

GRAHAM ROSE

PALEOMYTHIC

A ROLEPLAYING GAME OF STONE AND SORCERY

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 OSPREY
GAMES

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First published in Great Britain in 2019

This electronic edition published in 2019 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: HB 9781472834812; eBook 9781472834805; ePDF 9781472834799; XML 9781472834829

Osprey Games supports the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading woodland conservation charity.

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Artwork: John McCambridge and Mars Oosterveld

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to the following people for their enthusiastic support:
Nicole Rose, Susie Ackner, Gareth Hughes, Liam Mckeown, Amy Leigh, and Ben Davenport.

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INTRODUCTION

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

WHAT IS *PALEOMYTHIC*?

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

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

ROLEPLAYING GAMES

For those players new to RPGs, here's a brief description of some basic concepts.

An RPG is a game in which players act out the roles of characters in a fictional setting. This is done with the aid of a set of guidelines or rules that help to govern the outcome of actions taken by the PCs. The rules are administered by a referee, called the game moderator (GM). It is the GM's responsibility to play the roles of other characters in the setting, known as non-player characters (NPCs), and to



create the outline and details of the story within which the PCs participate. The GM provides the descriptions of all of the elements of the game world, the things the characters perceive, and the results of the characters' actions.

RPGs are typically played sitting around a table, and the game proceeds with the players and GM describing the various actions of characters. For example, a player might say: "My character enters the cave," and the GM would relate the consequences of doing so, such as what the character sees, or the actions of an NPC within the cave, and so on. If a player has their character attempt an action for which there is an element of doubt as to whether they would succeed, the RPG rules can be applied to resolve the action. In most RPGs, the GM acts as the arbiter of the rules, deciding when the rules should be employed and the outcome of actions.

RPGs usually have a plot outline and descriptions of events, locations, and NPCs created by the GM. This is the game 'scenario' or 'adventure', and provides the framework within which the PCs interact. An example of a simple plot might be:

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

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

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

Unlike most other games, an RPG has no definitive ending, and no resolution is the 'correct' one. Instead, a game might include a conclusion to a particular story (which is reached as a result of the actions of the characters and the GMs input), and the characters will then generally continue on to the next adventure. In this sense, an RPG more closely resembles a series of books that feature the same characters, except that unlike a book, the conclusion is mostly variable.

An RPG doesn't really have 'winners' and 'losers'. If the PCs survive an adventure, the players can be considered to have 'won', but then the death of a PC might also be considered a 'win' if the circumstances surrounding the death were entertaining to the players. The GM 'wins' if he or she manages to both have fun and create an entertaining game for the players. To be victorious in an RPG, one simply needs to enjoy the experience.

DICE

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

d6: The roll of a single die. Sometimes this is simply written as the phrase 'roll a die'.

d2: The roll of a single die, treating low numbers (1-3) as a result of 1 and high numbers (4-6) as a result of 2.

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

2d6: The roll of two dice, adding the results together. The number preceding the letter 'd' defines the number of dice to roll, so 3d6 means roll three dice, 4d6 means roll four dice, and so on.

ANCIENT MU

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

Ancient Mu is a large continent that has existed for many millennia. It was once the home of great and terrible beasts known as the saurians, creatures that seem to have vanished from the world. Ancient Mu is now the domain of man, although there still remain many areas of the continent that are wholly untamed, where monsters and strange beast men dwell.

Ancient Mu has a varied terrain, with vast jungles, barren wastes, arid deserts, dense forests, mountains, hills, and grassland. Many of these places offer awe-inspiring vistas and spectacular sights. There are huge waterfalls cascading down cliffs higher than any human can scale, jagged mountains that conceal winding trails through treacherous mountain passes, and hidden jungles that are home to strange beasts never before seen by humans. In these places, so too are there many different hazards and dangers, including strange tribes with peculiar ways and customs, troglodytes that live among the crumbling ruins and uncanny obelisks of ancient cities, feral beasts that lurk in vast, eerie forests, and even malevolent spirits that haunt ancient tombs.

The inhabitants of Ancient Mu are much like modern humans, although much hardier. Like modern humans, the people of Ancient Mu have a variety of different skin colours, hairstyles, and manners of speech and dress. There is an array of societies; the people of Mu live in tribes (some small and primitive, others large and culturally developed), settlements (such as tent encampments or villages of wood or rock buildings), and even cities (where the people dwell in large cave complexes, within labyrinthine streets of small mud brick houses or amid the ruins of ancient stone cities).

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

Then there are the strange peoples, the remnants of civilisations lost in time, the dwellers in the distant ruins. These beings possess primordial knowledge and practise weird and unfathomable customs. Among these strange peoples are those that lurk in the shadowy places of Ancient Mu. They are rumoured to perform dark rites to malignant deities, and to plot and scheme, all the while threatening to bring about the downfall of humans...

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

GAME MECHANICS

Paleomythic uses an easy and straightforward game mechanic to resolve activity. This is used throughout the rules, and involves the roll of several dice to make a ‘test’.

TESTS

When players have their characters attempt actions with an unpredictable outcome, a test might be required. Many actions won't require tests. These include simple activities and tasks that are routine and present no real difficulty, such as lifting a small bundle of firewood or travelling a short distance. The GM might also decide that some tasks, although challenging, might not warrant a test simply because the test would add little to the fun or drama of the adventure.

Tests are therefore used to determine the results of activities and tasks for which the outcome is uncertain, risky, or dramatic. For example, if a character tries to cross a ravine balancing on a fallen tree log, or travel over rugged terrain before nightfall and bad weather closes in, the GM might decide that a test is called for.

PROCEDURE

Characters are primarily defined using traits, which describe their abilities and, collectively, their overall competence.

When a test is required, the player rolls an amount of dice based on the current number of traits they have. The precise amount depends on a number of factors, as described below.

TRAITS

Traits are qualities that represent a character's innate physical and mental abilities, such as being ‘agile’ or ‘wise’. A test usually has an associated trait. This is the trait that would affect the test outcome the most. For example, the trait ‘charismatic’ would be the most relevant for a test to persuade someone to perform a task, whereas the trait ‘wise’ would affect a test to remember vital information.

To make a test, roll dice equal to the current number of traits possessed by the character. If any of the dice show a 6, the test is a success.

If the character has a trait that is applicable to the test, the player gets to roll an additional die, called a bonus die. Again, if any of the dice show a 6, the test is a success.

Note that since characters can temporarily lose traits (due to injury), the number of dice a player rolls for a test can vary. Always use the current number of traits when working out how many dice are rolled for a test. For more on trait loss and recovery, refer to the combat section.

The GM has final say as to which traits are relevant to an activity. This is usually obvious; if a character is lifting a heavy weight, the trait 'strong' applies, if a character is looking for a hidden object, the trait 'aware' applies, and so on. See the descriptions in the characters section for more on traits.

In these rules, tests will often be described with the suggested trait. For example, the rules might state that characters should make an 'aware test'. This indicates that a test is required, and that if the character has the trait 'aware', it can affect the test. Note that this does not exclude characters that lack the trait: the noted trait is simply the one that is likely to offer an advantage.

EXAMPLE

Nahmuna is clambering through hills when a rockfall occurs. The GM calls for a test to see whether Nahmuna avoids the falling rocks. Nahmuna has the trait 'agile', so the GM allows the player to roll a bonus die. Nahmuna currently has five traits, so the player rolls six dice in total. The results are 4, 1, 6, 1, 3, and 3. Because one of the dice shows a 6, Nahmuna succeeds and manages to evade the rocks.

Later, Nahmuna is faced with a narrow, fast flowing river. Nahmuna doesn't want to risk getting swept away, so decides to avoid wading it. She attempts to jump across, which is another test relevant to the trait 'agile'. Unfortunately, in an earlier fight Nahmuna temporarily lost her 'agile' trait. She now has only four traits, and none are now relevant to the task. The player must therefore roll just four dice. The player rolls 5, 2, 4, and 4, a failure. Nahmuna leaps but lands short, falling into the river and getting swept downstream. Fortunately, Nahmuna survives, battered and bruised, but having lost much of her equipment.

FLAWS

Flaws are the opposite of traits, and represent areas of weakness. A character might therefore be ‘clumsy’ rather than ‘agile’, or ‘ignorant’ instead of ‘wise’. Flaws are optional, and it is quite likely that many characters won’t have any. However, a flawed character is sometimes interesting and fun to play, and players might therefore wish to include flaws when creating their character.

Flaws usually apply to activities that are enhanced by the opposite trait. For example, if the trait strong applies to a test, the flaw weak is also likely to apply. Just as with traits, the GM has final say as to whether a flaw is relevant.

Whenever a flaw applies to a test, reduce the number of dice rolled by one.

Because this means that the character will also lack the relevant trait for the test, the number of dice rolled equals the current number of traits minus one.

A flaw cannot reduce a character to zero dice. If a character is reduced to one trait and a flaw applies to a test, the player still gets to roll a die (plus a bonus die for a tool, if one is used: see below).

TOOLS

Some tasks require a tool before they can be attempted. For example, chopping down a tree requires a tool such as a hafted axe, and preparing an animal hide requires a tool such as a scraper.

The GM decides which tasks need tools and which tools are correct for the task. Some suggestions are given in the crafting entry in the activities section of the rules. Note that some tasks might benefit from a tool, but the tool might not be absolutely necessary. In these cases, lacking the tool should not mean that the task cannot be attempted (for example, digging a hole in soft earth is made easier with a tool, but a character could also do the task with their bare hands).

If a character makes use of the correct tool for the task, roll a bonus die.

This bonus die is added to the dice rolled for a test (and is in addition to a bonus die for a relevant trait, if applicable). This means, for example, a character with four traits who is attempting an action for which they have a relevant trait would

get five dice without a tool, but six dice if they used a tool.

If a character uses an improvised tool (rather than the one required for the task), the test can be made, but in this case a bonus die isn't gained.

If the character lacks a necessary tool, and cannot improvise a suitable replacement, the task is an automatic failure, and no test is made.

The bonus die should be distinct from the other dice rolled for a test (such as a different colour or size). This is because of the special results that can occur when rolling it, as explained below.

TOOL BREAKAGE

In the Paleomythic world, tools are typically made from materials that are prone to damage (flint gets chipped, wood splits, vines fray, and so on). This means that tools can often break. Wise players ensure that their characters carry spare tools and weapons, or the materials required to repair them.

When making a test using a tool, the tool breaks if the result on the tool bonus die is 1. Note that it is still possible to succeed at a test in which the tool in use breaks (if any of the other dice show a 6).

When a tool breaks, it is deemed useless until repaired or replaced, and will no longer grant a bonus die for tests. See crafting in the activities section for details on how to repair tools.

EXAMPLE

Nahmuna is trying to chop wood to build a shelter before bad weather closes in. The GM calls for a strong test to see whether she manages to do so. Nahmuna has four traits, rather than her usual five, after suffering a wound earlier in the day. In addition, she lacks the trait strong. She has a hafted axe, however, which is a tool relevant to the task. The player therefore rolls five dice (representing Nahmuna's four remaining traits, plus a bonus die for the tool). The rolls are 4, 2, 3, and 6, and 1 on the bonus die. Because the result for the bonus die was 1, the hafted axe breaks during the task. However, one of the other dice shows a 6, so Nahmuna still succeeds, and manages to cut enough wood to construct a shelter.



WEAPON EFFECTS

Weapons are a special type of tool. In addition to granting a bonus die when used, they have a special advantage called an 'effect' (effects are described further in the combat section). Weapon effects are triggered when the result on the tool bonus die results is 6 (obviously, this also indicates that the weapon attack is a success). Only a 6 on the tool bonus die triggers a weapon effect; a 6 on any of the other dice simply indicates success.

WEAPON BREAKAGE

Because weapons are classed as tools, they can also break, as described above. When a weapon breaks, it cannot be used effectively, and no longer grants a bonus die. In addition, the weapon effect no longer applies. Weapons can be repaired just like other tools.

Again, just as with other tools, it is possible for a weapon to break at the same time as a test succeeds.

EXAMPLE

Several days later, having recovered from an earlier injury, Nahmuna is attacked by a 'tree lion' (a marsupial lion) while travelling in woodland. She fights with a flint-tipped spear. The player makes an attack test for Nahmuna, and because she has the trait 'brave', the player rolls seven dice (five dice for her traits, a bonus die for a relevant trait, and a bonus die for her weapon). The player rolls 3, 1, 1, 2, 4, and 2, and 6 on the tool bonus die. This means that the test succeeds and the weapon's effect is triggered (in this case, the effect 'impale').

GAME MECHANICS SUMMARY

To make a test, roll dice equal to the current number of traits. If any of the dice show a 6, the test succeeds.

Gain a bonus die for a relevant trait.

Lose a die for a relevant flaw.

Gain a bonus die for the correct tool.

Tools break if the tool bonus die shows a 1.

Weapon effects occur if the tool bonus die shows a 6.

CHARACTERS

CHARACTER CREATION

Each player needs a character. In *Paleomythic*, character creation is a simple process of choosing from some options or determining them randomly with a few dice rolls. It is recommended that you use a character sheet to keep track of your character information during the creation process. You can find the character sheet at the back of this book or on our website, www.ospreypublishing.com/gaming-resources.



GENDER

Characters can be any gender. If a player wishes, their character's gender can be determined randomly by rolling a die.

AGE

Age is usually descriptive rather than noted as a number of years, as most people in the Paleomythic world would be unlikely to keep an accurate record of such things. Descriptive age is divided into categories, each of which represents about a decade. Players can either choose a descriptive age, or roll a die to determine one of six age categories:

1	Adolescent
2	Young
3	Adult
4	Mature
5	Seasoned
6	Old

It's up to the player to decide precisely what their descriptive age means for their character, and a good way to do this is to add physical descriptors, such as greying hair if the character is mature or seasoned, or small stature for an adolescent.

NAME

Should players be short on inspiration for a character name, the below quick name tables can be used. These offer two lists of names, each with a male form and a suffix in brackets to make the female form. For example, the name 'Far(ia)' indicates that 'Far' is the male form and 'Faria' is the female form.

The names on the first (short name) column are simple one syllable names (two if female), while the second (long name) column has two syllable names (three if female). Choose a column or roll a d2 to determine one, then roll a d6 for a random name:

1	Short name
2	Long name

	SHORT NAMES	LONG NAMES
1	Arn(u)	Ballor(a)
2	Far(ia)	Dunar(u)
3	Kul(a)	Hanaz(ia)
4	Set(ea)	Nahmun(a)
5	Tor(en)	Solum(ia)
6	Var(ala)	Talzor(ea)

The appendix contains a more detailed name-creation procedure.

TRAITS, FLAWS, AND TALENTS

TRAITS

Traits represent areas of natural ability in which the character excels. A trait gives the character an advantage in tasks for which the trait is applicable. For example, the trait ‘resilient’ would help if a character was forced to endure hardships such as extreme cold or starvation, whereas the trait ‘strong’ would be useful for activities such as lifting heavy loads or restraining a foe. See the traits table further below for the full array of traits.

FLAWS

Flaws represent areas of weakness such as being ‘sickly’ or ‘careless’. They adversely affect tests, as described in the tests section. Flaws might be a simple lack of experience or training, or could represent something in the character’s background, environment, or circumstances that has had a damaging effect (such as a poor diet, detrimental tribal practices, or the effects of survival in a harsh climate). Flaws are shown on the traits table further below.

TALENTS

Talents represent the experience, skills, and sometimes specialist training a character has acquired. Each talent grants a unique ability, which might confer an advantage in certain circumstances, or offers some other special power. Refer to the talent

descriptions further below for details. A talent also comes with one or more useful items. When the talent is acquired, so are the noted goods.

Characters can acquire additional talents and traits as they adventure. This is covered later on in the improvement section.



STARTING TRAITS, FLAWS, AND TALENTS

Players choose the number of talents that their characters start with. The more talents a character chooses, the fewer traits that character can have at the beginning of the game. The maximum number of talents a character can begin with is three, in which case they can also select three traits. The minimum number of talents a character can begin with is one, in which case they can select five traits; see the table below for more details.

Players have the option to select either one or two additional starting traits beyond the numbers shown in the table, but for each additional trait they select, they must also select a flaw. The maximum number of starting traits a character can have is seven, in a case where the player chooses one starting talent and seven starting traits along with two flaws.

STARTING TALENTS	STARTING TRAITS
1	5*
2	4*
3	3*

*Each additional trait added beyond this number costs one flaw; the maximum number of additional traits is two.

For players who like to do things randomly, roll a d3 for the number of talents the character has, then choose the corresponding number of traits.

Characters can start with up to two flaws. For each flaw, a character gains an additional trait. As might be evident, a character cannot possess a flaw that is the opposite of a trait they possess (a character can't be both 'agile' and 'clumsy', for example). Additional traits acquired by taking flaws do not count when working out how many talents a character starts with.

Choose none, one, or two flaws. To randomly determine the number of flaws a character has, roll a d3 and subtract 1.

Traits can be chosen or determined randomly. For random traits, first roll a d2 for the relevant table, then roll a d6 for that table. Re-roll repeat results.

1	Traits Table A
2	Traits Table B

TRAITS TABLE A			
D6	Trait	Description	Flaw
1	Accurate	The ability to aim and act with precision	Inaccurate
2	Agile	The ability to leap, balance, climb, tumble, and dance	Clumsy
3	Aware	The ability to notice, search, eavesdrop, and detect hidden items	Oblivious
4	Brave	The ability to face foes and fight, brawl, and use melee weapons	Cautious
5	Charismatic	The ability to persuade, negotiate, inspire, and sway others	Unassuming
6	Dexterous	The ability to work delicately, do sleight-of-hand tricks, and steal	Awkward

TRAITS TABLE B			
D6	Trait	Description	Flaw
1	Fortunate	Being lucky, serendipitous, opportunistic, and avoiding misfortune	Unlucky
2	Guileful	The ability to be sneaky, deceptive, to remain hidden, and to conceal things	Careless
3	Resilient	The ability to resist pain, illness, poisons, and other hardships	Sickly
4	Strong	The ability to perform feats of strength, such as lifting, carrying, shoving, and so on	Weak
5	Wilful	The ability to resist failure, coercion, stress, and to keep trying	Passive
6	Wise	The aptitude for deduction, recollection, comprehension, and understanding	Ignorant

Talents are categorised into six groups, each broadly representing a different type of experience and knowledge. Talent groups are used to conveniently organise similar talents to make it easier for players to decide which types are available; they do not restrict a players' choices in any way.

Players can choose their character's talents freely from among those given or can determine them randomly by rolling a d6 for the group, then rolling a d6 for the talent within that group.

TALENT GROUPS		
1	Adept	Talents that are as much gifts as learnt skills
2	Bestial	Talents that indicate a strong link with animals and instinctive behaviour
3	Fighter	Talents that enhance combat and hunting prowess
4	Oracle	Talents that are concerned with power and prediction
5	Sorcerer	Talents that grant strange and otherworldly skills
6	Specialist	Talents that represent useful survival skills

D6	ADEPT TALENTS	BESTIAL TALENTS	FIGHTER TALENTS
1	Dancer	Beast tamer	Barbarian
2	Mystic	Savage	Brawler
3	Serpent	Simian	Caster
4	Shadower	Snake charmer	Feral
5	Storyteller	Soul eater	Hunter
6	Thief	Tracker	Warrior

D6	ORACLE TALENTS	SORCERER TALENTS	SPECIALIST TALENTS
1	Chief	Bone chanter	Crafter
2	Cultist	Cave painter	Fire maker
3	Priest	Doomsayer	Fisher
4	Ritualist	Effigy maker	Gatherer
5	Seer	Shaman	Healer
6	Soothsayer	Summoner	Trapper

Refer to the talent descriptions for details of each talent.

STARTING GOODS

Characters begin with basic clothes (a tunic, belt, and shoes). They also start with three items from the starting goods table below (players can choose their starting goods or roll a d6 three times to determine them). Repeat results may be re-rolled, or players may decide their characters have multiples of the same item if they wish.

STARTING GOODS	
1	Bag
2	Bone knife
3	Fire making kit
4	Gourd
5	Rope
6	Rushlight

Characters get additional goods from each of the talents they begin with. These are noted in the individual talent descriptions.



CHARACTER BACKGROUND

To help flesh out a character's background, players can use one or two of the character's initial traits to give them ideas of events that occurred in the character's past. In this way, possession of the trait fits into the history of the character. Some examples of possible events related to traits are given below, but feel free to make up your own.

ACCURATE

During a famine, the character went out hunting every day.
The character killed an unusual, strange, or rare beast with a ranged weapon.
The character has inherited the eagle eyes of one of their parents.

AGILE

The character escaped capture and was forced to flee, remaining on the run for many weeks.

The character competed in tribal contests of speed and agility, and won.

The character became a messenger for the tribe, quickly delivering important information.

AWARE

The character spent a long time searching for a lost sibling.

The character acted as a lookout when the tribe was under constant attack from an enemy.

The character was hunted by an enemy, and forced to be constantly alert for danger.

BRAVE

During a tribal war, the character fought on many occasions.

The character faced a terrifying foe that no others would challenge and won.

The character completed tribal tests of bravery.

CHARISMATIC

The character traded goods at many tribal gatherings.

During tribal conflict, the character negotiated peace.

The character is often a spokesperson for the tribe.

DEXTEROUS

The character spent long periods helping the crafters.

The character invented a new way of crafting an item.

The character likes to paint in caves, or to create body art.

FORTUNATE

The character went wandering into dangerous lands and emerged unscathed.
The character has never suffered from illness, injury, or bad luck.
The character was the sole survivor of a calamity.

GUILEFUL

During a famine, the character was forced to steal to survive.
The character managed to sneak through enemy territory without being captured.
The character often scouts ahead of hunters to spot prey unseen.

RESILIENT

During a plague, the character remained healthy.
The character was poisoned by a dangerous beast, and managed to survive.
The character fell from a great height, but managed to stagger home to seek help.

STRONG

The character spent long hours caring for sick family members.
Following a successful hunt, the character carried home the carcass of a huge animal alone.
The character was enslaved for a time, and forced to do back-breaking labour.

WILFUL

When captured by an enemy, the character did not reveal secrets.
The character continued to gather food during a famine after others gave up.
The character never gave in to fear when evil spirits attacked the tribe.

WISE

The character spent long periods with the elders.
The character discovered objects with strange markings and symbols, and deciphered them.
The character has travelled to many strange peoples to seek their knowledge.

CHARACTER APPEARANCE

Traits can be used to help describe how a character looks. Players can use one or two of the character's initial traits to give them ideas. Here are some examples:

Accurate: piercing gaze, large eyes, or squint.

Agile: lithe body, crouched posture, or quick movements.

Aware: bright eyes, distant look, or large ears.

Brave: scarred body, upright stance, or muscular limbs.

Charismatic: winning smile, stern look, or odd laugh.

Dexterous: graceful movements, fidgets, or thin fingers.

Fortunate: unblemished, often shrugs shoulders, or wry smile.

Guileful: furtive movements, quiet tread, or narrowed eyes.

Resilient: slender body, healthy glow, or rugged features.

Strong: muscled torso, broad shoulders, or squat build.

Wilful: expressionless face, calm manner, or gritted teeth.

Wise: thoughtful expression, sticks tongue out, or curious gaze.

CHARACTER CREATION EXAMPLE

I decide to create a character randomly, and begin by rolling a die to find the gender of the character. Based on my roll, my character is a woman. I roll a d6 for her age and get 2, so she is young.

Next, I give the character a name. I roll a d2 to find which table to use. The result is 2, so I use the long names table. The die roll on this table is 4, which means the character is called Nahmuna (the female form).

I roll a d3 to see how many talents she has. I roll 1, so she starts with a single talent and five traits. I roll a d3 - 1 for her flaws. A roll of 1, minus 1, means she has none.

To determine her traits, I roll a d2 for the table, then a d6 for the specific talent. My rolls and the results are as follows:

- Roll of 1 (table A), roll of 4 – brave
- Roll of 1 (table A), roll of 6 – dexterous
- Roll of 2 (table B), roll of 5 – wilful
- Roll of 1 (table A), roll of 2 – agile
- Roll of 2 (table B), roll of 3 – resilient

So far, I see Nahmuna is a courageous, nimble, and determined young woman, which gives her an excellent chance of survival in the harsh environment of the Paleomythic world.

To continue, I roll for one talent. I find the group first by rolling a d6 and get 6, specialist. Next, I roll a d6 for the actual talent and get 4, fire maker. Nahmuna is skilled at making and using fire, a very handy talent to have.

I note the starting goods Nahmuna has. She owns basic clothes (a tunic, belt, and shoes), and has three other random items. I roll a d6 three times and get 5 (rope), 4 (gourd), and 2 (bone knife). Her talent also grants her some goods; a hide hat, a bag, a fire making kit, oil, and a rushlight.

I create some background for Nahmuna by checking her traits against the background list. I decide to use ‘dexterous’ and ‘resilient’ as inspiration. Nahmuna spent many happy years growing up patiently watching and learning from the crafters in her tribe. Then a plague occurred, and many of the tribe succumbed. Nahmuna endured, however, thanks to her excellent health.

Finally, for her appearance, I make use of her ‘agile’ and ‘brave’ traits. Nahmuna is a lithe and slender young woman who has a few scars from the many fights she had when growing up.

This is Nahmuna’s finished profile:

NAHMUNA

Nahmuna, a young woman who is agile, brave, dexterous, resilient, and wilful. She is a talented fire maker who grew up fascinated by the work of the tribal crafters, and is the survivor of a plague that killed many others.

Nahmuna is slender, lithe, and sports a few scars from past fights. She carries a bag containing rope, a gourd, a fire making kit, oil, and a rushlight. She has a bone knife tucked into her belt. Nahmuna wears a hide hat, a simple tunic, and shoes.

CHARACTER CREATION CHECKLIST

1. Choose the gender of your character.
2. Choose your character's age.
3. Choose a name for your character.
4. Choose how many talents your character begins with. This number determines the number of traits the character gets.
5. Choose how many flaws your character will have. Each flaw grants an extra trait.
6. Choose which traits, flaws, and talents your character has.
7. Choose starting goods for your character. Your character gets all of the starting goods listed for the talents they possess.
8. Flesh out your character by writing a few sentences about the character's appearance and background.

TALENTS

Each of the available talents are described below. Players might wish to make a brief note of the details for each talent their character possesses as a reminder during play. Each talent has associated goods. When the talent is first acquired, the associated goods are also obtained by the character (in addition to starting goods). This applies to character creation only; if a character acquires a new talent later, the associated goods must be purchased or crafted.

TALENT USE

The way in which a talent is used depends on the particular talent. Many are conditional; they apply when a certain set of circumstances occurs. For example, the talent 'barbarian' allows a character to cause an additional wound in combat, but only when making an attack with a melee weapon.

Talents that are used actively typically count as the character's action in a turn of combat. An active talent is one that requires a conscious decision to use, rather than being something that's innate and reactive. For example, a cave painter must use an action to paint on a wall in order to summon a spirit, whereas a cultist gets a roll of their cult die as a reactive response to an attack, so an action isn't used up in this case.

Refer to the following descriptions for details of individual talents.

ADEPT

DANCER

With oiled or brightly painted bodies, or dressed in colourful costumes, the dancers are a fascinating spectacle at many gatherings. Onlookers will often stare in awe as the dancers cavort and leap to and fro, in a frenzy of ecstatic motion.

Dancers are an important aspect of many gatherings, and they are sought after when ceremonies and rituals are held. Their rhythmic movements are often deemed vital to the success of a ritual, and are viewed by many as a form of magic in their own right.

Dancers are typically lithe and supple. They often paint their bodies, or decorate themselves with costumes composed of all manner of materials, such as feathers, the tails of animals, horn headdresses, jewellery, and dyed linen. Dancers are renowned for their agility, speed, and remarkable reflexes.

Dancers are popular entertainers, and are typically able to perform a variety of dances, be they sensual dances performed for the amusement of tribal chiefs, rhythmic dances performed at rituals, or acrobatics and tumbling dances that amaze onlookers at gatherings, markets, and celebrations.

A dancer can perform for gain. If a dancer performs at a gathering in front of a suitable audience (such as at a celebration, ritual, or similar gathering), the dancer receives gifts worth one gem, plus an additional gem for each of the traits 'agile', 'charismatic', 'fortunate', and 'wilful', if they have them at the time of the performance.

Gifts can be goods, gems, or promised favours (such as crafting items for the character or gathering food for the character). A dancer can benefit from this once per day.

Dancers are extremely agile, and can use their ability for activities other than simple performance. As long as they are uninjured, a dancer gets a bonus die for any test that would use the 'agile' trait (in addition to a bonus die for the 'agile' trait itself). If a dancer is injured and has suffered the loss of one or more traits, this aspect of the talent cannot be used.

In addition, in combat a dancer can leap to try to evade ranged attacks. For each successful ranged attack against the dancer, a single die can be rolled once (the 'dance' die). If this results in a 6, the attack is avoided (the dancer has managed to



miraculously dodge it at the last second). If the dance die should ever result in a 1, the dancer has lost confidence in their ability and the die cannot be used again for the remainder of the combat encounter.

STARTING GOODS

Bag, brush, comb, pot containing pigments, pouch containing 1d6 gems, and a shawl or grass cloak.

MYSTIC

The earliest people of Ancient Mu possessed knowledge that has since been lost by all but a few. These ancient memories yet remain, but they are hidden deep within the labyrinth of the mind. Only those known as mystics are able to access these memories. They have, through meditation, found ways through the labyrinth, so that they can call upon these memories to grant them knowledge they did not know they possessed.

Mystics believe that everyone has the potential to access ancient memories, but few have the mental discipline required to do so. Many mystics therefore wander the land offering to help others to find their ancestral memories, and they can thus be found at tribal gatherings, burning heady incenses as they guide others in their meditation.

As a result of their meditations, many mystics develop an unearthly stare, their eyes peering into some unseen place in the distance. Some also develop a lack of interest in material things, and many look ragged and unkempt. This can make them seem like beggars, and in larger settlements mystics are not always welcomed.

The mystic talent confers the ability to recall ancient abilities and ancestral memories, and make immediate use of the resulting knowledge. If a mystic has time to meditate before a task (for at least several minutes), they can then attempt a single test associated with the task as if they possessed an applicable trait. For example, the mystic could meditate before crafting an item, and could then make a crafting test as if they possessed the 'dexterous' trait (granting the player a bonus die). If the mystic has a flaw relevant to the task, the flaw is ignored, but no bonus die is received. If the mystic already possesses the relevant trait, no extra benefit is gained.

The talent confers a benefit for just one test per activity; meditating before a

combat for example, would mean the test applies to only one test made during the current fight. The benefit applies to a single encounter or activity, and if it is not used when the activity or encounter ends, then it is wasted. Only one such benefit may be used at a time.

Meditation assumes the character has time to sit and concentrate, without distraction. It is therefore not possible in environments that are noisy or deemed dangerous. Likewise, characters distracted by injury (who have suffered one or more wounds) cannot effectively meditate until healed.

STARTING GOODS

Hide hat (armour), fire making kit, incense, and pot.

SERPENT

In distant and obscure places of Mu, there are those who worship a serpent deity, which is believed to grant them the power of snakes.

Once, so it is said, there was a powerful nation whose people worshipped a great and terrible serpent. The nation was thought to be vast, and its people built great temples and statues made from stone. The serpent people have now faded into myth, but there are those who believe that the blood of the serpent kin still flows through the veins of a few descendants.

In Ancient Mu, when a person displays an unusual degree of flexibility and suppleness, they are said to be one of the serpent kin, and it does indeed seem that some have a unique gift that allows them to writhe and bend like a snake.

Those who possess the serpent talent are often deemed strange and unsettling. Many 'serpents' play on this reputation, and decorate their skin with snake tattoos. Whether they actually have the blood of the serpent people is uncertain, but it is certainly the case that their talent is both potent and unique.

Characters with the serpent talent are incredibly lithe and nimble, with an uncanny suppleness. This is especially useful when trying to escape bonds or when squeezing through gaps and small spaces.

When attempting any form of escape (including an escape from combat), a character with this talent gets a bonus die for associated tests (which is in conjunction with any bonus dice the character might already benefit from). Likewise, when

moving in enclosed spaces (such as when crawling through tunnels and gaps, or moving through dense foliage), the character gets a bonus die for any test where nimbleness would apply.

In combat, this talent can be used to resist any tactics attempted by a foe (such as to restrain, strangle, shove, and so on). In addition, an even more powerful use of the talent is to negate weapon effects inflicted on the character.

Each time a character with this talent is exposed to a tactic (such as restrain or leap) or a weapon effect, the player can roll a single die, the 'serpent die'. If the serpent die results in a 6, the tactic or effect is avoided completely (the character has used their suppleness to evade the attack). If at any time the serpent die results in a 1, the character is deemed to have become fatigued and may not use this part of the talent again for the remainder of the combat encounter.

STARTING GOODS

Armlet, ear fang, and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Bone
2	Bone knife
3	Blow pipe and d6 darts
4	Hand axe
5	Hide whip
6	Horn stake

SHADOWER

Many hunters become accomplished at sneaking, hiding, and even posing as animals in an effort to fool their prey. Some go beyond such skills, to become one with shadow and gloom, training their bodies to twist and contort so that they can also, at will, appear other than human.

In many areas of Ancient Mu, there are those who have mastered the art of moving from shadow to shadow, passing unnoticed even by day. These are the shadowers. Many shadowers use their skill for hunting, but others use it for darker reasons. There are those who become assassins; accomplished killers who use their talent to hunt

people instead of beasts. Shadowers are therefore feared, although in truth few people are aware who among them possesses such skill – shadowers are masters of disguise and stealth after all...

A shadower is able to contort their features, adjust their posture and use shadows to become inconspicuous, unrecognisable, or even appear to be another creature.

When a shadower attempts to move without being seen, they automatically succeed as long as there is shadow, the day is gloomy or overcast, or it is night. However, in full daylight, or within rock range (that is, rock-throwing range) of an onlooker, a 'guileful' test is required to remain unnoticed. Those without this talent have no chance of going unseen in full daylight, without cover, and at such a close range.

A shadower can also contort their body so that they appear to be an animal of roughly the same size. Again, this can be accomplished only if there is shadow, and only if onlookers are at a distance of rock range or further. For example, the character might appear to be an ape, deer, hyena, leopard, wolf, or even some sort of beast man. Dangerous animals might frighten onlookers enough that they flee; make a 'guileful' test for the shadower to see whether this occurs. Other creatures might lure an onlooker towards the character (and perhaps into a trap); for example, a deer form might attract a hunter towards an ambush. Again, a 'guileful' test success is required for this tactic to work.

Shadowers can also attempt to disguise themselves as a person they have previously met. At the GM's discretion, this might require the shadower to wear something known to be worn by the subject, such as a similar-looking cloak or item of jewellery. Casual observers will be fooled by the disguise automatically, but a 'guileful' test is required to convince those who know the mimicked subject. Close scrutiny will not fool anyone who knows the subject well, however.

STARTING GOODS

Hood (armour), bag, grass cloak, linen tunic, armband, ear feather, and pigment.

STORYTELLER



Of all the diverse travellers and wanderers that can be encountered in Ancient Mu, the storytellers are the most popular. They are repositories of history, actors and scholars known for their ability to engage audiences and to create memories.

Storytellers are often encountered where there are gatherings. Some wander, visiting tribes and delivering news and entertainment in exchange for goods and food. Others make their homes in larger settlements, frequenting the markets and places where people gather.

Storytellers crave information, and are used as sources of gossip by some (especially those in authority). They are therefore often in positions of influence, acting as advisors to leaders.

Many storytellers are flamboyant in their dress and manner, whereas others are reserved and inconspicuous, preferring to let their tales speak for them.

A storyteller recounts tales, orates wise and insightful anecdotes, and might even manipulate memories.

A storyteller can recount tales for gain. If a storyteller performs in front of a crowd (such as at a market or tribal gathering), the character receives gifts worth one

gem, plus an additional gem for each of the traits ‘aware’, ‘charismatic’, ‘fortunate’, and ‘wise’, if they have them at the time of the performance. A storyteller can benefit from this once per gathering (they require a new audience, or at least a day to have passed, before they can tell their stories to the same people again).

A storyteller can tell a story, directed at a single human listener, which can alter the subject’s memories. Such an attempt takes several minutes, and requires the target to be able to hear the storyteller clearly. A storyteller can try to affect the same person multiple times, but that person is of course under no obligation to listen to the storyteller and might grow bored of their tales after a while.

To alter memories, first the PC describes the intended effect on the target, then makes several ‘charismatic’ tests. The number of tests made equals the number of traits currently possessed by the target. If all succeed, the described outcome occurs.

The change will not delete a memory, but simply change a detail within it. For example, the storyteller could alter the listener’s recollection of the time of day at which an event occurred or the direction they took when following a path. The more subtle the effects of the memory alteration, the longer they endure. The examples below show how a memory (someone witnessing the storyteller arm themselves, then leave camp for several hours) can be altered, and how long the effect lasts.

A dramatic memory change might last only a minute or two. Example: “If you recall, yesterday I was resting all day. It wasn’t me you saw leave the camp, it must have been someone else.”

A minor memory change might last a few hours or days. Example: “If you recall, yesterday I left the camp, but only for a few minutes, not several hours.”

A subtle memory change might last weeks or months. Example: “You may recall that yesterday, when I left the camp for several hours, I was unarmed.”

STARTING GOODS

Hide hat (armour), cushion, scarf or feathered cloak, and pouch with d6 gems.

THIEF

Shadowy figures might occasionally be seen winding their way through mazes of narrow passages or among the bright tents erected by traders, skilfully weaving around obstacles and through crowds. Beware these figures, for they can relieve you of your belongings without ever being noticed.

In the larger settlements of Ancient Mu, especially where the alleys are narrow and labyrinthine and where there are dark corners to hide in, the thieves can be found. Many thieves are born in such places, often to families made poor through misfortune. To survive, many take to thievery, but few become accomplished robbers. Those who do typically learn their skills from a mentor, and become adept at stealing from others, as well as entering homes to take what they need.

Thieves are dishonest rogues, able to steal items and break into places with ease. When attempting theft from a person, a thief can elect to take a random item rather than steal something specific. When they do so, they succeed automatically unless the victim possesses the 'aware' trait. In this latter case, the thief can still try the theft, but must make a 'guileful' test to do so without being seen. In addition, if the thief wishes to take something specific, or more than one thing, a normal 'guileful' test is required.

When electing to steal a random item, the GM can choose from among the belongings listed for the victim. If the GM lacks a list of goods carried by the victim, a 4d6 roll can be made on the below table:

4d6	Stolen Item
4	Bandage
5	Bead made from antler
6	Bracelet made from bone
7	Casting object, bones
8	Crude god statuette
9	Fetish, carved animal bone
10	Fetish, carved human bone
11	Fire making kit
12	Flaker
13	Fruit, one item
14	Gourd filled with water
15	Necklace of beads
16	Material, animal horn
17	Material, animal claws or talons
18	Nuts, a handful
19	Oil in a pot
20	Pouch with d6 gems
21	Rushlight
22	Scarf
23	Scraper
24	Skull pot

Thieves are also masters at defeating locks, and can attempt to open them even if they lack a tool (simply by using their supple and dexterous fingers). If the thief can improvise a tool, it confers a bonus die as if it were the correct tool for the lock.

STARTING GOODS

Fibre arm and leg wraps (armour), bone knife, awl, needle, pouch, and d6 gems.



BESTIAL

BEAST TAMER

Ancient Mu is a continent of many beasts, and there are many places where it is the animals, rather than humans, that hold dominion over the land. Therefore, those who can control beasts are viewed as truly gifted.

Beast tamers, called beast masters or mistresses by some, have an affinity with animals, which is typically acquired when young (although some develop the ability later, as they gain exposure to the wilderness). They are often more comfortable around animals than people, and enjoy wild places more than they do areas populated with people. Some beast tamers carry a 'beast mark', a symbol of their animal affinity. This might be a birthmark, scar, or tattoo shaped like an animal, or might even be a bodily manifestation of the beast, such as a vestigial tail, cat-like eyes, or talon-shaped fingernails.

Beast tamers commune with animals, and become friends with them. This ability can be passed on to those considered to have the instincts and nature of the beast, or an affinity with animals.

The beast tamer talent allows a character to have animal companions. Characters have one animal, plus one additional animal for each of the traits 'charismatic', 'fortunate', and 'wise' that they possess.

If a character later acquires one or more of these traits, they gain a new animal companion.

Animals stay within the vicinity of the beast tamer, and will appear when required, at a signal chosen by the player (typically a special call). Animals will aid a character in performing a specific activity, as long as the character remains relatively close to the animal (rock range or less). Each animal can be summoned once per day for one specific task (such as to use its special skill or to aid in a single combat encounter). Once an animal has assisted the character, it will wander away (to rest, hunt for food, and so on). It cannot be called upon again that day.

If an animal is used in combat, it must be commanded to attack a foe (which counts as an action). When in combat, the player makes tests for the animal. If an animal is killed, a new (randomly determined) animal will replace it in 1d6 days.

See also the beasts section for details of animals.

Players can choose their character's animal companions, or can use the table below to determine them randomly. Roll once per animal, re-rolling repeats.

1	BAT
A bat will assist a character moving in absolute darkness by using its echo location and guiding the character with squeaks and beats of its wings. It will do this until the character commands it to stop or a light source is found.	
2	CAT
A cat will show the character the best sneaking path when commanded to do so. This means that a single sneaking attempt made by a character automatically succeeds, with no test required.	
3	LIZARD (KOMODO)
Komodos have a scent organ used when they flick their tongue, and they can be commanded to detect living beings or dead things (corpses and carcasses), even if they are hidden. The lizard will travel to the nearest source (excluding the character and known companions), as long as it is within bow range.	
4	MONKEY
A howler monkey will show the character the best way to climb and leap when commanded to do so. This means that a single climbing or leaping attempt made by a character automatically succeeds, with no test required (as long as it is within the capabilities of a human). In a forest or jungle, a monkey can be commanded to find a meal of berries, nuts, and fruit for the character, as long as there is a source in the vicinity (within sight range).	
5	RAT
A rat can gnaw through soft materials (such as ropes, sacks, bindings, clothes, and even wooden items). The harder the material, the longer it takes the rat (a few turns for a cord or thin rope, an hour or so for a piece of wood). A rat can also detect food if it is within bow range, and can be commanded to locate the nearest source.	
6	WOLF
A wolf aids in tracking. When commanded, the wolf will track a single target, which means that an attempt by the character to follow tracks automatically succeeds, with no test required.	

STARTING GOODS

Hood (armour), bag, hunk of meat, and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Antler spike
2	Bone
3	Hide whip
4	Horn stake
5	Sling and 2d6 stones
6	Wood spear

SAVAGE

Primitive tribes abound in the many lands of Ancient Mu. These are the tribes that face the harshest existence, often living in barren and hostile places filled with ferocious animals and hostile tribes. To survive in such places requires a natural strength and endurance few others can match. Foremost among these tribes are those who are truly resilient: the savages.

A savage is someone who has endured incredible hardship and has learnt to overcome pain and injury to the point where they are able to shrug off wounds. Savages typically have a brutal and fearsome appearance, with skin as hard as that of a mammoth. Some adorn their bodies with decorative scars, a visual sign of their power.

Savages are survivors, and tougher than most. They get a bonus die to resist illnesses and disease.

In addition, they are naturally vigorous, and able to avoid attacks that would strike others. In combat, each successful melee attack against the savage allows a single die to be rolled once (the 'savage' die). If this results in a 6, the attack is avoided and has no effect. However, if the die results in a 1, the savage is deemed fatigued, and does not benefit from this aspect of the talent again for the remainder of the combat encounter.

STARTING GOODS

Bag, 1d6 pieces of fruit, and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Antler spike
2	Bone
3	Cudgel
4	Hand axe
5	Rock
6	Wood spear

SIMIAN



Deep within the jungles and forests of Ancient Mu are the lands of the 'ape men': the people who live as apes. Here, they build leaf-covered tree homes, which they connect with vine bridges and log walkways. Many of these tribes live in jungles so dense and remote that no other being has set eyes upon them.

Within their domain, simians move as shadowy tree top figures, deftly passing from branch to branch faster than many ground dwellers can sprint. Some tribes of simians paint their skin in the colours of the jungle, and amid the trees they are like the briefly glimpsed ape ghosts of legend.

Those who live as apes develop broad and powerful arms, giving them an ape-like appearance. Those with this talent are often seen to be one with the apes, and will at times be deemed an ape, rather than a human.

Simians have a unique ability known as 'brachiation', or tree-swinging locomotion. Characters in forest or jungle terrain can opt to travel using this type of locomotion, and when doing so can travel twice as fast as their normal movement speed (players can add one to the range they can move in a turn: see combat).

Characters with this talent will automatically succeed at a climb up to spear range, and only have to make climbing tests beyond this range. Likewise, if a character with this talent falls from a height of spear range or less, they automatically arrest their descent. See the activities section for details of climbing and falling.

Simian characters, being somewhat bestial in nature, can try to evade beast attacks. Whenever attacked by a beast (an animal, but not a beast man or human), the player gets to roll a single die: the 'ape die'. If this roll results in a 6, the attack is evaded and has no effect. However, if the roll results in a 1, the simian is deemed fatigued, and does not benefit from this aspect again for the remainder of the combat encounter.

STARTING GOODS

Fibre tunic (armour), bag, 15-metre rope, and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Antler spike
2	Bone
3	Bone knife
4	Blow pipe and d6 darts
5	Horn stake
6	Sling and 2d6 stones

SNAKE CHARMER

Across Ancient Mu, snakes are mostly feared and, in some cases, held in awe. Many see snakes as powerful, enigmatic beings; they are, after all, typically small creatures that are able to kill animals larger than themselves. In addition, some foreboding areas of Ancient Mu harbour the remains of statues and carvings of snake beings, and some believe there are serpent gods.

Snake charmers have power over snakes. They possess a rare skill, known by a few strange and courageous individuals, to command snakes and even resist their venom. For this reason, snake charmers are often viewed as a sort of sorcerer, and it is not unknown for the arrival of a snake charmer to cause consternation in a settlement.

Snake charmers often tattoo their bodies with serpent designs, which they believe helps them control snakes. They carry an instrument, such as a flute, which they use when attempting to control a snake.

A character with this talent has power over snakes, and is naturally immune to their venom.

When a character with this talent encounters a snake, they can try to command it, as long as it has not yet attacked the character. To command the snake, the snake charmer plays a musical instrument (of any kind) within the vicinity of the snake. The player must then make one ‘charismatic’ test for each trait normally possessed by the snake. If they are all successful, the snake can be commanded. If one of the tests fails, that particular snake cannot be controlled.

Typical commands include to leave the area, to leave the snake charmer and comrades unbitten, to attack a foe, and so on. Complex instructions, or more than one command, will confuse the snake so that it does not comply. Only one snake can be commanded at a time. The GM has final say as to which commands are acceptable and within the capabilities of the snake.

A snake can be commanded any number of times, but each command requires the requisite number of tests to be successful. A command cannot be for an activity that lasts more than several minutes – snakes do not have particularly good memories.

If a snake charmer possesses twice as many traits as the snake, the snake can be befriended. Befriending a snake follows the same process as commanding them, but requires one additional successful ‘charismatic’ test. If the process succeeds, the snake becomes a companion of the character, will allow itself to be carried and held, and can be given commands at will. The maximum number of snakes that a snake charmer can befriend is equal to the total number of the snake charmer’s traits multiplied by two.

Snake charmers are immune to snake venoms, and automatically succeed in any test required to overcome them.

STARTING GOODS

Hide arm and leg wraps (armour), bullroarer, and drum or flute.

SOUL EATER

At the dawn of time, when even Mu was young, there were many unnatural and unwholesome things: things that spawned when the forces of nature were immature and chaotic. Over time, nature weeded out such unwholesome and abhorrent creations. And yet, some of these things did not die.

Amid the dark ruins of an ancient city, the ancient ghouls endure. The ghouls are a forgotten race, with the power to steal the abilities and knowledge of others by consuming their flesh. Their dark ways are known to a few humans who have gained the abhorrent ghouls' power. These humans are known variously as the skill stealers, flesh eaters, or soul eaters.

Soul eaters file their teeth to points, the better to rend the flesh of the dead. Their unsavoury practices also give them an unhealthy pallor, and few can bare to gaze into their soulless eyes. Hardly any soul eaters are open about their ability; they would be hounded out and killed by many tribes. Thus, they lurk in shadows, using their power only when they can do so secretly...

This rather unsavoury talent confers an ancient power to acquire abilities from the dead. The character must consume some flesh from a deceased person, then a 'resilient' test is made. If successful, the character temporarily acquires a single talent or trait that was once possessed by the deceased person. The number of traits normally possessed by the character (excluding a newly acquired one) determines the number of hours for which the soul eater retains their acquired trait or talent. After this time, the knowledge fades and it is no longer useable.

Only one attempt to gain an ability is possible per cadaver, and it will work only on human beings. The GM chooses the acquired trait or talent; the character has no control over what is gained. Only one trait or talent acquired in this manner is useable at a time; if another is acquired, the earlier one is lost. If the victim of this gruesome ability only has traits or talents that are already possessed by the soul eater, nothing is gained.

Additional traits count only for the purposes of conferring a bonus die to tests; they do not count towards other effects (such as the number of wounds that can be sustained: see combat for details). All of the abilities of an acquired talent are useable, but note that some talents might not be useful in the short time that they are possessed. For example, acquiring the beast tamer talent would allow a character to make use of the animal companions of the deceased person, but if those animals are dead, the talent will have expired by the time the character has acquired new ones (in 1d6 days).

STARTING GOODS

Skull helm (armour), mask, and bone knife.

TRACKER

In many areas of Ancient Mu, specialist guides and navigators are prized for their ability to lead a party through the most inhospitable areas, or to find the wildest of beasts. These trackers use skills passed from generation to generation, and maintain a knowledge of the wilderness that few others can match.

Trackers are typically hardy folk, accustomed to travelling through difficult terrain in all weathers for days at a time. They can be recognised by their often dusty or mud-spattered clothes, rugged features, or weather-beaten skin.

Trackers are of vital importance if a group wishes to regularly travel through unknown territories. Many groups that have embarked on such journeys without these capable folk have become lost, never to be seen again.

A tracker is skilled at identifying and following animal tracks, finding pathways, navigating, and ambushing.

In most circumstances, a tracker can automatically identify the type of tracks (such as whether they were made by a wolf or deer, for example) after studying them for a brief while. In addition, a tracker can identify the specific animal (such as a wolf with an injured forelimb) or person (such as a comrade) that made the tracks with an 'aware' test. This latter ability is beyond the skill of characters lacking this talent, who must make a test to identify the type of track and have no chance of spotting anything more specific about those tracks.

When following tracks, an 'aware' test is required only when passing through difficult terrain (such as over hard and rocky ground), or when visibility is poor (such as at night). Otherwise, a tracker follows tracks automatically with no test required.

A tracker is able to scan terrain and identify either the quickest or safest route automatically. Attempts by characters without this talent require an 'aware' test. Note that the assessment of the route is based solely on visible factors (such as the terrain underfoot, obstacles, gradient, sections that are possibly difficult to navigate, weather conditions, and so on), and does not account for hidden dangers or events that might occur on the route.

A tracker can automatically succeed at navigating using the sun or (at night) the stars, and can find directions by using terrain features (such as the growth of plants, tree rings, or the prevalence of snow on mountain slopes). For other characters, successful navigation requires a 'wise' test.

Finally, a tracker can organise an ambush. It takes a tracker several minutes to do so, during which time the tracker looks for the best hiding places, terrain, the position of the sun or other light sources, and so on. A 'wise' test is made, and if successful, all participants of the ambush get a bonus die for any tests made during the first turn of combat. A failed test means the tracker did not adequately plan the ambush, and combat is conducted normally.

STARTING GOODS

Tabard (armour), bag, hood, sleeping fur, and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Antler pick
2	Bone knife
3	Fire-hardened spear
4	Horn stake
5	Sling and 2d6 stones
6	Wood spear



FIGHTER

BARBARIAN

Some of the areas of Ancient Mu are so remote, hazardous, and unforgiving in their terrain that few can survive there. These are the lands where the storms can last weeks, where temperatures can range from blistering heat to brutal cold in the space of a day, and where the land is scarred by ruinous earthquakes and volcanic ash. It is in these lands that many of the barbarians of Ancient Mu dwell.

The rugged and savage barbarians live a harsh life. Their tribes, though few in number, fight a constant war as they compete for their land's scant resources. Unremitting war forces them to learn to fight from an early age; in the barbarian lands, even children carry weapons. The battle prowess of the barbarian peoples comes at a cost; their bodies are typically scarred and twisted from badly healed bones, or they lack fingers, ears, or sometimes limbs.

A character with this talent is deemed to have barbarian lineage. This might be evident from an early age, or it might manifest later as the character gains experience. The talent gives a character the ability to fight with a bloodthirsty power few can match. When using a melee weapon, if a barbarian hits, they will always cause an extra wound. This is in addition to the usual wound caused from the hit, as well as any effect caused by the weapon (see combat for details).

STARTING GOODS

Hide arm and leg wraps (armour), ear fang or armlet, and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Antler pick
2	Bone
3	Cudgel
4	Fire-hardened spear
5	Hand axe
6	Wood spear



BRAWLER

Within the stone cities and tented settlements, in the more developed lands of Ancient Mu, there are places where people congregate to trade, meet, gossip, and be entertained. Amid the brightly coloured trade tents, or within the market squares surrounded by mud brick buildings, storytellers, dancers, and tumblers entertain visitors who have come to buy and sell. Here too are the brawlers; fighters who entertain for a living. For scraps of food, a trinket, or a few gems, brawlers will leap, tumble, wrestle, and throw their opponents until one lies breathless and subdued. Crowds cheer and throw gifts at the victor out of admiration, and at the loser out of pity.

Brawlers are rugged, nimble, and agile fighters. Many use their abilities to entertain, while others can be found acting as guards or thugs for the wealthy and powerful. Brawlers wear little, and often oil their bodies to make it difficult for opponents to grab them.

Brawler characters are skilled improvisational wrestlers, relying on their innate abilities as much as their weapons. They are at their best in melee combat against human and beast-men foes, when they have an opportunity to employ a range of tactics.

In combat, a brawler gets a bonus die when using any of the tactics other than rally. This is in addition to a bonus die acquired from an applicable trait.

Furthermore, when a brawler is successfully attacked by an unarmed bipedal foe (whether human or beast man), the player gets to roll a single die; the 'brawl die'. If this roll results in a 6, the attack is evaded and has no effect. However, if the die results in a 1, the brawler is deemed fatigued, and does not benefit from this aspect again for the remainder of the combat encounter. This aspect of the talent can be used once per turn, against a single attack.

STARTING GOODS

Hide arm wraps (armour), bag, gourd of sweet oil, and pouch containing 1d6 gems.

CASTER

On the great grasslands of Ancient Mu can be found the nomadic tribes, who roam the open plains in search of the herds of grazing animals that are their prey. The lithe and limber people of these tribes are highly skilled hunters, and their ability with ranged weapons is renowned.

The casters follow the animal herds, and learn the nature of their prey. As a sign of respect, many mark their bodies with symbols dedicated to the animals they will hunt, using pigments to draw symbols representing horns, hoof marks, tails, claws, and fangs. Most will use the hides of the animals they hunt for clothing, and might decorate spears and bows with animal fur, teeth, and horns. The skills of these hunters are prized, and many outsiders seek tutelage from these nomadic tribes.

The caster talent confers great skill with ranged weapons. When making ranged attacks, the character gets to make an additional ranged attack for each of the traits 'accurate' and 'dexterous' (unless they have been lost due to injury). For example, a character with the trait 'accurate' could make two attacks per turn, whereas a character with both 'accurate' and 'dexterous' could make three. Attacks can be directed to the same or different foes. Bonus dice, such as from a weapon or trait, do not apply to the additional attacks. Likewise, weapon effects can occur only on the initial attack.

STARTING GOODS

Fibre leg wraps (armour), grass cloak, and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Blow pipe and 2d6 darts
2	A pouch of 2d6 rocks
3	Self bow and 2d6 arrows
4	Sling and 3d6 stones
5	A bundle of 2d3 fire-hardened spears
6	A bundle of 2d3 wood spears

FERAL

In Ancient Mu, there are many who live as wild animals, foraging and hunting with their bare hands. Some see them as primitives, but in truth the feral are simply wild and savage, closer to the animal world than the world of humans.

The feral fight like beasts, rending and clawing with their hands. They can be seen in the wilder places, their sinewy bodies covered in pigments that make them look like wolves, boars, or big cats. Many grow their hair long, so that they appear to have manes like those of a lion or horse. They make fearsome foes, and are at their most savage when cornered and outnumbered.

This character has something of the wild about them, and when they fight they can do so in a frenzy, as if they were a savage beast. If fighting unarmed, a character with this talent gets an additional attack (two instead of one), plus one more attack for each of the traits 'agile' and 'strong' (unless they are lost due to injury). For example, a character with the trait 'agile' gets three attacks, whereas a character with both 'agile' and 'strong' gets four attacks.

The additional attacks apply only when fighting unarmed, and only to attacks that cause damage (rather than restrain, for example). Each attack can be used against a different foe, as long as all targets are close to each other (hand range). Bonus dice, such as from a trait, do not apply to the additional attacks.

STARTING GOODS

Hide arm and leg wraps (armour), gourd filled with sour juice, and salve.

HUNTER

Wherever there are animals, there are hunters. The plains hunters dress in skins and wear horn headdresses, hunting with bows and spears. In the dense jungles, hunters paint their bodies in dark-green pigments and use blowpipes to shoot at tree-dwelling beasts. In the snow-capped high mountains, the hunters dress in heavy furs and use slings and spears to target prey.

Hunters are an important part of many tribes, providing a rich source of protein and materials for the tribe's crafters. Many can also be seen travelling to settlements, where they trade animal skins and fur. Although their methods can vary, hunters have one thing in common; their skill at using ranged weapons.

Hunters are renowned for their deadly ranged attacks. They are able to bring down the largest and strongest prey, sometimes with just one throw of a spear or shot from a bow.

When using a ranged weapon (be that a thrown weapon such as a spear or rock, or a missile weapon such as a bow or blowgun), if a hunter hits, they always cause an extra wound. This is in addition to the usual wound caused from the hit. If the attack causes an 'effect' (as described in the combat section), the extra wound applies in addition to it.

STARTING GOODS

Fur arm and leg wraps (armour), pouch, scraper, and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Blow pipe and d6 darts
2	Long bow and d6 arrows
3	Self bow and d6 arrows
4	Sling and 2d6 stones
5	A bundle of d6 fire-hardened spears
6	A bundle of d6 wood spears

WARRIOR



There are areas of Ancient Mu where the tribes war regularly with each other. To survive, these tribes maintain a small force of warriors, whose purpose is to guard, patrol, and fight.

Warriors are often the only people in a tribe or settlement who are specifically trained to fight. Others might take up arms when called upon, but it is warriors who have learnt to use them day after day.

For most, an antler pick, a hafted axe, or a bone knife is a tool. When warriors look upon such an item, they see a weapon.

Even the strongest and most resilient person, when faced with a warrior in combat, will soon realise that they are outmatched and probably doomed...

This character is an accomplished fighter; a warrior skilled with melee weapons.

When fighting with a melee weapon, a character with this talent gets an additional attack for each of the traits 'dexterous' and 'strong' (as long as they have not been lost due to injury). For example, a character with 'dexterous' can make two attacks, whereas a character with both 'dexterous' and 'strong' can make three attacks.

The additional attacks apply only when using a melee weapon. Each attack can be used against a different foe, as long as all targets are close to each other (hand range). Bonus dice, such as from a weapon or trait, do not apply to the additional attacks. Likewise, weapon effects can occur only on the initial attack.

STARTING GOODS

Hide shield (armour) and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Bone axe
2	Bone-tipped spear
3	Fire-hardened spear
4	Flint cudgel
5	Stone-topped cudgel
6	Spine whip



ORACLE

CHIEF

There are numerous tribes throughout Ancient Mu, of varying size and influence. But one thing they all have in common is a leadership structure, with those who organise and control at the top of the hierarchy, and those who follow at the bottom. Many tribes have a single leader, who dominates and exercises absolute authority. Other tribes might have a number of advisors, elders, mentors, and so on who counsel a leader when decisions have to be made.

A chief is one such tribal leader, advisor, or aide, and is accustomed to authority and power. Such figures can be of any gender or age, depending on the customs of the tribe. A chief has power over some of the members of the tribe, although not all might be completely loyal or co-operative. Indeed, many chiefs might be deposed tribal leaders who are plotting to seize back power with a group of rebels. Others might lead breakaway groups, looking to start a new tribe.

A chief often has a symbol of authority, such as an item of jewellery, a tattoo, or a decorated weapon, which serves as a visual representation of their power. A chief might be known by other titles, such as advisor, leader, elder, queen, headman, master, and so on.

A chief has a number of like-minded followers who see the character as their leader or inspirational figure. The chief automatically begins with two followers, and gains one extra follower for each of the traits 'fortunate', 'wilful' and 'wise'. In addition, if the chief has the trait 'charismatic', this confers two more followers. Note that the loss of a trait will not result in the loss of a corresponding follower.

To quickly determine the details for a group of followers, roll 2d6 on the below table for each one (re-rolling repeats).

FOLLOWERS

Followers can be any gender. In the table below, follower names are given as male, with a female suffix in brackets.



2D6	NAME	TRAITS	FLAW	WEAPON
2	Arnaz(u)	Guileful, wilful, wise	Clumsy	Flint knife
3	Balkat(ia)	Agile, resilient	Oblivious	Cudgel
4	Dak(ia)	Aware, dexterous	Clumsy	Bone knife
5	Handar(u)	Charismatic, strong	Ignorant	Bone axe
6	Kur(a)	Fortunate, guileful	Cautious	Cudgel
7	Mirlok(ea)	Aware, strong	Careless	Staff
8	Nar(u)	Brave, wilful	Awkward	Wood spear
9	Orm(ia)	Dexterous, agile	Sickly	Bone knife
10	Sef(ia)	Accurate, wise	Passive	Sling
11	Tul(ea)	Brave, charismatic	Weak	Fire-hardened spear
12	Zorbal(a)	Agile, resilient, wilful	Unlucky	Hide whip

Alternatively, the GM might wish to allow the player to create the character's followers. Each follower has d3 traits, and a single flaw. They do not have talents. Followers have one weapon, and might also have other goods assigned by the GM.

Followers are controlled by the GM, but can be instructed by the PC. The GM might also wish to have the player make all tests for the character's followers. They will perform simple tasks for the character and do menial chores. They might accompany the character and help during adventures, but note that if a follower is killed, they are not replaced until the character returns to their home or another location designated as the character's base.

Followers will need to be given opportunities to rest and find food or they will sicken and perhaps abandon the character. Likewise, if abused, they might leave the character.

STARTING GOODS

Bone shield (armour), feather or fur cloak, and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Bone
2	Hide whip
3	Fire-hardened spear
4	Staff
5	Thorn staff
6	Wood spear

CULTIST

Many are the gods of Ancient Mu. They are said to be older than Mu itself, existing (so it is believed) in forgotten places within the penumbra, the land between shadow and light, and the parallel land called the netherworld.

The gods covet followers, and the followers seek to know their gods, hoping for enlightenment, gain, power, or to simply mitigate their suffering. The most zealous followers are the cultists, those who seek to serve their deity with fanatical devotion.

Cultists follow a particular deity, or sometimes a pantheon of several gods. They typically follow a code of conduct and have a set of beliefs unique to their god. Many carry a symbol of their devotion, perhaps a charm or curio, or else mark their bodies with the sign of their god (perhaps by tattooing or scarification). Some envy the cultists' devotion, others fear cultists as zealous fanatics with an uncanny ability to survive perils others would succumb to.

Cultists are characters that zealously follow a deity, spirit, or supernatural being. Cultists believe they are rewarded for their devotion by being favoured by their god, allowing them to emerge unscathed from dangerous situations.

Whenever the cultist would normally be injured, the player can roll a single die (called the 'cult die'). A roll of 6 on this die means the character miraculously avoids the injury (perhaps they tripped just as they were about to be struck, or the attacker snagged their weapon on a nearby bush just as it was about to strike). This works against all forms of injury caused by violence or mishap, but not damage caused as a result of poison, or illnesses and disease.

If at any time the result of the cult die is 1, the character loses the favour of their deity, and this talent will no longer work until such time as the character has made an offering to their god. An offering must be of goods to a value in gems that is equal to the character's number of traits (including any temporarily negated through injury). The offering can be left at a shrine, temple, or other area appropriate to the deity (as agreed by the GM).

In combat, this talent can be used in conjunction with another defensive talent (such as 'savage' or 'dancer'); the player would therefore be able to roll for both talents versus an attack if they wished.

STARTING GOODS

Crude god statuette, and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Antler pick
2	Antler spike
3	Bone
4	Cudgel
5	Hand axe
6	Wood spear

PRIEST/PRIESTESS

Temples and shrines exist in many places within Ancient Mu. Some are built on the ruins of older temples to forgotten gods, and these are often awe-inspiring monolithic structures of stone. Others are smaller and more humble places, such as shrines within caves, decorated groves amid forests, or simple wooden buildings.

Tending these places are the priests and priestesses, devout worshippers of a god. They are the ones who organise rituals, make offerings, lead ceremonies, promote the worship of their deity, and see to it that religious practices continue. For this they believe they are favoured, that their god assists them in times of need.

Priests and priestesses often wander the land on some mission for their deity, or to promote its worship. Some wear distinctive clothes; others simply carry a token of their belief. Most are welcomed, but some follow gods that are deemed by many to be malevolent and harmful. The followers of these deities are thus more often shunned and feared.

Priests and priestesses are representatives of organised religions, which are mostly established in the settled areas of Ancient Mu. A priest or priestess is able to gain the favour of their god with a successful 'charismatic' test. This can be attempted once per day. If successful, the character gets a number of favours equal to their normal number of traits. Failure means they get just one favour. These favours take the form of 'second chances', allowing a player to re-roll a failed test once, at the cost of a favour. Only one favour can be used per test, however.

Favours are available until used, but do not accumulate. As soon as a test to acquire new favours is made, any unused ones are lost.

A priest or priestess can make a sacrifice prior to making the test to acquire favours, and by doing so might gain an additional favour. The sacrifice must be in the form of goods with a value at least equal to the number of traits normally possessed by the character (the more capable the character, the more the god expects of them). For example, a character with four traits must sacrifice one or more items with a value of four or more gems.

When items are sacrificed, they are considered used and are no longer available to the character. Thus food would be left as an offering and could not then be eaten, a tool would perhaps be buried, cast into a lake, or broken, incense would be burned, oil poured away, and so on. Attempts by the priest or priestess to use goods that have been sacrificed will result in the loss of their god's favour, so that no tests to gain favour can be made for 2d6 days.

STARTING GOODS

Hood (armour), crude god statuette, fire making kit, incense, and pot.



RITUALIST



Common among many of the religions, cults, and communities of Ancient Mu is the performance of ceremonies, rites, and rituals. These are often done in service of a deity or as a means to symbolically mark an occasion. Some, however, are performed in order to create a powerful effect, a type of sorcery that can affect others. To perform such rituals requires a ritualist who has been taught the hidden techniques required to create sorcerous effects.

Ritualists are often imposing and solemn individuals, able to command great power to assist others in a variety of ways. Among the tribes of Mu, ritualists are both admired and feared, for they have the ability to protect and heal, but also the power to harm.

A ritualist can perform a selection of rites that produce a variety of effects. A ritualist must spend time performing a ritual, roughly a number of hours equal to the ritual's power divided by two (rounded up). The potency of a ritual is called its power, and this equals the normal number of traits possessed by the character. The power of the ritual can be increased if others participate; for every five people involved in the ritual (including the ritualist), its power increases by one (to a maximum equal to

the ritualist's own power multiplied by two). For example, a ritualist with four traits performing a ritual with nine others (ten people in total) adds two to the ritual's power, for a total of six.

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

CURSE

A number of named persons equal to the ritual's power are afflicted with a disease. A 'resilient' test is made for each affected person to see whether they succumb to the disease (as detailed in the hazards section).

FAMINE

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

FERTILITY

A number of named persons equal to the power of the ritual have their chance of conceiving a child increased. For game purposes, a person has a one in six chance of becoming pregnant each time they copulate. The ritual improves that to two in six for their next copulation.

HEALING

A ritual participant is healed of wounds equal to the ritual's power. This can heal a severely injured person who has lost all of their traits, but will not bring back a person from death.

PLENTY

A number of ritual participants equal to the ritual's power acquire food. The number of meals' worth of food acquired equals the ritual's power. Note that the food will not simply appear; instead it will be found when gathering, or take the form of additional animals killed when hunting.

PROTECTION

A number of ritual participants equal to the ritual's power are protected. During their next combat, the participant can ignore all wounds from a single attack (of the player's choice). If unused by the time the combat encounter ends, the protection is wasted (it cannot be saved for another encounter, and cannot be 'layered' with protection from other rituals).

STARTING GOODS

Tabard (armour), cloak of fur or feathers, skull headdress, and staff.

SEER

Predicting the future is an ancient skill, passed from generation to generation. Many different techniques are used to foretell future events, but by far the most common one in Ancient Mu is the casting of sticks, stones, or bones. Those who practise this art are known as seers.

Seers are popular figures in many tribes, and can also be found among traders and at large gatherings. Seers earn a living by making predictions: they cast bones, sticks, or stones, and interpret their patterns to foretell a person's future. Seers develop an expressive language to veil some of the meaning of their prognostications, creating enough ambiguity to ensure that they cannot be accused of making false predictions.

Many seers dress in eccentric and flamboyant ways, wearing extravagant clothes or jewellery so that they stand out and seem, especially to the gullible, to be unusual and exotic.

A seer can make a prediction about the outcome of a future event, and in so doing potentially affect that outcome. To make a prediction, the seer casts stones, sticks, or bones and then spends a few minutes interpreting them. The player makes a 'wise' test, and if successful, the seer or a named person in the company of the seer gains a bonus die for all tests of one type involving a specific event. Failure indicates that the prediction confers no advantage. The bonus die works in conjunction with any other bonus dice that might apply to the test (such as from a tool).

Note that the prediction must relate to a specific, named occurrence rather than a generic one. Thus, a seer could make a prediction such as "you will prevail in your forthcoming fight with Balok the savage", but not "you will prevail in a future battle". Likewise, a seer could state that "you will be able to safely climb the perilous cliff", but a prediction such as "you will safely climb the next obstacle you encounter" would not work. The GM has final say as to whether a prediction is suitable.

The affected character gains the advantage for all tests of one type relating to the event, for as long as the event lasts, but for no longer than a whole day. For example, in combat this would mean the affected character's attacks gets a bonus die until the fight ends. Only one person per event can be affected, and a character cannot benefit from more than one prediction at the same time.

One prediction attempt per specific event is possible. In addition, if the named event does not occur, the prediction has no effect.

Seers are able to make predictions during combat, but only regarding their own fate. This works by allowing the player to roll a die (called the 'prediction die') just before the seer is attacked by a foe in close (but not ranged) combat. If the result is a 6, the attacker loses a die for their attack (but never to less than one die). This is because the seer was able to see nature of the attack just before it happened. However, if the prediction die results in a 1, the seer cannot use this ability for the remainder of the encounter (their second sight temporarily fails them).

STARTING GOODS

Hide hat (armour), armband, bag, casting stones, bones or sticks, ear fang, fire making kit, pot, and incense.

SOOTHSAYER

Thanks to their pervading aura of potency and dread, crowds will hastily part to allow soothsayers to pass unmolested. When these intimidating individuals speak, it is with an arcane power that few can resist.

Soothsayers have the ability to use the force of their magnetism and persona as a weapon or tool that can cause others to hesitate and even tremble. They are thought to have learnt the secret to speaking with the power of the gods.

Many soothsayers wear dark and gloomy clothing, such as dark hide tunics, hoods, or cloaks made of dark feathers. This serves to enhance the aura of dread that surrounds them.

Soothsayers are typically drawn to populated places, as their power relies on a steady supply of listeners. They can sway crowds, inciting them to fearful action, and can engender dread into individuals, so that they are stupefied by fear.

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

A single humanoid foe can be targeted as an action. A 'charismatic' test is made, and if successful, the foe is affected. Starting with the foe's next action, and for the remainder of the encounter, the affected foe will hesitate and be unable to act. Instead, they stand dumbfounded, filled with anxiety and indecision. Each turn, a 'wilful' test can be made for the foe to see whether they overcome their fear. If successful, the effect ends and the foe is no longer able to be affected by the soothsayer for the rest of the encounter.

A soothsayer can also try to target a crowd of people, as long as they are not engaged in combat. In this case, one 'charismatic' test is made for every five persons (or fraction of five) in the crowd. If all succeed, the soothsayer has successfully caused dread and disquiet, so that the crowd will either disperse, moving away and not troubling the soothsayer, or else be inclined to believe the soothsayer's warnings (for a short time, at least). In this latter case, the soothsayer must speak of some threat or danger, and the crowd are then more likely to be afraid of it or to act upon it. For example, the soothsayer might warn of a coming storm, and this might be enough to send some of the crowd cowering back to their homes. The player chooses which of the two effects is caused.

A crowd can only be affected by a soothsayer once per day in this manner. Note that the duration of any effect caused by the soothsayer can vary, depending on the

nature of the warnings and other factors that might modify the opinion of crowd members, as judged by the GM.

STARTING GOODS

Hood (armour), dark linen or hide tunic, black feather cloak, and bone knife.



SORCERER

BONE CHANTER

In the gloomiest lands of Ancient Mu lurk those who still practise dark and mysterious skills long thought lost and forgotten by most. Of the skills that remain from those dread-filled, ancient times, one of the most feared is the talent of the bone chanter.

Bone chanters can be found where there are burials, tombs, and other dead things, for they are the ones who call up the dead. For them, the most loyal servant is a corpse, for such beings will rarely disobey a command. The bone chanters are shunned by many and hated by their enemies, as to die at the hands of a bone chanter is to risk servitude beyond death. Some bone chanters revel in this reputation, and paint their bodies so as to appear like skeletons. Others hide their talent and seek to blend in, using their gift cautiously.

This talent confers the ghastly power to animate cadavers and skeletons. This requires the use of a fetish, which is pointed at the corpse as the character chants ancient words to animate dead flesh and bone. A fetish is a focus for the bone chanter's magical powers, and is typically an object such as a stick or bone decorated with carvings, feathers, and animal skulls. Each time a fetish is used, the player must roll a die. On a roll of 1, the fetish 'breaks': its power is spent and another one must be obtained. On any other result, the power of the fetish holds and it can be used again. See the goods section for details of fetishes.

Cadavers are typically animated from recently dead foes, whereas skeletons are animated from the long dead at burial sites or ancient battle grounds. There is no limit to the number of dead a character can animate, but each animation counts as an action. If there are no corpses or burials in the area, the character cannot use this power. Animating a cadaver counts as the character's action in a turn of combat.

A bone chanter must direct a cadaver or it will wander aimlessly, attacking at random. Commanding a cadaver requires a 'charismatic' test. If successful, the cadaver obeys. Failure indicates that it begins to act of its own free will, and no further attempts can be made to control that cadaver. Bone chanters, beware: cadavers and skeletons with free will might attack the very person that gave them renewed vigour (at the GM's discretion). Such is the risk of dealing with the dead.

A cadaver can perform basic tasks such as fighting, carrying items, guarding an



area, and so on. They are able to make guttural shouts and form a word or two, but cannot otherwise speak. Complex or long-term actions will result in the cadaver failing at the task, and probably wandering off. Cadavers will make use of weapons and armour if they had them when they died, or are given them by the bone chanter.

A cadaver has d2 traits; roll a d6 on the table below for each one (re-rolling repeats). Cadavers have the flaws 'passive' and 'ignorant'.

1	Aware
2	Brave
3	Fortunate
4	Guileful
5	Resilient
6	Strong

Although there is no limit to the number of cadavers a bone chanter can animate, in practice it becomes increasingly difficult for a bone chanter to control a large number of them. Players should note that each must be regularly commanded (which requires a successful 'charismatic' test), and that large groups of uncontrolled animated cadavers pose a risk to the bone chanter and their allies, as well as others.

STARTING GOODS

Skull helm (armour), carved animal bone fetish, and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Blow pipe and d6 darts
2	Bone
3	Bone knife
4	Fire-hardened spear
5	Thorn staff
6	Spine whip

CAVE PAINTER

The desire to depict what can be seen and experienced is an ancient one. The earliest peoples of Ancient Mu developed a system of art, making their own pigments and using their hands to paint fascinating and vivid scenes on cave walls.

The cave painter is a person of unique power and ability who knows the ancient techniques of the earliest inhabitants of Mu. These individuals are able to create such evocative images that the very spirits they depict are summoned.

Cave painters are masters of art, and many decorate themselves with pigments to display their talents. Some have unique signatures, and other cave painters can often determine the artist simply by studying the painted scenes.

A cave painter is an artist who is able to decorate caves and depict scenes on cave walls. A cave painter also has the ability to summon animal spirits through art. The cave painter must spend a turn drawing the desired spirit on a nearby wall (and it must be a solid wall; a tree, piece of cloth, or the ground will not do). The spirit will appear on the following turn if the summoning is successful. A cave painter must have, at a minimum, pigment in order to paint.

A 'dexterous' test is required to summon a spirit. The types of spirit a cave painter can summon depend on which traits the painter possesses:

Ape	Dexterous
Bat	Agile
Bear	Charismatic
Boar	Brave
Cat	Guileful
Dog	Aware
Lizard	Accurate
Rat	Resilient
Scorpion	Wilful
Snake	Fortunate
Spider	Wise
Wolf	Strong

For example, a character with the traits 'aware', 'charismatic', 'resilient', and 'wise' can summon the spirits of dogs, snakes, rats, and spiders. If a character loses a trait, they cannot summon the corresponding spirit until the trait is re-acquired.

When a cave painter acquires additional traits, their repertoire increases, and they can summon a new type of spirit based on the trait they have acquired.

When a spirit appears, it will obey one command issued by the character (such as to attack a foe). Any task given to an animal spirit must be of short duration; a spirit will disobey a command to perform a task lasting more than a few minutes. Once it has completed this task, assuming it has not been destroyed, the cave painter must command it to depart. This requires a successful 'charismatic' test. Failure indicates that the spirit remains, and can do as it pleases. The GM might wish to roll a die at this point; on a result of 1, the spirit will attack the cave painter. Refer to the section on the dead for details of animal spirits.

STARTING GOODS

Hood (armour), bag, fire making kit, pot containing pigment, brush, pestle, skull pot, and torch.

DOOMSAYER

There are said to be many arcane and forbidden secrets from the ancient times of Mu. Of those, most are forgotten and lost in the depths of time. However, some dark powers have persisted, and the ability to 'doom say', to utter eldritch words that cause pain and injury, is one of those powers.

Doomsayers have learnt this ancient power, which has been passed to them by those who have studied the ancient lore, who have gazed upon the uncanny runes and age-old symbols that can still be found amid the ruins of Mu.

Doomsayers are typically a gloomy breed, with intense, staring eyes and a malevolent countenance. They carry a fetish; weird and unwholesome devices that focus their dark power. Those who know of the doomsayers avoid them, and where they walk there is fear.

The doomsayer has the power to cause pain and injury merely by pointing an object called a fetish at a target. A fetish is a focus for the magic, and is typically an object



such as a stick or bone decorated with carvings, feathers, and animal skulls. Each time a fetish is used, the player rolls a die to see whether it ‘breaks’. On a roll of 1, the fetish loses its potency and must be replaced. On any other result, the power of the fetish holds and it can be used again.

The target of doomsaying must be a human or beast man; it has no effect against animals. When the talent is used, the player makes a ‘wilful’ test. If successful, the foe suffers a wound and an effect based on the roll of a d3:

1	HARASS
The foe suffers agitation, fear, and doubt. For their next action, the foe cannot benefit from any traits normally applicable to a test.	
2	VEX
The foe is momentarily filled with anguish and haunting visions. The vexed foe loses their next action.	
3	TORMENT
The foe is disturbed and subjected to trauma, horror, and pain. The foe falls, takes an additional wound and cannot attack again until they stand (which counts as an action).	

A doomsayer can make one such attack per turn, and must hold their fetish to do so. Armour cannot be used against this attack. However, a target with the trait 'wilful' is immune to the additional effects of the talent, although not the single wound.

STARTING GOODS

Skull helm (armour), fetish (carved animal bone), and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Horn stake
2	Bone
3	Thorn cudgel
4	Fire-hardened spear
5	Thorn staff
6	Hide whip



EFFIGY MAKER

Among certain strange and curious tribes exist those who practise a peculiar form of crafting. These are the effigy makers, who have learnt the secret of making grotesque figurines that have a semblance of life. Not even the effigy makers themselves know the origins of their bizarre ability, although it is likely to be one of the forgotten and forbidden arts from the earliest days of Mu.

Their talent is rare, and effigy makers (where they can be found) are feared and avoided. The art of the effigy maker is unsettling and potent, as the effigies they make can spy, call, injure, and destroy. In many places, the effigy maker is therefore shunned.

Perhaps as a result of the hours spent modelling their weird idols, the effigy makers are a strange breed. Many dress in bizarre ways, wearing mismatched, ill-fitting clothes and odd jewellery. Others might mumble to themselves, or stare at things unseen by others. Such is the strange and unsettling world of the effigy maker.

A character with this talent makes effigies; macabre figurines little larger than an adult hand, which depict forgotten gods, weird spirits, or uncanny monsters. These effigies are imbued with the power to exhibit a semblance of life, and perform specific tasks according to their nature.

An effigy maker must craft their own effigies. This follows the crafting rules described in the activities section. The materials required to make an effigy are shown in the below table.

The maximum number of effigies a character can imbue with power (at one time) equals the number of traits they have. A character can make multiple effigies of the same type. Once an effigy has been used, it can be replaced if the character makes a new one.

An effigy has a specific purpose, based on its type. It will function once, when activated by a command or action; having performed its function, it becomes a lifeless doll. It cannot thereafter be used as an effigy by the character. There are several types of effigy, and a character can make a number of types equal to the number of traits they possess divided by two (rounded up). If a character gains additional traits, the player can choose additional effigies.

Roll a die or choose from the below table to see which effigies the character can make. Re-roll repeats.

1	THE BLOATED TOAD	Required materials: clay and glue
<p>This effigy is in the shape of a fat, toad-like creature. The effigy turns into a glue-like ichor when cast like a rock towards a foe. If the attack hits, no damage is caused, but the ichor covers the foe. Thereafter, the foe must make a 'strong' test each turn. On turns in which the foe fails, they cannot act. Foes larger than human size are unaffected by the ichor. The ichor remains until the end of the combat encounter.</p>		
2	THE COILED SNAKE	Required materials: plant and sinew
<p>A crude, woven snake effigy. This effigy activates automatically when the character is wounded. It coils itself around the wound, stretching and binding the injury like a bandage. The effigy will do this during combat if necessary, so that the character does not need to expend an action or use a bandage themselves. The effigy becomes lifeless after it has done this, and falls away in a day or so.</p>		
3	THE GLUTTONOUS MOUTH	Required materials: wood, fang, and glue
<p>This effigy is a bloated head with a large mouth full of sharp teeth. It can be thrown towards a foe like a rock, and if it hits, it will bite in addition to causing a wound. On the following turn, the effigy automatically causes another wound unless the foe uses their action to remove the gnawing effigy. Once it has inflicted the additional wound, or it has been removed, it falls away and becomes lifeless.</p>		
4	THE GNAWING RAT	Required materials: clay, flint, and glue
<p>A horrific, malformed, and eyeless rat figurine. This effigy is thrown towards a foe like a rock. If it hits, it will begin to gnaw away armour. It damages one piece of armour on the turn that it hits, and another piece each turn thereafter, until it is either removed by the wearer (which takes an action) or the armour is depleted, when it becomes lifeless. Damaged armour can be repaired.</p>		
5	THE SHOUTING HEAD	Required materials: wood and pigment
<p>This effigy is a twisted, grotesque head. It functions as an alert. Left in a particular spot, such as a cave entrance, it will shout and call the character when a certain condition set by the character is met, such as a stranger entering the cave, or on the approach of a dangerous animal. It will alert the character once before becoming lifeless.</p>		
6	THE WATCHING MAN	Required materials: clay and pigment
<p>A crude, spindly doll with bulging eyes. This effigy is left in an area, and when collected will whisper the last thing it has witnessed to the character. It will describe the scene in basic terms, using descriptions such as 'humans wearing furs searched the grove', or 'a large and dangerous lizard passed through the cave'. Once it has delivered its information, the effigy becomes lifeless.</p>		

STARTING GOODS

Hood (armour), one effigy of the player's choice, bag, burin, brush, flaker, and any three materials from the following list: clay, fang, flint, glue, pigment, plant, sinew, and wood.

SHAMAN

There is a place beyond the mortal world, where spirits of the dead roam ethereal landscapes of ruins and faded civilisations. In this realm, animal spirits lurk in shadows, and ghosts peer from amid shrouded ruins. It is a gloomy land of shadows and mists, and the people of Ancient Mu know it as the Otherworld.

A shaman is able to travel to the Otherworld. Only they know the secret of entry to the Otherworld, although they might occasionally take others with them. A shaman risks much to travel to such a hazardous place, for the spirits are malevolent and cruel. However, there is powerful knowledge to be gained in the Otherworld, and this is what draws a shaman to this dark land.

Many tribes have a shaman; and they might in turn have an apprentice who learns the shaman's skills. Before attempting to pass into the dangerous Otherworld, an apprentice must learn how to repel, punish, and banish spirits; without such abilities, they would be vulnerable indeed.

Many shamans paint their bodies with curious designs representing things they have seen in the Otherworld. This gives them an otherworldly aspect to add to the mystery that surrounds these curious and fearless individuals.

A shaman can enter the Otherworld in spirit form to commune with the dead. They can take others with them when they do this: see the Otherworld section for details.

A shaman can also repel, punish, and banish spirits (and this includes spirits in all forms, be they ghosts, shadows, wraiths, or animated dead). Each technique counts as an action when used, and affects a single being within sight.

REPEL

A shaman can repel a spirit, forcing it to flee the area. This is a 'charismatic' test, and if successful, the spirit flees to sight range and remains at that distance for a number of turns equal to the shaman's number of traits (including any temporarily negated by injury). Thereafter the being can return if it wishes, and cannot be affected in this way by the shaman again during the encounter. Repel works in both the mortal world and Otherworld.

PUNISH

A shaman can cause a spirit pain, so that it suffers a wound. With a successful 'wilful' test the spirit takes a wound. This can be attempted multiple times versus the same or other spirits, and works up to sight range. Punish works in both the mortal world and Otherworld.

BANISH

A shaman can try to force a spirit back to the Otherworld. Obviously, this works only against spirits in the mortal world. To banish a spirit, a shaman first repels them, then must successfully punish them immediately thereafter (on the following turn). Finally, on the turn after that, a successful 'wise' test must be made to banish the spirit. When the spirit is banished, it fades from the mortal world and passes to the Otherworld. Banishing often engenders resentment in the spirit, which might stalk the shaman the next time the character enters the Otherworld...

STARTING GOODS

Hood (armour), fire making kit, incense, pot, and carved animal bone fetish.

SUMMONER

Their power is ancient and believed to have been stolen from the gods. Reviled and feared by many, the summoners call forth the spirits of the dead.

Many of the inhabitants of Ancient Mu believe that to summon the spirits of the dead is to go against the most sacred taboo. Few wish their ancestors to be called forth and commanded by a mortal stranger.

A sect known as 'The Boneshade' teaches characters the dark art of summoning, and often welcomes outcasts, those who have already broken a taboo. This group has followers in many parts of Ancient Mu, and members believe that the Otherworld is a source of power as well as a supply of servants ready to do their bidding. Needless to say, the Boneshade is loathed by many across Mu, and its disciples thus keep their activities hidden.

Some summoners might see themselves as part of the sect, whereas others become independent, and use their powers for a variety of reasons, although often simply for personal gain. A few believe their talent is a gift to be used to help others.

Summoners are typically grim in their manner and appearance, tending to wear dark clothes or disturbing decorations such as the bones and skulls of the dead.

Summoners call forth the spirits of the dead. This requires the use of a fetish, which the summoner uses to enact a short ritual (counting as the character's action in a turn of combat). Each time a fetish is used, the player rolls a die to see whether it 'breaks'. On a roll of 1, the fetish loses its potency and must be replaced. On any other result, the power of the fetish holds and it can be used again.

Summoning a spirit is a three-part process. The spirit is first summoned, then commanded, and finally banished (forced to depart back to the Otherworld).

SUMMONING A SPIRIT

To summon the spirit, a 'wilful' test is made. If successful, a ghost or shadow appears on the following turn. The summoner decides which being to call forth (a ghost, or the less potent but easier to control shadow). Failure indicates that no spirit appears – a summoner can try again on the following turn if they wish.

COMMANDING A SPIRIT

Once a spirit appears, it must be commanded. This is another action, and requires one successful 'charismatic' test for each trait possessed by the spirit. Failure to command a spirit means it becomes trapped: see below. A spirit can be given a new command once it has completed a task. Each command is a new test, or series of tests depending on the spirit summoned. Typical commands include telling the spirit to attack a target, issue a dire warning to someone, or appear near a victim to scare them. Complex tasks are beyond the ability of most spirits. Likewise, a task cannot last for more than a few minutes.

BANISHING A SPIRIT

When a spirit has completed its task, it must be given another command immediately (given another task, as above), or else banished. Failure to do either of these means it will become trapped. Banishing a spirit requires a successful 'wise' test. If successful, the spirit dissipates and returns to the Otherworld.

TRAPPED SPIRITS

Trapped spirits have free will. They can no longer be commanded, and remain in the mortal world until destroyed or banished by a Shaman (who are the only ones capable of banishing another's spirit). Trapped spirits often haunt a particular spot, attacking those that come near. They are filled with rage, and loathe the living. When a spirit first becomes trapped, it might well attack the summoner (as it will know this person called it). To randomly determine this, roll a d3 and refer to the below table:

1	The spirit attacks the summoner
2	The spirit attacks another person nearby, or the summoner if there is no one else
3	This spirit departs the area

A character can in theory summon multiple spirits. However, in practice it will become increasingly difficult to control multiple spirits, and it will eventually lead to the summoner being attacked by one or more trapped spirits. Characters should therefore use caution when activating this talent.

STARTING GOODS

Hood (armour), carved human bone fetish, skull headdress, and talisman (skull or bone).

SPECIALIST

CRAFTER

In the world of Paleomythic, crafters reign supreme. Although anyone can craft items, the crafters are prized for their skill, and they are the master artisans of their time.

Crafters exist wherever there are people who require tools, containers, clothes, weapons, and furnishings. They are recognisable by their often stooped forms, acquired from hours of working hunched over an item, and by their calloused and scarred hands, which are the result of knapping sharp flint, scraping hides, sewing leather, and so on.

Crafters typically carry a bag of useful tools, and are always looking for useful materials. They often accompany expeditions, hunts, and those facing long journeys, so that they can repair and craft any items that might be needed.

A character with this talent is skilled at crafting with various materials (such as flint, wood, bone, hides, and plant fibres). Characters can thus make any item listed in the goods section, provided that they have the correct materials for it. In the list of goods, the required materials for a particular item are included in the item description. For example, a flint-tipped spear requires wood, flint, plant fibres, and glue. The procedure for crafting items is described in the activities section.

A crafter is able to use materials more efficiently than most, thanks to their increased skill and superior technique. When crafting an item, the player can choose one of two benefits conferred by this talent. The character can either:

1. Automatically succeed at the crafting test, although in this case all the required materials are used up, or;
2. Make a test as described in the crafting activity, but save one type of material from being used. For example, the crafter might save the flint when making a flint-tipped spear (representing the character being sparing with the material).

In addition to the above ability, crafters automatically repair items, and no test is required. This will still use up one of the required materials, however.

STARTING GOODS

Fur hat (armour), fire making kit, lamp, oil, pack, and three random tools from the following table (roll a die, re-rolling repeats):

1	Awl
2	Burin
3	Flaker
4	Hammerstone
5	Needle
6	Scraper

FIRE MAKER

In Ancient Mu, fire is viewed as a potent force. It is a thing of great power, providing warmth, light, the ability to cook, and the ability to destroy. Being able to create fire is for many the most important skill they will learn. Those not only able to create fire but also to manipulate it are deemed powerful indeed, to be viewed with wonder and awe.

Fire makers have learnt arcane skills that allow them to resist fire, and to control fire in such a manner as to be able to breathe it. This fearsome ability strikes fear into many humans, and also many animals. Fire makers often play on this fear, using pigments to stain their teeth, tongue and even eyes red, as if they were fire themselves. Some have temperaments to match, and are fierce and fiery individuals.

A fire maker can make fire without a test being required. This still requires a fire-making kit, and will use up materials as normal. Refer to the fire rules in the hazards section for details. Fire makers can gather twice as much firewood as others (which means that in woodland they can gather enough in 15 minutes to last two hours).

Fire makers are unusually resistant to fire. Each time they would normally take a wound from exposure to fire, the player can make a 'resilient' test. If successful, no damage is received.

Fire makers also know the secret of breathing fire. This requires use of oil (the same as that used in lamps). As an action, the fire maker drinks the oil (a gourd is enough for two uses), then on subsequent turns can spit it towards a source of fire,



such as a torch. This produces a jet of flame which functions as a ranged attack affecting a target within rock range. A hit exposes the target to fire, so that they take a wound and, on the following turn, must make a 'fortunate' test or will take a further wound. The flames subside after this. Refer to the combat section for details of ranged combat. Note that a character without this talent attempting to breathe fire will instead injure themselves, burning their mouth and throat (taking a wound).

STARTING GOODS

Hide hat (armour), bag, fire making kit, oil, and rushlight.

FISHER

For some, deep lakes or the vast sea engender a primordial fear, an innate foreboding of the dark and mysterious waters. The humble fisher, however, is most at home near water, be that a river, lake, or the sea.

Fishers have typically grown up near water, or have acquired a good deal of experience around it. They have their own customs, songs, and tales that highlight the joys and dangers of a life spent on and in water.

Many fishers tattoo their weathered skin with various symbols, often of dangerous animals such as sharks or gigantic squid. They often wear minimal clothes, or else have clothing that's easily shed, so as to be less restricted when swimming.

Fishers are renowned for their ability with a net in addition to their swimming and fishing skills, and many make use of these in combat.

Although many characters might try their hand at fishing, fishers are the most skilled. Fishing is treated like hunting in these rules, and full details are given in the activities section. When fishing, reduce the number of tests required to hunt the desired creature. For example, a fish (a small animal) would normally need two tests to hunt, but for a fisher, only one test is required. The player can choose which test is no longer necessary. If using a net, a fisher catches d6 fish per successful hunt.

Like other characters, a fisher can swim and does not need a test when in calm waters. When swimming in fast-flowing or stormy waters, a fisher treats the distance as one range category less (so that fewer tests are required). This benefit also applies to the use of boats.

A fisher can use a net in combat more effectively than most. If a fisher attacks with a net, it entangles and causes a wound on any successful hit (rather than just an effect). See the combat section for details of effects.

STARTING GOODS

Fibre arm wraps (armour), net, and wood spear.

GATHERER



Farming practices are uncommon in most of the lands of Ancient Mu; only a handful of the large settlements have developed such skills. The alternative for the majority of the people of Ancient Mu is to forage for their food. Most tribes therefore have several skilled gatherers, as they are often the key to the success of a tribe. Although hunting can provide large amounts of food for a tribe, it can be unreliable and risky. The gatherers therefore are the most highly prized of the food providers for many tribes because they ensure a regular supply of nourishing food.

True masters of survival, gatherers are able to find food and materials in the most inhospitable of places. They can find nourishment in sparse, malignant woodland, cold and barren crags, festering marshland, and even arid and dusty plains. Few gatherers are without a bag of useful materials, tools, and curios discovered as they scour the land using their keen senses.

Gatherers are highly skilled at finding foods and useful items, and therefore excel when foraging and scavenging – two tasks that are covered in the activities section of the rules.

When foraging, a gatherer adds 1 to the number of meals found in any habitat. In addition, in barren habitats they take only half a day to find food (rather than the whole day required for most characters).

When searching for craft materials, a successful test means gatherers find d3 uses of a material rather than just a single use. If searching for anything useful, roll twice on the scavenging table.

Gatherers are also accomplished at getting the most out of things. When using an improvised tool, the player is allowed to make a ‘wise’ test for the character. If successful, the item can be treated as the correct tool for one specific task, thus conferring a bonus die. Only one attempt per tool, and per test, is possible.

STARTING GOODS

Fibre leg wraps (armour), bag, bone shovel, pot, pestle, and one weapon determined randomly by rolling a die:

1	Antler pick
2	Antler spike
3	Hand axe
4	Fire-hardened spear
5	Horn stake
6	Wood spear

HEALER

Healers are the possessors of hidden lore, handed down from generation to generation. They know the mysteries of the body and the workings of the heart, lungs, and blood.

Healing lore has been acquired from many years of learned observation and experimentation, using plants, oils, lichens, fungi, and so on in an attempt to treat illnesses and alleviate symptoms. Most tribes have a healer, and it is considered a great loss when a healer dies. Many people will require the aid of a healer, and this is often why healers will travel great distances.

Some healers wear distinctive costumes, such as a headdress or hood, or carry a decorated staff so that others know of their skill and status.

The healers know the mysterious lore and arcane techniques of treating wounds and illness. Their skills allow them to staunch wounds, alleviate pain, treat sickness, and aid recovery in a variety of ways.

When a healer uses a bandage, two wounds are healed rather than just one. Likewise, when a healer uses a healing pouch or infusion, the subject recovers from two wounds.

Healers can make antidotes, infusions, salves, and medicines automatically, without a test being required. They still need the appropriate materials, however (as shown in the goods section).

Healers are regularly exposed to toxic substances, and have an improved immunity to them because of this. When a healer is exposed to poison or a disease, the player makes a 'resilient' test (prior to any other tests made to resist the ailment). If successful, the healer is deemed immune to that particular poison or disease, and will automatically resist its effects.

STARTING GOODS

Hide hat (armour), bag, d2 antidotes, d3 bandages, d2 infusions, d2 medicines, d2 salves, and staff.

TRAPPER

Trappers are unusual among the many peoples of Ancient Mu. Whereas most people forage, hunt, and gather their food, trappers are often content in setting their wilderness traps and then waiting for their prey to spring them.

Many trappers are thus able to survive well in wilderness areas, often alone or with few others around. Such characters are usually solitary and rugged, with a variety of other talents that all serve to make the trapper self-sufficient.

When trappers wander into civilisation, they are often notable from their dishevelled appearance. Many have long hair and beards if male, and they are often seen wearing patched hide clothing. Trappers are usually keen to trade animal hides and furs, and are thus a welcome sight for many.

Trappers are accomplished at constructing, discovering, and disarming traps. These are used to capture animals for food, or sometimes to deter trespassers.

CONSTRUCTION

A trapper is automatically successful at constructing their own traps; no test is required. The character still requires the requisite materials to make the trap. However, the skill of a trapper is such that they can improvise a single type of material required for a trap (so that players can choose one material from those given which is not required). See the hazards section for more on trap construction.

DISCOVERY

Trappers are accomplished at finding traps. When a trapper searches for a trap, the player can state that they are looking for a specific trap type (such as a pit trap or a boulder trap). If that trap is present, it is discovered automatically. If it is not, the player still gets an 'aware' test to try to find the trap. For reference, the standard trap types are boulder traps, needle traps, pit traps, rope traps, spike traps, and stumble traps.

DISARMING

If a trapper finds a trap, they can disarm it automatically. No test is required. The only exception is when a trap is of an unusual type (that is, a type not listed above). In this case, a normal 'dexterous' test might be required to disarm it.

STARTING GOODS

Hide arm wraps (armour), rope, hand axe, and antler pick.

CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

As characters survive and have experiences, their skills improve and their knowledge increases. This is called character improvement, and in *Paleomythic* it is measured in adventures that the player records as 'stories'.

An adventure is an individual scenario, or a section of a larger narrative. An adventure is often resolved in a single session of a few hours' worth of game play, although some might take two or three shorter sessions to complete. Typically, an adventure is made up of a series of encounters, and often concludes when a goal is attained or some sort of resolution has occurred. The GM always decides exactly when an adventure finishes.

When an adventure is concluded, the player writes a 'story', which in this case is a single sentence recording a title for the adventure. Adventure descriptions such as 'the abducted tribe member was saved', 'what happened when we explored the scorpion ruins', or 'the tale of the escape from the beast men' are examples of stories. Stories serve as a tally that is used to measure the characters' improvement.

When a character has accumulated enough stories, they can be 'spent', and in so doing the character can improve. This occurs when characters have time to reflect on their adventures, perhaps as they sit around a campfire after a long day of travelling.

Spending enough stories allows a character to acquire a new trait, rid themselves of a flaw or gain a new talent. Each option costs a number of stories:

- A new trait costs stories equal to the character's number of traits (including any temporarily negated by injury) plus the number of flaws they have. For example, a character that has four traits and one flaw can gain a fifth trait by spending five stories.

- Removing a flaw costs stories equal to the current number of flaws possessed by the character, plus one. Thus, a character with two flaws can rid themselves of one of them at a cost of three stories.
- A new talent costs stories equal to the current number of talents possessed by the character multiplied by two. For example, a character with a single talent could gain a second at a cost of two stories, whereas a character with two talents can gain a third at a cost of four stories.

Players might wish to provide a rationale for the benefit, such as spending time with the tribe's crafter to learn the crafter talent, or exercising to acquire the trait 'strong', and so on.

A character can never possess more than ten traits; no one is good at everything!

A story can be 'spent' just once. To show a story has been used, mark it with a cross. Do not erase or otherwise remove stories completely; they're a great way to help players recall past exploits.

RECOUNTING STORIES

Players may wish to use the time set aside for improvement, at the conclusion of a game session, as an opportunity to recount some of their character's stories in more detail. This is a great way to bring adventures and characters to life, as players swap 'war stories' about their characters. This is the time to boast about the character's exploits, and perhaps laugh about their failures.

AGEING

As an optional rule, the GM and players can decide to use character ageing. This helps to add a sense of realism to the setting, and develops the 'history' of the character.

If ageing is used, a character moves up one age category at the conclusion of every five stories. For example, a young character becomes adult upon completing their fifth story, mature upon completing their tenth story, and so on. If the GM and players want a longer period before ageing occurs, increase the number of stories before ageing occurs, such as every six or seven.

When a character reaches old age, they can take part in five more stories. At this point they are deemed 'ancient'. Thereafter the player must make an ageing roll at the conclusion of each story. An ageing roll is a roll on the trait tables found in the

character-creation section, as if randomly determining a trait. However, the result indicates the flaw gained as a result of ageing (if the character lacks the trait), or the trait lost (if the character has the trait). In this way, as the character gets older, the number of traits they possess declines and the number of flaws they gain increases.

Ageing can be offset by improvement, but eventually it will impact upon the character so much that adventures become very dangerous or almost impossible due to the reduced number of traits and increased number of flaws.

Should a character be reduced to zero traits through ageing, the character is deemed to have died of old age.

Characters that survive beyond old age can be retired, and might (if the character wishes) become a parent of a new character. This is a great way to establish a family dynasty, and creates an ongoing family lineage. Alternatively, a player can continue with the character, who is thereafter simply described by others as 'ancient', or perhaps by some other term such as 'grizzled', 'hoary', or even 'venerable'.

GOODS

Although goods are acquired from starting talents, players might wish to purchase additional supplies and equipment for their characters before their first adventure.

In the Paleomythic world, there is no coinage. Trade is conducted by barter or by using gems. Gems are precious or semi-precious stones, usually small fragments that have been polished. They are rarely much larger than fingernail size.

Gems are used as a convenient way to trade, and many settlements will accept them as payment for goods. Gems are usually seen as having the same value, irrespective of the type.

The values of goods in gems are given in the table below. The values are worked out from the number of materials required to make the item, and multiplying this score by itself (the number of materials squared for the mathematically minded). This means that an item made of one material costs one gem, an item using two materials costs four gems (two times two), an item of three materials costs nine gems (three times three), and so on. This reflects not just the value of the resources used, but also the time taken to craft the item.

MATERIALS

The goods list below shows the cost of items when they have been crafted. Each item is crafted from one or more types of material. Materials can be scavenged or hunted, and these tasks are covered in the activities section of the rules. The materials required to craft an item are noted in the description.

Materials cost one gem each. Many materials (such as clay, flint, and plant fibre) can be found, whereas others (such as bone, sinew, and hides) are obtained as a by-product of hunting. Typical materials include antlers, bones, clay, claws, feathers, flint, fur, hides, horns, plants, sinew, talons, and wood.

For simplicity, the material 'flint' can refer to various types of minerals other than flint, such as obsidian. Likewise, the material 'plant' refers to numerous different types of plants, resins, oils, and so on.



GOODS LIST

The standard format for each goods listing is:

Item Name	Average Gem Cost	Materials Required for Crafting	Tools Conferring Bonuses for Crafting
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ARMOUR

Characters can wear one piece of armour per location (head, torso, each arm, and each leg). Limb armour costs are for a pair. All armour described as hide, fibre, or fur is flexible, whereas all bone and obsidian armour is rigid. See the combat section for information about how armour protects characters.



ITEM	COST	MATERIALS	CRAFTING TOOLS
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HEAD ARMOUR

Hat: a hat made from thick fur, often decorated with an animal tail.

Hide hood: a hide hood covering the head and neck.

Skull helm: a helm fashioned from the skull of a large beast, giving the wearer a fearsome aspect.

HEAD ARMOUR			
Hat (fur or hide)	9	Fur/hide, glue, and sinew/plant	Scraper or needle
Hide hood	4	Hide and sinew	Scraper
Skull helm	9	Bone, hide, and glue	Brush or flake

TORSO ARMOUR

Bone tunic: a tunic made from sections of animal ribs, decorated with small animal skulls, and bound together with hide and glue.

Coat: a heavy mid-length garment secured with bone pins and toggles.

Fibre tunic: a tunic made from tough plant fibres woven together.

Obsidian tunic: a tunic made from hide with flakes of obsidian attached to form scales.

Tabard: a sleeveless garment tied at the waist.

TORSO ARMOUR			
Bone tunic	16	Hide, bone, glue, and sinew	Bow drill
Coat (fur or hide)	16	Fur/hide, glue, bone, and sinew/plant	Scraper or needle
Fibre tunic	4	Plant and glue	Brush
Obsidian tunic	16	Hide, obsidian, glue, and sinew	Bow drill
Tabard	9	Hide, sinew/plant, and glue	Scraper or needle

LIMB ARMOUR

Fibre wraps: woven plant fibres attached to arms or legs.

Wraps: pieces of heavy fur or hide secured with hide thongs around the arms or legs.

Bone wraps: pieces of bone and small animal skulls tied around the arms or legs.

Obsidian bands: sewn hide with obsidian flakes attached.

LIMB ARMOUR			
Fibre wraps	4	Plant and glue	Brush
Wraps (fur or hide)	4	Fur/hide, sinew/plant	Scraper or needle
Bone wraps	9	Hide, bone, or sinew	Flake
Obsidian bands	9	Hide, obsidian, and sinew	Bow drill

SHIELDS

Fibre shield: woven plant fibre attached to a wooden frame.

Hide shield: tough hides, often arranged to make a pattern, and stretched across a wooden frame.

Bone shield: a lattice of bones, claws, and skulls attached to a wooden frame.

SHIELDS			
Fibre shield	9	Plant, glue, and wood	Awl or brush
Hide shield	9	Wood, hides, and glue	Awl or brush
Bone shield	9	Wood, bone, and glue	Awl



WEAPONS

The following items are useable as weapons, but note that some (such as antler picks and hand axes) also make handy tools.

Weapons are listed as follows

Item Name	Average Gem Cost	Materials Required for Crafting	Tools Conferring Bonuses for Crafting	Weapon Type	Weapon Effect
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ITEM	COST	MATERIALS	CRAFTING TOOLS	TYPE	EFFECT
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AXES

Antler pick: this weapon is a piece of antler or bone, with a section long enough to form a haft, and sharpened section useable as an axe or pick; a weapon and useful digging tool.

Bone axe: a sharpened shoulder bone from a large animal, attached to a wooden haft.

Claw axe: a claw from a large predator fixed to a wooden haft.

Hand axe: a hand axe is a flint block, with one end smooth and suitable for holding, and the other sharpened; useable as a weapon and as a simple chopping tool.

Hafted axe: a hafted axe comprises a sturdy wooden haft topped with a piece of sharpened flint; a potent weapon and chopping tool.

Jaw pick: a large animal jaw with sharpened fangs, attached like an axe blade to a short haft.

Obsidian axe: a hafted axe with a jagged obsidian blade.

AXES					
Antler pick	1	Antler	Flake	Rend	Short
Bone axe	4	Bone and wood	Flaker	Short	Slice
Claw axe	9	Claw, glue, and wood	Flake	Short	Splinter
Hand axe	1	Flint	Hammerstone	Short	Pain
Hafted axe	16	Wood, flint, sinew, and glue	Flake	Short	Smash
Jaw pick	9	Wood, bone, and glue	Flake	Short	Ruin
Obsidian axe	16	Wood, obsidian, sinew, and glue	Flaker	Short	Gouge

BLUDGEONS

Bone: a length of heavy mammoth, rhino, or other large animal bone; a crude but formidable bludgeon.

Cudgel: a simple length of wood; a simple weapon useable as a makeshift walking stick.

Flint cudgel: a short length of wood that has sharp flint flakes embedded into the top.

Obsidian maul: a long-hafted weapon topped with a large piece of jagged obsidian.

Rock: a well-shaped rock for bashing or throwing; perhaps the first weapon ever used.

Skull-topped cudgel: a length of wood, to which is attached a skull; a fearsome-looking weapon.

Skull staff: a long length of wood topped with a skull; a macabre staff.

Staff: a long length of wood, requiring two hands to use; a weapon and useful tool for testing water depth, poking into dark caves, and so on.

Stone-topped cudgel: a length of wood, topped with a heavy stone block; a hefty weapon and a tool useable as a hammer.

Thorn cudgel: a length of wood with sharp thorns embedded into it.

Thorn staff: a slender staff made from wood from a thorny plant.

BLUDGEONS					
Bone	1	Bone		Short	Smash
Cudgel	1	Wood		Short	Pain
Flint cudgel	4	Wood and flint	Hammerstone	Short	Gouge
Obsidian maul	9	Wood, obsidian, and glue	Hammerstone	Long	Destroy
Rock	1	Flint		Short/thrown	Intimidate
Skull-topped cudgel	16	Bone, wood, hide, and glue	Brush	Short	Fracture
Skull staff	9	Wood, bone, and sinew	Flake	Long	Disarm
Staff	1	Wood	Hand axe	Long	Trip
Stone-topped cudgel	9	Wood, flint, and hide	Hammerstone	Long	Slam
Thorn cudgel	1	Wood	Burin	Short	Rend
Thorn staff	1	Wood	Burin	Long	Ward

KNIVES

Antler spike: a piece of antler shaped into a spike; useable as a weapon and as a tool for piercing.

Bone knife: a piece of sharpened animal bone; a light and useful weapon and cutting tool.

Flint knife: a long piece of flint, attached to a short wooden handle; a sharp cutting tool and weapon.

Horn stake: a piece of sharpened horn, used as a stake and a thrusting weapon.

Obsidian knife: a piece of shaped obsidian, half of which is wrapped in hide for the handle.

Wood knife: a crude but effective knife made from hardened wood.

KNIVES					
Antler spike	1	Antler	Flake	Short	Intimidate
Bone knife	1	Bone	Flake	Short	Intimidate
Flint knife	9	Wood, flint, and glue	Flake	Short	Rend
Horn stake	1	Horn	Flake	Short	Intimidate
Obsidian knife	9	Hide, glue, and obsidian	Flake	Short	Pain
Wood knife	1	Wood	Scraper	Short	Intimidate

SPEARS

Bone-tipped spear: a wooden haft topped with a sharpened bone; can be thrown, and is a useful weapon and hunting tool.

Flint-tipped spear: a long, heavy wooden haft topped with sharpened flint; requires two hands to use in melee, and unlike other spears, it can only be thrown to rock range (it is too unwieldy to throw further).

Fire-hardened spear: a simple but effective spear made of wood with the end repeatedly charred and polished to harden it; can be thrown.

Obsidian-tipped spear: a long piece of wood topped with a jagged obsidian flake.

Wood spear: a simple length of sharpened wood; the simplest of spears, it can be thrown, used for hunting, and used as a weapon.

SPEARS					
Bone-tipped spear	9	Bone, wood, and glue	Brush or flake	Long/thrown	Gore
Flint-tipped spear	16	Wood, flint, plant, and glue	Flaker	Long/thrown	Impale
Fire-hardened spear	1	Wood	Flake	Long/thrown	Pierce
Obsidian-tipped spear	16	Wood, obsidian, sinew, and glue	Flaker	Long/thrown	Gouge
Wood spear	1	Wood	Flake	Long/thrown	Ward

SWORDS

Bone sword: a long section of bone from a large animal, shaped into a blade.

Flint-shard sword: a slim length of wood with edges made from sharpened flint; it causes jagged wounds.

Obsidian-shard sword: a length of wood with shards of obsidian attached to form a blade.

Wood sword: a piece of hardened wood sharpened on both sides.

SWORDS					
Bone sword	16	Bone, wood, sinew, and glue	Burin or brush	Short	Slice
Flint-shard sword	16	Flint, wood, plant, or glue	Flaker or brush	Short	Gouge
Obsidian-shard sword	16	Obsidian, wood, sinew, and glue	Flaker or brush	Short	Gore
Wood sword	1	Wood	Flake	Short	Intimidate

WHIPS

Fang whip: this whip is formed of a two-metre length of hide, with snake fangs attached to one end.

Hide whip: this is a simple whip made from hide, and about two metres long; used as a tool to whip unfortunate beasts, and as a weapon.

Obsidian flail: Two or three short lengths of hide, ending in an obsidian shard, attached to a wooden handle.

Spine whip: a whip made from sections of vertebrae joined using sinew.

Stone whip: a whip made from vines, with several small stones knotted into the end.

WHIPS					
Fang whip	9	Hide, fangs, and glue	Burin or brush	Long	Gouge
Hide whip	1	Hide	Scraper	Long	Entangle
Obsidian flail	9	Wood, hide, and obsidian	Scraper	Short	Impede
Spine whip	4	Bone and sinew	Bow drill	Long	Smash
Stone whip	4	Plant and flint	Flaker	Long	Splinter

MISSILE WEAPONS

Arrow: a slender shaft, tipped with flint, and fletched with feathers; used with a bow.

Blow pipe: a hollow pipe of wood from which darts are fired by blowing; blow pipes are effective at rock range or less.

Dart: a slender piece of bone fired from a blow pipe.

Long Bow: a bow as tall as a human, which fires flint-tipped arrows; bows make excellent hunting tools as well as weapons and have the best range of all weapons.

Net: a woven net, which can be thrown to rock range; when a net hits, it causes the effect 'entangle' rather than damage, but if the net effect result is triggered, it entangles and causes a wound; retrieving a thrown net requires use of an action.

Self-bow: a simple, small bow that fires flint-tipped arrows.

Sling: a sling made from hide that is used to fire stones (which are free and easily gathered); slings are effective at spear range or less.

MISSILE WEAPONS					
Arrow	9	Wood, flint, and feather	Flaker		
Blow pipe	1	Wood	Bow drill	Missile	Pain
Dart	1	Bone	Flake		
Long Bow	9	Wood, plant/sinew, and glue	Brush or pestle	Missile	Impale
Net	1	Plant	Pestle		
Self bow	4	Wood and plant/sinew	Brush or pestle	Missile	Gore
Sling	1	Hide	Scraper	Missile	Pain

CONTAINERS

Containers can provide a tool bonus for tests when characters attempt to carry large, numerous, or awkward-to-transport goods.

Bag: a small bag made from woven plant fibres, with a string-like strap.

Basket: a woven container.

Bowl: a small clay or wood vessel.

Box: an open-topped box made from wood strips bound and glued.

Chest: a wooden box, bound and glued, with a lid secured using a bone clasp.

Gourd: a water container, with a wooden stopper.

Pack: a small hide or fur bag with long strap.

Pot: a large clay container for storing liquids, grains and so on.

Pouch: a pouch made from hide, with sinew attached for carrying.

Quiver: a hide container for arrows (holds 12).

Skin: a small skin bag used to hold water.

Skull pot: a bowl made from a skull.

ITEM	COST	MATERIALS	CRAFTING TOOLS
Bag	1	Plant	Scraper
Basket	1	Plant	Pestle
Bowl	1	Clay/wood	Burin
Box	4	Wood and glue	Awl or brush
Chest	9	Wood, glue, and bone	Bow drill or brush
Gourd	1	Plant	
Pack	4	Hide and sinew/plant	Scraper
Pot	1	Clay	Burin
Pouch	4	Hide and sinew/plant	Scraper
Quiver	4	Hide and sinew/plant	Needle
Skin	4	Hide and sinew	Scraper
Skull Pot	1	Bone	Flake

CLOTHES

Several items of warm clothing (such as a fur or hide tunic, leggings, and a hood) could provide a tool bonus for tests to resist exposure in cold weather, whereas cool linen clothing provides a bonus for tests to endure hot weather. High-value clothing can provide a bonus for tests to portray status.

Belt: a thin strip of hide or plant rope, tied at the waist.

Bikini: clothing covering the groin, buttocks, and breasts.

Boots: leg and foot wraps, sewn together to cover the feet and lower legs.

Cap: a close-fitting conical hat of fur or hide.

Cloak: a cloak made from bird feathers, woven grass, or a large fur skin, tied at the neck.

Jacket: a sleeved, thigh-length garment tied at the waist.

Hood: a hood covering the head, neck and shoulders.

Leggings: leg coverings, tied with hide.

Loincloth: clothing covering the groin and buttocks

Mittens: hand coverings used in cold climates.

Sandals: open shoes tied at the ankles with a hide thong.

Scarf: a length of linen worn around the head and neck.

Shawl: a fur wrap.

Shoes: foot covers made from sewn hide.

Tunic: a sleeved garment sewn at the sides and extending to the knees.



ITEM	COST	MATERIALS	CRAFTING TOOLS
Belt	1	Hide or plant	Scraper
Bikini, fur or hide	4	Fur or hide, and sinew or plant	Scraper
Bikini, linen	1	Plant	Wood knife
Boots, fur	16	Fur, hide, sinew or plant, and glue	Awl
Cap, fur or hide	4	Fur or hide, and sinew or plant	Needle
Cloak, feather	4	Feathers and sinew or plant	Needle
Cloak, fur	4	Fur and sinew or plant	Needle
Cloak, grass	1	Plant	Needle
Jacket, hide	4	Hide and sinew or plant	Awl
Hood, fur or hide	4	Fur or hide, and sinew or plant	Needle
Leggings	4	Hide and sinew or plant	Awl
Loincloth, fur or hide	4	Fur or hide, and sinew or plant	Needle
Loincloth, linen	1	Plant	Needle
Mittens	4	Fur and sinew or plant	Needle
Sandals, hide	9	Hide, sinew or plant, and glue	Awl
Scarf	1	Plant	Wood knife
Shawl, fur or hide	4	Fur or hide, and sinew or plant	Scraper
Shoes, hide	9	Hide, sinew or plant, and glue	Brush and scraper
Tunic, fur or hide	4	Fur or hide, and sinew or plant	Needle and scraper
Tunic, linen	1	Plant	Wood knife

CURIOSITIES

Curiosities typically provide a tool bonus for tests to intimidate, enthrall, or frighten others.

Casting objects: items used for prediction, such as small bones, stones, or sticks.

Fetish: a carved bone or a stick adorned with bones, jewels, feathers, or gems.

Headdress: decorative headwear made from a section of animal skull or from feathers tied together with sinew.

God statuette: a small statuette, either be crude or embellished.

Incense: aromatic resin derived from plants, enough for one ritual.



ITEM	COST	MATERIALS	CRAFTING TOOLS
Casting objects	1	Bone, flint, or plant	Flake
Fetish, carved animal bone	1	Bone	Flake
Fetish, carved human bone	1	Bone	Burin
Fetish, feather stick	4	Wood and feathers	Awl
Fetish, gem stick	4	Wood and gems	Bow drill and flint knife
Fetish, lizard stick	4	Wood and bone	Awl
Fetish, skull on a rope	4	Bone and plant	Flake
Fetish, talon stick	4	Wood and talon	Awl
Headdress, feathers	1	Sinew and feathers	Needle
Headdress, skull	1	Bone	Flake
God statuette, crude	1	Any one of wood, bone, horn, or clay	Burin and wood knife
God statuette, decorated	4	Gems and any one of wood, bone, horn or clay	Burin
Incense	1	Plant	Pestle

HEALING

Various preparations are available to treat wounds and ailments, as detailed below.

Antidote: a concoction made to counter the effects of poisons. It will negate one symptom of the player's choice obtained from a poison. It will not heal wounds from poisons, however (a medicine is required for this). An antidote has no effect against disease.

Infusion: Herbs added to hot water, which will negate one symptom of the player's choice obtained from a disease. It will not heal wounds from disease, however (a medicine is required for this). An infusion has no effect against poisons.

Medicine: a medicine heals one wound obtained from disease or poison but does not affect the symptoms (for which an infusion is needed). It is also ineffective when used to treat wounds such as cuts and bruises (for which a salve is required).

Salve: a collection of herbs in a hide pouch, applied to a wound. Treats one wound. Useable on wounds from violence (cuts, bruises, and so on), but useless for poisoning or disease.

ITEM	COST	MATERIALS	CRAFTING TOOLS
Antidote	1	Plant	Pestle
Infusion	1	Plant	Pestle
Medicine	4	Plant and bone	Pestle
Salve	4	Plant and hide	Pestle

TOOLS

Most tools provide a benefit to crafting, repairing, building, labouring, and similar tasks.

Awl: a boring, probing tool often made from bone.

Bandage: a strip of clean linen applied to wounds.

Boat: a two-person vessel made from wood, plant fibres, and glue, and rowed using a paddle.

Bow drill: a wooden drill with bow used for boring holes.

Bricks: a simple clay brick or tile, used for building houses, walls, steps, and so on; cost is per ten bricks.

Bone shovel: the shoulder blade of a large animal attached to a haft, used for digging.

Brush: a bundle of animal hairs or fur bound together, used to spread pigment or oil.

Burin: a flint tool used for carving wood, bone, and similar materials.

Canoe: a hollowed-out tree trunk treated with plant oils to preserve it; rowed with a paddle.

Drinking horn: a hollowed-out horn used as a drinking vessel.

Fire making kit: includes a piece of pyrite or marcasite used for sparking; can be used for six fires before needing to be replaced.

Flake: a small piece of very sharp flint used to carve detail on hides, bone, or wood.

Flaker: a piece of antler or bone used to knap fine edges on tools and weapons.

Glue: a gourd of animal-bone or plant glue, enough for six uses.

Hammerstone: a shaped stone used to knap flint to create tools and weapons.

Oil: oil extracted from plant material, or fat derived from an animal, for use in lamps; the cost is for a gourd with enough oil for one hour's worth of illumination.

Lamp: a small stone or clay with a wick lamp that burns oil or animal fat; holds one hour's worth of oil.

Mat: a simple woven mat used to cover a floor.

Needle: a needle made from a slender piece of bone, used to sew and remove thorns.

Net: a net, used for fishing or as a container, made from woven plant fibres. a net can be used in combat: see the weapon entry for a net.

Paddle: a section of wood with a flat end, used for paddling boats.

Pestle: a coarse stone shaped to grind materials such as seeds, roots, pigments, and so on.

Reed boat: a one-person boat made from bound reeds. It must be repaired after every three uses to ensure it remains watertight (see repair in the crafting rules). A paddle is required to row it.

Rope: rope made from vine or other plant materials; the cost is per five metres.

Rushlight: a basic torch made from dried bulrushes; burns for one hour.

Scraper: a flint tool used for preparing skins, shaving, and sharpening.

Screen: a woven, wicker screen used as a partition in a room.

Sled: wooden poles connected to a platform that can be loaded with goods and pulled behind a person.

Sleeping fur: soft but poor-quality fur used as a 'blanket' that can be rolled and tied up for easy carrying.

Torch: a piece of wood wrapped with untreated hide and animal fats; burns for four hours.

Wood knife: a simple knife made from fire hardened wood.

ITEM	COST	MATERIALS	CRAFTING TOOLS
Awl	1	Bone or horn	Flake
Bandage	1	Plant	Pestle
Boat	9	Wood, glue, and plant	Brush and hand axe
Bow drill	4	Wood and sinew	Awl and burin
Bricks	1	Clay	Wood knife
Bone shovel	9	Bone, wood, and plant or sinew	Flake and pestle
Brush	1	Fur	Scraper
Burin	1	Flint	Flaker
Canoe	4	Wood and plant	Hand axe
Drinking horn	1	Horn	Flake
Fire making kit	1	Flint	Flaker
Flake	1	Flint	Flaker
Flaker	1	Antler or bone	Hammerstone
Glue	1	Bone or plant	Pestle
Hammerstone	1	Flint	None
Oil	1	Plant or animal source	Pestle or hunted
Lamp	4	Clay or flint, and plant	Wood knife
Mat	1	Plant	Pestle
Needle	1	Bone	Flake
Net	1	Plant	Pestle
Paddle	1	Wood	Flint knife
Pestle	1	Flint	Flaker
Reed boat	1	Plant	Pestle
Rope	1	Plant	Pestle
Rushlight	1	Plant	None
Scraper	1	Flint	Flaker
Screen	1	Plant	Pestle
Sled	9	Wood, hide, and plant or sinew	Awl
Sleeping fur	1	Fur	Scraper
Torch	4	Wood and hide	Flake
Wood knife	1	Wood	Burin

LUXURIES

Luxuries can provide a tool bonus for tests to impress, lead, entertain, or charm others.

Anklet: jewellery made from sinew and wooden, bone, or stone beads.

Armlet: a hide strip, with a design carved into it.

Bead: small bead to plait into hair, beard, and so on.

Bracelet: jewellery made from sinew and wooden or stone beads.

Bullroarer: a musical instrument; a carved wooden sliver attached to a cord, twirled to make a sound.

Comb: a wood or antler comb, often delicately carved.

Drum: a drum, made from a hollowed-out log and hide.

Ear feather: a small feather shaped to be worn in a pierced ear as jewellery.

Ear fang: a small wolf or shark tooth worn in a pierced ear as jewellery.

Flute: a small musical instrument made from a hollow bone or piece of wood.

Incense: pleasant-smelling plant material for burning; one use wrapped in a small piece of hide or linen.

Necklace: a necklace with wooden beads, feathers, or the fangs of wolves, sharks or other animals.

Mask: a mask worn over the face, to give the wearer a supernatural or frightening aspect.

Oil: a sweet-smelling plant oil used as perfume.

Pigment: colourful resin used for decorating one's face or for painting.

Shaker: a musical instrument; a wooden ball filled with dried beans.

Statue: a large (roughly child sized) figure made from clay on a wooden plinth.

Talisman: a necklace from which human bones (usually fingers or a skull) hang.

ITEM	COST	MATERIALS	CRAFTING TOOLS
Anklet	4	Sinew and any one of wood, bone, flint, or horn	Flint knife
Armlet	1	Hide	Flake
Bead	1	Any one of flint, wood, bone, or horn	Awl
Bracelet	4	Sinew and any one of wood, flint, bone, or horn	Flint knife
Bullroarer	4	Hide and wood	Flake
Comb	1	Wood or antler	Burin
Drum	9	Wood, hide, and glue	Brush and scraper
Ear feather	1	Feather	Flake
Ear fang	1	Fang	Flake
Flute	1	Wood or bone	Awl
Incense	1	Plant	Pestle
Necklace	4	Sinew and any one of wood, bone, fang, or feather	Awl
Mask	9	Wood or clay, plant, and glue	Brush
Oil, sweet	1	Plant	Pestle
Pigment	1	Plant	Pestle
Shaker	4	Wood and plant	Burin
Statue	4	Wood and clay	Wood knife
Talisman, bone	4	Bone and sinew	Burin
Talisman, skull	4	Bone and sinew	Burin

FURNISHINGS

Bed mat: a large piece of linen stuffed with feathers and sewn.

Cushion: a small piece of fur stuffed with feathers and sewn.

Hangings: a large piece of linen or sewn hides used as a room divider or for insulation.

Log seat: a log, shaped and smoothed to serve as a seat.

Log table: sections of wood, supported on glued wooden pegs.

Rug: a rug made from plant fibres woven together, or simply a large fur.

ITEM	COST	MATERIALS	CRAFTING TOOLS
Bed mat	4	Plant and feathers	Needle
Cushion	9	Fur, feathers, and sinew	Needle
Hanging	4	Plant or hide, and sinew	Needle
Log seat	1	Wood	Hand axe
Log table	4	Wood and glue	Hand axe
Rug, fur	1	Fur	Scraper
Rug, woven	1	Plant	Pestle

FOOD AND DRINK

Food and drink can be used as a tool bonus for tests when helping others, gaining loyalty, making friends, and restoring stamina, at the GM's discretion.

Fruit or vegetable: a piece or handful of fruit or vegetables, such as wild apples, plums, pears, pomelo, dates, olives, fern, brassica, berries, or nuts. The type depends on the location, with rarer items worth double or triple.

Juice: a drink of juice often carried in a gourd, squeezed from fruit (such as grapes).

Meat or fish: a hunk (handful) of meat, such as deer, goat, pig, rabbit, horse, trout, salmon, mammoth, or lizard. As with fruit, the type depends on location, and meat from rarer or more dangerous animals is worth double or triple.

Sour juice: a gourd full of juice that has fermented, making it alcoholic.

ITEM	COST	MATERIALS	CRAFTING TOOLS
Fruit or vegetable	1	N/A	Gathered
Juice	1	Plant	Pestle
Meat or fish	1	N/A	Hunted
Sour juice	1	Plant	Pestle



ADVENTURING IN ANCIENT MU

COMBAT

Many situations result in characters having to resort to fighting. This is a fact of life for the characters; the Paleomythic world is filled with danger.

A combat encounter begins when a character or foe decides to attack or perform another manoeuvre with the intention of injuring or incapacitating their opponent. An encounter usually ends when one side is defeated, escapes, or surrenders. An encounter therefore lasts a variable amount of time, and it is the GM who decides exactly when the encounter ends.

A combat encounter is resolved in turns, which represent a few seconds of frenetic activity. In a turn, a character can perform one action, such as engaging in melee combat with a foe, running, grabbing a new weapon after one has broken, or standing up after falling. Fleeting activities such as shouting to a comrade and dropping an item do not count as actions, and can be done in combination with the character's chosen action for the turn.

TURN ORDER

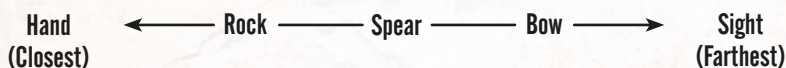
Those who are the most alert and intuitive avoid being surprised, and in a fight these are the individuals who act first. Therefore, at the beginning of a combat encounter, players make an 'aware' test. Those who succeed can have their characters act before the foes; those who fail are forced to have their characters act after the foe.

This turn order can be used for the remainder of the combat, which is the default method, but for a more unpredictable combat encounter, GMs can have the players test for the order at the start of every turn.

MOVEMENT

Although characters are assumed to move short distances when making attacks, players can also opt to have their character use an action solely for movement.

An abstract system is used to define range. This measures distances as: 'hand' (a metre or two, close enough for claws, fists, and melee weapons to be used); 'rock' (several metres, close enough to use a crude thrown object such as a rock); 'spear' (tens of metres, the range at which well-balanced thrown weapons such as spears could hit); 'bow' (a few hundred metres at most, the range at which only arrows shot from bows could feasibly hit); and 'sight' (the range at which a foe can be seen, but which is too far for a weapon to affect them). These are summarised below:



When a character moves, roll an 'agile' test. The character can move up to two range categories with a success (such as from hand to spear range). A test failure means the character can move only one range category.

If using miniature figures to help visualise combat, this is the *Paleomythic* way of judging distances on a playing surface:

Hand range	The figures are in contact with each other.
Rock range	The figures aren't touching, and are up to a thumbnail apart.
Spear range	The figures are between a thumbnail and a palm's width apart (from one side of the palm to the other).
Bow range	The figures are a between a palm's width and a hand span apart (from little finger tip to thumb tip when the hand is spread as wide as possible).
Sight range	The figures are more than a hand span apart but within the defined game area.

When judging distances in this way, the GM should allow a little leeway; hand sizes can vary, after all. Generally, GMs are advised to give players the benefit of the doubt when range is ambiguous.

When a combat encounter begins, the GM specifies the encounter range based on the circumstances. This sometimes depends on terrain; encounters might typically start at hand or rock range in enclosed environments (such as cave tunnels), at rock or spear range in terrain such as forest, and at spear or bow range in open terrain (such as plains).

CHASES

When a combatant flees and is pursued, a chase ensues. The combatant being chased is the prey, and the combatant trying to catch the prey is the pursuer.

To resolve a chase, the player makes an 'agile' test for their character.

A success for the character as pursuer means that they catch up with their prey. Failure means the prey escapes.

A success for the character as prey means that they escape their pursuer. A failure means the pursuer catches up with them.

When the prey escapes, they have moved beyond the sight of the pursuer and cannot be found. The pursuer might wish to try to track the prey, however (see the activities section for how tracking works).

When a pursuer catches up with prey, combat might ensue on the following turn if the pursuer wishes. The prey can of course try to escape the combat (see escape below).

ESCAPE

Sometimes escaping combat is the only sensible option. Things can go bad very quickly during combat, and players should never balk at the option of having their characters flee. Even the bravest know when to run. A character can also choose to escape a melee as a defensive tactic; it is often a useful manoeuvre to exit from a fight in order to employ different strategies (such as using ranged weapons or tactics such as 'tricks': see tactics below).

Escape is often a matter of luck. Therefore, when a combatant wishes to escape a melee, a 'fortunate' test is made. This counts as the combatant's action for the turn. If successful, they are deemed to have seen an opportunity to escape, and successfully fled from hand to rock range (which means there's a possibility that a chase might ensue on the following turn). If unsuccessful, the combatant has two options. They can flee anyway, but will expose themselves to an extra attack from their opponent, or they can remain in the melee (they are effectively cornered and cannot see an escape route).

FIGHTING



Paleomythic combat is a savage battle involving sharp blades, deadly bludgeons, claws, bites, and kicks. Combatants rarely escape a fight unscathed, and characters should therefore approach fighting with caution.

Most fights involve close combat; combatants fight near to each other in an effort to incapacitate their opponent (by rendering them unconscious or killing them). Close-combat attacks are defined as melee (armed attacks using knives, cudgels, and so on) and unarmed (punching, kicking, and so on).

When a combatant makes an armed melee attack against an opponent (using, for example, a knife or axe), a 'brave' test is made. If successful, the opponent is struck and injured.

If a combatant is attacking unarmed, using their hands to pummel, their teeth to rend, or their feet to kick, the trait 'strong' is used in place of 'brave'. Again, a success means that the opponent is injured.

RANGED ATTACKS

Ranged attacks (with thrown weapons, bows, and so on) proceed in a similar manner to melee attacks, with a hit occurring if an 'accurate' test succeeds.

Ranged attacks are possible only if the target is within the range category of the weapon or less. Thus, rocks can affect foes within hand or rock range, spears can affect foes within hand, rock or spear range and so on.

SUMMARY

- Armed melee attacks use the trait 'brave'.
- Unarmed melee attacks use the trait 'strong'.
- Ranged attacks use the trait 'accurate'.

INJURY

Injury is measured in wounds. An attack typically causes one wound, although many weapons have effects that cause additional wounds, and some talents might also cause additional wounds.

Each wound temporarily negates a trait so that it cannot be applied to tests; the trait is effectively lost for a time. For example, if a character takes a wound and loses their 'brave' trait, the trait no longer confers a bonus die in combat. Players can choose the traits that their character loses, while the GM chooses the traits lost by foes.

To show a trait is temporarily lost, players might wish to draw a minus sign next to it. This can be erased when it is regained.

If reduced to zero traits, a character falls unconscious for d6 turns. After this time, the character regains consciousness. They will be in a weakened, highly vulnerable state. If the character is still unconscious when the encounter ends, they will automatically regain consciousness.

A character with zero traits automatically fails tests; they are too feeble and impaired to have any chance of performing anything more than very basic actions. They can crawl or walk slowly, and can communicate. However, strenuous actions and mentally challenging tasks are beyond the character's capabilities in this state.

If injury would reduce a character to a negative trait score, the character dies. For example, if a character previously reduced to zero traits received a wound, they would die.

Although character death is sometimes a sad occasion, players are encouraged to embrace the opportunity to create a new character and explore different character options.

RECOVERY



Characters naturally recover one trait per day. Players are free to choose the recovered trait from any of those lost by the character. Once healed, the trait applies to tests as normal.

Bandaging wounds allows one trait to be recovered immediately, but can be done only once until further damage is received. Bandaging must occur within several minutes of being wounded or it will have no effect. Healing salves, if available, can be used to treat wounds and work in addition to the effects of bandaging. Wounds from disease and poison cannot be treated with bandaging, but can be countered using medicine.

A character with the healer talent is able to greatly assist wounded and ill characters (see the section on talents, above).

For foes, recovery is only a consideration if they are recurring adversaries. In such cases, the GM should simply choose an appropriate amount of time for how long it takes a foe to recover.

DEFENCE

In the world of *Paleomythic*, defence is not the practised skill of later times. Instead, defence relies on certain rare abilities (i.e., talents) or armour.

A number of talents have effects that apply to combat, and some of these are defensive in nature. Refer to the individual talent description for how these work.

ARMOUR

If they lack a useful talent, a character must rely on any armour they wear for their defence. When an attack causes more than one wound (as a result of a powerful attack, weapon effect, or talent), a single piece of armour can be used to negate one of those wounds. This damages that piece of armour. The remaining wounds still affect the character. Only one wound from a single attack can be negated by armour, and at least one wound will always get through (Stone Age armour simply isn't efficient enough to prevent all damage). An attack that would only inflict one wound cannot be negated by armour.

Players can always opt to save their character's armour and take the additional wound if they wish.

Paleomythic armour is not the durable and extensive protection of later eras. Instead, Paleomythic armour is only occasionally effective, and often gets damaged or ruined.

Each item of armour can be damaged just once before needing repair. Damaged armour cannot be used to negate further wounds until it is repaired. When armour is affected, the player chooses any one of the pieces of armour worn by the character as being damaged, and therefore no longer applicable to defence.

Armour is worn on the head, torso, each leg, and each arm. It is therefore possible for a character to have six pieces of armour. In addition, shields function, and are treated as, one piece of armour (but see below for a special rule regarding them).

When considering certain weapon effects, note that fibre, hide, and fur armour are considered flexible, whereas bone and obsidian armour are rigid.

Armour defined as 'ruined' (typically as a result of weapon effects) cannot be repaired.

Note that armour can still function as an item of clothing when damaged: it has only lost its protective qualities. Once a character has depleted their armour, however, they are deemed unarmoured.

Armour repair can be done relatively quickly, and characters might therefore find it wise to spend a few minutes after combat fixing one or two items of damaged armour before continuing their adventures. See the crafting rules for how items are repaired.

Beasts can also possess armour. Beast armour functions in a similar manner to worn armour; the animal will have one or more pieces of armour defined as rigid (like worn bone armour) or flexible (like fur or hide armour). This definition is used to determine whether certain weapon effects impact the armour (see the various weapon effects described above).

SHIELDS

Shields function a little differently to other types of armour. When a shield is used to negate a wound, the player rolls a die. Only if the die is a 1 is the shield damaged. On any other result, the shield remains intact.

SUMMARY

- One piece of armour negates one wound.
- When a piece of armour is used, it is damaged and no longer effective until repaired.
- Armour can only negate one damage per attack, and never all the damage from an attack.
- Fur and hide armour is flexible. Bone and obsidian armour is rigid.
- Shields are damaged only on a roll of 1.



TACTICS



Rather than making an attack to injure an opponent, PCs and humanoid foes can use other tactics. Tactics are employed in place of a normal attack, and count as the character's action for the turn. The following tactics are useable by characters.

FEINT

The combatant makes an attempt at a deceptive attack to 'wrong-foot' a foe, so that their ability is weakened for future attacks.

When a combatant tries to make a feint, a successful 'dexterous' test means they do so and throw a foe off guard. For the remainder of the combat encounter, the foe loses any benefit gained from a relevant trait (such as 'brave' or 'strong') against the character, until one of their attacks is successful. Once the foe makes a successful attack, this effect is negated and cannot be used versus the same foe again for this encounter.

If the attacker fails the 'dexterous' test, the foe reads the feint and it has no effect.

LEAP

The combatant takes a running leap towards a foe, in an attempt to knock them prone.

When a combatant is trying a leap, an 'agile' test success means the attacker crashes into their opponent. This causes a wound to the foe, and will cause them to fall prone. If the foe has the 'strong' trait (and it has not been lost to injury), they do not fall prone.

Note that only human and human-like (bipedal) opponents can be affected by this tactic. In addition, this is a risky tactic because if the attacker fails the test, they fall prone instead.

RALLY

The combatant gathers their strength, pausing to manoeuvre and catch their breath.

This special tactic does not adversely affect the opponent. Instead, the character uses their action to circle their foe and recover from the shock and pain of wounds.

If a 'resilient' test succeeds, the character recovers from one wound (as if it were healed). The player can thus restore one trait. Failure indicates that no healing occurs. This can be attempted once, and further attempts are not possible until the character is again injured. Note that it is possible only in combat, it is not a tactic to be used for other incidents of injury (such as wounds from hazards). Once combat ends, a rally cannot be attempted.

Note: only intelligent beings tend to make use of this tactic; animals and many beast men do not.

RESTRAIN

The combatant grips an opponent, restraining their limbs and holding them in place, so that they cannot act unless they escape.

When a combatant is trying to restrain a foe, a 'strong' test success means the opponent is held and loses their action for the turn, if they have not already acted. On future turns, the restrained combatant can try to escape or attack. The victim escapes if an 'agile' test is a success (which can be attempted once per turn). Alternatively, a restrained person can attempt an unarmed attack on their restrainer. In this case, the person remains held irrespective of whether they injure their assailant. Note that the combatant doing the restraining is unable to act (other than to continue to restrain or to release the victim). They can voluntarily release their victim at any time.

If the 'strong' test is unsuccessful, the attacker fails to overpower the foe. The tactic has no effect.

Only combatants of a similar or smaller size to the attacker can be restrained.

SHOVE

Instead of causing damage to an opponent, a shove forces them back.

If a combatant is trying to shove a foe, a 'strong' test success means the target is forced back from hand to rock range. If the foe has the 'strong' trait (and it has not been lost to injury), they cannot be shoved.

Note that a combatant can only shove opponents of equal or smaller size to themselves. If a shove forces a combatant against a hard or dangerous obstacle (jagged rocks or a pit), the shoved opponent might be injured (as judged by the GM).

If the 'strong' test is unsuccessful, the attacker fails to move their foe. The tactic has no effect.

SMASH

Instead of damaging a foe, the attack damages an item or weapon.

If a combatant is trying to damage an item held by an opponent, a 'strong' test success means they do so. If the foe has the 'fortunate' trait (and it has not been lost to injury), this tactic will not work against them.

Only items that are held or easily targeted can be damaged. In addition, the weapon used to smash must be larger and more resilient than the target item. For example, a bone knife could damage a bag held by a foe, but would be unlikely to cause significant damage to a cudgel or spear.

A damaged item can be repaired (see crafting in the activities section for details). Only armed characters can smash items in this way. Damaged weapons and tools are no longer useable, and will not confer a bonus die until they are repaired.

If the 'strong' test is unsuccessful, the attacker fails to damage the intended item. The tactic has no effect.

STRANGLE

The combatant grabs and chokes the foe.

If a combatant is trying to strangle a foe, a 'strong' test success means the opponent is grabbed by the throat.

Each subsequent turn that the attacker continues to strangle (and doing no other action), they inflict one wound on the victim automatically. If the foe has the 'resilient' trait (and it has not been lost to injury), they take a wound every other turn. The attacker can voluntarily release their victim at any time.

Each turn, the victim can either attempt to break free or attempt to injure their

attacker as their action. Breaking free requires a successful 'agile' test. Alternatively, the victim can try to cause the attacker injury with an unarmed attack or a melee attack using a short weapon. A long weapon (such as a spear) cannot be used in this situation. An attacker who is successfully struck by their victim immediately breaks their stranglehold.

If the 'strong' test is unsuccessful, the attacker fails to get a hold on their foe. The tactic has no effect.

Only combatants of a similar or smaller size to the attacker can be strangled in this manner.

TAKE

The combatant tries to take an item from the foe (such as a weapon or tool).

Note that only held or easily accessible items can be taken. Items that are concealed or fixed (such as a tool within a bag, a knife tied to a belt or a gem attached to a staff) cannot be taken without first defeating the opponent.

When a combatant is trying to take an item held by an opponent, a 'dexterous' test success means they do so. If the foe has the 'dexterous' trait (and it has not been lost to injury), an item cannot be taken from them with this tactic. A combatant needs both hands free to use this tactic.

If the 'dextrous' test is unsuccessful, the attacker fails to steal the desired item. The tactic has no effect.

TRICK

This is a special tactic that creates a danger in the combat area. Tricks are tactics that increase the threat or difficulty of fighting in the location. Examples include causing pots to smash on the floor to make it hazardous for barefooted opponents, knocking over a brazier of hot coals to cause a fire, thereby burning an opponent, casting oil on the floor to cause an opponent to slip, toppling a statue so that it falls onto an opponent, throwing a cloud of ash into the air to befuddle a foe, and so on.

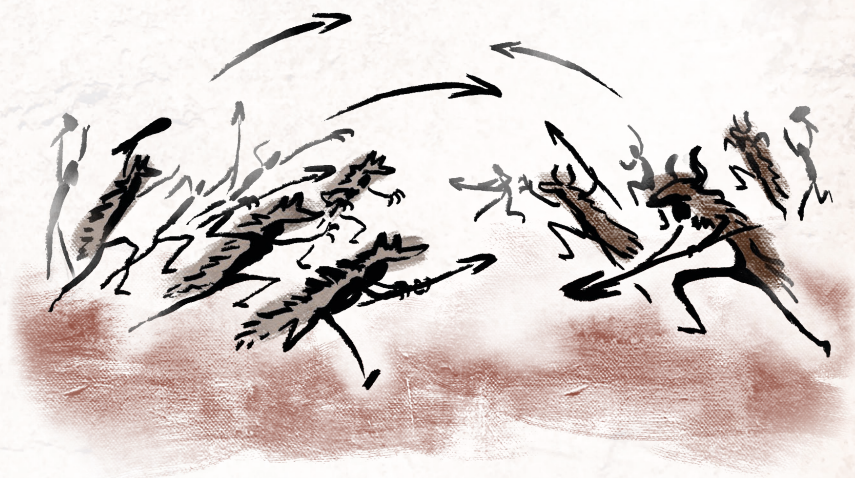
The effects of such tactics should be described; the GM has final say as to what is possible. Typically, dangers delay a combatant, cause them to fall, cause them to drop something, or cause injury.

If a combatant wants to create a trick, a 'guileful' test success is required. If successful, the opponent is exposed to the created danger. If the foe has the 'wise' trait (and it has not been lost to injury), this tactic will not work against them.

If the 'guileful' test is unsuccessful, the foe sees through or circumvents the trick. The tactic has no effect.

WEAPONS

Characters can make use of weapons, which in addition to granting the character a bonus die (because they are a tool), also confer an advantage to an attack called an 'effect'. However, like tools, weapons can break (as noted in the tests section). A broken weapon is deemed to be ineffective, but repairable. When broken, the bonus die and weapon effect no longer apply. This represents such occurrences as a flint spear or axe head coming loose, a flint blade becoming chipped and blunt, a wooden haft splitting, and so on. Refer to the activities section for details of how weapons can be crafted and repaired.



WEAPON TYPE

A weapon is defined as either long (like a spear) or short (like a knife). The weapon type is important for certain weapon effects.

WEAPON EFFECTS

When making use of a weapon, the weapon effect is triggered when a 6 is rolled on the weapon bonus die. The effect is in addition to the wound caused by the attack. Only weapons cause effects; an unarmed character cannot cause an effect.

At the GM's discretion, some effects might not apply to certain foes. This is particularly true when the foe is especially large (it would be extremely unlikely that a character could cause a mammoth to fall over as a result of a weapon effect, for example).

The nature of the effect depends on the weapon in use. Each weapon in the goods list has a noted effect, and these are described below. Some effects apply specifically to armour; the target always chooses which item of armour a weapon effect damages. Refer to the armour section for additional details.

DESTROY

The attack splits and crushes rigid armour, so that one piece is ruined and cannot be repaired. Flexible armour is instead damaged (but repairable). Targets lacking armour take an extra wound.

DISARM

The attack affects a short weapon wielded by the opponent, knocking it out of their hands. The weapon can be retrieved, but this counts as an action. If the weapon is instead long, it is knocked aside rather than out of the opponent's hands. In this case it cannot be used for an attack for their next action, but the wielder can attempt another action if they wish (they do not need to retrieve the weapon).

ENTANGLE

The weapon entangles a foe so that their fighting ability is impaired. An impaired foe loses their next action.

FRACTURE

The attack is forceful enough to damage one piece of rigid armour worn by the foe. If the target lacks armour, or wears flexible armour, they take an extra wound instead.

GORE

The weapon causes a deep and vicious wound, which against unarmoured opponents causes an extra wound. Armoured foes are instead impaired, so that they lose their next action.

GOUGE

The weapon causes a jagged, bleeding wound. The foe will suffer an additional, automatic wound next turn. Foes that have the 'resilient' trait are unaffected, unless the trait has been lost due to injury. If a foe spends their next action bandaging themselves, the extra wound is negated.

IMPALE

The weapon causes a narrow, penetrating wound, which against armoured opponents causes an extra wound. Unarmoured foes are instead impaired, so that they lose their next action.

IMPEDE

The attack affects a long weapon wielded by the opponent, knocking it out of their hands. The weapon can be retrieved, but this counts as an action. If the weapon is instead short, it is knocked aside rather than out of the opponent's hands. In this case it cannot be used for an attack for their next action, but the wielder can attempt another action if they wish (they do not need to retrieve the weapon).

INTIMIDATE

The attack unnerves foes. If the target of the attack is already injured (prior to this attack), they are unnerved and demoralised, and lose their next action. Uninjured foes are less affected, and can act but will not benefit from any applicable traits (such as 'brave' or 'strong') for their next action. Foes that have the 'wilful' trait are unaffected, unless the trait has been lost due to injury.

PAIN

The attack causes a sharp pain, momentarily distracting the foe. For their next action, the opponent cannot benefit from any traits normally applicable to an attack (such as 'brave' or 'strong').

PIERCE

The attack is especially dangerous, and causes an extra wound.

REND

The attack is forceful enough to damage one piece of flexible armour worn by the foe. If the target lacks armour, or wears rigid armour, they take an extra wound instead.

RUIN

The attack cuts and rips flexible armour, so that one piece is ruined and cannot be repaired. Rigid armour is instead damaged (but repairable). Targets lacking armour take an extra wound.

SLAM

The attack forces the target backwards, from hand to rock range (like the shove tactic). If the target strikes a hard surface, they take an extra wound. Foes that have the 'strong' trait are unaffected by this attack, unless the trait has been lost due to injury.

SLICE

The attack is so swift that an additional, free attack can be made immediately against the same opponent. For this extra attack, ignore any weapon effect result.

SMASH

The attack batters the target, so that they take an extra wound and fall (as long as they are bipedal). Fallen foes must use an action if they wish to stand; while floored, they cannot attack. Foes that have the 'strong' trait do not fall (but still take the extra wound), unless the trait has been lost due to injury.

SPLINTER

The attack jars a weapon held by the opponent. On future turns, the affected weapon breaks on a tool bonus die result of 1, 2, or 3. If this effect occurs again on the same weapon, that weapon immediately breaks. Unarmed opponents and beasts take an extra wound.

TRIP

The attack trips the foe, as long as they are primarily bipedal (humans and beast men). The foe falls and cannot attack until they stand (which counts as an action). Quadrupedal, crawling, flying, and other non-bipedal beasts cannot be tripped.

WARD

The attack keeps the opponent at bay, so that they cannot attack the character on the following turn unless they wield a long weapon (such as a spear or staff), in which case they can attack but lose the benefit of any traits normally applicable to an attack ('brave' or 'strong').



EXAMPLE COMBAT



Nahmuna is passing through the territory of a hostile tribe, when she encounters a guard patrolling the outskirts of the enemy camp. She realises she needs to silence the guard before he summons others and she becomes outnumbered.

Nahmuna has her full five traits ('agile', 'brave', 'dexterous', 'resilient', and 'wilful') and is armed with a bone knife. She is wearing a hide hat, her only piece of armour. The guard has four traits ('fortunate', 'guileful', 'strong', and 'wilful') plus the flaw 'ignorant', and carries a flint cudgel.

TURN ONE

At the start of the first turn, the GM declares that Nahmuna is at rock range and asks the player to roll an 'aware' test. Nahmuna gets five dice, with no applicable trait or tool. The player rolls 5, 1, 2, 3, and 4 for no successes. Nahmuna therefore acts second.

The GM states that the guard, believing Nahmuna will be no match for him, will rush towards her as his action (so that they are now at hand range). Nahmuna can now act, so the player states that Nahmuna will drop the bag she carries and draw her knife. Turn one therefore ends.

TURN TWO

The guard attacks, swinging his flint cudgel. The GM rolls his four dice, plus a bonus die for the weapon. The results are 6, 4, 1, 2, and 6 on the weapon die. This is a hit, and triggers the weapon effect. Nahmuna takes a wound, and because the weapon effect is 'gouge', she is bleeding.

The GM describes how the cudgel smashes into her, raking open jagged wounds. Nahmuna will suffer another wound next turn unless she bandages herself or damages her one item of armour. The player crosses off a trait, choosing to lose 'wilful', and decides that Nahmuna will quickly bandage her wound. She describes how Nahmuna swiftly grabs some soft hide tucked into her belt and wraps the wound. This is Nahmuna's action, so turn two ends.

TURN THREE

The GM describes how the guard laughs, and swings his cudgel again. The GM rolls four dice plus the weapon die, and gets 4, 1, 4, 2, and 3 on the weapon die. The attack misses.

Nahmuna can now act. The player rolls an attack, using four dice (Nahmuna is wounded and has lost a trait), plus a bonus die for her 'brave' trait, and another bonus die for her weapon. The six dice results are 6, 3, 3, 6, 2, and 1 on the weapon die. This is a hit, but Nahmuna has broken her knife.

The player describes how Nahmuna thrusts her knife, cutting the guard, before the knife falls apart in her hand. The GM crosses off the guard's 'wilful' trait.

TURN FOUR

The guard is angered by the wound, but grins as he sees Nahmuna's knife break. He attacks once more. The GM rolls three dice (as the guard is now wounded), plus a bonus die for the weapon. He gets 2, 6, 6, and 5 on the weapon die. Another hit.

The player crosses off Nahmuna's 'agile' trait, deciding she must have been struck on a leg. She can now act, and because Nahmuna lacks a weapon, the player decides to use the tactic 'take'. Nahmuna will attempt to grab her opponent's cudgel. This is a 'dexterous' test, and Nahmuna possesses this trait. The player therefore rolls three dice (Nahmuna has two wounds), plus a bonus die for the applicable trait. She gets 5, 5, 6, and 4 – success! Nahmuna now has the guard's cudgel.

TURN FIVE

The GM decides that the guard is enraged at losing his weapon, and tries to strangle Nahmuna. The guard now gets just three dice, but gets a bonus die for the applicable trait 'strong'. The GM rolls 3, 2, 3, and 1. A failure. The guard grabs at Nahmuna, but misses.

Nahmuna now attacks with the cudgel. She gets three dice, plus her bonus die for the trait 'brave', and a bonus die for the weapon. The player rolls 1, 4, 2, 6, and 2 on the weapon die. She hits the guard, and the GM describes how he takes a bash to stomach. The GM marks off another trait, choosing 'fortunate' (the guard's luck is running out, it would seem).

TURN SIX

The GM decides that the guard, now wounded, will act more cautiously. He decides the guard will shove Nahmuna, opening the range between them, to allow the guard to run for help. The GM rolls two dice, plus a bonus die for the trait 'strong'. He gets 4, 6, and 6 – a success. Nahmuna lacks the 'strong' trait, so she is forced back to rock range. There are no obstacles, so Nahmuna is uninjured.

The player decides to use the tactic 'rally', hoping that Nahmuna recovers from one of her wounds. She makes a test using three dice (Nahmuna lacks the applicable trait 'resilient'). The player rolls 4, 6, and 1, so succeeds. She restores Nahmuna's 'agile' trait.

TURN SEVEN

The GM describes how the guard runs back to his camp. He rolls an 'agile' test for the movement, with just two dice, and gets 3 and 2, a failure. The guard moves one range category away (to spear range).

The player decides that Nahmuna will not pursue, thinking it prudent instead to try to escape the hostile territory. She states that Nahmuna will grab her things and run, not pausing to bandage herself.

Combat ends, as the GM begins to roll tracking tests for the hostile tribe...

ACTIVITIES

Characters will often engage in a number of activities other than combat, such as climbing, foraging, crafting and repairing items, and so on. The following rules offer guidance to GMs on how these activities can be managed during a game.

BRIBERY

Bribery occurs when a character tries to obtain services that a foe would normally be reluctant to supply, such as paying a guard to not raise the alarm, or bribing a normally honest person to steal something. Characters attempting to bribe someone must make an offer: typically a number of gems, some goods, or a service of some kind.

If the GM thinks that the offer is good enough for the target of the bribe, the bribery succeeds automatically.

If the GM thinks that the target might accept the offer, but is unsure, the player makes a 'charismatic' test. If it succeeds, the target takes the bribe; if it fails, they refuse or ask for more.

If the GM thinks that the offer is too little, the target refuses and the bribe fails automatically. In this case, the target might feel insulted by the bribe and might, at the GM's discretion, refuse any additional attempts.

CLIMBING

Climbing in these rules is designed to be dramatic and dangerous, without necessarily being lethal. This allows characters to perform climbing feats without losing their character to unlucky dice rolls.

The GM describes a climb as a distance, similar to how range is defined in combat. For example, a climb might be defined as 'spear range' (as far as a spear could be thrown). For reference, the ranges, with examples, are as follows:

Hand range	Clambering over a few boulders
Rock range	Climbing a tall tree
Spear range	Scaling a ravine or down a crevasse
Bow range	Climbing high cliffs
Sight range	Climbing a steep mountain

When a character climbs, the player makes an 'agile' test for each range category the climb includes. For example, for a climb to spear range, the character must first pass through hand and rock range, so a total of three tests is required.

As can be seen, climbs of a great distance (such as an entire mountain) can be very tough because they require the completion of several successful tests. The GM might allow a character to break up the climb into two or three separate climbs, assuming that a character can comfortably rest in between each section.

When a climb test fails, the character falls one range category from the range they were on. An 'agile' test is then made to see whether the character manages to grab a hand hold or otherwise arrest their descent. If successful, the character avoids injury and can continue to climb. Failure indicates that the character takes one wound (from bumps and cuts), and falls another range category. Another test is then made to see whether the character manages to arrest their descent. This continues until the character stops falling, dies, or hits the ground.

CRAFTING

Characters can attempt to craft items; such skills are part of the upbringing of most people in the Paleomythic world. Materials are required to craft an item, and these must be purchased, found, or made. To purchase materials, refer to the goods section. Found materials are of course free. See the scavenging activity for details of how materials are found.

The goods section lists items that characters might wish to make, such as tools, bags, weapons, and so on. Each item entry shows the materials required to craft it. For example, making a box requires wood and glue.

CRAFTING ITEMS

Once a character has assembled the right materials, they can attempt to craft or repair an item.

To craft an item, a 'dexterous' test is made. If successful, the item is made correctly. A failed test means that it is unfit for its intended purpose. In either case, the stated materials required for the item are used up.

Crafting usually requires a tool; refer to the goods list for the various types of tool available. In addition, the goods list shows the tools that are most useful for crafting a particular item. When crafting, a tool will grant a bonus die if it is one of the listed relevant tools.

For example, in the goods listing, the box entry notes the tools 'awl' (to shape the wood) and 'brush' (to apply the glue). Using either of these tools confers a bonus die for the test to craft it. Another tool, such as a flint knife, could be used to craft the item instead. No bonus die would be gained in that case, however.

The below list is given as a guide to GMs, and shows the common tools and their typical uses.

TOOL	USE
Antler pick	To break up soil, dig for roots, and so on
Antler spike	To dig and make holes in soft materials such as earth or soft clay
Awl	To pierce and scrape wood, tough hides, and so on
Bone axe	To chop soft woods such as twigs for kindling
Bone shovel	To dig and shift soil, grain, and refuse
Bow drill	To make holes in wood, bone, horn, and similar materials
Brush	To apply glues and spread oils and pigments
Burin	For fine carving of wood, bone, and hardened clay
Flake	To clean, etch, and sharpen bones, animal talons, and claws
Flaker	To knap sharp edges on flint and bone
Flint knife	To cut tough materials and to carve
Hafted axe	To cut down trees and chop firewood
Hammerstone	To knap blocks of flint and break bones
Hand axe	To chop, carve, and plane wood, and to make planks
Needle	To sew soft materials
Pestle	To flatten fibres and sinew, and to grind grains, oils, and pigments
Scraper	To prepare hides and furs
Stone-topped cudgel	To break up bones, rocks, and flint blocks
Wood knife	To cut linen and shape soft materials such as clay

The time taken to craft or repair an item depends on factors such as the complexity and detail of the item, in addition to the type of materials used. For simplicity, the GM can assume that the time taken is roughly half an hour per material type (so an item made of two materials can be made in an hour). The GM can extend this time for items that are, for example, elaborately decorated, and reduce this time for items that are very simple to construct.

REPAIRING ITEMS

This follows the same procedure as crafting an item, but only one of any of the required materials is needed to repair it.

ESCAPE

Characters might find themselves bound, imprisoned, or trapped on occasion. In such cases, an attempt to escape can be made.

A test is required to escape. The manner of the escape determines the applicable talent; if a character is escaping by crawling or squeezing through gaps (in a cage or under a gate, for example), the trait 'agile' applies. The trait 'strong' applies when trying to break out of something using brute force. When wriggling out of bonds, the trait 'dexterous' applies.

The GM might rule that a tool is needed to allow an escape attempt (to cut especially tough bindings or to lever open a door, for example). If a character lacks the tool, escape might not be possible.

If the test is a success, the character escapes. Failure indicates that the character doesn't escape on this occasion.

In theory a character can continue to try to escape for as long as is required. However, the GM might rule that after the third or fourth attempt, the character must make a 'wilful' test for each attempt thereafter. Failure indicates that the character ceases to try to escape, having become too demoralised from their successive failures. After rest, they can resume their escape attempts if the GM deems it feasible.

FORAGING

Finding food can become a vital activity when travelling great distances in wilderness areas, and after characters have consumed any sustenance they are carrying, they will need to resort to gathering food. See the rules on starvation in the hazards section for the effects of going without food.

Foraging takes half a day; the other half can be spent travelling if the characters wish. A character can forage twice in a day, but will make no travel progress.

When a character forages, an 'aware' test is made. If successful, the character finds food. The amount found (as a number of meals) depends on the terrain and season, as follows:

Forest habitats (woodlands, forests, groves, jungles, and rainforest): d3 meals, d2 in winter.

Grassland habitats (grasslands, hills, scrubland, and thickets): d2 meals, 1 meal in winter.

Wetland habitats (bogs, marshes, wetlands, backwaters, swamps, and salt marshes): 1 meal all year round.

Barren habitats (rocky mountains, steppes, tundra, deserts, and glaciers): 1 meal all year round, plus foraging takes a whole day.

RANDOM FOODS

The type of food gathered by a character can be determined randomly using the below table. This gives a food description and some examples of the food type. The GM rolls 4d6 on the below table once for each meal found. Re-roll or choose if the food found doesn't seem congruent with the terrain.

RESULT	GATHERED FOOD TYPE (EXAMPLES)	DESCRIPTION
4	Bitter leaves (kale)	Dark leaves with a bitter taste, chewed or crushed in water
5	Brown root (cassava)	A bitter tasting root vegetable that can be roasted, seared and baked, or eaten raw
6	Brown seeds (flax)	Small seeds that can be ground or seared on a hot stone
7	Dark berries (blackberries, blueberries)	Sweet dark berries eaten whole or crushed to make a sweet paste and juice
8	Flowers (borage flower, elderflower)	Edible flowers, eaten raw or added to water
9	Fungi (mushrooms)	Various types of edible mushroom
10	Green fruit (apple, pear)	Firm green fruit usually eaten raw
11	Green seeds (peas)	Seeds from a pod, eaten raw or mashed
12	Nuts (hazelnuts, cashews)	Various types of nut, eaten raw or ground to a paste
13	Oil fruit (olives, dates)	Succulent fruit, eaten raw or made into a paste and oil
14	Red fruit (strawberry, raspberry)	Soft, sweet fruit eaten raw
15	Sap (syrup, honey)	Sugary sap harvested from trees (for game purposes, this can include honey); eaten raw
16	Small root (garlic, shallot)	Root vegetables with a strong flavour and aroma; eaten raw, roasted, or baked
17	Sour berries (gooseberry)	Eaten raw or made into a juice
18	Stone fruit (plum)	Sweet fruit with a stone; eaten raw or dried
19	Sweet berries (grapes)	Succulent berries eaten raw or made into a juice
20	Sweet leaves (sorrel)	Sharp, sweet leaves eaten raw or boiled
21	Sweet root (sweet potato)	A sweet root vegetable eaten raw, roasted, baked, or seared
22	White grain (spelt)	A grain that can be ground and stored or made into a mash
23	White root (parsnip)	A sweet root that is eaten raw, roasted, baked, or seared
24	Yellow grain (maize)	A sweet grain, used to make a paste or stored for later use

HUNTING



When characters hunt animals for food, the majority of the time spent during the hunt is devoted to actually locating prey. Hunting therefore takes a whole day, during which time no other activities or tasks are possible.

The following simple hunting procedure is used when the GM and players wish to resolve a hunt using an abstract method. The alternative is for the GM to create an encounter, which is then resolved using the standard combat rules.

ABSTRACT HUNTING

Using this method, the player selects the type of creature hunted and the GM checks the hunting table below to determine the required tests.

Each category of creature hunted (small, medium, or large) requires a different set of tests. All of the indicated tests must be successful for the hunt to be a success, although only one success of each type is required. For example, if a group of four characters is on a hunt, all four would attempt an 'aware' test; if three characters failed the test and only one succeeded, the test would still be classed as a success. It doesn't matter how many test failures there are in a group of hunters, as long as at least one character is successful on each of the required tests.

The number and type of traits used for the test depends on the sort of prey hunted. An 'aware' test is always required, to reflect the time spent finding the prey. Other traits that may apply include 'accurate' (to represent the usual method of killing the prey), 'dexterous' (for a hunting method such as where a burrow or nest is raided), 'agile' (to reflect the speed and agility required to catch some types of prey), 'resilient' (since some creatures require great stamina to pursue), and 'strong' (for those types of powerful prey that can put up a fight). Once all of the tests are a success the creature is deemed to have been killed. Failure means that it escaped.

The hunting table shows the number of meals obtained and any materials that can be acquired from the animal. Note that in these rules, fishing is deemed a form of hunting because it is usually carried out with a spear while either in a boat or wading in shallow waters.

ANIMAL SIZE	TESTS REQUIRED	SUPPLIES GAINED	DESCRIPTION
Small	'Aware' and 'dexterous'	1d6 meals, 1d6 materials	These animals are usually taken from burrows, nooks, foliage, and other hiding places, and thus require characters to be alert and dexterous. A small animal might be a bat, cat, deer, fish, goat, small lizard, small monkey, rabbit, rodent, small snake, or waterfowl.
Medium	'Aware', 'accurate', and 'agile'	2d6 meals, 2d6 materials	These animals are often in herds or packs, or hidden in foliage, and require ranged attacks and a good deal of agility to hunt. A medium animal might be an ape, boar, canine, large bird, large monkey, small bovid, or small equine.
Large	'Aware', 'accurate', 'resilient', and 'strong'	3d6 meals, 3d6 materials	These are formidable animals, and only those with skill and stamina are successful in hunting them. Note that when hunting these animals, each failed test counts as a wound sustained by a randomly determined character during the hunt. A large animal might be a bear, crocodilian, elephant, large bovid, large equine, large lizard, or rhinoceros.

Animals supply the materials bone, hides and sinew. Other materials can be acquired from specific animals as follows:

Antlers	Deer
Feathers	Birds
Fur	Bears, canines, felines, rabbits, rodents
Horns	Bovids, elephants

LEAPING

When characters must leap over or across something that the GM judges could feasibly be jumped, an 'agile' test is made.

A test success means that the character cleared the obstacle or distance. A failure indicates that they did not.

If the leap would result in a fall (into a pit, for example), the character is injured and loses a trait. If the fall is a great distance, the player makes tests to arrest the characters descent. This works in the same way as falling when climbing; see the climbing rules for details.

LOAD

Characters can carry many items without being encumbered, as they are accustomed to a harsh world in which everyday survival is a struggle. Only particularly cumbersome and heavy things will have an impact on a character.

A cumbersome thing is any item that is very heavy or awkward to carry. This is



usually obvious: for example, a large bundle of logs, a bag stuffed with rocks or gems, a heavy block of flint, a piece of mammoth hide, or several gourds filled with water could all be deemed cumbersome. Small and light things become cumbersome when there are many of them. A full set of armour is cumbersome when carried, but not when worn. Weapons aren't cumbersome unless the character has several large weapons.

Characters can carry two cumbersome things (one in each hand). If a character uses some means to transport a cumbersome object without using their hands (such as tying it to their back), they can carry three cumbersome things.

When a character tries to carry an additional cumbersome item, the player makes a 'strong' test whenever a significant physical action is taken. This includes a character moving from one location to another (such as from one cave to another, through a forest, over a hill, and so on), or when they perform a physical task (such as running, climbing, fighting, or leaping).

If the test is successful, the character can continue to function. Failure indicates that the character suffers a wound from the exertion due to strained muscles and so on. The GM can increase the number of wounds suffered by one per additional cumbersome item.

EXAMPLE

Nahmuna is transporting materials, carrying two blocks of flint and a bundle of furs strapped to her back. She straps one more fur bundle to her back, which is one cumbersome thing more than she can usually manage. Nahmuna treks through a forest, and when she emerges onto a path, the GM asks the player to make a 'strong' test. The player rolls a failure, so Nahmuna suffers a wound, having clearly overexerted herself.

LOCKS

Paleomythic locks are typically simple levers, latches, hooks, or rope bindings. Locks are sometimes placed on doors, and are easily opened from the inside (by lifting the latch, for example). If on the wrong side of the lock, there is usually a trick to opening it, known only by the owner (such as a hidden gap where a lever can be pushed to open a door). This trick is in place of keys, which are rarely used.

To open a lock without knowing the 'trick', a 'dexterous' test must be successful. A tool such as an awl, knife, or needle is often needed to open a lock.

If the test is a failure, the lock cannot be opened. A character can keep trying, but

each additional attempt is possible only with a successful 'wilful' test. Failure of the 'wilful' test indicates that the character has become frustrated and must calm down for an hour or so before trying again. If a character insists on trying before this time, the GM might decide that they break the tool they're using.

PERFORMANCE

Characters might wish to perform at times, perhaps by singing, dancing, playing a drum, chanting, and so on.

Performance is a 'charismatic' test. Performance can garner rewards in the form of food, gifts, and favours. If a performance test succeeds, the GM rolls a d3. The result is the number of rewards received. The GM may then choose what form the gifts take (which may be all of the same type, or a combination of rewards).

Food rewards count as one meal, and will typically be choice fruits, flavoursome drinks, freshly cooked meat, and so on.

Gifts might be one or two gems, a tool, a material for crafting, and so on. A gift might also be an unusual or mystery item (such as a statuette of a strange being), which the GM can use as a plot hook for an adventure.

Favours include promises of help during hunting, gathering, scouting, crafting, or healing. A character might also attract an admirer as a favour, who might be looking to marry...

The same group of onlookers will rarely reward a performance twice on the same day. Note that certain talents (such as 'dancer') have slightly different methods for managing performance.

SCAVENGING

Characters can search for crafting materials, or useful items such as broken or lost tools and weapons. When scavenging, the player therefore states either that the character is looking for a specific type of crafting item, or else is looking for anything useful.

To find craft materials, characters search an area. Finding one use of a craft material requires a successful 'aware' test. One attempt to find materials takes about half a day.

Characters will only have a chance of finding an item if searching in the correct terrain. If searching an inappropriate terrain, the test will fail automatically.

The following terrains are appropriate for the various materials characters search for:

Antler	Antlers and horns can be found in woodland, hills, scrubland, and forest areas
Clay	Can be found near riverbanks and other water sources, cliffs, hills, and coastal areas
Plant	Plant fibre, for making cloth, rope and woven items, is found near any vegetation, such as grassland, woodland, hills, riverbanks, marshland, and so on
Flint	Can be found in mountains, hills, cliffs, caves, coasts, and rocky terrain
Wood	Found wherever there are trees, but mostly in woodland, forests, and jungles

Bone, feathers, fur, hides, fangs, talons, and horns can be obtained from hunting; see the hunting section for details. Certain items (noted in the list of goods as 'special') are made of unusual materials. These are obtained either through trade or by specifically searching for them. In the latter case, the GM might need to create an adventure to see whether characters find the desired item.

If searching for anything useful, an 'aware' test is made for each hour of searching. This assumes a character is looking in an area where something could be found; searching a wasteland in the hope of finding something useful will probably meet with failure; searching an abandoned campsite is much more promising.

A test success in this case means that a character finds one useful thing of the GM's choice. If stuck for ideas, GMs can use the below table (roll 2d6):

2D6	ITEM
2	Bag, with food inside (one meal)
3	Bone from a large animal
4	Bones from a small animal (roll d3 for how many)
5	Bone knife
6	Damaged weapon (repairable: roll on the table below)
7	Discarded tool (roll on the table below)
8	Gems, roll d2 for how many
9	Gourd, empty
10	Piece of flint
11	Piece of fur or hide
12	Skull from a strange animal or beast man

DAMAGED WEAPON	
d6	Item
1	Bone axe
2	Cudgel
3	Bone knife
4	Flint knife
5	Hand axe
6	Wood spear

DISCARDED TOOL	
d6	Item
1	Awl
2	Bone shovel
3	Burin
4	Flake
5	Hammerstone
6	Scraper

SWIMMING

Characters are assumed to be able to swim, and succeed automatically at swimming to their destination in calm waters. When a character swims, their destination is judged as a range, just like the range categories in combat. Swimming across a narrow river would thus be rock range, a wider river might be spear range, and a lake might be bow range. A huge lake would count as sight range.

A test is required only when a character swims in fast flowing or stormy waters. In such cases, for each range category swam, a 'resilient' test is made. For example, a character swimming across a river of spear-range width makes three tests: one at hand range, one at rock range, and another at spear range.

If the test is a success, the character carries on swimming or, if it is the last test, reaches their destination.

If one of the tests is a failure, the character has become fatigued and is swept back one range category.

If a character gets swept back two range categories in succession, they also suffer



a wound (they have been swept under water and emerge a few minutes later, gasping for air). If a character takes so many wounds that they lose consciousness, they will drown unless another character rescues them.

Characters making use of boats can travel at roughly the same speed as if swimming, but are of course dry and can transport items. In rough waters a character must make tests in the same manner as if swimming, but the trait 'agile' is used. Failure indicates that the boat capsizes. If the character fails another 'agile' test, the boat drifts off or sinks, and the character must swim.

THEFT

A 'dexterous' test is made when characters try to steal something from another person (such as stealing an item from a bag). A 'guileful' test is made when stealing something near to a person, but not carried or worn by them (such as an item from a basket beside the person).

If the test is a success, the thief steals the item. If the test is a failure, the victim notices the attempt, and will react accordingly (some might attack, whereas others might shout to raise the alarm, as judged by the GM).

TRADING

When trading (buying and selling items), a character can typically sell an item for the value listed in the goods section (assuming it is of reasonable quality and in good repair).

To sell for a higher price, a 'charismatic' test is made for the seller. If successful, they have convinced the buyer to purchase the item for the increased cost. The maximum a character can usually ask for is 150% of the usual cost of the item. Any more than that and the buyer will refuse the deal, or offer a smaller sum.

When attempting to buy an item at a lower price, the character first makes a reduced offer. A 'charismatic' test is then made, and if successful, the seller accepts the reduced sum. Failure indicates that the seller won't budge on the price. Generally, a seller will not go below 50% of the usual cost of the item.

HAZARDS

DISEASE

Characters can be exposed to a variety of diseases, and only the healthy are able to overcome their debilitating effects.

Exposure to disease occurs when the character encounters a disease source (such as a person afflicted by the malady), when injured by a disease-carrying host (a diseased animal or human), or when the character enters an area where the disease is prevalent (such as a dank cave, a festering swamp, or a musty tomb).

When a character is exposed to a disease, a 'resilient' test is required. If successful, the character suffers from the lesser effect. A test failure indicates that the character suffers from both the lesser and greater effect.

LESSER EFFECT

The character acquires d3 symptoms. Each symptom affects a trait, which means the trait cannot be used for tests for the next d6 days (roll for each symptom).

Roll on the below tables to determine the symptom(s) the character acquires. If the character lacks the relevant trait, they acquire the associated flaw for the indicated period instead (so a character lacking 'strong', for example, becomes 'weak'). There is no effect if the character already has the flaw. Note that when a trait is affected, it still counts towards the number of wounds that a character can endure.

DISEASE SYMPTOMS

First roll a d2 for the relevant column, then roll a d6 for that table.

	DISEASE SYMPTOMS 1	DISEASE SYMPTOMS 2
1	Anxiety (brave)	Fatigue (resilient)
2	Apathy (wilful)	Grogginess (fortunate)
3	Blurred vision (accurate)	Headaches (wise)
4	Confusion (aware)	Joint pain (agile)
5	Cough (guileful)	Pustules (charismatic)
6	Exhaustion (strong)	Tremors (dexterous)

GREATER EFFECT

The disease causes the lesser effects noted above, and in addition the character suffers a wound each day for d6 days. During this period, normal recovery from wounds does not take place, although some medicines might allow a character to heal wounds.

EXPOSURE

Exposure, periods of prolonged cold, or heat exhaustion can be a danger for characters surviving in the wilderness. A night camping in extreme cold or a day spent trekking in extreme heat might trigger an exposure check.

To check for exposure, the player makes a 'resilient' test. If successful, the character suffers from mild exposure. This means that the character suffers a penalty: they cannot apply a trait to any tests while suffering from exposure. If the test is a failure, the character suffers a wound in addition to the above penalty.

Once the character is removed from the source of exposure (they warm themselves in a shelter or near a fire if cold, or cool themselves in a pool or under shade if hot), they recover and no longer suffer the penalty. The wound heals as normal.

If the character continues to be exposed, further 'resilient' tests are made each day, with the results indicated above implemented. Prolonged exposure, or exposure when weakened, is dangerous and can kill characters.

FEAR

Fear in the world of the Paleomythic covers the effects of stress, horror, loss of confidence and morale, and befuddlement. Causes of fear typically stem from exposure to the unknown, the eerie, and the unearthly. Other causes include continued stress, personal loss, and multiple defeats.

A 'wilful' test is required to resist fear. If successful, the character overcomes their distress or fright. Failure indicates that the character succumbs to fear, becoming nervous and hyper-vigilant, with trembling hands and cold sweats. In game terms, fear negates the traits 'accurate' and 'brave' (if the character possesses either), or adds the 'inaccurate' and 'cautious' flaws (if the character lacks one or both of the 'accurate' and 'brave' traits). If a character already possesses one of the noted flaws, they are unaffected by that aspect of the fear.

The effects of fear persist until the character rolls a success for a test that would normally have the 'accurate' or 'brave' trait applied (typically combat), or a test versus a hazard of any kind (such as resisting a poison or avoiding falling). Fear can also fade if the character is removed far from the source of fear, usually after a day or so (at the GM's discretion).

FIRE

Making fire is not as simple as it becomes in later eras; it is a laborious process that takes skill and time.

To make fire, a fire-making kit is required. A successful 'dexterous' test indicates that the fire is started, and this uses up one use of a fire-making kit. A test failure indicates that the fire goes out and materials are wasted. In woodland, 15 minutes spent gathering will yield enough wood for a small fire lasting an hour. In other terrain, it can take half an hour or more to find a similar amount of wood (at the GM's discretion).

Characters struck by a burning object, such as a torch or flaming arrow, have a chance of catching fire. This occurs if a 'fortunate' test made for the target is a failure. If a character is set on fire, they suffer an extra wound on the following turn (in addition to the one received from the blow).

Characters exposed to larger sources of flame (such as being shoved onto a bonfire) will take an automatic wound, and if they do not move from it, will continue to take a wound each turn.

POISONS

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

When a character is exposed to a poison, a 'resilient' test is required. If successful, the poison is resisted and has a lesser effect. A test failure indicates that the character suffers from both the lesser and greater effect.

LESSER EFFECT

The character acquires d3 symptoms. Each symptom affects a trait, which means the trait cannot be used for tests for the next d6 hours (roll for each symptom).

Roll on the below tables to see which symptoms affect the character. If the character lacks the relevant trait, they acquire the associated flaw for the indicated period instead (so a character lacking 'agile', for example, becomes 'clumsy'). There is no effect if the character already has the flaw. Note that when a trait is affected, it still counts towards the number of wounds a character can endure.

POISON SYMPTOMS

First roll a d2 for the relevant column, then roll a d6 for that table.

	POISON SYMPTOMS 1	POISON SYMPTOMS 2
1	Befuddlement (wise)	Nervousness (wifful)
2	Delusions (fortunate)	Seizures (strong)
3	Fogged vision (accurate)	Sense of dread (brave)
4	Hand cramps (dexterous)	Shakes (guileful)
5	Hallucinations (aware)	Skin lesions (charismatic)
6	Muscle spasms (agile)	Sweating (resilient)

GREATER EFFECT

The poison causes the lesser effects noted above, and in addition the character suffers a wound each hour for d6 hours. During this period, wound treatment will be ineffective, although some medicines might allow a character to heal.

STARVATION

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

Each time a character misses a meal (i.e., goes a day without food), two things occur. Firstly, healing ceases. This includes both natural healing, and healing received from other means (such as a healer). Healing will not take place until the character eats food. Secondly, the player must make a 'resilient' test. A test success means that the character has endured the starvation, whereas failure indicates that the character takes a wound. Because the character cannot heal, this damage might become serious after several days.

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

TRAPS

Traps are set for a variety of purposes; most often to catch prey for food, but also to guard valuables or prevent attack.

When a location contains a trap, several tests apply to the situation:

- An 'aware' test is used to see whether a trap is discovered.
- A 'dexterous' test is made to determine whether a discovered trap is disarmed.
- A 'fortunate' test is used to determine whether an undiscovered trap is triggered.

DISCOVER

To discover the presence of a trap, a character must search for it. A successful 'aware' test indicates that the character locates the trap, a failure indicates that they do not. If there is no trap present, a success will indicate that the area appears safe (in this respect at least).

DISARM

Once a trap is discovered, it might need disarming. Sometimes there will be an obvious solution: a pit trap can be made safe by filling it in, for example. Traps that have a mechanism of some sort might need careful work to disable, and in such cases a 'dexterous' test is required. If successful, the trap is made safe. Failure indicates that the trap is triggered, and the person attempting to disable it is affected. Disarming a trap often requires a tool such as an awl, burin, or needle.

TRIGGER

If a trap isn't discovered, it might be triggered. To determine whether this occurs, a 'fortunate' test is made. If successful, the trap isn't triggered by the character and remains in place. Other characters might of course trigger the trap, however. A failed test means that the character triggered the trap, and suffers the effects.

Some example traps are shown below.



NAME	MATERIALS
Boulder Trap	Plant, flint, and sinew
<p>The victim suffers a wound, or two wounds if the boulder is especially large. <i>This trap is a concealed boulder attached to a vine that swings towards the character when triggered. Typically the trap is triggered by disturbing a twig attached to a piece of sinew stretched across a path or passage.</i></p>	
Needle Trap	Needle, glue, and poison
<p>The needle pierces the victim's skin. This does not cause a wound, but it will deliver any poison applied to the needle. <i>This trap is a concealed needle attached to an item such as a box or seat. When a person handles the object, the trap is triggered.</i></p>	
Pit Trap	None, but requires a digging tool
<p>The victim falls into the pit and suffers a wound. A pit lined with stakes causes two wounds. The victim might have to climb out of the pit; see climbing in the activities section for how. <i>This is a simple covered pit. When activated, the character falls through the covering (such as twigs covered by a fur) and into a pit below.</i></p>	
Rope Trap	Rope and a lure of the player's choice, such as food or a valuable item
<p>The victim is trapped, hanging by their ankle. Animals will be helpless. Humans can try to free themselves if they have a cutting implement. This might take several minutes or even an hour or two, depending on the tool used and the rope's resilience. Note that characters might suffer a wound from the fall once they have released themselves. <i>This is a rope loop concealed in vegetation, positioned near something to lure the victim (such as food or a valuable). When activated, the rope coils around the victims' leg and, by means of a supple tree, hoists the victim into the air.</i></p>	
Spike Trap	Wood, rope, and sinew
<p>The victim takes a wound. Some spikes are poisoned, in which case the character is exposed to the poison as well. See the poison hazard above. <i>This trap is very similar to the boulder trap, but the trap comprises flint or bone spike attached to a wooden pole, which swings towards the character when triggered.</i></p>	
Stumble Trap	Sinew
<p>The victim falls forward. This will not cause a wound. However, the trap is often placed in front of something hazardous, such as a steep slope or a fire pit. The victim might therefore suffer one or more wounds as a result of the additional hazard. <i>The simplest of traps, this is a thin piece of fibre stretched across a path, and designed to cause a person to fall.</i></p>	

CONSTRUCTING TRAPS

If characters wish to construct their own traps, they can do so. The player begins by choosing the trap type (from those given). Players might also wish to devise their own, subject to the GM's approval.

The required materials are assembled, as noted in the descriptions above. A 'dexterous' test is then made for the character making the trap. If successful, the trap is constructed successfully and will work when triggered. Failure indicates that the trap might not work. In this case, when the trap is about to be triggered, the GM rolls a d6. On a roll of 3 or less, the trap fails to work. Otherwise, it works as designed. Faulty traps can be remade, but this will require a new set of materials.





THE WORLD OF ANCIENT MU

ANCIENT MU

Ancient Mu, sometimes simply called Mu by its inhabitants, is a single continent with a diverse array of peoples. It has a long history, which is mostly forgotten by the people of Mu; lacking a complex written language, only the legends passed down orally through the generations survive.

Tribal elders might speak of peoples long since gone from Mu, who built uncanny structures and lived in vast settlements filled with wealth, comforts, and other, unfathomable things. They might also tell of great beasts that once roamed the land, and strange non-human peoples who had knowledge and powers now lost – or perhaps waiting discovery by those courageous or foolhardy enough to search for them.

ENVIRONMENTS

Ancient Mu has, broadly speaking, four main environments. In the north, the terrain is mountainous in places, verdant and forested in others. It has some of the harshest weather in Mu, with cold, snowy winters, a stormy autumnal season and moderate spring and summer seasons. The north has some of the largest lakes of the continent, and several wide rivers flow from the mountains. The north is home to a wide variety of animals, and is a source of many of the furs and hides found all over Mu. The peoples of the north are mostly rugged, hardy folk. In some of the remote areas of the north there are expanses of tundra, where the land is flat, barren, and cold. Few venture into these areas, despite rumours of forgotten temples and ruins filled with gems, as the harsh conditions make it incredibly difficult to survive.

In the east, the terrain is dense jungle in many areas. It can be hot and humid in places, although there are large areas of forest where the temperatures are milder. The east also has a number of hidden valleys, surrounded by high mountains or deep lakes.

In these areas, there are animals and peoples found nowhere else on Ancient Mu, having been cut off from the rest of the continent for millennia. Parts of the east contain treacherous swamps and long, winding rivers that few can navigate. Here also are ancient ruins and forgotten buildings, covered in vines and hidden, awaiting discovery.

The south of Ancient Mu is mostly arid, and there are areas of desert that stretch great distances. Some areas of the south can be blisteringly hot in summer, and in winter desert winds scour the land, making travel near impossible. Small oases can provide occasional respite in the desert areas, offering water sources and shade thanks to the trees that grow there. Near the mountain areas of the south are the grasslands, where herds of grazing animals can be seen moving across wide plains. Here too are areas of forest and scrubland, watered by winding rivers that flow from down from the hills. Beyond the arid plains and desert regions of the south are dust-covered ruins and stone buildings built by long-forgotten peoples. Some have been settled, whereas others are avoided, as many of the southern peoples are superstitious about such places.

The western part of Ancient Mu is a temperate region filled with woodland, hills, verdant valleys, and marshland. Here too are areas of high mountains, which in winter become snow covered. In spring and summer, the west is warm and occasionally hot. In autumn and winter it can be chilly, with biting winds and at times torrential rain. There are more rivers, brooks, streams, and ponds in the west of Mu than in other areas. In places, the land can be boggy and treacherous for unwary travellers. Many animals dwell in the west, and it has some of the best hunting areas. It is also easier to gather foods here; there are many varieties of fruits, seeds, plants, nuts, and fungi to be found in this region. There are parts of the west of Mu where shadowy ruins can be found, and where strange and ancient tombs exist, concealed amid tangled vines and weeds. Some have long since been robbed of their treasures, but others still contain their secrets, the thieves being deterred by the stories of ghosts and malignant spirits that abound in the area.

SOCIETIES

Human life in the lands of Ancient Mu is highly varied thanks to its many unique societies and cultures. Ancient Mu is home to numerous tribes, some settled and some nomadic, the latter travelling ancestral routes in the search for food and resources. Settled tribes sometimes take to living in well-made, permanent structures and establish large communities, where they farm or survive through a combination of gathering, hunting, and trade.

Some of the peoples of Mu exist in unusual environments, and have developed unique cultures. This is true of those populations that have settled in the ruins of lost

and forgotten civilisations. Often, the inhabitants of such areas know little about the former residents, and simply make use of the area as a convenient home. In some of these settlements, however, the societies follow traditions passed down through many generations, their meanings now lost or shrouded by time.

In the hot regions of Ancient Mu (to the south and east of the continent), there are many tribes of dark, brown, tanned, and olive-skinned people. Some of the southern tribes have created large settlements, using mud bricks and stone to create small dwellings built close together to form narrow streets and alleys. Others live in tents made from hides or linen, and these tribes are often nomadic, moving from oasis to oasis along established routes. In the east, huts of woven branches are common, as are wooden cabins and stone structures. In this latter case, some buildings are made from stones scavenged from ruins, found in overgrown structures amid the jungles of the east.

The people of the south and east tend to wear clothes of linen or thin hide. Men often wear only a loincloth, or else a short linen skirt and loose tunic. Women wear 'bikini'-style hide garments, or linen skirts and dresses tied loosely at the waist.

The people of the south usually have dark hair, which is worn in a variety of styles. The men of some tribes shave their heads, and some women tie their hair into a knot, or use a piece of linen to keep it in place. In the east, hair is often cut short for all genders, or else knotted into long strands. Some eastern peoples use pigments to paint their faces with geometric designs.

The north of the continent of Ancient Mu is cold, and the far north is permanently covered in snow and ice. The people who dwell in this region tend to be lighter skinned, and their hair might be blonde, or various shades of brown and red. Many tribes in the north live in small settlements, and build houses from timber, or else find caves suitable for use as homes. There are also some who build homes using a combination of earth and stone, to create turf-covered mound houses. The nomadic tribes of the north often use tents made from furs, hides, and sturdy timber. In the west, wooden round houses, log cabins, turf houses, and stone huts are common, as are cave homes (especially in coastal areas, where they occur in cliffs).

The people of the north wear fur and hide clothing. Men usually wear a loincloth, a heavy tunic, and wrap their arms and legs in fur. They will also wear a fur cloak when outside. Women usually wear a fur or hide 'bikini', as well as a tunic and wraps for arms and legs, and a cloak when outside. Some women braid their hair, others leave it long and flowing for extra warmth. Men often have beards and long hair. In the west, the people typically have a greater variety of skin tones and hair colours. They wear lighter clothes, such as thin hide tunics, and both men and women might wear their hair long. It is common for women to use flowers as decoration in their hair and on their clothes, and some men and women use pigments to decorate their bodies.

CUSTOMS



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

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

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

Tribes and communities will often trade with others from nearby communities. In this way, goods can travel great distances, as they are traded again and again. Trade encourages travel, and there might well be those within a tribe or community who specialise in this activity. Trade can involve simple barter, the exchange of gems for other goods, or even payment for goods with a service of some kind. Sometimes

whole communities come together at great gatherings, and this is often when partnerships are formed and members of tribes arrange inter-tribal marriages.

LAWS

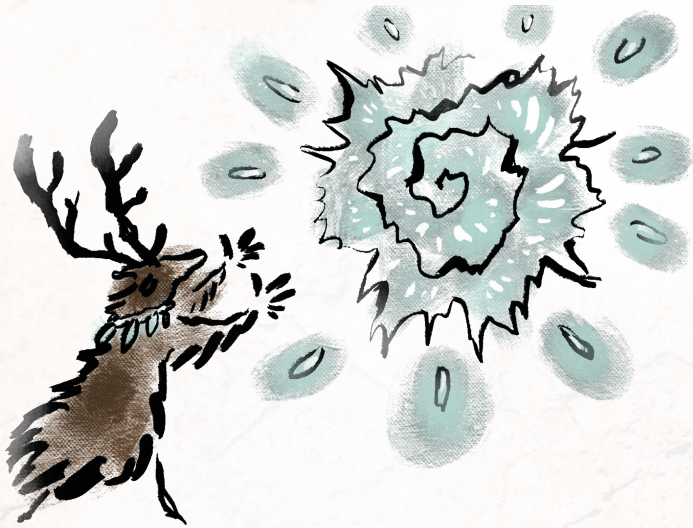
The laws of a tribe or settlement are often based around the notion of 'taboo'. Essentially, a community will have a rigid set of beliefs concerning certain practices, and to act contrary to these is taboo. If a taboo is broken, it is the belief of the community that bad things will occur, both for the person breaking the taboo as well as the community itself. This practice helps to ensure rules are kept and strongly enforced, as anyone acting outside the rules, breaking a taboo, is hurting both him/herself and the community. Typical taboos include those actions which in modern society would probably be viewed as immoral and illegal, such as murder and crimes of serious violence, sexual relations with a close family member, crimes of theft, adultery, and so on. Tribes and settlements might also have taboos peculiar to their own particular customs, history, or environment, and these are often put in place as ways to protect the community. For example, a tribe might have a taboo against going to a specific place, and this might be for a variety of practical reasons (it is the territory of an enemy tribe, there are poisonous plants growing there, it is a burial ground where spirits dwell, and so on). In addition, most communities have taboos relating to their beliefs, burial sites, and sacred artefacts.

Punishments for breaking a taboo can range from relatively minor penalties (the return of stolen property, with interest) to extreme measures, such as torture, banishment, or death. Such extreme punishments are often reserved for serious violations, such as putting a tribe at risk (for example, by helping the attack of an enemy tribe) or the murder of a member of the tribe (and in this sense, murder means that there was no good reason for the killing, as most tribes will excuse the killing of someone if there was cause, such as the victim being a traitor to the tribe).

Some communities indulge in the practice of slavery, and being traded into slavery is sometimes a punishment for taboo breakers. In this way, a community gets rid of its trouble maker, and makes a profit with the sale of the slave as well. However, many people view this sort of practice as distasteful, and this makes slavery uncommon.

The practice of cannibalism is rare. When it occurs, it is often the result of extreme circumstances within a community, such as prolonged famine or the result of some twisted and malevolent ideology or custom. Many tribes that dwell near to cannibals will make war against them, as most of the people of Mu believe cannibalism is the greatest of all taboos.

THE OTHERWORLD



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

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

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

Given the bleakness of the Otherworld, it would seem unlikely that anyone would willingly enter such a place. However, the Otherworld, as bleak as it is, is also a place of lost and obscure knowledge. A shaman will know this, and it is for this reason that they pass into the Otherworld.

Hidden among the mysterious ruins, forgotten temples, and dead forests, or within the foreboding caverns, there are the ghosts who can be interrogated, and who will impart knowledge to a shaman.

ENTERING THE OTHERWORLD

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

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

Once a ceremony has been conducted, a shaman can automatically enter the Otherworld. In addition, the shaman can bring other willing subjects into the Otherworld, if they are present during the ceremony. However, a shaman is limited in the number of persons he or she can bring, and this limit equals the normal number of traits possessed by the shaman.

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

ENCOUNTERS IN THE OTHERWORLD



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

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

1	Animal spirit (chosen by the GM, such as a cat spirit or a snake spirit)
2	Ghost
3-6	Shadow

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

COMBAT IN THE OTHERWORLD

Combat in the Otherworld proceeds exactly as it does in the mortal world. Injuries received in the Otherworld take effect just as they would in the mortal world. However, such injuries appear merely as blemishes and bruises on the physical body of the character.

If a character is killed in the Otherworld, their physical body will also die in the mortal world. However, there is a short period of an hour or two when the body is still alive, and susceptible to possession by a ghost if one is nearby (in the mortal world). To randomly determine whether this occurs, the GM can roll a die. Possession happens on a die roll of 1.

Possessed characters are effectively the same as walking cadavers (see the section on 'the dead').

Note that shaman characters cannot banish ghosts when in the Otherworld, but can still seek to control them (including the spirits of other characters that are present in the spirit world). See the shaman talent for additional information.

FINDING A WRAITH

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

Each hour in the Otherworld, a 'fortunate' test can be made for the shaman character to see whether a wraith is located. Other characters can also try to locate a wraith, but the test is made every two hours rather than one.

If a wraith is encountered, it must be persuaded to impart its knowledge. A wraith will answer one question for each successful 'charismatic' test made (for the shaman or accompanying characters). Characters should be careful, however; for each failed test, the wraith will test the questioner's will (see below).

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

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

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

TEST OF WILL

Wraiths are inherently vengeful, angry, and resentful. If they are not controlled, cajoled, and persuaded, they will seek to overcome others, and this makes them dangerous sources of knowledge.

Each time a question is asked of a wraith, and the 'charismatic' test fails, the character who asked the question has their will tested. The wraith will attempt to exert control over the character, in an effort to dominate them. The player makes a 'wilful' test for their character. If successful, the wraith continues to behave reasonably and can be questioned further. Failure indicates that the wraith senses weakness, and can no longer be questioned by the character or their comrades. In addition, the wraith is likely to attack (at the GM's discretion).

FORBIDDEN LORE

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

Examples of obscure knowledge include:

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

The GM decides whether a wraith possesses forbidden lore, or might roll a die for each wraith encountered. If the result is 6, the wraith possesses forbidden lore.

TRIBES



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

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

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

BELIEF

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

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

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

CEREMONIES

Tribes have ceremonies for many aspects of tribal life, including births, the naming of a child, deaths, hunting, marriage, tribal calamities, and so on. Most tribes also have a 'grand ceremony', which is typically annual. This is a ceremony specific to the tribal deity or belief, and is often the most important of the ceremonies practised by the tribe. Other ceremonies vary by tribe, and can be determined as follows:

First, roll a die and subtract 1 for the number of ceremonies a tribe regularly has (in addition to a grand ceremony specifically relating to their belief).

Next, roll 2d6 on the below table for the purpose of each ceremony. Re-roll repeat results.

2	Age (coming of age, when children become adults within a tribe, or adults reach a venerable age)
3	Calamity (following a calamity such as drought, famine or disease, to ensure recovery and future fortune)
4	Child (to ensure luck for a pregnancy, or to celebrate the birth of a child or an animal)
5	Death (a ceremony to celebrate the life of a deceased person, or to formalise their burial)
6	Gathering (for luck in gathering a seasonal food, such as berries in summer, mushrooms in the autumn, or for an abundant harvest in farming communities)
7	Hunting (a ceremony to ensure a successful hunt, or for luck in a battle)
8	Law (a ceremony to formalise a new edict, or make a pronouncement, or to cast out a person who has committed an offence or broken a taboo)
9	Leadership (a ceremony for the change of leadership, or the appointment of a person to a prominent position such as the new tribal shaman, elder, or advisor)
10	Marriage (the formal joining of two people as a couple)
11	Naming (a ceremony to give a child a name, or to mark a name change when the child comes of age)
12	Season (a ceremony to ensure good fortune in the new season, on the transition from one season to another)

Find the nature of each ceremony (the form that it takes) by rolling a d6 on the below table.

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

The GM is encouraged to flesh out the details of a ceremony, to add detail as required. Ceremonies are useful catalysts for adventures, as PCs are (for example) sent on quests to find a particular offering, or to perform tasks as part of the ceremony.

DWELLINGS

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

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

LEADER

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

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

SIZE

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

As a rough guide for the size of a tribe, the GM can roll 3d6 - 3 for the number of women, 3d6 - 3 for the number of men and d6 - 1 for the number of children of each gender. Larger tribes will of course exist, perhaps even numbering in the hundreds, but such tribes are the exception, and should be custom designed by the GM as required.

An imbalance of genders within the tribe might reflect a serious problem faced by the tribe, and can be a source of adventures. For example, if a tribe traditionally has warriors who are mostly men, a large number of women might indicate a past loss of warriors during some tribal war. A tribe of many men might indicate that women have been abducted by an enemy tribe. A tribe of few children might be indicative of inbreeding, necessitating the search for 'fresh blood' to increase the tribe size.

EXAMPLE TRIBE: THE CLOUD PEOPLE

The Cloud People are a small tribe that is suitable for use as the tribe to which the PCs belong.

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

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

BELIEF (PHENOMENA SPIRIT)

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

CEREMONY: GRAND (TASK)

This annual ceremony for the tribe relating to their belief is called the cloud ceremony. This is an annual task. At the beginning of the hot and dry summer, several tribe members (usually the most able bodied) make a journey to the nearby mountain (known as 'ember mountain' because it occasionally spits hot ash). At the highest point, the tribe members watch the clouds, looking for signs and portents for the coming year. When they return, the images they have seen are interpreted by the tribe leader, who determines whether the omens are good.

CEREMONY: DEATH (TASK)

When a person dies, offerings are made to their family. This is typically food, but also other useful items such as tools or clothing. This is a practical tradition, to assist a person who might have lost a useful member of their family. If no family exists, the offerings are made to the poorest in the tribe.

CEREMONY: GATHERING (CELEBRATION)

Prior to the gathering of certain fruits at the end of summer, a celebration occurs. This involves drumming and singing on the evening before the fruits are picked.

CEREMONY: LAW (SACRIFICE)

When a major decision has been made by the leader, a sacrifice is also made. This is usually a small animal, such as snake or bird. The sacrifice is made after the pronouncement.

DWELLINGS (SHELTER)

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

LEADER (SAGE)

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

SIZE (4 WOMEN, 4 MEN, 1 BOY, 2 GIRLS)

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

The tribe members are as follows:

AMDAR

TRAITS	FLAWS	TALENTS	GOODS
Guileful, resilient, and strong	Inaccurate and ignorant	Fire maker	Wood spear and hand axe

Amdar is a young man. He is the husband of Azala, and the father of the child Jod. Amdar is a bad-tempered soul, and often fights with his wife. He is a mediocre hunter.



AZALA

Traits	Flaws	Talents	Goods
Aware and wilful	Ignorant	Thief	Cudgel

Azala is an adult woman. She is married to Amdar, and is the mother of the child Jod. Azala is a hot-tempered woman with a fondness for jewellery. She fights with her husband often.

DUN

Traits	Flaws	Talents	Goods
Charismatic, fortunate, and wise	Oblivious	Seer, shaman, and storyteller	Staff

Dun is old man. Dun is the oldest member of the tribe, and his once black hair is now mostly grey. Dun is respected for his great knowledge and wisdom, and was chosen to lead the tribe several years ago. Dun is a calm and gentle soul, with an ability to inspire loyalty and courage in others.



HAK

Traits	Flaws	Talents	Goods
Agile and dextrous	Ignorant	Tracker	Wood spear

Hak is an adolescent man. Hak is a naive young man, keen to do well but lacking in any great ability. He proudly wears a necklace of large animal teeth he has collected over several years.

JOD

Traits	Flaws	Talents	Goods
Aware	Careless and weak	n/a	n/a

Jod is the son of Azala and Amdar. He is a quiet, introverted child who enjoys sitting alone playing with insects and small animals.

MUNIA

Traits	Flaws	Talents	Goods
Charismatic, resilient, and wilful	Clumsy	Gatherer	Antler pick

Munia is an adult woman. Munia is married to Zan, and is the mother of Sefia. Munia is a short, sturdy woman with a generous disposition.

NAREA

Traits	Flaws	Talents	Goods
Agile and aware	Unassuming	Shadower	Bow and flint knife

Narea is a young, slender, agile woman. Narea is an inquisitive and perceptive young woman, and a capable hunter.



SEFIA

Traits	Flaws	Talents	Goods
Dextrous	Meek	Storyteller	n/a

Sefia is a dreamer, a girl who is fond of making up stories. Hak has stated that she might well become his apprentice shaman. She is the daughter of Munia and Zan.



TULU

Traits	Flaws	Talents	Goods
Brave, fortunate, wilful, and wise	n/a	Healer and summoner	Bone-tipped spear

Tulu is a young, foreign woman. She was found in the barrens a few years ago, starving and weak. The Cloud People adopted her, and she has remained with the tribe ever since. She cannot speak, but usually gets her message across with gestures. It is generally accepted that Tulu was abandoned by her former tribe, but no one knows why. She was given the name Tulu by Dun. Tulu has the summoner talent, but keeps this a secret for fear of being cast out by her adopted tribe.

ZAN

Traits	Flaws	Talents	Goods
Accurate, agile, brave, charismatic, and strong	Awkward	Hunter, savage, and trapper	Bow and flint knife

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

SETTLEMENTS

Although there are no nations as such on the continent of Mu, there are the places where permanent buildings and large communities have been established (as opposed to the temporary gatherings of nomads and traders). These are what might be termed 'proto-towns'; places where structures of mud brick, wood, hides, or even stone are built to house communities. These settlements consist of farming families, trading groups, crafting communities, or a combination of these.

Settlements appear where groups gather, and often it is the terrain that helps to establish them. Sources of water, such as streams, ponds, rivers, oases, and lakes, are common features that help the establishment of settlements, as are areas where food sources are abundant (fertile land, woodland, and so on). Other factors include areas where regularly traversed paths and routes converge, or where there is a notable terrain feature (such as an unusual rock formation, an existing structure, a useable cavern, solitary mountain, and so on).

Farming is relatively uncommon in much of Mu, but does occur near a few settlements. Where there is farming, communities tend to be larger and are approaching the size of 'city states', with hundreds of inhabitants performing a variety of specialised tasks (including farmers, but also specialist crafters, labourers, overseers, and a bureaucracy keeping a tally of food stocks). Most farming involves the tending of crops for grain production, or orchards for fruit. Only a few communities farm animals; it remains a rare practice on Mu.

Mining also occurs in some of the settlements of Mu, and is predominantly of the open surface type. Typically, miners dig out deep trenches in search of good sources of flint, precious stones, or clay. Some mines are sub-surface and consist of low tunnels shored up with logs. These are mainly dug to hunt for gemstones. Generally, such mines go only as deep as digging with flint tools will

allow, which means many tunnels meander to and fro as miners find ways around areas of hard rock.

Trade is perhaps the most common reason for a settlement to be established. Trading settlements tend to have many permanent inhabitants in addition to many transient people arriving daily. These travellers often seek specific goods, such as sources of material or tools, or else are supplying such materials in exchange for foodstuffs, other materials, gems, or equipment.

To help in creating a settlement, GMs can use the below guidelines. This serves to create an outline of the settlement so that details can be added as required.

PURPOSE

The first step in designing a settlement is to define its purpose. As previously discussed, settlements occur in a place for a specific reason (although over time this might well change as the settlement develops). Roll a d6 to find the settlement purpose:

1	Farming (the settlement grew up as farmers began to harvest and nurture crops in the area)
2	Location (the site is an important location, such as the only path through mountains, the nexus of routes from other settlements, the safe path through a dangerous area, the only verdant area in barren terrain, and so on)
3	Mining (the settlement began as a mining encampment for gems, flint, clay, or some other resource)
4	Resource (the place is the site of a resource such as fresh water, clay, salt, wood, or a reliable food source, which is protected or monopolised)
5	Speciality (the area has become known for a speciality, such as a gathering site for crafters, dancers, storytellers, cultists, priests, seers, or mystics)
6	Trade (the settlement is a site for trade, as a regular gathering is held or as travelling merchants rendezvous)

BELIEF

Just like tribes, the inhabitants of a settlement will have a belief. However, due to the size of many settlements, there might well be more than one prevalent belief. Therefore, the GM first rolls a d3 to determine the number of beliefs, then rolls a d6 to determine the nature of each belief. This is slightly different from the tribal belief table:

1	Ancestors (venerated ancestors, such as great warriors, healers, or chiefs)
2	God or goddess (see the section entitled 'the gods of Ancient Mu' for details)
3	Deity leader (the inhabitants worship their leader as a deity)
4	Pantheon (the inhabitants worship several gods and goddesses)
5	Phenomena spirit (such as the wind, fire, rain, storms, or night)
6	Supernatural (such as a monstrous lizard, a strange subterranean race, or an undead being)

To determine the ceremonies for a particular belief, use the table in the tribes section. However, these ceremonies might not be as widely practised as within a tribe, and GMs can therefore skip this step and instead determine ceremonies when an adventure requires them.

DWELLINGS

Dwellings in a settlement might vary from those used by a tribe, and are typically smaller and more resilient (as it isn't so easy to remake them if they are damaged, given the limited space in many settlements). Roll a d6 to find the predominant type of dwelling, but note that a settlement can have other structures as well (such as large grain stores and meeting halls).

1	Cave system (the settlement consists of many caves and tunnels in a cliff, hill, or mountain)
2	Huts (the settlement is made from wooden or wood and mud huts with perhaps a few larger wooden halls for gathering and storing)
3	Mud-brick huts (homes made from baked mud or clay formed into bricks)
4	Ruins (homes made from scavenged stone from the ruins of an earlier settlement)
5	Stone or rock homes (dwellings made from shaped stone blocks or rocks)
6	Unusual (a rare or unique type of dwelling, such as raft homes on a lake, or underground homes made when a mine was abandoned)

LEADER

Settlement leaders are often different from the types that govern tribes, reflecting the nature and numbers of the inhabitants that they rule. Roll a d6 on the below table to find the leader:

1	Bureaucracy (a group of men and/or women administer the settlement, using debate and consensus to reach decisions)
2	Royalty (the ruler is a part of a ruling dynasty, and leadership is passed on to their offspring)
3	Sage (a wise man or woman, a spiritual advisor, governs the settlement)
4	Specialist (the most skilled or potent person with a respected or feared talent governs the settlement, such as a crafter, summoner, shaman, healer, soothsayer, ritualist, etc.)
5	Supernatural (the settlement is governed by something mysterious, such as a spirit, an undead being, or a monster. The wishes of the being are interpreted by an advisor or by consensus of bureaucrats)
6	Tyrant (the settlement is ruled by a person who overthrew the previous leader, usually by force, and who rules through charismatic dominance, treachery, or fear)

ORGANISATION

A settlement is typically organised through some sort of system to control its wealth and resources. To be part of a settlement, inhabitants are expected to contribute to the organisation in some manner, such as by handing over some of their goods or by performing tasks for the benefit of the settlement. Find out the system of organisation by rolling a d6 on the below table:

1	Anarchic (multiple systems of organisation are used, such as taxes, service, and so on, but also including some dubious methods such as extortion and theft)
2	Bondage (inhabitants are forced to work for the settlement, effectively as slaves, in exchange for food and a dwelling)
3	Communal (inhabitants work together, contributing to a pool of resources from which they all benefit)
4	Individual (inhabitants work for themselves, and simply inhabit the same area)
5	Service (inhabitants work for themselves, but must also spend part of the year working on tasks for the settlement)
6	Tax (inhabitants pay gems or goods, levied by the leader, each season)

SIZE

A settlement can number many permanent and transient residents. To determine the typical number of people in a settlement, first roll 3d6. Next, roll a d2. The result of the d2 roll indicates the number of zeros added to the 3d6 result. For example, a 3d6 roll of 12 followed by a d2 roll of 2 would mean the settlement has 1,200 people.

EXAMPLE SETTLEMENT: BITTENPOINT

Bittenpoint is a small settlement in the snowy part of northern Mu, an area of forests, fast-flowing rivers, icy streams, and high mountains. It is a place with an abundance of quality crafting materials, and was once a popular place to visit in the hope of obtaining a finely made tool or weapon. In recent years it has declined as a result of the harsh rule of its tyrannical leader.

PURPOSE (RESOURCE)

Bittenpoint has been established for decades. It was known as a place where flint could be found in abundance for as long as the local tribes can remember. Gradually, as more and more travellers came to the area for the resource, some settled and began to trade their finds and the flint tools they made. Over the years, many more have arrived, and its reputation has grown.

BELIEF (ANCESTORS, PHENOMENA SPIRIT)

Two beliefs are prevalent in Bittenpoint. Many worship their ancestors, a belief common to the area and one that is practised by many of the local tribes. Small shrines, little more than rock piles, can often be found in the woodland as evidence of this belief.

A newer belief, which has grown over the past few decades, is the worship of the winter spirit. Winters in the region can be especially harsh, and offerings to the spirit are made during the winter period in the hope that the populace will survive the season.

DWELLINGS (HUTS)

The settlement is close to a large expanse of forest, so most of the dwellings are wooden huts built from sturdy logs. Dwellings are typically small, with a room for sleeping and cooking, and a room that serves as a store and crafting area. Animal hides and furs help to insulate the dwellings against the cold. On the settlement's outskirts, the buildings are crude and flimsy huts, occupied by the poor, the infirm, the disreputable, and those who beg.

LEADER (TYRANT)

The former leader of Bittenpoint was an aged and wise crafter. His skill at toolmaking was unsurpassed. He was, however, usurped by a ruthless warrior from a forest-dwelling tribe. This tyrant, named Ballok, took control of the settlement several years ago with the help of his followers, a group of brutal thugs. Ballok now rules by fear, and his paranoia ensures that few challengers live long enough to present him with a problem.

ORGANISATION (TAX)

The inhabitants are forced to pay goods and food to Ballok and his thugs, in exchange for freedom to trade, obtain flint, and craft goods. Failure to pay the tax results in a beating, and continued failure results in the thugs seizing the home and belongings of the poor unfortunate. This has resulted in many former residents leaving, or else building a crude hut on the periphery of Bittenpoint, to join the ranks of the beggars and thieves.

SIZE (110 PEOPLE)

Bittenpoint currently has 110 permanent inhabitants, a number much reduced from its earlier population. Thanks to the brutality of its leader, few now seek to settle in the area.

PLACES

Ancient Mu is a large continent, and there is room enough for the lands, territories, and realms created by GMs themselves. Creating your own lands can be a daunting task, however. To help, the following guide is provided.

There is no one correct way to create a place within your game, but thinking of a name is a good way to start. The below tables can act as an aid in generating names for unexplored territories.

To create a land, roll 3d6 on table A and 3d6 on table B. For example, a roll of 9 on table A gives us 'Forgotten', and a roll of 12 on table B gives us 'Marsh', so the land is known as 'the Forgotten Marsh'.

THE MANY LANDS: TABLE A		THE MANY LANDS: TABLE B	
3	Ancient	3	Barrens
4	Beast	4	Coast
5	Black	5	Crags
6	Dark	6	Desert
7	Dying	7	Forest
8	Forbidden	8	Hills
9	Forgotten	9	Island
10	Lizard	10	Jungle
11	Lost	11	Lake
12	Mad	12	Marsh
13	Mystic	13	Mountain
14	Red	14	River
15	Serpent	15	Swamp
16	Spirit	16	Valley
17	Weird	17	Wastes
18	Wild	18	Woods

The next steps in creating a place can be done in any order, and the below are suggestions rather than strict guidelines. These suggestions concentrate more on the adventuring potential of a place rather than specifics and minutiae; these details can be added later.

Atmosphere: what feeling is created by the place? Is it eerie, or does it conjure images of a once great but now fading culture? Are there ruins, wild jungles, or weird features? What region of Mu is the land within?

Beasts: what creatures exist in the land? Are there many species of animal? What dangerous creatures dwell in the area? Are there legendary beasts?

Inhabitants: who and what are the people and tribes of the land? Are there any people at all, or was it abandoned long ago?

Potential: what type of adventures can be had there? Is it a land of many cultures, where characters can trade and receive requests for help? Is it a place of fear that must be escaped? Or is it a place to explore, a land of mystery?

Treasures: what are the treasures of the place? Are there secret gem hoards? Legendary artefacts? Hidden resources? Or the key to solving an ancient mystery?

Once some of the above details have been considered, add detail as it is required rather than trying to provide all of the information at once. In this way, a place can develop gradually and in accordance with adventures and PC actions.

THE STRANGER PLACES OF ANCIENT MU

There are many unusual lands on the continent of Ancient Mu, and the more exotic and unusual ones are given below.

THE BARROW LAND

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

THE CITY OF DUST

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



THE CITY THAT WAS

In the western region of Mu there is purportedly an underground settlement in a massive cavern. The place is known as the City That Was, and it is now abandoned for reasons unknown. The city is built from dark stone, with tall towers that extend from the cavern floor to the ceiling above. Long stone walkways are built between these towers, and within the dwellings of these forgotten structures, fabulous treasures await the bold. The entrance to the City That Was is lost, but is believed to lie on a mountain pass.

THE ISLAND OF BONES

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

THE NIGHT TOMBS

In a distant marsh, at a place where the mundane world and the Otherworld are close to each other, are the night tombs. The surrounding marshland is in perpetual darkness, and tendrils of mist constantly coil around the diseased vegetation.

The Night Tombs are a series of stone and earth mounds, within which are the bones and collected wealth of the ancestors of a once-powerful tribe. The tribe was cursed, and a disease-engendered madness caused them to war and slaughter each other, so that only the tombs remain. The place is filled with spirits, and only the most powerful shamans are said to be able to enter the area.

THE OBSIDIAN DESERT

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

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

THE REEKING SWAMP

The largest swamp on the continent is known as the Reeking Swamp, a land ruled by the Swamp People. The Swamp People are a strange tribe of humans who worship a fish god that few others have heard of. They are rumoured to sacrifice travellers to this god on occasion.

The Swamp People have created, in the centre of the swamp, a city built on stilts. Here, the Swamp People trade with the outlying tribes, selling animal skins, fish, and strange curios made from fish bones, dried amphibians, and swamp plants. The Swamp People are accomplished boat builders, and for a fee will transport courageous travellers safely through the swamp.

THE GODS OF ANCIENT MU



Among the more settled and long-established people of Ancient Mu, there are those who worship deities rather than spirits or ancestors.

The gods and goddesses of Mu do not form a single pantheon, and represent several pantheons coexisting on the continent. Followers typically follow one primary god, but might acknowledge others in their particular pantheon.

Confusingly, pantheons on Mu can vary depending on the region and followers. Therefore, the below gods are simply defined as being part of one of two pantheons: either the primordial deities or the prevailing deities. The followers of a god belonging to the primordial deities, for example, are more likely to acknowledge other primordial deities.

The primordial deities are ancient and often obscure, with origins shrouded in mystery. The prevailing deities, on the other hand, often have developed and detailed histories, and perhaps a slightly wider prevalence.

In some lands, temples have been constructed to various gods, and ‘henge’ monuments – stone and wood circles – are constructed by some tribes.

The below is a list of some of the gods of Ancient Mu. Each listing follows the below format:

Influence: the supposed spheres of influence the god has; what it governs and is concerned with.

Idol: how the god is depicted or purported to appear, in art, statues, and so on.

Customs: any practices and traditions associated with the god.

Prevalence: how often followers of the god might be encountered, defined as obscure (followers are rarely encountered), uncommon (followers aren't usually encountered), and common (followers are occasionally encountered).

Worship: the reason someone might choose to follow a particular god, their motivation or justification. Some will be incidental followers who make an occasional offering or prayer to the god when they think its influence would be helpful or relevant to a situation. Others might be dedicated worshippers or fanatics, fiercely devoted to that deity, perhaps to the exclusion of others.

AJOKK (PRIMORDIAL)

Influence: Ajokk is an unusual god, associated not with life or death, but with the emergence of life from death. He is thus popular with those who deal with death and spirits, mostly bone chanters, summoners, and so on. Ajokk's power is linked to natural phenomena, and is stronger during rain and storms.

Idol: Ajokk is portrayed mostly with small figurines of wood, as a vaguely human figure holding a child.

Customs: in especially rainy seasons, worshippers might sacrifice an animal or even human to Ajokk.

Prevalence: obscure.

Worship: fascination with spiritual things, phenomena, death, or the Otherworld. Also followed by those who are grieving or during funerals.

ALBAS (PRIMORDIAL)

Influence: Only a handful of twisted and deranged worshippers follow this cruel goddess. She despises birth, and is a goddess of suffering and fear. Albas purportedly kills unborn and infant children, and for this reason few people will tolerate the presence of one of her followers.

Idol: Albas is depicted on grotesque cave art as a woman with talons.

Customs: the deranged followers of Albas are murderers, and view this as a way to show their loyalty.

Prevalence: obscure.

Worship: followed by those with twisted ideologies or else out of fear of the priests of Albas, who might wield some sort of influence over the followers.

BADAMO (PRIMORDIAL)

Influence: Badamo is viewed as ruler of the spirits of those who in life had great power within the Otherworld. Badamo is rarely spoken of, for only shamans, seers, mystics, and various prophets know much about this god.

Idol: Badamo is often represented with a mouthless mask.

Customs: To speak the name of Badamo, one must first enter the Otherworld. Therefore, it is usually only shamans who perform any sort of ritual relating to this god.

Prevalence: obscure.

Worship: those with an interest in philosophical ideas concerning the Otherworld, or who wish to become a shaman, seer, and so on.

BELBOG (PREVAILING)

Influence: a god of good fortune, especially relating to hunting. Belbog is viewed as a force of nature by his followers, and is especially potent in the wilds and deep forests. He is most popular in northern Mu.

Idol: Belbog is symbolised using horns, either in art or as decoration in the form of horn jewellery.

Customs: hunters shout a call to Belbog before embarking on a hunt. Forest gatherings within large henge structures also occur in his honour.

Prevalence: common.

Worship: Belbog's followers include those seeking good luck after perhaps having suffered misfortune, as well as those who have a great respect for animals and nature.

DEWWICA (PREVAILING)

Influence: Devwica is a goddess of primal forces. She is viewed as promoting wild abandon and feminine potency. Many women who are hunters and gatherers follow Devwica.

Idol: followers mark tools and weapons with two or three lines to represent Devwica, as if they are made by an animal claw. In cave art, Devwica is drawn as a woman with wild hair and outstretched limbs.

Customs: followers kiss the Devwica symbol on their weapons before hunting, and occasionally gather at night to dance and sing.

Prevalence: common.

Worship: followed by many women seeking power, equality, and freedom, and more broadly by those with spirited natures and a fondness for risk.

FAH (PREVAILING)

Influence: Fah is the god of prophecy, and is able to see all that will be. Fah deals with the spiritual matters of tribes and individuals, and followers include those seeking wisdom, such as seers and storytellers.

Idol: Fah is often depicted as a face with many eyes. Followers sometimes carry items with eyes painted on them.

Customs: Small shrines are occasionally constructed to Fah by followers, as places to meditate and have visions. The shrines have small bowls on them in which incense is burnt.

Prevalence: uncommon.

Worship: people seeking to know their future pray to Fah, as wells as those wishing to know the destiny of their tribe.

HEQTET (PREVAILING)

Influence: among some tribes in the east and, to a lesser extent, the south of Mu, Heqtet is a popular goddess of fertility. Her influence extends to excess and debauchery, and followers sometimes sacrifice people to her during wild gatherings.

Idol: Heqtet is depicted as a bloated toad. Followers carry small figurines of toads in her honour.

Customs: Gatherings are held often by followers, during which dancing, debauchery, and fighting occasionally culminate in the sacrifice of a human.

Prevalence: uncommon.

Worship: worshippers are mostly those wishing to sate their lusty desires, gain power over others, further their own ends, or who are envious or greedy.

HUMBAWA (PRIMORDIAL)

Influence: the giant Humbawa is the god of virility and forests, a sort of wild and fearsome spirit. In the deepest parts of the forests and jungles of Mu, Humbawa is said to help those who are strong, and hunt those who are weak.

Idol: groves are cleared for Humbawa, and large wooden statues with exaggerated features are placed in the clearings.

Customs: during full moons, some followers organise ritual hunts in which a person is chased all night until caught. The hunter who captures the prey can then take the person as a wife or husband.

Prevalence: uncommon.

Worship: worshippers include those attracted to physical prowess and might, and who wish to prove their potency. Those who believe in the importance of fearlessness and courage follow this god.

KANG (PRIMORDIAL)

Influence: Kang the insect god is seen by followers as the ruler of rulers, and has ultimate authority. Rigidity and subservience are the spheres of influence for this alien god. Those who seek to enforce conformity and bolster their own power espouse the virtues of Kang.

Idol: Kang is depicted in art as a praying mantis. A few stone temples have been constructed to Kang, and within these are stylised statues of Kang as a mantis.

Customs: a strict hierarchy of followers exists for worshippers of Kang, with High Priests at the top. Followers make regular offerings of goods and food to Kang. Failure to make a regular offering leads to punishment and even, in rare cases, execution by the high priests of Kang.

Prevalence: uncommon.

Worship: followers include those in power who seek to dominate and control others. Many worship Kang because they are forced to by their leaders.

KOLADA (PREVAILING)

Influence: Kolada is a northern goddess, with a few followers also in the west of Mu. Kolada is the winter goddess, the goddess of snow, storms, and ice. In winter, praying to Kolada helps, so worshippers believe, in surviving the hardships of the long, cold days.

Idol: depicted in cave art, Kolada is drawn as a white feminine figure.

Customs: a small rock pile forms a shrine to Kolada, upon which followers drip the blood of a slain animal when invoking her aid. In the heart of winter, some followers give gifts of food to the hungry.

Prevalence: common.

Worship: worshippers seeking survival, comfort, and health during winter follow the goddess. Those who hold personal fortitude, tribal loyalty, and compassion in high regard tend to follow her.

MULAKU (PRIMORDIAL)

Influence: worshipped primarily in the south, Mulaku is god of feral brutality. Some beast-men tribes and a few backward human tribes follow Mulaku, and show their power by making war on other tribes.

Idol: misshapen wooden ape figurines and statues are sometimes made of Mulaku, and caves are sometimes crudely painted with his image.

Customs: worshippers hold rituals in which priests incite hatred for outsiders, prompting many to attack neighbouring tribes and groups of travellers.

Prevalence: obscure.

Worship: followers are typically motivated by fear; the fear of unseen forces, brutality, and things they cannot understand.

NEBKA (PRIMORDIAL)

Influence: a scorpion god who is believed to dwell in the Otherworld. He can access the mundane world through fire, and is seen by followers as granting them the power to endure pain. Some fire makers worship Nebka, although he is viewed by many as an evil deity.

Idol: some worshippers carry dried and mummified scorpions as charms. Underground temples have been built to Nebka in southern Mu, and followers erect scorpion statues in them.

Customs: worshippers show devotion through enduring pain, especially fire. Walking over hot coals, being burned by heated stones, and enduring lashes from the whips of priests are common practices among Nebka's followers. Many followers have numerous scars and burns on their bodies.

Prevalence: uncommon.

Worship: many follow Nebka because they fear suffering or seek solace from pain. Others follow Nebka to learn how to control their pain and so gain the admiration and adulation of the weak.

NYOKA (PREVAILING)

Influence: Nyoka is the many-armed spider god, concerned with revenge and retribution. This evil god is worshipped by the cruel, the jealous, and those seeking vengeance. Nyoka's priests are few in number and work in secret, holding small gatherings of followers in hidden places.

Idol: hidden shrines are decorated with small spider carvings.

Customs: followers are sometimes taught to make poisons by the priests of Nyoka, then sent to enact the evil schemes of those priests.

Prevalence: obscure.

Worship: those seeking revenge, justice, or who are consumed with jealousy, hate, and fear follow Nyoka.

POLVOI (PREVAILING)

Influence: Polvoi is a nature god, the guardian of plants and growth. Polvoi is said to have a mischievous temperament, and causes mishaps to befall those who show a disregard for nature. Gatherers, trackers, healers, and others who spend a long time in forests and the wilderness worship Polvoi.

Idol: Polvoi is depicted in crude clay figurines as a diminutive human, and these idols are often worn as an amulet by followers.

Customs: there are large gatherings of followers in spring and autumn where people celebrate with food and offer gifts to friends. These are held within henge circles made from found wood and vines, and decorated with flowers.

Prevalence: common.

Worship: followers are often motivated by the desire to promote values of kindness, respect, and sharing. Those seeking to ensure the welfare of themselves, their families, and their people follow Polvoi.

SHAKPATA (PRIMORDIAL)

Influence: a god of disease and madness. Seen as loathsome by some, but as a necessary part of life to followers. It is believed that Shakpata has the power to cause or cure disease and madness. Many worshippers show signs of past disease or of mental disorders. And many are dangerous, as Shakpata's priests promote the spread of disease as a means to become god-like.

Idol: small statuettes of a diminutive old man are carried by followers, and the crude temples built to Shakpata are filled with the decaying remains of animals.

Customs: the twisted priests of Shakpata sometimes have their followers capture or kidnap unbelievers, who are imprisoned with diseased people and rotten carcasses. They are sometimes released when they show signs of sickness, in the hope that the disease will spread.

Prevalence: obscure.

Worship: the dangerously insane, the wicked, and the fearful follow this god.

UDJET (PREVAILING)

Influence: Udjeter is a goddess of protection and resilience, who keeps her followers safe from harm and smites her adversaries, poisoning them with her venom. Snake charmers hold her sacred, and many warriors worship her.

Idol: Udjeter is depicted in art as a snake with arms, sometimes holding a spear and shield. Followers sometimes have carvings and jewellery in the shape of snakes.

Customs: before battle, or before embarking on a dangerous journey, followers pray to Udjeter. There are ancient temples that some believe were built to worship Udjeter, as they contain statues of snake creatures. Here, priestesses sacrifice animals to her annually.

Prevalence: common.

Worship: those who are regularly exposed to danger follow Udjeter, seeking protection and good fortune.

UHLANG (PRIMORDIAL)

Influence: Uhlanger is the swamp goddess, the bringer of life in foul places. She ensures plenty for her followers, and brings fever to unbelievers. She guards the swamp dwellers, and protects even the lowest and most unfortunate of beings.

Idol: followers depict her as a crocodilian, or else by hanging the skins of such beasts about their homes.

Customs: priests perform rituals to heal the sick and request offerings that are given to the most deprived or malformed. Occasionally, a human sacrifice is made, usually of a captured foe.

Prevalence: uncommon.

Worship: popular mostly in the swamps of the east and south, Uhlanger gives hope to the unfortunate ones, the sick, the malformed, and the fearful. Worshipped by those who are suffering.

WOLOS (PREVAILING)

Influence: Wolos is a great aurochs, and the ruler of such beasts. When hunting bovines and other large animals, followers ask the forgiveness of Wolos, and offer blood to him when the animal is slaughtered. Wolos is viewed as the tribal chief of the aurochs, and followers therefore value devotion to their tribe and a sense of community.

Idol: Wolos is depicted in cave art as a horned man. Followers wear amulets made from horns and make shrines from wood with horns atop them.

Customs: followers pray to Wolos when they hunt, and offer blood to him after

each kill. Priests hold large gatherings of followers, and ritual hunting dances, music, and large quantities of food are consumed at such times.

Prevalence: common.

Worship: Wolos attracts those who seek community and value honour, unity, and group strength. Some follow Wolos in an effort to allay their fears when hunting dangerous beasts.

YALIK (PRIMORDIAL)

Influence: the god of lightning, storms, and the violent forces of nature, his is the realm of anger, war, and violence. When natural disasters occur, or when there is lightning or fierce winds, followers believe it is the rage of Yalik.

Idol: statues of Yalik are carved from stone, and depict a large man with sharpened teeth.

Customs: in caves and crudely built stone temples, priests hold rituals for small gatherings of followers. During these, those who have in some way been seen to anger Yalik, perhaps through indolence or because they disobeyed a priest, are punished. This usually involves being beaten by worshippers.

Prevalence: uncommon.

Worship: Followers are those who feel anger or desire to prove their potency through violence and brutality. Some follow out of fear, having been coerced or threatened by bullying priests. The tribes that worship Yalik are typically war-like and known to raid other tribes.



ZAKU (PREVAILING)

Influence: the god of dreams, Zaku is believed to be the ruler of another land that is glimpsed during sleep. Followers believe they receive guidance through visions of this land. Priests interpret the meanings for followers, in exchange for gifts of food or goods. Soothsayers and mystics sometimes follow Zaku.

Idol: Small carvings of a sleeping figure are sometimes created by followers to decorate small wooden shrines or larger cave temples.

Prevalence: uncommon.

Worship: Zaku attracts those seeking answers to life's mysteries, and those seeking to better themselves or their position.





ADVERSARIES IN ANCIENT MU

FOES

The term 'foe' is used here to define the various human opponents characters might face. Non-human opponents are described in the sections on beasts and beast men.

Like PCs, foes are defined using traits, flaws, and talents. Most of the individuals encountered by PCs will have just a few traits and perhaps a flaw or two. Many will lack any sort of talent; these are rare abilities possessed by only a few exceptional people.

Unlike beasts, human foes are able to act tactically. To reflect this, the GM should choose which tactics they might employ based on their traits and the circumstances of the encounter.

The character creation process can be used to create human foes. Alternatively, to create foes quickly, GMs can use the below tables. When using the quick foe tables, choose whether the foe is feeble, tough, or formidable, and roll a d6 on the relevant table to determine the foe. Then make a d3 roll for the foe to find the weapon they carry (if any).

These foes can be used multiple times simply by changing their name and perhaps a few details.

FEEBLE FOE	
1	Amnar, a guileful, passive man (1 cudgel, 2 hand axe, 3 none)
2	Naria, an aware, cautious woman (1 bone, 2 cudgel, 3 none)
3	Sefia, a charismatic, dexterous, sickly woman (1 bone knife, 2 sling, 3 none)
4	Gansun, an accurate, guileful, unlucky man (1 sling, 2 wood spear, 3 none)
5	Farrig, an agile, wise, careless man (1 antler pick, 2 wood spear, 3 none)
6	Zanu, a wilful, wise, inaccurate woman (1 flint knife, 2 fire-hardened spear, 3 staff)

TOUGH FOE	
1	Dormun, an accurate, agile, resilient, ignorant man (1 blow pipe, 2 self bow, 3 wood spear)
2	Hakaz, a brave, dexterous, fortunate, oblivious man (1 cudgel, 2 flint-tipped spear, 3 hide whip)
3	Talu, an aware, resilient, strong, wilful, inaccurate woman (1 hafted axe, 2 stone-topped cudgel, 3 wood spear)
4	Torhek, an accurate, brave, fortunate man (1 fire-hardened spear, 2 hafted axe, 3 self bow)
5	Nar, a brave, charismatic, strong, wilful man (1 claw axe, 2 skull-topped cudgel, 3 thorn cudgel)
6	Lorgona, an agile, aware, brave, resilient, strong woman (1 bone axe, 2 bone sword, 3 stone whip)

FORMIDABLE FOE	
1	Balhom, an agile, guileful, resilient, inaccurate man with the talent warrior (1 bone axe, 2 fire-hardened spear, 3 whip)
2	Dakala, a brave, charismatic, fortunate woman with the talent barbarian (1 hafted axe, 2 flint-tipped spear, 3 skull-topped cudgel)
3	Darena, a dexterous, guileful, strong woman with the talents serpent and summoner (1 claw axe, 2 spine whip, 3 thorn cudgel)
4	Sultor, an aware, brave, fortunate, strong man with the talents savage and simian (1 flint knife, 2 hafted axe, 3 antler pick)
5	Umlor, an agile, brave, fortunate, resilient man with the talents barbarian and savage (1 hafted axe, 2 skull-topped cudgel, 3 flint-tipped spear)
6	Zultur, an aware, dexterous, charismatic, wilful, wise man with the talents bone chanter and doomsayer (1 horn stake, 2 bone sword, 3 skull-topped cudgel)

Foes can also have armour; roll a d3 and subtract 1 for how many pieces of armour the foe wears. One item can instead be a shield.

Foes can have possessions, although will rarely carry more than a few items. To find the items carried by a foe, GMs can choose a few things from the goods list, or roll a d6 on the below table:

1	Bag containing a gourd, flaker, and scraper
2	Bag containing a sleeping fur, fire making kit, and rushlight
3	Basket containing enough vegetables for d3 meals
4	Gourd tied to a belt
5	Pack containing d6 gems and a salve
6	Pouch containing d6 gems and a crude god statuette

BEASTS



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

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

The majority of the beasts described here are mostly those that exist today, or that existed in recent prehistoric periods. A few are more fantastical and mythical, so GMs seeking to create a more historically realistic setting can choose to ignore these.

The following descriptions are for a selection of creatures that characters might encounter. Beasts are defined using traits, like PCs. Of course, a trait possessed by a beast might not mean precisely the same thing as a similar trait possessed by a human (a beast described as 'brave', for example, is displaying instinctive aggressiveness rather than any sort of courage).

For the purposes of combat, a beast gains a bonus die for the trait 'strong', because most of their attacks are deemed to be unarmed. Where a beast can make a different sort of attack, the applicable trait is noted.

Some beasts are powerful enough to have a 'double' trait (represented by a '×2' next to it). This works like a normal trait, with the exception that when the beast takes wounds, the first wound makes it into a normal '×1' trait, whereas the second wound negates the trait. The double trait counts as just one die for test purposes, although it will continue to grant a die until completely negated. For example, a giant ape has the traits 'aware', 'resilient' ×2, and 'strong' ×2. This effectively gives it five traits for the purpose of absorbing wounds, but it is otherwise treated as having three traits, and thus three dice, for most tests.

If a beast has a tough hide or dense fur, it is described as possessing armour. Beast armour is defined as rigid (for protective shells, large bones, horns, and so on) or flexible (for thick hides and dense fur). Rigid armour is the equivalent of bone armour for the purposes of weapon effects. Flexible armour is the equivalent of fur or hide armour.

When a beast has armour, it will be given as a number of pieces. These function exactly the same as for worn armour, and when used up they no longer apply. Should a beast survive combat, the GM might decide that the beast's armour becomes restored after a few days of healing and resting.

APES

There are many species of ape, most of them dwelling in forest, jungle, or mountain areas. Adult apes vary in size from roughly that of an adult human to about the size of a human child, depending on species. Apes are omnivorous, consuming fruit, seeds, and nuts, and on occasion engaging in the group hunting of other, smaller apes and monkeys.

Apes are intelligent, and some are able to use basic tools, such as sticks, or even throw rocks at foes. Apes will mostly avoid contact with humans, but will attack if they are threatened.

Giant apes, similar to species of the extinct genus *Gigantopithecus*, are huge creatures that grow up to 3 metres in height. They are heavy, weighing more than three times the weight of a modern gorilla. They have long, shaggy, orange-brown fur somewhat similar to that of an orangutan.

Giant apes dwell in warm climates, within forest and jungle habitats, and move about searching for food in family groups of up to 12 individuals (which will include several adults and a few infants). They have a vegetarian diet, consuming fruit, nuts, and tubers. Giant apes avoid contact from other species, but will be aggressive if a human or other large animal approaches them or their family members.

Ape: accurate, agile, aware, dexterous. Apes cause one wound with their attacks (fists or bites), but can also throw rocks at the GM's discretion. When throwing rocks, they get a bonus die for their accurate trait.

Giant ape: aware, resilient $\times 2$, strong $\times 2$. The blow of a giant ape causes two wounds. Their powerful build gives them the equivalent of two pieces of flexible armour.

BATS

Bats typically emerge at twilight or night, and dwell in dark caves and caverns. Bats range in size from tiny (easily fitting into the palm of a person's hand) to giant (with a wingspan equal to the width of an adult human's outstretched arms).

Within their cave habitats, bats can number in their hundreds. Once outside, they fly alone, catching insects using echolocation to navigate. Some bats feed from blood, and will prey on animals such as cattle.

Smaller bats will rarely attack humans. Larger bats might do so when startled, or to feed on blood if the human is unconscious or sleeping.

Bat: aware. A bat's bite causes one wound if the bat is large. Smaller bats cause a wound only if the character fails a 'resilient' test after being bitten. When a character is wounded by a bat, they are exposed to a disease. See the hazards section for details of diseases.

BEARS

There are several varieties of bears, adapted to various climates. In the northern regions of Ancient Mu, the bears are huge with white fur. In the temperate western regions, the forest bears are smaller with brown or dark brown fur. In the eastern region of Ancient Mu, bears are roughly the size of an adult human and have black fur with lighter stripes of brown or even white.

Bears are omnivores in most regions, although in the north most bears have a carnivorous diet. Larger bear species will attack humans for food; smaller species will attack only to steal carried foodstuffs such as vegetables and fruit. They are typically encountered alone, or with one or two younger bears.

Cave bears are a large species of bear that inhabit woodland and mountain caves. When they stand on their hind legs, they are twice the height of an adult human. Their fur is dark brown.

Cave bears are omnivorous, consuming mostly roots, nuts and shoots. They prey on smaller animals, including humans, when they can.

Cave bears are solitary and, despite their size, stealthy. They are thus able to surprise those travelling in woodland, and have been known to ambush the unwary.

Bear: aware, strong $\times 2$, wilful. Bears bite and maul causing two wounds per hit. Their thick hide and coarse fur is the equivalent of two pieces of flexible armour.

Cave bear: guileful, resilient $\times 2$, strong $\times 2$. Cave bears cause three wounds when they bite. When first encountered, an 'aware' test is made for each character. Those who fail are surprised by the cave bear's ambush, and cannot act that turn. Cave bear hides are the equivalent of two pieces of flexible armour.

BEARDOGS

Species of the genus *Amphicyon*, otherwise known as beardedogs, look like bears but have heads that are somewhat similar in appearance to those of dogs. They are strong and heavy beasts that can grow to 2.5 metres in length. Beardedogs have short, thick tails, powerful shoulders, and coarse brown fur. They are omnivorous, scavenging meat and preying on slower animals when they can, and foraging for roots, shoots and tubers at other times.

Beardedogs dwell in forest habitats, and live mostly solitary lives. They are aggressive, and will usually attack other solitary, smaller creatures (such as humans) immediately. They are dangerous foes, and avoided by hunters.

Beardog: brave, resilient $\times 2$, strong $\times 2$. The bite of a beardedog causes two wounds. They have two pieces of flexible armour.

BIRDS

There are many species of birds, although they all share similar characteristics in that they are egg layers with feathers and beaks. Many are capable of flight, although there are flightless species. The below are some examples of the bird types encountered on the continent of Ancient Mu.

The moa is a large flightless bird that can grow up to 2 metres in height. It has shaggy feathers and long legs, but virtually no wings. They inhabit woodland areas and coastal regions, feeding on coarse grasses. They are large enough to be a danger to humans, but are aggressive only if threatened.

The raven and similar species such as rooks are a group of black-feathered, intelligent birds often seen near carrion. They will eat a variety of other foods as well, such as insects, nuts, fruit, small mammals, frogs, and worms.

Teratorns are huge birds of prey, with a wingspan of almost 4 metres. They have black feathers and large talons, and can swallow small prey whole, such as rats, smaller dogs and rabbits. Teratorns make their nests in high mountains.

Waterfowl are birds like ducks and geese that live a mostly aquatic existence. Their habitats include lakes, ponds, and marshland areas. These birds feed on grasses, insects, fish, and frogs. Hunters prize these birds, as they are a source of food and soft feathers.

Moa: resilient, wilful. A moa can peck or kick with its large feet, causing one wound.

Raven: agile. Ravens can peck, causing one wound. They can also attempt the 'trick' tactic in combat, knocking over items, picking up goods and dropping them, and so on.

Teratorn: agile, aware, resilient. The talons of a teratorn cause two wounds.

Waterfowl: aware. Waterfowl do not cause injury, but a successful attack from them is the equivalent of the trip tactic.

BOARS

Boars are powerful beasts with short legs, and are covered in short, coarse fur. They have large heads and tusks that protrude upwards from their mouths. Boars dwell in forests and scrublands, and are often seen in small family groups, although in forest areas they are typically encountered individually. They are mostly herbivores, consuming nuts, seeds, roots, and berries. They might also eat insects and other small creatures.

Larger species of boars, known as forest hogs, exist in some regions. As their name suggests, they dwell in forests and dense woodland. Forest hogs can grow to up to 2 metres long (twice that of most boars).

Boars are ill tempered, and will often attack anything that comes near, even if it is larger than they are.

Boar: brave $\times 2$, resilient (oblivious). A boar causes one wound when it hits. Adults have two pieces of flexible armour, thanks to their tough hides.



Forest hog: brave ×2, resilient, strong ×2 (oblivious). Forest hogs cause two wounds in combat.

BOVIDS

In the Paleomythic world, there are many species of large mammals similar to modern antelope, cows, buffalo, goats, and yaks. These are collectively referred to, for convenience, as bovids. Several types are detailed below, as a representative sample of the array found on the continent.

The largest of species of bovid known to the people of Ancient Mu are aurochs. They are huge, heavy beasts, with a height at the shoulder greater than that of an adult human, and have thick, dark-brown or black hides. The horns of an aurochs are very large, and supported by a massive, thick skull.

Aurochs live in herds of around 20 or 30 in number. They can be found in many different habitats, from temperate grasslands and woodlands to cold steppes and hills. Despite their size, they are fast and can act aggressively, especially when startled. A few tribes and settlements have domesticated small herds of aurochs, but this is rare.

Bison are another type of bovid, recognisable by their distinctively large shoulders, thick hair, and curved horns. They travel in herds, and in regions where there are grasslands or sparse woodlands. They graze on plants and grasses, and when not feeding spend their time wallowing in muddy pools, or resting in dusty hollows.

Bison are not aggressive, but they are unpredictable. Most will avoid human contact, but some might attack without warning.

Gazelles are deer-like animals, notable for their often long, spiral horns (which are prized by hunters). They are found in the warmer southern and eastern regions of Mu, and graze grassland areas in herds. They are swift runners, and avoid contact with humans.

Goats are mostly feral in the Paleomythic world, although a few tribes have begun to keep small herds of goats for access to their milk and as a source of meat. Goats can be ill tempered, and have been known to use their two horns to butt those they see as a threat.

Aurochs: resilient, strong, wilful (clumsy). If encountered at rock range, an aurochs will spend a turn charging a foe (moving towards them). On the following turn, if the attack hits, the foe suffers three wounds and is knocked over. At hand range, an aurochs will attack with its horns, which cause two wounds. Aurochs have thick hides giving them the equivalent of two pieces of flexible armour.

Bison: resilient, strong, wilful $\times 2$. A bison butts with its horn, causing two wounds. In addition, when struck by a bison, a strong test is required to remain standing. They have two pieces of flexible armour.

Gazelle: agile, aware. A gazelle can strike with its horns, causing one wound.

Goat: agile, resilient. If a goat butts a character, it causes one wound.

CANINES

Canines are numerous on the continent of Mu, and can be found in many different habitats. Three types of canine are detailed below: wolves, dogs, and jackals.

Wolves are a successful and numerous predator, and there are a number of species of wolves present in all areas of the continent of Mu. They are typically large, weighing as much as an adult human, and have grey, light brown, or white fur. Wolves are carnivores, preferring prey of roughly their own size or smaller. They will take on larger or more numerous prey if their pack size is large.

Wolves live in packs usually numbering between four and 12. Occasionally lone

adults might be encountered. Wolves can be found in all sorts of terrain, including forests, hills, steppes, grasslands, deserts, and mountains. Wolves are aggressive in packs, less so when alone. However, if hungry, a lone wolf will attack a human.

Dire wolves are a larger species of wolf. Their body length can reach almost 2 metres, and their large heads accommodate a long and powerful jaw. Dire wolves have dark fur, and typically hunt in packs, like wolves. They prey on large mammals such as bovinds. Most of the dire wolf populations are in northern and western Mu, but they can also be found in other regions.

Dogs are a subspecies of wolf, and tend to be more diverse in their size, fur colour, and length. They are more likely to be found near human settlements, scavenging on scraps and stealing food when they can. Some of the settlements and tribes of Mu have successfully domesticated dogs, and they are used in hunting. This remains rare, however.

Jackals are another canine species, typically smaller than dogs with slender frames. They have a range of fur colours, including various types of brown and grey. Jackals are opportunistic scavengers, feeding on small and young mammals, birds, and lizards. They are agile and quick, and have been known to sneak into camps to steal food.

Wolf: aware, agile, guileful, resilient. Wolves can bite causing two wounds. When in a pack of four or more in number, wolves get a bonus die for their attacks.

Dire wolf: aware, agile, resilient, strong $\times 2$. Dire wolves bite causing two wounds. Their bite also causes the 'pain' weapon effect. Like wolves, when in a pack of four or more in number, they get a bonus die for their attacks.

Dog: aware, agile. Dogs can bite causing one wound. Especially large dogs can have the trait 'resilient'.

Jackal: agile, guileful. Jackals can bite causing one wound.

CROCODILIANS

Crocodilians are various species of reptiles that prefer aquatic or semi-aquatic environments. Three types are given below: the crocodile, alligator, and gharial.

Crocodiles are large aquatic reptiles that dwell in rivers, lakes, swamps, and other wetland areas. They can grow to a length of 6 metres, and are recognisable by their scaly greyish-green hide and massive jaws.

Crocodiles are ambush predators, emerging from water or from a hiding place in the undergrowth to seize prey. Their jaws, arrayed with sharp teeth, are tremendously

powerful. Their hide is gnarled and tough, and offers them a great deal of protection.

The gharial is a type of crocodilian that has a long, narrow jaw. It can grow to a length of over 6 metres. Gharials inhabit rivers and lakes, and unlike crocodiles their diet consists primarily of fish. They are also less aggressive than crocodiles, and more likely to avoid contact with humans unless threatened.

Alligators are smaller than crocodiles, typically growing to around 4 metres. They are darker in colour, but their hides are as tough as those of crocodiles. Alligators prefer freshwater environments, although some dwell in brackish water (where salt water and fresh water is mixed).

Alligator: brave, guileful, strong $\times 2$. The bite of an alligator causes two wounds. They have the equivalent of four pieces of rigid armour.

Crocodile: brave, guileful, resilient $\times 2$, strong $\times 2$. The bite of a crocodile causes three wounds. They have the equivalent of four pieces of rigid armour.

Gharial: agile, resilient $\times 2$, strong. The bite of a gharial causes two wounds. They have the equivalent of two pieces of rigid armour.

DEER

There are several species of deer present on the continent of Ancient Mu. Robust types, with large antlers, are found in the north and west. In other regions, the deer tend to be smaller. In addition, there are a few types of very small, or dwarf deer, that can be encountered in dense woodland. Deer have soft hides covered with short fur in a wide variety of colours and patterns.

Deer are herbivores, and consume shoots, grasses, lichens, and fungi. Most species prefer woodland and forest habitats, although there are others that thrive in barren and more open environments. Deer live in family groups or herds, varying in number from as few as three to several hundred, depending on species and habitat.

Deer will rarely attack, preferring to flee when threatened. Some large males might show aggression on rare occasions, however.

Deer: aware, agile. If a deer attacks at all, it causes one wound by butting or kicking.

Dwarf deer: aware. They do not cause damage, but if they hit with a kick, it is the equivalent of the trip weapon effect.

Large deer: aware, agile, resilient. If a large deer butts, it causes one wound.

ELEPHANTS

Elephants are grouped here with similar beasts such as mammoths.

An elephant is a huge animal: adults can exceed 3 metres in height, and weigh around 6 tons. They have tough grey hides, large ears, and a characteristic trunk. Many have long, upwards facing tusks. Elephants inhabit grasslands, desert regions, marshland, and forests. They feed on roots, leaves, bark, and twigs, and because they require large amounts of food, graze almost constantly.

Elephants form herds of varying size, from just a few individuals to as many as a hundred. They have a territory, and are able to travel great distances.

Mammoths are typically larger than elephants, reaching 4 metres in height. Like elephants, they have trunks and long, upwards facing tusks. However, mammoths are notable for their covering of long brown hair. This is very thick and, coupled with their tough hide and layer of body fat, makes them incredibly difficult to wound. For this reason, only a few tribes regularly try to hunt them.

Mammoths inhabit the cooler regions of Ancient Mu. They can survive in inhospitable and barren regions where vegetation is coarse, but are also found in the forest and woodland regions of Mu. They normally travel in herds of a similar size to those of elephants.

Mastodons are similar to elephants in appearance, but tend to have a shorter trunk and shorter legs. They have upwards facing, long tusks that are more curved than those of an elephant. Mastodons are typically 2.5 metres tall, but with a similar weight to that of elephants.

Mastodons are woodland dwelling animals, feeding on leaves, bark, and shrubs. Their herd sizes are small, typically being small family groups.

Species of the genus *Deinotherium*, otherwise known as tuskers, are massive beasts that look similar to an elephant, but with tusks that curve downwards, instead of forwards and upwards. They are also taller than elephants, with adults reaching 4 metres in height and weighing up to 13 tons.

Tuskers have a very tough hide, mostly without any hair or fur. Their hides are typically grey or light brown. Tuskers are herbivores, feeding on leaves, tree bark, and tubers, which it digs out using its tusks and trunk. Tuskers live in family groups of around 20 individuals, although occasionally lone males can be encountered. Tuskers can be dangerous if threatened, and lone males are aggressive.

Tuskers are rarely hunted. On the rare occasions that they are the target of a hunt, usually all of the warriors and hunters of a tribe take part; tuskers are deadly foes.

The tusker king is a mysterious and legendary animal, said to be the largest of all such beasts. It is a huge and formidable creature, spoken about in campfire stories by hunters. The tusker king is a beast to be feared.

Elephant: dexterous, resilient, strong ×2, wilful ×2. Elephants can attack with their tusks, causing two wounds per hit. Elephants have the equivalent of two pieces of flexible armour.

Mammoth: brave ×2, resilient ×2, strong ×2, wilful (clumsy). Mammoths can attack with their tusks, causing three wounds per hit. They have the equivalent of four pieces of flexible armour.

Mastodon: brave, resilient ×2, strong ×2, wilful. Mastodons can attack with their tusks, causing three wounds per hit. They have the equivalent of three pieces of flexible armour.

Tusker: aware, brave ×2, dexterous, resilient ×2, strong ×2. Tuskers can attack with their tusks, causing three wounds per hit. Tuskers have the equivalent of four pieces of flexible armour.

Tusker king: aware, brave ×2, dexterous, resilient ×2, strong ×2, wilful ×2. The tusker king causes four wounds per hit. It has the equivalent of four pieces of flexible armour.

Tusks: these beasts get a bonus die for attacks from their 'brave' trait, as their tusks are like weapons. The exception is when charging and trampling, which is instead modified by the 'strong' trait.

CHARGING AND TRAMPLING

Charging: all of the above-noted beasts can charge as their attack. This typically occurs once per encounter, at the start of combat. Charging occurs if the encounter begins at rock range. The beast will spend a turn moving rapidly towards a foe. On the following turn, if the attack hits, the foe suffers four wounds and is knocked from hand to rock range, falling over upon landing.

Trample: if a foe has been knocked over by a charge, or falls for some other reason, the beast can trample them. This is a 'strong' test, and if successful, the foe takes three wounds. In addition, d3 pieces of armour worn by the victim are destroyed and cannot be repaired.

EQUINES

There are several common types of equine extant on the continent of Ancient Mu, including horses, donkeys, quaggas, tarpans, and zebras. All are similar in appearance, having long heads, manes of varying length, and relatively long legs.

Most equines are present in the west, south, and east of Mu, although there are small numbers in the northern region. Equines generally form herds of varying size, and are usually found in grasslands, woodland, and hills. They feed on leaves, shoots, twigs, bark, fruit, and grass. Equines are not usually domesticated on the continent of Ancient Mu, although there are a handful of settlements or tribes that have attempted to do so, with limited success.

Donkeys are relatively small equines that live in small herds. They are temperamental, unpredictable, and have been known to deliver powerful kicks to unsuspecting victims, for little or no reason.

Horses are larger than donkeys and have longer legs and agile, slender frames. They are swift, and difficult to catch in the open. The hide (or coat) of a horse can be a number of colours, from varying shades of brown to black and even white.

Quaggas are similar in stature to donkeys, being generally small. They have red-brown hides, with stripes like those of a zebra on their necks. They can be wild and unpredictable when threatened.

Tarpans have black or grey coats (unlike the wide variety of coat colours found in horses). In height, they fall somewhere between the donkey and horse. They prefer woodland habitats, and are even more skittish than other equines.

Zebras are the most distinctive of equines. They have long legs and agile frames, with coarse manes. Their coat is striped white and black, and the patterns are unique to each individual animal. Zebras often form large herds, and prefer open plains.

Equine: agile, aware. Larger animals might possess the 'resilient' trait. For each equine attack that hits, roll a d3. On a 1, they bite, causing one wound. On a 2, they rear, causing two wounds. On a 3, they kick, causing two wounds and knocking the victim down unless they have the 'strong' trait.

FELINES

There are many types of feline extant within Mu. These include smaller types, such as feral cats, and large, dangerous types, such as the Homotherium or 'flint cat'.

Feral cats of various types are often found throughout Ancient Mu, stalking small creatures such as rodents. Cats have a wide variety of fur colours, depending on their habitat. Occasionally, cats can grow up to 1 metre in length.

Some cats will befriend humans, and will keep an area free of vermin in exchange for food and a warm place to sleep. However, in Ancient Mu most cats are feral, and can be vicious when threatened.

Species of the genus Homotherium, or scimitar cats, are known in Ancient Mu as flint cats. Flint cats are large felines, standing shoulder height to an adult human. Their curved upper canines protrude slightly, and are serrated, giving them a deadly bite. This gives them their name, as their fangs are like jagged pieces of flint blade.

Flint cats are stocky, with short limbs. They are covered in soft grey fur, which is often patterned. This camouflages them in their habitat, which is commonly mountains, steppes, and rugged hills.

Flint cats are usually solitary, and have a carnivorous diet. Thanks to their powerful build, flint cats will often prey on beasts larger than themselves. Humans are also preyed upon by them.

Leopards are agile and lithe cats, sometimes growing to nearly 2 metres in length. They have white and yellowish fur with black spots, and are well camouflaged within their woodland and grassland habitats. Leopards spend their days resting in treetops, emerging to hunt at night. They are mostly solitary, and have large territories. Leopards prey on deer, bovines, boars, and primates (including, on occasion, humans). They store their prey in treetops.

Lions are powerfully built cats, with light, yellow-brown fur. Males have thick manes. Lions form prides which typically have a few males, and several females and cubs. They dwell in grassland areas, and primarily hunt bovines and deer (often opting for the young and weak animals). Typically, the females do the hunting, and work as a group to bring down an animal. They are dangerous when hunting, hungry, or threatened, but are otherwise relatively relaxed, preferring to rest in the shade of trees and bushes.

The Thylacoleo carnifex, or tree lion, is technically not a feline at all. However, it shares many of the attributes and qualities of felines, and is therefore included here.

Tree lions are cat-like creatures that grow to over a metre in length. They have coarse brown fur, and short but powerful limbs. They have vicious claws, with partially opposable thumbs enabling them to climb trees with great skill, and to grasp prey. Their fangs are short but deadly, thanks to a powerful bite. They feed



primarily on mammals of a similar size, but can also attack larger creatures, ambushing them by emerging from bushes or trees.

Felines of the genus *Smilodon*, in modern times known as sabretooth cats, are called tusk cats in the land of Ancient Mu. They are the most dangerous of all felines, with powerful, muscular bodies and long, curved canine teeth. Their teeth face downwards, and protrude from their jaws so that they remain visible even when the creature has its mouth closed. Covered in coarse fur, a tusk cat is nearly a metre and a half in height when standing on all fours, with a weight equivalent to five or six adult humans.

Tusk cats hunt large prey, including bovines, elephants, rhinos, and even the formidable mammoths. Their bite is powerful, and their tusk-like canines can penetrate the toughest hides. They hunt by stalking and ambushing prey, as they are too large and bulky to run for long periods or at great speed. They are mostly solitary, although females can be encountered with one or more cubs of varying ages.

A tusk cat is a frightening opponent that will not hesitate to attack a human. They are likely to kill characters unless attacked intelligently or in large numbers.

Cat: agile, guileful. A feral cat causes one wound with its claws.

Flint cat: aware, agile, guileful $\times 2$, strong. Flint cats cause two wounds with their bite, and automatically cause

the 'gouge' weapon effect. Flint cats have the equivalent of one piece of flexible armour.

Leopard: aware, agile ×2, guileful, resilient. Leopards cause two wounds with their claws and bite.

Lion: aware, agile, resilient, strong ×2. Lions cause three wounds with their claws and bite.

Tree lion: aware, brave, agile ×2, resilient, strong. Tree lions cause two wounds with their claws and bite, as well as the 'gore' weapon effect.

Tusk cat: aware, brave guileful, resilient ×2, strong ×2, wilful. Tusk cats cause three wounds when they bite. Each time their bite connects, they destroy a piece of armour. In addition, their bite always causes the 'gouge' effect. Tusk cats have the equivalent of one point of flexible armour.

FISH

There are numerous fish in the rivers and lakes of Mu, and many more in the seas around the coast. Those found in lakes and rivers are typically small in comparison to the large and dangerous types found in the sea.

Small types of fish serve as meals for fishers, and are mostly harmless. Some species are dangerous, however.

The dogtooth can grow to half a metre in length, and is found in rivers. They have a silvery sheen to their skin, and their jaws are large. Dogtooth fish prey on smaller fish. However, if caught or threatened, they will bite.

Eels are long, slender fish. Small types are harmless, but the moray can grow to a length of 4 metres. These creatures can be found in the sea, but also rivers and lakes, depending on the type. They are snake-like in appearance, with narrow jaws filled with sharp teeth.

Sharks are encountered in a variety of aquatic environments depending on the type. The most dangerous are the sea-dwelling ones, which can grow to enormous sizes. Among these are the feared great white sharks, which can grow to a length of 6 metres. Great whites prey on other fish, mammals, and birds, and are known to attack humans. They are formidable foes.

Fish (any small fish variety): aware. Fish are harmless to humans.

Dogtooth: agile. The bite of a dogtooth causes one wound.

Moray: agile, resilient, strong. The bite of a moray causes one wound and the 'pain' weapon effect.

Great white: aware, agile ×2, brave, guileful, strong. The bite of a great white causes three wounds and the 'gouge' weapon effect.

GLYPTODONTS

Two species of glyptodont are found on the continent of Ancient Mu. This first is known as the armour beast, the other is called the spike tail. They are similar to the modern armadillo, with distinctive outer shells as protection.

Armour beasts (species of the genus Glyptodon) are covered in a rigid shell, including on their heads. They have short legs, and a long armoured tail. Adults are roughly 3 metres long, and can weigh 2 tons. They are herbivores, feeding on tough grasses and roots. Armour beasts live in areas of sparse woodland, grasslands, and hills. They can be encountered in small family groups of three to six individuals. They are aggressive when threatened.

The spike tail, otherwise known as *Doedicurus clavicaudatus*, is very similar in appearance to the armour beast. It has the same type of armour covering, but differs by having a spikes protruding from the end of its tail. Spike tails can grow to 4 metres in length. They have a similar diet to that of armour beasts, but prefer more open terrain. Spike tails also tend to be more solitary, and males are aggressive to other male spike tails.

Armour beast: resilient ×2, strong, wilful. An armour beast can strike with its tail, causing two wounds. In addition, the victim suffers from the 'trip' weapon effect. They have the equivalent of three pieces of rigid armour.

Spike tail: resilient, strong ×2, wilful ×2. Spike tails strike with their tail, causing three wounds and the 'rend' weapon effect. They have the equivalent of two pieces of rigid armour.

HYENAS

Although superficially similar to dogs, hyenas are a different species. The hyenas of Ancient Mu are short-legged, long-necked beasts with coarse spotted, or striped, fur. Hyenas both hunt their prey, and scavenge the prey of others. Their jaws are powerful, and able to easily crunch bones.

Hyenas live in small family groups, although large packs sometimes form near the carcasses of large animals. Their habitat is mostly open plains, grassland, and scrub. They can travel quickly, and trek great distances to find food.

Hyenas can be aggressive, especially around kills. They are confident and fearless predators, and will scare off larger beasts when they get close. Hyenas are also stealthy, and will sneak into settlements to find food.

Hyena: agile, guileful, resilient, wilful. The bite of a hyena causes two wounds.

LEECHES

Leeches can be encountered in the humid jungles of eastern and southern Mu. Most leeches are small, rarely larger than a person's forefinger. They are similar in appearance to worms, although many have wider bodies.

Leeches attack their hosts by dropping onto them from vegetation, or attaching as a host brushes past them. A small tool such as a piece of flint can be used to detach them.

Leeches have jaws containing teeth, and suckers to attach themselves to hosts. They feed off blood, secreting an anti-clotting agent so that the blood continues to flow when they bite. Small leeches do not cause injury when they bite, but might cause disease.

Giant leeches inhabit humid jungles, swamps, and wetland areas. They are greyish brown in colour, and can grow to half a metre in length. Unlike smaller leeches, when a giant leech bites, it inflicts injury.

Leech: resilient (clumsy). A leech does not cause a wound, but does expose victims to disease. Leeches attack once only, attaching themselves to the host if successful. Otherwise, they fall harmlessly to the ground.

Giant leech: resilient (clumsy). Giant leeches function in all ways like other leeches, but cause one wound when they initially attach themselves.

LIZARDS

Lizards are a type of reptile, widespread in all regions of Ancient Mu. They range in size from small enough to fit into the palm of a hand, to more than 3 metres in length.

Lizards typically have tails, are scaly, and are quadrupedal. Many have skin colourations to help them remain camouflaged within their preferred habitat. Others have bright 'warning' colours, which they have evolved to scare off predators. The following lizards are just a few examples of the many types that can be encountered:

Beaded lizards are an example of a venomous lizard. They can grow to over a metre in length, and have scaly black hides (occasionally with yellow spots). They prefer a habitat that is arid, with scrubland and woodland. They prey on eggs, birds, mammals, frogs, and insects. They will attack humans if surprised or threatened, and their bite is venomous.

Geckos are small lizards, often encountered in many areas of Mu, other than the north (which is usually too cold for them). Geckos are able to climb sheer surfaces with ease, and move with speed and agility. They eat insects, and are harmless to humans.

The komodo is a large species of lizard that can grow to over 3 metres long. It has scaly skin that has small bones within it, creating a type of tough but movable armour. It has large jaws filled with serrated teeth, and its tongue (which is used to detect scents) is constantly flicking in and out of its mouth as it tastes the air. By contrast, the sight and hearing of a komodo are poor. They hunt mammals, and will attack creatures larger than themselves in some cases. The bite of a komodo is venomous.

Giant lizards are rumoured to exist in hot wilderness regions and within vast jungles. These beasts are the size of elephants, and feed on mammals, smaller lizards, carrion, and unfortunate humans.

Beaded lizard: agile, brave. The bite of a beaded lizard causes one wound and exposes the victim to poison.

Gecko: fortunate. Geckos do not harm humans.

Komodo: resilient, strong $\times 2$, wilful. The bite of a komodo causes two wounds and exposes the victim to poison. They have the equivalent of two pieces of flexible armour.

Giant lizard: aware, brave ×2, resilient, strong, wilful (clumsy). When a giant lizard successfully attacks, roll a d3. On 1–2, they bite, causing four wounds. On a 3, they lash out with their tail, causing three wounds and knocking the victim over. They have the equivalent of two pieces of flexible armour.

MONKEYS

Monkeys are primates, often distinguished from apes by their tail (although, confusingly, not all monkeys have tails). They range in size from being small enough to fit into the palm of a person's hand to as tall as 1 metre. Numerous types of monkey exist on Ancient Mu, mostly in the southern and eastern regions (although a few types can be found in the cooler western and northern regions).

Giant monkeys (otherwise known as cercopithecines) are the largest of all the monkey types, growing to over a metre tall and weighing as much as a human child. They are robust, with thick bones and long, muscular upper limbs. They inhabit forest and jungle terrain, feeding on vegetation such as fruit and nuts. They are territorial, and will challenge other animals with aggressive howls and branch shaking. They have been known to defend their territory against humans, using their thick-boned arms as dangerous clubs.

Howler monkeys can be found in the forest and jungle areas typical of eastern Mu. They grow to almost a metre in height, and have black or brown fur. Their tails are long, often longer than their body. Howlers have prehensile tails, which they can use to grip onto branches. As their name suggests, they have a loud and piercing howl that can be heard from a great distance away. Howlers consume leaves, fruit, and nuts. They avoid contact with humans.

Mandrills are large monkeys, with bodies of around 1 metre in length. Their fur is dark grey or pale green, but their snout (which is long, like that of a dog) is striped red and blue. This colouring also occurs around the genitals of the mandrill.

Mandrills lack the long tail of other monkey types, and dwell on the ground rather than in trees. They prefer a forest habitat, although can also be encountered in some grassland areas. Mandrills are omnivores, mostly eating fruit, but also insects, birds' eggs, and small mammals. They have long canine teeth, and can deliver a vicious bite should they need to defend themselves.

Giant monkey: brave, resilient, wilful. A blow from a giant monkey causes one wound.

Howler monkey: agile. If panicked, they can bite, causing one wound. Howlers travel by swinging in trees (brachiation), and do so rapidly. They are also excellent

climbers, and should be treated as if they have the talent 'simian'.

Mandrill: brave, resilient. Mandrill bites cause one wound.

RABBITS

Rabbits (and similar creatures such as hares) are present and abundant on the continent. They are widespread, although most numerous in the western region. Rabbits and hares share common characteristics. They have large ears, long hind limbs, and soft fur in a variety of colours. Their fur is prized by hunters, and used to make clothing.

Rabbits feed on grass and similar vegetation. They prefer woodland, grassland, and forest habitats, although some types can tolerate cold hilly environments, and others arid scrubland.

Rabbit: aware. They cannot harm humans.

RHINOCEROSES

Of the species of rhinoceros extant on the continent of Mu, the black rhinoceros is the most common.

Adult black rhinoceroses are 1.5 metres in height, and weigh a hefty 1 to 1.5 tons. They have dark grey hides, large bodies, and short legs. Two short horns protrude from their heads near their snout.

Rhinoceroses are solitary beasts, although females may occasionally be seen with calves. They feed on leaves, bushes, shoots, fruit and branches, and are encountered primarily in woodlands, forests and grasslands.

Species of the genus *Elasmotherium*, or horse rhinos, are a type of rhinoceros that stands 2 metres in height, weighing around 4 tons. Horse rhinos have a single, long horn, and their legs are longer than those of a black rhinoceros. They inhabit scrubland, brush, and woodland areas.

The hornless rhino is the name given to species of the genus *Toxodon*, creatures somewhat similar to a rhinoceros. Hornless rhinos are heavy and a large, with a body nearly 3 metres long. The beasts have short legs like a rhinoceros, and a similarly shaped head. However, they lack any sort of horn. This does not diminish their imposing presence, however; the sheer bulk of the creature when slammed against a foe would be enough to cause severe injury.

The woolly rhinoceros is slightly larger than a black rhinoceros, and covered

with thick fur. It is stockier than a black rhinoceros, with short but powerful legs. A woolly rhinoceros has two horns, roughly the same size as those of a black rhinoceros.

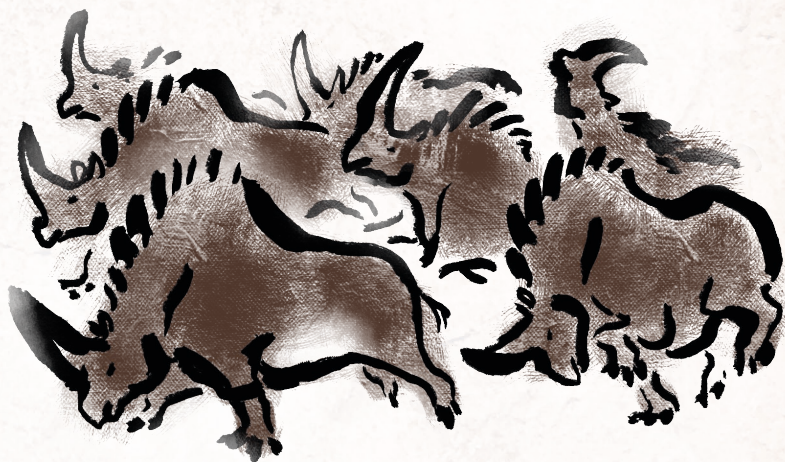
Woolly rhinoceroses inhabit cold regions, and are accustomed to surviving in arid and barren terrain. Their diet consists of coarse vegetation.

Black rhinoceros: brave, resilient $\times 2$, strong $\times 2$, wilful. A hit from the horn of this beast causes three wounds. They have the equivalent of three pieces of flexible armour.

Hornless rhino: aware, brave, resilient, strong $\times 2$. The hornless rhino slams foes, causing two wounds. They have the equivalent of one piece of flexible armour.

Horse rhino: brave, resilient $\times 2$, strong, wilful. A hit from the horn of a horse rhino causes three wounds. They have the equivalent of two pieces of flexible armour.

Woolly rhinoceros: brave $\times 2$, resilient $\times 2$, strong $\times 2$, wilful. A hit from the horn of this beast causes four wounds. They have the equivalent of three pieces of flexible armour.



CHARGING AND TRAMPLING

Charging: Like mammoths, rhinos can charge as their attack. This typically occurs at the start of combat if the encounter begins at rock range. The beast will spend a turn moving rapidly towards a foe. On the following turn, if their attack hits, the foe suffers four wounds and is knocked from hand to rock range, falling over upon landing.

Trample: If a foe has been knocked over by a charge, or falls for some other reason, the beast can trample. This is a 'strong' test, and if successful the foe takes three wounds. In addition, d3 pieces of armour worn by the victim are destroyed, and cannot be repaired.

RODENTS

Rodents are small mammals that include rats and mice. They are encountered in all regions of Mu, and are one of the most numerous and successful types of creature on the continent.

Rodents feed primarily on vegetation such as grasses, fruit, and seeds, although they will scavenge on other foodstuffs when able (eating grain, bread, and meat scraps when they infest settlements). The natural habitat for most rodent types is forest and grassland, although they can adapt to many other environments, such as marshlands, jungles, swamps, steppes, mountains, and even deserts.

Mice are generally smaller than rats, with most types no larger than an adult human hand. Rats can be larger, with one type (the giant rat) growing to as much as a metre in length.

Mouse: fortunate. They cannot harm humans.

Rat: guileful. Their bite causes one wound. When a rat bites, it exposes the character to disease. Giant rats have the trait 'resilient'.

SCORPIONS



There are many varieties of scorpions present on the continent of Ancient Mu. Most types dwell in the warmer regions of the south and east, but they can be encountered anywhere.

Small scorpions range in size from tiny to about the size of an adult human's hand. They prey on insects and other small creatures. Their habitats can be variable, with some types dwelling in trees, others among rocks and in crevices, some in burrows, and so on. Many of the smaller scorpions have potent and dangerous venom.

Giant scorpions grow as long as human forearm. They are black in colour, with very large pincers and a tail that arches over their body. They burrow beneath soil, and can thus surprise prey using an ambush tactic. They feed on insects. Although fearsome looking, they are an annoyance rather than a real danger, since their sting is painful rather than deadly.

Empress scorpions are said to exist within the desert regions of Mu. They are bigger than a human, and make fearsome and deadly opponents.

Giant scorpion: agile, resilient. They cause two wounds with their pincers, plus the weapon effect 'pain'.

Scorpion: agile. They sting, which does not cause a wound, but will expose the victim to poison.

Empress scorpion: agile, brave, strong, wilful. The sting of an empress scorpion exposes the victim to poison, and causes three wounds as well as the weapon effect 'intimidate'.

SNAKES

There are numerous types of snake prevalent on the continent, ranging in size, capability, and choice of habitat. Two varieties of snake pose a threat to characters: the venomous snakes found mostly in the eastern and southern parts of Mu (although also present in lesser numbers in the west), and the constrictor snakes found mostly in the east.

The endless snake is the name given to species of the genus Titanoboa, huge snakes that can be found in the swamps and jungles of Mu. Endless snakes can grow to a length of 14 metres, and they prey on the larger swamp-habitat creatures (including the biggest fish, young crocodilians, and various mammals). Endless snakes attack by biting to grip prey, then constricting. They have been known to attack humans.

'Green snake' is the unassuming name given to a type of pit viper, and it is an example of the many venomous snakes present on the continent. It can grow to a metre and a half in length, and is recognisable by its bright green colouring. Green snakes dwell in jungle and dense forest regions, and are known to climb trees. They are incredibly alert, using an infrared sense to detect their prey (which usually consists of small mammals). If startled, a green snake will bite a human, and their bite is very dangerous.

'Venom snake' is a catch-all term for a variety of snakes that inhabit some forests, jungles, and desert regions. They are typically small, but dangerous due to their venom.

Endless snake: brave, resilient, strong $\times 2$, wilful. The bite of an endless snake causes one wound. On the following turn it makes a restrain attack (a 'strong' test). If successful, it causes one wound per turn until the victim escapes (which requires a successful 'strong' test).

Green snake: agile, aware, guileful. The bite of green snake causes one wound and exposes the victim to poison.

Venom snake: guileful. The bite of a venom snake does not cause a wound, but will expose the victim to poison.

SPIDERS

Spiders are present in all regions of Mu. They can range in size from tiny, barely visible creatures to creatures as long as a human forearm.

Giant spiders have bodies bigger than a human hand, but relatively short legs. They are light brown in colour and have large fangs that can penetrate the skin of even large mammals (such as humans). These beasts live in warm forest regions, marshlands, and swamps. Their bite is painful, but their venom is weak. However, they can emit a cloud of barbed hairs that sting a foe's skin, causing irritation.

Venomous spiders are typically smaller, and vary in colour, leg length, and so on. Venomous spiders can be found in a variety of habitats, and typically prey on small insects. They attack humans if surprised.

Monstrous spiders are the stuff of nightmares. As big as humans, they dwell in dark caves and live off rodents, lizards, feral dogs, and similar creatures.

Giant spider: aware, agile. Their bite causes one wound and the weapon effect 'pain'.

Venomous spider: aware. Their bite does not cause a wound, but will cause the 'pain' weapon effect. The victim is also exposed to poison.

Monstrous spider: aware, agile $\times 2$, brave, resilient. When their attack succeeds, roll a d3. On a 1–2, the spider bites, causing three wounds. On a 3, it emits web, causing the 'entangle' weapon effect.

BEAST MEN

In the wilder areas of Mu, there exist strange races of people that are neither truly human, nor fully beast. These are the beast men. Many of the beast men are savage and primitive, with crude, brutal ways, or else are malevolent, being worshippers of vile spirits and demons. They are typically ruled over by villainous tyrants.

Beast men, being basically humanoid, are more akin to characters, and are therefore treated separately. Each beast man entry given below has a simple character creation process, for when the GM wishes to use beast men as adversaries for an adventure.

THE APE BEASTS OF THE WILDS

These hunched, primitive humanoids dwell amid the crags within the mountainous areas of Mu. They are covered in coarse black or brown hair, and have muscular, powerful limbs. Their heads are ape-like, with sloped foreheads and jutting jaws.

They are savage, primitive cave dwellers with a basic tribal society and only a basic language. They lack the intellect to comprehend human speech. The most regularly encountered tend to be the larger men. Ape Beast women are subjugated, mistreated, and little more than slaves. The Ape Beasts are known to eat human flesh, and have on occasion ambushed travellers, who end up as feasts for their tribe. Ape Beasts lack any sort of belief, but have a superstitious dread of anything beyond their limited range of experience. They fear fire and lightning.

To create Ape Beast characters, roll a d3 and add 1 for the number of traits they possess. Roll a d6 for each trait using the table below, as well as a d6 to determine their talent, weapon, and carried item.

In addition, All Ape Beasts have the flaws 'awkward' and 'ignorant'. Ape Beasts do not wear armour.

D6	TRAITS (D3+1)	TALENT	WEAPON	ITEM
1	Accurate	Brawler	Bone	Bag of gnawed bones
2	Agile	Caster	Cudgel	Bag of meat
3	Aware	Feral	Hand axe	Gourd filled with sour juice
4	Brave	Savage	d6 rocks	Nothing
5	Resilient	Simian	Nothing	Nothing
6	Strong	None	Nothing	Nothing

THE BOAR BROTHERS AND TAIL SISTERS

In the western and northern regions of Mu, there are strange, forest-dwelling beast men with tusks, akin to those of boars. Only the men have these, hence they are usually referred to as Boar Brothers.

Boar Brothers are squat and broad, with powerfully built upper torsos. The women are small, but otherwise similarly built. In place of tusks, women have short vestigial tails, and are for this reason sometimes called Tail Sisters.

Boar Brothers and Tail Sisters form small settlements of turf dwellings or rock homes, the latter made by forming a mound of stone and rock blocks with a small opening. They are hunters, and favour larger prey such as aurochs, bears, and mammoths. Rather than nomadically following herds, they wait for them to cross into the tribal territory, then send out hunting parties. They store their meat in stone-lined pits, after having preserved it by smoking.

Boar Brothers and Tail Sisters have basic crafting skills, somewhat more primitive than most human tribes. They have their own tongue, but can usually understand some human words. They are occasionally hostile to humans, typically when humans encroach on areas that the Boar Brothers and Tail Sisters view as their territory.

To create Boar Brother and Tail Sisters characters, roll a d3 and add 2 for the number of traits they possess. Then roll a d3 and subtract 1 to find how many pieces of armour they have, if any. Roll a d6 for each trait and piece of armour using the table below, as well as a d6 to determine their talent, weapon, and carried item.

In addition, all Boar Brothers and Tail Sisters have the flaw 'careless'.

D6	TRAITS (D3+2)	ARMOUR (D3-1)	TALENT	WEAPON	ITEM
1	Accurate	Fur hat	Barbarian	Antler pick	Bag containing meat
2	Brave	Skull helm	Crafter	Claw axe	Bag containing d3 bandages and salve
3	Fortunate	Fur tunic	Hunter	Fire-hardened spear	Bag with d3 tools (choose from awl, burin, flake, or scraper)
4	Resilient	Bone tunic	Tracker	Flint-tipped spear	Gourd with sour juice
5	Strong	Hide shield	Trapper	Stone-topped cudgel	Pouch with 1d6 gems
6	Wilful	Bone shield	None	Wood spear	Pouch with an anklet, armband, or talisman

THE DOG FIENDS OF THE MOUNTAIN OF SKULLS



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

The Dog Fiends have a hidden stronghold, which lies within a dense forest where there is said to be a huge mountain made from the skulls of Dog Fiend ancestors. No one knows the location of this stronghold, but it is rumoured to be in the largest of the dark, western forests.

Dog Fiends worship the spirits of their ancestors, and build skull-topped columns of rocks to serve as their shrines. Animal bones are typically strewn around the base of these, the remains of offerings.

Dog Fiends are somewhat primitive, and most of their tools and weapons are

stolen from humans. They have been known to abduct children to use as slaves. They dwell in earth tunnels and mounds dug by themselves or their slaves. Some can speak a basic version of the human tongue.

To create Dog Fiends characters, roll a d3 and add 1 for the number of traits they possess. Roll a d6 for each trait using the table below, as well as a d6 to determine their armour, talent, weapon, and 2d6 for carried items.

In addition, all Dog Fiends have the flaw ‘ignorant’.

D6	TRAITS (D3 +1)	ARMOUR	TALENT	WEAPON	ITEMS (2)
1	Aware	Fur hat	Feral	Antler pick	Fire making kit
2	Agile	Hide arm wrap (one only)	Hunter	Bow and d6 arrows	Gourd of lamp oil
3	Brave	Hide shield	Shadower	Claw axe	Gourd of water
4	Fortunate	None	Tracker	Bone	Rope
5	Guileful	None	None	Wood spear	Torch
6	Wilful	None	None	Nothing	Nothing

PRIMITIVES

In the wilder, forgotten places of Mu, tribes of degenerate Primitives dwell. They are humans, but from an earlier time. Primitives are hulking brutes, with thick, muscular limbs. They have jutting brow ridges, large noses, and broad necks. They wear filthy, untreated hides and furs in the colder parts of Mu, or nothing at all (save for dirt and grime) in warmer regions.

Primitives inhabit caves, or else shelter in undergrowth. They hunt using crude or stolen weapons, and eat their food raw, as they are unable to make fire. They cannot craft tools beyond basic pieces of sharpened flint or scraps of hide.

Primitives form small tribes, and are generally nomadic. They communicate with guttural calls and gestures, lacking a true language. They do not have a belief system per se, although they have crude customs around the burial of their dead. They are hostile to humans, viewing them as they would other animals, and usually attack them on sight.

To create Primitive characters, roll a d3 and add 1 for the number of traits they possess. Roll a d6 for each trait using the table below, as well as a d6 to determine their armour, talent, weapon, and carried items.

In addition, all Primitives have the flaws ‘awkward’ and ‘ignorant’.

D6	TRAITS (D3+1)	ARMOUR	TALENT	WEAPON	ITEM
1	Aware	Tunic	Barbarian	Bone	Meat
2	Brave	Limb wrap	Brawler	Cudgel	Piece of hide containing bones
3	Guileful	None	Feral	d6 rocks	Piece of hide containing fruit or seeds
4	Resilient	None	Savage	Wood spear	Nothing
5	Strong	None	None	Nothing	Nothing
6	Wilful	None	None	Nothing	Nothing

Primitives do not wear armour, but there is a small chance that their crude hides can act as a tunic or limb wrap, as represented by the above table.

THE SERPENTS OF THE FORGOTTEN RUINS

The Serpents are hunched, snake-like beings. They have spindly limbs, tails, and patterned, scaly skin. Their heads are elongated and appear like those of snakes.

The Serpents dwell amid dilapidated complexes hidden beneath an ancient, ruined stone structure, which was built by a forgotten species of being. The structure is hidden away within a dense jungle to the east, and appears to have had a regular, pyramid-type shape at some point in the distant past. Within their strange home, the Serpent Men perform macabre rituals, and evoke spirits to do their bidding.

Although the Serpents mostly remain hidden, some have travelled to other parts of Ancient Mu. They remain in the shadows, and avoid contact with others unless necessary. They covet certain minerals, and often seek gems and unique stones. They have no qualms about killing to obtain these. They have their own tongue, but also speak the language of humans.

In their ancient home resides the Emerald Priestess, a Serpent woman of great power. She is served by the priests, who wear headbands studded with green gems. These priests are cruel and ruthless, and the other Serpents, when encountered, are deferential to them.

To create Serpent characters, roll a 2d2 for the number of traits they possess. Roll a d6 for each trait using the table below, as well as a d6 to determine their talent, weapon, and carried items.

In addition, the scaly hide of a Serpent is the equivalent of one piece of flexible armour.

D6	TRAITS (2D2)	TALENT	WEAPON	ITEM
1	Accurate	Caster	Blow pipe and d6 darts	Bag with d3 salve pouches
2	Agile	Savage	Fang whip	Bag of odd stones
3	Guileful	Serpent	Flint cudgel	Clay statuette of a snake
4	Resilient	Shadower	Flint knife and bow with d6 arrows	Necklace of beads
5	Wilful	Thief	Flint shard sword	Pouch of 2d6 gems
6	Wise	None	Flint-tipped spear.	Talisman with human skull

If you are creating a Priest Serpent, instead use the following table for talents:

1	Bone chanter
2	Effigy maker
3	Cultist
4	Ritualist
5	Snake charmer
6	Summoner

All Serpents can use poison. Roll a d3; on a roll of 1, they have a poisoned weapon. When hit by the weapon, the victim is exposed to poison (see the hazards section).

THE TOAD THINGS OF THE BLACK OBELISK

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

The Toad Things dwell in dank forests, marshland, swamps, and jungles, and their stronghold is said to be a black obelisk which sits amid a clearing within an especially large, festering marsh in the western region of Mu. Atop this obelisk, the toad 'queen' is said to dwell. She is an especially huge toad person, who occasionally crawls down from the obelisk to demand rituals and sacrifice in the name of their deity (Heqtet, the toad goddess).

The Toad Things hunt and fish, and build shelters amid trees and dense bushes. They string up their food, hanging descaled fish and the skinned remains of lizards and rats from branches.

The Toad Things loath outsiders, and will slaughter any they encounter in their domain. They use stealth and the cover of night rather than attack outright. Their language is a twisted version of the human tongue, spoken with guttural croaks.

To create Toad Thing characters, roll a d3 and add 1 for the number of traits they possess. Roll a d6 for each trait using the table below, as well as a d6 to determine their talent, weapon, and carried items.

In addition, all Toad Thing have the flaw 'passive'. Toad People rarely have armour.

D6	TRAITS (D3 +1)	TALENT	WEAPON	ITEM
1	Accurate	Brawler	Bone knife	Basket of fish
2	Aware	Crafter	Bone-tipped spear	Bag of dead lizards
3	Dexterous	Fisher	Fire-hardened spear	Crude statuette of a toad
4	Guileful	Hunter	Hafted axe	Pouch of d6 gems
5	Resilient	Shadower	Wood spear	Pouch of medicine
6	Wise	Trapper	Nothing	Tool (awl, burin, flaker, or scraper)

THE TROODON PEOPLE

These strange humanoid beings appear to be upright bipedal reptiles. They are pallid of skin, short, and with thin limbs and a slender tail. Their ancestors were a species of the great saurians, now all but extinct (save for a few specimens that still exist in the lost and forgotten places of Ancient Mu).



The Troodon People live in underground strongholds, building complexes of regularly shaped rooms and passages. Within these strongholds, they farm strange creatures, such as white sightless lizards, bloated maggots, and insects. They craft weapons of obsidian, and patched cloaks from the skins of lizards. When encountered away from their strongholds, it is invariably because they are hunting for obsidian.

The Troodon People revere fire and phenomena that appear to be related to it, such as volcanic lava and lightning. Fire images are often carved onto the stone walls of their dwellings. They have a system of writing, and carvings depicting their runes are also prevalent in their buildings. The Troodon People communicate with gesture and high-pitched calls.

To create Troodon People characters, roll a 2d2 for the number of traits they possess. Roll a d6 for each trait using the table below, as well as a d6 to determine their talent, weapon, and carried items, and 2d6 for weapons.

In addition, all Troodon People have the flaw ‘cautious’.

D6	TRAITS (2D2)	ARMOUR (2)	TALENT	WEAPON	ITEMS
1	Aware	Hide hat	Cave painter	Obsidian axe	Bag with clay pot, pouch of pigment, and brush
2	Dexterous	Hide shield	Dancer	Obsidian knife and sling with d6 stones	Bag with fire making kit and d3 torches
3	Fortunate	Obsidian arm bands	Effigy maker	Obsidian-shard sword	Bag of obsidian shards
4	Guileful	Obsidian leg bands	Fire maker	Obsidian-tipped spear	Basket with d3 pouches of antidote, infusion, medicine, or slave
5	Wilful	Obsidian tunic	Storyteller	Staff	Pouch of 2d6 gems
6	Wise	None	Tracker	Stone whip	Pouch with d3 tools (awl, burin, bow drill, brush, flaker, or hammerstone)

THE DEAD

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

In the Otherworld, spirits are treated like other, mundane beings, and normal combat rules apply (as in the Otherworld they are almost corporeal).

When ghosts pass to the mortal world, they are mostly incorporeal and indistinct, and are thus barely affected by mundane objects such as weapons. Any attack upon them, with the exception of some sort of magical attack, will cause a wound only if the attacker also achieves a 'fortunate' test success.

This animated dead include cadavers and skeletons of men and animals bought to life by bone chanters. Such creatures are rotting, decayed things that have been given a semblance of life by having a spirit forced back into the original body. Such beings are mostly mindless, and governed more by instinct than reasoning. This sort of dead is affected normally by attacks in the mortal and otherworld.

The dead lose traits from wounds in the same way that mortal beings do. At zero traits, a spirit dissipates into the air, or crumbles to dust in the case of a cadaver or skeleton.

APE SPIRITS

These spirits appear as dark shapes, flitting amid the trees of ancient forests and decaying woodland.

Ape spirit: agile, aware, dexterous. Ape spirits attack using fists and bites. They are able to snatch items from foes; roll a d3 when their attack hits. On a 1–2, they cause a wound; on a 3, they steal one item (such as jewellery from around someone's neck, a pouch or tool hanging from a belt, or an item of clothing), rather than cause injury.

BAT SPIRITS

These spirits swirl as dark indistinct shapes around burial sites and ancient tombs. They are larger than corporeal bats, and their eyes glow red.

Bat spirit: agile. Bat spirits swoop and claw when they attack. A successful attack causes a wound, and in addition the bat emits an unearthly screech. Their opponent must make a 'wilful' test, and if this is a failure, they are stunned. Stunned characters cannot apply traits to any test performed on the following turn.

BEAR SPIRITS

These spirits inhabit ancient caves within twisted woodlands, where they skulk in long shadows, waiting to attack the living. Bear spirits appear as large, dark shapes of solid shadow, with massive arms and claws.

Bear spirit: resilient, strong, wilful. When a bear spirit attacks successfully, roll a d3. On a 1–2, they cause a wound; on a 3, they make a restrain attack, then inflict one wound automatically each turn until the victim escapes or dies.

BOAR SPIRITS

The boar spirits exist in forgotten tunnels and amid root-choked burial mounds. They are savage spirits that attack immediately upon being encountered.

Boar spirit: brave, resilient, strong. Boar spirits charge their opponents, goring them with their tusks. Their attack inflicts a wound and causes the target to fall unless they make a successful 'strong' test.

CADAVERS AND SKELETONS

A cadaver is the body of a recently deceased person, animated by magic. Such creatures are ghastly things, often encountered near burial sites. An ancient cadaver, reduced to nothing more than bones, is an animated skeleton. Both have similar capabilities.

A cadaver or skeleton has d2 traits; roll 1d6 on the table below for each one (re-rolling repeats). Roll a d6 to determine their weapon. In addition, cadavers and skeletons have the flaws 'passive' and 'ignorant'.



D6	TRAITS (D2)	WEAPON
1	Aware	Bone
2	Brave	Bone knife
3	Fortunate	Bone sword
4	Guileful	Hand axe
5	Resilient	Unarmed
6	Strong	Unarmed

CAT SPIRITS

These spirits appear as vague, misty cat shadows that flit and dart about. They are encountered in the darkest of woods or amid shadowy hills.

Cat spirit: agile, guileful. Cat spirits are difficult, vague targets. In order to have a chance of attacking one of them, an 'aware' test is required on each turn. If the test is a success, a normal attack can be made. If the test fails, the character flails wildly at shadows, unable to strike the spirit that turn.

DOG SPIRITS

These spirits roam wastes and areas where there has been bloodshed. They appear as foul and mangy creatures with drool-soaked fangs.

Dog spirit: aware, agile. Dog spirits bite their foes, causing a wound and the weapon effect 'rend'.

GHOSTS

Ghosts are spirits of the dead called forth by summoners. They are the restless dead, who dwell within forgotten burial mounds and within burial caves. These dead souls exist in a perpetual state of anguish, fear, or rage. Often these beings exist within the mortal world because they have been called forth by magic, and are then abandoned and unable to return to the Otherworld.

Ghost: guileful, fortunate. Ghosts are incorporeal, translucent beings that appear to be macabre, decayed versions of the living. Their touch can cause fear; if a ghost

successfully attacks a character, the character takes a wound from the chilling touch of the ghost. Each time the character is hit, a 'wilful' test is made for the character. If the test for the character is a failure, they are momentarily struck with worry, doubt, and indecision, and cannot act on the following turn, although they can still attempt to evade any attacks by the ghost.

LIZARD SPIRITS

Lizard spirits dwell in dank swamps and amid overgrown ruins. They are large creatures, at least three metres long, with sickly green skin and black, snake-like tongues.

Lizard spirit: accurate, agile, aware. Lizard spirits can make ranged attacks (by spitting), and they will use this type of attack when characters are beyond hand range. The viscous, oily spit of a lizard burns like acid, which in addition to causing a wound ruins a piece of armour or, if the character wears none, a single item of clothing.

RAT SPIRITS

Rat spirits are typically drawn to areas of decay and ruin. The rat spirit appears as a vague, black and shadowy creature, and is usually quite large (the size of a dog).

Rat spirit: agile. If a rat spirit successfully bites a character, they are exposed to a disease in addition to taking a wound.

SCORPION SPIRITS

In the mortal world, scorpion spirits can be found in ancient tombs and caverns. They appear as translucent beings with venom dripping from their stingers.

Scorpion spirit: guileful. If a scorpion spirit stings a character, they are exposed to a poison in addition to receiving a wound.

SHADOWS

These are barely visible, dark and eerie forms that appear to be vaguely human. They are fading ghosts, who have existed for so long within the Otherworld that they are beginning to dissipate into nothingness. Shadows are rarely encountered in the mortal world, but are numerous in the Otherworld.

Shadow: wilful. Shadows attack by attempting to claw at foes with sharp, needle-like fingernails.

When first encountered, the intangibility of the shadow spirit means that characters will be surprised. The shadow will therefore act first in a turn.

SNAKE SPIRITS

Snake spirits can be encountered amid festering swamps and vine-tangled jungles. They appear as translucent green serpents that writhe and twist in mid-air.

Snake spirit: agile, guileful. If a snake spirit successfully attacks a character, it causes a wound and exposes a character to a poison.

SPIDER SPIRITS

Spirit spirits lurk in dark caves, alcoves, pits, and tunnels. They appear as shiny black creatures, with metre-long legs and translucent bodies.

Spider spirit: agile, brave. When a spider spirit successfully attacks, roll a d3. On a 1–2, they cause a wound; on a 3, they use a web to cause the ‘entangle’ effect.

WOLF SPIRITS

Wolf spirits are encountered in barren, cold wastes. They appear as glowing, translucent white wolves with eyes of red.

Wolf spirit: agile, aware, guileful, strong. Wolf spirits attack by biting, causing one wound. At the start of an encounter they might howl. All those who hear the howl must make a ‘wilful’ test. Those who fail the test are overcome with horror, and will be unable to act for d2 turns.

WRAITHS



A wraith appears as a ghastly, luminous, human figure in a state of decay. They are potent ghosts that dwell in haunted temples, hidden ruins, and ancient crypts.

Wraith: aware, brave, strong, wilful. A wraith attacks with its touch, which causes one wound and results in the victim being overwhelmed with despair and fatalism. This means that for the following turn, the victim will not benefit from bonus dice of any sort.



GAME MODERATOR SECTION

GAME MODERATOR GUIDE

PRONUNCIATION

The word Mu refers here to the lost continent once believed to have existed on Earth. I have tended to pronounce this in the same way the Greek letter is spoken, which sounds like ‘Mew’. Players can of course pronounce the word as they wish – these rules are a guide, after all!

LANGUAGE

Ancient Mu has a single dominant language, which seems to have developed from a now lost language spoken centuries ago. There are local dialects, and a few obscure foreign tongues spoken in the distant parts of Mu, but these are not common. The dominant language of Mu (called by the people simply ‘speech’) has regional variations, and southerners will sound like they have an accent to a northerner, for example (and vice versa).

Writing is in its infancy. Some scholars regularly use a symbol-based written language, but this is uncommon in most of Mu. Traders make use of a few symbols and marks to represent such things as quantity and values for goods, but expressing anything more detailed than ‘two blocks of flint’ is beyond this simple writing.

TIME

Although time passes in Ancient Mu in the same way as we understand it today, many of the people of Mu often measure it in a more casual manner. They might keep track of days if it is important for a forthcoming event, but generally measure time only in seasons (spring, summer, autumn, and winter).

Most of the people of Ancient Mu look for signs in the environment that signal the coming of a season, but they are unlikely to name a specific day on which a season occurs. Thus, experiencing a day or two of cold weather, followed by morning frosts, will signal the coming of winter for some of the peoples of Mu, who will then conclude over the coming days that winter has arrived.

Some of the people of Mu might refer to periods within a season, typically as the season's beginning, middle, and end. For example, someone might say a child was born at the beginning of spring, or that the tribal gathering occurs in the middle of summer.

Among the more erudite inhabitants of Mu, there are scholars who keep calendars and track the days by means of observation of the stars and by following the course of the sun. Such knowledge is not commonly shared, however, and available only to a few philosophers, sages, and other learned scholars.

TRAVEL

For the people of the continent of Mu, there is no unified system of measurement in use, although most are able to understand distances when spoken of as 'spear range' or 'rock range', and so on.

When travelling, routes and distances are spoken about in terms of the local terrain features and natural phenomena. Someone might say, for example, 'to get to the great lake, walk towards the rising sun, then at noon go along the path through the hills, before turning towards the place of caves'.

Travel to distant places might be stated by someone as the number of days spent walking to it. Shorter distances may use the commonly used measures of 'bow range', such as; 'the hunter is in the woods over there, three bow shots away'.

When travelling, players should keep in mind that the only form of land locomotion available to them is walking. Riding animals is mostly unheard of, as are carts and similar vehicles. There are sleds, which are dragged by a person wanting to transport a large quantity of items, and there are rafts and canoes, which can speed up river and lake travel. Sea travel is limited, and only coastal communities regularly use this mode of travel. When they do, they stay within sight of land, and do not

venture out on days when the sea is rough; their boats are rarely capable of being used in anything other than calm seas.

Navigation for most is by use of the sun and stars, and therefore limited in its application. Most of the people of Mu can judge the direction of their travel by day, and at night when the stars are visible, although with less certainty. In cloudy conditions, a 'wise' test might be required to determine location and direction, as judged by the GM.

MAPS

There are no maps known to exist depicting the continent of Ancient Mu. Maps are not generally used by people; when travelling, people use terrain features to navigate. There might be ancient maps in existence in forgotten ruins, and a handful of scholars might have produced such items as curiosities, at the GM's discretion.



WEATHER

The continent of Mu is a place of diverse weather conditions, and the weather can become a consideration for characters in certain circumstances. Extremes, such as freezing cold or searing heat, can become a major threat during an adventure, and GMs are encouraged to consider these factors when creating scenarios.

The type of weather experienced by characters varies by region. To help in quickly determining a day's weather, GMs can use the below tables. Simply roll on the table appropriate to the region and season. These tables are meant to be suggestions only; GMs should re-roll results or choose their own weather conditions if the results don't suit the adventure.

NORTH		
D6	SPRING/SUMMER	AUTUMN/WINTER
1	Fog, cool and damp atmosphere	Ice storm, freezing
2	Rain, chilly and cloudy	Heavy snow, freezing, driving winds
3	Cool, drizzle, thunderstorm occurs for d3 hours	Snow, very cold
4	Warm, blustery	Sleet, damp and cold
5	Warm, cloudy	Hailstorm, windy, cold
6	Hot, clear blue skies	Overcast, cold

EAST		
D6	SPRING/SUMMER	AUTUMN/WINTER
1	Misty, warm, drizzle	Tornado causing structure and tree damage, torrential rain
2	Warm, cloudy	Thunderstorms, torrential rain, cool
3	Hot, humid, gentle wind	Rain, cool, dark skies
4	Hot, humid	Drizzle, warm
5	Very hot, cloudy, damp	Humid, warm
6	Very hot, clear skies	Overcast, warm

WEST		
D6	SPRING/SUMMER	AUTUMN/WINTER
1	Fog, damp and cool	Snow, windy and freezing
2	Drizzle, cloudy	Sleet, very cold
3	Warm, overcast, gentle wind	Heavy Rain, very cold with dark skies
4	Warm, clear	Rain, storms, cold
5	Hot, cloudy	Cold and overcast
6	Hot, clear skies	Chilly, clear skies

SOUTH		
D6	SPRING/SUMMER	AUTUMN/WINTER
1	Warm, windy, overcast	Rain briefly, then dark clouds
2	Warm, cloudy	Warm, cloudy, humid
3	Hot, cloudy	Warm, overcast
4	Very hot, windy	Cool, windy and dusty
5	Extremely hot, heat haze	Cool, windy, brief thunderstorm
6	Extremely hot, unbearable at midday	Dust storm, visibility is hand range, very windy

ADVENTURE TYPES

A wide array of games can be played with *Paleomythic*, depending on the type of adventures that GMs and players enjoy. Adventure types include, but are not limited to, conflict, travel, specialist, and a type of adventure that harks back to the early days of role playing called ‘paleodelving’. Simple guides to the various adventure types are given below.

CONFLICT

Conflict adventures can be dramatic and dangerous for characters. These sorts of adventures concern disputes between tribes or settlements, and can feature ‘mission’-oriented games in which diplomacy and stealth are the focus. Disagreements often occur between two tribes, but can also be between two settlements, between a settlement and a tribe, or even involve several different parties.

A conflict adventure requires a reason behind the dispute. This can be a disagreement over access to resources, or some other reason (such as to seek retribution or recompense). The below table can be used to find the type of disagreement, and this serves as the background outline for the adventure.

2D6	DISAGREEMENT
2	Access to caves (suitable for use as dwellings or storage)
3	Access to materials (a source of clay, flint, or wood)
4	Access to a spiritual site (such as a shrine or ancient temple)
5	Access to water (such as a spring, pool, or river)
6	Gathering rights (such as a copse of fruit trees)
7	Hunting rights (such as a wood where deer roam)
8	Ownership (of a curious artefact, relic, famous leader's weapon, ancestors' bones, etc.)
9	Recompense (the opposition failed to honour previously offered compensation)
10	Retribution (the opposition must be punished for a crime committed against the tribe, such as the kidnap or killing of a tribe member)
11	Tradition (the conflict is traditional and based on a forgotten historical disagreement)
12	Tribute (the opposition has failed to honour a traditional obligation, such as a delivery of food in exchange for access to hunting grounds)

Once the disagreement has been determined, there will be one or more activities required to resolve it. The below table can be used, rolling as many times as the GM wants to create the actions required to end the conflict (or to at least reach a temporary peace).

2D6	ACTIVITIES
2	Capture (take one of the opposition captive, such as a relative of the leader)
3	Collecting a tribute (travel to the enemy to collect goods they have offered in a prior negotiation)
4	Communal activity (participate in a hunt or ritual, oppose a shared enemy, etc.)
5	Diplomacy (approach the tribe to discuss a deal to encourage peace)
6	Facilitation (assist during negotiations, such as guarding the leader or opposing tribes' visitors, or hunting to supply food for a feast)
7	Fighting (skirmish with the opposition, such as by attacking their hunters or scouts)
8	Reconnaissance (sneak close to the enemy to see what they're up to)
9	Paying a tribute (travel to the enemy to deliver goods offered in a prior negotiation)
10	Sabotage (covertly damage the opposition's ability, such as by diverting their water supply, stealthily stealing their weapons, spoiling their food, etc.)
11	Subterfuge (engage in deceit, such as joining the tribe to gather information or undermine the leader)
12	War (participate in a battle to defeat the opposition, typically with set tasks such as to target warriors, burn dwellings, perform ambushes, etc.)



TRAVEL (EXPLORATION AND TRADE)

A travel adventure involves exploration and trade. These sorts of adventures require a justification (such as the need to find something), a place where the travel occurs, and several challenges (such as getting lost or overcoming obstacles).

To begin outlining a travel adventure, roll for the justification.

2D6	JUSTIFICATION
2	Adventure (the time has come to find a sacred or mythic object, such as a source of healing or spiritual power)
3	Enigma (a mystery, such as where an animal herd went, or where a strange artefact came from, must be solved)
4	Escape (the characters must flee a threat, and enter an unexplored area)
5	Food (the current food source is depleted and a new one must be found)
6	Home (the current tribal location has become unsuitable and a new location must be found, which includes a food source, water, and shelter).
7	Hunt (a criminal such as a thief or killer must be found and captured)
8	Locate (a person must be located, such as a lost child or a renowned crafter)
9	Route (an existing route, such as a path through forest or a mountain pass, is no longer available and a new one must be found)
10	Search (something needs to be found: a treasure such as a legendary weapon, or a lost item)
11	Trade (transporting resources to sell, or travelling to acquire goods)
12	Wanderlust (the characters are exploring to satisfy their desire to wander and 'see what's out there')

Next, find the primary location that the travel focuses upon. Other areas can of course be featured in the adventure, but the primary location is the area where most of the action occurs.

2D6	PRIMARY LOCATION
2	Abandoned site (the site of a disappeared tribe, or abandoned dwellings)
3	Barrens (an area devoid of vegetation and cover, such as steppes, a desert, or a beach)
4	Caves (a cave complex, underground cavern, or large burial mound)
5	Forest (woodland, jungle, or other terrain with dense vegetation)
6	Island (an offshore island, or an island in a lake or river)
7	Mountains (perhaps the other side of a mountain, a mountain pass, or a range of hills)
8	River (explore the source of a river or extent of a lake)
9	Ruins (ancient ruins of stone, overgrown timber structures, a strange monolith, etc.)
10	Taboo (the area is taboo to the tribe, such as burial grounds or the home of spirits)
11	Tunnels (passages through a hill, or within an old tomb)
12	Wetlands (marshland, a reeking swamp, or a recently drained wadi)

A travel adventure will have several challenges that characters must face. Many of these will be hazardous, but some might also be beneficial. Use the table below to determine the travel challenges, rolling as many times as you deem necessary.

2D6	CHALLENGES
2	Ambush (an enemy ambushes the party)
3	Beasts (wild animals or beast men create danger)
4	Cover (strong winds, snow, dust storms, or some other factor means a shelter is required)
5	Dangerous encounter (thieves, savages, or deranged foes are encountered)
6	Friendly encounter (a trader, fellow traveller, or local tribe is encountered)
7	Lost (a navigation error, caused by changing terrain, weather conditions, or poor instructions)
8	Obstruction (an obstacle is encountered, such as a cliff, ravine, river, fallen trees, etc.)
9	Sickness (prolonged heat or cold, or a disease, causes sickness)
10	Starvation (travel is delayed, and food becomes scarce)
11	Storm (a severe storm makes navigation difficult and causes landslides, obstacles, flooding, etc.)
12	Tool (a tool or crafting activity is required to make rope, craft a raft, dig through rubble, etc.)



SPECIALIST

Specialist adventures focus on particular abilities possessed by the characters. No tables are provided for these sorts of adventures because they depend on the types of characters in the party.

A specialist adventure might focus on one or more talents possessed by the party. For example, a party that includes a shaman or summoner might have an adventure that features spirits and the Otherworld, whereas a party that has crafter characters might embark upon adventures where tools are required, or materials must be obtained.

The GM can also create adventures that allow certain traits to come to the fore. In a party where players have chosen characters with the 'guileful' trait, it is likely that the players will enjoy an adventure that incorporates the use of stealth and deception.

When creating a specialist adventure, the GM should be careful to ensure that other characters lacking the specialist qualities aren't excluded; this can be countered by giving different tasks to such characters. Another option is to use specialist adventures for games where there is just a single player and GM.

PALEODELVING

Among the many different types of stories that can be told with the *Paleomythic* rules, some of the most enjoyable (especially for new players) are those that involve exploration in underground caves and amid forgotten ruins. Such stories hark back to the early days of fantasy RPGs, the days of ‘dungeon delving’ adventures. These types of games are easy to design, as there is little in the way of plot that needs to be considered (beyond an explanation as to why the characters must explore the place).

PLOT

To create a paleodelving adventure, begin by having a rough idea of why the characters must explore the place. This simple plot can always be developed later, when the other details have been defined.

For a random delve plot, roll a d6:

1	Artefact (a special item such as a tribal relic or symbol has been lost in the place)
2	Enemy (a known enemy is in the place and needs to be found)
3	Escape (the characters use the place to escape pursuers)
4	Missing (a person is missing in the area)
5	Route (the characters pass through the place as part of their journey)
6	Treasure (a treasure is known to be in the place)

DELVING LOCATIONS

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

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

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

AREA TYPE

The type of areas used might be dictated by the location, or it might be based on other factors (such as how defensible the location is).

To randomly determine the type of area, the below table can be used (roll a d6).

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

ILLUMINATION

The way in which an area is lit might become important should characters attempt particular activities in an area, and lack of sufficient illumination might cause some tasks to be hazardous or impossible.

To randomly determine the light source, roll a d6.

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

FLOOR

The surface of an area might be worth noting, especially if characters are attempting to find tracks or signs of habitation. To randomly determine the floor type of an area, roll a d6.

1	Blocks (cut stone or dried-mud blocks)
2	Earth (packed dirt or dried mud)
3	Sand or another grainy, loose material such as loose earth or snow
4	Stone (uneven rock, pebbles, etc.)
5	Rushes (vegetation such as rushes, straw, or twigs covering earth)
6	Wood (such as wooden boards, logs, or bound branches)

PORTAL

Thought should be given to the way in which an area is accessed. This could be a simple opening, or it might be something that presents a challenge, such as a stone block that needs to be heaved aside. To randomly determine the type of portal, roll 2d6.

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

FEATURES

An area will have one or more notable features, such as an item of decoration or useful object. To randomly determine features, roll a d6 twice on the below table: the first roll determines the group of objects, then the second roll determines the object within that group. You can do this twice to add two objects to the room.

1ST ROLL	2ND ROLL	ITEM, OBJECT, OR DECORATION
1	1	Alcove (recess in a wall)
1	2	Altar (a stone block or wooden table)
1	3	Bag (contains 1d3 items)
1	4	Bones (human or animal)
1	5	Bowls (1d3 wood or skull bowls)
1	6	Carcass (animal corpse)
2	1	Chest (contains 1d3 items)
2	2	Corpse (a human corpse)
2	3	Dais (a raised section made of stone or wood)
2	4	Flakes (flint chips and fragments)
2	5	Flint (large block)
2	6	Fruit (a pile of fruit, perhaps dried or rotting)
3	1	Fungi (mushrooms, toadstools)
3	2	Hanging (wall-mounted skin or linen hanging)
3	3	Hearth (a stone area for a fire)
3	4	Lichen (or moss)
3	5	Logs (or a pile of kindling)
3	6	Meat (piece of butchered meat)
4	1	Mineral (a vein of sparkling mineral, or a block of unusual coloured stone)
4	2	Pit (for a fire or refuse)
4	3	Plants (collected or growing in the room)
4	4	Pool (a small pool of water)
4	5	Rocks (small pile of rocks)
4	6	Rubble (pile of loose stones and dirt)
5	1	Seat (stone block, wooden bench, or stool)
5	2	Skins (1d3 animal skins)

5	3	Skull (a human or animal skull)
5	4	Spring (a bubbling spring)
5	5	Stream (a narrow stream flows through the room)
5	6	Stone blocks (several cut blocks)
6	1	Table (wooden table or large stone block)
6	2	Tool (a single tool, such as an awl or burin)
6	3	Torches (1d3, not alight)
6	4	Vegetables (collection of vegetables in a pile)
6	5	Wall painting (depicting animals, people, activities, etc.)
6	6	Water (dripping, damp walls or a puddle)

WALLS

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

To randomly determine the nature of the walls (and ceiling) in an area, roll a d6.

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

THEME

It can be useful for a GM to think about an area in terms of its theme. The theme of an area defines its purpose in the adventure, from creating a particular mood to presenting puzzles, rewards, or dangers. An area can have more than one theme, such as a cave that contains both a trap and treasure. Choose a theme or two, or roll a d6 to determine the theme randomly.

1 ATMOSPHERE

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

2 FIGHT

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

3 PUZZLE

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

4 SENSORY

Sensory areas help to remind both the GM and players that games can be as much about the senses of hearing, touch, taste and smell as they are about sight. This area has a sensory feature other than something to just see. Examples include:

- A strange noise emanating from a place within the area (perhaps the movement of some creature, a draught making a whistling sound, or the drip from a leaking roof).
- A smell, such as the scent from petals collected to make a scented oil, the smell of rotting meat, or perhaps faint wisps of smoke carry a smell of burning.
- A material that promotes touch, such as several soft furs hanging from the ceiling, a strange, colourful substance (such as a powder or liquid) stored in a bowl, or an unusually smooth and polished stone carving.
- An item that encourages tasting, such as an unusual, succulent-looking fruit, a jug containing a sweet liquid, or a substance that requires testing to identify it (such as a white, grainy powder that might be salt, but needs tasting to confirm).

5 TRAP

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

6 TREASURE

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

A few areas might lack a particular theme, and instead be functional. This might be the case with areas that are purely to allow access, such as a simple passageway or a small room with some steps, and an area might also be sparse because it is unused, abandoned, or undiscovered.

GAME VARIANTS

Paleomythic has a very specific setting and tone, defined as ‘stone and sorcery’, in which characters are adventurers in a fantasy prehistoric world. The Paleomythic world assumes a variable level of technology and society, somewhere around what archaeologists used to call the various ‘stone ages’ (the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic), but also influenced by early civilisations such as those of ancient Mesopotamia and the ancient African cultures. However, *Paleomythic* can be made more historically realistic – more ‘paleo’ and less ‘mythic’ – if the GM and players prefer. This will require a slight adjustment to the rules, primarily involving the removal of a few talents and considerations around character types and capabilities. The game can also be used as a classic ‘sword and sorcery’ system, and for this the addition of some technology is required.



THE PLEISTOCENE EPOCH

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

If a GM chooses this variant, some of the more fantastic aspects of the game, such as the various 'beast men', the magical abilities of some talents, and the use of gems as a form of currency, should be downplayed or eliminated altogether.

The GM might wish to incorporate various hominid species that are likely to have co-existed at the time:

SAPIENS

This is the sapiens species within the Homo genus, also known as modern humans, and represents the standard character in the *Paleomythic* RPG.

NEANDERTHAL

This is a species within the Homo genus (*Homo neanderthalensis*) that died out roughly 30,000 years ago. They are robust, stocky humanoids who are well suited to harsh and cold environments. Contrary to the popular notion of Neanderthals being somewhat dim-witted, it is likely that their intellect was comparable to that of modern humans. Neanderthals are likely to originate in the northern and western regions of Mu.

When creating a Neanderthal character, their first trait is determined using a d3 on the below table. Thereafter, determine traits as you would normally.

1	Brave
2	Resilient
3	Strong

FLORESIENSIS

This is a diminutive species of Homo (Homo floresiensis) that might have existed as recently as 12,000 years ago. Members of this species were little more than a metre tall, and as such have been nicknamed ‘hobbits’ by the media. They had arms and hands suitable for tree swinging, while still being able to perform tasks such as tool making with a good degree of manual dexterity.

When creating a Floresiensis character, their first trait is determined using a d3 on the below table. Thereafter, determine traits as you would normally.

1	Agile
2	Aware
3	Dexterous

CLASSIC SWORD AND SORCERY

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

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

In a traditional sword and sorcery setting, the technology is somewhere between the bronze age and early medieval Europe. There are thus swords of bronze, iron and steel, coins, the use of horses as mounts, carts, boats and ships. Metal armour is also present, though its use and value as protection is lessened in the sword and sorcery genre. Adding metal weapons and tools to the *Paleomythic* mechanics is simple enough. They have the equivalent properties in terms of effect, but break less frequently. Such items are deemed ‘durable’. Each time a 1 is rolled on a tool die for a durable item it gains a point of weakness. When a durable item accumulates a total of 6 weakness points it breaks. The GM may decide that it takes just 2 or 3 weakness points to break a less durable item, whereas as some items may require 7 or more points to break.

EMPHASISE CIVILISATION

Paleomythic has less of the trappings of civilisation, so for a traditional sword and sorcery game, these need to be introduced. These include defined nations, with rulers for those nations, as well as cultural features specific to each nation. There will be cities, ports, and towns. There will be large buildings, strongholds, and stone temples, and there will be religions and customs peculiar to civilised society. Of course, GMs should probably avoid trying to create all of these things in one go, and are advised to simply make a few notes on some of the nations, places, and cultures within their world. To make things easier, it is often useful to note an ancient civilisation to which the culture has some similarities. For example, a GM might decide to create a culture based on ancient Egypt, and could thus note that the culture has a pantheon of deities, and constructs pyramid structures.

DOWNPLAY THE PREHISTORIC FAUNA

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



ADVENTURE: CAPTIVES OF THE BEAST MEN

This is an adventure for two to five characters.

The GM can read the sections in italics to the players:

The beast men attacked!

During the night, the beast men came. They attacked without warning, and although the unprepared tribe defended themselves admirably, several captives were taken. In addition, a number of the most capable of the tribes' warriors were injured.

Now, in the morning, the chief has gathered you few, the remaining able-bodied members of the tribe. The chief fears that the captives will be kept as slaves, or worse, they might be eaten by the barbaric beast men. The chief wants the captives rescued before they face such a cruel fate.

The tracks of the beast men lead north towards the hills, where they are known to dwell. It is time to face one of the most difficult challenges of your lives, to face the savage beast men and rescue the prisoners.

This is a simple adventure designed for a small number of PCs. The characters might be part of the tribe, or might be travellers, hired by the tribe to help rescue the captives (in which case, they will have been offered a small reward, such as food and a few gems). If the GM wishes, the 'Cloud People' example tribe can be used, or the GM can decide to detail another tribe using the guidelines in that section.

If the PCs number three or less, the GM might wish to either reduce the number of antagonists the characters encounter, or add an NPC to assist the PCs.

The characters will receive instructions from the tribe leader, who will impress upon them the urgency of their task. They will be given food and water, and the route to where the beast men are believed to be hidden will be described. The tribe

will know little about the beast men, save for the fact that they are brutal savages dwelling in the mountains.

The chief explains where the beast men are believed to dwell. It will be an exhausting run; a whole day through the forest. But you are members of a renowned tribe, with unsurpassed endurance and a strong spirit. You leave the tribe with supplies of food and water, and fire-making implements. As the rain begins, and the dark clouds gather, you run...

The travel to the lair of the beast men is uneventful, unless the GM wishes to add any encounters. To enhance the sense of dread, however, the GM might wish to describe the characters passing blood spatters on foliage, and large footprints in mud.

The characters will have whatever of their possessions they wish to take, plus each is given a hide bag containing two meals, a skin for water, a fire making kit, and a torch.

THE BEAST MEN

The beast men are Primitives, hulking brutes that dwell in caves amid the mountains. They are ignorant and brutal, and lack basic skills such as the ability to make fire or craft all but the crudest weapons. The Primitives live by hunting and, more often than not, stealing. They also keep slaves to be used for menial tasks, or to be slaughtered and eaten when the tribe is hungry.

These Primitives wear filthy furs and have matted, mud-encrusted hair. They show the signs of their brutal existence; most have scars, missing fingers, and badly healed bones. If captured, a Primitive is too dull-witted to give much information.

THE CAPTIVES

The GM can choose who the captives are from among those listed in the chosen tribe, or create two or three characters. The captives might be children, or injured adults incapable of putting up much resistance.



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THE CAVES

The beast men dwell in caves that were once the home of another clan. They slaughtered the previous occupants, and took the caves for themselves. The caves are naturally formed, and show signs of having been worked long ago, resulting in enlarged areas and smooth floors.

When travelling in the caves, characters will usually only be able to move in single file along the passages. The caves themselves are large enough for several characters to easily stand and move about, however. Unless noted otherwise, the caves are dark and require a light source to navigate safely.

These caves follow the 'paleodelving' convention, and have the theme noted in italics along with the name of the cave.

1. THE ENTRANCE CAVE – *PUZZLE*

Emerging from the wood, grimy and fatigued, you see the mountains ahead. There are heavy footprints leading to sharp, jagged rocks. Near these, lichen-covered boulders partially hide a low opening, and beyond, darkness.

At the foot of an especially steep part of a range of mountains, between a few lichen-covered boulders, lies the small entrance to a cave. From a distance, the entrance is barely noticeable, and only when close can a small gap be seen between the rocks and bushes. There are several tracks leading to this area, as if a number of people entered the cave within the past few hours.

Stooping through the entrance, the characters will immediately note that the area is illuminated by a weak shaft of sunlight; there is a small gap in the ceiling which allows a thin beam of light through. The cave is roughly circular, and large enough for all of the characters to stand in. There are two openings in the cave (not counting the cave entrance). One opening is to the left, and the other is to the right.

A search of the cave reveals animal bones near to the left opening. Near the right opening is a rotting rodent carcass hanging from a wooden stake, which has been driven into a crack in the rock. This is a crude signal to other beast men of what lies ahead.

Both entrances lead to darkness; characters must use a light source to continue.

2. THE SLOPING PASSAGE (LEADING FROM THE OPENING ON THE LEFT) – *TRAP*

This narrow passage allows one person to walk down at a time, as long as they stoop. It slopes quite sharply, and an ‘agile’ test is required to avoid slipping down and tumbling to the bottom. Failure indicates that a character is deposited roughly at the bottom, into a dark cave. A roll of 6 indicates that the character lands badly and suffers a wound from grazes and bruises. This passage leads to the fire cave (see 4, below).

3. THE WINDING PASSAGE (LEADING FROM THE OPENING ON THE RIGHT) – *FIGHT*

This passage is also narrow, and winds left and right until, after roughly a spear’s throw in distance, it ends abruptly. The last few metres of the dark passage are notable for the smell. There is a nauseating odour emanating from the area, and this is from the refuse and waste dumped here by the beast men. The refuse has attracted rats, and they infest the area. The passage ends at the rat pit (below).

THE RAT PIT

The passage is filled with a nauseating stench, the smell of waste, refuse, and decay. The passage widens, then has a sharp dip. Ahead is a large pile of refuse, foul slop, scraps of animal skin, and bones, and upon it a black mass that moves and undulates. Dimly, the light picks out individual shapes within the mass... rats.

The passage widens slightly before ending in a dip, within which is a pile of waste and a moving mass of blackness – the rats. These large black rats are filth covered, and become excited when they sense movement (believing more food is coming). If the characters don’t immediately run, some of the rats will start to bite, crawling over each other to gnaw at legs and torsos.

Have the players make ‘fortunate’ tests for their characters each turn while here or heading back up the tunnel (which takes about two turns). Those who fail get attacked by d3 rats.

Rat: guileful. Their bite causes one wound. When a rat bites, it exposes the character to disease.

A small number of rats will emerge from the tunnel with the characters (roll 1d6 for how many). They will attack until one or two are killed, at which time the rest will flee.

Note that each time a character is bitten, they are exposed to disease.

4. THE FIRE CAVE – *FIGHT*

The sloping passage ends in a wide cave, within which you see a haze and smell smoke. The place feels dry and warm. Ahead, through the wisps of smoke, you see a fire pit, with a smouldering fire inside. Around it are piles of wood and turf. Two figures are near the fire. Amid the smoke, you see one of them is a hulking figure, broad with thick limbs and a sloping head. The other is smaller, and drags a twisted leg as it moves.

At the end of the sloping passage the characters will find themselves in a large cave, illuminated by a large fire in the centre. The beast men maintain this fire constantly, lacking the knowledge to make their own fire (they have to steal lit torches from foes, or go without). The cave is smoke filled, but the ceiling is high enough so that it isn't choking.

Two especially dull-witted Primitives tend the fire. One of them is a hulking figure, dressed in a hide loincloth, with long filthy hair. His partner is a smaller Primitive with a malformed leg, the result of a beating many years earlier.

HULKING FIRE TENDER			
Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Guileful, resilient, strong, and wilful	Awkward and ignorant	Feral	n/a

LIMPING FIRE TENDER			
Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Guileful and resilient	Awkward, clumsy, and ignorant	n/a	Bone

The fire tenders will immediately attack as soon as they become aware of the characters. If the hulking fire tender is killed, the limping Primitive will try to run off.

The Primitives have no possessions. In the cave, there are piles of wood and patches of dried turf for use as fuel. A blood-smearred stone block near the fire has the remains of meat on it.

Filthy hides hang from the walls around this cave. One of them conceals an opening, which leads to the bloody cave (see 5 below).

5. THE BLOODY CAVE – *ATMOSPHERE*

Peering into the cave beyond, your eyes are met with a disturbing sight. Ahead you see a narrow cave, and the dancing shadows from your light reveal red-stained walls. A scarlet ichor drips from the walls into a dark pool within the cave. Crudely hewn lengths of wood are positioned across the pool, and a small opening can be seen opposite.

By moving one of the worn hides, the entrance to this cave is revealed. This cave is damp, and with light the characters will be able to view its strange properties. Dripping down one of the walls is a thin trickle of a red liquid, which has stained the wall blood red. The liquid empties into a red pool, and over this pool is a makeshift wooden bridge leading to the far side, a rock's throw away. Crossing the bridge is tricky because it is slick from the liquid (which is in fact simply water, coloured by the mineral content in the rocks). When characters cross the bridge, an 'agile' test is required. Failure indicates that the character falls into the waist-deep pool, which is freezing cold.

In the pool is a species of dogtooth fish that has adapted to the strange cave conditions. It will be surprised by any disturbance in the pool, and attack.

Dogtooth: agile. The bite of a dogtooth causes one wound.

If characters decide to spend some time searching within the icy water, a test can be made (with 'aware' applicable). Each successful character will find 1d3 chunks of a red stone that can be knapped like flint to produce red-bladed items. This will increase the value of the knapped item by 1d6 gems. Each chunk is good for 1d3 uses.

On the far side of the cave there is a small opening, which leads to the passage of steps (see 6 below).

6. THE PASSAGE OF STEPS – *ATMOSPHERE*

This short passage has several rough-hewn steps leading up to a crude door made from lengths of wood lashed together with vines. The door is not hinged, but simply moved aside.

Beyond the door is an unexpected sight: a cave filled with vegetation, the cave of vines (see 7 below).

7. THE CAVE OF VINES – *FIGHT, TREASURE*

This cave smells of damp earth, and appears to be illuminated. As you step into it, you see vegetation. There are clumps of weeds about the place, and vines growing down the walls. High above, there is a narrow opening permitting dim light to seep through. In the centre of the room, hunched figures lumber about, piling what appear to be weapons into the centre. They look familiar... they are weapons stolen from your tribe.

This is a roughly circular cave about a rock's throw in diameter with, high above, a narrow opening that allows sunlight to penetrate the darkness. There are vines growing down the walls, stretching from the opening in the roof. With a good deal of effort, it would be possible to climb these and exit the cave via the roof, a spear's throw above.

About the cave there are small areas of vegetation and clumps of weeds, making the air smell of damp earth. In here also are more Primitives, storing their stolen weapons.

When the characters enter this cave, one of the Primitives gives a guttural order and gestures to another, smaller Primitive. The smaller Primitive quickly makes for an opening, almost hidden in the vines that grow down the walls. A successful 'aware' test is required for the characters to spot the small Primitive heading to a concealed exit within the wall vines (exiting to get help).

There are three Primitives (a stooped, obese Primitive, an old Primitive with greasy, greying hair, and the smaller Primitive, who appears to be a youth). If the characters have spotted the small Primitive and act quickly, they can prevent him from exiting the cave. In this case, the three Primitives will attack. If the smaller one exits, the two remaining Primitives fight the PCs, waiting for help from their alerted comrades.

OBESE PRIMITIVE

Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Fortunate, strong, and wilful	Awkward and ignorant	Brawler	Cudgel

OLD PRIMITIVE

Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Guileful and wilful	Awkward and ignorant	n/a	Wood spear

SMALL PRIMITIVE

Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Aware	Awkward and ignorant	n/a	Bone

If the small Primitive exits the cave, on the following turn and each turn thereafter, the GM should roll a die. When a 1 is rolled, the smaller Primitive returns with two others (a one-eyed Primitive and a muscular Primitive woman). If they haven't returned by the time the obese and old Primitive are defeated, they appear a turn or two later, while the characters check the cave.

ONE-EYED PRIMITIVE			
Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Guileful and strong	Awkward and ignorant	n/a	Hefted axe

MUSCULAR PRIMITIVE WOMAN			
Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Agile and aware	Awkward and ignorant	n/a	Bone

Within this cave are some of the spoils of the raid on the characters' tribe. This includes two flint-tipped spears, a fire-hardened spear, an antler pick, a flint knife, and a hafted axe. There are also two hide bags that contain two stolen furs and supplies of meat (three meals).

If the characters climb out of the roof of the cave, they will discover they are on top of a cliff, about two spear throws from the entrance to the caves, and about a spear's throw higher. Climbing vines requires an 'agile' test, but with a bonus tool die for using vines. See the climbing rules in the activities section for details.

The characters will discover the vine opening if they have seen the smaller Primitive pass through it, or upon a successful 'aware' test if searching. Passing through the vines, the characters will discover the concealed passage (see 8 below).

8. THE CONCEALED PASSAGE – PUZZLE

Beyond the twisted vines you see a narrow, dark passage. It slopes downwards, and in the flickering light you see it splits into two: a passage to the left and another to the right.

This passage is accessed from an opening partially hidden by vines. The passage is narrow in places, and winds downwards. The passage eventually splits into two, and with a successful 'aware' test, characters will notice a few animal bones near the left passage (see 9 below). The passage to the right has no bones near it.

9. THE LEFT-HAND PASSAGE – *SENSORY*

This passage continues to wind downwards, as narrow and dark as the previous passage. It ends in a makeshift door made from mouldy logs bound with vines. There is a nauseating smell as you approach the door, the stink of death and decay.

At the end of the passage there is a crude door made from mouldy logs, and beyond this is the gory refuse cave, which the characters will be able to detect as they get close (see 12 below).

10. THE RIGHT-HAND PASSAGE – *ATMOSPHERE*

This passage widens slightly, and seems especially dark and cold. Suddenly, you realise there is a sharp drop. You teeter on a ledge – below is a dark pit...

This passage is slightly wider, but cold and still very dark. The passage ends at a ledge, and there is a drop off into the cave of the cave dweller (see 11 below). Climbing down is easy, and it is a rock's throw to the bottom. The lead character might fall in, however, and a successful 'agile' test is required to avoid this. A fall causes one wound, and a successful 'dexterous' test is required to avoid dropping any held items.

11. THE CAVE OF THE CAVE DWELLER – *FIGHT*

This is a dank and gloomy cave, with shadowy nooks and a grimy floor. It is strewn with boulders, and the walls are rugged and sharp. A large shape looms out of the deep shadows. It is a hair-covered beast, with massive arms and a grotesque, ape-like face...

This grim cave is a rock's throw across, and about the same distance deep (from the level of the passage above). There are rocks and bones strewn about the floor, and shadowy nooks and small alcoves in the walls. The walls are rough, and it is possible to climb them to a concealed exit in the ceiling (a spear's throw above). This exit is hidden by a boulder on the exterior, and when removed, the boulder reveals the exit is positioned at the side of the hill amid an area of thorny bushes. Moving this boulder requires a successful 'strong' test, however. If the characters exit in this

manner, it will become apparent that they are at the side of the mountain, with no beast men in sight. They will have little option but to re-enter the caves.

Within this cave is the cave dweller, a huge, degenerate beast man. The creature sleeps in a shadowy alcove, and will stir once characters enter the cave.

The cave dweller looks somewhat similar to a gorilla, but has a bald head and vaguely human features. Its jaws are massive, and it has a large mouth filled with flint-like teeth. The cave dweller's arms are thick and powerful, and it is able to hurl large boulders at foes.

CAVE DWELLER			
Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Accurate, brave, resilient, and strong	n/a	Brawler and feral	Unarmed (but will throw rocks initially)

The cave dweller will initially, for the first one or two turns, attack by hurling rocks. In close combat, the cave dweller uses his powerful fists to bash foes.

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



12. THE GORY REFUSE CAVE – *ATMOSPHERE, SENSORY*

A loathsome odour permeates this cave. Stuffed in a hollow on one side are the gory remains of corpses, presumably the victims of the beast men. A horrid ichor oozes onto the floor from this pile...

This small cave contains gory, bloody refuse; the decaying corpses of past victims, as well as a few of the Primitives who have become the victims of their hungry brethren. The remains are stuffed into a hollow in one of the walls of the cave, but have spilled out and are leaking putrid fluid onto the floor. The stench is foul.

Opposite the crude door to this cave, a dirty piece of animal hide covers an opening to the area beyond.

13. THE PIT CAVE – *SENSORY, TRAP*

The entrance opens to a ledge, with a large boulder on one side. In front of you is a long, deep pit. The bottom is shadowy and dark. An eerie, unearthly howl can be heard intermittently, as if the spirits are calling for you to join them with the rest of the dead...

A short passage opens into a long, chilly cave. There is a strange auditory illusion in the cave; wind from the mountains outside resonates in the fissures of the rock, causing a constant howl. It is eerie, and worse in the pit below.

To the side of the opening, hidden by a boulder, is a low entrance to a hidden tunnel. This narrow passage is the way around the pit, but to get to it, the boulder must be moved. This requires a successful 'strong' test, with a bonus re-roll if other characters assist. The passage leads to the far side of the cave. The opening near here leads to the windy tunnel (see 14 below).

Near the opening where the characters enter, the floor disappears and the remainder of the cave seems to be a deep pit. Dimly, in the distance, the characters might be able to make out the other side of the cave, where there is a small ledge in front of an opening. This ledge is nearly a rock's throw away, a very risky leap.

If a character attempts the jump, this is a multiple test. A successful 'agile' test and a successful 'strong' test are required. Failure of the 'agile' test means the character doesn't make the jump, and falls into the pit. Failure of the 'strong' test means the character makes the jump, but hits the ledge with such force that they cannot grip on and fall.

The pit is deep, and a fall will cause a wound. In addition, the howling wind is especially loud, unearthly, and disturbing here, and characters will be exposed to fear. See the hazards section for details of fear.

Within the pit, if the characters have a source of light, they can find the remains of a Primitive. Near to the corpse is a claw axe and a hide bag containing mouldy food and tools: a flaker, a hammerstone, and a scraper. Climbing out of the pit is possible, requiring a test to climb a rock's throw in distance.

14. THE WINDY TUNNEL – *SENSORY*

Walking along this tunnel, the eerie howls are replaced by the buffeting of wind. Irregular squalls and gusts make the light flicker, and shadows dance on the walls.

As characters move down this tunnel, they will become increasingly aware that cold gusts of wind blow from somewhere beyond. This wind gets increasingly strong, and makes torches and lamp flames flicker and splutter.

While in the tunnel, a 'fortunate' test is made for the character(s) holding the light source. Failure indicates that the light goes out. If there is no other source of light, the characters are plunged into darkness.

The characters should have fire-making items with them, but using them in the dark is difficult. Lighting a torch or rushlight requires a multiple 'dexterous' test. Two successes are required, otherwise the light source goes out again.

Trying to navigate in darkness is difficult: the characters must feel their way along the walls, and will be unable to access the next cave without falling, dropping items, and becoming disoriented.

At the end of the tunnel there is an opening leading to the cave of flying (see 15 below).

15. THE CAVE OF FLYING – *TRAP*

The wind continues to increase, but at least this cave is dimly illuminated. In the dim light seeping in from a narrow gap high above, a slope leading to a wide opening can be seen. Vines trail in the wind, which is so powerful it is difficult to stand.

A mysterious, powerful wind buffets characters as they reach this cave. It is caused by the narrow fissures in the rocks, which focus and increase the force of the cold mountain winds.

At the far end of the cave, the characters will notice that two knotted vines are attached to sturdy wooden posts either side of a large opening. The wind is so powerful that the vines trail in the air horizontally.

The vines are there to enable a person to pull themselves towards the opening, since without them the wind would force them backwards. Characters who attempt to approach the distant opening without using the vines will quickly realise this, as they are forced back to the cave entrance. Without a vine to hold on to, a 'strong' test is required to remain standing and step forward. Moving this way, a character must succeed at three 'strong' tests to reach the other side. Failure at any point means the character falls.

If a character falls, another 'strong' test is required to stop the character sliding backwards to where they came in and starting all over again. Any held items are dropped if a fallen character fails a 'dexterous' test.

It takes three turns to reach the other side of the cave using the vines to pull yourself forward. No tests are required moving this way.

Clever characters might well devise methods to assist themselves through the cave, such as by crawling and using a tool to act as a piton. Such creative thinking should be encouraged.

Once the characters reach the far end of the cave, they will be able to see the source of the wind. Far above them, the ceiling is open, and the shaft that leads to this opening is the very top of the hill. As the wind travels down the shaft, it is made stronger.

Between the large wooden posts that hold the vines in place, there is a wide opening which leads to a large cave, the cave of the beast man chief (see 16 below).

16. THE CAVE OF THE BEAST MAN CHIEF

- *FIGHT, TREASURE*

This cave is a large circular area, with a high ledge around the edge. Near the entrance and at the far end, crude stone steps made from piled boulders lead to the floor below.

On the ledge at the far end, opposite the entrance, there is a fire pit with a fire burning within it. This is the only source of light in the cave, and makes the far end well lit, whereas the entrance is in shadow. Near to the fire is a large stone block piled with furs, and sitting here is the chief of the Primitive beast men, who is known as 'Three Scar' owing to the three old and nasty looking scars on his face.

Spread around the floor of the cave are grubby fur piles, and lounging on these are other Primitives. Some sleep, while others gnaw bones or pick at meat. Here too, not far from the entrance, are the captives. They are bound with thick vines, and show signs of bruising and cuts. They cower in fear.

Astute players will note that if stealthy and quick enough, it is possible to move

along the ledge and remain in shadow until close to the chief. It is also possible to creep down steps to the captives while remaining in partial shadow, which means they could be released without alerting the Primitives, if the characters are careful.

Possible stealthy actions are shown below. Each takes a turn and requires a successful test to accomplish. Failure of a test indicates that a Primitive notices a noise or movement, and will raise the alarm.

Creeping close to the chief to attack by surprise requires a successful 'guileful' test. If successful, the characters get to attack first. In addition, in the first turn of combat against the chief, he will not retaliate. On subsequent turns he will fight as normal.

Creeping down the steps to the captives requires a successful 'guileful' test. If successful, the bindings of the captives can be cut.

Cutting a binding requires a successful 'dextrous' test. Each captive is bound at the wrists and legs, so two tests are required per captive.

If the captives are freed, a 'fortunate' test is made for the character who cuts the last binding. Failure indicates that the captive gasps at the relief from pain, and the Primitives are alerted.

Should the characters manage to release the captives using stealth, they can make their escape unmolested. Otherwise, a fight is likely.

Three Scars, the chief, is a dangerous foe. He will arm himself with a skull-topped cudgel to face attackers head on, running towards them with a roar. The other Primitives will act as noted in their descriptions.

THREE SCARS			
Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Aware, brave, strong, and wilful	Awkward and ignorant	Savage	Skull-topped cudgel

HAIRLESS PRIMITIVE			
Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Aware and guileful	Awkward and ignorant	n/a	Rock
This balding Primitive will throw rocks from the ledge rather than melee.			

MUD-COVERED PRIMITIVE			
Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Brave and strong	Awkward and ignorant	Feral	n/a
This Primitive will try to grab a captive, and fight if it cannot get to one.			

BROKEN-TOOTH PRIMITIVE			
Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Aware	Awkward and ignorant	n/a	n/a
This Primitive woman will grab an infant Primitive and head to the chief to gain his protection. The infant is small and unable to act or resist attacks.			

BROKEN-NOSED PRIMITIVE			
Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Resilient and wilful	Awkward and ignorant	n/a	Cudgel
This Primitive will charge towards the characters, to join the chief.			

APE PRIMITIVE			
Traits	Flaws	Talents	Weapons
Agile and guileful	Awkward and ignorant	Brawler	Hand axe
This hairy, stooped Primitive will try to outflank the characters to block their exit, waiting until they try to flee before attacking.			

Should the characters manage to defeat all of the Primitives, they can search the area if they wish. In addition to the food and grimy furs strewn about the place, the chief has a pile of goods in a niche near his 'throne'. The goods consist of a finely made obsidian knife, two skins filled with sour juice, a bag containing a necklace of wolf fangs, a bracelet of stone beads, and a finely carved wooden statuette of an aurochs. There are also, loose in the bag, 15 gems of various colours.

ESCAPE

The characters can travel back through the caves, or try to exit via one of the climbing routes if they wish. The captives are in a poor state, although will recover somewhat if given food and water. They will not be able to undertake any arduous tasks such as fighting or climbing unaided.

When the characters arrive back at their tribe, they will be greeted warmly and hailed as heroes. A warm fire, food, and comfortable furs await them, as well as gifts from the chief. The gifts might be well-made weapons with a value of up to 9 gems, as well as fur armour wraps for the characters' arms and legs.

APPENDIX

NAME CREATION

The below procedure can be used for PC names, and for GMs looking for names for their characters. To begin, first roll a d6 for the number of syllables the name has:

SYLLABLE TABLE	
1-4	One syllable – roll once on the name table
5-6	Two syllables – roll twice on the name table

Once the name composition is determined, roll a d6 twice on the name table for each syllable. The name table lists two possibilities; either can be chosen to form a name. The syllables can be combined in whatever way the player thinks sounds best. Some syllable and suffix combinations can occasionally be tricky to pronounce. In such cases, simply re-roll some or all of the name.



RANDOM NAME TABLE					
1st Roll	2nd Roll	Name	1st Roll	2nd Roll	Name
1	1	Am/Arn	4	1	Lok/Lor
1	2	As/Az	4	2	Mir/Mun
1	3	Baa/Bal	4	3	Nah/Nar
1	4	Char/Chak	4	4	Neb/Nu
1	5	Dak/Dhu	4	5	Orm/Orn
1	6	Dar/Dor	4	6	Ral/Rig
2	1	Dun/Du	5	1	Sef/Set
2	2	Far/Fay	5	2	Shal/Sho
2	3	Gan/Gon	5	3	Sol/Sun
2	4	Gar/Gor	5	4	Shul/Sul
2	5	Hak/Hek	5	5	Tal/Tel
2	6	Han/Hin	5	6	Tor/Torv
3	1	Hod/Hom	6	1	Tul/Tur
3	2	Jad/Jod	6	2	Ulf/Um
3	3	Jal/Jul	6	3	Var/Vor
3	4	Kat/Kut	6	4	Vul/Vun
3	5	Ker/Kern	6	5	Zan/Zor
3	6	Kul/Kur	6	6	Zol/Zul

FEMALE NAMES

To create a female name, use the procedure above, adding a suffix to the result as follows (roll a d6):

Suffix Table	
1	Add 'a'
2	Add 'ala'
3	Add 'ea'
4	Add 'en'
5	Add 'ia'
6	Add 'u'

EXAMPLE

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

RANDOM TALENTS

This table lists all of the talents alphabetically, and can be used to determine random talents (for foes or for PCs, if they wish) by rolling a d6 twice.

RANDOM TALENT TABLE					
1st Roll	2nd Roll	Talent	1st Roll	2nd Roll	Talent
1	1	Barbarian	4	1	Mystic
1	2	Beast tamer	4	2	Priest
1	3	Bone chanter	4	3	Ritualist
1	4	Brawler	4	4	Savage
1	5	Caster	4	5	Seer
1	6	Cave painter	4	6	Serpent
2	1	Chief	5	1	Shadower
2	2	Crafter	5	2	Shaman
2	3	Cultist	5	3	Simian
2	4	Dancer	5	4	Snake charmer
2	5	Doomsayer	5	5	Soothsayer
2	6	Effigy maker	5	6	Soul eater
3	1	Feral	6	1	Storyteller
3	2	Fire maker	6	2	Summoner
3	3	Fisher	6	3	Thief
3	4	Gatherer	6	4	Tracker
3	5	Healer	6	5	Trapper
3	6	Hunter	6	6	Warrior

PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

For a quick PC, roll a d6 on the below table. The names are given as male with a female suffix in brackets.

1. KURBAL(A), ADULT

Traits/flaws: aware, charismatic, fortunate, guileful.

Talents: hunter, shadower.

Goods: tunic, belt, shoes, fur arm and leg wraps, pouch, scraper, hood armour, bag, grass cloak, linen tunic, armband, ear feather, pigment, fire making kit, gourd, rushlight.

Weapons: blow pipe and five darts, bone knife.

2. CHAKNARAM(U), MATURE

Traits/flaws: agile, dexterous, resilient, wilful, wise, unlucky.

Talents: cultist, doomsayer.

Goods: tunic, belt, shoes, crude god statuette, armour (skull helm), carved animal bone fetish, bag, gourd, fire making kit.

Weapons: antler pick, hide whip.

3. RIGNAR(IA), ADULT

Traits/flaws: aware, brave, strong, wilful.

Talents: savage, warrior.

Goods: tunic, belt, shoes, bag, three pieces of fruit, armour (hide shield), gourd, rope, fire making kit.

Weapons: antler spike, bone axe.

4. FAYEN(A), YOUNG

Traits/flaws: accurate, agile, brave, charismatic, guileful.

Talent: cave painter.

Goods: tunic, belt, shoes, armour (hood), bag, fire making kit, pot containing pigment, brush, pestle, skull pot, torch, fire making kit, gourd.

Weapon: bone knife.

5. MIRRAL(IA), ADULT

Traits/flaws: agile, charismatic, strong, wilful, wise, inaccurate.

Talents: serpent, snake charmer.

Goods: tunic, belt, shoes, armband, ear fang, armour (hide arm and leg wraps), bullroarer, drum, bag, fire making kit, rushlight.

Weapons: hide whip, bone knife.

6. TALUM(A), ADULT

Traits/flaws: brave, charismatic, fortunate, guileful, resilient.

Talent: bone chanter.

Goods: tunic, belt, shoes, armour (skull helm), carved animal bone fetish, gourd, bag, rope.

Weapons: spine whip, bone knife.



PALEOMYTHIC

A ROLEPLAYING GAME OF STONE AND SORCERY

CHARACTER SHEET

Name		Player	
Wound	Trait	Flaw	Age
	Accurate	Inaccurate	Appearance
	Agile	Clumsy	
	Aware	Oblivious	
	Brave	Cautious	
	Charismatic	Unassuming	
	Dexterous	Awkward	
	Fortunate	Unlucky	
	Guileful	Careless	
	Resilient	Sickly	
	Strong	Weak	
	Wilful	Passive	Background
	Wise	Ignorant	
			Goods
			Gems

Weapon	Range	Effect	Damaged

Armour	Type	Damaged
	Shield	
	Head	
	Torso	
	Left Arm	
	Right Arm	
	Left Leg	
	Right Leg	

Talent

Talent

Talent

Talent

Talent

Talent

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