

The Stalk across all worlds

A RPG of the Past taken into the unknown battling violence and evil

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The Past

Thirty pairs of brutish legs moved among the tall razor grasses. Ahead was the prey. Shaggy, curled tusks with the prominent forehead of it's kind. The beast was methodically stamping flat a circle three times it's size. The center was occupied with a weakly mewling hunter. Unable to crawl with a crushed body the tawny cat panted through foot long canine tusks. The once powerful eighteen foot long predator now destroyed with pad and trunk.

Long minutes pass as the thirty watches. Finally satisfied the intended meal looked up from the perfect circle. Raising trunk high with tusks reaching to the shoulders it trumpeted up into the cloudless frigid sky. Then charging the few steps to the sabertooth the mammoth reared up and crashed both forelegs onto the defenseless tiger. A last roar came with the blow. Then delicately the mammoth stood on the head cracking the skull. In front of the thirty unnoticed stalkers the victor scooped out the brains up into the eager mouth. Finished with the meal the shaggy trunk began to gently lap up the now spilt blood left over in death. Long minutes pass by filled with these feeding sounds.

Slowly the thirty moved closer under cover of long grasses and erratic breezes. No extraneous noises are made as sixty eyes all focus together.

Now a sense of peril, perhaps, catches the mammoth's attention. Trunk raised high, shifting piggish eyes strain to locate the danger. With a sharp howl the hunt leader springs up and charges the intended prey. Spear held out with butt low for the belly thrust the move is made. As one the remaining twenty-nine hunters attack. All converge on the now encircled beast.

First to die was the fast one. He streaked in with wooden spear aimed for the tight fore shoulder. A single shake of it's massive head smashed the luckless hunter with an ivory backed blow. The body impacted fifteen long feet back the way he had come. With death came opportunity. The Hunt Leader planted his shaft a foot deep into massive ribs. Another hunter also struck blood in a rear pillar of leg. Horrid grace threw the tons of prey into a sideways hop. Two more hunters died, crushed as a half dozen strikes miss. Still more blood in drawn from another few attackers slowing down the behemoth.

Now with spears in both hind legs is the mobility slowed. Blood leaks from the mounting wounds as two more dies under forelegs smashed down. A lost spear is snatched up by the mammoth and sheathed in an attacker body. It is buried through until two feet protrude from the back into the ground, as a stake would hold a corpse.

But the tusks are pulled down with the dead weight. Four survivors jump on the right curve of ivory. Three more spears join the Hunt Leader's; all shafted in ribs and muscle.

Now can the brave hunters close with their stone hand axes. Scores and rents appear on hindquarters and flanks. Defiantly the mammoth kills three more with weight and violence. Enraged the Hunt Leader brandishes another spear, wrenched from now icy hands. His howl again splits the frigid sky as he charges the shaggy head and plunges the weapon deep into the mouth opened wide in anger. Blood drenched he holds tight as the mighty beast attempts to fling the deathblow away. Grimly the Hunt Leader digs in and brings the mammoth head still for a moment.

This is all the remaining hunters need. Taking the opening they all strike repeatedly bringing the great furred body to the ground. Death throes claim a last victim, crushed, as gentle blood-frothed gurgle precedes the end. Ten, two legged, hunters lie in tribute of hunger and need. The mammoth's piggish eye goes dim and blanks as the Hunt Leader stares into it. Trying to comprehend it's actions. Together the twenty survivors rig the crude leather drag thongs to the body and begin the process of returning to camp. The Hunt Leader adds the cat's body to the load. Forty legs work together and get the carcass going. The tall grasses are crushed under helping with the weight.

Wonder and splendor in scenery is lost to these now single-minded individuals. Broad-leafed trees home to proto-avians dot the landscape. Behind them a mighty ice capped mountain range eclipses the sky.

Only a few winged predators attempt to disturb the hunters. All are driven away with waved spears and hand axes. The hours pass and with the sun's set do the laborers arrive back in their camp.

Filthy smoke crusted females rush forward to be beaten back by the Hunt Leader. All fall silent as the white hair one limps forward. Dim eyes peer into the Hunt Leader's then at the massive carcass. A jerk of assent brings howls from all mouths as the females begin the task of skinning the prize. Meat is torn from the bone and tossed onto waiting flat stones in the fire pits. Fat sizzles and pops while young tend the roasting flesh. One male ventures too close and is pushed into the flames. Shrieking the engulfed body rolls in the pit, back and forth, until the Hunt Leader ends the misery with a thrust spear. The added fats cause the flames to rise up singing the defiant Hunt Leader. With clenched fist hurled towards the sky he proclaims his strength.

Presently the older males snatch their portions from the cooking stones and gorge until passivity. Quickly dissatisfied with flesh the Hunt Leader strides to the stripped skeleton. Already the eyes have been gouged out, the tongue given to the white one to keep him quiet.

Reaching over to a handy stone adz the now single-minded leader methodically sets to cracking open the mammoth skull. Hard work is rewarded with raw brains glistening in flickering fiery shadows. Now a cracked smile displays jagged black crusted teeth and gums. Filthy hard nailed hands dig deep in the skull scooping out moist grey matter. The right of the hunt leader to eat of the most sacred place. With the prize being devoured sudden wracking spasm rock the hunt leader's form. Bile and body fluids spray from his mouth. His tongue is near bitten in half from the sudden fit as he falls to the ground. The meat taken in the feast expelled violently across the fire as the stomach is forcibly emptied. Hours pass, then the sky begins to lighten before the paroxysms begin to subside. The whole time the tribe had watched and made the ward signs against the moans and cries of the hunt leader. The tribes speaker to spirits, the white haired one, had ventured within a short spear cast away and watched during the night. There the observed body moved constantly in obvious pain. But he did not give the signal to advance on the hunt leader. Instead content to watch and wait to see when it would end.

When it was over, the hunt leader stood on unsteady legs. Without looking at the tribe he staggered to where the small stream lay the whole tribe had been camped near. Plunging his face deep into the glacier fed waters his whole body continued to shake and twitch. Looking very similar to how the sabertooth had looked just before dying under the pads of the long haired, long curved tusked mammoth. The hunt leader spends a very long time before his head raises and a howl of fierce cold and torment erupts once more from his lips.

Glaring at the tribe he leaps forward and grabbing one of the unwary young males attacks with his teeth and hard nails. Gouging flesh from the shoulders and neck before any of the watching tribes people can even react. The unfortunate hunter cries in pain as the blood spurts and the Hunt Leader begins to gulp it down as if it were water. Stunned and horrified at this the white haired one grabs a spear and rushes forward to fight off the Hunt Leader.

The crimson-faced tribal leader snarls and snatches at the spear. Tossing it to the side he crouches as an animal and leaps at the wise man. In that moment two other hunters have come up next to the white haired one and the pair of spears stab into the Hunt Leader as he attacks. Shrugging off the blood flowing slowly, in thick gobs like sap from a tree instead of the bright flow and spurt of the now dead hunter he had murdered. Shaking off their fright other hunters run up and drive away the hunt leader.

Driven away in pain the maddened tribe member runs into the tall grass close to the tribe. All the male hunters begin to follow, to hunt down the mad beast that was their hunt leader. The oldest among them taking over as Hunt Leader in this new pursuit, back in the tribe the white haired one goes to his fetishes and casts the bones to see what the spirits will advise.

The Present

Many turns of Father Sun ago the peoples of the land lived in harmony. They hunted for food, paid homage to the spirits and nature, gathered the fruit of the land when it was in season and plentiful.

Always the first tribe has felt the shame of the loss of their Hunt Leader. They have felt the many eyes accusing them of allowing the madness to have taken over him.

So in communing with the spirits of the land, the air, the other worlds the wise men and women of the tribes were shown what had to be done. The strongest, most cunning, the best hunters were to venture away from the tribes and into the wilderness. They were to go in search of the lost Hunt Leader of long ago and destroy him and all those like him he created. For the spirits told them the madness, the craving for the flesh of others of their own kind, the lust for blood and violence came to those the Hunt Leader of long ago, attacked and did not kill. If he was to perish and a beast ate of his flesh they too could succumb to the same destructive behaviors. So the tribes were tasked with the hunt. To stalk the Hunt Leader and all like him across the natural world, the spirit worlds, other worlds, and destroy them with spear and then the corpses with fire, the great clearer of old brush and stands making way for new growth. This would right the imbalance and bring more peace to the lands. The spirits made this known over many dreams to the wise ones of the tribes.

Also did they instruct them on the drum rituals that were needed. On how to construct the wooden frameworks just like people only the height of two men where the hunters could stand and with the favor of the spirits and with appeasement would the ones standing inside be transported. This is how they were to get to where they were needed to hunt down the ones thirsting for blood and causing the imbalance in nature.

So over the many seasons, into rain and snow and the encroaching of the great walls of ice pushing the tribes farther away from their first lands did the hunters go in search of the Hunt Leader of long ago and his get. There is not set time when a hunter would be called. When the time was right the shamans of the tribes would interpret the signs, the dreams, and the one or ones chosen would construct the man of wood and lashings and go forth venturing to slay the great imbalance. While virtually invincible with strength, violence, ferocity, still the human hunters with spirits as companions to guide their way strike back at what accuses them of failing to guard the Mother Earth with its continued existence.

Game Chef details

Step 1: The Theme:	Ice Age, Prehistoric Hunters
Step 2: The Ingredients:	Accuser, Invincible, Companion
Step 3: The Rules Limitations	The system makes use of designer-created cards: Not Tarot or Trump Cards.

The age is based on the period when primitive peoples roamed across the land. Battling with Saber Toothed Tigers and Mammoths and Mastadons for food and the struggle against the elements. Glaciers, Floods, Volcanoes, Tsunamis all being natural threats as well as Wild Fires and other predators.

The Ingredients form the basis. The natural world accuses the tribes of allowing a grave imbalance in creation

The invincible, to a mortal hunter, of bloodthirsty crazed monsters and other humans

The Companions are the cards, symbolizing the support of the natural world for the restoration of the balance to nature

The system has cards in it. Well ideas for cards to be used to symbolize the natural elements and other aspects of the setting working for the players' characters.

Characters and Creation

There are only a few main personae to play in this game. Since you are taking on the role of a hunter across time and space chasing after blood thirsty monsters only the strong and cunning are chose from the tribes for the journey.

Below are the base personae that are sent out. There can be more if the person running this comes up with them. This reflects the basic ones that would be summoned to the stalking of the imbalance.

The Hunter	Those that hunt using other hunters for aid.
The Stalker	Trackers of their prey and master of pouncing on their victim
The Walker	Using running and endurance to wear down the prey, then move into finish them off
The Weaver	Using nature and traps or tricks to gain the upper hand.
The Storyteller	Using the power of dance and song to convince others to aid in their goal
The Shaman	Speaking to the spirits of the worlds for aid and guidance.

Creating the personae

Each player takes on the role of a hunter from their tribe sent into the worlds to track down the spawn of the bloodthirsting ones. They are armed with their spears, chipped stone knives, warm pelts and wrappings. Adorned with talismans, ritual tribal fetishes, tattooed for strength and to convince the spirits of reality to aid them in their hunt. They know it is as dangerous as taking on a saber tooth tiger in its lair. Still they are stalwart and determined to overcome and erase the danger to all beings.

The stats for this game are very simple

This is the same with skills. Since it is dealing with intelligent peoples with a strong oral history and connection to the natural world, and no technology.

Stats

Stats to govern what they are made of

Character creation has stats, and skills, The stats range from 1 to 5, and the skills are a simple either you have it or you do not. The level of the stat indicates how good you are, in an abstract sense. The possession of a skill indicates if you have been trained, or educated in something. This system has no mechanic for distinguishing between highly trained and barely trained. Within the setting, it is not as relevant. More important is the access to the knowledge and theoretical applications of what you know (how many successes you randomly achieve) then in how detailed the characters information is.

The stats are more for fleshing out, role-playing opportunities than major game mechanics. But instead of a text only description, they exist to provide a sense of framework or skeleton on which to hang the write up of the characters.

To generate the stats roll a total of 3 Six sided dice, add the totals together and the amount received is how many points you distribute between the 5 stats listed below. The player needs to allocate at least 1 point per stat in their character. If your total rolled is only 6, meaning you rolled only a 1 on each die. Then add a single point to make it a total of 7 and place one in each stat. Otherwise make sure there is at least 1 in each and then distribute the rest of the points as the player sees fit for their character.

Brute Strength	An indication of lifting capacity, raw muscles, brute strength
Raw Skill	How naturally talented, adept, tool using ability
Endurance	Running, swimming, jogging, jump roping, how much pain you can take, how long you will be able to push yourself.
Spirit	How attuned to the spirits and different worlds you are. Mostly for Shamans or Story Tellers.
Dedication	How determined, how well the character stays the course in the game. Also for contests involving will power, domination, etc.

Skills to show what they can do and how much they know

If they have a skill that applies to what is happening, then in a Conflict Instance they can roll 2d6 to attempt something. If they do not possess it they can roll a single die and get either 0, 1 or 2 successes possible.

So if you possess the skill then 2d6 trying for successes, if not then 1d6 to try for success.

See the skills chart to see what there are. More can be added with the consent of the person running the game.

The character gets a number of skills equal to Spirit plus their Determination. Not too many to have but it is a small skill list also.

Remember it is a either possess or do not possess skills system.

Other items to turn them into characters instead of a series of numbers

Life Capacity This is a sum value of Endurance and Brute Strength
The total is how much damage the character can take. See the weapons charts for how much damage is done per success per weapon.

Movement This is equal to 5 meters per stat in Endurance per action.

Skills

Per the above each character has skills equal to their Spirit plus their Dedication. Below is the list they can select from. If the character chooses a skill they get to use 2d6 in Conflict Resolution vice only 1d6 to find a 5 for a success.

Skills Chart

Here is a list of the initial skills available to players and non-player characters to select from. Feel free to add others to reflect your ideals on this game and setting.

Butchering	Knowing what parts of an animal is safe to use, how to use it to make shelter, gut for twine, etc.
Climbing	Knowledge of climbing techniques, free climb, rope and piton, tree work, etc.
Communing	The ability to speak with spirits
Dowsing	The ability to locate potable water regardless of location. Without water many die in the strange wastes and landscapes especially while traveling.
Dreaming	Ability to interpret dreams sent from the spirits or the spirit world
Drumming	The talent to drum for hours while communing with spirits. Very essential for proper Communing.
Habimancy	Able to divine changes in the landscape. Such as earthquakes and other disasters
Harvesting	Knowing the right places and what to eat from the surrounding environment
Healing	Shaman skill of using herbs to heal infections, cure wounds, succor sick hearts.
Knife Work	Skilled to use a knife in a fight
Navigation	Knowing how to travel safely across ice, across volcanic flows, following streams, finding water in a desert, the whole host of primitive survival skills
Running	The ability to run for hours or days if necessary
Self-Control	The ability to control physical impulse. Allows for standing still for long periods, remain calm in adversity, stay at peace in tragedy, etc.
Spear Work	Able to use the short thrusting spear common to the tribes in this setting.
Stalking	Able to follow others without them knowing about it. Also this is how to evade it from happening to your character. Useful in hunting animals or to avoid a predator tracking your character as well.
Storytelling	Conveying without common language ideas and concepts. Different than communing with spirits.
Trapping	Able to make vine snares, dig pits and cover, and similar ventures to track prey and others.

The Cards

These are the key to victory really. It is true that while force of arms might win the day, the odds are against the hunters and others they may ally with. The Cards represent the forces of nature, spirits, good luck, the power of the tribe, and environment all working with the player characters to correct the imbalance of the bloodthirsting ones.

There is a list of cards at the end of this section. How they are used is simple. At character creation each player chooses a single card. This is their weird (To use an olde english term) this is their fate or destiny. It represents their ties to the world and worlds between.

In game play terms that card gives the player an extra dice, 3d6, for rolls in that area. The use is up to the person running the game. But it should only be allowed one time per game session, and should fit into the theme of the card as well.

How to make the cards.

Take stock CCG cards and paste simple drawings, just the word, however you want to make the cards. You can type up simple tokens to represent them. Similar to Nordic Rune Stones which fits into the game motif very well.

Running the Game

The idea here is monster hunting. At the bottom line the characters are hunting down what is essentially biologically created blood drinkers, similar to stereotypical vampires. What sets it apart is the setting and the focus. The characters are charged with this task by the very forces of creation. The spirits of land and air all are working to aid them. In odd and subtle fashions of course. Showing them dreams to help track things down. Images in the sky, transporting them to other realms or potentially other worlds in the universe if somehow a monster made its way there. There should be no limits. Work to foster a sense of grandeur in the environment. Show reverence towards the natural elements. Have the players act out once in a while

Point out the endless tracts of forests, the towering glaciers if they head to the north. Endless plains filled with dromedaries. Take a few minutes and find books about the ice ages to photocopy pictures to pass around. Time did not permit me to do that or to get original images to use. That does not mean you cannot go that extra step and make it seem more real. Then the graphic violence and obscene crimes against innocent tribes, effectively defenseless animals slaughtered not for food and if you go the space route weird aliens mowed down all in the cause of the thirst for blood. Make it seem idyllic then splatter them with innocents desecrated and give the characters a reason to fight to preserve the natural order.

Rules

In the simplest terms, the sequence is as follows

If a skill needs to be used in a Conflict Instance, roll 2d6,. Add up the total showing on the dice. If it sum of the numbers on the dice exceeds a total of 5, then a single success. There are several variations in success though. The following examples show how to get multiple successes and the chart farther down shows all the possibilities.

When something is happening between multiple characters or non-player characters, such as in an actual conflict, a fight between two people in instance, the other non-player character also rolls 2d6 and sees if the total equals or exceeds 5.

Next is to compare the quantity of > or = 5 results per side. The one with more succeeds with what they are doing. It is that simple.

So the results possible are as follows

2d6 ranges from 2 to 12.

Each side rolls their dice.

If the sum equals 5 then a single success

If the sum equals 10 then two successes

If an actual 5 shows up then a single success (in addition to the sum count success total)

If two 5s show up that counts as 4 successes

The side, person, character, creature, thing, alien, etc that has more successes than the other is the one that wins, and its actions take place.

The chart below shows the success results.

The order of the die really is not important.

But it aids in the chart layout so that is why it is used as Die 1 and Die 2

Die 1	Die 2	# of Successes	Die 1	Die 2	# of Successes
1	1	0	4	1	1
1	2	0	4	2	1
1	3	0	4	3	1
1	4	1	4	4	1
1	5	2	4	5	2
1	6	1	4	6	2
2	1	0	5	1	2
2	2	0	5	2	2
2	3	1	5	3	2
2	4	1	5	4	2
2	5	2	5	5	4
2	6	1	5	6	3
3	1	0	6	1	1
3	2	1	6	2	1
3	3	1	6	3	1
3	4	1	6	4	2
3	5	2	6	5	3
3	6	1	6	6	2

How many possible Successes there are per the previous chart	Chance to get this result
0 Successes	6
1 Successes	16
2 Successes	11
3 Successes	2
4 Successes	1
Grand Total of Successes chances	36

So in a fight the one with a higher success has their action succeed.

In example if a character is attempting to thrust a weapon (such as a spear) at a charging creature, if the success total is higher for the shooter they will hit with the weapon. If it is higher for the charging creature, it is able to dodge, move out of the way, or perhaps block the attack. Then when it is its turn, say to try to bite the character with the weapon, if they have more successes during that roll then the gunman, they will bite.

Simple mechanics. Each takes their action. Rolls the dice, counts successes, compares total of successes, the higher total wins. In the case of a tie nothing happens. The attack failed to hit or damage, the skill roll did not succeed, etc.

In a combat situation the one making an attack, if they get more successes than the other being attacked, then compares the # of successes to the weapon they are using. That determines what damage, or effects, occurs.

When an attack has a success and the damage value is calculated based on the weapon you compare the damage to what armor or other protection that the victim has. The amount of protection is directly subtracted from the damage done. The remainder is applied to the Life Capacity. When the Life Capacity reaches Zero, that person or creature is dead. Dead is dead in this setting. Combat is intended to be short and brutal, right to the point.

The system is simple enough that if someone running a game encounters a situation not covered, very likely, that all they need to do is decide what Stat or Skill would apply and all the players to roll either a single die or two die to see if they receive a success or not. If the world is against them then a roll versus them would be appropriate. If it is simply trying to do something then a single success should suffice to allow the players to do what they want.

Other things to start you off with

Weapons

Flint chipped Knives	Does 2 damage per success, range is hand held only
Improvised Clubs	Does 1 damage per success, range is hand held only. Any hefty stick, chunk of driftwood, counts as one of these.
Spear	Does 2 damage per success. Range is hand held, most tribal hunters do not throw their spears. If thrown does 1 damage per success out to about 20 feet away.

The Cards

The Elements	Spirits that Hinder	Fire Making
Earth	Talkers to the spirits	Dance
Air	Hunter Spirit	Storytelling around the fire
Fire	Stalker Spirit	After the Hunt
Water	Saber Tooth Tiger	Spear
Sky	Wolly Mammoths	Axe
Trees	Dromedary	Flint Knife
The Framework	Far Worlds	Fur to warm
Stars	Hunger	Far Journeys
Moons	Thirst	The Underworld
Mother Earth	Glaciers	Worlds of the Dead
Spirit	Rocks	Barren
Cave Drawings	Friendly Beings	Fire Hills
Seasons	Hostile Tribes	Smoke and Ash
Turnings	Appeasement	Predators
Spirits that aid	The Story	The Strange Attractors

Credits:

The game site that inspired this is at

<http://www.game-chef.com/>

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The Stalk across all worlds

Brute Strength	_____	Skill Name	Has
Raw Skill	_____	Butchering	
Endurance	_____	Climbing	
Spirit	_____	Communing	
Dedication	_____	Dowsing	
Life Capacity	_____	Dreaming	
Movement	_____	Drumming	
		Habimancy	
		Harvesting	
		Healing	
		Knife Work	
		Navigation	
		Running	
		Self-Control	
		Spear Work	
		Stalking	
		Storytelling	
		Trapping	

The Rule of 5