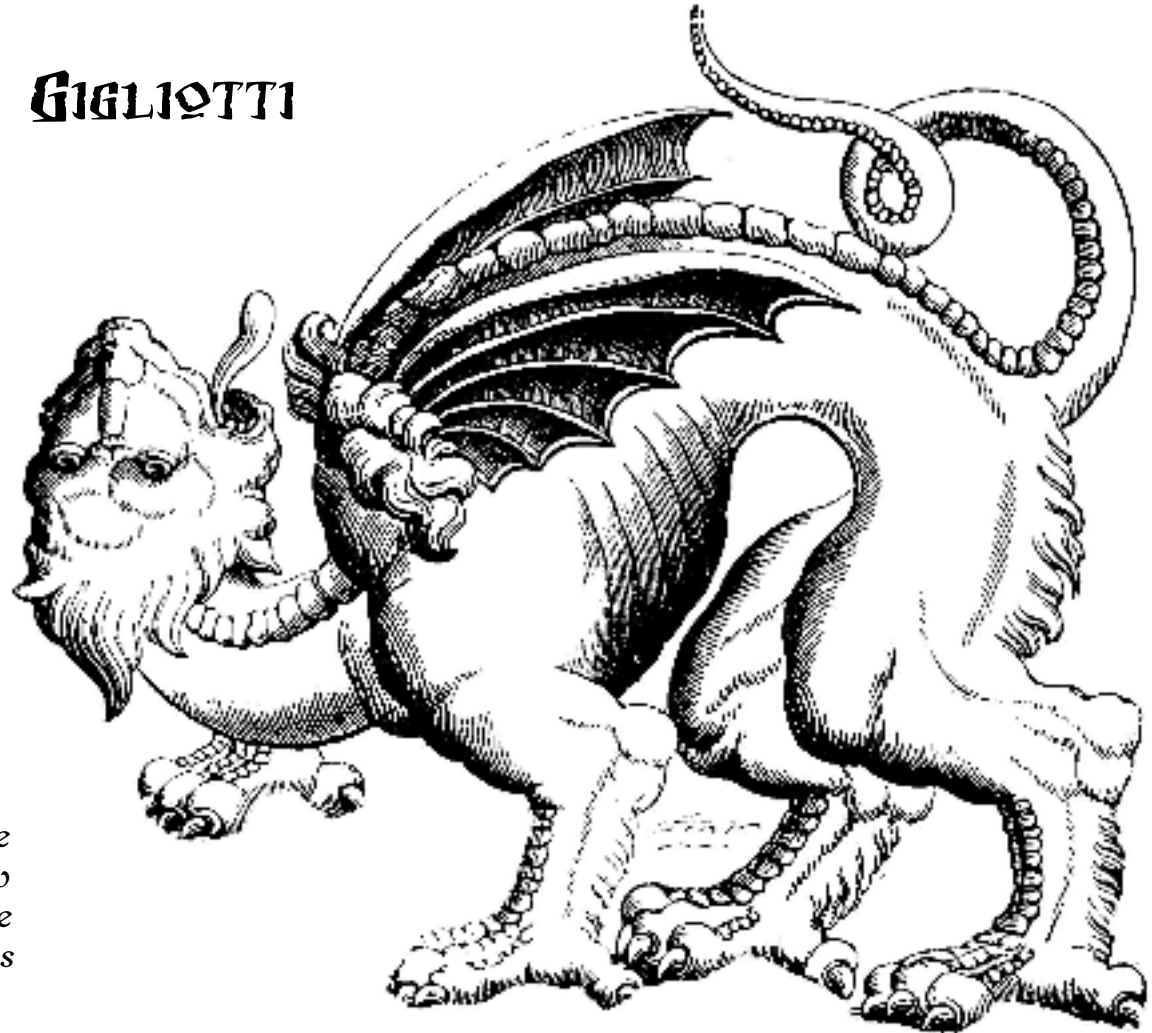


Slightly Crunchy!

A RISUS BESTIARY

BY RYAN GIGLIOTTI



Being a humble provision to the Risus Community of more monsters to outwit, kill, sneak past, and otherwise engage in the full glory of Risus Combat.

BLOB OF EYES

Description: This creature is a hideous mass of semi-liquid flesh, covered with dozens, if not hundreds, of eyes. The eyes are of many different shapes, sizes, and colors, and appear as if they could have come from any number of creatures. The eyes are continuously moving and rearranging as the thing moves, but eyes never appear in matched pairs.

In physical combat, a BoE clubs opponents with pseudopods, but this is not its only means of defense. Meeting the gaze of the Blob—which is virtually impossible to avoid if one is looking in its direction—causes victims to stand paralyzed and possibly even petrify.

Some species of Eye Blobs are known to be incredibly intelligent, capable of running underworld networks of crime. These Blobs often have human minions to carry tasks that require social interaction.

Clichés:

Amorphous Mass (3)

Ruthlessly Intelligent Criminal Mastermind (3)

Paralyzing Gaze (4)

Crunch:

Looking at a BoE causes a single action contest against the victim's willpower cliché. If the Blob wins, its opponent is held motionless and must begin a health combat. If this combat is lost, the victim is permanently turned to stone. If the victim wins, the paralysis is broken and will not affect that individual for the rest of the day.

BOG TROLL

Description: Bog Trolls are very large humanoids with thick, warty skin, sloped foreheads, and large, bulbous noses. Most stand over eight feet tall and bulge with muscle. Bog Trolls are greatly feared in combat for their strength, but also for their ability to take super-human levels of punishment. Some attribute their resistance to regeneration or amazing healing abilities, but in truth, their thick bodies have many redundant organs and at least three independent circulatory systems. About one in three bog trolls are female (a ratio that keeps their numbers low), and approximately one in ten females have limited magical abilities.

Clichés:

Violent Swamp-Dwelling Humanoid (4)

Blood Thirsty Berserker (3)

Axe Wielding Tribesman (3)

Big, Dumb, and Ugly (3)*

Swamp Fisherman (1)

* Bog Troll Hags replace Big, Dumb and Ugly with:
Cunning Hedge Witch [3]

--Go read S. John's article on Hedge Magic right now. Right Now. We'll wait.... <http://www.io.com/~sjohn/hedge.htm>

Crunch:

If you prefer to have your trolls actually regenerate, then simply eliminate the redundant clichés. Violent Regenerating Humanoid (4) can be used in combat (of the Hack and Slash variety) normally, but the Troll won't lose dice if beaten, unless the conditions for defeating it are met --usually fire and/or acid.

Another design considered for the redundant clichés:

Violent Swamp-Dwelling Humanoid (3)

These Dice Do Nothing Except Go Away Instead of the Other clichés (?)

--This method has the benefit of the dice being used for things other than typical violence-combat, perhaps in ways the GM couldn't possibly predict in advance. The down side is the dice being used for things other than typical violence-combat, perhaps in ways the GM couldn't possibly predict in advance....

DINOSAURS

BRONTOSAURUS (Apatosaurus)
Gigantic Impassive Plant-Eater (6)

YOUNG BRONTO
Elephant-sized Overly Curious Plant-Eater (4)

T REX
Big-ass Shark on Wheels (5)
Keen Sensed Predator (3)

RAPTOR (Deinonychus)
All Teeth and Claws (4)
Smarter Than You Think (4)

TRICERATOPS
Five Massive Tons of Pointy Faced Brutality (5)

Crunch:

Trying to take on any of the spectacularly large dinosaurs (or any large monster) in hand to hand combat is suicide in “realistic” campaigns (you know... realistic campaigns that have dinosaurs). If the Plucky Boxer with a Mean Left Hook (3) decides to punch-fight the Brontosaurus, he is in big trouble. If the clichés don’t match up well, consider using something akin to the “When someone can’t participate” rules. The boxer keeps his cliché, but the dino gets two more dice, because it is much harder to KO than the boxer’s typical opponent.

FIRE LION

Description: Slightly larger than an actual lion, a Fire Lion appears to be somewhat reptilian. Its brown, muscular body is low to the ground, and the head is ringed with a blazing fire resembling a mane. Scholars believe this creature to be an accidental creation of some sort, or perhaps some other-worldly being that does not understand our dimension. Fire Lions are often encountered trying to eat flammable objects. The Lion’s fire incinerates the erstwhile food, which causes the Lion to grow frustrated, which makes the fire burn even hotter. This behavior seems to confirm that the Fire Lion is unaware of its own flame.

Clichés:

Thick-bodied Predatory Beast (4)
Unnatural Flame [3]



HOWLING NIGHT GOBLINS

Description: Covered in thick, black fur, Howling Night Goblins are greatly feared in the dark forests they inhabit. While individually vicious, they are most dangerous in the large groups in which they hunt.

While capable of manipulating objects with their hands, feet, or tail, HNGs rarely use tools. When hunting (which is almost continuously), the Goblins rely on their eerie screech, which causes the weak-willed to panic and behave irrationally.

Clichés:

Furry Mass of Teeth and Claws (2)

Ear-Splitting Mind-Rending Screamer (2)

Crunch:

Because HNGs often hunt in packs, the GM should make liberal use of Grunt Squad rules. The Screamer cliché is used in combat against a mental cliché. If the Goblin wins, the victim either freezes in terror or runs in a direction chosen by the HNG... usually towards a pack ambush. Grunt Squads have increased Screamer clichés as well as Furry Mass clichés.

[A Sidebar]

Eyeballing Grunt Squads

A creature like the Howling Night Goblin relies on the power of the Grunt Squad to challenge stronger clichés. But how many HNGs are needed to increase Furry Mass of Teeth and Claws (2) to a (3) or better? In a game like Risus there is no Hard-n-Fast formula, but this bestiary aims to be somewhat crunchy; so here are some guidelines that attempt to be hard, or maybe fast, but probably not both.

Consider the following:

Ratio of combatants – Number of HNGs per PC.

Terrain or other environment conditions that could be favorable to either side.

What the Spoils of War will be if the NPCs win. The PCs rarely know in advance.

So, maybe ten Howling Night Goblins become a Furry Mass of Teeth and Claws (3) when they storm into a wide clearing. But in a jungle or thick forest, at night, those same ten Goblins are in their element. Ten HNGs might become a Furry Mass...(4) or (5) in that instance. And remember, it's hard for characters to count insane screaming monkey-things in the middle of a fight for their lives, so there is no need to assign actual numbers.

GM: "There's a huge mass* of Night Goblins pouring out of the trees. They mean to eat you."

Player: "No sweat, the last batch** died real easy-like."

GM: "There's a lot more this time."

Player: "How many?"

GM: "Three times as many? Maybe even more***. You can't help but feel terror in the back of your throat."

Player(s): "Crap!"

* Huge Mass = several dozen, maybe

** Batch = a dozen or so, perhaps

*** Even More = stop counting and get ready to eat hot monkey-death.

Decide how challenging you (the GM) want the encounter to be. If your PC group has several Reasonably Competent Combat Types (4), and you want to scare them into cooperation, consider a Grunt Squad with 5 or 6 dice in its cliché. The PCs will likely need to form a Team to win the combat. If you just like combat for its own glorious sake, consider splitting the Grunt Squad into smaller Grunt Squads, one for each PC. Keep clichés closer to the PCs abilities.

[End of a Sidebar]

SIRIUSIAN HOUND

Description: *Holy schmoly*, this thing is big. The Siriusian Hound is well over 20 feet high at the shoulder, with the proportional build of a stocky wolf. Thick black fur covers the Hound normally, though when frightened (which isn't often) or enraged, its fur changes color, becoming a fiery red-orange. Jet black eyes somehow manage to convey a wicked intelligence to those brave enough to look into them.

The Siriusian Hound is a harbinger of calamity. Even if the Hound walks through a town without stopping to eat the locals, disaster will surely follow. Tornadoes, violent thunderstorms, earthquakes, or swarms of vermin inevitably arrive in its wake. Perhaps the Hound is a warning from the gods, or perhaps it is somehow responsible for these catastrophes. Attempts to drive off the Hound with violence are sure to end poorly, as the creature has a most unusual defense....

Clichés:

Massive Arcane Wolf (6)

Symbol of Nature's Wrath (4)

Wolf Pack (*)

Crunch:

Part One: The Wolf Pack (*) isn't so much of a cliché, as it is a side effect of the Massive Arcane Wolf cliché. If someone or something wounds the Hound, the blood spilled becomes smaller (but still darn big) hounds. Essentially, these are Shield Mates. For every die lost from Massive Arcane Wolf in combat that would spill blood, a Bear-Sized Hound (3) sprouts up. These immediately attack the source of the injury, and fight until destroyed. A particularly evil GM could band several together into a Grunt Squad.

Part Two: Symbol of Nature's Wrath could be used in several ways. A wizard, spell-caster, miracle worker, or super hero attempting to avert a natural disaster must defeat the cliché with an appropriate roll of the dice. Or perhaps the Hound could engage in some combat, Symbol of Nature's Wrath vs. the city/town/village's Great Place to Live (3) cliché. Be creative with this one....

Comments

I love monster books. I love Risus. Hence, a Risus Bestiary. I have a rather clear memory of being in the Fourth Grade, reading the first edition Monster Manual, and then trying to write my own monsters (in the Fourth Grade!). While creating stats for the bad guys from the "Joust" video game, I noticed that there was not really any rhyme or reason to the way monster abilities worked. The writer of each monster just included the rules needed for the creature in the stat block. I loved that idea. Total freedom for the writer to wreak whatever havoc desired. Much like Risus. Of course, the difference is Risus allows players that same freedom. Look out monsters!

This bestiary doesn't really have any specific world or even genre in mind. It sort of bubbled up through my brain and migrated to a document via a keyboard. I suspect the overall tone of the creatures is somewhat gritty, but not necessarily realistic, and the writing is kind of goofy, if that makes any sense. For some reason, when I look at fantasy monsters, I like to imagine how they could be used in modern settings, and vice versa. Maybe that will help make some of this stuff process for you. Good luck.

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Risus is a game system by S. John Ross that is brilliant in its simplicity and execution. This PDF is an unofficial supplement for said game, and does not challenge anyone for ownership of Risus or other supplements. Especially not Shrewd Ruthless Corporate Lawyers [8].

Find Risus at <http://www222.pair.com/sjohn/risus.htm>

Thanks for listening.