

# SKYFALL LAKE

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*Note!* The conversion of this scenario to *Hero Wars* is a fan work. The hard-working volunteer has made all interpretations of game stats.

This episode is written for non-troll characters. They must enter troll territory and find a well-reported grog shop hidden in the woods. There one human must (and more humans may) enter into a good-natured drinking contest with the trolls. This should result in friendly enough relations that the humans can go on to Crabtown where a business deal can be concluded. The party can then return home.

The many opportunities for mishap are left to the narrator; if the adventurers decided to trash the grog shop, you must deal with the consequences. Stress to the players that the employer desires no hostilities, and will punish whoever starts a fight.

This episode is a mine for role-playing, since it avoids combat. The players have the rare opportunity to enter a troll community as a friendly or neutral party. The adventure allows the narrator to play the situation as she wishes.

Most of the general data in Player Information is correct. The exact size of this troll settlement is impossible to tell; any of the cited figures might be right. The handouts contain the usual exaggerations by prejudiced humans. The mentions of iron are false, as are the stories of iron's presence in the hills.

## The Task

A local merchant wishes to hire adventurers who can follow orders to guard an assistant going to Crabtown, a troll settlement in the Spider Woods near Skyfall Lake. The entire journey should take four days.

The merchant will pay each of up to eight adventurers the following: first, either an opportunity to trade feats using Issaries Spell Trading secret or 100L cash after the job is done; secondly, 50L in advance and another 50L after the job is done (the narrator may allow the players to spend Hero Points to increase their Wealth at the end of the episode); thirdly, a fair share of any loot rightfully gained in self-defense while on the job.

The assistant who is accompanying the party is a gentle, experienced Issaries Goldentongue trader named Murius. He is smart, a non-combatant, and a skilled speaker and trader initiate of his cult.

Murius will use his Travel affinity feats (such as "Protection While Sleeping") for the journey, and will bring medicines which keep him awake for the whole journey. He is a non-player-character who should be handled by the narrator. After the first 24 hours, he will be groggy and disoriented, and should be played quietly.

As far as actual play goes, Murius' function is to maintain peace. His employer claims to have prepared the trip with the trolls, and the party is guaranteed protection if they follow normal procedures. If he discovers, or even suspects that any characters deliberately caused trouble with the trolls, he will say so, and that person will lose all payment as well as Murius' protection.

Murius has a set of written instructions from his boss. It is written in Tradetalk, and it is included in the handouts. Murius will share it with the adventurers.

Everything is fairly straight-forward; your task as narrator is to entertain the players without a fight.

Murius' object is to pick up four large spools of spider silk, and four other bundles containing miscellaneous troll items dredged from the lake.

## The Overland Journey

The adventurers complete their instructions and outfitting in Ironspike, the northernmost Sartarite outpost. They must cover 40-50 kilometers on the first day, find the Frog Grogge Shoppe (as it is named) on the second day, and proceed as fortune takes them from there. Leaving Ironspike, the party travels through hilly country for 25 or so kilometers. This takes Murius' wagons about 12 hours. This region is hunting land for the trolls; the adventurers may encounter a band of troll hunters, or wild trollkin here (see "Non Player Characters", later). Trolls met here are wary, and may well flee if approached.



*Make Friendly Contact with Trolls (18): Bargain, Beg (-3), Haggle, Troll Customs.*

*Complete Victory:* The trolls are friendly, and will trade or offer the heroes information about the journey ahead.

*Any Other Victory:* The heroes are able to approach the trolls and negotiate with them. They may need to bribe them to get any help or information out of them.

*Complete Defeat:* The heroes offend the trolls, who will either withdraw (if outnumbered) or attack (if they think they will win).

*Any Other Defeat:* The trolls want nothing to do with the heroes, and will retreat if approached. They will only fight if cornered by the heroes.

Crossing the hills, the expedition enters the flat lands beside the Skyfall marshes. An additional six hours pass before they reach the stream beside which they are to camp. Trolls met here are more likely to be aggressive and will not take kindly to thoughtless or destructive acts by adventurers. Nonetheless, gifts and bribes made here are likely to be accepted.

*Bribe Trolls (14, or 5W if the heroes suffered a Complete Defeat trying to make friendly contact): Bargain, Bribery, Haggle, Spot Sucker.*

*Marginal Victory:* The trolls accept the bribe, and will not take hostile action against the heroes.

*Any Other Victory:* The trolls are friendly, and may trade or offer the heroes information about the journey ahead.

*Defeat:* The trolls are not impressed by the bribe and will either retreat or attack, as noted above.

Most trolls met while travelling here will be reluctant to interact with the party. Keep in mind that the journey is much less important than the events to follow at the Grogge Shoppe and in Crabtown. If the adventurers attack or kill trolls on the way to the Shoppe, no one at the Shoppe will know of it.

Once the player-characters reach Crabtown, however, word of any attack has likely reached the town authorities, and the adventurers may be forced to flee. Trollkin may have been watching from a distance if the adventurers attacked a troll, or troll hunters may find evidence of the struggle, such as a dead troll. If only wild trollkin have been killed, the trolls will not care, but if the player-characters have killed normal trollkin, the trolls may well react unfavorably: trollkin are at least as valuable to trolls as goats and dogs are to humans, and the trolls will not be pleased to learn that the visitors have been destroying valuable property.

## THE GROGGE SHOPPE

After breaking camp on the morning of the second day, the party should move upriver, pausing occasionally for an Ability Test (or Simple Contest, Resistance 14) of Acute Hearing, Tracking or Wilderness Survival. Have them begin to do this before there is anything to see.

Then they come to a junction with two markers, each pointing down a different trail. The correct choice is the Y-stick in the ground, with a bone in the crotch of the Y pointing left. A gourd weights the bone against the ground to keep the bone from being shifted. This is the way to the Grogge Shoppe.

The incorrect sign is that of an impala skull with a stick through one eye socket pointing to the right. The right-hand trail leads to a pit trap, left to the narrator to handle. The trolls occasionally check the trap to see if anything has tumbled in.

This is a critical decision. The players have to figure out which path goes to the Grogge Shoppe.

*Choose the Correct Path (15): Find Safe Path, Know Trolls, Tracking, Wilderness Survival (-3).*

*Complete or Major Victory:* The gourd is a symbol representing drink and, therefore, the Grogge Shoppe; the left-hand trail is the correct path. The skull represents danger, so the right-hand path should be avoided.

*Minor or Marginal Victory:* There are more troll tracks heading to the left. That is probably the way to go.

*Marginal, Minor or Major Defeat:* The character has no idea.

*Complete Defeat:* The impala skull represents food and, therefore, hospitality. The right-hand path must be the correct one.

## Outside the Shoppe

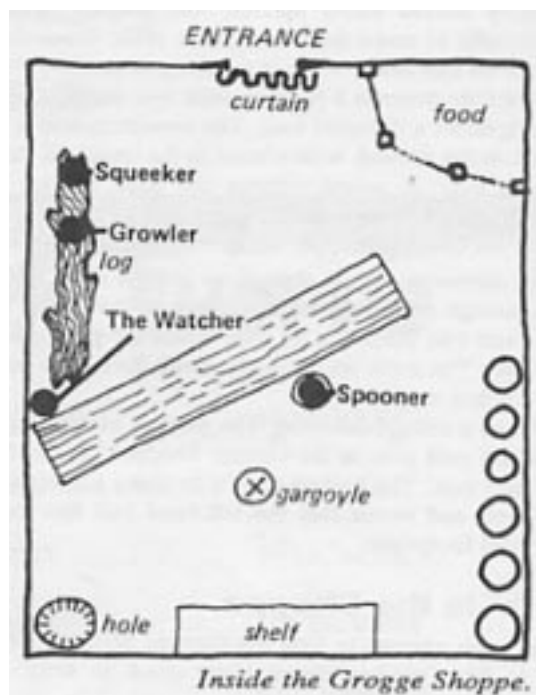
There is no attempt to hide the Grogge Shoppe. There are, in fact, obvious peace signs stuck to trees and painted on rocks. Most of these are crude marks, but also there is a real human hand giving the Lunar Sign of Peace, and a Chalana Arroy sash hangs nearby.

A thick, old, very dirty curtain flaps along a cliff face. It's held up by stone spikes wedged

into the limestone. To enter the Grogge Shoppe, raise the curtain and walk down into the dim interior.

## Inside the Grogge Shoppe

As the nearby floor plan confirms, there is nothing fancy about this place. Sketch the plan for the players while the eyesight of their adventurers adjusts to the darkness which trolls prefer. Naturally, any conversation in the Shoppe comes to an abrupt halt when the visitors appear.



Five trolls, three trollkin, and one gargoyle are in the cave. Note character locations on the plan, and play them as follows.

**SPOONER:** the bartender and owner, Spooner is an Argan Argar initiate, adroit at languages. Although the rite noted in the employer's instructions is little-known to humans, Spooner has done it often and knows it well. He should be the speaker whenever the adventurers must be answered. He orders the three trollkin about, and also translates for Watcher, the troll who cannot understand any language but Darktongue.

**3 TROLLKIN:** they have no personalities. Have Spooner send them scuttling about to do work and to provide comic relief.

**GROGGER:** this wingless gargoyle is a loyal slave to Spooner. He usually sits at

the spot located, acting as a chair for his owner. Upon command, he leaps up and does his stuff, surely leaving an opponent groggier than before.

*THE WATCHER:* he sits slumped on the floor. Sometimes he mumbles in Darktongue to Spooner, who may send a trollkin to him with a ladleful of this or that.

*GROWLER:* though his voice is low and raspy, he makes himself clear. He, too (what a coincidence!), speaks the language of the adventurers. He is fairly sober and speaks confidently to humans. He is dressed like a hunter.

*SQUEAKER:* dressed like a warrior, he makes no hostile moves. His armor is on, his helmet off, his weapons beside him. He doesn't want to fight and won't be provoked. He has met humans before; he likes to gamble.

## The Ritual

Once the adventurers make the proper statement (as instructed, the leader must say 'Rom born ga ga ooooo'), the trolls become friendly. They make welcoming noises to the player-characters, gesture them in, offer them seats, and ask if they are hungry.

Spooner says, "Welcome to the Frog Grogge Shoppe Inn. This is, as you somehow know, the secret entryway into my home city, granted to me by Her Mightiness Cragspider, Goddess over all the world. If you can meet a few special requirements, you and all of your party can enter Crabtown as friends.

"Here is what you must do. First, take a good large swallow from any one of these kegs which you select. Secondly, take a drink from any one keg which I select. Thirdly, take a drink from any one keg which someone else selects.

"After that you will be guided to town by one of my trollkin, and you will be announced as friends."

Someone, of course, must accept.

"Glad to hear that. Before we begin, would you or any of your friends like some human beer before we begin? It is good to trolls, you know, and I sell it cheap. Only one silver for a mug of real ale."

When any orders for beer are filled, Spooner says, "Let's begin now. You may choose your own poison, as they say. What? [looks shocked] Why yes, of course you must pay for the drinks, [looks angry] What are you trying to do, ROB ME? That's better!"

Some other answers Spooner may make are just below.

Q:	<i>Who made up the names of these drinks?</i>
A:	<i>There was a fellow named Willworth through here several times. He did it. I really don't know what those words mean. We have our own names in Darktongue.</i>
Q:	<i>Who wrote this menu?</i>
A:	<i>Once there was a woman here who had a remarkable feather. She did not drink here, though she did eat like everyone does, and she made this for me with her feather for payment.</i>
Q:	<i>What are in these kegs?</i>
A:	<i>I cannot tell you.</i>

And there are other speakers besides Spooner:

GROWLER: *I will help you out for money.*

SPOONER: *That is against all the rules.*

GROWLER: *Look, you guys, maybe I can help you another way. First of all, do you make bets?*



SQUEAKER: *Bets? Count me in!*

At this point, introduce the betting motif if you want. See the next section. Side Bets.

## Side Bets

Growler and Squeaker are happy to bet on the success and failure of the people drinking each drink. Each has a pattern he uses as much for entertainment as in aid of the humans.

Growler bets that the human will be slightly affected by a drink. He bets a small amount. He wants other people to bet against his assumptions.

Squeaker always speaks second. He always bets that something far worse will happen to the person,  
and makes much larger bets.

They are both wrong the first few times. Their bets show, in fact, that they have no idea how the drinks affect people. The names hint about effects which might occur, however, and if the adventurers understand that they may be tempted to bet against the trolls themselves.

The trolls are glad to bet. In fact, they suggest that all the humans take up the task of testing each of the vats and make greater and greater wagers.

However, Squeaker knows a lot more than he first shows, and at some point will make a huge bet  
on something quite silly which will occur from the drink of the narrator's choice. The event occurs exactly as Squeaker says it will, he will win, and the two trolls will laugh their heads off at the adventurers, and then collect their winnings.

## Sample Dialogue

These words are to guide the trolls' talk. Read them aloud if you like. Inflect them! Sound trollish by lowering your voice, growling and snorting. These ready-made speeches can fill gaps  
of silence and provoke responses from the adventurers.

GROWLER: *I bet you 12 lunars that his eyes fall out.*

SQUEAKER: *I bet 25 lunars that he never eats solids again.*

GROWLER: *I bet 14 lunars that he gets a case of the Shakes.*

SQUEAKER: *I bet double that and say that his hair will turn gray and that he'll lose the use of his fingers.*

GROWLER: *I bet 8 lunars and a clack that this is the drink that changes humans into bears.*

SQUEAKER: *No, I bet you 39 lunars that the man will laugh, then choke till he turns blue, have the runs, and then go berserk.*

GROWLER: *I can't believe that he'll drink that one! I bet he never gets rid of the smell! 15 lunars!*

SQUEAKER: *I saw this one happen before. I bet 23 lunars that he goes blind for a week, then catches Wasting disease.*

GROWLER: *Wow! I've seen this! 17 lunars says he dies!*

SQUEAKER: *I think that he'll get smarter and that all his hair falls out. 22 lunars.*

During this the two trolls drink heavily and, acting quite drunken, they always urge more ale upon the humans with whom they are betting. They'll even buy drinks for their marks.

Those who enjoy imbibing may be taken advantage of by experienced sharpies like Growler and Squeaker.

*Stay Sober (10, +2 for each round of drinks): Drink Alcohol, Large (-5), Resist Poison (-3), Tough (-5).*

*Any Victory:* The hero does not get drunk.

*Any Defeat:* The hero is drunk, to a greater or lesser degree, and will suffer a penalty on any attempt to avoid Growler and Squeaker suckering him or her into a bet (see below).

When the player-characters are nicely drunken, the trolls make an exorbitant bet. If the players understand what is happening, the narrator must insist that those adventurers can only refuse if they:

*Resist Sucker Bet (17, +2 for each level of defeat in the "Stay Sober" contest): Cautious, Quick-Witted, Resist Fast Talk, Spot Sucker (-1), Stay Sober, Stubborn (-1).*

*Victory:* The hero realizes that the trolls are trying to sucker him and refuses the bet.

*Defeat:* The hero accepts the bet.

This exorbitant wager may be anything that the narrator chooses, and can apply to any of the troll drinks that have not yet been tried. The effect should be ridiculous, but not fatal. This special effect applies only for this one drink, and the beverage's normal effects may or may not apply as well. In justification, the narrator can point out that troll drinks are not standardized, and that this particular batch had some unusual trace elements.

Feel free to adjust the amount of each bet to suit the cash which the adventurers typically carry. The trolls are good for their word; they'll always be able to pay up. They are not absurdly rich - this is a light entertainment, not a chance to strike it rich.

## The Grogge Shoppe Drinks and How They Work

Before running the Grogge Shoppe scene, the narrator should familiarize herself with the rules for poisons in the Hero Wars rulebook (p155-157).

Besides the drinks listed as available in the Grogge Shoppe, narrators are urged make their own to suit their fancies. All drinks are served in large mugs about a liter capacity. The following notes about specific drinks include appearance, effect upon trolls, effect upon humans, and other notes as needed.



## DRIVE CAREFUL WINE

This thick brown syrup smells sour. Little unidentifiable chunks float on its surface.

Of typical troll ingredients, most of it is boiled plants, about 15 varieties. The lumps are chopped beetle of a type valued for its powerful digestive juices which help ferment this stuff. The chunks crumble easily and are easily swallowed.

This drink is a troll favorite in taste, but not specially noted for any physical effect.

The chemicals may sicken human drinkers. Each mug is a Debilitating poison with a potency equal to the number of mugs swilled, cumulative for life. The human body cannot break down these poisons:

*Drink Drive Careful Wine (# of mugs drunk): Eat Anything, Drink Alcohol, Resist Poison, Tough (-5).*

*Any Victory:* No effect, except for a transitory queasy feeling when first drinking.

*Marginal or Minor Defeat:* The drinker is nauseous. Treat as Hurt (-1 penalty to all actions) for a number of hours equal to the number of mugs drunk.

*Major Defeat or Complete Defeat:* The drinker is violently ill. Treat as Injured (-50% penalty to all actions) for a number of hours equal to the number of mugs drunk.

During the recovery, only healing magic brings any solace to the otherwise helpless victim. This poison never breaks down. If a person ever tries this drink again, he or she must once again roll against the accumulated potency or be sick. (The number of mugs should be entered on the player's character sheet as a flaw: "Has Drunk Drive Careful Wine". The level of the flaw is equal to the number of mugs drunk. If she wants to keep this effect of the drink a secret from the player, the narrator may record this secretly.)

It is commonly believed that one may build up tolerance to many troll drinks, and the referee may wish to amuse himself by encouraging players to try this with Drive Careful wine.

## OLD ROTGUT

A dark purple drink with pale blue froth on the surface. This berry beer is made to almost human standards of cleanliness and purity.

Trolls like Old Rotgut because it numbs them into a comforting stupor which can be shaken off quickly if desired. The effects are short-lived as well, though persistent drinkers have pink teeth from the stuff.

For humans, this drink is a potency 15 Debilitating, Lethal poison. Successfully resisting the poison reveals Old Rotgut to be astonishingly pleasant.

Each mug is resisted against separately and, if successful, does no harm. Additional drinks are not cumulative. Some human debauchers are known to prefer Old Rotgut despite the damage (healable by magic), but even most alcoholics recognize the danger of that trap.

## SKULLBUSTER

A brown liquid covered by a turgid layer of crusty yellow and red bits. It smells like rotten tobacco and red peppers.

Trolls love Skullbuster because it dulls their sensitive hearing and dilates their weak eyes. They perceive this distortion of perception as a high. Skullbuster reportedly tastes very good, though some trolls think that the Grogge Shoppe uses too much elf skin during the soaking process.

Humans who drink Skullbuster show no apparent effects for a day after they drink it. When a victim wakes the next morning, he or she suffers a penalty of -1 to all Mental Skills, as if the character had received a Hurt for each mug drunk. This penalty does not affect Physical Skills, Affinities or other Abilities, except at the Narrator's discretion. The effect remains until the victim successfully resists the poison:

*Shake off the Effects of Skullbuster (1W): Resist Poison, Tough (-5).*

*Any Victory:* All penalties from the drinking of Skullbuster are removed.

*Marginal, Minor or Major Defeat:* The drinker cannot try to shake off the effects for another day.

*Complete Defeat:* The character goes into a coma that night and cannot be awakened until cured magically.

The roll can be made once per day.

## POWZIE

A frothy yellow drink, lively enough to give off hissing sounds. It is warm to the touch, and smells of cinnamon and garlic.

Trolls drink Powzie for its kick. Each mug drunk by a troll may affect him, in much the same way as it affects humans (see below). However, for trolls, the Resistance for the contest is only 17, and the worst injury that the drinker can suffer is a Hurt. A troll who overindulges in Powzie merely goes unconscious. Powzie is for trolls who drink to forget. Watcher, the sot slouched in the corner of the Grogge Shoppe, drinks this.

Humans who drink Powzie never finish a mug without having to stop. Each swallow rushes directly to the head, and the effect accumulates until the drinker is overcome. Powzie! An adventurer who chooses this drink may be felled by it several times, but the trolls will insist that he or she finish the drink.

Powzie is a potency 10W Instant, Lethal poison.

*Drink Powzie (10W): Eat Anything, Drink Alcohol, Resist Poison, Tough (-5).*

*Complete Victory:* The drinker downs the Powzie in one! Squeaker and Growler are, for once, speechless.

*Major or Minor Victory:* The drinker cannot finish the drink in one go and must roll again. This time, however, the Resistance is only 10, as there is hardly any Powzie left to swallow.

*Marginal Victory:* The drinker cannot finish the drink in one go and must roll again. This time, however, the Resistance is reduced to 15, as there is not as much Powzie to swallow.

*Marginal Defeat:* Powzie! The drinker is Dazed, and still has more of the drink to finish. After recovering from this defeat, he or she must attempt to finish the drink. This time, however, the Resistance is only 15, as there is not as much Powzie to swallow.

*Minor Defeat:* Powzie! The drinker is Hurt, and still has more of the drink to finish. After recovering from this defeat, he or she must attempt to finish the drink. This time, however, the

Resistance is only 15, as there is not as much Powzie to swallow.

*Major Defeat:* Powzie! The drinker is Injured, and still has more of the drink to finish. After recovering from this defeat, he or she must attempt to finish the drink. This time, however, the Resistance is only 15, as there is not as much Powzie to swallow.

*Complete Defeat:* Powzie! The drinker is Dying, and still has more of the drink to finish. If he or she recovers from this defeat, he or she must attempt to finish the drink. This time, however, the Resistance is only 15, as there is not as much Powzie to swallow.

## EROSION OUZO

This is a thin bubbling liquid, much like champagne. The dipping spoon for this drink is of enameled metal.

Erosion Ouzo is an acid. It's caustic, and placing something over the surface will let the bubbles pop there, with clear results. Skin will be mildly burned. Metal will be tarnished and slightly eroded. Cloth will be burnt away.

Trolls like this drink. It goes directly to their rock stomachs, where it joins the digestive juices to ignite massive heartburn, setting off chemical reactions which flush the body of acids. The result is rapid euphoria lasting about half an hour per mugful.

A human takes damage from the acid in this drink. It is quite possible to melt away by trying to swallow this stuff. Treat Erosion Ouzo as a potency 10-5W Instant, Lethal poison, depending on the strength of the mugful.

## RAINBOW DELIGHT

It changes color and consistency, passing through the spectrum from yellow to purple and back again. It gets thicker as it yellows; thinner as it becomes purple.

In the yellow stage. Rainbow Delight is chewy and smells like citrus. In the red stage it is salty and usually chugged quickly. In the purple stage it is tangy and aromatic. This social drink for trolls is much favored. Making it is a secret known only to trolls.



For humans, the yellow stage can be swallowed with great difficulty only after prodigious chewing:

*Swallow the Yellow Stage (18): Eat Anything, Strong (-3), Tough (-5).*

*Any Victory:* The drinker swallows the drink.

*Any Defeat:* The drinker cannot choke the chewy mass down, though he or she may try again with a -1 penalty after taking a rest or drinking another drink to clear the palate.

Once it has been swallowed, the yellow stage is a potency 15 Debilitating poison. It is not lethal, however, and the drinker can never suffer a worse consequence than "Injured" after drinking it.

The red stage is extremely salty to humans, but is otherwise palatable and without ill effect.

The purple stage is a concentrated alkali, burning the human target. Treat it as a potency 10 Instant, Lethal poison.

A single mugful has two of each of the drinks in it. As one color is consumed, the contents cease turning that color. For instance, if an adventurer drinks both red drinks, the stuff begins to alternate between yellow and purple.

## ALE

A normal, if rather dark amber ale, as served in many human inns and taverns. Trolls enjoy its flavor, though they can drink gallons of the stuff without becoming drunk.

## The Results

If the adventurers perform the minimal duties outlined, they will be able to ask for the guide and then be off to Crabtown.

They may or may not be or become drunken, though one of them must drink.

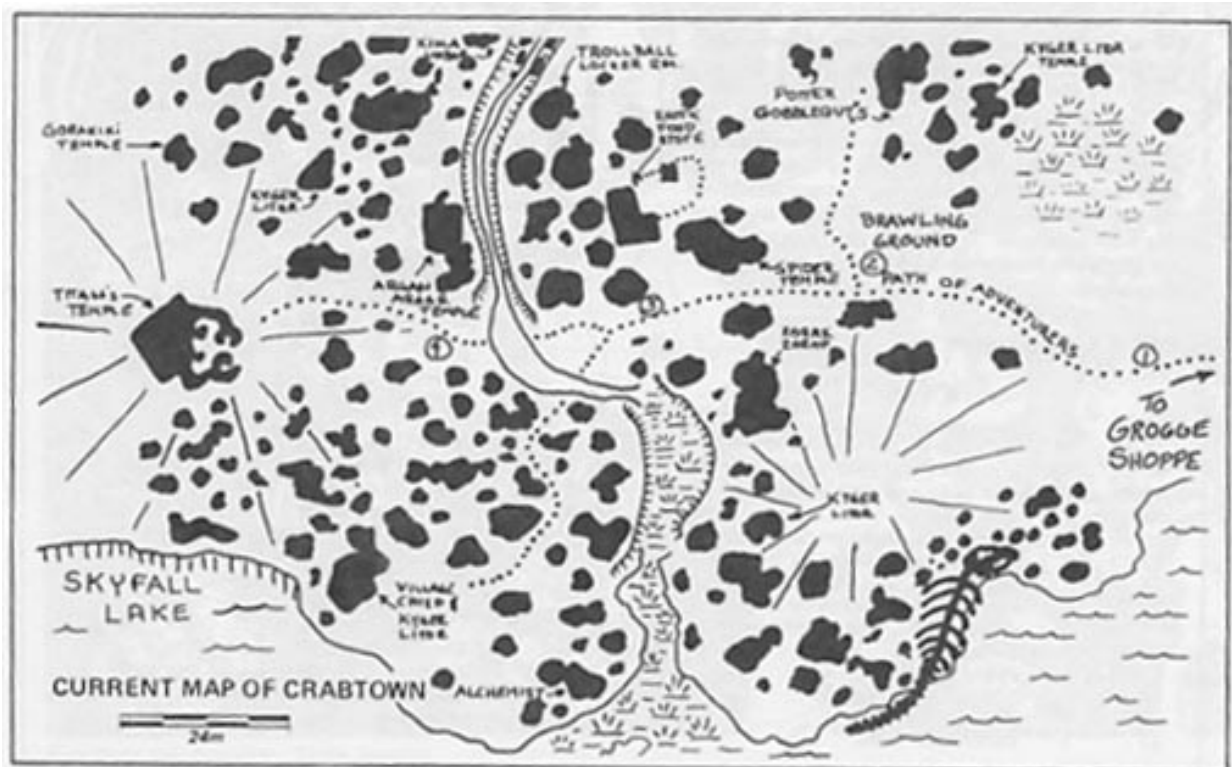
If the players have debts, then they surely will be allowed into the town. Nothing will happen to them at all, either, even from their angry debtors. Not paying off results in pursuit by those appropriate at the end of the episode.

Regardless of the betting, Spooner will send a trollkin to lead the humans to the Crabtown temple of Argan Argar. The trollkin is very ordinary, and refuses to speak to humans.

The trollkin carries a staff to which are tied a gourd and some other junk, dangling on red ribbons. One item is a little silver bell which the trollkin keeps ringing as they go.

## CRABTOWN

This settlement is both ancient and ever-changing. The map can be used many times; feel free to change sections of the town at will. This part of the adventure gives the adventurers chances to speak to trolls, be bumped by trollkin, smell their buildings, and otherwise give them opportunity for contact.



Using the word 'building' to refer to troll structures may be inapt. Trolls have little skill at architecture and usually excavate rather than build or grow surface constructions. They do often imitate other peoples by constructing temporary above-ground shelter.

Troll buildings or structures are always patchwork unless they get outside help (as Sir Scissor did years ago from human). Trolls are indiscriminate about materials: a single irregularly-stacked wall might contain rocks logs, bits of cloth, dirt, reed matting, bones, and skins stretched over openings. Such walls are precarious, tumbling down in the wind or collapsing when a trollkin tries to scale one.

## Approaching the Town

Crabtown is 11 kilometers from the Grogge Shoppe, about a two-hour walk. Time the arrival of the party to dusk, giving enough light to see by and allowing the trolls to come out and move about.

The path winds through large boulders; the adventurers can hear and see figures paralleling the way. These are trollkin guards. They will not attack and will run away if attacked, but they will keep pace all the way. As messengers come and go, the number of trollkin gradually increases.

Half way along, the party is stopped and questioned at a guardpost, even accompanied by a trollkin from the Grogge Shoppe. The guards are standard warriors of appropriate level selected from the sample troll statistics at the front of this book. This is a good time for everyone to check their adventurers, perhaps to heal them; now is also a good time for you, through Murius, to remind everyone of their duties and responsibilities.

The path through the rocks becomes difficult rising and narrowing abruptly to make a strong defensive position. More trollkin guards stand here. The path goes downwards, then turns sharply right. Turning a corner, the adventurers get their first glimpse of Crabtown.

POINT (1). This is the first of four viewpoints related to the map of Crabtown. From here

the town is a dirty brown and gray collection of irregular buildings. A steep barren hill dominates the left side of the town; the flanks of the hill are steeply eroded. The bleached bones of a large creature can be seen between the hill and the lake beyond. Many buildings cluster together in an area perhaps 150 meters square.

Many trollkin scabble about, stuffing their mouths with goods which surely will be gone later, eaten by bigger trollkin. Unarmored trolls in a variety of costumes are emerging, stretching and yawning. Drums beat. Patrols of scouts and bands of hunters come and go.

A well-worn path leads into town. Murius now directs the way. The trollkin guide accompanies the party without comment.

POINT (2). To the left are many buildings. To the right is the Brawling Ground. Several trolls are here, mostly naked, wrestling with each other. Some trollkin carry bundles of arms and armor out from shacks and prepare it in the open to be put on.

The supervising troll sights the humans and approaches them. He kicks aside the guide trollkin with the bell. He deliberately struts into the humans, ignoring them but shoving them aside and trying to knock them down. If the humans fight back, he will be glad to brawl for a moment. If any in the party draw weapons, he backs away shouting. His yells immediately bring a half-dozen armed and armored trolls, and six more will arrive every two minutes for the next six minutes.

The troll is Karvorki the Hungry, leader of the local Zorak Zoran temple. He dislikes humans and wants to provoke a fight, but he knows the rules and will not attack anyone protected by Spooner's ritual. Even if waves of warriors spew from the nearby temple, they will not attack, though they do threateningly gesture and try to drive the party away.

*Realize the Troll(s) are Not Attacking (17): Brave (-2), Common Sense (-1), Quick-Witted, Recognize Foe, Troll Customs.*

*Any Victory:* The trolls are threatening, but the hero remembers that the party is protected by the Grogge Shoppe ritual.

*Any Defeat:* The hero firmly believes that the trolls are attacking.

*Complete Defeat:* Not only are they attacking, they look hungry too!

If the adventurers want to flee, point out the two larger buildings as sturdy and defensible sites. The party's reception is quite different, depending on which building is chosen. The Spider Priests will be hostile and violently eject them, but will not pursue the combat past the temple doors. The Food Store owner politely receives the party and treats them kindly, as customers. If the adventurers insult the proprietor, a troll named Jop the Happy, he states that he will happily sell their carcasses later, and sends a trollkin to register his claim with the tribal leaders.

The Zorak Zorani do not pursue the party, nor do those trolls make further trouble once the humans leave the area around their Brawling Grounds.

POINT (3). To the right are buildings. The trollball team is seen, in uniform, heading to the ford from their locker room and back along the trail to their practice grounds. The local team is called the Total War team.

To the left are many trollkin hovels and another marsh. This marsh is guarded by armed trollkin who suspiciously watch the humans.

POINT (4). To the right is a neat, square-built house, the Argan Argar temple. Several trollkin work outside, toting bags or laying out fish to dry on the sloping sides of the shacks. To the left are more houses. Beyond them is the lake. As is typical, its surface today is covered with a thickening fog, stirred around by cold winds. Already some fishing boats are being rowed out into the mist. Overhead, the air is gray and misty.

A butler, wearing a jester's motley cap, stands by the carefully-made swinging door to the temple.

The butler comes forward to speak with the trollkin with the bell. The butler looks over his shoulder at the humans. The trollkin motions, nods, and points to each of the party. The two trollkin whisper in Darktongue with accents impossible to understand.

At last the butler turns to the adventurer who performed Spooner's ritual, saying, "Fum Sir Sisser to is customs: Hi! Te lord is out now, so plest be seated and eat or sleep to is

arrival. Plest do not straying fum tis spot."

Murius is embarrassed that the butler did not address him directly, and demands the statement be repeated. He then turns and repeats the message a second time to the adventurers.

Everyone should settle down and wait. This is an opportunity for the player-characters to be tempted by their own curiosity. If they wander off, you are on your own to guide them.

## TROLL-TOWN ENCOUNTERS

This section is a short and explicit tour down the main pathway of a troll settlement. The tables can show the players what these towns are like, and also give their characters chances to err and anger the trolls.

The best method of showing off the scenery is to move along the path and, where marked as on the accompanying map, direct the adventurers' attention to interesting points. The full descriptions of these points of interest are left to the narrator, who should spend a little time studying the points and their relationship.

The following table shows the percentage of occurrence for each building use in the town. Trolls tell what is inside these unmarked piles by looking at subtle clues on their outsides, something humans should not attempt. The information is generally of use and may help in an adventure. Though this table can be used for any troll town or settlement, adjust the priests accordingly.

### Who Lives Here?

D100 roll	%	resident or use
01-10	10	abandoned
11-44	34	trollkin only; roll 3D6 for number
45-55	11	1D6 trolls and 1D8 trollkin

56-65	10	2D6 trolls and 1D6 trollkin
66-67	2	1D4 trolls
68-69	2	storehouse, guarded by animal
70-73	4	storehouse, guarded by on-duty troll
74-76	3	storehouse, guarded by divine magic
77-79	3	storehouse, guarded by animal, divine magic, and guard troll
80-82	3	grog shop
83-84	2	potter
85	1	alchemist or herbalist
86	1	leadsmith
87	1	exotic food store
88	1	Argan Argar priest
89	1	Xiola Umbar priest
90	1	Aranea priest
91	1	Zorak Zoran priest
92-93	2	Kyger Litor priest
94	1	Skyriver Titan priest*
95	1	village chief
96	1	master fisher or hunter troll
97-98	2	Argan Argar goods
99	1	trollball locker room
00	1	Ooops! This one has a big basement. Roll 3 times on this table and combine the results.

\* occurs only in this village

If an adventurer were to go knocking on a troll's door, the inhabitant undoubtedly would have been doing something beforehand: what he was doing determines his reaction to being disturbed.

## Typical Troll Activities

D100 roll	result
01-30	asleep or loafing
31-45	working
46-66	eating
67-75	drinking
76-78	gambling
79-81	copulating
82-89	praying or otherwise worshipping
90-91	singing, entertaining
92-95	practicing arms
96-99	practicing magic
00	Uh-oh. Roll again to find result, but the troll always will be very disturbed.

## Sir Scissor

Meeting and dealing with Sir Scissor is the high point of the expedition. He is a strange and curious character, and his behavior is only his personal taste, exaggerated as much of troll behavior is.

He shows off by constantly going about in daylight. He is not at all intimidated by light, since he wears sunglasses made of natural volcanic glass.



Sir Scissor is not his troll name, which he keeps a secret. He gave himself the name Sir Scissor after many years of dealing with humans.

He is much influenced by human contacts he has made as an Argan Argar merchant, but these ways have been altered to suit troll tastes. Sir Scissor has on decent though unkempt robes of heavy wool, dyed a bright red. He wears a stout fur cap and a broad leather belt with a silver clasp, and many bags of varying size hang from his belt. If viewed carefully, movement can be seen beneath his robe. That is his rat familiar.

He carries a heavy crossbow, uncocked. Behind him come two slave trollkin carrying another of their kind, dead and already partially butchered. The dead one has no clothes and was apparently a wild trollkin.

Sir Scissor leads a leashed trio of creatures. They strain against his grip, glad to be home and done with the hunt. Two of them are cave trolls with blindfolds over their eyes. The third is a trollkin with an unusually large nose; it struts about and sometimes whines. Its eyes have been poked out.

Proud of his hunting team. Sir Scissor is flattered if anyone comments favorably about them. The unfortunates on the leashes have been treated to go abroad in daylight, and the dark troll is sure to point that out.

Sir Scissor formally greets Murius, and then begins the troll custom of introducing them to his home. Use this opportunity to show players troll customs. First, the greetings are made. Then several trollkin bring large bags of varying cleanliness. Sir Scissor then allows the adventurers into his house, casting a nicely-made sack over each head, symbolizing entrance into welcoming darkness. Always bag the jumpiest adventurer first, and let him make some trouble. After being welcomed inside and unbagged, use these customs: pointing-out of possessions, feeding live animals to guests, and bargaining for goods. Additional information can be found in Trollpak, if you have that publication.

Once this scene is concluded, the party may rest or go on, as you wish. Unless you want to continue to explore the town, nothing else of importance need occur here.

If the adventurers got this far without offending anyone, don't despair - be glad you have interested and sensitive players. Let them rest, travel home, and get paid. Then, on the next adventure, use the pursuit force statistics as enemies in your own episode.

## THE PURSUIT

The adventurers will not stay long in Crabtown if they think they are in trouble. If they are, let them know. Sir Scissor will certainly warn his guests if they are going to be arrested or assaulted. He'll urge them to flee, for troll justice is not kind to human offenders. He can help them escape to the town limits, but no further.

It is possible to attack the offending adventurers inside Crabtown, but that is unsporting and contrary to a good tale. If anything happens in town, it should be a hairsbreadth escape, perhaps with alarm drums booming as the party runs like hell to escape.

The party, having escaped, has no difficulties until they reach the flatlands by Skyfall Marsh. There avenging spider riders, in hot pursuit, attack.

Adjust the number of pursuers to an amount creating a fair fight. Remember, these trolls do not need to kill the whole party. They do demand vengeance, and their payment should be exorbitant (two humans alive or dead, for instance, or four horses). If these can be gained, the spider riders have achieved victory and will depart, leaving the survivors behind. The trolls do not care whether the offending adventurers or the entirely innocent are killed or returned to Crabtown.

The narrator may want to give the adventurers a chance to negotiate with the spider riders, or to betray two among them to the wrath of trolls. Adjust the situation to the adventure's flavor and your desires.

The pursuers are professional soldiers in the employ of Cragspider. They are competent and should

be used that way. They are led by a priest of Aranea. They all ride large tarantulas. Each tarantula is accompanied by swarms of giant wolf spiders which are furry and can jump and bite.

Each spider party is identical.

## Players' Information

A few kilometers behind them, the adventurers see some enormous gray mounds scurrying over the ground toward them. There is a swathe of smaller brownish objects before these gray things, either preceding them, being chased, or being herded.

As the pursuers draw closer, the players can see that they are being chased by gigantic gray tarantulas. Squatting on the backs of the tarantulas are trolls; each tarantula carries two dark trolls and one trollkin. The brownish objects are packs of man-sized wolf spiders. Here and

there, leading the packs, stride larger green and spiny lynx spiders, trying to govern the movements of the unintelligent wolf spiders.

## Playing the Attackers

On the back of each tarantula is a trollkin to carry missiles and poison for the dark trolls.

One troll guides the tarantula and serves as its mahout. The other troll uses magic to communicate

with the lynx spiders, to help them guide the advance of the spider pack. The lynx spiders are not very smart, but can take simple commands. Both dark trolls can fight. Instead of slings, they use javelins, and instead of mauls they wield nets, both thrown and in melee.

The trolls stop their tarantulas about 30 meters from the party, and send in the wolf spiders.

The trolls hide behind large shields. The lynx spiders advance and then spray webbing over the

humans while the wolf spiders surge forward. The lynx spiders concentrate on a single target with

their webbing, then move on to another; the wolf spiders keep biting until they or their foe is defeated.

A lynx spider will attack by biting if an attacker successfully reduces its AP total in close

combat. Each will bite a foe once, then move to another target if another attack reduces its AP.

If the party defeats three or more spiders without having any of their own members die, the tarantulas and trolls join in the attack. The trolls will not move in if their wolf and lynx spiders are winning easily, but will instead attack the party with missile weapons.

If all the lynx spiders are put out of action, the trolls move in to keep command over their wolf spiders. If the party starts to win easily, the trolls may just flee, using some wolf spiders as a rear guard to delay pursuit. The wolf spiders prefer to attack mounts rather than heavily-armed human mercenaries.

## NON PLAYER CHARACTERS

### Troll Hunters

Use the statistics for a typical troll hunter as per Narrator's Book p102.

### Wild Trollkin

Use the statistics for a typical trollkin worker as per Narrator's Book p102.

### Sir Scissor

Use the statistics from Hero Wars Narrator's Book p157.

### Troll Hunting Party

### Troll Warrior

Use the statistics for a typical troll hunter as per Narrator's Book p102, with the following additions/amendments:

*Weapons and Armor:* Lead armor and shield ^5, Heavy Mace ^4, Javelin ^3.

*Significant Abilities:* Close Combat 8W, Command Spiders 5W, Net 1W, Ranged Combat 19, Ride Spider 17, Roaring Voice 16.

### Troll Mahout

Use the statistics for a typical troll hunter as per Narrator's Book p102, with the following additions/amendments:

*Weapons and Armor:* Lead armor and shield ^5, Heavy Mace ^4, Javelin ^3.

*Significant Abilities:* Close Combat 3W, Net 19, Ride Spider 17, Ranged Combat 19, Steer Tarantula 1W.

## Trollkin Slave

Use the statistics for a typical trollkin worker as per Narrator's Book p102. The trollkin will act as a follower to provide AP to the troll warrior.

## Tarantula Mount

*Weapons and Armor:* Chitin ^5, Bite 1W^6.

*Significant Abilities:* Carry Heavy Load 5W, Large 10W, Strong 12W, Tough 1W.

*Poison:* Debilitating, Lethal, Potency 10W.

## Lynx Spider

*Weapons and Armor:* Chitin ^3, Bite 1W^2.

*Significant Abilities:* Large 2W, Lead Wolf Spider Pack 17, Scuttle Fast 17, Spray Webbing 5W, Strong 1W.

*Poison:* Debilitating, Lethal, Potency 2W.

## Wolf Spider

*Weapons and Armor:* Chitin ^1, Bite 17^2.

*Significant Abilities:* Detect Prey 1W, Hide 13, Run Down Prey 17, Tough 12.

*Poison:* Debilitating, Lethal, Potency 15.

A typical hunting party will have 6 wolf spiders, led by a lynx spider pack leader, and one tarantula with its troll crew. The narrator should feel free to amend these numbers to match the

situation and the capabilities of her party.

## PLAYER HANDOUTS

Some items of information are free, provided by the employer; some are for sale, and may be sought out by the players. The paired items also may be given out in any way desired by the narrator.

# Skyfall Lake - Handouts

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## From the Employer

*Note!* The conversion of this scenario to *Hero Wars* is a fan work. The hard-working volunteer has made all interpretations of game stats.

## Instructions to Skyfall Lake from the Employer

Your journey will begin at Ironspike Fort. This is the stronghold of the hill barbarians who live in Jaskor's Hold, their name for their valley. It is the last outpost of civilization and all outfitting must be completed there.

The journey is simple but dangerous. I have gone to great expense to prepare the way for the group and as long as instructions are followed there should be little risk.

You must set out early on the first day, with horses, and not slow for anything until night camp is made.

The first leg of the journey is 25 km northward, following the winding Jaskor River through the hills to the flat plains which surround Skyfall Marsh. From there travel on this plain northeast for another 25 km until you again reach broken and difficult ground. There is a wide river there, which has no name; make a well-defended camp in that area.

The single day's journey becomes more dangerous with each passing mile. Once the shores of Skyfall Marsh are reached you will be upon Giants' Walk, a place where the largest giants known

sometimes  
come. Their footprints may be visible.

This is also the entry into troll territory, and they are very jealous of their lands. My contacts have purchased you what safety can be bought by a humble man like me, but my friends have enemies of their own kind, and there are also many lawless trolls.

On the second day you must search the hills for signs of the Frog Grog Shoppe. Signs, obviously troll-made, will point to it. If trolls are sighted in the vicinity, they can be appeased by shaking a wine bottle, beer keg, or kvass skin at them.

At the Grog Shoppe, the person hired for drinking will show his stuff. This test should be no problem for a hearty adventurer. Don't believe what popular rumor says about troll drinks - they're harmless.

You will see signs which will lead you to the shop.

There is a large curtain which covers the entry. Murius will give the drinker a piece of food to hold. Go to the curtain, enter quickly, and shut the curtain as fast as you can. They do not like light. Throw the food to the left, and do not even look that way if you are squeamish.

Do not eat what they offer. It is poisonous.

Any number of you may enter at once, but only one of you must drink. Others should behave themselves peaceably, and may imbibe if they wish.

Enjoy yourselves!

You must say, "Rom Born Ga Ga ooooo. I say I can drink my way into Crabshell!"

After that they should be friendly. If they are not, flee at once.

Once the small task is accomplished at the Grog Shoppe, there should be a guide to bring the party to the town. Once there, the humans will remain, and rest or amuse themselves in any way

not offensive to the natives. I suggest you hide and stay hidden, or stick close to Murius.

Murius will do business with my customer, and everyone will remain in Crabcity for the day and night.

The next morning everyone will depart. The first day's journey will be to the previous campsite, or thereabouts. There is no need to stop at the Grog Shoppe, unless you desire to do so.

The next day's journey is the last. It is the hardest, for many miles must be covered going through Giants' Walk.

The duty of the hired guards will cease at Ironspike. Murius will follow private orders in returning home on his own.

Enclosed is a map for your purposes in the journey; you are welcome to keep it afterwards.

## Lunar Report on the Skyfall Lake Region

[compiled 1584]

This populous troll queendom is ruled personally by the heroquester called Cragspider. Her impenetrable castle, Cliffhome, perches atop the highest mountain of the region. Many able lieutenants assist her in dealing with her populace, for she is never seen outside of her home.

There are no cities here, though many tiny villages dot the shores of the misty Skyfall Lake.

Crabplace is the name of the largest. Except for the immense shell which forms the roof of the city temple, the place is a fair example of what a troll village is like. This giant shell is



located on high ground and is near the center of the buildings. The buildings themselves are in usual troll disarray, with sprawling streets and small filthy markets where they steal from each other.

Another town is built only of driftwood, and is called Driftwood in the troll tongue. Another is called Conch, and is said to whistle with a thousand eerie voices whenever the wind blows.

Most

are made of flotsam and jetsam.

Occasional stone structures are kept by wealthy trolls interested in keeping out other trolls, but there is no military defense of the ville. If a sizeable enemy force ever approaches with hostile intent then the trolls abandon their village and temples and take to their boats or to the hills to hide.

Once a week, buyers from Cragspider's castle descend and tour the villages on the lake. Their browsing and shopping may take hours or days, depending on their training and skills.

Whatever

they do not wish to purchase immediately is given a price which the owners remember religiously.

For that price they will thenceforth sell their items, but most of their stock is accumulated and worthless junk. Since trolls buy little from each other, their shanties are built of the previous years' catches.

I estimate their army to consist of 600 troll militia-type hunters, all of whom can assemble within forty-eight hours at a spot hidden in the hills. There are also many great trolls, maybe another 800 in sight or rumored to be nearby. Trollkin are limitless and sometimes roam the hills

in wild packs.

## Myth of Skyfall Lake

[A Tale Popular in all of Dragon Pass]

Why is there a place called The River? There are many rivers in this stormy land.

The source of this mighty river lies far to the north, in the wild regions of the land. This river

is famous in all the tongues of the world, for this was the first river which was born to flow downhill, from the hills to the sea.

During the War of the Gods there was a deity called Korang the Slayer. He was of chaos, a tainted monstrous god. He suffered both for and because of his ignorance, and revelled in it. He carried a long iron spear which pierced many foes with Death. He strode through the darkness leaving a poisonous wake; the peaceful of the world conspired to confront him.

Three deities set forth: Hard Earth is one, Skyriver Titan is the second, and the third is no longer remembered.

Korang the Slayer met them in combat. The god who is no longer remembered was struck and the life and soul and magic and energy flew out of him and burned up his body so that there is nothing left of him now.

Skyriver Titan thought to avoid this death, but was wounded anyway. His life-blood gushed out upon the land. He tried to flee skyward to his safe home, but the flow of his life broke through the worlds, and as a result that place is always raining. His life blood will always stream through the regions he fled.

Hard Earth thrust himself at the weapon, and the strength of his body shattered the tool into many pieces. But he was thrown down too, and became those hills where the Black Dragon lives and the spiders are servants to the trolls.

Once unarmed, the monster was nothing of power, and the great flowing of Skyriver Titan's blood cascaded upon it with a frothing and furious struggle. The monster was drowned, and violence of the blood and his soul churned up the marshes which surround the lake. Under the lake lies the

ruins of a dead city where the chaos gods once lived. And overhead the Skyriver still continues to flow, washing upon the region in great torrents to cleanse the earth.

## An Issaries Report

(Can be gained by talking in most marketplaces. Documentation is available upon request, and has been gotten for the players.)

There is a town called Crabcity which is the biggest troll settlement in all of the Dragon Pass lands. An immense temple made out of a single crab shell protects the shrine of Kyger Litor, who reportedly killed the monster.

Like many trolls, these tribes use various insects as guard animals. They are especially fond of their stingworms, but mostly love their spiders.

Even though they are creatures of darkness, these trolls go too far. Due to Cragspider's proximity they count all arachnids to be sacred, and so refrain from harming any of them. This is well in some respects, for the fly population is amazingly low for a filthy troll city. A larger spider variety, finding insects too small, takes birds on the wing by spitting a glue at them. Everything smaller than a housecat seems, even to me, acceptable and tame. For one thing, their ramshackle huts are often all covered with a clean whitish sheen of webbing,

It is the great spiders which are so abominable. I saw one whose body was larger than a horse and whose legs measured over ten meters across. He was covered by glistening hair and was an attractive bronze color.

Another was covered with warty gray skin and was the size of a woolly mammoth, as sometimes come to our land from Aggar. It dripped pools of acid which the trolls gathered after it had left. When it retired, it took three trollkin, kicking and screaming, with it.

When such a monster appeared, each separately, mind you, all the natives fled in terror. The spider then stalked calmly down the alleys, crushing huts as he walked over them. It paused occasionally to tear apart a hovel, peeling its layers of trash like a wife peeling a head of lettuce. Its familiarity with this hunt was plain to see, and such monsters may arrive here regularly.

Another common curse is when the young of the warty gray ones hatch. They are dangerous biters, and can gang up on larger creatures. The trolls then simply desert the whole region until the spiders clean out their town and eat each other. It is also possible for a priestess to somehow enchant them all into a small magic bottle which she then casts into Skyfall Lake. Also, a type of floor shrew sometimes appears in large numbers and devours the spiderlings.

Carathos suggested that they could set up a nice altar outside of town and leave trollkin as a sacrifice, but Garkagi said the priestesses would have none of that and that we should watch our tongues while we still had them.

- From the diary of Hafsar Blueyes, priest of Issaries, Fire Season 1610

## The Nets of Skyfall

A particular type of magical substance, especially useful in making nets, comes only from the Skyfall Lake area. It is probably some type of exotic spider silk, perhaps from gods or spirits, but it is impossible to tell for sure. Even the priests and their Rune spells cannot tell.

The local trolls use it to fish in Skyfall Lake. That is a feat in itself, for this lake is violent and troubled, and has creatures in it which have fallen out of the sky, or are left over from the Gods War. Still, the trolls sometimes make nets and skein the bottom, or make fishing lines with it and use hooks carved from dragon bones.

They are said to harvest odd animals, of no practical use to anyone but hungry trolls, and sometimes a magical item of worth, but more commonly a load of junk.

These things can only be gotten with those magical nets, and the nets can only be made with special knowledge which is unknown outside of that troll region.

- common knowledge among fishermen of the region

## Ancient Ditty

On the Shores of Skyfall Lake

Live the trolls who daily take

The treasures from that sea.

Their nets are gifts from the Spider

And the casters do not hide Her

Glory in loot and in misery.

They ride their boats through chaos ruins,

And slay evil foes with iron harpoons

And share in the Spider's treasury.

## FROM THE TEMPLE OF KNOWLEDGE

Price: 50 Lunars for entire collection

## From the Temple of Knowledge

## An Ancient Report on Great Trolls

[Excerpt from a speech by Naravang Four-eyes in 732 ST to his household.]

The presence of a new type of trolls, which we call Great Trolls, is absolutely sure. They are coming from Cragspider's Spire. She seems to have relocated a whole tribe of them, or has a method of breeding them, or else has made a hole to the hero plane to enlist aid.

The truth must be known. Therefore I have taken it upon myself to secretly penetrate Cliffhome in search of this menacing truth. I swear to return with the words to you, even upon my death and dispersal, on this matter. If I return, the name of Naravang Four-eyes will ring forever as a hero.

Farewell, wife. My last thoughts shall be of you. Keep our secret pathway open. Yelmario smile on you.

[Naravang was seen once since then. in a dream of his wife's. He appeared, looking gaunt and pale, and said "No fear." Four-eye is also the name of a servant in Cragspider's household who is a spirit of light and delivers messages for her.]

## Lunar Report on Religions

[c.1595]

The most popular religion in the area is that of Arachne Solara, the goddess of nature. Cragspider, a monster troll, is said to be high priestess of the cult. She is never seen but the pinnacle which houses her is but 12 miles away from the lake, always visible.

Kyger Litor is popular, as wherever trolls live.

Sea Titan is another god, whose shrine is set atop the crab shell there.

A priestess of Night wanders about, hobbling and aided by a slave. She carries a lead umbrella which she calls Argan Argar, and which shades her in the daytime.

## Troll Fishing Boats, Etc.

[Fragment from an old Tarsh report to the king, c. 1423]

To catch some of the deeper monsters the trolls use whole humans as bait, hooked alive and protected only by an air-breathing spell.

Most prized of their small lake fleet is Krakenbane, a massive ram-ship with eight magic oars cut from giant bones and armor made from the hide of unslayable dragons.

Most fishing boats are poor imitations of this vessel. Instead of dragon parts they usually have some portion of a dead dragonewt nailed to their wooden planking to provide protective magic.

Their nets, in the hand of a master, could provide access to almost any magic of the cosmos, were the caster to survive the many hard tests and guardians who are tied into its magical strands and knots.

## Another Redbird Document

We had no problem in acquiring a piece of the magical rope. These trolls responded like real friends, even though I was an initiate of two Lightbringer cults and had liberated a band of trollkin to my care.

The guards in my hire have turned out to be among the most slovenly and vile of my experience, for they seem to enjoy rooting about the poisonous drinks like the trolls that they are visiting. Only myself and a servant named Willworth went out onto the lake to fish.

I drew up several creatures which were strange, and lost my bait. The most impressive was a green snake's skull which seems to be important. Most important, of course, is that it was free.

Willworth pulled up a bronze pot with a lid closed tight. He pried it open with his knife and peered inside, but a mustardy vapor sizzled out and burnt his whole face off. Healing did help some and he is lucky that I saved his life then. One eye was horribly swollen and I couldn't bear to look at it.

I immediately set off home but we were beset by one of those unpredictable dangers of the

region.

A whale, measuring thrice the size of any of the greater dinosaurs in the world, rose and came to swallow us. It seemed as big as the city of Boldhome. All of my magic was no use against it.

Willworth then rose up and proved the worth of someone even as ignorant as he, for he simply said something and waved his hand and jumped once with a yelp of pain, and the whale shuddered and sounded, never touching us at all and sending a wave which carried us to shore. Willworth, poor fool, was ashock and was once again saved by my skills.

Such activities are common there, or so it would seem to me. We returned home as outlined elsewhere in my memoirs.

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I drew up several creatures which were strange, and lost my bait. The most impressive was a green snake's skull which seems to be important. Most important, of course, is that it was free.

Willworth pulled up a bronze pot with a lid closed tight. He pried it open with his knife and peered inside, but a mustardy vapor sizzled out and burnt his whole face off. Healing did help some and he is lucky that I saved his life then. One eye was horribly swollen and I couldn't bear to look at it.

I immediately set off home but we were beset by one of those unpredictable dangers of the region.

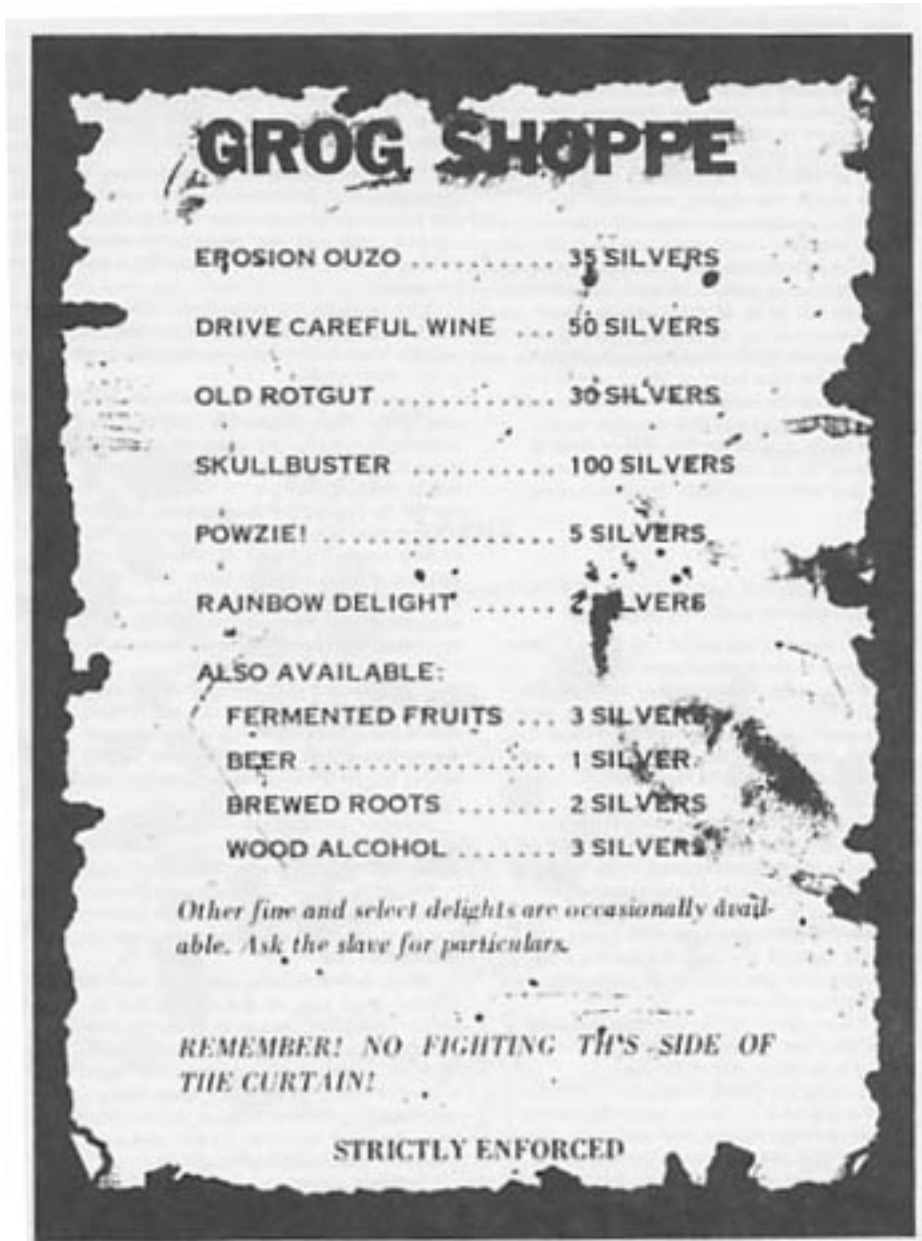
A whale, measuring thrice the size of any of the greater dinosaurs in the world, rose and came to swallow us. It seemed as big as the city of Boldhome. All of my magic was no use against it.

Willworth then rose up and proved the worth of someone even as ignorant as he, for he simply said something and waved his hand and jumped once with a yelp of pain, and the whale shuddered and sounded, never touching us at all and sending a wave which carried us to shore. Willworth, poor fool, was ashock and was once again saved by my skills.

Such activities are common there, or so it would seem to me. We returned home as outlined elsewhere in my memoirs.

## TO BE HANDED OUT LATER

### Grog Shoppe Menu



## ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Some [extra material](#) about Skyfall Lake and its surroundings.

# Skyfall Lake - Extra Material

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Irripi Ontor #90.45.7.8929/34

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## An Analysis of Aquatic Fauna Encounters, Skyfall Lake, Dragon Pass

By Greg Stafford and Sandy Peterson. Thanks to Stephen Martin and Bruce Ferrie for collection and entry of materials.

*Irripi Ontor Document #90.45.7.8929/34: Raibanth Wisdom Temple. Inscribed Under the Seal of*

*Lord High Sage Requiath Rattlepate, 26th year of the 7th Wane, using Irripi Ontor Truth Grading System 5a/RPATE. Prepared for Blademaster Sigilius Gar-Sool of Yanafal Tarnils, Baron of Carantes, in accordance with Imperial document regulations 35.1, 600.3, and 12.37 (Imperial Code of the Red Emperor, Revision XVII).*

Research Staff: Acolyte Ubiquus, known as the Skeptic; Scriveners Baz Razorpen and Murgot Thimble; Library Assistants Xot-Sin Swivelhips and Rusticus of Two Tomes.

MY DEAR SIR SIGILLIUS, thank you for your patronage of our modest temple. My assistants and I have researched the subject of Skyfall Lake with care. As you have requested, we paid particular attention to information pertaining to the greater monsters of the lake. I hope that the fruit of our efforts will suit your exalted pleasure.

After six seasons of dangerous field investigations, library work, divination, and onerous numerological codification, I have been able to arrive at certain definitive conclusions. Sections below summarize my recommendations for your expedition and the theoretical basis for these recommendations.

I also include several excerpts from documents related to the subject. These excerpts are representative of the large body of data I and my assistants examined, and I hope that they will serve to demonstrate the scope and accuracy of this project. Of course, a more exhaustive research effort would undoubtedly yield a more sophisticated result, but would require an even longer period of time and considerably more funding.

You will be relieved to know that all of the data I was provided with or unearthed has been painstakingly evaluated for accuracy using our famous Truth Grading system. Although I am certain you are fully cognizant of this system, permit me to recap the salient features for your convenience. After assembling all material on a subject, we sift each document for its essential validity, ascribing a numeric grade from 0 to 100 to every statement or piece of data encountered. A grade of 0 represents our estimation that a statement is an utter and certain falsehood or error, and a grade of 100 is awarded only to those statements guaranteed absolutely truthful and accurate in all details.

As said before, all data pursuant to the subject of this project was rated using our system. In accordance with our hallowed Irripi Ontor traditions of precise analysis, any material that fell below a TGS (Truth Grading System) of 85 was ignored.

Following are representative excerpts from the three most useful documents I analyzed.

Document I. Ubiquus the Skeptic's Report

Document II. Narrative of Neasha of Rhigos

Document III. The Guidebook of Gnashk Oneleg

## Summary of Research Findings

IN REGARDS to my overall appraisal of the data, samples of which you have read above, I can offer only a very basic, but carefully considered recommendation: your attention should be focussed on the weather over the lake. When certain meteorological events occur, as defined below, a

probability of 73 out of 100 exists that your expedition will encounter hazardous magical events and supremely dangerous creatures. When these events are in abeyance, the probability of such encounters drops to 29 out of 100. Using this system, expeditions onto the lake can be conducted without a catastrophic level of risk.

The specific event your scouts must watch for is the appearance of black storm clouds over the northern part of the lake, leading to a Class Seven or higher (using Jar-Veeshna's Weather Codex) thunderstorm in that area. High winds, lightning, and waterspouts are usually present during these storms, as are rains of odd objects such as worms or flakes of metal. This should make identification relatively easy. My research has established a correlation of Rank 73.13 significance (Temple Schedule 98.N1) between such thunderstorms and the sighting of dangerous monsters such as Megaserpentes Maritimus (sea serpents), or of more inexplicable entities, such as the apocryphal "Brown Shark."

Note that thunderstorms are frequent events on Skyfall Lake (occurrence in 43.41 out of 100 entries), but only those of great severity, and only those that occur in the northern part of the lake, are worthy of your special consideration. You may rest assured that a careful watch for this weather pattern will protect you and your men from excessive and undignified exertions during your expedition.

## Theoretical Background to the Analysis

MY LORD, THE THEORY behind my recommendation is quite simple. The monstrous fauna that infest the zone of magic known as Skyfall Lake derive from a source that is hidden in the sky, far above the rain clouds and storms over the lake. Using advanced methods of numerological divination, I have determined this distance to be exactly 719 Solar glm. (Temple Measurement Schedule 98.LI3).

My theory is that the clouds function as a curtain or barrier between our world and some strange opening into the plane of the gods, an opening that appears to be located over the northern part of the lake. Imprecision in the available material precludes a more specific localization.

When the clouds are thickest and storms are present, the opening to the God Plane gapes wide, letting vast monsters and other more mysterious forces through to our world, thus creating conditions hazardous even to a warrior of the greatest stature.

If you will indulge a speculation, my lord, I believe that beyond this opening is some place sacred to the gods, a place that is too awesome for our unworthy mortal eyes to behold. Thus great clouds and storms are constantly present, hiding all knowledge from our sight. The waterspouts, rains of odd objects, aquatic monsters, and other marvels are only small manifestations of the importance of this magic place.

My research indicates that very powerful storms (Levels Seven through Ten of Jar-Veesna's Weather Codex) form over the northern part of the great lake periodically. There seems to be no link between these storms and the ordinary weather of Dragon Pass. Nor does any other discernible local phenomena seem to be connected, even dragonewt sightings or broo outrages. This would tend to reinforce the theory that events in another world determine the pattern. Frequency is once per 17 days, on average.

As mentioned above, monster sightings or other dramatic events reliably occur on the same days that these great storms brew up in the north. Odd objects and entities follow the opening of the hole between the worlds in the same way that smoke follows fire.

I might add, for your peace of mind, that use of Yak-Teel's Solar Codex, the numerological technique pioneered by High Priest Yak-Teel Prime Requisite of our temple, fully confirms my theory of this linkage between the weather of the lake and the sighting of monsters.

# Document I. Ubiquus the Skeptic's Report

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OUR TEMPLE here in Raibanth is known for the fine training and preparation our initiates receive.

With this in mind, I summoned young Ubiquus, one of our most promising staff members, and offered

him the chance to perform field research on the subject of Skyfall Lake. This task was accepted

with great enthusiasm, especially once the alternative was clear.

Within four seasons he had returned, only a little worse for wear, bringing with him a veritable mass of raw data on the subject of Skyfall Lake, which I and other experienced members of our temple

then carefully sifted and analyzed using our special techniques.

Although Ubiquus belongs to one of the little cliques that often form in large temples like ours, he

is basically a sound researcher, and I think you will agree that his work is excellent in terms of detail.

Ubiquus took a position on board a troll fishing vessel and spent many weeks keeping a scientific

record of events. Several of the most significant entries from his log of observations follow, all presented complete and unedited, and in chronological order. Ubiquus began his work on the first

day of Earth Season, and ended his career as a fishermen on the 38th day of Dark Season.

Note that all observations were made at night, using troll "Dark Seeing" magic. Since trolls are a primarily nocturnal species, fishing on Skyfall Lake normally occurs at night.

My lord, I doubt you would wish to see the complete body of data that Ubiquus recorded.

Most

entries record events of little interest, and are, let us say, a bit overzealous as well. I am sure that so busy a member of the nobility as yourself has far more important work at hand.

Nevertheless, the material is available should you have need of it.

## The Journal of Ubiquus the Skeptic



Many legends and reports are available concerning the magical body of water in Dragon Pass known as Skyfall Lake. However, we progressive and sophisticated scholars are not always satisfied with the quality of such documents. Rumors accepted as fact by laymen are often contradictory, and no attempt is made to reconcile the information in many of these documents. I need only to reference the "Jarasborn version" of the Skyfall Creation Myth to remind scholars that even we may be misled without careful attention to methodology.

We of the Scribes of Ineffable Truth are famed for our courage and persistence in probing the deepest secrets of such legendary mysteries as Skyfall Lake. Our school of philosophy is known for its radical skepticism. Let those fools like Red Jarasborn proclaim that all doubt harbors God-Learnerism! In the spirit of the great tradition of Jornar Doubter-of-All I journeyed to Skyfall Lake, to reveal the truth about the lake for our temple and the further glory of our renowned school.

## Research Parameters

The period of my investigation was 13 weeks in duration. I interviewed 102 trolls, humans, trollkin, and other entities during the course of my stay at Skyfall Lake. I participated in 47 days of fishing on board the Wavecutter Granite, a ship owned and operated by trolls, keeping a diary of significant events and observations. I dissected 35 large specimens from the locality. I estimate that more than a third of these creatures will prove to be new and undocumented by our temple.

Of especial assistance to my researches were the following individuals, to whom we of the Lord of the Light of Knowledge are most grateful:

- Sir Scissor, dark troll, priest of Argan Argar, age 38. My main contact in Crabtown, he assisted greatly in translations and negotiations with persons in the community.
- Lord High Windbreaker, dark troll, priest of Engizi, age 93 (est.). Source of several legends, and assisted my research with protective spells and blessings.
- Worshkt Wrinkleface, dark troll, captain of Wavecutter Granite, age 49. Showed great

patience with my sometimes unusual requests.

- Brainsplatter Rogog and Geo Black Rogog, great troll mercenaries and my faithful bodyguards.
- Old Hummb, dark troll, fisherman and bartender, age 70 (est.).
- Milkonkt Rindpicker, dark troll, acolyte of Kyger Litor, age 50 (est.). Assisted my researches with spells and advice.

## Nature Of The Lake

Skyfall Lake is a terrifying place. My researches, performed at great risk to life and limb, have confirmed that the lake stands on the boundary between our plane and the plane of gods and heroes. I believe that on certain days when conditions are right, the lake stands open to both worlds, and could be used as a pathway between them.

Even the most basic facts about Skyfall Lake elude documentation. For example, both the outline and size of the lake were impossible for me to map in a precise fashion. I am quite aware of the size and shape that the lake is given on maps, and can only state that on several occasions I sailed far beyond those edges, based on painstakingly accurate estimates of our ship's speed and direction. It is true, however, that an observer walking along the perimeter of the lakeshore would believe the maps to be accurate. Luckily, we of the Scribes of Ineffable Truth are taught to check, test, and retest our observations of the world before committing precious ink to paper.

The legends of Skyfall Lake that describe it as a place of awesome magic are accurate. The facts are in some ways less thrilling than the legends, but in many ways the magic is even more powerful than I would have dared to imagine. The tales in which trolls constantly dredge up magical items, gold, and other treasure were quickly proven to be exaggerated, for most of the troll activity on the lake is simple fishing, as would be done on any lake. On the other hand, the legends that talk of Skyfall Lake as a passage between this world and the world of the gods are accurate, perhaps even understated, judging by the remarkable phenomena I observed.

## Fauna And Flora

The denizens of the lake are so multifarious that I was unable to make even an attempt at cataloguing them. Many schools of large and beautiful fish flourish in the depths of the lake, and terrible monsters prey upon them. Even the least of the creatures are large, about the size of a warrior's thigh. Most are much larger. Though I hesitate to repeat legends, I should note that there are tales of creatures so large that they swallowed ships whole. Certainly my own diary records several sightings of such mighty creatures as whales, sea serpents, and water wyrms, few if any of which would be encountered on a normal lake. I also encountered or sighted beings that could only have come from a more magical plane of existence.

Initially I wondered how such huge monsters such as water wyrms could live and find suitable prey in a body of water that is of such limited size, and I presumed, depth. To my awe, I was able to determine that Skyfall Lake is in some places, and on certain occasions, of unplumbable depth. I speak of distances greater than the entire width of the lake at its narrowest point. To venture an unprovable but intriguing speculation, it may be that the lake is bottomless in some places! The lake also seems to have boundaries that vary with the ebb and flow of strange, unearthly forces, sometimes extending into vast regions which I assume are the borders of the other world. It is possible that the more magical monsters of the lake swim between the planes, finding much of their prey in that other, far greater region. These mysteries of the lake are linked to its fearsome magical essence, which only one of the greatest of our cult could ever hope to penetrate.

There is deadly danger on the lake, especially if one sails out of sight of land, into the mists and rain clouds. Even the boats that fish for ordinary catches, well in sight of the shore, often come to grief. Persons fishing for magical creatures or dredging the lake for treasure always use equipment ensorcelled by the local priests. Large, sturdy boats with spells and runes carved into their structure, grotesque enchanted hooks, massively thick fishing lines, and huge nets are all available from the priests of Skyriver Titan, in Crabtown. Ordinary fishing equipment is useless against even the more ordinary hazards of the lake, such as a lake crocodile. Whether the enchanted

tools function more effectively simply because they are larger and better made, or because the spells cast upon them by the troll priests are useful, who can say? Certainly it is considered bad

luck to fish with a line or net that has not been blessed by the priests of Skyriver Titan. I can only state that I personally have much greater respect for this odd god now than before my expedition.

The trolls around Skyfall Lake often throw garbage or dangerous objects into the water. This contributes in many odd ways to the nature of the lake. The prevalence of huge aquatic spiders

is certainly linked to this practice, given the method that the priestesses of Orani, the troll spider spirit, use to make away with unwanted giant spider hatchlings. A very large percentage of

the items netted from the lake are worthless as a result of the use of the lake as a dump by these

seedy trolls, who are not intimidated by the magic of the place.

There is little in the way of plant life in the lake, though floating masses of water weeds were occasionally observed. I know not why this is so, except that the huge volume and swirling currents

of water flowing through the lake might inhibit the growth of underwater flora.

## Mythos Of The Lake

Skyfall Lake must have had a magical origin, but there is much disagreement as to the details of

what must have been a truly stupendous event. I offer here those legends that seemed most coherent

or consistent, with no guarantee as to their validity.

One point of relevance to all those readers who hate and fear chaos: according to many tales, at

the bottom of Skyfall Lake are the ruins of an ancient center of chaos, a city where foul and mighty beings of chaos once lived and may still lurk. These disturbing tales may have some basis

in truth, for I personally saw several creatures of chaotic horror in my sojourns on the lake. The rain that falls over the lake is credited with the power to keep the vile chaotic forces under control, but anyone who dredges or fishes in the lake takes a risk of encountering chaos, perhaps

in a virulent form. Let us hope that the rain never ceases to fall.

## The Legend of Skyriver Titan

The troll priests of Skyriver Titan, the sky god worshiped in Crabtown, were happy to tell me various tales of their god and the lake. Their creed seems to be that their god fought a chaos demon or monster on the site of the lake, which was at that time a place of chaos. This legend agrees with those described in our temple documents. The oldest priest I met, a gnarled curmudgeon

of a troll who was always addressed as "Lord High Windbreaker," told me the central mythos of his god in the following fashion:

During the War of the Gods there was one known as Korang the Slayer, who brought Death to many deities with a wicked spear of burning metal. Korang was tainted with the evil force of chaos, but had no shame in this, for his consciousness was too weak to understand any power but slaying and destruction. His path was strewn with his victims, and befouled with chaotic putrescence.

Korang was strong in his ignorance, and full of a squirming chaotic vigor. He was so powerful that three gods joined to destroy him, among them Skyriver Titan, a god of the sky. Korang was afraid, and took refuge with other forces of chaos, who had a city called Refuge of the Hated.

A terrible battle took place over that city of chaos. All three of the attacking gods were wounded unto death, and although Korang the Slayer was only disarmed, his spear was shattered for all eternity. Yet the monster still lived, albeit powerless.

Skyriver Titan was the last to take his death-wound from monstrous Korang. With his remaining strength, Skyriver Titan fled up to the sky where was his home, with the blood rain streaming from his sadly wounded body. Skyriver Titan left this world, but his blood rain still rushed out from the sky, in a torrent so strong that the evil monster was inundated. A lake formed over the ruins of the evil city, and Korang was trapped and drowned in the boiling depths of this holy lake.

Thus did Skyriver Titan, even in death, defeat the forces of chaos. The magical blood rain of our god still flows to this day, as anyone can see, preserving us all from the chaos that lurks below. We call the flow of his blood rain the Sky River, and it comes to us from the plane of the gods, bringing much that is good to aid his worshipers.

## The First River

A simple but intriguing legend is told of Skyfall Lake and its relationship to the Creekstream River, one that I believe could very well be accurate. This legend is told both by trolls and by humans, as opposed to the legend of Skyriver Titan, which is almost entirely a troll artifact. Here is the way a worshiper of an obscure river-spirit cult living in Crabtown told the tale:

In the Godtime, water was the most powerful force in the world. Mighty were those gods who sported amidst the force and majesty of the rivers and oceans.

When the surface world was created, only the weaker gods participated, for they were bored and frustrated over their lack of power over the plane of the gods, and wished to create a new place to display their mastery. But their creation was incomplete and fruitless.

One day one of the mighty water gods happened to perceive that the surface world had been created. He viewed the land, and saw that it was barren and dry. In his divine generosity, he raised his hand and channeled a path through the gods' home through which life-giving water could flow to the surface world. The water rushed through the channel and splashed onto the land, and there was much rejoicing. The water created first a lake, and then found its way through the land to the lowest portion, in the process creating the first River of the world. Water had come to the land, and the regions around the holy River grew fertile and green, and all praised the god and did obeisance.

## The Legend of Thog-don

One of the most interesting legends of the lake that I heard during my stay was that of Thog-

don,  
a chaotic but sentient being who has supposedly been caught by fishermen several times during the last few centuries, with odd but consistent results. I was not able to find any actual evidence of Thog-don's existence, but talked to several older trolls who claimed to have seen him.

According to these fellows, Thog-don is a huge, voracious aquatic monster with a taste for exotic bait, such as a gold statue or a dragonewt's head. The old troll fishermen were not able to agree as to the right bait to use when fishing for Thog-don, and spent several hours arguing about this point, growling and buffeting each other. Thog-don's exact form is also arguable, though he is always described as vast and bloated in size. He was most often described as a giant fish with two trolls' heads where eyes might be, and weird flailing limbs around his mouth, like whiskers on a catfish.

If one should be so lucky as to hook or net Thog-don, it is believed that the creature will unflinchingly beg for mercy and promise ransom. One old troll said that he had heard that Thog-don put up quite a fight before surrendering, while another claimed that the creature was an arrant coward, and howled for quarter as soon as he felt the sting of weapons.

In any case, what all my sources agreed upon was that, should a fishing vessel be lucky enough to subdue Thog-don and drag him to shore, an even more vast monster, supposedly Thog-don's mother, will soon arrive to offer ransom for his release. What kind of ransom Thog-don's mother is likely to offer remains unclear. My questions on this score brought on such a spate of arguing and drunken brawling among the trolls that I left the scene of the interview in haste.

## Other Tall Tales

The fishermen who have ventured often into the central area of the lake claim to have seen many odd or impressive things, some of them ludicrous, like a floating town inhabited by sentient

fish-men with purple scales, and some of them believable, like the rotting corpse of a giant. I enjoyed the story one seedy old gaffer told, in which he subdued a huge lake-spider with nothing but a wooden club and a supply of slingstones blessed by his mother. Trolls are as prone to exaggeration as humans, perhaps more so.

One legend I was able to partially verify was that of the city of green glass. There seems to be a link between the city's appearance and sightings of the monster known as the Brown Shark.

The trolls of Crabtown will tell you that anything is possible in Skyfall Lake. My own experiences indicate that there may be some sense to this attitude.

## A Catalogue Of Catches On The Lake

My old combat instructor, Saltinus Clippedtail, always said that the best scholars are not afraid to do a little first-hand exploration in order to confirm the truth or falsehood of what they have been told. With this wise dictum in mind, I chose to perform a survey of lake catches personally.

Although I am a man of advanced years, the power of my magic and my god sustained me in this endeavor, and I am proud to be able to offer a series of definitive personal observations, with the vital stamp of authority that only authorship by a disciple of Irripi Ontor can offer. I have edited my journal as necessary to omit speculation and conjecture, and only the most rigid skeleton of truth remains for your perusal.

During the greater portion of Earth Season, a time when the lake is comparatively peaceful, I fished and dredged as a common seaman in company with a large and prosperous crew of dark troll fishermen. I made myself as useful as was feasible for a person of my advanced years and kept a diary of events, an edited form of which appears below.

By the end of my stay, I was well known in Crabtown both as a successful fisherman, and also as a buyer and seller of odd bits and items gleaned from the lake.



## Excerpt 1:

*Commentary by Requiat:* In this early entry from Ubiquus's journal, the second in the series, one can already see certain indications of the linkage I have discerned between storms localized to the north and the potential for dangerous or magical manifestations. Further perusal of the data confirms this hypothesis, as you will see.

*Date:* Waterday, Disorder Week, Earth Season, 26th year of the 7th Wane

*Weather:* Powerful storms in the northeast. Heavy rains. As regards rainfall, a note on troll perceptions. The level of precipitation I consider heavy, based on accepted norms, is considered moderate by the trolls on board this ship. Luckily I have been trained in the standard techniques of objective measurement, and have brought a standard 100-ring beaker on board the vessel.

Comparatively light rains though they may be, I note that the precipitation was still so strong that my heavy oilcloth windbreaker was soaked through by the end of the night. I am sure that other corrections to my preconceptions about the lake will be necessary.

Odd yellow and blue lights in the south appeared during the later part of the night (total number sighted: 26). The trolls were uncommunicative about the meaning of these lights or their source.

I deduce that beings of semi-intelligent nature inhabit the great marshes in the southern part of the lake. Further research will be necessary.

*Sailing Route:* Followed the edge of the marsh to the south. Stopped several times for an hour or so while all the crew examined the water carefully. Apparently some sort of magical, green-colored ruins can occasionally be seen in the lake on nights like tonight, or so I was told by one garrulous dark troll fisherman.

*Fishing: Average.*

*Unusual Creatures Caught:* Many huge insects, of the water beetle variety (#3520-3528, New Jrusteli System), were present in our fishing area tonight. Distribution was approximately 3.2 insects per 100 Raibanth rods the ship sailed. Typical sample insect measured 1.35 rods in length.

*Unusual Items Netted:* None.

*Notes:* A little joke was played on me this evening, in which it was suggested that I be the bait for the Brown Shark, a legendary monster which the crew has apparently been trying to catch for some years now. They seemed to think it would be out and about this evening, and were looking around nervously. Trolls seem to take a joke a little farther than humans do. It was only when I had actually been tied to a huge rusted hook and tossed into the water that they relented.

It is always important for a sage to remain calm and unangered in such circumstances. I must remember to give my two bodyguards a raise, considering the way that they maimed several of the most obstreperous troll humorists so suddenly and efficiently shortly after I was pulled out. The shark was not sighted.

*Measured Data:*

Cloud cover: 74/100ths

Wind Force: 20 flags

Average Temperature: 5 I.T.

Average Precipitation: 87 rings

Observed average speed of ship: 2.3 short knots

Weight of catch, overall: 310 RSB

[Overall TGS grade: 91]

## Excerpt 2:

*Commentary by Requat:* Stasis Week of Earth Season was the most eventful week of Ubiquus's journal, with four major encounters with dangerous fauna. This entry is typical. Also see the following entry four days later. Note the caution and ritual activity displayed during this night's fishing.

*Date:* Waterday, Stasis Week, Earth Season, 26th year of the 7th Wane.

*Weather:* Very strong, warm rain tonight over the entire lake and the shore. Powerful storms in the northwest. Around midnight what appeared to be a tornado appeared, of great height and shot with lightning, lasting for only a few minutes. Its appearance and motions violated all normal weather patterns, and the ship stayed so far away that I was not able to make any accurate observations. Rain included a mass of various small snails, grubs and other squirming aquatic organisms too varied to classify. Most were unpleasant in smell and feel, although the trolls quickly devoured all within reach.

*Sailing Route:* Stayed near shore. Crew very wary.

*Fishing:* Plentiful, but almost all fish were an odd blue color. They seemed to slip through our enchanted nets without trouble until the captain brought out a small stone box, placed it in the center of the deck, and opened the top. I was not permitted to look inside the box.

*Unusual Creatures Caught:* While netting fish we also caught a magical crocodilian with metallic skin. The creature was very difficult to kill, as its gleaming, silvery skin was as tough as bronze armor. One of our crew was lost during this battle. The body, from jaw to tail, measured 3.2 Raibanth rods in length. Other than skin, monster was similar to ordinary *Crocodylus porosus* in most respects (Classification 298 New Jrusteli System), but about 25/100ths heavier. Metal in skin was not identifiable.

*Unusual Items Netted:* One wooden idol, of a fish with a crown. Dated 3rd quarter of the 1st Age using Droffat's system. Sold to a trader that morning.

*Notes:* Overall, a very notable and strange evening. Saw the Green Glass City clearly for the first time tonight. The trolls were very quiet, aware of even the slightest noise, during our passage over this eerie aquatic phenomenon. They all stayed away from the edges of the vessel, apparently in fear of the Brown Shark.

When we returned to shore, I examined the metallic crocodile's body (see above data), and offered to contact an armorer in Aldachur, a friend of mine, whom I knew was capable of working with magical materials, suggesting that he fashion the skin into a magical set of scale or plate armor.

*Measured Data:*

Cloud cover: 98/100ths

Wind Force: 15 flags

Average Temperature: 8 I.T.

Average Precipitation: 97 rings

Observed average speed of ship: 2 short knots

Weight of catch, overall: 562 RSB

[Overall TGS grade: 93]

### Excerpt 3:

*Commentary by Requat:* The entry below, another from Stasis Week of Earth Season, is one of the most dramatic listings of magical events and encounters to be found in the journal. The description of the storms as "shifting" may have some special significance.

*Date:* Wildday, Stasis Week, Earth Season, 26th year of the 7th Wane

*Weather:* Severe, gusty winds, rough water, and oddly shifting storms. Saw waterspouts for the first time: a disturbing experience. I doubt very strongly that most waterspouts have huge, murkily visible sea-beings rising up them as this one did. I noted that the captain stayed well clear of these phenomena.

*Sailing Route:* Stayed in the southern part of the lake, avoided storms. Several rituals were performed at midnight. I was not permitted to observe any of them, though the trolls were polite.

*Fishing:* Poor. Much damage to nets. Several lines, poles, and hooks taken.

*Unusual Creatures Caught:* Fourteen huge, voracious lake sharks were taken with hooks baited with various offal. Apparently identical to normal salt-water Carcharodon. How such creatures can survive in the lake is beyond my understanding. Skins are apparently somewhat valuable to trolls, especially those that were striped with yellow and red. Largest measured 12.48 rods in length: unusually large for a shark. I must remember to keep my belt strap attached to the ship at all times.

*Unusual Items Netted:* Six large, shimmering floating containers, made of a magical transparent substance, were snagged late this evening. They were formed of some sort of light protoplasm of unusually durable nature, and were shaped into a sack-like form. Each sack contained a myriad of odd blue and white crystals, which the trolls discarded before I could perform tests. The protoplasm that made up the sacks was extraordinarily non-porous, not even allowing the passage of air, as I was able to observe. One of the more playful trolls almost strangled a smaller one by pulling one of these containers over his friend's head. The captain took all these magical sacks for his personal use.

*Notes:* Near dawn I had the alarming experience of seeing several huge eyes on stalks peer over the edge of the boat. The eyes appeared to be of great complexity, similar to those of a human. I estimate that their diameter was between .2 and .3 rods. The trolls seemed not to notice

the eyes, so I restrained my outcries and said nothing. I have learned to control my normal survival impulses as a result of my experiences on the lake thus far.

*Measured Data:*

Cloud cover: 81/100ths

Wind Force: 30 flags

Average Temperature: 1 I.T.

Average Precipitation: 85 rings

Observed average speed of ship: 3 short knots

Weight of catch, overall: 230 RSB

[Overall TGS grade: 94]

**Excerpt 4:**

*Commentary by Requat:* One of the more peculiar and imprecise entries from Ubiquus's journal. Nevertheless certain points are raised of possible interest. Ubiquus refers in this entry to a series of depth-soundings that he had been making for some weeks previously, with peculiar results. Accuracy of the results obtained seems highly doubtful.

*Date:* Clayday, Movement Week, Earth Season, 26th year of the 7th Wane

*Weather:* Powerful storms. Warm winds. Very hot, even for this season of the year. Saw one whirlpool at close quarters tonight. Estimated diameter: over 600 Raibanth rods.

*Sailing Route:* North. Much tacking.

*Fishing:* Good. Many large creatures were caught, including giant crabs, several kinds of marine mammals, and some odd octopi with many extra tentacles.

*Unusual Creatures Caught:* Tonight the lookout sighted a gigantic lake whale. We followed the beast cautiously at my request for a short time, and I was able to make a few observations. The colossal monster was similar to a sperm whale from the deep ocean, but with a different form of head. As it breached, one could see many odd crustaceans and other life forms writhing on its vast green back. I am reluctant to offer an estimate of this creature's size. However, we pursued and harpooned a much smaller whale that joined the first after midnight, whose carcass measured 32 rods in length.

*Unusual Items Netted:* Several large pearls were found, to the excitement of the fishermen. I was not permitted a chance to examine these valuable items.

*Notes:* Although it was a busy night, I made another series of soundings tonight, with so vast a roll of measuring cords that it took both of my great-troll guards to help me unroll it. One of the foolish trollkin slaves panicked and was crushed by the roll when the work crew loaded it on board, and the captain demanded a stiff fee from me. The expenses involved in this effort proved worthwhile, however. To my amazement, there were still several places where bottom was not touched. Unless some special event is occurring, this experiment indicates that the lake is deeper than it is wide at some points.

*Measured Data:*

Cloud cover: 71/100ths

Wind Force: 24 flags

Average Temperature: 10 I.T.

Average Precipitation: 79 rings

Observed average speed of ship: 3 short knots

Weight of catch, overall: 378 RSB

[Overall TGS grade: 90]

## Excerpt 5:

*Commentary by Requiat:* Entry made for the High Holy Day of Kyger Litor. Note unusual events.

*Date:* Godday, Disorder Week, Dark Season, 26th year of the 7th Wane

*Weather:* Heavy rains and strong wind. The severe thunderstorms and lightning experienced during the day interfered with my sleep, but by evening they had died down. However, vast, slow swells and surges of water were experienced tonight, bringing the ship up and down in a manner reminiscent of travel on the ocean. Both of my bodyguards and I became seasick. The rain at one point included finned eels, tiny blue flying fish, and various kinds of small hard-shelled mollusks, one of which stunned me slightly, even though I was wearing my armor as usual underneath my oilskins. Biggest shell measured was .23 rods long, weighted 1.28 RSB.

*Sailing Route:* As has occurred before, tonight we sailed straight off into the clouds to the east. The ship sailed in a consistent direction for a period of five hours without reaching the marshes near the opposite shore of the lake. I was quickly able to estimate our speed over the water, which was enough to have brought us to the opposite shore in approximately 3.9 hours, based on standard maps. Yet the marshes were never sighted. Clearly there is powerful magic occurring on the lake.

*Fishing:* Good. Several kinds of smaller (one rod or less) fish, many of unusual beauty.

*Unusual Creatures Caught:* The tiny flying fish mentioned above were caught in hand-held nets by several of our crew. A closer examination showed that their wings were made of some



mineral substance. Those trolls lucky enough to take any of the fish guarded their catches so jealously, growling and snarling, that I was intimidated from making further analysis. Nor could I purchase a specimen.

*Unusual Items Netted:* An odd box made of some form of paper was dredged up. It was covered with garish colored symbols, and on the side was an odd rune of a whirlpool, made of black and white stripes. Inside was a disordered jumble of strange ritual objects such as small, distorted images of human beings.

*Notes:* A day filled with interesting encounters and events. Godday of Disorder Week in Dark Season is the High Holy Day for the great troll cult of Kyger Litor, so much religious activity took place in Crabtown. However, in addition to the normal troll activities I expected to see this day, the fishermen performed a ceremony of their own. Perhaps it celebrated the beginning of Dark Season, which is odd, since by normal reckoning using the Theyalan system popular in Dragon Pass, Dark Season had begun six days earlier. The ceremony was identical to that performed on Clayday of Stasis Week last season, so I am in doubt as to the actual event being celebrated.

*Measured Data:*

Cloud cover: 74/100ths

Wind Force: 25 flags

Average Temperature: 8 I.T.

Average Precipitation: 87 rings

Observed average speed of ship: 3.9 short knots

Weight of catch, overall: 561 RSB

[Overall TGS grade: 87]

Excerpt 6:

*Commentary by Requat:* This was one of the few entries that seemed to confound my theory of linkage between storms and monster sightings (see analysis following this section). I include it as a sample in order to demonstrate my commitment to the search for accuracy. One of our more

speculative initiates used this entry and certain other data to come up with a ludicrous theory linking the level of magical activity on the lake to certain days and weeks during the season. This theory was quickly disproved, but certain points raised were intriguing. Further analysis of the pattern and frequency of magical events on the lake might prove rewarding, but would require a considerable amount of temple donations for proper efforts to be made.

*Date:* Godday, Harmony Week, Dark Season, 26th year of the 7th Wane

*Weather:* Again, relatively calm weather for the lake.

*Sailing Route:* North, circulated in area. The island was not in sight this evening, and I believe that the ship sailed over the area in which it would normally be found. The storms were not severe, and visibility was reasonably good. "Dark Seeing" magic is certainly a boon. It is clear to me, based on experiences like tonight's, that the bounds of the lake are not always limited by the marsh.

*Fishing:* Average.

*Unusual Creatures Caught:* The placid weather seems to be stimulating the larger creatures of the lake to more surface activity. Final analysis of these entries will clarify the situation, I hope. We sighted several monsters such as sharks, crabs, and water wyrms. Worst was a huge, hungry plesiosaur (Plesiosaurus) that attacked our boat just after we had netted a large shoal of fine blue swordfish. The monster was the first live plesiosaur I have ever seen (New Jrusteli System category #8700). Only one fisherman was lost to the monster, though many sling bullets and much magic were expended in the battle. Estimated length of the plesiosaur was 12 rods, far greater than the usual number recorded in my book.

*Unusual Items Netted:* Nine hollow sea-metal spears, of some indeterminate ritual nature. Each spear tip was surmounted with an odd blue and silver device of some sort, such as a net or a brush-head.

*Measured Data:*

Cloud cover: 75/100ths

Wind Force: 16 flags

Average Temperature: 8 I.T.

Average Precipitation: 74 rings

Observed average speed of ship: 1.7 short knots

Weight of catch, overall: 367 RSB

[Overall TGS grade: 88]

## Excerpt 7:

*Commentary by Requat:* A typical entry during one of the five weeks in the journal with no dangerous encounters recorded. Note the relatively peaceful evening experienced by the crew during a period without storms. The mysterious ritual may have some importance to the absence of storm activity.

*Date:* Windsday, Death Week, Dark Season, 26th year of the 7th Wane

*Weather:* Average. No storms. Very strong winds.

*Sailing Route:* Stayed near Crabtown. Trolls performed a long, complex ritual tonight that seemed to involve the sacrifice of one of their number. Once again, I was not permitted a close look at events. I did note what appeared to be a large pool of blood on the deck soon

afterward,  
but this evidence washed away too quickly for me to take a sample.

*Fishing: Average.*

*Unusual Creatures Caught: None.*

*Unusual Items Netted:* Nothing but shards of some form of blue-green crystal that broke and shrank to nothing when exposed to sunlight at daybreak.

*Measured Data:*

Cloud cover: 73/100ths

Wind Force: 29 flags

Average Temperature: 6 I.T.

Average Precipitation: 81 rings

Observed average speed of ship: 4.4 short knots

Weight of catch, overall: 331 RSB

[Overall TGS grade: 94]

## Excerpt 8:

*Commentary by Requat:* Another uneventful evening experienced by crew, despite the decision to venture towards the center of the lake. Note once again the lack of storm activity which, this time, appears to have no relation to any trollish ritual.

*Date:* Windsday, Disorder Week, Earth Season, 26th year of the 7th Wane

*Weather:* A beautiful night. Strange, luminous colors tinged the water and the sky at sundown. The rain clouds moved off towards the mountains (to the north). The water was very clear.

Black storm clouds and lightning were visible over the north shore of the lake, and the winds rushed powerfully from that quarter.

*Sailing Route:* We sailed into the center of the lake tonight, for the first time. Several times during the night I caught glimpses of unusual underwater formations. "Dark Seeing" magic proving very useful. Again, it seemed as if the ship was going very slowly, based on our progress towards the opposite shore of the lake, yet objects sighted passed very quickly, as if our speed was quite good.

*Fishing:* Excellent. Great masses of shining white fish were netted this evening, and the crew was in good spirits.

*Unusual Creatures Caught:* None.

*Unusual Items Netted:* None.

*Notes:* No special events, but good fishing for the later part of the night. The captain had picked an area near a huge mass of floating water weeds, and luck was with him.

*Measured Data:*

Cloud cover: 68/100ths

Wind Force: 30 flags

Average Temperature: 7 I.T.

Average Precipitation: 71 rings

Observed average speed of ship: 2 short knots

Weight of catch, overall: 621 RSB

[Overall TGS grade: 96]

## Excerpt 9:

*Commentary by Requat:* Another entry which seems to contradict the theory linking storm activity to monster sightings. On this occasion, though, there was an interesting encounter with sentient denizens of the lake.

*Date:* Godday, Disorder Week, Earth Season, 26th year of the 7th Wane

*Weather:* Hot, humid. Huge thunderheads, rainfall very heavy, with falling debris. Much minor damage to rigging.

*Sailing Route:* Followed shore of lake north.

*Fishing:* Good.

*Unusual Creatures Caught:* This night a lake troll (a rare variant of the sea troll, New Jrusteli System #9602) made the mistake of biting our bait. After his friends had extracted the hook, he rose to the surface to complain and ask for compensation. Surprisingly, we were able to understand his crude language to some extent. The fishers were rude, and rejected his demands. He and several other lake trolls attacked about an hour later, but were driven off at the cost of much magical energy.

*Unusual Items Netted:* None.

*Measured Data:*

Cloud cover: 87/100ths

Wind Force: 22 flags

Average Temperature: 9 I.T.

Average Precipitation: 95 rings

Observed average speed of ship: 3 short knots

Weight of catch, overall: 345 RSB

[Overall TGS grade: 92]

## Excerpt 10:

*Commentary by Requat:* Ubiquus's enigmatic purple-spined creature, which will certainly merit further study by experienced researchers. Again, the priests' rituals coincide with a safe, or as safe as is possible, evening of fishing on the lake.

*Date:* Freezeday, Death Week, Earth Season, 26th year of the 7th Wane

*Weather:* A strong, fresh breeze blew up this evening out of nowhere, laden with mysterious odors. Everyone in Crabtown was out as soon as the sun had set, preparing traps, nets, or other items. No storms tonight. The priests of Aranea, Xiola Umbar, and Skyriver Titan all performed rituals of mysterious import.

*Sailing Route:* Straight out into the lake.

*Fishing:* Good.

*Unusual Creatures Caught:* A small aquatic being was netted tonight, of apparent sentience and extraordinary interest. My judgement is that it hails from the plane of gods and heroes, based upon its characteristics. It is humanoid, child-sized, but strange in appearance, with webbed hands,

purple spines, a tail and fins, and a vaguely human head. When netted, it appeared to be wearing a belt with something stuck through it, though this had disappeared by the time the excitement died down.

Although the trolls wished to kill and eat the creature, I insisted that it be saved, healed, and treated politely. Apparently such tiny aquatic beings are caught occasionally, and usually dealt with as would be a trollkin or other small, weak creature of no importance. The hunger of the trolls never cease to amaze me.

The little fellow is currently recuperating in a large tub of water near my shack on the lake shore, with one of my bodyguards in constant attendance. I have not yet succeeded in understanding its language.

*Unusual Items Netted:* Two odd boats were found floating, very broken up, as if by vast forces. They were made of some kind of shell or bone, and were exceedingly tiny and finely crafted.

I cannot help wondering if there is any connection between these boats and the purple-spined being we caught.

*Notes:* I began fishing a bit myself tonight. The bait was quickly lost, no catch. The trolls were quite amused, and insisted that I not pay for the hook and broken line. No other events of note.

*Measured Data:*

Cloud cover: 71/100ths

Wind Force: 25 flags

Average Temperature: 6 I.T.

Average Precipitation: 80 rings

Observed average speed of ship: 3.5 short knots



Weight of catch, overall: 530 RSB

[Overall TGS grade: 92]

## Excerpt 11:

*Commentary by Requat:* Ubiquus appears in this entry to have neglected to keep accurate records of the heading and speed of the ship. This makes the accuracy of his observations somewhat doubtful. Nevertheless, Ubiquus has some interesting comments on the trading opportunities around Skyfall Lake.

*Date:* Godday, Death Week, Earth Season, 26th year of the 7th Wane

*Weather:* Heavy rains. No storms. Vast, slow swells and surges of water tonight, bringing the ship up and down in a manner reminiscent of travel on the ocean. Both of my bodyguards became seasick. The rain included large eels and shells, one of which stunned me slightly, even though I was wearing my armor as usual underneath my oilskins.

*Sailing Route:* A very alarming route today. Sailed due west into the clouds. Around midnight, I realized that the ship had not tacked or changed heading, yet we had not reached the western shore of the lake. I will have to do speed measurements and establish what is occurring here.

*Fishing:* Poor. Two giant crabs attacked the ship this evening, but one was killed and the other driven off after a terrible fight that lasted almost an hour. The rest of the night was spent healing wounds and arguing about tactics, and little was caught.

*Unusual Creatures Caught:* A colossal giant crab with several chaotic features was caught and killed tonight. Only after the battle was the chaotic nature of the monster established with certainty, at which point the hulk was tossed back to the lake with a chorus of angry growls and

curses from our crew. Apparently the meat and shell of a normal specimen of these crabs is highly valued in town. One of my bodyguards was maimed in this battle, but strong healing magic is available in town, and I am happy with his performance thus far.

*Unusual Items Netted:* None.

*Notes:* Met with several scruffy human and troll merchants this morning, after the ship had docked and most trolls had gone to their rest. They mentioned that Sir Scissor, the priest of Argan Argar who seems so involved in all trade in the area, had suggested they drop by. We discussed my experiences thus far. Merchants were very impressed that I had survived several weeks on a troll vessel, and made offers for various odd items they seemed to think I had in stock, such as oil from the Pink-Spined Globefish, and shards of green glass from the Green Glass City. They were very disappointed to learn that so far I had gained only a few special items, none of any commercial value.

*Measured Data:*

Cloud cover: 71/100ths

Wind Force: 24 flags

Average Temperature: 7 I.T.

Average Precipitation: 83 rings

Observed average speed of ship: 3 short knots

Weight of catch, overall: 314 RSB

[Overall TGS grade: 85]

**Excerpt 12:**

*Commentary by Requat:* Despite his encounter with a group of possibly-malicious limnades, which proved to be of little threat to a cautious and alert investigator, this was a relatively peaceful evening for the crew. Note again the lack of storms.

*Date:* Waterday, Fertility Week, Earth Season, 26th year of the 7th Wane

*Weather:* Relatively calm weather today. No storms, though heavy rainfall occurred, and the wind changed directions 23 times during the night.

*Sailing Route:* Again tonight we sailed straight off into the clouds for hours without reaching the opposite shore of the lake. This time my log and other equipment was on board, and

I was quickly able to estimate our speed over the water. Clearly there is powerful magic occurring on the lake.

*Fishing:* Good.

*Unusual Creatures Caught:* None.

*Unusual Items Netted:* None.

*Notes:* An interesting encounter occurred tonight with some of the lake's intelligent denizens. A group of nine or ten beautiful but rather treacherous limnades (lake-dwelling naiads, New Jrusteli System #13c-92) offered our boat a chance to fish in a special, secret area they claimed to know of. "The best fishing is off near that fogbank to the north, dearies. Let us show you!" they trilled. I guessed that there was only a tiny chance that they were genuinely interested in helping us. The trolls said that they often lure fishers to a place where whales or lake serpents are active, then watch the fun.

*Measured Data:*

Cloud cover: 78/100ths

Wind Force: 24 flags

Average Temperature: 6 I.T.

Average Precipitation: 87 rings

Observed average speed of ship: 2.1 short knots

Weight of catch, overall: 130 RSB

[Overall TGS grade: 90]

### Excerpt 13:

*Commentary by Requat:* Powerful storms again seem to coincide with monster encounters on the lake in one of Ubiquus's more dramatic encounters. It is to be regretted that circumstances interfered with his gathering of statistics.

*Date:* Clayday, Stasis Week, Earth Season, 26th year of the 7th Wane

*Weather:* Powerful storms tonight, localized around the north-west marshes. Average rainfall, several rains of dirt and mud.

*Sailing Route:* Sailed to the north, but then abruptly turned and sailed south again, unfortunately.

*Fishing:* Average.

*Unusual Creatures Caught:* A disastrous night for our vessel. All was peaceful in the area we chose to fish in, until 4 water wyrms appeared and investigated the boat. A troll whispered to me that they can be dangerous unless any lines and hooks are quickly hidden, or unless someone in the boat can communicate with them. This statement spurred me to a bit of rashness. I have some small ability in Old Wyrnish, and I foolishly thought I could impress the fishermen by speaking to the wyrms in their own tongue. I was able to do so, but the first statement the wyrms made

was to

warn us to leave this area of the lake at once. I translated. For some reason, the trolls choose to laugh and reject this command, and the wyrms, offended, attacked us.

Several things were revealed about water wyrms in the course of this battle. For one, the vicious monsters swim almost as fast in water as their land-based cousins fly. They can have powerful magic, a fact that proved a disastrous surprise to my troll companions. My guess is that many water wyrms in Skyfall Lake have strong magic, simply in order to survive in competition with even more dangerous monsters.

After I and the other survivors had nursed our battered, blood-stained ship to shore, I asked why they had been so foolish as to provoke the wyrms. I was told that they had dealt with wyrms before, and found them not terribly dangerous. These particular wyrms, being magic-users, had proved tougher opponents.

I was blamed for not warning them of this point, as if I could have gleaned the knowledge of the monsters' spells by simply speaking with them. Clearly these trolls had dealt with wyrms only a few times before. One would think that the fact that the wyrms could be spoken with would have alerted these arrogant trolls to their capacity for harm! A sage should never underestimate the idiocy of the average individual, especially if he be a troll.

*Unusual Items Netted:* None.

*Notes:* Obviously this is the kind of Skyfall Lake event that discourages anyone who is not foolhardy, or devoted to the search for knowledge, from continuing their voyages.

*Measured Data:*

Cloud cover: 71/100ths

Wind Force: 21 flags

Average Temperature: 6 I.T.

Average Precipitation: 75 rings

Observed average speed of ship: Not measured.

Weight of catch, overall: Not measured.

[Overall TGS grade: 86]

## Document II. Narrative of Neasha of Rhigos

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This narrative was one of the most informative works in our archives, and was an excellent supplement to the superb field work performed by Acolyte Ubiquus. I should immediately acknowledge that the said Neasha was a devotee of the cult of Vinga, daughter of the proscribed and presumptuous storm god Orlanth, whose power the Emperor will soon crush. My inclusion of material linked to that barbarous god is not, I hope, offensive to your eyes. In the search for knowledge we searchers for truth must often suffer improprieties.

Neasha was apparently a citizen from the violent land of Esrolia. For reasons shrouded in obscurity, this foolhardy woman led a team of warriors from various cults to Skyfall Lake, where she spent several weeks on a so-called hunting (more accurately, fishing) expedition. Her purpose was the capture of an odd monster or being known as Thog-don, on the subject of which no suitably reliable information exists. The year was the 18th year of this Wane.

The expedition was a failure, but Neasha later agreed to give a description of her experiences to a member of the barbarian knowledge cult of Lhankor Mhy. I have included samples of material that I feel is of interest from her narrative, which consists primarily of descriptions of combat and magic, much of a highly colored nature not appropriate to this survey. Although Neasha was not a trained observer or scholar, her statements have authority, and command relatively high Truth scores, especially considering the heretical nature of her religion.

## Excerpt 1 (lines 40-45):

*Commentary by Requiat:* Neasha's team of warriors and fishermen often encountered underwater monsters that took the bait and broke the enchanted fishing lines without even deigning to attack the boat. Neasha describes the weather during one such day in the following passage:

...During this terrible day all our lines were broken, even the one plaited of manticore's fur, by forces that exceeded the strength of a normal fish as much as a man's strength exceeds that of an ant. Often the creatures lurked like cursed cowards in the depths, battering our hull or surging mightily upwards in fruitless attempts to swamp our spell-laden craft.

The creaking ship was buffeted by powerful winds and savage waves, though we had stayed distant from the black and lightning-shot storm clouds that hovered over the lake's northern quarter like raging dragons. Even my Shield Stops Wind feat seemed not to help, though perhaps my faith was not at its strongest at that time.

My pauldrons of finest and most carefully enchanted iron were twice dented by jagged shards of marble or some other pale stone that pelted from the sky from no apparent source, and several less-well armored warriors took severe injury from this unprecedented source. No one was

killed,  
however, by the mercy of Vinga... [TGS 87].

*Commentary by Requat:* Note the references to the position of the storm over the northern part of the lake. Also note the rain of stone shards. The fact that this experienced devotee of Vinga could not affect the storm over the lake is particularly intriguing and shows the ineffectual nature of the god Orlanth.

## Excerpt 2 (lines 120-156):

*Commentary by Requat:* The following is a selection from the end of one of the worst battles in Neasha's narrative. In this chapter she described a fight with a giant octopus or squid of colossal proportions. The team came off badly from the encounter. There are several more similar battles described, all depicting the same gory, sweaty work. I have not bothered including such material.

...Even to raise sail was an effort, but good Sir Varnous and his followers proved equal to the task, even though the knight's left hand and arm had taken awful damage from the squid's suckers and our faith was too sorely depleted for further healing efforts to be made. But our rest had made us ready for a final day's hunting. We wiped the stinking ink from our eyes and put back our battered helmets, ready for another trip into the depths of the stygian clouds. The sky continued to assault us with masses of earth and repulsive, squirming worms, some large enough to wrap themselves around one's body several times. Curse the luck, this last hunt yielded us no prey, for which the craven sailors were most thankful, and we sailed south at sunset with heavy heart for those brave ones who had gone to their gods without trophy or prize to show for their struggle...  
[TGS 86].

*Commentary by Requat:* Observe the entry of the ship back into the storm clouds, and the presence of falling objects. Also note the direction sailed when the day's hunting was over:



south.

By this point in her expedition Neasha had come to the conclusion that the most worthy monsters were to be encountered wherever the weather was worst on the lake, usually to the north by her observations. As a worshipper of the barbarian storm gods, Neasha naturally felt no hesitation in sending her ship and followers into the heart of the raging thunderstorm. Neasha's expedition arrived at the lake during Sea Season, a period when most of the Dragon Pass region experiences mild weather and gentle rains. Clearly this does not extend to Skyfall Lake.

### Excerpt 3 (lines 240-246):

*Commentary by Requat:* One day's struggle with a being of horror began with a description of interesting weather effects, of the kind that support my hypothesis.

...The foolish trolls were all about us this morning, bellowing in fear while priests performed hasty rituals. Even though the trolls are usually snoring at this hour of the day, the crisis was such as to galvanize even them into action. The black and gloomy storm clouds had moved over the town, shrouding the morning light, and the usual pestilent offal was pelting the trolls' crude shacks unmercifully. Several structures were flattened or buried by masses of coiling green eels, to the amusement of many of our warriors. Lightning flashed occasionally, to the great dislike of the masses of trollkin milling about the docks. Praise the lord of storms, cried I! We saw that today would be a great day, and set forth into the winds immediately with our hearts blustering to do battle with mighty Thog-don...[TGS 89].

*Commentary by Requat:* Once more Neasha's ship entered the central part of the storm, which this time occurred in the northwest portion of the lake, moving away from Crabtown after a period of imprecisely defined but apparently brief duration. The hunters failed to meet with Thog-don, but ran into a being perhaps as fell. Observe the recurrent description of severe storms during days in which great monsters were encountered. Also note various debris described as falling from the sky. Both storms and falling debris are a sign that the passageway between the worlds has opened wide.

## Excerpt 4 (lines 444-449):

*Commentary by Requat:* This is a typical entry describing an "unsuccessful" day, that is, one in which no truly extraordinary monsters were encountered. Descriptions of peaceful days become predominant in the latter part of Neasha's narrative, and the weather corresponds to the lack of interesting prey.

...I was sore disappointed with our hunting this day, although weather was reasonably calm for once. While the rain continued, there was no storm front visible, nor any thunder or lighting. The rains of stinging insects and other annoyances were also absent, but a warrior soon learns to ignore these things once the hunt is on...[TGS 90].

# Document III. The Guidebook of Gnashk Oneleg

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Although trolls, as accursed and benighted beings of darkness, are rarely respectable sources of information, the cult of Argan Argar is to a certain extent known for fair dealings and sensible behavior. Argan Argar seems particularly placid and trustworthy when compared with other troll religions. With this point in mind, I carefully analyzed one troll document that pertained to the subject of Skyfall Lake. This was the so-called Guidebook of Argan Argar priest Gnashk Oneleg.

This troll fisherman/priest lived in the Skyfall Lake area during a period of increased interest in the lake on the part of foreigners. He produced a short and rambling document which his temple later sold under the title "Oneleg's Guidebook to Skyfall Lake" to visiting merchants, fishing groups, transients, and other humans in the area. While the guidebook itself was not a great success, certain material is worthy of your perusal.

Please excuse the trollish nature of this material, my lord, in the understanding that all of relevance to your request was examined. As usual, I have not edited or modified the material in the following excerpts. Note that the translation from Darktongue into Sartarite, done many

years

ago by trolls, was imperfect at best. Such inaccuracy is typical of heathen trolls and is not worthy of further discussion.

## Excerpt 1 (lines 110-131):

*Commentary by Requat:* An excerpt from a discussion of the island that is often visible in the north part of the lake, in which Oneleg describes his first trip to that mysterious place. The island seems quite hazardous, and I include this passage as the best example of the material available on the subject:

...You bet, no sir, I never since went back to the island without a whole boat of big guys to back me up and float-skins off of bears or giants. Those storms up by the mountains [note: the northern part of the lake] are real nasty and you will surely do much better not to push your luck up there. Swamp is full of surprise tricks also. No swamp or island for safety is what we who are wise say to smaller ones.

But the big baskets with lobster locks worked out real good and I think everyone soon use that idea week next. Caught more frogs did we in one night than we caught the whole week before. Always you make sure frogs are not spuffy [note: chaotic] before eating.

Your choice is final arbitration as to far north part of lake: fishing is sure good, but two broken boats in two weeks is no good. In closing subject of island, we wish to say twice that often some guys go onto island, then island gone until flying fish start to jump high [note: an unclear reference to a trollish method of time measurement], after which island come back but friends are gone for good... [TGS 86].

## Excerpt 2 (lines 353-378):

*Commentary by Requat:* In one section of his guidebook Oneleg derides a group of thrill seeking humans, some apparently sages, who go off to the lake after big game, with him as the guide. Note the choice to head north once he gains a dislike for his customers. The strange creature described as a "half-bird" of large size may also be of interest to your lordship, considering the many references to such a being in legend and rumor (especially those of the barbarous southern land of Kethaela).

...But after they offer me the second pile of bolgs I decided it was fine whatever these boys wanted, so long as they are not too good fighters. Maybe they mostly fall off my boat when out

of sight of the Grog Shop, I think, so after taking a sniff or so at the wind and a little prayer or two, I head the boat straight out to the mountains, looking for trouble.

But this guy who has big ideas about catching stuff, he is a most unpleasant mosquito. When we

catch that big half-bird, he makes up all sort of reasons why we trolls do not get to eat the fellow. After buddy Ozzgo pitches some of his cow boards into the lake he becomes less pestilent

[note: "cow boards" is apparently a translation of a troll word for leather-bound books] and we have great feast with much rakhsh to talk about for weeks thereafter [note: "rakhsh" is a local troll word, untranslatable, having to do with the experiences involved in the ingestion of food. Both pleasure and certain other odd concepts are involved]. Fast-talking guy is much pleased to

get half-head from bird, which we offer since we feel so sorry for him after great meal. Too bad Ozzgo has taken out funny half-brain and heart first, but that is what humans call the hard luck for fellow... [TGS 93]