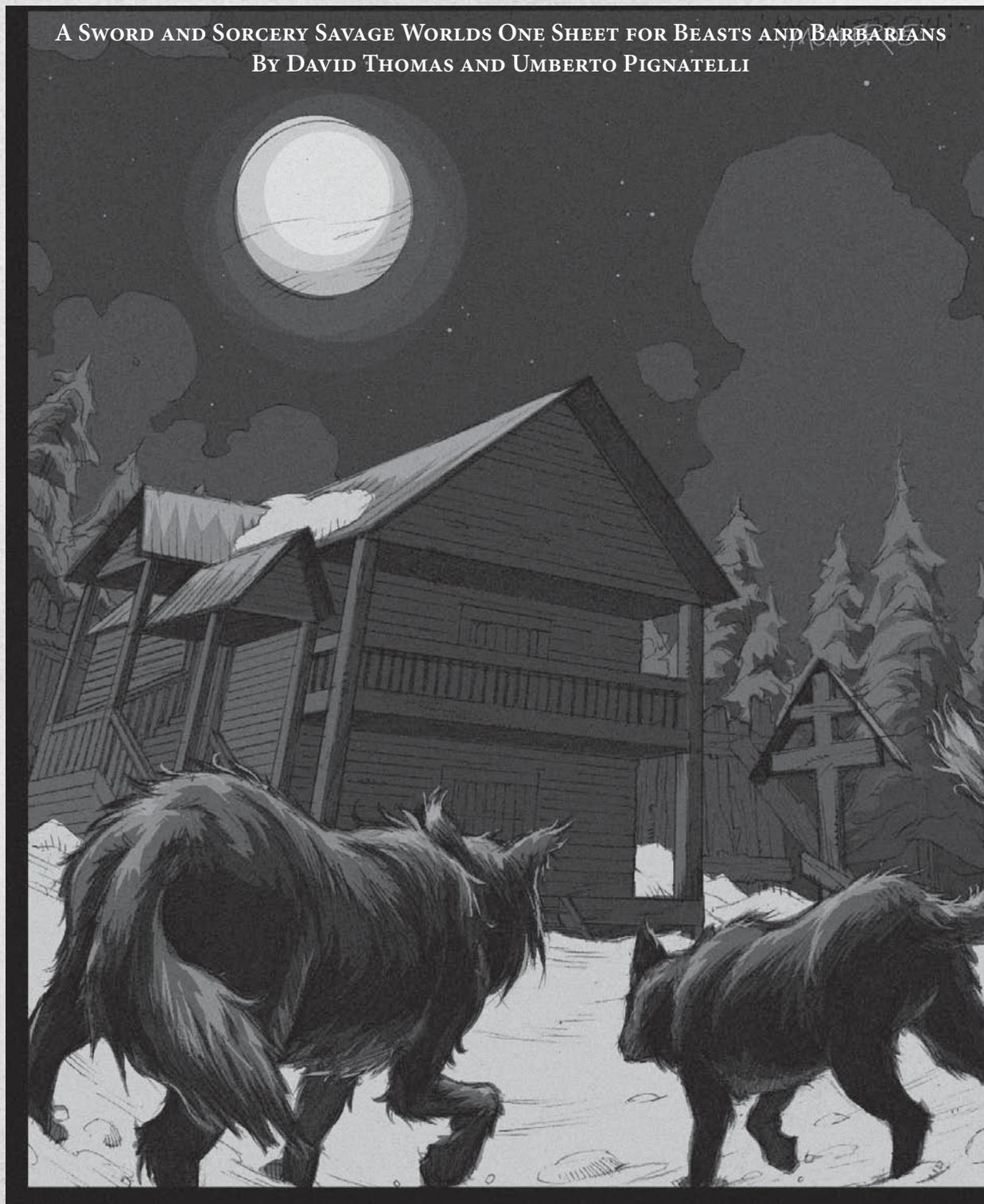


WOLVES

IN THE BORDERLANDS

A SWORD AND SORCERY SAVAGE WORLDS ONE SHEET FOR BEASTS AND BARBARIANS
BY DAVID THOMAS AND UMBERTO PIGNATELLI



BEASTS & BARBARIANS

ONE SHEET #3

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"Nobody goes into Black Forest willingly. Only those that's taken, and they don't be returning."

- Old Borderlands Saying

INTRODUCTION

The heroes are members of the Border Wolves, a large mercenary company serving in the Borderlands, whose men have signed up for a five-year "Price of Blood" contract (See *Beasts and Barbarians Player Guide*, p.21). The heroes are assigned to a small division that comprises themselves plus another four comrades. During the whole scenario, the mercenaries are under the party's control. To add some realism, the players should choose a commander for the division from among them.

The heroes are currently serving at Fort Vanguard, not far from the Godaxe River and on the edge of Black Forest, whose tall, black trees mark the border of the Caledlands.

(M) Border Wolf Mercenary (1 per hero)

RESCUE

The story is simple: Fort Vanguard, a small but sturdy fortification, stands on the very border of Black Forest. The lord of the Fort, Commander Voorhess, has a beautiful daughter named Kara, who was captured by Caled raiders three nights ago while on her way to visit her father. Her retinue of three soldiers and a slave girl were also captured. The raiders took their captives back into Black Forest, beyond the Godaxe.

Being short of men, Commander Voorhess has ordered you, the Border Wolves, to pursue the raiders and rescue his daughter. You know the truth: you have been chosen because any other man in the small garrison would have refused such a dangerous mission.

Black Forest is dark and silent and, although you constantly feel you are being watched, nothing hinders your advance. After pursuing them for two days, you have now located the raiders in a small Caled village...

The village consists of about eight huts, a central fire pit, some strange rock arrangements, and a crude wooden cage in which Kara is held captive. Next to the cage there are four wooden racks, with a corpse tied to each. The corpses are of the three captured soldiers and the slave girl. They are tied to the racks with vines, which also grow in and out of their flesh. Though dead, their eyes roam back and forth, keeping watch over the village. They have Notice d6 and let out loud shrieks if they spot an intruder. Any hero hearing such horrible shouts must make a Fear check or be Nauseated until the end of the scene.

Some smaller wooden racks hang from the trees surrounding the village, but luckily no corpses are tied to them. A Survival (-4) or Lotusmastery roll also allows noticing Green Lotus growing on nearby oaks (d6 doses,

see sidebar). Half of the village's Naked Spearmen are standing around, while the others and the Warchief are inside the huts but will immediately come out if the alarm is raised. Kara's cage is held shut with vines, which can be cut (Toughness 6). Alternatively, the wooden cage can be broken. (Toughness 8). Anyone who frees or protects Kara in this scene gets a Bennie.

(M) Naked Spearmen (2 per hero +2)

(M) Cuttrah, Naked Spearmen Warchief. Spearman with Fighting d10, add the Command Edge.

(M) Kara. She is a Wild Card commoner. She has d6 in all attributes except Healing d8, plus the Attractive Edge and Damsel in Distress Hindrance.

A FACE IN THE FLAMES

Read the following part after the heroes defeat the Caleds.

You are still standing among the fallen enemies, when suddenly the fire in the pit roars and blazes as tall as the surrounding trees. You see an evil face among the flames, which bears a strong resemblance to the Warchief lying dead at your feet. As you are looking at the necklace of severed heads around the man's neck, he speaks in a bloodcurdling voice: "Blasphemous dogs, how dare you enter our lands and kill the blood of my blood? I swear that before the moon is full I'll have my vengeance and I'll add your heads to my Necklace of the Dead Ones. Gulta Morn has spoken!" And then, with a terrible howl, the fire turns to ashes.

A Common Knowledge roll allows the heroes to remember that Gulta Morn is a druid of tremendous power, notorious on both sides of the border for his evil deed. If the Warchief they killed really is his relative, they should flee as far away as they can! The moon will be full in two nights, exactly the time they need to reach Fort Vanguard.

Harvesting in Black Forest



Two things are worth harvesting in the Black Forest: Green Lotus and ears. Green Lotus is a strange plant which can be found with a Survival (-4) or Lotusmastery roll. Each attempt requires an hour and yields a batch with a success, two with a raise. If a Lotusmaster uses this Lotus in a concoction with a plant trapping, he receives +2 to the Lotusmastery roll and the standard duration of the potion is increased by one time unit. However, any Caled Druid within a mile will automatically be aware of the user, once the concoction is used. Each dose can also be sold for 50 Moons or, with a Lotusmastery roll, two batches can be used to make a Refined Lotus dose (in this case, the Lotusmastery bonus doesn't apply).

The ears of the Caled warriors are another prized trophy. The Commanders of the border forts pay 30 Moon for each right ear delivered to them. So, a man with a sharp dagger can become rich if he is brave (or mad) enough to hunt human quarries in the forest. Yet, if the hunter is caught by the Caleds, he will certainly face a long, painful death.

ESCAPING FROM BLACK FOREST

Gulta Morn is now in trance in a holy cave several miles away. But this doesn't mean he isn't dangerous: his powers extend all over Black Forest and the heroes won't be safe until they leave these dark woods. The journey back takes two days and the heroes will have to face three encounters each day.

Survival: The heroes are allowed a group Survival roll at the start of each day. In case of success, they can skip an encounter or recover a level of Fatigue (Game Master's choice). This represents their ability to choose better paths avoiding difficult terrain, to find shelter, and so on.

FIRST DAY

Drums in the Night. The scenario is written assuming that the heroes leave the Caled village at once. The Game Master is free to send a patrol of Naked Spearmen (2 per hero) to pursue them. During the night the heroes hear wood cracking along with booming and hammering and, in the distance, the sound of drums. The sounds are occasionally accompanied by unintelligible shouts. This causes a *Fear check*. Any Extra who fails the fear check will flee into the forest. If he isn't stopped and brought back within three rounds, he will disappear and never return (but he'll come back to haunt the heroes as a Cursing Head, below).

Mud Terror. Early in the morning, the sky darkens and a cold, howling wind starts blowing. The heroes are soon in the middle of a rainstorm. It rains incessantly until past midday and the heroes and their allies must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue, due to the fact that marching has become more and more difficult.

In the afternoon the rain subsides, but this area of the forest has turned into a bog and this allows Gulta Morn's dark magic to manifest itself again. Silently, a giant claw of mud rises behind the character bringing up the rear of the group and tries to crush him (Fighting d8, damage d12+2)! If the claw hits with a raise, it grapples the victim as per the Grappling rules and continues to inflict damage every round. If the ambushed character misses an opposed roll versus the claw's Stealth d8, the dreadful thing has also the Drop.

The claw is totally immune to attacks. The heroes can try to run away (the claw cannot leave the mud), which triggers a short Chase sequence (5 rounds, Agility based). As the heroes are hindered by the mud, the claw has Agility d6 and +4 to Chase rolls.

There is actually a way to destroy the claw. Each round the heroes spend attacking it, they are allowed a Notice (-4) roll. In case of success, they spot a tiny salamander in the mud. It is the source of the magic animating it and can be dispatched with a Called Shot (-4), breaking the spell. The salamander is also detected as a magical being by the Detect Arcana power.

The Cup of the Green Giant. Immediately before dusk, the party sees a massive oak with ancient Caled runes carved into it. One of its branches is twisted in the shape of a receptacle containing a pool of rainwater, which the sap of the old tree has turned bright green. With a Knowledge (Arcana) roll, an adventurer can examine the runes and understand this is a holy place. With a raise, he also understands that the oak, known as the Green Giant, is a sort of forest god and, as long as the heroes stay under its branches, no Caled can harm them.

This doesn't mean the place is safe: the pool of rainwater is imbued with strong magic. It is toxic, and drinking it has the same effect as a *poison* spell cast with Sorcery d10. But looking into it is also extremely dangerous. The first player saying his hero is examining the water must make a Spirit roll. The various visions the hero can experience are detailed below.

Failure. The hero sees a strange cave, its ground covered in dead leaves and its walls inscribed with strange runes. An old man, Gulta Morn, sits among the leaves in deep trance. Suddenly he opens his cat-like, yellow eyes and notices that someone is spying on him. The hero must do a Fear check.

Success. The hero is walking with his companions through a forest of weeping willows. Suddenly, the soft leaves of the trees become as sharp as blades and, in a few moments, the adventurer's body is covered in hundreds of tiny wounds. Terrorized, he looks around and notices that humanlike hearts beat under the bark of the willows. This is an omen of the encounter with the Sap Warriors the party is about to have. The hero won't be surprised by the encounter and will also have a useful hint about how kill these elusive enemies.

Raise. The hero is sitting astride a trunk floating down a peaceful river. He is steering the trunk with an oak branch. Suddenly, the water starts bubbling and a hideous creature, its mouth as large as a house, surfaces to attack him. The hero throws his branch into the monster's mouth and the creature disappears. This is a premonition of the Crossing the River scene (see below). If, during that scene, a hero cuts a branch from the Green Giant and throws it into the whirlpool's mouth, the water instantly reverts to being placid.

Two Raises. The character is on the edge of a crevasse, wrestling with Gulta Morn. Despite being very skinny, the druid has incredibly strong hands and is strangling the hero. With his last strength, the hero snatches Gulta Morn's necklace of severed heads and shatter it. Suddenly, the druid turns into ashes and disappears forever. This is a hint about how to kill the spirit of Gulta Morn in the last scene of the adventure.

SECOND DAY

Cursing Head. The night passes quietly, even though far-away thunder claps are heard. The heroes and their allies should stop and rest; otherwise, they must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue. If they manage to find

safe shelter and relax a little, this is the perfect moment to break the tension with an Interlude. Then, at dawn, they start marching again. It is a foggy day and, although the rain has stopped, the air is heavy and the vegetation thicker than ever. Distant drums start sounding again, increasing their sense of urgency. After a while, they come to a small clearing and, in the middle of it, they see a staff stuck in the ground with a severed head on it. If the heroes have lost an ally during the adventure, the head belongs to their missing companion, otherwise it belongs to Cuttrah, the Warchief. When the heroes examine it, it suddenly opens its eyes and starts speaking in a hellish voice. This causes a Fear check and, if the heroes fail it, they will be Nauseated for the whole scene.

"Give up trying to save yourselves. You will soon be added to the Necklace of the Dead Ones, as I have been. You cannot escape Gulta Morn!"

At this point, the head lets out a hideous laugh, and all the characters must make a Spirit roll. The character with the lowest score is so anguished that he suffers the effects of the *lower trait* power, cast with Sorcery d10, until the party gets to the other side of the Godaxe. The evil magic can be broken by simply smashing the head. This makes the wretched thing explode in a shower of malodorous sparks (2d6 damage in a Medium Burst Template). The character that smashes the head should be rewarded with a Bennie.

Sap Warriors. The heroes are now crossing a thick forest of wild willows, with hollow, worm-eaten trunks. Some Caled warriors are hiding inside the hollow trunks. They have smeared their skin with yellow willow sap and invoked the protection of the trees; so, they are virtually invisible (Stealth d12+1) as long as they don't step out of the trees. They wait for the heroes to approach and try to surprise them. In addition, they can move from tree to tree with supernatural ability: a Caled warrior completing his turn in contact with the trunk of a willow can start the next turn in contact with any other willow on the battlefield. Moreover, he is considered hidden again (Notice roll opposed to the warrior's Stealth to spot him). Place twice as many trunks as there are Caled warriors on the battlefield, each at least 6" away from the next. Yet, the warriors' amazing powers come at a price: the souls of the Sap Warriors are linked to the trees and they can be killed by destroying the trunks (Toughness 7). A hero who experienced a vision by looking into the rainwater pool (see above) has guessed their weakness and cannot be surprised by them.

If the party manages to capture and question a Caled, he reveals that a big war band is approaching (see scene below) and tells the adventurers they don't stand a chance.

(M) Sap Warriors (1 per hero). Same as Naked Spearman but without the Naked Warrior special ability. They are armed with stone hatchets (Str+d6).

Crossing the River. The party finally gets to the Godaxe. Once they cross it, they'll reach the safety of the fort, but it won't be easy. The heavy rains have swollen the river and the wooden bridge leading into the Borderlands is

submerged under several feet of muddy water, so the party must find another way to cross.

Swimming is impossible, since the current is too strong. The best way to cross the river is to build a makeshift raft. It requires a cooperative Repair or Survival (-4) roll and half an hour of time. Note that the heroes manage to build a raft even if they fail the roll, but it is very unsafe. The basic raft has Toughness 4, plus 2 for each success and raise on the roll (maximum 8). As the heroes are about to take to the waters, a large party of Naked Spearman emerges from the vegetation. But they are too late, and can only scream their rage while wildly throwing their spears (counts as a Suppression Fire attack against all the party).

But the worst is yet to come. When the heroes are halfway across the river, Gulta Morn's dark magic strikes again: a dark whirlpool starts sucking the heroes' raft into its vicious mouth. The adventurers must row with all their strength to reach the opposite bank. It is a Dramatic Task based on cooperative Boating or Strength (-2) and the heroes must achieve five successes. Each round in which no success is scored, the raft suffers 2d6 damage. If at the end of the fifth round they haven't managed to complete the task, the raft disintegrate and the heroes must make a Swimming (-2) roll to reach the bank. When failing the roll, Extras are sucked into the whirlpool, never to resurface, while 2d8 damage applies to Wild Cards. A hero can willingly choose to hold Kara to save her (the poor girl cannot swim), in which case he has an additional -2 to the Swimming roll but receives a Bennie for his heroic behavior.

Another simpler way to avoid drowning consists in throwing a branch of the Green Giant into the center of the whirlpool. In this way, Gulta Morn's evil magic is dispelled and the whirlpool disappears.

The heroes are finally back in the Borderlands and Fort Vanguard is only a hundred yards away, on top of a hill. But there a terrible surprise awaits!

FORT VANGUARD

You stagger up the hill. Fort Vanguard isn't big – just a few barracks surrounded by a palisade and guarded by four wooden towers – but today it seems fairer to you than the Emperor's Palace in Faberterra.

Let the heroes make a Notice roll. In case of success, they realize that something isn't right. There are no sentinels on the battlements and no smoke is rising from the chimneys. The wooden gate is ajar. Once in the Fort's courtyard, the heroes see a smelling pile. When they discover its nature, they must make a Fear check or be Nauseated. The smoldering ashes are the soldiers of the garrison, horribly butchered by some savage horror.

While you are taking in the gruesome scene, a low, deep growl makes you do a double take. A nightmarish creature comes out of the stables. It is a Black Forest bear, but you have never seen one so big: it is almost six yards tall, its claws as sharp as

swords and its mouth smeared with old blood. But the most frightening sight is the necklace of severed heads around its massive neck. With an insane yellow light in its eyes, the creature charges towards you!

The bear is possessed by the spirit of Gulta Morn. Since the heroes have escaped all his traps, he has decided to intervene in person. During the night, he took control of this massive beast, climbed the fort's walls and murdered the entire garrison, then waited for the heroes. Gulta Morn is very powerful, but he has made a gross mistake this time: his own spirit resides within the bear and, if the party manages to kill the Bear, this will also kill the evil druid. The fort offers some useful props, including a small ballista on the battlements. With a Strength (-2) roll, which can be cooperative, a hero can use it to target the bear (Damage:3d8, Range: 25/50/100, AP 4, 3 combat rounds to reload).



Black Forest Bear

AFTERMATH

If the heroes manage to break the necklace or, even better, to kill the bear, a terrible howl is heard throughout the forest. It is Gulta Morn's cry of rage. If the necklace is shattered, the druid doesn't die but temporarily loses all his powers – and won't trouble the party for a while.

The sound is so loud that even the Caled warriors on the other side of the river hear it and, frightened, run back into the thick vegetation.

The heroes must bury the dead ones, take charge of the Fort, and send messages to the nearest ones, asking for reinforcements (which will arrive in a week). Tales of their deed will spread far and wide in a few weeks (+2 Charisma while they are in the Borderlands), and they will probably be promoted (you can also decide they receive a reward of 400 Moons).

They have saved Kara but the girl has no family left now (her father is among the dead ones). Finding a suitable position for her can be the hook for a new adventure.

In addition, if they haven't killed Gulta Morn, sooner or later he will come back to take his revenge.

CREATURES AND NPCs



BLACK FOREST BEAR

These massive beasts have inhabited Black Forest since the dawn of time, when terrors like them ruled the northern woods.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Swimming d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (9)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +3:** Layers of fat and very thick fur.
- **Bear Hug:** Bears don't actually "hug" their victims, but they do attempt to use their weight to pin their prey down and rend it with their claws and teeth. A bear that hits with a raise has pinned down his foe. The opponent may only attempt to escape the "hug" on his action, which requires a raise on an opposed Strength roll.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Size +3:** The Black Forest bear is 10' tall and weighs over 1,500 pounds.
- **Spirit Possessed:** The bear is possessed by the spirit of the Caled Druid Gulta Morn, which gives it the Arcane Resistance Edge. Yet, if the bear is killed, the druid is killed too.
- **Weakness (Necklace of the Dead Ones):** Gulta Morn controls the bear through this necklace. If the heroes manage to break it (Called Shot -4, Toughness 5), the spell is lifted. At this point, when the Bear is dealt a club action card, it decides to flee back into Black Forest. Due to the size of the Bear, the Called Shot can be attempted with a melee weapon only if the heroes climb onto the bear's body (which can be done by winning an Agility trick) or jump from above. Otherwise, they can use Ranged weapons and weapons with Reach 1 or more without any problem.

BORDER WOLF MERCENARY

The Border Wolves were founded twenty years ago by Skragos Baldface, once a Cairnlander bandit, who received an official pardon from the Count of Felantium. Today, they are known as one of the most ruthless companies in the north and even the barbarians fear them. Men of any race and class can join the Wolves, as long as they fight bravely and obey their orders. They are recognizable by the wolf pelt, head included, they wear over their armor and by their fearsome battle cry (see below).

The heroes' comrades in this adventure are: Rufus and Pontios (brothers, from the Borderlands), N'Goba (Ivory Tribesman), and Leus (Syranthian).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Gear: light armor (+1), bronze battle axe (Str+d8), small shield (+1 Parry), light helm (+1), bow (Dmg: 2d6, Range: 12/24/48) or 2 javelins (Str+d4, Range: 4/8/16).

Special Abilities

- **Wolf Howl:** Once in each battle, the Wolves can let out their terrible battle cry, similar to a real wolf's howl. It is a free Intimidation attempt, with a +2 bonus, which doesn't count as an action.

NAKED SPEARMAN

The most feared warriors among the Caleds, these primitive men attack savagely, protected only by their own ferocity and some magical tattoos. The tattoos identify the various clans and are believed to bestow great power. This warrior belongs to the Red Weasel clan.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Intimidation d8, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Throwing d6, Tracking d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: stone tipped spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands, Range: 3/6/12), stone dagger (Str+d4).

Special Abilities

- **Red Weasel Clan Tattoo:** The warriors of the Red Weasel clan are renowned for going wild as soon as they smell blood. If there is a wounded character (or one Shaken by a wounding effect) within 6" of a Red Weasel warrior, he has +1 to damage rolls.

- **Naked Warrior:** As long as he wears no armor, a Naked Spearman has the Loincloth Hero Edge and can soak wounds even if he isn't a Wild Card (in this case, he rolls only the Vigor die, without the Wild Die). This ability doesn't work if the Spearman is under the effect of fear or has lost an Intimidation Test of Will, since his gods shun cowards.

