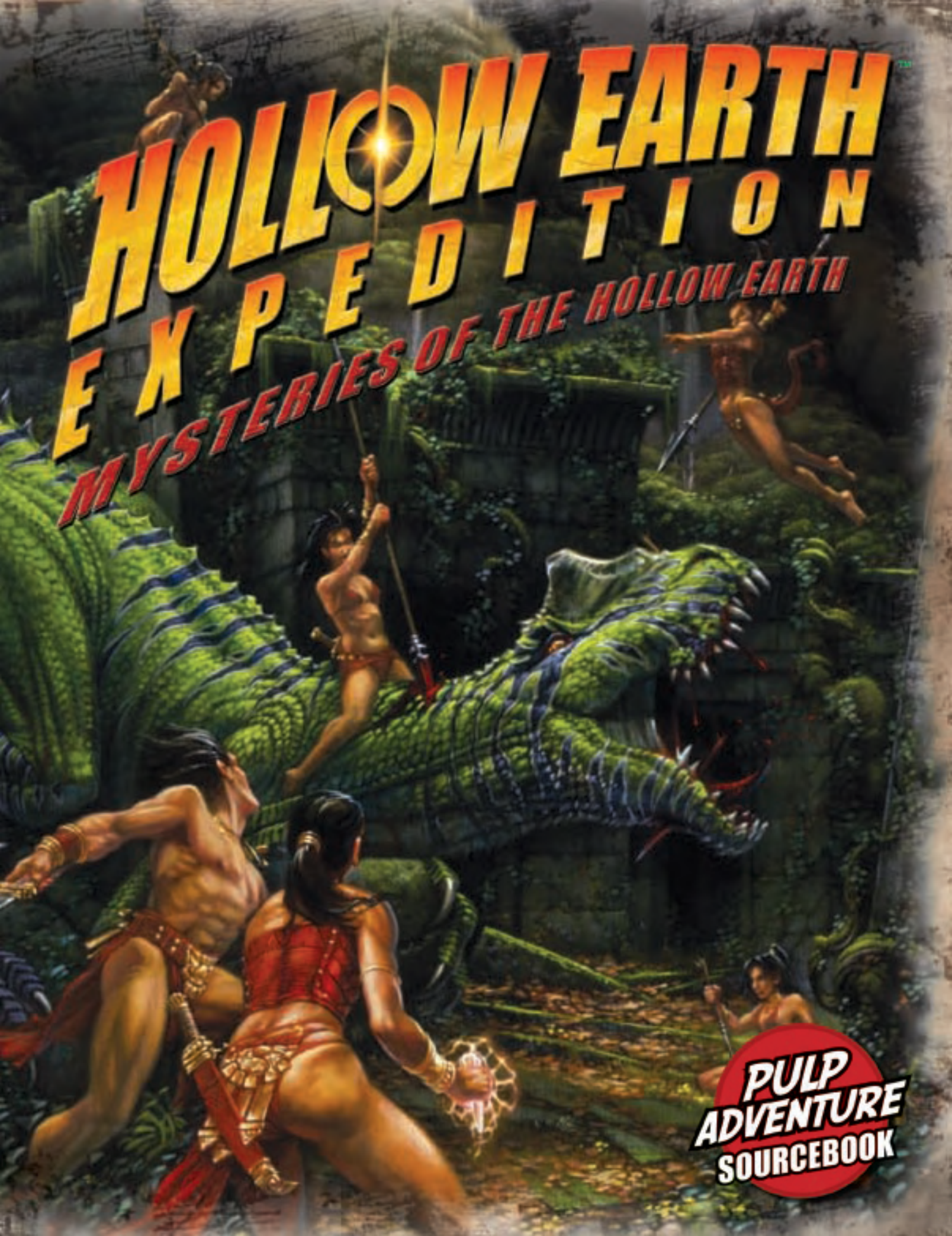


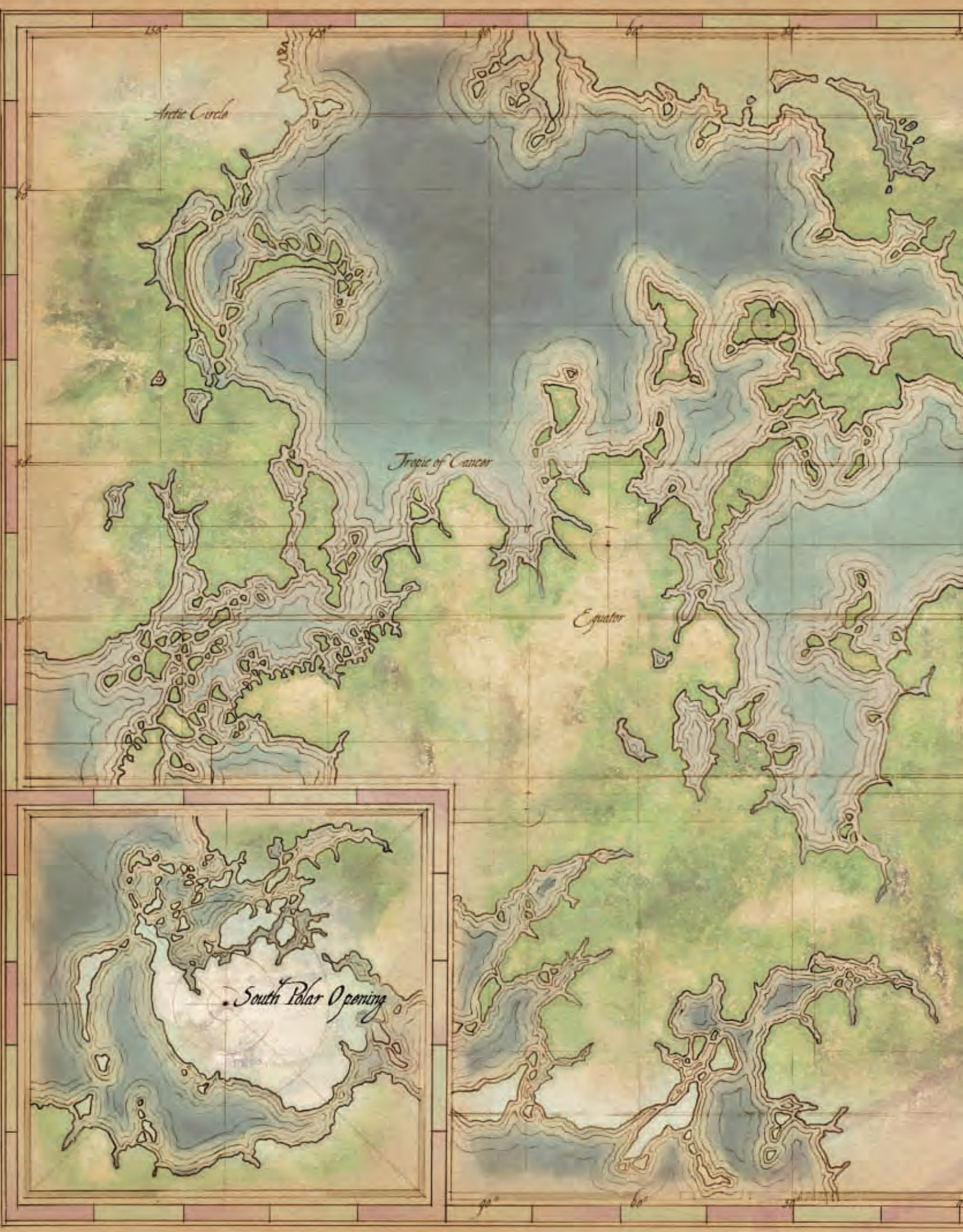


HOLLOW EARTH

EXPEDITION

MYSTERIES OF THE HOLLOW EARTH

**PULP
ADVENTURE
SOURCEBOOK**





A movie poster for 'Hollow Earth Expedition'. The background is a lush, fantastical landscape with multiple waterfalls cascading over mossy stone structures. In the foreground, four characters are visible: two men in khaki uniforms and hats wading through a pool of water on the left, and a woman in a red bikini and a man in a khaki uniform and hat standing on a rocky outcrop on the right. The woman is holding a spear. In the upper left, a large stone statue of a woman's head is visible. The title 'HOLLOW EARTH' is written in large, bold, yellow-to-orange gradient letters with a black outline, slanted upwards. Below it, 'EXPEDITION' is written in smaller, red-to-yellow gradient letters with a black outline, also slanted upwards. At the bottom, 'MYSTERIES OF THE HOLLOW EARTH' is written in red, italicized letters with a black outline, following the same upward slant. A small 'TM' trademark symbol is located at the end of the main title.

HOLLOW EARTHTM

EXPEDITION

MYSTERIES OF THE HOLLOW EARTH

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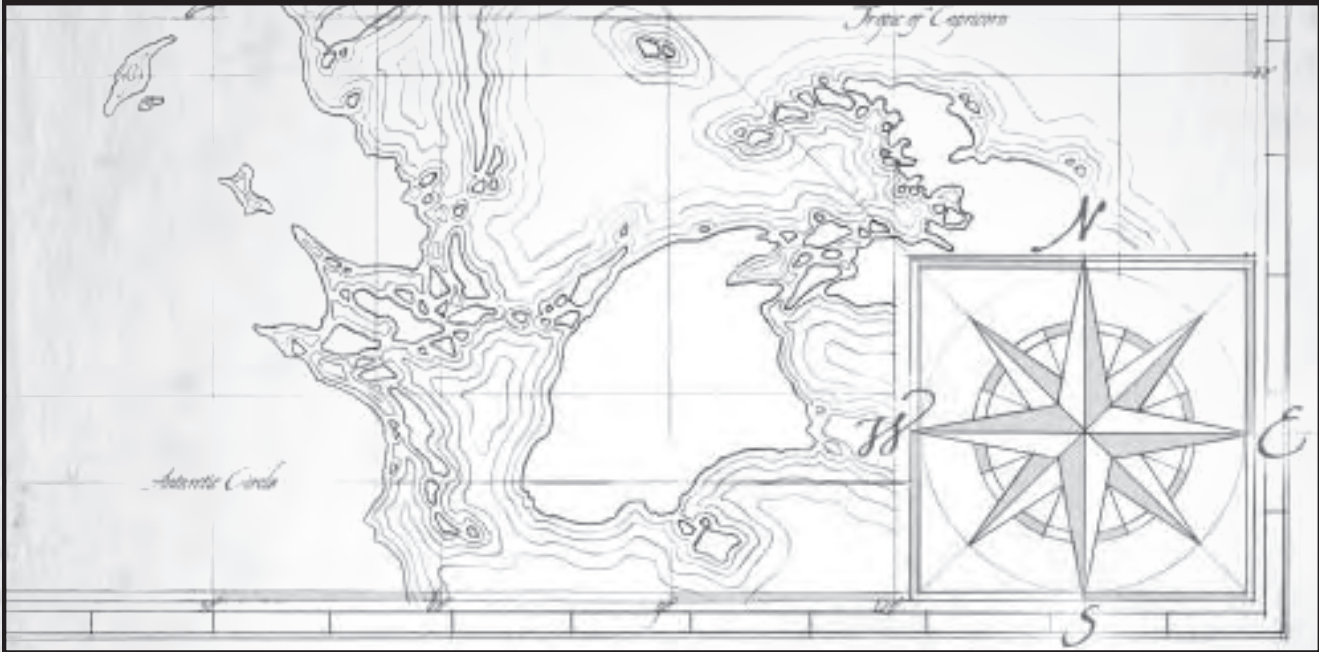
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HOLLOW EARTH EXPEDITION MYSTERIES OF THE HOLLOW EARTH

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⊕ *RITE OF PASSAGE*



It had been a mistake to leave the path. She understood that now. But at the time, stepping off the path had seemed to Yree the only possible course of action, the only alternative to failure. She was tracking an adolescent velociraptor—it was unusual to find one alone, but not unheard of. Sometimes the young ones wander off and get lost, and it was her good fortune that she had come across one on her sacred hunt.

The raptor's spoor led directly away from the game trail and into the rocky outcropping. Of this she was certain. Wasn't she the daughter of a master tracker? Wasn't her father able to follow a shadow through a trackless field in a raging storm? Hadn't he trained her well? Yes, yes, and yes. So away from the path and into the rocks she went.

The tracks gradually led her into a long, narrow valley, with steep cliffs on either side rising gently around her like stone giants slowly lifting their heads, until she found herself surrounded on all sides by sheer walls of pale limestone. A stream, almost dry, trickled through the narrow defile, its rocky banks lined by small, leafless trees. Yree picked her way carefully around jagged rocks and gnarled tree roots as thick as a man's arm. It was slow going, and she paused several times to drink from the stream. She had no fear of the water: her father had trained her well to sense any taint that would have made her ill.

Her lips curled into a grim smile of satisfaction—it would not be long now. Soon the beast would curl up in a hole or a cave to rest, and she would have it. She

would get her raptor, the hunt would be over, and she would return in triumph to her village, to be hailed a woman and a valued daughter of the Red Bear Tribe. Yree had been working toward this goal all her life and soon—very soon—she would take her rightful place among the trackers and hunters of her tribe.

Shadows deepened among the boulders as the cliff walls rose still higher, and as Yree walked she crouched low from time to time to examine a patch of disturbed ground, a broken twig, a bit of fresh dung. A tingle of unease grew deep in her belly. Where was her quarry? She should have found some sign by now to indicate that it had gone to ground. The velociraptor she followed was young, hardly as tall as her younger brother, but still dangerous. If she had underestimated the length of time since it had last eaten, it might not be looking for a safe sleeping place after all. Instead it could be lurking anywhere, waiting for her to blunder into its razor-sharp claws.

Yree traveled on, steeling herself for a confrontation with a clever predator. She walked quickly but with feather-light steps, making barely a sound. She had not gone far when her attention was drawn by the sound of a snapping branch. She whipped her head around to see her prey standing in the shadow of what she quickly realized was its mother. In the space of a heartbeat, Yree's lifelong training kicked in and she knew with certainty that she had walked into an ambush. Where there was an adolescent and its parent, there would be another parent nearby. She whirled with her spear

raised, just as a full-grown raptor leaped down upon her. Whether through luck, skill, or a combination of both, the attacking beast landed on her spear, causing the end of it to dig into the ground. The impact pushed Yree back, away from the deadly sickle-shaped claw protruding from the raptor's foot. But it wasn't quite far enough away—the wounded creature managed to rake her side with his forearm claw even as the spear tip drove fatally deep into his heart.

The raptor crashed heavily to the ground with an ungodly scream, splintering and breaking the spear with the momentum of its fall. In its death throes, her opponent no longer concerned her, and she whirled quickly to face the other pair, the adrenaline in her system making her oblivious to the wound on her side.

The other two raptors were chittering wildly, but they made no move toward Yree. She knew they would not immediately attack now that she had proven her-



self to be a danger. She also knew that without her spear, she had no chance of fighting off a single raptor, much less two of them. Still, as clever as they were, they wouldn't understand that her broken spear was next to useless. Yree yanked the broken end out of the ground. She couldn't afford the time it would take to pull the spear tip out of the now-dead raptor. Nothing went to waste in this land—scavengers would be upon the carcass shortly, and few of them limited themselves to scavenging. She was not interested in becoming a tasty morsel.

Yree turned and glared aggressively at the two raptors for a moment, then turned her back on them deliberately and continued striding through the valley. She wanted desperately to head back to her village, but the path home was blocked, and the beasts would view it as a confrontation if she walked toward them.

With a start, Yree became aware of a throbbing pain and wet stickiness on her side. She glanced down as she continued to walk; her wound was bleeding, but not heavily. Her relief was short-lived as she came to the realization that the raptors would continue tracking her, waiting for her to weaken from loss of blood and weariness. Her only hope was to keep going and pray that she could get assistance from a friendly tribe, or find shelter that the raptors couldn't access.

She did not like this place, and she liked it less and less the more she traversed its rocky confines. Ferns and shrubs, dispersed widely over the stony ground, seemed to quiver of their own volition in the dim light. Again and again, she imagined that she saw movement in the corner of her eye, only to be mocked by boulders and rocks and plants and nothing else. She reminded herself that her body and mind were slowing as a result of her exertions and injury. Her growing weariness gave power to her imagination, persuading her eyes that a thick clump of roots was a nest of writhing snakes, or that a fallen log was the tail of a great beast preparing to leap on her from the shadows.

Nothing looked familiar, and she was in territory completely unknown to her. Where in the name of the gods was she? She could hear the raptors following behind her, making no effort to be stealthy and purposely calling out in an attempt to unnerve her. She tried to reassure herself; she was following the direction of the stream, which meant she was probably headed toward a larger body of water. Eventually, she would find people. She simply needed to keep moving. To stay still was death.

A warm breeze sighed through the valley. Sounds and sights continued to be deceptive, uncertain: in the

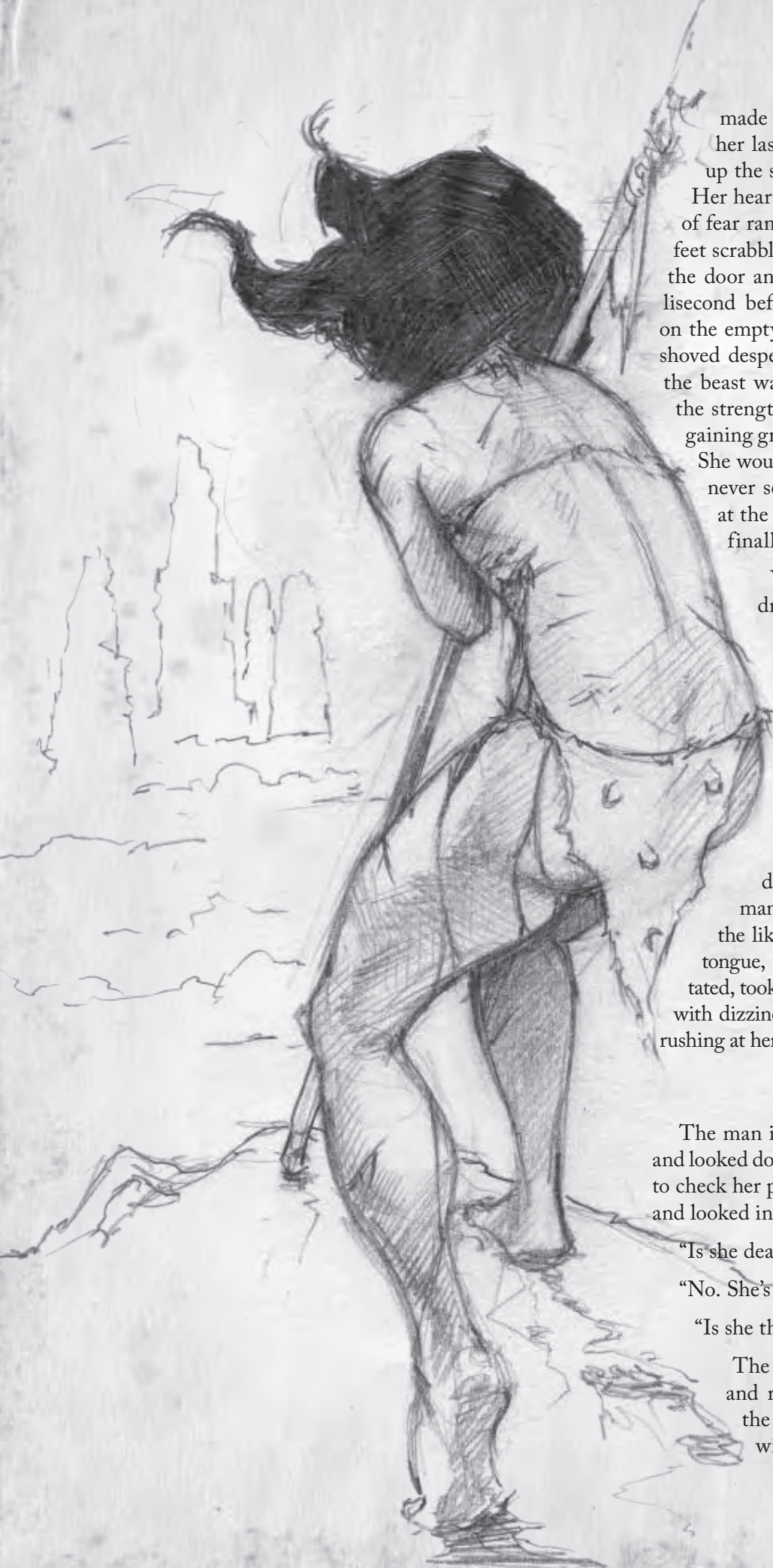
stirring of the leaves she heard the sound of men's voices, of women moaning, snakes hissing. Strange phantoms seemed to appear in the spaces between the boulders—twisted faces, tormented bodies, impossible shapes—then just as suddenly vanished, as if into the stones themselves. She shook her head and ordered herself to be calm. She was a trained tracker and hunter, and would not give in to her fears. She continued on, renewed in her confidence, striving not to slow her pace.

She came abruptly to the end of the rocky maze. The stream curved away to her left. The stone cliff to her right opened in a great semicircular curve, like a vast stone amphitheater of the sort she had seen once in the great ruined city near her village. A thin waterfall trickled from the overhanging summit, and ferns and moss grew out of the stones at its base.

Surrounding this place was a neglected wall. Her heart sank. The people who once lived here had long since left. She would find no help here. Two stone pylons, carved from blocks of grayish-green stone and engraved with symbols she did not recognize, marked a break in the wall. No, not a break: a gateway. Along with the symbols were graven images of men, but they were people of a sort she had never seen. The men were fighting—some sort of battle scene, like those her cousin was sometimes called upon to craft after another successful foray against the great hairy apemen of the far jungle. The victors wore clothing of outlandish sort and carried ornate sticks, from which emitted some kind of ray or lightning. The vanquished wore a kind of crested helmet and little else, and they fought with clubs and spears. Beyond the gateway, broken paving stones choked with weeds led to a small, triangular building with a strange roof that seemed to be made of some shiny golden metal.

Yree struggled to keep moving at a strong pace, but her body was weakening. The distance between her and the raptors lessened. She used her spear as a cane as she hobbled up the overgrown pathway. Though she wanted nothing more than to stop and rest, she did not pause at the steps leading to the building. She focused on the walls ahead of her and steadfastly made her way upward. The outer walls were covered with carvings in relief that sloped up and away toward the point of the roof, but from this angle she could not discern the images. The door, a massive thing of bronze studded with unfamiliar metal, stood ajar. Could this be her sanctuary? If she could get inside and close that heavy door before the raptors got to it, she would be safe!

Her hunters were distressingly close, and would surely see that she would have the advantage once she



made it through that door. She drew deep from her last reservoir of strength and ran—fled!—up the stairs toward her last chance for survival. Her heart was beating in her throat, and a frisson of fear ran down her spine when she heard clawed feet scrabbling up the steps behind her. She reached the door and squeezed through the opening a millisecond before the mother raptor snapped its jaws on the empty air where her body had just been. Yree shoved desperately at the heavy bronze door even as the beast was trying to push its way in. She lacked the strength to budge it, and the raptor was slowly gaining ground on her. She wasn't going to make it. She would die in this strange, dark building, and never see her family again. She pushed in vain at the door, her vision blurring from the effort, finally falling to her knees.

Yree awaited the sharp claws and teeth in dread, hoping for a quick end. She heard some loud bangs and pops, and men's voices, and felt the thud as the raptor fell to the ground. With a mixture of alarm and hope, Yree weakly pulled herself up, took a few steps back, and crouched in a defensive position. In her hand the shaft of the broken spear was slippery with her sweat and blood.

She watched with trepidation as the door opened to reveal the silhouette of a man wearing garb of which she had never seen the like. He barked at her in a strange, guttural tongue, and gestured her toward him. Yree hesitated, took a tentative step forward and was overcome with dizziness from her blood loss. The ground came rushing at her and then there was nothing but darkness.

The man in gray moved to the collapsed girl's side and looked down at her dispassionately, squatting down to check her pulse. Another man came to the doorway and looked in at them curiously.

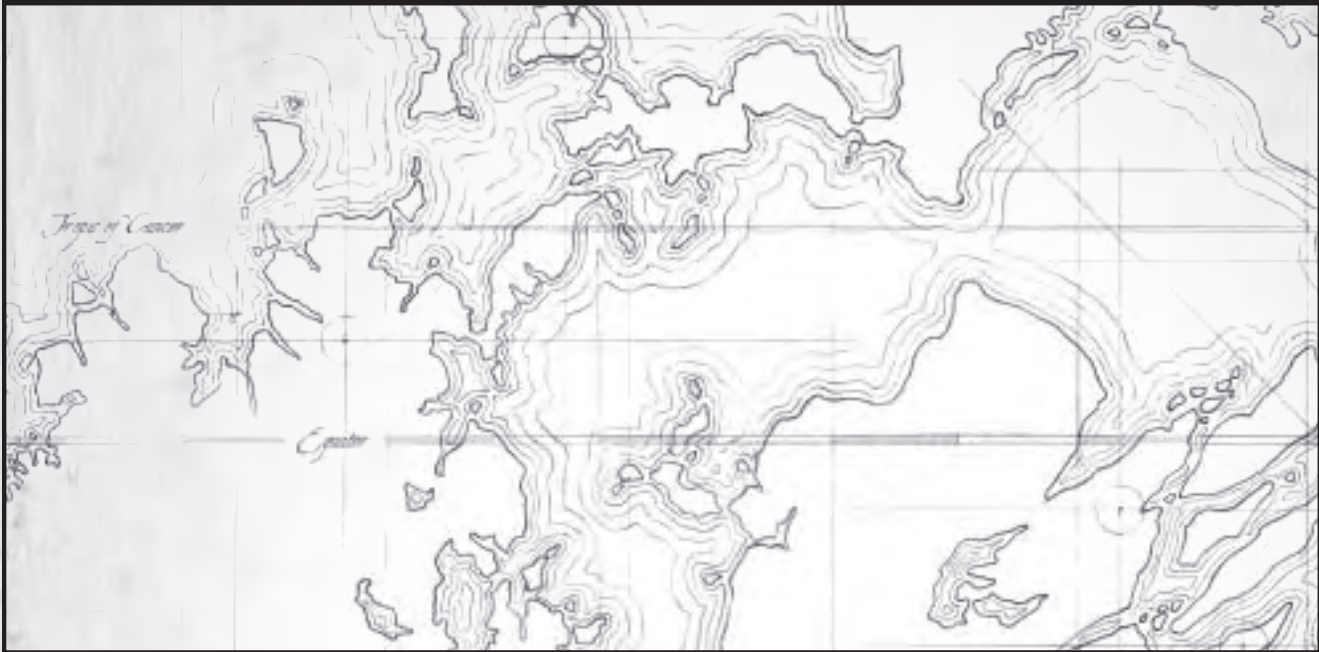
"Is she dead?"

"No. She's just wounded."

"Is she the one von Wartenburg is looking for?"

The first man shrugged, hoisted the girl up, and replied, "Who knows? Let's take her to the flying disc with the others. Wartenburg will have to figure it out himself."

⊕ INTRODUCTION



Enter a world of action and adventure, where prehistoric beasts walk among the ruins of lost cities. Here you will find untamed wilderness, hostile natives, and ancient treasures. Half-men prowl the shadows, the caves, and the trees while cannibals, dinosaurs, and stranger things seek to hunt you down. The few bastions of civilization here are usually more cruel and deadly than the jungles that surround them. Even if you can survive, will you be able to uncover the truths of the ancients and escape from this savage and uncharted world?

What is *Mysteries of the Hollow Earth*?

Mysteries of the Hollow Earth is a source book for the *Hollow Earth Expedition* roleplaying game. It expands the game world and provides an infinite number of possibilities for new adventures. With *Mysteries* in hand, your campaign can remain entirely within the Hollow Earth with player characters consisting entirely of natives or permanently lost travelers. You may also use this setting as a touchstone or a destination for stories that begin or end on the surface world. As a pulp adventure sourcebook, *Mysteries* provides more information about the things you've come to expect from *Hollow Earth Expedition*: strange creatures, supernatural powers, and lost technology from an ancient civilization!

How to use this Book

Mysteries of the Hollow Earth is divided into chapters, each dedicated to a different aspect of the game.

Chapter 1: Characters provides additional material for creating native characters, including beastmen characters.

Sample Characters features eight new Hollow Earth characters.

Chapter 2: Supernatural Powers includes shamanism—a new sorcery path, and rules for creating arcane artifacts.

Chapter 3: The Hollow Earth describes some of the most intriguing Hollow Earth locations.

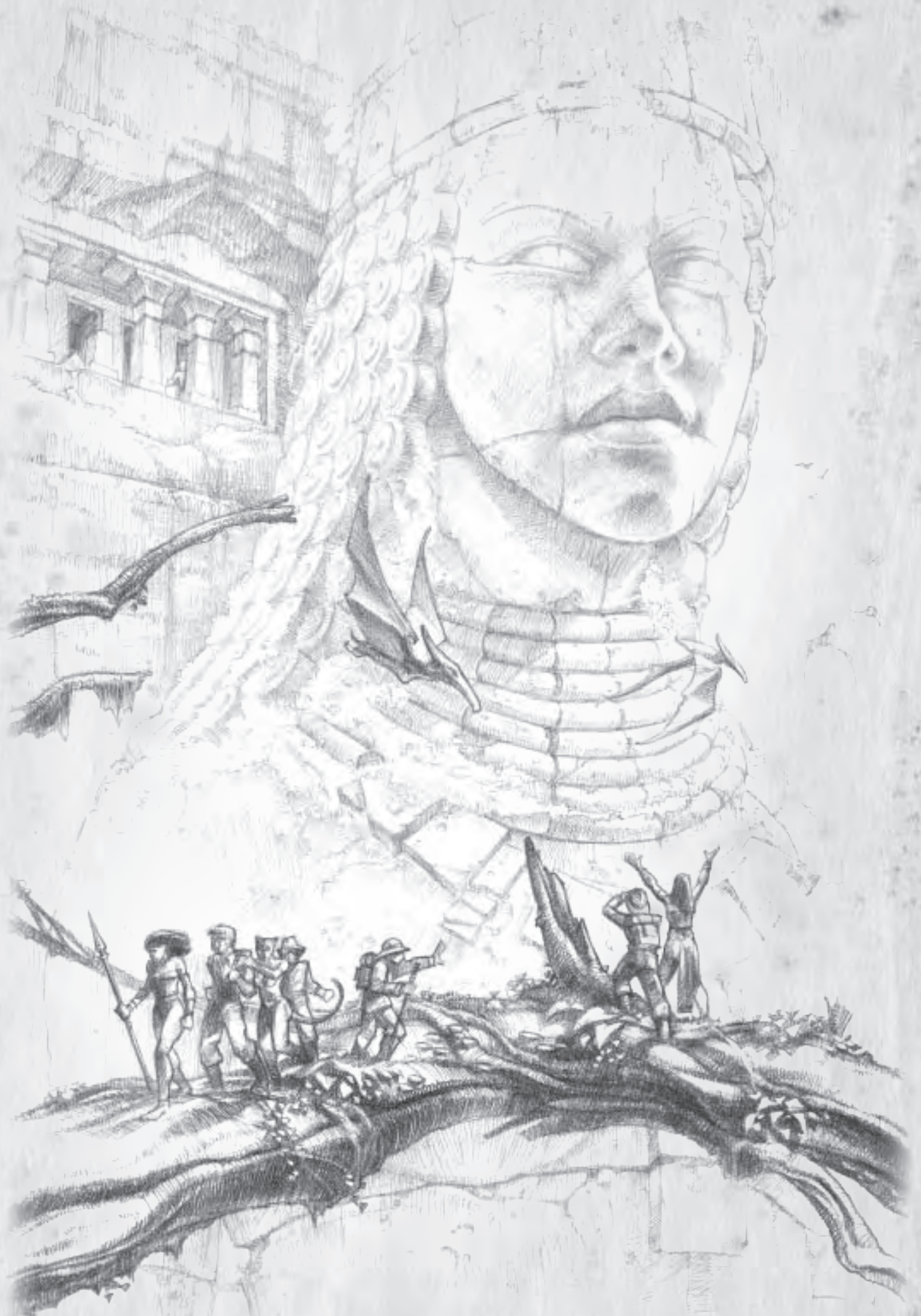
Chapter 4: Natives details the larger and more influential cultures your character might encounter.

Chapter 5: Beastmen outlines the behavior and biology of the half-human, half-animal species found within the Hollow Earth.

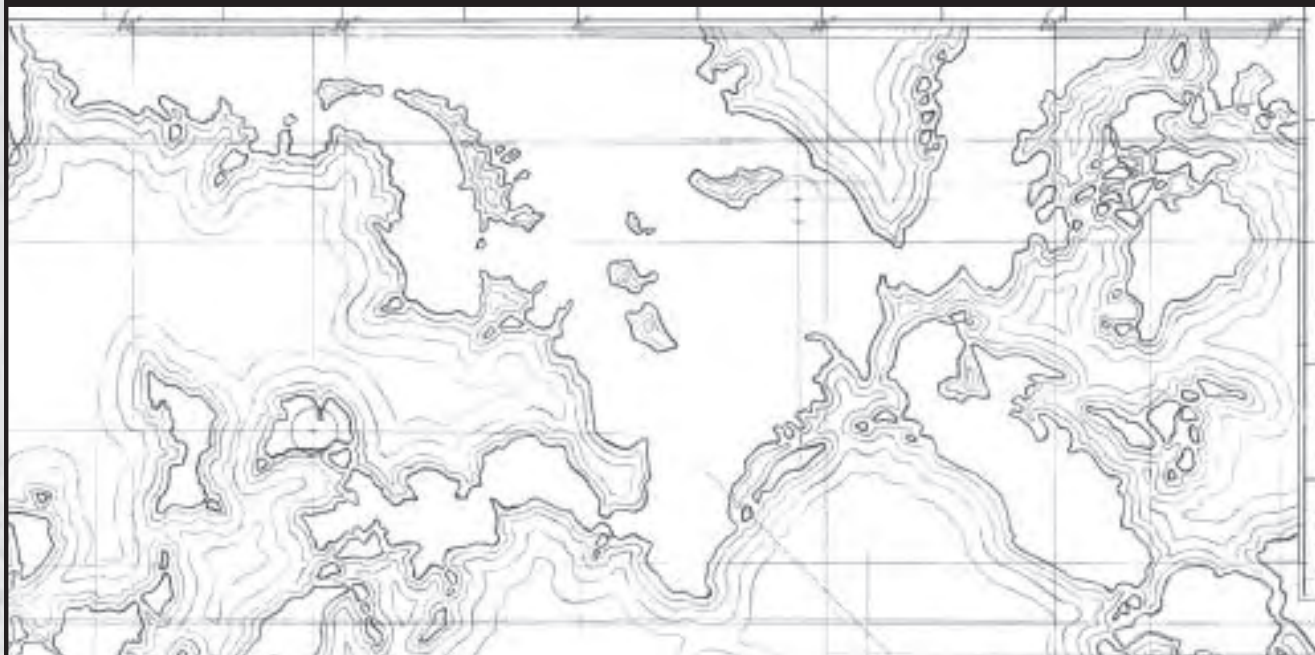
Chapter 6: Bestiary offers descriptions and statistics for numerous species that populate the wilderness, as well as rules for designing your own creatures.

Sample Adventure takes the characters on a thrilling adventure set in the lost city of Atlantis.

Brace yourself for intrigue, excitement, and action as you investigate the *Mysteries of the Hollow Earth*...



⊕ CHAPTER 1: CHARACTERS



Hollow Earth natives are as diverse and untamed as the wilds they inhabit. Below you will find new Archetypes, Motivations, Talents, and other character generation information designed to help create characters from uncharted frontiers and lost civilizations. The process for creating a Hollow Earth character is the same as creating one who originates on the surface world (see Character Creation Overview in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 36). Simply follow the normal character creation steps using any of the additional material presented here. Where there are conflicts, the information presented below supersedes that in the core rulebook.

ARCHETYPES

Many of the Archetypes presented in the *Hollow Earth Expedition* rulebook are well suited for natives and explorers alike. A lizardman might carry a spear and a safari leader might carry a rifle, but both share the Archetype of Hunter. A daredevil pilot may fly across the Atlantic while a pirate captain may set sail from Blood Bay, but both are equally Adventurers. Below are Archetypes that are more commonly found in the Hollow Earth, but they certainly also manifest on the surface world. By all means, put your own spin on the Archetype you select. Is your Outcast an insidious heretic or a lonely wanderer? Is your Mystic a lizardman shaman or a Shangri-La martial artist? Use these descriptions as touchstones to get you started.

Barbarian

Barbarians are more comfortable in the wilderness than in civilization. They have the ability to provide for all their own needs, and they regard most luxuries as more trouble than they're worth. Often, citizens of larger settlements view Barbarians as ill-mannered, ignorant misfits, but these so-called misfits know that those who look askance at their ways would be the first to die in the real world. To the Barbarian, society is an elaborate scheme to coddle weakness and waste time on trivialities. Most often, it is best to simply ignore civilization, but sometimes its encroachment on the natural world is too flagrant to dismiss. Other times, the treasures of civilization are too tempting to pass by. Either way, this often leads many Barbarians to consider themselves in a constant, low-key war against their weaker but more numerous "civilized" counterparts.

Examples: Feral Child, Noble Beastmaster, Reclusive Hermit

Beastman

Beastmen belong to any number of species that blend the traits and appearances of animals and humans. Although they are far less numerous than humans, different breeds can be found in any region and climate of the Hollow Earth and many are adapted to survive in environments in which humans could not. Scientists and

sages can only guess at their origin, but the day-to-day existence of Beastmen is usually not so different from their human counterparts. Some Beastmen aspire to greatness and walk paths that set them apart from others of their kind, but most are simply making their way through the world as guided by their instincts and upbringing. Few of their kind seek out adventure, but adventure nevertheless sometimes plucks them from their homes and their daily routines, and when it does they find that the skills and abilities which allowed them to survive in the wilderness of the Hollow Earth can influence the course of other civilizations on both large and small scales.

Examples: Apeman, Lizardman, Moleman

Guardian

Guardians are devoted protectors of persons, places, or objects. They might be protective for reasons of greed, ideological convictions, or unexamined subconscious needs, but all Guardians share the will to supplant their immediate desires with constant preparation and eternal vigilance. Whether the threat is physical, political, or otherwise, Guardians train their minds and bodies for the moment of crisis and pass their free time contemplating every scenario which might present a threat. Guardians who have lost their charge sometimes feel that they owe their own lives as penance, but most will seek redemption by attaching themselves to something or someone else in need of protection.

Examples: Keeper of Secrets, Professional Bodyguard, Temple Guardian

Healer

Healers have the skills and resources to nurture the physical, emotional, and often spiritual well-being of others. They know that mind and body are inextricably linked, and that when one is afflicted, the other will suffer. Healers are unlikely to have earned their skill through long years of formal education, but instead rely on their intuition about their patients' needs and their harmonious connection with the life-giving elements of Earth and sun, as well as the bountiful medicinal properties contained within the plants and animals of their domain.

Examples: Medicine Man, Village Midwife, Witch Doctor

Mystic

Mystics are those men and women who work to develop an intuitive understanding of the cosmos and their position in it. Perhaps they read books and study under strict masters, but intellectual comprehension is not their goal. If they study the form, it is only to realize the formless: the ineffable truths pursued by Mystics can only be understood and communicated indirectly through the languages of symbolism, faith, and ecstasy. Whether they seek epiphany through simple meditation or elaborate ritual, all mystics agree that in order to truly understand reality we must abandon all preconceived notions of the world and give ourselves over to veiled, sometimes counter intuitive celestial truths.

Examples: Tribal Shaman, Prophetic Oracle, Wandering Monk

Native

The natives of the Hollow Earth may seem exotic and even bizarre to outsiders, but in truth the vast bulk of their kind seeks nothing more than to support themselves, their families, or their tribes through their labors as hunters, gatherers, or farmers. Some practice outlandish rituals, some have devised ingenious ways to keep predators at bay, others subsist on a highly unusual diet, and some do all of the above. They see their lifestyle as nothing more than following in the footsteps of their ancestors while leaving a path for their descendants. Some may be staunchly set in their routine while others may long for a change, but few expect to travel far from their villages during their lifetimes and fewer still believe that they could become heroes. Still, when they are forced out into the wider world and disaster seems assured, it is often the fresh, unbiased approach of the Native which can save the day in ways "civilized" people simply cannot anticipate.

Examples: Cannibal, Cargo Cultist, Noble Savage

Outcast

Outcasts are rejected, scorned, and shunned by their people. Some chose this path as a sacrifice for their ideals or their loved ones, but most have the role of Outcast thrust upon them as the result of a crime, a plague, or a lowly birth. Many live on the outskirts of the society that rejects them, but more have been ejected from their homes and are doomed to wander—forever seeking a place to settle but never fitting in anywhere. Although the stigma is often unpleasant, many come to value their position and

Chapter One

find it liberating to be free of the societal expectations that most cultures place upon their members.

Examples: Exiled Pirate, Social Pariah, Vril-ya Heretic

Warrior

To the Warrior, combat is the ultimate art. They are certainly ready to follow the orders of their superiors and maneuver in cooperation with their peers, but fighting is an intensely personal undertaking for them; they pride themselves on their individual discipline and drive for superiority in all things related to war. Many also practice more refined arts and scholarly disciplines such as poetry, politics, or architecture, but they know that the realm of martial arts extends to and even encompasses all these other domains, and that excellence in any endeavor can sharpen the mind and spirit to promote excellence in all others.

Examples: Amazon Warrior, Warrior-Poet, Tribal War-Chief

MOTIVATIONS

Whether they were raised in the exotic wilds of a verdant rainforest or the concrete jungle of a bustling city, every character is driven by the same wants and needs. Most of the Motivations presented in *Hollow Earth Expedition* and *Secrets of the Surface World* are as fitting for Hollow Earth natives as they are for surface world residents. Below are some additional Motivations that might work best for native characters but are often not out of place on the surface world. As always, check with your Gamemaster to see which are best suited for the game, and work with your fellow players to choose Motivations that work well together (see Building a Party in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 39).

Glory

Your character seeks to become the stuff of legend. Through daring and amazing deeds, she hopes to inspire songs and stories that will be repeated for years—if not for generations. Often, those who seek glory do not look for immediate attention or recognition, but rather hope to achieve immortality as their names become increasingly heaped with honor, praise, and admiration.

You earn Style points when your character enhances her reputation or encourages a friend or adversary to enhance her reputation.

Possessed by: Barbarians, Hunters, Warriors

Preservation

Your character strives to preserve a threatened way of life or a fading body of knowledge. He is unlikely to receive any reward or recognition for his efforts, but failure means the loss of something even more precious than his own life. Perhaps the object of protection is threatened by an outside force, or perhaps the people have simply turned their back on it due to apathy or disdain. Either way, your character will need to embark on a lifelong quest to protect his traditions and his people.

You earn a Style point when your character preserves something for posterity or encourages someone else to do so.

Possessed by: Academics, Guardians, Healers

Wisdom

Your character is searching for answers to a dilemma. She may be driven to find peace over a personal quandary or she may be attempting to unravel the mystery of the human condition. To gain wisdom, she may study at the feet of a master or seek out the discoveries and experiences that will help her put everything into perspective.

You earn a Style point when your character gains insight into life's mysteries or helps someone else to do so.

Possessed by: Adventurers, Mystics, Outcasts

SKILLS

The Skills presented in the *Hollow Earth Expedition* rulebook cover nearly all of the abilities and knowledge that a native character might need. Most players will be able to create a character using the original Skill list. Along with new Archetypes and Motivations, there is also one new Skill (see Alchemy, page 55).

Zero Level Skills

The Hollow Earth holds countless cultures, each with a different set of proficiencies. Whenever a culture depends on a certain Skill for survival or everyday living, it makes sense that any character growing up in that culture would have at least minimal familiarity with that Skill.

If you are using the optional Zero Level Skills rule (see *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8), consult the following chart to determine which Zero Level Skills a character would have, based on his or her upbringing.

Native	Zero Level Skills
Amazon	Athletics, Brawl, Melee, Stealth, Survival
Cannibal	Brawl, Intimidation, Melee, Stealth, Survival
Cargo Cultist	Brawl, Diplomacy, Melee, Stealth, Survival
Neanderthal	Athletics, Brawl, Melee, Stealth, Survival
Noble Savage	Athletics, Brawl, Melee, Stealth, Survival
Pirate	Brawl, Firearms, Intimidation, Melee, Stealth
Titan	Athletics, Brawl, Intimidation, Melee, Survival
Vril-ya	Brawl, Diplomacy, Linguistics, Stealth

Vril-ya also gain a Zero Level Skill based on their caste (p. 89). Priests learn Academics: Religion, Warriors learn Firearms, and Builders learn a specific Craft (choose one).

Beastman	Zero Level Skills
Apeman	Athletics, Brawl, Melee, Stealth, Survival
Gillman	Athletics, Brawl, Melee, Stealth, Survival
Greenman	Athletics, Brawl, Diplomacy, Stealth, Survival
Hawkman	Athletics, Brawl, Melee, Stealth, Survival
Lizardman	Athletics, Brawl, Melee, Stealth, Survival
Mantisman	Athletics, Martial Arts: Mantis Style, Melee, Stealth, Survival
Moleman	Athletics, Brawl, Craft: Mining, Stealth, Survival
Pantherman	Archery, Athletics, Brawl, Stealth, Survival

TALENTS

Talents represent your character's natural aptitudes and special abilities. The Talents presented in the *Hollow Earth Expedition* rulebook cover a wide range of activities, but that is by no means an exhaustive list. Below are some additional Talents that increase your character's abilities and help him adapt to the Hollow Earth.

There are two types of Talents: standard and unique. Unique Talents can only be taken once, while standard Talents may be taken multiple times through additional experience point expenditures or temporarily raised through Style point expenditures. A Talent is available to any character who meets the prerequisites (if any). While most Talents can be purchased at any time, some are only available during character creation (but may be increased during play with experience points or Style points).

Multiple Talent Bonuses

In some cases, different Talents may provide bonuses to the same roll. Whenever two or more Talents provide overlapping bonuses, only the highest bonus applies. Therefore, it is only necessary to boost one Talent to gain the benefit to all related rolls. There are subtleties to different Talent bonuses, though. When in doubt, the Gamemaster has the final say as to whether a specific bonus applies to a particular roll.

TALENT DESCRIPTIONS

Acclimated

Unique

Prerequisites: Body 3

Your character is exceptionally hardy and can resist exposure to extreme temperatures much longer than other people can.

Benefit: Exposure to extreme temperatures does nonlethal damage every two hours that your character is without shelter (see Exposure in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 134).

Animal Affinity

Prerequisites: Charisma 3

Your character has a way with animals and intuitively knows how to handle them. When necessary, she can call existing animal friends to her aid or befriend new ones and convince them to help her temporarily.

Benefit: Your character can befriend a temporary Animal Follower. The cost of the new Resource is equivalent to boosting a Talent (see Boosting Talents in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 113). Your character gains a new Animal Follower (or Animal Followers) appropriate to the number of boosted levels (see Animal Followers, p. 25). The boosted Resource lasts for the remainder of the scene, after which point the animal friend departs.

Normal: Your character is not able to recruit Animal Followers.

Note: This Talent replaces *Animal Affinity* as listed in the *Hollow Earth Expedition* rulebook.

TALENT DESCRIPTIONS

Talent	Prerequisite	Benefit
<i>Acclimated</i>	Body 3	Take half damage from exposure
Animal Affinity	Charisma 3	Temporarily recruit Animal Followers
Beast Rider	Ride 4	Treat hostile mounts as cooperative mounts
Berserker Fury	Willpower 3	Exert to gain Strength-based Skill bonus
<i>Breath of Life</i>	Transmutation	Create living artifacts
Callous Rider	Ride 4	Exert your mount to gain Ride bonus
<i>Chameleon*</i>	Greenman, Lizardman, or Mantisman	Improved hiding ability
Civilized	Primitive Flaw	Improved modern technology bonus
Combat Clinch	Brawl 4	Damage opponent with a successful Grapple
<i>Deep Breath</i>	Body 3	Improved lung capacity
Disease Resistance	Body 3	Improved resistance to disease and illness
Dive Bomb	Wings	Improved throwing bonus while flying
Echolocation*	Perception 4; Gillman or Moleman	See without light; improved blind attack
Escape Artist	Acrobatics 4	Escape from restraints
Evasive Riding	Ride 4	Use Ride Skill for Defense roll
<i>Famine Hardy</i>	None	Half damage from starvation and thirst
Fearsome Attack	Intimidate 4	Can use Intimidation for attack roll
<i>Feign Death</i>	Con 4	May pretend to be dead
Feline Grace	Pantherman	Use Athletics to balance or break falls
<i>Gargantuan</i>	Titan	Your character is Size 2
<i>Giant*</i>	—	Your character is Size 1
Hardening	Body 3	Increased resistance to caustic damage
Heavy Lifting	Strength 3	Increased carrying capacity
Herb Lore	Medicine 4	Use natural supplies for medicine
Immovable	Body 3	Improved resistance to Knockback and Knockdown
Immunity	Body 3	Immune to specific disease, drug, or poison
Light Sleeper	—	Halves normal amount of sleep required
Mounted Attack	Ride 4	Use Ride Skill for attack roll
Mounted Charge	Ride 4	May charge without losing Active Defense
Native Terrain	None	Improved abilities on specific terrain
Orichalcum Sense	Lizardman	Can determine direction of orichalcum
Poison Skin*	Gillman, Greenman	Skin secretes Toxin rating 3
Poison Tolerance	Body 3	Improved resistance to drugs and poisons
Psychic Resistance	Willpower 3	Improved resistance to supernatural powers
Rend	Claws or Talons	Brawl attacks ignore Passive Defense rating
Ride-by Attack	Ride 4	Mount may move and attack simultaneously
Rooted	Greenman	Improved resistance to Knockback and Knockdown
<i>Sharp Claws</i>	Claws or Talons	Improved claws or talons
<i>Sticky Feet*</i>	Lizardman, Mantisman	Can scale sheer surfaces
Sweep	Brawl 4 or Melee 4	Reduce penalties for sweep attacks
<i>Swift Flight</i>	Wings	Increased flight speed
Swift Mount	Ride 4	Mount gains +2 Move rating
<i>Titanic</i>	Gargantuan	Your character is Size 4
<i>Transmutation</i>	—	Create Arcane Artifacts with Alchemy
Trick Rider	Ride 4	Improved riding ability
<i>Tunneling</i>	—	Double Move rating when digging
<i>Venom*</i>	Lizardman	Bite is poisonous
Venom Spitting	Venom	Spit venom
<i>Weather Sense</i>	None	Can accurately predict the weather
<i>Wings*</i>	Mantisman	May fly at half Move rating

* This Talent is only available during character creation (but may be increased later with experience points)

Unique Talents are listed in italics

Beast Rider

Prerequisites: Ride 4

Your character is an expert at riding hostile mounts and can hang tight on the backs of the wildest bucking broncos and surliest saurians.

Benefit: Your character can treat a hostile mount as if it were a cooperative mount while riding it (see Riding Animals, page 26).

Normal: Your character must make a Ride roll to hang on to a hostile mount.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 Ride bonus at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Berserker Fury

Prerequisites: Willpower 3

Your character can enter a state of reckless battle frenzy, increasing his power and aggression at a cost to his own health.

Benefit: As a free action, your character can exert (take one point of nonlethal damage) to gain +2 bonus to all Strength-based Skill and Attribute rolls until the end of the combat turn.

Normal: Your character cannot exert himself in battle to gain an advantage.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +4 bonus to all Strength-based Skill rolls at second level and a +8 bonus at third level.

Breath of Life

Unique

Prerequisites: Transmutation Talent

Your character knows the secret of life and can use alchemical ingredients to create sentient beings—such as living statues or talking mirrors—with thoughts and feelings of their own.

Benefit: Your character can create intelligent artifacts (see Living Creations, p. 63).

Normal: Your character is not able to create intelligent artifacts.

Callous Rider

Prerequisites: Ride 4

Although cruel, your character can coerce and force her mount to perform well beyond its natural abilities.

Benefit: Your character can force her mount to exert itself (taking one nonlethal wound). Following this exertion, the character gains a +2 Ride bonus until the end of the scene. You may use this Talent on both cooperative and hostile mounts (see Riding Animals, p. 26).

Normal: Your character's mount will not exert itself.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +4 Ride bonus at second level and a +8 Ride bonus at third level.

Chameleon

Unique; only available during character creation

Prerequisites: Greenman, Lizardman, or Mantisman

Your character has learned to exert conscious control over the shifting pigments in her skin, allowing her to produce natural camouflage.

Benefit: Your character gains a +4 camouflage bonus to hiding-related Stealth rolls.

Normal: The shifts in your character's skin color are not visible enough or coordinated enough to provide camouflage.

Civilized

Prerequisites: Primitive Flaw

Your character is familiar with surface world culture and has learned to be comfortable with modern technology, either because he grew up with it or spent time with someone who taught him about it.

Benefit: Your character does not suffer from the -2 penalty to modern or technology-related Skills.

Normal: Your character suffers a -2 penalty to any modern or technology-related Skill rolls

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 bonus to modern or technology-related rolls at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.



Combat Clinch

Prerequisites: Brawl 4

Your character is an expert at no-holds-barred fighting and can hold opponents in place or pin them down so that they cannot escape his blows.

Benefit: Your character can hurt his opponent as part of the Grapple maneuver (see Grapple in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 120). Resolve the Grapple normally, but your character inflicts damage if you roll more successes than your opponent. If you roll the same or fewer suc-

cesses than your opponent, your attack fails. Additionally, failed attempts to break the grapple with opposed Strength rolls do not inflict damage on his opponent.

Normal: Your character cannot strike an opponent he is grappling.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 Brawl bonus at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Deep Breath

Unique

Prerequisites: Body 3

Your character has exceptional lung capacity and is able to hold his breath for much longer than other people can.

Benefit: Your character can hold his breath for two minutes per point of Body rating, or two turns per success on a reflexive Body roll during combat (see Drowning and Suffocation in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 134).

Normal: Your character can hold his breath for one minute per point of Body rating, or one turn per success on a reflexive Body roll during combat.

Disease Resistance

Prerequisites: Body 3

Your character has an unusually strong immune system and is able to fight off disease and illness much more effectively and quickly than other people can.

Benefit: Your character gains a +2 bonus to Body rolls related to disease and illness (see Disease in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 133).

Normal: Your character's Resistance roll is unmodified.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +4 bonus to disease-related Body rolls at second level and a +8 bonus at third level.

Dive Bomb

Prerequisites: Wings

Your character has mastered the art of utilizing the momentum of her flight to help propel objects at targets below.

Benefit: As long as your character is flying above her target, she gains a +2 dive bomb bonus to attack rolls with thrown objects.

Normal: Flight grants no bonus to attacks with thrown objects.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +4 dive bomb bonus at second level and a +8 bonus at third level.

Echolocation

Only available during character creation (but may be increased later with experience points)

Prerequisites: Perception 4; Gillman or Moleman

Your character can listen to vibrations and sound waves reflected from surfaces allowing him to perceive his surroundings even in the total absence of light.

Benefit: Your character can effectively see in the dark. He can perceive structures, objects, and movement, but can not determine colors or distinguish between fine textures. Thus, your character could easily navigate around a pit, but would not be able to read a book or examine a photograph without more light. Additionally, he makes blind attacks at a reduced penalty. He may ignore up to a -2 penalty due to poor visibility, such as in partial darkness or with blurred vision.

Normal: Your character must have light to see. Additionally, you suffer a -4 penalty when your character makes a blind attack against an opponent, assuming he knows her general location. Making a blind attack against an opponent whose location is unknown results in a -8 penalty.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character may ignore up to a -4 penalty due to poor visibility at second level and a -8 penalty at third level.

Note: *You can not take this Talent if you have the Deaf Flaw or Hard of Hearing Flaw.*

Escape Artist

Prerequisites: Acrobatics 4

Your character can wriggle out of tight spaces, slip out of wrestling holds, and escape from shackles.

Benefit: Your character can attempt to escape from her bonds by contorting her body. Make an Acrobatics roll versus the difficulty of restraints. Escaping from reasonably snug ropes around the wrists is difficulty 2. Squeezing through the bamboo bars of a cage is difficulty 3 (or difficulty 4 in the instance of iron bars). Wriggling free of a straitjacket is difficulty 5. This Talent does not assist in picking locks, so your character might be able to slip free of handcuffs but could not unlock her friends; nor would this Talent help free her from a locked room.

Additionally, your character can substitute an Acrobatics roll to free herself when being grappled.

Normal: Your character can not use Acrobatics to escape bonds. Your character must make an opposed Strength roll to free herself when being grappled.

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Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +4 escape bonus at second level and a +8 bonus at third level.

Evasive Riding

Prerequisites: Ride 4

You can direct your mount to weave and dodge in an unpredictable pattern, thereby making you much harder to hit.

Benefit: Whenever your character is mounted on a cooperative animal, you may substitute your Ride rating for your character's or his mount's Defense rating. All Defense modifiers apply to the new Defense, including the penalty for Size. Your character can not use Evasive Riding if either he or his mount is prevented from using Active Defense.

Normal: Your character and the mount must roll Defense as normal.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 Defense bonus at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Famine Hardy

Unique

Prerequisites: None

Even in the Hollow Earth there are times when food is scarce and water is elusive. With this Talent, your character has the ability to function at a normal level long after those around him have dropped from malnutrition.

Benefit: Your character suffers one point of lethal damage for every two days he goes without water, and one point of lethal damage for every ten days without food.

Normal: Your character suffers one point of lethal damage for each day he goes without water and one point of lethal damage for every seven days without food.

Fearsome Attack

Prerequisites: Intimidation 4

Your character is a terror on the battlefield, capable of using fear as a weapon and forcing his opponent into making deadly mistakes.

Benefit: Your character can use his Intimidation rating when making an unarmed or melee attack. Make an Intimidation roll (including weapon modifiers) against your opponent's Defense rating (plus any appropriate modifiers). If you roll more successes than your opponent, you inflict one point of damage per extra success. If you roll the same or fewer successes than your opponent, your attack fails.

Normal: Your character may not use his fearsome presence to attack an opponent.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent three times. Your character gains a +2 Intimidation bonus at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Feign Death

Unique

Prerequisites: Con 4

Your character can temporarily slow his metabolism to the point where he appears to be dead.

Benefit: Your character can voluntarily suppress his respiration and slow his heartbeat to the point where even a medical examiner might be fooled. Your character's eyes must be closed while feigning death, but he otherwise remains fully conscious and may revive himself whenever he chooses. Anyone attempting to detect signs of life must make an opposed Medicine roll against your character's Con roll.

Normal: Your character is unable to feign death.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 Con bonus at second level and a +4 bonus at third level when undergoing medical examination.

Feline Grace

Prerequisites: Pantherman

As the saying predicts, your character always lands on her feet. Better still, she rarely loses her footing to begin with because she can rely on her athleticism and grace to prevent gravity from ever taking her unawares.

Benefit: Your character can make an Athletics roll in place of an Acrobatics roll when attempting to maintain her balance, contort her body, or break a fall (see *Falling in Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 135).

Normal: You must make a Dexterity roll for your character to balance herself, and she may not attempt to break a fall unless she has the Acrobatics Skill.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 Athletics bonus at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Gargantuan

Unique

Prerequisites: Titan

Your titan character has managed to eat enough and survive long enough to continue his growth. He is now as tall as a giraffe and as heavy as a triceratops. The downside is that he must consume massive quantities of food each day to support his titanic body.

Benefit: Your character is Size 2. In addition, he gains a cumulative +2 Strength and +2 Body rating. Your character's maximum Body and Strength ratings are increased and the Damage rating of all natural weapons is increased by two (i.e., kicks and punches are increased to 2 N).

Normal: Your titan character is Size 1.

Special: Your character's Size will also penalize attack, Defense, and Stealth ratings (see Size in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 46). Additionally, your character must eat at least five times as much as an average human adult or suffer from the effects of deprivation (see *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 132).

Giant

Unique; only available during character creation

Prerequisites: None

Your character is over seven feet tall and weighs more than five hundred pounds. He towers over normal people and is bigger, stronger, and tougher than they are. Finding clothing is a constant challenge!

Benefit: Your character is Size 1. In addition, he gains a +1 Body and +1 Strength rating. Your character's maximum Body and Strength ratings are increased and the Damage rating of all natural weapons is increased by one (i.e., kicks and punches are increased to 1 N).

Normal: Your character is Size 0.

Special: Your character's Size will also penalize attack, Defense, and Stealth ratings (see Size in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 46). Additionally, your character must eat at least twice as much as an average human adult or suffer from the effects of deprivation (see *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 132).

Hardening

Prerequisites: Body 3

Your character has an amazing resistance to a certain type of caustic damage and is able to shrug off things that might hurt other people.

Benefit: You can roll your character's Passive Defense rating when resisting certain types of caustic damage, such as fire, electricity, or poison (select one type when you purchase this Talent; see Caustic Damage in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 134).

Normal: Your character has no resistance to caustic damage.

Advanced: You may purchase up to three times for the same damage type. Alternately, its effects apply to a different type of caustic damage for each purchase. Your character gains a +2 Passive Defense bonus at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Heavy Lifting

Prerequisites: Strength 3

Whether through efficiency of motion or just plain grim determination, your character can lift and carry far more than his fair share. This Talent is favored by many Hawkmen Raiders who are charged with hauling water and food up to the Aerie.

Benefit: Your character gains an effective +1 Strength rating when calculating the amount of weight he can carry (see Encumbrance in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 128).

Normal: Your character's encumbrance limits are unmodified.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 effective Strength rating at second level and a +3 bonus at third level.

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Herb Lore

Prerequisites: Medicine 4

Your character was born into a primitive native tribe or was trained by an herb doctor and learned how to use plants, minerals, and other natural elements to heal wounds and cure diseases.

Benefit: When in the wilderness and there is a reasonable amount of time to search for proper ingredients, your character is always considered to have supplies when making Medicine rolls.

Normal: Without medical supplies, characters must make Medicine rolls at a -2 penalty.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 Medicine bonus at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Immovable

Prerequisites: Body 3

Your character is perpetually aware of her stance and her balance. Even when struck violently, she maintains her footing.

Benefit: Treat your character as having +1 Strength for the purpose of resisting Knockback and Knockdown.

Normal: If your character takes more damage in one blow than her Strength rating, she is knocked backward five feet per point of damage in excess of her Strength rating. If the damage is more than double her Strength rating, she is knocked down as well.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +1 Strength bonus to resist Knockback and Knockdown for each level of this Talent.

Immunity

Prerequisites: Body 3

Your character has developed immunity to a specific poison, drug, or disease, and suffers no ill effects from coming into contact with it.

Benefit: Your character can ignore the effects of a specific poison, drug, or disease (select one when purchasing this Talent; see Disease in *Hollow Earth Expedition* p. 133 and Poisons and Drugs p. 136).

Normal: Your character has no immunities.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent more than once, but each time its effects apply to a different poison, drug, or disease.

Light Sleeper

Prerequisites: None

Your character needs less sleep than most people and is known for “always sleeping with one eye open.”

Benefit: Your character only needs half as much sleep as a normal person (see Fatigue in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 135).

Normal: Your character suffers one point of nonlethal damage for each day he goes without sleep.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 Perception bonus at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Mounted Attack

Prerequisites: Ride 4

In combat, your character moves so closely with his mount that he can use the animal’s momentum to power and guide his own attacks.

Benefit: When mounted on a cooperative animal, your character can use Ride in place of Brawl or Melee rolls.

Normal: Your character uses his normal Brawl or Melee rating for attack rolls.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 Ride bonus at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Mounted Charge

Prerequisites: Ride 4

Your character may spur her mount into a charge directed at the enemy and use the full force of the animal’s momentum in the strike.

Benefit: When mounted on a cooperative animal, your character’s mount will perform the charge maneuver upon command. Your character and her mount gain the +2 charge bonus to the attack roll without losing their Active Defense.

Normal: Your character can command her mount to charge, but both character and mount lose their Active Defense rating.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times. Both your character and her mount gain a +4 charge bonus to attack rolls at second level and a +8 bonus at third level.

Native Terrain

Prerequisites: None

Your character is highly experienced at surviving in an environment where most fear to tread. He has an instinctive knack for finding food and water when in a specifically chosen terrain.

Benefit: Choose a certain type of terrain (such as Arctic, Jungle, Desert, Mountain, etc.). Whenever your character is in that terrain, he is immune to Deprivation and Exposure (see Deprivation in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 132 and Exposure, p. 134).

Normal: Your character does not have any Native Terrain experience.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent any number of times, with each selection indicating mastery of a different type of terrain. Alternately, you may purchase this Talent up to three times for the same terrain type, gaining a +2 bonus to all Skill rolls when in the specified terrain at second level or a +4 bonus at third level.

Orichalcum Sense

Prerequisites: Lizardman

Your character is effectively a living lodestone and has a sixth sense for detecting that precious and mystical metal: orichalcum.

Benefit: Make a Perception roll to detect orichalcum in your character's vicinity. The difficulty is determined by how far away and how well hidden the metal is. On a successful roll, your character can determine the direction of the nearest supply of orichalcum. Often, this includes orichalcum used in the construction of Atlantean and Arcane Artifacts. If your character is on the surface world, this same sense indicates the direction to the nearest opening into the Hollow Earth.

Normal: Your character has no special means to detect orichalcum.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +2 Perception bonus at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Poison Skin

Only available at character creation (but may be increased later with experience points)

Prerequisites: Gillman or Greenman

Your character's skin contains a toxin which does not harm him but makes him unpalatable and even deadly to predators. Whenever something bites your character, it is poisoned by his flesh.

Benefit: Whenever a creature bites your character it must make a Body roll against a Toxin rating of 3. If the creature fails this roll, it takes one point of nonlethal damage for each point by which it failed.

Normal: Your character is not poisonous.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character's Toxin rating is 4 at second level and 5 at third level.

Poison Tolerance

Prerequisites: Body 3

Your character has an unusually strong immune system and is able to withstand poisons and drugs much better than most people.

Benefit: Your character gains a +2 bonus to Body rolls related to poisons and drugs (see Poisons and Drugs in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 136).

Normal: Your character's Resistance roll is unmodified.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +4 bonus to poison and drug-related Body rolls at second level and a +8 bonus at third level.

Psychic Resistance

Prerequisites: Willpower 3

Whether through a natural gift or years of training the mind, your character has built up an uncanny resistance to mind-altering supernatural phenomena. He may pierce

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illusions, resist demonic possession, or stand up to supernatural terrors more effectively than most other mortals.

Benefit: Your character gains a +2 bonus to resist rituals or psychic powers.

Normal: Your character has no special defense against supernatural powers.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +4 Supernatural Resistance bonus at second level and a +8 bonus at third level.

Rend

Prerequisites: Claws or Talons

Your character can tear through his opponent's defenses with his claws or sink his talons into places where he is less protected.

Benefit: Your character can make a Brawl touch attack with his claws or talons (see Touch Attacks in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 126). Make a Brawl roll (including weapon modifiers) against your opponent's Active Defense rating (plus any armor modifiers). If you roll more successes than your opponent, you inflict one point of lethal damage plus an additional point of damage for each two Size levels your character possesses. If you roll the same or fewer successes than your opponent, your attack fails.

Normal: Your character attacks with his claws or talons normally.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character inflicts a bonus point of lethal damage at second level and two bonus points at third level.

Ride-by Attack

Prerequisites: Ride 4

Your character is deft when attacking with a mount, and can attack at the most opportune moments, even when the mount is moving erratically.

Benefit: When mounted on a cooperative animal, your character can attack without stopping his mount's movement (up to the mount's total Move rating). Alternatively, while your character is riding, your mount can attack without stopping its movement.

Normal: Your character and the mount can move and then attack, or attack and then move, but cannot move both before and after the attack.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent twice, granting your character or the mount the ability to simultaneously run and attack.



Rooted

Prerequisites: Greenman

By digging roots into the earth, your character plants himself making it virtually impossible to be pushed or shoved out of place. Even when he can not dig into the ground, your character can spread his roots out on all sides to secure his position.

Benefit: As a Move action, your character can plant himself into the ground, doubling his effective Strength for the purposes of resisting Knockback or Knockdown (See Knockback and Knockdown in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 129). Your character retains this benefit for as long as he remains rooted to the spot. Uprooting himself again is also a Move action.

Normal: If your character takes more damage in one blow than his Strength rating, he is knocked backward five feet per point of damage in excess of his Strength rating. If the damage is more than double his Strength rating, he is knocked down as well.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times, representing your character's increased fortitude when rooted. Your character gains a +2 Passive Defense bonus at second level and a +4 bonus at third level.

Sharp Claws

Unique

Prerequisites: Claws or Talons

Through proper care and careful whetting, your character has made her claws sharper, stronger, and more dangerous than the claws of others of her kind.

Benefit: The damage rating of your character's claws or talons is increased by 2.

Normal: The damage rating of your character's claws or talons equals your character's Size rating.

Sticky Feet

Unique; only available at character creation

Prerequisites: Lizardman or Mantisman

Your character's hands and feet are spongy and form a natural seal on smooth surfaces, or he has a mass of tiny filaments that grips anything it contacts. As a result, he can scale nearly any surface.

Benefit: Your character can climb across any surface (including the ceiling), including those that can not normally be climbed due to a lack of handholds or footholds.

Normal: Your character can climb across any vertical surface at his full Move rating (see *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 46). Your character will become dislodged if he is knocked back or knocked down by an attack.

Sweep

Prerequisites: Brawl 4 or Melee 4

Your character is adept at making wide, swinging attacks that can hit multiple enemies in one blow.

Benefit: Your character can ignore up to a -2 penalty for sweeping (see Sweep sidebar). If your character sweeps over a greater distance, reduce the sweep penalty by 2.

Normal: When performing a sweep, your character suffers a -2 attack penalty per target or each five-foot distance between targets.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times. You may ignore up to a -4 sweep penalty at second level and a -8 penalty at third level.

New Maneuver: Sweep

A sweep is a type of total attack in which your character swings a long weapon in a broad circle with the intent of hitting multiple targets. Make a Brawl or Melee attack at a -2 for each target and each empty five-foot space between targets. All targets must be within the normal reach of your weapon and must form an uninterrupted line; therefore, if an ally is between two enemies then you may not strike both enemies unless you include your ally as a target. Longer reach is an advantage when performing this maneuver, so a character can reduce his total penalty by an amount equal to his Size. When making a sweep attack, your character loses his Active Defense.

Swift Flight

Unique

Prerequisites: Wings

Through a combination of physical endurance and a knack for catching the right winds, your character can

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cover much more distance in the air than anyone could hope to run on the ground.

Benefit: Your character can fly at twice the rate he can run based on his Move rating (see *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 46).

Normal: Your character can fly at the same speed he runs.

Swift Mount

Prerequisites: Ride 4

With a little tenderness, the right tone of voice and the occasional spur in the side, your character can get surprising speed out of his mount.

Benefit: When your character is riding a cooperative animal, that animal gains a +2 Move rating.

Normal: Your character's mount moves at its normal Move rating.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent twice, gaining your character's mount an additional +2 Move rating.

Titanic

Unique

Prerequisites: Gargantuan

Your titan character has found enough food to survive to middle age and now weighs as much as a tyrannosaur. But the curse of growth continues: your character must consume truly unbelievable quantities of food each day to support his ongoing growth.

Benefit: Your character is Size 4. In addition, she gains a total +4 Strength and a +4 Body rating. Your character's maximum Body and Strength ratings are increased and the Damage rating of all natural weapons is increased by four (i.e., kicks and punches are increased to 4 N).

Normal: Your Titan character is Size 2 (if Gargantuan).

Special: Your character's Size will also penalize attack, Defense, and Stealth ratings (see Size in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 46). Additionally, your character must eat at least ten times as much as an average human adult or suffer from the effects of deprivation (see *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 132).

Transmutation

Unique

Prerequisites: None

Your character has the innate ability to manipulate alchemical elements and can use this power to create arcane artifacts.

Benefit: Your character can create arcane artifacts (see Alchemy, p. 55).

Normal: Your character can not create arcane artifacts.

Trick Rider

Prerequisites: Ride 4

Your character has the ability to guide her mount through, around, and over difficult terrain and unusual obstacles.

Benefit: When your character is riding a cooperative animal, she gains a +2 Ride bonus while performing tricks and stunts (see Stunts in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 145).

Normal: Your character's Ride Skill is unmodified when performing tricks and stunts.

Advanced: You may purchase this Talent up to three times. Your character gains a +4 Ride bonus when performing tricks and stunts at second level and a +8 Ride bonus at third level.

Tunneling

Unique

Prerequisites: None

Your character is adept at digging quickly and can create mines, trenches, and burrows with relative speed.

Benefit: Your character can dig up to double his Move rating in feet per hour.

Normal: Your character digs up to his Move rating in feet per hour.

Special: In order to dig, your character must have equipment such as shovels or picks. Rocky terrain may be impenetrable without this equipment, so his Move rating is considered halved. Only molemen need no equipment because their claws are naturally designed to tunnel.

Venom

Only available at character creation (but may be increased later with experience points)

Prerequisites: Lizardman

Your character has venomous saliva which can be used to incapacitate prey.

Benefit: Your character's bite injects venom into his victim. An envenomed character must make a Body roll against a Toxin rating of 3. If the victim fails this roll, she take one point of nonlethal damage for each point by which she failed. Your character can use this venom up to five times per day.

Normal: Your character is not venomous.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times. Increase the Toxin rating of your character's venom by 1 for each additional level of this Talent.

Venom Spitting

Prerequisites: Venom

Your character has learned to spit venom as a ranged attack.

Benefit: You can roll Athletics to make a touch attack with your character's venom. The range of this attack is ten feet (see Range in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 123).

Normal: Your character must successfully bite a creature to envenomate it.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent up to three times. You can ignore up to a -2 range penalty at second level and a -4 penalty at third level.

Weather Sense

Unique

Prerequisites: None

Your character has a knack for predicting the weather. He might gain foresight through careful study of the meteorological conditions, a sixth sense, or a certain pain in the joints, but he is rarely unprepared for even the most turbulent of climates.

Benefit: Your character knows what kind of weather to expect on any given day without having to make a Survival roll. Your character can predict rain, clear skies, snow, or even hurricanes, but no measurements

are precise. For example, he doesn't quite know when the rain will start or how many inches will fall, but he could determine whether it will start "soon" or "later" and if it will be "heavy" or "mild."

Normal: You must make a Survival roll (difficulty 2) to predict the weather that day.

Wings

Only available at character creation (but may be increased later with experience points)

Prerequisites: Mantisman

Whether a genetic throwback or an evolutionary leap forward, your character was born with a set of fully functional wings that allow her to attain low altitudes and limited speeds.

Benefit: Your character can fly at half her Move rating.

Normal: Your character can not fly.

Advanced: You may buy this Talent two times. At the second level, your character can fly at her full Move rating.

Special: Mantisman characters with this Talent are eligible for any Talent related to flight that would normally be allowed only for hawkmen.

RESOURCES

The Hollow Earth offers vast wealth to anyone who explores it, yet its wilderness often makes it very difficult to hold onto treasures or maintain supply lines. For these reasons, Resources are much less common—and, often, much less useful—inside the Hollow Earth than they are on the surface world. Although most natives have learned not to rely on equipment or expect special privileges outside of the confines of their own villages, there is one Resource which is common and well suited for travel: Animal Followers.

Animal Followers

Like human Followers, Animal Followers are faithful retainers, servants, and friends. This resource does not represent typical livestock, pets, or mounts, but rather unique animals who are especially motivated to assist their masters in particular tasks and even accompany them on their journeys. An animal's reasons for following its master may be gratitude, dependence, or

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loving devotion. Most of these animals were painstakingly trained for their roles and may have been raised from infancy by their masters. All but a rare few have come to depend on their masters and they cannot be useful in their role unless they receive a regular supply of food. Some animals accompany their masters at all times; if they are small enough, they may even reside on his person in a pouch, pocket, or fold of clothing. Others come and go at their own discretion, but generally never wander far enough that they lose track of their masters. Followers are not always skilled or formidable, but they are fiercely loyal and will almost always defend their owners with their own lives.

While you get to define the nature of your character's relationship with her Followers, the Gamemaster ultimately controls these characters and determines what they will or will not do. For example, even a well-heeled Hyaenodon might not understand that it isn't allowed to go inside the chief's hut, and a monkey that has been trained to steal small artifacts might not know better than to attempt to pick the pocket of Blood Bay's chief constable. Abuse or neglect of Followers will certainly negatively affect their attitude toward your character, possibly causing them to abandon him when he needs them most.

There are no restrictions on what creatures can become Followers, but the larger, fiercer creatures are generally harder to tame. Purchasing additional levels

of this Resource either increases the number of Followers your character has or improves his existing ones. All of the creatures listed in the Bestiary of this book (see Chapter 6) include Follower levels to indicate their rating as a Resource. To create your own animals, consult the chart below.

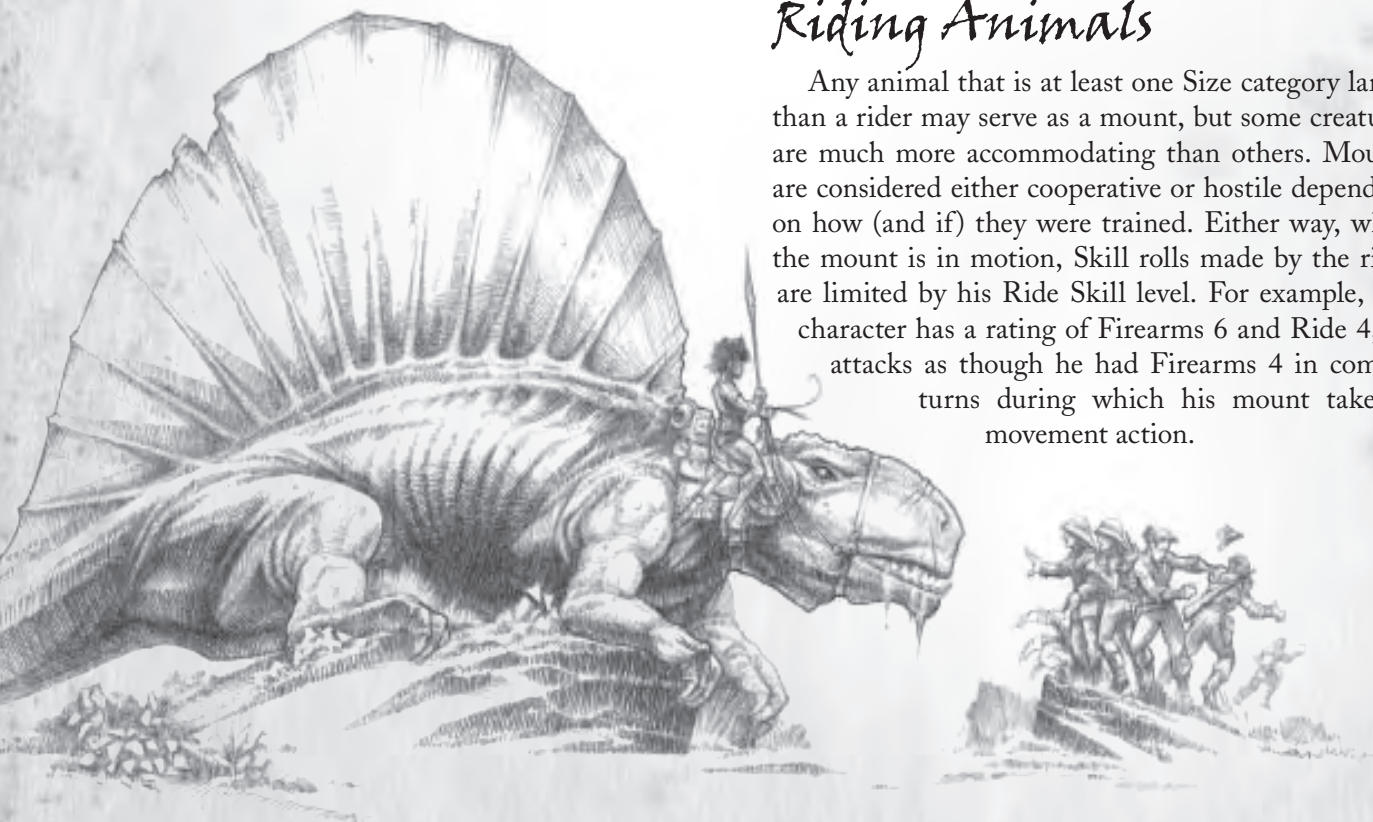
Followers	Number*	Attributes	Skills	Talents
0	1	9 pts.	5 pts.	0
1	1	12 pts.	10 pts.	1
2	1	18 pts.	10 pts.	2
3	1	24 pts.	10 pts.	3
4	1	30 pts.	10 pts.	4
5	1	36 pts.	10 pts.	5

**Instead of increasing the power of a single Animal Follower, you may increase the number of followers by adding two to their number for each additional level of this Resource.*

Example: John's character has Followers 1, but after flipping through the Bestiary he doesn't see anything he thinks fits his character. Instead, he designs a small pterodactyl that is about the size of a German Shepherd and has 12 Attribute points, 10 Skill points, and 1 Talent. After a few game sessions, he has enough experience to raise his Follower Resource rating. He could increase his current follower's Attributes and add a Talent (perhaps his pet is maturing toward full size). Alternatively, he could acquire two additional followers just like the one he already has (perhaps his original pet laid eggs and John's character helped rear the hatchlings).

Riding Animals

Any animal that is at least one Size category larger than a rider may serve as a mount, but some creatures are much more accommodating than others. Mounts are considered either cooperative or hostile depending on how (and if) they were trained. Either way, while the mount is in motion, Skill rolls made by the rider are limited by his Ride Skill level. For example, if a character has a rating of Firearms 6 and Ride 4, he attacks as though he had Firearms 4 in combat turns during which his mount takes a movement action.



A cooperative mount is any animal that has been trained or accustomed to take riders, and this always includes Animal Followers of sufficient Size. However, many trained animals accept only those riders whom they recognize as their masters, and will be hostile to all others (see below). A cooperative mount will generally obey the instructions of its rider, although it will not easily be coerced into performing any action counter to its nature or training. Therefore, a dairy cow will never charge into a noisy battle, while a stubborn triceratops is likely to stop to graze when hungry even if its master expresses a need for haste. The rider of a cooperative animal need not make a Ride check to stay mounted except in extreme circumstances, such as when the animal jumps over an obstacle or suffers Knockback (in which case the Ride difficulty is equal to the animal's Athletic Skill difficulty or the degree of Knockback, respectively).

Hostile mounts include any wild animal and any trained animal that takes a disliking to its rider. A potential rider must generally mount the hostile animal with a Ride roll (to climb onto its back), an Athletics roll (to jump down on it from above), a Stealth roll (to sneak up on it), or a combination of the above. Each combat turn thereafter, the rider must then use his movement action to make a Ride roll with a penalty equal to the animal's Size plus Dexterity. If the rider's number of successes is less than the mount's Strength rating, he is thrown to the ground and will likely be the animal's choice target on its next turn. If the rider's number of successes is equal to or greater than the mount's Strength rating, he stays mounted, but may only perform actions one-handed and with a -4 penalty. If the rider's number of successes is greater than twice the mount's Strength rating, then the rider holds his position with his legs and can perform actions with both arms without penalty.

A hostile mount can move and attack as normal, but the animal cannot attack its rider unless it has an unusually long and flexible appendage (such as a plesiosaur's neck or a stegosaur's tail). A mount may not use its Active Defense to defend against attacks from its rider. Whether the mount is cooperative or hostile, if it is equipped with riding equipment such as saddle and stirrups, a rider gains a +2 bonus to any Ride rolls.

FLAWS

Flaws represent your character's physical, mental, or social shortcomings. Whenever your character is hurt or penalized by his Flaw during play, you earn Style points that may be spent for bonus dice when you need them (see Flaws in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 76). The list of Flaws in the core rulebook is not exhaustive, therefore a variety of new Flaws are detailed below.

FLAW DESCRIPTIONS

Flaws	Description
Physical Flaws	
Albino	Lacks skin pigmentation
Clipped Wings	Cannot fly
Cold-blooded	Becomes sluggish when cold
De-clawed	Claws and talons do nonlethal damage
Dry skin	Must wet skin regularly
Dwarf	Smaller and weaker of body
Flea-Infested	Infested with blood-sucking parasites
Mange	Skin is scabby and infectious
Ravenous	Requires double amount of food
Thumbless	Cannot use tools
Mental Flaws	
Childlike	A child in an adult body
Code of Conduct	Lives by an inflexible set of rules
Easily Lost	Poor direction sense
Hard to train	-2 penalty to all non-Zero Level Skills
Indecisive	Cannot make up his mind
Malaise	Constantly ill at ease and lethargic
Multiple Personalities	Personalities interfere with each other
Obvious	Cannot stay inconspicuous
Ouranophobia	Irrational fear of falling upward
Territorial	Aggressively defends territory and possessions
Social Flaws	
Animal Antipathy	Instinctively hated by animals
Dominant	Seeks to subjugate others
Doomsayer	Foretells catastrophic events
Exiled	Forcibly outcast from society
Herd Mentality	Resists individualism and aloneness
Masochism	Desires pain
Raised by Wolves	Disregards all forms of etiquette
Repulsive	Repellent to other people
Sadism	Unnecessarily cruel
Submissive	Wants others to make the decisions
Misc. Flaws	
Bestial	Cannot communicate or use tools
Pawn of Prophecy	Fate controls your circumstances
Primitive	-2 penalty to all technology-related rolls

Physical Flaws

Albino: Your character lacks pigmentation in his skin, eyes, and hair and suffers one point of nonlethal damage for each hour he spends in direct sunlight. Additionally, NPCs from superstitious or xenophobic cultures may discriminate against him. You earn a Style point whenever your character suffers harm or discrimination due to his lack of pigmentation.

Clipped Wings (Hawkman Only): Your character can only glide at half his Move rating. He may have suffered an accident or illness, or he may have been injured by spiteful groundlings. You earn a Style point whenever your character is limited by his crippled wings.

Cold-blooded (Lizardman or Mantisman Only): Your character generates very little body heat and slows down significantly in cold environments. Whenever the temperature drops below 60 degrees Fahrenheit, she suffers a -2 penalty to all actions. You earn a Style point whenever your character is hampered by the cold. *A character with Cold-Blooded cannot take the Acclimated Talent.*

Declawed (Beastman only): Your character lacks claws. This may be the result of a birth defect, an injury, or a punishment for a crime. Her Brawl attacks inflict nonlethal damage. You earn a Style point whenever your character's lack of claws impairs her safety or livelihood.

Dry Skin (Greenman or Gillman only): Your character's skin is easily dehydrated and he must submerge himself in water regularly. He suffers one point of lethal damage for each day he cannot bathe for at least an hour. You earn a Style point whenever your character is harmed by his need to keep moist.

Dwarf: Your character is physically smaller than others of his kind. Reduce his size category by one. For most humans and beastmen, this means a Size rating of -1, and should include all the accompanying adjustments to Health, attack, Stealth, and so on. Additionally, your character also begins play with -1 Body and -1 Strength. You earn a Style point whenever your character's size or weakness is exploited. *A character with the Dwarf Flaw cannot take the Giant Talent.*

Flea-Infested: Whether due to poor hygiene or a property of your diet or blood, your character is unusually attractive to fleas and other blood sucking insects. As a result, he is constantly distracted by the itchy, swollen bites, causing you to suffer a -2 penalty on any roll related to concentration, patience, or stealth. You earn a Style point whenever your character's infestation proves a distraction to him or when he is shunned because of it.

Mange (Apeman, Moleman, or Pantherman only):

Your character has an infectious skin disease that causes her skin to be scabby and her fur coat to be patchy and unattractive. You suffer a -2 penalty to all rolls where appearance is a factor. Other characters may be cured with medical care, but you cannot be cured by normal means. You earn a Style point whenever your character is shunned or rejected because of her condition.

Ravenous: Your character requires an immense amount of food to sustain herself. Perhaps this is because she is on a growth spurt, has a digestive disorder, or is host to a parasite. If she does not consume twice the quantity of food required for an average adult, she will suffer from starvation (see Deprivation, *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 132). You earn a Style point whenever your character's hunger forces her or her friends to starve. *A character with the Ravenous Flaw cannot take the Famine Hardy Talent.*

Thumbless: Your character cannot use tools or equipment. Whether due to a condition of birth or an accident later on, your character cannot pick up or manipulate any object, and may not even turn doorknobs or put on clothes without assistance. You earn Style points whenever he is limited by his lack of manual ability.

Mental Flaws

Childlike (Titan only): Because of his titan heritage, your character is already six feet tall with a thick beard and yet no more than twelve years of age. Other people will expect him to take part in adult activities on an equal footing, yet he retains the innocence, inexperience, and neediness of any other child his age. You earn a Style point any time the disparity between your character's actual age and apparent age causes him to suffer. *A character with the Childlike Flaw cannot take the Gargantuan Talent.*

Code of Conduct: Your character lives by a set of rigid, inflexible rules that limit her actions. Perhaps she must always observe certain religious precepts or follow certain customs on the battlefield, but this code often runs counter to pragmatic decisions. You earn a Style point whenever your character convinces others to follow her code of conduct or when her code forces her to make something much more difficult than might otherwise be necessary.

Easily Lost: Your character is constantly getting turned around and lost. You may be methodical, careful, and use a map in your travels, but your internal compass points South instead of North. Your character suffers a -2 to any roll regarding giving, taking, or fol-

lowing directions. You earn a Style point any time your lack of direction sense gets you or your party lost or puts them in a bad situation. *A character with the Lost Flaw cannot take the Direction Sense Talent.*

Hard to Train: Like the proverbial old dog that cannot learn new tricks, your character is resistant to or inept with all new behaviors. You suffer a -2 to all non Zero Level Skill rolls for your character. (If you are not playing with the Zero Level Skill rule, then you suffer a -2 to all Skill rolls other than Athletics, Brawl, Melee, and Stealth). You earn a Style point any time your character or his allies suffer from your inability to learn new things or perform tasks outside your basic repertoire.

Indecisive: Your character couldn't make a split-second decision to save her life, particularly when rushed or in danger. The more options she has, the less able she is to decide what to do. You earn a Style point any time you or your party suffers from your inability to make a choice. At the Gamemaster's discretion, you can also earn a Style point by voluntarily taking a -2 Initiative penalty during combat.

Malaise: Your character constantly feels discontent, worried, and lethargic. Usually, this is accompanied by general feelings of sickness, but no physical symptoms are ever present. You earn a Style point any time your character's lethargy causes her to lose an opportunity or give up an advantage.

Multiple Personalities: Your character's mind plays host to two very different, often incompatible personalities. One personality may be dominant and may even repress the other, with the inactive personality being unaware of what the other does. At the Gamemaster's option, you may select a different Motivation for each personality. You earn a Style point whenever one of your character's personalities interferes with the life of the other or when your character is rejected by others because of his bizarre behavior.

Obvious: Your character is simply too loud and careless to stay hidden or subtle enough to conceal her true motivations. You receive a -2 penalty to stealth and deception-related rolls. You receive a Style point whenever your character fails to conceal her motives or draws negative attention to herself.

Ouranophobia (Moleman only): Your character is terrified of open spaces. Without the comfort of subterranean walls on every side, she fears she will fall up into the sky. Even if she knows this fear is irrational, it is so acute that she suffers a -2 penalty to all rolls whenever she is in an open space. You earn a Style point whenever your character's fear gets the better of her.

Territorial: Your character has a need to stake his claim and drive others away from it. He will not share that which is his and even has difficulty tolerating friends who encroach on his space. Most often, this impulse applies to protecting a location, but it may also include supplies, privileges, or mates—or all of the above. You earn a Style point whenever your character's protectiveness causes conflicts with his friends or allies.

Social Flaws

Animal Antipathy: There is something about your character that causes horses to buck her, cats to scratch her, and pterosaurs to swoop at her. Your character suffers a -2 penalty on any roll relating to animals. You earn a Style point whenever your character suffers a setback due to an uncooperative or belligerent animal. *A character with the Animal Apathy Flaw cannot take the Animal Affinity Talent.*

Dominant: Your character is driven to be the "alpha wolf." You constantly look for ways to overthrow your superiors and to force everyone else to obey your commands, even if only to prove that you can make them do something. You earn a Style point whenever your character's need to dominate others brings unnecessary strife.

Doomsayer: Your character is given to prophesying death and destruction. Maybe she does it because she is driven by powerful dreams or maybe she does it simply for attention. Some might hail your character as a walking curse and others an unabashed liar, but they rarely give your predictions a warm reception. You earn a Style point whenever your character is persecuted for her predictions or when one of her dire predictions comes true.

Exiled: Your character has been driven out of her homeland and cannot return upon pain of death. She may have been exiled because she committed a crime, violated a taboo, or may have been on the wrong side of a political or military conflict. Often, she has also been marked in some way so that she must bear the stigma of her banishment abroad as well. You earn a Style point whenever your character is shunned or denied support because of her past.

Herd Mentality: Your character resists individual thought and dislikes being alone. He may or may not expect everyone else to form a collective, but he resists individualism and is intensely uncomfortable except in the presence of his peers. You earn a Style point whenever your character sacrifices too much for the sake of the group or causes complications by refusing to be alone.

Masochism: Your character gets a kick out of feeling pain. She isn't truly self-destructive, but sometimes she may take it too far, and she might even seek out someone to cause her pain. You earn a Style point whenever your character hurts herself or needlessly invites harm.

Raised by Wolves: Your character is utterly unschooled in and possibly even contemptuous of social convention. You suffer a -2 penalty to rolls whenever manners and etiquette are involved. You earn a Style point whenever your character's brazen disregard for social niceties causes him or his friends to be rejected or excluded.

Repulsive: Whether it is his poor hygiene, constant flatulence, persistent nose-picking, obnoxiously loud talking, or some other disgusting habit or trait, your character makes people negatively react to him. People wrinkle their noses, turn away in disgust, or outright flee from the vicinity. You suffer a -2 penalty to Charisma rolls to influence people (see Influence in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p.45). You earn a Style point whenever your character's repulsive habit or trait causes him or his party to suffer in social situations.

Sadism: Your character derives pleasure from inflicting pain. She enjoys inflicting physical and emotional discomfort and has a hard time resisting toying with her victims instead of finishing them off. You earn a Style point whenever your character is needlessly cruel to his friends or enemies.

Submissive: Your character wants others to make all the decisions for him, right down to what he wears and when he sleeps. Your character suffers a -2 penalty to Willpower rolls to resist coercion and mind-affecting supernatural powers. You earn a Style point whenever your character is taken advantage of due to his submissive nature.

Miscellaneous Flaws

Bestial: Due to a disfiguring accident or simply being an animal, your character cannot communicate or use tools of any kind. You earn a Style point whenever these deficiencies interfere with your safety, happiness, or livelihood.

Pawn of Prophecy: Your character is subject to the overwhelming but invisible forces of fate. She may know her destiny and struggle against it, or it may be revealed to her piecemeal, but she finds that her circumstances conspire against her towards an inevitable destiny. You receive a Style point whenever your character takes a leap of faith or must sacrifice something for the sake of her destiny.

Primitive: Your character has difficulty interacting with anything more complicated than stone-age tools. Most likely, this results from being raised far away from modern technology, but, in the case of some beastmen, it is also compounded by differently sized and shaped hands and bodies which make it difficult for them to interface with complicated equipment. Your character suffers a -2 penalty to all rolls relating to modern technology, which includes (but is not limited to) any roll involving the Craft, Demolitions, Drive, Firearms, Gunnery, Pilot, or Science Skills. You earn a Style point whenever your character's lack of technological sophistication creates a complication or causes him to lose an advantage.

Beastmen and native characters typically start with the Primitive Flaw. With the Gamemaster's permission, players may take an additional Flaw of their choice at character creation.

CHARACTER TEMPLATES

Some creatures are basically anthropomorphic and yet do not belong to the human race. These beings think, speak, and behave in a way that is largely compatible with human kind, but they are still different enough in terms of physiology and psychology that they have comparatively enhanced abilities in some areas and striking limitations in others. Within the Hollow Earth, nearly all such creatures are beastmen, who combine the traits of animals and people.

To account for the radically different physical makeup and genetic heritage of the beastmen and other anthropomorphic creatures, you may generate such characters as you would for typical human characters (see Character Generation Overview, *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 36) and then apply the appropriate Character Template. Characters receiving Templates must give up their initial Talent or Resource, and in its place they may gain the benefit for the Template of their character type, including all Attribute adjustments, Natural Advantages, and Inherent Flaws. Characters with Templates are inherently non-human or semi-human, but with the Gamemaster's permission they may still be used as player characters.

Starting Attribute Adjustments: Most character templates offer pluses and minuses to individual Attributes, so it is possible for a starting character to begin play with an increased or decreased total quantity of Attribute points. Furthermore, characters with a Template that grants +1 to an Attribute have a maximum of 6 in that Attribute, while an Attribute at -1 can never be raised beyond 4.

Hollow Earth Character Templates

Full descriptions of the races and cultures of Hollow Earth creatures that take Templates can be found in chapters 3 and 4 of this book. Of course, there is always more to individual characters than what they gain from their heritage, but the Attributes, Natural Advantages, and Inherent Flaws for each Template are listed below.

Beastman Template	Attribute Adjustments	Natural Advantages	Inherent Flaw
Apeman	None	Climb (double Move rating when climbing); Prehensile Feet (may use feet as hands)	Primitive
Apeman, Giant	-1 Charisma -1 Intelligence +1 Willpower	Climb (double Move rating when climbing); Giant (+1 Body, Strength, Size); Prehensile Feet (may use feet as hands)	Primitive
Gillman	+1 Body -1 Dexterity +1 Strength -1 Charisma -1 Intelligence +1 Willpower	Gills (may breathe underwater); Swim (double movement rate when swimming)	Primitive
Greenman	+1 Body -1 Dexterity -1 Intelligence +1 Willpower	Chlorophyll (does not require food); Longevity (ages extremely slowly)	Primitive
Hawkman	-1 Body +1 Dexterity -1 Strength -1 Intelligence +1 Willpower	Wings (fly at full movement speed, 10-foot wingspan); Keen Senses (+4 bonus on sight-related rolls); Talons (0 L)	Primitive
Lizardman	+1 Dexterity -1 Charisma -1 Intelligence +1 Willpower	Claws (0 L); Regeneration (may regrow lost limbs and organs)	Primitive
Mantisman	-1 Body +1 Dexterity -1 Charisma -1 Intelligence +1 Willpower	Carapace (+2 Passive Defense); Hooked Arms (2 N); Keen Senses (+4 bonus on sight-related rolls)	Primitive
Molemen	+1 Body -1 Dexterity +1 Strength -1 Charisma -1 Intelligence +1 Willpower	Claws (0 L); Tunneling (double Move rating when digging)	Poor Vision (-2 penalty on sight-related rolls); Primitive
Pantherman	+1 Dexterity -1 Intelligence +1 Willpower	Claws (0 L)	Primitive
Other Template	Attribute Adjustments	Natural Advantages	Inherent Flaw
Titan	None	Giant (+1 Body, Strength, Size)	Primitive

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Even if a template imposes an Attribute penalty, no player character may have a score of zero in any Attribute.

Natural Advantages: Beastmen and other characters receiving a Template usually have some kind of specialized natural ability or equipment such as claws, gills, or heightened senses. In many cases, these are Talents that a human character might also choose, while in other cases they are unavailable to human characters.

Inherent Flaw: Character Templates may include one or even two Flaws which represent the shortcomings or unfitting adaptations of that species. All beastmen and most natives, for example, have the Primitive Flaw to represent their wild upbringing. Characters earn Style points for these Flaws as normal.

Example of Character Creation with Templates

Elizabeth wants to create a pantherman hunter and her Gamemaster agrees that beastman characters are permissible in the current game.

Elizabeth selects an Archetype and Motivation as she would for a human character, but she must consider the pantherman Template when it comes to distributing her Attribute points. Panthermen gain +1 Dexterity and +1 Willpower rating but suffer a -1 Intelligence rating, so Elizabeth's character starts with 16 Attribute points total. Because her character has a bonus in Dexterity, she could potentially begin with a 6 Dexterity (or raise her score to 6 later by spending experience). Elizabeth wants her character to be very stealthy and graceful, so she enters a score of 5, knowing that she can spend experience points later to raise it up to a 6 rating. She then distributes her other points as normal and then calculates Secondary Attributes and selecting Skills.

Instead of selecting a starting Talent or Resource, Elizabeth's character receives the



Pantherman Template which includes claws that do lethal damage. Elizabeth wants her character to be especially stealthy and dangerous, so she spends her 15 starting experience points to purchase the Subtle Strike Talent. Her character can now use her Stealth rating to attack.

Elizabeth's character must take the Primitive Flaw because it is mandated by the Pantherman Template. Optionally, she may take one additional Flaw to roleplay, and selects Aloof because she feels it fits her stealthy character concept. With that, the character needs only a few finishing touches to be ready to play.

Creating Character Templates

In the Hollow Earth, the titans and beastmen comprise the vast bulk of near-humans. But your game may call for the addition of other species hitherto undiscovered by explorers and even unknown to most natives. New types of characters that are basically anthropomorphic, yet definitely not human, call for new types of Character Templates.

You may create new Character Templates by determining their bonuses and penalties in Attribute Adjustments, Natural Advantages, and Inherent Flaws. These should balance out so that for each advantage enjoyed by the new species, it also must accept an equivalent disadvantage. To create a new Template, follow the four-step process below.

Step 1: Initial Trade-off. Because characters receiving a Template must give up the initial Talent or Resource that they would otherwise receive as part of character creation, you may add either one Natural Advantage or +1 to an Attribute.

Step 2: Determine Attribute Adjustments: For each -1 Attribute you add, you may take one Natural Advantage or +1 to a different Attribute. Except in extreme cases, no Attribute may receive more than +1 or less than -1.

Step 3: Select Natural Advantages: Natural Advantages may be added to a Template, but must be balanced on a one-for-one basis against Attribute penalties and

other disadvantages. A Natural Advantage is equivalent to a Talent, and in many cases it will be a pre-designated Talent that typical humans could also potentially develop. If it is not already a Talent, it should be equivalent to one: for example, the apeman's climbing bonus is functionally identical to the Climb Talent. Because beastmen must begin play without modern weaponry, they may receive an additional element of natural equipment such as claws, gills, or chlorophyll. The Gamemaster always has final say in what is allowable as a Natural Advantage.

Step 4: Select Inherent Flaws: Character Templates may include up to two Inherent Flaws.

Example of Creating a Template

Jack is running an extended game where his players will soon enter the valley of Shangri-La and he wants to have Yeti play a role in the events to come. He wants something a little more specialized than the pre-existing Apeman Template, so she decides to create his own sub-species of apeman suited to his particular needs.

Because Yeti are large, powerful creatures, he gives them the Giant Talent for their initial trade-off. Next, he determines their Attribute adjustments by giving them +1 Willpower and -1 Intelligence rating. But he also decides it might be better if they were gruff and standoffish, so he gives them a -1 Charisma rating. Jack wants a type of beastman that is at home in the cold and remote Himalayan mountains. Therefore, in exchange for the Charisma penalty, Jack adds Native Terrain: Mountains as a Natural Advantage. Additionally, he gives the Yeti a sixth sense to always be able to find the nearest portal into the Hollow Earth as their natural equipment.

Although the Yeti are raised in the tutelage of the Shangri-La monks, Jack still gives them the Primitive Flaw because they have virtually no exposure to technology—not to mention that their enormous hands would not be well suited to operate most modern machines. Now he has the perfect race of characters to act as Shangri-La's mountain guardians, and he may easily overlay this template on many different Yeti characters:

Beastman Template	Attribute Adjustments	Natural Advantages	Inherent Flaw
Yeti	-1 Charisma -1 Intelligence +1 Willpower +1 Size	Native Terrain: Mountains (Immune to deprivation and exposure). Hollow Earth Sense (Make a Perception roll to locate the nearest portal into the Hollow Earth)	Primitive

Chapter One

AMAZON WARRIOR

Archetype: Warrior

Motivation: Glory

Style: 3

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3	Charisma: 2
Dexterity: 3	Intelligence: 2
Strength: 3	Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 5
Move: 6	Defense: 6 (8)*
Perception: 5	Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Archery	3	3	6	(3)
Athletics	3	3	6	(3)
Throwing			7	(3+)
Brawl	3	3	6	(3)
Melee	3	3	6	(3)
Spears			7	(3+)
Stealth	3	2	5	(2+)
Sneaking			6	(3)
Survival	2	2	4	(2)
Warfare	2	2	4	(2)

Talents

Strong (+1 Strength rating)

Resources

None

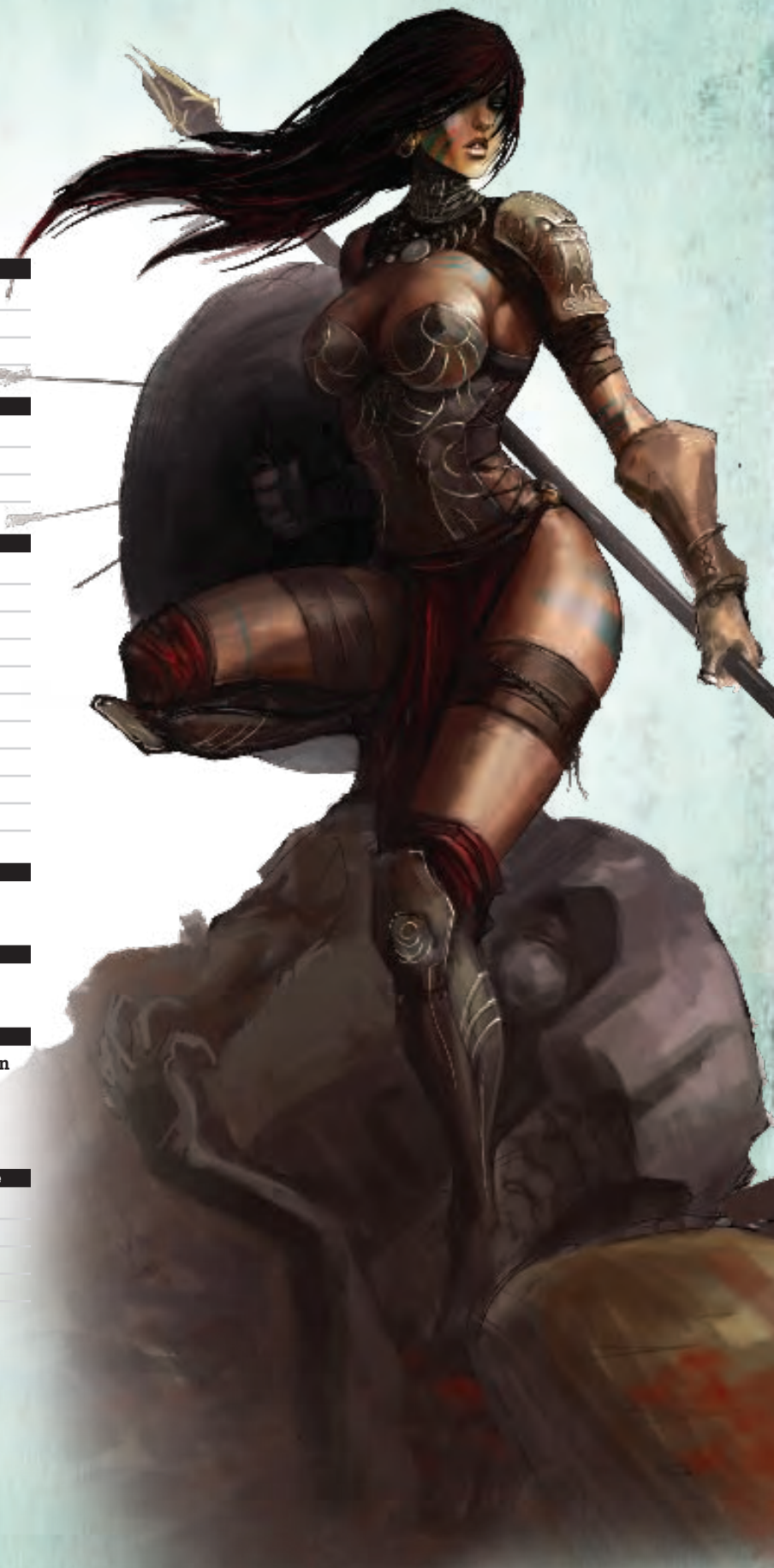
Flaw

Overconfident (+1 Style point whenever your character gets in over her head)

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Modifier	Attack	Average
Spear	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L
Spear (thrown)	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L
Sword	2 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Punch	0 N	0	6 N	(3) N

* Amazon shield provides a +2 Defense bonus



"You men stay here. Killing is woman's work."

Character Background

I was weaned on tales of valor and heroism. I learned each story at my mother's knee and know them all by heart. Each one tells of a heroic Amazon who snatched victory from the fanged jaws of defeat or sacrificed her life to defend her land and her people. I grew up dreaming of adding my name to these ranks and hearing my tribe tell tales of my own great deeds.

My mother taught me to fight with sword and spear from the time I was able to hold them. When I was old enough to bleed, I was sent out—alone—to test my mettle. I killed a cave bear and brought back its pelt. They dressed me in it and anointed me with its blood. On that day I became more than woman—I became an Amazon warrior.

Amazons are the finest warriors the world has ever known. Generations of women have handed down their weapons, knowledge, and training. We are their legacy, and like them, we are united by courage, discipline, and blood. Ours is a sisterhood of war maidens—both givers and takers of life. No one can stand against us.

When our enemies are foolish enough to encroach upon our land or test our strength, we blunt their weapons against our shields, fell them with our blades, and crush their dead underfoot. Survivors are driven before us like dust on the wind so they can spread tales of our valor and plant fear in the hearts of our enemies.

But now strange enemies have come, led by grey men that do not fear us. They wield strange weapons that sound like thunder and kill at great distance—something my sisters and I have learned firsthand. Our baffled leaders consulted the Oracle, who told us that outsiders will come from above to help us defeat the grey men. But I am a woman of action. I have grown impatient waiting for dreams, prophecies, and visions to come true. My blade is sharp, my vision clear, and my thirst for glory is unquenchable. I will track down these grey men and make them regret raising their weapons against us. I will strike fear into their hearts and my deeds will inspire my people. For the glory of my queen. For the glory of my family. For the glory of my name. I will write a new story—my story—in the blood of my enemies.

Roleplaying

You are a battle-hardened warrior, baptized in fire and trained from birth to fight and kill with sword and spear. Other Amazons—specifically, men—may be content to live peaceful lives and die in their sleep, but you are a woman and were raised to be a warrior. Death on the battlefield is the greatest glory an Amazon can achieve and you will die with your spear in your hand just like your mother. Tales of your deeds will be told long after you're gone, inspiring the next generation of great Amazon warriors.

Now a new enemy has invaded your land: outsiders equipped with strange weapons that crack like thunder and spit fire. They have only won a few skirmishes so far, but each victory emboldens your enemies and gives your menfolk delusions of grandeur. The fate of the entire Amazon civilization is at stake. Now is the time when legends are born.

Chapter One

CARGO CULT ALCHEMIST

Archetype: *Mystic*

Motivation: *Wisdom*

Style: 3

Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2	Charisma: 3
Dexterity: 2	Intelligence: 4
Strength: 2	Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 6
Move: 4	Defense: 4
Perception: 6	Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Alchemy	4	4	8	(4)
Athletics	2	2	4	(2)
Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Diplomacy	3	1	4	(2)
Linguistics	4	1	5	(2+)
<i>Gestures</i>			6	(3)
Melee	2	1	3	(1+)
Stealth	2	2	4	(2)
Survival	4	1	5	(2+)
<i>Foraging</i>			6	(3)

Talents

Transmutation

Resources

Artifact 1: Voodoo Bear*

*See Voodoo Bear in Sample Artifacts, p. 65

Flaw

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology related rolls)

Superstitious (+1 Style whenever your character's beliefs cause her trouble)

Weapons	Rating	Modifier	Attack	Average
Knife	1 L	0	4 L	(2) L
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N



“The Great Shampoo commands us: Lather! Rinse! Repeat!”

Character Background

My people dwell by the shores of the Endless Sea, blessed by a bounty of marvelous gifts sent to us by our benevolent and generous gods. These sacred items wash ashore from the sea or fall from the skies of the Eternal Sun—each a treasure with mysterious purpose that we must divine for ourselves. Many things are used to make life easier (like the silver skin of the hollow birds, from which we fashion the roofs of our huts), some things are used for play—for we are a joyous people and respect the pleasures of life—and some items are used for gaining wisdom and expanding our understanding of the world around us.

We have many wondrous treasures in our village: there is a pretty, green, curved glass bottle that fills itself with a fresh and sustaining healing-water, a metal torch that both illuminates without heat and allows the user to look inside a man’s heart to reveal lies, and a beautifully patterned box that plays a happy song when you open it.

There are few among us who can divine the mysteries of our gifts. Like my mother before me, and her father before her, I have the ability to create powerful treasures using the gifts of the gods. Identifying a gift’s true intent and knowing what it must be combined with to make its magic work: this is the knowledge handed down from generation to generation in my family. I’ve spent my life committing this sacred knowledge to memory so that I might one day pass it to my own children. Although there is much that we know, there are gaps to be filled in our knowledge. Each gift from the gods answers one question, but raises two more. I still have a great deal to learn about the nature of our existence!

Like most of my village, I devote several hours each day to look for gifts. Recently, I found a strange, small bear washed up on the beach. Not a real bear, of course, but a tiny replica. It was squishy, with raggedy fur and bald spots, and it was missing its eyes. When I picked it up, I had a powerful sense of pain, loss, and death, and I had to sit for a moment. I pulled out one of the thin, sharp sticks I keep in my hair. The bear seemed to fill with light and, without understanding why, I removed the necklace left to me by my mother, put it on the bear, and plunged one of the sharp sticks into its belly. To my surprise and dread, a mist came together to form the body and face of my dear mother! It opened its mouth to speak to me, but I raced toward my village, yanking the stick out of the bear as I ran. The mother-thing disappeared, and I made it back to my hut safely.

By painful experiment and horrible mishap, I discovered the bear’s terrible power: looking at another, I can inflict harm upon them by jabbing sharp sticks into the bear. I believe it may also be possible to use the bear to drain the very life out of someone. There is a price to be paid for all this power, though. Each time I’ve used it, I have been cursed with ill fortune for a time.

My tribe is peaceful, and fearful of this dark magic. And they should be. It threatens our very way of life! I am shamed that part of me wants to learn all its secrets and control its powers. But I am afraid I would lose myself and become a terrible, dark creature, reviled by those I love and hold dear.

The elders of my people agree with me that the bear is too powerful to remain among us. Since I released its power, I volunteered to return it to the gods. I do not know where to go—or if I will be punished by the gods for the insult—but go I must. And when I find them, and return the bear, I hope the gods will be kind enough to answer some of my questions.

Roleplaying

You have the ability to create wondrous, magical treasures using various combinations of surface world items that are sacred to your people. Mundane items such as a soda-pop bottle, an old flashlight, or even radio headphones can be used to produce magical effects. The voodoo bear is different, with a magic darker than your people practice, and you believe it is too tempting a magic to use, with too high a price.

Therefore, you left the safety of your village to roam the wilds of the Hollow Earth, seeking the gods so that you can return the bear to them. Naturally, you are more than happy to learn everything you can about the world along the way. Should you get into trouble, you can use the power of the bear to protect yourself. And should you be lucky enough to find the gods, perhaps they will enlighten you about a thing or two.

Chapter One

NATURAL PHILOSOPHER

Archetype: *Scientist*

Motivation: *Truth*

Style: 3

Health: 5

Primary Attributes

Body: 2	Charisma: 2
Dexterity: 3	Intelligence: 3
Strength: 2	Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 6
Move: 5 (10)*	Defense: 5
Perception: 6	Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Athletics	2	2	4	(2)
Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Craft: Chemistry	3	1	4	(2)
Demolitions	3	1	4	(2)
Firearms	3	1	4	(2)
Investigation	3	2	5	(2+)
Research			6	(3)
Science: Chemistry	3	3	6	(3)
Survival	3	2	5	(2+)
Navigation			6	(3)

Talents

Civilized (May use technology without penalty)

Resources

None

Flaw

Condescending (+1 Style whenever your prejudices cause trouble)

Weapons	Rating	Modifier	Attack	Average
Blunderbuss	4 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N

* Apemen double their Move rating when climbing

Apemen may use their feet as if they were hands, but suffer off-hand penalties



"I am a rational being. I will not stoop to acting like a human."

Character Background

Most members of my village can be—how shall I say it?—a bit incurious. A few show intellectual promise, but the older I grow the more I fear open-mindedness is a rare commodity indeed. Some of the elders are afraid of my research and go so far as to call me mad. And the young ones, even the scholars, are known to engage in behavior becoming only of those babbling, hairless, degenerate quasi-apes who teem in the jungles and call themselves "humans." Yet I persist in careful observation of the natural world, for it is only through observation that one may find truth.

Even as a child, I felt the joy of inquisitiveness strongly within me. I read the ancient scrolls preserved within the elders' huts, and when I had completed my course of study I roamed the forest, intent on authoring new scrolls for the collections. I watched the interplay of the food-chain at different levels of the forest, tracking the flow of various substances from the lofty canopy down to the dark floor and back up again. It was from these early studies that most of my life's work flowed. Extracting quicksilver from cinnabar built into knowledge of interactions of elemental substances. Melting sand into glass led to the shaped lenses which I now use to make small objects appear large.

It was on one of these youthful expeditions that I encountered a lone quasi-ape. He was dressed strangely and wore a bristling beard which made him look slightly less primitive (some days I toy with the notion that humans form the link between the apemen and the animals). It was he who taught me the secret of the blasting powder, a mixture of niter, sulfur, and charcoal. Although I have greatly refined the recipe in my years of research, this concoction has certainly proven the most pragmatically useful and—shall I say it?—spectacular of all my discoveries.

That gangly human who taught me to make the black powder also stated that he came from another world, a world surrounding our own the way an outer shell surrounds a hollow coconut. Just think of it! A land which curves downward in the distance rather than upward, and where the sun, unbound on any side, whizzes around unpredictably in the sky like a bird, sometimes escaping to the other side of the world to leave all the land in utter darkness. It sounds so preposterous that I can almost forgive my fellow villagers for their inability to comprehend my explanations. Yet, according to my extensive calculations, such a place could—and I strongly believe *does*—exist.

The apemen who live on the surface must be very advanced indeed, if they could teach a simple human how to make the blasting powder. I am sure they and I have much we could teach each other. This is why I must find this land. For the venture, no expenditure is too large, no risk is too great. When I find this "Outer World," they will never again dare call me mad, and my philosophy will be vindicated for all time. And, oh!, think of the things I shall learn on the way there!

Roleplaying

You are constantly devising and testing ideas and finding new ways to experiment with the natural world. Your ideas are not always correct (and sometimes might even represent gross miscomprehensions or absurd assumptions), but that won't stop you from carrying each theory as far as it can possibly go. Nor are you one to spend much time contemplating counter-theories: if something works, it must work for the reasons you imagine. And if you believe the "Outer World" exists, then you will consider no evidence to the contrary and stop at nothing to seek it out.

Although you tend to be reserved in your manners and refined in your tastes, you possess steadfast courage, particularly when knowledge is at stake. You will think nothing of risking your life to save a book you haven't read, or of setting out on an extended expedition to unearth a secret of the natural world. You look down on most races (including more than a few members of your own) as primitives and savages who waste their time in petty or debased pursuits. You remain confident that sophistication and rationality will eventually always win out against strange customs and brutish behavior.

Chapter One

NOBLE BEASTMASTER

Archetype: *Barbarian*

Motivation: *Honor*

Style: 3

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3	Charisma: 3
Dexterity: 2	Intelligence: 2
Strength: 3	Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 4
Move: 5	Defense: 5
Perception: 5	Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Animal Handling	3	3	6	(3)
Athletics	3	3	5	(2+)
Brawl	3	3	6	(3)
Melee	3	1	4	(2)
Knives			5	(2+)
Stealth	2	3	5	(2+)
Sneaking			6	(3)
Survival	2	3	5	(2+)
Hunting			6	(3)

Talents

Animal Affinity (Temporarily gain Animal Followers)

Resources

None

Flaw

Stubborn (+1 Style point whenever your character's inflexibility causes trouble)

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Modifier	Attack	Average
Knife	1 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Punch	0 N	0	6 N	(3) N



“Back away slowly. She doesn’t like the way you smell.”

Character Background

I have no interest in your valuables or any of the strange playthings you call tools. Where you carry bags filled with useless trinkets, I take only a knife. You have far-seeing eyes, loud booming spears, and heavy coverings to protect yourself, and yet—like children afraid of the dark—you ask me to guide you. This land that fills you with fear and dread is my home. Fortunately, I have many friends here. I will not allow them to harm you, and I will not allow you to harm them. That is my oath and my bond. Do not doubt it.

If you wish to stay here, if you want to survive, then you must become one with the land. This brutal, unforgiving place will constantly hone and test you, but the more respect you have for the land and its inhabitants, the longer you will survive.

Every waking moment is a struggle for survival, and when you travel, it is good to have friends that you can trust. Long-toothed cats make good hunting companions, but they are not our only allies. The goat of the mountain might show us a path that we would never find on our own. The fish of the stream shows us clean water. The plants of the land give us food and shelter. Every living thing can be your ally if you just listen and heed its wisdom.

Make no mistake, this land is not just another “thing” for you to claim or conquer. Look around you. Everything you see, hear, and smell can defend itself against you. And then there are things you cannot see—hungry beasts that stalk you and watch your every move, waiting patiently for the perfect moment to strike. This land cannot be conquered. It is indomitable. Its spirit cannot be broken. Fight it and you will die.

Until you arrive safely at the village, we will face every danger together. Keep your eyes and ears open. The beasts that inhabit this land will allow us safe passage because I am their friend and ally. But you are guests here, and any guest that makes himself unwelcome will pay for the insult with his life. I will not be able to help you. This is natural law. It is just and right.

Roleplaying

You’re a strong and noble guardian of the land, completely at ease in the primitive world around you, and friend to all the beasts that inhabit it. You don’t just survive in the savage and dangerous Hollow Earth, you thrive and flourish, using your strength, courage, and an uncanny way with animals to safeguard your friends and crush your enemies.

The land provides everything you need—food, shelter, and clothing—and in return, you nurture and protect it. There is no wrong in hunting for food or survival, but there is no honor in killing for sport. Similarly, killing more than you need, caging wild animals, or befouling the environment goes against natural law. Anyone guilty of one of these crimes will be given a chance to make amends and correct their wrongdoing. Your retribution for ignoring this opportunity is as swift as the wind, as hard as the mountains, and as deadly as the fiercest predator.

Chapter One

SHADOW STALKER

Archetype: *Beastman*

Motivation: *Love*

Style: 3

Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 1	Charisma: 3
Dexterity: 5	Intelligence: 3
Strength: 1	Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 8
Move: 6	Defense: 6
Perception: 6	Stun: 1

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Acrobatics	5	3	8	(4)
Archery	5	1	6	(3)
Brawl	1	4	5	(2+)
Claws			6	(3)
Con	3	1	4	(2)
Stealth	5	3	8	(4)
Survival	3	2	5	(2+)
Hunting			6	(3)

Talents

Subtle Strike (Use Stealth rating to attack)

Resources

None

Flaw

Aloof (+1 Style point whenever your character's standoffishness causes her trouble)

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Modifier	Attack	Average
Bolas	*	0	6*	(3)*
Bow	2 L	-2	6 L	(3) L
Claws	0 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Claws (Subtle Strike)	0 L	0	8 L	(4) L

* Weapon may be used to entangle (see "Touch Attacks" in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 126)



"If I'd wanted to kill you, you would already be dead."

Character Background

I was out hunting when the slavers attacked. They would never have caught me off guard if I hadn't been so focused on my cub. He was learning to hunt and kill, and I was following close enough to keep a watchful eye on him, but far enough back in the trees that he felt he was on his own. He was following a game trail when he spotted a hunk of meat partially obscured by bushes. I immediately recognized the danger and I started to call to him, but he has his mother's reflexes and he pounced before I could get my warning out.

The trap went off, and he was hoisted into the air by a net hanging from a large branch. He let out a frightened shriek and wriggled frantically, but he was firmly caught. With a snarl of fury, I leapt to the jungle floor and raced to free my cub from his restraints. I didn't pause to devise a strategy or consider the potential dangers. Every fiber of my being was focused on getting him down and to safety.

I was not the only one intent on retrieving the precious bundle in that net: hairless slavers adorned in unsightly pelts also came running for my cub. Bright lights shot from the ends of their spears, causing the air to sizzle and pop around me. Their aim was poor and I reached my cub unharmed. I yanked and clawed at the net, savaging it with my teeth, tearing one piece loose. I could see the terror on my cub's face as he cried out and strained to reach me with his small, outstretched paw. Suddenly, the entire world went white and I crumpled to the ground.

When I returned to my senses, I was alone on the game trail. They had left the hunk of meat behind—a meager payment for my cub, I supposed. But I am no dumb beast of the jungle, so easily bribed with food. I tore after the slavers, easily following their trail until I reached a clearing. I puzzled over deep depressions in the ground that must have been made by something very large and heavy, but the trail stopped there. All that remained was the smell of burnt air.

I swore to get my beloved cub back from the slavers. I could not forget the scent of these men or their strange speech. I traveled constantly, always in shadows, searching for signs of them. I deigned to approach people who had similar experiences, so I could hear their stories. I found other clearings with the same depressions in the dirt. And finally, one day, I found *them*.

I recognized their scent. I watched them set up traps designed to steal the young from their mothers. I crept forward and listened to them speak, and though I did not know their language, I found I could understand them. They laughed and joked about their capture of "simple beasts."

I waited patiently and bided my time. One of them fell behind and I attacked. He could not scream with my claws in his throat, but I pulled him deeper into the jungle anyway, and left him choking on his own blood. I stayed at the slavers' heels, never seen but always there, pouncing whenever one strayed too close to the shadows. It did not take long for them to notice their dwindling numbers, but they were powerless to stop me. I took them down one by one.

The last man standing panicked and fled. I dragged him down, but did not kill him right away. I made myself understood, or perhaps he recognized me, and he told me what I wanted to know: they took my cub to their city. The slavers only take the young because they are easier to train. If the captives do not learn to be slaves, they are made to fight and die for the amusement of an audience. I did not understand all of the slaver's strange words, but I did understand that my cub was taken to a terrible place. I will find this place. I will find my cub. I will do whatever it takes to get him back, and any who try to stop me will pay with their lives.

Roleplaying

You are a silent hunter, ambushing your prey from the shadows. Standing and fighting is not your way. You prefer to strike hard and fast and then melt away into the shadows again. You'll kill with one blow if possible, or harass larger and more dangerous prey until they fall.

While you know that humans took your cub, you do not hate them all. Experience has taught you that not all of them are alike. You have come across many tribes of humans in your travels, and some of them have lost loved ones too. Some of them have even been helpful. You will gladly work with others (even outsiders) to find your cub, but you will never let them get too close.

Chapter One

SKY RAIDER

Archetype: Guardian

Motivation: Preservation

Style: 3

Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2	Charisma: 2
Dexterity: 4	Intelligence: 2
Strength: 2	Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 6
Move: 6*	Defense: 6
Perception: 4 (8)**	Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Archery	4	2	6	(3)
Athletics	2	2	4	(2)
Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Melee	2	3	5	(2+)
Javelin			6	(3)
Stealth	4	2	6	(3)
Survival	2	3	5	(2+)
Navigation			6	(3)

Talents

Dive Bomb (+2 Attack bonus to throwing weapons when flying)

Resources

None

Flaw

Claustrophobic (+1 Style when confronted with his phobia)
Primitive (-2 penalty on technology related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Modifier	Attack	Average
Javelin	2 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Javelin (dive bomb)	2 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Lariat	0***	0	6***	(3)***
Talons	0 L	0	4 L	(2) L

* Hawkmen use their full Move rating when flying, but require 10 feet of space to flap their wings

** Hawkmen gain +4 on sight-related Perception rolls

*** Weapon may be used to entangle (see Touch Attacks in Hollow Earth Expedition, p. 126)



"My people have no future unless I find what I seek."

Character Background

Until recently, I spent my entire life flying high above the dirt, grime, and muck on the ground. My home, the Aerie, is the most magnificent sight in the world and the wellspring of all my people's fortune. I have pledged my life to the Aerie and the needs of my people. But the Aerie is now only a memory for me, as I had to give up my home—at least for a time—in order to save it.

I trained my entire life as a Sky Raider in order to increase the wealth of my city and ensure the survival of my people. I learned to fly fast, dive hard, and always hit my target. There was no place too far for my wings to take me, no height out of my reach, and no groundling who could prevent me from retrieving the food and water that my people so desperately need to continue our way of life. I had fame, I had respect, and, best of all, I had all the wide sky in which to soar.

But the Aerie, for all its marvels, is a homeland in peril. Most of our sustenance must come from the surface, and raiders like me must carry food and water up to the clouds. This process is laborious and dangerous, but it has always been the way of my people. The true danger is that our city is falling slowly from the sky as the vast and mystical machinery within its foundation winds down. In my lifetime, I may notice it sink only a little, and my children and grandchildren might still live among the clouds. But eventually it will settle until it is in danger of colliding with mountains, and then trees, and then the dirt itself. That is not the legacy I wish to leave to my people.

To preserve our kind, some of my fellows have founded colonies in the high peaks where their fate will not be tied to the Aerie. But I have a different mission: I will roam the world in search of something—anything—that might help preserve my ancestral home and keep it in the sky, or even extend its lifespan by another generation.

The difficulty is that I do not know what I am searching for. I can only hope that I will recognize it when I see it. I know that it is Atlantean technology which powers the Aerie, so it can only be an Atlantean device which can repair whatever is breaking down. So I wander. What else can I do? Perhaps my god will one day smile on me and guide my wings to where I need to be. I will work with the groundlings when I must, acting as their guide or messenger in hopes that I may one day discover what I need to take back to my home. For now, all I can do is survive in this unforgiving land, because as long as I keep flying I have a chance of finding that which will save my people.

Roleplaying

You were a member of the most elite hawkmen flock, but you have given that up to preserve your people's way of life. You have doomed yourself to sail the winds of the Hollow Earth in an aimless search for anything that will save the Aerie.

You'll negotiate, you'll trade, you'll offer coins, jewelry, and gems, but in the end you'll offer sharp talons and a daring fight to secure whatever is necessary to maintain your freedom and continue your journey. You're not cold-hearted, you're not cruel, but you are practical and have a goal that you will achieve. Your only fear is that you will be prevented from flying on, and that you will be trapped and forgotten far away from the home you have sacrificed everything to save.

Chapter One

TITAN BERSERKER

Archetype: : *Outcast*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 3

Health: 10

Primary Attributes

Body: 6	Charisma: 1
Dexterity: 1	Intelligence: 1
Strength: 5	Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1	Initiative: 2
Move: 6	Defense: 6
Perception: 4	Stun: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Athletics	5	1	6	(3)
Brawl	5	3	8	(4)
Intimidation	1	4	5	(2+)
<i>Threats</i>			6	(3)
Melee	5	3	8	(4)
<i>Axes</i>			9	(4+)
Survival	1	3	4	(2)

Talents

Berserker Fury (Exert to gain 2+ bonus to Strength-related rolls)

Resources

None

Flaw

Depressed (+1 Style point whenever your character's gloomy outlook is justified)

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Modifier	Attack	Average
Great axe	4 L	-1	12 L	(6) L
Punch	1 N	-1	8 N	(4) N



“One bite from the beast and it’s over for you. I would not be so lucky.”

Character Background

The people of this tribe once loved me for my strength. Now they are beginning to only tolerate me for my size. Soon, I know, they will hate me for the burden I will become. What then? Will they willingly starve that I may eat? Will I enslave them until I devour them all—or until they decide to end it with a poisoned meal or a knife in my back? Maybe the kindest thing would be to just leave them. I was never one of them anyway, not truly. None of them understands what I am. How could they, when I hardly understand myself?

I know almost nothing of my true family. I had a mother, but I don’t remember her face, or her voice, or her teachings. In truth, the first clear memory of my life is looking for her when she abandoned me in the wilds. I was a frightened, hungry child, wandering alone and lost in the dangerous jungle. I often think how much better it would have been if some hungry beast had found me at that time, or if I had just starved and died. Instead, I was discovered and taken in by this tribe.

These people may be too given to merriment and laughter, but they treated me well, and for a time my childhood seemed almost ordinary. As I grew, my size made me too different from the other children, and it is now becoming increasingly hard to fit in. I am still only a young man, yet I already stand nearly twice the size of some members of this village. And I eat twice as much as well.

Although I am more an outsider now than ever, I serve the tribe as best I can, defending them from the jungle’s predators or leading raids against their enemies. Battle holds no fear for me—why should it, when death is the worst that can happen? My role here is not without joy. Being close to death is the only time I feel alive, and I know each skull split by my axe adds to my glory. So, here, I have had a purpose if not a place.



But, I see now that I must depart from this tribe before I become more of a burden than a blessing. Leaving them is the only way I can repay them for taking me in. Perhaps, as I go my way, one of the bigger beasts will have me for a meal. But I doubt it. More likely, I will have the bad luck to survive to an old age, when I will be so large that I will eat the big beasts instead of the other way around. If I do not die fighting I will end as I began: hungry, lost, and alone.

Roleplaying

You are a dauntless warrior, ready to endure any hardship. When you aren’t in battle, you never fail to point out the bleakness of your situation, whatever it happens to be. You do not gripe about it, but rather make predictions of disaster and dismay. Some might mistake this as the sign of weak morale, but in fact it strengthens your resolve because even if the worst happens it is only what you expected. Just because things look hopeless is no reason to give up—in fact, the more hopeless things appear, the greater your will to fight, since the fight itself is the only redemption of life.

Aside from making you a powerful warrior, your size also leaves you feeling isolated from other people. In most cases, this is a self-fulfilling prophesy, as you pull yourself away from them before giving them a chance to pull away from you. On some level, you wish you could find acceptance, but you thoroughly believe that this is impossible, making you quick to cut your losses in any relationship.

Chapter One

TRIBAL SHAMAN

Archetype: *Healer*

Motivation: *Redemption*

Style: 3

Health: 5*

Primary Attributes

Body: 2	Charisma: 3
Dexterity: 3	Intelligence: 2
Strength: 2	Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 5
Move: 5	Defense: 5
Perception: 5	Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Athletics	2	2	4	(2)
Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Melee	2	1	3	(1+)
Sorcery: Shamanism	3	5	8	(4)
Stealth	3	1	4	(2)
Survival	2	4	6	(3)

Talents

Magical Aptitude (May cast spells and perform rituals)

Resources

None

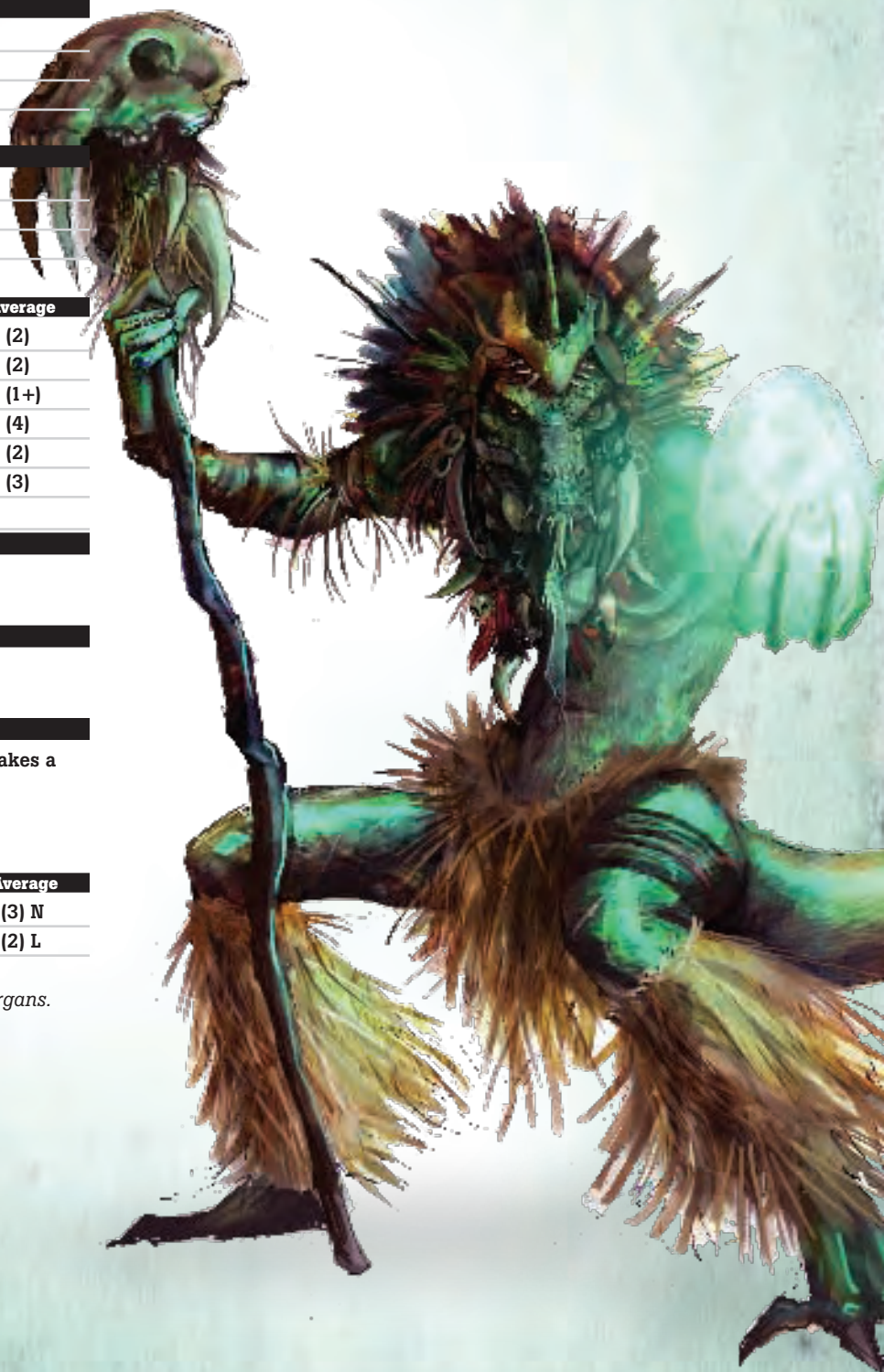
Flaw

Doomsayer (+1 Style point whenever your character makes a dire prediction)

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Modifier	Attack	Average
Staff	3 N	0	6 N	(3) N
Claws	0 L	0	4 L	(2) L

*Lizardmen can regenerate lost limbs and damaged organs.



"I hear the spirits. They are not pleased."

Character Background

I emerged from the hatchery as the single survivor of the nest. My brothers and sisters didn't have the opportunity to bask in the warmth of the great sun that never abandons us, so their spirits have never rested quietly. From my first days their voices rang loud within my heart and my mind; their speech is trapped within me and none other has ever heard their words.

I grew up with my lost siblings teaching me to listen to the spirits of the animals, the land, and the air itself. Spirit voices guided my tribe's hunts, healed our wounds, and led to discoveries within the ancient places. Through the favor of the spirits I earned my right to be a voice within the community. Their wisdom has guided and burdened me. They are the words of spirits and I was their voice within my community: I was a Shaman to my people.

While my people flourished under the guidance of the spirits, so too flourished the envy of those that reside in the surrounding lands. Jealous eyes peered upon our abundance of food, great riches, and the freedom from worry that my people enjoyed. The hostilities were costly at first, but even as the raids increased, the voices of the spirits spelled the doom of our enemies as they fell before us. Our foes slunk back to sharpen their spears and bring them forward against easier prey.

Our prosperity had never waned nor had the voices in my soul—until the spirits screamed. Their emotion and power stunned me, and for the first time I felt a rush of dread accompany the voices. A new enemy—not from our lands—had arrived and the spirits advised us down a path that I would not travel. The message was clear: flee or perish under the heels of this new enemy. For the first time, I ignored the voices.

I traveled to the camp of this enemy to learn about them, to impress upon them my abilities, and to turn them away from my tribe's lands. These grey-clad outsiders took me into their camp with eagerness and friendship. Their leader offered trade and alliance in exchange for knowledge of the area. The spirits were unusually silent during our exchange of information, and I felt an odd sensation within my head as the leader's advisor looked into my eyes. After our conversation I believed my trip to be a success; I shared a meal with my new friends, and then the sun that never dies blinked away. I do not know for how long I was the lost to the world, but when I awoke the spirits screamed as though in pain. The voices were bleating, chaotic, and nonsensical, and I knew that all was wrong. I had made a terrible mistake in coming to this place and meeting these people.

The spirits had warned me, I had ignored them, and my people paid the price for my arrogance. While I slept, they butchered my tribe. They stole our treasures. They even smashed our unhatched young—only a single egg survived, hidden from view by the broad frond of a broken palm branch.

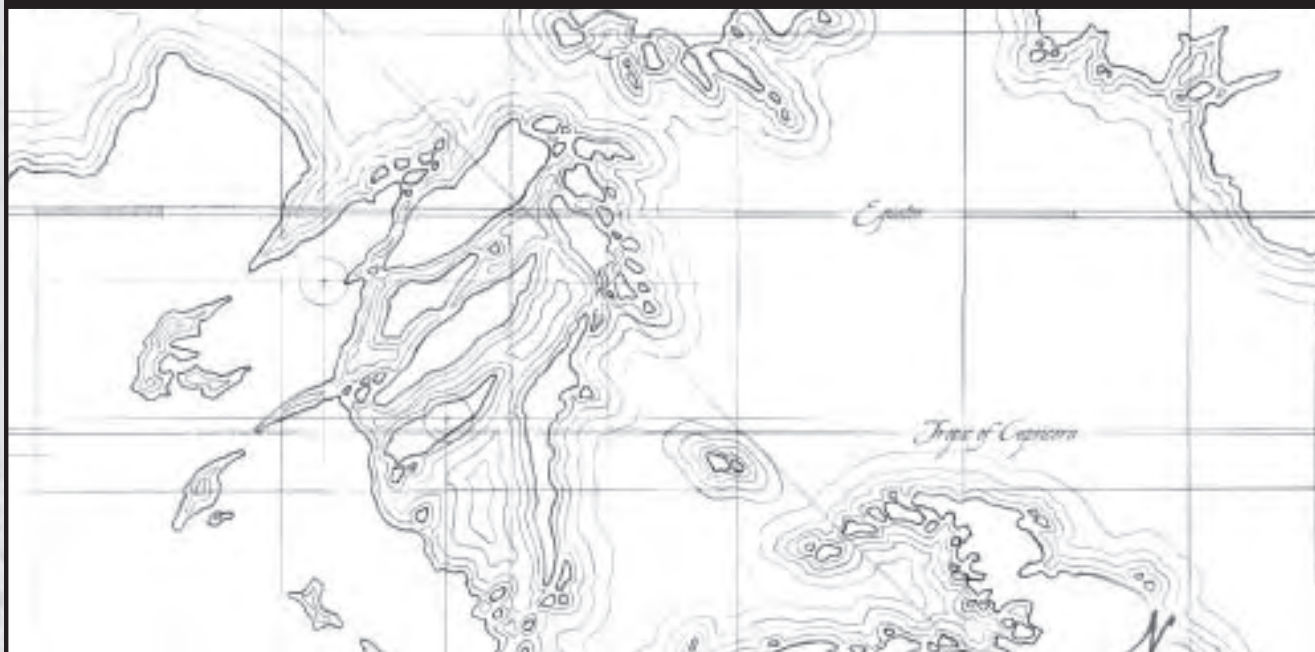
At first, I sought my own death, but the spirits do not want my death: they want my life. I took that one remaining egg and whispered to it to sleep, for it holds the entire legacy of my people and I do not wish the youngling to emerge as a tribeless orphan. I must roam the lands in search of my scattered people. Perhaps the egg will hatch when I have remade my tribe. This is what my ancestors wish, and it is what the spirits wish. Even after my failure the spirits did not abandon me, and I will not now abandon them.

Roleplaying

You were born with the powers of the Shaman and were a respected voice within the community. You acted as spiritual guide, healer, hunt leader, and advisor to your people. The community and well-being of your people has always been at the forefront of your thoughts.

Now your people are dead and you blame yourself. Without a tribe to guide, you're unsure of your purpose in this world, but the humans you travel with need you and your abilities to survive. You cannot rest until you have searched high and low to find a new tribe of your people, and appease the spirits that continue to scream.

⊕ CHAPTER 2: **SUPERNATURAL POWERS**



Both psychics and magicians exist inside the Hollow Earth, just as they do on the surface world. While still rare, they are more common inside the Earth than outside of it. For the most part, Hollow Earth natives display the same psychic powers as their surface world counterparts, but primitive magicians tend to follow different traditions. Shamans are far more common than theurgists or necromancers, for example. Otherworldly magical traditions are considered impractical by natives struggling to survive in the savage and dangerous Hollow Earth, but some such rituals may still be used from time to time by primitive magicians.

Additionally, in a world where modern technology is virtually unknown, and even the laws of Weird Science break down, alchemists and enchanters are accorded respect. These powerful individuals can create a dizzying variety of arcane objects, including magical weapons, powerful tools, and even living constructs capable of independent thought and action. Special components are required to create magical items, though, so alchemists are often required to trade their treasures with people willing and able to get the raw materials that they need.

SORCERY

Sorcery works the same inside the Hollow Earth as it does on the surface, and is subject to all the same rules for using magic, including learning rituals, channeling

extra magical energy, and the Sorcery roll modifiers (see Magic in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 47-49).

The following section introduces a new tradition of Sorcery: Shamanism. While this tradition may be found on the surface world, it is more widely practiced and more highly developed within the Hollow Earth.

RITUALS

Unless defined otherwise under the specific ritual description, all rituals are extended actions requiring five successes to complete, with each roll representing one combat turn (approximately six seconds), and with effects that last for the duration of combat or until the end of the scene. For the purpose of these rituals, the term “animal” refers to any creature with the Animal, Dinosaur, or Insect archetype, but not to humans or beastmen.

Sorcery Modifiers

Most rituals have their own unique set of modifiers that are listed with the descriptions for each spell. Unless noted in the ritual description, use the following chart to determine Sorcery modifiers.

Sorcery	Modifier
Area of Effect	
None	+0
5 foot radius	-2
10 foot radius	-4
25 foot radius	-6
50 foot radius	-8
100 foot radius	-10
Range	
Touching the subject	+2
Subject is up to 10 feet away*	+0
Subject is up to 100 feet away	-2
Subject is up to 1 mile away	-4
Subject is up to 10 miles away	-6
Subject is up to 100 miles away	-8
Subject is up to 1,000 miles away	-10
Caster does not have line of sight	-2
Miscellaneous	
Caster channels extra magical energy**	+2
Caster is unable to gesture	-4
Caster is unable to speak	-4
Each additional subject	-2
Taking another action while performing ritual	-4

* Your character suffers a -2 penalty if she does not have direct line of sight to her target.

** Your character suffers a nonlethal wound and gains a +2 bonus. Your character can channel additional magical energy to gain additional bonus dice.

Shamanism

Shamans derive power from their understanding of the animistic nature of the world. Shamanism operates on the principle that all things—trees, animals, mountains, people, lakes, and so forth—are infused with supernatural spirits that give life to the physical matter they inhabit. These spirits also have power extending beyond the material world, and it is this power that makes them potent allies. Various aspects and applications of this art are practiced by a wide cross-section of the tribes and races of the Hollow Earth, yet its principles are elusive and defy traditional study. Shamanism is acquired and developed through intuition and attention to the natural world, with observation, experience, and understanding taking preeminence over knowledge and memorization.

Shamanism Rituals

Animal Speak Rank 1

This ritual allows your character to speak with a specific animal by making the appropriate chatter-

ing, growling, or squawking noises. Your character can empathically communicate with the subject animal and exchange rudimentary concepts and information with it for the duration of combat, or until the end of the scene. While this power is in effect, you can use your character's Sorcery rating for Animal Handling rolls, including rolls to influence an animal's attitude (see *Influence in Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 45).

The Animal Speak ritual is subject to the following modifiers:

Animal Speak	Modifier
Animal is loyal	+2
Animal is an enemy	-2
Each additional communication attempt	-2

Nature's Healing Rank 1

This ritual harnesses nature's power to heal wounds, cure diseases, and neutralize poisons. Mastery of this ritual allows you to substitute your character's Sorcery rating for his Medicine rating, including rolls for performing first aid, providing long-term medical care, and treating poisoned and diseased patients (see *Healing in Hollow Earth Expedition*, pp. 131-132). Each use of Nature's Healing requires one dose of specially prepared herbal medicine. If the caster does not have this herbal medicine prepared in advance, he can improvise with raw ingredients (or even modern medical supplies), but suffers a -2 penalty on his Sorcery roll. Preparing more herbal medicine requires an Alchemy roll and the appropriate raw ingredients. Creating one unit of herbal medicine takes ten minutes and has a difficulty rating of 2. Each extra success on the Alchemy roll produces one additional unit of herbal medicine.

The Nature's Healing ritual is subject to the following modifiers:

Nature's Healing	Modifier
Using improvised medicine	-2
Each additional healing attempt	-2
Injury more than one hour old	-2
Medicine roll has already been made	-2

Spirit Sense Rank 1

This ritual allows the caster to attune herself to the spirit world, enabling your character to sense the use of normally invisible supernatural powers. After completing Spirit Sense, your character may substitute her Sorcery rating for her Perception rating on rolls involving detecting supernatural powers. Thus, she could use her

Sorcery rating to perceive the use of telepathic powers, but would use her ordinary Perception rating to spot a patch of quicksand. The effects of this ritual last for the duration of combat or the remainder of the scene.

Control Animal Rank 2

This ritual allows the caster to control the actions of an animal. Make a Sorcery roll as a standard action, including any appropriate modifiers. If you roll more successes than the animal's Willpower rating, it must obey your character's commands for one turn per extra success you rolled. If you roll more than double the animal's Willpower rating, it is under your character's control for the duration of combat or until the end of the scene. A controlled animal will defend itself normally and cannot be ordered to harm itself. The control is automatically broken if the animal is attacked or suffers any injury.

The Control Animal ritual is subject to the typical range modifiers, as well as the following:

Control Animal	Modifier
Animal is loyal	+2
Animal is an enemy	-2
Each additional control attempt	-2
Caster lacks line of sight to target	-2

Nature's Protection Rank 2

This ritual attunes the subject to a specific environment, providing supernatural protection from the elements and providing for his immediate needs. Thus, the caster could use this ritual to enable the subject to breathe underwater, travel through the desert without food or water, or survive a blizzard without shelter. The caster must specify the type of environment when casting this ritual (such as arctic, underground, or underwater) and is protected against exposure, deprivation, drowning, and suffocation for the duration of combat or until the end of the scene (see *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 132-135). More powerful versions of this ritual can even boost a target's defenses as conditions magically change to favor him.

The Nature's Protection ritual is subject to the following modifiers:

Nature's Boon	Modifier
Protection from the elements	+0
Each additional environment after the first	-2
Each additional subject after the first	-2
Minor protection (+2 Defense bonus)	-2
Major protection (+4 Defense bonus)	-4
Supernatural protection (+8 Defense bonus)	-8

Spirit Guide Rank 2

This ritual puts the caster in communication with a knowledgeable and helpful spirit who can inform and educate the shaman. When casting this ritual, name one Skill. This spirit provides an assistance bonus to the selected Skill rolls made by the caster. Skill selection is subject to Gamemaster approval, and should be limited to those Skills that might tie into the shaman's own background. For example, a shaman native to the Hollow Earth might summon a spirit mentor with knowledge of the Survival Skill, but would be unlikely to have access to any spirit who can help the shaman drive a car or investigate a science lab. The effects of this ritual last for the duration of combat or until the end of a scene.

The Spirit Mentor ritual is subject to the following modifiers:

Spirit Guide	Modifier
Each additional spirit guide	-4
Helpful spirit (+2 Skill bonus)	+0
Wise spirit (+4 Skill bonus)	-2
Sagacious spirit (+8 Skill bonus)	-4

Nature's Curse Rank 3

This ritual allows the shaman to direct nature's enmity toward one or more subjects within a certain environment. When the shaman casts this ritual, he selects one environment, such as jungle, river, tundra, or mountain-side. Whenever the subject enters this environment, the ground crumbles beneath her feet, gusts of wind blow against her, branches slap at her eyes, and every other feature of the environment works against her in multiple ways. As long as the subject remains within the selected environment, she suffers a penalty to all Skills and abilities. These penalties remain in place only while the targets are within the designated environment, so a victim of Nature's Curse within a forest might escape the effects by jumping into a lake (even though the lake is within the forest). This ritual remains in effect for the duration of combat or until the end of the scene.

The Nature's Curse ritual is subject to the typical range modifiers, as well as the following:

Nature's Curse	Modifier
Each additional subject after the first	-2
Each additional environment after the first	-2
Minor curse (-2 penalty)	+0
Major curse (-4 penalty)	-2
Catastrophic curse (-8 penalty)	-4

Spirit Binding

Rank 3

Through this ritual, the caster is able to harness a spirit's power by binding it into a fetish. The fetish can be any item, but most shamans prefer items which are portable and decorative, such as necklaces or ritual daggers. When casting this ritual, name one Skill or Talent. The fetish provides a Skill bonus or bonus Talent to anyone holding the fetish. Skill and Talent selection is subject to Gamemaster approval, and should be limited to those Skills and Talents that might tie into the shaman's own background. This ritual lasts for the duration of combat or until the end of the scene. When the ritual ends, the spirit escapes and the item retains no special powers. The shaman must use some of her own power to seal the fetish, making it difficult to create additional fetishes.

The Spirit Binding ritual is subject to the following modifiers:

Spirit Binding	Modifier
Each additional fetish after the first	-4
Each additional Talent after the first	-2
Useful fetish (+2 Skill bonus)	+0
Potent fetish (+4 Skill bonus)	-2
Grand fetish (+8 Skill bonus)	-4

Summon Animal

Rank 3

This ritual allows the caster to summon and control animals. Choose a type of animal and an area of effect and make a Sorcery roll. If the animal is present within the area of effect and you roll more successes than an animal's Willpower rating, it is compelled to obey your character's summons as quickly and directly as possible. If there is more than one animal present in the area of effect, the closest animal responds. Once it arrives, it will remain friendly towards the caster for a number of turns equal to the number of extra successes you rolled. The control is broken if it is attacked or suffers any injury during this time. If you roll more successes than twice an animal's Willpower rating, it is compelled to obey your character's commands (even if attacked) for the duration of combat or until the end of the scene.

The Summon Animal ritual is subject to the following modifiers:

Summon Animal	Modifier
Each additional animal after the first	-2
10 foot radius	+0
100 foot radius	-2
1 mile radius	-4
10 mile radius	-6
100 mile radius	-8
Caster lacks line of sight to subject	-2

Augury

Rank 4

This ritual allows the shaman to read the subtle influence of the spiritual realm on the physical world. The power of this ritual will reveal the answer to a single question, although answers are limited to yes, no, or maybe. Depending on the cultural background of the shaman, this ritual can be performed by reading the flight of birds, casting rune-stones or specially shaped bones, reading tea leaves, or examining the internal organs of an animal sacrifice. In general, the more successes you roll, the more definite the answer. Care should be taking in phrasing questions, though, as the answers to follow-up questions become increasingly hard to interpret.

Augury	Modifier
Each additional question after the first	-2
Caster lacks anything to interpret (runes, tea leaves, etc.)	-4

Nature's Embrace

Rank 4

This ritual allows the shaman to awaken and empower the spirit within otherwise passive plants, causing them to grow in stature and sprout animated tendrils to grapple and immobilize his enemies. Make a Sorcery touch attack against all enemies in the area of effect (see Grapple in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 120-121). Resolve the grapple as normal, but opponents may make an opposed Strength versus the caster's Charisma roll to attempt to break free. This ritual remains in effect for the remainder of combat or until the end of the scene.

The Nature's Embrace ritual is subject to the modifiers for both range and area of effect, as well as the following:

Nature's Embrace	Modifier
Thick vegetation (jungle)	+2
Typical vegetation (forest)	0
Low vegetation (grassland)	-2
Sparse vegetation (desert)	-4
Hostile environment (volcano)	-8

Power Animal

Rank 4

This ritual allows the caster to invoke the spirit of an animal, thereby enhancing her abilities and gaining the benefit of its wisdom and guidance. When the ritual is complete, choose one animal. Your character summons the spirit of that animal and can treat it as a Mentor for the duration of combat or until the end of the scene (see Mentor in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 21-22). In addition to Skill bonuses, the caster may choose to gain one or more Talents and/or one piece of that animal's natural equipment, thereby trans-

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forming into a hybrid version of herself and the chosen animal. Natural equipment might include claws (0 L), horns (2 N), or movement bonus (e.g., double Move rating while swimming). Characters can only have one power animal active at any one time. This ritual lasts for the duration of combat or until the end of the scene.

The Power Animal ritual is subject to the following modifiers:

Power Animal	Modifier
Mentor 1 (+2 Skill bonus)	+0
Mentor 2 (+2 Skill bonus; +1 Talent/Natural equipment)	-2
Mentor 3 (+4 Skill bonus; +1 Talent/Natural equipment)	-4
Mentor 4 (+4 Skill bonus; +2 Talents/Natural equipment)	-6
Mentor 5 (+8 Skill bonus; +2 Talents/Natural equipment)	-8

Animal Transformation Rank 5

This ritual allows the caster to transform into a specific animal, selected at the time he learns this ritual. While in this form, he gains all the physical benefits of his new form while leaving his mental abilities unchanged. In game terms, the caster gains the physical Attributes and special abilities of the animal, but retains his own mental Attributes and Skills. In addition, he retains the Talents, Resources, and Flaws from both his forms. Therefore, a caster with the One Eye Flaw that transforms into a dire wolf would still have one eye after completing his transformation. This ritual lasts for the remainder of combat or until the end of the scene. Note: this ritual can be learned more than once, allowing the caster to transform into additional animal forms.

The Animal Transformation ritual is subject to the following modifiers:

Animal Transformation	Modifier
Each Animal Follower level for the creature	-2
Each Size level difference between caster and creature	-2
Wearing clothing and armor	-2
Carrying weapons and equipment	-2

Example: Stan's lizardman shaman learns the Animal Transformation ritual. After considering his options, he selects *smilodon*. To save time, he calculates his character's new form so that he will have it ready during play. He writes down the *smilodon*'s Body, Dexterity, and Strength ratings and his own character's Charisma, Intelligence, and Willpower ratings. He then calculates his character's new Secondary Attributes and Skills using his new Attribute ratings. Finally, he writes down the Talents, Resources, and Flaws from both the *smilodon* and his own character. His transformed character is now ready to play!

Nature's Fury Rank 5

Through this ritual, the caster can command the forces of nature to attack an enemy. Make a Sorcery attack against all enemies in the area of effect (see Area of Effect Attacks in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 127). The targets can be hit with a falling tree, an avalanche, a tidal wave, a lava flow, or bolts of lighting. The exact nature of the attack should be determined by the immediate environment and the disposition of the shaman. If the attack does caustic damage, the only modifiers that factor in to the target's Defense roll are armor and cover.

The Nature's Fury ritual is subject to the modifiers for both range and area of effect, as well as the following:

Nature's Fury	Modifier
Nonlethal damage	+2
Lethal Damage	+0
Caustic damage (1 L)*	+0
Caustic damage (2 L)*	-2
Caustic damage (3 L)*	-4
Caustic damage (4 L)*	-6
Caustic damage (5 L)*	-8

* see Caustic Damage in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 134



Spirit Journey**Rank 5**

This ritual transports the caster (and any willing allies) into the spirit world, which resembles a shadowy and indistinct reflection of the physical world. The travelers' bodies remain quiescent during the time that their spiritual selves roam the dreamscape. Spirit journeys typically have a purpose, whether it is to find the answer to a troubling question, engage a malevolent spirit in combat, or simply spy on the physical world.

Travelers move at the same speed as they do in the physical world, but the landscape may be subtly different as dreams, memories, and emotions come to life in the spirit world. Additionally, they can carry representations of their possessions with them, but may be surprised to discover that their equipment does not operate the same way in does in the real world. As a result, it is all too easy for travelers to end up lost and/or unprepared for the hazards of the spirit world. If they do not return to their body quickly enough, it will slowly waste away and die, stranding them in the spirit world forever.

The Spirit Journey ritual is subject to the following modifiers:

Spirit Journey	Modifier
For each additional subject	-2
For each weapon or piece of armor	-2
For each Artifact or piece of equipment	-2

ALCHEMY

All matter in the universe vibrates with innate spiritual frequencies. These distinct vibrations determine the properties of the particular substances emitting them, and potentially influence the properties of other substances with which they interact. Alchemy is the art and science of understanding how the spiritual qualities of matter can be combined or altered to produce Arcane Artifacts.

Alchemists often seek to create artifacts capable of transmuting one element into another or of granting health and longevity. However, there are nearly limitless other applications, many of which are just as useful and much easier to achieve. An alchemist might create a spear with the power to call lightning from the heavens, a potion that enables its recipient to speak with animals, or a dinosaur-tooth necklace that grants its wearer improved strength and stamina.

Items become Arcane Artifacts by being modified with Enchantments and Drawbacks. Many Enchantments can be applied multiple times to an item, with each extra selection counting as another bonus or pen-

alty. As always, the Gamemaster has the final say in this and can disallow the creation of any item deemed too disruptive of the story or inappropriate to the mood, theme, or setting of the game. After all, Alchemy is not an exact science and individual results will vary.

Alchemy

Prerequisite: Transmutation Talent

Base Attribute: Intelligence

Through the understanding of the spiritual essences within all forms of matter, practitioners of alchemy can create magical items. A practitioner can imbue items with one or more Enchantments to create Arcane Artifacts

Skill Rating	Description
0 – 1	Bumbler
2 – 3	Dabbler
4 – 5	Skilled practitioner
6 – 7	Respected enchanter
8 – 9	Powerful artificer
10 – 11	Legendary alchemist

Your character may specialize in the following items:

- **Armor:** helms, shields, and other protective items
- **Clothing:** jewelry, garments, and decorative items
- **Medicine:** magical potions, elixirs, and concoctions
- **Tools:** tools, implements, and useful items
- **Weapons:** swords, bows, and dangerous items

CREATION

Creating Arcane Artifacts is a two-stage process: Preparation and Forging.

Stage One: Preparation

Step One: Select the item that will become the artifact. This can be anything—a weapon, a garment, a potion, or whatever the creator's imagination can devise.

Step Two: Determine the alchemical catalyst(s) needed. An alchemical catalyst is a certain special substance used to enable the arcane effect, and these substances are invariably exotic and difficult to obtain (see the Alchemical Catalysts sidebar for more information on the materials that work as catalysts).

Many Arcane Artifacts require more than one type of catalyst. The number required is primarily determined by the size of the item to be enchanted. This ensures a certain degree of game balance: a halberd is a more potent weap-

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on than a pen knife, and should therefore be a little more expensive in some way. The Gamemaster may, of course, alter the numbers as appropriate for any given Artifact, but no Alchemy can occur without at least one catalyst.

Item	Size	Catalysts Required
Dagger, amulet, or ring	-4 or less	1
Spear, shield, or tunic	-2	2
Greatsword, armored suit, or chest	-1	3
Carpet, dugout canoe, or life-sized statue	0	4
Catapult, rowboat, or large statue	1	5

Alchemical Catalysts

Orichalcum is the most common catalyst, but the particular nature of certain artifacts may call for substances that have some symbolic connection to the artifact's function. The Gamemaster should decide which materials are appropriate and what quantities are necessary, so long as there is an element of difficulty or sacrifice in acquiring each element. In some cases, a valuable item already owned by the alchemist may serve as its own catalyst, such as a jeweled sacrificial dagger found on the altar of a spider god. In other cases, the Gamemaster may wish to create a new quest centered around acquiring the catalyst, perhaps requiring the heroes to seek out a Kraken and retrieve its ink bladder—and save a peaceful fishing tribe from the monster while they're at it. But don't make the acquisition of catalysts too difficult; as a rule of thumb, if the alchemist plans ahead it should be possible for him to assemble all the necessary components in about the same amount of time it takes to earn the necessary experience points to purchase the artifact.

The important thing is to keep artifact creation interesting by requiring strange and rare components—if every artifact requires eye of newt, the alchemist will simply go to the boring old jar of newt eyes each time. Instead, an alchemist should be an inveterate pack-rat, always collecting strange objects for future use. Below are a few examples of alchemical catalysts and sample effects of the artifacts they can help create.

Catalyst	Potential Artifact
Animal talisman	Relates to the animal or its abilities. Works with any shamanism artifact.
Death spore	Relates to death or decay. Works with any necromancy artifact.
Heartflower Extract	Relates to healing or purification. Works with any theurgy artifact.
Orichalcum	Relates to channeling energy. Works with any artifact.
Power crystal	Relates to storing or focusing power. Works with any artifact.
Surface world item	Relates to the item's qualities. Works with any Cargo Cultist artifact.

Step Three: Select Enchantments and calculate Creation Difficulty. Enchantments improve an item's effectiveness. The more Enchantments you have, the harder it is to design and create. An item's Creation Difficulty is equal to one plus one-half the total number of Enchantments (rounded up).

Total Enchantments	Creation Difficulty
1 – 2	2
3 – 4	3
5 – 6	4
7 – 8	5
9 – 10	6
11 or higher	7 or more

Step Four: Select Drawbacks and determine Artifact level. Drawbacks decrease an item's change effectiveness (see p. 61). The more Drawbacks you select, the lower the item's power level. Artifact Level is calculated by subtracting Drawbacks from total Enchantments, then dividing the total by two (round up). Creations with a net Enchantment of 1 count as Level 0 Artifacts.

Step Five: Make an appropriate Alchemy roll versus the item's Creation Difficulty. At the Gamemaster's discretion, a synergy bonus may apply if the character also has another highly applicable Skill or knows an applicable ritual. If your character fails the roll, she can re-evaluate her arcane formula using the standard Try Again rules (see Try Again in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 112). Each roll represents one week of work, and success results in the recipe or formula for a single Artifact.

Stage Two: Forging

Step One: Whether starting from scratch or reworking an existing item, make an extended Craft roll using the appropriate discipline (such as Blacksmithing or Carpentry). The device is complete when you accumulate a number of successes equal to the item's Structure +5 (see Attacking Objects in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 137). At the Gamemaster's discretion, the alchemist may be able to use the item before it is completed, but it suffers a Structure penalty equal to the number of successes still needed. An item reduced to a Structure of 0 or less cannot be used. Each roll represents one week of work per point of the item's Size (to a minimum of one day).

Step Two: When construction is complete, your character must pay the appropriate number of Experience Points to purchase the invention as a Resource (see Artifacts, p. 65). This represents the acquisition

of catalysts, balancing of the spiritual vibrations, and labor invested in the forging. If the experience costs are not paid, the item's magic does not function. Artifacts with zero net Enchantments do not cost experience points. Additionally, all alchemical catalysts are consumed during the forging process.

Example of Alchemical Creation

Tim's cargo cultist character wants to create a suit of armor from a collection of bottle caps he found in the hold of a wrecked tramp steamer. He determines that the Artifact, a shirt, will be Size -2, which makes it large enough to require two different alchemical catalysts. The Gamemaster agrees that the metal alloy of the bottle caps themselves is exotic enough to count as the first catalyst, but Tim's alchemist will still need an ounce of orichalcum to round out his ingredients. Fortunately, the heroes are hot on the trail of some buried treasure, and when they dig it up, they find a small amount of orichalcum among the loot.

Thus equipped with all the materials he needs, Tim selects Enchantments and Drawbacks for his armor. He takes the Total Defense Talent (+2 Enchantments) because the strange writings on the metal disks are surely meant to protect the user. To round it out, he also takes Improved Attribute: +2 Defense (+2 Enchantments). These four Enchantments set the creation difficulty to 3.

To balance out the armor's powers, he gives his artifact the Requires Balancing Drawback (-2 Enchantments). Subtracting the Drawbacks from the total Enchantments, the armor ends up with two net Enchantments. Consulting the Artifact chart, Tim sees that this will be an Artifact 1.

To finalize his ideas, Tim rolls an Alchemy roll against a difficulty of 3. His character's skill rating is 6 and he rolls exactly what he needs. After careful preparation and experimentation, his cargo cultist character knows that his arcane formula is viable.

Tim's character must then bring his ideas into reality. He must accumulate a total of 3 successes (Structure -2 + 5) to sew the thing together with orichalcum thread. Tim makes a Craft: Sewing roll for each day of work. By the next week, Tim's character is finished; he pays his 15 experience points to purchase the Artifact 1 resource, and has his resplendent Armor of the Gods.

Armor of the Gods Artifact 1

This hide shirt is decorated with gleaming red and silver metal disks that have been sewn on with fine orichalcum thread. Donning the shirt greatly improves the wearer's Defense and prevents him from losing his

Active Defense no matter what happens in combat. However, the owner must frequently polish and adjust the disks to keep them in good order, which requires an Alchemy check with a difficulty of 2.

Enchantments: Total Defense Talent (+2 Enchantments); Increased Attribute: Defense +2 (+2 Enchantments)

Drawbacks: Requires Balancing (-2 Enchantments)

Alchemical Enchantments

Although Alchemical Enchantments are few in number, they allow an alchemist to recreate any supernatural power. An alchemist does not need to have the Sorcery Skill or the Magical Aptitude Talent to create artifacts that use Sorcery rituals. Conversely, magicians cannot enchant items unless they have the Transmutation Talent and learn the Alchemy Skill.

Animation

Cost: +1 Enchantment per +1 Move rating

The Arcane Artifact is capable of moving on its own. Generally, it can be commanded to go, stop, turn, or follow a certain person. This Enchantment does not grant any intelligence to the item: if the person it has been commanded to follow blunders into a pit, it will blunder right after him. Unless the Special Movement Enchantment is taken, the Movement type for the Artifact is limited to walking.

Advanced: This Enchantment can be added any number of times, increasing the movement by +1 each time.

Examples: *A walking table, a dancing candlestick, a slithering rope*

Attribute Substitution

Cost: +2 Enchantments

Upon creation, the alchemist selects one Primary Attribute to be used in all Skill rolls when using this artifact. Thus, someone attacking with the magical sword might require Intelligence + Melee (instead of Strength + Melee), or a priest performing a ritual might need to endure the process with Body + Sorcery (rather than Charisma + Sorcery).

Examples: *A spear that obeys the user's strength of will, a medicine bag activated by the user's endurance, a hammer that directs the user's strength into forging tools*

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Healing

Cost: +2 Enchantments

Upon contact with a wounded creature, this Artifact heals one lethal wound or two nonlethal wounds.

Advanced: This Enchantment can be taken any number of times, with each additional selection increasing the healing by one lethal wound or two nonlethal wounds per application.

Examples: *A magical ointment, a soothing stone, an enchanted berry*

Improved Damage Type

Cost: +2 Enhancements per level

This weapon inflicts more severe damage than normal, possibly even channeling forces of nature to do so.

Damage Type	Cost
Lethal Damage (L) instead of Nonlethal (N)	+2 Enhancements
Caustic Damage (1 L)	+4 Enhancements

Advanced: The amount of caustic damage can be improved by +1 L for each additional +2 Enhancements (see Caustic Damage in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 134).

Examples: *A bow that shoot arcs of lighting, a flaming sword, or a bone-crushing club*

Improved Hardness

Cost: +2 Enchantment per Defense point

The item's structure is more resilient and resistant to stress. Raise the Defense of the item by 1, which in turn raises its structure by 1 (see Attacking Objects in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 137).

Advanced: This Enchantment can be selected any number of times, providing +1 Defense (and +1 Structure) each time.

Examples: *a diamond-hard shield, an unbreakable door, a protective charm*

Increased Area of Effect

Cost: +2 Enchantments per increase

The magic item affects all targets in the area of effect (see Area of Effect Attacks in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 127).

Area effect	Cost
5 ft.	+2 Enchantments
10 ft.	+4 Enchantments
25 ft.	+6 Enchantments
50 ft.	+8 Enchantments
100 ft.	+10 Enchantments

Examples: *Explosive arrows, healing aura, protective ward*

Increased Attribute

Cost: +2 Enchantments per Primary Attribute point or +1 per Secondary Attribute point

This creation grants a bonus to a Primary or Secondary Attribute. These bonuses factor into all Attribute and Skill rolls, and in the case of Primary Attributes, are also calculated into Secondary Attribute ratings.

Examples: *A bottle-cap tunic that protects like armor, a belt that improves its wearer's strength, a crown that grants clarity of mind*

Increased Damage

Cost: +1 Enchantment per Damage point

This enchantment makes a weapon more potent, and can even transform an otherwise innocuous item into a weapon. Attacking with such an artifact still requires an attack roll of the appropriate type (e.g., Melee if swinging it, Athletics if throwing it, Firearms or Archery if it is a ranged weapon—or if it also has the Increased Range Enchantment).

Advanced: This Enchantment can be added to an artifact any number of times.

Examples: *A mystically keen blade, an amulet that burns flesh, a staff used to smite enemies*

Increased Duration

Cost: +2 Enchantments per increase

The effects of the magic item last for longer than a scene.

Duration	Cost
1 day	+2 Enchantments
1 week	+4 Enchantments
1 month	+6 Enchantments

Examples: *Prolonged curse, extended charm, strong enchantment*

Increased Range

Cost: +1 Enchantment per increase

This Enchantment allows weapons to project their damage at range. Making a ranged attack generally requires an Athletics, Archery, or Firearms roll, as appropriate. Weapons projected by mundane means (such as arrows) do not need this Enchantment to serve as ranged attacks, but their range can be increased through this power.

Range	Cost
+10 ft.	+1 Enchantments
+25 ft.	+2 Enchantments
+50 ft.	+3 Enchantments
+100 ft.	+4 Enchantments
+250 ft.	+5 Enchantments

This Enchantment can also be used in conjunction with other Enchantments—such as Healing and Life Draining—allowing the effects to take place at range.

Examples: *A sword that shoots blades, a ring that fires red beams across a battlefield, a bow that can strike enemies from an otherwise impossible distance*

Increased Rate of Fire

Cost: +2 Enchantments per increase

The magical weapon is capable of firing faster than normal, such as an enchanted longbow, crossbow, or blowgun.

Rate of Fire	Cost
Semiautomatic (M)	+2 Enchantments
Fully Automatic (A)	+4 Enchantments

Example: *Quickened longbow, magically reloading crossbow, blowgun that fires multiplying darts*

Life Channeling

Cost: +2 Enchantment

This provides the user with the ability to channel life force into an action. Upon the creation of this artifact, the alchemist selects a single Skill. When the bearer of this artifact performs that Skill, she can inflict non-lethal damage upon herself as a reflexive action. For each point of nonlethal damage suffered in this way, she gains +2 dice to that Skill roll during that turn. This damage can not be defended against or prevented in any way, but can be healed as normal.

Alternately, the user of this artifact can channel the life force of others, gaining +2 dice for each lethal wound inflicted on a human or beastman sacrifice or +1 die for each lethal wound inflicted upon an animal sacrifice. Unwilling victims must be completely immobilized (i.e., have no Active Defense), and they can use Passive Defense to reduce both the damage and the corresponding effectiveness of the sacrifice.

Examples: *An obsidian dagger, a sacrificial altar, a ceremonial spiked rod*

Life Drinking

Cost: +2 Enchantments

When attacking with this artifact, the user can steal vitality from a victim. Each point of Lethal damage this item inflicts on a living victim counts as if it were a success on a Medicine roll giving first aid to the user (see First Aid in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, pp. 131-132).

Examples: *A vampiric spear, a sacrificial dagger, the cudgel of a death-god*

Life Support

Cost: see table below

This Arcane Artifact protects its user from a specific hazardous environment, providing supernatural protection from the elements and for all of his immediate needs. The alchemist must specify the type of environment when creating the Artifact (such as arctic, underground, or underwater) protecting the user against exposure, deprivation, drowning, and suffocation for a specified duration (see *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 132-135).

Advanced: The duration of effectiveness is determined by the base cost (see below). For an additional +2 Enchantments, this artifact will protect from 1 additional environment; for double the base cost, it will function in all environments.

Life Support	Base Cost
One scene	+2 Enchantments
One day	+4 Enchantments
One week	+6 Enchantments
One month	+8 Enchantments

Examples: *A mask that lets the wearer breathe under water, a mole suit, a fire-proof cloak*

Rapid Recharge

Cost: +2 Enchantments

This item refreshes its alchemical energy faster than normal, regaining one charge every twelve hours.

Examples: *sunlight-drinking crystals, astral antenna, powerful alchemical reaction*

Reduced Weight

Cost: +2 Enchantments per 50% decrease

This item is lighter than normal, reducing its weight by 50% and lowering the Strength requirement by one.

Advanced: This can be selected twice, reducing the weight to less than a pound and lowering the Strength requirement to zero.

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Examples: *a feather-weight hammer, a house that can float on water, armor that is buoyant in the air*

Ritual

Cost: +1 Enchantment per Ritual Rank

This artifact grants the user the ability to perform a specific Sorcery ritual. To conduct the ritual, the user may make an Alchemy Skill roll in place of the Sorcery Skill roll, but otherwise the ritual requires the same amount of time, uses the same materials, and results in the same effect as it would for a sorcerer.

This Enchantment does not allow the user to gain bonus dice by making a sacrifice or channeling magical energy, although the user may do so if she possesses the Magical Aptitude Talent.

Examples: *A shroud to animate corpses, a mirror for seeing distant places, a pelt that allows its wearer to speak with animals*

Skill

Cost: +2 Enchantments

This provides the user with a specific Skill (including a Specialized Skill). The user can make a Skill roll as if her rating were a 4. If the user already possesses the Skill, the item provides a +2 teamwork bonus (see Teamwork in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 50).

Advanced: This Enchantment can be taken multiple times, with each additional selection improving the Skill rating by 2.

Examples: *A helmet that whispers advice to its wearer, a hunting knife that points to the nearest watering hole*

Skill Substitution

Cost: +2 Enchantments

Upon creation, the alchemist selects one Skill to be used in all Skill rolls when using this Artifact. Thus, someone attacking with a magical rod might roll Strength + Sorcery (instead of Strength + Melee), or a shaman sneaking through the forest under cover of an invisibility pelt might roll Dexterity + Animal Handling (rather than Dexterity + Stealth).

Examples: *A musket that is aimed through Sorcery, a boat that steers only for those who know how to fish, a medicine rattle activated by song*

Special Movement

Cost: +2 Enchantments per movement type (or +2 for flying at half speed, +4 for flying at full speed)

This Artifact grants its user an alternative mode of movement, such as flying, climbing, or swimming. If the character is already capable of moving in the designated fashion, the character's Move is doubled for that type of movement (see Move in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 128). If the character cannot already move in the designated fashion (such as flying), then the Move rating for this type of movement is half the character's base Move. The character may also need to be equipped with Life Support to travel safely through a particular environment (such as underwater). This Enchantment can be combined with the Animation Enchantment to grant the artifact different modes of movement.



Examples: *A flying carpet, wax wings, spider-sticky fingers for climbing*

Talent

Cost: +2 Enchantments

This provides the user with the benefits of one specific Talent. This may include Unique and mystical Talents, and prerequisites do not need to be met.

Advanced: This Enchantment can be taken up to three times, with each selection boosting the Talent to its next level.

Examples: *Boots that make the user swift, gauntlets that enhance knockdown blows, a horn that intimidates groups of foes*

Touch Attack

Cost: +2 Enchantments

The weapon only requires a touch attack to affect an enemy (see Touch Attack in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 147).

Examples: *Arrows made from fire, a ray that necrotizes internal organs, a blade that seeks gaps in an opponent's armor*

Alchemical Drawbacks

Even magic isn't perfect. The following Drawbacks help to balance powerful items, make them affordable as resources, and might even add flair and intrigue to their use.

Activation Requirement

Cost: -2 Enchantments (or -4 Enchantments if severe)

This artifact can only be used under certain conditions, or by someone possessing a pre-designated trait (race, Talent, Motivation, or Flaw). Thus, the artifact might only activate on a certain day of the year or only when the user is in danger. Alternately, the artifact might only activate when the character is acting in accordance with her Motivation or suffering from her Flaw. The severity of the Activation Requirement determines the cost. A requirement that comes up rarely during play is worth more than one that comes up frequently.

Example: *Boots that only fit panthermen, a wand that only works for someone with Magical Aptitude, a crystal that lights up only when it makes contact with someone in love*

Blood Offering

Cost: -2 Enchantments

Prerequisite: Limited Charges Drawback

This item cannot be recharged unless something bleeds for it. The sacrifice can be from any living creature, but the blood must be specifically dedicated to the item—blood collected elsewhere or for some other purpose doesn't do the trick. Each lethal wound inflicted on a human or beastman sacrifice enables the device to regain one charge (up to the maximum charges allowed per day). Animal sacrifices are less effective, however. Two lethal wounds must be inflicted per charge regained.

Example: *Amulet of a death god, sacrificial dagger, stone golem*

Consumes Catalyst

Cost: -4 Enchantments

The artifact cannot sustain its own alchemical balance. It must be fueled with a supply of orichalcum (or another pre-designated alchemical catalyst) after each use. Without it, the artifact ceases working until it receives more of the catalyst.

Examples: *An orichalcum shield that requires frequent patching, a powerful potion made from heartflower extract, an undead creation that eats death spores*

Exhausting

Cost: -1 Enchantment per nonlethal wound

Each time the artifact is used, it causes one nonlethal point of damage to the user. If its Enchantments ordinarily operate without interruption (such as an Enchantment providing a Talent), then it inflicts the damage at the end of any scene where that effect is called upon.

Advanced: Each extra selection increases the damage by one.

Examples: *A scepter that bruises the skin on contact, armor that pinches uncomfortably*

Flaw

Cost: -2 Enhancements

The Artifact causes the user to suffer from a specific Flaw—selected during the preparation phase. This condition lasts while using the magical item, but the player does not earn Style points for roleplaying the Flaw. Instead, the Flaw must be roleplayed at least once per activation, or the Artifact becomes unusable until the player spends one Style point to reactivate it.

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Examples: *Cursed ring that causes paranoia, healing salve that angers animals, oversized helm that slips down over the wearer's eyes*

Increased Recharge Time

Cost: -2 Enchantments per level

Prerequisite: Limited Charges Drawback or an Enchantment which requires charges.

The Artifact recovers charges more slowly than normal, extending the normal charge time of one day into a week or more.

Recharge time	Cost
1 week	-2 Enchantments
1 month	-4 Enchantments
1 year	-6 Enchantments

Example: *Weak crystal batteries, an altar only usable once per year, healing herbs that need to re-grow after each use*

Increased Weight

Cost: -2 Enchantments per 100% increase

The item is heavier than normal, doubling its weight and increasing its Strength requirement by one.

Examples: *A lead weapon, layered armor, an unusually heavy idol*

Inferior Damage Type

Cost: -2 Enchantments per level

This Drawback can only be applied to a weapon. The weapon inflicts less severe damage than normal, such as a sword that inflicts nonlethal damage or fire that does not burn. Weapons that inflict no damage can still have other effects, such as incapacitation and knockback.

Damage Type	Cost
Caustic Damage to Lethal (L) Damage	-2 Enchantments
Lethal (L) to Nonlethal (N) Damage	-2 Enchantments
Nonlethal (N) to No Damage (None)	-2 Enchantments

Examples: *A spear with a bunted edge, a hammer transmuted to a spongy material, neutralized poisons*

Intermittent Operation

Cost: -2 Enchantments per level

The magic of this artifact sputters irregularly. In combat, the user can benefit from the magic or use the weapon only every other round. In non-combat, the time requirements for all effects are doubled (animated objects move at half speed, rituals take longer, etc.).

Example: *Cracked crystals, a mirror that provides only a partial glimpse of the future, supply flying carpet that moves at half speed*

Limited Charges

Cost: -1 Enchantment per level

Using any Enchantment placed upon this item drains one charge, even if it would not already do so. The item will recover one charge per day it goes unused. The number of charges is determined by the level of the Drawback.

Charges	Cost
10	0 Enchantments
7	-1 Enchantment
5	-2 Enchantments
3	-3 Enchantments
1	-4 Enchantments

Examples: *A shining jewel that grows dim if used too often, a singing nightingale statuette that loses its voice if it sings too frequently, a wand that slowly recharges after each use*

Limited Effect

Cost: -2 Enchantments

All power, damage, or effects of this artifact work against only one type of creature or one race of people. The category can be as broad as "dinosaurs" or as specific as a certain individual. This artifact can be used by anyone, but the magic will fizzle, pass through, or fail to activate if the intended target or recipient does not fit the category.

Examples: *Darts that are poisonous only to insects, a knife cursed to harm only Vrilya, a stone that heals only molemen*

Movement Limitation

Cost: -2 Enchantments for half-Move rating (or -4 Enchantments for zero Move rating)

This Artifact limits one mode of movement that would normally be available, such as climbing or swimming.

Examples: *Heavy armor that prevents swimming, fixed gauntlets that limit climbing, loose clothing that slows flight*

Reduced Attribute

Cost: -2 Enchantments per Primary Attribute point or -1 per Secondary Attribute point

The item decreases a specific Primary Attribute by one point or a Secondary Attribute by two points. This penalty factors into all Attribute and Skill rolls, and, in

the case of Primary Attributes, into Secondary Attribute ratings.

Examples: *A ring that saps the wearer's willpower, a tunic that limits its wearer's range of motion, a pendant that clouds the mind*

Reduced Damage

Cost: -1 Enchantment per Damage point

This Drawback can only be applied to a weapon or in conjunction with an Enchantment that inflicts damage. The attack is underpowered or less accurate than normal, and has a reduced Damage rating.

Examples: *A dagger with a broken blade, a ritual idol that produces a weak life-draining beam, blunt-tipped arrows*

Reduced Duration

Cost: -1 Enhancement

The effects of the Artifact last for less than a scene.

Duration	Cost
1 minute (10 combat turns)	-2 Enhancements
6 seconds (1 combat turn)	-4 Enhancements

Examples: *Weak enchantment, instant charm, minor curse*

Reduced Range

Cost: -1 Enchantment per level

This Drawback can only be applied to a weapon or to an artifact with an effect that can be made at range. The weapon's power disperses over distance or is inaccurate, reducing its effective range. A weapon range can be reduced to zero, making it a melee weapon.

Range	Cost
-10 ft.	-1 Enhancements
-25 ft.	-2 Enhancements
-50 ft.	-3 Enhancements
-100 ft.	-4 Enhancements
-250 ft.	-5 Enhancements

Examples: *Underweight sling stones, a warped spear, a bow with a loose string*

Reduced Rate of Fire

Cost: -2 Enhancements per decrease

The magical weapon fires slower than normal, such as a weakened wand, longbow, or sling.

Rate of Fire	Cost
Semiautomatic (M)	-2 Enhancements
Single Shot (1)	-4 Enhancements
Once every other turn (1/2)	-6 Enhancements
Once every three turns (1/3)	-8 Enhancements

Examples: *Wand that must be recharged between shots, longbow with a heavy pull, sling that requires high-velocity to throw*

Requires Balancing

Cost: -2 Enchantments per level

The artifact requires constant alchemical conditioning. After each use, an appropriate Alchemy roll against a Difficulty of 2 is required before the item can be used again. The alchemist suffers a -2 penalty if any of the Enchantments are from a specialty other than his own.

Advanced: For each additional time this Drawback is selected, the Difficulty of the roll is increased by 1.

Example: *A headdress with feathers that fall out, a necklace with jewels that shake loose, a ritual scepter with easily misaligned spiritual harmonics*

Toxic

Cost: -2 Enchantments per one lethal wound

Each time the artifact is used, it causes one lethal point of damage to the user. If its Enchantments ordinarily operate without interruption (such as an Enchantment providing a Talent), then it inflicts the damage at the end of any scene where that effect is called upon.

Advanced: Each extra selection increases the damage by one.

Examples: *A skull that drains its owner's life force, an amulet that burns to the touch, a blowgun that delivers a corrosive poison*

Living Creations

A few rare alchemists can craft artifacts of such sophistication that they can move, react, and even think for themselves. Others have been known to transform people and creatures into living Arcane Artifacts, enhancing (or debilitating) their bodies through their magic. Either way, the alchemist must first have the Breath of Life Talent (see p. 15).

Living Arcane Artifacts are made using the same process as other Arcane Artifacts. The only difference is that Ally and Follower Resource levels can be added to the creation as Enchantments. Optionally, the alchemist

may choose to add Animal Follower levels (see Animal Follower, p. 25) Each two Enchantments increase the Follower or Ally by one level.

Ally/Follower Level	Cost
0	+1 Enchantment
1	+2 Enchantments
2	+4 Enchantments
3	+6 Enchantments
4	+8 Enchantments
5	+10 Enchantments

Like other Arcane Artifacts, Living Artifacts can be either modified from an existing subject or forged from scratch. If it is a modification, the alchemist is adding awareness and animation to an existing item, or altering an existing creature with one or more Enchantments or Drawbacks. Forging a living creation from scratch could include animating a statue or revivifying a corpse (or a body constructed of several corpses). When creating a new life form, use the appropriate Craft Skill, such as Stonemasonry for a statue, Carpentry for a wooden horse, or Medicine for an organism. The creation is complete when the inventor accumulates a number of successes equal to its Health +5.

Example: Paul's character is a priest from El Dorado, and he wants to design a Jaguar Gargoyle to protect the city of gold. He accumulates his 8 alchemical catalysts (for a Size 1 creation), then starts the design with Animal Follower 2 (+4 Enchantments). To this he adds Increased Attribute: Defense +2 (+2 Enchantments); Improved Damage Type: Claws 0 L (+2 Enchantments); and Life Support: All (+4 Enchantments). The total is 12 Enchantments, so the Creation Difficulty is 6.

To temper his creation, he selects Activation Requirement: Commanded by Owner (-2 Enchantments); Limited Charges: 1 (-4 Enchantments); and Blood Sacrifice (-2 Enchantments). Subtracting the Drawbacks from the Enchantments, he has a net total of 4 Enchantments, which makes this an Artifact 2. Paul makes his Alchemy roll and hits the required difficulty to complete his planning. He now has all the materials and a viable recipe—all that's left is to create his living artifact.

To forge his statue, Paul must make a Craft: Stonemasonry roll. The Gamemaster grants him a +2 bonus because he also has the Art: Sculpture Skill. He needs to accumulate 17 successes (Health 12 + 5), which he does after three rolls, representing three weeks of work. Upon completion, he pays 30 experience points to purchase this living artifact as a Resource, and his temple now has a very formidable guardian.

Jaguar Gargoyle of El Dorado Artifact 1

This stylized carving of a jaguar-like creature remains motionless until its owner calls it to life. When in action, its stony hide protects it from all but the most devastating blows, and its razor-sharp obsidian claws make it a fearsome opponent. A Jaguar Gargoyle animates for the duration of a scene or the entirety of a combat, at the cost of one charge. Afterward, a blood sacrifice must be made before it can be animated again.

Enchantments: Animal Follower 2 (+4 Enchantments); Improved Attribute: Defense +2 (+2 Enchantment); Improved Damage Type: Claws 0 L (+2 Enchantments); Life Support: All (one scene)

Drawbacks: Activation Requirement: Commanded by Owner (-2 Enchantments); Blood Sacrifice (-2 Enchantments); Limited Charges: 1 (-4 Enchantments)

Jaguar Gargoyle of El Dorado

Artifact 2

Archetype: Artifact

Motivation: Duty

Style: 0

Health: 12

Primary Attributes

Body: 7	Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 2	Intelligence: 0
Strength: 6	Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1	Initiative: 2
Move: 8 (16)*	Defense: 10**
Perception: 4	Stun: 7

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Brawl	6	4	10	(5)
Stealth	2	2	3	(1+)**
Hiding			4	(2)***
Survival	0	3	3	(1+)
Tracking			4	(2)

Talents

Hardening (Use Passive Defense to resist fire damage)

Tough (+1 Body rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Modifier	Attack	Average
Bite	1 L	-1	10 L	(5) L
Claw	1 L	-1	10 L	(5) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Jaguar gargoyles have a stony hide that provides a +2 Defense bonus

*** Jaguar gargoyles suffer a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Sample Artifacts

Philosopher's Stone

Artifact 0

This stone is a powerful catalyst for creating healing elixirs. When combined with common ingredients, it allows the user to substitute his Alchemy rating for Medicine rolls. Because of the transformative power of the Philosopher's Stone, the user is always considered to have the appropriate medicine on hand. However, it takes someone with the gift for Alchemy to unlock the secrets of the Stone.

Enchantments: Herb Lore Talent (+2 Enchantments), Ritual: Nature's Healing (+1 Enchantments)

Drawbacks: Activation Requirement: Transmutation Talent (-2 Enchantments)

Diving Conch

Artifact 1

This artifact is a large conch shell with several rubbery tubes curling out to a watertight facemask. When properly donned, it will supply its owner with breathable oxygen for one full scene or combat, per charge. Furthermore, small air bladders and contracting flukes respond to its owner's intent, helping to propel even swimmers twice as fast through the sunken depths. This artifact has 5 charges.

Enchantments: Life Support: Underwater (+2 Enchantments), Swim Talent (+2 Enchantments)

Drawbacks: Limited Charges: 5 charges (-2 Enchantments)

Voodoo Bear

Artifact 1

This is a small, brown, stuffed replica of a bear originally washed up on shore near a Cargo Cult village. Its fur is matted and missing in places, its water-damaged body is lumpy and misshapen, and it has bare divots where its button eyes once resided. Yet it still radiates with dark power, and for someone with a gift for alchemy, it can be very powerful artifact. By attaching an item belonging to a dead person to the bear, the user can summon the deceased's spirit and converse with it. Alternately, the user can curse an enemy, or suck the life from their body, by plunging a needle or other sharp object into the bear (see Necromancy Rituals in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 49-50). There is a price to be paid for this power, however. Each time the alchemist uses the bear, she becomes cursed and unlucky for a short time.

Enchantments: Ritual: Channel Dead (+1 Enchantment); Ritual: Curse (+2 Enchantments); Ritual: Drain Life (+3 Enchantments)

Drawbacks: Activation Requirement: Transmutation Talent (-2 Enchantments); Flaw: Unlucky (-2 Enchantments)

Amazon Bracers

Artifact 2

This bronze armor is intricately inlaid with orichalcum designs that mystically empower the wearer. Whenever attacked, she can instantly react to block strikes and deflect ranged shots. By tradition, these bracers can only be passed from one Amazon champion to another.

Enchantments: Block Talent (+2 Enchantments); Missile Deflection Talent (+2 Enchantments); Unarmed Parry Talent (+2 Enchantments)

Drawbacks: Activation Requirement: Female characters only (-2 Enchantments)

Stormbow

Artifact 2

This heavy bow is carved from a single piece of crystal and strung with orichalcum. When drawn and fired, it releases a bolt of lightning at its target. When firing the bow, make an Archery touch attack against your opponent (see Touch Attacks in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, pp. 126-127). If successful, you automatically inflict 3 L damage on your target.

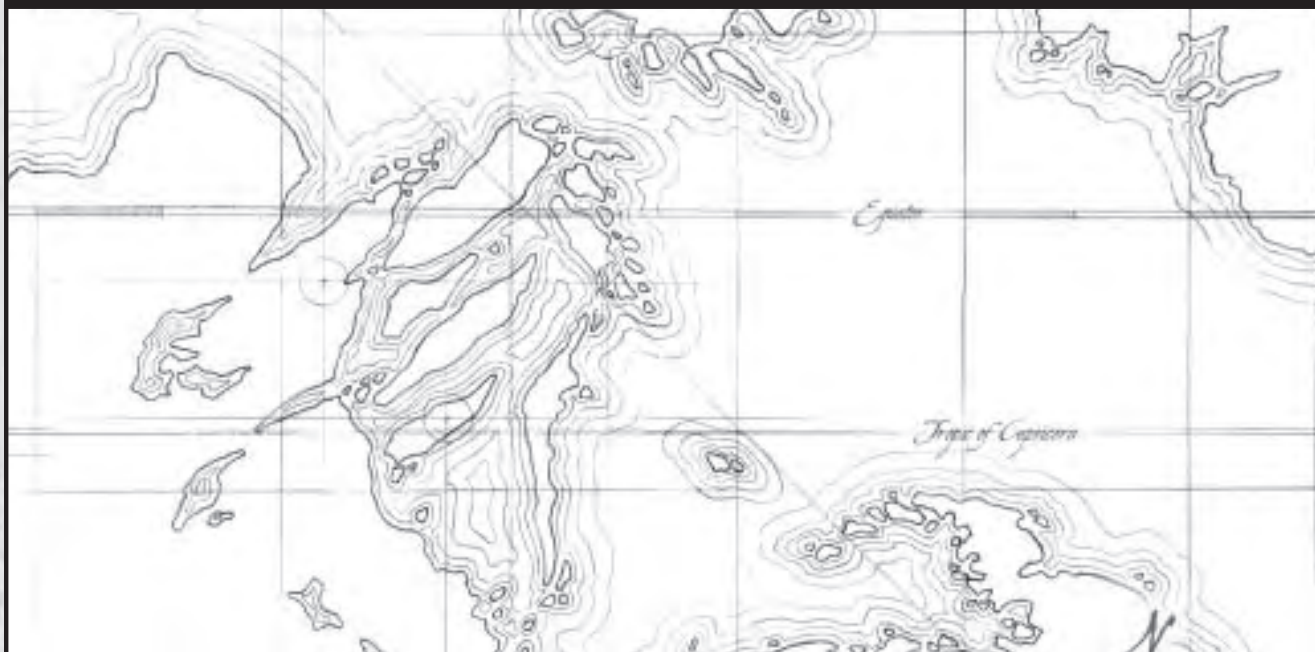
Enchantments: Improved Damage Type: Caustic 3 L (+6 Enchantments)

Drawbacks: Increased Weight: 100% (-2 Enchantments)

Artifact	Dmg	Str	Cap	Spd	Wt	Notes
Stormbow	3 L*	3	N/A	A	2 lb.	Electrical damage

* Caustic damage (see *Electricity* in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 134)

⊕ CHAPTER 3: NATIVES



From Amazons to Atlantean pretenders, from Cannibals to Cargo Cultists, Neanderthals to Noble Savages, and Pirates to Titans, the so-called natives of the Hollow Earth are a disparate array of peoples thrown together by happenstance. Despite the name, few of the groups explored herein are truly native to the lands in the Earth's core. Most entered the Hollow Earth long ago, and came to consider it home only because there was no alternative; the descendants of these travelers are born and expect to die without ever seeing the (perhaps mythical) surface world.

Explorers in the Hollow Earth sometimes mistake the natives they encounter for fellow travelers from the surface world, even when whole generations may separate today's natives from their displaced ancestors. What makes a native a native is his or her personal origin. The pirates of the Hollow Earth may sail on vessels that originally vanished from some surface sea, but they likely consider themselves people of the inner world rather than castaways. Offering them rescue or escape in exchange for assistance can be an insulting mistake. So can assumptions of ignorance. Misunderstandings can erupt into bloodshed, simple raids turn into massacres, and chance encounters become feuds—conflict is everywhere.

Native groups coexist in the Hollow Earth by striking a balance, but that balance can be fleeting and circumstantial. Sometimes the peace between two native tribes is as ritualized and explicit as a treaty, but some-

times it is delicate and indistinct. Perhaps the pirates on board that ship just haven't gotten around to getting rid of that Titan yet; it doesn't mean they're allies. A traveler might mistake coexistence for peace or understanding, when really it's just coexistence. Alliances are more often personal: this pirate somehow strikes a bargain with that Titan. Protecting that friendship from the ignorance or intolerance of outsiders is often a challenge—or an adventure!—of its own.

In game terms, the status quo is meant to be shaken up. The player characters are uncommon folk who, with a bit of roleplaying and a few experience points, might be able to make an Ally of a Titan or Neanderthal. The dynamic between characters almost always trumps the dynamic between whole peoples.

The sample characters for which you'll find game statistics in this section are intended as common examples of background and supporting characters. An Ally isn't a full-fledged main character, after all, and what you'll find here are examples of potential allies or enemies. These sample characters are skewed a bit toward combat and adventure—toward survival in the savage wilds of the Hollow Earth—for the sake of giving the Gamemaster ready-to-use hostile Neanderthals and bloodthirsty Titans. By swapping around a point or two (or adding a few experience points), you can turn one of these nameless characters into a loyal friend, dreaded enemy, or even a player character.



Playing a Native Character

With the Gamemaster's permission, a player may elect to portray a character native to the Hollow Earth. This is great for adding a character after the party has entered the Hollow Earth, or to replace a player character that perished or wandered off and became hopelessly lost. Such a character may be a major boon to a group of explorers stranded in a land the native character calls home. Not all natives get along, though, so having a native character along on the expedition is no guarantee of safe passage. Plus, in many cases the natives are just as ignorant of the Hollow Earth as the explorers themselves. Still, a native player character can add an exotic flavor to the party and create countless fun roleplaying opportunities for the group.

Like other characters, the native player character's role and Motivation should fit in with the rest of the party (see *Building a Party*, in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 39). There are two options for creating a native player character: create the character as normal and apply the appropriate template, if available (See *Hollow Earth Character Templates*, p. 31), or start with one of the sample characters below and add 3 Attribute points, 5 Skill points, a Talent or Resource, and an optional additional Flaw. Both options will create a balanced starting character that is ready to team up with others to explore (or protect) the mysteries of the Hollow Earth.

AMAZONS

Amazon women are tall, lithe, and regal, possessing nearly flawless physiques and beauty to match. They came to the Hollow Earth from the region around what is now Greece, and most individuals retain the look of people from that area, with olive skin and dark, lustrous hair. However, intermingling with other tribes has introduced variety, so it's quite possible to find Amazon individuals, or even whole families, with darker or lighter skin, and blonde, brunette, or even red hair.

Amazons adorn themselves in light, loose fitting clothing, appropriate for life in the hot and humid climates that they typically settle in. They paint their skin with depictions of vines and foliage to camouflage themselves when hunting. They also wear furs and pelts when in colder climates. Amazons usually go barefoot, but occasionally don woven fiber sandals, especially when they head to war. Amazons seem unconcerned about covering their breasts, doing so for aesthetic reasons rather than modesty—something that catches most outsiders off guard.

As a martial society, Amazons never venture forth from the safety of their cities without a weapon or three, even donning incredibly ancient (or ancient

looking) bronze armor, breastplates, and greaves. Their preferred weapons are powerful long spears and deadly short swords. Bows and other such ranged weapons are considered cowardly or, even worse, male weapons.

Culture

Amazon culture is strictly matriarchal. Females spend their time in debate, study, hunting, or practicing for war, while males serve as house servants, laborers, babysitters, and other domestic positions. Amazons are an incredibly healthy and robust people with remarkable longevity, though few live long enough to die of old age. Every Amazon woman is a warrior first and is expected to don her armor and pick up her spear and shield when called—even the elders, who are usually more than capable. While not considered weaker during pregnancy, Amazons protect their gravid sisters, who fight fiercely if pressed.

All Amazon women are raised to strive for *Arete*, a concept usually translated as “personal excellence.” Throughout their lives, they push themselves to excel at all pursuits including poetry, hunting, and art; however, Amazons seek greatest excellence in warfare. Almost from the time they learn to walk, they they are trained with their spear and sword. So rigorous is their training that many do not survive their formative years,



and an Amazon woman is not deemed a full citizen until she undergoes a rite of passage, such as single-handedly defeating a more powerful beast or warrior. This upbringing ensures that Amazons are extremely fearless and disciplined warriors, each believing it a high honor to die in defense of her sisters.

Males live a life of constant servitude, ever mindful of their place in the world. Generations of breeding, indoctrination, and punishment have driven almost all thoughts of revolt from the minds of males. This is not to say that attempts at insurrection haven't occurred in the past or that individuals do not try to buck the trend and escape, but such events are exceedingly rare and squashed with brutal speed by the females. Amazons treat their males relatively well and without cruelty, but discipline is harsh and punishment quick. An Amazon woman is expected to maintain absolute control of her household, and while the law grants her the right to physically punish her mate, exercising this right is deemed unbecoming and shameful for a powerful warrior.

When dealing with outsiders, Amazons come across as haughty, arrogant, and utterly capable. They admire strength and conviction of character, but male bravado is frowned upon as crude and repugnant—the typical male explorer from the surface world, if not killed outright for insolence, is at least treated with condescension and disdain, much as one would treat a particularly bratty child. Female explorers have an easier time dealing with Amazons, but have the opposite problem. If a woman proves incapable of handling herself in a fight, shows weakness in public, or displays subservience to any man, she is in for a seriously tough time.

Themiscyra—City of the Amazons

While there are smaller Amazon settlements scattered throughout the Hollow Earth, their capital and true home is Themiscyra. Named for the Amazon's ancient fabled city on the surface world, this settlement is a wonder to behold, with marble columns, pleasing temples, and carefully channeled waterfalls that produce long, refreshing pools. The area surrounding Themiscyra is lush and full of game and fruits. Part of an Amazon's long training involves keeping the nearby countryside free from large dinosaurs and other predators, making it relatively safe to venture through. Idyllic and civilized, Themiscyra is a paradise...as long as you're female.

Themiscyra is governed by a senate of stateswomen (most of whom also serve as priestesses and all of whom have served in battle) and led by a queen. The stateswomen are selected by regular elections open to all women with full citizenship status. The queen rules for life, but the position is conferred through a vote in the senate rather than through inheritance. Because the queen's primary role is that of military commander, battlefield experience plays heavily into the senate's selection criteria, although they also seek wisdom and sophistication in their leaders. Even when there is only one viable candidate, it is traditional that the senate subjects all potential queens to a period of testing designed to measure integrity, composure, and leadership.

Beliefs

Amazons are a deeply spiritual people whose religious roots come from the time before they entered the Hollow Earth. They have a number of gods with very close ties to those from ancient Greece and the surrounding area. More accurately, they have seen a number of goddesses with names and aspects similar to those of lore—male deities are either curiously absent, reduced to subservient roles, or portrayed as demonic figures epitomizing all that is evil and vile.

The goddesses of the Amazons embody traits of wisdom, loyalty, learning, and the more disciplined aspects of personal combat and war. The priestesses of the Amazons are both learned scholars and capable warriors who seek to emulate their heroes and goddesses. Since elevated to the status of a goddess, the Amazon Queen Myrina is the patron deity, and her name is spoken with the same reverence as Athena, Artemis, Demeter and the other goddesses. Queen Myrina first led the Amazons when they were brought to the Hollow Earth and led them on the path to conquest, quickly subjugating most of the primitive tribes they encountered. Some of the females from these natives were indoctrinated in the customs of the Amazons, while the males were made into slaves. The beliefs and bloodlines of these cultures were slowly absorbed into Amazon culture, adding new gods and goddesses to their pantheon.

The priestesses of the Amazons are highly revered, serving as the repositories of knowledge as well as martial technique. In addition to teaching their sisters the history of their culture and the stories of their past, most priestesses are adept in the arts of divination and spend many hours a day staring at the coals of sacred fires, watching the movements of birds, and casting

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bones in hopes of gleaning insights into the future for the betterment of Amazon society. One position held in particularly high regard is that of the Pythoness—the lead oracle of the Amazons. Secluded in the sheer cliffs that contain the precious artifacts of the Amazons, the Pythoness lives in a constant psychedelic haze, breathing the fumes that rise up from cracks within the cliff walls. This sacred sister continually rants, spilling out both gibberish and oracles, which the other priestesses write down and attempt to discern. More than once, the Pythoness has divined great danger and triumph for the Amazons, including the approach of strangers to their city—something that has startled more than a few explorers when they discover their arrival was foreseen.

Society

Amazons live in a delicate balance of war and peace. On the one hand, they are a warlike society with a well organized and disciplined army that is used to expand Amazon territory. They bring slaves back to maintain their city and bolster their civilization, and carry treasures back to fill their coffers. On the other, they are an enlightened people rich in poetry, philosophy, and the sciences, content to live in idyllic luxury until the time to pick up the spear comes yet again.

Outside the safety and civilization of Themiscyra, there are several small Amazon settlements functioning as farming communities, mining villages, or outposts to alert the capital of danger. While nowhere near as large and grand as Themiscyra, the settlements still offer a bit of civilization in the vast, untamed wilderness of the Hollow Earth. These towns export the bulk of their goods back to the capital, ensuring a steady supply of iron, meat, fruit, and marble for the Amazons to use. Young Amazons are typically sent to one of these outposts to study a trade or learn to become better warriors.

With their arrogance and xenophobic nature, Amazons look down on the other denizens of the Hollow Earth. Although they disdain aggression in males, as warriors they are no fools and they respect the martial prowess of certain patriarchal tribes. Still, they reserve friendly diplomatic relations for those societies led by women, and strongly prefer to trade with such societies over others.

Amazon Language

As befitting their martial culture, the Amazon language tends to be short and direct, but still retains a pleasing sound to an outsider from the surface world. Although influenced by generations of contact with the native dialects of the Hollow Earth, a scholar could still recognize the Ancient Greek roots of this language. It has undergone several vowel shifts and vocabulary additions, making the pronunciation markedly different from its closest surface-world precursor, but the fundamental grammar and alphabet remain intact, leaving the language somewhat more accessible than many of the other tongues of the Hollow Earth residents.

Amazon Names

Amazon names are short, full of vowels, and poetic in nature. When translated, they have a proud, militaristic quality to them. Women's names tend to end with the vowel "a" and often bear strong similarities to those of women in ancient Greek mythology. All male Amazon names end with the vowel "o," which has become a pejorative suffix that an Amazon may add to the end of any word describing something or someone considered pleasantly dainty or harmless. They frequently add this vowel to the names of foreign men, even when doing so represents a mispronunciation.

Example Names: Aramara, Kalinda, Aja, Erisorta, Charistaa, Koora

Amazon Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their martial upbringing, every Amazon is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Athletics
- Brawl
- Melee
- Stealth
- Survival

Amazon

Ally 1

Archetype: *Native*

Motivation: *Duty*

Style: 0

Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2

Charisma: 2

Dexterity: 2

Intelligence: 2

Strength: 3

Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 4

Move: 5

Defense: 4

Perception: 4

Stun: 2

Skills

Athletics	3	2	5	(2+)
Brawl	3	1	4	(2)
Melee	3	1	4	(2)
Spears			5	(2+)
Stealth	2	2	4	(2)
Survival	2	3	5	(2+)
Hunting			6	(3)

Talents

Strong (+1 Strength rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Spear	3 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Spear (Thrown)	3 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Sword	2 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N

CANNIBALS

Cannibals belong to any number of tribes of Hollow Earth natives who, for myriad reasons, have taken to eating human flesh. The reasons for this vary from tribe to tribe: to terrify their enemies, obey religious dogma, tradition, or just for the sheer enjoyment.

Cannibals physically resemble other Hollow Earth natives, but invariably take on a distinctly sinister outward appearance. Most of them are lean and predatory with the exception of high ranked individuals—chiefs, shamans, and other esteemed elders are often portly, or even grotesquely overweight thanks to their steady diet of human flesh. Cannibals adorn themselves with the skulls and bones of their victims, making grisly “armor” that is meant to terrify rather than protect. Some tribes prefer mummification, carrying tokens of dried fingers and shrunken heads as necklaces or talismans. Tat-

tooing and scarification are also common among the cannibal tribes, creating hideous and horrifying patterns that make the cannibal appear more terrible and animalistic. Other cannibals engage in body painting as a ritualistic preparation for the hunt or the slaughter, using white mud, plant dyes, or fresh blood to decorate themselves with symbols of death.

Cannibals employ heavy clubs, wicked knives, and fearsome spears when they hunt. The blowgun is also a popular weapon; they coat the darts (and sometimes their other weapons) with powerful toxins that paralyze their human prey. The still-living victim is then dragged back to the village and prepared for the great feast. Victims are often fattened up before being butchered, particularly if they are thin and scrawny.

Culture

As might be expected, cannibal culture centers on their primary activity: hunting down and eating other human beings. For cannibals, hunting is both a practical and spiritual affair, obtaining food while at the same time appeasing their gods. Their oral history is replete with tales of mighty hunters capturing powerful opponents or large groups of enemies and bringing them back to the cannibal villages to consume in massive feasts.

Cannibal villages are comprised of large extended families, typically with the most powerful adult male in charge of the clan. This does not mean the eldest, for as soon as a leader is deemed incapable of hunting or providing, he runs the risk of being eliminated by someone younger and stronger.

Every cannibal is a killer, including the women and children. Women are charged with executing the weakest captives, while children are taught cruelty and remorselessness by snuffing out the life of small animals under the tutelage of their parents and tribesmen. At the onset of puberty, male children must venture forth with the warriors of the tribe in order to hunt down their first human prey. This ritual is literally a matter of life and death for these youths, for failure means they are incapable of providing for the tribe—except as more meat for the feast.

Beyond their capacity for hunting, most cannibal tribes are woefully deficient in other skills. Their residences are usually shabbily built frameworks patched with palm fronds or the tanned hides of their victims. Their “art” rarely goes beyond crude pictograms and



totems cobbled together from skin, bones, and gristle. Cannibal songs are composed of discordant, guttural lyrics describing torture and the consumption of human flesh in gruesome detail.

The one place where cannibals excel is the production of poison and other toxins. Shamans and wise

women scour the countryside collecting the venom of snakes, spiders, and scorpions to make noxious concoctions. Most of these poisons are paralytics, but cannibals also use hallucinogens and nerve agents that can kill in mere seconds. Some cannibal tribes even include small doses of these poisons into their own meals as a means of building up immunity, or sometimes to receive strange visions from the gods.

Beliefs

Cannibal gods are bloodthirsty, vengeful, and hungry. Many rites are performed to feed the insatiable appetite of these gods, who find sustenance in the flesh and blood of human beings. Most cannibal tribes live in utter terror of angering these gods, believing that missing just one ritual or violating the trust of the shamans (and thus the gods) leads to being devoured in the afterlife and spending eternity in the bowels of horrific monsters. When cannibals discover human prey and successfully bring it back to their village, the entire population rises up in terrible song and mesmerizing dance, working themselves into a frenzy to placate the gods and prepare for their horrific feast. Depending on the tribe, the victims are either killed quickly and mercifully, or tortured and dissected alive so as to prolong their suffering and curry favor with the gods.

However, some tribes see their gods as essentially benevolent, having taught the people to eat the dead in order to understand them, absorb the essence, and gain strength from those who have gone beyond. In short, consuming the corpse of a human is to honor them,

merging their soul and memories of the “meal” with the eater. These tribes have a much more upbeat attitude, almost jovial, which can take outsiders off guard. They’ll show strangers immense hospitality, including promises of a great feast, before they slit their throats.

Cannibal shamans are charged with determining the “hunger” of the gods and how many victims are required to appease them. They use a variety of divination methods, including extispicy (divination by entrails), examination of the cracked bones of victims burned in ritual fires, and the pattern and frequency of attacks by vicious predators on the members of the tribe. The tribal shamans often make burnt offerings of specific organs—most frequently the heart, brain, or stomach—in order to offer thanks for a successful hunt or in hopes of propitiating their gods for future prosperity.

Being a shaman may seem like the best position to have within a society that eats humans, but it can be a tenuous position. When the gods are ravenous and no other people are nearby to hunt down, members of the tribe must be sacrificed; doing this too often can push even the most faithful to fear for their own survival and may “depose” the shaman into the cook fires. Explorers captured by cannibals may be able to escape intact if they manage to convince the shaman that they are somehow unclean and thus, unworthy of sacrifice to their gods.

Society

Cannibal society is cruel and vicious. The chief is chosen from the strongest and most successful warriors in the tribe, and power is only held for as long as he is able to keep it. Most chiefs surround themselves with a cadre of capable warriors and informants to keep him protected. This loyalty is often tested as new alliances emerge or if the chief shows any sign of weakness.

Politics in cannibal society are simple and rather deadly, as all disputes are resolved with a fight to the death. In some tribes, it’s acceptable for a fighter to surrender before being killed, but the loser must sacrifice a hand, foot, or limb to be removed and consumed by the victor. Custom dictates that women and children are exempt from being used as “bargaining chips” in these disputes—one of the few redeeming qualities that cannibals show.

Many cannibals base their economy on a gruesome form of currency: human remains. This varies from

tribe to tribe, but includes teeth, bones, and shrunken heads, which are scaled in value depending on scarcity. Thus, cannibals hunt humans not only for food, but also to gain wealth. Warriors are obviously the richest members of the tribe. Human slavery is also extremely common, although the slaves are given relatively light duties in order to keep them from getting too thin (and thus, less edible) for the day when the slave’s usefulness runs out. A slave escape is treated almost as a holiday, as the tribe’s warriors mobilize to hunt and kill the escapee, doing so with relish.

Cannibals defend their territory with frightening ferocity, often setting up grisly warnings—heads on spikes, limbs dangling from trees, and the like—to unnerve or scare away invaders. Unsurprisingly, cannibals have poor relations with their neighbors, especially other cannibal tribes. Because of their dietary needs, cannibals range far and wide in search of human prey and almost never recognize boundaries or treaties. Those native tribes that cannot fight off cannibal predations typically pick up stakes and move far away. Tribes that remain in place and fight usually end up on a spit. Depending on the cannibal tribe, they either avoid beastmen entirely or hunt them down as “delicacies” to augment their meals of human flesh. Cannibals fear anyone and anything stronger than themselves, meaning that the best defense against a cannibal attack is an overwhelming show of strength.

Cannibal Languages

The cannibal language varies from village to village, but most dialects sound harsh and grating to outsiders. Cannibals smile and laugh frequently, which can be mistaken for friendliness, and more than one hapless victim has been lulled into a false sense of security until it was too late.

Cannibal Names

Cannibal names sound brutish and short, and when translated refer to scenes of violence and horror.

Example Names (Translated): Heart Eater, Three Fingers, Devourer of Entrails, Leg Biter, Head Hunter, Cooker of White Flesh

Cannibal Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their brutal upbringing, every cannibal is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Brawl
- Intimidation
- Melee
- Stealth
- Survival

Cannibal

Ally 1

Archetype: *Native*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2	Charisma: 1
Dexterity: 3	Intelligence: 2
Strength: 2	Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 5
Move: 5	Defense: 5
Perception: 4	Stun: 2

Skills

Athletics	3	1	4	(2)
Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Intimidation	1	1	4	(2)
Melee	2	1	3	(1+)
Clubs			4	(2)
Stealth	3	1	4	(2)
Survival	2	3	5	(2+)
Hunting			6	(3)

Talents

Skill Aptitude (+2 Intimidation rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Blowgun	0*	0	4*	(2)*
Club	2 N	0	6 N	(3) N
Knife	1 L	0	4 L	(2) L
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N

* Weapon injects a drug or poison with a successful attack (See *Poisons and Drugs in Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 136)

CARGO CULTISTS

Cargo cultists revere the strange objects from the surface world that wash up on their shores or fall from the sky. To these tribes, the material they collect is not salvaged junk, but rather tangible proof of their gods' approval. For explorers stranded inside the Hollow Earth, cargo cultists can be true lifesavers, depending on what goods they've managed to scavenge from crates and wrecked ships.

Cargo cultists vary wildly in terms of body shape, skin color, and other features. They dress in whatever materials are available to them, typically cloth made from exotic plant fibers, feathers, and skins. Their outfits are adorned with a strange assortment of scavenged goods. For example, a cargo cult leader might wear a headdress made from scraps of surface world clothing, a necklace cobbled together from parts of an old typewriter, while bearing a staff topped with a child's doll. To the cargo cultists, these objects are considered sacred items, their true purpose a mystery.

Culture

The behavior, customs, and dress of many cargo cultists may seem amusing and even ludicrous to outsiders. But beneath the surface lies a deep and abiding faith in the power of the gods. Typically friendly (or at least non-aggressive) to strangers, the primary difference between cargo cultists and other Hollow Earth natives is materialism. Cargo cultists are obsessed with acquiring rare and unusual items on a scale that compares with the most avid surface world collector.

Beyond the day-to-day routine of gathering food and other menial chores, most cargo cultists spend their time searching for the next crate, ship, airplane, or abandoned cache of cargo. Scouts routinely ply routes known for being treasure troves. Some tribes, not content to wait, go so far as to construct mock landing fields in order to attract the attention of the gods. When something unusual is found, the entire village comes alive in celebration and anticipation: Is it food? Clothing? Or is it some enigmatic object that is meant to test the village's faith in the gods? These items are brought back to the village with great pomp and circumstance, and are presented to the tribal elders to discern their meaning. When goods are deemed harmless, such as food or clothing, they are divided up among the tribe members with the chief and elders receiving the first pick. Items determined to be especially valuable or



dangerous are declared to require “further study” and are selfishly hoarded by tribal elders. Most cargo cultists are content to allow their experts to hold on to such items until such a time that their greater meaning is revealed.

Cargo cultists who find new loot are greatly admired and praised within the tribe. A sure way for a youth to be proclaimed an adult is to bring something new back

to the village. In fact, most of the cargo cultists’ names reflect objects they themselves or a respected ancestor found, forming something akin to surnames, which is rare among other natives of the Hollow Earth.

In “wealthy” cargo cults, common clothing, household goods, and weapons are often comprised of the bits and pieces of surface world junk: Spear tips made from strips of metal torn from the hull of an abandoned tramp steamer, or armor made from salvaged pots and pans. Actual weapons are sometimes mistaken for harmless items while mundane equipment is used for weapons. For example, a cargo cult might initially believe “pineapple” grenades to be a hard-shelled fruit while using tins of food as projectiles. Whatever the item’s true purpose, its value is set by its appearance and perceived usefulness, and a healthy system of trade and bartering exists utilizing these items as currency.

Beliefs

Although many Hollow Earth natives have discovered material from the surface world and have incorporated it in some way into their own society, no other tribe is defined by the acquisition and reverence of this salvage like cargo cultists. By definition, a cargo cult’s settlement and day-to-day existence are shaped by the salvage that they have managed to acquire, meaning no two cults are going to be the same. A cargo cult that built their village in the remains of an airplane “graveyard” might worship gods who travel within giant metal birds, and plow their fields into designs only recognizable from the sky in hopes of encouraging their benefactors to return to the earth. A tribe that pulls a plethora of crates of toys and food from the riverbank where they have settled might believe that a celestial fish has laid bizarre eggs in order to bless her loyal worshippers. Despite these superficial differences, cargo cults all share the notion that the marvelous and unexplainable salvaged artifacts could only have been sent by divine beings.

Chapter Three

For cargo cultists, the cargo is a gift from their gods. When another crate, abandoned ship, or crashed airplane shows up near a cargo cult village, it is a clear sign that the gods are pleased with the tribe—blessing them with the bounty from beyond their world. Cargo cults that are not rich in bounty create epic tales about the time when the gods were merciful, and they pray frequently for the gods to once again bestow their material favor.

Tribal elders serve as both the keepers and interpreters of the wonderful and blessed objects, doling out items to the rest of the tribe as they see fit. Considering that cargo cultists don't have the slightest clue what most items are, they weave intricate stories to explain the purpose of surface world items—the most successful elders are those that give convincing descriptions of the cargo; those who don't are quickly replaced. When dealing with explorers from the surface world, elders are in a tenuous position. Although outsiders can explain the true purpose of the items that cargo cultists venerate, they can also “explain them away” or even take them for their own. For this reason, most elders consider the arrival of a team of strangers from the surface world as a mixed blessing.

At least part of a cargo cult's time is spent praying to the gods for more cargo to come their way. Crash sites of airplanes or beached ships serve as holy ground to these tribes. They build intricate shrines to venerate the various baubles and junk that they find. Damaging, stealing from, or destroying these shrines is a sure way to raise the ire of a cargo cult village.

Society

Cargo cults are typically hierarchical, with the tribal elders holding far more power than those of other native tribes. A tribe's chieftain is often the most venerable elder or the one possessing the most valuable items. Beyond that, tribe members who possess the most, or most coveted, items from the surface world serve as a form of upper class. The less wealthy live as the lower class, constantly striving for status.

As stated above, cargo cultists use the acquired goods as a form of currency, although the value fluctuates wildly based on the tribe's perception of items they have on hand. Food, alcohol, and clothing are almost always highly valuable and coveted.

Many cargo cults are interested in setting up trade relations with their neighbors in order to obtain more of the goods that they hold in high regard. Because

they are excited about obtaining new items for the tribe, cargo cultists are willing to engage in diplomatic relations with nearly anyone, including the strange and unnerving beastmen. If a cargo cult is strong or zealous enough they may even go to war, raiding neighboring villages and taking whatever they desire. Indeed, by doing so, many cargo cults believe that they are stealing the enemy tribe's magic, although doing so does run the risk of “angering the gods.”

Although it is rare, the discovery of artifacts can lead a tribe into anarchy or violence. Sometimes the introduction of a desirable and unique item can inspire feelings of covetousness, and a harmonious tribe might be divided into spiteful factions. Other times, after constant scavenging causes the bounty of artifacts to dry up, tribal elders may begin to fear that they have lost favor. In their increasing desperation, they sometimes seek to appease their gods through animal or even human sacrifices.

Cargo Cultist Language

Cargo cultists speak a pidgin language that is an amalgamation of words and phrases from native languages throughout the Hollow Earth. Not surprisingly, their strange tongue is also punctuated by words most surface world explorers would recognize, such as “chocolate,” “parfum,” “radio,” and the like.

Cargo Cultist Names

Cargo cultists borrow names from all over the Hollow Earth, but they have a particular fondness for naming themselves after surface world cargo that they have found and integrated into their society.

Example Names (translated): Red Metal Stripe, Finder of Metal Canoe, Drinker of Water that Burns, Lady Two Hats, Warrior with Booming Spear

Cargo Cultist Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their eclectic upbringing, every cargo cultist is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Brawl
- Diplomacy
- Melee
- Stealth
- Survival

Cargo Cultist

Ally 1

Archetype: *Native*

Motivation: *Faith*

Style: 0

Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2	Charisma: 3
Dexterity: 2	Intelligence: 2
Strength: 2	Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 4
Move: 4	Defense: 4
Perception: 4	Stun: 2

Skills

Athletics	2	2	4	(2)
Diplomacy	3	1	4	(2)
Melee	2	1	3	(1+)
Improvised			4	(2)
Stealth	2	2	4	(2)
Survival	2	3	5	(2+)
Foraging			6	(3)

Talents

Charismatic (+1 Charisma rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Crowbar	2 N	0	6 N	(3) N
Knife	1 L	0	4 L	(2) L
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N

NEANDERTHALS

Neanderthals disappeared from the surface world tens of thousands of years ago, but clans still exist inside the Hollow Earth. They are not quite the cave-men of the cinema, but a truly different breed of humankind, eerie and astonishing to modern eyes. They are hairier, yes, but not so different from the more hirsute *Homo sapiens*. They stand differently, slouched and seemingly braced for some scuffle, but they do it on legs not so unlike our own. Their heads are wider, exaggerated in brows and chins, with uniformly wide and flat noses, but again, not so unlike this or that man you once knew. Physically, they could pass for human if properly groomed.

It's the way Neanderthals move that gives them away. Their powerful muscles join differently, tugging their mouths wide and slapping their feet on the ground. Their shoulder blades, smaller and higher, roll

as they walk and follow their reaching hands with a stiff, loping motion. They chew their lips and look out with an animal confidence from under heavy brows and through eyes the color of their dark hair.

Culture

Neanderthals are simple, brutal people. They are insular and wary enough to protect themselves and survive, but too untrusting and too underdeveloped linguistically to share much knowledge with one another. They hoard when they could contribute, and withdraw when they could entreat. Seldom do they show compassion for any creatures other than their closest family members, and even then they have been known to abandon clan mates to hungry predators to save their own skins. Neanderthals fear change and are notoriously closed-minded. Their first impulse is to lash out at any person or object that challenges their traditional way of life. Most know that other tribes wield powerful "magics" in the form of arrows and blowguns, but if a clan of Neanderthals manages to capture outsiders they are likely to drop large rocks on their prisoners simply to maintain the status quo. Neanderthals, by and large, do not appreciate the appeal of ranged weapons—not when they could tackle a beast as a group and feel the sure blow that comes from an axe or a spear at close range.

In spite of their simplicity, Neanderthals can appreciate the contributions of the painter and the tool-maker. They marvel at their cave-painters as if they were wizards. They protect tool-makers as if they were children, sharing with them the clan's recent kills and protecting them from predatory beasts (and other natives). Aside from unsophisticated stone weapons, Neanderthals make simple jewelry and animal-hide clothing, and occasionally strive to create crude works of art for gifts or status symbols.

Neanderthals actually do have the capacity to cultivate a rapport with others, and with humans, but their culture has never had a period of history peaceful enough to facilitate this discovery of themselves. Their ability to interact with humans and animals suggests that, with time to develop culturally, they could transition from their society of fear and food into something more civilized. Yet realizing this potential must always come in second to survival. They fish. They hunt. They collect nuts and berries. Everything is stored on a small scale, ready to be carried off or abandoned if necessary.



Neanderthals live in constant fear of animal attacks, wildfires, and punitive murder at the hands of the alpha male. A tribe of Neanderthals lucky enough to find a safe, permanent home will defend it to the death, because they can expect nothing higher in life.

Beliefs

Neanderthals use their primitive language, gestures and drawings to tell stories of spirits at work in the world around them. Nearly all of these stories attempt

to answer basic questions about the origin and workings of the world. Many clans share similar stories about a group of great spirits that labored in unison to give birth to a perfect world, and how all creatures within this world will eventually join them. Stories such as these are recorded on cave walls and explained by elders, usually as the clan is gathered around a fire with their bellies full after a successful hunt.

Neanderthals have only a vague concept of the afterlife, believing that the dead simply become spirits. They will sometimes go to great lengths to protect the bodies of their loved ones, defending them from scavengers by burying them in great stone cairns and even leaving the dead with prized possessions not essential to the survival of the clan. Beyond this Neanderthals give no more thought to the dead, trusting that spirits can not only provide for themselves, but help provide for the living too. It is this belief that leads them to their might-makes-right approach to life. Spirits are assumed to lend strength to those they favor. In any conflict, the strongest is the most favored of the spirits, and therefore their cause is most just.

The Neanderthals have no roles for holy men or women, but rather accord a type of reverence on any of their number who can perform special skills. Thus, one who is uncommonly skilled at hunting is treated with special deference by all others. The same goes for exceptional cave painters, midwives, and warriors. A group of such “blessed” individuals may even hold enough clout within the clan to override a decision of the alpha male without resorting to violence, though such a situation is rare.

One “blessed” skill prized above nearly all others is fire-making, for fire is seen as a link to the life-giving sun and the only mark of sophistication recognized by Neanderthals. They have developed an almost religious view of fire, and a burgeoning sense of quasi-priesthood

developing around those who are capable of producing and handling it. To the Neanderthal, all creatures in the world are divided into two camps: the fire-makers and the animals. To the Neanderthals, animals are meant to be eaten while fire-makers are the beings for whom the world was created. Even with the respect that Neanderthals have for fellow fire-makers, they will not hesitate to kill them if they feel threatened.

Society

Neanderthals are natural-born social Darwinists. The strong dominate the weak. It is an alpha male culture, gathered around a single decision-making leader who uses fear and intimidation to keep the others in line. Above all, it is physical might—visible, fearsome strength—that captures status in Neanderthal society. The alpha male declares when hunts begin and end (though he may or may not actually participate himself), and also decides who gets to eat what. Any member of the clan who challenges the alpha male can expect to do so only through overt violence which is as likely as not to end with serious injury or even death for one or both parties.

The typical Neanderthal clan consists of anywhere from five to fifty extended family members. They are suspicious of outsiders, and usually more so of their own kind than of other races, owing to the common practice of stealing mates from other clans. Although they are proficient at hunting and gathering, their culinary skills go no further than unevenly roasting meat on a spit.

The ideal home for Neanderthal groups is a natural shelter, like a cave, with a wide vista for visibility. Beach-side caves and mountainside clefts are perfect. Within their shelter, Neanderthals dwell with the most irreplaceable individuals, like tool-makers and pregnant mothers, deepest in the rock, alongside the alpha male. It is there that they gather by firelight and watch the cave-painters conjure dinosaurs from ink on the walls.

Neanderthals that find themselves in contact with other intelligent creatures are concerned with two things, in this order: survival and appearing strong. Cracking skulls and making fearsome sounds often accomplishes both, and so they rely on it, leading other natives think of them as being little more than loud and violent.

Neanderthal Language

The language of the Neanderthal is gruff, utilitarian, and primitive. Their communication is so rudimentary that grammar is virtually nonexistent; it is rare that any Neanderthal goes so far as to push a noun together with a verb, and anything beyond that is considered bewilderingly complicated. Their vocabulary is also extremely limited, consisting of only a handful of single- and double-syllable words, which are combined with an equal number of gestures. Many outsiders find it very easy to establish basic communication with Neanderthals, but those who take the time to truly study this proto-language are invariably surprised at their ability to use grunts and gestures to communicate sophisticated concepts such as hunting strategies, tool making techniques, and campfire stories. Perhaps because of their reliance on gestures, Neanderthals are also adept at reading body language, allowing them to understand more complex concepts than one would think could be transmitted through their limited vocabulary. Sometimes this attention to non-verbal cues allows them to read motivations in the faces and actions of outsiders who wrongly assumed that their quick tongues would hide the truth.

Neanderthal Names

Neanderthal names are often just aurally pleasing sounds, two or three syllables long for the sake of distinction. The translations of these names are usually either the combination of two animal names or an adjective and an animal name. Such naming conventions are never abstract; the individual always bears a striking resemblance to the creature or creatures being described or has an associated personality trait. For example, an unusually hairy male might be called “Aurochs-Bear” after animals known to be shaggy, while a particularly short-tempered female might be called “Big-Lion.”

Example Names: Oona, Arkton, Otchnok, Roon, Eelee

Neanderthal Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their crude upbringing, every Neanderthal is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Athletics
- Brawl
- Melee
- Stealth
- Survival

Chapter Three

Neanderthal

Ally 1

Archetype: *Native*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3

Charisma: 1

Dexterity: 1

Intelligence: 1

Strength: 3

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 2

Move: 4

Defense: 4

Perception: 4

Stun: 3

Skills

Athletics	3	1	4	(2)
Throwing			5	(2+)
Brawl	3	1	4	(2)
Melee	3	2	5	(2+)
Stealth	1	3	4	(2)
Survival	1	2	5	(2+)
Hunting			6	(3)

Talents

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Spear	3 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Spear (Thrown)	3 L	0	8 L	(4) L
War club	3 N	0	8 N	(4) N
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N

are usually regal and handsome, and the women graceful and striking in their appearance. They wear clothing appropriate for their native climate, from fur-lined coats to simple loincloths. Whatever their attire, it is usually both sturdily made and aesthetically pleasing, adorned with shiny beads, brilliant feathers, and custom stitching done by an expert hand. Some noble savages will paint or tattoo their skin and pierce their flesh with bone or the rare bits of metal that they can obtain. Capable hunters and warriors, most noble savages are adept with spears, bows, daggers, and other simple weapons. The craftsmanship of these weapons is exquisite, almost art pieces unto themselves, carefully decorated with images of animals, their gods, or other pleasing depictions.

Culture

Noble savages live in harmony and deep communion with their environment, carefully observing and learning from the world around them. They live simple, rustic lives, striving to leave as little impact on the land as possible. Noble savages take only what they need from the wilderness around them and use everything they take.

Despite this seemingly idyllic viewpoint on the world, noble savages can be remarkably blasé about the human condition, accepting life and death with equal ease. They know that the world is a dangerous, uncaring place that will wipe out the weak or those who do not fight for their survival. For example, a noble savage belonging to a tribe that worships Smilodons has no qualms killing one that attacks or otherwise poses a threat. Likewise, they will not hesitate to go to war in defense of their lives, their lands, or their principles.

Most noble savages are migratory, either trailing herds of herbivores, such as bison, yak, and other, more exotic creatures; or moving through the jungle canopy in search of fruits, nuts, and other seasonal food. Depending on the climate, these tribes either live in easily portable tents or yurts, or build entire villages out of saplings and huge, broad leaves each time they decide to camp for the night. Either way, these noble savages eschew the material, taking few permanent items with them and crafting what they need as the situation arises. The noble savage tribes that are rooted still live in eco-friendly settlements, usually no larger than a hundred or so individuals who make their livelihoods through fishing or agriculture. The residential structures of these tribes are elegantly built, adorned

NOBLE SAVAGES

Forced to deal with the perilous conditions within the Hollow Earth, some tribes have risen to the challenge, becoming fine examples of humanity—regal, wise, and in touch with the natural world around them.

Surface world explorers may call them “noble savages,” but it is the outsiders themselves who are considered savages—rude, uncouth, and ugly people best pitied or ignored completely.

Noble savages can be found in every climate throughout Hollow Earth, from the frozen mountains to the deepest, darkest jungle. There is great variance in their physique, skin and hair color, but most appear quite attractive to the eyes of surface world residents. Their rugged, active lifestyle and nutritious diet mean that most noble savages are in peak physical condition throughout most of their lives. The men



with scenes of wildlife, and designed to blend harmoniously with the surroundings.

When dealing with outsiders, noble savages are markedly neutral, viewing them as a loud, ugly people with little to no respect for the world in which they find themselves. This disdain rarely turns to outright aggression, as most noble savages will simply try to scare off or dupe a band of explorers into leaving their territory rather than needlessly kill them. The weapons and devices carried by surface world explorers are impressive in their power to be sure, but this almost never translates into awe—noble savages understand tools for what they are and look down on those who rely on such objects to survive. They respect both strength and wisdom, and if a lost explorer can prove that he possesses both, the better chance he'll have when dealing with a tribe of otherwise skeptical noble savages.

Beliefs

Each noble savage tribe has its own oral history about how and why they came to this new land. What distinguishes the noble savage from other natives of the Hollow Earth is their acceptance of their situation, seeing it as a blessing by the gods.

Noble savages hold the natural world in deep regard, venerating the natural beauty of its earth, plants, and animals. As animists, the gods of the noble savages are

not abstract figures high in the sky, but living, breathing entities that are the animals they hunt, the river that they pull water from, and the trees that provide them with fruit and nuts. When a noble savage hunts and kills an animal, he gives prayers and offerings to the spirit of both that animal and the spirit of that animal's "people," asking forgiveness for taking its body so the tribe can survive. On the other hand, when an animal kills a noble savage, the tribe accepts this as part of the cycle of life, understanding that the animal too must hunt or defend itself in order to survive.

Many of the tribes take on totem animals or the names of natural features around them. For example, a tribe of noble savages located high in the frozen mountains may call themselves the "Shaggy Goat People" and hold these noble beasts in particularly high regard, and even emulate their characteristics. Noble savages may hunt and kill these revered animals in specific rituals, such as coming of age ceremonies, believing that by eating their flesh, they'll embody the spirit of the animal, thus strengthening the individual and the tribe.

Noble savages believe that after death they will return to the world as its mountains, sky, plants, or animals. For this reason, noble savages do not fear death, but live life with both zeal and aplomb, knowing that they will live for eternity in some form or another.

Society

Noble savages live in small tribes made up of individual families with close ties. Noble savages have few laws and those who break them know that they will be allowed to present their case before the elders to prove their innocence or explain their reasoning for violating the law. Exile is the preferred method for dealing with the most serious criminals, as most noble savages find the prospect of torture or spilling the blood of their own people to be a vile act. Sometimes the accused is assigned a perilous quest, where the consequences of success or failure represent the verdict of the gods. If an accusation has been made by another tribe member, the defender may challenge the accuser to a trial by combat, wisdom, or courage, as appropriate to the situation. Such trials might involve a wrestling match, walking across hot coals, or acquiring the tooth of a carnivorous dinosaur.

The laws of the noble savages place high value upon individuality and independence. Personal liberty takes precedence over nearly any other consideration, save only matters of survival. Each member of a tribe is judged by his or her accomplishments rather than on wealth or heritage. Leaders are chosen by merit, usually selected by a council of elders or a vote open to all tribal citizens. Noble savages are capable of living a solitary existence, and many chose to do so for a portion of their lives, often traveling far from their homes to discover what the world holds and to test themselves against its dangers.

Surprisingly egalitarian and gender-blind, noble savages believe the tribe serves the individual, not the other way around. Females are just as likely to become warriors, just as males may find their calling leans toward caring for the village's children or collecting fruit from the jungle. They understand that each person has her own skills, temperament, and destiny and everyone is allowed to pursue his own calling, as long as it does not interfere with the livelihood of the tribe.

Because of their self-reliant upbringing, most noble savages are content to trade just among friendly tribes (usually connected by familial bonds) and do not actively seek out other trading partners. They generally prefer to personally make or acquire anything they need. Outsiders that hope to trade with a band of noble savages are often surprised that their cache of "trade goods" are ignored by most noble savages who do not need and are unimpressed by these baubles. Additionally, noble savages view charity as an insult of the highest order. To give unasked-for aid demeans the recipient and implies that he or she is as helpless as a child. War is the one

exception to this rule. In times of need, most noble savage tribes come to the aid of their comrades, who are expected to reciprocate when appropriate. Explorers who come to the aid of a noble savage in trouble might receive a place to stay until they are rested and some food to add to their supplies, but little else.

Noble Savage Language

Noble savage tribes have fluid, elegant languages that sound appealing and lyrical to the ear.

Noble Savage Names

Noble savages have long, complicated names full of vowels and songlike tones. Surface world natives often have trouble with pronunciation and shorten them to one- or two-syllable nicknames for ease of conversation. When translated, the names have regal sounding qualities.

Example Names (translated): Walker-in-Wind, Stout Heart of the Eagle, Friend of the Longtooth Lizard.

Noble Savage Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their self-reliant upbringing, noble savages are assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Athletics
- Brawl
- Melee
- Stealth
- Survival

Noble Savage

Ally 1

Archetype: Native

Style: 0

Primary Attributes

Body: 2

Dexterity: 2

Strength: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Move: 5

Perception: 4

Motivation: Survival

Health: 4

Charisma: 2

Intelligence: 2

Willpower: 2

Initiative: 4

Defense: 4

Stun: 2

Skills				
Athletics	3	1	4	(2)
<i>Throwing</i>			5	(2+)
Brawl	3	1	4	(2)
Melee	3	2	5	(2+)
Stealth	2	2	4	(2)
Survival	2	3	5	(2+)
<i>Hunting</i>			6	(3)
Talents				
Strong (+1 Strength rating/maximum rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Primitive (-2 penalty on technology related rolls)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Spear	3 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Spear (Thrown)	3 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Knife	1 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N

PIRATES

Pirates of the Hollow Earth are a motley bunch of sailors and salty dogs, descendants from nearly every seafaring culture of the surface world. Pirates wear whatever they can find, resulting in a bewildering conglomeration of clothing patched together with bits from other clothes. Some pirates have taken to donning the clothing of the natives: simple loincloths, feathers,

vests made from bones, and the like. Most pirates balance their appearance between utility and looking as fierce and dangerous as possible.

Pirates use every kind of weapon imaginable—the bigger and more powerful the better. Firearms of all kinds are coveted, but depending on the ship, this could mean anything from flintlocks and blunderbusses to Thompson submachine guns and rifle grenades. Every pirate understands the value of swords, axes, and clubs when making boarding actions, though, and every pirate carries a knife or other small weapon for when things get close and personal.

Culture

One of the main appeals of being a pirate is living a life of relative freedom, traveling the seas with impunity, and paying allegiance only to one's ship and captain. With a good ship and stalwart crew at his back, a pirate is assured a life away from the rules of regular society. It is also filled with bad food, harsh living conditions, and a sure way to die at a young age. A pirate lives by his wits, his strength, and whatever armaments he's able to acquire out on the savage seas of the Hollow Earth.

Although the image of pirates sailing galleons and cutters from the 18th century is the most common, explorers are just as likely to run into marauding bands



of seadogs sailing Viking longships, Roman triremes, or Ukrainian baidak, all bent on boarding their vessel and relieving them of their goods. Some started out as simple merchant vessels or military ships that lost their way and then found themselves wandering the strange seas of the Hollow Earth; they turned to piracy as the only way to survive, or when their crews mutinied and took matters into their own hands. Over time, these ships bring in sailors, including natives, to replace crewmen who have died, making most ships a truly motley assortment of mongrels and half-breeds.

Without an organized military to stop them, each pirate ship has its own routes and safe places to make berth. Although the Pirate Code (see below) keeps things from getting too out of hand, the only thing that pirates really fear is other pirate ships. All pirates keep a sharp eye for damaged vessels or crews with weak or incompetent captains in order to board and loot them. Grudges between pirate captains can last for years and are usually resolved only with the demise of one of the feuding parties.

When a pirate ship makes dock at one of the many towns and hamlets that support them (such as Blood Bay, see p. 126), the crew disembarks to spend their ill-gotten gains on loose women, bad grog, and whatever cheap entertainment can be found. Unique within the Hollow Earth, pirate settlements are open to outsiders of all kinds, who are welcome so long as they have coin to spend or goods to barter. The permanent residents are accustomed to men and women of all descriptions coming and going on a weekly basis, and there is virtually no custom, dress, or mannerism so outlandish as to raise eyebrows. So long as visitors do not disrupt the civil peace they will be allowed to stay, and the “civil peace” is usually loosely interpreted to allow for brawling, public drunkenness, and all manner of other indiscretions and crimes that would be deemed an affront to nearly any other society. Because these seaside towns are one of the few places of “civilization” in the Hollow Earth, explorers may find themselves heading to Blood Bay or some other pirate village in search of supplies. If they can survive the wanton violence, they’re likely to find food, ammunition, and other goods gathered by the pirates in their ceaseless pillaging. But all visitors—even those born and raised as pirates—need beware: to display too much wealth and influence is to draw the attention of thieves and cutthroats, and to display too little is to draw the attention of press gangs. Anyone venturing into such a settlement would be advised to travel with a large crew.

Beliefs

Pirates are deeply superstitious by nature and are constantly muttering oaths, giving small sacrifices, and shirking certain activities in order to avoid being cursed. Because they come from almost every culture, these superstitions vary wildly from ship to ship and pirate to pirate.

As pirates travel the seas of the Hollow Earth, the more pious of their lot commonly set up shrines to their myriad deities on the shores and way stations, which can lead to considerable confusion for explorers who stumble upon an altar to Shiva, a lonely monument to Legba, or some other holy site with no other reference or apparent reason to be there. Most pirates consider it bad luck to kill holy men, even when the would-be victim practices a religion the pirates have never heard of.

Pirates also adhere to the “Pirate’s Code.” This enormous list of rights and responsibilities is never written down, but is almost universally accepted by pirates as a way to conduct their business. This includes such things as the right to be paid for piratical ventures, an entire codex of punishments for various infractions, and other codes of conduct. To be certain, the Pirate Code is open to interpretation, meaning that any pirate with a decent case and a silver tongue could convince his shipmates that he is in the right when naming one of the codes.

The Pirate Code

While there are hundreds of “rules” and untold variations on them, there are some codes that all pirates view as inviolate. Here’s a sample of some of the beliefs that pirates hold:

- All members of the ship are to receive shares of the loot. Ordinary seamen receive a share. Officers and vital positions receive double shares. The captain receives three shares.
- All crewmembers must keep their weapons clean and ready at all times. Failure to do so results in ten lashes with a whip.
- Fights between members of the crew involving weapons results in thirty lashes from the whip and forfeiture of one-half a share.
- Captains and crew from captured ships have the right to meet and negotiate the terms of their surrender with the captain of the victorious vessel.
- No one may leave the ship until they have made their equivalent worth in gold and booty.

Society

Outside the Pirate Code and the “laws” of the various pirate havens, each pirate vessel is subject to the rules of its captain. As a result, most captains command their ships with an iron fist to keep order and discipline. On ship, command is broken down into clear divisions, with each pirate knowing exactly what role he holds. The captain is the ultimate authority, followed by the first mate, who serves as the captain’s second-in-command. The quartermaster is responsible for the ship’s cargo, as well as often serving as the captain’s enforcer and usually the first person to lead in boarding actions—many quartermasters serve at a near equal level of fear and respect as the captain. The boatswain (or bosun) is in charge of junior officers, and responsible for crew morale and the general maintenance and upkeep of the vessel. Beyond that are a myriad of other roles and positions, including ship surgeon, carpenter, cook, and master gunner. At the very bottom of the rung, comprising the bulk of the crew, are the average shipmen, known collectively as sailors, swabs, or scum.

The economy and very survival of a pirate vessel relies on its ability to track down and overwhelm other ships and settlements to loot them for food, supplies, bags of gold, and other booty. The pirate captain who is unable to regularly find ships to capture is likely to have a mutiny on his hands; most use a combination of threats and promises to keep the crew grumbling, but under control. Once a ship has been plundered, the booty is divided up among the crew using a strict, if Byzantine, method of shares.

Pirates regard almost every other community as a potential trading outpost or a locale to be plundered. This distinction gets blurry at times, as treaties are overturned or alliances formed. A pirate vessel that makes dock at a village is just as likely to loot it as they are to spend their ill-gotten gains in an orgy of wenching and drinking.

Because of the high mortality rate on most of these vessels, pirates either use the time-honored method of press-ganging to kidnap able-bodied men, or they recruit and train natives to become sailors. This steady influx of fresh blood ensures that pirates continue to be a scourge of the Hollow Earth.

Pirate Language

Pirates speak the same languages that their ancestors brought with them into the Hollow Earth. Amongst many crews (and especially in Blood Bay), these lan-

guages have merged into a mongrel patois of English, Dutch, French, Spanish, and the tongues of natives from the Hollow Earth.

Pirate Names

Pirate names are drawn from dozens of different languages, mostly from the surface world, but some from the strange languages of the Hollow Earth. Of course, pirates are fond of nicknames and titles of all kinds, which can make for remarkably colorful and interesting names.

Example Names: Pierre Four Fingers, Roland Rumjug, Dougan the Black, Whiskey Pete

Pirate Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their marauding lifestyle, every pirate is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Brawl
- Firearms
- Intimidation
- Melee
- Stealth

Pirate

Ally 1

Archetype: *Native*

Motivation: *Greed*

Style: 0

Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2

Charisma: 1

Dexterity: 2

Intelligence: 2

Strength: 3

Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 4

Move: 5

Defense: 4

Perception: 4

Stun: 2

Skills

Athletics	3	1	4	(2)
Firearms	2	2	4	(2)
Archaic			5	(2+)
Intimidation	1	2	3	(1+)
Threats			4	(2)
Melee	3	2	5	(2+)
Stealth	2	2	4	(2)

Talents

Dual Wield (Ignore off-hand penalty)

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Resources

None

Flaw

Illiterate (+1 Style point whenever your inability to read causes trouble)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Flintlock pistol	3 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Cutlass	3 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Knife	1 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N

TITANS

The Titans of the Hollow Earth are solitary giants, born large in stature and ego. Stories about mythological giants, from the Norse Jotunn to the Greek Gigantes, can be traced to ancient members of this race. Titans never stop growing throughout their long lives. They grow at roughly one and a half times the rate of a normal human during their early childhood, but their rate of growth slows as they get older. By the time a Titan reaches adulthood, he is approximately twice the size of the average human. By the time that human's children have grown up, the Titan will have nearly doubled in size. By the time the human's grandchildren reach their prime, the Titan would likely tower thirty feet above them. Aside from their remarkable size, however, Titans are essentially human. They may be light or dark skinned, but almost all are plagued by rough and tenacious body hair. They eat, they sleep, they bleed, they mate, and they die like humans—but few humans will ever truly know what it is to live the life of a Titan.

Culture

Titans are thin on culture. As a rule, they have little tolerance for others of their kind. The world is not big enough for two Titans to dwell too close together—it is difficult to gather enough food to satisfy a single, growing giant, let alone two of them. Unlike human-sized peoples, having more Titans seldom means more resources gathered. Rather, it means more Titans feeding off the same small patch of land, and being forced to compete with each other in addition to other large creatures in the area.

Young Titans are abandoned at a young age to fend for themselves. This is callous, to be sure, but is not as heartless as it sounds. A five-foot simpleton is more likely to find help feeding and clothing himself from

pitying humans than he is from another selfish Titan.

The early onset of adolescence and the rapid relative growth of those early years naturally leads many Titans to become bullies. They are, after all, abandoned, surly, and surrounded by easy targets. Before long, when they have outgrown whatever clothes they were given by humans, most Titans strike out on their own, sullen and resentful at the world for their lonely futures. Soon, again, they have outgrown whatever clothes they can get their hands on and are forced to dress themselves in kilts made of sails, and tunics fashioned from mammoth pelts. By the time they're eating whole oxen, it's likely that they've given up on humanity and, out of blame, their own kind as well.

The source of a Titan's antisocial attitude is a question of nature versus nurture, but the truth of the Titanic attitude is undeniable: it is bad. Titans who come upon each other in the wild are more likely to fight than parley. It is only the inescapable instincts of their biology that drives Titans to mate. Even that typically ends in heartbreak and blame.

Titans are not inherently unintelligent. It is a circumstance of their existence that they so often end up poorly informed and badly educated. Nor does this inability to get along with one another eliminate feelings of isolation and loneliness. Most Titans will attempt to live communally at some point in their adult lives, either with their own kind or other races. However, these experiments seem almost universally doomed to failure as the Titan's nature and needs assert themselves.

All Titan parents fear that their own children will one day compete with them, which accounts for why they so often abandon their young to the wilds as soon as—and sometimes before—their children stand a chance of fending for themselves. While small, Titan babies require only a tiny portion of their parent's resources, but as they continue their rapid growth they awaken the primal fear of displacement in the parent, who begins to suffer an irrational fear that their child will one day literally eat them out of house and home. The parent will then depart the area, force or trick the child into leaving, or even attempt to destroy the child. These premonitions of danger may be a self-fulfilling prophesy, for young Titans abandoned in this way commonly swear vengeance, and may hunt down his or her parents years later to dispose of them and claim their giant-sized clothing, weapons, and lairs. This dark inheritance is played out just often enough to fuel the paranoia of Titan parents, thus perpetuating the cycle of abandonment and revenge.



Beliefs

Titans tend to be very pessimistic and dour, and their cruel and callous upbringing reinforces this disposition. While their size and strength give them a powerful advantage over other denizens of the Hollow Earth, it also makes them targets. Their lore is filled with tales of small-folk hunting and persecuting them. With few exceptions, their heroes and gods are doomed to meet bad ends, and they usually know about their fate in advance but are powerless to stop it. Still, Titans see the drive to struggle against the inevitable as a truly

admirable virtue, and many strive to live up to this standard in the face of a bleak and unforgiving world.

Although many Titans are left with no oral tradition or family history, most know at least something about human legends of giants. One common belief among Titans is that the world is actually the corpse of their primordial ancestor. Their forefathers were the children of this world-god, fashioned from stony mountains, icy glaciers, and all things large and hard. The smaller races of humans were born later, made from mud, water, and things smaller and softer than the components of the Titans. But what the smaller races lacked in size and strength, they more than made up for in teeming numbers, and soon they overwhelmed their larger forerunners and slew the world-god who birthed them. The Titans were subsequently imprisoned in the god's belly and cursed to forever suffer for the defeat. Few Titans take these myths seriously enough to hold a grudge against smaller folk, but it is not unusual for them to explain the source of life's miseries by way of referring to this tale.

Society

Much of Titan society hinges on marking and defending territory. The approach of another Titan usually foreshadows violence or looting. A Titan tends to assume that every other Titan comes close only because he smells a chance to take something from her, whether it's a lagoon, a rock to sleep on, or a herd of soft dinosaurs.

In an effort to avoid misunderstandings (or to let other Titans know they're about to pick a fight), Titans mark their territories with symbols that say, in their fashion, "There be giants here." Typically, this means putting something heavy up someplace high, where it couldn't get by accident. Tyrannosaur skulls propped up at the top of trees, airplane wrecks set atop ruined towers, and bits of huge Atlantean statues wedged into mountainside clefts are all good examples.

Gatherings of Titans are rare, made all the more difficult to organize by the fact that Titans of different ages neither figuratively nor literally see eye to eye. Nevertheless, these giants have been known to congregate under extreme need for mutual defense, to pass along vital information, to bargain for assistance from

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others of their kind, or to trade outgrown clothes and tools. With their powerful voices they can call others from leagues away, and with their long legs they can swiftly travel great distances to respond to such a summons. But to call for such a meeting is seen as a humiliating act, akin to begging for food in the street. Furthermore, the one making the call had better be ready to appeal to the self-interest of each Titan who responds, or else be prepared for violent reprisals.

Beyond that, Titans have no society, and they do not take it well. When they can, they eavesdrop on nearby human groups. They spy on natives in their villages, pirates on their ships, and beastmen in their ruins. They try to pick up languages and stories. They try, simply, to feel like they are not alone. Owing to their practice of abandoning their young, many Titans find their way into other cultures, whether because they seek to assuage their loneliness or because they are adopted as foundlings. Most assimilate into other cultures fairly well, at least until they outgrow their ability to fit in. A rare few shameless Titans combat their loneliness by posing as gods—or simply as hungry, unhappy giants—and native villages give up food and hides and water to them. They demand sacrifices of grain and animals, games to be played in their honor, and plays be put on for their amusement. But it seldom lasts. The shadow a Titan casts over smaller people eventually drives them, through fear or jealousy, to respond like the Olympians did, with revolt. In a world of would-be Davids, it's hard to be a Goliath for long.

Titan Language

The language of the Titans sounds deep and harsh to most ears, and is dissimilar in grammar and vocabulary to most other tongues of the Hollow Earth. A few of its roots may be tied to ancient forms of German, and the seldom-used written language contains a few traces of the Futhorc runes of the Nordic tribes.

Titan Names

Titans are often given (or take for themselves) corruptions of ancient Greek names, twisted simply for the sake of a pleasant or intimidating sound. They also love to give themselves bold and egocentric descriptors, in addition to their names, like The Toppler of Stones, Sinker of Mighty Ships, or The Quake Who Walks.

Example Names: Artetrix, Crossam, Hector, Hei-ana, Hercumax, Orytax

Titan Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their giant-sized upbringing, every Titan is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Athletics
- Brawl
- Intimidation
- Melee
- Survival

Titan

Ally 1

Archetype: *Native*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 8

Primary Attributes

Body: 4

Charisma: 1

Dexterity: 1

Intelligence: 1

Strength: 4

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1

Initiative: 2

Move: 5

Defense: 4

Perception: 4

Stun: 4

Skills

Athletics	4	1	5	(2+)
Brawl	4	2	6	(3)
Intimidation	1	3	4	(2)
Melee	4	1	5	(2+)
Survival	1	3	4	(2)

Talents

None

Resources

None

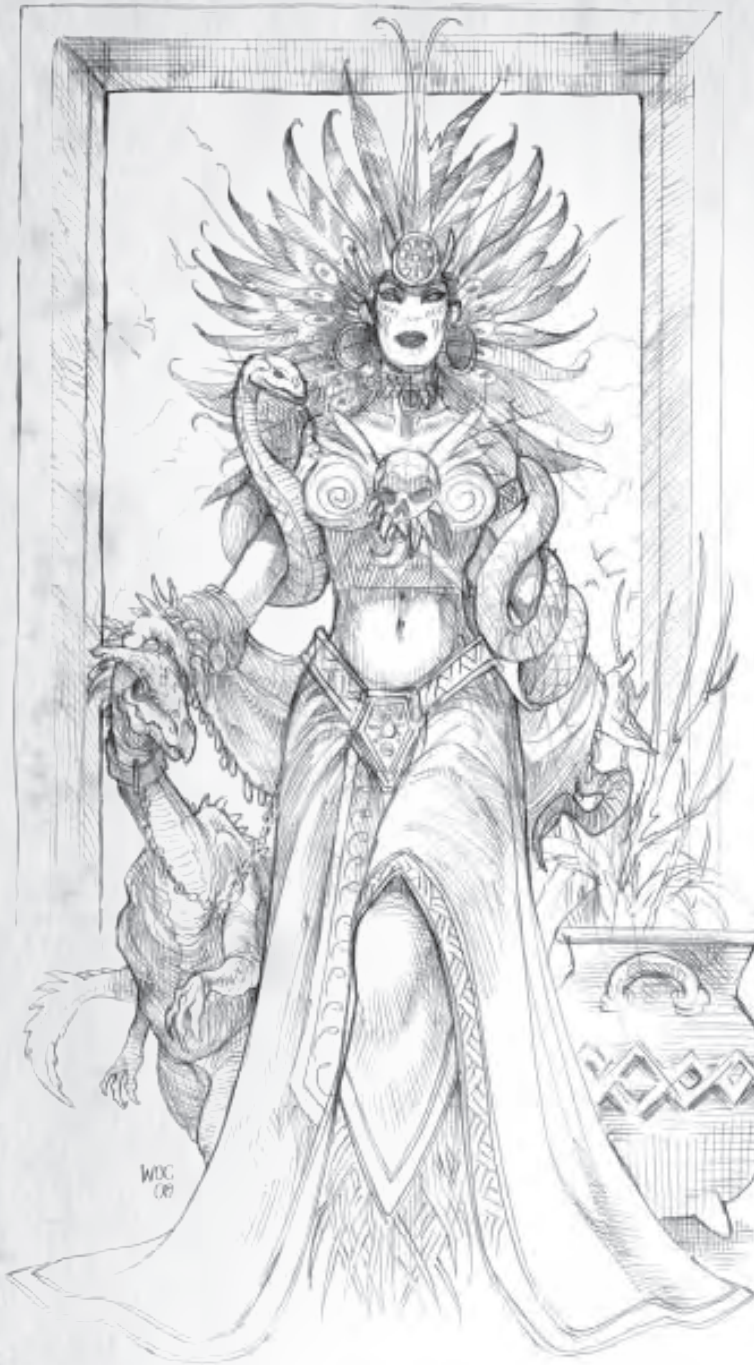
Flaw

Primitive (–2 penalty on technology-related rolls)

Racial Traits

+1 Size

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Great club	4 N	–1	8 N	(4) N
Rock (Thrown)	2 N	–1	6 N	(3) N
Punch	1 N	–1	6 N	(3) N



VRIL-YA

The Vril-ya claim to be Atlanteans and there is little reason to doubt them: they live in Atlantis, speak Atlantean, and possess Atlantean technology. In truth, they once served the Atlanteans, but never belonged to that elder race. Not one drop of Atlantean blood flows through their veins, not that one would know it by looking at them. Tall, long limbed, and attractive, the Vril-ya have sky blue eyes, alabaster skin, and hair of either bright blond or glossy black. They spend a great deal of time pursuing an ideal of superficial perfection and consider clothing to be synonymous with social status.

Natural fibers are considered the purview of debased and unintelligent races. Their own clothing is generally light and thin, and is nearly always shiny and colorful. When participating in formal events and rituals, they don elaborate and flamboyant costumes featuring multiple layers, sweeping capes, bizarre accessories, and tall hats or glimmering helmets.

Culture

The Vril-ya lead soft lives, relying on slaves to handle all menial tasks. The belief in their own superiority is deeply ingrained in them, and enslaving the denizens of the Hollow Earth seems natural and right as far as they are concerned. Most of them dedicate their lives to idle pursuits—maintaining their appearances, attending soirées, gambling on arena events, or conducting elaborate and unnecessary rituals. Like the Atlanteans before them, Vril-ya are divided into three hereditary castes: the Builders, the Warriors, and the Priests (see Society, below). Most Vril-ya are indoctrinated in the rituals and raised to believe that rote memorization is more valuable than critical thinking, so that only the most brazen renegade would even consider departing from their way of life. The Vril-ya have little to no understanding of their re-discovered Atlantean technology, and therefore they have no hope of sorting out essential techniques from mumbo-jumbo.

Atlantean Technology

Although the Vril-ya have access to a few advanced artifacts—some of which are quite powerful indeed—their typical tools, vehicles, and weapons are no more advanced than those on the surface world. Thus, their beam-staves are equivalent in power and range to rifles, and their flying disks have similar speed and maneuverability to helicopters. Though the Vril-ya's devices often appear futuristic and exotic—such as a smooth and rounded ray gun instead of an angular Colt pistol, or a softly glowing crystal instead of a doctor's penicillin and bandages—the Gamemaster should feel free to create a Vril-ya equivalent to any common surface-world item.

Beliefs

Vril-ya citizens have a distorted understanding of their race's history. In reality, they were once the servants of the great Atlanteans, acting as menial labor and body servants. When the Atlanteans departed on

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their Exodus, they sealed the Great Gate behind them, abandoning their servants forever. The Vril-ya quickly filled the void, salvaging as much of their masters' technology as possible and re-establishing the great society to the extent that they understood it. In the generations that followed, however, the Vril-ya conflated their own history with that of the Atlanteans themselves, and even erased historical evidence to the contrary. Now most Vril-ya believe that they are direct descendants of the original Atlanteans.

The Vril-ya religion, as perpetuated by their Priests, is highly ritualistic, with great emphasis placed on the memorization of precise sequences of words and actions. Each caste has its own set of rituals meant for different purposes, handed down for generations from master to apprentice. Some rituals contain the means to operate the salvaged technology, but most are simply chaff, having either lost their meaning long ago or never having had meaning to begin with.

Vril-ya Heretics

Although most Vril-ya think they are Atlantean descendants, there is a group of them that seeks to shatter the illusions of their society, leading the members of the High Council to accuse them of heresy. This secret society claims to have information from the mysterious Black Book that allegedly reveals the truth about Vril-ya history. The exact nature of this book and its author are unknown, and most Vril-ya dismiss its existence as a mere myth or hoax. Yet some members of Vril-ya society claim to have read fragments of the book, and based on these teachings actively promote the idea that Vril-ya society should cease their frivolous pursuits and their domination of other cultures lest the true Atlanteans return to punish their former servants. To gain attention for their message, the heretics are not above disrupting food supplies or helping slaves escape, and a few of the more fanatical members have even plotted to demolish ancient artifacts or assassinate government officials. Despite the fact that many citizens are executed on suspicion of being members of this organization, the heresy persists, and has gained followers in all three castes of Vril-ya society.

Society

The Vril-ya political structure rests on a delicate balance between the three castes. Each caste has some hold over the others which they protect jealously while working to capture further advantages from one another.

The Priests hold the other castes in check through superstition and a stranglehold on cultural institutions. Their position of authority and their creeping corruption often chafes the other castes, but they have two things in particular which protect them in turbulent times. First, per capita they have greater wealth than either of the other castes, and they have direct control over most of the financial institutions of their society. Second, they are the protectors of ancient knowledge. Although they have lost (or altered) many of the original Atlantean records and are unable to comprehend most of what they do have, they are the greatest repository of proficiency with the ancient language, including the ability to command others with the power of their words (See Atlantean Power Words in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 12).

The Warriors depend on tradition and bravado to maintain their position in society, and are not above demonstrations of military might to impress the other castes. They claim to have a great many powerful weapons and destructive engines, but most of these are inoperable. Although the Warriors are supposed to represent the military might of Atlantis, their combat training is little better than the Priests and their weapons are not much better than those of the Builders, so in effect their fighting capabilities are not inherently much better. Therefore, they mask their fear of inadequacy by instilling fear in others. Any defeat is a black eye for the Warriors, which they fear could reveal their weaknesses to the other castes.

The Builder caste is most essential to the operations of daily life, though they are afforded the least social status. They are charged with performing maintenance deemed too important or too specialized to leave to the slaves, though their maintenance usually consists of actions and rituals performed from rote with no comprehension of their true function, and which are often useless, meaningless, and ineffectual. Despite the durability of Atlantean technology, artifacts do break, and Builders are expected to fix them. More often than not, they will "fix" these items by substituting a similar item and claiming it has been repaired. In the past, Builders have gone so far as to illustrate their importance by disabling the power network of Atlantis for short periods of time. However, this sort of tampering is a double-edged sword, because disruptions can attract public scorn or, worse, expose their technological incompetence.

The real power in Atlantis belongs to members of the High Council, which consists of the leaders of each of the three castes. The High Council convenes in secret to collude in their machinations to maintain their own influence and wealth. Assassination and extortion are not uncommon.

mon in Vrilya politics, which have become more a game of power than a means to promote the welfare of their society. This small cadre is well aware that the Vrilya are not true Atlanteans and they will stop at nothing to protect the secret upon which their society is founded.

Vrilya Language

The Vrilya speak and write in Atlantean, although their version of the language is simplified compared to how it was spoken by its originators. Many of the more educated Vrilya citizens, particularly those of the Priest caste, are versed enough in Atlantean to use the language to command others (See “Atlantean Power Words”, *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 12).

Vrilya Names

Strangely, the Vrilya name themselves after gods of certain ancient civilizations on the surface world, and there is a connection between their namesakes and their castes. The Priests tend to share names with gods who serve as rulers or mystics. Warriors are also often named after ruling divinities, as well as heroes and fighters. The Builders’ names are associated with gods of the Earth, fertility, and wisdom. The Vrilya have no knowledge that they share these names with the mythological figures of other cultures; to them, the names are simply unquestioned tradition. Still, this connection suggests an ancient and long forgotten link between civilizations, no doubt carried to or from the surface world via the Atlanteans themselves.

Example Names: Ra, Isis, Inanna, Marduk, Ptah, Varuna, Lakshmi, and Nin-Hursag are only a few of the common names among their people.

Vrilya Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their privileged upbringing, every Vrilya is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Brawl
- Diplomacy
- Linguistics
- Stealth

Additionally, Vrilya also gain a Zero Level Skill based on their caste. Priests learn Academics: Religion, Warriors learn Firearms, and Builders learn a specific Craft (choose one).

Vrilya

Ally 1

Archetype: Native

Motivation: Power

Style: 0

Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2	Charisma: 2
Dexterity: 2	Intelligence: 2
Strength: 2	Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 4
Move: 4	Defense: 4
Perception: 4	Stun: 2

Skills

Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Diplomacy	2	1	3	(1+)
Etiquette			4	(2)
Linguistics	2	1	3	(1+)
Atlantean			4	(2)
Melee	2	1	3	(1+)
Stealth	2	2	4	(2)
Caste Skill	2	2	4	(2)

Talents

Atlantean Language (Basic proficiency)

Resources

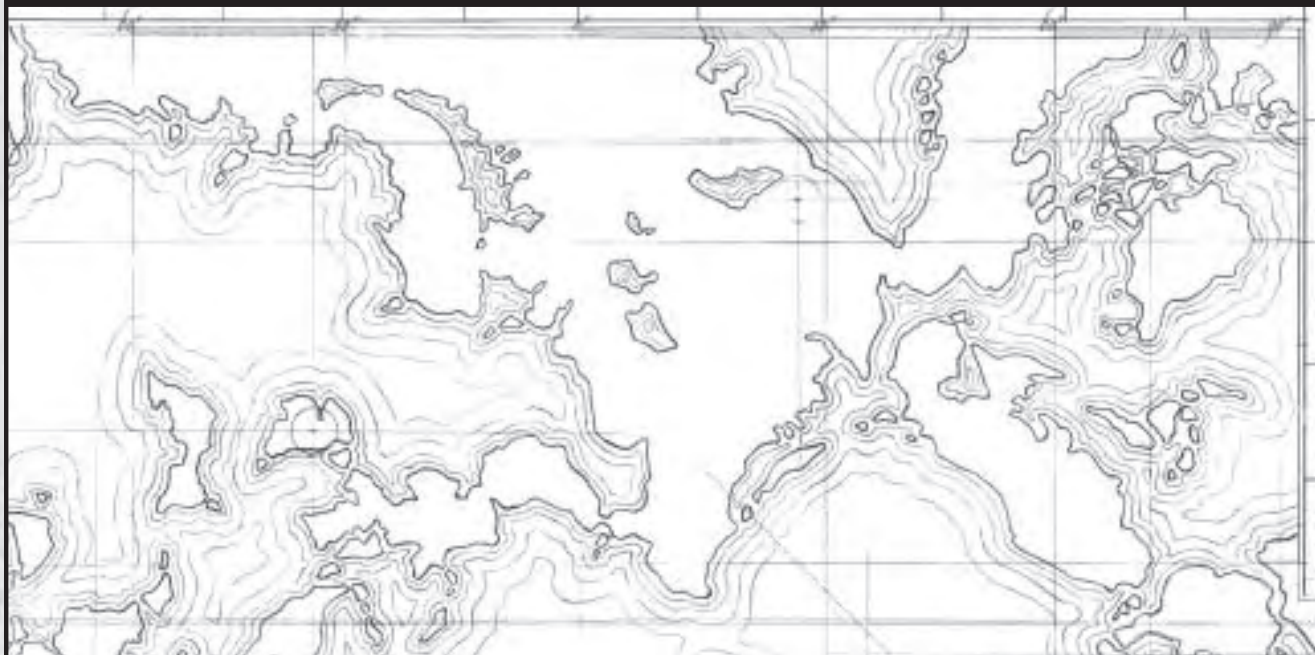
None

Flaw

Condescending (+1 Style point whenever your superior attitude causes trouble)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Knife	1 L	0	4 L	(2) L
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N

⊕ CHAPTER 4: **BEASTMEN**



They stalk through the shadows of ruined cities. They peer out from the treetops. They nest amid the fallen stones and gleaming orichalcum of Atlantis. They lay waiting in the long grass, watching for the moment you turn your back. And they are not entirely human.

From cunning cat people to enigmatic plant people, from coldly inhuman lizardmen to the fanatically zealous gillmen, the bestial and mysterious hybrid races of the Hollow Earth are like some lingering riddle upon the land. Are they remnants of Atlantean life, like the escapees from some bizarre menagerie, or are they peculiar mutations wrought on the wilderness (and the Atlantean people) by the misuse of ancient powers? Are they the strange remains of a great people or the hint of greatness yet to come? Are they part of some crazed design for the Hollow Earth or the consequence of some mystic mistake? Could they be creatures that took an alternate evolutionary path than humans, having been both improved and preserved by the mystical properties of the Hollow Earth?

No one truly knows, not the would-be Atlantean heirs nor the beastmen themselves. But as the natives and explorers puzzle over the question, the beastmen simply go on with their savage lives, pursuing peace and power, slaughter and survival.

Beastmen resist most easy categorizations or generalizations. Even within their own kind, one clan can

defy the stereotypes seemingly established by the next. Assume that the next village of apemen will be like the last and you risk being slaughtered by enemies you mistook for friends. Still, each race of the beastmen has certain attitudes, cultural practices, and beliefs that seem to be widespread among them, although there are individuals who prove to be the exception to the rule.

Though each species of beastman has a degree of intelligence and humanity balancing their animalistic traits, no set ratio applies to all the hybrid races. Some are more human (and more humane) than others. Some breeds of beastmen more closely resemble their animal halves, others are closer to human. None can say whether the ancestors of these creatures were human or beast, nor even if the races of the beastmen share a common origin.

What's known is that all types of beastmen tend to dwell in Atlantean ruins, from the soaring city of the hawkman Aerie to the sunken courtyards of the gillman refuge on the shores of the inner sea. Apemen are found lurking at the feet of great Atlantean towers and molemen have been found nesting in buried crypts. Are they drawn to these places... or do they somehow emanate from them?

Beastmen may be exotic allies and contacts, colorful goons and thugs for a two-fisted encounter, or anything in between. They are intended to be flexible and compelling sources of adventure and character inspiration.

To make each type of beastman easy-to-use, each is represented here with a sample character. These are quick stand-ins for supporting characters, friendly or villainous. They are fine archetypes for commonly encountered beastmen, but they are not necessarily exemplars of the breed. Not all hawkmen are Raiders and not every greenman is skilled with medicines. These sample characters are meant to provide the Gamemaster with shorthand examples that could be utilized in a broad variety of situations or quickly modified to fit specific needs as they arise.

Playing a Beastman Character

With the Gamemaster's permission, a player may portray a beastman character. This option may not be well suited for surface world scenarios—a six-foot praying mantis can't expect to walk into a cabaret and order a drink—but beastmen player characters can bring a new element of the exotic to an expedition already inside the Hollow Earth. For the most part, beastmen player characters may be treated as natives (see *Playing a Native Character*, p. 67).

To fully customize a beastman player character, create the character as normal and apply the appropriate template, if available (see *Hollow Earth Character Templates*, p. 31). Alternatively, choose any of the sample characters in this section and add the following:

Attributes	+3 pts.
Skills	+5 pts.
Talents/Resources	+1 Talent or Resource



APEMEN

The term “apeman” is a catch-all name used to include many different sub-species of beastmen who share characteristics of both humans and primates. The gigantic, shaggy type of apemen (sometimes identified as sasquatch or bigfoot) are just one variety of this race, albeit one that is rarely seen. Other breeds tend to be somewhat more specialized, but they are also usually less primitive and brutish. Different types of apemen—those seemingly akin to great apes, chimpanzees, and several sorts of monkeys—often merge their clans to form larger, integrated societies in which each sub-race contributes their particular specialties to the benefit of the whole.

Most apeman breeds top out at about six feet tall with dark skin and fur, and dark, deep-set eyes. Their arms are long and powerfully built, ending in hands about the size of a human foot. Their surprisingly dexterous fingers can manipulate objects, even tools, as easily as human hands. They also have prehensile feet, allowing apemen to use their feet as well as their hands. However, Apemen legs are short, thick, and bowlegged, giving them a slight side-to-side waddle as they walk.

Despite their fur, apemen make and wear clothing and armor which is both too large and too strangely designed for humans to don. Warriors wear helmets made of thick leather or scavenged bits of metal that they acquire from their conquests. Apemen can and do use a variety of weapons, with swords and spears being their preference. Larger and more primitive Apemen prefer massive clubs, however.

Culture

Despite their bestial appearance, most apemen are surprisingly gentle creatures with deep bonds to their mates, offspring, and fellow tribesmen. They respect their elders and tend their children with utmost care. When dealing with outsiders that seem threatening, however, apemen can become terrifying creatures, attacking with animalistic ferocity. A band of apemen on the warpath is a screaming, hooting mass of heavily muscled creatures armed with deadly weapons and razor sharp teeth.

Apemen females are slightly smaller and noticeably slimmer than the males, with long, graceful faces.

Females spend their time tending to the young, gathering food, weaving, and performing other domestic chores. In tribes where the majority of the able-bodied males have perished, the females take on their roles, serving as capable hunters and warriors.

Apemen define their territory and stick to it, rarely venturing beyond the borders except when food is scarce or when they are on the warpath. They prefer to make their homes in abandoned ruins and natural fortifications. Some of the more developed subspecies will even restore the decaying buildings to the best of their ability. In some cases, this can be rather impressive as their knowledge of engineering and architecture can be surprisingly advanced.

Apemen are omnivores, with the bulk of their diet made up of fruit, plant fronds, and roots. In order to sustain their bulk, apemen also eat meat, usually scavenged, although apemen do put together hunting parties to take down boar, deer, and the like, using their superior strength and natural cunning to box in and capture prey.

Each subspecies of apemen has their own particular behaviors and customs, making it difficult for outsiders to lump them into a single category. For example, the common, giant apemen are simple creatures content to live their lives without conflict with the outside world. Gorillamen, by contrast, are militaristic, gruff and sullen beings with a stoic and conservative view on life and a xenophobic approach to outsiders. Chimpmen, on the other hand, are much more likely to welcome outsiders and to express curiosity about other cultures.

Beliefs

Apemen have a robust and complicated pantheon, worshipping a variety of deities that reflect the many subspecies of the race. Ancestor worship is particularly pronounced, with tribes venerating those noble individuals that served with distinction. Apemen adorn the walls of their homes with images of their deities, usually depicted as gigantic versions of themselves. They also scribe scrolls that serve as combined history books and religious texts.

Apeman beliefs are rather staid and conservative by nature, which may be one of the reasons why most apemen are nowhere near as aggressive and expansionary as humans. Living in the savage and dangerous Hollow Earth may be another reason for this behavior. The

religious stories of most apemen tribes are replete with advice to tactically withdraw when faced with a superior foe in order to fight another day. However, there are radical tribes—particularly those with large gorillaman populations—that favor a more martial stance, with their leaders espousing violence as the standard response to anything strange or new.

Apeman society supports a position they call the “natural philosopher,” serving a role analogous to the shaman in human natives. These intellectual beings value the study of the natural world through observation and experimentation blended with the superstitions of their race. In some tribes, the natural philosopher’s influence overrides even the chief or Council of Elders, especially if he is also a powerful warrior or holds the knowledge of some kind of Atlantean technology. These apeman scientists spend their days engaging in ongoing experiments, conducting research in the field or sequestered in their huts, mixing chemicals or poking and prodding test subjects. While nowhere near as advanced as surface world scientists, these natural philosophers have made considerable advancements, particularly in biology and botany, and they also serve as spiritual advisors of a sort, explaining the strange events of their world to the satisfaction of their kin to bring reason and purpose to the race.

Society

Apemen have a surprisingly rigid society, where individuals know their place in life and are content to remain in it—for the most part. Their society is configured by caste, meaning that certain types of apemen do certain tasks and no others, thus limiting their upward mobility. The exception to this is the role of warrior—an apeman from the laborer caste who proves himself in battle may become a fighter, but doing so usually means severing ties with his former family and caste, as they are then considered beneath his rank.

The various subspecies of apemen further divide the race into social classes. Some tribes are fully integrated, with each subspecies performing particular tasks yet considered roughly equal to the others. Most tribes, however, are deeply segregated, with the subspecies in the majority dominating the smaller groups.

All apemen are drawn to bright, shiny objects and particularly love the gleam of gold, silver, and the other-

wise unheard of hues of the aluminum commonly used in surface world airplanes and ships. Traders intending to deal with apemen bring along shiny trinkets, such as glass beads or slips of highly polished steel.

Humans are viewed with suspicion and palpable disdain, mainly due to centuries of conflict between these two races over vital resources and prize territories. Some apemen tribes are content to leave humans alone, but most are willing to use armed conflict to either “persuade” nearby humans to leave the area or wipe them out entirely. A small percentage of apemen tribes even enslave humans, using them as laborers and house slaves. The humans in these tribes are a pathetic, downtrodden people, suffering under the casually indifferent cruelty of their masters. Most apemen in close proximity to stronger human settlements, especially those of the Amazons and certain tribes of noble savages and cannibals, live in a state of cold war, with each side using hit-and-run sorties to steal vital supplies or probe the defenses of the other. A few apemen tribes, however, live in peace with their human neighbors, usually those in particularly lush and abundant areas where there is plenty for everyone to survive.

Apemen Language

The language of the apemen is similar to that of the great apes, monkeys, and other primates on the surface world. Consisting of grunts, hoots, and chattering calls, these vocalizations are also heavily augmented with specific body language to convey meaning. Compared to the tongues of other beastmen, those of the apemen are relatively easy for humans to learn, as the phonetic components are all easily producible by the human vocal chords. For this same reason, apemen tribes living near human settlements may sprinkle their own language with that of their neighbor’s.

Apemen Names

For those unfamiliar with apemen, their names seem indistinguishable from their other words. When translated, the names of apemen reflect both their status and profession—only very high-ranking apemen are granted certain names, and an improper name is deemed an affront to an apeman’s family or tribe.

Example Names: Antal, Kroda, Rakkum, Thalinus, Zeyton

Apeman Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their upbringing, every apeman is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Athletics
- Brawl
- Melee
- Stealth
- Survival

Apeman Characters

Apemen run the gamut of hybridization between humans and various species of primates found on the surface of the world. Below are only two subspecies of apemen found in the Hollow Earth—feel free to create your own to suit your campaign.

Apeman Template:

- Starting Attribute Adjustment: None
- Natural Advantage: Climb (double Move rating when climbing), Prehensile Feet (May use feet as if they were hands)
- Inherent Flaw: Primitive

Giant Apeman Template:

- Starting Attribute Adjustment: -1 Charisma, -1 Intelligence, -1 Willpower
- Natural Advantage: Giant (+1 Size, Body, Strength), Climb (double Move rating when climbing), Prehensile Feet (May use feet as if they were hands)
- Inherent Flaw: Primitive

Apeman

Ally 1

Archetype: *Beastman*

Style: 0

Motivation: *Survival*

Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 Charisma: 2

Dexterity: 2 Intelligence: 2

Strength: 2 Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Initiative: 4

Move: 4 (8)* Defense: 4

Perception: 4 Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	2	2	4	(2)
Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Melee	2	2	4	(2)

Stealth	2	2	4	(2)
Survival	2	2	4	(2)

Talents

None

Resources

None

Flaw

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology-related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Short Sword	2 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N

**Apemen double their Move rating when climbing and have prehensile feet*

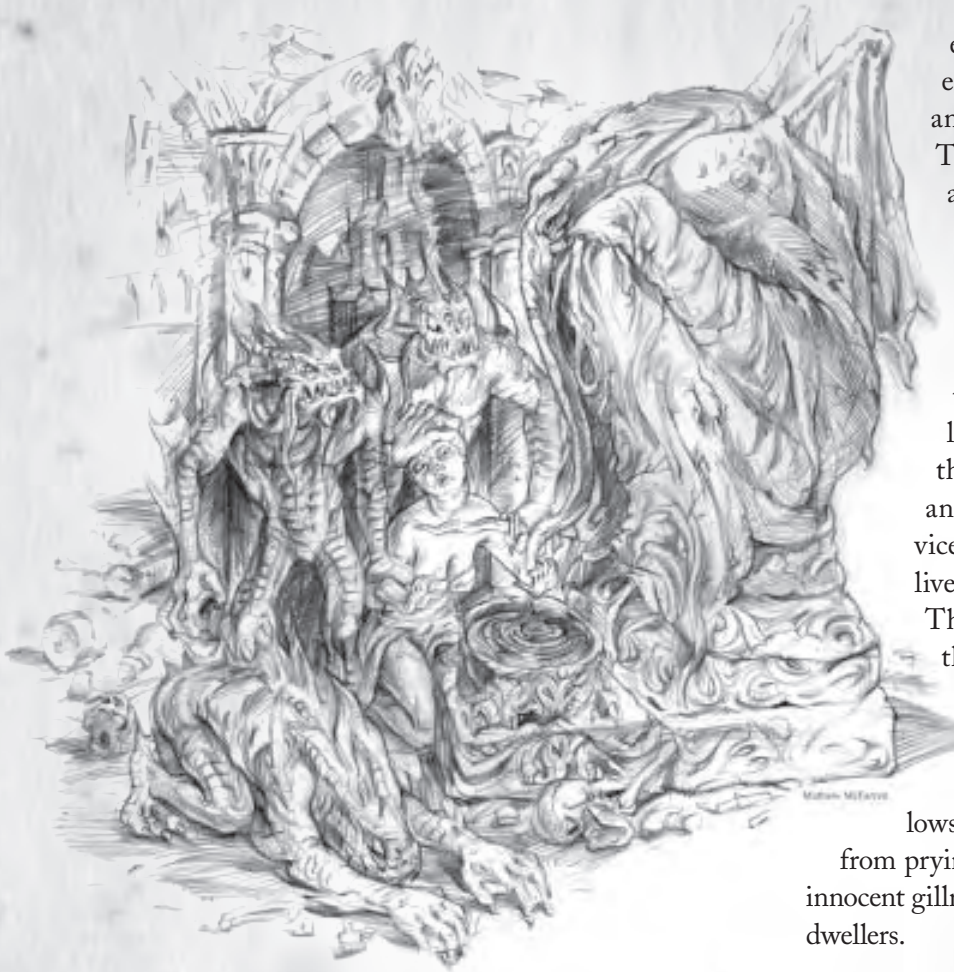
GILLMEN

Sometimes called fishmen or mermen, the amphibious gillmen of the Hollow Earth's seas and rivers are well adapted to their environment. Although they are a populous species, their aquatic habitat makes them unlikely to come into contact with other denizens of the Hollow Earth. This has contributed to many legends about the gillmen, only some of which are true.

Their skeletal structure is anthropomorphic, but their skins are scaly and strangely marked, with fluttering gills beneath their ears. They have no tails to speak of, and their mouths are wide and flat with protruding shark-like teeth. Though webbed, their hands and feet are not so different from those of humans. Their eerie-looking dark eyes, though wide and perfectly round, are little better at penetrating gloom than human eyes.

Gillmen have no difficulty walking on solid ground, but they slip through the water with the grace of eels. They display different digestive capacities as well, as they can eat nearly anything a land-dwelling omnivore might consume as well as a few exotic fishes that would make humans ill.

To stay hydrodynamic, gillmen rarely wear more than a sharkskin loincloth, and usually not even that. Their tough skin and hardy constitution provide them with more than adequate protection. Additionally, they might carry tools or weapons strapped to belts or bandoliers of tightly woven seaweed. Because ranged weapons work poorly under water, they typically refrain from such weapons even when on land, but they do use nets and long weapons such as spears and tridents.



Culture

The true culture of the gillmen differs greatly from their reputation. The residents of Blood Bay commonly assume that the gillmen are shark-toothed man-eaters prowling the shallows for lonely ships to sink and sailors to devour. In certain fishing villages, noble savages speak of having witnessed the gillmen lying out to sun themselves atop islands of human skulls. Castaways from the surface world even speak of murderous gillmen whose songs lure ships into deadly waters. Most of these tales are based on the truth, but this view of gillmen hardly provides a full picture of their race.

Gillman culture is divided into two distinct factions. Most gillmen are no more violent than they need to be to survive in the Hollow Earth, and they are not particularly warlike or cruel. Many gillmen are simple kelp-farmers and fishers seeking to feed themselves and their families. They rely on their strength of arms to repel or even hunt sharks and other ocean predators. These gillmen want simple lives for themselves—an

existence of peace and play, trade with others, and an opportunity to bask on the rocks and daydream about the vanished ancients. Their favorite art form is song, and they avidly compose music that can be heard both above and below the waves.

Those murderous gillmen who pluck sailors from their boats and pile their skulls upon the reefs have established themselves on the other side of the ideological divide. To members of their race, they are known as the gillmen of the deep, and they have pledged themselves to the service of an entity called the Great Maw, which lives in the depths beneath the Sunken City. Their objectives are not entirely clear, but they have displayed an appetite for making human (and beastman) sacrifices for their dark god.

Peaceful gillmen seek secluded shallows where they can farm and forage away from prying eyes. Due to their ugly appearance, even innocent gillmen are often treated like monsters by land-dwellers.

Although the gillmen of the deep are a small minority of the total population, they have infected the others with paranoia and misgivings. Worse, many of the strongest and bravest gillmen are drawn down to the depths of the Sunken City and its cult. The rest continue to hope that the gillmen of the deep will gradually disperse like ink into the sea, but the Great Maw seems unlikely to relinquish its hold any time soon.

Beliefs

Except for their reverence for the sea and where it meets the sky, gillmen have few universal philosophies. Some aspire to nothing more than a mouthful of fatty tuna, others are obsessed with understanding the mysteries of sunken Atlantean ruins, and a few aspire to high moral principles. Some pair their respect for nature with a cold certainty that no higher power holds sway over the wilderness, while others believe that things as lovely as sunlight on green water must be the work of some supremely talented and generous artist. The most common theme in gillmen beliefs is the Great Deep: the vast and unexplored sea floor that receives little or no light

Chapter Four

from above. Gillmen view the Great Deep in much the same way that surface world cultures view the night sky; while many on the surface spend a great deal of time star gazing, the gillmen engage in “deep gazing.” The lure of the Great Deep is irresistible to all gillmen, and theories and philosophies vary widely.

Two particular philosophies are common among the gillmen. The first is a kind of pragmatic pseudo-Darwinism that recognizes survival as the great prize for any living being. To these gillmen, the survival of ideas is as much a Darwinian matter as the survival of a species. Thus, compassion and reason persist in the world because they help creatures to survive. Among the gillmen who think this way, the concept of the Great Deep is an existential terror—a vast and unknowable darkness symbolizing the things that will always remain outside of understanding, and the constant lurking danger of simple, animal death. Great and terrible predators lurk in the Great Deep, but so do creatures of such cunning adaptation and beauty that it draws the imagination nonetheless.

The other widespread gillman philosophy is the cult of fear and mysticism propagated by the Great Maw. To these gillmen, the Great Deep represents the ancient past and the cold oblivion of the future. They believe that the Great Deep is home to beings of such mystical power and alien brilliance that simple, mundane animals such as humans and gillmen cannot truly understand them. The gillmen of the deep go so far as to say that their species has adapted to the sea in response to the ancient call of the Great Deep, and, thus, it is the purpose and destiny of the gillmen to serve the deep gods.

The Great Maw, as the greatest example of these unknowable creatures of the Great Deep, repays its followers with a rich black ink from its body. Devoted gillmen of the deep use the ink for ritual tattooing or consume it as a powerful hallucinogenic. Within the ink-visions they see the sunken ruins as they once were—alive with light and life, guided and beloved by the Great Maw.

Society

When their good relationships with other natives trump their fearsome appearance and reputation, gillmen eagerly trade bounty from the sea for knickknacks and foodstuffs from land. They're a romantic people

with a taste for great variety. They decorate their caves and sunken ruins with shiny baubles and scrimshaw, old and new. Though the sea affords them a great assortment of things to see and eat, they still have human appetites when it comes to fruits, vegetables, and meat.

Gillmen are curious by nature, which goes a long way toward leading them into contact with members of other cultures. Sometimes an entire school will attach itself to a particular tribe, serving symbiotically to assist them with ocean-going endeavors. One example of this exists in Blood Bay, where a small school of gillmen has found a niche by hiring themselves out to pirates. These gillmen follow along after their employer's ships as protectors and salvagers, driving off fearsome predators and claiming booty that goes overboard.

Outside of the gillmen schools that dwell in the Hollow Earth's sunken ruins, their rudimentary society is highly cooperative. Aggressive gillmen of both genders settle naturally into the role of sea-hunter, while those without the impulse for violence tend to kelp farms and fishing nets. Where possible, they house themselves in sea caves or sheltered lagoons, but they will sometimes create floating villages or underwater structures from bone, coral, reeds, rocks, or whatever other materials come to hand.

Gillman Language

Gillmen speak their own strange, warbling conglomeration of ancient Greek, Atlantean, Japanese, and Portuguese, mutated over thousands of years into something not really resembling any of its roots. Many gillmen also speak or understand some of the languages of nearby surface-dwellers. Their voices tend to be sonorous and they tend to draw out syllables. These idiosyncrasies can seem odd to land-dwellers, but these speech traits help the gillmen hear and understand one another underwater.

Gillmen Names

The names of the gillmen often have a degree of mythic resonance. They are not above naming themselves after famous kings, queens, places, or heroes of old. They also often take names they have learned from sunken texts and apply them to their own children and friends.

Gillman Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their upbringing, every gillman is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Athletics
- Brawl
- Melee
- Stealth
- Survival

Resources

None

Flaw

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology-related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Spear	3 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Spear (thrown)	3 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N

**Gillmen double their Move rating when swimming and may breathe underwater*

Gillman Characters

Gillmen are as at home in the water as out of it. They are strong and hardy swimmers but are not particularly warm and prone to being misunderstood.

Gillman Template:

- Starting Attribute Adjustment: +1 Body, -1 Dexterity, +1 Strength, -1 Charisma, -1 Intelligence, +1 Willpower
- Natural Advantages: Swim (double Movement rate when swimming), Gills (may breathe underwater)
- Inherent Flaw: Primitive

Example Names: Myrmidon, Jones, Scrimshaw, Feng, Zorak

Gillman

Ally 1

Archetype: *Beastman*

Motivation: *Faith*

Style: 0

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3

Charisma: 1

Dexterity: 1

Intelligence: 1

Strength: 3

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 2

Move: 4 (8)*

Defense: 4

Perception: 4

Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	3	1	4	(2)
Throwing			5	(2+)
Brawl	3	1	4	(2)
Melee	3	1	4	(2)
Spears			5	(2+)
Stealth	1	3	4	(2)
Survival	1	3	4	(2)

Talents

None

GREENMEN

From a distance, greenmen might be mistaken for richly painted natives rendered green for some glorious ritual. Up close, their texture and the detail emerges, revealing veins and fibers in places unusual to a normal human, and thin roots and vines substituting for hair and dangling from the elbows, wrists, fingers and toes. Even then, their outer surface is so much like skin and their photoreceptors are so much like eyes that many outsiders simply cannot believe that greenmen belong to the animal kingdom, let alone the human race.

Though each greenman is technically both male and female, individuals often adopt appearances that lend them the semblance of one gender or another. “Female” greenmen usually have thin, graceful bodies and they are either “bald” or they wear lengths of thin vines and fibers from their heads as though it were long hair. “Male” greenmen have the overgrown appearance of green cave men and may be partly responsible for ancient myths of the Green Man and his ilk; their heads are wreathed in leafy swaths of vines and spines. As their name implies, greenmen are typically green, though sometimes with the colorful highlights and details one might expect from jungle plants and leaves. Deep green skin might give way to pale white fingertips or bright blue veins.

The hybridization of animal with plants may seem bizarre even in comparison to other beastmen, but aspects of the human form are undeniable within the greenmen. Aside from typical human shape and weight, greenmen move like humans, albeit with slow and drawn-out deliberation. They are accustomed to swaying in the breeze for long periods of time, and when they move they seem relaxed and languid, sure of themselves and patient.



musculature and tendons. They have no organs to speak of, save for bundles of peach pit-like seeds.

Culture

Greenmen are unique among beastmen in that they draw all of their sustenance from the sun and the soil. Their skin is endowed with bright green chlorophyll that, together with fresh water and good soil, provides all the nutrition they need.

Greenmen are a patient people who spend much of their waking lives inert but attentive. They have exceptionally long life spans in comparison to other denizens of the Hollow Earth. Much like the trees on the surface, in the right environment and with care, they can live for hundreds of years. They dwell at the edges of ancient ruins, wrapped in vines and overgrown with weeds just like the structures around them. They recline in the low, sprawling branches of burly jungle moss-covered trees, listening to the sounds of nearby birds and distant dinosaurs. They sit in the lotus position, waist-deep in remote grottoes, soaking in the

dappled sunlight and twitching at the occasional far-off roar.

Absorbing life by sinking one's roots in soil, water, or compost is the defining activity of greenman culture. They don't feel as though they've truly experienced a locale until they have had their fibrous roots in the ground, run their fingers through the mud, and dunked their heads in the water. Left to themselves, the patience and serenity of the greenmen can leave them meditating or daydreaming without a care and without worry. Though slow to anger, they are quite passionate about preserving the balance of nature and maintaining its beauty. More than one enemy has mistaken their calm and passivity for weakness, only to learn the hard way that they are unrelenting and implacable foes.

Internally, greenmen are wet and fibrous, soft like the flesh of a melon and stringy like the inside of a pumpkin. All of these fibers move and yield like

Carnivorous Greenmen

There is a small faction of carnivorous greenmen that believe a diet of meat is both more natural and ethical than the "barbaric and cannibalistic" practice of deriving nutrients from soil composed of decaying plants. To their way of thinking, meat feeds upon plants, and plants should feed upon meat.

They have slightly faded skin as their chlorophyll is comparatively underdeveloped, but their body's thorns and spines have thickened enough that they may use them as defensive weapons and hunting tools. By necessity, they must be much more aggressive in their pursuit of food.

Beliefs

Greenmen are extremely pragmatic and down-to-earth. While many have an intellectual interest in the beliefs of others, most greenmen do not have interest in issues like religion, philosophy, and their place in the world. To most of them, the purpose of existence is simply to absorb the world as it is, perhaps make it better, and perpetuate their species.

They practice a type of detached awareness which they believe strengthens their minds. They rarely seek more than to sink their roots into mulch and compost readily available in the jungle, absorbing all manner of organic materials within the soil. This is how greenmen taste, smell, and truly feel the world they live in—without this “rooting” they barely feel alive.

Society

Traditional greenmen live isolated, modest existences at the edge of territories inhabited by other beastmen or natives—places where they can trade their cultivated salves, flowers and woven vines for mulch, or simply bask in the beauty of the Hollow Earth.

Most greenmen have only minimal relations with nearby settlements, although they are frequently sought out for their knowledge of plants and medicines. Often, a patch of greenmen are regarded as wise women of the woods or garden-tending hermits, and are visited only by a few midwives or peaceful traders.

Greenmen have no governmental structures and they seldom seek military alliances.

Language

Greenmen enjoy learning languages, but they have no tongue of their own. Instead, they learn the dominant language of the region in which they live. Among their own kind, they communicate as much through scents and pheromones as through words. Whenever possible, they will touch the one to whom they are speaking, usually with a gentle hand on a shoulder, and this idiosyncrasy tends to help them seem sincere and forthcoming.

Names

Greenmen don't name each other in the traditional sense. Rather, they recognize each other's scents as they make physical contact. For dealing with outsiders, they adopt for themselves names that are blunt and literal, as they are often hastily applied for the sake of communication.

Example Names: Angrythorn, Weeping Dryad, Poison Blue Girl, Silent Watcher, Wise One Who Healed the Pirate

Greenman Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their upbringing, every greenman is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Athletics
- Brawl
- Diplomacy
- Stealth
- Survival

Greenman Characters

Greenmen enjoy the ability to conduct photosynthesis, which frees them from the need to find food. When exposed to direct sunlight for at least twelve of every twenty-four hours, greenmen do not need to eat any food. Without direct sunlight, a greenman experiences the equivalent of dehydration, suffering one lethal wound for each day he goes without sufficient sunlight. Dehydration affects greenmen as it does humans (see Deprivation, in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, pp. 132-133).

Greenman Template:

- Starting Attribute Adjustment: +1 Body, -1 Dexterity, -1 Intelligence, +1 Willpower
- Natural Advantage: Longevity (ages extremely slowly), Chlorophyll (does not need to eat food)
- Inherent Flaw: Primitive

Carnivorous greenmen also benefit from the healing energy provided by photosynthesis, but they must still consume food. If they do not eat, they suffer from starvation, just like any other humanoid.

Carnivorous Greenman Template:

- Starting Attribute Adjustment: +1 Body, -1 Dexterity, -1 Intelligence, +1 Willpower
- Natural Advantage: Longevity (ages extremely slowly), Thorns (0 L)
- Inherent Flaw: Primitive

Greenman

Ally 1

Archetype: *Beastman*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 Charisma: 2

Dexterity: 1 Intelligence: 1

Strength: 2 Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Initiative: 2

Move: 3 Defense: 4

Perception: 4 Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Craft: Medicine	1	1	2	(1)
Medicine	1	1	2	(1)
Stealth	1	3	4	(2)
Survival	1	3	4	(2)

Talents

None

Resources

None

Flaw

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology-related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N

Greenmen have longevity and don't need to eat

HAWKMEN

Lithe and agile, hawkmen have bodies that seem to swim through the air, yet underneath their feathers they are more human than they first appear. They have human hands and torsos in addition to human-like skeletal structures and the proud, almost cocky bearing most commonly found among star athletes or ace fighter pilots. Their heads, wings, and feet are those of giant hawks, with their wingspans twice as wide as they are tall. Although their gracile, hollow bones make them slight of body, their speed and aerial prowess provide good justification for their aloof demeanors.

While a sitting hawkman might be mistaken for a human in an elaborate costume, a hawkman in motion is clearly inhuman. In the air, they have the controlled, economic grace of hawks. On the ground, their specialized musculature gives them a strange, strained walk, particularly in tight spaces where their wings often get in the way. At rest, their gestures are quick but halting. This is particularly noticeable in the incessant darting of their heads, which they rely on to maintain awareness above, below, and on all sides of them. This constant motion sometimes makes them seem twitchy and unnerving to other humanoids. Hawkman plum-



age changes with age, from rich but modest browns at youth, through striped and spotted patterns ranging from a sunny golden color to the matte black of burnt wood during adulthood, to pale whites and silvers in their later years. Some have physiques that are sleek and seemingly razor-sharp, while others are puffy and bristly with fat collars of half-molted fluff. Because of the variety in plumage, outsiders find it very easy to distinguish between individual hawkmen.

Culture

Hawkman culture is driven by two types of organizational relationships: those of the family and those of the flock. Each individual belongs to one group of each kind, with the family consisting of the hawkman's mate and blood relatives, and the flock equivalent to a guild or a professional cohort. While the family is determined by birth, hawkmen earn their way into flocks based on their personal aptitudes and temperament. It is common to have different siblings within a family belong to different flocks, although about half of all hawkman marriages take place between males and females of the same flock.

Hawkmen customarily mate for life and mark new marriages through extended ceremonies encompassing multiple feasts, aerial dances, and parades. The sanctity, safety, and happiness of one's nest are matters of personal prestige—and often, public knowledge, as hawkmen are quite gossipy. Great warriors are humiliated if they cannot keep their families together, while humble planters might be publicly celebrated for raising strong, productive young. Living up to the greatness of one's family is of deep concern to all hawkmen, because personal failure reflects badly on a hawkman's entire lineage.

In contrast to families, flocks are bodies of function, like platoons in an army or departments in an office. A flock can range from between ten to one hundred individuals, and each flock is dedicated to a particular role, such as raider, planter, fisher, teacher, or nest-builder. Performance is the only factor that determines how hawkmen are assigned to flocks; gender and family background do not influence the division of roles in any way. Although certain flocks (particularly raider flocks) are inherently more prestigious than others (such as planters or nest-builders), an individual's status is tied more closely to how one performs one's role

than to the nature of that role. This society strives to live by this ideal and is mostly successful. Still, it can not be denied that raiders are treated with great respect and are treated as celebrities. After all, the Aerie could not survive were it not for the efforts of the raiders. Without them, there would be starvation and death.

Beliefs

Hawkmen believe they are blessed by the sky itself. As proof of this, they have the gift of flight, which they view as the distinguishing feature of higher life forms. They also have the Aerie, their floating homeland, which sets them apart from all other tribes. They credit their god Aeraxis with both of these gifts.

Hawkmen storytellers describe Aeraxis as the god of air, who forced himself into a bubble within a cosmos made of stone and dirt, and it is this bubble which forms the Hollow Earth. Aeraxis provides life for all creatures by allowing himself to be drawn in as breath, and he also provides flight to a select few by holding their wings with invisible hands. With their typical self-confidence, the hawkmen tell stories of the First Days when Aeraxis surveyed all of the humans in the world and granted them life, but deemed only the hawkmen valorous enough to receive wings. Lesser humans may potentially gain membership within the “brotherhood of the sky” through natural means or with the aid of machines, but hawkmen have a difficult time seeing earthbound people as equals.

The oral history of the hawkmen also supposes that the Aerie was given to their race by the Atlanteans at the request of Aeraxis himself. Exactly why the Atlanteans gave up the city depends on the version of the story, but the traditional version maintains that the Atlanteans, who knew their time was drawing to a close, consulted Aeraxis for advice. The wind god instructed them to leave the city for his favored children, the hawkmen. In another version of the story, Aeraxis proposed a series of challenges between the hawkmen and the Atlanteans. The hawkmen, who did not need to rely on machines, won the competition and were rewarded the Aerie for their victory. No matter the version of the story, the Aerie is commonly seen as the spiritual homeland of the hawkmen, and they consider it a sort of holy land for all their people.

Society

The Aerie houses more hawkmen than can be found in the rest of the Hollow Earth, and its social organization has established the pattern for all other hawkman settlements. Even those hawkmen who do not dwell in the Aerie know it well, and these individuals very likely have a good reason for living elsewhere. Some errant hawkmen are sojourners in search of Atlantean secrets and devices to help maintain the city. Some are scouts or traders, out to help the city protect or feed itself. Others are exiles, rogues, and fugitives.

When governance of the city is required, the leaders of all flocks convene as Parliament. Every generation or so, Parliament elects representatives to serve as city elders. Cases of criminal justice are usually handled by flock leaders, but in the event of disputes the cases may be handed up to the Council of Elders, which will determine the verdict in extended questioning sessions that are open to all spectators.

The Aerie also defines most of the hawkmen's relations with outsiders. Though hawkmen are not innately greedy, they are inherently direct and proud, and their survival often demands that they play the role of looters, pirates, and raiders. The Aerie cannot supply food enough for all hawkmen and trading is not always an option in the savage environment of the Hollow Earth. Rather than risk being denied, hawkmen simply take what they need from the ground, much as the falcon takes the mouse. Those who do not vilify the hawkmen for their ways may find an opportunity to ally with them, gaining valuable friends in the sky. Humans who approach the hawkmen with gifts of food or water or Atlantean technology may receive an invitation to the Aerie. Pilots in search of information on potential landing sites and weather patterns would do well to make friends of the hawkmen, and even earthbound explorers can profit greatly from the geographical knowledge of these beastmen.

Language

The language of the hawkmen is a mixture of words that resemble bold, melodious birdsong and incorporates elements of pidgin Coptic, Quechua, and Japanese. How the hawkmen might have accumulated such an eclectic language is a mystery. Some outsiders have observed that the speech of the hawkmen, with its smoothed-over consonants and unhesitating delivery,

sounds mechanical and imitative, like a recorded voice played back on a gramophone.

Foreigners with knowledge of the root languages manage to communicate with hawkmen easily enough, but without avian beaks and larynxes they find it difficult to create many of the syllables of the language. For their part, hawkmen strive to pick up languages quickly so as to spy on those who dwell beneath the path of their aerial city and better plan attacks upon them.

Names

Hawkmen are typically given two names—one that is sung (and therefore difficult to transcribe) and one that is phonetic and writeable. These are divided as common familiar names (the song-name) and more formal names of honor (the written name). Song-names are derived from relatives' names, usually by combining the syllables of the names of the mother and father. Written names are assigned by one's mentors, teachers, or military leaders.

Example Names: Akator, Axum, Creusa, Felcor, Ibix, Ikidu, Sycrat, Zaeva

Hawkman Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their upbringing, every hawkman is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Athletics
- Brawl
- Melee
- Stealth
- Survival

Hawkman Characters

Hawkmen are somewhat frail but extremely quick on the wing. They have good reason to consider themselves lords of the sky.

Hawkman Template:

- Starting Attribute Adjustment: -1 Body, +1 Dexterity, -1 Strength, -1 Intelligence, +1 Willpower
- Natural Advantage: Wings (fly at full movement speed; 10-foot wingspan), Keen Senses (+4 on sight-related perception rolls), Talons (0 L)
- Inherent Flaw: Primitive

Hawkman

Ally 1

Archetype: *Beastman*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 1

Charisma: 2

Dexterity: 3

Intelligence: 1

Strength: 1

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 4

Move: 4*

Defense: 4

Perception: 4 (8)**

Stun: 1

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	1	1	2	(1)
Throwing			3	(1+)
Brawl	1	3	4	(2)
Melee	1	1	2	(1)
Spears			3	(1+)
Stealth	3	1	4	(2)
Survival	1	3	4	(2)

Talents

None

Resources

None

Flaw

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology-related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Spear	3 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Spear (thrown)	3 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Talons	0 L	0	4 L	(2) L

*Hawkmen use their full Move rating when flying, but require 10 feet of room to spread their wings

**Hawkmen gain +4 on sight-related perception rolls

LIZARDMEN

Lizardmen are five-foot tall bipedal reptiles with large black eyes and an elongated snout filled with small, sharp teeth meant for tearing flesh. Their scaled skins vary in color, from light green to near black, with many (but not all) tribes differentiating themselves by these hues. Every lizardman has a ridge of spines and frills that runs from the top of its head down the middle of its back. These ridges shift colors depending on a lizardman's mood, and these chromatic displays are incorporated into the lizardman language.

Physiologically, lizardmen look like bipedal iguanas. Their hands have four fingers and an opposable thumb, each ending in a razor sharp talon. Their tails

are used for balance and for conveying information, and it gives them a slightly waddling gait. Lizardmen are conservative with their energy and only move when necessary. When they do, they lunge forward in startling bursts of speed and purpose, which can easily take prey off guard. When sitting still, a lizardman almost appears like a statue or a remarkable wax dummy, with only the cold, darting eyes revealing that the creature is actually alive.

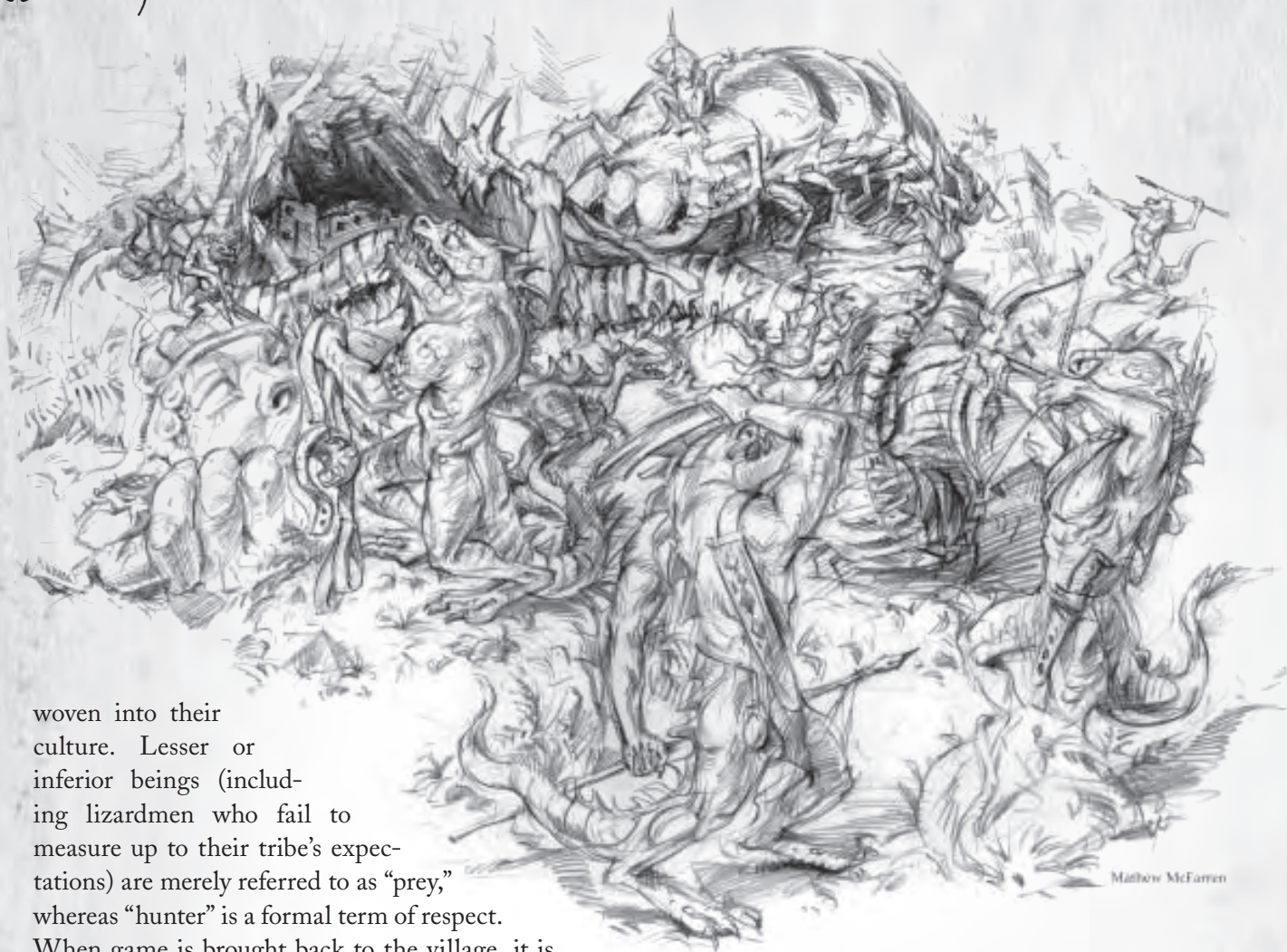
Despite their seemingly frail frames, lizardmen are strong, agile, and tough. Their bodies have a remarkable ability to regrow lost limbs or tails, and to repair damaged organs. They are more than capable of wrestling down wild game or fending off attackers. Unlike most of Hollow Earth's denizens, lizardmen do not make overt displays of physical prowess when confronting enemies. They simply move in with lightning speed to eliminate threats.

Culture

Lizardmen females lay small clutches of eggs which are cared for communally. Likewise, once the eggs hatch, the young are watched over by the entire tribe, with no special bonds formed between biological parents and their offspring. Hunting is the default profession of any lizardman, so every one of their young are taught how to stalk and kill prey.

Lizardmen come into maturity rapidly, at which point they are expected to prove their worth to the tribe. Typical rites of passage include making an impressive kill or returning with a valuable treasure. Young lizardmen, both male and female, serve their tribe as warriors, scouts, and hunters, although all members of a village, including the shamans and the elderly, are expected to help locate food. As a lizardman ages, he becomes progressively more sedentary and will eventually spend the majority of his time in a dreamlike torpor, deep in thought and contemplation of the nature of the gods.

As strict carnivores, they spend many of their waking hours hunting for prey or standing as lookouts for predators. They are known to pursue prey as small as finches and as large as stegosaurus, and they prefer to hunt in packs with up to twenty of their tribe mates. Much of the lore and language of the lizardmen revolves around the analogy of the hunt and it is deeply inter-



woven into their culture. Lesser or inferior beings (including lizardmen who fail to measure up to their tribe's expectations) are merely referred to as "prey," whereas "hunter" is a formal term of respect. When game is brought back to the village, it is divided up equally among all members according to need. A hunter who fails to bring back a steady supply of food is rotated out to some other role, such as guard or scout. Repeated failure (or a particularly egregious error) may result in the individual being banished from the tribe.

Although they rarely wear clothes, lizardmen apply their hunting instincts to ferreting out brightly colored objects, shiny metals, and precious stones of all kinds, adorning themselves with such treasures during important celebrations. Indeed, lizardmen are particularly drawn to glittering objects and are willing to trade and barter in lopsided ways to obtain such items. Members of other races who wish to trade with lizardmen often bring trunks full of shiny (and usually worthless) trinkets to exchange for lizardmen goods, safe passage through their lands, or as bribes if negotiations turn sour.

Lizardmen culture is a dichotomy between interdependence and autonomy. On one hand, a lizardman is dedicated to the needs of his village and the decrees of his elders. On the other, lacking much in

the way of empathy or other strong emotions, lizardmen are free to live their personal lives as they wish, with every other member of the tribe knowing that their kin will be there for them as needed. A lizardman hunter, for example, may disappear in the search for food, and the other members of his tribe may eat and sleep many times before his return. If he never comes back, no search parties are sent out and no one grieves at the loss. Yet, if his hunt is successful, he will return to share his gains with his people.

Beliefs

As befitting a race that so closely resembles the giant saurians that stalk the Hollow Earth, lizardmen revere dinosaurs as living gods. This worship, however, is neither loving nor fearful, but rather a grim reverence for the walking incarnations of powerful, divine entities that are likely to eat their worshippers if given the chance.

Like the rest of their society and culture, lizardmen's religious beliefs are remarkably ancient, fixed,

and unbending. Having known their place in the world for countless generations, the stories and creeds of the lizardmen have remained virtually unchanged for almost as long—although each tribe has its own minor variations on the names and status of each god. The names of their gods are identical to their words for the various types of dinosaurs that roam Hollow Earth—they see no problem with the idea that a single deity may manifest as multiple animals. Each deity within the area of a tribe must be appeased at various times throughout the life cycle of each lizardman. This worship usually involves staking out live game for a given species of dinosaur to tear apart and consume while the shamans chant and the warriors ward off hopeful scavengers that might take the sacrifice for their own. By making these sacrifices, the lizardmen hope to blunt the appetites of the more dangerous predators in their area. More than a few tribes have managed to use these rituals to successfully train large dinosaurs to follow the sounds of their ceremonial music, which the lizardmen find very useful when defending their villages or sacred areas from invaders.

The keepers of lore and belief are the shamans. Despite the egalitarian nature of lizardman society, shamans are held in higher esteem than everyone else. However, their homes are often relegated to the fringes of a village—as their works often draw dinosaurs too close for the comfort of their peers. Indeed, the lifespan of a shaman can be tragically short. Several times in the course of their lives, shamans will depart from their homes for extended vision quests in which they roam the wilds in search of contact with their ancestors or their gods.

Society

Lizardmen will fight to the death when their eggs, youth, or elders are threatened, and the entire populace will come to defend these precious resources. All tribe members will set aside any petty differences when facing such a threat in order to form a hissing, spitting line of formidable warriors that is sure to scare off an enemy.

Lizardmen divide themselves up into roles necessary for a village's prosperity. The strongest and bravest are sent to hunt for food and search for treasure, especially the highly-prized orichalcum. The smartest and most skilled produce sturdy, if simple, weapons and tools, some of which are used to trade with neighboring lizardmen and the occasional human tribe. Lizardman tribes are

extremely self reliant and insular, but become much more interested in commerce with outsiders who have Atlantean artifacts or shiny materials in their possession.

Lizardmen maintain cool and distant relations with the other denizens that populate Hollow Earth. Lizardmen shamans speak of wars with all the other races far in the past, although the reasons for these conflicts are long forgotten. At least for the time being, lizardmen are content to leave other cultures in peace for as long as the other races do the same. Still, conflict does occur—there are frequent border skirmishes, and fights for food and other vital resources—but rarely do these go beyond the occasional raid. Perseverance, not conquest, dominates the mindset of the lizardmen.

Lizardmen view the native humans with the most suspicion, as the wildly varying cultures of different tribes make it difficult for them to know who to trust. Still, some lizardmen tribes trade with human settlements just as often as they fight against them. They are more likely to repel raids of encroaching humans than the other way around.

Lizardmen Language

The lizardmen language consists of hisses and throaty “barks,” and supplemented through tail movements and subtle alterations of coloration in their dorsal ridges. Because of this, outsiders find the language almost impossible to speak with the proper inflection, so communication usually takes place through each party learning to understand the other's language while still speaking in their own.

Lizardmen Names

Like their language, the names of lizardmen are difficult to translate. When an outsider manages to unravel the language, she may find the names of lizardmen to be representative of their talents or personal history. Small variations in inflection make each name unique, and each lizardman bears his or her name with pride.

Example Names (translated): Redcrest, Silver Scale, Skin Tanner, Tracker of Small Prey

Lizardman Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their upbringing, every lizardman is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Athletics
- Brawl
- Melee
- Stealth
- Survival

Lizardmen Characters

Lizardmen are curious, quick, bold, and always on the lookout for food and shiny objects.

Lizardman Template:

- Starting Attribute Adjustment: +1 Dexterity, -1 Charisma, -1 Intelligence, +1 Willpower
- Natural Advantage: Regeneration (regrow missing limbs and organs), Claws (0 L)
- Inherent Flaw: Primitive

Lizardman

Ally 1

Archetype: *Beastman*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 5*

Primary Attributes

Body: 2	Charisma: 1
Dexterity: 3	Intelligence: 1
Strength: 2	Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 4
Move: 5	Defense: 5
Perception: 4	Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	2	2	4	(2)
<i>Throwing</i>			5	(2+)
Brawl	2	1	3	(1+)
Claws			4	(2)
Melee	2	2	4	(2)
<i>Spears</i>			5	(2+)
Stealth	3	1	4	(2)
Survival	1	2	3	(2)
<i>Hunting</i>			4	(2)

Talents

None

Resources

None

Flaw

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology-related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Spear	3 L	0	8 L	(3) L
Spear (thrown)	3 L	0	8 L	(3) L
Claw	0 L	0	4 L	(2) L*

*Lizardmen can regenerate lost limbs and damaged organs. They regenerate a finger in a week, an eye or other small organ in two weeks, and an entire limb or tail in four weeks. However, the Hollow Earth's natural healing properties speed this process.

MANTISMEN

Of all the beastmen, mantismen are the least physiologically anthropomorphic, which leads many to the erroneous assumption that they are a race of intelligent insects entirely unrelated to human kind. At first glance, they appear to be giant versions of the praying mantis, complete with long, double-folded forearms, segmented bodies, and triangular heads topped with bulbous compound eyes. To anyone other than an entomologist, the only feature (aside from size) that would distinguish them from other mantids is their hindquarters, for they stand on a single pair of relatively thick legs. This bipedal arrangement gives them a very nearly human posture. The size and placement of their arms is also reminiscent of human structure, and it allows them a greater range of motion from the shoulders than any mantid. Further, their chitinous arms end in a strange three-fingered, prehensile hand that is neither primate nor insectoid.

Most mantismen seek to adorn themselves in ways that will distinguish them from mere animals. When possible, they will wear clothing in accordance with the customs of human tribes in their area. More often, they don durable jewelry, particularly necklaces or ornamental belts. For utility, they equip themselves with leather straps to carry their weapons and tools. On the hunt, they prefer to ambush prey, attacking with spears and knives, or grappling in order to devour their prey alive.

Some mantismen are the almost-black of potting soil, others are the pale off-white of a grub worm, but most fall within a narrow spectrum of pale green.



Culture

Mantismen are nomadic hunters who follow the movements of their herds of prey. They have never been known to use pack animals or wheeled conveyances, preferring instead to move on foot through the jungles. Thanks to their tough exoskeletons, they rarely need to bother with shelter, but when necessary, they usually construct simple elevated sleeping platforms beneath sloped roofs of whatever leaves are available.

Mantismen travel in small hunting groups called clusters, with each cluster consisting of up to a dozen individuals. Clusters are formed spontaneously as mantismen encounter one another in the wild. If a cluster grows too large, it will split into two, with the new groups striking out in different directions. Clusters are always segregated by gender; females, either individually or in groups, may lure males from other groups, but a female will not join a group of males and a male may not survive long among a group of females.

In contrast to their insect counterparts, mantismen regard sexual cannibalism as a depraved and disgusting act. At one point in their evolutionary history, impregnated females may have needed to kill their mates because they relied on the nutrition from the male's body in order to fuel the gestation of her eggs, but now clusters are more than capable of providing for pregnant females. Still, the killing impulse is pres-

ent in many females, and stories always circulate about females who give in to the urge.

Females deposit their egg sacks—which can sometimes be as large as the mother—high in trees or on the roofs of large caves. By the time the eggs hatch, she is long gone, leaving the hatchlings to operate on two compelling instincts: to hunt, and to find members of their own kind. Those who succeed at both will be adopted into a cluster, where they will begin their formal socialization and indoctrination into mantisman society. Clusters are also always on the lookout for unaffiliated younglings, and very few mantismen who survive to adulthood fail to find a cluster.

In sharp contrast to their inhuman appearance and reproductive practices, mantismen deliberately strive to cultivate rationality and sophistication within themselves. The master of each cluster oversees the education of the younglings, which includes religious training and literacy instruction. Even necessary survival skills are linked to higher aspirations, as young mantismen are taught to meditate on religious matters while lying in wait for prey. Most notably, nearly every cluster carries on a tradition of formalized fighting designed to maximize the mantisman's natural advantages for grappling. This system has developed into a martial art, although different clusters practice it with differing degrees of precision and elegance.

Mantis Style Martial Arts

Mantis Style is a specialization for the Martial Arts Skill. This system of grappling was developed by the mantismen to maximize on their long reach, strong arms, and natural inclination to grip their prey. Practitioners need not be mantismen, and sometimes clusters are sought out by ordinary humans wishing to learn this style.

Style	Block	Grapple	Kick	Punch	Throw
Mantis Style	+1	+1	-1	+0	-1

Beliefs

Mantismen recognize a myriad of gods and tend to be rather compulsive in their religious habits. They welcome missionaries into their clusters and enjoy hearing mythology from any tribe they encounter, but they never believe in one god to the exclusion of others. Instead, each individual mantisman credits a massive pantheon for creating and operating the world, with each deity fulfilling some function or holding some position in a large and complicated celestial family. Most mantismen select one deity as a personal patron, to whom they dedicate their prayers.

Although the specific religious teachings vary widely from cluster to cluster, most subscribe to the notion that all life is impermanent and, therefore, one should commend oneself to the gods in order to become less attached to the material world. Of course, this is easier said than done and individual mantismen are just as susceptible to regret, anxiety, pride, and shame as are any human.

Thanks to their practice of calligraphy, the sayings of their masters and the history of each tribe is fairly well recorded. Unfortunately, these recordings are spread throughout the Hollow Earth, as their nomadic lifestyle prevents them from carrying these writings with them or compiling them in a single location. Most of their writing is etched into trees or tucked away in hidden niches. They ostensibly commend these writings to the gods, and will sometimes “send their words to the heavens” by deliberately inscribing them on a transient medium such as sand below the tide line or on paper to be fed to a fire. Although these inscriptions are intended for religious purposes, they also have a very earthly function in that they help young mantismen track clusters, or

bring clusters together for mating. The phrases they inscribe, which are invariably short and cryptic even to those who understand the language, also serve as the only form of communication between clusters and, thus, their only forum for debate.

Society

Rank within a cluster is determined by seniority, with the eldest and (presumably) wisest member assuming the role of master. There is no other form of government within or between clusters, as mantismen are more likely to socialize with humans than with others of their own kind. Because they are nomadic, other hunting cultures might take offense at their territorial incursions, so mantismen avoid remaining in any area long enough to wear out their welcome. When they do make contact, it is generally to barter with the more established agrarian races.

Although they carry few possessions, mantismen are always eager to trade, particularly for jewelry or clothing items that might fit their bodies. Some of their trading partners say that they seek these adornments to compensate for their otherwise inhuman appearance, but the mantismen nevertheless barter in earnest to acquire these things. Blank scrolls and paper are also in high demand among the mantismen, particularly those which come in portable and watertight containers. Because the mantismen have no industry and produce few items, they are most often limited to bartering their services. They will hire themselves out as scouts, hunters, or sometimes martial arts instructors, so long as the terms of service are not too long and do not take the mantisman too far from his cluster. Mantismen who can write in other languages are sometimes sought out as calligraphers, and samples of their writings have been traded as works of art to many tribes.

Hatchlings occasionally find their way into other cultures instead of locating a cluster of other mantismen. These individuals often have difficulty fitting in with their adopted tribe, but their patient temperaments and desire to assimilate usually wins out in the long run. Mantismen have been raised by tribes as diverse as cannibals, Amazons, and the Vrill-Ya, and in their adulthood they sometimes serve as emissaries or merchants to other mantismen.

Language

The language of the mantismen is made up of a very limited vocabulary consisting as much of whistles and clicks as of standard syllables.

Mantismen simply don't have the essential vocal components necessary to pronounce many syllables common to human languages, which gives them a strangely warbling accent. The mantisman written language, though also strictly limited in vocabulary, consists of a set of flowing pictograms which suggest their meanings even to those who do not know the language.

Names

Mantismen name each other only rarely, when long-term relationships yield the equivalent of nicknames. Otherwise, mantismen simply recognize each other and go on eye contact, pointing, or physical touch. Those who dwell for long among other races inevitably end up with names native to those other cultures. Although mantismen have no trouble understanding these names, sometimes they experience a great deal of difficulty in liking them.

Example Names: Krikkik, Orn'thatagat, Pratakka, Theren-galakka

Mantisman Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their upbringing, every mantisman is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Athletics
- Martial Arts: Mantis Style
- Melee
- Stealth
- Survival

Mantisman Characters

Seemingly the most alien of the beastmen, mantismen roam the Hollow Earth in search of their place in the grand scheme of nature.

Mantisman Template:

- Attributes: -1 Body, +1 Dexterity, -1 Charisma, -1 Intelligence, +1 Willpower
- Natural Advantage: Carapace (+2 Armor), Keen Senses (+4 on sight-related perception rolls), Hooked Arms (2 N)
- Inherent Flaw: Primitive

Mantisman

Ally 1

Archetype: *Beastman*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 1	Charisma: 1
Dexterity: 3	Intelligence: 1
Strength: 2	Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 4
Move: 5	Defense: 4 (6)*
Perception: 4 (8)**	Stun: 1

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	2	2	4	(2)
Martial Arts:				
Mantis Style	2	3	5	(2+)
Melee	2	1	3	(1+)
Stealth	3	1	4	(2)
Survival	1	3	4	(2)

Talents

None

Resources

None

Flaw

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology-related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Grapple	2 N	0	8 N**	(4) N**
Knife	1 L	0	4 L	(2) L

*Mantismen have a rugged carapace which grants them a +2 armor bonus

** Keen Sense (+4 bonus to sight-related Perception rolls)

***Mantis Style provides a +1 grapple bonus

MOLEMEN

Molemen are a shy, elusive, and strange people who live in the shell of rock that divides the surface world from the Hollow Earth. Buried deep in the earth, molemen almost never venture out to either surface and rarely glimpse the light of either sun.

Molemen are short beings, rarely standing more than five feet tall. Yet their bodies are powerfully built, with massive shoulders and stubby legs packed with muscle. Their arms have huge, pad-like hands ending in enormous claws that make it difficult for them to use tools and equipment but which are perfectly evolved for burrowing through rubble and virgin stone. Molemen usually do not make use of weapons, preferring to rely on their claws for defense. Molemen are covered with dense fur and wear no clothing, but individuals have been spotted with special harnesses and a type of bandolier that straps across their broad chests.



Lacking necks, their bullet-shaped heads end in broad snouts full of small teeth. Long, sensitive whiskers stick out from these snouts and constantly twitch and shiver as the moleman detects his surroundings. Their flat ears are usually tucked back and hidden beneath their fur. Although they are practically blind, molemen have remarkable hearing and an amazing ability to feel even the slightest vibration in the earth.

Culture

Completely adapted to life without light, the molemen have a view of the world that other races could never understand. Surrounded by utter darkness, the molemen live in a world where touch, sound, and smell define their existence and sight is a little used, inferior sense rarely to be trusted. In the honeycomb warren of tunnels that make up a moleman settlement, individuals keep in constant communication through the use of

sounds or rapping on the stone floors and walls to send messages over long distances. Because of this, molemen have a near instantaneous rapport with each other that can seem almost mystical to the uninformed.

Despite their reclusiveness, molemen are very social creatures and prefer being in close proximity to their own kind, traveling outside their settlements only in packs. But there are loners who prefer the silence of the underworld, away from the constant chatter of their kin, and there are also highly curious individuals who desire to discover what lies above their tunnels and caverns. These are the molemen most likely to be encountered by explorers.

In the stillness of the Earth's crust, the culture of the molemen has remained nearly static, with traditions that have been the same for thousands of years. Although most humans are unaware of this fact, the tunnels, warrens, and caves nearer to the surface do have their own subtle seasons, which the molemen observe, tracking the best times to harvest their farms of fungus, track and

hunt the strange herds of subterranean beasts that also share their world, and perform rites to their enigmatic worm gods. This attention to the passage of time is considered esoteric and superstitious by most members of their society, but explorers from the surface world may find it much easier to communicate about such matters with molemen than with any other natives.

Beliefs

Molemen revere a bizarre pantheon that includes several idealized forms of their species along with a race of mythical gigantic worms, white and blind, which wiggle and writhe through the crust of the earth, devouring enormous swathes of rock and ore. The molemen believe that these giant worm-gods helped to build the planet in order to slowly devour it. This rather fatalistic belief filters throughout moleman society—they wait for the day when the worm-gods will complete their task of consuming the world and bring about the next one, in which the molemen will pass to the next level of existence.

Molemen shamans, otherwise known as Worm Talkers, are the most influential members of moleman society, tasked with seeking out and gleaning wisdom from the worm-gods, in addition to protecting them from anyone or anything seeking to harm these immense and powerful creatures. Each moleman settlement has its own council of Worm Talkers who sequester themselves in sealed vaults for months at a time. Within the utterly dark and quiet confines of these caves, the shamans use their heightened sense of touch to divine the subtle vibrations that come to them from the worlds above and below, as well as the movements of the worm-gods as they burrow through the crust. One of the main duties of every moleman is to assist in digging tunnels in a search for rich veins of minerals and ore, ostensibly for their worm-gods to consume. Because of this, they have an unparalleled knowledge of the riches held beneath the Earth's surface, including stashes of strange rock and gemstones never documented by humans. Molemen guard this knowledge and wealth jealously, but can be persuaded to show humans veins of "worthless" metals like copper and silver, if they have something of value to trade in return. Supposedly, the worm-gods of the molemen find certain minerals, particularly orichalcum, to be more enticing than others and direct their followers to seek out such resources with near mindless fervor.

Society

Molemen colonies operate almost like a hive, with individuals selflessly serving the community and collaborating with clockwork precision when in action. Even as scattered as they are throughout the Earth's crust, the race's culture is united and uniform, with little variation in appearance or traditions. All molemen ultimately serve the Council of the Worm—the oldest and wisest of molemen who serve their chthonic deities.

The most common occupation among molemen is miner, spending most of their time in large gangs who use their massive claws to bore tunnels through the earth. These tunnels branch like twisting veins, serving as highways between colonies, chambers where fungus is farmed, and access shafts to veins of minerals and ore. The bulk of these tunnels exist between fifty and a hundred feet below the surface of the Hollow Earth, but a few delve deeper, and some even extend all the way to the surface world. In the most densely populated areas, teams of molemen move as a coordinated whole, chattering amongst themselves as they perform their tasks with efficiency. If attacked, they use their environment, teamwork, and surprising ferocity to destroy enemies.

Molemen live in family groups of between two to three dozen individuals, led by the eldest (and typically largest) member who brings the concerns and needs of their group back to the ruling council of the molemen community. These family groups typically have twice that number in children, who are raised in crèches and tended to by at least five molemen at any given time.

Molemen are shy and highly xenophobic creatures that do their best to avoid encountering other intelligent species, and will always avoid surfacing if they sense any nearby tremors above. Given a choice, molemen prefer to watch and wait, steering clear of threats unless they see little choice but to attack or negotiate. When they are driven to violence, molemen prefer to attack en masse, overwhelming opponents through force of numbers. Because of the scarcity of meat, they try to take captives alive, keeping them in gloomy cells illuminated by bioluminescent fungus (they know enough to realize that humans perish much faster if kept in utter darkness for long periods of time). When they do venture to the surface, it is to gather the supplies they need or to perform some enigmatic task for their shamans before returning to the safety below ground.

Molemen have little interaction with, and less need of, the other native and beastmen tribes. They are simply too proficient at avoiding other creatures, and they guard their treasure troves so jealously that they will not trade except in the direst of needs.

However, anyone delving into the ground in search of Atlantean artifacts or a route into or out of the Hollow Earth will inevitably find conflict with the reclusive molemen.

Molemen Language

Perhaps because their lives are spent in perpetual darkness, Molemen are surprisingly “vocal” creatures, constantly chattering, mainly to communicate but also to keep their bearings in relationship to each other. Their vocalizations consist of low murmurings and buzzing, the bulk of which is below the threshold of human hearing. Owing to their affinity for eavesdropping, they often learn other languages, and they have a remarkable ability to recreate the sounds they hear in nearly any tongue.

Molemen Names

Because their language is so difficult to decipher, most outsiders give their own “pet names” to friendly molemen they encounter. When a moleman identifies himself as an individual, this sound is whirring and chattering, with ample hard stops and repeated consonants.

Example Names: Ar’chikchick, Brr’klick’kar, Ch’rr’chak, T’kiklik, V’rrr’rr.

Moleman

Ally 1

Moleman Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their upbringing, every moleman is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Athletics
- Brawl
- Craft: Mining
- Stealth
- Survival

Moleman Characters

Molemen are secretive and reclusive, but their greed or their mysterious beliefs often lead them to surface from their lairs.

Moleman Template:

- Starting Attribute Adjustment: +1 Body, -1 Dexterity, +1 Strength, -1 Charisma, -1 Intelligence, +1 Willpower
- Natural Advantage: Tunneling (double movement rate when digging), Claws (0L)
- Inherent Flaw: Poor Vision (-2 penalty on sight-related Perception rolls), Primitive

Archetype: <i>Beastman</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 6		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 3		Charisma: 1		
Dexterity: 1		Intelligence: 1		
Strength: 3		Willpower: 3		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0		Initiative: 2		
Move: 4 (8)*		Defense: 4		
Perception: 4 (2)**		Stun: 3		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	1	4	(2)
Craft: Mining	1	3	4	(2)
Stealth	1	3	4	(2)
Survival	1	3	4	(2)
Talents				
None				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Poor Vision (-2 penalty on sight-related Perception rolls)				
Primitive (-2 penalty on technology-related rolls)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Claws	0 L	0	4 L	(2) L

* Molemen double their Move rating when digging

** Molemen suffer a -2 penalty on sight-related Perception rolls

PANTHERMEN

Panthermen have the heads, feet, and tails of great black cats and the bodies of lean, muscular humans. They are covered in short, sleek ebony fur which they keep meticulously—sometimes obsessively—well groomed. Although their fur appears to be entirely black, close examination or the right lighting reveals a beautiful pattern of blackish-purple or blue rosettes.



Panthermen prefer to travel lightly, and carry only minimal equipment. Few wear more than a simple leather loincloth, sometimes supplemented by a harness or vest to carry weapons and tools. They tend to scorn melee weapons in favor of their natural claws, and rely on ambushes and ranged weapons to defeat foes and take down prey. Panthermen generally prefer slings and short bows, and prize recurve bows for their combined high power and compact size. They are also widely known to use bolas, nets, and whips when they wish to capture live prey.

Culture

Panthermen learn to hunt almost as soon as they are able to walk. As cubs, their games usually involve ambushing their playmates. When hunting, they combine this talent with their natural cunning to select perfect ambush locations and to target the most vulnerable prey. Some panthermen rely so heavily on their stealth that they seemingly fade from the view of all other creatures, retreating into a life of solitude and self-isolation. This ability to live invisibly has led some to conjecture that panthermen are not quite as rare as they seem in the Hollow Earth.

The primary occupation and pastime for all panthermen is hunting. They hunt creatures of all sizes, and well-fed individuals will still hunt for sport. Despite their asocial tendencies, panthermen will cooperate with one another to hunt big game, provided that the need for teamwork doesn't last longer than a few hours. Panthermen eat little besides raw meat, though they sometimes use vegetation for garnish or flavoring. They will eat any kind of animal, but tend not to enjoy the flesh of humans or beastmen because they find it too salty. Panthermen may potentially subsist on vegetables, but they consider such a diet both disgusting and demeaning.

When sick, wounded, or tired, panthermen invariably seek out ingenious hiding spots to recuperate. Some of these locations seem highly improbable: they will drape themselves across low branches, fold themselves into small nooks within rocky structures, or, in a human-made domicile, tuck themselves away beneath beds or within alcoves. The purpose of these unconventional sleeping arrangements becomes all too clear when some unsuspecting creature happens past and the pantherman, who is always ready to spring from deep sleep to sudden action, seizes the opportunity to capture prey.

Particularly when young, these beastmen have been known to wander far from home, which sometimes results in their integration into other cultures and races. Panthermen have been known to be employed as hunting masters by Amazons, worshipped as gods by cargo cultists, trained as martial artists in Shangri-La, and enslaved by the Vrilya—though the latter have discovered that panthermen make poor slaves, owing to their stubborn resistance to manual labor and their penchant for escaping.

Beliefs

The pantherman culture lends itself readily to pursuits of mysticism, which leads more than a few to develop shamanistic powers. However, owing to the fact that they see no need to justify their philosophy or disseminate their beliefs to anyone else, panthermen have no central dogma or core set of shared beliefs.

The only belief that all panthermen seem to share is that they were created to be superior in self-reliance and sophistication to all other beings in the natural world. A few even take their egocentric beliefs to the extreme by asserting that the world exists solely for them, and that it will wink out of existence upon their deaths. Panthermen do not usually feel that they need to prove this superiority through boasts, demonstrations, or domination of other individuals. Rather, each individual simply assumes that he or she is the definition of perfection and that all other creatures have experienced varying degrees of failure in achieving this exact ideal. This leads some panthermen to shun and disregard all other races, but most are willing to graciously do their best to forgive others for their innate shortcomings.

One popular story passed between tribes of the panthermen holds that their mythological progenitor, known as The Mother, won dominion over the world for her offspring. The tale goes that the sun was once about to be eaten by a colossal snake (or a tyrannosaur or a pterosaur, depending on the telling), but The Mother sprang upon the monster as it broke cover in pursuit of its prey. As a reward, the sun agreed to forever illuminate the world, which would keep all the animals distracted as they look to what is lit instead of into the shadows, where the panthermen may lie in wait. Panthermen never tire of this story, and from it they derive the phrase “ignoring the shadows,” which is equivalent to being blissfully ignorant.

Panthermen hold special reverence for dreams, which they regard as potential visions of a higher reality. They group dreams into categories called Play, Emotion, and Holy Dreams. Play Dreams are those which allow the mind to focus on that which it has not been able to do while waking, and this type often includes fantasies of power, pleasure, or bountiful hunting. Emotion Dreams grant insight into the subconscious emotional state of the individual, and can express the dreamer’s true hopes and fears. Although panthermen consider all dreams holy, those labeled Holy Dreams are said to connect the dreamer to the world beyond, and may even be prophetic or revelatory. Every pantherman shaman is well versed in the symbolic language of dreams, while the most renowned dream-sages are often sought out over great distances by those wishing an interpretation of a particularly baffling dream or an unusually frightening nightmare. In the end, however, the dreamer is expected to trust the insight of the shamans only as far as the explanations make sense to the individual. It is thus not at all uncommon for a dreamer to seek out several different shamans only to arrive at an interpretation based on little of what any of them had to say.

Society

Panthermen live a significant portion of their lives in isolation. It is not that they do not form bonds of love and friendship with others, but simply that they feel no strong drive to cohabitate or cooperate unless they were raised to do so. For this reason, panthermen have no organized political, religious, or economic institutions. They will band together to defend their homes and families, but they have no taste for war and will scatter when faced with a determined and organized enemy force.

The basic social unit is the clan, which may include from one to a dozen females, from one to six males, and all their collected children. Many panthermen never join clans in their lifetimes, preferring instead to live alone and even raise cubs in isolation. Those who do join clans watch over each other, work together on hunts, and care for their sick or injured, but otherwise they will not make demands of one another. Gender distinctions are virtually nonexistent in pantherman society, with male and females being equally skilled hunters and combatants.

Panthermen have no interest in economics and do not use money within or between clans. They will never perform manual labor for wages, even if the alternative

is starvation. However, they have been known to barter their services as hunters, guides, spies, and even assassins. Panthermen always enjoy receiving gifts, especially in the form of weapons, baubles, skilled labor, live animals, or interesting information. Many Hollow Earth natives who have found themselves pursued by panthermen have saved their skins by offering a timely “gift” of sufficient value to distract the hunters from their game.

Outsiders may find employing them as scouts difficult because of their peculiar perspective. The younger members tend to be extremely excitable, impressionable, and mendacious, exaggerating everything they see. If they spot a small band of warriors approaching they will report that a vast army is on its way. As the panther grows older, they lose this ease of impression until it becomes reversed, with the older members of the clan becoming quite jaded and difficult to impress. If an elder pantherman sees an actual army approaching, he might describe it as “a handful of troublemakers.” Panthermen understand this tendency and naturally adjust their expectations according to the age of the story teller, but this can lead to confusion when communicating with outsiders.

Pantherman Language

Despite their solitary existence, panthermen can be extremely talkative when relaxed. Many of their words audibly resemble purring, growling, or meowing, but a trained linguist might detect grammar and vocabulary links to the Coptic tongue of ancient Egypt.

Pantherman Names

With very few exceptions, pantherman names are either one or two syllables and end in a vowel, usually an “a.” There is no distinction between male and female names.

Example Names: Feeba, Graa, Oska, Simka, Sinja

Pantherman Zero Level Skills

For use with the optional Zero Level Skills (see Zero Level Skills sidebar in *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 8).

Based on their upbringing, every pantherman is assumed to have some familiarity with:

- Archery
- Athletics
- Brawl
- Stealth
- Survival

Pantherman Characters

Stealthy and unfailingly self-assured, panthermen are among the deadliest hunters in the Hollow Earth.

Pantherman Template:

- Starting Attribute Adjustment: +1 Dexterity, -1 Intelligence, +1 Willpower
- Natural Advantage: Claws (0 L)
- Inherent Flaw: Primitive

Pantherman

Ally 1

Archetype: *Beastman*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 5

Primary Attributes

Body: 2	Charisma: 2
Dexterity: 3	Intelligence: 1
Strength: 2	Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 4
Move: 5	Defense: 5
Perception: 4	Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Acrobatics	3	1	4	(2)
Archery	3	1	4	(2)
Athletics	2	2	4	(2)
Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Stealth	3	1	4	(2)
Survival	1	3	4	(2)

Talents

None

Resources

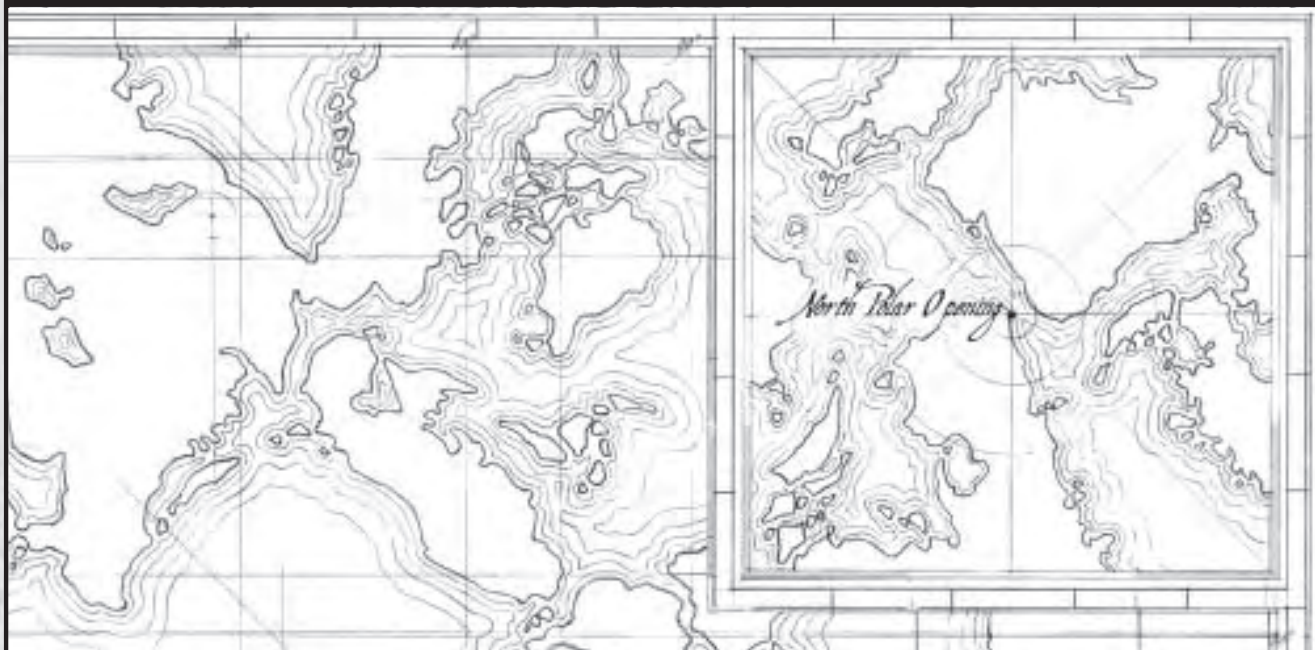
None

Flaw

Primitive (-2 penalty on technology-related rolls)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bow	2 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Claw	0 L	0	4 L	(2) L

⊕ CHAPTER 5: **THE HOLLOW EARTH**



COSMOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

The Hollow Earth is a world of extremes: It has the highest mountains, the hottest deserts, the fastest rivers, and the lushest jungles. Most of these features could be explained by the same laws of geology that operate on the surface, but a few defy all scientific theory. Some seem like minor mysteries—such as the way temperature drops at higher elevations despite the fact that the Hollow Earth is a closed system. Other phenomena, however, fly in the face of all known laws of physics, such as how gravity manages to be “down” for both the surface as well as the interior of the planet. Those who know of the Atlanteans can safely assume that these phenomena—as well as the existence of the Hollow Earth itself—can be attributed to that mysterious and long-vanished race.

Time Distortion

Any visitor who manages to keep out from between the jaws of a *Tyrannosaurus rex* long enough will find it exceedingly difficult (if not impossible) to measure time. All the usual, convenient indicators are absent: there are no season changes, no moon phases, nor any transitions between day and night. Worse, time pieces seem to conspire against their users as everything from pendulum clocks to pocket watches erratically speed up, slow down, move backwards, or stop altogether.

Time Dilation

Although time flows inconsistently from area to area and even from moment to moment within the Hollow Earth, it averages out to one day passing there for every two on the surface. Therefore, visitors to the Hollow Earth are usually gone for much longer than they anticipate. While inside, they may even encounter explorers who disappeared from the surface decades ago and yet appear much younger than seems possible, although they are unlikely to encounter anyone born in centuries long past (unless that person possesses special Atlantean technology or other means to extend the human lifespan).

Gamemasters are invited to look on the erratic time dilation not as a complication but rather as a convenience—and possibly even a plot device. If characters are inside the Hollow Earth for only a few weeks or months, they may not even notice the disparity in time flow. Furthermore, the two-to-one time ratio is simply an average, and as any player of a Ubiquity System game knows, individual results may occasionally differ greatly from the statistical average. If the story requires that the characters return to the surface after experiencing years of travel but you do not wish history to proceed too far without them, it is perfectly possible that the temporal distortion was negligible for them. Similarly, if you wish them to encounter lost travelers from centuries ago, it is within the realm of possibility. In short, the Gamemaster is free to adjust the properties of the space-time fabric to suit the needs of the game.

There are few ways to track time in the Hollow Earth. Some people study the seas: the ocean tides of the Hollow Earth rise and sink, but do so on a seemingly irregular cycle. The most common method is to track one's own bodily rhythms of eating and sleeping, but these vary greatly from person to person depending on activity level and other factors. Although these cannot be used for precise measurements, they can give a careful observer a reasonable benchmark for a day's duration—at least at a single location.

Healing

Something about the Hollow Earth promotes strength, longevity, resistance to disease, and resilience for all things living within it. Whether this effect comes from some special quality of the air, soil, water, sunlight, or some other source, it clearly allows creatures to grow and thrive in a way that they never could on the surface.

The most immediate advantage of these health-promoting properties is the rapid healing of wounds. Explorers from the surface world may be astonished when nagging medical conditions disappear, and even terminal and incurable diseases enter remission while in the Hollow Earth. The natives take these effects for granted—indeed, many tribes do not have a word for “disease”—and they rarely become afflicted even when exposed to the most virulent surface world germs.

The natives also know that in the Hollow Earth, a person can recover from anything short of mortal injuries in the span of a single sleep. Of course, that single sleep may consist of a week-long coma, but the individual only knows that he awakens feeling fully refreshed with only fading scars left from even the most grievous wounds.

Healing Rate

Characters in the Hollow Earth heal at twice the rate they would on the surface world (see Healing Rate in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 131). But in an environment where time is distorted, recovery durations can be difficult to measure. Instead, you may assume that when characters are allowed uninterrupted rest their bodies will take whatever time is needed to recover completely. Those who are not especially worn down will not sleep for long; those who are severely injured will slumber however long is necessary. When they awaken, they may have ravenous appetites, but they will have no lethal or nonlethal damage.

Getting Out

The Hollow Earth is without question or exception easier to enter than to exit. People can and do accidentally wander into the Hollow Earth, but no one escapes from it without an ample amount of cunning, courage, and luck.

Many people do not wish to leave the Hollow Earth; for most residents, the healthful environment and its untold riches more than offset the dangers and lack of modern conveniences. The surface world travelers who wish to return home (but did not happen to bring along a functioning drilling machine) may eventually discover other routes.

Polar Openings

Escaping through one of the polar openings may be the easiest route to discover, but the hardest to survive. Those approaching from the surface have the wide funnel-like opening to guide them in, but in the Hollow Earth the land gives no hint as to the direction of the pole until one is right on top of it. Piloting a zeppelin through the relatively narrow aperture is extremely dangerous; piloting an airplane through is nearly suicidal as it requires nose-diving into a fog-bank without functional instrumentation. Traversing the region on foot is somewhat safer but far more time-consuming and laborious, and the twilight regions between the inner and outer worlds hold severe perils and challenges of their own (see *Twilight Regions*, p. 141). Those who complete the journey will find themselves stranded either in the Arctic or Antarctic, probably without provisions or equipment suited for the environment.

Subterranean Tunnels

The caverns, tunnels, and caves that worm through the crust of the Earth are arguably the most common way that Hollow Earth creatures find their way out. Some of these passages are naturally occurring, such as the caverns connected to Mt. Snaefell in Iceland. Others are artificially constructed, such as those burrowed by molemen in search of new spoils. Many creatures become lost in these tunnels and a few find their way to the surface. Those who deliberately seek the surface may use these passages as well, but for every thousand openings in the Hollow Earth, there are perhaps only two connected openings on the surface. Worse, the geological activity ensures that routes will shift, open, and close in a way that makes them impossible to map. Without a knowledgeable guide or uncanny luck, the tunnels will take explorers to their doom far more often than it will take them to the surface world.

Atlantean Portals

The strange portals that can bend space to link distant locations are certainly the fastest and easiest way to travel out of the Hollow Earth, but they are also the rarest and are usually inoperable even when their location is known. Only a handful of these portals exist anywhere on or in the Earth, and there is some problem with each. All of the known gates that operate sporadically on the surface world—such as those in Bermuda and the Himalayas—are one-way passages into the Hollow Earth. The only known portals in the Hollow Earth exist in the major cities constructed by the Atlanteans. The Great Gate in Atlantis is well known to all the Vrilya, but it remains locked to all who lack Atlantean blood (and may only operate to a limited extent even for those who are descended from Atlanteans). The gate in the Aerie was crushed eons ago and, although the hawkmen have carefully preserved all the pieces, it seems unlikely that it could be repaired even if the Atlanteans themselves returned to fix it. The gate in the Sunken City is in the deep half, probably within the grasp of the Great Maw itself. If there is a gate in the Frozen City (see *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 76), then it is encased deep in the ice. A lost traveler could spend an entire lifetime scouring the Hollow Earth for the means to locate and operate an Atlantean portal.

LOCATIONS OF NOTE

The Hollow Earth consists of millions of square miles of land mass, not to mention deep and wide oceans—most of which is unexplored. Because so few natives know the land beyond their own tribal territory, the Hollow Earth is likely to contain unknown and unimaginable locations and surprises. The locations below are some of the more renowned, influential, and significant population centers of Hollow Earth culture.

THE AERIE

From the ground, the Aerie is naught but a dark spot in the sky, floating without sails or engines or sound, seemingly weightless on the wind. It would appear to be a peaceful wonder if not for the legends that precede it. This is the Aerie, home to the raiders from above.

Viewed in profile from nearby mountainsides, it is an impossible sight: a city laid out on a floating stone. To the eyes of modern surface-world viewers, it might

resemble a child's toy top of titanic proportions—suspended in the air, jagged and angular, cut from a single enormous mass of rock. Parapets with banners flapping and imposing towers poke up from the flat top of the rock. Like a giant ocean liner in slow motion, it rises and falls, gently, on invisible tides of air, sometimes reaching as high as ten thousand feet, other times dipping as low as five thousand.

Viewed from above, the city's circular plan is plain to see, made up of green slices of ground between streets laid out like great spokes from a shining center axle. At that center point, rising above the surrounding structures, is the ivory helix tower of the Aerie's great Citadel, which is usually dotted with hawkmen lazily perched on the outer stairs and balconies. Wide, cracked avenues fork and branch out from it, but these paths ultimately lead nowhere—paving stones run right up to the edges of the flying plateau and hang loose where the city meets the sky.

Looking down from even farther aloft, the city resembles a picturesque miniature of a metropolis overgrown with vines and heavy trees, a patch of countryside drifting unnaturally over a blanket of jungle and sea. Much of the Aerie is taken up by stunning architecture in a state of beautiful decay, inhabited by hawkmen of every sort, and used for the most mundane purposes. Grand temples are overgrown with lush jungle trees and gripped tight by hungry vines. The cracks in ornate walls are stuffed with branches and blankets woven into man-sized nests and beds. Fruit trees grow at odd angles from any patch of soft soil, reaching out of empty doorways and windows in search of the sun. Soft green mosses stretch across disused avenues and soften the fractured walls of toppled houses. Roofs have collapsed under the weight of rains and weeds, or been picked apart for materials used for makeshift rain-blocks over nearby nests. The whole city seems to be open to the air. Fingers of clean white clouds drift through the streets—or, more accurately, the streets drift through them.

The place has a strangely timeless feel. Its Babylonian-like architecture is cracked and crumbling, but still bears plenty of bright plasters and colorful frescoes. The huge carvings of kingly heads with beards made of tiny loops of stone would seem like ruins, but the nests of tiny birds and flowering vines weaving through their cracks make them seem revived and still very much appreciated.

Food and water are valuable commodities in the clouds. What were once delicate balustrades and arched minarets are now hanging gardens used by hawkmen



farmers for planting fruits and vegetables. The hawkmen have neither interest in full-scale farming nor soil deep enough for planting crops, so these hundreds of tiny gardens make up the city's sole source of self-produced food. Some buildings, meanwhile, have had their doors and windows sealed with packed stones and clay to create the cisterns that capture the rain from nearby clouds, the city's only source of fresh water.

From within the very rock beneath the paving stones and weeds echoes the constant thrum of colossal machines. The belly of the Aerie is full of crystals and gears, twisting orichalcum propeller blades and fluttering golden discs, always turning, throwing off occasional sparks and arcs of lightning. This miraculous machine is what keeps the Aerie aloft, and it is as mysterious and marvelous to the hawkmen as anyone.

Inhabitants

The inhabitants of the Aerie make up the majority of the Hollow Earth's hawkman population. They are typical representatives of their kind, setting the standard for hawkman culture and behavior. Two qualities truly set the inhabitants of the Aerie apart from those rogue or colonial hawkmen who dwell elsewhere. First, the hawkmen of the Aerie have a deep-rooted fascination with Atlantean technology and machine mysticism, born from both their dependence on it and ignorance of it. The Aerie inspires hawkmen to study architecture and design, cartography and chemistry, physics and mysticism, to intellectualize things that they would otherwise grasp only by instinct—like flight. The primitive mimicry of Atlantean style is no reflection of their potential; in the grand scheme, hawkmen have been tinkering with these subjects for a very short time.

The second way in which the hawkmen of the Aerie distinguish themselves from other colonies of their kind is in reverence for their raiders. The residents of the flying city have little reliable means of supplying themselves with food and water—certainly not to the degree necessary to sustain the hundreds of thousands of hawkmen who dwell there—so they depend on the boldness and ingenuity of their raiders to fetch supplies from the groundlings. Thus, the raiders enjoy all the celebrity of soldiers, explorers, and athletes. They dive from the Aerie to the sounds of civilian cheers and return to fanfare. The public buildings of the Aerie are painted with images of raiders boldly hunting rocs and pterosaurs, and of raider flocks waging glorious battle with native groundlings.

Despite their admiration for their own raiders, the hawkmen are not predisposed against humans or other beastmen; conflict, as they see it, is simply an inescapable part of existence in the Hollow Earth. If happenstance allows for the Aerie's hawkmen meeting former targets or potential enemies outside the circumstances of battle, they make it a point of pride to behave in a most civilized fashion.

The hawkmen's sense of superiority over groundlings colors their disposition to human flyers, whether they come in zeppelins or planes. If hawkmen are noble because they have the gift of flight, they reason, then human pilots are praiseworthy for aspiring to that gift. On the few rare occasions that an aircraft has approached the Aerie peacefully, it was escorted by curious, circling hawkmen and invited to land. More than one unlikely aerial castaway in the Hollow Earth has developed a rapport with the hawkmen here, and the hawkmen remain open to the idea of using their city as a port for all flying travelers—especially those who can trade for food and water. This welcoming attitude may be due to complacency born of having never been within the reach of enemies, and one day might make them vulnerable to invasion, should they encounter a determined force seeking a roving airfield.

The hawkmen of the Aerie are also complacent about the operation of the ancient machines operating within the city. No hawkman has ever understood the mechanisms by which the city remains aloft, or how it avoids collisions with mountainous regions. Yet a small enclave of sages has observed that the city's average altitude is dropping slowly but steadily. The city's wisest sages relentlessly search the inner workings of the Aerie for any clue to its operation, but they are no nearer to understanding it now than when they started. Meanwhile, the machinery spinning in the guts of the city continues to wear down.

In response to the decreasing altitude, the elders of the Aerie have quietly begun new kinds of expeditions from the flying city. The first is colonial: specialized flocks of nest-builders and raiders are dispatched to find potential roosts in the cliffs and treetops of the Hollow Earth, in case the Aerie must be abandoned.

The second new expedition is tactical: the elders have dispatched elite raiders throughout the Hollow Earth to seek out someone who can make sense of the Atlantean mechanisms. Upon discovering any potential candidates, the raiders are to bring them back immediately, where the would-be sages will be kept in riches as revered priests if they cooperate, or kept in chains as prisoners if they do not.

The Hatching Plazas

The Hatching Plazas are vast inverted Ziggurats capped by delicate columns and Grecian roofs. Here, the hawkmen have made numerous and ongoing attempts to raise pet rocs. The sites were once intended as open-air markets. Now they are each a single, enormous nest intended either to house captured rocs or to lure wild ones to nest. This rarely works, but the hawkmen's admiration for those magnificent and gigantic birds drives them to try, and try again. Their dream and goal is to tame a handful of hatchlings enough that they become protective of the Aerie and serve as beasts of burden, enabling raiders to return with larger quantities of food and water.

The Citadel

The Citadel at the center of the city is a wonder of Atlantean design. Stunningly tall and capped with a marble crown of interconnected balconies, it remains unaffected by the corrosion that has consumed so many of the surrounding buildings. Even surface-born architects tempered by exposure to steel-frame skyscrapers would marvel at the Citadel's resilience. The hawkmen put this marvel to use as a towering town hall where the government of elders meets to decide important matters for their people.

Beneath that great tower, amid the vast spinning contraptions of the Atlanteans, is its greatest treasure: the map room. This wide, round room, lit by plundered lanterns, has both a domed ceiling and a bowl-shaped floor—neither quite spherical. It was here that the Atlanteans once maintained a mosaic of the Hollow Earth made of tiny colorful tiles and shards of glass. Today, hawkman sages work to recreate the mosaic by mapping out the sites and locales they observe from the ten lenses. The ten lenses are precarious chambers

that hang from the edges of the flying city, each with a floor like a magnifying glass, each aimed at the ground below. There were once twelve of these chambers set at regular intervals around the Aerie, but two have been missing since before the hawkmen have inhabited the city. These chambers are used by raider flocks to plan attacks on groundlings and by sages to sketch out maps of the lands below. These maps may represent the only large-scale cartography project ever carried out within the Hollow Earth, and the findings could hint at the locations of long-lost Atlantean ruins, not to mention possible openings to the surface world.

The Cages

Captives and convicts of the hawkmen can expect to be imprisoned, but not in a typical dungeon. Prisoners are put into crow-cages which are then shoved over the edge of the city and left to dangle in the air currents, sometimes hundreds of feet below the Aerie, suspended by little more than an ancient chain. These prisoners are seldom set free, and many are left to starve in their cages. A few are sentenced to be “released,” by which the hawkmen do not mean they are to be set free, but rather that they are to receive the swift and dishonorable punishment of being dropped to the ground far below. No captive has ever escaped from these cages, and the hawkmen are confident that none ever will.

ATLANTIS

Once the crown jewel of the Atlantean Empire, the City of Atlantis is the single largest known relic of that elder race. Though the true Atlanteans departed eons ago and took the greatest splendors with them, the city remains one of the most active and cosmopolitan locations within the Hollow Earth.

Atlantis is more aptly described as an island than a city. From the air, its landmass resembles an elongated ellipse ranging approximately sixty miles along its shortest axis to just over seventy-five miles along its widest. Three of its sides rise sharply out of the sea as steep, craggy, short mountains that surround the metropolis like an armored phalanx. The fourth edge of the island, which sprawls much farther from the city than the other quadrants, consists of smooth, flat lowlands given over to grain fields, orchards, and livestock ranches.

The highly defensible geography and the powerful weapons of its Vrilya inhabitants are enough to deter any attackers, but the real reason Atlantis has never born the brunt of war is the fact that it is not station-

ary. None of its residents can even venture a guess as to what propels it through the oceans of the Hollow Earth, but it is unaffected by winds or tide. It never collides with other landmasses or runs aground, but beyond that there is no way to predict or control it. This constant movement is an advantage for the Vrilya because it enables them to raid a broad cross section of cultures, taking the finest treasures and slaves that the Hollow Earth has to offer. Afterwards, Atlantis will have floated away, leaving any potentially vengeful tribe baffled and unable to pursue.

The main metropolitan area is encircled by three concentric, river-like moats, ranging from a tenth of a mile wide at the innermost ring to nearly a third of a mile at the outermost. These moats are lined with a system of bridges leading from the metropolis area out to the farmland, and the rings of land in between the moats play host to the houses and markets of slaves and less affluent Vrilya. Several long canals intersect through the moats as though radiating from the city center through tunnels in the mountains and out to sea. These canals are wide enough to allow the largest Atlantean watercraft to pass one another on their way in to the city docks or out to the open ocean. Due to the continuous motion of the island, the waterways of Atlantis have a current which pushes in from the mountainous regions at the bow of the island through the farmlands at the stern. This current ensures a steady flow of water through the city's canals as well as flushes the inhabitants' waste out through the network of sewers just below the streets.

The city itself forms a perfect circle of nearly thirty miles diameter. The buildings and streets are alive with countless wonders: doors open to welcome visitors, warm light from unknown sources bathes interior rooms, and appliances appear and disappear into the walls, seemingly in response to the unspoken whims of the residents. Even after untold ages, Atlantis's rounded domes and vaulting towers still glint white, blue, and gold in the sun and show no signs of deterioration. At street level, however, the generations-long accumulation of dust and grime in the corners and the cluttered trinkets and tools piled around every doorway and windowsill all quietly suggest that the city's longevity owes nothing to its current inhabitants.

All of the main avenues radiate from the city center like spokes on a wheel. At the hub is the thousand-foot tall Grand Tower, the seat of the Vrilya government that houses the top officials of all three of their castes. Floating majestically above the tower is the Great Crystal, which is Atlantis's central engine for harvesting the



power of the Hollow Earth's sun. The Great Crystal streams energy through an intricate network of relay crystals, forming power nodes at evenly spaced intervals following the city's circular layout. Each of these nodes is operated by an enclave of Vrilya Builders who will, for a fee, conduct the recharging rituals to fuel the residents' salvaged Atlantean technology—despite the fact that no such ritual is actually required.

Inhabitants

Vrilya society is entirely dependent on Atlantis and its amazing technology. Although they think of themselves as an empire, the Vrilya are tied exclusively to this single location owing to the fact that their equipment will not function for long away from the city's power network. Therefore, the inhabitants are unable to colonize, occupy territory, or spread their way of life beyond their island.

Despite their geographical limitations, the Vrilya have made amazing strides in bringing the rest of the world to them, and boast the most vibrant free-market economy in the Hollow Earth. The continual migration of the island has brought them into contact with nearly every culture in the land, leading the trend-conscious inhabitants to develop a taste for the exotic and a continual hunger for “the latest thing.” Atlantis

has the only economy wealthy enough to use currency minted from orichalcum, which causes merchants and fortune-hunters to prize that metal even above gold and jewels, and to drive demand for it throughout the Hollow Earth.

Although the Vrilya are undeniably in control of Atlantis, they are actually a minority population. Most of the residents are slaves with family-lines that have lived in Atlantis and served the Vrilya for generations. Many of these slaves are valued members of the community who serve as confidants, skilled craftsmen, or popular entertainers. Although slaves are not legally allowed to own property, many receive discretionary funds from their masters, and a privileged few enjoy lifestyles more opulent than most Vrilya citizens. But these are the exceptions; the average slave performs menial labor and is afforded little respect. At the bottom of the hierarchy are the agricultural slaves who work for the farming conglomerates in the rural lowlands. These slaves perform hard labor for long hours and are provided with only the barest necessities. This is also the area with the lowest population density of Vrilya, so it is hardly a surprise that whispers of slave revolts always begin in the agricultural region.

Vril-ya Guards

The Vril-ya warrior caste functions both as military establishment and civilian law enforcement. Ostensibly, their loyalty lies with the High Council and the people of Atlantis, but in practice theirs is a system of graft and corruption. Each member of government, along with any other wealthy or influential Vril-ya citizen, effectively owns a private army of guards of varying loyalties to protect their person and their properties.

Although corrupt, the guards remain effective because their leaders are charged with protecting vital areas of the city and the Vril-ya way of life, and failure can mean being stripped of rank or even exiled. The majority of warriors are employed as civil servants to defend against threats to the status quo, particularly slave uprisings. Their foot patrols may be nothing more than routes for collecting protection money and casual bribes, but they nevertheless disperse themselves very efficiently throughout the population of Atlantis and remain vigilant for signs of true trouble. At all times, several teams of guards specially trained for aerial combat patrol the skies around the island, and they will attempt to board or shoot down any flying disc departing the city without properly authorized consent filed in advance with their bureaucratic wing.

The Great Crystal

The Great Crystal floats majestically above the heart of the city, casting its alternating white, green, and blue light to nearly every corner of Atlantis. This is Atlantis's greatest source of power—and its greatest weakness. A disruption to the power network would cause the flying discs to fall from the sky, machines to grind to a halt, interior rooms to plunge into dark-

ness, and panic to ensue. The Vril-ya government is well aware of this vulnerability, which is why they keep the area around the city center heavily patrolled and have declared it a “no-fly zone” for all non-government discs.

The crystal itself could withstand anything short of a sustained barrage of artillery fire, but enemies are always searching for a weak spot. As a challenge to any marksman attempting a shot, the nearest rooftop would put a sniper four hundred feet away. Furthermore, the area is well patrolled by Vril-ya Warriors.

The Weather-Weapon Array

A hundred-yard wide bed of spiky purple crystals lies nestled against the mountains in front of Atlantis city. This is a device which allows the Vril-ya Priests to control the weather, and it is arguably the most powerful artifact in their possession. It is mainly used to attain perfect growing conditions for the crops and to provide favorable winds to draw friendly ships in or push unfriendly ones away. But when used as a weapon, the Array can call down lightning enough to ravage an entire landscape like a battery of howitzers. A single demonstration against a resistant tribe usually provides ample leverage for the Vril-ya to secure whatever tribute they care to name.

If an outsider were to successfully damage this weapon, it could severely hamper the Vril-ya war machine and humiliate the Priestly caste.

The Coliseum District

The Coliseum District consists of a series of arenas and the dense and active marketplace which has blossomed around them. This section of the city is primarily

The Flying Discs of Atlantis

The residents of Atlantis use all manner of transportation within and beyond the city, including litters, rickshaws, aurochs-drawn carts, and oar- and sail-powered boats of all sizes. The preferred mode of transportation, however, is the flying disc, which provides unparalleled speed and maneuverability. The typical flying disc may hold as many as a dozen passengers within their silvery hulls and may be used for anything from public transportation to slave importation. Fully operational flying discs are extremely rare, however (treat them as Artifacts), as the Vril-ya cannot manufacture more. Consequently the open-market price is beyond what any one Vril-ya can afford—most flying discs belong to the powerful elite or extremely wealthy business consortiums. Additionally, the Vril-ya have passed laws against slaves and outsiders piloting the discs. These laws are not aggressively enforced within the city limits, but the skies around the island are constantly patrolled to ensure that these highly valuable vehicles are not lost to the outside world.

Artifact 1	Size	Def	Strc	Spd	Han	Crew	Pass
Atlantean Flying Disc	2	6	8	160*	+2	1	4

* Atlantean Flying Discs can hover in place.

owned and operated by the Warrior caste, and it serves as both the center of popular entertainment as well as commerce.

In the arenas, Vrilya Warriors as well as slaves compete in all manner of games. Condemned convicts are executed by pitting them against the most terrifying and deadly monsters available. Slaves willingly kill each other in hopes of winning glory and—perhaps—freedom. For less blood-thirsty fans, many arenas are given over to more conventional sports, with the perennial favorite being a game closely resembling lacrosse. Successful gladiators and sportsmen enjoy celebrity status among the Vrilya, and many prominent Warriors win great fame and wealth at the games. Yet in the end, for both Vrilya and slave competitors, their fame is only as good as their last match.

The arenas contain only a fraction of the excitement in this district. Enterprising individuals can find nearly limitless opportunities as merchants, or in employment to merchants. Warriors auction off their captured slaves, while the slaves' families watch in despair. In the alleyways, minor crime syndicates scheme to rob arena ticket agents. Hunters can make fortunes selling live exotic animals to arena managers; the deadlier the animal, the better—and it is not unheard of for these creatures to break from their cages and rampage through the streets.

The Vrilya boast that if it can be found in the Hollow Earth, it can be found in the Coliseum District... so long as there's enough orichalcum on the table.

The Crystal Graveyards

Although built to last, even Atlantean technology can break down after centuries of use. When the Vrilya are unable to repair or operate an item, they send it beneath their city into a deep, dark, secret, and heavily guarded cavern complex underlying the city sewers known as the Crystal Graveyard.

The Priests have declared these caverns to be sacred and strictly off limits to all non-essential personnel. Many of the best minds of the Builder caste are relegated to working here in secrecy and isolation, searching the remnants of Atlantean technology in an endless and thus far, fruitless, quest for anything of value and clues to how it all operates. The Priests maintain that it is an honor to research in this “holy” place, but the Builders must often be coerced into doing so and into keeping its secrets. Aside from the dim light cast by the eerily glowing broken crystals, the researchers complain of unusually high rates of disease and strange

changes in their bodies and metabolisms. They also exchange tales of horrid things lurking in the dark, such as gigantic, mutated insects, migrating pools of corrosive slime, and depraved former slaves who went deep to escape their bonds and have never since seen the light of the sun. Priests and Builder leaders alike deny the existence of any such things, yet they also deny their continued inability to repair the items upon which their society so heavily depends.

BLOOD BAY

Nestled in a sheltered cove alongside one of the Hollow Earth's many seas and at the confluence of several large rivers, Blood Bay is a perfect location for ships to make port. Sometimes considered new in comparison to other Hollow Earth settlements, Blood Bay is actually several hundred years old and has survived fire, dinosaur attacks, pirate attacks, and even stranger threats through its long history. While Blood Bay is certainly not the only pirate settlement in the Hollow Earth, it is easily the largest and most notorious. It is also one of the few “civilized” places in this savage land where an outsider can find precious supplies, a warm (if dirty) bed to rest his head, and plenty of adventure.

The natural cove of Blood Bay nestles in a series of volcanic hills. The hand-crafted stone walls on the land-side edge are manned around the clock to keep out the vicious dinosaurs and marauding bands of natives that are drawn to Blood Bay's bright lights and pronounced smells. These guards are given the biggest and best weapons the town has to offer, including commandeered ship cannons to deal with big targets, for even the stupidest pirate realizes that the wall is all that keeps Blood Bay from being overrun by the elements and beasts that reside just outside it. Despite the heavy firepower and height of the wall, deaths of guards are still extremely common. With this risk factor, the city rulers are obliged to pay high rates to keep guards on the wall.

Blood Bay's buildings struggle for space and are built on top of each other, connected by ladders, precarious catwalks, and lifts. Created over the centuries by dozens of different cultures, the city is a hodgepodge of architectural styles, each piled on top of the other with no rhyme or reason. Classic Greek buildings sit alongside French villas, Aztec abodes, and Persian-style constructions, all in various states of decay and disrepair. However, the majority of the buildings are mere hovels, cobbled together with every readily available material and patched over

with even more detritus. The streets are narrow and dark, hidden in the shadows of buildings that teeter high into the sky.

Blood Bay is a patchwork city filled with thousands of diverse people who call it home—at least the closest thing to home that many of them will ever know. Although Blood Bay has always been violent and dangerous, the previous (relative) stability enjoyed by the residents has been almost completely eradicated. When Captain Flint took a significant portion of his loyal men and ships out on a piratical venture, Captain Robert Culligan—a particularly heartless pirate—led a coup to usurp the Pirate King. Culligan had been lying low for years, quietly gathering a force of men and garnering alliances with the intent of taking over Blood Bay. When Flint left, Culligan saw his chance and took the town by storm. Armed with a small cache of relatively modern firearms and other bits of twentieth century technology, Culligan took control of the Governor's Mansion, captured Sarah Briggs, and made his demands: obey his rule or die. William Flint has not yet returned to challenge this dictate, and rumors

and speculation run rampant about what will happen if he comes back, if he's even still alive, and—most importantly—where he hid his huge stash of treasure.

Governor Sarah Briggs lives under house arrest and Constable Iron Tom serves under Captain Culligan's rule, knowing that one misstep will result in the governor's death. Every sea dog in town has been forced to take a side: follow Culligan, search for Flint in hopes of returning him to power, or make their own grab at power. Most choose to do nothing, which grants implicit consent to Culligan's rule. It is a choice between tyrants; many who resented Flint's rule are now working to help Culligan form his own pirate fleet to eliminate his rival once and for all; others have already grown to hate Culligan and look to the seas for Captain Flint to bring his fleet and regain the power that was wrested from him. Although Blood Bay has never fallen to such an assault before, the polarization and paranoia created by this conflict has resulted in a deadly tension that is barely concealed by the carefree revels of the city's visitors and residents.



Inhabitants

Although Blood Bay is considered a pirate city, it is also a functioning settlement with its own permanent inhabitants, many of whom have seen the rise and fall of numerous “pirate kings” during the centuries. Although chaotic, Blood Bay has a vibrant and functioning economy, with craftsmen making all the goods necessary for survival. Whenever a pirate ship returns to port laden with goods, booty, and new crewmates, trade picks up and benefits the entire town. Almost anything is available for sale here, including weapons, strange herbs and concoctions, and all manner of illicit items. There are always more sailors than spaces on ships, so the brothels, grog houses, and streets are filled with these idle men looking to join the crew of any ship that will take them. Some of these pirates may even be convinced to sign on with a land-based crew if the payout is high enough.

One of the main industries in Blood Bay is shipbuilding. With dozens of master shipwrights, the docks of Blood Bay are constantly abuzz with artisans working on new ships of all makes. Some of the more enterprising shipwrights mix and match the styles of the ships they encounter, making incredibly bizarre looking vessels. Once complete, these ships prowls the waters around Blood Bay and head off to far-away realms around Hollow Earth. Once in a while, the huge metal ships of the modern era are towed into the harbor where teams of engineers and shipwrights scavenge what they can and learn how to make faster, deadlier pirate vessels.

The streets of Blood Bay teem with an incredibly diverse population from many of the countries and cultures of the surface world, and representatives from every human culture of the Hollow Earth. Natives rub shoulders with Vikings, crusty seadogs, and German thugs. With the recent coup, violence in the settlement has increased tenfold. Fights were once resolved with fists, perhaps a knife at most. Now, however, Iron Tom and his crew of “sheriffs” have let things slide—perhaps by Culligan’s orders—and chaos rules in the streets. Where once there was tenuous peace, old grudges and new rancor has taken hold of Blood Bay.

Blood Bay is also rife with all manner of strange persons with ties to the supernatural. Voodoo is pervasive, with houngans and mambos selling their wares and services to those in need. Combined with Chinese sorcery, African black magic, and even stranger beliefs (including those native to the Hollow Earth), Blood Bay is awash with magic idols and hexes designed to either protect or do harm. Ever superstitious, the

pirates that hit the streets of Blood Bay go to these sorcerers, oracles, and wise men in hopes of changing their fortune for the better and warding off ill fortune. Sailors are found dead in the taverns and brothels every day, their bodies frozen in their final contortions. Such deaths are invariably said to be the work of curses, even when mundane knives are found in the backs of those who supposedly suffered supernatural deaths.

Although slavery is officially illegal in Blood Bay, many people live in indentured servitude in some way or another. Ship slaves brought to Blood Bay are still considered the property of their owner for as long as they are docked. However, once released from a master within the confines of Blood Bay, the slave is considered free, although he’s on his own to find a new “sponsor” or run the risk of being swept up by his former owner. The town is rife with former slaves, broken deals, and new alliances, making slaveholding a *de facto* constant of the economy.

The Docks

By far the most important part of Blood Bay is its huge array of docks, which line the water from one side to the other. Dozens of piers jutting out in a haphazard manner are capable of handling ships up to the size of galleons. Each pier is considered the turf of a bewildering list of toughs, pirates, and other criminals who charge exorbitant prices for the privilege of docking. However, the money paid out does have its benefit, as one of the perks for docking at a particular pier means that the ship will be protected by a veritable army of grizzled marines, ex-sailors, and thugs, who consider attacks on the ships under their watch as an assault on their home. Of course, bribes can and do get criminals onto these ships for all manner of illicit activity, so captains are advised to leave a small cadre of sailors behind to ensure the safety of their vessels.

Prostitutes, grog sellers, and peddlers of all sorts cram the decks, worming their way through the crews hauling cargo, moving livestock, and making their way to the streets beyond. At one point, the docks were among the safest places in Blood Bay, but the recent upheaval has made them arguably the most dangerous locale in the settlement.

Eliza’s Grog House

Although the streets of Blood Bay are lined with taverns, rum houses, and other places of ill repute, few have the notoriety of Eliza’s Grog House. The owner, Eliza, is an enormous red-haired woman with a thick Scottish accent who runs her business with an iron fist. Thanks to

the oil portrait that hangs in a place of honor above the shop's massive fireplace, everyone knows that Eliza used to be a beautiful and lithe woman. Many a sailor has been enchanted by the portrait of the Eliza of old, and unwisely attempted to woo this brusque woman.

Eliza's Grog House is filled to capacity around the clock with happy revelers imbibing Eliza's trademark grog, singing their myriad songs, and wenching to their hearts' content. Eliza watches over the never-ending party with an eagle eye, not so quietly ejecting anyone who starts (or threatens to start) a fight that may cause mayhem. Flanked by two enormous and mute Hollow Earth natives and packing her twin-barreled blunderbuss, Eliza's withering gaze can drive off all but the most stout-hearted. Eliza's Grog House is the place to go for clandestine meetings of all sorts, and travelers come here to book passage to far-off realms or to hire crew for ships of their own.

Sergeant Gryll's Arms and Armory

Nearly as plentiful and commonplace as the grog houses, dozens of storefronts in Blood Bay sell weapons to the throngs of pirates who roam the streets. But when pirates need the biggest and best and aren't afraid to pay top price, they are directed to Sergeant Gryll's Arms and Armory. Unremarkable on the outside, the interior walls of this shop are bedecked with an astounding array of firearms, swords, and bits of armor that Gryll and his descendants have acquired over the years through purchase, barter, and force.

The store is named after Sergeant Sebastian Gryll, a former marine from the US Navy from around the time of the American Civil War. His ship came to the Hollow Earth after a massive storm off the coast of Florida sucked it through a strange portal. After the crew mutinied, Gryll brought the armory from the ship onto the shore and set up shop. Business has been booming ever since.

Gryll's Arms and Armory contains almost every type of weapon and armor imaginable, including some surface world equipment from the present day, and it is rumored that Gryll supplied Culligan's forces with their modern weapons in exchange for protection. He typically trades for gold, orichalcum, precious gems, barter, or a combination of all three.

EL DORADO

The legendary "City of Gold" was once sought widely throughout South America by Spanish con-

quistadors and myriad fortune hunters. The tales of its wealth and splendor eventually reached mythical proportions, though if anyone found it they never returned to confirm the rumors. Yet, like so many other legends, the stories of El Dorado were based on truth. The treasure hunters were right to believe that its wealth was incomparable, but their expeditions throughout the Amazon rainforest were not coming as close as they had supposed, because the real El Dorado was actually hundreds of miles beneath their feet.

Located high in the green mountains of the Hollow Earth, El Dorado (known as Guamanimamu to the natives) is a city of hundreds of terraces sliced into the walls of its verdant mesa-like hill. These terraces are interconnected by a network of ladders and stairs, and each contains a small agricultural plot and at least one building. Although the buildings are not literally made from gold, they are liberally adorned with this mineral, as well as gemstones, orichalcum, and semi-precious stones like lapis lazuli and malachite. Every glittering vertical surface is detailed with intricate murals, writing, and the religious iconography of its inhabitants. The roofs of the houses are angled to channel and collect rain for irrigation and drinking water, and the corners of the buildings are usually decorated with large figurines that resemble stylized jaguars. The architecture itself is a work of art which displays a blend of the most advanced techniques known to the Mayans, Incas, and Aztecs, but also with pyramids and columns that hint as much of Egyptian and Babylonian architecture as anything from the Americas. Each ornate building is made from stones worked so precisely as to fit together without mortar, and they have proven almost impervious to deterioration despite being overgrown by vines and grasses in many areas. Crowning the hill is a lofty Ziggurat of three hundred sixty steps leading up to the gleaming gold temple that serves as the residence of the royalty and the priests who rule the city.

Located at such an elevation, the climate is somewhat cooler than in much of the Hollow Earth, but the sun shines on El Dorado brightly and the hillside catches rain clouds as they pass inland from the sea. These factors make for ideal growing conditions for corn, potatoes, and the other crops cultivated by its residents. Mountainous trails wind around the hill in a steep, uncovered approach to the city, making El Dorado easily defended. Even the most aggressive predators that venture up from the jungle may be repelled by a mere dozen defenders hurling rocks from above.

El Dorado occupies only one of several geographical protrusions in its area, all of which jut up from the jun-

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gle canopy like islands floating in a lush green sea. This landscape also helps screen the city from intruders, as one must practically stand at the foot of El Dorado to see it past the other plateaus and mesas.

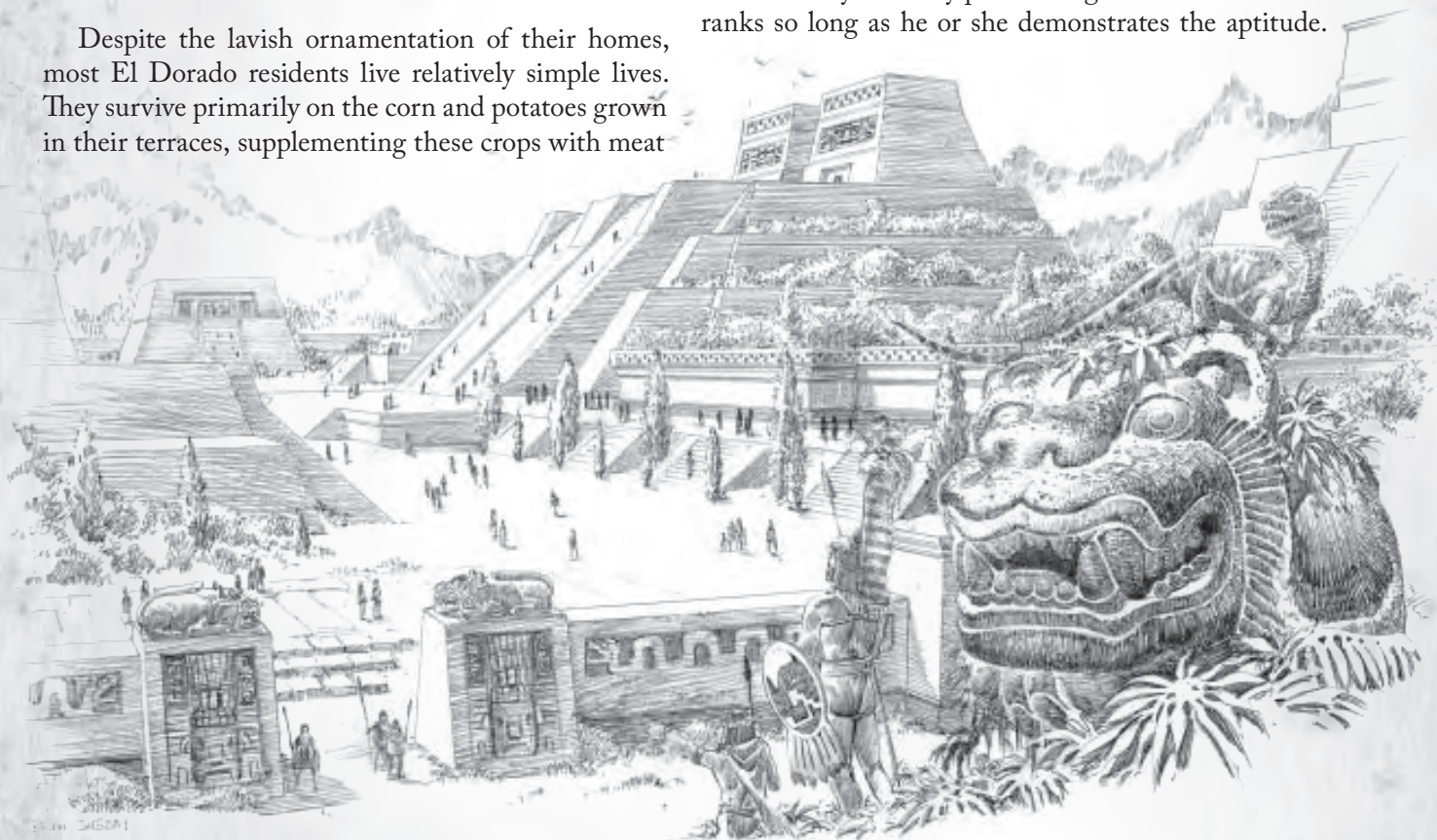
Inhabitants

The residents of El Dorado are isolationists and xenophobic, yet their wealth and their knowledge is enough to bring an unending stream of outsiders to their doors. They jealously guard the secret location of their city out of fear of a prophesy that foretells of a time when they will be destroyed by invaders seeking to steal their wealth. They do not allow anyone who has found them to leave alive.

Despite the lavish ornamentation of their homes, most El Dorado residents live relatively simple lives. They survive primarily on the corn and potatoes grown in their terraces, supplementing these crops with meat

All members of the peasant-class, who comprise the majority of the population, are expected to submit a certain portion of their produce to the priests, and are also required to pay a labor tax by either serving as soldiers to defend the land or as workers to maintain the general repair of the city. None now have the skills to construct the terraces or the elaborate buildings, and it is unclear if their people were the original builders or if the city had been abandoned by some other race before being discovered by the ancestors of its current occupants.

The peasants are ruled by a class of priests dedicated to the worship of the ever-present sun. These priests carry on a well established tradition of Shamanism, and they excel in Alchemy. For the most part, theirs is a meritocracy with any peasant eligible to rise into their ranks so long as he or she demonstrates the aptitude.



from the flocks of chickens and Protoceratops that are raised by each household. The basic social unit is the family, and it is not uncommon for three generations to live on a single terrace, tending their land to produce their own food. In order to minimize soil depletion, these family units rotate houses every generation or so, such that most of the buildings and terraces of El Dorado are unoccupied at any given time. This is made possible by the practice of strict population control; whenever the population increases beyond what they can manage, the priests select a “volunteer” to be sacrificed to their gods.

The office of Priest-king, however, is a hereditary position attainable only by members of the royal family. This royal family is believed to have descended from the Sun God himself and marriage between brother and sister is traditionally practiced as a way of preserving the bloodline. Though children of this family are often impulsive and irresponsible, the other priests reserve the best magical and physical training for them, thereby ensuring that they will outdo their peers in all ways and validate the notion of their godhood.

The priests honor the Sun God by displaying their gold, for they believe this metal to be a reflection of the sun's color. They also believe that it is their responsibility to keep the sun burning by offering regular sacrifices. The sacrificial victim is almost always a captured intruder or slave, whose heart is cut out with a razor-sharp quartz knife and held aloft, still beating, for the sun to gaze down upon. When no such captive or slave is available, the priests select one of the peasants of El Dorado—usually a beautiful young girl, in the belief that beauty will best please their god.

The people of El Dorado have no territorial ambitions and rarely come down from their city other than to supplement their water supplies or retrieve minerals from their mine. However, they are aggressive about maintaining their borders and they will enslave or terminate any people who draw too close to their home. They have been known to go on the warpath if any other tribe attempts to colonize the jungle within thirty miles. Backed by the magic of their priests, they strike without warning, emptying the offending settlement of every last man, woman, and child, and burning or smashing any vestiges of habitation.

Despite their isolationism, they do send out merchants to trade with other cultures, and they are well aware of how much their gold can buy. Their traders are forbidden to divulge the source of their money, though their reticence in these matters only serves to fan the flames of rumor. They are well-known for their ability to set ambushes for anyone attempting to track them home.

The Ziggurat

Adorning the hill like a sparkling crown is El Dorado's Ziggurat. This is the residence, school, laboratory, and center of religious practices for the priests. While all the buildings in El Dorado are ornamented in gold, nearly every inch of this grandiose pyramid-like structure is plated in the metal, with other structural components crafted of solid orichalcum or silver. 360 steps ascend to a flattened terrace that serves as the city's open-air temple. For ceremonial events, these steps are lined with citizens who cheer and throw wildflowers as the victims are carried by litter, bound hand and foot if necessary, up toward the altar and the awaiting priests. Sacrifices such as these are carried out on a fairly regular basis, and the skulls of past sacrifices are numerous enough to line the walls of every level of the Ziggurat.

Accessible only from the temple at the top, the Ziggurat contains a complex of rooms which houses the priests as well as contains the stockpile of all the magi-

cal artifacts possessed by the ruling elite, not to mention stashes of gems and orichalcum earmarked for repair projects throughout the city. Here, too, is the entrance to the catacombs, which houses the mummified remains of their former Priest-kings, each encased in solid gold inlaid with the largest and most valuable jewels discovered during his reign. The priests guard their gold and their secrets closely, and their powers are not to be trifled with. They have also utilized their knowledge in Alchemy to craft defenses throughout the building, including numerous enchanted jaguar-gargoyle statues that can spring to life and attack intruders. Though it first appears to be a treasure-hunter's dream, the interior vaults of the Ziggurat of El Dorado will quickly become a nightmare to anyone entering unprepared.

The Mines

At the foot of the El Dorado mesa is the wide mouth of a cave barricaded by heavy stone doors. Beneath these doors flows a splashing and swiftly moving river, but this too is closed by a grill of thick iron bars. The priests of El Dorado sealed this entrance to intruders because it serves as the main shaft of the mine from which all the wealth of their city is extracted. Although gold, orichalcum, gems, and other precious materials have been mined here for generations, its deposits continue to furnish seemingly unending wealth. The mining duties were long since delegated to the captives and slaves who are held within and forced to perform hard labor. The only time they are allowed to see the sun is when they are led up the Ziggurat to be sacrificed.

To prevent slaves from getting out and looters from getting in, the priests of El Dorado diverted the river into an underground bypass and erected the massive granite doors rigged to an ingenious counterbalance system. When a priest stands in precisely the right spot outside the mines, the door slowly rolls open, and then inexorably rolls back into place a short while later. The exact location of the pressure trigger is a closely guarded secret of the priests, any one of whom would rather die than divulge it to outsiders.

The river that cuts through this cave is actually part of a system of waterways that cuts all the way through the crust of the Earth. At one time, it was possible to enter this system from a tunnel hidden at the back of a waterfall on a plateau in the Amazon rainforest and follow it all the way to this exit in the Hollow Earth. One would need to travel upstream at some times and downstream at others, passing through dangerous obstacles, sulfurous lakes, and subterranean predators, but it was possible to make the journey in either direc-

tion. This tunnel is the reason why colonies of dinosaurs and Hollow Earth tribes have found their way out to make their homes in and around the Amazon, and the reason why a few explorers made it to El Dorado but never returned home. The waterways constantly shift as the flow cuts through into new chambers and drains out of old passages, and this natural action has left it blocked near the surface world at the present time.

MOLETOWN

Called “Moletown” by outsiders, the massive moleman capital located deep in the Earth’s crust is easily the largest concentration of the enigmatic molemen. Although its exact location is difficult to discern, tributary tunnels and caverns connect it to points throughout the Hollow Earth and even to some locations on the surface world. A spelunker could potentially stumble into Moletown from nearly any point of origin, but it’s unlikely that she would receive a welcoming party upon her arrival.

Located more than a mile beneath the Hollow Earth’s surface, most outsiders find Moletown to be an inhospitable and alien environment. The chief reason for this is the near total lack of light. The only sustainable source of illumination to be found within these endless tunnels is the bioluminescent fungi that grow along the rocky walls and ceilings. These fungi are often dangerous or impossible to reach, and they are rare enough that a lost explorer could wander in the dark for days before discovering them. Beyond that, food can be extremely difficult to locate. With the sparse ecosystem dependent almost entirely on nutrients brought in from the outside, most sources of protein—aside from those cultivated by the molemen themselves—consists of scavenging insects and a paltry selection of blind cave fish.

For all its drawbacks, Moletown does offer certain advantages to those who reside within. Despite its depth, it remains relatively warm, due to its close proximity to subterranean vents of magma, some of which actually flow freely. Providing they have light, even humans can move about Moletown in comfort, with plenty of fresh air funneled through tunnels thanks to the different pressure zones around its various surface openings. Water is plentiful in Moletown, channeled by an intricate series of pipes that emerge in a massive waterfall found in the center of the city. A series of ancient aqueducts disperses this water throughout Moletown.

Although it is an unconventional settlement at best, most of the trappings that could be found in a human city can also be found here. The city is a honeycomb of warrens, tunnels, caverns, and shafts that weave in and out of each other in a seemingly random manner. Some of these caverns are absolutely enormous, spanning miles in every direction and filled with their own unique species of insects, small mammals, and even stranger animals and fungi. Molemen sometimes prowl these spaces, hunting parasites, scavengers, and other species that are considered harmful to their farms and livestock.

As an underground settlement, Moletown has few actual freestanding structures. But there are clusters of huts scattered around open plazas or even built atop towering stalagmites. Molemen prefer being in close proximity to one another and, despite the massive amount of room available to them, most family units cram themselves into relatively tight living quarters with dozens of individuals so that they may be comforted by the warmth, vibrations, smells, and sounds of their fellow kin. The majority of the tunnels and warrens are low but wide, allowing teams of molemen to move freely throughout their settlement with ease while still allowing them to navigate in the dim or non-existent light by feeling the vibrations emanating from the rock.

In order to protect their settlement, molemen have rigged Moletown and several miles surrounding it with a variety of traps, dead ends, and other hazards. Pressure-sensitive triggers, trip lines, and pits riddle the tunnels leading up to Moletown—all of which are easily avoided by the molemen but considerably more dangerous for those who must grope blindly through the dark. Humans who dare to enter Moletown must navigate dozens of these traps. Those who make it through are still likely to be rounded up by one of the city’s regular patrols and taken to a council of elders, who will determine the fate of the intruders.

Inhabitants

Moletown is an ancient settlement, with hundreds of thousands of molemen calling it home. The city bustles with perpetual activity as teams of molemen tunnel through the rock to create new warrens, dig out ore, or hunt for the strange fauna that can be found lurking in the crust of the earth. Questions by humans to determine the exact age and purpose of Moletown have been answered with little information by the molemen.

From what little has been gleaned, it would seem that Moletown has been in existence longer than human civilization. Located in the safety of the earth, the molemen have little to fear aside from the occasional plate shift or attack by strange subterranean creatures.

Life in Moletown is one of industry, with all molemen dedicated to performing their tasks to the best of their abilities. The entire city bustles with activity as crews of molemen labor diligently, pushing carts of ore, hauling food, making their way to new tunnels, or eating in large communal eating areas. On occasion, vigilant molemen guards lead chain gangs of other beastmen and humans off to work in the mines. In their downtime, clusters of molemen huddle together, chattering amongst themselves in their strange language, filling the entire city with a constant scratching sound supplemented by the accumulated knocks and booms as molemen thump their feet on the ground sending long-distance messages.

Molemen do not use currency and lack a developed economy, as goods are made to serve the community as a whole. However, molemen are inquisitive creatures and are drawn to the strange objects that come from the surface world. For this reason, teams of molemen are routinely sent to the surface or out into the Hollow Earth in search of food, cloth, worked metal goods, and other strange objects. Trade exists between molemen settlements that barter over particularly bright or bizarre items, although most eventually end up in the Artifact Chamber in Moletown.

Moletown is lead by the primarch, an enormous female moleman whose sheer bulk prevents her from leaving her chamber. Workers tend to her every desire and shamans deliver news and help enforce her will in matters pertaining to the needs of Moletown. The primarch is extremely old, rumored to have outlived dozens of generations of her vassals. Different groups of molemen believe in different reasons for this longevity, with claims including that she is descended from a god, that she possesses Atlantean technology, or that she belongs to some elite subspecies.

Temple of the Worm God

In addition to being the largest settlement of the molemen, Moletown also houses The Temple of the Worm God, the spiritual center for these beastmen. This temple is the holiest of locations for all the molemen. Many of their kind from far-flung settlements make pilgrimages to Moletown to consult with the shamans who are in deep communion with the deity that rests there.

The heart of Moletown is a truly massive cave nearly four miles across and almost a mile high. At one end of this cave, the head of one of the molemen's Worm Gods juts from the wall, resembling a titanic grub. The stone around the Worm God is carved and polished, bearing bizarre runes in the molemen's scratch-like script, which, according to the shamans, keep the worm in its place and protects it from harm. Before it, a glassy black lake containing some mysterious fluid reflects the green, yellow, and purplish light cast off by the masses of phosphorescent fungus that grows in huge forests on the cave's floor, ceiling, stone pillars and towering stalagmites.

To an outsider, the Worm God appears to be long dead, with only its massive white exoskeleton left behind. The molemen believe that the Worm God is merely slumbering and that properly trained molemen shamans may glimpse into its dreams to gain oracular insight. At any given time, a hundred molemen shamans conduct their strange rites within this temple, ingesting powerful hallucinogens produced by particular types of fungus found only within this chamber. Only the oldest and most revered Elders sequester themselves within the temple, feeling the vibration and receiving the visions of their Worm God in utter silence and isolation. No outsider has ever been allowed into this chamber, and any who break the sanctity of this holy shrine would be punished swiftly and severely.

The Artifact Chamber

For outsiders, Moletown offers much in the way of opportunity, as the molemen have collected an enormous stash of strange objects from both the surface world and the Hollow Earth. An enormous cave called the Artifact Chamber holds the bulk of these treasures, which include everything from rusting automobiles to glittering Egyptian sarcophagi, and from moldering books to Assyrian tablets. Molemen from all over travel immense distances carrying their collected booty to deposit in these massive vaults. Most of the objects came from the various cultures of the Hollow Earth, including some that are Atlantean in origin. Curiously,

the Atlantean objects are separated from the rest and receive more attention and care—perhaps this is because the molemen are knowledgeable about their purpose, or perhaps they simply have a subconscious understanding of their power.

The molemen guard their communal treasures obsessively and rebuff offers of trade even when they are in great need or when offered new wonders. Outsiders who manage to find their way to the Artifact Chamber have a veritable treasure trove of massive proportions to browse through. In addition to the statues of gold, works of art, and valuable documents, there are also engine parts, piles of clothes, ammunition, and other precious items of all sorts. Sorting through this immense cache is a daunting task as there doesn't appear to be any rhyme or reason to how things are stockpiled. It is also a task which must be done quickly and quietly, as even the slightest noise will alert the sensitive ears of the many guards.

Fungus Farm and Stockyards

The fungus farm is the largest of its kind in any moleman settlement. It is a huge chamber easily a half mile in length and a quarter mile wide. Row after row of carefully planted and tended varieties of fungus grow here, nourished by the mineral rich water provided by aqueducts. The room glows from the light generated by certain breeds of this fungus, many of which reach towering heights and truly bizarre shapes. Dozens of molemen work at the fungus farm, pulling "weeds," planting new strains, and harvesting fungus by using their razor sharp talons to hack them down. Many of the species of fungus found here are consumable by humans, although just as many are poisonous or contain hallucinogens.

Adjoining the fungus farm is a cavern complex best described as the "stockyards," which is the other major site of food production in Moletown. This large, round chamber is filled with pens of bizarre creatures used as livestock by the molemen. Giant, blind mole rats, strange insect creatures, and considerably smaller (but still enormous) giant worm larvae live in pits carved in the floor, some lined with metal to discourage burrowing.

Despite the size of the farm and stockyards, these production centers still cannot generate enough to support the huge population of Moletown. For this reason, molemen send out parties to both the surface world and the Hollow Earth in search of plants, animals, and other goods to augment their meager supplies. Sometimes these dietary supplements include humans who venture

too close to moleman hunting parties. Prisoners are routinely tossed unceremoniously into the stockyards, either to be consumed by the strange animals that live there or to be slaughtered and eaten by the molemen themselves.

SHANGRI-LA

Much like the Hollow Earth itself, Shangri-La is difficult to enter but even more difficult to exit. Situated in a long valley within a high, barren, bitterly cold mountain range, arrival requires days of hard ascent by foot, and the steep slopes and harsh climate prevent the assistance of vehicles or animals. Although the entrance to the valley is fixed within the Hollow Earth, it has a strange sympathetic link to the surface world, providing intermittent access to the valley from different locations throughout the mountainous regions around Tibet and Nepal.

The climate within the valley is a startling contrast to its surrounding environment. As soon as travelers pass through the narrow, rocky opening into Shangri-La, they will find that the howling snowstorms have been replaced by warm breezes carrying the melodies of songbirds and the scent of spring flowers. Bright, delicious fruits decorate the trees, soft grasses blanket the landscape, and the walls of the valley pull back sharply to reveal a tranquil village at the foot of a high, cliffside monastery.

Everything about Shangri-La sings of serenity and vitality. The earth is extremely fertile and bears ample returns on even the most minimal agricultural endeavors. Dangerous predators are unknown here, and the local tree-lizards, brightly-colored birds, and playful deer are all so tame that they will eat food right from a person's hand. What is more, the valley is astoundingly rich in gold, as streambeds glitter sparkling yellow, and even the humble peasants dine on solid gold plates. Yet for all its mineral wealth, Shangri-La holds an even greater treasure—the treasure of life itself.

Amazingly, creatures residing in the valley will experience longevity even beyond that which is typical in the Hollow Earth. Furthermore, one will heal twice as quickly as the already accelerated rate of recovery within the Hollow Earth (see *Healing Rate*, p. 119). After a year's time in Shangri-La, severed limbs begin to grow back and pre-natal defects fade. None of the residents can explain this phenomenon, but to protect the secret, no one is ever allowed to leave the valley.

Most of Shangri-La's residents occupy simple, spacious stone buildings, decorated humbly but comfortably with brightly colored tapestries and cushioned furniture. The gates to the grand monastic palace are at the far end of the valley. The palace itself appears to be a large, blocky structure of white stone with rows of evenly spaced square windows. Yet this building is only the frontispiece—the true monastic palace extends through countless rooms and corridors back into the rocky walls of the mountain and beneath the valley floor. Outsiders can only see the outermost rooms of this complex, which are lavishly decorated by silk screens and solid gold religious statues, or lined with shelves of books and scrolls in every imaginable language and concerning every possible subject. Only the monks are allowed deeper into the palace, with deeper chambers of the monastery revealed only to the higher ranking members of their order. It is believed that even the abbot himself has not seen the full extent of the monastery.

Inhabitants

Shangri-La is home to four groups of residents: the monks, the villagers, the outsiders, and the Yeti. Of these, the monks are ostensibly the caretakers of the valley and its inhabitants. They claim that Shangri-La was given to their order as a gift, though from whom or for what purpose they can not—or will not—explain. Nevertheless, the monks are devoted to keeping the secret of Shangri-La from the outside world. While they welcome all those who arrive in the valley, they also prevent anyone from leaving. They rarely need do little more to restrain their guests than dispose of their traveling equipment. Without heavy clothing, durable foodstuffs, canteens, and firewood, it is next to impossible to survive the long journey down the frozen slopes. The monks have also been known to engage in misdirection, sabotage, and even use mystical powers to confound getaways.

At the top of the monastic order is Abbot Chogyal, who claims to be the third in his line—a lineage which may represent a millennia, considering the longevity conferred by the valley. Abbot Chogyal always has a kind smile and patient words for all residents of the valley, and he guides newcomers personally through their introduction to their new home. His gentle questions have a way of seeming innocuous at first, but the inquiries deftly weave together like a net which he uses to ensnare the secrets of those with whom he speaks.

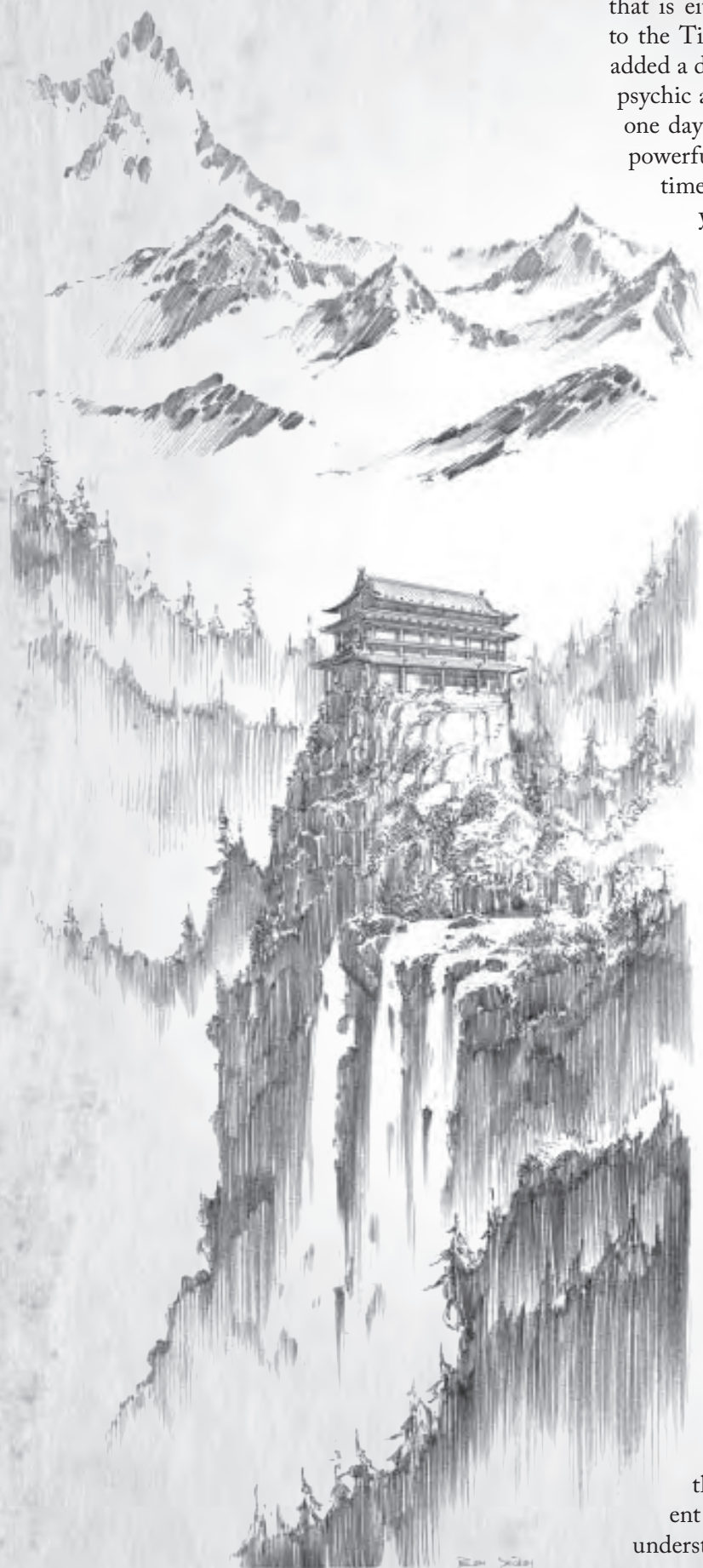
Although their motivations and means are obscure, the monastic order of Shangri-La practices a religion

that is either heavily influenced by or closely related to the Tibetan form of Buddhism. To this they have added a deep body of practice in martial, magical, and psychic arts. The stated purpose of their order is that one day they will go forth to cleanse the world of a powerful evil. The nature of this evil and how much time remains before the monks must combat it are yet another matter known only to the highest ranking members of the order.

Much like the monks, the villagers of Shangri-La are pious and outwardly benevolent. They appear to be primarily Tibetan in origin, though their number includes members of several outside cultures who have come to the valley in years past. The villagers are known for laughing freely and welcoming guests warmly. Strangely, there is an unusually high occurrence of telepathy and ESP among the villagers, with the most talented individuals generally being recruited into the monastic ranks.

Of the small handful of outsiders who come to Shangri-La, few resent their captivity in this paradise. They are warmly accepted into village life, where they may find friends, love, and a sense of purpose. If they seek knowledge, they can find it in the vast libraries of the monastery, or they can choose to use leisure time and natural resources to further their chosen form of art or scientific discipline. Many outsiders begin their stay by collecting as much gold as they can pile in their cottage, but eventually they all lose interest in wealth as they come to realize it is truly worthless in Shangri-La. Outsiders who live in the valley for any extended period of time eventually merge into the local population. It is these former outsiders who are usually the most sympathetic recipients of new arrivals, but they also tend to be the most vigilant defenders of Shangri-La by preventing escapes.

The strange white apemen known as Yeti are the only creatures allowed to both enter and exit the valley of Shangri-La. Beyond their white fur and acclimatization to cold environments, the Yeti are set apart from the lowland races of apemen by their apparent muteness. They do not give any sign of understanding the speech of villagers or outsiders,



although they are known to carry out instructions from the higher ranking monks.

The Yeti make their homes in the snowy mountain regions around Shangri-La and in the monastery, where they are stationed at posts like guards. They have never made so much as a threatening gesture towards any resident of Shangri-La but, because of their large size, no one has given them reason to do so. The abbot often sends Yeti outside of Shangri-La on specific missions into the Hollow Earth and the Himalayas. Lately, Abbot Chogyal has been sending the Yeti outside the valley with increasing frequency, and more permanent “guests” have been finding their way into Shangri-La through improbable circumstances. Some worry this is an indication that the prophesied time of the great evil is rapidly approaching.

Yeti in the Peaks

Several dozen Yeti have established a colony deep within the Himalayas, and a handful of expeditions have set out to find them. Most of these expeditions were led by crackpots and sensationalists, and thanks to their natural camouflage, the Yeti have proven very difficult to track. Approximately a year after a Nazi group entered the region, other foreigners have been meeting an unusual number of accidents or simply disappearing altogether. Many of those seeking the “Abominable Snowmen,” as well as other travelers who simply happen to be in the area, have cried foul and accused these Nazis of misdeeds, but no one has been able to prove that they have committed sabotage. No one knows why this mission seems so important to the Nazis, but their activities have attracted the attention of the Hermetic Order of the Rose Cross and the Foundation for Research and Enlightenment, both of which are now offering top dollar to individuals with supernatural knowledge or special skills that could help track down the Yeti.

A well organized and well prepared expedition to find the Yeti may bear out, and it might also lead to Shangri-La itself. The arrival of a cadre of seasoned adventures and supernatural investigators might take the residents of the valley by surprise. Then again, these might be exactly the kind of people Abbot Chogyal is hoping to take into the fold, and those who know him would not be surprised to discover that it had been his plan from the start to lure them in.

The Tournament

Every few years, Shangri-La hosts a unique and deadly martial arts tournament. Many competitors

have already found their way into the valley and now reside in a segregated portion of the monastery itself where they are provided with every imaginable luxury. To the champion, The Abbot has promised a prize of great wealth and prestige.

Past tournaments were like any others of their kind. Aside from the extremely diverse mix of fighters, many of the venues featured exotic and deadly features including spiked walls, bonfires, and high raised platforms from which the combatants must duel. Even considering the extraordinary healing properties of the valley, many of the combatants were maimed or even killed outright. Only the Abbot knows what the next tournament will include, but it is likely to force combatants to run ingeniously deadly gauntlets and duel in a variety of highly unpredictable environments.

When questioned about how the outwardly pacifistic monks can condone such a tournament, the Abbot cryptically replied: “sometimes, there must be blood.”

What Lies Beneath

Although most of those who arrive in Shangri-La are soon absorbed into the culture of the villagers or the ranks of the monks, not all have given up their intentions to return home. Occasionally, guests of Shangri-La who remain restless enough in their search discover clues that suggest the existence of an escape route through the catacombs beneath the monastery. These hints sometimes come in the form of coded messages on scraps of parchment tucked away in dusty volumes within the monastic library, or diagrams concealed within the greater design of an ornate tapestry, or partial maps scratched out on the walls of remote alcoves. Some are as old as the monastery itself, but the majority are of indeterminate age and possibly relatively recent. Whenever the monks become aware of such messages, they do their best to remove them from sight, cover them over, or even destroy them. The monks and the villagers are aware that such clues pop up from time to time and they will openly discuss the possibilities: perhaps they were left as way marks for others attempting to depart from Shangri-La, or they might be the product of a secret organization within the monastery that seeks to undermine the residents of the valley, or perhaps it is all a cunning plan of the abbot himself to lead his “guests” into performing some kind of service. The theories are as plentiful as those who discuss them, but no one seems able to furnish any evidence to raise the level of discussion above unsubstantiated rumor.

There are even a few residents who claim to have

found cryptic messages, and, with cautious looks over their shoulders, they will confide that an escape route is not all that might be found in the catacombs.

Most agree that the source of Shangri-La's amazing healing effects is also contained somewhere down below. A great many men and women on the surface and throughout the Hollow Earth who seek Shangri-La in order to discover the source of this power and, if possible, take it with them. Their way would be dangerous if not impossible: even if they can keep their intentions secret from the monks and avoid confrontations with the Yeti who guard the treasure, the ancient, darkened passages hold traps of untold ingenuity and deadliness. None have ever succeeded.

A few of the villagers still hold ambitions of discovering the source of Shangri-La's power, whatever it is. When the village is quiet enough, they claim to be able to hear it as a slow pulsing rhythm deep within the ground. The junior monks tell a tale that this is the still-beating heart of a dragon that gave up its life for Shangri-La, but if there is any truth to this story it is surely veiled in layer after layer of symbolism as is everything else within the monastery.

THE SUNKEN CITY

The Sunken City was once a grand vision of Atlantean architecture floating miraculously beneath the constant glow of the inner sun. Columns held shining green domes aloft over vast plazas decorated with delicate vines and gleaming silver statues. Temples and libraries, enormous in size and prestige, stood at the corners of wide streets. Circular canals opened the city to graceful boats and fed a multitude of tranquil gardens and forested parks.

This vision ended eons ago. What remains is the Sunken City, a ghost of its former self, haunted by the eroding evidence of its former majesty. It rests tilted on its base, like a sand-dollar protruding from the surf, with only one corner projecting above the waves while the rest angles down into the black, silent depths.

The Sunken City is not really one place, but many. It is the salty remains of a seaside city, rising in some places many stories out of the water and still colorful with sparkling mosaics and wet statues. It is also the sadly beautiful wreck lying dead on the sea floor, overgrown with swaying leaves and flitting fish, punctuated by gillmen trappers' nets and stalking sharks, where Atlantean treasures or forgotten chambers—or poison-

ous predators—might lie unseen just beneath a dusting of sand. And it is also the unknowably deep and dark mystery, tangible and terrible, vast and grandiose, and just out of reach, waiting to be explored.

The Sunken City is a scattered ruin divided more or less down the middle by a great gaping rift where the city's foundation broke when it sank. At the upper end, half-intact city streets and once-lovely Grecian style buildings stand in waist-deep water. This area is where most gillmen make their homes, and serves as an excellent platform from which to launch fishing expeditions. It is also a few thousand feet offshore, which makes it highly defensible against would-be raiders who attempt to approach by boat. The real danger to the gillmen, however, does not come from the land—it comes from below.

The rest of the city has fallen into an undersea trench where it remains wedged at a steep angle. As the ground slopes down into the sea, the sun loses its ability to penetrate to the ruins. The broken streets are strangled by sea-vines and clogged by dense fields of seaweed. Broken columns and topless towers poke through the silt, reaching like desperate fingers towards the air above. Sharks glide from one darkened doorway to another. Silver statues of Atlantean statesmen lay on their backs like half-buried corpses in the sand, home to crabs and sea spiders. This is the middle range of the city, where the ownership transfers from the gillmen to the sharks and squids.

Deeper still, the city seems to plunge all at once into the dark half. Here the sun is but a memory. Shapes come out of the dark like specters. Sand hangs in the water like a cloud. Strange songs echo up from below. In the presence of artificial light, peeling, gilded statues appear, encircled by weird long-toothed fish and darting, bioluminescent oddities. This is the domain of the gillmen of the deep, who worship a dark thing which they claim speaks to them in their dreams.

Drawn by the lure of the mysteries below, the bravest gillmen sometimes venture down into the deeper regions of the Sunken City. It is not just gillmen who make this journey; despite being submerged, the city is accessible to humans and other beastmen thanks to a convergence of two factors. First, peculiar properties in the soil of the city promote the growth of Black-breath vines (see *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 229). The leaves of these plants can greatly extend the ability of air-breathing creatures to hold their breath, and they are found in abundance here, even below the water and at the sunless depths. The second factor is that oxygen bubbles up from the submarine trench below the city

and becomes trapped in nearly every building or stone outcropping between the bottom and the surface. This air smells of sulfur, which suggests that it is being vented from a naturally occurring underground gas pocket, but some gillmen speculate that it is the remnants of an Atlantean life-support system. Whatever its origin, this oxygen, combined with the Blackbreath leaves, enables even moderate swimmers to zigzag from air-pocket to air-pocket and dive down as deeply as they wish to go.

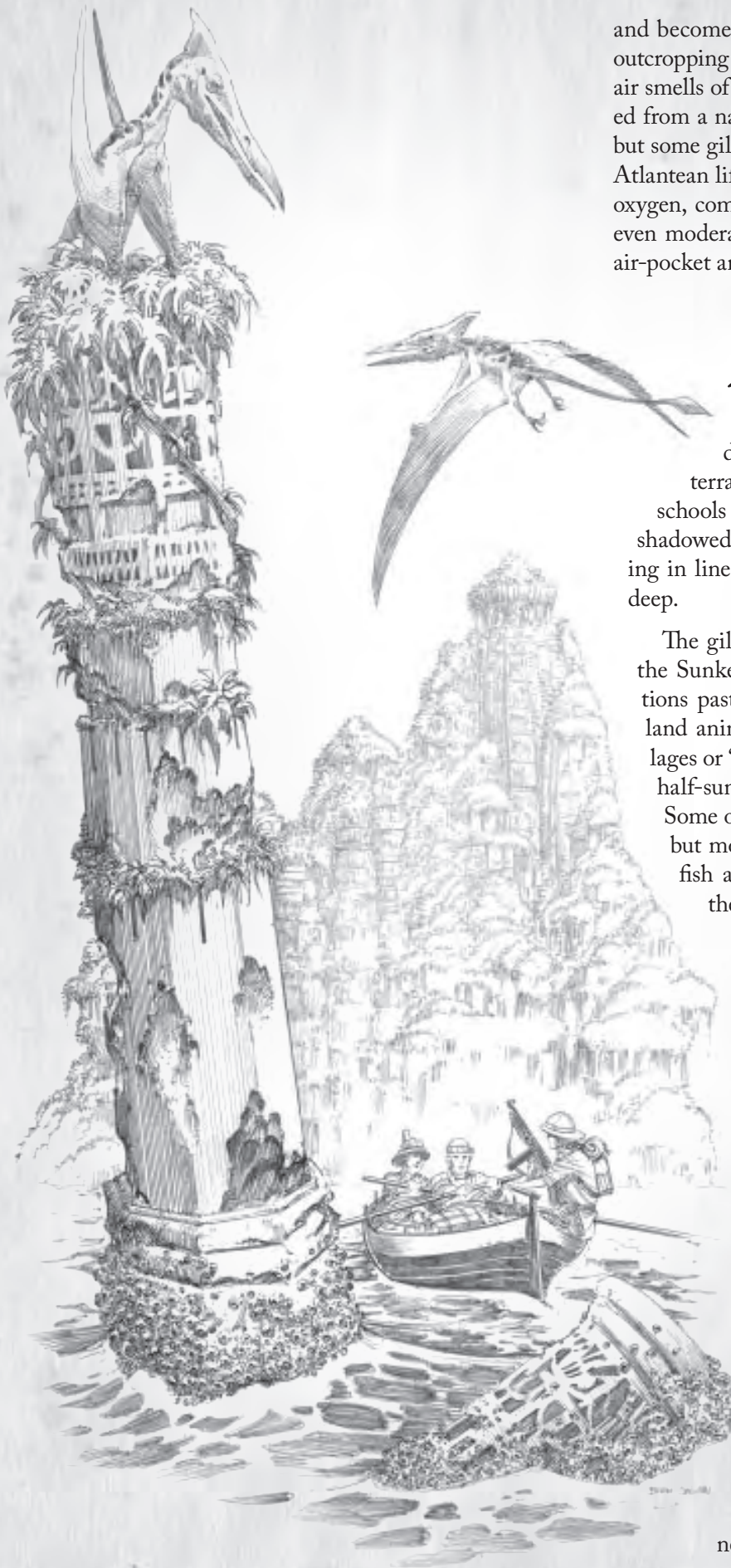
Inhabitants

The gillmen of the Sunken City live in dynamic equilibrium, divided as they are by terrain and ideology. The many and varied small schools of ordinary gillmen are being slowly overshadowed by a fanatical sect of shadowy devotees falling in line behind a single monstrous voice from the deep.

The gillmen who dwell in the shallowest parts of the Sunken City live today as they have for generations past. They are traders, fishers, and hunters of land animals who divide themselves into small villages or "schools" centered on picturesque patches of half-sunken ruins and choice fish-hunting grounds. Some of these villages are hostile to land-dwellers, but most are warily peaceful and willing to trade fish and supplies for exotic equipment. Because they are removed from the mainland, they maintain regular relations with only a few sea-faring tribes with whom they trade information as often as goods.

Those who dwelt in the deeper part of the sun-lit half have all but disappeared, having either joined their brethren above or gone below to join the so-called "gillmen of the deep." This group once made their livelihoods as kelp-farmers and hunters of sea creatures who also served to protect the Sunken City from the sharks that swim in the dark half of the ruins. The deep folk also took to braving the dark half of the city in search of treasures both natural and Atlantean, and it was these searchers who were the first devotees of the Great Maw.

The Great Maw is likely the single most elusive and yet significant resident of the Sunken City. It appears to be a kraken, but is either a mutant or a new species unknown elsewhere, as it is no



mindless beast. It slumbers perpetually in a cave on the underside of the deepest point of the Sunken City, and in its sleep it has established a telepathic hold on the Deep Gillmen as well as some members of other species from the surrounding area. Through the dreams of its followers, it tells them that it is a god that was trapped in material form when the Sunken City “fell from Heaven.” Its power, too great to be expressed by any one animal form, radiates in its telepathic voice and is made manifest in its hallucinogenic ink—a pitch-black substance the Maw squirts from sacs around its massive beak. The Great Maw also teaches its followers that they are meant to inherit the great power of ancient Atlantis’s absent kings, which has been hidden in deep jungles and deeper seas where only gillmen can travel and bring about a new era.

For now, the followers of the so-called Great Maw gather together in the deeper parts of the Sunken City’s sun-lit half, coming toward the shore only in small patrols and missionary squads.

The Temple

Largest among the Sunken City’s ruins is the site known only as the Temple. Larger than Rome’s Coliseum and more than twice as high, the Temple resembles a bright white Pantheon with a broken dome, set atop a single, enormous slab of granite. When the tide is high, the Temple is submerged to about half its height, putting the floor of its grand main hall dozens of feet underwater. When the tide is out, antechambers are exposed, revealing the remains of once exquisite Atlantean statuary, now worn so smooth by the sea that they seem to be abstract shapes. Gaps in the stonework that once held orichalcum details and deep-set crystal technology are now homes for water birds and crabs. Gillmen sometimes climb portions of the outer wall of the Temple and make daring dives past the rocks below. The Temple appears to be little more than a lovely remain, a happy gathering place, long ago stripped of its valuable treasures—but every few years, some pirate or treasure-hunter discovers a hidden chamber, an undiscovered vault, or a forgotten tomb cut into the rock beneath it. Rumors abound that hidden beneath the waters is a broken dome that can harness the power of the Hollow Earth’s sun to fuel the city’s long-dormant technology.

The Spines

The Spines are a field of delicately barbed, spiraling towers rising up from the deep end of the city, their bases lost in the dark far below. The original purpose of the towers is long forgotten. Today, the narrow parts visible from the sea’s surface look something like pinched

pipes jutting off a giant, deep-sea church organ. It’s in the surrounding waters that fishermen and pirates have now and again pulled strange crystal orbs out of the sea, each gripped by an orichalcum armature resembling the workings of a spherical astrolabe, and each about the size of a free-standing globe. More than one of these has been found bobbing up and down in a tower previously known to be empty, as if the orb broke free and floated up from the deep. Despite their size, they are light as beach balls and hard as glass. When broken in the open air, they have little noticeable effect. If broken in a liquid environment, however, the orb hyper-oxygenates the area, creating a fluid “breathable” by air-breathing animals. These orbs are extremely sought-after by seafaring people throughout the Hollow Earth, and will fetch a high price in Blood Bay.

The Abyss

The deep side of the Sunken City remains wedged into the mouth of a trench, but the trench extends down farther into the black waters than anyone can measure. Legend has it that long ago, before the Great Maw manifested itself, a gillman chieftain set out to prove her worth by diving to the bottom. She swam alone down through the cold waters, avoiding bizarre predators and surviving on a store of dried fish and whatever urchins and tube-worms she could scavenge from the walls of the abyss. After a maddeningly long descent, she saw the waters grow brighter with sunlight, and she grew discouraged, thinking she had become turned around in the dark and had accidentally gone back the way she had come. But when she surfaced, she found herself in strange waters where the sun overhead had “come loose in the sky.”

This tale has been passed down among the gillmen for ages and has no doubt been distorted with each telling. Still, it strongly implies that the abyss beneath the Sunken City is really a passage through to the surface world. But even if it does connect, it promises no easy journey. Only the gillmen are possessed of the ability to survive the pressure and the cold of the unfathomably deep waters. The gillmen from the upper city would not dare to travel that deep now, for the abyss has become the haven of the gillmen of the deep, and they will capture or kill any who intrude upon their domain. Worse still are the unnamed creatures that lurk in the trench, waiting to crush out any hint of light from the world above. If, as seems likely, the Great Maw rose from its depths, then the abyss may hold other alien and hateful intelligences which wait patiently, biding their time for fresh victims to float into their realm.

TWILIGHT REGIONS

The strange and frigid locations where the North and South Poles traverse the spaces between the inner and outer crust form a transitional zone which is not directly lit by the rays of either sun. In these areas, magnetism and gravity are warped through the peculiar funnels that link the surface world and the Hollow Earth, and cold and darkness are imposed by a strange, sunless fog. These silent, cold, and perpetually ill-lit lands are known as the twilight regions.

Travelers finding themselves suddenly whisked to locations such as Shangri-La and El Dorado might mistake themselves for being lost in some remote corner of the surface world, but a sojourn through the twilight regions is an unmistakably weird and undeniably unearthly precursor to the sudden transition from the icy exterior to tropical interior portions of the planet. Even if the mists deny a view of the rocky or watery ceiling that makes up the far side of the funnel entrance, the forlorn ground of the passageway between worlds cannot be mistaken for any other place on or in the Earth.

In the South, where the polar opening links between mountains at both ends, the vast curvature of the opening's mouth coupled with the obscuring mist and the bizarre effects of gravity pushing "out" onto the sides of the funnel creates little more than the sensation of traversing a steep incline. The journey from Antarctica may be made on foot: the twilight region begins just a little way past the Frozen City, after which the experience is like descending into a mist-clogged valley and eventually climbing out on the other side into a strange mash-up of jungle and frost beneath an omnipresent sun. At the far side of the twilight region, the realization that one has entered a new world is immediate, but the transition from one world to the other is gradual and most making the move are unaware of it until they have emerged into the Hollow Earth. In the North, where the sea itself is warped and funneled between worlds, the journey could be made over the frozen ice in the winter or by boat through the melted waters in the summer. In his journal, found in his ice-locked and abandoned ship in the midst of the northern twilight region, missing explorer Sir Walton Ford described it as "sailing into a valley in the sea which reveals itself to be a tunnel with ice floes and green sea for a sky." More often, the sensation on the surface side is something like sailing downhill into fog. The depth of the sea through the northern polar opening is inconsistent, but never shallow. Without instruments to measure it or sunlight to penetrate the depths, with electric lighting

inconsistent and sonar inoperative, the qualities of the sea through this miraculous passage are impossible to know. What is known is that during the colder months, the funnel can ice over enough to accommodate foot and wheeled traffic while still allowing submersible traffic below. Icebreakers and maneuverable ships have a chance during these months, but may find themselves frozen in the dark between worlds if they are not careful.

The curvature of the polar openings presents a distinct danger to aircraft. Fixed-wing aircraft must attempt a peculiar dive into an opening, and then pull up against the force of the bent and inconsistent gravity while maintaining a low but cautious altitude, all without instrumentation or gauges. Pull this off and it's possible to fly through either opening at any time of year; fail and your aircraft plunges into ice-clogged waters or smashes into Antarctic rock. Dirigibles have it easier: by floating over either opening, a dirigible will sink gradually into the bending gravity of the funnel. The gentle shift in what constitutes a "downward" direction pulls the craft toward the water or the ground at a rate that allows time for pilot reaction. Emergence from an opening requires little more than following the curvature of the ground outward.

On the interior face of the globe, the irregular qualities of the twilight regions stretch just beyond the funnels themselves. The inner openings are permanently shrouded with steam produced by the evaporation of incoming water and are sometimes punctuated by aurora borealis-like curtains of colorful light. Flickering torches and fluttering electric lights reveal little more than frost and rock through a dense mist. Flashing a bright light into that fog can be blinding. Compasses spin crazily. Radios find nothing but static. The mists suck the warmth from everything, and even the light of the great interior sun does not fully penetrate the fog and the cold. Seeing what's beyond arm's reach is difficult. Believing that one will ever see the sun again feels impossible. The route back into the polar opening is often unattainable and survival is unlikely for explorers who have no way to travel back to warmer climes after they emerge.

Inhabitants

Despite a relative lack of appreciable geography and navigability, the twilight regions are not merely featureless and lifeless expanses of mist, frost, and rock. Still, they are among the least inhabited and least well known lands of the Hollow Earth. On the surface-world side of the polar openings, living creatures are scarce. With-

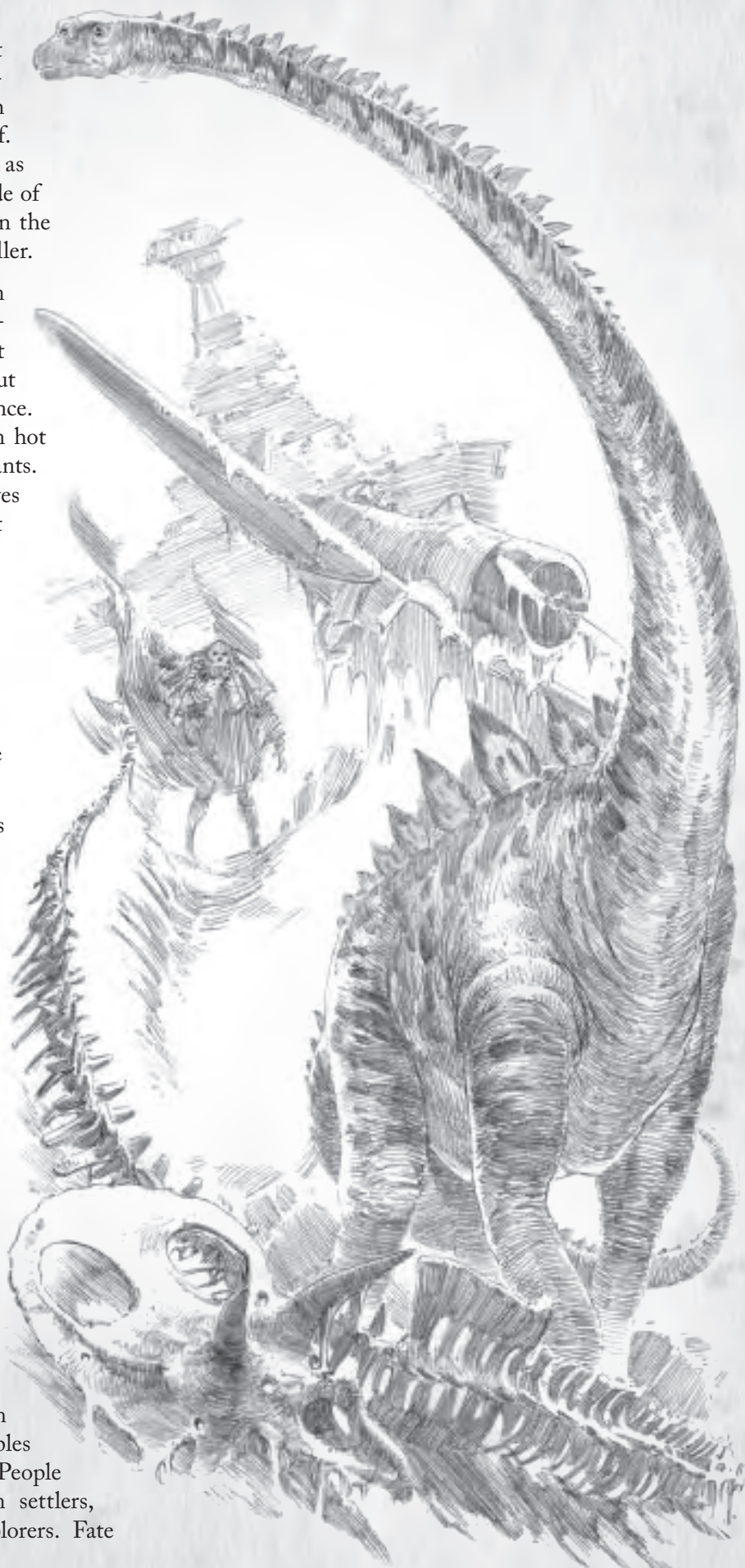
Chapter Five

in the wider bounds of the twilight regions surrounding the polar openings' mouths on the Hollow Earth side, people are few but not unheard of. Neither the darkness nor the cold is as severe as it is on the surface-world side of the funnels, and the distance between the poles and more habitable lands is smaller.

In the South, the twilight region begins abruptly with a snowline separating jungle from tundra and the hot sun burns through the mist pouring out of the polar opening almost all at once. Strangely, this confrontation between hot and cold is virtually devoid of inhabitants. Jungle-dwelling beastmen and natives may venture into this frigid twilight region out of curiosity, but they have food and shelter on the warmer side of the snowline. Superstition and common sense both tell them that it is a difficult place to survive, and so indigenous folk rarely venture here. Travelers and explorers, though extremely rare, are usually alone in the southern twilight region.

In the North, where the darkness and the cold gradually diffuse in the light of the interior sun, the miles of glaciers and packed ice are home to a few small communities and peoples. Some of these folk call the eerie gloom of this forlorn realm their home. Some are passing through. Others are trapped, struggling month after month to penetrate the polar opening and escape the Hollow Earth, unwilling to accept defeat and unwilling to see that each day they spend in the twilight regions makes them more peculiar, severe, and deranged.

Though natives of various kinds may wander into the twilight region for a time, only the nomadic "Sled People" are truly native here. Seemingly an amalgam of various surface-dwelling peoples who have banded together, the Sled People include the descendants of Alaskan settlers, Inuit hunters, and shipwrecked explorers. Fate



brought them together and the need to survive united them. Known for lightweight sleds and sleighs pulled by frontier dogs, reindeer, and supposedly even polar bears, the Sled People are always on the move. Their communal center is a great wooden ship hoisted up on bone and steel sled-blades. When the ice melts, the ship floats from glacier to glacier. When the ice freezes, it is hauled up into the frost to escape destruction in crushing ice. Few outsiders have glimpsed this ship because the Sled People keep its movements carefully secret to protect their young and their infirm who ride within. It is challenging enough to defend it from the elements—they've no reason to trust its fate to outsiders.

The Hermit

Perhaps the most mysterious inhabitant of the Northern twilight region is the Hermit, a legend among travelers and the Sled People alike. He is burly, scarred, and stitched up like a man who has survived being torn apart. His body seems mismatched and unbalanced, with his right hand noticeably larger than his left and his dark watery eyes each a slightly different shape. He lives alone—always alone. Though some travelers say this towering stranger, clad in bearskins and a tattered black greatcoat, has stalked them across the ice, Sled People insist he is a peaceful, if sad, creature who dwells alone in a hut in the haze between the impenetrable mist and the freezing twilight.

More than one traveler claims to owe his life to the Hermit. They say he comes out of the mist, plucks them from the deadly snow and ice and lugs them over his shoulders back to his one-room hut to warm them by his whale-oil stove. He sits silently, his raised scars red against his yellow skin, and avoids conversation. He looks out through ropes of black hair and opens his black lips as if he would speak. But before long, and usually after saying nothing at all, he guides these poor souls back to the brink of the twilight ice and points them toward the sunlight and fresh water. A few steps along, these travelers always look back to see that the Hermit is already gone.

The Twilight House and the Abandoned Bunker

The Twilight House is a ramshackle refuge located near the edge of the pack ice, within sight of the inner sun, and constructed from the remains of lost ships and crashed planes. Brightly lit with lines of Christmas lights, it's easy to find against the blank backdrop of the bleak expanse. Inside, the place is little more than a creaky and weathered lodge huddling around a massive central fireplace. The owners—a stranded married couple named Frank and Norma Hodgman—keep canned

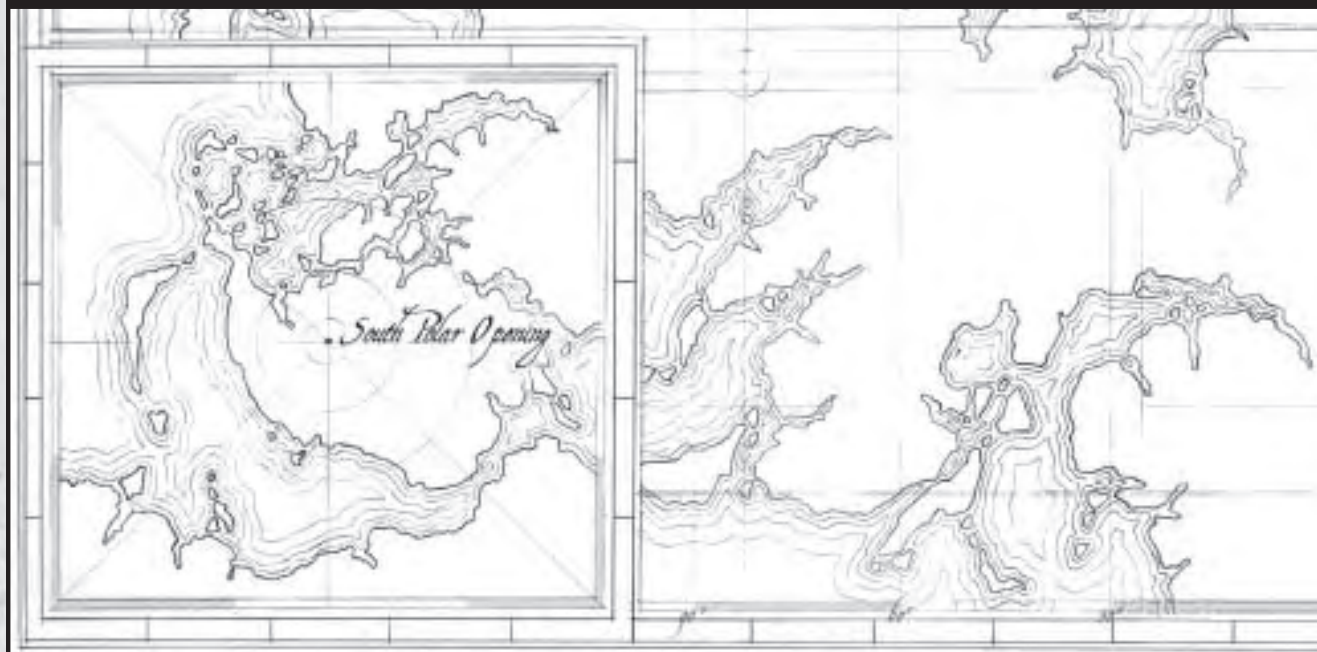
goods and liquor on hand when possible, for the sake of explorers and travelers who use the place as a stopover on their journeys through the northern twilight region. The Hodgmans say they have given up on ever getting back to the surface world, and live vicariously on the tales of braver souls who travel southward.

An abandoned Nazi base lies only a few miles away from the Twilight House. Stacks of broken ice-boulders and mounds of snow clog the bunker entrance and camouflage the site, but the lock on the door is broken and the outpost is deserted. The base extends far beneath the permafrost and contains numerous rooms for troop quarters, sealed storage sites for fuel and ammunition, and empty U-boat pens. The pantries still contain ample preserved food along with other provisions in varying stages of decay. There are signs of a hasty evacuation: playing cards remain half-dealt in the crews' quarters, pots and pans lie unwashed in the kitchen, and laundry sits frozen in its wash-water. The Hodgmans claim to know nothing of the base, although from their location they should have been able to notice its construction and operation. Why the Nazis went to such expense to build this base in this location is as much a mystery as why it now sits empty. Who attempted to bury the entrance, why the lock is broken, and where its occupants went or whether they intend to return are all questions that combine to deepen the mystery.

The Tower

Laying angled and upside-down in the snow and ice of the Southern region is an ornate Atlantean tower. Agleam with ribbons of orichalcum frozen beneath a solid coat of ice, it seems like a rook fallen off some titanic and ornate chessboard. No one can say exactly how tall the structure is, as no one has penetrated its sheath of ice and frost and ventured below the point where the tower plunges into the snow. Natives from nearby regions claim that it once marked an outpost with a passage that leads to the Frozen City on the outside of the twilight region. If a brave adventurer could find a way in to the toppled tower, perhaps the mystery of its origin would be revealed.

⊕ CHAPTER 6: **BESTIARY**



A Note to the Reader:

I have spent my lifetime exploring this great and wonderful world of ours. My last sailing trip through the Bermudas took me to a land so fantastical, the legends of yore pale in comparison. Had I not seen it with my own eyes, I would have never believed that there could be such a place as the Hollow Earth. With no understanding of how I had arrived there, it took what seemed a lifetime to find my way home. Through sheer perseverance, survival instinct, and help from the friendlier natives, three crewmen and I made our way back to the surface, despite the greatest of perils.

Whilst on my adventure, I stumbled upon the remains of a small rucksack, apparently belonging to some fellow adventurer and likely ripped apart by scavenging denizens searching for morsels of food. Torn rucksacks can often be a great source of information, even if emptied of their contents—the quality of the material and construction provide clues as to its origins. Upon spying it, I had my man bring it hither for closer examination. I learned very little from the rucksack itself, but inside I found a journal wrapped with a leather cord and stuffed with the remains of several years' worth of the notable and highly respected Proceedings of the Royal Society of London, Series B and Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History. The contents of this journal, as you will discover, are vitally important to understanding the perils and wonders of the Hollow Earth. For example, the recipe for Protoceratops chops and eggs was of great immediate benefit.

We can only imagine what horrors befell Professor Trader, the original possessor and keeper of the journal. Wherever his soul resides today, I hope he rests in peace now that his life's work has been discovered and given the attention it deserves. I have personally funded the publication of his journal for the edification of those who seek knowledge for its own sake, for those who remain skeptical of the existence of the Hollow Earth, but most importantly, for those who seek to explore that harsh and beautiful land, even if they can only journey there via the mind's eye.

I am, as always, requiring funding for future expeditions. You may support the ongoing legacy of Professor Trader's work by sending funds to my American address located below. Many thanks, and I am much obliged to you.

Yours,

Sir Stephen Nicholas Daniels, III
4509 Interlake Ave N #318
Seattle, WA

Dearest Reader,

It has been at least five years, as best as I can ascertain, since I was engaged as a biologist studying troglobitic life in the Edwards Aquifer located in Texas, in the United States of America. Sent by my beloved employer—the Natural History Museum of London—I eagerly looked forward to my assignment in America, most especially observing the likes of the peculiar and fascinating blind salamander. My jaunt, however, took me much farther than any could have ever guessed and exposed me to fauna far stranger than that which I originally anticipated.

On the second of my expeditions into the extensive limestone cave complex of the Edwards Plateau, my fate took a most bizarre twist. Engrossed in netting a cave amphipod specimen, I was oblivious to the approach of what I can only describe as “Mole Men.” After a brief scuffle with these strange creatures, I was bound and carried through what seemed an endless labyrinth of tunnels, and dumped unceremoniously into a dank cave with my rucksack beside me. Why I was abducted, I cannot surmise, but I was certain that it could not have been for a good purpose. When opportunity presented itself, I weakened my bonds on a jagged outcrop of rock and made good my escape. After what must have been days wandering through tunnel and cave, ever fearful of recapture, I emerged into what I thought was a return to the hot sun of Texas, only to discover I was in a world with an alien sun that never set: this Hollow Earth.

Alone in a strange and dangerous land, I set about securing my survival as best I could. My basic needs met, I determined to continue following my calling and set pencil to paper, cataloging the strange creatures all around me. I was fortunate in that I had packed some light reading on the discoveries pertaining to prehistoric creatures, a hobby of mine since childhood. I was easily able to identify most of the species I saw, with few exceptions, based upon my memories and the journals I had in my possession. What you hold in your hands is the fruit of my efforts—my magnum opus, such as it is.

If you are reading this, then all is lost for me, and I most certainly have already shuffled off this mortal coil. My life will not have been in vain, however, if this journal makes it to those who can appreciate my discoveries. It contains my observations and sketches of the abundant life inhabiting this perilous Hollow Earth. I can only hope that it will apprise, guide, and warn you against the many dangers you will encounter in this paradoxical paradise, and if so, it will have served its purpose well.

Respectfully yours,

Professor Alexander Trader

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Glossary

The lay reader may find the following short glossary useful when consulting my work.

Aves: The scientific classification for all birds, both modern and prehistoric.

Caudal Vertebrae: The name given to the bones of the spinal column found in the tail of an animal.

Ceratops: "Horn Face." Genus of herbivorous, beaked dinosaurs typified by horns and neck frills.

Chelae: The claws of an arthropod.

Dinosauria: "Terrible Lizard." Superorder of prehistoric animals.

Dromaeosaur: "Running Lizard." Family of carnivorous bird-like theropods. Typified by feathered hides, serrated teeth, and large claws on the second toe. A suborder of Dinosauria.

Eurypterid: Class of arthropod better known as sea scorpions.

Forcípules: Modified pair of front legs in centipedes that form poison-injecting pincers.

Ichthyosaur: "Fish Lizard." Order of prehistoric reptiles resembling dolphins and fish. Not part of the superorder Dinosauria.

Mantidae: Family of insects commonly known as "praying mantises."

Ornithopod: "Bird Feet." Of the order Ornithischia. Herbivorous dinosaurs lacking in armor, with sophisticated beak-like mouths.

Osteoderm: Bony deposit in the skin forming a nodule, plate, or scale.

Plesiosaur: "Near Lizard." Suborder of prehistoric carnivorous aquatic reptiles typified by small heads, long necks, and limbs modified into flippers. Not part of the superorder Dinosauria.

Pliosaur: "Fin Lizard." Suborder of prehistoric carnivorous marine reptiles typified by elongated heads, short necks, and limbs modified into flippers. Not part of the superorder Dinosauria.

Pterosaur: "Winged Lizard." Also commonly called pterodactyls. Order of prehistoric flying reptiles. Not part of the superorder Dinosauria.

Saurischia: "Lizard-hipped." Order of dinosaurs including Theropods and Sauropods.

Sauropod: "Lizard Feet." Suborder of Saurischia typified as herbivorous quadrupeds with long necks, small heads, large bodies, and long tails.

Stegosaur: "Roof Lizard." Of the genus Stegosauria. Infraorder of quadrupedal herbivorous dinosaurs typified by rows of plate- and spine-like osteoderms along the back, and long, narrow, beaked heads.

Telson: The last segment of a crustacean's body, such as the tail fan of a lobster.

Theropod: "Beast Feet." Primarily carnivorous suborder of Saurischia, typically bipedal with three-toed feet.

Troglobite: Animal adapted for life in total darkness. Typified by loss of pigmentation and functioning eyes.

Vespoidea: Family of predatory stinging insects composed of hornets, velvet ants, and wasps.

DINOSAURS

Discovering that the monstrous creatures of prehistory still roam this strange, impossible world was a moment of staggering shock. Many millennia after extinction upon the surface, these giants still thrive in the Hollow Earth. Prehistoric creatures have always been a favorite subject of mine, so I could not resist studying them, no matter the dangers.

My wanderings have led me to encounter an abundant variety of dinosaurs so large in extent that I can barely hope to study them all effectively, let alone record them for posterity. Many have already been discovered on the surface, and others will no doubt be familiar. Still, it would be remiss of me not to provide my complete notes so that comparisons can be drawn between the different species.

Allosaurus

Although I have laid eyes upon the awe-inspiring sight that is *Tyrannosaurus rex*, I reserve my greatest trepidation for encounters with the much larger *Allosaurus*. I determined it to be O.C. Marsh's *Allosaurus* after only a few measurements of a (deceased) specimen.

Truly, they are terrifying in their own right! These carnivorous bipeds are 30–40 feet in length with short, powerful, three-clawed forelimbs, and crushing jaws replete with knife-like teeth. Yes, an individual Allosaurus is indeed a fearsome predator, but how much more frightening is it then when you consider that they are pack hunters?

In my encounters with these theropods, I have seen them range in groups as small as two and as large as eight. When met in such numbers, few beasts can hope to stand against them. Indeed, I have witnessed packs as small as four tackle and bring to ground great sauro-pods such as Brachiosaurus. Be warned: if you see one, it is almost certain that others are close by. Fortunately, their group coordination is somewhat rudimentary, consisting of massed attacks, and a solitary Allosaurus will become impatient in its aggressive willingness to attack...not that this makes them any less deadly.

Similar Theropods

Albertosaurus: Less common than the Allosaurus, the Albertosaurus even more closely resembles the Tyrannosaurus rex, with its stunted and weak two-fingered forelimbs. Of a size with Allosaurus, it also hunts in family group packs.

Ceratosaurus: Smaller than the Allosaurus, Ceratosaurus is still a formidable predator. Its appearance is akin to the Allosaurus, but with the addition of a thin jutting horn on its nose, and crocodilian-style extensions of its caudal vertebrae. Thankfully, it is a lone predator rather than a pack hunter.

Allosaurus

Follower 2

Archetype: <i>Dinosaur</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 10		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 5		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 3		Intelligence: 1		
Strength: 2		Willpower: 3		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 2		Initiative: 4		
Move: 9		Defense: 6		
Perception: 6		Stun: 5		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	4	12	(6)
Stealth	3	1	2*	(1)
Survival	1	5	6	(3)
Talents				
Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)				
Resources				
None				

Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 L	-2	12 L	(6) L
Claw	2 L	-2	12 L	(6) L
Stomp	2 N	-2	12 N	(6) N

* Allosaurus suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Ankylosaurus

Barnum Brown was remarkably accurate in his description of Ankylosaurus, save that the back is flat, rather than arched as he supposed. In many ways, the Ankylosaurus brings to mind the tanks of the Great War: a ponderous, heavily armored and armed entity. Given an understandably wide berth by much of the Hollow Earth's fauna, this low-slung and solitary quadruped stands only around four feet in height atop short, stout limbs. Nearly half of its 30-foot length is a muscular tail terminating in a heavy bony mass that it uses to bludgeon any perceived threats that approach too closely. I once witnessed an unfortunate Albertosaurus stray too close to an Ankylosaurus, provoking a limb-cracking tail strike.

As if its tail were not deterrent enough, the Ankylosaurus has a thick hide across its back covered in osteoderms (fist-sized nodules of bone), while rows of large bone spikes run the length of its sides. Even the head of this dinosaur is armored with thick bone plating, and its eyes feature thick lids to protect them against errant thorns and branches from the bushes and shrubs upon which it grazes.

Similar Ankylosauridae

Euoplocephalus: Slightly smaller than Ankylosaurus, but otherwise identical in behavior, Euoplocephalus can be distinguished by virtue of the multiple rows of large, pointed osteoderms that range over its shoulders—diminishing in size rapidly towards its rump—and the fact that its club-like tail is comprised of two large, bony spheres. From my observations, it appears that Euoplocephalus is also somewhat rarer than its larger relative.



Ankylosaurus

Follower 2

Archetype: Dinosaur

Motivation: Survival

Style: 0

Health: 12

Primary Attributes

Body: 6 Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 2 Intelligence: 0

Strength: 6 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2 Initiative: 2

Move: 8 (16)* Defense: 6 (8)**

Perception: 4 Stun: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	4	12	(6)
Stealth	2	2	2***	(1)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 N	-2	12 N	(6) N
Tail Club	4 N	-2	14 N	(7) N

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Ankylosaurus has a thick, bone-studded hide that provides a +2 Passive Defense bonus

*** Ankylosaurus suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Archaeopteryx

I puzzled for some time over the classification of this unusual bird-dinosaur, which I finally decided was an Archaeopteryx. Up to two feet in length, with a wingspan of equal size, its long, feathered tail is stiff and bony. Meanwhile, its head resembles that of a tiny theropod, with a scaly narrow snout filled with small, needle-sharp teeth. There the resemblance ends, however, for Archaeopteryx's arms are feathered wings, albeit tipped with three small claws at the forefront, and its body is clad in a mantle of feathers.

Reasonably prolific, these strange creatures are most at home flying from bough to bough in forested areas, but are frequently seen running amidst the undergrowth, foraging for insects or hunting small animals.

I must admit to a certain fondness for them, having noted several native tribes keeping them as pets, utilizing them to control vermin.

Similar Theropods

Protarchaeopteryx: More Dromaeosaur-like than Archaeopteryx, Protarchaeopteryx is ground dwelling, with shortened feathered arms rather than wings.

Archaeopteryx

Follower 0

Archetype: Dinosaur

Motivation: Survival

Style: 0

Health: 0

Primary Attributes

Body: 1 Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 3 Intelligence: 1

Strength: 1 Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: -4 Initiative: 4

Move: 4 (2)* Defense: 8

Perception: 4 Stun: 1

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	1	1	2	(1)
Stealth	3	1	8**	(4)
Survival	1	3	4	(2)

Talents

None

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	-4 L	+4	2 L	(1) L
Claws	-4 L	+4	2 L	(1) L

* Archaeopteryx uses its full Move rating when flying, and half Move when on the ground

** Archaeopteryx gains a +4 Size bonus on Stealth rolls



Brontosaurus

Ever since I saw a Brontosaurus skeleton on display at Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History, I have yearned to see one alive. Although I believe it has been scientifically reclassified as Apatosaurus, it still seems the "thunder lizard" name fits best, especially after having been in close proximity to a live specimen walking the Hollow Earth! With their long necks, thick bodies, trunk-like legs, and long, tapering tails, they exemplify the typical sauropod. A fully-grown Brontosaurus is over 80 feet long, and weighs more than 40 tons. They depend upon their mass to protect them from all but the most fearsome predators. These great lumbering creatures can be astonishingly quick; I have seen a threatened Brontosaurus rear up on its hind legs and stomp its enormous front feet to frighten foes.

The small herds reside in the swamps and bogs, spending most of their waking hours feasting on the multitude of plants that grow so quickly here.

Similar Sauropods

Brachiosaurus: Somewhat giraffe-like in body structure, the dome-headed Brachiosaurus has a comparatively short tail for a sauropod, and shorter hind limbs and longer forelimbs, with a long, erect neck that enables it to graze leaves from the tallest of trees.

Diplodocus: The Diplodocus is easily distinguished from the Apatosaurus by its lighter build, longer neck, and significantly longer whip-like tail.

Brontosaurus

Follower 4

Archetype: *Dinosaur*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 24

Primary Attributes

Body: 12 **Charisma:** 0

Dexterity: 2 **Intelligence:** 0

Strength: 12 **Willpower:** 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 8 **Initiative:** 2

Move: 14 (28)* **Defense:** 6 (8)**

Perception: 6 **Stun:** 12

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	12	2	16	(8)
Stealth	2	4	0***	(0)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Stealth rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	8 N	-8	16 N	(8) N
Stomp	8 N	-8	16 N	(8) N
Tail	10 N	-8	18 N	(9) N

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Brontosaurus has a thick hide that provides a +2 Passive Defense bonus

*** Brontosaurus suffers a -8 Size penalty on Stealth rolls and automatically fails unless underwater or camouflaged

Compsognathus

These small and inquisitive theropods seem to find their way everywhere in the Hollow Earth, running down insects and other small animals, as well as stealing the unguarded eggs of larger beasts. With a distinctive chirrup-like call, they are bipedal, have a slender, lightweight body—little larger than that of the domestic housecat found on the surface world—that is covered with soft, downy feathers. They are remarkably bold in behavior, and their continued survival can undoubtedly be attributed to their agility and fecundity.

Johann Wagner was the first to describe Compsognathus, although he obviously had access to a juvenile specimen, as the creatures I see are not nearly so delicate as his description leads one to believe.

The status of Compsognathus among native tribes varies greatly; in some tribes they are regarded as little better than vermin, while in others they are raised as pets, showing an aptitude for learning tricks and a fondness for small lizards as treats. They are also greatly valued by some groups as food, and have a taste and texture not unlike chicken.



Compsognathus

Follower 0

Archetype: *Dinosaur*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 2

Primary Attributes

Body: 1 Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 3 Intelligence: 1

Strength: 1 Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: -2 Initiative: 4

Move: 4 Defense: 6

Perception: 4 Stun: 1

Skills

	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	1	1	2	(1)
Stealth	3	1	6*	(3)
Survival	1	3	4	(2)

Talents

None

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons

	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	-2 L	+2	2 L	(1) L
Claw	-2 L	+2	2 L	(1) L

* *Compsognathus* gains a +2 Size bonus on *Stealth* rolls



Similar Hadrosauridae

Corythosaurus: Slightly smaller than the uncrested *Hadrosaurus*, the *Corythosaurus* has a semi-circular head crest vaguely reminiscent of those found on antique helmets.

Lambeosaurus: Another crested *Hadrosaur*, the *Lambeosaurus* has a hatchet-shaped head adornment.

Parasaurolophus: Also slightly smaller than *Hadrosaurus*, the *Parasaurolophus* has a head crest that sweeps backwards and acts as a resonating chamber for its calls, resulting in a louder and more impressive call than those of other *Hadrosauridae*.

Hadrosaurus

Follower 2

Archetype: *Dinosaur*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 12

Primary Attributes

Body: 6 Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 2 Intelligence: 0

Strength: 6 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2 Initiative: 2

Move: 8 Defense: 6 (8)*

Perception: 6 Stun: 6

Skills

	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	2	8	(4)
Stealth	2	4	4**	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons

	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 N	-2	8 N	(4) N
Head butt	4 N	-2	10 N	(5) N

* *Hadrosaurus* has a thick hide that provides a +2 Passive Defense bonus

** *Hadrosaurus* suffers a -2 Size penalty on *Stealth* rolls

Hadrosaurus

My first experience with *Hadrosaurus* was aural rather than visual: the air around me was split by a deep, reverberating call of tremendous volume. Fearful at the prospect of encountering the sort of beast capable of producing such a resonant call, I approached a nearby lake with some apprehension. There, standing on the banks amidst the shallows, was a herd of *Hadrosaurus*—the duck-billed ornithopods responsible for the remarkable call.

Some of the 30-foot creatures drank deeply of the water, while other members of the herd reared up on two legs to strip nearby vegetation from trees, or bent down on all fours to drag up great masses of water reeds and rushes.

While Joseph Leidy did a marvelous job of describing the *Hadrosaurus* in his “Cretaceous Reptiles of the United States,” the *Hadrosaurus* is not completely bipedal as he assumed; it is quadrupedal for the sake of grazing, but then runs as a biped.

Although seemingly lacking in armament, they thrive in considerable numbers, protecting themselves by walking swiftly into the nearby waters when threatened.

Iguanodon

If you have ever seen the Iguanodons at Crystal Palace in London, I can only say you will find nothing of the sort here. For example, the horn on the nose is simply nonexistent. Before I was taken from the surface world, it had already been determined that the piece was in fact a modified thumb that had been mistakenly placed on the creature's head.

Like Hadrosaurus, Iguanodon can move both quadrupedally and bipedally. These plentiful ornithopods wander the surface of the Hollow World in large herds, several dozen strong, and are the standard prey of a number of carnivorous dinosaurs. Comparatively small at an average of only 17 feet long, their vaguely beak-like mouths that are almost invariably chewing slowly and continuously on some kind of collected plant matter.

Although shorter than their rear limbs, their forelimbs are capable of grasping and pulling apart branches and other choice morsels, and are also armed with large spike-like thumbs, providing the beast's main means of individual defense.

I can vouch that their dung is not unlike that of the modern elephant in aroma and appearance, and is dried for fuel by some natives, or used as a most efficacious fertilizer in the limited agriculture I observed.

Iguanodon

Follower 2

Archetype: <i>Dinosaur</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 12		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 6		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 2		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 6		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 2		Initiative: 2		
Move: 8 (16)*		Defense: 6 (8)**		
Perception: 6		Stun: 6		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	2	8	(4)
Stealth	2	4	4***	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 N	-2	8 N	(4) N
Thumb Spike	2 L	-2	8 L	(4) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Iguanodon has a thick hide that provides a +2 Passive Defense bonus

*** Iguanodon suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Ornithomimus

Flocks of these theropods race across the savannas and plains of the Hollow Earth on long bipedal legs, their long stiff tails providing counterbalance to their equally long, slender necks. In conjunction with their small, beaked heads, they possess a profile superficially resembling that of the modern ostrich.

The extremely swift Ornithomimus stands around seven feet in height and like the ostrich it resembles, is omnivorous—its diet primarily consists of leaves, seeds, insects, and the occasional small lizard.

Its forelimbs are comparatively long, with claws ideal for hooking branches and vegetation, while its legs sport a trio of short claws that make its kick potentially lethal.

My first encounter with these dinosaurs stunned and amazed me. Not only was I pleased to note that Osborn was correct in that Ornithomimus had a beak and not teeth, but it also marked my earliest encounter with the native humans of the Hollow Earth! I was run down and netted by several tribal warriors riding trained Ornithomimus mounts. In those early days, capture was an entirely too common experience for my taste.

Similar Theropods

Struthiomimus: Standing only around five feet in height, the Struthiomimus is otherwise all but identical to the Ornithomimus, though its reduced size precludes its use as a riding mount.



Ornithomimus

Follower 1

Archetype: *Dinosaur*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 4 Intelligence: 0

Strength: 2 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Initiative: 4

Move: 6 (12)* Defense: 6

Perception: 4 Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	2	2	4	(2)
Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Stealth	4	2	6	(3)
Survival	0	4	4	(2)

Talents

* Run (Double Move rating when running)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	0	4 L	(2) L
Claws	0 L	0	4 L	(2) L

Oviraptor

Among the most bizarre looking dinosaurs I have encountered, the Oviraptor is a toothless, beaked theropod with a head crest like that of the modern cassowary, and a pair of long, claw-tipped grasping forelimbs. Its body and forelimbs are covered in feathery plumage, while its long stiff tail ends in a fan of long tail feathers.

Around the same length and height as a small adult human, it generally avoids conflict with anything approaching its own size, favoring small animals and lizards, as well as seashore shellfish.

As my copy of the *American Museum Novitates* article (published through the American Museum of Natural History, of course) by Osborn et al. suggested, the Oviraptor is not actually an "egg stealer." I have yet to observe one stealing and devouring eggs. Indeed, they vigorously guard their own nests, brooding over clutches that range from 12–22 eggs. This behavior is most likely the source of the Oviraptor's name.

The natives frequently hunt this swift runner for its eggs, meat, and large feathers, with the latter making attractive decorative wear.



Oviraptor

Follower 1

Archetype: *Dinosaur*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 5

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 5 Intelligence: 0

Strength: 1 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: -1 Initiative: 5

Move: 6 (12)* Defense: 8

Perception: 4 (6)** Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	1	1	2	(1)
Brawl	1	3	4	(2)
Stealth	5	2	8***	(4)
Survival	0	4	4	(2)

Talents

* Run (Double Move rating when running)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	-1 N	+1	4 N	(2) N
Claws	-1 L	+1	4 L	(2) L

** Oviraptor gains a +2 bonus to sight-related Perception rolls.

*** Oviraptor gains a +1 Size bonus on Stealth rolls.

Pachycephalosaurus

The echoing crack of bone was my first introduction to this beast, as I stumbled across a pair of dueling males, clashing head-to-head in a fight for dominance like the rams of the surface world, but on a gigantic scale. I watched in rapt attention as they lowered their heavily armored skulls, stiff tails out behind them for balance, and then charged each other repeatedly. Given the force with which they collided, I was amazed they

did not seem to unduly harm each other. Having since examined the domed skull of a deceased specimen, I can conclude with confidence that the skull's thickness of approximately 10 inches contributes to this remarkable ability. This creature's fossil has never been seen and classified in my world, so I have named it "Pachycephalosaurus" after its thick head.

Small herds of these bipedal herbivores are found in scattered locations, where they live in a social structure not dissimilar to that of wild goats or sheep. Around 13 feet in length, they possess small forelimbs, and subsist on a diet of leaves and fruit.

Although the native humans have expressed to me their understandable desire to domesticate and raise these dinosaurs as mounts, they have proven too aggressive and stupid to train effectively.



Pachycephalosaurus

Follower 2

Archetype: Dinosaur Motivation: Survival

Style: 0 Health: 10

Primary Attributes

Body: 5 Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 4 Intelligence: 0

Strength: 5 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1 Initiative: 4

Move: 9 Defense: 8 (10)*

Perception: 6 Stun: 5

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	5	5	10	(5)
Stealth	4	1	4**	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	1 N	-1	10 N	(5) N
Head butt	3 N	-1	12 N	(6) L

* Pachycephalosaurus gains a +2 Passive Defense bonus from their bony skull

** Pachycephalosaurus suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Protoceratops

I was pleased to immediately recognize Protoceratops, as this creature was discussed in great detail by the scientific community in the 1920s. These ceratopsians are frequently raised as livestock by native tribes and are commonly encountered in the wild. Each the size of a large pig, they are placid creatures, similar in appearance to miniature Triceratops, albeit lacking the famous three horns of the larger ceratopsian, and possessing a much shorter neck frill.

Protoceratops graze on plant matter using their beak-like mouths, and when slaughtered, provide several hundred pounds of meat quite similar to pork in texture and taste. Fortunately, they reproduce quickly, filling their dugout nests with leathery eggs that produce many hatchlings when not consumed first by scavengers. I heartily recommend a meal of Protoceratops chops and eggs to any fellow traveler in this strange land.

Protoceratops

Follower 1

Archetype: Dinosaur

Motivation: Survival

Style: 0

Health: 8

Primary Attributes

Body: 4 Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 2 Intelligence: 0

Strength: 2 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Initiative: 2

Move: 4 (8)* Defense: 6 (10)**

Perception: 4 Stun: 4

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	2	4	6	(3)
Stealth	2	2	4	(3)
Survival	0	4	6	(2)

Talents

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 N	0	6 N	(3) N
Head butt	2 N	0	8 N	(4) N

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

**Protoceratops has a head plate that provides a +4 Passive Defense bonus to attacks from the front

Spinosaurus

Another dinosaur recently discovered on the surface world (by a German, if memory serves me right) and found living in the Hollow Earth, is the formidable Spinosaurus.

Greater in length and slimmer in build than the Tyrannosaurus rex, Spinosaurus is an unmistakable theropod with its long, narrow snout filled with sharp teeth, its forelimbs strong, long, and clawed. Lacking the brutish appearance of the Tyrannosaur, it is nonetheless a terrifying sight. The great sail of flesh and bone, thrusting upward six feet in height from the creature's back, serves to make it appear even larger and more impressive than it already is.

My experiences with this dinosaur are that it is generally opportunistic rather than actively predacious—equally content to snap up fish in the shallows of lakes or drive off other predators and scavenge their kills, as it is to deliberately stalk and kill. It also seems far more focused on comparatively small and medium-sized prey, rather than tackling larger opponents such as sauropods. Given the fact that we humans are light snacks to such a creature, it represents a source of great peril.



Spinosaurus

Follower 3

Archetype: <i>Dinosaur</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 16		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 8		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 6		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 6		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 4		Initiative: 6		
Move: 12		Defense: 10		
Perception: 6		Stun: 8		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	4	12	(6)
Stealth	6	2	4*	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	6 L	-4	14 L	(7) L
Claw	2 L	-4	10 L	(5) L
Stomp	4 N	-4	12 N	(6) N

* Spinosaurus suffers a -4 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Stegosaurus

With its profusion of upright back plates and spiked tail, the 14-foot-high and 30-foot-long Stegosaurus is a curious spectacle. This slow-moving herbivore spends a great deal of time grazing on low-lying foliage. Popular academic opinion held that the small brain cavity was indicative of a stupid animal, but quite to the contrary, I have found that the natives train and work this surprisingly gentle creature in much the same way as elephants on the surface world.

Similar Stegosaurids

Kentrosaurus: The Kentrosaurus of the Hollow Earth is only marginally smaller than Stegosaurus, and is certainly less prolific. The upright plates along its back are decidedly narrower than those of Stegosaurus, becoming increasingly narrow along the dinosaur's back, effectively forming twin rows of spikes along the rear of the back and all along the tail. Unlike Stegosaurus, it is capable of rearing up on its hind legs to reach higher vegetation.

Stegosaurus

Follower 2

Archetype: *Dinosaur*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 12

Primary Attributes

Body: 6

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 2

Intelligence: 0

Strength: 6

Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2

Initiative: 2

Move: 8 (16)*

Defense: 6 (8)**

Perception: 6

Stun: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	4	10	(5)
Stealth	2	2	2***	(1)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Sweep (Reduced penalties to Sweep attacks)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 N	-2	8 N	(4) N
Tail	4 L	-2	12 L	(6) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Stegosaurus gains a +2 Passive Defense bonus from their back plates

*** Stegosaurus suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Therizinosaurus

The discovery of this comical and amazing creature left me shaking my head in astonishment at the peculiarities of nature when I first beheld it slashing down and devouring leafy tree branches at the edge of a forest. There have been no fossils found on the surface world—at least not while I still lived there—so I am compelled to name this fellow “Therizinosaurus,” in honor of its scythe-like claws.

Approximately 40 feet long, it waddles atop two thickset, four-clawed legs, with wide hips and a potbelly leading to narrower shoulders, and a long neck topped by a small, beaked head. Covered in feathers everywhere save its head and feet, its strangest feature by far is its arms, these being slim, mobile, and longer than I am tall, each with three fingers, each digit tipped with a three-foot-long claw.

Placid in nature, it seems to spend nearly all of its time waddling from tree to tree, slashing down and grasping foliage to cram into its constantly-chewing



beak. This should not give the mistaken impression that it is an easy target for predators, for I observed it inflict considerable wounds upon an overconfident velociraptor.

Therizinosaurus

Follower 2

Archetype: *Dinosaur*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 14

Primary Attributes

Body: 6

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 2

Intelligence: 0

Strength: 6

Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 4

Initiative: 2

Move: 8

Defense: 4

Perception: 4

Stun: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	2	8	(4)
Stealth	2	4	2*	(1)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	4 N	-4	8 N	(4) N
Claw	6 L	-4	10 L	(5) L
Stomp	4 N	-4	8 N	(4) N

*Therizinosaurus suffers a -4 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

Triceratops

With its protective neck frill and trio of horns, the Triceratops is the quintessential Ceratopsidae, though certainly not the only one I observed in the Hollow Earth. Still, this distinctive dinosaur is quite a remarkable sight! They grow to approximately 28 feet long and 9 feet high, with a head a third the size of its sturdy, strong-limbed body. They live in mid-sized herds of 20-40 beasts, and prefer to eat plains grasses.

The Triceratops is one of the primary food sources for well-equipped natives, but it must be approached with caution. If its young are threatened, the beasts become as dangerous as any carnivore, if not more so. Its formidable horns are designed for charging thick-skinned predators, making them more than capable of goring a human with a quick stroke.

Similar Ceratops

Monoclonius: All but identical to Triceratops, Monoclonius lacks the telltale brow horns, instead having only a single large horn upon its snout.

Pentaceratops: Although slightly smaller than Triceratops at 27 feet long, Pentaceratops has a much larger neck frill. It also has five horns: three identical to those found on Triceratops, plus one under each eye.

Styracosaurus: Somewhat smaller than Triceratops, Styracosaurus is more aggressive in appearance. Its neck frill is crowned with half a dozen bony spikes, each up to two feet in length. Like Monoclonius, it lacks the dual brow horns of Triceratops, but possesses a large, long nasal horn.

Triceratops

Follower 2

Archetype: Dinosaur

Motivation: Survival

Style: 0

Health: 12

Primary Attributes

Body: 6

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 2

Intelligence: 0

Strength: 6

Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2

Initiative: 2

Move: 8 (16)*

Defense: 6 (10)**

Perception: 6

Stun: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	4	10	(5)
Stealth	2	2	2***	(1)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 N	-2	10 N	(5) N
Horns	2 L	-2	10 L	(5) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Triceratops has a head plate that provides a +4 Passive Defense bonus to attacks from the front

*** Triceratops suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Tyrannosaurus Rex

On the surface world, the famous Tyrannosaurus rex is usually presumed to be the most vicious predator in the history of all predators. Little did we know that even more frightening creatures existed! This is not to say that one should discount the ferocity of the "Tyrant Lizard" or its effectiveness as a predator. I do try most ardently to avoid being in the vicinity of this creature.

This startlingly speedy predator stands over 25 feet high, weighs more than 10 tons, and employs its dagger-sharp teeth quite effectively, if not neatly. A myriad of scavengers (including humans) stealthily and carefully follow the Tyrannosaur to feast on the ample leftovers that the careless beast leaves on its prey. It typically hunts herbivores, but a hungry Tyrannosaur will not hesitate to go after nearby predators.

There is great respect (and no small amount of fear!) among the natives for the Tyrannosaurus. On the rare occasion that one is killed, natives will scavenge the hide to make armor or shields. Indeed, I was once gifted a Tyrannosaurus rex shield when I shared my knowledge of the local flora with a grateful tribe. While I didn't have particular need of a shield, I was able to trade it for the services of a truly wonderful and talented guide who had almost a magical way with the beasts of this world.

Tyrannosaurus Rex

Follower 3

Archetype: Dinosaur

Motivation: Survival

Style: 0

Health: 16

Primary Attributes

Body: 8

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 4

Intelligence: 0

Strength: 8

Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 4

Initiative: 4

Move: 12

Defense: 8

Perception: 6

Stun: 8

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
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Brawl	8	4	14	(7)
Stealth	4	2	2*	(1)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	6 L	-4	16 L	(8) L
Claw	2 L	-4	12 L	(6) L
Stomp	4 N	-4	14 N	(7) N

* Tyrannosaurs suffers a -4 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Velociraptor

I have given the name Velociraptor to this genus, although it was originally reported as being only the size of a turkey in the journals, and these fellows are much larger. The proportions are remarkably the same, especially the presence of a sickle-shaped claw on each hind limb, so I can only assume this is the evolved form of that dinosaur. In the Hollow Earth, this bipedal carnivore stands about five feet tall and eleven feet long, with a most notable three-inch sickle-shaped claw protruding above and from the foot. The forelimbs are strong enough to "bear hug" a human, grasping with three claws. The sickle-shaped claws are then used to stab or slash at vital areas such as the neck or abdomen. Their primary prey in the Hollow Earth is humankind, so be extremely wary of this uncannily intelligent pack hunter!

Similar Theropods

Dromaeosaurus: Wolf-sized theropod with a similar, though smaller, sickle-shaped claw on the foot.

Troodon: Marginally smaller than Velociraptor, and slimmer in build, Troodon is hard to distinguish from the former at a glance. It has larger eyes and demonstrates cunning perhaps even surpassing that of the larger theropod. Fortunately, unlike Velociraptor, it does not seem to have made the hunting of humans part of its habitual activity.

Velociraptor

Follower 2

Archetype: Dinosaur

Motivation: Survival

Style: 0

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 5

Intelligence: 1

Strength: 3

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 6

Move: 8 (16)*

Defense: 8

Perception: 6

Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	3	1	4	(2)
Brawl	3	5	8	(4)
Empathy	1	1	2	(1)
Stealth	5	3	8	(4)
Survival	1	5	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

* Run (Double Move rating when running)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Claw	0 L	0	8 L	(4) L

PREHISTORIC REPTILES

After thoroughly examining and observing the wildlife in the Hollow Earth, I have taken it upon myself to reclassify some of the dinosaur specimens as reptiles, due to their noted similarities to reptiles on the surface.

Archelon

Of the many marvels I have witnessed in this mysterious realm, happening upon a female Archelon as she laid her eggs in the sand of a beach certainly ranks among the most remarkable. As I made my way onto a beach from the edge of a forested area, I came across the spectacle of this huge oceanic turtle lying on the shore nearby, casting great clouds of sand into the air with her flippers as she strove to create a nest for her eggs.

I watched in rapt attention as this vast turtle, the diameter of her shell easily twice my height, laid her clutch of eggs in the pit she had excavated, and covered them before dragging her great bulk back across the sands and into the waters beyond. My reverie over, I eagerly dug up the eggs and dined well that day.

Archelon

Follower 2

Archetype: Animal

Motivation: Survival

Style: 0

Health: 12

Primary Attributes

Body: 6

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 2

Intelligence: 0

Strength: 6

Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2

Initiative: 2

Move: 8 (4)*

Defense: 6 (8)**

Perception: 6

Stun: 6

Skills

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	2	8	(4)
Stealth	2	4	4***	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 L	-2	8 L	(4) L
Flipper	2 N	-2	8 N	(4) N

* Archelon uses its full Move rating when swimming but only half Move on land.

** Archelon has a tough shell that provides a +2 Passive Defense bonus.

*** Archelon suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls unless underwater or camouflaged.

Ichthyosaurus

Although I was always loath to cast myself upon the waters of the surface world—which did not have nearly the hazards of those of the Hollow Earth—my early zeal in attempting to escape this strange land did include a lamentably foolish excursion atop a crudely constructed raft.

The only positive experience of this brief foray was when a pod of curious Ichthyosaurs surfaced around my craft. They circled but kept their distance, no doubt due to the presence of a baby Ichthyosaurus.

The streamlined reptiles regarded me with huge circular eyes, their behavior and outline in the water bringing dolphins to mind. Their vertical shark-like tails propelled them gracefully through the water, their movements guided by two pairs of fin-like limbs. After a few moments spent observing the strange intruder to their watery home, they dove rapidly in pursuit of a shoal of silvery fish barely visible in the depths below.



Other Ichthyosauridae

Eurhinosaurus: Based upon descriptions given me from several fishermen of a coastal tribe, Eurhinosaurus also thrives in the Hollow Earth's salt waters. Similar in size and appearance to Ichthyosaurus, it differs in a single extremely obvious manner: it possesses an upper jaw twice the length as that of the Ichthyosaurus, covered with sideways-pointing teeth, much like a sawfish. No doubt it uses this saw-like snout to dig for crustaceans on the seabed, just like its surface world counterpart.

Ichthyosaurus

Follower 2

Archetype: Animal

Motivation: Survival

Style: 0

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 2

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 4

Intelligence: 0

Strength: 2

Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 4

Move: 12 (0)*

Defense: 6

Perception: 4 (8)**

Stun: 2

Skills

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	2	4	6	(3)
Stealth	4	2	6	(3)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

** Keen Sense (+4 bonus to sight-related Perception rolls)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Tail	0 N	0	6 N	(3) N

* Ichthyosaurus doubles its Move rating when swimming, but cannot move outside of the water.

Kronosaurus

One mercy for which I am extremely thankful is that my sole Kronosaurus encounter thus far was with a newly washed-up carcass. Eager to study it before the inevitable appearance of scavengers, I hurriedly and efficiently examined its physiology and the contents of its ruptured stomach.

The massive pliosaur, clearly a full-grown adult, was roughly 35 feet in length from tip of snout to end of tail. It was a streamlined and powerful predator with two pairs of huge flippers; a short, tapering tail; short, muscular neck; and long jaws lined with sharp, pointed teeth up front, giving way to rounder teeth in the back. The length of the head (nearly a third of the entire creature's length) and the great size of its jaws left me in awe.



The contents of its stomach painted a different picture than expected from its physical size; rather than being filled with only huge fish or the remains of other similarly large prey, it was awash with the crushed shells and partially digested bodies of ammonites, as well as all manner of squids.

The Kronosaurus was so formidable a creature that I find it difficult to imagine a higher predator under the water. I could only assume that it was stricken with a disease or died of old age.

Kronosaurus

Follower 3

Archetype: *Animal*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 16

Primary Attributes

Body: 8

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 4

Intelligence: 0

Strength: 8

Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 4

Initiative: 4

Move: 24 (0)*

Defense: 8

Perception: 4 (8)**

Stun: 8

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	8	4	14	(7)
Stealth	4	2	2***	(1)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

** Keen Sense (+4 bonus to smell-related Perception rolls)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	6 L	-4	16 L	(8) L
Flipper	4 N	-4	14 N	(7) N

* Kronosaurus doubles its Move rating when swimming, but cannot move outside of the water.

*** Kronosaurus suffers a -4 Size penalty on Stealth rolls unless under water or camouflaged.

Ornithocheirus

Although many are familiar with Marsh's Pteranodon, here in the Hollow Earth the reigning reptile of the air is Seeley's Ornithocheirus. It is most distinctive in that it has a long beak ending in a bulb, or "keel," and that the beak is equipped with teeth. With a wide variance attributable to age, it has a wingspan of ten feet and stand almost equally tall when on all fours. They are remarkably light for their size, no doubt due to fragile, hollow bones. Males are noticeably larger than females.

Unlike birds, their wings are huge flaps of skin stretched between fingerlike extensions. Although it had been speculated that these wingtips spread from forelimb to hind limb, in the specimens I observed (and ate) the wings attach at the ribs. They also have fine hair, not feathers, and are more suited to gliding and diving than true flapping, although they do that from time to time. Unlike most reptiles, they are warm-blooded, which some of my colleagues had suspected. They have acute sight enabling them to spot prey from

hundreds of feet in the air, but thankfully humans are not part of their diet.

Upon hatching, the Ornithocheirus grows to about half its adult size in the first two years, and then slows to achieve full adult size after five years. This gives a patient person plenty of time for training. I have witnessed more than one tribe of natives breeding the Ornithocheirus to serve rather like a Cormorant of the Orient—bringing its master fish from the seas.

Ornithocheirus

Follower 2

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 10		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 4		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 6		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 4		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 2		Initiative: 6		
Move: 10 (5)*		Defense: 8		
Perception: 4 (8)**		Stun: 4		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	4	4	8	(4)
Stealth	6	2	6***	(3)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
** Keen Sense (+4 bonus on sight-based Perception rolls)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 L	-2	8 L	(4) L
Claws	2 L	-2	8 L	(4) L

* Ornithocheirus uses its full Move rating for flying, and half the move rating when on the ground

*** Ornithocheirus suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Plesiosaurus

Although the Plesiosaurus has been described as “a snake threaded through the shell of a turtle,” it looks decidedly less so in person. Up close it is certainly terrifying, with its very long neck supporting a small head filled with long, sharp, curved teeth. It uses its long neck to dart quickly and snap up fish. I relaxed only when I discovered them to be more interested in fish than myself.

Two pairs of wide flippers, front ones slightly larger than the back, help propel the flattened, barrel-shaped body through the water at unbelievably fast speeds. Adults range in size from 7–30 feet long.

Examination of several carcasses showed that the Plesiosaur has stomach stones, rather like penguins or crocodiles sometimes have. I can only assume this weight in the stomach assists in allowing the Plesiosaur to rest at the bottom of the lake. The lungs are quite large, and the stones may be useful in counteracting the creature’s natural buoyancy.

Other Plesiosaurs

Elasmosaurus: Well-known among paleontologists for beginning the famous Bone Wars between Marsh and Cope (Cope mistakenly assembled the first specimen with its head on the tip of the tail, of course. It still makes me chuckle, even though most modern reptiles have short necks and long tails—hence his confusion.), the small head and long neck of Elasmosaurus is visible even from the beaches. The neck of Elasmosaurus constitutes approximately half of the total 45-foot body length.

Plesiosaurus

Follower 3

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 16		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 8		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 4		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 8		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 4		Initiative: 4		
Move: 12 (6)*		Defense: 8		
Perception: 6		Stun: 8		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	8	2	12	(6)
Stealth	4	4	4**	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	6 L	-4	14 L	(7) L
Flipper	4 N	-4	12 N	(6) N

* Plesiosaurus uses its full Move rating for swimming, and half its Move rating when on land

** Plesiosaurus suffers a -4 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Sarcosuchus

When taking water at any large freshwater body in the Hollow Earth, I advise a heightened level of alertness,

not just for potential attack from behind, or the possibility of being trampled by any heavy herbivores watering there, but for possible attack from the creatures living in its depths.

Taking my fill of water one day, I watched a nearby herd of Iguanodon warily, lest I be crushed underfoot. It was then that the nearby waters erupted, and a crocodile of staggering size lunged forth to seize an infant Iguanodon between its massive jaws, dragging it quickly beneath the surface with little effort.

Moving swiftly back to safety, I spent a goodly number of hours that day observing the waters closely, whereupon I saw on several occasions the 30–40 feet long crocodilian forms of what I have chosen to call “Sarcosuchus” watching the shallows while partially submerged. That their heads alone were longer than I am tall left me with a solid impression of their immense power.



Other Prehistoric Crocodiliae

Deinosuchus: The other mammoth crocodilian I have observed is Deinosuchus, of a size with Sarcosuchus, but with a more alligator-like build and broader snout.

Sarcosuchus

Follower 3

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 16		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 8		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 4		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 8		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 4		Initiative: 4		
Move: 12 (6)*		Defense: 8 (10)**		
Perception: 6		Stun: 8		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	8	2	12	(6)
Stealth	4	4	4***	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	4 L	–4	12 L	(6) L
Tail	4 N	–4	12 N	(6) N

* Sarcosuchus uses the full Move rating when swimming and half Move on land

** Sarcosuchus has a thick bony hide that provides a +2 Passive Defense bonus

*** Sarcosuchus suffers a –4 Size penalty on Stealth rolls unless underwater or camouflaged

PREHISTORIC MAMMALS

Despite competing with the many dinosaurs and other prehistoric reptiles of the Hollow Earth, ancient mammals have managed to survive against the odds.

Andrewsarchus

The Andrewsarchus is a creature reviled by me, for it forced me to spend an inordinate amount of time nestled in the relative security of a rather uncomfortable tree. While sketching a queer plant one memorable day, a deep, rumbling, canine-like growl caught my attention, and a monstrous wolf-like beast stalked out of the undergrowth, great yellow eyes fixed squarely upon me. With all haste, I clambered up the tree I was resting against, as high as was possible, hoping I was out of reach.



Chapter Six

The beast turned out to be an *Andrewsarchus*: a creature with four proportionately short legs bearing a body and head about twelve feet long, standing approximately six feet high. Its wolf-like head was disproportionately large, its immense and powerful muzzle stained with gore from prior feedings. The accursed thing paced about the base of the tree for some time, eyeing me keenly, before settling down to sleep. Trapped, unwilling to sleep for fear of falling, I spent several long hours high in the tree before the beast finally awoke and departed.

Although *Andrewsarchus* is more of a scavenger than predator, they have been known to hunt animals of the same or smaller size as themselves, and they are certainly a threat to humans. Anyone who has witnessed the great jaws crunch apart the femur of a *Brontotherium* will regard them with a healthy fear.

Andrewsarchus

Follower 2

Archetype: Animal		Motivation: Survival		
Style: 0		Health: 10		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 4		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 4		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 6		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 2		Initiative: 4		
Move: 10 (20)*		Defense: 6		
Perception: 4 (8)**		Stun: 4		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	4	10	(5)
Stealth	4	2	4***	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
** Keen Sense (+4 bonus on smell-based Perception rolls)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	4 L	-2	12 L	(6) N

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

*** *Andrewsarchus* suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Archaeotherium

This fearsome creature must be approached cautiously, as it has long since learned that humans are its enemy. The native tribes delight in the succulent meat and thick hides of the giant boar, so the hunting parties frequent-

ly seek them out, in spite of the long, sharp tusks and aggressive nature of the creature in question. The boars are also protected by a very thick skin covered with stiff hair, making it dramatically more challenging for lesser predators to wear them down with small lacerations.

The giant boars are typically eight to nine feet in length and live in small burrows which they dig out of the forest floor with their tusks and hooves. Their diet consists primarily of roots and tubers, but they are omnivores and will not pass up carrion.

Archaeotherium

Follower 2

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 10		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 5		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 3		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 5		Willpower: 5		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0		Initiative: 5		
Move: 8 (16)*		Defense: 8		
Perception: 5		Stun: 5		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	5	3	8	(5)
Stealth	3	3	6	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
Quick Reflexes (+2 Initiative rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Tusks	2 L	0	10 L	(5) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

Aurochs

I was delighted to run across herds of aurochs in my wanderings, as they have been extinct on the surface since 1627. The aurochs of the Hollow Earth is notably larger than modern cattle, the bull standing six feet high at the shoulder and the cow only slightly smaller. Males have black coats with a pale stripe down the spine, while females and calves have reddish coats.

Most aurochs roam wild in large herds—relying on safety in numbers—over the plains and forests of the lowlands, but some have been domesticated by native tribes both to help with farming and as a source of meat. Many native tribes hunt the wild aurochs for food, but

they are not easy targets! Their large, lyre-shaped front horns are well adapted to ramming enemies, and have dissuaded many a would-be predator.

Other Bovidae

Pelorovis: Approximately the same size as the aurochs, the dun-colored pelorovis has the build of a modern water buffalo, but with longer legs, a longer skull, and more massive horns—between six and eight feet long, semi-circular, pointing away from the head.

Aurochs

Follower 2

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 10		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 5		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 4		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 5		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 1		Initiative: 4		
Move: 9 (18)*		Defense: 8		
Perception: 6		Stun: 5		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	5	5	10	(5)
Stealth	4	1	4**	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Perception rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Horns	3 L	-1	12 L	(6) L
Kick	1 N	-1	10 N	(5) N

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Aurochs suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Brontotherium

Clearly an ancestor of the modern rhinoceros, the Brontotherium is a large, powerful animal, standing roughly nine feet tall at the shoulder. Brontotherium looks exactly like a larger version of its descendent save for the coarse brown hair covering its hide, and its large Y-shaped horn.

The creature is aggressive and ill-tempered in the extreme, tolerating no perceived intruders and swiftly charging to drive them off its vicinity. Fortunately, unless it feels threatened or is otherwise irritated

(which, admittedly, is quite often), it seems happy to spend its time grazing on low-lying shrubbery.

Brontotherium

Follower 2

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 12		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 6		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 2		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 6		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 2		Initiative: 2		
Move: 8 (16)*		Defense: 6 (8)**		
Perception: 6		Stun: 6		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	4	10	(5)
Stealth	2	2	2***	(1)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
Alertness (+2 Perception rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Horn	4 N	-2	12 N	(6) N
Kick	2 N	-2	10 N	(5) N

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Brontotherium has a thick hide that provides +2 Passive Defense bonus

*** Brontotherium suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls



Cave Bear

While hunting for berries with a lovely tribeswoman one fine day, we stumbled onto a sloth of cave bears sunning themselves on some rocks. Cave bears are much like brown bears on the surface world, but they are approximately 30% larger than their counterparts. At over 14 feet tall and 2,000 pounds, they are more than a little intimidating. Fortunately for my companion and myself, it was not cub season and the bears had recently eaten. We were able to back away slowly without arousing the ire of a single bear. While it is unusual for a cave bear to attack, they will do so if they feel threatened. The sharp claws and powerful arms of a cave bear are formidable weapons, and it is best to avoid tussling with one.

These omnivores will eat just about anything. They primarily subsist on berries, roots, and fungi, but they also enjoy fish, small mammals, and even insects.

Other Ursidae

Giant Short-Faced Bear (*Arctodus simus*): Standing six feet at the shoulder when on all fours, the giant short-faced bear is a plains-dwelling beast, its muzzle shorter and broader than any other bear. Its legs are proportionately longer, suited to long-distance running, and it has an uncanny ability to sniff out carcasses from considerable distances away. It is purely carnivorous, and generally a scavenger rather than active predator, though it does prey on slow-moving animals with some frequency.

Cave Bear

Follower 2

Archetype: *Animal*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 10

Primary Attributes

Body: 5

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 4

Intelligence: 0

Strength: 5

Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1

Initiative: 4

Move: 9 (18)*

Defense: 8

Perception: 6

Stun: 5

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	5	5	10	(5)
Stealth	4	1	4**	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	1 L	-1	10 L	(5) L
Claw	1 L	-1	10 L	(5) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Cave bear suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Chalicotherium

Another of nature's oddities, the Chalicotherium can best be described as a bizarre creature combining traits of horse, ape, and sloth. Approximately eight feet tall and covered in short hair, it has a gorilla-like posture and gait, with short rear legs that walk normally and long front limbs used to knuckle-walk. The head and neck are distinctly horse-like, however, and the tail short, while the long, powerful arms feature grasping hands armed with large, heavy claws much like those of the giant ground sloth.

Chalicotherium uses its long arms and large claws to reach and strip foliage, but it's worth noting that they make formidable weapons if the beast is attacked. Fortunately, it is relatively docile unless actively threatened, and favors soft vegetation over stranded explorers.



Chalicotherium

Follower 2

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 10		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 6		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 3		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 6		Willpower: 3		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 1		Initiative: 3		
Move: 9		Defense: 8		
Perception: 5		Stun: 6		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	2	8	(4)
Stealth	3	4	6*	(3)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
Alertness (+2 Perception rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	1 L	-1	8 L	(4) L
Claw	3 L	-1	10 L	(5) L

* Chalicotherium suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Dire Wolf

I once had the mischance to be scented by a dire wolf. At about two hundred pounds, these monstrosities are significantly larger than their grey wolf cousins. They are further distinguished by their long, thin legs that are designed for distance running and—most significant to me at the time—their massive jaws which boast perhaps twice the crushing power of any canine species on the surface world. Worse, I made the mistake of venturing into a tundra, where I had no chance of losing or breaking the trail of my scent. For what felt like days (and may have been), I stumbled forward, numbed by exhaustion, and constantly looking back over my shoulder to see the beast in the distance, growing closer with each passing mile. If the dire wolf had been a member of a pack, he surely would have driven me into an ambush, but the primitive brain of these prowlers seems to reduce their ability to coordinate, and they spend much more time hunting alone than as a group. Had I not managed to reach the edge of the tundra where I found a swiftly moving river and a floating log ready to carry me downstream, my journal would surely have stopped here.

Dire Wolf

Follower 2

Archetype: Animal		Motivation: Survival		
Style: 0		Health: 7		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 3		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 5		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 3		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0		Initiative: 5		
Move: 8 (16)*		Defense: 8		
Perception: 4 (8)**		Stun: 3		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	3	5	8	(4)
Brawl	3	5	8	(4)
Stealth	5	1	6	(3)
Survival	0	4	6	(2)
Talents				
** Keen Sense (+4 bonus on smell-based Perception rolls)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 L	0	10 L	(5) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

Dorudon

While riding atop the back of a pterosaur—an adventure in and of itself—I was carried swiftly across the saltwater of the inner sea, when I saw what I took to be a pod of pilot whales in the waters below. Swooping down for a closer look, I observed that it was in fact a pod of half a dozen dorudon—early predatory cetaceans. As best as I could estimate, the adults averaged 15 feet in length, with streamlined forms, typically cetacean tails, two pairs of strong flippers clearly evolved from legs, and narrow, almost dolphin-like heads.

They were coursing through the waves in pursuit of a shoal of fish, what I presume to be their typical diet. All in all, it was definitely one of the most peaceful experiences since my abduction.

Dorudon

Follower 2

Archetype: Animal		Motivation: Survival	
Style: 0		Health: 12	
Primary Attributes			
Body: 6		Charisma: 0	
Dexterity: 2		Intelligence: 0	

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Strength: 6

Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2

Initiative: 2

Move: 16 (0)*

Defense: 6

Perception: 6

Stun: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	2	8	(4)
Stealth	2	4	4**	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 L	-2	8 L	(4) L
Tail	4 N	-2	10 N	(5) N

* Dorudon doubles its Move rating when swimming, but cannot move outside of the water

** Dorudon suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls unless underwater or camouflaged

Giant Unicorn

I once scolded a pair of Ph.D. candidates for using the term “giant unicorn” to describe the *Elasmotherium rhinocerotidae*, but now that I have seen live specimens I might not be so quick with my rebuke. These animals are neither magical nor horses of any sort, but are rather a relative of the rhinoceros and were common to the Pleistocene era. Viewing them from a distance, one might easily be forgiven the mythological allusion due to the six-foot, scimitar-like horn which these creatures grow from roughly the center of their long heads. They are also somewhat more slender than the modern rhino, and more prone to galloping away from an enemy than to charging one—although I have witnessed them use their massive horns to devastating effect when cornered and when their young are threatened by predators.

With the size, speed, and docile disposition of the so-called giant unicorns, I imagine they would make superb mounts and beasts of burden. Still, I know of no natives who have domesticated these creatures. Perhaps a six-ton, twenty-foot-long, sharp-horned animal is best left to roam free in the grassy plains.

Elasmotherium

Follower 2

Archetype: Animal

Motivation: Survival

Style: 0

Health: 10

Primary Attributes

Body: 6

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 4

Intelligence: 0

Strength: 6

Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2

Initiative: 4

Move: 10 (20)*

Defense: 8

Perception: 4

Stun: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	4	10	(5)
Stealth	4	2	4**	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Horn	4 L	-2	12 L	(6) L
Kick	2 N	-2	10 N	(5) N

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Elasmotherium suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Entelodont

Among the more repulsive creatures I have chronicled, Entelodonts are aggressive omnivores: boar-like scavengers with a surly disposition. They are apt to devour any carrion they come across, or to finish off the weak, ill, and even their own sick, while supplementing their diet with any plant matter they can swallow.

These beasts reek of ordure and meat, their long canines and large incisors often encrusted with the remains of whatever they have recently devoured, their faces covered in bony lumps that protect them during their frequent clashes. Standing around seven feet tall at the shoulder, they are also extremely noisy, squealing and grunting constantly, as well as squabbling over food.

Individually they are quite intimidating; in a pack, as they normally are, they are downright terrifying, easily driving off otherwise more powerful predators from their kills.



Entelodont

Follower 2

Archetype: Animal Motivation: Survival
Style: 0 Health: 10

Primary Attributes

Body: 5 Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 4 Intelligence: 0
Strength: 5 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1 Initiative: 4
Move: 9 (18)* Defense: 8
Perception: 6 Stun: 5

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	5	5	10	(5)
Stealth	4	1	4**	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness (+2 Perception rating)
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	3 L	-1	12 L	(6) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Entelodont suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Hagerman Horse

This Equus is extinct on the surface, but is the ancestor of the modern horse. They stand between 45-60 inches tall and weigh between 400-900 pounds. They're a stocky, hardy breed with a donkey-like skull. Their coloring is wildly varying but they all have in common some striping on their backs, reminiscent of a zebra.

One finds the horses grazing on tall grasses alongside riverbeds, most often with two or three "protectors" watching over the herd. The creatures have been domesticated by several native tribes and are a valuable asset used for hunting, transportation, and on the occasions when times are lean—for food.

Hagerman Horse

Follower 1

Archetype: Animal Motivation: Survival
Style: 0 Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 4 Intelligence: 0
Strength: 3 Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1 Initiative: 4
Move: 7 (14)* Defense: 6
Perception: 4 Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	3	3	6	(3)
Brawl	3	2	5	(2)
Stealth	4	1	4**	(3)
Survival	0	4	4	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Kick	0 N	-1	4 N	(2) N

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Hagerman Horse suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Glyptodon

After a narrow escape from a predator, I once found myself struggling up a grassy riverbank to come face to face with a Glyptodon, which was surely one of the most peaceful and ponderous creatures I have encountered in this otherwise savage land. Indifferent to the point of obtuseness, one can understand why this herbivore need not be overly cautious about predators: its lumbering, two-ton body is amply protected by a shell of interlocking grey, bony plates, essentially making it the largest armadillo the world has ever seen. Should a hunter manage to pierce its unprotected belly, however, those plates could prove quite useful, as I learned a short time later when I housed with a small tribe who built body armor and even their shelters from scavenged Glyptodon shell fragments.

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Glyptodon

Follower 2

Archetype: Animal

Style: 0

Motivation: Survival

Health: 16

Primary Attributes

Body: 8

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 2

Intelligence: 0

Strength: 4

Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2

Initiative: 2

Move: 6 (12)*

Defense: 8 (10)**

Perception: 4

Stun: 8

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	4	2	6	(3)
Stealth	2	4	4***	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Robust (+2 Health rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 L	-2	6 L	(3) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Glyptodon has a tough shell that provides a +2 Defense bonus

*** Glyptodon suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Hyaenodon

A pack of Hyaenodons is a frightening sight, indeed! The scientific name means “hyena teeth” because the teeth are very strong and worn like the modern hyena, but there is no relation between the two creatures. The Hyaenodons are dog-like in appearance, the size of a small rhino, and they are formidable and effective predators. On the surface world, scientists hypothesized that the large species of Hyaenodon hunted alone, but that is not the case when they’re hunting dinosaurs! A single Hyaenodon is strong enough to take down a Smilodon, and a pack can take down even so mighty a beast as a Triceratops.

Hyaenodon

Follower 2

Archetype: Animal

Style: 0

Motivation: Survival

Health: 9

Primary Attributes

Body: 5

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 4

Intelligence: 1

Strength: 5

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1

Initiative: 5

Move: 9 (18)*

Defense: 8

Perception: 4 (8)**

Stun: 5

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	5	1	6	(3)
Brawl	5	5	10	(5)
Stealth	4	1	4***	(2)
Survival	1	3	6	(3)

Talents

** Keen Sense (+4 bonus on smell-based Perception rolls)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	3 L	-1	12 L	(6) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

*** Hyaenodon suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Irish Elk

On the surface world, the Irish elk would have little to fear. It is taller at its shoulder than the tallest of men, and its thick rack of antlers spreads twice as wide as the beast is tall. Here in the Hollow Earth, this deer is the preferred target of predators ranging from Rocs to Tyrannosaurs to human beings. (I can vouch that their meat is rich and flavorful, if a bit gamey). Yet even pitted against these creatures, the Irish elk’s swift feet and sharp horns make it no easy prey.

Irish Elk

Follower 2

Archetype: Animal

Style: 0

Motivation: Survival

Health: 8

Primary Attributes

Body: 4

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 4

Intelligence: 0

Strength: 4

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1

Initiative: 4

Move: 8 (16)*

Defense: 6

Perception: 5

Stun: 4

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	4	4	8	(4)
Brawl	4	4	8	(4)
Stealth	4	3	6**	(3)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Antlers	3 L	-1	10 L	(5) L
Kick	1 N	-1	8 N	(4) N

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Irish elk suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Megatherium

This giant sloth is as enormous as it is lethargic. At five tons and 20 feet tall, it supports itself by digging up roots and harvesting leaves and bark. But don't let its relaxed attitude fool you; I once observed a rather foolish pair of lizardmen learn a hard lesson: the sloth is only slow when it wants to be and that its long claws can be used for more than burrowing.

Rather than hunting them, a better use for these passive giants is to adopt their burrow. A single adult will dig a new hole for itself every few weeks, leaving the old hole available for a new tenant. These holes make ideal locations to escape the hot sun—not to mention the eyes of predators. But beware: many other creatures seek out these second-hand homes, and more than a few are willing to fight for them.

Megatherium

Follower 2

Archetype: Animal
Style: 0
Motivation: Survival
Health: 12

Primary Attributes

Body: 6
Dexterity: 2
Strength: 6
Charisma: 0
Intelligence: 0
Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2
Move: 8 (16)*
Perception: 4
Initiative: 2
Defense: 6
Stun: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	2	8	(3)
Stealth	2	4	4**	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)
Tunnel (Double Move rating when tunneling)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 L	-2	8 L	(4) L
Claws	4 L	-2	10 L	(5) L

* Burrowing animals dig up to their Move rating in feet per hour.

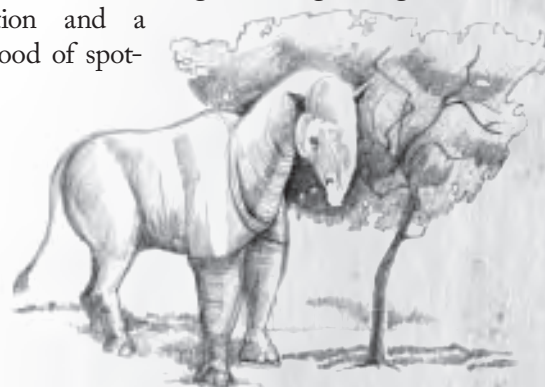
Megatherium double their move rating when digging

** Giant Sloth suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Paraceratherium

These gentle herbivores are vast in size and weight, a mature adult standing nearly 25 feet tall, 30 feet long, and weighing easily as much as a pair of woolly mammoths. With their longish neck, longer forelimbs, and shorter hind limbs, they are vaguely giraffe-like in structure, but are still more obviously related to rhinoceroses with their thick and sparsely-haired hide, and a head which is definitely that of a rhinoceros, despite lacking any type of horn.

Using small, downwards-pointing tusks, they strip leaves from branches near the tops of trees, grazing much like a giraffe, and their bulk seems to deter most predators. They also live within large herds, granting them more protection and a greater likelihood of spotting danger.



Paraceratherium

Follower 3

Archetype: Animal
Style: 0
Motivation: Survival
Health: 18

Primary Attributes

Body: 10
Dexterity: 2
Strength: 10
Charisma: 0
Intelligence: 0
Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 4
Move: 12 (24)*
Perception: 4
Initiative: 2
Defense: 8 (10)**
Stun: 10

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	10	2	12	(6)
Stealth	2	4	2***	(1)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness (+2 Perception rating)
Robust (+2 Health rating)
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

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Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	4 L	-4	12 L	(6) L
Kick	4 N	-4	12 N	(6) N

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Paraceratherium has a tough hide that provides a +2 Defense bonus

*** Paraceratherium suffers a -4 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Smilodon

Smilodons—often erroneously referred to as saber-toothed tigers despite not being tigers—have an undeserved reputation as dangerous man-eaters. Certainly, they are dangerous: they average 600 pounds of solid, stocky muscle and slit the throats of their prey with 12-inch, curved fangs. More frightening still, they travel in prides of 12-20, and I have seen them work together to take down prey as large and as dangerous as triceratops. Yet they are not typically man-eaters. Perhaps this is because they do not deem scrawny humans worthy of the hunt, perhaps we are simply not their accustomed prey, or perhaps we simply do not taste good to them.

Although the Smilodon fatalis does not usually seek out human prey, there are numerous situations in which they will kill. Firstly, one must bear in mind that cats protect their territory aggressively. Beyond that, hunger may drive them to hunt whatever they can catch (no matter the taste). Finally, older males may be defeated by younger ones and driven from their pride, and these defeated males are much more likely to be hungry to the point of feeding on people.

Smilodon

Follower 2

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 7		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 3		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 5		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 3		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0		Initiative: 5		
Move: 8 (16)*		Defense: 8		
Perception: 6		Stun: 3		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	3	5	8	(4)
Brawl	3	5	8	(4)
Stealth	5	1	6	(3)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				

Resources
None
Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Claw	0 L	0	8 L	(4) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

Woolly Mammoth

The great woolly mammoth is by far the largest animal in the frigid regions of the mountains. They travel in nomadic family packs, consuming all vegetation they pass, and using their large tusks to sweep the snow out of the way of foliage covered in recent storms. I traveled for many miles behind a herd of mammoths, as their footsteps promised the easiest path through the deep snow.

Even the cave bear gives these mighty creatures a wide berth, but dire wolves have been known to adopt pack tactics to prey on injured, ill, or young mammoths. However, the few tribes that also reside in the frigid regions of the Hollow Earth pose the bigger threat to the mammoths. For them, a successful hunt of the woolly mammoth is a windfall; the trouble being that even successful hunts result in at least a few dead hunters. Event still, many natives feel the loss of a few members is worth providing their villages with abundant meat, pelts, and ivory. The ivory is used to make many types of tools, weapons, and ornaments, and is a valuable trading item when bargaining with natives from more temperate regions.

Other Elephantidae

Dinotherium: As large as the biggest of mammoths, Dinotherium resembles a modern elephant, but has a much shorter trunk, and two downward curving tusks attached to its lower jaw rather than the upper jaw tusks more normally seen on members of the Elephantidae family.

Woolly Mammoth

Follower 2

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>	
Style: 0		Health: 12	
Primary Attributes			
Body: 6		Charisma: 0	
Dexterity: 2		Intelligence: 0	
Strength: 6		Willpower: 4	
Secondary Attributes			
Size: 2		Initiative: 2	
Move: 8 (16)*		Defense: 6	
Perception: 6		Stun: 6	

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	4	10	(5)
Stealth	2	2	2**	(1)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Tusks	4 L	-2	12 L	(6) L
Stomp	2 N	-2	10 N	(5) N

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Woolly mammoth suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Woolly Rhinoceros

Coelodonta antiquitatis, more commonly and aptly described as the woolly rhinoceros, inhabits many of the same regions as the woolly mammoth. Aside from its preference for colder climates, a secondary horn on its forehead, and its shaggy pelt, this animal closely resembles its more familiar surface world cousin. It displays the same cantankerous, aggressive disposition, and will charge just about anything smaller than a mammoth and larger than a fox. I have a rather nasty scar from just such an encounter.

Woolly Rhinoceros

Follower 2

Archetype: Animal

Motivation: Survival

Style: 0

Health: 10

Primary Attributes

Body: 6	Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 3	Intelligence: 0
Strength: 6	Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1	Initiative: 3
Move: 9 (18)*	Defense: 8
Perception: 5	Stun: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	4	10	(5)
Stealth	3	2	4**	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Horns	3 L	-1	12 L	(6) L
Kick	1 N	-1	10 N	(5) N

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Woolly rhinoceros suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

ARTHROPODS

Many of the creatures in the Hollow Earth inspire the surface world visitor to quickly find a hole or cave to hide in, as was the case on several occasions upon first discovering some of the dinosaurs and reptiles mentioned in earlier sections. But I wish to caution the reader to regard that hiding place as a territory already inhabited! I suggest a long stick be poked into any possible hiding place before entering, and it does not hurt to poke the same stick under your bed before turning in every night.

I came across several insects, spiders, crabs, centipedes, and other forms of arthropods previously believed extinct. As is common to those prehistoric species, they are considerably large and intimidating, and some regard humans as a food source. However, the natives in the Hollow Earth showed me how tasty and nutritious some of these arthropods could be, although I do not mind mentioning that I found it necessary to stifle my gag reflex at first. Some of the most notable are included here, but do remember that most of the normal-sized and surface world variations exist here in the Hollow Earth as well, and I simply could not list them all.

Arthropleura

At six feet in length, the typical Arthropleura is a monster of a millipede, scuttling swiftly through the undergrowth of the Hollow Earth's rainforests on 50 pairs of legs. Broad, low to the ground, and covered with a heavy carapace, it can also curl up into an armored ball to protect itself when threatened, and is armed with a pair of short, sharp jaws with which it slices and devours foliage, small animals, and insects.

The two jungle tribes with which I sheltered hunted Arthropleura when festivities were imminent; the arthropod was boiled whole and served as the centerpiece at feasts. The discarded chitin plates were used to craft light but reasonably durable primitive armor vests. While the creature typically avoided conflict with anything approaching its own size and was quick to roll into a ball when seriously threatened, it was still given a healthy respect, as it could deliver a vicious bite. The tribal hunters showed me an easy way to

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track Arthropleura: the tracks of this large millipede resemble parallel train tracks, although the feet leave a slightly crescent-shaped marking in their parallel rows. In the thick undergrowth these tracks are nearly invisible, but in muddy areas they are easy for even the untrained eye to find.



Arthropleura

Follower 1

Archetype: *Insect*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 8

Primary Attributes

Body: 4	Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 2	Intelligence: 0
Strength: 2	Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 2
Move: 4 (8)*	Defense: 6 (8)**
Perception: 4	Stun: 4

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	2	4	6	(3)
Stealth	2	2	4	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	0	6 L	(3) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running.

** Arthropleura has a tough carapace that provides a +2 Passive Defense bonus

Meganeura

More annoyance than threat, Meganeura is a one-foot long dragonfly with up to a three-foot wingspan. A colorful insect and agile predator, it snatches small birds, reptiles, mammals, and other insects out of the air mid-flight, or clasps them in its legs as it skims across the surface of water or nearby ground.

Although entrancing to watch, these plentiful insects soon become irritating on account of the extremely loud buzzing generated by their large wings. They can deliver a nasty bite if handled, so I suggest not swatting them away too vigorously.

Meganeura

Follower 1

Archetype: *Insect*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 3

Primary Attributes

Body: 2	Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 4	Intelligence: 0
Strength: 2	Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: -2	Initiative: 4
Move: 6 (3)*	Defense: 8
Perception: 4 (8)**	Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	2	4	6	(3)
Stealth	4	2	8***	(4)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	-2 L	+2	6 L	(3) L

* Meganeura uses its Move rating when flying but only half Move on the ground

** Meganeura has multifaceted eyes that provide a +4 bonus on sight-based Perception rolls

*** Meganeura gains a +2 Size bonus on Stealth rolls





Pterygotus

A sea scorpion of huge size, the Pterygotus is as long (from mouth to tip of tail) as a tall adult human male.

This predacious creature is constantly hunting trilobites, squid, and fish; its forelimbs form a pair of spike-lined claws as large as a man's arms, these followed by four pairs of limbs suitable for walking across the seabed, and a final pair of limbs modified into powerful paddles for swimming. The telson at the end of its tail is a wide, flat paddle, also providing it greater swimming facility.

Making my way along the beach, gazing down into the crystal waters of the nearby shallows, I was watching several large fish swimming lazily by, when the sand beneath them burst into a flurry of action. I watched as the massive, spiked pincers of a Pterygotus darted forward and swiftly grabbed a fish; its two pairs of large compound eyes glittered as it drew the struggling fish to its maw. Making a mental note to avoid walking through the shallows, even when they are seemingly clear, I left the powerful ambush predator to its meal.

Other Eurypteridae

Jaekelopterus: Slightly larger than Pterygotus, Jaekelopterus also differs in that it inhabits freshwater rivers and lakes rather than saltwater.

Pterygotus

Follower 1

Archetype: *Insect*

Style: 0

Motivation: *Survival*

Health: 3

Primary Attributes

Body: 2

Dexterity: 4

Strength: 2

Charisma: 0

Intelligence: 0

Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Move: 12 (0)*

Perception: 4

Initiative: 4

Defense: 6 (8)**

Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	2	4	6	(3)
Stealth	4	2	6	(3)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Pincer	0 L	0	6 L	(3) L

* Pterygotus uses its full Move rating when swimming, but cannot move outside of the water

** Pterygotus has a thick carapace that provides a +2 Passive Defense bonus

OTHER PREHISTORIC CREATURES

While prehistoric reptiles and mammals may rule the Hollow Earth, strange amphibians and birds from prehistory also stalk the waters and forests.

Dunkleosteus

Imagine a marine predator larger than an elephant. Now imagine one with armor plates and the jaw-strength of a Tyrannosaurus. Now imagine one that prowls the depths and the shallows in schools as large as a dozen. These horrors converge in the Dunkleosteus (sometimes also called the Dinichthys), a primitive but voracious carnivore. Individually, they will attack and consume prey as small as a monkey or as large as a rhinoceros. In packs, they have taken down a brontosaurus before my very eyes.

I had the good fortune of finding a Dunkleosteus that had been trapped in a tidal pool and perished as the lowering tide left it beached. Before the coastal scavengers chased me off, I made as thorough an examination

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as I could and was able to confirm the primitive and rudimentary nature of the Dunkleosteus's anatomy, all of which suggested that its basic structure and functioning had not changed in hundreds of millions of years. But then, such a vicious and efficient predator would have little need for evolutionary progress, so long as the seas hold food enough to support its appetite.

Dunkleosteus

Follower 3

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 16		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 8		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 4		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 8		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 4		Initiative: 4		
Move: 24 (0)*		Defense: 8 (12)**		
Perception: 6		Stun: 8		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	8	2	12	(6)
Stealth	4	4	4***	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	4 L	-4	12 L	(6) L

* Dunkleosteus double their Move rating when swimming, but cannot move outside of the water

**Dunkleosteus have an armored skull that provides a +4 Passive Defense bonus to attacks from the front

*** Dunkleosteus suffer a -4 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Gastornis (Gastornis parisiensis)

The dense subtropical and tropical forests of the Hollow Earth are perilous places, hiding a variety of predators, not the least of which is Gastornis, also known as Diatryma. These mighty flightless birds are ambush predators and scavengers, standing between six and seven feet tall on muscular, clawed legs, their heads equipped with massive, hooked beaks capable of crushing a victim's skull, or breaking open tough bones, with little effort.

Hunting Gastornis is considered the mark of a truly great warrior within certain tribes, their meat and eggs given almost sacred significance, their feathers found decorating the war bonnets of the few able to hunt them and emerge triumphant. In these tribes, it is considered among the most profane of acts for one to wear the feathers of Gastornis without having personally slain such a bird.



Gastornis

Follower 1

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 6		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 3		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 3		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 3		Willpower: 3		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0		Initiative: 3		
Move: 6		Defense: 6		
Perception: 5		Stun: 3		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	3	6	(2)
Stealth	3	3	6	(4)
Survival	0	4	4	(2)
Talents				
Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	0	6 L	(3) L
Kick	0 L	0	6 L	(3) L

Koolasuchus (*Koolasuchus cleelandi*)

One of the Hollow Earth's rare monstrous amphibians, Koolasuchus seems to be quite uncommon, perhaps even scarce, if the accounts I have recorded are any true indication. This salamander-like creature is around 15 feet long on average, with short, stubby limbs, and a broad, wide-mouthed head nearly two feet wide, lined with needle-sharp teeth.

A swamp and river dweller, it has eyes on the top of its head, allowing it to float almost completely submerged, watching the water's surface or edge for suitable prey, before lunging forward to bite, though it also commonly eats other smaller animals native to its home such as frogs, fish, turtles, crayfish, and clams.

Koolasuchus

Follower 1

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 8		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 3		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 2		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 3		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 1		Initiative: 2		
Move: 5 (2)*		Defense: 4		
Perception: 4		Stun: 3		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	3	6	(2)
Stealth	2	3	6**	(4)
Survival	0	4	6	(2)
Talents				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	3 L	-1	8 L	(4) L

* Koolasuchus use their full Move rating when swimming, and half their Move rating on land

** Koolasuchus suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls unless underwater or camouflaged

Megalodon

My first and—thankfully—only encounter with this massive shark occurred on a voyage I had booked with a crew of whalers out of Blood Bay (the whalers were despicable company, but the necessities of my travels prevented me from being choosy about my com-

panions). Evidently the Megalodon caught scent of the catch upon our deck, and even at full sails the ship was unable to outrun that ominous dorsal fin. The captain swung around while the crew, well trained in defending against threats below the surface, let fire a series of broadsides. If anything, the cannons only served to anger the monster, which proceeded to ram us viciously. We were saved only when the captain ordered that the ship's catch be jettisoned to occupy the Megalodon while we made good our escape.

The sheer size of the beast—it was one hundred feet long from the tip of its snout to the point of its tail—leads me to deduce that it must be a strictly solitary creature, for a school of such voracious carnivores could never find enough food to share. The size of its jaws almost defied belief: it was wide enough for three columns of sailors to comfortably march side by side down into its gullet. One wonders why it has so many rows of serrated, triangular teeth when it is perfectly capable of swallowing a whale without chewing.

Megalodon

Follower 4

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 24		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 12		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 2		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 12		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 8		Initiative: 2		
Move: 28 (0)*		Defense: 6 (8)***		
Perception: 4 (8)**		Stun: 12		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	12	2	16	(8)
Stealth	2	4	0****	(0)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
** Keen Sense (+4 bonus on smell-based Perception rolls)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Stealth rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	8 L	-8	16 L	(8) L

* Megalodon doubles its Move rating when swimming, but cannot move outside of the water

*** Megalodon has a thick hide that provides a +2 Defense bonus

**** Megalodon suffers a -8 Size penalty on Stealth rolls and automatically fails unless underwater or otherwise camouflaged

MEGAFauna

That species long dead flourish in the Hollow Earth is strange enough, but even more bizarre are those creatures that somehow attain sizes that by all means should be impossible according to my knowledge of biology. These megafauna include giant apes (relatives, I assume, of Gigantopithicus), giant spiders, and other monstrosities it is wise to avoid.

Giant Ant

Despite only being the size of a small dog, the giant ant is one of the most voracious predators in the Hollow Earth. Armies of them form unstoppable tides that attack all other creatures they meet in order to obtain food for the colony. Any creature they overcome is dragged back to the nest, or dismembered into smaller pieces (using their disproportionately strong mandibles) for transport if necessary. Any carrion they come across is also acquired as part of the colony's relentless search for food.

Giant ants have poor vision but an excellent sense of smell, making it difficult to hide from them.

The greatest threats to giant ants are hives of giant wasps and, perhaps surprisingly, other colonies of giant ants. Warfare of complete extermination between neighboring colonies is commonplace, to the great fortune of other Hollow Earth denizens, as this serves to keep the giant ant population in check.

Giant Ant*

Follower 0

Archetype: <i>Insect</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 3		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 1		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 3		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 1		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: -2		Initiative: 3		
Move: 4 (8)**		Defense: 6		
Perception: 2 (6)***		Stun: 1		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	1	3	4	(2)
Stealth	3	0	5****	(2+)
Survival	0	2	2	(1)
Talents				
None				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	+2	6 L	(3) L

*These stats are for an individual Giant Ant; for Swarm Rules, see the sidebar on p. 186

** Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

*** Giant ant suffers a -2 penalty on sight-related Perception rolls, but gains a +2 bonus to smell-related rolls

**** Giant ant gains a +2 Size bonus on Stealth rolls

Giant Ape

One of the most amazing sights I've seen was a giant ape that stood well over 25 feet tall and weighed more than 10 tons. I would never have thought such a thing possible! If I hadn't been led to a sheltered area where I could observe a family of giant apes for myself, I would not have believed they existed.

I very much enjoyed observing the behavior of these creatures who so reminded me of smaller versions of apes I have seen in the zoos back home. There was a clear alpha male who led the group and he seemed to have a firm, but playful, manner. The giant apes spent a great deal of time climbing and engaging in social activities.

The giant apes are omnivorous and each seemed to have very specific tastes, much like humans. They hunt and eat small mammals and fish, and consume quite a bit of vegetation as well.

I noticed that most large predators gave the great apes' home a wide berth, leading me to understand that these powerful creatures had demonstrated themselves to be capable of warding off even the fiercest predators.

Legend has it that there has been a special bond between an ape and a human in the past. This relationship led the ape to be extremely protective and caring toward its little friend. Not having witnessed this myself, I can't recommend making an attempt to befriend a giant ape. I suggest watching them from afar.

Giant Ape

Follower 3

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>	
Style: 0		Health: 15	
Primary Attributes			
Body: 8		Charisma: 0	
Dexterity: 4		Intelligence: 1	
Strength: 8		Willpower: 3	
Secondary Attributes			
Size: 4		Initiative: 5	
Move: 12 (24)*		Defense: 8	
Perception: 6		Stun: 8	

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	8	4	12	(7)
Empathy	1	1	2	(1)
Stealth	4	2	2**	(1)
Survival	1	3	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)
Climb (Double Move rating when climbing)
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Near-human (Character cannot communicate, but may use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	4 L	-4	14 L	(7) L
Punch	4 N	-4	14 N	(7) N
Stomp	4 N	-4	14 N	(7) N

* Giant ape doubles its Move rating when climbing

** Giant ape suffers a -4 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Giant Centipede

Up to two feet in width, with a waxy carapace, the giant centipede can reach lengths of ten feet, scuttling through the moist and shaded areas of the Hollow Earth on fifteen pairs of clawed legs. This predator is armed with a pair of poisonous forcipules, and is adept at noticing motion, which it uses as its means of hunting prey. As I found out, remaining utterly still provides a fair chance that the giant centipede will not notice you, but avoidance is by far the better option. Given that they exude a pungent ammonia smell and frequently molt, leaving behind cast-off exoskeletons, their presence in the vicinity can oftentimes be noted.

Much to my amazement, they relish hunting and devouring giant spiders, and vice versa, leading to a deadly dance of predators.

Giant Centipede

Follower 2

Archetype: Insect

Motivation: Survival

Style: 0

Health: 8

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 4 Intelligence: 0
Strength: 4 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1 Initiative: 4
Move: 8 (16)* Defense: 6 (8)**
Perception: 6 Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	4	4	8	(4)
Brawl	4	4	8	(4)
Stealth	4	3	6***	(3)

Survival 0 4 6 (3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	1 L	-1	8 L	(5) L
Venom	3 N	n/a	Special	

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running

** Giant centipede has a tough shell that provides a +2 Passive Defense bonus

*** Giant centipede suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Venom: After a successful attack, giant centipedes inject venom into their victim. A poisoned character makes a Body roll against a Toxin rating of 3. If the character fails this roll, he takes one point of nonlethal damage for each point by which he failed the roll. Giant centipedes may use their venom five times per day.

Giant Crab

These massive scavengers are a force to be reckoned with, as they stalk the salt waters and shorelines of the Hollow Earth. I have witnessed specimens as large as an adult elephant emerging from the surf to drive weaker scavengers away from washed up carcasses. With chelae nearly as large as I am tall, and thick, mottled green exoskeletons, they fear precious little.

One coastal tribe I sheltered with made mention of the fact that these gigantic crustaceans are supposed to be fine fare indeed, though none could recall the successful hunting of the creature.

Giant Crab

Follower 2

Archetype: Insect

Motivation: Survival

Style: 0

Health: 12

Primary Attributes

Body: 6 Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 2 Intelligence: 0
Strength: 6 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 2 Initiative: 2
Move: 8 (16)* Defense: 6 (8)**
Perception: 6 Stun: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	2	8	(4)
Stealth	2	4	4***	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Pincer	1 L	-2	10 L	(5) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running.

** Giant crab has an armored exoskeleton that provides a +2 Passive Defense bonus

** Giant crab suffers a -2 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Giant Mantis

Giant mantids inhabit the dense forests and jungles of this strange interior landscape, each the size of a large draft horse, relying on camouflage and an uncanny ability to remain utterly motionless to ambush prey passing within grasp. They lash out with blinding speed to strike, catching victims in their spiked forelegs before consuming them alive as they are held in place.

Their large compound eyes and mobile necks grant them a 360-degree field of vision, making them adept at noticing nearby movement. These opportunistic creatures will try to attack and devour any other living creatures up to their own size, including other giant mantids, of whom they are exceptionally intolerant.

Giant Mantis

Follower 2

Archetype: Insect

Style: 0

Motivation: Survival

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 2

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 5

Intelligence: 1

Strength: 4

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1

Initiative: 8

Move: 9 (18)*

Defense: 6

Perception: 4 (8)**

Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	4	2	6	(3)
Brawl	4	4	8	(4)
Stealth	5	4	8***	(4)
Survival	1	5	6	(3)

Talents

** Keen Sense (+4 bonus on sight-related Perception rolls)

Quick Reflexes (+2 Initiative rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Claw	1 L	-1	8 L	(4) L
Bite	1 L	-1	8 L	(4) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running.

*** Giant mantid suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Giant Mosquito

Few of the Hollow Earth's arthropods are as disconcerting as the giant mosquito. The size of a lap dog, these ungainly looking insects can prove dangerous, for the females actively seek blood to feed on. Approaching potential prey unawares, often when the victim is asleep, they deftly and lightly land and pierce the victim's skin with a long, razor-sharp proboscis. The area is almost instantly numbed by the painkiller they inject prior to drinking their fill. While the amount of blood a single female drains is little threat to a human, it is not unheard of for several giant mosquitoes to prey on the same victim with terrible results. Awakening in the night to see several of these foul insects feasting on a sleeping companion is a vision straight out of a nightmare. Fortunately, they do not seem to carry malaria, unlike their diminutive relatives on the surface world.

Unlike the females, the males feed exclusively on nectar, and can be quickly discerned from the former by virtue of having feathered antennae. They are also silent fliers, whereas the females emit a droning buzz when they take to the air.

My advice is to take any precautions possible when sleeping near areas of standing water, especially shaded areas, as normal mosquito netting is sure to prove inadequate. This is the only time that you are certain to welcome the distinctive buzz of Meganeura, as the large dragonfly preys on the giant mosquito in the Hollow Earth, just as their smaller counterparts do on the surface.



Giant Mosquito

Follower 0

Archetype: <i>Insect</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 3		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 1		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 3		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 1		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: -2		Initiative: 3		
Move: 4 (2)*		Defense: 6		
Perception: 4		Stun: 1		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	1	3	4	(2)
Stealth	3	0	5**	(2+)
Survival	0	2	2	(1)
Talents				
None				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	+2	6 L	(3) L
Blood Drain	-	n/a	Special	

* Giant mosquito uses its full Move when flying, but only half its Move when on the ground

** Giant mosquito gains a +2 Size bonus on Stealth rolls

Blood Drain: If successful with an attack, a giant mosquito's proboscis pierces the victim unnoticed, and causes no damage. Thereafter, if not interrupted, it drains 1 Health level from the victim each combat turn, before detaching and flying off to digest its meal.

Giant Scorpion

These horse-sized arachnids are extremely menacing, solitary predators with large, powerful pedipalps capable of crushing the life from an unwary man. Even more fearsome is the muscular barbed tail loaded with enough paralyzing venom to take down a fully-grown Brontotherium. Fortunately, from what I have been able to gather, they primarily rely on their strength and speed to overpower prey, and use their sting as a mainly defensive weapon.

In general appearance, they resemble the Emperor Scorpion of the surface world, thickset and glistening black. That they are also adept at burrowing both to lair and to dig out prey also hints at a distant relationship between the two.

Giant Scorpion

Follower 2

Archetype: <i>Insect</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 10		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 5		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 4		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 5		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 1		Initiative: 4		
Move: 9 (18)*		Defense: 8		
Perception: 6		Stun: 5		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	5	5	10	(5)
Stealth	4	1	4**	(2)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Claw	1 L	-1	10 L	(5) L
Sting	1 L	-1	10 L	(5) L

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running.

** Giant scorpion suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Venom: After a successful attack, a giant scorpion injects venom into its victim. A poisoned character makes a Body roll against a Toxin rating of 4. If the character fails this roll, he takes one point of nonlethal damage for each point by which he failed the roll. A giant scorpion may use its venom five times per day.

Giant Spider

Here is one creature I am glad I have not encountered first hand. The class *Arachnida* is, in a way, rather like the velociraptor of the insect world: voracious, effective, sophisticated, and prolific hunters. Magnify them to the size of a horse, and they are truly terrifying. The only saving grace about these gargantuan arachnids is that they shun the sunlight, which leaves them precious few habitats in a world of perpetual noon-day sun. Still, these ten-foot long abominations seem to have no trouble spreading their progeny through the abandoned ruins, the deep caves, and even the forest floors where the canopy above is thick enough to blot out the sun. These spiders are web-spinners who attempt to choke the passages of their lairs with sticky strands to slow the progress of their victims before descending with their

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venomous fangs. I have also heard of those which make their homes in rocky crevasses or in the abandoned burrows of animals such as the giant sloth, and from these redoubts the spiders ambush anything unlucky enough to pass by.

As I said, I have not encountered a live specimen of the giant spider, and I might have dismissed its existence as a mere ghost story but for my time with a tribe who worshipped the spiders as dark, indifferent gods. Those warriors who wished to prove themselves, as well as any who committed a transgression for which they needed to serve penance, would travel to an abandoned underground temple not far from their village. Success meant that the sojourner would bring back the corpse of a spider, or at least the venom glands and the web sack, so that the tribe could harvest poison for their arrowheads and silk for their nets and textiles. But, according to their belief, if the gods deemed the intruder unworthy, he would simply never return—which was the fate of most who set foot into those darkened halls.

Giant Spider

Follower 2

Archetype: <i>Insect</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 8		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 3		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 4		Intelligence: 0		
Strength: 4		Willpower: 4		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 1		Initiative: 4		
Move: 8 (16)*		Defense: 6		
Perception: 6		Stun: 3		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	4	4	8	(4)
Brawl	4	4	8	(4)
Stealth	4	3	6**	(3)
Survival	0	4	6	(3)
Talents				
Alertness 1 (+2 Perception rating)				
Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	1 L	-1	8 L	(5) L
Venom	5 N	n/a	Special	

* Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running. The giant spider may climb up sheer surfaces and even across ceilings at its normal climbing rate.

** Giant spider suffers a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

Venom: After a successful attack, giant spider injects venom into its victim. A poisoned character makes a

Body roll against a Toxin rating of 5. If the character fails this roll, he takes one point of nonlethal damage for each point by which he failed the roll. A giant spider may use its venom five times per day.

Giant Wasp

The giant wasps all seem to resemble members of the Vespidae family in terms of appearance and behaviour—sleek insects with vivid yellow and black striped exoskeletons and a venomous stinger at the end of their abdomens.

These aggressive hunters are the size of a small dog, but are quite fearless, intent on incapacitating prey with as many stings as necessary before arduously dragging it back to the nest. There, the prey is chewed up by the adult wasps and fed to the ever-hungry larvae, these repulsive maggots excreting a clear liquid that the adults then consume.

The angry buzzing drone of a wasp hive can often be heard from some distance away, but natives are always on the lookout for abandoned hives because the massive nests provide a valuable source of paper for scrolls and easy kindling.

Like giant ants, giant wasps are extremely territorial, and conflict with other hives viciously. I can think of at least four times I have witnessed giant wasps attacking other wasp hives, killing all within.



Giant Wasp

Follower 0

Archetype: <i>Insect</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>	
Style: 0		Health: 3	
Primary Attributes			
Body: 1		Charisma: 0	
Dexterity: 3		Intelligence: 0	
Strength: 1		Willpower: 4	
Secondary Attributes			
Size: -2		Initiative: 3	

Move: 4 (2)*		Defense: 6		
Perception: 4		Stun: 1		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	1	3	4	(2)
Stealth	3	0	5**	(2+)
Survival	0	2	2	(1)
Talents				
None				
Resources				
None				
Flaw				
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Sting	0 L	+2	6 L	(3) L
Venom	2 N	n/a	Special	

* Giant wasp uses its full Move when flying, but only half its Move when on the ground

** Giant wasp gains a +2 Size bonus on Stealth rolls

Venom: After a successful attack, the giant wasp injects its venom into the victim. A poisoned character makes a Body roll against a Toxin rating of 2. If the character fails this roll, he takes one point of nonlethal damage for each point by which he failed the roll. A giant wasp may use its venom five times per day.

Kraken

As powerful and voracious as the Megalodon is, even it will not challenge the sea's greatest terror: the Kraken. For years, surface world zoologists have presumed the existence of giant squid living at depths beyond our ability to penetrate, but the Kraken surely exceeds even their wildest expectations. In length it is at least 100 feet, though its narrow, arrow-shaped body keeps it from weighing as much as the Megalodon. From the vast, flat eyeball flanking its head and the thick, muscular tentacles sprouting from around its hooked beak, I am confident that this titanic cephalopod must be comfortable at depths which would crush a man's bones. Occasionally it makes hunting trips to the surface, where it prefers to seize its prey and drag it into the dark depths to consume at its leisure. No prey seems too large, and no prey seems too small, and I have heard ample accounts of these creatures tearing open galleons to pluck the helpless crew from the floating wreck.

Kraken

Follower 4

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>	
Style: 0		Health: 22	
Primary Attributes			
Body: 10		Charisma: 0	
Dexterity: 4		Intelligence: 0	
Strength: 12		Willpower: 4	

Secondary Attributes			
Size: 8		Initiative: 4	
Move: 32 (0)*		Defense: 6 (8)***	
Perception: 4 (8)**		Stun: 10	
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating (Average)
Brawl	12	2	16 (8)
Stealth	4	4	0**** (0)
Survival	0	4	6 (3)
Talents			

** Keen Sense (+4 bonus on sight-based Perception rolls)

Dual Wield 1 (Ignore off-hand penalty)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Brawl rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources			
None			

Flaw			
Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)			

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	8 L	-8	16 L	(8) L
Tentacle	8 N	-8	16 N	(8) N
Grapple	8 *****	-8	16	(8)

* Krakens double their Move rating when swimming but cannot move outside of the water

*** Krakens have a thick hide that provides a +2 Passive Defense bonus

**** Krakens suffer a -8 Size penalty on Stealth rolls and automatically fail unless underwater or camouflaged

***** See Grapple in **Hollow Earth Expedition**, p. 120

Leviathan

The rare and usually gentle Leviathan is a creature of truly biblical proportions. On the occasion I observed a pod of these creatures I was able to determine that the adults averaged 200 feet long with masses of 300 or more tons. Dwarfing even the mighty blue whale, these creatures are undoubtedly the largest animals on (or in) the Earth. Although they are baleen whales, it is not difficult to imagine one of these behemoths swallowing Jonah whole, and it might just as easily have swallowed Jonah's entire boat had it so desired.

Their huge bodies most closely resemble sperm whales, with their squared, battering-ram heads and sharply tapering hind sections. The pod I witnessed seemed quite relaxed and peaceful in our presence, no doubt because creatures so puny could not possibly have presented a threat.

Since my initial sighting, I have collected anecdotal evidence that these creatures may not always be so gentle. A one-legged Blood Bay captain told me he was maimed by an albino leviathan that destroyed his boat and consumed his crew (indicating that some of these creatures may have teeth instead of baleen). Cliché though this story seemed, it was corroborated by similar stories from a wide cross-

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section of eye-witnesses. Only with further research will I be able to determine whether these stories are false, or whether the aggression is due to Leviathan gender behavior, life-stage changes, a peculiar sub-species, or a single, mutated rogue male.

Leviathan

Follower 5

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>		
Style: 0		Health: 37		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 18		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 2		Intelligence: 1		
Strength: 12		Willpower: 3		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 16		Initiative: 3		
Move: 28 (0)*		Defense: 4 (6)***		
Perception: 4 (8)**		Stun: 18		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	12	2	14	(7)
Empathy	1	1	2	(1)
Stealth	2	4	0****	(0)
Survival	1	3	6	(3)

Talents

** Keen Sense (+4 bonus on hearing-based Perception rolls)

Robust (+2 Health ratings)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Stealth rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	18 L	-16	16 L	(8) L
Tail	16 N	-16	14 N	(7) N

* Leviathan doubles its Move rating when swimming but cannot move outside of the water

*** Leviathan has a thick hide that provides a +2 Passive Defense bonus

**** Leviathan suffers a -16 Size penalty on Stealth rolls and automatically fails unless underwater or otherwise camouflaged

Roc

Due to their isolation from their surface-world cousins, many of the creatures of the Hollow Earth have followed distinct evolutionary tracks, often attaining sizes that could only be sustained in the peculiarly rich ecosystems beneath the nurturing central sun. Perhaps the most magnificent example of this is the Roc, which seems to have flown right out of Arabian mythology—and, indeed, may have been the inspiration for the tales.

When I first sighted the Roc's silhouette among the clouds, I mistakenly assumed it some breed of flying

dinosaur, for I thought no breed of Aves could attain such proportions. But the Roc is, in fact, closely related to the raptors of the surface world, with its closest cousin most likely being the Middle Eastern imperial eagle. Yet this bird is truly extraordinary in that its wingspan is more than a hundred feet and that it is quite capable of carrying off a woolly mammoth or Protoceratops. Nor will this titanic white bird refrain from human-sized morsels, as I learned firsthand when it carried me to its aerie high on the peaks above the grassy plain where it hunted. Had the Roc been hungry, I surely would have perished, but instead it abandoned me in its nest with a pair of colossal eggs. Without my trusty rope and the six summers I spent as a boy in the Alps, I might never have escaped, for even as I descended the perilous rock wall I could hear the eggs cracking open and the chicks calling for their first meal.

I named the Roc Albapteros sultani, or "White Wing," and to honor the sultans who kept the memory of this great bird alive.

Roc

Follower 3

Archetype: <i>Animal</i>		Motivation: <i>Survival</i>	
Style: 0		Health: 16	
Primary Attributes			
Body: 8		Charisma: 0	
Dexterity: 4		Intelligence: 0	
Strength: 8		Willpower: 4	
Secondary Attributes			
Size: 4		Initiative: 4	
Move: 12 (6)*		Defense: 8	
Perception: 4 (8)**		Stun: 8	
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating (Average)
Brawl	8	4	12 (6)
Stealth	4	2	4*** (2)
Survival	0	4	6 (3)
Talents			

Talents

** Keen Sense (+4 bonus on sight-based Perception rolls)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Stealth rating)

Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	4 L	-4	12 L	(6) L
Claw	4 L	-4	12 L	(6) L

* Roc uses its full Move rating for flying and half its move rating when on the ground

*** Roc suffers a -4 Size penalty on Stealth rolls

WILD ANIMALS

For the sake of comparison with Hollow Earth creatures, I have included information on the more familiar animals from the surface world, including their relative strengths and weaknesses.

All entries in this section possess the following traits:

Archetype: *Animal*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Flaw: *Bestial* (Cannot communicate or use tools)

Anaconda (Follower 2)

Primary Attributes: Body 3, Dexterity 4, Strength 4, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 1, Move 8, Perception 6, Initiative 4, Defense 6, Stun 3, Health 8

Skills: Athletics 8, Brawl 8, Stealth 6, Survival 6

Talents: Alertness (+2 Perception rating), Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Bite 8 L, Grapple 8 + Crush 5 N

Bear (Follower 2)

Primary Attributes: Body 5, Dexterity 2, Strength 4, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 1, Move 6 (Run 12), Perception 6, Initiative 2, Defense 6, Stun 5, Health 10

Skills: Athletics 6, Brawl 8, Stealth 6, Survival 6

Talents: Alertness (+2 Perception rating), Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Bite 8 L, Claw 8 L

Boar (Follower 1)

Primary Attributes: Body 3, Dexterity 2, Strength 3, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size -1, Move 5 (Run 10), Perception 6, Initiative 2, Defense 6, Stun 3, Health 6

Skills: Brawl 6, Stealth 6, Survival 6

Talents: Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Tusks 8 L

Bull (Follower 1)

Primary Attributes: Body 5, Dexterity 2, Strength 3, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 2

Secondary Attributes: Size 1, Move 5 (Run 10), Perception 4, Initiative 2, Defense 6, Stun 5, Health 8

Skills: Brawl 8, Stealth 2, Survival 6

Talents: Alertness (+2 Perception rating)

Weapons: Horns 10 L, Kick 8 N

Camel (Follower 1)

Primary Attributes: Body 3, Dexterity 2, Strength 3, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 1, Move 7 (Run 14), Perception 4, Initiative 2, Defense 4, Stun 3, Health 8

Skills: Brawl 6, Stealth 4, Survival 6

Talents: Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Kick 6 N

Cat, Large (Follower 0)

Primary Attributes: Body 1, Dexterity 3, Strength 1, Charisma 0, Intelligence 1, Willpower 3

Secondary Attributes: Size -2, Move 4 (Run 8), Perception 4, Initiative 4, Defense 6, Stun 1, Health 2

Skills: Brawl 2, Stealth 6, Survival 4

Talents: None

Weapons: Bite 2 L, Claw 2 L

Chimpanzee (Follower 1)

Primary Attributes: Body 2, Dexterity 3, Strength 2, Charisma 1, Intelligence 1, Willpower 3

Secondary Attributes: Size -1, Move 5 (Climb 10), Perception 4, Initiative 4, Defense 6, Stun 2, Health 4

Skills: Brawl 4, Empathy 2, Stealth 6, Survival 6

Talents: Climb (Double Move rating)

Flaw: Near-human (Cannot communicate but may use tools)

Weapons: Bite 4 L, Punch 4 N

Chapter Six

Cobra (Follower 0)

Primary Attributes: Body 1, Dexterity 4, Strength 2, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 2

Secondary Attributes: Size -1, Move 4, Perception 2, Initiative 2, Defense 6, Stun 1, Health 2

Skills: Brawl 4, Stealth 6, Survival 2

Talents: None

Weapons: Bite 4 L + Venom 3 L

Crocodile (Follower 2)

Primary Attributes: Body 5, Dexterity 4, Strength 5, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 1, Move 4 (Swim 9), Perception 6, Initiative 4, Defense 8, Stun 5, Health 10

Skills: Brawl 8, Stealth 6, Survival 6

Talents: Alertness (+2 Perception rating), Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Bite 10 L, Tail 8 N

Deer (Follower 1)

Primary Attributes: Body 2, Dexterity 4, Strength 2, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 6 (Run 12), Perception 4, Initiative 4, Defense 6, Stun 2, Health 6

Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Stealth 6, Survival 4

Talents: Alertness (+2 Perception rating)

Weapons: Antlers 6 L

Dolphin (Follower 1)

Primary Attributes: Body 2, Dexterity 4, Strength 2, Charisma 0, Intelligence 1, Willpower 3

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 0 (Swim 12), Perception 4 (Hear 8), Initiative 5, Defense 6, Stun 2, Health 5

Skills: Brawl 4, Empathy 2, Stealth 6, Survival 6

Talents: Keen Sense (+4 hearing-based Perception rating)

Weapons: Bite 4 L, Tail 6 N

Donkey (Follower 1)

Primary Attributes: Body 4, Dexterity 2, Strength 2, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 4 (Run 8), Perception 4, Initiative 2, Defense 6, Stun 4, Health 8

Skills: Brawl 6, Stealth 4, Survival 6

Talents: Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Kick 8 N

Eagle (Follower 1)

Primary Attributes: Body 2, Dexterity 5, Strength 1, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size -1, Move 3 (Fly 6), Perception 4 (Sight 8), Initiative 5, Defense 8, Stun 2, Health 5

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Stealth 8, Survival 4

Talents: Keen Sense (+4 sight-based Perception rating)

Weapons: Bite 4 L, Talons 4 L

Elephant (Follower 2)

Primary Attributes: Body 6, Dexterity 2, Strength 6, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 2, Move 8 (Run 16), Perception 6, Initiative 2, Defense 8, Stun 6, Health 12

Skills: Brawl 10, Stealth 2, Survival 6

Talents: Alertness (+2 Perception rating), Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Tusks 12 L, Stomp 10 N

Gorilla (Follower 2)

Primary Attributes: Body 5, Dexterity 3, Strength 5, Charisma 1, Intelligence 1, Willpower 3

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 8 (Climb 16), Perception 4, Initiative 4, Defense 8, Stun 5, Health 8

Skills: Brawl 8, Empathy 2, Stealth 6, Survival 6

Talents: Climb (Double Move rating), Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Flaw: Near-human (Cannot communicate but may use tools)

Weapons: Bite 8 L, Punch 8 N

Hippopotamus (Follower 2)

Primary Attributes: Body 5, Dexterity 4, Strength 5, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 1, Move 9 (Run 18), Perception 6, Initiative 4, Defense 8, Stun 5, Health 12

Skills: Brawl 10, Stealth 4, Survival 6

Talents: Alertness (+2 Perception rating), Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Bite 10 L

Horse (Follower 1)

Primary Attributes: Body 3, Dexterity 4, Strength 3, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 2

Secondary Attributes: Size 1, Move 9 (Run 18), Perception 4, Initiative 4, Defense 6, Stun 3, Health 6

Skills: Brawl 8, Stealth 4, Survival 4

Talents: Alertness (+2 Perception rating)

Weapons: Kick 8 N

Lion (Follower 2)

Primary Attributes: Body 3, Dexterity 5, Strength 3, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 8 (Run 16), Perception 6, Initiative 5, Defense 8, Stun 3, Health 7

Skills: Athletics 8, Brawl 8, Stealth 6, Survival 6

Talents: Alertness (+2 Perception rating), Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Bite 8 L, Claw 8 L

Monkey (Follower 0)

Primary Attributes: Body 1, Dexterity 3, Strength 1, Charisma 0, Intelligence 1, Willpower 3

Secondary Attributes: Size -2, Move 4, Perception 4, Initiative 4, Defense 6, Stun 1, Health 2

Skills: Brawl 2, Stealth 6, Survival 4

Talents: None

Flaw: Near-human (Cannot communicate but may use tools)

Weapons: Bite 2 L

Owl (Follower 1)

Primary Attributes: Body 2, Dexterity 6, Strength 0, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size -2, Move 3 (Fly 6), Perception 4 (Sight 8), Initiative 6, Defense 10, Stun 2, Health 4

Skills: Brawl 4, Stealth 10, Survival 4

Talents: Keen Sense (+4 sight-based Perception rating)

Weapons: Bite 4 L, Talon 4 L

Piranha (Follower 0)

Primary Attributes: Body 0, Dexterity 5, Strength 0, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size -4, Move 0 (Swim 10), Perception 4, Initiative 5, Defense 9, Stun 0, Health 0

Skills: Brawl 2, Stealth 10, Survival 2

Talents: None

Weapons: Bite 4 L

Rat (Follower 0)

Primary Attributes: Body 0, Dexterity 5, Strength 0, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size -4, Move 5 (Run 10), Perception 4, Initiative 5, Defense 9, Stun 0, Health 0

Skills: Brawl 2, Stealth 10, Survival 2

Talents: None

Weapons: Bite 2 L, Claws 2 L

Rhinoceros (Follower 2)

Primary Attributes: Body 6, Dexterity 2, Strength 6, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 2, Move 8 (Run 16), Perception 6, Initiative 2, Defense 6, Stun 6, Health 12

Skills: Brawl 10, Stealth 2, Survival 6

Talents: Alertness (+2 Perception rating), Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Horn 12 L, Stomp 10 N

Swarms

Small creatures, such as piranhas and rats, can swarm larger opponents, inflicting more damage as a group than they can individually. Instead of treating each creature as an individual attacker, swarms are treated as a single Size 0 creature, gaining an attack rating based on the individual creature's original Size. Additionally, swarms suffer a Defense penalty, but gain a bonus to their collective Health rating.

Only attacks with an Area of Effect inflict full damage on a swarm. All other weapons inflict a maximum of one point of damage per hit.

Original Size	Attack	Defense	Health	Example
-2	+2	-2	+4	Monkey
-4	+4	-4	+8	Rat
-8	+8	-8	+16	Insect

Piranha Swarm

Primary Attributes: Body 0, Dexterity 5, Strength 0, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 0 (Swim 10), Perception 4, Initiative 5, Defense 5, Stun 0, Health 8

Skills: Brawl 2, Stealth 6, Survival 2

Talents: None

Natural Equipment: Bite (+2 damage rating)

Weapons: Bite 8 L

Seal (Follower 1)

Primary Attributes: Body 2, Dexterity 4, Strength 2, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 3 (Walk 6), Perception 4, Initiative 4, Defense 6, Stun 2, Health 6

Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Stealth 6, Survival 6

Talents: Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Bite 4 L

Shark (Follower 2)

Primary Attributes: Body 6, Dexterity 2, Strength 6, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 2, Move 0 (Swim 16), Perception 4 (Smell 8), Initiative 2, Defense 6, Stun 6, Health 12

Skills: Brawl 8, Stealth 4, Survival 6

Talents: Keen Sense (+2 smell-based Perception rating), Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Bite 10 L

Tiger (Follower 2)

Primary Attributes: Body 3, Dexterity 5, Strength 3, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 8 (Run 16), Perception 6, Initiative 5, Defense 8, Stun 3, Health 7

Skills: Athletics 8, Brawl 8, Stealth 6, Survival 6

Talents: Alertness (+2 Perception rating), Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Bite 8 L, Claw 8 L

Walrus (Follower 2)

Primary Attributes: Body 6, Dexterity 2, Strength 6, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 2, Move 4 (Swim 8), Perception 6, Initiative 2, Defense 6, Stun 6, Health 14

Skills: Brawl 8, Stealth 4, Survival 6

Talents: Alertness (+2 Perception rating), Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Bite 8 L

Whale (Follower 3)

Primary Attributes: Body 10, Dexterity 2, Strength 8, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 4, Move 0 (Swim 20), Perception 4 (Hear 8), Initiative 2, Defense 8, Stun 10, Health 20

Skills: Brawl 10, Stealth 4, Survival 6

Talents: Keen Sense (+4 hearing-based Perception rating), Skill Aptitude (+2 Stealth rating), Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Bite 10 L, Tail 10 N

Wolf (Follower 1)

Primary Attributes: Body 2, Dexterity 3, Strength 3, Charisma 0, Intelligence 1, Willpower 3

Secondary Attributes: Size -1, Move 6 (Run 12), Perception 4 (Smell 8), Initiative 4, Defense 6, Stun 2, Health 4

Skills: Brawl 6, Stealth 6, Survival 6

Talents: Keen Sense (+4 smell-based Perception rating)

Weapons: Bite 8 L

Zebra (Follower 1)

Primary Attributes: Body 2, Dexterity 4, Strength 2, Charisma 0, Intelligence 0, Willpower 4

Secondary Attributes: Size 0, Move 8 (Run 16), Perception 4, Initiative 4, Defense 6, Stun 2, Health 6

Skills: Brawl 6, Stealth 6, Survival 6

Talents: Skill Aptitude (+2 Survival rating)

Weapons: Kick 6 N

ON THE EVOLUTION OF SPECIES - CREATING NEW CREATURES

The following guidelines provide a step-by-step overview of how to go about creating new creature entries of your own devising.

Step One: Concept

Before creating a new creature, you should have a solid idea of its relative strengths and weaknesses, abilities and size. For real life creatures, or even extinct creatures, finding such information, if not already known, can often be as simple as a few minutes spent looking online or through an appropriate book. In the case of completely new creatures, this is down purely to your own imagination and conception, though taking cues from existing Bestiary entries can be a helpful guide.

Example: Anna decides to create a giant octopus for her forthcoming adventure. A quick search online tells her that an average North Pacific Giant Octopus weighs around 35 lbs.—though one has been recorded with a weight of nearly 160 lbs.—and has an arm span of about 15 feet. She also notes that it can change the color of its skin, much like a chameleon, and that they bite with a horny beak on their underside. She also notices that they are regarded as extremely intelligent invertebrates, with some problem-solving skills.

Step Two: Size

Average humans are Size 0, but animals come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. The first step is to determine what the base Size rating is for the creature you are creating (see Size in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 46). Look for the best fit possible, with weight generally being a better guide than length.

Example: Consulting the table in the core rulebook, Anna notices that the weight places the giant octopus at Size -1 normally, possibly up to Size 0 in the case of particularly large adults. If she had used arm length as a guide, it would have placed the giant octopus in the Size 1 or Size 2 categories, which are clearly too powerful for a creature of such a weight. Deciding that she wants her example to be a large adult, she opts for Size 0, making her giant octopus potentially as strong as nearly any man, and certainly a possible threat to an individual character.

Step Three: Follower Level

Once you know the Size of the creature, you may then determine how powerful it is (i.e., how many points you have to spend when creating it). As a general rule the larger the creature, the more points you will need to create it, and the Follower Level will increase accordingly. This is not a hard and fast rule, but rather a general guideline. The Sizes listed for each Follower Level in the table are intended to provide a rough benchmark for guidance; they are not strict limitations.

Because animals do not rely on Skills as much as humans do, they automatically gain the following Zero Level Skills: Athletics, Brawl, Empathy, Stealth, and Survival, which means that they can perform everyday tasks with fewer Skill points.

They also gain additional Attribute points instead of additional Skill points at each level, unlike intelligent Followers, as shown on the following table.

Follower	Size	Attributes	Skills	Talents/Resources
0	Less than 0	9 pts.	5 pts.	0
1	0	12 pts.	10 pts.	1
2	1-2	18 pts.	10 pts.	2
3	2-4	24 pts.	10 pts.	3
4	4-8	30 pts.	10 pts.	4
5	8-16	36 pts.	10 pts.	5

If you wish to make a more skilled animal companion, you can adjust it by reducing Attribute points by 3 and adding 5 Skill points. Therefore, a Follower 2 animal built using this option would have 15 Attributes, 15 Skills, and 2 Talents.

Example: Anna wants to make her Giant Octopus a viable threat, and decides that Follower 1 simply doesn't provide the kind of flexibility she desires, so she selects Follower 2. Additionally, she elects to use the skilled option, so that her creation can have more Skill points.

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Step Four: Assign Attribute and Skill Points

Create the creature by spending the appropriate amount of points in each category based on the Follower Level of the creature. Remember, animals do not normally have Charisma or Intelligence ratings unless they are considered especially charismatic or intelligent for their species, in which case they may have a rating of 1.

It is possible to assign 0 points to Attributes, even physical ones, especially in cases where the creature cannot truly compare to even the poorest of human beings in that area. For example, giving a domestic cat Body 0 and Strength 0 would be entirely appropriate.

Don't forget to apply the creature's Size bonus or penalty to attacks and Stealth in the final calculations.

Example: Anna mulls over the possible Attributes of her Giant Octopus, and looks at other entries for inspiration. After a little thought, she assigns the points as follows:

Attributes

Body: 3

Dexterity: 5

Strength: 3

Charisma: 0

Intelligence: 1

Willpower: 3

Skills

Athletics: 3 levels

Brawl: 5 levels

Empathy: 1 level

Stealth: 1 level

Survival: 5 levels

Step Five: Assign Talents

Talents should now be selected that reflect the natural abilities and strengths of the creature.

The vast majority of creatures have Skill Aptitude (Survival) to reflect the fact that they are extremely adept at surviving in their native habitat.

Alertness is another common Talent among animals, indicating their attentiveness to their surroundings when seeking prey or avoiding threats. Creatures with a truly exceptional sense of some kind, such as an eagle's vision, are likely to possess Keen Sense for that particular sense instead.

Depending on how the creature moves, you may decide to select Climb (if it's a swift, agile climber, able to brachiate with ease, such as a monkey), Jump (for creatures such as kangaroos), Run (if it's known for its great running speed, like a cheetah), or Swim (if it's unusually quick through the waves, such as a marlin or tuna).

Example: Anna wonders how to demonstrate the giant octopus' facility with its many limbs, and notices that the existing Kraken entry has Dual Wield (no off-hand penalties), so she opts to take that as one of her creation's Talents. For the second, she returns to the Kraken entry and decides that Keen Sense (sight) is most appropriate.

Step Six: Determine Attacks

Every creature gets the appropriate equivalent to a Bite attack (X L) and a Punch attack (X N) with X being the creature's Size, L being Lethal, and N being Nonlethal. Creatures with a negative Size possess a negative attack rating (the Bite of a Size -1 dog has a -1 L Bite attack, for example), though this is counterbalanced by the fact that they have an easier time actually striking opponents (the general Size-related bonus to attack for Sizes below 0).

Many smaller-than-Size-0 creatures have trouble inflicting quantifiable damage in game terms. For example, a domestic cat may scratch a local farmer several times quite nastily, but such minor scratches do not constitute the loss of 1 Health, even cumulatively.

In the case of Venom, which requires a successful attack in order to damage an opponent, the creature's Toxin rating is equal to its Size rating plus two (see Poisons and Drugs in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 136-137).

Example: Anna decides that the Giant Octopus' tentacles inflict N damage, and the beak inflicts L damage. Because the Giant Octopus is Size 0, its Bite naturally does 0 L damage, and its Tentacles 0 N damage.

Step Seven: Determine Natural Equipment

Animals lack the versatility of being able to use a variety of tools and weapons (and thus possess the Bes-

tial Flaw), and are often limited in the areas in which they can operate effectively. Because of this, they receive the equivalent of a +2 bonus in natural equipment. This could be allocated as two +1s, a single +2 bonus, or even a +4 bonus if the bonus is somehow limited. It could be used to boost their natural attacks, such as adding +1 damage to a creature's claws and +1 damage to their teeth if they're particularly sharp or large for the creature's Size. It might be used to enhance a Secondary Attribute, such as +4 Defense against attacks from the front if the creature has an armored head plate—this representing a limited bonus as it does not provide general coverage).

Example: To represent the Giant Octopus' ability to shift its skin color to match its surroundings, Anna decides to give it a +2 Stealth bonus.

Step Eight: Record General Traits

All animals possess the following traits:

Archetype: Select as appropriate (or make up as necessary): *Animal, Dinosaur, Insect, Plant*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Resources: None

Flaw: Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

Step Nine: Apply Movement Traits

The following movement-related traits should be applied freely as necessary to match the creature's concept and abilities:

Amphibious: Amphibious animals use their full Move rating for swimming and half their Move rating when on the ground.

Burrowing: Burrowing animals dig up to their Move rating in feet per hour.

Flying: The vast majority of flying creatures use their full Move rating for flying and half their Move rating when on the ground.

Immobile: Plants and creatures not capable of movement have a Move rating of zero, but gain an additional +2 bonus worth of natural equipment.

Quadruped: Creatures with four or more legs double their Move rating when running.

Swimming: Purely aquatic creatures double their Move when swimming (quadruple if they also possess the Swim Talent) but cannot move outside of the water.

Example: Anna selects the Swimming trait for her creature, appropriate given its underwater habitat.

Step Ten: Calculate and Record Final Attributes

As the last step, the creature's Secondary Attributes, and Skill Ratings and Averages should be calculated and recorded, taking into account any modifiers from Size, Talents, and other Traits. These are calculated just as they are in other Characters (see Step Four: Secondary Attributes in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 37).

Octopus, Giant

Follower 2

Archetype: *Animal*

Motivation: *Survival*

Style: 0

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3

Charisma: 0

Dexterity: 5

Intelligence: 1

Strength: 3

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 6

Move: 16 (0)*

Defense: 8

Perception: 4 (8)**

Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	3	3	6	(3)
Brawl	3	5	8	(4)
Empathy	1	1	2	(1)
Stealth	5	1	8***	(4)
Survival	1	5	6	(3)

Talents

** Keen Sense (+4 bonus on sight-based Perception rolls)

Dual Wield (Ignore off-hand penalty)

Resources

None

Flaw

Bestial (Character cannot communicate or use tools)

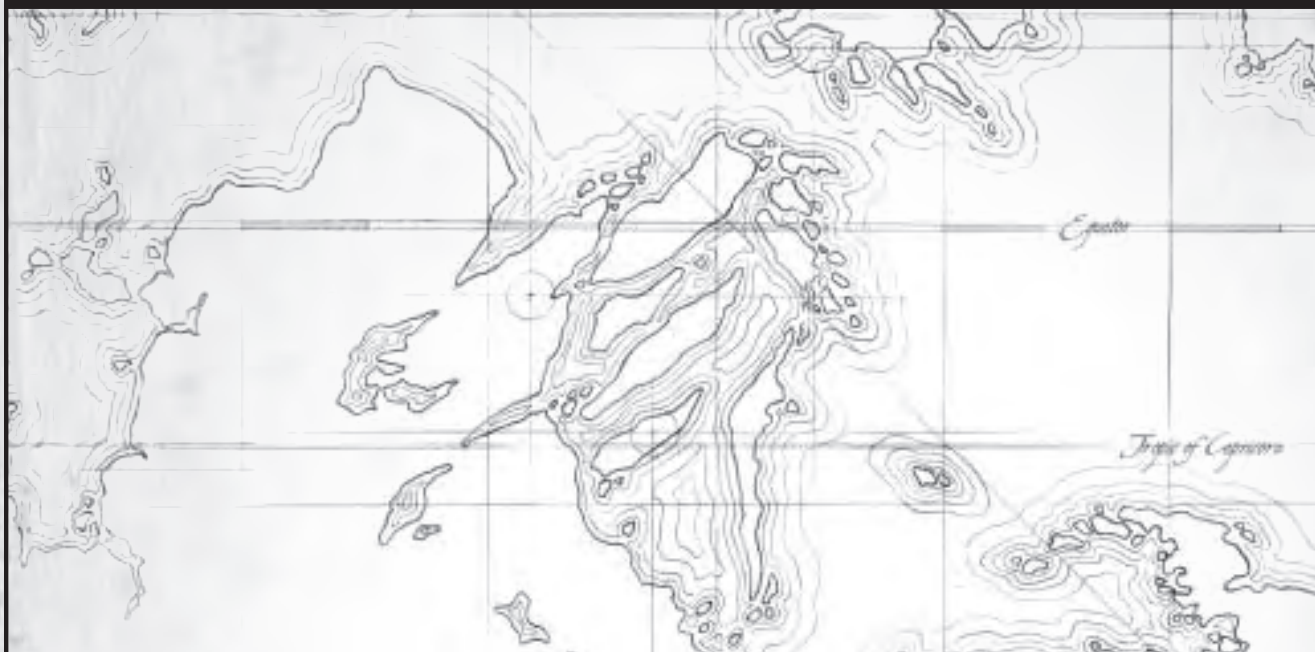
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	0 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Tentacle	0 N	0	8 N	(4) N
Grapple	0 ****	0	8	(4)

* Giant octopuses double their Move rating when swimming but cannot move outside of the water

*** Giant octopuses have color-changing skin that provides a +2 Stealth bonus

**** See Grapple in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 120

⊕ **SAMPLE ADVENTURE:** **FATE OF ATLANTIS**



Warning: This chapter is for the Gamemaster's eyes only. Reading this as a player ruins the surprise and makes the game a lot less fun to play. So don't do it!

This adventure brings a new environment of intrigue and action into the Hollow Earth setting. Even players who are familiar with *Hollow Earth Expedition* may gain new insights into the cryptic legacy of the Atlantean culture, although every answer promises to generate more questions. The heroes will also encounter Nazis, dinosaurs, lost civilizations, and strange artifacts. It all adds up to the surefire, two-fisted, heart-pounding pulp excitement you have come to expect inside the Hollow Earth.

Plot Synopsis

In the wondrous and deadly city of Atlantis, ruthless factions scheme to destroy Deirdre, an innocent girl, in a bid to unlock the might of the ancient Atlanteans. The heroes must fight their way out of the slave pits, through back alleys and dark catacombs, and into the halls of power on a quest to expose a long-lost secret that could shake the Hollow Earth civilization to its core!

Archetypes

This adventure is designed for characters native to the Hollow Earth. If you are running this as a one-shot scenario, several of the sample characters in this book (see pp. 34–49) provide a perfect way to jump right into the action.

If you want to use this adventure as the beginning of a longer campaign, you may want your players to

generate their own characters. As described in *Hollow Earth Expedition*, it is in your best interest to help them customize their characters by sharing as much as you can about what type of game you want to run. Likewise, listening to what they hope to get out of the game will help ensure everyone has fun! To help you get started, the Archetypes best suited for this adventure are listed below, along with suggestions as to why they might seek to guide the fate of Atlantis.

•**Guardian:** A defender would make it a point of honor to serve as Deirdre's protector, while at the same time taking umbrage at the corrupt and nefarious NPCs.

•**Healer:** In these calamitous times, the skills of a healer will be in great demand. This is an opportunity to heal more than injured bodies; this is an opportunity to heal an entire society.

•**Mystic:** Atlantis is a wonderland of magical artifacts. This character will constantly seek opportunities to study and utilize this technology.

•**Outcast:** The Atlanteans are the epitome of corruption and they're asking for comeuppance. This is a prime opportunity to overthrow their wicked government and set up something better.

•**Warrior:** The Atlanteans brought this character to Atlantis to fight—and now he's going to bring the fight to them, whether they like it or not.

•**Barbarian:** The ways of these city-dwellers are strange, but their bellies are soft and their hearts are full of lies. Someone must show them that technology can never impart true nobility of spirit.

Motivations

Having the right balance of Archetypes in the group is important, but the game can get sidetracked by conflict if the player characters do not share the same ultimate goal. Additionally, characters whose Motivations align with the game's major Themes will have more opportunities to earn style points, making the characters more effective and fun to play.

This adventure's major Themes and Motivations are:

•**Escape:** Freedom is of the utmost importance to you and no one should be held against their will. Escaping from this island prison or rescuing someone from the bonds of slavery and oppression represents a great moral victory to you.

•**Glory:** From the bloody floor of the arena to the chambers of the high council, you will fight against overwhelming odds for a prize that could alter civilization itself. Whether you live or die, your deeds will surely live on in song and tale for generations to come.

•**Justice:** Doing the right thing is more important than winning or losing. You will not sit idly by while injustices are committed, and will fight for what's right even if it puts you in harm's way.

•**Truth:** Unveiling the people's eyes to a mystery is worth any hardship. You will not allow a blatant lie to go unchallenged or let people live in ignorance if there is anything you can do about it.

The Hook

The adventure begins with the heroes imprisoned in the slave pits beneath the famous city of Atlantis. They have been plucked from their lives and homes in the wilds of the Hollow Earth; the last thing they remember is a flash of white light, and then awakening here in this large, circular room with heavy metal doors. They are still in possession of their equipment and weapons, and the room thunders with exultant cheers from thousands of voices somewhere above them.

Although they may not know it yet, the player characters have been sold into slavery as gladiators. The waiting crowd thirsts for blood, whether that of a first-timer in the pits or a seasoned warrior.

As the noise above reaches a crescendo, the ceiling of the characters' room dilates open, blinding them with sudden daylight and sprinkling sand down upon them as they are deafened by the roar of the crowd. The floor beneath their feet jolts once and then, with the sound of stone grinding on stone, it rises slowly and ominously upward until it is flush with a packed dirt floor. The characters now stand in an open arena surrounded by a ring of smooth, twenty-foot high granite walls. Sticks, rocks and bones litter the edges of the enclosure. A search through this rubble will turn up a multitude of spears, clubs, shivs, stones and slings, but nothing else of value.

On all sides above the characters, Atlantean spectators and their slaves rise from their seats, eagerly anticipating the entertainment to come. An invisible force field protects the audience from the fighting grounds by effectively preventing characters and their opponents from climbing or flying into the stands, just as if it were a solid granite wall. Attempts to attack the spectators are equally futile: projectiles striking the force field are instantly drained of momentum in a flash of blue light, leaving them to drop harmlessly to the dirt floor.

While the heroes take stock of their surroundings, Hierophant Tiamat—a priestess of obvious high rank—steps forward to the edge of her balcony, and the crowd immediately hushes. An ornate red cape swirls from her broad golden shoulder pads down past her leather bustier and skirt. On her head rests a tall, golden head-dress with multi-hued plumes sprouting from its sides and crest. The attire of those seated in the enclosed balcony behind her suggests that they are Atlantean celebrities and officials, with the exception of one man who wears a golden breastplate over a gray uniform. This is Dr. Wolfram von Wartenburg, though his presence will not seem significant unless the characters have encountered him before.

"This is a grand occasion!" Tiamat announces, her voice mystically audible to everyone in the arena. "My fellow Atlanteans, we will soon open the Great Gate and follow our ancestors to a celestial land of paradise! In celebration, I give to you the warriors you see below. Let them now fight for your entertainment!"

At this, the crowd roars with excitement and approval. Tiamat waves her hand to signal for the release of the beasts.

Blood Sport

Three Allosaurs (p. 147) rise into the arena on elevated platforms similar to the one that carried the player characters up from their cells. Heavy shackles



bind the dinosaurs by their legs, arms, and enormous, slathering mouths. With another gesture from Tiamat, the shackles drop from the beasts, allowing them to charge forward.

Although the players may feel overwhelmed at the sight of this monstrous trio, these Allosaurs are disoriented by the situation and surroundings and thus not at their deadliest. If assaulted, they will defend themselves aggressively; otherwise, roll one die for each creature each round. Only if the result is a success will an allosaur spontaneously choose to attack a player character, while the rest of the time it will attack one of the other dinosaurs, search for an exit, or simply stare distractedly at the commotion of the spectators above. Smart players will team up against one creature at a time to take the monsters down.

When the dust settles, the crowd will go wild for the heroes who have triumphed against impossible odds. On her balcony just beyond the force field, Tiamat

again rises from her seat to make her formal proclamation. “These combatants have shown commendable courage and strength, and have brought pleasure to the people,” she calls. “Shall they all go free—or shall they fight to the death for their reward?”

At this, the crowd erupts into a chant of “Death! Death! Death!” Tiamat smiles radiantly and drops her gaze to the player characters below. “The people of Atlantis have spoken,” she declares. “Fight on, and I shall award gold, jewels, and freedom to the one remaining victor.”

Award Style points to any players who dramatically refuse this command, such as by throwing down their weapons or making an impassioned speech. If the situation becomes tense and it looks like a few of the players might get bloodthirsty with one another, you may need to brandish a few Style points to encourage them to stand down—it simply won’t do to have the villains turn the heroes against each other so easily.

Tiamat, furious at the refusal, will immediately order the guards to kill the heroes. But before anyone can obey her command, someone in the audience screams “Vril-ya!” and an explosion rocks Tiamat’s balcony, knocking the Hierophant off her feet. Among the panicked screams of thousands of spectators, other answering cries of “Vril-ya!” sound around the arena, each followed by another explosion.

Chaos and Escape

Terror reigns in the stands as smoke and debris fill the air. Explosions spark off along the walls of the fighting grounds, showering the heroes with burning fragments of stone. Then, through the chaos, a voice calls out to them: “Come with me if you value your lives.”

This is the voice of Marduk, a handsome young warrior, who has opened a trapdoor in the sand of the arena floor and now gestures for the player characters to follow him.

Marduk

Ally 3

Archetype: <i>Outcast</i>		Motivation: <i>Love</i>		
Style: 3		Health: 6		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 3		Charisma: 4		
Dexterity: 2		Intelligence: 3		
Strength: 3		Willpower: 3		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0		Initiative: 5		
Move: 5		Defense: 5		
Perception: 6		Stun: 3		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Athletics	3	3	6	(3)
Brawl	3	3	6	(3)
Con	4	2	6	(3)
Firearms	2	2	4	(2)
Intimidation	4	2	6	(3)
Linguistics	3	3	6	(3)
Medicine	3	3	6	(3)
Stealth	2	2	4	(2)
Talents				
Atlantean Language (Basic fluency)				
Resources				
Rank 2 (Vril-ya Heretics)				
Flaw				
Secret (+1 Style when his involvement with the Vril-ya Heretics endangers himself or his allies)				
Weapons	Rating	Attack	Average	
Stun Pistol	2 N	6 N	(3) N	
Punch	0 N	6 N	(3) N	

Marduk leads the characters through the slave pens and out to the peripheral chambers of the coliseum. By each scoring a single success on a stealth roll, the heroes can make it out without being spotted, thanks to the ongoing tumult among the spectators above. Even if the characters are seen, the arena security forces are capable of mustering only a few guards to stand in the way of escape. Marduk will help battle to freedom, but he will urge the player characters to great haste, since the full force of the city’s army will no doubt descend upon the arena at any moment to re-establish order. Should any player express desire to free other slaves from the arena cages, Marduk will insist that time is too short, but he promises them a chance to free all their brethren if they come with him now.

The Vril-ya

Marduk guides the player characters to a secret exit through the city sewers, where he ignites a glowing crystal to light the dank and dark tunnels. As they travel, Marduk explains that his people are not Atlanteans; the true, godlike Atlanteans are long gone. Marduk’s people may live in their city, use their technology, and speak their language, but they are in fact Vril-ya, the former servants of the long-lost Atlanteans. This is a fact that the High Council wishes to conceal. Those who claim and accept their true ancestry as Vril-ya are proclaimed to be heretics, and are sentenced to death. Hierophant Tiamat, the head of the Priest caste, knows the truth of who they are, but she and other members of the High Council use the lie to stay in power.

Marduk is an avowed and proud Vril-ya, one of a select group that knows the truth. He is a member of the Warrior caste and one of the overseers of the arena, but when a Builder showed him a copy of the Black Book (see Vril-ya Heretics sidebar, p. 90), it shook his belief system to the core. Now he is a true believer and has dedicated himself to assisting his fellow heretics, overthrowing the council, abolishing slavery, and establishing a new, egalitarian society. And that’s where the player characters come in.

Before Marduk lays out his plans in full, he leads the characters through a concealed doorway into a comfortably proportioned suite of rooms skillfully carved from stone. The furniture is limited to one table and several high-backed chairs, but there are plenty of the latter to go around. Three other Vril-ya await the arrival of the heroes and, though they all wear the black robes of their order, any character even remotely familiar with Vril-ya

society can tell that two of these belong to the Builder caste and the third is a member of the Priests. The heroes are offered refreshments, and one of the Vrilya will now use the Major Healing Crystal (see *Hollow Earth Expedition*, p. 191) on any injuries. The Vrilya will inform the characters that they are free to go at any time, but ask them to remain long enough to hear Marduk's proposal, as they believe it will benefit everyone present.

The Bargain

Marduk begins his pitch by expressing his sympathy for the characters' desire to leave Atlantis and return to their homelands. However, the Vrilya are powerless to help them due to the mobile nature of this city; even if the heroes were captured recently, Atlantis has already traveled far from the location where they were taken, and none of the Vrilya know how to control the city's direction. Nor do the city's rare and highly guarded flying disks have the range to return the slaves to their homes. But Marduk claims to have found a means by which he can open a mystical portal capable of both delivering the player characters to wherever they would like to go and toppling the unjust government of the High Council of the Vrilya.

Marduk explains that the true Atlanteans departed eons ago through a portal called the Great Gate. Their destination and reasons for abandoning their home are purely a matter for speculation, but Marduk personally suspects they were tricked into it by the Vrilya Priestly caste, who then sealed the portal behind them and laid claim to Atlantis and its technology. In any case, the gate has been inoperable since the Atlanteans' migration. Recently, however, a great wizard newly arrived in the city has publicly claimed that he has deciphered the writings on the Great Gate and that he can open it, which will allow the ancient Atlanteans to return. Tiamat, along with the rest of the High Council, is forced to openly support this wizard in order to prevent the general public from questioning their motivations. Yet if the gate is opened, the great lie will be revealed and the mighty and benevolent Atlanteans will be able to restore justice in their former city.

The catch is that the key to opening the gate is a girl named Deirdre. At the mention of her name, Marduk's voice takes on an adoring tone and his gaze slips dreamily away. All but the most obtuse characters will immediately recognize that Marduk is love-struck by this girl, and he will not deny it.

Marduk explains that Deirdre comes from a distant land and is the only one with the power to open the Great Gate. She does not know how to do so, but the great wizard

can show her. Unfortunately, she is currently held captive by Tiamat, who has imprisoned her in a palace within the Pleasure Gardens, near the city's center.

While no unauthorized Vrilya may enter the palace to rescue Deirdre, the player characters can pass themselves off as slaves and slip in unnoticed among the household staff. If the characters will help rescue Deirdre, she can open the Great Gate, expose the High Council's lie, and restore the real Atlanteans to their rightful place. In turn, the great Atlanteans will free all the slaves as it is against their code to keep sentient beings against their will. It is an audacious plan, but Marduk believes that the player characters are the right heroes to pull it off because they had the strength to win through in the arena and the courage to defy Tiamat afterwards.

The Rescue

The characters should have every reason to help Marduk. He saved their lives, healed their wounds, clearly loves Deirdre, and has given them a way to get revenge on Tiamat and free themselves and their fellow slaves. If they agree, the Vrilya will gather slave robes and any basic equipment that the player characters request, and escort them as close to the Pleasure Gardens as they care to go. If the characters wish to travel through the streets (particularly in the arena district), Marduk warns them to cover their faces; if they are recognized they will at best quickly draw a crowd of arena fans offering adulation, and at worst quickly attract the attention of the authorities. However, with the precaution of a simple hooded cloak, the player characters will have little difficulty losing themselves in the dense and diverse crowds.

If this is a character's first time in the streets of Atlantis, the initial impression—particularly for those reared in isolated jungle villages—is likely to be one of awe at the tumult of color, noise, and activity on the streets. The Vrilya clearly hold the power and wealth in the city in spite of being a minority, and can be seen going about their business of trading, seeking entertainment, or simply showing off their outrageously ostentatious fashions. The streets teem with slaves from every tribe and race of the Hollow Earth. Likewise, animals abound in every role: fearsome carnivores await auction outside the arenas; huge mammals and dinosaurs serve as pack and cart-animals; and songbirds and colorful lizards trail behind the Vrilya as well-heeled pets. Here, a triceratops lumbers down the road, harnessed to a heavy cart loaded with granite blocks. There, a bron-



tosaurus lashed to a barge pulls its load through the dark waters of the city's outermost ringed canal. Despite the Vrilya claim of infinite technological superiority, discerning characters will quickly come to the conclusion that this society is truly predicated not on marvelous machines but on the physical labor of beasts and slaves.

If the player characters have or can obtain orichalcum, they can purchase just about any tool, weapon, or item of clothing imaginable. They could also acquire slaves, livestock, or wild animals, (but these are likely to be exorbitantly expensive) if they wish to purchase something for a valuable arena show. As an added difficulty, although slaves commonly run shopping errands for their masters, they cannot by law own property, which means that anyone who is not of Vrilya descent must avoid spending sprees or they will attract unwanted attention from the Council guards that patrol the city.

At the Gardens

The Pleasure Gardens are a large urban park walled off from the public. These gardens house the most powerful and influential Vrilya leaders, so security is tight at all times—doubly so following the attack at the arena. Two Vrilya warriors stand at the gate and several other pairs roam the grounds, ready to respond to emergencies. They will not allow anyone to pass unless they are tricked, bribed, or incapacitated. If the heroes choose to fight their way through, they will be counter-attacked by several more sets of guards responding from within.

If the heroes try to talk their way past the guards, they may also gain entrance with 4 successes on a Con roll (grant bonus dice for bribes), provided they are carrying no visible weapons. Alternately, they may scale a wall, which will require an Athletics roll with a difficulty of 2, followed by Active Defense (to avoid 2 L damage from the wrought iron spikes lining its top), and then Stealth difficulty at 2 to avoid being noticed once inside.

Inside, the player characters will see that the garden grounds are a beautiful paradise, meticulously cared for by an army of slave groundskeepers. Fragrant, flowering trees offer pleasant shade while small streams and carefully manicured miniature waterfalls burble to the accompaniment of countless songbirds. Teams of groundskeepers tending to the animals and plants will not hesitate to tell visitors where to find Tiamat's palace among the several residences within the garden. However, they know nothing of Deirdre and can not speculate where such a prisoner would be kept.

Vrilya High Council Guardsmen

Ally 1

Archetype: Warrior

Motivation: Duty

Style: 0

Health: 4

Primary Attributes

Body: 2

Charisma: 2

Dexterity: 2

Intelligence: 2

Strength: 2

Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 4

Move: 4

Defense: 4

Perception: 4

Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Diplomacy	2	1	3	(1+)
Etiquette			4	(2)
Firearms	2	2	4	(2)
Intimidation	2	2	4	(2)
Linguistics	2	1	3	(1+)
Atlantean			4	(2)
Melee	2	1	3	(1+)

Talents

Atlantean Language (Basic proficiency)

Resources

None

Flaw

Sadist (+1 style whenever he is needlessly cruel)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Death-ray Staff	4 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Punch	0 N	0	4 N	(2) N

In Tiamat's Palace

Tiamat has her own pair of Vrilya warriors guarding her door, and several others scattered throughout her house—none of whom can be bribed. If the alarm is raised, they will coordinate to stall the invaders while the guards from the Pleasure Gardens respond in force. Players would be smarter to sneak through, either by incapacitating each guard swiftly and silently, or by disguising themselves as household staff. The latter is likely the easiest route, since the Hierophant has a tremendous number of slaves filling different roles, including food preparation, stable hands, repair and household upkeep, and every other possible function. These slaves are loyal to Tiamat in that they are more afraid of her than of death itself, but new faces are common and there is little cause for suspicion so long as the work gets done. A convincing story accompanied by a Con or Diplomacy roll with a difficulty of 2 is enough to reveal that Deirdre is being held in a tower toward the rear of the palace.

Unless the heroes can scale the forty-foot sheer tower and go in through the window, the only access to the tower is a single door at the end of a long hallway. Two of Tiamat's soldiers are standing alertly by the door with strict orders not to let anyone in. They will insist that any food, messages, or gifts for Deirdre be left with them, and they will not hesitate to strike a slave for attempting to circumvent this command. In fact, Tiamat left them specific orders to open fire on anyone who claims to seek entrance by the Hierophant's own command.

The Scion of Atlantis

Any commotion will alert the other guards in the palace, but once the heroes have fought their way past the hall guards they will have little difficulty finding Deirdre, who is locked in a small room at the top of the tower, unharmed but eager to escape.

She appears very strangely dressed to the eyes of the Hollow Earth natives, but she will immediately join in the fight against any Vrilya who may oppose her escape. She introduces herself as Deirdre Rookwood, and announces (to the players' confusion) that she is from the surface world. She is, in fact, the Scion of Atlantis (see *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 40).

Deirdre will make a half-hearted attempt to explain her world to the natives, most of whom have no frame of reference for the concept. If her rescuers are clearly struggling to understand her, she will give up and say that it is a land "very, very far away," and after that she will use more such "native friendly" terminology.

Deirdre has never met the wizard who has promised to teach her to open the gate, but she is eager to do so, particularly if it will spite Tiamat. If asked to speculate why she alone has the power to open the gate, she will guess that it is because she is descended from the true Atlanteans.

Once the Scion is freed, the heroes need to smuggle her out of the palace and the Gardens, back through the streets to whatever transportation they may have arranged, and then into the sewers, where Marduk awaits their arrival. He and Deirdre rush into each other's arms, sharing a moment of ecstatic joy at the reunion before they remember the business at hand. Marduk will then lead them all back to the heretics' hideout, where he says the great wizard awaits them.

Unpleasant Surprise

The door of the hideout slides back to reveal the identity of the wizard: it is Dr. Wolfram von Wartenburg, a high ranking Nazi and leader of the Thule Society. He is flanked by a half-dozen Nazi storm troopers, all with their weapons at the ready, though they have not yet bothered to point them at the player characters.

It might be necessary to remind players that, while they may know all about Nazis, characters native to the Hollow Earth would be ignorant of who and what they now face. To simulate this, describe the soldiers in alien terms, focusing on the helmets that resemble the smooth carapace of beetles, the misshapen metal clubs that seem to be their only weapons, and—perhaps most strangely of all in this tropical environment—the grey garments that cover their whole bodies from neck to foot as though they are trying to hide their own skin.

Deirdre stiffens in fright the moment she catches sight of von Wartenburg. Before she can react, the Nazi commander rises from his chair and commands, "Remain still." He speaks in Atlantean so that all can understand him regardless of their native languages, and his request also contains an Atlantean Power Word (see *Secrets of the Surface World*, p. 12) that freezes them in place, preventing them from moving or attacking. (If the initial Power Word does not work, he will use his Style to boost his Atlantean Language Talent until he has a large enough bonus on his Linguistics roll to ensure that his next Power Word will be irresistible.) Then von Wartenburg gestures to Deirdre and intones, "Come to me, my child." She shuffles to his side in an obedient stupor, where he inspects her as one would inspect a horse at market. "You are a pretty thing," he says to her. "It is a shame that the life-blood of a true Scion is the only key that can unlock the gate."

Taking her roughly by the arm, he pulls her out of the room, calling back at his soldiers to "shoot the rest." He speaks in German, so the players may not know what to expect, but the Nazi soldiers have seen enough effects of von Wartenburg's Atlantean Power Words to know that attacking the characters will snap them out of their immobility. Instead of immediate execution, they light up cigarettes to stall while their leader gets away. They begin to boast arrogantly (in German) about how easy it will be for the Third Reich to overrun this world of primitive savages and how domain over "Ultima Thule" (which is where they believe they are) will help them fulfill their Fuhrer's dreams of conquest—today the Hollow Earth, tomorrow the surface world.

The player characters are held immobile, but they are free to converse. If any are capable of communicating with the soldiers, they may discover (mixed in with the Nazis' taunts and ridicule) that von Wartenburg knows the residents of Atlantis are Vrilya, and believes that the absence of Atlantean descendants in the Hollow Earth proves they all migrated to the surface long ago, and been absorbed into the populace above. Therefore, von Wartenburg reasons, the Great Gate is what will lead the soldiers back to their Fatherland on the surface.

When the cigarettes are burned to ashes, no amount of bribes, threats or tricks will induce the soldiers to shirk their duty. They point their submachine guns at the heroes, intending to finish the job quickly. But the threat of this imminent attack is enough to break the power of the Atlantean Power Word, and the PCs are suddenly free to act. Marduk will kick over a table at the Nazis, giving the PCs one turn to get the jump on their foes.

The sound of gunfire breaks the spell and the characters are free to engage the Nazis. By the time they escape, von Wartenburg is long gone, and Deirdre with him.

The Truth about von Wartenburg

If the players are clever and dedicated investigators, they can unearth the back-story for von Wartenburg by tracking down and interrogating his sympathizers.

Von Wartenburg had been trapped in the Hollow Earth for some time, and his supply of soldiers and equipment was nearly spent when he accidentally discovered that which he had been seeking all along: the City of Atlantis. It did not take long before he realized that the Vrilya were not true Atlanteans, and he used his occult knowledge to enter their society as a respected ambassador.

Believing that the Great Gate connects to the surface world, von Wartenburg decided that if he could control the portal before the Vrilya found out what he was really doing, he could lead the Reich to conquer Atlantis. With such power, von Wartenburg might even be able to supplant his own Fuhrer.

Only one thing stood in his way: he needed to sacrifice an Atlantean descendent to unlock the gate. His plans were stymied until he learned that Deirdre Rookwood, a Scion of Atlantis, had come to the city. He had made her acquaintance several years earlier while doing undercover research on potential descendants of Atlantis. He himself had been the one to open her file with the *Ahnenerbe* agency. Before he could move ahead with his plan, the duplicitous Hierophant Tiamat swooped in and seized the girl with the intent to keep her in a secure location. Von Wartenburg posed as a wizard as a means to trick Marduk and the heretics into bringing Deirdre to him.

The Gate Opens

Marduk assures the player characters that von Wartenburg will need some time to perform the ritual to open the Great Gate, which will give them a chance to recover from their wounds and plan their next move. Von Wartenburg has to be physically present at the Great Gate to perform the ritual, and this act will force Tiamat to move against him. Both sides are going to be heavily armed, so the characters will need an army of their own if they are to defeat Tiamat and rescue Deirdre.

Unless the players think of it first, Marduk will smile grimly at them and say, "We need an army, and I promised you a chance to free the slaves. Let us return to the arena and foment a rebellion."

Rebellion

If the players agree to free the slaves, Marduk can lead them back through the sewers to the arena. Most of the slaves have been sentenced to fight because they are too rebellious to work anywhere else, so they will make a formidable armed force—if they can be united. This can be a short prelude to the scenario's climax in which players have a chance to garner allies or earn Style points. Following up on every possible course of action might break the pace of the story, so pick the activities that will most interest the combination of players and player characters in your game. Some suggestions include:

- Once freed, most of the slaves have no interest in battle, instead fleeing their separate ways. It will require an inspiring speech by one of their liberators to remind them of their desire to avenge their captivity by taking the fight to the High Council's door.

- Old rivalries flare up once the cages doors are opened. This becomes apparent when an Amazon and a lizardman come to blows outside the armory, and all their friends and tribesmen seem ready to follow them into the conflict. Unless a player character can calm the tensions through Diplomacy (difficulty 4) or some other solution, the slave uprising may destroy itself before it begins.

- Whether from fear of reprisals or misguided loyalty, several of the slaves will attempt to warn the Vrilya authorities of this mass escape. Players require an Empathy roll with a difficulty of 2 to spot the intentions of these would-be snitches. After that, the players may also need to debate the proper method of handling these individuals.

- Some characters may also wish to free some of the fighting animals. Although the fiercest predators were the allosaurs that the heroes dispatched in the open-



ing scene, several powerful creatures remain, including a Styracosaurus, two cave bears, a smilodon, two dire wolves, and five hyaenodons.

- If the players hunger for additional combat, the Vrilya guards may choose to make their stand at the armory. Unless the player characters are willing and capable of convincing the slaves to pit their bare hands against Vrilya weaponry, they will have to break in for themselves before they can arm their rebellion.

- Once the army exits the arena, they will clash with the Vrilya law enforcers. Their numbers and their strength will ensure that the escapees can sweep their initial opposition aside, but many of their more vindictive and less scrupulous members of the mob will seek to inflict harm on innocent people. Characters with a sense of ethics will need to be prepared to establish discipline within their rebellion, and may even need to make an example of one or two renegades.

The Courtyard of the Great Gate

The Courtyard of the Great Gate sprawls out majestically in front of the High Council Palace. At the rear of the courtyard stands the Great Gate itself: a massive semicircle of stone large enough for three brontosaurus

to pass through side-by-side, though at present they could walk no more than a few feet through before colliding with the Palace behind it. Presumably, when the gate is activated, a portal will open within the ring and connect the space to some distant locale. At the crest of the gate are sculptures of three titanic skulls carved from white rock. The one on the left wears a crown of sculpted orange clouds, the one in the center wears a crown of green leaves, and the one on the right wears a crown of red flames.

When the heroes arrive with the rebellion at their back, they will see that von Wartenburg has tied Deirdre to a newly-erected altar on the platform at the base of the gate. A mob of Vrilya believers and Nazi soldiers surround him, eagerly awaiting the opening of the Great Gate. They will not need to wait long—he has reached the very culmination of the ritual, and is poised to drive his saw-toothed ceremonial blade into Deirdre's heart.

A charge from the player characters will disrupt the ritual long enough to keep von Wartenburg from killing Deirdre outright. The rebelling slaves will clash violently with von Wartenburg's minions, giving the characters enough time to close in for battle with the ten Nazi soldiers protecting the altar.

Sample Adventure

On the second round of combat, things get more complicated: Hierophant Tiamat descends the steps of the Palace with her royal guards at her back. “Kill them all!” she bellows, and they obediently let loose a torrent of deadly blasts from their staffs as Nazi soldiers turn to fire with their submachine guns.

Unless a character does something to avoid attention or draw fire away from the other characters, each hero will be attacked by one of von Wartenburg’s soldiers as well as one of Tiamat’s warriors each round. Otherwise, don’t worry about the numbers; describe the fight as a chaotic three-way battle in which the rebelling slaves, Tiamat’s warriors, and von Wartenburg’s minions more or less cancel each other out.

The players will more than likely wish to focus their attacks on von Wartenburg. Unless directly threatened by one of the heroes, Tiamat will do the same, and she and her warriors will inflict an average of 2 points of lethal damage to him each round. Von Wartenburg is doomed. Regardless of who lands the ultimate blow, he will fall to the ground, blood streaming from his injuries. His followers will battle on, undeterred. Once he is dead, Tiamat will focus her wrath on the player characters. If Tiamat is then killed or driven off, the fight will go out of both groups; the characters will have defeated their enemies and permanently changed the fate of Atlantis!

In that instant of victory, red and white balls of lightning ignite inside the ring of the Great Gate, effectively silencing the cheers and cries of the battlefield as all eyes turn to see what is happening. Von Wartenburg lies at the base of the ritual altar, his blood sluicing through the intricate system of grooves to the foot of the Great Gate, where it boils and pops in time with the flashes inside the portal. Deirdre, it would seem, was not the only descendant of Atlantis in the Hollow Earth—von Wartenburg also carried the key to opening the gate.

The air inside the Great Gate shimmers and ripples like air rising off a stone on a hot day. Then the scene within it peels back as though it had been projected onto a collapsing canvas, revealing behind it a window onto another place. Through the ring, the characters can see a landscape clearly not of the Hollow Earth—but neither is it of the surface world. The sun is pale and small, and sinks into a cloudless horizon. Beneath it stretch endless, desolate red dunes and rocky crimson mountains in the distance. A cold, dry wind rushes out of the gate, engulfing the courtyard with the smell of salt and ozone.

A rumbling, disembodied voice rolls toward them, and all present understand the Atlantean words, “At last...our long exile is over.”

In response, Deirdre shouts “No!” and pulls herself out of Marduk’s arms to rush to the gate before anyone can come through it. When she lays her hand on it, the ball lightning again flashes and that strange vista disappears, leaving the air as empty as it had been before von Wartenburg’s death. As she steps back, everyone gathered in the courtyard—Vril-ya and slaves alike—kneel before Deirdre, Scion of Atlantis.

Resolution

Many possible paths lay ahead, and unanswered questions could draw the characters into further adventures. These may include:

- At the gamemaster’s option, the Scion of Atlantis may now be able to operate the gate, allowing the characters a one-way trip to their Hollow Earth homes (or possibly even the surface world). This would provide a quick and satisfying ending to a one-shot scenario.

- If Tiamat was slain, the political and social organization of Atlantis will be sent into turmoil. Many will seek to place Deirdre as the rightful ruler, but others will try to control or overthrow her. Whether or not Deirdre herself wishes to rule the city, she will certainly seek the aid of her rescuers in establishing a just government within Atlantis.

- If Tiamat escaped with her life, the Hierophant will attempt to reestablish her rule. If so, the characters may need to escape Atlantis or infiltrate its population, perhaps disguising themselves as slaves or joining the heretics’ underground movement.

- The players who escape Atlantis may desire to either return to their homes or to continue exploring their world. Even if they wish to go home, they may find that Atlantis has moved so far from their point of origin that they have quite a journey ahead of them.

- The player characters (possibly along with the Scion) could have been sucked through the portal before it sealed behind them, leaving them stranded in this strange other land to which the gate opened. Once there, perhaps they might survive to learn answers to their questions: Where did the gate lead? Why did the Atlanteans go there? Are the exiled Atlanteans really as benevolent as some suppose? The answers to these questions can be found neither on the surface world nor in the Hollow Earth, but they may eventually be revealed to explorers of sufficient daring and innovation.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Dr. Wolfram von Wartenburg

Mentor 5

Archetype: *Occultist* Motivation: *Power*
Style: 5 Health: 9

Primary Attributes

Body: 4 Charisma: 5
Dexterity: 4 Intelligence: 5
Strength: 4 Willpower: 5

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Initiative: 9
Move: 8 Defense: 8 (10)*
Perception: 10 Stun: 4

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Athletics	4	2	6	(3)
Brawl	4	2	6	(3)
Diplomacy	5	3	8	(4)
Firearms	4	2	6	(3)
Intimidation	5	5	10	(5)
Investigation	5	5	10	(5)
Linguistics	5	5	10	(5)
Melee	4	4	8	(4)
Philosophy	5	3	8	(4)
Stealth	4	4	8	(4)

Talents

Atlantean Blood (Longevity)
Atlantean Commands (May issue complex commands that must be obeyed)
Atlantean Language (Basic fluency)
Atlantean Power Words (May issue one-word commands that must be obeyed)

Resources

Rank 2 (Thule Society—time away has eroded von Wartenburg's influence)

Flaw

Condescending (+1 Style point whenever he proves his superiority)

Weapons	Rating	Attack	Average
Luger P08	2 L	8 L	(4) L
Ritual Dagger	2 L	10 L	(5) L

Armor	Defense	Str	Dex
*Breastplate	+2	2	0

Hierophant Tiamat

Mentor 5

Archetype: *Politician* Motivation: *Power*
Style: 3 Health: 9

Primary Attributes

Body: 4 Charisma: 5
Dexterity: 5 Intelligence: 5
Strength: 3 Willpower: 5

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Initiative: 10
Move: 8 Defense: 9
Perception: 10 Stun: 4

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Academics:				
Religion	5	5	10	(5)
Academics:				
History	5	4	9	(4+)
Con	5	5	10	(5)
Diplomacy	5	5	10	(5)
Firearms	5	1	6	(3)
Intimidation	5	5	10	(5)
Investigation	5	3	8	(4)
Linguistics	5	5	10	(5)
Melee	3	1	4	(2)
Survival	5	1	6	(3)

Talents

Atlantean Language (Basic fluency)
Atlantean Power Words (May issue one-word commands that must be obeyed)

Resources

Rank 4 (Vril-ya High Council)

Flaw

Condescending (+1 Style point whenever she proves her superiority)

Weapons	Rating	Attack	Average
Death-ray Staff	4 L	10 L	(5) L

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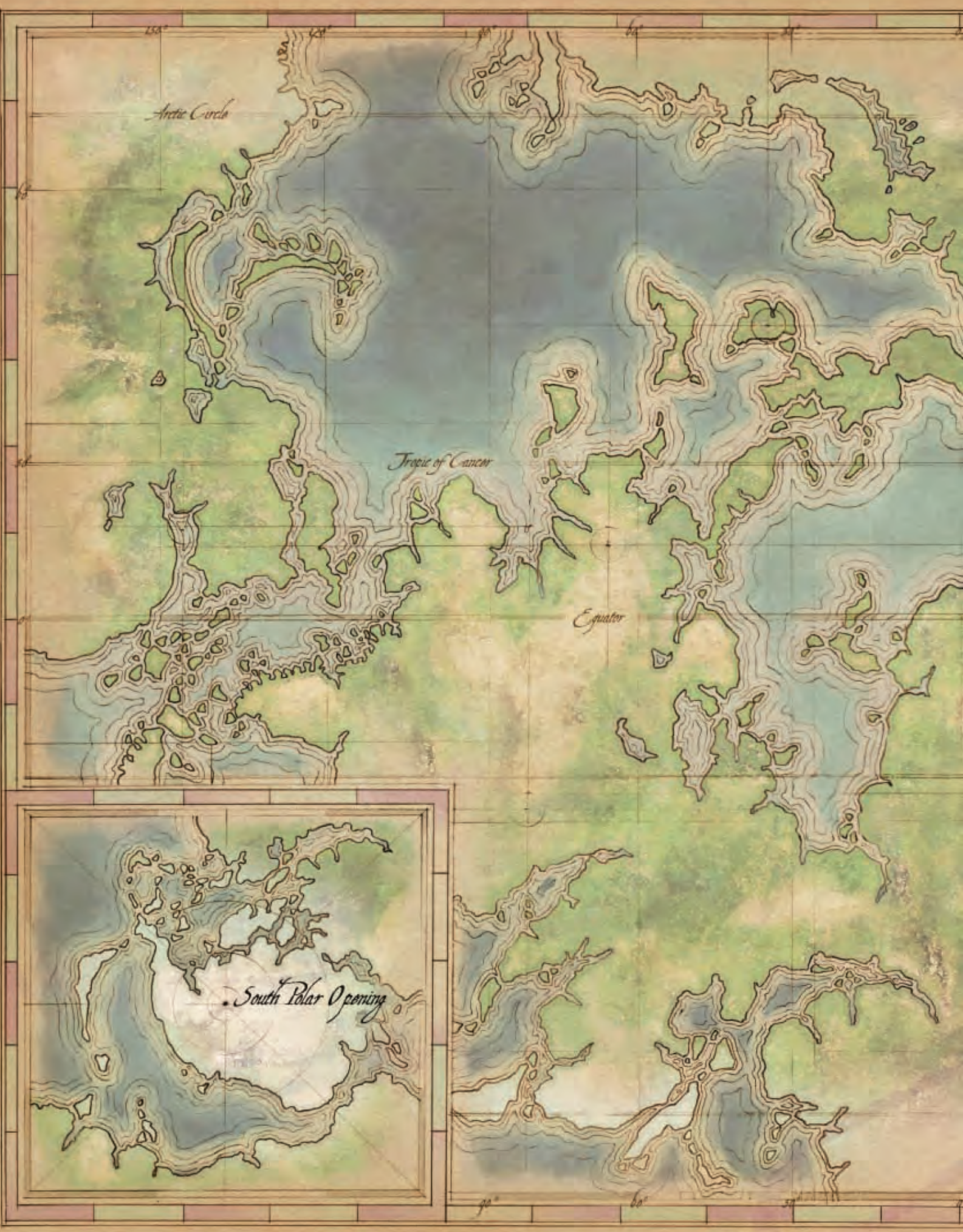
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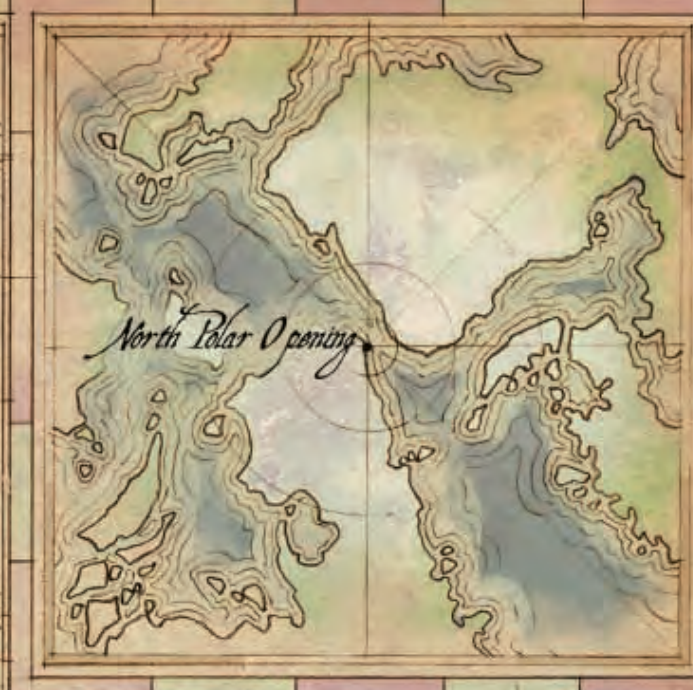
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