

BROKEN EARTH

Ludington

A Tale from the Great Lakes

By Jason Owen Black



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Ludington

A Tale from the Great Lakes

Written by: Jason Owen Black

Developed and Converted to Savage Worlds by: Matthew J. Hanson

Edited by: Craig Hargraves

Art by: Joyce Maureira

Title and Icons: Hart Rieckhof

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Ludington

A Tale from the Great Lakes



Ludington

Ludington sits in the remnants of its namesake, a small town on Lake Michigan which was once a popular tourist destination. In the decades leading up to the Great War, first tourism and then the population shrank drastically. After the War, however, survivors flocked to the old town and its lighthouse in hopes of finding a better future.

Since then, Ludington has become one of the most important ports on Lake Michigan, primarily because of its sheltered harbor. Many sailors pass through Ludington each year, and the town has taken on a rough and tumble feel with several bars and restaurants along the waterfront. Still, Ludington is a relatively stable place where the authorities maintain law and order. Most people either live off the water as fishers or sailors, or they make their living selling to those who do. There are a number of small farms, and scrappers still pull useful salvage from the ruins of the town.

All of this is possible because of the lighthouse which sits at the far end of the northern breakwater, and is home to a cult calling itself the Northern Light. Members of the

cult keep to themselves and rarely come to town or have visitors, but their dedication to keeping the lighthouse active is a huge boon for the town, as its light guides boats to safety. Without the lighthouse, Ludington might not even exist.

Ludington

Obvious

Population: 653 (Fisherfolk)

Salvage Value: 2

Building: Watch Tower

The Council of Three

The first years after the War were ugly as individuals and small groups looted the remains of the town and fought over scrap. This began to change when the lighthouse started working again, and the first boats made their way to the harbor. Seeing the potential for trade and fishing, one group of survivors decided to try and bring everyone else together. It took them a few years of cajoling, bribing,

promising, and some blood-shedding, but eventually they succeeded, and the new Ludington formed. The group took responsibility for running the town, and started calling themselves the Council of Three. This council has ruled the town down to this day, though the individuals on it have changed.

When an elder decides to step down, or passes away, the other elders choose someone to take their place preventing any gaps in the roster from lasting too long. The elders work together to decide the best path for the town. Although they hold special sessions during emergencies, they generally only meet twice a month, once to actually discuss things, and the second time for a town meeting to inform the people of any important news and to ask about special concerns the townsfolk may have. For the most part, the elders just go about their lives like anyone else in town.

Technically, no member of the council has any more power than any other, but practically, some have more influence. Jean Stewart is a former explorer and sailor who made his way to Ludington about twenty years ago from what remains of Quebec. He is about 75 now. He spent most of his life on the water and saw a lot of the world. As such, he is quite respected and often sought for advice about navigation, exploration, and sailing. He favors rational discussion to solve problems and is generally open to new ideas and new people.

Benjamin Brooks is a 65-year-old, dark-skinned man who grew up on one of the local farms. When he was about 30, he opened a restaurant on the waterfront called the Breakwater Diner, and he is generally considered to be the best cook in the area. The Breakwater sees a lot of business, and Benjamin is quite personable, so he always knows what's going on with everybody.

The last member of the council is Jacqueline "Doc" Hardy. Hardy is an elegant woman of medium complexion with short black hair who runs a small clinic in town. At only 60, she is the youngest member of the Council. Although she only joined the Council two years ago, she has had her hands in Ludington politics for ages, and as a doctor has treated almost everyone in town.

Law and Order

As a port town, Ludington sees some rough customers from time to time, so the original Council of Three established a sheriff's office to enforce the law. For the last five years, the sheriff has been a woman named Eun Hammet. Eun is in her early thirties, favors flannel shirts, a leather jacket, and jeans. She has short black hair and almond-shaped eyes. She's quite popular with

the townsfolk, most of whom she grew up with, and she's respected by repeat visitors who know she won't stand for any nonsense.

Eun's job is mostly to break up fights and arrest thieves. Aside from murder, theft, and slavery, not much is specifically outlawed in Ludington. If somebody is causing trouble or poses a threat, it's within Eun's power to arrest and then jail, fine, or exile them. She can't execute anyone without the permission of the Council, though she has killed in self-defense. Citizens and sometimes visitors can appeal to the Council if they don't think Eun's punishment was fair, but they rarely succeed.

Eun usually has five deputies on staff, although she has the power to deputize others when the need arises. She does this rarely, although her brother Bae, a waiter who works at the Breakwater Diner, is usually first on that list. In a pinch, the people of Ludington are hardy folk, and most know how to defend themselves in case the town is ever threatened.

Eun keeps her revolver holstered at her hip, though she rarely draws it, and fires it even less often, relying on her baton when she can't simply stare someone down. She wears her leather jacket most of the time, but she also has four undercover vests back at her office if things get serious.

Eun Hammet

Race: Human

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6+2, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Swimming d4

Charisma: —; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Code of Honor

Edges: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Quick Draw

Gear: Revolver (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1), billy club (Str+d4), leather armor (+1), steel handcuffs.

Economy

Life in Ludington revolves around the water, and most people at least know how to fish with hook and line, even if they don't go out on the lake itself. Lake whitefish are the most common catch, but bass, perch, trout, and salmon are all common as well. Fish are sold fresh in the market, and often smoked so they can be sold further afield. Fisherfolk often find lampreys attached to their catch. While they are edible, the parasites never really caught on as food, so only the poorest people bother eating them.

Beyond fishing, hunting and farming provide the bulk of the town's food. A few families also produce



maple syrup, which fetches a good price in other towns as far away as Scrap City or Geneva. There isn't much in the way of livestock in Ludington, so squirrel and rabbit are the most common meats. Venison is an important part of local culture, and there is a Dreek Festival every fall, where hunters compete to bring in the biggest bucks, and whatever meat isn't eaten during the festival is made into jerky. Turkey and other game birds are popular when they can be caught in the surrounding forests.

Most farming in Ludington developed out of personal gardens, so there is a pretty wide variety of fruits and vegetables available. Potatoes and carrots are common staples, and apples are grown both to eat and to make cider (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic). Various berries grow in the area and are used largely for making jams. Preserves are quite popular as the winters in Ludington

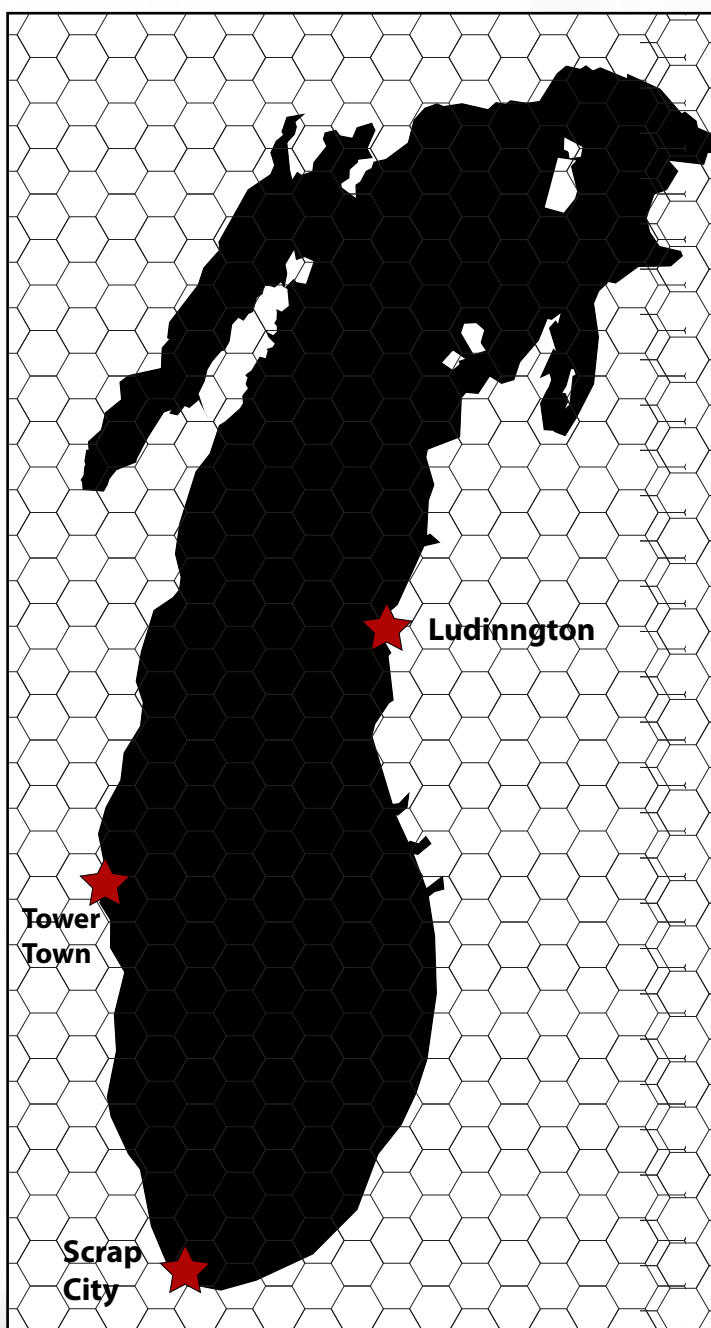
can be harsh, and aside from hunting and ice fishing, finding food gets difficult. Wheat and corn are grown on the larger farms, and there are a few families that maintain cranberry bogs. Numerous small greenhouses can be found throughout Ludington which can provide some vegetables during the winter, but not enough for trade.

Ludington's economy is not entirely dependent upon food though. The town was large enough before the Great War that there is still some salvage to be found. Construction materials, plumbing, household goods, and electronics are the most common, as most people who moved away took their belongings with them. Sometimes truly dedicated scavengers find more valuable bits and pieces. There are a number of abandoned cars and trucks in town which can be salvaged for mechanical parts as well as metal, and the nearby airport off US 10 has been left relatively untouched. Engines are hard to come by though, as they were pilfered early on to make generators. The town is surrounded by forest, and while it isn't the most demanded export, there are some lumberjacks who sell firewood or lumber for furniture and construction. Inland merchants wishing to make use of the harbor, or those from Scrap City or Geneva who wish to trade along US 10, all come through Ludington.

Culture

The people of Ludington are hardy and practical. Most know how to sail or at least how to fish, many more can hunt or trap, and everyone knows how to tend a garden. Visitors are warmly greeted along the road or in the harbor, but one usually has to spend a few days in town or visit several times before they're truly welcome. The harbor—along with the market, inns, and bars which border it—is the center of life in the town. Beyond that are homes, farms, and abandoned sites to salvage, but much of this is off limits to strangers. Life after the Great War is hard for everyone, and the people of Ludington aren't willing to let just anybody salvage in their town. The Council has been known to offer salvage rights to visitors or transplants who prove themselves trustworthy though.

The people of Ludington tend towards animism of a sort. While there are still some trappings of pre-War Christianity to be found, most people revere various spirits of the natural world. Making offerings and giving thanks to the spirits of the lake, the woods, or the earth is common. Dreek (*Broken Earth*, page 152) hold a special place in local religion, and they are seen as omens of good will, especially when successfully hunted. Each fall, townsfolk hunt the animals with bows or spears. The size and the quantity of dreek is seen as a sign of how the town will fare next year: more and larger bucks mean a better harvest. Individual hunters who bring down too many animals are seen as greedy, and overhunting is a significant faux pas within the community.



The other religion in town is the cult of the Northern Light, led by Father Pierre. Pierre and his followers live in and around the lighthouse on the northern breakwater, and use its light to guide sailors to safety in the harbor. Although few people in the town are members of the cult itself, everyone acknowledges the importance of the lighthouse to the town's survival, and many offer thanks to the Northern Light in their regular prayers. The families of sailors who have been away from home too long often go to the lighthouse itself to pray for their safe return.

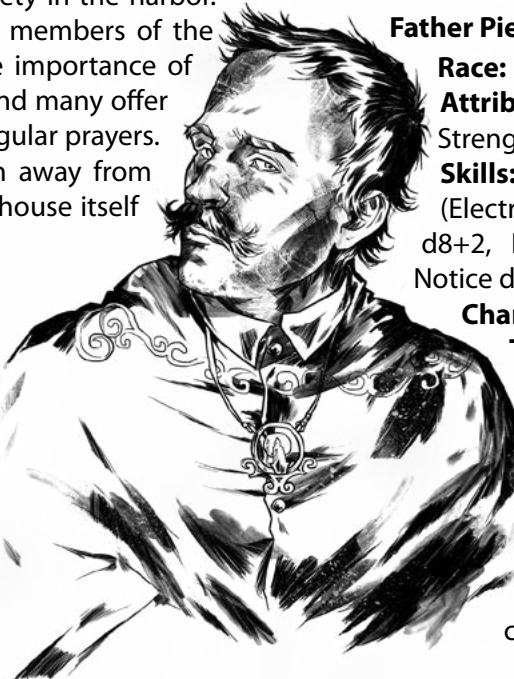
The Lighthouse

Sitting on the extreme end of the northern breakwater, the Ludington Lighthouse is home to Father Pierre and his cult of the Northern Light. About 60 years ago, Pierre and his mother Aurora came to Ludington. Aurora got the lighthouse back up and running. Now Aurora is long dead, but Pierre lives on, and has aged remarkably well. He takes his task seriously. He founded the cult of the Northern Light, and announced that the lighthouse was a sacred space, and his duty was to protect it and keep it running. He didn't ask for help, but help came. Others who had been saved by the lighthouse joined Father Pierre in his mission and his faith. Over the last forty years about a dozen men and women have joined the cult.

The monks maintain the lighthouse and run it during the night and on very overcast days. They power it with a wood gas generator. They spend most of their time maintaining the generator, the light, and the building. During the winter, they spend hours chipping away at the ice that builds up, trying to keep the building as free of it as possible. The monks live spartan lives, residing within a bunkhouse they constructed next to the lighthouse. They rely upon the people of the town to provide them food. Most townsfolk are happy to do so, since the lighthouse is essential to so much of their economy and culture. Monks sometimes come into town to get supplies, but usually stay at the lighthouse. Visitors are always welcome—as long as they don't interfere with operations. They can ask questions and even go to the top, for a stunning view of the surrounding area. The monks are not afraid to escort troublesome guests out of the lighthouse. They will fight to protect the lighthouse, as keeping the light active is their holy mission. Luckily, they've never had to do this, beyond keeping out the occasional drunk sailor.

Father Pierre is a man who appears to be in his late fifties, but is quite physically fit. His hair is cut short, and he has a large nose. Father Pierre prefers peace, but if

pressed he is quite capable in a fistfight. He is unaware that he is a synth, as only Aurora knew of this. Should he learn the truth, it will not change his mission



Father Pierre

Race: Human

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d8, Knowledge (Electronics) d8+2, Knowledge (Mechanics) d8+2, Knowledge (Post-War History) d8, Notice d6, Streetwise d6

Charisma: —; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5;

Toughness: 6

Hindrances: Quirk (overly concerned about his mustache), Untainted, Vow (major, keep the lighthouse running)

Edges: Martial Artist, Reinforced Skeleton, Scholar

Gear: Binoculars, tool kit, flashlight, compass

Nearby Locations

There are a number of locations in and around Ludington that can provide ample opportunities for adventure.

The Badger

Obvious (for the boat) or **Hidden** (Swimming; for the fish folk)

Population: 20 (Fisherfolk)

Salvage Value: 2

Once a gem of Ludington's tourism, the old car ferry called the Badger now rests at an odd angle in its old harbor, half submerged in Lake Michigan. The boat sank not long after the Great War, though nobody knows when exactly. The bottom levels of the ship, including the engine room, boiler room, some of the crew quarters and holds are all flooded. Because of the water, and the difficulty of lighting the inside to search within the water, these areas have never been salvaged by any of the locals. The upper levels—which include a state room, lounge, and additional quarters—are easily accessed from the top deck, and were picked over long ago. Only the largest and most difficult to loot items remain. The middle area, which is dark but reasonably dry, is where the cars were stored on trips across the lake, and there are still several old cars and trucks there, implying that the boat sank when it was leaving port. Like the upper decks, easy to salvage parts have already been claimed, but dedicated scavengers might find all kinds of useful industrial and automotive parts here.

Most locals stay away from the Badger, since there's little point in going there, but it still serves as something of a tourist attraction, and visitors sometimes take tours. A grizzled old sailor named Anton Chamberlain lives near the boat and takes people on tours of the safely accessible portions for a small fee. Chamberlain is a charming old man with dark skin and a gray beard. He's something of a local historian, and knows more about the Badger and pre-War Ludington than anyone else. He's also a fan of tall tales, and insists that some kind of creatures live in the sunken portion of the ship. He calls them "fish men," and holds that they eat trespassers and naughty children. The locals see it all as harmless fun, but Chamberlain doesn't. He insists to his dying breath that the fish men are down there, and that he's caught glimpses of them.

Fish Folk

There are, in fact, fish people living in the flooded portion of the Badger, but they don't eat naughty children. Several generations ago their grandparents were on the Badger when it sank. The ship happened to be carrying a tanker truck filled with a gene-altering virus, which mutated the surviving passengers of the boat. Although they figured out how to leave the ship in order to hunt, the fish folk made it their home and started lives away from the eyes of the locals. Now the third generation of fish folk face a crisis: there isn't a lot of genetic diversity to go around, as there are only twenty inhabitants left in the Badger. Some have suggested introducing themselves to the locals, to see if they can live among them, while others insist on simply leaving the Badger and looking for better waters elsewhere in the lake. A third group wants to simply stay in the Badger and live out their lives. So far, the conflict hasn't come to blows, but things are getting quite tense.

Fish Folk

Race: Freak

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

Skills: Fighting d 6, Notice d8, Survival d8, Swimming d12+1

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Freakish, Light Sensitivity, Not Built for Speed, Outsider

Edges: Gills, Radiation Resistant, Tough

Gear: Spear (Str+d6)

Old US 10

The highway that used to connect Ludington to more inland parts of Michigan still exists, but it has seen better days. The pavement is cracked and worn, the lines have faded away, and parts are so overgrown with saplings or

grass that the pavement has all but vanished. The ruins of the occasional gas station, farmhouse, or trailer home sit alongside the road, but most have been thoroughly salvaged. Few locals have followed the road very far east past the airport (about 3 miles from the market), or the ruins of Scottville (9 miles) or Custer (12 miles)—none of which have settlements. Occasionally, traders come from deeper in the interior of Michigan via US 10, suggesting that there are other settlements to the east. These merchants claim to come from places as far away as the legendary Motor City.

For most locals, US 10 is just the way that merchants come by land, and the few who have set out east to find other settlements have never returned. Many assume that they've died, and this may be true, but more optimistic townsfolk think they found some other settlements first. The road is pretty safe, at least between Ludington and the old airport. The Council declared long ago that the town should keep a regular patrol on US 10, just in case any trouble makers come along that way.

The Airport

Little more than an air strip before the Great War, the two runways of the old Mason County Airport now sit as a graveyard for small planes. The skeletal remains of the planes and buildings there have been stripped of anything easily salvaged by Ludington locals, but characters looking for larger parts, or wishing to try and build or fix a plane, could find much of what they need there.

The Woods

Even before the Great War, Ludington was known for its forests. Ludington State Park and Manistee National Forest were once tourist attractions. Now they're known collectively as the Woods, and they're a mixed blessing. On the one hand, the Woods are full of rabbits, squirrels, game birds, and dreek, all of which are hunted by the locals. There is also plenty of wood for lumber, as well as berries and the maple trees that provide the famous Ludington maple syrup.

On the other hand, the deeper you get into the Woods, the more dangerous they become. Several small packs of burst wolves call the Woods home, and there have been sightings of giant ants (*Broken Earth*, page 151), roaches, and spiders (*Broken Earth*, pages 154–155), as well as rumors of ghost cats (*Broken Earth*, page 153) and dragons (*Broken Earth*, page 152). There are some "wild men" and "forest people" who live in the Woods, some of whom come into town to trade from time to time, but otherwise have little contact with the locals. Legend has it that the Woods are also home to carnivorous plants, although nobody has found credible proof such plants exist.

Unfortunately such plants do exist and they are spreading from the most remote parts of the Woods to those closer to Ludington. The deadly plant species is a genetically-engineered crossbreed of sundew and ground ivy. After the Great War, it mutated further and is capable of ensnaring humans and similar creatures and crushing them to death before absorbing their nutrients.

Death Vine

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4

Pace: 1; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

- **Entangling Vines:** If the death vine hits a target with its vine attack (regardless of damage) it can attempt to grapple without suffering a multi-action penalty. In subsequent rounds it deals Str+d6 damage with a successful grapple test.
- **Plant:** Called shots do no extra damage. Bullets, arrows, and other piercing weapons inflict half damage. Immune to Tests of Will.
- **Vine:** Str+d6, and see entangling vines.

Savage Tales

Ludington is full of adventure opportunities. Here are a few such possibilities.

Fixing the Light

Where: Ludington Lighthouse

When: Any Time

Father Pierre hasn't let anybody outside the cult of the Northern Light know, but the lamp and other parts of the lighthouse need to be replaced sometime soon. He's looking for someone to head north to another lighthouse and see if they can salvage anything. The Big Sable Point Lighthouse is about eight miles north on the coast of the Lake. It's in the old Ludington State Park, which is now simply part of "the Woods." He has never been to the lighthouse, but he has seen it, and hopes that the necessary parts are there.

Big Sable Point Lighthouse hasn't been used in almost a century, and it's certainly seen better days. The surrounding area is dense forest, and home to any number of dangerous creatures, and the lighthouse itself is home to a small gang of hatters.

As soon as the hatters detect the PCs, they attack, but retreat if they take two or more wounds. Any who are not killed in the initial attack try to follow the PCs back to Ludington, where they may infect a lot of people.

Hatters (one per PC)

Hatter

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidate d10, Notice d8

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

Gear: Large improvised weapon (Str+d8).

Special Abilities

- **Berserk:** This functions as the Edge of the same name in the core rulebook.
- **Improvised Weapon Masters:** Hatters suffer no penalty for using improvised weapons.
- **Size +1:** The virus causes an increase in size.
- **Unshakeable:** Hatters have a +2 bonus to recover from being Shaken.
- **Very Tough:** Hatters have a wound track like Wild Cards, but do not gain any other benefits of Wild Cards (such as Bennies or Wild Dice).

We Need a Posse

Where: Ludington

When: Any time

Ludington is having bandit problems, and Sheriff Hammet needs some help. A small band of raiders attacked people on US 10 and have even broken into some homes on the edge of town, but there are more than Eun and her deputies can handle. If the PCs have already proven themselves useful, she asks them to join the posse to pursue the criminals, otherwise, she makes a plea for additional help to the people of the town. If the PCs offer to help, she'll accept, but keep an eye on them.

With a successful Tracking check, the heroes track the bandits back to their temporary lair in the ruins of Custer. The bandits always have at least two people on watch. They are brave, but not stupid, and if the heroes eliminate more than half of the bandits, the rest flee.

Bandit Leader

Bandits (Two per PC)

Bandit Leader

Race: Human

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Technology) d6, Shooting d8, Survival d8, Tracking d6

Charisma: —; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Wanted (Major), Vengeful (Minor)

Edges: Ambidextrous, Brawny, Claws (Str+d6), Two-Fisted

Gear: Bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), leather armor (+1)

Bandit

Race: Human

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(1)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Mean, Wanted (Minor)

Edges: Brawny, No Mercy, Steady Hands

Gear: Bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), battle axe (Str+d8), dagger (Str+d4), leather armor (+1), 20 arrows, quiver, horse, saddle.

Dreek Hunt

Where: Ludington

When: Late fall or early winter.

Each year, as the nights start to dip below freezing, Ludington holds its Dreek Festival. If the PCs are in town they are invited to participate. Bagging a big buck would certainly earn them some points with the locals, but humans aren't the only hunters in the Woods these days . . . A mated pair of ghost cats have taken up residency near the town, and all the added commotion of the Dreek Fest has drawn their attention, putting hunters at risk.

The first sign of danger comes when one of the hunters, a man named Elmer, doesn't return the night after the first hunt. The heroes can find Elmer's body themselves with a Tracking or Survival check, otherwise another hunter discovers it the following afternoon.

Elmer was clearly killed and ripped apart. A Survival or Knowledge (Nature) check reveals that it was wild animals, while a Raise on the roll determines that it was a great cat, about the size of a tiger.

After the first attack, many hunters refrain from going into the Woods until the ghost cats are dealt with. PCs can track down the cats with a Tracking test with a -2 penalty. Otherwise a lone hero or pair of heroes have a 25% chance of being attacked each day they wander the forest. The ghost cats do not intentionally attack groups of more than two.

Ghost Cats (2)

Ghost Cat

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d8, Stealth d10+2, Tracking d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities

- **Bite or Claw:** Str+d8.
- **Camouflage:** Ghost cats can alter the color of their fur to blend in with their surroundings. This ability gives the ghost cat a +2 bonus to Stealth tests. Further they can use a sudden change in color as a Smarts trick with a +2 bonus.
- **Low Light Vision:** Ghost cats ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Pounce:** Ghost cats can pounce on their prey to deliver a devastating attack. They can leap 1d6" to gain a +4 bonus to attack and damage, but if it does so its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action.
- **Size +2:** Ghost cats are the same size as their tiger ancestors, stretching six feet from the nose to the base of the tail and weighting an average of 400 pounds.

