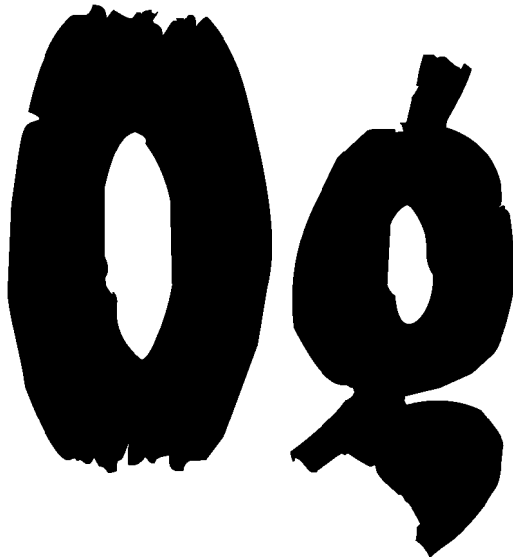


# OOOG

Unearthed Edition



**Robin D. Laws**



# The Roleplaying Game Of Caveman Miscommunication — Unearthed Edition —

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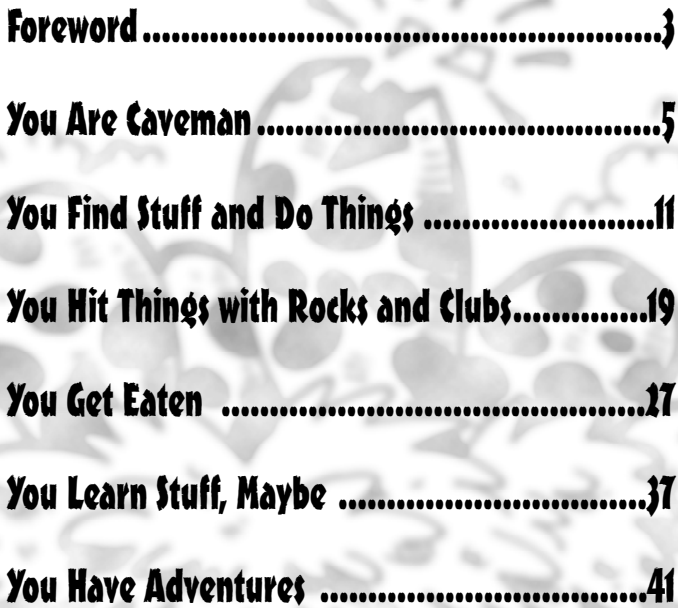
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



Foreword .....	3
You Are Caveman .....	5
You Find Stuff and Do Things .....	11
You Hit Things with Rocks and Clubs.....	19
You Get Eaten .....	27
You Learn Stuff, Maybe .....	37
You Have Adventures .....	41



# PREFACE TO THE UNEARTHED EDITION

**B**reakthrough moments are few and far between for those of us who labor in the arcane field of paleo-aleology. (As all readers of this specialized volume doubtless know, this is the study of prehistoric roleplaying games as discovered in the fossil record.) Without question, the publication of this book represents just such a milestone, one whose scholarly necessity we at the Institute of Paleo-Gaming Studies are well-prepared to proclaim.

In March of 2004, researchers affiliated with the Institut de Préhistoire et de Géologie du Quaternaire, France, uncovered a previously unexamined cave complex near the village of Montignac. This is the same area where the Lascaux cave paintings were discovered in 1940.

As any schoolchild is aware, the original cave paintings depict scenes of animals and hunting. Lesser known are the contents of its Chamber of the Polyhedrals, where was found, in fragmentary form, the rules for the world's first roleplaying game. Translated from pictogram into English by noted gamer and paleoanthropologist Aldo Ghiozzi, this rules set was first published in 1993 by Wingnut Games, with subsequent revisions and releases in 1995, 2000, and 2001.

Consensus estimates date the paintings of the Lascaux complex to between 10,000 and 13,000 years B.C. Thus the Wingnut editions of *Og: The Role Playing Game* have long been assumed to represent mankind's oldest roleplaying game, predating by a

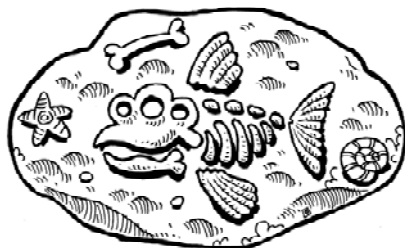
considerable margin the famous meeting of Gygax and Arneson at Gen Con in 1971.

The 2004 discovery of the so-called de Moisi Caves threw our roleplaying timeline into a steaming pile of brontosaurus ordure. There, on cave surfaces we can conclusively date to an astoundingly ancient 30,000 BC, was a previous, more primal edition of the roleplaying game known as *Og*. Its superior antiquity is unquestioned. Not only does the carbon test pan out, but the de Moisi version is obviously a simpler creation, predating the invention of character levels, ablative armor, and *Magic: the Gathering* jokes.

We of the Institute have our quibbles with certain interpretive choices made by designer Robin D. Laws, who in several instances has recklessly privileged entertaining game play over scholarly accuracy. Nonetheless, we are anxious to endorse its promulgation to a wider audience. We thank Firefly Games for the opportunity to provide pedagogical corrections, where warranted, to Laws' work. These appear in sidebar form throughout the main text.

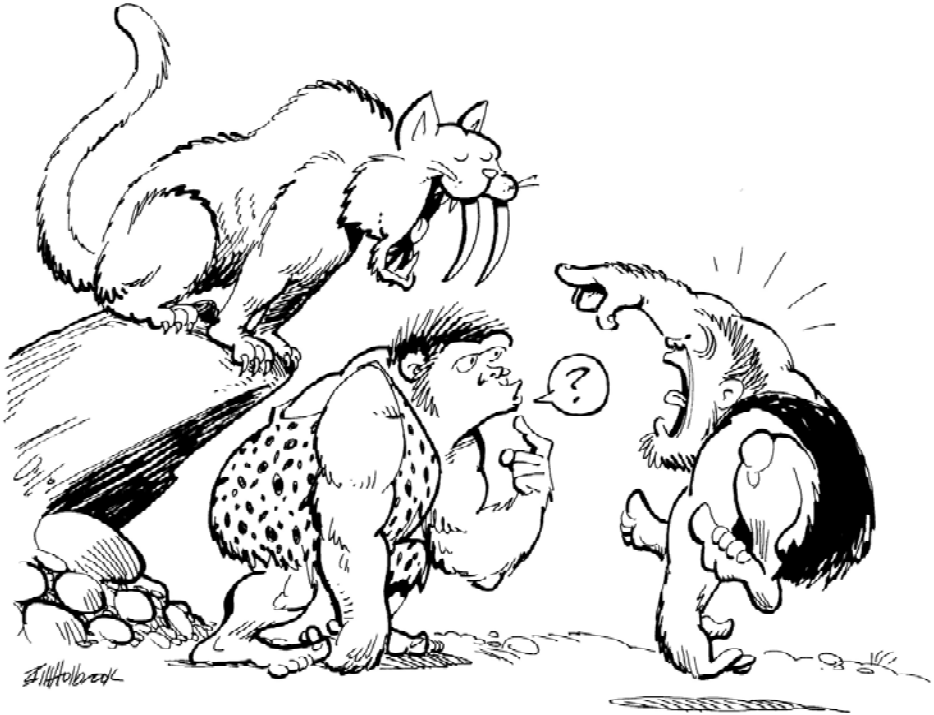
— Laurent St.-Moytmorency Ph.D.

Senior Fellow, Institute of Paleo-Gaming Studies,  
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# YOU ARE CAVEMAN



In *Og*, you play a caveman (or cavewoman) struggling for survival in a hostile world of dinosaurs, mammoths, and other prehistoric beasts. The dinosaurs, mammoths, and prehistoric beasts want to eat you, and you want to

eat them. You are very stupid. Bad things happen to you. You make bad things happen to things who make bad things happen to you. So it all works out. Unless you get eaten.

## What Am Roleplaying?

Although the de Moisi version of *Og* is by many millennia the oldest roleplaying game now known, tantalizing hints suggest that it builds on earlier examples of the form. Most notably, it begins with a section of pictograms explaining that roleplaying games are like organized pretend-

ing, but with a referee, called a Game Master, and a set of rules which determine outcomes, thus differentiating them from childhood games of “Pterodactyl and Pterodactyl meat.” It then goes on to state that it will keep this section short, as everyone has read it a

million times already and nobody ever learns RPGs from a cold reading of a cave wall anyway. “They ask their friends how it works, and their friends either explain it, or pelt them with sharpened rocks.”

—L.S.M.

## 18 Words

Did we mention that you are very stupid? Hampering your progress through this hostile, hungry world are your vast array of mental inabilities.

Chief among these is your limited grasp of language. Human speech is in its infancy in the land of *Og*. Among the people of your tribe, only 18 words are known. These words are:

You	Me	Rock	Water
Fire	Stick	Hairy	Bang
Sleep	Smelly	Small	Big
Cave	Food	Thing	Shiny
Go	Verisimilitude		

Do you start play with all 18 words? Heck no! That would make you a smart caveman. Instead, you know only a fraction of these words. You may learn more words in the course of play. You might even get to coin new words unknown to your tribe. But for now you know only a few.

When communicating with other characters in the game, you can use only these words, augmented by whatever grunts, hoots, trills or other non-verbal noises you care to make. You can also supplement your communications with gestures.

Curiously, your cavemen do understand words they don't know how to use themselves.

All communication to other players must be expressed with your limited vocabulary. You may never address your fellow players "out of character." Your few words, plus grunts, gestures, and, if you're really talented, stick-figure drawings, are all you get.

Your GM will discourage you from engaging in formal charade techniques, like spelling out words or naming the number of syllables in a word, because your characters lack the necessary frame of reference. Aside from that restriction, feel free to leap up and engage in mimicry and miming to get your point across. Do you need to distinguish between a hairy thing (sabertooth tiger) and a hairy thing (dire wolf)? Mime the big fangs of the former, while letting out an ear-splitting feline yowl. Then do your best wolf impression, while growling appropriately.

When in doubt, say your few words louder. That always helps.

You may, however, step out of character to describe to the GM what your character is doing.

Although, for ease of reference, the players and GM give the characters names, the cavemen are actually incapable of speaking them. They think of each other as "hey, you" and leave it at that.

## Speaking and Understanding

It is a curious feature of both known versions of *Og* that characters are presumed to understand the meaning of words they cannot speak. This has led some theorists to suggest that the brain structures of the hunter-gatherers who first played this game were still in the process of evolution, with some language faculties more highly developed

than others. On the other hand, maybe the nameless cavemen who first created this game just thought it was funnier that way.

—L.S.M.



## Example Of Play

Your character, Thag, is walking up the hill with his buddies, Mog (played by Krista), Dag (played by Jerry) and Garg (played by Asif). At the crest of the hill you see a tribe of monkey-men hauling off the carcass of a dead ibex.

“Hey,” you say to your fellow players, “let’s jump those monkey-men and get that carcass!”

Your GM wags a finger at you. “Uh uh uh,” she admonishes. “Use only your words.”

You stand corrected. Gesturing wildly, you bellow: “Food! Food! Go bang hairy!”

The other players nod their heads enthusiastically.

“Bang!” yells Krista.

“Bang hairy thing!” growls Jerry, refining the thought.

“Okay,” you say to the GM, “I grab my spear and charge on up.”

“I go around the side and try to sneak up from behind,” says Krista.

You start to argue with Krista. “No, no, let’s all go together—” Catching yourself, you grope for a way to express your thought, which is that you should go in together. (Last time the group tried the clever approach, you got stomped by members of a rival tribe while waiting for your supposedly sneaky colleagues to arrive.) Jumping up and down angrily, you point to yourself, then to the whole group, then to the monkey-men.

“While you’re trying to get your point across,” says the GM, “the monkey-men scamper over the side of the ridge, disappearing out of sight.”

“I chase them!” you call, to the GM. “Go bang! Go bang!” you cry, to the other players, as your character charges up the hill.

## Character Creation

Character creation in *Og* occurs in the following simple steps. Write the results down on a copy of the character sheet provided at the back of this book. (It’s also available as a PDF download from the Firefly Games website at [www.firefly-games.com](http://www.firefly-games.com).)

1. Choose your character class. Characters fall into seven character classes: Eloquent, Strong, Banging, Learned, Fast, Tough, and Grunting. These are explained in greater detail in the next section.
2. Everyone rolls  $1d6+2$  to see how many words they get. Eloquent cavemen roll after everyone else, and get either the result of a  $1d6+4$  roll, or 2 more words than any other non-Eloquent caveman, whichever is greater. Each player then chooses their allotted words from the list of 18.

You can take a word that isn’t on the list of 18 by reducing the number of words you would otherwise get by 2. Don’t spend all night thinking about which one you want, though.

Your GM may want to get started quickly, for example in the case of a convention game. Or maybe you’re a notorious pack of foot-dragging slowpokes. In either case, she can speed this stage up by having you draw your words randomly from a hat.

3. Everyone rolls  $1d6+3$  to see how many Unggghh Points they get. Unggghh points measure the caveman’s ability to take physical punishment before keeling over. They are named after the sound you make when you lose them. (“Unggghh!”) Be sure to grunt vigorously whenever using this term



in the course of play.

Tough cavemen roll after everyone else. The Tough caveman may either choose to roll  $1d6+6$ , or to get  $X+3$  Unggghh Points, where X is the highest Unggghh Point value of any non-Tough caveman in the group.

4. Note your Attack value on your character sheet. Your value is 5, unless you chose to be a Banging caveman, in which case it's a 4. This is your chance of hitting your enemies when engaged in a fight.
5. Note your Damage value on your character sheet. Your value is 1, unless you chose to be a Strong caveman, in which case it's 2. This measures how hard you hit your enemies, assuming you succeed in landing a blow.
6. Note your Evade value on your character sheet. Your value is 0, unless you chose to be a Fast caveman, in which case it's a 1. Enemies trying to hit you must add your Evade to their Attack values.
7. Note how many abilities you get to pick during play. If you're a Learned caveman, you get 6. Otherwise, you get 3.

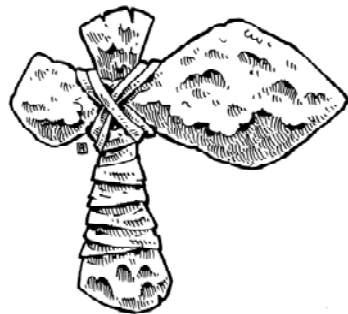
Rather than choosing your abilities before play starts, you pick them as the game unfolds. There is no shame in picking exactly the ability you need to get you out of whatever predicament you happen to find yourself in at the moment. If there are abilities you know you want, you can declare them at any time. Just don't keep everyone else

waiting before play starts poring over the ability lists and carefully choosing your abilities. This is not that kind of game.

Learned or otherwise, all characters automatically get the Run Away ability — all cavemen who are not part of the fossil record have already honed this talent to perfection. This does not count against the total number of abilities they get to choose. This reflects the fact that fleeing at top speed is often the smartest choice a group of cavemen can possibly make.

Some classes get more use out of certain abilities than others, so you may want to choose the ones that match your character. Learned cavemen get extra mileage out of Draw and Fish. Strong cavemen are especially good at Lift. Tough cavemen totally rock that Resistance ability. (Everyone gets the Run Away ability, but Fast cavemen get to be better at it than anyone else.)

That's it! You're done with character creation, and ready to get out and face that nasty prehistoric world!



## Dice

To play *Og*, each player, including the GM, needs a few, standard, six-sided die. (Most of the time you'll only need one.) Because a result of 1 is always bad news, you may wish to acquire special *Og* dice from Firefly Games. These dice replace the 1 with the image of a slaving dinosaur, ready to devour your flesh. However nifty these dice are, they are not strictly necessary for play.

## Character Classes

Each character class revolves around a defining quality. These make you slightly better than your fellow tribesmen in a particular area.

### Eloquent

By caveman standards, you are a silver-tongued devil, capable of great feats of oratory. In other words, you know a few more of the eighteen 18 words than anyone else does. You try to solve problems by talking your way through them, and consider yourself wildly persuasive.

### Strong

You're a thick-necked, slope-browed tower of rippling muscle. With ropy sinews, you club down any enemies fool enough to step into your path. You may not have the best aim, or hit as often as the Banging caveman, but when you do club somebody, he stays clubbed. (For the slow-witted, that means you deal more damage.)

### Banging

You hit your combat opponents more frequently than other cavemen. You were born with a stick or rock in your hand. Your response to any problem is to bang it—to hit it with a rock or stick. Is there a Neanderthal blocking your path? Bang him with a stick! A towering brontosaurus? Bang him with a stick! Does a raging river stand between you and your favorite hunting ground? That's right—hit it with a stick! What could possibly go wrong?

Oh, and that shapely cavewoman from the other tribe who makes you feel all funny inside... You get the idea...

### Learned

You're good at figuring out how to perform actions, and to remember them later. With your specialized abilities, you might be able to cook, throw objects, or build things. You might even develop new abilities previously unknown to your tribe.

### Fast

You're fleet of foot, finding it easy to Evade blows. Fleeing from enemies and dangerous creatures is a particular specialty. When everything in the world is bigger and tougher than you are, running away is nothing to be ashamed of.

### Tough

Somebody wants to hit you? Fine, let them hit you. You've got tough skin. And tough muscles, and tough bones, and the squishy parts that come out of people when a dinosaur bites them in two... whatever you call it, yours are tough, too. In other words, you take less damage per hit than other cavemen.

## Grunting

Of all the caveman types, yours is the most mysterious. When you find yourself in an emergency, you can sometimes, by furiously grunting, chanting, and flapping your arms, cause events to turn in your favor in dramatic and unexpected ways. Here are some of the things you've seen grunting accomplish:

- Once a sabertooth tiger was chasing you, and just when it was going to sink its massive teeth into your friend's flesh, you grunted, and an eagle flew overhead and dropped a turtle onto the tiger's head and it yelped and ran away.
- Once a pterodactyl dropped you from a great height, and you grunted all the way down, and just before you hit the ground, a wind came up and blew you onto a giant lily pad in a pond, breaking your fall.
- Another time you were on the edge of a volcano when it exploded, but you were blown free of the blast, and landed safely in a tree.

Sometimes you think that your grunting is proof that your pathetic

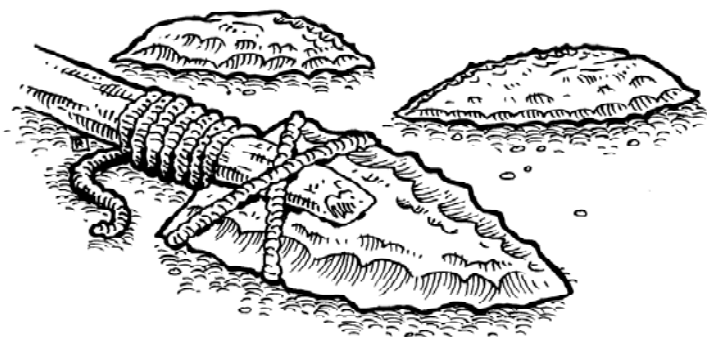
tribe isn't alone in the world. Instead you think there might be some benevolent being watching over you, maybe from the sky or something. You can almost picture him, as a giant, smiling caveman with a long white beard and a flowing loincloth that never gets dirty. If you didn't know better, you might one day decide to attract his favors more often, maybe by chanting and dancing or making sacrifices of precious food to him...

Wait a minute! Give away your food? That's crazy talk!

You'll just stick to grunting for now.

You may attempt to grunt once per scene. The GM decides what constitutes an entire scene. It may be a series of actions that takes place in one location or in a set period. Or it may encapsulate an entire encounter with a particular character or creature.

When you grunt, roll two dice. If each die comes up with the same number, a miraculous butt-saving event occurs — unless you roll two ones ("snake eyes") in which case something even more devastatingly horrible happens.



# YOU FIND STUFF AND DO THINGS

**A**s play begins, you have a number of abilities left to pick. You get to pick three abilities, unless you are a Learned caveman, in which case you get six.

Abilities allow you to perform particular tasks more effectively than the average caveman.

When you try to do something, you roll a die to see if you succeed or not. If none of your abilities apply to the action at hand, you succeed only on a result of 5 or 6. If an ability does apply, you

succeed on any result of 3 or higher.

However, no matter how clever you think you might be, you're still a slope-browed mouth-breather. Whether you have a skill or not, you are apt to blank out any time you try anything remotely difficult. On a roll of 1, you Forget How to perform the task, if you ever knew it at all. The GM thinks of the most disastrous, humiliating result (short of outright killing you) of your sudden lapse into utter stupidity, and then describes it to you. Slapstick hilarity

## Difficulties

*Og* is not a game of complicated gradations. Almost all actions should pose roughly the same difficulty. GMs are advised to deviate from this simple rule only when credibility absolutely demands otherwise. And credibility can stretch a long, long way in a slapstick caveman game.

If you need to make an action extra difficult at all,

it should be so difficult as to be almost impossible. Rule that only a character with the relevant ability can succeed at the task, and only on a roll of 6.

Many actions should, of course, be genuinely impossible. Cavemen can't leap over mountains, build computers, or lift full-grown woolly mammoths, no matter what they roll.

You may be tempted to make certain tasks difficult by splitting them up into multiple rolls—for example, requiring three Climb rolls to get up a mountain. Don't do this; it makes tasks punishingly difficult.

## Exclusive Abilities

Some abilities are exclusive, meaning that if you don't have the ability, you can't attempt the related action, at all, period, end of story. These are:

Build	Fire	Weather
Cook	Swim	
Draw	Throw	

## Class Abilities

Certain abilities are especially good if you belong to a particular character class. Strong cavemen gain additional benefits from the Lift and Throw abilities. Tough cavemen get more bang for their buck from Resistance. Fast cavemen excel at Run Away.

ensues, at your expense. Oops!

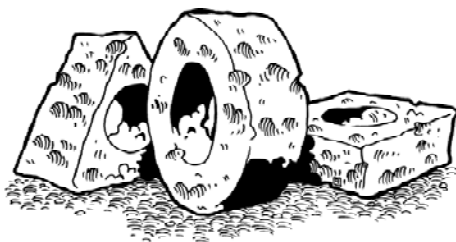
Don't forget to laugh when this happens to the other players.

GMs wishing to add additional chaos to their games—and test their own ingenuity—can add an optional rule. Whenever you attempt to use an ability and roll an actual 6, roll again. If the second roll is also a success (not necessarily a 6), you Succeed Wildly, doing such a great job that something surprising, funny, slapstick and/or amazing happens. The GM decides what this is, but, if stumped for an answer, may solicit suggestions from you or other players.

The list of starting abilities, with explanations, is as follows.

## Build

Most cavemen look at all the sticks and rocks and bones littering their environment and think to themselves, that stuff is no good to eat, so what good is it? You, on the other hand, occasionally



think to group the sticks and rocks and bones together, perhaps with some strips of dried animal skins, and voila — you've built something. Maybe it's a temporary cave made of tree trunks and animal skins, or a fish catcher made out of sticks and strips of loincloth, or even a wheeled conveyance that travels down hills.

Like any caveman, you have trouble repeating past actions. Having made a wheel or a lean-to on a previous

## Technology Sucks

Items created with the Build ability don't last very long. When a caveman sees an item of technology made by one of his clan mates, his first impulse is to knock it around to see how sturdy it is. If not carefully watched, your own people will test any invention to the breaking point.

All cavemen, including the most intrepid of builders, hate items of technology in the possession of other clans.

If you see a lean-to, catapult, wheel or cart in the hands of a neighbor or rival, you must make a Resist Destructive Impulse roll. You succeed on a 5, unless you are a Learned caveman, in which case you succeed on a 4. If you fail, you must rush toward the item and do your best to smash it into tiny pieces.

Why are cavemen possessed by this apparently irrational desire to destroy what others

build? Maybe they hate and fear what they do not understand. Perhaps they're afraid that their rivals will get a leg up on them. Or perhaps, deep down inside, they somehow sense that if they permanently invent the wheel, the plough and metallurgy that it will all one day lead to infomercials, car alarms, and regular security updates from the Microsoft Corporation.

occasion gives you no additional advantage in trying to make one today. The roll always remains the same.

## **Climb**

You can climb up stuff. Trees, rock faces, the webs of giant spiders... you name it, you can climb it.

Better yet, you can often climb back down again, afterwards.

## **Cook**

You can use fire to turn delicious raw food into even more mouth-watering cooked food. The wise people of your tribe claim that cooked food is less likely to make you sick than raw. Most people don't care about this. They're all about the tasty.

Note that you can *use* fire, but not necessarily make it. That requires a separate ability—see below.

## **Draw**

With the drawing implement of your choice, you can make simple images that others will recognize as representing features of their environment. This ability covers drawing in the sand with a stick or sketching on the walls with bits of charcoal. Advanced artistes may even collect berries and other pigment-

bearing materials to add color to their cave paintings. If you are a Learned caveman, you can add this last wrinkle to your own repertoire.

Without this ability, you can never draw diagrams, in or out of character, to explain things to other players.

To use this ability, the player must produce an actual drawing for the benefit of the GM and other players. Players may not write words. Modern symbols, like stop signs, are also right out. When players are especially skilled at illustration, GMs may handicap them by forcing them to draw with an entire hand crudely clasped around the pen or pencil.

In an ideal world, the GM will construct a sandpit in her living room and force the player to draw in it with a stick. We recognize, however, that not everyone has this much preparation time. Until such time as Firefly Games markets its Instant Home Sandpit Set (with or without special Tar Pit Extension Kit), GMs can consider themselves excused from this obligation.

## **Explore**

You know how to navigate your hostile prehistoric environment. You can remember where landmarks are, to find

## **An Unfortunate Ellipsis**

The original pictographic text of this roleplaying text devotes an entire section of wall to the drawing ability. At impressive length, it explains that cavemen who can draw are the cleverest cavemen of all.

It imputes to them a variety of secondary abilities, from antelope stalking to personal grooming to prodigious sexual prowess.

It is unfortunate that the authors of this adaptation have elected

to omit this prolonged in-joke, which ranks with the renowned Lascaux “auroch slipping on banana peel” image as the pinnacle of Upper Paleolithic comedy.

—L.S.J.N.

your way back to places you want to find your way back to, or to avoid places you never want to return to again. You can tell your directions (where the sun goes, where the sun goes from, to the left of where the sun goes, to the right of where the sun goes) and find the easiest trails through thick forests and up treacherous mountainsides. When the elements threaten, you can find the nearest halfway decent source of shelter, whether it be a shallow cave mouth or a dense canopy of trees. When hidden danger looms, you can spot it before you get into trouble. This ability also comes in handy when trying to think your way around natural hazards, from avalanches to the ever-present tar pits.

Explore does not allow you to find food, but makes a good complement to the abilities that do: Fish, Forage and Hunt.

## Fire

Whether by whacking flint stones together to create sparks, or by applying friction to a stick in a pile of dry leaves, you know how to summon that orange, burning source of both life and danger, fire.

You have suggested to your clan mates that this ought to be grounds for their worshipping you as a god, but somehow they refuse to take the hint.

## Fish

This ability allows you to find food for

yourself, your friends, and your clan by harvesting fish from lakes, streams or seas. You probably fish by jumping into the water and grabbing up the finny morsels with your bare hands. If you are a Learned caveman, you can fish by jabbing a sharpened stick into the water, spearing your quarry from the dry safety of the shore. (The first thing a fishing caveman learns is that there as many things in the water that want to eat him as the other way around.)

## Forage

You can find edible plants in the wilderness. Perhaps more importantly, you can tell plants that are good to eat from those that will kill you painfully dead.

Forage also allows you to find non-plant foods that are more harvested than hunted, from honey to a lip-smacking array of grubs and worms.

## Hide

In a world populated by T. Rexes and sabertooth tigers, the ability to find avoid being seen, smelled, heard or otherwise noticed can make the difference between a live caveman and a deceased one. This ability allows you to find good hiding places, to remain absolutely still when under observation, and to disguise yourself from the senses of the many creatures who are higher up on the food chain than you are.


## Hunt

This ability allows you to gather food in the form of small, land-dwelling animals. This list includes mice, lizards, birds, snakes, and rabbits.

Bigger game can't be brought down with a mere ability roll. Any character can join the hunt for a mammoth or dinosaur, but they must kill it during a







knock-down, drag out combat. Such large-scale hunts naturally bring with them the risk of being stomped, gored, gnashed or otherwise subjected to the affronted wrath of your designated dinner.

Hunt allows you to compensate for the ability of edible, nonsentient creatures to outpace your blows. During combat, you may forgo an attack to make a Hunt roll instead. If successful, all of your attacks against this creature type for the remainder of the current combat are made as if its Evade has been reduced by 1. If you Forget How to Hunt it, all of your attacks against it are made as if its Evade has been increased by 1. This trick is of no use against creatures with an Evade of 0.

You may also use Hunt to find soft spots in creatures' natural armor. During combat, you may forgo an attack to make a Hunt roll instead. If successful, all of your attacks against this creature type for the remainder of the current combat are made as if its Armor has been reduced by 1. If you Forget How to Hunt it, all of your attacks against it are made as if its Armor has been increased by 1. This trick is of no use against creatures with no Armor rating.

## Intimidate

You can scare cavemen and other quasi-intelligent beings, discouraging them from attacking or confronting you. You do this by making yourself fearsome, beating your chest, stomping about, and brandishing your weapons.

Intimidate only works when the objects of your browbeating attempt might credibly believe they're better off retreating. At least one of the following conditions must apply to allow a chance of success:

- You outnumber your rivals.

- They're injured and you're not.
- You're collectively bigger and tougher than they are.
- You enjoy some strategic advantage — for example, you're above them on a hillside, with big boulders to roll down on them if they mess with you.

On a successful Intimidate roll, your targets cautiously withdraw from the scene, keeping a close watch on you to make sure you don't attack them as they retreat.

GMs should be aware that many players like to Intimidate NPCs but hate to be intimidated themselves.

## Jump

You can jump over stuff. When absolutely necessary, you can jump up into the air a fair ways, too.

## Lift

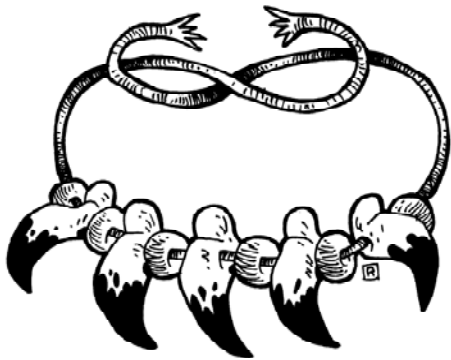
You can move heavy objects, such as slabs of rock, fallen logs, or medium-sized dinosaur carcasses. Moderately heavy objects can be lifted in their entirety. Extremely heavy objects can be shifted slightly out of their current positions.

If you're a Strong caveman, you succeed on any result other than a 1.

## Resistance

When you're at risk of sickness, exhaustion or poisoning, roll your Resistance ability to see if you take any damage or suffer any other ill effects. On a success, you suffer scarcely a snuffle, yawn, or shudder of nausea, as the case may be. On a failure, you succumb to whatever negative consequences await you.

If you're a Tough caveman, you succeed on any result other than a 1.



## Romance

It's all about propagation of the species, baby. To ensure the survival of your clan, you must attract fertile mates. Bopping them on the cranium and dragging them off to your cave is one thing, but keeping them around when the headache wears off requires mastery of the arts of primeval love. With this ability you can woo cavepersons you find attractive into the hubba-hubba warmth of your bearskin blanket.

Romance is not hypnosis; the subject

## Movement Speeds

Players of modern role-playing games often wonder exactly what movement capacity the cavemen and creatures of *Og* possess. Rather than defining this precisely as a number of feet per round, the system prefers to abstract it through use of the Run Away ability.

When further definition is needed, it defaults to "whatever is funniest."

One pictogram near the Run Away description shows a particularly slope-browed caveman being pummeled by an angry, dashing handsome caveman. Scholars believe that the pummeling caveman

is meant to represent the original game designer, and his victim a tendentious rules lawyer hoping in vain for a more mathematical approach to movement rates.

—L.S.M.

## Measurements

Regrettably, the modernizers of this game have chosen to adopt the US measurement standards, rather than maintain the paleolithic measurement system provided on the walls of the Montignac caves. The Cro-Magnon designers of the original game used snakes as their core unit of distance measurement. The throwing rules allowed a Strong caveman to throw

a rock up to 12 snakes away, or a javelin-like stick up to 56 snakes. To what degree the cavemen of Montignac achieved standardized measurement through the use of snakes remains unknown. One particularly vivid image from the cave walls shows a caveman being painfully bitten by a snake while attempting to use it to measure the distance between

combatants in a LARP (Live Action Roleplaying) setting.

Although the players and GM may prefer to think of measurement in familiar terms, the characters probably know only near, far, and very far. Even then, they begin play without words to articulate these abstract concepts.

—L.S.M.

of your wooing must be somewhat receptive to your charms to begin with. PC cavewomen can always resist the charms of wooing cavemen if they choose to do so, and vice-versa.

## Run Away

The first rule of caveman survival is: when in doubt, run away. The world is full of nasty creatures that are way bigger than you are and think of you as lunch. If you're lucky, you and your clan mates might be able to gang up and fell that rampaging mammoth or thundering T. Rex, but why rely on luck when you can head for the hills instead?

The run away ability measures not only your flat-out running speed, but also your ability to maneuver confusingly, seek out favorable terrain, put obstacles between yourself and your pursuer, and generally make yourself not worth the effort of catching and devouring.

If you succeed at your roll, you get away from whatever's chasing you. If you're a Fast caveman, you succeed on any result other than a 1.

Every character gets this ability automatically.

## Swim

You can move through the water without risk of drowning. Well, unless you Forget How. Then it's glug, glug, glug time.

## Throw

Nearly any item you can lift one-handed, you can toss, hitting a target with reasonable accuracy.

The maximum distance you can throw a rock is 50 feet, give or take, unless you are a Strong caveman, in which case you can throw it 65 feet.

You can throw a sharpened stick up to

approximately 150 feet, unless you are a Strong caveman, in which case you can throw it up to 200 feet.

If you have this ability, you can use your Attack value to lob rocks and other missiles at your combat opponents, striking them from a comparatively safe distance. To hit an enemy hard enough to do damage to them, you must be within one-third of your maximum range for that type of missile.

## Tiptoe

Sometimes, when you're attempting to avoid something that wants to eat you, mere stationary hiding is not enough. When you need to move silently past a place of danger, rely on your Tiptoe ability to provide the necessary stealth.

## Weather

You can predict what the weather will be like later on in the same day. You can also predict in advance the consequences of various climactic conditions. As a result, you know to get off the mountain when a mudslide is imminent. You've also figured out that standing out in the rain is unpleasant and can lead to illness.





# YOU HIT THINGS WITH ROCKS AND CLUBS

**A**lthough running away is almost always better than fighting, you are probably stupid and prone to get into fights anyway.

Many of your fights will be with fellow player characters. They are even stupider than you, and can't understand your brilliant plans when you tell them to "Go smelly. Go bang smelly." Also, they may have stuff you want, like tasty morsels of food or an inside track to bed a comely cavewoman from the next clan over. Nothing resolves problems like a smack upside the head with a tree branch.

Whether hunting for big game, battling to avoid becoming dinosaur chow, or smacking around deserving party members, here's how combat works.

## Initiative

When hostilities break out, every creature or caveman who might become involved in the fight rolls for initiative, adding their Evade values to the roll of a single die. The GM ranks the combatants by initiative result, from highest to lowest. Combatants get to act in the order of their initiative ranking. If combatants tie for initiative, the GM breaks ties as follows:

Fast cavemen go before anybody else.

Player characters go before creatures and other cavemen.

If a conflict still exists between player characters, the player who arrived at the gaming session first gets precedence.

If a conflict still exists between creatures or characters controlled by the GM, who cares? The GM chooses by whim, or the order the creatures appear in her notes.

## Rounds

A fight resolves in a series of rounds. Each character or creature who is able to act does so in initiative order. When the combatant with the lowest initiative ranking completes its action, that round ends and a new one begins, with the combatant with the highest initiative ranking going first. Then all combatants who are able to act do so, in the same order. The combat continues until one group of combatants is unable or unwilling to fight any longer. Combatants who are unwilling to fight may flee the scene. Characters unable to fight have probably succumbed to their injuries, and are at the victors' mercy.

## Attacking

When it's your turn to hit, make an Attack roll. If your target has an Evade or Armor value, your Attack value roll is reduced by that number. Neither Evade nor Armor increases your chances of Forgetting How in combat.

(Only creatures, usually armored dinosaurs, have Armor values.)

If your roll meets or exceeds your Attack value, your Damage value is subtracted from the target's Unggghh point total.

If you roll a 1, you Forget How to attack. You not only fail to harm your opponent, but cannot launch an attack during the subsequent round. You not only fail to hit your opponent this time around, but don't get to attack at all during the subsequent round, either. You may attack normally the round after that.

## Getting Damaged

When you take damage, your Unggghh point total is temporarily reduced by the number of points of damage suffered.

Although you may look bruised, bloodied, or otherwise harmed, nothing bad happens to you until you run out of Unggghh points entirely. When this happens, you become incapacitated. You are unconscious, unless the GM deems it funnier that you're still awake and aware, but unable to move, speak, or do anything.

If you are incapacitated but your fellow cavemen are still fighting your opponents, you can generally count on being left alone to lie there unmolested in your dazed or unconscious state.

If you are incapacitated and none of your allies are present to distract your opponents, they can do what they want with you, including kill you.

Carnivorous creatures will do just that. They dine on your flesh, spit out your bones, crack them to get at the marrow, then... well, you get the point.

Herbivorous creatures ignore you as soon as you cease to be a threat to them. Unless you made them really, really mad.

Quasi-intelligent beings, like other cavemen, typically carry you back to their caves, where they restrain you and



wait for your clan mates to come around to negotiate for your return. Most often they trade you for food, mates, or territory.

Other beings may have other plans in store for you. For example, if you are defeated and taken away by ancient astronauts, expect a thorough probing.

Exceptionally nasty cavemen may kill you on the spot. A few are cannibals, and will act as carnivorous creatures, though possibly with a pause as they heat up the water in a stone cooking pot. The time it takes to cook you and peel the vegetables may give your comrades the chance to come and rescue you.

If you've been exceptionally nasty to your neighboring tribes, by killing their

## Early Criticism

The portion of the Montignac wall containing rules on bringing replacement characters into the game contains a series of pictograms etched in what appears to be a shaky, later hand. Several scholars, includ-

ing yours truly, have interpreted this as a complaint about the realism of having new player characters suddenly appear in the midst of a presumably small clan, without ever having appeared in the narrative

before. Thus we have the first recorded example of a gamer criticism, making this section of barely coherent scrawling the primeval predecessor of today's RPGnet.

—I.S.J.N.

cavemen instead of ransoming them or leaving them to wake up, you can expect the same harsh treatment from them.

## Death: It's Permanent

If you do die, there's no coming back. Your character has irrevocably joined the fossil record. Get a fresh character sheet and create a new caveman. This caveman, though never seen before in the story, is presumably from the same tribe as the others, who've known him all along.

## Getting Undamaged

Cavemen may be dumb and hapless, but the upside is that they heal more quickly than modern man. By spending an evening recuperating in your home cave, you regain all lost Unggghh Points, even if you were reduced to 0 Unggghh Points during a fight or other incident. If you are incapacitated, your fellows must bear you back to your home cave in order to allow for your recuperation.

If forced to recuperate while exposed to the elements, you still regain 1 lost Unggghh Point every eight hours.

If taken to a shelter other than your home cave, the GM may or may not allow you to heal up. Other cavemen taking you prisoner may give you enough food and water to keep you alive, but will likely leave you tied up and unable to properly rest. You will probably regain only 1 Unggghh Point. This will be enough to allow you to attempt an escape, but few enough that they'll be able to easily beat you down if they catch you sneaking off.

Some shelters are only partially adequate. Especially cold or hot caves, for example, might allow you to

recover 2 lost Unggghh Points every eight hours. Or they might be just as inhospitable as open country.

## Fleeing Combat

Now that you've seen how badly it sucks to be incapacitated, you might be thinking, "Hey, maybe I should get the hell out of there when I'm getting creamed in combat!"

Congratulations. You are now thinking like a caveman.

When it is your turn to attack, you may forgo that attack to withdraw from the fight. You can't do this when you have lost an upcoming attack by Forgetting How, or by paying the price to use a Combat Add-On (see below.) Roll against your Run Away ability. If successful, you deke out of the fight unscathed. As long as you keep running from the scene, you succeed in putting a considerable distance between yourself and your pursuers.

If you fail, you still get away, but your enemy gets a final shot at you before you go. The enemy makes a free, immediate attack roll, dealing damage to you if successful. This attack is in addition to any attacks your opponent may ordinarily make.

## Missiles

Although confronting your enemy nose-to-nose brings with it its own visceral satisfactions, you may find it safer to stand at a remove and pelt your enemies with sticks and stones.

Missile combat works pretty much like regular close combat, except that your opponent may not be able to respond if he has no missiles at hand, or is a dinosaur or giant sloth or whatever. Those guys never use missiles for some reason.

You must have the Throw ability to





engage in missile combat. The maximum effective distances from which you can harm opponents while using missiles are listed under the description for this ability.

No matter what your damage value is in standard combat, it never exceeds 1 while using missiles.

Opponents without missiles will typically charge, erasing the gap between you, so they can stomp you close up.

## Other Ways To Get Hurt

Combat is only the most obvious way a caveman can get hurt. In other potentially damaging situations, the GM gives you a chance to roll an applicable ability, like Climb, Explore, Jump, Swim or Tiptoe, to avoid being hurt. If no ability applies, Fast cavemen succeed on a roll of 4 or more, and others succeed on a 5 or more.

Most ways to get hurt only do 1 point of damage. GMs assess greater damage only where even the credibility of a slapstick caveman story would be stretched by anything less. Certain hazards may lead to instant death. These should only be presented to the characters if they have multiple opportunities to avoid them.

## Combat Add-Ons

Fighting in *Og* is meant to be straightforward, thudding, and stupid. You try to hit the other guy with a club. He tries to hit you with a club. You try to hit him. He tries to hit you. He hits you. You hit him. Ugh. Oof. Growl.

After a few sessions, though, your

players may grow impatient with the straight-ahead dumbassness of it all and yearn for a few tactical decisions to make during fights. If this happens, humor them by introducing the following optional add-on rules. Because they add complexity to a game best enjoyed for its brain-dead simplicity, we advise against using them until your players clamor for them.

Except where otherwise noted, to use a combat add-on, you must forgo your normal attack. You may not use a combat add-on if you have lost your normal attack, for example by Forgetting How.

If you Forget How while using a combat-add on, this current fancy attack automatically fails, and you lose your next attack, too.

Any caveman may use any combat add-on.

You may never use more than one add-on per round.

## Chest Thump

Once per round, you may attempt a Chest Thump, interrupting a caveman or creature who is about to launch an attack a target other than yourself. The interrupted creature must be close enough to attack you instead of its chosen target. Roll a die; to succeed, you must get a 4 or more, unless you are an Eloquent caveman, in which case you need a 3. If you are successful, the creature switches targets, attacking you instead.

## Cower

When you're about to be attacked, you may declare that you are Cowering. You devote all of your energy and attention to making yourself a poor target. Your precise cowering technique depends on terrain features. You may be

flattening yourself against a wall, diving into bushes, or simply crouching and whimpering. (For whatever reason, the whimpering is hugely helpful. Maybe it's related to Grunting.)

At any rate, any damage scored against you by that creature this round is reduced by 1. You must forgo your next attack, as if you Forgot How while attacking. You may not Cower if you already have to forgo an attack because you have Forgotten How.

## Disarm

If you succeed with a roll of 5 or 6 in an attack against an armed caveman, you may forgo the chance to damage your opponent, and instead Disarm him. The rock or club he's carrying goes flying

through the air.

The weapon lands in the unluckiest place possible for the disarmed caveman, as determined by the GM. If the terrain offers a halfway-plausible chance for the weapon to be lost forever, or at least for the duration of the fight, that's where it goes. It might, for example, land in a river, sink into a tar pit, or be snapped from the air by a passing pteranodon. (Even in the land of *Og*, GMs with an eye for plausibility should restrict themselves to one flying-creature-weapon-catch per session.)

If the GM can't credibly explain the loss of a weapon, it lands several feet away from the skirmish in progress. In this case, the caveman can retrieve it by forgoing his attack for 2 rounds, or 1

## Weapons

Standard *Og* combat doesn't worry its thick-browed head about weapons. It assumes that cavemen have rocks or big chunks of tree branch which double as clubs, and that they use them to hit each other with. When they can't use a rock or club they smash each other with fists or maybe bite each other or whatever.

If you introduce the combat add-ons, weapons matter a little bit more.

Weapons do not increase the amount of damage you deal. However, to deal 2 or more points of damage, you must be carrying a weapon.

Any character can do 1 point of damage bare-handed. Characters who can only do 1 point of damage can get away with not carrying a weapon.

To be eligible to deal 2 or more points of damage in a single blow, you must be carrying a weapon of some kind or another, or be willing to get in close enough to deliver a bite. This rule applies to Banging cavemen as well as to other cavemen who enjoy a momentary damage advantage, such as that gained against a Grabbed opponent, or from a Reckless Swipe. If you have no weapon and are unwilling to bite, you deal only 1 point of

damage.

Cavemen making biting attacks suffer additional risk. Their opponents may respond with an immediate Grab or Shove attempt. Neither attempt requires them to give up their forgo their next normal attacks. They may even do this if they have Forgotten How to attack.

Any character can carry a weapon.

These rules apply to other cavemen but not to creatures.



round if he is a Fast caveman.

Creatures, who have natural weapons like saber teeth, tusks, horns, or thagomizers, can't be Disarmed.

## Distract

You make a fake attack against an opponent meant to Distract it and throw it off balance. Make an attack roll, as normal. If you succeed, you do no damage to the target, but any other attack made against that creature during the current round gains an attack bonus.

## Grab

You may attempt to Grab an opponent, reducing its freedom of movement. In place of your regular attack, make a Grab roll. You succeed on a 4, unless you are a Strong caveman, in which case you succeed on a 3. When a creature is grabbed, all successful attacks against it score an additional point of damage.

You cannot do anything, including attack the grabbed creature, if you want

the grab to remain in effect.

By forgoing its normal attack, a grabbed creature or caveman may try to break your hold on it. Cavemen and creatures as small or smaller than cavemen succeed on a 4 or more. Creatures bigger than cavemen succeed on a 3 or more, as do Strong cavemen.

While grabbed, the creature's Evade rating decreases by 1.

A Grabbed creature can't also be Distracted.

You can't effectively grab anything that is significantly bigger than you are. If you try, it will probably drag you painfully across the landscape, to your detriment and its annoyance.

## Lure

At the beginning of a round, you announce that you are attempting to Lure an opponent to a particular spot on the field of battle. All of your opponents get an attack bonus against you for the duration of the round. Before your attack, make a Lure roll to see if you maneuver your opponent to the desired location. This succeeds on a 4, unless you are a Fast caveman, in which case you succeed on a 3.

You may want to Lure an opponent away from an incapacitated and tasty fellow cave-mate, or toward a hazard such as a magma flow, tar pit, or precipice. In the latter instance, the Shove add-on (below) serves as the other half of a potent combination.

## Opportunistic Strike

When an opponent is about to attack you, you may declare an Opportunistic Strike. If the opponent fails to hit you, you may make an immediate counterattack against him. If you succeed, you do +1 damage. By making an Opportunistic Strike, you forgo your next attack, as if

you Forgot How while attacking. You may not use this option if you have already Forgotten How.

## **Plink**

When launching an attack, you gain an attack bonus of 1. If you hit, your damage is reduced by 1. Even the dumbest caveman knows to Plink only if his normal damage would be 2 or more.

## **Purple Nerple**

You may elect to attack an opponent barehanded, with the objective of inflicting an impermanent but disabling muscle trauma. After a successful attack, make a Purple Nerple roll, which succeeds on a 4 (3 if you're a Banging caveman.) On a success, the opponent suffers an attack penalty for the remainder of the current combat, or until he successfully performs a Shake It Off.

Purple Nerple is a viable attack only against creatures with a conventional musculature. Creatures like worms, insects, and crustaceans are immune to its effects.

## **Reckless Swipe**

You may elect to make a Reckless Swipe instead of a normal attack. Ignoring your own safety, you charge at your opponent, swinging all-out. If you hit, you score an additional point of damage. Any attacks made against you until your own next attack (or the end of the subsequent round, whichever comes first) gain an attack bonus of 1.

## **Shake It Off**

When you take 2 or more points of damage in a single blow, you can forgo your next attack to try to shake off its painful effects. Your Shake It Off roll succeeds on a 4 (or on a 3, if you're a

Tough caveman.) On a success, you regain 1 Unggghh Point.

## **Shove**

You can forgo a normal attack to push your opponent up to three feet away from you. You can move him straight back, back and to your left, or back and to your right. You succeed on a roll of 4, unless you are a Strong caveman, in which case you succeed on a 3.

Shove is only really useful if there's something bad waiting for your opponent when he stops, like a cliff.

You may only use Shove against opponents who are either a) no larger than you are or b) facing a significant disadvantage of leverage. You can only shove a woolly mammoth after you've maneuvered him onto, for example, an enormous makeshift teeter-totter, which, believe me, is easier said than done.

## **Skull Thickness Demonstration**

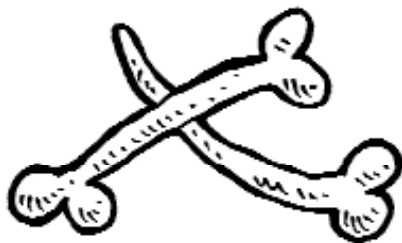
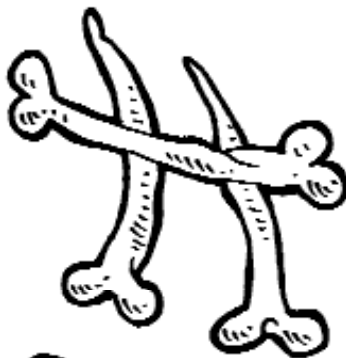
You may forgo your usual attack to engage in a Skull Thickness Demonstration, whereby you smack yourself in the head with a club or rock. Make a Resistance roll.

On a success, the club breaks or the rock crumbles. (So make sure you have a spare on hand if you wish to fight armed.) You take no damage. Any sentient beings, including cavemen, ancient astronauts, monkey-men and lizard people, suffer a -1 attack penalty against you. The penalty remains in effect until one of them damages you, or until the end of the combat, whichever happens first.

On a failure, you deal your normal damage to yourself.

## Violent Frenzy

Instead of launching a normal attack, you can go into a Violent Frenzy, hooting, frothing at the mouth, and striking out at everything in sight. Roll a die; you succeed on a 5, or on a 4 if you're a Fast caveman. If you're successful, you get two attacks, which you can direct against a single opponent, or against two separate nearby opponents. If you fail, you get one normal attack, and must make a second attack against the nearest other player character. If there are no other player characters present, you smack yourself in the face, taking 1 damage.



# YOU GET EATEN

Cavemen want to find creatures, so they can kill and eat them. Most creatures want to find cavemen, to kill and eat them. Isn't a circular food chain wonderful?

Creatures appear in the following format.

Where necessary, we start with a brief description of the creature. This is omitted for well-known modern animals.

*Caveman name* shows you the term cavemen use to describe the creature, in their limited vocabulary.

*Ungggh points* tells you how much damage they can sustain before dying. If the creature has an *Evade* or *Armor* value, that is listed next.

*Attacks* describes the way they hurt you.

Two numbers are given in brackets after each attack. The first is its *accuracy*—the number it needs to roll on a d6 to hit its target. The second number is the *damage*: the number of Ungggh Points you lose if it succeeds in hitting you. Some creatures get multiple attacks.

*Eating habits* tells you if the creature is carnivorous, herbivorous, or omnivorous. Carnivorous animals will aggressively hunt cavemen.

Herbivores attack only when threat-

ened. Omnivores swing both ways. *Food value* tells you how many days eating your clan will get from the animal's carcass, if you succeed in killing it and dragging it back to your cave. Creatures with a food value of *meal* provide only enough food for the group of PC cavemen to eat a single meal together. Often these are eaten out on the trail. A food value of *snack* means they provide momentary nourishment to only a single character. Food value is omitted for creatures who are too revolting or sentient to eat.

Meat keeps for only about 5 days before it starts to go bad. Excess goes to waste unless it is traded to other clans within its freshness window. Cavemen typically accept labor, shelter, information, mates, or promises of future cooperation in exchange for excess meat.



## Multiple Attacks

By default, creatures who can hit more than once per round concentrate their attacks on either the most vulnerable victim (in the case of carnivores) or their most apparently

threatening enemy (in the case of herbivores.) Omnivores concentrate their attacks like carnivores if they're attacking to capture prey, and like herbivores if they're being attacked.

If one of a creature's multiple attacks is with its tail, it must almost always direct that attack against a secondary opponent. It lashes its tail at the most conveniently placed enemy.

## Allosaurus

A bipedal dinosaur equipped with a massive bite and tiny useless little fore-arms, about which it is very sensitive.

An average specimen is about 15 feet high and a little less than 40 feet long.

*Caveman name:* Big Smelly Bang Thing

*Unggghb points:* 24

*Attacks:* bite (3, 4)

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

*Food value:* 7

## Ancient Astronaut

These smooth-skinned, hairless, bug-eyed, short-statured humanoids periodically descend from the skies in their flying saucers to conduct unethical and/or kinky scientific experiments on caveman subjects. Their caveman name derives from their sleep rays, which knock cavemen unconscious so that they can be probed. Ancient astronauts are trying to make cavemen more intelligent by showing them how to build pyramids and primitive batteries, but so far their project has shown no signs of success.

*Caveman name:* Shiny Sleep Thing

*Unggghb points:* 6

*Evade:* 1

*Attacks:* Ray gun (2, 6 or puts caveman to sleep.) Ray gun can be used from up to 50 feet away.

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

## Anklyosaurus

An armored quadrupedal dinosaur, about thirty feet long, with a heavy turtle-like plate protecting its upper body. Strikes with a bony, clubbed tail.

*Caveman name:* Big Thing

*Unggghb points:* 36

*Armor:* 3

*Attacks:* clubbed tail (4, 3)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 7

## Ape

*Caveman name:* Hairy Big Stick Thing

*Unggghb points:* 5

*Evade:* 1

*Attacks:* bite (3, 1)

*Eating habits:* Omnivorous

*Food value:* Meal

## Auroch

Large wild cattle whose bulls are equipped with sharp, outward-curving horns.

*Caveman name:* Big Food Thing

*Unggghb points:* 8

*Attacks:* horns (4, 1), trample (3, 1); cows get only the trample attack.

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 4

## Baboon

These vicious primates patrol the savannah in packs.

*Caveman name:* Hairy Thing

*Unggghb points:* 4

*Evade:* 1

*Attacks:* bite (4, 1)

*Eating habits:* Omnivorous

*Food value:* Meal

## Baluchitherium

These 15-ton gigantic land mammals are fifteen feet high and about 26 feet high. They graze on trees.

*Caveman name:* Big Big Food Thing

*Unggghb points:* 32

*Attacks:* stomp (3, 2)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 14

## Bear, Black

*Caveman name:* Hairy Cave Smelly

*Unggghb points:* 8

*Attacks:* bite (4,1), right paw swipe (4,1), left paw swipe (3,1)

*Eating habits:* Omnivorous

*Food value:* 2



## Bear, Cave

A two-ton gigantic and ill-tempered bear who, if it does not have a cave of its own to live in, would probably very much like to live in yours.

*Caveman name:* Big Hairy Cave Smelly

*Ungggh points:* 32

*Attacks:* bite (4,2), right paw swipe (5,2), left paw swipe (3,1)

*Eating habits:* Omnivorous

*Food value:* 9

## Beaver, Giant

Like a present-day beaver, except it's three feet long and comes up to your waist.

*Caveman name:* Hairy Water Thing

*Ungggh points:* 6

*Attacks:* bite (5,2), tail slap (5,1)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 3

## Big Cat

A catch-all category for lions, tigers, jaguars, and cheetahs. (Knock off a few Ungggh Points for the former.)

*Caveman name:* Hairy Thing

*Ungggh points:* 16

*Evade:* 1

*Attacks:* bite (2,2), claw slash (5,1)

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

*Food value:* 3

## Boar

*Caveman name:* Small Smelly

*Ungggh points:* 4

*Evade:* 2 during first round, 1 during subsequent rounds

*Attacks:* tusk (3,1)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 2

## Cavemen and Dinosaurs

Caveman RPGs typically include a disclaimer in which the author assures you that he knows that millions of years of prehistory separated dinosaurs and cavemen, but then says that the two have been combined because it's more fun that way. With the Montignac discovery, such mealy-mouthed pronouncements are forcefully consigned to history's dumpster.

The original game inscribed on its walls includes accurate illustrations of a range of

dinosaurian species, including detailed monster stats. Since its Paleolithic designers had not discovered archaeology, there is only one explanation for this: direct observation. Cavemen and dinosaurs really *did* coexist! Paleontologists have had it completely wrong all these years. Not only that, but dinosaurs coexisted with that era's exotic mammalian megafauna. Further still, species of oversized prehistoric mammals supposedly limited to

Australia and North America were also known in Europe.

Despite the incontrovertible evidence of this discovery, as described in my upcoming scholarly tome *Paleontologists Are A Pack Of Idiots*, the close-minded bone-scrappers of the academy have yet to publicly repudiate their thoroughly demolished old theories. The world's gamers, at least, will now know the real truth. The truth they're *afraid to tell you*.

—I,§M

## Bobcat

*Caveman name:* Hairy Thing

*Ungggh points:* 4

*Evade:* 1

*Attacks:* bite (3,1)

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous, but does not treat healthy cavemen as prey

*Food value:* 1/2

## Brachiosaurus

An enormous sauropod dinosaur with longer front limbs than back limbs, the brachiosaurus is about 80 feet long and can weigh up to 38 tons. Its tiny elevated head looks down at you from about 40 feet up.

*Caveman name:* Big Big Thing

*Ungggh points:* 48

*Attacks:* right forward stomp (3,8), left forward stomp (4,8), tail lash (5,3)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 48

## Brontosaurus

An equally massive relative of Brachiosaurus, with evenly elevated front and back legs.

*Caveman name:* Big Big Thing

*Ungggh points:* 52

*Attacks:* right forward stomp (3,8), left forward stomp (4,8), tail lash (5,3)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 52

## Brontotherium

Eight feet tall and two tons heavy, these big grazers sport rhino-like horns on their noses. Their shovel-like mouths scoop in massive gulps of vegetation.

*Caveman name:* Big Hairy Thing

*Ungggh points:* 28

*Attacks:* horn (3,3)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 8

## Crocodile, Giant

*Caveman name:* Big Big Water Smelly

*Ungggh points:* 24

*Attacks:* bite (2,3), tail lash (3,2)

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

*Food value:* 4

## Crocodile, Regular

*Caveman name:* Big Water Smelly

*Ungggh points:* 12

*Attacks:* bite (2,2), tail lash (3,1)

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

*Food value:* 2

## Dinohyus (Terrible Pig)

A ten-foot long giant boar who wants to gore you with his lethal tusks.

*Caveman name:* Big Smelly

*Ungggh points:* 12

*Evade:* 1

*Attacks:* tusk (3,2)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 4



## Diprotodon

The diprotodon is ten feet long and six feet tall (as measured from the shoulder.) Foolish paleontologists believe that this gigantic wombat lived only in Australia, but the logic of coolness suggests that it surely co-existed with cavemen, dinosaurs, and mammoths. However, given its extreme meatiness and lack of appreciable attacks, it probably won't be co-existing for long.

*Caveman name:* Hairy Food Thing

*Ungggh points:* 12

*Attacks:* none

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 8

## Elk, Irish

What's more impressive than a deer that's 7 feet tall at the shoulders? A deer with a 12-foot antler span, that's what.

*Caveman name:* Hairy Food Thing

*Ungggh points:* 12

*Attacks:* antler swipe (2,2)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 8

## Gigantopithecus

This bipedal ape displays the coloration and facial construction of an orangutan and is three times bigger than the modern gorilla, hitting the scales at around a thousand pounds and towering to a height of nine feet. They are peaceful until enraged, at which point they fight with frothing determination.

*Caveman name:* Big Hairy

*Ungggh points:* 15

*Evoke:* 1

*Attacks:* bite (4,1), arm pull (2,2). In this last maneuver, the gigantopithecus grabs your arm and attempts to tear it out of its socket. If it reduces you to 0 Ungggh Points, he does indeed tear your arm off, and you die of

shock and blood loss.

*Eating habits:* Omnivorous

*Food value:* 5

## Glyptodont

This two-ton armadillo scuttles around under a dome of essentially impenetrable bony armor, with a matching crest of bone on top of its head.

*Caveman name:* Rock Thing

*Ungggh points:* 8

*Armor:* 3

*Attacks:* none

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 4

## Gorilla

*Caveman name:* Hairy Big Stick Thing (In this context, "big stick" means a tree.

The gorilla actually prefers thickly vegetated jungle floors to trees, but then cavemen don't have words for "jungle", "floor", or "thickly vegetated.")

*Ungggh points:* 9

*Evoke:* 1

*Attacks:* bite (3,2) right fist pummel (5,1)

*Eating habits:* Omnivorous

*Food value:* 1

## Iguanodon

A class of bipedal plant-eating dinosaurs, including the jaunty and charming duck-billed dinosaur. They range in height from about 30 to 36 feet, and weigh in at over 5 tons.

*Caveman name:* Big Thing

*Ungggh points:* 20

*Attacks:* tail lash (5,1)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 28

## Kangaroo, Giant Carnivorous (Ekaltadeta)

Yes, there were giant carnivorous kangaroos. They had big spike-like fangs

jutting from their lower jaws. Honestly.

*Caveman name:* Hairy Go Go Thing

*Unggghb points:* 9

*Evoke:* 1

*Attacks:* Tooth stab (3,2)

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

*Food value:* 1

## Lizard Person

These tall, thin humanoids, covered in green reptilian skin, inhabit elaborate artificial cave networks below ground and carved into the sides of mountains. Sometimes they wield items of technology which they do not appear to fully understand, as if they are a devolved remnant of a much more advanced ancient civilization.

Large, black unblinking eyes dominate their grotesque faces. Bony crests appear on the top of their heads. Lizard people hunt and eat cavemen. Cavemen do not eat lizard people, though not out of moral concern—lizard person meat tastes unbearably rancid.

Communication with the lizard people is impossible. They, too, know only 18 words, but they're all hisses of various lengths.

*Caveman name:* Smelly Cave Thing

*Unggghb points:* 9

*Armor:* 1

*Attacks:* treat as Banging caveman

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

## Leech, Giant

A hazard in inland waters, the giant leech is about six feet long and always hungry for blood.

*Caveman name:* Smelly Water Thing

*Unggghb points:* 6

*Attacks:* blood-draining bite (5,1.) After hitting once, it has attached its sucker to the victim and continues to do 1 point of damage per round until it is

killed, it is somehow dislodged, or the victim dies.

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

## Mammoth

An enormous elephant with huge curving tusks, sometimes covered in a shaggy layer of fur. An especially large specimen is about 14 feet high and weighs 7 tons.

*Caveman name:* Big Hairy

*Unggghb points:* 28

*Attacks:* tusk (4,3) right forward stomp (4,2), left forward stomp (5,2)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 14

## Mastodon

Like the mammoth, but less so. About 9 feet high and 5 tons of heavy.

*Caveman name:* Big Hairy

*Unggghb points:* 24

*Attacks:* tusk (4,2) right forward stomp (4,1), left forward stomp (5,1)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 12

## Megatherium (Giant Sloth)

This elephant-scaled ground sloth doesn't seem so slothful when he's ripping you apart with his impressively long claws. He weighs up to 5 tons and, when he stands up, is about 20 feet high. Although not a hunter, he frequently takes over the kills of other predators.

*Caveman name:* Big Smelly Hairy

*Unggghb points:* 28

*Attacks:* bite (4,1), right claw jab (3,2), left claw jab (4,2)

*Eating habits:* Omnivorous and grabby

*Food value:* 12



### **Monkey-Man**

Resembling the dudes from the beginning of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, these ape-like humanoids represent the missing link between cavemen and hairy tree things. The GM creates them like Cavemen characters, except that they can only be Strong, Banging, Fast or Tough. Monkey-men don't use words at all, only grunts. They eat cavemen and vice versa.

*Caveman name:* Hairy Smelly

*Unggghb points:* see above

*Attacks:* fight like cavemen

*Eating habits:* Omnivorous

*Food value:* 1

### **Pteranodon**

The bat-like wings of these flying reptiles span to an astonishing 30 feet. Their long beaks act as spearing weapons.

*Caveman name:* Big Shiny Go Thing

*Unggghb points:* 14

*Evade:* 1

*Attacks:* beak peck (2,2).

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

*Food value:* 1/2

### **Rhino, Woolly**

Like a modern rhino, but woolly, twelve feet long, and weighing 2 1/2 tons.

*Caveman name:* Hairy Bang Thing

*Unggghb points:* 20

*Attacks:* horn (5,2). Damage is 3 immediately following a charge, a maneuver it uses when entering a fight.

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 6

### **Sabertooth Tiger**

Lion-sized big cat with impressively outsized curved canine teeth.

*Caveman name:* Hairy Thing

*Unggghb points:* 16

*Evade:* 1

*Attacks:* bite (3,3), claw slash (4)

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

*Food value:* 3

### **Spider, Giant**

The large webs spun by these car-sized arachnids can entrap cavemen, but also tend to be conveniently placed to save their lives when falling off the sides of mountains.

*Caveman name:* Hairy Cave Thing

*Unggghb points:* 14

*Armor:* 1

*Attacks:* mandible (4,1). A successful bite injects a caveman with venom. Each round thereafter, the caveman gets a Resistance roll to see if he shrugs off the poison. On a success, he takes no damage this round and need not roll again against the bite of that particular giant spider. On a failure, he takes 1 damage. Effects of multiple spider bites are not cumulative.

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

## Stegosaurus

This tiny-headed quadrupedal dinosaur is famed for the set of enormous diamond-shaped bony plates jutting from its spine, and even more so for the four sharp spikes on the end of its tail. These are collectively known as its thagomizer. Poor old Thag, after whom the spikes are named, may have been a personal friend of yours. (Thagomizer is a genuine scientific term, as a Google search will amusingly reveal.)

A healthy adult stego is 30 feet long, 14 feet high, and weighs five tons.

*Caveman name:* Big Rock Thing

*Ungggh points:* 32

*Attacks:* thagomizer (3,6)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 12

## Terror Bird

This bad-ass bipedal flightless bird reaches a height of up to 10 feet. Its scientific name is Phorusrhacoid, which it will savagely peck you for mispronouncing.

*Caveman name:* Shiny Rock Thing

*Ungggh points:* 12

*Evade:* 1

*Attacks:* peck (3,2), right talon slash (5,1)

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

*Food value:* 2

## Triceratops

A quadrupedal dinosaur equipped with a trio of goring horns and a flaring bony frill to protect its neck from the chops of hungry T-Rexes. A good-sized specimen is 10 feet tall, 30 feet long, and weighs 6 tons.

*Caveman name:* Big Thing

*Ungggh points:* 36

*Attacks:* all three horns (3,4 — counts as one attack); right forward stomp (5,2), left forward stomp (6,2)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 14

## Tyrannosaurus Rex

40 feet tall. Weighs 6 to 8 tons. Either you know the rest, or you've never been a kid.

*Caveman name:* Big Big Smelly Bang Thing

*Ungggh points:* 40

*Attacks:* bite (2,4)

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

*Food value:* 9

## Uintatherium

Three-ton rhino-like mammal distinguished by the fascinating variety of knobby horns protruding from its heavily reinforced skull. These will look really cool when it's bashing you with them.

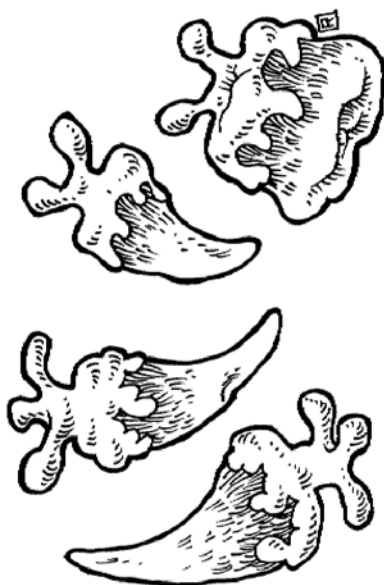
*Caveman name:* Big Bang Thing

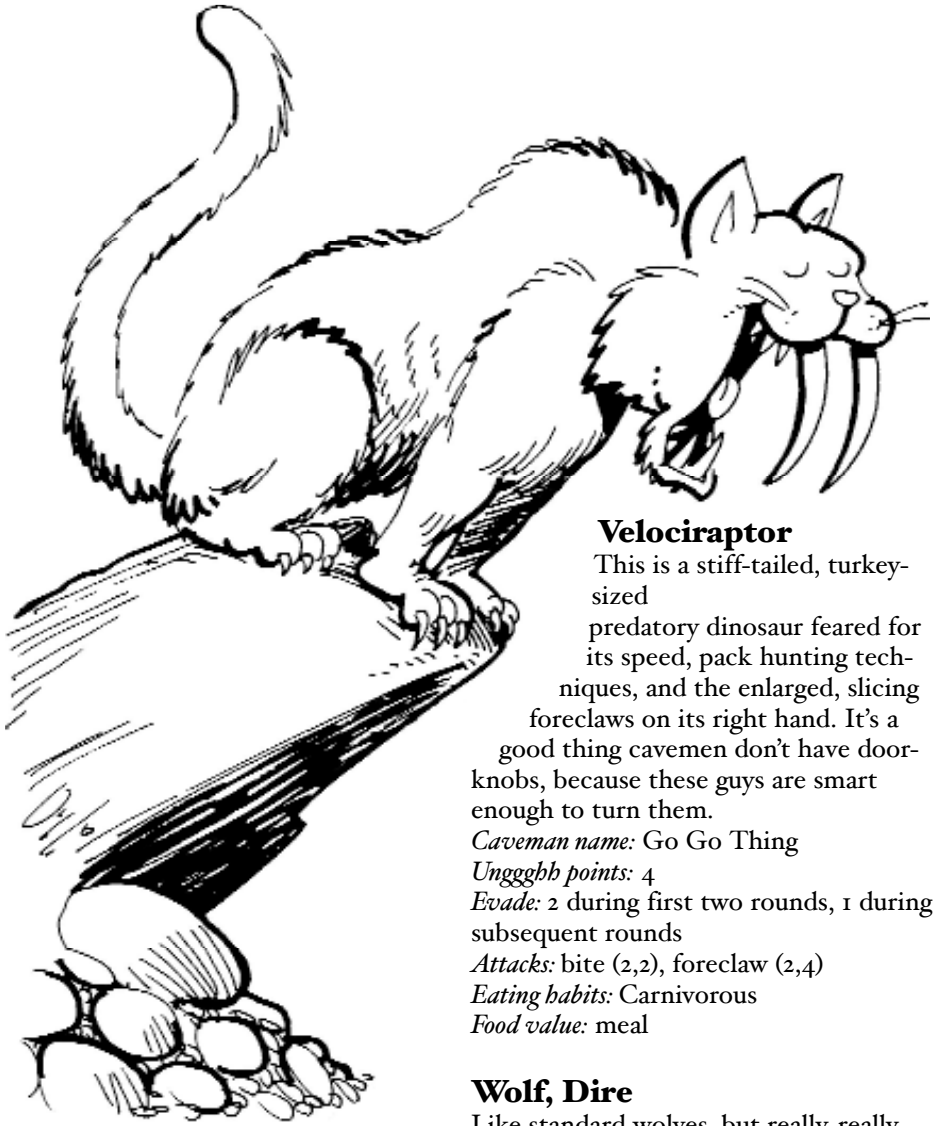
*Ungggh points:* 24

*Attacks:* Head bash (3,2)

*Eating habits:* Herbivorous

*Food value:* 8





### **Velociraptor**

This is a stiff-tailed, turkey-sized predatory dinosaur feared for its speed, pack hunting techniques, and the enlarged, slicing foreclaws on its right hand. It's a good thing cavemen don't have door-knobs, because these guys are smart enough to turn them.

*Caveman name:* Go Go Thing

*Unggghb points:* 4

*Evade:* 2 during first two rounds, 1 during subsequent rounds

*Attacks:* bite (2,2), foreclaw (2,4)

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

*Food value:* meal

### **Wolf, Dire**

Like standard wolves, but really, really dire. Six feet long and 200 pounds.

*Caveman name:* Hairy Thing

*Unggghb points:* 6

*Attacks:* bite (3,2)

*Eating habits:* Carnivorous

*Food value:* 1





# YOU LEARN STUFF... MAYBE

**M**ankind's history is a constant march of progress, of lessons learned and follies avoided. We learn from history and never make the same mistake twice—

Oh, who are we kidding? We're mostly as boneheaded as our caveman forebears, but with more choices of breakfast cereal.

Even though we haven't learned that much as a species, your characters can still improve themselves in the course of play. Slightly, that is.

## New Words

Nearly any successful roleplaying game you care to name rewards its players with an escalating series of cool powers.

Here you get the coolest powers of all.

Extra words, which you can use to communicate with each other, and other cavemen.

At the end of each session, the GM asks the other players to confer and decide what your most memorable moment of the evening was. In most cases the players will come quickly to a consensus. Oddly enough, they'll nearly always set aside your glories and triumphs to focus on your most spectacularly embarrassing moments.

With your highlight scene chosen, the GM then selects the word that most clearly relates to it. First she examines the list of 18 starting words. If none of them seem to apply (or you already have the words that do), she assigns you any other word in the English language. When assigning a previously unknown word, the GM favors the most versatile and useful word possible. In the context

of *Og*, it may be that a comparatively drab but workhorse word like "or" or "yes" is infinitely more powerful than colorful terms like "dinosaur" or "agriculture."

## Additional Abilities

After giving you your new word, the GM gives you an opportunity to lobby for a new ability. Here you describe what you feel is your highlight sequence from the session. It can be the scenes chosen by your fellow players prior to the GM's word selection, but doesn't have to be. Explain to the GM why you think your character might have permanently learned something from this experience. Specify the ability you think you may have learned. Unlike your fellow players, you may find it advantageous to emphasize one of your character's obvious successes.

Assuming that the GM finds your pitch halfway credible, you may then roll a die. (Lenient GMs will let you pitch again, rather than simply rejecting your proposal and moving on.) Learned cavemen add 1 to their die rolls.

On a result of 4 or more, you gain the desired ability.

On a 2 or 3, you do not gain the ability.

On a 1, you must cross off the ability on your character sheet. You have not only failed to learn it, but develop a mental block rendering you incapable of ever figuring it out. You never again get a chance to learn that ability.

Some groups may find it amusing to require the characters to go back to the cave and recount their relevant exploits to their fellow clan members before earning additional abilities.

## New Abilities

When your highlight scene doesn't relate to a pre-existing ability, you can propose a new ability to gain instead. The GM will hone this idea, typically making its application much narrower than the broad abilities that appear in this book. The more absurd the new ability, the better.

This way, you may learn abilities like Annoy Triceratops, Ice Floe Skating, or Resist Alien Probe.

If you are a Learned caveman, you can ask to gain a new ability. If the GM finds it sufficiently amusing, and relevant to the session, you gain it without having to roll.

## Retaining Built Items

Characters who use the Build skill to invent something useful can, by forgoing the opportunity to gain an additional or new ability, permanently remember how to make this item. Other clans will still want to destroy your creations on sight (see p. 12), but now you know how to build a new one when they do.

## More Words About Words

The following advanced rules govern the spread of new words in play.

### Hunting For Words

Eloquent cavemen can learn additional words in the course of play, by encountering people from other clans and tribes who know terms unknown in their own cave—that is, words not appearing on the initial list of 18.

If they meet other cavemen who know unknown words, they may try to convince these peculiar outsiders to teach

their mysterious secrets. Discovered words in *Og* work like treasure in a traditional fantasy RPG. The players have to work for them, overcoming obstacles and performing great deeds. They may need to find a handsome husband for the chieftain's daughter, quell the angry volcano spirits, or drive off a troublesome baluchitherium.

Once the character who knows the new word agrees to teach it to the Eloquent caveman, the Eloquent caveman must then make a die roll to see if he learns it. He succeeds on a result of 4 or greater.

(Although player characters who try to teach rare words must roll to see if they instruct their students well, non-player cavemen succeed automatically.)

After the Eloquent caveman incorporates a new word into his vocabulary, other player characters can learn it by osmosis, listening to him use it. They can gain it through the usual highlight scene method, at the end of any session.

If your party lacks an Eloquent caveman, you're out of luck—until somebody dies, and can be replaced by an Eloquent caveman. Don't worry. That won't take too long.

### Teaching Rare Words

PCs are not the only cavemen who seek rare words. Knowing a word outside the core list of 18 is like having a precious treasure that you can give to someone else, without losing anything yourself. You may be able to gain food, mates, shelter, or allies by teaching them these ultra-valuable words.

You can only teach rare words to an Eloquent caveman. Teaching words is hard. If you are an Eloquent caveman, you succeed in teaching the word on a roll of 3 or more. Other cavemen succeed on a 5 or more.

The non-player caveman is assumed to succeed at his roll, and always successfully learns the word if you successfully teach it.

### From Rare To Square

Cavemen who know rare words hoard them carefully, dispensing them only in exchange for truly needed goods or favors. People from other clans will be reluctant to dole them out for no reason. Likewise, you should be careful about spreading around a new word around willy-nilly. Once you teach a new word to someone, you know that he will probably teach it to someone else. He'll tell two friends, and she'll tell two friends, and so on before you know it, the word will be everywhere—and no longer valuable.

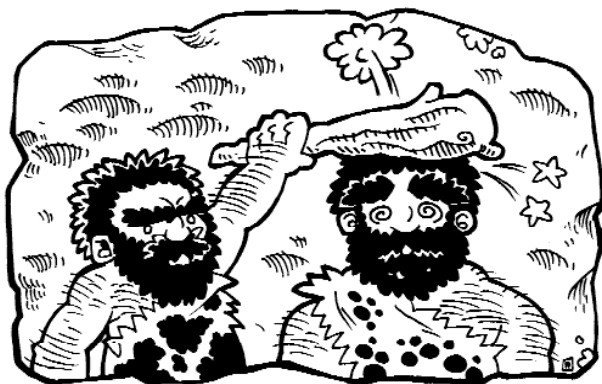
The GM keeps track of every time you teach a rare word to a caveman from another clan. He makes a separate record for each individual word.

If the word originates in your clan, you can teach it to characters from three other clans before risking its wide dissemination. After that, the GM rolls a die each time you

teach the word again, adding the number of total times you've taught the word to the result. If the modified total exceeds 9, the word becomes common knowledge, and no longer valuable.

If you learned the word from another clan, the GM makes a note every time you teach it, even the first. The GM adds the total number of times you've taught the word to a die roll. If the modified total exceeds 9, the word becomes common knowledge, and no longer valuable.

At this point, the word is added to the list of common words available to all characters. Players creating new characters in the same campaign can choose them as they would any other basic word.



### Assymetrical Design in Prehistoric Gaming

Here the author of the de Moisi game includes a sidebar to justify the fact that the rules for teaching rare words do not simply reverse those for learning them. He argues that the two rules keep the players at the center of the action,

in each case allowing them the die rolls that determine success or failure. He goes on to state that it would, in what is admittedly a free translation of the pictograms, "totally suck" to lose out simply because

a GM-controlled character rolls badly. After that, he threatens to belabor anyone who objects to this design choice with the jawbone of a giant hyena.

—L.S.M.



# YOU HAVE ADVENTURES

## Running Og

The following section is addressed to GMs. Players can read it, but honestly, why bother?

## Coming To a Decision

You may find that conversations between players go on forever, as they struggle to make themselves understood with their incredibly limited word palette. The line between an amusing opaque *Og* conversation and a maddeningly obtuse one can be paper thin. Problems most often crop up when players are trying to propose different courses of action to deal with a plot obstacle. Sometimes they just end up repeating the same words and gestures over and over, provoking no comprehension in their fellow players.

If (and only if) a discussion appears to be going in circles, step in and call for a Forced Resolution. In a forced resolution, the cavemen all decide which one of their number to follow, and do as he or she seems to say.

Each player proposing a plan rolls a die. Eloquent cavemen add 1 to their rolls. The player with the highest roll is deemed the leader of the moment; the others fall into line and do as the leader seems to instruct. Reroll tied results until a single leader emerges.

## The Clan

All player characters are assumed to belong to a single clan, a group of a few dozen people who live in the same location. They are among the clan's young expert foragers, and are expected to bring home food for the entire



group. The clan provides motivation and support for the player characters.

When the clan is hungry, they go out and find food for it. When they need a new shelter, the PCs go out to seek it. When the clan is endangered, they are delegated to take care of the threat. They kill threatening creatures, and make war, or negotiate peace with rival clans. They may also negotiate with human-like foes like monkey-men, lizard people, and ancient astronauts.

Having a clan confers benefits as well as responsibilities. Characters heal best in their home shelters. Clan membership gives them a comparatively safe place to run to when being chased by enemies. When running away from enemies, your clan mates will come out to help drive them off, if only you can get close to home.

Although you might create a special adventure in which the clan grows discontented with the players, requiring them to prove themselves, in general the cavemen enjoy the support of their own people.

Think of clan mates as being like the unnamed extras you see in the background on the TV show *Lost*. You never provide an exact count of them. When you need a new supporting character, you can introduce him and say he's been there all along. Likewise, you can kill off any number of clan members for dramatic effect, without having to specify that the clan has been depopulated beyond recovery.

## Describing Actions

As GM, you are never limited to the few words allowed the players. However, you should still describe places, objects, characters and events as vaguely as possible. Most games ask you to create

clear and vivid descriptions. Here, you do the opposite, thereby helping the players in their quest to seem confused and stupid. Err on the side of vagueness, but allow the players (out of character) to quiz you on details. Provide just enough to give them a mental image of events, but make them work for it.

Whenever possible, throw in the 18 words, just to preserve that distinctive Oggy flavor.

So, where another game might expect you to say:

*It's a crisp, cold morning. The screeching sound of birds and monkeys rends the air. You climb up the sandy slope for a while, until you come to a vine-strewn wall. It's incised with strange, swirling hieroglyphics, some of which glow as you grow near. Suddenly a strange, reptilian creature leaps onto the top of the wall, hissing at you and baring a row of needle-sharp teeth.*

Here you say:

*It's cold out. Animal noises very loud around here. You climb up slope thing. You see wall of strange square rocks. Weird marks on rocks. Some of them glow. Nasty lizard thing jumps on wall, hisses at you.*

You may wish to write more specific descriptions for your own reference when creating adventures. However, you need never bother with the evocative text of the first example here.

## Creating Adventures

Og gives the harried Game Moderator a break from the rigors of adventure creation. Here you don't need to strive for a coherent narrative in which the characters pursue a goal, develop it through a series of scenes, and then resolve that goal in a neatly constructed climax. Instead, a bunch of funny stuff happens, and, as the end of the evening approaches, the story stops.

You might introduce a simple element at the beginning of a session and refer back to it at the end, if you're feeling all artsy-fartsy about it. But you'll find that any more ambitious goal or storyline is not only unnecessary but actively counterproductive.

The extreme stupidity of the characters and the game's inherent language barriers will cause any elaborate scenario to collapse into a meandering nonsense anyway. Even the most basic situation complicates itself almost on its own, with little advance preparation on your account. The simple appearance of a wasp's nest outside the characters' main cave can spiral into an evening's worth of diverting prehistoric slapstick. Anything more than that is trying too hard.

## Motivating Adventures

All adventures start with a simple triggering event, a situation that inspires the characters to take action. A triggering event consists of a *motivation* and an *obstacle*.

The motivation is something the cavemen want. Cavemen are simple and want simple things, all related to their personal survival, or the survival of their clan.

The top five things that motivate cavemen are:

- food
- escaping becoming food
- mating
- shelter
- thumping on rival cavemen

The need for food is simple and self-explanatory. You can always start an adventure by telling the players that their characters need to head out and get with the hunting and gathering.

Predation is always a problem. A wandering dinosaur, sabertooth, giant


spider or other threat can wander its way up to the clan's shelter and start trying to snack on the nearest tribesman. The cavemen may be able to drive it off temporarily, but then must figure out a way to dispatch this dangerous creature permanently. Many dangerous creatures, once killed, can then be eaten—bringing us back to motivation number one.

As the action begins, all cavemen are assumed to be single and of mating age. The need to find mates forces them out into the world, to visit other clans and find suitable partners. Caveman adventures present bountiful opportunities for old-fashioned sexist humor, where going clubbing means finding foxy cavewoman, conking them on the head, and dragging them back to your home cave. Some groups may prefer to inject a note of equal-opportunity sexism, turning the tables so the females pursue hunky, well-oiled specimens of prehistoric man-meat. For that matter, there are probably some groups out there who've been anxiously awaiting a game of same-sex caveman romance. Hey, don't let us stand in your way.

Every clan starts play with a shelter all its own. A simple disaster is all it takes to send the cavemen out looking for a new home for their people. Example catastrophes include cave-ins, mudslides, floods, famine, or forcible ejection, either by bigger, stronger tribes, or by large and insistent creatures.

They say that man's worst enemy is man. This probably technically untrue in





an age of tyrannosaurs and pterodactyls, but you get the point anyway, right? Other clans can come after the characters for your food, to kidnap mates, or to capture sacrifices to their cruel volcano gods. They may try to drive the characters' home clan out of their territory, to make better foraging for themselves, or simply to claim a most excellent shelter as their very own. To reverse the point, there's no reason why the characters' clan has to be a bunch of wussy cavemen waiting for the nasty clan from over the hill to come after them. They may choose to become the aggressors, actively attacking rival clans.

(This last example works best in an ongoing series with proactive players. If you sense that your group includes a Pleistocene Napoleon or two, let them create their own motivations and set their own goals. Doing so not only guarantees player engagement over an extended series, but is even less work for you. All you have to do is react to player actions by putting entertaining obstacles in their path.)

The simplest triggering adventure for a starting point is as follows:

*You wake up and you're hungry and there's no food in the cave.* There you have your motivation (the need for food) and an implicit challenge (the need to go out into the hostile world and forage.)

There's your introductory adventure right there, people. Thirteen words long. And that's with extra conjunctions, for rhythmic effect. Beat that, GURPS!

## Creating Challenges

The second part of the triggering event is the obstacle—the reason why it's hard for the cavemen to achieve what they want. This is a logistical problem that can be overcome with

some difficulty, either with their abilities, by fighting, or negotiation.

Word limitations make even the simplest action inherently amusing. However, the best obstacles come out of the following phrase: "Wouldn't it be funny if..."

Create challenges which are both intimidating and rife with potential comedy, either slapstick or verbal.

Examples: The cavemen want food. The funny thing is... the bananas they seek are very high up in a very bendy tree that's swaying in the wind.

The cavemen want mates from the clan across the river. The funny thing is... they must agree to take the furriest, ugliest potential mate in the clan in order to also take away the attractive ones.

The cavemen want to drive off a brontosaurus that keeps sleeping in front of their cave. The funny thing is... it crashes there after eating fermented papayas. The bronto has a drinking problem.

## Developing Adventures

Once you've got the adventure rolling, you have to maintain its comic momentum, introducing new complications to make the characters' lives amusingly challenging.

The three best ways to develop adventures are:

### Make It Up as You Go Along

Why do advance work when you can half-ass your way through it? Your players will be so busy struggling with their tiny vocabularies to notice.

Anytime the cavemen attempt to overcome a challenge, a new scene tends to naturally suggest itself. If the cavemen fail, they must regroup, and find a new way to tackle the problem at hand. Allow them to pursue their own solution



or, if this fails, have an event take place that suggests a way out. In either case, put a new amusing obstacle in between them and their new goal. This leads to an adventure structure in which one obstacle is nested within another, which in turn has another obstacle inside it. As the session comes to a close, the cavemen start to unravel the chain of obstacles, finally finding the solution to their original problem. Armed with this solution, they get a chance to win. If the rolls go in their favor, they do. If not...well, prehistory is a dangerous time.

Likewise, whenever the cavemen succeed, their success leads to a new problem, with a suitably amusing obstacle in their path. Just keep looking at what the players are trying to accomplish at the moment, ask yourself what might logically stand in their way, and then find a coming twist by asking yourself, "Wouldn't it be funny if...?"

## Use Index Cards

GMs uncomfortable with straight-up improvisation can prepare a set of unconnected challenges, which they then weave together as they go along. Write the challenges down on index cards. (Laptop users may prefer to place them in a document file, using a header or bookmark system to easily locate the

scenes they need.) Each index card consists of a very broad goal and an scary and/or potentially amusing obstacle. (Don't worry about making them all funny; that will happen in play.) Include additional details if you prefer, but avoid making them too specific, as you'll have to adjust the scenes to fit into a developing adventure.

Example index cards might read as follows:

- A rival clan's wisest grunting caveman has been treed by an enraged baluchitherium.
- Monkey-men have set up pit trap to capture unwary cavemen. Spikes on bottom of trap. Roll Forage to spot trap. If you fall in, roll Jump to avoid spikes, or take 1 damage. After cavemen fall in, monkey men appear, lobbing coconuts. They want to eat cavemen, or at least to scare them away from their territory.
- Crazy lone wandering caveman wants to join a clan. Tries to convince dumbest-looking PC he is his long-lost father.
- Tasty giant parrot eggs on top of high cliff. Only access is by rock-slide-prone slope. At inopportune moment, parrots return, angry.
- In exchange for food, caveman from Red Bird clan reveals location of

## The Oft-Mentioned Baluchitherium

Apart from such obvious candidates as the sabertooth tiger and tyrannosaurus, the creature type most often mentioned in the de Moisi cave text is the baluchitherium. This fifteen-ton herbivore is the largest

land mammal found in the fossil record. Why it appears so often in examples and off-hand references is a matter of scholarly controversy. Some suggest that players of the first roleplaying game had positive associa-

tions with it, equating its meaty frame with wealth and success. My personal theory is that the unknown author believed baluchitheriums to be inherently funny.

—L.S.J.M.

ironwood tree. He says tree, when chopped down, makes very strong wall to protect mouth of your cave from predators and invaders. Does not explain that, for this reason, tree is extremely hard to chop down.

- Lizard men lead a group of enslaved cavemen on leashes. If PCs rescue them, cavemen bitterly protest. As lizard man slaves, they had food and shelter without having to forage for it.

## Use a Map

Since *Og* sessions are more about the amusing event of the moment than a coherent plot, you may prefer to jettison the effort to connect scenes together at all. Instead, you can write up similar point-form encounters, as in the index card method above, but place them on a map.

Start by drawing a map of the characters' immediate area, with their clan shelter in the middle. Create a set of unchanging terrain features. Cram as many interesting environments into your map as you can. Needless to say, geographic credibility is not a top priority. Don't worry about scale or direction; cavemen have no concept of the latter and no way of measuring the former. Once you've got your basic map, make copies of it, so that you have a fresh one for each session.

Before each session, mark on the map where each of your encounters will occur. The adventure consists of the players deciding where to go. When they enter an area marked on your map, the encounter takes place. Astute readers will recognize this as *Og* equivalent of old school dungeon bashing.

For later sessions, remove used encounters and add new ones to the map. Certain terrain features may inspire various encounters. For example,

if the cavemen kill a plesiosaur who lives in a lake, the next week a camp of monkey men might have set up camp there, now that it's a safe place to live.

## Random Adventure Charts

Stuck for inspiration because your cavemen have solved the problem of the evening in five minutes flat? Use the following charts to jumpstart your imagination and construct a quick situation for the characters to resolve. The situation consists of:

- a benefit:** something the cavemen get if they prevail (thus luring them into danger)
- a location:** an interesting setting for the encounter
- an opponent:** someone or something that stands in their way
- a complication:** an additional element making the encounter weirder, tougher, or funnier

### Benefit Chart

- 1 .....food
- 2 .....good shelter
- 3 ....invention in need of destruction
- 4 .....mate-wooing opportunity
- 5 .....rival to chase or harass
- 6 .....shiny thing

### Location Chart

- 1.....cliff
- 2.....jungle
- 3 .....mountainside
- 4 .....salt flat
- 5.....shoreline
- 6.....underground tunnel

## Opponent Chart

This chart gives you categories of opponent. Choose the specific creature or rival as the need strikes you. You may want to pick one you haven't used before, recycle a frequent, much-loathed enemy, or (if they've been doing nothing but Running Away lately) select one the cavemen have a chance of successfully defeating.

- 1 .....dinosaur, carnivorous
- 2 .....dinosaur, herbivorous
- 3 .....intelligent non-human
- 4 .....other (crocodile, giant spider, etc.)
- 5 .....prehistoric mammal
- 6 .....rival cavemen

## Complication Chart

- 1 .....another opponent waiting in wings to finish off weakened victor
- 2 .....benefit is endangered or in precarious position
- 3 .....extreme weather
- 4 .....hazardous terrain (quicksand, crumbling cliff face, burning vegetation)
- 5 .....interfering animals (troublesome monkeys, divebombing birds, etc.)
- 6 .....trap or traps constructed by cavemen or sentient beings

## Sample Adventures

To illustrate the lack of advance preparation required for a fun Og game, here are three complete sample adventures.

### The Sun Food Bang Thing

The cavemen find a bee's nest full of tasty honey outside their cave. They probably get stung trying to get it. Following the bees, they run into a cave bear, also harvesting honey. He's on an island with lots of trees. The trees have very springy trunks. Hilarity ensues.

### Me Smelly, You Hairy

The cavemen's mothers tell them that it's time to get married. They go to a rival clan, which will allow the men to marry their curvaceous cavewoman, provided that they also take the clan spinster, who looks suspiciously like a gigantopithecus. Hilarity ensues.

### The Big Bang Thing

While foraging, the group encounters a friendly brachiosaur. As much as it likes them, it is jealous of everyone else they come near, who it then tries to stomp. If insufficient hilarity ensues, members of a rival clan show up to sue for damage caused by the brachiosaur's crushing of their huts.



# Og Character Sheet

Player: \_\_\_\_\_

Character: \_\_\_\_\_

Character Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Attack

Unggghh  
Points

Damage

Dodge/  
Evade

**Words:**  
Circle your words

You	Me	Rock	Water	Fire
Stick	Hairy	Bang	Sleep	Smelly
Small	Big	Cave	Food	Thing
Shiny	Go	Verisimilitude		

**Abilities:**

Circle 3 (6 for Learned Cavemen)

Build	Fire	Intimidate	Run Away
Climb	Fish	Jump	Swim
Cook	Forage	Lift	Throw
Draw	Hide	Resistance	Tiptoe
Explore	Hunt	Romance	Weather

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**Author: Robin D. Laws**

**Artists: Bill Holbrook, Ramsey Hong**

**Cover Design: Dan Zillion**

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**You know those cavemen who invented fire,  
the wheel, and civilization?**

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