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Welcome to MONSTER GUTS, a tabletop roleplaying game, Illuminated by LUMEN, that draws from your favorite monster-hunting video games.

This zine contains all the information you need to make a Scavenger, pick a Weapon, and hunt some Monsters.

Happy butchering!

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This game is Illuminated by LUMEN, based on the LUMEN RPG system designed by Spencer Campbell, Gila RPGs. This game is in no way affiliated with Spencer Campbell or Gila RPGs.

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SETTLING

Once, we flew the skies and traveled the deeps. Once, we delved into the miniscule and corralled the massive. Once, we created life to support and sustain our progress.

And then our monsters turned on us. They consumed our forests, our ore, our livestock, our homes, and our lives. And then they multiplied.

Our Village was isolated enough to escape the brunt of the attacks. But there are no more trees to burn, no metal to smelt, no food to eat, no water to drink. To live, we needed to hunt the very monsters who had deprived us of our livelihoods and liberties.

And so we trained the scavengers in massive weaponry cobbled together from whatever we could spare. Weapons suited to killing the behemoths who stalk our land. These scavengers are our last, best hope for victory.

P.S.

As always, the enemy is capitalism.

CORE MECHANIC

As scavengers are highly trained and capable individuals, MONSTER GUTS's mechanics focus on how they perform actions, the approach they take when confronted with obstacles.

There are three stats, corresponding to the three damage types used by scavenger weapons and three different ways of tackling problems. Each stat has a rating of 0 or more. When undertaking an action in a perilous situation, choose which stat best applies to the scavenger's approach and then roll a number of dice equal to that stat's rating, choosing the highest number (if 0 in a stat, roll two and choose the lower roll).

1-2: failure

3-4: mixed success

5-6: success

Crush

Crush governs actions that employ raw power and brute force.

Slice

Slice governs tactics that require speed and dexterity.

Pierce

Pierce governs maneuvers that depend on precision, study, patience, and practice.

WEAPONS

Weapons are the heart of a game like MONSTER GUTS. Each functions like a character class in other roleplaying games, providing an initial rating in each of the 3 damage types, base Health, a unique Passive ability, a few Weapon Moves, and a cap on the weapon's Currency.

Basic weapon attacks use the core mechanic: rolling dice based on the approach used and consulting the highest die.

1-2. The attack misses and the monster attacks!

3-4. The attack hits the monster's body and you suffer small setback.

1. lose 1 Edge, 2. knocked back, 3. must reload, 4. knocked down, 5. staggered, 6. the monster attacks.

5-6. The attack hits the targeted part.

Weapon Tags

Weapons are described with a series of tags. You gain more tags by slaying monsters and applying their guts to your weapons.

Aimed: +1 Harm when using Pierce

Aerial: while airborne, attacks deal +2 Harm

Brutal: +1 Harm when using Crush

Cleaving: affects multiple targets with each swing

Close: useful at-hand

Explosive: On a 6, deal +1 Harm

Far: useful at a distance

Glancing: failures deal half Harm to a Close target

Keen: +1 Harm when using Slice

Near: useful nearby

Musical: each swing adds +1 Melody

Reload: weapon must be reloaded

Stationary: must be still to use

Stunning: On a 6, +1 Stun Clock

Currencies

Scavengers via their weapons access formidable powers called Weapon Moves. Using these powers requires either spending **Ammo** or degrading the weapon's **Edge**. Some moves are particularly powerful and require more currency.

The War Bugle uses a special currency called **Melody**.

Blisters indicate how much the weapon chafes the scavenger.

Ammo

Ammo represents special coatings and elixirs that augment regular ranged weapon attacks.

During a Lull, the Scrounge action will fully replenish Ammo.

Edge

Edge measures the Harm dealt by a regular weapon attack. Most moves spend Edge, reducing the Harm dealt in exchange for a powerful effect.

During a Bout, scavengers may take the Sharpen action to restore their weapon's Edge.

Melody

Each regular attack with the War Bugle adds 1 Melody, to a maximum of 5.

Most War Bugle moves scale with the length of the Melody played.

Blisters

Sometimes scavengers have to be carted back to safety. Each time a scavenger's health drops to 0, they gain a Blister. Track Blisters separately for each weapon.

At the end of a Hunt, roll a die. If the roll is equal to or less than the number of Blisters, the scavenger must use a different weapon on the next Hunt.

THE BOW



Crush	0
--------------	----------

Slice	2
--------------	----------

Pierce	2
---------------	----------

Health	6
---------------	----------

Ammo	5
-------------	----------

Attack: 1 Harm, Near/Far, Aimed, Reload

Accurate: Always hit the targeted monster part on a mixed success.

Bow Moves

Sidestep (1)

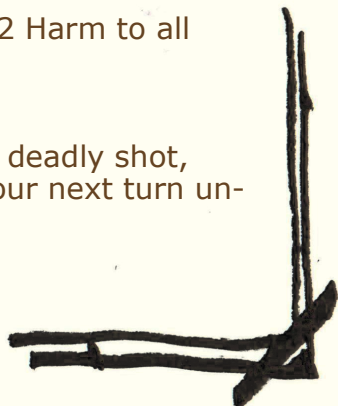
Close; Evade incoming attacks and deal 4 Harm at the start of your next turn.

Quick Shot (1)

Near; Fire a rapid volley, dealing 2 Harm to all parts and targets in range.

Skullpiercer (2)

Near; Spend the round drawing a deadly shot, dealing 10 Harm at the start of your next turn unless the attack is interrupted.



THE FIRE LANCE



Crush	2
--------------	---

Slice	0
--------------	---

Pierce	2
---------------	---

Health	10
---------------	----

Edge	4
-------------	---

Attack: Close, Explosive, Reload

Discharge: When you hit, you may spend 1 Edge to deal +2 Harm.

Fire Lance Moves

Reposition Rockets (1)

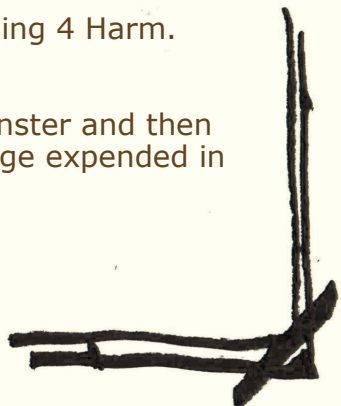
Explode your lance to travel up to a far distance. If you rocket into a monster, deal 4 Harm.

Bombard (1)

Near; fire a blast at a target, dealing 4 Harm.

Splinterstrike (all)

Stab your lance deep into the monster and then explode it, dealing 3 Harm per Edge expended in this attack.



THE GREATSWORD



Crush	3
--------------	----------

Slice	1
--------------	----------

Pierce	0
---------------	----------

Health	10
---------------	-----------

Edge	4
-------------	----------

Attack: Close, Glancing, Stationary

Weighted: Cannot be knocked away on a mixed success.

Greatsword Moves

Deflect (1)

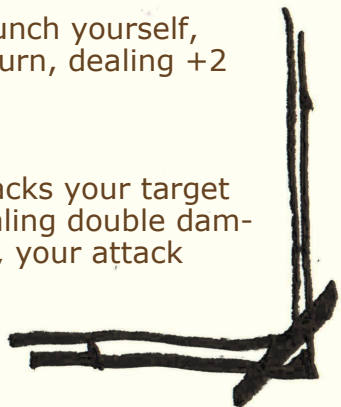
Shrug through the next enemy attack, reducing incoming Harm by 2 (minimum 1).

Whirlwind (1)

Use the mass of your sword to launch yourself, spinning, into the air. Land next turn, dealing +2 Harm with your next attack.

Charged Swing (2)

Prepare a massive swing that attacks your target at the start of your next turn, dealing double damage. If hit between now and then, your attack fails.



THE ~~KNIVES~~



Crush	2
Slice	1
Pierce	1

Health	6
Edge	4

Attack: Close

Evasive: Cannot take Harm from a mixed success.

Knives Moves

Fury Swipes (1)

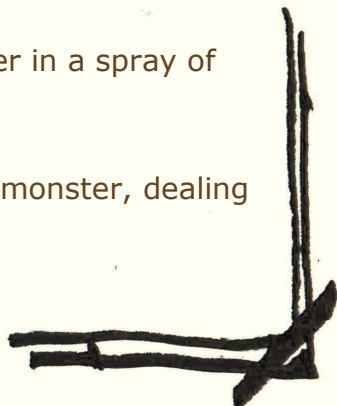
Close; Attack twice on your next turn, with 3 base Harm. You dodge all attacks between now and then.

Sparkshow (1)

Close; Smash your knives together in a spray of sparks, blinding foes.

Spiraling Blades (2)

Close; Traverse the length of the monster, dealing Harm to each part.



THE MAUL



Crush 3

Slice 0

Pierce 1

Health 10

Edge 4

Attack: Close, Stunning

Impactful: Headshots inflict +1 Stun clock

Maul Moves

Yeet (1)

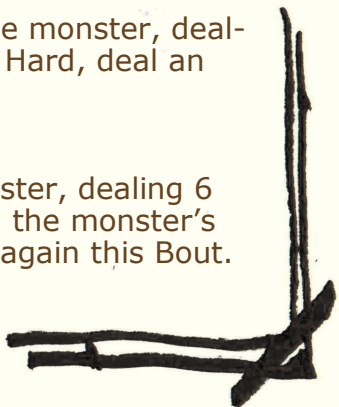
Using your Maul as a launch pad, hurl a Close ally to Near.

Bonecruncher (1)

Twirl your Maul as it slams into the monster, dealing +3 Harm. If the struck part is Hard, deal an additional 2 Harm.

Clock-Cleaning (2)

Whirlwind your Maul into the monster, dealing 6 Harm. If you hit the head, refresh the monster's Stun clock, allowing it to be filled again this Bout.



~~THE VESPINE SPEAR~~



Crush	0
--------------	----------

Slice	3
--------------	----------

Pierce	1
---------------	----------

Health	6
---------------	----------

Edge	4
-------------	----------

Attack: Close/Near, Aerial

Stingers: When you hit a target, your wasp familiars flurry and inflict +1 Harm.

Vespine Spear Moves

Kip Up (0)

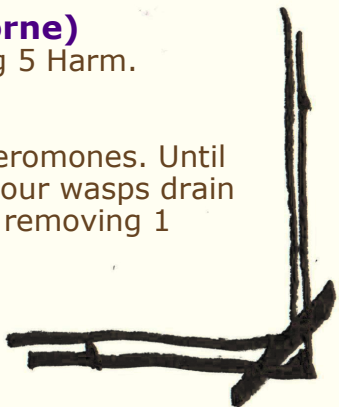
Close; Strike the Monster for 2 Harm and spring airborne. Spend an Edge when attacking to stay airborne.

Aerial Rodeo (1, while airborne)

Dance above the monster, dealing 5 Harm.

Pheromone Control (1)

Mark the monster with special pheromones. Until the end of the Bout, each round your wasps drain curative juices from the monster, removing 1 Harm from yourself or an ally.



SCAVENGER

You are trained fighters, foragers, trackers, and slayers. You are the only hope of your Village, the only ones capable of facing the terrifying monsters.

But while you are powerful, your equipment is not. The village only has enough materials to furnish you with a basic form of each weapon and rudimentary armor. You'll have to enhance them with the guts from the monsters you hunt.

You will also be joined by a furry friend, a Companion who will support and aid you as best they can.

Write down the name of your scavenger, their Companion, and the first weapon you will use, as well as a description of all three. Scavengers are the stuff of tales, after all, so you'd best make them memorable.

Gear

In addition to their weapons and companions, scavengers also rely on their gear to ward off killing blows and store the many useful things they find while on a hunt.

What does your scavenger's armor look like? How do they carry bits and bobs with them?

Apparel

The first goal of your apparel is to look badass. The second is to guard your highly-skilled bod from harm.

Each outfit can have up to two tags, following the same rules as your weapons: only one Effect tag and one Element tag at a time.

Items

The Village might be short on resources but there is no shortage of creative solutions to bloody problems.

They've developed a quick-acting salve that will restore your Health to full. However, the salve is unstable and easily-spoiled, so you can only carry one with you at a time. Assume you start each Hunt with one at the ready.

In time, perhaps the Villagers will develop new gadgets and ways for you to carry more of them at once.



Name _____

Pronouns _____



Notches

Weapon _____

Tags _____

Blisters _____

Weapon _____

Tags _____

Blisters _____

Weapon _____

Tags _____

Blisters _____

Weapon _____

Tags _____

Blisters _____

Health

Outfit _____

Tags _____

Outfit _____

Tags _____

Companion

Name _____

Breed _____

Tool _____

Tags _____

Assist

◇ Push to side

◇ Prone

◇ Out of Hunt

THE HUNT

The Hunt begins as soon as the scavengers leave their village and ends only when the monster has been slain.
Hunts have 2 alternating phases: Bouts and Lulls.

Bouts

Attack the monster! Get its guts!

During a Bout, we divide time into Rounds. In every round, each scavenger receives a Turn, during which they may travel between range bands and take a Move. After the scavengers have all acted, roll to see what Tempo Change occurs.

After the Tempo Change, another round begins.

Rounds

During each round, scavengers have different Moves they can take. Usually, scavengers either attack or use one of their weapon's special moves. All scavengers may also take the following moves.

Assist

Use an item on yourself or a Close target. Roll a die. **1** -2. Monster attacks, item wasted.
3+. Item used successfully

Sharpen

Roll a die.

1-2. Monster attacks, restore only 1 Edge.
3+. Fully replenish Edge.

Attack

Make an ability test to see how well your attack succeeds.

1-2. Miss; monster attacks
3-4. Hit monster's body; suffer small setback (1. lose 1 Edge, 2. knocked back, 3. must reload, 4. knocked down, 5. staggered, 6. monster attack.)
5-6. Hit targeted part

Tempo Change

The Tempo Change happens at the end of each round. Roll a die.

1. Complication appears

2-5. Monster attacks

6. Monster flees (3rd or later round only)

Complications

When rolling a 1 for the Tempo Change, a complication interrupts the battlefield. Roll to see what kind of complication manifests.

1-2. Beasts

A group of beasts from the area will interfere with the hunt.

3-4. Instability

Hazardous weather or treacherous terrain will affect the hunt.

5-6. Monster

Another monster from that area will interrupt the hunt.

Lulls

Track the monster! Heal and resupply! Each scavenger takes 2 Lull Moves, after which the next Bout begins.

Sharpen

Restore your Edge to full.

Assist

Use an item or ability on yourself or allies.

Scrounge

Restore your Ammo to full or roll a die to see what you find.

Resupply

Return to camp to exchange up to 2 tags on your equipment.

Chase

Leave your allies to immediately start the next Bout. Those who don't Chase will arrive at the start at the second round. Roll a die. On a 6, you catch the monster sleeping.

Scrounging Items

Roll a die to see what you have found.

- 1-2. Bitter Herbs.** Consume to restore Health to full.
- 3. Ambrosial Honey.** Consume to cure all status effects and recover 3 Health.
- 4-5. Glob.**
- 6. Boost.**

Globs

- 1. Treebomb.** Explosive pinecone. Throw to inflict 1 Harm and +1 Metal.
- 2. Slimeball.** Clump of mucus and goop. Throw to inflict 1 Harm and +1 Slime.
- 3. Dungball.** You know what it is. Throw to force the monster to flee at the round's end.
- 4. Hollybomb.** Bundle of toxic berries wrapped with thorns. Throw to inflict 1 Harm and +1 Venom.
- 5. Sparkgrass.** Magnesium fern that blinds nearby foes for 1 round.
- 6. Somnashroom.** When smashed, all Close at start of next round gain +1 Snooze Clock.

Boosts

- 1. Swordscales.** When next Sharpen, augment Max Edge by 1 until end of Hunt.
- 2. Mud Bath.** Ignore the Harm from the next attack.
- 3. Euphorishroom.** Raise maximum Health by 2 until end of Hunt.
- 4. Stimshroom.** Deal +2 Harm with your next strike.
- 5. Ampjuice.** The next attack that would reduce your Health to 0 leaves you at 1 Health instead.
- 6. Dummyfish.** This awkward, hovering fish is so weird the monster's next attack hits it instead of your friends.

Spacing

MONSTER GUTS uses three different range bands to determine how close all of the Hunt's combatants are to each other. Folks who are Close are within a few feet, while those who are Near are a few yards distant. Those who are a Far distance are easily a dozen yards away.

The following variant rules use figures and cards for a more visual representation of each Bout.

Close

Scavengers are Close if they are on the same card.

Travel

Moving nearby entails hopping to an adjacent card.

Near

Scavengers are near if they are on adjacent cards.

Moving a far distance means moving two cards.

Far

Scavengers are Far if there is a card between them.

Monsters

Due to the size of the monsters, place them between cards. Scavengers next to the monster are close to it, those a card away are a Near from it, and so on.

Airborne

Tuck a card perpendicular to the base card under it and place the scavenger on this card.

Hunt Environs

The Cities of Yore

Built from poured stone and metal, these fallen towers now house new occupants: steel-trees, moss, and monsters.

Complications

Sinkholes, toppling trees, explosive mold.

The Hanover Wastes

A testament to the laziness and inefficiencies of those Before, the Wastes are windswept plains and irradiated waterways.

Complications

Flash flood, vicious tumbleweed, mighty wind.

The Once-Emerald Forests

In the Before, these trees were green. Now they are red, orange, purple, blue, and their needles are sharp and hard. Their bark turns aside any axe and their fruit is toxic to all but the most venomous of creatures.

Complications

Vanishing sun, hasty shrubs, poisonfruit showers.

MONSTER GUTS

At the end of each Hunt, the triumphant scavengers carve up their quarry's body, repurposing its bones, flesh, and fluids. Each scavenger retrieves 1 monster gut for slaying the monster, plus an additional monster gut for each part broken.

Each monster gut gets a random tag from the monster that the scavenger may imbue into their weapon or gear.

Tags fall into three categories: Ephemera, Elemental, and Effect. Weapons and gear can have 1 Elemental and 1 Effect tag active at the same time, although scavengers can exchange any acquired Elemental and Effect tags while in the village or by taking the Re-supply Move.

Ephemera

Ephemera tags indicate the type of a monster. Imbuing 2 matching Ephemera tags into a weapon allow scavengers to increase any of its numbers by 1.

Ephemera tags include: Beast, Behemoth, Brute, Insect, and Leviathan.

Element

When applied to weapons, Element tags convert the weapon's damage to the appropriate element, which fills the appropriate clocks and may receive extra bonuses.

When applied to gear, Element tags convey damage resistance to attacks marked with the same tag, allowing the scavenger to ignore the first attack inflicting that type of Harm each Hunt.

Element tags include Bleed, Venom, Water, Fire, Metal, Stun, Ice. Snooze, Shock, and Slime.

Effect

Whether applied to weapons or gear, Effect tags offer new Moves or passive abilities.

Effect Tags

Dash—once per Bout, travel between range bands in addition to all other actions.

Bellow—resist the effects of monster roars

Stomp—resist knockback

Armor—reduce incoming Harm by 1, to a minimum of 1.

Survivor—roll twice when Scrounging, taking both results

Sharing—items you use affect Close allies as well

MONSTERS

- All monsters have a cool name and can be summarized in three words or less.
- All monsters have tags that reflect the perils they present and act as treasure.
- All monsters have parts that can be broken as well as a silhouette, a graphic representation of these parts.
- All monsters have their own moves listed on a 2-die spread so they can be randomly rolled.

Monster Parts

Monster parts include all areas and organs of the body that the monster uses in its attacks. By damaging these parts, scavengers weaken the monster's abilities and gain more rewards at the end of a hunt.

All monster parts are either Hard or Soft.

Hard Parts

Hard parts are reinforced by bone or cartilage. They take half damage from all damage types except Crush. Once broken, Pierce attacks to the part deal 2 additional Harm.

Soft Parts

Soft parts take full damage from all damage types.

Broken parts

When a monster's attack uses a broken part, the attack deals half its regular Harm. If the attack does not deal Harm, its other effects are lessened or do not activate.

Status Clocks

All monsters have a few Status Clocks that reflect their vulnerability to different statuses.

When a clock fills, the monster succumbs to the clock's effect until the end of that Bout. Each clock cannot be triggered more than once per Bout, and all clocks are reset at the beginning of each Lull.

Bleed increases the Harm received from Slice attacks by 1.

Venom deals 2 Harm each round.

Slime makes the monster fall over when next it would move around.

Fire increases Harm taken from Fire sources by 1.

Stun prevents the monster from taking any actions until their next turn.

Metal creates a powerful explosion, dealing 10 Harm.

Ice inflicts 2 Harm whenever the monster moves.

Snooze makes the monster fall asleep. The next attack deals double Harm.

Water increases Harm from Shock attacks by 1.

Shock adds +2 Stun clock or reset the Stun clock if it has been filled.



Ancorhynch

No one has an explanation for the ancorhynch, bizarre salmon with muscly legs that terrorize the shores.

Health: 2

Harm: 1

Moves

Kick: Whack a scavenger with its mighty legs, knocking them away.

Bite: Clamps onto an arm, refusing to let go.

Needlefly

Child-sized flies with a fiendish stinger. An entomologist's last wet dream.

Health: 1

Harm: 1

Moves

Slurp: Pierces with its stinger, draining fluid. Another needlefly explodes from it next round.

Bzz: 2+ Close needleflies stun Near foes.

SPARKSQUIRREL

Body

75 Health; shock-immune

Parts

Head (15-S)
Foreleg (15-S)
Hindleg (15-S)
Tail (15-S)

Tags

1-2: Shock
3-4: Stun
5: Dash
6: Beast

Clocks

Venom (3)
Slime (4)
Stun (4)
Water (4)

Rage

At 50 and then 25 Health, the Sparksquirrel glows red and rages. All Harm +1.



RAPIDPUNCHES

Thunderous, Springing Squirrel

Originally designed to control household humidity, sparksquirrels were household pets. When exposed to the environmental collapse of the Oil Wars, they super-sized and became a threat. Their ability to channel static electricity into potent currents now interferes with local weather patterns, turning ordinary storms into furious maelstroms.

Most sparksquirrels still lair in the ruins of their ancestors' homes, the Cities of Yore, but some can be found in the Once-Emerald Forests.

Moveset

2-3. Sparking. Electricity crackles through the monster's fur. Scavengers hit by attacks are Stunned, losing their next turn.

4. Tail Whip. Violently waves its tail, dealing 2 Harm to all Close to it.

5. Charge. Rushes forward. All in its path take 2 Harm and are knocked away.

6. Roar. All Close lose their turn.

7. Reposition. 1-2: advances; 3: retreats; 4-5: flips around; 6: changes facing.

8. Swipe. Claws someone near its foreleg, dealing 3 Harm.

9. Tail Slam. Flips forward, bashing those formerly Close to the head for 1 Harm.

10. Bound. Leaps into the air, dealing 3 Harm and pinning a single foe.

11-12. Climb. Scales nearby terrain but leaves its tail dangling. The Sparksquirrel's next move is Bound.

Monster Guts Reference

Core Mechanic

Describe what you want to do and choose the attribute that best describes it, then roll a pool of dice based on your attribute rating, choosing the highest result.

1-2. Incur a consequence

3-4. Mixed success

5-6. Full success

Crush

Crush governs actions that employ raw power and brute force.

Harm from Crush applies normally to both Hard and Soft targets.

Slice

Slice governs tactics that require speed and dexterity.

Slice attacks deals half Harm to Hard targets.

Pierce

Pierce governs maneuvers that depend on precision, study, patience, and practice.

Pierce attacks deal half Harm to unbroken Hard targets. Against broken Hard targets, they deal an extra 2 Harm.

Hunt Moves

Assist

Use an item on a self or Close target. Fails on 1-2.

Sharpen

Replenish Edge. Fails on 1-2.

Attack

1-2. Miss; monster attacks

3-4. Hit monster's body; suffer small setback

(1. lose 1 Edge, 2. knocked back, 3. must reload, 4. knocked down, 5. staggered, 6. take 1 Harm.)

5-6. Hit targeted part

Tempo Change

End of round roll a die.

1. Complication appears

2-5. Monster attacks

6. Monster flees (3rd or later round only)

Complications

1-2. Beasts

3-4. Instability

5-6. Monster