

LONG TOOTH

A tale of survival for Paleomythic
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This adventure is created from design notes and mechanics tests written a while ago. It's not an adventure in the conventional sense, and is more a series of encounters and events around the theme of survival. As such, there's no real plot to the adventure, but hopefully GMs may find it a useful way of getting accustomed to the rules.

This is suitable for a GM and single player or small party. It could also be used as a solo adventure with little modification needed.

I haven't tried this as an adventure; so I have no real idea of well it works. I therefore invite readers to give it a try and let me know how it went.

Characters

The most suitable characters for this adventure are those with specialist talents, such as gatherer and crafter. If players wish, they may use the ready made characters below. Note that their equipment varies from the standard sets of starting goods shown in the rules.

Character names are presented as male, with a female name suffix in brackets.

1 Agan(a)

A young Fire Maker - Gatherer that is brave, dexterous, resilient and strong.

Possessions: pouch, fire making kit, one gourd of oil.

2 Brul(i)

A mature Hunter - Fisher that is accurate, agile, aware, guileful, wilful and unlucky.

Possessions: bone knife, bag, scraper.

3 Harvan(i)

An adult Crafter that is agile, aware, dexterous, fortunate and wise.

Possessions: pouch, hammerstone, burin.

4 Kulan(a)

An adult Gatherer that is accurate, charismatic, resilient, wilful and wise.

Possessions: antler pick, bag, flaker

5 Thul(ia)

A seasoned Crafter - Trapper that is dexterous, fortunate, guileful and wilful.

Possessions: pouch, flake, bone shovel

6 Zagan(i)

A mature Barbarian - Healer that is agile, brave, strong, wilful, wise and inaccurate.

Possessions: handaxe, pouch, bandage, salve

In addition to the items shown, characters wear warm skins and furs, with straw stuffed hide boots, mittens and hat.

Background

It is late autumn in the high mountain region of Northern Mu. At this time of year the air is fresh and cold, and it is a time when many tribes are undergoing the last of their preparations before winter.

The character has been trading with the Lake People tribe, who live in a valley on the opposite side of the mountains to the characters own tribe. The trip is a journey of two to three weeks, but it is worthwhile; the Lake People pay well for furs and skins.

The character set out when the weather was clear, and for the first week or so travel in the mountains was uneventful. The trail climbed steadily, and the character began the trek around Long Tooth mountain, where the near mythical long tooth wolf was purported to dwell. None of the characters tribe have ever seen the beast, and it has become a tale to scare children.

For the next few days, the character travelled higher and further; the weather becoming steadily worse. On the eighth day, it turned bitterly cold, and before long it started to snow. Winter had come early.

As the character sought shelter, a snow storm began. It was the worst position to be in; caught in the open, dragging a sled of goods and equipment on a narrow ledge at the side of the mountain. Fighting against the driving wind, the sled slipped, and plummeted to the ravine below. Unable to rescue the sled, the character sheltered in a hollow, to await the end of the storm.

A cold night followed, enduring extreme, bone gnawing cold. As the day dawned, the character fully comprehended the truth of the matter. Alone, with no supplies, in the barren mountains. A grim situation few can survive.

The character faces a tough time. Travel through the mountains during the harsh weather will be risky, and with no supplies and few tools the situation is even more dangerous. The character must travel home, or back to the Lake People. Either way, it is a journey that in this weather could take a week or more.

Activities

This adventure has no set story or aim beyond surviving and making it to safety (a trek of at least 7 days). Each day the character has a number of choices. They may travel, hunt, forage, scavenge, craft or in some cases a combination of these.

Activities are mostly, and for convenience, measured in days or half days. Note that terrain and season affects this, as noted below.

Adventure Checklist

When running the adventure, remember to check for the following:

- **Route:** Characters may become lost or take indirect routes; check each day to determine how well a character navigates or lose time (see below).
- **Terrain:** Check to see what type of terrain the character is travelling in (unless they remain at their current location).
- **Food:** Characters must eat one meal a day. They may forage, hunt or fish (in some areas - see below). Failure to eat triggers starvation (p.150).
- **Exposure:** At night a character must find shelter or make fire. Without shelter or fire the character faces exposure (p.147).
- **Escaping Danger:** There may be times it is prudent for a character to escape danger, such as wild animals and so on. See the escape and chase rules for how to resolve this (p.113).

Travel

The terrain within this section of mountains varies from barren (rocks, scree and jagged peaks with little vegetation other than lichen and small bushes), to forest (occasionally areas of tall coniferous trees, but more often small groves of low trees and shrubs).

Route: The nature of the mountainous terrain means travel will follow a meandering route. Occasionally a character may lose their way or be forced to avoid impassable obstacles. Make an aware test when travelling. A failure indicates the period of travel (be it a day or half day) is wasted, and no progress is made.

Terrain: Terrain becomes important when foraging and scavenging for materials. Therefore, for each day of travel, roll a die for the terrain type:

1-3 Barren, 4-6 Forest.

To get home, or back to the Lake People, will take 7 days of successful travel. Travel time is increased by days of wasted travel, so that it could take the character a lot longer.

Foraging

Foraging in the mountains is tough. In barren terrain during winter, it takes most characters a whole day to forage for a single meal (assuming an aware test success - see foraging on p.135 of the rules). In forest terrain things are a little easier, since a character can forage for half a day and potentially find up to two meals of food. Characters with the gatherer talent are at a distinct advantage when foraging.

Dangerous Foods: Characters that trek through a lot of barren terrain will find foraging, whilst also making travel progress, extremely tough. In such cases a character may risk eating dangerous foods such as near indigestible plants, hard seeds and bark, and inedible fungus.

Foraging for such foods is easier; add 1 to the number of meals of this type of food found (based on the terrain). When a meal of this sort of food is eaten, a resilient test is made. If successful, the food has no ill effects and counts as a meal. A failure indicates the food is inadequate as a meal, and in addition poisons the character. See the poison rules on p.149 for what happens next.

Hunting

There are a number of animals that can be hunted in the mountains. Small animals include species of feral cats, dwarf deer, hares and rodents. Medium sized animals include mountain goats, horned deer and snow monkeys (similar to a howler monkey). Large beasts are uncommon; an occasional mammoth or fearsome tusk cat may be encountered, but this is rare.

Hunting takes a whole day, but has the potential to supply a large number of meals worth of food (see p.137).

Only small beasts can be hunted without a weapon. To hunt medium sized beasts requires a weapon such as a spear, although a knife or hand axe might do at a pinch. Attempting to hunt a large beast alone is foolhardy to say the least. Materials can of course be obtained from a hunted animal, as noted on the hunting table in the rules.

Fishing

If the character finds a stream or pool, they can fish (see hunting, p.137). In this environment, only small fish can be caught (providing d6 meals and d6 materials, as noted on the hunting table). Fishing without a spear is possible - this is the technique of hand fishing. If the character has managed to fashion themselves a spear however it adds a tool die to the test.

Scavenging

Characters need materials if they are to make tools, and so must scavenge (or use the materials acquired from a successful hunt).

Scavenging takes half a day, as noted on p.141 of the rules. In the mountains, it is only possible to scavenge for flint, plants and wood. Animals, and other locations, may allow characters to gather other types of materials.

Shelter

The mountains are bitterly cold, with biting winds, snow flurries and occasionally snow storms. Blizzards can make travel hard, the icy snow hails down in painful shards, reddening the skin and making it nearly impossible to see. At night therefore, a character must find shelter or, at the very least, build a fire.

Finding a suitable shelter relies on being observant and alert; a successful aware test means a suitable location is found before darkness makes it impossible to search any more. Alternatively a character make make a fire if they have suitable materials (see p.148 of the rules).

Failure to find shelter or build a fire means the character faces exposure, as noted on p.147 of the rules.

Each time a shelter is found make a fortunate test; a success indicates it has a useful resource or material (in addition to providing shelter). Roll a die on the list below to see what was found. A failed fortunate test means the shelter has no materials.

1 An abandoned shelter with a fire making kit and 2 torches stuffed in a nook.

2 A burial mound with useable ceramic pot, skull bowl and hand axe.

3 A small goat carcass with useable hide (if skinned), plus d3 materials of bone and sinew, in a cave. The carcass has d3 meals of meat, but it is decayed (make a resilient test per meal, failure and the character is poisoned - p.149)

4 A hollow with shrubs; some have edible berries (enough for one meal).

5 A piece of antler wedged under a ledge.

6 A recently deceased wolf, a flint tipped spear protrudes from its' hind quarters. The wolf skin is useable, and it also provides 1d bone and 1d sinew.

Crafting

If characters manage to acquire materials they can craft tools that will help them during their travels. To keep things simple, GMs may assume crafting any item takes half a day, although several simple items can probably be made during that time (such as a couple of wood spears or knapped flint tools).

Note that some items require a tool in order to make them, although characters need not necessarily use the correct tool (they may improvise, but will not gain a tool die if they do so of course).

Characters may also try other activities of a similar nature, such as constructing traps or building shelters. Again, assume these take a half day, and GM should make a reasonable assessment of the materials and tools required. For more information about crafting, refer to p.133 of the rules.

Events, Encounters and Incidents

The course of this adventure depends on the characters activities. Once per day, do one of the following:

- If a character travels and makes progress, check for an event.
- If the character travels and fails to make progress, check for an encounter.
- If the character does anything else, check for an incident.
- On the final day of travel, if not previously seen, resolve encounter 6 (long tooth).

An event, encounter or incident cannot be repeated. If randomising these, re-roll repeats.

Event

A fortunate test is made to see if an event occurs. If successful nothing happens, but a failure indicates the character has an event. Choose or roll a die:

1 Avalanche: Snow, ice and rocks fall from the mountain. A successful agile test allows the character to leap to safety. Otherwise the character is struck and suffers a d2 wounds.

2 Cliff: A cliff blocks the characters path. The character may climb it or avoid it. To avoid the cliff requires travelling a long route up into the higher slopes of the mountain. If this option is chosen, make a resilient test or suffer extreme fatigue, so that the traits agile, dexterous, resilient and strong do not confer a bonus die for d3 days. Alternatively, climb the cliff, which is a height of bow range (see climbing on p. 132).

3 Corpse: The character discovers a decayed, frozen corpse. It appears another traveller met a grisly fate many years ago. A search of his belongings reveals he has a fire making kit, a torch, a hafted axe and a rope. His basket is rotted through. The rope is useable, and adds a tool die to climbing. However, it is a little decayed, and breaks on a tool die roll of 1 or 2. Unfortunately, contact with the corpse exposes the character to disease (see p.146).

4 Gully: A narrow gully presents a challenge. The character may leap it with an agile test. Failure indicates the character falls into the gully, suffering a wound. Getting out of the gully is a climb to spear range.

5 Monolith: An eerie dark stone monolith is encountered. It has strange markings and the wind whistles around it, like the wail of many spirits. the character is exposed to fear (p.148).

6 Storm: A particularly brutal storm, with a drop in temperature only the hardiest of individuals could withstand. An immediate exposure test is required, in addition to the normal test made at night.

Encounter

A fortunate test is made to see if an encounter happens. A failure indicates the character has encountered something. Choose or roll a die:

1 **Beast Man:** A lone beast man wanders the mountains, on some curious and unknowable mission; create a dog fiend foe and begin combat (see p.226). Note that the dog fiend may have one or two useful items.

2 **Goat:** A lone goat agilely clammers over the rubble and boulders of the mountain. A successful guileful test allows the character to surprise it and attempt to kill it for food, proceed to combat (see p.204 for goats). A failure and the goat runs off.

3 **Hyanas:** The character is being followed. A successful agile test allows the character to move far enough away for the pursuer to give up. A failure indicates the pursuers attack - there are d3 hyenas. These mountain dwelling cave hyenas are similar to their plains inhabiting cousins (see p. 215 of the rules).

4 **Snow Ape:** It appears to be a mound of snow; too late - a large snow ape lurches forward and attacks. The snow ape is as tall as a man, with white fur and powerful muscles. It has the same traits as a giant monkey (p.217).

5 **Spirits:** An uncanny mist descends, and within it whispering spirits stalk. A successful wilful test is enough to show the spirits the character is too potent for them; a failure and d6 shadows appear from the mist and attack.

6 **Wolf - Long Tooth:** A huge greying dire wolf, with a scar across its' face, stands atop a boulder. It has especially long fangs - this is the legendary Long Tooth.

To avoid Long Tooth requires both a successful guileful test (to sneak from its' gaze) and a successful agile test (to move away quickly enough). Fail one of these tests and Long Tooth attacks - begin combat. Alternatively, the character can be bold and attack anyway. In this case, a successful wilful test gives the character a bonus die on their first attack, since Long Tooth will be confused by a creature bold enough to face it...

Long Tooth is a standard dire wolf (p.206) with an additional strong trait. It will be a challenged for a character; especially if lacking a weapon or weakened by starvation.

Incident

Incidents occur when characters remain in the same locale, allowing them to perhaps discover features that had previously gone unnoticed, or for other things to discover the character...

A fortunate test is made to see if an incident occurs. A failure indicates it does. Choose or roll a die:

1 **Bugs:** The location is infested with crawling insects. Lose use of the trait dexterous for d2 days due to scratching. Those without dexterous gain the flaw awkward for d2 days.

2 **Copse:** The character finds a copse of trees with abundant plants, wood and a few animal bones. In addition, there is a pool in the midst of the copse. The character can fish here, but exhausts the supply once 3 fish are caught (the remainder are too small).

3 **Rodent:** As the character clammers through vegetation a rodent is disturbed and bites the character, so that they are exposed to disease (p. 146).

4 Spirits: The character takes a nap, and has dreams plagued by wailing mountain spirits, bemoaning their fate in the bitter winds. The character is exposed to fear. See the rules on p. 148.

5 Stream: The character discovers a small stream winding down the mountain. There is edible fungus here, but it is mixed in with a poisonous variety. If picked, it provides d3 meals. Make a fortunate test for each meal. A success indicates it provides nourishment, a failure indicates it is poisonous. The character is exposed to poison (p.149) and hallucinates so that they are also exposed to fear (p.148). The stream can be fished, but is exhausted once 3 fish are caught.

6 Thorns: As the character goes about their activities they realise too late they have walked into a patch of thorny shrubs. Make a resilient test or take a wound.

Safety

The ultimate goal of the character is to arrive safely home, or to return to the Lake People and remain there until spring. In the former case, the character will be treated like a returning hero, for few make it through the mountains in winter travelling alone. In the latter case, the character will be treated well, though will incur an obligation to pay for the hospitality of the Lake People (perhaps in the form of work or favours in the future).