

TROLL



THE BRIDGING

DEFINITELY NOT A JOKE SUPPLEMENT BY PADDY HUTCHINSON

COVER PIC IS TROLL ART BY COMRADE KING ON FLICKR CC A SA

You stand at the crossroads, and inhabit the spaces in between the things that people remember.

They don't like to say it, but a lot of strange things start to make sense on the road, crossing bridges and passing forgotten places with barely a glance.

Some part of you is terribly old. In the time before, you were amongst the masterless and violent, those mad few who demanded tribute from civilized folk based on an order, a tradition, that had no place in the new world. Half guardian, and half extortionist, your kind have haunted the bridges connecting the far off lights of town since before there was time to remember.

Tolls need taking. That is your place, though the civilised would have it forgotten.

Your bridge still stands. Will you let them forget? You're still here, wearing human skin and haunting the shadowed underpasses, the dingy roadhouses, the unlit highways. The humans encroach upon your fief, where once your people were lords of barrows and gods of the unwatched roads. The Entropics seek to plunge your fragile kingdom back into the Primordial Chaos, while your forbears, the Elementals, rail against the pacts you made forcing them to confinement. Your world, slowly forgotten, slowly falling.

What will you do?

THE TROLLFORGE

Under the Bridges... in the strange un-places that exist on the insides of transport lanes... the trolls still lurk.

And tolls need paying.

Let's create our Trolls.

First, select your Trollvirement. Are you...

A Rock Troll?

(Your Body is built for crawling, clambering and hiding in open scree fields and dark caverns. Rough footing bothers only your foes, and the shadows shield you from sight).

Body: Darkness

Stalker: Once per session, you can employ horror movie logic to appear unexpectedly within kissing distance of an unaware target, to burst onto a darkened scene you were not previously in, or escape into a patch of darkness large enough to cover you, emerging in another dark place nearby.

A River Troll?

(Your Body rides with the current, and the waters of life keep you buoyant and lively. The river can bear you wherever you wish along its path, and useful things inevitably wash up as they are needed.)

Body: Supplies

All Along the Shore: Once per session, you may enter a body of water and reappear at any point on the shoreline which that body of water connects to. You may bring willing trolls with you if you wish.

A Valley Troll?

(Your Body sings to the stars and the valley shields you from the storms and high winds. From the stories of the stars you have an inkling of what will come next, and wind is a chatty old friend)

Body: Direction

Voices on the Wind: Once per session, you may ask the wind a question, and it will give you the answer, as long as that answer has been spoken at least once.

A Cliff Troll?

(Your Body is strengthened and weathered by the constant brutal attention of the ocean. The very strength of tested stone is yours, and you can endure any force or weight)

Body: Forces

Unstoppable: Once per session, you may survive an attack that should kill you. You haul yourself to your feet, badly hurt but not yet destroyed.

Or a Road Troll?

(Your Body is meta as fuck, frankly. The road has carved the connections between places and things into your eyes and brain, so you always know where - and how - things are)

Body: Transport

Mapwright: If you have a map of a place, you may view the places it represents as if you were standing on any point on the map.

Then, select the Bridge you were born beneath. You've spent aeons of subjective emptiness studying its underside, and it has taught you things.

Is it...

A Wooden Bridge?

Your Bridge has shown you the ways of trees and growing things. Your Bridge is one of growth and flexibility. Bridge: Growth, Adaptability

A Masonry Bridge?

Your Bridge has shown you the ways of stone and pragmatism. Your Bridge is one of clarity and interdependence. Bridge: Insight, Unity

An Industrial Bridge?

Your Bridge is the connection between the old world and the new, and has shown you the ways of drive and dominance. Your bridge is one of change and dynamism. Bridge: Machines, Energy

A Futurist Bridge?

Your Bridge has shown you the ways of hope and new ideas. Your Bridge is one of illusion and dreams, the hopes of those who would bridge lands. Bridge: Inspiration, Dreams

Or a Fallen Bridge?

Fallen under its own weight, or through some terrible force, the remnants of your Bridge have taught you the ways of impermanence and destruction. Your bridge is one of loss and forgetting. Bridge: Destruction, Forgetting

Choose a Human Name.

Describe a Human Disguise that lets you pass among the crowd unnoticed.

Choose some small Telltale that might give away to a careful observer that something is not right with you.

Beneath your human likeness, are hidden... (choose 3)

- A gaping maw, drooling filth - wicked claws - a scaly hide - matted fur
- fangs like daggers - webbed fingers and toes - eyes like a cat, spying truth - crawling stone and twitching clay - a melodic voice, sweet like sickness - a screeching howl to stop fearful hearts - long, gangly limbs - a long tail, heavy or swift - burning sigils, screaming lost secrets - empty sockets that yet see -

Play to see what happens.

PLAYING

This is a plugin. You can run it with whatever TTRPG system you like. But here's a few suggestions.

Chronicles of Darkness

What Troll was originally mapped to. Treat your Body and Bridge Keywords as Spirit Influences, which you get 5 dots worth to distribute on top of the human template. You keep the little Body stunt, just like auspice gifts in Werewolf the Forsaken 2e. You harvest your Fuel Stat, Toll, by terrorizing humans into paying you the strange objects you keep as currency, ala Glamour harvests in Changeling the Lost, basically choosing a pool that makes sense from your methods and getting successes back in Toll, which you spend like Essence for your Influences. Replace Integrity with Forgotten; every time someone questions your authority, resists your influence, defeats or breaks you, resist with Presence+Resolve as you slide further from relevance. Your true form can be invoked when you wish, gives an equipment bonus as appropriate but may cause further hits to Forgotten as human minds struggle with you not making sense.

Jeeze, this was meant to be easy.

Undying

Like Vampire the Masquerade but so much simpler. Switch Blood for Toll, Humanity for Forgotten and you're pretty much set to go. All of the Body and Bridge influences fall for the most part under Flaunt What Your Maker Gave You. Plug and Play, kids!

FATE

Yay! It does everything! Include your Trollvironment and Bridge in your High Concept, and make your third aspect a Toll one so you can get compels for doing the Troll thing, but otherwise just work as normal. Your true form can be used to slap temporary aspects on you for a scene, but otherwise rock on.

Don't Rest Your Head

Because it's not like Evil Hat owns my soul or anything. Trade out Exhaustion for Forgotten, call Madness Resonance if you have to and have it rep your Body and Bridge talents. It's a bit broader than DRYH usually is, but the confluence of pushing your troll-strength and being forgotten sits pretty nicely.

Dungeons and Dragons 5th Ed

Well, DnD is a great... nah, I think you're fucked. Not even I can think of a way to make this work.