

*What sages know: a large ark was built by one man to secure all living things against a great flood of the waters. For a year and a day the ark housed one pair of each pre-existing animal. Around the six-month mark the stakes separating male from female were pulled.*

## MISCEGENATION OF THE ANCIENTS

An inexplicable, vaguely ship-shaped gopher-wood construct on top of a mountain peak in the highlands. It is 500' long, near 100' wide and 50' high. A large hole has broken in the hull near the bow, seemingly as a result of violent landfall. A wide ramp leads up to an open entryway halfway up the hull-side.

The mountain slopes are obscured by unnatural mists year round. (Yes, by all means add complications to the journey up-country.) Any living being seeing a glimpse of the ark or even its shadow has to save vs. Magic or be confused and lost, never reaching the peak without help. Divine magic cannot be used to find the ark or help reach it as long as the Seal is present.

The ark was abandoned in disarray following its accidental grounding. All pure animals and many impure breeds escaped the ark before the great Seal was set by an archangel. All residents remaining fell into deep slumber in the mercy of the Lord. Since then the ark has been frozen in time.

The Seal is akin to a floating, invisible wheel of fire above the ark. The seal is broken when any being possessing a soul touches the ark. At that point the denizens wake; within 1d6 minutes the most mobile (birds, etc.) begin escaping the ark; within 1d6 hours other animals follow as per the random encounter table; within 1d6 days the intelligent denizens (particularly the Mule) dare to exit. Within 1d6 weeks the entire mountain is colonized by a chaotic hybrid ecology.

**RANDOM ENCOUNTERS:** After the Seal is broken, check for encounters every 3 Turns. Determine encounter type off the following table:

- MINOR CREATURES** – smaller miscegenations or other ark life that won't be dangerous unless poisonous, etc.
- A lone wandering hybrid. 50% chance the next hybrid encounter is with the same type.
- A **HYBRID UNIT** – a herd, pack, troop, family or other unit of one hybrid type.
- MULTIPLE TYPES** – 1d6 different types of hybrids that may be hostile to each other.
- DEGENERATE OOZE** – a random type of ooze, slime or mold, with signs of hybrid ancestry.
- SPECIAL ENCOUNTER** – roll on the table.

**HYBRIDS:** Despite having been divested of the pure animals, the ark is teeming with life, the vast majority of which consists of unnaturally miscegenated animals, or worse. We'll call encounter-sized specimens "hybrids". Nearly all imaginable animal combinations can be found within the unnatural procreative environs of the ark; see the sidebar for help in generating them.

About 50% of the hybrids are non-viable long-term, either due to individual or racial weaknesses. Hybrids of the same species breed true. Cross-type fertilization produces various non-viable awfulness that degenerates into primal ooze soon enough, except in 5% of the cases when it produces a chimera or lycanthrope.

Any living being that spends a day and a night within the ark gains prodigious procreative powers for the next year, so as to aid in repopulating the Earth after the flood. During this time-frame they are capable of breeding hybrids themselves, in addition to more ordinary feats of husbandry.

**EXPLORING THE ARK:** The ark has three decks (A–C) and a sloping roof with extruding eaves. Entrance is either through the hole to deck C, through the ramp to deck B, or conceivably by climbing to the roof and descending to A through one of the many hatches.

The ark is built of cypress timber with ambitious craftsmanship, although signs of use and depilation are everywhere. Planks have ancient writing on them (names of antediluvian prophets). The floors slant slightly due to the keel being uneven.

The ark is illuminated within by glowing stones set in the walls and ceilings every ten feet or so. The various colors may help navigating the interior, if attention is paid to them. Removing a stone takes a Turn with suitable tools. The glow of the stones subsides if they are taken outside the ark. Each stone is worth 50 rupees (dropping to 10 rupees once the local market is satisfied). There are about 15 000 stones in the ark in total.

Allow players to map the interiors if they would; improvise specific architecture from the deck descriptions (NB: each deck is about 500' × 100'). Give themes to areas by selecting one animal type to hybridize through the area. ~1/3 of the rooms have hybrid populations (in addition to random encounters). For each Turn spent exploring, a 1/6 chance of discovering something off this table:

- HATCH** – a way up (25%), down (25%), both (25%) or neither (25% – it's stuck, hidden, broken, or it's on the hull for waste removal). Down from C leads to the bilge (a healthy ooze ecology), up from A leads to the roof.
- SECRET FEATURE** – not quite obvious, but a party that performs a search has a chance to find secret treasure (50%, forgotten valuables for 1d1000 rupees), passage (25%) or trap (25%).
- INTELLIGENT DENIZEN** – a hybrid of near-human intellect and sanity; human (50%), demi-human (25%) or other (25%) heritage.
- ARCHITECTURE** – a notable exception to the general floor plan, such as a large skylight, central feed station, water collection tanks, the outside exit, site of a large fire, giant aviary, clogged ventilation, an animal's territory...
- TREASURE** – see deck description.
- SPECIAL ENCOUNTER** – encountered at their lair.

**DECK A:** Complex warrens intended mostly for birds and humans. Murals mired in animal refuse adorn the walls.

The Antediluvian library is on this floor (unique, but valued at 100 000 rupees). This is a collection of preserved pre-historical literature and art, mostly on tablets of various materials. The story of the ark, as well as the world it escaped, may be found here alongside arcane knowledge and adventure hooks to sate the referee's pleasure.

**DECK B:** Large halls for big animals, exercise and plant-life, arcology-style. Plants are pale and wilted due to insufficient light, but fertile due to the ark's influence.

The bones of the First Man are on this floor. This legendary relic seeps myth and bestows resistance to the original sin. All Abrahamic religions claim the relic; taking it to authorities is worth 10 000 xp, but makes enemies of the other faiths.

**DECK C:** Complex warrens and deep refuse pits. Originally for unclean animals, later for impure breeds, still later for imprisonment.

The remainder of the Gibborim Hoard that

**GENERATING HYBRID ANIMALS:** Roll twice, then combine with imagination and flair. Roll 3-5 dice and discard highest for a more even-keeled result. Pick a species of each type indicated, whatever comes to mind (ask players for variety, perhaps). Hit Dice are better of the two base stocks ±1 per referee judgement, and the same goes for AC and attacks. Possible interesting special features are determined by base animal stock – hybrids normally have nearly all features of both parents. Numbers appearing (if not otherwise indicated) are the lesser of the two base stocks.

### d12 TYPE

- APE:** human, gorilla, orangutan, neanderthal, demi-human. If intelligent, the hybrid is likely insane.
- CARNIVOROUS MAMMAL:** wolf, fox, bear, lynx. Maybe roll 1d8 to indicate size and HD.
- UNGULATE:** horse, deer, camel, rhinoceros.
- RODENT:** rat, squirrel, beaver, rabbit.
- LIZARD:** crocodile, chameleon, gecko.
- BIRD:** owl, raven, swan, duck.
- SNAKE:** poisonous, constricting.
- INSECT:** ant, bee, spider, scorpion, flea, fly.
- FISH:** tuna, dolphin, eel, shark, seal.
- LIMALITIES:** crab, frog, bat, monkey, elephant, worm lizard. Remember all the weird fringes of evolution that might or might not be included in the above types.
- PLANT:** tree, fungus, weed, cereal, algae. Animal-plant hybrids are probably not feasible in the wilds; all do not even have animal-like cognition.
- DRAGON:** winged, limb-less, fire-breathing; chromatic or metallic; spiritual being or beast; intelligent or non-intelligent. Any dragon hybrid has 50% chance of being some sort of chimera instead.

financed the ark's construction is stored in an oubliette (a sectioned-off part of the bilge) under a massive stone lid that may only be raised by the weight of an elephant, or clever collection of rain-water. The hoard is the patrimony of the tenth patriarch and consists solely of Nephilim-struck antediluvian gold. A 10 HD ooze or jelly has collected in the oubliette alongside the coin. The value of the hoard is 50 000 rupees.

**SPECIAL ENCOUNTERS:** Swap in new ones as necessary.

- SABBA** – the lilin (succubus – 5 HD) that engineered the bestial descent of the ark. Invisible, immaterial, charming. Has hidden the human body she used to get on board, which she may possess as a ghoul.
- ANGELIC PRESENCE** – supernatural awareness of the ark. Could range from visions or dreams of guidance to an outright angelic agency setting out to re-establish the Seal. Could be fallen angels, too. Pick the first idea that occurs and run with that.
- ADVENTURERS** – 1d6 competing explorers. If not causally possible, then ancient pure-breed humans caught by the Seal by mistake.
- CHIMERA** – a D&D chimera or other chimeric beast (griffon, lamia, manticores, mongrelmen, etc.). Has a lair with treasure.
- JACOB** – an elephant-man (8 HD) with a human head at the end of the trunk. Child-like, unpredictably schizophrenic, worships the Mule.
- THE MULE** – a donkey-headed man (4 HD) with psionic powers: he may control and guide all animals he is aware of, including Hamitic humans (save vs. Magic) and anybody with bestial ancestry. He may also have other psionic talents, system-dependent. Bitter, disoriented, sickly, megalomaniac; knows of the Gibborim Hoard.