

BROKEN EARTH

The Radiant Grove

A Tale from the Great Lakes

By Yves Geens



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A Tale from the Great Lakes

Written by: Yves Geens

Edited by: Craig Hargraves

Art by: Joyce Maureira

Title and Icons: Hart Rieckhof

Layout by: Matthew J. Hanson

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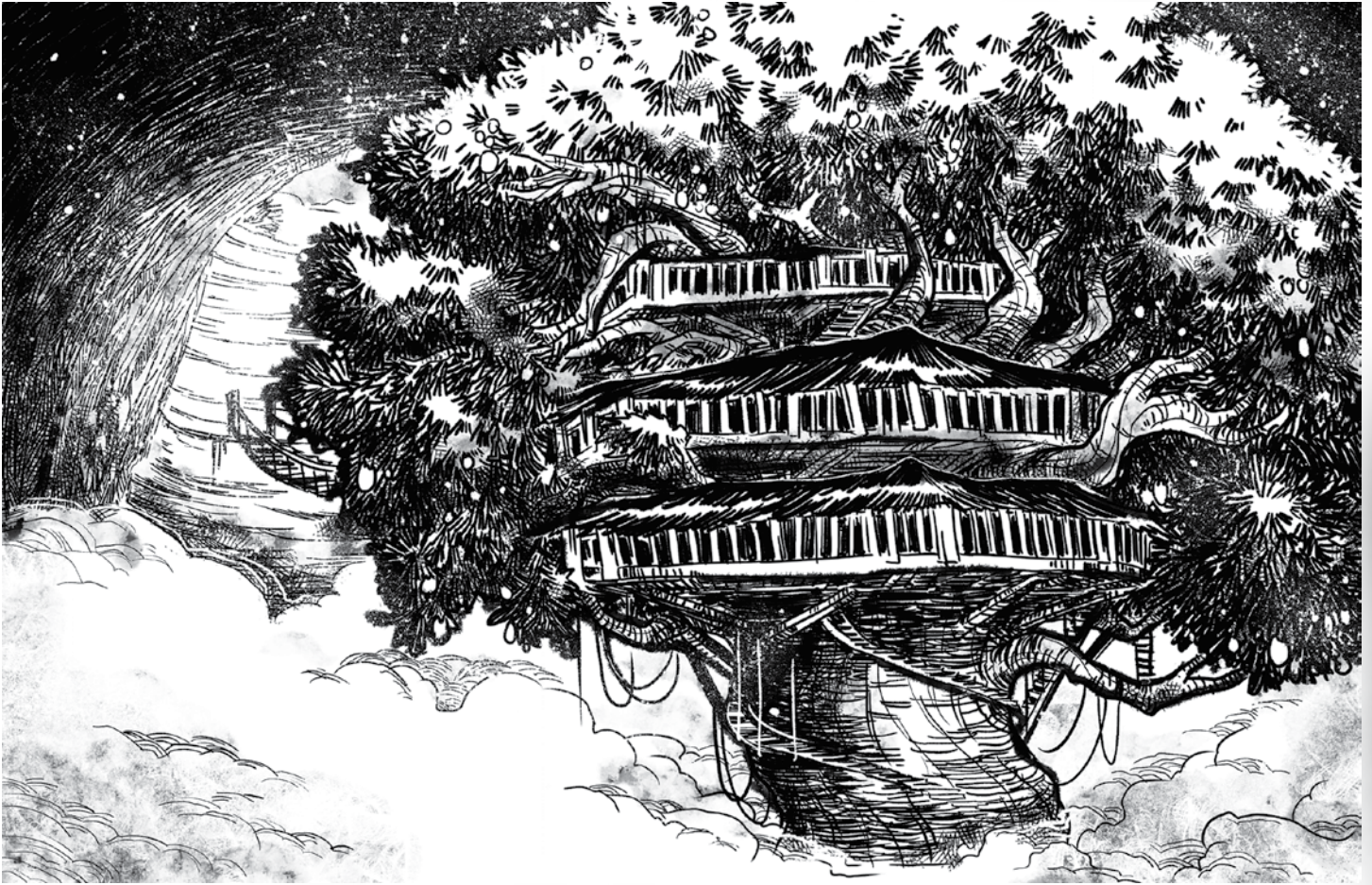
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The Radiant Grove

A Tale from the Great Lakes



In the years leading up to the Great War, the global resource shortages led the United States government to tap any remaining deposits on sovereign soil. Door Peninsula, in eastern Wisconsin, saw its share of strip-mining, exhausting the last stores of copper and lead.

After a disastrous, much-publicized accident which cost the lives of a great many miners, the site at Cave Point was mothballed. Removed from the public eye, the cave system in the once unspoiled park was turned into a dumping ground for radioactive and biological waste. Among these waste shipments were a few from local company TransGenome, whose genetic experiments created large quantities of hazardous by-products. Local environmentalists and scientists vociferously petitioned the government to stop the dangerous practice, but as the nukes flew, the fate of one county park became just another footnote to history.

An abundance of mutated creatures sprung up and made Cave Point their home in the following decades, making it a place even the foolhardiest adventurers

preferred to avoid. It wasn't until fifty years after the Great War that a band of simians settled the caves. Led by a fierce warrior named Longmane, they arrived at the park in search for a land to call their own, safe from the constant attacks by raiders and human bigots.

Seeking shelter from the wildlife, the simians eventually braved the descent into the subterranean caves. While the tunnels closest to the surface proved treacherous, the pitch-dark home of dangerous beasts and many pitfalls, an eerie glow coming from deeper within the cave system goaded on Longmane. Together with a handful of fearless comrades he pushed into the depths, until they reached what the simians would later call the Radiant Grove. Perched on a rocky outcrop, the party were the first to ever lay eyes on the Tree of Life, a mutant tree of titanic proportions.

Longmane alone climbed down to the tree. At the precise moment he reached it, a small fruit fell into his hands. Longmane ate from it and gained much wisdom about the natural world and the role his tribe should play

in the coming conflicts, or so he claims. When he returned to the surface, his fervor convinced many of the tribe of the truth of his words. The tribe pledged to follow him to what he decreed would be their home, and the promised home for simians everywhere, “until the star of mankind falls and heralds the dawn of the Age of the Simian.”

The Tribe Today

It has been thirty years since the simians discovered the Tree of Life and made their home high up in its massive branches. In keeping with Longmane’s prophecy, the tribe has expanded considerably, as proselytizers are regularly sent out, so now they number over two hundred.

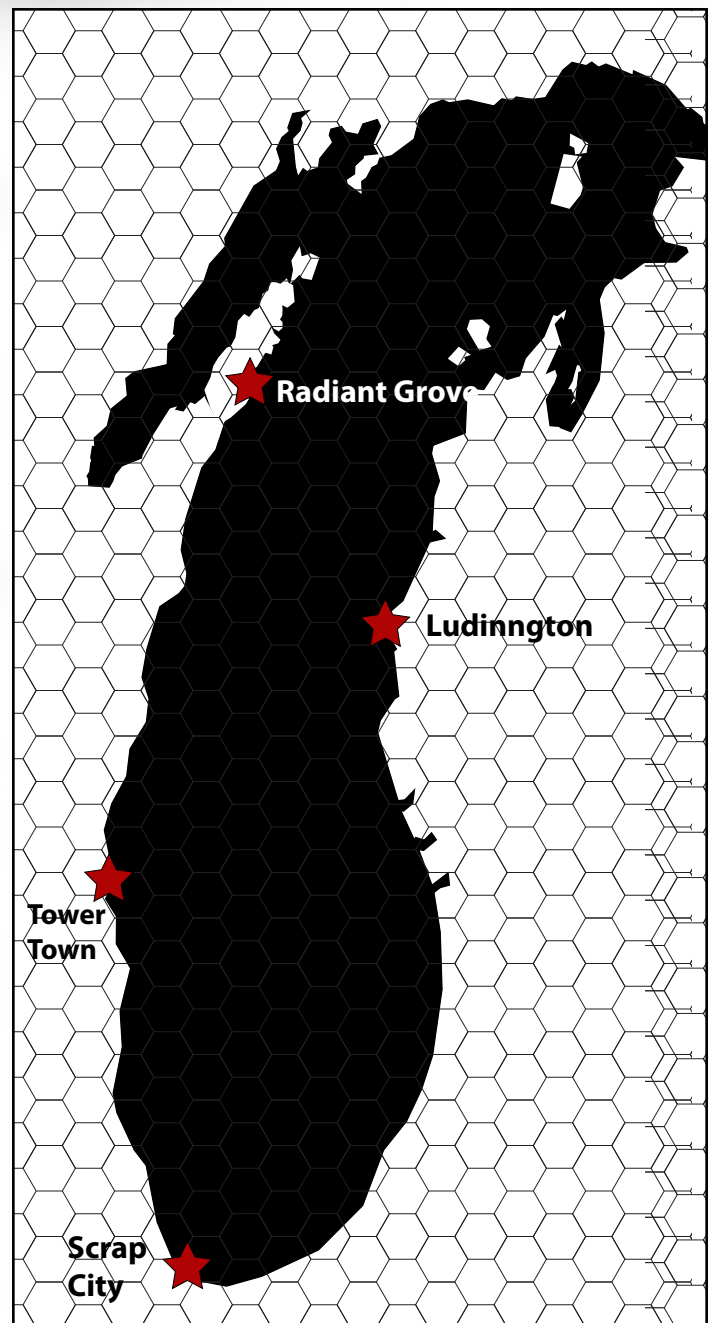
Reverence of the Tree of Life is paramount to the tribe. In addition, their stance on technology is very strict. Members of the tribe must abstain from the use of any technology more advanced than that of the pre-industrial age: no electronics, no gunpowder weapons, no devices or contraptions which are not manually powered. Those who are found trespassing on their lands with modern technology are severely punished.

While some whisper that the tree works some nefarious influence over the simians, there is no evidence of this, and the direction of the tribe is firmly guided by the hands of its three elder councilors.

Lay of the Land

Groups of three to five guards on horseback patrol the lands that were once Cave Point Park. They know the area well and constantly keep an eye out for any sign of trouble, not only travelers, but also creatures like dreeks and ghost cats. The guards force back any non-simian travelers, granting those who act peacefully a single warning. If the trespassers look like raiders or worse, the simians immediately ambush the interlopers.

A small barracks and guard post has been dug just inside the mouth of the main entrance to the cavern, manned at all times by 1d6+2 guards with a small supply of cronk bombs and darkstars (see section Gifts of the Tree). All other surface entrances have been collapsed and would take days to excavate, certain to draw the attention of the simians. However, there are still underwater tunnels which can be accessed through Lake Michigan. Characters looking for such possible entrances make a Notice roll at -4 for every ten minutes spent diving and searching. The underwater tunnels meet up with the main cave system and are unguarded, if completely unlit.



Simian Guard

The tribe’s guards are well-trained and brook no nonsense.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: — , **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7(2)

Edges: Low Light Vision, Natural Climber (*Broken Earth* 13)

Gear: Heartseeker bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), quiver (15 normal arrows, 5 darkstar arrows), mace (Str+d6), heartseeker spear (Str+d6), treated barkskin armor (+2), water skin, 1d4 small fruits, 2d10 Trade worth of goods.

Zandir Ironpaw

The captain of the guard, stationed at the main entrance. Zandir Ironpaw is a seasoned fighter and rabid xenophobe. Ironpaw is a Wild Card Simian Guard with Strength d12, wellspring armor +4, and the Command Edge.

The tunnels in the cliff face which lead down to the grove are unpopulated and only intermittently patrolled by the tribe. The characters can avoid detection by wandering guards with a simple success on their Stealth rolls. In the decades since the tribe moved in, the beasts have been cleared out of the upper tunnels and the hazards filled up. Through careful tree shaping and pruning, the tribe has guided the growth of luminous offshoots from the tree all the way up to the surface, so that the tunnel is bathed in a dim green glow at all times. It takes nearly half an hour to reach the grove from the surface.

The Radiant Grove is a large clearing in the living rock, roughly cylindrical in shape. The only point of ingress is the main cave tunnel, which ends on a rocky promontory: a narrow ledge suspended some hundred feet above the bottom of the cave. The bottom of the cave disappears in mist, which takes on a green tinge due to the tree's light. The dome of the cave is another hundred feet up from the precipice where the characters enter the grove. From their vantage point, the characters can see the Tree of Life, growing in a central position in the cave and illuminating it by way of its bioluminescent branches. The characters can clearly make out three large wooden platforms of artificial construction in the tree, which are brightly lit. Except for these platforms, the rest of the cave is only dimly lit. Apart from the tree, the only other plants are gray and green vines and creepers that cover cavern walls.

The characters can use the vines which grow along the cave wall to climb to a small wooden platform located higher up with a successful Climbing roll. From this platform several ropes extend upward to the crown of the tree, crossing the vast expanse between the edge of the cave and the tree. Using these ropes to cross the cave requires a Climbing roll at -4. There is also a rope bridge which the tribe folk use for transporting large and heavy goods, but can be used by those lacking the nimbleness of simians. A stealthy approach is difficult to pull off since it leaves the characters entirely exposed. The characters suffer a -4 penalty to their opposed Stealth rolls in order to avoid detection.

The shadowy reaches of the cave are home to a species of winged frugivores the simians call dakkals. They have a keen sense of smell and a taste for exotic fruits and seeds, so every time the characters enter the grove there is a 1 in 2 chance of 1d4 dakkals swooping down to accost them if they have dried rations or the like on them. If the characters are climbing the vines or ropes while this happens, they must make a Climbing check to maintain their grip or balance if they engage in combat.

Dakkal

Four feet large winged animal with leathery skin and a prominent, tough beak, the mutant hybrid of old-world fruit bats and cormorants. They normally only attack when provoked. Dakkal hides are worth 20 Trade.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d8+2, Stealth d6

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6(2)

Special Abilities

- **Alertness:** Notice +2.
- **Armor +2:** Leathery hide.
- **Beak:** St+d4.
- **Infravision:** Dakkals halve penalties for Dark lighting against living targets (round down).
- **Size -1:** Dakkals measure 3–4 feet, with wingspans of up to six feet.

Inveterate Targ

This decade-old Dakkal is the leader of the flock. It will only show itself if the characters kill at least half a dozen of its kind. Possessed of a crude intelligence, Inveterate Targ will try to ambush the characters and make them plummet to their deaths. Its extremely tough hide is worth 250 Trade. Inveterate Targ is a Wild Card with all Traits one die type higher than a regular Dakkal, Size +1, and Armor +3.

The Tree of Life

The tribe folk live in the crown of the tree, spread out over three large wooden platforms which have been constructed among the boughs and bole. Thanks to the simians' reshaping efforts, some of the younger branches have been made to grow in a circular fashion, girdling around the tree to form a natural defensive barrier which occludes the platforms from view when observed from the perch.

The ropes and bridge lead to the middle platform, where the market, shops, and private quarters of the tribe are located. The tribe's dwellings and stalls are very simple, airy constructions, as the tree provides sufficient warmth and the cave protection from the elements. Here the characters have the first opportunity to avail themselves of the blessings of the tree. Touching its bark creates a warm and soothing sensation unlike the normal effects of radiation. The party finds that their constitution improves if they sojourn in the grove for any amount of time, as the tree grants a +1 bonus to Natural Healing checks.

Though the simians revere the mutant tree, they know very little about it, scientifically speaking. Characters who wish to learn more about the tree must collect a sample and succeed in a Knowledge (Botany) roll. Cutting or puncturing the tree must be done in secret as it draws the ire of the simians. Samples gathered from the heart

of the tree or its roots work best; tree bark reveals less about its inner workings and penalizes the roll by 2. With a success, the characters learn that the tree is symbiotically intertwined with a fungus, from which it gains its luminescence. With a raise, the characters determine that the tree's mutated chloroplasts gather energy from gamma radiation rather than natural light and, as a side effect, render the radiation harmless to other creatures.

Though there is no natural light, life in the tribe follows the familiar night and day routine. During the day the shopkeepers peddle the wares of the tribe's craftsmen and the exotic fruits gathered from the tree (see section Gifts of the Tree). Ropes and winding footbridges lead to the upper and lower platforms.

The upper terrace is only sparsely built, featuring a large common area among the upper branches where the simians gather for communal meals, celebrations, and important events. A modest enclosure serves as the council chambers; the chairs of the three elder councilors molded from the living wood. A small guard station (manned by 1d4+1 guards), stockade, and armory are located at the entry point to the platform.

The lower platform is the craftsmen's area, where the tribe's famous woodworkers ply their trade. The tribe also has a skilled metalworker and tanner, though their goods are only on par with what can be found in the outside world. The artisans are the only ones permitted the use of fire so near the tree and therefore have stone structures to house fire pits and ovens.

From the lower platform a pulley-operated elevator leads down alongside the trunk to the roots of the tree. As the simians are forbidden from cutting living wood or marring the tree in any way, the only wood that they can use is the deadwood which accumulates in the depths.

The gathering of deadwood is more dangerous than it sounds, however, as strange plantlike creatures dwell among the fog issued from the nearby underground river. Harming them is taboo to the simians, who mask their scent by sprinkling themselves with the juice of the dapple fruit.

Sapling

Saplings are humanoid plant creatures with mottled green-brown skin. They move noiselessly through the fog, seeking out any intruders among the tree's roots. An irradiated variety glows a noxious green and may deal radiation damage.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Barkskin.
- **Claws:** St+d6.

- **Entangle:** Instead of a regular attack, a sapling may make a Fighting roll to restrain an adjacent target as per the entangle power. The sapling's root-like fingers rapidly lengthen to envelop its victim.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Saplings roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- **Infection:** Victims wounded or shaken by a claw attack must make a Vigor check. Those who fail suffer from huskskin, a short term debilitating disease (see the Savage Worlds core rulebook), which creates irritating, moldy infections on the victim's skin.
- **Improved Frenzy:** Saplings may make two attacks per round without penalty.
- **Infravision:** Saplings halve penalties for Dark lighting against living targets (round down).
- **Irradiated:** Irradiated Saplings glow brightly, eliminating illumination penalties against them. Characters adjacent to an irradiated sapling when it dies must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of radiation Fatigue.
- **Weakness (Fire):** Fire deals an additional +4 damage.

Characters trying to find a way out of the roiling green fog may make a Notice roll at -4 for every ten minutes spent searching. If successful, they can discover the tunnel leading further down hidden among the roots, where the fog disappears and the party will soon find barrels of radioactive and other highly toxic waste. Unlike the beneficial glow emitted by the tree, the waste zone is a lethal radiation trap, requiring a Vigor roll every minute. The corridor continues for several hundred yards, lined on both sides with chambers filled with leaking barrels, penetrated from above by tree roots. Hidden among the roots and drums, slumber irradiated saplings. The tunnel reaches a dead end at the site of the cave-in. Here the characters may find a small cache of mining gear, such as picks, mining helmets, a toolkit, and some oil canisters. A nearby abandoned pre-War industrial excavator can be jury-rigged with a Repair roll at -4 and a refill of the gas tank to spring to life one final time and break through the wall of debris, granting access to the mine. The noise created by the machine has a 5 in 6 chance of attracting the attention of a large swarm (3d4) of irradiated saplings.

Copper Mine

Requires: Engineer, 40 Build, 14 weeks

Extracting copper from the mine is hard and dangerous work, but the valuable ore is essential for electrical equipment.

Community Benefit: Reduces the Build cost of power stations by 20%.

PC Benefit: The characters receive access to finished copper wire, which they can use at a machine shop to build simple electronics at a cost of half their normal value.

The characters may gather all the copper they can carry, but to get the full benefit of the mine a team of engineers would need access to the site and set up proper facilities, earning their community a unique Building Edge. This necessitates finding a way to clear out the waste, neutralize the saplings, and above all deal with the simians.

Important People

The three elder councilors, also known as the Triumvirate or the Three of the Tree, steer the future of the tribe. Despite their title, councilors are selected on merit and not by age, though councilors Longmane and Reza are in fact getting on in years. Councilors are chosen because of the contributions they have made to the tribe and, while rare, can be removed if a majority of the tribe and the other two councilors vote in favor of such a deposing.

Longmane

Though in theory all councilors are equal, the erstwhile leader and most formidable warrior of the tribe has the distinction of being 'first among equals.' While his hair and mane have turned gray with the years, the beneficial influence of the tree has preserved much of Longmane's renowned strength. Despite no lack of suitors, Longmane never took a mate.

During the decades since the discovery of the Radiant Grove, Longmane's anti-human and anti-technology stance has only hardened. He is dedicated to the simian cause and believes the tree will play a crucial role in their ultimate victory over the other sentient races of Earth. He frequently comes into conflict with some of the worldlier members of the tribe, who prefer to interpret his ideals in a philosophical manner, rather than as an actual call to battle.



Longmane

Race: Simian

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d12, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d6, Taunt d8, Tracking d4

Charisma: +2, **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 11(4)



Notable Townsfolk

Arhorn, jovial yet deceptively slick armor merchant; Bandar, fruiterer and fanatic tree worshipper; Nillep, the tribe's tanner and leatherworker, unhappy with his station in the tribe; Lokashi, metalworker curious for any news from the outside world; Grenk One-eye and Ferrulin, master woodworkers engaged in eternal competition; Klim Fish-breath, forester and heavy drinker; Mawk, itinerant merchant looking for opportunities to expand his business in the outside world; Jules, purveyor of fine fruit wines and beers, lacking the skill but not the ambition to become a great warrior; Zimzib, powerful mental healer distrustful of any outsiders.

Edges: Ambidextrous, Charismatic, Command, Florentine, Low Light Vision, Natural Climber, Strong-willed, Two-fisted

Gear: Heartwood and Radiant Core (unique heartseeker sai, Str+d4+1, provide illumination as per light power), ceremonial wellspring armor (+4)

Reza

Trusted ally of Longmane, the two councilors have been friends since their earliest childhood. Reza is a skilled warrior in his own right, though not the equal of Longmane. It is general knowledge that the true reason for Reza's nomination to councilor lay with Longmane's desire to have a known quantity on the council. Despite the circumstances of his nomination, Reza is his own man and occasionally disagrees with Longmane on matters important to the tribe. His stance on technology and the proposed attitude of the tribe toward the outside world is notably more relaxed than Longmane's.



Reza

Race: Simian

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d6, Taunt d6, Tracking d4

Charisma: —, **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Edges: Low Light Vision, Natural Climber, Sweep

Gear: Swift Resolution (mastercraft heartseeker spear Str+d6+1 which grants Improved Frenzy Edge), ceremonial wellspring armor (+4)

Topple

The most recent and youngest addition to the council, Topple only joined the tribe a few years ago after a lifetime of exploring the waste lands. Her nomination received overwhelming support from the artisans and traders, whom her knowledge of crafting techniques and other simian settlements had helped immeasurably. Much to Longmane's chagrin, Topple accepted the position, electing to stay with the tribe, despite her frequent and notorious disagreements with the council. Topple believes the tribe should embrace the outside world and share the gifts of the tree with all who wish to coexist peacefully with the simians. The sedentary life is starting to wear on her, however, and she longs to go out and explore the world once more.



Topple

Race: Simian

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Knowledge (Mechanics) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Repair d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Taunt d8, Tracking d8

Charisma: —, **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9(4)

Edges: Acrobat, Extraction, Low Light Vision, McGuyver, Natural Climber (*Broken Earth* p. 13), Quick

Gear: Heartseeker bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), quiver (20 darkstar arrows), ceremonial wellspring armor (+4)

Gifts of the Tree

Small Fruits

These fruits are roughly orange-sized and grow in clusters of four to six dozen on the smaller branches.

Dapple Fruit: Fruit reminiscent of green apples, but mottled with brown stains. Fleshy texture. Cures any poison when ingested within 10 minutes of the event and relieves radiation Fatigue. Application of the pulp and juice masks the character's presence from saplings. Unbeknownst even to the simians, planting a dapple fruit causes a sapling to sprout within three to four weeks.

Howler Tear: This bitter, milky-white fruit seems to scream when bitten into and causes the character's eye to irritate, hence its name. The noise is simply caused by

ripping cellular walls. Howler tear imbues the character with preternatural awareness, similar to Danger Sense (see *Savage Worlds Deluxe*) for 6 hours.

Loon: Technically a nut, but has the consistency of a grape. Anyone eating of a loon must immediately make a Vigor check at -2 or become Incapacitated by Knockout. The simians distill this fruit into the very alcoholic drink loonshine.

Verdant Skulk: Soft, juicy, bioluminescent fruit which boosts the Vigor of the character by one die type and makes non-simian characters glow in the dark for 6 hours. Continued consumption of verdant skulk doubles the life span of the character.

Large Fruits

These fruits, watermelon-sized and larger, are found growing on the larger boughs further down the tree, among the craftsmen's terrace.

Cronk: Not a different species of fruit, but loon which has matured for an additional year. Cronk nectar becomes highly volatile, so that the fruit is

used by the tribe as improvised explosives, boring a small hole in the fruit and adding a wick to light. Cronk bombs deal 2d10 fire damage in a Medium Burst Template, range 4/8/16, and weigh six pounds each.

Darkstar: This tough, inedible fruit, while a dull gray when growing on the tree, turns pitch-black in natural light and drains the light from its surroundings at the same time. A darkstar creates an area of darkness similar to the obscure power (see *Savage Worlds* core rules).

Wellspring: These sacred seeds of the Tree of Life can grow to the size of a small car. No one but the master craftsmen, are allowed to touch them. If a wellspring can be obtained and planted, a tree similar to the Tree of Life eventually grows, producing its first small fruits after a year. It takes twenty years for the tree to grow to a mature size where it produces fruit all year round, providing a powerful Resource Edge to the community.

Tree of Life

A mutant tree which provides ample food no matter the season.

Community Benefit: A hex containing a tree provides 1d4 additional Food. The community gains a +1 bonus to Economy tests to resist epidemic events and other diseases.

PC Benefit: Once each week, the characters can requisition a supply of fruit.



Weapons and armor

Fine wooden weapons and armor sold by in the market place. Unless otherwise specified, the going rate for these items is three times the cost of their mundane counterparts. There is an additional markup for non-simians, upping the price to five times the standard rate.

Heartseekers (bow/spear): These weapons guide the user's aim. Using a heartseeker weapon reduces the called shot penalty to hit the target's heart, head, or other vital area by 2. (20 Trade/arrow)

Darkstar arrows: Arrows coated with darkstar extract. A hit with a darkstar arrow which leaves the target Shaken induces blindness until the victim becomes unshaken. The target suffers a -6 penalty to all Trait rolls that require vision and has his Parry reduced to 2. (20 Trade/arrow)

Barkskin armor: Treated barkskin uses the flexible bark of young branches to create armor with the durability of chainmail at a fraction of the weight. Armor +2, weight 5 pounds, 600 Trade.

Wellspring armor: These decorative suits of armor are extremely tough but allow the same freedom of movement as ordinary leather. Only a handful of simians have the honor of wearing such a suit and it would only be sold with a special dispensation from the council. Armor +4, weight 3 pounds, 3,700 Trade.

Deadwood shield (small/medium/large): Shields made from the fallen branches of the tree weigh half as much as standard shields and add 1d4 damage when used to shield bash.

Plot Points

Characters in good standing with the Wright family can get involved with the Radiant Grove through the Survey Expedition adventure plot point.

Survey Expedition

Where: Begins in Wright Town

When: Any time

Scavengers working for the Wright family retrieved an old survey map, indicating the mining site at Cave Point. Wright Town offers 3,000 Trade to any group who will verify the claim (and preferably bring back some ore as proof). Characters who research more on Cave Point can discover the site was repurposed as a waste dump with an Investigation roll at -4 for and an hour of rummaging through old files.

Although not explicitly stated by the Wrights, they offer a generous bonus of 5,000 Trade if the characters return with an agreement from the simians to allow the town to exploit the site, or if they found some other way to drive the tribe from the grove. Of course, the characters may prefer to use the mine for their own purposes.

A Star Named Fackelträger

Where: Door Peninsula, hexes north of D47

When: On approach

Traversing Door Peninsula, the characters witness a ball of fire crashing down in Lake Michigan. If they follow its general direction, they eventually reach the east shore near Sturgeon Bay. They can observe a few simians dragging a man out of the lake and a large metal object sinking, when the heroes are waylaid by a party of 1d4+1 simian guards on horseback.

Unless the party consists solely of simians, the guards explain that this area is their ancestral home and that the heroes are trespassers. They give them the option to turn back immediately, or to surrender their weapons and technology and come with them to face their leaders. If there are any simians in the party, they can vouch for the non-simians with a Persuasion check at -2, and the group is allowed to keep their weapons if they elect to return with the guards to Cave Point.

Should the characters fight the guards, a few of the simians escape with the prisoner back to Cave Point. Heroes can examine the crashed shuttlecraft by braving the cold and dark waters of Lake Michigan, requiring a Swimming and Notice roll, both at -4, for every half hour spent searching the bottom. The shuttle is made of a black metal and its exterior features white and red symbols and text in a foreign language on its hull: FACKELTRÄGER. A Knowledge (Engineering) roll at -4 reveals the ship is constructed out of silica tiles on an aluminum frame. The inscription, meaning Torch Bearer, requires a Knowledge (German) roll to translate. The interior of the craft is largely flooded, wrecking the delicate electronics, but a smaller secondary compartment is still sealed off. Getting inside requires an advanced tool, such as an oxygen-arc cutter, to breach the metal. Alternatively, if they learn the password BNZNKNSTR from the astronaut, the storage unit can be accessed for a functional spare spacesuit and a solar powered laser pistol.

Spacesuit: Hermetically sealed suit, +1 Armor. Helmet with headlamp and two-way radio (20 mile range). The suit provides protection against cold, vacuum, and radiation and up to six hours of oxygen.

Solar powered laser pistol: As a regular laser pistol, but its battery automatically charges when exposed to sunlight at a rate of one shot per hour.

Facing the Council and Negotiating with the Simians

Where: The Radiant Grove

When: Any time

If the heroes agreed to be escorted by the guards, the simians keep watch over the heroes, but the party is free to peruse the marketplace and common area while they wait for the council to convene and determine their fate for trespassing. If they resisted or were caught sneaking into the grove at any point, the guards attempt to capture them and put them in the stockade.

In the stockade they can find the crash-landed astronaut, a man by the name of Klaus Streichholz. The astronaut speaks fluent German, but his knowledge of English is limited. The characters can learn he is an astronaut on a recon mission. He claims to have come from a space station in Earth's orbit, where many of pre-War Earth's brightest are suspended in cryostasis. He is naturally confused about his surroundings and begs the characters for help, offering whatever gadgets remain in his shuttlecraft as a reward.

When the council and the tribe convene, the characters and the astronaut in turn are judged.

If they did not act with hostile intent, the characters are set free without much ado, and told not to return to the lands of Cave Point. In this outcome they can start negotiations regarding the mining site without additional penalties.

If they were caught sneaking into the grove, the council is more suspicious. The characters must argue their innocence or submit to a trial by combat, each side nominating a champion. In the simian's case, this is usually the captain of the guard Zandir Ironpaw, unless the heroes offended Longmane, in which case he personally takes up the challenge. If the heroes win the duel, they are grudgingly and forcibly made to leave.

If they killed any guard or other member of the tribe, they are to be put to death immediately and can only hope to fight their way out.

The astronaut's fate hangs in the balance. When he is brought out and the guards relate the story of the crash, councilor Longmane becomes extremely agitated. He considers the astronaut's arrival the prophesied "fall of the star of mankind" and believes the time has finally come for the simians to take what's rightfully theirs. He proclaims manned flight the ultimate technological arrogance, and the astronaut to be sentenced to death.

Saving the astronaut's life through non-violent means is extremely tricky and requires masterful persuasion. The players should act out their arguments rather than make a simple roll, keeping in mind that especially councilor Topples and a large part of the public can be swayed toward a peaceful resolution. This can be played according to the Social Conflict rules (see the Savage Worlds core rulebook). Similarly, negotiating access to the copper deposits in the mine will take a lot of persuasion. Pledging that no advanced technology will be used and that the tree under no circumstances will be harmed mollifies the council. If the characters successfully argued the release of the astronaut, this accomplishment provides them with an automatic success in the tally for further negotiations.

If the characters can resolve both cases to both sides' mutual satisfaction, even Longmane acquiesces. The heroes are allowed to purchase wellspring armor and given a small wellspring seed in recognition for their efforts.

War with the Simians

Where: The Radiant Grove

When: Any time

If the characters fail in their negotiations, the only option to take control of the Tree of Life and the mine below is through force. Choosing this avenue requires a sizeable force, as the simians make a fighting retreat into the tunnels, cut off access to the surface and then take shelter in the tree, where they can remain indefinitely thanks to their food and water supplies. Any attacking force has to find a way across to the tree before they can even begin their assault. Use the Mass Battle rules found in the core rulebook to run the assault. The simians have an 'army' of 200 capable fighters. They will not (and most likely cannot) retreat from the tree and thus gain a Morale Modifier of +2.

