

OLDSKULL TROLLS

KENT DAVID KELLY

Oldskull Trolls

**An Old School Supplement
For Fantasy Role-Playing Games**

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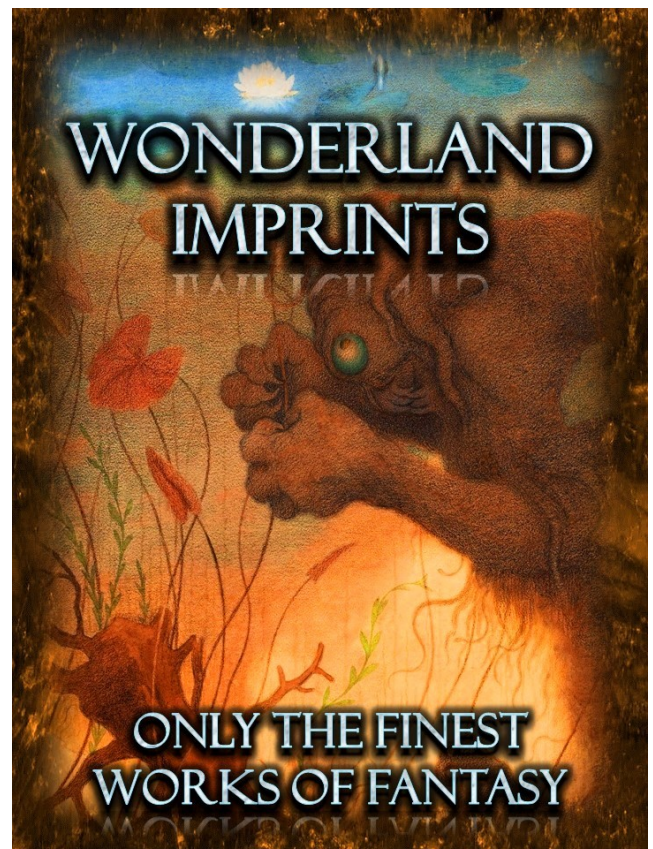
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Only the Finest Works of Fantasy

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Description

Have they now come for thee?

Ah, the trolls of Groohlz-Drakha!

Forsaken progeny of Mung the death god,

Accursed children of the Grendel-Modor ...

Fearlessly, forever ravening, ever-healing, they lie in wait.

Will your heroes slay these deathly fiends

To learn the gravest secrets of Castle Oldskull,

Or will they merely fall to blood and ruin

As so many have before?

Wonderland Imprints is proud to announce the second most ambitious book of troll lore to ever have been created (the first having been authored by Brian and Wendy Froud). OLDSKULL TROLLS is a massive compendium of troll lore, weaving snippets from the Gygaxian bestiaries, dungeon modules, and tales of 1971-1985 into the larger tapestry of Pegana, Peer Gynt, Norse myth, Scandinavian folklore, the Grendel myth, the Cthulhu Mythos, and the fairy books of Andrew Lang.

Herein you will find: details on troll history, tactics, weapons, treasures, fungal gardens, and lairs; 11 game-ready troll sub-races (bog, bridge, cave, cursed, forest, hill, lake, mountain, sea, snow, and stone); 6 troll-giant sub-races (hill, fire, frost, mountain, stone, and two-headed); lore concerning the foul Trolghuls, enigmatic troll hags, disturbing cauldron rituals, the winsome Troldfolk, shamans, witch doctors, chieftains, King's Claws, and Mountain Kings; the secrets of the

mysterious troll deities including Trogool, the Great Boyg, the Haga-Daimonai, and Groohlz-Drakha (Overlord of Castle Oldskull); a full roster of trollish allies, guardian beasts, and nemeses; and more besides.

This is an Oldskull bestiary of new monsters, as well as a treasury, and a storybook as well. Being a complete unveiling of trolls, hags, sub-races, leader types, deities, and allied monstrosities, ready for you to plug into your old school FRPG campaign. Horrify your bored and overconfident players all over again, with lots of new surprises from the Midgardian highlands! Another fine gaming supplement from Kent David Kelly and Wonderland Imprints, *Only the Finest Works of Fantasy*.



Chapter 1:

The Nature of the Trolls

Now the daughter of the King of that country had been carried off into the mountains by a Troll, and the King had no other children, and for this cause both he and all his people were full of sorrow and affliction, and the King had promised the Princess and half his kingdom to anyone who could set her free; but there was no one who could do it, though a great number had tried.

— *The Red Fairy Book*, by Andrew Lang



Introduction

What are trolls? The question is both simple and very difficult to answer. At their purest they are giant-like and wilderness-dwelling monsters, the enemies of Thor (and the nemeses of lesser god-worshippers as well), as featured in Norse mythology and later in fairy tales and Scandinavian folklore.

Trolls are one of the most iconic monsters in the classic fantasy role-playing game. In fact, their inclusion in the game dates to events earlier than the original game's actual publication in 1974. In March of 1971, Gary Gygax (using design rules and inspiration borrowed from esteemed wargamer Jeff Perren) presented two types of trolls for fantasy wargamers' consideration. Normal-ish and mundane "Trolls" (basically, ugly giant-like creatures as featured in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*) were described as being creatures much like ogres, while "True Trolls" (green-fleshed regenerating horrors) were specifically derived from Poul Anderson's tale *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, which itself was first published in 1953. This is rather interesting because it shows us that from the very beginning, Gygaxian trolls in the game had distinct sub-species with differing origins and abilities.

Gary's 1971 tactical rules were tested and enhanced by many, and we can be certain that many forgotten wargames featuring trolls vs. heroes were fought out on play tables throughout the early 1970s. Most importantly, game designer David Lance Arneson featured a wickedly gamesome troll and a troll bridge in his first fantasy wargaming scenario, played up in Minnesota. Dave also featured those very same tropes as detailed for a bridge room in his *Temple of the Frog* dungeon scenario, first published for the public in 1975. His

colleague Gary Gygax also mentioned that he too liked using this favorite monster in his own early fantasy wargame playtests. In c. early 1971 Gary must have included a memorable bridge troll on his own gaming table, because he once mentioned (on the Dragonsfoot forums, posted September 23rd, 2005): “*The Three Billy Goats Gruff* was a favorite story of mine when I was a wee tyke. Thus for the first *Chainmail* Fantasy Supplement game played in my basement, a great ugly troll rushed out from under the bridge one side’s forces had to cross. Fortunately one of their leaders was a hero and defeated it.”

Sub-species related to trolls then appeared in Gary’s home mega-dungeon campaign beginning in 1972, along with the strange “gnolls” (or “gnoles,” as derived from tales by Dunsany and St. Clair) who were described as being part gnome and part troll (a pairing alluded to in some Scandinavian sources). A bit later on the dungeons also revealed strange new monstrous “thouls,” a cursed hybrid mixture of troll, humanoid, and ghou. Thus by 1972 we have four strains of troll already in play: “mundane” trolls (ogre-ish or giant-ish in nature), true trolls (regenerating), gnoles (part-troll humanoids), and thouls (infused with troll blood). Already, things were getting very confusing on the monster design front!

Design decisions changed and were either altered or became crystallized over time. For example the largely unsubstantiated “gnome plus troll” gnoll lore was cleared up in Gary’s mind by 1977, when they became hyena-like creatures instead of troll offspring. But interestingly, gnoll lairs are still said to include trolls from time to time as powerful guardians! These two races are therefore closely allied, even if they are not born of the same mothers as it were. Meanwhile, thouls were accidentally “disappeared” out of the game between publications; they resurfaced later in the

Basic set (1981), but not in quite the same way that Gary had portrayed them in his own campaign. This current supplement by the way features a similar Dunsanian creature, the Trolghul (of this author’s invention), with game stats derived from an e-mail communication between Gary and a fan which was written about 15 years ago. These Gygaxian stats were not published in the official role-playing game materials.

By 1974 all of the classic RPG trolls had been re-codified so that the “True Troll” subtype dominated trollish representation in the game, as reiterated in the 1977 hardcover bestiary. There were still different sizes and types of these beasts implied however, with 1974 “Original” trolls having 6+3 hit dice, and 1977 “Advanced” trolls possessing 6+6 hit dice along with greater strength and more powerful attacks. Leader-type “chieftains” and “lieutenants” — neither are mentioned in the 1977 bestiary by the way — were further introduced for the race in a giant-themed dungeon module released in the early summer of 1978. These leader types were granted additional damage bonuses a bit later in 1978, in a netherworld-themed module. Both of these publications were written by Gygax. Troll worship of fanged and monstrous gods was vaguely alluded to in that last source, and the enigmatic god worshipped by both trolls and ogres was finally introduced in the deities bestiary (by Ward and Kuntz, with draft commented upon by Gygax and thus revised prior to publication) in 1980. That deities-oriented tome also further codified troll shamans and witch doctors, which had been initially (and partially) described within the Game Master’s hardcover rulebook of 1979.

For a brief while in the official game — this was late 1980 — all things troll-related were clearly delineated at last. But then things got really messy in 1981, where four new troll sub-species surfaced from out of the United Kingdom and prior magazine

publications. These four types of creatures were created by Ian Livingstone (the giant troll, with folkloric precedent), Oliver Charles MacDonald (the giant two-headed troll, again with folkloric precedent), Russell Cole (the ice troll, in a rather poor manifestation, reimagined herein) and Chris Atkin (the spirit troll, a gimmick creature which has no real basis in the existing mythology). The fiendish bestiary of 1981 that featured these monstrosities was published by TSR UK, and as it turns out Gary was not entirely happy with the selection of creatures made “official” for the game therein. However we know he at least liked the giant troll, because one of those beasts appears in a “forgotten” Gyaxian dungeon module that was published in 1982.

We also know that Gary still had a strong interest in continuing to develop his own preferred troll sub-species, because his water troll designs (both freshwater and saltwater, each differing in the particulars) were also published in a “lost” dungeon module in 1982, and then republished in their more widely-known format in the second major hardcover monstrous bestiary of 1983.

Whew! Quite a tale so far.

Parallel to all of this gaming history, the REAL trolls — those featured for centuries in mythology and folklore — were unfortunately rather obfuscated as a result of all the conflicting machinations within the role-playing game. Part of the reason for this is tied up in Gary’s decision to champion the “True Troll” (Anderson) template as Advanced-official over the perhaps less interesting “Troll-Ogre” template (of Tolkien and others) in 1977, perhaps because (a) he really adored the Andersonian portrayal of regeneration and combat, and (b) he had a very strong beef against the Tolkien Estate by this time due to threats of litigation. That’s a long story in itself, which you can read about in my

RPG history series of books, entitled *Hawk & Moor*. But as the game’s later authors doubled down on the archetype of the Andersonian regenerating troll — especially in 1981 and onwards — the mythic troll fell by the wayside. Ever since, old school RPG trolls have been distinctly “other” and quite different from their mythological counterparts. Those folkloric trolls, sadly, have largely been erased from the ongoing legacy of the published game.

Until now, that is.

This current supplement attempts to rectify all of that confusion, by tying all of the established game lore (1971-c. 1983) together with many of the known myths, along with relevant threads from the author’s World of Oldskull campaign, which in turn prominently features both the Pegana Mythos and the Cthulhu Mythos. Devout readers will likely recall that Gyax specifically listed Lord Dunsany (via Pegana) and H. P. Lovecraft (via Cthulhu) in his “Appendix N” summary of sources, as direct inspirations upon the development of the classic fantasy role-playing game. Indeed, he called Lovecraft one of the most important sources for game lore, alongside L. Sprague de Camp, Fletcher Pratt, Robert E. Howard, Fritz Leiber, Jack Vance, and Abraham Merritt. Together these authors are integral to the spiritual design of the old school RPG ... even if some modern game designers haven’t yet bothered to read those foundational tales, or have ignored them.

In developing this work I have provided detailed lore concerning the Oldskull troll god (that being Trogool of the Pegana mythos), the troll goddess (the Great Boyg, of *Peer Gynt* and Scandinavian lore), and the Lovecraftian near-troll equivalent race (the gugs, as featured in *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*), along with full rules for troll sub-strains, troll-giants, and “little trolls” (those being the Troldfolk of later Scandinavian tales). I have also been

careful to retain both the Anderson-themed Original (HD 6+3) and Advanced (HD 6+6) trolls, alongside the other known troll sub-races, while also providing unifying information inspired by Gygaxian modules and other sources so that the baffling mass of troll lore is consolidated in a format that is easily usable in the modern game. As a bonus, here you will also find a full elaboration of the legendary Groohlz-Drakha — the troll demigod and Overlord of the dungeon labyrinths beneath Castle Oldskull — as he appears in the World of Oldskull campaign.

I hope that you enjoy this fascinating synthesis of hundreds of trollish secrets, brought together in a unified presentation for the very first time! Have fun with all of the troll-kin, their bloodthirsty allies, and the wild, chaotic mayhem that they're going to bring to your play table once those poor heroes wander down the wrong tunnel in search of gold and glory.

Tread lightly down the way, my dearies yes, and mind the ever-regenerating slime pools

...



Suggested Viewing and Reading for Trolldom

The following sources were used to create this supplement. Of course, there were also a great many RPG sources which the OGL isn't always warm toward my mentioning, so you can assume that many

of those sources (1971-1985) were used in development as well.

I can recommend the following:

- *Among Gnomes and Trolls* (various volumes, rarely in English), by various authors; original title *Bland Tomtar Och Troll*
- *Beowulf* (Anonymous); especially the Hall translation (1892) which reveals some pre-Gygaxian prose
- *The Book of Weird*, by Barbara Ninde Byfield
- *The Dark Crystal* (film), particularly the portrayal of the Mystics
- *D'Aulaires' Book of Trolls*
- *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*, by H. P. Lovecraft
- *Gnomes*, by Wil Huygin
- *The Gods of Pegana*, by Lord Dunsany
- *In the Hall of the Mountain King* (opera), and related discussions, by Edvard Grieg
- *Labyrinth* (film)
- *The Norwegian Fairy Book*, by Klara Stroebe
- *The Old Norse Dictionary* (vikingsofbjornstad.com) for monstrous names and terminology
- *Peer Gynt* (play), by Henrik Ibsen (and sometimes Arthur Rackham too)
- *The Pegana Mythos* (game supplement), by Kent David Kelly (relevant, with the most pertinent and crucial matters featured in this volume)
- *The Red Fairy Book*, by Andrew Lang; in addition to several other works in the series

- *The Roaring Trumpet*, by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt
- *The Swedish Fairy Book*, by Klara Stroebe
- *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, by Poul Anderson
- *Time and the Gods*, by Lord Dunsany
- *Trollhunter* (movie)
- *Trolls*, by Brian and Wendy Froud
- *Trolls: An Unnatural History*, by John Lindow

Origin and History of Trollkind

Still, an avenger outlived the loathed one, long since the sorrow caused by the struggle: the mother of Grendel, devil-shaped woman, her woe ever minded, who was held to inhabit the horrible waters.

... Thence demons unnumbered fate-sent awoke ...

— *Beowulf*, as translated by Dr. Lesslie Hall

We still don't know what the word "troll" means, although there are many theories and frustrating near-answers which have been discovered by various linguists over the years. It probably means something like "to conjure," or "to perform an act of magic." We can be certain however that all trolls are inherently magical beings, infused with primal spirits either malevolent or benign.

In the World of Oldskull campaign, trolls were originally created by the nameless Mad God, and following that deity's defeat they continued to be spawned endlessly by the ever-shedding and -regenerating skin-sloughs of the monstrous Beast of the Frozen Waste, one Trogool by name. Trogool's feminine counterpart, the Great Boyg, is somehow directly involved in troll generation as well. It's probably best for us not to imagine that matter too distinctly, however!

The lore of the Pegana Mythos tells us that one of the earliest cultures of men arose in the Eastern Ocean. But before that, simpler and more wondrous creatures arose to rule the World of Oldskull. The primordial god Kib created life in the Game of the Gods: "Kib grew weary of the First Game of the Gods," the prophet Dunsany tells us, "and raised his hand in Pegana, making the sign of Kib, and [*the World of the Elder Skull*] became covered with Beasts [*and Monsters*] for Kib to play with. And Kib played with Beasts."

The other Peganan gods were curious of Kib's follies, yet horrified. This was a grand blasphemy, an act of dark wonder which fascinated the gods and beckoned them to play in the deeper game. But to act so directly in the image of the great Creator, Mana-Yood-Sushai, might well lead to the creation of tiny godlings, highly destructive and quickly multiplying dreams which did not yet exist except in the fantasies of the gods themselves. The gods called these forbidden dreams of smaller slaves and disciples and lunatics by a strange new name, "Men." The word might mean "trifling things."

Kib cared not for such concerns. But the other gods feared, despite their desire to play. The game of Kib was deathly. If Beasts and Monsters could be created, then the complexity of the game would escalate in elaborate ways. The temptation to create Men would surely follow. And

Men, granted the gifts of sentience and wonder as ever-more-empowered playthings in the Game of Gods, would surely worship one God over another and thus glorify the holy ones to ecstatic satisfaction. But too, the curiosity and ambition of Men would threaten the Secret of the Gods: the meaning and the destiny of Mana-Yood-Sushai. If Men ever stole the divine Secret, they would become Gods themselves, and the elder Gods would be annihilated from memory. Even Mana-Yood-Sushai himself might well be then imperiled in his Slumber.

But if the Gods did not play, the Elegy of Lifelessness would take hold throughout the world, and hopelessness would reign. The Gods would begin to fade without play and struggle, treasure and deprival to give them meaning. What was to be done?

The most reverent and Mana-fearing of the Gods was a dark creature known as Mung. As Kib indulged in the reckless gift of Life, so did Mung indulge in the tempering gift of Death. And he was very busy, playing against Kib as the Beasts played against the Monsters. Mung grandly and decisively took up the cause of the Monsters against Beasts, in the hope that the Beasts would meet oblivion and end the game. Then, the Monsters themselves could be annihilated so that the Secret of the Gods would remain safe forevermore. Through such gambits, the Game of Gods intensified. In the words of Dunsany: "Mung was jealous of the work of Kib, and sent down Death among the Beasts, but could not stamp them out."

There was chaos, and there was war.

The Beasts of Kib were suffering terribly upon the World of the Elder Skull, as the Monsters and Mung sought them in the farthest corners of the world. Even hiding in caves and fissures came to naught as the Monsters spawned newly horrific versions of themselves and cornered the Beasts in desolate corners and labyrinths of the

nether. Weary at last to have his game defiled by the interloper Mung, brother Kib fought back with the forbidden coup de grace: he "raised his hand in the Middle of All, making the sign of Kib, and made Men. Out of Beasts he made them, and [*the World of the Elder Skull*] was covered with Men."

Mung was horrified, and even the other observing Gods could no longer fully sympathize with the forbidden wonders wrought by Kib upon the glassy world. Mung fought all the harder, smiting Men as well as Beasts with the sweet and sorrowful power of Death. But the Men (and too, the Women) multiplied beyond all conception of Time — for the fleeting passing of Time, that which causes the scurry of Men, is a very crude and baffling thing to the immortal Gods — and even the powers of Mung were gradually overcome by the mortals' teeming multitudes. The Monsters, enemies of Man in the name of Mung, were driven into the wastelands and the netherworld.

As Man ruled the surface, Mung reigned below. In defiance of Man, the powers of Mung manifested themselves further within the netherworld as he summoned and seized upon the flesh-sheddings and blood-crawlings of the two great ice-realm abominations who lurk beyond the realms of Men: the demigod Trogool, and his mate-thing, the Great Boyg.

Using these quivering remnants of monstrous vitality Mung created even greater Monsters which could withstand the weapons of Men, creatures that could grow in legion and in secrecy, to once again bring balancing Death to the lands above. These creations were known as Trolls. Mung may have been defeated for a time, but beneath the earth his new creations toiled in secret, plotting the ultimate demise of the countless foolish mortals who walked unknowing beneath the sun.

After the age of Pegana and during the tumultuous centuries which defined the grim Hyborian Age, heroic men and women forged and shattered sunlit-and-twilit kingdoms throughout the more godless World of “Oldskull.” Those few mad heroes who braved the netherworld deeps were slaughtered, their tales never spoken, for the dread powers of Mung and others who dwell beneath — the Trolls, the Serpent Folk, the subterranean Deep Ones, the Thralls of Cthulhu, and worse besides — had over the millennia created glorious under-kingdoms of their own. These kingdoms, even without the bloody incursions made by surface-dwelling men, waged war with one another and many monstrous things either went extinct or their peoples faded deeper beneath the world in splintered remnants. It was only well after the Hyborian Age, during the Golden Age of Achaea and Roma, that heroes such as Orpheus, Theseus, Heracles, and Aeneas braved the terrible nether kingdoms and lived to tell their tales. At this time the Trolls were few, for they were locked in a death struggle with the Dream Eaters, the Deep Gnomes, and the foul Eyes of Azathoth.



It was not until the age of Beowulf (c. 550 AD), in both the kingdoms of the Danes (being Dania, mythic Denmark) and of the Geats (Suecia, mythic Sweden) that the first vile troll-things of Mung crawled out into the surface world to devour mortal men. The deep-delving gnomes and dwarves by that time were well aware of these regenerating terrors, but their



nether-faring clans had not yet sworn those centuries-old alliance pacts with mankind which are now taken for granted. The first known emergent monster of the troll race was a Trollkona (female) spell caster, of unknown name; we know her only as the Grendel-Modor. With her unholy blessings and protection her son, the war troll and nether champion known as Grendel, rose and laid waste to the Danian realm of King Hrothgar, and after the deaths of many fighting men the doughty Geat hero Beowulf came to the Hall of Heorot in defiance. In a tumultuous battle, Beowulf tore Grendel asunder. The trolls of Mung in that age were more powerful than those known today, but their regenerative blood was thinned by exposure to the poisonous and pure-aired surface world. By fate, Beowulf managed to sever Grendel's arm in battle, and this created a mortal wound which the war troll could not fully heal.

Grendel returned to his hag-witch mother in agony, and despite her magics she could not save him from the mortal-envenomed wound which had torn his limb from his body. Grendel died bleeding in his mother's arms, and she prayed for salvation to the blackest entities in the names of vengeance, forbidden power, and eternal allegiance. She had cast her augury bones, and she had beheld the nearing future: Beowulf would soon come for her, and would slay her as well, unless she could twist the fates to deny him his imminent victory against the emerging and war-beleaguered trolls of Mung.

A gaunt and vicious demon lord named Hyaenoghul came to the Grendel-Modor's calls, and she willingly sacrificed her monstrous soul to seal a black pact with that grinning and shivering Thing: If Hyaenoghul would grant the power to slay Beowulf, and the blood-might to endure the human surface world, she would glorify and serve him in life and death forever.

The demon lord agreed to this sworn wickedness with ravening delight. Yet in the true spirit of Chaotic Evil, his pact was treacherous in its fury: He did not grant these black gifts to the Grendel-Modor herself, because she was already dangerously potent and never to be trusted. Instead, he gifted her *lifeblood* with greater powers of regeneration, magic, poison, virility, and accursed retribution. Only when the Grendel-Modor was slain would the potential of her immortal lifeblood be realized. Nevertheless, Hyaenoghul swore that the Grendel-Modor was infused with the power to lay mankind low ... and he spoke only partly in deceit.

Beowulf found the Grendel-Modor's lair soon after Hyaenoghul had departed from this plane, and he even witnessed the hag-witch attempting to use her magic to bring Grendel back to life to no avail. A great battle ensued, and despite a near-victory on the part of the Grendel-Modor, her overconfidence in Hyaenoghul's cursed bequeathal brought her to a grisly end. Beowulf slaughtered her, and then he witnessed the true might of the demonic pact: The Grendel-Modor's blood crawled in wavelets over the cavern floor, seeking to re-stitch her flesh. Some tricklings of that foul ichor even crawled up between Grendel's claws, seeking his mouth, and the vanquished war troll nearly twitched his way back to life once again.

But Beowulf — having unknowingly already created the first ritual of the troll hunter, the Rite of Dismemberment — cut apart the Grendel-Modor's body with her own obsidian sword, and scattered the pieces, and burned them. Thus was the Rite of Purging Fire ordained. He then, seeing with horror the flickering of resurgent life in Grendel's dead form, enacted the third ritual, that being the Rite of Decapitation. Beowulf brought this cursed trophy forth, back into the surface world. The war troll's head would hang in

triumph high in the Hall of Heorot. And trolls — for their part — would loathe mankind for an eternity.



And so did the death reign of the forsaken spawn of Trogool, the black makings of Mung, and the treacherous machinations of Hyaenoghul — one fallen Grendel, and the betrayed Grendel-Modor — all finally come to their own predestined ends.

But Beowulf had not known to commit the last needed rite of the troll hunters, which would have been the Burning of the Blood. The surviving streams of the Grendel-Modor's ichor seeped down through the earth, through the secret enchanted portal which the Grendel-Modor had risen into the world from. This demonic slime-blood became gelid and it crawled downward for miles, seeking its bloodline's kin, and in the end this curdled filth was feasted upon by a deep-lairing tribe of stone trolls.

The blood beguiled those who found it. In the keening voice of the Grendel-Modor's soul, the blood-filth psychically promised great strength, as well as unholy immortality. Those who dared to swallow the blood, however, would be forever damned.

Several of the stone trolls fled the terrible scene of transformation which then took

place. These few, who did not swallow the Grendel-Modor's ichor, are the pure shamanic stone trolls who are now known as the Secret Bearers of the Memory Before. But those who imbibed the blood also swallowed in the filth of Hyaenoghul. These few spawned, raged, hunted, and waged war upon the other netherworld races for centuries, feeding and mating until they were many. This undying breed — hated by all surface dwellers, and now only vulnerable to acid or the touch of fire — are now known as the Ones Accursed, the Vengeance of the Grendel-Modor, or the Cursed Trolls.

Troll Description

He quickly laid hold of a soldier asleep, suddenly tore him, bit his bone-prison, the blood drank in currents, swallowed in mouthfuls: he soon had the dead man's feet and hands, too, eaten entirely ...

— *Beowulf*, as translated by Dr. Lesslie Hall

If you ask a dozen people what trolls look like, you'll get two dozen answers. Here is an amusing aside:

When Gary Gyfax was three years old, he made the first crayon drawing that his mother would decide to keep for posterity. This was a sketch of "a great ugly troll, because I loved the stories of *The Billy Goats Gruff*. It was a vaguely cubical thing with a great many legs and eyes." The "great ugly troll" appellation has been preserved in this supplement as a leader

type in honor of Gary's netherworld-wandering imagination.

Classic RPG trolls share several distinct characteristics: They are all warty, gangly, and hunchbacked, with huge cucumber-like noses. Claws are long, and fangs are filthy and razor-sharp. Their deep-set eyes glower in hollowed sockets. Eye color varies from ice blue (for snow trolls), to vivid green (for forest trolls), to jet black (for cursed trolls). Skin color tends to roughly match the terrain a troll is found to lair in (gray for mountains, brown for hills, green for swamp, etc.), except that the cursed trolls are always a vivid and putrid green in hue.

But that's just how trolls *look*. In almost every circumstance, you're going to *smell* a troll long before you see one. Even after adventurers smell the reek of troll, it is still possible for the trolls to attack with surprise, because their stench can waft up to 500' feet away (especially in cramped caves and warrens). In a labyrinth it's hard to tell exactly where the stench is coming from.

Worse, the smell will tend to linger for several months even if all of the trolls and nests in an area are incinerated. It's one of the worst smells in all the World of Oldskull, akin to a mix of spoiled meat, wet excrement, hot vomit, and rotted cheese. The only thing that can reliably mask troll stench is the reek of a nether fungal garden. Details on that particular matter will follow a bit later on in this volume.

Behavior-wise, trolls are fairly simple to understand. They are chaotic and evil. A few are chaotic and neutral, but even they are up to no good from humanity's selfish perspective. They have no great goals outside of surviving, hunting, butchering (particularly dwarves and gnomes, their eternity-sworn enemies), feasting, and regenerating their wounds so that they kill again. They are exceedingly gluttonous,

feeding their generative inner workings with blood, gore, and splintered bones. Anything they are not quite ready to devour goes straight into the stewpot — if hags, shamanesses, or witch-crones are available to shepherd a cauldron brew along — or heaped atop their disgusting nesting piles for later gastric contemplation.

Only the neutral ones have any redeeming qualities, and the goals of the wisest trolls always include “exterminate the humans and demi-humans” along with any higher agenda. In short, adventurers have every reason to seek them out, to destroy them, and to steal all of their treasures. But be wary ... the roles of hunter and hunted are never quite certain when one enters a troll warren with murder on the mind!



Troll Alignment

Almost all troll species are chaotic, and none are of good alignment, save for the diminutive Trolldfolk. The beliefs of the troll were summarized quite succinctly in the drama *Peer Gynt* (Ibsen, 1867):

Out there, where sky shines, humans say:

‘To thyself be true.’

In here, trolls say:

‘Be true to yourself, and to Hell with the world.’

The alignments of distinct troll sub-species, troll-giants, troldfolk, and so forth are provided in the individual descriptions for each archetype as presented throughout this supplement.



Troll Languages

Trolls: “Eat him!”

Troll King (forbidding this): “Remember, his understanding is only human.”

— *Peer Gynt*, by Henrik Ibsen

Trolls speak a corrupted version of the primordial death language (the Mother Tongue) which is called Mungoltha, the Breath of Mung. Those belonging to the sub-race of the cursed trolls (only), however, are afflicted with a baneful effect which causes their language — when heard by mortals of good or neutral alignment — to be reduced to a wind-rustling chanting mantra (“HoooOOOooOOoo ...”) and nothing more. Cursed troll chieftains and spell casters are not affected by this curious affliction.

Evil characters will understand any cursed troll’s utterances perfectly, although they may well wish that they had not.

All trolls regardless of sub-race speak the languages of their allied races in rudimentary form, whether those allies are giants, demons, bugbears, troglodytes, or something else. The Chaotic Evil dream

language (“alignment tongue”) is known to all as well.

Most trolls of higher intelligence (INT 7+) speak at least a smattering of Common. All hags speak at least 4D4 languages, and the emerald hags in particular are adept in the art of mimicry.

Meeting with Trolls

Trolls will only parley with evil creatures (such as bugbears and dark elves), or with mortals who seem exceedingly powerful due to their armor, numbers, glowing weapons, readied spells, and so forth.

Crones (hags and spell casters) are wily and beguiling and prone to charming misdirection, which should be played to the hilt by the Game Master. But non-crone trolls — even chieftains — are far from subtle. They also suck at negotiating fairly because they are the embodiment of violent self-interest. (The notable exceptions to this rule are the Mountain Kings.) A common troll’s idea of being generous is telling adventurers to go away, so that the pesky man-lings will not be eaten ... unless they bumble into the troll’s lair a second time.

If offered treasure or a bribe, a troll will want much more than adventurers will want to part with. If (for some godforsaken reason) a party of PCs want to ally with a troll, the troll will agree if it is given wealth, promised flesh, and a chance to kill hated enemies or rivals nearby. To the PCs, this might be a charming scene of troll reform that gives slight validation to monstrosity. To the troll, it’s an opportunity to wipe out some powerful enemies that the troll couldn’t easily kill before; and when those enemies are dead, it is time to turn on the PCs and perhaps eat them, too.

The exceptions to these general rules include the following:

- Bridge trolls will parley if they are not hungry, but only if their warnings are heard and the negotiators immediately leave their bridge (back the way they came, not crossing to the other side).
- Mountain trolls can be parleyed with on their own terms, provided there are not any mountain giants or hag-leaders around.
- Stone trolls will be interested in communicating with humans, up until the time when it becomes clear that the humans are nothing more than thieves.
- Troll kings (but not chieftains) will hold gracious audience with mortals, because they regard such rare meetings as grand scenes within a centuries-long tragedy in which they want to be regarded winningly by all. Such scenes might well end in death however, or in adventurers being stripped of all of their belongings.
- Trogool and the Great Boyg will only attack after they themselves have been attacked. Parleying will be difficult, but possible ... and rather disturbing.
- Groohlz-Drakha will treat an invitation to parley as a chance to play at tricks, riddles, dares, and death-defying games, with all of the fun and merriment that those rituals entail.



Troll Tactics

Trolls are by no means brilliant tacticians, but they are cunning and feral hunters. All are dangerous. They tend not to balk when faced with deadly weapons in mortal hands (acid vials, torches, divine magics, etc.), simply because they *are* fear incarnate. Some will run from a losing fight when they are outmatched ... but no troll will ever back down from a furious melee before the battle even begins.

Troll lairs are warrens, and it is rare for such places to have only a single entrance. When intruders are detected the lair's trolls will usually split themselves into two groups and they will attack from two directions. Surrounding the enemy is their foremost tactic, as this induces panic and it makes the tasty mortals much easier to devour.

If faced with enemies who lack infravision (usually meaning humans), they will focus on the light-bearers with the goal of separating party members from one another. If the trolls are aware that the humans are approaching, it is likely that they will leap forth and attempt to drag the front-rank person into their lair. Then, half of the trolls will devour the unfortunate soul who has been thrown while the other half surges out to attack the rest of the party. "Divide and conquer" is the troll credo, and while they are not very intelligent the tactic works for them far more often than it fails.

Weaponry of the Trolls

Most trolls do not wield weapons. Not only are their claws and fangs perfectly deadly in and of themselves; they also love the sensation of crunching into bones and

causing a lot of screaming. Hitting someone with a weapon is one step removed from all that visceral satisfaction.

The exceptions include troll-giants (who wield the weapons that are common to their giant kin, such as clubs and axes), hill trolls (who forge their own weapons due to their lesser physical capabilities), snow trolls (who occasionally use icicle spears), and troll guardians.

Troll guardians are a special type. They are either employed by an evil overlord of some kind (a necromancer, an assassin, a Knight of Saigoth, or what-have-you), or they are stationed by their chieftain to defend one of the outer entrances to the lair. In either case they are responsible for keeping a deadly monster in chains and in goading that monster with a pointy stick so that it will attack any intruders. The troll's regenerative powers allow it to recuperate in those trying times when the guardian monster turns against them.

The Game Master can design these encounters and place them at appropriate locations in a dungeon or cavern system. Generally, 25% of troll lairs will have 1D2 entrances that are each defended by a troll guardian and his monster. This chance increases to 50% if a chieftain is present in the lair, 75% if there are spell casters (shamans or witch doctors), or 100% if there is a troll king.

Known examples of guardian beasts used by trolls include badgerbears, cave bears, crocutas, giant rhinoceros beetles, hydras, wyverns, and tentacle beasts (which serve as "garbage disposals" and act in symbiosis with the trolls, never attacking them). Certainly you as the Game Master can come up with some other great ideas too.

Here are the types of "stick-stickies" that troll guardians tend to use in their work (and a D100 random roll for designation if that's what you'd like to do):

- **[01-20]** Fauchard (damage 1D6+1+STR bonus)
- **[21-35]** Partisan (damage 1D6+1+STR bonus)
- **[31-50]** Fauchard-Fork (damage 2D4+STR bonus)
- **[51-75]** Spetum (damage 1D6+2+STR bonus)
- **[76-95]** Military Fork (damage 1D8+1+STR bonus)
- **[96-00]** Ranseur (damage 2D8+1+STR bonus)

Note that these pole arms tend to be troll-sized, 12' to 14' in haft length, and as such they are a little too long for any PC smaller than a half-ogre to wield effectively.

The troll will use the weapon a single time to "pokey" the guardian monster from behind (inflicting 1D4 damage upon it), and the beastie is trained to attack and eat someone else whenever it is poked. (The monster has learned the hard way that attacking the troll leads to beatings.) There is a 5% chance that the monster's chains will break during the initial charge, in which case it is likely to attack the troll instead of any intruders. If the troll is in position fighting from a distance alongside or behind the guardian monster, the pole arm will be used to keep intruders at bay. Some guardian rooms feature a staircase, ledge, bridge, or even a small bastion from which the troll can prod the monster without being reached by melee weapons. But if anyone manages to approach and then ducks in under the weapon's range, the troll will drop the weapon to attack normally with claws and bites.

Being a guardian and monster keeper is tough work, and only the toughest trolls are chosen for the task. In game terms, this means that such trolls will always have at least 6 hit points per hit die.



Rarity and Frequency of Troll Encounters

The frequency of trolls appearing depends upon the will of the Game Master. As always, the GM should design whatever encounters he feels are appropriate for dungeons and wilderness locales throughout the campaign. In addition to these “set” encounters, both “wandering monster” encounters and encounters in randomly-generated terrain can be dictated by a monster’s Frequency rating, as dictated in the 1977 bestiary. Additional rules pertaining to monster frequency by terrain type and climate can be found in the 1979 GM’s book, and the 1983 bestiary as well.

Generally troll Frequency ratings are as follows:

Cursed Trolls, as exemplified by the 1974 Original rules and the 1977 Advanced rules, are by far the most common. They are considered Uncommon in most areas, including dungeons, caverns, and ruins.

The Uncommon rating can fluctuate however based on climate and terrain, as detailed in the 1983 bestiary. For example cursed trolls are Rare in Cold Civilized Mountains, Rare in Tropical Wilderness Plains, and so forth. As general rules of thumb:

- **[1]** Cursed trolls are never Common.

- **[2]** Cursed trolls are Uncommon in most temperate wilderness areas.
- **[3]** They are Rare in most cold areas, and/or civilized areas.
- **[4]** In areas that are both cold and civilized, in most campaigns they should be Very Rare in those locales.

All of the other sub-types of trolls are either Rare, Very Rare, or non-existent in specific areas (unless of course they feature in a special encounter designed by the GM).

Beyond the matter of cursed trolls, the following precepts should be applied for other troll sub-races:

- **Bog Trolls** are Rare in temperate swamps, Very Rare in dungeons (and caves and ruins), and Very Rare in both cold and tropical swamps. They are not found elsewhere.
- **Cave Trolls** are Rare in dungeons (and caves and ruins), and Very Rare in mountainous or hilly terrain. They are not found elsewhere.
- **Forest Trolls** are Rare in forested terrain, and Very Rare in dungeons (and caves and ruins). They are not found elsewhere.
- **Hill Trolls** are Rare in hilly terrain, and Very Rare in dungeons (and caves and ruins). They are not found elsewhere.
- **Lake Trolls (and Bridge Trolls)** are Rare in freshwater, and Very Rare in wet dungeons (and caves and ruins). They are not found elsewhere.
- **Mountain Trolls** are Rare in mountainous terrain, Very Rare in hilly terrain, and Very Rare in dungeons (and caves and ruins). They are not found elsewhere.
- **Sea Trolls** are Rare in saltwater, and Very Rare in seaside dungeons (and

saltwater caves and seashore ruins). They are not found elsewhere.

- **Snow Trolls** are Rare in cold terrain, and Very Rare in cold dungeons (and caves and ruins). They are not found elsewhere.
- **Stone Trolls** are Rare in mountainous terrain, Very Rare in hilly terrain, and Very Rare in dungeons (and caves and ruins). They are not found elsewhere.

These ratings are suggested for troll-giants (Troll-Jotunns), which are half-troll and half-giant as described later:

- **Fire Troll-Giants** are found wherever fire giants can be encountered. They are always Very Rare.
- **Frost Troll-Giants** are found wherever frost giants can be encountered. They are always Very Rare.
- **Hill Troll-Giants** are found wherever hill giants can be encountered. As the most common troll-giant race, they are always Rare.
- **Mountain Troll-Giants** are found wherever mountain giants can be encountered. They are always Very Rare.
- **Stone Troll-Giants** are found wherever stone giants can be encountered. They are always Very Rare.
- **Two-Headed Troll-Giants** are found wherever fire giants and/or ettins are encountered. They are always Very Rare.

Troldfolk, the “little trolls,” are always Very Rare at best. Moreover, they should never be randomly encountered; they should only

be found in predetermined areas as dictated by the Game Master. The most common areas for such consideration are cold forests, cold caverns, and dungeons.

(Further, **Hag** frequency — for Brine Hags, Emerald Hags, Nether Hags, and Shadow Hags — stands as detailed in the 1977, 1979, and 1983 hardcover volumes).



The Number of Trolls Appearing

The suggested number of trolls appearing in any given encounter is based upon an area’s Challenge Level. The Challenge Level of a locale depends on the Game Master’s decisions. This is a tricky matter for learning GMs to master, so I will provide a fair amount of detail on this important topic. You will want troll (and other monster) encounters to be dangerous and exciting, but not immediately lethal to the adventuring party’s Player Characters. PCs should almost always be given the option to run away when an encounter is too difficult for them to manage. (Whether *players* are wise enough to recognize a fatal encounter, however, is another matter entirely.)

Here are some general guidelines:

- **Surrounding the base of operations:** At the start of the game, the Player Characters are temporarily stationed in a civilized settlement (typically a village, town, or city). The civilized hexes immediately outside of this base of operations are considered to be of

“Challenge Level (CL) 1.” This means that encounters in this area are rolled normally by terrain, but the monster level (I-X) of the actual monster types appearing is equivalent to the same number that would be found on “Dungeon Level 1” per the 1979 rules. At Challenge Level 1, most encounters are with monster level I creatures, but encounters with monster types of levels II and III can also occur. I wish I could be more specific, but the strictures of the OGL largely prevent my direct citation in this publication. I will say that you will probably be very interested in a hardcover volume written by Gary Gygax, published by TSR in 1979. You will probably find an Appendix with a letter designation between “B” and “D” to be particularly fascinating. Happy reading.

- **In the wilderness:** Each specific multi-hex terrain locale in your game world (each forest, each lake, each mountain range, etc.) should have its own Challenge Level. Very generally, areas that are close to the base of operations, where the GM wants the PCs to go exploring, are probably of Challenge Level 1 or 2. Areas that the local citizens declare as “dangerous” would be Challenge Level 3, or even higher. Remote and very deadly “lost world” and wilderness areas could have Challenge Levels as high as 16 (using the 1979 random encounter system), but most known regions in the world will top out at CL 8 or 9.
- **In a mega-dungeon:** Mega-dungeons have a unique lethality configuration, because Player Characters are meant to spend a lot of time exploring them throughout the lifetime of a campaign.

Generally, the upper surface ruins positioned over a mega-dungeon will be Challenge Level 1. The first dungeon level below the surface will be Challenge Level 1 or 2; the second dungeon level will be Challenge Level 2 or 3; and so forth. PCs can easily get in over their heads if they journey too deeply while inexperienced, but this is a classic risk vs. reward paradigm which is integral to the game.

- **In a smaller dungeon:** Smaller dungeons, which are not mega-dungeons, tend to have between 1 and 3 dungeon levels in total. The first-accessed level has a Challenge Level as designated by the GM, or on a published dungeon module’s cover. For example, a smaller dungeon designed by the GM for her players’ experience level 6 and 7 PCs, with 3 dungeon levels, probably has Challenge Level 6 for the entry level, CL 6 or 7 for the second level, and CL 7 or 8 for the deepest level. Similarly, a published module “for character levels 1-3” could be understood to have a Challenge Level of 1 in the first region, a Challenge Level of 2 in the mid-chapter areas, and a Challenge Level of 3 in the endgame region.

With all of that said, when trolls are encountered in either a random encounter or in a GM-designed encounter, the following ranges for number appearing are recommended. These numbers are extrapolated from the 1979 random encounter system, with the varying levels of lethality for each troll sub-race uniquely considered and applied. For example weaker troll races are encountered in greater numbers, while stronger troll races are encountered in lower numbers overall.

- **Bog Trolls** (HD 6+3**, lethality 7.375): Regions of CLs 1 to 3, zero (no encounter). CL 4, 1D2. CL 5, 1D3. CL 6, 1D4. CL 7, 2D4. CL 8, 3D4. CL 9, 4D4. CL 10, 5D4 (etc.).
- **Brine Hags** (HD 3****, lethality 5.000): Regions of CLs 1 to 4, zero (no encounter). CL 5, 1. CL 6, 1D2. CL 7, 1 (50%) or 2D2. CL 8, 1 (50%) or 3D2. CL 9, 1 (50%) or 4D2. CL 10, 1 (50%) or 5D2 (etc.). 50% of brine hag encounters at CL 7+ are with a solitary hag, defended by allied creatures (typically sea trolls or undead).
- **Cave Trolls** (HD 5+5**, lethality 6.625): Regions of CLs 1 to 3, zero (no encounter). CL 4, 1D3. CL 5, 1D4. CL 6, 1D4+1. CL 7, 2D4+2. CL 8, 3D4+3. CL 9, 4D4+4. CL 10, 5D4+5 (etc.). Note that cave troll encounters become much more deadly if the PCs are not carrying reliable sources of light.
- **Cursed Trolls** (HD 6+6***, lethality 8.250): Regions of CLs 1 to 3, zero (no encounter). CL 4, 1. CL 5, 1D2. CL 6, 1D3. CL 7, 2D3. CL 8, 3D3. CL 9, 4D3. CL 10, 5D3 (etc.).
- **Emerald Hags** (HD 9***, lethality 10.500): Regions of CLs 1 to 5, zero (no encounter). CL 6, 1. CL 7, 1. CL 8, 1D2. CL 9, 1 (50%) or 2D2. CL 10, 1 (50%) or 3D2 (etc.). 50% of emerald hag encounters at CL 9+ are with a solitary hag, defended by allied creatures (typically giants or troll-giants).
- **Fire Troll-Giants** (HD 9+2****, lethality 11.250): Regions of CLs 1 to 5, zero (no encounter). CL 6, 1. CL 7, 1D2. CL 8, 1D3. CL 9, 2D3. CL 10, 2D3 (etc.).
- **Forest Trolls** (HD 4+4***, lethality 6.000): Regions of CL 1, zero (no encounter). CL 2, 1. CL 3, 1D2. CL 4, 1D3. CL 5, 1D4. CL 6, 2D4. CL 7, 3D4. CL 8, 4D4. CL 9, 5D4. CL 10, 6D4 (etc.).
- **Frost Troll-Giants** (HD 9****, lethality 11.00): Regions of CLs 1 to 5, zero (no encounter). CL 6, 1. CL 7, 1D2. CL 8, 1D3. CL 9, 2D3. CL 10, 2D3 (etc.).
- **The Great Boyg**: This demigoddess will challenge characters of experience levels 16 and up.
- **Great Elder Trolls**: These monsters should never be encountered randomly. They can serve as deadly adversaries for adventurers between experience levels 9 and 18, depending upon the number and power of their trollish followers.
- **Groohlz-Drakha**: This godling will provide a challenge for characters of experience levels 15 and up. However, due to his capricious and (somewhat) gentler nature, he can be encountered within a mega-dungeon by characters of any experience level. He will tend to spare the lives of low-level PCs, unless they viciously attack on a repeated basis.
- **The Haga-Daimonai** (HD 9****, lethality 11.00): Because it is never encountered alone, and the special circumstances involved, this horror will challenge characters of experience levels 11 and up.
- **Hill Trolls** (HD 5+5**, lethality 6.625): Regions of CLs 1 to 3, zero (no encounter). CL 4, 1D2. CL 5, 1D3. CL 6, 1D4. CL 7, 2D4. CL 8, 3D4. CL 9, 4D4. CL 10, 5D4 (etc.).
- **Hill Troll-Giants** (HD 8**, lethality 9.000): Regions of CLs 1 to 4, zero (no encounter). CL 5, 1. CL 6, 1D2. CL 7, 1D3. CL 8, 2D3. CL 9, 3D3. CL 10, 4D3 (etc.).

- **Lake Trolls** (HD 5+5**, lethality 6.625): Regions of CLs 1 to 3, zero (no encounter). CL 4, 1D2. CL 5, 1D3. CL 6, 1D4. CL 7, 2D4. CL 8, 3D4. CL 9, 4D4. CL 10, 5D4 (etc.).
- **Mountain Trolls** (HD 7+7**, lethality 8.875): Regions of CLs 1 to 4, zero (no encounter). CL 5, 1. CL 6, 1D2. CL 7, 1D3. CL 8, 2D3. CL 9, 3D3. CL 10, 4D3 (etc.).
- **Mountain Troll-Giants** (HD 9+3****, lethality 11.375): Regions of CLs 1 to 5, zero (no encounter). CL 6, 1. CL 7, 1D2. CL 8, 1D3. CL 9, 2D3. CL 10, 2D3 (etc.).
- **Nether Hags** (HD 7+3*** to 7+12***, lethality 9.5000): Regions of CLs 1 to 5, zero (no encounter). CL 6, 1. CL 7, 1. CL 8, 1D2. CL 9, 1 (50%) or 2D2. CL 10, 1 (50%) or 3D2 (etc.). 50% of nether hag encounters at CL 9+ are with a solitary hag, defended by allied creatures (typically trolls or a demon).



- **Sea Trolls** (HD 6+12**, lethality 8.500): Regions of CLs 1 to 4, zero (no encounter). CL 5, 1. CL 6, 1D2. CL 7, 1D3. CL 8, 2D3. CL 9, 3D3. CL 10, 4D3 (etc.).
- **Shadow Hags** (HD 8****, lethality 10.000): Regions of CLs 1 to 5, zero (no encounter). CL 6, 1. CL 7, 1. CL 8, 1D2. CL 9, 1 (50%) or 2D2. CL 10, 1 (50%) or 3D2 (etc.). 50% of shadow hag encounters at CL 9+ are with a solitary hag, defended by allied creatures (typically troll-giants or a nightmare).
- **Snow Trolls** (HD 6+1***, lethality 7.625): Regions of CL 1 or 2, zero (no encounter). CL 3, 1. CL 4, 1D2. CL 5, 1D3. CL 6, 1D4. CL 7, 2D4. CL 8, 3D4. CL 9, 4D4. CL 10, 5D4 (etc.).
- **Stone Trolls** (HD 5+3**, lethality 6.375): Regions of CLs 1 to 3, zero (no encounter). CL 4, 1D3. CL 5, 1D4. CL 6, 1D4+1. CL 7, 2D4+2. CL 8, 3D4+3. CL 9, 4D4+4. CL 10, 5D4+5. (etc.). Stone troll encounters will frequently be non-violent, unless the PCs are particularly unwise and/or aggressive.
- **Stone Troll-Giants** (HD 8+2**, lethality 9.250): Regions of CLs 1 to 4, zero (no encounter). CL 5, 1. CL 6, 1D2. CL 7, 1D3. CL 8, 2D3. CL 9, 3D3. CL 10, 4D3 (etc.).
- **Trogool**: This demigod will challenge characters of experience levels 18 and up.
- **Troldfolk** (HD 1+1***, lethality 2.625): Regions of CL 1, 1D3. CL 2, 1D4. CL 3, 1D4+1. CL 4, 2D4+2. CL 5, 3D4+3. CL 6, 4D4+4. CL 7, 5D4+4. CL 8, 6D4+4. CL 9, 7D4+4. CL 10, 8D4+4 (etc.).
- **Trolghuls** (HD 4+2***, lethality 5.75): Regions of CL 1, zero (no encounter). CL 2, 1. CL 3, 1D2. CL 4, 1D3. CL

5, 1D4. CL 6, 2D4. CL 7, 3D4. CL 8, 4D4. CL 9, 5D4. CL 10, 6D4 (etc.).

- **Two-Headed Troll-Giants** (HD 8+3***, lethality 9.875): Regions of CLs 1 to 5, zero (no encounter). CL 6, 1. CL 7, 1D2. CL 8, 2D2. CL 9, 3D2. CL 10, 4D2 (etc.).

(Remember that in Excel, you can use for example the macro =RANDBETWEEN(3,9) to generate a random number between 3 and 9. Or you can use dice! A D3 can be represented by a halved D6; 1-2 = 1, 3-4 = 2, 5-6 = 3.)

A group of trolls is colloquially known as a “pack.” Amongst sages and expert troll hunters however, the preferred professional terminology is “a gurgling of trolls.”

Later on in this supplement you will find rules for fully-populated troll lairs, which can potentially feature *many* more deadly monsters than a typical PC adventuring party can deal with simultaneously. Such places should have their population split over a fair number of rooms or caverns, and a kindly GM will provide NPC warnings that troll lairs are not to be tampered with unless the adventures are *very* prepared for a hard and bloody fight. Bring extra torches, henchmen, and acid vials along!



For those trolls which have sexes (male and female), assume that 50% are male, rounded up, and 50% are female, rounded down. Female trolls are usually smaller than male trolls. Hags are always female;

their race procreates with male giants, and newborn hags are the result of a terrible cauldron ritual. The hags’ offspring, the troll-giants, are always male.

Troll Armor Class

Only some kinds of trolls wear armor; most “lesser” trolls feel unnatural in armor, and instinctively believe that such obstructions slow their attacks and interfere with limb regeneration. Some sea trolls, and all hill trolls, wear armor (as delineated in their stat blocks).

Hags do not wear armor, but their low armor class includes un-dispellable auras of bodily protection.

All troll-giants wear armor, and their armor class reflects this.

Some troll chieftains and other leaders wear special customized armor, crafted by hag-crones or imprisoned armor crafters. Details for these variants are provided in the troll champions chapter.

Special Consideration:

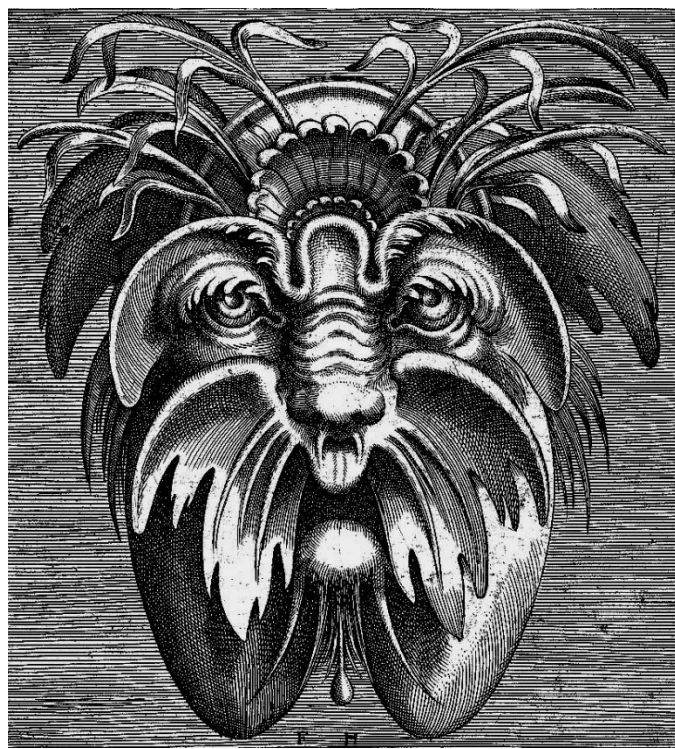
A Vulnerability to

Lightning

In the Scandinavian folklore there is a belief that trolls are terrified of lightning and thunder. This likely relates to the existence of Thor, the Troll Smiter. Trolls who hear thunder, or see lightning, would be rightly terrified of divine wrath smiting them down from the Asgardian heavens!



monstrous attacks, such as blue dragon's breath, would inflict lightning damage as well.



Whether this is merely a superstitious fear, or a true vulnerability to electrical attacks, is up to the decision of the Game Master. The rules lightly touch upon this by stating that trolls cannot heal burn damage, and in the real world lightning strikes are most certainly a type of burn! But the matter should probably be clearly stated for game play.

My suggestion is that only *cursed* trolls — those creatures which are based directly on the game's Basic (1977) and Advanced (1979) rules sets — can heal and regenerate lightning damage, while other types of trolls cannot. Trolls are already susceptible to fire and acid, and this adds a third mythic damage vulnerability to the mix. This ruling helps to slightly counter the nasty power of these monstrous creatures in game play.

Of course Player Characters will only have access to lightning damage through magic items (Hammer of Thunderbolts, Javelin of Lightning, Wand of Lightning), and various spells (Lightning Bolt, Chain Lightning, etc.). Theoretically of course other electric

Chapter 2:

Troll Sub-Species

This chapter provides information on each of the troll sub-races which exist in the World of Oldskull. The descriptions here are quite brief, because trolls of all kinds are discussed at length throughout this supplement; therefore, only game statistics and a few distinguishing traits are detailed here.

Bog Trolls

They guard the wolf-coverts, lands inaccessible, wind-beaten nesses, fearfulest fen-deeps, where a flood from the mountains 'neath mists of the nesses netherward rattles, the stream under earth ...

— *Beowulf*, as translated by Dr. Lesslie Hall

Bog trolls are swamp dwellers. They are adept swimmers, and are more vicious than even cursed trolls when encountered in large numbers. They hunt prey in gory feeding frenzies, turning the waters pink for nearly a mile around their fetid lairs. They tend to fall mindlessly upon their own wounded after a battle, devouring the weak. This is the only dreadful thing that really holds back their numbers. As might be imagined, all non-troll creatures despise bog trolls and destroy them whenever they can.

Note that bog troll regeneration is somewhat hindered if they are not standing or swimming in water (a pool, swamp, lake, etc.). They can regenerate outside of water for up to 6 hours, but then all regeneration ceases until they can immerse themselves once again.

TROLL, BOG, MALE

(Old Norse = MYRR-TROLL)

Myrr-Troll: Armor Class 4, Move 60' (20' ground / 120' (40') swimming, Hit Dice 6+3**, average hit points 30, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D4+2 / 1D4+2 / 2D6, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, great strength (STR 18/01), superior infravision (90'), water breathing, Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (2 hp per round on land, 3 hp per round if immersed), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 7 (due to 6+3 HD), Morale 10, Intelligence low (INT 5), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

TROLL, BOG, FEMALE

(Old Norse = MYRR-TROLLKONA)

Myrr-Trollkona: Armor Class 4, Move 60' (20' ground / 120' (40') swimming, HD 6**, average hit points 27, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D4 / 1D4 / 2D4, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, superior strength (STR 18), superior infravision (90'), water breathing, Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (2 hp per round on land, 3 hp per round if immersed), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 6, Morale 10, Intelligence low (INT 5), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

Cave Trolls



Cave trolls are the only sub-race which can be petrified by sunlight. They dwell only in

the netherworld and deep dungeons, but have been known to chase prey out into the daylight when they are desperate to feast upon tasty flesh. They are ever-rotting, leprous, terrible things that sleep in web-like cocoons filled with regenerative slime. Their skin is black and purplish-gray, and their eyes are aglow with dim violet sparks akin to faerie fire.

If faced with dim light (candles, magic swords, torches, lanterns, or even moonlight), cave trolls suffer a -1 to their morale and to hit rolls. They will attack at first not to wound their prey, but to smack light sources out of adventurers' hands. Assume that any successful first hit, in addition to normal damage, will swat the light source down to the ground (with a 25% chance that it will be extinguished, or 50% for candles). If a light source is knocked down, the next attack(s) by that troll will be spent extinguishing the light.



If faced with powerful light (Light, Continual Light, Fireball, and similar magics), cave trolls suffer a -2 to their morale and to hit rolls.

If faced with sunlight (or a spell or magical item which creates true daylight), cave trolls suffer a -3 to their morale and to hit rolls. Their slimy skin also begins to petrify due to contact the light. Cave trolls will suffer 1D6 points of damage from the light per round, until they die or manage to flee.

Damage inflicted by sunlight cannot be regenerated.

In some way, cave trolls are strongly associated with gugs (the terrible giant-things of the nether Dreamlands). The proof of this connection can be found in their bodies; cave trolls have dangerous thorny growths emerging from their forelimbs, at the same joint where gugs have split forearms. Their claw attacks as listed below include additional damage due to these nasty “troller-thorns.”

TROLL, CAVE, MALE

(Old Norse = HELLIR-TROLL)

Hellir-Troll: Armor Class 5, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 5+5**, average hit points 28, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D6+4 / 1D6+4 / 2D4, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, superior strength (STR 18), excellent infravision (120'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (3 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 7 (due to 5+5 HD), Morale 9, Intelligence low average (INT 7), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

TROLL, CAVE, FEMALE

(Old Norse = HELLIR-TROLLKONA)

Hellir-Trollkona: Armor Class 5, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 5+2**, average hit points 25, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D6+2 / 1D6+2 / 1D6, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, superior strength (STR 17), excellent infravision (120'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (3 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 6 (due to 5+2 HD), Morale 9, Intelligence low average (INT 7), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

Cursed Trolls

The foeman trod the shining hall-pavement, he strides furiously into the hall. Strode he angrily; from the eyes of him glimmered a lustre unlovely likeliest to fire.

He beheld in the hall the heroes in numbers, a circle of kinsmen sleeping together, he exults over his supposed prey. A throng of thanemen: then his thoughts were exultant, he minded to sunder from each of the thanemen the life from his body, horrible demon, ere morning came ...

— *Beowulf*, as translated by Dr. Lesslie Hall

Cursed trolls are the “standard” trolls already detailed in the classic FRPG, as already described in the Basic, Expert, and Advanced rules. The first were born long ago due to cruel Hyaenoghul, the forsaking of Mung, and the demonic heresies of the Grendel-Modor. As is well known, they are loathsome, shambling, emerald green in hue, utterly evil, and exceedingly stinky too.

Arguably, second only to dragons, they are the archetypal evil monster in the game. Play them as such.

For those who care about such things, the cursed troll as described here has been designed to unify the design disparity inherent in different editions of the old school game. The male cursed troll possesses the stats of the “Advanced troll,” as featured in the 1977 bestiary. Meanwhile, the female cursed troll

possesses the stats of the “B/X troll,” as featured in the 1981 Expert rules. As such, both sets of game stats are accurate and ready for game play.



TROLL, CURSED, MALE

(Old Norse = **BLOTA-TROLL**)

Cursed Troll: Armor Class 4, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 6+6***, average hit points 33, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D4+4 / 1D4+4 / 2D6, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, great strength (STR 18/51), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (3 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid or fire damage, Save As Fighter 8 (due to 6+6 HD), Morale 10, Intelligence low (INT 6), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

TROLL, CURSED, FEMALE

(Old Norse = **BLOTA-TROLLKONA**)

Cursed Trollkona: Armor Class 4, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 6+3**, average hit points 30, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage

1D6 / 1D6 / 1D10, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, great strength (STR 18/01), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (3 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid or fire damage, Save As Fighter 7 (due to 6+3 HD), Morale 10, Intelligence Low (INT 6), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

Forest Trolls



Forest trolls are lithe, gangly things which look a bit like thorny moss-covered trees. Their skin is bark-like and difficult to penetrate, but their claws and fangs are relatively weak. They stand with ultimate stillness as they prefer to watch prey from the shadows, ambushing travelers from

behind. They run with an eerie, stilted gait, and their slowness ensures that some lucky victims will escape their grasping reach from time to time.



They will hunt throughout an entire forest in search of tasty prey. In their immediate lair region however they are exceedingly dangerous, because they will make well-trodden paths only to dig concealed pits for the purpose of catching human explorers unawares. Forest troll lairs are made of great, twisting thorn-boughs, riddled through with labyrinthine corridors lost in verdant shadow. Some latent form of evil magic allows them to corrupt ancient trees and to turn them into thorny black twisting monstrosities over time.

Elves in particular despise forest trolls, and bumbling Player Characters might (if they are lucky!) find themselves being rescued from a troll ambush by elven scouts or half-elven rangers.

TROLL, FOREST, MALE

(Old Norse = SKOG-TROLL)

Skog-Troll: Armor Class 3, Move 90' (30'), Hit Dice 4+4***, average hit points 22, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D6 / 1D6 / 1D8, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, camouflage

(surprise on a 1-3 on 1D6), superior strength (STR 17), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (2 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save as Fighter 5 (due to 4+4 HD), Morale 9, Intelligence low average (INT 7), Alignment Chaotic Neutral with Evil tendencies.

TROLL, FOREST, FEMALE

(Old Norse = SKOG-TROLL)

Skog-Trollkona: Armor Class 3, Move 90' (30'), Hit Dice 4+1***, average hit points 19, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D4 / 1D4 / 1D6, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, camouflage (surprise on a 1-3 on 1D6), enhanced strength (STR 16), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (2 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save as Fighter 5 (due to 4+1 HD), Morale 9, Intelligence low average (INT 7), Alignment Chaotic Neutral with Evil tendencies.

Hill Trolls

Despite their warty ugliness, broad bodies, and hunched stature, hill trolls are sometimes mistaken for ogres or runty hill giants. They are far smaller than other trolls, and they even brave their fear of fire in the name of forging armor, helmets, and weapons for themselves. Hill trolls are considerably more intelligent than cursed trolls, and despite their chaotic nature they will fight in formation against adversaries. They wear fearsome iron skull-masks which cover their mouths, and their battle

roars echo with a terrible reverberating clamor.

Hill trolls have a slow and burdensome gait, and weighty armor slows them down. Their fangs are blunted and they do not bite in combat. Their claws are rather small, and they clutch heavy two-handed weapons (typically pole arms, mauls, or great axes) which they will use in preference of rending attacks whenever possible. Some hill trolls will even use thrown weapons (clubs, hammers, barbed javelins, and axes), although bows, slings, and crossbows are too finicky and fragile for their stubby fingers.

Due to their chosen home terrain, hill trolls very frequently come into violent contact with gnomes and hill dwarves. Such battles are always horrific affairs, ending only when one side or the other is completely annihilated.

TROLL, HILL, MALE

Fell-Troll: Armor Class 2 (armored), Move 60' (20'), Hit Dice 5+5**, average hit points 28, # Attacks 1 weapon or 2 claw / claw, Damage by weapon +3 or 1D4+2 / 1D4+2, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, superior strength (STR 18), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks +2 to hit with thrown weapons at short range (+1 at medium range, no penalty at long range), severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (3 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 7 (due to 5+5 HD), Morale 9, Intelligence average (INT 10), Alignment Chaotic Neutral with Evil tendencies.

TROLL, HILL, FEMALE

(Old Norse = **FELL-TROLLKONA**)

Fell-Trollkona: Armor Class 2 (armored), Move 60' (20'), Hit Dice 5+2**, average hit points 25, # Attacks 1 weapon or 2 claw / claw, Damage by weapon +2 or 1D4+1 / 1D4+1, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, superior strength (STR 17), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks +2 to hit with thrown weapons at short range (+1 at medium range, no penalty at long range), severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (3 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 6 (due to 5+2 HD), Morale 9, Intelligence average (INT 10), Alignment Chaotic Neutral with Evil tendencies.

Lake Trolls and Bridge Trolls



“Freshwater trolls” (Saer-Trolls and Bryggja-Trolls) are deadly water-breathing creatures. They are associated with emerald hags, and those hags in particular seem to be the only ones who congregate with freshwater trolls in numbers. Curiously, freshwater trolls are genderless,

but they can lay fish-like eggs from time to time.

They have wing-like spiny fins upon their backs; their heads are immense; their greenish grins are filled with vicious fangs. They have gills, small claws, and very thick and gristly skin. Note that they can only regenerate while they are at least partially immersed in freshwater.

Lake trolls frequently ally with frogmen, and frogmen protect their eggs and treasures in return for protection (and a share of devoured human flesh). There is also a rarer sub-type of the freshwater troll, which favors running water; these are the Bryggja (bridge) trolls. Bridge trolls do not like company of any kind. They are very rare, and lair only in places where overhangs, ruins, dams, or bridges cross a river, waterfall, or stream.



Bridge trolls are very poorly understood, but from what little has been divined, it seems that they are exiles from their kind who dream and meditate in order to purify the “flow severance” that is caused by a

bridge or other barrier over running water. As such, they are extremely territorial and will challenge anything that dares to cross their bridge. They will demand gold from powerful-seeming adversaries, while weaker interlopers will simply be devoured. Bridge trolls lurk and slumber lightly (while sitting up), and they immediately awaken when someone dares to cross their water. Their treasure is typically stashed in hollows, or perhaps an underwater grotto of some kind.

TROLL, LAKE

(Old Norse = SAER-TROLL)

Saer-Troll: Armor Class 3, Move 30' (10') ground / 150' (50') swimming, Hit Dice 5+5**, average hit points 28, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D4+1 / 1D4+1 / 3D4, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, superior strength (STR 18), infravision (60'), water breathing, Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack if immersed, Special Defenses regeneration (3 hp per round) if immersed, Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 7 (due to 5+5 HD), Morale 10, Intelligence semi- to low (INT 4 or 5), Alignment Chaotic Evil with Neutral tendencies.

TROLL, BRIDGE

(Old Norse = BRYGGJA-TROLL)

As above, but hit points will never be below average (minimum hit points 28) and should be rolled at +1 on the die.

Mountain Trolls

When the dance was over, the king asked the youth what he asked as a reward for having given him such a pleasure.

The youth answered: “My lord king, I did not come to you to win gold and gear. But I have another request to make: that you allow me to set out and search for your three daughters, carried away by a mountain troll.”

When the king heard this his thoughts once more grew gloomy, and he replied: “You need not even think of delivering my daughters. It is no child's play, and your betters have already attempted it in vain. Yet should it really come to pass that you deliver one of the princesses, you may be sure that I will not break my word.”

So he took leave of the king and set forth. And he decided to take no rest until he had found what he sought ...

— *The Swedish Fairy Book*, by Klara Stroebe

Mountain trolls willingly fled from the imprecations of Mung long ago, and have evolved quite separately from the baser sub-races of their kind. They have a deceptively innocent appearance, something like an overgrown Muppet crossed with a drunken ogre and a Wild Thing. The huge trolls illustrated by John Bauer, like the one below, are typically mountain trolls.



They are the largest of trolls, and the strongest. They are both fatter and more muscled, with bulbous noses and bumbling bodies. Their shaggy hair tends to grow long; sometimes errant sprouts of it peek out from an ear, the back of a hand, or a tattooed shoulder blade. But despite such an unkindly genetic legacy, mountain trolls are actually quite cleanly and self-admiring.

Mountain trolls are herders, raising elk, moose, wild sheep, giant goats, or reindeer. Misunderstood by all their monstrous kin, they find solace in song and ritual. Deep in their lairs, mountain trolls sing and chant in their booming, stone-hollowed voices. They sing of battles won, kingdoms lost, an age when all living things were one, and riddling poems of the un-worlds which lie beneath the iridescent caverns of the Dreamlands. They believe they are the last keepers of a secret realm which no longer exists due to the dawning Kingdom of Man.

Of all the troll races, mountain trolls are unique in that while still being evil they are fascinated by humans. Mountain trolls

have been known to abduct children, or princesses, or even old men and women, spiriting them away to deep crystalline grottoes or wind-wrought aeries towering above the alpine wilderness.

Mountain trolls are easily corrupted by their troll-kin. If mountain trolls are found without other creatures (e.g., mountain giants, hags, allied humanoids, or other troll sub-races), it is virtually certain that they will be raising 1D3 innocent humans in their domain. Such people are treated well for life, and even fawned over. “Rescuing” such souls will be a very challenging prospect to be sure.

However, intruders will quickly learn that mountain trolls are exceedingly secretive, superstitious, and territorial. Uninvited humans are regarded as an ill omen of supremely dire portent. Bringing unarmed humans into their own homes as a matter of choice is one thing; being invaded by armed adventurers searching for loot to steal is quite another. Intruders will be shouted at and threatened with death for 1D3+1 rounds only; if such warnings are belittled or ignored, the mountain trolls will attack.

TROLL, MOUNTAIN, MALE

(Old Norse = **BERG-TROLL**)

Berg-Troll: Armor Class 4, Move 90' (30'), Hit Dice 7+7**, average hit points 40, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D6+4 / 1D6+4 / 2D6+1, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, great strength (STR 18/99), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (3 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save as Fighter 9 (due to 7+7 HD), Morale 11, Intelligence low average (INT 7), Alignment Chaotic Evil with Neutral tendencies.

TROLL, MOUNTAIN, FEMALE

(Old Norse = **BERG-TROLLKONA**)

Berg-Trollkona: Armor Class 4, Move 90' (30'), Hit Dice 7+4**, average hit points 37, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D6+2 / 1D6+2 / 2D6, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, great strength (STR 18/51), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (3 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save as Fighter 8 (due to 7+4 HD), Morale 11, Intelligence low average (INT 7), Alignment Chaotic Evil with Neutral tendencies.



Sea Trolls

Once upon a time, when the king was sailing out at sea, a sea troll had called up a terrible tempest, so that the ship was about to sink.

In order to escape with his life, the king had to promise the sea troll to give him whatever first came his way when he reached shore. The king thought his hunting dog would be the first to come running to meet him, as usual; but instead his three young daughters came rowing out to meet him in a boat ...

— *The Swedish Fairy Book*, by Klara Stroebe



The sea trolls are truly nightmarish in appearance, with pale oval eyes, lamprey-like teeth, and draping manes comprised of

filth and seaweed. They will eat fish and sharks and just about anything else, including nereids, tritons, sirens, and mermaids. Even sea devils fear these vile things.

Sea trolls are vicious and nasty bastards. They are similar to freshwater trolls in some physical ways, but in behavior they are merciless, ravenous, sadistic and cruel. Some will speak to humans (particularly fishermen and shore-folk), making promises which will never be kept, or misleading stray children to be devoured in the shallows.

Sea trolls are more cowardly than troll races, and if sorely pressed by enemies they will flee to their deep lairs beneath the kelp and froth rather than fighting to the death. As such they are usually allied with lesser creatures, such as merrow (aquatic ogres), aquatic hobgoblins, aquatic gargoyles, or even Deep Ones.

Their fore-claws are somewhat weak, but their maws are deadly. Smaller sea trolls swim quite quickly, but they are easily outmaneuvered aboard a ship or on the land. Considering too that sea trolls can only regenerate while immersed, it should come as no surprise to learn that they will almost never pursue prey onto land. Even when facing fishermen, they will ambush and attempt to drag down individuals to drown rather than facing an entire hostile crew.

About 10% of sea trolls are considerably more cunning than their swarm-mates. These “salt trolls” are very large, with at least 45 hit points. They will armor themselves with sharkskin and seaweed-woven clumps of shells.

TROLL, SEA

(Old Norse = HAF-TROLL)

Haf-Troll: Armor Class 2 (1 if an armored salt troll), Move 30' (10') ground / 120' (40')

swimming, Hit Dice 6+12**, average hit points 39 (minimum 45 for a salt troll), # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D4 / 1D4 / 1D8+8, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, great strength (STR 18/96), infravision (60'), water breathing, Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack if immersed, Special Defenses regeneration (3 hp per round) if immersed, Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 9 (due to 6+12 HD), Morale 8, Intelligence low (90%) or average (10%) (INT 6 or 7 / 8 for a salt troll), Alignment Chaotic Evil.



Snow Trolls

Snow trolls are exceedingly rare, and even many veteran adventurers believe that they are nothing more than legends. But they are known to howl along with the winds of the deadliest blizzards, and their shrill, tinkling laughter can be heard presaging an avalanche. When beheld, they are seen to possess ice-like fangs, mist-clouded claws, and glowing blue eyes. Their bodies are eerily, almost impossibly gaunt and their limbs are slender, icicle-thorned, and very long. Their translucent flesh is rimed with heavy protective clusters of ice, and their bodies are surrounded by bone-chilling magical cold. These misty auras even provide the snow trolls with partial resistance to fire attacks.

The effect of the protective ice is that a snow troll has an Armor Class of 0 (zero), until the first wound is struck. Then, much of the ice falls away and the troll's Armor Class is reduced to 2.

Snow trolls are only found in glacial rifts or ice caves, with entrances that are never lower than 7,000 feet in elevation. They care little for treasure but they are highly territorial. Some tame snow leopards or winter wolves to protect their lairs, while others are allied with frost giants, ice drakes, frost manticores, or even yetis.

Approximately 25% of snow trolls are hunters, and they wield icicle spears made of magically-sculpted ice from caverns deep. These spears inflict 1D6+2 points of damage when thrown. Besides the razor-sharp tip, the spear-shafts always shatter upon impact, lodging a piece of ice in the victim's flesh. On a natural to hit roll of 20, the spear will impale the victim for double damage (2D6+2).

Snow trolls are utterly fearless, and they will fight until destroyed. When slain (reduced to negative hit points by acid or

fire), they shatter into blood-drenched shards of petrifying gore.

TROLL, SNOW, MALE

(Old Norse = SNAER-TROLL)

Snaer-Troll: Armor Class 0 until first wound inflicted (2 thereafter), Move 60' (20'), Hit Dice 6+1***, average hit points 28, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D6 / 1D6 / 1D10 plus cold aura, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, superior strength (STR 17), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks cold aura (+1D3 damage per successful hit), icicle spears, severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses cold immunity (no damage), fire resistance (-1 damage per die), regeneration (3 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 7 (due to 6+1 HD), Morale 12, Intelligence low (INT 6), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

TROLL, SNOW, FEMALE

(Old Norse = SNAER-TROLLKONA)

Snaer-Trollkona: Armor Class 0 until first wound inflicted (2 thereafter), Move 60' (20'), Hit Dice 5+2***, average hit points 25, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D4 / 1D4 / 1D8 plus cold aura, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, superior strength (STR 17), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks cold aura (+1D3 damage per successful hit), icicle spears, severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses cold immunity (no damage), fire resistance (-1 damage per die), regeneration (3 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 6 (due to 5+2 HD), Morale 12, Intelligence low (INT 6), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

Stone Trolls

Stone trolls are the most intelligent, peaceful, tradition-bound, and secretive of the troll sub-races. This does not mean that they are friends of mankind, but they are willing to barter for what they need and will enter into peace pacts when it suits them.

They are somewhat similar in appearance to mountain trolls, but they are smaller and their gray skin is plated with calcite structures and “warts” made of something like veined transparent quartz.

This sub-race is very rare and will likely become extinct within several centuries. The stone trolls are the keepers of their race’s legacy and memory. They do not “write” per se, but they do etch spiral glyphs upon stone and these intricate glyphs can be fully interpreted by others of their kind. The glyphs speak of exile, war, treasure hoards beneath the earth, curses, ancestors, alliances, monstrous territories and migrations, and so on. The triskelion and the “spiral labyrinth” symbol are both sacred to them, and these circles are notched to provide various details and nuance of meaning. Note that the glyphs do not denote a “language,” as part of their meaning involves ancestral memory triggers and spiritual recollections; as such, a Comprehend Languages spell (for example) will only allow a very partial translation of any spiral’s true meaning.

If characters can somehow manage to gain the trust of a tribe of stone trolls — for example, by honoring their traditions while also slaying their powerful enemies — they might learn that the eldest stone troll in any tribe serves as a sage to his people. This elder might well be able to provide surprising information concerning ancient treasures, ruins, lost cities, deluges, unknown historical happenings, “extinct”

monstrous species, the true history of Castle Oldskull, the future reign of Great Cthulhu (which has already begun in some timelines), and other tantalizing tales ... for a price.

Stone trolls sleep after battle to fully heal themselves. (Regeneration keeps them alive, but rebuilding their “wars” and scarred calcite exoskeletons takes time.) They can sleep for a very long time, sometimes for years. The oldest survivors of the race are several thousand years old. However, the most ancient stone trolls remain asleep for over 95% of their remaining lives.

Their lairs feature ancient pillars of basalt-like crystal — of unknown origin — each covered with engravings from the top down. Long-lived lairs have been known to dig trenches around their pillar-obelisks so that additional engravings can be made upon the stone surface below ground level. Their spell casters are known to use rock crystal scrying “mirrors” for prayer and divination. These mirrors, and all other tribal treasures, are kept within the “Sanctum of the Stone-Spire,” a sacred chamber which all of the stone trolls will defend to the death.

The stone trolls are crafty builders, sculptors, and underworld engineers. They are allies of the stone giants; both races are master crafters. Their lairs and passages are frequently crisscrossed with nearly-undetectable secret doors, covered pits, and “echoing rooms” which allow them to hear the footsteps and voices of intruders. As such, stone trolls dwelling in their sculpted lairs can almost never be surprised.

TROLL, STONE, FEMALE

(Old Norse = STEIN-TROLLKONA)

Stein-Trollkona: Armor Class 1, Move 30' (10'), Hit Dice 6+2**, average hit points 29,

Attacks 2 claw / claw, Damage 1D4+4 / 1D4+4, Special Abilities sage wisdom, superior strength (STR 18/51), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses non-magical weapons inflict -1 damage, regeneration (3 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities -2 to initiative rolls, cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 7 (due to 6+2 HD), Morale 10, Intelligent high (INT 14), Alignment Chaotic Neutral.

TROLL, STONE, MALE

(Old Norse = STEIN-TROLL)

Stein-Troll: Armor Class 1, Move 30' (10'), Hit Dice 5+3**, average hit points 26, # Attacks 2 claw / claw, Damage 1D4+2 / 1D4+2, Special Abilities sage wisdom, superior strength (STR 18/01), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses non-magical weapons inflict -1 damage, regeneration (3 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities -2 to initiative rolls, cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 6 (due to 5+3 HD), Morale 10, Intelligent high (INT 14), Alignment Chaotic Neutral.

Trolghuls

Trolghuls — known by arcane sages as the Remonstrations unto Hyaenoghul — are the rare, regenerated remnants of slain trolls which are not completely incinerated or drenched in acid. When a troll is hacked into pieces and strives to regenerate, it is frequently set upon by other starving trolls who devour the limbs even as these fight to re-mesh themselves into a composite being. If the limbs are left alone, they will reform as a scarred troll or (very rarely) as a trolghul. Trolghuls can be created only in

places of evil, such as forsaken demon temples, haunted castles, or dungeons where terrible slaughters have taken place.

At times, the dark necromantic priests of Trogool — such priests are quite rare themselves — will gather up the leavings of a hacked-apart troll, or will even hack a Troll into pieces and throw the twitching and re-gathering remains into an enchanted regenerative cauldron. The cauldron is filled with ghul essence, rendered from slain ghuls either willing or unwilling. When the limbs in the cauldron regenerate, they will rise as the Cauldron Born ... a clutch of from 1 to 6 Trolghuls, depending on the amount and intensity of ghul essence boiled and the size of the sacrificial troll.

Trolghuls rise as undead and sentient minions of the priests, hags, shamans, and/or witch doctors of Trogool. They are soulless and do not remember any previous life they may have loved or suffered through. They are the allies of ghuls and trolls as well, but other creatures find them horrifying and will destroy them on sight. Sadly, that is far easier said than done.

Trolghuls have the paralytic talons of ghuls, and the regenerative ability of trolls. However, they are terribly damaged by sunlight, and they cannot heal wounds caused by fire, acid, or holy water. If a trolghul is exposed to sunlight, it suffers damage at the rate of 1 hit point per round of exposure. This damage cannot be regenerated and must be slowly healed in total darkness at the rate of 1 hit point per day.

Trolghuls appear as ghouls, although they are instilled with an horrific undead vitality which causes their pallid flesh to take on a deathly crimson hue. Trolghuls are occasionally found alone. More frequently, they are discovered leading ghouls packs, or in troll lairs where death-worshipping troll shamans or witch doctors are present.

Once a trolghul attacks, it will fight until destroyed.

TROLGHUL

(Old Norse = TROLL-DRAUGR)

Trolghul: Armor Class 6, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 4+2***, average hit points 20, # Attacks 2 claw / claw, Damage 2D4 / 2D4, Special Abilities superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks paralyzation (per successful attack; successful victim saving throw indicates immunity for 1d20+20 rounds), Special Defenses regeneration (1 hp per round, unless in sunlight), undead (immune to sleep, charm, and mind attacks), Special Vulnerabilities can be turned (as spectre), cannot regenerate acid, fire, or holy water damage, suffers 1 damage per round exposed to sunlight, Save As Fighter 5 (due to 4+2 HD), Morale 10, Intelligent average (INT 10) with exceptional cunning, Alignment Chaotic Evil.

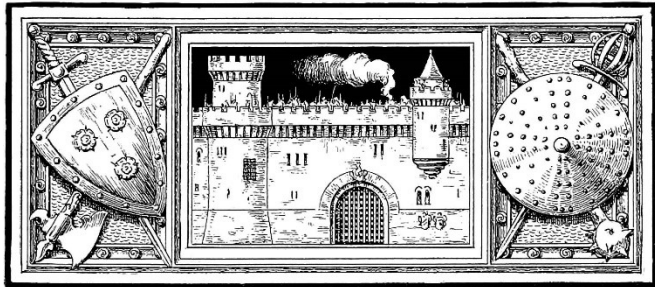
The Lost Troll Races

There are legends concerning other “lost” troll races, including the war trolls (Grendel’s bloodline), but these creatures are said to have been wiped out when the Grendel-Modor was vanquished by the Geat lord Beowulf. It is likely that there were other now-extinct troll sub-races (death trolls, plague trolls, trollish shoggothai, etc.) as well, as discovered in the frozen of Trogool and the Boyg, or as wrought long ago by the foul godly magics of Mung. Whether or not any of these creatures remain is not a simple question that this author can fully answer.

Please also note that I have not included two fiendish types of trolls which I do not feel are in the Gygaxian vein: these are Ice

Trolls, and Spirit Trolls. You are welcome to include these races in your game world if you feel they fit thematically within your campaign.

I would also strongly encourage you to add your own new sub-races if you so choose, using my examples as inspiration. Have fun!



Chapter 3:

Troll Lairs and Treasure



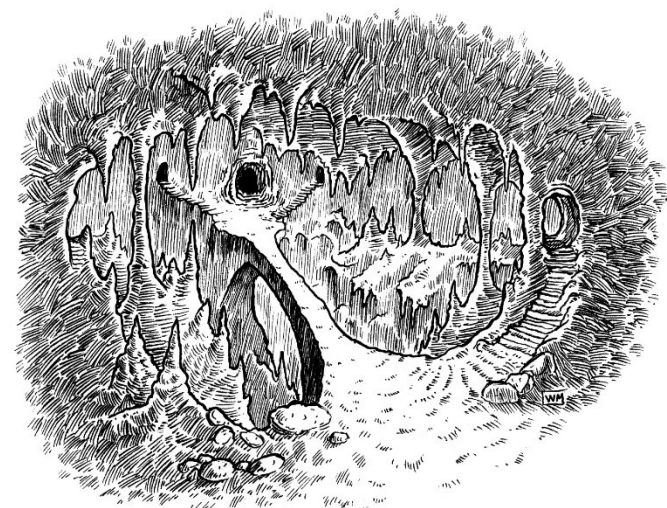
Troll Lairs

Troll lairs, or dens, are places where many trolls reside in a shared territory somewhere beneath the earth. Quite frankly, troll lairs are death traps. Not only will there be a lot of “normal” trolls to contend with, but they are likely to be backed up by leaders, spell casters, guardian beasts, allied monsters, hags, giants, fungal garden symbioses, or something even worse. My recommendation is that the troll lairs encountered early in the campaign — say, when Player Characters are between experience levels 4 and 8 inclusive — should either be “basic” and filled with only a few normal trolls, or they should be heavily garnished with any and all warning signs that the Game Master feels can be piled up in a semi-realistic manner. These signs might include piles of half-eaten corpses, inscriptions, tracks, shattered skulls, or even something blatantly obvious (like the corpse of a young dragon, mutilated by claws and fangs) so that even the most clueless and arrogant players

might (1% chance) stop to think, “Hey! Maybe we should be really careful approaching this place, and come up with a good tactical plan.”

Of course most players’ heroes will waltz on by such scenes while shouting “Haloooo! Is this place appropriately balanced to easy or average Challenge Level?”, secure in the knowledge that the almighty and loving Game Master will save their precious hides, while apologizing profusely and providing lots of treasure, too. (Ha ha.) *Do* expect your PCs’ first experience with a real troll lair to be a bloodbath. It should certainly be a memorable experience for everyone involved.

The typical troll lair will be spread across approximately 3 to 12 locales (rooms, chambers, caves, etc.) within a dungeon, ruin, or cavern system. Underwater trolls might lair in a submerged ruin or coral caves; while forest trolls will make “rooms” in a bramble labyrinth that is shielded away from the sun. Even bigger lairs might exist; for example the full palatial complex of a Mountain King might cover 20 or 30 encounter locations or perhaps even more, depending on the size of the tribe.



The lairs will always be dank, dark, and difficult to navigate. Narrow passages will have been widened by iron-like claws, and rubble will be heaped away from common areas. Stone trolls and mountain trolls will have fairly nice dwellings, replete with piled furs; but for the other sub-races, disgusting filth is the name of the game. Trophy skulls and rib cages will be prominently displayed, sometimes even being literally plastered to walls and ceiling by clumps of dried adhesive (mud and excrement).

The monster taming trolls and their guardian beasts, if any, will be situated near to the prominent entrances. Inside, weaker trolls (those of low hit points) will have small nests in cramped and undesirable areas, while deeper in one will find larger nests, more sinisterly-appointed arches and connecting corridors, and bigger and stronger trolls.

At times, trolls will either be made to dwell in an evil overlord’s barracks, or will take over the barracks-like rooms of conquered foes. In such cases the too-small furniture is piled up and left to rot. Beds, divans, cages, and similar places might be converted into troll nests.

If the trolls are “religious,” meaning that they are led by hags, shamans, or witch doctors, there will be hanging wicker and bone figures, bone-circle “dream catchers” (nightmare catchers?) strung with gut, voodoo-like effigies, and painted cadavers dangling in hideous formations.

Be sure to come up with variations on a theme using these baseline suggestions to come up with your own memorable scenes. Each lair should be different, while silently and pungently screaming “troll!” in no uncertain terms.



Troll Treasure Types

“He who has such precious things in gold and silver and diamonds,” said the King, “must be the one who killed the Troll, for such things are not to be had anywhere else.”

— *The Red Fairy Book*, by Andrew Lang

Troll are territorial, and they like to be distracted by sparkly glittery-ma-bobs; they frequently possess a fair amount of treasure. Their treasures are of three kinds: individual (rarely), individual nest-based, and lair-based. Trolls — most commonly being naked — do not typically carry treasure, and even hags will only carry usable magic items (such as potions or a magical wand). Troll-giants have learned to carry bulging junk-and-treasure tinker sacks as giants do.

The following guidelines are offered to GMs once the sum of bestiary and dungeon module troll-treasure lore is considered as a whole:

Individual Treasure I: Carried Items

Trolls and trolghuls do not normally carry treasure.

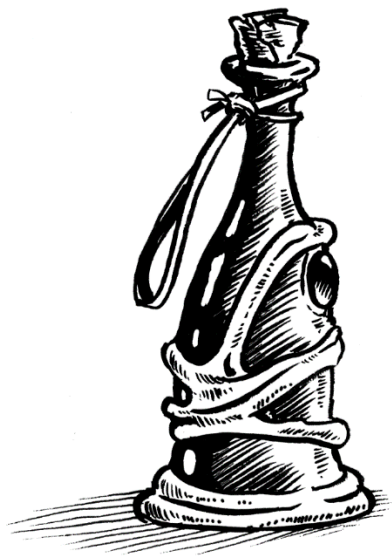
Brine, nether, and shadow hags might (20%) carry 10D10 platinum pieces, or (25%) 1D4 gems of base 100 gold piece value, or (55%) nothing at all. Emerald hags are considerably more greedy and conscious of mundane treasure value; each will tend to carry a satchel with Treasure Types Mx100 and Nx10 (200-800 gold pieces and 10-60 platinum pieces, respectively).



Troll-giants carry approximately 100 gold pieces worth of coins per full hit die they possess. For example a hill troll-giant (8 HD) would carry about 800 gold pieces worth of coins, in various denominations (perhaps 2,000 sp, 600 ep, 300 gp, 20 pp, etc.).

Also, troll blood (but not hag blood or troll-giant blood) is a prized reagent that is used in the alchemical creation of Potions of Healing and Potions of Extra-Healing. The blood must be relatively fresh, although it will keep regenerating in a flask for 1D6+6 days. Theoretically an enterprising group of troll slayers could acquire 1D4 flasks from each slain troll, if they were quick and

efficient (as the blood tends to seep and crawl away); but in practice only a few flasks could be collected by most groups under what we might choose to label as “standard” adventuring circumstances.



Each flask is worth 5D20 gold pieces, depending on “random” impurities which only an alchemist could possibly detect. Assume that PC magic-users of experience level 11 or higher (along with INT 13+ and WIS 13+) will be able to appraise the value of each flask; otherwise, the value will be a surprise once the troll blood is sold on the market.

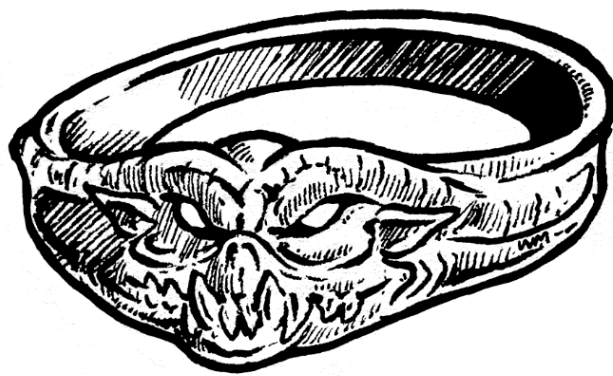
Individual Treasure II: Troll Rings

In addition to any personally carried treasure, particularly powerful troll-kind will carry magical rings. Gygax wrote specifically that trolls can wear magical rings due to their intelligence, and the thinness of their fingers. These rings might be crafted by powerful ancient hag-crones, or they might be won from devoured adventurers. All trolls covet rings but

normal trolls do not possess them, because such lovely trinkets are always handed to their leaders as a ritual of reverence in the name of the Great Boyg.

Rings will be possessed only by [1] troll leaders (chieftains, kings, etc.) [2] troll spell casters (shamans, witch doctors, etc.) as described later in this supplement, or [3] hags (of the brine, emerald, nether, or shadow sub-races). Normal trolls and troll young will not possess rings. Each leader has a 1% chance per hit die, with plusses rounded up, of possessing a magic ring. Therefore a leader of HD 6 would have a 6% chance to possess one, while one of HD 6+6 would have a 7% chance.

The power of the ring will vary according with the monstrousness of the wearer. Do keep in mind that determined Player Characters are likely to win these treasures for themselves, and plan accordingly! You will note for example that Rings of Wishes do not appear on the random table below; an item of that power would need to be placed by the decision of the Game Master.



Roll 3D12 to determine ring type, adding +1 per hit die of the wearer, and an additional +1 if the wearer has hit die plusses (e.g., HD 6+6 means add 7 to the 3D12 roll):

- **[7 or lower]** Ring of Contrariness (cursed)

- **[8-9]** Ring of Delusion (cursed)
- **[10-11]** Ring of Warmth
- **[12-13]** Ring of Swimming
- **[14-15]** Ring of Water Walking
- **[16-17]** Ring of Feather Falling
- **[18-19]** Ring of Animal Friendship
- **[20-21]** Ring of Protection +1
- **[22-23]** Ring of Jumping
- **[24-25]** Ring of Chameleon Power
- **[26-27]** Ring of Blinking
- **[28-29]** Ring of Truth
- **[30-31]** Ring of Free Action
- **[32-33]** Ring of Invisibility
- **[34-35]** Ring of the Ram
- **[36-37]** Ring of Protection +2
- **[38-42]** Ring of Fire Resistance (prized by trolls far more than other more powerful rings, for reasons you might well imagine!)
- **[43+]** Ring of Protection +3



Trolls and hags with magic rings are very dangerous, and they will design their lairs to maximize the power of those talismans' arcane blessings. For example, a troll chieftain with a Ring of Water Walking might live on a nest-isle in the middle of a flooded cave, and will wait to attack intruders until they are wading toward his lair in neck-deep water. Magic rings can increase the lethality of an encounter by a significant degree; be clever and be ready in your design!

Nest-Based Individual Treasure

Trolls and trolghuls (but not hags, who sleep in furs and are far more civilized) keep a little personal treasure hidden away in their nests. As Gygax tells us, the troll nest is an infamous heaping pile of trash, sticks, bones, flesh-scraped corpses, rotting vegetation, and cored-out animal pelts. The entire mess is kept together with a caked-on mix of dried mud and old excrement (yes, really). You can probably imagine the smell, although you really wouldn't want to.

(Troll-giants, by the way, do not make nests; they have a traditional giant's ways. But they will have the personal treasure amounts listed here.)

The size of the nest denotes the status (hit points) of the troll. An ancient mountain troll might even have a nest-mound standing 7' tall and 12' wide at the base; a typical cursed troll's nest would be 2'-3' tall and 5' wide. The heap has a hole at the top, and the troll hunches inside to sleep. On the floor of the hole are found the troll's "glitteries," or baubles.

Each troll's personal treasure, regardless of species, can be rolled randomly as follows (D100). Add 1 to the roll for each hit point that the troll possesses; for example, for the nest of a troll with 33 hit points you would

roll 1D100+33. If this level of detail is too onerous, you can instead assume that all troll nests will possess 3D10 of each coin type.

- **[01-10]** 1D10 of each lesser coin type (copper, silver, electrum).
- **[11-20]** 1D10 of each coin type (copper, silver, electrum, gold, platinum).
- **[21-30]** 10D10 of one preferred coin type (electrum).
- **[31-50]** 1D10 pretty tumble-stones (uncut gems of base 10 gold piece value).
- **[51-60]** 10D10 of one preferred coin type (gold).
- **[61-70]** 2D10 of each coin type (copper, silver, electrum, gold, platinum).
- **[71-80]** 3D10 of each coin type (copper, silver, electrum, gold, platinum).
- **[81-90]** 4D10 of each coin type (copper, silver, electrum, gold, platinum).
- **[91-100]** 5D10 of each coin type (copper, silver, electrum, gold, platinum).
- **[101-110]** 10D10 of one preferred coin type (platinum).
- **[111-130]** 2D4 shiny stones (uncut gems of base 50 gold piece value).
- **[131-150]** 1D4+1 glittery-baubles (uncut gems of base 100 gold piece value).
- **[151+]** 1D3 shiny-shiny baubles, yes (uncut gems of base 500 gold piece value).
- (You can either roll nest treasures before the game begins, or you can roll them during play, forcing the players to slowly search each

disgusting nest until they either give up or slog on through to the very end.)



Lair-Based Treasure I: Complex System

The letter-based Treasure Type featured in the Advanced RPG is deceptively complex, with a careful reading being required to discern where treasures are found (and in what amounts). The following is my own interpretation of the conflicting Gygaxian sources.

Lair-based treasures are only found in monster lairs. The Oldskull definition a lair is “The place where the monster sleeps and heals, and spends most of its time.” Therefore, for trolls, the lair is typically a cave, a ruined building, a dungeon chamber, or an interconnected series of adjacent rooms (perhaps 3 to 12 rooms in all).

Most of the trolls who exist in a group will be encountered in the lair. As a basic example, if there is a troll group with 15 normal trolls and 3 leaders, there will probably be about 10-12 normal trolls (along with all 3 leaders) in the lair at one time. The other 3-5 normal trolls would either be wandering nearby, hunting, scavenging, or away fulfilling some kind of duty.

For trolls, the lair-based treasure will be found in the location where the leader dwells. If there is no designated leader, the

treasure will be found in the location where the troll with the highest hit points is.

Now here's where things get tricky!

Under the full Gygaxian system (1977), the listed treasure type is for a “mean” (average) number of monsters appearing, as based on the Number Appearing statistic for that monster's bestiary entry. For example, for cursed trolls, the listed Number Appearing is 1 to 12, and the listed Treasure Type is D. By the book, this means that Treasure Type D is present if 6.5 trolls are present in the lair. Being logical with that stat (hey, there can't be 6.5 trolls unless one is regenerating after being hacked in half), we can say that normal baseline Treasure Type D is present if there are 6 or 7 trolls in the lair.

The rules further state that a downward adjustment must always be made when the number of monsters in the lair is below average. In this instance, that means (for example) that if there were 3 trolls in the lair, Treasure Type D would be rolled, and all rolled treasures would be halved. Instead of 3,000 gold pieces, there would be 1,500; instead of 3 magic items, there would be 1.5 (have fun with that); and so forth. A bit of eyeballing is required; for example, if the 3 magic items were a sword, a potion, and a scroll, the less valuable two items would probably be present (likely the potion and the scroll).



Complicating things further, the rules also state that a “minor” upward adjustment can be made if the number of monsters is considerably above average. In this case, that means that if there are 10 to 12 trolls, Treasure Type D would be increased (perhaps to 4,000 gold pieces instead of 3,000, and perhaps 4 magic items instead of 3).

Hereafter you will find my recommended Treasure Types, Number Appearing factors, and magic item distribution guidelines for all of the various troll types. Keep in mind that the Number Appearing stats shown here are NOT for determining how many trolls are present (we already went over that, in the detailed Challenge Level section); the stat just appears here to fairly adjust the amount of treasure appearing.

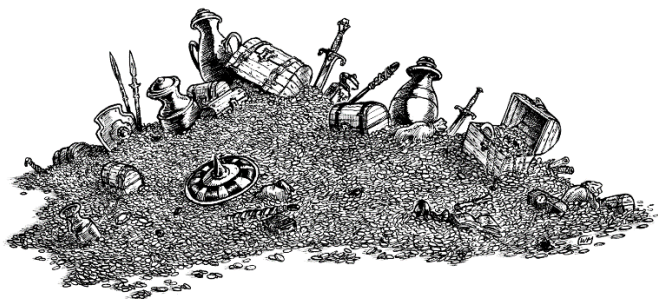
Always remember that under the Gygaxian old school system, treasure is not a direct indicator of monster lethality. Some relatively weak monsters have a lot of treasure, by ratio; and some powerful monsters have only a little treasure, or none at all. The system is designed to portray a huge number of quasi-realistic possibilities over a range, simulating a world, instead of a video game-esque interpretation of “fairness.” Players who demand lots of treasure, all the time, will need to be told in complete sincerity that their PCs should go hunt some dragons to the exclusion of all other monster types.

Lair-Based Treasure II: Hags

Brine Hags: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 4, Lair Treasure Types C and Y.

- For 1 hag, use Treasure Types C and Y, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 2 or 3 hags, use unmodified Treasure Types C and Y.

- For 4 or 5 hags, use Treasure Types C and Y, +10% coins, +10% gems and jewelry, +1 magic item.
- For 6 or more hags, use Treasure Types C and Y, +20% coins, +20% gems and jewelry, +2 magic items.



- Roll these Treasure Types for each hag present. For example, a lair with 3 shadow hags would have Treasure Types Qx9, Sx3.

Special Note: Hags with powerful usable magical items will always carry them, and will always use them in combat whenever possible. (Classic treasure items for hags include potions, staves, crystal balls, and brooms of flying. A wand of polymorphing or something similar can fit in perfectly with the classic fairy tale witch trope as well.) Make these design decisions after the treasure trove has been rolled.

Emerald Hags: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 1, Lair Treasure Types Qx5, X.

- Roll these Treasure Types for each hag present. For example, a lair with 3 emerald hags would have Treasure Types Qx15, Xx3.

Nether Hags: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 3, Lair Treasure Type D.

- For 1 hag, use Treasure Type D, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 2 hags, use unmodified Treasure Type D.
- For 3 or 4 hags, use Treasure Type D, +10% coins, +10% gems and jewelry, +1 magic item.
- For 5 or more hags, use Treasure Type D, +20% coins, +20% gems and jewelry, +2 magic items.



Shadow Hags: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 1, Lair Treasure Types none (by the book) or Qx3, S (Oldskull recommendation).

Then the troll said some words to him which he did not understand, and with that the lad turned into a hare, and ran out into the wood. He got plenty to run for, too, for all the hunters aimed at him, and tried to shoot him, and the dogs barked and ran after him wherever they got wind of him.

— *The Pink Fairy Book*, by Andrew Lang

Lair-Bases Treasure III: Trolls

Bog Trolls: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 10, Lair Treasure Types C and Q.

- For 1 troll, use Treasure Types C and Q, -90% coins, -90% gems and jewelry, no magic items.
- For 2 trolls, use Treasure Types C and Q, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 3 trolls, use Treasure Types C and Q, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 4 trolls, use Treasure Types C and Q, -25% coins, -25% gems and jewelry.
- For 5 or 8 trolls, use unmodified Treasure Types C and Q.
- For 9 to 12 trolls, use Treasure Types C and Q, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 13 or more trolls, use Treasure Types C and Q, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Cave Trolls: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 12, Lair Treasure Type D.

- For 1 troll, use Treasure Type D, -90% coins, -90% gems and jewelry, no magic items.
- For 2 trolls, use Treasure Type D, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -2 magic items.
- For 2 or 3 trolls, use Treasure Type D, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 6 to 9 trolls, use unmodified Treasure Type D.
- For 10 to 12 trolls, use Treasure Type D, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 13 or more trolls, use Treasure Type D, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Cursed Trolls: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 12, Lair Treasure Type D.

- For 1 troll, use Treasure Type D, -90% coins, -90% gems and jewelry, no magic items.
- For 2 trolls, use Treasure Type D, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -2 magic items.
- For 2 or 3 trolls, use Treasure Type D, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 6 to 9 trolls, use unmodified Treasure Type D.
- For 10 to 12 trolls, use Treasure Type D, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 13 or more trolls, use Treasure Type D, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Forest Trolls: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 10, Lair Treasure Type C.

- For 1 troll, use Treasure Type C, -90% coins, -90% gems and jewelry, no magic items.
- For 2 trolls, use Treasure Type C, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 3 trolls, use Treasure Type C, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 4 trolls, use Treasure Type C, -25% coins, -25% gems and jewelry.
- For 5 or 8 trolls, use unmodified Treasure Type C.
- For 9 to 12 trolls, use Treasure Type C, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 13 or more trolls, use Treasure Type C, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Hill Trolls: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 12, Lair Treasure Type D.

- For 1 troll, use Treasure Type D, -90% coins, -90% gems and jewelry, no magic items.
- For 2 trolls, use Treasure Type D, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -2 magic items.
- For 2 or 3 trolls, use Treasure Type D, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 6 to 9 trolls, use unmodified Treasure Type D.
- For 10 to 12 trolls, use Treasure Type D, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 13 or more trolls, use Treasure Type D, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Lake Trolls: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 6, Lair Treasure Type C.

- For 1 troll, use Treasure Type C, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 2 or 3 trolls, use Treasure Type C, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 4 trolls, use Treasure Type C, -25% coins, -25% gems and jewelry.
- For 5 to 7 trolls, use unmodified Treasure Type C.
- For 8 to 10 trolls, use Treasure Type C, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 11 or more trolls, use Treasure Type C, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Mountain Trolls: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 6, Lair Treasure Type D.

- For 1 troll, use Treasure Type D, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
 - For 2 or 3 trolls, use Treasure Type D, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 4 trolls, use Treasure Type D, -25% coins, -25% gems and jewelry.
- For 5 to 7 trolls, use unmodified Treasure Type D.
- For 8 to 10 trolls, use Treasure Type D, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 11 or more trolls, use Treasure Type D, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Sea Trolls: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 8, Lair Treasure Type D.

- For 1 troll, use Treasure Type D, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 2 trolls, use Treasure Type D, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 3 trolls, use Treasure Type D, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 4 to 7 trolls, use unmodified Treasure Type D.
- For 8 to 10 trolls, use Treasure Type D, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 11 or more trolls, use Treasure Type D, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Snow Trolls: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 12, Lair Treasure Type D.

- For 1 troll, use Treasure Type D, -90% coins, -90% gems and jewelry, no magic items.
- For 2 trolls, use Treasure Type D, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -2 magic items.
- For 2 or 3 trolls, use Treasure Type D, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 6 to 9 trolls, use unmodified Treasure Type D.
- For 10 to 12 trolls, use Treasure Type D, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 13 or more trolls, use Treasure Type D, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Stone Trolls: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 6, Lair Treasure Types C and Qx2.

- For 1 troll, use Treasure Types C and Qx2, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 2 trolls, use Treasure Types C and Qx2, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 3 to 5 trolls, use unmodified Treasure Types C and Qx2.
- For 6 to 8 trolls, use Treasure Types C and Qx2, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 9 or more trolls, use Treasure Types C and Qx2, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Trolghuls: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 6, Lair Treasure Type C.

- For 1 troll, use Treasure Type C, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 2 or 3 trolls, use Treasure Type C, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 4 trolls, use Treasure Type C, -25% coins, -25% gems and jewelry.
- For 5 to 7 trolls, use unmodified Treasure Type C.
- For 8 to 10 trolls, use Treasure Type C, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 11 or more trolls, use Treasure Type C, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Lair-Based Treasure IV: Troll-Giants

Keep in mind that troll-giants typically carry a fair amount of individual treasure, while their stashed lair treasures tend to be less valuable (by ratio) in comparison to trolls.

Troll-giants have less treasure than giants do overall, with stronger troll-giant sub-races generally possessing more treasure than individuals of weaker sub-races do.



Hill Troll-Giants: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 12, Lair Treasure Type C.

- For 1 troll-giant, use Treasure Type C, -90% coins, -90% gems and jewelry, no magic items.
- For 2 troll-giants, use Treasure Type C, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -2 magic items.
- For 2 or 3 troll-giants, use Treasure Type C, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 6 to 9 troll-giants, use unmodified Treasure Type C.
- For 10 to 12 troll-giants, use Treasure Type C, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.

- For 13 or more troll-giants, use Treasure Type C, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Stone Troll-Giants: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 10, Lair Treasure Type D.

- For 1 troll-giant, use Treasure Type D, -90% coins, -90% gems and jewelry, no magic items.
- For 2 troll-giants, use Treasure Type D, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 3 troll-giants, use Treasure Type D, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 4 troll-giants, use Treasure Type D, -25% coins, -25% gems and jewelry.
- For 5 or 8 troll-giants, use unmodified Treasure Type D.
- For 9 to 12 troll-giants, use Treasure Type D, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 13 or more troll-giants, use Treasure Type D, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Frost Troll-Giants: Maximum Number Appearing 8, Lair Treasure Type C.

- For 1 troll-giant, use Treasure Type C, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 2 troll-giants, use Treasure Type C, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 3 troll-giants, use Treasure Type C, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 4 to 7 troll-giants, use unmodified Treasure Type C.

- For 8 to 10 troll-giants, use Treasure Type C, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 11 or more troll-giants, use Treasure Type C, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Fire Troll-Giants: Maximum Number Appearing 8, Lair Treasure Type C.

- For 1 troll-giant, use Treasure Type C, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 2 troll-giants, use Treasure Type C, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 3 troll-giants, use Treasure Type C, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 4 to 7 troll-giants, use unmodified Treasure Type C.
- For 8 to 10 troll-giants, use Treasure Type C, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 11 or more troll-giants, use Treasure Type C, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Two-Headed Troll-Giants: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 3, Lair Treasure Types D and Q.

- For 1 troll-giant, use Treasure Types D and Q, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 2 troll-giants, use Treasure Types D and Q, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 3 troll-giants, use Treasure Types D and Q, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 4 to 7 troll-giants, use unmodified Treasure Types D and Q.

- For 8 to 10 troll-giants, use Treasure Types D and Q, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 11 or more troll-giants, use Treasure Types D and Q, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Mountain Troll-Giants: Maximum Typical Number Appearing 3, Lair Treasure Types D and Q.

- For 1 troll-giant, use Treasure Types D and Q, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 2 troll-giants, use Treasure Types D and Q, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 3 troll-giants, use Treasure Types D and Q, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 4 to 7 troll-giants, use unmodified Treasure Types D and Q.
- For 8 to 10 troll-giants, use Treasure Types D and Q, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 11 or more troll-giants, use Treasure Types D and Q, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Lair-Based Treasure V: Exotic Trollkind

Great Elder Trolls

- Great Elder Trolls have Treasure Type H, along with the treasure hoard of their followers.

Trolghuls: Maximum Number Appearing 8, Lair Treasure Types D and Q.

- For 1 troll, use Treasure Types D and Q, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.

- For 2 trolls, use Treasure Types D and Q, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 3 trolls, use Treasure Types D and Q, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 4 to 7 trolls, use unmodified Treasure Types D and Q.
- For 8 to 10 trolls, use Treasure Types D and Q, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 11 or more trolls, use Treasure Types D and Q, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.

Troldfolk: Maximum Number Appearing 100, Lair Treasure Types A, Qx10.

- For 20 or fewer troldfolk, use Treasure Types A and Qx10, -90% coins, -90% gems and jewelry, -2 magic items.
- For 21 to 30 troldfolk, use Treasure Types A and Qx10, -75% coins, -75% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 31 to 40 troldfolk, use Treasure Types A and Qx10, -50% coins, -50% gems and jewelry, -1 magic item.
- For 41 to 50 troldfolk, use Treasure Types A and Qx10, -25% coins, -25% gems and jewelry.
- For 40 to 70 troldfolk, use unmodified Treasure Types A and Qx10.
- For 71 to 100 troldfolk, use Treasure Types A and Qx10, +10% coins, +10% gems, +1 magic item.
- For 101 or more troldfolk, use Treasure Types A and Qx10, +20% coins, +20% gems, +1 magic item.



Lair-Based Treasure VI: Unique Creatures

These hoards are vast, but only the luckiest and most powerful PC parties of experience levels 16+ will ever claim them. The Haga-Daimonai trove might be in reach for parties of levels 11+.

The Haga-Daimonai: Unique (Maximum Typical Number Appearing 1), Lair Treasure Types S (100%), T (100%), V. The trolls found with the Haga-Daimonai will have their own treasure as well.

The treasure will belong to the unholy fane, and it will be cursed; anyone who takes a single piece of it will suffer -2 to all saving throws, -2 to hit, and -2 to all damage per attack. A Remove Curse spell will remove one of these effects; 3 such castings would be required to fully remove the threefold ill-omened auras from each of the treasure's thieves.

Groohlz-Drakha: Unique (Maximum Typical Number Appearing 1), Lair Treasure Types H (100% chances), Qx20 (100% chances), S, T.

The treasure is cursed (-3 penalties instead of -2, but otherwise as described above).

The Great Boyg: Unique (Maximum Typical Number Appearing 1), Lair Treasure Types H (100% chance), Qx30 (100% chances), Sx2, Tx2.

The treasure is cursed (-4, but otherwise as above).

Trogoon: Unique (Maximum Typical Number Appearing 1), Lair Treasure Types Hx2 (100% chances on the first H, normal chances on the second H), Qx50 (100% chance). Note that all items which could perish over many centuries (potions, scrolls, spell books, maps, furs, spices, etc.) will be ancient and completely spoiled if present. Coins will be perfectly blank, of metal but of no imprinted denomination.

The treasure is cursed (-4, but otherwise as above).

Lair-Based Treasure VII: Simple System

If all of the above is too much to deal with, you can use the following rough statistical averages for treasure type value instead. You as the GM would decide which treasures are present; a treasure worth 5,000 gold pieces might be all coins, all gems, a mix, or a combination of coins, gems, and art objects (urns, plates, incense, spices, whatever). Very fine and fragile items however will not survive troll handling.

There is not a simple way to judge magic items in a trove; the GM will need to decide on which items are present, if any. You

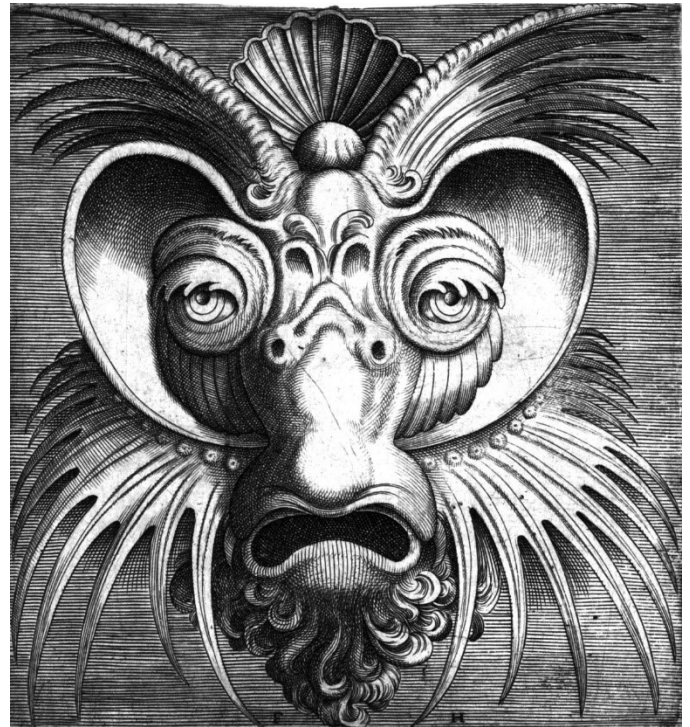
might want to make a rough guideline to follow, for example no magic items (or 1 potion) for a lair with 1 or 2 trolls, 1 magic item for 3 to 6 trolls, 2 magic items for 7 to 12 trolls, and so forth, with more for leader types or particularly deadly circumstances.

Simple recommendations for lair treasure values are as follows:

- **Bog Trolls:** 500 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll.
- **Brine Hags:** 1,700 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per hag.
- **Cave Trolls:** 700 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll.
- **Cursed Trolls:** 900 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll.
- **Emerald Hags:** 2,500 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per hag.
- **Fire Troll-Giants:** 700 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll-giant.
- **Forest Trolls:** 350 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll.
- **Frost Troll-Giants:** 600 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll-giant.
- **Great Elder Troll:** 5,000 gold piece worth of non-magical lair treasure per hit die; therefore a great elder troll with 12+12 hit dice would have 60,000 gold pieces worth of treasure.
- **Hill Trolls:** 800 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll.
- **Hill Troll-Giants:** 300 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll-giant.
- **Lake Trolls:** 550 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll.

- **Mountain Trolls:** 1,600 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll.
- **Mountain Troll-Giants:** 800 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll.
- **Nether Hags:** 1,900 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per hag.
- **Sea Trolls:** 1,300 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll.
- **Shadow Hags:** 1,500 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per hag.
- **Snow Trolls:** 850 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll.
- **Stone Trolls:** 850 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll.
- **Stone Troll-Giants:** 500 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll.
- **Troldfolk:** 125 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per individual.
- **Trolghuls:** 500 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per trolghul.
- **Two-Headed Troll-Giants:** 600 gold pieces worth of non-magical lair treasure per troll-giant.

(Individual treasure is as determined in the Complex System, which is particularly important for troll-giants, because they carry a considerable amount of their treasure with them in giant sacks.)



Troll Young in Lairs

Troll Imp: “Let me slash him on the fingers!”

Troll Maidens: “Oh, tear his eyes out and cut off his ears!”

Troll Imps: “Come, bite him! Don’t let him escape! Now jump on his face!”

— Excerpts from *Peer Gynt*, by Henrik Ibsen

The fact that there are both male and female trolls — as featured in *Peer Gynt* and many other folkloric works — points us to an obvious inference: Troll children exist as well. However, some play groups are uncomfortable with the idea of butchering monster young, which in turn calls into question the Gygaxian idea of “innate alignment.” Are trolls — within a universe

of magic, ruled by true Heavenly gods and arch-devils in their Hells — born as being soulless and Chaotic Evil? All signs point to yes, but that is not a politically correct standpoint for many to take in the 21st Century. Troll young exist in the World of Oldskull, but you as the Game Master should make a separate and personal decision for the purposes of your own campaign.

There is also the further matter of noting that troll young are not featured in any of the existing rule books or dungeon modules that I know of. The closest precedent is giant young, as featured in the 1977 bestiary. There, percentile dice are rolled to determine the proportionate size, hit dice, hit points, and attack capability of giant children.

If you decide to include troll young in your world, I recommend using the established dragon age hierarchy as a rough guide to determining their approximate stats along a 10%-25%-50%-75% growth ratio. Here is an example, using the cursed troll male adult as a useful paradigm:

- **Very Young Cursed Troll (Spawnling, 10% size):** Armor Class 7, Move 30' (10'), Hit Dice 1-1*, average hit points 4, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1 / 1 / 1D2, Special Abilities superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (1 hp per round), Save As Fighter 1, Morale 6, Intelligence Semi- (INT 2), Alignment Chaotic Evil.
- **Young Cursed Troll (Broodling, 25% size):** Armor Class 6, Move 60' (20'), Hit Dice 2*, average hit points 9, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D2 / 1D2 / 1D4, Special Abilities superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks severed limbs can

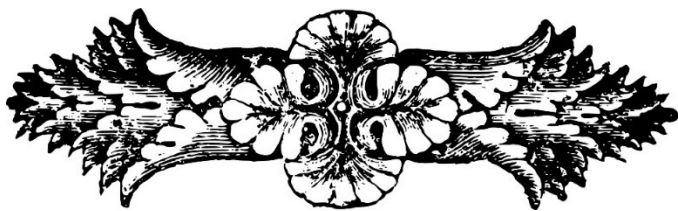
still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (2 hp per round), Save As Fighter 2, Morale 7, Intelligence Semi- (INT 3), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

- **Sub-Adult Cursed Troll (Urchin, 50% adult size):** Armor Class 5, Move 90' (30'), Hit Dice 3+3**, average hit points 16, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D2+2 / 1D2+2 / 1D6, Special Abilities superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (2 hp per round), Save As Fighter 4 (due to 3+3 HD), Morale 8, Intelligence Semi- (INT 4), Alignment Chaotic Evil.
- **Young Adult Cursed Troll (Troll-Kind, 75% adult size):** Armor Class 4, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 5+2**, average hit points 25, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D4+2 / 1D4+2 / 2D4, Special Abilities superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (3 hp per round), Save As Fighter 6 (due to 5+2 HD), Morale 9, Intelligence low (INT 5), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

A general guideline would be that 20% of encountered trolls (in large lairs only) are younger than adults, with their number rounded down; and each age bracket should have roughly the same number of trolls, with near-adult trolls being more common than younger ones. (Trolls, unlike most creatures, almost never die until the PCs come along, due to their regenerative powers. If they bred more quickly, the world would be overrun!)

As an example, a very large lair of 30 cursed trolls would include 24 adults and 6 young (1 very young, 1 young, 2 sub-adult, 2

young adult). Grimly, we can assume that troll children are eaten in times of hardship, which would account for their rarity.



Troll Fungus Gardens

Despite their frenetically-charged metabolisms and raging surges of unholy energy, at heart trolls are actually pretty lazy. They prefer to gurggle, crap, and sleep, with some profound virtuosos of the species being capable of indulging in all three of these fine arts simultaneously.

Given their cunning and eagerness to both rest and feed, it should come as no surprise to learn that trolls frequently grow and harvest fungal gardens. They do so by digging rotten gore and leathery carcasses out of their nests, and infusing moist cavern soil with piles of this disgusting stuff. A few drops of generative troll blood, some patience, some symbiotic fire beetles and cave crickets, and voila! Instant fungus garden ... in 6 to 12 months, at least.

The trolls don't grow these gardens because they like to eat mushrooms, although they can do so in times of desperation. Rather, there are three reasons why trolls create nether gardens when they have the means to do so:

[1] The reek of fungus, as Gygax tells us, is so pungent that it even masks troll stench over a general subterranean area. This increases the chances of trolls surprising intruders, which leads to more frequent

tasty meals (although those blasted cavaliers and dwarf lords have very crunchy shells that need to be popped before you can dig the meaties out).

[2] Inevitably, a really huge and disgusting fungal garden will sprout either shriekers, violet fungi, or both. Shriekers serve as excellent alarm systems, as they can be "trained" (through uprooting disagreeable specimens) to only shriek when they are exposed to bright light, which is always brought by either adventurers or troll hunters. And violet fungi, while deadly, are useful in killing a few intruders all on their own.

And,

[3] Fungal gardens attract cave crickets, fire beetles, giant boring beetles, troglodytes, bugbears, and other useful creatures who can serve as guardians for the trolls (intentionally or not).



Whether or not a fungus garden is present near a troll lair really depends on the decisions of the Game Master. Such places

will only be found underground, and only where there is room (on the dungeon map) for a cavern or room of at least 3,000 square feet. If both of these conditions are met, the GM can assume a 2% chance per normal troll present that a fungus garden will exist.

If the garden is present, it will include the following creatures:

- 4D4 shriekers, 90% of the time.
- 1D4+2 violet fungi, 70% of the time.
- Symbiotic caretakers, 60% of the time. These will be 4D4 cave crickets (30%), 1D4+1 giant boring beetles (20%), 4D4 giant fire beetles (25%), 2D4+1 giant worker ants (15%), or (10%) something rather surprising, dreamed up by the GM.
- Nasty parasitic thingies, 20% of the time. These might be green slime pools, phyco-death fungi, yellow mold patches, or something even worse.
- Guardian humanoids, 10% of the time. There will be 3D4 troglodytes, 2D4 bugbears, or something similar at the GM's discretion.
- Each of these chances should be checked individually; it is entirely possible (for example) for a fungal garden to be occupied by shriekers, parasites, and guardian humanoids simultaneously.

At times, adventurers will die in the garden in a yucky way where the trolls cannot safely interfere to grab their carried treasures. There might be a sinkhole, a dangerous patch of mold, an acid pool, or something similar. In such cases there is a chance that there will be additional treasure present, which has been

overgrown by fungi and completely forgotten by the trolls. Such items will be at the GM's discretion, but they will not include perishable items such as leather, hides, fragile potion bottles, tapestries, and so forth. They will typically be metal (coins), gemstones, or enduring magic items.



Chapter 4:

Champions of the Trolls

The Troll King: “What do you mean to do?”

Peer Gynt: “To leave you.”

The King: “Softly! It is easy to get within here, but the Troll King’s gate does not open outward.”

— *Peer Gynt*, by Henrik Ibsen

Troll Leaders and Their Protection

(GM Note: Due to their great power and lethality, leader types are never found outside of the lair. The “big ugly” option — namely, a leader that is hardly a leader at all — is left as a “safety valve” for those Game Masters who do not wish to unduly slaughter their campaign’s Player Characters. When in doubt, include only a big ugly without rolling for stronger leader types. The rest of the options in this chapter have been specifically designed to challenge adventurers of quite high experience levels, typically levels 9 and higher.)

Wandering trolls, along with small troll hunting groups, are foul enough. But true troll lairs are even more deadly than one might expect, due to the presence of leaders and their protectors. Every troll lair will have a leader of some kind. The leader will be a hag with a minimum of 6 hit points per

hit die (9% of the time), a Stor-Illr (literally in Old Norse, a “big ugly”) 30% of the time, a “normal” troll leader (60% of the time), or the unique Haga-Daimonai (1% of the time).

Hag Leaders: A hag leader is known as an Ividia-Kirling in the Old Nordic tongue. The type of hag present to lead the lair will depend upon the sub-race of the normal trolls she leads:

- **Bog trolls:** Led by an emerald hag.
- **Cave trolls:** Led by a nether hag.
- **Cursed trolls:** Led by either a nether hag (60%) or shadow hag (40%).
- **Forest trolls:** Led by an emerald hag.
- **Hill trolls:** Led by a shadow hag.
- **Lake trolls:** Led by an emerald hag.
- **Mountain trolls:** Led by a nether hag.
- **Sea trolls:** Led by a brine hag.
- **Snow trolls:** Led by a shadow hag.
- **Stone trolls:** Led by a nether hag (30%) or shadow hag (70%).

Hags are malicious and overbearing leaders; the entire troll tribe will share the alignment of the hag. Note that this seemingly minor circumstance could come as a rude surprise to any uninformed adventurers if, for example, they wander across a new tribe of stone trolls and wish to parley and barter in the name of peace!

If the lair has more than 16 normal trolls, the Ividia-Kirling will have one daughter (being a hag of the same type, but with a maximum of 6 hit points per hit die). If the lair has more than 32 normal trolls, there will be 1D3+1 such daughters present.

Further, there is a 2% chance per normal troll present that the Ividia-Kirling will also

be in control of 2D6 Cauldron Born, or trolghuls.

The Big Uglies (as young Gyga was fond of calling them): If the tribe is led by a Stor-Illr, that simply means that the tribe is disorganized. Most commonly this means that the former troll chieftain was slain in battle and the remains were devoured to empower the surviving members of the tribe. The troll leader in this group is simply the one that is covered with the most warts, while also possessing the biggest teeth, the biggest claws, and so forth. Trolls respect all of those traits out of base instinct and primal fear. If a big ugly is present it is simply a big troll with a minimum of 7 hit points per hit die. These creatures gain +1 to all to hit rolls, and inflict +1 damage per strike due to their superior strength.

The Haga-Daimonai: For this fun little critter, refer to the end of this chapter. Basically, the players should be warned away by the Game Master (using an NPC mouthpiece, warnings, signs of mutilated corpses, and all of that good stuff) unless they are of experience level 11 or higher. The danger of this creature is somewhat extreme.

Troll Leaders: Most commonly, the leader will be a chieftain (or more rarely, a chieftess) of considerable wily cunning and intelligence. The size and power of the leader will depend upon the number of normal trolls present in the lair.

- **Up to 12 normal trolls:** The leader will be a **chieftain**. Chieftains have a minimum of 7 hit points per hit die. They gain a +1 bonus to their to hit rolls, damage rolls, Intelligence, and saving throws.

- **Between 13 and 24 normal trolls:** The leader will be a **war chief**. War chiefs have the maximum number of hit points for their sub-race. They gain a +1 bonus to their to hit rolls, +2 to damage rolls, +1 to Intelligence, and +2 to saving throws.
- **Between 25 and 48 normal trolls:** The leader will be a **great ugly troll chief**. Great uglies (entitled Mikill-Illr) have the maximum number of hit points for their sub-race. They gain a +2 bonus to their to hit rolls, damage rolls, Intelligence, and saving throws. A lair of this size will feature Treasure Type A in addition to the other listed appropriate Treasure Types for the trolls' race.
- **49 or more normal trolls (A):** If the lair is not in or under a mountain range, the leader will be known as the **King's Claw**. A King's Claw is similar to a great ugly troll chief (above), but also gains unshakable morale (12) and a +3 bonus to all saving throws (instead of +2). The presence of a King's Claw ensures that Treasure Types A and Qx10 will be included in the lair, in addition to all other troll treasures appropriate to the race.
- **49 or more normal trolls (B):** If the lair is in or under a mountain range, the leader will be a **Mountain King**. There is only one Mountain King (at most) per mountain range in the world, and there are no more than 13 in existence at one time; the legendary one known best (in *Peer Gynt*) is named Dovregubbens the All-Wise. A Mountain King gains +4 hit dice; for example, a cursed troll Mountain King would possess HD 10+6. The Mountain King also has the maximum number of possible hit points (in this case, 86), and gains a +3 bonus to damage rolls,

intelligence, and saving throws. The King attacks as a monster of his hit dice, rounded up if there's any plus, plus an additional one. For example a HD 10+6 Mountain King would attack as a 12 HD monster. Uniquely, Mountain Kings are Chaotic Neutral and somewhat patient with granting audiences to peaceful interlopers; their alignment is shared by the rest of the tribe. Idiots who behave violently or without due respect will of course be slaughtered and devoured. The presence of a Mountain King ensures that Treasure Type H will be included in deep-most vaults beneath the lair, in addition to all other troll treasures appropriate to the race.

Assistants to Troll Leaders: Hags are protected by the normal trolls, and troglhuls, and their daughters, if any. Big uglies have no designated protectors, and in fact they forbid such a station due to their need to express perpetual dominance over the tribe. The Haga-Daimonai is found with several other types of guardian trolls, as explained in its own chapter. "Normal" troll leaders, however — including chieftains of all ranks and Mountain Kings — have several Great Trolls among them. The Great Trolls are favored companions who dwell in the leader's den.

The assistants who will be present are as follows:

- **Companions of a Chieftain:** Chieftains have either 1D2 **male troll champions** (60%) or 1D3+1 **huge female consorts** (40%). Hit dice are determined in accordance with the appropriate sub-race's hit dice for male and female trolls. For those sub-races which are genderless, there will be 1D3 **great champions** present. All of these

guardian creatures possess a minimum of 6 hit points per hit die, and they inflict +1 damage per attack. They are utterly fearless (morale 12) and will actually fight to the death in defense of the chieftain. Great Trolls do not leave the lair.

- **Companions of a War Chief:** As above, but there will be 1D3 male troll champions, 1D4+1 female consorts, or 1D4 champions for the genderless sub-races.
- **Companions of a Great Ugly Troll Chief:** As above, but there will be 1D3+1 male troll companions, 1D4+2 female consorts, or 1D4+1 champions for the genderless sub-races.
- **Companions of a King's Claw:** As above, but there will be 1D4+1 male troll companions, 1D6+2 female consorts, or 1D6+1 champions for the genderless sub-races.
- **Companions of a Mountain King:** As above, but there will be 1D6+1 male troll companions, 1D8+2 female consorts (being a **Queen under the Mountain** with +2 hit dice and maximum hit points, and the rest will be "handmaidens"), or 1D8+1 champions for the genderless sub-races.

The companion with the highest hit point total is known as the "Great Fang," and the one with the second highest total is known as the "Blood Claw." In any battles where the Blood Claw is present, all normal trolls will fight at +1 morale. In any battles where the Great Fang is present, all normal trolls will fight at +2 morale. And although the leader rarely leaves the well-defended den, if present in the room or cavern of battle all normal trolls therein will fight to the death.

All leaders' dens are well-protected by the tribe, geography, and perhaps even some form of traps as well (pits are a perennial favorite). Troll leaders become big not because they are born that way, but because they are craftier and they have devoured all of the lesser trolls who have dared to challenge them. Their lair-dens are usually discovered behind a secret door, or one-way door, through a cave mouth blocked by a moveable boulder, or something similar. They will always be found in close proximity to the normal trolls they lead, although the normal trolls are not allowed to dwell in the same chamber.

In addition to this circumstantial protection, there is a good chance that the leader — troll or hag — will be protected by ritualistic unholy armor. This armor is sacred to the tribe, and only the leader is allowed to wear it. The armor will typically be “rattle armor,” which is made of broken and re-stitched dwarven rib cages. This armor shows the grisly dominance of the leader over that other upstart runty race which dares to swear allegiance to a non-trollish “Mountain King” of their own. Rattle armor gives a +1 bonus to Armor Class. The next higher tier is known as bone armor, and is made of many victims' thigh bones lashed together with curling pieces of leather and steel. Bone armor gives a +1 bonus to Armor Class. The highest tier of armor is called the Drakha-Veil, and it is actually magical, giving a +3 bonus to both Armor Class and saving throws. This armor is cursed to disintegrate if its wearer is ever slain, or the armor is somehow stolen.

The armor type belonging to the leader will be as follows:

- **Big Ugly:** 50% no armor, 45% rattle armor, 5% bone armor.

- **Chieftain or Brine Hag:** 90% rattle armor, 10% bone armor.
- **War Chief or Emerald Hag:** 70% rattle armor, 30% bone armor.
- **Great Ugly Troll Chief or Shadow Hag:** 50% rattle armor, 45% bone armor, 5% Drakha-Veil.
- **King's Claw or Nether Hag:** 75% bone armor, 25% Drakha-Veil.
- **Mountain King:** Drakha-Veil.
- (The **Haga-Daimonai** does not ever wear armor, however.)



Troll Spell Casters

They call me Trollkona ...
 Gnawer of the moon,
 Gale-winder of the giants,
 Bane of the storm-sun,
 Maiden-in-misery to the seeress,
 Hag and night-wanderer,
 Devourer of the Heavens' wheel.
 What is a Troll but that?

— *Skaldskaparmal*, from the *Prose Edda*,
 by Snorri Sturlusson

Quite separate and in addition to the magic-wielding hags (described later), Gary Gygax's 1979 hardcover volume tells us that the troll races have their own racial spell casters hidden away in some of the deepest caverns. Some of these wise and gifted trolls are shamans (tribal clerics), and others are witch doctors (tribal cleric/magic-users). These are Mung's forsaken, his errant children, who covet immortality and who abhor the natural balance brought by one's willing death.

There are unfortunately no guidelines given for using or placing these unusual trolls, but the 1980 deities' tome gives us a few more details. I have provided a fuller description of troll spell casters here for use in world and dungeon design.

They are only found in lairs, and they appear adjacent to any leader-types or hags. In other words, trollish spell casters can be present even when the other special types of superior trolls are present as well.

In the World of Oldskull campaign, are trollish spell casters are Trollkona (female), except for those troll sub-races which do not have male and female genders. The two types of spell caster are mutually exclusive; therefore a troll tribe will be either unbelieving (60% chance), shamanic (20% chance), or witch-wrought (20% chance).



The she-trolls gain their spells by praying and sacrificing corpses to the Great Boyg, the demigoddess of all trollkind. Shamans cast spells using bone harps (strung with withered gut), plucking away to make eerie simplistic songs which serve to cast the spells. Witch doctors use bone staves and clack-helms made of stitched-together skulls taken from victims (with dwarves' and gnomes' skulls being preferred), clacking out the somatic component of their spells. In the Scandinavian folklore, the word "Trollkonst" roughly translates to "black magic" or "witchcraft." The word "Trollkonstnar" means "magicker" or "spell caster."

The level titles for the Trollkonstnar Trollkonas are as follows:

- **Shamanic:** Wise Woman (level 1 cleric), Hag Dancer (level 2 cleric), Crone-Seeress (level 3 cleric)
- **Witch-Wrought:** Troll-Witch (level 1/1 cleric/magic-user), Bone Hag (level 2/2 cleric/magic-user), Blood Crone (level 3/3 cleric/magic-user)
- These titles apply in all cases, because even for the troll sub-races which do not have genders, the spell casters are always regarded as female because they embody the power of the Great Boyg.

Per the deities' tome rules, these casters gain additional hit dice and hit points:

- **Wise Woman (C1):** Normal hit dice, Intelligence 11, Wisdom 13
- **Hag Dancer (C2):** Normal hit dice, +1D4 hit points, Intelligence 11, Wisdom 14
- **Crone-Seeress (C3):** +1 hit die, +2D4 hit points, Intelligence 11, Wisdom 15
- **Troll-Witch (C1/M1):** Normal hit dice, Intelligence 13, Wisdom 11
- **Bone Hag (C2/M2):** Normal hit dice, +1D4+1 hit points, Intelligence 14, Wisdom 11
- **Blood Crone (C3/M3):** +1 hit die, +2D4+1 hit points, Intelligence 15, Wisdom 11

Additionally, spell casting counts as a special or exceptional ability. Wise Women, Hag Dancers, and Troll-Witches gain 1 asterisk (*) for a special ability. Crone-Seeresses, Bone Hags, and Blood Crones

gain 2 asterisks (**) for an exceptional ability.

All of these bonuses are added to the Trollkona's statistics, by race. Here is an example stat block for a Trollkona cursed troll who is also a Blood Crone (C3/M3):

Cursed Trollkona, Blood Crone of the Tribe: Armor Class 4, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 6D8+2D4+4**** (attacks and saves as a HD 8 monster), average hit points 36, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D6 / 1D6 / 1D10, Special Abilities battle up to three foes simultaneously, great strength (STR 18/01), superior infravision (90'), spell caster (cleric 3 / magic-user 3), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, Special Defenses regeneration (3 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid or fire damage, Save As Cleric / Magic-User 8/8 (using the best available saving throw number for each category), Morale 11 (due to Fury Forbidden to the Boyg), Intelligence Exceptional (INT 15, WIS 11), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

The number of spells available to a Trollkonstnar are equivalent to those available to a human cleric and/or magic-user of the same experience level(s). They do not gain bonus spells for high Wisdom, and they do not require spell books or material components (besides an unholy symbol, which is typically a dwarf's painted, crushed-and-restitched ribcage, used as a type of rattle). The available spells for troll spell casters are as follows:

- **Clerical spells, level 1:** Cause Fear, Cause Light Wounds, Cure Light Wounds, Darkness, Detect Good, Detect Magic, Protection from Good (preferred)
- **Clerical spells, level 2:** Augury, Chant, Detect Charm, Resist Fire (a

favorite), Snake Charm, Speak with Animals

- **Magical spells, level 1:** Affect Normal Fires (used to reduce torch and lantern flames to almost nothing, preferred), Dancing Lights, Identify, Push, Shield, Ventriloquism
- **Magical spells, level 2:** Audible Glamer, Detect Invisibility, Invisibility (preferred), Levitate, Magic Mouth (used for lair defense, alarm), Scare

The number and experience levels of any spell casters present are based on the number of normal trolls in the lair, as follows:

- In shamanic lairs with 10 or fewer normal trolls: 1 Wise Woman (C1)
- In shamanic lairs with 11 to 15 normal trolls: 1 Hag Dancer (C2)
- In shamanic lairs with 16 to 20 normal trolls: 1 Crone-Seeress (C3)
- In shamanic lairs with 21 to 25 normal trolls: 1 Crone-Seeress (C3) and 1 Wise Woman (C1)
- In shamanic lairs with 26 to 30 normal trolls: 1 Crone-Seeress (C3) and 1 Hag Dancer (C2)
- In shamanic lairs with 31 or more normal trolls: 2 Crone-Seeresses (C3)
- In witch-wrought lairs with 10 or fewer normal trolls: 1 Troll-Witch (C1/M1)
- In witch-wrought lairs with 11 to 15 normal trolls: 1 Bone Hag (C2/M2)
- In witch-wrought lairs with 16 to 20 normal trolls: 1 Blood Crone (C3/M3)
- In witch-wrought lairs with 21 to 25 normal trolls: 1 Blood Crone (C3/M3) and 1 Troll-Witch (C1/M1)
- In witch-wrought lairs with 26 to 30 normal trolls: 1 Blood Crone (C3/M3) and 1 Bone Hag (C2/M2)
- In witch-wrought lairs with 31 or more normal trolls: 2 Blood Crones (C3/M3)

Both types of spell casters use brew cauldrons, creating various vile mixes of gore, bone meal, spice, and alcoholic spirits for their followers to imbibe. All of the normal trolls in the tribe provide gory droppings and gristly bits for the Trollkonstnar's Boyg Cauldron. They all drink the horrific brews, as well, on a daily basis. This gives all trolls (including leaders and the spell casters, and any hags) the "Fury Forbidden to the Boyg," which causes them to suffer a -1 penalty to all to hit rolls. However, it also gives the trolls a +1 bonus to morale, and a +1 to damage inflicted with every physical attack (whether a claw, bite, or weapon strike).



Lairs with troll spell casters are particularly blessed, and as might be imagined the trolls who protect the Trollkonstnar are deadly and fearless hunters as well. Because of this, troll lairs with spell casters will always have all of the possible treasures in the lair.

As an example, a review of the Treasure Type table will reveal that Treasure Type C normally has only a 20% chance for copper pieces to be present, 30% for silver pieces, 10% for electrum pieces, 0% for gold pieces, etc. In a lair with a Boyg Cauldron and a Trollkonstnar however, those percentages would instead be 100% chance for copper pieces, 100% chance for silver pieces, 100% chance for electrum pieces, 0% for gold pieces (still), and so on down the line, including a 100% chance for magic items to be present. Any magic items which are usable by the Trollkonstnar (clerical, magical, rings, etc.) will certainly be used in combat whenever possible.



The Insidious One: Haga-Daimonai

(Author's note: This creature is partly inspired by a very obscure unique demon-troll sub-type which Gary Gygax published in a little-known geomorph supplement back in 1977.)

There is one enigmatic horror in existence which many adventurers have spoken of, and some have even "slain" ... only for it to rise again in later generations, taking vengeance upon those brazen mortals who dare to breach and defile the unholy god-shrines of the trolls.

This unique creature is the Haga-Daimonai, first born of the sheddings of Trogool some thousands of years ago. It is thirteen feet tall, appearing much like a mummified troll covered in withered vines and shivering fungal growths. Whatever it is, it is not undead, and it does not feed. The Haga cannot speak, for its lichen-bearded jaw is sewn shut with barbs of adamantite steel. But it possesses a vile intelligence, which can be seen in its glowing emerald eyes. And it seems to have been spawned with but a single purpose: To defend altars, shrines, and unholy places dedicated to Trogool, Groohlz-Drakha, or the Great Boyg.

The Haga can be found in any of these subterranean fanes, typically accompanied by 1D4+4 huge trolls (of any sub-species) and either a crone or a great troll leader. There will also be 5D4 normal trolls present, of the appropriate sub-race (snow trolls beneath a glacier, lake trolls on an island, hill trolls in the highlands, and so forth). All of these creatures will share the same alignment, Chaotic Evil. These places are frequently heaped with gory corpses

and the enchanted treasures won for the glory of the troll gods.

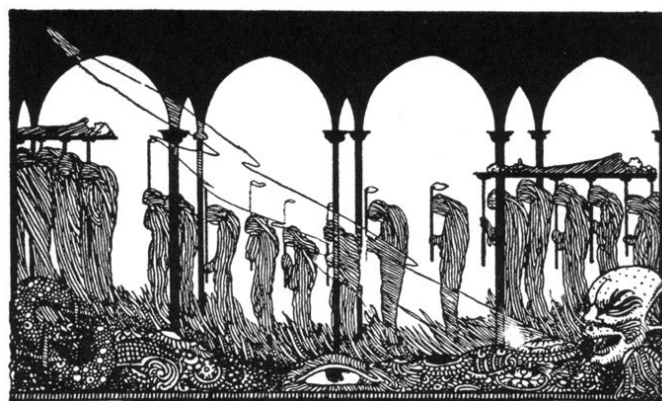
Anyone who battles the Haga will quickly learn that its powers of regeneration are extreme, and it is utterly fearless (being immune to magical fear, charm, beguiling, psionics, or any form of mind influence). It will attack until destroyed, but it will not pursue any who flee more than 240' away from its chosen unholy site. Even if riddled with arrows, it will simply stand and regenerate endlessly. The Haga can apparently teleport at times, or it can be "placed" by a higher power, because some veteran adventurers have reported encountering the thing in separate shrines located several hundred miles apart.

The Haga cannot be negotiated with, and can only be appeased by those who fall to their knees and offer one magic item for its taking. Curiously, despite the creature's intelligence it seems perfectly content to accept an offered Potion of Healing or something considerably more valuable. Those who do not sacrifice one of their own carried items will be destroyed. Each Player Character has a WISx2% chance to know this legend (and the specific magic item offering detail) from childhood, although it is doubtful that anyone would believe this creature truly exists, as it is a "Bogeyman" that is whispered of by parents in order to keep their children in good graces of behavior. The "destroyed only by holy water" detail is much more obscure and mostly known only to gnomish elders; a sage could learn this in one week's research time (if asked how to destroy the thing), and otherwise the PC with the highest Wisdom score has a WISx1% chance to remember the tale as told by a grandparent long ago.

Any who manage to "slay" the Haga (reduce it to zero hit points or lower) will learn that it can regenerate damage caused even by fire, acid, or lightning. The only way to annihilate it is to douse the remains with

holy water. If the Haga truly dies, a "new" one will arise from Trogool's endless sheddings in 13 years. The risen thing will then be teleported into the same shrine where the previous Haga fell, or another similar site nearby.

The Haga-Daimonai: Armor Class -2, Move 90' (30'), Hit Dice 9****, Hit Points 70, # Attacks 2 claw / claw, Damage 1D8+8 / 1D8+8, Special Abilities battle two foes simultaneously, giant strength (STR 21), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks severed limbs can still attack, cause weakness (Each hit reduces a victim's current STR by -1, cumulative; but a natural to hit roll of 20 results in a *permanent* -1 STR loss which can only be cured by a Cure Disease spell or similar magic. Temporary STR loss persists for 2D6 turns, meaning up to 2 hours.), Special Defenses immune to mind attacks, regeneration (7 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities can regenerate virtually all damage, but not damage caused by holy water, Save As Fighter 9, Morale 12, Intelligent genius (INT 18), Alignment Chaotic Evil with Neutral tendencies (but will cease fighting if all who oppose it offer magic items).



Chapter 5:

Of Hags and Wizen

Troll-Daughters

In they went then, and no sooner did the hag see them than she said, “So you have come, Prince Ring; you must have seen to my husband and children.”

Snati saw that she was about to attack them, and sprang at her with a red-hot iron from the fire, while Ring kept pouring boiling porridge on her without stopping, and in this way they at last got her killed. Then they burned the old troll and her to ashes, and explored the cave, where they found plenty of gold and treasures.

— *The Yellow Fairy Book*, by Andrew Lang



Hags are one of the most confusing types of monsters in the game. Some people think they're merely witches, but their unholy powers and extra-planar origins make it clear that their woman-like appearance is only a matter of mockery, not kinship with

humankind. It is also puzzling that they are always old, and always female.



When we dig into the lore which Gary Gygax used in developing his array of monsters, we find tantalizing clues which lead us to the possibility that hags are actually elderly female trolls, or somehow associated with giantesses (just as female trolls are in the Norse mythology). There is also the strange matter that female trolls are featured in Gary's preferred Norse and Scandinavian mythology sources (such as the Edda), but while he drew out a lot of Nordic lore for use in the RPG, he left the specific Trollkona (troll-wife) archetype behind.

In the mythic and folkloric World of Oldskull campaign, hags are strongly related to trolls, but they are not just females of the various troll sub-races. Due to their highly magical nature they are *other* ... incarnated as matriarchal evil spirits, wreaking a powerful influence upon the existence of troll-kind, while remaining

apart from the crude bloodlines of the larger trollish order.

For those Game Masters who want to consider allying the hag races with the trolls, details are provided here. For those who would rather not, hags can be kept entirely separate and these tentative connections can be disregarded.

Here is the mythic lore from the Pegana Mythos as featured in the World of Oldskull campaign, for those Game Masters who wish to use my lore in their own worlds:

As told in the age-old fable of Arb-Rin-Hadith, there was once a terrible blood feud between Women and Men as a result of the years-long pestilence which ravaged the holy temple vale of Sidith. During this dark time, many blasphemies upon the near-blameless Matriarchy were committed. Many of the women who were slain by the terrible “Blood Ones” during this time were priestesses and prophetesses of considerable power. Some of them magically cursed the men who murdered them, and vowed to rise in undeath to wreak vengeance upon the bloodlines of their slayers.

These included the risen Lich Maidens Hagath, Annis, Brinhilde, and Griselde, and perhaps the Vampiric Maidens Lilith and Lamia as well. Although all of the Lich Maidens were destroyed and their remains purified long ago, the blood curses of hatred were never truly lifted.

There rose from the blood-ichor of the defeated Lich Maidens four forms of female spirit. While not truly undead, these born-ancient crones are compelled by the curses to seek the corruption, annihilation, or the enslavement of blameless and guilty Men alike. These are the hags. All are poisonous, hateful, immense (though gaunt and crouched), elderly and incredibly strong. It is whispered that evil giants sometimes take Hags as their brides.

The four main hierarchies of Hag include the Brine Hags of Brinhilde, the Emerald Hags of Griselde, the Nether Hags of Annis, and the Shadow Hags of Hagath. Many of these creatures are allied with familiar beasts, who are typically imps or quasits. The familiars tend to take the forms of cats, ravens, toads, giant rats, rat-things, or similarly small and stealthy beasties. In these shapes they serve as scouts, spies, observers and even emissaries on behalf of the hags and their allied troll-kin.



BRINE HAGS**(Old Norse = SAER-VOLVA)**— *The Yellow Fairy Book*, by Andrew Lang

They had sailed for several days, when the breeze suddenly fell, and there came a dead calm, at a time when they needed only one day's voyage to reach home. Sigurd and his Queen were one day on deck, when most of the others on the ship had fallen asleep.

There they sat and talked for a while, and had their little son along with them. After a time Sigurd became so heavy with sleep that he could no longer keep awake, so he went below and lay down, leaving the Queen alone on the deck, playing with her son.

A good while after Sigurd had gone below the Queen saw something black on the sea, which seemed to be coming nearer. As it approached she could make out that it was a boat, and could see the figure of some one sitting in it and rowing it.

At last the boat came alongside the ship, and now the Queen saw that it was a stone boat, out of which there came up on board the ship a fearfully ugly Witch.

The Queen was more frightened than words can describe, and could neither speak a word nor move from the place so as to awaken the King or the sailors.

The Witch came right up to the Queen, took the child from her and laid it on the deck; then she took the Queen, and stripped her of all her fine clothes, which she proceeded to put on herself, and looked then like a human being. Last of all she took the Queen, put her into the boat, and said —

“This spell I lay upon you, that you slacken not your course until you come to my brother in the Underworld ...”

Brine hags, or sea witches, are sea-dwelling crones. They frequently ally themselves with sea trolls, merrow (sea ogres), aquatic hobgoblins, and Deep Ones. Their dread gazes, evoking the horrific Visage of Mung, are capable of slaying mortals where they stand. (Trolls and hags are immune to this vile form of death magic.) Some hags are able to raise their horror-struck mortal victims as the undead, and such unfortunate souls rise in the form of drowned zombies, aquatic ghouls, shoal ghastrs, Topielce wraiths, or even worse things besides.

Brine hags loathe mankind and they covet wondrous treasures — particularly magic items. Therefore they frequently accost treasure ships, shorelines hamlets, maritime explorers' fleets, and trading vessels.

The progenitor matriarch of the bring hags was Brinhilde, a hideous creature of considerable power (quadruple hit dice and maximum hit points, HD 12, hp 96). She once held sway over a coven of thirteen daughters and an entire court of vile undead, terrorizing the mist-enshrouded islets which encircle the treacherous “Maelstrom” whirlpool that is found in the Norwegian waters of Saltfjorden.

Note that all hags are born old (from a black cauldron ritual), and they can frequently endure for centuries until they are wiped out by heroes or divine magics. It is therefore possible, although unlikely, that the terrible Brinhilde still holds dominion over a seaweed-enshrouded palace somewhere in the frigid and briny deeps which lie between Midgard and Caledonia.

Brine Hag: Armor Class 7, Move 150' (50') / Swim 150' (50'), Hit Dice 3****, average hit points 14, # Attacks 1 dagger, Damage 1D4, Special Abilities water breathing, Special Attacks cause fright, death gaze, Special Defenses magic resistance (50%), Save As Magic-User 3, Morale 9, Intelligence average (INT 10), Alignment Chaotic Evil.



EMERALD HAGS

(Old Norse = GROENN-VOLVA)

The way led over a little stream which flows into Vidostern Lake, and across the stream was a bridge, known as the Earth Bridge, and on the bridge stood two witch trolls, busy washing. As the woman came riding across the bridge, one of the witch trolls called out to the other, "Hurry, and tear her head from her shoulders!"

— *The Swedish Fairy Book*, by Klara Stroebe

Emerald hags, or green witches, are hideous crones who favor swamps, wet and misty forests, lakes, rivers, and quicksand bogs. They sometimes lair beneath bridges, or at ford-crossings, simply because those places are commonly frequented by those frail delicious morsels who call themselves "adventurers" or "merchants."

These creatures embody the magical essence of ancient giantesses, a boon which makes them supernaturally strong (STR 18/00). They use their powers of mimicry, deception, and appearance-altering illusions to draw prey into vulnerable positions. Common ploys involve inviting adventurers into a hut for healing and storytelling; feigning injury beside a broken cart or wagon; sobbing on the side of a river (while wearing a noble maiden's robes); crying for help in a child's voice from out of a quicksand thicket; and so on.

Emerald hags are known to Achaea and Britannia, and are particularly found in their homelands of Caledonia (mythic Scotland) and Hibernia (mythic Ireland).

The more notorious ones are known by “bogey-woman” names, and are whispered of to errant children in hushed voices when bedtime comes around. Famous ones include Achlys, Glaistic, Grindyflow, Jenny Greenteeth, Gwilloin, Makva, Peg Powler, and Shellycoat.



Come give us a kiss, my pretties!

The progenitor matriarch of the emerald hags was known as Griselde, the Grey One; she was a being of terrible unholy power (with double hit dice and maximum hit points, HD 18, hp 144). For some unknown reason there was considerable enmity between the Grey One and Baba Yaga.

Nightmare whispers speak of an emerald shadow palace which sometimes appears atop the low, strangely-hued clouds which come before Hibernian thunderstorms. Further, it is said that this foul ruin is the accursed abode of either the ancient Griselde or some few of her surviving daughters.

Emerald Hag: Armor Class -2 (unholy aura), Move 120' (40') / Swim 120' (40'), Hit Dice 9***, average hit points 41, # Attacks 2 Claw / Claw, Damage 1D2+6 / 1D2+6, Special Abilities audible glamor, change self, dancing lights, infravision (60'), mimicry, move silently, pass without trace, speak with monsters, superior strength (STR 18/00), surprise on a 1-5 on 1D6, ultravision (120'), water breathing, weakness, Special Attacks, Special Defenses invisibility, magic resistance (35%), surprised only on a 1 (1D20, 5%), Save As Magic-User 9, Morale 10, Intelligence average to very (INT 10-14), Alignment Neutral Evil.

NETHER HAGS

(Old Norse = HELLIR-VOLVA)

*'Tis said the soul of mortal man recoiled
To view Black Annis' eye, so fierce and
wild ...*

*Vast talons, foul with human flesh, there
grew*

*In place of hands, and features livid blue
Glared in her visage, whilst her obscene
waist*

*Warm skins of human victims close
embraced.*

Not without terror they the cave survey,

*Where hung the monstrous trophies of her
sway.*

*'Tis said that in the rock, large rooms were
found*

Scooped with her claws

Beneath the flinty ground.

— A poem by John Heyrick (1895)



Nether hags, akin to the Grendel-Modor, are vicious creatures who prefer the company of trolls and giants. They are known as Kutshedra or Cauldron Mothers in some mythologies and are always found brewing disgusting alchemical concoctions made of herbs, old vegetables, animal entrails, and severed parts of victims' bodies. They are similar to emerald hags in behavior, but they prefer to dwell in caverns, ruins, dungeons, and subterranean fanes throughout the underworld. Rumors hold that the enigmatic blood lineage of Baba Yaga herself runs through several centuries of the nether hag ancestry.

The progenitor matriarch of this bloodline is Black Annis, an arcane crone of wicked prowess and legendary machinations (of

double hit dice and maximum hit points, HD 7+12, hp 68). She yet lives despite many centuries of hunting by intrepid crone slayers, troll hunters, and would-be heroes. The primary entrance to her nether domain lies within the province of Leicester in Britannia, beneath an ancient oak tree known as the Twisted Dane. The troll-infested tunnels there below are filled with many dangers, including giant spiders, demon-kin, barrow wights, and incomprehensible horrors from out of the Outer Dark.

Nether Hag: Armor Class 0 (enchanted iron flesh), Move 150' (50'), Hit Dice 7+3*** to 7+12*** (average 7+8***), average hit points 41, # Attacks 3 Claw / Claw / Bite, Damage 1D8+8 / 1D8+8 / 2D4+1, Special Abilities change self, excellent infravision (120'), giant strength (STR 19), Special Attacks grapple foe, Special Defenses fog cloud, immune to illusion spells, resistant to edged weapons (which inflict -1 damage), Special Vulnerabilities susceptible to bludgeoning weapons (which inflict +1 damage), Save As Magic-User 9 (due to hit dice), Morale 10, Intelligence average to exceptional (INT 10 to 16), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

SHADOW HAGS

(Old Norse = GRIMA-VOLVA)

Round about the cauldron go;

In the poison'd entrails throw.

Toad, that under cold stone

Days and nights has thirty-one

Swelter'd venom sleeping got,

Boil thou first I' the charmed pot.

Double, double toil and trouble;

Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

*Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble!*

— *MacBeth*, by William Shakespeare

Shadow Hag: Armor Class 9, Move 90' (30'), Hit Dice 8****, average hit points 36, # Attacks 1 Bite, Damage 2D6, Special Abilities astral projection, cure disease (periapt), demon gate, devil gate, ethereal travel, excellent infravision (120'), know alignment, planar travel, polymorph self, Special Attacks hag riding, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, sleep curse, strangling, Special Defenses +3 or better weapon to hit, +2 to saving throws (periapt), immune to cold and fire, immune to sleep, charm, and fear spells, magic resistance (65%), Save As Magic-User 8 (and additional +2 due to periapt), Morale 11, Intelligence exceptional (INT 16), Alignment Neutral Evil.

Shadow hags, or night crones, are the most secretive, stealthy, and beguiling form of troll-crone. They are the Weird Sisters, and while capable of tempting deception they do not always face their foes directly; some favor inducing madness through the Dreamlands, or accosting their victims in a form of vampiric sleep paralysis over a period of many nights. They are planes walkers, known to bargain with both devils and demon-kind. Those who do brave combat directly are frequently supported by powerful evil allies, including demons, nightmare steeds, trolls, or “Sisterlings” who hail from the other hag covens.

The progenitor matriarch of the shadow hag bloodline was Hagath, a powerful alchemist known for her unique polymorphing abilities. (She preferred turning victims into giant rats if she wished to eat them, or into toads if she did not.) Other famous hags from this prodigious ancestry include Bercht, Cailleach Bheur, Calill Eaca, Deino, Enyo, Haetes, Hecate the Youngest, Hexe, Krisky, Maera, Nocnitsa, Pemphredo, Percht, Plaksy, and Zelos.



Chapter 6:

The Troll-Giants

The blasphemous troll-giants of Nordic lore are not as uncommon as one might think, as hags seek to gain power over the mortal world by siring powerful children. These creatures are the offspring of a powerful male giant, and a shape-shifting hag (typically a shadow hag, although cauldron rituals exist in which all of the hag types can temporarily take on the form of a giantess in a special non-combat situation).

The ritual which allows a hag to take on the form of a giantess also allows her to manipulate her appearance. She can then seduce the most powerful giant that she can find. This is not a polymorph or shape change spell, per se; it is an ancient ritualistic effect which takes a considerable time to prepare through the use of influential cauldron brews, stick figure construction, Jotunn mantras, and so forth. Outside of the circles of hags and troll matriarchs, the required rituals are virtually unknown even amongst elven elders and mortal sages.

It is also said that magical troll crones (shamanesses and witch doctors) can mate with giants, but due to their lack of polymorphing or shape-shifting ability such crosses are more rare. Make of that what you will.

Troll-giants are always born male (but see below). Their claws are thicker and weaker than a troll's, while their teeth tend to be protruding and tusk-like. They favor the use of melee weapons, as their fathers do; but in close combat they can use their claws in hammer-blow punches instead. The giantish skill of throwing boulders in combat is largely unknown to them. They do not bite their prey, either (just as giants do not). Due to the dark and esoteric

cauldron rituals, which involve infusions of troll's blood to ensure a birth, the troll-giants are born with regenerative powers and other powers possessed by either giants or trolls.

Note however that troll-giant regeneration tends to be slower when compared to the potency of full-blooded trolls, and troll-giants cannot survive decapitation (and cannot re-bond severed limbs). So hang on to those ever-handy vorpal swords if you have them!



A face only a mother could love?

When the prospective mother is impregnated by the giant, she will either vanish from the giant's lair, or the giant will be exiled from the crone's lair. The children are raised by the hag and any other members of the tribe. Some hag-sons choose to stay with their hag mothers, while others seek out either giants or trolls ... perhaps depending on their parentage, or their instincts, or some fell purpose entirely unknown to us.

There are other mysteries to consider as well. It is said that there is another, fouler cauldron ritual in which a troll-giant can choose (agonizingly) to be cut apart, with its own regenerative blood serving to empower the black magic of the unholy and procreative brew. This ritual is sometimes conducted because troll-giant males eventually die from weakness and old age, but hags do not. This "crone resurrection" is a form of monstrous and transformative immortality. The few crone-sons who dare to sacrifice themselves in this manner are reborn ancient, as hags (females) of the same sub-race as their mother. It is believed that this is the only way in which new hags can be born into the world, but when one considers the ghastly manner in which extra-planar demons and devils are made from necrotic and resurrected flesh, no one can ever truly be certain.

Regardless of their origin, troll-giants are frequently outnumbered by their kin. If encountered with their hag mother, the hag will be accompanied by 1D2 sons who share their giant race with their father's bloodline. Only 10% of troll lairs have troll-giants as members, while 20% of giant lairs feature them. The number of troll-giants appearing in a troll or giant lair is usually equal to about 10%-15% of the number of adults of the outnumbering species, rounded up. For example, a lair with 23 fire giants would also have 3 or 4 fire troll-giants.

FIRE TROLL-GIANTS

(Old Norse = **ELDR TROLL-JOTUNN**)



Fire troll-giants are born of a fire giant father and a hag or troll mother. Like their sires, they are Lawful Evil, fearsome, tyrannical, treasure-hoarding creatures who prefer to lair near geysers, fiery deserts, or volcanoes. Average height is only 10'6", but they are very broad of shoulder, and thick with twisted muscles. Favored weapons include great swords, mauls, hammers, and maces.

And for those keeping score at home, you might have already figured out that fire troll-giants are the deadliest sub-race, because they share their fathers' immunity to fire, up to and include red dragons' breath! Acid damage, lightning damage, or decapitation are required to lay them low.

As a practical matter, I recommend that Game Masters allow any troll-giant slain — or slain in part — by large edged weapons such as swords, and reduced to -10 hit points, to be considered dead and unable to

regenerate any further. This ruling should apply to troll-giants of all races. Dwarves and gnomes will know this life-saving bit of information automatically (due to their age and upbringing), while other would-be slayers might well need to learn the grim truth of this unforeseen matter through trial and error.

Eldr Troll-Jotunn (Fire Troll-Giant):

Armor Class 3, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 9+2****, average hit points 43, # Attacks 1 by weapon or 2 claw / claw, Damage 5D6 or 2D6+1 / 2D6+1, Special Abilities giant strength (STR 20), superior infravision (90'), Special Defenses catch or deflect missiles (25%), immune to fire, regeneration (2 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 10 (due to 9+2 HD), Morale 11, Intelligence low average (INT 8), Alignment Neutral Evil.

Special Note on Fire Troll-Giant Armor:

Most fire troll-giants wear thick furs and heavy leather. A few wear either chain mail (20%, AC 2) or partial plate armor (10%, AC 1).

FROST TROLL-GIANTS

(Old Norse = JOKULL TROLL-JOTUNN)

Frost troll-giants — sometimes colloquially referred to in passing as “Loki’s Laughter” — are born of a male frost giant, and either a hag or troll mother. Like their fathers, they are barbaric, lusty, plundering, hard-drinking, dragon-hunting, and brutally cruel. They raid far and wide, but their lairs are frequently hidden away in very distant and inhospitable places. As D’Aulaire poetically tells us: “They lived in castles of ice, surrounded by shimmering fences of northern lights. They were as wild as the mountains themselves, and pelted the valleys with snow and ice.”

Their favored weapons are battle axes, mauls, thrusting spears (never thrown), and great clubs. A typical specimen stands some 12' tall. Due to both sides of their parentage, these creatures are tall, narrow-bodied, and gangly; but their sinewy ice-blue bodies are entirely composed of muscle.

Frost troll-giants are somewhat ostracized from the Hrimthursar courts of the frost giants of Ymir. They never ascend to become Jarls, although some of the strongest and most lethal eventually become Huscarls due to their utter fearlessness and sheer brutality in battle.



Jokull Troll-Jotunn (Frost Troll-Giant):

Armor Class 4, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 9****, average hit points 41, # Attacks 1 by weapon or 2 claw / claw, Damage 4D6 or 2D4+1 / 2D4+1, Special Abilities giant strength (STR 19), superior infravision

(90'), Special Defenses catch or deflect missiles (25%), immune to cold, regeneration (2 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 9, Morale 11, Intelligence low average (INT 8), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

Special Note on Frost Troll-Giant Armor:

Frost troll-giants typically wear bear hides and partial mail. Some warriors however wear full mail (30%, AC 3) or partial plate armor (20%, AC 2).

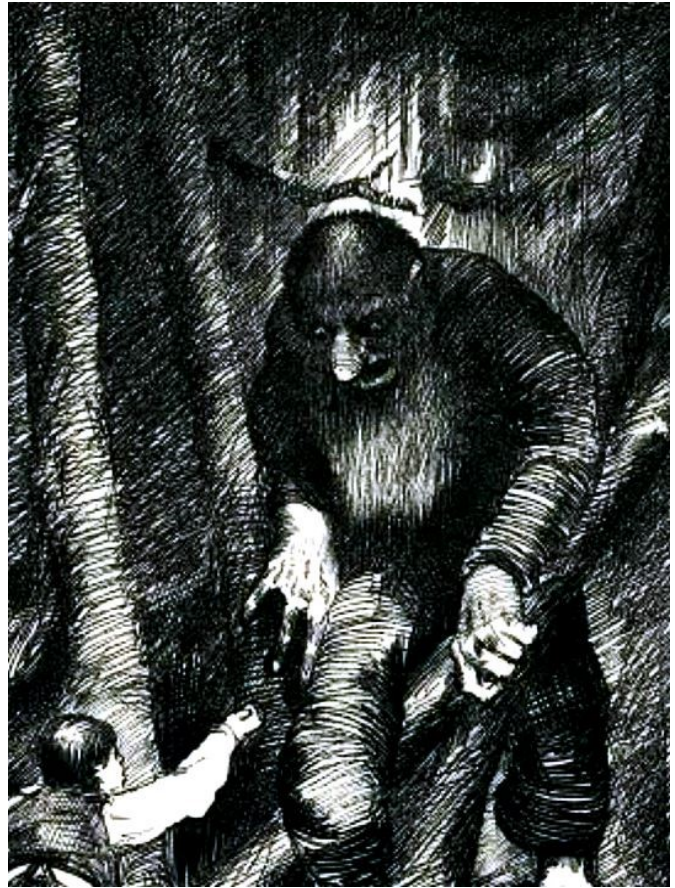
HILL TROLL-GIANTS

(Old Norse = **FELL TROLL-JOTUNN**)

Hill troll-giants — sired by a hill giant father — are the most common of the Troll-Jotunn sub-races by far. In fact, some Grimrook sages have yet to believe that the other hypothetical sub-strains even exist. Anyone who first brings a decapitated head and a quality blood sample to the city state, for any non-hill species, is all but assured of earning 2D6x1,000 gold pieces for in return for offering such trophies ... first come first serve of course, and only once per sub-race until all are proven to exist!

These creatures are rather small (about 10' tall, and sometimes hunchbacked down to a mere 7'), but they are feared and powerful hunters. Unlike other troll-giant races, Fell Troll-Jotunns favor thrown and hurled weapons (but not boulders). Popular choices include throwing clubs, hammers, axes, javelins, and "tumble-spikes," which are basically morning stars with chain handles instead of wooden hafts. A typical specimen will carry 3 such weapons, throwing two before engaging in melee whenever circumstances allow. Due to their skill and prowess, these troll-giants gain their Strength bonuses when throwing, which means that their weapons

inflict the same amount of damage whether they are thrown or wielded by hand.



Oho, little one!

Fell Troll-Jotunn (Hill Troll-Giant):

Armor Class 4, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 8**, average hit points 36, # Attacks 1 by weapon or 2 claw / claw, Damage 2D8 or 1D6+1 / 1D6+1, Special Abilities superior strength (STR 18/00), superior infravision (90'), thrown weapon for damage 2D8 (range S 20' / M 40' / L 60'), Special Defenses catch or deflect missiles (25%), regeneration (2 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 8, Morale 10, Intelligence low (INT 6), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

Special Note on Hill Troll-Giant Armor:

Hill troll-giants wear masses of animal fur and boiled leather. Rarely, they might don

partial mail (10%, AC 3) or heavy leather and iron-skirted jacks (5%, AC 2).

MOUNTAIN TROLL-GIANTS

(Old Norse = **BERG TROLL-JOTUNN**)



The mighty mountain troll-giants — sired by a mountain giant father — are reclusive, secretive, wily, sardonic, and occasionally even rather talkative ... a trait which troll hunters wryly refer to as “playing with their food.” They are highly intimidating, standing very straight and implacably at 12’ tall. Their favored weapons are swords and clubs, although some few are also surprisingly adept with their preferred iron-shod battle staves.

Uniquely among the Troll-Jotunn sub-races, mountain troll-giants can evoke a powerful ancestral power which is known as the “Chaunt of the Shivering Stones.” This half-magical, half-commanding ritual allows any such creature to summon fearless allies who will arrive ready to do battle in 1D6 rounds. This ritual can only be performed once a month by any tribe which includes mountain troll-giants. However, the Chaunt can be invoked in or before a battle. The creatures summoned will be either 2D4+1 ogres (60% chance), 1D4 mountain trolls (30%), or 1 shadow hag (10%). If more than 1 troll-giant is present to participate in the Chaunt, the counts will instead be 2D4+3 ogres, 1D4+1 mountain trolls, or 1D2 shadow hags.

Berg Troll-Jotunn (Mountain Troll-Giant): Armor Class 4, Move 120’ (40’), Hit Dice 9+3****, average hit points 44, # Attacks 1 weapon or 2 claw / claw, Damage 4D10 or 2D6+2 / 2D6+2, Special Abilities giant strength (STR 21), summon ogres, trolls or a shadow hag (once per month), superior infravision (90’), Special Defenses catch or deflect missiles (25%), regeneration (2 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 10 (due to 9+3 HD), Morale 11, Intelligence average (INT 10), Alignment Chaotic Neutral with Evil tendencies.

Special Note on Mountain Troll-Giant Armor: Mountain trolls almost never wear armor, favoring furs and hides. A few who are frequently in battle will wear heavy leather and partial mail (10%, AC 3).

STONE TROLL-GIANTS**(Old Norse = STEIN TROLL-JOTUNN)**

The Stein Troll-Jotunns, sired by stone giant fathers, are the most complacent (and non-evil) of all the troll-giant sub-races. They are grave, taciturn, silent, defensive, and ritual-minded. Contact with humans and demi-humans is quite rare, although some mountain dwarf clans are known to have very tentative trade and non-aggression pacts with two of the recognized Midgardian populations.

Stone troll-giants use stalactite clubs as weapons. Philosophically they combine the lore mastery of the stone trolls with the reclusive and territorial nature of the stone giants. Their confident yet relatively peaceful behavior makes them both perceptive and patient, and as such they are excellent miners, artisans, and beast tamers. Most stone troll-giants have either cave bears, dire wolves, or giant boars as guardians and hunting companions.

Stein Troll-Jotunn (Stone Troll-Giant):

Armor Class 2, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 8+2**, average hit points 38, # Attacks 1 by weapon or 2 claw / claw, Damage 3D6 or 2D4 / 2D4, Special Abilities giant strength (STR 19), superior infravision (90'), Special Defenses catch or deflect missiles (25%), regeneration (2 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save As Fighter 9 (due to 8+2 HD), Morale 10, Intelligence low average (INT 8), Alignment Chaotic Neutral.

Special Note on Stone Troll-Giant Armor:

Stone troll-giants almost never wear armor, due to the strange crystalline formations that form upon their rock-hard flesh. The largest one found in a lair might (25%) wear ritualistic bone armor (AC 1).

TWO-HEADED TROLL-GIANTS**(Old Norse = KLOFNA TROLL-JOTUNN)**

The shudder-inducing, 12'-tall Klofna Troll-Jotunn is the inevitable result of an ettin father and a troll-crone mother. These creatures are considered degenerate mutants, and one of the heads will invariably be either half-paralyzed (seemingly waking only when it is time to feed, or to bite in combat), deformed, or insane. Nevertheless these creatures are nearly unstoppable in battle due to their fearless stubbornness (morale 12) and vicious attacks. They are used as "battering rams" by giant and troll forces, leading charges, smashing down barricades, and taking on the paladins and other powerful heroes that other monsters are too wary to face.

As weapons, they use flails, chain morning stars, great clubs, or “smashums” (a boulder chained and strapped to the forearm, used as a rudimentary and very gory hammer). However, their claws are considerably longer than those possessed by most other troll-giants are, and they can inflict horrendous damage while wielding no weapons at all.

Klofna Troll-Jotunn (Two-Headed Troll-Giant): Armor Class 3, Move 120' (40'), Hit Dice 8+3***, average hit points 39, # Attacks 4 claw or weapon / claw or weapon / bite / bite, Damage 1D8+3 (dominant arm) / 1D6+3 (weaker arm) / 2D6+1 / 2D6+1, Special Abilities giant strength (STR 20), infravision (60'), Special Defenses immune to magical fear, only surprised on a 1 on 1D6, regeneration (1 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, Save as Fighter 9 (due to 8+3 HD), Morale 12, Intelligence low (INT 6), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

(These creatures never wear armor beyond heavy leather, girdles, and filthy hides.)



Chapter 7:

Allies and Enemies

of the Trolls

While it is not possible to compile a full listing of the relations which trolls have with all other types of creatures throughout the World of Oldskull, it can be useful to the Game Master — for the purposes of lair design, region design, wandering encounter generation, role-playing between races and faction, and so forth — to review brief notes pertaining to the more common associations between trolls and other entities. This information is a combination of folkloric and mythic pairings, along with Gygaxian inspirations and details unique to the sub-races found throughout this volume.

- **Ant, Giant, Worker:** These insects are sometimes found caring for troll-wrought fungal gardens.
- **Badgerbear:** These fearsome beasts are sometimes used, quite unwillingly, as guardian beasts by trollish monster tamers.
- **Bear, Cave:** Cave bears are chained and forced to serve as guardian beasts. The stone troll-giants, however, are able to tame and command these creatures freely.
- **Beetle, Giant, Boring:** Sometimes found in symbiosis with the fungi, slimes, and/or molds in a trollish fungal garden.
- **Beetle, Giant, Fire:** Found in troll-wrought fungal gardens. However large migrating swarms of these creatures sometimes surge through in locust-like fashion, devouring all organic matter; in such cases the

trolls feed on upon the beetles until the disruption has been diverted.

- **Beetle, Giant, Rhinoceros:** Occasionally used as deadly guardian beasts.
- **Boar, Giant:** Can be tamed as hunting beasts by stone troll-giants.
- **Bugbear:** Bugbears and trolls are sometimes found in alliance, particularly in netherworld warrens where both types of creatures are found in significant numbers. Many bugbears greatly distrust trolls, because their insatiable hunger occasionally leads — in times of hunting hardship — to a bugbear warrior being devoured. Nevertheless the two races have a tentative pact of alliance, particularly in regards to killing dwarves and gnomes. Without drow leadership and influence, bugbear and troll alliances tend to fall apart within a month. Either the bugbears are strong enough that they no longer need the trolls, or the trolls become strong enough that they try to eat all of the bugbears.



- **Cave Cricket, Giant:** Can be found living in symbiosis with trollish fungal gardens.
- **Character, Evil Lord:** Many types of powerful evil NPCs employ trolls as guards, thralls, gaol keepers, intimidators, or hunters. The reason for this is simple: trolls regenerate, and they do not suffer the miserable losses and desertions which other lesser evil races do. Trolls do not serve willingly with any frequency but they are easily coerced with generous heapings of treasure, threats, and tasty flesh. Trolls are usually intelligent enough to recognize signs, symbols, gestures, and tabards associated with a cause (e.g., “Let anyone with a golden robe through the left door, but only those wearing skull masks are allowed to proceed through the right door.”) Unfortunately — and frequently to adventurers’ advantage — they tend to get confused into carelessness over the particulars, such as “Why is that one’s robe covered in blood” or “Who are these new people I’ve never seen before.” Regardless of circumstances however, they have some difficulty controlling their hatred of dwarves, elves, and gnomes.
- **Character, Troll Hunter:** Troll hunting enjoys a long, proud tradition among the dwarf lords’ kingdoms, the gnomish laird clans, and the ranks of adventuring mercenary companies. Everyone loves to kill trolls; or, at least, to have them be dead. The art is very lucrative, and bounties for troll heads — make you absolutely sure the heads are no longer moving, mind — are common throughout the borderlands and city states, and rather generous (25 to 250 gold

pieces per, depending on size and species). The indefatigable hunters belong to a loose association of fellowship through misery, which is grimly and jokingly named “The Spiritual Order of Beowulf.” Its members are many and ever-changing. The reason the membership changes frequently is because most of the veteran troll hunters are dead.

- **Crocuta:** These creatures are used as guardian beasts, and hags adore them due to their crafty skills in mimicry.
- **Deep One:** Although far from trustworthy, some sea trolls and brine hags consider the Deep Ones to be allies (or at least, enemies of shared enemies).
- **Demon:** Collectively, the various types of demons are abusive allies and occasional masters of the troll species. Demonkind holds control over the cursed trolls in particular, due to the sacrificial vows of the betrayed Grendel-Modor. Fear can lead to trolls serving demons as guardians and warriors. At times, a powerful hag coven can keep the peace between demons and trolls for the purposes of a temporary alliance — formed either in the name of vengeance or survival — against the forces of good. The creatures who most effectively barter with demons are the nether hags and the shadow hags, due to their control over the larval souls that demons covet in their never-ending quest to imperiously dominate mankind.



- **Devil:** Devils abhor the chaotic nature of the trolls; they regard most troll specimens as inferior, reckless, and incapable of adherence to any form of pact or treaty. As such devils frequently exploit or torture trolls, but they do not ally with them. The most important exception to this general state of affairs involves the coven of the shadow hags; this is because these hags control larval souls, which devils must possess in order to create newly-risen vessels of their own accursed kind.
- **Drake, Ice:** Dragonkind does not mix well with trolldom, simply because neither race is willing to allow for anything but ultimate dominance. However, lesser ice drakes can sometimes be encountered as allies or guardians of the snow trolls.



- **Dwarf:** Dwarves are the ultimate nemeses of the trolls. The two races have battled throughout the netherworld for centuries, with neither achieving true dominance. The dwarven kingdoms flourished throughout the surface world (c. 300 AD to present) for over a thousand years. Recently however, several calamitous events — the humanoid invasions from the Utter East, the Chaos Plague, and the tempest-driven migrations and exiles driven up from Afrik and the Stygian hinterlands — have caused dwarven dominance to falter. As a result many dwarven clans are again returning to their works beneath the surface, which inevitably results in

battles with the trolls. All dwarves are trained to be troll hunters to some degree, but the losses suffered by the race considerably outpace their slow rate of births ... to say nothing of the slowing rise of dwarven maids and heroes from out of the enclaves. These hardships have made the dwarves more reliant upon gnomes, halfling bounders and allies, and adventurers from the city states. The trolls, for their part, are happy to devour and conquer all. A few wiser trollish creatures — hags, spell casters, and King's Claws, in particular — know not to slay vanquished dwarves, for these hardy creatures can be put to good use as slaves, making armor, weapons, and tools, and serving the trolls as treasure hunters.

- **Elf:** Much like the dwarves who are retreating back into their mist-enshrouded mountains, the once-numerous elves have mostly retreated to their forest enclaves due to the many tragedies which have scourged the World of Oldskull in recent centuries. A few valorous elven heroes are still about, and the race has made strong pacts (through half-elven kindred) with many of the borderland regions where trolls proliferate. The elves have long held themselves in enmity toward trollkind, and the most hated trolls are unquestionably the forest trolls. These creatures have almost universally been wiped out in forests where the elven kings still reign; however, more than one elven enclave has been eradicated by the trolls in turn. Exiled and homeless elves frequently ally themselves with the gnome laird or the shire-folk as they plan expeditions of vengeance against the trolls.

- **Elf, Drow:** Even as the surface-dwelling Ljosalfar (the Light Elves, or Sunlit Elves) have warred against trolls, for over a thousand years the dark elven races have worked to manipulate nether-dwelling trolls to suit their own ends. As a result the drow are strongly allied with many of the known troll sub-races in the deep. These pacts are mostly matters of intelligent contrivance on the dark elves' part. Trolls' needs and desires are easily sated with promises of cave lairs, fertile fungus-growing areas, treasure (actually quite meager) and the promise of dwarven and elven flesh for those trolls who serve particularly well as guardians and warriors for the drow. Most drow distance themselves from direct contact with trolls out of preference, but they will threaten and command them directly when they must. In most instances the numerous bugbears — being themselves well-tended protectors of the drowic lands — are made to serve as liaisons between troll packs and dark elven commanders. Trolls, even wild and raging ones, will rarely attack dark elves on sight. And in turn the drow stand ready to manipulate any who will potentially serve to suffer their losses in battle against the surface dwellers.
- **Ettin:** These monsters are typically encountered along with two-headed troll-giants.
- **Frogman:** While often treacherous (yet easily threatened into submission), frogmen frequently ally with lake trolls. The frogmen are promised prisoners as either food or breeding partners, and in turn they protect the egg clusters of the trolls.
- **Fungus, Death:** This catch-all monstrous category includes many unusual and dangerous fungal types, including phyco-fungi and Fungal Abominations (as detailed in *The Classic Dungeon Design Guide, Book II*). These things are avoided by most trolls but can sometimes be found as parasites living off of trollish fungal garden growths.
- **Fungus, Violet:** It is believed that trolls can regenerate the withering effects caused by contact with violet fungi branches, because these growths are commonly found being cultivated as “guards” in fungal gardens.
- **Gargoyle, Aquatic:** These rare creatures are sometimes allied with sea trolls.
- **Ghast, Shoal:** Rarely otherwise scene, aquatic ghouls can be risen by brine hags (who slay sailors with the Visage of Mung).
- **Ghoul:** Ghouls fear and avoid trolls. However, crones and troll spell casters gather ghouls because their essence can be used to create Trolghuls (and other horrific “cauldron critters” at the GM's discretion. It is said that the Ghoul King owes fealty to the demon lord Hyaenoghul, which if true would mean that some chaotic evil troll tribes are allied with ghouls directly.
- **Ghoul, Aquatic:** Much like shoal ghouls, these creatures can be risen by brine hags.
- **Ghoul, Great (Ghul):** These powerful undead (HD 4, a “double ghoul” in most ways) are needed to create powerful Trolghul spawn. Their essence is also said to be an ingredient in the sacrificial cauldron ritual which turns self-destroying troll-giants into hags.

- **Giant, Cloud:** It should be stated that there are no known cloud troll-giants, most likely because the noble cloud giants regard trolls as being utterly inferior and beneath them. Good cloud giants are enemies of trolls, and slay them frequently. Evil cloud giants will only rarely associate with them, unless they require strong-backed regenerating slaves.
- **Giant, Fire:** Fire giants (the Eldjotnar) are uncommonly found lairing with fire troll-giants. Tyrannical fire giants also use cursed trolls as warriors, hunters, slavers, and servitors. Trolls are provided with treasure and victims, and serve as gaolers of the giants. (Particularly uncooperative prisoners, or those who are worth nothing in ransom, are allowed to be devoured.) The trolls due to alignment conflicts are frequently rebellious, and those who require discipline are made to work in the lava smithies. Trolls are rightly horrified by magma. Those who continue to rebel are imprisoned by the giants, to be used as ever-regenerating “torture practice targets” until they go berserk and are driven utterly mad.
- **Giant, Frost:** The Hrimthursar are allied both with snow trolls, and with frost troll-giants.
- **Giant, Hill:** These giants are most commonly associated with trolls. Not only are they found with hill troll-giants, they also ally with cursed trolls for raiding and plundering expeditions.
- **Giant, Mountain:** Mountain giants associate both with mountain trolls, and with mountain troll-giants. There has been goodwill between the races for centuries, ever since the first Mountain King allied with giants against invading legions of dwarven and gnomish warriors long ago.
- **Giant, Stone:** Stone giants — despite some philosophical and territorial differences — ally with stone trolls and dwell with stone troll-giants. Temporary alliances are made when the little folk are poking about, so that intruders can be quickly brought to terms.
- **Giant, Storm:** Storm giants loathe trolls, and destroy them with lightning bolts whenever possible. Trolls are terrified of storm giants, and rightly so. However these giants are very rare and most troll tribes know to scurry away when the “Storm-Sons of Odin” are stalking about.
- **Gnoll:** The thralls of Hyaenoghul, are allies of some (but not all) troll tribes. Most humanoids fear trolls too much to be kept around them. Gnolls, however, are typically both strong and numerous enough to hold their own — which means that trolls will tolerate them and battle alongside them, without devouring the wounded ... mostly. The gnolls’ martial prowess, combined with the trolls’ often unstoppable strength, makes combined raiding parties fearsome indeed. The common agreement is that gnolls acquire the vanquished victims’ treasure, while trolls get to eat all of the victims who are not enslaved. The trolls understand that culling the numbers of humans and demi-humans is important to their continued survival and these pacts can sometimes last for several weeks or even months despite the intrinsic nature of the chaotic evil ethos. Fire giants also use gnolls as thralls and servants, and trolls as shock troops, so sometimes the creatures will be

found together because of a fire giant's stratagem and tyrannical manipulation. Some few troll exiles, who choose to live among gnolls instead of with hags or troll-kind, are known to willingly worship the gnolls' vile god, Hyaenoghul, as well. These trolls can be found in defense of gnoll lairs.

- **Gnome:** Gnomes are reluctantly associated with the trolls due to the ancient and arcane machinations of the stone giants. (Refer to the Trolldfolk chapter in this volume for particulars.) It is also believed that both gnomes and trolls are related to Huldrafolk bloodlines, although that race is too mysterious for even the most learned of sages to be able to hold an evidentiary opinion on the matter. But the gnomes and trolls hate one another, indisputably. Refer to the Dwarf section above, as much of that information on the dwarven kingdoms also applies (to a somewhat lesser extent) to the holdings and peoples sworn to the powerful gnome lairds.
- **Goblin:** There is enmity between trolls and goblins, because goblins don't enjoy being eaten. Refer also the Humanoid, General entry.
- **Green Slime:** Whether or not trolls can be killed by green slime remains an interesting question. (The author believes that green slime is acidic in nature, and therefore capable of killing a troll.) Slime colonies can sometimes be found in trollish fungal gardens as parasitic infestations.
- **Hag, Brine:** Brine hags frequently lead or control sea trolls.
- **Hag, Emerald:** Emerald hags lead groups of bog, forest, or lake trolls.

- **Hag, Nether:** These hags reign over cave, cursed, mountain, and stone trolls.
- **Hag, Shadow:** Through fear and threat, shadow hags compel cursed, hill, snow, and stone trolls to do their bidding.
- **Herd Animal:** The mountain trolls are known to raise, tame, and herd various forms of cold-dwelling beasts. They keep these creatures in their caves during the winter, and then watch the herds from afar during warmer months. Woe to any human hunters who seek to cull a troll-herd, unknowingly or otherwise! The most commonly herded animals, all large, are elk, giant goats, moose, reindeer, and wild sheep (and giant rams).
- **Hobgoblin:** Hobgoblins fear trolls, and will rarely associate with them unless they are forced to do so. But hobgoblin essence can be rendered into a brew which can be used to create Trolghuls, so hags sometimes keep them as slaves. Also, hobgoblins are apparently delicious once you pop the spiky armor off.
- **Hobgoblin, Aquatic:** These creatures are "allies" (typically slaves or servants) to both sea trolls and brine hags.



- **Humanoid, General:** In addition to other comments throughout this section, there are some trends involving relations between trolls and evil humanoids. Trolls are so powerful that even groups of humanoids numbering in the dozens will avoid them out of fear. Trolls despise weakness, and they will eat just about living thing when they are hungry, so long as it squirms and crunches juicily. This means that weak humanoids frequently fall prey to hunting trolls when times are lean, and humanoids that are weaker than gnolls will rarely trust trolls at all. However, a strong leader (such as a drow commander or evil lord) can force trolls and humanoids to fight together, provided both sides are disciplined severely. Even this form of cooperation requires strict balance, however. Otherwise, either the humanoids become numerous enough to drive off the trolls, or the trolls eat too many of the humanoids and the remainder flee.
- **Hydra:** These monsters are sometimes used as guardian beasts by troll monster tamers.
- **Imp (or Quasit):** These demonlings and devilkin commonly serve as familiars for hags or troll spell casters. It seems too that such creatures are capable of shifting themselves into shapes which are rarely if ever seen by human wizards. The forms used include the Black Grimalkin (a fiery-eyed black cat, sometimes of fearsome size with maximum hit points), the Troll-Fogel (an unusual serpentine rooster-like creature, more akin to a cockatrice than a bird), and the Trollhund (a shadowy wolf form, perhaps related in some way to the umbral hounds).



- **Kobold:** Kobolds taste bad, which is a good thing if you're a kobold. There is mutual tolerance between trolls and kobolds, but the kobolds are usually too afraid to work with trolls ... unless a powerful evil lord is forcing to the two groups to work together.
- **Leopard, Snow:** These great cats are sometimes used as hunting beasts by the snow trolls.
- **Lich:** These foul things require larval soul essence in order to maintain their undead potency without suffering eventual annihilation. Therefore, lichs are allies with the eldest hags, including the progenitor matriarchs most especially (Hagath, Black Annis, Brinhilde, and Griselde). Also, depending on a Game Master's preferences, there might exist the possibility of

inhuman liches. If this is the case, then the elder matriarchs might indeed be liches in full, and not just greatly-empowered hags.

- **Manticore, Frost:** These very rare horrors are allied with the snow trolls.



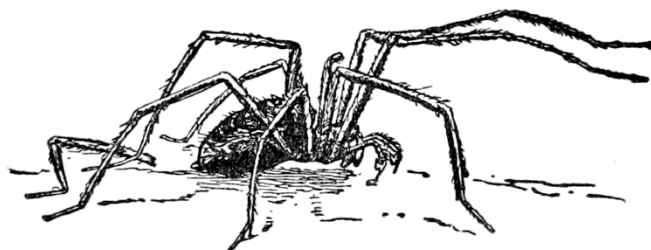
- **Merman:** Mermen and mermaids are devout enemies of the sea trolls, who prey upon them.
- **Mold, Yellow:** While being by no means favored, these growths can be found as parasitic infestations in trollish fungal gardens.
- **Nereid:** Much like the merfolk, nereids are enemies of the sea trolls.
- **Nightmare:** These creatures are frequently ridden by shadow and nether hags. Some sages even believe that hags require nightmares for effective travel between the planes, but the truth of this assertion is not known.



- **Ogre:** Ogres are very commonly allied with trolls, and particularly with troll-giants. Ogres are large enough to fight back when the trolls are hungry, and trolls are strong enough to impress and intimidate even the mightiest of ogres. The two creature types make raiding pacts with one another, in a manner similar to the gnoll-troll alliances against the forces of good. Typically the ogres get all of the plundered treasures, while the flesh of the vanquished is split between the two groups (with the trolls of course receiving the lion's share).

- **Ogre, Aquatic (Merrow):** The merrow are allies of both sea trolls and brine hags.
- **Orc:** There is great antipathy between trolls and orcs. Refer to the Humanoid, General section for details.
- **Purple Worm:** The trolls revere purple worms as offspring of the Great Boyg. Rarely, a powerful war chieftain might ride a worm in battle.
- **Quasit:** Refer to the Imp entry.

- **Siren:** There is hatred between sirens and sea trolls, and the sirens will destroy the trolls whenever possible.
- **Slug, Giant:** Trolls revere giant slugs as spawn of the Great Boyg, but they fear them more than they worship him. (The slug's deadly acidic spittle likely has something to do with it.)
- **Spider, Giant:** These deadly hunters can sometimes be found in the tunnels between hag and troll lairs underground.



- **Shark:** Sharks are rivals of the sea trolls (not in an intelligent fashion; they just tend to hunt the same prey).
- **Shrieker:** These growths are deliberately cultivated in trollish fungal gardens, to serve as "alarums."

- **Tentacle Beast:** These symbiotic creatures are preferred as both guardian beasts and trash disposals.
- **Titan:** Titans despise trolls even more than storm giants do (see that entry); in the rare cases where trolls meet up with such an entity, all of the trolls are likely to perish in an exceedingly violent fashion.
- **Triton:** As with merfolk, triton are hunted by sea trolls and therefore they exterminate them whenever they can.
- **Troglodyte:** Troglodytes are very commonly found in alliance with trolls, either naturally or through drowic influence. The creatures share similar diets, preferences, enemies, and creative hobbies (making stench!). Trolls detest the taste of stinky trog, which makes the alliance even more sustainable.

However, conflicts to arise from time to time. If the trogs are strong enough — for example, led by a strong chieftain, or sword-wielding champions, or battle wyvern riders — there will likely be a long-term alliance with nearby trolls. If the trog are too weak, there will be goodwill between the two races until any threatening enemies are wiped out; then the troglodytes will depart for their own safety.



- **Trolghul:** As mentioned throughout, trolghuls are commonly controlled by hags, troll shamans, or witch doctors. They can also be found with populations of ghouls or hobgoblins.
- **Troll (Other Tribes):** The troll sub-races, all being chaotic, do not always willingly accommodate one another's needs. There are considerable faction divides (e.g., demonic vs. non-demonic) and territorial rivalries, and only powerful leaders — typically hags, giants, drow, or evil lords of some kind — can keep competing tribes from one another's throats. The rivalries tend to get violent unless there is enough for everyone to eat. Otherwise, the

bigger troll tribe (regardless of sub-race) will seize all of the existing territory, while the smaller tribe is forced to move on.

- **Wight, Barrow:** These gruesome undead things can sometimes be found in the tunnels and crypts which lie between the warrens of nether hags.
- **Will-o'-Wisp:** Rarely, a powerful coven of emerald hags will be found in some form of hunting alliance with one or more will-o'-wisps. More commonly, the wisps will serve as rivals in seeking the destruction of victims (and feeding upon their essence).
- **Wolf, Dire:** At times these creatures will be tamed by stone troll-giants or hill troll-giants to serve as hunters and guardian beasts.
- **Wolf, Winter:** These are guardian beasts who are allegiant with the snow trolls.
- **Wraith, of the Topielce:** Rarely, these aquatic-dwelling spirits can be found as a result of the Mung-induced death magic wrought by the vile brine hags.
- **Wyvern:** Rarely, these monsters will be used as guardian beasts by the trolls, although they are difficult to tame. More commonly the wyverns will be tamed and trained by allied troglodytes.
- **Yeti:** These sentient evil primates are occasional allies of the snow trolls.
- **Zombie, Drowned:** These creatures are sometimes raised from the victims of brine trolls, but only if there were enough victims for the hags to become sated before all are devoured.

Chapter 8:

The Ever-Curious

Enigma of the Troldfolk



The Troldfolk look a bit like long-nosed goblins, and somewhat like stunted gnomes. Strange tattoo-like spirals form on their skin as they grow older, telling the silent tale of their lingering lives. They barely seem to age, but few are young, and they always engage in mysterious and highly eccentric behaviors. It is said that they are part stone troll and part deep gnome — first sculpted from oak and granite, and then animated into life — and that they were magically created many thousands of years ago by the stone trolls as a potential surface-dwelling alternative to the “bad folk” (meaning, normal humans and demi-humans) who tend to ruin everything. Now, they are free-willed worshippers of nature, favoring cold and idyllic forested environments, shallow subterranean warrens, and — their favorite pastime — never being seen. (Except by the occasional waif, stray, or faerie princess, of course.)



Troldfolk have a distinctive hobbling gait which, rather amazingly, causes their footfalls to make no sound whatsoever.

The Troldfolk comprise a mysterious race that is commonly hinted at in Scandinavian folklore, but rarely encountered. I recommend that they be considered “advanced and optional” for the Game Master’s consideration, because they’re notoriously charming and they inevitably raise lots of game-disrupting questions (“If they’re good and part troll can we turn them into an army,” “Are they available as Player Characters,” “Where have they been all this time and whose side are they on anyway,” “OMG I need one as a familiar,” “Hey can I name mine Mister Brian Froud,” and so on and on *ad nauseam*). The GM must decide if they exist, and under what circumstances they can be discovered. And no, Player Character Troldfolk are strictly forbidden!

Their move silently skill is effectively 100% if they are not carrying any metal or treasure, down to a low of 50% when they are completely laden down with coins, pick axes, and tinker-junk. They carry large backpacks or satchels which are frequently bulked out by cooking gear, foodstuffs, harvested lichen and mushrooms, wineskins, or various sorts of non-mechanical and silly things. (Ideas for that last category include a “dream sifter” stick, a dowsing rod with a live fire beetle larva dangling between its tips, a copper-bladed hatchet (a tool, never a weapon) named Whickety-Strike, a drum painted to look like a troll’s mouth called the “cobble-thumple,” and so forth.) They tend to dress in ill-fitting caps, ragamuffin cloaks, or floppy robes. Dress tends to be camouflaged in times of duress, or garishly colored in times of celebration.



The troldfolk love to tinker, hide, spy, and eat honey-speckled lichen. They grow mushroom gardens, which they vigilantly keep free of shriekers, beetles, slimes, molds, and other pesty things. Those who make secret surface lairs prefer to keep honeybees as well. They will only speak to humans or demi-humans if they are certain

they have been seen, and their secret doors — which look like boulders, walls, floors, mossy cliff faces, or hollow trees — are too far away to scurry through.

They do not like most things that are manufactured by either men or demi-humans, although they are fascinated by child-crafts, artwork, mirrors, and mortal attempts at sculpture. As treasure they favor river-tumbled gemstones, gold nuggets, amber, raw silver, spices, rare woods, incense, and so forth. They will keep all magic items that somehow fall into their hands, as they find it eternally frustrating that they cannot craft such things for themselves. (That latter irksome issue being a lingering after-effect of the racial troll curse, no doubt.)



In battle they use only wooden weapons, including staves, throwing sticks, clubs, cudgels, fire-sharpened darts, spears hardened in fire, and short bows replete with bramble-arrows. They are very adept at using missile weapons, attacking with

them at +2 (before range penalties are considered).

Troldfolk lairs are protected by pits and secret doors; their inner sanctums are eternally mist-enshrouded. (It is said that their elder matriarchs generate crystalline and sweet-smelling mist, merely by their presence and exhalations.) The secret doors throughout their warrens are magical and almost impossible to detect. These masterful portals take decades to create and perfect, and only the Troldfolk themselves can chant them open and shut. This singular arcane skill is termed “singing the stones.” Each such chant requires 1 uninterrupted melee round and has an effective range of 60’.



The very tall and unsettling Troldfolk matriarchs, or “Troldwives” — found only in the lair, or leading a trooping expedition of their followers — are similar to tribal shamans, but they possess druidic spells. For every 20 normal Troldfolk, there will be a wise woman (druidic level 1D4). If there are 50 or more normal Troldfolk in a lair, there will be 1D3 stone daughters (druidic

level 1D4+4); and if there are 100 or more, there will also be a grandstone matriarch (druidic level 1D4+8). These spell casters are always female and have D8 hit dice equal to their experience level.

In addition to their normal spells, once a month at the full moon the matriarchs can cast Create Bountiful Feast (which requires a pile of stones to turn into mushroom loaves, and the clan’s enormous brazen cauldron). The cauldron is the communal center of the lair. It is always bubbling away with something that smells quite earthy and delicious, and the savory smoke traveling downwind is a sure sign that a lair is near. Evil creatures know of this through ancient legendry, and so the clever Troldfolk take pains to vent their cauldron smoke very cleverly, sometimes forcing the steam to travel for hundreds of yards down through stone piping or narrow and winding stream-tunnels.

Uniquely, Troldfolk latent abilities change with the seasons. In spring, they move at a blurry and magical double speed (180’); in summer they gain the ability to pass without trace at will; in autumn their Intelligence and Wisdom are temporarily majestic (INT 18, WIS 18) and their magic resistance increases to 50%; and in winter they are slower (60’) yet protected by a magical aura (+4 to armor class and saving throws). Their appearance also changes with the seasons: greenish hair and flesh in spring, bushy and silvery hair (which birds tend to make twig-nests in) during summer, brown and tree-like skin in autumn, and solemn gray stony flesh in the winter.

In a trait that is rather unusual in sentient beings, Troldfolk do not fear death. They will retreat from battle — someone needs to take care of their kinfolk, after all — but when forced to fight, they will accept death with an almost wistful sense of resignation. Troldfolk who die underground vanish into mist, leaving their belongings in a heap;

those who die above ground slowly turn into gnarled trees (and their belongings along with them).

In times of need, a Troldfolk clan can summon an earth elemental to serve them. The elemental will be fearless, semi-intelligent, controllable, and willing to do battle (or dig, terrify intruders, or whatever else it is able to do). This power can only be invoked once a season (every 3 months) at most. A tribe of up to 20 can summon a lesser elemental (HD 8); a tribe of up to 40 can summon a standard elemental (HD 12); a tribe of up to 60 can summon a greater elemental (HD 16); a tribe of up to 80 can summon a noble (HD 20); and a larger tribe can summon up an Ancient (HD 24). The elemental will depart for its native plane when the time of danger or need has passed.

And then, the Troldfolk will dance. They're quite gifted with tambour, bramble harp, and the reed syrinx as well.

And there you have it.

(With love and respect to John Bauer and Jim Henson, RIP.)



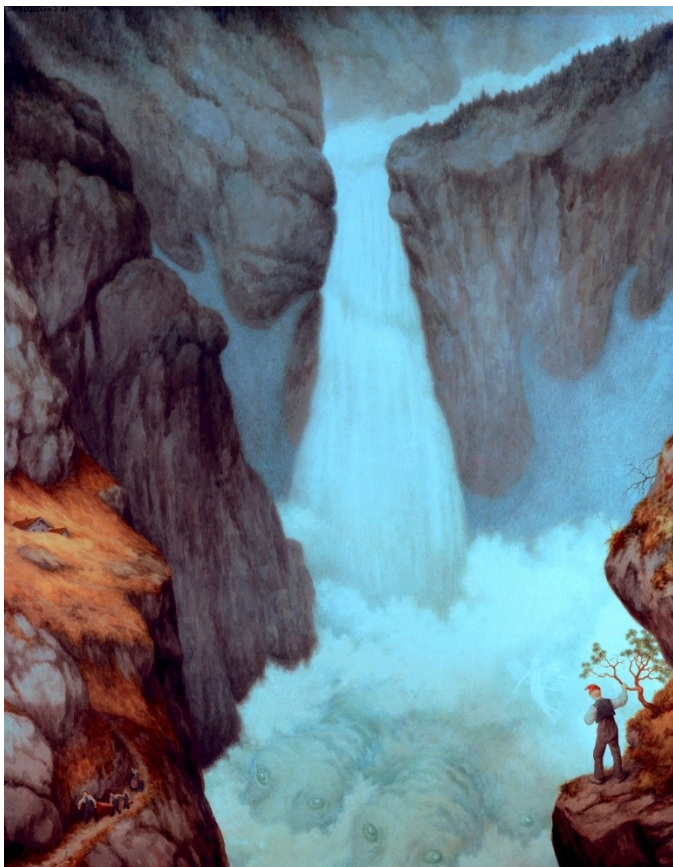
Troldfolk: Armor Class 4 (high Dexterity), Move 90' (30'), Hit Dice 1+1***, average hit points 6, # Attacks 1 weapon, Damage by weapon -1 (minimum damage 1 per successful hit), Special Abilities detect evil, detect good, faerie fire, infravision (60'), move silently, only surprised on a 1 (1D10, 10%), seasonal power, singing the stones, surprise on a 1-4 on 1D6, Special Attacks +2 to hit with all ranged or thrown weapons, Special Defenses elemental summoning, magic resistance 25%, silence (once per day, duration 2 rounds, frequently cast upon enemy spell casters), Save As Druid 2 (due to 1+1 hit dice), Morale 9, Intelligence very (INT 13), Alignment Chaotic Neutral with Good tendencies.



Chapter 9:

Elder Horrors

in the Lore of Trollkind



This chapter provides details on certain ancient and legendary troll powers, who can serve as enemies to very powerful Player Characters in epic campaigns.

Great Elder Trolls

The elder trolls are singular, ever-regenerating entities that were born of the great troll god: Almighty Trogool, the Beast of the Frozen Waste. They can be killed but an unknown number of them remain throughout the World of Oldskull.

The stench-ridden festering hide of Trogool is eternally shedding itself and regenerating. Entire warts, clumps, mildewed talons and even crawling things fall from the body of Trogool as it reads the Grimoire of All That Is to Be and All That Was, scurrying away to die in the shadows bereft of their maker's attentions. The few pieces which possess deadly appendages — fangs, or maws, or amorphous tentacles which swallow — hunt down and absorb the other pieces and thus grow limbs, and even heads and faces. Those that develop limbs arise as giants, walking ever northward as a scourge upon the wild lands. These are the Great Elder Trolls, the deathly and monstrous blasphemies which were the bane of the kingdoms of Afrik long ago.

Most of the Elder Trolls were slaughtered in ancient wars long ago by the mounted Man-and-Beast legions of the great god Kib. However, every few years a new Great Elder Troll is born from the hide of Trogool and it crawls away from the Utter South, northward over the ocean, crawling and even striding along the wave-choking Sargasso of the Deeping Seas. When the Great Elder Trolls reach the mainland, they rage and raven for several years before they collapse into limbs, vile sheddings, and a chittering head ... the beginnings of a new tribe of vile and loathsome Trolls to scourge the world. Some Elders die in a matter of years, while others persist for centuries.

Trogool himself is blameless in their creation, as he simply fulfills his will by reading the Grimoire as he sheds away rinds of ruin. The lesser trolls can even be said to be born of the hindered rages which he experiences when he reads terrible true tales of murder, injustice, treachery and faithlessness throughout the histories of Man. The ichor of these dark traumas

festers from his mind, down through his veiny hide, to slough off and crawl away.

Hags are horrified by these Things, while trolls revere them as godlings who walk amongst the unworthy in search of revelation. The Great Elders are babbling, near mindless, ravening and mad, but that doesn't stop the trolls from following and worshipping them. (And sometimes getting eaten, if enough sacrifices are brought into the Great Elder's ever-fumbling grasp.)

Due to plagues and forced migrations, many of the monstrosities which were once known only to Afrik have shuddered their way northward in recent centuries. As such, it is possible — although an extremely rare occurrence — that adventurers might face a Great Elder Troll in battle. In the World of Oldskull they are known to exist in the Underworld of Apshai, Khom, Stygia, Mauretania, and Golgotha. At least one is known to have been summoned by a higher power (Groohlz-Drakha?) as a war beast thundering through the deeper labyrinths under Castle Oldskull. In your campaign, they may be found (at night) in wastelands, besieging villages, or in the deepest nether ruins where few souls dare to tread.

Have fun! And do note (stats appear below for various types) that anyone forced into melee combat with a Great Elder is almost certainly dead.

Great Elder Troll: Armor Class 0, Move 150' (50'), Hit Dice 12+12***** (minimum of 6 hit points per die), average hit points 96, # Attacks 5 claw / claw / bite / trample / trample, Damage 2D4+8 / 2D4+8 / 4D6 / 3D6 / 3D6, Special Abilities giant strength (STR 22), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks battle up to five foes simultaneously, crushing blows (1%

chance per point of damage inflicted by each attack that victim will be rendered unconscious for 1D4 rounds), severed limbs can still attack, swallow whole (small creatures, on a natural 20 with bite attack), Special Defenses magic resistance (30%), regeneration (4 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, direct sunlight will inflict terrible damage (2D6 hit points per round) which cannot be regenerated, Save As Fighter 13 (due to 12+12 HD), Morale 12, Intelligence low (INT 6), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

These elder trolls are 16' tall, with an 8'-long arm reach.

Great Elder Troll, Monstrous: Armor Class -1, Move 180' (60'), Hit Dice 18+18***** (minimum of 6 hit points per die), average hit points 144, # Attacks 5 claw / claw / bite / trample / trample, Damage 3D4+12 / 3D4+12 / 6D6 / 4D6+1 / 4D6+1, Special Abilities giant strength (STR 23), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks battle up to five foes simultaneously, crushing blows (1% chance per point of damage inflicted by each attack that victim will be rendered unconscious for 1D4 rounds), severed limbs can still attack, swallow whole (small or medium creatures, on a natural 20 with bite attack), Special Defenses magic resistance (60%), regeneration (7 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, direct sunlight will inflict terrible damage (2D6 hit points per round) which cannot be regenerated, Save As Fighter 19 (due to 18+18 HD), Morale 12, Intelligence low (INT 6), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

These elder trolls are 20' tall, with a 10'-long arm reach.

Great Elder Troll, Colossal: Armor Class -2, Move 210' (70'), Hit Dice 24+24***** (minimum of 6 hit points per die), average hit points 192, # Attacks 5 claw / claw / bite / trample / trample, Damage 4D4+16 / 4D4+16 / 8D6 / 6D6 / 6D6, Special Abilities giant strength (STR 24), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks battle up to five foes simultaneously, crushing blows (1% chance per point of damage inflicted by each attack that victim will be rendered unconscious for 1D4 rounds), severed limbs can still attack, swallow whole (small or medium creatures, on a natural 19 or 20 with bite attack), Special Defenses magic resistance (90%), regeneration (10 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, direct sunlight will inflict terrible damage (2D6 hit points per round) which cannot be regenerated, Save As Fighter 25 (due to 24+24 HD), Morale 12, Intelligence low (INT 6), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

These elder trolls are 24' tall, with a 12'-long arm reach.

Great Elder Troll, Kohnngool the Eldest (Unique?): Armor Class -3, Move 240' (80'), Hit Dice 30+30***** (minimum of 7 hit points per die), average hit points 255, # Attacks 5 claw / claw / bite / trample / trample, Damage 6D4+20 / 6D4+20 / 10D6 / 8D6+2 / 8D6+2, Special Abilities titanic strength (STR 25), superior infravision (90'), Special Attacks battle up to five foes simultaneously, crushing blows (1% chance per point of damage inflicted by each attack that victim will be rendered unconscious for 1D4 rounds), severed limbs can still attack, swallow whole (small or medium creatures, on a natural 19 or 20 with bite attack), Special Defenses magic

resistance (120%), regeneration (13 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot regenerate acid, fire, or lightning damage, direct sunlight will inflict terrible damage (2D6 hit points per round) which cannot be regenerated, Save As Fighter 31 (due to 30+30 HD), Morale 12, Intelligence low (INT 6), Alignment Chaotic Evil.

This horror is 28' tall, with a 14'-long arm reach.



Sleeping Colossal Trolls

There are several Colossal Trolls in the World of Oldskull, which were born of Trogool and the Great Boyg long ago in the Before Time. They strode through shallow oceans, ever northward, until they could stride no more. These ancients were infused with primordial spirits of the

natural realm, in an age when the Chaos surrounding the world had not yet cohered into recognizable terrain. They possess bodies of earth and stone, and are several hundred feet tall. They cannot be slain because they are the world itself. By any natural laws of physics they should be incapable of movement, but those laws were not solidified in the time when the Colossal Trolls themselves laid down to slumber. Their bodies are covered in soil and deep-rooted trees, and their occasional breaths (occurring perhaps once a decade) are always mistaken for distant thunderstorms.



The Colossal Ones are protected from all detection by the Gods of Pegana, and their slumber is very deep. Locating one would be quite a lifelong undertaking, and waking one would be very unwise indeed. They are Chaotic Neutral, nearly mindless, and completely beyond all attempts at mortal

control. A rampaging Colossal would ravage a realm for 1D6 days before returning to the smothering embrace of the Great Sleep once again.

Now is not their time, nor may it ever be. Let them dream.

The Storytellers' Secret of the Troll God

(The following Dunsanian lore can be related verbatim to any player whose character possesses either Intelligence 18, or Wisdom 18, as representing legendary knowledge known prior to beginning an adventuring career. This information will also become known to anyone who hires a sage and wishes to know anything of secret troll lore.)

[In the southernmost frigid waste] there is neither South nor East nor West, but only North and Beyond; there is only North of it where lie the Worlds, and Beyond it where lies the Silence, and the Rim is a mass of rocks that were never used by the gods when They made the Worlds, and on it sat Trogool.

Trogool is the Thing that is neither god nor beast, who neither howls nor breathes, only It turns over the leaves of a great book, black and white, black and white for ever until THE END.

And all that is to be is written in the book is also all that was.

When It turneth a black page it is night, and when It turneth a white page it is day.

Because it is written that there are gods — there are the gods.

Also there is writing about thee and me until the page where our names no more are written.

Then as the prophet watched It, Trogool turned a page — a black one, and night was over, and day shone on the Worlds.

Trogool is the Thing that men in many countries have called by many names, It is the Thing that sits behind the gods, whose book is the Scheme of Things.

But when Yadin saw that old remembered days were hidden away with the part that It had turned, and knew that upon one whose name is writ no more the last page had turned for ever a thousand pages back. Then did he utter his prayer in the fact of Trogool who only turns the pages and never answers prayer.

He prayed in the face of Trogool: “Only turn back thy pages to the name of one which is writ no more, and far away upon a place named Earth shall rise the prayers of a little people that acclaim the name of Trogool, for there is indeed far off a place called Earth where men shall pray to Trogool.”

Then spake Trogool who turns the pages and never answers prayer, and his voice was like the murmurs of the waste at night when echoes have been lost: “Though the whirlwind of the South should tug with his claws at a page that hath been turned, yet shall he not be able to ever turn it back.”

Then because of words in the book that said that it should be so, Yadin found himself lying in the desert where one gave him water, and afterwards carried him on a camel into Bodrahan.

There some said that he had but dreamed when thirst seized him while he wandered among the rocks in the desert. But certain aged men of Bodrahan say that indeed there sitteth somewhere a

Thing that is called Trogool, that is neither god nor beast, that turneth the leaves of a book, black and white, black and white, until he come to the words:

Mai Doon Izahn, which means The End For Ever, and book and gods and worlds shall be no more.

— *The Gods of Pegana*, by Lord Dunsany



The End For Ever.

The One True Troll God, Trogool

At the very bottom of the World of Oldskull, far beyond the Rim of the Known, there stands the rocky crumbling barrier that is the Rim of the Unknown. Beyond there in

some shifting land — perhaps at now the southern pole, and later the tip of Afrik, ever changing — there crouches Trogool, the Thing That is Neither God Nor Beast.

Some say that Trogool is Lord of Trolls, but he is more than that. He is the Ur-Troll, the troll that was manifest as spirit ere the Creation. He has taken many forms, he is ageless and unknown. When his leavings give birth to trolls, he has only one saying, a whisper, and that is “*Shoggoth-ai.*”

He is the deathless reader of the Grimoire of All That Is to Be and All That Was, reading and hungering and hating and wondering forever until The End. Every black forbidden page he passes over is a night, and every whitened leaf he turns over with regenerating fingers is a day.

He reads of every hero and villain in the World of Oldskull, and it is a wondrous story indeed. And as our mundane Strand is entwined with the fabric of Olmsuul, he reads nightly as well of you, and of me. He scours and reads with avid interest, cackling with our victories and lamenting with our sorrows, and he is much vexed when he turns a page of Mung and comes to read that the adventures of either your or I are suddenly no more.

Evil he may be, yet he adores us all. He will never hurt anyone (until they hurt him), lest they touch the Grimoire or disrupt the sacred reading.

He wishes that he could slow the turning of the pages, to linger over the beautiful passages and to shy away from the reading of the most terrible things, but he cannot. Destiny and Dorozhand forbid it. He has no priests, save the trollish spell casters and those few who insist upon the mission and spreading the word of the Grimoire; he refuses to enslave. To those few who dare to pray to him for power, or for mercy, he

answers only in enigmatic chants beholden unto the Eternal Mystery.

When All is ended, the Grimoire shall be shut.



Trogool (Lesser God of Trollkind): Armor Class 0, Move 150' (50'), Hit Dice 39*****, Hit Points 197, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 5D4 / 5D4 / 4D4, Special Abilities godlike attributes (STR 23, DEX 18, CON 25, INT 19, WIS 19, CHA 6), grant battle rage to trolls (conferring +2 to hit, +2 damage, and -2 penalty to Armor Class), immaculate infravision (240'), skin shedding (passively summons 1 troll of random type and maximum hit points per round), use 1 spell-like power per round when not physically attacking (see below), battle up to three foes simultaneously, Special Defenses +1 or better weapon to hit,

immune to cold, poison, and death magic, regeneration (13 hp per round), severed limbs can still attack, Special Vulnerabilities +1 damage from acid attacks, +1 damage from fire attacks, cannot heal acid or fire damage, Magic Resistance 80%, Save As Magic-User 24, Morale 12, Intelligence godlike, Alignment Chaotic Neutral with Evil tendencies.

Innate Magical Abilities: All saving throw targets are 2 (failed only on a 1), Astral travel, Ethereal travel, Infravision (240' range).

Spell-Like Abilities (as level 24 magic-user): Anti-Magic Shell (1 time/day), Command (duration 2 rounds, 1 time/day), Comprehend Languages (at will), Continual Darkness (at will), Continual Light (at will), Cure Blindness (at will), Cure Deafness (at will), Cure Disease (at will), Cure Feeblemind (at will), Cure Insanity (in others only, at will), Cure Light Wounds (3 times/day), Detect Charm (at will), Detect Evil (at will), Detect Good (at will), Detect Illusion (at will), Detect Invisibility (at will), Detect Lie (at will), Detect Magic (at will), Detect Traps (at will), Dispel Evil (2 times/day), Dispel Good (2 times/day), Dispel Illusion (2 times/day), Dispel Magic (2 times/day), Finger of Death (at will), Gate (1 time/day), Geas (at will), Heal (1 time/day), Holy Word (1 time/day), Know Alignment (at will), Levitate (at will), Limited Wish (granted to self or another, 1 time/day), Mirror Image (at will), Phantasmal Force (at will), Polymorph Self (at will), Protection from Evil, 10' Radius (at will), Protection from Good, 10' Radius (at will), Raise Dead (3 times/day), Read Languages (at will), Read Magic (at will), Remove Curse (3 times/day), Remove Fear (at will), Summon Trolls (at will, 3 will be conjured per melee round, or 1 with maximum hit points), Symbol (of preferred

type, 1 time/day), Teleport Without Error (at will), Tongues (at will), True Seeing (2 times/day), Ultravision (at will), Unholy Word (1 time/day), Wall of Force (at will).

The One Eternally Unknowable Goddess of the Trolls, the Great and Almighty Boyg

Peer Gynt: "Say what you are!"

Thing: "The Boyg."

Gynt: "Neither dead, nor alive. Slime and mistiness. No shape or form! It's as if one were smothered amidst any number of bears that are growling at being waked up! Why do you not strike out at me?"

Thing: "The Boyg is not so foolish as that."

Gynt: "Oh, strike at me!"

Thing: "The Boyg does not strike."

Gynt: "Come, fight! You shall fight with me!"

Thing: "The Great Boyg ... can triumph ... without any fighting."

— *Peer Gynt*, by Henrik Ibsen

The Great Boyg, the Ever-Writhing, Ever-Twisting, is the female ancestor of all trolls. She was born of a slime pool left behind by the birth of Trogool, and the two entities share a symbiotic presence with one another. She twists and dreams forever in agony, as do the subsumed souls of those

few hundred foolish explorers that she has devoured over the last several centuries. Due to her eternal confusion and inability to focus upon any one concept for more than a handful of moments, her Intelligence and Wisdom attributes are actually quite low for a demigoddess entity of her standing.

The Great Boyg is invisible and wreathed in mist, until she wishes to show herself. She appears as a 100'-long, 10'-diameter worm with a mandibled face which crowns thirteen pulsating, translucent sheaths of interwoven layers of flesh. The circumstances of her torment and arrested evolution have prevented her from achieving a more complex or anthropomorphic form. The Great Boyg is not only the mother of all trolls, she is also the ancestress of the Dreamlands dhole race, and the purple and mottled worm species as well. It is said by some that dholes exist throughout the universe elsewhere, being a form of early spawn born of the great cosmic fertility entity, Shub-Niggurath. Whether this implies that the Great Boyg and Trogool are spawn of Shub-Niggurath themselves, or something else entirely, remains an intriguing yet ultimately unanswerable question. Yet nevertheless the Great Boyg's and Trogool's unique powers of regeneration are certainly derived from a shared unholy source, and many sages believe that the tentative lore linkage between the two and Shub-Niggurath herself is far more likely than an impossibility.

The Great Boyg will not attack intruders unless she is first attacked. She is likely to attempt to communicate through telepathically-comprehended guttural Common, although such efforts have only a 10% chance per melee round (cumulative) to be successful. Unfortunately a conversation with the Great Boyg will only last for 1D6 rounds at most, and then she

will forget who she was speaking to and why.

If attacked, the Great Boyg can only use spell-like powers 20% of the time (determine whether this is possible at the beginning of each melee round, and she will cast her spells intelligently and defensively whenever she is able). Otherwise, she cannot focus through the agony and then must physically attack or use acid spittle, which can only be done once every 4 melee rounds.

The Great Boyg (Lesser Goddess of Trollkind): Armor Class 0, Move 150' (50') / Burrow 120' (40'), Hit Dice 36*****, Hit Points 186, # Attacks 1 bite or spittle, Damage 6D10 or acid (40' range, striking one target and all within 10' of the target (roll to hit separately for each), 50% accuracy vs. each target on first use increasing by 10% per use to a maximum of 90%, damage 10D12, save for half damage), Special Abilities godlike attributes (STR 21, DEX 15, CON 24, INT 16, WIS 7, CHA -3), Special Attacks stinking cloud exhalation at will (30' long, 15'-wide cone), swallow whole (on a natural to hit roll of 17 or higher), acidic skin secretions when wounded (any making contact with their flesh must save vs. poison at -4 or suffer 10D10 damage per touch), attempt to use 1 spell-like power per round when not physically attacking (see below), Special Defenses +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold, poison, and death magic, invisibility at will when not attacking, regeneration (13 hp per round), Special Vulnerabilities cannot heal fire or holy damage, randomly effective spell casting, Magic Resistance 30%, Save As Magic-User 19, Morale 12, Intelligence exceptional, Alignment Chaotic Neutral.

Innate Magical Abilities: All saving throw targets are 2 (failed only on a 1), Astral

travel, Ethereal travel, Infravision (240' range).

Spell-Like Abilities (as level 19 magic-user, but casting attempts are only uncommonly effective): Anti-Magic Shell (1 time/day), Command (duration 2 rounds, 1 time/day), Comprehend Languages (at will), Continual Darkness (at will), Continual Light (at will), Cure Blindness (at will), Cure Deafness (at will), Cure Disease (at will), Cure Feeblemind (at will), Cure Insanity (in others only, at will), Cure Light Wounds (3 times/day), Detect Charm (at will), Detect Evil (at will), Detect Good (at will), Detect Illusion (at will), Detect Invisibility (at will), Detect Lie (at will), Detect Magic (at will), Detect Traps (at will), Dispel Evil (2 times/day), Dispel Good (2 times/day), Dispel Illusion (2 times/day), Dispel Magic (2 times/day), Finger of Death (at will), Gate (1 time/day), Geas (at will), Heal (1 time/day), Holy Word (1 time/day), Know Alignment (at will), Levitate (at will), Limited Wish (granted to self or another, 1 time/day), Mirror Image (at will), Phantasmal Force (at will), Polymorph Self (at will), Protection from Evil, 10' Radius (at will), Protection from Good, 10' Radius (at will), Raise Dead (3 times/day), Read Languages (at will), Read Magic (at will), Remove Curse (3 times/day), Remove Fear (at will), Summon Trolls (at will, 3 will be conjured per melee round, or 1 with maximum hit points), Symbol (of preferred type, 1 time/day), Teleport Without Error (at will), Tongues (at will), True Seeing (2 times/day), Ultravision (at will), Unholy Word (1 time/day), Wall of Force (at will).

Chapter 10:

Mysteries of the Trolls



There are many enigmatic legends, glimpses of the Beyond, and forbidden splinters of lore related to the ever-baffling trolls. Here are a few pieces of bait which Game Masters might find interesting to dangle in front of the players when things get slow, or you want the PCs to go wandering on a random errand or three. Feel free to add more, and to decide upon your own answers to all the mysteries!

The Dholes

Now Carter knew from a certain source that he was in the vale of Pnath, where crawl and burrow the enormous dholes; but he did not know what to expect, because no one has ever seen a dhole or even guessed what such a thing may be like. Dholes are known only by dim rumour, from the rustling they make amongst mountains of bones and the slimy touch they have when they wriggle past one. They cannot be seen because they creep only in the dark. Carter did not wish to meet a dhole, so listened intently for any sound in the unknown depths of bones about him ...

— *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*,
by H. P. Lovecraft

more lethal), who destroy stone; and mist dholes (exhaling a venomous vapor), whose reactions create breathable gusts of air deep beneath the earth.

Dholes are believed to be the spawn of the Great Boyg. A dhole will not attack trolls unless the trolls attack first. Trolls possess a supernatural terror of dholes and will flee madly away from them in awe, which the mindless dholes strangely allow.

Unanswered questions concerning the Dholes include:

- Do they signify a link between the troll gods and Shub-Niggurath?
- Do they create portals between the netherworld and the Dreamlands, which adventurers can exploit?
- Is their lack of hostility toward trolls instinctive, or a sign of sentience?
- If they are almost never seen except in the deepest reaches of the world, how deep precisely is the netherworld?
- And at the utmost depths, where even the dholes will not cross the Basalt Barrier, what exactly is down there?

The Gugs

Many things intervene betwixt their gulf and the enchanted wood, including the terrible kingdom of the gugs.

The gugs, hairy and gigantic, once reared stone circles in that wood and made strange sacrifices to the Other Gods and the crawling chaos Nyarlathotep, until one night an abomination of theirs reached the ears of earth's gods and they were banished to caverns below. Only a great trap-door of stone with an iron ring connects the abyss of the earth-ghouls

Dholes (or bholes, in some Lovecraftian texts) are monstrous annelids, the ancestors of purple and mottled worms. They are the great burrowers of the netherworld, churning stone and soil alike to create massive hollows and cavernous galleries throughout the wastelands deep. They have the ability to flicker between dimensions several times during their life cycle, when they shed their massive skins and require entirely different essences for continuing sustenance and survival. In the author's campaign, after shed-molts they journey between the World of Oldskull and the netherworld of the Dreamlands.

Dholes are twice the size of purple worms (HD 30). The known sub-species are slime dholes (attacking with gobs of slowing mucus), who churn the soil; acid dholes (with spittle much like a giant slug's, yet

with the enchanted wood, and this the gugs are afraid to open because of a curse.

That a mortal dreamer could traverse their cavern realm and leave by that door is inconceivable; for mortal dreamers were their former food, and they have legends of the toothsome-ness of such dreamers even though banishment has restricted their diet to the ghastrs, those repulsive beings which die in the light ...

— *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*,
by H. P. Lovecraft

It is said (and might be half-true) that gugs were born of degenerate cave trolls of some kind, born of a cauldron ritual in which demonic magic was used by an elder hag in an attempt to create a mighty new trollish servitor race. The things that were created grew rapidly, shrieking and collapsing into greater and festering forms of themselves. Most of them died, it is whispered, but some few were banished into the Dreamlands before they could slaughter the “mother” who had created them. And as they twisted into their drying forms, their forearms split in two, and their fanged maws turned upward and inward upon themselves.

In the current era, gugs do not wander the World of Oldskull, and they have also been divinely removed from the enchanted forest within the surface realms of the Dreamlands. They have been banished into the Dreamlands’ netherworld, restrained by the mighty abjurations of the Sigil of Koth. Regenerative demonic ichor has made these creatures massive, but their uncontrollable growth (a molt every several years) eventually kills them. They spend their entire lives in pain, which

makes them highly aggressive, ravenous, and nasty.

Gugs have excellent infravision. They hate light, and can eat just about anything, but they actually prefer rotting or undead flesh (apparently due to such a meal’s deadening and pain-killing properties).

Mysteries concerning the gugs include:

- Are they actually a sub-strain of trolls, or have they evolved completely beyond the influence of troll spell casters and hags?
- Due to the widening dimensional fractures within the netherworld beneath the dungeons of Castle Oldskull, do any live in “real” world beyond the Dreamlands? Or are the fractures too hazardous to serve as gates?
- Are trolghuls a failed, second, or altered sub-species related to gug experimentation?
- Did the gugs exist before the black dabblings of hag-kind, and was the ritual an ancient chant of the Great Old Ones? Or are they indeed hag-born?
- Could a hag or troll crone ever control a gug, and turn it into a creature of war?

The Shoggoths

The nature of the enigmatic link between shoggoths and trolls is largely unknown, but what is known is intriguing: the trolls and hags believe that the shoggoths are incarnations of Chaos, somehow related to the origin of Trogool. Further when trolls encounter a shoggoth, they will cease any action that is underway — battle, rest, hunting, exploring, or anything else besides — and they will begin chanting endlessly “*Shoggoth-ai, shoggoth-ai,*” and

lost in a rapture they will allow themselves to be consumed. Then a great metamorphosis begins to overtake the devouring shoggoth's form. Little more is known; the few netherworld adventurers who have witnessed this terrible seen have all either perished, or fled and descended into madness.

It is true that shoggoths have remarkable adaptive and flesh-shaping powers, and it is rumored that Trogool was born of sentient shoggoth plasm long ago. That would make trolls the quasi-descendants of shoggoths in a way, but the link between the species would be as temporally and metaphysically remote as the linkage between humans and single-celled organisms.

Baffled sages have wondered:

- Were the first shoggoths created by the Elder Things millions of years ago, or were they merely manipulating regenerative manifestations of Chaos-flesh which existed in the universe prior to their own meddling
- Is there any connection between the ruins of the Elder Things and the vales of Trogool, which both lie somewhere in the Utter South beyond the Mountains of Madness?
- Was Trogool born to the World of Oldskull long ago as a manifestation of shoggoth plasm, or vice versa?
- What truly occurs when trolls are slain and absorbed by a shoggoth? What does the shoggoth then become, and what further enlightenment does it seek?



Trolls of Many Heads

There is a strong tradition in relatively recent troll folklore, in which trolls appear with an extreme number of heads. In the tales, three-, six-, nine-, and even twelve-headed trolls exist. The standard joke is that the hero keeps chopping off heads, but even larger trolls keep appearing in a series of repetitive blunders for comedic effect.

I have herein provided details on the ettin-troll two-headed crossbreed, because that monster has been featured in the classic FRPG for nearly 40 years. But beyond that threshold things simply get too ridiculous

to be taken seriously; and what works in humorous fairy tales does not always work in practice for the atmospheric game. The Game Master is encouraged to make multi-headed “super trolls” if they are needed for his or her own campaign, of course. I would recommend using the classic fairy tale *Soria Moria Castle* (public domain, c. 1841 and earlier) as a starting inspiration.

(And by the way, that tale is where Tolkien found his own inspiration to create the place name “The Mines of Moria” ... labyrinths which do indeed feature a cave troll.)



The Fable of the Hidden Ones: The Huldrafolk

There is another hidden race which is related to the Troldfolk, known as the Huldrafolk (or Huldurs). These are dangerous female nature spirits, and they

might be the mothers of the cabalistic Troldfolk matriarchs. They are said to seduce human males for some nefarious purpose, and the Troldfolk elders might or might not be a result of these sinister pairings. Very little is known ... but in my own campaign these malicious half-faeries do occasionally appear as an NPC race. Feel free to research the existing Scandinavian tales, beginning with (for example) *Svenka Folksagner* by Herman Hofberg, published 1882. This is a step too far removed from true troll lore to be included in this volume, but if you decide to include the Troldfolk in your game — and the players become curious about their secrets — you might want to feature this race as well as a bridge into the Faerie Londs of the Unseelie Court.

Forbidden Lore: The Half-Spun Tale of the Ever-Enigmatic Groohlz-Drakha, Great Overlord of the Dungeons under Castle Oldskull

(Here we discuss the true source of the deepest Oldskull riddles and conundrums, an immortal creature specifically crafted over the years to baffle, fluster, and entertain all my players. Walk warily, there are confusing spoilers ahead! ~K)

Groohlz-Drakha is a troll-shaped chaos godling, the immortal jester who reigns throughout the dungeons beneath the

Ushirian Manor (a ruined mansion known to many as Castle Oldskull). He is known as the Hag-Son, the Immortal Troll King, the Ever-Replenishing Jester, Devourer of Maiden Flesh, the Terrible and Most Wondrous, the Emerald Lord of Meaningless Things, and the Shatterer of the 6,666 Ever-Shifting Shards of Chaos.



As summoner of the deeper dungeons' monstrous hordes and as the Overlord who controls the Tarot Deck of Strangest Things, he is both savior and bane to any overly-presumptuous adventurers who dare to raid his labyrinths beneath the castle. Some mortal fools he rescues from certain death, while others he feeds to the demons and dragons as he pleases. Rude interlopers seem to perish with far greater frequency than the clever or the amusing

ones do, however. Groohlz-Drakha loves a wry trickster and adores a wicked jest, even a deadly joke made at his own expense.

His history is enigmatic and directly tied into the deepest and darkest secrets of the World of Oldskull campaign. (Brief spoiler: The World of Oldskull is a post-apocalyptic, post-science fiction setting. I will share many more details to come in future supplements, but this book is about trolls, not chrono-dimensional chaos!)

To give the Game Master *enough* of Groohlz-Drakha, so that he can be useful as a mega-dungeon personage appearing in any campaign, I can provide some useful clues as to his origin, his meaning, and his blackest bonds to the legacy of the troll race:

When the Gods of Pegana arose and populated the World of Oldskull with beasts, heroes, and monsters, one of their number — a nameless fiend known only as the Mad God — refused any role in the gambit of the gods, other than that of ultimate supremacy. As a nightmare born of Mana-Yood-Sushai the Mad God was the lord of Things, those blasphemous Abominations which slither forth from the beyond. His greatest servitors through millennia of warfare would be enslaved trolls, in all their shapes and sizes. In each of the trolls that he turned from their creators (Trogool and the Boyg) to fulfill his own worship, a blood drop of the Mad God served as a spark of generative healing and terrible wrath.

The Mad God's battles with his immortal brethren were directly responsible for the cataclysmic Great Deluge which ended King Conan's time, the Hyborian Age (c. 10,000 BC). After centuries of earthly tumult the Mad God's soul fell into a torpor deep beneath the ravaged earth, where he was accidentally awakened (c. 7,200 BC) by those dimensional travelers' sons and daughters who had founded the Great

Netherworld Imperium. (This relates to the earliest origin of the World of Oldskull, tied to the 22nd Century of our own intertwined world of Earth. Dimensional “null sphere” travelers escaped our Nyarlathotep-ravaged Earth and escaped through a wormhole “gateway” into the netherworld of Oldskull, where magic reigns over science. However, these exiles’ descendants possessed no meaningful knowledge of their own history.)

In the midst of a civil war beneath the earth, the Mad God possessed a willing and heretical high priest who stood against the Imperium, a powerful necrophage-hermit who had named himself Groohlz-Drakha. This empowered entity conquered the Imperium’s remnants in the name of his mad followers, but at a terrible cost. Drakha sacrificed himself in the bloody name of supremacy, butchering his most powerful adversaries (the Archons) through the blasphemous use of vicious magic. These vile and bloody sorceries fed upon his form, spawning terrible war-monstrosities, such as the babbling Shoggothai, the juggernaut-driven Dhole Remnants, and the ever-horrible Grimplues.

War-monstrosities slaughtered enemy and worshipper alike, but the specific area of their greatest destruction spelled the Imperium’s ultimate end. The Great Netherworld Imperium would require centuries to die, but its lingering fate was sealed in those monstrous death throes.

After that great battle against the Imperium’s last Archons, the berserker-worshippers of Drakha saved his ravaged form by infusing his remaining flesh with dark magic and troll blood, so that he — soon to be “reborn” as their reincarnated quasi-deity — could never truly perish. The war for the Imperium continued to rage between diminished factions for over a century (c. -7,100 BC), collapsing many lower palatial levels, and many extra-dimensional artifacts from the Before World

were destroyed. The remaining fragments, experiments, repaired improvisations, nullifications, auras, and echoes of these lost “speaking idols” (Artificial Intelligences) over the years became known as the “magical” 6,666 Shards of Chaos. (But that is a tale for another day ...)

By the time of the Great War’s final decade, only one set of uncorrupted artifacts from the Before World remained. Over many years the resurgent Drakha seized possession of each protected plaque of this AI-driven set of probability attenuators, which — after being reformed and disguised by Drakha’s chaos magic — came to be known as the Deck of Strangest Things. Possession of these powerful divinatory talismans ensured Drakha’s total supremacy in the nether.

Yet Drakha himself had become something else entirely as a result of his troll-incarnation. He had suffered disastrous setbacks and perished in battle several times. Ever-darker infusions of trolls’ blood, corrupted magic, and the life essence of drained slaves returned this god-thing to life once more, but with every reincarnation Drakha became more troll-like, more sardonic, more erratic, and more insane.

With every life-stealing resurgence, Drakha’s mind was overgrown and made wretched with delusions. The high priest’s memories were almost entirely wiped out, the reflected soma-presence of the devoured souls inside of him grew ever stronger, and the strengthening Mad God became something wild and tumultuous within his mind. He had once been a “One,” a priest merely a man; he had then become a “Duality,” a man with a God twisted inside his spirit; and in the end, he became a “Many,” an embodied kingdom of warring voices and personalities, ruled by a tyrant of waning memory. Within him, the war for the Great Netherworld Imperium had never truly ended.

Such was his ultimate destiny, he realized. Whoever he was. And throughout the labyrinthine and echoing halls hollowed beneath the world, Groohlz-Drakha did laugh!

The Great War ended due to repeated waves of slaughter, troop regeneration, exhaustion, plague, and annihilation. A peace of sorts emerged once Drakha's usurping berserkers became too dispersed throughout the ruins of the Imperium, and their enemies — the few surviving loyalists who survived the slaughter of the Archons — dug surface-ward in the name of survival. Drakha let them go, for he had read well of their future fates in the Deck of Strangest Things. With their upward burrowing and magics, these generations of loyalists were creating labyrinths and shelters beneath the earth, stronghold by stronghold, level by level. Drakha populated the levels that they abandoned, using his dribbling troll blood here and a bit of spawning magic there, giving rise to nettlesome factions and worshippers and enemies and all kinds of fascinating little things which Drakha could tamper with, and scry upon from afar. Little beetles and kobolds and spiders and manticores all scrabbling in the dark. And yes, there were trolls as well. Some even worshipped idols of Groohlz, despite his laughter at their idolatry. What fun!

Generation by generation, year by year, the loyalists of the Imperium sought an exit to the netherworld. Some few of these pale magic-wielding mortals finally emerged as the wondrous "Risen Peoples," breathing in the air of some primeval forest. They rose as human miracles from out of the ground, gasping and crawling by the shores of a strange gray sea, cringing to behold an unknown golden god — the sun — who reigned over a green wilderness, a beast kingdom of wonders, over an ancient land known as *Tyrrhenia*.

Tyrrhenia at that time was home to a native human race, the Etrurians. These simple mystics and warrior-prophets worshipped the deep earth, for the Risen Ones by their emergence proved that humanity's true home was beneath the land, beneath even the realm of the dead! The Etrurians bonded well with the Risen Ones, and great heroic bloodlines were established between these two worthy kinships. Then came the Emyreans, the conqueror-men from across the sea. There were ages of war, times of peace. Factions grew in numberless profusion. A great city later known as Grimrook arose near to the Ushirian Manor. The Manor was a mighty and forbidden temple-palace, which a self-exiled cabal of Risen mages and elementalists had raised up stone by stone, swearing that they would seal the old Imperium's grief and evils beneath the world ... forever.

And Drakha, enthroned deep in his nether palace, flipping his cards and cackling, decided to let the little humans stay there in their innocence, living and praying and dying beneath the sun and its sister moon. A few bold fools and fiend-slayers would come to visit him, in time. How ever could they not? The one true god of the mortals, after all, was Curiosity.

And came to the deep they did. But centuries passed before the first huntresses and paladins found their way down the deepest stair, there to experience a reading from the Deck of Strangest Things. Drakha, playing eternally with his monsters and his trinkets of fading memory, nearly perished from boredom in the waiting.

Far down below in the Imperium's waste and ruins Groohlz-Drakha had become dormant upon his throne, speaking in tongues, with his wishes being interpreted by several "new" cultic factions of necrophagous priests. It was noted by the wisest priests that a sacrifice of maidens,

devoured by the greatly weakened Drakha, caused the Mad God to speak through his ravaged body with more insistence from time to time. A tradition arose that Drakha would be attended by several hundred priestess-handmaidens, and those who failed to interpret his divinatory wishes “properly” would become scapegoats to the degenerating peoples of the nether ... and so they would be devoured as a sacrifice of repentance (either in part by Drakha, or fully by the cultists).

So was the world of Groohlz-Drakha, in the nether palace whose domes and spires touch high upon the bottom of the deepest dungeon level.

Before the coming of the adventurers an Age of Madness lasted for many years, and Drakha outlived virtually all of his worshippers. He polymorphed the forms of beetles, humanoids, monsters, and many less nameable things to become his replenished “handmaidens” as he devoured and played, and laughed. His eternal feasts of blood and flickering memory continued without end.

Could he ever remember who he was? No. Did it matter? Uncertain. Could he decide who he *would* be, for today, for his next meeting with querulous mortals venturing from above? Why yes! And he flips the cards, and he teleports throughout his dungeons, causing the trolls to fall to their worshipful and sloughing knees. And all the while, Drakha is sure to remind those “powerful” fiends and liches and dragons who the *true* master of the nether is ... and in this age, the age of heroes, his meetings with intriguing mortal heroes from the surface lands are many and strange indeed.

To this day, the creature who once was Groohlz-Drakha remains forever cruel, merciful, mirthful, capricious, random, riddle-adoring, logic-abhorring, and — to those who vex him — exceedingly deadly.

Perhaps the Player Characters in your campaign will get to meet him, down in the dungeons deep, at some wondrous point in time!

* * *

As a carnal avatar of the Peganan Mad God, Groohlz-Drakha can never truly die unless his true form is slain in the ever-shifting palatial realms of Limbo. He can certainly be faced in battle on the Prime Material Plane, and has conquered thousands of hubris-laden heroes ... and from time to time, he has even died. If he dies and his fleshly remains exist (e.g., are not disintegrated), he reforms in slumbering torpor at the rate of 1 hit point per day until he awakens once again at full strength. If his fleshly remains are fully eradicated, his spirit must generate a new planar form in Limbo before he can return to reign beneath Castle Oldskull once again; this process requires 13 years from the day of death.

Groohlz-Drakha’s abilities within the Prime Material Plane are as follows:

Groohlz-Drakha, Overlord of Castle Oldskull: Armor Class -1, Move 120’ (40’), Hit Dice 20*****, Hit Points 119, # Attacks 3 claw / claw / bite, Damage 1D8+6 / 1D8+6 / 2D8+4, Special Abilities superior attributes (STR 20, INT 19, WIS 16, DEX 18, CON 23, CHA 13), immaculate infravision (240’), use 1 spell-like power per round when not physically attacking (see below), battle up to three foes simultaneously, Special Defenses +1 or better weapon to hit, catch or deflect missiles (75%), regeneration (5 hp per round), severed limbs can still attack, Magic Resistance 70%, Save As Magic-User 20, Morale 12, Intelligence supra-genius, Alignment Special (roll randomly per day:

1% Chaotic Evil, 9% Chaotic Good, 70% Chaotic Neutral, 10% Chaotic Evil with Neutral tendencies, 10% Chaotic Good with Neutral tendencies).

Innate Magical Abilities: All saving throw targets are 2 (failed only on a 1), Astral travel, Ethereal travel, Infravision (240' range).

Spell-Like Abilities (as level 20 magic-user): Anti-Magic Shell (1 time/day), Command (duration 2 rounds, 1 time/day), Comprehend Languages (at will), Continual Darkness (at will), Continual Light (at will), Cure Blindness (at will), Cure Deafness (at will), Cure Disease (at will), Cure Feeblemind (at will), Cure Insanity (in others only, at will), Cure Light Wounds (3 times/day), Detect Charm (at will), Detect Evil (at will), Detect Good (at will), Detect Illusion (at will), Detect Invisibility (at will), Detect Lie (at will), Detect Magic (at will), Detect Traps (at will), Dispel Evil (2 times/day), Dispel Good (2 times/day), Dispel Illusion (2 times/day), Dispel Magic (2 times/day), Finger of Death (at will), Gate (1 time/day), Geas (at will; typically, dangerous but not 100% fatal quests, directed to procure various objects or treasures within the Castle Oldskull dungeons), Heal (1 time/day), Holy Word (1 time/day), Know Alignment (at will), Levitate (at will), Limited Wish (granted to self or another, 1 time/day), Mirror Image (at will), Phantasmal Force (at will), Polymorph Self (at will), Protection from Evil, 10' Radius (at will), Protection from Good, 10' Radius (at will), Raise Dead (3 times/day), Read Languages (at will), Read Magic (at will), Remove Curse (3 times/day), Remove Fear (at will), Summon Trolls (at will, 3 will be conjured per melee round, or 1 with maximum hit points), Symbol (of preferred type, 1 time/day), Teleport Without Error (at will), Tongues (at

will), True Seeing (2 times/day), Ultravision (at will), Unholy Word (1 time/day), Wall of Force (at will, typically used to force adventuring parties down certain paths).



About the Author



Beginning play as a chaotic neutral normal human with one measly hit point to his name, KENT DAVID KELLY eventually became apprenticed to a magic-user of ill repute ... a foul man who dwelt in the steamy deeps of the Ivory Cloud Mountain. After this mentor carelessly misplaced an intelligent soul-sucking sword and then died under suspicious circumstances, his former henchman Mr. Kelly escaped to the deeper underground and there began playing Satanic role-playing games. This, the legends tell us, occurred in the year 1981.

Hoary wizard-priests who inspired Mr. Kelly in his netherworldly machinations included the peerless Gygax, Carr,

Arneson, Cook, Hammack, Jaquays, Bledsaw, Moldvay, Kuntz, Schick and Ward. Sadly, a misguided made-for-the-basements movie entitled *Mazes and Monsters* gave Mr. Kelly's parents conniptions in 1982. As a result of that blasphemous Tom Hanks debacle (and other more personal lapses in judgment), Mr. Kelly was eventually forbidden from playing his favorite game for a considerable length of time.

Nonplussed but not defeated, he used this enforced exile to escape to a friend's alehouse, and there indulged himself in now-classic computer RPGs such as Zork, Telengard, Temple of Apshai, Ultima, Tunnels of Doom, The Bard's Tale, Phantasie, Pool of Radiance, Wizard's Crown and Wasteland. He then went on to write computer versions of his own FRPGs, which led to his obsession with coupling creative design elements with random dungeons and unpredictable adventure generation.

Mr. Kelly wrote and submitted his first adventure for *Dungeon Magazine* #1 in 1986. Unfortunately, one Mr. Moore decided that his submission was far too "Lovecraftian, horrific and unfair" to ever serve that worthy periodical as a publishable adventure. Mr. Kelly, it must be said, took this rejection as a very good sign of things to come.

In the late 80s and 90s, Mr. Kelly wrote short stories, poems and essays ... some of which have been published under the Wonderland Imprints banner. He wrote several dark fantasy and horror novels as well. Concurrently, he ran Dark Angel Collectibles, selling classic FRPG materials as Darkseraphim, and assisted the Acaem with the creation of the Valuation Board and other minor research projects.

At this time, Mr. Kelly and his entourage of evil gnomes are rumored to dwell in the dread and deathly under-halls of the Acaenum, Dragonsfoot, ENWorld, Grogardia, Knights & Knaves, ODD, and even more nefarious levels deep down in the mega-dungeon of the Web.

There he remains in vigil, his vampiric sword yet shivering in his hand. When not being sought outright for answers to halfling riddles or other more sundry sage advice, he is to be avoided by sane individuals *at all costs*.



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