

# Trolls in Scandinavian Folklore

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Enlarged for greater clarity.

In Scandinavian folklore, trolls are supernatural creatures in the shape of humans but usually unfriendly, or even hostile, toward people. In local lore, trolls may be gigantic or dwarfish. They have great strength but are often of limited intelligence. They are often unattractive physically to the point of frightening ugliness.

Scandinavian trolls generally live in caves or rocky places and are often associated with large stones. The construction of prehistoric stone structures such as the dolmen called “Troll’s Church” shown on the Danish stamp above were sometimes attributed to these creatures. Huge boulders in unusual places are sometimes explained as having been thrown there by a troll or as the remains of a troll who was turned to stone when sunlight hit his or her face.

Trolls are sometimes depicted as living in families and having human character traits, making troll stories a medium for life lessons for people, especially for children whose imaginations are easily drawn to unusual creatures.

