

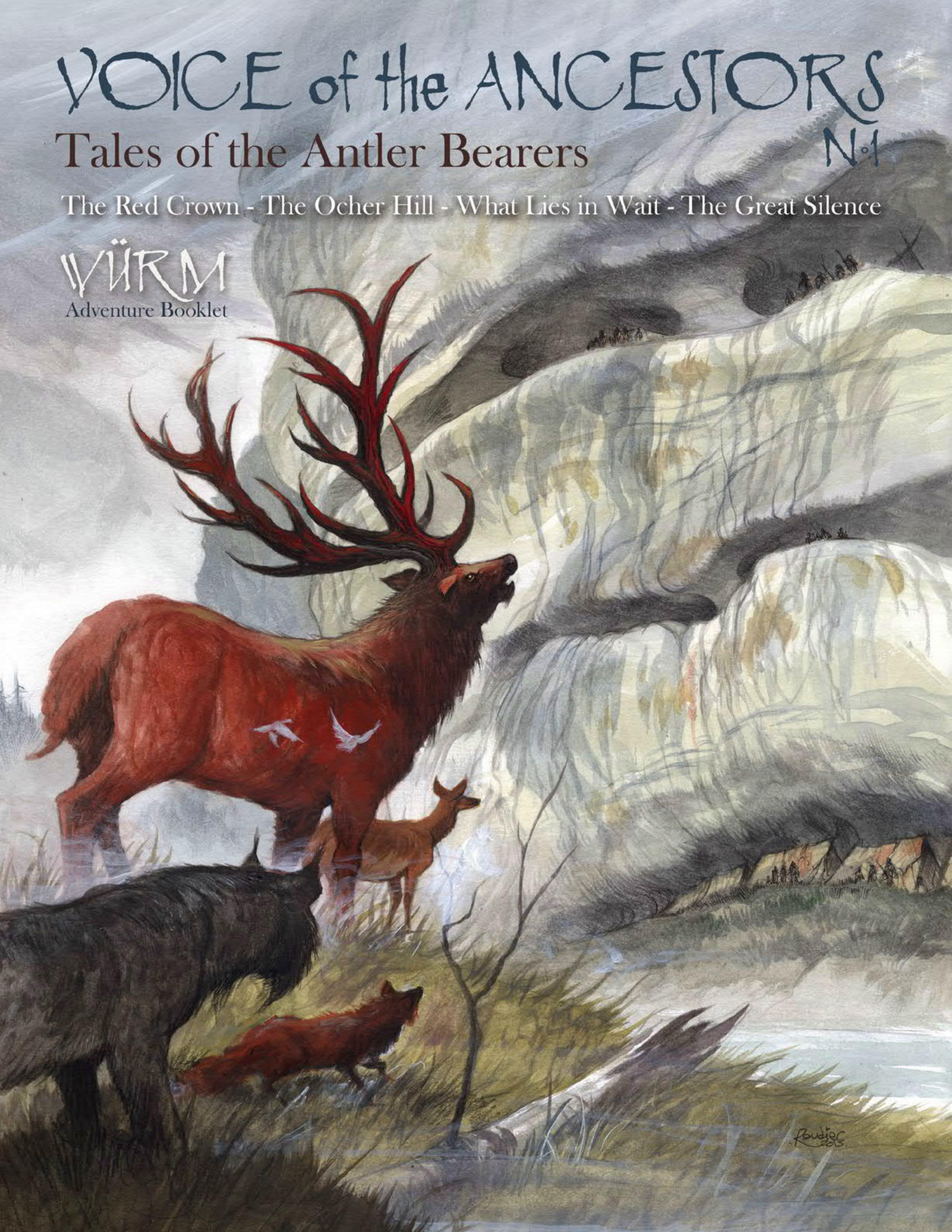
VOICE of the ANCESTORS

Tales of the Antler Bearers

N.1

The Red Crown - The Ocher Hill - What Lies in Wait - The Great Silence

WÜRМ
Adventure Booklet



VOICE of the ANCESTORS

Adventure Booklet for WÜRМ Number 1

Tales of the Antler Bearers

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Preface

At La Cour d'Obéron, we love projects that are kind of crazy, generous challenges, shared adventures and close friendships. So when Emmanuel Roudier knocked on our door in the fall of 2007, carrying his amateur version of Würm under one arm, we gave him a warm welcome on the site and the forum. As we "Oberonists" began to discover and discuss Würm, it was soon obvious that this "prehistoric" game would open up a whole range of opportunities for fun, far beyond the basic survival adventures of the ice age. Spirituality, music, cannibalism, the fate of a whole clan, and of course the old favorites – love, hate, jealousy, fear, betrayal, sacrifice – that make up the greatest and strongest tales since the Bear-men and Long Men began to tell them.

Of course, we cheered heartily when Würm found a professional publisher in Editions Icare. In the meantime, a group of Oberonists had come together with Emmanuel to create an informal group, pondering and plotting the future of the collection around the campfire, at the back of the cave. Therefore, it was quite naturally that, to mark the release of this "pro" edition in 2011, and after a (Bison) flesh and blood (of Ao) meeting at Tarascon-sur-Ariège on a freezing day in June, the idea was born to organize a competition for scenarios and adventure ideas. It was launched shortly after, and with the double sponsorship of La Cour d'Obéron and Editions Icare, it ran from the fall equinox to the winter solstice of 2011.

Once the results were announced, the fine tuning of the scenarios became more of an editorial job: it truly was a shared adventure and – if we may be so bold – a close relationship was formed between authors and jury, under Emmanuel's demanding yet benevolent leadership.

The publication of this Voice of the Ancestors is a matter of great satisfaction for La Cour d'Obéron. With Editions Icare, we launched the scenario contest to give this collection a varied and high quality basis for play. The result has arguably reached, and even exceeded, the expectations that we had when we dared to launch the contest. We will only know for sure when you, the players of Würm, tell us just how much fun you are having with these adventures.

May the Spirit of Mordagg travel with you on these paths that we hope will be fascinating!

La Cour d'Obéron

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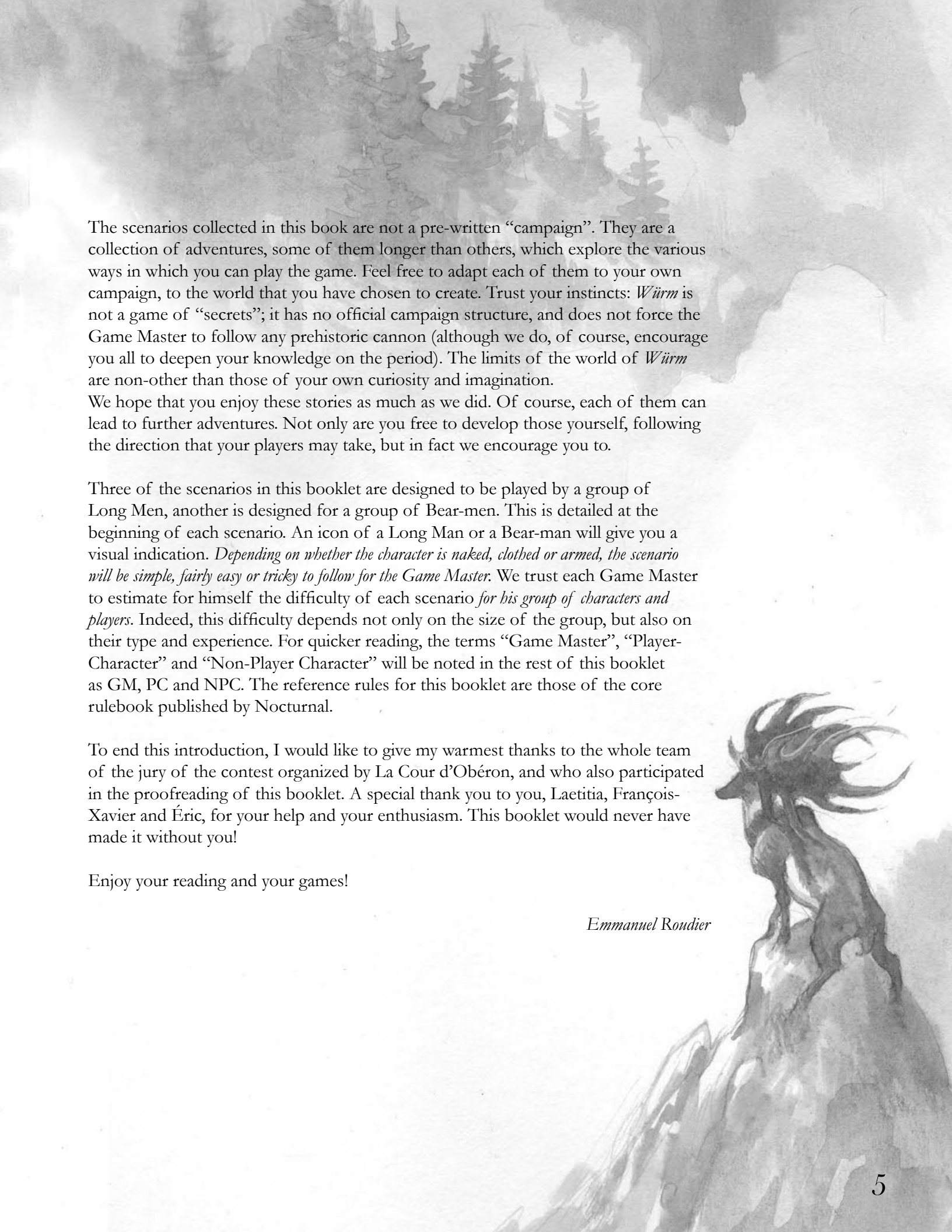
Introduction

My dear readers,

Welcome, and thank you for buying this first edition of *Voice of the Ancestors*! The booklet you are holding right now is the first in a series of scenario collections for *Würm*; it contains stories, nothing but stories, to take you and your friends on new adventures in the ice age.

This first *Voice of the Ancestors* is made up of four adventures. Three of these stories revolve around the common theme that gives this book its title: the “antler bearers”. The stag in *The Red Crown*, the megaloceros in *The Ocher Hill* and the reindeer in *The Great Silence*. To tell these tales, we are very happy to present scenarios from the quills of Julien Clément, Frédéric Debout, Olivier Castan and myself for this edition. As you will see, these adventures are as varied in their twists and turns as they are united in the will to each present a different approach to the world of *Würm*.

Two of the adventures featured in this book came to us through the *Würm* scenario contest in 2011, organized jointly between Editions Icare and the role-playing game forum Cour d’Obéron. This original initiative has borne some very juicy fruit. The debates to select the winning texts were very close at times. The objectively established and identical criteria that we had established to compare each story were systematically overshadowed by each jury member’s subjective opinion. After careful consideration, *The Red Crown*, a scenario by Julien Clément, was selected as the winner of the contest. This is why it is the opening adventure for this book, and indeed for the whole series of *Voice of the Ancestors*. However, given the quality of the contributions that we received, we chose to publish almost all of the scenarios written for the contest. *The Red Crown* has hardly been edited at all, whereas the others have seen some minor edits, decided jointly with the authors and jury members. Two other scenarios from the contest are part of the second edition of *Voice of the Ancestors*.



The scenarios collected in this book are not a pre-written “campaign”. They are a collection of adventures, some of them longer than others, which explore the various ways in which you can play the game. Feel free to adapt each of them to your own campaign, to the world that you have chosen to create. Trust your instincts: *Würm* is not a game of “secrets”; it has no official campaign structure, and does not force the Game Master to follow any prehistoric cannon (although we do, of course, encourage you all to deepen your knowledge on the period). The limits of the world of *Würm* are non-other than those of your own curiosity and imagination.

We hope that you enjoy these stories as much as we did. Of course, each of them can lead to further adventures. Not only are you free to develop those yourself, following the direction that your players may take, but in fact we encourage you to.

Three of the scenarios in this booklet are designed to be played by a group of Long Men, another is designed for a group of Bear-men. This is detailed at the beginning of each scenario. An icon of a Long Man or a Bear-man will give you a visual indication. *Depending on whether the character is naked, clothed or armed, the scenario will be simple, fairly easy or tricky to follow for the Game Master.* We trust each Game Master to estimate for himself the difficulty of each scenario *for his group of characters and players.* Indeed, this difficulty depends not only on the size of the group, but also on their type and experience. For quicker reading, the terms “Game Master”, “Player-Character” and “Non-Player Character” will be noted in the rest of this booklet as GM, PC and NPC. The reference rules for this booklet are those of the core rulebook published by Nocturnal.

To end this introduction, I would like to give my warmest thanks to the whole team of the jury of the contest organized by La Cour d’Obéron, and who also participated in the proofreading of this booklet. A special thank you to you, Laetitia, François-Xavier and Éric, for your help and your enthusiasm. This booklet would never have made it without you!

Enjoy your reading and your games!

Emmanuel Roudier

The Red Crown

The Red Crown is an open tribal intrigue scenario. It is suitable for any group of Long Men based during the Gravettian culture period (ideally) or the Aurignacian, regardless of their actual location. Given the landscapes and the fauna described in the scenario, it seems logical that the events take place somewhere in Europe, but with a few small changes, it could take part elsewhere (or at another time). The places described in the scenario are based on a real prehistoric site (see the inset "La Roque?"). However, this site could very well exist elsewhere, and the Game Master can move it to wherever the players are used to living. To make things easier at the beginning of the adventure, we suppose that the PCs are already an integral part of the community that lives there. This can either be the case since their birth or only for the last season. They are young members of the clan who are impatient to prove their worth to the clan.

Summary

Fall. The clan has returned from its summer wanderings to hunt. The great terraces cut into the chalk cliffs of La Roque are once again brought to life by the presence of the dozens of men, women and children who huddle there at night, safe from the weather and from predators. The PCs are among them. They are mainly younger members of the clan. The most respected hunters usually set up their homes on the upper terrace from which they can easily run off towards a passing herd or an approaching enemy clan. The PCs are eager to prove that they too are worthy of everyone's respect, by actively taking part in the clan's daily activities. That is when He appeared. So majestic, so red, so troubling. He is the Great Red Stag, a fantastical creature with a crown of antlers as red as His coat. Nobody knows where He came from, nor why He remains here, mocking even the most seasoned hunters who do not dare to try and claim such a strange trophy. After all, who knows if He is not in fact a Spirit? Who will solve the mystery of the red beast? Who would dare to slay Him and claim His red crown?



An adventure for Long Men characters, preferably with a seasoned Game Master.



Introduction

This scenario is presented in an open fashion to allow everyone, GM and players alike, to customize it based on their own preferences, their own themes, and the personality of their characters. First, we will paint a picture of the location and a few of its inhabitants. This first part will allow the GM to play out the day-to-day life of the clan, if he wants to, and the PCs can use it to establish their position within the community.

Then it will be time for the triggering event of the adventure. The exact circumstances of this apparition will be, at the very most, suggested, in order to leave plenty of room for you all to find the explanation that you like best. This is clearly not a “mystery” scenario: seeking a plausible explanation for the appearance of the Beast is not part of the objectives. Würm offers a game-playing context where it is perfectly normal to not always have a rational reason for things. Each player will have his or her own interpretation, and they will all be right. The scenario is made up of scenes, all of them optional, and which act as a number of suggestions for the Game Master as to how to run this plot while letting the characters play an active part in it.

What's at Stake?

Okay. So just between us, let's get this straight: just what exactly is this Great Red Stag? He is the calm before the storm. He is the first gust that announces the arrival of new winds. In a word, He is change. At the time of Würm, small groups of humans are experimenting with various empirical forms of social organization, depending on their needs and opportunities. Here, for example, it is the unique characteristics and environment of La Roque (see below) that allowed men to consider setting up camp for a little longer on the edge of the eternal hunting path.

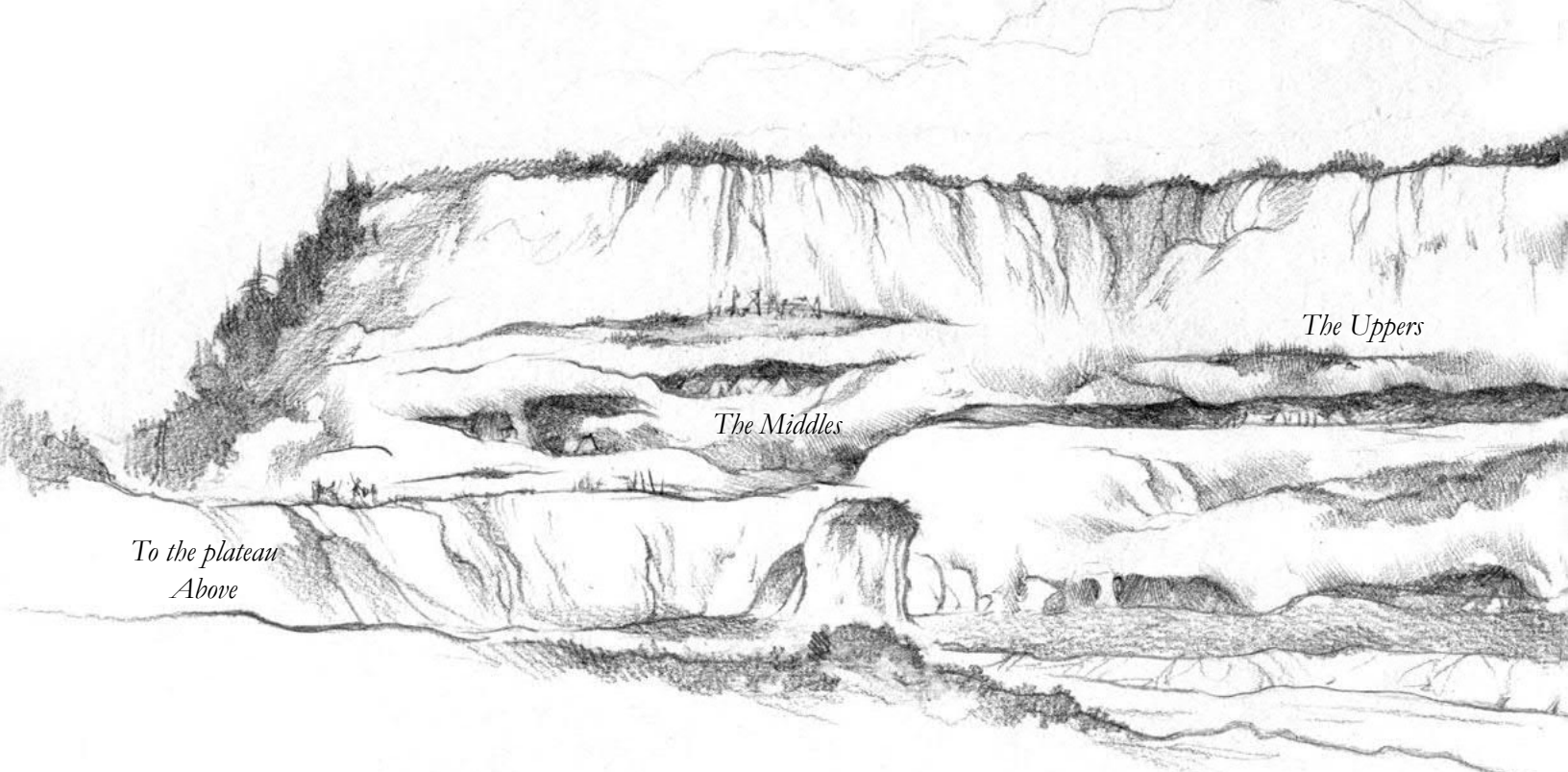
But the time of kings and great cities is not yet come for humankind. There is always a grain of sand that comes along to challenge the status quo. So the old chief, worn out by his time in power, is buried with all due honors, then the younger men take over, and the tribe moves on. In this scenario, that grain of sand is represented by the Great Red Stag. The PCs are destined to play the young ones. And for the adventure to be a great one, they will need to seize this opportunity and act to change the way things are to their advantage.

La Roque?

The location for this scenario is very freely inspired by a real place in the valley of the Vézère river in the Perigord region of France. This is the famous "Valley of Mankind", so named because it is so rich in iconic prehistoric locations: La Madeleine (that gave its name to the Magdalenian period), Le Moustier (that gave its name to the Mousterian), and of course the cave of Lascaux. More specifically, La Roque is based on *La Roque Saint-Christophe*. It is located in the commune of Peyzac-le-Moustier near the town of Eyzies. In this case, the shelter of the Outer-Roque and the painted cave that can be found nearby, could be the nearby site of Le Moustier.

In any case, first hand knowledge or extra research of these real locations can be a real advantage for the GM, but won't really be of any use to the players. The location for this scenario can be moved anywhere where it could be useful to the GM's campaign.

Note that the unique beauty of the site of La Roque Saint-Christophe inspired scenes in the novel *The Shelters of Stone* by Jean M. Auel. Although it is not directly connected to this scenario, reading this "prehistoric" novel can certainly be inspiring for anyone playing Würm. We should also point out that Robert Merle also places the action of his post-apocalyptic novel *Malevil* in this location. In his story the troglodytic location that he describes is simply known as "La Roque", a shortened name that we have borrowed for this scenario.



The Uppers

The Middles

*To the plateau
Above*

These are a few of the things that they will probably need to consider:

Who will take over the power in La Roque once Tay-Hay's time inevitably ends?

What kind of organization will then be put in place on the terraces?

What will the relationship be like between La Roque and the Outer-Roque?

Will they need to change their Guardian Spirit?

There will probably be many more questions that will appear during this adventure.

the humans seized the godsend it offered them. With some wood, some dried leaves and most of all the endless passage of their feet, generation after generation, they ended up modeling the formations into a gigantic troglodytic shelter with layered terraces. This is La Roque.

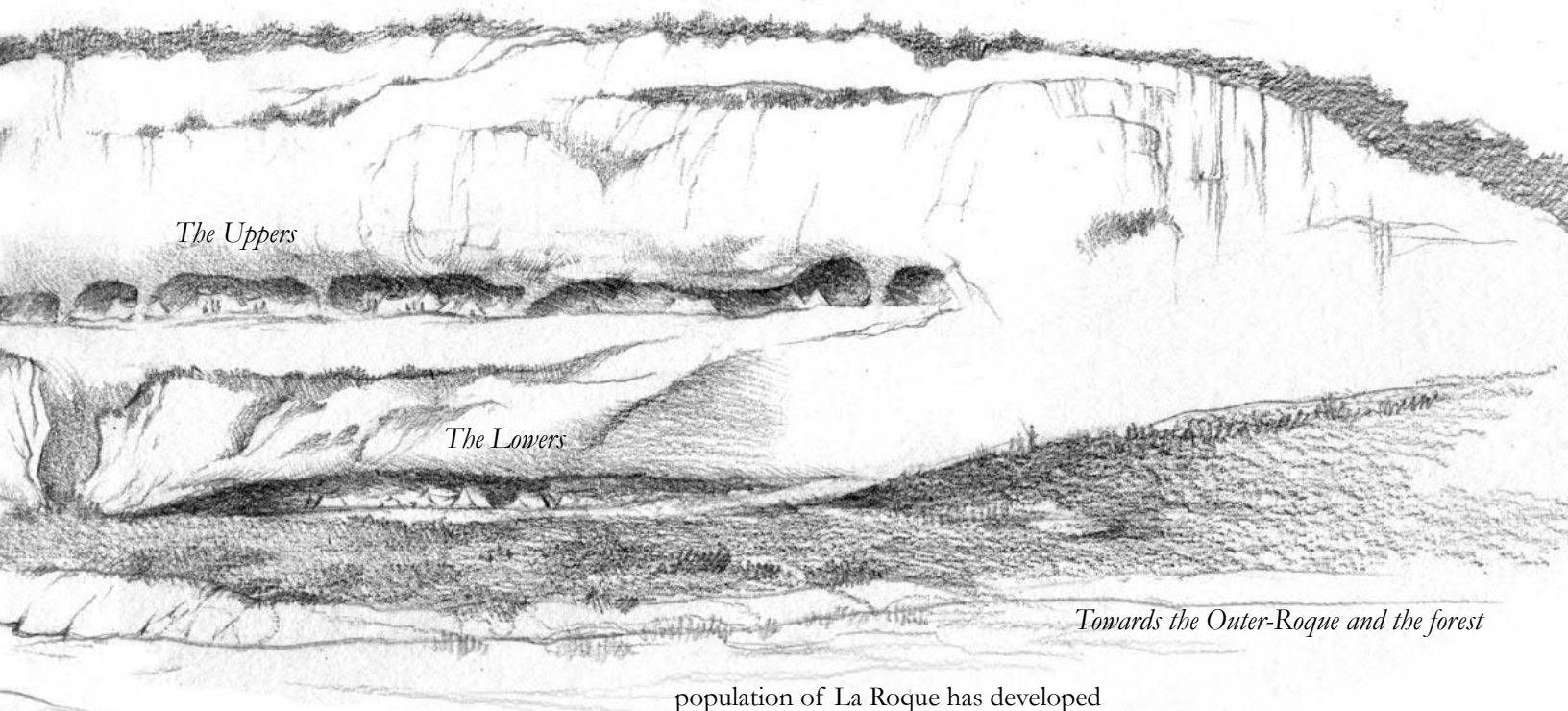
La Roque is divided up into several terraces. Their number is variable, as they do not all run the whole length of the cliff. For the most part, the terraces can be divided into three sections:

The Stone Shelters

The PCs' clan is almost completely sedentary. It owes this specificity to a rare geological formation found nearby. The Greenwater, nowadays a fairly small river, runs through a valley. Once powerful and hectic, the river shaped the landscape around it to that grand scale, before retiring, exhausted, into its current bed. The most remarkable feature is a long chalk cliff, rising up along the bank of the river. It is about a thousand steps long and eighty steps high. The cliff sides bear scars where the river waters once ran. Each period made its mark on the cliff face by carving out terrace-shaped formations all the way along it. The moment they came across this landscape,

• The Lowers

In close proximity to the river and the bottom of the valley, these are the most exposed terraces. Predators, enemies, floods... the inhabitants of the Lower terraces have plenty to worry about. However, their position close to the water and ground also has some advantages: access to drinking water, fishing... The inhabitants of the Lowers have to carry out a lot of useful tasks for the community: surveillance, loading and unloading goods from the rafts, etc. These rather laborious tasks do not give these people much opportunity to shine, but they need to be done, and all the inhabitants of La Roque respect the inhabitants of the Lowers for their work.



The Uppers

The Lovers

Towards the Outer-Roque and the forest

• The Uppers

The spacious upper terrace has the best view. It is also the one that allows access, through the Middles, to the upper plateau, and therefore reach the good hunting grounds, outside the valley. This is also the terrace for protection, a place where predators and enemies can't reach. The upper terraces are usually inhabited by men only, the best hunters and the greatest warriors. They are, in fact, those upon whom the community depends for its survival, and are therefore, in a way, the chiefs of the group.

• The Middles

The Middles are the terraces in between, and the isolated rock shelters in the cliff face. This is where all the people who only have a secondary importance huddle together: the women and children of the men from the Uppers, and the elders. The access to the Middles from the plateau is defended day and night by two watchers.

La Roque is an exceptional shelter, in terms of the comfort and size of its troglodytic living space. The children survive, the young adults stay, and nomads stop there if they are made welcome. Because of all this, the

population of La Roque has developed considerably. This is a strength, as they always have plenty of helping hands, and because it provides a greater protection against nearby clans. However, it can also be a weakness, and in some ways, La Roque is constantly at risk of overpopulation. Finding supplies is an ongoing issue, and it creates tensions between the clan members when it comes to sharing or making decisions when things run short. Generally speaking, tensions are not something easy to bear in a shelter where space and intimacy are the rarest of commodities.

It is in response to this problem that, generation after generation, the clan formed the **Outer-Roque**. This is another rock shelter, a much smaller one, situated just a few hundred steps from the cliff, at the bottom of the valley. It was long considered taboo, deemed fairly useless by the inhabitants of the terraces, but the shelter ended up being reinstated as a place to house all of those who ended up becoming unwelcome on the terraces: any rebellious, antisocial or disturbing individuals. Gradually, the Outer-Roque has become a small community of its own, dependent on La Roque, from which they traditionally receive ritual deliveries of leftover meat, fish, etc.

On the terraces of La Roque

La Roque is inhabited on an almost sedentary basis. Only part of its inhabitants, the hunters of the Uppers with some of the young folk from the Middles, leave during the warm season on hunting expeditions far away. The rest of the time, the surrounding land provides small and medium-sized game, berries and roots that grow abundantly in the surrounding woods.

Of course, the Greenwater river plays a major role in the attachment the inhabitants feel for this place. It gives them access to fresh water, it provides extra resources through fishing and even allow them to leave the valley easily in wooden dugouts or rafts made of bundles of sticks. It is easy to understand, therefore, that La Roque's Guardian Spirit is the River Spirit, to whom sacrifices are regularly made to appease the ancestral Spirits. The people of La Roque also honor the Spirits of the ancestors who first were inspired to set up their camp in these miraculous shelters.

This culture revolving around exceptional individuals, and undoubtedly the necessities of a vertical habitat, created the conditions for the precocious social hierarchy at La Roque. Although there are no tyrants among them, the hunting leaders of the Uppers are indisputably the leaders of the clan. Among them, Tay-Hay is the most respected.

Note: the Guardian Spirit of the Greenwater gives all the people of La Roque the Strength Fins of the Salmon. The people of the Outer-Roque do not have any particular Strengths.



Tay-Hay

Tay-Hay is undoubtedly the best hunter to ever walk the chalky floors of the terraces of La Roque. His strength, speed and especially his natural authority earned him the attention and acceptance of the hunters of the Uppers. At the time he had not even reached the end of his sixteenth year. Although it has never been officially stated, many consider him to be the chief of the clan. Of course, when, a few seasons ago, when the clan needed to organize a hunting expedition in the middle of winter to make up for a decreasing stock of meat, he was the one they entrusted with the expedition lead. Similarly, when an unknown tribe dared to set foot on the hunting grounds of the clan of La Roque, it was he alone who was sent out to challenge and berate the foreign hunters who decided to slip away again without causing any further trouble.

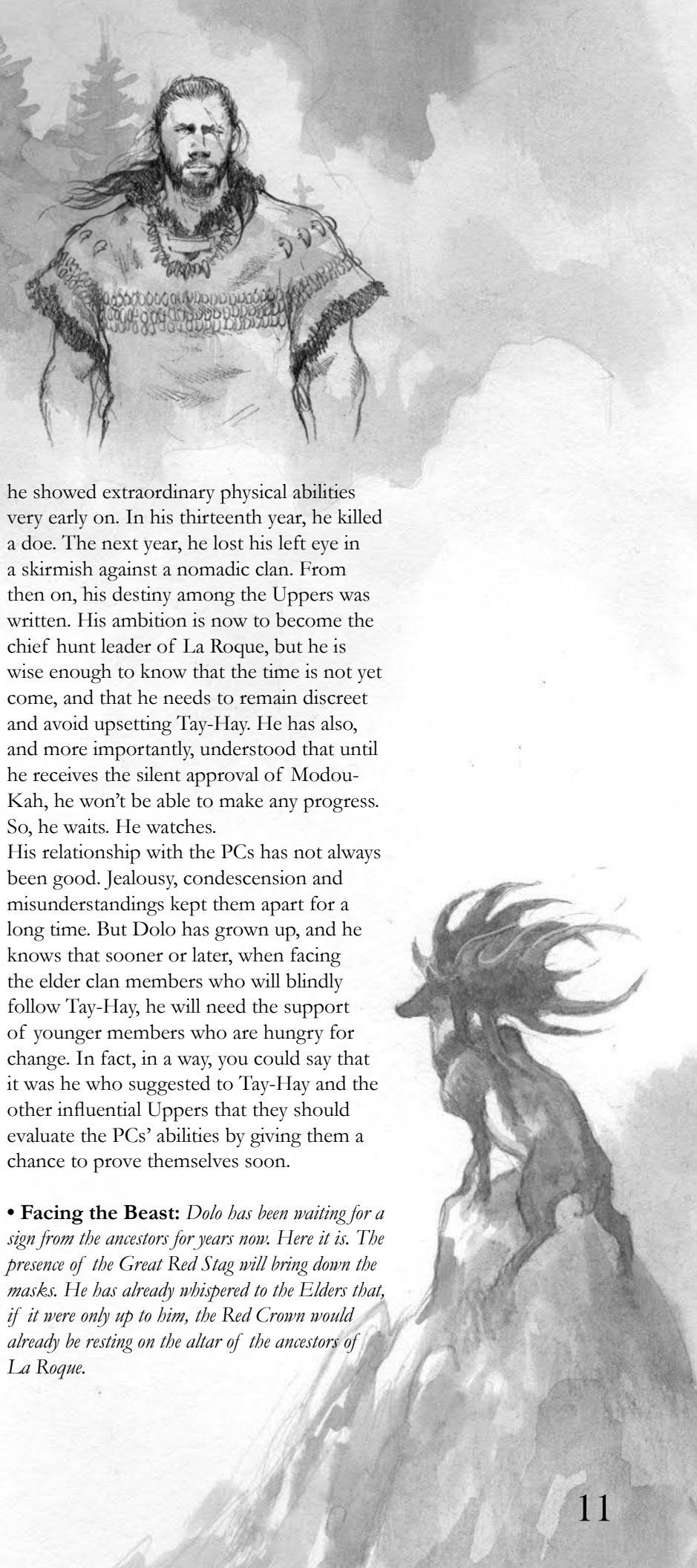
But all of that was yesterday. For a few – seemingly never-ending – weeks, Tay-Hay has been suffering from a stabbing pain in his left shoulder. After an intense effort, the pain gets worse, and it feels as if one

of his hunting companions were sticking a spear straight through his heart. He emerges from each of these episodes of suffering completely out of breath and shaken. Tay-Hay is very troubled, and is doing his best to hide the pain he is in from the rest of the clan. He is as scared to die as he is of disappointing his companions. He doesn't want to lose the admiring way that men and especially women look up to him, and the way they see him as a natural leader. The harsh survival laws of the clan are formal: if he doesn't soon regain his regular efficiency at hunting, another will step up to take his place and he won't have his say in the matter. If he refuses, the general disapproval of the clan will see him pushed out to the Outer-Roque. And there are plenty of clan members that he sent there himself for refusing to obey his all-powerful authority. Yet there is not much he can do, despite his gritted teeth and proud looks, the pain he endures is affecting his mood. He was already quite unpleasant and often condescending towards the weaker clan members, but Tay-Hay has now become particularly unreasonable and even detestable to be around. That's not really what an overpopulated shelter expects from its chief.

• **Facing the Beast:** *He has come too soon. Or too late. Well, one way or another, the timing is not right. Tay-Hay doesn't feel strong enough to go and fight Him. And he can't tell the clan the truth. So, unlike his usual resolute self, he is pondering, hesitating, asking for advice. In other words, he's trying to put it off until his health gets better.*

Dolo


This young hunter is roughly the same age as the PCs, already a part of the Uppers, and has always been very precocious. Well fed by his parents, who are also from the Uppers,



he showed extraordinary physical abilities very early on. In his thirteenth year, he killed a doe. The next year, he lost his left eye in a skirmish against a nomadic clan. From then on, his destiny among the Uppers was written. His ambition is now to become the chief hunt leader of La Roque, but he is wise enough to know that the time is not yet come, and that he needs to remain discreet and avoid upsetting Tay-Hay. He has also, and more importantly, understood that until he receives the silent approval of Modou-Kah, he won't be able to make any progress. So, he waits. He watches.

His relationship with the PCs has not always been good. Jealousy, condescension and misunderstandings kept them apart for a long time. But Dolo has grown up, and he knows that sooner or later, when facing the elder clan members who will blindly follow Tay-Hay, he will need the support of younger members who are hungry for change. In fact, in a way, you could say that it was he who suggested to Tay-Hay and the other influential Uppers that they should evaluate the PCs' abilities by giving them a chance to prove themselves soon.

• **Facing the Beast:** *Dolo has been waiting for a sign from the ancestors for years now. Here it is. The presence of the Great Red Stag will bring down the masks. He has already whispered to the Elders that, if it were only up to him, the Red Crown would already be resting on the altar of the ancestors of La Roque.*



Modou-Kah

The shaman of La Roque is a man of a respectable age, probably not far from his fortieth year. His ever stern, wrinkled face and balding head intimidate the usually cheerful inhabitants of the terraces. He is tall but is now looking rather skinny. Folds of skin show that, long ago, the shaman must have had a rather larger figure.

Indeed, before becoming an Elder and a master of mysteries, Modou-Kah was an athletic young hunter, accepted among the Uppers. As his uncle simultaneously initiated him to the secrets of the Spirits, he was able to use his instinctive knowledge of nature and animals to his advantage. He became a renowned hunt leader. Intrigued by the mysteries that he was barely beginning to discover, Modou-Kah wished to continue to learn. As he made progress on the totem path, he had a number of penetrating trance experiences, during which his mind became one with that of an unknown animal.

During these trances, the young hunter felt an incredible sensation of spiritual, physical and even sexual power. It was an intoxicating experience. And yet, uncommonly, these trances were so fleeting that he never had the time to clearly identify the animal he had connected with. Worse still, the trances soon stopped coming.

Both fascinated and frustrated, Modou-Kah plunged into his shamanic research, spending most of his time carrying out rituals, meditating and unsuccessfully trying to enter into a trance. Little by little, he turned away from hunting and other vigorous and daring young hunters like Tay-Hay took his place. Now that he has become the Voice of the Ancestors of La Roque, Modou-Kah has become a sort of *eminence grise* for the hunt leaders of the Uppers. It is true that his

advice is often of great value. As a former hunter and current shaman, the Elder has a good overview of what it takes for the clan to survive.

Yet Modou-Kah draws no false glory from his status as an influential man of the Upper terraces. He has no interest at all in using that influence to gain a form of covert power. He has never used his own authority to declare a person taboo, and therefore force them, through the public rejection it would cause, to leave and find refuge in the Outer-Roque. On the other hand, he is cunning and knows full well that the mere fact that he has that power can be a formidable deterrent. So if anyone did truly get in his way, he would not hesitate to use it.

• **Facing the Beast:** *it's Him, Modou-Kah is certain of it. The Great Red Stag is his personal totem animal, the one that granted him those trances of such a rare intensity. He is determined to use His appearance in the area to at last renew the unforgettable feeling of those dizzying trance states. He can already feel it coming. Of course, there is no way he will let anyone hunt the Beast. Not the characters, not even Tay-Hay.*



Djeel

Djeel is an entity made up of two perfectly identical boys. The twins come from one of the very rare cases where both babies were able to survive the ordeal of their delivery and the harsh conditions of their first winter. The people of La Roque had never, in living memory, seen anything like it, and therefore they had many questions that remained without answers. How was it possible that two boys could have the same face, the same build, the same behavior? Their disturbing singularity could have seen them excluded from La Roque, but they always managed to blend in to the clan and even become quite helpful. After the death of their mother, severely weakened by the trials of her pregnancy, the boys were taken in by the community of the Lower terraces. The twins are now roughly fifteen years old, and crafty as monkeys. They always find ways to make themselves useful in the community: they are tireless watchers, elite fishermen, ever-willing messengers... Simply put, you can always see one of the Djeels crouching on the banks of the Greenwater, concentrated on some task or another.


One of the Djeels, or more precisely *The* Djeel. Indeed, after long consideration, Modou-Kah pedantically explained to the people of the clan that the two boys were in fact a single being that had been lucky, or unlucky, enough to be born with two identical bodies that shared a single spirit: the spirit of Djeel. Since then, the people of La Roque, who are used to following the teachings of their shaman, call the twins the Djeel, and behave as if they were a single boy.

As for the boys, they intuitively realized that their rare situation was upsetting for some, and that they were at risk of being exiled to the Outer-Roque. So they adapted. In fact so much so that they probably ended up convincing themselves that Modou-Kah's tale was the truth. Therefore, they do their best to avoid appearing together in public and in a way, they have become the perfect team: when one of them is asleep, the other is awake; when one of them is travelling, the other is on watch, and so on.

• **Facing the Beast:** *although they were born perfectly normal, the Djeel have gradually become magical beings through the fearful attitude that others have towards them. They are therefore inexplicably attracted to the Beast. More importantly, although they don't yet know it, they have the privilege of being able to approach the Great Red Stag without Him noticing, or at least without Him being disturbed by them in any way.*

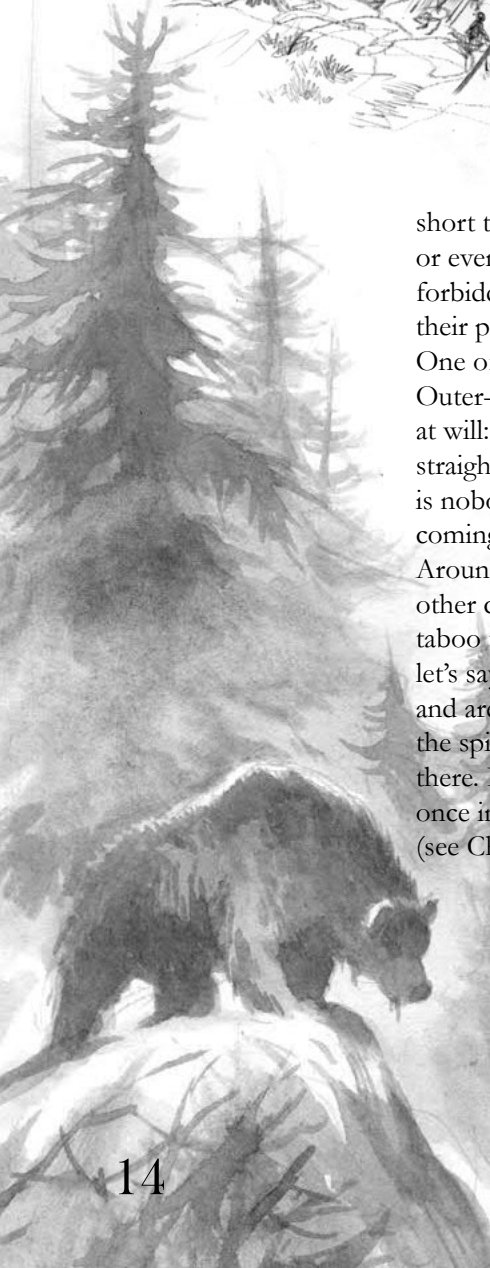
The Outer-Roque

The Outer-Roque is a rather humble shelter, located in a deep cave that has a very wide opening. It is right at the base of the cliff, and was probably created by gelifraction, the erosion of a rock structure caused by the alternating freezing and thawing of water in the cracks. The people of the Outer-Roque, no more than twenty people of all ages and both genders, huddle together at the back of the cave to try to find some shelter from the elements and from possible predators. La Roque is very close by (about 500 steps). Therefore there is no lack of drinking water and help. The people of La Roque, especially those of the Middle terraces, customarily bring their excess food and materials to the people of the Outer-Roque. When they do so, it is acceptable to make contact for a



Nahaa

Nahaa is a beautiful young woman with a proud face. She has not yet celebrated her twentieth year, and so is the youngest member of the Outer-Roque community. To them, she is unanimously seen as Hotoun's woman. But despite that reputation, she has still not accepted any of his repeated and explicit advances. She merely shares some all-too-rare moments of simple human warmth and friendship with him, when the cold is fierce for the people of the windy Outer-Roque shelter. In fact, Nahaa has a real problem with intercourse. Although she is very sensual and her heart is open to the possibility of love, she is struggling to go through with the act itself, as she is still traumatized by the Tay-Hay's brutal advances in the past. At the time she was barely into puberty, and only her quick wits managed to keep her from being yet another of the hunt leader's lays. Humiliated by the young girl's refusal, Tay-Hay had easily convinced Modou-Kah the shaman to declare her taboo. Like so many before her, Nahaa was then thrown out of La Roque and condemned to eternal exile and questionable survival at the Outer-Roque. That said, thanks to her very resilient nature, Nahaa is doing pretty well, both physically and mentally. She is taking care of her health and has quickly become irreplaceable within the community of exiles. She knows the surrounding countryside better than any other woman in the area, and sometimes even better than the hunters of the Uppers of La Roque. Every day she goes off, stealthily and alone, through the brambles and the ferns. She brings back berries and roots that help improve the meager daily rations of the Outer-Roque folk. More importantly, during her excursions, Nahaa allows herself one of the very few pleasures



short time. However, prolonged contact – or even worse, friendship – is completely forbidden to ensure that everyone knows their place.

One of the few advantages of living at the Outer-Roque is the freedom to come and go at will: the cave has several exits and opens straight onto the woods. Furthermore, there is nobody to watch or pass judgment on your comings and goings.

Around the Outer-Roque there are several other caves and cracks that are more or less taboo to the people of the terraces. Well, let's say that they know very little about them and are afraid of them. The legends say that the spirits of their enemies' ancestors live there. Indeed, some of these caves were once inhabited by other groups of humans (see Chakmah, below).

of her life or toil and suffering. She stops whenever she gets a chance to watch the hunters of La Roque in action without being seen by them. Then, deep down, she dreams that one of those proud hunters will come and take her far away from the Outer-Roque, or even that he could convince Tay-Hay and the others from the Uppers to accept her in La Roque once again, and they could settle down in safety and start a family.

• **Facing the Beast:** *she is very curious about what she sees as an obvious manifestation of the Spirits. She is soon convinced that the Great Red Stag is the sign of a coming change for La Roque and the surrounding area. The end of Tay-Hay's reign? A change in the rules of occupation of the shelters? She doesn't know, but she hopes it will be a major upheaval.*

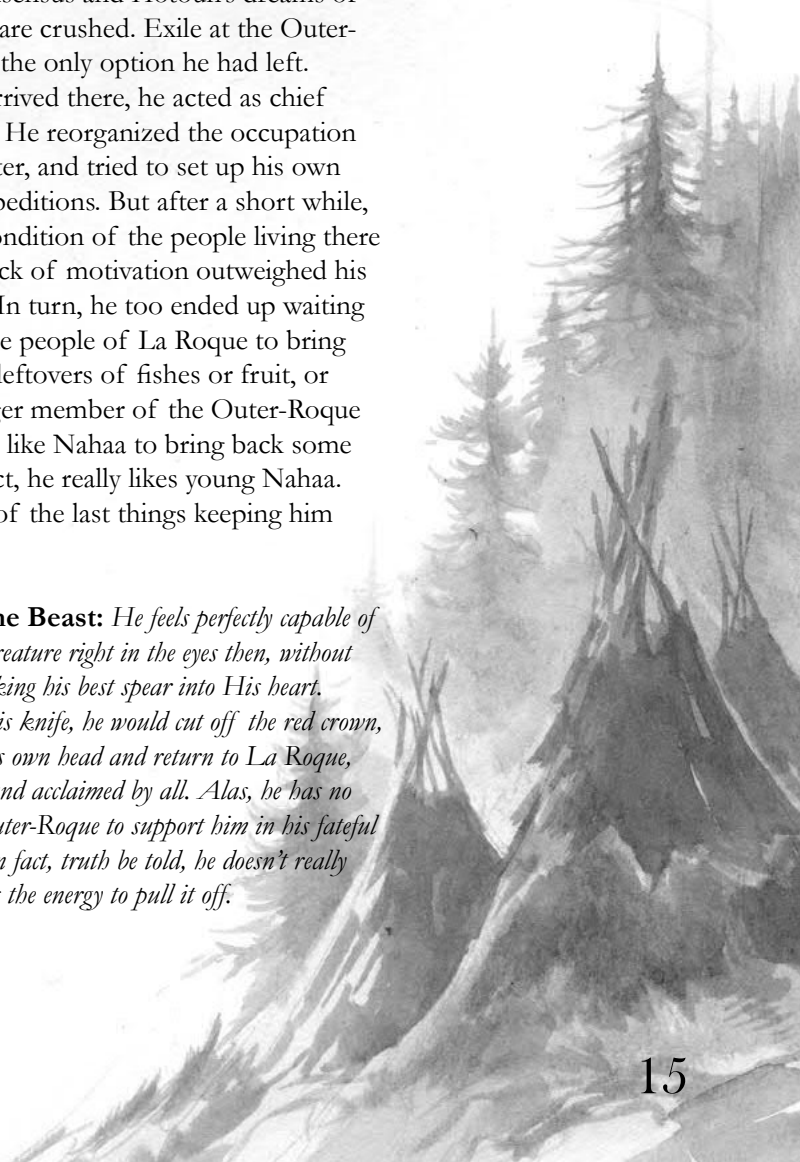
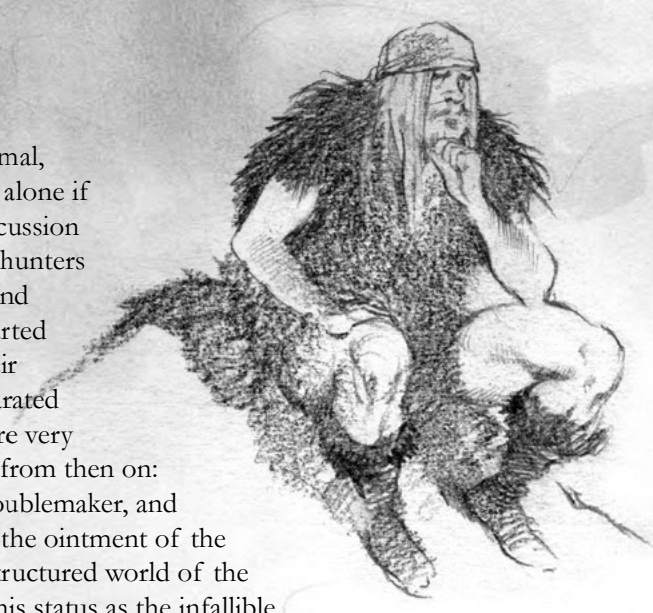
Hotoun

Hotoun is no more a bad hunter than he is a coward. Yet it is that double reputation that the people of La Roque gave to this man whom they now barely remember. Hotoun is short, wide-shouldered, firmly standing on his gnarled legs, and he has an excellent sight, which makes him a very efficient hunter. Because of all these qualities, he had been integrated without question into the hunting groups run by the Uppers, and was undoubtedly looking at a life on the upper terrace with his future family.

But one day this young man was foolish enough to question the authority of a hunt leader at the height of his popularity: Tay-Hay. The hunt leader had ordered that the group end their pursuit of an already wounded animal that was about to leave the usual hunting grounds of La Roque. Hotoun had suggested that he could continue

to pursue the animal, whatever it took, alone if he must. The discussion between the two hunters became heated, and they had even started to fight when their companions separated them. Things were very clear to Tay-Hay from then on: Hotoun was a troublemaker, and therefore a fly in the ointment of the segregated and structured world of the terraces. Due to his status as the infallible leader, crucial to the survival of the whole community, Tay-Hay easily obtained a general consensus and Hotoun's dreams of grandeur were crushed. Exile at the Outer-Roque was the only option he had left. When he arrived there, he acted as chief for a while. He reorganized the occupation of the shelter, and tried to set up his own hunting expeditions. But after a short while, the poor condition of the people living there and their lack of motivation outweighed his ambitions. In turn, he too ended up waiting lazily for the people of La Roque to bring them their leftovers of fishes or fruit, or for a younger member of the Outer-Roque community like Nahaa to bring back some food. In fact, he really likes young Nahaa. She is one of the last things keeping him going.

• **Facing the Beast:** *He feels perfectly capable of looking the creature right in the eyes then, without shaking, sinking his best spear into His heart. Then, with his knife, he would cut off the red crown, place it on his own head and return to La Roque, triumphant and acclaimed by all. Alas, he has no one at the Outer-Roque to support him in his fateful expedition. In fact, truth be told, he doesn't really believe he has the energy to pull it off.*





Chakmah

It is truly a mystery that someone like Chakmah is still alive. The old man is emaciated, almost completely toothless and, it has to be said, half crazy. He should have been carried off to the land of the ancestors long ago by the laws of natural selection. Yet he hangs on, sometimes even bringing some mirth to the sad atmosphere of the Outer-Roque with his legendary giggling fits.

A long time ago, Chakmah lived on the Middle terraces of La Roque. He was partly a shaman, partly a bone worker. One way or another, he made himself useful. Then, one fine day, he went running helter-skelter down the steps dug into the chalk, dived head first into the Greenwater, climbed out of it downstream, dripping wet, and walked away into the sunset without looking back. Nobody ever knew what came over him that day, nor where he went. A year later, changed but recognizable, Chakmah returned, but he was incapable of explaining his behavior. He thought that he would just return to his position in the Middles, but public opinion would not allow it: he had become too unsettling for them all and he was no longer welcome anywhere but the Outer-Roque. Since then, he has survived there, making do with little, spending his days roaming the surrounding land, especially the various nooks and crannies in the rocks that he now knows better than anyone. This is how he happened to find a stunning decorated cave that the men of his time had long forgotten (the paintings probably date back to the Aurignacian). He only shares its secret with the people of the Outer-Roque and, very rarely, with visitors who manage to gain his trust.

• **Facing the Beast:** *he knows the paintings of the decorated cave, and he knows the majestic figure of the Great Stag, painted in ochre on its walls. This has to be related to the Beast. Although he has completely lost the memory of his adventure of long ago, he likes to think that maybe the Great Stag is a creature that he met at the time and that He is here to look for him. Well, this is all rather muddled in his poor tortured mind, but he honestly thinks that he has a major part to play in the current situation.*

First Steps

The PCs are all playing younger members of the clan, confined for the moment to the Middle terraces. They have lived sheltered lives there since their childhood, protected from flooding, bad weather and attacks. Now they have reached the age of evaluation.

They could very well spend the rest of their lives in the Middles (for example if they are a fertile female or a skilled craftsman), follow the call of destiny up to the Uppers, or be sent down to the Lowers. At the moment, everything is still left to play for. Depending on what initiatives they take, the attitude they will have, the actions they prove capable of, the clan's informal council will decide their fate.

The first moments of the scenario are particularly open. The GM must give them a good view of the situation and what's at stake: the PCs are then invited to show their initiative or at least react quickly to the events. This is an opportunity to bring the terraces of La Roque – and even the Outer-Roque, depending on the PCs' actions – to life. Ideally the PCs should meet all the important NPCs (those detailed here, and any that the GM should choose to add) at least once before the Beast appears.

The GM can use the rules of Prestige, especially for this part of the scenario.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Characters

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Stamina and Experience	Secret Skills And Techniques
Tay-Hay	Speed of the Horse, Flight of the Crow, Strength of the Bear, Fury of the Lion, <i>Fins of the Salmon.</i>	Quick-Tempered	36, 16	Impaling, Melee
Dolo	Speed of the Horse, Might of the Bison, Flight of the Crow, Quickness of the Lynx, <i>Fins of the Salmon.</i>	One Eyed, Presumptuous	30, 4	Melee
Modou-Kah	Hand of the Ancestors, Wisdom of the Mammoth, Majesty of the Aurochs, <i>Fins of the Salmon.</i>	-	30, 18	Trance, Shaman's Tongue, Contact with the Spirits
Djeel	Hand of the Ancestors, Cunning of the Weasel, Nose of the Wolf, Sight of the Owl, <i>Fins of the Salmon.</i>	Shy	24, 2	-
Nahaa	Speed of the Horse, Grace of the Swan Nose of the Wolf	-	24, 4	-
Hotoun	Speed of the Horse, Sight of the Owl, Strength of the Bear	-	30, 12	Impaling
Chakmah	Hand of the Ancestors, Secret of the Bear, Eye of the Panther, Inspiration of the Rocks	Weak	24 12	Trance, Shaman's Tongue, Bone Craft, Painting

Consider, for example, that earning around ten Prestige Points at this time would be a good way to draw the attention of the hunters of the Uppers.

To play this first part of the scenario, the GM can use the suggested introduction scene below. It is then up to the GM to add to this, by using elements from the list of “Twists” developed later in this booklet. Most of them are indeed playable before (or regardless of) the arrival of the triggering event of the scenario, the appearance of the Great Red Stag.

The Trials

The big day has arrived. Early in the morning, the PCs were gathered together by Akhon, one of their elders, a talented hunter and someone they admire. Today, as they approach the age when you are finally seen as an adult, they will go through the first of the trials that will decide their destiny. Today, they are going hunting with Tay-Hay, the hunt leader of the Uppers.

Their introduction to him is brief. The old leader already seems to be on the lookout and is paying very little attention to the young men who will hunt beside him. The team is a small one; only Akhon and Tay-Hay are joining the PCs.

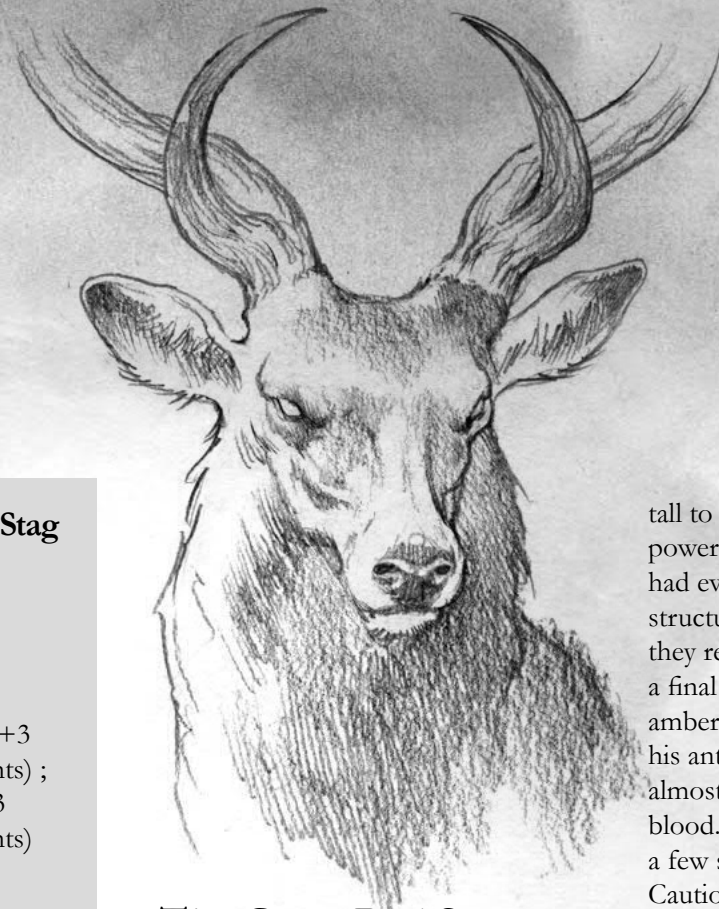
They leave the Uppers and the hunters

follow Tay-Hay’s rapid pace through the undergrowth, thick with sharp thorns. They are out of breath and their limbs are already bloody and painful when they step out into a wide clearing where a small herd of juvenile aurochs is peacefully grazing.

They all grip their weapons, and look to Tay-Hay, awaiting his orders. But what a surprise! The great hunter is wincing in pain and seems barely able to stand. He looks like he is about to faint. Akhon is obviously not prepared for this situation, and he seems lost as he orders a retreat to the undergrowth just as the aurochs are clearly considering the option of charging the humans.

It is now up to the PCs to play their part. If they run away, they are missing out on a unique opportunity to stand out. They can try to hunt one of the aurochs, or they may consider that it is more important to get Tay-Hay back to the shelter for healing and comfort. One way or another, they will still need to find their way back to La Roque and find a way to transport the hunt leader there safe and sound.

Their trials don’t end there. Tay-Hay will survive this time, and he intends to save his reputation. He will therefore try to intimidate, negotiate or blackmail the PCs into keeping quiet about what they saw and did that morning. It’s up to them to choose how to react.



The Great Red Stag

Dodge 8

Thick skin 4

LP 60

Initiative 2d6+3

Attack(s): [1]

Giant Antlers 2d6+3
(5d6 Damage Points) ;

Trampling* 2d6+3
(5d6 Damage Points)

Running 12

Steady Nerves 9

Alertness 12

Special Abilities:

*Trampling**: a character hit by His antlers must roll a Strength Test (DT 9) to avoid being knocked over and risk being trampled as a result.

Legendary Animal: any character faced with such an opponent will have to carry out a *Steady Nerves Test* (DT 9) or they will panic, as with the effects of a *Combat Cry*.

The Great Red Stag

The appearance will occur once the GM thinks that the players have gotten to grips with the environment, both geographic and social, in which their characters are living. Here are some of the clues that can show that the time has come to truly launch the story: the players are beginning to talk about the NPCs among themselves and calling them by their names, or they are working out plans to take their own initiatives to make a difference in the fate of their *alter-egos*.

He appeared on a misty early morning. The first shadows were barely even visible through the layers of fog that covered the Greenwater valley. Through it, however, a powerful bellow and an extraordinary silhouette were enough to alert the hunters of the upper terraces. Something unusual was going on.

As soon as the first pale rays began to light up the valley, the hunters saw him. The stag was at least 30 hands

tall to its withers. His chest was the most powerful that any hunter in living memory had ever seen exposed to his spear. The structure of His antlers was complex and they reached impressive heights, giving Him a final majestic touch. His coat was a deep amber color, almost red. Strangely enough, his antlers had taken on a far brighter shade, almost as if they had been dipped in fresh blood. The Beast stared at them. He took a few steps. Then He let out a surreal roar. Cautiously, the hunters decided to retreat and go back to seek the counsel of the Elders of La Roque.

The animal has remained there ever since. So far nobody has dared to make a decision, after all, He's not doing any harm. He just wanders to and fro in the area, roaring here and there. The more cautious hunters say that, given His size, the animal must be old, and his flesh as tough as leather. There is no point in hunting Him. The more cowardly ones are very glad to hear it, and waggle their heads in agreement. The possibility that the animal known to all as the Great Red Stag, or simply *the Beast*, may be a manifestation of the Spirits is also on everybody's mind. There too, it would be wise to be cautious. One way or another, all the thoughts, conversations and actions in La Roque and the Outer-Roque, are now centered on a single topic: the Beast. Ambitions are awakening, fears are seeping through, and buried hopes are resurfacing. Tensions are beginning to appear between the members of the clan.

What part will the PCs decide to play in the coming events?

As you already know, The Red Crown is an open scenario. Other than the fantastical apparition of the Great Red Stag, none of the further events is written in stone. Everything that happens around La Roque depends on the actions of the PCs and, of course, on those of the main NPCs as laid out by the GM. To make the GM's work easier and ensure that the game does not lose momentum due to a lack of inspiration or initiatives, here are a few twists and adventures that PCs may come across. The GM should only select the ones that suit the PCs and the way the players want to play.

• **An Unusual Earbashing**

For some futile reason, or even no reason at all, Tay-Hay is in a terrible mood and he is taking it out on the PCs by shouting and threatening them. The PCs know that if they stand up to the hunt leader, they can kiss their integration to the upper terraces goodbye. If the conflict really gets nasty, they could even end up exiled at the Outer-Roque. Their fate is really in the balance in this argument. If they stand up to Tay-Hay all the same, they will win the sympathy of several inhabitants (if there are witnesses of the scene) who think the hunt leader is becoming more and more unbearable. If the attack really gets out of hand, then the PCs will cause a sudden pain that strikes Tay-Hay right in the heart.

• **Dolo the Plotter**

Although they have not had much contact with him since he was accepted into the Uppers, the PCs are surprised to see Dolo coming towards them. He is very friendly towards them, bringing them each a prime piece of meat or some other valuable gift. If they have been seen in a positive light recently, he suggests that it's partly thanks to him. If he manages to win their trust, Dolo will become less guarded and directly ask the PCs what they think of Tay-Hay and Modou-Kah (possibly even what they think about the Beast).

Twists

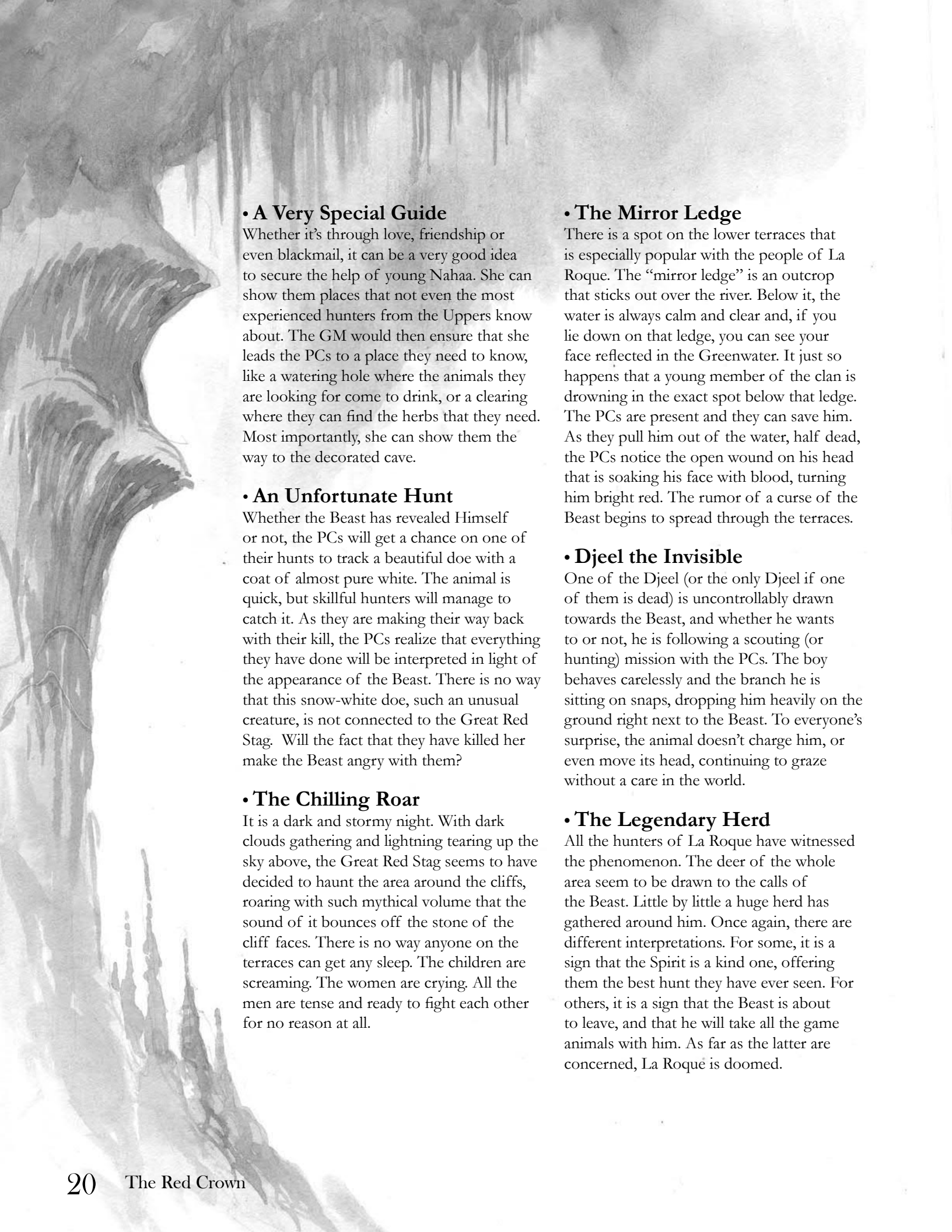
• **A Lovely Spy**

The PCs are on a routine mission for the clan's survival; for example a hunting expedition for medium-sized game. While they are lying in wait and keeping perfectly quiet, they are alerted by a cracking sound nearby. Is the Beast about to charge them? An enemy warrior maybe? None of the above! It is a beautiful young woman who was obviously watching them and ended up being a little careless. Of course, it is Nahaa, but it is quite probable that they don't know who she is, unless they have visited the Outer-Roque before. The young woman is quick, but if they run after her long enough, they can catch up with her. She won't have any meaningful explanation for her attitude. However, as they question her closely, it will be difficult not to notice her warm and supple body and the beauty of her eyes, despite the fear in them.

• **Djeel the One and Only**

One of the twins dies in an accident. Of course, the remaining twin is traumatized and will need support. More importantly, the debate spreads through the terraces: what should they do with a single Djeel? Has he returned to a normal state or is this a new monstrosity that really should be exiled to the Outer-Roque for everyone's sake. Like all the other members of the clan, the PCs can take part in the debate. They could well decide to give their unfailing support to the poor shaken boy and in doing so earn his undying loyalty.





• **A Very Special Guide**

Whether it's through love, friendship or even blackmail, it can be a very good idea to secure the help of young Nahaa. She can show them places that not even the most experienced hunters from the Uppers know about. The GM would then ensure that she leads the PCs to a place they need to know, like a watering hole where the animals they are looking for come to drink, or a clearing where they can find the herbs that they need. Most importantly, she can show them the way to the decorated cave.

• **An Unfortunate Hunt**

Whether the Beast has revealed Himself or not, the PCs will get a chance on one of their hunts to track a beautiful doe with a coat of almost pure white. The animal is quick, but skillful hunters will manage to catch it. As they are making their way back with their kill, the PCs realize that everything they have done will be interpreted in light of the appearance of the Beast. There is no way that this snow-white doe, such an unusual creature, is not connected to the Great Red Stag. Will the fact that they have killed her make the Beast angry with them?

• **The Chilling Roar**

It is a dark and stormy night. With dark clouds gathering and lightning tearing up the sky above, the Great Red Stag seems to have decided to haunt the area around the cliffs, roaring with such mythical volume that the sound of it bounces off the stone of the cliff faces. There is no way anyone on the terraces can get any sleep. The children are screaming. The women are crying. All the men are tense and ready to fight each other for no reason at all.

• **The Mirror Ledge**

There is a spot on the lower terraces that is especially popular with the people of La Roque. The "mirror ledge" is an outcrop that sticks out over the river. Below it, the water is always calm and clear and, if you lie down on that ledge, you can see your face reflected in the Greenwater. It just so happens that a young member of the clan is drowning in the exact spot below that ledge. The PCs are present and they can save him. As they pull him out of the water, half dead, the PCs notice the open wound on his head that is soaking his face with blood, turning him bright red. The rumor of a curse of the Beast begins to spread through the terraces.

• **Djeel the Invisible**

One of the Djeel (or the only Djeel if one of them is dead) is uncontrollably drawn towards the Beast, and whether he wants to or not, he is following a scouting (or hunting) mission with the PCs. The boy behaves carelessly and the branch he is sitting on snaps, dropping him heavily on the ground right next to the Beast. To everyone's surprise, the animal doesn't charge him, or even move its head, continuing to graze without a care in the world.

• **The Legendary Herd**

All the hunters of La Roque have witnessed the phenomenon. The deer of the whole area seem to be drawn to the calls of the Beast. Little by little a huge herd has gathered around him. Once again, there are different interpretations. For some, it is a sign that the Spirit is a kind one, offering them the best hunt they have ever seen. For others, it is a sign that the Beast is about to leave, and that he will take all the game animals with him. As far as the latter are concerned, La Roque is doomed.

• **The Painted Cave**

The PCs can hear about the painted cave from Nahaa or Chakmah and decide that they want to explore it. There, they will be stunned to discover all the paintings of animals on the cave walls, but they will stop dead in front of the greatest, most beautiful and most visible of the paintings. On his own in the middle of a large wall, a great stag is painted in a red shade of ocher. The similarity with the Beast is even more obvious when they compare the details of the antlers: they are exactly the same as the complex structure of the Great Red Stag's. How can this be?

• **Secret Skill**

Modou-kah wants to “Contact the Spirits” to find out the truth about the nature and intentions of the Beast. So far, he hasn't been able to. If he were to carry out the ritual opposite the figure in the painted cave, it would significantly increase his chances of success. But he doesn't know that the cave exists. Even if he is told about it, he will be unwilling to be seen among the exiled members of the Outer-Roque.

Epilogue

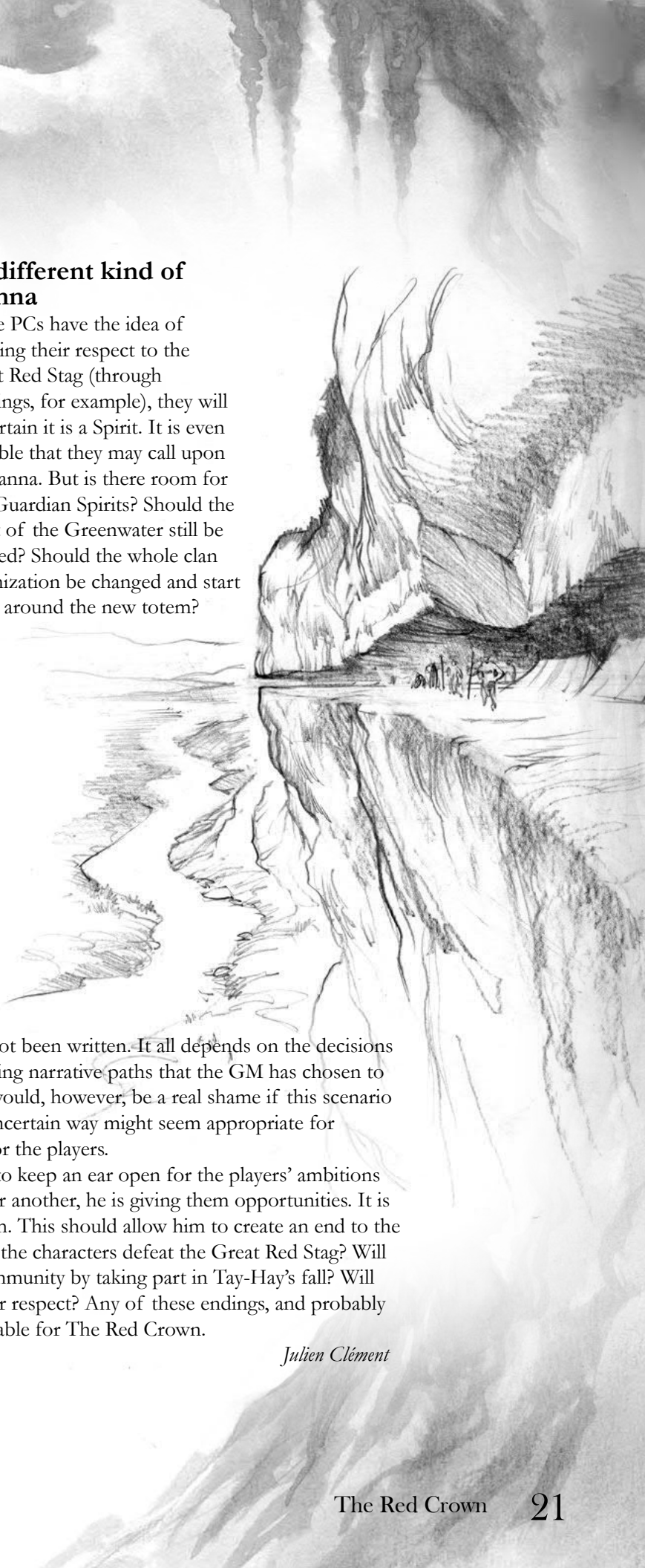
It impossible to plan the end of this scenario. It has not been written. It all depends on the decisions made by the players, and of course the fun or interesting narrative paths that the GM has chosen to explore, and the way he brought the NPCs to life. It would, however, be a real shame if this scenario did not have a real end. Ending the adventure in an uncertain way might seem appropriate for prehistoric times, but it would mainly be frustrating for the players.

For the GM, the best thing to do would therefore be to keep an ear open for the players' ambitions throughout the game. By sending them on one path or another, he is giving them opportunities. It is then up to him to see which players grab hold of them. This should allow him to create an end to the story that will satisfy them. Will they dream of seeing the characters defeat the Great Red Stag? Will they prefer to become important members of the community by taking part in Tay-Hay's fall? Will they want to go towards the Beast and show Him their respect? Any of these endings, and probably an infinite number of other ones, are perfectly acceptable for The Red Crown.

Julien Clément

• **A different kind of Manna**

If the PCs have the idea of showing their respect to the Great Red Stag (through offerings, for example), they will be certain it is a Spirit. It is even possible that they may call upon its Manna. But is there room for two Guardian Spirits? Should the Spirit of the Greenwater still be revered? Should the whole clan organization be changed and start anew around the new totem?



The Ocher Hill

This very short scenario, designed to be a first adventure for adult or child characters, has been played at a number of different gatherings and events. It can be played out in just two hours. However, the Game Master (GM) can easily build on it and flesh it out to adapt it to his objectives and the type of players and characters that he is preparing this adventure for. It can even be added as a side quest for a longer campaign.

This scenario is designed for a group of characters that is made up partially or exclusively of Long men. It can easily be adapted for child characters with just a few changes as described in the section on characters.

A Quick Summary

The players' characters are accompanying the shaman of their clan to look for red ocher, a precious raw material that is important for the tribe. But just as they arrive at the sacred site where the ocher is to be gathered, an evil rhinoceros (or a wolf) attacks the old shaman and vanishes into the mist. The PCs will therefore have to enter the sacred site to take care of the wounded woman and gather the ocher according to her instructions while warding off the spirits of the dead who would take her soul. Then they will have to face the terrifying animal roaming around the edge of the site before they can return home, whether they have saved the shaman or not.

The Characters

The PCs are young adults or children from their tribe. They can belong to the same clan or to different ones as they wish. One of them could even be a Bear-man or Bear-woman, why not? Whether or not they are hunters does not matter for the mission they were given, or for which they volunteered.

If required, to adapt this scenario to a group of child characters, you can replace the rhinoceros with a large gray wolf. In this case, you will find the necessary changes detailed at the end of the scenario.

The Attack of the Beast

The PCs are travelling to the Ocher Hill. The shaman of their tribe, an old woman named Lake Eye, is running low on red ocher, too low in her opinion to meet the clan's needs, so she has put together an expedition to go and get some more. When the story begins, the shaman is guiding the PCs to a magical place: the Ocher Hill, similar to the ocher hills in Roussillon in the Provence region of France. The journey takes them two and a half days and goes smoothly.

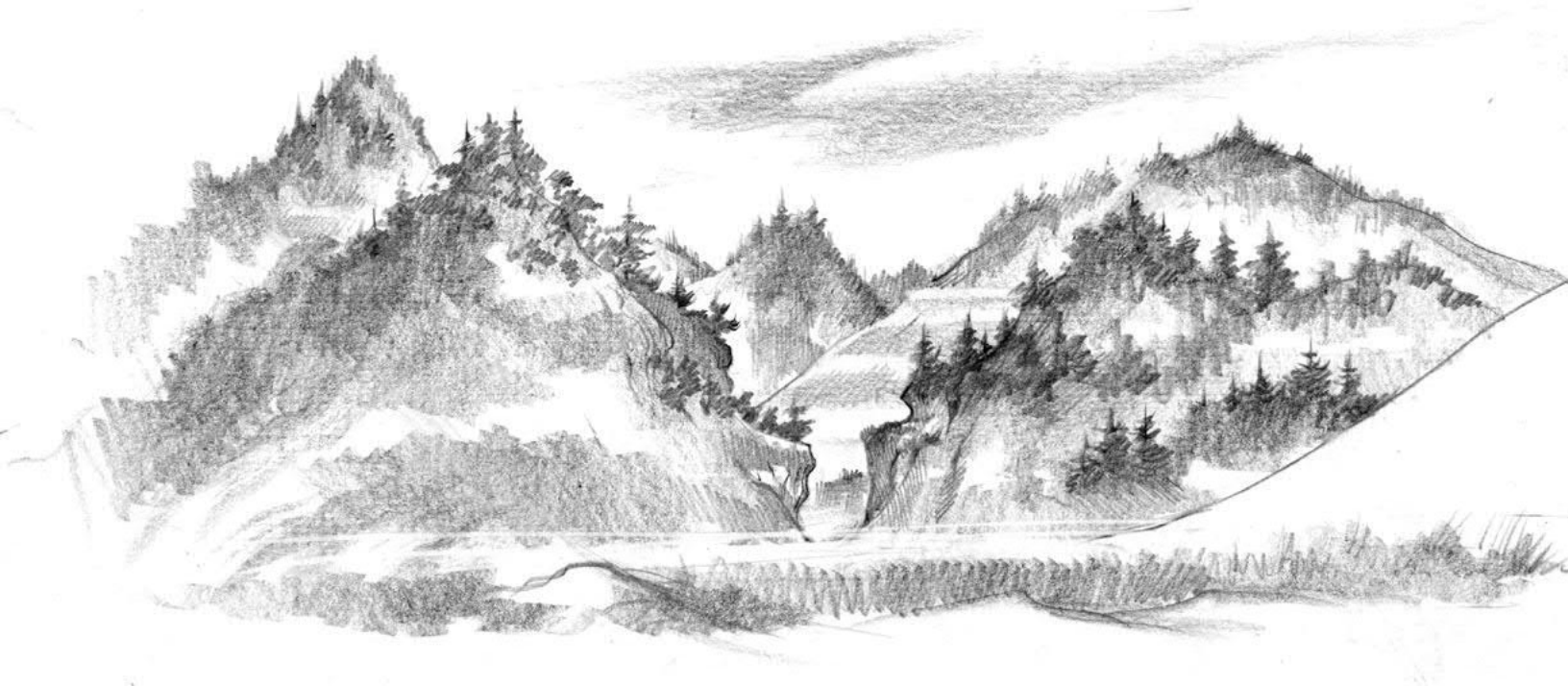
Towards the end of the afternoon, as a thick mist rolls over the landscape, announcing the oncoming sunset, the PCs arrive in sight of a small orange-tinted mountain range, rising up above the bushes of the steppe. Lake Eye points out an opening, a few hundred meters ahead of the group, through which they will enter the site.

Suddenly, a wooly rhinoceros appears out of nowhere and charges the group at an incredible speed! Nobody heard it coming, nor did they feel the tremor of its pounding hooves on the soft ground of the steppe. Ask the PCs to carry out a Surprise Test DT 7 (bonus for *Sight of the Owl*). If they succeed, they will manage, if they wish, to hit the monster as it passes by them. If not, then they can only try to hit it at a distance once it has charged.

The wooly rhinoceros charges the shaman, and her alone. It rams her with its horn, and then it tramples her. The first attack causes 12 Damage Points to the old woman's chest,



*An adventure
for Long Men,
adults or children.
A super easy
scenario to run.*



causing a shock to her lungs and internal bleeding. The trampling that follows during the same attack causes 14 Damage Points to the shaman's right arm, and her bones are broken on impact.

Once the rhino has gored and trampled the shaman, it runs away and disappears out of sight. Any of the PCs who were not taken by surprise can still manage to land one hit while in hand-to-hand range. They also have time for two ranged attacks before the creature disappears into the mist. The rhinoceros will probably be injured by the characters, but they must not be allowed to kill it. The mysterious animal will be back later to seek its revenge... If the PCs, quite rightly, want to run off after their attacker, then make it understood that catching up with the woolly rhinoceros is practically impossible, and that facing it in hand-to-hand combat would be very risky. Above all, make sure that they understand that Lake Eye's state requires her to be taken to safety. In fact, if the PCs come to her aid, the shaman will ask them to take her inside the magic mountain and gather the ocher, before she falls unconscious.


The Dying Shaman

The sacred site is a strange enclosed mountain formation, surrounded by steep hills covered in scots pines and all kinds of

plants. Inside lies a maze of valleys and cliffs through which runs a small, trickling stream. The entrance to the sacred site of the Ocher Hill is through a narrow gully – about six steps wide and a hundred steps long – between two high, yellow hills.

The shaman is unconscious. The characters can give her first aid care (see Würm, page 63). The old woman's condition is serious. Her wounds are very bad. To heal her, the PCs have three possibilities:

- **Apply ocher to her wounds.** Red ocher eases the pain and helps wounds to heal.
- There are said to be **medicinal herbs** growing on this magic mountain. They can search for them with a Gathering Test (DT 5, bonus for *Venom of the Viper*). If they do this, then the shaman will gain 2d6 Stamina Points the next morning.
- Counting on the fact that the shaman will wake up the next morning, the characters can prepare a **warm and moist meal** for the next day, a stew, for example, rather than the dried, chewy meat strips that they have brought as rations on their journey. They will need to hunt or set some snares during the hours of dusk. The hunt will allow them to catch some small game (see Würm, page 43). The snares have a 2 in 6 chance of catching something during the night (see Würm, page 45).



As the PCs set up a small camp and possibly share out the tasks to be carried out, Lake Eye briefly regains consciousness, with a sparkle in her eye. With a grip of steel, she seizes someone's wrist. She knows that she may be dying. So she strongly urges the PCs to carry out the rituals to take the ocher in her place! They must take her flute, play the magic tune that she played for them a few times during the journey, and wait to see if the guardian eagle passes overhead. If the eagle passes, then they can fill the three pouches with ocher. Then, they will need to spend one night – and only one – inside the Ocher Hill to honor the Spirits, and leave the next day to avoid angering them.

Note: the PCs can remember Lake Eye saying at some point during their journey that it was absolutely forbidden to spend more than one night in the Ocher Hill. It is said that those who disobey the law can be cursed – or worse.

The PCs easily find Lake Eye's flute, made out of a swan bone. They all more or less remember the tune that the shaman played for them over the last two days. It is in fact pretty simple, and even if the characters are not accomplished flute players, the Test to play the tune is easy (DT 5, bonus for the Song of the Blackbird – for talent and skill, or for Wisdom of the Mammoth – for having perfectly remembered the tune). If the Test is a success, the melody sounds perfect, and the sweet sounds of the flute rise up into the twilight air. Ten minutes later, the PCs see an eagle fly past. It is a good sign, and they go to collect the ocher. A very easy Craft Test is required (DT 3) to collect the best quality ocher, especially the red, which is very sought after. Three skin pouches were brought along for the transport.

If the Test fails, a series of wrong notes rings out in the sacred site, jarring the ears of anyone within hearing range. If nobody manages to play the tune correctly, or if they don't see the eagle fly by, they will need to decide whether to take the ocher all the same, or not. What could possibly go wrong?

Night of the Great Black Stag

When night falls, the PCs may decide to take turns standing watch. If so, then whoever is on watch around 4 in the morning (2 hours before the dawn) sees a gigantic Megaloceros appear suddenly at the top of the Ocher Hill. He is convinced that it is the Great Black Stag (see inset), come to collect the spirit of the shaman to carry it away on his giant antlers. The PCs have time to wake up and decide what to do. To stop the creature taking Lake Eye's soul, they have two options: either they can try to chase the Megaloceros away by attacking it, or they can try to negotiate with him, beg for him to be merciful and leave the shaman in peace. The huge animal's dark silhouette stands out strikingly against the white disc of the full moon. To approach him, a Steady Nerves Test (DT 7) is required.

- To impress him enough to scare him away, a difficult (DT 9) Shooting or Hunting Cry Test will be necessary.

- To convince him, they must successfully carry out a difficult Talks Test (DT 9).

One way or the other, if the PCs manage to approach the giant stag, it will run away, either straight away or after a few minutes. The buck has the characteristics of a normal megaloceros. In fact, maybe that's exactly what it is, but not as far as the PCs are concerned. Make sure that everyone is convinced – at least for the first while – that this is indeed the Great Black Stag.

The Great Black Stag is a sort of prehistoric version of the Ankou or Anubis. This terrifying animal is the psychopomp Spirit that carries the souls of the dead on his giant antlers, to take them to the other world, at winter's end. As far as the characters are concerned, he is not a god to be worshipped. Although he inspires fear and respect, it is quite possible to send him on his way, by scaring him off like a normal animal, or by negotiating with him.



If the PCs do not attempt to chase the buck away, *or on the contrary welcome him and entrust the shaman's soul to him*, the great animal will wander near the camp for a while, roar, then majestically walk away, showing no fear of the humans. Not long after, as the first rays of sunlight are about to appear, the shaman breathes her last breath. She is dead. The PCs will have to manage on their own for the rest of the adventure. The first thing to do is to decide if Lake Eye should be buried inside the sacred site or if her body should be taken back to the camp (on a travois for example).

Preparing for combat

If the PCs chased the giant stag away, the shaman comes to in the morning. She regains Stamina Points depending on what the PCs have accomplished: 1d6 or 2d6 if they made or applied some poultices. 1d3 more if she can eat the stew and drink the broth, 1 point more if they thought to spread ocher on her wounds. If the shaman regains consciousness, she congratulates the PCs and tells them that in her dreams she saw the Great Black Stag roaming near her. She also tells them that she

saw the figure of the woolly rhinoceros (or of the gray wolf), outside the gully that leads to the site, waiting to avenge the wounds they inflicted on it. In fact, she wonders if the attack of this angry rhinoceros isn't due in some way to her late rival, Horn-Nose, the shaman of a once allied and now enemy tribe. Their shaman wanted to take Lake Eye for his wife, but she refused. His totem animal was a woolly rhinoceros...

Now that the old shaman has predicted the creature's attack, she will do everything she can to prepare the characters for combat. For example, she can try to enter a trance state and ask the Spirit of the Bison to help them. But she is still very weak. With her broken arm, she cannot draw the figure of the bison to help her contact the great spirit. It will be up to one of the characters to paint the bison on the rock face with ground red ocher. If the character does not yet have the Painting talent, the test will be difficult (DT 9, bonus for Inspiration of the Rocks). If the painting is a success, then the shaman can enter her trance and contact the Spirit. The Spirit accepts to grant all the PCs the Might of the Bison until the following dawn.





If the drawing is a failure, the shaman can enter her trance state but the contact with the Spirit is blurry and uncertain. She can therefore only guarantee that one of the PCs has the Might of the Bison bonus.

Note: if one of the characters already has the Might of the Bison Strength, there is no change for him. If someone has Strength of the Bear, then the effects of both Strengths can exceptionally be combined.

Then, under the shaman's supervision, the PCs can make and apply some body paint with the ocher to protect themselves from the rhinoceros's attack (the *Blood of Ao*, see *Würm* page 72). If the PCs do not have the Body Painting Secret Skill, an easy Test (DT 5) must be carried out for each person whose body needs to be painted, thanks to Lake Eye's guidance.

If the PCs took the ocher without having managed to play the melody with the swan bone flute, their protection is 1 point.

If they managed to play the tune, or if they waited for the shaman to wake up to do it, their protection level is 3 points.

To complete their preparation, one of the PCs can conduct a ceremony to "warm up" the fighters (DT 9, see *Würm* page 40) to give them all a bonus of 1d6 on their first Test, be it ranged or hand to hand combat.

The Final Clash

If the woolly rhinoceros was wounded the day before, it will have regained 6 Life Points since then. The furious beast, which seems to be forbidden from entering the sacred site, attacks the group the minute they leave the gully. The PCs are already alert and armed, so they will not be surprised this time. They have one Combat Round to attack the rhinoceros from a distance before it arrives in hand to hand range, charging as it comes (running target, 40 meters distance, and average range for a javelin).

This time, the woolly rhinoceros will fight until it falls below 18 Life Points, at which time it will attempt to flee. It takes 18 Damage Points to inflict a serious wound on the rhinoceros (21 including its Thick Skin protection).

If the PCs manage to defeat the wooly rhinoceros, it would be a great idea to take a few trophies. If they don't think of it themselves, the shaman will highly recommend it. The rhinoceros is a highly magical animal. The whole group can then make its way back to the camp in triumph. If any of the PCs are severely wounded, they can take the time to tend to the wounds before they return to the camp. The shaman can help them, if necessary by calling on a miraculous cure, if the GM is in a generous mood. If the PCs are not back at the camp seven days after they left, then a group of people from their tribe will go out looking for them.

The Wooly Rhinoceros

Dodge 5; Thick Skin 3

LP 54

Initiative 2d6

Attack(s) [1]: Horn 2d6 (3d6 Damage Points); Trampling* 3d6 (4d6 Damage Points)

Running 9; Alertness 9;

Steady Nerves N/A;

Special Abilities:

**Trampling:* a character hit by the charge of a wooly rhinoceros must carry out a Strength Test (DT 12) to avoid being knocked over, and risk being trampled in the same combat round.

Prestige and Experience

Everyone gains 1 Experience Point. For gathering the red ocher, the PCs each get a share of twenty Generosity Points. For saving the shaman from death, they get a share of thirty Generosity Points. Last but not least, the PCs get a share of twenty-four Bravery Points for defeating the rhinoceros.

The Big Gray Wolf

If your characters are children, then a single big gray wolf attacks the shaman. He bites her throat badly, and then claws at her right arm, causing 16 Damage Points for the bite (Critical Wound) and 5 for the arm. The rest of the scenario is the same, except during the last combat, where the wolf will run if it has less than 7 Life Points left. Of course, the wolf will be easier to defeat than the rhinoceros for children who get a penalty of -3 for all Damage rolls (see *Child* weakness).

Dodge 8; Thick Skin 1

LP 21

Initiative 2d6

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

Running 9; Alertness 12;

Steady Nerves N/A;

Special Abilities:

Tracking: the wolf is better than anyone else at following a trail (4d6). It can run for great distances without tiring.

The Megaloceros

Dodge 6; Thick Skin 1

LP 42

Initiative 2d6

Attack(s) [2]: Giant Antlers 2d6 (3d6 Damage Points); Bucking 2d6 (1d6+2 Damage Points); Trampling* 2d6 (3d6 Damage Points)

Running 9; Steady Nerves 9; Alertness 9

Special Abilities:

**Trampling:* a character hit by the antlers of a megaloceros must carry out a Strength Test (DT 9) to avoid being knocked over, and risk being trampled in the same combat round.

Lake Eye, the Shaman

She is very short and very old. Her still-beautiful gray-green eyes twinkle with mischief, and her face is wrinkled like an old apple. She wears many necklaces made of animal teeth or seashells. Her long silver hair has a great number of bird bones and great eagle feathers plaited into it. She leans on a gnarly old stick when she walks, and she also uses it to whack the ankles or buttocks of rude or careless youngsters.

Dodge 5; protection 1 point
(animal skin clothes)

Stamina Points 20

Initiative 2d6

Attack(s) [1]: Magic Stick Hit 2d6+1
(1d6-2 Damage Points)

Running 5; Alertness 10

Special Abilities:

Lake Eye's Strengths are: *Hand of the Ancestors*, *Sight of the Owl*, *Wisdom of the Mammoth*, *Inspiration of the Rocks*, *Rise of the Eagle* (charm), *Eye of the Panther* (charm), *Protection of the Vixen* (charm). She is *Weak*. Her old age causes her to lose 2 Dodge Points, 2 Running Points and 4 Stamina Points

Emmanuel Roudier

Legends of the Torn Mountains Clan

One day, Rearing Horse got lost in the mists for over a moon.

Hungry and lost in the mountains, he found shelter in what turned out to be the lair of a terrifying red bear. The red bear was about to eat him up, but his wife was impressed by Rearing Horse's bearing and insisted that her husband let him share their shelter. There was a whole aurochs carcass in the cave, but the red bear only gave Rearing Horse a tiny piece of meat. Then he grumpily declared that it was time to sleep and grudgingly invited the man to sleep beside them.

Soon the bear was snoring so loud it made the cave walls shake.

"What are you waiting for?" said the she-bear, winking at Rearing Horse.

"Huh?" replied Rearing Horse.

"Go on, you know you want to," purred the she-bear. "When he's sleeping like that he won't wake up until the spring!"

So Rearing Horse jumped up, gave her a cheeky wink and... scooped down a huge chunk of aurochs meat!

(This story always makes the men of the Torn Mountains clan laugh long and hard. And when they do the women usually send them off to do some chore or other.)

Olivier

What Lies in Wait

A few moons ago, the Earth shook. Since that day, a strange illness has struck the clan. Can the PCs find a cure, with the help of the Long Men who have recently settled in the area?

The Same Old Nightmare

The shadow of Grandfather Bear fills the space between the earth and the sky. He screams in pain, so loud that it hurts your ears, while the evil light of the Red Spirit devours his substance. The Spirit of your ancestors wavers and falls heavily, crushing you when it lands.

Once again, tonight the PCs wake up in a cold sweat. Since the day the earth shook, and the strange sickness appeared, nothing has felt right. The first victim of this sickness was **Teardrop** the shaman, then others close to him. A child was born with malformations. Some people seem to be losing their minds. Even the animals seem to have changed their behavior. And the season of the Big Sleep (winter) is getting ever closer...

The Elders predicted it. If the hunters do not recover soon, there will not be enough of them to go ahead with the great hunts during the migrations, and the clan will not have enough to build up a stock of food for the ice season. It will bring famine, and death...

The clan has visibly lost the favors of its Guardian Spirit, the Red Bear. To add to their misfortune, their "cousin" clans, with whom they have many marital connections, are too scared of being contaminated by their curse and refuse to help...

The tribal council doesn't know what to do, and they have asked the bravest clan members (well, the only ones who are not sick!) to go and ask a mysterious wandering clan of Long Men for help.

The Terrible Truth

"During the time of the eternal ice, the Red Spirit reigned alone in the valley. Grandfather Bear came to challenge him and tricked him out of his beautiful, magical color. The Spirit was banished to the Otherworld, but he swore that one day, he would return to reap vengeance upon the children of the Great Bear."

(Secret legend of the valley of Bear Rock)

Viper, the wife of Teardrop the late shaman, is not dead. She has lost her mind but she survived trying to kill herself (see *The clan of Bear Rock* below). She now believes that she is the incarnation of the Red Spirit, who has convinced her that the newcomers to the valley are the source of all the tribe's misfortunes. She focused all her hatred on the Long Men, and she has been persecuting them since she disappeared (by chasing away their game, lighting fires, attracting predators).

When a hunting group of Long Men set up camp inside a network of caves to shelter from the rain, she interpreted an earthquake as another sign from the Red Spirit, and she caused cave-ins to block their way out.

She will do everything she can to cause the failure of the PCs' mission. To begin with, she will leave increasingly threatening "signs", then she will sabotage the attempt to save the Long Men, and as a last resort, she will use trickery and violence to prevent the PCs from reaching the cave of the Red Spirit.



This is a scenario for a beginner or seasoned GM and a group of Bear-men characters.





The Bear Rock Clan (Patrilinear structure, Châtelperronian)

The camp of the Player Characters' (PCs) clan is set up on a mountainside, under a rocky outcrop that vaguely resembles a bear. Their spacious cave looks out onto a small plateau that gives them a beautiful view of the valley, and therefore a good lookout spot for the passage of the great herds during the spring and fall migrations.

To the West, a waterfall (the Aley river) provides a constant supply of water. The river then runs down to a small mountain lake (the Puddle), with banks covered in sweet-smelling herbs where the “small game” animals sometimes come to drink (ibex, wild boar...).

The bottom of the mountain is bordered by a strip of woodland – the Dakk forest, subject of many a scary tale – and beyond that stretches the steppe of the Bear Rock valley.

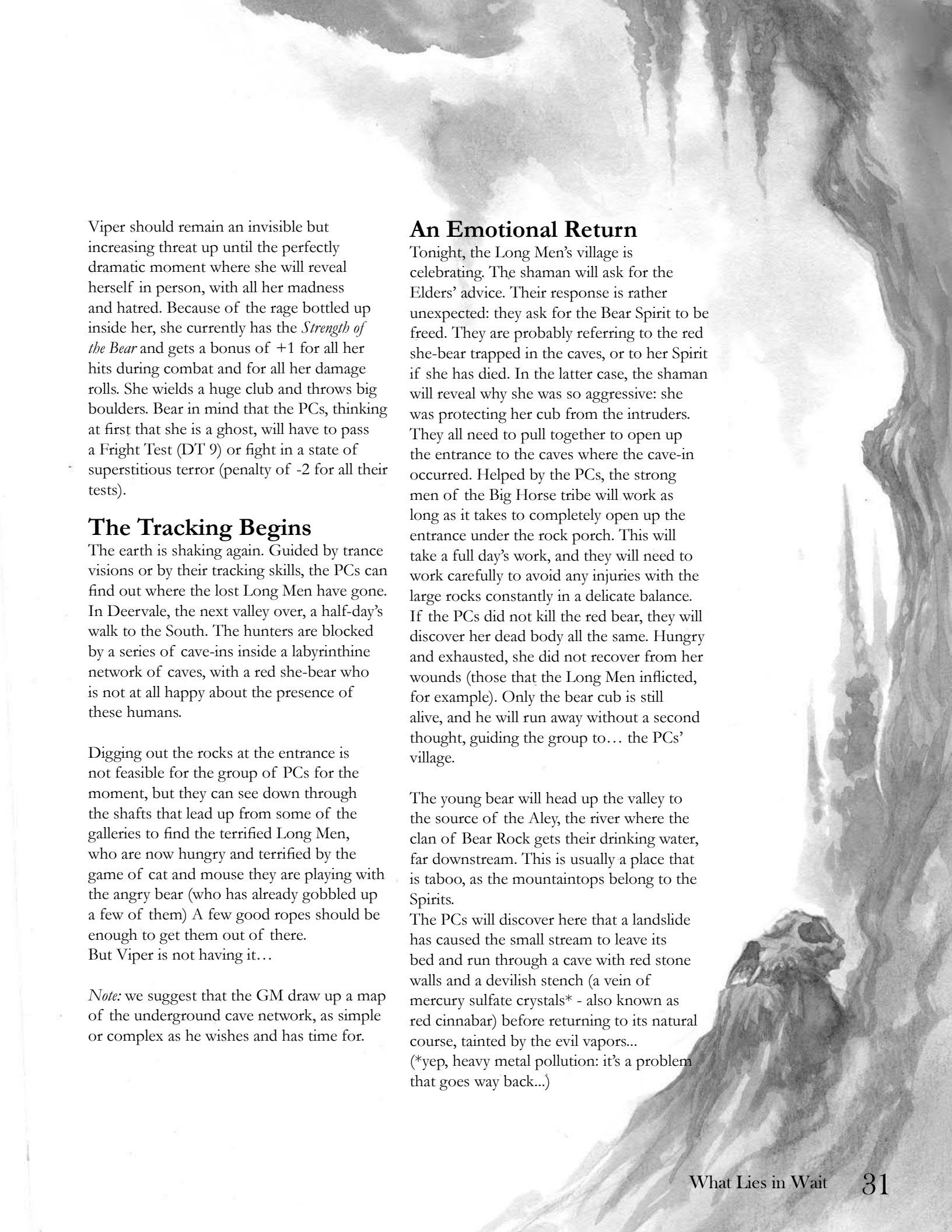
A few members of the Bear Rock clan:

Teardrop: even though he passed away several moons ago, the former shaman still retains all his prestige among the clan. Crushed by her grief, his wife Viper had set up a form of worship to his memory. The inconsolable widow ended up jumping from the top of the waterfall...

Grandfather Elm: the Voice of the Ancestors is a well-aged old man who no longer wanders far from the cave. Although he is blind, he seems to have a supernatural sense of what kind of mischief the children are up to while he is watching them.

Spike is the last “able-bodied” hunter in the tribe. This former tracker lost an arm two summers ago. Now an expert in tanning and basketwork, he had to start hunting again to feed his people, and his handicap prevents him from going after larger animals...

Sprogs: this old woman is the tribe’s midwife. She is also an amazing gatherer who knows the mountainside like the back of her hand.



Viper should remain an invisible but increasing threat up until the perfectly dramatic moment where she will reveal herself in person, with all her madness and hatred. Because of the rage bottled up inside her, she currently has the *Strength of the Bear* and gets a bonus of +1 for all her hits during combat and for all her damage rolls. She wields a huge club and throws big boulders. Bear in mind that the PCs, thinking at first that she is a ghost, will have to pass a Fright Test (DT 9) or fight in a state of superstitious terror (penalty of -2 for all their tests).

The Tracking Begins

The earth is shaking again. Guided by trance visions or by their tracking skills, the PCs can find out where the lost Long Men have gone. In Deervale, the next valley over, a half-day's walk to the South. The hunters are blocked by a series of cave-ins inside a labyrinthine network of caves, with a red she-bear who is not at all happy about the presence of these humans.

Digging out the rocks at the entrance is not feasible for the group of PCs for the moment, but they can see down through the shafts that lead up from some of the galleries to find the terrified Long Men, who are now hungry and terrified by the game of cat and mouse they are playing with the angry bear (who has already gobbled up a few of them) A few good ropes should be enough to get them out of there. But Viper is not having it...

Note: we suggest that the GM draw up a map of the underground cave network, as simple or complex as he wishes and has time for.

An Emotional Return

Tonight, the Long Men's village is celebrating. The shaman will ask for the Elders' advice. Their response is rather unexpected: they ask for the Bear Spirit to be freed. They are probably referring to the red she-bear trapped in the caves, or to her Spirit if she has died. In the latter case, the shaman will reveal why she was so aggressive: she was protecting her cub from the intruders. They all need to pull together to open up the entrance to the caves where the cave-in occurred. Helped by the PCs, the strong men of the Big Horse tribe will work as long as it takes to completely open up the entrance under the rock porch. This will take a full day's work, and they will need to work carefully to avoid any injuries with the large rocks constantly in a delicate balance. If the PCs did not kill the red bear, they will discover her dead body all the same. Hungry and exhausted, she did not recover from her wounds (those that the Long Men inflicted, for example). Only the bear cub is still alive, and he will run away without a second thought, guiding the group to... the PCs' village.

The young bear will head up the valley to the source of the Aley, the river where the clan of Bear Rock gets their drinking water, far downstream. This is usually a place that is taboo, as the mountaintops belong to the Spirits.

The PCs will discover here that a landslide has caused the small stream to leave its bed and run through a cave with red stone walls and a devilish stench (a vein of mercury sulfate crystals* - also known as red cinnabar) before returning to its natural course, tainted by the evil vapors...

(*yep, heavy metal pollution: it's a problem that goes way back...)



The Big Horse Clan (Matrilinear structure, Aurignacians)

The travelling camp of the Long Men (*Homo Sapiens*) is set up at the southern end of the valley overlooked by the Bear Rock clan's camp. Usually the two clans avoid each other politely, occasionally exchanging gifts to maintain good neighborly relations (ritual gift exchanges).

The group of messengers are free to take 15 exchange value points worth of gifts from the clan's reserves (see Würm page 100) to give to these strange Long Men and win their favors.

The journey will barely last more than a day. Possibly one night more, as it is customary that one should only arrive at another clan's camp at daybreak. It is up to the PCs to decide otherwise. Set up on the top of a hill, the Long Men's camp is made up of leather tents and surrounded by strange totems made of sculpted wood. Only women, old men and children are visible.

After a cautious approach and the ritual exchange of gifts, the Big Horse village will give the messengers a warm welcome and take them to see their Elders, some of whom speak their tongue. The Elders will pay close attention to their tale and explain that their clan too is in a difficult situation. Their hunting group should have returned from their hunt a week ago already, and without the precious fruit of the seasonal hunts, their tribe too will have little hope of surviving the winter.

They will be willing to help the Bear Rock clan... in return for their help in finding their hunters first.

A few members of the Big Horse clan:

Rabbit is the clan's shaman. He is an old man, riddled with arthritis, with a great sense of humor. He is very proud of his rabbit skin hat with its crumpled ears.

Ears is the Voice of the Ancestors. She is the oldest member of the tribe, and grandmother to half of them. She is known for her difficult personality. It is said that she once fell in love with a Bear-man.

Quick Crane is the daughter of Spear, the hunt leader. She is curious to a fault, and more than willing to use her charms to convince a handsome Bear-man to help save her dear father...

Little Horse, an old berdache (man-woman), is still rather attractive. If the Elders of the village can more or less speak the language of the PCs, she speaks it fluently. She is an excellent scout, but she doesn't know the valley as well as the members of the Bear Rock clan.

It won't be very hard to give the water Spirit its purity back: all they need to do is return the river to its original course by clearing the rocks. It would also be a good idea to perform a beautiful ceremony of thanks to the Bear Spirit. As if to confirm the Spirits' approval of this purifying action, the PCs will see a herd of nice fat ibex appear close by (about twenty of them) that they can hunt with a bonus of +1 for all their rolls.

Epilogue

Things are gradually getting back to normal. As both their tribes are temporarily weakened, the Bear-men and the Long Men will join forces to take part in the seasonal hunts for reindeer and aurochs together. The event will be celebrated with a great painting on the walls of the cave in Deervale, now known as the "Cave of the Mother Bear". The cave will become the new initiation place where the shamans of the valley will come to experience their visions. In fact the shaman of the Long Man tribe will initiate the new shaman of the Bear Rock clan there to show his thanks.

The tribal council will ask for the PCs' opinion when it comes to deciding what to do with Viper (whether she is their prisoner or whether she's dead). Can she be healed (exorcism)? Should her body be given the funeral rites or should her Spirit be condemned to wander restlessly?

The Long Men will continue their journey once the Spring has come. Maybe they will leave behind a little hybrid child, a sign of things to come. But that is another story...



The Red She-Bear

Dodge 6; **protection** 2

LP 36 out of 48 (the Long Men have already injured her a few times)

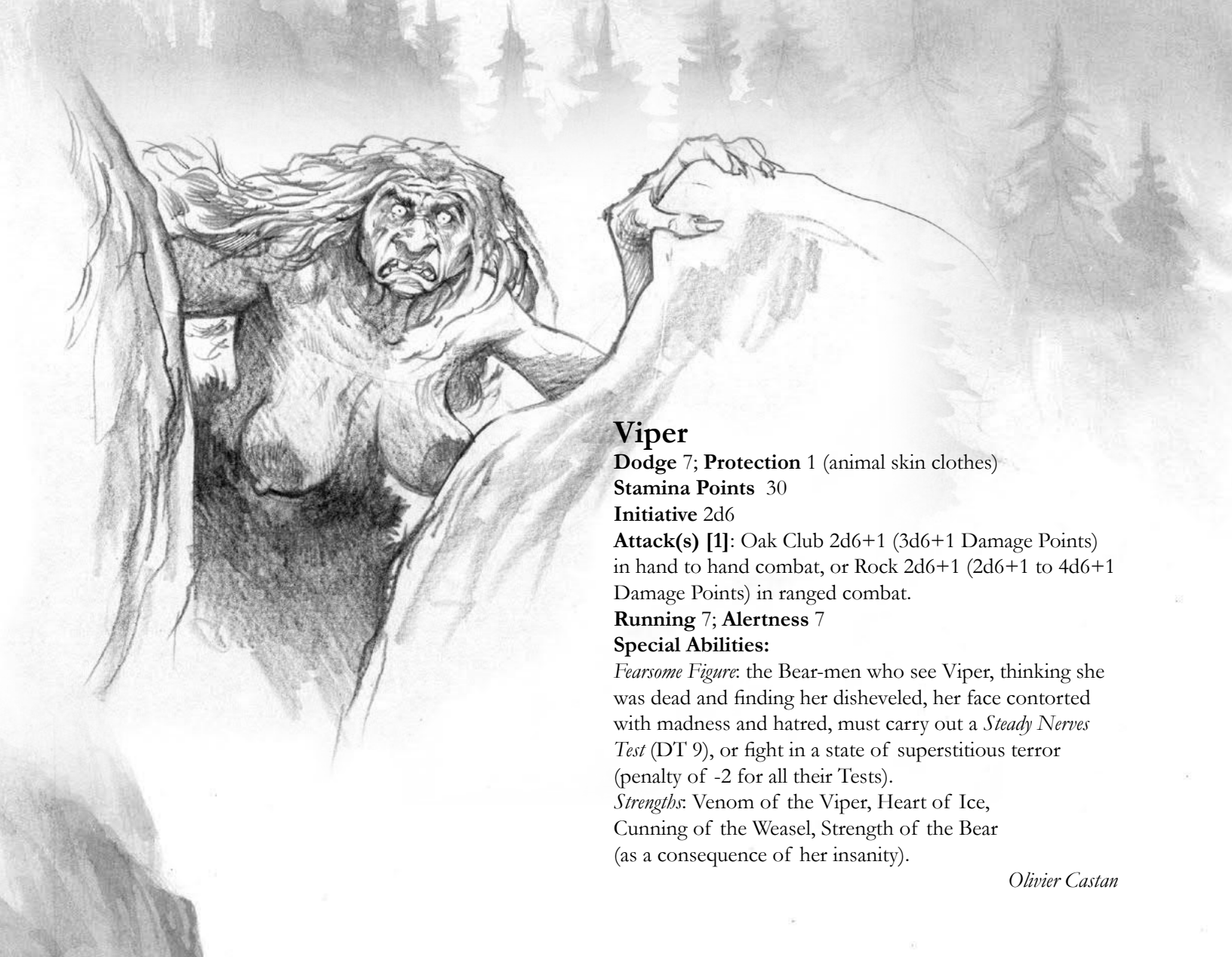
Initiative 2d6

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

Running 7; **Steady Nerves** 12; **Alertness** 9

Special Abilities:

Bear Hug: a bear that has managed to hit its opponent in two Combat Rounds in a row can attempt a Wrestling Test (4d6) against him during the third Combat Round. If the Test is a success, the bear inflicts 2d6 Damage Points on its victim per Combat Round for as long as it can maintain its hold, and any bites land at 4d6 instead of 3d6.



Viper

Dodge 7; **Protection** 1 (animal skin clothes)

Stamina Points 30

Initiative 2d6

Attack(s) [1]: Oak Club 2d6+1 (3d6+1 Damage Points) in hand to hand combat, or Rock 2d6+1 (2d6+1 to 4d6+1 Damage Points) in ranged combat.

Running 7; **Alertness** 7

Special Abilities:

Fearsome Figure: the Bear-men who see Viper, thinking she was dead and finding her disheveled, her face contorted with madness and hatred, must carry out a *Steady Nerves Test* (DT 9), or fight in a state of superstitious terror (penalty of -2 for all their Tests).

Strengths: Venom of the Viper, Heart of Ice, Cunning of the Weasel, Strength of the Bear (as a consequence of her insanity).

Olivier Castan

Legends of the Torn Mountains Clan

Horny Bear was the best wrestler in the tribe. But his dream was to become the best wrestler ever, and become a legend.

“Oh wise Clear Sight, sometimes I win, sometimes I lose. How can I always win and become a legend?”

“Hmm... You leave too much of yourself to one side. Look at all the children you have! Our enemy Orh Thek doesn't have a single child to look after! He is still as strong as ever!”

One morning, Horny Bear gathered all his children on the riverbank. He thought long and hard, then picked up his biggest son... and hugged him tight. Then he led them back to the village, eager to make yet another child with his wife.

Hiding behind a grassy knoll, Cheeky Bison let out the breath she was holding. She threw her dagger in the river and ran to make herself beautiful and await her impossible husband.

Olivier

The Great Silence

The Great Silence is the tale of an epic and magical quest, where the players' characters have to go looking for a way to lift a terrible curse. This adventure takes place in a region about five or six days' walk to the north of today's Auvergne region in France, near the Allier river (known here as the Winding River). The players come from the Rock Tooth clan, a tribe of Long Men, but the GM can change this as necessary. The same goes for the whole cosmology described in this scenario. Although this adventure is primarily designed for a group of Long Men characters, it is perfectly possible to change this starting situation and take a group of Bear-men on this journey. If this is the case, it would still be preferable that Bone Leg the witch and the Flaming Spears tribe remain anatomically modern humans.

Prelude

When time began, Xa Nok, the dark Spirit of the night, fought Xa Zerun, the fire in the sky, for control of the heavens and all that lives beneath them. Each in turn gained the upper hand, leaving deep marks on the body of Sura, the mother of all things. For uncountable seasons, the dark and the cold covered the earth in a cloak of ice and darkness. But little by little, the warm season became hotter, longer, and everyone saw this as a sign of the imminent victory of Xa Zerun.

When he saw this, the Spirit of darkness became very angry, and could not bear to lose his grip in the world, even a little. So, with the help of Kasae, mistress of ice and blizzard, he bestowed a dark gift on the inhabitants of the lands below.

From the farthest corner of the sky, he threw down a rock of hatred and rage that liked nothing better than the silence and darkness of its infinite journey. As it crashed down in a roar of fire and dust, the hateful Spirit that lived in the rock soon realized that its eternal wandering had come to an end. The silence of the void had given way to a cacophony of sounds, smells, movements and living things. Overcome with rage, it sought to corrupt everything around it, and soon the plants began to wither and the animals fled. To appease this new monstrosity, all the living things around the shard of rock fell silent.

The Thorns clan, who worshipped the sun, the eye of Xa Zerun, lived not far from there. The Long Men were concerned and curious, so they approached the rock, a huge clump of icy, black crystal that they called *Xa Nok's tear*. When they saw the devastation of the flora and fauna around the crash site, and the nightmares that haunted their nights, their shaman recommended that they carry out a long trance to implore the assistance of the sky-fire. Weakened by their bad dreams, upset by the presence of the shadowy rock, betrayed by one of their own who succumbed to the lies and promises of the night Spirit, they failed. The ritual that was supposed to guide them corrupted them, and they became *Dark Dreamers*, working for the night Spirit.

But the bad news did not stop there. The forest where the rock crashed was on the migration path of a great herd of reindeer, led by Frosted Antlers, a majestic buck possessed by an untamable Spirit of nature. He refused to submit to the will of the evil meteorite. He entered the icy forest alone and charged the rock, trying to crush it in a titanic effort. But although he tried with his whole mind and his whole body, he couldn't break it. In his defeat, the rock corrupted him and he too became an agent of hatred and rage...



*A great quest
with a few twists
for a group of
Long Men.*



The Rock Tooth Tribe

A few days walk away from this sparse forest lives a community of hunter-gatherers.

One fine day during the warm season, the members of the tribe go off hunting reindeer, their favorite big game animal. As they follow the tracks of a young solitary male, they are led to this forest, one they had always been rather wary of, out in the great silent land.

The characters are part of the **Rock Tooth tribe**, Long Men of the Aurignacian culture. The tribe's name comes from the rocks that surround the cave where, long ago, the ancestors met the lion that became their Guardian Spirit.

There are **thirteen men** in the tribe. They all wear necklaces made of seashells and lion teeth. **Glowing Lion** is the hunt leader; **Silent Crow** is a fearsome but silent javelin thrower, **Bear Arms** is a sturdy and rather hairy chap. Two hunters are still in initiation: **Moon Stone**, a gifted flint crafter, and **Rumbling Sun**, cheerful and daring. **Night Claw** (36 winters) is the tribe's chief. He is admired for his wisdom and his generosity, and he is said to be touched by the Spirit of the Great Lion. **Thunder Heart** (38 winters) is an accomplished shaman and an Elder. Everyone looks to him for his wise counsel. He is a very tall man, who has retained all his energy.

There are **fifteen women** in the tribe. **Summer Snow** has had white hair since birth. She has the knowledge of the winter women, witches who follow the teachings of the taiga and the tundra. She is the wife of chief Night Claw. **Starry Mane** is very old (44 winters). Her hair is studded with bone stars, and she is the Voice of the Ancestors.

Wild Dawn is a stunning woman with ebony hair and eyes. She is a talented charm maker and well on her way to become a shaman (she has yet to master Exorcism and Animal Form). **Singing Stone** is a mystery for his own people: he spends most of his time with the women and dresses like them. Even though he has seen thirty winters, he still has no woman or children. He is tall, slim and surprisingly beautiful. But he has been fragile since he was a small child. He is an astute man. He is incredibly talented in all the arts of the Aurignacian culture.

The other members of the community are the **eleven children**. There is a roughly even gender distribution. The family line is defined by the mother, and their exogamic system works on the patrilocality system. The Rock Tooth tribe's main game animal is reindeer. There are plenty of them and the tribe is prosperous. Bellies are full and illness is rare.

Guardian Spirit

Kaoro is the Spirit who watches over the fate of the Rock Tooth tribe with the help of the ancestors. He was the one who, long ago, taught the Elders to hunt (*see inset on next page*). In return, the men promised that they would never kill a lion, unless it was in self-defense. The majestic feline is therefore the totem animal for the whole community. Their main rituals are chants and dances that are carried out before each hunt and each combat, but also every day at dawn to salute the flaming star and at dusk to request protection from the evils of the night. The heart of a defeated animal or enemy is always given to the Great Gray Lion, and a short prayer of appeasement is said to honor their bravery. The rituals carried out on some special occasions can refill the Manna pool.



The Origin of the Tribe

Legend has it that when the tribe's ancestors arrived in the region, they were haunted by the ghost of annihilation. They were exhausted by a long and painful exodus that had shaken their every belief, and they were being hounded by a group of cruel and aggressive Bear-men.

Then, one fine day, as they were searching in vain for something to hunt, the ancestors heard a deep and majestic roar, followed by the sounds of a fight so intense that they thought two giants were fighting each other on the peaks above them. They were curious, and they climbed the soft slope leading up to the top.

Up there, in front of the entrance to a cave, the most impressive lion they had ever seen was sitting next to the body of a gigantic bear with red fur. The wild beast's eyes were full of intelligence, cunning and determination. The bear bounded away in a single leap, leaving the stunned ancestors with a huge and unexpected gift of meat. They feasted upon it.

Later, their dreams were filled with the presence of the lion, which they named Kaoro. Guided by the lion Spirit, they met other communities who were also fighting the dark Bear-men. Together they managed to defeat them. They tamed the dangers and discovered the resources of the area and settled in there, on that soft slope, at the entrance to the cave where they had first met the giant lion. The cave looked out over a rushing river with crystal clear waters and a sandy bed. To the south, the steppe spread out like a beautiful green ocean as far as the eye could see. To the north, at the foot of a rocky range, a large wood cast a mysterious shadow over one of the river bends. It was a perfect place to raise countless generations.

When tribe members die, their heart and liver are left open to the judgment of the winds, then their body is given to the wild animals if they are found worthy. Only their skull is kept in the sanctuary of the cave.

Taboos

Incest taboo, cannibalism taboo, totem taboo about the killing of lions.

Secret Combat Techniques

The tribe Elders know the techniques of *Melee*, *Impaling* and *Flight of the Snowy Owl*. Night Claw and Bear Arms can teach the science of *Melee*. Glowing Lion is a master of *Impaling* and Silent Crow of the *Flight of the Snowy Owl*.

Allies

The allies of the Rock Tooth tribe are the *Thorns*, who live deep in the Whispering Woods, and the *Gray Braids*, who live on the banks of a wide river to the west of the great steppe. These are the tribes they fought with long ago against the Bear-men, who worshipped the darkness and ruled the whole land, or so the ancient stories say. Since then, every time summer returns, the three tribes meet during the great hunts to celebrate new unions. These meetings take place around a small lake, under the shadow of a single great boulder, worn down by the weather. The place is known as *The Sleeper* as the Elders claim that the rock is a sleeping giant.



A Strange Hunt

The players' characters are part of a hunting expedition led by Glowing Lion. The other members of the group are Silent Crow and two young hunters who are undergoing their initiation, Rumbling Sun and Moon Stone. It is the warm season. Because of the heat, all the hunters are wearing simple loincloths or skin tunics (0 Protection Points).

Summer is already well under way, and there should be plenty of game. There have been plenty of reindeer herds around since they were led there by a splendid beast: Frosted Antlers. This huge buck, with his gigantic frost-covered antlers, efficiently protects his herd and gives them the energy they need to face predators and overcome the harsh winter conditions. Strangely enough, this morning the great herds are not on the plateau where they usually come to graze. It is not difficult to track them though. Their tracks are obvious (DT 3), even though they are not all that recent.

After two days walking west, the hunters finally arrive at the edge of a sparse birch forest: the Whispering Woods; a frightening place (but not taboo) where strange sounds can be heard. The herd's tracks lead here, but the reindeer are nowhere to be seen, and their tracks do not seem to lead in between the trees. Just as our hunters are beginning to feel rather disheartened, a challenging

call rings out in the forest. A young and powerfully built male reindeer, his antlers already fully grown, is standing a few steps away from them, so near yet so far away. He seems to be the only animal around, and his challenge is clear: "Face me, hunters, if you want to eat!"

The young buck then runs off into the woods. To keep him in sight, they will need to carry out Running Tests (DT 5 due to risk of tripping), opposed to the prey's Running score. The distance between them and their prey is about thirty meters to begin with. The animal is weaving between the trees, and hitting him with a throwing weapon will be difficult (-4 penalty on Tests: -2 for the plant cover, -2 for a running target). If the men lose sight of the reindeer, they can always track it (DT 5). The calls of the young buck will spear them on if they get disheartened. The trackers can notice (DT 5) that the forest is completely silent and that this is extremely unnatural.

What if...

Your players are wary about running into the forest after the animal? The young Rumbling Sun won't be. He will rashly run off in pursuit, and Glowing Lion will not let "that young idiot get lost" or even "get butted by those antlers". If you don't want to force your players' hand, you can have them encounter the corrupted reindeer (see details in the following paragraph) at the edge of the forest, or even out on the steppe.

Frosted Antlers

As soon as the Game Master decides the time is right, after leading the PCs on for a while, the real encounter of this hunting expedition appears from behind a huge tree, sealing their fates. A gigantic reindeer, a truly terrifying sight, stands before them.

The characters recognize him: it's Frosted Antlers, the leader of the herd. But there is nothing left of the majestic animal they once knew. His coat is exuding a mixture of pus and blood, his nose is covered in a green slime that crackles evilly when it drips to the ground, his eyes are nothing but darkness and his huge antlers are covered in ice crystals. The beast is nothing more than an evil creature filled with rage and hatred. The monstrosity then lets out a great roar that would freeze even the bravest of warriors on the spot (DT 9 for Steady Nerves), then it charges the Long Men, reversing the roles of hunter and hunted. Moon Stone and Rumbling Sun only fight from a distance. The great buck fights to the death. When it comes, in one last effort, Frosted Antlers looks around at each of the hunters who fought him hand to hand. Each of them clearly hears the words of a desperate curse form in the depths of their mind:


*"My blood that you have spilled,
Covers those who have killed.
Drunk with hatred and fears,
From now on will you live,
Sorrow, terror and tears,
To your herd will you give."*

The Options

From that moment on, the PCs can feel a shadow weighing on their heart: days of sorrow are upon them. The unnatural silence of the forest is even more noticeable after the combat has ended. It is time to make their choice: return to their own camp and cause the downfall of their own people, explore this silent forest to discover what caused the great buck's corruption, or look for help elsewhere?



A pale Glowing Lion says that he knows a witch called Bone Leg who has found shelter in some caves a few days south of here. The Elders mentioned her during the last clan gathering at the beginning of the season of Xa Zerun. Maybe she could lift the curse... Glowing Lion refuses to return to the camp and suggests they should explore the forest, for the great buck came from the heart of the woods. The hunt leader also suggests that they send the two young hunters back to the camp to let the Rock Tooth tribe know what has happened to them, as they were not touched by Frosted Antlers' blood. Silent Crow will only give his opinion if he is asked directly, and will hesitantly answer that he agrees to explore the forest to discover its mysteries. He does not want to return to their camp, and thinks that the cause of their misfortune is in the woods. Moon Stone and Rumbling Sun are unsure about going back. Moon Stone remains calm, and suggests that they should go looking for the witch. Rumbling Sun is all fired up and doesn't want to be sent back to the tribe.



The PCs may come up with other options. They should take part in this decision and realize just how rare it is for young hunters to be given a say in their own destiny. Usually, the tribe's Elders make the decisions for the whole group. The silence, growing ever more oppressive, should weigh on their choice. The woods seem to be an enemy in their own right, but it is a good idea to explore them to resolve the mystery of the corruption of the legendary animal. Then they can go looking for Bone Leg the witch as a second step.

The only really bad choice would be to go back to their tribe's camp and therefore contaminate the whole community with the curse they carry. If they did, then they would lose a considerable amount of Prestige Points.

What if...

Your characters want to go to the Thorns' camp? Make it clear that they would be endangering their allies. The other members of the team do not like this idea. If they manage to convince their companions through persuasion or persistence, then do not block them. Visiting the camp of the Thorns clan can teach them a lot. (See the description of the *Dark Dreamers* in the appendix.)

The Whispering Woods

Following the tracks left by Frosted Antlers will not be all that hard (DT 7). They lead into the heart of the forest, which is filled with a deathly silence. Everything seems still, as if waiting to be delivered from an evil presence. There are no animals in sight, not even an insect. But the worst is still to come. After an hour's cautious walking, the PCs discover plants and trees that are completely twisted, like a human would be if they were in intense

pain. The earth has turned a sickly color. The trackers will have to take a *Steady Nerves Test* (DT 7) to continue to move forward in this nightmare landscape. A failure on this Test means that the character doesn't dare to go any further into the woods. For those who are brave enough, the answer to their many questions is close at hand.

About a hundred steps further, a desolate landscape appears in front of the PCs: mounds of earth that look like the bruised lips of a gigantic mouth, trees sticking up through the ground like broken teeth. The whole area looks like the maw of a Leviathan, screaming silently at the heavens.

At the center of this chaos, a black stone roughly the size of a man is stuck in the upturned forest floor. An aura of hatred and anger is radiating from the stone. A wide crack runs down the stone from top to bottom. After a quick look around the area, they can see traces of a struggle (trampled earth, bits of reindeer antlers, shards of black stone...). The PCs are therefore in the presence of the thing that corrupted the nature of the great buck. There is no doubt that the rock is emitting an invisible veil of fury. Each of them feels a strange anger rise within them towards everything nearby: animals, plants, and humans. They must leave the area very quickly or they will end up like Frosted Antlers. Any attempt to destroy Xa Nok's tear is doomed to fail.

The Journey

The cursed PCs and their companions cannot return to their clan, so they will need to find outside help. Bone Leg the witch is their only hope. They don't know much about her. During the last clan gathering, at the beginning of the warm season, the Elders of the Thorns clan mentioned that she lived in the caves two days south of the

Whispering Woods. She is a tall redheaded woman who walks with a limp, always carries a gigantic club and wears all kinds of strange charms. Nobody has ever come close enough to her to engage in conversation. They therefore know nothing at all about her intentions. They will need to win her favors by bringing quality gifts.

The PCs have two days' journey to find something to win her over with. The forest can provide rare plants, on their travel they can find animals for meat and pelts, or maybe even interesting rocks (see the rules of hunting and gathering in the core rulebook, page 42 to 46). 15 to 20 Trading Value Points seems to be a pretty good amount to start their negotiations. The journey lasts for two full days, and it can be interesting to develop on it. They will need animals for food, and they can come across predators, depending on the strength of your players' group. Under the influence of the curse, these animals will always be dark and aggressive. Even characters who have the *Grace of the Swan* or the *Song of the Blackbird* Strengths won't be able to calm these fierce animals. They will have to fight them, and risk increasing their rage.

Suggested Encounter:

A pack of red wolves, led by a vicious alpha male, is harassing the PCs. They are always on their heels, trying to grab the fruit of their hunting or scaring off the game (as you prefer), the canines can even attempt to attack the weaker members of the group. When night comes, their presence is even more noticeable as they prowl nearby. Only a good fire will keep them at bay. They are excellent trackers and tireless runners. Trying to lose them or distance them will be a tough task.

Bone Leg

The Cursed Ones finally reach the hills where they can find the witch's caves.

Finding her lair will require them to carry out a difficult Tracking Test (DT 9).

A narrow path winds its way along the edge of a short cliff to her cave. The opening of the cave is partly covered by plants.

As they enter, they can see a fire burning at the back of the cave, its smoke rising up through a natural chimney. The cave is well furnished with furs and branches, and it seems very comfortable. It's pleasantly warm inside. There are high quality paintings on all the walls. There are things hanging all over the place: bone, stone and ivory trinkets, charms, bunches of rare and fragrant herbs, dried animal remains... They can also notice the presence of a passage leading to other parts of the cave. They can also hear the crystal clear sound of trickling water far away. In the middle of all of this, a tall woman with bright red hair is waiting for them, leaning on a large club made of wood studded with stone shards. Despite her fearsome appearance, she is not uncomely, in fact far from it. She seems to have a magnetic personality. All those who meet the green flame of her gaze find it hard to look away.

When the PCs arrive in her lair, she speaks in a gruff voice: "The night's whispers have preceded you." Bone Leg invites her guests to settle comfortably and, according to the rules of hospitality, offers them food and water. In turn, it is time to offer their gifts, and each of them is examined with care. She then encourages the PCs to tell her about the events that have brought them to her. After a moment's thought, she mentions that she had dreamed the arrival of travellers marked by the shadow, looking for information.

She will need the counsel of the Spirits to understand how to get rid of this curse and end the stone's influence. A trance ceremony is required for all. However, before she will give her help, Bone Leg wishes to negotiate three things: the first is the broken antlers of the great buck. The second is a shard of Xa Nok's tear. And the third is a companion for the next six seasons (three years). The only negotiable part is the duration for which her husband must remain (two seasons less), but she will choose him herself from among the PCs. Once the negotiations are over, the ritual can begin.

As the PCs are not shamans, swallowing a magic drink will help them to cross through the many circles of consciousness. Before that, they will need to purify their mind and body. They will wash their bodies clean of any impurities by bathing in a natural pool in one of the caves, where the water has purifying properties. To honor the underground river, each of them will need to give a little blood by cutting their chest with a ceremonial knife provided by their hostess (-1d3 Stamina Points). To purify their minds, a fast of a full day and night will be necessary: hunger refines the thinking and heightens perception. They will spend that time meditating to come closer to the Spirit world. The witch will use this time to prepare the elixir, well away from them to protect her Secret Skill.

Once those steps have been carried out, Bone Leg comes to get the PCs, wearing her shamanic outfit: her body is completely painted, and naked except for a panther pelt, reaching from the animal's mouth which covers her head all the way down to her feet. The shaman then covers their skin with strange painted shapes, while murmuring an entrancing chant from the dawn of time.



Then they are finally given the ceremonial drink, bitter and spicy. It triggers strong alternating feelings of heat and cold. Have the PCs undergo a Test to enter their trance state (DT 7, the drink gives them a bonus of 2 for their roll). After the Test, the PCs all feel a violent prickling sensation all over their skin, then they feel as if their skin was leaving their body, layer after layer, until they can see their internal organs! These images are accompanied by violent spasm and cramps. Let your players have a moment of doubt where they wonder if they have been poisoned, or if they have failed.

At last, the PCs fall into blissful unconsciousness. For those who did not manage to enter a trance state, the experience ends there. The others are hit by unbelievably strong visions, a different one for each person. Here are a few examples, but the GM is welcome to add anything he wishes:

Hunters from different clans come together in front of a bloated, seeping black rock. The men are quarrelling, but the subject of their fight is unknown. One group among the fighters seems to be enjoying the whole thing. They are wearing necklaces made of pale, white bones that stand out against the black body paintings that hide their features. None of them have any hair or body hairs. Their leader is wearing a dark pendant, like a stone tear. His darkened face stands out from the others by the red lines drawn around his eyes. He wears two human half-skulls on his powerful shoulders, held in place with leather strips. Then the argument turns into a fight and much blood is spilled. Suddenly the scene freezes and all those involved prostrate themselves before the stone, united like brothers.

Men in a state of insanity are killing each other, inflicting terrible wounds. Far away, a dark creature is enjoying this scene of violence. Suddenly a thick, sticky rain falls over this evil being. The monstrosity is trying to rid itself of this sticky liquid, but it can't; the more it scrubs, the more the substance sinks into it. The shape begins to turn red and a second later bursts into flames, then its body is scattered in a hot breath.

A ceremony is taking place in front of the dreaming PC, but no one notices him. The celebrants are Long Men. A great fire is burning in front of the entrance to a cave. In the distance a mountain is spitting out its own glowing lifeblood. The whole tribe then begins a crazed dance around the fire, shaking their javelins at the flames. An old man and a young woman appear, both with dead eyes. In a wooden bowl, they bring a sticky substance that smells strongly of both minerals and plants. The strange couple then daubs the dancers' javelins with this strange substance. When the dancers approach the fire again, their javelins all catch fire with a crackling sound, as the crowd cheers them on. Suddenly the PC notices

that the young blind woman has turned towards him and is staring at him with her dead eyes.

A man is crying (one of the PCs, maybe even the one having the vision). At his feet are the broken bodies of a woman and a child: his own wife and son. He realizes that the blood that fills his mouth and covers his arms and face is their blood. He remembers that in a moment of infinite fury, after a simple disagreement, he massacred the people he cares about most in the whole world. A guttural cry of despair comes out of his mouth. But the cry is not human; it is the bellow of a reindeer. The man's consciousness wavers and spins in the darkness.

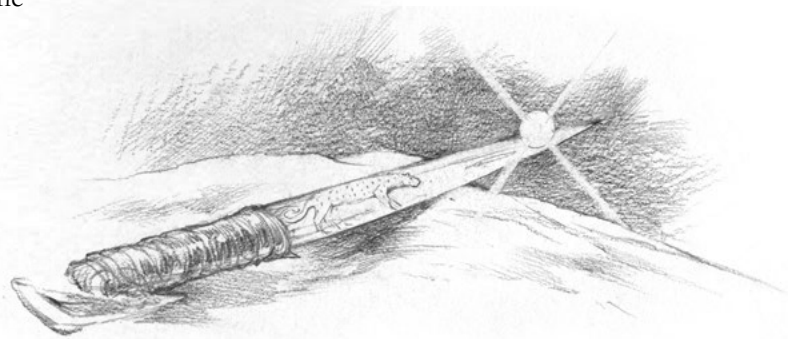
A cave lion is looking out over a vast steppe from a wide rocky promontory. His coat has lost its luster. He is hungry, so very hungry. Yet out on the steppe he can see reindeer. They are scrawny though, weak with sickness, and he knows that if he eats them, he too will perish, like his mate and their cubs. He remembers the time when the herd of reindeer was huge and healthy, led by a powerful male. He decides to go looking for him. He sniffs at the wind and finds a very faint trace of his odor, both familiar and different at the same time. He runs off, putting his last strength into this final chase. He crosses the steppe and sees nothing but desolation. The breath of Sura is gone from this place. Led by the smell of the great buck, he reaches a wood that was once full of whispers. There is nothing but silence. Then, at last, he sees it on the ground: the body of the great buck, once so powerful and now but a shadow. As the dead body rots, so too does his spirit fester. The ritual to honor his courage was not carried out. And so, he who was once the very life force of this steppe has now poisoned the lion with his rage and hatred. The flame of the lion's life, which once burned so bright, is extinguished. The great hunter lies down across the body of Frosted Antlers. Never again will he hunt on the plains.

Once the visions are over, everything turns black. Then, little by little, the world comes back into focus: first a sound, then a smell, the cold followed by an intense heat, a whirlpool of sensations that slowly stabilizes. Bone Leg is sitting by the fire, watching them closely. When they have all regained consciousness, she offers them a few roasted hares to eat. She stays stubbornly silent until they have all eaten, then asks them in turn to tell her about their shamanic journeys. She patiently listens to each tale, and then asks them what they understood. She corrects anything that may have been misinterpreted.

Bone Leg's Interpretation

Lifting Frosted Antlers' curse requires the destruction of the black rock with the help of a sticking and foul-smelling substance: the all-consuming flame. To achieve this, the PCs will have to find a tribe that knows the secret of such sorcery. They are the **Flaming Spears**, a clan that lives three days' walk away from her cave to the South, at the foot of an area known as the **Blood Mountains**. After that, the Rock Tooth hunters will have to carry out the funeral rites to honor the death of the great reindeer: remove the liver and heart, expose the organs on a spear so that Frosted Antlers can be judged by the winds, the breath of the great Spirits, then they must burn his body to purify it. Whatever they do, the PCs must not return to their own clan before they carry out this quest. They must be wary of the men who worship the stone and never fight them near the stone itself. The witch seems to know the Flaming Spears clan, but she remains vague when speaking about them. (She never managed to discover

their secret and is rather bitter about it.) The time comes to leave, and Bone Leg reminds each of them of the promises they have made. She gives the PCs five doses of her healing balm, and five doses of the potion of spiritual fire, an elixir that allows the drinker to resist the dangers of the mind (+3 for Tests for resisting mental attacks during a whole day, including Steady Nerves Tests and Rage Tests). She gives her future mate a beautiful ivory dagger engraved with the figure of a panther. It will allow the witch to always be in contact with its bearer. The dagger is a magic weapon: it gives its bearer a bonus of +1 for hits and +1 for damage (1d6 + 2). It will also become a focal point for the witch to curse the PC if he does not keep his word.



A Long Trek

This long walk to the land of the Flaming Spears clan, the land of volcanoes (modern day Auvergne region in France) must be demanding. The PCs are in an unknown territory, as they have already left the clan lands that only reach as far South as the Whispering Woods. Travelling in this new land is difficult; the tiniest wrong move could put them in unexpected danger. Let's not forget that because of the curse, all this stress could increase the PCs' rage levels. They will probably need to hunt for food,



and maybe prepare some gifts to create a good first impression on the Flaming Spears clan. Let them face dark predators, icy rains and any other unpleasant events that you can think of. Exhaust them without killing them, and make them cruelly aware of the weight of the curse on their shoulders.

Suggested Encounters:


The red wolves may return, if the alpha male is still alive. They could come across a swarm of aggressive bees that the travelers can hear coming with their loud buzzing. A lone predator, a grumpy rhinoceros or a violent storm are among the other obstacles that can “brighten” our hunters’ travels. Furthermore, if their rage levels are already high, their perception of danger could well be altered. A perfectly calm animal or human could appear to be threatening or mocking them. The GM also has the option of inflicting nightmares on the characters, making their nights as rough as their days.

The Dark Dreamers

When the GM considers that they are ready, he can make them encounter the Dark Dreamers (at sunset if possible). There are three of them, and they appear with their arms crossed over their chests as a sign of peace. However their weapons are close

to hand. Their leader, Obsidian Heart, is a dignified man who wears a pendant that absorbs light and looks like a stone tear. His face is painted black, except around his eyes, where it is painted red. He is wearing two human half-skulls as protection on his wide shoulders, held in place with leather strips. His two companions are also hiding their features behind black paint and necklaces made of bone. They all have shaved heads and chins. Two other warriors are hiding within javelin range. Although they are unrecognizable, the three men introduce themselves as members of the former Thorns tribe.

This information should be completely overwhelming for the PCs! The men who stand before them are nothing like their former allies. Their looks have changed, but so have their words. They do not hide anything of the events that changed them. They are not coming to fight with the Rock Tooth clan, but to invite them to return with them to the stone that fell from the sky and serve it. They consider the characters as chosen by the rock, carriers of rage and hatred, and emissaries of Xa Nok. They never seek to provoke any confrontation, and they hold the Cursed Ones in high regard. However, if the characters do



start a fight, they will fight back with determination and cruelty. If they can't convince the PCs, they will leave, but they will be visibly disappointed. They will then travel back to the black rock as quickly as possible. They too have had visions sent by the night Spirit. Members of their clan are on their way to attack the Flaming Spears and therefore remove the threat of that burning substance. Before they leave them, they tell the PCs that their quest is in vain: they are marked by the darkness and they can't do anything about it.

This encounter should sow the seed of doubt in your players' hearts. What do their enemies really know? They will soon find out.

Suggestion:

To spice up the debate, you can add the pretty young Blue Feather to Obsidian Heart's group, and she will inflame the heart of Silent Crow (and maybe also one of the PCs!). Maybe he will overcome his shyness to try and convince his loved one. If the conversation becomes a fight, could he take her defense, changing the balance of the two sides?

The Flaming Spears

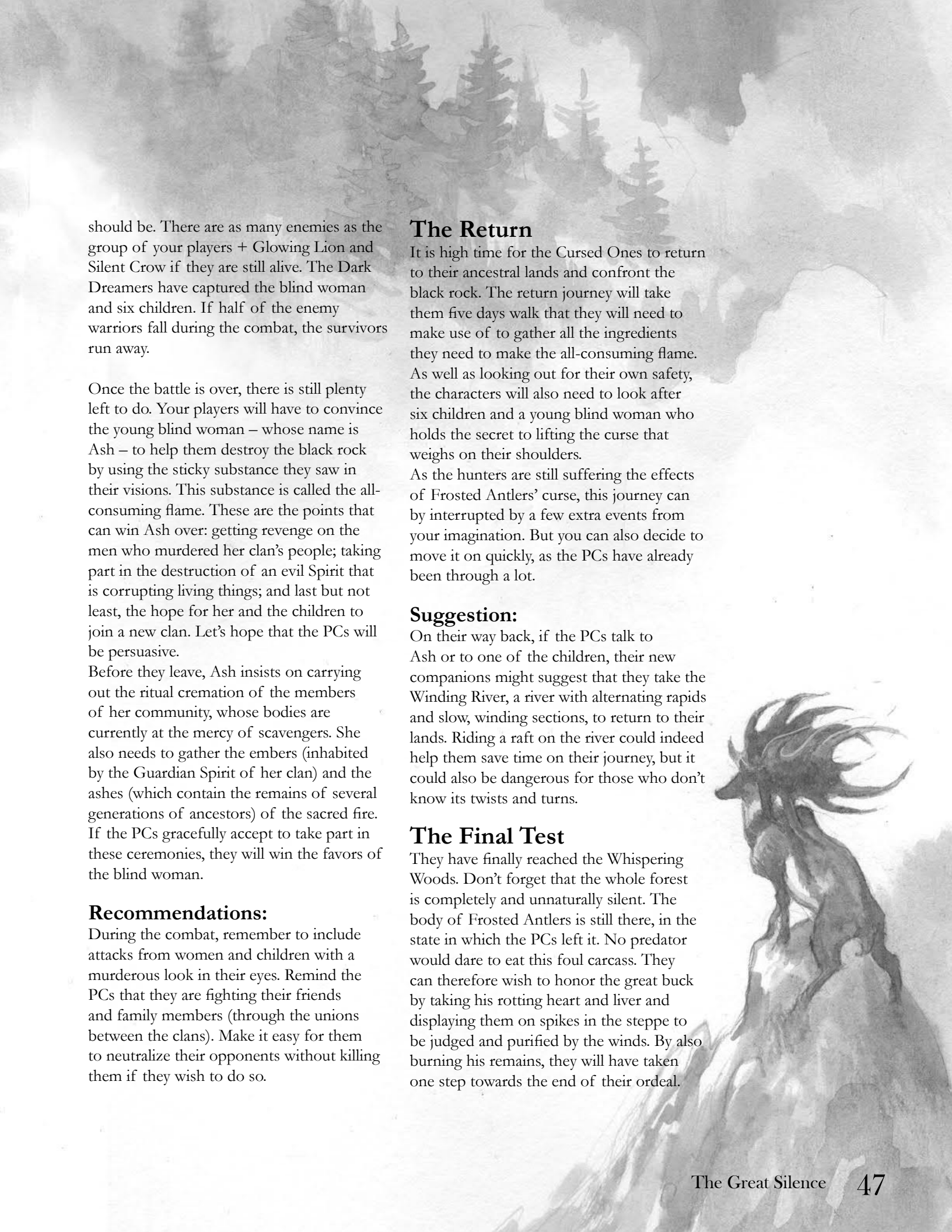
The Cursed Ones have finally arrived in the territory of the Flaming Spears clan: the Blood Mountains. Indeed, from the plain they have now reached, they can see mountains, some of them constantly fuming, and others covered in snow. Here fire and ice are at war. This sight will cause wonderment among them, combined with a fear and reverence for the power and magical mystery of nature.

To find the camp of the Flaming Spears, they will need to follow their tracks by

finding their hunting grounds (DT 7).

This is not hard to do, as reindeer are their favorite game. The camp is set up inside a gigantic rock shelter up on a rocky peak, looking out over a thick forest. Nearby a mountain stream gushes over a drop and crashes down a few meters below before resuming its rapid flow. But the Rock Tooth folks don't have time to take in all these details. War has devastated the Flaming Spears. Bodies lie in twisted positions made grotesque by death. Men, women and children have all been killed with the same savagery. They can see bite marks left by human teeth. Some limbs have been severed and are nowhere to be seen. But the defenders fought well, and among the victims are warriors painted black and wearing bone decorations. The attackers abandoned their own without paying them any form of respect. Searching the battlefield will allow them to observe a few things: The blind woman that one of the PCs saw in a vision is not among the dead. Searching will not allow them to find any significant amount of the flammable substance, just a little left on the spears or javelins.

Successful Tracking Tests (DT 7) will allow them to find the tracks left by the bone-wearing warriors. They have not made any effort to hide their tracks. Another Tracking Test (DT 9) will allow them to discover that they are only a few hours behind the attackers, and that the fight probably took place during the night before their arrival. If they walk hard and fast, the hunters can catch up with their targets in a day (12 hours). Remember to use the rules for travel and fatigue (see Würm pages 47 and 66). Let your players plan out the ambush. The disciples of Xa Nok, still high on the rush of their victory, will not be as alert as they



should be. There are as many enemies as the group of your players + Glowing Lion and Silent Crow if they are still alive. The Dark Dreamers have captured the blind woman and six children. If half of the enemy warriors fall during the combat, the survivors run away.

Once the battle is over, there is still plenty left to do. Your players will have to convince the young blind woman – whose name is Ash – to help them destroy the black rock by using the sticky substance they saw in their visions. This substance is called the all-consuming flame. These are the points that can win Ash over: getting revenge on the men who murdered her clan's people; taking part in the destruction of an evil Spirit that is corrupting living things; and last but not least, the hope for her and the children to join a new clan. Let's hope that the PCs will be persuasive.

Before they leave, Ash insists on carrying out the ritual cremation of the members of her community, whose bodies are currently at the mercy of scavengers. She also needs to gather the embers (inhabited by the Guardian Spirit of her clan) and the ashes (which contain the remains of several generations of ancestors) of the sacred fire. If the PCs gracefully accept to take part in these ceremonies, they will win the favors of the blind woman.

Recommendations:

During the combat, remember to include attacks from women and children with a murderous look in their eyes. Remind the PCs that they are fighting their friends and family members (through the unions between the clans). Make it easy for them to neutralize their opponents without killing them if they wish to do so.

The Return

It is high time for the Cursed Ones to return to their ancestral lands and confront the black rock. The return journey will take them five days walk that they will need to make use of to gather all the ingredients they need to make the all-consuming flame. As well as looking out for their own safety, the characters will also need to look after six children and a young blind woman who holds the secret to lifting the curse that weighs on their shoulders.

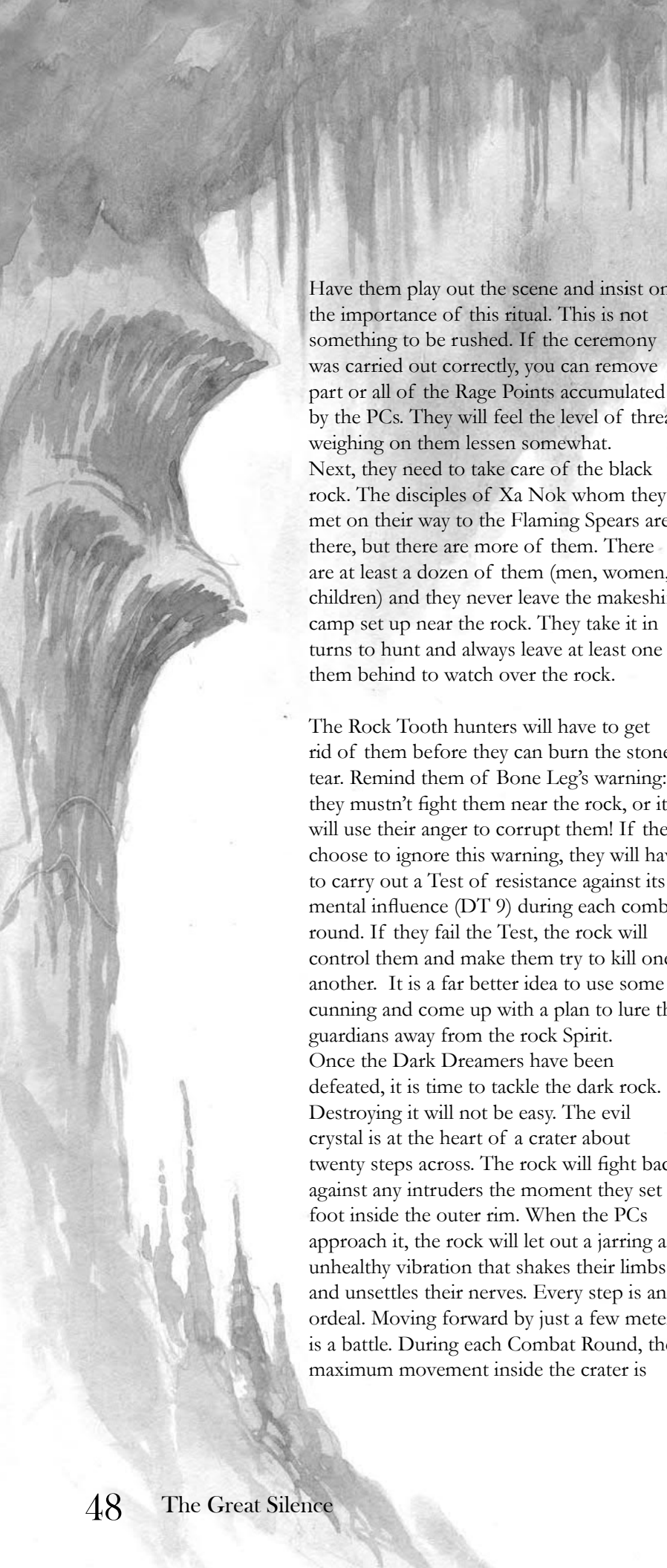
As the hunters are still suffering the effects of Frosted Antlers' curse, this journey can be interrupted by a few extra events from your imagination. But you can also decide to move it on quickly, as the PCs have already been through a lot.

Suggestion:

On their way back, if the PCs talk to Ash or to one of the children, their new companions might suggest that they take the Winding River, a river with alternating rapids and slow, winding sections, to return to their lands. Riding a raft on the river could indeed help them save time on their journey, but it could also be dangerous for those who don't know its twists and turns.


The Final Test

They have finally reached the Whispering Woods. Don't forget that the whole forest is completely and unnaturally silent. The body of Frosted Antlers is still there, in the state in which the PCs left it. No predator would dare to eat this foul carcass. They can therefore wish to honor the great buck by taking his rotting heart and liver and displaying them on spikes in the steppe to be judged and purified by the winds. By also burning his remains, they will have taken one step towards the end of their ordeal.

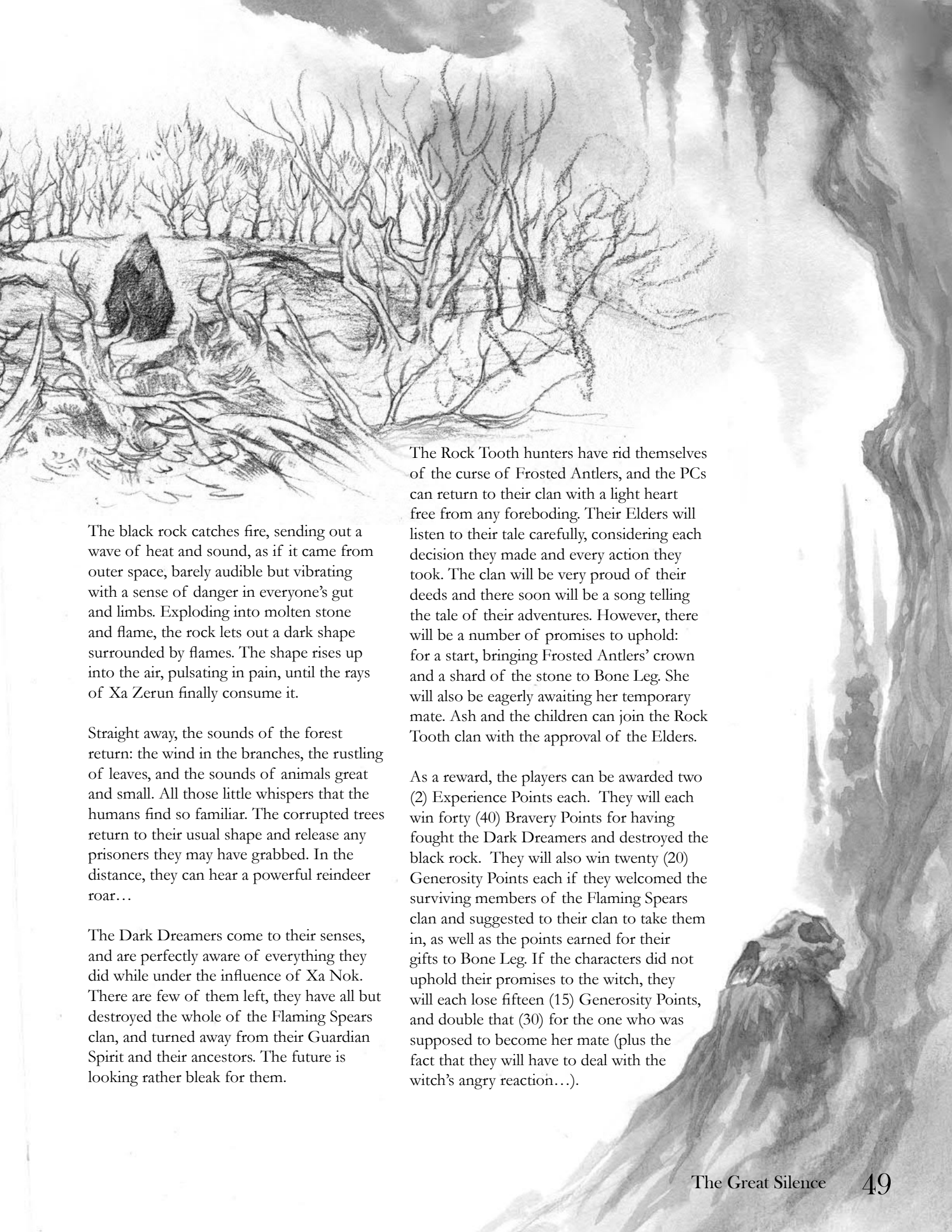


Have them play out the scene and insist on the importance of this ritual. This is not something to be rushed. If the ceremony was carried out correctly, you can remove part or all of the Rage Points accumulated by the PCs. They will feel the level of threat weighing on them lessen somewhat. Next, they need to take care of the black rock. The disciples of Xa Nok whom they met on their way to the Flaming Spears are there, but there are more of them. There are at least a dozen of them (men, women, children) and they never leave the makeshift camp set up near the rock. They take it in turns to hunt and always leave at least one of them behind to watch over the rock.

The Rock Tooth hunters will have to get rid of them before they can burn the stone tear. Remind them of Bone Leg's warning: they mustn't fight them near the rock, or it will use their anger to corrupt them! If they choose to ignore this warning, they will have to carry out a Test of resistance against its mental influence (DT 9) during each combat round. If they fail the Test, the rock will control them and make them try to kill one another. It is a far better idea to use some cunning and come up with a plan to lure the guardians away from the rock Spirit. Once the Dark Dreamers have been defeated, it is time to tackle the dark rock. Destroying it will not be easy. The evil crystal is at the heart of a crater about twenty steps across. The rock will fight back against any intruders the moment they set foot inside the outer rim. When the PCs approach it, the rock will let out a jarring and unhealthy vibration that shakes their limbs and unsettles their nerves. Every step is an ordeal. Moving forward by just a few meters is a battle. During each Combat Round, the maximum movement inside the crater is



half the character's running score, in other words 3.5 steps per Combat Round (5 steps for a character who has the Speed of the Horse Strength). The anger within each of the PCs swells and boils. Round after Round, have each of the PCs carry out a Resistance Test: DT 7 for the first three Rounds, then DT 9 for the next three, then likewise for DT 12 and 15. The Strengths Heart of Ice, Wisdom of the Mammoth and Magic of the Rhinoceros give a bonus of 1d6. If a PC fails, he remains still during that round, paralyzed by the pain, and suffers the loss of 1d6 Stamina Points. The plants that were corrupted by the meteorite move to and fro, even though there is no wind at all. Branches and roots strain towards the characters, and attempt to grab hold of them with their claw-like ends (Attack score for grabbing: 2d6). If a character is grabbed, the plant merely holds him fast until the rock is done with him. A Strength Test is necessary (DT 7) to escape the grasp of the corrupted tree. They will need at least four combat rounds to reach the rock, and then two other full combat rounds are required to spread the all-devouring flame over the rock. Then, they will need to set it alight. Let's hope that the PCs thought to light a flame before the attack! It is possible to set fire to Xa Nok's tear with a flaming spear.



The black rock catches fire, sending out a wave of heat and sound, as if it came from outer space, barely audible but vibrating with a sense of danger in everyone's gut and limbs. Exploding into molten stone and flame, the rock lets out a dark shape surrounded by flames. The shape rises up into the air, pulsating in pain, until the rays of Xa Zerun finally consume it.

Straight away, the sounds of the forest return: the wind in the branches, the rustling of leaves, and the sounds of animals great and small. All those little whispers that the humans find so familiar. The corrupted trees return to their usual shape and release any prisoners they may have grabbed. In the distance, they can hear a powerful reindeer roar...

The Dark Dreamers come to their senses, and are perfectly aware of everything they did while under the influence of Xa Nok. There are few of them left, they have all but destroyed the whole of the Flaming Spears clan, and turned away from their Guardian Spirit and their ancestors. The future is looking rather bleak for them.

The Rock Tooth hunters have rid themselves of the curse of Frosted Antlers, and the PCs can return to their clan with a light heart free from any foreboding. Their Elders will listen to their tale carefully, considering each decision they made and every action they took. The clan will be very proud of their deeds and there soon will be a song telling the tale of their adventures. However, there will be a number of promises to uphold: for a start, bringing Frosted Antlers' crown and a shard of the stone to Bone Leg. She will also be eagerly awaiting her temporary mate. Ash and the children can join the Rock Tooth clan with the approval of the Elders.

As a reward, the players can be awarded two (2) Experience Points each. They will each win forty (40) Bravery Points for having fought the Dark Dreamers and destroyed the black rock. They will also win twenty (20) Generosity Points each if they welcomed the surviving members of the Flaming Spears clan and suggested to their clan to take them in, as well as the points earned for their gifts to Bone Leg. If the characters did not uphold their promises to the witch, they will each lose fifteen (15) Generosity Points, and double that (30) for the one who was supposed to become her mate (plus the fact that they will have to deal with the witch's angry reaction...).

Appendix

The effects of the curse

From the moment the PCs are contaminated by the blood of Frosted Antlers, they will be imbued with a permanent anger that they will have to keep in check, or they will be overcome with a destructive rage that will be aimed at themselves or their companions.

During each situation of significant stress, verbal or physical conflict, the PCs will have to carry out a Resistance Test (one roll per scene) to contain their increasing level of rage. The difficulty of this Test is 7 (DT 7). If the Test is a success, nothing happens: the Cursed One remains in control. If the Test is a failure, he gains a Rage Point and his anger explodes. During a dialogue phase, it is up to the player to play out the effects of this anger fittingly.

When a PC obtains a Rage Point, he must carry out another Resistance Test immediately, with a difficulty equal to his Rage Point level. If he fails again, then it means he is possessed by his rage! Until the end of the scene, the GM controls the character, who will be violent towards friend, foe and even himself.

During a combat, the PC can choose, on his own initiative, to release a true warrior fury without carrying out a Resistance Test: if so, then he gets a bonus of +2 for hits and damage. He immediately gains one Rage Point. If he attempts to contain the rage but fails his Resistance Test, the bonuses are divided by two, but the Rage Point is still fully acquired.

The Strengths *Heart of Ice*, *Wisdom of the Mammoth* or *Magic of the Rhinoceros* grant an extra 1d6 to roll as a bonus on all the Resistance Tests for the curse. If the GM is in a generous mood, he can allow a character to take one die from the Manna pool to decrease his Rage score by 1 point (once per day per PC).

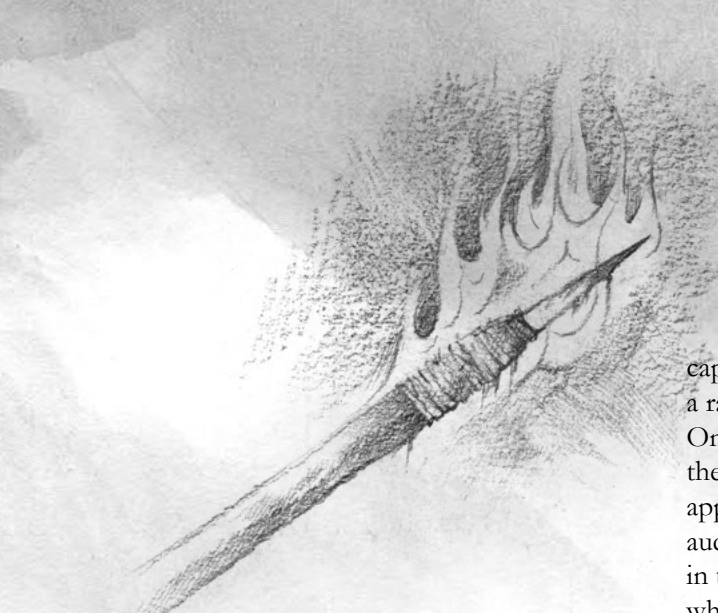
The Flaming Spears

This is a Long Man clan living on the edge of a volcanic region (modern day Auvergne, in France), a land of ice and fire. They received a number of Secret Skills from their Guardian Spirits, **Sura** and the **Fire of Ages**, that form a new set of Skills: the Teachings of the Bloodlands.

The community, made up of around forty people when the attack occurs, is guided by two shamans: **Speaking Embers** (43 winters) and **Ash** (23 winters). They are both blind, for that is the price that the Fire of Ages demands they pay to learn its formidable sorcery.

The Fire of Ages is the great fire that burns constantly in the center of the camp. It is a powerful Spirit that has warmed, protected and taught the community for generations. It is also the receptacle for the souls of the ancestors, for every time a Flaming Spear dies, their body is given to the fire.

After the destruction of the tribe, young Ash will want to return to the camp, to burn the bodies and take the embers away with her, in order to save the tribe's Guardian Spirit and the memory of her clan. Aside from Ash, the survivors of the clan are called **Butterfly** (8 winters), **Dragonfly** (9 winters), **Cheeky Coal** (6 winters), **Salamander** (5 winters), **Lazy Fox** (8 winters) and **Viper** (6 winters).



The All-Consuming Flame

The all-consuming flame is a substance invented by the Flaming Spears, with the help of their Guardian Spirits. It is a mixture of plant resins, black rock oil, various plants and animal grease. The resulting paste is very flammable. The hunters daub it on their javelins and spears, then they set light to them to scare their prey (+2 for Tests) or burning them (+2 for Damage). This substance takes a long time to prepare and requires a complex preparation ritual. Only an initiated shaman who has given his or her sight to the fire Spirit can carry it out successfully (DT 12 for the preparation). This mixture is a part of a new set of Teachings: the **Bloodlands**. The GM can develop the other Secret Skills of these Teachings as seems fitting.

Xa Nok's tear

The black meteorite is the size of a man and made of some kind of seeping icy crystal that seems to absorb light. It emits an invisible wave of rage and it is instinctively obvious that it is not from this world. The hateful Spirit that inhabits it is in a state of perpetual fury. Only silence can appease it. Under Xa Zerun's fire, the rock is sleeping, its powers diminished: resisting its control has a DT 7, then the difficulty increases, as explained in *The Final Test*, with a range of 20 meters. As the night falls, the evil Spirit is at the height of its destructive

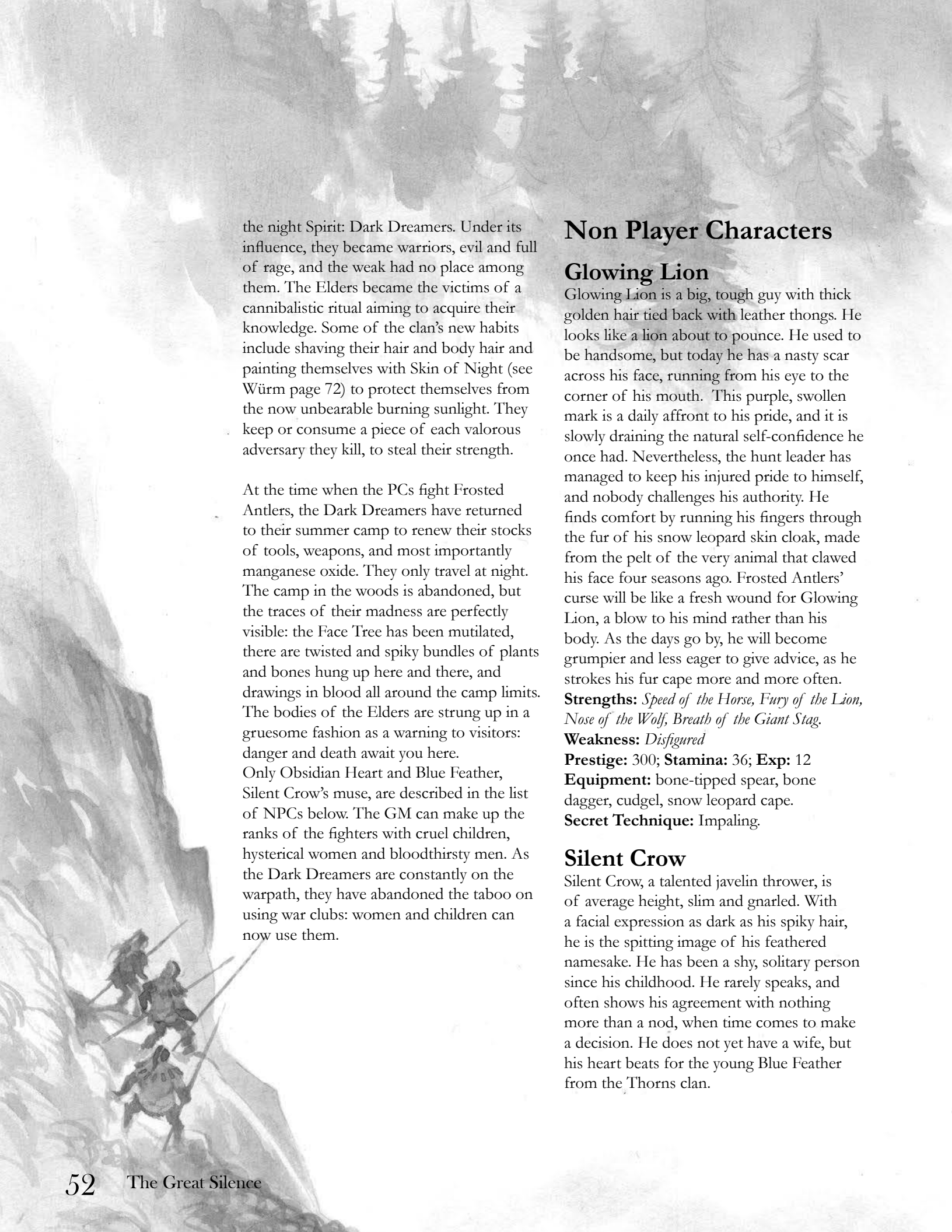
capabilities: DT 15 to resist its control, with a range of 50 meters.

Only the all-consuming flame can destroy the black rock. If a living creature approaches it, the rock produces a barely audible buzzing that the intruder can feel in their belly. This will completely panic whoever experiences it: they must carry out a difficult Steady Nerves Test (DT 9), and if they fail, they run away.

The Dark Dreamers

The Thorns clan was, until recently, a powerful and prosperous group of roughly forty people who would travel between the two main camps following the seasons. In the summer, the community travels up to a high rocky plateau with plenty of mineral resources (flint, stone of night...) and in the winter they return down to the Whispering Woods where they can access all the treasures of the forest (wood, roots, plants, bark...). During the warm season, they worship Xa Zerun, and in the cold season the **Face Tree**, a great pine, son of the fire in the sky. Their interaction with the Rock Tooth clan and the Gray Braids were very frequent and the ties of their friendship were strong.

But that was before Xa Nok's tear fell upon the forest. When the inhabitants of the Whispering Woods noticed the damage done to their minds and to nature itself by the tear from the sky, they tried to carry out a daring ritual, led by their shaman **Singing Thrush**. Through the Face Tree, they implored the help of his father, the fire in the sky. Haunted by the nightmares that filled their nights and by the presence of the meteorite, betrayed by the young Obsidian Heart who killed the shaman, they were corrupted by the ritual and became the docile servants of



the night Spirit: Dark Dreamers. Under its influence, they became warriors, evil and full of rage, and the weak had no place among them. The Elders became the victims of a cannibalistic ritual aiming to acquire their knowledge. Some of the clan's new habits include shaving their hair and body hair and painting themselves with Skin of Night (see Würm page 72) to protect themselves from the now unbearable burning sunlight. They keep or consume a piece of each valorous adversary they kill, to steal their strength.

At the time when the PCs fight Frosted Antlers, the Dark Dreamers have returned to their summer camp to renew their stocks of tools, weapons, and most importantly manganese oxide. They only travel at night. The camp in the woods is abandoned, but the traces of their madness are perfectly visible: the Face Tree has been mutilated, there are twisted and spiky bundles of plants and bones hung up here and there, and drawings in blood all around the camp limits. The bodies of the Elders are strung up in a gruesome fashion as a warning to visitors: danger and death await you here. Only Obsidian Heart and Blue Feather, Silent Crow's muse, are described in the list of NPCs below. The GM can make up the ranks of the fighters with cruel children, hysterical women and bloodthirsty men. As the Dark Dreamers are constantly on the warpath, they have abandoned the taboo on using war clubs: women and children can now use them.

Non Player Characters

Glowing Lion

Glowing Lion is a big, tough guy with thick golden hair tied back with leather thongs. He looks like a lion about to pounce. He used to be handsome, but today he has a nasty scar across his face, running from his eye to the corner of his mouth. This purple, swollen mark is a daily affront to his pride, and it is slowly draining the natural self-confidence he once had. Nevertheless, the hunt leader has managed to keep his injured pride to himself, and nobody challenges his authority. He finds comfort by running his fingers through the fur of his snow leopard skin cloak, made from the pelt of the very animal that clawed his face four seasons ago. Frosted Antlers' curse will be like a fresh wound for Glowing Lion, a blow to his mind rather than his body. As the days go by, he will become grumpier and less eager to give advice, as he strokes his fur cape more and more often.

Strengths: *Speed of the Horse, Fury of the Lion, Nose of the Wolf, Breath of the Giant Stag.*

Weakness: *Disfigured*

Prestige: 300; **Stamina:** 36; **Exp:** 12

Equipment: bone-tipped spear, bone dagger, cudgel, snow leopard cape.

Secret Technique: Impaling.

Silent Crow

Silent Crow, a talented javelin thrower, is of average height, slim and gnarled. With a facial expression as dark as his spiky hair, he is the spitting image of his feathered namesake. He has been a shy, solitary person since his childhood. He rarely speaks, and often shows his agreement with nothing more than a nod, when time comes to make a decision. He does not yet have a wife, but his heart beats for the young Blue Feather from the Thorns clan.



Strengths: *Speed of the Horse, Flight of the Crow, Cunning of the Weasel, Heart of Ice.*

Weakness: *Sly.*

Prestige: 175; **Stamina:** 24; **Exp:** 6

Equipment: 3 bone-tipped javelins, cudgel, throwing stick.

Secret Technique: Flight of the Snowy Owl.

Rumbling Sun

Sturdy yet agile, his dark eyes and hair are the perfect opposite of his ever happy and exuberant attitude. This young hunter is always eager for a new adventure. In fact, he is sometimes too eager, so much so that he can ignore danger.

Strengths: *Speed of the Horse, Quickness of the Lynx, Secret of the Bear.*

Weakness: *Reckless*

Prestige: 15; **Stamina:** 24; **Exp:** 3

Equipment: fire-hardened spear, cudgel, throwing stick

Moon Stone

A lanky young man with a long face, Moon Stone has a certain horse-like quality about him... His patience and abilities for manual crafts make him very popular with the other members of the clan.

Strengths: *Flame of the Salamander, Heart of Ice, Hand of the Ancestors.*

Prestige: 15; **Stamina:** 24; **Exp:** 3

Equipment: 2 javelins, bone dagger, slingshot and roughly ten polished stones.

Frosted Antlers

He is a legendary animal corrupted by the black rock. His characteristics are those of a legendary reindeer with the following modifications:

Dodge 8; **Thick Skin** 2

LP 30 (he was wounded during his battle against the rock)

Initiative 2d6 + 2

Attacks [1]: Antlers 2d6+2 (Damage 2d6+3)

Running 12; **Alertness** 10

Special ability: *terrifying.*

Any character who has to face Frosted Antlers has to carry out a *Steady Nerves* Test (DT 9) or suffer the panicked effect of a hunting roar (see Würm page 43). The buck is immune to them.

Obsidian Heart

Half-Shadow

This tall man has a number of attractive features: his muscular build, his virile charm, his artistic talents... He could have become one of the pillars of his clan, but the fire that drives him forward is also burning him up. He wanted to become a shaman, so he asked Singing Thrush to initiate him. The shaman refused and this first setback became a permanent injury to his pride. After this refusal, Obsidian Heart's personality became bitter, and the other members of the clan began to avoid him. He developed a deep resentment towards all his companions. Therefore when Xa Nok promised him the powers of a shaman and the leadership of a horde of warriors during the ritual, he betrayed his own people and sealed his fate by killing Singing Thrush. Of all the Dark Dreamers, he is the only one who is truly willing and conscious of what he is doing. The GM can make him a recurring bad guy if he likes.





Strengths: *Majesty of the Aurochs, Breath of the Giant Stag, Inspiration of the Rocks, Speed of the Horse, Magic of the Rhinoceros, Heart of Ice (charm)*

Weakness: *Individualistic.*

Prestige: 375; **Stamina:** 36; **Exp:** 11

Protection: 1 Point of animal skins and bones.

Equipment: bone dagger, bone-tipped spear, stone war club, black rock charm that gives the Heart of Ice Strength.

Powers of the half-shadow: Trance, Shaman's Tongue, Contact with the Spirits.



Ash, Witch and Shaman

This slim young woman, skinny but not weak, with her silver-blond hair, has a very beautiful face, although it is now disfigured by the burns that took away her sight.

When she was but 5 winters old, her dreams were already filled with the Spirits of the fire. "The fire walks with her", said the Elders. She was therefore a natural choice to take over from Speaking Embers as shaman of the tribe. She carried out the initiation ritual with a steady nerve that stunned the whole community. She didn't let out a single sound as her sight was taken with a hot coal. She took on the name of Ash after the ceremony that made her blind, as it is a smell that is now always with her.

Strengths: *Flame of the Salamander, Hand of the Ancestors, Eye of the Panther, Venom of the Viper.*

Weakness: *Blind.*

Prestige: 250; **Stamina:** 24; **Exp:** 7

Secret Skill: Trance, Shaman's Tongue, Contact with the Spirits, Sorcery: Teachings of the Bloodlands.

Blue Feather

Silent Crow's secret love

Petite and graceful, Blue Feather has long brown hair and bright blue eyes that capture the hearts of those who see them. She also has feelings for her shy and love-struck suitor, and she is patiently waiting for him to declare his intentions.

Under the influence of the black rock, Blue Feather has become a deadly and relentless woman. The GM can decide that, when faced with the man she loves, she will partially come to her senses. But it is also possible that this will only occur if she is mortally wounded. She could finally confess her feelings for Silent Crow just before taking her very last breath.

Strengths: *Speed of the Horse, Grace of the Swan, Venom of the Viper, Quickness of the Lynx.*

Weakness: *Presumptuous.*

Prestige: 75; **Stamina:** 24; **Exp:** 4

Protection: 1 Point of animal skins and bones.

Equipment: stone knife, stone-tipped spear, poison at the GM's discretion.

The Dark Beasts

These are versions of the regular versions of normal animals, but their coats are strangely darkened, almost black. The dark beasts are very aggressive and only back away in the face of violence. They honor Xa Nok. The red wolves mentioned in the scenario above are an example.

Bone Leg

This tall woman with wild hair was born with one twisted and skeletally thin leg. Despite her handicap, she has a powerful aura of magnetism and animal-like beauty. She is not only a witch but also a powerful shaman. She comes from a land far away, modern-day Siberia, and has traveled a lot. She has all the knowledge of witches, enchanters and shamans. She can transform into a snow leopard, or into a majestic eagle. During this adventure, Bone Leg will want to help the characters to destroy the black rock, which represents too great a danger to ignore.

She too has a certain amount of darkness inside. She is constantly looking for new knowledge and new powers to acquire. This hunger burns from inside, but she has it in check for the moment. The GM can make this woman a recurring character in future scenarios, sometimes as an ally, sometimes opposing the PCs, but she is always hidden and manipulative. Her Strengths and Weaknesses are not relevant to this scenario, so it is not worth listing them here.

Frédéric Debout

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.

“The other day, I was cooking some snails for myself and my old friend Steady Buck when two of the clan’s hunt leaders came looking for me. The generous Rock Shadow and the tall Bounding Antelope were pondering some of the darndest questions.

“Master Lynx Beard, something’s just not right. When we hunt certain animals, kill them and eat their liver, we gain the Strengths associated with those animals.”

“Yes, for example, if I kill a bison and eat its liver, I gain the Strength *Might of the Bison* until the next day at sunrise.”

“But sometimes, when we hunt other animals, kill them and eat their liver, nothing happens! That’s not right, and our hunters are complaining. Have the Spirits abandoned those animals?”

Ha ha! The two hunters sure had a keen eye, and they were onto something!

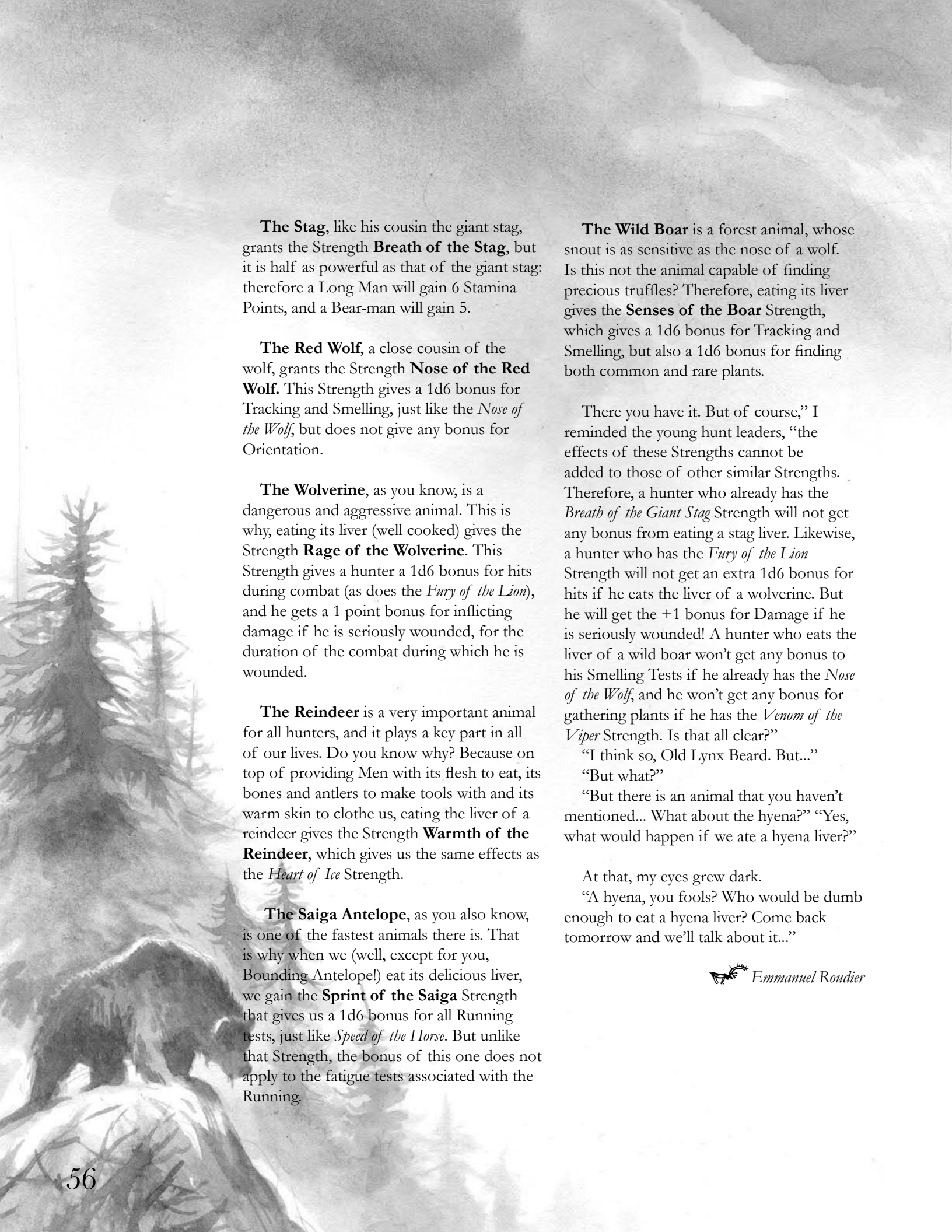
“Have you noticed which animals this happens with?” I asked them. But before they could answer, I continued:

“All the great mammals that can be found in the *Fauna of the ice age*, and which have no specific Strength associated with them. No, the Spirits have not abandoned these animals.” I assured them. “Let’s just say that the Creator overlooked them a little. But I’ll tell you what it’s all about.”

“We are listening, Old Lynx Beard.”

“Here are the animals that you are wondering about: the stag, the red wolf, the wolverine, the reindeer, the saiga antelope and the wild boar.

“It’s perfectly simple:



The Stag, like his cousin the giant stag, grants the Strength **Breath of the Stag**, but it is half as powerful as that of the giant stag; therefore a Long Man will gain 6 Stamina Points, and a Bear-man will gain 5.

The Red Wolf, a close cousin of the wolf, grants the Strength **Nose of the Red Wolf**. This Strength gives a 1d6 bonus for Tracking and Smelling, just like the *Nose of the Wolf*, but does not give any bonus for Orientation.

The Wolverine, as you know, is a dangerous and aggressive animal. This is why, eating its liver (well cooked) gives the Strength **Rage of the Wolverine**. This Strength gives a hunter a 1d6 bonus for hits during combat (as does the *Fury of the Lion*), and he gets a 1 point bonus for inflicting damage if he is seriously wounded, for the duration of the combat during which he is wounded.

The Reindeer is a very important animal for all hunters, and it plays a key part in all of our lives. Do you know why? Because on top of providing Men with its flesh to eat, its bones and antlers to make tools with and its warm skin to clothe us, eating the liver of a reindeer gives the Strength **Warmth of the Reindeer**, which gives us the same effects as the *Heart of Ice* Strength.

The Saiga Antelope, as you also know, is one of the fastest animals there is. That is why when we (well, except for you, Bounding Antelope!) eat its delicious liver, we gain the **Sprint of the Saiga** Strength that gives us a 1d6 bonus for all Running tests, just like *Speed of the Horse*. But unlike that Strength, the bonus of this one does not apply to the fatigue tests associated with the Running.

The Wild Boar is a forest animal, whose snout is as sensitive as the nose of a wolf. Is this not the animal capable of finding precious truffles? Therefore, eating its liver gives the **Senses of the Boar** Strength, which gives a 1d6 bonus for Tracking and Smelling, but also a 1d6 bonus for finding both common and rare plants.

There you have it. But of course," I reminded the young hunt leaders, "the effects of these Strengths cannot be added to those of other similar Strengths. Therefore, a hunter who already has the *Breath of the Giant Stag* Strength will not get any bonus from eating a stag liver. Likewise, a hunter who has the *Fury of the Lion* Strength will not get an extra 1d6 bonus for hits if he eats the liver of a wolverine. But he will get the +1 bonus for Damage if he is seriously wounded! A hunter who eats the liver of a wild boar won't get any bonus to his Smelling Tests if he already has the *Nose of the Wolf*, and he won't get any bonus for gathering plants if he has the *Venom of the Viper* Strength. Is that all clear?"

"I think so, Old Lynx Beard. But..."

"But what?"

"But there is an animal that you haven't mentioned... What about the hyena?" "Yes, what would happen if we ate a hyena liver?"

At that, my eyes grew dark.

"A hyena, you fools? Who would be dumb enough to eat a hyena liver? Come back tomorrow and we'll talk about it..."

 Emmanuel Roudier

Tales of the Antler Bearers

This first edition of *Voice of the Ancestors* includes four brand new scenarios:

The Red Crown, an open scenario where the characters will have to find their way among the complex intrigues of their tribe.

The Ocher Hill, an initiation scenario designed for child or adult characters.

What Lies In Wait sees a group of Bear-men try to work with their Long Men neighbors to appease their Guardian Spirit.

The Great Silence, an epic quest where the characters will have to battle a dark curse that could well drive them out of their minds.

