

A Pub Conversation

(For first-time players)

“Oho, going adventuring you say?”

“Well, I’m a Veteran of many journeys with Blood and Ringing Iron filling a lot of them. For a few coins and the ale they buy I’ll tell you what I know.”



Before turning the page, pay the gentleman a gold piece and deduct it from your current total.

"First and most dangerous of all are Men - Wild, Hairy Berserks from the Far North who swing iron till they drop; sneak thieves who stab silently from stark street-corners; bold men girt with iron inured to iron, fire and frost alike who inhabit the Great Houses and Lands around the kingdoms; Holy men, wise in Sorcery and the ways of the Gods, who with the Masters of Rune and Lore claim to protect our cities from the beasts and fell creatures of the wilds. But excuse me, I addle in my wine... Men of the Wild are what you want to know about.

"Don't go North unless you are wise in woodcraft, for there lurk naked Picts who will kill you with poisoned arrows from ambush. Unless you're an experienced warrior, I wouldn't go out into the Wild at all. Stay in the lands cultivated by the Great Houses and hunt there. Many are the beasts that can be hunted in these lands: wolves, boars and bear are fair hazard for young men with spears, and several kinds of wild cattle, horses and deer are all worth hunting. Or hunt the escaped thralls and wastrels that prey on passers-by. Justt make sure in which lands you can legally hunt! You take my meaning...

"Raiding beyond the cultivated lands there are the real dangers as well as the guardians of much hoarded gold and silver. Small green goblins ambush at night with dagger and dart but these are dangerous to a warrior only if they catch him unaware. Often they are led by larger and more capable hobgoblins wielding axe and club, some of whom know runes. Small monies are to be had from these filth but at least they keep your sword arm in fettle.

"Much more dangerous are the Orcs - hunched black scum waving machete-scimitars and axes, these are a match for veterans and often have rune-workers. These are to be avoided unless you have strength of arms or rune-mastery with you.

"Similarly dangerous but easily outwitted are Ogres - degenerate hulks whose only tactic is to run out of the bush waving half a tree at you. These are an easy mark for spear or magic but swing weightily indeed if they get into sword arc. They are slow but hardy and it takes several blows to cut them down. They carry only small monies but pick up many glittering items so it is well worth putting them to the sword if they happen by.

"At all costs avoid the hairy Kur - these are yellow-brown fiends resembling the spawn of an unholy marriage between Orc and Troll - these are battle for the mightiest of warriors, swinging iron, girt with mail. These are both vicious and deadly. Usually they are poor reward for all your effort as the filthy swine leave their money at home in the mountains where there are indeed hoards and hordes. Ho-ho!

"Ahem - my throat is a little dry, you understand? Ah, thank you.

"Less intelligent, but even more vicious are the Forest Trolls - green, mean and muscled speed. These are a challenge to any warrior. Their claws and fangs can be shielded off, but if you defend yourself you are likely to fight a prolonged battle and you must hit these fell creatures hard and swift, for they are exceeding hard to drive off and heal unnaturally before your eyes. Even when cut down the damn things will not have the good grace to lie still but are forever twitching and wriggling until you cut off their heads and burn the corpses. However, those that have found them report Troll dens to be crammed with gold, silver, jewels, armour and the like. Mostly they are crammed with human skulls as well, so these deeds are for the mighty only.

"Rumours of terror report also of Stone Trolls living in dark halls under the mountains - never seen abroad in the light of day, and of Mountain Trolls that are huge and armoured

and reap a bloody swathe through men like over-ripe corn. Both kinds are supposed to be fabulously rich, but I prefer to breathe poor than be buried rich.

“Ah another drink. Good Health!

“Where was I? Death! Well no sooner are some men dead than the restless buggers are up and walking the night as Draugrs. There are many sorts – all of nasty repute. Some of these Hellwalkers carry rich treasure and fine weapons, others nothing. Especially deadly are those that float like thin icy veils on the dread nights when they walk. On these only enchanted weaponry will bite but it is rumoured that sometimes a silver blade will suffice.

“Such weaponry is generally all that those who have contracted the disease of lycanthropy will shirk from. Such men run wild at nights of the full moons generally in Wolf or Bear form in a frenzy of slaughter. These creatures are unnaturally strong and their bite carries the added curse of spreading their contagion. Killing such trash is usually profitless as they hoard all of value in some lightless hole there to spawn more of their loathsome breed.

“Lastly to be numbered among the oft-met threats of the Wild are Giants. The most common sort are belike to huge men of girth and brawn, dressed poorly in rags and wielding huge clubs. Not renowned for thinking deeply they are renowned for crushing men into heaps of gore and splintered bone at one blow and for eating several sheep at a single sitting. They are often wealthy in hack silver and gold and are a good mark for a party of hardened adventurers. Why I remember when but five of us wielding battle-axes... well, long ago anyway.

“Two other sorts of Giant are sometimes to be found in the Wild. These are immune to Frost and Fire respectively, and are even huger, wearing armour and wielding fine weapons, sometimes blazing with fire. These are often found to be carrying great treasure and correspondingly more dreadful carnage ensues from any battle with them.

Ah well the rest are as much legend as fact: Dragons, Demons and the like. If you meet them you'll either come back a legend yourself or you'll not come back at all!”

“Thanks for the ale - keep your shield up and your head down!”

