



FORCES OF NATURE

Monstrous Pages for Shadow of the Demon Lord

Unthinking and uncaring, giants are more forces of nature than villains. Birthed long ago in the time of the Troll King, the consensus among the learned is that giants were enslaved, bred, created, or otherwise spawned to serve as war machines during the Troll Wars. Untouched by the degradations of their former masters, they trudge on, indulging in their base desires.

This installment of Monstrous Pages, *Forces of Nature*, examines giants in all their menace. From their uncertain origins to an overview of their strange beliefs and behaviors, in these pages you will find everything you need to let loose these brutes to stomp across your campaign. This entry also expands on giants by providing customization options and abhorrent new breeds. Read on and create nasty, brutish, and gigantic encounters your players will soon not forget.

~CREDITS~

WRITING AND DESIGN:

STEPHEN RADNEY-MACFARLAND

DEVELOPMENT AND ART DIRECTION: ROBERT J. SCHWALB

EDITING AND PROOFREADING: JAY SPIGHT

GRAPHIC DESIGN: KARA HAMILTON AND HAL MANGOLD

LAYOUT: KARA HAMILTON

ILLUSTRATIONS: KIM VAN DEUN AND JACK KAISER

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SCHWALB ENTERTAINMENT, LLC



PO Box #12548, Murfreesboro, TN 37129
info@schwalbentertainment.com
www.schwalbentertainment.com

Legends abound describing the ancient Troll Wars, fought against their hated foes, the faeries. The stories are so old as to be rife with contradiction. Their events predate the First People, handed down by faeries to the people living in the Autumn Lands before the Kingdom of Gog and the coming of the Kalasans. Faeries are not the most consistent storytellers to begin with, but those tales were often twisted into allegories to serve the various ideals of the Old Faith, or its poetry tortured into more contemporary forms by minstrels, monks, and orators before finally being written down.

In all the legends, giants fought for the trolls, but in some they were merely enslaved by the trolls, and in others they were created by them. One legend in particular—an obscure jotun poem called the *Saga of Jarnsaxa*—makes a more shocking claim. It speaks of the people of Grimnir, before that god cursed the dwarfs, describing them as majestically tall and beautiful, proud and godlike. Nearly nonchalantly, it claims that those who escaped the curse of Grimnir were later warped by the trolls. It's the blood of these uncursed giants, rather than the crude and boorish troll-created ones, that runs through the veins of every jotun.

No matter the particulars of giant genesis, what is clear is that they were the thralls of the trolls during the war against the faeries, and with the death of Oberon, and the vengeful curse laid down by the Summer Queen, the giants scattered for their lives. Dull and stupid machines of war, they became nothing more than base animals, either fighting for existence or chasing their pleasures. With no troll lash at their back, they wistfully slaughtered those they encountered, and struggled under strange superstitions and asinine beliefs.

Arrogant Ignorance: Giants are truly stupid beings. Logic is seen as a form of trickery at best and vile word-magic at worst. To a giant, everything in the world fits in one of two categories: things the giant likes, and things it does not. Even worse, a thing can shift categories at a moment's notice, without a glimmer of thought.

A giant's capricious and befuddled thinking does have a sense of proportion. All giants believe that the bigger creature is the only important creature. Since giants are typically larger than anyone else, this manifests as the giant doing whatever it wants, however it wants, to most other creatures. Among the rare conclave of giants, or in their rutting, this belief takes on a surprising but not wholly unexpected nuance. The smaller giant will submit to the larger one until the other is killed by trickery, or the submissive giant makes its escape. Larger, more intelligent creatures can often manipulate giants for a short period of time, as can some trolls.

Hopelessly Lazy: Given an abundance of food, and the occasion to rut, a giant would do nothing more than look up at the sky and occasionally fiddle with itself. Many giants make deals with local villages or caravans traversing their territory. If the little folk don't want to get eaten, the little folk can give the giant food. These arrangements eventually sprawl all sideways, as the giant gets bored or forgets the details of the deal.

Disgusting Pleasures: Giants take childlike pleasure in the horrific preparation of their food. They love boiling little creatures alive in some bubbling broth of blood and bile, and sucking them down as the last laments issue from their throats. They claim it tickles going down. They'll slow-roast children and other still-living morsels over a fire, believing that the evacuation of their victim's tears and urine helps give the meat an even sweeter flavor. They'll tear open a creature to suck out the sweet meats while rejoicing in the delicious freshness of the vile snack.

While giants love to eat, they love rutting even more. Such rutting is sexually indiscriminant. It is seen not only as a source of intense pleasure, but a way to show dominance and wreak destruction. Giants believe that rutting is best when it is done amid a small settlement or atop the wagons of a caravan. Rolling and energetic, their shows of sexual athleticism often crush all those caught in the frolicking. Luckily such coupling is rare, due to their territorial nature and fear of submission. They also frequently end in the murder of the weaker or slower giant by their rutting mate.

Vile Superstitions: Giants are prone to magical thinking and compulsive rituals. The specifics of their beliefs and compulsions vary strangely, but they often have a common theme involving the slaying of a creature, and using its viscera as a salve, incense, or communion-like host. Often these are done in the name of Grimnir (or a thundering gurgle sounding something like "Grim-NA") or a vague "giant of giants" pseudo-deity. Other times a giant will ape religious rituals and beliefs of lesser creatures, often with a kind of idiotic humor, but with the same compulsive intensity as other giant rituals.

Unthinking Violence: When a giant is sated, and any depraved personal ritual fulfilled, the existence of smaller creatures goes largely unnoticed, or rather, beneath notice. Any lesser creature unfortunate enough to be in a giant's path can survive if they quickly get out of the way and hide. The giant will likely pass them by... most of the time. One never knows when a giant will decide it's in the mood for a little fun, or that it's not that full after all. There's always room for blood pudding.

GIANT

Most giants stand 15 feet tall and weigh about 2,000 pounds. Common giants look like enormous humans, with slouched postures and exaggerated features: a broad nose, drooping eyebrows, and a slack mouth filled with stained teeth the size of small shields. Most giants forgo clothing, though the more modest might strap livestock, living or dead, to their nether regions. Some make do with carnival tents, ship sails, or balloons they have snatched from the air.

Giants speak Trollish. Some rare intelligent giants might also speak the Common Tongue.

GIANT

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 3 or larger giant

Perception 10 (+0)

Defense 15; **Health** 100; **Insanity** 1d3; **Corruption** 1d3

Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 13 (+3)

Speed 12

Stupidity A giant makes Intellect attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 bane. Creatures make attack rolls against the giant's Intellect with 1 boon.

Crushing Footfalls When a giant moves into a space occupied by a creature on the ground, the creature must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or take 3d6 damage and fall prone. If the creature was already prone, it takes 1d6 extra damage. A creature makes this roll once per round regardless of how many times a giant moves through its space.

Giantfall When an effect knocks the giant prone, the giant's body covers an area on the ground that is as long as it is tall (pick a number between 4 and 6 yards) and as wide as its Size, starting at the end of its space and extending from the source of the effect that knocked it prone. Everything in the area takes damage equal to 2d6 x the giant's Size. A creature can make an Agility challenge roll with a number of banes equal to half the giant's Size. On a success, the creature takes half the damage and moves to the nearest open space outside the area. On a failure, the creature becomes trapped under the giant's body. A creature trapped in this way is prone, blinded, immobilized, and totally covered. It can use an action to make an Agility challenge roll with a number of banes equal to half the giant's Size. On a success, the creature moves half its normal Speed in a direction it chooses. If it moves out of the area, it removes the afflictions. Otherwise, the creature remains trapped.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Fist (melee) +7 with 3 banes (5d6)

Boulder (long range) +7 with 1 boon (3d6)

CUSTOMIZING GIANTS

A giant's greatest asset is its massive size, and its ability to deal great damage to the scenery and its surroundings, but they are also disgusting creatures that are often fascinated by their own bodily functions. Some have created incidental weapons by way of their digestive system. You can customize the basic giant into your own unique creation by applying any of the following modifications to its statistics box.

MASSIVE

Common giants might stand between 15 and 20 feet tall, but giants can, and do, grow much larger. These massive brutes are every bit as dull, venal, and cruel as their smaller kin.

INCREASE DIFFICULTY BY TWO STEPS

Size 8 or larger frightening giant

Health increase by 200

Strength +2

ATTACK OPTIONS

Fist (melee) +9 with 3 banes (6d6)

Boulder (long range) +9 with 1 boon (4d6)

INCIDENTAL WEAPONS

Some giants excel at using weapons from the landscape to terrifying effect. When lacking a suitable boulder or tree, giants improvise with carts and parts of buildings.

INCREASE DIFFICULTY BY ONE STEP

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Two-Fisted Throw The giant picks up two boulders, or objects of similar size and weight, and throws them both. The giant makes each attack roll with 1 bane.

Tree Club The giant swings a tree it is wielding in a wide arc. Each creature within 6 yards of the giant must get a success on an Agility challenge roll with 2 banes or take 4d6 damage and fall prone. Each time the giant uses Tree Club, roll a d6. On an odd number, the tree breaks apart and the giant cannot use Tree Club again until it tears another tree out of the ground.

DUNG AND GAS

No one ever accused giants of being sophisticated, but some can feature cunning of a kind. Fascinated with the rumbles and run over of their digestive processes, they have found that the production of digestive waste can yield debilitating weaponry.

INCREASE DIFFICULTY BY ONE STEP

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Dung Bomb The giant throws a ball made from its own dung to a point within long range. The ball's exterior is hardened, but the interior is warm and viscous. When the ball reaches the target point or encounters a solid surface before then, it explodes, dealing 4d6 damage to everything within 6 yards of the point it struck. A creature that would take this damage must make a Strength challenge roll. A creature takes half the damage on a success, or also becomes impaired for 1 round on a failure.

END OF THE ROUND

Choking Blast Roll a d6. On an even number, the giant lets rip a disgusting blast of flatulence that spreads through a 6-yard cone originating from a point in the giant's space. Each breathing creature in the area must get a success on a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or become impaired for 1 round.

VARIANT GIANTS

The trolls modified or bred a few types of giants in the efforts to perfect their war machines or to serve other purposes. These variant giants tend to cling to remote parts of the world, at least until they become hungry.

MORE GIANTS

Other *Shadow of the Demon Lord* supplements detail giants beyond the ones described here. You can find the dreaded mountain giant in *A Glorious Death*. *Beyond the World's Edge* describes the sea giant.

RUNE-CARVED GIANT

It's believed that trolls created these monstrosities during the end of the Troll Wars. Bound, empowered, and preserved with ancient troll rune-magic—thankfully now lost to the world—most of these horrors wait in forgotten caverns and caves, patient for their purpose to be revealed.

Once roused, the troll runes that dot the giant's entire body glow like burning coals, at which point it moves toward its goal: a single location designated on its rune of ruin. Once there, the rune explodes, wreaking devastating carnage.

Standing nearly 60 feet tall, rune-carved giants look like other giants, but are carved head to toe with numerous troll runes. Before a rune-carved giant becomes active, its runes appear to be merely carved into the flesh, but the wounds do not bleed. Once activated, the runes glow like embers but do not seem to cause the giant pain.

Rune-Carved Giants understand Trollish but rarely speak it.

RUNE-CARVED GIANTS

DIFFICULTY 1,000

Size 10+ frightening giant

Perception 8 (-2)

Defense 17; **Health** 500; **Insanity** 1d6; **Corruption** 1d3

Strength 20 (+10), **Agility** 9 (-1), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 15 (+5)

Speed 10

Immune damage from fire

Colossal A rune-carved giant takes half damage from creatures half its Size or smaller. It cannot be charmed, compelled, dazed, immobilized, slowed, or stunned by effects originating from creatures half its Size or smaller.

Stupidity A giant makes Intellect attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 bane. Creatures make attack rolls against the giant's Intellect with 1 boon.

Crushing Footfalls When a giant moves into a space occupied by a creature on the ground, the creature must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or take 3d6 damage and fall prone. If the creature was already prone, it takes 1d6 extra damage. A creature makes this roll once per round regardless of how many times a giant moves through its space.



Giantfall When an effect knocks the giant prone, the giant's body covers an area on the ground that is as long as it is tall (pick a number between 20 and 30 yards) and as wide as its Size, starting at the end of its space and extending from the source of the effect that knocked it prone. Everything in the area takes damage equal to $2d6 \times$ the giant's Size. A creature can make an Agility challenge roll with a number of banes equal to half the giant's Size. On a success, the creature takes half the damage and moves to the nearest open space outside the area. On a failure, the creature becomes trapped under the giant's body. A creature trapped in this way is prone, blinded, immobilized, and totally covered. It can use an action to make an Agility challenge roll with a number of banes equal to half the giant's Size. On a success, the creature moves half its normal Speed in a direction it chooses. If it moves out of the area, it removes the afflictions. Otherwise, the creature remains trapped. Furthermore, when a giant is knocked prone, roll a d6. On a 6, the giant's rune of ruin is activated.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Fist (melee) +10 with 3 boons ($8d6 + 5$ plus Smash Down)

Boulder (extreme range) +10 with 1 boon ($6d6$)

Smash Down A target half the giant's Size or smaller must get a success on a Strength challenge roll with 3 banes or fall prone.

END OF THE ROUND

Rune of Ruin Each rune-carved giant has a final destination carved somewhere within their hide along with an explosive rune. If the giant has reached its destination, the fire energy bound within this rune activates causing the giant to explode in fire, killing the giant instantly and dealing $10d6$ damage to everything within 100 yards of the giant. A creature takes half the damage with a success on an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane.

TROLL-KIN

The trolls bred giants to serve in war, but obviously some were used for other, more carnal, services. Rare creatures that can only breed with members of their own line or with a troll, they fuse some of the most dangerous qualities of both races. While their giant blood saved them from the Summer Queen's curse, their troll blood grants them regeneration.

Standing at least 20 feet tall, and weighing nearly 2,500 pounds, these lurching, deformed things have awkward, often melted features, and a hide as tough as boiled leather. Drooling and stupid, they kill and eat all they snatch in their clawed hands, tearing flesh apart with their chisel like teeth.

Troll-kin speak Trollish.

TROLL-KIN

DIFFICULTY 500

Size 4 or larger giant

Perception 13 (+3); darksight

Defense 15; **Health** 160; **Insanity** 1d3; **Corruption** 1d6

Strength 19 (+9), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 16 (+6)

Speed 10

Stupidity A troll-kin makes Intellect attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 bane. Creatures make attack rolls against the troll-kin's Intellect with 1 boon.

Crushing Footfalls When a troll-kin moves into a space on the ground occupied by a creature, the creature must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or take $3d6$ damage and fall prone. If the creature is already prone, it takes $1d6$ extra damage. A creature makes this roll once per round, regardless of how many times a troll-kin moves through its space.

Giantfall When an effect knocks the troll-kin prone, the troll-kin's body covers an area on the ground that is as long as it is tall (pick a number between 4 and 8 yards) and as wide as its Size, starting at the end of its space and extending from the source of the effect that knocked it prone. Everything in the area takes damage equal to $2d6 \times$ the troll-kin's Size. A creature can make an Agility challenge roll with a number of banes equal to half the troll-kin's Size. On a success, the creature takes half the damage and moves to the nearest open space outside the area. On a failure, the creature becomes trapped under the troll-kin's body. A creature trapped in this way is prone, blinded, immobilized, and totally covered. It can use an action to make an Agility challenge roll with a number of banes equal to half the troll-kin's Size. On a success, the creature moves half its normal Speed in a direction it chooses. If it moves out of the area, it is no longer trapped and it removes the afflictions. Otherwise, the creature remains trapped.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Fist (melee) +9 with 3 boons ($5d6$ plus Smash Down)

Teeth (melee) +9 with 3 boons ($5d6 + 3$)

Smash Down A target half the troll-kin's Size or smaller must get a success on a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or fall prone.

END OF THE ROUND

Regeneration The troll-kin heals $1d6$ damage if it is not incapacitated.

