Heavy Metal Adventures Presents

Dungeon Crawl Companion #2:

Goblinoid Mutagenesis

By Banjo Destructo

COMPATIBLE WITH

DCC RPG

Greetings

Welcome to the second issue of the Dungeon Crawl Companion series. A series of RPG mini-zines in which I hope to expand upon certain ideas and subjects within gaming to provide aid and inspiration to my fellow gamers. This time I want to make goblins more interesting and dangerous.

If you have any feedback or questions about the content in this product, please email me at HeavyMetalAdventures@protonmail.com with either the subject line "DCC#2 Feedback" or "Goblinoid Mutagenesis Feedback"

Introduction

I was playing a game one day when I lamented that goblins are just a meme these days that you throw at lower-level parties as a not-so-serious challenge, and they become meat-grinder goons for higher level parties. Gone were the days where goblins were a terrifying threat that people gave nightmares. When along came **Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG**, a game that was teaching people monsters can be scary again, with weird and unusual powers that throw players for a loop. A game that not only made it okay to run away from battles again, but sometimes made it essential to the party's survival. This product "Goblinoid Mutagenesis" is designed to provide a structure for anyone running a game to create dangerous, strange, and creative alterations to goblins so they become interesting for a longer period of time in any campaign.

What Is This Product?

This product is for people who want to run Goblins as a primitive, mutation-prone, evil-minded species with an irredeemably evil instinct for violence and survival on the level of a shark or other creatures that survive off of violence from the day they are born. The mutations outlined here allow you to adapt Goblin tribes to any environment, they will describe and develop the hierarchy of the Goblin Tribe, and allow for enough variations with Goblins so that if you throw Goblins at your party of players, they will not know what to expect instead of having the same experience every time.

Background and Information

Goblinoids will infest any cave, forest, dungeon, and abandoned settlement wherever they are not actively being guarded against. Any small group of Goblins that manages to make a nest will quickly increase its population and become a dangerous threat to any civilization in their area as long as they have plenty to eat. The stress induced by life-or-death situations will trigger mutations within Goblinoid Tribes, increasing their adaptation to their local environment and any challenges they frequently face.

Goblinoids can survive off of almost any food source, including food that would be inedible or rotten to Humans. But they have a huge preference to eat meat and will even hunt Humans.

While cunning, Goblinoids are not intelligent. They can learn to use common tools and weapons that are used by Humans, but they are not able to craft any equipment more complicated than simple wooden spears and sharpened rocks. If they are using any metal equipment it is likely to have been scavenged or stolen from a settlement, or an unfortunate caravan or travelling group.

Goblinoids are greedy and jealous by nature. They are covetous of the civilized lifestyles Humans live, but unable to maintain or understand what it means to live in a civilization. Scouts on Goblin extermination campaigns have witnessed villages and towns where the local populace was slaughtered by Goblins, and in their place Goblinoids were seen mimicking the Human activity that the Goblins had witnessed from the shadows. Performing deeds such as hoeing fields, gathering buckets of water, and other routine chores. However, upon closer inspection, they did not sow seeds after plowing and weeding the fields, after gathering water the buckets were being dumped into mud puddles instead of pots or other vessels, and other chores were being done in a half measure, as if an understanding of the purpose of such activities was missing. Their inability to even understand why Humans do what they do, combined with their jealousy, leads to this mindless mockery of activity that they perform, leading to the gradual decay and destruction of the structures that they have taken from any settlement they ravage. Because of their inability to maintain settlements, they grow frustrated and continually encroach upon and attempt to invade and conquer more settled lands.

Base Stats and Lifecycle Mutations

Goblinoids will potentially go through several mutations and life cycle changes. New hatchlings are classified as Goblins, and most Goblinoids will remain at this stage.

Goblin: Init -1; Attack bite or claw -1 melee (1 damage plus disease) or sticks & rocks +0 melee/thrown (1d4) or as weapon -1 (+0 damage); AC 9 + Armor; HD 1d6; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP **Meat Shield, See Below**; SV Fort -2, Ref +1, Will -2; AL C.

As their tribe or group grows in size and experience, some of the Goblins may emerge as potential leaders by being slightly bigger or stronger or just lucky enough to survive deadly encounters and will mutate into Hobgoblins where they gain some cunning, strength, and size.

Hobgoblin: Init +1; Attack bite or claw +1 melee (2 damage plus disease) or as weapon +1 (+1 damage); AC 12 + Armor; HD 2d8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP **See Below**; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -1; AL C.

As the tribe grows even more, and gains more members who have mutated into Hobgoblins, one or more Nobgoblins may mutate in the tribe. At this stage, Nobgoblins gain an especially strong will to survive and have been noted to sacrifice their entire tribe in order to escape and start over again.

Nobgoblin: Init +2; Attack bite or claw +4 melee (4 damage plus disease) or as weapon +3 (+3 damage); AC 14 + Armor; HD 4d10; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP **Will to Survive, See Below**; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; AL C.

A further mutation known as the Mobgoblin, nicknamed the Goblin King, has been rumored but is rare enough that it has only been chronicled in legends, when the tribe is said to be large enough for a Goblin King to emerge, entire kingdoms would be at risk from falling to the Goblinoid threat.

Mobgoblin (Goblin King): Init +3; Attack bite or claw +6 melee (4 damage plus disease) or as weapon +5 (+4 damage); AC 16 + Armor; HD 6d12; MV 30'; Act 3d20; SP **Will to Survive, See Below**; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.

All Goblinoids will have the following Special Rules: **Infravision** 90'; **Solar phobia**; **Drag you Down**; **Slick Blood**; **Filthy Creatures**.

Special Rules

Infravision: The Goblinoids are capable of seeing in the dark based on heat signatures of the objects around them, but are able to be temporarily blinded by any sudden changes in light intensity.

Solar phobia: Goblinoids will suffer a -1D penalty to actions when in sunlight.

Drag you Down: When a Goblinoid successfully makes a Bite or Claw attack, their target must make a DC 15 Reflex saving throw. If failed, the Goblinoid latches on and grants a +2 bonus to any attack rolls made against their victim until they escape. A player may attempt to escape by making a Strength Check (roll 1d20 below player's strength score). The player will also suffer a -1 penalty on Reflex saving throws and Strength Checks for every Goblinoid that has successfully Dragged them Down.

Slick Blood: Every time a Goblinoid is killed, its blood has a 50% chance of slicking onto the weapon used for the killing blow. A slicked weapon suffers a -1D penalty on attack rolls. A player needs to take a round to wipe the weapon off on a clean cloth to remove the slick blood, or switch to a new weapon.

Filthy Creatures: Any time a Goblinoid causes damage, the player must make a DC 14 Fortitude saving throw or their wound will become infected, developing a fever, causing temporary loss of 1d4 points of strength and agility.

Meat Shield: Goblins are the lowest rung on the social structure of Goblinoid Tribes, and could be considered slow on the uptake, completely trusting of their hierarchical leaders. This leaves them vulnerable to be used as living shields for their more cunning brethren. If a Goblin is standing within 10' of a Hobgoblin, Nobgoblin, or Goblin King, they may be used by their higher ups to soak all the damage of an attack in place of the original target.

Will to Survive: At this stage of development the Goblinoid becomes capable of a higher drive of self-preservation than a Goblin or Hobgoblin, allowing it to make crude plans to escape the destruction of its tribe. It thinks it is better to survive and make a new tribe than face the risk of death. If any battle looks like it is one sided against the Goblinoid Tribe, or when an even-match begins to go downhill, this Goblinoid will make every attempt to escape, leaving through hidden exits, or running past a pre-planned booby trap to halt any pursuers.

Creating a One-Off Goblinoid Tribe

A Goblinoid Tribe can be as small as 1 Goblin, up to as large as about 1000 Goblins. If you wanted to create a Goblinoid Tribe as a potential one-off encounter discovered while hex-crawling or added to some specific dungeon or other location, the following recommendations are suggested.

Generate 1d6 Goblins for each member of the adventuring party, plus Nd6 Goblins, where N is the average character level of the party.

For every 10 Goblins, add one Hobgoblin to the Tribe.

For every 40 Goblin, add one Nobgoblin to the Tribe.

It is not suggested to use a Mobgoblin unless the tribe has over 120 Goblins.

Take the base stats of the Goblinoids, choose or randomly roll some **Appearance Mutations** to adapt them to the location you want the one-off to take place in. Add one **Functional Mutation** to the Tribe for the average party character level. For example, if the average character level in the party is level 3, add three **Functional Mutations** to the Goblinoid Tribe.

One Goblinoid will be the Chief of the Tribe, it will be the highest mutation type generated. For example, if the Tribe has one Hobgoblin, then it will be the Chief. If the Tribe has one Nobgoblin, it will be the Chief. If there is more than one of the highest Goblinoid type, choose one to be Chief and the others will be subordinate to the Chief but still in command of the common Goblins. If you want to make the Chief extra special you can add one **Functional Mutation** that only applies to the Chief.

You should determine if you want the Goblinoid Tribe to have any scavenged weapons and armor, the Chief will have the pick of the best equipment available to the Tribe.

Appearance Mutations

To randomly generate: first roll 1d6 for the section of mutation, then another 1d6 for the specific mutation. Or you can choose the mutations you want to make an interesting and unique appearance.

Head (**1**): **1d6** Beak Mouth (1), Rabbit Ears (2), Circular Jaw (3), Boar Nose (4), Insectoid Pincers (5), Head Crest (6).

Eyes (**2**): **1d6** Beady Black (1), Yellow Slit (2), Glowing Red (3), Milk White (4), Three Eyes (5), Cyclopean (6).

Skin Tone (**3**): **1d6** Sandy Tan (1), Moss Green (2), Ice Blue (3), Clay Red (4), Shale Gray (5), Coal Black (6).

Skin Texture (**4**): **1d6** Feathers (1), Scales (2), Wooly Fur (3), Thick Hide (4), Slimy Smooth (5), Silky Fur (6).

Arms (**5**): **1d6** Reversed Hands (1), Amphibolid Hands (2), Elongated Fingers (3), Unusually Thick Arms (4), Skin-flapped armpits (5), Reversed Elbows (6).

Legs (**6**): **1d6** Reversed Knees (1), Webbed Feet (2), Monkey Feet (3), Cloven Hoofs (4), Bird Feet (5), Unevenly Lengthened Legs (6).

Functional Mutations

Acidic Blood (1) … When killed, if **Slick** Blood hits, the blood will also cause 1d6 Acid damage to their attacker and damage their weapon.

Acidic Saliva (2) … Bite attacks gains +1d8 Acid damage, melts 1AC of armor

Blind (3) … These goblins are blind and find prey by sound, immune to light/dark effects

Camouflaged Skin (4) … When on their home ground, gain +10 to Hide in Shadows

Extra Arm (5) … Gains one extra Claw or Weapon attack every round

Extra Head (6) … Gains one extra Bite attack every round

Extra Leg (7) … Gains 10' Speed, and +1D for resisting actions that knock them over

Gills (8) … Goblinoids with gills can breathe under water, may also have webbing

Heightened Reflexes (9) … Gains +1 to initiative and AC

Horns (10) … Gains Attack Type (Gore +N (1d6 + N damage, SP GORE)

Horrendous Odor (11) … Opponents within 15' will have a -1D to attack rolls and 1AC due to the vomit-inducing odor of the Goblins

Large Claws (12) … Claw attack gains +1d4 damage

Large Teeth (13) … Bite attack gains +1d3 damage

Prehensile Tail (14) … Gains extra grasping and mobility through a tail

Savage Strength (15) … Gains +1 to attack and damage rolls

Sensitive Hearing (16) … Gains +10 to any checks to hearing checks

Sensitive Nose (17) … Can automatically determine what has gone past the area it is smelling recently, but won't automatically know if what they smell is still nearby.

Slime Gland (18) … Gains Attack Type (Sticky Glob +6 (ignores Armor AC), 15' Range, no damage, roll 1d6 for effect (1-2 Legs Disabled, 3-5 Arms Disabled, 6 Head Smothered, unable to see/breathe/hear/speak)

Toxic Skin Coating (19) … If the goblin successfully performs **Drag you Down**, their opponent must make a DC 14 Fort save every round or take 1d4 damage.

Venomous Bite (20) … Bite gains **Venom**, victim must make DC 15 Fort save or take an additional 2d4 damage.

Goblinoid Lairs

Goblinoid tribes can be found in any climate due to their ability to mutate in adaptation to their surroundings. They will prefer to make nests and lairs underground in caves, inside abandoned or stolen buildings, or in thick forests where they may be able to use dirt mud or other natural materials to make crude shelters against the sun. They will tend to accumulate items, equipment, coinage, and treasure from any humans unlucky to come upon their path, although they are not smart enough to use coin and treasure in trade and will instead keep it as a prideful prize much like a magpie.

Tribal Leaders

Usually, a goblinoid tribe is lead by one of the goblins of the highest mutated type within the tribe. For example, if there's only one Hobgoblin, it would be the leader, but if there's a Nobgoblin, it would be the leader. If you only have Goblins, or there are multiple of the highest tier of goblinoid within the tribe, you may wish to do something to distinguish it from the rest as the leader in the tribe. The leader may be holding the single piece of human weaponry the tribe has acquired so far, or the nicest piece of human equipment out of all the available equipment.

You may wish to give the leader one additional appearance and/or functional mutation to distinguish them from the rest of the tribe as well.

Sometimes an evil creature that is not a goblin may be the leader of the tribe if there are only Goblins in the tribe. If higher tier goblinoids are in the tribe the rest of the Goblins will feel less likely to follow some other creature unless it has clearly established that it is the top dog. Examples of potential leaders of the tribe could include Ogres, Trolls, Demons, or Giants, but you could pick anything that fits the rule of cool.

Shamans

There is about a 5% chance of a Goblin mutating into a Shaman (per 50 goblins), if you decide to include some Shamans in the tribe, it is likely the tribe has access to a lot of mushrooms with psychoactive chemicals within them. A Goblin Shaman has the same stats as a Goblin, but it will know and be able to cast one of the following three spells with a +2 to spellcasting checks. **Choking Cloud, Magic Missile, Darkness** (but not the reverse "**Light**"). They will not "forget" spells as a Wizard does.

Using a Tribe in a Campaign

If you would like to use a Goblinoid Tribe as a continuing threat in your campaign rather than as a one-off, then the following should be taken into account. The Goblins, while slow to realize the danger to their own lives, will likely break off and flee from battle as soon as half of them are slain, unless they are in their lair and still might have an idiotic over-confidence in the situation, such as if they are outnumbering the party of players, even though the players might be higher level and way outclass the goblins in battle.

A Goblin tribe will likely grow by about 1d6 members every week of in-game time, as Goblin's breed via a mucous egg sack, and will hatch with the full mind and abilities of a Goblin. For classification purposes, you could say Goblins with lower HP are just younger/smaller, but no Goblins that are hatched are helpless or incapable of fighting.

If the Tribe is small enough to not have a Hobgoblin or higher tier leader, then whenever they go on a hunting raid it is likely that about 80% of the tribe will go out all at once. If there is a leader, then only about 25% of the tribe will be sent on any one trip at a time, unless they are planning something sinister to a juicy target like a small village or farm.

If you want go grow tribes from scratch rather than determining the number based on the party, then begin the tribe with 1d6 Goblins, and grow about 1d6 Goblins per week. Then 2d6 per week when they get above 30 in the tribe.

As soon as the tribe reaches 10 members, there's about a 20% chance per week that one Goblin will mutate into a Hobgoblin.

After the tribe reaches 40 members, there's about a 30% per week that one Hobgoblin will mutate into a Nobgoblin.

After the tribe reaches 120 members, there's about a 5% per week that one Nobgoblin will mutate into a Mobgoblin. Once the tribe has one Mobgoblin, no other Mobgoblins will mutate unless it dies.

You should apply what you think are appropriate Appearance Mutations to the Tribe to fit the area they move to. If the Tribe flees or travels from one location/environment to another, their appearance will typically mutate at one Appearance Mutation per month.

If the Goblin Tribe has encounters with the party, and any surviving members flee, then there is a 20% chance that the Tribe will gain a new Functional Mutation, if you feel like they have enough Functional Mutations, then replace what you think the weakest mutation is with the new randomly rolled Functional Mutation.

In a campaign, you will have to determine if it seems fitting for a different Evil monster to be the leader of the tribe vs a Goblinoid leader.

As for Goblin Shamans, if you feel like the Goblins are being exposed to or gathering significant quantities of Mushrooms, or if they have encountered spell casters in battle and escaped, then you could assign an appropriate % chance that a Shaman will begin to mutate into the tribe from a Goblin. I would assign a base 10% chance that a Shaman will mutate per month.

Goblin Signs

It does no good to have Goblins in your campaign if there are no signs of the growing threat. So here are some ideas that you can sprinkle around in your campaign to hint that something might be going on with Goblins becoming a bigger threat if your players are just deciding to go around and do other adventures. Some of these hints and rumors will be for when the threat is still small, while others give hints at the ever-growing threat of the Goblins. Use them as you see appropriate.

Villagers have been reporting that some of their Livestock are disappearing over-night. (1 or 2 per week for small tribes, more for larger)

Strange tracks have been seen cutting across common travel routs. (The number of tracks will depend on the size of the tribe)

People haven't heard from some farms because the farm hands haven't stopped into town for a while, but they used to be in frequent contact with them (the goblins have overrun the farms but nobody has gone to check)

A regular trading caravan has gone missing, despite being well armed against bandits (the goblin threat is getting pretty big)

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