

NEVERLAND

Here Be Monsters!

Tiger Lily, Heroic Hunter

110

You stumbled upon the tracks of a Horned Lizard yesterday morning and, following the biped's spoor, you have been patiently stalking the carnosaur ever since, following it eastwards into the foothills of Mount Thunderpeak.

Your quarry is a deadly apex predator, sixty hands in length from its blunt nose to the tip of its sturdy tail, but if you can find it and take it down, nothing would prove to your father, Great Chief Panther, more effectively that you are worthy of being elevated to the rank of warrior of the Accala tribe.

You are currently following a narrow trail through the barren peaks south of the mountain, where it hugs a dusty hillside. Very little vegetation grows here. On your left hand is a near sheer cliff, while to your right, on the other side of the path, is a precipitous drop to the jungle below. Beyond that, far to the south you can see the sparkling waters of Cannibal Cove, but between your current location and the bay the Spider Swamps lie under a pall of fetid mist that rises from the stagnant pools and brackish hollows of the stinking marshland.

Fang suddenly comes to a halt. "What is it, boy?" you whisper into one alert ear, whilst scratching the fur on the back of the Sabretooth's neck.

Your companion starts to growl, a low rumbling sound rising from deep within his ribcage that is full ominous menace. He must have caught the scent of something up ahead. Could it be the Horned Lizard you are hunting?

Tightening your grip on your spear, you kick your heels into the great cat's flanks, hard enough to make your intention plain, and Fang begins to pad warily along the cliff path once more.

Rounding the next bend in the path you find the track opens out onto a small plateau that protrudes from the side of the cliff. And standing there, grazing on the leaves of some spiky shrub is a huge beast, built like a Great Horn, but lacking either a great crest or three horns projecting from its face.

What it does have is a body covered in bony plates, from its head right down to its tail; even its eyelids have small plates covering them.

More than four times the size of Fang, the huge reptile is blocking your way onward.

If you want to use the *Beast Lore* special ability, turn to **111**. If you want to use the *Earth Lore* special ability, turn to **128**. If you do not have either of the abilities, or do not want to use them now, will you:

Retreat and follow the path back down through the foothills? Turn to **122**.

Behave in a threatening manner towards the huge animal? Turn to **116**.

Attack the creature? Turn to **112**.

111

(Cross off one use of the *Beast Lore* special ability.)

The beast is a giant Club-Tail and a bull, by the looks of it. These animals are not carnivores but they are notoriously bad-tempered and aggressive, not to mention territorial.

If you are to avoid a confrontation with the beast you had best find another way through the foothills. However, if you are intent on challenging the brute you either have to be supremely confident that you can get the better of it, or you had best watch out for the vicious club tail that gives it its name.

If you do end up battling the Club-Tail, you may apply a +1 *Combat* bonus when calculating your *Combat Strength*.

Now what do you want to do? Will you:

Use the *Earth Lore* special ability (if you can)? Turn to **128**.

Retreat and look for another way through these desolate crags? Turn to **122**.

Give a display of threatening behaviour? Turn to **116**.

Attack the Club-Tail? Turn to **112**.

112

The Club-Tail may be herbivorous, but it is no less able to defend itself despite its vegetarian diet. Its sharp beaked mouth and mace-like tail could both cause some serious damage, not to mention what would happen if it managed to trample you beneath its heavy, blunt-clawed hooves. (You and Fang have the initiative in this battle.)

CLUB-TAIL

COMBAT 7

ENDURANCE 20

If you and Fang defeat the beast, turn to **113**.

113

The Club-Tail is dead!

Roll one die (or pick a card). If the number rolled is odd (or the card is red), turn to **114**. If the number rolled is even (or the card is black), turn to **115**.



114

Weakened by your battle with the Club-Tail, and the impacts of its heavy mace, the cliff path crumbles beneath Fang's feet and, before you know it, you are caught in a devastating landslide of rock and clay!

Turn to **121**.

115

You briefly consider taking the Club-Tail's head back to your tribe before dismissing the idea. If you want to prove yourself worthy of joining the ranks of the Accala's warrior cadre you are going to need to bring home something more impressive than the head of a dead plant-eater.

And so you urge Fang on along the path through the hills, in the hope that you will find the Horned Lizard's trail again soon.

Turn to **131**.

116

"Yah!" you shout, shaking your spear threateningly, whilst fixing the beast's eye with a furious, unrelenting stare. Fang joins in, snarling viciously and pawing the ground with his claws bared.

If you want to employ your *Strength of Will* special ability, turn to **117**. If not, turn to **118**.

117

The Club-Tail gives a bray of annoyance even as it slowly backs away from you. Finally, it turns tail and thuds away into the crags to join the rest of its family pod, not doubt.

With that bad-tempered obstacle out of the way, you breathe a sigh of relief and urge your steed on along the path through the hills.

Turn to **131**.

118

In response to your threatening display, the Club-Tail gives voice to a sonorous bellow and, taking a step closer, swings its fused bone club at you.

Take an Agility test. If you pass the test, turn to **119**. If you fail the test, turn to **120**.

119

You pull Fang out of the way of the monster's swinging tail, and rather than hitting you or the Sabretooth, it smashes into the cliff face. Where the tail hits, the compacted earth and rock fractures and crumbles.

As the beast pulls its club free again, part of the rock face falls away. And then a great mass of rock and clay above that sloughs away, crashing down onto the path, which in turn gives way and in no time at all you find yourself caught up in a devastating landslide!

Turn to **121**.

120

You try to pull Fang back before the Club-Tail can deliver its deadly strike, but you do not react quickly enough. The ball of fused bony plates hits your steed's side and you hear the horrible sound of ribs cracking under the force of the blow.

Fang is lifted off the ground by the force of the blow and hurled over the edge of the cliff, with you still in the saddle on his back. The two of you tumble down the mountainside, not stopping until you collide with the piles of boulders at the bottom of the escarpment.

Deduct 4 *Endurance* points, 1 *Agility* point and 1 *Combat* point from your own scores, and deduct 6 *Endurance* points, 1 *Agility* point and 1 *Combat* point from Fang's scores.

Picking yourselves up, when you have had time to recover from the shock of your fall, you decide that there is nothing to be gained by climbing backs into the and risk invading the Club-Tail's territory again, and so you set off once more, heading east.

If you want to skirt the boggy limits of the Spider Swamps, in hope of picking up the Horned Lizard's trail again further on, turn to **131**. If you actually want to enter the swamp, turn to **122**.

121

Caught in the midst of the landslide, you and Fang tumble down the mountainside, not stopping until you collide with the piles of boulders that lie at the bottom of the escarpment.

Deduct 2 points from your *Endurance* score and 3 points from Fang's *Endurance* score.

Once you've had a chance to recover yourselves, you decide that there is nothing to be gained by climbing back up into the hills, and so you set off once more, heading east.

If you want to skirt the boggy limits of the Spider Swamps, in hope of picking up the Horned Lizard's trail again further on, turn to **131**. If you actually want to enter the swamp, turn to **122**.

122

Leaving the rugged uplands, you enter the fetid marshes that lie between them and the coast. Fang keeps yowling at getting his feet way, as he picks his way daintily through the boggy hollows and muddy waterways, preferring to stay close to the low stunted trees that grow here, rather than have to brave the squelching mud. It takes all your focus to keep him heading east through the brackish wetlands.

You don't particularly like this place either. It is humid here, your skin is slick with sweat, and you find yourself subject to the unwelcome attentions of all manner of biting insects.

Lose 2 *Endurance* points and deduct 1 *Combat* point as well, due to the distraction caused by so many itchy bites.

If you have the *Plant Lore* special ability and want to use it now, turn to **123**. If not, turn to **124**.

123

As you are scratching furiously at the bites on your skin, in an effort to alleviate the terrible itching, you spot a plant with succulent spiked leaves, growing in a thicket. Breaking off one of the leaves you daub the bites with the white sap that oozes from the exposed inner flesh of the plant.

The effect is almost magical; in no time at all, the itching subsides and you feel able to go on, without feeling as if you have been disadvantaged by the unkind attentions of the blood-sucking bugs.

Restore 1 *Combat* point and turn to **124**.

124

As you head deeper into the swamp, strange echoing cries chase you through the cloying mist and a gigantic dragonfly alights on the branch of a tree nearby to devour the small parakeet it has caught in its sharp mandibles. Its iridescent wings are each as long as your forearm. And then, its meal done, it's on its way again.

Roll one die (or pick a card). If the number rolled is odd (or the card is red), turn to **125**. If the number rolled is even (or the card is black), turn to **126**.

125

The mire in front of you sudden heaves and with a horrible glooping sound, undulating bodies emerge from the mud. As the slick sludge trickles from the huge worm-like forms, you see that they are eyeless, blood-red in colour, and each at least as long as you are tall. And you have no choice but to fight your way past the giant swamp leeches. (Despite being totally blind, the leeches can sense both your body heat, as well as your heartbeat, and so have the initiative in this battle.)

	COMBAT	ENDURANCE
First RED LEECH	6	7
Second RED LEECH	6	6
Third RED LEECH	5	7

If you slay all of the leeches, turn to **126**.

126

At long last you make it to the other side of the foul-smelling swamp. However, before you leave this fecund environment, do you want to take the opportunity to look for healing herbs, or other flora that may provide sustenance for you?

If you do, turn to **129**. If, on the other hand, you would happily leave the swamp behind as quickly as possible, turn to **131**.

128

(Cross off one use of the *Earth Lore* special ability.)

You can't help noticing that the ground here appears very crumbly and, lacking the root systems of plants to hold it together, it could be prone to landslides, particularly with something as big and heavy as this bony-plated brute stomping about the place.

What do you want to do next? Will you:

Use the *Beast Lore* special ability (if you can)? Turn to **111**.

Retreat and find another way through these desolate crags? Turn to **122**.

Threaten the beast? Turn to **116**.

Attack the animal? Turn to **112**.

129

You set about looking for suitable plants on the fringes of the swamp.

If you have the *Plant Lore* special ability and want to use it now, turn to **130**.

If not, roll one die (or pick a card). If the number rolled is even (or the card is black), turn to **130**. However, if the number rolled is odd (or the card is red), you are unsuccessful in your search, finding only poisonous plants and toxic fungi – turn to **131**.

130

You eventually find what you are looking for – herbs that will help knit wounds and enough tasty fruit to fill a hungry belly.

Add 4 Meals to your Provisions. If you choose to eat one Meal of the fruit, or use the healing herbs on yourself, you may restore 4 *Endurance* points.

Happy with your foraged finds, you quit the swamp at last.

Turn to **131**.



You come to the top of a rise and through a break in the trees you are presented with a jaw-dropping sight. Rising out of the jungle are the ruins of a temple-city raised by the ancient civilisation that once dominated these lands. You see huge carved stone faces clung with vines and teetering towers, almost entirely reclaimed by the forest, their stones forced apart by the roots of huge trees.

But central to the ruins and dominating the vista is a huge stepped pyramid. Its highest tier rises high above the trees, although it is still overshadowed by the peak of the volcano behind it, crystal waterfalls cascading down the sides of the peak amid spray-born rainbows.

The rite of passage to become a hunter forgotten, you direct Fang down the other side of the rise and enter the outskirts of the abandoned temple city.

TO BE CONTINUED...

