

# THE TROLLS OF MISTWOOD



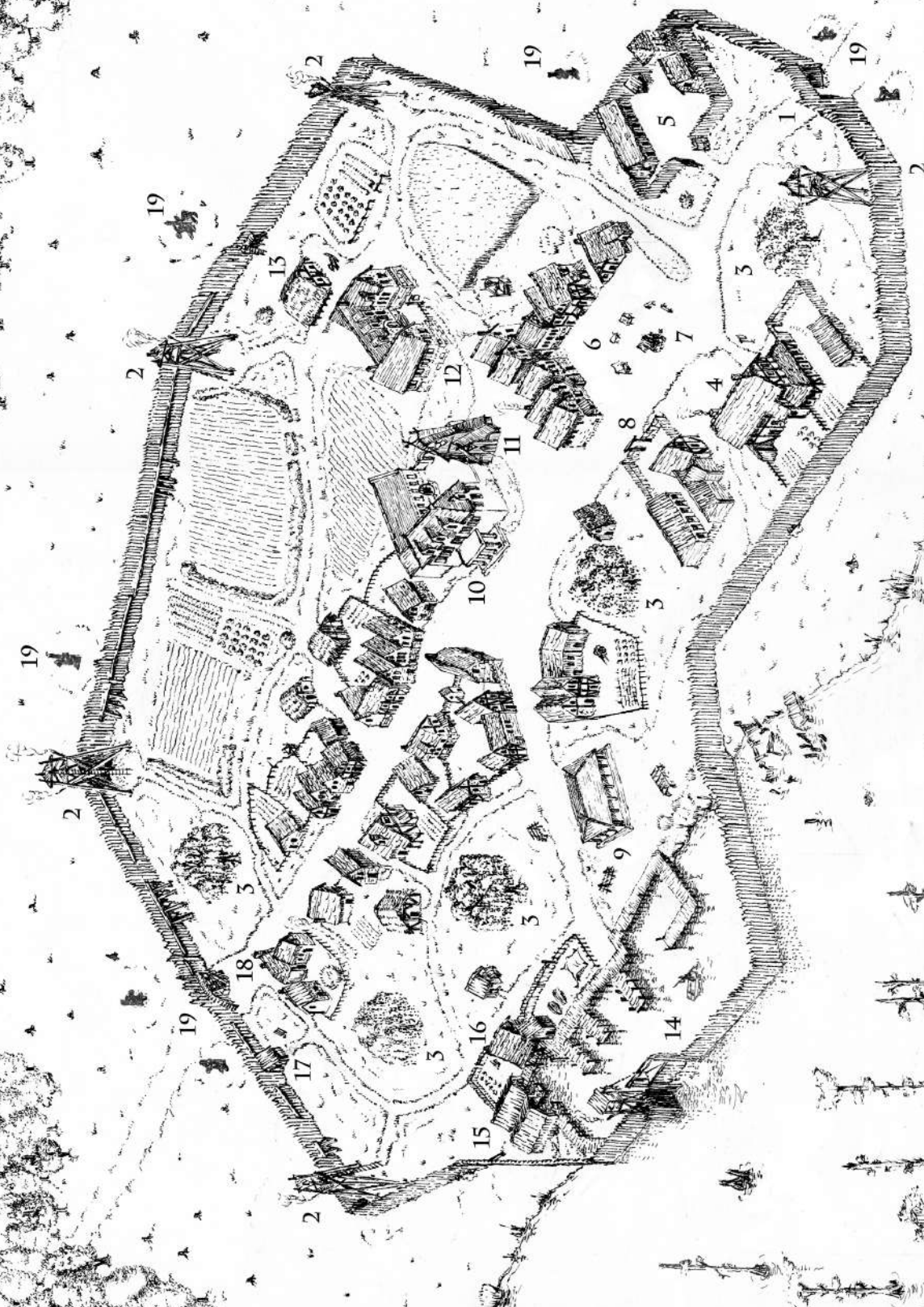
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**DCC  
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David W. Fisher  
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# MISTWOOD

1. FRONT GATE
2. WATCHTOWERS
3. WILLOW TREES
4. MURKY ALE TAVERN
5. BARRACKS
6. MARKET SQUARE
7. WELL
8. STABLE
9. FISH MARKET
10. TOWN HALL /  
MAYOR'S HOME
11. SHRINE OF THE TRI-GOD
12. GOLDEN EEL INN
13. MORGAN'S FARMHOUSE
14. THE HARBOR
15. BOATHOUSE
16. DOCK MASTER
17. APOTHECARY
18. NORTH GATE
19. TROLL PYRES



# THE TROLLS OF MISTWOOD



The Trolls of Mistwood is an adventure designed for a group of 5 to 8 Characters of levels 4 to 6.

**Writer:** David W. Fisher

**Illustrator:** David W. Fisher

**Cartographer:** Brian Van Hunsel

**Cover Artist:** David W. Fisher

**Layout:** David W. Fisher

**Editors:** Daniel J. Bishop, Brian Van Hunsel & Paul Wolfe

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## THE TALE OF MISTWOOD

IN THE DAYS OF DARKNESS, MORE THAN FOUR DECADES PAST, A PLAGUE BESET THE REALM OF MEN. 'THE BLIGHT' IT WAS CALLED OR BY SOME, 'THE REAPER'S TOUCH'. WHOLE VILLAGES FELL AFOUL OF THE BLIGHT AND, AS IN ALL TIMES OF WOE, HOLY MEN AND SHAMAN ALIKE CONSULTED THEIR OTHERWORLDLY DEITIES.

'T'WAS FOLLOWERS OF HECATE, GODDESS OF WITCHES, THAT FOUND THE HEALING ELIXIR THAT CURED THE BLIGHT PLAGUE. THE OIL OF THE SILT EELS OF GRAVIC SWAMP WAS THE SOURCE OF THE CURE AND, WEST OF THE MISTY WOOD, ON THE SHORE OF THE GRAVIC SWAMP, THE FISHING VILLAGE OF MISTWOOD WAS FOUNDED. MANY A PROSPEROUS YEAR PASSED FOR THE FISHERMEN OF MISTWOOD. THE CURATIVE OILS AND SUCCULENT FLESH OF THE SILT EELS WERE IN GREAT DEMAND. BUT IT WAS NOT TO LAST.

VICIOUS TROLLS EMERGED FROM THE SWAMP, ENRAGED BY THE HUMANS FISHING THEIR WATERS. DEFENSES WERE MOUNTED BUT THE FEROCITY OF THE BEASTS WAS UNRELENTING. THE TROLL SIEGE OF MISTWOOD LAID RUIN TO THE VILLAGE AND HOPE WAS LOST BY ALL BUT THE BARON, JOHAN OF HOUSE WILLOW. THE BRAVE LEADER REFUSED TO ABANDON THE VILLAGE AND WITH HIS WATCHMEN, THEY ERECTED A PALISADE AROUND THE FRIGHTENED SETTLEMENT AND THEY HELD FAST.

IT WAS THE COMING OF THE BEAUTIFUL ENCHANTRESS GLYNDEL THAT ENDED THE SIEGE. SHE PRESENTED JOHAN WITH A MIGHTY WEAPON, THE MAGIC BLADE CLAWREAPER AND WITH IT, HE ALMOST SINGLEHANDEDLY SMOTE THE FOUL TROLL HORDE. JOHAN AND GLYNDEL WERE MARRIED AND SHE BORE HIM A BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER AND THEN VANISHED AS MYSTERIOUSLY AS SHE HAD ARRIVED.



This tale is common knowledge in Mistwood. There is a 20% chance that human PCs have heard parts of the tale. Non-human PCs have a 10% chance of having heard the Tale of Mistwood. If asked about the history of the town, villagers of Mistwood recite variations of this tale.

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**Playtesters:** Tony Cotterill, Paul Curtis, Anil Haji and Ash Haji. Nico Eldritch, Cody Mazza, Jesse Wolfe, Lukas Wolfe and Paul Wolfe.

### *The reality of the situation*

The stories of Mistwood are the stuff of legend. Bards tell tales of the brave Johan and beautiful enchantress and their struggle to cure the Blight, against all odds. But there is more to this story.

The first part of the tale is true. The Blight was threatening the realm and the trolls were indeed a menace needing to be eradicated but the tale of the enchantress is largely based on deception. In reality, the beautiful enchantress, Glyndel, is a hag from a coven of three that dwell within the Gravic Swamp. She and her sisters, Gillara and Necrosa, have lived in their hidden hut for centuries, preying off travellers and swamp denizens. Such is their power, an entire clan of lizard folk were driven out of the swamp by the hags many years before the fishermen came.

As formidable as the hags were, the incursion of the trolls caused by the fishermen of Mistwood threatened the sisters' secrecy. Using their talent for deception and sorcery, they agreed to send the youngest sister to offer the villagers assistance. The elder sisters forged *Clawreaver* as Glyndel infiltrated Mistwood to sell the story of how she wanted to help the villagers against the trolls. What Glyndel didn't expect were her feelings for Johan. When the elder sisters noted the changes in their young sister, they realized something had to be done to prevent their foolish sibling from fraternizing with a human.

*Clawreaver* is a powerful magic sword, but the sword was forged with magic from the blackest origins. Hecate herself was called upon to empower the weapon and underlying the sword's potential to slay trolls was a hidden curse aimed at eventually destroying Johan for daring to woo Glyndel. With each unsheathing of *Clawreaver*, the wielder would gradually transform into a troll. Gillara and Necrosa knew it would drive their wayward sister back to the coven. What they didn't foresee was their younger sister's love for a human to be so great.

Being a formidable warrior, Johan resisted the transformative magic of the sword for a while but after a particularly gruesome battle, he noticed his skin starting to mottle and turn green each time he drew the sword. Rushing to his home, he awaited Glyndel's visit, praying she could help him. Recognizing the nature of the magic, Glyndel cured her beloved using her own formidable magic. She performed a ritual, invoking her coven's patron, Hecate, to remove the curse from the sword. But the witch goddess is

cruel, and rather than aid the wayward hag, she slyly transferred the curse to Glyndel's unborn daughter.

When Larissa was born, Glyndel's sisters threatened to take the child if Glyndel didn't return to her 'rightful' place with them. Thus, Glyndel resentfully returned to her life as a hag, determined to win back favor with her sisters and Hecate to spare her daughter a similar fate. Baron Johan has raised Larissa since she was a year old.

On her twentieth birthday, something happened to Larissa that would change the carefree girl forever. Her father organized a coming of age party and many young suitors attended to win favor with the village's most beautiful daughter. One young fisherman, Marcus, who had grown up with the girl, had already won her heart and as the party went on, the two went for a walk together. As they wandered along the banks of the Gravic Swamp, Marcus dropped to one knee and proposed marriage to Larissa. Excited and accepting, she kissed the handsome youth. Her first kiss was not what she had hoped it would be. Marcus dropped to the ground writhing in pain as his body contorted and grew into the form of a troll, literally bursting from his skin. Confused and horrified, the troll reached out to Larissa who screamed for it not to touch her. It obeyed. An alien feeling of power welled up within the girl. She knew she could dominate the troll's mind and it obeyed her every command. She willed Marcus to leave, and the confused troll wandered off into the marshy swamp.

The sudden manifestation of Hecate's curse had another affect on Larissa. She became aware that she was not human; she was a fusion of troll and hag with considerable power. Her virtuous spirit twisted inside, succumbing to a dormant, cruel nature that sought only one thing: power. She willed herself into her true form and gazed at her horrific reflection in the swamp. Her life as a human had been a lie and she would make everyone pay, especially her parents.



### ***Mistwood now...***

The troll attacks have started again. Due to the nature of silt eel fishing, the first attacks were not immediately acknowledged as men often went fishing in the swamps for days on end. But the discovery of human remains and shredded clothing alerted Johan to the return of his old foes. He reinstated the Troll Killers and took up *Clawreaver* once more but these trolls were more cunning and dangerous than those he'd encountered in the past.

Almost nightly, the men of town went missing. Baron Johan reinforced the walls and erected pyres where captured trolls were bound and burnt as a warning to their folk to keep away. But the deterrence didn't work.

Then something happened that sent fear throughout the village. *Clawreaver* was brought back to town from the swamp. All that was found of Johan was a pile of bloodied clothes and flesh. Larissa vowed to continue their struggle but many townsfolk are leaving. It is at this point the PCs enter the scene.

### ***Enter the Player Characters***

The PCs could be travelling to Mistwood for any number of reasons. The Judge could easily drop the small village anywhere near a potential swamp area in their campaign world. Perhaps a lord's or a noble's child is showing symptoms of the Blight, and the PCs are sent to investigate why Mistwood has not been sending any precious silt eel oil. Or worse, an epidemic could be brewing in the land. In any case, the PCs find themselves on the Riverside Road heading north to the isolated fishing village.

Read aloud:

*The trek north from the coast has been peaceful. The chirps of forest birds accompany the sound of the gently flowing Gravic River as you continue your journey upstream to the town of Mistwood. Ahead of you, the river and path leads into a dark, thickly wooded forest, and you notice the scent of swampland in the air. Above the trees, you see smoke rising in the distance.*

The forest is the Misty Wood after which the town was named. Describe the dank surroundings to the players and the strong smell of rotting vegetation. The river is hardly flowing here and slowly opens up to the PCs' left into a dense, smelly swampland. This is the Gravic Swamp, famous for its giant silt eels and the historic troll siege of Mistwood.

Staying on the path leads the players safely to the gates of Mistwood. Those foolhardy enough to venture into the swamps enter into a dangerous world (see *Deadly Swamps*).

There is potential to throw a random encounter at the players during this stage of the adventure but it is also a good opportunity to spook the players by mentioning the strange sounds that the swamp seems to produce and feelings of being watched.

### ***Mistwood***

Read aloud:

*Before the gates of the 15' wooden wall that surrounds the village, three posts with the smoking remains of large humanoid beasts smolder. This is Mistwood, a village under siege once more. There is a pungent stench hanging in the air as you approach the gates. You notice similar smoke trails rising from around the walled village. Above the gates to the left, a manned guard tower can be seen.*

The guard in the tower calls for the PCs to state their business. Once the adventurers announce their intentions, a well-oiled bar slides free inside, and the gates open. Two guards, dressed in dark, boiled leather armor cautiously approach the PCs. Each guard wears a small silver brooch in the shape of a troll's claw. Judges should highlight the guards' apprehension as they peer back and forth from the PCs to the swamp.

The guards again ask the characters' business in Mistwood before they grant entrance. The two guards, Earl and Lance, are seasoned troll killers, so they have little patience and less sense of humor than most. Any reasonable excuse for the PCs' presence results in them ushered inside. The guards hastily re-lock the gate once everyone is inside.

Characters getting cheeky or disrespectful with the guards could end up in hot water. Any derision or rudeness earns them a sudden blow to the face from Earl. Lance does not intervene if the fight is one-on-one. If Earl wins, he lectures the character about respecting his or her betters and marches off. If Earl loses, Lance heartily shakes the victor's hands, welcoming the formidable warrior to a place where they are much needed. Killing Earl is ill-advised and Lance calls for the fight to stop before a fatality occurs. If Lance has to fight, use Earl's stats. Murder is punishable by burning at the stake in Mistwood.

**Earl – Troll Killer of Mistwood (4th Lvl Warrior):**  
Init +4; Atk longsword d6+2 melee (1d8+2); AC 13;  
HD 4d12, HP 30; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref  
+2, Will +1; AL L.

Lance directs the players to the Baron's home in the center of town. The players may wish to do some exploring of Mistwood before they see Larissa. A bit of investigating never goes astray. Most villagers are aware of the Legend of Mistwood and the widely accepted version of the tale. Many villagers are mourning the recent loss of Johan.

The villagers eye the PCs with a mixture of suspicion, fear and perhaps even hope. Other than the NPCs that are given stats, the villagers of Mistwood are 0 - level peasants.

The following points of interest are from the Mistwood map inside the front cover. A players map with no marked locations is included for players to use for exploration (*inside the back cover*).

#### 1. *Front Gate*

The front gate is approximately 10x10' in size, constructed of thick wooden beams. The hinges are also wooden, as is the large, tree trunk-sized bolt that slides across to lock the gate. It takes a combined strength of 20 to secure the gate by sliding the greased bolt across.

#### 2. *Watchtowers*

Situated around the village are 30' tall watchtowers. The villagers call the towers the Tripods since each is a rudimentary 3-legged tower with a simple platform and shelter at the top.

The watchtowers stand twice as tall as the wall and since the return of the trolls they are manned day and night by a rotating roster of Troll Killers. The Troll Killers are more than happy for players to man a tower for an evening or three.

The swamp gas makes visibility at night difficult but the towers do afford an informative view during the day. Looking out over the swamp during daylight is a good way to get a bearing on the landmasses within the swamp. Swamp trees tend to be sparser in the deeper channels of the swamp, so any character with knowledge of the wilderness can make a note of the islands in the swamp. A particularly large willow tree towers over the other swamp trees in the distance to the west.



### 3. *Willow Trees*

The Gravic Swamp is also home to many species of trees and other flora. When the first fishermen came to build the village of Mistwood, they cleared the area of all trees save five large, beautiful willow trees that to this day remain within the walls of the village. It is after these trees that Johan's family took their house name.

The willows provide shade and some natural beauty in an otherwise plain settlement. Many local children have enjoyed climbing amongst the branches and swinging on the long willow vines of these ancient trees.

### 4. *Murky Ale Tavern*

The Murky Ale Tavern is a two-story building with guest rooms on the upper level. On the ground floor is a large tavern with tables and booths for patrons to rest and enjoy an ale or ten. The bar and kitchen is attended to by Thaddeus Muttval and his wife Kyrene. Their specialty dish is silt eel broth, although it is quite pricey due to the current shortage of the eels.

When the PCs arrive, the establishment is rather quiet due to the disappearances. A handful of villagers sit around drinking heavily and discussing the disappearances. The player characters can acquire some knowledge here or listen to some silly rumors at least. Roll 1d8 and refer to the rumor table overleaf to determine what the PCs overhear or the judge may select from the rumors what the characters hear. Judges are free to expand the details and importance of any of these rumors.

Thaddeus and Kyrene are happy to offer a room to the players for 3 silvers a night. A much cheaper and less comfortable stay than at the Golden Eel Inn, but the rooms are clean and cozy, sleeping two guests per room.

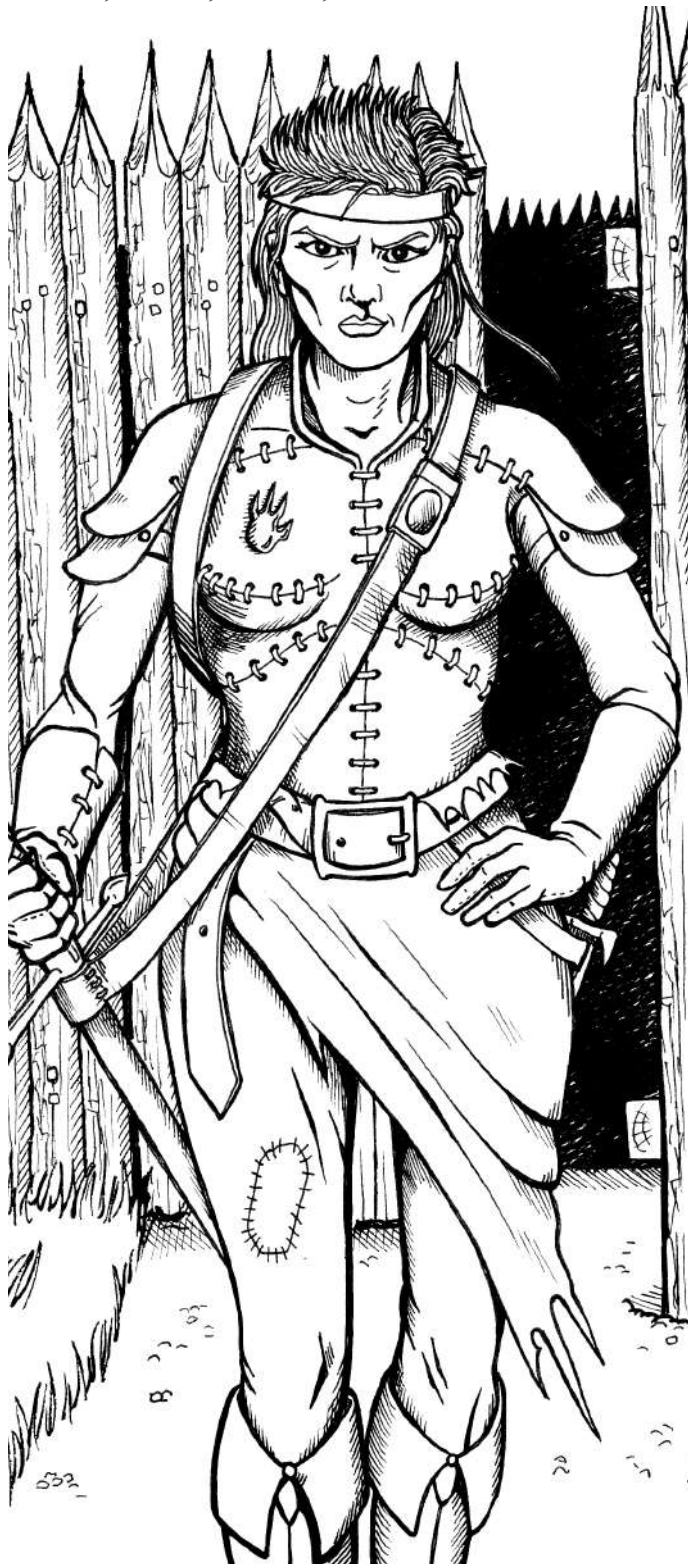
### 5. *Barracks*

The famous Troll Killers of Mistwood's barracks are located just inside the main gates and to the east. There are usually twenty Troll Killers enlisted at any particular time. There are only ten at present as the trolls have taken half of them over the last month.

The current sergeant-at-arms is a woman by the name of Battilda the Grey. A once attractive woman, she is now in her fifties and as her name suggests, her hair is steely grey in color. She wears the familiar dark, boiled leather armor with the silver troll claw brooch.

She happily enlists the characters to join the ranks, if she thinks they may be formidable allies. She outlines the village's defenses for those that join as described below. She insists there must be a hidden way into the village since trolls have attacked within the walls on some nights, leaving only the clothes and shredded skin of their victims behind.

**Battilda the Grey – Troll Killer sergeant-at-arms (5th Lvl Warrior):** Init +6; Atk longsword d7+1 melee (1d8+1) or longbow d7+1 missile (1d6+1); AC 14; HD 5d12, HP 41; MV 30'; Act 1d20 + 1d14; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; AL L.





Roll	Rumor	Fact
1	<b>Swamp monster</b> A pair of drunken fishermen discusses an encounter they had with a 40' tall shambling green monster. The monster apparently smashed their raft not far from the harbor and they swam back.	In reality the monster was a tree and the two drunks merely crashed into its roots, upending their raft.
2	<b>Haunted swamp</b> A lonely woman looks out of the window of the tavern crying. If approached, she will claim her husband's ghost wanders the swamp looking for her and that he calls to her at night.	This is Erina Granger and she lives in a house near the north gate. Her husband, Gareth, was transformed into a troll but his stronger-than-normal will enables him to remember his humanity at sunset – he tries to return home but finds the gates locked and people throw fire at him. He growls for Erina every evening at sunset outside the gate.
3	<b>House Willow is cursed</b> An elderly woman claims Johan made a pact with a demon and now the whole village must pay for his crimes	The old woman, Susana, used to be in love with Johan before Glyndel arrived. She believes Glyndel was a demon that bought Johan's soul for the sword <i>Clawreaver</i> . She's not far from the truth.
4	<b>Zombie army</b> A disheveled fishmonger claims an army of zombies is amassing in the swamp.	Zombies animated by Necrosa once attacked Karl the fishmonger in the swamp. Whilst there isn't an army of undead out there, there are certainly zombies created by the hags.
5	<b>Troll tunnels</b> Col, a local farmhand, thinks secret tunnels run under the village allowing the trolls to infiltrate the walls without being seen	This rumor is based on the fact that many troll tracks are found leaving over the walls but very few entering.
6	<b>Close encounters of the troll kind</b> An elderly woman thinks the trolls are visitors from another planet. She claims a troll approached her outside of the walls and tried to communicate with her.	The troll Anabelle encountered was Marcus Felworth in a moment of clarity. He was trying to tell the old woman who he was but she only heard he meant her no harm before Troll Killers scared him away.
7	<b>Griselda is a criminal?</b> A young pregnant woman is crying over the loss of her boyfriend. An older woman whispers to her in hushed tones that Griselda can 'take care' of her pregnancy.	Griselda has 'helped' unwed pregnant villagers in the past but was warned about the unlawful practice by the Judges of the temple. Griselda has also been warned about selling 'unlawful, recreational potions'.
8	<b>The Gods have abandoned us</b> Villagers wallow in self pity, claiming the absence of the temple's clergy is evidence the Gods have abandoned them.	The clergy of the temple, known as Judges, have gone to the capital to oversee a trial. This is a good opportunity for travelling clerics to preach about their gods. Any PC zealous enough, may win some converts in these dire times.

At any time during the day there are two Troll Killers manning the main gates, one in each tripod and the remaining troops are either resting at the barracks or patrolling the village. In total there are 7 standard Troll Killers (Battilda, Earl and Lance are officers) left in Mistwood out of a standard force of 20. It is obvious that the village needs more recruits, since the numbers of Troll Killers has dwindled.

Adventurers can learn about troll abilities from the Troll Killers, including their ability to regenerate and their susceptibility to fire. All Troll Killers are given a flask of fire oil and torches for finishing off trolls (see page 73 of the Core Rules).

**Standard Troll Killer of Mistwood (3rd Lvl Warrior):** Init +3; Atk longsword d5 melee (1d8) or longbow d5 (1d6); AC 13; HD 4d12, HP 31; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +1; AL L.

## 6. *Market Square*

This paved courtyard houses abandoned stalls. It used to be a very busy marketplace, supplying all manner of produce and seafood to both villagers and travellers alike.

The only stall that still operates is a local farmer's produce booth, selling cabbages, carrots and other plain vegetables. His name is Morgan and he manages the fields located in the east of the village.

He is present during daylight hours to sell his wares. He doesn't have any theories as to why the trolls have returned, only the fact that three of his farmhands have been taken by the monsters. He has also found troll tracks within the wall on his fields and is quite willing to show the players (see location 13).

## 7. *Well*

Mistwood's water supply is surprisingly clean and refreshing. Although the bedrock beneath the village filters the water before it reaches the well, it has a pungent scent that the locals have become accustomed to. Travellers take some convincing before they drink.

PCs suspecting a tunnel leads into Mistwood may explore the well. Their suspicions will be further aroused when they discover a submerged tunnel 5' below the water level. The underwater passage leads to the basement of the Golden Eel Inn (location 12), which has its own well for faster service (see *Things that go bump – First Night, Event 2*).

## 8. *Stable*

A simple wooden structure with stables to house up to twenty horses. There are only three horses at this time (other than the PCs'). A boy named Thomas, who appears to be around twelve years old, cares for them. He is the only child of a family within the village. His father could easily have been taken if you want to further develop this character.

## 9. *Fish Market*

Once the busiest location in Mistwood, this building is now silent and empty. Rows of tables fill this open-air building. Once used to display the silt eels and other fish stock available, large glass aquariums sit half filled with murky green water. PCs should note that the silt eel aquariums are up to 10' long and 4' deep.

A well preserved, 12' long silt eel hangs from ropes as a centerpiece for the market. It is a horrific fish and its razor sharp fangs should be a forewarning to adventurers and fishermen alike. The hands of a loving taxidermist have obviously been at work

Travellers came from all over the southern realm to buy the market's wares. Perhaps, if the troll problem is solved, this market will prosper once more.

## 10. *Town Hall/Baron's Home*

This large central building serves as both the town meeting place and the residence of the Baron and his family. It is an opulent building constructed from imported marble and stones not found in the region.

Currently, the only occupant of the building is Larissa. During the day, a clerk named Argyle mans the front desk. He acts as Larissa's personal assistant and arranges a meeting with Larissa for the PCs.

He is completely besotted with Larissa and will not believe her capable of any wrongdoing. He will be Larissa's next troll recruit. He has the combat ability of a 0-level peasant.

## 11. *Shrine of the Tri-God*

This oddly designed building sits near the Town Hall. Its structure is based on a recurring theme of three. It has three sides with many triangular features. Each face has a different word above a door. They are: *Law, Order* and *Retribution*, the mantra of those who worship the three-faced god.

The temple is usually home to three clerics known as *The Judges*. The Tri-God is a Lawful deity who is followed by lawyers and zealous knights. Presently, there are no clergy in Mistwood. Any lawful deity from the judge's campaign world can replace the Tri-God. Suffice to say, PCs should be aware the people of Mistwood are law-abiding citizens.

## 12. *Golden Eel Inn*

The Golden Eel is Mistwood's premier guest accommodation. At 5 gold pieces a night, it is a huge step up from the Murky Ale.

The Golden Eel has large guest rooms designed for housing visiting dignitaries, wizards and those with a taste (and coin) for more opulent accommodation. Hot baths can be drawn if desired, and inn staff even clean clothing and items for a reasonable tip.

Calen and Audrey Felworth run the Golden Eel. Calen made his fortune silt eel fishing but decided to use his earnings to build the inn to earn money from the wealthy travellers that frequented Mistwood.

Larissa's first victim and former love, Marcus, was the child of Calen and Audrey. They are somber folk due to this loss.

It is here that *Event 2 of Things that go bump – First Night* takes place.

### 13. *Morgan's Farmhouse*

This is the home of Mistwood's chief farmer, Morgan. He hires local youngsters to tend his crops during planting and harvest time. Otherwise, he manages the fields himself.

He owns a large grey wolfhound that barks incessantly when visitors come near the house.

He shows anyone who has the faintest interest a set of troll tracks that cross one of his fields. Characters might take notice (DC 10) that the tracks lead towards the wall.

### 14. *The 'Harbor'*

The 'harbor' district, as it is jovially named, is located on the western side of the village. Several docks sit within the walled shoreline. The muddy water here is only 2 feet deep at best. Rafts and boats sit tied to the docks. A secured gate opens west into the Gravic Swamp.

When the players decide exploring the swamp is the only means to uncover the cause of the troll attacks, they depart from these docks. The gates into the swamp are a heavy affair with chain pulleys that work via a winch system to raise and lower the gates. Bunkor, the dock master, has removed the winch handle and he alone has the authority to grant passage to and from the Warf .

Bunkor the dwarf dock master can be found here if not in his offices (location 15).

### 15. *Boathouse*

Rafts and upturned rowboats sit stored under this shelter. Canvases cover some whilst others are exposed to the elements. The boats range from finely crafted vessels to rafts assembled from logs from the local woods.



Players can rent a raft or boat from the boathouse for a modest price. A dilapidated raft costs 1 silver piece a day to rent. A fine rowboat can cost up to 5 gold pieces a day. Bunkor's wife Bailene runs the boathouse.

### 16. Dock Master

This is the home of Mistwood's only dwarven citizens, Bunkor and Bailene. To leave Mistwood via the swamp requires permission from Bunkor, the dock master.

**Bunkor (5th Lvl Dwarf):** Init +0; Atk mace d7+1 melee (1d6+1) or sling d7+1 missile (1d4+1); AC 13; HD 5d10, HP 35; MV 20'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP Infravision; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; AL L.

He also issues silt eel fishing licenses for a one-off fee of 5 gold pieces. This steep price deters the 'non-serious' fishermen.

Bunkor also outlines areas where it is forbidden to fish, such as the southwestern area of the swamp. The dwarf claims this is the breeding ground for the silt eels and as such, is a sanctuary forbidden to the fishermen on threat of losing their license and being fined. He also claims that the silt eels are particularly aggressive around their nests and for the PCs' safety, they should stay away from them.

*Judge's note: In reality, the island where the coven of hags lives is situated in this area of the swamp. Just over 20 years ago, Baron Johan agreed with Glyndel to keep people away from that area. And whilst the silt eels are aggressive around their nests, the fishermen that go missing illegally fishing there are generally devoured by the coven of hags.*

### 17. Apothecary

A ramshackle home leans against the northern wall of the village. Whilst most of the buildings in the village appear to be maintained by their owners, this structure has clearly been neglected. A slathering of purple paint has been splashed across the crumbling, wooden walls. Above the front door, a sign swings gently in the breeze. It reads 'Griselda: Apothecary of Mistwood'. A steady stream of smoke rises from the chimney.

Griselda is a harmless old wizard and one of the oldest human inhabitants of Mistwood. On entering the door, a bell rings, summoning Griselda from the back room. A counter separates the entrance from the rest of the building. Vials and bottles are arranged

across rows and rows of shelves.

As the village's apothecary, Griselda is thoroughly versed in the curative qualities of most flora and fauna in the Gravic Swamp.

She sells her wares at reasonable prices. Herbs and magical ingredients of all kinds can be found in the small glass bottles lining the shelves in her store. Magic potions may also be available at the judge's discretion.

**Griselda (5th Lvl Wizard):** Init -1; Atk dagger +2 melee (1d4) or dart +2 missile (1d4); AC 9; HD 5d4, HP 19; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP spellcasting (1d20+7 spell check); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; AL L.

Spells: **1st level** *Color Spray, Detect Magic, Invoke Patron, Mending, Read Magic, Sleep*; **2nd level** *Locate Object, Scorching Ray*; **3rd level** *Make Potion, Drink the moon*

Griselda greets the PCs warmly, asking what they need. She shares the following if asked:

*She was around when the first troll siege occurred and had to treat the wounds of those who fought the trolls. She has never seen anything like the shredded, bloody pulps of skin and clothes these current trolls leave of their victims,*

*She suspects the trolls are being controlled in some way as they seem to be more intelligent than they should be,*

*She is the most powerful spellcaster in Mistwood.*

The old apothecary is more secretive about where she gets her wide variety of potion ingredients. Any adventurer with some knowledge of potions should appreciate the rarity of some of the items she has for sale.

Griselda is one of the two people in the village who is aware of the coven of hags in the swamp. In fact, she regularly sneaks from the village to visit the hags, who spare her life for two reasons. Firstly, Griselda is a follower of Hecate, goddess of witches (see *Patron Information*), as are the hags. Secondly, Griselda provides the hags with information about Larissa in exchange for rare spell components and items. Griselda does not know that Larissa is the daughter of one of the hags. Griselda plans to leave the village that very night to inform the hags of the PCs' presence.

If asked about Larissa, Griselda only comments that the carefree girl she helped raise has become bitter and sullen since her father's demise. This, she explains, is to be expected under the circumstances.

### 18. *North Gate*

Up until the recent spate of attacks, this used to be another means to enter and leave the village. Presently, it is barricaded with large wooden crates, barrels and an upturned wagon. Obviously, the villagers feel this entrance is not defensible.

### 19. *Troll Pyres*

At various points around the outside of the palisade wall, 10' posts stand in a scorched circle of earth. A large, charred, humanoid creature, burnt almost beyond recognition, is chained to each post. Most are burnt out and desiccated but others still smolder in the breeze.

### *Larissa*

At some point, the characters will want to see the acting leader of Mistwood, Larissa of House Willow. Argyle greets the PCs when they arrive at the town hall. He asks a series of intrusive questions, such as what the character has been eating to make their breath so foul and so on, before he informs Larissa of their presence.

Read aloud:

*The beauty of the young woman who descends the stairs behind the counter is breathtaking. At 5'7", Larissa has sparkling green eyes, thick wavy dark hair and pouting red lips. Dressed in figure hugging trousers and a white blouse, she rests her hands on the claw-shaped pommel of a formidable looking sword at her hip.*

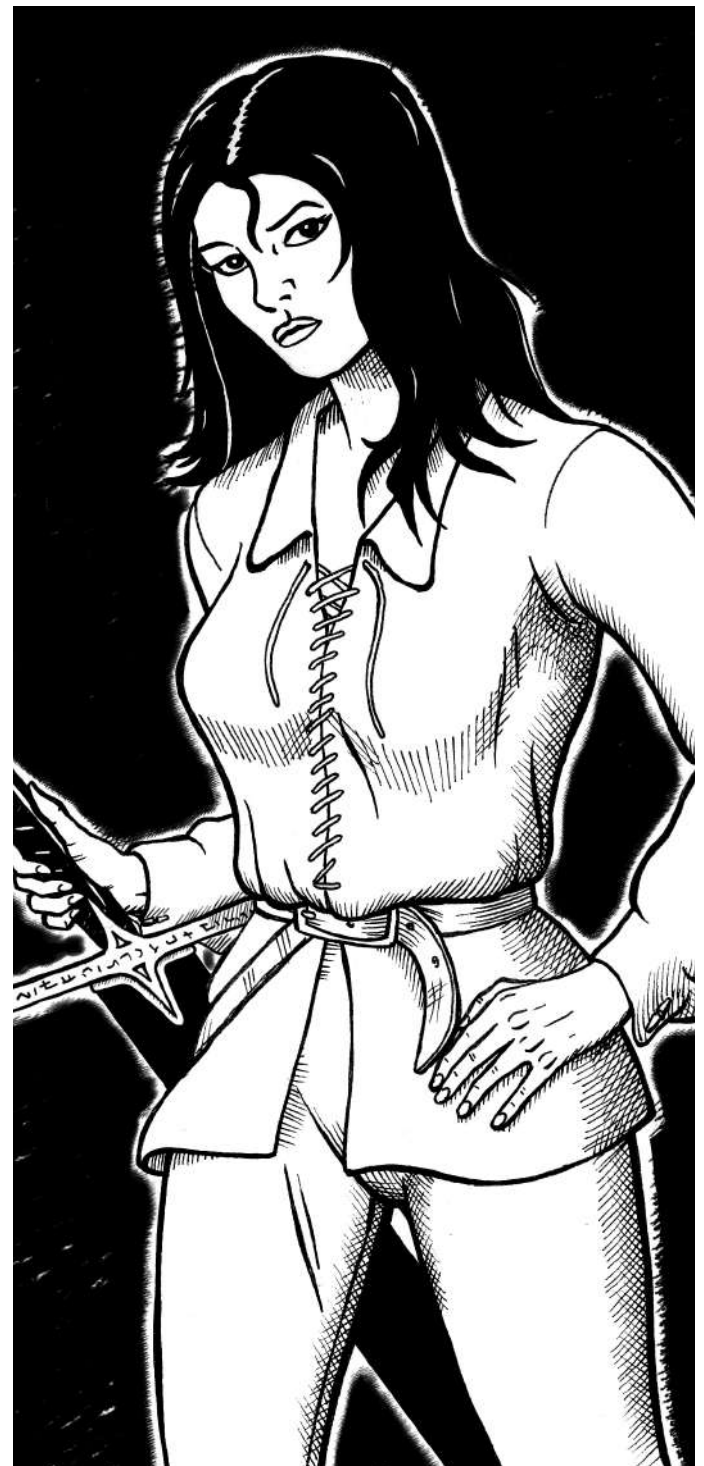
*"Yes?" she asks, looking your group up and down with steely determination.*

Once the player characters have introduced themselves, Larissa explains that trolls are raiding the village, devouring the menfolk and preventing the town from earning its livelihood through fishing. She informs them her father has been taken and is presumed dead. She stops for a moment and stifles back tears for affect. She humbly asks the PCs' help to secure the town at night. She even goes to the extent of claiming she is terrified the trolls will come for her, leaving the village without a leader. (Note: In human form, Larissa cannot be detected as being evil.)

If asked about the sword, Larissa unsheathes *Clawreaver* to show the sword to the PCs. She tells a colorful tale of how her mother gave the weapon to her father during the troll sieges before her birth.

Larissa has been expecting adventurers to investigate the troll attacks. She has, in fact, been counting on it to exact revenge against her mother for abandoning her and not revealing her 'superior' heritage (see *Murder in the Dark*). To this point, her trolls have been unable to defeat the coven.

Having a PC 'devoured' by a troll is another scheme Larissa contemplates, if a player has their character become particularly enamored of her.



## *Night Watch*

The PCs may wish to find lodgings and rest on their first evening, or they may leap at the chance to join the Troll Killers and perform night watch duty. Ensure NPCs encourage the player characters to play an active role in the defense of Mistwood.

Battilda will meet the characters at the barracks and from there, issue orders of where she wants them. She positions any spellcasters on tripods near the northern wall so they can see the harbor gates and the blocked north gate. Fighters are sent to patrol the inside of the wall around the village .

### *Things that go bump – First Night*

On the first evening, two events unfold that will reveal some of the goings-on in Mistwood.

#### *Event 1*

Observant PCs patrolling the northern end of the village or those posted to the northern tripods may notice (DC 15) Griselda sneak to the harbor. There she meets Bunkor and pays him a bag of coins. She then punts a raft through the gate that Bunkor quietly opens and closes for her.

If confronted, Griselda explains that she needs to gather herbs from the swamp for her store. She also assures the PCs that she regularly does this and has remained safe. Bunkor attests that Griselda regularly pays him to allow her access from the village at night.

If the PCs demand to go with her, she decides against going, claiming that the player characters will attract the trolls and put her in danger. Likewise, she decides not to go if the PCs make a fuss about it being too dangerous.

A stealthy adventurer might decide to follow her. She travels by raft, punting through the waterways of the swamp and unless the PCs wish to brave the swamp by swimming, they will have to find an alternative means to stay on her trail.

If they manage to follow her (Stealth DC 5 on land or DC 20 in the swamp water), she stops at several islands, stooping to pick mushrooms and herbs at various locations. If she suspects she is being followed, harvesting herbs is all she does before returning to Mistwood. If she thinks she is alone, she travels all the way to Crone Island. Here she deals with the three hags.

Griselda discusses the happenings in the village. She may talk about the player characters and her opinion of them if they have made an impression on her. The hags listen intently to everything she says.

Note that any PC spying on this event needs to be within 20' to hear what they are talking about (DC 20 at 20' and reduced by 1 for each foot the distance is reduced), running the risk of being spotted by the coven of hags. Due to the bone rattles hanging around the borders of Crone Island, there is a 50% chance Necrosa is aware of any PCs present on the island unless they have magically concealed themselves in some way. The hags are harder to deceive than old Griselda and if they discover they are being spied on, they do their best to have the player characters for a midnight snack (see *Crone Island* and the *Foes and Allies* for a description of the area and of the hags themselves).



After an hour of chatting, the hags give Griselda a sack containing exotic herbs and magical ingredients for her store. She graciously leaves and makes her way back to the village.

If the characters confront her after her clandestine meeting, she at first denies anything suspicious about her activities. She gets very angry if she learns she has been spied on. If the players harass her too much, she reports them to Battilda who will warn the PCs to stay away from ‘innocent villagers’.

## Event 2

If player characters decide to stay at the Golden Eel (location 12), they are in for some excitement. If not, they hear of the tragedy on the morrow.

A scream, followed by growls and the sound of breaking furniture from downstairs, awakens the PCs from their rest. On investigating, the characters will find Calen dead amongst the shattered remains of a bar table. His still twitching face stares at an open doorway that leads to the basement of the building. A mighty blow has crushed his chest. Gouged into the wood of the bar are the letters, “*Larsa mst di*”.

PCs investigating the open door find it leads to a downstairs wine cellar with a subterranean well. Wet troll prints are sloshed around the well, leading to the stairs.

The troll, Calen and Audrey’s own son Marcus, entered the inn through the well. He knew of this entrance as his father once showed him in case of an emergency.

PCs who wish to take a midnight swim find this well meets up with the village well. This is quite a swim at 120 yards and requires a character to hold their breath till they reach the well. A PC can hold his or her breath for double their stamina after which they must make a Fortitude save (DC 10) each round with the difficulty increasing by +1 each roll. If the player fails the roll, their character will fall unconscious that round, drop to zero hit points in the second and be dead by the third. Movement through the tunnel is at normal speed for characters that can swim, or half speed for those pulling themselves along in the dark. The potential for drowning here is high. Player characters with dark vision notice (DC 15) an opening halfway along the ceiling of the tunnel. Investigating this tunnel leads to an interesting discovery. A small alcove dug into the stones hides a rare magic item as well as a much-needed pocket of air. The magic shovel, *Digger*, is hidden here (see sidebar).

It is unlikely, but if the PCs catch Marcus, he will fight only if he cannot escape over the walls and back into the swamp.

**Marcus the troll:** Init +6; Atk Bite +10 melee (2d8+6) or claw +8 melee (dmg 2d6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6, HP 60; MV 40’; Act 3d20; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, susceptible to mind affecting spells, vulnerable to fire; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +0; AL C.

## Digger

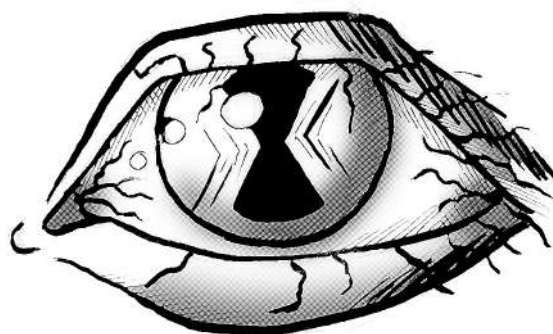
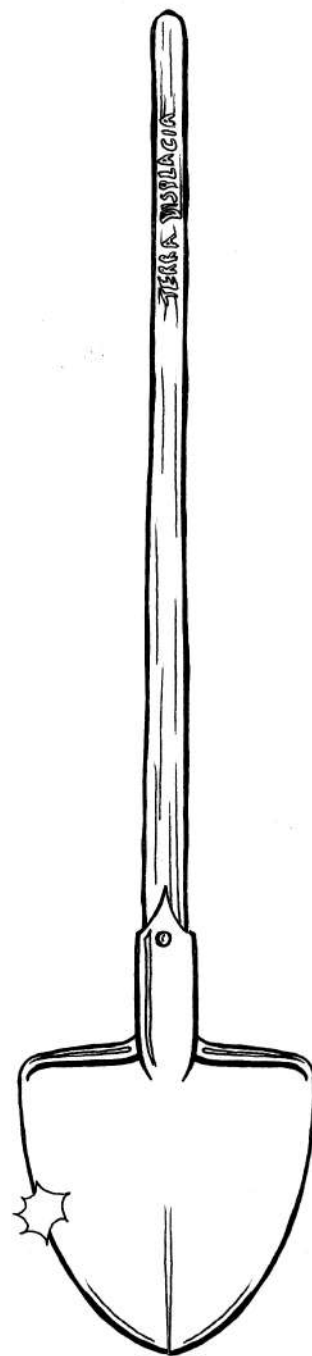
### Physical Description

Wrapped in waxed parchment is a shovel with a highly polished blade. Engraved into the grip of the shovel are the words ‘*Terra Displacia*’.

### Magical Properties

If the shovel is gripped firmly by a character and the words spoken, it will remove 1 cubic yard of soil weighing 1.5 tons from the tip of the shovel and place that soil directly behind. If *Digger* is pointed down when the command words are spoken, soil appears above the head of the user, dropping 1.5 tons of dirt upon their head. A Reflex save DC 15 enables the character to dive to safety. If the soil cube lands on a player character they suffer 10d6 crushing damage.

It can ‘dig’ every round for 10 rounds before falling dormant for 24 hours. It cannot dig through stone or other solid materials, only loose soils, clay, sand or gravel. It is also a deadly weapon if used against creatures composed of such materials. It has no effect on living creatures.



### *Murder in the dark – Second Night*

Larissa is aware of the location of her mother's coven thanks to her troll slaves. She is also aware that Griselda frequents the coven's secret island. She murders the old spell caster in full view of one of the Troll Killers or, if circumstance allows, one of the player characters. She does so in her natural troll hag form, scales the village wall and leaves tracks to the south in the direction of the coven's island. After secretly circling back to her home she rushes to Griselda's body and pretends to grieve. She mentions she always suspected Griselda was dealing with foul sorcerers from the swamp. She even points out the conveniently placed map furling in Griselda's dead hand.

Read aloud:

*A cold mist has risen from the swamp and wafts gently over the walls of Mistwood. The sound of frogs croaking dominates the otherwise silent evening. Then the calm is broken by a piercing, blood-curdling scream.*

Allow the PCs to come upon the following scene – ideally a PC in one of the northern tripods could already be there.

Read aloud:

*In the darkness, outside the apothecary, a large figure draped in black robes leans over the body of an elderly woman. Sensing your eyes on it, the creature turns, the throat of the elderly woman still clenched in its grotesque, stained teeth. This 'thing' is NOT a troll! As the body drops to the creature's feet, it stands to over 7 feet tall and you can see it is clearly some kind of demonic crone. The abomination smiles and turning on its unnaturally long legs it springs at the pile of debris stacked against the north gate and disappears over the wall.*

Allow the PCs an action to attempt to stop Larissa. But for the sake of the conclusion of the adventure, she should be allowed to escape here.

Examining the corpse reveals it to be Griselda. Her eyes are locked open in a terrified stare. The troll hag's powerful bite has broken her neck. Any player character looking closely (DC 15) notices a crumpled piece of paper furling in her lifeless hand. It is a map to Crone Island, planted there by Larissa before she fled. A party that has already followed Griselda to Crone Island should rightfully be suspicious at this point.

Investigating outside of the wall will reveal the crone's large footprints leading back around to the south and into the swamp. Larissa has since flown back to her home. She comes rushing from her home *Clawreaver* drawn, and heads to the murder scene. She feigns horror and disbelief at what the PCs witnessed.

Larissa now initiates her scheme to kill her mother and the other crones. She orders the PCs to march on the crones at first light of day, pulling the planted map from Griselda's hand (if the adventurers have not yet found it), pretending to examine it, then claiming that it must reveal the location of the hags. She insists the hags must be commanding the troll hordes to attack the village.

To add to her credibility, Larissa mentally commands two trolls to clamber over the wall near where the group is located. The two trolls bellow ferociously before charging those around Larissa. She instructs the trolls to take down the warriors first. Larissa wields *Clawreaver*, albeit ineffectively, to help demonstrate herself as an ally to the PCs. Player characters should notice some of *Clawreaver's* abilities during this encounter.

Larissa allows a troll to strike her, apparently knocking her unconscious. Judges should feel free to inflict a grievous wound on Larissa here; she can easily regenerate at a later time in her troll hag form.

The trolls continue to fight until slain. If the PCs are over-powered, Troll Slayers charge to the scene causing the trolls to flee.

**Trolls (2):** Init +6; Atk Bite +10 melee (2d8+6) or claw +8 melee (dmg 2d6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6, HP 40 each; MV 40'; Act 3d20; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, susceptible to mind affecting spells, vulnerable to fire; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +0; AL C.

'Regaining' consciousness, Larissa thanks the PCs and, to assist in their quest, she bestows *Clawreaver* on a character that she believes a worthy wielder of her father's sword (see *Clawreaver*). She hopes that PC will slay her father with his own sword when she no longer has any use for him.







## Clawreaver

### Physical Description

*Clawreaver* is a unique, hag-crafted longsword. Its most notable feature is the curved hilt and the pommel. The pommel is the shape of a gnarled troll claw. A blow from the 4 claws on the pommel will cause a vicious wound (1d8). *Clawreaver* radiates with a dull green light.

### Magical Properties

+1 to attack and damage

Communicates urge to slay trolls via simple urges

### Bane

+3 to attack and damage trolls

Berserker fury facing trolls ego check or wielder gains +4 Strength and Stamina for 2d6 rounds, then is exhausted at -4 Strength and Stamina for 1d6 turns thereafter

### Special Purpose

Transform wielder into troll (dormant until Larissa slain). If Larissa is killed the sword slowly regains its special purpose. Each time the sword is unsheathed there is a cumulative 5% chance (100% after 20 uses) that the user will have to make a Fort Save DC 15 or start to transform into a troll, with noticeable results. If a player fails the save, roll on the below table:

Roll 1d10	Troll Attribute	Effect
1-2	Troll skin	The character's skin takes on a green rubbery texture and is immune to critical hits. Whenever <i>Clawreaver</i> is wielded the PC's skin takes on this appearance and quality.
3-4	Troll strength	The character's strength increases to 20 giving them a +4 modifier when wielding <i>Clawreaver</i> .
5-6	Troll height	The character grows to 12' tall, tearing from their clothing and gear. Restrictive armor may cause damage at the judge's discretion. The PC returns to normal when the sword is sheathed.
7-8	Troll mind	The character becomes mindless, attacking the nearest living thing. The character is immune to mind affecting magic whilst <i>Clawreaver</i> is unsheathed when this affect takes place. Sheathing the weapon will stop this affect.
9-10	Troll regeneration	The character regenerates 1d8 hit points a round whilst wielding <i>Clawreaver</i> . The wielder cannot regenerate fire or acid damage.

Each time a player fails a save and takes on a troll attribute, change the dice to reflect the remaining options when another save is failed: d8, d6, d4, d2.

Players may at first find the transformative powers of *Clawreaver* a blessing but judges must remember that each time the sword is unsheathed the curse gets stronger. Once the sword imbues the wielder with all five attributes, *Clawreaver* ignites, causing the wielder to drop the weapon, never to be used again by that character as he or she has completely transformed into a mindless troll, that the sword is sworn to destroy.

If a new wielder possesses *Clawreaver*, the process begins anew.

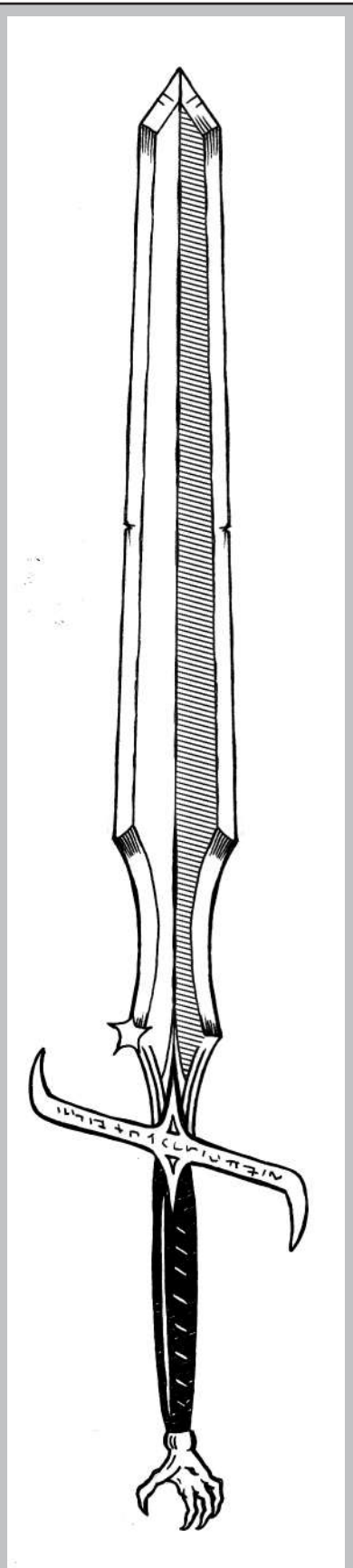
Eventually, the PC will become a regular troll with stats as listed on page 429 of the core rules (see *Life as a troll*). Only the destruction of *Clawreaver* can undo this effect.

### Sword Powers

Detect trolls within 30' when unsheathed

Flame brand. Ignite in flame 3/day. Duration 6 rounds. Inflicts additional 1d6 damage and ignites target on fire (Ref save to avoid; DC = 1d10+5)

Players may ultimately agree that the destruction of *Clawreaver* is a worthy cause. This quest is explored in the follow-on adventure *Curse of Mistwood*.



### *Life as a troll*

There is a distinct possibility that one or more PCs may find themselves transformed into trolls. The judge can handle this situation in the following ways:

The PC automatically becomes an NPC, controlled by the judge. Probably not the best alternative for the player but it will prevent power hungry players from exploiting their troll status.

The PC retains control of their player with certain limitations. The player must make a DC15 Will save to remember he/she is not actually a troll. Unlike the cursed villagers who must make rolls every round at select opportunities, PCs can maintain control of their troll forms for 15 minutes at a time before having to roll again. It is likely to make an interesting battle when a party troll turns and attacks its comrades.

If Larissa is nearby, she may exert her will upon the PC to obey her commands DC 15. Judges must remember that as a cursed troll, the PC has no bonus for their will save. Larissa can attempt to control the character each round. With this in mind, the troll character is also more susceptible to friendly mind affecting spells.

Characters that remain a troll for longer than three days become NPC trolls until the curse is lifted (see *Foes and Allies* for details). The cursed character will remain a troll forever if Larissa is not slain. If *Clawreaver* changes the PC, after Larissa has been vanquished, only the destruction of the sword will remove the troll curse. The means to destroy *Clawreaver* is outlined in the follow-on adventure, *Curse of Mistwood*.

**Trolls:** Init +6; Atk Bite +10 melee (2d8+6) or claw +8 melee (dmg 2d6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6, HP 50; MV 40'; Act 3d20; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, susceptible to mind affecting spells, vulnerable to fire; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +0; AL C.





CRONE  
ISLAND

T  
GRAVIC



1/2 MILE



TREES ON LAND



TREES IN WATER

MISTWOOD



LIZARD HOLLOW

THE SWAMP

8/10/13

### ***Deadly Swamps***

Eventually, the PCs should venture into the swamp, either of their own volition or answering the call to action from the leader of Mistwood. The Gravic Swamp is a large and dangerous location. Those who enter unprepared, do so at their own risk.

The only practicable means to get around the swamp is via raft. Bunkor offers a 10' x 10' raft to the adventurers, and for a fee of 10 gold, he 'volunteers' to travel with the players as navigator and guide. The raft is steered with a pole, punting slowly along at a rate of ½ mph. Punting is not an easy task and requires DC 10 Strength checks every mile to maintain a decent speed and avoid stumps and swamp trees that crop up through the mist. A character with a seafaring background, like a smuggler, has a +2 benefit traversing the swampy channels.

Players should also be made aware of the cramped conditions on the raft. If the PCs cannot all fit on a single raft (a raft can safely carry 6 characters), Bunkor will provide a second raft that one of the PCs has to navigate by the aforementioned means. Unless the PCs have some experience on boats, as mentioned above, combat that takes place on the raft will incur a -2 penalty. This is due to the unstable nature of the raft combined with the care required to avoid striking an ally. Furthermore, if the PCs are attacked whilst on the raft, any blow from an enemy may knock the character into the swamp. If a PC sustains over 5 points of damage from a single attack, they must make a Reflex Save DC Damage Dealt or be thrown into the swamp. Those in the swamp have a chance of attracting silt eels that are actually vicious predators (see the random encounter table opposite for details).

Progress through the channels in the swamp is fraught with many dangers. There is an abundance of living creatures both on the islands and in the water of the Gravic River. The random encounter table can be used to generate swamp encounters or, if so desired, Judges can use them where they feel the action needs to be heightened.

### ***On the shores of the Gravic***

At some point during the journey, have Bunkor or a PC Spot (DC 10) an unusual object on the shore of an island. Closer inspection will reveal a smashed raft, a pile of shredded clothes and a bloody pile of human skin. Observant characters will notice the absence of bones or any other remains in the mound of flesh.

Amongst the clothes and skin is a magical dagger. If villagers see the dagger they will recognize it as Gareth Granger's filleting blade. The initials 'G. G.' are engraved in the handle. The blade is enchanted to filet fish and acts as a +2 weapon against fish and other aquatic creatures.

Larissa discovered this fisherman several weeks ago and transformed him into a troll. As such, the flesh is putrid.

### ***Troll Ambush!***

A troll for every two PCs hides beneath the murky swamp water to ambush the adventurers.

Read aloud:

*A quiet seems to fall over the swamp. The cypresses and willows crowd out the sky and the dark waterway becomes even gloomier. Not a ripple stirs the black water.*

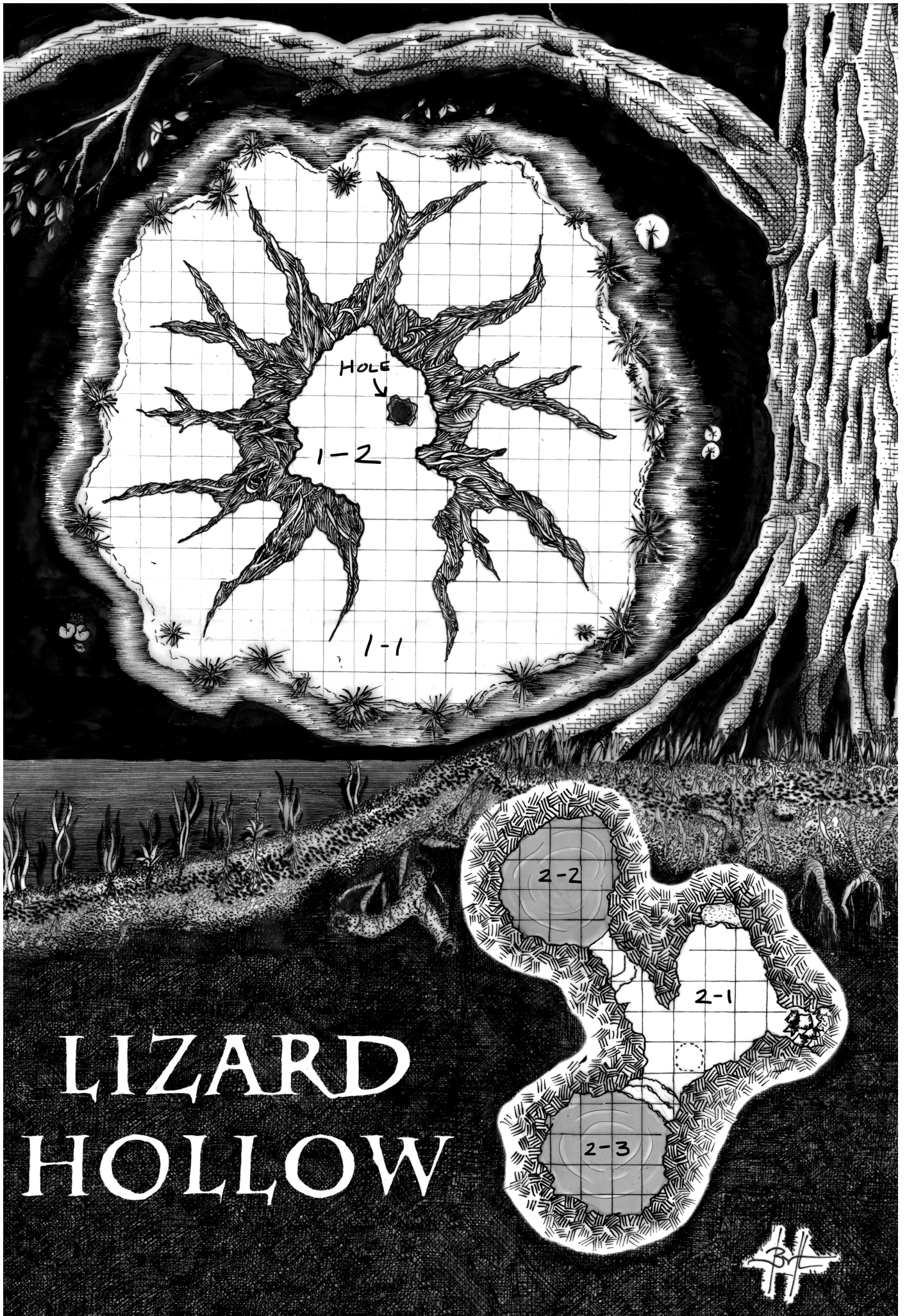
Once the PCs seem adequately apprehensive, have each PC make a Spot Check DC25 to notice small bubbles rising around the raft. Immediately have the trolls burst from around the front raft. Remember the increased chance to be knocked overboard.

**Trolls:** Init +6; Atk Bite +10 melee (2d8+6) or claw +8 melee (dmg 2d6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6, HP 55, 60; MV 40'; Act 3d20; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, susceptible to mind affecting spells, vulnerable to fire; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +0; AL C.

Due to the trolls' wetness, fire damage and burning duration for fuels is halved.



Roll D6	Random Encounter	Description	Stats
1	Giant mosquitos	A swarm of 2d20 hand-sized insects buzz down from the surrounding trees and attempt to land on the PCs.	<b>Giant mosquitoes:</b> Init +5; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3); AC 11; HD 1d8; MV fly 60'; Act 1d20; SP blood drain 1 stamina; SV Fort -5, Ref +5, Will -5; AL N.
2	Giant snake	A large boa constrictor drops its coils down from an overhanging branch, attempting to ensnare a player to haul up into the trees for dinner. PCs need to make a Spot Hidden check DC 15 to avoid surprise.	<b>Boa constrictor, giant:</b> Init+4;Atk bite +10 melee (1d6 + constrict); AC 18; HD 5d8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP constriction 1d6; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; AL N.
3	Swamp Ooze	As the raft passes a particularly thick area of the swamp, 1d4 oozes, 10' square in size, cling to the bottom of the raft and commence attacking the PCs with pseudopods from between the rafts boards.	<b>Swamp ooze:</b> Init last; Atk pseudopod +4 melee (1d4); AC 10; HD 2d8; MV 5', climb 5'; Act 2d20; SP half damage from slicing and piercing weapons, Paralysis touch DC 14 Fort save or be paralyzed 1d6 hours; SV Fort +6, Ref -8, Will -6; AL N.
4	Silt eel	Falling into the swamp has a 50% chance of attracting a silt eel to attack. Otherwise silt eels have been known to lunge from the swamp to attack (DC 12 to avoid surprise). In fact, the primary way these beasts are caught is luring them to attack.	<b>Silt eel:</b> Init +6; Atk bite +8 melee (3d6 + infection DC 12 Fort or lose 1 point of Stamina for 1d6 hrs); AC 16; HD 4d8; MV swim 30'; SP lunge out of water, infection; SV Fort +6, Ref +4 (-4 out of water), Will -1; AL N.
5	Trolls	One troll for every two PCs charge, snarling from an island by the channel the group is navigating. Remember the penalties the PCs have on the raft. They should have enough time to punt the raft to the side and set foot on land before the trolls reach them.	<b>Trolls:</b> Init +6; Atk Bite +10 melee (2d8+6) or claw +8 melee (dmg 2d6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6, HP 50; MV 40'; Act 3d20; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, susceptible to mind affecting spells, vulnerable to fire; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +0; AL C.
6	Overboard	The raft snags on a submerged tree trunk pitching the vessel violently to the side. PCs must make a Reflex save DC 15 to stay on the raft.	PCs thrown into the water find that it is quite deep where they have landed. Judges determine whether the character can swim and there could always be a dangerous denizen of the swamp nearby (see above).



# LIZARD HOLLOW

43



### ***Lizard Hollow***

This small island was once home to a family of lizardfolk. When rafting, adventurers will notice an unusually large willow tree in the center of the swamp. PCs may have seen this tree from the tripods back in Mistwood. Bunkor will navigate past the island, unless directed otherwise by the PCs.

Read aloud:

*This island rises steeply from the swamp to the trunk of an imposingly grand willow tree. Knee height grass entangles the island but you notice the aged skeleton of something lying facedown on the slope.*

1-1. The island is around 100' in diameter. The trunk of the willow is roughly 80' in diameter. Partially concealed in the grass on the slope is the skeleton of a long dead lizardman (Spot DC 10). If the PCs do some investigating they will find a rotting leather strap around the skeleton's neck.

See below:

#### ***Amulet of Hhaaashh-Lusss***

Hanging from a strap is a stone amulet engraved with a single rune surrounded by a scale embossed circle. Anyone who can speak lizardman or casts *Comprehend languages* will find the rune is a stylized letter 'H' representing the Lord Duke of Reptiles, Hhaaashh-Lusss.

The family of lizardfolk that dwelled on this island revered Hhaaashh-Lusss. When the hags oozed into the swamp, Hecate took offence to the lizardfolk's patron. The hags made quick work of the lizardfolk family, cutting down the shaman when they arrived on this island. As he died, he called to his patron who empowered the amulet, albeit too late, with powerful magic that can be used against the hags.

Anyone donning the amulet will feel an immense hatred for the hags and a sudden love for all things reptilian. The amulet provides a +5 saving throw bonus against all magic cast by the hags. It also enables its wearer to become invisible to hags, working the same as the spell (Core Rules pg. 172).

Every day the amulet is worn, the player must make a will save DC 10 (+1 per day worn) for the wearer. On a failed roll, the wearer has become a true follower of Hhaaashh-Lusss for the remainder of his/her days and will seek any means to complete the Patron Bond (See *Patron Information*).

1-2. PCs investigating the trunk find that between the massive roots is the entrance to a spacious hollow. The naturally formed hollow in the tree is roughly 20' in diameter. Concealed amongst the swamp roots is an overgrown opening (Spot DC 15) to a subterranean network of chambers. A foul smell rises from below.

It is a 10' drop to the chambers below. Daylight does not reach these caves, so PCs will need to find a way to see in the dark.

2-1. 10' below the opening is a dank stone chamber. Large tree roots protrude through the stone walls down here and the sound of water dripping breaks the silence. A foul stench hangs in the air. There are exits to the northwest and southwest. To the east is a collapsed tunnel.

To the north is a small recess in the cave wall. A crude stone statue sits here. It depicts a strange reptilian hybrid of snake, crocodile, turtle and lizard. The lizardman family that dwelt here revered Hhaaashh-Lusss and this primitive shrine was their place of worship. Anyone wearing the *Amulet of Hhaaashh-Lusss*, found outside, is compelled (DC 15 Will save to resist) to kneel before the idol.

2-2. To the northwest, stairs descend into a putrid chamber around 15' in diameter. The source of the smell is the rotting corpses of the family of lizardfolk that once lived in this tree.

Anyone disturbing the water finds this out as Necrosa the hag reanimated the slain creatures as zombies. The slightest ripple will compel the rotting corpses to rise from the water and attack. The rotting flesh combined with the putrid conditions has caused the lizardman zombies' bites to be toxic. Note: the creatures will not attack a PC carrying the *Amulet of Hhaaashh-Lusss*.

**Lizardman zombies (6):** Init -2; Atk Bite +3 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 3d6, HP 15 each; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP infectious bite (DC 15 Fort save or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds), un-dead; SV Fort -4, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C.

2.3. Stairs descend to the southwest into a chamber 20' x 15' in size. The water appears to be clear and clean. Adventurers that explore this pool will find a total of 15 dormant lizardman eggs fastened to the floor by some kind of transparent goo. If handled the eggs will once again start to develop into young lizardfolk.

If a PC wants to take the eggs, they must be kept moist or the young will die. A baby lizardman will hatch from each egg in 1d5 weeks after being reactivated. These babies will seek a mother figure and anyone wearing the amulet is sure to be chosen.

Judges are free to expand on what else can be found in the underground lair. Some further suggestions for this location:

- *The cave could offer refuge to PCs being pursued through the swamp or a temporary base to strike out from.*
- *A concealed tunnel may lead to other subterranean chambers, other islands or, perhaps, even other planes.*
- *Clues to an ongoing quest may be found here or perhaps to a quest yet to be embarked upon.*



### ***Crone Island***

Eventually, signs nailed to trees begin to appear long the channels in the swamp. “DO NOT ENTER!”, “EEL BREEDING GROUNDS!” and “TURN BACK!” If Bunkor is still with the characters, he points out that silt eels are “awfully aggressive” during breeding seasons (which happens to be all year round). And whilst this is true, the signs are part of the fishing rules created by Baron Johan in his deal with Glyndel all of those years ago. If the PCs are following the map found on Griselda’s body, it clearly directs them to proceed into the “breeding grounds.” Bunkor grumbles under his breath and proceeds down the channel leading to Crone Island.

Read aloud:

*A silence seems to settle over the water as you drift into an opening in the swamp. As the canopy of swamp trees falls behind you, you see a large island ahead. Many of the trees protruding from the water here are long dead and, as you pass between them, you notice strange markings scrawled on them in dried reddish-brown paint of some kind. From desiccated branches, you notice what appear to be the random bones and skulls of small birds and animals dangling from strings. The bizarre decorations rattle when a breeze blows through. As you near the island, you see nearly all the trees on the island have similar bone decorations hanging from them.*

This large swamp island is the home of Glyndel, Gillara and Necrosa, a coven of particularly formidable hags (see *Foes and Allies*). The bone rattles serve multiple purposes. Aside from their frightening appearance, the bones have two spell-like effects. The first affect is to alert Necrosa of strangers’ presence near the island (50% chance). The second is similar to the spell *Scare* (see Core Rulebook page 191). PCs must make a Will save DC 16 or be compelled to flee for 1d4+1 round. This only affects the PCs once, however, considering the PCs’ proximity to a swamp full of angry silt eels – the Judge may contrive some nasty consequences for a character’s momentary lapse of control. After the initial effects, the bone rattles play no other role in the adventure.

Crone Island is approximately a quarter mile in diameter. Both living and dead swamp trees line the shore of the island as the land rises towards a central, circular clearing about 50’ in diameter. There is still ample trees and foliage to conceal stealthy adventurers (or stealthy trolls), despite the abundance of withered and burnt trees.

Once on the island, it is up to the Judge if Bunkor ventures on with the player characters (provided he’s still alive). As the PCs move inland, they hear the sound of a battle ahead. It won’t matter if the PCs use stealth or just charge ahead – as all combatants will be occupied when the adventurers arrive.

Read aloud:

*The sound of battle rages ahead and, between the trees, you see flashes of electricity and flame. You can hear the roar of inhuman beasts as well as the ghastly cackling and chanting of spellcasters.*

The PCs arrive moments after Larissa has sent a raiding party of 6 trolls to attack the hags. Larissa hopes the trolls weaken the hags prior to the PCs’ arrival. Then, once the PCs destroy the coven or vice versa, Larissa has the remainder of her trolls including her father, an enormous prime troll, kill those left standing.

But the young troll hag underestimates the power of the coven. The three sisters are devotees of Hecate, goddess of witches (See *Patron Information*), and together they have invoked their patron’s aid. A total of 15 Hecate’s hell hounds have been conjured to fight the trolls, and whilst the trolls can make short work of a single hell hound each combat round, the hounds’ flaming breath, combined with their immunity to fire, enables the sisters to utilize fire spells to immolate the trolls from a distance. Unlike regular hell hounds, these ‘gifts’ from Hecate can use their breath weapon each round, rather than once per hour.

To help keep the combat flowing, a formulaic method should be used to handle the combat between the trolls and hell hounds. Each round the trolls tear a hell hound to shreds and in turn the trolls take 8 points of fire damage from each hell hound attacking it. This damage reduces each round as the hell hounds are destroyed. By the time the trolls can close on the hags in melee, they should be reduced to half of their health.

Whilst this is taking place, the coven of hags use their own offensive spells against the trolls. Gillara, being a Pyromancer, is particularly deadly with fire. Necrosa, will conjure undead to slow down the trolls’ advance when the hell hounds’ lines begin to thin. Glyndel focuses on aiding her older sisters in any way she can. The sisters stand in a triangular formation no more than 10’ apart. So long as they stay this close, they cast spells as a coven (see *Foes and Allies*).

The hags' onslaught combined with the hell hounds should effectively weaken the trolls.

Regardless of their approach, upon their arrival, the PCs find themselves behind a circle of six trolls fighting the fifteen hell hounds. Behind the ring of hounds, the coven of hags cast offensive spells against the trolls. Judges need to be aware the PCs could be heading into the breath weapons of the hell hounds and the hags' spell onslaught.

**Trolls (6):** Init +6; Atk Bite +10 melee (2d8+6) or claw +8 melee (dmg 2d6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6, HP 50 each; MV 40'; Act 3d20; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, susceptible to mind affecting spells, vulnerable to fire; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +0; AL C.

**Hecate's Hell Hounds (15):** Init +2; Atk Bite +4 melee (1d6+2) or breath weapon (dmg 2d6 if Reflex DC 12 not made); AC 12; HD 2d6, HP 12 each; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP immune to damage from fire or heat, patron invoked breath weapon at will; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1; AL L.

### *Whose side am I on?*

As the hags' defenses falter (considering Larissa has 3 more trolls and a prime troll waiting to advance), and if the PCs have not taken any action, Necrosa looks directly at them and screeches, "If you do not help us, the evil that stalks Mistwood will never be stopped!"

The PCs must make a choice at this point. Will they aid the hags that they were sent to destroy? Will they aid the trolls to kill the hags? Or (for the foolhardy) will they decide to fight everyone? Judges should remember anyone wearing the Amulet of Hhaaashh-Lusss will feel compelled to attack the hags (DC 15 Will save to resist).

These three options have the following consequences:

#### *1. Defend the coven*

If the players join forces with the hags, continue the combat for 2 more rounds, then read the following:

*"Stop!" screams a voice above the fray. Turning you see Larissa step out from behind a dead cypress tree. The trolls take a step back from the combat, looking at the beautiful young woman.*

*"You fools!" Larissa bellows at your group, "You were meant to kill these monstrosities, not help them!"*

*The youngest of the hags cackles loudly, "You see my sisters, I told you my daughter was powerful. Now come child, join your family and forget this madness. Free these villagers" she gestures to the trolls, "and join our coven."*

*"Never!" snarls Larissa. "But I have a surprise for you mother... I've brought father to be with you!" Lumbering up from the darkness, a huge troll, twice the size of those already present, stops behind Larissa. The creature has four muscled arms and a torso the size of a wagon. Its eyes look dull and subdued.*

*"NOOOO!" wails the youngest hag but Larissa just smiles coldly back. Then she calmly says to the prime troll, "Kill them all."*

Larissa now joins the fray with her horribly mutated father by her side. She assumes her troll hag form that the PCs may recognize from Griselda's murder. Any defenses the hags have left will be made short work of by the prime troll.

Glyndel will assume the form of the beautiful enchantress and if harmed, the prime troll, Johan, can make a DC10 Will save to regain his human senses (see *Foes and Allies*).

If this happens, the smaller trolls also have the opportunity to make a DC10 check to shirk off Larissa's control. If Johan regains his wits, it is to a limited instinctual capacity. These instincts are torn between protecting his wife and his daughter (as ugly as they may be). This instinct rapidly disappears if he regains his humanity, at the discretion of the judge.

#### *2. Fight alongside the trolls*

If the characters decide to side with the trolls, the hags should show them no mercy. When casting any area affecting spells, they are sure to include the PCs as targets. Glyndel will attempt to charm the PCs to defend them – remembering her increased spell power when casting as a coven.

Larissa and her prime troll wait to see how the combat progresses but remember there is a chance that Johan could run to defend his wife in his altered state of mind. If the PCs are winning, Larissa and Johan hold back until the hags are killed. If the player characters do succeed in killing the hags, any remaining trolls will turn on the PCs.



Read aloud:

*The coven of hags lie dead at your feet and, for a time, the island remains silent. Then the sound of clapping hands alerts you to Larissa entering the clearing. She stops and smiles.*

*“You have done well, my heroes. Come, let me kiss each of you to show my gratitude.”*

Any character that takes Larissa up on her suggestion will fall victim to transforming into a troll slave (see *Foes and Allies*). If they refuse, she sets the remainder of her trolls onto them.

Without the aid of the coven and their summoned creatures, the PCs will find it difficult to defeat Larissa and her trolls, especially when the prime troll, Johan, enters the fray. The adventurers might choose to flee into the swamp to be hunted down by the denizens of the swamp. The judge could create an entire adventure for the party escaping the Gravic Swamp.

### 3. *Wipe them out, all of them!*

On the chance the player characters decide to kill everyone first and ask questions later, a huge battle ensues. The trolls defend themselves, as does the coven, turning their spells and summoned hell hounds against the party.

Of course, the coven waits to make sure the PCs are attacking without discretion before unleashing their wrath. Larissa and her prime troll father come in with the remaining 3 trolls when all combatants are sufficiently weakened.

**Trolls (3):** Init +6; Atk Bite +10 melee (2d8+6) or claw +8 melee (dmg 2d6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6, HP 50 each; MV 40'; Act 3d20; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, susceptible to mind affecting spells, vulnerable to fire; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +0; AL C.

**Prime troll:** Init +6; Atk Bite +10 melee (2d10+6) or claw +10 melee (dmg 2d8); AC 20; HD 10d8+6, HP 85; MV 40'; Act 5d20; SP 4 arms, stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, susceptible to mind affecting spells, vulnerable to fire; SV Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +5; AL C.

Whatever choice the players make, there is really only one effective way to resolve the adventure. Larissa needs to be destroyed. The player characters may or may not figure this out. Necrosa, the eldest hag, as much as it pains her to have her niece killed, tells the

PCs what needs to be done to free Mistwood from its dire circumstances.

If Larissa is killed, the trolls collapse to the ground writhing in agony as their bodies revert to human form. Those trolls who have been destroyed also return to human form, including the troll remains back at the pyre posts around the village. All of the village men are naked. Either the hags (if they're still alive) offer them rags or they scavenge rags from the hag's dwelling.

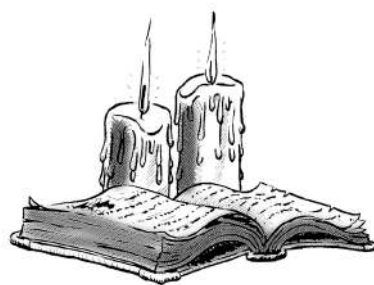
### *Happily ever after?*

The huge prime troll transforms back into the Baron of Mistwood. If alive, he is confused by what has happened. If Glyndel has survived, she assumes her enchantress disguise and rushes to help him. They lament the loss of their child, who has reverted to her human form, and Gillara and Necrosa may even leave them for a moment of peace. How this encounter pans out is up to the judge. PCs may want answers. PCs might want revenge. PCs may want to eradicate the hags. It is up to the judge how to end this scenario.

If Larissa is destroyed, Mistwood starts to recover and once again Baron Johan wisely but sadly governs the small town.

As a reward for their efforts, Baron Johan will give *Clawreaver* to the party (Note that the curse is now back with the sword). He will also bestow the title of Troll Killer of Mistwood upon each of the characters, giving them a small silver brooch in the shape of a troll's hand. If the characters came for silt eel oil, he immediately arranges for a barrel of the elixir to be transported where the characters want it sent.

Further adventures could waylay the adventurers in Mistwood longer at the judge's discretion. There are other islands in the Gravic Swamp to be explored. Perhaps some of the village men are not accounted for. Perhaps the battle has awakened the long controlled lust for human flesh in the hags. *Curse of Mistwood* will continue the story...



### *Foes and Allies*

**Larissa, Troll hag of Mistwood:** Init +1; Atk bite +13 melee (2d4+9), claws +13 melee (1d4+9) or curse; AC 19; HD 9d8+8, HP 70; MV 30', Fly 60'; Act 2d20; SP transform, regeneration, flight, troll curse; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +8; AL C.

Larissa is the mixture of a hag and troll: a curse incarnate. In her true form, Larissa stands at 7' tall. Her long slender figure is a distorted mockery of the beautiful woman she once was. Her face is horrific to behold with a large hooked nose, red bloodshot eyes and brown stained teeth. She has rubbery blue green skin that she covers with a black, hooded gown she has fashioned for herself.

Larissa has some powers similar to her mother. She has a limited ability to transform herself between her human form and troll hag form. She can assume no other guises. Like a troll, she regenerates but only 1d6 points at the end of each round.

By some whim of Hecate, Larissa has the ability to fly. She uses this ability to spy on her enemies as well as to flee from her victims, if they have enough wits to attack her in troll form. In human form, she cannot be detected as evil.

Her most dangerous power is her troll curse ability. By kissing a male on the lips, she curses him to transform into an obedient troll servant. The victim of the kiss literally rips out of his skin leaving a bloody pile of clothes and flesh behind. There is no save for this curse. Only powerful cleric magic or her destruction can return a victim to his true form.

If Larissa survives the adventure, she will start to learn spellcasting like her mother and aunts. She will become even deadlier with this power.



### *The Coven*

The three sisters, Necrosa, Gillara and Glyndel, have lived on what is known as Crone Island since they oozed through a portal from a parallel existence over three hundred years ago. Believing they had arrived at some kind of hag Nirvana, the three existed peacefully in the swamp. They had plentiful food, contact with their goddess and enough arcane knowledge to keep them content.

When humans came to the region, the hags decided not to meddle with them. A devout follower of Hecate lived amongst the villagers and they made a pact not to interfere with the villagers unless they trespassed into the hags' territory.

When the trolls migrated into the southern reaches of the swamp, during the original troll siege, the sisters became involved for their own security. The youngest sister, who by some quirk of fate did not despise the humans – triggered the events of this adventure.

**Necrosa, Eldest hag of Crone Island:** Init +1; Atk 2 claws +13 melee (1d4+4); AC 19; HD 9d10+9, HP 75; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP transform, curse, necromantic affinity, spellcasting (+9 spell checks), coven casting; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +7; AL L.

As the eldest sister, Necrosa is the head of the coven on Crone Island. Obese and revolting, this bloated creature wants nothing to do with other sentient beings outside of her family. Her relationship with her goddess and sisters, as well as her research into the arcane art of necromancy is all she desires. She appears as a rotund green skinned hag with mottled black hair. She wears a decaying brown garment.

Unlike others of her kind, Necrosa has a slight regard for law, in particular pacts and promises. She will quite happily eat a meddlesome human, however, and should not be trusted to any great extent.

As a necromancer, Necrosa has mastered the art of animating the dead. During the final conflict, she will likely use undead to fight for her.

#### Spells

1st level: *Chill touch, Choking cloud, Color spray, Enlarge, Invoke patron, Magic missile*; 2nd level: *Mirror image, Ray of enfeeblement*; 3rd level: *Animate dead, Slow*; 4th level: *Control fire, Transmute Earth*; 5th level: *Magic bulwark, Mind purge*

**Gillara, Middle hag of Crone Island:** Init +2; Atk 2 claws +13 melee (1d4+5); AC 19; HD 9d10+9, HP 70; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP transform, curse, pyromantic affinity, spellcasting (+9 spell checks), coven casting; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +7; AL C.

Second in charge of the coven is the grotesque Gillara. Unlike her squat elder sister, Gillara stands at 7' tall with a sinewy physique. Her long hooked nose and vicious eyes accurately represent this creature. She has short ginger hair that clings slimily to her scalp.

Unlike Necrosa, Gillara feels no obligation to lawfulness. Only her fear of her elder sister and her goddess, Hecate, keeps her from feasting more regularly on the fishermen in the swamp.

Obsessed with fire from a young age, Gillara is an accomplished pyromancer capable of burning forests to the ground, which could explain the number of dead trees on Crone Island.

#### Spells

1st level: *Flaming hands*, *Invoke patron*, *Magic missile*, *Magic shield*, *Spider climb*; 2nd level: *Fire resistance*, *Scorching ray*; 3rd level: *Fireball*, *Fly*; 4th level: *Control fire*, *Control ice*, *Wizard sense*; 5th level: *Magic bulwark*, *Mind purge*

**Glyndel, Youngest hag of Crone Island:** Init +2; Atk 2 claws +13 melee (1d4+4); AC 19; HD 9d10+9, HP 55; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP transform, curse, spellcasting (+9 spell checks), coven casting; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +5; AL L.

More human in appearance than her sisters, the youngest hag stands at 6' tall with long dark hair. Her green skin is unmarred by warts and growths like her sisters. Make no mistake, she is far from being a beautiful creature but she leaps and bounds ahead of her horrific elder sisters.

From her infancy, Glyndel was seen as being a disappointment to the family. For starters, she did not inherit the family's bad looks. She also had a kind and caring disposition, much to the disgust of her family.

On the plane the hags lived, it was determined she should be destroyed for the good of all but she and her sisters opened a portal to the Gravic Swamp where they thought they could live in isolation and safety.



It was her 'humanity' that the coven considered useful when they went to contact the Mistwood villagers.

#### Spells

1st level: *Charm person*, *Color spray*, *Flaming hands*, *Invoke patron*, *Sleep*; 2nd level: *Invisibility*, *Phantasm*; 3rd level: *Lightning bolt*, *Sword magic*; 4th level: *Control fire*, *Polymorph*, *Wizard sense*

#### Coven Casting

When the three hags stand in a triangular formation, no more than 10' apart, their spellcasting becomes more powerful. Every spell check roll and result moves one step up the dice chain. If combat or distraction causes the hags to move from the formation, they lose this bonus



**Prime troll Johan:** Init +6; Atk Bite +10 melee (2d10+6) or claw +10 melee (dmg 2d8); AC 20; HD 10d8+6, HP 85; MV 40'; Act 5d20; SP 4 arms, stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, susceptible to mind affecting spells, vulnerable to fire; SV Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +5; AL C.

When Larissa kissed her father, his previous contact with the troll curse, combined with his larger than life heroic abilities, caused him to mutate into a prime troll. Standing over 20' tall, the prime troll has four arms with large cruel claws.

Johan the prime troll has a stronger will than the other trolls that Larissa has transformed. As such, Larissa has to exert more concentration to control her father. If a PC deduces who the large beast is and attempts to reason with it, allow Johan a DC10 Will save to come to his senses for 1d4 rounds before having to make additional saves.

**Trolls of Mistwood:** Init +6; Atk Bite +10 melee (2d8+6) or claw +8 melee (dmg 2d6); AC 19; HD 8d8+6, HP 50 each; MV 40'; Act 3d20; SP stench, regeneration, immune to critical hits, susceptible to mind affecting spells, vulnerable to fire; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +0; AL C.

The trolls in this adventure are creatures of tragedy. They were once men dwelling in Mistwood, now cursed to hunt their friends, neighbours, and lovers. Although they are bloodthirsty killers, they subconsciously remember who they are and desire to be human once more. When one of these trolls attacks someone it once knew, there is a 1 in 5 chance per round that the troll will stand confused, unable to attack, as memories of its past life wash over it. Unless attacked, a troll so affected remains inactive for 1d3 rounds and may even attempt to communicate. The judge should use these opportunities to give the players clues as to the trolls' real nature.

As a result of their curse, the trolls' wills are weak, making them more susceptible to Larissa's control, or other spells that rely on will saves.

Physically, the trolls encountered in this adventure are identical to regular trolls from the Core Rulebook (pp. 429 – 430).



**Silt eels:** Init +6; Atk bite +8 melee (3d6 + infection DC 12 Fort or lose 1 point of Stamina for 1d6 hrs); AC 16; HD 4d8; MV swim 30'; SP lunge out of water, infection; SV Fort +6, Ref +4 (-4 out of water), Will -1; AL N.

These ravenous, mud-slithering beasts are near the top of the Gravic Swamp food chain. The fully-grown silt eel usually measures 12' in length and weighs over 400lbs. Valued for their oil secretion, the silt eel is also notorious for its putrid, infectious bite.



### **Patron Information**

#### **Hecate, Goddess of Witches**

Since ancient times, the Witch-Goddess Hecate has interfered in human affairs for unknown reasons. It is certain, though, that she intercedes on behalf of some witches as well as on behalf of those wizards and elves she patronizes.

Hecate appears most often in one of three guises: a young and beautiful maiden, a motherly matron, and an old iron-toothed crone, which symbolize the three phases of the moon. She also appears occasionally as the dark of the moon – invisible save as a dark whisper and a foul breath rank with decay.

Hecate acts as patron for both male and female wizards but prefers females to males. An elf or wizard who casts patron bond to secure a compact with Hecate gains a +2 bonus if the subject of the spell (herself or another) is female and a –4 penalty if the subject is male. This same modifier is also used whenever one of Hecate's patron spells is cast.

The patron bond ceremony to bond with Hecate must occur within a cemetery or within a cavern space dedicated to the Goddess of Witches.

#### **Hhaaashh-Lusss, Lord Duke of Reptiles**

With the mouth of a crocodile, venomous bite, turtle-shell scales, and serpentine body, Hhaaashh-Lusss, the Cold-Blooded One, Lord Duke of Reptiles, is a supernatural being whose very existence is centered upon promoting the interests of all scaly things that creep and crawl through desert, sea, and swamp. He has no interest in the cosmic battle between Law and Chaos, and prefers patient waiting for his own prey. He is slow to act, but resolute in his decisions.

The Lord Duke of Reptiles views human creatures only as meat, but his cunning mind can make use of those Wizards and Elves who would request power of him. Only a fool believes Hhaaashh-Lusss means him well. As soon as a relationship is no longer beneficial to the Cold-Blooded One, the petitioner once more becomes prey. Yet, so long as one can remain of use to the Lord Duke of Reptiles, there is power to be had. And, as patron taint makes one more and more like the kith of Hhaaashh-Lusss, the more one's interests intertwine with this patron.

Hhaaashh-Lusss' ceremony may be conducted anywhere that reptilian life is plentiful in any of its forms – steaming snake-filled jungles, marshy riversides haunted by crocodiles, iguana-infested coastal lands, or desert lands where tuataras, lizards, and sidewinders dwell.

(For greater detail on these patrons and many more order a copy of *Angels, Daemons and Beings Between* from *Dragons Hoard Publishing* © 2012.)



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