

SQUIRMING FRAGMENT OF A DEAD GOD

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Something fell from the sky – a boiling streak of green light that shook the earth and tore a great hole in the mountainside. By morning, the still-smoldering crater lay empty, and a trail of mutated plants (flowers with dizzying neon petals, pearlescent silver fruit, nacreous stamens glittering like crystal, faintly wailing vines) led away through the hills to a ruined temple.

A local wizard is keen to acquire whatever it was that crawled out of the crater. They will pay dearly for its recovery.

The Fallen Star. Fragment of a dead star god; a writhing column of liquid mercury that bathes everything around it in cold green light and warps all it touches.

The Ruined Temple. The lair of a mountain troll. The Troll loves to collect shiny things from its victims – a glimmering platinum ring, still attached to a severed hand; a dismembered human torso draped with dozens of necklaces, pendants and charms. The smell is unbelievable.

It found the fallen star and carried it back to its lair beneath the ruined temple.

Where is the Troll?

Roll a d6 for its location (Areas 1-6). 3-in-6 chance each turn the Troll moves. If so, roll a d6 against the Troll's current location.

- **Higher:** the Troll moves into the next highest Area.
- **Lower:** the Troll moves into the next lowest Area.
- **Equal.** No change.

Mutant Troll

9' tall, with long, spindly limbs. Translucent flesh like rancid chicken. Bony, sloping skull split by sweeping horns of shining crystal, glowing from within by strange lights.

HD 7 (31 hp), AC as chain (15), Attacks (+8 to-hit) 2 x claws (d8), 1 x horns (d10 + impale), MV 35', SV D10 W11 P12 B13 S14, ML 10 (fears fire 8)

Regeneration. Regains d6 hp per round. If killed, it returns to life within 1d6 turns. Severed limbs regrow.

Fire. Damage from fire cannot be regenerated. Only way to truly kill a troll. Morale is 8 when confronted with fire.

Impale. Pins target to a nearby surface. Must save to get free. Take d10 automatic damage on each subsequent round.

What is the Troll doing?

1. **Tucking into a putrefied human corpse.** The sounds of snapping bone and slurping flesh echo through the air.
2. **Singing to itself.** Rearranging nearby traps, trinkets, and grisly trophies – a low, discordant rhyme punctuated by high whimpers and guttural snarls.
3. **Mending its club.** Pushing fresh nails through the huge hunk of bloodstained wood. Giving it a few practice swings. A severed head mounted on a wall bursts like a melon.
4. **Playing with its food.** A dying hobgoblin, a deer, a merchant – whatever it is, it's next on the menu and still barely alive.
5. **Stacking and restacking a pile of severed heads** by size, by race, by amount of jewelry – cross legged like a child with its toys.
6. **Asleep.** Curled up, belly distended, snoring happily.

Area 1. Collapsed hall. A ruined structure now exposed to the elements. Carrion flies and crows flock here, cawing and buzzing. The stench is overwhelming; sour and faintly sweet.

- **Troll trophies** (piled around the area). Armored, bloody torso (propped up on a waist-high wall) draped in scraps of polished metal (d100 gp worth of charms, jewelry, and holy trinkets); a deer carcass (pinned to the wall by a massive spear); a statue of a forgotten goddess, its body repeatedly brutalized by some sort of heavy club, the shattered marble head lying on the floor, face gone.

Area 2. Adjoining Hall. Dim, damp, narrow. Yellow lichen and wispy green moss.

- **Entryway.** Used by the Troll to bypass the traps in the entrance to Area 4.
- **Footprint.** Large, three-toed, clawed imprint in the muck.

Area 3. Larder. Dark stain spreading under the wooden door. Cramped room. No windows. Humid, reeking air choked with flies. Once used to store holy vestments and priestly garb, now used as a larder by the troll.

- **Corpses.** Bloated, oozing bodies, stacked here by the Troll until they're good and putrefied. The detritus yields 4d6 gp, and a Small Silver Dagger (+1)

Area 4. Chapel. Dark, vaulted roof, partially collapsed. Shafts of light. Stained glass. Alcoves contain statues to small gods, human bones, rotting severed heads. Ancient pews shattered – hurled around like matchwood.

- **Severed heads** on spikes and spears. Draped in jewelry – worth 1d12 x 10 gp for each turn spent stripping them. Max four turns.
- **Traps.** Tripwires crisscross the main stairs, strung with bells. Rusted mantraps hidden in the leafmold.
- **Triggering a trap. Save or choose:** take 1d8 damage or cry out loudly in pain (4-in-6 chance the troll hears).

Area 5. Upper Crypt. Dark as night, humid. The stench is unbearable – a physical thing. Ancient flagstones caked with animal filth, blood and bones (crunching underfoot). Gold, silver and platinum baubles twinkle through the muck here and there, like stars. The floor moves; millipedes, flies, maggots, squirm in the filth. Bodies strewn around.

- **Cold, greenish glow** coming from deeper in the crypt (Area 6). Ears start ringing, teeth feel numb, hair stands on end, the air seems to fill with whispers, half-heard.
- **Valuables** half-buried in the muck. Each turn spent searching turns up 1d10 x 10 gp.

Area 6. Lower Crypt. The oldest and grandest part of the crypt, lined with burial niches, shattered sarcophagi.

- **Fallen Star.** Glowing with cold green light in the middle of the room, atop a pile of bones, chunks of stonework, and putrescent offal. A writhing greenish-silver mercury, rising and falling, reacting to movement and light.
- **Standing near the Star.** Nausea, a feeling like your teeth are vibrating, the stink of burning metal and ozone even stronger than the pervasive offal, ringing ears. Each turn, save vs Spells or begin to mutate (grow an extra limb, eyes on your hands that see the future, beautiful crystalline skin, a second face, iridescent wings – at the GM's discretion).
- **Transporting the Star.** A lead-lined or iron box (like a coffin) blocks the need to regularly save against spells. Other creative solutions should also be rewarded.
- **If the Troll is here,** it sits childlike on the floor, legs crossed, staring into the writhing fragment.
- **Troll Nest.** A fetid pile of rags, furs, rotting meat, dirt, and gnawed bones in the corner of the room. Contents: platinum necklace set with river pearls (800 gp), a magic ring inlaid with silver fang design (makes you grow huge fangs that function as a d10 weapon and heal half the damage they inflict, but prevent speech; cannot be removed without cutting off the finger), and a jewel-encrusted skull with a perfect set of gold teeth (1,200 gp) that screams loudly whenever a monster is nearby (nothing sneaks up on you, but you can't sneak up on anyone else).

