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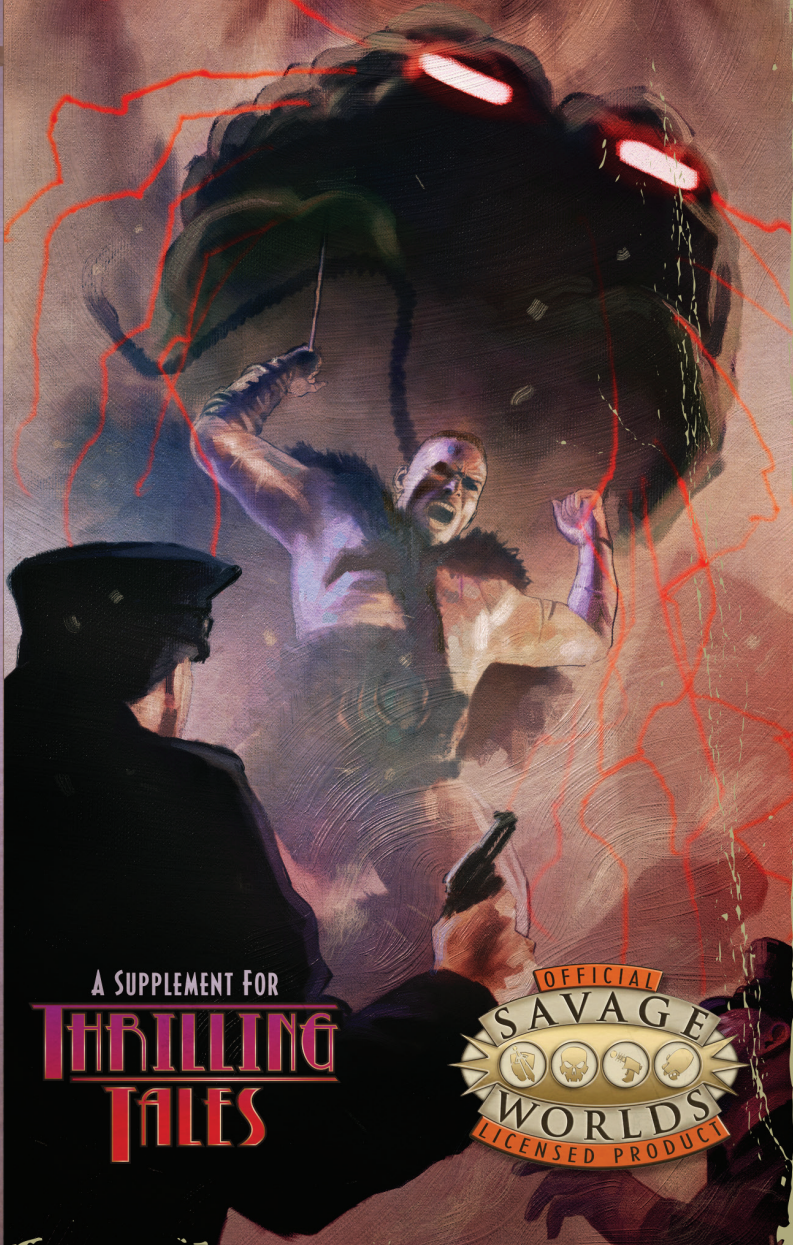
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# TOR-AK

## THE UNDYING SAVAGE



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TALES**



JARROD  
FELICIANO



**PULP VILLAINS**

# TOR-AK

## THE UNDYING SAVAGE

by **JARROD FELICIANO**

**"D**O NOT FEAR ME, MY CHILD. There is no need, for I have chosen you. A storm rages inside you, child. I hear the quickening of the blood in your veins. It is strong blood, like lightning; pumped by a strong heart, full of thunder. Do not let your meek physical form constrain your potential. I can see the hero you desire to be. I can make you that champion. I am what you have been waiting for, the chance you have been denied!

*"The world needs you to save it! Not the people, the world! Smash the glass! Pick up the Bone Blade before you and together we will purge this world of the human plague I unleashed so long ago! Do it, My child! Do it now, and in so doing, claim your birthright!"*

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### **ABOUT TOR-AK**

**THIS VOLUME OUTLINES** the supernatural horror of Tor-Ak—a possessive entity (called “The Grandfather” or “The Cro-Magnon King”)—that has existed since prehistory; a powerful ancient warlord and jungle villain. While written for a Pulp setting (ca. the 1930s), given

Tor-Ak’s effective immortality and the secluded nature of his jungle lair in the Lost Land, the supplement can theoretically be used in any time period, and easily dropped into any existing urban- or wilderness-based campaign.

Tor-Ak is, by design, quite powerful, and is suitable for escalating the threat level in an ongoing campaign.

## INTRODUCTION

Meet Andy Epstein. Andy Epstein is possessed.

He didn't want to be possessed, of course, but when he saw the polished bone, honed into a wicked blade, just sitting there in the museum case, he just had to pick it up. It was more than a compulsion—it was a *command*.

Andy didn't want to plunge the knife into his own heart, but it was the only way he could let the spirit of The Grandfather in.

He didn't want to flay his own skin, just as he didn't want to seize the knife, but it was the only way The Grandfather could be free.

Andy's wife, Ethel, didn't understand, not at first. But when he let The Grandfather speak directly to her, she saw the truth. The truth was inescapable, as was the will of The Grandfather.

Her eyes didn't sparkle after that, not like they once did, and he found the slight trail of saliva dripping constantly from the corner of her mouth bothersome at times, but The Grandfather didn't mind—her strength and broad build would bear him many spawn before her life expired.

Andy didn't want to leave the comforts of his modern existence behind, nor did he wish to travel so far to find the secluded jungle-filled valley The Grandfather called home, but it was the only way he could find Grandfather's children slumbering in their crystal caverns.

Still, he had Ethel.

Together, they could control the children.

Together, they would save the world.

When Andy Epstein grasped the Bone Blade he was possessed by the 45,000-year-old spirit of Tor-Ak, The Grandfather, a Cro-Magnon warlord possessed of stupendous psionic powers.

Long without a host, Tor-Ak wasted no time in claiming Andy's body for his own, his wife Ethel for a mate, and quickly setting out to reclaim his kingdom of hibernating Neanderthals in the Lost Land.

## THE CRO-MAGNON KING

The possessive psychic entity known as Tor-Ak was born along the muddy banks of the Danube somewhere in what is now modern-day Hungary approximately 45,000 years ago. He doesn't remember when exactly—time when considered in such massive quantity loses any illusion of specificity—but he has seen his people rise from small clans of hunters into the dominant species on the planet.

His earliest recollections have devolved over the expanse of time from particular memories into little more than emotions and vibrant colors, distant echoes of pitched battles and the smells of bloodshed. But he remembers in some form.

He remembers everything.

He can dimly recall the first harsh breath of thin, sulphur-tinged air choking his new lungs.

The first moment of blinding light as his eyes opened for the



first time is seared forever into his memory.

He remembers the heft of the bone club and the roughness of his father's hands as they taught him how to wield his first weapon.

Even now, he can hear the gurgle of his father's death rattle as he lay, bleeding, in the mud of a prehistoric killing ground.

He can never forget the crushing weight of responsibility upon him as he took up his fallen father's mantle of leadership.

He can still taste the coppery taste of blood as he exhorted his people into war, and the dying screams of the neighboring tribespeople he had consigned to death, to seize their lands and meager possessions.

He can never forget the endless cycle of death that was the life of the savage.

But he savors most recalling the moment he learned that he *himself* was a weapon.

## **THE ANAJ-MIR**

Tor-Ak is what his people called *Anaj-Mir*—a special caste of early human born with inherent psionic gifts. The term, in his long-forgotten mother tongue, translates literally as "Makers of Peace" but they were referred to colloquially as "Grandfathers."

As the rest of the caste is tens of thousands of years decayed to dust, Tor-Ak is the last remaining Anaj-Mir, and thus identifies solely as The Grandfather.

The Anaj-Mir were the leaders of the clans and, as is so often the case for humanity,

the "peace" they sought to make was inextricably linked to bloodshed—and the Anaj-Mir unquestionably spilled a great deal of blood. While they saw in each other's psionic capabilities an interconnecting strand of commonality between them, the clans they ruled were little more than fodder to be sacrificed on the altar of a dubious peace.

In fact, the more blood the caste spilled, the more powerful their mental gifts became. Each was little more than a blood-hungry conqueror.

Tor-Ak, however (the youngest of the caste) saw the futility in this approach and a profound abandonment of the caste's greater purpose: to bring peace.

He realized the Anaj-Mir fomented war and bloodshed, not in the pursuit of peace, but of power. And he would have no more of it, finally sating his own bloodlust by taking the lives of the other Anaj-Mir. Not only did Tor-Ak take their lives, but through unknown psionic rituals, he claimed their mental powers for his own.

## **THE GRAND EXPERIMENT**

Tor-Ak has no interest in riches or conquest or vanity, for he has conquered immutable time. Tor-Ak believes in peace. Tor-Ak wants enlightenment. And to this end he began a great experiment: seeding the early human race with gifts of introspection and self-examination to elevate them from their less evolved brethren.

Periodically, throughout his



endless existence, he has taken more active roles in the expansion of his children's empires—he was, for example, Hephaestion, closest adviser and lover to Alexander III of Macedon; and he was the “Unknown Archon” of the Serbs who led them to settle the Balkans in the early 600s.

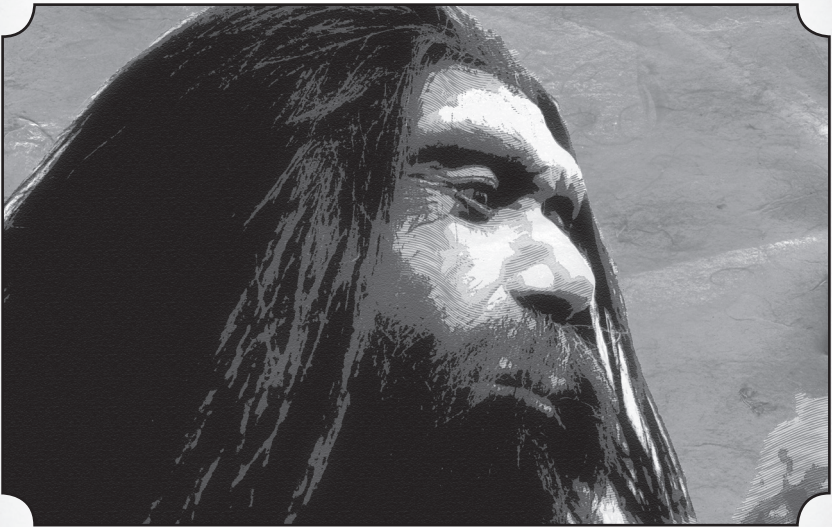
These experiences, however, caused him to question his own methods. How could his children find their own way to maturity and enlightenment if he took such a heavy hand in leading them? With that simple realization, he withdrew from his children's affairs, content to pass his endless days unlocking deeper levels of psionic mastery, exploring the distant reaches of the cosmos, or simply pondering the intrinsic meaning of a single mote of dust dancing in sunlight.

## VALLEY OF THE PURPLE SPIRE

While he has lived many lives through the millennia and while his recollections tend to blend together, one thing has been consistent: his life truly began when he discovered the Lost Land in the ancient Rilo-Rhodope Mountain range of what is now Serbia. He claimed the valley for his own, dubbing it Bane-Anent-Inoj in his original tongue (or “Valley of the Purple Spire,” see “The Monolith” on page 25).

Populating and protecting it with his dominated Neanderthals, he created a sanctuary for them and a secure location for his own birth body when his soul was traveling or in possession of a different host.

Eventually though, with the



*The shaggy figure—clad in little more than filthy rags—was covered in matted hair, and streaked with mud. His eyes darted wildly from side to side, fearful of the concrete and steel edifices of the city. A feral growl escaped from its mouth, and it brandished a makeshift club...*

passing of eons his true body began to wither and rot and decay, until all that remained was dust and a single fragment of bone: a length of his right femur. Through the use of his host forms, Tor-Ak crafted the final bone remnant of his physical form into the Bone Blade (see pages 12–13). As the last trace of his corporeal existence, the Bone Blade serves as the repository for Tor-Ak's soul.

### **THE PERSPECTIVE OF ETERNITY**

Tor-Ak has a unique perspective on the world we live in—he has witnessed the complete evolution of the human race—and he views himself as its lone patriarch. In fact, he will do anything to safeguard his progeny. After wandering the astral planes for the last 2,000 years, Tor-Ak has returned to the world of his birth to check on the progress of his favored experiment: humanity. Alas, he is very unhappy with what he sees.

He remembers what the world looked like before the blight of his people, before the cities belching pollution and fomenting misery. Wars have ravaged the globe. Automation and mechanization pollute the air.

The concept of representative money had spread like wildfire, diminishing the cooperative nature of barter, and splitting an already fractured civilization into wealth-defined castes.

Worldwide economic failure. Fascism. Famine. Genocide.

Worse, to Tor-Ak, the path his children travel can only lead them

into still greater conflicts.

No, humanity had not progressed the way he hoped, and Tor-Ak cannot help but wonder if he made a mistake in elevating his young race to its position of dominance on the globe.

With the perspective of 45,000 years and with war once again looming on the horizon, The Grandfather has refocused his attentions on humanity, to consider if it is perhaps time to end his experiment and start anew.

But to do this, he would need to allow the Bone Blade to be rediscovered. It is once again time to choose a new host...

### **A HIDDEN TRUTH**

For all of his disappointment, the truth of the matter is that Tor-Ak would rather not destroy his children. If someone were able to prove to him that humanity was yet still redeemable, he might consider sparing the human race. A highly unlikely outcome, but certainly within the realm of possibility for clever players.

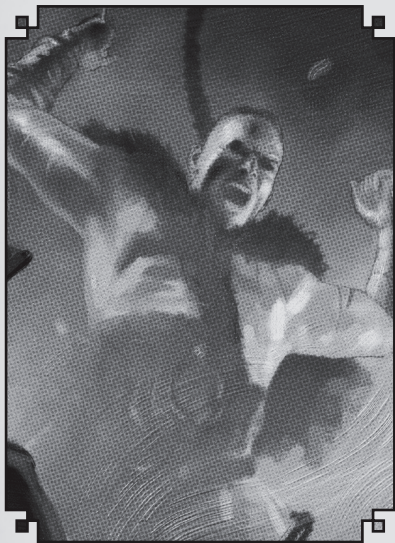
### **ANDY EPSTEIN**

Andy Epstein is Tor-Ak's current host. He is a squat, stocky, muscular male, with dark olive skin, ice-blue eyes in square sockets, and his once well-maintained dark hair has been raggedly shorn by bone tools. Once possessed by Tor-Ak, he wears little clothing beyond a loincloth and hide cloak, proudly displaying the webwork of scars on his skin—self-inflicted as part of the possession “ritual.”



## ANDY EPSTEIN

### FORMER ACCOUNTANT, POSSESSED PSYCHIC HOST



**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d12+4, Spirit d12+4, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** As Ghost Form (pages 8–11) plus the following: Driving d4, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Accounting) d6.

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8 (9 with Bone Blade); **Toughness:** 11 (4)

**Hindrances:** As Ghost Form (pages 8–11) plus the following: Anemic, Curious, Cautious.

**Edges:** As Ghost Form (pages 8–11) plus the following: Alertness, Dodge.

**Psionic Powers:** As listed for the Ghost Form (pages 8–11).

**Gear:** The Bone Blade (see pages 12–13).

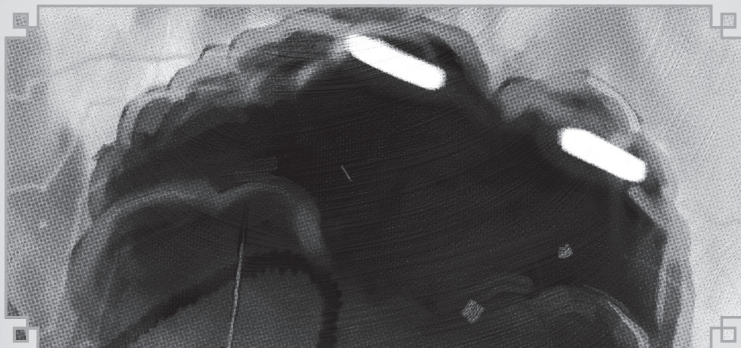
#### Special Abilities

As the host form of Tor-Ak, Andy has access to any of the Ghost Form's Special Abilities marked "✦", plus the following:

- **Armor +4:** Andy's body has been psionically transmogrified into an approximation of Tor-Ak's natural body and is covered in calloused layers of crisscrossed scars.

## == TOR-AK, THE GRANDFATHER ==

### LEGENDARY ASTRAL PSIONIC CONQUEROR



The Grandfather is effectively a disembodied consciousness able to use his mastery of ancient psionic powers to take control of a host body. Tor-Ak, however, does not always desire a host, preferring at times to wander and observe the universe as his insubstantial consciousness only.

When in his mental (or ghost) form, use the stat block below. Tor-Ak's abundance of Skills, Edges, and Psionic Powers reflect his millennia of life experience.

***A Word to the Wise:** With his array of Psionic Powers, his ability to Possess opponents, and his nigh invulnerability to anything but the Bone Blade (not to mention an army of Neanderthals), Tor-Ak is a very dangerous opponent. Characters who attempt to confront him head-on will likely die ignominious bloody deaths. Diplomacy, subterfuge, tactics, and alliances resulting in the destruction of the Bone Blade are the key to ending the undying threat of the Cro-Magnon King.*



**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d12+4, Spirit d12+4, Strength d8, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Arcane Background (Psionics) d12+4, Boating d8, Climbing d8, Fighting d12, Healing d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Battle) d12+2, Knowledge (Ancient History) d12+2, Knowledge (History) d12+2, Knowledge (Archaeology) d12+2, Knowledge (Psionics) d12+2, Knowledge (Occult) d12+2, Notice d12, Persuasion d12, Psionics d12+2, Riding d8, Shooting d12, Stealth d10, Survival d12, Swimming d10, Taunt d8, Throwing d12, Tracking d10

**Pace:** 12; **Parry:** 8 (9 with Bone Blade); **Toughness:** 7

**Hindrances:** Savage\*

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Psionics), Arcane Resistance, Command, Dirty Fighter\*, Font of Information\*, Improved Arcane Resistance, Improved Nerves of Steel, Improved Trademark Weapon (Bone Blade), Iron Jaw\*, Killer Instinct, Mentalist, Mighty Blow, Natural Leader, Nerves of Steel, Photographic Memory\*, Really Dirty Fighter\*, Strong Willed, Trademark Weapon (Bone Blade).

**Psionic Powers:** Tor-Ak has 50 Power Points and commonly

uses the following powers: Armor, Beast Friend, Detect/Conceal Aura, Fear, Havoc, Mind Reading, Puppet, Slumber, Smite, Teleport, Warrior's Gift.

**Special Abilities:**

- *Autobiographical Memory*✚: Tor-Ak remembers everything he has ever experienced and can recall even the smallest detail given enough time to pore through his voluminous memories.
- *Cro-Magnon King*✚: Tor-Ak is automatically able to directly contact and control the mind of any Neanderthal within 36" of himself.
- *Ethereal*: Without a host, Tor-Ak is immaterial and can only be harmed by his Weakness. He can maneuver through any solid surface, flying about at Pace 12, and cannot be seen unless he desires to be. He can still affect the Bone Blade in his immaterial form, moving it freely, or even wielding it in combat.
- *Fearless*✚: Tor-Ak believes he will never truly die and is completely immune to Fear effects and cannot be

\* Indicates a Hindrance or Edge from the *Thrilling Tales* core book.

Intimidated (though he may be affected by Taunts).

- *Invulnerability*: Tor-Ak can only be harmed by his Weakness. He may be Shaken by other attacks, but never wounded.
- *Level Headed*✦: Tor-Ak's incredible range and breadth of experiences allows him to act on the best of three cards.
- *Master Mentalist*✦: Tor-Ak's mastery of the psionic arts is such that he rolls a d10 Wild Die when rolling for his Psionics skill.
- *Polyglot*✦: Tor-Ak may speak, read and write all human languages that have ever existed.
- *Possession*: Tor-Ak can attempt to possess anyone who makes physical contact with the Bone Blade. To do so, Tor-Ak and his target make opposed Spirit rolls. If Tor-Ak succeeds, he forces the victim's soul from its body, trapping it inside the Bone Blade, and then inhabits the host body himself.

The victim may

attempt an opposed Spirit roll to break free anytime Tor-Ak is Shaken or wounded. If the victim succeeds, Tor-Ak is sent back into the Blade and the host is free. However, Tor-Ak can simply attempt to possess the bearer again.

The possessed victim uses Tor-Ak's Smarts and Spirit Attributes, while their own Agility, Strength, and Vigor increase by one die type. They retain their own Skills and Edges, but gain all of Tor-Ak's Skills, Hindrances, Edges, Psionic Powers, as well as any Special Ability marked (✦). Redundant Hindrances, Edges, and Psionic Powers are ignored, while in instances where Skills overlap, the better die of the two is used.

Victims of this possession are fully aware of their actions while controlled. In addition, Tor-Ak has access to all of the victim's memories.

- *Synaptic Web*✦: The Grandfather uses his psionic abilities to create and maintain a Synaptic Web to control his Neanderthal hordes. The Synaptic Web is, in essence, a hive mind in which he appoints key "linchpins" (anyone with



the Synaptic Repeater ability) who allow him to expand the range of his mental control for hundreds of thousands of miles.

Tor-Ak has a mental link of infinite distance and can see, hear, taste, touch, and feel through the senses of any Sub-Chief or being with the Synaptic Repeater ability. This contact allows Tor-Ak to remotely control any Neanderthal Warrior within 12" of the Synaptic Repeater. Tor-Ak can freely control up to 12 Sub-Chiefs simultaneously with this ability. Doing so does not incur a multi-action penalty.

In game terms, the GM should only keep loose track of the synaptic web connections in key areas of an adventure. For example, if there is a scene at a bank robbery, a Sub-Chief should be placed in the general vicinity. If the Sub-Chief is defeated, the synaptic web connection is broken and the Neanderthal Warriors in the area can no longer be directly controlled by The Grandfather.

- *Telepathy*✦: As a free action, The Grandfather can communicate with any and all sentient minds within a

range of one mile. This is in addition to his communication with any of his Sub-Chiefs.

- *Transmogrify*✦: Once a new host is obtained, Tor-Ak uses his transmogrify ability to compel his host to physically carve away their own body with the Bone Blade, psionically warping and transforming the tendons and musculature beneath the surface into a representation of what he (somewhat vaguely) recalls his original physical body to look like.
- *Undying*: Tor-Ak isn't affected by the aging process, or powers or effects that reference aging.
- *Weakness (The Bone Blade)*: Tor-Ak's ghost form may only be wounded by the Bone Blade. In addition, Tor-Ak may only be truly killed by the destruction of the Bone Blade.

## THE BONE BLADE

### PSIONIC ARTIFACT

The Bone Blade, Tor-Ak’s personal weapon and the reliquary of his immortal consciousness, is a simple shaft of sharpened bone, calcified and hard as steel. The weapon has appeared countless times throughout history, oftentimes without any mention of The Grandfather himself. Some legends say the Blade is the weapon Cain used to murder Abel; others believe it to be the jawbone used by Samson to decimate the Philistine army. To hear Tor-Ak tell it, Cain and Samson both were just two of his many hosts. And it certainly could be true...

The Bone Blade functions in all ways as a dagger, but does damage as a great sword.

The Bone Blade provides a non-psionic wielder with a pool of 20 Power Points to draw from. Both psionic and non-psionic wielders gain access to the following powers: Armor, Fear, Smite, Warrior’s Gift.

| Type   | Damage  | Weight |
|--------|---------|--------|
| Dagger | Str+d10 | 1      |

### SPIRIT AND BONE: KILLING THE UNDYING SAVAGE

Destroying Tor-Ak is directly tied to destroying the Bone Blade (see the “Mother Knows Best” adventure hook, page 29). However, the Blade can only be destroyed in a specific place and under very particular circumstances. These details are left open for the GM to determine, but some possible examples for her to choose from follow:

- The Blade must be soaked in the blood of the last “Great Gorilla King.”
- The Blade must be carried by its wielder into the belly of a “Fire Worm From Below The Skin Of The World.”
- The Blade must be boiled in the immolated soul of a priest who committed fratricide.
- The Blade must be returned to the physical form of Tor-Ak from whence it came.

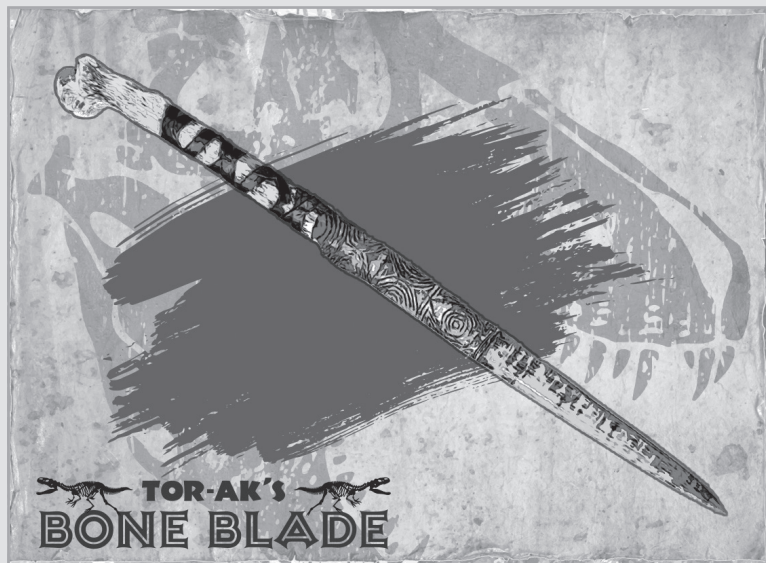
If the Bone Blade—the last remnant of his physical form—is destroyed while in possession of a host, the host’s spirit is freed from the Blade and returned back to its body; while



## THE BONE BLADE (CONT.)

Tor-Ak's ghost will have nowhere to return and simply vanish into the ether of the universe.

Should Tor-Ak's host form be killed without first destroying the Blade, The Grandfather's spirit simply returns to the safety of its reliquary and is free to wander again, find new hosts, and live another 45,000 years.



As an immortal being of incomprehensible age, the mere notion of death, of a permanent end, is utterly inconceivable. Tor-Ak fully expects to live forever.

He always comes back.

He always will.

Due to this almost youthful arrogance, when directly confronted, Tor-Ak will wade his host body into direct combat against superior forces without hesitation.

## FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Born in Jersey City, New Jersey, Andy Epstein always felt he was destined for something great. But an early marriage and a mortgage and mounting debt led him to a career in accounting and relegated his dreams of exceptionalism to quietly imagining himself as the hero in the pulp magazines he'd secretly read during his lunch breaks.

On occasion he would even sneak off to a picture show or a museum to fully immerse himself in his imagination of 'what might have been.' Such was the case when he saw the advertisement for the exhibit of Cro-Magnon artifacts at the City Museum.

The Bone Blade immediately stood out to him. And the voice of The Grandfather in his head easily convinced him that the Blade was his path to greatness long denied. The glass shattered easily enough and then it was all a blur of chaos. He remembers the ringing alarm and the screams of the people around him as he carved away his own flesh to release The Grandfather. And the mild-mannered nebbish accountant was gone, replaced by Tor-Ak reborn.

## **EDITH EPSTEIN, THE GRANDMOTHER**

The fate of Andy's wife, Edith, is almost too horrible to consider. Each time Tor-Ak takes a host body, he selects a single female to become The Grandmother—an entity whose sole purpose is the propagation of the Brood Mother caste (see pages 23–24).

Through a combination of psionic manipulations and ancient antediluvian spores, Edith was transformed into an enormous oviparous monster, little more than a mindless husk with no purpose other than to spawn huge black-shelled eggs from her cavernous womb. These eggs hatch into the full-grown female caretakers of the sleeping Neanderthal army: the asexual Brood Mothers.



## EDITH EPSTEIN

### THE GRANDMOTHER

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d10, Vigor d12

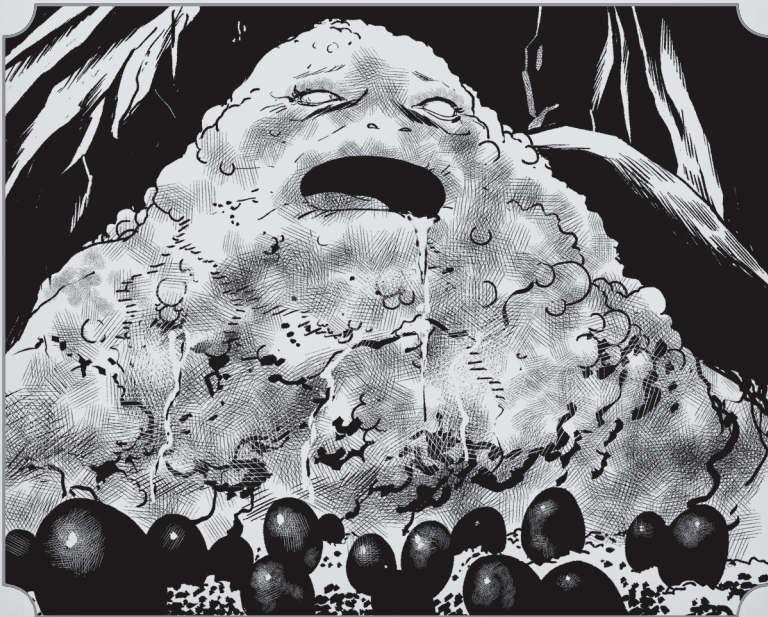
**Skills:** Intimidation d10, Notice d10

**Pace:** 1 (cannot run); **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 17 (2)

**Special Abilities:**

- *Armor +2:* Thick layers of blubber, fat, spores, and chitinous scabs.
- *Death Burst:* When The Grandmother is slain, her massive form bursts and deflates as the giant abscess that is her body drains into a pool of disease the size of a Large Burst Template. Anyone in the area of the burst must make a Vigor roll for each round of exposure. On a failure, the character suffers a level of Fatigue. A character who dies from contact with the psionically charged ichor is mentally and physically transformed into a Neanderthal warrior over the course of 1d4 days.
- *Hardy:* A second Shaken result does not result in a wound.
- *Handmaidens:* The Grandmother is attended by 2d4 Brood Mothers at all times. In addition, she can disgorge 1d4 additional Brood Mothers eggs from her womb every other round. These Brood Mothers hatch one round after being birthed and immediately rush to The Grandmother's defense.
- *Rooted:* The Grandmother is practically immobile, only able to slowly drag herself along with great effort. She cannot run.
- *Immunities:* The Grandmother is immune to disease, fear, poison and Intimidation.
- *Large:* Attackers add +2 to their attack rolls when attacking The Grandmother.
- *Noncombatant:* The Grandmother has no direct attack form at her disposal. She relies on her Handmaidens and her Spore Bursts to defend her.
- *Size +5:* The Grandmother's massive grotesque size is the equivalent of a small elephant, weighing nearly 4 tons, and about fifteen feet long.

- *Spore Burst:* The Grandmother is rife with infection, disease, and pestilent spores. Each time she is wounded, a burst of thick viscous pus sprays out in an area the size of a Small Burst Template. Anyone in the area of the burst must make a Vigor roll. On a failure, the character suffers a level of Fatigue. A character who dies from contact with the psionically charged ichor is mentally and physically transformed into a Neanderthal warrior over the course of 1d4 days.
- *Synaptic Repeater:* The Grand Mother functions as a Synaptic Repeater for The Grandfather's hive mind, able to relay commands to a 48" range.
- *Living Death:* While Edith is still technically "alive," for game purposes she bears the qualities of an undead abomination. +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage (except to the head).
- *Vomitous Visage:* The Grandmother constantly oozes infection from the pores of her body. The first time a character gets within 3" of her, he must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken. Whether he succeeds or fails, he is then injured to the sight of her for 24 hours.





## THE GRANDCHILDREN (NEANDERTHALS)

Tor-Ak's growing army ("The Grandchildren") is comprised of savage Neanderthal clans gathered together beneath his mental yoke. These ancient beings have been hibernating in great caves for thousands of years, awaiting his call to action.

There are two types of Neanderthals: the "natural" born descendants of Tor-Ak's clan, who have persisted in the Lost Land from time immemorial, and the more recent additions of human victims, captured and psychically lobotomized by The Grandfather, or subjected to the psionic suppurations of The Grandmother. Statistically they are the same.

Despite being referred to as the Grandchildren, there are no children amongst the ranks of the slumbering Neanderthals. All of the Neanderthals—male and female—are considered warriors. There are no non-combatants.

### WARRIOR (NEANDERTHAL)

The rank and file Neanderthal Warriors are always encountered in large numbers in the service of Tor-Ak and are considered Mooks for the purposes of combat (see the *Thrilling Tales* core book, p.87). They attack *en masse* in groups of no less than a dozen, ganging up on a foe until it falls before moving onto the next.



### WARRIOR NEANDERTHAL

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5;

**Toughness:** 7 (1)

**Hindrances:** Illiterate, Savage\*

**Gear:** Spear and Club (60%, Str+d6; Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands), Axe (Str+d6) and Dagger (30%, Str+d4), Maul (Str+d8; AP 2 vs. rigid armor, Parry -1, 2 hands) and Short Sword (10%, Str+d6)

#### Special Abilities:

- *Armor +1:* Neanderthals have thick skin and heavy musculature.
- *Berserk:* Neanderthals have the Berserk Edge when not in contact with The Grandfather's hive mind.
- *Never Shaken:* As Mooks, Neanderthals are never shaken. If an attack equals or exceeds their Toughness, they are out of the fight.
- *Synaptic Dependency:* Neanderthals must be within control range of a Synaptic Repeater (such as a Sub-Chief) to maintain contact with The Grandfather's hive mind. When within range, the Synaptic Repeater allows Tor-Ak to remotely

contact and control any Neanderthal Warrior within 12" of the Sub-Chief. When a Neanderthal loses contact with the hive mind, they lose control and gain the Berserk edge.

### **SUB-CHIEF (NEANDERTHAL)**

Neanderthal Sub-Chiefs are the "leaders" who serve as the Synaptic Repeaters for the Grandfather's hive mind. Sub-Chiefs are considered Henchmen for the purposes of combat (see the *Thrilling Tales* core book, p.87).



### **SUB-CHIEF (NEANDERTHAL)**

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Survival d6, Throwing d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6;  
**Toughness:** 8 (2)

**Hindrances:** Illiterate, Savage\*

**Edges:** Hold the Line!, Iron Jaw\*

**Gear:** Axe (Str+d6), 2 Spears (Str+d6; Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands), Dagger (Str+d4)

#### **Special Abilities:**

- *Armor +2:* Neanderthal Sub-Chiefs have thick skin and heavy musculature.
- *Hear the Master:* The Sub-Chief has a mental link of infinite distance with The Grandfather, and can send and receive non-verbal mental communications

with him. As they are in direct contact with The Grandfather, Sub-Chiefs do not have the Berserk edge like standard Neanderthals.

- *Synaptic Repeater:* Neanderthal Sub-Chiefs function as Synaptic Repeaters for The Grandfather's hive mind. This contact allows Tor-Ak to remotely contact and control any Neanderthal Warrior within 12" of the Sub-Chief.

If the Sub-Chief is defeated, the synaptic web connection is broken and the Neanderthal Warriors in the area can no longer be directly controlled by The Grandfather. These uncontrolled warriors gain the Berserk edge.

- *Wild Die:* Sub-Chiefs are considered Henchmen and as such rolls a Wild Die along with their Trait die when making tests, taking the better result of the two.

### **TERRORSAUR RIDER (NEANDERTHAL)**

While rare, some Neanderthal warriors have an unexplained mental bond with specific terrorsaurs, undertaking personal quests to find and bond with them as their Riders. These elite warriors become psychically linked and bonded with their terrorsaur mounts, and form the devastating ranks of the The Grandchildren's cavalry.



**TERRORSAUR RIDER (NEANDERTHAL)**

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Riding d8, Survival d6, Throwing d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6;  
**Toughness:** 8 (2)

**Hindrances:** Illiterate, Savage\*

**Edges:** Beast Bond (Mount), Beast Master (Mount), Berserk (but see Mind Bound below), Hold the Line!, Iron Jaw\*

**Gear:** Lance (Str+d8; AP 2 when charging, only usable in mounted combat), Axe (Str+d6), Spear (Str+d6; Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands), and Dagger (Str+d4)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Armor +2:** Terrorsuar Riders have thick skin and heavy musculature.
- **Berserk:** The Riders have the Berserk Edge when not in contact with The Grandfather's hive mind.
- **Mind Bound:** If the rider's mount is killed, the Neanderthal will immediately go Berserk and fight until any nearby enemies are dead or fled.
- **Synaptic Dependency:** Terrorsuar Riders must be within control range of a Synaptic Repeater (such as a Sub-Chief) to maintain contact with The Grandfather's hive mind.

When within range, the Synaptic Repeater allows Tor-Ak to remotely contact and control any Terrorsaur Rider within 12" of the Sub-Chief.

However, a Terrorsaur Rider does not go Berserk when he loses contact with the hive mind; only the loss of his mount will have this effect.

- **Telepathy:** As a free action, Terrorsaur Riders can communicate telepathically with their bonded mount to a range of one mile.

**TERRORSAUR**

The flora and fauna native to the Lost Land have been psychically mutated from their millennia long exposure to the latent psychic imprint Tor-Ak has left upon the valley. This increase in intelligence has driven some of the native biota mad with bloodlust, while others have developed mental abilities of their own. The most notable of the latter group—and the dominant natural species in the valley—are the Terrorsaurs, a mutated species of pack-hunting psionic dinosaurs.

Terrorsaurs are dangerous enough that even The Grandchildren give them a wide berth. However, some Neanderthal Warriors have an unexplained psionic link with the beasts and actively seek them out as mounts (see Terrorsaur Riders, pages 18–19).

Due to their heightened

intellect, the terrorsaurs live in makeshift domiciles, and while the first choice in their diet is meat, they are omnivorous—not pure carnivores—like their ancestors.

Terrorsaurs are similar in appearance to velociraptors, but with partially translucent skin, larger craniums, long tetradactyl limbs and intelligent human-like eyes.

### TERRORSAURS

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**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Psionics d8 (but see Pack Psionics below), Stealth d8, Tracking d8

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 7;  
**Toughness:** 11 (2)

**Edges:** First Strike, Quick

#### **Special Abilities:**

- *Armor +2:* Thick skin.
- *Bite:* Str+d6.
- *Psionic Resistance:* Terrorsaurs act as if they have 2 additional points of Armor when hit by damage-causing psionic powers, and add +2 to their Trait rolls when resisting opposed powers.
- *Pack Psionics:* Individually, terrorsaurs possess no exploitable psionic power. However, a pack of three terrorsaurs create a psionic resonance between them, granting them a Psionics skill of d8, and allowing

them to access a shared pool of 10 Power Points. Each additional terrorsaur in the pack provides an additional 3 Power Points to the pool.

If the number in the pack drops below the minimum of three, the terrorsaurs no longer have access to Pack Psionics (and they will often retreat).

- *Size +2:* These creatures can stand up to 8' tall and weigh over 1000 pounds.
- *Stunning Blast:* The pack only has access to a single power: Stun. The terrorsaurs will open any attack with this psionic blast, then descend upon their Shaken foes to tear them to pieces.

### TERRORSAUR MOUNT

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Terrorosaur mounts have the standard Terrorosaur statistics with the following additions:

- *Mind Bound:* If its Rider is killed, the terrorsaur mount will be Shaken. On a Raise, the riderless terrorsaur will consume its rider's corpse and join the closest terrorsaur pack it can find.
- *Mounted Attack:* The terrorsaur mount may attack any threat to its front during its Rider's action.
- *Telepathy:* As a free action, terrorsaur mounts can communicate telepathically with their bonded rider to a range of one mile.





*The creature cried a horrifying, piercing shriek, and fixed its all-too-human gaze upon them. "Get ready," whispered Helena Troy. She thumbed back the hammer on her pistol, and took careful aim as the terrorsaur hissed, then lunged forward with the speed of a freight train...*

## **THE LOST LAND**

The Lost Land existed before Tor-Ak. It will exist after him. For millions of years, the hidden tropical valley tucked away in the towering Rilo-Rhodope Mountains has persisted unchanged. Thick jungle, towering trees, dense vegetation, deep river gorges, and large cave systems teem with abundant and deadly life. However, unlike the life in most tropical climates, the Lost Land is a psionic focal point, and this has altered the ecosystem to such an extent that the majority of life here is either psionically active or resistant.

Some specific locations of note in the Lost Land follow:

## **THE DREAMING CAVES OF THE GRANDCHILDREN**

The tens of thousands of Neanderthals calling the Lost Land home are not all active at the same time. The Brood Mothers oversee and maintain a strict sleep/activity cycle, wherein only approximately one thousand Neanderthals are awake at any single time, while the remainder are left in hibernation in cavernous Dreaming Caves that stretch deep below the valley.

The Dreaming Caves of the Grandchildren are titanic stone vaults embedded with psionically resonant crystals specifically maintained to induce sleep to anyone within range.



*The air was blast-furnace hot and heavy with the stench of decaying plant matter. In the misty distance, they could hear the bellowing of titanic and ancient beasts...and the death cries of their prey. "Step carefully, team," Doc Steele said. "This isn't a walk in the park. History itself intends to kill us all...."*



## BROOD MOTHERS

Created from the fertile oocytes of Edith Epstein, and mutated by the corrupted fluids of her new form as The Grandmother, the Brood Mothers are responsible for the caretaking of the Dreaming Caves of the Neanderthals, and rarely leave her side, save to seek out food sources for their mistress.

Brood Mothers are gaunt emaciated things, whose hands and feet end in talon-like claws. Their stringy hair conceals their horrific eyeless visage and hissing sphincter-like mouth. The Brood Mother's alabaster skin is coated at all times in slick, viscous black oil.

Brood Mothers are not Neanderthals.

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

**Skills:** Climbing d4, Fighting  
d8, Intimidation d6, Notice  
d8, Stealth d8, Swimming d6

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6;  
**Toughness:** 9 (1)

**Special Abilities:**

- *Amphibious:* Brood Mothers are amphibious and cannot drown.
- *Armor +1:* Rubbery hide.
- *Claws:* Str+d6. Talon-like claws.
- *Fearless:* Brood Mothers feel no fear when in the presence of Neanderthals or The Grandmother.
- *Fleet Footed:* On land and in water, Brood Mothers have a Pace of 8 and roll d8 for running.
- *Oiled Skin:* A Brood Mother cannot be grappled due to the slick black slime coating her skin.
- *Speechless:* Brood Mother's are physically incapable of coherent speech, only able to manifest a series of high-pitched hisses. All Brood Mothers and Neanderthals, however, are able to understand and interpret the sibilant sounds, and obey the Brood Mothers implicitly.
- *Synaptic Repeater:* Brood Mothers function as synaptic repeaters for The Grandfather's hive mind, but can relay commands to a 24" range.
- *Telepathy:* The Brood Mothers

may communicate telepathically with The Grandmother and Tor-Ak.

- *Unnatural Physiology:* The mutated physical form of the Brood Mothers provides them +2 Toughness.

- *Wail:* As an action, a Brood Mother can emit a terrible hissing psionic screech. All non-Neanderthal targets within 6" must make an opposed Spirit roll. Failure means they suffer 2d10 sonic damage, +d6 on a raise.

These crystals are composed of what some refer to as Atlantean Crystal. Those who know how to manipulate the psionic resonance of the stones (such as Tor-Ak) can cause them to elicit different effects, including spontaneous combustion, mass hypnosis, summoning, even time travel.

### **THUNDER LIZARD HUNTING GROUNDS**

While the entire valley is the hunting ground of roaming packs of hundreds of prehistoric dinosaurs, the stretch of plains in the center of the valley are known as the Thunder Lizard Hunting Ground for good reason. Something about these grasslands cause the dinosaurs to go mad with bloodlust. They gain the Frenzy edge while in the grasslands and for 1d3 hours afterwards.

### **TRISHULA FALLS**

Not far from the Dreaming Caves are three immense waterfalls, each towering some 3,000 feet

in the air, all emptying into the same plunge pool. The fury of the water here is crushing, and serves to protect and conceal the series of interlinked caves behind the falls. These hidden caves are home to Tor-Ak's host body as well as The Grandmother and her Handmaidens.

### **THE HOWLING CAVERN**

A terrible wailing issues forth from a small fissure in the rear of this nondescript cave. The fissure widens after several thousand feet of cramped space into a subterranean tunnel stretching off into darkness. This tunnel eventually connects with the hollow world below the surface of the earth and the kingdom of the Mantle Men and their surface world conquerer, Arthur Slingsby Duncombe-Parker, "The Subterranean Monarch." (ADM3230 *Pulp Villains: The Subterranean Monarch*).



## **THE MONOLITH**

This weird unearthly spire of purplish stone twists up out of the ground in the middle of a barren plain not unlike a gnarled arthritic finger. The base of the spire is covered in muddy handprints and is clearly the site of some form of Neanderthal worship.

The monolith is inscrutably ancient—its origin is unknown even to Tor-Ak—and has existed in the valley for as long as the valley has existed. Its primordial origins confound Tor-Ak and unveiling its secrets has become a pet project of the Undying Savage. In its very simplest truth, the monolith is the focal point of the psionic energy that maintains the valley's tropical nature and concealed geography. But Tor-Ak has discovered similar alien spires scattered about the universe in his explorations and he is convinced there is a much greater mystery to unravel with the spire.

## **MOUNT ILKILKAI**

Overlooking the valley is Mount Ilkilkai, the enormous cone of a long dormant volcano. It is in its shadow that the terrorsaurs have built their crude villages. While Ilkilkai has not erupted in thousands of years, Tor-Ak is well aware that an eruption would destroy the valley and his Neanderthal host. To this end, he has implemented several psionic early warning safeguards to allow him enough time to lead his Neanderthals into the tunnels of the Hollow World below.

## **THE SCREAMING JUNGLE**

Extremely dense, triple-canopy foliage conceals a dimly lit emerald netherworld. Located to the south of the Dreaming Caves, the Jungle teems with all manner of poisonous insects, venomous snakes, and roving packs of terrorsaurs. Despite the remote natural surroundings, the jungle is constantly inundated with the buzz of millions of bugs, and the death screams of prey falling beneath the claws and fangs of predators.





# THE LOST LAND

**MOUNT  
ILKILKAI**

**THUNDER LIZARD  
HUNTING GROUNDS**

**THE MONOLITH**

**THE HOWLING  
CAVERN**



## ADVENTURE HOOKS

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### THE MAD ACCOUNTANT

Andy Epstein is missing. Perhaps he is a close friend of the player characters, or they have been hired by Epstein's family or even local law enforcement—the case has an element of the weird about it.

Last seen several weeks ago at an archaeological exhibit at the City Museum, reports of the mild-mannered accountant breaking through the exhibit's glass, seizing an ancient bone knife, and flaying his own skin, dominated the news cycle. Epstein went missing in the chaos that night and the city was briefly abuzz with rampant sightings of the "Mad Accountant," but these have since been replaced by tales of strange creatures terrorizing the sewers—which is also where Epstein was last seen.

The players must track Epstein into the sewers, which have been populated by a scouting force of The Grandfather's Neanderthal legions, including a contingent of Terrorsaur Riders! Surviving this conflict leaves the heroes with more questions than answers about Epstein's fate, but those questions will soon be answered....

### THE MARCH OF THE NEANDERTHALS!

After much consideration, Tor-Ak has decided it is indeed time to clean the slate of humanity and begin anew, this time, perhaps, ceding the world to The Grandchildren.

Awakening several caves of his slumbering Neanderthals, Tor-Ak's sub-chiefs lead the hordes into The Howling Cavern and down into the Hollow World below the Lost Land, maneuvering them through the labyrinthine tunnels of the underground caverns, until they spill out onto the surface, quickly taking over several national parks: Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Mount Rainier. From these beachheads, Tor-Ak intends to establish new breeding grounds and slowly annex the neighboring lands, bringing the cities to ruin and reinforcing his ranks by converting his enemies into more Grandchildren. His ultimate goal is to once again let nature take over, growing out from the focal points of the national parks.

The news about public lands overrun by "cavemen" spreads like wildfire and the National Guard quickly moves to close off access to the affected regions. The heroes



can be drawn into the conflict purely by chance, visiting one of the afflicted parks on unrelated business, or following a clue about Andy Epstein's whereabouts from a prior adventure. Now trapped within the park and surrounded by Neanderthals, the heroes can choose to maintain a low profile, complete their initial objective and escape, or take an aggressive approach and attempt to defeat the Neanderthal forces, possibly even by targeting the Sub-Chiefs. However, wholesale slaughter of The Grandchildren will quickly bring the heroes to Tor-Ak's attention.

## WEIRD TALES

Once the heroes realize the danger posed by Tor-Ak is far too great to leave unchecked, they may wish to take the fight to him directly. Tor-Ak, however, controls his forces from afar, and most likely will not have revealed himself, so the heroes will need to find their way to him.

Enter the famed explorer Guy Willingham, whose best-selling memoir dedicates an entire chapter to a concealed valley he claims to have found somewhere in Eastern Europe. A known alcoholic and scoundrel, some believe his tales are little more than drunken fiction. But his book speaks of both "psychic cavemen" and "trained dinosaurs." Either through bribery or appealing to his massive insecurities (read ego), Willingham claims he can lead them directly to the valley

Getting there requires

extensive overland travel through extremely dangerous mountainous terrain, but the true peril lies within the confines of the valley itself, where the heroes could easily end up "recruited" into the lobotomized forces of the Grandchildren, or possessed by the spirit of The Grandfather himself. (See "The Lost Land" chapter for several different adventure location seeds.)

## MOTHER KNOWS BEST

Not all of his servants believe Tor-Ak is the best steward of the Neanderthals. The ancient matriarch of the Brood Mothers, called the Brood Queen, was charged by Tor-Ak ages ago to oversee each new 'crop' of Brood Mothers brought into the world. Once little more than a drone, her centuries of service overseeing the Dreaming Caves have afforded her an unparalleled level of autonomy from Tor-Ak's synaptic web... and she has begun to think for herself.

The Brood Queen cares more for The Grandchildren and their continued well being within the sanctuary of the Lost Land than she does for any of Tor-Ak's machinations--and she is prepared to do something about it. Much like the terrorsaurs, her lengthy exposure to the psychic energies of the valley have caused her to develop psionic powers of her own. Thus far she has kept them hidden from Tor-Ak, but it is only a matter of time before he takes notice and she knows it. If she is going to act against The Grandfather, it will need to

be soon.

The Brood Queen is possibly the only living being with direct knowledge of The Grandfather's susceptibility to the Bone Blade (see "Spirit and Bone: Killing the Undying Savage" on page 12–13). However, she requires agents to put this knowledge into effect. When the heroes cross paths with Tor-Ak's forces, they come to her attention as well—and the heroes will suit her task perfectly.

Tasked with destroying Tor-Ak,

the Brood Queen will aid them in this quest by revealing both the location of Andy Epstein's lair behind Trishula Falls, and the method of destroying the Bone Blade—and The Grandfather—once and for all. The Game Master should choose one of the possible methods of destruction listed under the sidebar on pages 12–13 (or create one herself).

To execute their plan, the Queen will turn the Brood Mothers against Tor-Ak's host—and if

## THE BROOD QUEEN

The Queen is an exceptionally tall (7') Brood Mother, her body covered in self-inflicted ritualized scars used by her to tally the passing years and track the number of Grandchildren she oversees. Her stringy hair is long and gray, braided into dozens of braids woven around shards of human bone.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d4, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d12, Psionics d10, Stealth d10, Survival d6, Swimming d6, Throwing d6, Tracking d8

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 12 (3)

### Special Abilities:

- *Amphibious:* The Brood Queen is amphibious and cannot drown.
- *Armor +3:* Ritually scarred rubbery hide.
- *Claws:* Str+d6. Talon-like claws.
- *Fearless:* The Brood Queen is immune to fear and Intimidation.
- *Fleet Footed:* On land and in water, The Brood Queen has a Pace of 8 and rolls d8 for running.
- *Improved Psionic Resistance:* Over millennia of exposure, The Brood Queen has developed a resistance to Psionic Powers: she acts as if she had 4 additional points of Armor when hit



need be, The Grandmother—to allow the heroes to steal the Bone Blade from Andy. Further, she will provide safe passage from the Lost Land so that the heroes may perform the second part of their task: destroying the Blade itself.

The Brood Queen does not know Tor-Ak's ability to possess a host is derived from contact with the Bone Blade itself, or of his Ghost Form's ability to wield the blade in combat, and therefore cannot warn the heroes of these

dangers. The Game Master should keep these tricks in mind and spring them on the unsuspecting players at the most inopportune of moments.

## GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS

For gamemasters who are familiar with other Pulp Villains releases, this scenario works as a “crossover” of sorts. As Tor-Ak consolidates his

by damage-causing psionic powers, and adds +4 to her Trait rolls when resisting opposed powers.

- *Oiled Skin:* The Brood Queen cannot be grappled due to the slick black slime coating her skin.
- *Psionic Powers:* Unknown to Tor-Ak, The Brood Queen been quietly cultivating her own latent psionic powers. She has 25 Power Points and access to the following Psionic Powers: Detect/Conceal Arcana, Dispel, Drain Power Points, Slumber.
- *Speechless:* The Brood Queen is physically incapable of coherent speech, only able to manifest a series of high-pitched hisses. All Brood Mothers and Neanderthals, however, are able to understand and interpret the sibilant sounds.
- *Synaptic Repeater:* The Brood Queen function as a Synaptic Repeater for The Grandfather's hive mind, but can relay commands to a 24” range.
- *Telepathy:* The Brood Queen may communicate telepathically.
- *Unnatural Physiology:* The mutated physical form of The Brood Queen provides her with +3 Toughness.
- *Wail:* As an action, The Brood Queen can emit a terrible hissing psionic screech. All non-Neanderthal targets within 12” must make an opposed Spirit roll. Failure means they suffer 2d10 sonic damage, +d6 on a raise.

## PULP VILLAINS: TOR-AK

power after his long absence from the Valley of the Purple Spire, he becomes aware of the recent rise of the Subterranean Monarch in the caverns below the Lost Land, as well as his coup of the Atlantean tribals, the Mantle Men.

Tor-Ak feels an ancient kinship with the Mantle Men, and does not take kindly to Duncombe-Parker's manipulations. He intends to possess Duncombe-Parker, claim his hollow world lair, and supplement his own Neanderthals with the arrayed forces of the Mantle Men.

The heroes might find themselves thrust into the conflict of these two forces, recruited by Duu-Kal-Quon, who has seen

the return of Tor-Ak in fevered dreams. Believing Tor-Ak to be one of the Lotokka-Tu-Shah, or "First God Kings," returned—and perhaps he is—Duu-Kal-Quon seeks apotheosis with his spirit. To do so, he needs the Bone Blade brought to him, or he needs to be brought to it. Duncombe-Parker, however, will not simply allow the High Priest of the Mantle Men to walk out or receive suspicious visitors from the surface, so subterfuge and infiltration are necessary.

Should the Bone Blade successfully make its way to Duu-Kal-Quon, Tor-Ak will immediately abandon the host form of Andy Epstein to possess



*They'd once been normal people—just average Joes and Janes. Now, they were bestial, animalistic, and terrified of their once-familiar surroundings. And like terrified animals, they lashed out. The sounds of screams and shattering glass filled the streets...*



the Atlantean High Priest, quickly slay Duncombe-Parker and consolidate control of his collected forces, before finally using the Staff of Huu-Baju to summon a swarm of Magma Worms from deep in the earth. With his knowledge of the psionic harmonics of Atlantean crystal, Tor-Ak will use the Magma Worm swarm to expedite the eradication of his failed experiment: humanity, by wiping every last industrialized city from the face of the earth.

## THE INHERITORS

An alternate approach to the awakening Neanderthal hordes could involve Tor-Ak perfecting a ritual that allows him to transform the average citizen of the modern age into "Neocavemen" (functionally the same as the Neanderthals, and under Tor-Ak's control).

The ritual involves the alignment of three items—"Bone," "Blood," and "Iron" from the era of Tor-Ak's birth, and the PCs investigation might lead them to a local museum or historical society, with a trove of ancient artifacts.

One such item is a surviving fragment of Tor-Ak's original skull (the "bone")—a fragment

that even Tor-Ak was not aware of. (Upon learning of the skull's existence, Tor-Ak would be drawn to it as a secondary resting place for his consciousness—possibly acting as a lure for the ancient conqueror.)

The second item is a recovered cave painting on a slab of rock, one created using the ancient painter's own blood.

Finally, a fragment of iron ore from the meteor that killed the dinosaurs completes the collection.

The PCs must reverse the ritual by capturing the items, and free the citizenry from the ancient conqueror's clutches.

## HERO DOWN

During the course of their battles against Tor-Ak, the PCs manage to disrupt the ancient horror's plans for conquest, freeing Andy Epstein from his psychic control.

In spite, Tor-Ak chooses a *new* host: one of the player characters. Now armed with The Grandfather's arsenal of psychic powers, as well as detailed knowledge of the PCs' skills, resources, and weaknesses, the need to defeat Tor-Ak becomes even more urgent. Can the adventurers save their friend, or will Tor-Ak claim his final victim?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jarrold Feliciano discovered the Bone Blade in a small cave while on vacation in Norway. He recalls little about his actions while possessed by the spirit of The Grogard, save mumbling about today's gamers being mollycoddled by things like "rules balance" and "player agency." When not rending his own flesh whilst in thrall to a prehistoric disembodied psychic horror, Jarrod wanders the blasted streets of New York, scribbling nightmares on pulp and celluloid.

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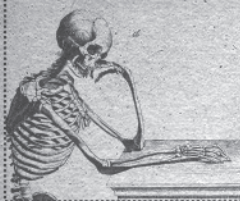
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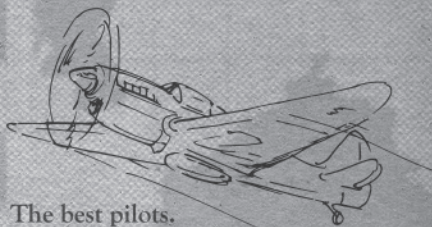


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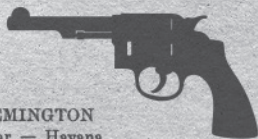


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