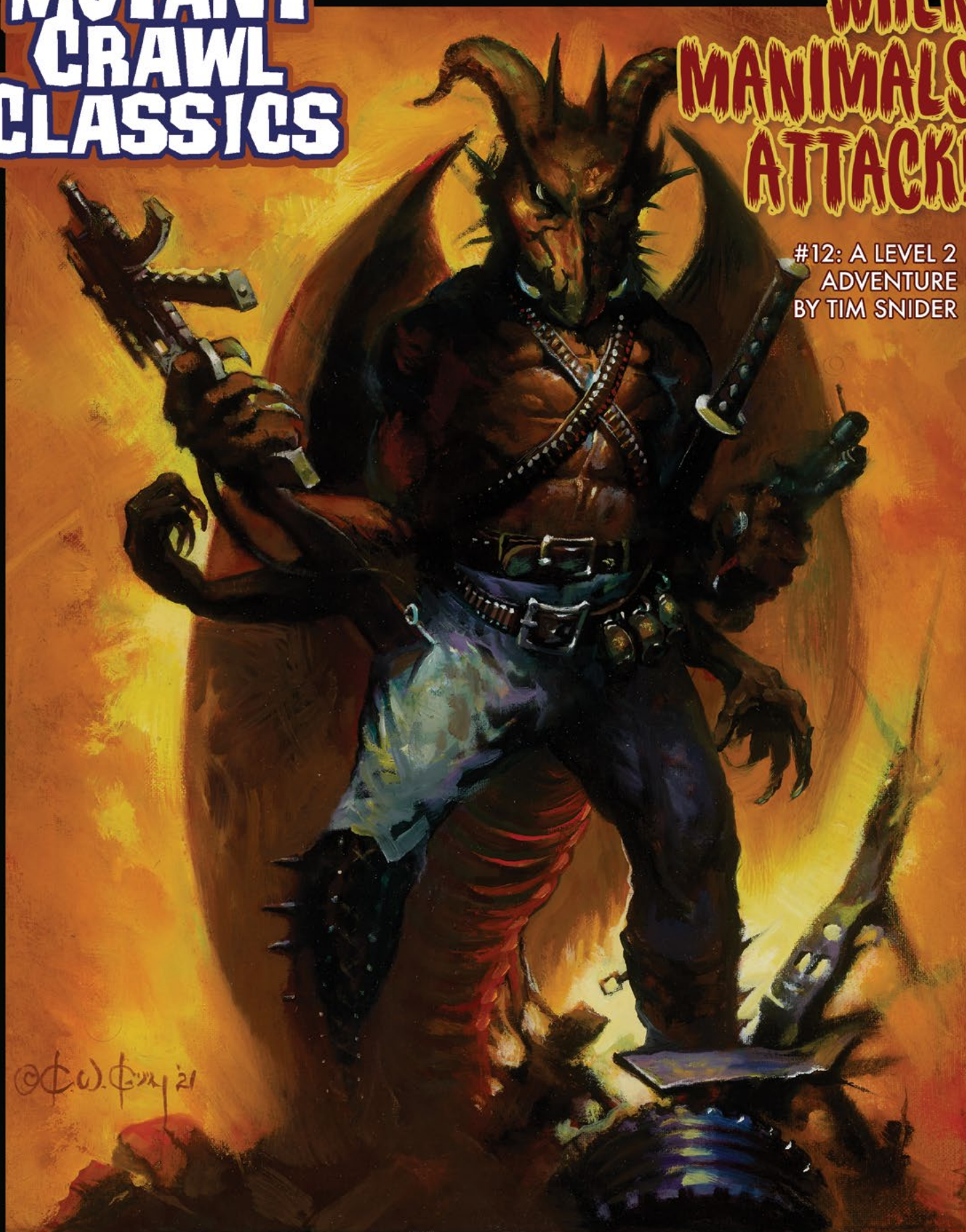


MUTANT CRAWL CLASSICS

WHEN MANIMALS ATTACK!

#12: A LEVEL 2
ADVENTURE
BY TIM SNIDER

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A LEVEL 2 ADVENTURE

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This adventure is inspired by the classic tale
"The Island of Dr. Moreau" by H.G. Wells.

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INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when post-apocalyptic adventures were full of super-science, robots that were there to be mastered, and the finale of every underground adventure was setting the fusion power plant to overload? Those days are back. Mutant Crawl Classics adventures take place in an ambiguous time period after a great disaster has ravaged the world, and it's up to your neolithic mutant tribesmen to go out into the hot house jungles and radioactive deserts of Terra A.D. (After Disaster) and collect the artifacts of the Ancient Ones in order to attain great personal power and savage glory.

When Manimals Attack! is a Mutant Crawl Classics adventure designed for four to six 2nd-level player characters. The rescue of a mute manimal leads the PCs to rediscover the fabled manimal lands of Zuu! However, the legendary city is now ruled by a savage bestial madman who plans to convert all Terrans into his submissive subjects. The characters must stop his machinations before they come to fruition by, perhaps, leading a manimal revolution!

THE SAVAGE ONE'S BACKGROUND

The human Yarlzeth secretly loathed his fellow man. Looking at the members of his mostly-human tribe, he lamented how weak and frail the human form was compared with the other races of Terra A.D., those born to thrive in the hostile world. He saw plantients and mutants as nothing more than twisted parodies of humankind. But the manimals—Ah! *They* were the true pinnacle of evolution! A miraculous blending of man's sentience and the raw power of beasts! He envied them and wished to become one himself.

Enthralled by manimal culture, Yarlzeth left his tribe and searched out the manimal tribes and listened with rapt attention as they told legends of the lands of "Zuu", a wondrous paradise where the manimal race first surfaced. Believing the answers could be found in this fabled city, Yarlzeth set out to find the legendary birthplace of the manimal species. And one day, he found it—the fabled Zuu spoken of by the manimals themselves.

The lands of Zuu were not what he expected; they were deserted and walled off from the outside world. However, this allowed him to explore the hallowed grounds undisturbed. Although Zuu was devoid of beasts, Yarlzeth collected many DNA samples from strands of hair, bits of claw and bone, and other genetic spoor left behind by the Ancient's beasts that once lived here.

Eventually, Yarlzeth discovered the Zuu medical facility and an Ancient gene resequencer (used in the past to treat animals' injuries and illnesses, as well as to keep several near-extinct species viable). A healer by trade, Yarlzeth knew of the Ancient practices of genetic manipulation and RNA resequencing—ways to combine the traits of both man and animal. Through self-experimentation, Yarlzeth combined his own genome with that of several beasts. Experi-



ment through agonizing experiment, he "improved" himself, stitching several animal traits into his genetic makeup: the hide and tail of the crocodile, the wings of a bat, the horns of a ram, the snout of a warthog, and the addition of multiple upper limbs. Now calling himself The Savage One, he wishes to recreate and rule over his own "Zuu paradise", as well as convert humankind into the far-superior manimal race—whether they want it or not.

When he returned and revealed his new bestial form, The Savage One was able to convince many humans in his former tribe to undergo the transformation, adding the first members of his Tribe of Zuu. When the others resisted, he had the strongest of his new converts bring them to Zuu by force, where they were also transformed into a new manimal form. Even now, a few humans will seek him out upon hearing of a miraculous process that will improve their bodies to better survive on Terra A.D. However, to swell his ranks even further (and to acquire specimens for further experimentation), The Savage One's enforcers have taken to raiding nearby villages and lands, bringing back even more pure strain humans to Zuu to become The Savage One's new "subjects".

THE CONVERSION AND THE PRICE

The Savage One's gene resequencer was never designed for such a task, and the conversion process is far from perfect. The best results are acquired for those who undergo resequencing with mammalian DNA. These subjects convert into a fully functional manimal; however, their human sentience is drastically affected as they revert to a more animalistic mentality. Their Intelligence is effectively halved, reverting the new manimal to a child-like state. Judges should treat NPCs as having an Intelligence score of 6 or less. This state of mind also makes them easier to command and control, giving The Savage One near-complete domination over all manimals he's created.

THE GAMEKEEPER AND ZUU'S ENFORCERS

The Savage One keeps order in Zuu through the actions of his second-in-command, known only as “The Gamekeeper”, a mutant from The Savage One’s original tribe who never felt at ease around the pure humans. When The Savage One first began looking for manimal “converts”, he approached her, knowing of her desire for power and revenge toward those who mistreated her. The Gamekeeper (whose real name is no longer known) is a tall, hairless female with two sets of purple eyes. She keeps the Zuu subjects in line with her powerful mental mutations; first using *thought spike* to enhance her abilities, followed by a horrifyingly powerful *mental blast*. It is said, truthfully, that she can kill with just a thought.

As a firm believer in “Only the Strongest Will Prevail”, The Savage One has personally selected five of his subjects to act as enforcers who work with The Gamekeeper. They are given special privileges and treated as “alphas” and are thus fiercely loyal to him (with the exception of Grelvin, the musk ox). They are also the only ones publicly entitled to use their mutations as well as weapons (improvised firearms, aka “zipguns”, which The Savage One has given them). The judge should also keep in mind the manimal pack mentality, giving the enforcers a +1 melee attack bonus for each one of them who attacks the same target in the same round. The enforcers patrol Zuu, meting out punishment and enforcing subjugation of the inhabitants. They also carry out raids on nearby villages to “recruit” new subjects for The Savage One.

Tunn was crossed with the gorilla genome and is there-

fore the strongest of the Zuu enforcers and recognized as the alpha leader (when The Gamekeeper is not present). Tunn uses his *amplimorph* mutation to make himself even larger and more imposing before attacking. His ego will never allow him to shrink in size.

Warq, a lion manimal, is usually the first enforcer to leap into combat, savagely slashing with claw and fang. His *heightened stamina* mutation keeps him fighting while others tire out. He will sometimes use his *devolution* mutation to convert a defeated opponent into easily consumed prey.

Jeril, a kangaroo, is the retriever of the enforcers. With her powerful legs, she can leap a distance of 40' in a single bound. As retriever, she will land next to a victim, grab them, and leap back out before anyone notices. Her *infravision* comes in handy during nighttime raids, as well.

Krutsh, a rhinoceros manimal, is the unstoppable tank of the enforcers. His thick hide makes him difficult to injure, and his *regeneration* mutation heals the most egregious of injuries. Krutsh can use his horn to gore a victim, but he prefers to get a running start and trample them underfoot.

Finally, Grelvin, the musk ox, is the least-respected member of the enforcers, as he is the slowest and weakest. He is only on the team due to his powerful *gas generation* mutation, which can potentially debilitate a hostile crowd. Grelvin is sympathetic to Zuu’s subjects, treating them kindly and smuggling food and supplies to them when he is able.

Conversely, those who undergo the process with non-mammalian DNA (reptiles, birds, fish, insects) do not, in fact, become “true” manimals and instead become warped human/animal chimeras—a horrific combination of the two where animal limbs and features are randomly mixed with the human form. These chimeras are also savage and mindless, having completely lost their humanity. These unfortunate victims are treated as subcreatures by The Savage One, who refuses to destroy them as they’ve been “blessed” by a beastly genome. They are instead dropped into the appropriate Zuu environs to let the subjects within deal with them.

Sadly, the conversion process—whether manimal or chimera—is utterly irreversible.

In spite of his many genetic alterations, The Savage One has managed to retain most of his human sentience through one horrific means: he will occasionally use the gene resequencer to break down the entirety of a pure human subject, whose entire genetic code is then absorbed into his own, temporarily restoring his own humanity at the cost of another’s. The Savage One must genetically absorb an unmutated human once a month to stave off this mental decay, otherwise he will revert to a pure beast-like mentality (and, of course, that month is almost up when the adventure begins).

THE SAVAGE ONE’S SUBJECTS

Currently, there are roughly 40 manimal/chimera subjects that The Savage One has created who reside (i.e., are imprisoned) within Zuu (around 10 in each habitat). To keep his subjects in line and submissive, The Savage One does not allow the Zuu inhabitants to use any mutations they may have. Any display of mutational ability is met with swift and severe punishment. As such, no one dares to use their mutations in the presence of The Savage One, The Gamekeeper, or their enforcers. If any of the Zuu subjects uses a mutation, they do so at a -1d penalty due to underuse over the years.

When the adventure begins, Zuu’s subjects are already becoming defiant. If the PCs are able to convince Zuu’s subjects to rise up, they may prove to be valuable allies in the attempt to overthrow The Savage One and his minions. The players can try to turn the tide of oppression and downtrodden amongst the Zuu subjects. Have a PC make a DC 13 Personality check each time a PC displays rebellion versus The Savage One and his followers, if they assist a Zuu subject, or if they make an impassioned speech. Keep track of each success and, upon reaching 6 successes, the Zuu inhabitants will see the characters as their new leaders and will do as they ask to overthrow The Savage One.

PLAYER START

THE STRAY

While The Gamekeeper and Zuu's enforcers were on a raiding mission, one of The Savage One's subjects ("Anji", a female badger manimal) managed to burrow her way out of Zuu. She's been running all night, avoiding the many terrors found in the darkness of Terra A.D. Lost, winded, and bewildered, her luck ran out at daybreak when three preyers spied her and gave chase. She managed to scramble up a tree near the PCs' village, and her animalistic cries can be heard by the characters nearby. Any manimals will confirm the sounds as those of a frightened animal, but the species is unknown.

Preyer (3): Init +2; Atk claw +2 melee (1d6) or bite +0 melee (1d6); AC 15; HD 2d8; hp 10 each; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP light-based attack resistance, 360-degree vision; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1.

A preyer is a very large (10' long) mutated descendant of the praying mantis. A preyer walks on four spindly legs, reaching a height of 8'. Its chitinous outer shell is a metallic bronze material; light-based attacks typically reflect off its surface and are made at -1d. The preyer's large bulbous eyes give it a 360-degree range of view, and it cannot be surprised by any moving creature or object. A preyer attacks with its large, hooked claws or by biting.

After the PCs manage to kill or drive off the preyers, the terrified manimal will slowly descend the tree once coaxed. She will shy away from any manimals she sees (thinking they may be enforcers come to return her to Zuu). Once she calms down, the PCs will see she is injured and weak from hunger, thus hopefully returning to the village to both treat her and investigate where the small manimal came from.

Due to her rudimentary intelligence (caused by the genetic conversion she underwent at The Savage One's hands), she cannot communicate verbally, only via flailing gestures and animalistic grunts. She does, however, remember how to write her own name. If asked, she'll scrawl the word "ANJI" into the dirt and gesture at herself. Anji has the mentality of a nonverbal, feral, 2-year-old child and is unable to communicate complex thoughts or answer questions of more than a few words. Anji can mime or impart one-word answers of the most basic sort, such as "run", "hide", "hurt", "big", etc. To complicate communication, the judge should avoid answering "yes" or "no" questions as well. Once she's comfortable and realizes the danger has passed (for now), Anji will struggle to speak, dredging up only two words from her past life. She will tap her chest while groaning "oooh-min" (human). If asked where she comes from, she will hiss "tsoo" (zoo) while glaring angrily at the memory.

Anji will spend the rest of the day curiously exploring the village, ravenously eating, and befriending the villagers. She seems to be enthralled by any pure humans she encounters, particularly the pure human Pharom (the village weaver). The PCs may occasionally catch her staring at him for an unusually long time. (In these moments, Anji has a flicker of re-

ZUU'S OTHER INHABITANTS

Each Zuu habitat has roughly 10 other manimal subjects other than any specific NPCs the characters may encounter. Roll on the following tables for other manimal genotypes the PCs may meet in each area. This will also be useful if additional NPCs are needed; give any new NPCs a random mutation or two as desired.

The Veld

1. Zebra
2. Giraffe
3. Meercat
4. Gazelle
5. Aardvark
6. Warthog
7. Mongoose
8. Chimpanzee

The Swamp

1. Bobcat
2. Raccoon
3. Opossum
4. Beaver
5. Black bear
6. Wolf
7. Deer
8. Bat

The Arctic

1. Arctic fox
2. Walrus
3. Caribou
4. Narwal
5. Arctic hare
6. Harp Seal
7. Arctic wolf
8. Moose

Oceana

1. Orca
2. Porpoise
3. Sea lion
4. Mouse
5. Otter
6. Manatee
7. Sand rat
8. Platypus

membrane of her prior human form.) Pharom in turn takes a shine to the small manimal, showing her how he crafts his wares. After the evening meal and as the sun begins to set, Anji refuses to leave Pharom's side, so he offers to let her stay in his hut for the evening.

Anji's absence has not gone unnoticed by The Savage One, and he has ordered a small team of Zuu enforcers (Tunn, Warq, and Jeril) to "bring her home". The enforcers have tracked her to the PCs' village, and they have been watching from the shadows during the day. Once the sun is down, they plan to move in to recapture Anji, as well as secure another human subject for The Savage One's "personal use".

FLAMES IN THE NIGHT

After the midnight hour when most of the village is asleep, the Zuu enforcers will begin their assault to reacquire Anji. Tunn and Warq will sneak in and set fire to a few of the huts on the outskirts of the village. As the fire grows and spreads to other huts, villagers will awaken and dash about, attempting to douse the flames, grabbing personal belongings, and accounting for family members and friends. Chaos