

Untold Stories – Behind the Curtain

by Delbert "Greentongue" Jackson

About the Adventure:

This Serial is designed for 4 seasoned player characters. This Scene takes place north east of Stuttgart, Arkansas around the year 1927. It is a pulp adventure and while based on some facts, doesn't try to replicate what really happened during this time.

Opening Scene: **Dirigible**

The captured dirigible moved effortlessly eastward, rain clouds blocking distance viewing, then it passed through a particularly thick cloud bank. As the fog of cloud passed over them, there was a flicker in their vision, their engine quit, and they were left floating over a dense jungle.

The jungle stretched as far as the eye could see. It was laced with waterways winding between mounds of jungle. Rising above the jungle, a structure shaped as a squared pyramid with smoke rising lazily from its covered top. This pyramid was decorated in pale spikes and the movement of humanoids could be seen around it.

Proceed to Introduction

Opening Scene: **Boat**

Racing the boat from the city of Clarendon, the group encountered and passed through an odd fog bank. It didn't look natural, more like a real wall with a mist shroud. As the fog passed over them, there was a flicker in their vision, the engine quit, and they were left floating in a narrow opening between dense jungle growth. Initially they were surrounded by silence. Soon an orchestra of sound filled the air as the jungle life returned to normal. To the right, the water narrowed and turned slightly until its path was hidden by jungle. To the left, the water widened slightly and joined with another expanse of water. In the opening over this water, between the trees, there was a thin trail of dark smoke.

Proceed to Introduction

Introduction:

Though the fog has cleared, the air is hot and the humidity is oppressive. From the direction of the pyramid a thumping starts. A drumming sound with a changing pattern.

This is trackless jungle with the only easy paths being the waterways. These wind between higher ground and generally tend towards the south.

In the water they can *Notice* what they first think are huge olive colored catfish. On a raise, they note that some of the "fish" have small legs protruding from their sides. They have to be some kind of huge tadpole.

Whatever they are, they are large and there are many schools of them.

On another Notice roll, they see off in the distance the water is churning as olive colored bodies roil the blood stained water.

More Notice rolls allow the sounds of the jungle to be separated enough to determine there are large bodies moving through the growth.

Enough can be seen to tell them that while they are still on Earth, it is not the Earth that they knew. While there are snakes, they have feathers, other things are just different enough that they almost recognize them, and yet don't.

When they encounter them, they have certainly never seen anything like the Hluut.

Special Rules and other Details:

This is the Land Time Forgot in some aspects. A hot jungle land with dense growth, Fatigue effects, difficulty in movement through jungle, and seeing distances.

From the dirigible, the top of the pyramid, or a ridge, there can be seen a fog bank that never clears. It is to the south west and occasionally the "wall of fog" sweeps out from it. To cross back to home, move towards the wall of fog as it passes. Crossing the fog will stop any engines or electronic equipment.

Each hour the party spends exploring, draw a card from your initiative deck. If the card is a face card, a random encounter occurs. If a Joker comes up, the group has run into two things at once. Reshuffle the deck after every encounter.

Snakes and Hluut may be encountered at any time. Over hanging limbs may allow a snake to drop into the boat. If anyone falls into the water, an alligator or Hluut of some form might be near by. During any time the characters gets into the water, be sure to have something in the water be noticed. Nothing needs to attack, just be Noticed.

The Hluut tribes who live here are firm believers in Survival of the Fittest and they eat the weak. The weak are also culled from their young and eaten. They have a very high birth rate and this is one of the ways that the population is kept under control. Their society is very territorial with many warlords. What joins them together is their worship of fire. When bringing fuel for the temple, they are safe from the near constant competition that goes on in their daily life.

They have created a temple for their fire. It is formed into a square sided pyramid of dirt bounded by logs. Each square forms the base for the next square above it. At the very top is a roof on poles to keep the rain from extinguishing the flame. This structure rises above the jungle and the smoke from its fire can be seen from a great distance. It is decorated by tusks of ivory (and other items stuck in the logs supporting the pyramid.) There are priests that tend the fire and beat a drum when more fuel is needed. They are the wisdom and memory of the tribes and have high status. They do not completely welcome "gods" among them.

Shortly after the realization that this jungle world is not theirs, they hear a young man's cry of pain.

A sudden cry of pain comes from your right (or from just inside the trees in one of the few breaks in the jungle foliage below) and bursting from the jungle runs a young man, maybe fifteen, staggering from a bloody wound on his shoulder. Chasing him is a band of strange, hopping humanoids (the Hluut) closing in for the kill.

The boy should be rescued by the heroes figuring one Hluut per hero. He can relate this tale.

"I was out hunting in the woods when this fog bank rolled over me. Next thing I know I was in a god durned jungle! I been walk'en and trying not to get 'et for a few days when I saw this big temple with a streak of smoke coming from it. I managed to get close and see other people surrounded by those frogmen. One big guy was waving a lighter at the frogs and the froggies led all of them up to the temple. I think the frog guys were gonna eat them so I started trying to find my way home. I was spotted by the frogs and one of 'em winged me, force'n me to drop my rifle and run. If you hadn't rescued me I'd be frog meat!"

Steve "Hold'em" Anderson, is a card playing heavy smoker with one of the new Ronson Banjo lighters. He has gathered survivors that have been swept into this dimension. The Hluut are in awe of his lighter and believe he is some kind of god. Unfortunately, lighter fluid doesn't last forever.

Steve "Hold'em" Anderson (Wild Card NPC)

The current leader of the refugees who's first words on meeting will be, "Got a smoke?"

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

Skills: Gambling d10, Intimidation d6, Fighting d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6, Notice d6, Swimming d4

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Habit (Cigarette addiction), Stubborn

Edges: Strong Willed, +2 to Intimidate and Taunt rolls.

Gear:

- Lighter: Ronson "Banjo" lighter that will light with one hand, until a 1 is rolled.
- Revolver: (Damage: 2d6+1 Range: 12/24/48, RoF: 1, Shots: 6) AP 1

One of the refugees should be an NPC extra professor type who can give the players the idea of leaving by recrossing the fog bank going towards it. The Hluut priests are split between those want to return the demons (humans) to their own world and those who like the taste of demon.

Refugee Characters (Extras) About 2 per player, before Encounters eliminate most.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6. Swimming d4

Gear:

- Some with a rifles (Damage: 2d8 Range: 24/48/96, RoF: 1, Shots: 8)
- Some clubs (STR+1) includes the rifle butts when the limited ammo runs out.
- Some knives (STR+1)

Hluut

This frog like humanoid amphibious species are very territorial and attack without checking morale. They carry darts for spearing or throwing and eat their food raw. They will break off their attack to eat their incapacitated, unless they are being attacked.

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

Skills: Fighting: d8, Guts: d8, Notice: d6, Swim: d8

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 5

Gear:

- Darts: (Damage: Str+2, Range: 3/6/12, RoF: 1, Shots: 2)
- Dagger: Str+1

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6 in water
- **Ambidextrous and Two-fisted:** Hluut may attack with a weapon in two limbs without multi-action penalty. They ignore the -2 penalty for using an off-hand attack.

Hluut Tad

These baby Hluut school in groups of at least a dozen. Due to the speed of their maturation, they are always ravenous and will attack anything they think is edible. Once the first blood is scented, the entire school goes into a feeding frenzy. If no food is available, Tads will attack other schools they encounter. Any wounded will be consumed, even their own school.

Attributes: Agility: d4, Smarts: d4, Spirit: d6, Strength: d6, Vigor: d6

Skills: Fighting: d8, Guts: d6, Notice: d6, Swim: d10

Pace: 8, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 5

Gear:

- Bite: Str

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6 in water
- **Fleet:** +2 to Pace (d10 in bursts)
- **Feeding Frenzy:** One extra Fighting attack per round at -2. During feeding frenzy Smart rolls are at -2.

Hluutlet

This is a transitional form. They start to work together as a pack with others not of their same school. They begin communication with the adult Hluut at this stage of their development. The common type of attack is to bite once and hold while stabbing with their crude daggers. The adult Hluut will kill and eat any weak that have survived to this stage. The adults will teach the strong what they have learned and include them in their hunts.

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

Skills: Fighting: d8, Guts: d8, Notice: d6, Swim: d8

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 5

Edges: Two-Fisted

Gear:

- Teeth: Str+1
- Bone Dagger: Str

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6 in water
- **Amphibious:** +1 to Pace in water (d8 in bursts)
- **Two-fisted:** Hluutlet may attack with a weapon in two limbs without multi-action penalty.

Head Pecker:

Small sharp beaked birds that that drill and scoop meat through though hide and scales.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(a), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6,

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 2(10 flying); **Parry:** 5(7); **Toughness:** 3

Special Abilities:

- **Size:** -2 (small - about the size of a woodpecker, -2 to be hit in melee or direct range attacks),
- **Beak:** (STR +1, AP 3),
- **Head-shooter:** If it gets a raise on fighting it automatically attacks the head with no called shot penalty (+4 damage),
- **Quiet Flier:** Unless noticed (-2 due to size) the first attack is with the drop!

Feathered Moccasin:

Small snakes that lives around water and are covered in water resistant feathers. The Hluut make personal decorations from their feathers.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Guts d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6,

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

Special Abilities:

- **Poison:** Vigor roll at -2 or become Incapacitated
- **Quick:** Discard Action card 5 or lower
- **Size:** -2
- **Small:** -2 from opponent's Attack roll
- **Amphibious:** Swim = Pace

Furred Alligator:

These are mammals that are covered in dark fur and are treated like dogs by the Hluut. They are often seen together. They act as standard alligators.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Guts d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Swimming d8

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

- **Armor:** +2 from thick skin
- **Aquatic:** Pace 5
- **Bite:** Str+2
- **Rollover:** +2d4 damage if hit with raise

Scaled Boar:

Massive, feral pig like reptiles, with razor-sharp tusks, notoriously short-tempered. Their ivory tusks are highly prized by the Hluut.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Tough, thick hide.
- **Charge:** A boar can attack at the end of a run with no multi-action penalty, and gets a +2 to damage when doing so.
- **Tusks:** Str+1

Fanged Chameleon:

These 7' long lizards change their coloration to match their surroundings, and use their long fangs as effective stabbing weapons.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d10, Stealth d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities:

- **All-Around Sight:** A chameleons eyes allow it to see in all directions; it gets a +2 to Notice rolls involving sight.
- **Armor +1:** Scaly hide.
- **Color Change:** While remaining motionless, a Fanged Chameleon gets a +4 to its Stealth rolls.
- **Fangs:** Str+3.
- **Size +1**
- **Pounce:** The chameleon can leap 1d6" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. Its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action when performing this maneuver.

The following can be added from the core rules if more critters are needed.

A nasty bear (grizzly level), page 129 of original book, page 125 of Revised.

More snakes, page 133 of original book, page 131 of Revised, page 54 of **Savage Beasts**.

Giant bug swarms, page 134 of original book, page 131 of Revised.

Bug swarms that can dissolve/eat the zeppelin's membrane.

Bats, page 7 of **Savage Beasts**

Giant Beetles, page 8 of **Savage Beasts**

Giant Centipede, page 12 of **Savage Beasts**

Giant Leech, page 42 of **Savage Beasts**

Giant mosquitoes, page 46 of **Savage Beasts**

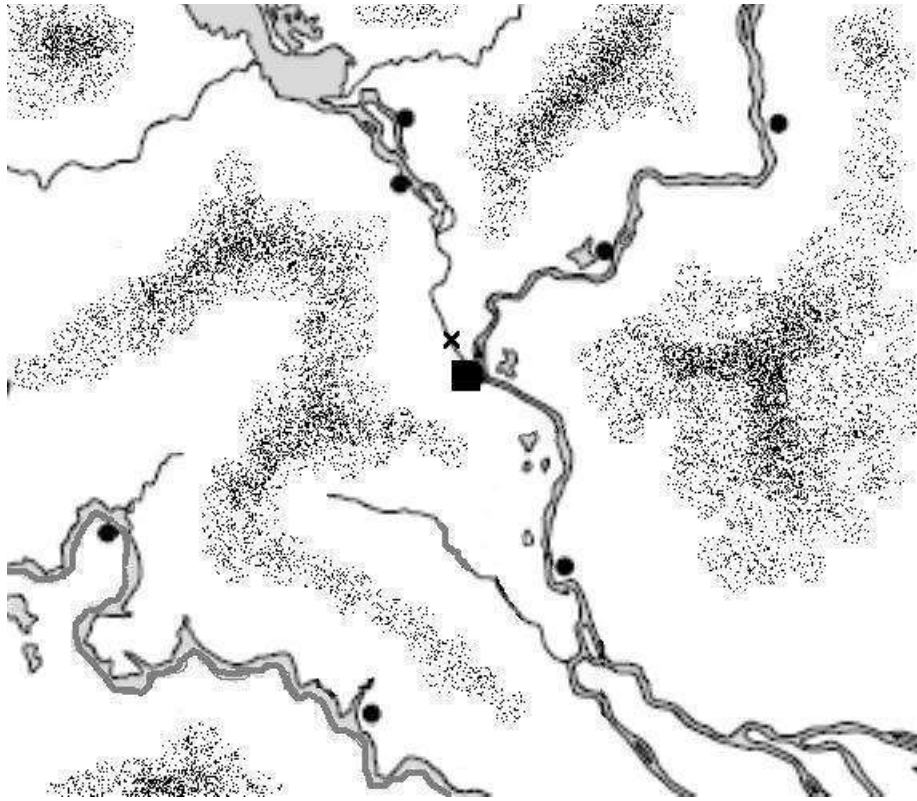
Semi-sentient vines and other dangerous plant life can be created with the Toolkits released for Savage Worlds.

Savage Beasts by Butch Curry can be found at

<http://www.zombienirvana.com/savage/SavageBeasts.pdf>

Map of the Area:

Square indicates temple site, dots are villages, rivers and ridges are also shown. They are not to scale, as the distances is in miles.



The fog bank is located at the bottom right of the map beginning where the river splits into many branches. Visibility drops to arms reach very quickly once inside it.

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