

PALEOMYTHIC BEAST MEN

In the varied and strange place of Ancient Mu humans are not the only people. There are Beast Men surviving in the distant places, in the dark forests, arid hills, frigid mountains and dank swamps. Some are small in number, a tribe or two, soon to dwindle and pass into history. Others are numerous and a growing threat to the existence of humans.

Here follows a selection of Beast Men for GMs to use in their adventures. Only one (the Vine Women) are suggested as being tied to a particular region of Mu; GMs may of course place these Beast Men anywhere in their game world that they wish.

The Mound Builders

Far into the highest mountains of Ancient Mu live the Mound Builders, a species of reclusive beast men. The Mound Builders are muscular and squat, with long arms and short legs. They are pale skinned, with dark hair that extends down their backs.

The Mound Builders dwell in stone mound houses that they build from large boulders scavenged from the mountains. Typically, several families occupy an area amidst high mountains, where they hunt mountain dwelling beasts and forage lichen, mosses and shrubs.

The Mound Dwellers lack a spoken language, but have a well developed sign language that they use to communicate basic concepts; needs, actions and warnings. They are skilled crafters of bone and flint, but make only rudimentary items with other materials. They wear poorly treated skins, which gives them a continual odour of decaying flesh. They cannot make fire, but some use it if they can find a source (which then necessitates that they keep it burning by one of the tribe continually feeding it fuel).

The Mound Builders use hefty stone topped cudgels to mine flint and minerals. They are thus a good source of fine quality flint and gemstones. Unfortunately it is difficult to trade with them; they dislike outsiders and avoid them, and communication is difficult with these silent beast men.

To create a Mound Builder character roll d3+1 for the number of traits they possess. Roll on the table below to determine the specific traits they have. All Mound Builders have the flaw unassuming.

Traits (d6)

- 1 Aware
- 2 Brave
- 3 Dexterous
- 4 Guileful
- 5 Resilient
- 6 Strong

Some Mound Builders have a talent, roll a die to determine this:

Talents (d6)

- 1-2 None
- 3 Brawler
- 4 Crafter
- 5 Gatherer
- 6 Savage

Mound Builders do not wear armour, but often have a weapon. Roll on the table below for their weapon, then roll again for other items they may have.

Weapons / Goods (d6)

- 1 Bone / Bag, Awl, Scraper
- 2 Flint Cudgel / Bag, Burin, Flake
- 3 Flint Tipped Spear / Bag, Flaker, Flint (a block good for d3 uses)
- 4 Skull Staff / Bag, Gems (2d3)
- 5 Skull Topped Cudgel / Bones (2d3 in a bundle)
- 6 Stone Topped Cudgel / Sled, Sleeping Fur, Flint (a block good for 2d3 uses)

The Moon Brood

A forgotten settlement, within a mountain valley, is the home of the Moon Brood. The people of nearby tribes rarely speak of these beings, for they are feared. These beast men are thus little known.

The Moon Brood are grey skinned, lithe beings with dark eyes and lipless mouths that open to reveal needle sharp teeth. They dwell in a ruined settlement of slate and stone towers, built by some forgotten ancestors long ago. The towers are accessed using narrow, worn steps of cracked stone and dark slate, and they contain gloomy rooms within which the brood hang bones and skulls as decoration. These rooms reek of burning animal fat from small, ineffective skulls lamps which achieve little in illuminating the areas, and simply cast shadows about the cold rooms.

Within the valley of the Moon Brood there are many spirits, and even the most skilled shaman would balk at entering the place. The Moon Brood seem to serve these spirits, and at night erect large bonfires around which both the Brood and spirits dance. On occasion, a member of the Brood has been known to cast themselves onto the fire, to die and join the realm of spirits.

The Moon Brood are stealthy and cruel, and actively seek outsiders to capture, torture and sacrifice. They are skilled summoners, and also frequent visitors to the Otherworld. They make poisons for use in hunting, and value obsidian highly (although it is unclear where they obtain this material, for there appears to be none in the valley).

To create a Moon Brood character roll d3+2 for the number of traits they possess. Roll on the table below to determine the specific traits they have. All Moon Brood have the flaw weak.

Traits (d6)

- 1 Accurate
- 2 Agile
- 3 Aware
- 4 Guileful
- 5 Wilful
- 6 Wise

All Moon Brood have a talent, roll a die to determine which one:

Talents (d6)

- 1 Cultist
- 2 Dancer
- 3 Doomsayer
- 4 Shadower
- 5 Shaman
- 6 Summoner

When encountered, a Moon Brood group will typically travel prepared for fighting and will thus be wearing armour. They will each wear d3 pieces; roll a die to see what type each piece is:

Armour (d6)

- 1 Bone Tunic
- 2 Bone Arm Wrap (1 piece)
- 3 Bone Leg Wrap (1 piece)
- 4 Obsidian Arm Band (1 piece)
- 5 Obsidian Leg Band (1 piece)
- 6 Skull Helm

Roll on the table below for their weapon, then roll again for other items they may have.

Weapons / Goods (d6)

- 1 Bone Tipped Spear / Anklet of small animal skulls
- 2 Darts (bundle of 2d3), Bone Knife / Bag filled with sour berries (d3 meals)
- 3 Jaw Pick / Bag with small animal carcass (d3 meals)
- 4 Obsidian Knife / Pouch with d3 antidotes
- 5 Obsidian Tipped Spear / Pouch with one use of poison for a weapon
- 6 Self Bow, bundle of 2d arrows, Bone Knife / Pouch with d3 uses of red pigment

The Vine Women

In Eastern Mu, amidst the dense rain forests, are the vine spires. These tall obelisks are covered in vines, and ancient palms surround the bases of these monumental structures. Here dwell the vine women, a race of beast women that climb the vines to their vine huts built atop the spires.

The Vine Women are small and wiry, with flattened, almost skull like features. They are highly skilled climbers, able to leap and swing from spire to spire, and from tree to tree. The Vine Women use strange weapons to hunt small animals; typically monkeys, lizards, snakes and birds. They craft using vines, plants and wood, and are less capable using flint and stone. They do make use of a strange type of stone, but it is uncommon and thus not widespread amongst them.

The Vine Women are wily and perceptive, and can speak a strange howling language akin to the sounds of monkeys. The males of the species are docile and awkward creatures, less inclined to hunt and explore, and are thus rarely seen.

Near to their vine covered spires are deposits of a dense and heavy stone called 'dark ore'. The Vine Women gather pieces of this to use, mostly for their weapons, and occasionally (when smoothed by grinding), for decoration.

The Vine Women, when encountered, may seem unnerving at first. Their skull like faces can be a macabre sight as they peer through the forest vegetation, and their quick and furtive movements surprise even the most alert of observers. Their clothing consists of thin coiled vines, giving them the appearance of being composed of vegetation. Vine Women are not initially hostile, and may well trade with outsiders if approached cautiously. They are quick to react to perceived threats however, and any sign of violence will be met with an immediate attack.

To create a Vine Woman character roll d3+1 for the number of traits they possess. Roll on the table below to determine the specific traits they have.

- 1 Accurate
- 2 Agile
- 3 Aware
- 4 Fortunate
- 5 Guileful
- 6 Wilful

All Vine Women have the talent Simian. They do not use armour, and carry little save for their weapons and perhaps a few strands of vine to bind hunted animals.

Roll a die to determine the weapon carried by a Vine Woman:

- 1 Blow Pipe and 2d darts in a pouch, Wood knife.
- 2 Casting Hook.
- 3 Claw axe.
- 4 Darts (2d in a bag), Bone knife.
- 5 Net and Bone knife.
- 6 Vine Stones (2d3), Wood knife.

New Weapons

Casting Hook

A casting hook is one or two large animal talons attached to a long and slender piece of vine. It is thrown and pulled backwards to scrape and claw at a target. It has the effect gouge, and the materials required to make it are vine and talon.

Vine Stone

A vine stone is a small but heavy piece of ore attached to a short length of vine. It is a ranged weapon; twirled and then thrown at a target. It has the effect slam, and is made with the materials dark ore and vine.

New Material

Dark Ore

Dark Ore is a special material, a type of dark grey stone that is unusually heavy. The Vine women dig this up from a secret site near to their vine spires. Ore should be a mystery to characters when encountered; and may be used by the GM as a treasure, perhaps the basis for a quest to locate this useful material.