

Zone Humans

ZONE GHOULS – BEHIND THE MASK



Introduction. Welcome to *Zone Humans*. In these pages I will introduce a new playable race in *Mutant Year Zero* – the Zone Human! These are the descendants from survivors of the Fall, and have nothing to do with the Enclaves or the Titan Powers. Enjoy!

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The numbers in the lift counted down quickly, too quickly for Raya's liking. She dreaded the moment where the doors opened and the lobby on the ground floor welcomed the young Scraper. However, she was 16 now, a woman, and the Elders insisted on sending all young men and women out on a scavenger hunt. A rite of passage of sorts. The doors opened, and the dark and foreboding lobby awaited her. Only the most experienced scavengers ever saw this place. The rest stayed on the 50th floor or higher. There, they were safe.

Raya loaded a couple of shells in her shotgun as she approached the door. The hunters had warned her about the mutants, horrible creatures forever twisted by the dying Earth around them. Without a safe haven such as the big skyscraper, they were doomed to wander the wasteland. She pulled up the

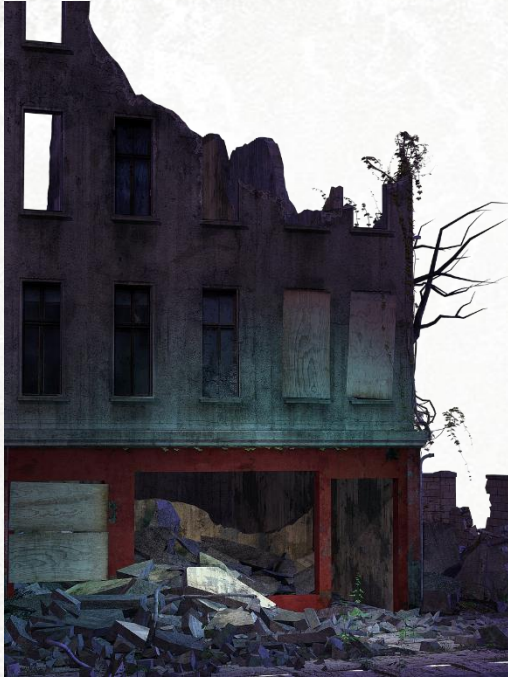
hood of her sweater and put on the gas mask that would allow here to breathe the poisonous fumes of the outside. She could not come back until she had scavenged an item they didn't have in the skyscraper. After so many generations, this scavenger hunt became more and more difficult every year. Raya looked back towards the inviting lift. She hoped this wasn't the last time she saw it.

ZONE HUMANS

Mutant Year Zero contains rules for playing human mutants, animal mutants, robots and enclave humans. But a fifth intelligent humanoid exists in the Zone, resilient survivors of the apocalypse, these creatures have lived isolated for

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centuries. Inbreeding and evolution characterize this species,



so much that many believe them to be separate races. The Elders of the Arks warned the young mutants against these creatures. Horrible tales were spun about their monstrous appearance, dark deeds and voracious appetites for mutant flesh. The Elders called these creatures *Zone Ghouls*.

In truth, these are, or at one time, were, *humans*. Here, we will call them Zone Humans.

RULES FOR PLAYING ZONE HUMANS

This PDF contains rules for playing a non-mutated, non-enclave human in the Zone – a Zone Human if you will. Here you will find rules to create a *zone ghoul hideout* and how to make one zone ghoul tribe different from the next.

In the MYZ CoreBook, the Zone Ghouls live at a water purification plant and are allergic to sunlight due to generations of staying out of the sun. This does not mean that every zone human in the campaign world has these traits. In the Zone, there might be several different smaller tribes of “zone ghouls” that have survived the Fall. Some might have taken up residence in a skyscraper, some might have built wooden huts

and walkways in large forests while others live in their old neighborhood, pretending to be normal. The Zone Ghouls from the water purification plant are technically just as much human as “*The Family Homestead*” from Zone Compendium 1.

To keep it simple, I will consistently refer to this species as Zone Humans, they live in Communities and they are considered a Clan. What each group of zone humans calls themselves, their organizational structure and their home, may vary. And what the other denizens of the zone call them, may be something entirely different.

CREATING A ZONE HUMAN

1. Choose your name.
2. Choose your appearance.
3. Choose your age.
4. Distribute your attribute points.
5. Distribute your skill points.
6. Choose your talent.
7. Describe your relationship with the other PCs as well as NPCs.
8. Establish your character’s big dream.
9. Choose your gear.
10. Choose your clan’s traits and quirks.
11. Describe your home.

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Professions

Unlike the other playable character races, zone humans do not have professions or roles.

Attributes/skills

Just as enclave humans, zone humans start with a number of attribute and skill points corresponding to their age.

| Age | Years | Attribute Points | Skill Points |
|-------------|-------|------------------|--------------|
| Young | 18-31 | 16 | 8 |
| Middle aged | 32-50 | 15 | 11 |
| Old | 51+ | 14 | 14 |

Specialist skills

A zone human can choose between all skills when distributing skill points, also specialist skills normally restricted to other roles or professions. This is still up to the GMs approval. Few zone human societies are civilized enough to allow the use of the Procurator's *Prosecute* skill, for example.

Talents

A zone human character may choose any talent, also those restricted to specific roles or professions. In order to take one of these talents, the character needs at least 1 skill point in that profession's specialist skill. Therefore, if your character wants to choose the Stalker's *Scavenger* talent, the character needs at least 1 skill point in *Find the Path*.

TRAITS

The remnants of humanity have survived more or less isolated from others, both from their own kind and from mutants, animals, robots and enclave humans. Through exposure (or lack thereof) to certain elements, many of these clans have altered their physiology somewhat. It is hardly major changes, and they still look more human than animal mutants and human mutants.

The following list is not an exhaustive list, and the player is more than welcome to come up with her own, unique trait. As a rule of thumb, the trait should copy one lesser effect of a mutation or animal power, or replicate the effects of a talent.

Most of the traits are physical, but they do not have to be. Psi mutations should not be used as a trait.

You can choose more than one trait if you want. Discuss with the GM and the other players if the number of traits are too many.

Traits should also give this clan of zone humans a penalty to something, or a hindrance of some kind.

- Darkvision – after living underground for years, the people of this clan ignore all penalties for darkness. In sunlight, they suffer -2 on all skill rolls.
- Light Eater – due to scarcity of grub, the clan has learned how to live on little food. All members of the clan have the Light Eater talent for free. However, their stomachs cannot take large quantities of food, and may only heal up to 2 damage by eating.
- Sleepless – with enemies all around, this clan has developed the ability to survive without sleep. They still rest, but have always at least one eye open, ready to act on a moment's notice. They do not suffer the ill effects of being sleepless (MYZ p. 93). In order to heal confusion, they need an hour's rest. They can only heal one confusion per day, however.
- Rot Eaters – the metabolism of the members of this clan can eat raw meat without suffering any ill effects or Rot Points. The freaky metabolism cannot take fresh food, however, and any clan member who ingest fresh food, takes 1 damage.
- Climber – the clan has lived for years in high rise buildings, in trees or in the mountains. They gain a +2 bonus when using Move while climbing. When trying to use Move on the ground, however, they suffer a -2 penalty.
- Herbivore – the lack of available meat led this clan to develop a radical vegan diet, even eating inedible plants, roots and poisonous mushroom. When using Find the Path to find grub in the zone, a member of this clan finds twice the amount. Members of the clan

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are quite allergic to meat, and will suffer 1 point of damage if they eat meat.

- **Tracker** – this clan’s sense of smell has improved drastically, and they have learned how to track by smell alone. You can use Scout to follow someone by smell. This has come at a cost, as their hearing is not so good. They suffer a -1 penalty when using Scout to hear or spot someone.
- **Silent** – in order to escape notice from hostile forces and wild monsters in the zone, the people of this clan have learned how to be extremely silent. They get a +2 modifier on Sneak. Any skills that rely on speech, such as Manipulate, Inspire, Intimidate etc., suffer a -1, as the members of the clan are withdrawn and timid.
- **Small** – for one reason or another, members of this clan stop growing at an early age. They look young and are quite small. Any outsiders attacking this clan suffer a -1 penalty. Members of this clan inflict 1 less damage on their melee attacks.
- **Wanderer** – members of this nomadic clan move around a lot, and modify their Endurance rolls by +2 when trekking. They start play with 1 permanent rot point.
- **Resilient** – members of this clan are unusually resilient. Whenever they are broken by Damage, they can roll an Endurance roll. If they succeed, they get back on their feet with a Strength of 1. If they are broken again, they cannot roll for Endurance and must roll twice on the Critical Injuries table – choosing the worst result.
- **Tech Savvy** – the clan has lived in a place of high technology, and have maintained the knowledge of Old Age technology. In addition to having access to at least one major type of modern technology (e.g. water purification plant, computer facilities, weapons locker, car park, etc.), members of the clan should be considered to have a Technology of 50 when it comes to identifying artifacts. The clan has

been extremely isolated throughout the years, staying indoors or belowground. As a result, they suffer 1 point of damage when in direct sunlight.

- **None.** Due to living under relatively favorable circumstances, this group of humans have no abnormal traits.

QUIRKS

After living isolated for several generations, these communities often develop one or more quirks that defines them at least as much as their traits. These quirks are most often cultural or religious in nature.

Pick one or more from the examples below, or come up with your own, unique quirk for the clan your character hails from.

- **Weird worship** – the community worships something really weird, like:
 - an intelligent (or unintelligent) zone monster
 - an artifact (a computer with a screensaver of an Old Age celebrity)
 - a rusted army tank or Old Age motor vehicles in general
 - a building (such as a skyscraper that pierces the Zone mist)

The leaders of the community are fervently adhering to this strange worship, and anyone who refuses or shows signs of questioning this worship, is at best exiled from the community.



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- Religious taboos. The community has for some obscure reason instituted one or more strange taboos.

Examples include:

- not stepping on the ground
- not speaking after night falls
- not using technology from the Old Age
- not eating meat (a normal dietary choice in the Old Age, but it becomes a weird taboo when grub is scarce enough as it is)

- Strange language/communication

- The community has developed its own language, not comprehensible to others
- The community always answers a question with another question
- The community understands oral language, but only communicates with sign language



- Clothes

- The community eschews clothing, and everyone walks around naked (maybe they

put on a loin-cloth when meeting strangers)

- The community always wears protection suits (artifact or scrap), protection masks (or gas masks)
- The community uses uniforms (army uniforms, school uniforms, Burger King uniforms, sports teams' jerseys)

- Hierarchy

- The males and females live completely separated, and only meet once or twice a year for mating purposes.
- Every year, a lottery is held. All members of the community receive one lottery ticket each. Whoever wins, is the mayor/boss for the next year.
- The community consists of several families. To avoid inbreeding, genealogists carefully monitor the family relations, restricting who your mate can be to whoever is furthest away on your family tree.

- Attitudes towards other communities/Arks

- Complete paranoia. All outsiders are attacked on sight. If the community is savage enough, they may be eaten.
- The community raids other communities for male/female slave to diversify the gene pool.
- Ignorance. The community believes itself to be the last living humans on Earth, and their belief system will be rocked to the core if proven otherwise.
- Naivete. The community will accept outsiders without question, happy to realize they are not alone, eager to start rebuilding the world. This might be their doom.

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HOME

Where does the community of zone humans live? Have they lived at the same spot for generations, or have they been moving around, scavenging for food over a wide area?

Try to come up with fun and interesting homes for the community. It can very well be extremely weird!

- The clan is descendants of children at an elementary school. As the alarms started sounding, the teachers led the children down into the school's shelter. When no help came, they eventually made their way back to the surface. The clan is still located at the school, and the classrooms are used to teach new children about the old world.



In the MYZ CoreBook, the zone ghouls who live at the purification plant are the descendants of the original staff at the plant. Other communities may have a similar origin story, but a different location.

- The clan is the descendants of the employees at a large corporation. The world started burning in the middle of their annual Christmas party. While some tried to flee, others stayed put, waiting for a rescue that never came. Today, the clan still lives in an old office building (use a known brand name from our time, and name the community *The XXXX Tower/Building*, etc.)

- The clan is descendants from the crew and passengers on a cruise ship that was sailing the seas as the Enclave War reached its climax. The ship is barely seaworthy, and the clan members are desperate to find spare parts or – even better – a new ship.

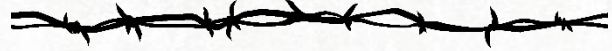
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Smaller clans of zone humans may base their community on a smaller scale, perhaps because it's easily defensible or it is the only Rot Oasis in miles. The communities may be either stationary or moving.

- A bridge spanning a river or a canyon. The zone humans exact a toll from anyone passing.
- A botanical garden. The clan lives comfortably on herbs, fruits and vegetables growing in the old botanical garden, but must be careful to avoid some of the more dangerous flora (like *acid grass* and *nightmare flowers*).
- A subway train that still works. Powered by a nuclear core, the subway train moves the same route over and over again. Automated systems make the train stop if a passenger gives a signal. The clan knows which subway stations are available and open to the surface, and uses the train in an efficient hit-and-run fashion to scavenge, avoid/ambush their enemies and get out in a hurry.

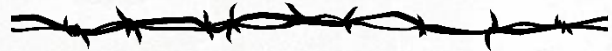
If you want to cross into the seriously weird category, consider these choices:

- A cemetery. All the graves have been excavated, and every member of the clan lives (and sleep) at the bottom of the grave.
- A mountainside. The clan lives in tents fastened with ropes and bolts to a cliffside. These zone humans should have the Climber trait, and a system of bridges and ropes enable them to move within their community.
- A tank. The vehicle itself won't move, but the small clan who lives inside has learned how to steer the cannon. While it may or may not be able to fire, the sight of the immense weapon may be enough to scare away any enemies.



EXAMPLES?

Special Zone Sector 3 describes three different settlements of Zone Humans created using the rules presented here.



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