

MONSTER ISLAND



THE DESIGN
MECHANISM

Mythras

Pete Nash
& Friends

MONSTER ISLAND

An Adventure Setting For MYTHRAS

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FOR LYNN WILLIS & RAY HARRYHAUSEN

In memory of two great men, giants of their respective crafts whose art has left an enduring legacy.
Lynn Willis, who was my mentor and gave me my start in professional game writing; and
Ray Harryhausen, a man I never met, but whose monsters have never been surpassed. Both of you
spurred my imagination and haunted my dreams. May you rest in peace, buoyed by the wonderment
your creations have inspired in me, and others, since childhood.

This book is a fruition of your influences.



CONTENTS



<i>Map of Monster Island</i>	4
Introduction	5
1. The Island	8
2. History and Cultures	17
3. Settlements	42
4. Places of Interest	65
5. Campaigns	113
6. Magic	128
7. Items and Substances	165
8. Flora and Fauna	188
Appendices	282
Index	292

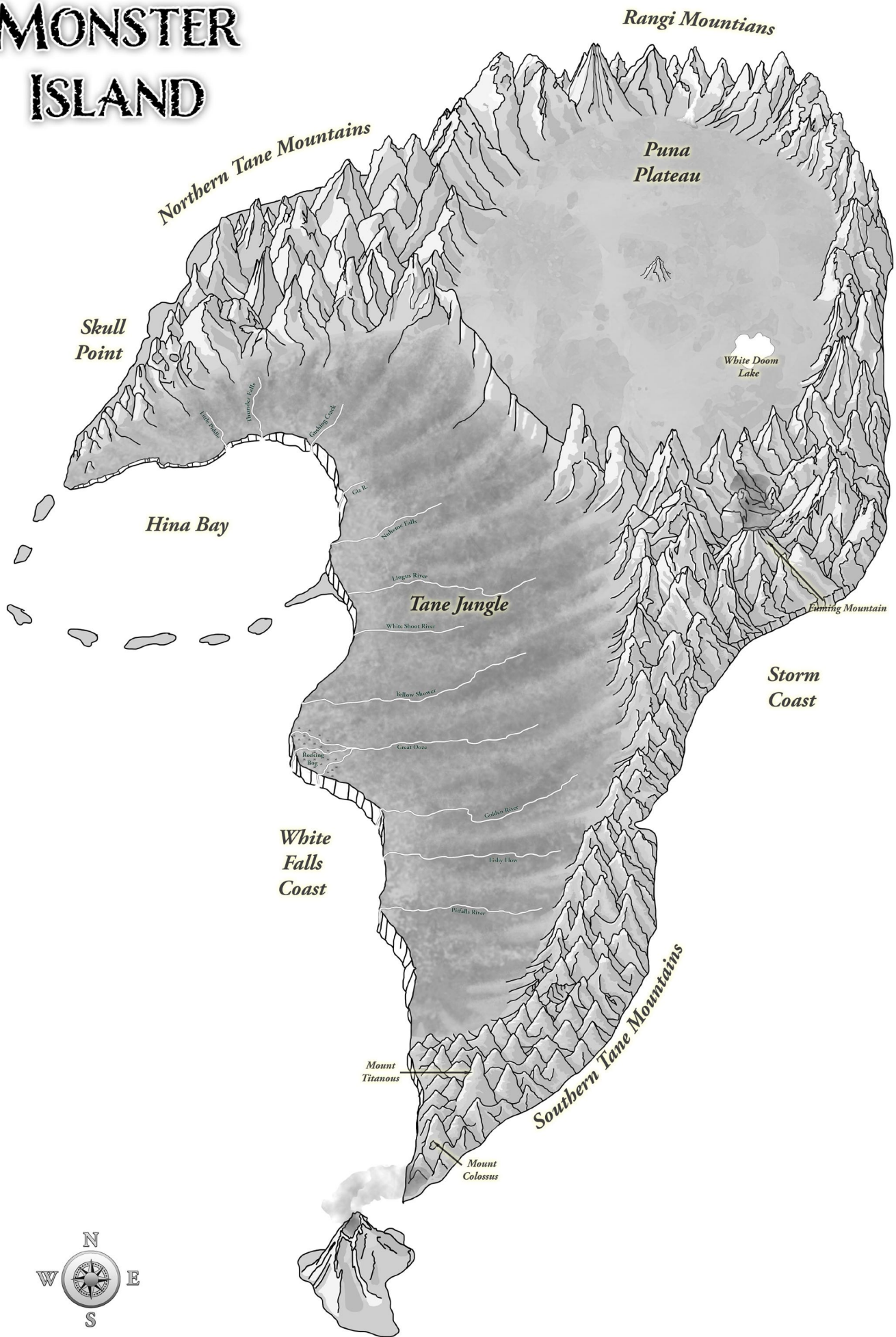
MONSTER ISLAND COMPANION

This book contains a huge amount of information and, in its hard-print version, a large-scale, pull-out, full-colour map of the island.

If you'd like an electronic version of the map, along with additional NPC statistics, then you can buy the *Monster Island Companion* as a separate PDF file from www.thedesignmechanism.com. This PDF gives you the island map as a layered PDF, allowing you to create and print your own variations of the main map (with or without place names, for example, or with or without the hex grid). Its also presented in the same size as the pull-out map, which means that you can zoom-in without losing clarity.

The Monster Island Companion also includes NPC statistics for all the named characters in this book - information we simply didn't have space for - and the most essential tables from the Campaigns and Items and Substances chapters.

MONSTER ISLAND



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INTRODUCTION: MONSTER ISLAND



Shrouded by mists, but distinctly lacking in mellow fruitfulness, Monster Island is a place of legend and infamy. Countless centuries ago, in the time of myths, powerful sorcerers - or the gods themselves - created this place to hold all the greatest horrors of the world; for study perhaps, or in some attempt to keep the lands free from terror. Though the gods have been bound, held in check by compromises and compacts, and the sorcerers are long-dead, the denizens of Monster Island yet prevail.

Warriors come here to test their skills and sword-arms; magicians arrive to gain materials for their spells. Adventurers come here for plunder and riches. All of them might be considered mad, for Monster Island teems with creatures and spirits, all of them malevolent, all of them hungry...

Monster Island is a stand alone, sandbox campaign setting for use with MYTHRAS. This book not only provides a place for adventure, but also deals with an exotic melange of legendary creatures roaming the varied habitats where they are at their most dangerous. Monster Island details the different cultures and locales of this mythical place, but, more importantly, introduces a host of new monsters, describing their habits and natures.

Do you dare set foot upon the shores of Monster Island?

WHAT THIS BOOK CONTAINS

This book is a combined bestiary and sandbox setting, similar in concept to the immortal Griffin Mountain, but set on an isolated mountainous island inspired by the Weird Science and Sword & Sorcery writings of famous authors such as E. R. Burroughs, R. E. Howard, Clark Ashton Smith, Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore. It is full of exotically alien cultures, overgrown ruined cities, strange gateways from which weird monsters appear, giant kaiju worshipped by reptilian natives, and ancient brooding sorceries.

Perhaps of the most use to Games Masters will be the new plants, animals and spirits introduced in its latter half. These creature statistics can be used to populate their own games; many of the creatures are new to MYTHRAS, drawn from the myths and legends of diverse cultures and folklore. Some are unique creations, crafted especially for this book.

In addition to the expanded range of creatures, Monster Island contains:

- ⇒ Cultural write-ups of two reptilian species, which should work as a template for Games Masters wishing to design their own campaign settings
- ⇒ Examples of tribal and city based exotic cults and the magic available to them
- ⇒ Several dozen adventuring locations, mysterious and deadly, provided to initially flesh out the island
- ⇒ Lists of encounter tables for use whilst characters explore the island's different climatic zones
- ⇒ A few non-player characters on the island who might become allies, contacts, rivals or foes
- ⇒ Incidental rules for adventuring in adverse conditions, and modelling how magic works on the island
- ⇒ Over one hundred plot seeds to help Games Masters weave together an epic campaign, ranging from monster hunts to inter-cultural politics

Games Masters should find a vast array of resources for their own campaigns within the covers of this book. It contains enough material to run a game for years! So grab your weapons, prepare your magic and set aside your fears - or some of them at least... MYTHRAS just became a little more dangerous and crowded.

MONSTER ISLAND IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

As explained above, Monster Island is both a descriptive menagerie of beasts and a campaign setting for encountering these creatures. The island itself has been designed as a unique environment with its own species, cultures and gods, thus allowing it to be inserted into almost any campaign world where a large ocean exists.

The individualistic nature of the Island grants it great flexibility, as well as portraying a rather distinctive atmosphere, permitting it to act as a long lost land of scholarly mystery, a place of exclusive trading opportunities or even a penitentiary colony. Games Masters can easily twist the land to fit any trope they desire.

Some suggestions follow as to where Monster Island could fit into published campaigns or games based on famous works of fantasy

LEMURIA:

18th-19th C campaigns, possibly set during the period of British exploration and colonialism. Monster Island could be a last remaining fragment of a lost continent once located somewhere in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar. According to the lost Book of Dzyan Lemuria was occupied by a race of 7 foot tall sexually hermaphroditic, egg-laying beings, mentally undeveloped and spiritually pure. After the subsequent creation of mammals, some Lemurians turned to bestiality, transgressing the will of the gods, who in their disgust sank Lemuria into the ocean and created the race of man on Atlantis. Good ripping stuff!

MEROPIS

Ancient Greek campaigns. In the words of Aelian: *"Amongst other things, Silenus told Midas that Europe, Asia and Africa were Islands surrounded by the Ocean: That there was but one Continent only, which was beyond this world, and that as to magnitude it was infinite. That in it were bred, besides other very great Creatures, Men twice as big as those here, and they lived double our age: That many great Cities are there, and peculiar manners of life; and that they have Laws wholly different from those amongst us : That there are two Cities far greater than the rest, nothing like each other ; one named Machimus, Warlike, the other Eusebes, Pious: That the Pious people live in peace, abounding in wealth, and reap the fruits of the Earth without Ploughs or Oxen, having no need of tillage or sowing. They live, as he said, free from sickness, and die laughing, and with great pleasure: They are so exactly Just, that the Gods many times vouchsafe to converse with them. The Inhabitants of the City Machimus are very Warlike, continually armed and fighting. They subdue their Neighbours, and this one City predominates over many. The Inhabitants are not fewer then two hundred Myriads : they die sometimes of sickness, but this happens very rarely, for most commonly they are killed in the Wars by Stones or Wood, for they are invulnerable by Steel. They have vast plenty of Gold and Silver, insomuch that Gold is of less value with them than Iron is with us."*

MU

In Robert E. Howard's Kull stories, Mu was a continent with many cities; when it sank, the mountain tops became the isles of Lemuria. Mu could also be utilised as a 1920s setting based upon James Churchward's book The Lost Continent of Mu, where he claims Mu as the home of an advanced civilization, the Naacal, which flourished

between 50,000 and 12,000 years ago, dominated by a “white race, superior in many respects to our own”.

NEHWON

In the Outer Sea west of Klesh, reachable by ship from Quaimall. The centre of the island could be populated by the humanoid lizard beasts encountered by Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser in the story *The Bleak Shore*.

SKULL ISLAND

Another good candidate for a 1920s or 1930s pulp setting, being the famed island home of King Kong. In this circumstance the reptilian inhabitants could be changed for stereotypical Hollywood natives, cargo cultists, cannibals

and the like; ruled over by an H. Rider Haggard style lost white race, suitable for the period and genre.

ANYWHERE ELSE?

Monster Island could easily be inserted into other settings, perhaps as a Pacific South Seas island accidentally stumbled upon during World War II; a mysterious tropical land discovered by Spanish Conquistadors, giving rise to a *Lost World* style game; one of the islands discovered by Captain Cook and the crew of the *Endeavour* (or Charles Darwin and *The Beagle*); or even a Neolithic Polynesian campaign where the characters stumble upon the island of their gods. The possibilities are endless!