

One Roll Monsters



For the first ransom after *REIGN Enchiridion*, I've got a mini-setting named "The Kingdom of Nain." It's a fantasy setting distinct from Heluso and Milonda. For one thing, it has traditional astronomy and geography. More important, it's influenced by J.K. Rowling and Fritz Leiber instead of Robert Silverberg or China Miéville.

One of *REIGN*'s fans suggested doing One Roll Monsters as a bonus for the ransom on *REIGN Enchiridion*, and I immediately realized how perfect the idea was for Nain, a kingdom where monsters are supernatural and often symbolic (not just strange animals, as on Heluso or Milonda). The monsters milled out of these charts, then, are more likely to fit traditional mythology than the pseudo-biology of Milonda. But they're vague: With enough imagination and descriptive text, they probably fit anywhere.

A nice side effect of the charts is that a pile of puzzle-piece monstrous attributes makes it easy to sum up a creature simply by giving the numbers in its roll. Like monstrous DNA, I don't have to publish a long description for a Nainian unicorn. I can just give the roll code 2x1, 2x4, 3, 10 and some short text to explain the details.

As with *REIGN*'s many, many one-roll tools, this one is meant to inspire and not to constrain. The more dice you roll, the tougher and nastier the monster is. (Feel free to set some dice to ensure results you want.) But just copying a set of attacks and defenses from the lists misses the point. That's just the framework, the blank canvas on which you can draw the details that make a creature interesting even before (or after) fighting it.

The Foundation, and Die Rolling



All monsters start out with the following traits, even before any dice are rolled.

- They have a normal human wound silhouette. If the monster is shaped like a horse or a lizard, it still has four Wound Boxes in the head at location 10, ten Wound Boxes in a torso at 7-8, and so on.
- It has a Fight pool of 4d and its attacks do Width in Shock damage.
- It has 2d in Body, Coordination and Sense if necessary.

ROLLING

For a weak monster that could slow down a few starting magic students, roll 2d. For a serious threat to several adolescents, or to one well-trained fighter, roll 5d. Want something terrifying? Sky's the limit. Ten dice, fifteen... some Nainian dragons have twenty.

Once you've made your roll, sort them into sets and isolate the waste dice. The more dice you roll, the greater the possibility of getting a set Wider than 5x. If that happens, just re-roll until they're gone.

SETS

Consult the charts for your results. Each includes the previous levels, so if you roll 4x3, your monster doesn't just get AR1 over its whole body. It gets that, plus another AR2 everywhere (the 2x3 result) and an additional AR2 on its head (the 3x3 result).

x1: Natural Weapons.

Does your creature have talons, fangs, antlers or something more exotic?

2x1 Damage from Fight attacks is Width in Shock and Killing. Fight pool +2d.

3x1 Poisonous bite or sting. The poison is Potency 4. The Minor effect is -1 to Body for a day. The Major effect is a point of Shock damage to every location.

4x1 +1d Fight. Its attacks ignore a point of armor.

5x1 +1d Fight. Its damage increases by +1SK.

x2: Ranged Attacks

Does it spit acid? Swallow stones and expel them with great force? Magically animate nearby trees to attack?

2x2 It has 4d in a ranged attack pool, range equal to a longbow, and it does Width in Shock damage.

3x2 The ranged attack also does Width in Killing.

4x2 +2d to ranged attack pool.

5x2 +1d to ranged attack pool, does an additional +1SK.

The Foundation, and Die Rolling



x3: Armor

What makes it so tough? An affinity to the earth, making its flesh stone hard when struck, but swift and supple when it strikes? Thick, matted fur? Does it craft elaborate leather armor made from human skin?

2x3 +2 AR on all locations.

3x3 +2 AR to location 10.

4x3 +1 AR to all locations.

5x3 +2 AR to all locations for defense against magic only.

x4: Size/Toughness

Mechanically, this is just extra wound boxes, but does that mean it's really big? Or is it just dense like lead and a blow that would behead a man merely dents it?

2x4 +1 Wound Box on every location, +1d to Fight pool.

3x4 +1 Wound Box on every location.

4x4 +1 Wound Box on every location.

5x4 +1 Wound Box on every location.

x5: Fear

Monsters are scary, pretty much by definition, and some augment their native terror with magical enhancement. What about the creature is so frightening? Its roar? Its hideous face? The icy chill of death that all mortals feel when its gaze falls upon them?

2x5 The creature produces a Morale Attack 6 every round. This is in addition to its other actions, it requires no roll, and it doesn't penalize its other rolls.

3x5 The creature has a 4d Terrorize pool. If it rolls a set with it, all who perceive the terrifying act (be it a sound, a look, or some other threat) lose a die from the Widest set they have.

4x5 Terrorize pool gets +1d. In addition to causing all around it to quail, it can focus on one specific target. That target takes a penalty to his next attack on the creature, equal to the Width of the creature's Terrorize set. This occurs whether the victim attacks the next round or after ten years of having nightmares about it.

5x5 Terrorize pool gets +1d. In addition to the 4x5 effect, if its Terrorize roll beats a Difficulty of 6 and the target doesn't counterspell, he's turned to stone. Magic can restore him exactly as he was before petrification, if the statue is undamaged, but it requires a lengthy ritual.

The Foundation, and Die Rolling



x6: Wings and Flight

Just what wings does it have? Flame-wreathed angel pinions? Leathery ones like a bat? Transparent insect wings? What tactics does it use its flight for?

2x6 Locations 4 and 5 each become wing locations with 3 Wound Boxes each. The creature can automatically fly 15' per round and has a 4d Flight pool. With a Flight success it can perform a difficult maneuver or increase its speed by 5' per point of Width.

3x6 Its base flight speed increases by 10' / round and it gets +1d to its Flight pool.

4x6 It gets two more Wound Boxes on each wing and +1d to its Flight pool.

5x6 +1d Flight, speed increases by 5' / round, each wing gets another Wound Box.

x7: Supernumerary Head(s)

The creature has one or two extra heads. Are they identical to its primary head, or are they different altogether? How do the heads interact with its other abilities?

2x7 Location 9 becomes a secondary head with four Wound Boxes. As long as the creature has a Wound Box in one head and in its torso with no Killing damage, it's still alive, even if the other head is completely severed. It is not unconscious until both heads are full of Shock.

3x7 The secondary head gets +1 AR and another Wound Box.

4x7 Location 8 becomes a third head with two Wound Boxes. As long as it has an unshocked Wound Box in any head, it can stay awake. As long as it has a box without Killing damage in one head and in its torso, it survives.

5x7 The third head gains a 4d Bite pool that does Width in Shock damage. This is entirely separate from its Fight pool and is rolled separately.

x8: Flame Affinity

You can change this to "Frost Affinity" or "Acidic" or any other similar effect you wish. Perhaps it constantly gives birth to horrid, skittering offspring and it is these that produce the listed effects.

2x8 It gains +2 AR against fire at all locations. Anyone who gets within ten feet of it suffers an Area 1 Killing Attack.

3x8 It produces a Morale Attack 3 every round without a roll. If it already produces a Morale Attack from another result, that Morale Attack rating increases by 3.

4x8 It can create an Area 2 Killing attack on everyone within fifty feet, but this attack is Slow 1. This does not penalize or interfere with any Fight or other attacks.

5x8 Its Area attack rises to Area 3 Killing and it can do it every round.

The Foundation, and Die Rolling



x9: Speed and Cunning

What gives it these extra attacks? Is it just blindingly swift? Does it have swarms of tentacles, each semi-independent? Is it all down to craftiness?

2x9: The creature gains +1d+MD to its Stealth and Sight pools.

3x9 It can attack with its full Fight pool twice per round.

4x9 Its attacks with full Fight pool are now thrice per round.

5x9 It gains +2d to Stealth and +1d +MD in Scrutinize. Now it stalks its prey...

x10: Evil

In Nain, there is the everyday evil of cruel choices and selfish weakness, but there is also supernatural Evil—a force of chaos and destruction that revels in sadism and seeks to subsume all that is kind and good and beautiful. Creatures with x10 sets are infected with supernatural Evil.

2x10 By taking an action and doing nothing else, it can strike an individual within its sight with blasphemous terror. This replaces the target's Craving (if it has one) with a temporary Craving to get as far from the creature as possible. (People without Cravings are unaffected.) This lasts until the person can no longer see, hear or otherwise perceive the creature.

3x10 All spells cast against the creature are at +5 Difficulty.

4x10 It produces a Morale Attack 5 every round without a roll. If it already produces a Morale Attack from another result, that Morale Attack rating increases by 5. However, none of its Morale Attacks affect creatures or persons already dedicated to the principles of Evil.

5x10 By taking an action and doing nothing else, it can inflict a stifling sense of despair on one individual within sight. As long as that person can perceive the creature, his Duty has no effect.

Waste Dice



The Waste Dice that turned up outside of sets indicate unique factors about the creature.

Roll Effect

1. Its natural weapons do Width in Shock and Killing. Are these fangs, thorns, razor scales or does its touch simply cause unnatural aging and disease?
2. It spits venom or some other noxious substance. This attack has Potency 2 and its Minor effect is an Area 4 Killing attack on one target. The Major effect is that the target loses a point of Body per hour until death at Body 0, or until healed. Once the Major effect is stopped, Body returns naturally at the rate of one point per day.
3. It gains +1 AR to all locations.
4. It gains an extra Wound Box at every location.
5. It can inflict an Area 3 Shock attack on people in a ten-foot diameter ring within a hundred paces. What is this? A noxious scent, an eldritch blast, deceptively sweet poison?
6. The creature can swim 20' per round and breathe easily underwater.
7. It has a deadly tail. Location 7 becomes a separate location with 3 Wound Boxes. If the target is standing behind the creature, its Fight attacks do an extra point of Shock and Killing damage.
8. Anyone who successfully attacks the creature with a hand to hand or magical attack takes an Area 1 Killing attack. Is this a mystic curse? Does its flesh roil with unearthly cold that chills the blood of all who touch it, whether they use body or will?
9. The creature has a specific vulnerability, and other than that it's hard to harm. (What's the vulnerability? Silver? Yew wood? Weapons anointed with phoenix blood or covered over and over with a particular rune?) All Killing damage that originates from sources that don't incorporate the vulnerability becomes Shock. But any source that uses the vulnerability can ignore all the creature's armor (if any).
10. The creature is infused with supernatural Good. It seeks to defend beauty, purity and innocence. It can give itself or another person a +MD bonus to his next Vigor roll at will. (This requires an action in which it does nothing else.)

Example



Wanting something fairly nasty, I roll 7d and get 3x1, 2, 5, 6, 9.

3x1 indicates that the thing does WSK with its 6d Fight pool and has poison. (That's Potency 4 with -1 to Body as the Minor and a point of Shock to every location for the Major.) So whatever this is, it's probably a predator with some pointy bits. On to the waste dice.

2 gives it *more* poison. This attack has Potency 2 and its Minor effect is an Area 4 Killing attack on one target. The Major effect is that the target loses a point of Body per hour until death at Body 0. This sounds kind of like the first poison, so it's probably a different application of the same venom. Hm...

That loose 5 gives it an Area 3 Shock attack on people in a ten-foot diameter ring within a hundred paces. Oh you know this is just more toxin, right?

The loose 6 puts it underwater, and that's good because it gives me some ideas about how it's propagating its venom.

9 means it has some kind of kryptonite action going on. I was just thinking this thing was all offense and no defense, and then the dice read my mind.

This thing lives in lakes and rivers, it has a long neck with rows of gills down the sides. Its skinny legs let it move around on land, but it has a big fan-shaped tail that propels it smoothly through the water.

Its poison glands are in its wide, triangular head, so that when it bites you you get a dose right at the wound site and then it's in your blood, causing weakness and pain. (That's our 3x1.) Or it can spit a concentrated stream at an individual from a good twenty paces. If that hits you, it corrodes your skin and the fumes can rot out your lungs, slowly weakening and eventually killing you. (Loose 2.) Finally, it can take a huge mouthful of water, mix that with poison, and blow it out through its gills while shaking its head vigorously, gassing everyone nearby with dilute venom. (Loose 5.)

On Heluso, I'd make its vulnerability something like cobalt from the local mines. PCs can either make Lore rolls to recognize the "Humped Lake Beast" of legend, or make nice with the natives to hear the stories, or just take the course of most resistance and punch it with shock until it dies.

For Nain, I'd make this a sort of elemental water nasty. The weakness is for fire, meaning the PCs have to summon fire bolts to strike it, or heat up their spear-tips, or use flaming arrows. A bit tricky near a lake, where it can always dive down for safety...