



# Blood Rites

A Dark Role-Playing Game  
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21. April 2012

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## Introduction

### Mud

Unfortunately, you were born on Mud.

Life is hard in your village. You have lost many play mates to the deadly jungle that surrounds you.

You took solace only in the tales told around the weak village fire, of the vast empire of the High Old Ones, the age of leisure and war, of slaves and feasts. That was before the Uprising, and the long Downfall that left those few who survived naked and huddling in the darkness of the jungle.

You grew. When the time came for the Trials of Life and you went through the Bloodletting, the shaman moaned at the sight your blood. You have the Blood's Way in you.

You spent the next year learning the ancient, strange arts of Bloodletting. You have the scars to prove it—some carved by your own hand. Now, at the height of your fourteenth summer, you must leave your village. If you're lucky, you will survive your four years of exile and become a full shaman. Perhaps you will even uncover the secrets of the High Old Ones and the great stone cities they left behind. Perhaps you will even stay sane.

### What the Hell, Dude?

This is a strange RPG system designed for a dark world. Your character was born into a primitive, savage world. You use magic that hurts others or yourself.

This is a system of constant harsh choices. Your character must make harsh decisions in an environment very alien from our own.

### The Basic Feel of the World

**The world is primitive.** There is no technology (at least not in the villages). Most infants and children do not survive to adulthood. Culture is limited to a few simple religious observances and beads in womens' hair. Even clothing is a luxury that almost nobody can afford.

**The world is savage.** Tremendous, powerful beasts hunt in the vast jungles of the world. Nobody

ventures more than a few miles outside their village, except shamans and Carrion the Plague Carrier.

**The world is unexplored.** After Downfall, mankind scattered. People know nothing of the world beyond the next hill.



### The Required "What's Role-Playing?" Section

If you've never role-played before: it's basically a game of "Let's Pretend," with rules. The rules determine who's stronger than who, and in what areas.

A role-playing game (RPG) is played by a set of *players* and a *Game Master* (GM). The players pretend to be (in our case) shamans-in-exile, wandering the endless jungles of Mud. The GM provides a scenario for the players, and stands in for all the villains, monsters, and side characters (commonly called Non-Player Characters, or NPCs).

### The Core Mechanic

Every creature—intelligent and otherwise—is represented by a few statistics. These statistics are listed as either a number from -4 to +5, or an adjective which corresponds to one of those numbers:

- +5 Legendary
- +4 Superb
- +3 Great
- +2 Good
- +1 Fair
- 0 Average

- 1 Mediocre
- 2 Poor
- 3 Terrible
- 4 Abysmal

When attempting an action that carries with it significant difficulty or danger, it is resolved one of two ways:

- The GM looks at the relevant statistic, and narrates the results based on that ability. For example, if you're trying to convince a suspicious tribe to let you stay with them for the night, and you are Good (+2) at Presence, you do a Good job of convincing them.
- You can roll *fudge dice*—four 6-sided dice. Every die that rolls 1-2 subtracts 1 from your score, 5-6 adds 1, and 3-4 has no effect. That result is then compared to the difficulty of the action. Re-using the above example, let's say I rolled a 6, 5, 4, and 1. That adds a total of +1, so I did a Great (+3) job of convincing the tribe.

## The World

The world of Mud was once ruled by powerful Demon Kings, the High Old Ones who used terrible and powerful sacrificial magic to enslave the world.

The Demon Kings were not unlike the Aztecs or Maya in this regard...except that their magic worked, and ceremonially eviscerating a few slaves could summon a dragon or flatten a village.

Eventually, the slaves revolted and killed the High Old Ones, but only the Demon Kings could work the magical devices that kept the empire running. Humanity reverted to savagery and barbarism. They now huddle in tiny villages, surrounded by the terrible creatures who are now also free from the Demon Kings' shackles.

## Locales

The Demon Kings left behind great stone cities that have now mostly sunk into the jungle. Some tribes have taken up residence here, but so have various monstrous creatures.

Legends tell of underground cities, too; vast

dungeons and tunnel complexes that may literally go on forever.

There are also stories of flying ships, handheld eyes with terrible and painful gazes, temples to old gods, and forgotten coliseums now ruled by the vicious creatures that once fought each other for sport.

## Other Characters

### Carrion, The Plague Carrier

Carrion wanders the world, wearing a long cloak that completely covers his (or her?) body, his (her?) face covered by a bird-skull mask.

Carrion carries the plague, and visits villages to spread it. Why? A far worse form of the plague exists (and it is said that only Carrion knows where it lays dormant). Carrion spreads only the milder version of plague—which still kills one in ten—so that the full horror is never released.



## Characters

### Races

You can play any one of three races: Humans, Skarri, and Pterrans.

#### Humans

Humans are the most common race on Mud, but have no particular advantages over other races.

#### Skarri

Skarri are lizard-like humanoids with leathery skin, snouts, and sharp teeth. They tend to be the most savage of the playable races, but are also the most hardy.

Skarri can use their claws as a +2 weapon, and get automatic +1 on all endurance-related rolls.

#### Pterrans

Pterrans have wings and a beak, and can fly. At the end of each wing is a clawed hand consisting of two fingers and a thumb, which is more awkward than a human's hand but at least has a strong grip.

Pterrans innately have the Major Flying spell; they can fly up to 10 feet per turn in any direction through unobstructed air. They cannot use weapons while flying.

### Your Character's Statistics

Stats are divided into *vital* statistics and *common* statistics. All creatures have vital stats, but common ones are only used by player-characters and major villains.

Each character's **vital** statistics are:

- **Brawn** – Your character's raw physical might.
- **Cunning** – Your character's intelligence and mental flexibility.
- **Spirit** – Your character's will and ability to relate to others.

Cunning is used to determine the accuracy of physical attacks, and brawn to determine their power. Spirit is related both to magic and your relationships

with others.

Each character's **common** stats are:

- **Agility** – Your character's physical flexibility and dexterity.
- **Endurance** – Your character's ability to withstand the elements.
- **Lore** – Your character's knowledge of the past and the natural world of Mud.
- **Perception** – Your character's ability to notice things.
- **Presence** – Your character's charisma and ability to influence others.

These are used in non-combat situations.

Your character also has a **Magic** statistic.

All your stats start at +1. You can take any number of stats except Magic down to 0 or even -1 to give you an equal number of extra points for other stats. You may increase Magic, but for each extra point in Magic you must decrease each of your 3 vital stats by -1. No stat may be below -1 or above +3.

### Your Character's Health

Each vital statistic is translated into a different gauge of the character's health.

- Brawn: Physical Health
- Cunning: Mental Health
- Spirit: Spiritual Health

Health is calculated as follows:

| <i>Vital Stat</i> | <i>Health Score</i> |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| -1                | 1                   |
| 0                 | 2                   |
| 1                 | 3                   |
| 2                 | 6                   |
| 3                 | 9                   |

### Your Character's Focus

Your character may have a focus. That focus gives you access to a special spell.

#### Fire Mage

You access the element of fire. You can light a small

fire at any time just by snapping your fingers, and you have access to the *Fiery Blast* spell.

### **Fiery Blast**

*Spirit. Use within 1 day.*

- 
- MINOR** You unleash a ball of fire directly at one target within 10 feet. Deal Physical damage equivalent to your spell roll.
- MAJOR** You unleash a ball of fire directly at one target within 50 feet, dealing 1 extra damage. Deal Physical damage equivalent to your spell roll + 1.
- GREAT** You launch an arc of fire that hits up to three targets that are each within 10 feet of each other, one of which must be within 50 feet of you. Deal Physical damage equivalent to your spell roll.
- 

### **Water Mage**

You call upon the element of water. You can purify up to one gallon of water per hour, making even the most brackish water perfectly clean, and you have access to the *Coils of Water* spell.

### **Wall of Water**

*Spirit. Use within 1 day.*

- 
- MINOR** One target within 20 feet is encased in a bubble of water for one turn, dealing +2 Physical damage. After that turn, the water splashes to the ground.
- MAJOR** Up to three targets within 20 feet are encased in bubbles of water for up to 3 turns (your choice), dealing +2 Physical damage each turn. Afterwards, the water splashes to the ground.
- GREAT** Up to five targets within 50 feet are encased in water, and moved up to 20 feet per turn for up to 5 turns (your choice), dealing +2 Physical damage each turn. Afterwards, the water splashes to the ground.
- 

### **Mentalist**

TBD

### **Herbalist/Healer**

TBD

### **Beastmaster**

TBD

### **Beast Direction**

*Cunning. Use within 3 days.*

- 
- MINOR** Give one creature a single-word, non-violent command. The creature will obey the command for about half a minute.
- MAJOR** Give one creature a single command. The creature will obey the command for several minutes.
- GREAT** You have complete control over one non-sentient creature for one hour.
- 

### **Tracker/Hunter**

TBD

### **Illusionist**

TBD

### **Your Group's Ambition**

In addition, the entire group must have some specific objective they are trying to achieve. The player-characters may come from different villages or the same village, but the players must choose a common goal that unites them all. Feel free to think up one yourself; here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- You must find a new site for your decimated village.
- You seek to end the plague.
- You search for the Blood Urn; those that drink from it may be able to practice the Way of the Self with no penalty.
- A new disease ravages your village; you have heard that it can be cured by sacrificing an

incredibly rare raptophoenix.

- You wish to find a city of the High Old Ones and pillage it for wealth for your village.
- You wish to become one of the High Old Ones yourself.
- You wish to destroy all vestiges of the High Old Ones' dangerous remains.

## ***Your Character's Stuff***

Clothes and possessions are luxuries on Mud. Armor will not protect you from a raging fleshrender or a swarm of pirritous.

However, you will probably want to carry a weapon:

A one-handed weapon is worth +1 on your attacks.

Examples include:

- Bone knife (hand-held)
- Sling (ranged, 50 feet)
- Blowgun (ranged, 20 feet) – on hit, besides dealing damage, the target is also [weakened](#) (page 14).

A two-handed weapon is worth +2 on your attacks, but restricts you in combat. While using a two-handed weapon, you cannot let go of it to open doors, drink, *etc.*

- Spine sword (hand-held)
- Bow and arrow (ranged)

You can also choose training in unarmed combat. This gives you a +1 on attacks, but you cannot use any weapons, even if you hold them.

There are no healing potions or the like.

## ***So, How Do I Create a Character?***

Put 1 point into each of the following statistics. You can lower any stat except Magic to -1 to give you extra points for another stat. If you increase Magic by a point, you must decrease brawn, cunning, and spirit by -1 each. Each stat must be between -1 and +3.

- Brawn
- Cunning
- Spirit

- Agility
- Endurance
- Lore
- Perception
- Presence
- Magic

Choose one **weapon** for your character.

Choose your character's **race**. If skarri, note your +2 claws and add 1 to your Endurance; if pterran, note your innate Major Flying spell.

Calculate your character's Physical Health, Mental Health, and Spiritual Health using the table listed under Your Character's Health.

As a group, think up one **Ambition** that the characters want to achieve.

## ***How to Play Your Character in Blood Rites***

This game demands a certain kind of role-playing.

I'm not going to exhort you to "become your character." I will suggest a few things that may seem paradoxical, and are cribbed from Graham Walmsley's excellent book, *Play Unsafe*.

Create a group with a **strong Ambition**, one that the other player-characters can react to and build on. An ideal Ambition evokes a strong reaction from the characters.

In play, **build on other players' actions** and ideas. Don't try to counteract another character's behaviors; instead, react.

When in doubt, **do the next obvious thing**. Move the story forward. Momentum is more important than careful planning; on Mud, careful planning will get you killed. Besides, "obvious" acts often look brilliant to other players.

If the story ever feels boring, **do something risky**. You can try something risky for the party (especially if there's a strong relationship between that risk and the potential reward), or you can try something that you're a bit uncomfortable with. Don't like to flirt? Flirt.



## The Years of Exile

Shamans enter exile for 4 years. Each year, they face a trial. Each trial tests their skills and their character.

### Setting up Years

Okay, GM: Years are for you. They're a convenient way to organize a *Blood Rites* campaign into something like a series of adventures.

Each year is a broad scenario into which you can drop any number of battles and scenarios.

But more importantly, each year deals with some major moral or ethical issue. Each year is designed to challenge the characters'...character.

### Sample Years

#### The Year of Air

*Theme: Protection*

King Torra of the Pterrans rules his kingdom with an iron fist...and has begun expanding with ruthless precision. The party is sought by peaceful Pterrans who want them to sneak into King Torra's kingdom and steal the terrible Ancient Eye that he uses to create his fearful Death Riders.

#### The Year of the Dragon

*Theme: Hunt*

A great and terrible beast has been awakened. The party must find and destroy it.

#### The Year of Ends

*Theme: Magic*

Someone is corrupting magic at its source on Mud, so that all magic is mis-firing. The party tracks this to the legendary Fountain of Souls and must stop the meddling.

#### The Year of Fire

*Theme: Goals*

The party encounters another group of shamans in exile who want to kill and loot the party.

#### The Year of Passageways

*Theme: Cunning*

The players discover a portal that takes them to a bizarre, obstacle-course world of mental and physical challenges. Another shaman discovered it and is using it to build a personal army.

#### The Year of the Shell

*Theme: Rescue*

A village decimated by plague seeks a new home. The party discovers the villagers beset by monsters, then protect the villagers as they search for a prosperous place for their new village.

#### The Year of Stone

*Theme: Justice*

The party finds a new skarrrl empire based in a Demon King city. The skarrrl stumbled on a Demon King who had put himself in stasis, and they now keep him just awake enough to power the city's dread machines. The skarrrl have enslaved thousands, and every day sacrifice three victims at the top of the city's ziggurat.

#### The Year of Water

*Theme: Survival*

The party discovers the Ska, a race of savage fish-people who are now creating an empire on dry land. The party must find an ancient spell scroll that will enable them to breathe underwater, then dive into the sea and face them on their own turf.

Ska are individually weak, but they are arcane masters of the element of water, and can create driving rain, cutting ice gales, and walls of solid water. The party must deal with constant environmental obstacles.

## Magic

There are two kinds of magic: The Art of the Other and the Art of the Self.

When practicing the **Art of the Other**, you must capture an animal and, while it still lives, drain its blood in a specific way in-character. Doing so takes about 20 minutes. While performing the sacrifice, you choose a spell and roll Fudge dice, adding your score in the corresponding vital statistic listed for that spell. Each spell has a Minor, Major, and Great variant; roll +2 or lower to prepare the Minor version, +3 or +4 to prepare the Major version, or +5 or higher to prepare the Great version.

You may now cast this spell at any time this day. You may prepare at most 3 times per day. You may not prepare the same spell multiple times before casting it.

When practicing the **Art of the Self**, you cut yourself in a prescribed manner. You immediately choose a variant of a spell. For Minor variants, you immediately attack yourself with a -1 on your Brawn value; for Major variants, your exact Brawn; and for Great variants, +1 on your Brawn. If you're still conscious, you then immediately are granted the corresponding spell variant.

You may use the Art of the Self as often as you want, though note the effects in the After-Effects section on page 13.

## Spells

### Ascertainment

*Cunning. Use within 1 day; effect lasts half an hour*

- 
- MINOR** Read the surface thoughts of another sentient.
- MAJOR** Read the surface thoughts of another sentient, as well as the target's hostility or friendliness towards the caster.
- GREAT** Communicate telepathically with one sentient.
- 

### Comprehension

*Cunning. Use within 2 days.*

- 
- MINOR** You understand how a simple mechanical system works. When applied to a lock, you will now recognize the key that fits that lock.
- MAJOR** You understand how an electromechanical system as large as about 1 foot cubed works. You can perform simple repairs on it.
- GREAT** You understand how any given mechanical, electromechanical, electronic, or otherwise non-biological system works. Given the appropriate tools, materials, and time, you can perform any repairs on it.
- 

### Devitalization

*Brawn. Use within 1 day*

- 
- MINOR** The target's Brawn is decreased by -1 for the remainder of the fight.
- MAJOR** The target's Brawn is decreased by -2 for the remainder of the fight.
- GREAT** The target's Brawn is decreased by -2 permanently.
- 

### Disenchantment

*Spirit. Immediate*

- 
- MINOR** If you roll a Good (2 or higher) Spirit roll, an ongoing minor spell of the caster's choosing dissolves away.
- MAJOR** If you roll a Good (2 or higher) Spirit roll, an ongoing major spell of the caster's choosing dissolves away. If you roll lower, a minor spell of the caster's choosing dissolves away.
- GREAT** If you roll a Good (2 or higher) Spirit roll, an ongoing great spell of the caster's choosing dissolves away. If you roll lower, a minor or major spell of the caster's choosing dissolves away.
-

**Disintegration***Brawn. Use within 1 day*

- 
- MINOR** Deal +3 Physical damage against one creature within 10 feet.
- MAJOR** Deal +3 Physical damage against up to 3 creatures within 50 feet. Roll fudge dice; if you roll -2 or lower, you take +3 damage.
- GREAT** Kill any living creature within 50 feet. Roll fudge dice; if you roll -1 or lower, you are knocked unconscious. If you roll -3 or lower, you die.
- 

**Elicitation***Cunning. Use within 1 day*

- 
- MINOR** The caster concentrates on a specific object or type of object and knows its direction from him or her, if it exists within 20 feet.
- MAJOR** The caster concentrates on a specific object or type of object and knows its direction from him or her if it exists within 30 feet, or is guided to it if it exists within 10 feet.
- GREAT** The caster concentrates on a specific object or type of object and is guided to it, if it exists within 100 feet.
- 

**Enchantment***Spirit. Use within 1 day*

- 
- MINOR** Infuse one (non-living) object up to 1 foot square with magic. If you are within 1 mile of the object within the next 30 days, you will know its exact location. You can immediately provide the same benefit to up to 5 other shamans within 20 feet.
- MAJOR** As above for one object up to 3 feet square. You can instead know if the object is touched or moved by any means if you are within 1 mile of it within the next 30 days.
- GREAT** As above, for an object up to 6 feet square. You can also rig the object to explode on a trigger of your choice, doing Physical damage scaled such that a human-sized object deals 2 damage.
- 

**Far-Seeing***Brawn. Use within 3 days*

- 
- MINOR** Objects 300 feet away are seen as though they are only 3 feet away. Effect lasts for 5 minutes.
- MAJOR** Objects 500 feet away are seen as though they are only 6 feet away. Effect lasts for 15 minutes.
- GREAT** Objects 1,000 feet away are seen as though they are only 9 feet away. Effect lasts for one hour.
- 

**Immobilization***Spirit. Use within 1 day*

- 
- MINOR** One creature within 20 feet cannot move next turn. Flying creatures stay aloft but cannot move.
- MAJOR** One creature within 50 feet cannot move for 1 minute. Flying creatures stay aloft but cannot move.
- GREAT** All creatures within a 10-foot radius up to 50 feet away cannot move for 5 minutes. Flying creatures fall to the ground.
- 

**Invisibility***Brawn. Use within 1 day; effect lasts 1 hour*

- 
- MINOR** The caster can make him- or her-self, or a willing target within the caster's sight, nearly invisible or visible at the caster's will. Others must make a perception roll of at least Great to see the target.
- MAJOR** The caster can make him- or her-self, or a willing target within the caster's sight, completely invisible or visible at the caster's will.
- GREAT** The caster can make any number of desired targets within 10 feet—including the caster—completely invisible or visible at the caster's will.
-

## Levitation

*Brawn. Use within 3 days; effect lasts 1 hour*

- MINOR** The caster can levitate up to 30 feet above the ground and move sideways up to 5 feet, but can lift only normal amounts of weight.
- MAJOR** The caster or a willing target can fly through unobstructed air up to 10 feet per turn in any direction.
- GREAT** The caster and anyone else within 10 feet can fly as a group up to 20 feet per turn in any direction. Alternately, the caster can lift a weight of up to 1,000 pounds.

## Locomotion

*Brawn. Use within 2 days*

- MINOR** The caster drags a creature up to 10 feet.
- MAJOR** The caster drags a creature up to 20 feet, or up to 3 creatures who are within 5 feet of each other up to 5 feet.
- GREAT** The caster drags one creature and up to 4 others who are within 10 feet of the target creature up to 50 feet.

## Mental Blast

*Cunning. Use within 1 day.*

- MINOR** Deal 1 Mental damage against a target within 5 feet.
- MAJOR** Deal 2 Mental damage against a target within 10 feet.
- GREAT** Deal 4 Mental damage against a target within 50 feet, or 2 Mental damage against up to 3 targets within 20 feet.

## Redirection

*Cunning. Use within 1 day.*

- MINOR** One enemy within 10 feet confuses the caster (or one of the caster's allies) for one of the caster's allies (or the caster). Effect lasts for one turn, about 5 seconds.
- MAJOR** One enemy within 30 feet confuses the caster (or one of the caster's allies) for one of the caster's allies (or the caster). Effect lasts for

about 30 seconds.

- GREAT** Up to five enemies within 50 feet confuses the caster and his or her allies with other individuals or creatures of the caster's choosing. Effect lasts for about 60 seconds.

## Scent of Blood

*Spirit. Effect lasts 5 minutes*

- MINOR** The caster can determine whether inanimate objects within 10 feet are enchanted.
- MAJOR** The caster can determine whether inanimate objects within 10 feet are enchanted, and whether they are hostile or dangerous.
- GREAT** The caster can determine whether inanimate objects within 10 feet are enchanted, and the exact nature of the enchantment.

## Terror

*Spirit. Use within 2 days*

- MINOR** One sentient is gripped with fear, and will immediately flee the immediate area.
- MAJOR** As above, but affects any creatures of the caster's choice within a 10-foot radius up to 50 feet from the caster.
- GREAT** All targets of the caster's choosing within a 50-foot radius of the caster are immediately reduced to gibbering puddles of raw terror. Each target either cowers helplessly or flees screaming as far as possible, running thoughtlessly for at least 5 minutes (caster chooses effect for each target).

## Translocation

*Brawn. Use within 1 day*

- MINOR** Lift and slowly move a small object weighing up to half a pound up to 15 feet.
- MAJOR** Lift and move an object up to five pounds in weight up to 30 feet. A creature hit with this object is shaken.
- GREAT** Lift and move an object up to 60 pounds a distance of up to 90 feet. A creature hit with this object is stunned.

## Transportation

*Brawn. Use within 3 days*

- 
- MINOR** Instantly transport the caster exactly 300 feet to a position previously occupied by the caster.
- MAJOR** Instantly transport the caster and any willing creatures within 10 feet exactly 300 feet to a position previously occupied by the caster.
- GREAT** Instantly transport the caster, any willing creatures, and any inanimate objects weighing less than 100 pounds each within 10 feet of the caster exactly 500 feet to a position previously occupied by the caster.
- 

Rolling 1 or 2 chooses Brawn; 3 or 4 chooses Cunning; 5 or 6 chooses Spirit. The corresponding Health scores do not change.

- 16-18 **Voices** Strange voices urge you to a sadistic or otherwise bizarre act.

## After-Effects

You can cast one spell per day with no noticeable effect.

If you cast 2 to 3 spells in one day, then when you next awake from a night's sleep, you take an after-effect from the following table. This after-effect persists for one day.

If you cast 4 or more spells in one day, when you next awake you take an after-effect that persists for three days.

Choose an after-effect that is interesting to you, or roll three six-sided dice and choose the corresponding after-effect.

- 3-4 **Angry** +1 to Brawn, -1 to Cunning.
- 5-6 **Depressed** -1 to Spirit, and your speed is halved.
- 7-8 **Distracted** Before every attempted roll, roll Cunning; if the Cunning roll is Fair or below, you take a -2 on the attempt.
- 9-11 **Dizzy** Immediately after next spell use, -1 penalty on all rolls for 10 minutes.
- 12-13 **Paranoid** You're convinced that one other player is trying to harm you in some way.
- 14-15 **Schizophrenic** Three times per day (upon waking, noon, and dusk), roll two dice. The first die adds +2 to a vital stat; the second subtracts -2 to a vital stat.

## Combat

Combat is divided into turns. You can determine the combat order in any way you'd like: around the table, pass out playing cards, go in order from highest Cunning to lowest Cunning, or have each player roll dice to determine initiative.

During your turn, your character may move up to 10 feet, and may either attack with a weapon or cast one spell.

Movement includes climbing, jumping, and other physical feats, though particularly challenging ones may require a roll at the GM's discretion.

## Physical Attacks

For a non-magical attack, roll fudge dice using your Cunning plus your weapon's value. If this beats your opponent's Cunning, the attack hits.

If the attack hits, roll fudge dice using your Brawn. The attacker's damage roll is subtracted from the opponent's corresponding Physical Health.

If any of your health scores fall below 0, you fall unconscious.

Each turn lasts about 5 seconds in the game world.

## Effects

**Immobilized** Cannot move.

**Shaken** -1 penalty to attack rolls.

**Stunned** -1 penalty to all rolls.

**Weakened** -2 penalty to damage rolls.

**Unconscious** You can take no actions. On your turn, make a Brawn roll. If it's Legendary, you awake as normal. If it's Superb, you awake shaken for 5 minutes. If it's Terrible or below, you die..

## Unconsciousness

While you are unconscious, the only thing you can do during your turn is make a Death Roll, using your Brawn or Spirit. If you roll +4 or higher, your character returns to consciousness. If you roll -4 or lower, your character dies.



## Bestiary

Following are a selection of beasts that inhabit Mud.

**Durability** indicates how much extra damage a creature can take before it takes an effect. Subtract this value from each Brawn attack to find the final effect.

To create your own beasts, simply choose a point budget appropriate to the challenge: 4 points are easy, 6 are moderate, and 8 are hard. Distribute these points between Brawn, Cunning, and Spirit, and roughly double Brawn for Physical Health, Cunning for Mental Health, and Spirit for Spiritual Health. Add 1 Durability for moderate beasts and 2 Durability for hard ones.

### *Doomcoil (moderate)*

This is a giant snake with two spiked tails.

|             |    |                   |   |
|-------------|----|-------------------|---|
| Brawn:      | +2 | Physical Health:  | 3 |
| Cunning:    | +3 | Mental Health:    | 6 |
| Spirit:     | +1 | Spiritual Health: | 2 |
| Durability: | 1  |                   |   |

Attacks:

**Coil.** +2 attack against a creature not captured by this doomcoil. If successful, it does Physical damage and the target is immobilized. The doomcoil can coil up to two creatures at once. A coiled creature must make a Great (+3) Brawn roll to escape the coil.

**Crush.** +3 attack against a creature it has coiled, dealing Physical damage.

### *Fleshrender (moderate)*

This large reptilian beast has a nasty temper and even nastier teeth.

|             |    |                   |   |
|-------------|----|-------------------|---|
| Brawn:      | +4 | Physical Health:  | 9 |
| Cunning:    | +2 | Mental Health:    | 3 |
| Spirit:     | +0 | Spiritual Health: | 1 |
| Durability: | 1  |                   |   |

Attacks:

**Howl**, once per fight. +3 attack. If successful, it deals Mental damage all creatures within 10 feet are stunned.

### *Howlers (easy)*

These simians may lack sentience, but they can be organized when they want to. Their long-range slings can do significant damage.

|             |    |                   |   |
|-------------|----|-------------------|---|
| Brawn:      | +2 | Physical Health:  | 3 |
| Cunning:    | +1 | Mental Health:    | 2 |
| Spirit:     | +1 | Spiritual Health: | 2 |
| Durability: | 0  |                   |   |

All Howler attacks are at a range of 5 to 50 feet.

### *Kerrak (hard)*

Kerrak are velociraptors.

|             |    |                   |   |
|-------------|----|-------------------|---|
| Brawn:      | +3 | Physical Health:  | 6 |
| Cunning:    | +3 | Mental Health:    | 6 |
| Spirit:     | +2 | Spiritual Health: | 3 |
| Durability: | 2  |                   |   |

Attacks:

**Pack Tactics**, once per fight. Another Kerrak within 20 feet either moves up to 10 feet or makes a free attack.

Spells:

**Telepathic Confusion.** Any creature standing between at least two kerrak takes a -1 penalty on all Spirit rolls. A creature standing between at least 4 kerrak takes -2 to Cunning rolls.

### *Pirritous (hard)*

These small winged creatures are individually a nuisance, but a colony can strip the flesh from a human in seconds.

|             |    |                   |   |
|-------------|----|-------------------|---|
| Brawn:      | +4 | Physical Health:  | 9 |
| Cunning:    | +3 | Mental Health:    | 6 |
| Spirit:     | +1 | Spiritual Health: | 2 |
| Durability: | 2  |                   |   |

### *Stone Guardians (easy)*

These ancient stone constructs remain, guarding long-forgotten treasures.

|             |    |                   |     |
|-------------|----|-------------------|-----|
| Brawn:      | +3 | Physical Health:  | 6   |
| Cunning:    | +1 | Mental Health:    | 2   |
| Spirit:     | 0  | Spiritual Health: | N/A |
| Durability: | 0  |                   |     |

Attacks:

**Bash**, once per fight. +3 attack. If successful, it deals Physical damage and its target is weakened.

Spells:

**Immobilizing Ray**, twice per fight. +3 attack *vs.* Cunning. If successful, target and all of its allies within 5 squares of target are immobilized next turn.

**No Spirit**. Spirit attacks do no damage to a Stone Guardian.

### **Zombie (moderate)**

These fearsome creatures retain some shred of intelligence, leaping and clawing at living humanoids in the constant desire for brains.

|             |    |                   |   |
|-------------|----|-------------------|---|
| Brawn:      | +3 | Physical Health:  | 6 |
| Cunning:    | +2 | Mental Health:    | 3 |
| Spirit:     | +1 | Spiritual Health: | 2 |
| Durability: | 1  |                   |   |
| Attacks:    |    |                   |   |

**Leap**, once per fight. The zombie makes a +3 Agility roll to leap up to 20 feet.

### **Zombie Queen (hard)**

This intelligent undead creature directs other zombies for its own nefarious purposes.

|             |    |                   |   |
|-------------|----|-------------------|---|
| Brawn:      | +1 | Physical Health:  | 2 |
| Cunning:    | +4 | Mental Health:    | 9 |
| Spirit:     | +3 | Spiritual Health: | 6 |
| Durability: | 2  |                   |   |
| Attacks:    |    |                   |   |

**Come, My Minions!**, once per fight. When a hit lands on the Zombie Queen, another zombie within 10 feet immediately leaps in front of the Zombie Queen to take the blow instead.

Spells:

**Death Ray**, twice per fight. +4 attack *vs.* Cunning, dealing +3 Physical damage on the first attempt and +2 on the second attempt.

**Numbing the Mind**, once per fight. +3 attack, dealing Mental damage.





## Notes for the GM

### *If You've Never GM'ed Before*

Don't panic.

Keep the story loose. Think up an interesting villain (or villains) and some mooks. Think up an interesting location.

React to the players' decisions. A world thought up in advance is slightly more vibrant but far more brittle than one created as you game. Go ahead and leave a lot of decisions for the game.

### *Running Blood Rites*

Games played in *Blood Rites* should be savage and bloody. Rip off arms. Behead things. Armies of acid-clawed, naked, zombie slaves fit perfectly in Mud.

The party's Ambition should give you a starting point for your adventure's villains and plots.

Mud was designed so that the physical world can be changed drastically by the GM. PC's know very little about the world itself, so you can go wild. Mud could contain vast, civilized empires that simply haven't reached the PC's villages yet. There could be crashed spaceships nearby. The jungle could give way to a

blasted wasteland filled with mutants and shotguns—indeed, perhaps the legends of the High Old Ones are vague post-apocalyptic memories of our own technological world.



## Credits

This game was written entirely by [Brent P. Newhall](#).

Thanks to gamefiend and the other members of the #4eDnD IRC channel at 4eatwill.net for their invaluable help and suggestions on this game.

This document was written in NeoOffice 3.1. The headers are typeset in Calligrapher, and the text is set in Bell MT.

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