

TOTEM



A Roleplaying Game Where YOU ...

Select a Tribal Totem

Explore an Ice Age Wilderness

Master Tribal Magics

Wander Two Worlds, the Spirit and the Earthly, Simultaneously

Fight Exiles, Ogres and Elementals

Quest For Artefacts of Power For Your Tribe



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Thanks to Mike Holmes and Steve Emsley for feedback

THE HUNTER
THE STONES
THE SPIRITS
THE TRIBE

"Our Storyteller taught us that the StoneTooth Tribe was born of the Rock. For many years our ancestors fed on pebbles and boulders before the Great Sprit fashioned the plants and animals that we feed on today. From dust we came and to dust we shall return."

"There are patterns in the cliffs and on boulders which the Storyteller taught us are the birthmarks of our ancestors. On Spirit Days we dress these clefts and marks with flowers, and paint them with clay and ochre."

"When I became a Hunter, I had to recite the names of all of my ancestors and I had to climb The Pinnacle and spend three nights and three days atop its terrifying height. When I returned I was looked upon as a Hunter of the Rock, a Hunter of the StoneTooth People, a Hunter of the Tribe. Finally my family prepared to welcome me into their Clan.. Our Clan Spirit is FireFoot - the Horse Spirit and he tested me severely. With help from my Clan Folk I had to steal the tail-hairs of a wild horse identified as sacred by the Storyteller. Three hairs cost me a broken nose and two black eyes - but I was at last a Hunter of the Clan alongside my Kin. The hard won hair I braided with horse hide as a fillet for my pony-tail."

"FireFoot has granted me his powers of speed and quickness that I may hunt for the Tribe and bring honour upon my Clan. My Kin have taught me many things; they have imparted to me knowledge of the seasons, of the trail, of the forests and the hills, they have taught me how to pitch a camp and strike it in the morning, how to fish for bream in the rivers, how to make a spear, a blade, a bow, boots, clothes and everything else I may need. They taught me the way of spirits and the duties of a Hunter. Finally I learnt an extra skill since each Hunter must strive to outdo his Kinsmen in one activity. My talent is for jumping and leaping. My father knows well the art of healing wounds with herbs, while my brother-in-law knows the courses and ways of the local rivers and is an excellent swimmer."

"My Clan call me Two Tongues because they find my laughter strange. They say it sounds like two people laughing at once! My wife was formerly a member of the Cave Bear Clan, but she has been given a warm welcome by FireFoot and by my Kinsmen also. She is called SweetSun (the Great Spirit bless her)."

"Before I leave you for the hunt, I will show you my Kit, for I made all of it with my own hands. I wear a tunic of deerskin under a jacket of fox fur. My leggings are also of fox fur and my boots are of seal-skin and bison hide. I carry fur mittens and a shelter of seasoned willow wood staves that will support a tent skin made of wild cattle (auroch). I have two spears, one

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tipped with a good flint blade, the other tipped with a serrated bone blade. The flint spear is heavy and deadly, the bone spear is lighter and can be thrown a long way. My backpack is made of auroch hide and covered with a thatch of bound reeds to keep the rain off. This soft leather pouch here contains my tools. If I open it out you can see my flint scraper, a hole borer, a flint slicer, a flint sparker, a flint axe and a chopper. In this other pouch I keep sinew thread and a bone needle (my most treasured possession). This pouch also keeps my sphagnum moss dry - I will use that as tinder to start a fire out on the trail."

"You've already seen the band for my pony-tail. But around my neck I wear a hare's foot which gives me the power to leap and jump as I do. Every skill and talent must have a physical correlation for it to work. The Storyteller calls this 'magic' but for my Kinsmen it is just the way of things."

"My uncle is calling me. We are ready for the trail. We are expecting snow today, and that will mask the sounds of our movement from the deer. And we are expecting to meet the Spirit of the Yellow Forest (the Great Spirit bless us). Join us! I will show you the way ..."

THE HUNTER

You are a Hunter. A man or woman of the Tribe who explores the world and who encounters dangerous spirits and wild animals on a daily basis. You are strong, proud and committed to supporting the Tribe. Without it you would be utterly alone in the world. Are Hunters all men? No. Most are, but often many hands are needed for this valuable job, or Clans find they lack enough men to serve as Hunters. What is the counter-part to the Hunter? It is the Firekeeper. Many women are Firekeepers, collecting firewood and tinder, keeping the Clan fire burning, cooking food, preparing meat, tanning hides and making clothes. Crippled hunters often become Firekeepers.

To create the character of your Hunter in more detail, first select a Clan and receive a Clan Talent, then select an Extra Talent. After this you select a name from the Name Options List and finally create the Hunter's Wealth.

CLAN

Your Tribe is made-up of maybe a hundred men, women and children. These tribal members live in related groups called Clans, and every Clan reveres the guardian spirit (or 'totem') of an animal that watches over it's members. Clans have their own customs and rituals based on their guardian spirit. The most important power is the Hunter's Blessing, bestowed on every Hunter of the Clan by the guardian spirit. This blessing allows him to kill an animal for food, and serves as a prayer that he can recite to appease the spirit of the dead animal and stop it from seeking revenge. The guardian spirit also teaches its Hunters a special Clan Talent. The Talent is often an ability or power possessed by the animal itself. Select a Clan from the following list:

The Cave Bear Clan

Members of this Clan are often strong and heavily built. The men have hairy bodies and grow long beards. The Clan Spirit is called StrongPaw. Clan Talent is *Immensely Strong*.

The Horse Clan

Members of this Clan are tall and fast on their feet. Men and women both have long pony-tails. The Clan Spirit is called FireFoot. Clan Talent is *Fast Runner*.

The Bison Clan

Members of this Clan are extremely hardy. The hunters of the clan tend to be heavy as they frequently gorge themselves on any meat they cannot carry back from the hunt. The Clan Spirit is called StoneHoof. Clan gift is Endurance.

The Wolf Clan

The men of this Clan are surly and watchful. Men and women grow their hair long and they file their canine teeth to points. The Clan Spirit is called Howler. Clan Talent is *Tracker*.

The Rhino Clan

The Rhino Clan members are blunt and direct; both men and women wear their hair in a top-knot. The Clan Spirit is called Rumble. Clan Talent is *Ignore Pain*.

The Red Deer Clan

Members of this Clan are quiet and relaxed people, often colouring their faces and bodies red with ochre. The Clan Spirit is called Tanglehorn. Clan Talent is *Stealthy*.

TALENTS

Besides gaining a Talent from the Clan spirit, the Clan members also teach the Hunter-to-be a useful Talent. This Extra Talent is chosen by the Hunter's player. Select one from:

- Animal Habits
- Archery
- Calm Spirit
- Climbing
- Disable
- Endurance
- Fast Runner
- Fire Making
- Healing Herbs
- Hunt (specify animal)
- Identify Spirit
- Leaping
- River Skills

- Sense the Invisible
- Throwing

TALENT AND FOCUS

Note that Talents aren't just skills or learned abilities, they fall somewhere between magic and skill. Everything in this world is semi-magical, it is pervasive and ubiquitous. To utilize a Talent, the Hunter must have on him a magical correspondence or Focus. Clan Talents, for example, are always bone, ivory, stone or wood carvings of the Clan's Guardian Spirit. If he loses this Focus then he can no longer use his Talent. He must fashion another which takes him a moderate amount of time, making the loss inconvenient but not catastrophic. Another person's focus can be used only as a source of raw materials to create your own version. Only a focus that you have made with your own hands will work for you. The Focii are described within the Talent descriptions.

TALENT DESCRIPTIONS

Animal Habits - You can detect the mood of an animal, perhaps giving you a clue to its intentions. You know how animals behave in specific circumstances. Focus is a Tatoo (see below)

Archery - You have a great aim and can hit targets with your arrows at great distances and with some accuracy. Arrows, even those with flint tips, are nowhere as lethal as spears, however, and best for shooting birds, goats and baby deer. Focus for this Talent is a collection of bird feathers which are used for the arrow flights.

Calm Spirit - Many spirits are hostile to Hunters and their Kin, but you can try to appease a spirit with words or magical techniques. Focus is a Tatoo (see below).

Climbing - You can climb cliffs, rocks, trees (or anything else) like a mountain goat! Difficult terrain such as boulder-strewn gulleys, steep rock-covered hillsides and any other hard-going can also be negotiated without the nasty injuries associated with them. Focus is a pair of goatskin boots.

Disable - Whether you are using a flint axe, spear, stick or fist, if you can hit someone or something, you can usually knock them down and disable them for a time. Focus is a leather bracelet decorated with bison bone.

Endurance - You can walk without stopping to rest for days at a time. After the first day draw one Sunstone to be able to continue for another day. After the second day draw two Sunstones, and so on. If an Earthstone is drawn the character is treated as if he is under the Sleep curse until he has slept for a full day. Focus for Bison Clan members is a pair of bison-hide boots.

Fast Runner - You can sprint at high speed to escape or to pursue an animal. Focus for Horse Clan Members is a carving of FireFoot.

Fire Making - You are adept at starting a fire with the barest of materials - a little dry moss or bundle of dry twigs and grass, and a flint sparker. It takes, on average, half an hour. Make a draw of stones to determine whether this is done faster or slower (refer to the Creating Goods rules for that). Focus is a small carved figurine in wood, ivory or soft rock of the Earth Goddess.

Healing Herbs - Many plants have medicinal effects, some are able to stop bleeding, reduce swelling, act as a poison antidote, reduce fevers, cure stomach ills and so on. You know when and where they can be found and you know how to prepare and administer them. Focus is the very herbs you are preparing.

Hunt (specify animal) - Most Hunters are generalists, hunting whatever comes their way. Someone with this Talent is adept at bringing down and killing a particular species of animal in spear combat. A bonus stone may be drawn during each 'turn' in the attack (as with other Talents) but only in direct spear combat, not archery or a thrown spear attack. The player must specify the prey animal when this Talent is chosen, and it cannot later be changed. The Talent only adds to draws involving *that particular* species. Choose from: Birds, Hyena, Red Deer, Cave Bear, Horse, Wild Cat, Wolf, Auroch, Bison, Reindeer, Mammoth, Mountain Goat, Rhino, Wolf and Cave Lion. Focus is a necklace of at least half a dozen teeth from a lion, wolf, cave bear or hyena.

Identify Spirit - Faced with magic or the obvious existence of a spirit - you can identify what type of magic or spirit it is, which may help you deal with it. You have knowledge of different spirit types. Focus is a Tatoo (see below).

Ignore Pain - Pain caused by injuries can put a Hunter in shock or stun him for a few vital moments, but you usually shrug off pain and keep on going until disabled or killed. Focus for Rhino Clan Members is a carving of Rumble.

Immensely Strong - You are stronger than most people. Focus for Cave Bear Clan Members is a carving of StrongPaw.

Leaping - You can jump higher and farther than most people. Focus is a Hare's Foot.

River Skills - You are familiar with the courses and ways of local rivers, you know how to cross them safely, how to fish and how to swim. Focus is a necklace of pretty seashells.

Sense the Invisible - You can sense the existence of spirits, of malign powers and the magic of Storytellers. You get a 'feeling' rather than complete understanding of the powers at work. For that you need Identify Spirit. Focus is a Tatoo (see below).

Stealthy - You are an expert at hiding and sneaking around, especially in the forests or in the darkness. Focus for Red Deer Clan Members is a carving of Tanglehorn.

Throwing - You are able to throw spears with great accuracy and over long distances. Focus is a spear caster, a shaped length of antler ending in an animal carving. The spear fits in a notch at the end, and the Talent allows the Hunter to swing the caster out and propel the spear using its leverage.

Tracker - You are better than most people at locating human and animal tracks and following them across country. You also know how to interpret tracks to estimate speed, number and type of prey. Focus for Wolf Clan Members is a carving of Howler.

THE TATOO FOCUS

Some Talents, in particular those relating to spirits, have no physical Focus. Instead the Storyteller of the Tribe tatoos a design onto the Hunter's skin which serves the same purpose. The design may incorporate zig-zags, parallel lines or spirals, and it acts as a link between the Hunter and the Spirit World. Tatoos are usually on the arms, chest and face.

NAME OPTIONS LIST

The Hunter needs a name. Rather than let player's create fantasy names that would be inappropriate the beginning player should pick a name from the list below, or create a name in the same style.

Hidden Moon, Long Shadow, Sun Face, Archer, Tale Teller, Sweetlove, Tall Man, First Born, Second Sister, Hammerhand, Sky, Mist, Wanderer, Lionheart, Whisperer, Mighty Hand, Faith, Trueheart, Seeker, Heather, Thorn, Holly, Berry, Midnight, Many Miracles, Greenblood, Big Laugh, Strong Bone, Spearshaker, Faithful, Thunder.

WEALTH x STATUS

Wealth is relative. In Totem, everyone is poor. Food, shelter, clothing, a few tools and a spear form a basic measure of status and wealth. The Hunter may own two spears, maybe a bow, perhaps a few amulets and a couple of fishhooks, but no-one is richer than that. What use are items you cannot carry with you and do not aid you in some manner? Wealth is measured in portable Kit. Meanwhile, status is the real prize for any tribesman. Increased status gives more social prestige, more say in the running of the Clan or Tribe and a place of honour at meals, feasts and

ceremonies. Members of the Tribe grade themselves along the following simple descending scale:

- The Chief
- The Storyteller and the Elders
- Hunters
- Firekeepers and Youths
- Born Cripples
- Outcasts

A HUNTER'S KIT

Each newly created Hunter should start with the following basic items:

Flint-Bladed Spear

Fur Jacket and Leggings

Fur Hat and Mittens

Leather Pack

Tinder and Flint Sparker

Flint Slicer

Dried Food (2 days worth)

any Focii associated with his Talents

COMPARATIVE VALUE OF GOODS

The following list isn't a shopping list of Ice Age goods available from the local trader. In TOTEM every adult can manufacture for themselves all of the items on this list. All that is required are adequate raw materials and time. Some Talented individuals may be able to complete the process in a shorter time than others. No-one can afford NOT to learn the skills of stone-knapping, bone-working and woodwork.

This being the case there is no currency in TOTEM. Items may be bartered for other items, for food or for favours, but only on an ad hoc system based on the needs of the individuals involved. All of that should be handled in-game. To assess the relative value of everyday items the list below rates each object according to how long it takes to create given that the raw materials are on hand. If you need something that the Tribe may already have in abundance (flint cores for creating tools, animal bones and cured hide) you can trade for what you need.

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| <i>Item</i> | <i>Time to Manufacture</i> |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Animal Hide | 4 Days |
| Arrows (5) | 2 Days |
| Bag, Leather | 2 Days |
| Belt, Leather | 3 Days |
| Bone Comb | 10 Days |
| Boots (Foot Wrappings) | 3 Days |
| Bow | 4 Days |
| Cap/Bonnet, Fur | 2 Days |
| Cloak, Sheepskin/Fur | 2 Days |
| Coracle, Wood & Hide | 15 Days |
| Club, Wood | 1 Day |
| Dugout Canoe (3-man) | 40 Days |
| Fire Bow, Wooden | 4 Days |
| Fishhook, Bone | 5 Days |
| Flint Sparker | 1 Day |
| Flint Tools (Borer, Scraper, Slicer, Chopper) | 2 Days each |
| Frame Pack, Wooden | 2 Days |
| Hammerstone | 1 Day |
| Healing Herb Remedy | 1 Day |
| Hooded Cloak, Textile | 5 Days |
| Leggings | 3 Days |
| Mittens, Fur | 4 Days |
| Needle, Bone | 8 Days |
| Pack, Leather | 3 Days |
| Paints & Pigments | 10 Days |
| Pick, Deer Antler | 1 Day |
| Pouch, Leather | 1 Day |
| Rations, Dried, per-day | 1 Day |
| Rope of Willow or Nettle Fibres (3m) | 6 Days |
| Shovel, Shoulder-blade | 1 Day |
| Sledge, Wooden | 12 Days |
| Sleeping Furs | 3 Days |
| Sling, Leather | 2 Days |
| Spear Caster (see Throwing Talent) | 2 Days |
| Spear, Fire-hardened | 1 Day |
| Spear, Bone-tipped | 2 Days |
| Spear, Flint-tipped | 3 Days |
| Staff | 2 Days |
| Tent, Leather, per-man | 5 Days |
| Thread, Sinew (3m) | 1 Day |
| Torch, Wooden (one-hour) | 2 Days |
| Tunic, Leather | 4 Days |
| Waterskin, Leather | 2 Days |

CREATING GOODS

To create anything you firstly need the raw materials. Most items will either require leather hide, wood, stone/flint, or bone/horn/ivory. Sinew can be used to create a thread. Leather is the material of choice in this era and used for an innumerable range of items, from boots to leggings, bags to thongs, bowstrings to tents. A large animal is killed, bled and skinned (then gutted and cooked) and the skin is always stretched on a wood frame, the fat and flesh cleaned with a flint scraper and then cured or dried (either in the sun or over a low fire). If the fur is to be left on, the job is done. If leather is required the cured hide is soaked in water for a couple of days, the fur can then be pulled out and the hide scraped once again. To tan the hide and make leather, a mixture of the animal's brains and body fat is worked steadily into the skin. Finally the hide is dried over a fire. Total preparation time: 4 days.

Hamstrings and other leg sinews can be dried and used as bindings and threads with which hides can be stitched together or as short rope or bowstrings. Sinews are sticky when wet and dry hard - they make excellent bindings for spear heads. Total preparation time: 1 day.

Let's say our Hunter wants to make a Bow. In the Ice Age bows were made of seasoned wood and a rawhide bowstring. What are the raw materials our Hunter needs? Well, with a flint chopper he needs to cut himself just the right piece of wood and let it season for several months. A Tribe might carry around a stock of wood that is being seasoned, but it might not. Instead the Hunter might have to use unseasoned wood, but the springiness in his Bow will only last a few weeks before it needs replacing. Rawhide for the bowstring can be gathered from any slaughtered animal. In addition five arrows will be needed, requiring a number of large feathers, additional wood (birch is good for arrows) and five flint arrowheads. If our Hunter has all the required raw materials then a bow and set of arrows may take him only 6 days to manufacture. On the other hand, he may have to go out and make a flint chopper and blade to cut his wood, kill a bird and a mountain goat to get his sinew and rawhide. Then he'll have to cure his hide, make his sinew and so on. From start to finish the process of creating a bow and arrows will take (on average) 10 days. We can say that the sinew and flint chopper were made while the animal hide was soaking for two days. Of course the Hunter might want to barter for his raw materials from his Kin, they should have surplus cured animal hide ready for fabricating as well as flint cores and other essentials (deer antler, leg bones and so on).

How long does it take the Hunter to fashion his Bow? The player draws 1 stone, 2 if suitably Talented. A single Sun Stone indicates the item was made in the time stated above. Two Sun Stones indicate the item was made in half the time stated above. No Sun Stones indicate that the item was not completed after the time above and the process needs to continue or be abandoned.

THE STONES

When I first began work on TOTEM, my overriding aim was to create a game where the method for task resolution existed both in our world *and* in the world of the Ice Age Hunters. I wanted to use something *they* would use. I settled on stones. I know you can buy coloured glass beads and polished stones in garden centres and flower shops, but I wanted the real thing and so I scoured my local beach looking for pebbles. I chose two colours, orange and grey, to represent two essential elements in the lives of the Tribes: the Sun and the Earth. Orange stones are Sunstones, grey stones are Earthstones. Use glass beads, ornamental pebbles - whatever you can find ... use different colours - it doesn't really matter.

You'll need maybe ten of one colour and ten of another, put them in a bag and you're ready to go. I wanted to remain authentic, so I bought a piece of soft patchwork leather, stained it and made it into a bag by stitching it with leather rawhide (sold as rawhide for 'gothic' pendants). I put in my beachcombed stones and created a bag tie by cutting up an old leather belt, knotting the terminals and just tying it around the neck of my bag. Instant Pleistocene 'rune stones'!!

For those wedded to their dice, use six-siders. Even results are successes, odd results are fails (see below). It's a simple binary mechanic. Instead of drawing 1 or 2 stones, roll 1 or 2 dice instead. To get into the Ice Age mood buy haematite dice! I swear I must get hold of some of those one day...

TASK RESOLUTION

When a Hunter wishes to accomplish some task, the Game Master asks the player to draw ONE stone from the bag. This is the default draw. If the stone is a Sunstone then the task succeeds. If it is an Earthstone then the task fails. You may be using different colours, but the method is the same.

If the Hunter has a Talent relevant to the task then let the player draw an extra stone, any stone that is a Sunstone indicates success. In addition, the GM may decide the task is easier than normal (due to some in-game factor) and allow an *another* stone to be drawn. Refer to the table below:

| Difficulty | Stones Drawn | % Chance | Example |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Average Task | 1 | 50 | Stab a Deer |
| Easy Task | 2 | 75 | Climb a tree |
| Routine Task | 3 | 87.5 | Hear a sound |

Drawing more than 3 stones severely warps the probability of failure! Drawing 4 stones gives a success 93.75% of the time; drawing 5 stones gives success 96.88% of the time, drawing 6 stones gives success 98.44% of the time, and drawing 10 stones gives success 99.9% of the time! Keep the draws low.

Alternatively the GM can make the task harder. Instead of asking the player to "draw 2 stones", he can ask the player to "draw 2 *Sunstones*", which reduces the chance of success below 50%. To really make a task formidable, the GM can ask the player to draw "3 *Sunstones*". He is asking the player to draw *that* amount of stones, and for them all to be *Sunstones*. A tough proposition. Remember: the default draw is 1 stone. A Talent that has some bearing on the Task will, in this case, reduce the number of *Sunstones* required by one.

Example: the Hunter wants to climb up a cliff and over the overhanging precipice. This is very difficult and so the GM asks the player to "draw 3 *Sunstones*". The player reminds the GM of his Climbing Talent and so the draw is reduced to only two *Sunstones*.

It cannot be stressed enough that this is a very fluid system and should never be subject to intense scrutiny or endless mechanical debate. The GM can simply pluck a number out of the air based on the difficulty of the situation as he sees it. Or the player can pick a difficulty if the group is that way inclined ... just grab a stone or two and get on with it. Don't pretend to be playing a realistic game, either. This isn't a simulation - it's an atmospheric fantasy roleplaying game. Treat it as such.

FIGHTING x INJURY

What happens when a Hunter is trampled by an auroch or falls from a high cliff? Does he survive? How hard is it for a Hunter to kill a wildcat? A lion? An ogre?

TOUGH RATINGS

Living creatures are rated according to how tough they are. Hunters have a Tough rating of 3. They can sustain three good hits before collapsing and dying. When that 3rd Tough point has been lost the Hunter is weak and struggling to stay alive, the GM may make all of his subsequent actions more difficult if need be. At this level of injury the Hunter is sure to come away with some visible reminder, perhaps a scar or a limp, perhaps a missing eye or a recurring pain. Other creatures are rated according to the following table:

| <i>Creature</i> | <i>Tough Rating</i> |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Auroch | 4 |
| Bison | 4 |
| Cave Bear | 6 |
| Cave Lion | 6 |
| Eagle | 1 |
| Goat | 1 |
| Horse | 2 |
| Hyena | 2 |
| Mammoth | 8* (shrugs off hits of 1) |
| Ogre | 3 |
| Red Deer | 2 |
| Reindeer | 2 |
| Rhino | 5* (shrugs off hits of 1) |
| Wildcat | 2 |
| Wolf | 2 |

** These animals are invulnerable to single hits and must be injured with a Sunstone success of two or more in one draw.*

RESOLVING FIGHTS

When situations involve violence, it is best to resort to a ‘blow by blow’ account of the story. The GM needs to narrate events in ‘turns’, switching between player characters and non-player characters until everyone involved in a scene has had an opportunity to state their intentions. Turns represent a flexible amount of time, somewhere between 5 and 15 seconds.

When it is his turn in the flow of events to act, a Hunter’s player usually makes a draw of stones to determine the result. Any Sunstones indicate that he has inflicted damage on his victim, one good hit per Sunstone. Often there will be pain, shock and some incapacitation associated with these injuries - the GM should adjudicate this based on the circumstances

of the damage sustained. If all of a Hunter's stones were grey then he failed to hurt his opponent and also suffered a single good hit himself! When Hunters gang up on a victim they have a much better chance of success, bringing down the animal before it can recover and get away. Big animals such as bison, rhino and mammoth will harm *any* Hunter who fails to strike them; lesser creatures can only harm one Hunter at a time.

The difficulty of an attack is determined by its Tough rating. If the Tough rating is equal or less than that of the Hunter (3) then the player draws the default one stone. If the Tough rating exceeds 3 but is less than double (6) then the player must draw 2 Sunstones. Finally, if the creature's Toughness rating is double that of the Hunter's, then the draw made is 3 Sunstones.

Damage suffered outside of a fight (falling from a tree, being hit by a rock, burnt in a fire and so on) should be adjudicated by the GM based on terrain, circumstance etc. A single good hit should be appropriate for most eventualities, however.

WEAPON EFFECTS

The stone drawing system is suitably abstract enough to get by without delineating the exact damage and cutting capabilities of different weapons, replete with measures of 'reach', 'hit points', 'speed' and so on. This could all be narrated after the fact (after the stones have been drawn and the stones studied, in other words). For a GM who would like some detail of weapon strengths to be abstracted into the stone drawing system, then use the following rules:

Hunting Spear – The default weapon; when a Sunstone is drawn as per the rules, a hit is scored on the victim. Quick to use, capable of being thrown 20m, dangerous and able to keep a single predator at bay.

Ogre Spear – Short with a large and heavy flint head, this weapon is made by ogres and their style of hunting involves close quarter combat. The ogre spears do a lot of damage to game, but are incapable of being thrown. For an ogre this is not a problem, they are tough and able to take a few knocks from the animals they try to kill. An ogre would gain an extra stone to draw if attacking a larger than man-sized creature with one of these spears. If a Hunter was facing an ogre armed this way he would conversely reduce his draw by one.

Sling – The sling is a leather pouch on a strap whirled over the head to propel river pebbles at speed. The range of a sling is 60m. Because sling-stones, like arrows, aren't very effective, the player draws one less stone to attack if the victim is man-sized or bigger.

Bow & Arrows – A good yew bow has a range of 120m. Its arrows can be tipped with flint or bone and like the sling do less damage than a Hunting Spear - the player draws one less stone to attack if the victim is man-sized or bigger.

HEALING

Injuries sustained would in real life deteriorate and kill an Ice Age Hunter. Fortunately this is not real life and we give the benefit of the doubt to our hairy heroes! Each Tough point lost can be recovered in a different manner.

| <i>Level of Injury</i> | <i>Healing Method</i> |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1st Tough point | Good meal and warm night's rest |
| 2nd Tough point | As above for 3 days, or Healing Herbs |
| 3rd Tough point | As above for 2 weeks, plus Healing Herbs |

Mention has already been made of Healing Herbs, how do they work in play? Anyone can look for suitable herbs, but a Hunter with the Healing Herbs Talent will be better at this task. It takes a day to find herbs suited to a particular medicinal purpose. State the purpose when you go searching.

- Injuries - Bruises, bleeding, broken bones, etc.
- Ailments - Sickness, fevers, pains, fits, etc.
- Special - Magical herbs required for specific purposes...

Next draw ONE stone, or two if Talented. If a Sunstone is drawn the herb is found in one day. As with creating items, if two Sunstones are drawn, then the herbs are found in half a day. If no Sunstones are drawn then no herbs were found. The time to find herbs moves up to two days now (obviously there are no suitable herbs locally). Keep extending the time period if needed. The GM may make finding herbs more difficult or easier as described in Task Resolution.

Anyone wanting to know if a creature survives its injuries just draws a number of stones equal to the Tough points it has left. If any are Sunstones then the creature recovers after a week. If all are grey then the creature dies within days. GMs are free to use this rule for player characters who do not receive treatment if they wish. But be warned – it will kill characters!

THE SPIRITS

"Who are we? What is out there? Who made the world? Our Storyteller taught us that the Great Spirit fashioned the mountains and the rocks, the ice and the seas, but left all devoid of life. He had walked for many years through the void and needed a place to rest. The Great Spirit drank from the rivers, bathed in the seas and slept on the sides of mountains. The first members of the StoneTooth Tribe, the very first humans, were born of the Rock in the places where the Great Spirit's hands and feet had touched it (though other Tribes claim to be the progenitors of the human race...)."

"For many years the StoneTooth People ate rocks and pebbles to sustain themselves, until the Great Spirit (in his wisdom) created the plants and animals upon which they could now feed. To do this he had awoken the Earth Spirit, a bountiful and generous goddess who desired to nurture mankind. In turn she awoke the slumbering spirits of all of the animals, the rocks, streams, waterfalls, trees and plants, and they issued forth from the Wombs of the World – deep caves reaching into the interior of Mother Earth. In this blessed garden all lived happily: men, women, lion, rhino, bison and mammoth."

"Time came when the Great Spirit decided to continue his journey into the void and he bid farewell to the Earth Spirit and to his trusted human lieutenant - Black Chief. Black Chief proved disreputable and greedy and wanted all good things for himself. When he was opposed by a number of angry bison (for in those days all animals had the gift of speech) the Black Chief committed the ultimate sin, he killed. The spirit of the dead bison appealed to the Earth Spirit and in her fury she turned against mankind, bringing down an endless winter, a terrible frost and a bitter famine. The creatures of the world also turned against mankind and when the Black Chief ordered more deaths in order that the Tribe might eat, the souls of the slaughtered animals came hunting for revenge. Many humans died."

"Bidden to return by the howls of the dead echoing through the void, the Great Spirit interceded on behalf of the Tribe. He declared that the Earth Spirit relent, at least in part, and allow a few months of respite from the cold each year. He set guardian spirits over each breed of animal as representatives, and these spirits were to forge protective alliances with

the humans. Next he taught these guardian spirits the Hunter's Blessing, a prayer they could teach to men that would allow humans to kill animals for survival and for survival alone. The animals of the world agreed to this pact and the Tribe agreed to uphold this agreement. Murder, wanton killing, was outlawed."

"Black Chief, too, was outlawed, exiled from the Tribe to the most inhospitable places of the world. The Great Spirit sent him mad and cursed his line. His descendants are the man-like monsters of savagery and barbarism - the hideous Ogres. That the sons of his fallen favourite might live, the Great Spirit taught the Black Tribe the Hunter's Blessing directly. But no guardian spirits mediate with the Ogres."

"Happy that justice had been done, the Great Spirit once more removed himself, but remained high above, in the Sky, to slumber with one eye open. The Moon lazily watches nightly proceedings down below while the Sun gazes down during the day. Meanwhile the Earth Spirit continues to heal and hurt in equal measure, offering up warm weather and good hunting in summer, and replacing it with snow drifts, frostbite and hunger in winter. Her hard heart is followed in turn by the spirits of the rocks and the trees, the animals and pools. Only those guardian spirits allied with Clans have warmed to humanity. The rest are, at best, indifferent, and at worst, vengeful and openly hostile."

"Such is the lot of man and woman. The dead are buried with solemn rites pits in the ground and accompanied both by their possessions and food and drink to sustain them on their journey. The Earth Spirit relents when a human dies and she welcomes the spirit into her bosom. She then blesses the spirit of the dead man before it journeys into the Sky to pay homage to the Great Spirit. After spending some time there the Great Spirit allows it to return to earth as either a newly born baby or a newly born animal (often the totem animal of his old Clan)."

"If you doubt the words of the Storyteller, then look up. That shooting star, another spirit returning to earth. There ... and there ... the wandering stars, the first elders of the Tribe who are now living alongside the Great Spirit and passing messages to us, even today. And the stars, the stars are the campfires of all of the Clans who have passed away. See the fires flicker? Each one warms the spirits of the newly dead, awaiting their moment to return to us."

"Finally, you wonder about the stones. About the orange Sunstones and the grey Earthstones. Both are holy stones, but we look to the Sunstones

for aid in times of crisis as we look to the rising sun in the depths of night, and the spring sunshine in the depths of winter. The sun is the steadfast gaze of the Great Spirit, and as he returned to help us in our time of need, he will reach out and help us again. The Earthstones are equally powerful, but they are portents of darkness and unwanted change, of struggle and hardship. There can be no life without the pangs of childbirth, the Earth Mother demands a price for her gifts."

THE SPIRIT WORLD

Who is the Great Spirit? He is known by many different names, but his nature and power are undisputed. Some call him Grandfather, some call him the Great Unseen Spirit, some call Father Sky or Father Spirit. Some Tribes use all five terms interchangeably.

GUARDIAN SPIRITS

The guardian spirits are powerful protectors of their species and every breed of animal has them. Most of the time they are invisible and aloof, although some individuals with the Talent 'Sense the Invisible' can feel their presence during ceremonies. When the guardian spirit wishes to enter the physical realm it can manifest as a majestic and powerful member of its own species. In this guise the guardian spirit can talk to humans and, depending on the species, may be able to command a great deal of authority. Such a creature would be unkillable. These spirits are able to use all of the Spirit Powers described later on.

ANIMAL SPIRITS

The spirits of animals such as hares, bison, mammoth and horse are not as intelligent as humans, but still sentient. At death the spirit passes to the Earth Mother and then returns to the physical world as a new member of the species. If the beast was murdered (in other words killed without the Hunter's Blessing) then the animal spirit seeks revenge and becomes a vengeful spirit.

HUMAN SPIRITS

When a person dies the spirit travels first to the Earth Mother and then on to the abode of the Great Spirit beyond the Sky. After some time that spirit is reborn either as a human or an animal linked to the dead man's totem spirit. As with animals, if a man was killed by another, then a vengeful spirit is created which haunts the killer. These ghosts can cause a great deal of trouble.

NATURE SPIRITS

It isn't just animals and humans that have spirits, everything from boulders to valleys, trees to waterfalls also have sentient spirits within them. The Hunter's Blessing is needed to take or despoil any of these natural phenomenon, perhaps stone to make an axe or wood to make a staff. Places of great beauty have the most powerful spirits, their abodes are wreathed in an aura of majesty and inner strength. At the other end of the scale a pebble has only the shadow of the spirit from the mountain or stream from which it was plucked. The GM should decide what the spirit presides over, is it the tree - or the forest? The boulder - or the hill? The power of a nature spirit is restricted to the area of its concern, it cannot roam at will. Angering a nature spirit will not release a vengeful spirit to haunt the Hunter, but it will mean that the transgressor will be subject to vengeful magical attacks while in the area or using an item fashioned from that area. Rocks might fall from a cliff, a forest may seem to inhibit travel in one direction, rivers carry away valuable material etc.

VENGEFUL SPIRITS

Ghosts. Vengeful spirits are the angry ghosts of the restless dead. These spirits want revenge on the Hunter who killed them. They will plague him wherever he travels and appear in nightmares and as bad omens. A vengeful spirit has access to the Spirit Curses described later.

BLESSINGS x CURSES

There are a number of magical effects in the Ice Age World of TOTEM that can be wielded by some of the spirits as well as skilled and experienced Storytellers. They are akin to typical fantasy 'spells' but more subtle, and when cast by a Storyteller (more detail of which later) they are very ritualistic.

The spirit descriptions already given state whether a spirit can use Curses or Blessings or both. These magical effects are directed at a particular human, and take effect automatically. It doesn't matter how far apart the victim is from the spirit, and Curses in-particular last until they are removed by the Blessing called Banish. Curses are very much like Talents in that they are listed on a Hunter's record sheet as a special effect. Blessings are one-use magical effects that can be forgotten about once the effects are implemented.

CURSES

Agony - When timing matters during a particular story, the Hunter is wracked by ferocious and crippling pain. He may be sneaking between

two tents at the dead of night, or jumping from a tree to retrieve a spear in front of an angry auroch. The pain is incapacitating and lasts for a minimum of one 'turn'. To figure out how much longer it lasts draw 3 stones. Each Earthstone is an extra 'turn' in which the Hunter is incapacitated. Only inflict such a grievous disadvantage on a Hunter once per session. Obviously a spirit will not plague a member of the Rhino Clan with this Curse!

Blur - The victim's eyesight deteriorates rapidly and he or she becomes partially sighted, able to make out shapes, movement and people, but unable to recognize faces or see anything remotely useful further than 20m.

Cripple - The victim is cursed with a pain when he moves. Walking is painful; running, climbing and jumping are all more difficult.

Deaf & Dumb - The victim loses the power of hearing and speech.

Fear - When faced with a situation in which he may be placed in immediate physical danger (being charged by a bison, negotiating the steep part of a very high climb) the victim will break into a sweat and either freeze or panic! Draw 3 stones. If he draws more Sunstones than Earthstones then he freezes until someone can convince him to move or physically move him. If there are more Earthstones then he panics. He might flee blindly, attack blindly, jump to 'safety' or do some other reckless and dangerous act to get out of hot water.

Illness - The victim is constantly ill and the GM may describe the effects based on some real life illness. The illness removes one Tough point from the Hunter's record sheet - he now only has two points! Nothing seems to shift the illness, neither rest, good food or herbal remedies.

Nightmares - The victim is afflicted with terrifying nightmares associated with the caster of the spell, either a spirit or a Storyteller. These nightmares keep him awake at night, and result in him being tired in the afternoon and also under stress, worrying about the coming night's sleep. Any tasks conducted in the afternoon have their difficulties increased.

Possession - The spirit actually enters the victim and possesses him (or the Storyteller sends a spirit to do the same). What this means in game turns is that there are long periods where the Hunter cannot remember what he was doing. Sometimes it might be hours or days. The spirit has taken over and often acts in an antisocial and evil way, bringing harm and pain to the victim's Kin and disrepute onto the victim. Today this would be described as schizophrenic behaviour.

Sleep - The victim wants to sleep all of the time. He must always be woken by others first thing in the morning, he is the first to drop off to sleep in the evening and he cannot stay awake at night for more than an hour in total. At any time when the victim is not engaged in some

activity, draw two stones. If he draws an Earthstone then he drops off to sleep.

BLESSINGS

Banish - This Blessing is only gifted to a Hunter who is under a Curse. If a spirit banishes a Curse then the effect takes place immediately. Draw two stones; if one is a Sunstone then the Curse is banished for good. Otherwise this particular spirit cannot help. If a Storyteller attempts to banish a Curse then follow the same procedure, but he must organize a fairly elaborate ritual involving ceremonially cleansing the victim and causing him terrible pain that will shift the Curse. If it fails then the victim must seek another Storyteller or another remedy. Often a Storyteller or spirit can only banish a Curse for a week or so, and in that time the Hunter must undergo an ordeal, locating some sacred object, setting something to rights, restoring the damage he has done etc. If the ordeal was unfulfilled after the time is up, then the Curse re-establishes itself. Note that since many Curses are triggered by murders, one ordeal may be to find the body of the victim, give it a decent burial (sometimes with the head buried separately) and to return to the grave any objects looted from (or manufactured from parts of) the victim.

Divination - The spirit or Storyteller (using a means of divination such as reading flames or entrails or dreams) can answer one question. The question can be about anything that has *occurred*. Not the future, not the thoughts or intents of other people or animals - only events that have occurred in the past or are ongoing in the present. In TOTEM we avoid thorny problems of prediction.

Feast - This power conjures up a bountiful feast of broth, tender-cooked meats, berry juice and honey, enough for half a dozen Hunters. The Hunters eating this heavenly meal do not need to eat for the rest of the day or for the day after.

Found It - This power conjures from thin air some item, weapon or artefact that the Hunter has lost or mislaid or left behind or had stolen or that he knows has been broken sometime in the past.

Miracle Heal - A Hunter can have his Tough points restored to full strength by this power. If cast by a Storyteller then it may involve an elaborate ceremony in which the magician removes a pestilent object from the injured man which has been the source of the illness (often a stone or thorn).

Second Chance - The power gives the Hunter a second chance at resolving some task. When stones are drawn and not to the liking of the player, then the Hunter can invoke the Blessing agent (spirit or Storyteller) and draw again, choosing whether to use the first or second draws as he sees fit. Once invoked, this power is used up.

STORYTELLERS

Storytellers aren't viable player characters, they know too much, have too many answers. They're better left as non-player characters. But it's still handy to know what they are capable of, what they do. They are most certainly odd-balls, able to see spirits all day everyday and talk to them as other people talk to their Kin. They dress differently, elaborately, impractically. The Storyteller needs to catch the attention of the spirits, and he often scars his face or body or tatoos his body to separate himself from the earthly world. His behaviour and appearance are strange and disturbing, but his Tribe will understand and allow the Storyteller to be different. He isn't one of them. He sees dead people. The Storyteller gets his title from his day-to-day role as a keeper and dispenser of TRibal lore. The Storyteller tells the epic tales of the tribe, the myths of the spirits, how StrongPaw once made an alliance with Howler and then tried to kill Tanglehorn and blame the attack on his wolf companion. He tells the tale of the StoneTooth Tribe, of the early chiefs and their exploits, their discoveries, traumas and warm-hearted tales of camaraderie and loyalty. And he tells the stories of more recent heroes, of grandfathers, fathers ... maybe even of the player character Hunters themselves if they perform great deeds!!

TALENTS

First off, the Storyteller is a member of the Tribe, but he has renounced his Clan. As young boys (or girls, or both - different Tribes have different methods for recruiting Storytellers) potential candidates are put through a series of ordeals. If they pass they become apprentice Storytellers. Every Tribe will have one Storyteller and one apprentice. A fully-fledged Storyteller will be fairly old and have two Talents. The first Talent is Spirit Guide. The second is Healing Herbs.

Spirit Guide - At his initiation into the Storyteller profession, a friendly spirit and lieutenant of the Great Spirit is summoned and quickly possesses the candidate. This Spirit Guide teaches the new Storyteller the history of the Tribe and its Clans and knowledge of the natural world and the spirits that inhabit it. The Storyteller sees through the eyes of his Spirit Guide and can therefore see all spirits and the normally invisible sources of power and magic. The Spirit Guide essentially possesses the Talents of Calm Spirit, Identify Spirit and Sense the Invisible! This loyal and dutiful spirit is the source of a Storyteller's power. When he enters a trance (induced by sleep and food deprivation as well as certain herbal poisons) the Spirit Guide watches over the body while the Storyteller's spirit wanders across the landscape at great speed, talking to spirits as if

they were people. Focus is an item of clothing, a hat or a coat or skin jacket that is embroidered with numerous carved ivory beads. Some Storytellers have deerskin coats decorated with hundreds of these beads woven into an intricate pattern!

BLESSINGS & CURSES

The Storyteller's power comes from his ability to cast Blessings and Curses. All require at least a two hour ritual involving much chanting, dancing and strange mixtures and invocations. He does not cast the spell himself but asks his Spirit Guide to order a suitable spirit to carry out the task of healing, divining or cursing or whatever. A Spirit Guide can only be persuaded to find a suitable spirit three times in three days. He might find three spirits on the first morning and no more for the next two days, OR, he might find one spirit each day. It's all up to the Storyteller.

Unlike a malign spirit, a Storyteller must draw stones to discover whether his Blessing or Curse worked. Draw two stones for each casting, a Sunstone indicates the Blessing or Curse was cast as desired. An Earthstone indicates that *something else* happened.

THE TRIBE

This section puts the story elements of the Hunter, the Spirits, the Storyteller and the Stones into a framework. We look at the setting of TOTEM, at the geography of Ice Age Europe, the animals and the weather. We also look at the Tribe as a fundamental building block of any TOTEM campaign.

THE HUNTING GROUNDS

Mother Earth has taken some of her bounty out of the reach of the Tribes. Once glorious neverending summers have been replaced with a weak summer sun barely warm enough to melt the winter snows for a few months. The World Ice forms a vast and deadly wilderness in the north, while ice-gripped mountains form a lofty barrier in the south. Between the two are the Hunting Grounds – a vast grassy steppe inhabited by all of the great herd animals of the world – bison, auroch, reindeer, mammoth. Their migrations spur the Tribes to follow, or to lay in wait for them on the migration trail – or both. Without these vast roaming herds, the Tribes would not survive. The hunting is good. Life is good.

Fragments of an ancient forest are found scattered across the Hunting Grounds. Most species of tree are represented: pine, fir, spruce, beech, ash, yew and so on, but the conifers predominate – they are adapted to the cold conditions and waste no energy shedding their leaves in autumn. In summer, the forest floors are filled with plants such as ferns, brambles, and mosses.

BEYOND THE BARRIER MOUNTAINS

There are ways through the Barrier Mountains, but beyond grows the Great Forest, which borders the northern shore of the Sea of Many Favours. Mother Earth favours these lands with longer summers and warmer weather, but the Tribes shun the tree-clad slopes and peninsulas. The hunting is poor, travel is difficult. Herds cannot roam the hills, slopes and islands of the Great Forest. What would the Tribes hunt?

WESTERN STEPPE

The Tribes do not wander across the Hunting Grounds aimlessly. On the Western Steppe, Tribes follow mammoth, reindeer and bison herds, often camping for long periods during the migrations of spring and autumn. As the herds pass through the area the Tribe can hunt successfully. At other

times heavy snow or a change in the herd's route can force the Tribe to the brink of starvation. Usually in these cases a Clan Spirit has been offended and commands its herds to go elsewhere.

WOMB OF THE WORLD

Three of the most successful Tribes on the Western Steppe have traditionally co-operated in their hunt. They have established semi-permanent camps north of the Barrier Mountains, in a range of rugged hills called the Womb of the World, hills that are located directly on two migration trails (for horse and reindeer). These three Tribes are the RainMaker People, the StoneTooth People and the ThunderFace People.

A special spiritual significance is attached to the Womb of the World. The caverns of these hills are deep and some penetrate into the interior of Mother Earth – each one a womb of the earth, each one a source of life, each one a temple for the Tribes. Storytellers can spend long periods journeying into the caves, communing (via their Spirit Guide) with the Earth Spirit and then making their return. The Earth Mother has hardened her heart to the plight of the Tribes, but deep in her womb she can be addressed and touched by the appeals of Storytellers. Because the first men and women sprang from these caves, they have mysterious powers of life and rejuvenation. This is the true nature of the womb's special status.

Once in the life of a man or a woman of the Tribe, at a time when that life is in deadly peril, the Tribe's Storyteller can journey into the Womb of the World and commune with the Earth Spirit. He will make his handprint on the cave wall and then paint an image of the patient's Clan Spirit on the wall. Following a short ritual in the enshrouding darkness, lit only by a guttering lamp of animal fat, the Storyteller emerges from the cave. If the Earth Spirit has listened to the entreaties of the patient's Guardian Spirit then she will have returned that dead or dying man's spirit to his body. Her Blessing is Life.

This extraordinary Blessing can be received only once from the Earth Spirit (if we ignore the first grant of Life at birth!). It is just that – Life. A person might be dying from a terrible wound or a crippling disease, he or she may even already *be* dead but this Blessing restores that person to Life, to health and happiness. It is the ultimate gift. There is a disadvantage to being brought back to Life if already dead – the victim's memories are lost. He is born again and must undergo his initiation ritual once more.

Note that each of the three Tribes favour certain Wombs of the World over some of the others, and this mysterious and magical location is not jealously guarded (at the present anyway). Tribes from beyond the area are free to journey here to make use of the caves under supervision of the local Stortellers. The three caretaker Tribes take goods in trade as a reward. A dead person can only be returned to life within three days of death, making this a prerogative of the local Tribes rather than visiting Hunters.

SACRED COAST

In the far west, in the rugged hills facing the Sunset Sea, one Tribe has discovered another series of sacred caves. Each of these caves is a womb of the Earth Mother and they all have the same mystical properties. The Tribe inhabiting the caves of the Sacred Coast is the RedFeet. The RedFeet are unusual in that they have penetrated beyond the Barrier Mountains and they subsist mainly on horses, ibex and mountain goats.

IVORY FIELDS

The Ivory Fields are the vast hunting grounds of the east. Mountains, rugged hills and caves suitable for habitation are not common. Often the Tribes here have to fashion semi-permanent huts from large stones, mammoth tusks and animal hides. These imposing huts are very sturdy and capable of withstanding the deadly gales that sweep the Ivory Fields. Mammoths are the most common herd beast out on these wide open spaces.

CRAGGEN HILLS

These hills and valleys form a traditionally accepted border between the Western Steppes and the Ivory Fields. The hills are wide ranging, heavily forested and cut by numerous valleys. The main Tribes here are the Blackhand, Speakers With Stones and the Tall Tribe. The Craggen Hills are one of the many haunts of ogre clans, forced into the poorer margins of the Hunting Grounds.

WEATHER x THE SEASONS

The world is in the grip on an Ice Age (to state the obvious). Northern lands including central and northern Britain, the North Sea, Scandinavia and northern Russia are covered by glaciers and thick ice sheets which have moved south as the climate deteriorated. This means that temperatures in Europe are an average of 10 degrees C lower than those of today. Although late spring and summer can be pleasant enough on the grassy steppes and in the scattered pine forests, winters are long and

cruel. The land is covered with snowdrifts, and daytime temperatures can plunge to -10° for weeks at a time, freezing lakes and rivers. Most animals must migrate south to the wooded foothills of the Barrier Mountains to avoid the very worst of the winter. Spring comes late, and as the snow melts and the rivers run full spate, flowers bloom and animals return north to breed.

The deeper levels, beneath the steppe, do not always thaw out and meltwater forms fly-infested pools and marshes. Water birds flock to these wetlands to offer the Tribes another food source. As the herds feast on lush grasses and on mosses and lichens growing on the frozen rocks close to the World Ice, the Tribe enjoys fine hunting. Most inter-Tribal gatherings and Clan ceremonies take place in this short summer. Without fail, however, the temperature drops, the winds blow and snow heralds the start of winter.

Some animals have already migrated south during the first few weeks of autumn, others, with perhaps shorter routes in mind, migrate much later. Lone bands of herd beasts walk the trail, meeting other bands also heading south. Often they stay together to form a huge herd (many thousands strong) travelling south. Other animals roam their summer grazing lands throughout the cold months, eking out a living shovelling snow with their antlers or horns, or surviving on evergreen plants and trees.

The GM should keep in mind that snows do not arrive one day and stay the entire winter. Spring and autumn might see plenty of snowfalls laying across the land to melt days later. Or autumn snows may have fallen in the higher land, but be absent on the lowlands. As the snow melts, it does of course linger on higher ground, in valleys and on slopes facing north. Create an interesting environment for the player characters by varying the landscape and by varying the effects of weather on the landscape. The popular image of the Ice Age (and one, I must admit I used to hold) is of a vast Arctic ice plain filled with mammoths and Cro Magnon hunters – and little else. The march of the seasons does allow the GM to seriously change the local landscape in a way I'm sure most Canadians and Mid-Westerners are intimately familiar with. In summer walk through fragrant meadows, fish at the lake, catch wild boar in the forests and bison on the plain. In winter it turns into a frozen hellhole, the lake is iced over, snow drifts make the meadows almost impassable, the bison are gone and cave lions scavenge for stragglers.

CREATURES OF THE STEPPE

The people of the Hunting Grounds considered themselves blood related to the animals all around them, if perhaps distantly. Clan members, however, thought of examples of their totem animal (wolf, bison, auroch etc.) as brothers and sisters (in a very literal way). Here we look very briefly at the various creatures of the European Ice Age.

Auroch: The auroch is a (now extinct) species of very large wild cattle with great forward curving horns. They will act like cattle, but be far more skittish. Males will protect their cows, cows will protect their young. Territories are typically open grassland.

Bear: Bears roam the hills and forests scavenging for berries, grubs and favourite plants. They are fairly shy of humans, but if wounded or startled will attack. And bears can be dangerous, they are able to run faster than a man and stand up on hind legs to appear incredibly intimidating. Cave bears are an Ice Age species of similar size and temperament to the brown bears described above. They hibernate in caves and will not appreciate being roused by cold and wet humans seeking shelter. Cave bears are sometimes hunted by humans.

Bison: Looking much like the North American buffalo of today, the Ice Age bison has a distinctive hump and is covered with woolly brown hair. It grazes on the steppelands and like other herd animals migrates as winter approaches. Bison have short upcurved horns and stand 2m tall at the shoulder.

Cave Lion: This now extinct species of lion is big and powerful, with heavy set shoulders and a white-grey winter coat for better camouflage. Treat in all other ways as a modern African lion with regards behaviour. Territories are typically open steppe where they hunt herd animals.

Deer: Red deer are very nervous herbivores that live in small herds, and a favourite game of Hunters. The males grow impressive antlers with which to fight for mating rights, and they shed these antlers yearly. Does do not have antlers. Territories are woodland, which provides cover.

Giant Elk: Now extinct, this enormous species of deer is hunted for its meat. Unlike red deer, the giant elk prefers open plains, mainly due to the trouble it would encounter in woodland with its fantastic antlers – together over 3m across! These giants stand 2m high at the shoulder and

easily kill a man with a kick or twist of those immense antlers. They mate in autumn and are far more solitary in nature than red deer.

Horse: In the Ice Age horses are wild and untamed, fiery steppe animals that make great prizes for a band of Hunters. They are the size of sturdy poies rather than the colossal selectively bred monsters we ride today, with short necks and shaggy manes.

Ibex: Ibex are a species of goat inhabiting the crags of hills and mountains, and living off very sparse vegetation indeed. They are hunted by those humans able to scrmble up to these rocky locations. The ibex is prized for its elegantly curved horns.

Mammoth: The Pleistocene relative of the elephant is a stunning and evocative symbol of the age. Herding, like elephants today, on the plains of Europe, the mammoth was afraid of nothing. It has no natural predators, most Tribes do not attempt to bring down mammoths but prefer instead to scavenge the dead. Only ogres try their luck with mammoth, sometimes using fire at night to drive them over crags. The mammoth is the king of beasts, majestic, proud, fearless. Each adult is coated with a shaggy red-brown fur growing up to a metre long in winter, and moulting in spring to be replaced with a thinner wiry coat. The mammoth is well known for its amazing set of curved tusks which it uses to scrape away snow from off tasty grasses. Territories varied from stepplands in summer to the more sheltered forested valleys of the Barrier Mountains in winter.

Reindeer: This species of deer is much larger and sturdier than the delicate looking red deer, in addition reindeer of both sexes grow antlers. Reindeer inhabit the steppes sometimes in herds a thousand strong! Like all of the herd animals they migrate in winter to find safer and more productive feeding grounds.

Sabretooth Tiger: Sorry, wrong continent! There were no sabretooths in Europe, and the Hunters there would be very grateful for that fact if they knew!

Wolf: Wolves are far more numerous than today, preferring wooded territories, but also living in mountains and on the Hunting Grounds. Wolves are intelligent pack animals that are wary of humans. They work together and have a complex society. Most wolf packs venture out at twilight. Dire wolves are larger but slower relatives of the wolf, and operate in smaller packs as scavengers rather than hunters.

Woolly Rhinoceros: The woolly rhino must have been an awesome sight, standing 2m at the shoulder, covered with shaggy brown hair and sporting two sharp horns (one up to a metre in length!). Like the rhino today, this breed has poor eyesight but excellent smell. It lives alone and may flee from humans. Or else it will charge in and often inflict terrible wounds. The rhino is not an easy animal to hunt, its body being protected with rolls of fat and plates of armour. Territories preferred are steppelands and plains.

CRAFTING A CAMPAIGN

What do the player characters do in this game? This is the central question that should be answered by every set of roleplaying rules. TOTEM, like most other games, has a long list of activities and plot hooks that might kick-start a scenario. Many of these plot hooks do *not* involve hunting mammoth, bison and reindeer – which might surprise some players and puzzle others. Survival on its own is not a long term option for a roleplaying game. After trying out tactics on a few hunts the campaign will enter the realm of boredom.

All stories need conflict to work, physical conflict works in a pinch and is often fine for a session or two, but for anything more satisfying and more long term the conflict must be social and emotional. The day job of hunting, trapping and gathering goes on of course, but this merely forms a backdrop for the central story, whether it be about Clan betrayal, the illicit love of a couple from rival Clans, the Tribal chief who only has three days to live (and to determine a successor), and so on. These are Tribal affairs and as already noted to Tribe acts as a source of such plot hooks. Another area that provides a viable source of story seeds is the world outside the Tribe, the realm of the spirits, of exiles and other Tribes. All provide ‘human’ elements that can interact with the player character Hunters in a hundred different ways.

USING THE TRIBAL STRUCTURE

The players’ own Tribe acts as ‘society in general’, as a patron, as a source of conflict and plots and also as a ‘dependant’ toward which the player characters have a sense of duty. The Tribe was a crucial life-giving social structure in the Pleistocene Era, in TOTEM it is crucial to the structure of any TOTEM campaign. It provides any Hunter with a reason for his existence and can provide him with a motivation and series of goals. Because of the Tribe’s importance to the wider game, we look at it

as a campaign tool. It can impact on the player characters in the following ways:

Tribal Organization: The Tribe is an inter-related group of men, women and children who can usually trace their line back to a common ancestor. Tribes vary in size depending on their success and the resources available to them. Assume a moderate Tribe has around 75 adults within it (and typically an equal number of children) separated into maybe four or five Clans. Clans represent separate familial traditions within the overall Tribal relationship.

Each Clan is led by the Clan Chief – a mature and respected male of the family. He is fit and able, and he can consult the older members of the Clan (the Elders) for advice. In times of urgency the Elders can veto a decision, but the chief is under no compulsion to follow their alternative suggestion. Clans co-operate, feud, inter-marry and forge alliances with other Clans in the Tribe. It is rare that they all get along together, or that Clan Chiefs are universally liked, respected and obeyed. It is common for the Clans to camp in separate locations from time to time, perhaps a member is ill or crafting some important objects, perhaps the Clan has remained in a certain spot to exploit local resources (flint, game, fish, etc.). But much of the Tribe will stay together if possible.

A typical Clan has around 15 adult members (that is over 14 years old). Let us postulate a Reindeer Clan made up of the Clan Chief, his brother, uncle and aging father, as well as his oldest son. Each has a wife, bringing the total to 10. We can also include the chief's sister and her husband, and three more adolescents. There will be approximately as many children as adults in a typical Clan. The Clan camps together in the same group of tents or cave, often erecting the symbol of the Clan atop a pole or a tent.

Clan Chiefs form the Tribal leadership, each has a say in the way the Tribe is run. The oldest and wealthiest chiefs have a greater say. Ultimately the Tribal Chief must make his own decisions. He will listen to his own Clan, the other Clan Chiefs and the Tribal Storyteller. Of course he is also the chief of his own Clan. When a chief dies he often has an heir from his own Clan waiting to succeed him. Sometimes he might designate another Clan Chief as the new Tribal leader if there are no suitable candidates. If the old chief dies suddenly without nominating an heir then the spirits decide. The Storyteller will arrange for a ritual combat or test of skills between any nominated candidates. Or sometimes a simple show of hands or drawing of stones decides the matter

(though it's not as dramatic!). All depends on the Tribe, its customs and its current situation.

Tribes are different. Although we have generalized a little here, the GM is encouraged to play things differently from Tribe to Tribe. Maybe the Tribe's chiefs are all women, maybe the Storyteller is sacrificed to the Great Spirit in his 30th year. Maybe Hunters are both male and female with an equal split. Maybe new chiefs are decided purely on omens and the favour of the spirits. Make every Tribe unique.

The Tribal Chief has the place of honour. Surely he works as hard as every other Hunter (he must do or lose the Tribe's favour) but his tent is more splendid, his Clan a little richer, his women the pick of the crop, his wealth composed of far-flung treasures.

We must mention the Storyteller here. Clanless – the Storyteller devotes his life to the heritage of the Tribe, he knows the rules and customs, the myths and legends, the taboos and curses that dominate Tribal life. He is neutral in his dealings. Tribes have their own peculiarities when it comes to Storytellers. Some are men, some are eunuchs, some women, some are cripples only – in a few Tribes Storytellers of either sex are allowed. In some Tribes the same hereditary name is adopted by the Storyteller, turning him or her into a perpetual myth figure.

Who does what in a typical Tribe? Again this can and should vary with each Tribe. Generally the adult males are Hunters and the adult females are Firekeepers. Hunters fabricate weapons and go into the wilderness to hunt game, often for several days at a time. Firekeepers tend the precious camp fires, forage for firewood, berries, roots and raw materials, rear the young and prepare clothing and food. But this is a broad generalization. Hunters can make their own clothes, cook for themselves on the trail and look out for herbs and berries. Likewise Firekeepers often join the hunt or expeditions to collect raw materials. In this era, everyone has a knowledge of the basic skills of life. Everyone. Some are more able than others – but all the skills of life are taught to children. Often there will be some cross-over. Unmarried women may live as Hunters until marriage marks an initiation into the life of a Firekeeper. Some men give up hunting to become Firekeepers. They may have some minor disability, or perhaps a talent for crafts or cooking.

Customs & Taboos: As already stated, every Tribe should be different. The GM is advised to pick a good name for a new Tribe, and then to develop a short list of customs and taboos. These are rules passed down

to the Storyteller from the spirits he has contact with. In addition each Clan will have its own customs and taboos. Rather than complicate the player's lives with too many rules and regulations, create a single custom and taboo for every Clan, and *three* customs and taboos for the Tribe as a whole. Let's consider the StoneTooth People, an amalgam of the Horse, Wolf, Bison and Rhino Clan.

The Horse Clan has an initiation ceremony for Hunters which involves capturing the tail hairs from a wild horse. The Clan taboo prohibits the eating of nuts. The Wolf Clan hunt a wolfpack leader and feast on the body at midwinter. The Clan taboo prohibits any Wolf Hunter seeing his children for the first year. They are usually adopted by other women in the Clan. The Bison Clan dance before every meal and the first cut of the main evening meal is determined after the males have wrestled for the honour. The Clan taboo prohibits speaking of the newly dead for six months. The Rhino Clan has a woman as its chieftan and follows descent through the female line. The Clan taboo forbids sex before marriage. Unmarried men are not allowed to talk to any unmarried girls and are refrained from even looking at them.

What are the customs and taboos of the StoneTooth People? There are three of each:

- The StoneTooth Tribe is in possession of a Womb of the World, which it uses for rituals and regularly dresses with flowers.
- The StoneTooth Tribe always buries its dead face down, with green leaves all around the corpse in honour of the Earth Spirit he or she is going to meet.
- The StoneTooth Tribe fabricates very beautiful and distinctive flint axeheads that are sought after by neighbouring Tribes.

And for the Tribal taboos we come up with:

- No-one may enter the Womb of the World without the express permission of the Storyteller - on pain of death.
- The Tribes' females are not allowed to see the dead, participate in funerals and so on.

- The Tribe must never eat the unborn of an animal killed on the hunt, but must offer it to the Great Spirit.

This is actually an impressive list of customs and taboos! But it took ten minutes work to come up with, and will give the campaign a great deal of texture. I advise GM's to let the spirits decide at the time how they propose to punish the transgressors of a taboo.

And don't forget the endless feasts and rituals which will be a feature of *any* nomadic Tribe. Rituals for birth, for initiation into adulthood, for marriage, for pregnancy, for death and for the honouring of the dead. These rituals will invariably involve feasting (the exact dishes vary), dancing (the exact costumes and themes will vary), and sacrifice (of items, food, drink, animals or even humans - possibly transgressors or cripples).

Daily Life: The Tribes often use natural caves as shelters or semi-permanent homes, but tend to rely on tents made from wooden poles and tanned hides. Some utilise grass thatch or moss in the summer. Most shelters are grouped around a Tribal camp and are sited in sheltered valleys, within woods or the lee of cliffs. The Tribe is often on the move following the migratory paths of herd animals. But even then the Tribe has pre-marked camp sites that it uses with seasonal regularity – and it might put up a carved wooden pole to declare as much to other Tribes. GMs should understand that these Ice Age Hunters draw upon generations of wisdom and follow set-patterns of movement and behaviour. From riverside camp to hilltop camp, then down into the woods over winter, then out on to the marshes to catch the reindeer, then to the riverside camp, and so on ... Every Tribe has a pattern like this, but will break this pattern as frequently as the situation dictates. Camp sites are particularly favoured, but not fought over. There is no clash of territories in TOTEM. A traditional camp can be shared with a strange Tribe but it will be grudgingly shared, with a custom of hospitality taking precedence.

Hunting is done with spears, tipped either with flint, horn or bone-carved heads, or at worst just fire-hardened. Unlike the ogres, the human Tribes know how to craft bows and arrows, slings and spear casters. The Tribes are adept at creating useful tools from flint. Slicers, borers, cleavers, shavers and scrapers are all found in the Firekeeper's tool-kit. Flint, a hard, sharp stone, is used, but obsidian, black and capable of being knapped into an even sharper cutting edge, is preferred. Flint daggers are made, but have no hilt – being held by the dull edge. Axeheads however,

are commonly bound to wooden handles and are wonderful tree-felling tools.

Although flint keeps a sharper edge, bone, ivory, horn and antler are far more versatile. The Tribes are able to manufacture fish hooks, needles, tent stakes, figurines used as Focii, small oil lamps, spear straighteners and awls. Weapons and other items are made on days that are spent in camp (about which, see later). After a good hunt, the Hunters need not hunt again – although scouts from each Clan are sent out to watch the herds. This free time between hunts can be very productive.

The hide from an animal is also used extensively. In fact nothing from an animal is ever wasted. Hides are tanned and used to fabricate tents, bags, pouches, tunics, hats, leggings, boots and rawhide thongs. Fur is left on hides that will be used for winter clothing. Sinews are used for thread for sewing, making bowstrings and fastening arrow and spear-heads. Intestines make good general purpose bindings, bladders are waterproof and make good water-carriers or water-proof bags. These waterproof bags can be hung from a tripod and the water inside made to boil for cooking by dropping in fire-heated rocks ('pot-boilers').

To move from place to place the Tribes go on foot since no animals have yet been domesticated (except the faithful hound). A useful innovation is the sledge. Small sledges (much like the light-weight Inuit sledges of our world) can carry enough kit to sustain a group of Hunters out on the ice for many days. Of course they must all pull the sledge themselves.

In summer, some Tribes close to rivers or marshes build canoes from a single large tree. These dug-out canoes can be crafted to carry either a couple of people, or up to six! They are very effective in calm waters and used for fishing and perhaps an occasional communication.

The Issue of Free Time: The player character Hunters can be assigned a particular quest, investigation or adventurous duty by the Clan or Tribe, but what about the Hunt? Let's assume that not all the Hunters go out chasing game at any one time. Scouts will be sent out at first light and return to make a report to the chief and the elders. The Hunters are then given their tasks. Some will be sent out to catch bison that have been spotted, others might be sent to the frozen river where seal have been seen. Still others will stay with the Tribe as guardians to protect it from predators. They are also able to help any group that needs it, perhaps to take out sledges so that a bison can be returned to the camp. Guardian

duty is rotated amongst the Hunters, and it allows them to get on with any craft jobs they have on-going.

So, how much free time can we assume our Hunters have for manufacturing objects? Give out free time *after* a game, not before, this is generally when players will want to craft items anyway. It also allows the GM to give out free time as a reward for a successful mission. Missing out on death defying hunts could certainly be viewed as a suitable reward!

The better the player characters do, the more free time they gain afterwards to craft whatever they want. Think of it in hunting terms; when the Hunters do well and bring back plenty of meat for the Tribe they need not go out again for several days – why bring in more meat then you can eat, and you all deserve a rest after the hunt anyway! If player characters haven't been given enough time to finish their craft projects then keep a track of where they're up to and they can finish up at a later date, maybe after the next adventure.

Here are some brief guidelines for awarding free time:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Scenario Failed | No free time awarded |
| • Scenario Succeeded/Moderate | 1 day |
| • Scenario Succeeded/Difficult | 2 days |
| • Scenario Succeeded/Formidable | 3 days |

If a successful outcome also saved lots of Tribespeoples' lives then add on another day. Don't get too generous, by the way. Firstly, the player characters will be knocking up all kinds of items for trade (i.e. becoming very rich very quickly), and secondly (and realistically the Tribe cannot spare an able-bodied Hunter for *too* long).

ADVENTURE POSSIBILITIES

What can you use to build a TOTEM scenario? Use all of the same rules for constructing them as in any other roleplaying game. Mix wilderness challenges with social obstacles and magic. Perhaps one of the most common types of Ice Age scenario type is the quest – the Tribe has a problem, someone (the Hunters) must go out into the wilderness to battle with fantastical forces (spirits, magical elements) and return to save the day. It can be used effectively, or misused as a trite fantasy quest. But it does illustrate the three building blocks of a good TOTEM scenario.

Something is happening within the Tribe itself

This is important because the Tribe *is* society, it is the Hunters' world. They are not outcasts or mercenaries wandering the landscape. They are part of a social group. To make it feel like a very real social unit, make sure things are always happening and that these things spark adventures.

A wilderness journey is required

This is important because the Hunters are tiny specks in a vast untamed wilderness, without cities, towns, farms or fields. The Tribe is a tiny band of humans clinging together for protection and support. And for nomads life is on the move, in tents and temporary shelters and caves. Players should feel that their characters are in this wilderness, never sat at home warm and safe. A wilderness journey is *any* journey, to fetch firewood, collect reeds or water, hunt an ibex, reach an old abandoned cave, explore a haunted wood or reach the World Ice. Any of these has the possibility of threatening the Hunter with hostile creatures, physical challenges, wounding or death.

An element of fantasy is involved

This is important because this *is* fantasy. An historically accurate version of TOTEM could work and work well, tribal intrigue on its own, for example, would make an effective 'realistic' game. Imagine 'Macbeth' or 'Romeo and Juliet' set within the Tribal context. But as with running a basic survival-only game, this lack of fantasy might not capture the interest of the players. In fact without the insertion of supernatural elements, a 'realistic' game doesn't really resemble the mindset of the Ice Age Hunters at all. They believed implicitly in the existence of magic and spirits – it just makes sense that they be portrayed in scenarios as very real elements. Without the fantasy, TOTEM games become (to my mind) *less* realistic.

These three adventure elements are obviously not *de rigueur*. They are the three useful elements for scenario creation, but one or even two might be left out and the game could still prove entertaining. As long as there is variation! You could run a Tribal politics game one week, a trip to find honey the next and in the third week try to help exorcise a spirit haunting a comatose boy. Each game focusses on a single adventure element, but the focus changes every week. I think that could work quite nicely. The problem with this approach is that, ten minutes into the game, everyone knows what is going to be involved "uh oh, the chief's son has been found murdered, its Tribal politics today ...". Using more than one of the elements keeps everyone guessing and of course provides some interest

throughout the scenario. The adventure suggestions below try to incorporate a number of the elements.

Feud – One of the Clans is upset and fallen out with other Clans in the Tribe. It has moved up to another campsite nearby. The Hunters are chosen as ambassadors to sort out the grievance. They might stumble upon a dead member of Clan on the way there, and then be discovered by Clan members looking at the body. Have things just got even more complicated?

Werewolf - There is an evil spirit preying on the Tribe, a werebear or werewolf that appears as a friendly stranger by day, but who, at night, stalks the land killing the unwary. Will the Hunter's unmask him?

Lost Child – A child from the Tribe has run away and is trapped in a cave. The occupants of the cave (a family of cave lions) have arrived to spend for a day or so there. Can the Hunters get to the child before it is noticed? The lions must not be harmed.

Honey – The Tribe want some honey! A sacrifice of some type will be made to the bee spirit, and once done someone very brave (with a good grip) must climb one of the tallest trees in the wood to retrieve the honey. If they are not careful and the bee spirit is angered or unimpressed by the sacrifice, a cloud of bees will emerge to sting the climber, making his grip on the tree untenable. Got any plans?

Thief! – Mysterious thefts plague the Tribe. An outcast or exile is preying on the Tribe. Is he just trying to survive? No, he is a Storyteller from a rival Tribe trying to steal certain artifacts he needs to cast a spell against the players' Tribe.

Magic Berries – A special purple magic berry is needed to cure the strange illness affecting the chief. The Hunters must go and find some, and may have to negotiate one of more physical and magical obstacles first. The berries will eventually be found in a grove guarded by powerful spirits who must be tricked or appeased. They declare that “no man may step into the grove” and they will kill any who do. But a woman? A child? And what if they crawl, hop or run into the grove?

White Hart – An albino deer, a holy spirit, has been spotted in a high valley. If the player characters can some of the antlers that it has shed then they will be able to manufacture magical items. The hart's antler is powerful!

Clever Lion – The Tribe is being stalked by a cave lion that is solitary and attacks when it finds a straggler or undefended Tribesperson. It seems to be intelligent. Is it the wrath of Fang the Guardian Spirit of the Cave Lions? Communing with Fang at a special sacred spot reveals the machinations of an exiled Storyteller from many years ago. He is seeking revenge on his home Clan and has a hidden lair that is protected by magic and his cave lion ally.

Red River – The river has turned red and is undrinkable. Terror! The Hunters must discover the reason for this cosmic aberration by journeying upstream. There they find that the river flows from a cave in a gorge, a sacred grotto. When the Hunters enter this cave they discover that it has been desecrated and now possessed by evil spirits. The cave needs putting in order before the river can be ‘cleansed’ – they need to fashion new idols from raw materials that they must scavenge for in the gorge.

Forever Sleep – A Tribeswoman is in a perpetual sleep and the Storyteller declares that the woman’s spirit has wandered away during her dreams. In fact it has been captured! The Storyteller gives the Hunters a magical amulet fashioned of badger bone to ‘sniff out’ the spirit of the woman. Where is it? There is a great hollow tree at the centre of the woods inhabited by a spirit called the MistMaker and this spirit draws in wandering spirits. It thrives on the dreams of others. In the deep base of this tree far underground is a pool filled with bright swirling bubbles – each one the spirit of a trapped dreamer. The cavernous chamber under the hollow tree is guarded by huge bat spirits, hanging hidden and silent out of sight.

Magic Stones: The Tribe have moved off after reindeer, but the Storyteller realizes that he has left something very important behind at the campsite – his pouch of magic stones! A Hunter is sent back to get it. Between the camp site and the Tribe is an angry auroch that must be avoided. At the abandoned camp site the stones are nowhere to be seen, but tracks in the snow lead away to the south. The tracks lead up a rough and rocky slope that drops suddenly on the other side into a deep, snow-filled gorge. There are brambles growing here and there on the cliff faces and on the canyon floor. The ogre that has stolen the magic stones is hiding here, in a little cave behind a tangle of brambles on the cliff nearest the Hunter. In fact it is likely that the player character will miss the cave altogether. On the gorge floor, waist deep in snow it is obvious there are no tracks here. But the ogre springs into action and begins hurling stones from his hideaway. If the ogre is driven off or defeated the

Hunter finds the magic stones inside the ogre's cave along with some stinking furs, a handaxe and a length of sinew cord.

Scout – One or perhaps two Hunters have been sent out to track an older reindeer that has fallen behind on the hunt. As they enter a stand of pine trees they see the reindeer, now dead, with a cave lion laying claim to it. It's tough, mean and big! Do they try to outrun it or do they fight the lion for the carcass?

APPENDIX

ORIGINS

The idea for an Ice Age game came to me as I was pondering how to run an effective demonstration game for a group of nine-year olds. I needed something without a modern urban setting, full of intensive social interaction. I needed a setting that might pose a threat to the characters. And I needed some sort of survival situation with which I could test the children's mental resources. I came up with a short Ice Age game, which soon developed into **TOTEM**.

INSPIRATION

Of course it didn't come out of nowhere. I was struck by the magnificent images of Mammoths and Cro Magnon's in the BBC's final episode of their 'Walking With Beasts' show. I'd also communicated with Ian Young about his own Ice Age roleplaying game, Cold Mountain. Cold Mountain can be found [here](#) and is richer, deeper and eminently more suited to a group of more mature players than is **TOTEM**. I tried hard not to cover the same territory as Ian.

Another inspiration was Kirk Wilson Tate's book '[GURPS Ice Age](#)', written as a supplement for the GURPS line by Steve Jackson Games. That book is now out of print, but I believe the information on early man is reprinted in '[GURPS Dinosaurs](#)' instead.

Other works I found useful include: 'Cave Art' by Andrew J. Lawson and the 'Oxford Illustrated History of Prehistory of Europe', edited by Barry Cunliffe.

LINKS

Further information of use can be found at the following websites:

[The Mammoth Saga](#)

[The Chauvet Cave](#)

[The Cave at Lascaux](#)

BBC's Walking With Beasts

And I can't resist linking to another Steve Jackson Games product, a game I've heard good things about, but never actually played, a game called Tribes.

PROJECTS

Because **TOTEM** was designed to be used within a school environment I wanted the game to include more than just verbal storytelling, but also some kind of hands-on aspect. As explained in the section entitled 'The Stones' I created my own leather bag of beach stones, see a picture of this here.

I've also created a number of Ice Age related craft projects for my students to carry out to alternate with roleplaying sessions. There are four craft projects ready to try:

Spirit Rattle - Using a forked twig, twine, seashells and feathers, the students will create a North American Indian-style rattle with which to summon their ancestor spirits, or to ward off evil spirits.

Leather Painting - I bound my copy of TOTEM in mock-leather that I made using thick brown paper stained with tea and coffee, gently scrunched and left to dry. Once dry the paper resembles leather, I even used leather cord to bind my pages to the cover and finished the job off with an Ice Age-style hand painting on the cover. See a picture of this here. My students will make a leather hide and paint a picture on it.

Ivory Carving - I can't get hold of ivory, or let my students use knives in the classroom, so instead we're going to use bars of white soap and carve animals from them using plastic knives or clay-working tools. I've already made a mammoth while my son experimented by carving a mouse.

Cave Painting - The first idea to come to me was that of a cave painting. Using a long roll of paper pinned up on the wall, students will draw their totem animal using appropriate colours in pastels, chalks and charcoals. After completing their animal they will 'sign' their work with a handprint stencil as the Ice Age artists did in France and Spain. As the game progresses week-by-week they will add to the painting, depicting spirits encountered in the form of their animal guises. I tried it with my son, see it here.

If anyone has any further suggestions for craft projects, I'd be most interested in hearing them!

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STARES DEEP

Stares Deep is a Hunter created by Mike Holmes (co-author of the game **UNIVERSALIS**). He has generously let me add Stares Deep to the **TOTEM** website along with a fully fledged Tribe to back him up. Thanks Mike!

STARES DEEP

Stares Deep is a member of the Eagle Clan.

Eagle Clan

Members of this Clan have a proud in demeanor. The men and women draw feathers on their foreheads with ash. The Clan Spirit is called FarWing. Clan Talent is See Far.

See Far - You can see things at great distances without difficulty, and tend to spot things well before they arrive. The Focus Eagle is a wood carving of FarWing.

His **Talent** is Identify Spirits, and he is often relied upon in hunts to ensure that the way is clear of vengeful spirits.

THE SUN-MEN

Stares Deep's tribe, the Sun Men lives in the Craggen Hills. They spend a lot of effort on moving about to avoid the Ogre Clan, and the Tall Tribe with whom they have a blood feud. The tribe travels lightly because of the nature of the terrain (no sledges possible), and the constant need to move due to their enemies, and customs. As such, they carry no housing, and use the common rock overhags as their shelter. In the evening it is the responsibility of a special team of hunters (currently composed mostly of Rhino Clansmen) to investigate any caves adjacent to the overhang selected to ensure that no sabercats or wolves are within.

Currently the tribe numbers 62 adults, and 33 children, with the Eagle Clan being but 6 adults and 4 children. The other Clans in the tribe are Rhino (largest, and the clan from which both the Storyteller and Tribal Chieftain come from), Wolf, and Red Deer clans.

Tribal Customs

-Every morning, the Storyteller of the Tribe (Rough Skin) calls the men of the tribe to a nearby hill to greet the rising sun.

-In general they travel west during the spring and summer, and east during the Fall and winter, which has to do with the sun's cycle, and how shadows fall in the Craggen Hills. In the process they travel the entire length of the hills.

-When greeting outsiders, the Sun Men will speak only from the next hill, and will scatter if approached.

Tribal Taboos

-The Sun Men never travel or hunt when the sun is not visible in the sky believing as it brings bad luck.

-A kill cannot be transported across a river. The Sun Men would rather eat it on the spot than transport the dead creature across a river and risk the river's wrath.

-The women sing each night to encourage the sun to rise again.

CURRENT SITUATION

The adults of the Eagle Clan are the Chief Wide Eye, his wife Running Wind, his brother Night Sun, Stares Deep (who is Wide Eye's son), Stares Deep's wife Nenat, and Wide Eye's daughter Astat. One of the children, a girl who has yet to be named is Stares Deep's offspring. There is a long standing problem with the clan in that Night Sun refuses to take a mate. This threatens the Clan's viability, already at too low a number.

Currently, the Tribe is having trouble deciding which of two paths to take. They can either go around a nasty crag ahead, which is treacherous, and has taken lives in the past, or they can save several days by crossing it. The condition of the crag changes each time the tribe comes to it.

Complicating this, the Red Deer clan has refused to scout the area out, having lost two of their members the last time they were sent on this errand. The Rhino Clan very much wants to save time and go through. The negotiations have stalled, and the Chieftain has called upon the Eagle Clan to fix things. They owe him a debt for his support in a recent Tribal

Council.

So it's up to the Eagle Clan to try and figure out a solution to the problem. They could go and do the scouting themselves, but that would leave the tension between Red Deer, and Rhino intact and festering. Perhaps better to find another honorable solution.

What the Tribe does not know is that the Spirit of the crag is at war with it's neighbors, and has sent animals from it to attack the wood to the south (the alternate rout). So at the moment, unless this can also be dealt with, either path is very dangerous.

E N D