid, both fearful of the terrible transformation they are undergoing and the change in their mental state; civilised behaviour and ethical morals beginning to be undermined.

At some dramatic moment, normally a stressful situation which places the host in physical danger, the hump splits open and eight spider-legs in semi-proportion to the host's body rip free. These are the cob hobbler's own legs, connected to its central mass which itself is firmly interwoven with the

creature's nervous system, lodged deep in the host's chest cavity. There is no way of removing a cob hobbler at this stage without killing the host. Once its legs have sprouted the cob hobbler engages in a brief rampage of killing, filling itself with meat before going into hiding. This gives it a chance to allow its legs to reach full size before the symbiote engages in a predatory reign of terror, using the host's intelligence and knowledge to hunt prey. Thus a cob hobbler which subverts a sapient humanoid may be far more dangerous than one that infests a cow, despite the advantage of size.

The spindly legs of a cob hobbler allow it to climb walls or trees with ease, and grant it a superior movement rate. Other than this the parasite grants no other advantage, the base creature remaining relatively intact save for its subverted nervous system. A favoured tactic is to leap from ambush at a trailing or lone victim, grapple them with two legs then use the



remaining ones to run off at high speed, to eat their prey later. The only significant threat it poses are the spore patches upon its legs, which spread the seeds of a new generation if the cob hobbler is killed in combat. This can be very dangerous since a cloud of spores can corrupt an entire region, turning most of the native animals into multi-legged horrors.

A fully developed cob hobbler has little effect on the Characteristics of the host save for increasing their SIZ and DEX. If the host is struck in combat then roll 1d6. On a 1-3 use the host's normal locations to see where the blow landed. On a 4-6, roll on the following Hit Location table instead.

| Dice | Average |
|---|---|
| STR | As per Host |
| CON | As per Host |
| SIZ | As per Host x 1.5 |
| DEX | As per Host x 1.5 |
| INT | As per Host |
| POW | As per Host |

| 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|
| 1 – 2 | Right Fourth Leg | 6/As per Host's Leg |
| 3 – 4 | Left Fourth Leg | 6/As per Host's Leg |
| 5 – 6 | Right Third Leg | 6/As per Host's Leg |
| 7 – 8 | Left Third Leg | 6/As per Host's Leg |
| 9 – 10 | Right Second Leg | 6/As per Host's Leg |
| 11 – 12 | Left Second Leg | 6/As per Host's Leg |
| 13 – 14 | Right First Leg | 6/As per Host's Leg |
| 15 – 16 | Left First Leg | 6/As per Host's Leg |
| 17 – 20 | Chest | As per host |

**Action Points**: As per host +1 per pair of spider legs brought to bear
**Damage Modifier**: As per (adjusted) host
**Magic Points**: As per host
**Movement**: +4m to base ground movement
**Strike Rank:** As per (adjusted) host
**Armour**: 6AP Chitin, no Armour Penalty
**Abilities**: Adhering, Multi-Limbed
**Skill Adjustments:** Athletics +20%, Brawn +20%, Evade +20%

**Combat Styles**
As per host, but unarmed skill also includes control over spider legs

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Legs* | *Special* | *Special* | *Special* | *As for Leg* |

The size, reach and damage of the arachnid legs depend on the size of the host. Refer to the Natural Weapon Damage and Natural Weapon Size and Reach tables (see RuneQuest page 324) to gain a general idea. It is recommended that the host's original SIZ is used as the reference point, and that the reach is increased by one step.

## Cob Hobbler Spores

Black finger length spores with a feathery top, these reproductive seeds are floating time bombs if they manage to land on bare flesh. The spore only needs a moment of time to inject the tiny parasite (contained within its tip) under the victim's skin, leaving a tiny red dot of blood. Such injections cause faint stings, normally unnoticeable by those more severely wounded. If not cut out within minutes of the infection, the parasite burrows deep into the body, working its way to an area along the upper spine where extraction becomes far more risky.

**Application:** Touch
**Potency**: 60
**Resistance**: Endurance
**Onset time**: 1d3+3 months
**Duration:** Permanent
**Conditions:** The victim must make a single resistance roll when first touched by a spore. Failure indicates that they have been infested. The victim will slowly have its nervous system compromised by the infant cob hobbler whilst its eight spider legs grow in a slowly swelling cyst upon its back. See creature description above.

**Antidote/Cure**: If treated within the first three months, the symbiotic parasite can be removed via surgery. A successful Healing roll excises the creature without harm. Failure either kills the host or causes permanent paralysis due to damage to the spinal cord.

# Cockroach, Giant

Thriving in the lush jungles of the island, giant cockroaches are ubiquitous, thriving on the waste of humanoid civilisation and the strange carcasses of alien visitors through the Smoking Mirrors. Indeed the species is so successful that giant cockroach is a standard meal amongst the lowland savages, who consume it with relish.

Growing to nearly two metres in length, giant cockroaches are otherwise no different than a normal cockroach. Despite their size, they are capable of extremely rapid flight, making them not only a mobile threat but also a difficult one to predict. Armed with strong mandibles they are capable of chewing up most substances, storing the resulting mass in their stomach to be regurgitated later for additional rotting to aid digestion.

Instinctive scavengers, giant cockroaches, unless driven by extreme hunger or scenting a badly wounded creature, do not usually attack people. Assaults when they do occur are crude and unimaginative, save from perhaps launching an ambush from a pile of detritus.

Cockroaches do not parry or evade, merely barrel into a victim in a headlong charge, crushing them in its mandibles whilst shrugging off blows. If they win a special effect they Grip the location struck, continuing to crunch which automatically inflicts damage each turn until the location has been destroyed.

The physiology of giant cockroaches is so primitive they are almost indestructible. Decapitate or dismember a cockroach and it will ignore the effects of the Major Wound, effectively only dying by starvation if allowed to live that long. Likewise these insects seem immune to poison or disease, although this may be a factor of their incredible endurance. Except for overwhelming violence, the giant cockroach is downright immortal… as well as being good eating.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 2 | 1 | Right Rear Leg | 6/7 |
| CON: 2d6+18 (25) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 2 | Left Rear Leg | 6/7 |
| SIZ: 2d6+6 (13) | Magic Points | 4 | 3 | Right Middle Leg | 6/7 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 10m | 4 | Left Middle Leg | 6/7 |
| INS: 2d6+2 (9) | Strike Rank | 11 | 5–9 | Abdomen | 6/10 |
| POW: 1d6 (4) | Armour | Chitin | 10–13 | Thorax | 6/9 |
| | | | 14 | Right Front Leg | 6/7 |
| | | | 15 | Left Front Leg | 6/7 |
| **Abilities:** *Adhering, Burrower, Night Sight* | | | 16–20 | Head | 6/8 |
| **Skills:** *Athletics 62%, Brawn 64%, Endurance 90%, Evade 56%, Perception 43%, Survival 79%, Willpower 38%* | | | | | |
| **Combat Style:** *Disgusting Scuttle (Mandibles) 62%* | | | | | |

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Mandibles* | *M* | *M* | *1d6+1d4* | *As for Head* |

# Deathdrip Flowers

Deathdrips are purple-coloured bromeliad-like parasitic flowers which grow upon the lower branches of large trees. One of the many alien life-forms brought through the Smoking Mirrors, what was once the propagation method for the flowers has now become a lethal side effect. In return for the nutrients stolen from its host, the bromeliad now helps to sustain the tree by creating a large amount of natural fertiliser around its roots.

The concept is simple, as the flower extrudes an alien, and frighteningly potent, nerve toxin which appears tailored to affect higher-order reptilian and mammalian creatures. The toxin is only produced during electrical thunder storms, sweated from the petals of the flower where it mixes with captured rainwater, and is then carried to the ground as a series of drops. There it incapacitates by either being inadvertently swallowed (perhaps by grazing beasts) or more slowly from being absorbed through the skin.

Other than a pile of inert bodies, the only clue to the short-lived neurotoxin is that it has a smell a little like acrid pear drops. Unfortunately even inhaling the faintest whiff is enough to expose the victim to its deadly chemistry. Fortunately the complex toxin quickly fades from the environment in a matter of a few hours. This has led to the lowland natives believing that some trees are haunted by evil spirits which randomly slay passers-by.

Since they are more inherent traps than actively aggressive plants, no characteristics are provided for deathdrip flowers. Their toxin however has the adjacent stats (see boxed text).

### Deathdrip Toxin

An exceptionally powerful poison, the result of a very alien biology, it only affects reptilian and mammalian physiologies. Despite being considered deadly, the toxin does not directly kill its victim; rather it sends them into an effectively permanent coma, during which the hardly breathing victim eventually dies of dehydration. If not for its extremely short lifespan, it would certainly be used as an assassination method.

**Application**: Contact, Imbibed or Inhaled

**Potency**: 80

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d3 minutes, or ten times that if absorbed through the skin

**Duration**: Permanent

**Conditions**: Failing to resist the toxin causes unending Unconsciousness.

**Antidote/Cure**: Can only be neutralised by powerful magic or a concoction made from fresh hydra faeces and the powdered teeth of a pihuichen.

# Deinonychus

A ferocious, three metre-long dinosaur equipped with vicious, sickle-like claws on the second toe of each foot (the name means 'Terrible Claw') and fierce claws on the three fingers of each long arm, as well as a set of strong jaws with sharp, curved teeth for ripping and rending prey. The tail is thin, narrow and rodlike, used for balance. The animal is decked head to tail in a diverse array of feathers, from colourful head plumes and long "wing" arm feathers to shorter, more hair-like body feathers. Startling variations in colouration are evident in male and female animals, and across geographic regions.

A deinonychus is a swift, agile and merciless hunter that can use a combination of teeth, swift claw strikes and leaping attacks to overwhelm prey larger than itself. Groups of these terrors may band together to take down very large prey on occasion, but they generally favour prey of twice their size or less. In group hunting situations, deinonychus may use simple but cunning tactics to cooperate, although selfish opportunism may take over at inconvenient moments.

A deinonychus uses its whole arsenal of weaponry to incapacitate prey, initiating combat with a leap to take down prey, holding it immobile with the arm claws, then following up with a series of kicking strikes aimed at the legs and abdomen. Once prey is helpless the jaws are used to finish the job. The deinonychus is attracted to blood and tracks wounded and injured prey over many kilometres to secure its meals.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 3 | 1–2 | Tail | 2/6 |
| CON: 2d6+9 (16) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 3–5 | Right Leg | 2/6 |
| SIZ: 2d6+6 (13) | Magic Points | 7 | 6–8 | Left Leg | 2/6 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 10m | 9–11 | Abdomen | 2/7 |
| INS: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 16 | 12–14 | Chest | 2/8 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Tough Hide and Feathers | 15–16 | Right Arm | 2/5 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 2/5 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 2/6 |

**Abilities:** *Blood Sense, Leaper*

**Skills:** *Athletics 78%, Brawn 62%, Endurance 52%, Evade 68%, Perception 60%, Stealth 62%, Track 68%, Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *Explosive Strike (Beak, Claw, Tail) 79%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *T* | *1d4+1d4* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *M* | *M* | *1d6+1d4* | *As for Arm* |
| *Kick* | *M* | *M* | *1d8+1d4* | *As for Leg* |

# Dudreyas (Levius Stubbulos)

The dudreyas is a semi-sapient carnivorous plant that is peculiar and disturbing in every regard. Reaching four to five metres in height when mature, and with a one metre girth at the base, the dudreyas is predominantly dark green in colour, with occasional streaks of yellow and umber. At the base is a dense collection of serrated leaves, about the length of a forearm and shaped like a crude spear-head. Within the leaves is the bowl of the plant, a rugged, urn-sized protuberance with a surface that is as tough and gnarled as the shell of a walnut.

From the top of the bowl emerges the stem: as thick as a grown man's thigh at the base, and tapering slightly as it rises to the stigma. The stem is smooth when compared with the bowl, but threaded with disturbing, pulsing veins and covered in a fine, almost downy, fur akin to that of a mouldering peach. The stigma is the most troublesome aspect of this remarkable plant: a fat, bulbous, veined, ovoid as thick as a human torso, and both gnarled (like the bowl) and veined (like the stem). The stigma is bifurcated vertically, the edges of the bifurcation being rubbery and faintly red, almost like a pair of lips. When not in feeding mode, the stigma follows the course of the sun; and, when the sun is hidden, or at night, it droops, somewhat pathetically, onto its base of leaves.

The stigma contains the feeding apparatus for the plant; the bowl contains its digestive system, and the strange organ that constitutes a brain is buried below the soil, protected by the roots. The dudreyas subsists on meat and it has a variety of methods for attracting prey, as discussed below. The stigma opens, revealing within a purple and red stamen resembling an immense tongue. Rows of tiny, razor-sharp leaves surround the stamen and, when the stigma closes about a meal, the whole appendage convulses as the food is ground against these 'teeth' and digestive juices are forced up through the stem to help break-down the organic matter being enthusiastically masticated by the stigma.

- The leaves exude a sweet, glossy sap that is highly attractive to many different kinds of birds which fly down to feed. The sap is tasty, but also sticky, and smaller birds are easily caught and then snapped up by the stigma.
- The dudreyas senses the life-force of passing animals and, as they come within reach of the stem and stigma, it snaps out, the stigma forming an enormous mouth that engulfs the hapless prey.
- Finally – and most worrying for sapient creatures, such as humans and lizardfolk – the plant's brain, buried beneath the ground, sends out pulses of psychic energy which easily reach the minds of sapient creatures and are interpreted in the form of music and song: deeply rhythmic, strangely compelling, and with a tempo that the denizens of Port Grimsand might describe as 'hip'. These psychic vibrations act as a lure, coercing the victim (if not resisted) to move towards the plant, often in a dancing or swaying motion. Then, when the victim is close enough, the stigma snaps open, the neck shoots out, and the unresisting victim is engulfed; although such an act allows all witnesses subject to the plant's enthrallment another chance to resist.

*Continued*

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 4d6+12 (26) | Action Points | 2 | 01–06 | Leaf Base | 2/9 |
| CON: 3d6+10 (21) | Damage Modifier | +1d12 | 07–10 | Bowl | 4/12 |
| SIZ: 4d6+12 (26) | Magic Points | 7 | 11–14 | Stem | 4/11 |
| DEX: 3d6 (11) | Movement | Immobile | 15–20 | Stigma | 4/10 |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 10 | N/A | Root Brain | 6/10 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Tough Membrane & Roots | | | |

**Abilities:** *Engulfing, Formidable Natural Weapons (Stigma), Immunity (Impaling Weapons), Life Sense, Psychic Emanations (Enthrallment), Regeneration (1HP per day)*

**Skills:** *Athletics 0%, Brawn 62%, Endurance 72%, Evade 0%, Perception 45%, Willpower N/A*

**Combat Style:** *Feed Me All Night Long (Stigma) 77%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *L* | *L* | *1d8+1d12+Engulfing* | *As for Stigma* |
| *Bludgeon* | *L* | *L* | *1d6+1d12* | *As for Stigma* |

Digestion is rapid. The acidic compounds dissolve organic materials at the rate of 1 point of SIZ per five minutes, meaning that an average human is broken down into a digestible sludge in just over an hour. Inorganic material cannot be digested by the dudreyas and so, once the organics have been dealt with, non-consumables are vomited out of the stigma with considerable force, often landing several dozen metres away – which means that evidence of a sapient meal may not be immediately evident around the plant's base.

Dudreyai are problematic to kill. Slicing away any part of the upper plant prevents it from feeding, but its remarkable regenerative properties mean that fresh foliage re-sprouts at a rate of 1 Hit Point per day until it is fully formed once more. Destroying it outright can be accomplished by burning the thing, although the root system must also be burned, preventing regrowth. If fire is not an option, a weapon could be plunged down through the base, hopefully striking the well-protected brain-growth hidden within the roots (hence the lack of a d20 value in the statistics). Such attacks are at a Herculean grade of difficulty: the brain-growth is well-buried and it is tough to hit with precision.

Having limited sentience, a dudreyas can defend itself – either through bashing attacks with the heavy stigma, or biting attacks that intend to engulf (and then digest) the opponent. If an opponent can be clubbed senseless by the flailing stigma, the plant can then feed at leisure. An Engulfed victim suffers a Bite attack, as per the Engulfing rules (see RuneQuest page 314). Each round thereafter, the digestive juices produced in the plant's bowl inflict damage as per Strong Acid (see RuneQuest page 104). If the victim is still conscious, they can attempt to break free using a Contest of Strength.

# Dune Haunter (Sand Ghoul)

A type of desert spirit which has the power of commanding the sands, on other worlds dune haunters are greatly feared by nomadic tribesmen. Fortunately for the inhabitants of Monster Island, this ghostly race sticks to the little-frequented high plateau, the only arid place; as the touch of water is inimical to the manifested spirits.

In appearance a dune haunter is akin to a desiccated ghoul, thin and wiry of body with sharp teeth, gnarled claws and a dun coloured skin, which reeks of a burned, cinnamon-like scent being ostensibly their body odour. Such assumptions are false however, since the physical presence of the spirit is simply animated sand, held into some pattern recalled in some distant racial memory. It is quite possible for a dune haunter to turn themselves into a living rivulet of sand able to flow through the smallest crack.

Dune haunters normally wander the sands without purpose, but are drawn by the life force of large creatures especially humanoids. They generally travel as a whirling dust devil, reforming their ghoulish shape on encountering

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: | Action Points | 3 | 01–20 | Whole Body | 0/16 |
| CON: | Spirit Damage | 1d8 | | | |
| SIZ: | Magic Points | 16 | | | |
| DEX: | Movement | 6m, 12m as Dust Devil | | | |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 13 | | | |
| POW: 1d6+12 (16) | Armour | None | | | |
| CHA: 2d6+6 (13) | | | | | |
| **Skills:** *Allergy (Water), Immunity (Non-magical Weapons)* | | | | | |
| **Skills:** *Brawn 49%, Evade 66%, Perception 59%, Sand Sculpting 76%, Stealth 66%, Willpower 72%* | | | | | |
| **Combat Style:** *Sandy Doom (Sand attacks and Spirit Claws) 69%* | | | | | |

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Sand Wave* | *H* | *VL* | *Blinding (as per Blind Oppinent), or Asphyxiation* | - |
| *Spirit Claw* | *S* | *T* | *1d8* | - |

prey which they attack ruthlessly. In addition to striking physically using their Spirit Damage, they control the sand and small pebbles in their immediate vicinity, as if using the Sculpt sorcery spell (limit the material effects to one tenth of their Willpower), digging pits under foes (assuming a sufficient depth), filling tents, even sending a wave of sand to blind or asphyxiate opponents who fail to evade. Each discrete action costs one Magic Point to invoke.

Once sand has entered a victim's lungs it is usually a death sentence unless the sand haunter can be driven off by destroying its physical form, followed by a successful First Aid to clear the breathing passages. Unfortunately, dune haunters only take damage from magic or water, suffering 1d6 damage per litre of water they are struck by. Furthermore they are immune to Serious or Major Wounds. Even if physically destroyed by reducing them to zero Hit Points their spirit persists, reforming a new body after a day has passed, similar to a wraith. To permanently slay a dune haunter, it must be pursued onto the Spirit Plane and dissipated there.

If the victim is killed the sand haunter feasts on the departing soul, refreshing their Magic Points. The seeming unharmed corpse is left to desiccate under the sun, a warning to others crossing the same path. Fortunately few of these creatures exist on the plateau and those that know about them carry plenty of water to drive them off.

# Dziwozoana (Mamuna)

Dziwozoana or Mamuna are female swamp demons which mainly infest the southern jungles around the marshy Ghidori tribal lands, although they may be found wandering further afield. Malicious and dangerous, these demons are said to be the bloated bodies of old dowagers, unmarried mothers, or pregnant females who die before childbirth which have been animated by perverse Undeath spirits.

These foul creatures lust after young men, which they carry off to be their husbands. If prevented from eloping with the object of their desire, the dziwozona use their huge breasts to attack and murder those who interceded against the match; or if the species lacks mammary glands, as in the case of lizardfolk, the dziwozona returns at night whilst the intercessor sleeps, and kills them during a particularly revolting episode of necrophilia.

Natives who fall under the charms of a dziwozona have few choices save leaving a large stone in their sleeping hammock and fleeing into the mountains, trying to organise family to defend them, or going through with the repellent marriage. Those brave enough to survive the last course of action (dziwozona are not prone to forgiving those that cannot perform their husbandly duties) are returned a year later, rewarded with a great gift – a treasure, magical ability or forgotten skill of worth – and often become tribal champions, although they are sexually impotent ever after.

Dziwozoana have the characteristics of a three day old Zombie corpse, animated by an Intensity 4 Undeath Spirit. That is to say the species' normal rolled physical characteristics with the following modifiers +9 to STR, +9 to CON, -3 to SIZ, and -3 to DEX. Mental characteristics are substituted with INT 2d6+6, POW 1d6+24 and CHA 3d6.

In addition to the normal skills an Undeath Spirit possesses, it gains a Seduction skill of 20%+INT+CHA, a Folk Magic skill of 40%+POW+CHA and knows 1d6+3 random folk magic spells, of which one is always Glamour.

Human and Serpent People based dziwozona have their breasts enlarged to repulsive size, which dangle down to their knees. They are treated as Size Large, Reach Long weapons that inflict 1d4 damage before any Damage Modifier. They are capable of inflicting the Entangle special effect, which if entangling the head also causes suffocation.

# Eagle, Giant

Kings of raptors, giant eagles are amongst the largest predatory birds which can fly. Though smaller than the legendary roc these huge birds are still capable of snatching up a person in their claws or carrying one upon their back, the eagle's wingspan extending up to 15m. Most of the giant eagles upon the island live in the southern Tane Mountains, well away from those that would hunt them.

Due to their rather significant need for fresh meat, giant eagles soar considerable distances to find enough prey. They instinctively avoid the native villages, learning by bitter experience the traps and retaliation which welcome them. Instead they hunt wild alpine herbivores, monkeys and apes of the top jungle canopy, or they may even fish for small sharks in the seas surrounding the island, carrying the victim back to shore to eat.

Giant eagles build eyries in the highest mountain peaks, places perched in rocky clefts above sheer, un-scalable cliffs. Their feather lined nests are snug for eggs, but adult birds are often exposed to the strong winds of their high altitude homes. Rainy season often finds giant eagles hunkered down, half covered with drifting snow. However, their size and down keep them warm even in the most severe conditions.

Unless badly injured eagles always fight on the wing, their first strike beginning with a swooping dive out of the sun. If they surprise their target, this initial blow is combined with Choose Location to enable the great bird to rake the head, chest or forequarters, or more specifically the neck and spine. With the increase to its Damage Modifier for diving, most creatures are instantly killed.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+15 (22) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Right Leg | 4/9 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d10 | 4–6 | Left Leg | 4/9 |
| SIZ: 2d6+21 (28) | Magic Points | 7 | 7–10 | Abdomen | 4/10 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 2m, 15m Flying | 11–14 | Chest | 4/11 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 16 | 15–16 | Right Wing | 4/8 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Thick Feathers | 17–18 | Left Wing | 4/8 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 4/9 |

**Abilities:** *Driving Strike, Flyer, Grappler*

**Skills:** *Athletics 41%, Brawn 70%, Endurance 66%, Evade 38%, Fly 81%, Perception 79%, Stealth 51%, Willpower 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Death from Above (Claw, Peck, Wing) 81%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Peck* | *L* | *L* | *1d8+1d10* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *L* | *M* | *1d6+1d10* | *As for Leg* |
| *Wing Buffet* | *H* | *VL* | *2d10* | *As for Wing* |

Smaller prey, that is creatures up to half its SIZ, can be simply carried aloft by using the Grip special effect. This allows the eagle to soar back upwards, then either carry the struggling creature back to its eyrie or drop it from a fatal height.

If faced by large groups or formations of warriors, giant eagles will often perform a strafing attack, gliding low just over the nape of the earth. At this height their extended wings act as buffets, scything down anyone struck by their leading edges. Such attacks affect multiple opponents simultaneously (striking locations above the waist), usually inflicting Knockback or the Bash manoeuvre to smash them prone.

When not performing its swooping attacks, a giant eagle will keep well clear of ground-based enemies to ensure it stays out of missile weapon range. During a dive, prepared archers and the like only have a single chance to shoot at the creature since it is travelling so fast. The eagle is permitted a Fly roll to evade any such volley of missiles, using the roll against any ranged attack launched against it on the approach.

# Eel, Giant

Perhaps the source of many tales about sea serpents, the giant eel is a dangerous predator which can emerge from seas and lakes to feed on land animals. These beasts continue to grow throughout their lives, some monsters reaching colossal size. Normally however, they only start to become a serious threat to humans once they grow beyond 5m in length. Before this they are actually regarded as being good to eat, with plenty of muscle along their elongated spine.

Giant eels possess peg-like fangs to grip onto prey, which is thrashed around to tear off chunks. Lacking sheering teeth the eel is forced to swallow these large pieces whole, an extendable jaw permitting the creatures to gulp down lumps or even entire creatures nominally larger than its head. Eels can survive short lengths of time on land, provided they can keep their gills wet. This often means they only come ashore during rainy season. When they do so they leave strange silvery-slimy tracks where they wriggle; usually culminating at the carcass of a large herbivore which has had a limb or two torn off.

Eels are not particularly aggressive creatures unless hungry or accidentally rammed by a passing vessel when basking on the surface. Once stirred into action however, they become mindlessly implacable, often lunging up from the surface to drag a victim underwater where they can be dismembered with ease. If a giant eel connects with its bite it tries to Grip the opponent and on its following turn begins to thrash about, attempting to rip the victim apart. Rending cannot be parried and each action it spends thrashing about it inflicts its Damage Modifier to the location, ignoring armour. This continues until that location tears free from the rest of the body, or the victim manages to break or slip free.

The fishermen and coastal natives of the island generally only see such beasts at night during periods of the full moon, when they come to the surface to mate or bask in the sallow light. Every few years however, a strange migration occurs, causing vast numbers of giant eels to wriggle up the near un-scalable cliffs and squirm through the jungle in a single night of savage frenzy. Why they do this is unknown, but always culminates during a particular astronomical conjunction.

The following characteristics are for a 6-10 metre eel. For every five metres of length beyond that, add an extra point of armour and a further 3 points to STR and 6 points to SIZ.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+9 (16) | Action Points | 2 | 1–3 | Tail Tip | 3/7 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 4–5 | Mid End-length | 3/7 |
| SIZ: 2d6+12 (19) | Magic Points | 7 | 6–7 | Fore End-length | 3/7 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 4m, 6m Swimming | 8–9 | Rear Mid-length | 3/8 |
| INS: 2d6+3 (10) | Strike Rank | 12 | 10–12 | Mid Mid-length | 3/8 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Slimy Skin | 13–14 | Fore Mid-length | 3/8 |
| | | | 15–16 | Rear Fore-length | 3/7 |
| | | | 17–18 | Mid Fore-length | 3/7 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 3/7 |

**Abilities:** *Aquatic, Hold Breath, Swimmer, (Frenzy during migration)*

**Skills:** *Athletics 49%, Brawn 55%, Endurance 56%, Evade 46%, Perception 47%, Stealth 43%, Swim 79%, Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *Thrashing Fury (Bite, Rend) 59%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *L* | *T* | *1d6+1d4* | *As for Head* |
| *Rend* | *-* | *T* | *Damage Modifer* | *As for Head* |

# Eel, Lightning

Small but dangerous creatures, lightning eels stun their prey by electric shocks. Usually pacific in nature they live in jungle rivers hunting tiny fish which they live on, rarely interacting with humans unless accidentally stumbled upon. Sometimes however the island natives use lightning eels as guardians for sacred areas, containing them in sacred pools or as weapons, placed in water-filled urns.

At two metres long and thick bodied, each eel is a minor threat in its own right, but a swarm of eels can be deadly. The electric shock can only travel short distances in water, but can give an attacker a nasty surprise, especially if struck by a metal weapon that can conduct the charge back to the wielder's hand. The eel can release a jolt every 1d3 turns, which must be resisted by anyone within range. If the victim succeeds in an opposed test of their Endurance against the Zap roll of the eel, they escape harm.

Failing the test causes the victim to be stunned, unable to act for 1d4+1 rounds, leaving them vulnerable to the eel's bite. If the Endurance roll is a fumble the victim suffers heart failure instead, dying unless they are successfully treated with the First Aid. A lightning eel's teeth are less of a threat, being no more significant than a non-venomous snake bite.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 1d6+6 (10) | Action Points | 2 | 1–3 | Tail Tip | 0/4 |
| CON: 2d6 (7) | Damage Modifier | -1d2 | 4–5 | Mid End-length | 0/4 |
| SIZ: 1d6+6 (10) | Magic Points | 4 | 6–7 | Fore End-length | 0/4 |
| DEX: 1d6+6 (10) | Movement | 2m, 6m Swimming | 8–9 | Rear Mid-length | 0/5 |
| INS: 2d6+3 (10) | Strike Rank | 10 | 10–12 | Mid Mid-length | 0/5 |
| POW: 1d6 (4) | Armour | None | 13–14 | Fore Mid-length | 0/5 |
| | | | 15–16 | Rear Fore-length | 0/4 |
| | | | 17–18 | Mid Fore-length | 0/4 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 0/4 |

**Abilities:** *Aquatic, Hold Breath, Swimmer*

**Skills:** *Athletics 30%, Brawn 40%, Endurance 34%, Evade 40%, Perception 34%, Stealth 40%, Swim 67%, Willpower 28%*

**Combat Style:** *Vengeful Zap (Bite, Shock) 60%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *S* | *T* | *1d3-1d2* | *As for Head* |
| *Zap* | - | *L* | *Special* | - |

# Ettin (Multi-Headed Humanoid)

Occasionally some creatures mutate in strange and unexpected ways. Often this is due to some evil curse, virulent poison or perhaps even the touch of Chaos. Others however are considered unusual blessings depending on the culture and religion, some seeing it as a sign of divinity. For example, on the island those born to lizardfolk are considered monsters, whilst the High Folk see it as a boon.

An ettin is what is produced when a humanoid under the influence of a usually baleful power gives birth to conjoined twins, triplets or even quadruplets. The resulting malformed creature is oftentimes born with several deformities, but they always have one peculiar feature – two or more heads. Cursed ettins formed by dark magic or Chaos frequently show other signs of corruption, such as flaking scales, a discolouration of the skin, open sores, twisted limbs, additional digits or even primordial genetic regressions. Few show any useful mutations, only warping that makes them more monstrous.

Ettins possess exaggerated arms and chests to make up for the malformed heads that sprout from the creature's wide, trunk-like neck. Each of these heads is independent in terms of the actions they can take and can assume control over any part of their shared body – providing no other head is already attempting control of it. An ettin whose

heads disagree with each other is in for a tough time; every combat round, each head rolling an opposed Willpower test with the other(s) to struggle for brief control of the disputed limb. Usually though, most ettins achieve some sort of equanimity during their youth, otherwise few would survive to adulthood.

Ettins sometimes speak in an eerie, slightly off-tonal speech pattern where each head speaks an alternating word as part of an entire sentence. This is done deliberately to confuse and frighten potential victims, but normally the heads speak separately when alone or during combat where they lose concentration whilst controlling their shared body.

Since ettins can be of any humanoid species, including lizardfolk and serpentmen, use the base racial Characteristics and apply the following modifications. For each additional head, the ettin gains the following bonuses to its base physical Characteristics: STR +3, CON +3, SIZ +6, DEX -1 (minimum of 1). An ettin's mental Characteristics are static and don't change according to the number of heads. INT and POW are as per normal, and CHA is either 1d6+3 or 3d6+6 according to cultural precepts. They also gain the Multi-headed trait.

# Febrilis

Small and cunning animals often hunted for their attractive plumage, febrilis or fever snakes are winged serpents able to fly. They live in the upper canopies of the jungle and cloud forest, rarely descending to the understory levels except to defecate; a most necessary precaution since the faeces of the Fever Snake draw Sickness Spirits which cluster about the droppings. This helps to keep the snake's roosting tree free from predators or other animals which might compete with it for food.

This can be a significant problem for natives living nearby, since the creatures tend to remain within a small territory. Climbing into the upper levels of the jungle is a frightening experience at the best of times, one missed handhold or weak branch resulting in a fatal fall, whilst the canopy itself is filled with venomous creepy crawlies. Thus hunting down a fever snake is fraught with difficulties.

The dangers inherent with locating and killing a febrilis also make its feathered skin exceptionally valuable. As a side benefit, the serpent's own immunity to disease is conferred by the plumage, so headdresses made from its remains are treated with almost religious respect. Unfortunately the power fades with time, so that after 1d6+4 years the plumage loses this ability.

Fever snakes do their utmost to avoid conflict at any cost. Instead of snapping at an attacker it will attempt to intimidate by ruffling up all its feathers and hissing loudly first, then if that doesn't work, flee; only turning to face a foe if no escape is possible. In a physical fight it is next to harmless, with little likelihood of seriously injuring a human. On the other hand, reaching the beast generally exposes the hunter to one or more Sickness Spirits of 1d3 Intensity; and woe betide the fool who picks up a living specimen, which causes it to defecate over its captor with explosive diarrhoea, attracting further Sickness Spirits for the next 1d6 weeks, unless they bathe in a volcanic spring to purge the supernatural pollution.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d3 (4) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Tail | 1/3 |
| CON: 2d6 (7) | Damage Modifier | -1d6 | 4–6 | Rear Body | 1/4 |
| SIZ: 1d3+2 (4) | Magic Points | 4 | 7–10 | Right Wing | 1/3 |
| DEX: 2d6+9 (16) | Movement | 2m, 10m Flying | 11–14 | Left Wing | 1/3 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 14 | 15–17 | Fore Body | 1/4 |
| POW: 1d6 (4) | Armour | Feathers | 18–20 | Head | 1/3 |

**Abilities:** *Disease Immunity, Diving Strike, Flying*

**Skills:** *Athletics 40%, Brawn 8%, Endurance 34%, Evade 52%, Fly 70%, Perception 56%, Stealth 68%, Willpower 38%*

**Combat Style:** *Flee Battle (Bite, Poop) 60%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *S* | *T* | *1d4-1d6* | *As for Head* |
| *Diarrhoea* | *-* | *L* | *Spirit-attracting faeces* | *-* |

# Flocks, Hordes, Packs and Shoals

Whilst most small or passive animals are harmless to humans, collective groups of them can pose a more significant threat, due to their overwhelming numbers. Although not as tiny as insects, a flock of birds, horde of small rodents or shoal of piranha can pose just as much danger; dozens or hundreds of small individuals which overwhelm any normal defence, flowing, swimming or oozing past weapons, and sometimes even penetrating armour and clothing. Unless there is some good reason, the collective affects every Hit Location of a target which fails to Evade, Fly or Swim clear (as applicable).

Melee weapons are useless against a flock, horde, pack or shoal since each blow can only kill a tiny proportion of the entire group. Each individual creature is so minor they possess no Characteristics, but the collective itself is given a number of Hit Points to disperse it, assuming the characters have some sort of area effect attack capable of damaging a volume rather than a single target.

Unlike insect swarms, these groups can inflict different types of injury rather than just poisonous stings. The size of the group determines the number of 'injuries' it delivers at the start of every round. These are automatic and cannot be avoided if it has engulfed the victim. Consult the chart below.

| Group Size | Injuries | Hit Points |
|---|---|---|
| Small | 1d3 | 1d6+6 |
| Medium | 1d4 | 1d6+12 |
| Large | 1d6 | 1d6+18 |
| Huge | 1d8 | 1d6+24 |
| Enormous | 1d10 | 1d6+30 |

The best option when faced with a collective pack is to escape the area or leave the water as quickly as possible. If the mass can move more quickly than the characters, such encounters are potentially fatal.

## Bats

Although bats can carry disease, they do not generally attack people directly. Instead they simply cause a significant distraction due to the battering of hundreds, even thousands, of thrumming wings passing by. This can interfere with actions from trying to cross over a narrow bridge to casting a spell as the bats bump those in their path or get caught in clothing and hair. The magnitude of the distraction each round is calculated by imposing a number of difficulty grades equal to half the rolled injuries.

## Crabs

Encountered on land as well as in the sea, a swarm of carnivorous crabs inflict harm by scuttling over a victim and viciously snipping exposed areas of flesh with their pincers. Each 'Injury' inflicts 1 point of damage to all parts of the body, thus a small swarm of crabs inflicts 1d3 damage to every location. Armour helps reduce this damage as per normal. Crab swarms move at 4m.

## Jellyfish

Dangerous jellyfish swarms are composed of highly venomous individuals. If the rolled number of injuries exceeds the victim's Armour Points then they are stung with a lethal toxin. The potency of the dose depends on the number of stings (injuries) which penetrate, accumulating round by round. Jellyfish swarms simply drift with the current unless controlled by magic. In such cases the swarm swims at 2m.

### Leeches

Nasty parasitic creatures, leeches can be encountered in both wet, tropical vegetation and in boggy waters. They attach themselves in countless numbers to any living creature possessing blood which passes through their territory, stealthily wriggling under clothes with maddening ease. With naturally anaesthetic saliva they can feed without the host even noticing the infestation, although falling into a pit or pool full of the little horrors might be obvious. The consequence of leech shoals is somewhat different than other types, taking several hours to take effect. The swarm only rolls for the number of injuries once, armour having no effect. For each two points of injury the victim suffers a persistent level of Fatigue from blood loss and secondary infection.

### Piranhas

Able to strip a victim down to the bones in a matter of seconds, piranhas are one of the most frightening types of shoal a character can face. Each round a shoal inflicts an equal amount of Hit Point damage as the number of rolled injuries, applied simultaneously to every location. Initial damage is always applied to worn armour first, reducing its Armour Points on a one for one basis until it is 'destroyed'; non-metal protection simply being consumed whereas metal armour has its straps eaten through and drops off. In the case of chainmail it is assumed that the armour simply slows the fish temporarily until they begin eating their way up the sleeves or skirts.

### Rats

Everywhere verminous rats thrive, there are dark tales told of hungry rat packs that can consume men and strip livestock to the bone in minutes. Although somewhat exaggerated, rats can pose dangers if encountered in sufficient numbers. Even if beaten off, rat bites often carry virulent diseases which can be just as deadly. When attacking as a swarm, if the rolled number of injuries exceeds the victim's Armour Points then each successful injury inflicts 1 Hit Point of damage. In addition the victim is exposed to a disease (see page 172) which is resolved after the combat is concluded. Rat packs scurry along at a rate of 4m.

### Stampede

Although technically not composed of 'small' individuals, a stampeding herd of moderate or larger animals can pose a significant danger if they overrun a group of characters. The number of members in the herd is roughly equivalent to its Hit Points, the injuries inflicted caused by being struck by horns, hoofs or barging. Each 'Injury' inflicts damage to a single location, against which armour protects. The amount of damage rolled is equal to the Damage Modifier of the herd creature. Stampedes move at five times the base movement of the comprising animals.

### Jellyfish Shoal Venom

Some of the most venomous creatures known, shoals of tiny jellyfish protect themselves with a highly lethal toxin.

**Application**: Contact
**Potency**: Number of accumulated stings x 5%
**Resistance**: Willpower vs. primary condition, Endurance vs. secondary.
**Onset time**: Instantaneous
**Duration**: 1d4+1 minutes

**Conditions**: Each time the victim is stung, they must make a Willpower resistance roll against the current potency of the poison, to avoid suffering Agony. If, and only if, they succumb, then an Endurance resistance roll must be made at the conclusion of its duration at whatever potency the accumulated venom might have reached. If that is failed the victim suffers Death.

**Antidote/Cure**: The venom works too rapidly for most medicinal cures to take effect. Being removed from the water and treated with the Healing skill may offer some hope of survival, however.

# Flying Worms

Whilst the city of Akakor breeds giant vultures for use as flying mounts, and Zerzura has its moon bats for this task, the High Folk citadel of Agartha instead uses a strange type of flying worm, which is held aloft by hot gases. Segmented beasts with no obvious sensory apparatus, the worms have a glistening, translucent skin permitting the internal organs and digestive tract to be seen. Their wings are its oddest appendage, merely fine metallic whiskers which extrude to a length of five or more metres from two pairs of organs on its flanks.

Upon these diaphanous threads the worm manages to fly, squeezing out a jet of gas from its rear to provide a powerful, if somewhat pungent thrust. Once airborne, the worm continues its flight by relying on its ability to glide on its wondrous filaments. Although nearly fifteen metres from head to tail, the body of a flying worm is rather thin, making it precarious to ride. Despite a fragile appearance, the skin and threads of flying worms are remarkably resilient – being elastic in the former and flexible wires in the latter.

With no apparent limbs or claws, the worms kill by crushing prey in their coils, then eating their way into the body to consume it from within. They are aided by an ability to spit an extremely sticky mucus at the faces of their prey, with a range of up to their SIZ in metres. If not evaded or parried with a shield, the mucus has the effect of temporarily blinding the opponent, until the gunk can be cleaned off with alcohol or some similar solvent.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 2 | 1–3 | Tail Segments | 1/7 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 4–6 | Right Rear Filaments | 3/6 |
| SIZ: 2d6+15 (22) | Magic Points | 7 | 7–9 | Left Rear Filaments | 3/6 |
| DEX: 1d6+6 (10) | Movement | 2m Wriggling, 10m Flying | 10–12 | Body Segments | 1/8 |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 9 | 13–15 | Right Fore Filaments | 3/6 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Elastic Skin & Metallic Filaments | 16–18 | Left Fore Filaments | 3/6 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head Segments | 1/7 |

**Abilities:** *Dark Sight, Flying, Grappler*

**Skills:** *Athletics 53%, Brawn 75%, Endurance 56%, Evade 50%, Fly 63%, Perception 57%, Stealth 50%, Willpower 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Gobbing Grab (Constrict, Spit) 63%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Constrict* | *H* | *T* | *1d8+1d4* | *As for Segment* |
| *Spit* | *M* | - | *Blindness* | - |

# Gibberer (Jumbee)

The gibberer is a central part of the island's animistic traditions, being a person who has been possessed by a great spirit of darkness. This normally occurs during a novice kahuna's attempt to discover his fetch, where he must ultimately face the Jumbee of the Jade Pyramid and overcome his shadow in Spirit Combat. Those that fail are consumed by their own malevolence and passions.

The resulting gibberer subsumes the original soul and begins to wreak evil upon the island, using its shamanic powers to diabolical effect. Outwardly the only sign that the kahuna has fallen is the gradual darkening of the gibberer's skin or scales, and an increasing propensity to mutter to itself. Unable to replenish its own Magic Points, it is forced to consume the physical characteristics of the body it wears, eventually transforming its own body into shadow, till nothing remains but the clothes and accoutrements it once wore, from which its inane babblings continue to issue.

At this point any pretence of humanity is lost, forcing the foul creature to subsume the bodies of others via Dominant Possession. The gibberer retains all of the mental characteristics of the original animist. However, it assumes the physical characteristics of each new body it steals, slowly burning up points on a one-to-one basis to fuel its

own summoning and bindings. Whilst this might affect the body's attributes, it does not adjust the gibberer's skill values, which remain those of the original kahuna.

Whilst still embodied the gibberer will defend itself using any weapons and physical skills it knows from its first body. It can however be forced from the increasingly frail body of its current host, simply by inflicting a Major Wound on it. This spells immediate death to physical remains, which collapse in on themselves and melt into nothingness. The emerging shadow is thus cut off from any remaining Magic Points the body might have provided, but in certain ways makes the gibberer even more dangerous.

As a disembodied shadow, the gibberer can attempt to take over a new body by initiating a wrestling attempt against its next victim, who may only Evade this ethereal attack. Success triggers a Spirit Combat; the bodies of the two struggling combatants, tangible and intangible, reflecting what occurs on the Spirit Plane. If the gibberer wins, it dissipates the original soul, so that it cannot carry word of its existence back to the tribal ancestors. This is eternal death and greatly feared by the island natives.

It is best for a kahuna to deal permanently with a gibberer, otherwise it flees in its pure shadow form, floating away over the ground at an inhuman speed. If not located quickly it possesses some tiny creature and slowly works its way back up to taking over a full grown humanoid again, returning to wreak more evil.

# Heterodontosaurus

Heterodontosaurs are small, burrow-building omnivores that favour small animals, tubers, fruits and flowers for their diet. They have a mix of flat, spadelike teeth used for shearing plants and short but protuberant tusk-like canines used for dispatching struggling food items. A row of long, stiff quill-like spines runs down the back and tail, but is used mainly in inter-specific communications rather than in any defence.

However, the pebbly hide covering the rest of the body serves an important defensive role: heterodontosaurs can slowly (taking a minute or so to complete a change) alter their skin colouration to blend in better with their surroundings. As a result, they tend to favour less open environments, preferring areas with plenty of cover. Outside of their corkscrew-like burrows, heterodontosaurs use this ability to avoid predation.

Their long bipedal legs and fleet feet enable them to swiftly switch hiding places if discovered, but if trapped they can mount a pugnacious defence with sharp tusks and somewhat blunt but powerful front digging and grasping claws. Although relatively harmless, the animals live in groups of around a dozen and act in concert, overwhelming individuals with coordinated pack attacks. They can also hop and leap selecting the Grip special effect to remain attached; so that they can eventually overbear prey to the ground where they are killed with dozens of accumulated, tiny bites.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+4 (11) | Action Points | 3 | 1–2 | Tail | 2/3 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | -1d2 | 3–5 | Right Leg | 1/4 |
| SIZ: 1d3+3 (5) | Magic Points | 7 | 6–8 | Left Leg | 1/4 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 8m | 9–11 | Abdomen | 2/5 |
| INS: 2d6+4 (11) | Strike Rank | 15 | 12–14 | Chest | 2/6 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Tough Hide and Quills | 15–16 | Right Arm | 1/3 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 1/3 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 1/4 |

**Abilities:** *Camouflaged, Leaper*

**Skills:** *Athletics 60%, Brawn 45%, Endurance 51%, Evade 68%, Perception 42%, Stealth 70%, Willpower 42%*

**Combat Style:** *Tenacious Scrapper (Bite, Claw) 55%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *S* | *T* | *1d4-1d2* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *S* | *S* | *1d3-1d2* | *As for Leg* |

# Hitotsume-kozō

The one-eyed monsters of Japanese legend, Hitotsume-kozō are diminutive creatures that delight in terrifying those they meet as they wander about. Similar in size to a small child, they appear to be harmless shaven headed boys when seen from behind. When they turn around the viewer has a terrible shock, since they have but a single great eyeball in the centre of their face, below which extends nauseatingly long tongue!

Apart from inducing fright, however, Hitotsume-kozō are actually harmless creatures. They simply gain great enjoyment from terrifying people or nagging them to be quiet. Yet many folks consider them to be omens of doom, so strive to avoid meeting such creatures in case they become cursed with bad luck. The most superstitious leave fetish objects or totems carved with many eyes outside the door of their home. This reputedly upsets hitotsume-kozō, who view the many eyes in despair and run away envious at only having one.

Hitotsume-kozō never involve themselves in direct combat if at all possible. They merely try to frighten those who see their faces, using their Terrifying visage to recoil any who would cause them harm. Usually this gives them a round to slip off into the cover of darkness, whereupon they will hide and delight in the panic they caused.

If actively pursued, the creatures will attempt to Evade blows, surrendering if it appears they cannot escape. To make up for their lack of combative prowess most Hitotsume-kozō know some form of Sorcery or Spirit Magic, with which they will defend themselves but never to cause physical harm. An average Hitotsume-kozō knows 1d3+3 spells or possesses the same number of bound spirits.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6 (7) | Action Points | 2 | 1 – 3 | Right Leg | 0/4 |
| CON: 3d6 (11) | Damage Modifier | -1d4 | 4 – 6 | Left Leg | 0/4 |
| SIZ: 1d3+3 (5) | Magic Points | 13 | 7 – 9 | Abdomen | 0/5 |
| DEX: 3d6 (11) | Movement | 4m | 10 – 12 | Chest | 0/6 |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 12 | 13 – 15 | Right Arm | 0/3 |
| POW: 2d6+6 (13) | Armour | None | 16 – 18 | Left Arm | 0/3 |
| CHA: 2d6 (7) | | | 19 – 20 | Head | 0/4 |

**Abilities:** *Terrifying*

**Skills:** *Athletics 58%, Brawn 32%, Endurance 52%, Evade 62%, Perception 66%, Stealth 64%, Willpower 66%*

**Magic:** *Invocation 56% and Shaping 56%; or Binding 50% and Trance 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Nauseating Tongue Waggle 58*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Tongue* | *S* | *S* | *None* | *As for Head* |

# Huakaipoor

Huakaipoor are the ghosts of ancient warriors, members of the lowland tribes, who died in honourable combat. They often manifest on the anniversary of the conflict in which they died, journeying from their tribal territory to the place of their death upon the stone causeways which cut through the jungle. The ghosts then gather upon the ritual battlefield and dance in praise of the huakaipoor of their respected enemies, whereupon they re-enact the skirmish in joyful relish, before departing back to the Spirit World.

The number of warrior ghosts encountered depends on the scale of the skirmish, but the most famous conflicts often draw hundreds of additional huakaipoor who sit as spectators around the perimeter of the battlefield. The only other time they are seen is when a highly respected Eiki warrior of high status dies in battle, whereupon the huakaipoor manifest to escort them to the afterlife.

Encountering these ghosts is dangerous, but fortunately the huakaipoor engage in martial singing and dancing en-route to their ghostly conflicts, granting alert travellers some warning of their approach. Avoiding the stone causeways also aids against random encounters, although the ghosts sometimes travel away from the ancient thoroughfares in order to reach their places of death.

If a meeting is unavoidable, mortals are recommended to respectfully lower their heads before the magnificently battle-arrayed warriors, who treat those with the temerity to gaze upon them with violence, decapitating transgressors unless they are descendents of direct blood relations. The huakaipoor are easily tricked, however, so their chastisement can be averted with quick wits or prestidigitation.

Most huakaipoor are in actual fact lesser Ancestor Spirits who temporarily take upon themselves the physical aspects of Wraiths during their warrior pilgrimage. Treat as Intensity 1 or 2 Ancestors, save that their professional skills are limited to 50%+POW+INT. More significant groups of huakaipoor are sometimes led by full blown Ancestor Spirits of tribal heroes (see RuneQuest page 401).

# Hydra, Ophidian

Ophidian hydras are multi-headed creatures which lack superfluous limbs, being purely serpentine of form. Without legs they wriggle around as a snake does, yet are deadly; their blood, spittle and breath a frighteningly toxic poison. Indeed the miasma which exudes from this venom is so noxious that the fumes are capable of choking a man to death from several metres away. Fortunately however this poisonous cloud disperses in open air, so is generally only encountered within the hydra's lair.

The iron-hard, emerald green scales of the ophidian hydra glisten reflectively, interspersed by fantastic patterns of contrasting colour. Worse still, these monsters are capable of regenerating damage inflicted upon them, even to the point of regrowing severed heads! Fire or acid will seal the stump of such a wound preventing regeneration, but it takes the decapitation of all the heads to ultimately kill the beast.

Fortunately, most hydras on the island are lesser examples of their species, only growing additional heads as they age, assuming they manage to consume enough to spawn a new appendage. Since the largest hydras are almost suicidal to battle against, they are often left to lurk in their swamps or mountain caves, given wide berth by the natives.

Ophidian hydras can have anywhere from 2-9 heads (1d8+1), each one bearing its own Hit Points. Any detrimental effects of a Serious or Major Wound only affect the head so injured. As per the Multi-Headed trait, every head beyond the first adds one additional Combat Action to the hydra's existing pool. Each head also gains its own independent Willpower resistance roll. They writhe back and forth constantly, using this dance to confuse prey. When a head location is rolled against a hydra, roll again to see which specific head is struck.

For each head beyond the second, the hydra gains the following bonuses: STR +1, CON +1, SIZ +3, DEX +1 and +1 Armour Point. Thus a five headed hydra would gain +3 STR, +3 CON, +9 SIZ and +3 DEX atop its base Characteristics. The statistics provided overleaf are for a default two headed hydra, the most common type encountered.

Ophidian hydras fight with cunning, saturating an opponent's defence with multiple bites. Those that try to flank the monster are often battered by its lashing tail. It can even loop a coil over anyone who dares to close within its writhing heads to strike at its body, slowly crushing them, armour offering no protection beyond the initial strike.

Although their long necks are capable of keeping attackers at bay, when faced with ranged weapons they can find themselves at a disadvantage. To counteract this, they instead spit deadly corrosive venom which can burn through armour like acid. Each head may spit at a single target up to its STR in metres distant, but then requires 1d3 hours to replenish its venom sacs.

If the hydra starts to suffer a life threatening number of severed heads, it is sensible enough to slither away and flee the battle – perhaps wriggling into a hole inaccessible to its pursuers. Killing the beast results in an out-gushing wash of acidic blood, which is likely to burn the feet off those foolish enough to be standing nearby.

## Hydra Venom

Serpent hydras are so poisonous even their blood and breath is toxic. This lethal venom combines the effect of a potent toxin with the caustic burning of a strong acid. It comes in two forms. First is the concentrated liquid ejected from its venom glands when spitting, which can dissolve non-ceramic materials and whose necrotic touch is usually lethal. Second is the sublimated liquid which creates a wispy gas which is less potent, only capable of causing mild asphyxiation due to its acrid nature.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 3+1 per additional head | 1 – 6 | Tail | 3/8 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | 7 – 14 | Body | 3/9 |
| SIZ: 2d6+18 (25) | Magic Points | 7 | 15 – 20 | Heads | 3/8 each |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 6m | | | |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 13 | | | |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Tough Scales | | | |

**Abilities:** *Area Attack (Tail), Cold Blooded, Dark Sight, Multi-Headed, Poison Immunity, Regeneration (1 Hit Point/Round in every location), Venomous*

**Skills:** *Athletics 66%, Brawn 58%, Endurance 66%, Evade 66%, Perception 69%, Stealth 55%, Willpower 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Writhing Dance of Death (Bite, Constrict, Spit, Tail) 76%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *L* | *1d6+1d6* | *As for Head* |
| *Constrict* | *L* | *T* | *2d6* | *As for Body* |
| *Spit* | *S* | - | *Poison* | - |
| *Tail Lash* | *L* | *L* | *1d8+1d6* | *As for Tail* |

**Application**: Contact or Inhaled

**Potency**: 70

**Resistance**: Endurance.

**Onset time**: Liquid form: both the Agony condition and acidic effects are instant. As a gaseous miasma, Asphyxiation begins immediately upon inhalation.

**Duration**: Half the hydra's CON in rounds as liquid, or minutes as an inhaled miasma

**Conditions**: The liquid venom initially acts as Strong Acid which causes 1d4 damage to whatever it touches, either to the Armour Points of an object or the Hit Points of a location. If the venom touches flesh it will inflict Agony for the remainder of the duration, if not resisted. In confined circumstances the acrid miasma causes a victim to cough and choke if they fail to resist, incapacitating them as per Asphyxia as their lungs begin to burn. Such damage is only temporary however, recovering after ten minutes of breathing clean air. If the accumulated asphyxiation damage to the chest causes the victim to pass unconscious, there is a risk they will choke to death.

Antidote/Cure: The venom has no cure save for potent magic or divine intervention.

# Isnashi

A tall carnivorous ape which stands over two metres when fully erect, the isnashi is famed for both its terrifying scream and the putrid odour it gives off. The smell is so bad that the creature draws a cloud of flies which swarm about its body, perhaps explaining its evil temper. They inhabit jungles and mountain forests, where they utter their unsettling howls that echo off of nearby peaks.

Isnashi are covered from head to foot in a very thick, shaggy pelt, dark red in colour, which can often turn arrows and weapons. It normally walks on all fours, using disproportionately long arms end that with wicked claws. The jaws have outsized fangs, however the beast does not feed using its mouth; rather the isnashi possesses a gaping maw in its belly through which large chunks of meat are directly consumed. It is this disgusting orifice which emits the foul stench which plagues the creature.

The favoured food of an isnashi are brains, which it normally extracts by twisting the top off the skulls of its victims. Humanoid-eaters by habit, these creatures are often hunted by tribes unfortunate enough to border the beast's roaming territory. Killing the creatures is extremely difficult, not only due

to their size and strength, but also because they somehow twist the awareness of those hunting them.

The creature knows little of hygiene, dirt and debris tangled in its fur. This combined with its eating habits and stomach opening causes Disease Spirits to swarm about it on the Spirit Plane, although it has no animistic powers itself.

Isnashi prefer the taste of humanoid brains, stalking those foolish enough to wander off into the jungle or mountains in small groups. It hides its presence until an opportune moment, yet the foul stench of the beast can often give it away. They begin every battle by uttering their intimidating howl, which normally causes those that fail a Willpower test to retreat in fear. The monster leaps into combat with those that remain and begins rending its victims with its claws. Favoured manoeuvres are Impale or Disarm.

All those drawing close to the Isnashi are subject to its confusion ability. At the start of each round they must succeed in an opposed test of their Perception against the Willpower of the creature, or for the remainder of that round they suffer a bewildering shifting of colour and shadows in their vision, causing them to either attack a nearby companion or some large inanimate object. Only a Serious Wound to the isnashi's head will stop this confusion aura.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 2 | 1–2 | Right Leg | 5/7 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d8 | 3–4 | Left Leg | 5/7 |
| SIZ: 2d6+15 (22) | Magic Points | 7 | 5–7 | Abdomen | 5/8 |
| DEX: 3d6 (11) | Movement | 6m | 8–10 | Chest | 5/9 |
| INS: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 12 | 11–13 | Right Arm | 5/6 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Very Thick Pelt | 14–16 | Left Arm | 5/6 |
| | | | 17–20 | Head | 5/7 |

**Abilities:** *Psychic Emanations (Confusion),Intimidate*

**Skills:** *Athletics 70%, Brawn 71%, Endurance 66%, Evade 62%, Perception 60%, Stealth 54%, Track 56%, Willpower 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Savage Brute (Bite, Claw) 70%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *L* | *T* | *1d8+1d8* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *L* | *L* | *1d6+1d8* | *As for Arm* |

# Ivory Impaler

A nasty piece of flora and well feared by jungle travellers, the ivory impaler appears to be dead or dying tree stump, between five to eight metres tall, covered in vividly coloured trumpet-like flowers. These complex blooms are able to emit a range of sounds, with which it attracts its prey, from pain-filled moaning to almost familiar snatches of conversation in perfect mimicry of what the plant has heard before.

The extensive root system of the tree extends over ten metres from the trunk, the sharp tips rising up underground in vertical alignment. These provide two functions: the first is to detect the vibrations of approaching creatures, the second is that when a victim enters the area, all of the roots thrust violently upwards; transfixing anything above them on their three to four metre lengths.

After the initial trigger, the slick creamy white roots remain above the surface for several hours, waiting for any impaled beast to die of blood loss, then gradually withdraw back into the ground. The plant subsequently feeds off the decomposing carrion which gradually rots into

the soil, nourishing its subsidiary root complex. Rotting corpses have the additional benefit of drawing further scavengers, which if unaware of the danger, often also succumb to the Impaler.

Unsurprisingly, the plant always uses the Impale special effect if it succeeds in a surprise attack. The roots cannot be parried, but must be evaded instead. If attacked there is little the tree can do except randomly extend roots up through the surface in the hope of hitting its oppressor. In such cases the size and extent of the plant means that an attacker can choose to either strike at the trunk or the root closest to their position.

The following example possesses six mature impaling roots. Other trees may have more or fewer, as desired. An ivory impaler's Damage Modifier is calculated based on the relative size of each root, not the overall SIZ of the entire tree.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+9 (16) | Action Points | 3 | 1–8 | Main Trunk | 6/18 |
| CON: 2d6+9 (16) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 9–10 | Root 1 | 3/16 |
| SIZ: 4d6+48 (62) | Magic Points | 7 | 11–12 | Root 2 | 3/16 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | Immobile | 13–14 | Root 3 | 3/16 |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 14 | 15–16 | Root 4 | 3/16 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Thick Bark | 17–18 | Root 5 | 3/16 |
| | | | 19–20 | Root 6 | 3/16 |

**Abilities:** *Earth Sense, Flora*

**Skills:** *Athletics 0%, Brawn 80%, Conceal (Root) 66%, Endurance 82%, Evade 0%, Perception 55%, Willpower 0%*

**Combat Style:** *Unwelcome Upthrust (Roots) 65%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Sharp Root* | *C* | *S-VL* | *2d6+1d4* | *As for Root* |

# Ivy, Succubus

An innocuous looking type of ground foliage which spreads across an area of tens of metres, succubus ivy is in actual fact a diabolical plant that drains the physical characteristics of creatures it entwines, in a similar manner to the sorcery spell Tap, adding the victim's vitality to its own.

Visually there is nothing apparently harmful about the plant when first spotted, although a faint whiff of corruption can be smelled if a Hard Perception roll is made; the scent being disguised by other rotting jungle scents. Otherwise the plant makes no immediate reaction when first trodden upon, waiting for victims to draw closer to its centre before springing its attack. At this point the tendrils of ivy coil up, snagging anything and everything within its central area. Tendrils cannot be parried, but must be evaded.

Creatures caught by this surprise attack suffer the Entangle special effect, plus Trip Opponent. The combination of both together usually spells doom for victims, unless they are big and strong enough to break free. On its following turns the ivy may spend an action Point to drain a single target of 1d8 points of both Strength and Constitution, unless the victim can resist the attack with an opposed Endurance test. This draining continues until the characteristics are reduced to 0, at which point the creature is immobilised.

Instead of dying, the ivy inserts some of its tendrils into the victim, keeping them alive in a sort of symbiosis; the plant hydrating the victim, whilst they provide their stolen characteristics to the ivy. This has the added effect of concealing the body beneath the foliage, although still living victims occasionally twitch. Eventually the creatures die of starvation (their characteristics then lost to the plant), and the emaciated corpses are drawn beneath the leaf mould, near the centre of the ivy patch, where they attract future predators and scavengers.

Due to its sprawling size, each target of a succubus ivy attack treats their own patch of ivy as a separate Hit Location. As each victim is drained towards zero, readjust the Attributes of the plant to reflect its burgeoning vitality. Such bonuses do not affect its skill values. If a creature escapes an attack or is freed from the ivy, lost characteristics return at their Healing Rate in points per day.

The following statistics are for a succubus ivy plant which currently has no victims granting it STR and CON bonuses. The plant can hold and conceal a total combined SIZ of creatures equal to its own. Once exceeded, future victims are warned off by the obvious unnatural distress of these entwined beings.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 1d3 (2) | Action Points | 2 | 1–2 | Tendril Cluster 1 | 1/8 |
| CON: 1d3 (2) | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | 3–4 | Tendril Cluster 2 | 1/8 |
| SIZ: 4d6+24 (38) | Magic Points | 4 | 5–6 | Tendril Cluster 3 | 1/8 |
| DEX: 2d6 (7) | Movement | Immobile | 7–8 | Tendril Cluster 4 | 1/8 |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 8 | 9–10 | Tendril Cluster 5 | 1/8 |
| POW: 1d6 (4) | Armour | Woody Stems | 11–12 | Tendril Cluster 6 | 1/8 |
| | | | 13–14 | Tendril Cluster 7 | 1/8 |
| | | | 15–16 | Tendril Cluster 8 | 1/8 |
| | | | 17–18 | Tendril Cluster 9 | 1/8 |
| | | | 19–20 | Tendril Cluster 10 | 1/8 |

**Abilities:** *Characteristic Drain, Earth Sense, Flora, Trapper*

**Skills:** *Athletics 0%, Brawn 70%, Conceal 54%, Endurance 44%, Evade 0%, Perception 52%, Stealth 0%, Willpower 0%*

**Combat Style:** *Entangling Foliage (Tendrils) 49%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Tendril* | - | - | *Drain 1d8 STR and CON* | *As for Tendril* |

# Jellyfish, Giant

Graceful monarchs of the ocean, giant jellyfish are huge creatures of translucent beauty whose bell bodies can measure over two metres across and have tentacles up to twenty metres long. They drift with the tides and currents, although they can pulsate gently to drive themselves in a particular direction when necessary.

Giant jellyfish have primitive light-sensitive organs around their outer body, but principally detect objects by touch. Quiescent creatures, giant jellyfish pose little threat save to creatures swimming in the sea or if washed up on shore. They cannot attack or defend as normal creatures do, and merely swim away from harm. Due to their primitive structure they are immune to the detrimental effects of wounds, and are effectively impervious to (or automatically fail) anything requiring an Endurance or Willpower roll.

Despite being barely sensible of their surroundings, they can be deadly due to their unconscious feeding habits. Anything the jellyfish unwittingly passes over can become accidentally caught in its tendrils and become entangled. Creatures must evade the drifting strands by succeeding in an opposed test of their Swim skill verses the jellyfish's Dragging Tentacles roll.

The tendrils do not inflict direct damage, but rely on the hundreds of stingers along their length, which inflict incapacitating levels of pain on those unwittingly blunder into them. The agony usually sends a victim into convulsions, causing them to entangle themselves still further in the drifting tendrils. When the creature finally stops struggling the tendrils pass the body up to its bell where it is digested.

Armour does not protect against this attack since there are hundreds of tendrils which instinctively twine about anything caught in their grasp, guaranteeing that some vulnerable spot will be found. Each round after the first, the tendrils can roll for a new Hit Location and sting that area too. To break free the victim must beat the jellyfish in a Contest of Strength using Brawn (see RuneQuest page 59), capped by their Swim skill.

### Giant Jellyfish Venom

The venomous stingers of giant jellyfish are designed to drive away large predators and stun the smaller creatures that it feeds upon. Although not inherently fatal to humans, the involuntary spasms caused by the pain-inducing toxin can lead to accidental death by drowning.

**Application**: Contact
**Potency:** 65
**Resistance**: Willpower
**Onset time:** Instantaneous
**Duration:** Ten times the jellyfish's CON in minutes
**Conditions**: As soon as the victim contacts the stinging tendrils, they must make a single resistance roll against the potency of the poison. The stingers inflict extreme pain on the area touched, as per the Agony condition. A victim must mentally overcome the pain or else lose control of the location, which begins to involuntarily spasm. A humanoid that loses command of two or more of its swimming limbs may potentially begin to sink. A sting to the head will prevent the victim from thinking logically if they fail to master the pain.

**Antidote/Cure**: Since the stingers are ripped free from the tendrils, they continue to pulsate and inject venom into the victim for the full duration after the encounter. Each location must be plucked free of the barbed stingers by hand, requiring a First Aid or Healing roll. If removed properly the pain clears after a single minute.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6 (7) | Action Points | 1 | 1–5 | Body | 0/12 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | 6–8 | Tendril Clump | 0/9 |
| SIZ: 2d6+24 (31) | Magic Points | 4 | 9–11 | Tendril Clump | 0/9 |
| DEX: 1d3 (2) | Movement | 2m | 12–14 | Tendril Clump | 0/9 |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 5 | 15–17 | Tendril Clump | 0/9 |
| POW: 1d6 (4) | Armour | None | 18–20 | Tendril Clump | 0/9 |

**Abilities:** *Aquatic, Grappler, Venomous*

**Skills:** *Athletics 0%, Brawn 68%, Endurance 0%, Evade 0%, Perception 31%, Swim 46%, Willpower 0%*

**Combat Style:** *Drag Fishing (Tendrils) 49%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Tendril* | - | *VL* | *Poison* | *As for Tendril Clump* |

## Jempulex (Jewel Wasp)

A nasty flying predator the length of a hand with an oversized stinger, the jempulex is greatly feared across the island. Although coloured a beautiful combination of reflective golds and sapphire blues, its venom turns the target into a living zombie under the wasp's control, becoming the still-living host for a wasp larvae. Victims stung by this vicious insect are usually just granted a quick, merciful death by their compatriots.

The wasp usually keeps to the upper canopies of jungle and cloud forest, only descending for a few short weeks at the conclusion of breeding season to hunt for a suitable victim. Most natives are well prepared for this period, either bearing censors of burning incense to drive away the wasps or staying indoors. The wasps seek anything warm-blooded and large enough to provide a decent food source for the entire gestation.

Once stung, the wasp hangs nearby its victim, waiting for the venom to rewrite the neural synapses of the brain with the jempulex's own insectoid proteins. Once conscious intellect has been destroyed, the wasp often circles about the subverted victim's head or lands on the back of its neck, where it exerts control via buzzing tones which the mind is now hardwired to obey. Sapient humanoids lose all ability to think for themselves, turning into a disconcerting blank-faced zombie.

Under this control, the first thing the victim does is start to build a sort of beehive-shaped mud urn if it has hands to work with; or excavate a muddy hole under a tree bole if not. When the nest is near completion, the victim enters the constructed space – which is just large enough to hold its body – then has a single larvae laid in its still living body. The wasp then completes the job by walling up the

entrance with more mud, leaving a small hole from which a new jempulex will hatch in several months time, after it has eaten its way free from the internal organs of its host.

Meanwhile the mother remains close by the mud tomb-pot, scaring off potential scavengers, or poisoning and subverting them to guard the entombed host. The only thing which helps those hunted by the wasp is the distinctive loud buzzing which accompanies their flight. Due to their size, jempulexes rely heavily upon the Inject Venom special effect.

### Jempulex Poison

Dreaded by all sapient inhabitants of the island, the venom rewrites the neural pathways of its victims, turning them into mindless drone zombies. Any creature suffering this horrific doom still possesses all of its physical skills (at the beck and call of the wasp which stung them), but lacks any self awareness or will – incidentally making them immune to any mental- or emotion- affecting magic.

**Application**: Injected
**Potency**: 50
**Resistance:** Willpower
**Onset time**: 1d6 minutes
**Duration**: Permanent
**Conditions**: Zombification. If the initial resistance roll is failed, the victim becomes incapable of independent action, loses any knowledge-based skill and creatures with INT have their characteristic converted to INS. Furthermore they are subject to the complete control of the jempulex.

**Antidote/Cure**: Eating excessively large amounts of citrus fruit for several days prior to being stung makes the resistance roll one grade easier. Once the poison takes hold, only magic can cure the effects; and only then if the miracle or spell is cast within 1d3x6 hours of succumbing to the poison.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 1d3 (2) | Action Points | 3 | 1–4 | Stinger | 1/1 |
| CON: 1d6 (4) | Damage Modifier | -1d8 | 5–7 | Abdomen | 1/3 |
| SIZ: 1 (1) | Magic Points | 2 | 8–10 | Thorax | 1/2 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 15m Flying | 11–12 | Right Wing | 0/1 |
| INS: 2d6+2 (9) | Strike Rank | 14 | 13–14 | Left Wing | 0/1 |
| POW: 1d3 (2) | Armour | Chitin | 19–20 | Head | 1/2 |

**Abilities:** *Adhering, Flying, Venomous*

**Skills:** *AAthletics 0%, Brawn 0%, Endurance 24%, Evade 0%, Fly 78%, Perception 41%, Stealth 48%, Willpower 24%*

**Combat Style:** *Buzzing Zombifier (Sting) 65%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Sting* | *S* | *T* | *Zombification* | *As for Stinger* |

# Kanaima

Kanaima is the name given to those were-creatures formed by natives who have gone mad whilst possessed by a Shape-Shifting Spirit. Whilst the tribes have the ability to summon these spirits to infuse their warriors with great strength, some natives' own fetishes containing spirits which are beyond their ability to control, and once possessed, cannot change back to their original form. Sometimes the possession is the result of punishment; divine vengeance sent from the tribe's totem for abusing its spirits; or the result of a kahuna permanently binding a Shape-Shifting spirit within a transgressor as punishment for breaking a particular taboo.

Whatever their source, a kanaima is the victim of an enduring possession by a bad spirit. They come in many forms depending on the animal spirit used - jaguars, snakes, even crocodiles - and run around in a blood lust, strangling and eating everything they see. When they look at someone, they make them crazy. Even if the victim escapes being consumed, the gaze is enough to drive them insane, so that they suffer extreme psychological reaction whenever seeing the animal related to the initial kanaima attack. This can be absolute terror, berserk psychosis and even suicidal tendencies.

There are of course almost limitless variants of kanaima. They have the physical characteristics and appearance of

an average member of that species, but the mental characteristics of the person possessed. In addition they gain a Gaze Attack, which inflicts temporary insanity and an ongoing fear of the species if the victim does not succeed in a Willpower test.

# Kapre

A kapre is a bipedal ursoid which haunts the forests and jungles of many lands. Often used by parents to frighten disobedient children, it has many different names, dependent on the local culture, such as Nandi Bears, Yeren, and Yowie amongst others. Although characterised as an evil type of wild-man or tree demon, few first hand observations of their activities are ever reported – but perhaps that is due to the premature demise of those a kapre focuses its disfavour upon.

Kapres are generally slightly larger than men and covered in a thick pelt of reddish coloured hair. They possess a tooth-filled snout similar to a bear and are omnivorous in nature. Preferring solitude, most kapres creep through the woodlands by themselves, giving a wide berth to groups of hunters; but sometimes they draw near to the edge of a remote village waiting for an opportunity to inflict mischief or perhaps make off with a woman it finds itself attracted to.

Far from being mindless, a kapre has a cunning wit which it uses to play tricks on travellers whom enter its territory, or more frequently cause harm to those that raise its ire. Often this is nothing more than luring folks from a trail by smoking a pipe full of strongly scented herbs, then fading into the vegetation whilst the intrigued explorer attempts to find their way back to the path. Other times hunters may find their traps sprung and empty, or their camp provisions stolen.

An angry kapre is something to be avoided, the creature using its local knowledge to lure (or herd) transgressors into dangerous natural features such as pools of quicksand, pit traps or cunningly set up dead falls. Once a group has been weakened by such tactics, the kapre will ambush them and prove itself a ferocious combatant. On the other hand, those who leave respectful offerings to a kapre may find themselves aided by the ursoid.

Kapres forced into combat, whether hunting or being hunted by adventurers, prefer to use tricks and traps against their foes. Once a few serious injuries start hindering their opponents, the kapre will ambush the group, usually by charging out of cover, taking a swipe against the nearest foe, then disappearing back into the jungle or forest cover. Each attack is set minutes apart to impose psychological pressure and give the kapre a chance to reposition itself.

If the ambush attack results in a Special effect, a kapre will use it intelligently, utilising Choose Location to repeatedly maul an injured limb or Bleed via its claw attacks. Only once the party appears sufficiently crippled will the kapre commit itself to a stand-up fight, during which it will use whatever actions and manoeuvres necessary in order to avoid being ganged up on; Bash, Trip and Disarm for

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 2 | 1 – 3 | Right Leg | 3/6 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 4 – 6 | Left Leg | 3/6 |
| SIZ: 2d6+9 (16) | Magic Points | 11 | 7 – 9 | Abdomen | 3/7 |
| DEX: 3d6 (11) | Movement | 6m | 10 – 12 | Chest | 3/8 |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 12 | 13 – 15 | Right Arm | 3/5 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Thick Pelt | 16 – 18 | Left Arm | 3/5 |
| CHA: 2d6 (7) | | | 19 – 20 | Head | 3/6 |

**Abilities:** *Night Sight*

**Skills:** *Athletics 50%, Brawn 65%, Endurance 56%, Engineering 56%, Evade 42%, Perception 54%, Stealth 64%, Track 46%, Willpower 56%*

**Combat Style:** *Hairy Nightmare (Bite, Claws) 70%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *T* | *1d6+1d4* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *M* | *S* | *1d4+1d4* | *As for Arm* |

example. If the kapre wins without being significantly hurt, it will not kill its defeated opponents, but rather impose some diabolical tricks on them, such as covering them in insect-attracting perfume or foul-smelling tar, stealing all their clothes and weapons and so on; whatever seems the most malicious at the time.

# Kitsune

Kitsune are a type of supernatural were-creature, in effect an enlightened magical fox which has learned how to assume humanoid form, usually that of a child, old man or beautiful willowy woman if interacting with human colonists. Famed for their mischievous nature, they take delight in intrigues and rumour-mongering to see what entertainment can be garnered. Though tricksters at heart they are not malicious, so when caught out and confronted they are genuinely, albeit briefly remorseful, and they are soon back to their old habits.

As they age these fox-spirits grow more magically powerful, growing an additional tail for every 100 years of life. When it reaches nine tails the kitsune turns a silvery white and stops growing more. Each extra tail grants an increase of 3 points of Characteristic POW. Although a Kitsune can adopt humanoid shape, even duplicate that of a specific person, the tails never undergo the change, forcing them to hide or disguise the bushy appendages in some crafty manner. If viewed magically, the Magnitude of the transformation equals the number of tails the Kitsune possesses.

Kitsune adore magic of all kinds and are keen to learn whatever spells they can, and this curiosity is often the cause of some of their trickery and deceit. Although they get on well with spirits, especially nature spirits of their own kind, by default they know 1d6 + 1 extra per tail of Folk Magic spells.

Being rather frail creatures, kitsune typically try to avoid direct combat, relying on their sharp wits or magic instead. The only time they utilise a bite is if attacking by surprise or when engaged in a grapple. Despite its limited effectiveness, some kitsune enhance the damage of their attacks by appropriate spells, such as Foxfire (Fireblade on bite) or Tail Crackle (Shock).

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 1d3+3 (5) | Action Points | 3 | 1–2 | Right Leg | 0/3 |
| CON: 2d6 (7) | Damage Modifier | -1d6 | 3–4 | Left Leg | 0/3 |
| SIZ: 1d3+3 (5) | Magic Points | 13 | 5–6 | Tail(s) | 0/2 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 8m | 7–9 | Abdomen | 0/4 |
| INT: 1d6+12 (16) | Strike Rank | 18 | 10–12 | Chest | 0/5 |
| POW: 2d6+6 (13) | Armour | None | 13–15 | Right Arm | 0/2 |
| CHA: 2d6+6 (13) | | | 16–18 | Left Arm | 0/2 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 0/3 |

**Abilities:** *Magic Sense, Night Sight, Shape-shifter*

**Skills:** *: Athletics 64%, Brawn 30%, Conceal 62%, Deceit 69%, Endurance 44%, Evade 78%, Perception 69%, Stealth 65%, Willpower 66%*

**Magic:** *Folk Magic 66%*

**Combat Style:** *Nasty Nip (Bite) 64%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *S* | *T* | *1d4-1d6* | *As for Head* |

# Kraken

Krakens are colossal squid-like monsters, aggressively predatory, which often attack seafaring vessels, plucking sailors from the decks to feast upon. Although rumoured to be able to create mighty whirlpools that can sink ships, in reality most simply wrap their arms about the hull and masts of a ship, slowly crushing it by brute force alone. Larger ships rarely fall prey to such destruction as their numerous crew and tougher hulls can beat off kraken attacks. Smaller boats, however, can be splintered in a matter of moments, and the vessel dragged below to be picked through by a hungry squid.

An average kraken is a 20 metre long beast, able to swim at high speeds due to their method of jet propulsion, forcing water quickly from their mantle. The two main tentacles are 15 metres long, whereas the lesser 'arms' are only 5 metres in length. Each limb is lined with suckers inside of which are viciously sharp hooks. At the base of the tentacles and arms is the feeding mouth, a large beak capable of shredding prey before it is swallowed.

Krakens normally hunt large fish and small whales, which they vigorously pursue in high speed chases. If threatened by even larger leviathans, kraken can dive to great depths to escape and in fact spend a great deal of time at the bottom of oceans where they not only rest safe from harm, but can also leisurely extract dead sailors from the wrecked ships they sink. The entire east coast of the island is a haven for kraken, who feed off the creatures brought by the upwelling waters of the deep shelving coastline.

Kraken normally attack by lashing out with their two long tentacles, in an attempt to knock down or pluck up victims, before passing them back to the more muscular arms where they are crushed and fed into its beak. If the kraken desires, any attack by a tentacle or arm automatically grapples in addition to damage normally inflicted in combat.

Unless driven to a berserk fury a kraken usually attacks stealthily; plucking several victims from a ship to fill its stomach and retreating under the waves. If the kraken is upset with the ship itself, it will grasp the vessel and try to crush it, doing damage to its structure.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Hit Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+18 (25) | Action Points | 3+4 (Multilimbed) | 1 – 3 | Mantle | 3/14 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +2d6 | 4 | Head | 3/13 |
| SIZ: 4d6+24 (38) | Magic Points | 11 | 5 | Arm 1 | 3/11 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 10m | 6 | Arm 2 | 3/11 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 16 | 7 | Arm 3 | 3/11 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Gelatinous Skin | 8 | Arm 4 | 3/11 |
| CHA: 2d6+6 (13) | | | 9 | Arm 5 | 3/11 |
| | | | 10 | Arm 6 | 3/11 |
| | | | 11 | Arm 7 | 3/11 |
| | | | 12 | Arm 8 | 3/11 |
| | | | 13 – 16 | Tentacle 1 | 3/12 |
| | | | 17 – 20 | Tentacle 2 | 3/12 |

**Abilities:** *Aquatic, Area Attack (Tentacle Lash), Grappler, Multi-Limbed, Night Sight, Swimmer*

**Skills:** *: Athletics 43%, Brawn 83%, Endurance 78%, Evade 0%, Perception 63%, Stealth 61%, Swim 84%, Willpower 62%*

**Combat Style:** *Ship Killer (Arm, Tentacle) 74%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Tentacle Lash* | *L* | *VL* | *1d6+2d6* | *As for Tentacle* |
| *Arm Crush* | *H* | *L* | *1d8+2d6* | *As for Arm* |

*Kraken limbs suffer no penalties for fighting at shorter Reach.*

# Kulamyu Pod

Giant versions of the honeydew plant, except that the acidic digestive bowl is underground, part of its root system. Surrounding the tuber are long, fleshy leaves which spread out for approximately 2 metres in every direction; these have an uncanny ability to change their colouration and patterning to blend into the surrounding foliage. The orifice itself is disguised as a beautiful flower full of rich nectar, which gives off a wonderful jasmine-like scent. This attracts many types of prey which attempt to feed on the sweetness.

Touching the stamen of the false flower causes the leaves to coil rapidly, precipitating the victim into the now gaping maw of the plant if they fail to Evade the engulfing attack. Inside, the capacious bowl of the plant is half-filled with strong acid, which drenches whatever body parts become immersed. Roll 1d10+10 three times to see which locations end up in the acid.

Since the insides are slippery and most bipedal victims end up being immersed head first, there is very little chance of escape unless they succeed in a Contest of Strength (see RuneQuest page 59) at an additional level of difficulty for their inverted position; or they have compatriots on hand to hack the engulfing leaves away and drag the injured party out (excess damage carrying on to the trapped victim). Once the snare has been sprung, the plant can do little save hold onto the struggling victim.

Whilst feeding, Kulamyu plants appear as strange, almond shaped, vertical pods; within which is held those parts of an animal or person yet to be fully dissolved. The leaves only reopen once the lower bowl has finished rendering the entire body down to bone fragments, a process which takes one hour per point of the victim's SIZ. Most Kulamyu pods are large enough to swallow adult humans although gargantuan specimens have been reported, capable of swallowing a dinosaur whole or engulfing dozens of men simultaneously (SIZ 80+).

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 1d6+3 (7) | Action Points | Not Applicable | 1–2 | Digestive Bowl | 2/10 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 3–5 | Leaf 1 | 1/8 |
| SIZ: 4d6+12 (26) | Magic Points | 4 | 6–8 | Leaf 2 | 1/8 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | Immobile | 9–11 | Leaf 3 | 1/8 |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 14 | 12–14 | Leaf 4 | 1/8 |
| POW: 1d6 (4) | Armour | Waxy Skin | 15–17 | Leaf 5 | 1/8 |
| | | | 18–20 | Leaf 6 | 1/8 |

**Abilities:** *Camouflaged, Engulfing (Victims up to plant's own SIZ), Flora, Trapper*

**Skills:** *Athletics 0%, Brawn 73%, Conceal (Leaves) 63%, Endurance 66%, Evade 0%, Perception 52%, Willpower 0%*

**Combat Style:** *Sprung Leaves (Swallow) 62%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Swallow Whole* | - | - | *Strong Acid* | *Not Applicable* |

# Lakooma (The Grabbing Hand)

A creature dreaded by those that live near deep rivers and lakes, the Lakooma is a terrifying beast reputed to vaguely resemble a huge five-fingered hand, pasty white and corpse-like. The monster prowls under the surface near banks and lunges forth with blinding speed to grab its victims, dragging them screaming into the water, never to be seen again.

The lakooma's 'fingers' are multipurpose digits, containing its sensory organs, feeding mouths and providing its main form of locomotion – allowing it to scuttle in an uncomfortably similar manner to an animated severed hand. Lacking eyes, they are instead very sensitive to vibration, being able to detect the approach of creatures to the edge of a river or lake bank.

Since few survive its attacks, nobody is quite sure whether a lakooma is indeed merely the hand of a titanic giant that sleeps in the slimy depths, or if it is just the horrific feeding parts of something far more disturbing. Either way the creature evokes so much horror that an attack can drive away the inhabitants of entire villages, despite the fact that no lakooma has ever been seen to fully emerge out of the water. Even if slain, the monster disintegrates into a puddle of slimy sludge within moments of its death.

Part of this fear stems from the monster's reputation of calling all the blood relatives of a victim to it, one by one over a period of months following the initial attack, until no one in the family remains. Somehow destiny seems to twist against the doomed victims, causing them to return to the river or lake, no matter how hard they struggle to avoid their fate. Few folks dare to hunt down and face a lakooma, fearing for the lives of their relatives who may die as a consequence. Fewer still have any idea of how to locate these monsters, although the concept of a sacrificial lamb might work if a surviving blood relation was available.

Lakooma rely on a combination of their horrible appearance and stealth to render prey helpless, only attacking if they believe they have surprise. The monsters never stray further than a few metres out of the water, their foreparts seemingly connected to something larger under the surface. If the target can scramble away from the water's edge, it is safe – the lakooma rapidly retreating back under the surface, leaving only confused images of something huge with five nauseating fingers erupting out of the foam.

The monster normally uses all its fingers to move. On its initial attack it leaps onto the victim, smashing down on them and establishing a Grip if it can. It requires at least one finger to establish the grapple, but if unthreatened the lakooma can use multiple fingers to grab additional locations to prevent its victim from escaping. Spare fingers can lash out at those that try to interfere, knocking them backwards with the Bash manoeuvre. Unless hindered by some method a lakooma will draw backwards into the water at the end of the first round of combat if it fails to grab its target; or the end of the second round of combat if it succeeded and is encumbered. Only once it is submerged and can bring all of its fingers to bear will it begin to crush a victim.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+9 (16) | Action Points | 4 | 1–4 | Tail/Wrist | 4/10 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | 5–10 | Body/Palm | 4/11 |
| SIZ: 4d6+9 (23) | Magic Points | 7 | 11–12 | Finger 1 | 4/9 |
| DEX: 2d6+18 (25) | Movement | 8m Scuttling & Swimming | 13–14 | Finger 2 | 4/9 |
| INS: 2d6+7 (14) | Strike Rank | 20 | 15–16 | Finger 3 | 4/9 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Bloated Skin | 17–18 | Finger 4 | 4/9 |
| | | | 19–20 | Finger 5 | 4/9 |

**Abilities:** *Aquatic, Earth Sense, Leaper*

**Skills:** *Athletics 71%, Brawn 59%, Endurance 58%, Evade 80%, Perception 61%, Stealth 79%, Swim 65%, Willpower 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Finger Fighting (Crush, Flick) 81%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Crushing Grip* | *L* | *T* | *1d8+1d6* | *As for Fingers* |
| *Finger Flick* | *M* | *M* | *1d6+1d6* | *As for Fingers* |

# Lammasu

Divine agents supposedly created by the gods, lammasu are winged, humanoid-headed quadrupeds who act as protective guardians for temples, palaces and even ancient hidden treasures. Intelligent and effectively ageless, each lammasu is steeped in both knowledge and power. The specific creature they are chimerically melded with is usually the cult beast of the deity which created them. Since they cannot procreate, all the lammasu of the island are either ancient servitors which survived the sinking of the continent, or alien beings drawn from another realm.

The great creatures are magical beasts with the bodies of huge animals, the wings of an eagle, and the head of an oversized humanoid. Larger than a bull, a lammasu is an imposing foe, rippling muscle under tough hide. Its six metre wingspan is kept folded up along the lammasu's flanks, stretching out in an instant when the creature needs to take flight. Whilst the feathered wings, when spread, shimmer with an almost iridescent glow, the creature is not particularly quick or agile when aloft. The regenerative ability of a lammasu allows it to replace even lost limbs.

A lammasu's head is always that of a humanoid, its appearance of a mature adult with appropriate decoration. For example a human lammasu would have its thick beard and long hair coiffured in a style suitable to its original society, and wears an imposing headdress of authority suited to their station. No matter the base animal it was formed from, all lammasu share the same Characteristics and Attributes. The only differences occur between what natural weapons it possesses.

The magic of lammasu is potent, drawn directly from the culture which first created them. Each creature is considered a Priest, Mage or Master of the cult it once served, knowing 1d3+4 appropriate miracles, spells or talents; utilising these powers intelligently. Of course theistic lammasu on the island face difficulties since most of their gods are either sleeping, entombed or cut off from them. However nothing stops an abandoned, now independent, lammasu from joining a different religion providing they feel inclined to do so.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+18 (25) | Action Points | 3 | 1–2 | Right Hind Leg | 5/11 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d12 | 3–4 | Left Hind Leg | 5/11 |
| SIZ: 4d6+18 (32) | Magic Points | 19 | 5–7 | Hindquarters | 5/12 |
| DEX: 2d6+3 (10) | Movement | 8m, 12m Flying | 8–10 | Forequarters | 5/13 |
| INT: 2d6+9 (16) | Strike Rank | 13 | 11–12 | Right Wing | 5/10 |
| POW: 2d6+12 (19) | Armour | Thick Hide | 13–14 | Left Wing | 5/10 |
| CHA: 2d6+9 (16) | | | 15–16 | Right Front Leg | 5/10 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Front Leg | 5/10 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 5/11 |

**Abilities:** *Disease Immunity, Flying, Magic Sense, Regenerate (1 HP/Minute), Trample*

**Skills:** *Athletics 65%, Brawn 77%, Endurance 78%, Evade 50%, Fly 55%, Perception 75%, Willpower 44% plus other cultural and knowledge skills as necessary at a default base+40%.*

**Magic:** *Requisite magic skills at 90%*

**Combat Style:** *: Divine Wrath (Limb, Trample) 85%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Limb Attack* | *H* | *L* | *1d8+1d12* | *As for Limb* |
| *Trample* | *E* | *T* | *2d12* | *Not Applicable* |

# Lizard, Blood

Blood lizards are large reptile-shaped beasts up to three metres in length. Unusually, instead of being made from flesh and bone, they are actually a sorcerous conglomeration of accumulated blood, given shape and solidity by a magical organ hidden within their inherently fluid body.

The creatures need fresh blood to survive, gradually replacing ageing plasma by applying it to their outer surfaces, where it dries into a crispy, reddish brown skin often embedded with sand and soil. This innocuous colouration helps it blend into the ground, helping to camouflage it against scavengers attracted by its smell. Blood lizards prey upon these carrion eaters, blinding then draining them via hundreds of hollow, needle teeth it forms specifically for the task.

Having no natural solidity save for its skin makes killing these creatures difficult, their lack of internal structure causing weapons to only inflict minimal damage. They possess only one weak spot, the magical organ which gives them sentience and holds their shape, hidden in the tip of their tail.

Blood lizards are instinctual ambushers. When potential prey accidentally wanders into range, the lizard vomits some of its sticky blood at the target's eyes. The spray normally takes the victim by surprise and they must parry or evade the gout of fluid. Failing to do so blinds the victim

for 1d4+1 rounds, the slightly sticky fluid clogging up the eyes. With its target hopefully placed at a disadvantage, the lizard then leaps on the target and attempts to get a solid bite. If either of these two tactics fails, the lizard will begin a fighting retreat using both bite and tail to fend off the prey if it proves belligerent.

Any bite which inflicts a Special Effect permits the lizard to use Grip to lock its jaws in place and begin draining blood via hundreds of hypodermic needle teeth. On the start of the next round and each round thereafter, the siphoning inflicts a level of Fatigue on the victim and heals the lizard of 5 Hit Points which it can re-distribute as desired to heal any damage it suffers. Once drained to Debilitated level the lizard gives up sucking the increasingly low pressure blood and retreats to enjoy its meal. Thus whilst the enduring penalties of being drained can last for days, attacks are rarely fatal.

Of course, remaining attached to a still struggling foe can be dangerous. Blood lizards possess the advantage that they partially immune to physical weapons. Any blow which penetrates their 'skin' will merely allow a little of their internal plasma to leak out before the wound clots and seals – thrusting and slashing weapons inflict insignificant harm. Only bashing weapons inflict normal damage, splattering the creature's blood over a wide area, beyond its ability to control.

Due to their weird physiology blood lizards are immune to the special effects of Bleed, Impale, and Stun Location. The one weak spot of the lizard is its tail. Any damage inflicted on the Tail Location is not reduced, damaging the magical organ which is the source of its life. A Major Wound to the location will cause the creature to collapse into a soggy sack of oozing blood. If severed the tail continues to writhe about, seemingly part of its death throes, but actually part of a cunning survival trick, the organ attempting to 'accidentally' roll into some undergrowth where it forms a new, far smaller, body and begins its growth cycle all over again.

A blood lizard will rarely attack superior numbers unless it is enormously bigger than the individuals. Occasionally several blood lizards combine forces to attack a more formidable target, something like a large herbivore.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 3 | 1–2 | Tail | 2/8 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 3–4 | Right Hind Leg | 2/7 |
| SIZ: 2d6+12 (19) | Magic Points | 7 | 5–6 | Left Hind Leg | 2/7 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 8m | 7–10 | Hindquarters | 2/8 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 16 | 11–14 | Forequarters | 2/9 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Dried Blood | 15–16 | Right Front Leg | 2/7 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Front Leg | 2/7 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 2/8 |

**Abilities:** *Camouflaged, Immunity (edged or piercing weapons), Leaper, Vampiric*

**Skills:** *Athletics 62%, Brawn 52%, Endurance 56%, Evade 68%, Perception 49%, Sneak 71%, Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *Suck and Smash (Bite, Squirt, Tail) 72%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *T* | *1d6+1d4+Drain thereafter* | *As for Head* |
| *Blood Squirt* | *L* | *L* | *Blindness* | *Not Applicable* |
| *Tail Lash* | *M* | *M* | *1d4+1d4* | *As for Tail* |

# Lizard, Thorny

Giant lizards covered with spiky growths, the lean body of a thorny lizard can reach five metres in length. Disliked by the natives, these lizards engage in brief spurts of destruction, consuming vast amounts of anything they can find, whether collected fruits in a storehouse to all the living animals in its immediate locale, before retreating to a secure location and slowly digest the results of its rapine.

Thorny lizards come in a wide range of colours, seemingly used more for display and mating, rather than as useful camouflage. Despite their size the lizards have a frighteningly fast sprint speed, fortuitously however they cannot maintain it for long. Besides a gaping maw full of razor sharp teeth and a long thick tail, they also possess scything claws on each foot with which they climb huge trees capable of supporting their weight; the upper arboreal levels being their favourite place to rest.

The creature's large spikes not only provide armour but also inflict damage on bigger beasts which foolishly attempt to bite it. When surrounded by smaller predators trying to take it down as a pack, the lizard utilises the spikes by rolling over its foes. Thus monstrous lizards are sometimes encountered with still rotting carcasses impaled on their body spikes, held in place by the barbed tips. Anyone attacking the lizard with a Touch or Short reach weapon also suffers damage.

These monstrous lizards openly stalk their prey, following them at a distance until they can subtly approach into sprint range. The beast then explodes into a high speed charge, giving plenty of warning of their approach but hoping to overrun their chosen target. The first attack is always a bite which often knocks down prey as the lizard barrels into it. A prone victim is held down and savaged whilst it is still on the ground, the first attack being utilised to grapple – pinning the location to the floor rather than inflicting damage. Following attacks are normally the bite and using other available claws to rake.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 3 | 1–2 | Tail | 5/10 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d8 | 3–4 | Right Hind Leg | 5/9 |
| SIZ: 2d6+18 (25) | Magic Points | 7 | 5–6 | Left Hind Leg | 5/9 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 8m | 7–10 | Hindquarters | 5/10 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 16 | 11–14 | Forequarters | 5/11 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Thorny Scales | 15–16 | Right Front Leg | 5/9 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Front Leg | 5/9 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 5/10 |

**Abilities:** *Cold Blooded, Spiny, Trample (Roll)*

**Skills:** *Athletics 78%, Brawn 64%, Endurance 68%, Evade 58%, Perception 49%, Stealth 51%, Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *: Thorny Storm (Bite, Claw, Tumble) 68%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *L* | *L* | *1d6+1d8* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *L* | *M* | *1d4+1d8* | *As for Limb* |
| *Tumbling Roll* | *H* | *T* | *2d8* | *Not Applicable* |

# Lizardfolk of Monster Island

The following lizardfolk are a slightly tweaked version of the Lizardman presented in RuneQuest. Most of the details concerning their culture are contained in the Cultures chapter on page 21. Big and strong they are formidable foes, even for well equipped adventurers.

The lizardfolk of the island possess a colourfully patterned skin which helps identify their tribal bloodline, whilst head crests and facial frills can rise and fall for display purposes. Slightly more crocodilian in internal physiology, they are well adapted to life in water with an inherent ability to hold their breath for extended periods, and with the aid of their tails are strong swimmers.

The predominant hunters of the island, lizardfolk can be a nightmare of guerrilla warfare against those trespassing within their territory. Within favoured terrain – flooded riverside, swamps and jungle – lizardmen are adversaries to be feared. They prefer to ambush their opponents, making use of local knowledge and wilderness skills to set traps and lie in wait. Their favoured tactic is to lie submerged in mud or water next to the path of their targets, hidden except for the tops of their heads. Once such an ambush has been set up it can be maintained for hours, even days, the lizardmen entering a semi-torpid state.

As prey passes their hiding place or becomes ensnared in a prepared trap, the warriors attack with a volley of missiles, before leaping upon the victims and striking with melee weapons. They will often attempt to grapple the target and drag it underwater, where the greater lung capacity of the lizardfolk allows them to remain until their prey is half drowned. Since live prey generally keeps better in tropical or swamp environments, most lizardmen try to subdue victims and keep them alive for later consumption. Thus favoured special effects tend to be Bash to knock foes into water, Stun Location to knock them unconscious, or Entangle if using nets or tails.

Sexually dimorphic, female lizardfolk are smaller than their more expendable male counterparts, only rolling 1d6+12 for SIZ. Since lizardfolk can be as diverse in skill and aptitude as humans, some generic examples are provided in the Appendices for Games Master use. To create a lizardman character, use the guidelines suggested on page 20 in the Cultures chapter.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+9 (16) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Tail | 3/7 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 4–5 | Right Leg | 3/7 |
| SIZ: 1d6+15 (19) | Magic Points | 11 | 6–7 | Left Leg | 3/7 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 6m Walking and Swimming | 8–10 | Abdomen | 3/8 |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 13 | 11–14 | Chest | 3/9 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Thick Scales | 15–16 | Right Arm | 3/6 |
| CHA: 3d6 (11) | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 3/6 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 3/7 |

**Abilities:** *Cold Blooded, Hold Breath, Night Sight, Swimmer*

**Magic:** *Animism*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *T* | *1d6+1d4* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *M* | *S* | *1d4+1d4* | *As for Limb* |
| *Tail* | *M* | *M* | *1d4+1d4* | *As for Tail* |

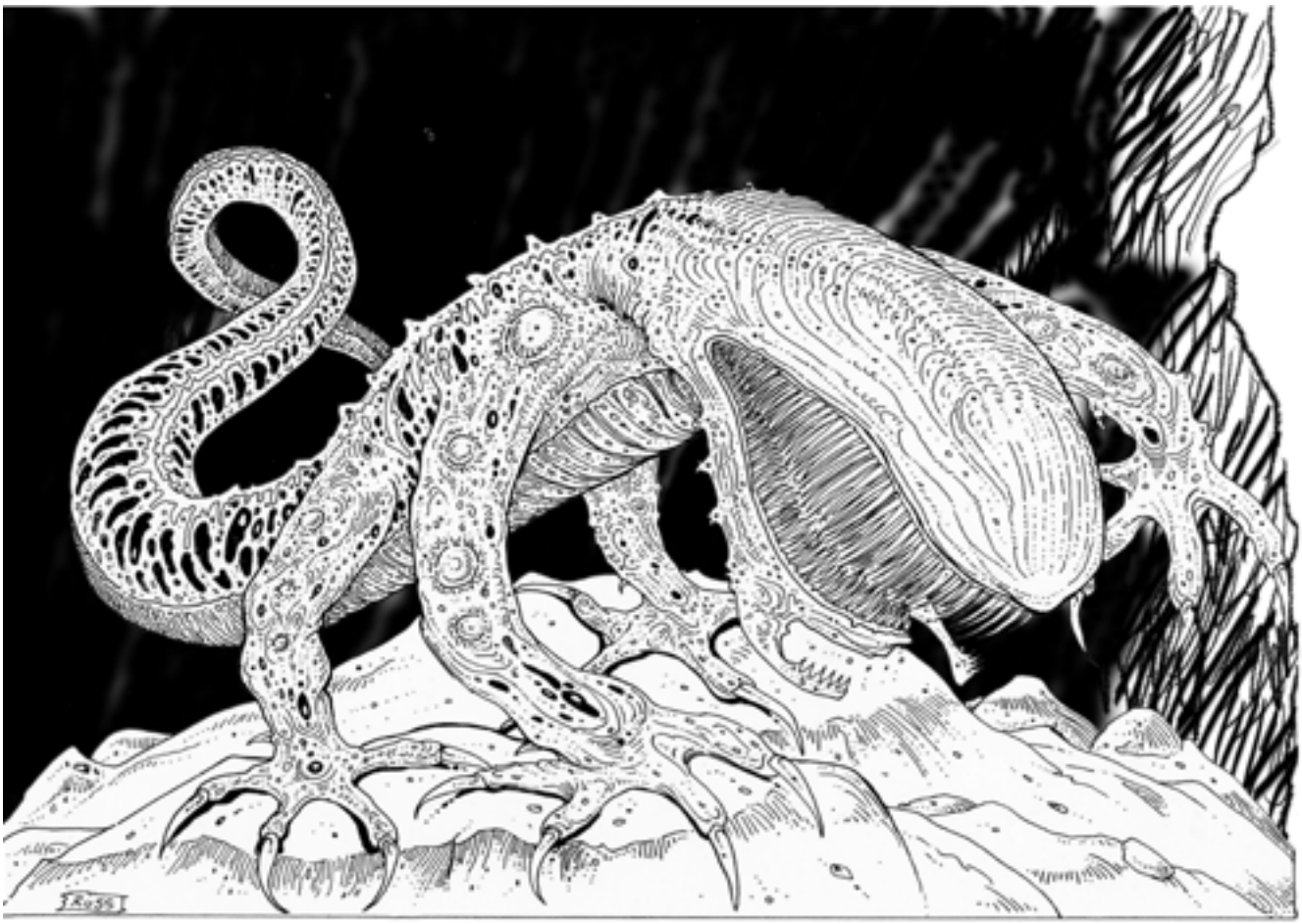
# Malcathorn

A nightmare combination of a snake with four arms, no eyes, sensitive hearing and a gaping mouth with hundreds of teeth, the malcathorn is a dangerous creature that lives in tombs and burrows, dark places where its lack of sight grants it an advantage. Feared by mages for their natural magical suppression, few dare to hunt these monsters in their subterranean lairs. Despite its somewhat horrifying appearance, some primitive tribes use malcathorn as guardians for sacred sites, feeding the creature so that its presence keeps thieves and desecrators away; or alternatively they feed their dead to the monster in order to prevent the body ever being used for necromantic purposes.

Malcathorns are carnivorous but have a taste for carrion and bones, which perhaps explains their sepulchral haunts. In wilderness regions they often find homes at the bottom of sinkholes, patiently waiting for animals to fall in. Although their cold-blooded metabolism allows them to subsist on one gorging a month, in times of shortage they are sometimes forced to briefly roam from their den in search of prey.

The scaled skin of a malcathorn is coloured a deep purple on its back and flanks, allowing it to blend into the darkness better. Its arms end in spidery hands with opposable thumbs, permitting it to clutch its victims and operate simple devices such as door handles. Partially blind, the creature cannot see but instead uses echolocation to find its way about and has exceptionally sharp hearing. In fact the malcathorn's sensitivity to sound is something of a weakness too, magnified bangs or yells often driving it off if it fails a Willpower check. Since malcathorn are immune to magic, those plagued by the creatures often arm themselves with musical instruments, such as giant drums.

Malcathorn prowl in the darkness, relying on stealth to try and ambush those that foolishly venture into their realm. They have some degree of light and heat sensitivity which they use to initially attack items such as torches



or lanterns, knocking them away to plunge the immediate area into darkness. Faced with multiple opponents it utilises the Outmanoeuvre action to limit the number that can attack it during that round. In this it is normally successful since the darkness penalties apply to both Evade and Combat Style skills of opponents unable to see in such conditions; making their flailing blows more a question of luck rather than skill.

The most dangerous aspect of malcathorn is their magic suppression. Any spell contacting it is immediately neutralised if it has a Magnitude less or equal than the creature's POW, including any defensive magic on an attacked target. Many adventurers confident in their illumination spells have fallen foul of the monster as the perimeter of their spell touches it. Likewise combat spells are dismissed as they strike the creature, having no effect on it.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 3+1 (Multi-Limbed) | 1–3 | Tail | 4/8 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | 4–6 | Abdomen | 4/9 |
| SIZ: 2d6+18 (25) | Magic Points | 10 | 7–10 | Chest | 4/10 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 6m | 11–12 | Right Lower Arm | 4/7 |
| INS: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 16 | 13–14 | Left Lower Arm | 4/7 |
| POW: 2d6+3 (10) | Armour | Thick Scales | 15–16 | Right Upper Arm | 4/7 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Upper Arm | 4/7 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 4/8 |

**Abilities:** *Cold Blooded, Echolocation, Immunity (Magic), Multi-Limbed*

**Skills:** *Athletics 52%, Brawn 68%, Endurance 66%, Evade 68%, Perception 63%, Stealth 72%, Willpower 60%*

**Combat Style:** *Blind Fighting (Bite, Claw, Tail) 72%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *L* | *S* | *1d8+1d6* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *L* | *M* | *1d6+1d6* | *As for Limb* |
| *Tail* | *L* | *L* | *1d6+1d6* | *As for Tail* |

# Manananggal

Usually concealed within the shape of an old or beautiful woman, a manananggal is a loathsome monster. When the moon waxes full, it goes to a secluded area and splits itself in half to hunt for victims. The legs and waist remain behind, whilst its upper torso spreads huge bat-like wings and flies into the night, searching for people on which to feed.

Akin to an aswang, the manananggal possesses an elongated proboscis-like tongue, with which it sucks the blood of unsuspecting, sleeping victims - the younger the better. Even if resting inside a home, children are not safe – the tongue being capable of inserting itself through windows or even slight cracks in a wall. Some stories tell of manananggal becoming caught when their tongue is pinned and tied into a knot, preventing its withdrawal back through the hole by which it entered.

It is said that if one finds its torso, to either sprinkle salt, sand or even crushed garlic on its lower half body or burn it makes it impossible for the creature to rejoin itself, causing it to die upon the first rays of sunlight. Rumour says that the diving attacks of a flying manananggal can be avoided if the target lies prone, because the monster is fearful of scraping its dangling major organs on the ground.

The following statistics are for the flying half of the manananggal. Double its SIZ, recalculate Hit Points and use the humanoid Hit Location table when reunited with its other half. Manananggal inherently know 1d3+2 Folk Magic spells.

Manananggal prefer to attack sleeping or helpless victims, rarely getting involved in combat unless discovered when feeding. In such situations they use their inherent advantage of flight to perform strafing attacks (see RuneQuest page 152). This generally keeps them safe from being ganged up upon, provided the attackers are not armed with missile weapons. If the assailants are thus armed, the

mananangal will wisely fly off and try to feed another night.

Since their whipping tongues are razor sharp they tend to prefer the Bleed special effect, causing small nicks and cuts to each opponent till they collapse from blood loss. If successful in this tactic the mananangal will then hover, or hang from a convenient protrusion, to feed upon the pooling nourishment. The only other time they willingly enter combat is to defend the lower half of their body, left behind in a secluded place. If salt, sand or garlic has been applied to the gaping wound the mananangal will attempt to clean off the offending material unless physically stopped.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 3d6+6 (17) | Action Points | 3 | 1 – 4 | Right Wing | 0/4 |
| CON: 3d6 (11) | Damage Modifier | None | 5 – 8 | Left Wing | 0/4 |
| SIZ: 1d6+3 (7) | Magic Points | 11 | 9 – 12 | Chest | 0/6 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 6m, 10m Flying | 13 – 15 | Right Arm | 0/3 |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 13 | 16 – 18 | Left Arm | 0/3 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | None | 19 – 20 | Head | 0/4 |
| CHA: 3d6 (11) | | | | | |

**Abilities:** *Diving Strike, Flying, Night Sight*

**Skills:** *Athletics 50%, Brawn 44%, Deceit 64%, Endurance 52%, Evade 46%, Fly 70%, Perception 64%, Stealth 66%, Willpower 62%*

**Combat Style:** *Tongue Lashing (Claw, Tongue) 70%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Claw* | *S* | *T* | *1d3* | *As for Arm* |
| *Tongue* | *S* | *M* | *1d4* | *As for Head* |

# Mantithorn Cactus

This weird plant has the form of a large pumpkin-shaped cactus, covered with thousands of needle-sharp spines, sitting atop an innocuous mass of hairy vines. Its danger lies in the fact that the plant can shoot these thorny spines at victims which draw too close to the plant, probably attracted by the water it stores within its pulp.

The cactus detects potential threats from ground vibrations, waiting until the victim is within range of its hypodermic spines, which it fires using hydraulic pressure. Each of these deadly little darts is insignificant in its own right, but a dozen together carry enough poison to bring down an adult man, completely paralysing them in a few minutes (treat as Assassin Conch Paralytic except that it has an onset time of 1d3+3 rounds, and does not cause Asphyxiation). Thus unless fully concealed behind a shield, the only way to avoid the cloud of several hundred needles is to Evade the attack. The mantithorn has enough spines for 1d6+1 volleys before expending its entire store, continuing to fire until it is no longer threatened. However, since the spines are so small it requires use of the Inject Venom special effect to ensure enough of the darts manage to penetrate any worn or natural armour.

Assuming a victim succumbing to the paralytic doesn't wander off too far, the mantithorn slowly (at a snail's pace) crawls over to the body using its stubby vines to drag it along. If it manages to arrive before the victim recovers from the poison, the plant inserts its vines into the helpless foe via any orifices its questing runners can locate. Once inside, they begin to propagate rapidly and even if the cactus is destroyed at this point, these internal shoots continue spreading unless destroyed using some form of potent magic, such as Cure Malady.

The infestation causes terrible and irrecoverable injury, inflicting 1d3 points of Characteristic damage to STR, CON and DEX each day until the victim dies. In a matter of hours a new seedling sprouts nauseatingly from the dead corpse's stomach, eventually maturing into a new mantithorn. Fortunately for most of the island natives, the mantithorn plant only thrives in the dry climate at higher elevations. Thus it is rarely found in the jungles below the Puna Plateau.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 1d3+3 (5) | Action Points | 1 | 1–15 | Body | 4/11 |
| CON: 1d6+6 (10) | Damage Modifier | -1d4 | 16–20 | Vines | 0/9 |
| SIZ: 1d6+6 (10) | Magic Points | 2 | | | |
| DEX: 1d3 (2) | Movement | Less than 1m | | | |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 5 | | | |
| POW: 1d3 (2) | Armour | Cactus Rind | | | |

**Abilities:** *Area Attack (Spine Volley), Earth Sense, Flora, Trapper*

**Skills:** *Athletics 0%, Brawn 25%, Endurance 30%, Evade 0%, Perception 50%, Willpower 0%*

**Combat Style:** *Cloud of Thorns (Spines) 47%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Vine Impregnation* | - | - | *1d3 points of Characteristic damage per day* | *Not Applicable* |

# Megalonyx

A giant prehistoric ground sloth, the megalonyx is a heavyset, tailed herbivore which stands between three and four metres tall if it rises up on its back legs. Found in almost every environment from jungle to open plains, it grazes succulent leaves and digs up roots and tubers, easily excavating the ground with its huge claws.

Heavy and relatively slow, giant ground sloths dislike deep water, shying away from large pools or fast running rivers which they cannot cross. They make up for this by possessing a remarkable stealth for something of their size, methodically moving through undergrowth with little disturbance.

The thick fury hide of the megalonyx is embedded with tiny dermal bones or "ossicles". These provide an unusual level of protection, acting as flexible armour against predators foolish enough to attack a creature of its size and inherent strength. Fortunately the giant animal is pacifistic, only attacking if it or its young are directly threatened.

With their slow movement rate and poor evasion skills ground sloths find themselves at a serious disadvantage against hunters using ranged weapons. For this reason megalonyx try to avoid contact with those humanoids it detects approaching, fading silently into whatever cover is available. If it fails to disguise its presence and is attacked, the creature will charge into close combat and swing its huge claws wildly about, inflicting Bash or Bleed whenever possible.

Most ground sloths usually travel in small groups of 1d6+6 individuals for mutual defence. These creatures however are sometimes captured by primitive peoples and used as opponents in sacrificial pit fights or chained up as guard animals. Such incarceration sends the sloth mad, turning it into a frightful opponent that gains the Frenzy ability.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+18 (25) | Action Points | 2 | 1–2 | Tail | 4/11 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d12 | 3–5 | Right Hind Leg | 4/9 |
| SIZ: 2d6+24 (31) | Magic Points | 7 | 6–8 | Left Hind Leg | 4/9 |
| DEX: 2d6 (7) | Movement | 4m | 9–11 | Hindquarters | 4/11 |
| INS: 2d6+4 (11) | Strike Rank | 9 | 12–14 | Forequarters | 4/12 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Thick Fur and Ossicles | 15–16 | Right Front Leg | 4/10 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Front Leg | 4/10 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 4/10 |

**Abilities:** *Night Sight*

**Skills:** *Athletics 42%, Brawn 71%, Endurance 68%, Evade 34%, Perception 48%, Stealth 58%, Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *Savage Slashing (Claws) 62%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Claw* | *H* | *L* | *1d10+1d12* | *As for Limb* |

# Mokele-Mbembe

Mokele are huge crocodilian lizards with oversized bodies swollen as large as a hippopotamus, that live along the muddy banks of jungle rivers and swamps. Their short stumpy legs are little good save for locomotion, although it can lumber at a reasonable speed on land. Its head however, is not directly attached to the shoulders; instead it has a two metre long flexible neck that grants the beast the ability to reach fruit laden branches or mud buried tubers, which it roots out with its single, nose-mounted horn. Despite its fearsome appearance the mokele is totally vegetarian, having blunt teeth unsuited to slicing flesh.

Although most reptiles have long tails, the mokele's appendage is exceptionally long, serpentine and prehensile, adding another limb with which it can manipulate its surroundings. Dark green scales mottled with brown streaks cover the entire beast, allowing for a basic degree of concealment for a creature of its size. It spends about the same amount of time on land where it feeds and in the water, to relax.

Much of the folklore surrounding the mokele comes from its furious territoriality, attacking any creature man-sized or larger which trespasses into its domain, even predators. Strictly herbivorous, it does not eat the creatures it kills, but rather tears them apart leaving the remains for worms and maggots to consume. Some legends say that the mokele's savage rage comes from a curse which prevents it from eating the meat it secretly craves.

Mokele-mbembe prioritise their targets solely by proximity. Those closest to the mokele are attacked first, goring with its horn until they cease being a threat. Only at that time will a mokele move on to another target. The beast normally uses its tail to clear away opponents that attempt to flank it, the length of the appendage enabling it to catch several foes with the same sweep. If not heavily pressed a mokele will sometimes use its tail to grapple the current

target, wrapping it around a random location and lifting the victim into the air where they dangle, vulnerable to the creature's wicked horn.

Faced with overwhelming opposition, a mokele-mbembe will withdraw into the nearest body of river or pool and fight from the partial safety of the water, submerging if targeted by ranged weapons. In such cases the monster will often try to grab one last victim, either via a tail grapple or impaling them on its horn before they dive.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 3d6+12 (23) | Action Points | 2 | 1–2 | Tail | 4/12 |
| CON: 3d6+6 (17) | Damage Modifier | +1d12 | 3–4 | Right Rear Leg | 4/11 |
| SIZ: 3d6+24 (35) | Magic Points | 7 | 5–6 | Left Rear Leg | 4/11 |
| DEX: 2d6+3 (10) | Movement | 6m | 7–9 | Hindquarters | 5/12 |
| INS: 2d6+4 (11) | Strike Rank | 11 | 10–12 | Forequarters | 5/13 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Thick Scales | 13–14 | Right Front Leg | 4/11 |
| | | | 15–16 | Left Front Leg | 4/11 |
| | | | 17–18 | Neck | 4/11 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 5/12 |

**Abilities:** *Area Attack (Tail), Cold Blooded, Night Sight, Swimmer*

**Skills:** *Athletics 53%, Brawn 78%, Endurance 64%, Evade 50%, Perception 48%, Stealth 41%, Swim 50%, Willpower 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Goring Horror (Horn, Tail) 63%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Horn* | *H* | *VL* | *1d12+1d12* | *As for Head* |
| *Tail Sweep* | *H* | *VL* | *1d10+1d12* | *As for Tail* |

# Moonflower

Another of the deadly plants which fill the jungle of the island, moonflowers are gigantic blooms which grow in places open to the sky, such as swamps or pools, floating like giant water lilies. They grow ponderously, never opening their single great bud for decades as they slowly mature. Eventually on the night of the full moon when the sky is clear, the bloom finally flowers, revealing beautiful silver petals over five metres across that spread under the moonlight.

It is the ephemeral beauty of the moonflower which becomes a dangerous lure to the weak-minded. It is said that the petals capture the mystical lunar light, coalescing it so that strangely hypnotic images appear to dance above its sweet smelling stamens. In fact the undulating light is so mesmerising, any sapient creature regarding it must succeed in a Formidable Willpower check or become entranced.

Those who succumb to the flower will approach the bloom and, assuming they don't stumble into a patch of quicksand or fall into the water, gaze into the lights and slowly be drained of their Magic Points. The victim does not notice the loss, being transported into a higher plane of consciousness – literally discorporated – but instead of appearing on the Spirit Plane, they transcend into the space between stars where they marvel at the complexities of the cosmos.

The Magic Point loss continues at a rate of 1d3 points per hour, until the flower furls its petals with the setting of the moon (assume the lunar transition lasts 2d6 hours). A victim who runs out of Magic Points before this occurs is lost in the cosmos, unable to find their way back to their body, which will eventually die if not cared for.

Although ghastly, this is often more preferable to those who return with the withering of the bloom, since a moonflower only blossoms once in its life and dies soon after. The entranced victim, bereft of the ability to return, often slips into insanity, searching for other moonflower buds and refusing to leave the vicinity in the desperate hope of achieving transcendence once again.

# Morko

A being of darkness and deadly cold that haunts the mountains, Morko is an icy killer feared by even the voormi who propitiate her as a deity. Appearing as a hunched and looming figure with long clawed arms, two staring eyes, a huge prominent nose and mouth filled with white icicle teeth, Morko at first seems to present little threat. Her dark fur is long but she seems to lack any legs, although legendarily possesses a tail nobody survives to see.

The greatest danger presented by Morko is the intense cold she radiates, killing nearby vegetation and leaving a trail of ice behind her. Morko's touch freezes anything contacted, including living creatures. Indeed, the island natives believe that those who venture above the cloud forests will die in their sleep, killed by her intense cold when she comes to investigate their camp fires.

Morko is fascinated by fire and heat of all kinds, travelling long distances to hug anything warm into her fatal embrace. Why she does this nobody knows, but if not for the volcanic upwellings that bring scalding water to the mountain heights which she temporarily ices up, it is sure that the remaining High Folk enclaves would have long since been nothing more than chill fortresses filled with frozen mummies.

Despite her reputation as a night haunting ghost, Morko is a corporeal creature – at least during the hours of darkness. During the day she cannot be found, even by those foolish enough to follow her icy trail to its end. She is silent when moving, although water begins to creak and crack when she draws close, and animals are warned by the plunging temperature.

Morko is immune to fire of any type, extinguishing flames with no harm to herself. Those who attack her suffer a constant leeching of their warmth, slowly succumbing to hypothermia as she drains their body heat. At the start of each round anyone within five metres gains a level of fatigue unless they succeed in a Hard Endurance roll. Worse still, any weapon which strikes Morko automatically applies its damage roll to itself, ignoring its own Armour Points. Only if it survives the blow does the weapon inflict the same damage upon her. Thus a spear hitting Morko for 5 points of damage would shatter before it could harm its intended victim.

Seeking comfort, even from those that attack her, Morko hugs anyone within reach. She grapples them, not seeking to inflict damage, but her touch burns with icy cold. If her touch continues, the area grasped eventually freezes solid, whilst simultaneously inflicting an automatic level of Fatigue with no chance to resist. If Morko is somehow given a Major Wound she dissipates into a snow flurry, but regenerates damage at a rate of 1 Hit Point per hour until the injury is fully healed; at which point she can manifest again, provided the sun has set.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 17 | Action Points | 2 | 1–2 | Tail | 4/9 |
| CON: 23 | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | 3–7 | Abdomen | 4/10 |
| SIZ: 21 | Magic Points | 27 | 8–12 | Chest | 4/11 |
| DEX: 7 | Movement | 4 metres | 13–15 | Right Arm | 4/8 |
| INT: 11 | Strike Rank | 9 | 16–18 | Left Arm | 4/8 |
| POW: 27 | Armour | Thick Fur | 19–20 | Head | 4/9 |
| CHA: 5 | | | | | |
| **Abilities:** *Fatigue Drain (Aura), Immunity (Temperature), Regeneration (1 HP per hour)* | | | | | |
| **Skills:** *Athletics 44%, Brawn 58%, Endurance 86%, Evade 34%, Perception 78%, Stealth 68%, Track 64%, Willpower 84%* | | | | | |
| **Combat Style:** *Seek Warmth (Grapple) 64%* | | | | | |

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Hug* | *L* | *M* | *1d8 Cold plus Fatigue* | *As for Arm* |

# Moth, Lotus

Insects evolve strange and different ways to survive in the dangerous worlds they live in. Some have spiky carapaces, powerful jaws, or even painful stingers – the lotus moth is highly poisonous. Animals that foolishly eat the beautiful insect will rapidly succumb to its toxic effects brought on from touching the pollen-like dust from the moth's wings.

Nearly sixty centimetres in wingspan, lotus butterflies are tropical insects whose larvae are laid in fresh carrion, but once they finally eat their way free of a carcass, they grow multiple legs and crawl into the undergrowth to feed on the swollen fruits and blossoms found in wetlands. In both caterpillar and moth form they are as beautiful as they are lethal, with their thick, hairy bodies and dark wings, streaked with vivid coloured splotches to warn off predators, but in the thick vegetation of swamps and jungles many creatures do not see them until it is already too late.

It is thought that the caterpillars, prior to spinning their pupae, seek out and feed upon poisonous vegetation in order to metabolise and concentrate the toxins as part of their metamorphosis. Thus the most noxious moths come from areas where the incidence of vegetative poisons is highest. In fact the colour patterns of their wings is often an indication of the plants eaten, and hence the type and quality of their toxicity; purples, crimsons and blacks reputed to come from the dreaded lotus plants and orchids (see Poisons pages 168-171).

A lotus moth is generally harmless save when accidentally startled or seeking a host for its eggs. Being little more than mindless insects they rely on pure instinct when faced with danger, attempting to flee in most situations. The dust they leave in their wake is purely a side effect of flying violently, thus deliberately attacking the insect only serves to scatter more of its poison about. Blocking such clouds of dust is impossible even with a shield, meaning that it is often more sensible to dive clear using Evade.

When hunting for a victim they prefer to flutter over the head of a resting creature, which they detect via the host's exhalations. The dust is then drawn into the lungs where it begins its deadly effect. Once the creature stops breathing the moth will then settle on an exposed patch of flesh and begin laying eggs. This generally leaves a smear of wing dust over the area, helping to protect the eggs from being consumed by an opportunistic scavenger.

## Moth Dust

Although glittery in direct sunlight, the toxic dust from a lotus moth's wings can sometimes be overlooked by observers who have no experience of the deadly nature of this creature. When first encountered, observers should be permitted an unopposed Perception test to see if they

notice the faint, tiny scintillations in the air. If used as part of an assassination attempt an alert target can attempt to Evade a cloud of blown or thrown dust. If that fails then they are exposed to the poison.

**Application**: Inhalation or Ingestion

**Potency**: 80 (reduced by 10 per week if preserved in some manner)

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: 1d6 Rounds if inhaled, 1d6 Minutes if licked or eaten

**Duration**: The moth's CON in minutes

**Conditions**: The poison has three stages, each one triggered in subsequent order by failing the initial or previous opposed test of Endurance versus the potency of the dust. Succeeding in a resistance roll negates any subsequent effects. The first failure causes Dumbness, the victim's vocal chords seizing up preventing vocal communication or spell casting. After a minute a second check is required, failure bringing total body paralysis. After a minute more a third failure results in death from cardiac arrest. If the victim survives, all conditions clear at the end when the duration concludes.

**Antidote/Cure**: None known. The Healing skill can help a victim through the most dangerous stages however.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 1d3 (2) | Action Points | 2 | 1–2 | Right Legs | 0/2 |
| CON: 2d6 (7) | Damage Modifier | -1d8 | 3–4 | Left Legs | 0/2 |
| SIZ: 1d3 (2) | Magic Points | 2 | 5–7 | Abdomen | 0/3 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 6m, Flying | 8–10 | Thorax | 0/4 |
| INS: 2d6+2 (9) | Strike Rank | 11 | 11–12 | Upper Right Wing | 0/1 |
| POW: 1d3 (2) | Armour | None | 13–14 | Upper Left Wing | 0/1 |
| | | | 15–16 | Lower Right Wing | 0/1 |
| | | | 17–18 | Lower Left Wing | 0/1 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 0/2 |
| **Abilities:** *Adhering, Flying, Venomous* | | | | | |
| **Skills:** *Athletics 0%, Brawn 0%, Endurance 14%, Evade 0%, Fly 55%, Perception 51%, Stealth 72%, Track 66%, Willpower 24%* | | | | | |
| **Combat Style:** *Unseen Death (Dusting) 65%* | | | | | |

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Dusting* | - | *M* | *Poisonous* | *Not Applicable* |

# Naga

Collectively naga are supernatural or divine beings which take the form of large serpents, often with humanoid features, ranging from just a human head all the way to a body above the waist and snake below. Their appearance is fluid, the creatures able to magically shift between physical forms as desired, provided at least half of their figure is ophidian. Lesser naga are restricted to single-headed forms, but greater naga can assume the terrifying shape of a multi-headed serpent (3-7 heads), albeit the heads being somewhat smaller in this shape.

The colour and pattern of a naga's scales can be quite varied. However, a naga cannot change this colouration, which remains constant whatever their form. Example decoration ranges from jet black with golden flecks to alternating bands of ruby, emerald and obsidian. No matter the hues, the scales of a naga are always fascinatingly beautiful and resplendent. Despite this naga are adept at gliding silently along or remaining motionless when they wish to be unobserved.

Sapient beings, nagas are often highly knowledgeable sages and well versed in thaumaturgy. Those that know Divine Magic are holy servitors, ageless throwbacks to the time before the great cataclysm and often cut off from their deity unless worshipping one of the few which did not involve itself in the gods' war. Sorcerous nagas and bio-engineered versions were created by the foul experiments of the High Folk, often enslaved to the will of their creator.

Naga are also blessed with the power to speak to any sentient being in its native tongue through its hisses and whispers, no matter what species its head might currently be. Via this ability they can command all non-sapient snakes and serpent based creatures, which follow orders without question, recognising the naga's authoritative aura.

Their attitude to other races depends wholly on how they are personally regarded. Treated with respect, they can be powerful guardians to cults, rulers or those that propitiate them. If persecuted they actively undermine societies, bringing misfortunate and performing ostensibly evil deeds. When angered naga are terrible creatures with enormous egos and anyone that dares ignore their suggestions is sure to suffer an apt retribution in short order.

The shape shifting ability of a naga costs it a single Magic Point each time it changes form and takes three rounds to complete. Use the separate table to determine Hit Locations, Armour Points and Hit Points. Characteristics are provided for a single headed lesser naga.

Greater naga add 1 INT and 3 POW for each additional head they possess, up to a maximum of seven heads (+6 INT, +18 POW) which is kept, even if in serpent or half humanoid form. They also gain the Multi-Headed trait which improves their Action Points, but only when using their hydra form. If wounded, the transition from hydra form back to single headed shape only carries over the three least injured heads to the associated locations.

Nagas avoid physical combat where possible, preferring to defeat foes with wit, intimidation or magic. If forced to fight it will use its abilities very intelligently, outmanoeuvring multiple foes, retreating into more defensible positions, spitting venom and casting magic.

A naga can spit once (per head) every1d3 hours, its venom able to travel up to its STR in metres. If this does not blind the victim, the naga will bite and tail-lash those that manage to close on it. Nagas prefer the special effects of Inject Venom or Trip. The former is used in combination with subsequent retreating, allowing the venom a chance to work. The latter is used in combination with a follow-up grapple attack, the naga wriggling over the fallen victim and sweeping them up in its coils.

Ensnared victims, if the naga spends an action squeezing them, will suffer crushing damage to their chest location. Torso armour protects against this damage, normally for the first round only. In addition to the hit point damage caused by the constriction, the victim is unable to breathe and begins to suffocate (see RuneQuest page 108). If strong enough the victim can attempt to break free using a Contest of Strength using Brawn (see RuneQuest page 59).

Greater nagas which assume a multi-headed form may only use one head at a time to cast spells. The others are restricted to spit or bite as desired until the casting is completed. At this point a different head may initiate a new spell.

## Naga Venom

The venom of a naga is an exceptionally lethal concoction of neurotoxins as befits the emperors of serpent-kind. It has two separate effect paths depending on its application. If spat at the face of a victim it causes blindness. If injected into a bite, the venom causes rapid death.

**Application**: Contact or Injected

**Potency**: 75

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time:** Instantaneous for Blindness, 1d3+3 rounds for Death

**Duration**: Permanent

**Conditions**: Spat venom which hits the victim in the face will cause immediate blindness. Failing to resist indicates the blindness is permanent, the neurotoxins destroying the surface of the eyes. Success means that the loss of sight is temporary, the victim's sight returning in 1d3 hours. If the venom is injected via a bite instead, it will attack the nervous system of a victim who fails to resist, causing death in less than half a minute.

**Antidote**/Cure: None

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 3 | See below table | | |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d8 | | | |
| SIZ: 2d6+18 (25) | Magic Points | 13 | | | |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 6 metres | | | |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 16 | | | |
| POW: 2d6+6 (13) | Armour | Scales on serpent parts | | | |
| CHA: 2d6+6 (13) | | | | | |

**Abilities:** *Night Sight, Poison Immunity, Shape-Shifter, Swimmer, Venomous*

**Skills:** *Athletics 58%, Brawn 64%, Deceit 56%, Endurance 68%, Evade 78%, Influence 66%, Insight 76%, Perception 66%, Stealth 62%, Willpower 76%*

**Magic:** *Requisite magic skills at 70%*

**Combat Style:** *Slithering Horror (Bite, Constrict, Spit, Tail) 78%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite (Multi-Headed)* | *M* | *M* | *1d3+1d8+Poison* | *As for Head* |
| *Bite (Single Headed)* | *L* | *M* | *1d6+1d8+Poison* | *As for Head* |
| *Constrict* | *-* | *T* | *1d8* | *As for Tail/Body* |
| *Spit* | *S* | *-* | *Poison* | *Not Applicable* |
| *Tail Lash* | *L* | *L* | *1d8+1d8* | *As for Tail* |

| 1d20 | Hybrid | AP/HP | Snake | AP/HP | Hydra | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1–3 | Tail Tip | 4/9 | Tail Tip | 4/9 | Tail Tip | 4/9 |
| 4–5 | Mid End-length | 4/9 | Mid End-length | 4/9 | Mid End-length | 4/9 |
| 6–7 | Fore End-length | 4/9 | Fore End-length | 4/9 | Fore End-length | 4/9 |
| 8–9 | Rear Mid-length | 4/10 | Rear Mid-length | 4/10 | Rear Mid-length | 4/10 |
| 10–12 | Mid Mid-length | 4/10 | Mid Mid-length | 4/10 | Mid Mid-length | 4/10 |
| 13–14 | Chest | 0/10 | Fore Mid-length | 4/10 | Fore Mid-length | 4/10 |
| 15–16 | Right Arm | 0/9 | Rear Fore-length | 4/9 | Heads (Roll Randomly) | 4/9 Each Head |
| 17–18 | Left Arm | 0/9 | Mid Fore-length | 4/9 | | |
| 19–20 | Head | 0/9 | Head (Human or Serpent) | 4/9 | | |

# Nanaue

Said to be the monstrous offspring between a human woman and the god of sharks, the nanaue are similar to the adaro, in that they are closely related to the feared ocean swimming predators. Unlike the hybrids, however, nanaue are actually shape-shifters taking the form of normal-looking men when ashore, but able to change into sharks when they enter seawater.

The only defining feature that can identify a nanaue concealed in human shape is a shark mouth located upon their back, but sometimes found on the front of the chest instead, just above the diaphragm. Although frightful to look at, the mouth is near useless in combat; only being used to consume large amounts of flesh quickly. To avoid detection most sharkmen hide the existence of the mouth with obfuscating tattoos or some item of local clothing such as a shirt or body wrapping.

Sharkmen live in isolated small groups hiding within local society, usually no more than a single family in a coastal village, for example amongst the fisherfolk of Grimsand. Their constant hunger forces them to remain close to the sea in which they can supplement their paltry human diet with quantities of fish. Unfortunately the

nanaue's man-eating appetites force them to attack swimmers or fishermen whilst in their shark shape. Unless these monthly primal urges are controlled with a successful Willpower check, the villages will begin to suspect a sharkman or adaro is responsible and being hunting down all sharks in the local waters.

Nanaue retain their Characteristics in shark form, but gain an improved swimming speed, additional abilities, increased Armour Points, and a deadly bite.

If engaging opponents in its shark form, the nanaue uses the Charge action against wading enemies to perform 'swim-by' attacks; or utilises the Leaping Attack option to jump clear of the water in an attempt to knock an foe overboard, substituting its Swim skill for Athletics. To aid in this hit and run style of fighting, the sharkman often swims away for several rounds before changing course and attacking from an unexpected direction. In this instance, assuming the water is clear enough to see though, the victim of an attack may roll their Perception in an opposed test against the sharkman's Stealth to see if it is spotted prior to the attack. If this fails they are subjected to a surprise attack.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+9 (16) | Action Points | 2 | 1–3 | Right Leg / Tail | 0 or 2/6 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 4–6 | Left Leg / Dorsal Fin | 0 or 2/6 |
| SIZ: 2d6+9 (16) | Magic Points | 11 | 7–9 | Abdomen / Hindquarters | 0 or 2/7 |
| DEX: 3d6 (11) | Movement | 6m, 10m as shark | 10–12 | Chest / Forequarters | 0 or 2/8 |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 11 | 13–15 | Right Arm / Right Fin | 0 or 2/5 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | None as human. Thick skin as a shark | 16–18 | Left Arm / Left Fin | 0 or 2/5 |
| CHA: 3d6 (11) | | | 19–20 | Head | 0 or 2/6 |

**Abilities:** *Shape-Shifter, Swimmer. In shark form: Aquatic, Blood Sense, Frenzy (Blood)*

**Skills:** *Athletics 57%, Brawn 62%, Disguise 64%, Endurance 66%, Evade 42%, Perception 54%, Stealth 44%, Swim 79%, Willpower 52%*

**Combat Style:** *Cultural Weapons 67%, Unarmed 77%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite (Shark)* | *M* | *T* | *1d8+1d4* | *As for Head* |
| *Unarmed (Human)* | *S* | *T* | *1d3+1d4* | *As for Limb* |

# Nukekubi

Nukekubi ostensibly appear as normal humans, lizardfolk or serpent people but at night their heads detach from their bodies and magically fly about, hunting for prey to feast upon. They are greatly feared for their taste for humanoid flesh and powerful, iron hard jaws which can dislocate to increase the size and power of the bite.

By day, the creatures try to blend into local society, often living in groups, impersonating normal families. Those whose true natures are discovered often flee to necropolises, hiding amongst the dead where inanimate, if decapitated, bodies would be less remarkable. There are few methods to determine a nukekubi from a normal humanoid. The only physiological sign is a faint red line around the base of the neck, sometimes incorporating mystical glyphs and symbols. However, this clue can easily be hidden under clothing or jewellery, or sometimes even disguised by vibrant tattoos.

Similar to manananggal, the nukekubi's body remains vulnerable when the head departs. If it cannot locate and reattach to its body by sunrise, the creature dies a terrible

agonising death. Stories tell of harassed villages without access to warriors, foiling the creatures by hiding their bodies while the heads are elsewhere. The following statistics are for the flying head of the nukekubi. Add 2d6+3 to its SIZ, recalculate Hit Points and use the humanoid Hit Location table when reunited with its body.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 3 | 1-20 | Head | 6/3 |
| CON: 3d6 (11) | Damage Modifier | -1d4 | | | |
| SIZ: 1d3 (2) | Magic Points | 11 | | | |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 6m, 8m Flying | | | |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 13 | | | |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Iron-Hard Skull | | | |
| CHA: 2d6 (7) | | | | | |
| **Abilities:** *Dark Sight, Diving Strike, Flying, Terrifying* | | | | | |
| **Skills:** *Brawn 55%, Deceit 50%, Endurance 52%, Fly 66%, Perception 54%, Stealth 66%, Willpower 52%* | | | | | |
| **Magic:** *Folk Magic 62%* | | | | | |
| **Combat Style:** *Shrieking Horror (Bite) 66%* | | | | | |

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *T* | *1d6-1d4* | *As for Head* |

# Olgoi

The olgoi-khorkhoi is a worm-like creature reported to exist in remote arid regions. Growing up to a metre and a half, it is coloured a vivid bright red-purple with darker blotches along its length, and small spiny projections at either end. It has a deadly reputation regardless of its small size. Indeed, local inhabitants regard this monster to be a demon-possessed length of animal intestine, to which it bears a remarkable resemblance.

Olgoi have several nasty defences. It can spit a potent acid which corrodes everything it touches, turning more resilient materials which don't dissolve a pitted, sickly yellow. On unprotected human flesh it can eat away a limb in less than half a minute. In addition the creature has organs which can store a life-threatening electrical charge. This comes as something of a shock to those who attack it with metal weapons!

The creature spends most of its life living underground in a state of hibernation, only becoming active in the rainy season or if it comes into contact with moisture. Wet ground allows its electrical senses to detect the life signs of animals passing nearby. If the target comes close enough, the olgoi discharges a massive jolt which is conducted through the damp sand or soil. This normally kills or at least stuns the victim long enough for the worm to emerge and start feeding.

Their subterranean burrows are only detectable by a tiny patch of breathing holes which most creatures overlook. Otherwise they are almost perfectly hidden. Although legend tells that the olgoi has a 'predilection for the colour yellow', this is in fact a twisting of the truth by outsiders. In reality most encounters with these worms occur when urinating on or near their burrow – with predictable results...

The primary attack of the worm is its electric shock. This either travels a short distance through wet ground or along a conducting weapon which strikes it, in the latter case it is an autonomous defence requiring no Combat Action to trigger. The shock affects those limbs of the target in contact with the wet ground; this can include the abdomen if the victim is shocked during urination.

Each successful shock requires the victim to roll an opposed test of their Endurance against the Zap roll of the worm. The effect of the jolt depends on the comparative success levels. If both the olgoi and victim gain the same level of success, then the victim's locations are stunned for 1d3 rounds. If the olgoi wins by one level of success the victim is rendered unconscious for 1d3 minutes. If it wins by two or more levels of success, the victim suffers a severe heart attack, leading to collapse and eventual death if not quickly treated by First Aid.

Once it senses that a victim has collapsed, the worm will emerge from underground and proceed to eat its way into the potentially still living body. Considering the size of its mouth this can often take considerable time, allowing the victim to be rescued, assuming they were not alone.

Interfering with the olgoi when it is trying to eat generally results in a concentrated acid being spat at its attacker. If struck by the corrosive blob, the acid continues to burn for three rounds, eating through armour first and then permanently reducing the maximum Hit Points of the location hit.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 1d6+6 (10) | Action Points | 2 | 1–3 | Tail Tip | 0/4 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | -1d2 | 4–5 | Mid End-length | 0/4 |
| SIZ: 1d6+3 (7) | Magic Points | 4 | 6–7 | Fore End-length | 0/4 |
| DEX: 2d6+3 (10) | Movement | 4m, 2m in loose soil and sand | 8–9 | Rear Mid-length | 0/5 |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 9 | 10–12 | Mid Mid-length | 0/5 |
| POW: 1d6 (4) | Armour | None | 13–14 | Fore Mid-length | 0/5 |
| | | | 15–16 | Rear Fore-length | 0/4 |
| | | | 17–18 | Mid Fore-length | 0/4 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 0/4 |

**Abilities:** *Burrower, Life Sense*

**Skills:** *Athletics 40%, Brawn 37%, Endurance 46%, Evade 50%, Perception 62%, Stealth 58%, Willpower 38%*

**Combat Style:** *Slimy Shock (Bite, Spit, Zap) 60%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Burrowing Bite* | *S* | *T* | *1d4-1d2* | *As for Head* |
| *Spit* | *M* | *VL* | *Concentrated Acid* | *Not Applicable* |
| *Zap* | *-* | *-* | *Special* | *Not Applicable* |

# Ophidiodis

An unusual creature, the result of some mad sorcery or alien environment, an ophidiodis is quite literally a writhing ball of snakes, their bodies somehow all connected together within its wriggling mass. Looking somewhat like a giant tumbleweed, the ophidiodis rolls along seeking prey to bite with its countless heads.

At first glance the nest of snakes looks like it is merely the result of a serpentine mating frenzy, more than a dozen huge snakes squirming and twisting about each other. When examined more closely, preferably after death, the complex mass seems to be a Gordian knot of heads and tails splicing into one another in a mind bending non-Euclidian way. The visible heads, bodies and tails of each snake have their own colouration and patterning, making the ophidiodis' appearance that much more confusing.

Despite their numerous heads, they are relatively simple-minded monsters who randomly roam about, seeking to fill their improbable, ever empty bellies. Sadly for the beast it is unable to gorge itself via its relatively tiny mouths, so most largish victims end up suffering multiple bites and if they survive, experience the madness inflicted by its poison.

An ophidiodis hunts by chasing down creatures, rolling at fantastic speeds to ram, or even steamroller multiple targets, hoping to knock them prone. Once stationary it extends its multiple heads, attempting to overwhelm the victim or victims with its superior number of combat actions.

The weak spot of an ophidiodis is its central squirming body. Normally this is safe from most animals, kept at range by its extended heads. Against weapons however, the body becomes a reachable target by those clever enough not to be distracted by the threatening heads. If blows are aimed at its body, the ophidiodis will attempt to parry them, sacrificing heads in the process.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 3+12 (Multi-Headed) | 1–7 | Body | 1/11 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | 8 | Head 1 | 1/9 |
| SIZ: 2d6+18 (25) | Magic Points | 7 | 9 | Head 2 | 1/9 |
| DEX: 2d6+15 (22) | Movement | 8m | 10 | Head 3 | 1/9 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 17 | 11 | Head 4 | 1/9 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Scales | 12 | Head 5 | 1/9 |
| | | | 13 | Head 6 | 1/9 |
| | | | 14 | Head 7 | 1/9 |
| **Abilities:** *Cold Blooded, Multi-Headed, Regeneration (1 Hit Point/Hour in every location), Trample, Venomous* | | | 15 | Head 8 | 1/9 |
| | | | 16 | Head 9 | 1/9 |
| | | | 17 | Head 10 | 1/9 |
| **Skills:** *Athletics 65%, Brawn 58%, Endurance 58%, Evade 74%, Perception 59%, Stealth 54%, Willpower 44%* | | | 18 | Head 11 | 1/9 |
| | | | 19 | Head 12 | 1/9 |
| | | | 20 | Head 13 | 1/9 |

**Combat Style:** *Overwhelming Flurry (Bite, Ram) 65%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *M* | *1d3+1d6+Poison* | *As for Head* |
| *Ram* | *H* | *T* | *2d6* | *Not Applicable* |

Due to its number of heads it is likely that the creature will gain a number of unopposed attacks. In such cases it prefers to use the Entangle, Grip, or Pin Weapon special effects.

The regeneration of an ophidiodis can be stopped with freezing cold, fire or acid. Unless one of these methods is used the monster will heal all damage, even if completely dismembered, somehow drawing unnatural energies from the sorcery which created it. Of course it may take the ophidiodis hours to fully heal, but once it does some primitive instinct will cause the creature to hunt down those that treated it so, spawning many tales of epic chases across the wilderness in an attempt to outwit the enduring, hungry pursuer.

### Ophidiodis Venom

The poison of an ophidiodis causes a terrible madness, inflicting psychedelic visions and paranoia on the bitten victim. Such effects can last for weeks, making the experience a fatal one for those without support from comrades.

**Application**: Injected
**Potency**: 60
**Resistance**: Willpower
**Onset time**: 2d6 Minutes.
**Duration**: Half the ophidiodis's CON in days.

**Conditions**: Hallucination and Mania. The mental effects of the poison come into play each time the victim encounters a new or stressful situation. For example they meet a suspicious looking traveller on the road they are following or must cross a narrow rickety bridge over a chasm. In such circumstances the victim must make an unopposed test of their Willpower or suffer some delusional warping of their reality, which they are absolutely convinced is true.

**Antidote/Cure**: Purging the blood with a herbal antiintoxicant and drinking plenty of clean water will clear the mental effects after a day of treatment. Otherwise sedating or at least disarming the victim is often sensible.

## Oviraptor

An oviraptor may appear unusual and even frightening, averaging over 3 metres long and bearing wicked hand claws; but a parrot-like beak and short, lightly built skull reveal its preference for small prey, specializing in molluscs, eggs, crabs and other durable food, including some nuts and fruits that it can crack open. On occasion they will also eat carrion or small mammals and reptiles.

The top of the head in some varieties sports a low, brightly coloured crest like that of the modern cassowary bird. They have long, clawed hind limbs which allow them to run swiftly, and are outfitted with a prodigious birdlike plumage including stubby wing-like feathers that they flap to ascend steep slopes or enable longer leaps. Their short, muscular tail ends in a beautiful fan of feathers that they can nimbly flick about in visual displays.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 3 | 1–2 | Tail | 2/4 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | None | 3–5 | Right Leg | 2/5 |
| SIZ: 2d6+4 (11) | Magic Points | 7 | 6–8 | Left Leg | 2/5 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 12m | 9–11 | Abdomen | 2/6 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 16 | 12–14 | Chest | 2/7 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Tough Hide and Feathers | 15–16 | Right Arm | 2/4 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 2/4 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 2/5 |

**Abilities:** *Leaping*

**Skills:** *Athletics 72%, Brawn 53%, Endurance 56%, Evade 68%, Perception 54%, Stealth 52%, Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *Furious When Cornered (Bite, Kick) 62%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *M* | *1d6* | *As for Head* |
| *Kick* | *M* | *S* | *1d4* | *As for Leg* |

Oviraptors are caring parents, building great nests on the ground in pits covered with vegetation and brooding them with vigilance. It is in this situation that they can be dangerous, as they usually nest in small groups (3-5 nests); with one parent foraging while the others tends the eggs; and are extremely aggressive in defending their nesting grounds from interlopers of any size. Oviraptors tend to be found in more arid or rocky environments but remain near bodies of water where food is most plentiful.

# Pachycephalosaurus

The dome-headed, bipedal herbivores called pachycephalosaurs are famed for their thick bony head covering, made mace-like by small knobs and even spikes that may extend onto the neck region. They have stubby arms and tails, and elongated hind limbs well suited for moderately swift sprints. The total body length rarely exceeds 5 metres. The skin is tough and pebbly, with thicker strips along the flanks where animals sometimes butt each other in competitions for mates, food or space, although these flank-butting contests sometimes escalate to dramatic full-on charges and head-on butting.

The genders of pachycephalosaur are difficult to tell apart; both use their headgear in frequent aggressive behaviours, as part of a generally stubborn and gruff disposition. But pachycephalosaurs are quick to flee, as well, if encountering obviously superior threats. These dinosaurs range widely, seeking out fresh shoots of various plants with careful selectivity, and staying in areas for little time before they move on to seek other delicacies.

A pachycephalosaur prefers to use a Charge to boost its headbutt damage, and only uses the kick attack if it has no other option, or to attack foes knocked down by its headbutt.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+15 (22) | Action Points | 2 | 1–2 | Tail | 3/8 |
| CON: 2d6+9 (16) | Damage Modifier | +1d10 | 3–5 | Right Leg | 3/9 |
| SIZ: 2d6+21 (28) | Magic Points | 7 | 6–8 | Left Leg | 3/9 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 9m | 9–11 | Abdomen | 5/10 |
| INS: 2d6+4 (11) | Strike Rank | 12 | 12–14 | Chest | 5/11 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Tough Hide and Bony Head | 15–16 | Right Arm | 3/8 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 3/8 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 7/9 |

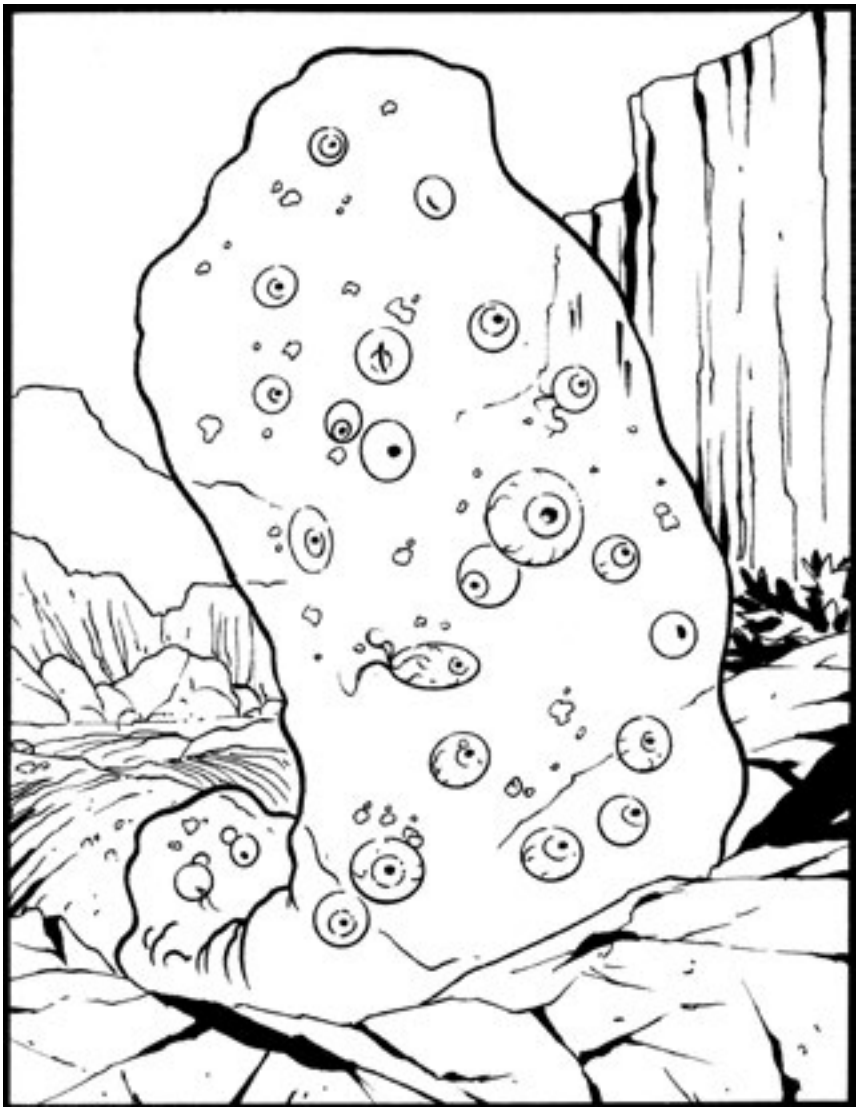
**Abilities:** *Intimidating*

**Skills:** *Athletics 65%, Brawn 70%, Endurance 62%, Evade 56%, Perception 48%, Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *Stubborn Pugilist (Headbutt, Kick) 65%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Head Butt* | *L* | *S* | *1d8+1d10* | *As for Head* |
| *Kick* | *L* | *M* | *1d6+1d10* | *As for Leg* |

# Panopticus (Child of Ubbozathla)



This horrific aberration is a terrible creature that seeps through the Smoking Mirrors to slither across the island. Amoeba-like of form, its body is dotted with the eyes of its victims, which it does not digest but absorbs into its own being. Through these stolen organs, the panopticus sees everything around it and hungers only to add more to its gelid collection.

Panoptici are able to shape themselves from a humped lump two metres in diameter, to a thin pool over five metres across. This fluid body actually flows and can grow pseudopods to initially capture prey, before flowing over them. The creatures are phenomenal scavengers, able to digest almost any biological material no matter how rotted or disgusting, but ready to hunt for fresher meat, using near silent locomotion to creep up on victims.

A panopticus prefers to use the Grip special effect as an opening gambit, so that the prey is unable to run away. Once within its grasp, further special effects won will allow another location to be gripped, or discourage interruption of its meal by bashing other foes away. When the prey is finally incapacitated, the panopticus flows over the victim's head to remove the eyes by eating away the skull and flesh around them.

Killing one of these creatures is nearly impossible without magic or the use of a pre-prepared fire, since it constantly regenerates damage inflicted upon its gloopy body. The island's natives sometimes capture panoptici, by luring them into sheer sided stone pits, or inside huge glazed urns and sealing them inside with a ceramic stopper.

## Panopticus Slime

The slime the panopticus extrudes is a combination of lubricant, weapon and digestive juices. In mechanical terms it combines the effects of an acid with a mild paralytic poison, allowing it to literally eat away part of a victim without them being aware of the creature's feasting.

**Application**: Contact

**Potency**: 85

**Resistance**: Endurance

**Onset time**: Instantaneous

**Duration:** Acid continues for 1 round after contact ceases. Paralysis lasts 1d3 hours

**Conditions**: As soon as the slime touches a victim, the Hit Location struck goes numb and no longer registers any feeling, but is not rendered immobile. This is perhaps good for the individual, since the slime also begins to eat away at the flesh at a rate of 1d4 Hit Points per round.

**Antidote/Cure**: Counteracting the acidic effect requires an alkaline solution, an example of which can be manufactured from the pulp of the Mantithorn Cactus.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 2 | 1–20 | Gelid Body | 0/11 |
| CON: 2d6+9 (16) | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | | | |
| SIZ: 4d6+12 (26) | Magic Points | 7 | | | |
| DEX: 1d6+3 (7) | Movement | 4m | | | |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 8 | | | |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | None | | | |

**Abilities:** *Dark Sight, Immunity (Slashing and Piercing weapons), Regeneration (1 HP/Round), Venomous*

**Skills:** *Athletics 20%, Brawn 59%, Endurance 52%, Evade 34%, Perception 75%, Stealth 75%, Willpower 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Engulfing Slurp (Pseudopod) 60%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Pseudopod* | *L* | *L* | *Acidic Poison* | *As for Body* |

# Pihuichen (Flying Snake)

Looking akin to a small and somewhat innocuous red-gold snake when sunning itself on trees or rocks, the pihuichen hides a surprise in the narrow, bat-like wings which its keeps closely folded to its body. They are able to fly with great agility, and even to hover, in a similar way to a hummingbird. The effort of flying causes them to breathe rapidly, making an odd hissing sound which can serve as a warning to the perceptive.

The pihuichen is vampiric, drinking the blood of its prey, both humanoids and animals. Individually these flying reptiles are a significant threat, but an entire flock of the swooping creatures can be deadly. It is said that those with the misfortune to see the flying snake die, drained to dehydrated husks. Indeed the unique 'piurut piurut' of its cry often drives its victims into panicky flight, desperately looking over their shoulders to catch sight of their hunter. Natives claim that crossing running water will allow a victim to escape it clutches or that the creature can be caught by mixing blood with a bowl of strong wine, but such folklore may be untrue.

Pihuichen normally hunt at dusk or during the night when low light levels grant it an advantage, the normal jungle noises countering the faint hissing noise it is forced to make whilst flying. Its preferred method of attack is to drop from a convenient branch to alight softly on the back of a passing animal, hopefully landing somewhere the creature cannot easily reach. It then makes a small incision with its razor sharp teeth and softly laps up the flowing blood. If

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 1d6+6 (10) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Tail | 1/4 |
| CON: 1d6+6 (10) | Damage Modifier | -1d2 | 4–6 | Rear Body | 1/5 |
| SIZ: 1d6+3 (7) | Magic Points | 4 | 7–10 | Right Wing | 0/3 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 2m, 8m Flying | 11–14 | Left Wing | 0/3 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 16 | 15–17 | Fore Body | 1/5 |
| POW: 1d6 (4) | Armour | Scales on Body | 18–20 | Head | 1/4 |

**Abilities:** *Blood Sense, Disease Immunity, Driving Strike, Flying*

**Skills:** *Athletics 39%, Brawn 17%, Endurance 30%, Evade 48%, Fly 89%, Perception 56%, Stealth 71%, Willpower 38%*

**Combat Style:** *Flittering Nipper (Bite) 69%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *S* | *T* | *1d4-1d2* | *As for Head* |

faced with less bulky creatures, such as humanoids, it often follows at a distance waiting until they settle down to sleep. The pihuichen then wriggles stealthily along the ground and makes its gentle bite on the sleeper.

Due to the sharpness of its teeth and an impulse to latch onto major blood vessels, pihuichen that win a combat manoeuvre instinctively inflict Bleed upon their victims – assuming that their bite caused enough damage to penetrate any natural or worn armour. Whilst this allows them to feed quickly, the neat circular wounds continue to flow after the snake has finished drinking. Targets that are unaware of the bite often bleed to death.

When attacking as a flock or swarm of pihuichen, the creatures use pack tactics to buzz in and bite, then evade back out of range so that other snakes can attack. Against thicker-skinned foes the snake often uses diving strikes to increase the force of its blows.

# Plant, Possessed

Upon Monster Island it is quite possible for some plants to become possessed by the verdure nature spirits that thrive in the jungle. These spirits have the power of Animate Vegetation, permitting them to move the roots and boughs of whatever plant it inhabits. Under this power a bush or tree could literally crawl over the soil to change position, or lower a branch to allow a climber easier access to its canopy.

Despite their apparent usefulness, few native kahuna know the secrets of these plant spirits, merely paying careful obeisance to the great spirit of Tane who is the source of all these children. Indeed, the jungle itself sometimes changes in strange and mysterious ways that imply that the jungle is semi-sentient in its own right, retaliating against those that cause it undue harm.

Since most flora lacks INT or INS, it is a simple matter for a verdure nature spirit to possess the plant they desire. Their spiritual Characteristics are equal to Regional Nature Spirits (see RuneQuest page 408). However, since the physical proportions and structure of plants can vary dramatically between species, animated plants are given a generic set of base statistics to cover all circumstances, irrespective of the actual bush, shrub or tree. Thus it is the Intensity of the spirit which gives the plant its Damage Modifier, Hit Points, Armour and so on.

Other than engaging it in spirit combat, defeating a possessed plant requires either inflicting enough damage on the plant to drive out the spirit, or the destruction of the plant itself. They are treated similarly to Elementals in that they have only total Hit Points, but instead of being invulnerable to non-magical damage they possess a more tenacious physical structure.

For example, whilst it may be near impossible to hack through the trunk of a huge tree under combat conditions, imposing enough damage to seriously harm the massive plant will cause the spirit within so much pain, that it will flee back to the Spirit World.

The possessed plant's Combat Actions and Strike Rank are calculated as per normal spirit attributes (see RuneQuest page 203). To fight the plant uses the Spectral Combat skill of the Verdure Nature Spirit, which it also uses for Brawn tests or any other physically orientated opposed rolls required. Possessed plants are immune to Endurance

| Spirit Intensity | Damage Modifier | Bough Size | Hit Points | Armour Points | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1d6 | S | 1d6+12 | 2 | Small waist high shrub or spindly vine |
| 2 | 1d8 | M | 1d6+24 | 4 | Large man high shrub or moderate vine |
| 3 | 1d10 | L | 1d6+36 | 6 | Huge shrub, small tree or thick vine |
| 4 | 2d6 | H | 1d6+48 | 8 | Medium tree or house high vine |
| 5 | 1d8+1d6 | E | 1d6+60 | 10 | Large tree |
| 6 | 2d8 | C | 1d6+72 | 12 | Huge tree |
| 7 | 1d10+1d8 | C | 1d6+84 | 14 | Colossal tree |

tests, but automatically fail Evade rolls. Willpower resistance rolls use the spirit's skill.

Most spirit animated plants have as many 'limbs' as they need to attack with, the most obvious being branches and roots. Damage inflicted is normally caused from bashing, lacerations or strangulation or a combination of several. With these limbs they can use the special effects of Bash, Bleed (if thorny), Disarm, Entangle, Grip, Stun, Sunder or Trip. Whilst battling an animated tree, for instance, it would not be unusual to see several opponents held up in the air, tripped or entangled foes pinned down by roots and incidental folks being swept away by swinging branches (using the Area Attack ability if big enough). In fact a lone large tree can be extremely destructive, especially if attacking structures.

# Polong

These horrors are created by animists from the blood of murdered people, which is placed into a huge clay jar, and then has a Predator Spirit bound into it, as if it were a fetish. The accumulated blood is left to fester for an entire month, after which the owner will start to hear sounds coming out of the container. It is the sound of crying. Following this the animist can feed hair, nail clippings and the like from the intended victim into the ceramic pot, creating a bond which the spirit will follow once released.

Once another week has passed the animist can release the transmogrified spirit from the captivity of the jar. It emerges as an animate pool of blood into which it has embodied itself, taking weird, horrific shapes combining both a melange of the victims whose blood went into the forming of the polong and the mad alien thoughts of the normally bodiless spirit. Normally the owner will keep the polong inside the jar and unleash it when needed. As part of its shape-shifting, the polong lacks any true Hit Locations and is immune from Serious and Major Wounds, only being destroyed once its total Hit Points are reduced to zero, as if an elemental.

Once loosed it will ceaselessly hunt down the victim whose body parts it was fed, able to climb walls or seep under doors as needed. The only thing it cannot cross is flowing water which destroys the fluid polong. Those killed by a polong are left with vivid bruises and have blood coming out of their mouths, from where it forced itself down its victim's throat, murdering them via asphyxiation. This requires the monstrosity to engage in unarmed grappling, then use of the Choose Location special effect to enter the nose or mouth. Drowning automatically continues without further effort from the polong, unless it is somehow forced to remove itself from the victim's orifices.

The following polong is based upon an Intensity 3 Predator Spirit bound into the collected blood of murdered lizardfolk.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+15(22) | Action Points | 3 | 1–20 | Blood Pool | 0/38 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d8 | | | |
| SIZ: 1d6+15 (19) | Magic Points | 10 | | | |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 6m, Flowing | | | |
| INT: 1d6+6 (10) | Strike Rank | 15 | | | |
| POW: 1d6+18 (22) | Armour | None | | | |
| CHA: 1d6+6 (10) | | | | | |
| **Abilities:** *Adhering, Immunity (non-magical weapons), Shape-Shifter* | | | | | |
| **Skills:** *Athletics 61%, Brawn 0%, Endurance 68%, Evade 68%, Perception 62%, Stealth 59%, Track 69%, Willpower 84%* | | | | | |
| **Combat Style:** *Flowing Doom (Choke, Pseudopod) 71%* | | | | | |

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Choke* | *-* | *T* | *Asphyxiation* | *As for Blood Pool* |
| *Pseudopod* | *L* | *M* | *1d4+1d8* | *As for Blood Pool* |

# Quathil

Weird exotic life-forms, quathil are floating gaseous creatures superficially similar to jellyfish, although of huge proportions. However, quathil come in a myriad range of different shapes, from floating cones with dangling tendrils to multi-spherical conglomerations which are linked together by fine webs. Odd to observe and even odder of smell, they float about the mid to low canopy levels of the jungle, glowing with a faint radiance; a beautiful albeit ethereal sight at night. They can propel themselves with strange appendages such as undulating fins or expelling gas from their anus, but generally just follow the winds.

Quathil possess an extraterrestrial metabolism, designed to thrive in a hydrocarbon atmosphere. They split apart these gases to produce hydrogen, with which they inflate their gas bladders and utilise other trace elements to generate a bio-electrical illumination, often combining several distinct colours. After its transition to the island a quathil will die in a matter of days, slowly losing hydrogen

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 1d3 (2) | Action Points | 1 | 1 | Brain Nexus | 0/5 |
| CON: 1d3 (2) | Damage Modifier | +1d2 | 2–9 | Floatation Bladder | 0/8 |
| SIZ: 2d6+21 (28) | Magic Points | 4 | 10 | Gas Anus | 0/7 |
| DEX: 1d3 (2) | Movement | 6m Undulating, Wind Speed Floating | 11–13 | Tendril Clump | 0/6 |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 5 | 14–16 | Tendril Clump | 0/6 |
| POW: 1d6 (4) | Armour | None | 17–19 | Tendril Clump | 0/6 |
| | | | 20 | Sensory Stalk | 0/5 |
| **Abilities:** *Breathe Flame (3d6 Explode), Flying* | | | | | |
| **Skills:** *Athletics 0%, Brawn 50%, Endurance 24%, Evade 34%, Fly 34%, Perception 41%, Willpower 28%* | | | | | |
| **Combat Style:** *Boom! (Explosion, Tendrils) 44%* | | | | | |

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Explode* | *C* | *VL* | *3d6 to every Location* | *Not Applicable* |
| *Tendrils* | *-* | *VL* | *Stun Location for 1d3 mins* | *As for Tendril Clump* |

and sinking towards the forest floor. It is here where they are most often encountered and inflict a rather edifying lesson on creatures which attack them.

Anything which punctures the quathil's floatation bladders will release a cloud of hydrogen gas, which reacts with exposure to air by instantly igniting – perhaps triggered by some other contaminant in the gas. The effect on attackers is rather painful (especially if the puncture was caused by a bite or someone wearing flammable clothing), inflicting 3d6 damage to every Hit Location of all and sundry within a radius equal to its CON in metres. This will, of course, completely destroy the quathil in the process. In addition quathils can defend themselves with their tendrils which produce a mild electric shock.

The natives are fully aware of the dangers these creatures pose, keeping them away from settlements or exploding them from afar. Since the gaseous floaters are not predatory by nature, at least not upon species other than themselves, they are normally quite passive unless deliberately provoked.

# Rokurokubi

Rokurokubi appear to be normal humanoids during the day, able to fit within society so well that their neighbours and even spouses are completely oblivious of their monstrous nature. When darkness falls, however, the creatures gain the ability to stretch their necks to great lengths and warp their facial features to take on the appearance of demons.

Like many similar beings the rokurokubi are tricksters by temperament, but vary in severity from those that simply like to spy or frighten annoying people, to those who wilfully murder to consume sapient blood and flesh. Whatever their ultimate urges, rokurokubi go to great efforts in order to keep their true nature secret, targeting only those who'll not be believed – such as fools, drunks or sleepers. When they occasionally need to enjoy company in their true shape, they often relax with blind people or with their spouse in pitch darkness.

A rokurokubi can stretch its neck a number of metres equal to one half of its SIZ. By doing this the being can extend its head, serpent-like, from its body, enabling it to look through upper windows or around corners whilst the body remains hidden. Such stretching is automatic and very rapid. Perhaps because of this ability, when viewed in partial darkness or from afar, rokurokubi are often mistaken for nukekubi.

Rokurokubi prefer to avoid combat unless it is biased in their favour. Predatory members of the race tend to pick on helpless or unarmed targets, being wary of taking on anyone carrying cutting weapons. When forced to fight, however, a rokurokubi can be a surprising foe, especially

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 3d6 (11) | Action Points | 3 | 1–2 | Right Leg | 0/5 |
| CON: 3d6 (11) | Damage Modifier | None | 3–4 | Left Leg | 0/5 |
| SIZ: 2d6+6 (13) | Magic Points | 11 | 5–7 | Abdomen | 0/6 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 6m | 8–10 | Chest | 0/7 |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 13 | 11–12 | Right Arm | 0/4 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Demonic Flesh on Head & Neck | 13–14 | Left Arm | 0/4 |
| | | | 15–18 | Neck | 5/6 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 5/5 |

**Abilities:** *Night Sight, Terrifying*

**Skills:** *Athletics 44%, Brawn 74%, Deceit 54%, Endurance 44%, Evade 66%, Perception 54%, Stealth 66%, Willpower 52%*

**Combat Style:** *Nasty Necking (Bite, Strangle) 74%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Snaking Bite* | *M* | *Any* | *1d6* | *As for Head* |
| *Strangulating Neck* | *-* | *Any* | *1d4* | *As for Neck* |

due to its terrifying countenance which can briefly paralyse even the stoutest heart.

Since they can extend their neck many metres, a rokurokubi can strike at whatever range desired. Generally this means at distances beyond Very Long, effectively preventing foes from attacking its body unless they can close the distance. This is often used to great purpose when launching ambushes. In consequence attackers can only strike at the rokurokubi's head and neck, which is more difficult than it sounds as the location dances and whips about.

Another aspect of the creature's weird physiology means the rokurokubi can maintain the Entangle, Grip, Pin Weapon and Trip special effects against several opponents simultaneously, using its stretching neck to weave (and wrap) around, between and through its foes.

# Saltasaurus

Although it is one of the smaller varieties of sauropod dinosaur (about 12 metres in total length), a saltasaur is remarkable for its extensive body armour (especially along the back and flanks) of small plates embedded in the leathery hide, and for the collection of bony knobs that cap the long, flexible tail. They are lengthier in all dimensions than an ankylosaur, with a long thin neck and a comically small head that must almost constantly keep feeding to push food through the gut inside the barrel-like main body. The long, column-like legs propel them gracefully along as they move between feeding areas.

A small family group of saltasaurs will swiftly devegetate an area, using their long necks to reach into treetops as well as lower browse, and the great weight borne on their stubby clawed feet pounds the earth into a hard-packed state that won't recover until after a steady rain. Saltasaurs lay concealed nests of dozens of round eggs and let their many young fend for themselves until they grow large enough to join a wandering group- it is in this early stage of growth that many predators find them irresistible. Their giant size makes saltasaurs almost invulnerable to most attackers except other giant forms, so they tend to pay little heed to seemingly harmless, small creatures like humans. The statistics below are for a rather large saltasaur; smaller varieties exist, including dwarf forms on islands.

A threatened saltasaur keeps its vulnerable head away from melee, rearing its long neck up high while it tries to turn its armoured regions toward its enemy and bring its tail to bear on the largest foe. In combat against human-sized targets, an alert adult saltasaur's head and neck can only be struck by missiles or weapons with Very Long reach. A saltasaur will tend to use its trample attack against small foes and reserve the tail for large enemies or numerous small ones. The bite attack is used only in utter desperation, especially if the tail cannot be brought to bear on the target. The tail is long enough to inflict damage against anyone within range of its swinging arc.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+24 (31) | Action Points | 2 | 1–3 | Tail | 10/20 |
| CON: 2d6+15 (22) | Damage Modifier | +2d10 | 4–5 | Right Hind Leg | 8/20 |
| SIZ: 4d6+60 (74) | Magic Points | 11 | 6–7 | Left Hind Leg | 8/20 |
| DEX: 2d6 (7) | Movement | 5m | 8–10 | Hindquarters | 10/21 |
| INS: 2d6+4 (11) | Strike Rank | 9 | 11–14 | Forequarters | 10/22 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Tough Hide and Armour Plates | 15–16 | Right Front Leg | 8/19 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Front Leg | 8/19 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head and Neck | 6/20 |

**Abilities:** *Area Attack (Tail), Intimidate, Trample*

**Skills:** *Athletics 66%, Brawn 135%, Endurance 84%, Evade 34%, Perception 52%, Willpower 42%*

**Combat Style:** *Reluctant Defence (Bite, Tail, Trample) 60%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *H* | *VL* | *1d4+2d10* | *As for Head* |
| *Tail Club* | *C* | *VL* | *2d6+2d10* | *As for Tail* |
| *Trample* | *C* | *T* | *4d10* | *Not Applicable* |

# Scarab, Giant

In the arid wastes of the Puna Plateau it is difficult to survive the extremes of temperature and the dryness, but creatures like the giant scarab make it worse. These enormous insects often live in subterranean catacombs, and unlike their tiny cousins they do not collect dung, but instead emerge at night to hunt for large animals and carrion to fill their deep stomach. Powerful and voracious, these thankfully solitary creatures are avoided by the High Folk at all costs.

A single giant scarab is a massive creature made of indigo chitin, easily growing beyond three metres in length. Six spiky limbs hold up the thick body and shell of the beast and allow it to scuttle along, although it is too massive to crawl up walls and ceilings. Its shining head is equipped with a pair of spade-like mandibles that are strong enough to crush through armour and bone, but it also uses their distinct shape to quickly push aside sand and rocks to create its burrows.

Giant scarabs do not hunt during the day unless they live in extensive underground tunnels or tombs, preferring the cooler temperatures of night. As the sun sets the scarab digs up from below to begin searching for prey which may have recently passed by. When tackling unobservant prey that may be able to fight back it likes to dig into sand or loose dirt to come at it from below (opposed Perception rolls one grade harder), hopefully crippling it, only to follow the wounded creature for a day or two before closing for the kill.

Giant scarabs are dangerous foes due to their tough carapace. Unlike many creatures the scarab can use its mandibles to parry weapon attacks, an instinctive holdover from mating fights with other scarabs. They use no subtlety in combat, merely rushing at the biggest foe and trying to crush them. Often this is a pack beast rather than a humanoid. On a successful attack the scarab grapples and on subsequent turns automatically apply damage to the held location unless the victim somehow manages to break free.

If facing multiple opponents the beetle will try to withdraw from the fight with its pinioned prey. Since they can trample over smaller creatures, the scarab will often charge through a densely packed group of attackers, crushing and lacerating them with its leg spurs as it trundles over them. Although they do not erupt from underground to ambush prey, scarabs often do use their burrowing ability to withdraw from combat, flinging the spoil back into the faces of its attackers (providing the terrain is made of sand or loosely packed soil). It takes two rounds of burrowing to escape and during the second round the scarab can only be struck on the rear end (1d10 for Location).

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+15 (22) | Action Points | 2 | 1 | Right Rear Leg | 8/8 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d10 | 2 | Left Rear Leg | 8/8 |
| SIZ: 2d6+18 (25) | Magic Points | 7 | 3 | Right Middle Leg | 8/8 |
| DEX: 2d6+3 (10) | Movement | 6m, 2m Burrowing | 4 | Left Middle Leg | 8/8 |
| INS: 2d6+2 (9) | Strike Rank | 10 | 5–9 | Abdomen | 8/11 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Chitin | 10–13 | Thorax | 8/10 |
| | | | 14 | Right Front Leg | 8/8 |
| | | | 15 | Left Front Leg | 8/8 |
| | | | 16–20 | Head | 8/9 |

**Abilities:** *Burrower, Earth Sense, Formidable Natural Weapons, Grappler*

**Skills:** *Athletics 52%, Brawn 87%, Endurance 78%, Evade 40%, Perception 56%, Stealth 49%, Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *Crushing Demise (Mandibles, Trample) 72%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Mandibles* | *L* | *M* | *1d8+1d10* | *As for Head* |
| *Trample* | *H* | *T* | *2d10* | *Not Applicable* |

# Sentinel

Animate magical creations, these statues are usually crafted from stone or metal, but can be constructed from any solid material. Most of the sentinels found on Monster Island are ancient tomb or temple guardians, enchanted centuries past by magic now forgotten by the island's natives. Yet they still live on, melancholy fragments of the original god's consciousness or an artificial being of ruthless amorality.

Due to their heritage these guardians are shaped in mimicry of the gods and demons once worshipped by the reptilian folk and are sculpted with a particular cultural style. The eldest are square featured, with rounded smooth edges and decorated with many feathers and skulls. Whereas the later sentinels crafted by the High Folk are more representational of their own forms, with finer detail, true proportions and wearing kilts. Indeed some take the likeness of mortals, literal mortuary statues, though of exaggerated size.

In general, sentinels range from between 2-4 metres in height. Since they normally stand motionless for years at a time, they are often mistaken as statues or bas-reliefs when placed within alcoves and against walls; granting the Sentinel the chance to ambush unsuspecting trespassers. Most are partially overgrown, or have suffered some damage from previous combats and weathering. It is these eternally patient guardians which give most of the ruins on the island such an unsavoury reputation amongst the native inhabitants, who superstitiously avoid any place of vegetation-covered architecture in case a sentinel remains within.

In combat a sentinel is near unstoppable unless lured into a trap large enough to contain it, or some sort of Sorcery or Theism is brought to bear upon it. Being made from solid materials, it is likely that weapons striking it will suffer damage, as per Using Weapons Against Inanimate Objects (see RuneQuest page 123). The best way to defeat such horrors is by use of the Sunder special effect.

They use Bash, Stun and Damage Weapon as preferred special effects in combat; and since they cannot heal naturally, retain damage from previous encounters. Although most are humanoid in form, sentinels do not suffer debilitating effects from Serious and Major Wounds save for the loss of that limb or appendage. To destroy the sentinel its chest must first be reduced to a Major Wound, which exposes the magical binding which keeps them functional, usually a still beating heart of questionable provenance. If this is struck the power animating the statue finally ceases.

Fortunately for most explorers, sentinels rarely move from the shrines, fanes or tombs they are set to watch over, since these are often the source of their animating power. A few are capable of wandering independently, with orders to track down and recover artefacts stolen from a particular place, but these monstrosities are rare.

The base characteristics of a sentinel are limited by the magical skills of its creator (and vary slightly from the rules given under the Awaken miracle). As a rule of thumb, it has a STR of one third of the priest's Devotion skill or a sorcerer's Invocation skill, and a SIZ of double that. CON is equal to STR, whilst DEX is one tenth of the magical skill. Mentally the sentinel has a fixed INS value of 2d6+7, but lacks POW or CHA – substituting INS to calculate any base skill values using the missing characteristic. Physically their natural Armour Points depend on the material they are constructed from: 6 for wooden or obsidian idols, 8 for hollow bronze, and 10 for basalt, although sentinels made of other materials exist.

The following sentinel is a typical squat, vine encrusted obsidian statue, which can be found standing guard in numerous pre-cataclysm temple ruins scattered across the island. Its creator was a priest with a Devotion skill of 90%, using the Awaken miracle. The skills of sorcery-created sentinels tend to be lower, limited by the sorcerer's own knowledge, but can be more versatile.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 30 | Action Points | 2 | 1–3 | Right Leg | 6/18 |
| CON: 30 | Damage Modifier | +2d8 | 4–6 | Left Leg | 6/18 |
| SIZ: 60 | Magic Points | 0 | 7–9 | Abdomen | 6/19 |
| DEX: 9 | Movement | 4m | 10–12 | Chest | 6/20 |
| INS: 14 | Strike Rank | 12 | 13–15 | Right Arm | 6/17 |
| | Armour | Obsidian Surface | 16–18 | Left Arm | 6/17 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 6/18 |

**Abilities:** *Construct, Dark Sight, Magic Sense, Trample*

**Skills:** *Athletics 0%, Brawn 90%, Endurance 90%, Evade 0%, Perception 90%, Stealth 90%, Willpower N/A*

**Combat Style:** *Temple Guardian (Fist, Stomp) 90%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Fist* | *E* | *L* | *1d10+2d8* | *As for Arm* |
| *Stomp* | *C* | *T* | *4d8* | *As for Leg* |

# Serpent, Spellbreaker

Brightly coloured and beautifully patterned, spellbreaker serpents thrive in the most noxious environments such as swamps, volcanic fumaroles or dense jungle. They use their colouration to blend in with flowers or mineral outcroppings, camouflaging themselves for protection against larger hunters.

Ostensibly a large and tough venomous snake, its reputation far outweighs its modest appearance. It is dreaded by thaumaturgists of all types due to its venom's potent effect on magic. This has made the serpent a useful weapon against the island's shamans and sorcerers, whether inserted into a victim's bedchamber in the evening, milked for the poison they produce or even thrown as a weapon.

By nature, spellbreaker serpents are rather aggressive towards anything drawing too close, especially things that radiate magic which sends them into a rage. In the wild they initially take a threatening posture, encouraging an approaching creature to keep away. Persons that ignore the warning are spat at, then leapt upon and viciously bitten, the snake surprisingly capable of springing into the air by rapidly uncoiling its body. The serpent can jump up to its SIZ in metres, more if leaping from a high perch. After biting the victim several times it will then wriggle away, hoping that the transgressor will take the hint and leave it alone.

For reasons only known to the snakes themselves, they tend to attack the most magically potent target in range. If leaping the snake will land on the victim, coiling itself around the location struck. Removing the creature requires winning a Contest of Strength (see RuneQuest page 59) to pull it free. Attacking it with a weapon whilst still in place will inflict half the damage onto the victim too. In the meantime the snake will repeatedly bite the location, attempting to utilise the Inject Venom special effect.

A predator in its own right, the spellbreaker usually feeds on small animals and leaves most humanoids alone if left in peace. Hunting spellbreakers normally attack from ambush, provided they find a floral or colourful area in which they can blend in. Although the snake's venom is not designed to kill bigger creatures, it can still cause physical harm, making its bite an unpleasant experience, beyond its annoying anti-magical nature.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 1d6+9 (13) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Tail Tip | 1/5 |
| CON: 1d6+9 (13) | Damage Modifier | None | 4–5 | Mid End-length | 1/5 |
| SIZ: 1d3+6 (8) | Magic Points | None | 6–7 | Fore End-length | 1/5 |
| DEX: 2d6+15 (22) | Movement | 4m | 8–9 | Rear Mid-length | 1/6 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 17 | 10–12 | Mid Mid-length | 1/6 |
| POW: 1d6 (4) | Armour | Scales | 13–14 | Fore Mid-length | 1/6 |
| | | | 15–16 | Rear Fore-length | 1/5 |
| | | | 17–18 | Mid Fore-length | 1/5 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 1/5 |

**Abilities:** *Cold Blooded, Leaper, Magic Sense, Venomous*

**Skills:** *Athletics 75%, Brawn 61%, Endurance 56%, Evade 74%, Perception 56%, Stealth 74%, Willpower 48%*

**Combat Style:** *Springing Strike (Bite, Spit) 60%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *S* | *T* | *1d8+Poison* | *As for Head* |
| *Spit* | *S* | *-* | *Poison* | *Not Applicable* |

## Spellbreaker Venom

Whether created by the gods to punish the hubris of mortal sorcerers or a random chaotic mutation, the painfully caustic venom of the Spellbreaker has potent anti-magical effects. These are persistent and ongoing, making the poison particularly dangerous to those who rely on magic. In addition to its normal effects, any spell the venom touches is dismissed if it is of a Magnitude equal or less than one tenth the venom's potency. Thus the initial spit of the snake can often strip many protective and augmentative magics, even if the victim resists the poison's other effects.

**Application**: Contact or Injected
**Potency**: 85
**Resistance**: Endurance
**Onset time:** Instant for Agony, 1d3 Rounds for Sapping.
**Duration**: Depends on the condition. Agony lasts for the Spellbreaker's CON in minutes. Sapping lasts for the Spellbreaker's CON in days.

**Conditions**: The conditions inflicted depend on the application. Spat venom inflicts Agony. Injected venom causes Sapping in addition. The Agony condition only affects the location struck. Sapping suppresses the Magic Points of the victim by 1d8, multiple bites incrementing this Magic Point loss, assuming the victim fails to resist the venom. Any Magic Point reduction continues for the entire duration (at least ten days).

**Antidote/Cure**: For obvious reasons magic cannot heal this poison unless of a high enough Magnitude to overcome the venom. The Agony effect can be treated by First Aid, permitting a second Endurance test to overcome the pain. The Sapping effect is normally untreatable, although a potion concocted of suitably rare components such as griffon blood, powdered unicorn horn or some such materials can purge the poison if correctly brewed and administered via the Healing skill.

# Serpent People (Serpentmen, Ophidians)

An ancient race who ruled the world long before the advent of mankind, the serpent people were once wise of knowledge and strong in sorcery. Now they are simply devolved remnants of a proud race who struggle to preserve the last fragments of their civilisation, skulking in high mountain fastnesses and awaiting a chance to seize power once more.

Like the lizardfolk described earlier, this version of the Ophidians is slightly different to those presented in the core RuneQuest rules. Physically the serpent people are slightly taller than humans, but closely match their form, save for a convex serpent face, slit eyes and a slightly iridescent scaly skin. Other than that, their limbs possess the same proportions and are jointed in an identical way, although their bodies tend to be somewhat lean. Secondly the serpent people are a dimorphic race, producing hyper intelligent, yet sterile 'sports' and more physically capable 'breeders'.

Not all serpentmen are blessed with humanoid form however, some being warped by sorcerous or diabolic influences; perhaps due in part to their use of gold blighted by the Plunderer's Curse (see page 87). These unfortunates suffer evolutionary regression, parts of their body becoming substituted at birth with stranger serpentine elements, such as twin heads (see Ettin) or a snake lower body. Such aberrations are rare, however, being lauded as genetic prodigies which rise far in their society.

Every ophidian has a venomous bite, which it uses rarely, since the poison glands require several days to replenish. The specifics of the toxin depends on the brotherhood to which it belongs, serpent people possessing the ability to tailor venoms for particular purposes. However, learning a new formula requires an investment of time and Experience Rolls akin to studying a sorcery spell. In addition only a single toxin can be manufactured by the glands at a time, so changing toxins requires a lead time of 1d3 days before the chemical transmutation is completed.

A highly refined people, serpentmen try to manipulate others via cunning oratory, subtle lies and introducing corrupting habits, rather than using brute force approaches. If death is necessary an ophidian prefers to take life secretly, by assassination with one of their exotic weapons on a sleeping or surprised victim; or inflicting a poisonous bite (using the Inject Venom effect). Direct combat is not their preferred way. Indeed if battle must be fought ophidians often call upon corrupted or subjugated allies to do the brunt of the fighting for them, whilst supporting with sorcery or ranged weapons.

For further details about the serpent people, see the Cultures chapter. Some examples of serpent people are provided in the Appendices for Games Masters to use as random encounters. Guidelines for creating a serpentman character are presented on page 20 in the Cultures chapter.

### Sports

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 3d6 (11) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Tail | 1/4 |
| CON: 3d6 (11) | Damage Modifier | None | 4–5 | Right Leg | 1/5 |
| SIZ: 2d6+6 (13) | Magic Points | 16 | 6–7 | Left Leg | 1/5 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 6m | 8–10 | Abdomen | 1/6 |
| INT: 2d6+9 (16) | Strike Rank | 15 | 11–14 | Chest | 1/7 |
| POW: 2d6+9 (16) | Armour | Soft Scales | 15–16 | Right Arm | 1/4 |
| CHA: 3d6 (11) | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 1/4 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 1/5 |

**Abilities:** *Cold Blooded, Earth Sense, Venomous*

**Magic:** *Sorcery*

**Combat Style:** *Unarmed Weapons*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *T* | *1d3+Poison* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *M* | *S* | *1d3* | *As for Arm* |
| *Tail* | *M* | *M* | *1d4* | *As for Tail* |

### Breeders

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Tail | 1/5 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d2 | 4–5 | Right Leg | 1/6 |
| SIZ: 2d6+9 (16) | Magic Points | 11 | 6–7 | Left Leg | 1/6 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 6m | 8–10 | Abdomen | 1/7 |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 13 | 11–14 | Chest | 1/8 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Soft Scales | 15–16 | Right Arm | 1/5 |
| CHA: 3d6 (11) | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 1/5 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 1/6 |

**Abilities:** *Cold Blooded, Earth Sense, Venomous*

**Magic:** *None*

**Combat Style:** *Unarmed Weapons*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *T* | *1d3+1d2+Poison* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *M* | *S* | *1d3+1d2* | *As for Arm* |
| *Tail* | *M* | *M* | *1d4+1d2* | *As for Tail* |

# Snapdragon

Thorny bushes several metres in height with a solitary flower, a snapdragon has an amazing orchid-like bloom of yellow, orange and red covered with black decorative splotches. Despite its fragile appearance, the splendid appearance belies a very dangerous carnivorous plant which attracts prey with narcotic pollen that infuses the breather with an incredible sense of euphoria.

The pollen is progressively addictive, encouraging the addict to insert their head into the bloom to get a full dose. Since this is part of the pollination process the snapdragon does not attack every inserted appendage, but once the correct cross-fertilisation occurs it triggers a reproductive instinct in the plant, causing it to decapitate whatever creature next inserts its head. This then provides a sufficient source of protein in which to gestate the new generation of snapdragons.

Snapdragon plants usually grow in collective groups of 1d6+6 flowers, which are all connected under the soil with an interlaced root system, in effect a single organism. Whilst immobile, the blooms support one another from attack, actively snapping at anything seeking to harm the group, or using whip-like tendrils to drag persistent foes into their reach.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 3 | 1–10 | Thorny Bush | 4/9 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 11–13 | Left Tendril | 4/7 |
| SIZ: 2d6+12 (19) | Magic Points | 4 | 14–16 | Right Tendril | 4/7 |
| DEX: 2d6+15 (22) | Movement | Immobile | 17–20 | Snapping Bloom | 4/7 |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 15 | | | |
| POW: 1d6 (4) | Armour | Entangling Briars | | | |

**Abilities:** *Communal Mind, Earth Sense, Flora, Grappler*

**Combat Style:** *Vicious Viniculture (Bloom, Tendril) 75%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bloom* | *M* | *L* | *1d6+1d4* | *As for Bloom* |
| *Tendril* | *S* | *VL* | *1d4+1d4* | *As for Tendril* |

Usually the decapitating bite of a snapdragon comes as a surprise attack, unless the pollen addict is aware of the plant's carnivorous tendencies, allowing the plant to Grip and Choose Location by default. When fighting in coordinated self defence, the blooms also utilise Entangle, Flurry, Take Weapon and Trip which they apply as maliciously as possible, either stealing weapons to render attackers harmless or pulling them down, then overwhelming them with multiple flurrying blows to rend the foe apart.

The statistics describe a single flower of the unified whole.

# Spineapple Tree

To all intents and purposes, the spineapple tree is a large plant of the palm family which grows along river banks or sandy shorelines. Its fruit resemble a golden-coloured pineapple and are indeed very tasty and nourishing, used by the plant as a way of dispersing its seeds. However, if left past its prime, the fruits have a backup method of propagation. In such cases the fruit changes colour to an orangey-red , its insides rapidly fermenting so that the husk contains a highly unstable and pressurised alcoholic gas. When the fruit drops it explodes, throwing the seeds far and wide.

Of course the destructive efficacy of these fruits has turned them into weapons in the hands of the natives, shards of the husk inflicting nasty wounds. Fortunately the trees fruit almost at random during the year, so that they are not readily available in any quantity. However, encountering a fully laden tree without awareness of the danger it poses can be lethal to the uninitiated.

Although the tree itself does not try to kill or capture oblivious victims, it does pose a threat and is thus treated as a trap of sorts. Each encountered spineapple tree has 1d6+4 unstable fruits.

**Trigger**: Walking by, fighting near or climbing the trunk of the tree.

**Difficulty**: Equal to ten times the number of unstable fruit.

**Resistance**: Either Stealth to pass by, Athletics to climb up, or Evade to avoid an explosion.

**Effect**: The first fruit to drop explodes, bringing down the rest, causing an amount of damage equivalent to the Difficulty as illustrated on the Death Trap Damage table (see RuneQuest page 127). The chain reaction affects everyone within a five metre radius of the tree, taking the damage to a random Hit Location and automatically suffering the Bash special effect in addition any further ones the explosion gains.

# Tengu (Bird Goblins)

Tengu are winged and feathered humanoids who use bladed weapons in combat. Self-imposed watchmen of high mountains, clouds and forests they are viewed, perhaps mistakenly, as the angry reincarnated spirits of arrogant warriors or vain, heretical priests. Tengu are usually troublemakers, their fierce temperament depending solely on their own agenda – some having no liking for certain religious philosophies, whilst others seek to preserve the knowledge of martial skills or engage in vendettas against particular tribes or whole villages.

Each tengu displays physically different characteristics depending on their avian progenitor. All tengu have thin, wiry arms and legs that end in sharp bird claws, short bodies that rarely reach one and a half metres tall, a savagely beaked head, and great wings granting them flight. The plumage of its head and wings matches that of its spiritual ancestor; crows, ravens and kites being the most common.

Tengu live in mountain or treetop communities where their domiciles can only be reached by wing, taking advantage of their natural abilities. They form organised clans, usually led by a dai-tengu (great tengu) and ferociously protective of the eggs from which they are hatched. If attacked the entire community will band together to fight off their aggressors.

Highly magical beings, tengu are often rumoured to be capable of stirring up the winds, usually via an enchanted fan made from feathers. Their cloaks too are reputed to grant invisibility. In addition to these powers the bird-goblins display animistic abilities, being able to possess the bodies of others, especially those of women and children, who they use as mouth-pieces through which they communicate. They can even use this ability to covertly possess a victim, cursing them with some infirmity such as paralysed or misbehaving limbs, or removing the victim's sight – literally riding them in spirit form and using their 'metaphorical' wings to cover the possessed person's eyes! Imposing madness is another favourite 'curse' which tengu use against those they wish to punish.

Generally most tengu do not provoke direct conflict if they can help it. They prefer to annoy or trick victims using their cunning backed up by animism. In extremis a tengu might free a bound elemental spirit to control the winds or summon an allied curse spirit to possess persistent foes, inflicting conditions like Blindness, Hallucination or Mania.

Yet this does not mean tengu are afraid of combat. Depending on the situation Tengu have a range of different tactics they use whilst fighting. As a lone combatant they prefer to duel on the ground, one on one, where they can display their remarkable prowess. Unless provoked to a murderous rage, they fight honourably and do not try to kill their opponent. Thus they prefer special effects like Disarm, Trip, and Overextend to place the foe in an untenable situation and try to force a surrender.

If ganged up on, a tengu will use their first action to Outmanoeuvre multiple opponents, picking them off one at a time. If this becomes untenable they will instead use the first available chance to Change Range and fly out of combat. Tengu rarely fight when flying unless pursuing hated foes or defending their remote pinnacle villages. In such cases the tengu will use longer weapons, to keep foes at bay whilst performing fly-by attacks and diving strikes; by preference selecting the Bleed and Choose Location manoeuvres to incapacitate enemies, then leaving them alone till the battle ends and they can be captured or killed as the tengu decides.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+6 (13) | Action Points | 3 | 1–2 | Right Leg | 1/5 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | None | 3–4 | Left Leg | 1/5 |
| SIZ: 1d3+9 (11) | Magic Points | 13 | 5–7 | Abdomen | 2/6 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | 6m, 12m Flying | 8–10 | Chest | 2/7 |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 16 | 11–12 | Right Wing | 2/5 |
| POW: 2d6+6 (13) | Armour | Feathers on Wings and Body. Scaly Skin Elsewhere | 13–14 | Left Wing | 2/5 |
| CHA: 3d6 (11) | | | 15–16 | Right Arm | 1/4 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 1/4 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 1/5 |

**Abilities:** *Diving Strike, Flying*

**Skills:** *Athletics 62%, Brawn 54%, Endurance 56%, Evade 78%, Fly 52%, Perception 66%, Willpower 66%*

**Magic:** *Binding 64%, Trance 72%*

**Combat Style:** *: Bladed Weapons 82%, Unarmed 72%.*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Beak* | *M* | *T* | *1d4* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *M* | *S* | *1d3* | *As for Limb* |
| *Glaive* | *L* | *L* | *1d10+2* | *4/10* |
| *Sword* | *M* | *M* | *1d8* | *6/10* |

# Tetrapus

Another of the alien oddities which crawl through the Smoking Mirrors, a tetrapus is a strange arboreal creature seemingly formed from four thick-limbed tentacles arranged in a tetrapedial shape with a single mouth and three eyes at their base where they meet. They are arboreal creatures which swing through the jungle and cloud forest, hunting for smaller prey which they strangle then drag up into the higher canopy to consume at their leisure.

Whilst their morphology allows rapid scaling of almost any surface, it is the chromatophore skin of the beast which makes it such an effective hunter. The camouflage is so good that other arboreal animals such as monkeys and birds can climb over the surface of the tetrapus without even realising its presence – a short-lived mistake, when several tentacles lash round the oblivious prey.

Tetrapuses grapple their prey, drawing it back to the central mouthparts where it is engulfed; a slow process

taking up to an hour as the creature distends itself about the now helpless victim. Once consumed, the tetrapus looks like a great swollen lump of flesh with four wriggling tentacles at one end. Food is digested directly through the skin and since the tetrapus has no digestive tract, its mouth also acts as its anus, expelling non digestible pieces of body, keratin, and such like. This is actually a way of tracking the hard-to-see creature, as for several hours it seeps an oily anal leakage.

The three eyes of a tetrapus are exceptional, able to see the departing spirits of the newly slain, as well as picking up very low levels of visible light.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+9 (16) | Action Points | 4 | 1–2 | Mouth | 1/7 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d8 | 3–7 | Tentacle 1 | 1/9 |
| SIZ: 2d6+18 (25) | Magic Points | 7 | 8 | Eye 1 | 1/8 |
| DEX: 2d6+18 (25) | Movement | 10m Swinging | 9–13 | Tentacle 2 | 1/9 |
| INS: 2d6+7 (14) | Strike Rank | 20 | 14 | Eye 2 | 1/8 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Blubbery Skin | 15–19 | Tentacle 3 | 1/9 |
| | | | 20 | Eye 3 | 1/8 |

**Abilities:** *Camouflaged, Death Sense, Grappler, Night Sight*

**Skills:** *Athletics 81%, Brawn 71%, Endurance 66%, Evade 70%, Perception 61%, Stealth 79%, Willpower 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Slimy Stalker (Tentacle) 81%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Tentacle* | *L* | *VL* | *1d6+1d8* | *As for Tentacle* |

# Therizinosaurus

Of all the dinosaurs, the therizinosaurus is the one that most looks like either a cruel god's joke or a hideous nightmare, depending on how they are acting when viewed. A long neck ends in a stubby head with squinty eyes and a downcurved jaw full of small, leaf-shaped teeth. The torso is bulbous and stocky, almost obese in appearance, due to the great plant-fermenting gut inside. The tail is somewhat short and the legs are robust and ponderous. Much of the animal is coated in metre long, pigmented filaments that are simple feathers. But those arms! Nothing stands out more than the arms of a therizinosaur. They are longer than the legs, draped with a cloak of feathery filaments, and end in three enormous narrow-bladed claws that can be used to devastating effect in self defence.

A therizinosaur prefers docile browsing on local vegetation, and tends toward a quiet, solitary existence in lonely

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+21 (28) | Action Points | 2 | 1–2 | Tail | 4/10 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d12 | 3–5 | Right Leg | 4/11 |
| SIZ: 4d6+18 (32) | Magic Points | 7 | 6–8 | Left Leg | 4/11 |
| DEX: 2d6+4 (11) | Movement | 5m | 9–11 | Abdomen | 4/12 |
| INS: 2d6+4 (11) | Strike Rank | 11 | 12–14 | Chest | 4/13 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Tough Hide and Feathers | 15–16 | Right Arm | 4/10 |
| | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 4/10 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 4/11 |

**Abilities:** *Formidable Natural Weapons, Frenzy, Intimidate*

**Skills:** *Athletics 59%, Brawn 90%, Endurance 68%, Evade 42%, Perception 58%, Willpower 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Scything Slasher (Claws) 75%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Claw* | *H* | *L* | *1d8+1d12* | *As for Arm* |

places. This preference for solitude enhances their bizarre appearance and behaviour. Therizinosaurs are so odd in appearance that those unfamiliar with them, especially when first encountering them, have Formidable difficulty on Willpower checks to resist their hooting, thrashing-clawed threat display (Intimidate ability), which they use to great effect to discourage potential predators or more petty annoyances.

They have an erratic personality that can catch those encountering them off guard, too-- if surprised or threatened, a therizinosaur might placidly ignore (unless wounded), intimidate, flee noisily, or go into a murderous frenzy, as a response. These reactions occur with little warning and in apparently little proportion to the extent of any danger. If injured or cornered, however, they may enter a berserk state of titanic slashing claws and hideous warbling shrieks—they more than earn their nightmarish appearance in such instances.

A therizinosaur can parry with its massive claws, displaying surprising skill. The claws can use the Sunder combat effect.

# Tikbalang

The tikbalang is an odd creature of myth said to lurk in the mountains and forests of tropical islands. A blend of man and animal, it is formed from the bodies of aborted foetuses that have been warped by black magic or diabolic powers, such as certain sorceries of the High Folk. Whilst some tikbalangs are merely recluses, exiled by the horror of their appearance and birth, others are ravening monsters who prey on any creature foolish enough to enter their territory or are bound to the service of a sorcerer or shaman.

Tikbalangs are very tall, yet bony humanoids with disproportionately long limbs, over twice the length of their torso, so that they look almost spider-like when they squat down. They possess the head and feet of the animal blended with, which in the original island arrivals was a horse, but can be any beast. Their fingernails are often horny and clawed, making them dangerous even if they lack any other natural weapons.

Despite their intimidating physique, Tikbalangs are ill-educated and hampered by the instincts inherited from their animal half. Many are inherently superstitious and can be kept at bay by adopting strange local customs, such as wearing one's shirt inside out, or painting oneself a particular colour. The exact superstitions vary according to native belief, and some may be less than efficacious...

Tikbalang are cunning but not particularly imaginative combatants. They like to ambush prey or engage in hit-and-run tactics, using the Charge combat action to make a single attack then disappear into the forest. Quite often they will lure annoyed hunters from forest paths so that they get lost. If tracked a tikbalang will lay its trail to a natural danger, such as carnivorous or poisonous vegetation, or

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 3 | 1 – 3 | Right Leg | 1/7 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | 4 – 6 | Left Leg | 1/7 |
| SIZ: 2d6+12 (19) | Magic Points | 11 | 7 – 9 | Abdomen | 0/8 |
| DEX: 3d6+6 (17) | Movement | 8m | 10 – 12 | Chest | 0/9 |
| INT: 1d6+6 (10) | Strike Rank | 14 | 13 – 15 | Right Arm | 0/6 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Animal Hide on Head and Legs | 16 – 18 | Left Arm | 0/6 |
| CHA: 2d6 (7) | | | 19 – 20 | Head | 1/7 |

**Abilities:** *Formidable Natural Weapons, Night Sight*

**Skills:** *Athletics 76%, Brawn 68%, Endurance 66%, Evade 74%, Locale 60%, Perception 51%, Willpower 62%*

**Combat Style:** *Lanky Buffeter (Bite, Hoof) 76%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *T* | *1d4+1d6* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw/Hoof* | *M* | *L* | *1d4+1d6* | *As for Limb* |

a cliff edge where its pursuers can be readily pushed over the edge.

Specific Special effects depend on the type of creature it is blended from. Stun Location or Bash are favoured by herbivore tikbalangs, especially if taking on several foes simultaneously. Conversely, predator tikbalang often prefer to Bleed opponents one by one, till they are seriously weakened.

# Triceratops

Herbivorous dinosaurs, triceratops are characterised by the bony frill that guards their neck and the two forehead and one nose horns with which they protect themselves. Beside this distinctive head is the large, stocky body and short, thick tail. Averaging around 8 metres in length, triceratops are even heavier than the tank-like ankylosaurs. They are herd grazers, feeding on ground level vegetation and low hanging foliage with their beaks. A triceratops may seem to be heavy and lumbering but they are not as ungainly as they might appear. Their sheer weight, powerful legs and intimidating horns mean they are far from defenceless; a charge or herd stampede being excellent protection from would-be predators, such as allosaurs and tyrannosaurs.

Provided it is attacked from the front, a triceratops can parry attacks with its horns and bony head frill.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+30 (37) | Action Points | 2 | 1-3 | Tail | 9/18 |
| CON: 2d6+15 (22) | Damage Modifier | +2d10 | 4-5 | Right Hind Leg | 9/18 |
| SIZ: 4d6+50 (64) | Magic Points | 11 | 6-7 | Left Hind Leg | 9/18 |
| DEX: 2d6+3 (10) | Movement | 6m | 8-10 | Hindquarters | 9/19 |
| INS: 2d6+4 (11) | Strike Rank | 11 | 11-14 | Forequarters | 9/20 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Tough Hide and Bony Head Plate | 15-16 | Right Front Leg | 9/17 |
| | | | 17-18 | Left Front Leg | 9/17 |
| | | | 19-20 | Head | 12/18 |

**Abilities:** *Formidable Natural Weapons, Intimidate, Trample*

**Skills:** *Athletics 67%, Brawn 121%, Endurance 84%, Evade 40%, Perception 52%, Willpower 42%*

**Combat Style:** *Thundering Terror (Horns and Trample) 77%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Horns* | *C* | *L* | *2d6+2d10* | *As for Head* |
| *Trample* | *C* | *T* | *4d10* | *Not Applicable* |

# Trifrond

An ambient tripartite flower, this three metre tall plant looks ridiculous but is in fact a deadly carnivore. The bottom of the trifrond is a triple lobed bulb whose protuberances flex, allowing it to amble along slowly. From this odd base extends upwards a tall, thick stalk topped with three trumpet-like blossoms, with long stamen partly exposed from the petals.

It is these stamen which form the flower's offense, each one acting like a razor-sharp tongue capable of lashing out several metres like a whip accompanied by a unearthly snapping noise. The action is so fast it cannot be actively parried except by a shield (as if a missile weapon); and whilst the stamens appear innocuous, they are capable of decapitating a human and are formed from an unearthly substance as tough as metal, so that they can parry with the organs.

A trifrond's biggest weakness is their slow perambulation, so they attempt to creep up on prey. When working together as a group, they communicate with one another by rattling their stamens inside their woody stems – an unfortunate giveaway to the natives who recognise the implicit threat of the signal. Thus to further their chances they have a monstrous ability to coordinate ambushes, something almost beyond comprehension for a vegetable life-form.

Bleed is the preferred special effect of trifronds, which then track down the wounded victim from the trail of blood it leaves. On reaching the casualty, the trifrond extends a feeding tube from its lower bulb, which injects a digestive fluid. This renders down the internal bones and muscle which the plant then sucks back into itself, leaving an empty sack of skin behind.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+9 (16) | Action Points | 3+1 (Multi-Limbed) | 1–8 | Motile Lobe 1 | 4/9 |
| CON: 2d6+9 (16) | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 9–10 | Motile Lobe 2 | 4/9 |
| SIZ: 2d6+12 (19) | Magic Points | 7 | 11–12 | Motile Lobe 3 | 4/9 |
| DEX: 2d6+15 (22) | Movement | 2m | 13–14 | Stem | 4/8 |
| INS: 2d6+7 (14) | Strike Rank | 18 | 15–16 | Frond Flower 1 | 6/7 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Woody Husk and Metallic Fronds | 17–18 | Frond Flower 2 | 6/7 |
| | | | 18–20 | Frond Flower 3 | 6/7 |

**Abilities:** *Blood Sense, Communal Mind, Echolocation, Flora, Formidable Natural Weapons, Multi-Limbed*

**Skills:** *Athletics 48%, Brawn 35%, Endurance 52%, Evade 54%, Perception 71%, Stealth 66%, Track 70%, Willpower 64%*

**Combat Style:** *Lethal Lasher (Stamen) 78%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Stamen* | *L* | *M-VL* | *1d10+1d4* | *As for Frond Flower* |

# Turtle, Tiger

Living along the sea coast or low waters of inland marshes is a particularly large and powerful breed of shelled reptile, called the tiger turtle. Named thus because of the uniquely striped colouration and the large fangs which are part of its terrifyingly enormous beak, the tiger turtle is easily capable of snapping off a man's arm or leg in a single bite. Huge, ill-tempered, and ready to eat nearly anything that draws too close, these turtles can bring a surprisingly quick death for the unprepared.

Monstrously big and strong, tiger turtles live for over a century, growing to more than four metres in length, and the largest can weigh well over a ton. The gnarled green striped shell is several fingers thick, strong as stone, and turns away all but the most forceful of blows. The most interesting feature of the turtle is, oddly enough, its flippers which are jointed to allow the creature to briefly lift its body clear of the ground. Supported by these massively strong and heavily clawed limbs, the turtle is capable of propelling its fore-body up into the air, whilst the back

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+24 (31) | Action Points | 2 | 1–3 | Right Rear Flipper | 6/11 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +2d6 | 4–6 | Left Rear Flipper | 6/11 |
| SIZ: 4d6+24 (38) | Magic Points | 7 | 7–12 | Body | 12/14 |
| DEX: 2d6+3 (10) | Movement | 2m, 8m Swimming | 13–15 | Right Fore Flipper | 6/12 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 11 | 16–18 | Left Fore Flipper | 6/12 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Thick Hide and Plastron | 19–20 | Head | 6/12 |

**Abilities:** *Cold Blooded, Hold Breath, Swimmer*

**Skills:** *Athletics 51%, Brawn 89%, Endurance 68%, Evade 20%, Perception 39%, Stealth 62%, Swim 50%, Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *Surprising Snapper (Claw, Crush, Snap) 61%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Claw* | *H* | *L* | *1d8+2d6* | *As for Flipper* |
| *Crush* | *E* | *T* | *4d6* | *Not Applicable* |
| *Snap* | *H* | *M* | *1d10+2d6* | *As for Head* |

flippers push it forwards, allowing it to fall onto a foe and crush it under the weight of its body.

Most of the time these reptilian hunters live rather sedentary lives, settling in the sand or mud to hide their large bodies whilst waiting for animals to pass by their resting place; only when disturbed by outside influences or coming up for air will the tiger turtle move from its chosen ambush point. Although big, they lunge out with amazing speed and can end most conflicts in a single bite before their target even knows they are in danger.

Special effects won in the opening ambush tend to be used to either Grip if biting with its beak or Trip if attempting to pounce atop the victim. With its flippers the turtle generally uses Bash Opponents. Faced with multiple opponents a tiger turtle will often just weather the blows until it starts taking significant damage, at which point it will attempt to withdraw into the water and swim away.

# Vampire Palm

Despite its name the vampire palm has no relation to the undead. It looks exactly like a common palm tree, with a shortish knobbly trunk topped by a crown of broad palm fronds of about the same length as its height; rarely growing more than four to five metres tall. If studied closely, wary observers might spot small scraps of desiccated flesh and bone in the vegetation that grows about the base of the tree.

Like some other carnivorous plants the vampire palm detects the approach of prey via its root system which picks up vibrations. When a large enough creature passes within three metres or so of the trunk, the huge leaves snap down as if it were a closing umbrella, impaling the victim onto the sharp hollow leaf stumps and held in place by the barbs on the underside of the fronds. The prey has a single chance to Evade the attack, else they are held fast and must either break free using brute force or be hacked free by companions.

Assuming the leaf stumps managed to impale through whatever worn or natural armour the creature possesses, the tree begins to drain the victim of blood – albeit at a slow rate, only one level of Fatigue per hour. Eventually, if not rescued, they are completely exsanguinated; the dry body is released and drops… whereupon whatever nearby scavengers or insect colonies take care of the rest.

Only the vampire palm's initial frond grapple causes any significant physical damage. After that the only threat is the slow blood drain, although since the leaf stumps are also barbed it requires a First Aid check to remove an impaled victim from them without causing further harm. Otherwise it is relatively simple for others to approach and destroy the tree once its trap has been sprung. Attacks against the trunk cause blood to leak from hack marks into the wood!

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | Not Applicable | 1–8 | Knobbly Trunk | 6/11 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d8 | 9–10 | Frond 1 | 0/9 |
| SIZ: 4d6+12 (26) | Magic Points | 4 | 11–12 | Frond 2 | 0/9 |
| DEX: 2d6+12 (19) | Movement | Immobile | 13–14 | Frond 3 | 0/9 |
| INS: 2d6+1 (8) | Strike Rank | 14 | 15–16 | Frond 4 | 0/9 |
| POW: 1d6 (4) | Armour | Knobbly Bark | 17–18 | Frond 5 | 0/9 |
| | | | 18–20 | Frond 6 | 0/9 |

**Abilities:** *Earth Sense, Flora, Grappler, Trapper, Vampiric*

**Skills:** *Athletics 0%, Brawn 65%, Endurance 68%, Evade 0%, Perception 52%, Willpower 0%*

**Combat Style:** *Bloody Embrace (Fronds) 78%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Snapping Fronds* | - | - | *1d8+1d8* | *As for Frond* |

# Vorompatra

Formidably large and flightless birds, vorompatra were once peaceful herbivores, but their translocation to Monster Island has caused them to develop rapidly from prey for wandering dinosaurs and big cats, into belligerent predators in their own right. Despite their vestigial wings, the vorompatra more than makes up for its loss of flight by increased running speed and their rapidly – perhaps even magically - evolving beak and claws. Indeed the creature is given wary respect by the natives of the island, as the birds show little fear and are regular man-eaters.

Three metres tall, covered in black or dark brown feathers except for their more colourful plumage on the neck and head, vorompatra are somewhat bland in appearance. Their hard beak however is more alarming than that of an alicanto, being raptor-shaped and serrated for slashing off chunks of flesh. The legs are sheathed in thick muscle, ending with oversized claws tipped that are used to hold their prey in place while they rip chunks of flesh away with their beak.

Worse still, vorompatra gather in small hunting flocks of between two to five adults, using mob tactics to overpower animals larger than themselves. With a fast reproductive rate and their gang survival instincts, the vorompatra have literally clawed out their own ecological niche, displacing other midsized predators; helped in part by their ability to track down wounded beasts and berserk fighting frenzies. Effectively walking avian tanks, these truly are birds of terror...

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+9 (16) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Right Leg | 1/9 |
| CON: 2d6+9 (16) | Damage Modifier | +1d8 | 4–6 | Left Leg | 1/9 |
| SIZ: 2d6+21 (28) | Magic Points | 7 | 7–10 | Abdomen | 3/10 |
| DEX: 2d6+6 (13) | Movement | 10m | 11–14 | Chest | 3/11 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 13 | 15 | Right Wing | 3/4 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Thick Feathers | 16 | Left Wing | 3/4 |
| | | | 17–18 | Neck | 2/8 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 2/8 |

**Abilities:** *Blood Sense, Frenzy, Night Sight, Trample*

**Skills:** *Athletics 79%, Brawn 58%, Endurance 62%, Evade 66%, Perception 49%, Stealth 45%, Track 68% (Blood), Willpower 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Feathered Berserker (Claw, Peck, Trample) 69%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Claw* | *L* | *M* | *1d6+1d8* | *As for Leg* |
| *Peck* | *L* | *VL* | *1d8+1d8* | *As for Head* |
| *Trample* | *H* | *T* | *2d8* | *Not Applicable* |

# Vorslurp

Another of the aberrations which the superstitious natives hold in terrified dread, the vorslurp is a slug-like creature the size of wide brimmed hat. Its puffy, formless body is slick and black, covered with a fine, mould-like fur. Their fearful reputation derives from consuming the brains of those that unknowingly wander beneath their hiding place, whether gnarled jungle tree or unexplored subterranean catacombs.

The waiting mollusc will drop atop its victim's head, engulfing it like a gelatinous pancake, so that it dangles down to the level of the victim's ears and eyes. It then proceeds to drill tiny threads into the skull using acidic secretions, ultimately dissolving away the entire skullcap, whilst clinging onto the struggling foe with the sucker-like protuberances on its underside.

Once the brain is exposed (a Major Wound is reached), it devours the soft brain material (killing the host) whilst simultaneously taking control of the victim's nervous system. This allows the vorslurp to ride about as if driving a vehicle, using the still functional body (albeit temporarily) to perform tasks or actions unsuited to its native form. The vorslurp demonstrates an almost human sapience during this time, although the manner of its strange actions are often incomprehensible to observers, especially if more than one vorslurp zombie are working together.

When the vital energies of the body begin to fade, as they will if the zombie is not fed, the vorslurp abandons its host, climbing a nearby vertical surface in preparation of falling upon the next victim which comes by; the only clue to its presence being the distinctive missing upper half of the cranium of its previous victim. Many underground catacombs are filled with the skeletons of dead explorers, whose skulls are so holed.

Vorslurp prefer to attack from ambush, using the attack to generate several special effects. Favoured ones are Choose Location to strike the head, and Entangle (as per RuneQuest page 146). Trying to strike the creature with weapons, once it has landed atop the foe, inflicts rolled damage to both the vorslurp and the victim. Zombie hosts use the skills of the vorslurp which is 'riding' it.

| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 2 | 1–20 | Gelid Body | 0/4 |
| CON: 1d3+3 (5) | Damage Modifier | None | | | |
| SIZ: 1d3 (2) | Magic Points | 7 | | | |
| DEX: 1d3+3 (5) | Movement | Negligible Without Host | | | |
| INT: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 9 | | | |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | None | | | |

**Abilities:** *Adhering, Dark Sight, Dominant Possession, Grappler*

**Skills:** *Athletics 24%, Brawn 61%, Drive 52%, Endurance 40%, Evade 0%, Perception 60%, Stealth 78%, Willpower 74% plus all remaining common skills and 1d3+3 professional skills of weird provenance.*

**Combat Style:** *Engulfing Splat (Acid) 64%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Acid Burn* | *S* | *T* | *Concentrated Acid* | *As for Body* |

# Vulture, Giant

Vast birds with their distinctive bald head and neck, giant vultures soar over the northern reaches of the island – bred and ridden by the High Folk of Akakor. The birds thrive on stripping the bloody remains of carcasses left by the island's rampant predation, which they locate with their remarkable sense of smell. Although they primarily hunt the mountains and more open cloud forest, they are quite capable of landing in a nearby jungle clearing, then progressing the rest of the way on foot.

Despite being clumsy flyers, giant vultures can glide for hours on uprising thermals. They avoid direct combat if at all possible when aloft, but are tenacious combatants when alighted, especially when defending a meal from other scavenger, or trapped under the canopy of trees where they lack the space to take off.

If seriously threatened they often throw up their last meal to lighten themselves in preparation for flight. Although the vomit has no exceptional features, it does look and smell disgusting enough to dissuade further approach by its attacker. This is resolved by a single unopposed Willpower roll.

The feet and blunt claws of the giant vulture are adapted to walking, so are rarely used in combat. Instead it tries to buffet an opponent with its wings in an attempt to knock them prone, then leap atop the fallen victim and tear into it with its hooked beak.

Although rare, giant two headed vultures exist, being favoured as mounts or servants for High Folk sorcerers. Such mutated specimens gains the following bonuses STR +3, CON +3, SIZ +6, DEX +3, and the Multi-headed trait.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+12 (19) | Action Points | 2 | 1–3 | Right Leg | 4/10 |
| CON: 2d6+12 (19) | Damage Modifier | +1d10 | 4–6 | Left Leg | 4/10 |
| SIZ: 2d6+24 (31) | Magic Points | 7 | 7–10 | Abdomen | 4/11 |
| DEX: 2d6+3 (10) | Movement | 2m, 12m Flying | 11–14 | Chest | 4/12 |
| INS: 2d6+5 (12) | Strike Rank | 11 | 15–16 | Right Wing | 4/9 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Thick Feathers | 17–18 | Left Wing | 4/9 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 2/10 |

**Abilities:** *Blood Sense, Disease Immunity, Flying*

**Skills:** *Athletics 79%, Brawn 58%, Endurance 62%, Evade 66%, Perception 49%, Stealth 45%, Track 68% (Blood), Willpower 54%*

**Combat Style:** *Drive off Rivals (Peck, Wing) 69%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Peck* | *H* | *M* | *1d10+1d10* | *As for Head* |
| *Wing Buffet* | *E* | *VL* | *2d10* | *As for Wing* |

# Waheela

A species of giant wolf or bear-dogs which hunt in groups of 2-3, these fearsome predators coordinate their attacks to bring down large prey. Big, black and shaggy, with oversized paws they can rapidly adapt to any terrain using an almost sapient level of instinct to concoct tactical plans and being able to deduce how to open doors or avoid traps.

In combat waheela try to leap on victims, in an attempt to knock them prone where they are far easier to kill. Against prey larger than themselves, they orchestrate a team assault, one pack member attacking from the rear or flank whilst the others hold the beast's attention, then evading clear when struck back at, which in turn opens up an opportunity for another waheela to continue the attack.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+9 (16) | Action Points | 2 | 1–2 | Right Hind Leg | 3/7 |
| CON: 3d6 (11) | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | 3–4 | Left Hind Leg | 3/7 |
| SIZ: 2d6+15 (22) | Magic Points | 7 | 5–7 | Hindquarters | 3/8 |
| DEX: 3d6 (11) | Movement | 8m | 8–10 | Forequarters | 3/9 |
| INS: 2d6+6 (13) | Strike Rank | 12 | 11–13 | Right Front Leg | 3/6 |
| POW: 2d6 (7) | Armour | Thick Fur | 14–16 | Left Front Leg | 3/6 |
| | | | 17–20 | Head | 3/7 |

**Abilities:** *Night Sight*

**Skills:** *Athletics 67%, Brawn 58%, Endurance 62%, Evade 62%, Perception 60%, Track 54%, Willpower 44%*

**Combat Style:** *Savage Pack (Bite) 67%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *L* | *S* | *1d6+1d6* | *As for Head* |

# Yeti (Voormi)

High in the frozen ranges of the Rangi Mountains there is an ancient race of degenerate humanoids called yeti. The apelike, hairy yeti are seldom seen and dislike any contact with others, unless hungry. When they are cornered or seriously threatened, yeti can be extremely dangerous and surprisingly cunning.

A yeti is several metres tall but rarely stands erect, instead leaping across chasms or climbing about the peaks hunched over. They are covered in thick, shaggy white fur, keeping them warm in the whipping wind and snow, or deep in their ice-cave dwellings. Although not strictly sapient, they seem to retain some knowledge of tool use, often using stones to cut open carcases and tenderise meat. They even throw them as rather lethal weapons, considering their strength.

Rarely seen, let alone confronted, yeti are powerfully built and can break most creatures' bones with their raw strength. They commonly hunt by ambush, utilising their natural camouflage to blend in with the snow and ice, only attacking if they outnumber or out-mass the prey. Naturally armed with hook-shaped nails and very sharp teeth, they are formidable fighters in close combat, becoming utterly savage if their young are threatened. A favourite tactic is to use their claws to grip an opponent's most dangerous location (weapon arms, horned head, and so on), then rend it off using grappling.

Yeti are deemed repulsive, even feared by the High Folk of Zerzura, upon whom they occasionally feast – being man-eaters and cannibalistic to boot. Patrols rarely venture into the peaks in fear of ambush. However, the yetis descend from the mountains during those very rare blizzards which sometimes sweep down over the Puna Plateau. When the howls of the yetis mix with the howling of the winds, all High Folk know to take shelter and bar their doors.

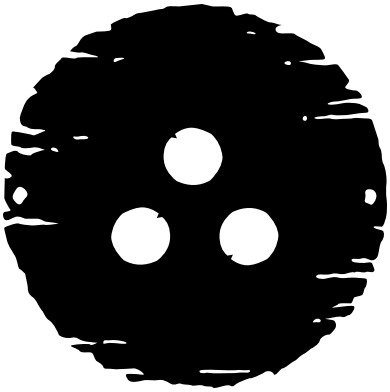
| Characteristics | Attributes | | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 2d6+9 (16) | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Right Leg | 3/7 |
| CON: 2d6+6 (13) | Damage Modifier | +1d6 | 4–6 | Left Leg | 3/7 |
| SIZ: 2d6+15 (22) | Magic Points | 11 | 7–9 | Abdomen | 3/8 |
| DEX: 3d6 (11) | Movement | 6m | 10–12 | Chest | 3/9 |
| INS: 2d6+7 (14) | Strike Rank | 13 | 13–15 | Right Arm | 3/6 |
| POW: 3d6 (11) | Armour | Thick Fur | 16–18 | Left Arm | 3/6 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 3/7 |

**Abilities:** *Burrower (Snow & Ice), Camouflaged, Immunity (Cold)*

**Skills:** *Athletics 77%, Brawn 68%, Endurance 66%, Evade 42%, Perception 65%, Stealth 65%, Track 67%, Willpower 52%*

**Combat Style:** *Yeti Brute (Bite, Claw, Thrown Rock) 67%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *L* | *S* | *1d8+1d6* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *L* | *L* | *1d6+1d6* | *As for Arm* |
| *Rock* | *L* | - | *1d4+1d6* | *Not Applicable* |



# Appendices

## Generic Encounters

The following characters are generic examples of an average member of that culture. As a general rule of thumb, assume that competence levels roughly match the following skill values:

| Skill | Competence | Military Equivalent | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1-30% | Novice | Cannon Fodder | Unqualified student still learning the basics |
| 31-50% | Competent | Green | Can perform easy tasks if taking their time over it |
| 51-70% | Proficient | Seasoned | Has reached an employable level of competence |
| 71-90% | Expert | Veteran | Has spent years as a professional |
| 91-110% | Master | Elite | Is considered one of the best the local community offers |
| > 110% | Paragon | Heroic | Renowned far and wide for their consummate skill |

# Lizardfolk

The lowland savages have a rather unique life cycle where normally reserved skills are gained outside of their sole sexually orientated career, males following the hunters path and females are craftswomen. Individuals' knowledge of combat and animism can vary wildly, being taught as a reward for courage, productivity or injury. For example a crippled savage might be prematurely promoted to the shaman path.

Remember that the following are just off-the-cuff examples. Lizardfolk can be as diverse in skill and aptitude as humans, some skills being higher or lower than those presented here to represent different interests, tribal status, age, rank or role. Add additional skills where needed.

Note that the example weapons can be substituted for similar versions as described in Chapter 7, each family or village specialising with their preferred traditional combinations. For example one village might arm their Mua Infantry with Cuauhololli clubs, whilst the neighbouring tribe may use Wahaika clubs instead.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 16 | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Tail | 3/7 |
| CON: 13 | Damage Modifier | +1d4 | 4–5 | Right Leg | 3/7 |
| SIZ: 19 | Magic Points | 11 | 6–7 | Left Leg | 3/7 |
| DEX: 13 | Movement | 6m Walking and Swimming | 8–10 | Abdomen | 3/8 |
| INT: 13 | Strike Rank | 13 | 11–14 | Chest | 3/9 |
| POW: 11 | Armour | Thick Scales | 15–16 | Right Arm | 3/6 |
| CHA: 11 | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 3/6 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 3/7 |

**Abilities:** *Cold Blooded, Hold Breath, Night Sight, Swimmer*

**Magic:** *Animism - Can Use Fetishes*

*Unarmed Weapons*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bite* | *M* | *T* | *1d6+1d4* | *As for Head* |
| *Claw* | *M* | *S* | *1d4+1d4* | *As for Arm* |
| *Tail* | *M* | *M* | *1d4+1d4* | *As for Tail* |

### Seasoned Skirmisher

*Skills: Athletics 59%, Binding 42%, Boating 59%, Brawn 65%, Endurance 56%, Evade 66%, Locale 56%, Navigate 64%, Perception 54%, Stealth 66%, Survival 54%, Swim 49%, Track 56%, Trance 44%, Willpower 52%*

*Combat Style: Tua Skirmisher (Blowpipe, Bolas, Sling) 69%, Unarmed (Bite, Claw, Tail) 64%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage & Traits | AP/HP/Special Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Blowpipe* | *-* | *-* | *Poison* | *1/4, Inject Venom* |
| *Bolas* | *M* | *S* | *1d4* | *2/2, Entangle, Stun Location* |
| *Sling* | *M* | *M* | *1d8+1d4* | *1/2, Stun Location* |

*Additional Armour: None*

### Veteran Infantry

*Skills: Athletics 69%, Binding 52%, Boating 59%, Brawn 70%, Endurance 66%, Evade 66%, Locale 61%, Navigate 69%, Perception 64%, Stealth 71%, Survival 64%, Swim 59%, Track 66%, Trance 54%, Willpower 62%*

*Combat Style: Tua Skirmisher (Blowpipe, Bolas, Sling) 84%, Mua Infantry (Club, Spear and Shield) 79%, Unarmed (Bite, Claw, Tail) 74%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage & Traits | AP/HP/Special Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Club (Cuauhololli)* | *M* | *M* | *1d6+1d4* | *4/6, Bash, Stun Location* |
| *Spear (Trishula)* | *M* | *L* | *1d8+1+1d4* | *4/8 Impale* |
| *Shield (Chimali)* | *L* | *S* | *1d3+1d4* | *4/12, Bash, Stun Location, Ranged Parry, Blocks 4 Locations* |

*Additional Armour: +2 Armour Points to every Hit Location*

### Elite Champion

*Skills: Athletics 79%, Binding 62%, Boating 59%, Brawn 75%, Endurance 76%, Evade 66%, Locale 66%, Navigate 74%, Perception 74%, Stealth 76%, Survival 74%, Swim 69%, Track 76%, Trance 64%, Willpower 72%*

*Combat Style: Tua Skirmisher (Blowpipe, Bolas, Sling) 99%, Mua Infantry (Club, Spear and Shield) 94%, Eiki Elite (2H-Mace, 2H-Shark Toothed Sword and Strangle Cord) 89%, Unarmed (Bite, Claw, Tail) 84%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage & Traits | AP/HP/Special Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Stone Mace (Gada)* | *H* | *M* | *1d12+1d4* | *6/5, Bash, Stun Location* |
| *Great Sword (Maquahuitl)* | *L* | *L* | *2d6+4+1d4* | *4/12, Bleed* |
| *Strangle Cord (Ixcheltu)* | *S* | *VL* | *1d4+2+1d4* | *2/4, Bleed, Entangle* |

*Scaled Bone or Ivory +4 AP to every Hit Location*

### Tribal Hero

*Skills: Athletics 84%, Binding 67%, Boating 64%, Brawn 80%, Endurance 81%, Evade 71%, Locale 71%, Navigate 79%, Perception 79%, Stealth 81%, Survival 79%, Swim 74%, Track 81%, Trance 69%, Willpower 77%*

*Combat Style: Tua Skirmisher (Blowpipe, Bolas, Sling) 114%, Mua Infantry (Club, Spear and Shield) 109%, Eiki Elite (2H-Mace, 2H-Shark Toothed Sword and Strangle Cord) 104%, Unarmed (Bite, Claw, Tail) 99%*

The following kahuna possess a number of fetishes as part of their status. Note that every tribe has its own selection of friendly and neutral spirits, so where necessary substitute a spirit of correct type, utilising the proffered Characteristics and Intensity (all base skills are presented, even if a particular spirit may not possess them). Nature spirits should grant effects suitable to the worshipper's tribal totem.

### Assistant Shaman (Spirit Worshipper)

*Skills: Athletics 64%, Binding 69%, Boating 64%, Brawn 60%, Endurance 66%, Evade 66%, Locale 61%, Navigate 74%, Perception 64%, Stealth 71%, Survival 59%, Swim 44%, Track 51%, Trance 69%, Willpower 62%*

*Combat Style: Tua Skirmisher (Blowpipe, Bolas, Sling) 84%, Mua Infantry (Club, Spear and Shield) 79%, Unarmed (Bite, Claw, Tail) 74%*

*Fetishes (Type Intensity POW, Skills)*

*Nature Spirit (Trait) 1, INS 16, POW 9, CHA 16, Spectral Combat 75%, Willpower 68%*
*Nature Spirit (Boost) 2, INS 13, POW 13, CHA 13, Spectral Combat 76%, Willpower 76%*
*Shape-shifting Spirit 3, INS 9, POW 19, CHA 9, Spectral Combat 78%, Stealth 68%, Willpower 88%*
*Other Known Spirits: Ancestor Spirits*

### Shaman

*Skills: Athletics 59%, Binding 84%, Boating 69%, Brawn 55%, Endurance 61%, Evade 61%, Locale 71%, Navigate 79%, Perception 69%, Stealth 76%, Survival 64%, Swim 49%, Track 51%, Trance 84%, Willpower 72%*

*Combat Style: Tua Skirmisher (Blowpipe, Bolas, Sling) 79%, Mua Infantry (Club, Spear and Shield) 74%, Unarmed (Bite, Claw, Tail) 69%*

*Fetishes (Type Intensity POW, Skills)*

*Nature Spirit (Trait) 2 INS 15, POW 14, CHA 15 Spectral Combat 79%, Will 78%*
*Nature Spirit (Boost) 2 INS 10, POW 14, CHA 10 Spectral Combat 74%, Will 78%*
*Nature Spirit (Dominate) 3 INS 12, POW 22, CHA 12 Spectral Combat 84%, Will 94%*
*Shape-shifting Spirit 3 INS 13, POW 24, CHA 13 Spectral Combat 87%, Stealth 76%, Will 98%*
*1st Neutral Spirit 2 INT 9, POW 18, CHA 7 Discorp 77%, Spectral Combat 75%, Stealth 66%, Will 86%*
*2nd Neutral Spirit 3 INT 7, POW 19, CHA 6 Discorp 76%, Spectral Combat 75%, Stealth 63%, Will 88%*
*Other Known Spirits: Ancestor Spirits*
*Fetch Abilities: Autonomy, Binding, Domination, Spellcasting*

### High Shaman

*Skills: Athletics 54%, Binding 99%, Boating 74%, Brawn 50%, Endurance 56%, Evade 56%, Locale 81%, Navigate 84%, Perception 74%, Stealth 81%, Survival 69%, Swim 54%, Track 51%, Trance 99%, Willpower 82%*

*Combat Style: Tua Skirmisher (Blowpipe, Bolas, Sling) 74%, Mua Infantry (Club, Spear and Shield) 69%, Unarmed (Bite, Claw, Tail) 64%*

*Fetishes (Type Intensity POW, Skills)*

*Nature Spirit (Trait) 2 INS 13, POW 13, CHA 13 Spectral Combat 76%, Will 76%*

*Nature Spirit (Boost) 3 INS 14, POW 24, CHA 14 Spectral Combat 88%, Will 98%*

*Nature Spirit (Dominate) 4 INS 11, POW 26, CHA 11 Spectral Combat 87%, Will 102%*

*Shape-shifting Spirit 4 INS 13, POW 28, CHA 13 Spectral Combat 91%, Stealth 76%, Will 106%*

*1st Neutral Spirit 3 INT 9, POW 20, CHA 11 Discorp 79%, Spectral Combat 81%, Stealth 70%, Will 90%*

*2nd Neutral Spirit 3 INT 10, POW 23, CHA 11 Discorp 83%, Spectral Combat 84%, Stealth 71%, Will 96%*

*3rd Neutral Spirit 4 INT 10, POW 26, CHA 8 Discorp 86%, Spectral Combat 84%, Stealth 68%, Will 102%*

*Hostile Spirit 3 INT 11, POW 19, CHA 10 Discorp 80%, Spectral Combat 79%, Stealth 71%, Will 88%*

*Other Known Spirits: Ancestor Spirits, All Neutral Spirits, One Hostile Spirit*

*Fetch Abilities: Covert, Imperishable, Persistent, Possession, Sagacity*

### High Kahuna (Spirit Lord)

*Skills: Athletics 49%, Binding 114%, Boating 79%, Brawn 45%, Endurance 51%, Evade 51%, Locale 91%, Navigate 89%, Perception 79%, Stealth 86%, Survival 74%, Swim 59%, Track 51%, Trance 114%, Willpower 92%*

*Combat Style: Tua Skirmisher (Blowpipe, Bolas, Sling) 69%, Mua Infantry (Club, Spear and Shield) 64%, Unarmed (Bite, Claw, Tail) 59%*

*Fetishes (Type Intensity POW, Skills)*

*Nature Spirit (Trait) 2 INS 9, POW 13, CHA 9 Spectral Combat 72%, Will 76%*

*Nature Spirit (Boost) 4 INS 11, POW 30, CHA 11 Spectral Combat 91%, Will 110%*

*Nature Spirit (Dominate) 4 INS 10, POW 27, CHA 10 Spectral Combat 87%, Will 104%*

*Nature Spirit (Dominate) 5 INS 13, POW 32, CHA 13 Spectral Combat 95%, Will 114%*

*Shape-shifting Spirit 5 INS 17, POW 34, CHA 17 Spectral Combat 101%, Stealth 84%, Will 118%*

*1st Neutral Spirit 4 INT 12, POW 25, CHA 8 Discorporate 87%, Spectral Combat 83%, Stealth 70%, Will 100%*

*2nd Neutral Spirit 4 INT 8, POW 25, CHA 12 Discorporate 83%, Spectral Combat 87%, Stealth 70%, Will 100%*

*3rd Neutral Spirit 5 INT 11, POW 33, CHA 9 Discorporate 94%, Spectral Combat 92%, Stealth 70%, Will 116%*

*4th Neutral Spirit 5 INT 8, POW 31, CHA 11 Discorporate 89%, Spectral Combat 92%, Stealth 69%, Will 112%*

*1st Hostile Spirit 4 INT 10, POW 26, CHA 7 Discorporate 86%, Spectral Combat 83%, Stealth 67%, Will 102%*

*2nd Hostile Spirit 5 INT 9, POW 36, CHA 8 Discorporate 95%, Spectral Combat 94%, Stealth 67%, Will 122%*

*Other Known Spirits: Ancestor Spirits, All Neutral Spirits, Several Hostile Spirits*

*Fetch Abilities: Binding, Comprehension, Covert, Deadly, Elemental, Perception*

# Serpent People

High Folk are easier to model due to their highly stratified culture where a career is followed for life. Once enrolled in the Brotherhood to which they are given as a child, no serpentman may change the path handed to them.

The following careers are based on an average High Folk Breeder. Most are professionals at a proficient level of competence. To quickly create superior experts and masters simply add +20% or +40% respectively to their key career skills.

| Characteristics | | Attributes | 1d20 | Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR: 13 | Action Points | 3 | 1–3 | Tail | 1/5 |
| CON: 13 | Damage Modifier | +1d2 | 4–5 | Right Leg | 1/6 |
| SIZ: 16 | Magic Points | 11 | 6–7 | Left Leg | 1/6 |
| DEX: 13 | Movement | 6m Walking | 8–10 | Abdomen | 1/7 |
| INT: 13 | Strike Rank | 13 | 11–14 | Chest | 1/8 |
| POW: 11 | Armour | Soft Scales | 15–16 | Right Arm | 1/5 |
| CHA: 11 | | | 17–18 | Left Arm | 1/5 |
| | | | 19–20 | Head | 1/6 |

**Abilities:** *Cold Blooded, Earth Sense, Venomous*

**Magic:** *None*

### Serpentman Agent

*Skills: Athletics: 61%, Boating: 26%, Brawn: 49%, Conceal: 64%, Culture (Savages or Colonists): 56%, Customs: 76%, Dance: 44%, Deceit: 69%, Disguise: 67%, Endurance: 46%, Evade: 61%, First Aid: 36%, Influence: 42%, Insight: 69%, Language (Low Tongue or Human): 54%, Locale: 61%, Lore (Cryptography): 56%, Native Tongue: 84%, Perception: 69%, Ride: 24%, Sing: 42%, Stealth: 66%, Streetwise: 57%, Swim: 26%, Unarmed: 61%, Willpower: 57%*

*Combat Style: Brotherhood of the Noiseless Whisper (Ixcheltu, Katar, Urumi – Assassination trait): 66%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage & Traits | AP/HP/Special Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Ixcheltu* | *S* | *VL* | *1d4+2+1d2* | *2/4, Bleed* |
| *Katar* | *S* | *S* | *1d4+2+1d2* | *4/8, Bleed, Impale* |
| *Urumi* | *M* | *M* | *1d8+1d2* | *2/4, Bleed* |

*Additional Armour: None*

### Serpentman Beast Handler

*Skills: Athletics: 46%, Boating: 31%, Brawn: 29%, Conceal: 44%, Craft (Animal Husbandry): 56%, Customs: 66%, Dance: 44%, Deceit: 59%, Endurance: 66%, Evade: 61%, First Aid: 56%, Influence: 62%, Insight: 59%, Locale: 66%, Lore (Giant Vultures): 66%, Native Tongue: 84%, Perception: 59%, Ride (Giant Vultures): 64%, Sing: 42%, Stealth: 61%, Swim: 36%, Teach (Giant Vultures): 64%, Unarmed: 56%, Willpower: 62%*

*Combat Style: Brotherhood of the Carrion Scavenger (Taiaha, Lasso, Bolas – Mancatcher trait): 61%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage & Traits | AP/HP/Special Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Taiaha* | *M* | *M* | *1d8+1d2* | *4/10, Bash, Impale, Stun Location* |
| *Lassso* | *-* | *VL* | *-* | *2/4, Entangle* |
| *Bolas* | *-* | *-* | *1d4* | *2/2, Entangle, Stun Location* |

*Additional Armour: Quilted +2 AP to every Hit Location worn when training vultures*

### Serpentman Courtesan

*Skills: Art (Flower Arranging): 62%, Athletics: 46%, Boating: 26%, Brawn: 29%, Conceal: 44%, Courtesy: 69%, Customs: 86%, Dance: 64%, Deceit: 64%, Endurance: 46%, Evade: 61%, First Aid: 26%, Gambling: 54%, Influence: 67%, Insight: 64%, Locale: 61%, Musicianship: 59%, Native Tongue: 84%, Perception: 64%, Ride: 24%, Seduction: 64%, Sing: 62%, Stealth: 61%, Swim: 26%, Unarmed: 51%, Willpower: 57%*

*Combat Style: Brotherhood of the Serpentine Grace (Mubuchae, Cakera, Ixcheltu, Maduvu – Hidden Weapons Trait): 51%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage & Traits | AP/HP/Special Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Mubuchae* | *S* | *S* | *1d2+1d2* | *4/4, Bleed, Ranged Parry, Blocks 2 Locations* |
| *Cakera* | *-* | *-* | *1d6+1d2* | *6/4, Bleed* |
| *Ixcheltu* | *S* | *S* | *1d4+1d2* | *2/4, Bleed. Entangle* |
| *Maduvu* | *S* | *S* | *1d4+1+1d2* | *2/4 Impale, Inject Venom* |

*Additional Armour: None*

### Serpentman Crafter

*Skills: Art (Item Decoration): 66%, Athletics: 46%, Boating: 26%, Brawn: 59%, Commerce: 59%, Conceal: 44%, Courtesy: 64%, Craft (Primary): 66%, Craft (Secondary): 61%, Customs: 81%, Dance: 44%, Deceit: 59%, Endurance: 46%, Evade: 61%, First Aid: 26%, Influence: 52%, Insight: 59%, Locale: 61%, Native Tongue: 84%, Perception: 64%, Ride: 24%, Sing: 42%, Stealth: 61%, Swim: 26%, Unarmed: 46%, Willpower: 62%*

*Combat Style: None*

### Serpentman Entertainer

*Skills: Acrobatics: 61%, Acting: 57%, Athletics: 66%, Boating: 26%, Brawn: 59%, Conceal: 44%, Customs: 81%, Dance: 69%, Deceit: 64%, Endurance: 56%, Evade: 61%, First Aid: 26%, Influence: 57%, Insight: 64%, Locale: 61%, Musicianship: 64%, Native Tongue: 84%, Oratory: 62%, Perception: 59%, Ride: 24%, Sing: 67%, Stealth: 61%, Swim: 26%, Unarmed: 46%, Willpower: 57%*

*Combat Style: None*

### Serpentman Hunter

*Skills: Athletics: 61%, Boating: 36%, Brawn: 49%, Conceal: 54%, Craft (Hunting Traps): 56%, Customs: 71%, Dance: 44%, Deceit: 59%, Endurance: 61%, Evade: 61%, First Aid: 26%, Influence: 42%, Insight: 59%, Language (Low Tongue): 54%, Locale: 71%, Native Tongue: 84%, Perception: 69%, Ride (Small Dinosaur): 64%, Sing: 42%, Stealth: 66%, Survival: 59%, Swim: 46%, Track: 64%, Unarmed: 56%, Willpower: 52%*

*Combat Style: Brotherhood of the Relentless Pursuit (Bolas, Javelin, Tepoztopilli – Skirmishing trait): 66%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage & Traits | AP/HP/Special Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Tepoztopilli* | *L* | *VL* | *1d10+2+1d2* | *4/10, Bleed, Impale* |
| *Bolas* | *-* | *-* | *1d4* | *2/2, Entangle, Stun Location* |
| *Javelin* | *-* | *-* | *1d8+1+1d2* | *4/8, Impale* |

*Additional Armour: Linothorax +3 AP to every Hit Location worn when hunting*

### Serpentman Official

*Skills: Athletics: 46%, Boating: 26%, Brawn: 34%, Bureaucracy: 66%, Commerce: 49%, Conceal: 44%, Courtesy: 64%, Customs: 81%, Dance: 44%, Deceit: 69%, Endurance: 46%, Evade: 61%, First Aid: 26%, Influence: 67%, Insight: 64%, Locale: 61%, Lore (History): 61%, Native Tongue: 84%, Oratory: 62%, Perception: 64%, Ride: 24%, Sing: 42%, Stealth: 61%, Swim: 26%, Unarmed: 51%, Willpower: 67%*

*Combat Style: None*

### Serpentman Physician

*Skills: Art (Vivisection or Taxidermy): 59%, Athletics: 51%, Boating: 26%, Brawn: 29%, Conceal: 54%, Courtesy: 64%, Craft (Medicine): 56%, Customs: 81%, Dance: 54%, Deceit: 59%, Endurance: 46%, Evade: 61%, First Aid: 71%, Healing: 64%, Influence: 57%, Insight: 59%, Locale: 66%, Native Tongue: 84%, Perception: 59%, Ride: 24%, Sing: 52%, Stealth: 61%, Swim: 26%, Unarmed: 46%, Willpower: 62%*

*Combat Style: None*

### Serpentman Scout

*Skills: Athletics: 71%, Boating: 66%, Brawn: 49%, Conceal: 64%, Customs: 71%, Dance: 44%, Deceit: 59%, Endurance: 66%, Evade: 71%, First Aid: 51%, Influence: 42%, Insight: 54%, Language (Low Tongue): 64%, Locale: 71%, Native Tongue: 79%, Perception: 69%, Ride (Giant Vulture): 69%, Sing: 42%, Stealth: 61%, Survival: 69%, Swim: 64%, Track: 54%, Unarmed: 61%, Willpower: 52%*

*Combat Style: Brotherhood of the Unsleeping Eye (Bagh Nakh, Ixcheltu, Cakera, Blowgun – Assassination trait): 66%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage & Traits | AP/HP/Special Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bagh Nakh* | *-* | *-* | *1d6+1d2* | *6/6, Bleed* |
| *Ixcheltu* | *S* | *S* | *1d4+1d2* | *2/4, Bleed. Entangle* |
| *Cakera* | *-* | *-* | *1d6+1d2* | *6/4, Bleed* |
| *Blowpipe* | *-* | *-* | *Poisom* | *1/4. Inject Venom* |

*Additional Armour: Linothorax +3 AP to every Hit Location worn when scouting*

### Serpentman Warrior

*Skills: Athletics: 61%, Boating: 56%, Brawn: 59%, Conceal: 49%, Customs: 71%, Dance: 54%, Deceit: 49%, Endurance: 71%, Evade: 61%, First Aid: 56%, Influence: 47%, Insight: 49%, Language (Low Tongue): 54%, Locale: 61%, Lore (Tactics): 56%, Native Tongue: 79%, Perception: 64%, Ride (Giant Vulture or Small Dinosaur): 59%, Sing: 57%, Stealth: 56%, Survival: 49%, Swim: 49%, Unarmed: 66%, Willpower: 57%*

*Combat Style: Brotherhood of the Obsidian Claw (Trishula, Tamking, Maquahuitl, Katar – Mounted Combat trait): 66%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage & Traits | AP/HP/Special Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Maquahuitl* | *L* | *L* | *2d6+4+1d2* | *4/12, Bleed* |
| *Katar* | *S* | *S* | *1d4+1d2* | *6/6, Bleed.* |
| *Trishula* | *M* | *L* | *1d8+1+1d2* | *4/8, Impale* |
| *Tamking* | *M* | *M* | *1d3+1d2* | *3/9, Bash, Ranged Parry, Blocks 3 Locations* |

*Additional Armour: Monster Hide Half Plate +5 AP to every Hit Locations*

# The Gods That Walk

Long ago the gods of Monster Island took corporeal form and descended to the world to battle for supremacy. Although a handful stayed aloof from the great cataclysm, most became trapped in their immortal shells as the continent shattered, mere shadows of what they once were.

This appendix is devoted to these unique monsters of overwhelming power. These go beyond the usual monsters and dinosaurs which arrive via the Smoking Mirrors, indeed during the rare times the gods awaken from their enforced slumber, they often battle the thunder lizards for sport. The deities are intended to be beasts of insurmountable power that exist as forces of nature, not necessarily encounters for adventurers to defeat in heroic combat.

Now this need not imply that they cannot be defeated through the course of a story or quest, it merely illustrates just how high the scale of power can be tipped when the status quo of the island is unbalanced and the gods start to awaken. With enough coordination the citizens of Port Grimsand might be able to drive off one of these titanic monsters, but it would be an epic undertaking. Another method would be to awaken a more sympathetic deity to fight against the original threat – in which case the players could run the gods themselves in direct combat!

All of the gods share the same basic size and characteristics, each one reaching approximately ten to fifteen metres in height, length or breadth – depending on its morphology – but harbouring their own specific powers based upon the form within which they are trapped. Even without these, their default abilities and stupendous resilience already make them truly terrifying...

In addition to great size and strength, the gods are also immune to the Bleed, Bypass Armour, Press Advantage

| Characteristics | | Attributes |
|---|---|---|
| STR: 40 | Action Points | 2 |
| CON: 35 | Damage Modifier | +2d10 |
| SIZ: 70 | Magic Points | 75 |
| DEX: 7 | Movement | 8m |
| INS: 15 | Strike Rank | 11 |
| POW: 75 | Armour | Near impenetrable scales, chitin, fur, or skin |

**Common Abilities:** *Amphibious, Area Attack, Disease Immunity, Formidable Natural Weapons, Immunity (Various special effects), Magic Sense, Night Sight, Poison Immunity, Terrifying*

**Skills:** *Athletics 50%, Binding 200%, Brawn 130%, Endurance 150%, Perception 50%, Stealth 100%, Willpower 175%; and either Evade, Fly or Swim at 50%*

**Combat Style:** *Wrath of the Gods 100%*

| Weapon | Size/Force | Reach | Damage & Traits | AP/HP/Special Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Primary Attack* | *C* | *VL* | *2d8+2d10* | *As for Location* |
| *Secondary Attack* | *C* | *L* | *2d6+2d10* | *As for Location* |

and Sunder special effects. Their physical manifestations have no weak spots, preventing them from being unduly hindered by massed volleys of missiles, unless the weapons are able to inflict more damage than the 15 Armour Points of their divine flesh, such as a siege engine for example. In such cases they become vulnerable to these particular special effects once again.

If by some chance the deity is given an incapacitating or nominally fatal wound they invariably return back to their resting place, seeming to disappear by falling down a cenote, are buried by collapsing ruins, or in some similarly dramatic manner. Being immortal they do not actually die, but merely sleep, slowly regenerating any damage inflicted on their physical form.

Unbeknownst to anyone save the High Shamans, the only weakness each deity possesses is that it must expend a single Magic Point each hour it spends awake and active. After a little more than three days of rampaging, it is forced to find a place to hide and slowly recuperate its strength – assuming of course the tribe which normally keeps it bound does not feed it their own magical strength.

## Anguru

Anguru takes the form of a colossal horned and spiky armadillo. It generally crushes insignificant foes by curling into a ball and rolling over them using the Trample trait. Against creatures nearer its own size, it uses its nose horn as a primary attack, and its rather nasty claws as a secondary. Due to its low slung posture, most of its body is within reach of human sized combatants. Its greatest danger as far as the natives are concerned is when it burrows up from wherever it was last sleeping, spelling doom for any village which might have accidentally been built above it.

Additional Abilities: Burrower, Leaper, Trample

| 1d20 | Hit Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|
| 1–2 | Tail | 15/21 |
| 3–4 | Right Hind Leg | 15/20 |
| 5–6 | Left Hind Leg | 15/20 |
| 7–10 | Hindquarters | 15/22 |
| 11–14 | Forequarters | 15/23 |
| 15–16 | Right Fore Leg | 15/20 |
| 17–18 | Left Fore Leg | 15/20 |
| 19–20 | Head | 15/21 |

## Gabaru

Gabaru is a titanic moth which resides somewhere on the island volcano of Ruaumoko. The interesting aspect of Gabaru is that it can reincarnate itself into a pre-laid egg which is always left behind before flying to the mainland. The primary mode of attack is to ram into opponents, utilising its Diving Strike to reduce the damage reduction of their parry (if also a monster of the same scale). The secondary attack involves hovering whilst its wings blow a typhoon of wind and debris against foes. As a last ditch effort, Gabaru may shed its wing scales (preventing further flight) which acts as a cloud of Black Lotus Dust (page 168) upon everything within an area several hundred metres across.

Additional Abilities: Diving Strike, Flying, Venomous

| 1d20 | Hit Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|
| 1–2 | Right Legs | 15/20 |
| 3–4 | Left Legs | 15/20 |
| 5–7 | Abdomen | 15/23 |
| 8–10 | Thorax | 15/22 |
| 11–12 | Upper Right Wing | 15/21 |
| 13–14 | Upper Left Wing | 15/21 |
| 15–16 | Lower Right Wing | 15/20 |
| 17–18 | Lower Left Wing | 15/20 |
| 19–20 | Head | 15/21 |

## Gamaru

Gamaru the tortoise is another gigantic beast with tremendous clawed flippers and a tusk enhanced beak. It usually swallows whole smaller foes, but can raise itself onto its back legs to brawl with enemies its own size. The primary attack is it's clawed legs, with the engulfing beak being the secondary. In pressing circumstances, Gamaru can release a cloud of boiling steam (as per the Breathe Flame ability) which inflicts harm equal to its Damage Bonus.

Additional Abilities: Breathe Steam, Engulfing, Swimmer

| 1d20 | Hit Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|
| 1–2 | Tail | 15/20 |
| 3–4 | Right Rear Leg | 15/20 |
| 5–6 | Left Rear Leg | 15/20 |
| 7–9 | Lower Plastron | 15/22 |
| 10–12 | Upper Plastron | 15/23 |
| 13–15 | Right Fore Leg | 15/21 |
| 16–18 | Left Fore Leg | 15/21 |
| 19–20 | Head | 15/21 |

## Ghidoru

Ghidoru is a three headed hydra of gargantuan scale, whose heads breathe out bursts of actinic red lightning. If this were not bad enough, it also possesses wings with which it clumsily flies across the island, making it difficult to assault until it lands. If all three heads spit lightning at the same target, Ghidoru inflicts damage equal to its Damage Modifier, each head contributing one third of the total; but if one or two heads are distracted or aimed at a different target, then the damage roll is divided accordingly. Its primary physical attack are its mouths, whilst the secondary is its sweeping tail.

Additional Abilities: Breathe Lightning, Flying, Multi-headed

| 1d20 | Hit Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|
| 1–2 | Tail | 15/21 |
| 3–4 | Right Leg | 15/21 |
| 5–7 | Left Leg | 15/21 |
| 8–10 | Body | 15/23 |
| 11–12 | Right Wing | 15/20 |
| 13–14 | Left Wing | 15/20 |
| 15–16 | Right Head | 15/20 |
| 17–18 | Middle Head | 15/20 |
| 19–20 | Left Head | 15/20 |

## Gyaosu

A flying bat of monstrous size and appearance, Gyaosu possesses rather more bizarre warping than usually displayed by the other gods; its hind parts ending in a mass of tentacles. These are used as its primary attack when grounded, its bite being secondary. When aloft however, Gyaosu uses its sonic scream (treat as per Breathe Fire) which inflicts damage equal to its Damage Modifier, even to solid objects made from ceramics and obsidian.

Additional Abilities: Echolocation, Flying, Sonic Scream

| 1d20 | Hit Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|
| 1–2 | Tail Tentacle Mass | 15/20 |
| 3–4 | Right Tentacle Leg | 15/20 |
| 5–6 | Left Tentacle Leg | 15/20 |
| 7–9 | Abdomen | 15/21 |
| 10–12 | Chest | 15/22 |
| 13–15 | Right Wing | 15/23 |
| 16–18 | Left Wing | 15/23 |
| 19–20 | Head | 15/21 |

## Kamacuru

An immense mantis with huge golden compound eyes, Kamacuru uses its serrated forelimbs as its primary form of attack, leaping from hiding to ambush its foes. Its secondary attack is biting with the oversized mandibles it sports. Despite its scale Kamacuru can fade against any background, its chitin able to change colour.

Additional Abilities: Camouflaged, Flying, Leaper

| 1d20 | Hit Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|
| 1–2 | Right Legs | 15/20 |
| 3–4 | Left Legs | 15/20 |
| 5–8 | Thorax | 15/23 |
| 9–10 | Right Wing | 15/20 |
| 11–12 | Left Wing | 15/20 |
| 13–15 | Right Forelimb | 15/22 |
| 16–18 | Left Forelimb | 15/22 |
| 19–20 | Head | 15/21 |

## Kangu

A giant two-headed white ape of savage temperament, its muscular body sporting shaggy fur and overlong nails. Of all the deities, the ape god delights most in mindless destruction, tearing up trees or boulders to throw at opponents. Kangu uses its fists as its primary attack, rending apart those who succumb to its grapples. Despite possessing fearsome fangs, the bite is withheld for secondary attack.

Additional Abilities: Grappler, Leaper, Multi-headed

| 1d20 | Hit Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|
| 1–2 | Right Leg | 15/20 |
| 3–4 | Left Leg | 15/20 |
| 5–6 | Abdomen | 15/21 |
| 7–10 | Chest | 15/23 |
| 11–13 | Right Arm | 15/22 |
| 14–16 | Left Arm | 15/22 |
| 17–18 | Right Head | 15/21 |
| 19–20 | Left Head | 15/21 |

## Kumongu

The colossal lord of spiders and spider-kind, Kumongu takes the form of a hairy tarantula with an innocuously beautiful gold and black patterning. It has all the normal features of arachnids, being able to scale any surface (despite its tremendous bulk), the ability to wrap foes in webbing, and a venom so potent it can even kill dinosaurs (Injected, Potency 100, Onset 1d3 Rounds, Conditions – Agony and Death). The primary attack of Kumongu is its legs which it uses to crush smaller foes to the ground, with its mandibles acting as a follow up attack on larger opponents. Its finger-thick silk threads are treated as described under Giant Spiders (see RuneQuest page 388).

Additional Abilities: Adhering, Venomous, Webbing

| 1d20 | Hit Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|
| 1–2 | Right Rear Leg | 15/21 |
| 3–4 | Left Rear Leg | 15/21 |
| 5–6 | Right Mid Leg | 15/21 |
| 7–8 | Left Mid Leg | 15/21 |
| 9–12 | Body | 15/23 |
| 13–14 | Right Fore Leg | 15/21 |
| 15–16 | Left Fore Leg | 15/21 |
| 17–18 | Right Front Leg | 15/21 |
| 19–20 | Left Front Leg | 15/21 |

## Mandahu

A huge serpentine python, Mandahu actually measures twice the length of its brethren deities due to its serpentine morphology. Despite being the god of ophidian creatures, Mandahu lacks any venomous bite, using its tremendous constriction as its primary attack to crush foes instead. Smaller irritants are simply swallowed whole. Although a fearsome monster to behold, the iridescent scales of the snake god shimmer from vibrant purple to jet black, depending on the ambient light.

Additional Abilities: Adhering (vertical surfaces only), Engulfing, Grappler

| 1d20 | Hit Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|
| 1–3 | Tail Tip | 15/21 |
| 4–5 | Mid End-length | 15/21 |
| 6–7 | Fore End-length | 15/21 |
| 8–9 | Rear Mid-length | 15/22 |
| 10–12 | Mid Mid-length | 15/22 |
| 13–14 | Fore Mid-length | 15/22 |
| 15–16 | Rear Fore-length | 15/21 |
| 17–18 | Mid Fore-length | 15/21 |
| 19–20 | Head | 15/21 |

## Oodaku

Oodaku is a titanic octopus who normally rests in the seas but can clamber from the waves when called, the god's multiple arms not only allowing it to scale the island's sheer cliffs, but making it dangerous to grapple too. The great octopus is particularly cunning when disguising itself, its skin able to take on the colour and shape of objects about it. Its tentacles are its primary attack, with the beak acting as secondary.

Additional Abilities: Camouflaged, Grappler, Swimmer

| 1d20 | Hit Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|
| 1–4 | Body | 15/21 |
| 5–6 | Tentacle 1 | 15/21 |
| 7–8 | Tentacle 2 | 15/21 |
| 9–10 | Tentacle 3 | 15/22 |
| 11–12 | Tentacle 4 | 15/22 |
| 13–14 | Tentacle 5 | 15/22 |
| 15–16 | Tentacle 6 | 15/21 |
| 17–18 | Tentacle 7 | 15/21 |
| 19–20 | Tentacle 8 | 15/21 |

## Varanru

The true king of the lizards upon the island, Varanru takes the form of a gargantuan bipedal reptile, possessing spiky plates and horns along the length of its spine. Whilst the back legs and tail are enormously thick, the forearms are rather feeble in proportion. The terrifying screech of Varanru is legendary as is its ability to breathe out an electric blue fire that causes the jungle to sicken where it does not immediately burn down. These flames inflict harm equal to its Damage Bonus. However, Varanru prefers to stomp and bite foes, these being its primary and secondary attacks respectively.

Additional Abilities: Breathe Fire, Engulfing, Trample

| 1d20 | Hit Location | AP/HP |
|---|---|---|
| 1–2 | Tail | 15/21 |
| 3–5 | Right Leg | 15/22 |
| 6–8 | Left Leg | 15/22 |
| 9–11 | Abdomen | 15/23 |
| 12–14 | Chest | 15/22 |
| 15–16 | Right Arm | 15/20 |
| 17–18 | Left Arm | 15/20 |
| 19–20 | Head | 15/21 |

# INDEX


## A

Abjure, 146
Abjurements of Ybion, School of, 142
Adaro, 190
Adhere Article, 146
Affiliations, Tribal, 25
Agartha, 25, 30, 34, 42, 68, 110, 220
Ageing, Miracle, 162
Aggrandise, Gift, 152
Ahuizotl, 191
Ajastan's Cartography, 61, 62
Akakor, 25, 30, 42, 49-56, 117, 220, 279
Akpalix, 168
Alamimo Swiftspear, 47
Alan (Moon Bats), 191
Alicanto, 192
Allosaurus, 193
Altar of Burning Light, 86
Amphibious, 189
Amphitheatre, Iqari, 93
Anak-Krakatau, Curses of, 84
Anak-Krakatau, Heads of, 80-85
Anguri, 21, 25, 109-110, 138,
Anguru, 289
Animate, 146
Animism, 132
Animus Glass, 66
Ankylosaurus, 194
Ant Lion, Giant, 195
Antagonistic Asphyxiation, 146
Anthropocentric, 116
Ape, Carnivorous, 196
Appendices, 282-291
Apprehend (Xeno-Perception), 146
Area Attack, 189
Arena of Co-Operative Conflict, 52
Armageddon, 17
Armour (Heat Stroke), 12
Arouse Daemon, 146
Arumco (Hellfrog), 196-197
Assassin Conch, 198
Aswang, 199
Atlachanacha, 41, 161
Atmospheric Magic, 156
Attract, 146
Auditorium, 100
Avenue of Delights, 50

## B

Babalu Eggs, 183
Bagh Nakh, 176
Bakunawa, 200
Banish, 146
Baths of Bashuun, The, 110
Bats, 218
Batter Aside, 41
Battle Armour, Iqari, 94
Battle Site, The, 67
Battle Slayer, 185
Beach and Lower Quarter, 57-58
Beaches, 9
Beagle, The, 7
Beast Stampede, 120
Beast-Back Lancer, 41
Bidentis, 176
Big Cat Skins, 166
Black Lotus, 168
Black Lotus Dust, 167
Blood Weep, 83, 172
Bone Melt, 168
Bone Wraith, 201
Brazier of Heavenly Houris, 185
Bronze Bindings of Khut-Nar, School of, 142
Brotherhood Guardian, 20-21
Brotherhood Guild Houses, 51
Brotherhood Necropolises, 53
Brotherhoods of Akakor, .
Bubbling Breath, 172
Bubbling Mudpit, 120
Bultungin (Werehyenas), 202
Bunyip, 203
Burial Chamber, 99
Bursting Pustules, 172
Butterfly Wings, 166
Byangoma, 203-204
Bypass Armour, 146

## C

Cache Might, 146
Cakera, 176
Campaigns, 113-127
Cannibal Spirit (Wendigo), 204
Cannibalism, 28
Canopy, 12
Captain Cook, 7
Carafe of Infinite Drinks, 183
Cardinal Directions, 10
Castback, 146
Castigate Upstart, 146
Casting Miscarriage Table, 130
Casting Time Difficulty, 129

Catacombs, 105
Causeway of the Nightmarchers, 65-69
Cautious Fighter, 41
Cave Shrines, 70
Caverns of Agartha, The, 110
Celeritous Progression, 146
Cenote, Heated, 83
Censer of Insect Repulsion, 184
Centipede, Giant, 205
Change Reality, Gift, 152
Chastising Doom, 146
Chimalli, 176
Chimes of Warning, 184
Citrus Fruits, 166
City of Zerzura, The, 110
City Walls, Akakor, 49-50
Civilian Cohort, 20-21, 40
Civilisation, Rise and Fall of, 18
Clam, Giant, 206
Cliff Face Dancers, 70-71
Cliffs, 9
Cloud Forest, 10, 14
Coastline, 9, 12
Cob Hobbler, 206-208
Cockroach, Giant, 209
Cocoa Beans, 166
College Structure (Sorcery), 140
Colonists, 20, 38-41, 46, 48-49, 54-55, 58-59, 62-63, 67-68, 70, 76, 80, 85, 99, 104, 110, 113-116, 118, 121-124, 128-129, 131, 154-175, 180, 187, 232, 286
Combat Style Traits, New, 41
Combustible Tree Sap, 166
Conjure Possession, 146
Construct, 189
Construction Lumber, 166
Consuming Annihilation, 146
Copper 166
Corridor of Doom, 97
Crabs, 218
Creature Abilities, New, 189
Cryptical Weavings of Xeeth, School of, 142
Crystal Fetishes, 70
Cuauhololli, 176
Cultists of Yhounkehd, 107
Cultures, 20-41, 46, 49, 102, 113, 116, 240, 269
Cultures and History, 17-41

# D

Daichui, 177
Damage Enhancement, 146
Damage Resistance, 146
Dancing and Singing, 31
Dancing Court, 44
Dangerous Plant, 120-121
Daredevil Matador, 41
Darwin, Charles, 7
Dashatan, 40, 58, 155
Dashatan, Cult of, 155
Dead Bodies, 120-121
Deathdrip Flowers, 209
Dedicate Might, 146
Defensive Minded, 41
Defy Eidolon, 67, 146
Deinonychus, 210
Delusion, 146
Desperate Exile, 120-121
Diabolical Staffs, 185
Dictates of Tzarkand, School of, 142
Dimensional Portal, Gift, 152
Diminish, 146
Dinosaur Bones and Skin, 166
Discern (Possession, Psychology or Phenomenon), 146
Disciplines, Magical, 128
Diseases, 172
Divination, Gift, 152
Doleful Chime, Miracle, 162
Dominate, 146
Doom, Miracle, 162
Dour Grotto, The, 58, 61
Dowager Roundhouses, 44
Doyal, Artur, 64
Drakk Bark, 167
Draw, 146
Dream Seizure, 172
Dreaming God, 120
Drummers, Savages, 24-25, 43, 132, 186
Drumming Heights, 43
Dudreyas, 211
Dune Haunter, 212
Dwyrulas' Flower, 186
Dziwozoana (Mamuna), 213

# E

Eagle, Giant, 214
Earth Quellers, 71
Earthshaker's Drums, 186
Ebon Disk, 186
Ebon Words of Zaruthra, School of, 143
Ecology, 11-12
Eel, Giant, 215
Eel, Lightning, 216
Egressing Gateway, 146
Eidolonosis, 172
Eight Jab Doom, 20-21, 69, 145, 177
Eiki Elite, 20-21, 27, 117, 180, 284,
Eku, 177
Elevation, Monster Island (Diagram), 9
Enchant, 146
Enchanted Artefacts, 182-187
Encounters, 118-127
Endeavour, The, 7
Enhance, 146
Enkindle Carrion, 146
Enlarge, 146
Ensconce Vitality, 146
Enslave, 146
Ensymbolise, Miracle, 163
Escorted Sorcerer, 120-121
Ettin, 217
Etzlak, 55
Eugenic Horrors, 151
Evoke, 146
Ewelani Headbasher, 46
Exacerbate Injury, 146
Exotic Flowers, 166
Eye Canker, 172
Eye of Terror, 186
Eyries, Iqari, 93

# F

Falls of the Diseased Ones, The, 110
False Sarcophagus, 99
False Tomb, 96
Fan of Dismissal, 184
Fane of the Black God, 71-73
Fatigue Drain, 189
Fauna and Flora, 188-281
Fauna Encounters, 124-127
Fawset, Persval, 64
Feathered Cloak of Protection, 184
Feathered Skin, 186
Febrilis, 217
Fetish Hoarding, 134
Fetishes, 183
Fetter Chattel, 146
Finger Needles, 177
Fire Scale, 172
Fishermen's Dock, 61
Flocks, Hordes, Packs and Shoals, 218
Flora, 189
Flora and Fauna, 188-281
Flora Encounters, 127
Flower Bearing, 35
Flying Worms, 220
Foodstuffs, 14, 18, 188
Forbear Violation, 146
Foreboding, Miracle, 163
Foreign and Forgotten Gods, 154
Foreswear Process, 146
Forgotten Necropolis, 120-121
Formal Gardens, 61
Fornicarium, The, 110
Furniture Hardwood, 166

# G

Gabari, 21, 25, 111, 138
Gabari, Cult of, 138
Gabaru, 289
Gada, 177
Gamari, 21, 25, 42-48, 63, 68, 117, 137-138
Gamari, Cult of, 138
Gamaru, 289
Game Balance, 114
Gateways, dimensional, 103
Geology and Topography, 8
Geolok, 40, 155-156
Geolok, Cult of, 155
Geomantic Nodes, 131
Geriatricide, 28
Gestalt Circlets, 186
Ghidori, 21, 25, 71, 110, 117, 138, 169, 213
Ghidori, Cult of, 138
Ghidoru, 290
Ghouls, 72, 152
Giant Tikis, The, 111
Gibberer (Jumbee), 220-221
Gifts, New, 152-153
Glacial Peaks, 10, 16
Global Location of Monster Island, 11
Glorantha, 6
Glyphorium, 107
Gods, Fall of, 18
Gods That Walk, 288-296
Gold Dust, 166
Gold Mine, Accursed, 86
Golden Bromeliad Nectar, 167
Golden Idol, 88
Gong, The, 111
Gorgon, 90
Governor's Residence, 63
Great Kom, 73
Green Eye of the Black God, 73
Grey Jasmine, 168
Greystone, Lord, 38, 57, 63, 68, 71, 85, 108, 117, 157, 161
Greystone's Bluff, 57
Grimoire, Miracle, 163
Gums, 14
Gyaosi, 21, 25, 73, 85, 110, 138, 175
Gyaosi, Cult of, 138
Gyaosu, 290

# H

Haaheo Highleaper, 47
Handmaidens, Mummified, 101
Hanging Village, 73-76
Haondor's Retribution, 186
Hardwoods, 14, 62, 185
Harojama's Tower, 77-80
Haste, 146
Haunted Tiki, 120-121
Head Shrinking Ritual, The, 29
Head Taking, 28
Headdress of Subservience, 184
Healing, 115
Heartless Houri Tavern, The, 61
Heat Stroke and Armour, 12
Helpless Child, 120-121
Heterodontosaurus, 221
Hetwoman's Roundhouse, 45
Hide Life, 146
High Folk, 19, 20-25, 30-36, 42, 46, 48-56, 65-67, 71, 73, 76, 80, 85, 87, 89-95, 101, 104, 110, 114, 117-119, 121-124, 129, 131, 139-151, 154, 156, 167, 169-170, 174-176, 180, 184, 191, 199, 216, 220, 247, 249, 265, 274, 279, 281, 285
High Mountains, 10, 15

Hina, The Moon Bowl, 8, 12
Hinder, 146
Hired Thugs, 120-121
History and Cultures, 17-41
Hitotsume-Kozo, 222
Holdfast, 146
Hoodin, Harrick, 64
Horde, Gift, 152
Hospice, 61, 62
House of Blades, The, 61-62
House of Silver, The, 61-62
Howling Pass, The, 111
Huakaipoor, 65-67, 139, 222
Hummingbird Feathers, 166
Hunting Party, 120-121
Hydra, Ophidian, 223
Hysteria, Miracle, 163

## I

Ibysarth Gum, 166
Ilioth, 40, 59, 64, 156-158
Ilioth, Cult of, 156
Immure Essence, 146
Impose Injury, 146
Impress Configuration, 146
Imprison, 146
Impromptu Weapons, 41
Inferal Brain Library, 184
Inflate Stature, 146
Inhibit Fiends, 146
Inscribe Dominion, 146
Insightful Presentment, 146
Interment, Ritual, 37
Introduction, 5-7
Intuition, 146
Iqari, 91-95
Iqari Feathers, 166
Iron Tools and Weapons, 187
Island, The, 8-16
Isnashi, 225
Items, 166
Items and Substances, 165-187
Ivory Impaler, 226
Ivrist, Gorge, 64
Ivy, Succubus, 227
Ixcheltu, 177
Ixcheltu of Purging, 186

## J

Jadestone, 53, 88, 93, 99, 102-104, 106-107, 143, 152, 177, 182
Jaguars, War, 67
Jellyfish, 218
Jellyfish, Giant, 228
Jempulex (Jewel Wasp), 229
Joh Jung, 48
Jubala Bark, 167
Juncture, Gift, 153
Jungle, 10, 12
Jungle Fever, 172
Jungle, Travelling In, 13
Jystozis Dust, 168

## K

Kahekili Thunderfoot, 47
Kahuna's Bane, 168
Kalal, 55
Kamacuri, 21, 25, 76, 89, 91, 110, 138
Kamacuri, Cult of, 138
Kamacuru, 290
Kanaima, 230
Kangi, 21, 25, 71-72, 76, 111, 117, 138
Kangi, Cult of, 138
Kangu, 290
Kapala, 49
Kapre, 231
Katar, 177
Kinslay, Mari, 63
Kitsune, 232
Knockout Blow, 41
Kocha Leaves, 167
Koipahoa, 177
Komombo, 73-76
Kpinga, 177
Kraken, 233
Kratosi, 177
Kulamyu Pod, 234
Kulamyu Pod Root, 167
Kumongi, 21, 25, 74, 80, 84, 138,
Kumongi, Cult of, 138
Kumongu, 291
Kumongu, Cavern of, 85

## L

Lackadaisical Locomotion, 146
Lakooma (The Grabbing Hand), 235
Lammasu, 236
Laundry, 61
Leeches, 219
Lemuria, 6
Lethe Powder, 167
Levjeen the Haberdasher, 61
Licentious Lapidary, The, 61, 62
Lichdom, Gift, 152
Lizard Point, 57
Lizard, Blood, 237
Lizard, Thorny, 239
Lizardfolk, 240
Lokapele Moonvoice, 46
Looted Antechamber, 97
Lower Sheerway Gatehouse, 61
Lycanthropy, Miracle, 163

## M

Maduvu, 177
Mage Blight, 168
Magic, 128-164
Magic, Nature of, 128
Magic Points, Recovery of, 131
Magic Points, Running Out of, 131
Magic, Sources of, 130
Magnify (Strength, Health, Body or Agility), 146
Maklur, Dughar, 63
Malcathorn, 241
Malformations of Maldweeb, School of, 143
Manananggal, 242-243
Manawalea Sweethearted, 47
Mandahi, 21, 24, 25, 67, 92, 112, 138
Mandahi, Cult of, 138
Mandahu, 291
Manifest Creations odf Yeiber, School of, 143
Mantithorn Cactus, 244
Map of Monster Island, 4
Maquahuitl, 177
Maquahuitl of Bereavement, 187
Mark, 146
Mask of Lord Hunhou, 183
Massklyn, Knev, 63
Matrices, Examples, 183
Matrix, Gift, 152
Maze of Madness, The, 111
Medicines, 14
Megalonyx, 244-245
Meliorate Maltreatment, 146
Merchants of Kapala, 62
Meropis, 6
Metaphysical Perspicacity, 146
Mirrors, Smoking, 18
Mirth, Miracle, 163
Mirthless Mask, 187
Mnophkatus, 168
Mokele-Mbembe, 245
Moly Blossom, 167
Monggoke, 167
Moonflower, 246
Mordiggoth, 40, 157, 161
Mordiggoth, Cult of, 157
Morko, 247
Mortuary Temple, 95
Moth, Lotus, 248-249
Mu, 7
Mua Infantry, 20-21, 27, 180, 283-285
Mubuchae, 177
Mummification and Burial, 35
Mystic, 146

## N

Naga, 249-251
Nanaue, 251-252
Naos, 108
Narcotics and Perfumes, 167
Ndengen's Flute, 183
Nehwon, 7
Neutralise Magic, 146
Nightsoil Collectors, 59
Nostril Cavity, 82
Nukekubi, 252-253
Nut Oil, 166

## O

Obdurate Proscriptions of Phnom, School of, 143
Obliterate Conjury, 146
Observatory, 52
Obsidian Rift, 85-89
Obviate Mortality, 146
Occalyth, The, 111
Octopus, Giant, 58
Ocularium, 83
Offering Chamber, 96
Oils, 14, 199
Ojahl, 40, 157-158
Ojahl, Cult of, 157
Olgoi, 253
Omen, Miracle, 163
Omg, 40, 158
Omg, Cult of, 158
Ominous Sinkhole, 120, 122
Oodaki, 21, 25, 47, 66-68, 71, 117, 138
Oodaki, Cult of, 138
Oodaku, 291
Ophidiodis, 255
Oppress Inferiors, 146
Options and Objectives, 115
Orb of Fossilisation, 91
Orchestrated Casting, 129
Ouphalus Tablets, School of, 144
Oviraptor, 256

## P

Pachycephalosaurus, 257
Pact, Gift, 153
Palisade and Tiki Perimeter, 43
Palisade, Defences, 44
Palsy, 146
Panopticus, 258
Paralytic Immobilisation, 146
Parashu, 177
Patu, 177
Peaks, Glacial, 10, 16
Perceive, 146

Perfumed Hardwood, 166
Perfumed Klatu Sap, 167
Petrified Forest, 89-91
Phantasmal, 189
Phantom, 146
Pholzalu Pollen, 167
Phsosen, 55
Pihuichen (Flying Snake), 259
Pipes of the Beast, 184
Piranhas, 219
Pit of Bones, The, 85
Places of Interest, 65-112
Plant, Possessed, 260
Plateau, 10, 15
Plaza and Colony Wall, 58-59
Plaza of Knowledge, 53
Plunderer's Curse, The, 87, 91
Pnachotic Protections, School of, 144
Poisons, 168-172
Polong, 261
Porphyry Blocks, 166
Port Grimsand, 57-64, 66, 71, 95, 108, 154, 211, 288
Port Grimsand Map, 60-61
Portal, 146
Portals, 103
Powdered Gold, 168
Preclude Menace, 146
Prison, Gift, 153
Progenitor Metamorphoses, 146
Prognostications of Nugsoth, School of, 144
Project, 146
Propitiate, Miracle, 163
Protective Ward, 146
Proteus Plague, 172
Protuberate, 146
Psychic Emanations, 189
Puna Plateau, 8-9, 15, 18, 30, 71, 73, 76, 110, 120, 122, 124, 166, 244, 265, 281
Purloin Personage, 146
Purple Orchid, 168
Puuiki, 42-49
Pylenos Cordial, 167
Pyramid, 104

# Q

Qaqanal, 54
Quathil, 262
Quatochil, 40, 62, 158
Quatochil, Cult of, 158
Quell Bewitchment, 146

# R

Ramie Linen, 166
Ranged Marksman, 41
Rangi, The Sky Bowl, 8, 15
Rapture, Miracle, 164
Rats, 219
Raw Obsidian, 166
Raw Spices, 166
Raylimshaitan, 41, 161
Reception Hall, 100
Regenerate, 146
Relegate Daemon, 146
Remote Elucidation, 146
Repulse, 146
Resins, 14
Restless Souls of Sorcerers, The, 99
Revivify, 146
Rhanthois Dust, 167
Rhubin Nuts, 166
Ritual Challenges, 23, 48
Ritualistic Casting Times, 129
Rokurokubi, 263
Rot Goitre, 172
Ruamoko, The Fire Bowl, 9

# S

Sacrificial Site, 120, 123
Sagacious Scrolls of Soleks, School of, 144
Sagacity, Miracle, 164
Saltasaurus, 264
Sanctuary, 108
Sandals of Fleetness, 184
Sandbox Campaigns, 113
Sarcophagus of Regeneration, 185
Savages, 19-37, 42-49, 51, 57, 63, 65, 67-70, 73-75, 77, 84-85, 87, 89-95, 99, 103, 109-114, 117, 121-124, 128-129, 132-141, 148-149, 151, 170, 175-176, 180, 191, 193, 204, 209, 283, 286
Scaly Sentinel, The, 59, 61
Scarab, Giant, 265
Scholar's Court, 61
Scorpions, Silicate, 90
Screeching Mountain, 91-95
Scroll Chamber, 97
Sculpt, 146
Sea Encounters, 127
Selenaru Lichen, 167
Sense, 146
Sentinel, 266
Sequester Peon, 146
Serpent People, 269-270
Serpent, Spellbreaker, 267
Settlements, 42-64
Shakton, Ernst, 64
Shaman's Roundhouse, 46
Shapechange, 146
Shape-Shifter, 189
Shark Teeth, 166
Sheercliff, 57
Sheerway, The, 58, 61
Shield Splitter, 41
Shrink, 146
Shrivel (Strength, Health, Body or Agility), 146
Shyuss, 167
Sinkhole of Watery Doom, The, 112
Siren's Song, The, 58, 61
Sisshero Scribes, 61, 62
Skin Shedding, 35
Skinkeeper Roundhouse, 45
Skinning, 28
Skull Island, 7
Slave Collars, 68
Slavery, High Folk, 36
Slaves, Corrupted, 69
Smoking Mirrors, 18, 28, 54, 70, 74, 102, 124, 130-131, 136, 140, 142, 144-145, 172, 188, 204, 209, 259, 272, 288
Smother, 146
Snapdragon, 270
Soleks, High Folk Sorcerer, 101
Soleks, Sepulchre of, 95-102
Sorcery of the High Folk, 139-153
Sorcery, Sympathetic, 36
Soul Harvester, The, 66
Soul Weakness, 172
Special Events, 118-119
Spell Resistance, 146
Spice of Life, The, 61-62
Spices, 14, 26, 166
Spineapple Fruit, 166
Spineapple Tree, 271
Spiny, 189
Spirit Encounters, Random, 139
Spirit Resistance, 146
Spirit Source, 120, 123
Sports, High Folk, 31
Staff of Chastisement, 185
Stampede, 219
Status, 21-28
Store Manna, 146
Stranglevine Liana, 166
Street of Illicit Pleasures, The, 59
Substances and Items, 165-187
Summon, 146
Summon Dead, Miracle, 164
Swamp Reeds, 166
Switch Body, 146
Sword and Sorcery Genre, Aspects of, 115

# T

Taboos, Savages, 24
Taiaha, 177
Talismans, Examples, 185
Tamking, 177
Tane, The Forest Bowl, 8, 15
Tangential Perambulation, 146
Tanu Leaf, 167
Tasks 116
Teachings of the Ancient Masters, 140
Telepathy, 146
Teleport, 146
Temple District, 104
Temple of Thrice Thirteen Girdles, The, 112
Temple Pyramid, The, 106
Tengu, 271-272
Tepoztopilli, 178
Terror Spines, 168
Tetrapus, 272
Thargorgos, 40, 159
Thargorgos, Cult of, 159
Thasaidon, 40, 159
Thasaidon, Cult of, 159
Theism of the Colonists, 154-164
Therizinosaurus, 273
Thokcha, 166
Throat Tunnel, 82
Throne of Kapala, 100
Thwart Panoply, 146
Tikbalang, 274
Tikbalang Skeleton, 98
Tiki, 24, 28, 30, 42-44, 71, 80, 83, 85, 111, 120-122, 131, 134-135
Time of the Gods, The, 17
Tipsy Melons, 166
Tithes, Lunar, 18
Tomb Robbers, 120, 124
Tomb Rot, 102
Tortoise Sentinels, 44
Tortoise, Ancestor Spirit, 44
Tortuous Stairway, 86
Totemic Cults (Animism), 132-139
Toxic Touch, 41
Transcend, Gift, 153
Transcendent Fossilisation, 146
Transfer Malady, Miracle, 164
Transfer Wound, 146
Transform, Gift, 153
Transmogrify, 146
Trap Soul, 146
Trapper, 189
Travelling Merchant, 120, 124
Treasure Cave, The, 112
Treasure Chamber, 83
Treasures, 180-182
Tree of Life, The, 112
Tribal Affiliations, Savages, 25
Triceratops, 275
Trifrond, 275
Trishula, 178
Tua Skirmisher, 20-21, 27, 283-285
Turtle, Tiger, 276
Tusk Ivory, 166
Tuuthal's Lens, 187
Tyrannise Thrall, 146
Tzathogua, 41
Tzelja, 54

# U

Ubbozathla, 41, 118, 161, 175, 258
Undeath, 146
Upper Sheerway Gatehouse, 61
Uru of Ruaumoko, 112
Urumi, 178
Uru-Soruru, 77-80
Uvlesk Juice, 167

# V

Vagnarr Elucidations, School of, 145
Vagnarr, Fate of, 145
Vajramuṣṭi, 178
Valley of Ivory Doom, 109-110
Vampire Palm, 277
Varanri, 21, 25, 67, 71, 112, 117-118, 139
Varanri, Cult of, 139
Varanru, 291
Vergamka, 40, 160
Vergamka, Cult of, 160
Verity, Gift, 153
Villa of the Heirophant, 53
Vivify, Gift, 153
Vomit Blight, 172
Vorompatra, 278
Vorslurp, 279
Vulture, Giant, 279
Vutomisia Leaf, 167

# W

Wahaika, 178
Waheela, 280
War Party, 120, 124
Warehouses, 61
Warrior Accoutrements of the High Folk, 35
Warrior Units, Savages, 27
Weather, 10-11
Wendigo, 204
White Death Barracks, 61
Wild Bee Honey, 166
Wish, Miracle, 164
Woeful Woodmonger, 61-62
Wrack, 146

# X

Xanthus Sap, 168
Xanzoga, 53-54, 112
Xenophobic, 116

# Y

Yarad Gum, 167
Ybos Gum, 166
Yeti (Voormi), 281
Yeti Skins, 166
Yhounkehd, 41, 104-108, 161
Yhounkehd, Cult of, 162
Yhounkehd, Temple of, 104-108
Yhtill, 54, 118, 141
Yimskar Malignancies, School of, 145
Ylila, 40, 59, 160
Ylila, Cult of, 160
Yohimbe Aphrodisiac, 167
Yoormiphazreth, Mount, 17, 38
Ythussis, High Folk Sorceress, 69
Yuklha, 40, 161
Yuklha, Cult of, 161

# Z

Zerzura, 19, 25, 30, 34, 42, 67-68, 73, 92, 110, 148, 220, 281
Zoetic Motivation, 146
Zululun, 40, 161

# MONSTER ISLAND

## A Complete Setting Supplement for RuneQuest

*Imagine a land of dark, sweltering jungles filled with nameless monstrosities and savage reptilian head-hunters... hacking through thick undergrowth to uncover forgotten overgrown ruins filled with glittering treasures... discovering mysterious cities of gold hidden high up between the sheer mountain peaks, filled with foul sorceries... uncovering ancient temples still used by secretive cults to practice their abhorrent sacrifices... and worse still, if those gods arose as titanic beasts beyond mortal comprehension, to destroy those that dare despoil their worshippers...*

*Then imagine you've arrived, shipwrecked or magically transported, to this tropical hell and that there is no escape. Welcome to the horror of Monster Island!*

Monster Island is a fully detailed sandbox setting which can be used in almost any existing campaign, from Swords & Sorcery through to 1930's Two Fisted Pulp. It contains enough material to run a game for years, including:

- *A full colour, pull out map of the island with all important locations and borders marked*
- *An examination of the native cultures, their strange habits and unsettling magical practices*
- *Almost a hundred new creatures, plants and spirits to use in any RuneQuest campaign*
- *Comprehensive tables for encounters, random events, poisons, diseases, treasures and the like*
- *New spells, miracles and fully defined cults for those that wish to dabble in the dark arts*
- *Several dozen places of interest, half of which have been fully detailed for immediate play*
- *Countless plot hooks and scenario ideas, as well as guidance of how to incorporate Monster Island into an existing campaign*

With its foetid secrets and gritty adventure, the comprehensive content of Monster Island is guaranteed to inspire any Game Master. Delve back to a time of classic Sword & Sorcery with priceless jewels, fierce dinosaurs and dark horror!

ISBN: 978-0-9877259-2-9