

# VOICE of the ANCESTORS

## Tales of the Man Eaters

N°2

A Guide to Cannibalism - What We Did To Our Forefathers  
Horror in the Deep - The Curious Quest of the Spark Hunters

WÜRМ  
Adventure Booklet



Roudier  
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Adventure Booklet for WÜRМ Number 2

## Tales of the Man Eaters

### Credits

#### Authors

Olivier Castan, Jean-Pierre Hufen,  
Emmanuel Roudier, Paul-Henri "Pitche" Verheve,  
Yodram

#### Translator

Kathy Calmejane

#### Project Manager

Emmanuel Roudier, Jean-François Morlaës

#### Technical Coordinator

Franck «Booga» Florentin

#### Proofreaders

Vincent Basset, Kathy Calmejane, François-Xavier Cuende,  
Jean-Pierre Hufen, Arnaud Prié, Emmanuel Roudier,  
Paul-Henri "Pitche" Verheve, Yodram,

#### Artist & Graphic Designer

Emmanuel Roudier



# Preface

My dear readers,

You are now holding the second edition of *Voice of the Ancestors*, and I thank you for that. In theory, you would have had to wait a little longer for this second adventure booklet for *Würm*, but thanks to the successful crowdfunding campaign by Editions Icare, you can now discover it at the same time as the first edition! Hooray for that! It means that you will be able to get an immediate feeling for just how different they are from one another. As we continue in our plan to explore the many aspects of the prehistoric universe of *Würm*, as well as the many game playing possibilities, in this edition we propose to take you into the world of the “Man Eaters”.

Who are these “Man Eaters”? There are no big cats or wolves in sight this time; instead we will be taking a closer look at the cannibalistic humans who so pique our curiosity. Just what is cannibalism? The term refers to humans eating the flesh of other humans. As you will soon discover, there are a number of different types of cannibalism that we will address here.

Over the next few pages you will find a game aid presenting the details of the various types: whether the cannibalism is for ritual purposes or for food, exo- or endocannibalism, you will soon know everything there is to know about it. You will then be able to add this exotic element to your games of *Würm*. As repulsive as it may seem to begin with, it can bring us all to think further about our own beliefs and convictions, and about the relationships that our ancestors had with their families, their enemies, and their dead.

The game aid is followed by three scenarios.

In the first one, our players are a group of young humans who happen to discover during their coming of age ceremony that the traditions of their tribe have included cannibalism since the dawn of time. How will they react to this discovery? Will they overcome this ancestral taboo to play out their characters, attempting to see a different side to sharing and transmission, two essential parts of societies based on tradition?

The second scenario involves actual monsters. Legendary boogey-men, goblins and ghouls assemble for this descent into the darkness, in search of the darkest part of humanity, the part that lurks in the dark, far from the surface. Let's wager that our players will never enter a cave in the same way after that encounter.

The third and last scenario explores a different and interesting take on cannibalism: what if the monstrous humans who practice this cannibalism are not the strange Neanderthals for a change, but our own ancestors, the *Homo Sapiens*? Our own species, in all its glory and its horror, with its unquenchable thirst for knowledge and discovery, and its terrible lack of consideration for others' lives...

One thing is for sure: this booklet is not for everyone! If you are used to playing with your six- and eight-year-old kids, it would probably be a good idea to wait for a while before you play out these scenarios or give them this edition of *Voice of the Ancestors* to read...

Enjoy your reading and your games!

*Emmanuel Roudier*

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# A Guide to Cannibalism

*A game aid for WÜRM*

## What is This For?

*Würm allows you to play characters living 35,000 years before our time. Research has uncovered evidence of cannibalism in a number of places occupied by mankind at this time. Although it has clearly been proven for the Neanderthals (Bear-men), the consumption of human flesh for dietary purposes alone has not yet been confirmed when it comes to the anatomically modern man of the recent Paleolithic. Yet given its later presence in historic civilizations until the modern day, there is nothing to prove to us that this type of cannibalism was not practiced by our own species in these ancient times. To simplify things, the following comments can be applied just as much to the Bear-men as they can to the Long Men. For a start, ritual cannibalism is just as plausible within both species. Allowing players to explore this aspect of human culture in prehistoric times merely adds an extra dimension to the possibilities of the game.*

*Today, cannibalism is a near-universal taboo. It is solidly anchored in our modern human consciousness, this activity generates a very strong revulsion and when it is featured in a story, it can sometimes lead to some pretty bad taste. The aim of this game aid is to give you a basis on which to build a “peaceful” way to play the cannibalism theme, by working to move past our modern (and perfectly legitimate) revulsion for it, while avoiding the pitfalls of simplistic horror stories for which other role-playing games might be better suited. While we’re busy overturning stereotypes, it can be stimulating for a GM to invite the players to play members of a cannibal tribe; eating another human doesn’t necessarily mean that they belong to the kind of evil, sub-human creatures who have so often been opposed to the good guys in works of fiction or to adventurers/explorers in role-playing games. Seeing this activity only as a sign of the savagery of animal-like beings is akin to taking a neo-colonial position boasting the superiority of our own civilization. We recommend that including cannibalism in a campaign should only be done with players who are mature enough to be able to distance themselves sufficiently from the character they are playing.*

## What is it All About?

Cannibalism can come in several forms. We have listed three main types below, but we will only take a closer look at one of them here, and its two sub-categories.

☞ Eating human flesh can be a last resort when it comes to one's own survival. Exceptional circumstances of famine can cause humans to turn to cannibalism to survive, whatever the period. There is evidence of this situation for Neanderthals but not for modern man during the era when *Würm* is set. Regardless, this occurrence does not require specific rules to be used when necessary during a *Würm* adventure. The GM should simply bear in mind that in a tribe for whom this is taboo, resorting to this extreme measure for survival can have serious consequences. The characters

who partake in it will have to make multiple offerings to wash away the stain and calm the anger of the clan's Guardian Spirits. On the other hand, unless there is any specific rule against it, it would be far more natural for a cannibal tribe to eat human flesh if they are in need of food, for example by eating the members of another clan or the weaker members of their own clan (although this may still be a taboo, even for cannibals).

☞ Even though it is a powerful taboo, some characters may resort to cannibalism when affected by major psychological problems. This situation doesn't require any particular attention; it can be treated on a case-by-case basis when it appears in a scenario. When it does, it's up to the GM to describe the events as they are intended.

☞ Cannibalism can also be the result of specific beliefs within a human society; in this case, it is a way for those consuming the human flesh to obtain part or all of the strengths or talents of the victim. In this context, *Ritualistic cannibalism* is just a part of the cosmic game that the Spirits play with mankind. Through its practice, humans can dominate and flatter the Spirits, offering sacrifices to them, and trying to increase their influence on their environment. In this context, sacrificing a human and eating parts of the body becomes a shamanic activity, similar to the others detailed in the *Wurm* rulebook, through which men can invoke supernatural powers.

We will take a closer look at this aspect of cannibalism in two different situations: first *exocannibalism*, which involves sacrificing a human from outside the clan and eating his or her flesh. Secondly, *endocannibalism* or necrophagia, which involves eating certain parts of the dead members of the community.

## Exocannibalism

### Cultural Environment

The extremely low population levels of the *Wurm* era exclude any possibility of human conflict on a large scale. There are therefore no wars during which opposing sides fight each other with armies that are hundreds strong. A warrior expedition of even a dozen individuals is an exceptional event, and it is probable that such an occurrence would be the subject of endless epic tales of combat for the Elders who pass on the Voice of the Ancestors.

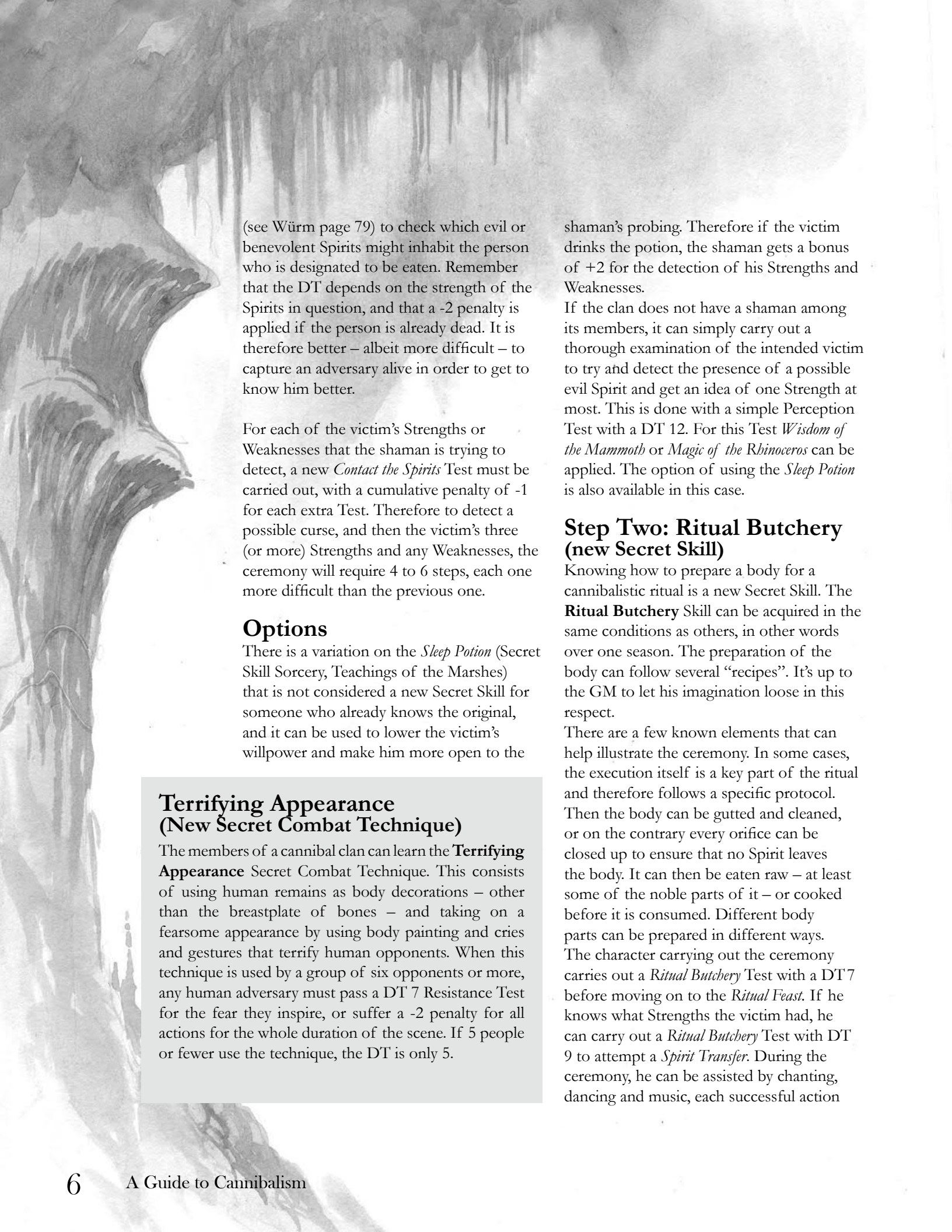


However, a clan can have a generally aggressive stance to people from outside their clan. This aggressiveness often bases its legitimacy on a legend specific to that group. Ritualistic cannibalism therefore becomes a weapon of warfare, weakening the enemy and reinforcing the clan. The main weakening factors for the enemy clan are the terrifying reputation of the Man Eaters, the killing of their warriors and the fact that the will not be able to give their dead the ritual burial they deserve. The cannibal clan is reinforced by absorbing the strengths of the enemy victims and by ensuring their Spirits don't return to haunt them.

### Step One: The Ritual

Not every opponent is a worthy candidate for a ritual ceremony. Some that are considered to be weak or cursed could even turn out to be dangerous to eat. In practice, it's always best to *Contact the Spirits*





(see *Würm* page 79) to check which evil or benevolent Spirits might inhabit the person who is designated to be eaten. Remember that the DT depends on the strength of the Spirits in question, and that a -2 penalty is applied if the person is already dead. It is therefore better – albeit more difficult – to capture an adversary alive in order to get to know him better.

For each of the victim's Strengths or Weaknesses that the shaman is trying to detect, a new *Contact the Spirits* Test must be carried out, with a cumulative penalty of -1 for each extra Test. Therefore to detect a possible curse, and then the victim's three (or more) Strengths and any Weaknesses, the ceremony will require 4 to 6 steps, each one more difficult than the previous one.

### Options

There is a variation on the *Sleep Potion* (Secret Skill Sorcery, Teachings of the Marshes) that is not considered a new Secret Skill for someone who already knows the original, and it can be used to lower the victim's willpower and make him more open to the

### Terrifying Appearance (New Secret Combat Technique)

The members of a cannibal clan can learn the **Terrifying Appearance** Secret Combat Technique. This consists of using human remains as body decorations – other than the breastplate of bones – and taking on a fearsome appearance by using body painting and cries and gestures that terrify human opponents. When this technique is used by a group of six opponents or more, any human adversary must pass a DT 7 Resistance Test for the fear they inspire, or suffer a -2 penalty for all actions for the whole duration of the scene. If 5 people or fewer use the technique, the DT is only 5.

shaman's probing. Therefore if the victim drinks the potion, the shaman gets a bonus of +2 for the detection of his Strengths and Weaknesses.

If the clan does not have a shaman among its members, it can simply carry out a thorough examination of the intended victim to try and detect the presence of a possible evil Spirit and get an idea of one Strength at most. This is done with a simple Perception Test with a DT 12. For this Test *Wisdom of the Mammoth* or *Magic of the Rhinoceros* can be applied. The option of using the *Sleep Potion* is also available in this case.

### Step Two: Ritual Butchery (new Secret Skill)

Knowing how to prepare a body for a cannibalistic ritual is a new Secret Skill. The **Ritual Butchery** Skill can be acquired in the same conditions as others, in other words over one season. The preparation of the body can follow several "recipes". It's up to the GM to let his imagination loose in this respect.

There are a few known elements that can help illustrate the ceremony. In some cases, the execution itself is a key part of the ritual and therefore follows a specific protocol. Then the body can be gutted and cleaned, or on the contrary every orifice can be closed up to ensure that no Spirit leaves the body. It can then be eaten raw – at least some of the noble parts of it – or cooked before it is consumed. Different body parts can be prepared in different ways. The character carrying out the ceremony carries out a *Ritual Butchery* Test with a DT 7 before moving on to the *Ritual Feast*. If he knows what Strengths the victim had, he can carry out a *Ritual Butchery* Test with DT 9 to attempt a *Spirit Transfer*. During the ceremony, he can be assisted by chanting, dancing and music, each successful action

## Table of Anatomical Analogies

Eaten body part	Ritual Feast (+1)	Spirit Transfer
<b>Brain</b>	<i>Memory, wisdom, insight</i>	Wisdom of the Mammoth, Secret of the Bear
<b>Eye</b>	<i>Perception, tracking, orientation</i>	Sight of the Owl, Eye of the Panther
<b>Nose, ears</b>	<i>Perception, tracking, orientation</i>	Cunning of the Weasel, Nose of the Wolf
<b>Tongue, throat</b>	<i>Eloquence, lying, singing, cursing</i>	Song of the Blackbird, Magic of the Rhinoceros
<b>Lungs</b>	<i>Stamina, breath, swimming</i>	Rise of the Eagle, Breath of the Stag, Fins of the Salmon
<b>Heart</b>	<i>Courage, power, resistance to cold</i>	Heart of Ice, Fury of the Lion, Flame of the Salamander
<b>Liver</b>	<i>Strength, power, resistance to sickness</i>	Majesty of the Aurochs, Strength of the Bear, Venom of the Viper
<b>Genitals</b>	<i>Fertility, sexual power, seduction</i>	Might of the Bison, Protection of the Vixen
<b>Legs, buttocks</b>	<i>Running, dodge, reflexes</i>	Speed of the Horse, Quickness of the Lynx
<b>Feet</b>	<i>Agility, dancing, jumping, balance</i>	Agility of the Ibex, Grace of the Swan
<b>Arms</b>	<i>Precision of aim, dexterity for building</i>	Knowledge of the Beaver, Flight of the Crow
<b>Hands</b>	<i>Manual skills, medicine, crafts</i>	Hand of the Ancestors, Softness of the Otter, Inspiration of the Rocks

gives a bonus of +1 for the *Ritual Butchery* Test. A failed roll will prevent the ceremony from being completed. A Critical Success will give the participants a 1d6 bonus for the *Spirit Transfer* or *Ritual Feast* Tests.

### **Ritual Feast**

Each clan member who takes part in the *Ritual Feast* can benefit from a +1 bonus from eating one of the various body parts detailed in the **table of anatomical analogies** on the next page. Be warned, however, that each bonus for a part of the human body can be awarded to *one and only one* clan member, even if several of them eat the same part. To benefit from the bonus associated with their chosen part, the

character will have to roll against a DT 5. A Success grants a bonus for 2d6 days; a Critical Success lasts a whole moon. If the character fails, he will suffer a penalty caused by a possible Weakness or an evil Spirit in the victim, for 1d6 days.

### **Spirit Transfer**

With a roll against a DT 7, a character can benefit from the victim's Strengths for a whole moon – as long as the celebrant has successfully carried out the *Spirit Transfer* Test. If the Test fails, the character will suffer a penalty for a moon caused by a Weakness or an evil Spirit in the victim. A critical success makes the bonus last for a whole season.





## Endocannibalism & Necrophagia

Apart from the case of famine-related cannibalism mentioned above, there is a very strong ritualization of cannibal activities within the clan. The aim is indeed to honor the memory of the deceased and ensure they are at peace, while making sure their Strengths and Skills are passed on to the surviving clan members during the *Ritual Feast*.

Once again, it is up to the GM to describe the appropriate ceremony to address both of those objectives. To do so he can refer to the **table of anatomical analogies** above. As the family of the deceased already knows them well, the celebrant of the funeral ceremony – not necessarily a shaman – does not need to carry out a *Contact the Spirits* Test. They already know all the Strengths and Weaknesses of the deceased, as well as any curses that may have affected them. The celebrant can be assisted by chants, dancing or music (cumulative bonuses of +1 for each), as he rolls for a *Ritual Butchery* Test with a difficulty depending on the aim of the ceremony.

It may simply be to lay the deceased to rest in peace and transmit his memory to the rest of the participants. If this is the case, the same rules apply as for the *Exocannibalism Ritual Feast* detailed above: DT 7 for the celebrant, and DT 5 for the participants. However, the effect lasts for longer: one moon for a success, a whole season for a critical success.

The ceremony can also be used for a *Spirit Transfer*. One of two cases can apply:

☞ The person eating the flesh is being initiated into adulthood. Through this ceremony, the memory of the deceased is passed down to the young clan member with one of their Strengths (the third Strength gained on reaching adulthood). The celebrant of the ceremony must successfully carry out a *Ritual Butchery* Test with a DT 7 (assisted by the other participants). In this case, the new Strength is automatically awarded to the initiate, and it is of course permanently acquired.

☞ The character eating the flesh is already an adult and he already has at least the three Strengths that come with that status. With a *Spirit Transfer* Test with a DT 7, he can benefit from one of the deceased's Strengths for a moon, added to his own. Optionally, the GM can decide that a Critical Success can grant the extra Strength for a whole season, or even permanently.

To create a special atmosphere, the GM will ensure the description of the transmission is surrounded by magic. Whenever a character calls upon a Strength obtained by *Spirit Transfer* or simply a bonus awarded after a *Ritual Feast*, he is overcome with memories of the deceased and emotions that are difficult to handle at first, through visions that vary in intensity.

*Yodram*

## Summary Table of Ritual Cannibalism

Type of cannibalism	Result	Exocannibalism	Endocannibalism
<b>Ritual Butchery</b> <i>Celebrant</i>	<b>Conditions for Success</b>	<b>DT 7</b> ( <i>for feast</i> ) or <b>DT 9</b> ( <i>for transfer</i> ). <i>Contact the Spirits</i> beforehand.	<b>DT 7</b> ( <i>for feast</i> ) or <b>DT 9</b> ( <i>for transfer</i> ). <i>Contact the Spirits</i> not applicable.
	<b>Failure</b>	Failure of the ceremony. Impossible to attempt it again	Failure of the ceremony. Impossible to attempt it again
	<b>Critical Success</b>	+1d6 for participants for the <i>Spirit Transfer</i> or the <i>Ritual Feast</i>	+1d6 for participants for the <i>Spirit Transfer</i> or the <i>Ritual Feast</i>
<b>Ritual Feast</b> <i>Participant - DT 5</i>	<b>Success</b>	Bonus +1, 2d6 days	Bonus +1, 2d6 days
	<b>Failure</b>	Weakness or Curse for 1d6 days	Weakness or Curse for 1d6 days
	<b>Critical Success</b>	Bonus +1, one moon	Bonus +1, one moon
<b>Spirit Transfer</b> <i>Participant - DT 7</i>	<b>Success</b>	Extra Strength for one moon	<i>ditto</i> OR if during a coming of age initiation: automatic and permanent transfer
	<b>Failure</b>	Weakness or Curse for one moon	<i>ditto</i> OR if during a coming of age initiation: no failure possible
	<b>Critical Success</b>	Extra Strength for one season	<i>ditto</i> , or even permanent transfer (at GM's discretion)

# What We Did To

## Introduction

After the long, warm season of Ao, the first chills that announce the coming of winter have swept over the hunting lands. It is time for the members of the Lion clan to travel to the safe haven that they have occupied during the cold season since time began. Nestled in the heart of a deep gorge, it provides a few small game animals for the winter, a hot spring that bubbles at the back of a cave chamber, and most importantly a plentiful plant life which, combined with the hot springs, remains relatively luxurious and maintains a warmer temperature in the whole of the gorge. At the top of the valley, just downstream from where the river turns from a series of rapids into a thundering waterfall, is the gaping Maw of Scilax (entrance to the sacred cave where the annual rituals take place, for the adults of the clan only).

This year, during a bison hunt, one moon to the north of the winter camp, a young “flat-face” (the Lion clan’s nickname for the Long Men) hunter was captured. As every year, the clan’s captive was washed, fed, treated well, and only recently did the clan begin to drug him. For a few days now, he has been in a constant state of semi-consciousness. Soon, he will be devoured by Scilax as an offering to the powerful Spirit for the protection of the clan... That is all the clan’s children know about the strange ritual that they have always been excluded from for as long as they can remember.

## The Clan’s Legend

The Lion clan was once a peaceful Bear-man clan. When the flat-faces arrived in the area, the river Spirit that protected the clan was no

## The clan of Scilax, the Lion-men

Bear-men– 5 men, 6 women and 4 children + PCs; Mousterian Culture

**Guardian Spirit:** Scilax Ember eyes, Vengeful and Clairvoyant

**Totem animal:** cave lion.

The clan doesn’t practice patrilocality or matrilocality. For survival, the small group encourages all its members (men or women) to find a partner elsewhere and bring them back to the clan, by force if necessary.

The clan’s Manna Pool contains 1 point per player +1. The PCs can use it, as long as they respect the requirements of the cult of Scilax... and they only know part of them!

**Secret techniques:** common skills + *Ritual Butchery*.

**Secret skills:** *Sorcery* (Teachings of the Marshes: *Sleep Potion*, *Love Potion*, *Ointment of the Rhinoceros*, *Potion of the Frog*, Würm p. 85) + *Terrifying Appearance*.

*Note:* for this scenario, the players will be beginning the adventure as child characters about to become adults – see pages 35-36 of the *Würm* core rulebook. You can consider that the PCs are missing one Strength that they will acquire during their coming of age initiation. On top of that, they have a penalty of -3 for their physical Tests, -2 for Knowledge, a total Stamina score of 20 and 1d3 Experience Points. During character creation, you can ask them which Strength they would like to acquire when they come of age. The future deceased, who will be ritually eaten at the end of the story, will therefore have the Strengths that the players wish to acquire. Another option is to have the GM decide at the end of the scenario which new Strength the characters will get.

# Our Forefathers\*

\*An obvious homage to “What we did to father”, also known as “The Evolution Man” by Roy Lewis. A recommended read!

longer enough to prevent the attack of an evil Spirit. Many perished. Scilax the clairvoyant appeared to Arvar the ancestor. He gave him the Fury of the Lion. He taught him the ways to defend his clan. Since then, the flat-faces have not returned to the area, and Scilax watches over his people in all his generous fury. At least, until recently...

## What the PCs Don't Know at the Beginning of the Scenario

The adults have all been initiated to cannibalism, always heavily ritualized, as much inside the community as occasionally outside it.

**Exocannibalism** can also occur without any special occasion, but it mainly happens when the clan returns to the winter camp each year. To mark the occasion, the clan's alliance with Scilax is reinforced: a outsider to the clan must be sacrificed (sometimes after months of captivity within the clan). The *Ritual Feast* is held, shared between the able-bodied adults (the elders look after the children), and the trackers have to offer certain parts of the body to a cave lion that they must track down beforehand.

**Endocannibalism** is rather special: the Elders spend the night reciting a long list of the names of the ancestors (the children have taken part in this ceremony without truly understanding the meaning). This demonstration of their memory helps them to learn the names of around a hundred ancestors, all the way back to the legendary Arvar. When they reach adulthood, each clan member is given the name of one of his ancestors – this symbolizes the transmission of the ancestor's memory, but it is also a practical concern. When a death

occurs within the clan, a *Ritual Feast* is held, allowing 1 to 4 youngsters (depending on the Strengths of the deceased, maximum 4) to acquire the third Strength required to become adults.

## Scilax is Hungry!

The challenge is to manage, in a short game play period, to give the players the equivalent of the childhood memories of the PCs they are playing. Here are a few essential bits of information that they must know, and some suggested scenes to help you transmit them.

- 1** Scilax's Maw (the sacred cave in the gorge) is just one of many caves in the area. As children they often played in these cavities. Some of them are shallow cul-de-sacs, others contain the sulfurous hot springs that trickle down to the main river and play their part in the strangely temperate microclimate in the gorge.
- 2** **Argun**, the last young man to have come of age two seasons ago, returned from his initiation after having disappeared for several days. When he returned, he came over the mountain, down from the highest point, over the waterfall that marks the entrance to the valley. The PCs remember it because they saw him walking all alone, his body painted black and white, his eyes wide and unfocussed and a skull hanging from his belt. But what they remember best is that he seemed to be having an intense conversation with a cave lion!
- 3** When the clan's legend is told, there is a litany that is recited during the chants, after every four names of their ancestors: "*Scilax chewed up Arvar; Scilax spat out Arvar; Scilax fed Arvar* ».
- 4** From a number of amused looks and persistent questioning from the Elders, the



*A scenario for  
Bear-men characters  
and an experienced GM*

**MANOK**, typical Bear-man, *Strengths* to be defined by GM, *Weak.* Experience: 10, Stamina: 18

**ARGUN**, typical Bear-man, *Strength of the Bear, Agility of the Ibex, Fury of the Lion.* Experience: 3, Stamina: 24. Bone spear.

**ANTA**, typical Bear-woman, *Heart of Ice, Softness of the Otter, Wisdom of the Mammoth, Eye of the Panther, Weak.* Experience: 10, Stamina: 24

**CHILDREN**, typical young Bear-children, *Heart of Ice, Weakness Child.* Experience: 0, Stamina: 16

PCs have figured out that the time for their coming of age initiation is coming soon. But all of this is surrounded by mystery. Even more mysteriously, old **Manok**, whose rheumatism often keeps him constrained to his bed, has often asked the PCs to come to his side

lately. He is one of the few who accepts to answer their questions (except for the elements that are reserved for the initiates) and he also seems to have a great deal of affection for them. Explanation for the GM: he knows that he is soon approaching the end of his long life, and to ensure the transmission of the clan's memory, he is offering his body for the *Ritual Feast* for the PCs' coming of age.

**5** As they do every year at the same period, the trackers mentioned around the campfire that they have spotted a large cave lion in the area. This year, rather unusually, the large male entered the gorge. The children have even heard him roar. They have been forbidden from leaving the camp.

**6** Trackers have also spotted "flat-faces" on the high plateaus above Scilax's Maw to the south. This was debated at great length around the evening's campfire. For most of them, it is of course seen as a bad sign. Other more daring clan members want to watch them to learn more about them before they decide what to do about them. In the end, young Argun, who is protected by the Spirits of the wolf and the lion, was sent on this mission. He will have been gone for three days when the events at Scilax's Maw occur.

**Note:** depending on how much time you have for the game, you can of course leave out the enactment of any or all of these establishing events and move on to the action.

### *What if...*

The PCs can show their eagerness during this first part of the scenario to go rushing into the adventure? For example, they may decide to follow Argun towards the plateaus to spy on the "flat-faces". Of course, Argun will refuse to have the children follow him. If they do however decide to tag along without him knowing, this phase will allow them to work out just how weak their characters are. They are too clumsy to hide efficiently from a trained hunter, they lack stamina and are not experienced enough to handle the climbing in the mountain or be able to follow his tracks. Make it as hard as you can for them, it should push them to return sheepishly to the adults who stayed in the camp.

### **Scilax Awakens!**

Unsurprisingly, as they do each year, the "grown-ups" have left the elders to watch the camp. However, old Manok, despite his condition, has followed the other adults to Scilax's Maw. Nine of them (4 men and 5 women) went to the cave, taking **Teka**, the young flat-face who is to be sacrificed to Scilax, with them. Reminder: Argun has not yet returned from his scouting mission to the other "flat-faces" spotted on the southern plateaus. Old **Anta** has therefore been left behind alone to look after the four little ones and the PCs.

She immediately gave the PCs a number of chores to do, hoping to keep them occupied and take their mind of the fact that they are

still not considered adults. They constantly have to feed the main campfire, reinforce the wall of brambles that marks the outer limit of the camp, and keep an eye on the little ones to make sure they don't get into trouble or wander away from the camp.

When night comes, Anta calls the PCs to her side. She finally tells them – although they had already kind of figured it out – that it is time for their coming of age initiation. They must prepare to leave, alone, in the middle of the night, and go to the cave known as “Scilax’s Maw”. If the PCs mention the presence of the big lion, she will tell them with a mysterious and vaguely amused look on her face, that they will just have to learn to protect themselves without depending on the adults.

You can let the players plan their nighttime expedition. Anta leaves them alone to make their own decisions; their initiation has already begun! Even if the players are old hands themselves, it is time to make them painfully aware of how vulnerable their characters are. The night is a foggy one (as is often the case down in the gorge). It is filled with a multitude of increasingly worrying animal sounds. However, there is little chance that the children will get lost, as the winding path to “Scilax’s Maw” is very easy to follow along the bottom of the gorge. It takes about two hours of quick walking to get there. On several occasions, the blood-chilling roars of a lion echo through the gorge, and always seem close by. A DT 9 Perception Test can allow them to work out the direction and distance of the animal. The difficulty comes from the way the sounds echo off the rock walls and are muffled by the fog. If they do see the lion, then he bounds away into the fog as if he

## The best laid plans...

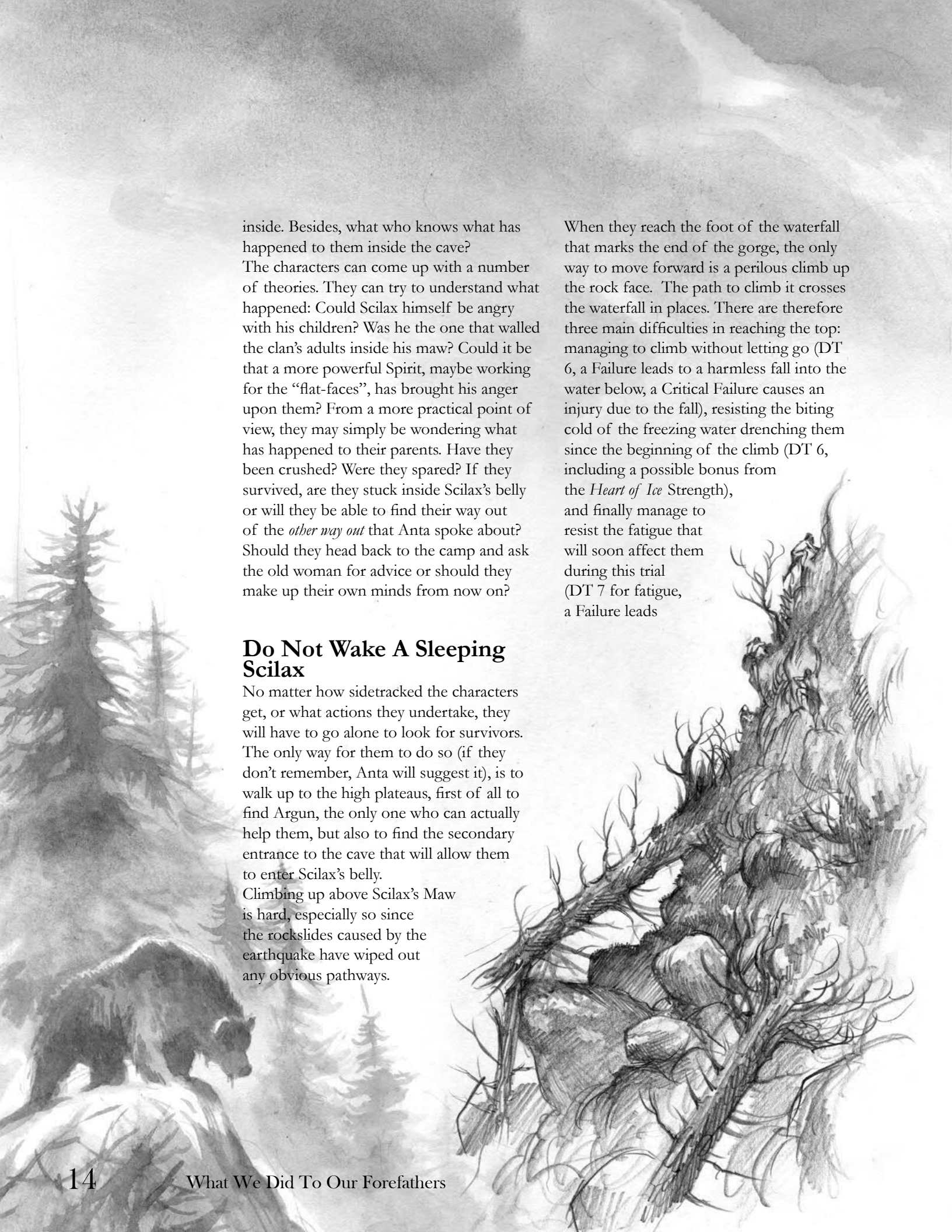
The adults were supposed to travel to Scilax’s Maw to prepare for the PCs’ coming of age initiation. They were then supposed to welcome them and have them “devoured” by Scilax – in fact get them lost in a labyrinth of caves – leave them to be “digested” (by confronting their fears and hardships), before being reborn as adults. They would then have taken part in the Ritual Feast around Manok to receive their new Strength. Then they would have been sent (accompanied by a hunter) to offer the remains of young Teka to the cave lion that has been prowling around near the gorge. Last of all, they would each have gone in search of their totem animal: the theory being that this animal must be approached, and observed until the character is familiar enough with it to be accepted and in return understand their animal *alter ego*. But Scilax, or fate, has decided otherwise!

was playing with the PCs. This can partially reassure them; as for the moment he does not seem to be tracking them.

## Scilax Has Eaten!

When they are getting close to the entrance of Scilax’s Maw, the valley is suddenly filled with a commotion as if every animal around was shrieking at the same time. They all seem to be panicking simultaneously, even the daytime animals that have been brutally dragged from their slumber. A few seconds later, the ground begins to shake. It goes on for so long that it seems like it will never end. They are surrounded by the deafening cries of wounded animals, hundred-year-old trees being upturned, snapped in two like twigs, and blocks of rock coming loose from the cliff sides and rolling... right towards the end of the gorge where the PCs are. Now is not the time to weaken them, given what they are about to go through. However a few dice rolls (readjusted if necessary behind the GM’s screen) can give them the impression that they narrowly escaped being buried alive.

Once the earthquake and the initial shock have passed, the PCs can notice that the landscape all around them has drastically changed. Most importantly, they can see that the entrance to “Scilax’s Maw” is permanently blocked by several tons of huge rocks. They can no longer reach the adults who were waiting for them



inside. Besides, what who knows what has happened to them inside the cave? The characters can come up with a number of theories. They can try to understand what happened: Could Scilax himself be angry with his children? Was he the one that walled the clan's adults inside his maw? Could it be that a more powerful Spirit, maybe working for the "flat-faces", has brought his anger upon them? From a more practical point of view, they may simply be wondering what has happened to their parents. Have they been crushed? Were they spared? If they survived, are they stuck inside Scilax's belly or will they be able to find their way out of the *other way out* that Anta spoke about? Should they head back to the camp and ask the old woman for advice or should they make up their own minds from now on?

### **Do Not Wake A Sleeping Scilax**

No matter how sidetracked the characters get, or what actions they undertake, they will have to go alone to look for survivors. The only way for them to do so (if they don't remember, Anta will suggest it), is to walk up to the high plateaus, first of all to find Argun, the only one who can actually help them, but also to find the secondary entrance to the cave that will allow them to enter Scilax's belly.

Climbing up above Scilax's Maw is hard, especially so since the rockslides caused by the earthquake have wiped out any obvious pathways.

When they reach the foot of the waterfall that marks the end of the gorge, the only way to move forward is a perilous climb up the rock face. The path to climb it crosses the waterfall in places. There are therefore three main difficulties in reaching the top: managing to climb without letting go (DT 6, a Failure leads to a harmless fall into the water below, a Critical Failure causes an injury due to the fall), resisting the biting cold of the freezing water drenching them since the beginning of the climb (DT 6, including a possible bonus from the *Heart of Ice Strength*), and finally manage to resist the fatigue that will soon affect them during this trial (DT 7 for fatigue, a Failure leads



to a loss of 1d6 Stamina Points). It takes 2 successful Climbing Tests to reach the top. A failed Test for Cold Resistance or Fatigue will mean they need to stop for a moment... and therefore suffer the effects of the cold and the fatigue for longer. If the players manage to help each other in any way, they get a +1 to +3 bonus at the GM's discretion.


Once they reach the top of the waterfall, the PCs discover a relatively flat plain, swept by the winds and where the biting cold of winter has a far stronger hold than it does down in their own familiar gorge with its running warm water. In the distance, they can see the impressive peaks with their eternally snowy tips. These must be the homes of the most powerful Spirits, where mankind has never dared to tread. The river that they know so well winds its way lazily between misty peat marshes and a scattering of grassy knolls already whitened by winter's touch. There is no sign of Argun, the clan's tracker. Let the PCs wander in this wasteland for a while. Hunger, cold and despair should be their only companions for the moment. It is up to them to come up with ways to resist the elements. Then they come across a crevice in the plateau: a gigantic lake feeds the river that they know, but it also runs away towards the rising sun in a small stream that

seems to drop down into the ground. When they get closer, the PCs can see that the stream drops over a ledge down into a gorge that looks similar in some ways to the one that they know so well. There too, the wrath of the Spirits (the earthquake) has left gaping wounds that are still visible.


They can hear a wailing human voice coming up from the bottom of the gorge. After a dangerous approach through the rocky chaos along the banks of the newborn waterfall, they discover a scene that leaves them filled with anticipation. Argun is sitting, cross-legged, beside a fire. He seems to be watching a young female "flat-face" whose leg is crushed by a recent rockslide. He is rocking back and forth, as if in a trance, while the young woman wails and stares at him with terror-filled eyes. In fact, as a ruthless hunter trained in the secrets of his clan, Argun is about to kill the young woman, who is wounded and blocked by the block of stone. He wants to take one of her Strengths before he heads back to the camp. If the PCs tell Argun that the Elders may have been blocked or wounded inside Scilax's belly during the earthquake, he decides to follow them to the secondary entrance, but before that, he will show them the ritual he is about to carry out.

**ELEA**,  
typical Long Woman,  
*Hand of the Ancestors*,  
*Secret of the Bear*,  
*Inspiration of the Rocks*.  
Experience: 2, Stamina:  
10 (wounded)





Argun will be confident and inflexible when it comes to what he is about to do. He is aware of the truly exceptional circumstances the Lion clan is now in, and therefore he decides to forget the plans for the PCs' initiation and directly include them in this Ritual Feast. Whatever the PCs decide to do about this, he is determined to make the most, at least for himself, of the benefits he can reap from the Spirits that accompany his prisoner. This scene is designed to be a moral dilemma for the PCs (and *in theory* for the players who will have a greater cultural revulsion for cannibalism). This is the occasion for the GM to present the dilemma: either they obey the clan's rules, represented here by Argun, or they rebel against them. The PCs have grown up with a fear of these "flat-faces", but the humanity of the unfortunate young woman should still move them. At the same time, the necessity to save their people could prove to be a counter argument. Let them go with whatever they choose. Will they go as far as to confront Argun (or try to at least!)? What will happen to them at the end of the scenario if they commit the unthinkable? This scene will allow the GM to get a first peek at the resistances that the characters may present during their future initiation. If they decide to share the *Ritual Feast* with him, then the sacrifice, the ritual butchery and the cooking of the body parts will be carried out with cold and precise gestures, without any needless cruelty and as discreetly as possible (see the game aid on pages 6-7).



Whatever the PCs choose, they will now have to make their way to the secondary entrance of the caves that lead to Scilax's Maw, with or without Argun. After having followed some rather obvious tracks (DT 5) left by the regular passage of the flat-

faces in the area, they discover that the only way to enter the caves is through the flat-faces' winter camp. There are about twenty people living in huts set up in fairly similar conditions to those of the Lion clan, under a rock shelter at the back of which is the access to the cave. After the earthquake, several people seem to have been wounded and are lying near the great fire. A huge flat-face who seems to be a shaman is dancing and singing around them, asking the Spirits to favor them. From their lookout spot, the PCs then see a rather unsettling scene: the man seems to sit down in a strange way. Then a Bear-man pokes his head out from under the great animal skin worn by the shaman. The shaman seems confused, hesitates, then with a tap on the head, orders the Bear-man to take him back to the entrance of the cave.

## Inside Scilax's Belly

Let the PCs take a careful look at the location, work out a plan to reach the entrance to the cave and anticipate what they will find inside – beginning with the darkness! How can they discreetly enter the cave while carrying lit torches? When they finally go for it, make sure they get caught at the very last moment by a member of the Long Men clan.

If Argun is with them, it is time to split them up! Seeing that they have been caught just as they were about to enter the cave, he tries a last desperate measure: he uses his *Terrifying Appearance* to cause a diversion and allow them to run inside. From there onwards, they won't see him again and will be on their own. Much later on, they will find out that after a few skirmishes and a run for his life, Argun managed to escape the flat-faces, who were enraged by the violation of their taboo. Indeed, for the flat-faces, the inside of the cave is a sacred place and completely taboo. Only the shaman can enter it, outside of the special ceremonies where the whole clan can venture inside. This will in fact help the PCs, as even if they are spotted entering the cave, no one will dare to come after them. They will get away with a bit of a fright, realizing that only the shaman and his Bear-man porter are left to bar their way.

The narrow gallery descending into the ground leads at first into a wide circular chamber, which can't be seen from the outside. This is where the shaman, still on the shoulders of his porter, has gone to try and plead to the clan's Guardian Spirits. He has heard the cries of his brothers outside, and is awaiting the PCs. In the end, the arthritic old man has very little in terms of personal resources to fight against a group

## The Story of the Shaman and the Bear-man

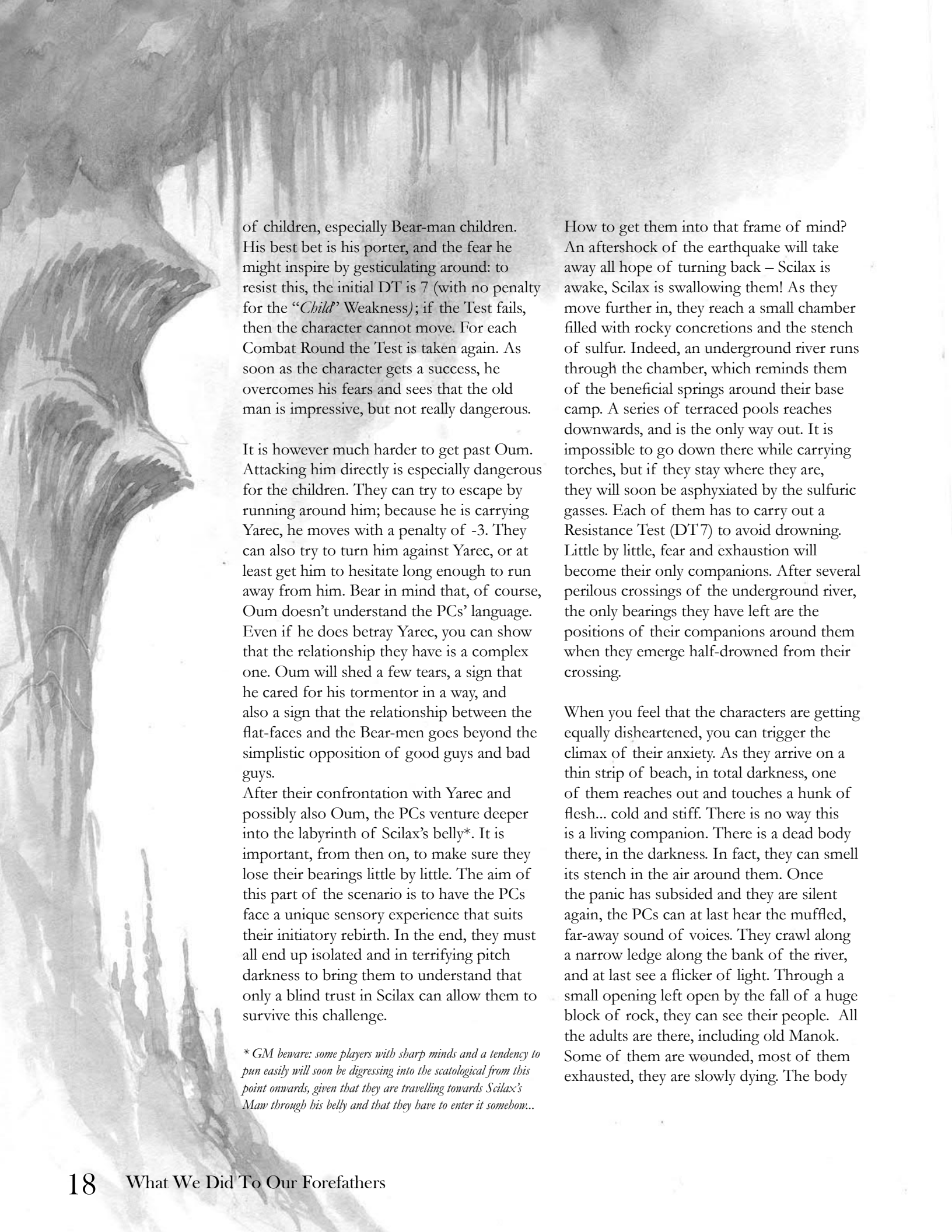
The history of the strange "pet" Bear-man who carries the shaman goes back a few years, when the shaman Yarec met the Bear-child that they would later all call Oum. Yarec had suffered a bad fall and broken his spine. Since then he had become so moody that his brothers came to fear his frequent tantrums. When he first saw Oum, who had been captured by hunters, he came up with a cruel plan for him: he would raise him to be his legs, and legs don't need to talk. He tore out the bear-child's tongue and secured an exclusive authority over him, waiting patiently for the boy to be strong enough to carry him. The other members of the clan, although they all secretly disapproved of this cruelty, accepted it, assuming that some powerful Spirits must have approved this strange association. Oum is now considered to be a beast of burden. In fact, having been beaten since childhood and deprived of speech, he looks, at first, like a wild animal. However he is far from stupid, and has developed a form of intelligence mainly focused on allowing him to survive in the best possible conditions. As he has no memory of his own kind and doesn't know what he looks like, he will not spontaneously identify with the PCs if he sees them. They will have to be very subtle (DT 9 plus maybe the *Song of the Blackbird* or *the Grace of the Swan*) to prevent him from turning against them, driven by the reflex of protecting his master.

**YAREC:** typical Long Man, *Hand of the Ancestors*, *Magic of the Rhinoceros*, *Rise of the Eagle*, *Inspiration of the Rocks*, *Lame*, *Quick-tempered*, *Fragile*. He also wears a charm at all times that gives him the *Majesty of the Aurochs*. Experience: 6, Stamina 16.

**Attack** [1] Stick 2d6 (1d6 Damage Points).

**OUM:** typical Bear-man, *Heart of Ice*, *Secret of the Bear*, *Might of the Bison*, *Mute*. Experience: 3, Stamina 30.

**Attack** [1] Kick 2d6 (2d3 Damage Points) or Stick 2d6 (2d6 Damage Points, if Yarec has fallen and Oum tries to defend him).



of children, especially Bear-man children. His best bet is his porter, and the fear he might inspire by gesticulating around: to resist this, the initial DT is 7 (with no penalty for the “*Child*” Weakness); if the Test fails, then the character cannot move. For each Combat Round the Test is taken again. As soon as the character gets a success, he overcomes his fears and sees that the old man is impressive, but not really dangerous.

It is however much harder to get past Oum. Attacking him directly is especially dangerous for the children. They can try to escape by running around him; because he is carrying Yarec, he moves with a penalty of -3. They can also try to turn him against Yarec, or at least get him to hesitate long enough to run away from him. Bear in mind that, of course, Oum doesn’t understand the PCs’ language. Even if he does betray Yarec, you can show that the relationship they have is a complex one. Oum will shed a few tears, a sign that he cared for his tormentor in a way, and also a sign that the relationship between the flat-faces and the Bear-men goes beyond the simplistic opposition of good guys and bad guys.

After their confrontation with Yarec and possibly also Oum, the PCs venture deeper into the labyrinth of Scilax’s belly\*. It is important, from then on, to make sure they lose their bearings little by little. The aim of this part of the scenario is to have the PCs face a unique sensory experience that suits their initiatory rebirth. In the end, they must all end up isolated and in terrifying pitch darkness to bring them to understand that only a blind trust in Scilax can allow them to survive this challenge.

*\* GM beware: some players with sharp minds and a tendency to pun easily will soon be digressing into the scatological from this point onwards, given that they are travelling towards Scilax’s Maw through his belly and that they have to enter it somehow...*

How to get them into that frame of mind? An aftershock of the earthquake will take away all hope of turning back – Scilax is awake, Scilax is swallowing them! As they move further in, they reach a small chamber filled with rocky concretions and the stench of sulfur. Indeed, an underground river runs through the chamber, which reminds them of the beneficial springs around their base camp. A series of terraced pools reaches downwards, and is the only way out. It is impossible to go down there while carrying torches, but if they stay where they are, they will soon be asphyxiated by the sulfuric gasses. Each of them has to carry out a Resistance Test (DT7) to avoid drowning. Little by little, fear and exhaustion will become their only companions. After several perilous crossings of the underground river, the only bearings they have left are the positions of their companions around them when they emerge half-drowned from their crossing.

When you feel that the characters are getting equally disheartened, you can trigger the climax of their anxiety. As they arrive on a thin strip of beach, in total darkness, one of them reaches out and touches a hunk of flesh... cold and stiff. There is no way this is a living companion. There is a dead body there, in the darkness. In fact, they can smell its stench in the air around them. Once the panic has subsided and they are silent again, the PCs can at last hear the muffled, far-away sound of voices. They crawl along a narrow ledge along the bank of the river, and at last see a flicker of light. Through a small opening left open by the fall of a huge block of rock, they can see their people. All the adults are there, including old Manok. Some of them are wounded, most of them exhausted, they are slowly dying. The body

they found earlier was Ergata, a brave woman who, being skinnier than the others, managed to crawl out of their prison; but she was too badly wounded to make it and died before she could save them. Given the situation, the children can only make their way in through the gap to join the adults, but the adults can't get out. They tried in vain for many a long hour to tug and scratch at the blocks of granite that are blocking the exit. Let the PCs organize some first aid (getting water for them for a start!) and then indulge in the comfort of being reunited with them, before they start trying to find a way out of this predicament. *Hand of the Ancestors*, *Knowledge of the Beaver* or *Secret of the Bear* can help them to analyze the situation. From where they stand, the problem doesn't seem too hard to solve. In fact, the block of granite that is blocking the exit for the adults is resting on an earthy, crumbly soil. It can be dug out, or even washed away by a light flooding by the river that is easy enough to set up. If they don't come up with this solution on their own, then talking to Manok, who is hounding them with questions, will help them come up with it.

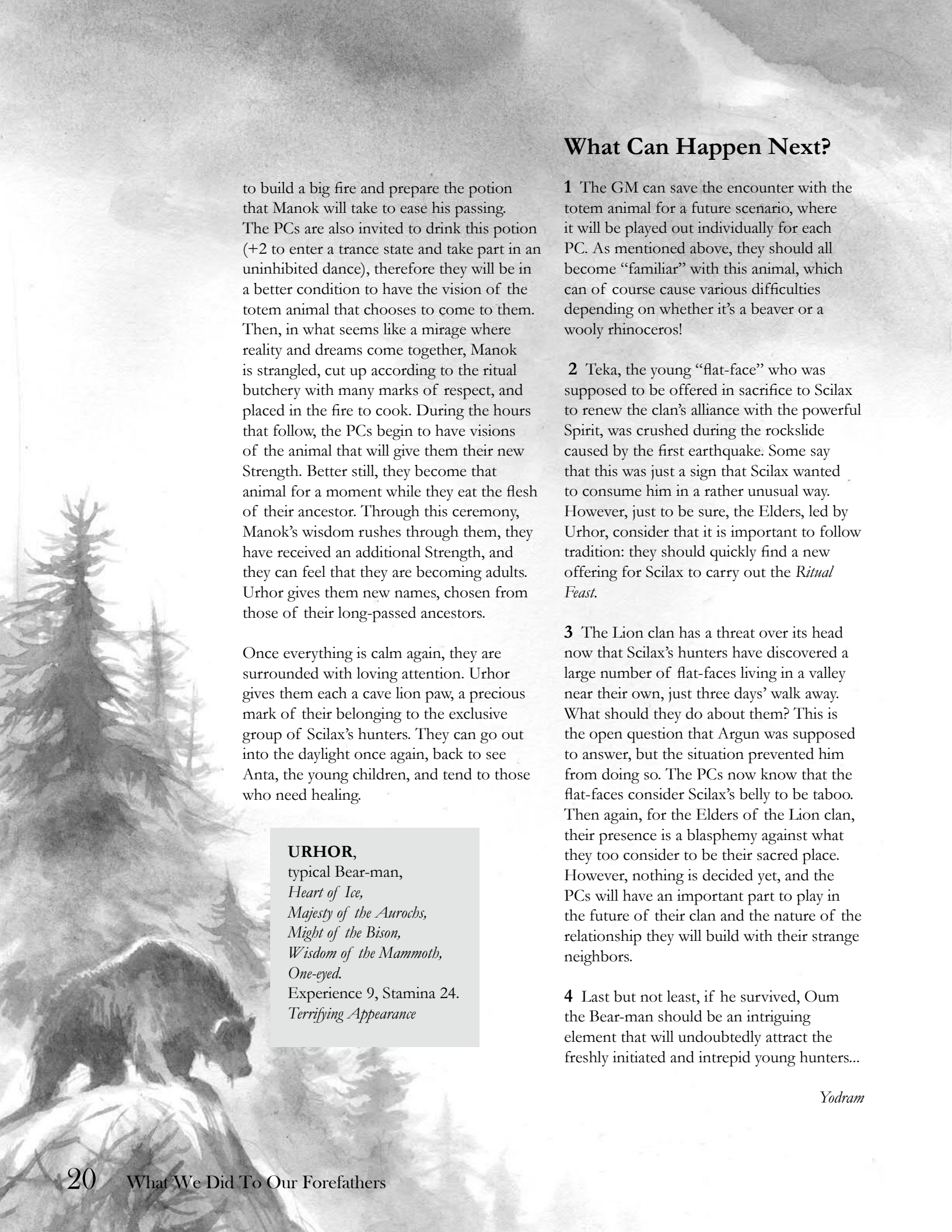
Finally, the small opening widens by a few centimeters after hours of hard work, and allows them all to leave quickly. Taking the only path available – in other words the underground river – the group arrives more dead than alive in a gallery of caves that runs parallel to that of Scilax's Maw. Those who are in better shape lead the rest of them to an exit that emerges half way between their base camp and the old opening of Scilax's Maw. But just as they were about to finally see the light of day again, the Elders stop the PCs in their tracks.



### In Scilax's Heart

Manok is exhausted, and Scilax will soon summon him to his side. He calls those who are still considered children to his side for a moment. He explains to them that the challenges they have now overcome successfully make them exceptionally qualified for initiation into the secrets of the Lion clan. Scilax is a predator, and anything that is not a predator is a prey. That is Scilax's greatest lesson. Therefore, many years ago, he taught Arvar how to fight to ensure that his own people survived: eat your enemy if you don't want him to eat you, and take his life strength from him. You should also honor your ancestors and retain their memory and the strengths of their totem animals by eating their bodies. Manok is impressed by the PCs' courage, and at the same time he knows his end is near. He considers it an honor to be able to continue to live through them, and offers himself for their initiation.

Urhor, the hunt leader, is presiding the ceremony. Everyone gathers around the PCs and Manok. Some of the adults go outside to gather and bring back wood



to build a big fire and prepare the potion that Manok will take to ease his passing. The PCs are also invited to drink this potion (+2 to enter a trance state and take part in an uninhibited dance), therefore they will be in a better condition to have the vision of the totem animal that chooses to come to them. Then, in what seems like a mirage where reality and dreams come together, Manok is strangled, cut up according to the ritual butchery with many marks of respect, and placed in the fire to cook. During the hours that follow, the PCs begin to have visions of the animal that will give them their new Strength. Better still, they become that animal for a moment while they eat the flesh of their ancestor. Through this ceremony, Manok's wisdom rushes through them, they have received an additional Strength, and they can feel that they are becoming adults. Urhor gives them new names, chosen from those of their long-passed ancestors.

Once everything is calm again, they are surrounded with loving attention. Urhor gives them each a cave lion paw, a precious mark of their belonging to the exclusive group of Scilax's hunters. They can go out into the daylight once again, back to see Anta, the young children, and tend to those who need healing.

**URHOR,**

typical Bear-man,

*Heart of Ice,*

*Majesty of the Aurochs,*

*Might of the Bison,*

*Wisdom of the Mammoth,*

*One-eyed.*

Experience 9, Stamina 24.

*Terrifying Appearance*

## What Can Happen Next?

**1** The GM can save the encounter with the totem animal for a future scenario, where it will be played out individually for each PC. As mentioned above, they should all become "familiar" with this animal, which can of course cause various difficulties depending on whether it's a beaver or a woolly rhinoceros!

**2** Teka, the young "flat-face" who was supposed to be offered in sacrifice to Scilax to renew the clan's alliance with the powerful Spirit, was crushed during the rockslide caused by the first earthquake. Some say that this was just a sign that Scilax wanted to consume him in a rather unusual way. However, just to be sure, the Elders, led by Urhor, consider that it is important to follow tradition: they should quickly find a new offering for Scilax to carry out the *Ritual Feast*.

**3** The Lion clan has a threat over its head now that Scilax's hunters have discovered a large number of flat-faces living in a valley near their own, just three days' walk away. What should they do about them? This is the open question that Argun was supposed to answer, but the situation prevented him from doing so. The PCs now know that the flat-faces consider Scilax's belly to be taboo. Then again, for the Elders of the Lion clan, their presence is a blasphemy against what they too consider to be their sacred place. However, nothing is decided yet, and the PCs will have an important part to play in the future of their clan and the nature of the relationship they will build with their strange neighbors.

**4** Last but not least, if he survived, Oum the Bear-man should be an intriguing element that will undoubtedly attract the freshly initiated and intrepid young hunters...

*Yodram*

# Horror In The Deep

Horror in the Deep is a horror scenario designed for a group of characters who have recently come of age or with some basic experience. We recommend that the Game master (GM) choose a group of Long Men to make the contemplation of the cave drawings more plausible. However a group of Bear-men or a mixed group can also be a good fit with a few adaptations.

This scenario deliberately takes some liberties with historical correctness, and flirts with the realms of fantasy and horror. Horror in the Deep is loosely based on the film *The Descent* (Neil Marshall, 2005).

Watching it will probably inspire you for your depiction of the nightmare that the characters will have to go through. This scenario will confront the characters with repulsive cannibal humanoids in an oppressive closed environment. During this adventure, one of the characters can be introduced to shamanism, which he will first experience in terrifying circumstances.

## Introduction

The tribe is facing a rough winter. Their stocks of food are at their lowest and their allies are not around to barter for food. So the characters have been sent on a hunting expedition. Following a great gray lion into a dark cave, they find themselves in a maze of galleries. At the heart of it, they find strange cave paintings, and can choose to go into a shamanic trance to help them find the exit... But more importantly they will have to face the terrifying *creatures of the deep* that haunt this place and see the characters as fresh meat for their next meal. You will find a map and a cross-section of the cave on the following pages. It is based on the Grotte du Tasson, at Fromelennes in the Ardennes region of France.

During this adventure, the characters will be wearing their *winter clothing* (2 Protection Points, -1 for Agility and Dodge). Deep inside the cave where the temperature is a stable 11°C all year round, they can remove the outer layer of their clothing. They will therefore not suffer any penalty for their Agility Tests (which can be handy for climbing!), but they will only have one Protection Point left.

## Winter is Coming, and it's Not Looking Good

The cold is already biting and a blizzard has begun to blow in the valley where the camp has been set up. They should have finished the preparation of their food stocks by now - a vital activity if they are to resist the harsh climate conditions to come. Unfortunately, the reindeer didn't show up this year. Could the great herd have changed its age-old migration path? Was the hunt leader negligent or maybe even cursed? One way or the other, the hunters had to settle for bison, and they are far harder to kill. As it stands, the stocks of food seem far too low to survive a regular winter.

A few days ago, the tribe's shaman went into a trance to ask the Spirits for a sign of what was to come over the coming season. Since then, he has noticed several obvious signs: the winter will be very harsh. Is his prediction the fruit of "simple" meteorological observation and common sense? Or could it come from deciphering real signs sent to him after he asked for a *Clairvoyance Favor* (see Würm, page 91)? Either way, the future is looking bleak for our characters' tribe.



*A scenario best suited to Long Men*



## The Wolves Attack

One night, the PCs are woken up by the alert call of a watcher at the other end of the camp. He has just come across a pack of hungry wolves while patrolling near the cairn that covers the hole where their food stocks are stored, down in the frozen ground, less than a foot below the surface. Hunger has given a pack of a dozen wolves the courage to push over the mound of stones. In the dead of night, they had already helped themselves to the stocks of meat when he found them, their mouths dripping with defrosted blood. When they were caught, the wolves were still gobbling down the pieces of frozen meat, barely even taking time to chew.

The tribe has to chase off these opponents as quickly as possible, and the wolves won't hesitate to fight back, when surrounded by all those pointy sticks. The PCs are backed up by half a dozen other hunters (see *Würm* page 121). But the wolves shouldn't suffer too many fatalities. Make it so that only two or three wolves are killed, and the others manage to flee into the dark night. Indeed, the wolf meat should not provide enough to replace the stolen meat.

Once they have been chased off, the tribe realizes that the wolves have gobbled up a huge amount of food. They also notice that the animals they have just killed are not worth as much as a hunted prey, and that there is not much meat on their bones.

## Reduced to Famine

Faced with this event, added to the perils of the winter to come, the members of the community feel defeated and they start trying to place the blame for their lack of supplies. Things get a little heated, but the old shaman manages to calm them down.

He decides to send off a small group of hunters (the characters!) to meet an allied tribe that has settled nearby. Maybe these allies were lucky enough to have killed plenty of reindeer on their own hunting lands. The PCs are laden with fine furs, pieces of hand-made clothing and various raw materials (see *Würm* page 100), to trade for some meat supplies. The GM is free to make up the characteristics of this friendly tribe based on the typical tribes detailed in the *Würm* book on page 96.

The neighboring tribe is about a day's walk away. As the weather is already quite cold, the characters will find walking difficult (see *Würm* page 66). The biting wind makes the journey even more unpleasant. When they get there, they are stunned! For some unknown reason, the tribe seems to have left their base camp. The rock shelter is empty and the huts disassembled and taken away. When they saw the cold weather coming, their allies probably had a little more common sense than the PCs' clan and must have left for a warmer climate before the mountain passes and vast frozen steppes became impassable. Unfortunately, this option is no longer available to the PCs' tribe, as they are already too weak to travel. The characters must head back to their camp quickly to tell the others the bad news.

As if to confirm the fact that the PCs are cursed, they are attacked on the way back by an evil arctic fox. It is an Ice animal (see information at the end of this scenario). It is lying in wait, on the *lookout* (see *Würm*, page 43). The group will have to carry out an opposed Test between its *Camouflage* (4d6) ability and their *Alertness*. If the Ice arctic fox succeeds, then it can attack them with a bonus of +3 for the element of surprise.



*Note for the GM: invite the supernatural to the table! The tribe's shaman should see this disturbing and dangerous adventure as a very bad sign when the group tells him about this part of their adventure. He could wrongly suppose that the tribe is the victim of a Vengeful Animal, as a result of some unknown curse. Is the tribe being persecuted by dark forces hiding behind these harsh weather conditions? Later on, the appearance of the big gray lion will be even easier to interpret as a sign from the Spirits.*

## Immediate Measures for Survival

During the nights following the old shaman's trance, he dreamt several times of the rough conditions awaiting them during the winter. On the night after the PCs return to the camp, the tribe's Guardian Spirit appeared to the shaman in his dreams and ordered that an extraordinary hunt take place to ensure the community's survival. The decision is therefore made to undertake an expedition on the very brink of winter. All hunters who are able to walk are sent off to all the corners of the territory and beyond to bring back as much game as possible. The Elders make sure they form groups of people who get along well and have plenty of common experience. Together, the characters form one of the three hunting groups. Give the PCs time to gather their equipment, trading and bartering some objects if

necessary to get everything they need. It has been decided that their group would head towards the mountains. Therefore, the older hunters advise them – if they haven't already thought of it themselves – to take a good length of braided plant fiber rope with them.

## Replenishing the Manna Pool

Assigning them this survival "mission" can be done by carrying out a ritual of devotion for the whole tribe, especially the characters. If applicable, this ritual can replenish the clan's Manna Pool before they leave for their hunt.

## All Hopes Rest on This Hunt

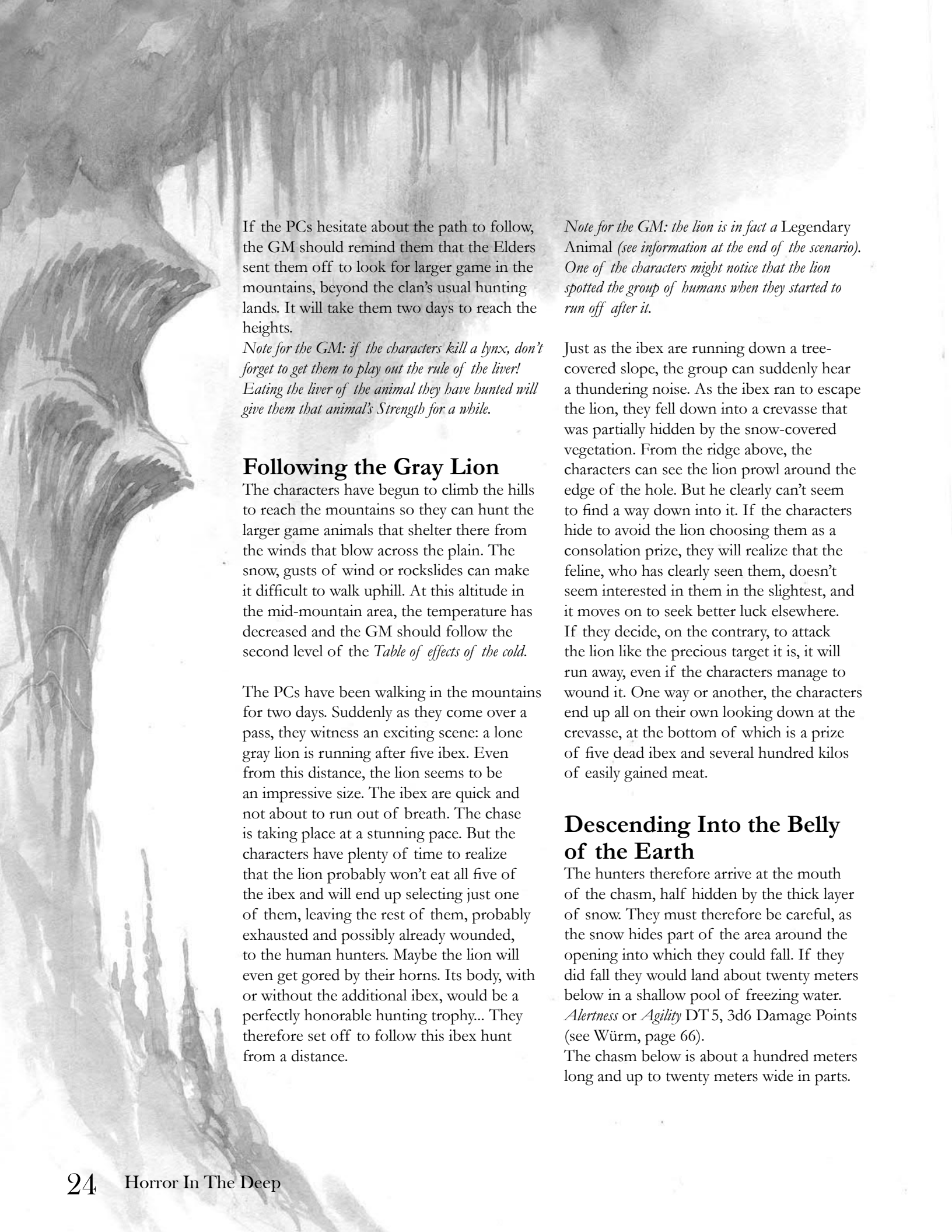
Next morning at sunrise, the characters are ready to leave. The cold is already biting, but the wind hasn't begun to blow yet. The tribe's shaman and the Elders come to see them on their way and call the favors of the Spirits onto each group as they leave in different directions. Everyone is there to say goodbye, including the women and children. The air is thick with anxiety.

The characters set off across the steppe. The biting cold is a constant reminder that the unforgiving winter is close and that the objective of their hunt is crucial. The GM should refer to the first level of the *Table of effects of the cold* (see *Würm*, page 66).

He can set up a first hunting encounter in the *steppe* environment. The GM should insist on the depressing absence of the larger game animals, the chilling wind steadily rising over the plain that offers no shelter at all, and only let the PCs find the tracks of small game animals (hare, grouse, lynx...). The PCs can always attempt to hunt these animals, in order to have enough to keep themselves going, but there is no way they will take such meager supplies back to the camp.







If the PCs hesitate about the path to follow, the GM should remind them that the Elders sent them off to look for larger game in the mountains, beyond the clan's usual hunting lands. It will take them two days to reach the heights.

*Note for the GM: if the characters kill a lynx, don't forget to get them to play out the rule of the liver! Eating the liver of the animal they have hunted will give them that animal's Strength for a while.*

## Following the Gray Lion

The characters have begun to climb the hills to reach the mountains so they can hunt the larger game animals that shelter there from the winds that blow across the plain. The snow, gusts of wind or rockslides can make it difficult to walk uphill. At this altitude in the mid-mountain area, the temperature has decreased and the GM should follow the second level of the *Table of effects of the cold*.

The PCs have been walking in the mountains for two days. Suddenly as they come over a pass, they witness an exciting scene: a lone gray lion is running after five ibex. Even from this distance, the lion seems to be an impressive size. The ibex are quick and not about to run out of breath. The chase is taking place at a stunning pace. But the characters have plenty of time to realize that the lion probably won't eat all five of the ibex and will end up selecting just one of them, leaving the rest of them, probably exhausted and possibly already wounded, to the human hunters. Maybe the lion will even get gored by their horns. Its body, with or without the additional ibex, would be a perfectly honorable hunting trophy... They therefore set off to follow this ibex hunt from a distance.

*Note for the GM: the lion is in fact a Legendary Animal (see information at the end of the scenario). One of the characters might notice that the lion spotted the group of humans when they started to run off after it.*

Just as the ibex are running down a tree-covered slope, the group can suddenly hear a thundering noise. As the ibex ran to escape the lion, they fell down into a crevasse that was partially hidden by the snow-covered vegetation. From the ridge above, the characters can see the lion prowl around the edge of the hole. But he clearly can't seem to find a way down into it. If the characters hide to avoid the lion choosing them as a consolation prize, they will realize that the feline, who has clearly seen them, doesn't seem interested in them in the slightest, and it moves on to seek better luck elsewhere. If they decide, on the contrary, to attack the lion like the precious target it is, it will run away, even if the characters manage to wound it. One way or another, the characters end up all on their own looking down at the crevasse, at the bottom of which is a prize of five dead ibex and several hundred kilos of easily gained meat.

## Descending Into the Belly of the Earth

The hunters therefore arrive at the mouth of the chasm, half hidden by the thick layer of snow. They must therefore be careful, as the snow hides part of the area around the opening into which they could fall. If they did fall they would land about twenty meters below in a shallow pool of freezing water. *Alertness* or *Agility* DT 5, 3d6 Damage Points (see *Würm*, page 66).

The chasm below is about a hundred meters long and up to twenty meters wide in parts.

From up above, the characters can't yet see that the ibex are no longer there. Once they are down inside it, tracks in the frozen mud will show them that the ibex seem to have been dragged further into the cave, through a passage at the back of the chasm. The characters will therefore have to enter the heart of the darkness to get their precious prey back.

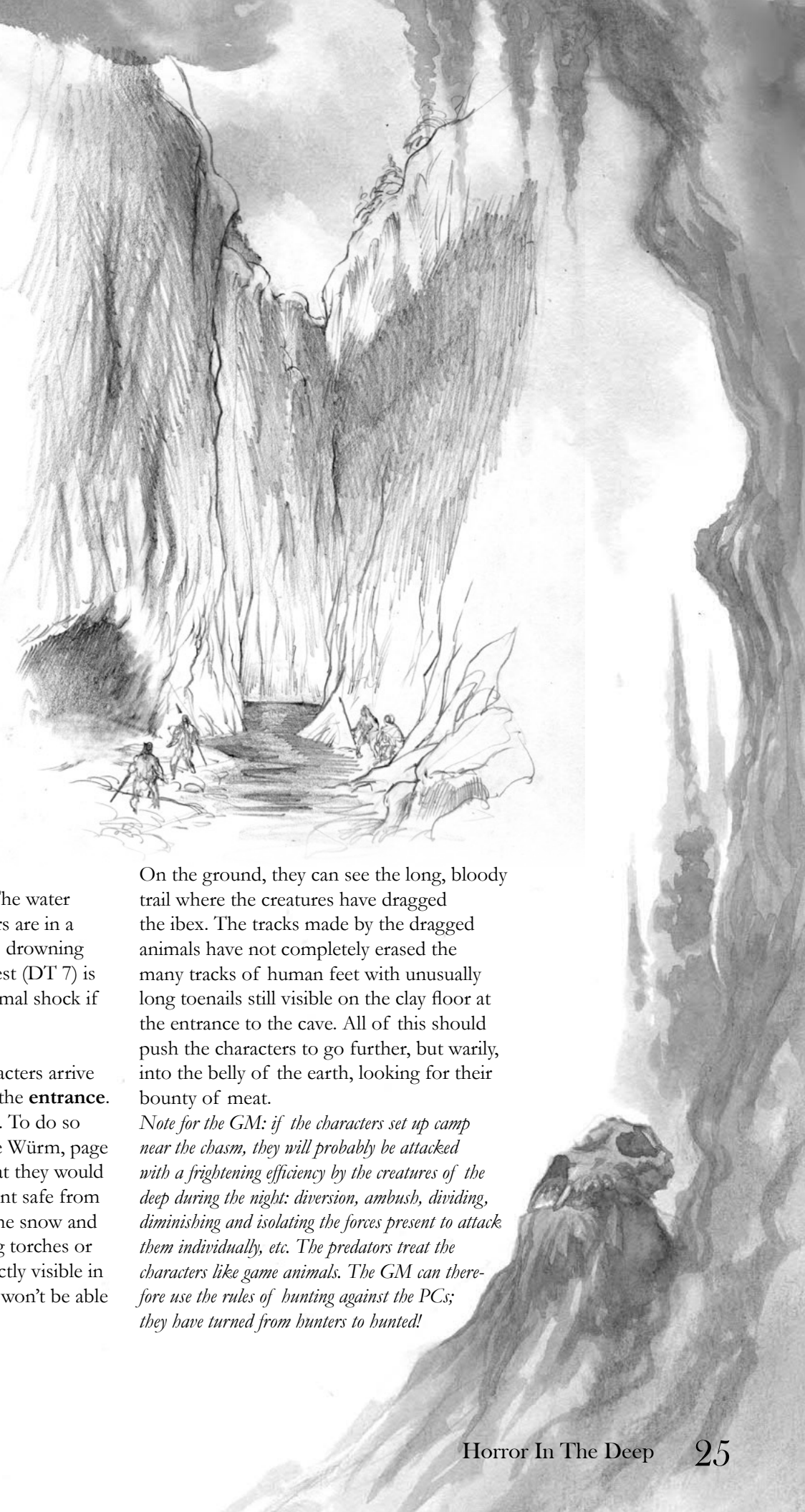
*Note for the GM: the animals were dragged away by the creatures of the deep who have taken them back to their lair.*

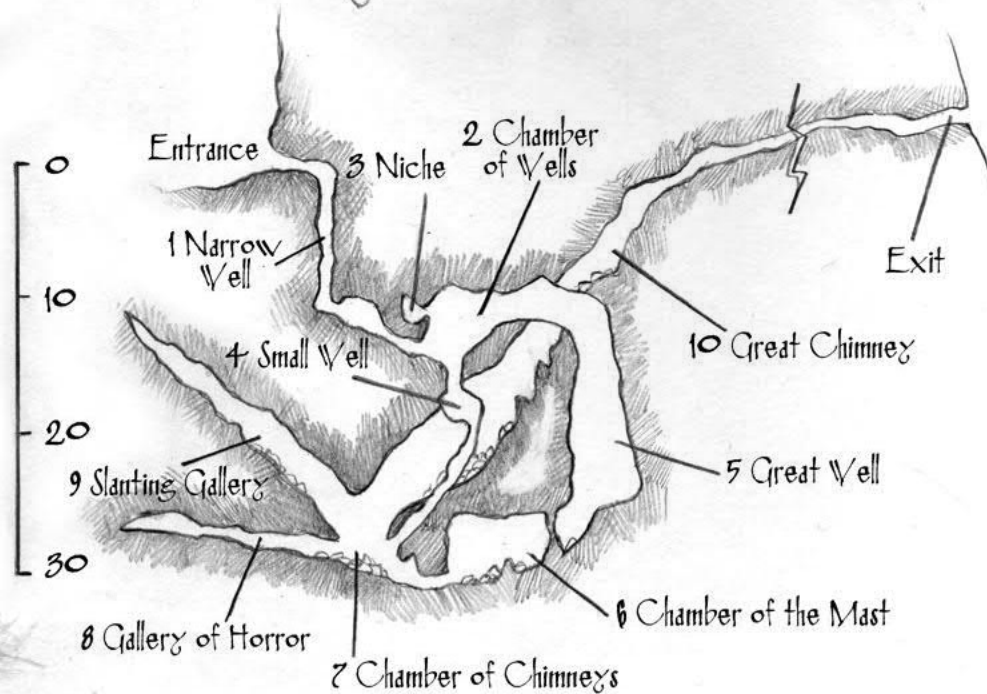
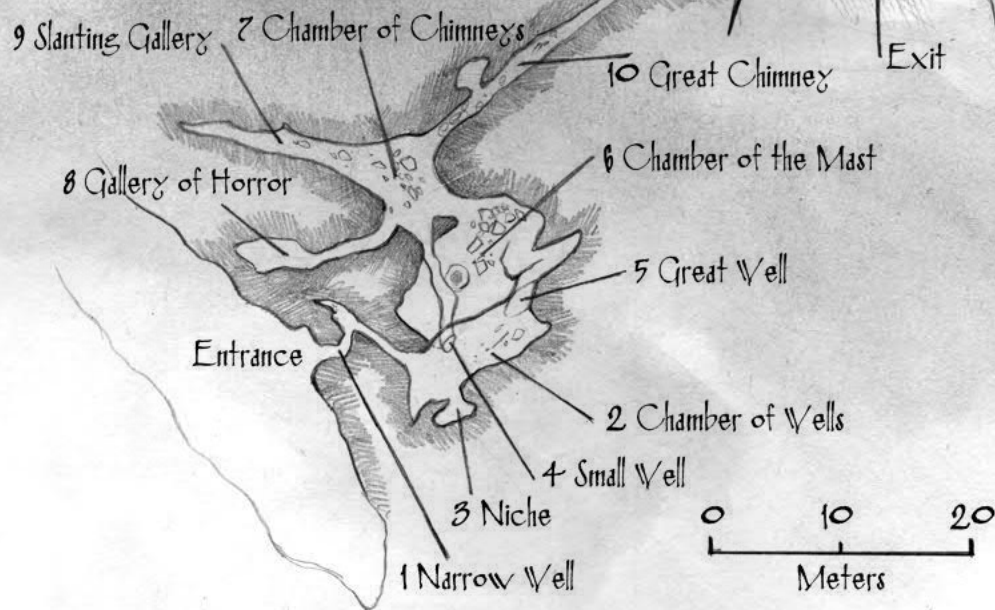
If the characters have not fallen into the chasm, the descent requires a difficult Climbing Test (DT 9). Climbing out again this way is impossible (SD 15), as the rock walls are frozen and almost vertical all the way up. The water below is freezing. The characters are in a shallow pool where the risks of drowning are low. A Resistance to cold Test (DT 7) is necessary to overcome the thermal shock if they have fallen into the water.

On the map provided, the characters arrive by falling or climbing down, at the **entrance**. They will soon need some light. To do so they will need to light a fire (see Würm, page 39). It is reasonable to think that they would keep their fire-lighting equipment safe from water, as they are travelling in the snow and the rain. Whether they are using torches or grease lamps, they will be perfectly visible in the darkness, even though they won't be able to see all that well themselves.

On the ground, they can see the long, bloody trail where the creatures have dragged the ibex. The tracks made by the dragged animals have not completely erased the many tracks of human feet with unusually long toenails still visible on the clay floor at the entrance to the cave. All of this should push the characters to go further, but warily, into the belly of the earth, looking for their bounty of meat.

*Note for the GM: if the characters set up camp near the chasm, they will probably be attacked with a frightening efficiency by the creatures of the deep during the night: diversion, ambush, dividing, diminishing and isolating the forces present to attack them individually, etc. The predators treat the characters like game animals. The GM can therefore use the rules of hunting against the PCs; they have turned from hunters to hunted!*





## An Underground Adventure

The characters have now reached the **entrance**, a porch about forty meters at its highest and six meters wide. As they enter the short passage, the PCs gradually adapt to the darkness, a harsh contrast to the blindingly bright snow-covered landscape they have just left. If they have managed to arrange a source of light, the characters will move forward inside a sort of halo of light that will give them some protection against the darkness. In the torchlight, their shadows dance on the cave walls, some dry, some wet, but all of them sparkling, as the light bounces off the embedded calcite crystals. The echoes of their steps resound along the galleries. Sometimes they will be walking on slippery paths or over rocky remains

from previous rockslides. At times, they will have to climb down wells or narrow passageways (DT 5 to 9 if assisted or lit, bonus of 1d6 for *Agility of the Ibex* or *Secret of the Bear*). They will always be able to stand, as the cave is high enough.

Barely a few meters from the entrance, the characters will have to climb down a narrow passage that goes downwards for about ten meters. This is the **narrow well(1)** (see map on previous page). The descent is difficult, as it is very steep. Three Climbing Tests are required (DT 9, or 5 with ropes), and the well is very narrow. If a character was to fall, he would be badly injured by hitting the sides on his way down, suffering scrapes and bruises, before hitting the ground at a speed reduced by the bouncing off the walls of the narrow well (from 1d6 to 3d6 depending on how far he fell).

The characters reach the majestic **chamber of wells (2)**. It is a huge chamber decorated with many shiny and elaborate calcifications. On the ground, they can see some tracks from the dragged ibex leading down into the **small well (4)**. Up above, they can also spot a **niche (3)** up in the shadows above, looking out over the chamber. It is easy enough to climb up there if given a leg up to reach the edge. Up there, the PCs can find plenty of animal and human bones, all with traces of scraping and bite marks.

At that point, the GM can have the players carry out some Perception Tests (DT 7) and let those who succeed know that they have the vague feeling that there is something nearby watching them, without being able to actually see anything or anyone.

*Note for the GM: in fact, the creatures are moving around near them in places that the characters*

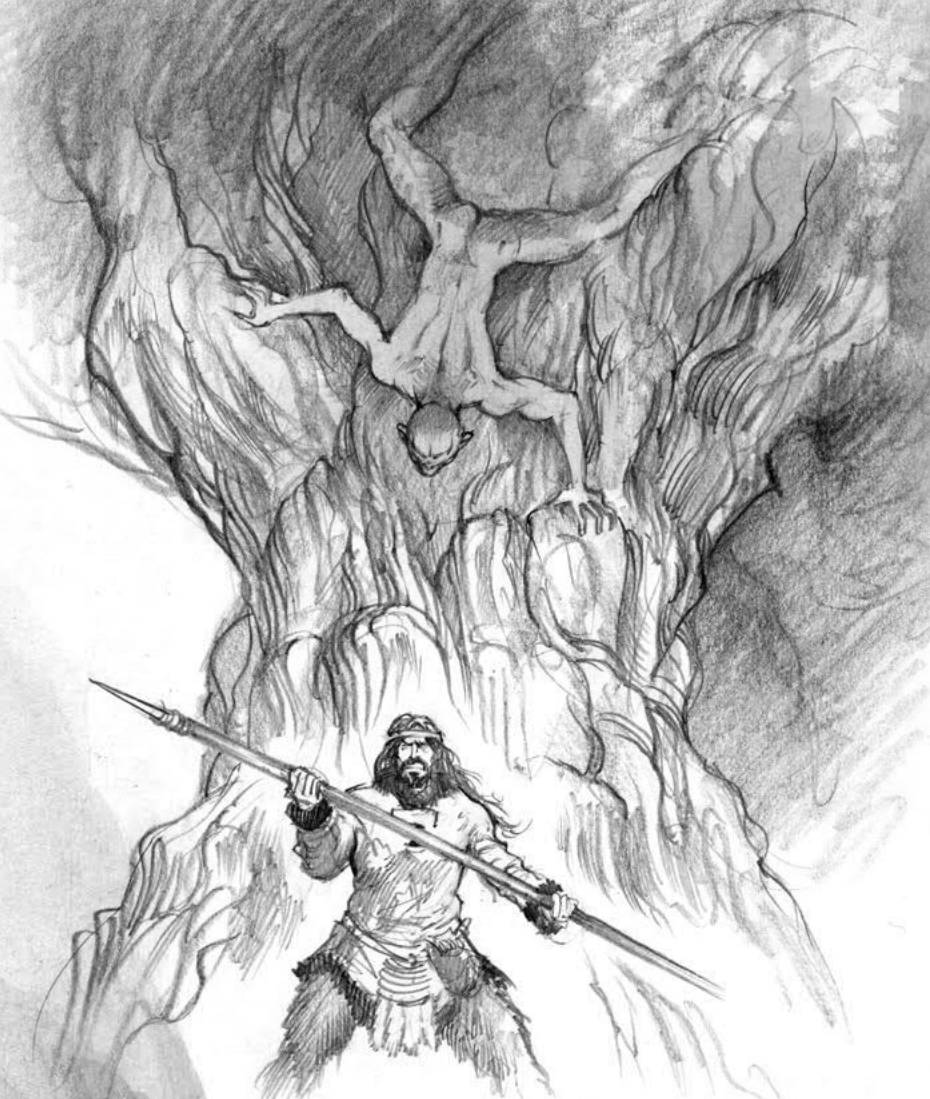
*wouldn't think of as "passable": hanging from the ceilings, crawling through incredibly tight passages...*

From the chamber of wells, they will have to decide which way they are going to go to continue their exploration. **The small well (4)** is quite narrow, but its size actually makes it easier to climb down. It is possible to descend one behind the other by hanging from the edge, or by pushing against the other side to make it easier to climb down. **The great well (5)** is much wider, but it is far harder to climb down and using ropes is almost mandatory (DT 12 without ropes, 7 with them).

## The Drawings on the Rock

In the **chamber of the Mast (6)** and the **chamber of chimneys (7)**, the PCs can discover some stunningly beautiful cave art. Engraved and then darkened with charcoal, the one in the **chamber of the Mast** represents a great lion, three rhinoceroses and a small mammoth, and the one in the **chamber of chimneys** shows a lion and a horse. The drawings are undoubtedly the work of very ancient Long Men: the calcite crystals that have begun to cover up the drawings gives them a bluish hue that looks mysterious and enchanting. Lost in the middle of the lair of these creatures, constantly surrounded by darkness, the characters' torch seems to give the animals a new lease of life.

At least one character (at the GM's discretion, and preferably in chamber 6) will be entranced by these drawings. Indeed, they do seem to give off a strange feeling of calm in this stressful environment. The GM should feel free to have this character (or characters) enter a real trance, triggered by the contemplation of the drawings, but



also fuelled by the stress, anxiety, hunger and the strong concentration of carbon dioxide that makes the air heavy. All the characters feel a certain weight on their chest, maybe even a slight light-headedness. But the one having the trance is about to faint, his mind spinning wildly. His heart is pounding and his blood thumping in his ears. His sight is blurred and he risks losing consciousness if he doesn't succeed a Resistance Test (DT 7, bonus for *Heart of Ice* or *Secret of the Bear*). Whether he faints or remains conscious, the character experiences a form of contact with the Spirits. During his trance, he sees one of the drawings of lions, reminding him of the lion that lured them to the chasm, moving along the darkened cave walls. He is able to see in the dark through the lion's eyes, and is guided in spirit towards a passage back to the surface, further away but far easier to reach than the one outside the entrance...

If the character has fainted, the creatures could choose to attack, making the most of this moment of weakness for the group. The **chamber of the Mast** is breathtaking, with a huge calcium stalagmite forming an impressive central column. Its circumference is huge and if the characters have the (bad) idea of backing up against it to face the creatures, their attackers will use their amazing climbing skills to scramble down from the top of it to take them by surprise. *Note for the GM: some players may think that the creatures themselves are the artists who drew the animals on the walls, or even that the ancient humans who drew them have degenerated over the millennia into these cave-dwelling monsters. Do not correct them on this. This whole story must remain shrouded in the darkest mystery.*

## The Creatures Attack

The characters can sense the creatures' presence as they progress through the caves. They may be able to get a fleeting glimpse of them, but they won't be able to really work out what they are. They move silently, perfectly comfortable in the darkness, and they have developed their own hunting signals based on nail clicks and whistles.

A first attack *can* occur during their descent into the small well: the last character to enter it is attacked by one or two creatures who try to grab him and drag him back to the previous chamber to eat him! This promises a moment of terror and loneliness (special ability *Terror*; see end of scenario). The victim can make out the claw-like nails and the pointy canine teeth. The character's ability to fight (and dodge) is greatly diminished while he's in the small well: -3 penalty for Attack Tests and Dodge score. For the other characters, freeing up the way

down can help the victim wriggle his way out of this predicament faster by leaving him room to move.

The next attack can take place in the **chamber of chimneys (7)** that the characters can reach through the small well, and where they can discover the first drawings. It can also take place in the **chamber of the Mast (6)** where the characters are at risk of (unfortunately) being backed to the mast to face it. Depending on the group's strength, the GM can decide to make the attack more or less violent and brutal, as the assailants try to overcome the characters with their numbers. The attackers are coming from all directions and can literally drop from the ceiling into the middle of the PCs' group to take them by surprise and slash at them.

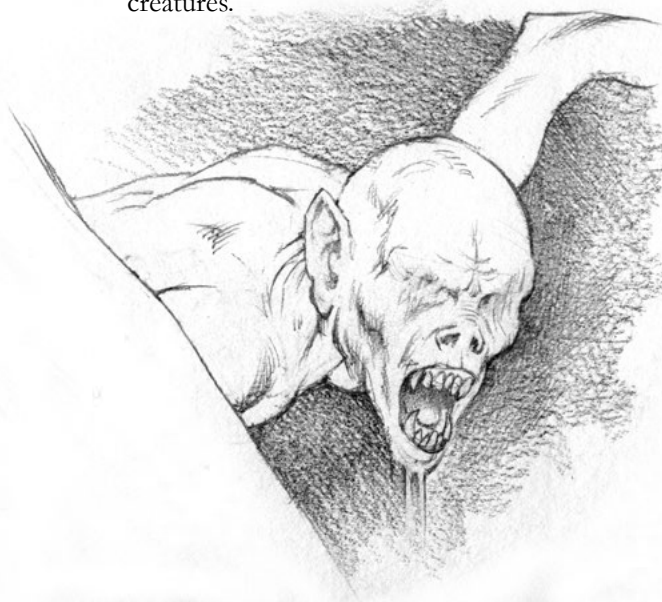
The GM can find more information on these creatures below. Based on this information, it is up to him to work out the number of opponents facing the characters, and what the full size of the dark tribe will be. These humanoids are to be treated like fantastical creatures.

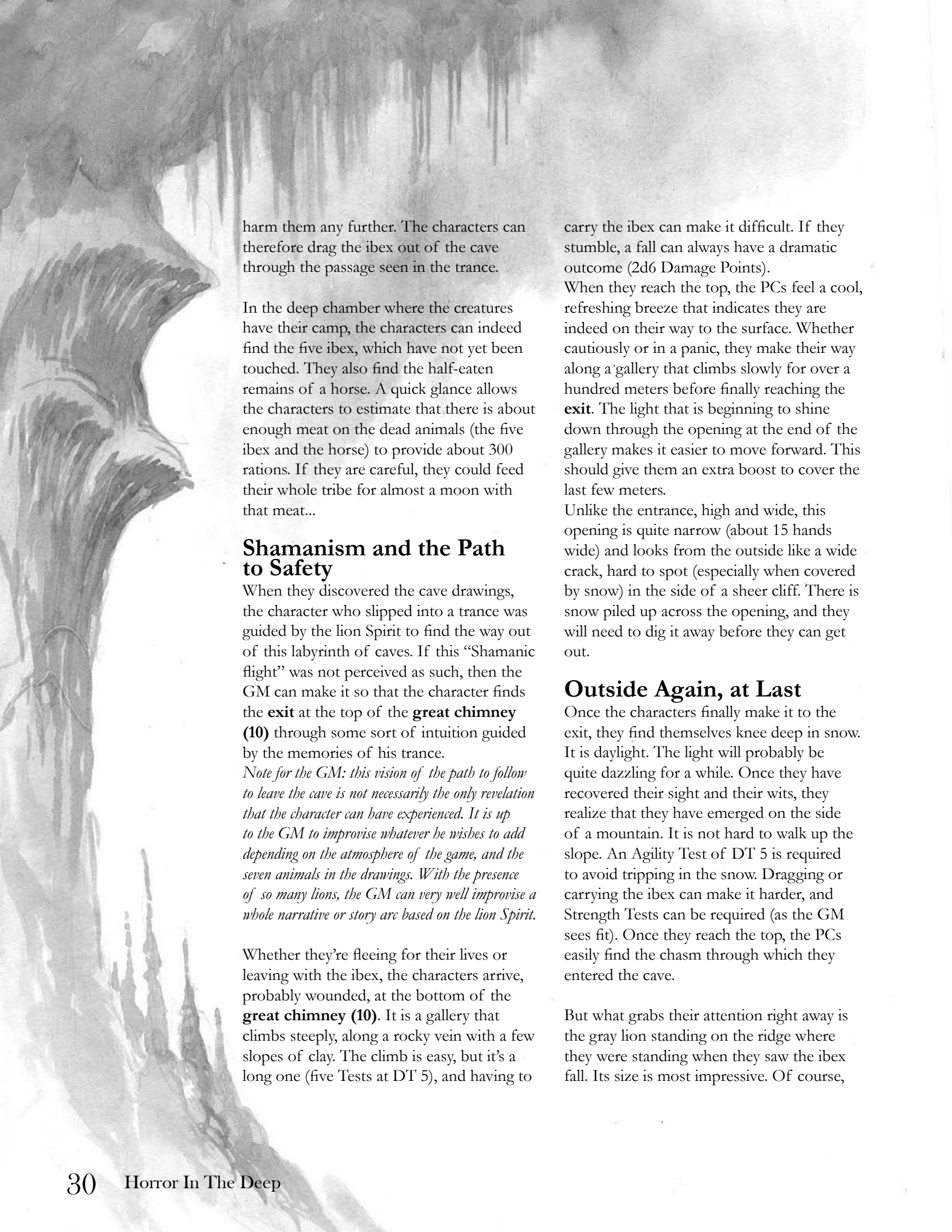
## In the Lair of the Creatures of the Deep

These creatures from the dawn of time and the depths of the earth, living like bats, blind in the darkness, remind the characters that the deep darkness is no place for humans to live.

The lair is hidden deep down in the depths of the cave, at the end of the **gallery of Horror(8)**, hidden under the fallen rocks of the **slanting gallery (9)**. It is difficult to reach. The characters can discover the way there by accident or after a long search. This place is plunged into an almost total darkness, except for a very weak glow coming from some phosphorescent stones and algae. The creatures are capable of moving around easily in total darkness. They are completely blind and are guided by smell and sound, like bats. The light of the torches does therefore not dazzle them in any way. Despite their humanoid appearance, they are not human, and there is no way to communicate with them. These creatures behave like predatory animals: they feed on small fish and insects that live in the depths, but they also sneak out in the dead of night to hunt for game in the area around the cave. They have no problem at all with eating human flesh...

The creatures' "tribe" is made up of **6 to 10 males** young or old (depending on the GM's needs), **a dozen females**, no elders and **four small children**. Half of the females can fight, depending on the requirements of the scenario. See the information on the Creatures of the Deep at the end of the scenario. If the number of creatures is down to 2 males (and 6 females if they are fighting), they stop fighting and try to flee to parts of the cave that the characters can't reach. They will not try to





harm them any further. The characters can therefore drag the ibex out of the cave through the passage seen in the trance.

In the deep chamber where the creatures have their camp, the characters can indeed find the five ibex, which have not yet been touched. They also find the half-eaten remains of a horse. A quick glance allows the characters to estimate that there is about enough meat on the dead animals (the five ibex and the horse) to provide about 300 rations. If they are careful, they could feed their whole tribe for almost a moon with that meat...

### Shamanism and the Path to Safety

When they discovered the cave drawings, the character who slipped into a trance was guided by the lion Spirit to find the way out of this labyrinth of caves. If this “Shamanic flight” was not perceived as such, then the GM can make it so that the character finds the **exit** at the top of the **great chimney (10)** through some sort of intuition guided by the memories of his trance.

*Note for the GM: this vision of the path to follow to leave the cave is not necessarily the only revelation that the character can have experienced. It is up to the GM to improvise whatever he wishes to add depending on the atmosphere of the game, and the seven animals in the drawings. With the presence of so many lions, the GM can very well improvise a whole narrative or story arc based on the lion Spirit.*

Whether they’re fleeing for their lives or leaving with the ibex, the characters arrive, probably wounded, at the bottom of the **great chimney (10)**. It is a gallery that climbs steeply, along a rocky vein with a few slopes of clay. The climb is easy, but it’s a long one (five Tests at DT 5), and having to

carry the ibex can make it difficult. If they stumble, a fall can always have a dramatic outcome (2d6 Damage Points).

When they reach the top, the PCs feel a cool, refreshing breeze that indicates they are indeed on their way to the surface. Whether cautiously or in a panic, they make their way along a gallery that climbs slowly for over a hundred meters before finally reaching the **exit**. The light that is beginning to shine down through the opening at the end of the gallery makes it easier to move forward. This should give them an extra boost to cover the last few meters.

Unlike the entrance, high and wide, this opening is quite narrow (about 15 hands wide) and looks from the outside like a wide crack, hard to spot (especially when covered by snow) in the side of a sheer cliff. There is snow piled up across the opening, and they will need to dig it away before they can get out.

### Outside Again, at Last

Once the characters finally make it to the exit, they find themselves knee deep in snow. It is daylight. The light will probably be quite dazzling for a while. Once they have recovered their sight and their wits, they realize that they have emerged on the side of a mountain. It is not hard to walk up the slope. An Agility Test of DT 5 is required to avoid tripping in the snow. Dragging or carrying the ibex can make it harder, and Strength Tests can be required (as the GM sees fit). Once they reach the top, the PCs easily find the chasm through which they entered the cave.

But what grabs their attention right away is the gray lion standing on the ridge where they were standing when they saw the ibex fall. Its size is most impressive. Of course,



the PCs recognize it as the lion that was chasing the ibex through the snow a few hours before (what seems like an eternity ago to the characters). The animal is standing there, almost mocking and provoking them in such an open place, while still out of range of any throwing weapons.

The lion does not look like it's about to attack, but who knows what it's up to? The PCs have to make a decision and work out what they are going to do about the lion:

- ☞ They may think that the great predator, attracted by the smell of the ibex blood, is about to pounce on them.
- ☞ They may think that the lion is a Spirit animal appearing to salute them after offering them its prey.
- ☞ They may also realize that without this lion, Spirit or not, they would never have found these ibex, and that it would only be fair to offer him a share to repay it.

Is this lion a Spirit guide or a ravenous animal ready to take back the prey it was

chasing earlier? There is no one to give the PCs the answer to that question.

**If the PCs attack the lion**, it will fight to the best of its abilities, with cunning and experience, and will try to run away if it is reduced to less than a third of its life points. If the characters do manage to kill it, the lion weighs a hefty 400 kilos, in other words, a significant amount of meat.

**If the PCs go on their way without leaving anything for the lion**, it will prowl around near them for a part of the journey back to the camp. It is up to the GM to decide if the lion will attack the PCs or leave them alone, either with its blessing or its disdain.

**If the PCs leave the lion a share of the meat** that they have managed to drag out of the cave, it will come and grab it once the humans have moved away, and then bound away gracefully, taking its share with it. A bellowing roar will send the characters on their way over the ridge.



## Returning to the Camp

If the characters managed to drag all the ibex out of the cave (and maybe even the remains of the horse), the return journey will be exhausting. But the tribe's survival depends on them! A character with the *Strength of the Bear* or the *Might of the Bison* can carry a dead ibex on his shoulders all day, even the heaviest of them. But the other characters will probably want to build travois to drag along the dead animals for the four days' walk ahead of them.

When they reach the camp, the game they're bringing back will bring joy to the whole tribe. The story of their adventure, however, will send shudders down spines all round. The two other hunting parties will return a few days later: one of them only managed to find some small game, but the other managed to kill a bison. The tribe will be able to survive the coming winter.

### Awarding Experience and Prestige

All the PCs receive 1 Experience Point for this adventure.

As well as the Bravery Points acquired during the combats and hunts, and the Generosity Points received for any gifts given, the characters can gain Prestige based on what they have accomplished:

*Chasing away the wolves:* 5 Bravery Points;

*Leaving and returning with food for the tribe :* 20 Generosity Points;

*Exploring the inside of the cave:* 20 Bravery Points.

The characters will undoubtedly be intrigued by the mysterious behavior of the great gray lion that led them to this cave with walls covered in enchanted drawings and filled with nightmarish creatures... If the characters see the lion as a good Spirit, then maybe it will become the auxiliary Spirit of one of the characters as he begins his shamanic journey?

## The creatures

### The Wolves (pack of 12)

**Dodge 8; Thick Skin 1**

**LP 21**

**Initiative 2d6**

**Attack(s) [1]:** Bite 3d6 (1d6+2 Damage Points)

**Running 9; Steady Nerves 5; Alertness 12**

**Special Abilities:**

**Tracking:** wolves can track a scent better than anyone (4d6). They can run for long distances without running out of breath.

### The Ice Arctic Fox

**Dodge 8; Thick Skin 2**

**LP 18**

**Initiative 3d6**

**Attack(s) [1]:** Bite 2d6 (2d6 Damage Points)

**Running 7; Alertness 9**

**Special Abilities:**

An Ice animal is immune to the effects of the cold, but it is very vulnerable to fire: any damage due to fire is doubled.

**Camouflage:** the arctic fox rolls 4d6 to hide.

**Arctic breath:** this breath has a conical range of up to ten meters with a maximum width of half a dozen meters. Any creature within its range suffers 3d6 Damage Points unless it is immune to the effects of the cold. A character can avoid this breath with a successful *Dodge Test* (DT 12), or reduce the

damage by half with a successful *Resistance to Cold Test* (DT 9). When an Ice animal has used its Arctic breath, it must wait for 1d6 Combat Rounds before it can use it again.

## The Creatures of the Deep

**Dodge** 7; **Protection** 0

**Stamina Points** 24

**Initiative** 2d6

**Attack(s)** [2]: Claws 2d6 (1d6 Damage Points) and Bite 2d6 (1d6 Damage Points) or [1]: Bone club 2d6 (2d6 Damage Points) or large, sharp throwing stone (2d6 Damage Points).

**Running** 10; **Alertness** 7

**Special Abilities:**

**Climbing:** the creatures roll 3d6 for their Agility Tests, as if they had the *Agility of the Ibex*.

**Terror:** seeing a creature of the deep is so terrifying that a *Steady Nerves* Test with a DT 7 is required to avoid panicking.

**Vulnerability to daylight:** the creatures of the deep suffer 1 Damage Point per minute they spend exposed to sunlight.

**Note:** if the players' characters are already quite experienced, then feel free to give the creatures of the deep 3d6 for hitting in hand-to-hand combat. Also, remember to penalize the PCs for the bad visibility in the caves, especially during the combats where they are taken by surprise.

## The Legendary Lion

**Dodge** 10; **Thick Skin** 2

**LP** 48

**Initiative** 3d6+2

**Attack(s)** [2]: Claws 3d6+2 (3d6 Damage Points); Bite 3d6+2 (3d6+1 Damage Points).

**Running** 10; **Alertness** 12

**Special Abilities:**

**Roar:** anyone who hears it must take a *Steady Nerves* Test or panic (DT 9, see *Hunting Roar*).

*Paul-Henri "Pitche" Verheve*

## Legends of the Torn Mountains clan

Sometimes the worst conflicts lead to the most wonderful experiences.

So it was that, during the annual debate between the Skull Chewers and the Eye Gobblers, two young hunters were watching their elders ponder the meaning of life by pounding each other with war clubs.

Hidden out of the way in a ditch, they were waiting for the sun to rise again over the sinister plain echoing with groans of agony. The younger of the two decided to pop out and hunt for heads. His elder brother tried to convince him not to, but he wouldn't listen.

The other hunter cried quietly for the rest of the night. Then all of a sudden, he heard the sound of galloping feet and with an awesome jump, his brother landed back in the ditch.

"Well, I didn't find any heads, but I lost my virginity!"

"Woouooooah, what happened?"

"I met an amazing woman. We were at it all night. We did it all: the hungry beaver, the reverse hyena..."

"By Ao! And did she, you know... blow your whistle?"

"Well, no. I told you: I never found her head."

*Olivier*

# The Curious Quest

The Curious Quest of the Spark Hunters is an adventure that takes place about 35,000 years before our time, in a place that could be the very southwestern corner of modern day France. The Player Characters (PCs) are members of a clan of Bear-men who have to face the arrival of grim Long Men from the East, and who bring with them their fearsome traditions. This scenario is recommended for a fairly experimented Game Master who will be able to carry out many debates with multiple opposing NPCs, bring to life the dissensions and the weight of traditions, to give this adventure the dramatic tone that it requires.

Of course, it is perfectly possible, and even recommended if you are playing this as part of a campaign, to integrate this adventure into the usual settings of your player-characters' group, with just a few changes to the story below.



*A scenario for Bear-men characters and an experimented GM.*

## Introduction

A clan of Bear-men was living peacefully in a clearing that seemed to have been blessed and protected by the Spirits. Then a disturbing tribe of Long Men settled in the forest on the edge of their territory. Since they arrived, the Spirits seem to have abandoned the Bear-men: the game animals are getting rarer, the winter is getting colder than before, people are getting sick, people have disappeared from their allied clans in mysterious circumstances... Is this a coincidence or a curse? The Long Men who are now roaming the forest are far worse than any of the ones they heard about in legends. They practice a ritual form of cannibalism that has progressively evolved into dietary cannibalism (an exceptional occurrence among Long Men). They are also perfecting the art of poisoning. More importantly, their shaman is convinced that by studying the internal organs of the Bear-men, he will be able to find the secret to eternal life. During this scenario, the players' characters will have to make a number of choices that will prove to be crucial for their clan: should they chase away the Long Men, spy on them to discover their terrifying secrets, try to reach an agreement with them, defend or abandon their own territory, or should they resist their hate and desire for revenge to avoid exposing their clan to danger in vain?

## The River Children

The PCs are playing members of the River Children clan. Three generations ago, this clan was called the Gray Tree clan, named after a beech tree. At the time, they were a nomadic clan of Bear-men. Their chief was a man named Wu Loi. He was a very good hunter. But he was most renowned for his wisdom.

During their exodus to the South, the members of the clan were forced to flee from a pack of wolves by jumping into a river. That's when a miracle occurred: all fifteen of the clan members survived the jump into the river. What made the incident even more surprising was that the group included two very young children, a pregnant woman and some wounded hunters. Furthermore, the Gray Tree clan had been very wary of rivers until then, and none of them knew how to swim. Last but not least, they managed to shake the wolves off their track. The Bear-men then decided to set up a makeshift camp where the river had dropped them off. From that day on, the clan considered the river Spirit to be their protector. They took the name of *River Children* as they believed the river had given them a new life.

The area was very pleasant. They were surrounded to the South and West by the river, to the East and the North by a forest.

# of the Spark Hunters

This location offered them a protection against predators, the other clans and the cold North wind. Some bison were also sheltering in this spot, which allowed the clan to replace the food supplies they had lost in the river. There was no way this was just a question of good luck. They decided to remain there for as long as they could. The members of the clan made regular offerings to the Spirit of the “Sparkling River” to ask it to accept their arrival. The main offerings were food and weapons, in memory of what the ancestors lost to the river in their flight.

As the warm season approached, the River Children were surprised by the amount game and fruits that they found in the forest. During the years after their arrival, their hunting and gathering expeditions were more bountiful than ever before. They therefore believed that the Spirits of the plants and the forest had created this perfect shelter just for them. They no longer worship just the river, but this sheltered haven as a whole, and they named it the “Haven of Plenty”. To grow closer to the river, they developed their fishing skills. The children were allowed to play in the water. None of them drowned,

## The River Children clan

**Population:** Bear-men from the Mousterian culture.

11 men including 4 hunters: **Mehja** 24, **Haram** 32, **Mu Boas** 21, **Mahtra** 29; **Motwe**, 51, a wise and respected Elder (especially when it comes to managing the group, the resources, and migrations); **Vors**, 48, an Elder and a shaman in charge of the rituals and the communication with the Spirits; **Taman**, 56, an Elder who knows practical skills (plants, art, combat, hunting); **Gruhn**, 20, Taman’s apprentice; **Loff**, 16, Vors’s apprentice.

6 women: **Haki**, 35, leads the clan’s spiritual life with Vors; **Myrh**, 25, Mehja’s wife, 8 months pregnant.

3 children: two boys, **Habrod** (5) and **Nirhne** (12, son of Haki and Mahtra); and a girl, **Luhn** (10).

The 3 to 5 PCs are free to choose their gender and abilities (one of them will be Nirhne’s older brother).

**Guardian Spirit:** *Lataiglin*, the Sparkling River, the Haven of Plenty, the legendary chief *Wu Loi*.

The clan has an even gender distribution. No leader (decisions are made by the whole community, and the opinion of the four Elders is greatly respected). Patrilineal descent.

Incest taboo, taboo of disrespecting the river and the Haven, cannibalism taboo. The tribe has no totem animal: it lives in communion with its forest and river environment.

Secret combat techniques: *Fight like a Bear*, *Fight like a Bull*.

## About the players’ characters

They players are free to choose their status within the clan (with the GM’s authorization), their gender and most of the details about their character. Because they were born in the Haven, their two basic Strengths are the *Strength of the Bear* and the *Fins of the Salmon* (the latter replacing the *Heart of Ice Strength*). If the players want to use one of their old character sheets, it can just be considered that their PCs were taken in by the River Children clan a few years before and explain that in the introduction.

## The White Lynx clan

The White Lynx clan is a large Bear-man clan, with almost 30 members and a reputation for being excellent hunters.

Before the arrival of the Long Men, the clan used to hunt in what would now be eastern France. The members of the clan had always been very careful to avoid the Long Men, even when it meant abandoning their hunting territories. They are however open and diplomatic when it comes to sharing their hunting lands with their fellow Bear-men. They have therefore built up friendly and trusting connections with other clans that they have met in their ongoing flight from the Long Men. During one of their hunting expeditions, they met a group of hunters from the River Children clan (who were hoping to increase their food supplies by hunting outside the Haven). Once their initial and mutual wariness was lifted through an exchange of gifts, the two groups organized several joint hunts. The River Children taught the White Lynx clan some of the secrets of the art of fishing that they have perfected over the last two generations. There have been marriages between the two clans. The White Lynx clan now considers the River Children to be faithful allies.

**Population:** Bear-men of Châtelperroian culture.

12 men, including 11 hunters.

11 women.

3 children.

2 shamans.

**Guardian Spirit:** *Fingle*, the White Lynx.

Equal gender distribution. No chief (decisions are made by the whole community). Patrilineal descent.

Incest taboo, totem taboo, cannibalism taboo, spending the night in a forest is also taboo.

Secret combat techniques: *Fight like a Bear*, *Fight like a bull*.

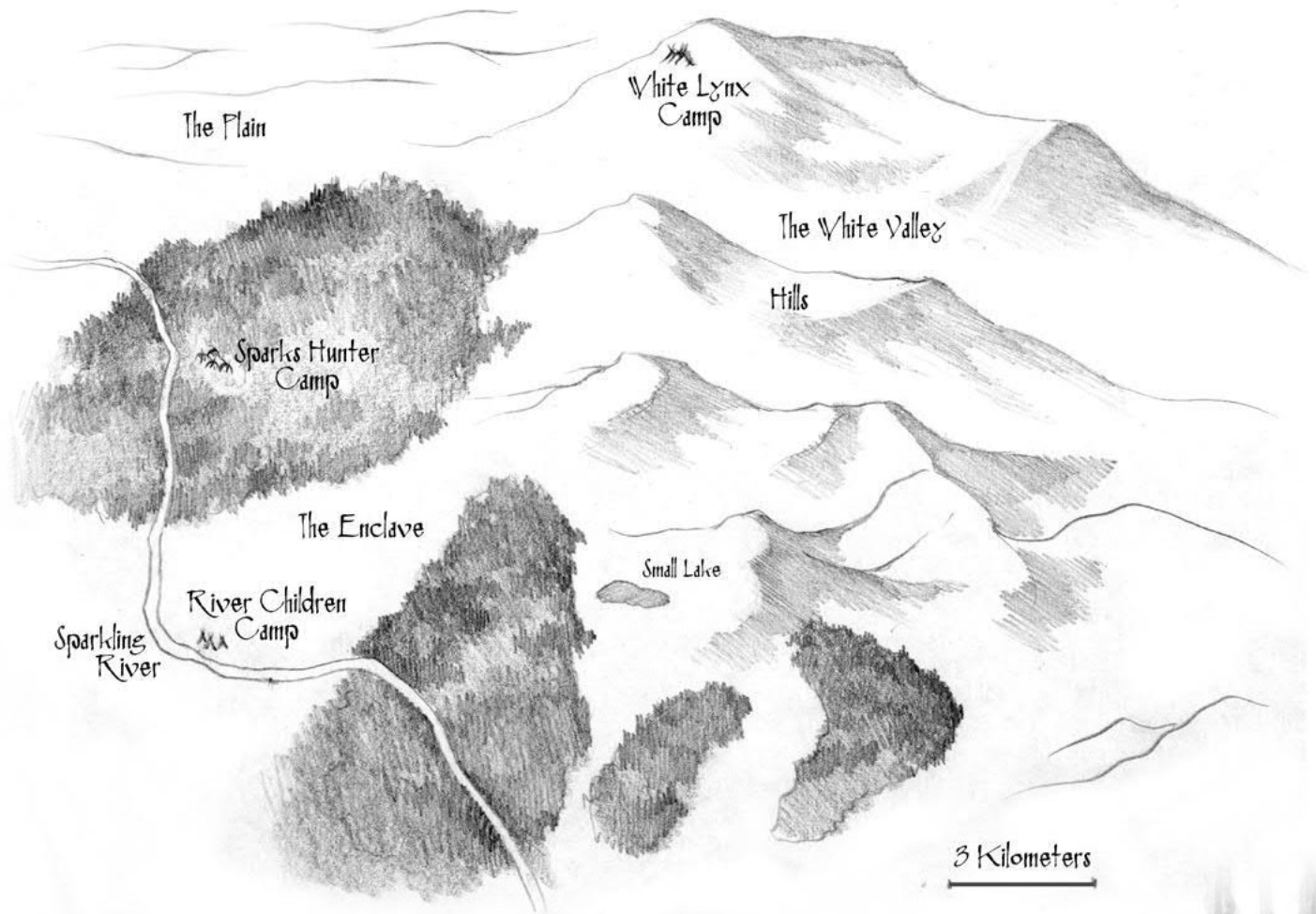
in fact some of them even learned to swim. The protection of the Haven seemed to be infallible: the clan members no longer fell ill, there were no more still-born babies, and the Elders passed away without any suffering.

*Note to the GM: this explains why the Elders will refuse to leave the Haven during this scenario. The PCs will have to be very persuasive if they want to get them to change their minds. Furthermore, the Haven contains the history of three generations of the clan, as well as the graves of the ancestors (only the first generation are buried there, as the funeral ritual changed after that: the body of the deceased is sent down the river in a hollowed-out tree trunk).*

## The First Hunt

To begin the scenario, the GM can tell the story of the River Children to the players through the old shaman, **Vors**. It is up to the GM to give them all the details, add some, or on the contrary give them just a quick summary. Vors tells his tale with big gestures to mark the key moments. During this prologue, the GM should make sure the players get a feeling of just how peaceful this clan and its land are, despite the recent events.

The PCs are standing next to a Bear-man with an impressive build and a very friendly face. They know him as **Haram**. He is their clan's hunt leader. They are assisting him in the ceremony of preparation for the first hunt of young **Nirhne**. Although everyone already knows the clan's story, telling it is part of the ceremony and it provides a good excuse to introduce the PCs to the clan's past. Vors the shaman and Nirhne are standing in the river with water up to their knees. Once the speech is over, Vors sprinkles Nirhne with water. He then takes some mud and paints symbols on the young



man's face and body that represent the waves of the Sparkling River. Then they come out of the river. Vors adds some Blood of Ao to the future hunter's body paintings, when two women hand it to him. Haram and the PCs also have some Blood of Ao, Stone of Night and yellow pigments to hand. They can follow Haram's lead and prepare their body paintings themselves, as they were already initiated to the art of hunting a few years before. You can let your players describe the paintings that their characters are doing, or have them sketch them on paper.

The beginning of the cold season has arrived, and it looks like it's going to be a harsh one.

**All the members of the PCs' clan are wearing half-season clothing (1 Protection Point).**

Once the group is ready, Nirhne is presented with a beautiful fire-hardened spear (page 54 of the core rulebook) and his slingshot. The other hunters of the clan, who have

prepared everything (food, equipment, etc.), hand out the weapons that the PCs chose when they created their characters. Nirhne grins gleefully at the hunters as he prepares to go on his very first hunt. They will be hunting outside the Haven, on the plain to the West.

**Mahtra will not be joining the hunting party as he is going to travel with Vors to the White Lynx camp.** They have to help to prepare the rituals for protection against the Spirits of the night who attack their allies more and more often.

As they get under way, Nirhne asks if it is true that it is becoming harder to find game animals when they were so plentiful before. The hunters reply that it is indeed true. Over the past few moons, the game animals have become rarer, as if they were avoiding the Haven. They have to go further and further afield to hunt. Mu Boas adds that it is for this reason that they often hunt with the men from the White Lynx clan.



Unfortunately they couldn't come this time: they are increasingly busy with their rituals to ward off the Spirits of the night.

What the PCs learn on their way there will depend on what questions they ask. Here you can share the other elements necessary to the development of the storyline: all the information on the White Lynx clan from the inset box on page 36, the difficulty to find food by hunting or gathering, the way some of the plant life to the North of the Haven seems to have wilted for no apparent reason, the delivery of the first two still-born babies since the clan first arrived in the Haven (during the last 2 moons), Mu Boas' concern that the Spirits might have abandoned them...

After a few hours' walk, and after following tracks that didn't lead to anything, the group spots four megaloceroses, including one male with an impressive pair of antlers. As they lie in wait, the hunters discuss their tactics. Encourage the PCs to suggest their own plan and actions, with the advice of the other hunters. Then the hunt begins. You can find the information for the Megaloceros on page 122 of the Würm core rulebook. At the very beginning of the hunt, Nirhne stuns the male with his slingshot, allowing the others to

approach and try to finish him off (give the megaloceros a penalty to Dodge and Running during the combat). Unless they get a critical success, you should only allow the hunters one catch.

The hunters are all happy that the youngest has bagged his first beast, and what a beast! They will constantly congratulate him and tease him in a friendly way. One of the PCs is Nirhne's brother (unless that contradicts the group's history), and it is up to him to show him how to skin and butcher the animal. Have them roll a few Dexterity Tests to see how they do. Then the group will say a prayer of thanks to their ancestor Wu Loi. Nirhne will have the honor of carrying back the best parts to the camp himself as a sign of his success.

## A Macabre Discovery

On their way back to the camp, the group spots a figure on a hill. As they come closer, Mu Boas and the older PCs recognize one of their hunter friends from the White Lynx clan standing with his back to them. However, he is not responding to their calls. He does not turn around when the group approaches. The PCs see that his skin is blue from the cold, and that his face is frozen in an expression of terror. He is not breathing, he is dead, and yet he stands. This is a human scarecrow, a fearsome message left by the Long Men to the White Lynx clan, to dissuade them from defending themselves. Slim, fire-hardened wooden javelins have been inserted through the man's body to keep him standing. However the PCs probably won't notice this because of the terrible shock of the scene (DT 15). They barely dare to touch him, but the older hunters remind them that abandoning the body like this would be an offense to the Spirits. They must take him

back to the Haven. Haram says that they will return the body to the White Lynx clan when they visit in a couple of days. Mu Boas is completely shaken. Mehja advises them to hurry back to the camp so that they can carry out a ritual to purify Nirhne so that he is not cursed after such an event during his first hunt.

## Haki's Nightmares

The PCs arrive at the camp at the end of the day. Straight away, Haki asks the PCs to help carry out the protection rituals against any cursing of Nirhne and the deceased. Once it is done, she joins the characters around the campfire. She asks them questions to find out more about what happened during the hunt.


She tells the PCs that she has been having nightmares for a few weeks. In these dreams, she sees a spider holding a shining speck of dust between its legs. The spider seems to be wondering at the spark, then it plays with it for a while and swallows it. Then the whole spider begins to shine with a blinding light. This light becomes that of the moon, shining on a disturbing scene: tall, fragile beings dancing through a forest with expressionless faces. They are floating above the ground and the plants wilt at their touch. The wilting spreads little by little until it reaches the river. The river grows dark and dries up to reveal the body of a man and a feline, both rotting in the mud. Haki tells them that she couldn't identify the body of the man, or that of the feline, as she always awakes in fright before she can see the details. She adds that the strange dancing beings seem to match the way Motwe and Taman always describe Long Men. The two Elders are also the only ones in the clan who have actually seen the Long Men.

Let the PCs think about this dream and offer some theories on what it could mean. Will they make a connection with the discussions that they had during the hunt, especially when it comes to the wilting plants? Haki thinks that the Spirits of the Long Men may be prisoners of the forest. Their anger and their attempts to escape are damaging the plants and causing them to wilt. And maybe the spider is an evil Spirit, and the light it is swallowing is in fact the souls of the Long Men that it captures? Haki and the other members of the clan can provide information for the PCs when it comes to the strange events that all seem to have occurred within the last two moons. Here are a few examples of stories told by the other members of the clan that you can use:

**Taman and Gruhn:** "It was very difficult to find the plants we needed to prepare Nirhne's initiation ritual. In several places to the North of the Haven and near the forest, where we usually gather our ingredients, the plants have wilted, dried, or rotted away. Some trees even seem to be in far worse condition than they should be even with this harsh start to the cold season."

**Motwe** who is responsible for the food stocks, or other hunters, can tell them: "Game animals are getting rarer, and gathering food was more like a trek than a harvest this year. It is true that over the last two years we haven't seen quite as much abundance as we did when I was younger, but this year it really is a disaster. We are going to have to ration the food very strictly. Furthermore, this cold season is looking like it will be rougher than any of the ones we have seen since our ancestors arrived in the Haven..."  
Some NPCs will tell them that this is all





caused by the early arrival of the cold season; others will think it is all because of a curse. Let the PCs discuss this between themselves, weigh up the importance of each of the statements, consider their meanings and decide what to do.

If any of the PCs can enter a trance state (page 78 of the core rulebook), Haki can offer to help them interpret the meaning of their vision. Let them do a Test with a DT 9. If they fail they have the same vision as Haki's nightmare. If they succeed, they discover some extra details:

*A wounded lynx is being swarmed by thousands of spiders. They cover it completely, and the lynx slowly dies. The spiders crawl into its ears, eyes, nostrils and mouth. Then each of them comes out again carrying a sparkling speck of dust...*

If the Test is a success, the PCs also recognize the exact spot in the forest where the Spirits are dancing. Then they identify the body of the man and the animal in the riverbed:

*Half buried in the mud lies a tall Bear-man. He has long hair and a gray beard. There are many scars on his right arm and shoulder. The animal next to him is a large lynx...*

Let the PCs discuss the meaning of these visions. They symbolically reveal a large part of the plot. The Long Men are trying to steal the spark of life from the members of the White Lynx clan. The dance represents their many rituals. They have been researching poisons and sometimes testing them on the plants and trees (hence the wilting and the rot), and the river will be poisoned in a few days. The drying up of the river represents the powerlessness of the Spirits or their disappearance... If the PCs describe the man on the riverbed to one of the clan's Elders, they will recognize their ancestor Wu Loi. If the PCs ask him, he will tell them how he reached that conclusion (see next page).

## The Clan Council

The next day, Vors and Mahtra return from their visit to the White Lynx camp. Their faces are solemn. Vors announces that the clan must assemble to make an important decision.

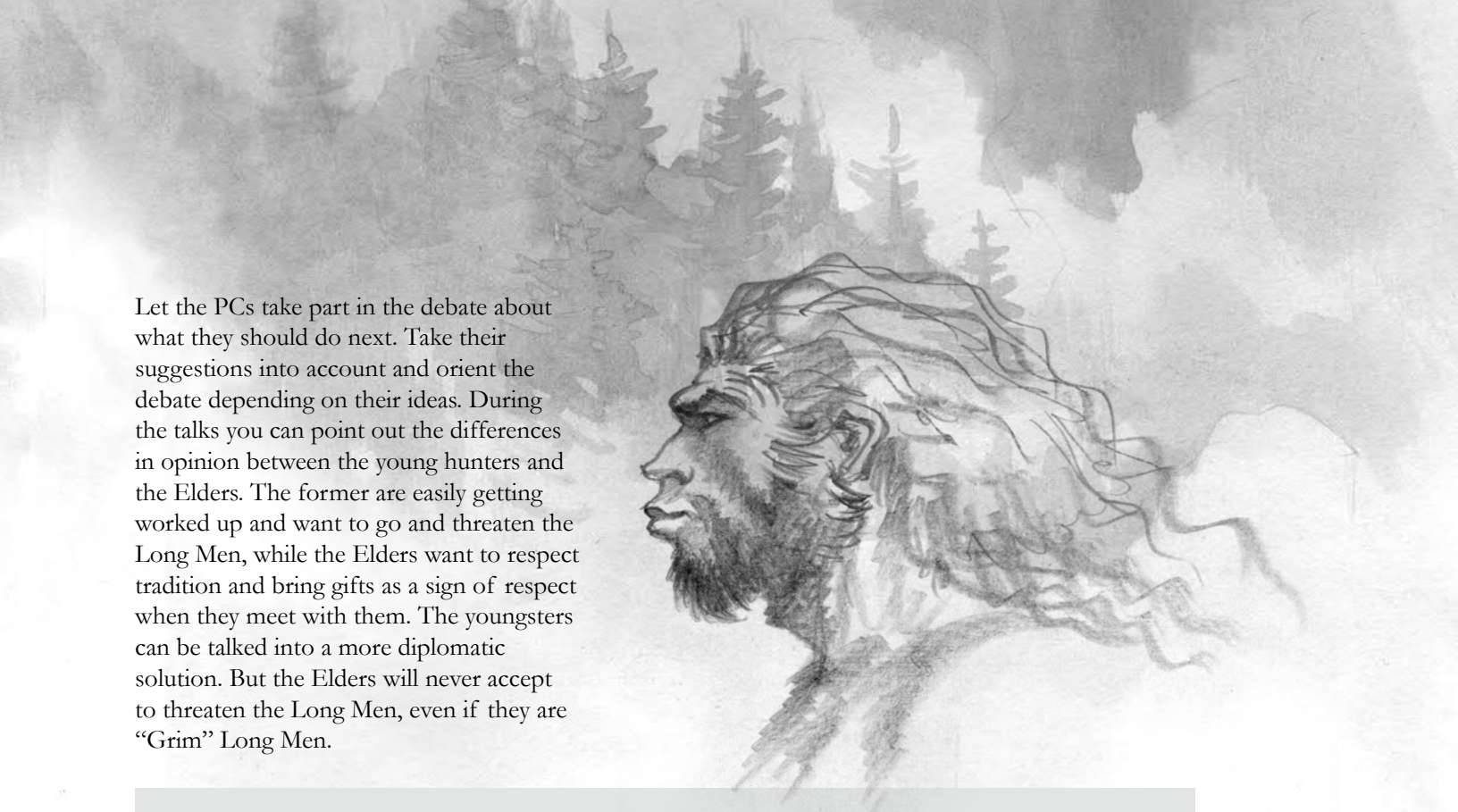
Once all the clan members are present, **Vors** reminds them that he travelled to the White Lynx clan to prepare the protection rituals against the Spirits of the night that are attacking their allies more and more often. He has returned with disturbing news. There seem to be strange Long Men in the forest to the North of the Haven. These men may be part Spirits. According to the Elders of the White Lynx clan, they were sent by the Spirits of the forest to punish them for the faults of their ancestors. Four members of the White Lynx clan have been taken so far. If the PCs ask questions about the White Lynx clan and its situation, the members of the Council or the members of the White Lynx clan whom they will meet later will give them the information in the inset box on page 42 (the GM is welcome to add to it).

**Motwe** speaks up to say that they should still help the White Lynx clan. Maybe the Long Men will accept to speak with the River Children?

**Taman** reminds them that the presence of the Long Men in the forest would explain a lot, especially the rarity of the game and the reduced amounts of food they can gather.

**Haram** cries out that the Long Men have offended his clan by setting up their camp so close to their territory without asking for permission. A rumble of approval can be heard from the youngsters.

**Vors** considers the presence of the Long Men to be a danger for the Spirits of the Haven that had protected them so far. For the first time, he names these Long Men "the Grim Ones".



Let the PCs take part in the debate about what they should do next. Take their suggestions into account and orient the debate depending on their ideas. During the talks you can point out the differences in opinion between the young hunters and the Elders. The former are easily getting worked up and want to go and threaten the Long Men, while the Elders want to respect tradition and bring gifts as a sign of respect when they meet with them. The youngsters can be talked into a more diplomatic solution. But the Elders will never accept to threaten the Long Men, even if they are “Grim” Long Men.

### **Wu Loi's scars**

Wu Loi was better at evaluating danger than anyone else in the clan. He preferred retreat to senseless conflict, and could avoid loss of life by convincing the most hotheaded members of the clan not to attack the Bear-men who had just arrived on their lands, given that the newcomers were fleeing from the Long Men from the East. However, one year, Wu Loi's clan was forced to leave its territory at the beginning of the cold season. Wu Loi, who had spoken to the chief of the invading clan, realized that its members had already suffered a lot from confrontations with the Long Men. They were therefore desperate and aggressive. Wu Loi feared that a conflict with this clan could lead to many deaths.

So the Grey Tree clan prepared to leave for the South. Unfortunately, on the day before they were due to leave, a group of young hunters went to attack the invaders. The other clan fought back and Wu Loi's clan suffered serious losses: five people were killed and the hunters who returned had suffered various degrees of wounds. Their departure was a hurried one and they couldn't take much food with them. Their situation got worse when a pack of starving wolves began to harass the survivors. The first snow of the season rapidly became a blizzard and made it difficult to see. The clan's leaders were paying more attention to the wolves than they were to the landscape around them. That's how the wolves managed to corner them on a cliff above a river. There was no way out: the wolves outnumbered them, the hunters were in no condition to defend their families and, even if the river wasn't blocking their path, Wu Loi's sister was heavily pregnant and wouldn't be able to keep walking for long at a fast pace. Who knows if it was despair or the Spirit of the river that moved Wu Loi to order his companions to jump into the icy water. The fear, hunger, cold and fatigue accumulated during the last week of their exodus led the Bear-men to follow his instructions without question. The quick current swept the clan away...

The Elders know that Wu Loi was the last one on the cliff as the others jumped into the river. He managed to hold back the wolves, but it earned him some impressive scars on his right arm.

## The White Lynx clan's situation

For just over two moons, the members of the White Lynx clan have had the feeling that the Long Men have followed them as they travel south. They had decided to set up their camp on the southern side of a hill, to the northeast of the Haven, but despite what seemed to be a good shelter, their bad luck continued. They hadn't seen a single lynx for ages, the last few babies had been stillborn and the game animals were scarce. The clan would have to live off its food stocks to survive the cold season.

Not long ago, the watchers had reported seeing shadows lurking around the camp at night. A hunter and his wife mysteriously disappeared from the camp one night. Two weeks later, the same happened to a young girl. The young hunter Zaram noticed that the silhouettes, the ones they saw on the hilltops at night, were coming from the forest. At first, he thought that the Spirits of the forest had not yet forgiven the clan's offenses. He hid in a bush nearby to see the Spirits up close. That was when he recognized the features of the Long Men... terrifying Long Men, wearing ornaments sculpted out of bones – and some of those bones were clearly human. Zaram returned to the clan with his news. The Elders concluded that the Long Men had been sent by the Spirits to punish the Bear-men for their lack of respect. The *Grim Ones*, as the clan soon began to call the Spark Hunters, were seen as a group of Long Men specifically sent to punish them for their ancestors' lack of respect for the Spirits of the forest.

*\*The clan did not seek refuge in the forest for fear of the Spirits. A few generations ago, the Spirits of the trees were among the clan's Guardian Spirits. But some less-than-perfect rituals and an increasing lack of devotion had angered the woodland Spirits. The clan was hit by two epidemics at the time. Since then, they have avoided the forests. Of course, this fear has decreased as time goes by: at first, nobody would dare approach even a small grove of trees. Nowadays, the clan's men will hunt in the woods if necessary, but they wouldn't spend a night there, let alone set up camp.*

If the PCs do choose the more violent route, they will have to do so without informing the Elders, and they risk the consequences if they are discovered.

Towards the end of the discussion, the four Elders remind them all that it is their duty to act, both to protect their allies from the White Lynx clan and to defend the Spirits of the Haven and the Sparkling River. They will insist on the fact that the Spirits of the Haven have always protected the members of their clan, against drowning, hunger, cold, illnesses and still births.

### Preparing to leave

The next day, the Elders choose who will be part of the group that will go to meet with the Long Men. The PCs who volunteer will all be picked, unless they were opposed to the diplomatic solution. Mu Boas, who has become very grumpy since the death of his friend, will not be allowed to go. Two hunters are designated to watch him: the Elders don't want a hotheaded attempt at

revenge endangering the whole clan. If any of the PCs are not part of the expedition, they will be assigned to watch Mu Boas (who will suggest they sneak out of the camp during the night to go and strike revenge on the Grim Ones).

The group prepares the gifts to be brought to the Long Men. These include the antlers of the megaloceros that the PCs hunted at the beginning of this scenario and three well-prepared wolf skins.

At sundown, as the drums beat, the Elders wade into the river. They perform a ritual chant to ask the Spirits for their support in this attempt for reconciliation. The other clan members go back to their activities before they go to sleep. This leaves time for the PCs to interact with some of the NPCs (if they haven't already done so), exchange their points of view on the situation and discuss what they should do next. They can also convince some of the younger hunters to come with them to spy on the Grim Ones.

## The Emissaries From the White Lynx Clan

The next morning at sunrise, the group, probably made up of the PCs, Mehja and Motwe, get underway. But they have barely left the camp when they see five hunters from the White Lynx clan appear at the northeast entrance to the Haven!

The frightened hunters tell the PCs that the ritual performed by Vors didn't work: the Long Men have taken another three members of the clan, this time a woman and two children. One of the PCs will probably tell them how they found their dead hunter in the mountains. The five White Lynx clan hunters will ask to be taken to the River Children's camp.

Once they are back in the camp, the five hunters renew their warnings and tell the Elders about a suggestion with serious consequences. The White Lynx clan has decided to flee, so they will no longer have to face this danger. They suggest that the River Children should follow them South to escape the Long Men. The White Lynx clan is offering to form a larger tribe by merging with the River Children. After a short deliberation, the clan's Elders turn down the offer and explain that they can't leave the Haven without having returned a big enough favor to repay the Spirits for all the protection that they have received over the years. It could bring a curse down on both clans. The emissaries of the White Lynx clan are sad to hear it, but they understand the Elders' reasons. The body of their brother, wrapped in animal skins, is returned to the visitors, who leave with two pieces of bad news and a dead body to take back to their clan. The Elders decide that the diplomatic mission should be maintained.

## Meeting the Spark Hunters

After a half-hour's walk in the forest, the group reaches the camp of the Grim Ones. Two Long Men come to meet them and grunt a few words in their own language at the visitors. They are not armed, but their decorations (bracelets, necklaces, and belts made of bone and ivory) give them a threatening look. They repeat the same word that the PCs don't understand. Motwe bows to show his respect. He holds out their gifts. The shorter of the two Grim Ones comes closer and sneers at the offerings. He takes them reluctantly and the other signals them to follow him. Motwe and Mehja are wise enough to not pick up on the offensive behavior of the Long Men who didn't bow in return.

The two Grim Ones go inside one of the tents with the gifts, leaving the group standing bewildered in the middle of the village. Motwe orders the PCs not to move. While they wait, they have the time to observe the camp's strange architecture. The tents seem to be held up by bone and ivory. They also see great totem poles made of animal and human bones. But some elements are scarier and more impressive: skeletons of huge creatures that look like dragons, or even giants with great horns.

*Note for the GM: The Grim Ones use strong and sticky spider thread to fix the bones together and make the skeletons look like they are standing on their own. They are made of ordinary bones, assembled to look like fantastical creatures. They therefore look like the erroneous reconstitutions of skeletons from the beginning of the history of paleontology. With a DT 9 Perception Test, they can recognize bones of saber tooth tigers, bison and mammoths.*



Next to one of the tents, the PCs can see gray-whitish, egg-shaped blobs that don't have any visible openings. The PCs have no way of knowing that these are cocoons that hold some of their friends from the White Lynx clan, placed in a comatose state with poison from giant spiders. If they want to know more and manage to discreetly get closer to the sacks, a DT 7 Perception Test will allow them to see that they seem to be crafted from a fabric made of hair, or maybe long mammoth hairs. If a PC rolls a 12 or more for his Test, then he immediately makes the connection with the spider threads.

At last, a Long Man (Tenz) emerges from the tent. He speaks to the PCs in their language, but with difficulty. *"Greeting, excuse guards. Deep sorrow. Chief shaman dead. So sadness and anger. Follow me."* (Shach'lin died six moons before this scenario begins).

Tenz leads the group to the campfire and invites them to sit down. With a DT 5 Perception Test, the PCs can notice human

limbs being cooked on another fire a few meters away. Also, some of the clan members seem to be in bad health, and the bags under their eyes show a lack of sleep. *"New chief much busy. Not come. What you want?"*

A Long Woman brings them human skulls filled with a red liquid... Blood. Their host doesn't hesitate and drinks. This is done to intimidate the PCs: outside of rituals, the Grim Ones don't usually drink blood. But they have learned that fear is an important advantage over their enemies.

The PCs' clan has a powerful cannibalism taboo, and they have a feeling that the blood is not that of an animal... will they dare to ask where it comes from? If so, a heavy silence will fall, then the Long Men will glance at each other and one of them will ask to be brought something. The Grim Ones seem even more closed and uncomfortable with their presence. The same Long Woman brings a bowl full of deer meat to the group. The host helps himself first. This meat, just like the blood, is poisoned, but the Long Man NPC has taken the antidote and won't be affected. Motwe, who knows that they have already offended their host by refusing to drink the blood, will signal to the PCs with a nod that it would be better if they accept the deer meat to ease the rest of the negotiations.

The PCs are free to ask their questions about the curse of the White Lynx clan, the game animals, their cooperation, etc. They don't learn much, as the chief hasn't come to meet them. Their host denies the abduction of the Bear-men and promises to do what he can about hunting as little game as possible on their territory. The GM can choose which questions the host will answer and which ones he will hold back on.

Once this fruitless conversation comes to an end, one of the Long Men falls down, and starts to shake all over. This seizure is a side effect of one of the drugs that the Grim Ones use to enter into a trance. Their host seems upset and gets up to help the other members of his clan look after the shaking Grim One. Without looking back, he wishes the PCs a “safe journey home”. Motwe and Mehja are visibly relieved to be leaving, and they jump at the chance to lead the group out of there.

“At least we know they are not Spirits”, says Mehja. Motwe adds: “I still get the feeling they are suffering from some strange curse. Did you see the dark shadows under their eyes? And that man who fell down, screaming and trembling all over? He looked like he was possessed.” Give the PCs time to discuss their feelings: sympathy for the Grim Ones, disgust, fear, a feeling they were misled, disappointment that they didn’t learn anything more, etc.

On their way back, they will experience the effects of the poison: tiredness and blurred vision. They will have to carry out a DT 8 Resistance Test to reach the camp. If they fail, they will faint and be found by the members of their clan who were worried and came looking for them.

The members of the expedition who drank the blood or ate the deer meat suffer a violent fever for two days. Their sleep is disturbed by nightmares and hallucinations. The PCs are vaguely conscious of the presence of their fellow clan members who come to care for them and try to feed them. Vors and Haki will carry out healing rituals with the clear water from the Sparkling River that give back 1d6 Life Points to the PCs. Test Mehja’s Resistance every day. The poison has a Severity of 8. According to the rules, a failed Test means that the character

## The Clan of the Spark Hunters

**Population:** Long Men of the Aurignacian culture (with advanced ivory sculpting skills).

15 men including 5 hunters/trappers, 4 specialists in potions and poisons, 3 shamans, 2 apprentice shamans and **Nah’grin** (chief and shaman).

11 women: 1 shaman, 2 hunters/trappers, 3 specialists in healing potions and drugs, 5 in charge of searching for the “spark gland”.

3 children: 2 girls and 1 boy.

**Guardian Spirit:** the spider Spirit *Ur-Morn* and *Shach’lin*.


The clan has an even gender distribution. Chief: Nah’grin (but he pays great attention to the ideas of others, especially when it comes to carrying out rituals and “research”: he does his utmost to avoid any internal conflict). Patrilineal descent.

Incest taboo, totem taboo. Totem animal: spiders. This totem gives the Strengths *Venom of the Spider* (similar to *Venom of the Viper*); and *Cunning of the Spinner* (similar to *Knowledge of the Beaver*).

**Secret Combat Techniques:** *Melee, Flight of the Snowy Owl, Terrifying Appearance*.

### The shamans and their animal form:

**Nah’grin** and one of the 5 other shamans, **Tenz**, have mastered the animal form of the spider (both of them will be present if the PCs have backup. If they are alone, then only Nah’grin will be there) They can take on the shape of a “swarm” of giant spiders, each one the size of a fist. Their venom paralyzes, and only the three female potions specialists know the antidote. In this form, they can spin spider webs to trap game animals and enemies.



loses 16 Stamina Points; a successful Test means he only loses 4. The effects will disappear suddenly on the morning of the third day. Motwe will not survive this poisoning.

### **The Spark Hunters (the *Grim Ones*)**

This Long Man clan counts about thirty people. The culture of these Long Men from the East is strongly influenced by the delusions of grandeur of their shaman, **Shach'lin**. He had accumulated a wealth of knowledge about various poisons, venoms and antidotes. He dreamed of inventing the potion of eternal life. He soon realized that such a goal was impossible to reach by using plants alone. He therefore sought to discover the secret of life through shamanism and ritual experimenting on human beings.

One night, as Shach'lin was studying the internal organs of one of his victims in the moonlight, a dark shadow walked up to stand beside him. It was a witch named **Norn**. She explained that she had been watching him for a while. She too was looking for a way to obtain eternal life, so the experimenting process the Long Man was using intrigued her. They began to discuss their ideas, hopes and results on a regular basis. Through this, Shach'lin gradually began to believe that every living thing must have a spark within it. A spark that gives the body energy, allows it to think and to move. It is because of this spark that the human body is warm. When this spark disappears, that is when the body dies and grows cold. It is to feed the fire of this spark that humans have to eat, and when the spark is not fed, it burns up the human's body and causes a pain in the belly that then spreads to the rest of the body. Shach'lin therefore

sought to locate the organ that contains the spark and find a way to take it for himself.

The members of his clan were also ingenious people. Their hunting techniques mainly consisted of using poisoned weapons or elaborate traps. Shach'lin told them his plans. From then on, he no longer had to hide from his fellow clan members to conduct his dark rituals; he had their support. At the same time, the witch taught him the rituals needed to contact the Spirit of the great spider **Ur-Morn**. Testing on humans allowed the clan to make progress in the art of poisoning and drugging. Unfortunately, they didn't manage to discover the "spark-gland". At first, Shach'lin looked for it on dead bodies. But he soon realized that he couldn't tell it apart from the rest, since the spark disappeared as soon as the test subject was dead. The problem was that the victims died too quickly once their bodies were opened up, leaving very little time for the shamans to find the spark. Therefore they developed drugs aiming to keep the victims alive for as long as possible, even when they had lost a lot of blood. The clan that had once been made up of daring and ruthless nomadic hunters slowly changed. The mental health of the clan members began to waver. They forgot their ancient Guardian Spirits and they all began to worship Ur-Morn. The spider Spirit helped them to deepen their knowledge of venoms and some of the shamans have mastered the spider animal form. This last ability became very useful to the clan: in their spider form, the shamans could wrap up their guinea pigs in cocoons and keep them alive for months. Their ritual cannibalism became a dietary cannibalism. They gradually severed their connections with the other clans. They lived in a world of their own and



lived only for their obsession. There was, however, no rivalry between them. They liked to help each other out, answer their companions' questions on the effects of this or that plant, the uses for various organs and so on.

One day, Shach'lin declared that he had discovered the ritual that would allow him to extract the spark, known as the *Long Life Ritual*. However, the ritual was still very rough and not very efficient. If the spark was too weak, he wouldn't be able to target it correctly, and its energy would be lost during the transfer. There were therefore two solutions to this problem: either refine the ritual to make it more efficient, or use it on a creature with a life spark that burned brighter than that of ordinary beings. Shach'lin felt his old body weakening, and chose the fastest option. But it was also the more dangerous one. He had heard of legendary creatures with a long lifespan, such as chimeras, dragons or mountain giants. Thanks to his clan's significant knowledge of poisons and drugs, the plan didn't seem all that impossible. The main difficulty was to find a creature to sacrifice...


One evening, Shach'lin returned to the camp, mortally wounded. One of his arms had been ripped off and he was losing a lot of blood. The shamans did what they could to keep him alive, but in vain. Nobody knew exactly what had happened to Shach'lin, for he never said a word about it. He died of his injuries after two days of agony. Nobody ever saw the witch again, the one who whispered in the shaman's ear.

Before he died, the shaman gave his last instructions to his successors. The ritual to allow them to steal a life spark had to be refined and developed. He told them that the spark of the Bear-men burned brighter than that of the Long Men and that's why they were sturdier and stronger. *"The witch said the same thing... it's possible that... we could perfect our ritual on the Bear-men... I should have waited... don't make the same mistake..."*

The death of the shaman deeply saddened the Spark Hunters. His passing was a shock that reminded them to concentrate on their quest for eternal life: their days too were numbered.







They therefore started to follow a clan of Bear-men as they travelled South: the White Lynx clan. The Spark Hunters regularly abduct people from the clan to perfect their ritual with. The “research” was now managed by **Nah’grin**, Shach’lin’s brother. Shach’lin joined Ur-Mon as one of the clan’s Guardian Spirits. Now he sometimes whispers brilliant ideas to the shamans as they sleep. In this way he continues to contribute to the *Long Life Ritual*. Although most Long Men don’t speak the Bear-men’s language, the Spark Hunters have some basic knowledge of it.

### **The River Children’s Dilemma**

Once the PCs are well enough to get up, a new clan Council is held to discuss what to do next. That is when the White Lynx clan arrives at the eastern border of the Haven. They can see that the whole clan is heading South: the men and women are carrying all their belongings with them. The once great White Lynx clan seems to only have about fifteen members left... The PCs notice a number of wounded among the men. If someone goes to meet them, they explain to the PCs that they tried to sneak into the Grim Ones’ camp and release the four latest hostages. They had to fight their way out and lost a lot of people. The Grim Ones didn’t seem to have hunters to defend them, but the place where they live is cursed. According to the White Lynx clan, every man wounded in that forest, even very lightly, is condemned to die in terrible agony. It was as if sickness and death were entering the body through every tiny scratch!

*Note to the GM: in fact this has nothing to do with the place. The hunters are suffering from the effects of the poison (very difficult to detect) with which the Long Men coat their weapons.*

At the PCs’ request (or Mu Boas’), the hunters from the White Lynx clan mention that they destroyed three tents and killed about ten Long Men. The hunters also describe what they managed to see during their attack\*. They found their women and children dead in the snow, standing still and straight with javelins propping up the bodies. They saw the skeletons of strange creatures, the faces of evil Spirits and totems made of children’s limbs. The PCs will realize that at first the men of the White Lynx clan wanted to keep these details to themselves. In the end, they decided to tell the River Children to try to convince them to follow them in their flight to the South. Despite this, the Elders still refuse to leave the Haven. The White Lynx clan gives them some good quality stone-tipped spears and wishes them no need to use them against their fellow men.

*\*Note for the GM: when the Bear-men attacked, Nah’grin and Tenz were in a trance to try to contact Ur-Morn. Therefore the White Lynx clan doesn’t mention any giant spiders. However, if the PCs decide to attack the Grim Ones, they will have to face Nah’grin and Tenz in their spider forms.*

*Once the White Lynx clan has left, the Council assembles. The youngsters are in favor of a radical action: either running away to join the White Lynx clan, or attacking to protect the Haven and put an end to the threat once and for all. They think that the time is right to attack as the enemy clan is weakened. The Elders are opposed to both these proposals. As their allies’ report confirmed, it is too risky to flee with them without having returned a favor to the Spirits. Furthermore, travelling South would mean having to set up camp outside of the Haven for the first time in generations, and at the beginning of the worst cold season in a long time! The Elders say that they should pray and make offerings to the river. Is this some kind of test?*

*They must prove to the Spirits that they are strong and capable of surviving without their help, to receive their reward and gain their protection once again! If they show that they have lost faith by leaving the Haven, the Spirits will abandon them for good. Besides, the Spirits need them at the moment. They are facing the presence of the Long Men and the spider Spirit!*

*The PCs can choose to pick the side they want, or even to come up with their own opinion on the matter. To persuade the Elders to flee, they will have to manage a DT 12 Persuasion Test, and to convince them to authorize an attack, a DT 15. To persuade the young ones to delay their plans for a while, DT 9. If the PCs are persuasive, and take care not to offend any of the factions, the GM can decide to reduce the DTs.*

**If the Council decides to pray** and wait for help, see the following scene named *The Powerless Spirits*.

**If the Council decides to flee**, skip to the scene named *Paradise Lost*.

**If the Council decides to attack**, skip to the scene named *Bloody Vengeance*.

## The Powerless Spirits

During the night, the PCs hear screams coming from the forest. The Long Men must have taken prisoners during the attack. The Elders will once again call upon the river Spirit and carry out rituals all night long. Almost as if it were a direct response, the next day the river is poisoned. Around midday, dead fish are seen floating on the surface of the water. Habrod and Luhn, who were playing in the water, suffer a strong fever and vomiting. The Elders forbid them from touching the fishes and order them to throw out all the water taken from the river over the last few days.

But it is too late. Some are already sick: Mu Boas, Haram, Taman, Gruhne, Nirhne, Loff, Haki and Myhr. This is very upsetting, as there haven't been any diseases in the Haven for the last two generations. *Note to the GM: Of course, this is not so much a disease as a poisoning.*

Taman and Nirhne are those who are suffering the most. Taman will die during the following night. This is a terrible loss for the clan. He had a vast knowledge of plants, combat and hunting. Roll the dice to test Nirhne's Resistance (page 68 of the core rulebook). He has the *Breath of the Giant Stag* and therefore rolls 3d6 for his Resistance Test. The poison (diluted in the river water) has a Severity of 6. You can decide that Vors attempts an exorcism (pages 80-81 of the core rulebook) to free a person from the sickness (probably one of the children). The effects of the poison are paleness, shaking, headaches, and fever. According to the rules, a failed Test means that a character loses 12 Stamina Points. A successful Test means he only loses 3.

Vors will then send the PCs to fetch water in a lake to the East of the Haven, to fill their stocks and give to the sick. The PCs are given wooden containers. They are able to carry out this task without any problems. However, on their way back, they see a Long Man running towards the forest in the North. He is carrying an unconscious Luhn on his back! He must have managed to kidnap her without the other clan members noticing. To catch up with him, they will have to take a Running Test, opposed to the speed of the Long Man, which is reduced to 9 instead of 10 as he is carrying the child.



☞ If the PCs don't manage to prevent Luhn's kidnapping, they will hear her screams through the forest during the next night. If the PCs discreetly approach the camp, they will be able to watch one of the bloodcurdling rituals of the Long Men. The Spark Hunters are very carefully removing the young girl's organs and placing them around her in what seems to be a well-prepared organization. Nah'grin, a tall, old Long Man, directs the three men who are carrying out this operation. They take their time examining each of the organs. They seem to be deep in thought. They talk, sometimes with raised voices as if they were disagreeing on something, then they fall back into silent thought. There are always two Long Men on the lookout, regularly doing rounds around the camp limits. The PCs can therefore tell all of this to the Elders, and this time they will agree to leave.

☞ If the PCs manage to capture the Long Man before he reaches his camp, he will scream and struggle, but he can easily be overcome. An opposed Wrestling Test (see Würm, pages 58-59) is necessary, but the Grim One is *Weak* (-3 for his Strength Test) and has no combat skills. In his garbled

attempt at their language, he explains that his clan is looking for the life of the Bear-men that burns stronger than that of the Long Men. They are looking for "fire that is easy to put out but hard to find". But he flatly refuses to be any more specific about what that means.

When they search him, the PCs find herbs that Vors doesn't know, and powdered poisons and antidotes. If they show the powders to Vors, who has the *Venom of the Viper Strength*, he can notice (DT 12) that the antidote might be able to help the sick clan members. The Difficulty Threshold is high because the Spark Hunters' poisons and antidotes are very elaborate and contain many ingredients. This also explains why the White Lynx clan was not able to detect the unknown poisons that were affecting their hunters.

The PCs find out that while they were away getting water and dealing with Luhn's abduction, Myhr has given birth to her baby, but it was stillborn. Mehja, the baby's father, is enraged. He has gathered his best weapons and is about to attack the Long Men. Mu Boas, who is rather impulsive and wants to avenge the death of his friend from the White Lynx clan, is speaking hateful words to the clan's hunters, to encourage them to join him in a vengeful assault.

If the PCs decide to join the hunters, see the scene named *Bloody Vengeance*. If the PCs try to calm them down, they must carry out a DT 12 Persuasion Test.

The PCs can also decide to forcefully contain Mehja and Mu Boas. The hunters will not dare to use their weapons against their own clan members. You will need to carry out opposed Wrestling Tests. Mahja

and Mu Boas are proud hunters: they both have the *Strength of the Bear* and the *Fury of the Lion*. If the PCs succeed their Tests, the two hunters will calm down and abandon their destructive plans. Mehja cries in anger. Once the two hunters have been convinced or restrained, the others will also change their minds.

If the clan is to survive, we strongly suggest that the PCs shouldn't let them run off to their deaths.

## Paradise Lost

After these events, the Elders Haki and Vors announce that they accept to leave the Haven, which may have been soiled by the non-natural deaths of several members of their clan. The rest of the clan is relieved to hear it. The Elders explain that they will have to carry out a collective ritual to implore the forgiveness of the Haven and Sparkling River Spirits for leaving them alone with the Long Men. During this ritual, they must also ask Urzohunkan to protect them during their exodus, and ask the Spirit of Wu Loi to not abandon them. To do so, they will have to sacrifice part of their meager food stocks to the river, along with the most treasured object of each clan member.

The rituals begin. This time, nobody approaches the water for fear of being poisoned. One at a time, they each throw their most treasured possession into the river. For some it is a piece of jewelry, for others weapons, and for Vors and Haki, it is some very rare medicinal herbs. Then it is time for the PCs to do the same. Ask them all to give you a slip of paper with their name and a cross or a circle. A circle means that they did indeed sacrifice their most treasured possession; a cross means that they didn't.

☞ If you have three crosses or more (two if you only have two players), the clan suffers an attack from the Grim Ones during the ritual. They attack with poisoned weapons (javelins from a distance and bone-tipped spears in hand-to-hand combat), and they are accompanied by a swarm of giant spiders, unless the PCs have already killed them of course. If the Long Men are not in condition to fight when the ritual is being carried out, then a month-long blizzard will hit the PCs' camp.

☞ If there are fewer than three crosses, the ritual goes without a hitch. Haki and Vors go into a trance. When they awake from it, they tell the clan that the Spirits have accepted their offerings and that the Spirit of Wu Loi is ready to follow them. From now on they will be known as the *clan of Wu Loi's Children*. The Elders then encourage the clan members to gather their belongings and catch up with the White Lynx clan members who left that morning, or about four days ago if you have played the *Powerless Spirits* scene. Together, they may have a better chance of surviving the cold season.

On the morning of the second day of walking, they spot the White Lynx's camp on the side of a hill. If the clans are four days apart, the PCs and all the others will wonder how they caught up with them so quickly. As they approach, they don't hear a sound. There is a fire and five tents. None of the clan members can be seen, except for a child of about ten, sitting staring at the fire.

He tells them that a sickness made a large number of his fellow clan members incapable of walking. They wanted to stop to rest and gather their strength. It was a bad idea though, as instead of getting better,

their sickness worsened at the speed of lightning... He is the last survivor of his clan. He is very calm and seems to have lost touch with reality. He is pale, coughs a lot and has trouble walking. He asks the PCs' clan to take him in, as he has not yet finished his training as a hunter.

The Elders gather another Council.

Everyone is in shock. Although most of the clan members are willing to take him in, Haki and Vors warn them that it could be risky to take in a child who may carry a sickness that killed a whole clan. Of course, you should let the PCs take part in the debate and give their opinion. Depending on the Council's decision, see one of the two epilogues.

## Epilogues

☞ If they leave the child behind, he begins to cry and curses the River Children, screaming that they are no better than the Long Men. The curse scares the Elders. The members of Wu Loi's clan leave, some of them sick, all of them tired, with very little food to face what is looking to be a very rough cold season. They can feel a burning gaze of hatred and despair on their backs. None of them dare to turn around.

☞ If they take him in, the clan will have a new member who will soon recover from his sickness after a bout of fever. He will become a good hunter, but he will always bear a fierce hatred towards the Long Men, and he will often try to pass it on to the other Bear-men.



## Bloody Vengeance

This scene can be added at any point in the plot, depending on the PCs' decisions. Indeed, they have many opportunities to attack, but they will not always have any backup: even the young ones who want to fight respect the decisions of the Elders, at least to begin with.

The Grim Ones are rather disorganized during combat, as it was Shach'lin who used to protect them from attackers. If the attack occurs after the fight with the members of the White Lynx clan, the Grim Ones will be in the middle of rebuilding their huts. On their stone altars, there are bodies of Bear-men and Long Men who died during the last battle, being used for experiments or for food. Some bodies have been opened and their organs laid out in the snow.

The Grim Ones have coated their weapons with a paralyzing poison made from the venom of the giant spiders, and they are covered in decorations made of human bones (*Terrifying Appearance*, see game aid on page 6). In spite of all this, the PCs do have a fair chance of beating them, but they will probably not be able to take any prisoners: the younger members of the clan will be in a murderous mood and will stop at nothing to kill the Grim Ones. The GM can decide to define the frontier between natural and supernatural. If they have to fight the giant spiders, the GM can decide whether they are indeed the shamans on their animal form or if the PCs are simply under the influence of the drugs with which the Long Men's weapons are coated. The PCs can try to work out what is real, or simply accept it all. If the PCs do manage to capture one of the enemy Elders and protect him from the young hunters, they can learn whatever

the GM wishes to reveal about the Spark Hunters' past and their motivations. If they search the camp, the PCs will find the cocoons with the living Bear-men, but they will never wake them up without the antidote. A Test for Perception or Insight (DT 12, with *Sight of the Owl*, *Wisdom of the Mammoth* or *Venom of the Viper* as possible bonuses) will allow them to discover the antidotes that are required to wake the prisoners and end the paralysis of those who have been bitten by the spiders or wounded by the Grim Ones.



## The Non-Player Characters

Use the basic characteristics for the NPCs (see Würm page 121). Depending on the situation, apply any differences as specified in the scenario, or as they seem necessary.

## Swarm of Giant Spiders

Each swarm is made up of 26 spiders. Their slick body, as big as a fist, shows how solid their protective shell is. They are black, have four pairs of deep red eyes and impressive mandibles. In combat, treat each swarm as if it were a single creature. If a swarm is split into two, count each "half-swarm" as a creature by dividing the LP in two. For each LP lost by the swarm, remove one spider.

**Dodge 10, Thick skin 1**

**LP 26, divide the damage received by 2\*.**

**Initiative 3d6**

**Attacks [1]:** Bite 2d6, +1 per group of 6 spiders (Damage: 1d6 Points, +1 Point per group of 6 spiders), Poison\*, Binding\*.

**Running 9, Alertness 12.**

**Special Abilities:**

\**Reduced Damage:* because of their numbers, their small size and their speed, the Damage inflicted on the spiders is reduced by half, rounded down to the nearest whole number

(each Damage Point inflicted kills one spider).

\**Poison:* the spiders' poison is very potent, although it is rarely lethal for a human in good physical condition. Its Severity is 8. It acts in 1d6 minutes and causes 4 Damage Points for a successful Resistance Test, or 16 Points if the Test fails. It causes a muscular paralysis (therefore the heart too can be affected to a lesser extent) that can cause unconsciousness during **30 minutes**, if the Test result is a Failure.

\**Binding:* during a combat round, the swarm can choose to use its attack to *Bind* its opponent. This attack doesn't cause any damage; the spiders secrete very strong fibers and bind their victim with them, covering him in their web. The victim is 80% covered. A successful Wrestling Test (DT 9) can allow him to wriggle free from it. During the next round, the swarm can abandon their victim or, on the contrary finish covering him, taking away the victim's last chance to free himself from it on his own. Another option for the swarm is to use their attack to inflict a poisoned bite that automatically succeeds. The spiders will not harm a victim in a cocoon for no reason.





## The Grim Ones

The Grim Ones are regular Long Men, except that they are all **Weak**: they all suffer a penalty of -3 for all their Strength and Wrestling Tests and for Damage. As they are less resistant to the cold than the Bearmen, the Grim Ones are already wearing their winter clothing and therefore have **2 Protection Points**.

The Grim Ones fight with weapons coated with the venom of the giant spiders. Any wound inflicted by one of their cutting or piercing weapons *that causes more than 1 Damage Point* can poison the victim in the same way a venomous spider bite would (*Severity 8, for Damage and paralysis, see previous page*).

**Dodge 6, Protection 2**

**Stamina Points 24**

**Initiative 2d6**

**Attacks [1]:** bone-tipped spear 2d6 (2d6 -2 Damage Points + Poison\*) or bone-tipped javelin 2d6 (1d6 -2 Damage Points + Poison\*)

**Running 10, Alertness 7**

**Special Abilities:** Secret Combat

Techniques: *Terrifying Appearance*. For some (at GM's discretion): *Melee, Flight of the Snowy Owl*.

*Jean-Pierre Hufen*

# Old Lynx Beard's Wise Advice

*Old Lynx Beard is an Elder and the Voice of the Ancestors for his clan. He is an old hunter, a good painter, a shaman and a musician, and he likes nothing better than to give his advice on the customs and rules of Würm. As his advice is often wise, we must forgive his tendency to ramble on a little.*

“Yesterday, we discussed the Strengths that a hunter can gain from eating the liver of an animal he has killed. I told you about many important animals, such as reindeer, wild boar or wolverines. But I was troubled, as was my friend Steady Buck. One of the hunt leaders who came to see me, Rock Shadow, was very curious to find out what would happen is one of his hunters (and a formidable group they are indeed) was to eat the liver of a hyena killed in combat.

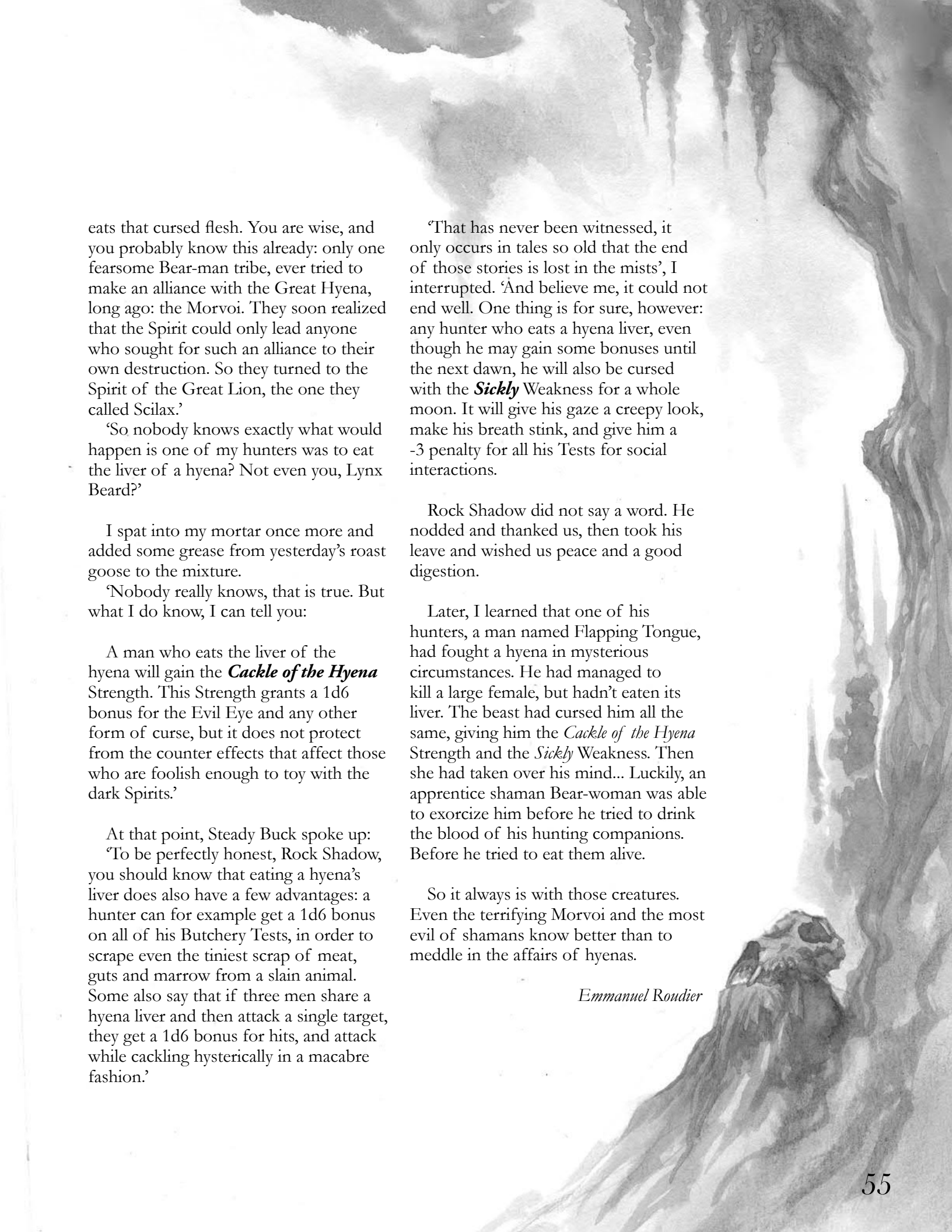
That very evening, Rock Shadow

came to seek me out as I was preparing black paint under the porch of the old Hollybush Shelter.

“So, old Lynx Beard, will you tell me now what Strength my javelin throwers could gain from eating the liver of a hyena?”

I put down my pestle, spread out the ground black powder in the birch gall mortar and spat into it.

“Listen to me, Rock Shadow. Eating the liver of a hyena is a very bad idea. Nothing good can come to anyone who



eats that cursed flesh. You are wise, and you probably know this already: only one fearsome Bear-man tribe, ever tried to make an alliance with the Great Hyena, long ago: the Morvoi. They soon realized that the Spirit could only lead anyone who sought for such an alliance to their own destruction. So they turned to the Spirit of the Great Lion, the one they called Scilax.'

'So nobody knows exactly what would happen is one of my hunters was to eat the liver of a hyena? Not even you, Lynx Beard?'

I spat into my mortar once more and added some grease from yesterday's roast goose to the mixture.

'Nobody really knows, that is true. But what I do know, I can tell you:

A man who eats the liver of the hyena will gain the ***Cackle of the Hyena*** Strength. This Strength grants a 1d6 bonus for the Evil Eye and any other form of curse, but it does not protect from the counter effects that affect those who are foolish enough to toy with the dark Spirits.'

At that point, Steady Buck spoke up: 'To be perfectly honest, Rock Shadow, you should know that eating a hyena's liver does also have a few advantages: a hunter can for example get a 1d6 bonus on all of his Butchery Tests, in order to scrape even the tiniest scrap of meat, guts and marrow from a slain animal. Some also say that if three men share a hyena liver and then attack a single target, they get a 1d6 bonus for hits, and attack while cackling hysterically in a macabre fashion.'

'That has never been witnessed, it only occurs in tales so old that the end of those stories is lost in the mists', I interrupted. 'And believe me, it could not end well. One thing is for sure, however: any hunter who eats a hyena liver, even though he may gain some bonuses until the next dawn, he will also be cursed with the ***Sickly*** Weakness for a whole moon. It will give his gaze a creepy look, make his breath stink, and give him a -3 penalty for all his Tests for social interactions.

Rock Shadow did not say a word. He nodded and thanked us, then took his leave and wished us peace and a good digestion.

Later, I learned that one of his hunters, a man named Flapping Tongue, had fought a hyena in mysterious circumstances. He had managed to kill a large female, but hadn't eaten its liver. The beast had cursed him all the same, giving him the ***Cackle of the Hyena*** Strength and the ***Sickly*** Weakness. Then she had taken over his mind... Luckily, an apprentice shaman Bear-woman was able to exorcize him before he tried to drink the blood of his hunting companions. Before he tried to eat them alive.

So it always is with those creatures. Even the terrifying Morvoi and the most evil of shamans know better than to meddle in the affairs of hyenas.

*Emmanuel Roudier*





## Afterwords of Acknowledgement

The Author wishes to express his warmest thanks to Kathy Calmejane, who has done a outstanding job translating and proofreading the entire contents of the *Voice of the Ancestors* booklets (and an important part of the Rulebook). Sing praises for her !

# Tales of the Man Eaters

In this second edition of Voice of the Ancestors, you will find:

**A Guide to Cannibalism**, a game aid to introduce you to the lesser-known aspects of cannibalistic rituals,

as well as three new scenarios:

**What We Did To Our Forefathers** introduces a group of child characters to the dark side of their tribe's initiation rituals.

**Horror In The Deep** is a scenario where the characters will have to enter a horrifying cave and find their way out after discovering its dark secrets.

**The Curious Quest Of The Spark Hunters** is a tragic saga where a tribe of Bear-men will have to face the terrifying traditions of their new Long Men neighbors.

